

**Horses of different colors** — In discussions of Assyrian administrative tablets regarding horses and the color of their hides, several terms refer to red, black, and *irginu*-horses (SAA XI, pp. XXV-XXVI; M. F. Fales, Assur 1/3, 1974). White horses are offered to the Assur temple by Adad-nirari III (SAA XII. no. 69), and they are also attested together with *harbakannu*-horses, as offerings to various gods (SAA VI, p. 297, s.v.). Interestingly, *harbakannu*-horses seem to have been offered only to Nergal, the god of war and pestilence. Fales proposes a solid color for *irginu* and a blend color for *harbakannu*.

Information on horses and the color of their hides is also provided by the wall paintings from the Assyrian palace at Til Barsip (F. Thureau-Dangin and M. Dunand, *Til Barsib*, 1936; A. Parrot, *The Arts of Assyria*, 1961, pls. 118-120, 345, 347. The published color reproductions of Lucien Cavro's copies of the wall paintings include the horses depicted in rooms 22, 24, 27. Room 22: a row of soldiers, each leading two cavalry horses standing side by side. The paired animals are in solid colors of white, light reddish brown, black, pink. Room 24: in one section, two animated horses are attended by an Assyrian soldier. The animals are multicolored red and white and blue and white, respectively. Room 27: the royal hunt of lions. The chariot horses are in solid colors of blue (royal chariot), dark brown, and black. A ridden horse is multicolored red and white. Thus the hides of the Til Barsip horses have solid colors associated with those animals: white, pink and light reddish brown (sorrel), red (chestnut), dark brown, and black. The blue hue deserves comment. It may represent a shade of gray (dun or roan), either solid or mottled, since black and white pigments mixed together never occurs in Assyrian painting (on the color gray, see: B. Landsberger, *JCS* 21, 1967, p. 148; F. A. M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits*, 1992, pp. 54-55). Nonetheless, the blue horse pulling the royal chariot is exceptional. Possibly, the animal was intentionally painted blue in order to impart a visual richness (e.g. lapis lazuli and Tyrian purple. On these subjects, see: Landsberger, pp. 164 ff.; articles in *BASOR* 269, 1988, pp. 81-91). The multicolored cavalry horses show them to be piebald horses (calico, pinto). From the Til Barsip paintings, the piebald horse was relatively common. The two known colors of hides of horses not described in the Assyrian administrative tablets are piebald and dun. Is this coincidence or is there a connection between these colors and the *irginu*-horse and *harbakannu*-horse?

Finally, the various depictions of horses in the Til Barsip paintings are datable to the late 8th and 7th centuries (see A. Nunn, *Die Wandmalerei und der Glasierte Wandschmuck im Alten Orient*, 1988, pp. 102 ff.). Stylistic comparison with the palace wall reliefs leads me to suggest that each Til Barsip wall painting, mentioned earlier, was produced in the reign of a different Assyrian king.

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