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The Taymanitic onomasticon

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Abstract

The Taymanitic inscriptions, written in the *c.* mid-sixth century BCE, largely consist of personal names. While personal names cannot inform us directly on the language or ethnicity of their bearers, name-giving practices do reflect a choice made by the person bestowing it on someone. This article will focus on the personal names of the inscriptions; what they can tell us about their linguistic and cultural background, and how this might inform us on the cultural heritage of the authors of the Taymanitic inscriptions.

KEYWORDS

Ancient North Arabian, epigraphy, personal names, Tayma

1 | INTRODUCTION

Taymanitic¹ is a script used to carve inscriptions on rock in and around the ancient oasis of Tayma in north-western Saudi Arabia (Macdonald, 2000: 33). The oasis was one of the stopping points along the incense trade routes (Macdonald, 1997: 334–336). While not all inscriptions can be dated, several mention King Nabonidus of Babylon (*nbnd mlk bbl* or *mlk bbl*) (Esk 169; Esk 177 and Esk 025 respectively), which means that at least these inscriptions can be dated to the mid-sixth century, during Nabonidus' ten-year sojourn in the oasis (Beaulieu, 1989: 150).

Most of the Taymanitic inscriptions are very short and seem to be graffiti rather than official inscriptions (Macdonald, 2010: 11). The more elaborate inscriptions typically contain an introductory particle *l-* or *lm*² followed by the name and short genealogy of the author, and a short verbal or nominal phrase. Most of the inscriptions consist solely of personal names, sometimes not even accompanied by an introductory particle.

¹Note on the transcription conventions: [x] indicates a restored letter, {x} indicates a damaged letter.

²The *lm* variant of the introductory particle is typical for the Taymanitic inscriptions (Winnett, 1980: 135–136).

This article will focus on the personal names of the inscriptions;³ what they can tell us about their linguistic and cultural background and how this might inform us on the cultural heritage of the authors of the Taymanitic inscriptions.

As Macdonald (1999) has convincingly argued, the name of a person cannot be used reliably to inform us on the language of its bearer. Names are often archaic and 'travel' from language to language (1999: 255). Name giving, however, does reflect a choice made by the parents of a child. In the name-giving practices in the ancient Near East it can be observed that the etymology of names was often transparent to the person bestowing them. This is most clearly illustrated by the giving of 'harmonic names' within a family: when family members are given names which are 'etymologically, morphologically, or categorically/semantically related', a practice found in both Akkadian and Arabic sources (Dirbas, 2017: 212).⁴ In this way personal names *can* inform us on the cultural affiliations of a person's parents.

³A previous article dealt extensively with the language of the Taymanitic inscriptions (Kootstra, 2016).

⁴Cf. for example: Abum-waqar son of Aḥum-waqar (Akkadian, IPNOBS 8) (Dirbas, 2017: 27); or even family members that bear names based on the same root: 'āmir, 'Umar, 'āmira, and 'Imrān sons of Maḥzūm (Arabic, CIK 1 22) (Dirbas, 2017: 64).

1.1 | Linguistic background

In order to be able to place the attested personal names in their linguistic context at the oasis, it is important to have some understanding of the linguistic situation at Tayma. The language of the Taymanitic inscriptions is clearly distinct from other Ancient North Arabian (ANA) varieties, and it seems to share several isoglosses with North West Semitic (NWS) as opposed to Arabic (Kootstra, 2016: 105–106).

1.1.1 | Taymanitic

There are some typically Taymanitic innovations that set it apart from the other ANA varieties: the merging of the interdental fricative series with their sibilant counterparts (Kootstra, 2016: 75–81) and the assimilation of *l* and *n* to following consonants in unstressed position (2016: 83–84). An important sound change it shares with NWS is that of word-initial *w-* to *y-* (2016: 84). In addition to this, Taymanitic shares some lexical isoglosses with NWS: *ntn* ‘he gave’ (JSTham 352; Philby 279 ap)—compare for example, Hebrew *nātan* ‘he gave’; *yd* ‘he knew’ (Kim CIMG 0759)—compare for example, Hebrew *yāda* ‘he knew’.⁵ Taymanitic seems to share some other features with NWS, but due to limited evidence it is difficult to evaluate their presence in the language of the Taymanitic inscriptions with any certainty (Kootstra, 2016: 105–106).⁶

1.1.2 | Aramaic

Besides the Taymanitic inscriptions there are also many Aramaic inscriptions found at the oasis. It seems likely that Nabonidus introduced the imperial Aramaic used in

the Babylonian, and later in the Achaemenid Persian Empire, in Tayma as a new ‘language and script of prestige’ (Macdonald, 2010: 11).⁷ While it is difficult to date most of the Taymanitic inscriptions (apart from the three that mention Nabonidus), the fact that we have no Taymanitic inscriptions which are clearly datable to the period after Nabonidus’ stay in Tayma has led to the suggestion that the Taymanitic script may have died out in favour of Aramaic as the written language at the oasis (2010: 11).

1.1.3 | Thamudic

Finally, many Thamudic inscriptions have been found in the desert surrounding Tayma. Thamudic is still an umbrella term for inscriptions in a number of as yet undifferentiated North Arabian scripts.⁸ While these inscriptions are undated, they may have been contemporary to the Taymanitic material.

2 | THE NAMES

Many of the personal names found in the Taymanitic inscriptions are either common Semitic or difficult to interpret etymologically. This article will focus on those names that either display significant linguistic features that can inform us on their place of origin or ones that form a significant sub-category within the Taymanitic onomasticon.

2.1 | Personal names with significant morphological and phonological features

There are several names which contain marked phonological or morphological features that merit discussion.

2.1.1 | *ḏ* > *z*

In the language of the Taymanitic inscriptions the interdentals were lost and merged with their sibilant counterpart (Kootstra, 2016: 75–81). As expected we find several names in which **ḏ* is represented by *z*. This suggests that these names were taken from another language which underwent the same merger (e.g. Hebrew), that they represent local names, or that they were taken from a language that still preserved the interdental /*ḏ*/, and *z* was felt to be the closest available equivalent in Taymanitic.

⁵Reflexes of $\sqrt{\text{NTN}}$ ‘to give’ and $\sqrt{\text{*WD}}$ ‘to know’ are also found in Ge’ez and Akkadian, it seems that the loss of these meanings for these lexical items sets the other ANA varieties, ASA, and Arabic apart from the other Semitic languages.

⁶These are the possible reduplication of the third root consonant in the D-stem of middle weak verbs and a construct plural ending *-y*. If *ḥll* ‘he was a soldier’ (e.g. Esk 104; Esk 020; JSTham 403) should indeed be interpreted as the D-stem of the root *ḥyl* (cf. CA. *ḥawl* ‘strength’ and Hebrew *ḥayil* ‘armed forces, strength’), it seems that Taymanitic formed the D-stems of II-w/y roots by reduplicating the third consonant of the root (Kootstra, 2016: 94–95) in a similar way, for example, to Hebrew (Joüon & Muraoka, 2009: 198) or Ugaritic (Tropper, 2000: 575–576). Finally there is one example of what seems to be a construct plural suffix *-y*: *b’ly tm* ‘residents of Tayma’ (Kim CIMG 0759). Since there is no evidence for the use of *matres lectionis* in Taymanitic this probably reflects a suffix *-ay/* similar to that found in Canaanite and Aramaic (which became *-ē* in Hebrew and some forms of Aramaic); cf. Hebrew *malke* ‘kings of’ (Gzella, 2011b: 440). There is only one example of a construct plural in Taymanitic, however, making it difficult to draw any firm conclusions on it.

⁷Macdonald also suggests that, probably after the fall of the Achaemenid Empire, a local variety of the Aramaic script developed in Tayma (2010: 11).

⁸For a full discussion of the term Thamudic see Macdonald, 2000: 43–44.

Z'b < **d'b* (e.g. WTay 5)
Yzkr < **ydkr* (HE 43)

There is one name which may represent a form what underwent *d* > *d*, similar to, for example, Aramaic.

grd < **grd*⁹ (Esk 040)

This name, however, could also represent *jarād* ‘locust’ (from the root GRD), which is still used among Arabic speaking nomads today (Dirbas, 2017: 274).¹⁰

2.1.2 | -at > -ah

In a similar way to the other varieties written in ANA scripts,¹¹ Taymanitic did not undergo the sound change *-at* > *-ah* (Macdonald, 2008: 502–503). All the attested personal names in the Taymanitic inscriptions containing this suffix still have the *-t* form.¹² While this may not seem surprising—after all, the names have the expected morphological form—this uniformity sets the Taymanitic onomasticon apart from other corpora. The Dadanitic corpus, for example, which did not undergo the shift from *-at* > *-ah* either, does contain personal names with both the archaic *-at* ending and the *-ah* forms (cf. for example *hmmh* [e.g. U 123] and *hmmt* [JaL 157ae]; *s²n'h* [e.g. AH 081] and *s²n't* [Ph 395v]; *zdh* [e.g. JSLih 184] and *zdt* [JSLih 014] [OCI-ANA]) (Table 1).¹³

⁹Cf. for example Classical Arabic (CAr.) *juraq* ‘rat’ (Lane: 408b), Aramaic *grd* ‘beaver’(CAL). Note that beavers do not occur in the Middle East; in CAr., *juraq* is specified as a particularly large species of rat (Lane: 408b), it probably signified something similar in Aramaic. I would like to thank one of the reviewers of this paper for pointing out that the animal Lane refers to is a *jird*, a relative of the gerbil. He noted that it is ‘probably *Meriones tristrami* Thomas 1892 or *Meriones libycus* Lichtenstein 1823 both of which are native to the area around Tayma’. The reviewer refers to Harrison & Bates, 1991: 293–99.

¹⁰I would like to thank Hekmat Dirbas for suggesting this etymology to me.

¹¹Safaitic, Dadanitic, Hismaic, and Thamudic B, C, and D are all considered Ancient North Arabian (Macdonald, 2000: 29). This category is primarily based on script. Presently little is known about the linguistic features of the different scripts currently labelled ‘Thamudic’ (2000: 32).

¹²Note that both men and women can bear names with a *-t* suffix so this suffix does not indicate biological gender. It is only possible to tell the gender of a person if they give their genealogy using *bn* ‘son of’ or *bt* ‘daughter of’, followed by the patronymic.

¹³It is interesting to note that although the language of the Dadanitic inscriptions generally maintains *-at* in all positions, the personal names with *-h* endings seem to be more frequent whenever there are pairs of *-t* and *-h* forms available.

TABLE 1 Some examples of *-t* names in Taymanitic

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>bhs²rkt</i> | HE 34; WTay 20 |
| <i>hhdryt</i> | HE 17; HE 40 |
| <i>hmsryt</i> | WTay 37 |
| <i>h²nk²t</i> | TM.T.016 |
| <i>l't</i> | Al-Muṣayrifah Tay 3 |

In several languages *-at* eventually becomes *-ā*: **-at* > *-ah* > *-ā*.¹⁴ Since Taymanitic did not write final vowels the corpus may contain several names with a final *-ā* ending which are simply not identifiable.¹⁵

2.1.3 | s-causative

There is one name in an s-causative form: *s¹kfr* (JSTham 518). Unfortunately, there are no examples of causative verbs in the Taymanitic inscriptions, making it impossible to know what the local form would have been, but it clearly shows that this form cannot be a NWS or Arabic name. It may be a non-Sabaic Ancient South Arabian form.¹⁶

2.1.4 | -iwa > -iya

Taymanitic does not seem to have undergone the sound change *-iwa* > *-iya* as Arabic did; we have an attestation of the verb *rdw* ‘may he please’ (Esk 013) with the etymological *w* and the triphthong preserved (Kootstra, 2016: 84). If the name *lyh* (Esk 235) should be interpreted as coming from the root **'lw* it cannot be of Taymanitic origin and was probably from an Arabic linguistic source. There is also an attestation of a name *lw* (HE 32), with the *w* preserved, underlining the multiple linguistic origins of the personal names found in the Taymanitic inscriptions. Alternatively, *lyh* may represent *l* + *yhw* ‘yhw is high’ or ‘yhw proved to be high’ which is attested in Hebrew (cf. possibly *ly* [Zadok, 1988: 221]; *lywh* [1988: 324]).¹⁷

¹⁴For example Aramaic f.abs.s. *hh* / *ahā* ‘sister’ < **ht* (Gzella, 2011a: 578). Cf. also Amorite personal names: um-mi-ba-a-la (F) 6229 Aspät p. 312; a-ma-at-⁴ba-a-la (F) 400B (Streck, 2000, 1: 312).

¹⁵There are two examples of a pair, one name with the *-t* suffix, and one without: *h²nk²* (TM.T.040) and *h²nk²t* (TM.T.042; TM.T.016); *l't* (HE 32) and *l't* (Al-Muṣayrifah Tay 3). Unfortunately, it is impossible to tell whether the suffix-less form is just that, or whether it ended in a long vowel (I would like to thank Marijn van Putten for inquiring about the existence of such pairs).

¹⁶One of the most easily distinguishable features that sets Sabaic apart from the other ASA languages (Minaic, Qatabanic, and Hadramitic) is the formation of the pronouns and the causative verbs with an *h* while the other varieties all have an *s¹* here (Stein, 2011: 1046).

¹⁷I would like to thank Hekmat Dirbas for pointing out this possible etymology to me.

2.2 | Şalm names

A subgroup of names which seems to be of local origin contains the theophoric names with the element Şalm.¹⁸ Şalm was an important deity at the oasis (Dalley, 1986: 85–88), and is invoked in some of the standard formulae in Taymanitic: in prayers *mn s^lm' l-şlm l twy* ‘whoever obeys Şalm will not perish’ (HE 41; WTay 2; HE 24; WTay 1.2; HE 31); as the beneficiary in the performance of military duties *nşr l-şlm* ‘he kept watch on behalf of Şalm’ (e.g. HE 17; HE 40; WTay 32); and in one dedicatory inscription *b-şlm ntnt* ‘by Şalm I gave’ (JSTham 352).

2.2.1 | Şalm names in other corpora

Şalm names are found in other ANA corpora as well. *şlm*, *şlmy*, and *şlm* are used as personal names in Safaitic. In Dadanitic *şlm* names are rare: *şlmgd* (JSLih 314) and *şlmyhb* (JSLih 382) are attested. While JSLih 314 was found in the oasis of Dadan, JSLih 382 was found close to Tayma (OCIANA).¹⁹ *şlm* is generally used as a noun in Dadanitic with the meaning ‘statue’ (e.g. *qrb / h- şlm // l- dğbt* ‘he dedicated the statue to dğbt’ [JSLih 041]²⁰). In Sabaic *şlm* is attested twice as the second name of a person with two names (CIH 550; RES 4664²¹). This distribution of names seems to indicate that theophoric compound names containing the element Şalm are specific to Tayma and its surroundings, which matches Şalm’s status as an important local deity (Table 2).

Besides seeming culturally local, the Şalm names also seem to be consistent with Taymanitic phonology. One of the particular conditioned sound changes in Taymanitic is the assimilation of // and /n/ to a directly following consonant in unstressed position. Compare the following examples:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| WTay 9.2 | <i>M-s^lmw</i> |
| | ‘from s ^l mw’ |
| WTay 2; WTay 1.2; He 31 | <i>Mn s^lm' l-şlm</i> |
| | ‘Whoever listens to Şalm’ |

Note that, if the interpretation of WTay 9.2 in the first example is correct, *m-* (**mn*) is a preposition that never

TABLE 2 The occurrences of Şalm names in Taymanitic

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>lşlm</i> (WTay 30; WTay 34.2) | <i>şmn' m</i> (Esk 174) |
| <i>lşlm</i> (HE unpublished 2) | <i>şmntn</i> (Esk 4; JSTham 421; Al-Ĥabū al-Şarqī Tay 1; Al-Muqāyil.A Tay 3) |
| <i>şlm</i> (WTay 25.2) | <i>şmr'</i> (JSTham 504) |
| <i>şlm' b</i> (al-Anşāry 1423/2002: 65) | <i>şmrf'</i> (JSTham 376; WTay 14) |
| <i>şlmkfr</i> (Abu Duruk ANA 1) | <i>şmrk</i> (Esk 138) |
| <i>şmkfr</i> (WTay 26) | <i>şms²kr</i> (JSTham 520) |
| <i>şmd'</i> (JSTham 517+512; JSTham 519; TM.T.015) | <i>şms³mk</i> (TM.T.001B) |
| <i>şmflṭ</i> (TA 00515) | <i>şmtr</i> (TM.T.024) |
| <i>şm' g</i> (Esk 14) | <i>şmys³'</i> (TM.T.028)* |
| <i>şmhnm</i> (TA 9913) | <i>şm' zr</i> (TM.T.003) |
| <i>şmmlḥ</i> (JSTham 455) | |

*Transcribed as *şmyṭ'* there.

occurs without an object, which may have led to it being treated as a proclitic element, similar to the prepositions *b-* and *l-*; while *mn*, in the second example, is the subject of the sentence (Kootstra, 2016: 83).

Names containing a Şalm element seem to follow the same pattern of assimilation regarding the //l/. Whenever the Şalm element is in construct with the following noun in a compound name, and therefore in unstressed position, the //l/ is elided, while it is maintained whenever Şalm occurs as the second element of a compound name or when it is used by itself (2016: 84). Compare for example, the names *lşlm* (WTay 30; WTay 34.2) and *lşlm* (HE unpublished 2) with *şmkfr* (WTay 26), *şmflṭ* (TA 00515), and *şmn' m* (Esk 174).²²

The name *şlm' b* seems to be an exception to this rule. If we look more carefully at the names, however, the syntax of this name seems to be different from the other names with Şalm as their first element. While in *şlm' b* the second element is clearly a noun, constructing the nominal phrase ‘Şalm is (the) father’ (see Table 2), the other Şalm names seem to be verbal phrases. This difference in syntax may have been accompanied by a different stress pattern. This only leaves the name *şlmkfr* (Abu Duruk ANA 1) to be explained. Since there is also an attestation of the assimilated form *şmkfr* (WTay 026) it is unclear what caused the difference exactly. If the interpretation of the difference between *şlm' b* and the other names is correct, we may assume that the second element *kfr* in the name with the unassimilated form represents a noun rather than a verb in this name as well, although this is of course a rather ad hoc explanation.

Another phonological feature that stands out in this subgroup of names is that in none of these names is the final

¹⁸While Şalm names are also quite common in the Assyrian onomasticon, they do not seem to overlap with the Taymanitic ones. While the Taymanitic Şalm names form mostly verbal phrases expressing the power or goodness of the deity (e.g. *şmr'* ‘Şalm saw’; *şmntn* ‘Şalm gave’; *şmrf'* ‘Şalm restores’), the Assyrian ones often refer to *şalam-şarri* ‘the royal image’ or focus on kinship and closeness (*şalam-ahḥē* ‘image of the brothers’; *şalmuḥtu/şalm-ahḥūti* ‘image of the brotherhood’; *Şalmu-immī* ‘Şalm is with me’) (Baker, 2002: 1163–1168).

¹⁹OCIANA 31-1-2017.

²⁰OCIANA 31-1-2017.

²¹DASI 31-1-2017.

²²There are no clear examples of l-assimilation outside Şalm names.

triphthong of the 3-weak verbs represented (see *šmd*' ($\sqrt{D}W$); and *šmr*' ($\sqrt{R}Y$)), which sets the language of these names apart from both Safaitic and Dadanic (Jallad, 2015: 121; Sima, 1999: 93–94)²³ and might place it closer to NWS varieties that did collapse the final triphthongs in III-weak verbs (Gzella, 2011b: 444).²⁴

At present, it is unclear how III-weak verbs were formed in Taymanitic. There is one attestation of a III-w verb *rđw* 'may he be pleased', but this intransitive verb probably had a final triphthong *-iwa* (cf. CAR. *rađiya* $\sqrt{*RDW}$). It is not unlikely that triphthongs with two different short vowels were maintained while the ones with a short /a/ on both sides of the glide collapsed. Compare for example CAR. *laqiya* (\sqrt{LQY}) and *banā* (*banaya, \sqrt{BNY}).

This feature sets this group of names apart from other III-weak names in which the final triphthong is preserved. The clearest example of this is the name *'b'tw* (WTay 19) which follows the same structure as most of the Šalm names: theophoric element + verb. Since the vocalisation of the names is unsure in the Taymanitic consonantal orthography, the following examples are less secure.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>'tw</i> (JSTham 555) | <i>ns²w</i> (e.g. HE 17) |
| <i>s²ty</i> (JSTham 460) | <i>hyw</i> (JSTham 521) |

Finally, it seems worthwhile to point out that one of the most frequently occurring Šalm names contains the verb *ntn* 'to give'. This verb is also attested once in a Taymanitic inscription. The absence of the usage of \sqrt{NTN} as a verb 'to give' seems to set the other ANA varieties, Ancient South Arabian (ASA), and Arabic apart from the other Semitic languages.

| | |
|------------|------------------|
| JSTham 352 | <i>b Šlm ntn</i> |
| | 'by Šalm I gave' |

The root NTN is attested, however, as an element in personal names in several of these languages. There is one attestation of a personal name *ntnm* (Haram 15) in early Sabaic from the ancient site of Haram, in the Wadi al-Jawf area in Yemen (DASI²⁵), but none in other ASA corpora (DASI²⁶). There are thirty-seven attestations of the personal name *ntn* in Safaitic (e.g. C 1246; C 1555; KRS 2383), seven in Dadanic and three compound names with *ntn* as an element in

Dadanitic (*ntnb* 'l [JSLih 081]; *b'lntn* [JaL 073 a] and *ntndd* [JSLih 186]²⁷). This distribution seems to mark names containing the root NTN as part of the naming practices of the north of the Arabian Peninsula and the Levant.²⁸

This makes the name *'mntn* (JSLih 527) stand out in particular, in which the 'northern' element *ntn* is combined with the deity 'Amm. 'Amm is the main deity in the Qatabanic inscriptions, but *'m* could also refer to a theophoric ancestor. Natūn as a single word name is found in Amorite (Streck, 2000, 1: 330). While names with a theophoric element 'Amm are attested in Amorite as well (2000, 1: 269),²⁹ they do not seem to occur in combination with a verb of the root NTN.

2.3 | 'Ēlistic names

There seem to be two subgroups of 'Ēl-based theophoric names in the Taymanitic corpus—one in which the glottal stop is preserved and one in which it is lost (Kootstra, 2016: 82), signalling that they originated in languages with a different phonology (see Table 3).

As illustrated by the following examples, Taymanitic preserved the glottal stop in all positions (2016: 82).

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| TA 02669.1 + 02669.2 | {—}hmd / 'hr 'h // rt 'glory until the end of posterity' ³⁰ |
| Esk 31 | 's ¹ b dmg / l 'š{r/n} / h-đ{b}' / {h/h}{r}{'}{y}' 's ¹ son of Dmg to/for 'šr, the soldier, the chief' ³¹ |
| WAMT 59 | s ¹ q' / s ¹ l šl // m f {w} l b mk'l 'S ¹ q' asked Šalm and W'l son of Mk'l (too)' ³² |

This shows that the 'Ēlistic names in which the glottal stop is lost must have been coined in languages other than Taymanitic. Understanding which language these personal names were taken from and knowing the phonology of this

²³Although it has been suggested that the *-y* and *-w* represent *matres lectionis* /e/ and /o/ respectively in Dadanic (Drewes, 1985: 170–172), the third weak radicals do remain clearly orthographically represented also before pronominal suffixes, e.g. *rđy-h* 'may he please him' (e.g. U 116), and word internally, e.g. *bnwy* 'they built' (e.g. U 008).

²⁴I would like to thank Ahmad Al-Jallad for bringing this striking feature of the Šalm names to my attention.

²⁵31-1-2017.

²⁶31-1-2017.

²⁷OCIANA 31-1-2017.

²⁸Note the name *'mntn* (JSLih 527). While the deity *'m* features in NWS personal names as well (e.g. Hess, 1993: 234), he seems to have been the main deity of Qataban. I would like to thank Ahmad Al-Jallad for pointing out to me the significance of this deity in Qataban.

²⁹E.g. ḥa-mu-l[a]-ri-im ('Ammul[a]rīm) 'Der Vatersbruder möge sich erhalten zeigen' (Streck, 2000, 1: 269), in which 'Amm probably refers to a theophoric family relation (2000, 1: 158) or a theophoric ancestor.

³⁰See Kootstra, 2016: 109 for a discussion of the translation of this phrase.

³¹See Kootstra, 2016: 110 for a discussion of the translation of this inscription.

³²This translation was first suggested by Michael Macdonald (personal communication, 2013).

TABLE 3 Occurrences of 'ēlistic names in Taymanitic

| | |
|--|---|
| 'br'l (JSTham 433) | b'rl (Esk 13; HE 31; JSTham 478) |
| 'l'l (e.g. JSTham 378; TM.T.011; WTay 17; WTay 19) | dhml (Facey unpublished 864) |
| 'zr'l (e.g. Esk 181; JSLih 381; JSTham 372; 514) | gdnl (Esk 17.1) |
| bmk'l (HE 22) | hbl (JSTham 556) |
| gtn'l (HE 22) | hkdl (JSTham 505; WTay 35) |
| gwr'l (JSTham 432) | {k}frl (TM.T.020) |
| hb'l (WTay 2) | n'm'l (Esk 272) |
| kfr'l (e.g. Esk 001; HU 672; JSTham 503; TM.T.021) | nšbl (JSTham 441) |
| mk'l (HE 36; WAMT 59; WTay 35; WTay 36) | rdtl (Esk 290) |
| rb'l (WTay 24) | rḥml (JSTham 513) |
| wdd'l (JSTham 560) | rbbl (TM.T.021)* |
| ybhr'l (Seal in Staatliche Münzsammlung) | s'mrl (Esk 290) |
| yd'l (Esk 237; JSTham 555) | šhl (Al-Muqāyil.A Tay 6) |
| | y'rn'l (Esk 14) |
| | y'rs ² l (Esk 68+69; JSTham 431; 530; 542) |
| | y'ws ¹ l (Esk 178; JSTham 554; JSTham 567) |
| | y'zrl (JSTham 568) |
| | y'zrl (HE 41; WTay 12; WTay 13) |
| | ykfrl (JSTham 495; TM.T.016) |
| | yrf'l (JSTham 485; JSTham 537) [†] |
| | ys ¹ m'l (Esk 183) |
| | yws ¹ l (Esk 289; JSTham 443; JSTham 575; Seal in Cabinet des Médailles BnF no inv 1406 (M 5093 entré en 1902) |

*Note that this name is very damaged and the reading should not be taken as more than a suggestion.

[†]Compare this name to *yrf'* (JSTham 531) and *smrf'* (JSTham 376) from the root RF' 'to mend, repair' (Lane: 1117, bc).

language could help us to understand the realisation of several problematic phonemes in Taymanitic (especially the plain sibilants) (Kootstra, 2016: 82–83). Unfortunately, based on the current corpus it is impossible to tell which language they were taken from.³³

³³For a more elaborate discussion of the problems surrounding the identification of the source language of these names see Kootstra 2016: 82–83.

2.3.1 | Mk'l

One name that stands out among the 'ēlistic names is *mk'l* (Table 3), which occurs four times in the corpus (HE 36; WAMT 59; WTay 35; WTay 36). If this name represents the name *mīka'el* it is a well-known name in NWS languages (Noth, 2010: 249; Zadok, 1988: 58) but there are no attestations of it in other ANA corpora (OCIANA) or in ASA inscriptions (DASI). The name could also represent *makk'el* (with an assimilated form of **malk* 'king'). Note that this would be another example of the assimilation that happens in the Šalm compound names.

2.4 | Family names

There are only few family names mentioned in the Taymanitic inscriptions. They are preceded by the noun 'l 'family' and form a genitive construction with the preceding personal names.³⁴ Of the almost 400 Taymanitic inscriptions only ten contain family names. Below, a discussion will follow of several of the family names that stand out or can tell us something about their origin.

2.4.1 | Trḏlt

This is the only attested name in Taymanitic with the deity Lāt as a theophoric element so far. The name is a compound made up of the feminine prefix conjugation *tarḏī lāt* 'may Lāt be pleased', from the root *RḏW. Lāt is often invoked in Safaitic inscriptions (e.g. LP 685; C 1936) and seems to be connected to the Arabian cultural realm. Safaitic theophoric names most commonly contain the theophoric elements *lt*, *lh*, and 'l (Al-Jallad, 2015: 58). Compared to theophoric names containing 'l, names with *lt* are rare. Compared to other theophoric elements, however, names with *lt* are relatively frequent (based on the Safaitic personal names in OCIANA).

2.4.2 | Glk

This family name stands out due to its form. Since *g* and *k* are homorganic consonants they are unlikely to appear together in position I and III of a Semitic root (Greenberg, 1950: 162). This suggests that this name may have come from a different linguistic family altogether.

³⁴In Safaitic, lineage is indicated by the phrase *ḏ'l* (Al-Jallad, 2015: 57), as in ANA varieties, which use a relative + *āl*; the same construction is also found in Haramic (North Sabaic) (A. al-Jallad, personal communication, December 2016). In Dadanitic the relative *ḏ* is used, directly followed by the family name to indicate lineage affiliation (e.g. U 008; JSLih 306).

2.4.3 | H'g'

The name *h'g'* can probably be linked to a mountain range close to modern-day Ḥā'il, a city about 400 km east of Tayma. While the name 'g' does not look Semitic, it is attested in Safaitic as a toponym.³⁵ It is mentioned in the book of idols (Faris, 1952: 51) as the name of a mountain where the Ṭayyi' worshipped an idol called Fals. As mentioned before, it is also attested as a toponym in several Safaitic inscriptions that were collected and studied by Chiara Della Puppa from the Ḡabal Qurma region.³⁶ These inscriptions contain the phrase *r'y h-'g'* 'he pastured at 'g', which Al-Jallad and Macdonald propose to be the same mountain in northern Arabia. This mountain, or 'the two mountains of Ṭayyi' (*ḡabalā ṭayyi'*), are usually identified with Ḡibāl 'Aga', some 10 km west of Ḥā'il and Ḡibāl Salmā, about 60 km south-east of Ḥā'il (Al-Jallad & Macdonald, 2015: 153).

2.5 | Combinations of names inside lineages

Earlier in this paper the relation between personal names and cultural affiliations was mentioned. This section will consider the continuity of these affiliations across generations.³⁷ If they are closely connected to ethnic background, the types of names people choose for their children should be relatively stable across generations. Variation across generations of names from the different subgroups outlined above would seem to point to a more flexible cultural identity.³⁸ This could be due to a changing political climate³⁹ or to intense cultural contact with other cultures, possibly through intermarriage.⁴⁰

While some inscriptions seem to display some homogeneity in the names used, these examples seem to be

infrequent and do not always occur within the same genealogy. There are only two possible examples:

| | | |
|----------------|--|---|
| Esk 290 | <i>s'mrl {w} r{d}tl</i> | Both 'ēlistic names with a dropped glottal stop, but the names are given in conjunction to each other not as part of the same genealogy |
| JSTham 517+512 | <i>lm ṣmd' / b ṣmn 'm / b s³rbn</i> | Two Ṣalm-based theophoric names in the same genealogy |

In his dissertation on the use of animal names in Akkadian, NWS, and Arabic Hekmat Dirbas mentions the reuse of the same root across generations as an example of how people seem to be aware of the meaning of names and how they can use this knowledge in a purposeful way (Dirbas, 2017: 64). There is one such example in Taymanitic, which may be a coincidence rather than a conscious choice, given that it does not seem to have been common practice in Tayma.

| | | |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Abu Duruk ANA 1 | <i>l ṣmkfr / {b} { } { } { } // 'h}b b kfr'{} b k{h}</i> | Note also that the inscription is damaged, further complicating any certain interpretation |
|-----------------|--|--|

There are only slightly more examples of names from clearly different subgroups co-occurring.

| | | |
|--------|--------------------------|--|
| Esk 14 | <i>y'rl {b} ṣm{'}{g}</i> | A clearly borrowed 'ēl-based name, with loss of glottal stop with what seems to be a Ṣalm name as patronymic |
|--------|--------------------------|--|

Most of these examples consist of different forms of 'ēlistic names co-occurring (the ones with and without glottal stop).

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| JSTham 542 | <i>y'rs²l / b 'l'l</i> | The second name is quite damaged and the reading can be taken merely as a suggestion |
| TM.T.021 | <i>kfr'l b r{b}{b}{l}—</i> | |
| WTay 35 | <i>hkdl b mk'l</i> | |

3 | CONCLUSIONS

While personal names are not always etymologically the same as the spoken language of their bearers (Macdonald, 1999: 255), they can tell us something about the cultural affiliations within society. Whether these are ethnic or

³⁵Ahmad Al-Jallad and Michael Macdonald (2015) give an overview of the attestations of this toponym in epigraphic and medieval Islamic sources.

³⁶An edition of these inscriptions will appear in Della Puppa's Leiden University PhD dissertation, which is in preparation.

³⁷I would like to thank Maarten Kossmann for pointing me in the direction of this line of inquiry.

³⁸Since none of the inscriptions can be dated very precisely, it is difficult to compare naming practices within generations: we cannot know whether the father mentioned in one inscription belongs to the same generation as a father mentioned in another. As expected then, there does not seem to be a correlation between the usage of specific names and their position in the genealogies given: e.g. Ṣalm names occur both as author's name and as patronymic (compare Abu Duruk ANA 1 and Esk 014), and so do 'ēlistic names with and without glottal stop (cf. Abu Duruk ANA 1 with Esk 290 and Esk 014 with Esk 215).

³⁹Note in this respect, for example, the ten-year sojourn of king Nabonidus at the oasis (Beaulieu, 1989; Winnett & Reed, 1970: 90–91).

⁴⁰Note the so-called Hierodulenlisten which mention intermarriages between Minaic men and women from Dadan (Farès-Drappeau, 2005: 51 with n. 121).

political remains difficult to establish within a relatively small corpus such as Taymanitic.

The names attested at the Tayma oasis and the linguistic consistency in some subgroups suggest, however, that the names used in Tayma were drawn from different linguistic varieties, which is not surprising in an oasis town which would draw people from different places.

We find names that seem markedly local, based on both religious and linguistic features, in particular the Ṣalm-based theophoric names. Other names that seem worth pointing out in this respect are the names that underwent the same $\underline{d} > z$ shift as the Taymanitic language, which suggest that they were either, 1) calqued locally; 2) originated in languages which preserved the interdental; or 3) from languages that underwent the same sound change. At the same time, it rules out an origin in a language that merged \underline{d} and d like Aramaic. There may be one attestation of a name that represents $\underline{d} > d$. Also striking are the names with the suffix $-t$ which consistently remains $-t$ in the entire onomasticon, similar to the language of the Taymanitic inscriptions, while other corpora attest to a mix of $-t$ and $-h$ forms even when the language of the inscriptions has not undergone the $-at > -ah$ shift.

Other names seem markedly foreign. Compare for example the III-weak names in which the final triphthong is orthographically represented with the Ṣalm names in which they are consistently absent. Another category of names that has to have originated in language(s) other than Taymanitic are the 'Ēl-based theophoric names that lost their glottal stop, contrary to the language of the Taymanitic inscriptions.

The few family names that are mentioned in Taymanitic seem foreign too. While the Lāt-based name *trdl̥t* can be tied to the Arabian cultural realm, the names *glk* and *h'g'* seem to be impossible Semitic forms. The name *h'g'*, however, may point to a family origin not very far from Tayma, by the 'Aga' Mountain close to Ḥā'il.

When we look at the usage of names across generations it seems that names that can clearly be categorised into different cultural or linguistic groups could easily co-occur within the same family. Since most genealogies do not go further back than the name of the father and not all names belong to recognisable sub-groups, this can be no more than an observation at present. If the clear examples that we do find accurately reflect the name-giving practice within Tayma, this may suggest that the oasis was a linguistically and culturally complex society, which was, at least in its naming practices, open to outside influences.

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4 | SIGLA

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Abu Duruk | Inscriptions published in Abu Duruk, 1986. |
| AH | Dadanitic inscriptions in Abū al-Ḥasan, 1997. |
| Al-Anṣāry | Taymanitic inscriptions in Al-Anṣāry & Abū al-Ḥasan, 1423/2002. |
| DASI | Digital Archive for the Study of pre-Islamic Arabian Inscriptions, http://dasi.humnet.unipi.it . |
| C | <i>Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum. Pars quinta: Inscriptiones saracenicis continens.</i> Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1950–1951. |
| CAL | Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon, http://cal.huc.edu/ . |
| CIH | <i>Corpus inscriptionem semiticarum. Pars quarta: Inscriptiones himyariticas et sabæas continens,</i> vols. I–III. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1889–1932. |
| Esk | Eskoubi, 1999. |
| Facey | Inscriptions discovered in and around Tayma before 1985 and photographed by William Facey during the construction of the Tayma Museum. |
| Al-Ḥabū al-Šarqī Tay | Taymanitic inscriptions from the Tayma Survey found at Al-Ḥabū al-Šarqī available on OCIANA |
| Haram | Inscriptions published in Robin, 1992. |
| HE | Inscriptions published in Parr, Harding, & Dayton, 1970. |
| JaL | Dadanitic (formerly Liḥyanite) inscriptions published by Jamme, 1974. |
| JSLih | Dadanitic (formerly Liḥyanite) inscriptions in Jaussen & Savignac, 1909–1922. |
| JSTham | Thamudic inscriptions in Jaussen & Savignac, 1909–1922. |
| Kim CIMG | Photographs taken in and around Taymā' by Dr Kim. The photos were subsequently sent to M.C.A. Macdonald. |
| Lane | Lane, 1863–1893. |
| LP | Inscriptions published in Littmann, 1943. |
| Al-Muqāyil.A Tay | Taymanitic inscriptions from the Tayma Survey found at al-Muqāyil available on OCIANA |
| Al-Mušayrifah Tay | Taymanitic inscriptions from the Tayma Survey found at al-Mušayrifah available on OCIANA |

(Continues)

| | |
|---------|--|
| OCIANA | Online Corpus of Inscriptions of Ancient North Arabia, http://krcfm.orient.ox.ac.uk/fmi/webd#ociana . |
| Ph | Dadanitic (called Liḥyanite) inscriptions published in Van den Branden, 1960. |
| Philby | Inscriptions published by Van den Branden, 1956. |
| RES | <i>Répertoire d'Épigraphie Sémitique</i> . Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1900–1968. |
| TA | The registration numbers of the inscriptions discovered during the Saudi-German excavations at Tayma (Macdonald, forthcoming). |
| TM.T. + | The number of the inscription in the catalogue of inscriptions in the Tayma Museum (Macdonald & Al-Najem, forthcoming). |
| U | Inscriptions from al-Uḡayb in Sima, 1999. |
| WAMT | Taymanitic, Hismaic, and 'Thamudic' inscriptions in Winnett, 1971. |
| WTay | Taymanitic inscriptions in Winnett & Reed, 1970. |

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