

## History of Maryamah Town (Hajar- al- ‘Adī) in Wādī Ḥarīb in the Light of Its Musnad Inscriptions (7<sup>th</sup> Century BC – 3<sup>rd</sup> Century AD)

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**Abstract:** *This study aims at shedding light on the history of a significant Qatabanian town which was known as Maryamah, in Wadi Ḥarib, in the light of its Musnad Inscriptions during the period from the 7th century BC to 3rd century AD. It presents some important historical data about a Qatabanian town that had not been known earlier, and which had a vital role in the history of Ancient Yemen. This is the first research that tries to discuss the history of Maryamah town. In fact, there had been no studies on any aspect of such a town regarding its chronological order, according to its inscription data, except a few previous studies the researcher conducted in Arabic. The study is mainly based on Qatabanian inscriptions which the researcher has collected from Maryamah during the past few years. They reached so far 120 Qatabanian inscriptions that were dedicatory, construction, legislative, and memorial inscriptions, as well as other Qatabanian inscriptions which had been published and smuggled to Arabian and foreign museums, and those preserved by private groups.*

**Keywords:** *History, Marayamah, Musnad Inscriptions, Hajar- al- ‘Adī, Qatabān.*

### Introduction

Maryamah, a Qatabanian ancient town, is located in the east of Yemen (Fig. 1) to the southeast of Marib, as far as around 90 kilometers, within the southern range of Wadi Ḥarib, where the mountains that gradually slope towards the east and meet the Empty Quarter, between the latitudes (14 56 38. 3) and longitudes (45 2800. 2), at an altitude of (1172 m) above sea level, in a place currently known as (Hajar- al- ‘Adī) village. It is the village that was built on the ruins of Maryamah which is five kilometers far to the east of Ḥarib district center.

The town is bordered to the south and southeast by Mohsin Ben Aboud Al-Shareef Farm, and Hajar- al- ‘Adī village and Taraf Al- ‘Azab mountain, Al-Wasee‘ah, and the mountain range of Raḥmah; to the east and north by some houses of the new Hajar- al- ‘Adī and

the main asphalted Road which connects Wadi Ḥarib and Marib; to the west by the new houses of Al- ‘ūbāb family and Al-Ḥādī family that are attached to the buildings of western Maryamah town; to the northeast by Wadi ‘Ablaḥ stream, Ḥaid Al-Madārīn Mountain (dū- Al-ḥaḍer) and ‘uṣāiferah mountain range.

The plan of the town is semi-rectangular (Fig. 2) with an area of about (270 m) from the north to the south; and about (260m) from the east to the west, according to its walls. Some of the towers of its wall which is built with granite stone still exist up to the present day; and the existence of big buildings in the west and the middle parts of the town.<sup>(1)</sup> (Fig. 3.)

Regarding the archaeological boundaries, Maryamah is bordered by a number of ancient towns and places that are situated on the old trade route which runs through Wadi Ḥarib. At a distance of almost seven kilometers from

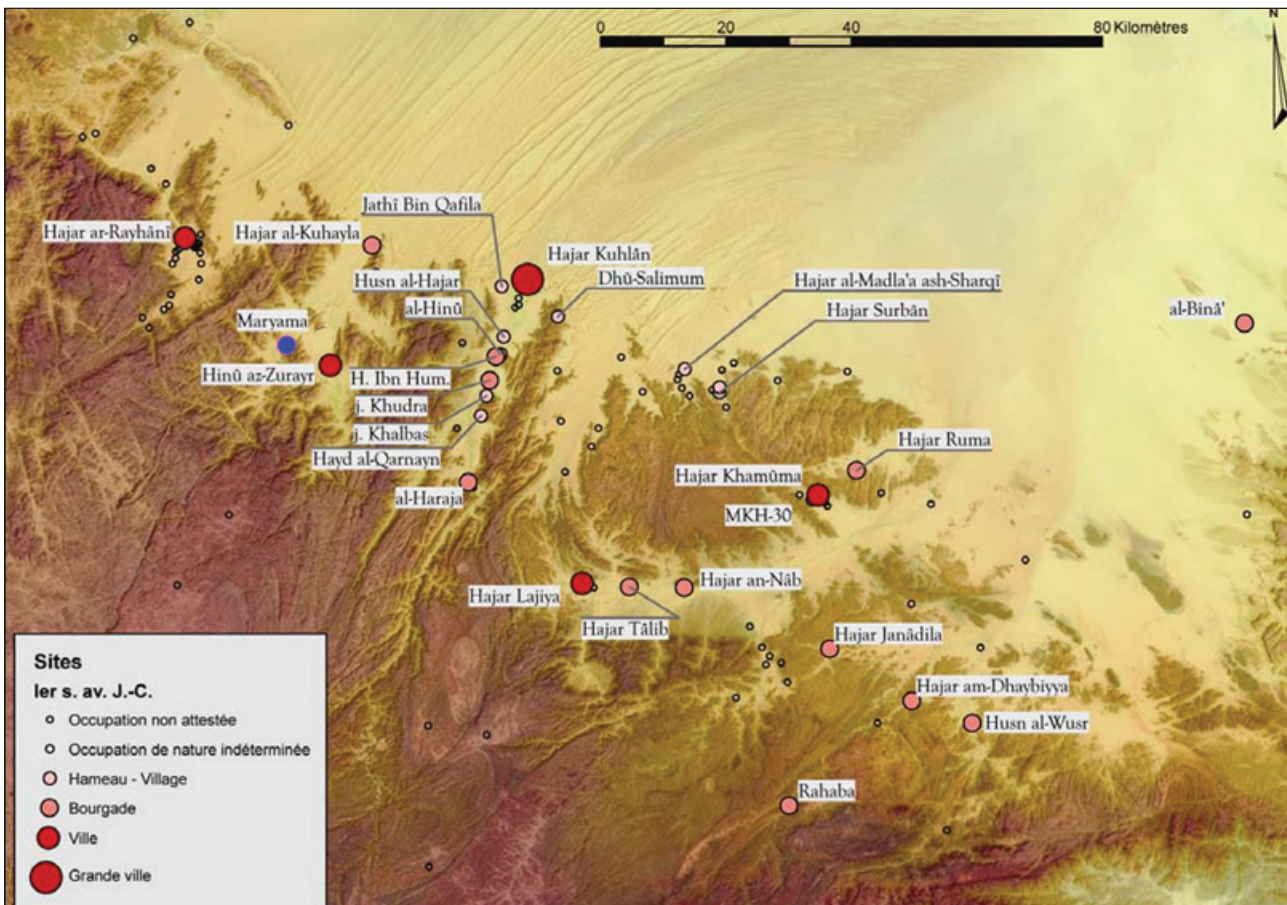


Fig. 1 An illustrative map of the site of Maryamah, by (Schiettecatte, 2006: 54) – I made some additions, and readjusted the site of Maryamah to its right place.

Maryamah to the south-east Haribat town (Ḥinū az-Zurayr) is located, one of the most important towns of Qatabān Kingdom in Wadi Ḥarib (RES 4329); to the north-east of Maryamah, Hajar al-Kuḥaylah, Hajar Ḍahbā, and Nagd Marqad are located (Harding, 1964: 47-48, pl. XLIX; Doe, 1971: 202-203, 225-226, Schiettecatte, 2006: 217-221). The ancient towns of Wadi Al-Jūbah are not very distant from Maryamah. After the trade caravans pass by the towns of Wadi Ḥarib, such caravans go through along the northwest mountains towards the towns of Wadi Al-Jūbah which is located 30 kilometers far from Wadi Ḥarib.

The Qatabānians remained to connect the towns of the two wadis (Ḥarib and Al-Jūbah) through a mountainous pass which was dug on the rock, known as Zaram Path (RES 4328). It

was established to facilitate the passing of the old trade caravans that came from Wadi Ḥarib towards Marib town across the Wadi Al-Jūbah (al-Daḥīf, 2007:116-117; Avanzini, 2004: 5-8; Beaston, 1971: 73-74).

Maryamah is significant for two main reasons: the first reason is that it is located in an alluvial arable land which was the result of what the Wadi 'Ablaḥ stream brought about; such a Wadi is located to the west and north-west of Maryamah; some parts of the land were resulted from frequent deposits that led to the soil fertility. The location of the town on the region between high plateaus and the Empty Quarter, where the feet of mountains meet the desert, contributed to the availability of water and to the people's access.

The second reason is that Maryamah is located on the old trade route that runs through most towns of the eastern Wadis. That is, during the period from the beginning of the first millennium BC to the first century AD, Maryamah became a focal point and a trading post between the Qatabān Kingdom towns that are located in Wadi Markhah and Wadi Bayḥān where Timna', the capital of Qatabān is situated, on one hand, and the Qatabān Kingdom northern towns in Wadi Al-Jūbah, which are located near the lands of Saba', specifically Marib town where the trade caravans were grouped together to get ready to travel to Najran towards the north across the Ma'ineans Jawf. Not only that, a number of such a group's inscriptions indicated that there were trade relations between the residents of Maryamah town and the residents of the other towns of

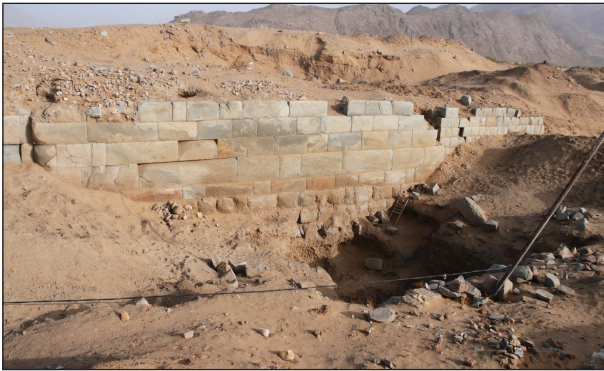
southern and south-western highlands, which made Maryamah one of the most important towns in Qatabān Kingdom, which is located on the old trade route.

### The meaning of Maryamah

The name of Maryamah (Mrymtm) is closely connected with the Wadi located towards the west and north-west sides of such a town. This Wadi is known as 'Ablaḥ. Its name has a topographic significance, and came from its higher location on a mound of earth at the edge of Wadi 'Ablaḥ which is tens of meters distant from such a town. Thus, it is called as Maryamah which derives from the Musnad formula (rym) indicating the highness from which many names of Yemeni places in the past times such as the towns of Tarīm and Yarīm and Yarīm 'Ayman by the tribes of Hamdan and its kings (CIH 315/1) and from the item (rym) the



Fig. 2 Aerial photo of the site of Maryamah in which its planning appears and the random excavations it is exposed to.



**Fig. 3 Foundations of the constructions of Maryamah, and the works of random excavations appear in front of them.**

definite nominal formula (Raymān), and from the definite nominal formula (Ryām), i.e.: the height which is, in inscriptions, related to the place of worshipping the god Tālab Ryām; in addition to the comparative formula (‘Aryam) found in the Musnad inscriptions as a title for names (Abadān 1/1).

In today’s Yemeni dialects, the roof of a house is called (Raīm) which is comparable with the texts in Musnad inscriptions, especially the Construction ones (Gar nuove iscrizioni 3/ 3- 5): br’w bythmw d- Ḥrmm bn mwtr-hw ‘dy mrymhw ... “and they built their house dū-Ḥaram from its foundation to its top”; and in the past tense (CIH/448/2): wwśfw wrymw kl gn ḥw ... “and they added and raised its whole wall”, and it is called the stone ladder or stairs in Musnad inscriptions (mrym), and in Arabic (Rym) means “a stair” and “shop” and is attributed to the language of Yemen (Ibn Manzūr, 1999, 5: 394; Beaston et al, 1982: 120).

### **The history of discovering artifacts and inscriptions of Maryamah:**

The artifacts and inscriptions of Maryamah had not been addressed in serious scholarly studies during the recent years, except the MA and PhD and a number of articles conducted by

the researcher on a number of its dedicatory, construction, legislative, and memorial inscriptions, as well as studies conducted on some of its apparent architectural monuments (al-Hajj, 2015: 47-67). However, one can say that there are some short studies on its inscriptions, the first of which is by Jamme study on an inscription of Hajar- al-‘Adī (Ja 2898), a historian during the Era of king Krb’l Wtr Yhn‘m king of saba and dū-Raydan (Jamme, 1981: 98-99); a study by Robin on a bronze Qatabanian inscription of Hajar- al-‘Adī (Robin 2005-2006: 283-285); a study by Bron about a number of Qatabanian inscriptions of Hajar- al-‘Adī (Bron 2009: 121-126; 2010: 163-175; Bron, 2013: 187-194); another study by Arbach et. al. (Arbach, Bataye’a, al-Zubaidi, 2003: 68-70); still another study conducted by Prioleta and Arbach on bronze inscriptions of Hajar- al-‘Adī, which are preserved as private groups in Sana’a (Prioleta and Arbach, 2015: 243-271); another preliminary study by al-Hasani on Qatabanic dedicatory inscriptions in both his PhD dissertation and in his research published in the book of the Seventeenth Sabaean conference (al-Hasani, 2012; 2015: 43-53); and a study by Marqatn about a Qatabanic inscription written down on a bronze plaque (Marqatn, 2014: 97-114)<sup>(2)</sup>.

### **Abandoning the town and its ruins:**

Undoubtedly there are many factors for destroying Maryamah and abandoning it. But, at present, it is hard to answer the question ‘When did that happen?’ before conducting regular archaeological excavations. Concerning the issue of how the town was deserted, one can say that the town had been effected by the political and social change which Qatabān had experienced during the period from the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> C to the 3<sup>rd</sup> C AD, in addition

to the political and religious divisions and violent conflicts that Yemen had witnessed in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD; the coming of Abyssinians, the earlier infiltration of many nomads in several regions in the eastern part of Yemen; in addition to desertification which spread to a lot of towns in the east of the Wadis. All these geographical and political situations had a vital effect on the life of the residents of towns in the east of the Wadis and their social and political development and so they were imposed to looting and destruction.

The researcher deems that the two most major factors that led to abandoning and ruining of Maryamah town are as follows: The first is the change of political and civilized weight towards the towns of the south and south-west highlands as a result of the effective progress trade activities of such towns in the presence of political stability in all the western plateau which took place in the emergence of the era of Kings of Saba' and dū-Raydan. That also had an impact on the trade activity of the town in the eastern parts of the Wadis which became restricted within the range of their narrow wadis, as confirmed by a number of the inscriptions of Maryamah town (Ḥaj-al-'Adī 57, 58, 59, 62), and other Qatabanian inscriptions from the consecutive settlements of the residents of Maryamah and other towns in Qatabān in many southern and western elevated highlands on the Gulf of Aden and the Port of Mocha in order to seek livelihood and for trading.

The second factor is that, Maryamah was exposed to a large fire in several religious places and houses. It was supposed that such a fire happened because of an aggression to Maryamah in the late centuries AD. It is identified that such a fire occurred when conducting the archaeological field surveys in

Maryamah to collect and study its inscriptions and artifacts (al-Hajj, 2015: 61-63).

### **The importance of Maryamah town inscriptions**

The number of the inscriptions of Maryamah town, which had been known to date, reaches almost 200, out of which 100 inscriptions, were published in earlier studies by the researcher (Ḥaj-al-'Adī 1-99) and some other studies that were published by other scholars: (FB-Qatabān 1; Atlal 6; FB-Ḥawkam 1A; FB-Ḥawkam 1B; FB-Ḥawkam 3; FB-Ḥawkam 5; FB-Qatabān 1; RES 4273; COX 4; FB-Ḥawkam 2; FB-Ḥawkam 4; FB-Ḥawkam 7; UAM 518; UAM 519; ATM 870; MuB 601; UAM 520; ATM 888; UAM 523, MUB 635; Ja 2898; Maraqtan-Qatabānic 1; Ḥaj- al-'Ādī 35= Collection privée yéménite 2014-3; FB-al-Ādī 1; FB-al-Ādī 2; ATM 866; Sotheby's, New York, 10.XII.1999, n° 331?). Many inscriptions are preserved in museums in Yemen, Arab countries, and foreign countries, or housed in private groups while other inscriptions are still under study. The content of the inscriptions definitely detects the history of an important Yemeni town which was unknown for most scholars; it had been established in Wadi Ḥarīb a long time ago; its emergence came along with those towns in the eastern part by the trade caravan routes such as, Tamn', d-Ġylm, as well as some other towns of Qatabān Kingdom which had progressed at the beginning of the first millennium BC.

In fact, all these inscriptions, in their topics, and their linguistic, religious and historical significance, represent a significant historical depiction and a valuable knowledge addition which enriches the readers in the field of old Yemen studies, especially the Qatabānic ones. Moreover, such inscriptions are as important

as those Qatabānic inscriptions that were previously published.

From the historical perspective, the oldest inscriptions date back to almost the 8<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, specifically those inscriptions written in boustrophedon, one of which mentioned a new Qatabānic king (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 25), another one mentioned some Priests of the god Ḥawkam in that earlier historical phase (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 24), and the most recent inscriptions date back to about the mid of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 62 = Ja 2898). With the probability that two of these inscriptions namely (Ḥaj-al‘Adi 56, 58) date back to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD since they seem to go back to the era of Himyarite King, Šammar Yuhar‘iš dū-Raydan.

With regard to the topics related to inscriptions, most of them are within those known as dedicatory inscriptions which made it easy to identify most religious, social, and economic affairs in the life of the residents of Maryamah town, and their deep religious feeling towards their worshipped gods and their absolute belief in their powers and their good and harm; in addition to their trade activities with a lot of old Yemeni towns in the eastern wadis and in the west and south highlands by the Gulf of Aden and Bab Al-Mandab (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 21, 59, 60, 35, 62), as well as other trade activities with some kingdoms of the Arabian Peninsula and the civilizations of the old Near East, reaching Egypt and Greece (Maraqten-Qatabāni 1).

Additionally, such dedicatory inscriptions provided us with the names of a number of gods that had been worshipped in Maryamah; of which the most important one was Ḥawkam Nabaṭ, the main god of Maryamah town. They also provided us with the names of a number

of kings of Qatabān, of which are three kings that were previously unknown in Qatabanian inscriptions (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 25; ATM 866; FB-Hawkam).

Through the dedicatory inscriptions of Maryamah, it is found that several ‘qyal (rulers) reigned over the town from the time of its emergence to the 1st century AD (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 1/3; 11/1; 22/1; 30/6; 31/6; 32/5; 36/2). By mentioning these rulers, it has primarily identified the history of ‘qyal (ruling) system and its chronological order in Maryamah town, in particular, and in Qatabān Kingdom, in general. Through the content of the inscription (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 1/1) which dated back to around the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, it can be said that the system of qayl had been known in Qatabān Kingdom since a long time ago, rather than in later historical periods as thought by some scholars (Korotayev,1995: 62-77; Bafaqih,2007, 51- 56). The appearance and spread of the qayl system was not just restricted to the north Sabaeen highlands, but the Qatabanian Maryamah town had known it since the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, as well; and perhaps before that time (al-Hajj, 2015:11-102; 2017: 127- 128).

Moreover, these inscriptions also help to identify the nature of political relations between the Kings of Qatabān and the Kings of Ḥaḍramawt. Kings of Qatabān and the rulers of Maryamah had been maintaining the permanent political and economic stability in Ḥaḍramawt, specifically Shabwah town where many Qatabān Kingdom traders reside, including those of Maryamah (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 22; 35).

Other inscriptions of Maryamah fall within the construction inscriptions which made it easy to identify several names of towers of Maryamah and buildings, both the religious and the civil ones, and the names of the people who

built them and the purpose of building them, and in which era they were built, as well as the economic and social relation between those people in Maryamah who built them, with the other old Yemeni communities, especially such communities that are located in the west and south highlands. The construction inscriptions, especially those ones discovered in their original places from the monuments indicated the significance of construction words which were vague in the Qatabanian inscriptions in particular, and the ancient Yemeni inscriptions, in general such as, the formula (Ṣwbt) which was interpreted as “substructure; feature associated with town walls; a base” which means “stairs; stone ladder” in the inscription (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 58/3). The formula (Mrś‘t) is interpreted in earlier studies as a type of construction or upper stone without giving details regarding its shape or function. In fact, (Mrś‘t) means the interior thick and wide construction which supports the external stone walls of towers and town’s wall. It is noted that this term (Mrś‘t) is repeated in the inscriptions on the towers of Maryamah (Ḥaj-al-‘Adī 56/3; 57/5; 59/2). Additionally, there are other construction formulae that have a significance, as in these two formulae (Ḥwl and Ṣrbt) in the inscription (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 8/3) whose significance are verified during the field work in Maryamah town (Al-Haj, 2015a: 170, 186-187; 2015b:115-120). There are also new words revealed in these inscriptions as in the formula (K‘bt), i.e. ka’aba – sanctuary; and the formula (Ḥlkm) which means complete (Ḥaj-al-‘Adī 8/3, 6,7): bn mb‘l Ḥwkm ḥlkm.

It is noteworthy that the construction inscriptions discovered in Maryamah indicated the permanent care of the residents to build and renovate its architectural buildings, especially the premises in the town wall and towers (Ḥaj-al-‘Adī 57, 58, 59 60, 62 = Ja 2898) and

their participation in the costs and wages for reconstructing it in order to preserve it, and to seek good reward from their god Ḥawkam; to save effort and money; and they had a belief in the importance of social cooperation to preserve such public architectural buildings.

Other inscriptions are known as the short commemorative inscriptions which had been written down on different stones, and, in general, they include the names of the prominent personages and towers and ancient religious and civil architectural constructions, some of them are still in their original places of the construction, while others had been ripped off and taken to the modern buildings of Hajar- al-‘Adī village which directly laid on the buildings of Maryamah.

Then the legislative inscriptions which are very few, but extremely significant as their linguistic, historical and social contents are distinguished from the other Qatabānic inscriptions previously published. The legislative inscription (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 84) contains new Musnad words which indicate the significance of the construction and the type of funerary architectural buildings, as well as its evidence of new legislations relevant to women and men (both free ones and slaves) of Maryamah; and its reference to some of the rituals and religious rites that the community of Maryamah agreed upon and approved by the god Ḥawkam and the rulers of the town. The contents of the legislative inscription (ATM 866) contain other important facts (Arbach, Bāṭāyi‘ and al-Zubaydī 2013: 59-66). For instance, it mentions a new Qatabānic king who had ruled in almost the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, whose name is Ḥwf‘m Yhn‘(m) [bn] (‘) nrmr mlk Qtbn.

The people who had written down these inscriptions represent the different strata of the

Qatabāni community in Maryamah town; the civil, the religious, and the military; in other words, those people of Maryamah town were the rulers, the traders, the fighters, the public, and the craftsmen, etc.

The importance of Maryamah inscriptions were not just limited to what is mentioned above. They also mentioned a number of ancient Yemeni towns with which the residents of Maryamah had trade relations during the period between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD such as, Zfr (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 62/1), Rḥbtn (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 60/1), Šbwt (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 35/2), Šbmm (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 60/2), as well as other towns that were previously unknown in the ancient Yemeni inscriptions such as, Ḥykl̄n ‘dnm (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 59/1), Ḥṣwt, Mr‘t (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 57/1), Tbnw (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 59/1). In addition, they referred to many Qatabānic families which lived in Maryamah and contributed to constructing the town and enriching its history. Some of such well-known families are Brnt̄m (barānīt) from which most rulers of Maryamah (FB-Ḥawkam 6 = Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 29/1; Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 35/1); Dr’n (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 78); Sflyn (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 35/3; 45/3; 56/8); Ḥyw (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 84/2, etc. Regarding the tribes, some of them were mentioned such as the tribe of Bklm d-Mrymtm (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 35/4; 36/2), which is the most prominent one; d-Qbln (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 84/3); and Qwmn (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 51/1)<sup>(3)</sup>.

### Ḥawkam and Maryamah Town

The god Ḥawkam is closely related to Maryamah because he was its primary god. The residents of Maryamah gave him their vows and they considered him their local god. They built an important temple for him, which is located in the western part of the town; and it was known as Shab‘an “bytn šb‘n” (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 22//2).

Ḥawkam is a masculine name and it is

rhymed with (faw‘al), meaning “having a lot of wisdom; wise; the ruler”; it is indicated in the formula ‘Ḥawkam’ in many Semitic languages, including the Ancient Yemeni language (Beaston et al, 1982: 67; Gordon, 1965: 396; Hoftijzer and Jongeling, 1995: 371); and it derives from the root (Ḥkm); its adjective is (Ḥawkam). It was evident from the inscriptions of Maryamah, which the researcher dealt with that Ḥawkam was the main worshipped god of Maryamah town in Wadi Ḥarib, and that the land in which Maryamah and the surrounding regions are located, was known as the land of the god Ḥawkam. A number of prominent personages, who had many posts such as Priests, were serving him and also were taking care of his temple which was known by the name Shab‘an (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 24); and they managed the god’s properties and financial resources (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 8/2) such as collecting taxes, tithes and portions of crops, etc. There were also other prominent personages that were managing such estates and spending them in architectural works related to building, rehabilitation, and maintenance of Maryamah constructions such as, temples, towers, walls, and agricultural lands (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 8; Al-Ḥaj, 2015a: 94-96, 172-174).

The residents of Maryamah in Wadi Ḥarib continued worshipping such a god up to about the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, and perhaps quite to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, as indicated in some inscriptions (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 51; 56; 58).

In a previous study, a question was raised: What was the reason behind the recurrent presence of the god’s name (Ḥawkam) in Maryamah inscriptions; and why did Maryamah residents bestow that god in vows and all their devotions rather than the other gods of Qatabān? Even in some inscriptions in Maryamah, they considered his name as the second in priority,



after the god 'Aathtar and before the god 'Amm which was supposed to come directly after the god 'Athtar (Ḥaj-al-'Adī 9/5). In other times, He came before the 'Athtar (UAM 523/5). In the same line, another question was raised with regard to the presence of the name god Ḥawkam with the title Mukarribs of Qatabān who named themselves as first-born of the two gods, 'Anbai and Ḥawkam (RES 3880), although he is a local god and the home of worshipping him is Maryamah in Wadi Ḥarīb, distant from the Qatabānic capital (Tmn').

At that time, the researcher hypothesized that the interpretation of such topics comes by searching again in the data of the political and religious constitution of the Qatabān Kingdom through the facts in the new inscriptions, specifically the inscriptions of Maryamah that mentioned the god Ḥawkam and his importance, in addition to other inscriptions such as the early Sabaean inscription (DAI 2005-50) dated to the time of the Sabaean Mukarrib Yaṭa' 'amr Watar bin Yakrubmalik whose rule was certainly in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC (Nebes, 2007: 25-33; 2016, 9-38). This inscription sheds light on the beginning of political and religious constitution of Qataban Kingdom; it does not mention Qataban as a kingdom, as indicated in inscription (Gl 1000 A=R 3945) from the era of (Karib'il Watar), but as territories where the rule of some of its kings was just to Timna'. This was the same situation for the other Qatabānic entities lately known within the Qatabān Kingdom, that were kingdoms of territories, each had its own king, main god.

From my viewpoint, after a period of time the Qatabaanians were within a confederation that included the towns, the people and the gods, and they selected a national god for that confederation, "'Amm" and a capital which was

located in the important place; Timna' was one of them and perhaps was the powerful and most important town due to its location in the middle, i.e. on the ancient trade route. As a result of such political and religious confederation, the god Ḥawkam became one of the main group of Qatabanian gods and within the title of its rulers: Mukarribs Qatabān: mkrb Qtbn wkl wld 'm w 'wsn wKhđ wDhsm wTbnw bkr 'nby wHwkm... (MuB 673 = CSAI I, 18; MQ-HK 11 = CSAI I, 38).

This confirms the hypothesis that the god Ḥawkam was mentioned in early Qatabanian inscriptions written in boustrophedon which was found in Maryamah (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 24), which indicates that the appearance of the god Ḥawkam in the collection of Qatabān gods was early, at the same time of the appearance of the god 'Amm; and that Maryamah had been a main religious center for worshipping such a god.

The residents of Maryamah called their god Ḥawkam the title Nābaṭ (Ḥwkm Nabṭ). The oldest reference to this formula in Maryamah inscriptions dates back to almost the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC (FB-Ḥawkam 1 B/4): sqnyw Ḥwkm Nbṭ walhy bytn Šb'n ...; but his temple was known by the name Shab'ān located in the western side of the Maryamah town; and it was one of the most iconic Qatabānic religious constructions in Wadi Ḥarīb and it was as a large religious collection where other Qatabānic secondary gods were worshipped, beside the god Ḥawkam as is evident from the well-known formula: sqnyw Ḥwkm Nbṭ w 'lhy bytn S<sup>2</sup>b 'n... (Ḥaj al-'Adī 4/2-3), and the formula: wbḤwkm wbalhy bytn Šb'n in the inscription (MuB 523/5) which is dated in the era of Shahr Hilal Yuhan'im, king of Qatabān (the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC)<sup>(4)</sup>.

## The history of Maryamah town in light of its Musnad inscriptions

The Qatabanian inscriptions that the researcher found in Maryamah town, during the preliminary survey, and which had been previously studied, indicate that their history dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century BC according to the contents of such inscriptions written in boustrophedon which are similar to the early Musnad inscriptions found in Timna' and the remaining towns of ancient Yemen, in their writing style. The most important of these inscriptions are (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 24; 25; 26).

By classifying and studying all inscriptions of Maryamah, the researcher is able to identify different time periods for those inscriptions, helping to know the preliminary historical chronology of Maryamah. What follows are the three periods, starting in the 8<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> century BC and ending in about the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD:

### 1. The first period (The 8<sup>th</sup> – the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC):

The system of Musnad writing had been done in a number of periods, according to the alphabet forms and the style of writing it (palaeography); the most ancient one is the system known to scholars of ancient Yemeni inscriptions as the boustrophedon. It is the system of writing the first line of an inscription from right to left, then the opposite, i.e. from left to right, and so on until the end of the inscription; while there are other inscriptions related to the end of this period, in which the writing system is just from right to left.

This type of inscriptions had been found in some towns of Qatabān; but they are a few, compared to the Kingdoms of Saba' and Ma'īn. What distinguishes the inscriptions of this period in Qatabān is that they are small in

size and they were written on stones in which people did not consider the form and color when selected, and mending the surfaces of such stones; the forms of their alphabets were in uniform and they were not decorated; their contents were very brief and were limited to some names of the rulers of Qatabān Kingdom and the main gods.

Five inscriptions which were found in Maryamah date back to the beginning of this early period, which are: (Ḥaj-al-'Adī 24, 25, 26, 27, 63), two of them were written in boustrophedon which were during the period between the 8<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century BC (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 24, 25); while the other three inscriptions were written (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 26, 27, 63) from right to left in regular fonts with clear trough, their date perhaps dates back to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> period of the Maryamah history (6<sup>th</sup> century BC); the alphabets of the inscriptions in this period, which were found in Maryamah, are characterized by their simple writing, not being decorated, and by the difference of the direction of their alphabet writing (Fig 4).

From the inscriptions of this period, which were found in Maryamah (Ḥaj- al- 'Adī 24, 25, 26, 27, 63), an important historical presumption is deduced that the history of Maryamah goes back to the first half of the first millennium BC, like the history of the other towns of Qatabān Kingdom that are located on the ancient trade route. In addition, from the inscriptions of this period, especially those written in boustrophedon (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 24, 25), some of the most important gods of Qatabān could be identified which were worshipped during such a period in Maryamah, specifically the two gods (Ḥawkam and 'Amm, the god 'Athtar (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 26), as well as some prominent personages that were rulers at that time in Maryamah and

perhaps in Qatabān Kingdom (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 25/2) which were not previously mentioned in Qatabanian inscriptions.

## 2. The second period (The 5<sup>th</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> century BC):

The corpus of inscriptions from Maryamah town that can be assigned to this period are: (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 21; 22; 23; 28; 29; 30; 31; 32; 33; 34; 35; 36; 37; 38; 39; 40; 41; 42; 43; 44; 54; 55; 64; 65; 66; 67; 74; 85; Atlal; MuB 523 ; ATM 866; Cox 4; FB-al-Ādī 1; FB-al-Ādī 2; Āl Ṣabāḥ LNS 1756 M/4).

The inscriptions of this period were characterized by their big size, their abundance, the diversity of their topics; writing most of them on several types of polished stones such as limestones, marble and alabaster, etc., in addition to bronze which is one of the most important materials of such a significant historical period (Ḥaj-al-‘Adī 28; 29; 35; Cox 4). What distinguishes the alphabetic forms of this period is that they were written in a uniform way, clear in trough, with no clear geometric decorations, especially in the inscriptions dating the beginning of such a period (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 1; 2; 28; 29). They also had simple decorations at the beginnings and ends of the alphabets which started to clearly appear in the inscriptions that dated the middle of this period (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 30; 31; 32; 33) and the end of the period as in the inscriptions (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 21; 35; 36) dated in the time of Shahr Yagul Yuhargib, King of

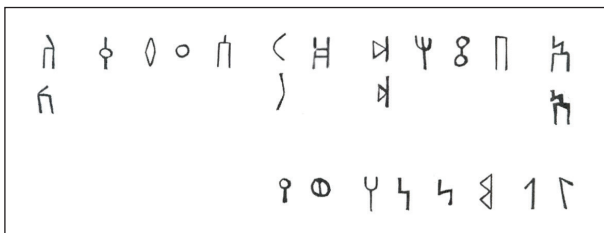


Fig 4: Forms of the letters of the first period in Maryamah town inscriptions.

Qatabān whose rule was perhaps in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.

In addition, the most important features of this period might be the presence of the formula of praying and imploring to the gods, the Qatabānic god ‘Amm is the most important one, then come the two gods ‘Anbay and Ḥawkam (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 28/12-13; 29/8-9). The name of the god ‘Athtar often comes in such a formula, whether preceding the name of the god ‘Amm (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 30/4; 35/3; 36/5), or following his name (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 29). It is a formula that was related to the period of the political and economic flourishing of Qatabān Kingdom that lasted from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC to the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, i.e. to the period of the rule of the last Mukarrib of Qataban called Shahr Yagul Yuhargib (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 21; 35).

The inscriptions of this period are related to the history of Qatabān during the period of political stability and economic flourishing, getting rid of depending on Sabaeans, and the inclusion in a union that included the towns, people and gods. Maryamah town and its people and god Ḥawkam was one of the most significant members in that confederation. That interprets, at that time, the appearance of the name of the god Ḥawkam among the titles of kings of Qatabān Kingdoms. Additionally, such a period can be described as one of the most spotless periods in the history of Maryamah, in particular, and the towns of Qataban, in general. During that period the ruling of Qatabān kings, after they got rid of the Sabaeans dominance, extended to the south and southwest highlands by the Gulf of Aden and Mocha port for the purpose of sea trading (Aqabat Bura’ 1; Ismail). Its kings were named as the long Royal title (MuB 673): mkrb Qtbn wkl wld ‘m w’wsn wKḥd wDhsm wTbnw bkr ‘nby wḤwkm.

This period inscriptions, which were found in Maryamah town, can be divided into three historical phases:

**1. The first phase:**

These inscriptions are related to the beginning of such a phase (the 5th - the 4th century BC), and the alphabets of this phase inscriptions are such as: (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 1; 28; 29; Āl Ṣabāḥ LNS 1756 M/4). They are characterized by their right angles and are not decorated, and they became more evident and more upright (Fig 5). The beautiful bronze inscriptions are considered to be one of the most important characteristics of such a phase due to link to the beginning of the political and economic flourishing of Qatabān Kingdom.

**2. The second phase:**

The history of this phase can be dated to the middle of the second period (the 3rd – 2nd century BC). The alphabetic forms of this period in Maryamah (Fig 6) are characterized by their accurate uniformity and clarity, in their simple decoration at the beginnings and ends of the alphabets (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 23; 30; 31; 32; 33).

**3. The third phase:**

This phase dates back to the 1st century BC, during the period of ruling by Qatabanian kings from the family Yad‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im (the Third). The inscriptions of such a phase, which are (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 8; 9; 22; 35; 36; 39; 40; 41; 42; 43) are an extension of the previous phase inscriptions. The similarity between both phases, with regard to the forms of the alphabets, is quite clear, especially when engraving the letters h, t, b, n; but one can distinguish some letters in increasing of circling and decorating them and in making them slimmer than the letters preceding them. This is evident in the angles of the lower letters as in (b, a, k, s) which

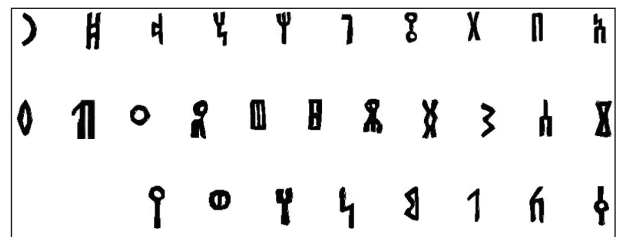


Fig 5: Forms of the letters of the 1st phase of the 2nd period in Maryamah inscriptions.

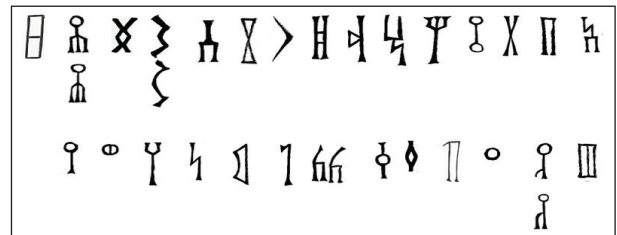


Fig 6: Forms of the letters of the 2nd phase, of the 2nd period in Maryamah inscriptions.



Fig 7: Forms of the letters of the 3rd phase, of the 2nd period in Maryamah inscriptions.

became transverse and very close to each other towards the inside, to the extent that the letters seem as if they are closed from the lower side; the engraving of the letter (T) takes a different form from that of the previous phase in some inscriptions (Fig 7).

**3. The third period (The 1st – the 3rd century AD):**

Its evidences are around fifty inscriptions in Maryamah such as: (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 45; 46; 47; 48; 49; 50; 51; 52; 53; 56; 57; 58; 59; 60; 61; 62= Ja 2898; Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 68; 69; 70; 71; 72; 73; 75; 76; 77; 78; 79; 80; 81; 82; 83; FB-Ḥawkam 3; Maraqtan-Qatabanic 1.

The inscriptions of this period are characterized by the big size of their letters, the

diversity of their topics, the writing of most of them on several types of carved stones such as limestones, marble, alabaster, bronze, etc. What distinguishes this period inscriptions is that, the general nature of the pattern of their letters is in clear decoration and circling. The upper and lower angles of the letters are made acute ending with big and clear transverse feet at a high level of accuracy, coming out of the letter body towards the right and left (Fig 8). (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 51; 62; 79).

The inscriptions of this period are related to the beginning of political and economic weakness of Qatabān Kingdom and the decrease of its rulers’ influence, especially after the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD which was followed by considerable political and social changes which included most towns of Qatabān Kingdom. That took place following the emergence of Saba’ and dū-Raydan state and the shifting of the center of political weight towards the towns of the south and southwest highlands that overlook the Gulf of Aden and Mocha Port. As a result, a lot of Qatabānian people displaced to the towns that were active in trade and politically and economically stable, including the people of Maryamah.

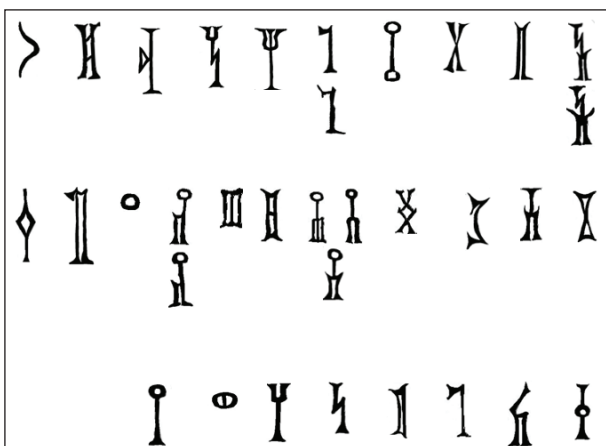


Fig 8: Forms of the letters of the 3rd Period of Maryamah Inscriptions.

### History of Maryamah town based on its Musnad inscriptions dated by the names of Qatabān kings:

The dated Qatabānian inscriptions, which were found in Maryamah town, gave the names of a number of Qatabān kings. By tracing the periods of the history of these kings, it turns out that a preliminary chronological order of Maryamah town can be arrived at; it started from around the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC until the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Below is a depiction of the kings of each period, separately:

#### Kings of the first period: The 7<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> century BC:

##### Sumhuyada’

The Qatabānic inscription (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 25), which was found in Maryamah town, is one of the most ancient historical evidences that mark such a period. It is dated back to around the 8<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> century BC. It is a dedicatory inscription written in boustrophedon (Figures 9, 10), bearing the name of a Qatabānic king who was previously undefined Smhyd’.

1. ← [... ...] / b‘m / wb
2. → smhyd’ [... ...]

#### Translation

1. ← [... ...] by (the authority) ‘Amm and by
2. → Sumhuyada’ [... ...]

Although it is not known who Smhyd’, indicated in the aforementioned inscription, is and why he was implored by the inscription creator after the name of the main Qatabānic god ‘Amm during that early period in the history of Maryamah. However, it was certainly known that Smhyd’ was one of the first Qatabanian kings who founded Qatabān Kingdom in its early periods; he was also probably the founder of the ancient Maryamah town because he was



Fig. 9 - Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 25.

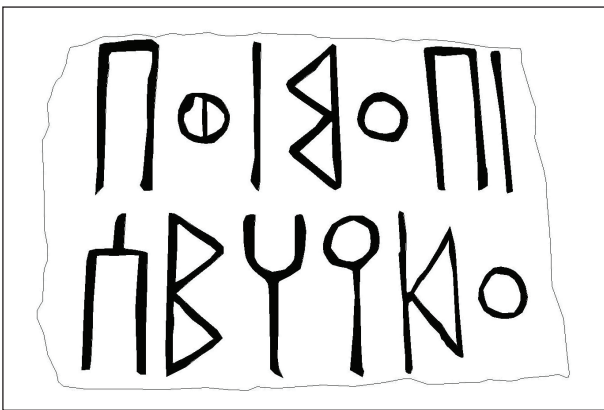


Fig. 10 - Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 25

a local king (qayl) who belongs to Qatabān sovereignty. But mentioning his name directly after the name of the Qatabānic god ‘Amm makes us rule out that he was a (qayl). The Qatabanian inscriptions which will be explored from the time of Smhyd‘ can prove these facts or reverse them (al-Hajj, 2017: 74-77).

Though the above mentioned inscription is a short Qatabānic one, it includes significant historical information: it is one of the most ancient Qatabanian inscriptions which was written in the script of the early period in the history of Qatabān (boustrophedon). It is a period that has its evidences in the different kingdoms of Ancient Yemen. But its evidence in Qatabān Kingdom is not considerably mentioned.

In addition, this inscription is one of the

most ancient Qatabanian Musnad texts which were originally from the Ancient Maryamah. This confirms that Maryamah is an ancient town and that its emergence was accompanied by the emergence of the towns of east Wadi such as Timna’ and other towns in Qatabān Kingdom.

Other historical evidences for the ancient history of Maryamah are: The Qatabanian inscription (Ḥaj-al-‘Adī 24) which is a dedicatory inscription written in boustrophedon, dates back to around the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. (Fig.11, 12); it was found in the temple of the god Ḥawkam located in the west side of Maryamah, and it is housed by a resident of Hajar- al- ‘Adī village.

**Ḥaj-al-‘Adī 24**

- 1. ← [... .. r](š)ww / ḥwkm / sqny [... ..]
- 2. → [... ..] dr’krb / wkl/ ’wl[dsmy ... ..]

**Translation**

- 1. ← [... ..] priests of Ḥawkam dedicated to [... ..]
- 2. → [... ..] Darākrib and all their children [... ..]

Darākrib is perhaps the name of one of the dedicated of the inscription to the god Ḥawkam as he was one of its priests, or perhaps the name of the ruler in Maryamah town at the time of writing the inscription.

This inscription is of a special historical and religious importance in that, in addition to the inscription (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 25), it is one of the oldest Qatabānic texts that were discovered in Maryamah; moreover, it is the oldest historical text which carried the name of Qatabānic god (Ḥawkam) during that early period in the history of Qatabān (the 8<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century BC). It is also one of the important historical documents for writing

about the history of ancient Maryamah in that, it indicates that such a town, from its evolution, was a Qatabānic town, and that the relation between the town and its god called Ḥawkam, on one hand, and the rest of towns and gods of Qatabān Kingdom, on the other, took place in a later period, in a confederation that included the people, the towns and the gods of Qatabān, and the name of the god Ḥawkam became one of the titles of kings of Qatabān.

**Kings of the second period: The 5<sup>th</sup> - the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC:**

As mentioned above, the Qatabanian inscriptions found in Maryamah, which are related to this period, indicate that there had been a political flourishing and economic activity in Maryamah at that time. Most of the inscriptions of this period found in Maryamah have dedicatory pattern and are written on stone slabs and beautiful bronze plaques (Ḥaj-al-‘Adī 1; 2; 2; 3; 22; 28; 29; 35) reflecting a bright period of

Maryamah history that lasted up to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. There had been other inscriptions that mention the architectural flourishing in Maryamah at that time; and extension of religious and civil constructions; and the rehabilitation of the agricultural lands that surround Maryamah; and supporting the towers of the town’s wall (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 8; 9; 54; 55). In that period, the god Ḥawkam played a vital role in financing the expenses of some of such rehabilitations and architectural works following the gains and the diverse jobs of the god’s priests. What follows are the most prominent kings of this period, who were mentioned in Maryamah inscriptions, are:

**Damār‘ali, King of Qatabān**

He was one of the Qatabān kings who ruled in around the 6<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, i.e. at the beginning of the real or actual expansion of Qatabān Kingdom. He was mentioned in many Qatabanian inscriptions, described as the father of King Yada‘’ab Yagul (Ja 2361; MuB 457). He probably carried the title Mukkrrib, and he was one of the first kings of Qatabān who counteracted the wars of Saba’ for expansion and he fortified a number of Qatabān towns. He was mentioned in a significant bronze inscription of Maryamah (Āl Ṣabāḥ LNS 1756 M)<sup>(5)</sup> in the context of the inscriptions makers who were: ‘l’ws, Hwf ‘tt, and Nbt‘m who were the sons of ‘byd‘ bn Ṣw‘n, regarding the devoting of themselves, their sons and properties for the god Ḥawkam, as Ḥawkam protected their father ‘byd‘ when Damār‘ali, king of Qatabān, entrusted him to build a wall for Maryamah town and fortify that wall, and when the god Ḥawkam protected and saved the ‘l’ws, Hwf ‘tt, and Nbt‘m in the war between Saba’ and Qatabān, and in all the duties which they were demanded by their master Yd‘b Ygl, king of Qatabān and the leader of his army Ydkrmlk bn Dr’n bn Ṣḥr in the days of war and peace.

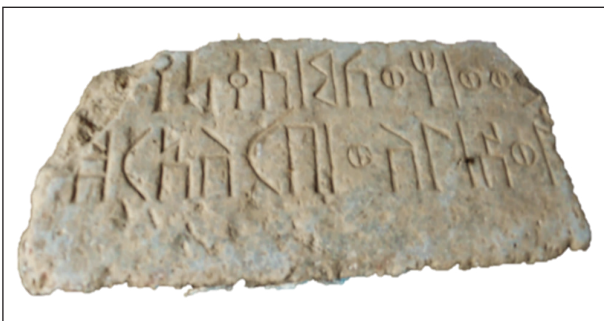


Fig. 11- Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 24.

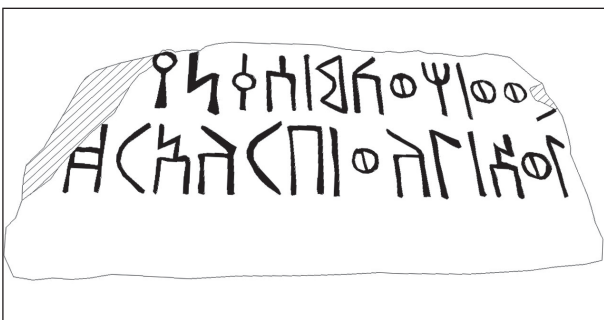


Fig. 12- Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 24.

**Āl Šabāḥ LNS 1756 M**

1. 'l'ws w-hwf'tt w-nbt'm bnw 'byd' bn šw'n  
sqnyw ḥwkm 'nfshmw w-'dnhm
2. w w-bnyhmw 'l'z w-'mdḥr w-tb'krb  
w-'mšbm w-'b'ns w-lḥy'tt w-nbt'l
3. y w-'lwhb w-'lḍr' w-kl 'wldhmw ywm swfy  
ḥwkm 'dn 'bsm 'byd' b
4. tḥtg ḥrgs dmr'ly mlk qtbn lgn' w-'zzm gn'  
hgrn mrymtm w-y
5. wm swfy ḥwkm 'nfs w-'dn 'l'ws w-hwf'tt  
w-nbt'm bdr sb' w-kl
6. mwštm swštm w-ḥrg mr'sm yd'ab ygl mlk  
qtbn w-ḥwls ydmrmlk
7. d-dr'n bn šhr bdrim w-slmm b'm w-b 'nby  
w-b ḥwkm w-b dt-šntm w-b d
8. t- zhrn w-b dt- rḥbn w-b mr'hmw yd'ab ygl  
mlk qtbn w-b ydmrmlk d-dr'n

**Translation**

1. 'Īl'aws and Hawfa'att and Nabaṭ'amm, sons of 'Abyada' of the family Šaw'ān dedicated to Ḥawkam their lives and their faculties
2. and their sons 'il'azz and 'Ammḍaḥar and Tubba'karib and 'Ammšabam and 'Ab'anas and Luḥay'att and Nabaṭ'aly
3. and 'ilwahab and 'Īḍar' and all their sons, when Ḥawkam saved the faculties of their father 'Abyada'
4. when the king of Qatban Damar'aly commanded him to wall and strengthen the wall of town Maryamah
5. and when Ḥawkam saved lives and faculties of 'il'aws and Hawfa'att and Nabaṭ' during the war of Saba', and in every
6. mission they were sent and commanded by their lord Yada'ab Yagul king of Qataban and his leader Yaḍmuralik

7. of the family Dar'an, son of Šahr, in war and peace. By the authority of 'Amm, and 'Anbay, and Ḥawkam, and dāt Šantam, and dāt
8. Zahrān, and dāt Raḥban, and by their lord Yada'ab Yagul king of Qataban, and by Yaḍmuralik of the family Dar'ān.

The content of this inscription can be compared with that of Al-'awd Mountain inscription (RES 3858) which mentioned the events of such an internecine war that took place between kings of Saba': yd'li byn, Smh'li ynf, and yṭ'mr wtr on one hand, and King of Qatabān yd'ab ygl bn dmr'li, on the other.

**Yada'ab Yagul son of Damar'ali, King of Qatabān**

He was one of the most important kings of Qatabān in the 6<sup>th</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> century BC (MQ-Bayt aṣ Ṣuraymī 6/8). He had fought wars against Saba' and he could recoup the Qatabanian lands that were dominated by Saba' in the south and southwest highlands (RES 3858) which were latter known as the lands of Himyar<sup>(6)</sup>. He also took the title Mukarrib (MuB 457). This Qatabānian king was mentioned in three dedicatory inscriptions in Maryamah town, all of them are bronze (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 1/1; Atlal 'Āl Šabāḥ LNS 1756 M)<sup>(7)</sup>.

The inscription (Atlal) was presented by people who belong to the family Abgl. In line 9 of such inscription, Yada'ab Yagul, king of Qatabān is mentioned; but it is more certain that he was mentioned by his father as well his son yd'ab ygl mlk qtbn. It is also believed that he was mentioned by the ruler of Maryamah at that time who belongs to the family Brntm, the most well-known family that lived in Maryamah<sup>(8)</sup>. Most of the rulers of Maryamah town were descended from such a family.



The inscription (Āl Ṣabāḥ LNS 1756 M) is also dedicated to the god Ḥawkam by people belonging to the family Ṣaw'an in Maryamah. In this inscription, Yada'ab Yagul, king of Qatabān was mentioned in the context of their participating in the war against Saba'; their accomplishing of the duties that their king Yada'ab Yagul, king of Qatabān, and his leader Yaḍmarmalik Ḍar'an mandated them during the times of war and peace.

But the inscription (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 1) was devoted by a resident of Maryamah who belongs to Baḡir family, to the Goddess ǧat Ṣaḥran, one of the most deities in Maryamah. He was also, in addition to being a historian by the name of Qatabānic king Yada'ab Yagul, mentioned by the ruler of Maryamah at that time, who was named 'il'aws who belonged to Baraniṭ family. To the best knowledge of the researcher, this is the oldest mentioning of the formula qayl in Qatabanian inscriptions, which indicates that Maryamah had known the system of qayl in the early times, i.e. during the period when such a regime in the Sabaeen highlands (al-Hajj, 2015: 71-105).

It seems that Maryamah, during the reign of the two kings Ḍamār'alī and his son Yada'ab Yagul, was one of the most important towns in Qatabān, if not being the most important town ever. That is because the evidences of inscriptions, which belong to such a period, from Timna' town are perhaps virtually unavailable, unlike Maryamah which offered valuable historical evidences on this period. This makes one wonder if Maryamah had become a second or temporary capital for Qatabān kings; otherwise why did Ḍamār'alī, King of Qatabān, mention that he fortified it by constructing a wall? Was it because it was near the Sabaeen lands, in anticipation of any attack

that might occur from Saba' kings; or because it was the most important stronghold for the Qatabān kings and rulers at that time?

### Šahr Yagul and his son Wahb'amm, the two kings of Qatabān

They are Qatabānian kings who perhaps ruled during the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. These two kings were mentioned in one of Maryamah inscriptions (FB-Ḥawkam 7/7) which is a dedicatory inscription that consists of seven lines, and it is written on a bronze plaque (Bron, 2013:192-193, fig. 6). This inscription was gifted to the god Ḥawkam by some people who belong to Ba'n family that lived in Maryamah. This inscription mentioned a new Qatabānian king unknown in earlier Qatabānic inscriptions. He was King Wahb'amm, whose father, Šahr Yagul appointed him to take the reign during that flourished period in the history of Qatabān wbm'r ḥmw Šhr Ygl wbnhw Whb'm mlkw Qtbn. The Qatabānic inscriptions, which will be discovered in the future from Maryamah, shed light on the period of the rule by such a king and the political and social situations in that time.

But his father, Šahr Yagul son of Yada'ab left a number of Qatabānic legislative and construction inscriptions, which were found in Wadi Bayḥān and Wadi Ḥarīb, that reflect the social and economic reality at that time. The inscriptions also indicate the achievements of the King such as, the agricultural and architectural works and legislations regulating the Qatabānian residents (Ja 2366; RES 3689; 3692), e.g. the inscription which was found on the gate of Timna'.

### Yada'ab Ḍubyān, King of Qatabān

He was also a Qatabānian king mentioned in Maryamah inscriptions, specifically in

dedicatory inscription (Cox 4/7): w-b Yd 'b Dbyn mlk Qtbn w-b š'bs w-'qwlš Bklm d-Mrymtm. It is an inscription written on a bronze plaque; and it was devoted to the god Ḥawkam by a resident of Maryamah town, who belonged to 'Abrān family, one of the important families that lived in Maryamah town<sup>(9)</sup>. It is believed that such a king was Yada''ab Dūbyān Ben Šahr, Mukarrib of Qatabān who ruled in around the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Arbach, 2005-2006: 121; Gajda, al-Hajj, and Schiettecatte, 2009: 169-170). He left a number of Musnad inscriptions (MuB 673; 'Aqabat Bura'1) that mentioned that the King took the long royal title: mkrb Qtbn w-kl wld'm w-'wsn w-Kḥd w-Dhsm w-Tbnw w-kl Yrf' š'ms w-'ymns. During his reign, Qatabān reached its utmost flourishing in that, its lands expanded to the Straits of Bab el Mandab, which combined its dominance on land and sea trade.

It is noticed that the content of the inscription (Cox 4), in its text, formula, and the reason for devoting to god, is similar to the contents of the bronze inscriptions that dated back to the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> period of Maryamah history (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 1; 85). This makes it possible that it dated back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC rather than to the time of Yada''ab Dūbyān Yuhan'im who ruled in the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.

### Yada''ab Dūbyān Yuhargib and his Son Hawf'att, the Two Kings of Qatabān:

These two kings, who ruled in around the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, were mentioned in a Maryamah inscription (Ḥaj-al-'Adi 2 = ATM 867). It is a construction inscription that immortalized the undertaking of a person from dū-Ya'wd family that lived in Maryamah that he built many walls connected to the wall of Maryamah which extends from the dū-Saḥari gate up to Yahr'il tower, by mandate from his lord, King Yada''ab

Dūbyān Yuhargib, king of Qatabān (Figures 13, 14). The inscription (Ḥaj- al-'Adi 2 = ATM 867) is similar to the Qatabānic construction inscription MQ Ḥinū az-Zurayr 1, in content and date. It mentions that King Yada''ab Dūbyān Yuhargib had built defensive fortifiers in Haribat town (Ḥinū az-Zurayr) which is located near Maryamah.

This makes one wonder why king Yada''ab Dūbyān Yuhargib fortified parts of the wall of both Haribat and Maryamah towns. Is it because they were located in the first contact line with Saba'? It was known that, in that time, Qatabān Kingdom was highly flourished as its geographical area had expanded towards the north and west, which brought about its clash with Saba' Kingdom<sup>(10)</sup>.

### ATM 867= Ḥaj-al- 'Adi 2

1. wf'tt bn Ḥm'tt d-Y'd tqdm lmr's Yd''b D
2. byn mlk Qtbn kl mhlk w-mbny ḥms šḥfm bn ḥ
3. lfn d-Šḥrym lfs' 'd mḥfdn Yhr'ī w-bny mḥf
4. dn Yhr'ī b'm w-b'nby w-bdt Rḥbn w-b Yd
5. 'b Dbyn Yhr'gb w-b bns Hwf'tt mlkw Qtbn

### Translation

1. Hawfā'att son Ḥamā'att of the family dū-Ya'ūd undertook for his lord Yada''ab
2. Dūbyān king of Qatabān realization and construction all five walls (which are included in the wall of Maryamah); that is from
3. the gate dū-Saḥari extending up to the tower Yahr'il, and he built the tower
4. Yahr'il; by 'Amm, by 'Anbay, by dāt Raḥban, and by Yada
5. ''ab Dūbyān Yuhargib and his son Hawfā'att, the two kings of Qatabān

### Yada‘‘ab Ḍubyān and his son Šahr, the two kings of Qatabān:

These two kings were mentioned in a Maryamah town inscription (FB-Ḥawkam 2). It is dedicatory and is written on a bronze plaque (Bron, 2009: 122-124, fig 3) dating the 2<sup>nd</sup> period of the history of Maryamah. This inscription reflects an economic and political period that the people in Maryamah had witnessed at that time. It is dated in the time of these two kings of Qatabān Yada‘‘ab Ḍubyān and his son Šahr. It is devoted for god Ḥawkam by a resident of Maryamah, who belongs to Sanah family after he got the agreement of Qatabān king Yada‘‘ab Ḍubyān to take the reign as a ruler of dū-Qablān tribe which is one of the tribes of Maryamah town as mentioned in the inscription (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 84/3).

We can compare the royal formula Yd ‘b Ḍbyn w-bnhw Šhr mlkw Qtn which is mentioned in the inscription (FB- Ḥawkam 2) with its identical formula in the Qatabanian inscriptions (MQ-HK 7/5; RES 4094) which dates back to the same period which is between the 4<sup>th</sup>- 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC rather than to the period of the rule of Yada‘‘ab Ḍubyān and his son Šahr Hilal at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC due to some factors as follows:

The content of the inscription (FB-Ḥawkam 2) is similar to that of those bronze inscriptions found in Maryamah, which date to the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> period of its history (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 1; Atlal; Cox 4). If the inscription (FB-Ḥawkam 2) dated back to the phase Yada‘‘ab Ḍubyān and his Son Šahr Hilal, the formula of devotion of the inscription would change, and so the name of the god Ḥawkam would come after the known formula sqny Ḥwkm w’lhy bytn Šb ‘n mentioned in the inscription (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 22/2) of the time of Šahr Hilal Yuhan‘im



Fig. 13- ATM 867= Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 2. Photo: Ataq Museum Team.

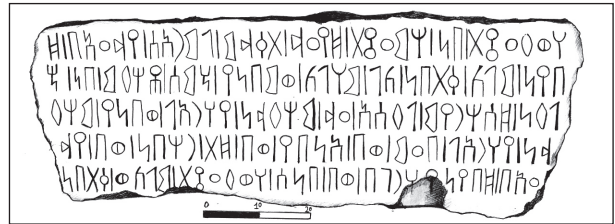


Fig. 14- ATM 867= Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 2.

son Yada‘‘ab Ḍubyān. This makes us suppose that the history of the inscription (FB-Ḥawkam 2) dates back to a more ancient period (the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC). That can be noticed through the style of writing the letters of the inscriptions (palaeography) that date back to the time of Yada‘‘ab Ḍubyān Yuhan‘im king of Qatabān (TC 995; Arbach-Sayūn1) and the paleography of the inscriptions that date back to the time of royal formula Yada‘‘ab Ḍubyān Yuhan‘im (FB-Ḥawkam 2; MQ-HK 7/5; RES 4094).

In addition, the name of the temple dū-Taw‘arān and the religious jobs included in the inscription (FB-Ḥawkam 2) were mentioned in the stone dedicatory inscriptions, later found in the temple of the god Ḥawkam (under study) which perhaps date back to around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC as is evident from the style of writing their letters.

### Yada‘‘abb Ġaylān, King of Qatabān

He is one of the Qatabānian kings whose rule was perhaps in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. He was mentioned in the inscription (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 23/3-4) which is an incomplete dedicatory inscription, its source is the temple of the god

Ḥawkam Nabaṭ. It is known that the Qatabānian King Yada'ʿab Ġaylān son of Fāri' Karib had got the short-term title Mukarrib (MQ-HK 11): mkrb Qtbn wkl wld 'm bkr 'nby wḤwkm. During his reign, the palace called (Ya'ūd) located in Maryamah had a significant status as it was one of the most important palaces where the rulers, from Barāniṭ family, lived. It was mentioned in the end of the inscription (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 23/4), specifically after the name of king Yada'ʿab Ġaylān. That is affirmed in the text of the construction inscription (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 55 = Hajr-al-'Adī 1) which was mentioned in the context of the works in extension and in the raise of a well called (Rawah) located in the yard of Ya'ud Palace (al-Hasani, 2012: 338; al-Hajj, 2017: 222).

### **Hawfa'amm Yuhan'im son of 'Anmār, King of Qatabān**

He is also one of the kings of Qatabān who were mentioned in Maryamah inscriptions, ATM 866/1<sup>(11)</sup>, which was perhaps dated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC according to the style of inscription letters. It was the only inscription that mentioned King Hawfa'amm Yuhan'im son of 'Anmār. That king had not been previously mentioned in what was known as the published Qatabanian inscriptions. In the future, the inscriptions of Maryamah might uncover other inscriptions related to the time of such a king, which will help us to identify the period of his reign; and if he was one of the Qatabān kings who belong to the family Yada'ʿab Ḍubyān Yuhan'im or from another Qatabānian family that was in Wadi Ḥarib.

### **Šahr Hilal Yuhan'im, King of Qatabān**

He was one of the most prominent kings of Qatabān who took the reign in around the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. He left a number of Qatabanian inscriptions of his time (CIAS

47.10/r 3/c 82/1). He was singly mentioned in two dedicatory inscriptions of Maryamah (Ḥaj- al-Adi 5/4; MuB 523/7), which were written on slabs made of marble and they were devoted to god Ḥawkam in his temple Šab'ān. The inscription, (MuB 523/8), mentioned the ruler Dayran of the family Barāniṭ. While the other (Ḥaj-al-'Adi 5) indicates the good trade relations between the people of Maryamah, on one hand, and the people of the middle Arabian Peninsula, on the other, during the time of Šahr Hilal Yuhan'im. The inscription mentioned the god dū-Samāwī, god of Najran, and Kahl, god of Qaryat al-Faw in the middle Arabian Peninsula. This indicates that the Qatabānians had combined between land trading and sea trading (Ismail) during the time of King Šahr Hilal Yuhan'im. That was really confirmed by the early Mukarribs of Qatabān who could dominate the south regions overlooking the Gulf of Aden and Mocha Port and who take the long royal title.

### **Šahr Hilal Yuhan'im and his son Hawfa'amm, the two kings of Qatabān:**

King Šahr Hilal Yuhan'im had involved his son Hawfa'amm Yuhan'im in the rule according to the fact of a number of Qatabanian inscriptions (CIAS 47.10/r 3/c 82/1). They were both mentioned together in one of the important inscriptions of Maryamah town (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 22/7-8). It was a dedicatory inscription; the residents of Hajar- al-'Adī took it from the temple of god Ḥawkam Nabaṭ, known as Šaba'an (Plaques 14-15).

The dedicator of the inscription is the ruler Yaṭa', qayl of Bakīl tribe, and some leaders of Maryamah town of the family Ḥayāw. They devoted their inscriptions, in addition to the bronze statue, to the god Ḥawkam and the gods of the temple Šab'ān from the tenth that they

had to pay for their spoils of war, which they took from Ḥaḍramout when they helped the King of Ḥaḍramawt Yada' 'ab Ġaylān in the war waged on him and Šabwah town, by the rebels of Yuhbaer and other Ḥaḍramitic tribes, by a command from their master Šahr Hilal and his son, Hawfa'amm, kings of Qatabān.

The content of the inscription shows that a number of new historical data were known, which are related to that time such as: Qatabān Kingdom during the time of Šahr Hilal and his son Hawfa'amm Yuhan'im still enjoyed considerable influence and political stability, unlike what was happening in Ḥaḍramawt during the time of its King Yada' 'ab Ġaylān. The text also shows that the rulers and leaders of Maryamah had a vital role in supporting such an influence and stability, because it was described as the town of the rulers and the place of traders from Bakīl ḍu-Maryamah tribe.

Kings of Qatabān also maintained the stability of Ḥaḍramout Kingdom and for the long-ruling of its king Yada' 'ab Ġaylān owing to the shared economic interests represented in earnings on ancient trade route which runs through all the towns of Qatabān in the east Wadis, and basically coming from Šabwah town, the capital town of frankincense and incense and the center of trade caravans. So both Kings of Ḥaḍramawt and Qatabān took part in suppressing such tribal rebels and in subduing Šabwah.

A significant data that the inscription (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 22) provided us is its confirming that the war which is mentioned in the inscription (Arbach-Sayūn 1) was not between Ḥaḍramawt and Qatabān, but it was rather for advocating and supporting the King of Ḥaḍramawt (Yada' 'ab Ġaylān) against a number of Ḥaḍramawt tribes revolting against him (al-Hajj, 2014: 22-136).

### Šahr Yagul Yuhargib, King of Qatabān:

He is one of the later kings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> period mentioned in Maryamah town inscriptions. He is the last Mukarribi of Qatabān, from the family Yada' 'ab Ḍubyān Yuhan'im (Be 9). The period of his reign was around the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC; and he might have been so up to the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. During his time, Qatabān enjoyed a considerable flourishing and active political and commercial stability. Adding to that, is the presence of legislative authority regulating many jobs which were contemporary to such a political activity and stability, and dealing with a lot of social and economic aspects (RES 3566, MuB 589). He was mentioned in a number of Maryamah inscriptions (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 21/4-5; 35/4; FB-al-Ādī 1/6). He was also mentioned in other inscriptions that have not been published yet<sup>(12)</sup>, all of them are of dedicatory nature in which the creators mention their devotions to the god Ḥawkam Nabaṭ in his temple Šab'ān.

The two Qatabānic inscriptions (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 21, 35) are one of the most important evidences about the history of Maryamah in the time of king Šahr Yagul Yuhargib. The inscription (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 21) indicates that a number of the people of Maryamah, who belong to the tribe of Bakīl ḍu-Maryamah had trade and economic ties with Šuku' town located in Yuhantiṭ land (al-Ḍāli') overlooking the Gulf of Aden, later known as Ḥimyar land (al-Hajj, 2013:119-144).

But the inscription (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 35) indicates that the trader Škr'l bn Lhy'm from the well-known family Barāniṭ which was a part Bakīl tribe and who lived in Maryamah town, was one of the biggest traders living in Šabwah town, the capital town of Ḥaḍramawt in the time of king of Qatabān, Šahr Yagul Yuhargib. That is evident from the amount and

type of the dedicatory donations he bestowed to the god Ḥawkam and the gods of the temple Šab‘ān such as, human and animal statues and inscriptions, all of them made of bronze, from the alms (for his properties) and rewards for the god Ḥawkam (al-Ḥajj, 2015b:163-196).

It is evident now that the trading of Qatabānian people, especially the people of Maryamah, was flourished in the time of king Šahr Yagul Yuhargib. That was because of the strong economic and political ties between the residents of Maryamah and the other towns of ancient Yemen, specifically Šabwah, on one hand, and the residents of the west and south plateau by the Gulf of Aden and Mocha Port.

### **Kings of the third period: Beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century AD:**

In this period, the inscriptions, which were found in Maryamah, are numerous. The most important ones are the dedicatory and constructions inscriptions that date back to the beginning and end of this period. These inscriptions mentioned that a lot of Maryamah town residents had trade travelling to all towns of ancient Yemen such as, Šbbm (Ḥaj-al-‘Adī 60/2) and the towns of the west and south highlands overlooking the Gulf of Aden and Mocha Port such as Z̄fr (Ḥaj-al-‘Adī 62/1), Tbnw (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 59/1), Ḥykln ‘dnm (Ḥaj-al-‘Adī 59/1), Rḥbtn (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 60/1) as well as other towns that their places are undefined such as Mr‘t and Ḥṣwt (Ḥaj- al- ‘Adī 57/4, 1).

During this period, the trade activity of Maryamah residents was not just limited to the towns of ancient Yemen. In the Qatabānic inscription (Maraqten-Qatabānic 1), dated back to the beginning of this period, mentioned that traders from Maryamah reached the towns of the Levant and to the lands of the north (Maraqten, 2014: 97-114), and thus reaching

the Mediterranean Sea and Egypt, by land and sea. This indicates the extent of trade activity and political stability which the Qatabānic towns had witnessed at the beginning of this phase, especially Maryamah town at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. It seems that the god Ḥawkam, during this period, still had a considerable religious presence, as his name, and his temple Šab‘ān, were mentioned in several inscriptions.

It was regrettable that most of the inscriptions of this period are not dated by the name of Qatabānian kings, from the sons of Šahr Yagul Yuhargib, king of Qatabān; and in some of these inscriptions, the date was erased. But definitely, there are inscriptions that had not been found yet in Maryamah from the time of Waraw‘īl Ġaylān Yuhan‘im son of Šahr Yagul Yuhargib, because there are inscriptions from his time in Haribat town, near Maryamah, which mention that the residents of such a town had activities with Zafar town, the capital of Himyar (Ry 497).

One of the most significant inscriptions which were dated and found in Maryamah town, related to this period, is the Qatabānic inscription (Ḥaj-al-‘Adī 62 = Ja 2898) which dated in around the mid of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, during the time of Karib‘īl Watar Yuhan‘im, king of Saba’ and dū-Raydan. In addition to that, two inscriptions (Ḥaj-al-‘Adī 56, 58) which are likely dated to the end of this period (the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD). It is probable that these two inscriptions were written with the name of the king Šammar Yuhar‘iš dū-Raydan.

### **Karib‘īl Watar Yuhan‘im, king of Saba’ and dū-Raydan**

As it is stated before that the name of this king is mentioned in the inscription (Ḥaj-al-‘Adī 62). It is a construction inscription which

indicates that Maryamah town perhaps after the period of the rule of the Qatabānian King Waraw'īl Ġaylān, had remained populated and flourished, and its residents who were from the tribe of Bakīl dū-Maryamah perform their trade activities with the west and south towns that overlook the Gulf of Aden and Mocha, but under the control of the Kings of Saba' and dū-Raydan for economic and political reasons that Qatabān experienced, in particular, and Yemen, in general during the time of King Karib'īl Watar Yuhan'im (al-Ḥajj, 2017: 271-278).

### Ḥaj- al-'Adī 62 = Ja 2898 (Fig 15-16)

1. *š'bn d-Mrymtm ḥwr hgrn Zfr b*
2. *r'w w-sqšb mrs't mḥfdsm Yrd' w-*
3. *sqfm šrbt bn mḥbm ṭwbw l-'lsm H*
4. *wkm b-rd' wṭhrḡ mr'sm Krb'īl W*
5. *tr Yhn'm mlk Sb' w-d-Rydn*

### Translation

1. the people of dū-Maryamah, the inhabitant of Zafar town
2. built and reconstructed the interior construction of their tower Yarda'
3. and the ceiling (Floor) of carved stones<sup>(13)</sup> as the recompense by which they reward their god
4. Ḥawkam; by the help and command of their lord Karib'īl
5. Watar Yuhan'im, king of Saba' and dū-Raydan

### Šammar Yuhar'iš dū-Raydan?

There are two incomplete construction inscriptions (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 56; 58)<sup>(14)</sup>, the researcher documented in Maryamah town, that mention the formula dū-Raydan. The words which came before dū-Raydan were completely

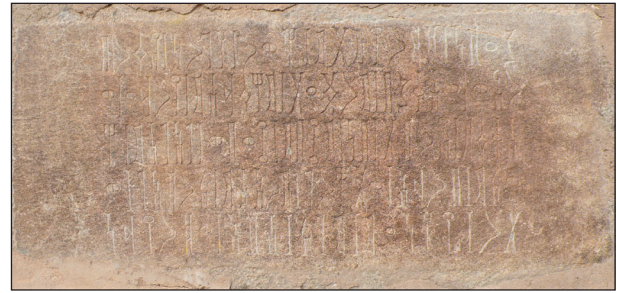


Fig. 15 - Ḥaj- al-'Adī 62 = Ja 2898.

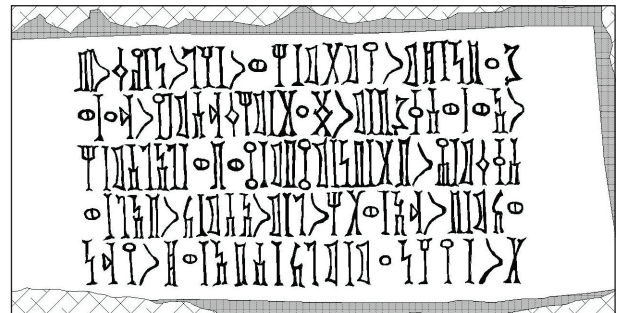


Fig. 16 - Ḥaj- al-'Adī 62 = Ja 2898.

erased except for some few letters such as Š. Perhaps the significance of such a formula is related to the name of a Himyarite king who belonged to dū-Raydan Fort. During his time, the constructions had been built in Maryamah town with his blessing. With much regret, we could not identify this Himyarite king whom the residents of Maryamah acknowledged his reign at that time. But with the existence of the letter Š in both inscriptions (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 56/6; 58/2), it might be concluded that the king mentioned in them is Šammar Yuhar'iš dū-Raydan who ruled at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. If this can be verified, this will reveal that Maryamah and its god, Ḥawkam, were existing during this period. However, they followed the rule of Saba' and dū-Raydan Kings and the political and economic focus turned in favor of the towns of the South and West Highlands, specifically Zafar town, the capital of the Himyarite state and the near towns in the highlands.

**Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 56 (Fig. 17-18)**

1. š‘b(n) / (d)mrymtm / ‘sdm / (q) [... ...]
2. ‘sdm / y(t)wb / (b)‘lsm / [Ḥwkm ... .. ws]
3. wtr / w-sšqr / mrś‘t / m(h)[fdsm... ..]
4. thwn‘ / bn / mṭbm / twbw / l‘(l)sm / (ḥ) [wkm... ..]
5. ‘lsm / Ḥwkm / nbṭ / w-brd’ / w-tḥr(g) [/mr ‘sm/Šmr/Yhr‘]
6. š / d-rydn / w-bmnš’ / š‘bsm / bkl[m / d-mrymtm / w-tq]
7. dmw / w-shlk / dn / (š)qn / (y)t(‘)[krb ... ..]
8. [bn/sflyn / w-‘m’l / bn / (b)(r)(n)[tm]

**Translation**

1. the people of dū-Maryamah who are the soldiers [... ...]
2. soldiers (men) reward their master the god Ḥawkam [... ..]
3. laid foundations and raised the interior construction of their tower [... ...]
4. (called) Tuhawni‘ as the recompense, by which they reward their god Ḥawkam [... ...]
5. their god Ḥawkam Nabaṭ, by the help and command of [their lord Šammar Yuhar‘i]
6. š dū-Raydan and by the mobilization of their tribe of Bakīl dū-Maryamah [... ...]
7. and those who took over and realized this construction are Yatha‘karib [... ...]
8. of the family Sifyān and ‘Amm’il Barāniṭ [... ...]

**Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 58 (Fig. 19, 20)**

[... ...]

1. [... .. ḥ](w)(k)(m) / w’lhw / bytn / šb‘n / w-brd’ / w-tḥ(r)(g) / [mr ‘sm]

2. [Š](m)(r) [/Yhr‘] (š) / d-rydn / w-brd’ / š‘bsm / d-mr(y)[mtm... ..]
3. [... ...] (w)(t)qdm / w-smlk / mbr’ / dtn / šwbtn / ‘m’l / bn / br[nṭm ... ..]
4. [... ...] / w-‘šbm / wšytm / b-‘ttr / w-‘m / wb / ḥwkm [... ...]

**Translation**

[... ...]

1. [... ...] Ḥawkam and gods of the temple Shab‘ān, and by the help and the command of [their lord]
2. [Šammar Yuhar‘iš] dū-Raydan; and with the support of their people dū-Maryamah [... ...]
3. [... ...] undertake and realized the construction of these stairs: ‘Amm’il of the family Baraniṭ [... ...]
4. [... ...] and ‘Ašb and Šayyāt; by ‘Athtar, ‘Amm, and by Ḥawkam [... ...]

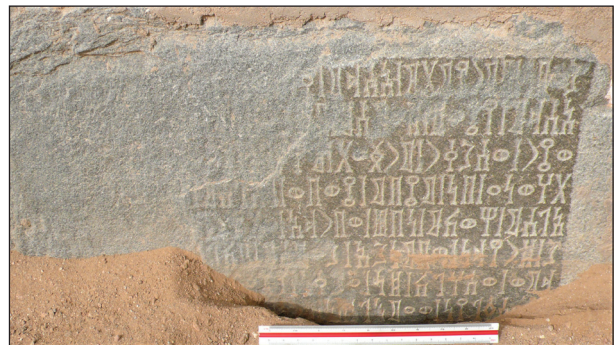


Fig. 17 - Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 56.

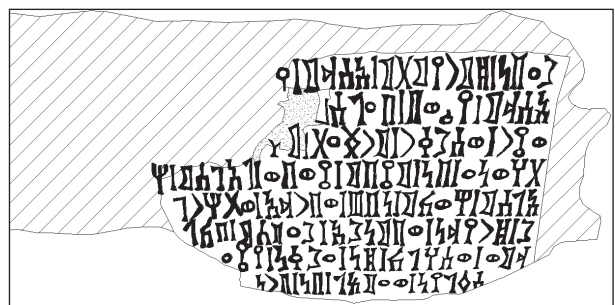


Fig. 18 - Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 56.



After the inscription (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 62 = Ja 2898) and the two inscriptions (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 56, 58), there are not any dated inscriptions from Maryamah town; but there are other inscriptions that mention new tribes other than the tribe of Bakīl dū-Maryamah, one of which is Qawmān tribe which is mentioned in the inscription (Ḥaj-al-'Adī 51) perhaps dated in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, or perhaps in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, according to the forms of its clearly decorative letters. The researcher believes that Maryamah might partly be abandoned after that date; it was later exposed to a huge fire that destroyed a lot of its religious and civil constructions. Ḥawkam, however, remained the peoples' god, including the new people, until around the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

**Ḥaj- al-'Adī 51 (Fig 21, 22)**

1. š'bn / qwmn / d-mrymtm / bdm / '
2. [h]d / w-stwḏ' / l-'ln / Ḥwkm / w-swfy / w
3. [..] / wz' / whb / wsqny / 'mns / whwk
4. (m) / l-yšm / wfy / yšf / w-'hhsww / w(b)
5. n(s)m / w-'bytsm / wk1 / (' )qny(s) / (r)
6. [td/ y]šf / ḥwkm / w-'lhsww / sqny(t)[s]

**Translation**

1. (This is what) the people of Qawmān dū-Maryamah
2. promised and dedicated to god Ḥawkam, and faithful to him
3. and increased, gave, offered from him, and Ḥawkam
4. may assure (to continue) the safety for Yašūf and his brothers
5. and their sons and their houses, and all his properties
6. and Yašūf entrusted to Ḥawkam and his gods his dedication

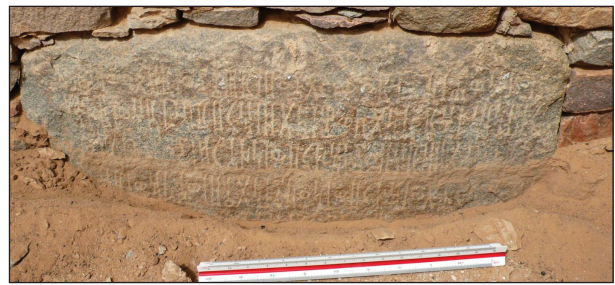


Fig. 19 - Ḥaj- al-'Adī 58.

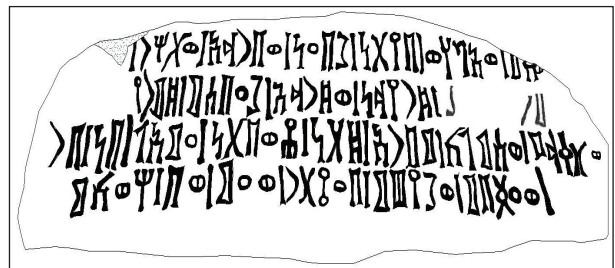


Fig. 20 - Ḥaj- al-'Adī 58.

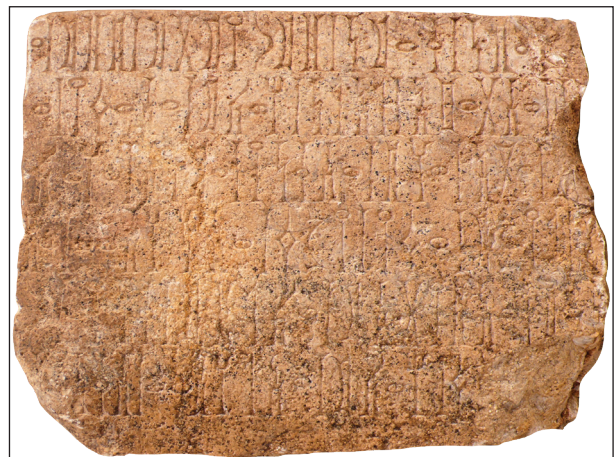


Fig. 21 - Ḥaj- al-'Adī 51.

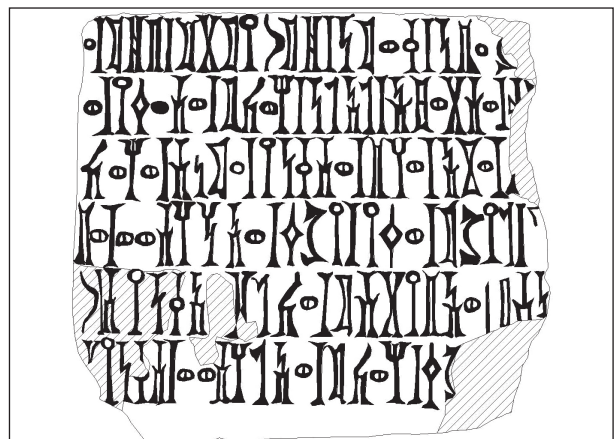


Fig. 22 - Ḥaj- al-'Adī 51.

In conclusion, it is worth-mentioning that, according to the classification of Maryamah town inscriptions based on the style of writing their letters, “paleography” (list 1), and on the kings’ names mentioned in such inscriptions, we could primarily identify the history of Maryamah, since the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The inscriptions of the 1<sup>st</sup> period indicate that the history of Maryamah emergence accompanied the towns of the east Wadis located in the ancient trade route such as, Timna’ and other towns of Qatabān Kingdom, according to the patterns of the inscriptions found in such towns. While the 2<sup>nd</sup> period inscriptions indicate that Maryamah had experienced a flourished phase in the same way as those Qatabanian towns during the period between the 5<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, i.e. the phase in which the influence of Qatabān Kingdom and its rulers took the title of Mukarrib in addition to other titles which were taken according to the extent of expansion and power of Qatabān Kingdom during that period. It is evident that, during that period, Maryamah town had been one of the

most important towns in Qatabān, for the rich contents of the inscriptions and valuable types, as well as its devotion of different human and animal statues and beautiful bronze plaques. No other towns of Qatabān granted such valuable things. With regard to the 3<sup>rd</sup> period, it may be concluded that there are some preliminary data about the period in which people deserted Maryamah and how it became, in addition to many towns of Qatabān Kingdom after the emergence of Saba’ and dū-Raydan state.

### Notes

I would like to deeply thank prof. Dr. Norbert Nebes for his great and sincere cooperation in providing me the opportunity to do this piece of research in the Institute for Oriental Studies, Jena University during my stay there doing my post-doctoral research. I would like also to express my sincere gratitude to Gerda Henkel Foundation for financing my research.

	8th – 6th century BC	5th – 1st century BC	1st – 3rd century AD
·	𐤁 𐤂	𐤁 𐤂 𐤃	𐤁
b	𐤃	𐤃 𐤄 𐤅	𐤃
t		𐤄 𐤅 𐤆	𐤄
t̄	𐤇	𐤇 𐤈 𐤉	
g		𐤊 𐤋 𐤌	𐤊
h	𐤍	𐤍 𐤎 𐤏	𐤍
h̄		𐤐 𐤑 𐤒	𐤐
d	𐤓 𐤔	𐤓 𐤔 𐤕	𐤓
d̄	𐤖 𐤗	𐤖 𐤗 𐤘	𐤖
r	𐤙 𐤚	𐤙 𐤚 𐤛	𐤙
z		𐤜 𐤝 𐤞	𐤜
s <sup>1</sup>	𐤟	𐤟 𐤠 𐤡	𐤟
s <sup>2</sup>		𐤣 𐤤 𐤥	𐤣
s <sup>3</sup>		𐤧 𐤨 𐤩	𐤧
š		𐤫 𐤬 𐤭	𐤫
d̄		𐤯 𐤰 𐤱	𐤯
t̄		𐤳 𐤴 𐤵	𐤳
z̄		𐤷 𐤸 𐤹	𐤷
·	○	○ 𐤻 𐤼	○
ḡ		𐤽 𐤾 𐤿	𐤽
f	◊	◊ 𐥀 𐥁	◊
q	◊	◊ 𐥂 𐥃	◊
k	𐥄 𐥅	𐥄 𐥅 𐥆	𐥄
L	𐥇 𐥈	𐥇 𐥈 𐥉	𐥇
m	𐥊 𐥋	𐥊 𐥋 𐥌	𐥊
n	𐥍 𐥎	𐥍 𐥎 𐥏	𐥍
h	𐥑 𐥒	𐥑 𐥒 𐥓	𐥑
w	⊖	⊖ 𐥕 𐥖	⊖
y	𐥙	𐥙 𐥚 𐥛	𐥙

A list of the forms of the Qatabanian alphabets in the inscriptions of Maryamah town according to their chronological order

## A list of the names of Qatabanian kings mentioned in the inscriptions of Maryamah town

Smhyd'	7 <sup>th</sup> century BC	Ḥaj-al' Adī 25/2
Ḍmr'ly	6 <sup>th</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> century BC	Āl Ṣabāḥ LNS 1756 M/4
Yd' 'b Ygl bn Ḍmr'ly	6 <sup>th</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup> century BC	Ḥaj-al' Adī 1/1; Atlal; Āl Ṣabāḥ LNS 1756 M/4
Šhr Ygl wbnhw Whb' m	4 <sup>th</sup> century BC	FB-Ḥawkam 7/7
Yd' 'b Ḍbyn	4 <sup>th</sup> century BC	Cox 4/7
Yd' 'b Ḍbyn Yhr gb wbnhw Hwf' tt	4 <sup>th</sup> century BC	Ḥaj-al' Adī 2/4-5= ATM 867
Yd' 'b Ḍbyn wbnhw Šhr	4 <sup>th</sup> - 3 <sup>rd</sup> century BC	FB-Ḥawkam 2/ 9
Yd' 'b Ġyln	2 <sup>nd</sup> century BC	Ḥaj-al' Adī 23/ 3-4
Hwf' m Yhn' m bn 'nmrm	2 <sup>nd</sup> century BC	ATM 866/1
Šhr Hll Yhn' m	1 <sup>st</sup> century BC	Ḥaj-al' Adī 5/4; MUB 523/7
Šhr Hll Yhn' m wbnhw Hwf' m	1 <sup>st</sup> century BC	Ḥaj-al' Adī 22/ 7-8
Šhr Ygl Yhr gb	The second half of the 1 <sup>st</sup> century BC	Ḥaj-al' Adī 21/ 4-5; Ḥaj-al' Adī 35/ 4; FB-al-Ādī 1/6
Krb' l Wtr Yhn' m	The middle of the 1 <sup>st</sup> century AD?	Ja 2898/4-5 = Ḥaj-al' Adī 62
[Šmr Yhr' ]š d-Rydn?	The end of 3 <sup>rd</sup> century AD ?	Ḥaj-al' Adī 56/6; 58/2

## Sigla

'Aqaba Burā	Gajda, I: 2009.
Ḥaj-al' Adī	Inscriptions of Hajar al' Adī. al-hajj, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017.
'Abadān	Inscriptions of 'Abadān Valley.
Arbach-Sayūn 1	Arbach M and Alsekaf 2001.
Atlal	Atlal Journal, 1982.
ATM	Ataq Museum.
CIAS	Corpus des inscriptions et antiquités sud-arabes, Louvian : Peeters , 1977 – 1986.
CIH	Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum.
COX	Robin, 2005-2006.
CSAI	Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions. Avanzini 2004.
DAI	Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Sirw' h 2005
FB-al-' Adī	Bron, F. 2009.
FB-Ḥawkam	Bron, F. 2009, 2013.
FB-Qatabān	Bron, F. 2010.
Gar nuove iscrizioni	Bayt al-Ašw' l Inscriptions. Garbini 1973
GI	Inscriptions edited by Glaser.

Ja	Inscriptions edited by Jamme.
Maraqten-Qatabānic	Maraqten, 2014.
MQ	Mission Qataban.
MQ-HK	Inscriptions of Hajar Kuḥlan Mission Qataban,
Āl Ṣabāḥ LNS 1756 M/4	Qatabanic Inscriptions from Hajar al-'Adi deposit Islamic Antiquities House in the Museum of Kuwait.
MuB	Bayḥān Museum
Collection privée yémenite	. Alessia and Arbach, 2014.
RES	Repertoire d Epigraphic Semitique, tomes I-VIII.
Ry	Inscriptions edited by G. Ryckmans.
TC	Inscriptions of the Timna' Cemetery.
UAM	Inscriptions University Aden Museum

For further sigla see al-Hajj 2017.

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**ملخص:** تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إلقاء الضوء على تاريخ مدينة قتبانية مهمة، عرفت باسم مدينة مريمّة، في وادي حريب، وذلك في ضوء نقوشها المسندية الواقع تاريخها بين القرن السابع قبل الميلاد وحتى القرن الثالث الميلادي، والتي قدمت لنا معطيات تاريخية مهمة عن مدينة قتبانية لم تكن معروفة من قبل، كان لها دورها الكبير في تاريخ اليمن القديم. وتعد دراستنا هذه المحاولة الأولى لكتابة تاريخ تلك المدينة، إذ لم يسبق وأن كُتِب عنها عن أي شيء فيما يخص تسلسلها التاريخي وفقاً لمعطيات نقوشها، سوى ما قدمناه من دراسات سابقة عن بعض نقوشها المسندية باللغة العربية. وتعتمد هذه الدراسة بشكل أساسي على النقوش القتبانية التي سبق وأن جمعها الباحث من مدينة مريمّة خلال السنوات الماضية، والتي وصل عددها حتى كتابة هذا البحث ١٢٠ نقشاً قتبانياً، توزعت بين نقوش نذرية، ومعمارية، وتشريعية، وتذكارية، فضلاً عن النقوش القتبانية الأخرى التي سبق نشرها من المكان نفسه، كتلك التي تم تهريبها إلى المتاحف العربية والخارجية، والمجموعات الخاصة، وأخرى لم تنشر بعد.

## Notes

- (1) For further information about Maryamah town architectural Monuments, see Chapter I of al-Hajjs' book : Nuqūš qatabāniyya min Haḡar al-'Ādī (Maryamah qadīman). Dirāsa fī dalālātihā al-luḡawiyah wa-l-dīniyyah wa-l-tāriḡiyya. King Saud University. (Series of Refereed Studies, 4i)., 2015, in which we clearly documented some of the buildings in Maryamah such as its premises towers in the north, west and south sides; and the temple of god Ḥawkam Nabaṡ known as Shab'an, in the west part, which was random excavation, and his inscriptions and stone and bronze artifacts were looted.
- (2) For further studies, see: al-Hajj, 2015. And 2017, Nuqūsh Qatbāniyyah ḡadīdah min Madinat Maryamah (Hajar al-'Aadi) bi-wādī Ḥarīb, Dirāsaḥ taḡlīliyyah muqāranah, PhD Thesis, Department of Archeology, King Saud University.
- (3) For further information about such towns, tribes, families, and for verifying their places and the significance of their names and importance, see: al-Hajj, 2017, Nuqūsh Qatbāniyyah ḡadīdah min Madinat Maryamah (Hajar al-'Aadi) bi-wādī Ḥarīb.

- (4) It was regrettable that, lately, the temple was exposed to looting and destruction, and many of its antiquities and stone and bronze inscriptions, a lot of them were smuggled to European and Arabian museums; and other private ones are in Yemen and abroad (See: al-Hajj, 2015: 61-63, 126; 2017: 470 - 477).
- (5) This inscription which is written on a rectangular bronze plaque, one of the most important Musnad inscriptions found in Maryamah town, as it has important historical information that date for Maryamah in particular, and Qataban in general, in the 5th century BC, and perhaps the 6th century BC. The source of inscription is the temple of the god Ḥawkam located in the west of Maryamah. In 2013, Christian Robin provided us with the photos of the inscription as he knows the extent of our attention to the inscription of Maryamah town (Hajar- al-‘Adī) in Wadi Harib. What is regrettable is that such an inscription, in addition to other bronze valuable inscriptions and human and animal statues which were not found in Maryamah, had been smuggled after being dug from the temple of god Ḥawkam to abroad selling some them to the Islamic Antiquities House in the Museum of Kuwait, and they are now known as the groups of Sheikh Al-Sabah. And Robin lately introduced a preliminary reading of such an inscription in the book *Timna’*: Robin, Christian J. 2016. *La Chronologie de Qataban Premiers Reperes Gli scavi italo-francesi di tamna’ (repubblica dello Yemen), rapporto finale, In memoria di Alessandro de Maigret, A cura di Alessandro DE MAIGRET Christian Julien ROBIN, Éditions de Boccard 11 rue de Médicis, 75006 Paris, 2016, p. 70, 82, 92.*
- (6) Yada‘‘ab Yagul is a Qatabanic king whose reign probably was at the end of the early period of Qataban history, or in the beginning of the second period (the 5th century BC). In his time, the Qatabanic ambition for facing Saba’ Kingdom started. He left a number of important Qatabanian inscriptions (MUB 457, MQ-Bayt aṣṢurymi 6, Atlal 6) of which the most important is Jabal Al’ awd inscription (RES 3858=CSAII,203) located in the southeast highlands, within what was later known as the lands of Himyar. In it the wars that waged by Qataban Kingdom in the era of king Yada‘‘ab Yagul son of Dhamar ‘Ali against Saba’ Kingdom and its three kings Yada‘‘il Baīyn, Sumhu‘ali Yanūf, and Yatha‘‘amr Watar in addition the kings of Rū‘āīyn Kingdom due to their stand with Saba’ against Qataban and ‘Awlad ‘amm. The war ended when Qataban controlled a part of Sabaeen lands in such highlands. Researchers were different in their views on the period of the reign of king Yada‘‘ab Yagul. Albright thinks that he ruled in 4th century BC. (Albright:1950: 12); while Kitchen believes that he ruled in 350-320 BC (Kitchen, 2000: 742-743); but Avanzini thinks that his reigning period dates back to (B1) which is between the 5th and 3rd century BC (Avanzini, 2004: 27, 62, 279, 281). But probably that his ruling period was in the end of the 6th century and beginning of the 5th century BC as he was contemporary of three kings of Saba‘: Yada‘‘il Baīyn, Sumhu‘ali Yanūf, and Yatha‘‘amr Watar who, probably, ruled in the same period, and they left a number of inscriptions written in boustrophedon on the Wall of the Temple Awam (Ja 550, Ja 555) which mentions that a war was waged by Saba’ against Qataban; I think it is the war mentioned in the Qatabanic inscription (RES 3858 = CSAI1, 203). see (Al-Haj, 2015: 74, 97-98; Arbach, 2006: 118-119).
- (7) Some inscriptions of Maryamah, which date back to the beginning of the 2nd period of Qataban history (5th -1st century BC), show that there was an influence by some features of Sabaeen dialects such as the use of pronouns (hw, hmy/ hmw) at the ends of nouns, as in the formula wbnhw ‘m šbm w’ḥyhw ’lkrb in the inscription (Haj- al-‘Adī 1/1) and the formula wkl awldhmy...wb mr’hmw yd‘‘b ygl mlk qṭbn in the inscription (Āl Ṣabāḥ LNS 1756 M 3,8); and in the inscription (Cox 4/2-3) the formula wbnhw hwf‘ṭt waḥyhw ab’ns; also the use of the inflection of the present tense with the letter (n) in (Yaza’n) in the inscription (Haj- al- ‘Adī 28/9-10) which is common in Sabaeen; the present tense with the letter (n) in the formula yz’wn in the inscription (Ḥaj-al- ‘Adī 84/10); perhaps that is because of the proximity of Maryamah to the Sabaeen lands, or because of the dominance of Saba’ at that time, which results in mixed vocabulary between (s) and (h) dialect.
- (8) Bany Barāniṭ family, one of the most known, and oldest, Qatabanic families that lived in Maryamah town. It was mentioned in many inscriptions of Maryamah (Ḥaj- al-‘Adī 1/3, 29/1, 35/3, 39/1, 40/1 ...). It seems from the inscriptions that mention this family, and which were devoted from its members, that it had a high status in

Maryamah; many rulers belong to it who reigned Maryamah town, in addition to the leaders, traders, craftsmen, etc. It is a part of Qatabanic Bakī tribe, the most famous tribe in Maryamah. The ruling of its members was not just limited to the Qatabanic families from Bakīl dū-Maryamah, but also there were under their ruling other Qatabanic families and tribes that lived in Maryamah, Such as: Ḥyw, Sflyn, Qabln.; its members, since around the 6th -5th century BC had contributed to developing Maryamah and to giving devotions and gifts to their main god Ḥawkam Nabaṭ, in addition to managing the religious rituals, taking care of properties of the god and spending them on religious and civil architectural works in the Maryamah and outside it (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 8).

- (9) 'Abran family was mentioned in a number of inscriptions of Maryamah (Cox 4 /1; FB- al-'Adī 1/1-2; UAM 519/1). It is one of the ancient Qatabanic families which settled in Maryamah, which perhaps belongs to the tribe of Bakīl dū-Maryamah. The oldest reference to it is mentioned in the inscriptions (Cox 4/1) which is dated in the era of Yada' 'ab Dūbyān son of Šahr king of Qataban whose reign is probably in the 4th century BC, or perhaps before that time (Arbach, 2006, 119-120; Gajda-al-Hajj-Schiettecatte, 2009,165). That family lived in Maryamah town until its late era, i.e. its mentioned in the inscription (FB- al-'Adī 1/1-2) which is dated in the time of Šahr Yagul Yuhargib king of Qataban whose reign was probably in the 2nd half of the 1st century BC.
- (10) From the Musnad inscriptions left Yada' 'ab Dūbyān Yuhargib son of Šahr, it is known that he continues to hold the long royal title King of Qatban w-kl wld 'm w 'wsn w Kḥd w-Dhsm w-Tbnw ..., without taking the title of Mukarrib (Ja 405). He involved his son Hawfa'att in ruling, who left an architectural inscription from both his and his father's eras (MQ-Hajar Kuḥlān 9) that mentions the construction of the house Ya'ūd mentioned in another inscription (T.00. B 1) discovered in Timna' town, the capital of Qataban; and it was dated in the 4th century BC or later (Arbach, 2006: 68; de Maigret & Robin, 2006: 2, 56; Arbach, 2005-2006: 122).
- (11) This inscription is legal which mentioned that the Qatabānian king Hawfa'amm Yuhan'im son of 'Anmār had, in legal terms, granted his followers who belong to the family 'Asb and their sons and grandsons the preference to possess a number of the houses in Maryamah and their floors, yards and grounds; and no person could steal, or dwell, or destroy such houses, as per the decision by the King. When studying the inscription (ATM 866), Arbach et al put forward the hypothesis that its source was (Ḥinū al-Zurair) located near Maryamah town in Wadi Ḥarīb (Arbach et al, 2013: 59-66); but its original source was Maryamah; that is because the inscription text confirmed that the houses and palaces owned are located in Maryamah; and that was mentioned in inscriptions found in Maryamah (Ḥaj- al-'Adī 19; 23; 55). It is known that the legislative inscriptions that confirm the ownership of the houses were directly put on the outer walls of such houses or on their doors, on the upper side so that all people easily read them.
- (12) It is noteworthy here that there is a Qatabanian inscription of Maryamah which was smuggled later to Geneva, and it is now preserved by Geneva Customs, its photo was sent to me by a friend, Christian Robin. It is a legislative inscription which mentions that members of 'Abran family own a number of buildings and lands in Maryamah town, according to the legal instrument they got from king Šahr (without mentioning the title of that king: wdm byst'dw bnḥg dn ḥrmmn whgrn wtzrbn fl ystwfy lmr'sm šhr 'lf sl'tm n'mm ...). And probably the intended king is Šahr Yagul Yuhargib king of Qatabān, as is clear in the style of writing the letters of the inscription. There is also another bronze inscription which is now housed in the Islamic Antiquities House, in the Museum of Kuwait; it was offered by a resident of Maryamah town, who belongs to the family d-ḥnzt, dated at the time of the Qatabanic king Šahr Yagul Yuhargib. Prof. Robin provided me with its photo.
- (13) For the meaning of the term *Šrbt* in the ancient Yemeni inscriptions see: al-Ḥajj, 2015c, *Dirāsa taḥlīliyah muqārīna li-'alfāz musnadīya (qitbānīya) ḡadīda* (1) in: *Dirāsāt fi 'ilm al-'āṭār wa-t-turāt* 6, 109 – 132.
- (14) Regarding the content of these inscriptions, and study them, and the place it was found from Hajar- al-'Adī village, see: Chapter (3) of the researcher's PhD: *Nuqūsh Qatbāniyyah ḡadīdah min Madīnat Maryamah* 2017.

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