

TAYMĀ' III

CATALOGUE OF THE INSCRIPTIONS
IN THE TAYMĀ' MUSEUM AND OTHER COLLECTIONS

TAYMĀ'

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

Edited by

Arnulf Hausleiter, Ricardo Eichmann, Muḥammad al-Najem

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Orient-Abteilung

Heritage Commission at the Ministry of Culture



هيئة التراث

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Michael C. A. Macdonald and Muḥammad al-Najem

with contributions by

**Frédéric Imbert, Jérôme Norris,
and Peter Stein**



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Cover: Incense altar with Imperial Aramaic inscription TM.IA.017
(Taymāʾ Museum register no. 385), DAI Orient Department, J. Kramer (photo), H. Hamel (editing).

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This volume is dedicated to the memory of

Professor Alasdair Livingstone

(1954–2021)

who was one of the pioneers in the archaeology and epigraphy of Taymā'

and

Irmgard Wagner

(1956 – 2021)

Longstanding photographer of the German Archaeological Institute's

Orient Department and member of the Taymā' Expedition

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FOREWORD

The third volume of the series on the results of the Saudi-German excavations in Taymā' presents for the first time a comprehensive catalogue of the inscriptions from the collection of the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography in the city of Taymā', Tabuk Province, in the northwest of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The museum, along with six other regional museums, was established in the early 1980s by the then Deputy Ministry of Antiquities and Museums. During the preparation of this publication, the collections were moved to the museum's storage facilities in the provincial capital of Tabuk due to the planned construction of a new Taymā' Museum.

For almost 40 years, the Taymā' Museum was a central reference point for the transmission of historical and ethnographic knowledge to the local population, tourists and scholars. In addition to the museum, the archaeological sites of Taymā' excavated by the Deputy Ministry of Antiquities and Museums from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, such as the architectural complexes of Qasr al-Hamra and Qasr al-Radm, were also prepared for visitors, as was the Bir Hadaj, the famous well in the middle of the old city of Taymā'. This unique ensemble of cultural heritage sites and monuments is now joined by the archaeological site of Qrayyah, where the joint expedition of the German Archaeological Institute and the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) first carried out excavations and then conservation work on historically significant buildings. This is an important step towards greater public involvement in the rich cultural heritage of Taymā'.

The Taymā' Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography, with its workrooms, laboratories and accommodation, served as the hub of the joint expedition for more than 15 years and was a lively research centre and meeting place. Therefore, the initiative of its former director and head of the Antiquities Office at Taymā', Muhammad al-Najem, to systematically record the inscriptions from the museum in cooperation with the DAI-SCTH team was a logical step. Michael C. A. Macdonald, a member of the joint team on site, in going a step further, recorded and examined all the texts in the Taymā' Museum. Certain texts and text groups were examined by his esteemed colleagues Frédéric Imbert, Jérôme Norris and Peter Stein. In addition, the catalogue includes textual sources from Taymā' held in other museums.

Together with the inscriptions from the archaeological excavations of the Saudi-German expedition, published as Volume II of the Taymā' series, the complete corpus of Taymā' inscriptions is now available for further research. We hope that these data, which reflect the rich history and cultural diversity of the oasis over the centuries, will contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural heritage of the site and the region as a whole. We are very grateful to the authors for their successful work.

Dr Abdullah A. Alzahrani

Director General of Archaeology
Heritage Commission at the Ministry of Culture

PREFACE

It is with great pleasure and honour that the publication of the catalogue of the inscriptions in the Taymā' Museum can be presented as the third volume of the series reporting on the work of the Saudi-German collaborative project at the important site of Taymā' in the northwestern part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This project has been conducting multidisciplinary research on the ancient oasis in the context of collaboration between the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) and the Orient Department of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI).

Since its construction in the early 1980s the "Taymā' Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography" has been a landmark for many visitors and tourists. It was also a reference point for those citizens of Taymā', who discovered artifacts in the modern town and its surroundings. The reasons for such discoveries were manifold – mainly activities connected to agriculture within the oasis or to construction work in the context of a constantly expanding urban settlement. It was therefore fortunate that the museum took care of such objects which are part of the rich cultural heritage of the area and which otherwise would probably have been lost forever.

The existence of a museum at Taymā' goes back to an initiative of the Kingdom's government to build seven provincial museums all over the country at historically and culturally significant sites. In recent years the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTH) has started to replace these museums by new buildings in order to respond to the need of a state-of-the-art presentation of the country's cultural heritage.

Starting in 2004, the Taymā' Museum hosted the Saudi-German team for 30 seasons of excavation until 2018. As well as the guest rooms, there were well equipped offices and specialized labs which guaranteed highly professional working conditions right from the start. The rooms with the permanent exhibition next door always reminded us of our task to establish a contact between scholarship and the public through publicizing the results of our work. At the same time, the store, where all of these inscriptions had been safely kept, was also the final destination of the objects recovered in the context of the Saudi-German excavation project.

It is in this context that Muhammad al-Najem, then director and head of the Taymā' Antiquities Office, and co-editor of the Taymā' publication series, already in 2004 suggested a systematic recording of the inscriptions in the showrooms and store of the Taymā' museum.

The project and this publication were made possible by the constant support of a number of institutions and individuals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Germany. These are the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage in Riyadh (SCTH) with its former President HRH Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, succeeded by the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Mr Ahmad al-Khateeb. We are very grateful to former Deputy Minister of Antiquities and Museums, Professor Sa'ad al-Rashid, former Vice-Presidents of SCTH, Rustom al-Kubaisi, Professor Ali al-Ghabban, Dr Hussein Abu al-Hassan, and Jamal Omar. We express our warmest thanks to Dr Abdullah A. Alzahrani, Director General of Archaeology, for actively contributing to the progress of our collaboration. Our thanks also go to his predecessors, Professors Daifallah al-Talhi and Abdulaziz al-Ghazzi, Khalid Eskoubi, and Jamal Omar.

The Governor of the Tabuk Region, HRH Prince Fahd bin Sultan, constantly showed his interest in our work, which is gratefully acknowledged.

During the publication process of this volume, the responsibility for cultural heritage in Saudi Arabia was transferred from SCTH to the Heritage Commission at the Ministry of Culture. To its CEO Jasir Alherbish and his staff we are grateful for the continuation of our reliable collaboration.

In Germany, we are indebted to the German Research Foundation (DFG) which supported the project for many years, since 2008 in the frame of a long-term funding. The German Archaeological Institute hosted the project in the Orient Department in Berlin. The German Embassy in Riyadh and the German Consulate General in Jeddah supported the project at all stages. As with the

volumes I and II of this series, the Orient Department of the German Archaeological Institute provided the funding for this publication.

The present volume would not have been possible without the enormous interest and perseverance of Michael C. A. Macdonald, who, since 2010, has been member of the Taymā' project. For weeks he spent his time in the store of the Taymā' Museum recording the inscriptions. Our colleagues Frédéric Imbert, Jérôme Norris, and Peter Stein contributed significantly to this publication in publishing Arabic, Imperial Aramaic, and Minaic inscriptions from Taymā'. It is to Michael's great credit that all known inscribed objects from Taymā' kept in other collections are included in the catalogue. Thus, all inscriptions from Taymā' known today are now accessible in the two volumes Taymā' II and III.

Mirco Cusin, the late Irmgard Wagner and Johannes Kramer recorded most of the inscriptions published in this volume by photography – even in cases where the dimension and the weight of the objects created a real challenge. The late professor Alasdair Livingstone (Liverpool) allowed the reproduction of several photographs as did William Facey, who worked at Tayma in the early 1980s, and the former excavator of Taymā', Ḥamid Ibrahim Abū Duruk. The Musée du Louvre in Paris, part of the Réunion des Musées Nationaux (RMN), granted the right to reproduce photographs of several inscriptions which is gratefully acknowledged. Helga Kosak and Michael C. A. Macdonald made graphic copies of inscriptions which were only available as photographs.

Hanspeter Schaudig's index of words and names in the Akkadian inscriptions in the volume Taymā' II has been reproduced in this book, as have the other parts of the index of Taymā' II.

Dr Dörte Rokitta-Krumnow began the editing of this volume, before Susanna Wittmann-Gering took over. Towards the end of the process, the editors were supported by Antonia-Charlotta Seifert. Wassim Alrez and Ibrahim Salman translated the captions into Arabic. Final works and the production of a printable file were carried out by Annika Busching and Lisa Klisch. The reviewers of the manuscript added very useful suggestions which have been incorporated into the book.

The Orient Department's heads of editing branch, Dr Anja Fügert and (formerly) Lisa Klisch supported the publication process at all stages. Archaeopress publishers, with its director David Davison and editor Mike Schurer, have once again taken great care in the publishing process. To all of them we express our heartfelt thanks.

Arnulf Hausleiter, Ricardo Eichmann

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut
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We would like to thank the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) and the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) for inviting Michael Macdonald to work on the inscriptions discovered in the excavations and the epigraphic collection in the Taymā' Museum, and for facilitating his work in every way. In particular, we are most grateful to HRH Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, former President of the SCTH; former Vice-President of the SCTH and Director of the Two Holy Mosques Cultural Heritage Program, Prof Dr Ali bin Ibrahim al-Ghabban; former Vice-President Dr Hussein Abu al-Hassan; former Deputy Ministers Professor Sa'ad al-Rashid and Dr Muhammad al-Ruweishid; Director General for Research and Survey, Dr Abdullah Alzahrani, and his predecessors, Mr Jamal Omar, Professor Abdulaziz al-Ghazzi and Dr Dhaifallah al-Talhi. We are also very grateful for the support of Professor Said al-Said, Dean of the King Abdullah Institute for Research and Consulting Studies at King Saud University, Riyadh. At Tabuk, the interest of the Governor, HRH Prince Fahd bin Sultan, is highly appreciated, as is that of the local SCTH branch.

We are extremely grateful to Professor Dr Ricardo Eichmann and Dr Arnulf Hausleiter of the DAI for all their help and co-operation. We hope that they will be pleased with the results. We would also like to thank the Saudi-German teams working over many seasons on the excavations at Taymā' and the staff of the Taymā' Museum for all their assistance. In particular, we thank the photographers on the excavations, Mirco Cusin, Johannes Kramer, and the late Irmgard Wagner, for the photographs which appear in these catalogues, and Dörte Rokitta-Krumnow, Susanna Wittmann-Gering, Lisa Klisch, and Annika Busching for their great skills and patience in page setting successive versions of both catalogues. We are thankful for the help of Wassim Alrez and Ibrahim Salman, who translated the captions into Arabic. Finally, we are most grateful to Professor Frédéric Imbert, Dr Jérôme Norris and Dr Peter Stein for their contributions to this volume.

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INTRODUCTION

The collection now in the Taymā' Museum has been built up since the late 1970s, partly from archaeological excavations and partly from accidental finds made during building or irrigation works in and around the oasis. Excavations have been undertaken since 1979 by the Saudi Deputy Ministry of Antiquities and Museums, now the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage, and from 2004 onwards by the Saudi-German team. Before the present Museum was built, the collection was housed in the Taymā' office of the Deputy Ministry, but in 1985 it was transferred to the new Taymā' Museum. Mr William Facey, who was working as a planning and exhibition consultant with Michael Rice and Company, as part of the programme to establish seven local museums around Saudi Arabia, photographed the inscriptions which were there at the time. We are most grateful to him for making his photographs available to us.

At the time of writing, with the exception of TM.A.008 and TM.TAr.017, which were on display in the Museum, and TM.TAr.023, TM.T.030 and TM.T.031, which were in the Museum courtyard, all the inscriptions were housed in the Museum storeroom. However, a new museum is planned in which it will be possible to display many more of them. Other inscriptions from Taymā' are to be found in the National Museum in Riyadh and the Musée du Louvre in Paris. New editions of these texts appear in Part 2 of this volume.

This *Catalogue of the inscriptions in the Taymā' Museum and Other Collections* lists the 'pre-existing collection', consisting of those texts discovered in excavations prior to 2004, and chance finds for which information on provenance is regrettably sparse. The directors of the Saudi-German excavations at Taymā' wished the inscriptions found in those excavations to be published in a separate catalogue which can be found in Taymā' II, rather than in a single volume since they felt it was important to separate those found in scientific excavations from those with little or no detailed archaeological provenance. This is why there are two catalogues. To the best of our knowledge, these two catalogues contain all the inscriptions from the oasis of Taymā' known at the time of publication.¹ We hope that the inconvenience of having two catalogues will be modified for the reader by the combined index of words and names from the inscriptions in both catalogues, which appears at the end of each, therefore providing a complete lexical and onomastic list for all the inscriptions of the oasis.

¹ It should be noted that several of the inscriptions included in Degen 1974, followed by Schwiderski 2004 who uses Degen's numbering of the inscriptions, are either from the desert around the oasis (nos. 11 and 13) or from areas in and around Madā' in Ṣāliḥ and al-'Ulā (14–19) and so are not included here.

THE LAYOUT OF THE CATALOGUE

The prefix **TA** followed by the excavation register number (e.g. TA 13109) indicates that the inscription can be found in the *Catalogue of the inscriptions discovered in the Saudi-German excavations at Taymā' 2004–2015*. (Taymā' II). The prefix **TM** indicates that the inscription is in the Taymā' Museum and is in this catalogue. Following **TM**, the script of the text is indicated by one of the following:

- A** Arabic
- IA** Imperial Aramaic
- TAr** Taymā' Aramaic
- M** Minaic
- N** Nabataean
- T** Taymanitic
- Q** Query (when the script is unidentifiable)

Finally, this is followed by the number of the inscription within that section. Thus, **TM.IA.001** is the first inscription in the Imperial Aramaic section of this Catalogue.

Editorial Symbols

- | between words indicates a word-divider.
- { } in the transliterations, enclose a letter the reading of which is doubtful.
- { } in the translations, enclose the translation of the whole name or word in which one or more letters in the original are doubtful or restored.
- {.} in the transliterations and translations, indicates the presence of a letter which cannot be identified.
- {/} in the transliterations and translations, indicates alternative interpretations or readings of the same letter, for instance {d/r} in Aramaic.
- [] in the transliterations, enclose a letter which is not visible on the stone and which the editor has restored.
- before or after a letter indicates an inseparable particle or an enclitic pronoun respectively, e.g. *l-^clm* or *npš-h*.
- = indicates that the word has been divided between the end of one line and the beginning of the next.
- indicates one or more letters which have been destroyed, or a passage which is so damaged that it is impossible to read it.

Dimensions

Because most of the stones on which the inscriptions are carved are of irregular shapes, the figures given for the measurements always refer to the maximum dimensions. They are in the order length/height × width × thickness.

Provenance

All available information about an object's provenance is given whenever this is known. However, in a large number of cases there is no information, though it is likely that most if not all the inscriptions come from the oasis of Taymā' and possibly its surroundings.

Wusūm

Several of the inscribed stones also bear tribal marks known as *wusūm* (sg. *wasm*). In some cases, these may be later additions, but others were clearly symbols of social groups within ancient Taymā' and occur beside a considerable number of the inscriptions in the Taymanitic script.