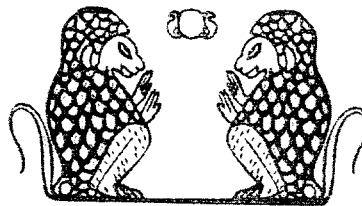


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n° 30

Bulletin d'informations méroïtiques



GRUPE D'ÉTUDES MÉROÏTIQUES DE PARIS

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Avant-propos

L'année qui s'achève a été pour moi tout entière illuminée par un sourire : celui du pharaon Taharqa, exhumé en janvier la favissa de Doukki Gel par les soins de nos amis Charles Bonnet et Dominique Valbelle. Grâce soit rendue à la Mission archéologique de Genève, qui redonne ainsi vie et jeunesse à ce vieux compagnon de route dont j'avais croisé les pas à Karnak au tout début de ma carrière égyptologique et qui n'a plus cessé dès lors de marquer de sa présence mes divers travaux et fouilles. Avec lui, c'est aussi toute une théorie royale qui est surgie du sol soudanais : Tanoutamon, Senkamanisken, Anlamani, Aspelta, tous ces souverains illustres qui ont fondé la grandeur de Kouch. Leur retour dans le monde des vivants après vingt-six siècles sous terre nous rappelle combien de trésors recèle encore la terre des Deux-Nils et nous laisse espérer d'autres découvertes.

Mais n'est-ce pas aussi leur rendre vie que de faire sortir d'un oubli millénaire leur langue quotidienne, que nous ont conservé les textes méroïtiques ? C'est un pas important dans cette direction que propose cette *Meroitic Newsletter* n° 30, avec une série de contributions centrées sur la langue de Méroé.

Après la "Poursuite de la constitution du *Répertoire d'Épigraphie Méroïtique*" (ici REM 0023F et REM 1368-1379) traditionnellement présentée par Claude Carrier, on trouvera un essai de Penelope Aubin sur la genèse de l'écriture méroïtique et la parenté de la langue avec le nubien, développant des idées originales sur un sujet fort débattu. Une partie de ces thèmes sera ensuite abordée par Claude Rilly dans une optique différente : un premier article est consacré aux graffiti du temple d'Amon de Doukki Gel récemment mis au jour et aux plus anciens témoignages actuellement connus de l'écriture cursive méroïtique ; une seconde étude, fort attendue, expose les conclusions de sa thèse de doctorat sur la grammaire, le lexique et la position linguistique de la langue méroïtique : on verra que les thèses avancées par Bruce G. Trigger, avec lequel j'ai lancé les *Meroitic Newsletters* il y a 35 ans, étaient justes en dépit du faible matériel linguistique dont il disposait alors. Ensuite, Nicholas B. Millet revisite l'inscription fameuse de Kharamadoye en affinant les analyses qu'il avait proposées sur ce sujet dans la *MNL* n° 13. Enfin, Claude Carrier présente un outil particulièrement précieux pour les méroïtisans : une série de polices de caractères méroïtiques (PC et MacIntosh), longuement élaborée au sein du Groupe d'Études Méroïtiques de Paris ; elle comprend une cursive archaïque, une cursive tardive, une hiéroglyphique, une hiéroglyphique inverse, une police groupant les caractères numériques et une dernière les signes divers.

J'espère que nos fidèles lecteurs trouveront dans ce numéro matière à réflexion et je me réjouis de les retrouver à Paris pour notre X^e Congrès d'Études méroïtiques, organisé sous le haut patronage de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, du Ministère français des Affaires Étrangères, de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV) et du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique ; il sera consacré essentiellement aux questions de chronologie.

Comme l'année précédente, la parution de ce numéro a été rendue possible grâce à la collaboration de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres et du LLACAN (Langues, Langage et Cultures d'Afrique Noire), UMR 8135 du CNRS ; je remercie ces institutions de la part qu'elles prennent ainsi dans la renaissance du patrimoine le plus ancien de l'Afrique subsaharienne, celui de Méroé.

Jean Leclant Noël 2003

Nouvelles inscriptions intégrées au *Répertoire d'Épigraphie Méroïtique (REM)*

Claude Carrier*

La précédente *Meroitic Newsletter* (MNL n° 29, 2002) avait présenté les inscriptions méroïtiques faisant l'objet des numéros REM 1343 à REM 1367. Nous enregistrons aujourd'hui quelques inscriptions méroïtiques supplémentaires répertoriées sous les numéros REM 0023F, puis REM 1368 à REM 1379. Ces numéros feront bien évidemment partie du *Répertoire d'Épigraphie Méroïtique, Corpus des inscriptions publiées, Tomes IV-V-VI* consacrés à la translittération et aux remarques philologiques des inscriptions du corpus et dont la rédaction est en cours au sein du Groupe d'Études Méroïtiques de Paris sous la direction du Professeur Jean Leclant. Nous remercions ceux qui nous ont adressé copie de leurs publications ou leurs observations bibliographiques sur les nouveaux numéros que nous envisageons de répertorier dans le *REM*.

REM 0023F (pl. I fig. 1)

Cette inscription avait été simplement signalée par Griffith (1911c, p.62). Présente sur un cliché photographique récent (Wildung et Schoske 1999, fig. 66), elle n'a jamais fait l'objet d'une publication particulière. Plutôt que de lui attribuer un nouveau numéro de REM, il nous a paru préférable de la joindre au REM 0023A-E sous l'incrémentation " F ".

Localisation actuelle : Naga, *in situ*.

Désignation originelle : /

Identification du monument : Naga, temple du Lion, pylône d'entrée.

Dimensions : /

Description de l'inscription : Texte gravé en hiéroglyphique.

Inscription d'une colonne dont l'état de conservation est très mauvais.

Bibliographie : Griffith 1911c, p. 62.

| Wildung et Schoske 1999, p. 66 fig. 66.

* Groupe d'Études Méroïtiques de Paris.

REM 1368 (pl. I fig. 2)

Localisation actuelle : Naga, *in situ*.

Désignation originelle : /

Identification du monument : Naga, temple du Lion, mur Nord intérieur.

Dimensions : /

Description de l'inscription : Restes d'un texte en hiéroglyphique sculpté en haut relief dans un cartouche au nom de Natakamani, en haut et à gauche de la représentation du monarque faisant offrande au dieu Amon de Napata.

Inscription sur une colonne dont l'état de conservation est mauvais.

Bibliographie : Lepsius D., V, pl. 63.
Griffith 1911c, p. 60.

| Zibelius 1983, p. 37 (Inscr. 25), 71 et pl. 14.

REM 1369 (pl. II fig. 3, 4)

Localisation actuelle : Méroé, *in situ*.

Désignation originelle : /

Identification du monument : Bloc de réemploi du bâtiment M 750 .

Dimensions : /

Description de l'inscription : Graffito sous la main d'un personnage tenant une corde (?).

Inscription de trois lignes gravée avant réemploi en cursive archaïque/transitionnelle et dont l'état de conservation semble moyen.

Bibliographie : Hofmann et Tomandl 1986, p. 36, 37 (fig. 31, 32).

REM 1370A&B (pl. III fig. 5)

Localisation actuelle : Naga, *in situ*.

Désignation originelle : /

Identification du monument : Naga, temple du Lion, base d'un support de barque.

Dimensions : /

Description de l'inscription : Deux cartouches en hiéroglyphique gravés en relief dans le creux.

Inscriptions sur deux colonnes dont l'état de conservation semble satisfaisant.

Bibliographie : Wildung 2003, p. "1/4 couv." (photo), 37.

REM 1371 (pl. IV fig. 6)

Localisation actuelle : Khartoum, SNM n° 20147. (*un petit morceau jointif porte le n° 20151*)

Désignation originelle : 16.J.20/2

Identification du monument : Fragment d'ostracon originaire d'Attiri retrouvé au cours des fouilles de sauvetage SASudan dirigées par Adams et Williams.

Dimensions : hauteur : 20 cm env. ; largeur maximale : 12,3 cm env.

Description de l'inscription : Restes d'une inscription de douze lignes en méroïtique cursive tardive inscrite à l'encre noire.

Bibliographie : Abdalla 2003, p. 44, 45 (fig. 5).

REM 1372 (pl. IV fig. 7)

Localisation actuelle : Méroé, *in situ*.

Désignation originelle : /

Identification du monument : Bloc du temple d'Amon M 250.

Dimensions : /

Description de l'inscription : Inscription placée au-dessus de la représentation de trois femmes emmenées en captivité et entre deux des captives.

Inscription de trois lignes dont l'état de conservation est mauvais : la première est très érodée et les deux autres illisibles.

Bibliographie : Hofmann et Tomandl 1986, p. 59 (fig. 66).

Zach 2003, p. 147-150, fig. 1-2.

REM 1373 (pl. V fig. 8-9, pl. VI fig. 10)

Localisation actuelle : Musée de Bologne, KS n° 3157.

Désignation originelle : /

Identification du monument : Méroé, nécropole Beg. Nord, pyramide de localisation inconnue, table d'offrandes de type B2.

Dimensions : /

Description de l'inscription : Restes d'une épitaphe gravée en cursive tardive.

Inscription sur une bande totalement érodée, très probablement au nom du roi Yesbokhe-Amani.

Bibliographie : Davoli 1998, p. 23-32.

Davoli et Zach 2003, p. 21-30, fig. 1-3.

REM 1374 (pl. VI fig. 11)

Localisation actuelle : Dangeil, magasins.

Désignation originelle : El-Fereikha 4/97.

Identification du monument : Table d'offrandes brisée en 3 morceaux jointifs, découverte sur le site d'El-Fereikha, au Nord de Dangeil, par un habitant de la localité voisine.

Dimensions : hauteur : 40 cm env. ; largeur : 34,8 cm env.

Description de l'inscription : Inscription au centre de la table d'offrandes, originellement de plusieurs lignes, dont seules deux ont conservé quelques caractères cursifs inscrits.

Bibliographie : Anderson et Mohamed Ahmed 1998-2002, p. 28, 29 fig. 2.

REM 1375 (pl. VII fig. 12-13)

Localisation actuelle : Méroé, *in situ*.

Désignation originelle : AT 16.

Identification du monument : Montant de porte Ouest AT 16 (face Est) du temple d'Amon M 260 de Méroé retrouvé lors des fouilles de Grzymiski et Ali Osman.

Dimensions de l'inscription : hauteur : 20,4 cm env. ; largeur : 31,8 cm env.

Description de l'inscription : Graffito gravé en cursive traditionnelle.

Inscription de cinq lignes apparemment complètes.

Bibliographie : Grzymiski 2003, p. 19-19, pl. XIVb, fig. 11b.

REM 1376 (pl. VIII fig. 14)

Localisation actuelle : Khartoum, SNM n° 22883.

Désignation originelle : excavation no. 16-J-20/199.

Identification du monument : Fragment d'ostracon sur poterie rosâtre à extérieur rougeâtre retrouvé dans les fouilles du SAS-UNESCO près d'Attiri.

Dimensions : hauteur : 6,7 cm env. ; largeur : 10,2 cm ; épaisseur : 0,6 cm.

Description de l'inscription : Inscription de deux lignes complètes en cursive écrites à l'encre noire terminées par des chiffres et dont l'état de conservation semble satisfaisant.

Bibliographie : Peust 2003, p. 53, 54 (+ photo).

REM 1377 (pl. IX fig. 1-2)

Localisation actuelle : Doukki Gel, magasin.

Désignation originelle : DG B. 34.

Identification du monument : dalle C (partie Ouest), bloc de grès retrouvé en 1998 à 1 m de profondeur parmi les vestiges du temple napatéen de Doukki Gel.

Dimensions : longueur : 18,5 cm ; largeur : 9 cm (épaisseur manquante).

Description de l'inscription : une ligne et une colonne en cursive, de part et d'autre d'un médaillon synthétisant apparemment un nom de couronnement royal en hiéroglyphes égyptiens. L'état de conservation est relativement bon.

Bibliographie : Rilly 2003, p. x, pl. IX fig. 1-2.

REM 1378 (pl. X fig. 3-4)

Localisation actuelle : Doukki Gel, magasin.

Désignation originelle : DG. II B. 50.

Identification du monument : bloc de grès réemployé dans le môle Est du temple napatéen de Doukki Gel (côté Nord, bas), découvert en 1999. Le bloc porte des graffiti divers.

REM 1378 (suite)

Dimensions : longueur : 48 cm ; largeur : 30 cm ; épaisseur : 28 cm.

Description de l'inscription : une ligne de cursive méroïtique archaïque dont l'état de conservation est moyen.

Bibliographie : Rilly 2003, p. x, pl. X fig. 3-4.

REM 1379 (pl. XI fig. 5-6)

Localisation actuelle : Doukki Gel, magasin.

Désignation originelle : DG/T/B. 232.

Identification du monument : bloc de grès décoré d'un disque solaire flanqué de deux uræus, appartenant à un linteau du temple napatéen de Doukki Gel.

Dimensions : longueur : 66 cm ; largeur : 33 cm ; épaisseur : 19 cm.

Description de l'inscription : vestiges de graffiti généralement illisibles, le principal et le moins mal conservé figurant sur la corniche ; de nombreux traits parallèles apparaissent plus bas, à gauche du disque.

Bibliographie : Rilly 2003, p. x, pl. XI fig. 5-6.

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Davoli 1998

Paola Davoli, « Una tavola per offerte meroitica del Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna », in *Studi di Egittologia e di Antichità Puniche*, t. 18 (1998), p. 23-32.

Davoli et Zach 2003

Paola Davoli et Michael H. Zach, « A Meroitic Offering Table in the Museo Civico Archeologico in Bologna (Italy). New Evidence for King Yeseboḥamani », *BzS* 8, 2003, p. 21-30, 3 fig.

Griffith 1911c

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Lepsius D.

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Peust 2003

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Rilly 2003

Claude Rilly, « Les graffiti archaïques de Doukki Gel et l'apparition de l'écriture méroïtique », *MNL* n° 30, p. x, pl. IX-XI (fig. 1-6).

Wildung 2003

Dietrich Wildung, « Naga - The City in the Savannah », in : *Common Aims 2003 - Sudanese-german co-operation in archaeology*, National Museum Khartoum, Khartoum 2003, p. "1/4 couv." (photo), 32-39.

Wildung et Schoske 1999

Dietrich Wildung et S. Schoske, *Die Stadt in der Steppe*, Grabungen des Ägyptischen Museum Berlin in Naga. Sudan. Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin 1999.

Zach 2003

Michael H. Zach, « An Unpublished Inscription from Temple Meroe 250 », *BzS* 8, 2003, p. 147-150.

Zibelius 1983

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Planche I

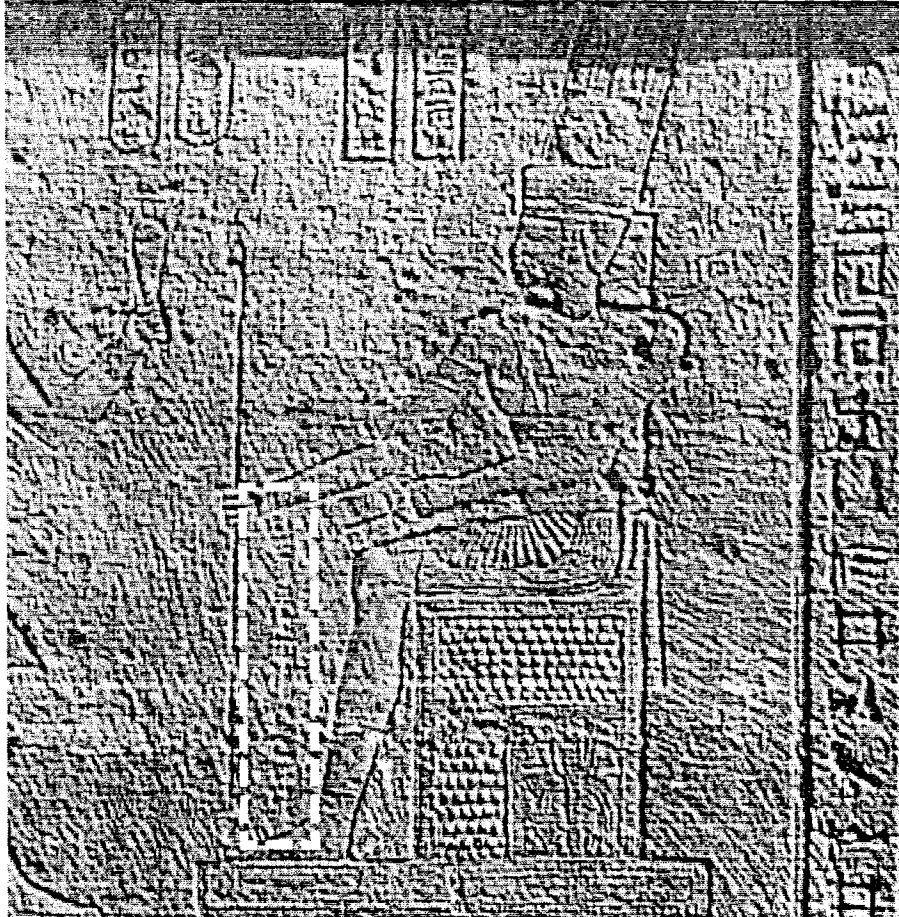


Fig. 1 - Inscription gravée sur le pylône d'entrée
du temple du Lion à Naga (REM 0023F)
(Wildung et Schoske 1999, p. 66 fig. 66)



Fig. 2 - Fac-similé d'un cartouche gravé sur le mur intérieur Nord
du temple du Lion à Naga (REM 1368)
(Griffith 1911c, p. 60)

Planche II

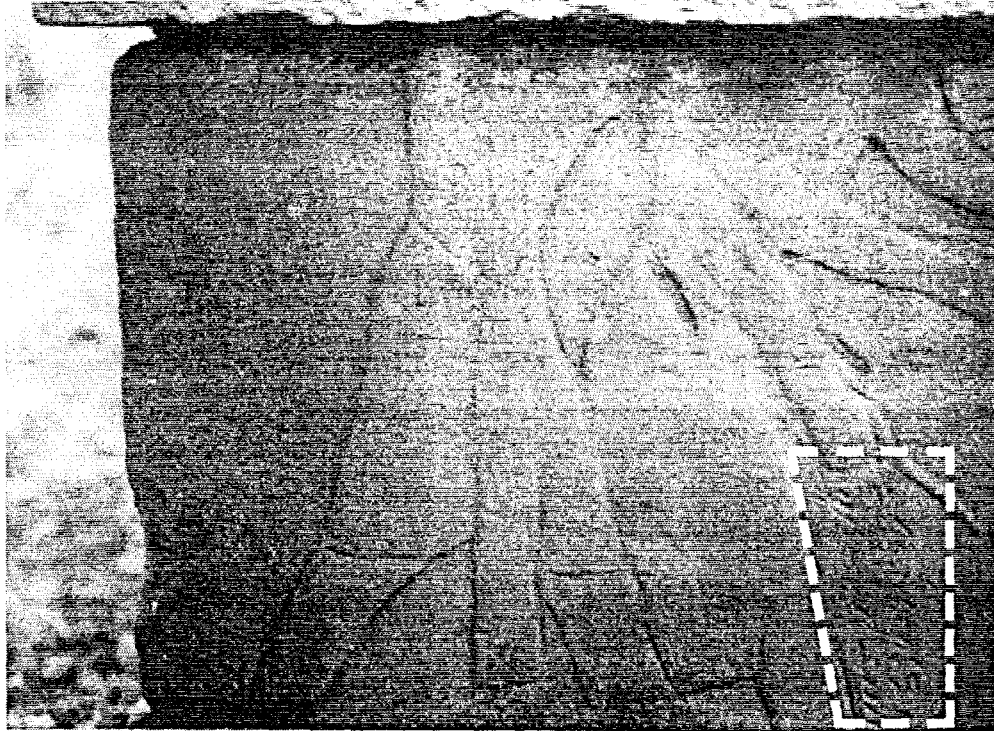


Fig. 3 - Bloc inscrit du bâtiment M 750 à Méroé (REM 1369)
(Hofmann et Tomandl 1986, p. 37, fig. 31)



Fig. 4 - Graffito sur un bloc du bâtiment M 750 à Méroé (REM 1369)
(Hofmann et Tomandl 1986, p. 37, fig. 32)

Planche III

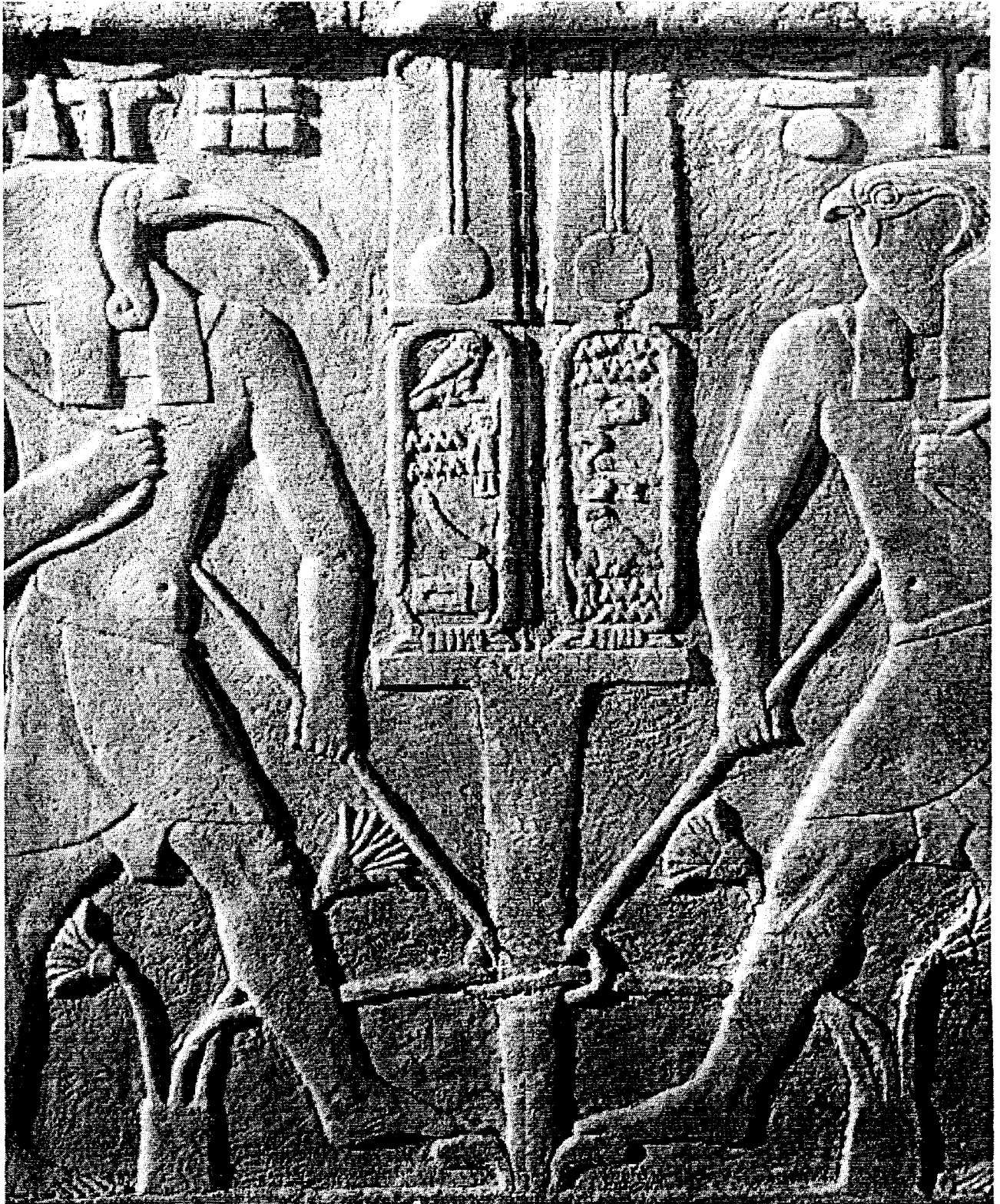


Fig. 5 - Base d'un support de barque provenant
du temple du Lion à Naga (REM 1370A&B)
(Wildung 2003, p. "1/4 couv.")

Planche IV



Fig. 6 - Ostracon originaire d'Attiri (Khartoum, SNM n° 20150) (REM 1371)
(Abdalla 2003, p. 45 fig. 5)

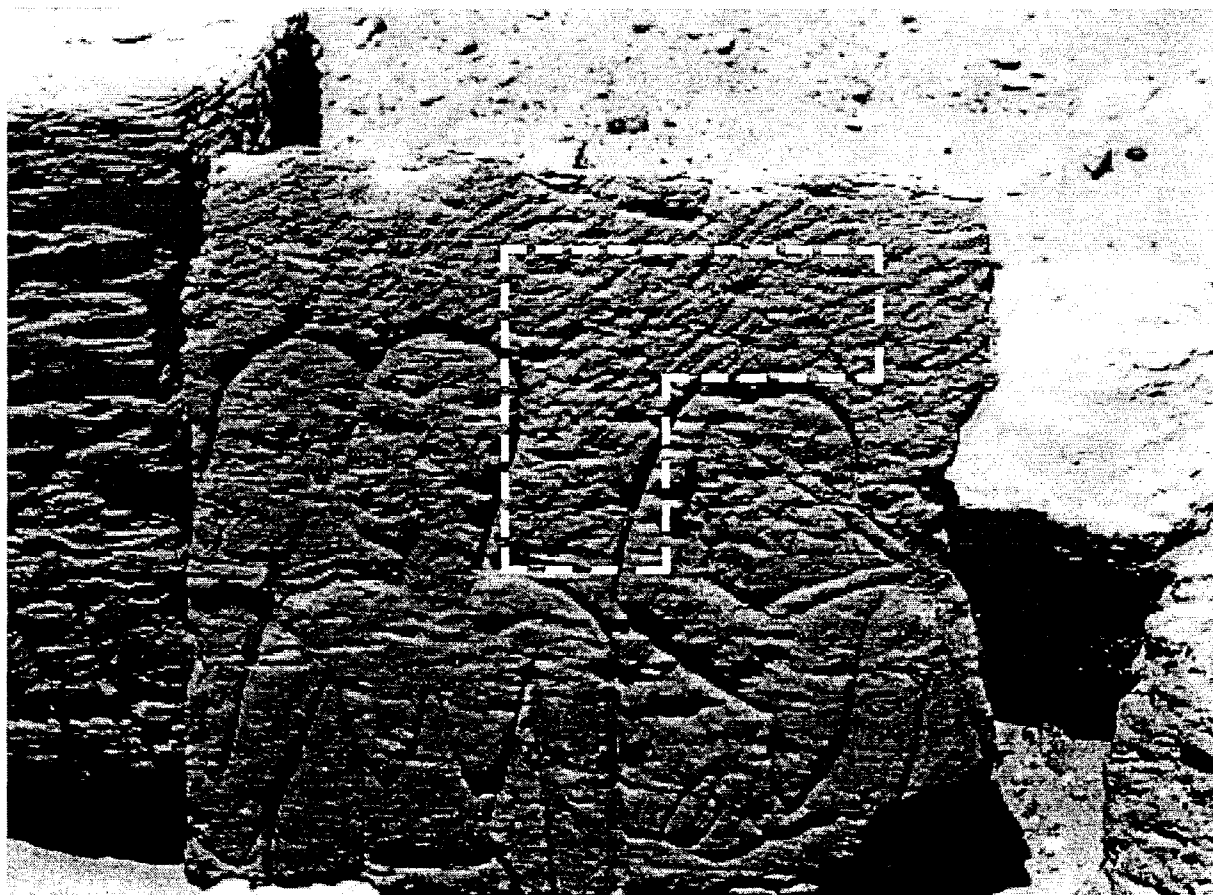
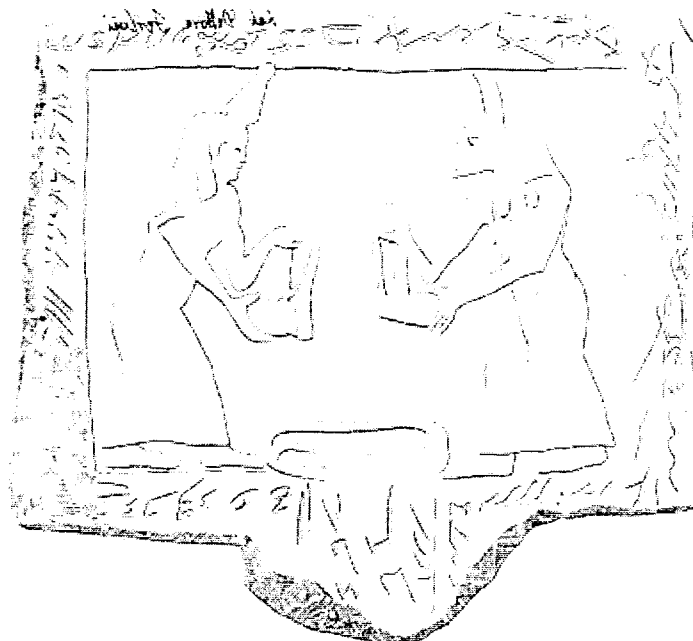


Fig. 7 - Bloc provenant du temple Méroé 250 (REM 1372)
(Zach 2003, p. 148 fig. 1)

Planche V



**Fig. 11 - Dessin de Ferlini d'une table d'offrandes provenant de Méroé (Bologne, KS 3157)
(REM 1373)**

(Davoli et Zach 2003, p. 29 fig. 1)



**Fig. 9 - Table d'offrandes provenant de la nécropole Beg. Nord de Méroé (Bologne, KS 3157)
(REM 1373)**

(Davoli et Zach 2003, p. 30 fig. 2)

Planche VI

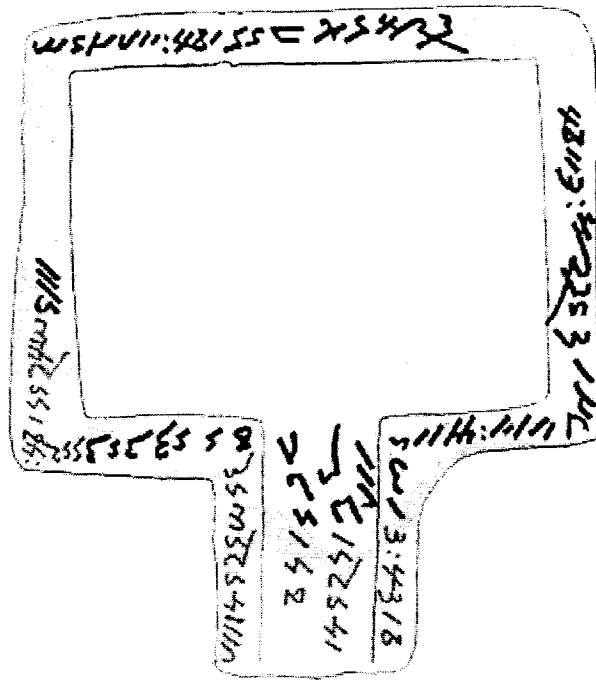


Fig. 10 - Reconstruction du texte (Cl. Rilly) de la table d'offrandes KS 3157 conservée à Bologne (REM 1373) (Davoli et Zach 2003, p. 30 fig. 3)

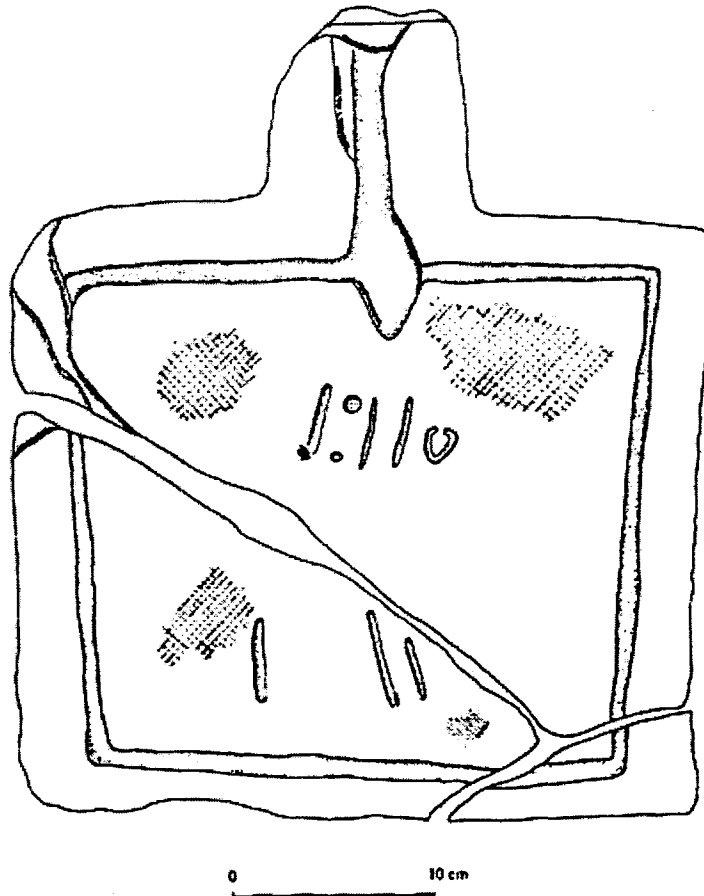


Fig. 11 - Table d'offrandes provenant d'El-Fereikha (REM 1374) (Anderson et Mohamed Ahmed 2003, p. 29 fig. 2)

Planche VII

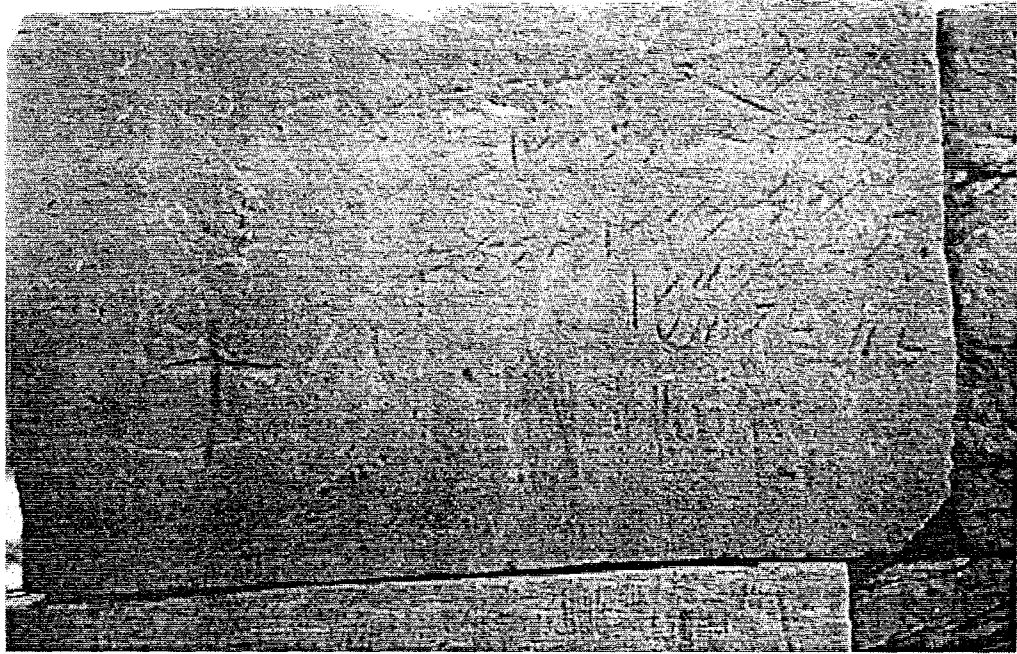


Fig. 12 - Graffito sur le montant de porte Ouest AT 16 (face Est)
du temple d'Amon M 260 de Méroé (REM 1375)
(Grzymski 2003, pl. XIVb)

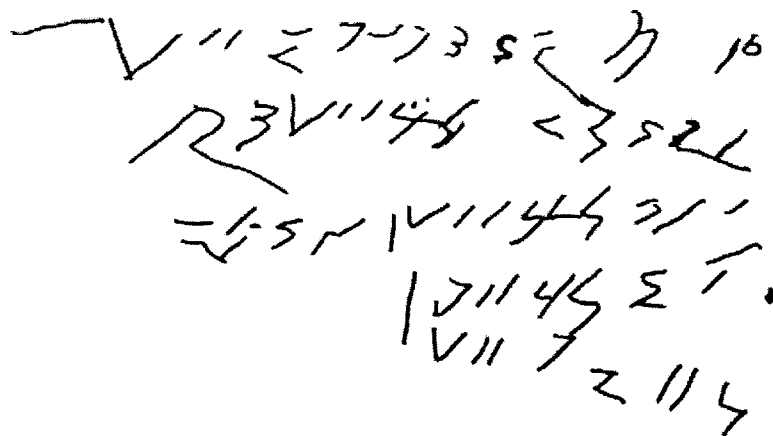


Fig. 13 - Fac-similé d'un graffito sur le montant de porte Ouest AT 16 (face Est)
du temple d'Amon M 260 de Méroé (REM 1375)
(Grzymski 2003, fig. 11b)

Planche VIII



Fig. 14 - Ostracon provenant d'Attiri et conservé à Khartoum (SNM n° 22883)
(Peust 2003, p. 54)

Evidence for an Early Nubian Dialect in Meroitic Inscriptions : Phonological and Epigraphic Considerations

Penelope Aubin *

This paper will reconsider the possible relationship between Meroitic and an early, even proto, form of Nubian. The idea of such a link has been languishing in Meroitic circles for close to a century — proposed, rejected, revived and shelved again for lack of concrete evidence.

To propose such a relationship yet again calls for a new approach. This will be to question some of the accepted sound values of Meroitic signs and to point to possible counterparts in Old Nubian. Some striking epigraphic similarities between Meroitic signs and those of the Kharosthi alphasyllabary suggest an Old Nubian connection.

Inscriptions in the language of Meroë, or Kush, ancient Egypt's southern neighbor, survive on several large stelae, numerous funerary monuments and ostraca. These texts have yielded to only fragmentary decipherment.¹

Background

The first step toward reading these texts is identification of the nearest descendant of the language in which they are written, or at least the nearest subgroup into which that language fits. Although the present consensus among scholars is that Meroitic probably belongs to

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1. Assessments of the state of research on Meroitic over the past 30 years include : Bruce G. Trigger, "The Classification of Meroitic : Geographical Considerations" in *Ägypten und Kusch*, ed. Erika Endesfelder...[et al.], *Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients* 13 (Berlin : Akademie, 1977), 421-435 ; Fritz Hintze, "Meroitisch und Nubisch, Eine vergleichende Studie" in *Beiträge zur Sudanforschung* 4 (Vienna, 1989), 95-106 ; László Török, *The Kingdom of Kush : Handbook of the Napatan-Meroitic Civilization* (Leiden : Brill, 1997), 49-51, 62-67, and Tormod Eide ...[et al.], ed., *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum*, v. 2 (Bergen : Klassisk Institutt, Universitetet i Bergen, 1996), 359-360.

Nilo-Saharan,² one of the four main language families in Africa, disagreement exists on where to situate it within that sizeable family.

The two most recent classifications for Nilo-Saharan are those of C. Ehret (proposed in 1989,³ with a revised version in 2001⁴) and M.L. Bender (1997).⁵ Their schemes differ sharply. Although neither sketches in the Meroitic branch on his classification tree, both scholars' research is useful to me, particularly Ehret's. I formulated the main lines of this paper in the fall of 2000, but the subsequent publication of his latest work with its detailed tables of sound shifts from original Proto-Nilo-Saharan phonemes has served to buttress some of my hypotheses. Where appropriate, I have tried to insert his findings as well as Bender's. Another recent source of useful data has been the three-part first section of the *Répertoire d'épigraphie méroïtique* (REM).⁶

In 1911, F.Ll. Griffith suggested that the Meroitic language, whose script he had just succeeded in transliterating, might somehow relate to Old Nubian,⁷ now classified as a member of the Nilo-Saharan family. Five years later, however, he abandoned this line of inquiry in the belief that the "borrowing of individual words may... have gone on freely between Nubians (Nobatae ?) and Meroites, but so far the language of the Meroitic inscriptions does not appear to have been the ancestor of the Nubian dialect."⁸ Griffith's rejection of such a link helps

2. There is no unanimity on this assignment of Meroitic to the Nilo-Saharan family. Among the other language families that have also been proposed is Altaic, as supported by Siegbert Hummel, *Die meroitische Sprache und das protoaltaische Sprachsubstrat als Medium zu ihrer Deutung* (Ulm/Donau: Fabri, 1992). An earlier suggestion was the Afroasiatic family : see E. Zylharz, "Das meroitische Sprachproblem", *Anthropos* 25 (1930), 409-463. Some researchers have also speculated that it may be related to such individual languages as Tokharian and even Sumerian : see Clyde Ahmad Winters, "A Note on Tokharian and Meroitic", *Meroitic Newsletter* 23 (June 1984), 18-21, and J.C. Sharman, "Meroitic : its Ancestors and Descendants — Some Relationships," *Azania* 9 (1974), 207-216. G. Böhm drew on all the above-mentioned families and languages in making a case for caste distinctions in speech and grammar to support the hypothesis of an ancient "Indo-nilotischen" proto language : Gerhard Böhm, *Die Sprache der Aithiopen im lande Kusch*, Veröffentlichungen der Institute für Afrikanistik und Ägyptologie der Universität Wien 47, Beiträge zur Afrikanistik 34 (Wien : 1988).
3. Christopher Ehret, "Subclassification of Nilo-Saharan : a Proposal" in M. Lionel Bender, ed., *Topics in Nilo-Saharan Linguistics*, Nilo-Saharan Linguistic Analyses and Documentation 3 (Hamburg : 1989), 35-49.
4. Christopher Ehret, *A Historical-Comparative Reconstruction of Nilo-Saharan*, SUGIA Beiheft 12 (Köln : R. Köppe, 2001), 65-110.
5. M. Lionel Bender, *The Nilo-Saharan Languages : A Comparative Essay*, LINCOM Handbooks in Linguistics 06 (München : Lincom Europa, 1997).
6. *Répertoire d'Épigraphie Méroïtique*, ed. Jean Leclant...[et al.] (Paris : Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 2000). The computer-based corpus of all inscriptions in the language contains those published over the course of the last decades in the *Meroitic Newsletter*, which began in 1968. *MNL* 28 (November 2001) included the long-awaited publication, by Claude Carrier, of the "Abratoye stela" discovered by Jean Leclant in 1961 during the UNESCO campaign. This was followed closely by *MNL* 29 in 2002 with Claude Rilly's publication of Queen Amanishakheto's obelisk.
7. Francis Ll. Griffith, *Karanog : The Meroitic Inscriptions of Shablul and Karanog*, The Eckley B. Coxe Junior Expedition to Nubia IV (Philadelphia : 1911), 22.
8. Francis Ll. Griffith, "Meroitic Studies II", *JEA*, v. 3 (1916), 123.

explain why for almost half a century virtually no one further investigated a connection between Meroitic and Old Nubian.⁹

In 1964, however, B. Trigger proposed a correlation between Meroitic and Nilo-Saharan's Eastern Sudanic branch. Besides the Nubian languages, Eastern Sudanic also includes Barea (also presently known as Nara) and six other subgroups of languages,¹⁰ according to J. Greenberg's classification scheme for African languages, widely accepted at that time.¹¹ Subsequently, other researchers have explored a possible relationship without drawing definite conclusions.¹²

In 1977, Trigger fine-tuned his earlier suggestion: he concluded that the most promising area for research lay with the most northerly languages of the Eastern Sudanic branch of the Nilo-Saharan family, notably Barea and the various dialects of Nubian,¹³ including Old Nubian, the focus of the present paper.

In a 1984 paper, M. Bechhaus-Gerst noted six words of possible Nubian origin in Meroitic, but she said the evidence was not sufficient to claim a family link between Nubian and Meroitic.¹⁴

In 1989, F. Hintze, who had earlier discounted connections between Meroitic and any other known African language, demonstrated some structural parallels between Meroitic and Old Nubian. He concluded, however, that without more research to reconstruct proto-languages, particularly in the Eastern Sudanic branch of Nilo-Saharan, the seeming lexical resemblances between the two languages could be mere coincidence and were not enough to prove a genetic relationship.¹⁵

In 1999, C. Peust briefly discussed the likelihood of an Old Nubian-Meroitic connection. In a work otherwise devoted to evidence of a specific dialect of Egyptian spoken in ancient

9. An exception is G. Murray, who suggested a few tentative cognates in 1923: G.W. Murray, *An English-Nubian Comparative Dictionary* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1923), 28, 33.

10. Bruce G. Trigger, "Meroitic and Eastern Sudanic: a Linguistic relationship?", *Kush* 12 (1964), 188-194.

11. Joseph Greenberg, *Studies in African Linguistic Classification* (New Haven: Compass Publishing, 1955), 75.

12. M.F.L. Macadam, "Queen Nawidemak", *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin* 23.2 (1966), 48; *École pratique des hautes études, V^e Section (Sciences religieuses), Annuaire (1970-71)*, 180-181 (concerning N. Millet and A. Heyler); B.G. Haycock, rev. of Bruce G. Trigger (with André Heyler), *The Meroitic Funerary Inscriptions from Arminna West* (New Haven: The Peabody Museum of Yale University, 1970) in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92.2 (1971), 307-309; Fritz Hintze, "Beobachtungen zur Altnubischen Grammatik I und II", *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Ges.-Sprachw. R.* 20 (1971), 287; Werner Vycichl, "Trois études sur la structure du méroïtique", *Meroitic Newsletter* 13 (1973: July), 58-60, and Gerald M. Browne, *Introduction to Old Nubian Grammar*, *Meroitica* 11 (Berlin: Akademie, 1989), Vorwort des Herausgebers [by Fritz Hintze].

13. Trigger (1977), 434.

14. Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst, "Sprachliche und historische Rekonstruktionen im Bereich des Nubischen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Nilnubischen", *SUGIA* 6 (1984), 94.

15. Hintze (1989), 103.

Napata,¹⁶ Peust claimed that the Meroitic script was used to write two distinct languages, that of the Tanyideamani and Akinidad stelae and that of the Kharamadoye inscription. Peust suggested that further study of the sound equivalents in apparent cognates between the two languages might reveal that Meroitic really deserves the name of Old Nubian, while what has been called Old Nubian should rightly be called Middle Nubian.

Thus, while some scholars have speculated about Meroitic's links to languages ranging from Altaic to Sumerian (see note 2), others have suggested that a link between Meroitic and Old Nubian may be found in the future. So far, however, little concrete evidence has been produced.

If scholarship since the 1960s has been moving hesitantly in the direction of identifying Meroitic with early Nubian, its progress now seems stalled. The problem is that despite some good matches of individual words and morphemes, the two languages do not appear to be relatives in the same way as are, for example, various Germanic or Romance languages. I hope to show that this lack of resemblance may be more apparent than real.

This paper deals with the nature of Meroitic's syllabic script. Certain assumptions about this fundamental aspect of the language have provided a framework for scholarly research that has been unquestioned over many decades. I will attempt to show that some assumptions underlying the present transliteration of Meroitic may be wrong ; these false premises may have had the effect of obscuring signs of family resemblances between Meroitic and the Nubian languages.

Future papers will deal with morphological, syntactical and lexical aspects of the problem of Meroitic's identity. By reinterpreting the evidence and pointing out alternative explanations for contradictions and ambiguities, my aim is to show that Griffith's initial hunch was close to the mark.

Ancient orthography

Scribes working in languages with syllabaries, such as Mesopotamian cuneiform or Linear B, developed certain spelling conventions to cope with the problems of adapting their scripts to record configurations other than straightforward Consonant-Vowel (CV) syllables.¹⁷ To handle words with contiguous consonants or CVC (Consonant-Vowel-Consonant) patterns, Elamite scribes, for example, made use of both CV and VC type signs. This meant they could make CVC (that is, CV-VC) type syllables and words by simply ignoring the extra vowel in the middle.¹⁸

16. Carsten Peust, *Das Napatanische : Ein ägyptischer Dialekt aus dem Nubien des späten vorchristlichen Jahrtausends : Texte, Glossar, Grammatik*, Monographien zur ägyptischen Sprache 3 (Göttingen : Peust & Gutschmidt, 1999), 74-81.

17. D. Gary Miller, *Ancient Scripts and Phonological Knowledge* (Amsterdam : John Benjamins, 1994), 1-2.

18. David W. McAlpin, *Proto-Elamo-Dravidian : The Evidence and Its Implications*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society v. 71, pt. 3 (Philadelphia : The Society, 1981), 64.

Since their syllabary had no VC signs, Linear B scribes devised another method. They used a syllable with a “dummy” vowel identical to that of the preceding syllable sign to indicate a closed syllable or consonant blends like *pl* or *tr*.¹⁹ It is possible that the alternate spellings of *Akinidd* versus *Akidd* (probably with an unwritten *n*) or such spellings as *pestili* and *pqrili* may be examples of the work of Meroitic scribes trained within a system with rules similar to those of the Linear B scribes. A variation of such a rule is evident in the apparent Meroitic convention of sometimes using *e* following a consonant to indicate a closed syllable, or lack of the default vowel.²⁰ In this respect it resembles the Indic devanagari script which also has a default vowel and uses a special sign to indicate a consonant alone.

Meroitic scribes may have adopted another Linear B spelling convention, that of omitting the *n* signs when they are final or precede another consonant. (Linear B actually omitted *l*, *m*, *r*, and *s* as well in such situations).² Linear B was a true syllabic script; Meroitic, however, seems to be more of an alphasyllabary (with signs for syllables consisting of consonants plus *a* and for initial vowels and syllables which have vowels other than the default *a*). Meroitic shares this type of writing system with only three other scripts: Old Persian cuneiform, Brahmi (India) and Ethiopian Ge'ez.²²

J. Justeson proposes that in the case of the Old Persian and Indic scripts this distinctive form resulted from transmission by value recitation of alphabetic scripts, a process that accounts for “unusual gaps in the inventory of syllabic values”.²³ Justeson says that whereas the defective syllabaries of Old Persian resulted from misunderstanding the principles of the parent script (Aramaic), the same cannot be the case with Meroitic. He attributes Meroitic's defective syllabary to the adoption of Demotic Egyptian “group writing” signs, mainly used for writing foreign words and names, as originally proposed by K.-H. Priese.²⁴

It is not surprising that modern research has had difficulty grasping the principles of syllabification and vowel harmonization in the Meroitic language and its notation in the script: the scribes themselves had a variety of methods for showing these. One example is the alternative spelling of *pšī* and *pišī* in the “Benediktionsätzen” of the funerary inscriptions, or the variants *mdewi* and *medewi* in the *Akinidad* stela. Such spellings may indicate an only partially observed convention that the vocalization of syllables preceding a vowel sign should match that vowel sign. Another example of alternative spellings is the variation in use of initial

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19. Michael Ventris and John Chadwick, “Evidence for Greek Dialect in the Mycenaean Archives”, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* (1953), 91, and John Chadwick, *The Decipherment of Linear B* (New York: Random House, 1958), 76.
 20. Fritz Hintze, “Some Problems of Meroitic Philology”, *Sudan im Altertum, Meroitica* 1 (Berlin: Akademie, 1973), 323.
 21. Chadwick, 75.
 22. Bruce G. Trigger, “Writing Systems: A Case Study in Cultural Evolution”, *Norwegian Archaeological Review* (1998), v. 31, n° 1, 53-54.
 23. John S. Justeson, “The Evolution of Syllabaries from Alphabets: Transmission, Language Contrast, and Script Typology”, *Die Sprache* 35 (1991-1993): 1 [2-46], 38-40.
 24. Karl-Heinz Priese, “Zur Entstehung der meroitischen Schrift”, *Sudan in Altertum, Meroitica* 1 (Berlin: Akademie, 1973), 273-306.

a with names, both divine and noble : *mnil/amni*, *Šoreyi/Ašoreyi*, *Brtoye/Αβρατοεις*²⁵ (Greek). Meroitic inscriptions prior to the first century CE actually used the spellings *Amni* and *Ašoreyi* for the gods' names Amun and Osiris. This could simply indicate that the initial *a* disappeared over time but could also mean it was a vocative or honorific particle, an explanation that would also account for the similar variation for *Brtoye/Αβρατοεις*. Another explanation, however, is possible.

Research on Meroitic may have proceeded on a false premise that the signs consist exclusively of CV type syllables (with a default *a* vocalization) and vowels. The sign for *m*, to begin with, requires a closer look. Besides the example of *mnil/amni*, this sign occurs frequently in the funerary inscriptions where the word *mlo* is ever-present. Yet the presumed modern Nubian cognate for *mlo* is *amel*. Could this indicate that the sign was actually a VC syllable? Since an initial *m* is taboo in some Nilo-Saharan languages, such as that of the Jebel Dair region,²⁶ these initial vowels could simply reflect a similar convention. Furthermore, linguists are fond of projecting “prothetic alephs” onto proto-roots that do not conform to their expectations. Ehret reconstructs a Proto-Nilo-Saharan nasalized labial consonant *mb* : it persists in non-initial position in Dongolawi (the language which he uses to represent the Nubian branch of Nilo-Saharan) although it has merged with *b* in initial positions.²⁷

Another intriguing clue, however, points to a VC syllable : the Kharosthi script's sign for *am*, 𑌛 (or *a* with anusvara, i.e., nasalization), is remarkably like the Meroitic *m* : 𑌛.²⁸ Actually, the Demotic, Kharosthi and Meroitic signs for *m* all resemble each other, and each has alternate forms, with and without the extra hook.

Possible Kharosthi connections

According to I. Hofmann (and several other scholars starting with F. Cailliaud in 1822), similarities in art may attest to significant cultural contacts between the Indian subcontinent and ancient Kush.²⁹ In addition, there are very clear resemblances between the Egyptian numeral system, particularly the Hieratic, and the oldest Indian forms.³⁰ Resemblances in script strengthen the hypothesis of contacts with the Nile Valley.

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25. The notable of REM 1088 and 0321 and the stele recently published by C. Carrier (*MNL* 28, Nov. 2001).
26. Murray, xxv.
27. Ehret (2001), 30.
28. S.J. Mangalam, *Kharosthi Script* (Delhi : Eastern Book Linkers, 1990), 13.
29. Inge Hofmann, *Wege und Möglichkeit eines Einflusses auf die meroitische Kultur*, *Studia Instituti Anthropos*, v. 23 (St. Augustin bei Bonn : Anthropos-Institut, 1975), 130-148. For discussion, see Louis Žabkar, *Apedemak : Lion God of Meroë* (London : Aris & Philips, 1975). Žabkar cites Cailliaud, A.J. Arkell, J. Vercoutter, W. Vycichl, P. Shinnie, and Hofmann as proponents of “Indian influences” on Meroitic art (p. 1-5). Žabkar himself takes issue with this premise (p. 36-51), as does S. Wenig, “Meroitische Kunst”, *Journées internationales d'études méroïtiques*, Paris, 10-13 juillet 1973 (cited by Žabkar, p. 145, n.89).
30. Bühler, Georg, *On the Origin of the Indian Brāma Alphabet*, 2nd rev. ed., *Indian Studies III* (Strassburg : K.J. Trübner, 1898), [115]-119.

In an effort to approach the question of the Meroitic script with a fresh eye I have so far avoided discussion of its relationship with Demotic and Hieratic. The many resemblances originally were noted by Griffith³¹ and have been analyzed at length by Priese.³² O. El-Aguizy's extensive work on Demotic inscriptions and the development of the script from Hieratic to the Demotic of the late Ptolemaic period provides a wealth of examples of characters that resemble their Meroitic counterparts.³³ Common sense dictates that the Meroitic script is more likely to have developed from the culturally and geographically closer Egyptian writing than from the distant Kharosthi. This does not, however, preclude the possibility that the Egyptian Demotic/Hieratic also influenced Kharosthi, perhaps via its influence on Aramaic, or perhaps via direct Indic contacts, such as Hofmann suggests, with the Meroitic-speaking (and writing) region. Any such influences, however far-flung, are worth examining in the search for clues about the nature of Meroitic (and particularly about those characters that show little or no resemblance to Hieratic or Demotic). In language history, it is not uncommon for the outermost reaches of a language's range to preserve archaic features long after the original language (spoken and written) has undergone considerable change. Icelandic's relation to Old Norse and Old Irish's relation to early Celtic are examples.

Kharosthi, closely related to Brahmi, another of the rare alphasyllabaries mentioned earlier, was a script used in western India beginning around 500 B.C.E. under the Maurya emperor Asoka ; it continued under the Kushana dynasty until the 4th century C.E. It appears on both Persian sigloi and on Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian coinage.³⁴ This script may have been a hybrid of Aramaic, which was introduced by the Persian Achaemenid rulers who conquered Northwest India, and the indigenous Brahmi script,³⁵ itself possibly inspired by Aramaic. It is sometimes referred to as Indo-Aramaic.³⁶ Justeson advances the well-accepted view that the Meroitic cursive signs developed from Demotic Egyptian as Pre-Meroitic "group writing". Charts like those of Griffith³⁷ or K.-H. Priese³⁸ and more recently H. Longpré³⁹ readily demonstrate this development. These signs, however, also display many resemblances to Kharosthi.⁴⁰ In addition to similarities among the individual signs, Kharosthi, Hieratic, Demotic and Meroitic are all written from right to left, make use of connections between certain signs (Kharosthi, Hieratic and Demotic more so than Meroitic which only connects *i*) and employ diacritics on some signs.

31. Griffith (1911), 11.

32. Priese (1973).

33. Ola El-Aguizy, *A Palaeographical Study of Demotic Papyri in the Cairo Museum from the Reign of King Taharka to the End of the Ptolemaic Period (684-30 B.C.)*, MIFAO 113 (Le Caire : Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1998).

34. Mangalam, 8.

35. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya, *The Achaemenids and India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1974), 55.

36. Mangalam, 4-5.

37. Griffith (1911), 18-19.

38. Priese (1973), 300-303.

39. Hélène Longpré, "Investigation of the Ancient Meroitic Writing System", diss., Rhode Island College, 1999, leaves 47-54.

40. Since this was written I have come across an article by C. Winters that mentions similarities between the Meroitic and Kharosthi scripts although none specifically. While I do not support his unrelated

Whereas Hieratic mainly adds diacritic dots or strokes to certain signs to distinguish them from others similar in appearance, Kharosthi diacritic strokes affect the quality of the syllable sign's sound, as with Ge'ez. The Kharosthi strokes change the vocalization of the syllable signs, producing syllables with long *a*, *i*, *u*, *e*, *o*, or anusvara instead of the default vowel (short *a*). The short horizontal or oblique stroke used to denote an *r* sound, however, seems strangely like a similar stroke for *r* used as a preposition in Demotic.⁴¹ Some of the Meroitic signs with which this paper deals resemble Kharosthi signs with these specific diacritic strokes, although there does not appear to be any evidence for a similar system of vocalization using diacritics.

Meroitic seems to have retained the Hieratic/Demotic idea of diacritics. One example is the dot on the *t* to distinguish it from the *l*. Another is the dot on the *to* to distinguish it from some of the versions of *h* (although it is also tempting to see it as a sign of Indic-style anusvara in this case, given the unwritten *n* in *pesto*). Too bad the Meroitic scribes did not do the same for the *m*, *s*, and *h*, even though the left-hand stroke on the *q* would seem to be an attempt to distinguish it from those same signs. Curiously, the diacritic left stroke of the Demotic *t* that originally was probably intended to distinguish it from the Demotic *q* was retained even though the other part of the sign does not resemble other Meroitic signs.

Not all dots and vertical strokes in Demotic were used to distinguish between similar characters. El-Aguizy discusses the use of verticals crossing horizontals as possible indicators of *t* or *d* in group writing, and dots may be used to show the presence of *t*, *n*, as mentioned above, or *k*.⁴²

The second century B.C.E. (during the reigns of the Ptolemies in Egypt) is the time of the earliest known inscriptions in Meroitic cursive :⁴³ this period coincides with the same general dating for Greek ascendancy in western India, where Indo-Greek coins with Kharosthi inscriptions have been found.⁴⁴ It is tempting to speculate that contacts between people in different regions under Greek influence may have led to the use of new types of script. Another possibility : some version of the script reached India and Kush in comparable circumstances as early as the time of the Achaemenid Persian domination of both Hindu Kush and the Nile Valley. No examples have yet been found from this period, however.

Most of the Kharosthi syllable signs are for CV type syllables, but besides the VC type of syllable just discussed (*am*), there are signs for almost every CV type syllable in combination with *m* producing CVC syllables : *kham*, *gam*, *g'am*, *gham*, etc., most formed by attaching a diacritic type of stroke to indicate this *m* nasalization or anusvara. In addition, Kharosthi uses a great many syllable signs for CCV combinations, such as *khva*, *khsa*, *rtha*, *dra*, *sni*, etc.

conclusions about Meroitic, I do agree that the two scripts have many points of resemblance. Clyde A. Winters, "Inscriptions of Tañyidamani", *Nubica et Æthiopica* 4/5 (2000 ?), [355]-387.

41. El-Aguizy (1998), 27.

42. El-Aguizy (1998), 237.

43. Török, 62.

44. A.K. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1957), 29.

This is reminiscent of the Demotic group writing signs. As later discussion will suggest, Meroitic *m* is not the only sign that may possibly have a Kharosthi connection.

The Meroitic CV equivalent of the *m* or *mV* or perhaps even a *mba* syllable could be the *b* sign : μ . Considerable ambiguity surrounds these two phonemes. E. Zyhlarz has proposed that the Egyptian toponym *Mrkr*, for example, might be related to both an ancient province *Markale* and the Pure Mountain,⁴⁵ now known in Arabic as Gebel Barkal. It is common in other Nubian languages not to distinguish between *b* and *m* or even *f* and *p*.⁴⁶

The *m* or *am* sign is only one of several Meroitic signs that originally may have represented VC syllables. The peculiar *n* sign, β , could be interpreted as a combination of the Kharosthi *e* sign, η , and the *n* sign, ρ ⁴⁷ (reading right to left : $\rho \eta$), in other words *en/an*. This would explain why the other \tilde{n} (or *ne*) sign, α , is never followed by a vowel since it already includes one in CV form, although it rarely occurs initially, just like the corresponding *n* sign in Old Nubian, φ , which it resembles.⁴⁸ If the *n* sign represents *en/an*, it would still conform to the Old Nubian rule that *n* is not allowed initially. It is curious that both Meroitic *n* signs most closely resemble Hieratic and Demotic group writing signs⁴⁹ that terminate rather than begin with *n*. This may be another indication that neither can represent an initial sound. Enigmatically, the Demotic sign representing group writing for three lines of waves⁵⁰ most likely has some sort of *n* sound, but it is identical to the right-hand side of β , in other words, to ξ (Meroitic *k*). The *n* sound that does occur initially in Old Nubian, τ , may result from a complex situation to be discussed later.

The same idea may apply to the *s* signs. Old Nubian also has two *s* signs : σ , and ω ; the latter, using the Coptic sign for the *sh* sound, is much less common than the former. It is possible that the Meroitic \check{s} or ξ , which actually resembles the Kharosthi sign for *dha* (*zh*), β ,⁵¹ may be a VC sign. Griffith himself remarked that the pronunciation of the god's name invoked in the funerary inscriptions, *Šoreyi*, may really have been "Ašoreyi", considering that there is a prefixed *A* in the earlier occurrences.⁵² B.G. Haycock suggests that the Meroitic *šil/šo* in the funerary texts and on some sherds from Begrawwiya (Bej. N. 11 [R.C.K. IV, 21-3-371a-d]) where *irp n kmt* ("wine of Egypt") is translated as *Qomo-š(o)* in Meroitic, means "make" or "made".⁵³ Since the Old Nubian root for "work or effect", according to Browne, is \bar{c} or $\epsilon\bar{c}$ [*eis*], this too could be seen as support for a VC pronunciation for the

45. E. Zyhlarz, "Countries of the Ethiopian Empire of Kash (Kush) and Egyptian Old Ethiopia in the New Kingdom", *Kush* 6 (1958), 15.

46. Murray, xxiv.

47. Mangalam, 13, 25.

48. Browne (1989), 2.2.1.

49. El-Aguizy (1998), 216 (β) and 168 (α).

50. *Ibid.*, 346 [CXLIII]. No phonetic equivalent is given.

51. Mangalam, 29.

52. Griffith (1911) 33. As with *mni* and *amni*, however, *Ašoreyi* is the older form and may include a vocative prefix.

53. Haycock (1971), 309.

Meroitic š sign. On REM 1270, 1271 and 1272, as well as the recently published E3652 from Tomb 307 now in the Musée de Bruxelles,⁵⁴ the form is *išo*, which corresponds even better. (The *o* would correspond to the Old Nubian third singular preterite I suffix with the *n* unwritten.)

The other *s* sign, $\forall\forall\forall$, is never followed by a vowel (presumably because like the \forall , it already includes one). It has no Kharosthi counterpart, but a similar sign is used in Egyptian Demotic script (7th-5th century B.C.E.).⁵⁵

A convention of transliterating the Meroitic \forall as *ne* and the $\forall\forall\forall$ as *se* (and the $\forall\forall$, which will be treated later, as *te*) has prevailed in most of the literature since Hintze's proposal in 1979.⁵⁶ Paradoxically, this presumed convenience may have contributed to the problems of decipherment.

Grounds also exist for suspecting that the *y*, $\forall\forall\forall$, and *i*, \forall , signs may in fact be a *Vi/Vy* and a *yV/iV* sign respectively. Again, note the resemblance between the Kharosthi *yi* sign, \forall , if rotated, and the Meroitic \forall (*i*).⁵⁷ Also, $\Gamma\Theta\epsilon\Gamma$, meaning "oil",⁵⁸ offers an intriguing example of an Old Nubian word with a two-syllable vowel combination or diphthong that could be the equivalent of Meroitic *ni*, perhaps pronounced as /na-yi/.⁵⁹ Such apparent cognates support the possibility that sometimes vowel signs may have been pronounced as separate syllables. On the other hand, CV syllables with vowels other than the default vowel *a* may have been handled by juxtaposing CV syllables and vowel syllables, with the added complication that sometimes this may have signalled vowel harmonization in preceding syllables, as noted earlier.

Old Nubian connections

In discussing Meroitic syllable signs, it is hard to ignore resemblances to several Old Nubian alphabetic signs, such as the \forall sign and for one of the signs for *w*, \forall .⁶⁰

54. Claude Carrier, "Un fragment d'amphore inscrite provenant de Méroé et conservé à Bruxelles (E 3652)", *MNL* 28 (Novembre 2001), 10-11.

55. Longpré, table II.

56. Fritz Hintze, *Beiträge zur meroitischen Grammatik, Meroitica* 3 (Berlin : Akademie, 1979), 15.

57. Mangalam, 35.

58. Gerald M. Browne, *Old Nubian Dictionary, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* v. 556, Subsidia t. 90 (Lovanii : Peeters, 1996), 202.

59. The combination " *ni* " occurs repeatedly with numbers in temple graffiti, which could make sense if these record donations of vessels of oil for anointing. Another plausible explanation, however, could be that this is related to the Old Nubian multiplicative suffix " *n/\Delta n* ". See Browne (1989) 3.8.3.

60. These two signs, which have striking Kharosthi counterparts (Mangalam, 16 : *ga*, and 13 : *u* respectively), have no close Demotic matches. The nearest Demotic characters are so-called group-writing signs for *šn* and *nw* (El-Aguizy, 168, 177), a peculiar situation in that the final rather than initial phonemes seem to characterize the signs. It does not take much imagination, however, to see that same Demotic *nw* in the Kharosthi *nu* sign reversed (Mangalam, 25).

Also worth noting is the obvious similarity between the two writing systems in the phonological rules against initial use of *l*, *r* and *ñ* in both languages.⁶¹ Ehret proposes that Proto-Nilo-Saharan initial *l* became *d* while initial *r* disappeared in Dongolawi.⁶² If this sound shift holds true for Old Nubian, then the frequent adjective *l̥he* that scholars believe means “great” may be a cognate of the Old Nubian $\Delta\Delta\Upsilon\bar{\epsilon}$ or $\Delta\Delta\Upsilon\epsilon\iota$, a form of the verb meaning “to be great”.⁶³ Without drawing any conclusions, it should be pointed out that the Kharosthi signs for *d* and *r* are identical to the Meroitic *l* sign. On the other hand, the appearance of initial *l* or *r* may signal that the word involved is borrowed (in which case the borrowed word could be Coptic $\lambda\epsilon\gamma\lambda\omega\gamma$ meaning “high” or “tall”). It could also hint that these two signs represent VC syllables.

The role of assimilation

The tendency for *r* and *l* to assimilate in the spoken Nubian languages may come into play as well in the written Meroitic language. C. Rilly makes a convincing case for such an assimilation in the case of the word *qor* /*qurra*/ (meaning “king”) from *qore* /*qur*/ plus /*la*/, with assimilation of the *-l* nominalizing particle.⁶⁴ Such a type of assimilation involving *ñ* may also explain the puzzling occurrence of the *-yi* suffix in *qoreyi* in line 8 of the Kharamadoye stela.⁶⁵ The *ñ* of the *-ñyi* suffix of the parallel constructions of the presumed “invocation” may have been assimilated in the first case under the influence of the *r* of *qoreyi*.

Other cases of such a type of assimilation may not yet be recognized. Browne and Hintze list dozens of Old Nubian examples of assimilation of the sonorants λ , ρ and η , both regressive and progressive, as well as less frequent assimilation of Γ , κ and Π .⁶⁶ Murray presents a tabulated alphabetical list three pages long of all the various assimilations possible in the modern Nubian languages.⁶⁷ Hintze points out, however, that in Old Nubian the spoken and written versions of words may have differed but both the assimilated and the “etymologische” orthographies seem to have been acceptable.⁶⁸

Another reason that Meroitic may look so different from Old Nubian is that it may be spelled as it was pronounced before much of the assimilation occurred. Note, for example, that Browne postulates that many of the Old Nubian verb forms are based on the verbid (that is, a verbal noun, whether infinitive or participle). To this verbid Old Nubian added affixes: *-la/ελ* for the present, *-ol* for preterite I, *-cila* for preterite II and *-Δila/(Δ)Pila* for the future

61. Browne (1989), 2.2.1. and Fritz Hintze, “Beobachtungen zur altnubischen Grammatik VI”, in *Nubische Studien*, heraus. Martin Krause (Mainz am Rhein : Philipp von Zabern, 1986), 288.

62. Ehret (2001), 22.

63. Browne (1996), 36.

64. Claude Rilly, “Assimilation et détermination en méroïtique : le déterminant masqué du mot *qore* ‘roi’”, *MNL* 26, 79-85.

65. Nicholas Millet, “The Kharamadoye Inscription”, *MNL* 13 (July 1973), pl. 2.

66. Browne (1989), 2.3 and Hintze (1986), 290-291.

67. Murray, XXVIII-XXXI.

68. Hintze (1986), 291-292.

plus personal endings for the subjunctive or plus personal endings and a predicative λ for the indicative.⁶⁹ In the written forms of Old Nubian that survive, all these suffixes have undergone assimilation, in every case dropping the λ of the verbid or transmuting it to p . If one examines the original unassimilated forms, which include the original λ of the verbid, these verb suffixes appear as $\lambda\lambda$, $\lambda\lambda\sigma$, $\lambda\lambda\eta$, $\lambda\lambda\eta\eta$ (present), $\sigma\lambda\lambda$, $\sigma\lambda\sigma$, $\sigma\lambda\eta$, $\sigma\lambda\eta\eta$ (preterite I), $\sigma\lambda\lambda\lambda$, $\sigma\lambda\lambda\sigma$, $\sigma\lambda\lambda\eta$, $\sigma\lambda\lambda\eta\eta$ (preterite II) and $\delta\lambda\lambda\lambda$, $\delta\lambda\lambda\sigma$, $\delta\lambda\lambda\eta$, $\delta\lambda\lambda\eta\eta$ (future).

If such is the case, some of the many Meroitic forms with *-li*, *-lw*, *-sl*, *-sli*, and *-slw*, which commonly have been taken to be nominal forms or nouns with postpositions, should be re-examined as possible verbal forms. Many such examples exist in the Meroitic stelae. Such forms might answer the question of why the stelae do not seem to be written in the first person as are so many of their Egyptian counterparts. Perhaps we simply have mistaken some first person suffixes for nominal suffixes or postpositions. In the Akinidad stele, for example, there are abundant potential first person endings such as *li* and *sli*.

To the failure to differentiate *b* and *m* in some Nubian languages already mentioned, add the lack of distinction between *b* and *p* or *f* in Old Nubian. (Both are written as π ; with the exception of a few loan words, there are almost no occurrences of *b* except in personal and place names in the Old Nubian gospels).⁷⁰ On the other hand, the Demotic sign closest to the Meroitic *p* is a group writing sign representing *bn* (El-Aguizy CCLXXXIV). In the modern Nubian languages *p* is totally absent (as in Berber) except in Midob (also known as Tìdn-Aàl).⁷¹ Hofmann has already noted some seeming labial alternations, possibly dialectal, in Meroitic: for example, *biši* and *piši*, in the funerary inscriptions, or *ameloloke* and *beloloke*.⁷²

In searching for possible counterparts of Meroitic words containing *b*, then, Old Nubian words with π as well as μ should also come under consideration.

Dentals

Most perplexing of the Meroitic cursive signs are those for *t* syllables: a generous total of three appears to exist, all of which bear resemblance to Demotic signs (El-Aguizy XXXVII, LXVI, CLXXXV). The Kharosthi script may again provide clues. Notice the clearer similarity between the Meroitic 𐎢 and Kharosthi 𐎢 , which also signifies *ta*,⁷³ than between the Meroitic and the Demotic: the former is more angular and less curved in virtually all cases. The Meroitic *te* sign, 𐎣 , on the other hand, looks more like Kharosthi *di*, 𐎣 , or *di*, 𐎣 ,⁷⁴ although there are also equally good matches with some Demotic *t* characters.⁷⁵ Probable Old Nubian cognates

69. Gerald M. Browne, *Old Nubian Grammar*, Languages of the World/Materials 330 (Muenchen: Lincom Europa, 2002), 49-51.

70. Murray, XXIV.

71. Murray, XXV.

72. Inge Hofmann, *Meroitische Grammatik* (Wien: Afro-Pub, 1981), 33-34.

73. Mangalam, 26.

74. Mangalam, 26.

75. For example, El-Aguizy (1998), 303: i4.

would seem to indicate that the Meroitic *te* or 𐎢 may more likely represent a *d* syllable, for example $\Delta\epsilon$ (Old Nubian, “and”: Meroitic *te*?) or $\Delta\epsilon\rho$, so frequent in Old Nubian compounds (to apply, reckon : Meroitic *ter*?).⁷⁶

Many scholars have commented on the Meroitic *d* phoneme. The Egyptians and Greeks seem to have heard it as *r*, for example, in *Mrw.t* and Meroë for the Meroitic *Medewi*, *Mdewi*, *Mdewe*, *Bedewi* or *Bedewe* (note again the ambiguous nature of the labial *m/b*); or as in Greek *Primis* for Meroitic *Pedeme*. In some African languages, a trilled sound that almost seems a combination *dr* or *tr* is common. Ehret’s reconstructions of Proto-Nilo-Saharan non-initial consonants demonstrates a marked tendency for non-initial Proto-Nilo-Saharan **d* to become *r* in daughter languages.⁷⁷

Kharosthi once again yields clues to the enigma of what sort of sounds the Meroitic *r* and *d* may actually represent. First, the signs for *da* and *ra* seem barely distinguishable in Kharosthi, 𑌧 and 𑌨 , respectively, while *dra*, 𑌩 , as well as *tra*, resemble Meroitic *r*, 𐎢 .⁷⁸ Secondly, a great many signs exist for combinations of *t*, *th*, *d*, *dh*, with *r* both before and after in the Kharosthi syllabary. Thirdly, the Kharosthi *ra* sign looks very much like the dangling part of the Meroitic *te* sign (𐎢 , proposed here as representing a *d* sound), which seems to have been left off some of the Kalabsha examples of this sign.⁷⁹ Lastly, most of the *t* and *d* signs in Kharosthi have distinct horizontal cross bars like the Meroitic signs for both *te* and *to*.

One of the Egyptian hieroglyphic signs used for *te* in the Meroitic hieroglyphic script is the outstretched arm determinative (which is the sign given on Priese’s *Tabelle*⁸⁰ rather than the spiral type of sign 𐎢 given in standard usage). It meant “to offer or present” and seems to have had an original /di/ or /rdi/ pronunciation.⁸¹ C. Kuentz, however, points out that dental occlusives in Semitic languages seem to have undergone mutations in Egyptian similar to the Germanic and Armenian consonant shifts.⁸² The end result was that *d* and *t* came to be pronounced the same, probably as *t* if Coptic is any indication. One cannot be certain which pronunciation was in use at the time that Meroitic scribes were adapting the Egyptian hieroglyphs for their own purposes. By the time that scribes were using the Old Nubian alphabet, however, the pronunciation may have become /d/ in line with the shift of Proto-Nilo-Saharan initial **t* to Nubian *d* that Ehret describes.⁸³ Incidentally, almost all variations of the Kharosthi *th* syllable signs have a dangling stroke reminiscent of the Meroitic *te* sign.

76. Browne (1989), 3.10 and (1996), 43, 46.

77. Ehret (2001), 30.

78. Mangalam, 28, 36. The Meroitic sign is closer to the Kharosthi than to the single Demotic etymon that resembles it (El-Aguizy 1998, [LXXIII : g3]).



79. Priese, 302.

80. *Ibid.*, 303.

81. Alan Gardiner, *Egyptien Grammar*, 3rd ed. (London : Oxford University Press, 1957), 32, 579, 602.

82. Charles Kuentz, “Les deux mutations consonantiques de l’égyptien”, in *Atti del III Congresso internazionale dei linguisti* (Roma 19-26 Settembre 1933), eds. B. Migliorini, V. Pisani (Firenze : 1935), 193-199.

83. Ehret (2001), 21.

The third of the supposed *t* signs in Meroitic cursive, , has been transcribed as *to*. It also had another form . El-Aguizy remarks that the Demotic form appears both with and without the dot and notes that W. Spiegelberg suggests that since the same sign was used for both *d* and *t*, the dot may have indicated when a *d* was intended.⁸⁴ There is a single Demotic example of this sign representing *dw*.⁸⁵ The Meroitic sign does not have a strong resemblance to its Kharosthi counterpart.

Lexical evidence hints that it may have been closer to a /ts/ sound. Adding weight to this suggestion is the fact that the Old Nubian word for “water” (presumably *ato* in Meroitic) appears both as $\epsilon\tau\tau\omega$ and $\lambda\text{c}\text{c}\epsilon$. On old maps such as those accompanying Burckhardt’s *Travels in Nubia*,⁸⁶ the Atbara river appears as the Astaboras, with the *asta* component presumably meaning water since other rivers in the area also have this same prefix. This would appear to be a typical case of metathesis if the *to* were actually pronounced *ts*. A similar consonant alternation seems to have characterized the shift from Proto Afro-Asiatic to Pre-Egyptian, according to Ehret. In his numbered sound shift rules, numbers 4 and 5 reflect similar changes: “#4. PAA *t’ > pre-Eg. *ts’. #5. PAA *c > pre-Eg. *ts...”⁸⁷ In Ehret’s Nilo-Saharan reconstructions the picture becomes exceedingly complicated: he has proposed no less than nine proto-consonants for different types of *t* which have become all sorts of phonemes in the daughter languages, including those under discussion.⁸⁸

Hintze and Hofmann suggest that the *to* sign may have been used with an optative or imperative sense,⁸⁹ this would square with the Old Nubian imperative particle $-\text{c}\omega$.⁹⁰

The problem of *se + l*

Although ample evidence exists of forward and backward assimilation in the Nubian languages, there seems to be no Nubian precedent for a mutation along the lines of a sound-change law whereby Meroitic *se* plus *l* becomes *te* or *se* plus *lo* becomes *to*.⁹¹ This apparent sound shift or assimilation in Meroitic has been widely accepted by scholars; Hintze, for one, in some of his transliterations reconstructs *se-l* and *se-lo* wherever *te* and *to* occur in the Meroitic texts.⁹²

84. El-Aguizy (1998), 40.

85. El-Aguizy (1998), 343 [CXXXIV : g1].

86. John Lewis Burckhardt, *Travels in Nubia*, 2nd ed., (London : Murray, 1822), [1].

87. C. Ehret, *Reconstructing Proto-Afroasiatic*, (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1995), 529.

88. Ehret (2001), 21, 31.

89. Hintze (1979), 76, and Hofmann (1981), 205-208.

90. Browne (1989), 3.9.17; and Gerald M. Browne, *Old Nubian Dictionary Appendices*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, v. 562, Subsidia t. 92 (Lovanii : Peeters, 1997), 38-43.

91. This phenomenon was first recognized by Griffith, “Meroitic Studies II”, *Journal of Egyptian Archeology* 3 (1916), 124. It came to be referred to as “Hestermannsches Lautgesetz” because of an article on the subject by F. Hestermann, “Ein Lautgesetz in den meroitischen Inschriften”, *Folia Ethnographica* 1 (1925), 11-13. It has also been noted by N. Millet, “A Possible Phonetic Alternation in Meroitic”, *Meroitica* 1 (1973), 314, and by I. Hofmann, *Meroitische Grammatik* (Wien : Afro-Pub, 1981), 36-37.

92. For example, F. Hintze, “Die Struktur der ‘Deskriptionssätze’ in den meroitischen Totentexten”,

While Browne mentions no Old Nubian assimilation of this sort, Murray does mention an assimilation of *st* becoming *tt*.⁹³ Given that *t* and *d* interchange frequently in the Nilo-Saharan languages, one could perhaps think of that *tt* also as *dd*. Considering that Ehret proposes a sound shift of initial **l* to *d* in Nubian (as represented by Dongolawi),⁹⁴ the following shift becomes conceivable: *sl* > *sd* then *sd* > *dd*, which in Meroitic would look like the *te* sign (geminate were only written once). To add another interesting dimension to Ehret's proposed Proto-Nilo-Saharan **l* = Nubian *d* equation, the Kharosthi *d* sign (as noted above) appears to be identical to the Meroitic *l* sign.⁹⁵

Another explanation for the interchange of *sl* with *d/te* may lie in two Old Nubian near synonyms: $\text{C}\text{I}\text{A}\text{E}$ meaning "every(one)"⁹⁶ and AIE , meaning "many".⁹⁷ Neither of these necessarily requires a plural noun and may also be used more like a partitive genitive in some cases. Commonly in Meroitic, adjectives can attach to the nouns they follow, as we see in the numerous instances of *lh*. In many cases, then, the apparent *-sl* and *-te* suffixes could well be two different adjectives or partitive genitives (with the standard Old Nubian rectum/regens order).

Yet another explanation for the supposed *sl* > *te* assimilation could result from Browne's proposed original verb forms. If *te* indeed represents an Old Nubian Δ , such suffixes as AIA , $\text{A}\text{E}\text{A}\text{H}$ (> AEN), and $\text{A}\text{I}\text{A}\text{Y}$ might be comparable to *-teli*, *-te* (with unwritten *n*) or *-telw*. The supposed assimilation might thus simply represent different tenses of the same verbs with the *-sl* suffixes representing the Old Nubian preterite II forms and the *-te* suffixes representing the future forms.

What does the proposed revision of *te* (IA) as *d* or *th* mean for the Meroitic sign which has been labelled *d* (A)? Again, the Kharosthi script may point to the answer: Kharosthi *g'a*, g , or *j'a*, z , looks much like the Meroitic A sign, which can also have the form A .⁹⁸ As well, some Old Nubian words proposed here as possible cognates for Meroitic ones have a *j* or \check{g} sound. Examples: Meroitic *dh* as in *adhite* in Akinidat 8 (and Old Nubian SAY , "to proclaim" ?), Meroitic *d* as in the Old Nubian direct object marker represented by the sign S (or S in Browne's grammar and dictionary).⁹⁹ The dominant sound in the Egyptian word for the eye of Horus or the *watch* / *wd-t* hieroglyph E , the same hieroglyph which Meroitic scribes used before the development of the cursive, was *tch* or *d* or \check{g} , as Y. Zawadowski¹⁰⁰ and Griffith¹⁰¹ point out.

Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientalforschungen der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Bd. IX, Heft 1 (1963), 3.

93. Murray, xxx.

94. Ehret (2001), 22.

95. Mangalam, 28.

96. Browne (1996), 158.

97. *Ibid.*, 45.

98. Mangalam, 17, 20.

99. Browne (1989), 3.9.5b.

100. Yuri Zawadowski, "Some Considerations on Meroitic Phonology", *MNL* 10 (July, 1972), 27.

101. Griffith (1916), 117.

Ehret's reconstructed Proto-Nilo-Saharan initial *d became *j* in Dongolawi. Other types of *d, however, remained as *d* while both initial and non-initial *g also became *j* in Dongolawi; to further complicate the picture, initial *t and non-initial *t and *th shifted to *d*.¹⁰² Such shifts have produced a situation in which possible cognates between Meroitic and Old Nubian as well as the other Nubian languages seem to keep multiplying.

Possible evidence for a *j* sound for the Meroitic *d* is the word *Medjay*, the Egyptian term for an ethnic group from the desert region of Nubia whose members often served as police or servants in Egypt. In Demotic sources they are called *Brhm* while in classical sources they are the *Blemmyes*, ancestors of the modern Beja.¹⁰³ Scholars have speculated that these are the *Mdd* people who are cited in the Irike-Amanote and Harsiotef stelae.¹⁰⁴ One might also wonder whether they could be ancestors of the *Amag* or *Hamaj*, who are cited in later documents from Funj history and by early Arab and European travellers.¹⁰⁵ Their name could also reflect an association with the area referred to as *Amod* (probably the region now known as Qustul between Gebel Adda and Faras) in Meroitic in the *hllhror* inscriptions.¹⁰⁶ The Meroitic word *mdes* in the opening lines of the Kharamadoye stela may well refer to the king's dominion over this land or people. Browne in his Old Nubian dictionary cites the Meroitic word *mde* as possibly meaning "servant" under the Old Nubian entry for ΜΕΛΔΟΥ.¹⁰⁷

The Meroitic *q* sign or *ⲕ* may have been pronounced more like a hard *k*, while the *k* sign or *Ⲛ* may have sounded more like a softer *k* or *kh*. Although the closest Demotic match in appearance for the *k* sign is the one that represents the triple-wave group writing sign, El-Aguizy gives no phonetic equivalent for this etymon.¹⁰⁸ Strangely, the other Demotic sign that resembles the Meroitic *k* is the group writing sign for *bk*. Neither the *q* nor the *k* has a Kharosthi equivalent.

The Coptic evidence also supports the pronunciation as *k* of the Egyptian goose biliteral hieroglyph used by Meroitic scribes (Ⲛⲓ), while the Greek transcription seems to have been *kh*. This sign originally represented *gb* in Egyptian, as in the earth god Geb, but probably was pronounced *k* as in Coptic ΚΗΕΤ, or *kh* as in the Greek version of the same god's name, χηβ, by the time the Meroitic scribes adopted Egyptian signs to write their own language, according to A. Dembska.¹⁰⁹

A look at a likely Old Nubian cognate reinforces the idea of a /k/ pronunciation for the Meroitic *q*. It is generally agreed that Meroitic *qo* was probably an honorific with the conno-

102. Ehret (2001) 20-21, 30-31.

103. Török (1997), 39.

104. For example, Eide, ed., v. 2, 407, 448-449.

105. Jay Spaulding, "The Fate of Alodia", *MNL* 15 (October 1974), 12, 16.

106. Eide, ed., v. 2, 675-676. The Old Nubian word ΜΕΛΔΟΥ meaning "servant" may reflect the fact that members of this ethnic group often wound up as prisoners.

107. *Ibid.*, 114.

108. El-Aguizy (1998), 346 [CXLI].

109. Albertyna Dembska, "A Note on the Sound Shift in the Egyptian Language and the Phonetic Value of the Meroitic [k] Sign", *Rocznik-Orientalistyczny* (1987), 45 :2, 73-75, and Kuentz (1935), 193-199.

tation of “ noble person ”, comparable to Old Nubian $\kappa\omicron$ meaning “ master ”.¹¹⁰ The Meroitic word for king or sovereign, *qore*, might be a contraction of *ko* and the Dongola and Kenuz word for “ chief ” or “ king ”, *ur* or *uru* in Nobiin, $\omicron\Upsilon\omicron\Upsilon$ in Old Nubian, $\omicron\Upsilon\omicron$ in Coptic.

Bechhaus-Gerst, on the other hand, suggests that the Old Nubian cognate for *qore* is $\Gamma\omicron\omicron$ or $\Gamma\omicron\Delta$, which would equate Meroitic *q* with Old Nubian Γ (pronounced as a prenasalized *g* or */ng/* rather than the unvoiced *k*). Browne and Murray both say this means “ Lord ” with an upper-case *L*.¹¹¹ The modern Nubian (Nobiin) cognate *nor* can mean “ master ” or “ owner ” as well as “ god ”; its resemblance to Coptic HOYTE meaning “ god ”¹¹² seems stronger than to *qore*. Perhaps a better cognate for $\Gamma\omicron\Delta$ would be Meroitic *note* as in the god’s name *Mnote*, or Lord Amon (for example in the Kharamadoye stela, lines 9 and 12); this could also be the equivalent of Egyptian *Jmn-njwjtj* or “ Amon-of-Thebes ”, literally, “ Amon-of-the-city ”.¹¹³

If Old Nubian Γ is indeed the equivalent of Meroitic κ , both signs may hark back to an earlier Nilo-Saharan phoneme not present in the Egyptian language. Proto-Nilo-Saharan, according to Ehret, had four nasals: */m/*, */n/*, */ny/* and */ŋ/*.¹¹⁴ The last, while lost in present-day Dongolawi through the strong influence of Afro-Asiatic languages in the area, may still have been in use as an initial during Old Nubian times. As Bechhaus-Gerst suggests, it could be a vestige of Meroitic *q*.¹¹⁵

Scoring Meroitic and Kharosthi

In an honors thesis written for Rhode Island College in 1999, Longpré presents a useful method of tabulating ancient scripts from various regions of the Middle East and North Africa.¹¹⁶ She assigns a score to each sign according to how closely it resembles its Meroitic counterpart and then gives each writing system a total score. The highest scoring systems (that is, those which most resembled Meroitic) were what she calls “ Enchorial Egyptian ”,¹¹⁷ Demotic Egyptian (7th-5th c. B.C.E.) and Nabatean Aramaic with 28 out of a possible 38, 25 out of 34 and 19 out of 36 points respectively if each sign receives a 2 for strong resemblance, 1 for some resemblance or 0 for no resemblance. The second figure for each pair varies because some of

110. Browne (1996), 95.

L. Reinisch gives another definition of the word *ko* in the modern Nubian language Nobiin. In his glossary of the Barea language, he says that the Barea word *ku*, meaning “ man ”, is a cognate of Nubian *ko* which he says means “ person ” or “ self ”. [Leo Reinisch, *Die Barea-Sprache: Grammatik, Text und Wörterbuch nach den handschriftlichen Materialien von Werner Munzinger Pascha*, Sprachen von Nord-Ost-Afrika 1. Bd. (Wien: W. Braumüller, 1874), 138]. Murray, on the other hand, gives the modern Nubian meaning as “ alone ”. [Murray, 101].

111. Browne (1996), 201; Murray, 134.

112. Lambdin, 251.

113. C. Rilly, personal communication.

114. Ehret (2001), 6.

115. Bechhaus-Gerst (1984), 94.

116. Longpré, 47-54.

117. “ Enchorial ” represents the Demotic of the Rosetta stone in the Ptolemaic period (332-30 B.C.E.).

the scripts lack signs for certain sounds. Converting these scores to percentages gives results of 74%, 73% and 53%.

It should be pointed out, however, that Longpré seems to make no allowances for the fact that some of the Demotic signs, while not matching the specific Meroitic sign cited in each column, do bear a likeness to other related signs. For example, the Demotic signs for *t* do not resemble the Meroitic *t* but rather the Meroitic *te*. As well, the Meroitic *se* resembles not an Enchorial *se* but rather *s*. If she had had access to El-Aguizy's thorough examination of Demotic papyri, some of her scores might be different.

Because such omissions might have affected the outcome, I scored the same three scripts myself. The results were : Enchorial, 31 out of 40, or 77%, Demotic, 21 out of 38, or 55%, and Nabatean Aramaic, 17 out of 40, or 43%.

Repeating Longpré's exercise by matching Meroitic signs with the Kharosthi script produces a slightly higher score, 34 out of a possible 42, or 81%. For some signs like *r*, *d*, *t* and *w*, closer matches occur in Kharosthi than in the other languages mentioned.

In the following table, I have chosen representative examples in each script. Many variations of each sign exist according to individual scribes and time period.

	a	e	i	o	y	b	d	h	h	k	l	m	n	ñ	p	q	r	s	š	t	te	to	w
			u			m	j	kh		r	-m	-n		py		dr				d	ts	u	
Mer.	Ⲙ	Ⲏ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ
Khar.	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ
score	2	2	2	1	0	2	2	1	2	0	2	2	2	0	2	0	2	1	2	2	2	1	2

Strictly from the point of view of resemblance, then, Kharosthi would seem to have a roughly equal claim to Enchorial/Demotic as far as some kind of relationship with Meroitic goes. As mentioned earlier, from a strictly geographical viewpoint, influence on the Meroitic script by the Enchorial/Demotic script appears far more likely than by Kharosthi. What the results of the above comparison may signal is that Meroitic and Kharosthi owe their mutual resemblance to the fact that they are both greatly indebted to the Egyptian. A different direction of influence, however, even that of Meroitic to both Demotic and Kharosthi, cannot be ruled out entirely.

Another tabulation helpful in approaching the Meroitic cursive script is Rilly's recent "Comparaison paléographique".¹¹⁸ That article's grid has revealed a curious phenomenon. The syllable signs that may prove to be of the VC type (Ⲙ, Ⲙ, Ⲙ, and Ⲙ) all have a component

118. Claude Rilly, "Approche comparative de la paléographie et de la chronologie royale de Méroé", *MNL* 28 (Paris : Groupe d'études méroïtiques de Paris, 2001), 85.

that resembles the right-hand part of the *a* syllable sign (𐎠). This sign itself uncannily resembles the Old Nubian, Coptic and Kharosthi signs for *h* as well as a reversed “hamza” of Arabic script. Possibly this element of the 𐎠 produced the quality of *Vokalanlaut*, as Priese refers to it.¹¹⁹

In sum, this experiment of scoring scripts, for all its limitations, does emphasize that the Meroitic cursive script resembles Kharosthi about as much as it does Demotic/Enchorial. In addition, a few of the Kharosthi signs like *r* seem closer matches than the Demotic ones while others, such as *w*, *ñ* and *n*, have matches whose phonetic counterparts in Demotic seem to be group writing.

The possible consequences of the change of scripts

This article would be incomplete if it did not suggest a possible historical explanation for why the relationship between Meroitic and Nubian became obscured.

Our knowledge of Old Nubian comes from inscriptions and manuscripts from the time of the Christian Nubian kingdoms ; these realms occupied more or less the same area as the earlier kingdom of Kush. In the late 8th and 7th centuries B.C.E., Kushite pharaohs ruled Egypt as the 25th Dynasty ; when forced back to Kush by an Assyrian invasion, the Meroitic-speaking Kushite society continued to flourish with its center at Meroë until it disintegrated in the early 5th century C.E. The Christian kingdoms rose soon after.

Bechhaus-Gerst, in 1984, used glottochronological methods to hypothesize a history of the Nubian languages.¹²⁰ In a 1989 paper, she speaks of the “Pre-Nobiin”, the ancestors of Old Nubian speakers and modern Nobiin speakers. Citing cultural vocabulary, she proposes that it is “highly probable the migration of pre-Nobiin speakers into the Nile Valley took place no later than 1400 B.C.”¹²¹ She does not give an earliest possible date.

Vague though it is, this time frame is useful. It provides a general era for the emergence of early Nubian in the region and, although Bechhaus-Gerst does not suggest it, would appear to put these early Nubian speakers in the right place at roughly the right time to have been Kushites, and as such, Meroitic speakers.

119. Priese (1973), 284-285.

120. Bechhaus-Gerst (1984), 18. Her work was based in part on the research of Peter Behrens, “C-group-Sprache-Nubisch-Tu Bedawiye : ein sprachliches Sequenzmodell und seine geschichtlichen Implikationen”, *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 3 (1981), 17-49, and on lexico-statistics assembled by Robin Thelwall, “Lexico-statistical relations between Nubian, Daju and Dinka”, in *Études Nubiennes, Colloque de Chantilly, 2-6 Juillet 1975* (Cairo : 1978), 265-286.


121. Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst, “Nile-Nubian Reconsidered”, *Topics in Nilo-Saharan Linguistics*, ed. M. Lionel Bender, Nilo-Saharan 3 (Hamburg : Buske, 1989), 92.


Archaeologists and anthropologists suggest that the peoples of the area have been of virtually the same stock for the last 5,000 years.¹²² This increases the likelihood that the Nubian speakers of the Christian kingdoms were the descendants of Kushites. If so, how has misunderstanding arisen about their language? Perhaps the source of confusion can be found in the writing change that accompanied the advent of Christianity in Nubia.

The following scenario might have occurred. Ancient scribes and possibly even the Church fathers (who first attempted to render the Bible into the language of the inhabitants of the former Meroitic empire) may have had considerable difficulty in converting the Meroitic cursive syllabic script to the Greek-based alphabets used in Coptic and Old Nubian. In continuing the written tradition of Kush and Meroë in an alphabetic form, these scribes may have made some decisions that seem peculiar now.

Some of their changes in orthography might reflect changes in pronunciation due to sound shifts. Almost a thousand years separate the most recent examples of Meroitic cursive script from the earliest surviving examples of Old Nubian. We need only look at the development of Old Anglo-Saxon into Shakespearean English (over a shorter period) to appreciate how much a language can change in such an amount of time.

In adapting the new Greek/Coptic script to the needs of the language of the former Meroitic empire, the scribes faced the challenge of how to cope with all the nasals that appear to characterize not just Meroitic (in which so many seem to have been unwritten) but also numerous Nilo-Saharan languages, as a glance at Ehret's proto phonemes indicates.¹²³ In converting from syllabary to alphabet, the scribes would have had to choose between considering unwritten syllable-final nasals as letters in their own right or as pre-nasalization of the initial consonant of the following syllable. For example, where Meroitic speakers had written *pesto* but pronounced /pesante/, the new written form could have been written p-e-s-a-n-t-(e) or p-e-s-a-nt-(e).

Ehret identifies these prenasalized medial consonants as distinct phonemes in proto Nilo-Saharan, but for *nt*, *nd*, *nk*, and *ng* the scribes may have opted to write these blends as two separate letters, using the simple n, the equivalent of the Meroitic *Vn* syllable. It is even possible that the dot on the Meroitic  sign may indicate nasalization as such a dot indicates anusvara in the Brahmi, Sanskrit and Hindi alphabets. Priese's table has examples of the sign both with and without the dot.¹²⁴

As speculated earlier, the Meroitic  may have been closer to *ts* in pronunciation. When the scribes began to use the Coptic/Greek alphabet to transcribe the Old Nubian

122. William Y. Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), 667; Peter Shinnie, *Meroe: A Civilization of the Sudan* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967), 155; Bruce Trigger, "Nubian, Negro, Black, Nilotic?" in *Africa in Antiquity*, v. 1: *The Arts of Nubia and the Sudan* (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1978), 27-35, and Török (1997), 43-44.

123. Ehret (2001), 20, 32.

124. Priese, 303.

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language, they may have arbitrarily opted for the C for both *s* and *ts* since the *ts* had no equivalent sign in those alphabets.

The Greek alphabet also had no way of indicating the *nV* sign with its constraints against word-initial use. The scribes therefore may have continued to employ the existing Meroitic symbol, Ⲙ, slightly tipped, where necessary.

However, for words that contained the laryngeals *h* and *h*, neither of which occurs in the Coptic/Greek/Old Nubian alphabet, problems would have arisen. There is only a single Old Nubian word, other than loan words, with an initial *h* (ϩ) : the word for heaven, ϩⲁⲢⲏ. Many of these Meroitic laryngeals occur in conjunction with unwritten final nasals in the preceding syllable. For example, a bilingual rendering (in Egyptian and Meroitic) of the name of the owner of Pyramid no. 5 at Meroë shows that Irknhrl = Arikhror.¹²⁵ The ḥ (probably close to Ehret's proto Nilo-Saharan *h) appears to have dropped out of the spoken language (as happened across the board in most of the Nilo-Saharan languages, according to Ehret¹²⁶) or to have been assimilated in most words containing it.

For words in which the ḥ followed an unwritten nasal, however, the loss of the ḥ through sound change would have meant that the nasal, doubtless altered in some way, would have become the initial phoneme of the following syllable. This could explain why the scribes may have re-interpreted the Meroitic ḥ sign, Ⲙ, which had come to represent a nonexistent sound, as the symbol for the syllable-initial *h* sound that had resulted. Since the Greek/Coptic alphabet had no letter for such a sound, they could have continued to make use of the Meroitic sign although it now stood for a different sound than it had originally. This Ⲙ or Ⲙ sign rather than ϣ may have come into use for all initial N sounds in Old Nubian.

With words that had unwritten syllable-final nasals before ḥ, the proto *kh type of sound had probably shifted to *k* by the time of the Old Nubian writers so they could have spelled out NK using the Greek/Coptic alphabet. Millet suggests that the Meroitic word *hlo* is the number word "seven", cognate with Nobiin *kolod* and Old Nubian ⲕⲟⲗⲟⲧ; this would produce an equivalence of Old Nubian ⲕ for Meroitic *h*,¹²⁷ as corroborated by Ehret's research.¹²⁸ Peust supports this contention and has added Meroitic *hara*, possibly meaning north, as a cognate for Old Nubian ⲕⲁⲗⲟ or ⲕⲁⲗⲗⲉ.¹²⁹ Still, these cognates are by no means certain. Neither Ehret nor Bender shows any interchange of medial *l* and *r* (as would have had to have taken place between *hara* and ⲕⲁⲗⲟ) from proto Nilo-Saharan to the present,¹³⁰ although such an alternation was common for Egyptian (which had no sign for *l*) and Meroitic. In addition, Millet bases his hypothesis on the Meroitic combination *yerehlo* (with the *yere*

125. Macadam, 53.

126. Ehret (2001), 15-16, [22].

127. N.B. Millet, "Some Possible Meroitic Number Words" in Steffen Wenig, ed., *Studien zum antiken Sudan : Aktum der 7. Internationalen Tagung für meroitische Forschungen vom 14. Bis 19. September in Gosen/bei Berlin, Meroitica 15* (Wiesbaden : Harrassowitz, 1999), 616-621.

128. Ehret (2001), 21.

129. Peust, 79-80.

130. Bender (1997), 68 and Ehret (2001), 33.

supposedly meaning “ten”), which he suggests means “seventeen” since it appears both with and without the written numeral 17. This, he proposes, may be a case of dittography. However, the same group of signs, *yerehlo*, appears many times in graffiti at Kawa with all sorts of numbers other than seventeen.¹³¹ It may simply be the first or second person plural form of a verb and does not seem to be proof that *hlo* means “seven”. The weakness of the cases for these cognates, however, does not necessarily invalidate the idea that Meroitic *h* could be the equivalent of Old Nubian κ.

There is also some evidence that the Meroitic sign for *h*, or ▽, originally may have been a labialized laryngeal *hw* sound, perhaps similar to **w*, the glottalic glide that Ehret hypothesizes for proto Nilo-Saharan.¹³² When the laryngeal component disappeared, it may have left behind a residual *w* sound that came to be written as γ or “OY” in Old Nubian. Several Old Nubian words appear to be cognate with some of Ehret’s reconstructions for initial **w* : OYЄ, to say (Browne {1996}, 204) and **we*, to say or tell (Ehret {2001}, #1424) ; OYOY, to shout (Browne {1996}, 130) and **wi*, to cry out (Ehret {2001}, #1438) ; OYρ, burning (Browne {1996}, 139) and **wir*, to shine (Ehret {2001}, #1441); OλP/OλΔЄ, night (Browne {1996}, 122) and **a’wa* : d, night (Ehret {2001}, #1465).

Another explanation may be that diphthongs created by the loss of a consonant tend to become pronounced with a medial *w* when the second component is a back vowel, or with a medial *y* when the second component is a front vowel. The very fact that *w* came to be written as a diphthong *ou* or OY in the Old Nubian alphabet may indicate that its original sign was for a VC syllable, similar to the alternate *s*, *m* and *n* signs examined earlier. Its CV counterpart in this case would have to be the Meroitic “*o*” sign (I), which some scholars would prefer to transliterate as *u*¹³³ and which resembles nothing so much as the Semitic *waw* or *vav*.

The apparent confusion by Old Nubian writers about how to handle the *w* sound may in itself testify to the possible existence of both VC and CV syllables in Meroitic. The Greek alphabet of the time had no true sign for *w* (since the old digamma was no longer in use). As a result, Coptic scribes had resorted to using an OY combination to represent this sound. While Old Nubian scribes used this technique also, they seem to have found it insufficient, perhaps because of the existence two types of syllable (CV and VC) in Meroitic ; they therefore may have adopted an additional sign, the Meroitic *w* : ⚡. This sign is similar to the Demotic group writing sign for *nw*,¹³⁴ another example of a Meroitic sign that represents the final rather than the initial phoneme of an Egyptian sign. Coincidentally, it also resembles the Kharosthi *nu*, reversed, although it is closer to the *u*. It shows no resemblance to the Demotic signs for the hieroglyphic that Meroitic scribes used for *w*. Browne’s dictionary lists only eight entries under this sign, all of them followed by the vowels λ or Є (there are no I, ЄI, O or OY).

131. M.F.L. Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa* (London : 1949), v. 1, 96-99.

132. Ehret (2001), 14-15.

133. Yuri Zawadowski, “Some Considerations on Meroitic Phonology”, *Meroitic Newsletter* 10 (July 1972), 20-21.

134. El-Aguizy (1998) [CXCVI].

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Some of the *y* semi-vowel signs also might have become written as diphthongs. *Ye* and *yi* may have become $\epsilon\iota$ and $\lambda\iota$, as in Old Nubian $\lambda\ddot{i}$, meaning “I” or $\epsilon\iota\text{p}$ meaning “you”. These spellings in themselves may indicate the presence of VC signs. Such spellings would be in keeping with sound shift rule 4 for Dongolawi (as representative of Nubian) that Ehret postulates:¹³⁵ PSN *Y>zero. Such a rule would also be consistent with the change from *ye-* to *e-*, evidenced by a comparison of the Akinidad stela with that of Tañyideamani.

The sound shifts that apparently occurred as the Egyptian language evolved into Coptic were not confined to the consonants studied by Dembska and Kuentz. The language also underwent the effects of vowel precession: front vowels became back vowels so that many Coptic words have O or OY or OO or even OYO and $\text{OYO}\epsilon\iota$ where the hieroglyphs showed no vowels. There is reason to think that Meroitic also experienced such vowel precession. For example, the Meroitic *wte-* (in the formulaic opening lines of the so-called “epistolary” inscriptions such as REM1096) may have become $\text{OY}\epsilon\iota\lambda$ (meaning “to be distant”, in Old Nubian). As well, *tke*, as in line 3 of the Kharamadoye stele, may have become $\text{TO}\epsilon\kappa$ (meaning “power”).

In addition, frequent gemination that had been unwritten became written. Syllable-final nasals hitherto unwritten also became written. Thus Meroitic *ye* sometimes may have become Old Nubian $\epsilon\iota\text{n}$, which is both a demonstrative and an equivalent of the verb “to be” used in periphrastics that serve as substitutes for relative clauses.

The scribes also may have seen fit to break up clauses and phrases that were formerly undivided by the two- or three-dot separators in Meroitic and to write them as discrete words. Thus prefixed subject-, direct object- and possessive-pronouns like *tr*, *eqe-* or *tk-* or *t[an]-* and *a[n]* may have come to be written separately though still maintaining the SOV word order shared by Meroitic and Old Nubian syntax conventions.

When switching from Egyptian to Meroitic for monumental inscriptions several centuries before, scribes had already experienced the adjustment problems that some scholars have cited as responsible for the peculiar Egyptian grammar of the inscriptions of the Harsiyotef and Nastasen stelae.¹³⁶ These anomalies may have been the result of a change from Egyptian to Meroitic word order but could also have resulted from a tendency to treat the entire verb phrase, including pronouns, as a whole. Such a tendency in some other languages has led to the development of conjugations with the subject pronouns becoming inseparable affixes. Meroitic seems to have included object pronouns in these agglutinated verb phrases, a convention that the scribes may have discontinued in switching to the Old Nubian alphabetic script.

The net effect was to produce a written language with frequent long strings of vowels and doubled consonants that looked quite different from present-day transliterations of Meroitic texts. And, to be sure, the disappearance and transformation of laryngeals, the diphthongization and the conversion of semi-vowels to vowels all contributed to the written language’s new look.

135. Ehret (2001), 27.

136. Eide, ed., v. 2, 494.

Conclusion

We may obtain new insights into Meroitic by approaching the syllabary with a fresh eye.

First, we should be open to the possibility of CV, VC, and even CCV or VCC types of syllables.

Second, we should question the accepted equivalencies for certain other syllable signs and be ready to revise some. These revised transliterations could include *te>d*, *to>ts* and *d>j*.

Third, we must concede that many of the Meroitic cursive signs resemble not only Demotic signs but also forms with similar phonetic values found in the Kharosthi script. We must ask what this means in terms of ancient relations between Kush/Meroë and the Middle East/Indian subcontinent and be alert to any linguistic clues from that area that might prove to be vestiges of ancient Meroitic contact.

Finally and most important, we must recognize that the phonological and epigraphic evidence points more and more to some early version of Old Nubian as a daughter language of Meroitic.

Some of these suggestions fly in the face of Griffith's transliterations and might call into question some of the revised ones used in compiling the *Répertoire d'Épigraphie Méroïtique (REM)*. On the other hand, the father of Meroitic and Old Nubian studies might be amused if the hunch he had almost a century ago should prove to be true.

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Phonetic Correspondences between Meroitic and Old Nubian

Standard translit.	Suggested revision	Meroitic sign	Old Nubian
initial a	V-	Ϣ	Α
e		ϣ	Ε
i	yV	Ϥ	Ι
o or u	Vw or o or u	ϥ	Ο or ΟΥ
y	Vy	Ϧ	ϢΙ
w	wV	ϧ	ΟΥ
b	bV or mV	Ϩ	ΠV or ΜV
p	pV or Vp	ϩ	Π
m	Vm	ϩ	VΜ
n	Vn	ϫ	VΝ
ñ or ne	nV	Ϭ	ϣ
r	rV/Vr/trV/drV	ϭ	Ρ (r)
l	lV or Vl	Ϯ	Λ or Δ
h	h or hw	ϯ	Υ or zero
h	k	ϰ	Κ / Γ
s or se	sV	ϱ	Ϣ (s)
š (sh) or s	Vs	ϲ	ϣ
k	g/k or Vg/Vk	ϳ	Γ / Κ
q	g/k + w	ϴ	Κ / Γ
t	tV	ϵ	Τ or Δ
te	d	϶	Δ or Ρ
to	ts	Ϸ	Τ or Ϣ
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Les graffiti archaïques de Doukki Gel et l'apparition de l'écriture méroïtique

Claude Rilly*

Les fouilles menées sur le site général de Kerma par la Mission archéologique de l'Université de Genève, sous la direction de Charles Bonnet, se sont concentrées depuis le milieu des années 1990 sur le lieu-dit Doukki Gel¹, un kilomètre au Nord de la ville ancienne de Kerma. Il ne fait maintenant plus de doute, depuis la découverte en janvier 2003 de la favissa contenant des statues royales koushites et napatéennes, que ce site correspond à la ville antique de Pnoub, de l'égyptien *P3-Nbs*, *Pr-Nbs* "le jujubier", "la demeure du jujubier", grec Πνούψ, latin *Nups*². Chaque statue comportait en effet la mention d'« Amon de Pnoub », une des hypostases majeures de l'Amon koushite³.


Le complexe cultuel de Doukki Gel⁴ a sans doute été fondé dans la première moitié de la XVIII^e dynastie. Un peu plus tard, un grand temple dédié au dieu Aton est construit sous le règne d'Akhenaton. Victime de la réaction amonienne, ce bâtiment fut peut-être remplacé par un nouveau sanctuaire peu après. À la fin de l'époque napatéenne, sans doute sous le règne d'Amannote-erike, fut érigé, en partie avec des matériaux issus des temples égyptiens, un nouvel édifice qui paraît être resté en fonction jusqu'à l'époque méroïtique. Enfin, ce

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1. Orthographe à préférer à celle de « Dokki Gel » que l'on trouve parfois. Ce nom nobiin *dùkkí géel*, "la butte rouge", a été donné par les habitants modernes de la région au kom abritant les vestiges, en raison de la présence d'innombrables restes de moules à pain méroïtiques en brique qui lui confèrent cette couleur. Sur les fouilles de ce site, on consultera notamment : Bonnet et Valbelle 2000 ; Leclant et Minault-Gout 2000, p. 148 ; Bonnet 2001 ; Valbelle 2001 ; Leclant et Minault-Gout 2001, p. 463-464 ; Grimal et Adly 2003, p. 126-127 ; Bonnet et Valbelle 2003 (sous presse).
2. Forme latine d'après les itinéraires de Bion de Soles et de Juba rapportés par Plinie (*Hist. Nat.*): cf. *FHN* II-1996, p. 552-557 et *FHN* III-1998, p. 804-809. On trouvera dans Valbelle 2003 une synthèse récente des questions relatives à Amon de Pnoub.
3. Le temple d'Amon de Pnoub est ainsi une des étapes principales du « tour du royaume » effectué par les souverains napatéens fraîchement intronisés : voir stèle d'Amannote-erike, lignes 56-63 (*FHN* II-1996, p. 409-410), stèle de Nastasen, lignes 25-26 (*FHN* II-1996, p. 481).
4. Nous suivons ici dans ses grandes lignes l'exposé de Bonnet et Valbelle 2000.



sanctuaire fut rebâti probablement à l'époque d'Amanitore et de Natakamani, un règne conjoint remarquable par son activité architecturale, non seulement à Naga, Amara ou Napata, mais aussi à Tabo⁵, à Méroé et donc à Pnoub.

Les trois ensembles de graffiti méroïtiques qui nous intéressent ici⁶ ont été gravés sur des blocs issus du sanctuaire napatéen, retrouvés sous les vestiges du temple méroïtique. D'après leur paléographie, ils remonteraient au II^e siècle avant notre ère, voire plus tôt encore pour DG B. 34, soit bien avant la reconstruction du temple méroïtique sous Amanitore et Natakamani⁷. Ces textes nous donneront l'occasion de faire ici le point sur la date d'apparition de l'écriture méroïtique, ou du moins de ses premiers témoignages connus.

Le premier document, DG B. 34⁸, est un bloc de grès décoré, porteur d'une gravure en forme de rébus hiéroglyphique : voir pl. IX, fig. 1-2. Ses dimensions sont de 9 x 18,5 cm. Malgré la dégradation de la pierre, on distingue encore en son centre le contour d'un scarabée, surmonté de deux bras enserrant un disque solaire, le tout se prolongeant par une épaisse tige en relief. Le groupe correspond sans doute au cartouche égyptien  *Hpr-k3-R*^c, nom de couronnement de plusieurs souverains méroïtiques⁹. À l'époque napatéenne, il n'est connu que pour le roi Malowiebamani¹⁰, mais il est probable que d'autres monarques, dont on ne connaît que le nom indigène, l'aient porté. Il n'est donc pas possible de dater précisément le décor en fonction de ce détail.

Sur la gauche figure une première inscription méroïtique d'une ligne incomplète : six signes, qui présentent une paléographie extrêmement archaïque, y ont été conservés :

...]qlre...tew[...

Le  *r* semble probable, malgré son inclinaison inhabituelle vers la droite et sa position sur une ligne de fracture. On aurait attendu plutôt un  *i*, *qli* pouvant être une graphie alternative du démonstratif *qoli*¹¹, mais le tracé du signe n'autorise guère une telle interprétation. Le signe qui suit n'est pas certain : il se compose d'un long trait vertical, flanqué en haut à gauche d'un second beaucoup plus petit et incurvé. Sa valeur *e* est déduite plutôt par élimination que de façon positive. Toutefois, Macadam, dans sa lecture des graffiti de Kawa, avait proposé la même lecture pour un signe d'apparence assez proche en REM 0662¹².

5. Voir Jacquet-Gordon 2002, p. 39.
6. Nous remercions chaleureusement Mme Dominique Valbelle et M. Charles Bonnet pour la documentation inédite qu'ils nous ont communiquée.
7. La datation de ce règne conjoint dans la seconde moitié du I^{er} siècle, avancée par Hofmann 1978 (p. 128sq.) et reprise par Török (*FHN* III-1998, p. 898-899) semble confirmée par nos études paléographiques (Rilly, à paraître, Tab. 13 ; Tome VI du *Répertoire d'Épigraphie Méroïtique* en préparation).
8. Il correspondra à REM 1377 dans le *Répertoire d'Épigraphie Méroïtique*.
9. Le nom est copié de celui du pharaon Sésostris I^{er}, connu pour ses campagnes de Nubie, et dont le cartouche était peut-être encore largement présent sur ce territoire. Il a été porté à l'époque méroïtique par Arnekhmani, Natakamani, Aritene-yesbokhe et Teqorideamani. Voir aussi Rilly 2002, p. 142 n. 60, où est décrit un pareil rébus formant le nom de couronnement identique de la reine Amanishakheto en REM 0406.
10. Voir *FHN* I-1994, p. 301-302.
11. Voir Rilly à paraître, p. 324.
12. Macadam 1949, p. 110.

Il n'est malheureusement pas possible d'avancer une interprétation fiable de la séquence, ni même d'en proposer une segmentation. Peut-être est-ce notre lecture des deux signes centraux, pour lesquels les parallèles manquent, qui fait difficulté, mais dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances, nous ne voyons pas d'alternative.

À droite, entre la tige qui supporte le "rébus" et un trait parallèle apparaissent quatre signes, disposés en colonne. Du premier ne subsiste que l'extrémité inférieure :

...][.]*deto*[...

Le caractère disparu était peut-être un *e* ou un *i*. Le deuxième signe visible, que nous translittérons *e*, est très curieux, avec une forme en "P" où la boucle supérieure est non seulement fermée, mais de plus inversée par rapport à la forme habituelle ζ . Toutefois, on trouve un tracé similaire (boucle inversée et presque fermée) au début de REM 0405B, une courte légende gravée sur une des faces d'une petite stèle de Taneyidamani. C'est ce même texte qui permet de proposer la valeur *to* pour le dernier signe en forme de spirale, brisée par une cassure de la pierre. Cependant, en REM 0405B, la spirale comporte un trait souscrit que l'on ne distingue pas ici. On observera que les caractères vocaliques sont non pas adscrits sur le même niveau que les signes syllabiques qu'ils complètent¹³, comme dans les textes en colonnes plus tardifs¹⁴, mais souscrits, ainsi qu'en REM 0405B (lignes 2 et 5).

Il est assez probable que la séquence corresponde à une forme verbale à suffixe *-to*, comme il s'en trouve beaucoup dans les textes royaux¹⁵. On rappelle que le verbe figure habituellement en fin de proposition en méroïtique.

Le second document, DG B. 50¹⁶, est également un bloc de grès issu des vestiges du temple napatéen, où il prenait place dans le môle Est (côté Nord, en bas) : voir Pl. X, fig. 3-4¹⁷. Ses dimensions sont de 48 x 30 x 28 cm. Il comporte deux ensembles de graffiti. À droite figure un dessin formé de carrés et de lignes. En haut à gauche est gravée une ligne de signes démotiques¹⁸ et méroïtiques cursifs un peu érodés :

$\lceil Hr \rceil \triangleleft Jmn \triangleright bese mkdi yd\dot{h}no kb[.] [...]$

Cette lecture reste en grande partie hypothétique, car l'inscription pose de sérieux problèmes de lecture et d'interprétation. Elle appartient sans aucun doute aux graffiti de type *yd\dot{h}no* particulièrement bien attestés à Kawa, en l'honneur d'Amon, et à Musawwarat, en l'honneur

13. C'est-à-dire les signes qui correspondent dans les translittérations aux "consonnes", mais sont en fait des caractères syllabiques à voyelle /a/ par défaut : voir Hintze 1973, p. 322.

14. Cf. Hintze 1987, p. 41.

15. Voir entre autres : Schenkel 1973, p. 17 Tab. 1 ; Hofmann 1981, p. 211 ; Rilly 2002, p. 143.

16. Il correspondra à REM 1378 dans le *Répertoire d'Épigraphie Méroïtique*.

17. Le fac-similé en fig. 2 est le résultat d'une collaboration avec le dessinateur Marc Bundi, de la mission de l'Université de Genève, que nous remercions vivement pour sa patience et sa précision. La dessinatrice Marion Berti avait en effet produit une première esquisse en 1999 lors de la découverte du bloc, que Marc Bundi a reprise et précisée d'après nos remarques et nos recommandations en 2001. Nous avons enfin, à l'aide des excellentes photographies fournies par Mme Dominique Valbelle, amendé quelques petits détails de ce second dessin, aboutissant au fac-similé présenté ici.

18. Dans la transcription qui suit, la translittération entre triangles correspond à la partie démotique. Nous suivons en cela les conventions adoptées dans les tomes IV-VI du *REM* actuellement en préparation.

d'Apedemak¹⁹. Ces inscriptions sont la plupart du temps très mal conservées, comme souvent les graffiti, réalisés par des lapicides amateurs avec un matériel de fortune et sur des murs extérieurs exposés aux intempéries. D'après leur paléographie, elles remontent à des époques variées, parfois très ancienne comme ici, parfois plus récente comme en REM 0673 (II^e siècle apr. J.-C. ?). La structure majoritairement représentée comporte un nom de divinité suivi de la séquence obscure *ydhno*, considérée traditionnellement comme verbale²⁰, et de ce qui semble un anthroponyme. Le théonyme initial est parfois au vocatif (REM 1051, 1054 : *Apedemk-i* "ô Apedemak"), parfois affecté du présentatif postposé *qo* "c'est" (REM 0673, GA 6G).

Le mélange de démotique, pour les théonymes, et de cursive méroïtique, bien que rare, n'est pas exceptionnel : on le trouve à Kawa, en REM 0648A et 0662, où le nom d'Amon apparaît respectivement sous les formes $\tau\epsilon$ et $\tau\epsilon$ ²¹. Il caractérise des inscriptions très anciennes, sans doute postérieures de peu à l'apparition de l'écriture méroïtique, ce qui peut expliquer que s'y mêlent l'écriture originelle importée d'Égypte et la cursive indigène qui en est dérivée. La résistance des théonymes démotiques n'est évidemment pas sans rappeler l'utilisation dans les manuscrits médiévaux latins de graphies abrégées grecques comme $\bar{\chi}\bar{c}$ pour *Christus*. Dans les deux cas, la valeur sacrée attachée au théonyme explique sans doute le conservatisme graphique. On notera toutefois l'utilisation à Kawa soit d'une variante du démotique probablement spécifique à Koush, à comparer avec le démotique ancien $\tau\epsilon$, $\tau\epsilon$, $\tau\epsilon$, soit d'une adaptation de la graphie hiéroglyphique tardive $\tau\epsilon$ puisque le démotique ptolémaïque présente pour Amon les graphies $\tau\epsilon$, $\tau\epsilon$, $\tau\epsilon$, proches en revanche de celle qui apparaît ici à Doukki Gel.

Il semble bien que le graffiti s'adresse à trois divinités. Le premier groupe τHr pourrait en effet correspondre à la graphie démotique pour Horus, malgré un léger renversement vers le haut du signe initial sous sa forme canonique. Il est certes curieux que le nom d'Horus apparaisse en premier, alors même que ce temple était consacré selon toute vraisemblance à Amon. Mais on a retrouvé dans le complexe cultuel de Doukki Gel plusieurs représentations du dieu-faucon, d'époque pharaonique et napatéenne²², qui laissent supposer qu'il y disposait au moins d'une chapelle.

19. REM 0615, 0616, 0658, 0661, 0664, 0666A, 0673, 0693A (Kawa), REM 1034, 1045, 1051, 1054 et peut-être 1284 (Musawwarat) ; un exemple inédit également au Gebel Adda (GA 6G, aimablement communiqué par Nick Millet). Pour ces graffiti, classés "type III" par Török 1984, voir Macadam 1949, p. 138 ; Heyler 1967, p. 109 et note 44, 128, 120 ; Trigger et Heyler 1970, p. 30 n. h 63, 60 Index B ; Leclant et Hainsworth 1978, p. 13 ; Török 1984, p. 160, 175 ; Leclant 1985-86, p. 253 ; *FHN* II-1996, p. 670 ; Wolf 1999b, p. 50 ; Rilly à paraître, p. 197.

20. Cette hypothèse qui repose essentiellement sur la présence du *y* initial, parfois manquant, reste toutefois très fragile.

21. Voir Macadam 1949, p. 106, 109.

22. Notamment les blocs DG B. 183 (fragment de pilier thoutmoside retaillé en base de colonne, cf. Bonnet et Valbelle 2000, p. 1112 fig. 9 ; Valbelle 2001, p. 230 fig. 1) ainsi que DG B. 77 et DG. B 94, ce dernier datant probablement de la XXV^e dynastie ou de l'époque napatéenne (communication personnelle de Dominique Valbelle).

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Le groupe suivant, qui mêle démotique et méroïtique, se lit sans trop de difficulté $\triangleleft Jmn \triangleright bese$. Il s'agit clairement d'Amon de Pnoub, l'initiale *n* du toponyme (ég. *nbs*) étant absente en raison de l'haplographie. Le nom méroïtique du dieu était déjà attesté sur le mur extérieur Sud du temple d'Apedemak à Naga, où, face à la représentation d'un Amon criocéphale, on trouve en hiéroglyphique (REM 0010) la mention *Amnbsi* < *Amnbse* + *-i* "ô Amon de Pnoub", avec le suffixe vocatif ajouté au /s/ final noté *se* selon les conventions de l'écriture méroïtique²³. On remarquera que l'article égyptien *p3* dans Pnoub, *P3-nbs* "le-jujubier", parfois réinterprété en *Pr-nbs* (voir ci-dessus notre introduction), est absent ou assimilé. Également remarquable est la vocalisation ancienne en /a/ face au /u/ grec de Πνούψ, de tradition ptolémaïque et sans doute repris dans le latin *Nups* : /amanabs/ (Doukki Gel) ou /amanabas/ (REM 0010). Cette conservation en méroïtique des formes médio-égyptiennes non encore touchées par la mutation vocalique du néo-égyptien se retrouve dans plusieurs théonymes comme *Amni* */amanai/ "Amon" ou *Atri* */atarai/ "Hathor", à comparer aux versions égyptiennes tardives connues par le grec Ἄμμων ou Ἄθουρ.

La divinité suivante, si notre lecture est correcte, est simplement désignée par un substantif : *mkdi* " (la) déesse ". Il est néanmoins étrange qu'elle ne soit pas mieux précisée. En REM 1333 (stèle du vice-roi Abratoye) on trouve par exemple *mkde* : *Tmne-te* " la déesse (qui est) à Tamane " ²⁴ pour désigner probablement Hathor, nommée ainsi en REM 1323²⁵. Mais même dans ce cas, il y a au moins un locatif pour indiquer l'hypostase. Peut-être ici, dans le temple d'Amon de Pnoub, n'était-il pas nécessaire d'apporter davantage de précision, la " déesse " honorée en ces lieux étant sans doute Mout, qui, aux côtés d'Horus (?) et d'Amon, pourrait compléter la triade divine.

Après la séquence *ydhno* (voir ci-dessus), on trouve ce qui pourrait être le début d'un anthroponyme : *Kb*[...], mais il ne s'agit que d'une hypothèse fragile, la fin du texte étant perdue.

Le dernier document²⁶, DG/T/B.232, est particulièrement difficile à exploiter. Il s'agit à nouveau d'un bloc de grès, apparemment un linteau, avec corniche et disque solaire à uraei : voir Pl. XI, fig. 5-6. Ses dimensions sont de 66 x 33 x 19 cm. Malheureusement, la surface est très érodée, et les signes sont enchevêtrés et peu reconnaissables. Ni les clichés de bonne qualité qui nous ont été communiqués, ni le fac-similé de F. Plojoux (non reproduit ici), ne peuvent permettre de déchiffrer plus de quelques caractères. Plusieurs séries de traits parallèles, manifestement intentionnels, sont gravées au centre, à gauche du disque solaire, selon un procédé que l'on retrouve par exemple à Kawa²⁷ : il pourrait s'agir de décomptes

23. Il n'est pas impossible que le théonyme *Amnb*, qui apparaît dans les textes royaux REM 1044 et 1361, ne soit qu'une variante d'*Amnbese* où le *-se* final, confondu avec le suffixe homonymique de génitif postposé, ait été purement et simplement supprimé comme fautif (cf. Rilly 2002, p. 148 n.67). L'absence d'Amon de Pnoub dans des textes où l'on trouve par ailleurs les principales hypostases d'Amon ne se comprendrait pas sinon.

24. Voir Carrier 2001, p. 27. Le terme *mkde* est une variante tardive avec affaiblissement vocalique pour *mkdi*.

25. Cf. Edwards et Fuller 2000, p. 84-85.

26. Il correspondra à REM 1379 dans le *Répertoire d'Épigraphie Méroïtique*.

27. Voir par ex. REM 0604-0607 (Macadam 1949, pl. 43-45), REM 0629 (*ibid.*, pl. 28), REM 0636-0637 (*ibid.*, pl. 54), etc.

d'offrandes ou de prières effectuées par les pèlerins. Sur le haut du linteau, au-dessus de la corniche, on distingue à droite ce qui paraît la fin d'un anthroponyme, [...]tr^ro^r, avec la terminaison en *-ror* fréquente dans les noms de personne. Sur la gauche, après une partie totalement arasée, apparaît une séquence *qb*, non identifiable mais intéressante par la paléographie archaïque du signe *q*. Au-dessus se trouvent quelques signes manifestement non méroïtiques. Il pourrait s'agir des caractères démotiques pour *s* et *p*, mais l'ensemble ne forme rien de connu dans cette langue, sauf à supposer que nous avons ici affaire à un anthroponyme écrit phonétiquement.

Outre la mention certaine du nom d'Amon de Pnoub, ces courts textes présentent un grand intérêt sur le plan paléographique, et au-delà pour la chronologie de l'apparition de l'écriture méroïtique. Traditionnellement, ce sont les cartouches hiéroglyphiques de la reine Shanakdakhete ²⁸ à Naga (REM 0039A-B) qui passent pour les traces les plus anciennes de l'écriture méroïtique ²⁹, ce qui aurait pour corollaire que l'écriture hiéroglyphique serait plus ancienne ou tout au moins contemporaine de la cursive ³⁰. Ces deux opinions sont manifestement fausses. La seconde repose sans doute sur un démarquage naïf de la situation égyptienne, où les hiéroglyphes apparaissent en premier, suivis des cursives que sont l'hiératique et bien plus tard le démotique. Or, contrairement à l'Égypte prédynastique, le royaume de Méroé n'était pas une *tabula rasa* sur le plan scriptural : les hiéroglyphes égyptiens, mais aussi le démotique, même si les traces en sont plus ténues, y étaient connus. Il est généralement admis que l'écriture méroïtique s'est développée en raison de la méconnaissance croissante de l'égyptien, perceptible dans les stèles napatéennes tardives, et de la nécessité où se trouvaient les scribes de Koush de transcrire la seule langue qu'ils maîtrisaient désormais, la leur. Ce scénario est vraisemblable. Mais de quel ordre était cette nécessité, et qui touchait-elle ? Le méroïtique hiéroglyphique ne concerne en effet que les monuments royaux (pas même les stèles royales constituant les annales du régime), alors que la cursive intéressait l'administration pour la tenue de ses comptes et de ses archives, le particulier pour ses inscriptions funéraires et ses graffiti pieux, ses propres comptes et sans doute ses contrats. Tous ces documents n'existent qu'en cursive. Or c'est évidemment là que se faisait sentir la nécessité d'une écriture méroïtique, et non dans les légendes iconographiques des temples, pour lesquels il restait assez de scribes habitués à l'égyptien (ou égyptiens eux-mêmes ?), comme d'ailleurs le prouve l'emploi de cette langue et de cette écriture de part et d'autre des fameux cartouches de Shanakdakhete ainsi que son usage récurrent jusqu'aux inscriptions du règne d'Amanitore et de Natakamani, deux siècles plus tard.

Un autre argument en faveur de la précéden- ce de l'écriture cursive se déduit du répertoire même des signes. Alors que la quasi-totalité des caractères cursifs peut sans difficulté

28. On rappelle que la graphie Shanakdakheto (voir par ex. *FHN* II-1996, p. 660), bien que sans doute possible si l'on en croit les variations du nom d'Amanishakheto / Amanishakhete, n'est jusqu'à présent pas attestée.

29. Voir par exemple récemment Welsby 1996, p. 134, avec une chronologie haute de 180-170 av. J.-C. pour le règne de Shanakdakhete. Assez souvent, les auteurs parlent prudemment de "plus anciennes inscriptions datables", nonobstant le fait que les datations pour cette reine oscillent entre 180 (Hintze 1959, p. 33, 39) et la fin du 11^e siècle av. J.-C. (Török in *FHN* II-1996, p. 661sq.).





30. Ainsi Hofmann 1981, p. 2.

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

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représenter une évolution naturelle du démotique ³¹, les signes hiéroglyphiques méroïtiques, s'ils correspondent chacun à un hiéroglyphe égyptien connu, ont parfois des valeurs phonétiques qui paraissent aléatoires (par ex.  *d*,  *k*,  *h*,  *u*). Elles peuvent dans certains cas s'expliquer par une acronymie (pour *k*) ou une influence de la cursive (pour *d*) et concourent à donner l'impression d'une écriture partiellement artificielle. Il nous semble plausible que le syllabaire hiéroglyphique ait été élaboré par les scribes royaux autour d'un noyau séculaire constitué du répertoire des transcriptions napatéennes de noms méroïtiques, enrichi de quelques nouveaux signes pour le faire correspondre exactement au syllabaire cursif ³².

L'écriture cursive n'est donc pas contemporaine, mais antérieure au règne de Shanakdakhete. La chapelle funéraire de cette reine (Beg. N. 11) contient d'ailleurs des inscriptions cursives qui ne peuvent avoir été gravées qu'au moment de son édification (ou au plus tard quelques années après), puisqu'elles donnent les noms et les titres de personnages appartenant à la frise en relief qui décorent les parois intérieures. C'est clairement le cas de REM 0051A et 0052B qui légendent dans des termes identiques ³³ la représentation du même personnage féminin respectivement sur les murs Nord et Sud. Sans doute l'inscription jumelle REM 0053-0054, où apparaît un anthroponyme, est-elle de même nature, mais elle figure sur des blocs isolés rapportés par Lepsius au Musée de Berlin, ce qui empêche son rattachement à un contexte iconographique précis. Enfin, il n'est pas impossible que les inscriptions en méroïtique et démotique REM 0804A-D sur fragments d'amphore ³⁴, retrouvées également en Beg. N. 11, soient un vestige du matériel funéraire originel. Le relevé paléographique de REM 0051-0054 (voir pl. XII fig. 7) montre des graphies certes archaïques, mais plus évoluées que celles de Doukki Gel (voir pl. XIII fig. 8, deux premières colonnes ³⁵), et il est peu vraisemblable qu'une telle évolution se soit faite en un laps de temps aussi court que le règne d'un seul souverain ³⁶.

Les témoignages les plus anciens de la cursive sont donc à chercher dans des règnes antérieurs. Le seul document royal que l'on pourrait y rattacher est une table d'offrandes en faïence dont ne subsistent que deux fragments (REM 0805), porteurs de portions de filiation maternelle et paternelle, retrouvés en Beg. N. 12, la pyramide attribuée au roi Taneyidamani.

31. C'est très logiquement avec le démotique ptolémaïque ancien de Haute-Égypte que la filiation est la plus étroite : voir Rilly à paraître, p. 241-260. Les seuls signes pour lesquels l'étymon démotique n'est pas clair sont  *l* (le signe démotique proche est trop tardif) et  *ne*.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 261-274. On notera de plus qu'il serait peu vraisemblable que les deux syllabaires aient été strictement parallèles dès l'origine, tant par le nombre de signes que par leurs valeurs, s'ils provenaient de façon indépendante des deux écritures égyptiennes démotiques et hiéroglyphiques.

33. Le texte commun se lit *Bke-l-o erebereke-l sem-l-o* "c'est Bake-la, c'est l'épouse d'un erebereke" (ou "de Ereberékela" s'il s'agit d'un anthroponyme avec déterminant et non d'un titre).

34. L'inscription démotique mentionne du "vin d'Égypte", ce qui nous laisse penser qu'il s'agit de fragments des récipients contenant ce produit plutôt que de véritables ostraca. La localisation précise de cette découverte n'est pas donnée chez Dunham 1957 (p. 74), pas plus que la présence éventuelle de fragments de poterie anépigraphes.

35. Les textes qui y sont désignés par « Doukki Gel 1 et 2 » correspondent respectivement à DG B. 34 et DG. B. 50.

36. De manière empirique, nous estimons à trois générations (env. 70 ans) le temps nécessaire à une mutation paléographique visible et stabilisée dans le domaine méroïtique. Ce délai correspond à la marge d'approximation que nous reconnaissons dans les datations obtenues par l'examen de la paléographie.

Un anthroponyme masculin terminé en -^ri^l s'y reconnaît ³⁷. L'inscription montre une paléographie archaïque (voir pl. XII fig. 7). Malheureusement, peu de signes de ductus significatifs sont conservés, et encore sommes-nous tributaires du fac-similé de Dunham, si bien qu'il est impossible de préciser davantage. En revanche, on peut trouver dans les textes de Méroé et surtout de Kawa des graphies assurément plus anciennes que celles de la fin du règne de Shanakdakhete (REM 0051-0054) et de l'époque de Taneyidamani, son probable successeur ³⁸, ainsi que l'on peut le voir dans la table paléographique reproduite en pl. XIII. Les graffiti de Doukki Gel y correspondent aux plus anciennes graphies attestées, et il faudrait par conséquent les replacer au tout début du 11^e siècle av. J.-C. Le mélange de démotique et de méroïtique que l'on constate dans deux des textes (et qui était déjà présent à Kawa) parle également en faveur d'une datation proche de la scission des deux écritures, que nous avons placée ci-dessus à l'époque ptolémaïque ancienne, soit au cours du III^e siècle avant notre ère.

*

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37. Voir Hintze 1959, p. 36 (n. 23). Cette inscription est considérée comme la plus ancienne connue en cursive par Török, mais il l'estime contemporaine de Shanakdakhete (voir Török 1997, p. 62 et Török in *FHN* III-1998, p. 762, chaque fois avec attribution erronée au roi Tarekeniwal, rectifiée dans *FHN* IV-2000, p. 1233 et dans Török 2002, p. 262 et note 291).

38. Voir Török in *FHN* II-1996, p. 664 (151). De plus, il nous semble assez vraisemblable que l'inscription REM 0052A qui légende, parmi les reliefs de Beg.N.11, la représentation d'un prince amenant au sacrifice quatre bovins au bout d'une longe (voir L.D.V, pl. 33), puisse se lire *T[ne]yi* après correction du fac-similé de Griffith 1911 (N° 52a p. 75). Ce prince, le futur Taneyidamani, est l'acteur principal du banquet funèbre et serait par conséquent le successeur de la reine.

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FHN I-1994

Tormod Eide, Tomas Hägg *et al.*, *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum I (From the 8th Century to the 6th. B. C. Textual Sources for the History of the Middle Nile Between the 8th Century BC and the 6th AD)*, Bergen 1994.

FHN II-1996

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Planche IX



Fig. 1 - Inscription DG B. 34 de Doukki Gel
(cliché de P. Kohler-Rummler)

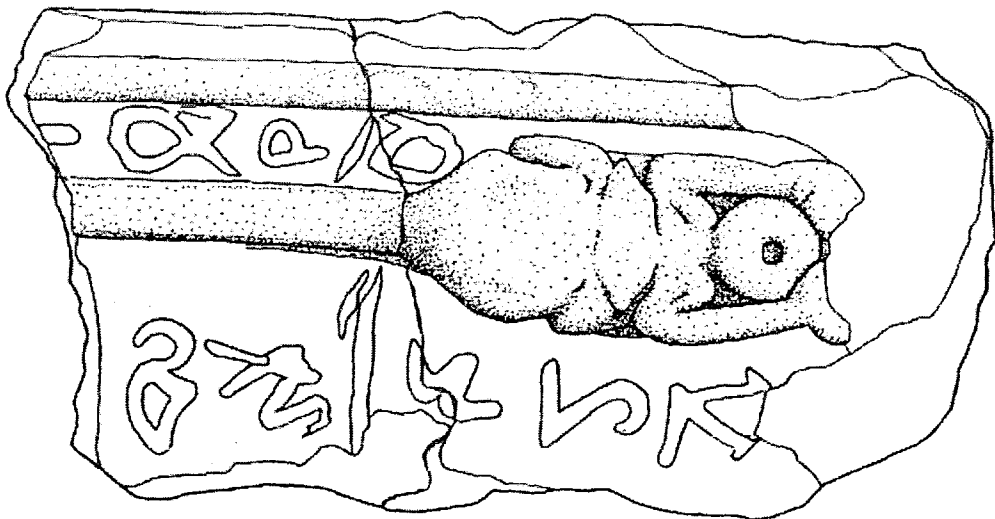


Fig. 2 - Fac-similé de l'inscription DG B. 34 de Doukki Gel
(M. Bundi)

Planche X



Fig. 3 - Inscription DG II B. 50 de Doukki Gel
(cliché de P. Kohler-Rummler)

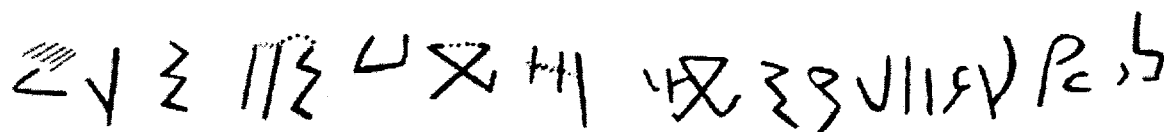


Fig. 4 - Fac-similé de l'inscription DG II B. 50 de Doukki Gel
(C. Rilly d'après M. Bundi)

Planche XI

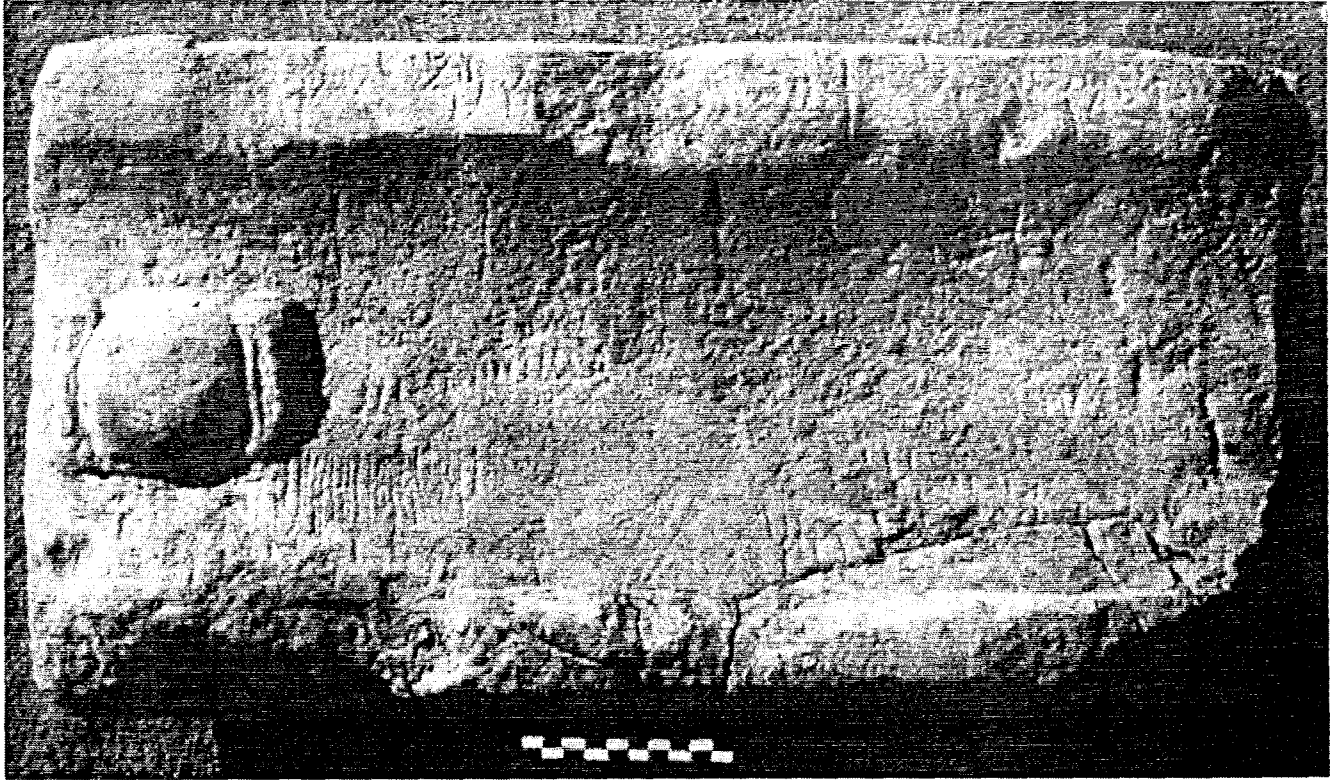


Fig. 5 - Inscription DG/T/B. 232 de Doukki Gel
(cliché de P. Kohler-Rummler)

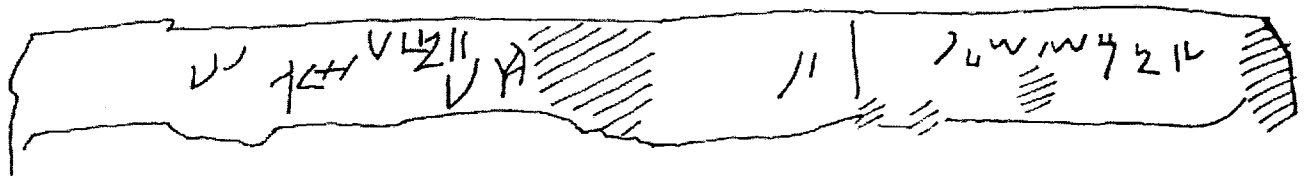


Fig. 6 - Fac-similé de l'inscription DG/T/B.232 de Doukki Gel

Planche XII

	REM 0051A	REM 0052B	REM 0053-0054	REM 0805
a				
b	⋮ ⋮	⋮ ⋮		
d			⌘	⌘
e	⋈ ⋈ ⋈	⋈ ⋈ ⋈	⋈	⋈ ⋈
h				⌘
ḥ				
i			4	4̣
k	⌘ ⌘	⌘ ⌘		
l	⋈ ⋈	⋈	⋈	⋈ ⋈
m	3	3		
n				
ne				
o	/	/		/
p				
q			⌘	
r	⌘	⌘		⌘
s				
se	⌘⌘	⌘⌘		
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w			⌘	3
y				

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Fig. 7 - Table paléographique des textes de Beg. N 11 et 12

Planche XIII

	ARCHAÏQUE A														ARCHAÏQUE B								
texte site	Doukki Gel 1 Kerma	Doukki Gel 2 Kerma	REM 0405A Méroé	REM 0632 Kawa	REM 0617 Kawa	REM 0694 Kawa	REM 0635 Kawa	REM 0641 Kawa	REM 0707 Kawa	REM 0621 Kawa	REM 0636 Kawa	REM 0637 Kawa	REM 0700 Kawa	REM 0435 Méroé	REM 0434 Méroé	REM 0425 Méroé	REM 0428 Méroé	REM 0833 Méroé	REM 0832 Méroé	REM 0405B Méroé	REM 0127 Méroé	REM 1044 Barkal	
a					ʔ	ʔʔ	ʔʔ	ʔʔ		ʔʔ	ʔʔ; ʔʔ	ʔʔ	ʔʔ	ʔʔ; ʔʔ	ʔʔ	ʔʔ; ʔʔ	ʔʔ; ʔʔ	ʔʔ; ʔʔ	ʔʔ	ʔʔ	ʔʔ; ʔʔ		ʔʔ
b		ʔ										ʔ									ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	
d	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ		ʔ	ʔ			ʔ	ʔ; ʔ		ʔ		ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ
e	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ			ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ		ʔ; ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ; ʔ		ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ
h									ʔ						ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ		ʔ; ʔ	
h			ʔ	ʔ?				ʔ		ʔ?	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ						ʔ	ʔ	ʔ?		ʔ	
i		ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ		ʔ	ʔ		ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ
k		ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ				ʔ	ʔ		ʔ; ʔ				ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ		ʔ	
l	ʔ		ʔ					ʔ	ʔ; ʔ		ʔ	ʔ; ʔ		ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ
m		ʔ						ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ				ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ
n					ʔ	ʔ		ʔ	ʔ											ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ
ne									ʔ		ʔ				ʔ			ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ
o				ʔ	ʔ			ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ		ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ
p						ʔ			ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ					ʔ			ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ
q	ʔ		ʔ	ʔ											ʔ			ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ		ʔ
r	ʔ		ʔ	ʔ		ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ		ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ
s				ʔ				ʔ						ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ
se		ʔ		ʔ										ʔ	ʔ			ʔ				ʔ	ʔ
t				ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ		ʔ		ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ		ʔ	ʔ			ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ
te	ʔ		ʔ					ʔ; ʔ							ʔ			ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ		ʔ
to	ʔ		ʔ													ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ		ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ
w	ʔ		ʔ			ʔ					ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ		ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ; ʔ		ʔ; ʔ
y						ʔ									ʔ	ʔ	ʔ			ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ
séparateur			ʔ												ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ; ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ

Fig. 8 - Table paléographique cursive archaïque (d'après Rilly à paraître, Tableau 12)

The Kharamandoye Inscription (MI 94) revisited

Nicholas B. Millet *

The thoughts expressed below are intended as further suggestions to an article on the same inscription that I published in 1973 in *MNL* n° 13. A new transliteration of the text is included to begin with, employing the conventions which are now in use. The superscript numbers indicate the lines of the inscription ; numbers on the left are those of the clauses (*stiches*, or tactical groups) into which the text might properly be divided, at least as I see things at present.

The writer, it should again be pointed out, believes that this text provides the best likelihood of understanding of the few “ historical ” inscriptions which have come down to us from ancient Meroe. The text shows every sign of being the narrative of a single episode, or series of connected episodes, in the history of Lower Nubia ; it is not a question here of the listing of gifts to various temples, nor of a king’s serial record of the events of his reign, but of something resembling the description of a single historical happening. The personages and peoples introduced in the early part of the inscription continue to appear ; although their actions may be obscure, they remain the *dramatis personae* throughout - in fact, from lines 8 to 28. This being the case, one has every right to expect some sort of narrative progression which might be followed.

A further aspect of the text which ought to offer hope to the would-be interpreter is relatively high number of words for which some kind of meaning can be suggested. It might be pointed out that the American-codebreakers of the Second World War claimed to be able to divine the sense of many messages if they knew the significance of only twenty per cent of the groups.

It is at least clear that the text can be divided into several sections. The remarkably extended protocol which begins the inscription (here “ tactical groups ” 1 to 15) comprises the first of these. The second and perhaps the most important of all (and certainly the most impenetrable) is that which is contained in TGs 16 to 20, where apparently the story proper

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begins. Therein are introduced the main characters, and there also must have been outlined the *casus belli* for the conflict or conflicts which clearly follow.

The next section, by far the longest, comprising TG 21 to 48, describes a series of actions of an apparently warlike nature in which new characters are introduced and some ethnic groups (as I believe them to be) are named. Territorial areas along the river, defined by the naming of towns ("to X all-the-way? from Y") are mentioned, as clearly recognised by Griffith.

The last section consists of only two TGs and would seem to express good wishes for the king. The initial element of the predicate word in both cases, *p-*, is seen in the same position in the well-known funerary formulae and also in the prayers addressed to Isis by the official Mashataraqaye in MI 102, 103, and 111, and thus seems a good candidate for an indicator of the optative mood. The suggestion by Zyhlarz in *Kush VI* (1958) that it may be a cognate of the Nubian *fa-*, an indicator of the future tense, is intriguing, but the case of the Philae Chamber prayers seems to militate against it; there may still of course be some distant connection on the semantic level.

TRANSCRIPTION ¹

- 1: *xrmdoye* : *qore* :
 2: *aritenel* : *mdese* :
 3: *mnitke* :
 4: ²*mkleb* : *yereqe* :
 5: *qyiselhl* : *yesebohe* :
 6: *qrleb* : *tro*³*se* :
 7: *aritene* : *terekelise* : *dblilxe* : *qrke* :
 8: *qore* : *mnpte*⁴*se* : *lw* : *qoreyi* :
 9: *tx* : *mnoteselw* : *txneyi* :
 10: *qr* : *aritenelise*⁵*lw* : *qrneyi* :
 1: *sob* : *xlbiliselw* : *sobneyi* :
 2: *tx* : *mnoteselw* : ⁶*txneyi* :
 3: *arette* : *wosselw* : *xiretteneyi* :
 4: *xrpxe* : *mkedo*⁷*keliselw* : *xrpxeneyi* :
 5: *terise* : *mnpte* : *pdhose* : *tlo*⁸*lise* : *kidketet* :

 6: *yisemeniye* : *qorelh* : *yetolxe* : *yiti 4 yoto* :
 7: ⁹*ptpotekye* : *able* : *ywito* :
 8: *sewide* : *aqtoye* : *tepke* : *yed* :
 9: *mkl* : *te*¹⁰*pke* : *yeyk* : *wyed* :
 20: *tepke* : *pyk* :

 1: *xiwr* : *ado* : *wse* : *phrse* : *tdo*¹¹*mne* :
 2: *asy* : *kedebxeky* :

1. NDLR: selon le système de translittération adopté ici par Nicholas B. Millet, < est transcrit x au lieu de h et ʒ est transcrit h au lieu du traditionnel ħ.

3: qo
 4: 12
 5: 13
 6: p.
 7: b.
 8: n
 9: y
 30: a
 1: p
 2: r
 3: j
 4: j
 5: 1
 6: 1
 7: 1
 8: 1
 9: 1
 40: 1
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- me ethnic 5 : ¹³simlok : dik : pilqoyte : bqol :
- ed by the 6 : pro : dole : plw : penn : t¹⁴lte : br : pxinel : bxemi : yedet :
- gnised by 7 : bykelxdik : kdimloye : ¹⁵sqkdi : ptpot | yisemeniye : ysebet : bersowi :
- 8 : mte : wse : ¹⁶ayekenl : ytpoto :
- 9 : yed : ykle :
- ies for the 30 : arohetye : nle : dolk : ¹⁷mtel : pikedelwi :
- osition 1 : ptpotekye : wkdiwikete
- re official 2 : mte wse : ¹⁸qore : txneye : tklwi :
- licator of 3 : ysebete : bereknwi :
- ate of the 4 : x¹⁹rphe detelxe : wene : yed :
- Chamber 5 : wopike : til : yeyki :
- ction on 6 : ²⁰brleb : kedebx :
- 7 : kdileb : mrorleb : ssleb : kbb²¹te :
- 8 : pdhose : lhleb : yexoyke :
- 9 : yetete : mrorbe :
- 40 : qe²²sw : aderek : mtr : wse hrw : pilqoke : mtr : wse
- 1 : ²³qore 4 - 4 hrese : wteb : axi : dete :
- 2 : skle : de²⁴te : wedi : dxo :
- 3 : mte : kdi : aqtoyese 2 wbqob²⁵te :
- 4 : wido : wrosyego : wido : yisexteteyego : bqo²⁶bx :
- 5 : semle : wsi : tkbte :
- 6 : ste : wese #? : bqobte :
- 7 : ²⁷simlok : dik : seleleyte : mho : temey : nsedoke kdi²⁸ abr : nxbres : kbx :
- 8 : mholi : temeyli : dk :
- 9 : ²⁹pro : dole : plw : penn : tlte : br : phole : bxemi : ³⁰yedet :
- 50 : hrw : adonilikete : yireqw : ar³¹w : terekete :
- 1 : hrw : seleleke : mtr : wse [:] yire³²qw : ade.leke : mtr : wse :
-
- 2 : qore : pside : tmot : ³³m...es : ..plne :
- 3 : ptmkide : tmot : aritele : wo³⁴ple :

COMMENTARY

Tactical Group (hereinafter TG) 1 : the king's name is, as was pointed out years ago (but wrongly denied by me in *Meroitic Nubia*), almost certainly a Blemmy one of the type known from the Gebelein documents ; it is probable that we should read *xrmdoye* as "Kharamando-ye" and see it as a theophoric name incorporating that of the god Mandulis. Later in the text there occurs the name *xrosye*, who is one of the two daughters of the mysterious Aqatoye ; this is presumably another name of the same theophoric type, containing that of the goddess Isis. Aqatoye's other daughter is named Yisekhateteye, the first syllables of which recall the name of the Yisemniye of our text, the Ἰσεμνε of the Greek text published by Jean Maspero in *BIFAO* 6 (1908) ; that king has generally been thought to be a Blemmy. If all

of the above is true, it must follow that both the daughters of Aqatoye and the king in whose name the present text was uttered were in fact of Blemmy race.

TG 2 : the word *aritenel*, despite the definite article unexpected after a divine name, can only be the name of the god Ariten, and the following word, *mdese*, that discussed by me in *Meroitic Nubia* (p. 71 ff.), and there proposed to mean “ directly descended from ” someone. Despite occasional statements in the literature there is no real evidence that Meroitic kings were regarded as divine in themselves, but it is entirely possible that they were regarded as of divine *descent*.

TG 3 : the word *mnitke* is met with infrequently elsewhere ; see my remarks in *MNL* n° 13, where I suggested it might mean “ hand of Amani ”.

TG 4 : The meaning of the word *yereqe* is of course unknown, unless it is the same as, or is related to, the word for “ south ”. There may be a root meaning such as “ to go upwards ” which would work here as well, but the suggestion I made in *MNL* n° 13 (“ whom the gods exalt ?”) must be abandoned.

TG 5 : My suggestion here has been that the word written in the text as *qyithl* is to be analyzed as *qyise-lh-l*, “ the great *qyise* ”, with the last word meaning something like “ council, cycle (of the gods), ennead ”. It is conceivable that we are dealing here in these last four TGs with two thought-couplets, the second members of which complement the first in some way. The word *yesebohe* is well-known in reference to the relations between the king and the gods, but apart from some generally desirable or fortunate implication its meaning eludes us.

TG 6 & 7 : The following two *stiches* may as said comprise a thought-couplet of the kind suggested above, if the presence in both of the element *qr* is an indication. Although it may be rash to attribute such a degree of art to the composer of our text, it is not impossible given the frequency of this particular device in writings from ancient times in general, and it is not unknown in Nubian heroic poetry of a later time. In *MNL* n° 13 the first TG was rendered “ parent of princes ? ”, suggested 1) by the possible analysis of the princely title *pqr* as *p-qr*, and 2) by that of the epithet of Isis, *ptroti* = *ptrose-li*, as *p-trose-li*. The word *trose* occurs in a funerary text from Arminna (Arminna 1b) in the clause *temey-lh bereqedoli trose-lowi* “ she ? was *trose* of the Temeya-chief Bereqedoli ”. In MI 101 the goddess Isis is apparently described as *aro-l trose-l*. My inclination at present is still to take *trose* as meaning “ parent ”, *arol-trose* as meaning “ parent of Horus ”, and the *p-* in *p-trose* as meaning something like “ royal/divine/noble child ”. The *qr* in *p-qr* might then mean “ prince ” or perhaps “ heir ”, with *qr-ke* in TG 7 being an in some way modified form of it. The following group of TGs seem to be, as has been recognized since Griffith’s time, phrases “ in praise of the king ”, in each case relating him somehow to a deity ; together with the preceding lines, they comprise the lengthiest and most effusive royal protocol to be found in any Meroitic inscription of whatever date. Although many known gods of the Meroitic pantheon are mentioned, the name of the god Mandulis, the paramount god of Kalabsha and of the Blemmyes, is conspicuous by its absence. One is led to wonder whether this was intentional,

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and whether the god of the Blemmyes is being deliberately passed over in order to emphasize the preeminence of the deities of the Meroitic state pantheon, and thus the political eminence of a king who, Blemmy or not, still followed them. It should however be noted that in the Kalabsha Greek graffiti of the (presumably) Blemmy kings published by Jean Maspero in *BIFAO* (1908) there is also no clear mention made of Mandulis, although other deities, such as Ploulan, seem to be named.

The relationship of the king to each of the divinities mentioned is presumably expressed by the postpositive particle *-selw* ; this also occurs in MI 101 in the phrase *ptrose-li-selw armte-kw*, inserted between the subject of the sentence (the donor) and the object, the list of offerings or gifts. I would thus consider this series of words a prepositional phrase and render it “ on behalf of the Parent of the Child (i.e. Isis) and (of) Horus the Child (*mte*) ”.

The final *-neyi* in each of the segments would seem to be a laudatory adjective of some kind, for which see my remarks in *MNL* n° 13. The gloss suggested below, “ august ”, is a feeble attempt on my part to indicate this and should not in any way be taken seriously as an exact rendering.

TG 9 : The gloss “ creator ” for *tx* is of course also the merest guess.

TG 11 : The word *xlbi* occurs in the much-discussed graffiti MI 64 and 70, see Griffith, *Meroitic Inscriptions*, part I, and Hintze (1959), p. 53 ff. Here it seems most likely that it should be translated as “ month ” and the following word *dime*, also followed by a numeral, as “ day ”. In the second version of my publication of the Adda texts, now in preparation, I say more on this point. If “ month ” is correct then a moon-god may well be in question here. The meaning of the element *sob*, apparently a ἄπαξ, is quite unguessable, unless it is somehow related to the word *so* “ to make, create ?”, for which see *JSSEA* XXV (1995), p. 59.

TG 12 : This TG is an unexpected and probably careless repetition of TG 9.

TG 13 : This segment departs from the pattern of the earlier ones, if my understanding is even more or less correct. *arette* can only be, as Griffith saw, the Meroitic form of the name of the god Harendotes, and was presumably pronounced */arentate/ ; the final element *xirette* may be a compound of the same, *xi-(a)rette*, in which the element *xi-* I take to have some such meaning as “ to be nurse, protector, one who rears (a child) ”.

TG 15 : The last character seemed to me in 1965 to be a *t* corrected to an *l*, but both are possible.

In the rendering below I am suggesting

(X) *terise mnpte pdhose tlo-li-se kid- ke-te-l*
 (subject)+object+unmarked indirect object+verb+obj. pronoun

with the king of course being the subject. What I see as an unmarked indirect object, the phrase

mnpte *pdhose* *tlo-li-* *se*
 might further be analysed as
 (noun+noun-in-apposition)+(definite noun+genitive).

Now the noun *terise* is very likely a variant of the word *terite* found in the Tanyidamani stela published by Hintze in *Kush* 8 (1960), in the context *terite amnptete-se-lw teri-ik-te*, "(he) ...s a *terite* on behalf? of Amanapate". My suggestion in the rendering below is that the word in both cases means something like "memorial, monument" or the like. The verb *kid-* is now well attested in the Ibrim stelae published by myself in Mills 1982 and apparently means "to give", so that in the Kalabsha case the king is represented as giving a memorial (to) the god Amanapate. It remains to consider the import of the epithet, if such it be, that follows the name of the god. The word *pdhose* occurs later in our text in the phrase *pdhose lh-leb*, where it seems to be in parallelism with other words in the plural denoting classes of human beings who are being dealt with rather roughly, and I have been so bold below as to take it to mean "the great lords" as opposed to the men (*br-leb*) who were killed (*√kede-*) and the women, children? (*mrer-leb*), and *ss*-persons who are treated otherwise. The word in our text is followed by *tlo-li-se*, "of the *tlo*". A word *telo-le* is found on an iron projectile point found at Qustul (Emery 1938, pl. 116, no. 3); one is reminded of the warlike slogan found on such articles and slingstones in the Greek and Roman world. A somewhat similar word occurs as label to the Hellenized victory figure on the Worcester plaque - see Griffith 1917, 24 - in the form *tleyi-go*. The equivalence "victory" suggests itself; if so, we would have the king giving "a memorial to Amanapate, lord of victory".

Thus in the first fifteen TGs of the text we have the picture of a king, identified by name and a following chain of extravagant epithets, giving a memorial to the god Amanapate, presumably in thanks for the achievements he will relate in the remaining part of the inscription.

The next section of the text (TGs 16-20), as stated earlier, clearly introduces the main players and must describe the events which precede, and presumably lead toward, the warlike actions recounted in the subsequent section. It is all the more regrettable that it is also the most obscure portion of the tale.

TG 16 : The identity of the Yisemeniye of our text with the Ἰσημενε of Jean Maspero's Greek inscription at Kalabsha is now I think generally admitted. He is here described as "great king", or perhaps "chief king". The word *yetolxe* may include the Meroitic word for water or river (*ato*) which appears in the well-known title "general of the river" in somewhat earlier Meroitic times. The postposition *-lxe* is a common one in Meroitic, but of unknown meaning; in the rendering below I have been so bold as to take it as possibly meaning "on/upon". The final "predication" word is *yoto*, in which I am very much inclined to see again a compound, *yose-lo*, perhaps encapsulating the word known from Napatan times in the form *i3-s3* (in the Harsiotef inscription, *Urkunden* III, 125), where ten persons so-called are presented to the temple along with a hundred ordinary folk, men and women. It would seem probable that the ten *i3-s3*s are to be taken as overseers of some kind, in the proportion

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of one to ten so familiar from Pharaonic Egypt. The element is of course well-known as a modifier of various titles in Meroitic times as well. The word *yiti* may well conceal a compound *yise-li*, in which case we would be dealing with “the 4 *yises*”, whatever they might be. All of these suggestions have led me in the rendering below to propose the translation “Isemniye, the great king on the river, was the chief of the four *yises* (tribes, nations, allies?)”. It is not likely that the word *yise* (/is/ ?) is a cognate of the Old Nubian $\epsilon\iota\zeta$, meaning “other”, in which case Yisemeniye would be being described as a great king who was “chief of the 4 other (kings)”.

TG 17 : In this segment we are introduced to a personage named Patapotekaye, whose name occurs again, and who is clearly to be regarded as one of the chief characters in the tale. His name appears to be Meroitic, but this may mean very little in the confused post-Meroitic world of Lower Nubia. The predication-word might be analyzed either *ywise-lo* or *ywi-se-lo*, with in the last case the third person singular pronoun referring to Isemniye, either as object after a verb or as a genitive after a noun. It is difficult to take the preceding *able* as anything except some kind of qualifier after the name - a title, complementary noun, or adjective - since Patapotekaye, obviously one of the main players, is otherwise simply a faceless nonentity in terms of the narrative. My inclination is to take the word *ywi-* as *awi* and a form of *wi* meaning “brother” and render the TG as “Patapotekaye, an *able*-person, was his (Isemniye’s) brother”. K-H. Priese’s suggestion that the word for brother can actually take the form *wil* I do not find entirely convincing (WZHU 1971, p. 281).

TG 18-20 : In this section of the text the only certain words are a personal name, that of Aqatoye, who appears now for the first time, and *mk-l*, which of course ought to mean “the god”. Which god, if one is indeed indicated, we are not told. The key word in the section would seem to be *tepke*, which occurs three times, but whose syntactic position is so unclear that we can only guess at the part of speech it represents. The words *yed* and *wyed* bring to mind the root $\sqrt{d-}$ in MI 101, where I pointed out (in *Meroitic Nubia*, p. 257 ff.) it can only mean “give, grant”. The initial *w-* in the second instance may be a dialectic variant of the particle *qe-* long ago suggested by Hintze to be a preterite indicator for verbs. The word *sewide* must identify Aqatoye somehow or other, as a title or, as I am inclined to think in view of what we learn later, a term of relationship. Could it possibly be a Meroitic form of the Old Nubian $\zeta\epsilon\gamma\alpha\tau\tau$ “heir”?

There remains the question of the element *tepke*. One would like to see it as a noun object for the verb *yed*, if indeed the latter can be taken as an active verb. In view of the drastic actions which seem to be described in the following TGs some sort of tolerably dire import would seem to be asked for. There does exist in Old Nubian a noun $\pi\eta\eta\zeta$ - which means “a fight, battle” from a verb $\pi\eta\eta\kappa$ - “to fight” which might have been related to a Meroitic $*/(te)panke/$. It is possible that Patapotekaye is “giving” battle to someone named Aqatoye, described only by the $\acute{\alpha}\pi\alpha\xi$ *sewide*? This might suit the sense as I have tried to see it, but it is a very slender thread indeed on which to hang a matter of some moment. But if this is at all correct, the next TG might mean “the god had caused (that he) *yeyk* (accept?) battle”, and the following TG being in *oratio recta*, as the god’s words - “let him accept? battle!” with the

optative *p-* remarked on earlier. All of this depends of course entirely on the correctness of the word born equation *tepke* = "battle". The proposition is thus feeble in the extreme. "after".

TG 21 : If the boundaries of the TGs are as I have suggested, the word *xiwr* - another ἀπαξ - **TG 23** : (should be the first in TG 21. It and the succeeding words presumably act as a sort of preface to In *Meroi* the immediately following description of bloody activity. The word *ado* can here hardly be postposit the Meroitic name of the site of Gebel Adda which I thought to identify in *Meroitic Nubia*, the first be *qoret* since it is followed by the word *w-se*, which in *MNL* n° 13 I "translated" as « of (the) land », one, *qor* following Zyhlarz's old suggestion, but which is much more to likely to be, as it would seem another (a) *qe-se*, "his, hers, its" : thus "his *ado*". Here the phrase is followed by the well-known Against Against place name *phrse*, "Faras". If the two nouns are in apposition - "his *ado* Faras", the first area ! Al (b-*qo*?) ought to be a term describing the town of Faras in relation to the person referred to. to Old "noble sort of someth In *MNL* n° 13 I rendered this segment

... (he) was-absent-from? (the) fortress? of the land, Pakharas

but would now prefer a somewhat different interpretation. In 1977, in an article in *Aegypten und Kusch (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des alten Orients* 13, Berlin) I made the suggestion that a predicate-final particle *-nil/-ne* might be an indicator of a circumstantial clause ; such an interpretation would fit well here. Thus I am now inclined to render the present TG in some such terms as "when (*-ne*) he was not residing-in his residence Faras", with *t-do* being a verbal relative of the word *ado* and *-m-* being a negative infix. This last suggestion is evoked not only by my general understanding of the thrust of the text, but also by consideration of the word *kdi-m-dxe* which occurs in REM 1333, treated by myself in 1996 in *Studies in Honour of William Kelly Simpson*, vol. 2, p. 612 ; it can be pointed out (again rather feebly, to be sure) in its defence that the syllable is a negative indicator in many languages. If this is in fact such here, it is perhaps strange that we have no other clear example of it in the entire Meroitic corpus, but of course it is not something that one would expect to find in the funerary texts which compose so much of our material. The suggestion here is that what follows in the narrative could happen because *someone* was not in his city. Which person is here intended is quite uncertain ; in 1973 I was of the opinion that it must have been Kharamandoye, but the last-mentioned individual is of course Aqatoye, and a case could certainly be made for him. On the whole I am still more inclined to the former identification, and to reassert the view that Kharamandoye's residence may have been, on the basis of this text, Faras itself.

TG 22 : The operative word here is certainly *kede-bxe-ky*. The element *-bxe* was dealt with at some length in *Meroitic Nubia* and again in 1973 in *MNL* n° 13, where I tried to make a case for it being a marker of the third person plural of the verb. The word *kede* is now known from many texts and can only be a word for "to kill", as Griffith realized in 1917. The initial *asy* I suggested in *Meroitic Nubia* and again in *MNL* n° 13, basing myself on its occurrence in this text and in MI 101, might be a word for "many". At the time I made the foolish suggestion that it might be a loan-word from Egyptian, Coptic ⲁⲱⲁⲓ. I am still persuaded that the gloss is probably correct, but the notion that such a common idea would be expressed by a loan

TG 23 : (In *Meroi* postposit the first be *qoret* one, *qor* another Against area ! Al (b-*qo*?) to Old "noble sort of someth

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ss of the word borders on the fatuous. The final *-ky* I felt obliged to gloss as a postpositive conjunction, “ after ”.

TG 23 : Griffith rendered this segment effectively as “ from Qêreli all-the-way from Philae ”. In *Meroitic Nubia* (p. 286) I laid out my reasons for preferring the transposition of the two postpositions, so that one would read “ to X all the way ? from Y ”. My own examination of the first place-name as it appears on the stone suggests that the correct reading would rather be *qoreti*, a good match for the modern Qurta or Qurti, south of Daka. The word is a Nubian one, *qorti*, meaning “ knee, corner ”, presumably in this case “ bend of the river ” ; there is another place of the same name in Sudanese Nubia, down-river from the modern Merowe. Against this theory it should be pointed out that there is no marked bend in the river in either area ! Also in *Meroitic Nubia* I gave my reasons, at some length, for regarding the word \sqrt{bqo} (*b-qo* ?) as meaning something like “ to possess, control ”. No doubt there exists a relationship to Old Nubian KO- , KOY- , “ to have, own ” ; the common Meroitic word *qo* meaning “ noble ” or the like of persons must also be involved. The final *-k* should logically have some sort of final nuance in the grammatical sense, i.e. “ as-a-result-of-this he possessed ... ” ; something of the same sort may appear in TG 45, for which see below.

TG 24-25 : The series of nouns, as they appear to be, which end in the syllable *-s*, were thought by me in earlier attempts on the text to be ethnic terms, the names of tribes or peoples involved in the power-plays of post-Meroitic Lower Nubia ; my understanding has not changed. The element *s* appears to occur in the title or epithet *s-qo* which appears before the name of the deceased on the monuments of a man named Pakhome, monuments found by the Spanish expedition at Nag^c Gamûs ; this might well mean nothing more than “ noble person ”, since in this position more specific titles usually follow the person’s name (see *Meroitic Nubia*, p. 231, for the matching female form *kdi-qo*, as well as further evidence on this point). Since the word *sq-* occurs later without the ending *-ye*, as does the word *temey-* in the Adda and some other texts, I have in the rendering taken the liberty of inserting an ^cayin in both cases, to show in a purely symbolic fashion that some other consonant, perhaps an ^cayin or a fricative, must have been heard which the limitations of the Meroitic script were unable to reproduce as such. These variations of two of the terms in this TG must thus, I think,, be seen as further evidence of their being words of non-Meroitic origin.

TG 25 & 26 : The exact location of the place Shimalo is uncertain, but somewhere in the vicinity of either Tumâs or Amada is probable (see Priese in *Meroitica* 7, p. 487-8). Shablul, sometimes thought as a candidate, was probably called Tene. Thus someone, apparently the subject of the sentence, is said to be “ the possessor (*bqo-l*) ” of a stretch of the river extending “ to Shimalo all the way ? from Philae ”. The main problem resides in the next TG ; this series of words is repeated with a slight variation in TG 46, without anything preceding it which resembles what we have here, the result being that TG 25 seems to float in a syntactic limbo. The only explanation that occurs to me is that the entire TG 25 must in fact be the subject of a sentence which includes TG 26 as its predicate ; the almost exact duplicate in TG 46 must thus have its subject understood, with some residual doubt as to whether it was the same

subject as before. In these two TGs the only words which one can gloss with any confidence are *penn* “ year ” and *br* “ man ”, and one remains at a loss as to how to interpret them. Perhaps some period of time is described during which something did (or did not) happen, an interval in the narrative with which we are dealing. It is certainly unlikely that the word *tlte* here is related to the *tlt* in the Ibrim text I published in Mills 1982 ; that word is most likely to be understood as a Meroitic rendering of the Greek τάλαντον, meaning a talent measure of the commodity *yed* (? silver, Egyptian *ḥd*, Coptic ρατ).

TG 27 : The first word, an unusually lengthy one, is presumably a complex of some sort, but not one known elsewhere ; nor do its elements seem particularly familiar, although the final *-k* does appear in our text ; see above, TG 23. No doubt the equivalent of a circumstantial or other clause is involved, modifying in some way the more intelligible section which immediately follows. In this we have the mention of a *sq*-woman with the Meroitic name of Kadimaloye and the king Isemne named earlier as a major player in the drama ; between them is a word *ptpot*, followed by a slanting stroke \, which cannot of course be the Meroitic *o*. It must I think be accepted as an abbreviated form of the name of Patapotekaye, with the slanting virgule used as an abbreviation mark, as it is in Greek texts of the same period such as Jean Maspero’s at the same site. Quite unexpected in a Meroitic text, its appearance here suggests that the scribe was familiar to some extent with Greek graphic usages, an intriguing thought ; one cannot help wondering whether the scribe of MI 94 was perhaps the same man who wrote the Greek text of Isemne !

The word *ysebet* which follows the three names is found later in the text in TG 33 in the form *ysebete*, but also perhaps in an Adda ink inscription on a wooden label (see MI 353, GA 47 below). The text reads

txbo : *SEBETE-leb-se*

adke-li-se : *areketo* :

bike-leb : *ab*

(reverse) *kele* : *sm* : *lqo-li*

It would seem that here we are dealing with a noun in the plural, “ a *txbo* of the *sebetes* ”. In an article I wrote in *Meroitica* 15 (1999) on the Meroitic numberwords I suggested that *are-keto* might be the word for “ fourteen ”, and that the lines on the Gebel Adda wooden tag might be rendered “ a *txbo* of the fourteen *sebetes* of the *adke* ... ”, or the like.

A similar word, and possibly a variant of the same, is met with in the texts of Abaratoye found by the French expedition at Tumâs in the 1960s. The word *asebe* appears in a sentence which I have dealt with earlier in a contribution to the *Festschrift* for W.K. Simpson (Boston, 1996, edited by Peter der Manuelian) :

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confidence In the article cited I rendered this as

“ Noba 535 he slew ; *asebe* [booty ??] women-*tk* (and) men-*tk* 2003, *meqe-seke* 3, (and) animals -- cattle-*tk* (and) horses-*tk* -- 1700, he sent (back ??). ”

The translation “ booty ” was of course again a guess ; I am now inclined to suggest that a gloss “ prisoner, captive ” (referring only to the human beings listed immediately thereafter) might be closer to the truth. Is it conceivably possible that the shadowy Shaqa-woman Kadimaloye and Patapotekaye made (-*so-wi*) Isemne a prisoner ?

A serious problem, however, with the idea of *sebeta* in the Adda tag meaning “ prisoner ” is the necessity of explaining what the tag was attached to, since it must have described the contents of something or other. If it were just a *list* of “ prisoners ” how sizable could the document have been to require a tag of such dimensions ? Surely the Adda tag must have been attached to something of greater bulk than - for example - a single sheet of papyrus ?

TG 28 : *mte w-se* can only mean “ his child ”, the *w-se* being, here and later, a dialectal variant of the more familiar *qe-se*. I presume the person named Ayekenal was Isemne’s son or daughter. The next word, *ytpoto*, I would analyze as *ytpo-se-lo* and see as the predicate-word, perhaps including the same root from which is formed Patapotekaye’s name. The problem is that the following *yed* has been met with before (TGs 18 and 19) in positions which suggest it too is a verb (“ to give ” ??). It would seem best to take the words *yed ykle* as a TG in themselves (TG 29) and the section beginning with the name of Arokhetaye as another (TG 30). The whole of the latter is mysterious to a degree ; it introduces another character to our tale, since *arohetye* has every appearance of being a good Meroitic personal name, and this personage is rendered even more mysterious by the fact that the name does not seem to be followed or preceded by a recognisable title or epithet, leaving him or her quite unexpectedly something of a wild card in terms of the narrative. The only word in this TG - besides the name - to which a meaning can be assigned is *mte-l*, “ the child ”, unless the element *kede* in the last is the word for “ kill ”. And are we to take it that this “ child ” is the Ayekenal just mentioned ?

TG 31 : Patapotekayes’ name occurs again and is followed here by what may be a verb complex which might be analyzed as *w-kdiwi-ke-te*, whatever that might mean ; the ending at least is a familiar one, from the funerary formulae and elsewhere, and the initial *w-* may be the element referred to earlier in dealing with TG 19. The most likely reading of the final element is that it represents a singular direct object, under the circumstances probably “ him ” or “ her ”.

TG 32 : A new face appears in this segment, “ his (Patapotekaye’s) child the *qore* ? Takhaneye ”. In my earlier treatments I took the name to be Qorakhatakhane, following Griffith’s reading and assuming that the worddivider was wrongly used. I find however in referring to the text published in the computerized *Répertoire* that the compilers read the words as *qore : txneye* “ king ? Takhaneye ”, which appeals for many reasons, one of them being that the name would otherwise be a very long one, even by Meroitic standards. If one accepts that

reading we would have a son of Patapotekaye named Takhaneye as a king - perhaps succeeding his uncle Isemne (and his son Ayekenal) ? The word *tklwi* is perhaps to be analysed *t-kl-wi*, in view of the similar *ykle* in TG 29 ; can it be cognate to the modern Nubian *tall-*, meaning “ to follow ”, as Meroitic *kid-* may be to the Nubian *tir-* ?

What must trouble us in the relationships which seem to be described in the foregoing is that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that a father-son succession may be implied. Al-Maqrizi is quite clear that the Beja of his day (c. 1400, chapter 32) practiced matrilinear descent, as did the Meroites in the period with which we are dealing. It is true that in the third and fourth centuries the Egyptianised upper-class Meroites in the north of Lower Nubia, like their Egyptian neighbours further down-river, passed their offices down from father to son (Millet 1968), and perhaps we have here a later echo of this custom.

TG 33 : Here in the words *ysebeta bereknwi* we are faced with a variation of the final two words of TG 27, *q.v.* I am quite unable to make any suggestions, useful or otherwise.

For the moment I will defer discussion of TG 34 until later, since it contains some elements in common with TG 42.

TG 36-37 : Here I would render, much as I did before, “ they slew the men, they took away ($\sqrt{k-b-bte}$) the women, the *mrors* (children ?), (and) the *sss* (old people ? worthies ?), and they *yexoyked* the great lords. ” Here we have described the second of the warlike events commemorated in the inscription ; unfortunately, again, we do not know who is doing it to whom.

TG 39-40 : The first two words may indeed not belong where I have put them, but it is more difficult to see them as attaching to what has gone before. The word *mr-or-be* is puzzling ; it must be related to the *mr-or-leb* in TG 37, but I cannot suggest what it is doing here. It is indeed uncertain whether the words belong to the preceding group or the following. The group *mtr w-se* really ought to mean “ his/her/its *mtr* ”, instead of “ boundary of (the) land ”, as I thought in 1963, and one can wonder whether the Meroitic *mtr* is not cognate with the modern Mahâs Nubian *murtar* “ possession, property ”. The root is also known in Old Nubian (ΜΟΥΡΤ-). But the search for Nubian cognates for Meroitic words, tempting though it may be, is after all only a last and desperate resort.

The place-name Adere has been identified by K-H. Priese with the modern Derr, although Griffith suggested a more southern location in the Second Cataract area (Griffith 1912, p. 82).

TG 41 : Despite Claude Rilly’s cogent arguments in *Meroitic Newsletter 27* I still cleave to my understanding of the word *wte* as meaning “ letter/missive ”, and I also still incline to the gloss “ to send ” for the verb *axi-de-* which follows it here (see Mills 1982 and my article in *JSSEA XXV*, 1995). Thus I would render this section as “ he sent letters (to) eight ? kings of (the) north ”.

At this point we must consider the problems presented by TGs 34 and 42. These two TGs have in common one word, *dete*, and in TG 42 a word *skle* leads us further into a text from Serra and another from Adda which may or may not have something to add. In TG 34

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there occurs a word *wene*, which calls to mind the *w-se* of TG 32 and elsewhere, which I have suggested should be translated ther as "his". In an article I wrote many years ago (Millet 1977, p. 320) I suggested that a final *-ni* might represent the suffix form of a first person pronoun *yini* or the like. Could then *we-ne* be the possessive form of the same, "of me, mine"? Nothing whatsoever in any part of the text so far can be construed as leading to the notion that the king is relating the events described in the first person; it is not out of the question, however, that the reader was expected to understand from the beginning that such was the case. Is it possible that TG 34 should be rendered " (I) gave (*yed*) a command (*xrpxe*) to (*-xe*) my *dete* " ?

The partial similarity of TG 42 may be to the pont her :

34 : *xrpe dete-l-xe we-ne yed*

42 : *skle dete we-di dx*

The word *dete* must surely be a noun, whatever its meaning. The word *skle* in TG 42 may be the same as that encountered in two other texts of the period, the stela from Serra published by Rosenvasser in *Kush* XI (1963) and GA 30 :

Serra : *mlo-k tereke skl-lo*

GA 30 : *tereke skl-w wemoke wi st 200*

In the case of the Serra text, the following TGs seem to describe warlike activity and the capture of a Noba prisoner, while the Adda instance is an interpolated line apparently inserted as an afterthought to expand the listed titles and honorifics of a distinguished relative of the deceased, the "chief Temeya" Apeloye.

TG 43 : One would like to translate this as "two female children of Aqatoye had ? possessed them", more or less as I had dealt with it in 1973, but it might be more consistent to render "he/she had possessed two daughters of Aqatoye". The problem is then of course where to seek for the subject. It is most likely that it is Kharamandoye himself, but Isemne is, one supposes, a possibility.

TG 44 : The two "female children" of Aqatoye are here specified. The word *wido*, which in 1973 I hazarded might mean "namely, to wit" is more likely I think to be a title or descriptive epithet, probably honorific. If the verb *bqo-bx* means "they (the two ladies) possessed" or the like, it is unclear what the object is..

TG 45 : I can see no better rendering of this TG than that offered in 1973 : "the consort Washi took them (away ?)".

TG 46 : In 1973 I hazarded the gloss "arura" for the word *ste*, relying on a distant phonetic resemblance to the Egyptian word and on the grounds that a possible numeral sign followed shortly after it. It was of course the merest speculation, one which matches very badly with the

Coptic form, and one which it was difficult to make any connection with what seems to follow. The apparent numeral sign may indeed not be such it certainly does not resemble any of the known numeral signs. Griffith thought it might have been a misshapen *h*. Could it simply be a sculptor's blunder, once corrected with plaster since washed away? The phrase *ste we-se* could by itself mean "his/her mother", but in that case the interpretation of the puzzling sign as a numeral would make little sense. The identity of the persons (or territories?) referred to in the plural object pronoun *-bte* is equally obscure.

TG 47-48: The rendering of these two TGs given at the end of this article is essentially that of my earlier treatment: the reader should refer to my remarks on TG 23 for the suggested gloss for the final *-k* in the second of the two:

To Shimalo all-the-way from Salele, a Maho, a Temeya,
a Nasdoke (who) carried off a woman (or) a man of the Nakhabar -
the Maho (and) the Temeya will give (them) back.

My feeble understanding of the balance of the text remains much as it was in 1973.

The treatment offered here of the great Kalabsha text is perhaps marginally more satisfactory than that given in 1973, but it must be emphasized again that nothing can be gained in such a matter by shrinking back from surmise. Surely a multiplicity of hypotheses is always better, heuristically speaking, than none at all.

RENDERING

- 1 : Kharamandoye, king ;
 - 2 : descended from Ariten,
 - 3 : hand ? of Amani,
 - 4 : whom the gods *yereqe*,
 - 5 : whom the great *qyise* blesses/favours ?,
 - 6 : parent ? of the princes ?,
 - 7 : who *dbilixe qrke* Ariten of the *tereke* ;
 - 8 : king of behalf of Amannapate, the supreme king ;
 - 9 : *tx* on behalf of Amannote, the supreme *tx* ;
 - 10 : prince on behalf of Ariten, the supreme prince ;
 - 1 : *sob* on behalf of the Moon-god, the supreme *sob* ;
 - 2 : *tx* on behalf of Amannote, the supreme *tx* ;
 - 3 : Arentate on behalf of Wosha, who nursed Arentate ;
 - 4 : ruler on behalf of makadoke, the supreme ruler -
 - 5 : he gives a monument (to) Amannapate, lord of victory.
-
- 6 : It was Isemne, great king on (?) the river, who was the chief of the 4 *yises* (tribes/nations ?) ;
 - 7 : Patapotekaye, an *able*, was his brother.
 - 8 : The *sewide* Aqatoye gave ? *tepke* ;

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- 9 : the god had caused ? that he accept ? *tepke*.
- 20 : " May he accept ? *tepke* ! "
- 1 : *xiwr* when he was not residing in his residence Faras.
- 2 : After ? they killed many ?,
- 3 : he ? was in possession to Qurta alle the way from Philae --
- 4 : A Laka-person, a Shaqa^c-person, a Nasdoke-person, a Temeya^c-person, and a Nakhabar-person were in possession.
- 5 : (He,) the possessor, (of the country ?) to Shimalo all the way from Philae,
- 6 : *pro dole plw year tlte man pxinel bxemi yedet*
- 7 : *byekelxdik* Kadimaloye, a Shaqa^c-woman, Patapota/ (=Patapotekaye ?) (and ?) Isemne *ysebet bersowi*.
- 8 : It was his child Ayekenal who *ypod* him/her/it.
- 9 : he gave (?), he *ykled* ?
- 30 : Arokhetaye *nle dolk pikedelwid* the child ;
- 1 : Patapotekaye had (?) *kdiwiked* him/her ;
- 2 : his child King ? Takhaneye *tklwid* ;
- 3 : *ysebete berkenwi*
- 4 : (I ?) gave a command ? to a *dete* of mine ?
- 5 : *wopike til yeyki*
- 6 : The men they slew,
- 7 : the women, the *mrors*, the worthies ? they carried off ;
- 8 : the great lords (I ?) *yewoyked* ;
- 9 : (I ?) *yeteted mrors* ?.
- 40 : Kush-wards to Adere its boundary, northwards to Philae its boundary,
- 1 : (to) 4 - 4 (= 8 ?) kings of north(land) (I ?) sent letters ? ;
- 2 : *skle dete wedi dx*
- 3 : the two daughters of Aqatoye had been ? in possession ;
- 4 : the noble *wido* Kharoshaye, the noble *wido* Isekhateteye, are (now ?) in possession ;
- 5 : the consort Washi took them away ;
- 6 : his/her mother ? ... ? was in possession of them.
- 7 : To Shimalo all the way from Selele - (if) a Makho, a Temeya, a Nasdoke carries off a woman (or) a man (who are) Nakhabar-folk --
- 8 : the Makho (or) the Temeya gives (her/him) back ! "
-
- 9 : *pro dole plw year tlte man phole bxemi yedet*
- 50 : Northwards he *adonilikes* it, southwards he *arwterekes* it,
- 1 : northwards to Selele, his frontier, southwards to Ade.le, his frontier.
- 2 : May the king *tside tmot m...es ..plne* !
- 3 : May he *tmkide tmot aritele wople* !

SOME FINAL NOTES

If indeed Kharamandoye was himself a Blemmy, we are faced with the question of whether he was ruling a Blemmy nation somewhere in Lower Nubia or whether the people of the Ballana culture in the south, the builders of the great tumulus-tombs (who surely must have been Nobadae) were at this juncture ruled by a Blemmy royal family. My feelings in this

been Nobadae), were at this juncture ruled by a Blemmy royal family. My feelings in this matter are of course influenced by my belief that the ethnic terms *mho* and *nxbr* in our Kalabsha text represent the Blemmyes and the Nobadae respectively.

We should bear in mind the real possibility that the text was not published, as it would appear to be, *de par le roi*, but rather by one or more of the beneficiaries of the king's settlement, most likely the daughters of the mysterious Aqatoye. Such a settlement there must have been, and the flattering extravagances of the beginning protocol (quite the most fulsome of any preserved in the surviving Meroitic royal inscriptions) would certainly fit such an explanation.

It will be obvious that the present treatment of the great Kalabsha text is at the most only a slight improvement, if any, on the versions published in 1968 and 1973. Many of the conjectures herein are no doubt quite wrong, and will be proven so by more advanced students in the future, but nothing whatsoever is gained by refusing the challenge again.

*

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Récents progrès dans le domaine de la philologie méroïtique

Claude Rilly *

J'ai soutenu le 20 décembre 2003 en Sorbonne une thèse de doctorat de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études intitulée « Le méroïtique : données grammaticales, lexicales, position linguistique. » Le résumé qui suit expose quelques-uns des résultats auxquels je suis parvenu au cours de mes récentes recherches, et qui ont été présentés à cette occasion. Le progrès le plus sensible et le plus attendu est évidemment la situation du méroïtique au sein des langues africaines, une question pour laquelle se trouvent confirmées, quarante ans après leur parution, les théories de Trigger, mais sur des bases linguistiquement plus solides et un corpus plus étendu.

Dans le domaine grammatical, trois points ont fait l'objet d'une étude novatrice. Tout d'abord le génitif, pour lequel nous avons prouvé qu'il existait sous deux formes en méroïtique : un génitif antéposé (ex. *peseto-l wi-l* "le frère du vice-roi"), utilisé pour les relations de type inaliénable comme les liens de parenté, et un génitif postposé bien connu (ex. *ant Wos-se* "prêtre d'Isis"), employé notamment pour des relations de type aliénable (ici l'affectation à un culte).

Le deuxième apport concerne la prédication non verbale, laquelle se fait à l'aide d'une copule variable en nombre. Jusqu'à présent, lorsque l'on trouvait *pesetolo(wi)* "c'est un vice-roi" ou *pesetolebkwi* "ce sont des vice-rois", on pensait que la copule était au singulier *-lo(wi)*, au pluriel *-lebkwi*. Ne trouvait-on pas d'ailleurs des nominations des personnages de type *X-lo* "c'est X" ? Nous avons démontré que l'élément *-l*, *-leb* n'était rien d'autre que le déterminant de l'attribut, et qu'il était erroné de l'en détacher. Les nominations atypiques s'expliquent fort bien si l'on considère que le personnage désigné dans *X-lo* porte un anthroponyme déterminé de type *X-l* (cf. français Lefort, Legrand, etc.), ce qui est courant chez les Méroïtes. La copule est donc au singulier *-o*, parfois élargie par la particule "emphatique" (focalisateur ?) *-wi*. Au pluriel, elle prend la forme *-k*, et est toujours suivie de *-wi*. Dans les exemples précédents, on segmentera donc : *peseto-l-o(-wi)* et *peseto-leb-k-wi*. Nous avons également pu mettre en évidence la présence de topicalisation dans certaines propositions non verbales, une hypothèse qui, jointe à la précédente, apporte des simplifications dans la syntaxe et une réduction du nombre de morphèmes supposés.

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Enfin, nous avons proposé une analyse de la deuxième personne de l'impératif, pour laquelle les désinences sont au singulier *-te* et au pluriel *-kte* (ultérieurement *-kete*). La première forme est bien attestée dans les bénédictions divines aux souverains (par exemple à Naga), la suivante dans les bénédictions funéraires où la prière est adressée à Isis et à Osiris.

Le précédent lexique de quelque ampleur remontant maintenant à plus de trente ans (Meeks, 1973), il a paru nécessaire ensuite de refaire le point des connaissances et des hypothèses dans le domaine de la lexicographie méroïtique, et d'y inclure les résultats des travaux parus depuis lors, notamment ceux de F. Hintze et I. Hofmann. Il fallait également produire un document qui tînt compte de la nouvelle translittération du méroïtique initiée par Hintze, universellement admise depuis 1973, mais rarement mise en pratique. Notre lexique présente environ huit cents mots, et en particulier tous ceux qui ont pu faire l'objet d'une analyse, d'un débat, d'une traduction si hypothétique soit-elle, dans les quelques trois cents publications consacrées en tout ou en partie au méroïtique depuis plus d'un siècle. Pour chacun d'entre eux, nous sommes retourné aux inscriptions originales afin de présenter un point de vue critique. Les théonymes, toponymes et anthroponymes royaux y ont bien entendu leur part. Chaque entrée est accompagnée d'une bibliographie complète.

Le lexique comprend également des mots dont l'identification est récente ou inédite. Dans le premier cas, il s'agit de termes que nous avons étudiés dans nos publications parues ces dernières années, comme *arohe-* "protéger, garantir", *hr-* "manger", *pwrite* "vie", *yer* "lait". Nous y avons joint ceux que des travaux encore inédits nous ont permis d'élucider : *ar* "garçon", *are-* et son synonyme *dm-* "prendre", *dime* "vache", *hlbi* "taureau", *ns(e)* "sacrifice", *sdk* "retour, voyage", *tke-* "aimer, révéler", *wle* "chien".

La découverte de ces traductions, concentrées notamment dans un nouveau type de texte que nous avons appelé "commémoration d'offrandes funéraires" (les anciennes « Bauinschriften »), nous a permis de jeter un jour nouveau sur la position linguistique du méroïtique, un sujet qui occupe la troisième partie de notre thèse, et auquel il n'était pas originellement prévu d'accorder une si grande place. Mais il n'était évidemment pas question de présenter une synthèse consacrée à la langue méroïtique en excluant des données aussi importantes pour l'avenir de cette discipline, sous prétexte qu'elles étaient neuves et auraient demandé plus de maturation. Nous avons donc tenu à nous entourer de toutes les précautions possibles, au risque de la redondance. La position linguistique du méroïtique est en effet une problématique débattue depuis le milieu du XIX^e siècle, avant même que l'écriture ne fût déchiffrée, et ses enjeux dépassent le simple cadre de la philologie.

La plupart – sinon la totalité – des travaux qui ont été réalisés dans ce domaine ne sont que de courtes listes de cognation possible entre des termes méroïtiques dont la traduction n'était pas toujours certaine, et différentes langues de la région. Lepsius le premier, puis Griffith après son déchiffrement avaient ainsi subodoré une parenté avec le nubien qui s'avéra décevante. Seuls quelques rares termes semblaient communs, et encore fallait-il faire la part des emprunts possibles, les Nubiens ayant vécu longtemps au côté des Méroïtes. On s'orienta alors vers les langues chamito-sémitiques, mais les obstacles étaient encore plus importants, puisque la structure générale de la langue (notamment l'absence de genre) empêchait un tel rattachement de manière simple. En 1964, B. Trigger avança, à partir de la comparaison de

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quelques lexèmes et morphèmes, que le méroïtique appartenait au phylum nilo-saharien nouvellement créé par J. Greenberg, dont la classification des langues africaines en quatre superfamilles fait toujours autorité malgré les critiques récurrentes. Trigger rattachait plus exactement le méroïtique au groupe soudaniqu oriental, comportant des langues comme le nara d'Érythrée, et justement le nubien. Mais Hintze n'eut aucun mal à démontrer que la moitié des termes méroïtiques, empruntés sans précaution aux analyses de Zyhlarz, étaient erronés, et que parmi ceux qui restaient, les correspondances étaient souvent peu convaincantes. La théorie nilo-saharienne ne devint donc plus qu'une vague hypothèse. Elle restait néanmoins la moins improbable de toutes les parentés possibles. Mais il n'était pas impossible que la langue de Koush fût, comme le sumérien ou le basque, un isolat.

Notre approche de la question est triple. Tout d'abord, il convenait d'établir un corpus, si réduit soit-il, de termes méroïtiques dont la traduction fût assurée. Ensuite, nous avons, comme nos prédécesseurs, mais à partir d'un matériau lexical plus fiable de part et d'autre, comparé ces mots avec les langues nilo-sahariennes, pour lesquelles on dispose maintenant de descriptions plus nombreuses et plus solides que celles dont s'était servi Trigger. Cette première approche, qui emprunte ses méthodes à la comparaison de masse de Greenberg et à la lexicostatistique, nous a permis de cerner une famille particulière du nilo-saharien où se concentraient les ressemblances. Enfin, nous avons appliqué à cette famille la méthode comparative, bien illustrée par Meillet pour l'indo-européen, par Manessy pour les langues voltaïques, par Guthrie pour les langues bantou : définir dans un premier temps des séries comparatives prototypiques, en inférer des lois de correspondances phonétiques, les éprouver ensuite sur un corpus plus étendu et procéder ainsi à la reconstruction de proto-formes, auxquelles nous avons finalement comparé nos données méroïtiques.

La première partie (établissement du corpus) examine tous les termes nouvellement traduits que nous avons évoqués ci-dessus, ainsi que plusieurs autres qui avaient été avancés par nos prédécesseurs, parfois sur des bases insuffisantes. Nous avons, pour ce faire, établi une grille générale d'éléments pouvant assurer une traduction (adéquation avec le contexte archéologique, iconographique, inclusion dans le contexte sémantique et syntaxique de la phrase, existence d'équivalents égyptiens ou grecs dans des formules parallèles, etc.). Cette grille nous a permis de quantifier la fiabilité des identifications, d'en rejeter quelques-unes, et de parvenir à un corpus de 40 lexèmes, sur lesquels nous avons écarté 11 termes qui n'appartiennent pas au lexique fondamental d'une langue (les points cardinaux par exemple).

Notre thèse comporte ici un chapitre particulier consacré à un catalogue exhaustif des langues nilo-sahariennes, afin que l'on puisse sans difficulté les identifier dans la comparaison qui suit et qui implique plusieurs dizaines d'entre elles. Au terme de cette comparaison, item après item, nous arrivons à des résultats étonnants de clarté : 72 % des mots de la liste restreinte présentent des "ressemblances" avec des langues nilo-sahariennes, et le même pourcentage concerne le soudaniqu oriental, branche principale de ce phylum. À l'intérieur de cette branche, le nubien est la mieux représentée des familles, avec 55 % pour le midob (langue nubienne du Darfour), 48 % avec le kenuzi-dongolawi (une des deux langues nubiennes du Nil), 45 % avec le nobiin (l'autre nubien du Nil). Ces scores, qui avoisinent ceux qu'en lexicostatistique on trouve entre dialectes d'une même langue, sont si élevés que non seulement la parenté est évidente, mais que doit s'y ajouter un certain nombre d'emprunts, probablement du méroïtique, langue alors dominante, vers le nubien.

Le nubien appartient selon les travaux récents de M. L. Bender à une sous-branche du soudanien oriental qu'il symbolise par le sigle Ek, et que nous avons baptisé (suivant d'ailleurs une de ses suggestions) « soudanien oriental Nord », en abrégé SON. Le SON comporterait également le nara d'Érythrée, le groupe dialectal taman (tama, merarit, etc.) parlé à la frontière tchado-soudanaise, non loin du massif de l'Ennedi, et le nyima des monts Nuba. Toutefois cette classification n'est qu'amorcée par Bender sur des bases morphologiques, et aucun travail n'a été publié sur la cohérence lexicale de cette famille. Nous avons donc établi un corpus comparatif de deux cents mots pour ces quatre groupes de langues et leurs nombreux dialectes, afin de prouver cette cohérence lexicale et d'aboutir à la reconstruction, au moins partielle, d'une proto-langue. À l'intérieur de cette famille, nous avons pu grâce aux travaux de J. Edgar sur le taman reconstruire une bonne partie du proto-lexique de ce premier groupe ainsi que sa phonologie originelle. Dans le groupe nubien, nous avons procédé à notre propre reconstruction du proto-lexique et de la phonologie originelle du nubien. Pour le nyima (comportant les dialectes nyimang et afitti ou dinik), les données publiées sont si peu nombreuses (une poignée de courts articles) qu'il n'était pas question de reconstruction. Semblablement, le nara n'est connu que par une synthèse ancienne (Reinisch 1874), et quelques articles récents qui n'enregistrent pas les différences dialectales, dont l'existence est toutefois certaine. Ici aussi, nous avons dû utiliser la langue moderne, sans possibilité de remonter à une proto-langue.

Nous avons procédé ensuite à l'analyse comparative de ces quatre ensembles : proto-taman, proto-nubien, nyima, nara. Elle nous permet d'assurer la cohérence de cette famille, beaucoup plus forte qu'on l'a supposée (ex. : « manger » : nara *kal*, proto-nubien **kal*, nyimang *tal* ; « maison » : nara *wal*, proto-nubien **kaal*, proto-taman **wal*, nyimang *wel*, etc.). Elle fournit également un aperçu de la phonologie du proto-SON avec des éléments caractéristiques qui l'éloignent des autres langues soudanien orientales comme le groupe nilotique ou le daju : absence de /p/ et de /y/, fricatives réduites à la seule consonne /s/.

Nous avons enfin comparé les données connues du méroïtique à cette proto-langue. Les résultats sont sans ambiguïté. Au niveau de la phonologie, on retrouve le même système, le graphème méroïtique transcrit *p* (hérité de l'égyptien) correspondant à une prononciation /b/ et le signe *y* (également adapté de l'égyptien) ayant apparemment un usage essentiellement graphique (notation des voyelles initiales, des voyelles longues, etc.). La comparaison lexicale est très positive également, avec des correspondances régulières : le méroïtique a ainsi transformé le **d* initial proto-SON en *l*, et le **g* en *h* (sauf **-g(u)* qui devient *b*), masquant ainsi une cognation évidente. Sur le plan morphologique, on s'aperçoit par exemple que le déterminant méroïtique *-l*, pl. *-leb*, provient d'un démonstratif proto-SON **de*, pl. **degu* (cf. nara *te*, *tegu*), que la copule méroïtique se retrouve sous des formes proches dans toutes les langues SON, que le suffixe applicatif particulier au méroïtique est un ancien pronom datif intégré dans le verbe, ainsi que d'autres correspondances tout aussi convaincantes. Il ne fait pas de doute que le méroïtique appartient à la famille SON, dont il n'est d'ailleurs pas le plus ancien rameau puisque le proto-nubien semble mieux à même de fédérer toutes les formes SON que le méroïtique lui-même. On pourrait dire en forçant le trait que le proto-nubien est le sanscrit et le méroïtique le hittite du SON.

Notre dernière hypothèse concerne l'origine géographique et historique d'une famille aussi dispersée. En fait, au III^e millénaire av. J.-C., le plus puissant tributaire du Nil était

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le Wadi Howar, le " Nil jaune " de Frobenius, qui coulait à travers le Soudan septentrional depuis les hauteurs de l'Ennedi au Tchad. Les récentes recherches archéologiques dans cette région (projet ACACIA de l'Université de Cologne) ont montré que le fleuve avait eu, au moment où la désertification du Sahara oriental avait commencé à se produire, le même pouvoir d'attraction sur les populations environnantes que le Nil en Égypte. Nous supposons que c'est là, au III^e millénaire, que s'est cristallisé le proto-SON. Avec l'assèchement progressif du Wadi Howar, la population a petit à petit gagné des zones restées en eau, puis s'est dispersée : les Koushites, ancêtres des Méroïtes, ont alors fondé le royaume de Kerma¹ près du confluent du Wadi Howar et du Nil, peut-être suivis par les Proto-Nara qui gagnèrent ensuite l'Érythrée, où ils sont attestés au début de notre ère. Les Proto-Taman, quant à eux, s'étant réfugiés vers l'amont, s'établirent près de l'Ennedi, non loin des régions où ils vivent aujourd'hui. Les Nubiens et les Proto-Nyima descendirent sous une latitude plus clémente, dans le Kordofan, où se trouvent encore leurs descendants. Toutefois une partie des Nubiens émigra vers la vallée du Nil, où ils pénétrèrent en masse durant l'agonie du royaume de Méroé. Ce scénario est bien sûr encore très schématique et demande à être affiné.

La partie grammaticale de notre étude constitue un chapitre de notre ouvrage actuellement sous presse (*La langue du Royaume de Méroé*, Éditions Champion, Collection de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études). Le lexique sera publié dans le tome VI du *Répertoire d'Épigraphie Méroïtique*. La position linguistique du méroïtique devrait faire, sous toutes réserves, l'objet d'une monographie dans la collection « Afrique et Langage » chez Peeters.

Quelques correspondances dans la famille soudanienne orientale Nord :

MÉROÏTIQUE	PROTO-SON	nara	proto-nub.	proto-taman	nyima
are- [ər] "prendre, recevoir"	*ar "prendre" N° 151	(hind)	*aar-	er- "acheter"	-
dm- [d̪am]- "prendre, recevoir"	*ndom- "cueillir, prendre"	nem-	*dumm-	?	dumud-
hre [xar] "repas"	*go(o)r "mâcher, manger (du dur)"	?	goor	?	ṭorom / kworom
kdi [kadi] ou [kandi] "femme"	*kari ou *ka ⁿ di "femme"	kede "sœur"	*kari "femelle"	(ii)	ker "femme"
ked- [ked] ou [kəd] "abattre"	*ṅkod- "abattre"	kad-	ṅod-	?	ṭai / kai-
wle [wal] "chien"	? "chien"	(wos)	*wel	(*wiis)	wil
Apede-mk [əbedemaka] dieu-lion	*ebede "dieu créateur"	ebbere	*ebed-	?	abidi

*

- Les arguments soutenant l'existence du méroïtique (ou du moins du proto-méroïtique) comme langue de l'aristocratie kermaïte ont été présentés lors du 8^e Congrès de linguistique nilo-saharienne de Hambourg en 2001, dont les actes sont actuellement sous presse.

Nouvelles polices méroïtiques pour ordinateurs Mac et PC

Claude Carrier *

Avec la généralisation du travail des chercheurs sur ordinateurs personnels, il devenait nécessaire de disposer de polices informatiques adaptées pour la transcription des signes méroïtiques tant pour Mac que pour PC. Après une période de gestation relativement conséquente nécessitée essentiellement par les opérations de dessin à très grande échelle de chaque élément des fontes projetées, c'est maintenant chose faite : nous avons le plaisir d'informer nos collègues que six polices sont disponibles sur Internet aux adresses suivantes :



« www.egypt.edu/meroitique » ou « www.thotm-editions.com/meroitique »¹.

Les polices réalisées sont les suivantes² :

- Meroe Cursive Archaïque
- Meroe Cursive Tardive
- Meroe Hieroglyphique
- Meroe Hieroglyphique Inverse³
- Meroe Numerique
- Meroe Divers.

La différenciation des signes entre **Meroe Cursive Archaïque** et **Meroe Cursive Tardive** a été réalisée à partir des tables paléographiques en cours de préparation pour le *Répertoire d'Épigraphie Méroïtique* : la période d'utilisation de l'écriture cursive archaïque s'étend de

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1. Les auteurs des polices sont : Claude Carrier, Claude Rilly, Aminata Sackho-Autissier, Olivier Cabon. Éditeur : ThotM, Paris. Ils peuvent être contactés à l'adresse « olivier.cabon@egypt.edu ». Nous remercions Michael Zach pour les remarques pertinentes qu'il nous a présentées après son examen des *Tests de positionnement relatif des signes des polices méroïtiques (février-juin 2003)* que nous lui avons fait parvenir et dont nous avons tenu le plus grand compte.
2. Tous les signes diacritiques (accent, tréma) ont été volontairement exclus des noms des polices.
3. Les signes de la police *Meroe Hieroglyphique Inverse* sont ceux de la police *Meroe Hieroglyphique* avec un effet de miroir horizontal, c'est-à-dire que les signes sont orientés vers la droite. Par exemple :  ou .

la fin du III^e siècle av. J.-C. (?) jusqu'à la fin du I^{er} siècle av. J.-C., tandis que celle de l'écriture cursive tardive est comprise entre le I^{er} et le V^e siècle apr. J.-C. En ce qui concerne la police *Meroe Hieroglyphique Inverse*, cette orientation des signes est fréquente dans les textes de Naga. Pour la police *Meroe Numerique*, nous n'y avons fait figurer que les signes pour lesquels une identification à peu près sûre a pu être proposée (Griffith 1916, *JEA* 3 ; Hofmann *et alii* 1989, *BzS* 4). La police *Meroe Divers*, quant à elle, rassemble les signes probablement idéographiques (mesures, denrées, marques de fabrique, etc.) connus surtout par les ostraca, ainsi que quelques caractères particuliers qui apparaissent dans les textes royaux.

Certains signes dans les différentes polices comportant une ou plusieurs variantes, ces dernières ont été repérées dans la présentation des claviers qui est exposée *infra* par les symboles "v / v1 / v2" placés en exposant gras à la suite des signes de translittération des variantes. C'est ainsi que l'on a distingué :

- pour **Meroe Cursive Archaïque** : *s^{v1}* ; *s^{v2}* ; *to^{v1}* ; *to^{v2}*.
- pour **Meroe Hieroglyphique / Inverse** : *b^v* ; *n^v* ; *ne^v* ; *q^v* ; *r^v* ; *s^v* ; *t^{v1}* ; *t^{v2}* ; *te^v* ; *vie^v*.
- pour **Meroe Numerique** : *9^v* ; *0,6^v* ; *0,7^{v1}* ; *0,7^{v2}* ; *0,8^{v1}* ; *0,8^{v2}*.
- pour **Meroe Divers** : *Drapeau^v* ; *Flèche^{v1}* ; *Flèche^{v2}* ; *Haricot^{v1}* ; *Haricot^{v2}*.

Les signes de ces polices méroïtiques étant surtout destinés à une utilisation dans des commentaires, ils ont été alignés par construction sur la ligne de base des polices habituelles, par exemple pour les polices hiéroglyphiques :

<i>a</i>	
<i>b</i>	
<i>b^v</i>	
<i>l</i>	
<i>m</i>	

Structure des polices Meroe⁴

Les six polices Meroe sont proposées sous la forme de quatre fontes — ou ensembles de fichiers informatiques — correspondant aux versions "Macintosh Postcript", "Macintosh TrueType", "Pc Postcript" et "Pc TrueType". Pour des raisons de compatibilité avec les très nombreux systèmes d'exploitation susceptibles d'utiliser ces fontes, les noms de ces fichiers informatiques ne comportent aucun accent. De même, pour permettre la transmission des textes entre les différents systèmes, seuls des emplacements de caractères "standards" ont été retenus — ce qui exclut, le plus souvent, l'utilisation des touches "option", "contrôle" ou "commande". Les fontes "TrueType" devraient être exclusivement réservées à un usage

4. Ce paragraphe a été rédigé par Olivier Cabon.

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“bureautique” ; les versions Postscript impliquent, en règle générale, l'utilisation d'une imprimante “Postscript” ou d'une flasheuse.

Dans les menus “police” des logiciels, les deux fontes Macintosh seront, le plus souvent, regroupées en une seule famille nommée “Meroe”¹ et comprenant les déclinaisons :

- “CursiveArchaïque”,
- “CursiveTardive”,
- “Divers”,
- “Hieroglyphique”,
- “HieroglyphiqueInverse”
- “Numerique”.

Sur Pc, en revanche, il n'est pas possible de regrouper les polices² qui apparaîtront sous les noms abrégés :

- MeroeCursArc,
- MeroeCursTard,
- MeroeDiv,
- MeroeHiero,
- MeroeHieroInv,
- MeroeNum.

L'ensemble “**Macintosh Postscript**”, dont l'utilisation devrait s'imposer en priorité — notamment lorsqu'il est question d'imprimer pour publication les textes composés — comprend trois séries de fichiers : les “polices écran”, permettant la sélection de la fonte dans les menus *ad hoc* des logiciels ; les “polices téléchargeables”, utilisées pour afficher les caractères à l'écran et par les imprimantes ; les fichiers “Afm”, mis à contribution par les photocomposeuses. Chacune des six polices fait appel à ces trois types de fichiers différents qui ne doivent pas être séparés ni (à l'exception éventuelle des “fontes écran”) être renommés. Nous indiquons ci-après, dans le même ordre — “écran”, “téléchargeable”, “Afm” — les fichiers composant chacune des polices :

- cursive archaïque :
 - Meroe CursiveArchaïque.suit,
 - MeroeCurArc,
 - MeroeCurArc.afm ;
- cursive tardive :
 - Meroe CursiveTardive.suit,
 - MeroeCurTar,
 - MeroeCurTar.afm ;
- hiéroglyphique :
 - Meroe Hieroglyphique.suit,
 - MeroeHie,
 - MeroeHie.afm ;
- hiéroglyphique inverse :
 - Meroe HieroglyphiqueInv.suit,
 - MeroeHieInv,
 - MeroeHieInv.afm ;

- . numérique :
 - Meroe Numerique.suit,
 - MeroeNum,
 - MeroeNum.afm ;
- . divers :
 - Meroe Divers. suit,
 - MeroeDiv,
 - MeroeDiv.afm.

Un fichier supplémentaire — Meroe.suit — reprend l'ensemble des " polices écran ", ce qui permet d'activer et de désactiver rapidement la fonte.

L'ensemble "**Macintosh TrueType**" ne comprend que six fichiers :

- . Meroe CursiveArchaïque.ttf,
- . Meroe CursiveTardive.ttf,
- . Meroe Hieroglyphique.ttf,
- . Meroe HieroglyphiqueInv.ttf,
- . Meroe Numerique.ttf,
- . Meroe Divers.ttf.

Par commodité, ces six fichiers ont également été rassemblés dans Meroe.ttf.

L'ensemble "**Pc Postscript**" comprend, par police, quatre fichiers qui ne doivent être ni séparés ni renommés. La fonte complète comprend donc 24 éléments :

- . MeroeCurArc.afm, MeroeCurArc.inf, MeroeCurArc.pfb, MeroeCurArc.pfm ;
- . MeroeCurTar.afm, MeroeCurTar.inf, MeroeCurTar.pfb, MeroeCurTar.pfm ;
- . MeroeDivers.afm, MeroeDivers.inf, MeroeDivers.pfb, MeroeDivers.pfm ;
- . MeroeHie.afm, MeroeHie.inf, MeroeHie.pfb, MeroeHie.pfm ;
- . MeroeHieInv.afm, MeroeHieInv.inf, MeroeHieInv.pfb, MeroeHieInv.pfm ;
- . MeroeNum.afm, MeroeNum.inf, MeroeNum.pfb, MeroeNum.pfm.

L'ensemble "**Pc TrueType**" comprend les six fichiers :

- . MeroeCurArc.ttf,
- . MeroeCurTar.ttf,
- . MeroeDivers.ttf,
- . MeroeHie.ttf,
- . MeroeHieInv.ttf,
- . MeroeNum.ttf.

" Claviers " des polices Meroe

On trouvera ci-après les dispositions de clavier permettant d'appeler les différents signes de chacune des polices. Bien entendu, si l'utilisateur dispose de l'application *PopChar* sur Macintosh, ou de son équivalent sur PC, il lui est possible de faire apparaître à l'écran la fenêtre de l'ensemble des signes de la police méroïtique sélectionnée et de choisir le signe *ad hoc*. L'usage d'un tel utilitaire facilite grandement le travail de transcription.

Clavier pour *Meroe Cursive Archaique*

<i>Translittération</i>	<i>Signe méroïtique</i>	<i>Touche clavier</i>	<i>Translittération</i>	<i>Signe méroïtique</i>	<i>Touche clavier</i>
a.....	Ϛ	a	r.....	Ϟ	r
b.....	ϛ	b	s.....	ϟ	s
d.....	Ϝ	d	s ^{v1}	Ϡ	z
e.....	ϝ	e	s ^{v2}	ϡ	Z
h.....	Ϟ	h	se.....	Ϣ	S
h.....	ϟ	H	t.....	ϣ	t
i.....	Ϡ	i	te.....	Ϥ	T
k.....	ϡ	k	to.....	ϥ	u
l.....	Ϣ	l	to ^{v1}	Ϧ	U
m.....	ϣ	m	to ^{v2}	ϧ	alt+u
n.....	Ϥ	n	w.....	Ϩ	w
ne.....	ϥ	N	y.....	ϩ	y
o.....	Ϧ	o	:	ϩ	:
p.....	ϧ	p	?	ϩ	?
q.....	Ϩ	q	[.].....	▨	/




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



































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Clavier pour *Meroe Cursive Tardive*

<i>Translittération</i>	<i>Signe méroïtique</i>	<i>Touche clavier</i>		<i>Translittération</i>	<i>Signe méroïtique</i>	<i>Touche clavier</i>	<i>Transl</i>
a.....	ϢϢ	a		p.....	Ϩ	p	
b.....	ϣ	b		q.....	ϩ	q	
d.....	Ϥ	d		r.....	ϥ	r	
e.....	Ϧ	e		s.....	ϧ	s	
h.....	Ϩ	h		se.....	ϩ//	S	
h.....	ϩ	H		t.....	ϫ	t	
i.....	Ϫ	i		te.....	ϫ	T	
k.....	ϫ	k		to.....	Ϭ	u	
l.....	ϭ	l		w.....	Ϯ	w	
m.....	ϯ	m		y.....	ϯ//	y	
n.....	ϰ	n		:	:	:	
ne.....	ϱ	N		?	?	?	
o.....	ϲ	o		[.].....		/	








































Clavier pour Meroe Hieroglyphique

e clavier	Translittération	Signe méroïtique	Touche clavier	Translittération	Signe méroïtique	Touche clavier
P	a.....		a	r.....		r
Q	b.....		b	r ^v		5
r	b ^v		1 ou B	s.....		s
s	d.....		d	s ^v		6
S	e.....		e	se.....		S
t	h.....		h	t.....		t
T	h.....		H	t ^{v1}		7
1	i.....		i	t ^{v2}		8
v	k.....		k	te.....		T
r	l.....		l	te ^v		9
:	m.....		m	to.....		u
/	n.....		n	w.....		w
	n ^v		2	y.....		y
	ne.....		N	:		:
	ne ^v		3	vie.....		v
	o.....		o	vie ^v		V
	p.....		p	?		?
	q.....		q	[.].....		/
	q ^v		4			



Clavier pour Meroe Hieroglyphique Inverse

Translittération	Signe méroïtique	Touche clavier		Translittération	Signe méroïtique	Touche clavier	Translit
a.....		a		r.....		r	1.
b.....		b		r ^v		5	2.
b ^v		1 ou B		s.....		s	3
d.....		d		s ^v		6	4
e.....		e		se.....		S	5
h.....		h		t.....		t	6
h.....		H		t ^{v1}		7	7
i.....		i		t ^{v2}		8	8
k.....		k		te.....		T	9
l.....		l		te ^v		9	1
m.....		m		to.....		u	2
n.....		n		w.....		w	3
n ^v		2		y.....		y	4
ne.....		N		:		:	5
ne ^v		3		vie.....		v	6
o.....		o		vie ^v		V	7
p.....		p		?		?	8
q.....		q		[.].....		/	9
q ^v		4					



Clavier pour Meroe Numerique

Translittération *Signe méroïtique* *Touche clavier*

1.....	1
2.....	2
3.....	3
4.....	4
5.....	ƙ.....	5
6.....	llL.....	6
7.....	//.....	7
8.....	2.....	8
9.....	ʀ.....	9
9 ^v	ʀ.....	q
10.....	┐.....	a
20.....	└.....	b
30.....	×.....	c
40.....	∨.....	d
50.....	ʒ.....	e
70.....	ɿ.....	g
80.....	ʒ.....	h
100.....	┘.....	A
200.....	┙.....	B
300.....	┚.....	C
400.....	┛.....	D
500.....	├.....	E
600.....	┝.....	F
1000.....	┞.....	J

Translittération *Signe méroïtique* *Touche clavier*

2000.....	ʒ.....	K
3000.....	ʒ.....	L
5000.....	ʒ.....	N
0,1.....	•.....	&
0,2.....	••.....	é
0,3.....	∴.....	“
0,4.....	∴.....	‘
0,5.....	∴.....	(
1/2.....	∪.....	w
0,6.....	∴∴.....	§
0,6 ^v	∴.....	x
0,7.....	∴∴.....	è
0,7 ^{v1}	∴∴.....	y
0,7 ^{v2}	∴∴.....	Y
0,8.....	∴∴.....	!
0,8 ^{v1}	∴∴.....	z
0,8 ^{v2}	∴∴.....	Z
0,9.....	∴∴.....	ç
[.].....	▨.....	/

clavier



Clavier pour *Meroe Divers*

<i>Identification</i>	<i>Signe méroïtique</i>	<i>Touche clavier</i>
<i>Drapeau</i>	𐎁	d
<i>Drapeau</i> ^v	𐎂	D
<i>Écheveau</i>	𐎃	e
« en huit »	𐎄	8
« en neuf »	𐎅	9
<i>Épi</i>	𐎆	*
<i>Flèche</i>	𐎇	v
<i>Flèche</i> ^{v1}	𐎈	V
<i>Flèche</i> ^{v2}	𐎉	W
<i>Fourche d</i>	𐎊	<
<i>Fourche g</i>	𐎋	>
<i>Fourche sym</i>	𐎌	f
<i>Fourche sym + chapeau</i>	𐎍	g
<i>Fourche sym + chapeau inv</i>	𐎎	G
<i>Haricot</i>	𐎏	h
<i>Haricot</i> ^{v1}	𐎐	i
<i>Haricot</i> ^{v2}	𐎑	I
<i>Marteau</i>	𐎒	T
« ne » entouré	𐎓	N
<i>Pot</i>	𐎔	p
<i>Table d'offrandes</i>	𐎕	o
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Brèves d'actualité

Nos collègues français et étrangers qui souhaiteraient porter des informations à la connaissance de nos lecteurs peuvent utiliser les e-mail des rédacteurs :


Our French and Foreign colleagues which would like to share informations with our readers can serve the e-mails of editors :

- . Claude Rilly : rilly@vjf.cnrs.fr
- . Claude Carrier : claudc.carrier@online.fr


Les informations sont groupées sous quatre rubriques repérées respectivement par les logos suivants :


New informations are grouped under four readings marked respectively by the following logos :


fouilles archéologiques  *archaeological fieldwork*

publications du domaine méroïtique  *publications connected with Meroitic Studies*

colloques et congrès  *conferences and congresses*

varia  *miscellaneous*

 Le 11 janvier 2003, Charles Bonnet (Université de Genève) et Dominique Valbelle (CNRS, Paris) ont découvert trois fosses, au Nord du temple napatéen de Doukki Gel (à proximité de Kerma au Soudan), qui contenaient des éléments appartenant à sept magnifiques statues de granite, peintes en noir avec leurs ornements dorés, représentant cinq souverains koushites et napatéens (cités ici selon l'ordre de leurs règnes) : Taharqo (deux statues), Tanwetamani (deux statues), Senkamanisken, Analamani et Aspelta.

 La rédaction de la *Meroitic Newsletter* a reçu les publications suivantes :

- *Der Antike Sudan*, Mitteilungen der Sudanarchäologischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin e.V., Heft 13, 2002. Avec des articles de : S. Wenig, D. Eigner, T. Scheibner, B. Gabriel, A. Lohwasser, L. Török, D.A. Welsby, P. Wolf, K. Zibelius-Chen, M. Fitzenreiter.
- *A tribute to Excellence, Studies offered in honor of Ernő Gaál*, Ulrich Luft, László Török, Edited by Tamás A. Bács, *Studia Aegyptiaca XVII*, Budapest 2002. Avec, dans le domaine nubien, des contributions de : W.Y. Adams, J.R. Anderson and S.e. Mohamed Ahmed, Tamás A. Bács, Ch. Bonnet, E. Cruz-Uribe, E. Fiandra, B. Gratien, P. Grossmann, T. Hägg, J. Hallof, L. Kákosy, P. Lenoble, H.Å. Nordström, J.F. Quack, I. Vincentelli, B. Williams, M.H. Zach.

- László Török, *The Image of the Ordered World in Ancient Nubian Art. The Construction of the Kushite Mind*, Leyde-Boston-Cologne 2002.
- *Sudan & Nubia*, The Sudan Archeological Research Society, Bulletin N° 6, 2002. Avec des articles de : M.C. Gatto, D. Rane, P. Storemyr-E. Bloxam-T. Haldal-A. Salem, Ch. Bonnet, P. Spencer, D.A. Welsby, Cl. Heywood, H. Bell et M.J. Hashim, M.F.A. Ali, H. Barnard, O.A.W. Abdel Meguid, D. Usai and S. Salvatori, B. Zarawski.
- *Nubia. Los reinos del Nilo en Sudán*, Fundación "la Caixa", Barcelone 2003. Avec des contributions de : H. Hussein Idriss, W.Y. Adams, V.M. Fernández Martínez, J. Reinold, M. Honegger, Ch. Bonnet, C. Pérez Die, R. Morkot, T. Kendall, L. Török, J. Leclant et Cl. Rilly, P. Lenoble, D.A. Welsby, J. Zozaya, F. Berenguer, A. Martin Flores.
- *Orientalia*, Vol. 72, fasc. 1, 2003. avec un article de N. Grimal et E. Adly, « Fouilles et travaux en Égypte et au Soudan. II-Soudan », p. 120-134, 2 fig.
- Krzysztof Grzymiski, *Meroe reports I*, SSEA Publications XVII, Mississauga 2003.
- *Kush XVIII*, Journal of the Sudan Antiquities Service, édité par Hassan Hussein Idris, publié avec le concours du Département de coopération et d'action culturelle de l'Ambassade de France à Khartoum et le National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums, Khartoum 1998-2002. Avec des articles de : J. Anderson et Salah eldin M. Ahmed, Ch. Bonnet, V. Davies et I. Welsby Sjöström, F. Geus, B. Gratien, B. Keding, K. Kroeper et D. Wildung, L. Krzyzaniak, Salah Omer Al Sadig, L. Smith, S. Tyson Smith, D. Usai, D.A. Welsby, S. Wolf et H.-U. Onasch.
- *Beiträge zur Sudenforschung* 8, édité par Michael Zach, Vienne 2003. Avec des articles de : G. Browne, M. Buhl et M. Neumann, P. Davoli et M.H. Zach, J.H.F. Dijkstra et J. van der Wliet, E. Fantusati, D. Kahn, E. Mccann, A. Orlando, S.R. Rampersad, U. Sieversten, M.H. Zach.



La X^{ème} Conférence Internationale d'Études Méroïtiques aura lieu à Paris
du mercredi 1^{er} septembre au samedi 4 septembre 2004.

Pour toute information, veuillez utiliser l'adresse électronique suivante :

meroe2004@vjf.cnrs.fr

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