Potential Old Nubian cognates for Meroitic aleqese
Gilda Ferrandino and Vincent W. J. van Gerven Oei

Introduction
In this article we will analyse three potential Old Nubian cognates of the Meroitic word aleqese, taking up a prior suggestion of Claude Rilly. After providing an overview of the linguistic relationship between Meroitic and Old Nubian and the extant analyses of aleqese in the extant literature, we will inspect the Old Nubian conditional clause marker ⲁⲗⲉⲥⲛ̄, as well as the words ⲁⲗⲕⲁⲥⲛ̄ and ⲁⲗⲓⲕⲟⲧⲛ̄, both with an unknown, but seemingly adverbial function. It will be our claim that ⲁⲗⲉⲥⲛ̄, which is frequently used in Old Nubian literary texts, is a true cognate, a word supposedly deriving from the same potentially reconstructable root. The existence of this cognate relationship, which follows the sound correspondences that have so far been proposed by Claude Rilly, further substantiates the claim that Meroitic is a Nilo-Saharan, and, more precisely, a Northern East Sudanic language. We will suggest that, by contrast, ⲁⲗⲕⲁⲥⲛ̄ and ⲁⲗⲓⲕⲟⲧⲛ̄ are loanwords from Meroitic, which gives us further evidence concerning the pronunciation, phonetic variation, and orthography of Meroitic.

Meroitic and Old Nubian both belong to the Northern East Sudanic language family of the Nilo-Saharan phylum (Rilly 2010). According to Rilly, the Eastern Branch of Northern East Sudanic includes Nubian, which further splits into Western Nubian and Nile Nubian, of which Old Nubian is a member; Meroitic; and Nara, with an ancestral language or close relative thereof, provisionally labelled ‘pre-Nubian,’ which is an assumed substrate beneath Old Nubian in the Lower Middle Nile Valley. Old Nubian has borrowed words from both Meroitic and this pre-Nubian language substrate, although the distinction is often unclear. Currently, all Northern East Sudanic loanwords in Old Nubian that cannot be attributed with certainty to Meroitic are attributed to the C-Group linguistic substrate.

It is certain that Meroitic and Old Nubian users were in contact and involved in cultural exchange, if only because the Old Nubian alphabet contains three characters taken from the Meroitic alphasyllabary. This implies the existence of biliterate users, comfortable enough with the Meroitic and Old Nubian languages to adapt characters from one script to the other. Rilly proposes that this development took place in the 6th century AD, two centuries before the first secure attestations of Old Nubian writing, and one century after the latest attested Meroitic inscription (Rilly 2008, 198). Such intense cultural contact cannot but have left traces in the Old Nubian language itself.

Although the distinction between an Old Nubian cognate with Meroitic in the true sense (i.e., regularly reconstructable to an earlier stage of the language) and a loanword remains blurry as long as the sound laws governing the development of the different members of the Eastern Branch have not been exhaustively described, there are several promising candidates for Meroitic loanwords in Old Nubian. The following Meroitic loanwords in Old Nubian have been proposed: Mer. aroxe ‘to protect’ /aruɣw-e/ > ON ⲥⲣⲟγⲓⲥ-ⲣ(ⲧ)ⲧ- ⲥⲣⲟγⲓⲥ-ⲧ- (hapax), ⲥⲣⲟγⲟⲩ-ⲣ- (hapax) ‘to protect’ (Rilly 2010, 117, no 4); Mer. ms-l ‘the sun (god)’ /maʃala/ > ON Ⲙⲓⲟⲧⲅⲛ ‘sun’ (Rilly 2010, 286); Mer. mte ‘child, small’ /mate/; mete ‘junior’ /mate/ > ON ⲡⲓⲧⲓⲧ (hapax) ‘generation’ (Rilly 2010, 134, no 23); Mer. ns(e) /na.ie/ ‘sacrifice’ > ON Ⲥⲧⲓⲧⲓⲧ- Ⲥⲧⲓⲧⲓⲧ- ‘sacrifice’ and perhaps the widely attested Ⲥⲟⲩⲧ- ‘holy’ (Rilly 2010, 135, no. 24); Mer. -se-l ‘each’ /ɻela/ > ON Ⲝⲧⲧⲧ (hapax), ⲥⲧⲧ (hapax) ‘each’ (Rilly 2010, 138, no. 27). There is little doubt that a developing understanding of the Meroitic language will yield further loanwords in Old Nubian. Our efforts below are based on that assumption.

Attestations of Meroitic aleqese
The role and meaning of aleqese has been debated for a long time. In most cases, the word appears at the beginning of texts, while in others it occurs inside the inscription without apparently a defined syntactical position. In the literature, aleqese has been analysed as containing a proper name (‘Aleq’) or noun (‘monument’), or being an adverb.
One of the first occurrences analysed by Francis Llewellyn Griffith was REM 0075, a text engraved on the back of the Isis statue (Griffith 1912, 2). Griffith suggested to divide the word in aleq-se [Proper name-GEN] ‘belonging to Aleq’. He compared Aleq with the Egyptian word I-laq, an ancient name for Philae (Griffith 1912, 3). This interpretation fits well with the text, which mentions the divine name Isis four times.

**REM 0075, ll. 1-4**

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<tr>
<td>aleqese</td>
<td>eqeterkelw : wos : aterekebe : teneke xenel : tewwi : ays :</td>
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<tr>
<td>aleqese</td>
<td>eqeter-to love-DET-OBJ Isis atere-VSUF.PL(?) west-DET-from-ne-DET</td>
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<tr>
<td>te-wwi</td>
<td>ays</td>
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<tr>
<td>PREF-to move (?)</td>
<td>ays</td>
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Hintze analysed aleqese differently, dividing it as ale-qese [noun + [Dim + GEN]], translating the noun ale as ‘monument, inscription’ (Hintze 1960, 142). According to Hintze’s hypothesis, the meaning of the noun phrase could be ‘his/her monument’. This theory was supported by László Török (1984), who studied religious graffiti from sacred sites at Philae, Qasr Ibrim, Kawa, Musawwarat es-Sufra, and Meroe. According to the formal aspects of the inscriptions, he categorised the graffiti in 10 classes. The 7th class comprised four graffiti with aleqese: two graffiti from Kawa, REM 0610 and REM 0619B; one from Gebel el-Girwai, REM 1155; and one from Meroe, REM 0414.

**REM 0610**


aleqese : hri-DET God-DET xrim-DET man(?)-DET-OBJ cow ??-DET

š-dik[-1] mne-berek-p-li-se-li

??-all.the.way

In this text, Török (1984, 176-177) interpreted š as a verb and suggested the translation ‘to write’, thus supporting Hintze’s interpretation of aleqese as ‘his/her monument’. The other three attestations are less clear. In REM 0619B and REM 0414 aleqese comes at the beginning, in REM 1155 in the middle of a sequence.

**REM 0619B**

aleqese : s-mne[-1] hom [-1] yty [...]

aleqese : s-mne[-1] hom [-1] yty [...]

aleqese : man- mne [-1] hom [-1] yty [...]

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1 The word bereke was found in different contexts, and interpreted as a title. In this case it is preceded by mne. If we consider mne as a variant of mni, where the presence of e instead of i is only attested in (A)mnepte (REM 0664), then bereke could be interpreted as an epithet of the god Amon. In REM 0031 there is the sequence Amni Bero-te ‘Amon of Bero’, where Bero is a place name, possibly linked to Aborepi ‘Musawwarat es-Sufra’, from the Egyptian Ipbr-‘nḫ. According to Rilly, Aborepi is composed of the word -pi, which indicates a generic place. So, here the sequence mneberekpliseli could be also divided in mne-bere-k-p-li-se-li, identifying in -k- the morpheme of spatial origin ‘from’: ‘under the authority of Amon (?) who (comes) from Bere’. Nevertheless, this is only an idea based on an interpretation of mne which, at the moment, need to be further substantiated.

2 The adverb dik is usually used in the sequence (Place Name)-ke dik (Place Name)-yte ‘from (Place Name) all the way until (Place Name)’....

3 Török translates: ‘Inscription written by Hr for the god….may it remain forever before Amon (?)’.
Further evidence of aleqese is found in four royal texts: the stele of Taneyidamani, REM 1044; the I stele at Hamadab, REM1003; the fragment of the Obelisk of Meroe, REM 1041A; and the Amanishakheto stele from Qasr Ibrim, REM 1141.

According to Hintze’s hypothesis, aleqese here refers to the stele or to the royal decree itself.

REM 1044 L1-3
qore tneyidmni aleqese iblk-mni simde-l-w terit-e
King Taneyidamani aleqese iblk-Amon simde-DET-OBJ terit-VSUF(?)
amn-nepte-te-selw terit-kto qes qr-se
Amon-Napata-LOC-PP terit-VSUF Kush qr-GEN
i-pl-te VPREF(1SG)-grant(?)-VSUF
‘King Taneyidamani, aleqese : iblk-mni simdelw : terite, under the protection of Amon at Napata teritkto, I(?) grant (?) Kush qrse’

REM 1003, ll. 15-17
alle-b-s-o pertese qes go-leb-wi xrp˹x˺ ETHN-PL-GEN(?)-COP pertese Kush DIM-DET.PL-EMP TITLE
mle˹wsekke˺ aleqese-wide˺ l˺i eqete-de-bxe seb
mel˹wsekke˺ aleqese-brother-DET eqete-V-PL-PronObjSuf ADV
q-leb wite-se yese˹b˺e ns nsi

In the photo of the text, it is possible to see before the word mnite, some vertical strokes, that were maybe over-interpreted by Garstang, Sayce and Griffith (1911, 58, 71) as the last part of the sign y followed by r.

Mdewetye is probably a person name including Mdewe, var. of Medewe/Medewi: ‘Meroe’.

The verbal suffix -kete or -ke is frequently used in the benedictions of the funerary texts.

The word is unknown but seems composed of the noun mde.

Qr perhaps means ‘royal’.

The sequence could be divided in yr-mni-se-ło ‘It is the yr of Amon’.

The word alle is an ethnonym which occurs in the war report that is part of the same text. Because of the plural morpheme -b the noun may be be linked to the verb eqete-de-bxe of the following sentence.

Mle˹wsekke˺ is maybe a proper name as apposition to the title xrpX(ne), which is usually translated as ‘governor’.

Wite usually follows nouns.

For nsi Rilly suggests the meaning ‘long’, comparing it with the Old Nubian adjective /nass/, and considers ns nsi a nominal phrase meaning ‘a long offering’. The difference between ns and nsi may be tonal in nature.
Potential Old Nubian cognates for Meroitic aleqese (Ferrandino and van Gerven Oei)

REM 1041A, ll. 1-4


aleqese Amanishakheto king.DET candace-DET pe-N good.DET

yị- [...]

VPREF(1SG)-[...]

REM 1141, ll. 1-6


: yi.ʾpqʾnymeyi:  dnme: pkʾrʾtr: dh.li kror. nir [ ] tred: elx:

aleqese wos tebwe-te-li medewi-ke aro-doke-l-w m.s

aleqese Isis Abaton-LOC-DET Meroe-PP N-ADJ-DET-OBJ m.s

sxi-ʾbʾti aben-bite-l-w amni [s]xeto qore-(n-ey)i

ADJ-PL-ti aben-bite-DET-OBJ Amanishakheto king-to-be-VSUF

kdwe-n-eyi akinidd ʾaʾns-n-ey[i] yi.ʾpqʾrʾn-eyi

candace-be-VSUF Akinidad TITLE-be-VSUF

dn-mde pkʾrʾtr dh.li kror. nir-l

dn-mde TITLE-ADJ(“great”) dh.li TITLE

irʾl DET

tre-tl el-x:

To offer- VSUF to give-POSUF

‘Aleqese Isis from Abaton to Meroe arodokelw: m.s: sxix’b’ti: abenbitelw. While Amanishakheto was king and Candace, while Akinidad was ans and pqr, dnme the great(?) pkʾrʾtr offering(?) gives to her the nir’.

REM 1141 L 23-24


Amanapa nete-PP Isis nete PP aleqese worte ek.ʾ~1]70 water

ape-se-l ʾsd-te asr ape-se-l p[~2]ʾtė

N-GEN-DET V- VSUF meat N-GEN-DET V- VSUF

‘Under the authority of Amanapa the nete, under the authority of Isis the nete: aleqese worte: ek.ʾ~1]70 may bring(?) the water of ape, may (offer?) the meat of ape’

In most cases, aleqese opens the inscription. It does not appear in this position only on three occasions. The first is the Taneyidamani stele, the most ancient royal text we actually know. Here, aleqese follows the royal protocol and precedes the sequence iblkmmni simdelw : terite, which is probably part of the royal epithets or eulogy. The second occurrence is the I stele at Hamadab. Here, the word, linked to the noun phrase wide-l, occurs after the reports of war and before a new section of the text which probably deals with rites or offerings to temples. The last case is the religious texts from Gebel el-Girwai. Unfortunately, it is difficult to give an interpretation of the text because of the state of preservation.

Despite the fact that some scholars have accepted Hintze’s proposal to translate aleqese with ‘monument/inscription’, this must be rejected for two reasons: 1. aleqese does not always begin the monumental inscriptions; 2.

18 Wide usually means ‘brother’. However, the sequence pewide:ʾm-[lo]- yị- [...]

19 The postposition -ke following a place name indicates the origin ‘from’ or direction ‘toward’. The sequence probably is an epithet of the goddess Isis. It is associated with the general noun mk ‘god’ but also with Isis in REM 0075, ll. 16-17.

20 Nir indicates a kind of royal offering.

21 See footnote 16.

22 The verb sd seem so similar to the word sdk translated by Rilly ‘travel’ (Rilly, 2010, 97-98). The translation of the sentence could be suggested by the passage in the List of the Nubian Nomoi of Ptolemy VI at Philae (FHN II, 614-630), where the structure of the phrases appears so similar to the Meroitic one.
the meaning ‘monument/inscription’ has not been verified by any comparative linguistic analysis.

In a 2002 article on the Obelisk of Meroe, Rilly (2002, 142-145) opted not to translate the word in REM 1041A, but he used a question mark to indicate an unknown word. From the grammatical point of view, Rilly commented on the different positions in which the word is found in the extant texts. He suggests that aleqese does not appear to be bound to a precise syntactical position, like in the cases of the royal protocols where it precedes or follows the royal names. Accordingly, Rilly suggested aleqese might be an adverb and be related to the Old Nubian word ⲁⲗⲉⲥⲛ. Since aleqese does not occur in all Meroitic texts, his idea is that it might be used to introduce or indicate some texts or sections of main texts of religious nature. Further, the word always precedes a nominal syntagma and in most cases is used in verbal sentences.

Attestations of Old Nubian alesin, alkasin, and alikotin

allows was one of the first Old Nubian words to be recognised, appearing with the correct translation ‘if’ already in Griffith’s ‘Some Old Nubian Texts’ (Griffith 1909, 547). Griffith connects the word etymologically to ale ‘truth’ (Griffith 1913, 87), an analysis that is adopted by Gerald Browne in his Old Nubian Dictionary (Browne 1996, 9). The second part -ⲁⲥ is analysed as a ‘copulative/focus marker’ (Browne 1997, 28-37; 2002, 74). This etymological analysis, as we will show below, has now become questionable. (Browne 1996, 9). The second part -ⲁⲥ is analysed as a ‘copulative/focus marker’ (Browne 1997, 28-37; 2002, 74). This etymological analysis, as we will show below, has now become questionable. allows is a frequently occurring adverb introducing the protasis of conditional clauses.

M 4.15-5.4

allows eilak ai-ka noyaqaoxqoño filoxenitih-hleyed ñorye;

alesin yod-il-0 ai-ka moudou-ouko-n-no filoxenitih-gille-lô

if Lord-DET-NOM 1SG-ACC lead-SUBORD-2/3SG-LOC Philoxenite-ALL-FOC

jou- Ñe
go-PRS-1SG.PRED

‘If the Lord guides me, I will go to Philoxenite’.

allows has also been attested in a curse, where a translation with ‘if’ is grammatically less felicitous. However, the sense of conditionality is still present.

P.QI 3 30.30-31

allows an xalaka oukka eltaxlô ëpíñaxoxch tan qiffrôko takka xagbûnh

alesin an sal-ka ousk-a nagg-ad-il-0-lo

if 1SG.GEN word-ACC speak.against-PRED deny-INTEN-PRS.DET-NOM-FOC

epimakhosí-l-0 tan ñigir-ro ko tak-ka

Epimachus-DET-NOM 3SG.GEN spear-LOC through 3SG-ACC

ñag-jj-à-mê

stab-PLACT-PRED-JUS.SG

‘Whoever will speak against and deny my statement, may Epimachus stab him multiple times with his spear’.

allows mainly occurs in literary texts, but there is one attestation in a letter that shows a phonologically reduced variant, P.QI 3 43.3 allows. The fact that this phonological reduction can take place already suggests that the ending -ⲁⲥ is perhaps not the same as Browne’s ‘copulative/focus marker’, which never undergoes phonological reduction.

In the Old Nubian Dictionary, Browne lists several other adverbs that appear somehow etymologically related to allows, including allows ‘indeed; now’ (Browne 1996, 10), alikotî ‘indeed; now’ (Browne 1996, 10), with perhaps the shortened form kotî, which Browne glosses as an ‘emphasiser’ (Browne 1996, 10). Despite uncertainty about their precise meaning, they appear at the beginning of orders, and in both cases these commands come at the end of a section in the letter in which various orders are given. Both sentences are then followed by closing formulas and greetings.

24 M = Van Gerven Oei and El-Guzuuli 2012.
Potential Old Nubian cognates for Meroitic aleqese (Ferrandino and van Gerven Oei)

P.QI 3 54.i.3-4

Indeed (?) Soŋoja-ACC 6 artab 9-ACC

leave(?)-PLACT-IMP.2/3SG.PRED-COMM

‘Indeed (?) leave (?) 6 artabs and 9 bushels to Soŋoja’.

P.QI 3 55.i.7-8

Indeed (?) send to the king the tori and the green plot that I gathered (?)‘Indeed (?) send to the king the tori and the green plot that I gathered (?)’

The shorter form kotî has been attested twice, at different positions in the clause but both times in the context of a conditional order.

P.QI 3 52.4-5

If he doesn’t give it to you, indeed (?) write me a letter’.

P.QI 3 51.7

‘Now (?) indeed (?) when they have given it to her, go away’.

Potential Etymological Connections

Alesin

There appears to be a possible correspondence between Meroitic initial q- and a proto-Nubian zero realisation. The most prominent example is the correspondence between Meroitic qore /k*ur/, proto-Nubian *ur, and Old Nubian oyr /ur/ ‘head’, oyr-oy /urw/ ‘king’, oyr-\-\- /uran/ ‘chief’ (Rilly 2010, 136-138; 364, no. 17; 376; 517, no. 180). A second correspondence, more tentative, between medial -q- and Old Nubian zero may be between the Meroitic pqr /bak*ara/ or /bak*ora/ and npfr /bur/ ‘prince’ (van Gerven Oei and Tsakos 2017, 272; van Gerven Oei 2017, 122).

It has been observed that there is variation in pronunciation of q /k* - /w/ in funerary inscriptions, particularly in the epithets wetnênyinêqeli instead of qetnênyinêqeli for qualifying Isis and wettri instead of qetttri for qualifying Osiris. The phenomenon of the different initial sign was highlighted in some inscriptions from Lower Nubia. According to Heyler the phenomenon might be related to a dialectal form (Heyler 1964, 34; Rilly 1999). In the inscription of Kharamadoye, REM 0094, Millet (2003) suggested that the word wse might be a variant of the known singular possessive qese.26 The phonological alternation mirrored by the variation in orthography nonetheless suggests a possible weakening of q

26 Millet 2003. However, the syntax and semantics of the context are still uncertain and wse could also be considered a noun.
from labialised velar to approximant, a development that could have been mirrored in proto-Nubian.

If we were to assume a correspondence between Meroitic medial -q- and Old Nubian zero, aleśin is a good candidate for a cognate with Meroitic aleqese. The other sound correspondences also hold well: initial Meroitic /a/- corresponds consistently to proto-Nubian *a- and Old Nubian a-, cf. Meroitic are/arf ‘to take, receive’ and Old Nubian ḥr(p) ‘to take’ (Rilly 2010, 354, no. 2; 377; 446, no. 53); non-initial Meroitic /l/ corresponds to proto-Nubian *l, for example in Meroitic wle/wal/ ‘dog’, Roman wel (Rilly 2010, 369, no. 23; 376; 433, no. 27); for non-initial s/c/ the evidence is less robust, although a relation with proto-Nubian *s seems clear (Rilly 2010, 376).

There remains the final -n in aleśin, which is not present in the orthography aleqese. Rilly has argued convincingly that syllable-final nasals before stops are not written, although they can be deduced from Greek and Egyptian transcriptions. Examples are kalke, kake ‘candace’ with Greek κανδάκη and peseto ‘vicerey’ with Greek πρεσετος (Rilly 2007, 394; Rilly 2010, 367-376).

If indeed aleśin is a cognate of aleqese, this suggests a pronunciation /alok*e*oan/, meaning that in Meroitic syllable-final -/n/ was not written altogether. We find negative evidence for this claim in that the two attested roots ending in the grapheme -ne were pronounced with a vowel following the nasal: the placename final /- ne/ corresponds to Old Nubian -ne, although a relation with proto-Nubian *l (Rilly 2007, 394). Rilly, however, suggests that -ne has no final vowel; he proposes a pronunciation [akine(ta)] for Akine-te (Rilly 2007, 376).

Another loanword from Meroitic falling in the same category may be aleqese, this suggests a pronunciation /alok*e*oan/, meaning that in Meroitic syllable-final -/n/ was not written altogether. We find negative evidence for this claim in that the two attested roots ending in the grapheme -ne were pronounced with a vowel following the nasal: the placename final /- ne/ corresponds to Old Nubian -ne, although a relation with proto-Nubian *l (Rilly 2007, 394). Rilly, however, suggests that -ne has no final vowel; he proposes a pronunciation [akine(ta)] for Akine-te (Rilly 2007, 376).

In terms of lexical category, the parallel between aleqese and aleśin is suggestive. Both are adverbs often encountered in the first position of a clause. In literary Old Nubian, aśin is generally used to introduce conditional clauses, but there may be indications that in non-literary texts its use was less restricted.

If indeed aleśin is a cognate of aleqese, this also implies that Browne’s analysis of aleśin as being composed of ḥe ‘truth’ followed by the suffix -i may be incorrect. Rather, aleśin should perhaps be included in a class of adverbs that also comprises ḥiṣ ‘behold’ and ḥk, which probably means something like ‘finally’ (van Gerven Oei 2020, §17.4.1.3.3).

Alkasins and Alikutins
If aleśin is indeed a cognate of aleqese, alkaśin and alkukti may very well be a direct borrowing of the same word. The main indication that alkaśin and alkukti are loans is the presence of the velar consonant, with different vocalisation of the following vowel as a result of the labialisation: Mer. /k/e/ > ON /kai, ko/ (possibly /gai, go/). The rendering of Mer. /la/ > ON /li/, /li/ is also not unexpected. The schwa is either syncopated or rendered with the default Old Nubian epenthetic vowel /i/. Finally, the alternation /-sin/-, /-tin/ may be indicative of an alternation that has already been attested in Meroitic, for example in the couples kdiq/kdise ‘sister’ (Rilly 2010, 538, no. 10) and mte/mse ‘infant, small’, which has been borrowed in Old Nubian as nis. (Rilly 2010, 134, no. 23).

Furthermore, the existence in Old Nubian of the shorter variant koṭi may suggest that aleqese is composite, ale-gese. In Meroitic -qese has been identified as singular possessive of the third person, ‘his/her’, composed of the demonstrative pronoun qo/qe followed by the genitive postposition -s. Rilly speculated that this may be the second part of aleqese (Rilly 2010, 200), and we may see a reflex of that in koṭi. It seems unlikely, however, that koṭi has a possessive meaning.

If alkaśin and alkukti are indeed direct borrowings from Meroitic, this means that Meroitic must have been used in the Middle Nile Valley for a long period after it vanished from the written record. Although there may have been a conscious effort from Christian scribes to avoid Meroitic loanwords in translations, the situation may have been different for non-literary texts, where scribes were at more liberty to use turns of phrase from Meroitic scribal conventions, such as the use of aleqese. The fact that the documentary material from Qasr Ibrim dates to the late 12th, early 13th century suggests that alkaśin and alkukti must have been absorbed into Old Nubian scribal practices centuries before, and was perhaps part of a chancery tradition developed in parallel to the translation practices used for liturgical texts.

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27 Rilly 2007, 394. Rilly, however, suggests that -ne has no final vowel; he proposes a pronunciation [akine(ta)] for Akine-te (Rilly 2007, 376).

28 Another loanword from Meroitic falling in the same category may be qolē/qe, which again is only attested in non-literary contexts: the colophon of the Stauros text and a letter from Qasr Ibrim.
Conclusion
In this article we have argued an etymological relation between the Meroitic word \textit{aleqese} and the Old Nubian adverbs \textit{ⲁⲗⲟⲥⲛ̄}, \textit{ⲁⲗⲥⲛ̄}, and \textit{ⲁⲗⲙⲟⲧⲛ̄}, which confirms Claude Rilly’s suggestion that \textit{aleqese} should be interpreted as an adverb. We suggest, based on comparative and phonological evidence, that \textit{ⲁⲗⲟⲥⲛ̄} is a cognate of \textit{aleqese}, widely used as an indicator of Old Nubian conditional clauses, whereas \textit{ⲁⲗⲟⲥⲛ̄} and \textit{ⲁⲗⲙⲟⲧⲛ̄} should be considered loanwords from Meroitic used as adverbs. The late dates at which both have been attested, suggests the existence of (remainders of) Meroitic literacy extending considerably beyond the latest attestations of written Meroitic in the 5th century AD.

References
**List of Abbreviations:**

ACC: accusative  
ADE: adessive  
ADJ: adjective  
ADV: adverb  
ALL: allative  
COMM: command marker  
CONJ: conjunction  
COP: copula  
DET: determiner  
DIM: demonstrative  
EMP: emphatic  
ETHN: ethnonym  
FOC: focus marker  
GEN: genitive  
IMP: imperative  
INTEN: intentional  
JUS: jussive  
LOC: locative  
N: noun  
NEG: negative  
NOM: nominative  
OBJ: object  
PL: plural  
PLACT: pluractional  
POSUF: pronominal object suffix  
PP: postposition  
PRED: predicate  
PREF: prefix  
PRON: pronoun  
PROP: property  
PRS: present  
PST2: past 2  
SG: singular  
SUBORD: subordinate  
V: verbal root  
VPREF: verbal prefix  
VSUF: verbal suffix