

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

* Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

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.

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 4 : 12
 5 : 13
 6 : p.
 7 : b.
 8 : n
 9 : y
 30 : a
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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 :
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- osition 1 : ptpotekye : wkdiwikete
- re official 2 : mte wse : ¹⁸qore : txneye : tklwi :
- licator of 3 : ysebete : bereknwi :
- ate of the 4 : x¹⁹rppe 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 : dxex :
- 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 $\epsilon\iota\text{C}$, 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 $\text{C}\epsilon\text{Y}\text{A}\text{T}\text{T}$ “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 $\text{P}\text{I}\text{N}\text{C}$ - which means “a fight, battle” from a verb $\text{P}\text{I}\text{N}\text{K}$ - “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 $\alpha\text{p}\alpha\chi$ *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 borne in the 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 ἄπαξ - **TG 23** : (C In *Meroi* should be the first in TG 21. It and the succeeding words presumably act as a sort of preface to 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 since it is followed by the word *w-se*, which in *MNL* n° 13 I "translated" as « of (the) land », be *qoret* following Zyhlarz's old suggestion, but which is much more likely to be, as it would seem one, *qor* to be later below, a dialectic form of what appears more frequently in Meroitic of the period as 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 ought to be a term describing the town of Faras in relation to the person referred to. *(b-qo?)* In *MNL* n° 13 I rendered this segment to Old "noble sort of someth

... (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

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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 Arokhetye 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.
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- 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 *ytpod* 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 ! ”
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- 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

