

TAYMĀ' II

CATALOGUE OF THE INSCRIPTIONS
DISCOVERED IN THE SAUDI-GERMAN EXCAVATIONS
AT TAYMĀ' 2004–2015

TAYMĀ'

MULTIDISCIPLINARY SERIES
ON THE RESULTS OF THE SAUDI-GERMAN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

Edited by

Arnulf Hausleiter, Ricardo Eichmann, Muhammad al-Najem

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Orient-Abteilung

Heritage Commission at the Ministry of Culture



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Michael C. A. Macdonald

with contributions by

**Arnulf Hausleiter, Frédéric Imbert, Hanspeter Schaudig,
Peter Stein, Francelin Tourtet, and Martina Trognitz**



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FOREWORD

The oasis of Taymā' is one of the major heritage sites in the northwestern part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It embodies, like few others, aspects of the interaction of the local culture with those of distant regions through far-reaching contacts and exchange through centuries. As we know now, these contacts of the oasis can be dated back as far as the Early Bronze Age, if not even earlier.

The Saudi-German collaborative project at Taymā' jointly operated by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) and the German Archaeological Institute (DAI), started in 2004. Since then, a multitude of contexts and artifacts have been revealed with the skills and expertise of specialists of various fields. The interdisciplinary efforts of archaeologists, epigraphers, hydrologists, botanists, bioarchaeologists, historians and other scientists in studying and analyzing these different materials, have contributed to a deeper understanding of the site and its environment.

The research project at Taymā' has been developed in the context of a systematic exploration of the cultural heritage of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, launched by the SCTH at the beginning of the new century. This initiative, involving numerous Saudi and international academic institutions of high reputation is rooted in the deep commitment of the Kingdom to its own rich history and cultural heritage. This commitment goes back to the 1960s, when the legal and administrative foundations of today's archaeological work in the country were laid.

SCTH has actively participated in the joint project at Taymā' and has given continuous and strong support over 15 years, as did our partner, the DAI. Within the Kingdom's current initiatives to substantially develop and expand the tourist sector, archaeology plays a fundamental role as part of the cultural heritage of the country as well as of the region. The transfer of SCTH's Sector of Antiquities and Museums to the Heritage Commission at the Ministry of Culture is an important step in meeting these new challenges, which also have an economic dimension for future generations.

The second volume of the jointly edited monograph series on the results of the collaborative project is a catalogue of inscriptions discovered in the Saudi-German excavations at Taymā'. The numerous languages and scripts in these sources not only reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the people of this oasis, but at the same time reveal new information on the political organization and the social and religious life at this important site.

We are, therefore, grateful to all authors of this volume for making these significant data accessible to scholarship in our country and the world.

Dr Abdullah A. Alzahrani

Director General of the Center for Archaeological Research
Heritage Commission at the Ministry of Culture

PREFACE OF THE SERIES EDITORS

The second volume of the series on the results of the Saudi-German Joint Archaeological Project at the oasis of Taymā' is a catalogue of all the inscriptions found in the archaeological excavations of this project. This collaborative project has been carried out by the Orient-Department of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI), Berlin, and the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH), Riyadh, since 2004.

It is our pleasure to express our thanks to SCTH for its generous support. Next to its chairman of the Board of Directors, Mr Ahmed Al-Khatib, it was its former president, HRH Prince Sultan bin Salman, who encouraged the project over the years. To current and former Vice-Presidents of SCTH, Rustom Al-Kubeisi, Jamal S. Omar, Professor Ali Al-Ghabban, Dr Hussein Abu Al-Hassan, Director General for Research and Study, Dr Abdullah A. Al-Zahrani, and his predecessors, as well as their staff, we are gratefully indebted. During the preparation of the present publication the Heritage Commission at the Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom took over the responsibilities from SCTH, and we extend our thanks to its CEO Jasir Alherbish and his staff for continuing the trustful collaboration. The constant interest of the Emir of the Tabuk Province, HRH Prince Fahd bin Sultan, in the work of the Saudi-German expedition is acknowledged with gratitude. The former SCTH offices at Tabuk and Taymā' substantially contributed to the success of the project. Our dear colleague, Professor Said F. Al-Said (King Saud University, Riyadh) has been participating since the beginning of the project with great interest in the growing number of inscriptions from Taymā'. Historically significant texts have been published by him in preliminary reports in the journal *Atlal – Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology*.

The German Research Foundation (DFG) has constantly supported our work, since 2008 within the frame of long-term project funding, whereas the German Archaeological Institute hosted and administered the project. In Saudi Arabia the German Embassy, Riyadh, and the German Consulate General in Jeddah, continuously supported and advocated our work. To these institutions go our warmest thanks.

The editors of the Taymā' Series are indebted to Michael C. A. Macdonald (University of Oxford), a member of the Saudi-German expedition since 2010. Thanks to his enormous efforts and enthusiasm, these inscriptions have now been united in one volume. He edited those inscriptions in Imperial Aramaic found between 2010 and 2015, as well as all those in Taymā' Aramaic, Nabataean, Taymanitic and Dadanitic and organized the content of the entire volume, including the indices. Equally, we are very grateful to the other authors, i.e. Hanspeter Schaudig (University of Heidelberg), Peter Stein (University of Jena) and Frédéric Imbert (Aix-Marseille University), who contributed significant chapters on the textual evidence in cuneiform, Aramaic and Arabic, respectively. The cuneiform inscriptions from the Saudi-German excavations had been published earlier by Hanspeter Schaudig in several issues of the journal *Atlal*.

Martina Trognitz (Austrian Academy of Sciences, formerly the IANUS project in the DAI's IT-Department) wrote Appendix C on Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI). Arnulf Hausleiter contributed a study of the iconography of a funerary stele with three inscriptions in Section 4, and Francelin Tourtet provided information on individual pottery sherds bearing inscriptions.

Most of the inscriptions published in this volume, in addition to photography and drawing, have been recorded by means of the above mentioned RTI, a modern technology aimed at documenting in detail shallow surfaces of objects of any kind. This project on the Taymā' inscriptions was made possible by a grant from the innovation fund of the DAI's presidency, to which we express our heartfelt thanks. The final products can be accessed through the DAI's website at <http://dx.doi.org/10.13149/001.pi46vf-z> using a RTI-viewer, which offers detailed views of the objects and their inscriptions. Martina Trognitz finalized the virtual part of this innovative hybrid publication. She as well as Patrick Biedermann, Luis Kohl, Max Haibt and Sebastiano Lora were involved in recording and developing RTI at Taymā', including experimental outdoor-documentation.

Johannes Kramer, Irmgard Wagner, and Mirco Cusin took the majority of the photographs. The drawings were made by Alessia Borlin, Eva Götting, and Helga Kosak. Dörte Rokitta-Krumnow prepared the editing of the book which was completed by Susanna Wittmann-Gering. She reliably integrated the results of the proofreading process into the manuscript. Wassim Alrez and Ibrahim Salman created the Arabic translation of the captions. Emily Schalk, Berlin, and Alice Wang, New York, read and corrected those English texts written by non-native speakers. Hanna Hamel assisted in the final phase of proofreading, while Annika Busching kindly did the final editorial and technical checks.

To the reviewers of this second volume of the Taymā' series we express our appreciation for their comments and suggestions.

As in the case of vol. I of this series, we are indebted to the editorial office of DAI's Orient Department headed by Anja Fügert and Lisa Klisch. Their precise and valuable advice in the preparation of this volume is greatly acknowledged. We are also indebted to Archaeopress Publishing and its director David Davison for a smooth handling of the publication process. Without them, this book would not have been completed.

Arnulf Hausleiter, Ricardo Eichmann, Muhammad Al-Najem

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Orient-Abteilung, Berlin, and
SCTH Antiquities Office at Taymā'

INTRODUCTION

This Catalogue contains all the inscriptions discovered during the twenty-four seasons of the Saudi-German excavations at Taymā' between 2004 and 2015. Its somewhat unusual structure reflects changes in the treatment of the inscriptions over the period of the excavations. Originally, Hanspeter Schaudig was asked to edit the cuneiform inscriptions and Peter Stein the Imperial Aramaic texts. By 2010, Peter Stein had prepared an excellent report on the Imperial Aramaic (and one Taymā' Aramaic) inscriptions found in the 2004–2009 seasons with an historical introduction and detailed study, and it was planned to publish this separately.

In 2010, I was asked to join the team in Taymā' and to work on all the inscriptions, except the cuneiform (which are beyond my competence) and the Imperial Aramaic from the 2004–2009 seasons, which Peter Stein had already studied. My first task was to make a full autopsy of all the alphabetic inscriptions from the excavations and this was achieved over the following seasons. It quickly became clear that a complete and coherent catalogue of all the texts was required and I was asked to undertake this.

Thus, I am responsible for the catalogue as a whole (everything in the Table of Contents which does not bear someone else's name) with individual sections by Hanspeter Schaudig (Section 1), Peter Stein (Section 2) and Frédéric Imbert (section 9), and contributions on the ceramics of the ostraca in Section 3 by Francelin Tourtet and on the relief of TA 10277 by Arnulf Hausleiter in Section 4. Peter Stein's contribution (Section 2) is in German and is published as an integral whole, regardless of any minor inconsistencies between his views and mine on the history of Liḥyān, dating on the basis of palaeography, etc. Finally, in Appendix C, Martina Trognitz describes the use of RTI photography of the inscriptions.

In addition to this catalogue, which is published as the second volume (*Taymā' II*) of the Taymā' excavation reports, I also made autopsies of all the inscriptions already in the Taymā' Museum and which were brought to it from outside the excavations. This will be published in *Taymā' III* as *The Catalogue of the Inscriptions in the Taymā' Museum*, by Muḥammad Al-Najem, director of the Taymā' Museum, and myself.

To avoid the reader having to check the indexes in each of these volumes, a combined index of the names and words from the inscriptions in both catalogues will be found at the end of each of them. The references are distinguished by the prefixes **TA** for those from the Saudi-German excavations and **TM** for those in the Taymā' Museum. The list of tombstones of men and of women in Appendix A of the present volume as well as the lists of inscriptions by script, type, and date also include inscriptions from both catalogues, to give as complete a picture as possible.

It should be noted that all of the inscriptions found in the Saudi-German excavations had been reused in secondary contexts, and in the process many had been broken or reshaped with a consequent loss of text. It is therefore impossible to say anything about the original positions and uses of the inscriptions or to provide any external dating for them. This is obviously extremely frustrating for the archaeologists and epigraphists alike, especially since we know comparatively little about the history of North Arabia in the first millennium BC. However, what a number of the Imperial Aramaic inscriptions have revealed for the first time is that Taymā' was ruled by the kingdom of Liḥyān at some period in the second half of the first millennium BC.

I would like to thank Muḥammad Al-Najem, director of the Taymā' Museum, and his staff for all their help and cooperation over several seasons. I am deeply grateful to Ricardo Eichmann and Arnulf Hausleiter for asking me to join the project and for supplying me with all the context information and photographs of the inscriptions. Finally, I would like to thank my co-authors Hanspeter Schaudig, Peter Stein, Frédéric Imbert, Martina Trognitz, Arnulf Hausleiter and Francelin Tourtet for their excellent contributions.

Michael C. A. Macdonald, Wolfson College, Oxford