

**Rawlinson’s “Curious” Discoveries: The List of Eighteen Tribute-Bearers and Zabibe, Queen of the Arabs** – One exemplar of the Kalḫu Annals of Tiglath-Pileser III (Text No. 32 in Tadmor and Yamada 2011, RINAP 1), which contains a list of eighteen tribute-bearers subdued by Tiglath-Pileser III, is known only from a copy made by Henry Creswicke Rawlinson (*Notebook 2*, fols 5v-6r = BL Add MS 47654; see Tadmor 1994: 35, 89, pl. XXVI).<sup>1</sup> Tadmor refers to a letter from Rawlinson to Edwin Norris, announcing the discovery of this “complete” list of tribute-bearers. Parts of the letter were read at a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society on 4 February 1854 (see *The Athenaeum*, no. 1373 [18 February 1854]: 216; Tadmor 1994: 35 n. “a”). In the *Morning Chronicle* (5 April 1853): 5, there is a report of a letter from Rawlinson to Norris, addressed and dated Baghdad, 15 February 1853, which was read at a meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society on 2 April 1853. In this letter Rawlinson announces that he has found “Šabibim, Queen of the Arabs” at the end of a list of tribute-bearers, which he has reconstructed from texts in Layard, *ICC* (1851). Fortunately, these two letters are in the Rawlinson Collections of the Royal Asiatic Society in London, and relevant parts of them are referred to in this article.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. The List of Tribute-Bearers<sup>3</sup>

In his letter to Norris, addressed and dated Baghdad, 16 December 1853,<sup>4</sup> parts of which were published in *The Athenaeum* (18 February 1854), Rawlinson wrote:

I have also got several new inscriptions of Tiglath Pileser II from the centre of the Nimrud mound, but they are terribly mutilated and disfigured. The only valuable thing I have got out of them at present is a complete list of the Syrian kings and princes subdued by Tiglath Pileser in his 8th year and this list I will copy out for you. Strange that Ahab is not found amongst them.

[JPG]

Fig. 1. List of Eighteen Tribute-Bearers  
(RAS, Rawlinson Collection, Box III/09: 18)

Rawlinson must have copied the cuneiform text from his notebook (*Notebook 2*, fols 5v-6r). In this list we see how he read the names of the tribute-bearers. The comment in his preliminary remarks that it is strange that Ahab is not found amongst the names of the kings does not make sense. Did he mean Ahaz? In any case, Ahaz (Jehoahaz) only appears in a list of rulers who brought tribute in a later inscription of Tiglath-Pileser III. See Tadmor and Yamada 2011, RINAP 1, 47 rev. 11’: <sup>m</sup>ia-ú-ḫa-zi KUR.ia-ú-da-a-a, “Jehoahaz of Judah”.<sup>5</sup> In biblical literature, Ahaz is also described as paying tribute to Assyria (2 Kgs 16:5-18; Isa 7:1-16). The names are presented as follows:

- 1 Kushtashpi of Kummukha (Comagene; and Arian)
- 2 Ratsianu of ---- – Rezin of Damascus (certain)
- 3 Minikhimi of Tsamirina – Menahem of Samaria
- 4 Khirummu of Tsurra – Hirom of Tyre
- 5 Sibitti-bi’li of Gupla – Byblos

- 6 Hurikki of Khasua – Casiotis ?
- 7 Pisis of Qarkamis – Carchemish (Mabog not Kerkissia)
8. Enil of Khammata – Hamath the great
9. Panammu of Tsamhala
10. Tarkhulara of Gamguma – Zamzumim (Scythic)
11. Tsulumal of Milidda – Melitene
12. Dadiyalu of Kazka
13. Uasshurmi of Tupala – Tubal of Scripture
14. Uashkhitti of Tuna – Thynia
15. Uarpalla of Tukhana – Tyana of Cappadocia?
16. Tukhammi of Ishtunda or Miltunda
17. Hurimmi of Khusimna
18. Khabibé, Queen of the Arabs

Rawlinson adds: “This list may be compared with the B.M. series Pl. 50, 67, 69 &c., but it is far more complete and the orthography of all the names is certain”. He is referring to the list of tribute-bearers which he reconstructed from the texts in Layard, ICC (1851), a copy of which he sent to Norris on 15 February 1853 with the comment: “The whole list of Pul’s tributaries is curious – here they are as far as I can make them out, joining Layard’s heterogeneous fragments”.<sup>6</sup> The following readings and comments from this earlier list may be noted:

1. Kustaspa;
2. Radiyan;
4. Name of the king of Tyre lost;
5. Sibit-bel of Gubal;
7. Gargamis;
8. The place-name lost;
15. Tusa... (place-name incomplete);
16. Names lost;
17. Hurim of Khubiruna (Hebron);
18. Şabibim.

Rawlinson provides no explanation for changing his reading of the first syllable of the name known today as Zabibe (<sup>t</sup>za-bi-bé-e) from *şa* to *kha* (*ħa*): Şabibim to Khabibé. We shall have more to say on this in the next section.

## 2. Zabibe, Queen of the Arabs

In the letter addressed and dated Baghdad, 15 February 1853, Rawlinson tells Norris:

I have now to announce a discovery which is I think curious. The northern Arabs there about the head of the Red Sea were really governed by *queens*, and Solomon’s Queen of Sheba was no doubt from this quarter and not from the southern extremity of the Peninsula. Here is the proof. In the list of the Syrian tributaries of *Pul* or Tiglath Pileser the last name after *Hurim* of Hebron is *Şabibim*, Queen of the Arabs: <sup>x</sup>şabibiim sarrat <sup>x</sup>Aribi.<sup>7</sup>

He then refers to a passage in the inscriptions of Sargon in which “Samsi, queen of the Arabs” is mentioned. Unfortunately, his reading of the queen’s name is unclear. In translation the Sargon passage reads: “I received tribute from Pir’û (Pharaoh), king of Egypt, Samsi, Queen of the Arabs (<sup>f</sup>*sa-am-si šar-rat* KUR.a-ri-bi) (and) It’amar, the Sabaeen” (see Frame 2021, RINAP 2, 1:123; 7:27). Rawlinson mentions the importance of identifying the determinative used before women’s names, and of discovering the Assyrian word *šarratu*, “queen”. It is unlikely that he had worked out that *šarratu* was used for foreign queens, just as Heb. *malkāh* was the designation for the unnamed Queen of Sheba and Vashti, the queen of Persia.<sup>8</sup> In a flight of fancy, Rawlinson goes on to argue that,

as Arabs are joined in one list with Hebron [months later he read Khusimna] and in the other with Egypt and Saba (or Heb. *šēbā’*), it gives us the exact locality where the Bible places Cushan & Midian and the Arabs too and where Moses found his Arab wife. This must be about the Gulf of Akaba and from here depend upon it the Queen of Sheba came up to visit Solomon of Jerusalem”.

A week after the publication of some of the contents of Rawlinson’s letter in the *Morning Chronicle* (5 April 1853: 5), Edward Hincks arrived at the British Museum to work on the cuneiform inscriptions. In his diary for 13 April 1853 he wrote:

At inscriptions of Esarhaddon’s cylinder. Compared my copy with the original, and found a vast number of mistakes. Found notice of an Arab queen. Wrote a paper for Royal Society of Literature on Arabian queens, refuting Rawlinson’s views respecting the site of Sheba.<sup>9</sup>

The hexagonal cylinder/prism which Hincks was examining has the museum number BM 91028. Tabū’a (col. iii line 13, <sup>f</sup>*ta-bu-a*) was ruler in Adumutu/Adummatu, but she is not given the designation *šarratu*, “queen”.<sup>10</sup> Hincks’s paper, “On Certain Arab Queens”, which he read at a meeting of the Royal Society of Literature, was not published in the society’s *Transactions* until 1856 (Hincks 1856).<sup>11</sup> He seems to put words in Rawlinson’s mouth and appears to suggest that Rawlinson had claimed to have actually identified the Queen of Sheba in the inscription of Tiglath-Pileser. But Rawlinson’s argument is more subtle. He merely notes the existence of a tradition of female rulers among northern Arabs and suggests this may help us to locate the Queen of Sheba. Rawlinson and Hincks therefore both agree that there was a tradition of queens who rule, but they disagree about the location of Sheba. Rawlinson’s attempt to relocate Sheba in the northern part of Arabia around the Gulf of Aqaba is speculative and lacks real evidence, while Hincks’s argument that there was conclusive evidence in the Bible (see 1 Kgs 10:1-10; 2 Chr 9:1-9, 12; Matt 12:42; Luke 11:31) that Sheba was in the south of the Arabian Peninsula is really a theological one.<sup>12</sup>

In the published version of Hincks’s paper, the name Zabibe appears as *Khabiba*, “the affectionate” (Hincks 1856: 163). I previously thought that Hincks might have erroneously connected his version of the name with Ar. *ḥabba*, “to love”; *ḥubb*, “affection” (see Wehr 1971: 151), and Aram.-Syr. *ḥbb*, “to love”; or that he had confused the *ḥa* and *za* signs. However, I have recently noticed that in the summary of his paper in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society Literature*, 1/23 (1853): 361, and also in newspaper reports of his paper, the name is written

*Chabiba*. We know from various sources, including a letter Hincks wrote to the Trustees of the British Museum, that he represented *ša* by *cha* (Cathcart 2008: 200-202).<sup>13</sup> This was still his practice in the articles he published in 1856. Perhaps the editor of the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature* altered Hincks's *ch* to *kh* (unwittingly *š* to *ḫ*). In Tadmor and Yamada 2011, RINAP 1, p. 77 n. 7, the reference to Rawlinson's reading *za* for *ḫa* has inadvertently been attached to <sup>m</sup>*tu-ḫa-am-e* instead of KUR.*tu-ḫa-na-a-a*. However, it is clear from Rawlinson's "Tukhana" in his list above (fig. 1, no. 15) that he sometimes gave the *za/ša* sign the value *ḫa*.<sup>14</sup> This is confirmed by his reading Khabibé for his earlier Šabibim (Zabibe). We have no explanation for this state of affairs. It is possible that Rawlinson had read the reports of Hincks's paper on ancient Arab queens to the Royal Society of Literature, presented six months earlier, in which the name was written Chabiba. Rawlinson's Ts (for S) in Tsamirina (no. 3) and Tsulumal (no. 11) is peculiar but such a practice is found in Hincks's publications.

The name Zabibe probably derives from Ar. *Zabīb*, "raisin" (Eph'al 1982: 82; see Wehr 1971: 372).<sup>15</sup> The basis upon which Hincks reached the meaning "the affectionate" for his Šabiba is not known. Perhaps he associated the name with Ar. *šabba*, "to love ardently"; *šabābah*, "ardent longing" (Wehr 499-500).

## Notes

1. No. 32 in Tadmor and Yamada 2011, RINAP 1 = Ann. 27 in Tadmor 1994. Lines 1-12 of no. 32 are used to restore no. 14 line 10 – no. 15 line 4.

2. See the "List of the RAS Collections of Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson Bart. (1810-1895)", Box III/09: 1, 18 (available on the Royal Asiatic Society website, under Archives. We take this opportunity to thank Edward Weech, the Librarian, and Nancy Charley, the Archivist, at the Royal Asiatic Society for their help in providing access to the Rawlinson Collection. We are also grateful to Roger Parsons for writing this invaluable descriptive list of the Rawlinson papers. See Parsons 2015.

3. For a study of the lists of tribute-bearers, in which "Zabibe, Queen of the Arabs" is always at the end, see Tadmor 1994: 265-268.

4. In Tadmor and Yamada 2011, RINAP 1, p. 77, it is erroneously stated that Rawlinson's letter is dated 18 February 1854.

5. See Tadmor 1994: 265, 268.

6. Letter to Norris dated 15 February 1853 (RAS Rawlinson Collections, Box III/09: 1).

7. See Tadmor and Yamada 2011, RINAP 1, 15:2; 27:6-7: <sup>m</sup>*ú-ri-im-mi-i* URU.*ḫu-bi-iš-na-a* <sup>z</sup>*a-bi-bé-e šar-rat* KUR.*a-ri-bi*, "Urimmi of the city Ḫubišna, (and) Zabibe, queen of the Arabs".

8. On the title *šarratu*, see CAD Š/2: 72; Svärd 2015: 39; Bennett 2021: 30-32. 40-41. Svärd notes that the title *šarratu* was reserved for foreign female tribal leaders as well as goddesses, whereas the royal women of the Neo-Assyrian court were designated *sēgallu* (Mí.É.GAL). A similar terminological distinction may be observed in the Hebrew: as well as Sheba and Vashti, Esther as a Persian Queen (Esth 2:22, etc) and the unnamed consort of Beshazzar (Dan 5:10) are given the appellation *malkāh*; the royal women of Judah and Israel are never described by this term. Instead, these royal women tend to be described by the alternative designation *gebîrâ* (1 Kgs 15:3; 2 Kgs 10:13). The titles *šarratu* and *malkāh* are therefore functionally equivalent as descriptors for non-autochthonous female rulers.

9. Cathcart 2008: 198 n. 1.

10. On the reading URU.*A-du-mu-u*, a scribal error for URU.*A-du-mu-tu*, in BM 91028 col. ii 56, which is followed in early publications, see Eph'al 1982: 119-120.

11. Hincks's short article was the first in which attention was drawn to the Arab female rulers Tabū'a, Zabibe and Samsi in Assyrian texts. Aside from the important work by Eph'al (1982), the only article of note dealing with Arab queens is an early article by Abbott (1941). However, the Arab queens in Neo-Assyrian texts have received new attention in the Helsinki doctoral thesis by Bennett (2021).

12. The Queen of Sheba is also the subject of a long narrative in the Qur'ān; see Sūrah 27:15-44. We intend to consider ancient Arab queens and the biblical Queen of Sheba in a separate publication. In the meantime, see the brief discussion in Bennett 2021: 281-287 and note her mention of "cultural memory of prominent female rulers of the 'Arabs'" (285).

13. The letter, dated 4 May 1853, is addressed to Henry Ellis who was Principal Librarian at the British Museum from 1827 to 1856. One of his duties was to report the contents of any relevant correspondence at meetings of the Board of Trustees. In his letter Hincks provides two specimens of transcriptions and translations of Bellino's cylinder, lines 31-33. In line 31 he has *michir* for *mişir*, which he correctly translates "territory". See Grayson and Novotny 2012, RINAP 3/1, 3:31-33. Hincks's transliterations are frequently infuriating and confusing. They led to a lot of misunderstandings.

14. In the earlier, February 1853 list Rawlinson wrote the incomplete Tusa...

15. Compare Heb. *qəšî'āh*, "Keziah", the name of one of Job's daughters (Job 42:14), which means "cassia". According to the Hebrew Bible, raisin cakes were used in ancient Near Eastern religion as deity offerings, especially associated with fertility rites (2 Sam 6:19; Isa 16:7; Hos 3:1; 1 Chr 16:3).

## Bibliography

ABBOTT, N., 1941. "Pre-Islamic Arab Queens", *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, 58:1-22.

BENNETT, E. R., 2021. *The "Queens of the Arabs" during the Neo-Assyrian Period*. PhD Thesis (Helsinki).

CATHCART, K. J., 2008. *The Correspondence of Edward Hincks*, Vol. II (1850-1856) (Dublin).

EPH'AL, I., 1982. *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent 9th-5th Centuries B.C.* (Jerusalem).

FRAME, G., 2021. *The Royal Inscriptions of Sargon II, King of Assyria (721-705 BC)* (RINAP 2; Winona Lake, IN).

GRAYSON, A. K. and J. NOVOTNY 2012. *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704-681 BC)*, Part 1 (RINAP 3/1; Winona Lake, IN).

HINCKS, E., 1856. "On Certain Arab Queens", *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, 2nd ser., 5/2: 162-164.

LAYARD, A. H., 1851. *Inscriptions in the Cuneiform Character from Assyrian Monuments* (London).

LEICHTY, E., 2011. *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680-669 BC)* (RINAP 4; Winona Lake, IN).

PARSONS, R., 2015. "A Brief Description of the Collection of Rawlinson Papers at the Royal Asiatic Society", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd series, 25: 481-497.

SVÄRD, S., 2015. *Women and Power in Neo-Assyrian Palaces* (SAAS 23; Helsinki).

TADMOR, H., 1994. *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III, King of Assyria* (Jerusalem).

TADMOR, H. and S. YAMADA, 2011. *The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (744-727 BC), and Shalmaneser V (726-722 BC), Kings of Assyria* (RINAP 1; Winona Lake, IN).

WEHR, H., 1971. *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Ithaca NY).

Kevin J. CATHCART <kevin.cathcart@ucd.ie>  
8 Friarsland Road, Dublin 14 (IRELAND)

Laura QUICK <laura.quick@theology.ox.ac.uk>  
Worcester College, Walton Street, Oxford, OX1 2HB (UK)