THE ASSYRIAN PORSCHE?

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One of the reasons why no really satisfying account of the Assyrian army has yet been written is the confusion caused by new scribal habits introduced in the 1st millennium, which are not explained in the regular Babylonian lexical repertoire. No doubt if we had a much more complete text of the Practical Vocabularies of Assur and Nineveh we should be less confused, but in many cases we can only penetrate the abbreviations and newly invented logograms of the Neo-Assyrian scribes by patient collection of examples and comparison of usages. The present note is an attempt to elucidate just such an obscurity which has hitherto left us very puzzled about the terminology of different types of chariot.

The proposal is simply to identify the epithet pattute, applied to the hunting chariot of the Assyrian kings from Tiglath-pileser I until Shalmaneser III, with the logogram DUH^MES which is found after LU^GIS^GIR (and sometimes just after ša in later Neo-Assyrian administrative texts and letters. A selection of occurrences is given at the end of the article. It makes no claim to completeness, but the picture it gives is quite consistent. The instances for pattute are taken directly from AHw., p. 849. The suggestion made there that this word is the feminine of pattu, i.e. the verbal adjective of petu D, is surely correct. Note in particular that it is applied to a single chariot before Assur-naṣir-apli II, and therefore that the ending in -te cannot be a plural, but must be feminine, so that the original form of the word must be pattu'u (otherwise there is no reason for the u). These chariots are therefore described as “open”, or rather, “opened”.

In the Nimrud Wine Lists three types of chariot troop are listed together, ša DUH^MES, ša GIRH, and GIS^TAH^KAL (NWL 6, 34; same three in a different order in NWL 19, 9). Since I do not believe in “foot-chariots”, I think these are classes of troops, not classes of chariots, and that the ša šēpē are (as long understood) a chariot contingent attached to the person of the king (hence my doubts expressed in CTN 3, p. 34 n. 44). On the other hand, I agree with Dalley (ibid.) that Borger has hit upon the right explanation of GIS^TAH^KAL, i.e. to read tah-šip and compare the word tah-li-pi “(armour-)cladding” in the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic. There remains the ša DUH^MES (often transcribed GAR^MES). It cannot (despite, most recently, Kwasman in NALK p. 498a) be another writing for
tahlipi because, as we have seen, it occurs side by side with $^{\text{GIS}}$tah-lip in NWL. Instead, it must be a different type of chariot, and by far the most elegant solution is to read $^{\text{DUH}}$MES as pattu'u, feminine pattutu: non sunt multiplicandi aurigae praeter necessitatem.

There are two points to be discussed about the logogram: the use of $^{\text{DUH}}$ or $^{\text{DUg}}$ for a form of petu, and the plural sign. The normal logogram for petu is BAD, and $^{\text{DUH}}$ stands more usually for patāru. It is possible that BAD was rejected because of the — significant — risk of confusion with sumun, "old". If the scribes were looking for an alternative Sumerian equivalent, $^{\text{DUH}}$ was not far to seek: the AHw. article for petu gives us for instance $^{\text{gag i - du s}}$ = pe-tu-ú sikkati from 1ú = ša, and the equation $^{\text{tu-uh tu h}}$ = pe-tu-ú šá pi-i; also referring to MSL 4, 37: [111] (Emesal vocab.). For some bilingual passages see Deimel, SL 167, 26. As for the plural sign, it is important to note that it occurs in almost every case, both where a single chariot is mentioned and with the professional designation $^{\text{LlJ. GISGIGIR}}$.particularly suggestive are the NWL passages where neither ša gir nor ša $^{\text{GIS}}$tahlip are given a MES, although in parallel usage. Note also that we never meet a writing like ($^{\text{Lú.}}$)GISGISIR MES $^{\text{DUH}}$MES: this may not be conclusive, but it would be surprising if only the plural adjective and never the plural noun were given the MES. The explanation must surely rather be that as in other examples (zIMES for nasāhu D, AHw. p. 751b; KUDMES for parāsu D, AHw. p. 831b), the MES: here is the marker of the D stem — hence a welcome convergence with the proposal to identify $^{\text{DUH}}$MES with pattu(tu).

The distinction between an "opened" chariot and an "armoured" one should be recognizable in the reliefs and other representations. The kind of chariot used by the king to hunt in Middle and early Neo-Assyrian representations can hardly be considered "closed" (cf. Ninurta-tukulti-Assur, e.g. Frankfort, Cylinder Seals p. 192). In fact, though, the chariots used by the kings in battle, to judge from the reliefs, differed from their hunting chariots only by the addition of a heavily bossed shield at the back (see for instance B. Hrouda, Kulturgeschichte des Assyrischen Flachbildes, p. 94 with Taf. 23 Nos. 22-3; M.A. Littauer - J.H. Crouwel, Wheeled Vehicles and Ridden Animals in the Ancient Near East p. 103 — "Lion-head-bossed or toothed shields are often seen in profile as hung at the rear of these chariots"). Although it does not seem to me certain that these are shields, rather than a specially designed 'back-door' for the chariot cab, this single difference between the hunting and the battle version hardly appears sufficient to justify so clear and long-lived a polarity in the terminology, so that I cannot consider the issue resolved. Nevertheless, it is perhaps justifiable to wonder whether the "opened" sports-chariot was adopted by the army only later, after it had shown its worth in the hunt.
Appendix

A. Syllabic writings (after AHw.)

1. Tiglath-pileser I: ina qitrub metštii-šu ina GISGIGIR-šu pa-at-tu-te, “In his valiant onslaught in his open chariot ...”.
2. Aššur-dan: ina GISGIGIR-ia pa-tu-te ina GIR MEŠ -ia lasamate ... adāk, “In my chariot (and) on my fleet feet I killed.”.
3. Tukulti-Ninurta II: ina GISGIGIR-ia pa-at-tu-ti ina libbii-ia ekdi ina qitrub metštii-ya ... adduak, “In my open chariot with my raging heart in my valiant onslaught I killed.”.
4. Adad-nirari II: ina GISGIGIR-ia pa-at-tu-ši-te ina qitrub metštii-ia ... adāk (emended after AHw.), “In my open chariot in my valiant onslaught ... I killed.”.
5. Assur-naṣīr-apli II: ina GISGIGIR MEŠ -ia pa-tu-te ina qitrub EN-ti-ia ..., “In my open chariot(s) in my valiant onslaught ...”.
6. Shalmaneser II: ina GISGIGIR MEŠ -ia pa-tu-tei ... adāk, “In my open chariot(s) ... I killed.”

Note: These all refer to hunting wild animals, in stereotyped phraseology persisting for over 2 centuries. Note that only in the texts of the last two kings is there a MEŠ written after GISGIGIR. It is not clear (as AHw.’s query implies) whether a plural is really intended, however, since we would need pattu’ate (GISGIGIR is certainly feminine in NA, see 1-et GISGIGIR in ABL 241 and 242, even if it is to be read mugerru; unless it can still be read both mugerru and narkabtu, and the former is masculine, in which case one could postulate patt(u)’ate in the Assur-naṣīr-apli and Shalmaneser passages).

B. Written DUH(MEŠ)(-te)

in administrative texts:
1. ša DUH MEŠ NWL 6, 34 // ša GIR II and ša GISGIGIR-šu tah-lip;
2. ša DUH ME NWL 19, 19 // ša GIR II and ša GISGIGIR-šu tah-lip;
3. PAP 28 DUH MEŠ CTN 3, 111, 2 // GIR II (Sargon);
4. 2 qur-but GIR II DUH MEŠ ADD 834(+), I, 4’ (cf. 9’);
5. 3 qur-but GIR II GIS X[x], 1 ... DUH MEŠ ADD 971, II, 5;
6. [ GISGIGIR DUH MEŠ ADD 835, 2’;
7. PN LÜ GISGIGIR DUH MEŠ ADD 857, IV, 2 (cf. II, 24-27);
8. PN LÜ GISGIGIR DUH MEŠ -te ADD 912, I, 2;
(nos. 4-8 are post-Sargon).
in legal texts, witness lists:

9. PN ... LÚ. GÌS.GIGIR DUH.MES NALK 100 (=ADD 354), 11’; 236 (=ADD 60); 244 (=ADD 185), r. 18’ but cf. 11’; 249 (=ADD 421), r. 21’ (same man as 244 r. 11’);

10. PN ... LÚ. GÌS.GIGIR DUH NALK 244 (=ADD 185), r. 11’; 256 (=ADD 470), r. 35’.

Note: Although examples 1-3 show that “personal (chariotry of the king)” (ša šēpē) was sometimes distinguished from the “open-chariotry”, it seems from example 4 that the two categories could be merged — “personal open-chariotry”? We are still inadequately informed to be sure of this, however.

There is a graphic problem with the sign group LÚ. GÌS.GIGIR, since Parpola has shown fairly convincingly that it should be read susānu in NA texts (see SAAB II, p. 78 fn. 2, referring to his discussions and duplicate passages now in A. Livingstone, SAA III No. 38,15). It may be hard to conceive that LÚ. GÌS.GIGIR DUH.MES is to be read *susān pattute, but note that examples 1-4 omit GÌS.GIGIR, rather implying that we should read ša pattute, “Open-chariot man”. If so, there is nothing too implausible in reading DUH.MES as pattute even where not preceded by mugerrwnarkabtu, and this leaves the way open to take LÚ. GÌS.GIGIR here as susānu after all, i.e. “open-chariot groom”. Nevertheless, this is far from certain.