

SUDAN'S HOLY MOUNTAIN
JEBEL BARKAL
AND ITS TEMPLES
A Visitor's Guide

Timothy Kendall and El-Hassan Ahmed Mohamed
Co-Directors: NCAM Archaeological Mission



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2022

“The whole form of the mountain is very picturesque and imposing, especially when seen from a distance. At the southwest corner, a large perpendicular mass of sandstone has become separated by a deep fissure from the body of the mountain, and when looked at from a distance of a mile upstream, it has all the appearance of a colossal statue. The Arabs declare that it is a statue of one of the kings who reigned in the ‘Time of Ignorance,’ (i.e., before the time of Mohammed the Prophet). . . . As Cailliaud says, however, the form of the rock is due to a freak of Nature and is purely accidental.”

E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Egyptian Sudan: Its History and Monuments*, vol. I (London: 1907), pp. 130–131.

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Cover: *The start of excavations on the “mammisi” complex, B 560-561, Jebel Barkal, January 2014.*

Title page: *Gold appliqué from a royal garment in the form of a hawk-headed warrior-god; found in 2014 during the sifting of one of the dumps from the Reisner excavations of 1919 from the Napatan palace (B 1200).*

Table of Contents

Preface	1
Nile Map.	4
Frontispiece: <i>Jebel Barkal and its temples as they appear today and as digitally reconstructed</i>	5
I. Introduction: Jebel Barkal and Ancient Napata	6
II. Jebel Barkal and the Cult of the Primeval Amun.	9
III. Jebel Barkal: A Prehistoric Source of Kingship?.	20
IV. Egypt in Kush: Jebel Barkal and Luxor Temple	30
V. Kush in Egypt: Jebel Barkal and the Cap Crown.	35
VI. A History of Archaeological Exploration of the Site	43
VII. The Amun Sanctuary: Map and Key to the Known Buildings	49
VIII. Temple and Palaces in the NCAM Sector	54
B 100: A Meroitic Palace	54
B 200: Taharqo's Temple to Hathor.	56
B 300: Taharqo's Temple to Mut	57
B 300-sub: An Eighteenth Dynasty Precursor to B 200 and B 300 . .	60
B 350: The Pinnacle Monument of Taharqo	61
B 500: The Great Temple of Amun of Napata	63
The Statue Cache	67
B 501: The Kiosk of Natakamani and Amanitore	70
B 551: The Kiosk of Amanishakheto.	71
B 560/561: The Meroitic Mammisi and Kiosk	72
B 600: An Enthronement Pavilion	75
B 700: Atlanersa's Temple of Osiris-Dedwen.	77
B 700-sub Chapels: Open-Air Aten Shrines?	80
B 800/900: The Temple of Amun of Karnak.	82
B 1000: The Great Well	83
B 1100: The Temple of the Royal Uraeus Goddesses	83
B 1200: The Napatan Palace	86
B 1700: House of the High Priest of Amun?	88
B 2500: A Meroitic Temple inside Karima Town.	90
The Jebel Barkal Quarries	91
IX. Kingship and Ritual at Jebel Barkal.	93
X. Members of the Team (1986–2016) and Acknowledgements	107
XI. Select Bibliography	109

Preface

As co-directors of the Jebel Barkal Archaeological Mission of NCAM (the National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums of Sudan), we are pleased to be able to present this Guidebook as a summary of the results of our team's discoveries in the Amun sanctuary there, made between 1986 and 2016. Until our final publication is completed (anticipated 2024/25), this booklet can provide for English readers an introduction to the site and its monuments and a summary of our latest views on the site's evolution, its religious meaning, and its impact on the ancient political history of the Nile Valley.

We are deeply grateful to NCAM for giving us the honor of working at this remarkable site. The unfailing support and hospitality of its directors and dedicated staff and all our Sudanese colleagues and workmen over the years has made the project a continuing pleasure. Our teammates, who have contributed so much to the project since its inception, are individually listed at the back of the book, and much of the Mission's success has been due to their extraordinary talents and insights. During the long life of this project our institutional sponsors, besides NCAM, have been the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), Boston (1986–1998); Northeastern University, Boston (1999–2002); and the Qatar-Sudan Archaeological Project (QSAP), Doha, Qatar (2013–2015). The project has also been the beneficiary of many generous sponsors: the National Geographic Society; the Schiff-Giorgini Foundation; the Marilyn M. Simpson Foundation; the Archaeology4All Foundation; the J.A. and H.G. Woodruff Charitable Trust; and the Shelby White-Leon Levy Program for Archaeological Publications.

Our basic knowledge of the site of Jebel Barkal is due largely to the work of the American archaeologist George A. Reisner (1867–1942), who spent parts of four seasons digging there, from 1916 to 1920, excavating its temples and pyramids on behalf of Harvard University and the MFA, Boston. Although Reisner published in detail only the results of his 1916 season, his original

diaries and photo archives in the MFA preserve a complete record of his work, his finds, and his interpretations. One objective of our work has always been to complete the publication of Reisner's results.

Reisner's excavating capability was massive. He worked up to four months each season with between 250 and 400 workmen and conducted huge clearing operations. He found and recorded thousands of objects, discovered important historical texts and translated them, excavated numerous statues, and reconstructed the history of the site, as he saw it, through analysis of its texts and architectural remains. Our own Mission has been the chief beneficiary of his great work, since from the beginning our licensed area at the site has been the same as his (excluding the pyramids). It thus goes without saying that without his meticulous records to build on, our own contributions would be very limited indeed. No one today, of course, could or would excavate on the scale that he did, but the fact that he did has left us an invaluable record of what he saw on the ground that we could never hope to see ourselves.

Thanks to the staff at the MFA, our team has been able to use Reisner's superb records to become familiar with the site and to target areas that needed clarification and further excavation. Along the way, having the benefit of over a century of new scholarship, we have also been able to correct or modify many of Reisner's initial impressions and conclusions.

Our approach to the archaeological record of Jebel Barkal has differed somewhat from Reisner's. His response to it was, naturally, that of the pure archaeologist and Egyptologist. In the early twentieth century, his focus was on recovering primary data: distinguishing the building phases of temples, establishing their chronology and translating the preserved texts in order to anchor the temple phases to a historical framework. A century later we have sought to take the work to the next level by asking the questions that would be asked by the political and religious historian: When did this site become important as a religious sanctuary and why? What was the origin and nature of the Egyptian god Amun of Jebel Barkal, whom we first encounter only in the mid-18th Dynasty? What was the function of the different temples? Were the Egyptians aware of Jebel Barkal as a sacred site prior to the New Kingdom? Why did this remote hill in Upper Nubia become so

closely associated with Egyptian kingship and coronation? What was its role in legitimizing the kingship of the Sudanese 25th Dynasty in Egypt?

Recent revelations from Jebel Barkal challenge long-held scholarly assumptions about the respective roles played by the Egyptian and Nubian states in the long history of the Nile Valley. The emerging picture now pushes us to confront an idea that would once have seemed preposterous: that the pre-historic origins of Egyptian kingship, symbolized by the White Crown, are probably to be sought in Sudan – specifically at Jebel Barkal.

Timothy Kendall & El-Hassan Ahmed Mohamed
Karima, Sudan
Feb. 28, 2022





Jebel Barkal and its temples as they appear today (Drone Photo: Sami Mohamed el-Amin)



The Jebel Barkal Temples (with palace [B 1200] in the background) as they may have looked about 600 BC (Model by Geoff Kornfeld and Nadezhda Reshetnikova © NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

I. Introduction: Jebel Barkal and Ancient Napata

When the Egyptians completed their conquest of northern Sudan in the early fifteenth century BC (a region then known as “Kush,” today as “Nubia”), they fixed the upper limit of their occupied territory at Jebel Barkal,¹ a lone sandstone butte on the right bank of the Nile some 1260 km (or two to three months’ river journey) upstream from their southern capital at Thebes and about 100 km up the reverse curve of the Nile’s Great Bend (cf. map and fig. 1). Here, under the mountain’s shadow, they founded a city called Napata, whose scattered suburbs today, 15 km up and down the river on both banks, form one of the largest archaeological districts in Sudan.² Presently Jebel Barkal stands on the SW edge of the modern town of Karima, about 325 km NNW of Khartoum.

Aside from the town’s defensive position as a barrier against hostile Nubian groups attempting to make incursions into Egyptian-held territory from upstream, Napata’s only other strategic significance seems to have been that it lay at a main Nile crossing-point of a key overland caravan route that cut in a near straight line from southeast to northwest across the Nile’s great S-curve, connecting the Sixth Cataract region with the Third (see map). During its 400 years under Egyptian control, Napata would have been the main ferry point where valuable African products from the eastern and central Sudan, arriving by caravan at the south bank of the Nile, were trans-shipped to the north bank and stockpiled before being sent north to Egypt as part of the annual “tribute of Kush.”³

¹ This is the mountain’s Arabic name. In earlier literature the name is regularly rendered in English “Gebel Barkal.” However, the rendering “Jebel...” is to be preferred now because it reflects Sudanese (rather than Egyptian) pronunciation and brings the name into conformity with the English rendering of all other mountain names in Sudan, which are written “Jebel...” As for the name “Barkal,” this was a spelling popularized by Cailliaud (1826, iii: 198–227), but more commonly one finds in 19th century sources the variants “...Berkel, Birkel, Birquel” (eg. Hoskins 1835: 134–159). Today one still hears it pronounced locally as “Jebel el-Birkel.” The Sudanese themselves seem to be unaware of the origin and meaning of the name, but it may have derived from an old colloquial Arabic word *birghîl* (“land near water or between cultivated ground and the desert”) (Steingass 1884: 119). Since the mountain indeed stands between cultivated land and the desert, the rendering *Jebel el-Birghîl* may have been its original Arabic form.

² On Napata, see Guermeur 2005: 524–539; Kendall and Mohamed et al. 2017: 156–159; 1920. On the newly discovered urban remains in front of the temples, see Tucker and Emberling 2016, and for ongoing discoveries, see <https://lsa.umich.edu/kelsey/research/current-field-projects/jebel-barkal--sudan.html>.

³ Probably even in the New Kingdom a town on the south bank, 4 km downstream from Jebel Barkal, existed as the terminus of the southern leg of this route. Often called “Contra-Napata,” this site (whose ancient name is still uncertain) is today called Sanam Abu



Fig. 1. Aerial view of Jebel Barkal, looking north across the Nile (here flowing southwest) with the Barkal pyramids visible to the left of the mountain. The ancient city of Napata sprawled along the riverbank in front of the mountain, just above the flood zone (Photo by Enrico Ferorelli, 1989).

Napata was probably never very important as a river port, since for most of the year the prevailing winds blew from the northeast, and this, combined with a river current flowing in the same direction, prevented ships from sailing upstream. Only in the summer months, when the prevailing winds blew from the southwest, would it have been possible to reach the town by sail.

Stray early potsherds found around the mountain suggest that a Nubian settlement had existed nearby since Neolithic times (ca. 5000 BC), but no physical trace of it has yet been found.⁴ Although the site may have been

Dom. During the 25th Dynasty it became a major receiving center for African goods and raw materials arriving at the Nile via caravans from the south, and Italian archaeologists have recently excavated a warehouse complex 250 m in length, with storerooms still containing remains of elephant tusks, unworked semi-precious stones and Red Sea shells, among other raw materials. See Vincentelli 2011, 2016 and refs. The site also preserves the ruins of a temple, dedicated to “Amun-Re, Bull of Nubia,” built by the Kushite king Taharqo in the early seventh century BC. See Guerneur 2005: 519–524, and Pope 2014: 58 ff.

⁴On the possibility that an early Nubian town, named Degail, existed on the site, see Gabolde 2020, 360, n. 1 (and see below, note 73). Note, too, that the Jebel Barkal Stele of Thutmose III, dating to about 1432 BC – the earliest Egyptian inscription found at the site – is addressed to a local citizenry: “Hear ye, O People of the Southland who are at Pure Mountain....” Reisner and Reisner 1933a, 35.

known to Egyptian overland merchants since the Old and Middle Kingdoms, it was first visited by an Egyptian king about 1502 BC, when Thutmose I, in his second regnal year, passed it by with an army, probably only two or three months after his destruction of the early capital of Kush at Kerma, 310 km downstream.⁵ He surely passed by the mountain because he left an inscription, marking his official imperial boundary, 250 km further upstream on the rock outcrop known as Hagr el-Merwa at Kurgus.⁶

The site's earliest known Egyptian remains date from the reign of Thutmose III (ca. 1479–1425 BC), but the name "Napata" does not occur in texts until the early reign of his son Amenhotep II (ca. 1425–1400 BC). As is clear from the earliest preserved Egyptian texts, the site included a walled fort called "Slaughter of the Foreigners" (not yet identified archaeologically) and a small temple to Amun called his "Resthouse for Eternity" (apparently surviving today only as a mud brick foundation under the lowest stone level of temple B 500). Other, later New Kingdom temples on the site are attributable to Thutmose IV (B 600), Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) (B 500-Phase I, B 700-sub 1, 3), Tutankhamun and/or Horemheb (B 500-Phase II, B 300-sub; B 700-sub 2; B 1100), Seti I (B 500-Phase III), Ramses II (B 500-Phase IV), one or two of the later Ramessides (B 500-Phase V), and Menkheperre, an Egyptian High Priest of Amun of the 21st Dynasty (reused blocks in B 200, fig. 14).⁷

Nearby sandstone ledges at Hillat el-Arab are also honeycombed with rock tombs, some of which were cut and first used during the New Kingdom.⁸

After a brief decline, Napata, in the ninth and eighth centuries BC, underwent a renaissance and became the birthplace of a powerful, revived Kushite monarchy, which turned the tables on Egypt, conquered it and brought it under its own rule for about 70 years.⁹ This Sudanese ruling family is counted as Egypt's 25th Dynasty (ca. 727–653 BC).

In the 660s BC, these Nubian pharaohs, who had taken up residence in Egypt, were pushed back into their homeland by repeated invasions of Egypt by the kings of Assyria. Relocating their court (probably) at Napata,

⁵ Bradbury 1984–85; Török 2009, 157–165; Valbelle 2020, 329; Williams 2020b.

⁶ Davies, W. V. 2017.

⁷ Kendall and Mohamed et al. 2017.

⁸ Vincentelli 2006.

⁹ Morkot 2000, 167–304; Mysliwiec 2000, 68–109; Kahn 2004; Török 2007, 285–365, Williams 2020b.

they consolidated their still vast kingdom in northern Sudan, which endured for another millennium. In time, Meroë, 275 km southeast of Napata, would become their new political capital,¹⁰ but Napata for centuries would remain the chief cult center of the kingdom and the preferred venue for its royal coronations. Until the third century BC, Napata also remained the preferred site for the royal burials. El-Kurru, 12 km downstream from Jebel Barkal, is the site of the cemetery of four of the five members of the 25th Dynasty, their queens and their ancestors, dating back to about 900 B.C. Nuri, 10 km upstream and on the opposite bank, is the site of the pyramid of Taharqo (690–664 BC), the penultimate and greatest king of the 25th Dynasty, and those of nineteen of his successors on the throne of Kush and fifty-three of their queens to the third century BC (figs. 18, 83, 84). After this time, most of the rulers were buried at Meroë, but a few continued to build pyramids beside Jebel Barkal, and these date from the second century BC to the third century AD (figs. 1, 19).¹¹

From its founding, Napata's greatest importance was as the host city of Jebel Barkal, which the Egyptians, in their language, called variously "Pure Mountain" (*Dju-wa'ab*) and "Throne(s) of the Two Lands" (*Nesut-Tawy*), believing the hill to be occupied by a primeval form of their state god Amun of Karnak. The sanctuary built here would become the most important (and most remote) in the Egyptian Nubian empire and later, the most important in the neo-Kushite Meroitic kingdom, with a nearly continuous history of operation from about 1450 BC to AD 300.

II. Jebel Barkal and the Cult of the Primeval Amun

Jebel Barkal is a striking anomaly on the landscape. Standing 104 m high above ground level, it rises abruptly from an otherwise flat desert plain and faces the river, about 1.5 km distant, with a sheer cliff 80 to 90 m high and approximately 200 m long. If its isolation and sharp profile are impressive, it has another feature which in ancient times made it a natural wonder and distinguished it from all other mountains in the Nile Valley. This is a towering pinnacle, 75 m high, which projects from its south corner and presents the illusion of a gigantic statue (cover, figs. 2–4, 6).

¹⁰ Grzymski 2020 and refs.

¹¹ Lohwasser and Kendall 2019, 621–627. See also Dunham 1950, 1955, 1957a, b; Yellin 2020.

From the moment the Egyptians set eyes on this hill, they seem to have identified it as a major residence of their dynastic god, Amun or Amun-Re, Lord of Thebes. As part of their program of conquest, the Egyptians established his cult at many towns in Nubia, both below and above the Second Cataract,¹² but Jebel Barkal, which was located farthest from Thebes and closest to the imagined Nile sources, was the place, they believed, where this god resided in his most ancient form – as they imagined him to be at the beginning of time.

To Egyptian eyes, the peculiar shape of Jebel Barkal, with its pinnacle at one side, proved it was a manifestation of the “Primeval Mound” of popular myth, where the god, as Creator, was said to have raised himself out of the primordial waters, which then covered the earth, pulled himself up onto the Mound, took his phallus in his hand, and, through an act of self-stimulation, ejaculated, swallowed his semen and gave birth to his first children, the twins Shu (god of air) and Tefnut (goddess of moisture), by spitting them out.¹³ (These gods, a brother-sister pair, then became the parents and grandparents of all the other gods and naturally figured prominently as members of the Jebel Barkal pantheon.) The unusual phallic-shaped pinnacle seemed to confirm that Jebel Barkal was the place where the god had performed his first creative act (fig. 2) and where he still dwelt, hidden behind the cliff, re-initiating Creation each year by releasing the Nile flood.



Fig. 2. The phallic-shaped pinnacle on Jebel Barkal seemed to prove that the hill was the original “Primeval Mound” of Egyptian myth on which the great god had initiated Creation through an act of masturbation. The pictured scene at right is from the papyrus of the 21st Dynasty Theban priestess Her-Uben (Cairo Museum 133).

¹² Gabolde 2020, 349–352.

¹³ For example, Rundle-Clark 1959, 37–45; Tobin 2001.

If the ancients imagined the pinnacle as an erect phallus of godlike scale, they also saw it as a colossal rearing cobra (*uraeus*): that is, the form of any goddess transformed from human to serpent shape. In public art this is the way the rock was most frequently represented.¹⁴ When viewed from different angles, the “uraeus” also appeared to be wearing different crowns, which meant that it was identified with multiple goddesses.

A uraeus was the emblem worn on the front of the crowns of both the king and the god, and it symbolized their respective terrestrial and cosmic authorities. To an ancient viewer, recognizing a giant uraeus on Jebel Barkal would have been unmistakable proof that the mountain was an ancient source – perhaps even the original source – of kingship, and it would have identified its hidden resident god as the purveyor of this kingship.

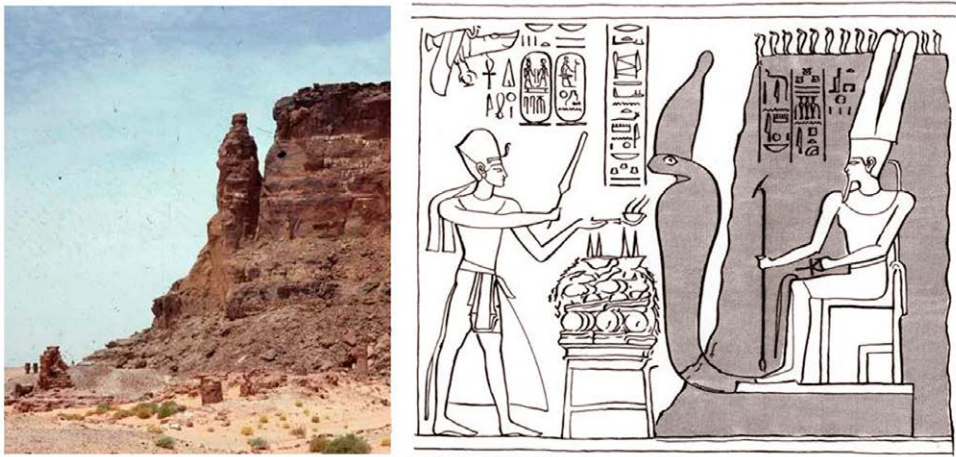


Fig. 3. *The Jebel Barkal pinnacle seen from the northeast (left), with the same view (right) represented by the artists of Ramses II and rendered on the south wall inside his Great Temple at Abu Simbel. Here the Theban god “Amun-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, foremost in Karnak” is shown sitting inside Jebel Barkal, with the pinnacle rendered as a royal uraeus crowned with the White Crown, symbol of royal authority over the Southlands (Photo: T. Kendall; Drawing: P. D. Manuelian).*

When viewed from the northeast, the pinnacle could clearly be seen as a uraeus wearing the White Crown, symbol of kingship over Upper Egypt or, more broadly, the South (figs. 3, 4). When viewed from the southwest, it could be seen as a uraeus wearing the Red Crown, symbol of kingship over Lower Egypt, or the North (fig. 4). These two uraei, representing the

¹⁴ Kendall 2008, 124–134 for a full discussion of the ancient imagery of Jebel Barkal, to which should be added Lohwasser 2015.

goddesses Nekhbet and Wadjet, respectively, were known as the “Two Ladies.” As the patron deities of Upper and Lower Egyptian kingship, they were thought to be the king’s personal protectors and guarantors of his authority over the “Two Lands” that comprised Egypt. Worn on the front of the king’s crown, they were thought to be merged as one within his usual single uraeus (just as they were so merged in the pinnacle), but during Dynasty 25 they appeared separately side by side on the unique crown of that era, in which each goddess was now shown crowned with her identifying crown (again, just as each appeared in the pinnacle).

At Jebel Barkal both Nekhbet and Wadjet had separate shrines at the foot of the pinnacle within the single temple B 1100. Another goddess housed in this temple and associated with the pinnacle was Weret-Hekau (“Great of Enchantments”), who personified the king’s crown. During coronation ceremonies, it was she who was said to place the crown on the king’s head (her role perhaps being played by the king’s mother).¹⁵



Fig. 4. The Jebel Barkal pinnacle, when viewed from the southwest (left), was almost certainly conceived as a royal uraeus crowned with the “Red Crown” (as depicted in this pectoral of Tutankhamun), just as, when viewed from the northeast (right), it was seen as a royal uraeus wearing the “White Crown” (fig. 3). These were the serpent forms of the goddesses Wadjet and Nekhbet. The small temple B 1100, placed at the base of the pinnacle and directed to it, contained their separate shrines, called “the House of Flame” and “Great House.” The king entered these chapels during his coronation to receive his crowns (Kendall 1997, 337–341).

When viewed from the southwest, the pinnacle could also be seen as a uraeus crowned with a sun disk or orb – that is, it could be imagined as Amun’s uraeus, which was a shared form of the goddesses Hathor, Mut

¹⁵ Gardiner 1953, 15; Kendall 2008, 126, n. 22.

and others, and was known as the “Eye of Re” (=Sun’s Eye). This is proven by the relief drawn in fig. 5, which depicts the pinnacle as a sun-crowned uraeus hanging from the cliff in front of the god, who is shown sitting inside the mountain. This scene appears in the first rock-cut chamber of temple B 300, which was cut into the cliff just to the left (west) of the pinnacle base. It was from this angle, outside the temple entrance, that the rock shaft looked most like a rearing cobra crowned with a sun disk.¹⁶

In this location two temples were built side by side: B 200 and B 300. These were dedicated, respectively, to the goddesses Hathor and Mut, both of whom were considered aspects of each other as well as of the “Sun’s Eye.” Both were considered Amun’s daughters, consorts and uraeus-protectors. Just as the pinnacle, when imagined as the god’s phallus, suggested the presence of god as divine father, so, when imagined as a rearing uraeus, it suggested the presence of god as divine mother. B 300, the deeply rock-cut temple just to the left of the pinnacle, was even dedicated to Mut (“Mother”), which greatly enhanced the mountain’s sexual symbolism, for it suggested a womb, giving the hill, like the primeval Amun himself, both male and female characteristics.

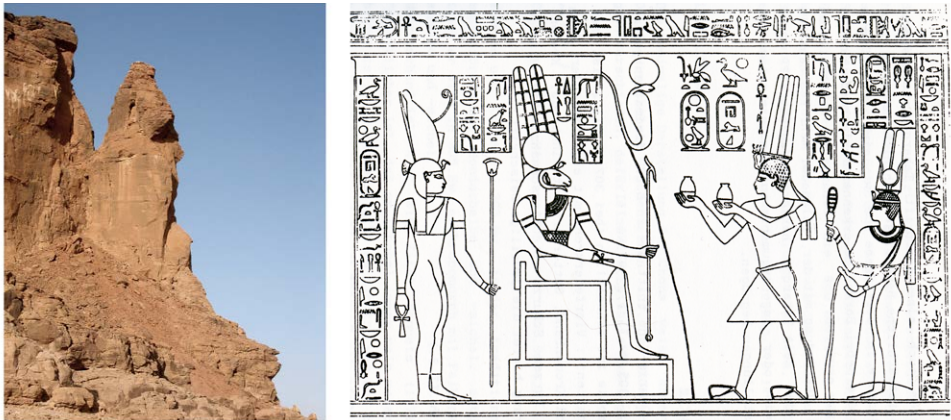


Fig. 5. *The Jebel Barkal pinnacle seen from the southwest (left) in late afternoon light, and the same view (right) as imagined by the artists of Taharqo and rendered on the NE wall of the first rock-cut room in temple B 300. Here the pinnacle appears as a sun-crowned uraeus, hanging from the cliff line, behind which Amun, now ram-headed, sits enthroned followed by Mut, his consort. The king and queen are shown making offerings to the god, who is called “Amun-Re, Lord of the Throne of the Two Lands, who is in Pure Mountain.” (Photo: T. Kendall; Drawing: Robisek 1989, 53)*

¹⁶ Kendall 2008, 126–127, nn. 25–30.

The pinnacle had yet another important identity. It was imagined as a vague human figure wearing the White Crown – a huge royal effigy stepping forth from the mountain, as if it were Osiris, the acknowledged first king (fig. 6). This is revealed by several texts, one of which formed a major decorative scheme in temple B 700.¹⁷

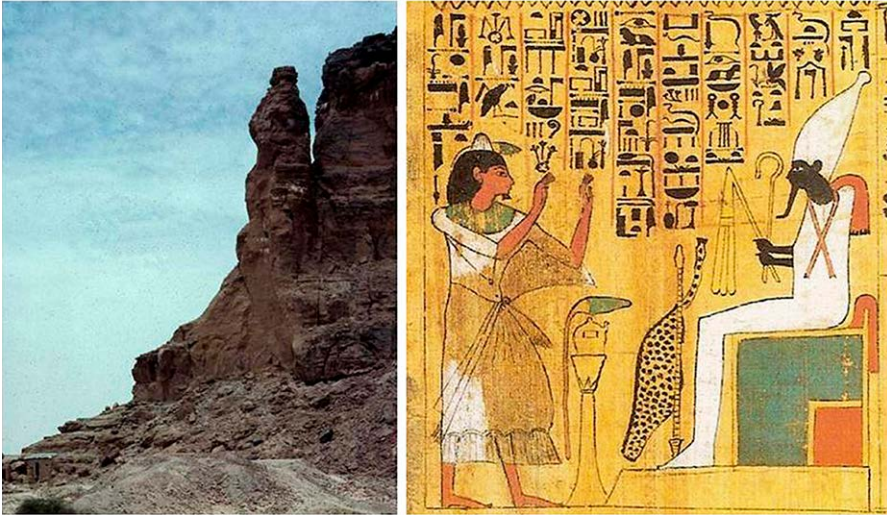


Fig. 6. Textual evidence suggests that, as one of its meanings, the pinnacle was conceived as a colossal statue of a king wearing the White Crown – in particular, the legendary first king of Egypt, Osiris (right), who, like Amun, became a god of fertility and creation. His southern origin, claimed by Diodorus (3. 3. 2–7), was implied not only by his White Crown, which indicated hegemony over Upper Egypt and Nubia, but in this illustration also by his black skin, which not only identified him with the Nile silt but also as a native Sudanese. (Photo [left]: T. Kendall; Photo [right]; Papyrus P 3005, 21st Dynasty, Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin [photo reversed for comparison]).

In the first century BC, the Hellenistic Greek historian Diodorus of Sicily (3. 3. 2–7) recorded a tradition he had heard in Egypt from a group of Kushite ambassadors. They told him that Osiris, the first king of Egypt, was, in fact, a native Kushite (“Aithiopian”), who came north into Egypt at the dawn of time and colonized the country, bringing with him “Egyptian” civilization. This, they said, explained why the two countries, Kush and Egypt, had so many customs and beliefs in common. It also explained, they said, why both Egyptian and Kushite kings (in the manner of Osiris) wore “tall pointed felt hats ending in a knob.” This surprising comment suggests that the source of the story

¹⁷Priese 2005; Kendall 2008, 135–139: “Greetings to you, Osiris, Lord of Eternity, King of the Two Lands, Chief of both banks...Youth, King, who took the White Crown for himself ... What he loves is that every face looks up to him...in this his name as ‘Pillar.’ ”

may very well have originated at Jebel Barkal, where the form of the White Crown appeared so perfectly in the pinnacle summit (cover, figs. 3, 4 and 6).

Surprisingly, Diodorus' account is not the only source of a tradition that places the origin of Egyptian kingship in Sudan. We encounter it repeatedly throughout Egyptian history, as we will show below. One of the more obvious examples is over thirteen hundred years older and is found in the Jebel Barkal Stele of Thutmose III. This is the earliest document known from the site and is now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA 23.733).¹⁸ The text is dated to the king's 47th regnal year, or about 1432 BC.

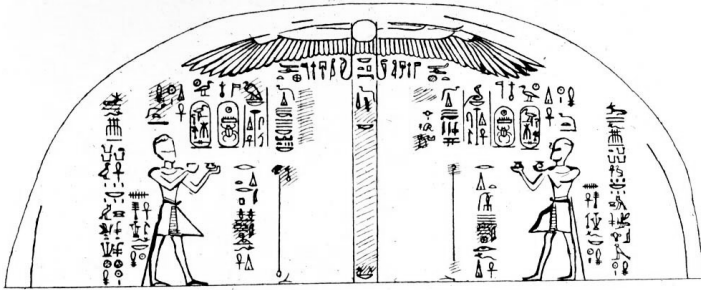


Fig. 7. A drawing of the top of the Jebel Stele of Thutmose III, showing the two empty spaces where two different aspects of the god Amun had stood prior to their erasure in the late 18th Dynasty (Boston MFA 23.733).

On the lunette (or rounded top) of this granite monument Amun was originally represented twice, as two figures back-to-back, each facing a figure of the king (fig. 7). A century after the stele was erected, however, both images of the god were deliberately erased during the Aten heresy of Akhenaten (ca. 1352–1336 BC). Thus, only the words of the two Amuns still partially survive here. The figure on the left (whom we can determine from data presented below was “Amun of Karnak” in Thebes) is made to say to the king: “I give you all lands and all foreign lands,” while the figure on the right, whom the preserved text still identifies as “[Amun] who is in Pure Mountain (=Jebel Barkal)” says to him: “I give you the kingship of the Two Lands.” The implications of this are astonishing and at first seem impossible to take literally or seriously. Here, the kingship of Egypt is being granted to Thutmose III by a form of the Egyptian Amun dwelling at Jebel Barkal – from a place, and from an aspect of the god, that we have not previously encountered in history!

¹⁸ Reisner and Reisner 1933a; Cumming 1982, 1–7 (1227–1243).

At this point we need to try to reconstruct the missing images of Amun on Thutmose's stele, for, as we will see, these forms contain important clues to the split nature of the deity. Fortunately, restoring them is easy because at Jebel Barkal Amun always appears in two distinctive, directional forms, one always on the left sides of stelae and temple walls and the other always on the right. These forms, we discover, signified Amun's different chronological and geographical aspects (fig. 8).

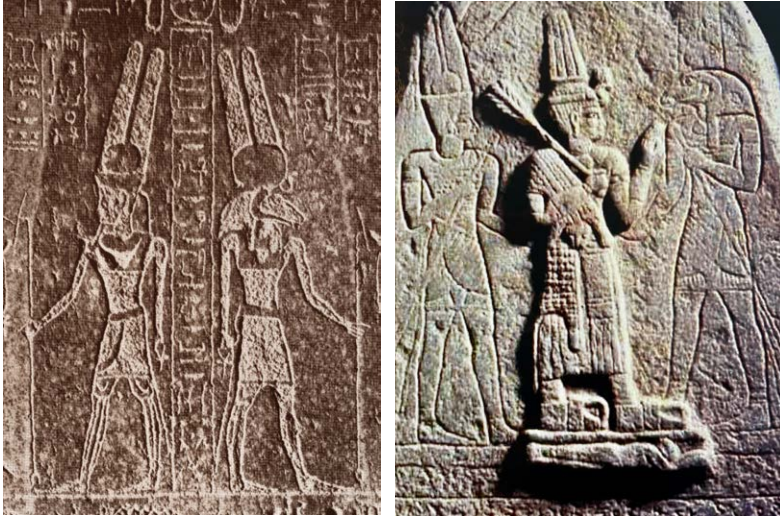


Fig. 8. *The dual Amuns at Jebel Barkal as they appear (left) on the Stele of Harsiotef (ca. mid-fourth century BC) (Cairo Museum JE 48864) and (right) on the Stele of Tanyidamani (late second century BC) (Boston MFA 23.736).*

In the left position, Amun was always depicted fully human, wearing a crown topped by two tall plumes and a sun disk. In the right position, he was always depicted as a man with a ram's head, wearing just the twin plumes and disk. Since left here indicated "downstream," his human form symbolized "north" and Egypt. Since right indicated "upstream," his ram-headed form indicated "south" and Nubia. (Observe, for example, how the god is represented in figs. 3 and 5. In fig. 3 he is the fully human "Amun of Karnak" because we are looking at the mountain from northeast toward southwest [i.e., downstream, toward "north" and Egypt"]; in fig. 5, he is the ram-headed "Amun of Jebel Barkal" because we are looking at the mountain from southwest toward northeast [i.e., upstream, toward "south" and the Upper Nile.]) The Thutmose Stele also tells us something else about these two Amuns. The king states that he "seized the Southerners by the command of (Amun's) *ka*, while the Northerners were under his guidance." This in-

dicates that the ram-headed Amun at Jebel Barkal was the “ka” of Amun’s northern, Egyptian (human) form. What then is the meaning of “ka,” and what is the significance of his ram head?

According to the distinguished Egyptologist Lanny Bell, the Egyptians conceived of the “ka” as the immortal ancestral aspect of a human being, a king, or a god.¹⁹ The “ka” was a supernatural presence that connected its host to the moment of Creation and could reside within a statue, which gave it physicality. One might describe the “ka” in modern terms as a personification of one’s DNA. If Amun of Jebel Barkal was the “ka” of Amun of Karnak, then he must have been conceived as the Egyptian Amun’s most ancient self – that is, the god as he was at the mythological “first occasion.” By *this tradition*, therefore, Jebel Barkal would have been understood to be the birthplace of the Theban Amun, which made it the original “Primeval Mound.” The text even confirms our definition when it later tells us that he was “the great god of first time, the primeval one, who created [the king’s] beauty.”

The Egyptian word “ka” was normally written with the hieroglyph of a pair of open arms, symbolizing an embrace. However, the Creator himself – the source of all “ka’s” – seems to have been a sort of ultimate “ka”, where the word could also be written with a bull hieroglyph, pronounced the same way. This, by hieroglyphic pun, indicated that the Creator was a powerful phallic, “bull-like” being, source of fertility and all life. We can therefore conclude that the human-headed Amun of Thebes, *by this tradition*, was the god of present time while his ram-headed counterpart at Jebel Barkal was his “ka” (=original essence) as well as the *Ka* (“Bull”)/Ejaculator of Creation.²⁰

Turning our gaze northward to Thebes, we also find Amun, beginning in Dynasty 12, commonly represented in two ways, obviously closely related to the previous. One form, as before, was fully human (i.e., the “Amun of Karnak”), but the other was human but overtly phallic: a figure, crowned with two tall plumes, wrapped as a mummy, having an erect phallus, holding one arm upraised, bent at the elbow, and supporting a flail balanced on the tips of his upright fingers (fig. 9, left). This strange form of the god was called *Kamutef*, which again emphasized the word “Ka.” The name, trans-

¹⁹ Bell 1997, 131–132, 282, n. 2.

²⁰ In the Invocation hymn to Amun at Hibis Temple, in which the god’s different forms (“ba’s”) are described, his first “ba” is described as “Bull (*Ka*), who ejaculates Nun (=the primeval waters),” yet he was represented as a ram-headed man crowned with a sun disk and uraeus. Klotz 2006, 21–25.

lated, meant “Bull of his Mother,” and it was intended to represent the god in his most ancient state: as a self-generated, self-replicating Creator, who incorporated within himself a father (i.e., a male aspect), a mother (i.e., a female aspect), and a child (i.e., a replica of himself).²¹ In this guise he was imagined not only as the impregnator (*Ka* = “Bull”) of his own mother, the goddess Mut, his consort, but he was also imagined as his own child. As his own child, Amun personified the so-called “royal *ka*,” that is, the aspect of himself as first earthly king, which he imparted to each subsequent king forever.²² A living king’s acknowledged inheritance of the “royal *ka*” made him, in the eyes of the people, Amun’s “bodily son” as well as the god’s living manifestation on earth. Because the “royal *ka*” was born from the god’s “*ka*” at the beginning of time,²³ and because the god’s “*ka*” (according to Thutmose’s stele) was said to dwell at Jebel Barkal, then *by this tradition* the earliest kingship, too, would have been recognized as originating from Jebel Barkal!

The ithyphallic Amun-Kamutef commonly pictured in temple scenes at Thebes, and the ram-headed Amun commonly pictured at Jebel Barkal and elsewhere in Nubia, seem to have been identical in meaning. Their close relationship is confirmed by an observation made in the first century BC, again by Diodorus (1. 88), who wrote that the Egyptians “*deified the goat (i.e., ram), just as the Greeks are said to have honored Priapus, because of the generative member; for this animal has a very great propensity for copulation, and it is fitting that honor be shown to that member of the body, which is the cause of generation.*”²⁴ Four centuries earlier Herodotus (II: 46) had written something similar: that the Egyptian ram-headed god of Mendes was represented that way in order to conceal his true appearance, which was that of the Greek god Pan. In other words, the ram head of Amun of Jebel Barkal concealed a phallic form of the god.²⁵

²¹ Bell 1997, 174–176; Klotz 2006, 213.

²² Bell 1997, 137–144.

²³ Note this text from a stele of Amenhotep III at Kom el-Hetan in Western Thebes: “Words spoken by Amun-Re Kamutef (to the king)...: Come my son...I am your father, the one who fashioned your beauty. I fashioned you in front of Shu and Tefnut. From out of my body you have come before them, and I brought you up when I came forth from Nun (=the primeval waters), before I opened my mouth for speech...I have made this land in (all) its length and width, in order to do what my *ka* desires... Your kingship – (it) is like when I was King of Upper and Lower Egypt...You are my beloved Son, who came forth from my body, my statue which I have placed upon earth...” Davies 1992, IV, 12–13.

²⁴ Oldfather 1960, 299.

²⁵ On the ram-god of Mendes, see Klotz 2006, 98–99. Note also Herodotus II: 42, where Zeus (i.e., Amun) covers himself with a ram skin and head to prevent Herakles from seeing him as he really was, which suggests that the ram-head may have been a device used to represent deities whose true form was too private, too complex or too mysterious to be



Fig. 9. (Left) The primeval Amun-Kamutef, as represented at Thebes in Dynasty 12 (from the White Chapel of Sesostris I at Karnak). (Right) A rare figure of Amun-Kamutef in which the god's phallus has been replaced by a ram head. (From Medinet Habu, room 40) (Photos: T. Kendall).

At Jebel Barkal, we have confirmation of this when we find the god's ram head appearing on a rearing uraeus. This combination subtly informs us that the uraeus-pinnacle on the mountain, when representing the god, is a phallic entity! The iconography appears twice: first, in a small bronze statuette found in temple B 700 representing Amun as a ram-headed uraeus (fig. 10, left), and second, in a rock drawing on the western side of Jebel Barkal where the mountain is represented as a box with stepped roof, inside which the god sits, while the pinnacle in front appears as a ram-headed uraeus with the upraised arm and flail of Kamutef!

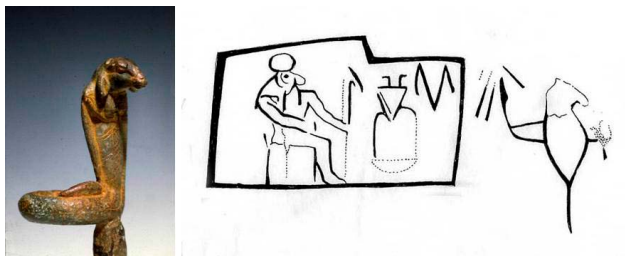


Fig. 10. At left, a small bronze from temple B 700 representing the pinnacle as a ram-headed uraeus (Boston MFA 24.960). At right, a rock drawing from Jebel Barkal, showing Amun enthroned inside the mountain, with the pinnacle rendered as a ram-headed uraeus with the upraised arm of Kamutef. (Drawing and photo: T. Kendall).

represented. See also note 20.

It is this unofficial graffito which gives away the “secret” of the mountain: namely, that *the Jebel Barkal pinnacle is Kamutef... is the Ka!* We can understand this now, for, as we have observed, the “statue” could be seen simultaneously as many things at once: an erect phallus (i.e., a divine father), a serpent-uraeus (i.e., a divine mother), and a figure wearing the White Crown (i.e., a divine royal child)! It represented them all, united within one body, just as the god himself was said to be at the beginning of time! It was this mysterious conceptual entity, veiled by the god’s ram-head, which was understood to be Amun’s original form, and we find a perfect description of it in Taharqo’s prayer to Amun at Karnak, where the king describes the god as one

*“... whose images are secret, whose appearances are numerous, whose true form is unknown ... through whose manifestations all manifestations manifest themselves ... the great elder ... who was first to come into existence ... father of fathers, mother of mothers ... King-of-Upper-and-Lower Egypt, Amun-Re...”*²⁶

III. Jebel Barkal: A Prehistoric Source of Kingship?

By about 1475 BC, the Egyptians secured complete military and administrative control over the former territory of the kingdom of Kush.²⁷ This allowed them to extend the limit of their settled empire as far upstream as Jebel Barkal, some 310 river kilometers beyond the old capital at Kerma and about 170 km by direct overland shortcut across the Nubian Desert. Because no hard evidence has yet been found at the site to indicate the presence of an earlier Kushite sanctuary, it is generally assumed that the mountain had no special prominence or religious significance before the arrival of the Egyptians.

On its face, however, this assumption seems suspiciously illogical. For one thing, the Egyptians identified “Amun of Jebel Barkal,”²⁸ a previously unknown god, as the most ancient manifestation (“*ka*”) of Amun of Karnak, who by then had been established as the chief deity of Thebes for at least six centuries. It seems doubtful that they would have invented a “primeval” Amun to occupy Jebel Barkal if they had just discovered it – a deity at once mythologically older than Amun of Karnak but historically new. Nor does it seem

²⁶ FHN I, 181–183.

²⁷ See notes 5 and 6; Bonnet 2019b, 94–150 and refs.

²⁸ The god’s full Egyptian name with titles was “Amun (-Re), Lord of the Throne(s) of the Two Lands, who is in the Pure Mountain of Napata, great god, lord of heaven.”

likely that they would have identified Jebel Barkal as a creation site unless it had already had some long standing as such. We may thus suspect *a priori* that, soon after the fall of Kerma, when Thutmose I arrived at Jebel Barkal with his army, he found the site already flourishing as a Nubian sanctuary and occupied by an ancient Nubian creator god. The most likely candidate for this god would be that previously worshiped by the Kushites at Kerma in the Deffufa complex and probably locally renamed by the Egyptians “Amun of Pnubs.”²⁹ It was this god who was installed immediately after the Conquest in nearby temples at Dokki Gel (“Pnubs”) and whose standard form was a ram.³⁰ That Thutmose I beheld a form of this same god at Jebel Barkal and again identified him as Amun is further suggested by the fact that on his Kurgus inscription (made only weeks after his visit to Jebel Barkal) he represented “Amun-Re” for the first time as a man with a ram head, crowned with a sun disk and Amun’s double plumes.³¹ Beneath this image, written with an oversize bull hieroglyph, was the name of the god’s primeval form: “Kamutef.” A few decades later, this same ram-headed figure would become familiar as the standard form of Amun of Jebel Barkal (figs. 5, 8).

Despite Amun’s historic associations with the myth of Creation, he himself was not a particularly ancient god. Although mentioned twice in the Pyramid texts, he was an obscure god who rose to prominence only in the early 11th Dynasty (ca. 2150 BC) because the ruling family of Egypt was of Theban origin, and Amun was a god of Thebes.³² Amun acquired supreme rank within the Egyptian pantheon only after the Theban rulers achieved national hegemony. At that time, to increase his status, Amun’s priesthood began to merge him locally with other more ancient, nationally prominent creator deities, like the sun god Re-Atum of Heliopolis and Ptah-Tatanen of Memphis, so that Amun simply “became” them, absorbing their identities, their functions, their great age, and their mythologies. While the former were northern gods, by early Dynasty 12 (ca. 1990 BC), Amun had also begun to appear on Theban monuments in the guise of another ancient creator god – this one with southern origins. This was the overtly phallic Min or Min-Horus (fig. 11).³³

²⁹ We strongly suspect that the Lower Deffufa was built by the early kings of Kush as a substitute “mountain-residence” at their capital Kerma for the god whom they believed occupied Jebel Barkal. We also suspect that Luxor Temple was built at Thebes as a substitute Egyptian residence for the same god. See Part IV.

³⁰ Valbelle 2003; Bonnet 2004, 156–161; Chaix 2006.

³¹ Davies 2017; Gabolde 2020, 346–347.

³² Gabolde 2018, 170 ff, 389 ff.

³³ Lacau and Chevrier 1969, II, pls. 17, 18, 20, 23, 27–29, 38, 40; Gabolde 2018, 523–528.



Fig. 11. (Left) Min-Horus represented on a Middle Kingdom stele from Mersa Gawasis, a port on the Red Sea from which Egyptian ships sailed to Punt; (Center) Min-Horus on a Middle Kingdom stele in the Bologna Museum (KS 1911); (Right) Amun-Kamutef as a clone of Min in a 19th Dynasty relief at Karnak (Photos: internet). In each case the god stands before a *sehenet*, Min's strange, very tall, tubular shrine. Cf. also fig. 9, left.

We often assume that the gods of Nubia, before the Egyptian conquest, are unknowable because no texts and few intelligible images of them survive from Nubia from this period.³⁴ On closer look, however, we soon come to realize that this is not correct, for some pre-Conquest Egyptian texts list the chief gods of Nubia by name.³⁵ These make us realize that the major Nubian gods, before the New Kingdom, were well known to the Egyptians, that they were not so different conceptually from the Egyptian gods and that many were worshiped by Nubians and Egyptians alike. In the famous Middle Kingdom *Tale of Sinuhe*, for example, the hero of the story names the Egyptian and Nubian gods as they unite to offer praise to the king's "ka."

³⁴ Bonnet 2004, 156–160; 2019a, 426. The current quandary of Egyptologists is perhaps best expressed by Gabolde (2020, p. 343): "Though Amun is clearly a Theban composition..., it has sometimes been hypothesized that some aspects of the deity may have originated from the Sudan. As a matter of fact, the kings of the 25th Egypto-Kushite Dynasty and their Napatan successors promoted myths, sometimes traceable back to Ramesside times, which make clear allusions to some potential roots of the deity at Jebel Barkal [and see his note 1].//Although there is no doubt that from the New Kingdom onwards some mythical connections were drawn between Amun and Nubia, nothing of this kind is attested in Kush during the Middle Kingdom when the god was first worshiped at Thebes, or in the Old Kingdom....")

³⁵ Eg. Lichtheim 1975, vol. I, 114–115, 204, 230.

Among the latter are listed “the conclave upon the flood, Min-Horus of the Hill Countries, and the goddess Wereret, lady of Punt....”³⁶

Especially notable here is Min-Horus, the god with whom the Theban Amun had already united by Dynasty 12. And then there is the great goddess of Punt, Wereret (“Great One”), whose name doubles in meaning as “Great (Double) Crown.”³⁷ The implication here is that when the *Tale of Sinuhe* was composed, the Egyptians already recognized a pantheon of gods in Upper Nubia, among whom were those associated with the Nile inundation, Min-Horus as the embodiment of primeval kingship, and a great goddess who personified the *Egyptian* royal crowns!

It is hard to read this text without immediately recalling that from the New Kingdom on a great crown goddess, in the form of a uraeus, was imagined to dwell at Jebel Barkal (figs. 3, 4), that the phallic shape of the pinnacle also indicated the presence of a phallic god (figs. 9, 10), and that under Egyptian control a primeval ithyphallic Amun – an exact duplicate of Min-Horus – became the god of the mountain. The *Tale of Sinuhe* in other words, implies that by Dynasty 12, the Egyptians already had some awareness of Jebel Barkal but perhaps placed it imprecisely in Punt. Punt, of course, was the famous southern land, source of incense, myrrh, ebony, ivory and other exotic products, thought to have been centered further to the southeast, closer to the Red Sea coast.³⁸

The god Min is perhaps the oldest documented deity in the Egyptian pantheon. He makes his earliest appearance in rock drawings in the Eastern Desert dating to the early or mid-fourth millennium BC.³⁹ By the late Predynastic era, he had become the chief deity of the Upper Egyptian towns of Coptos and Akhmin, both of which were linked by Eastern Desert roads to the Red Sea coast.⁴⁰ Min was also commonly said to be the chief god of the Medja nomads of the Eastern Desert, the peoples of the Red Sea coast, Punt, “God’s Land” (i.e., a mysterious country to the east and south of Egypt), and, surprisingly, riverine Nubia.⁴¹

³⁶ Lichtheim 1975, I, 230.

³⁷ Faulkner 1964, 64.

³⁸ Phillips 1997; Robson 2007.

³⁹ Wilkinson 2003, 190–192; McFarlane 1995, 157–173, pls. I–II.

⁴⁰ Williams 1988; Bard and Fattovich 2011.

⁴¹ References to Min as the chief god of Nubia are numerous, especially in texts from the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, mainly from the temples of Horus at Edfu and Hathor at Dendera – and here he is not linked to Amun. That these texts are not late inventions but

Just as Amun-Kamutef was conceived as a god who incorporated within himself a father, mother and royal child, the god Min/Min-Horus, depicted in the same way, was believed to be a form of Horus (the royal god), sharing a body with his own father Re-Osiris and his own son, the living king.⁴² His consort was his own mother, the dual goddess Hathor/Isis. In effect, both Kamutef and Min were conceptually and functionally identical as creator gods, and both were believed to be progenitors of a divine kingship symbolized by the wearing of the White Crown.

A 12th Dynasty stele in the Louvre,⁴³ for example, calls Min the *“arm-raising Horus...tall-plumed, son of Osiris, born of divine Isis...Sovereign of all the gods.”* And while acknowledging his status as chief deity of Coptos and Akhmim, the text alludes to his Puntite and Eastern Desert dominions by calling him *“fragrant with incense when he comes down from Medja-land.”* It then describes him as *“awe-inspiring in Nubia (‘Bow-land’).”* What makes this text so intriguing is that the word translated *“awe-inspiring”* can also be translated *“ram-headed.”*⁴⁴

much more ancient is suggested by the fact that they are couched in antique terms, which ignore the contemporary political reality of the Meroitic kingdom. Here, in scenes where individual Ptolemaic kings and Roman emperors are shown before Min, the god speaks to each, granting him his own powers over the southern lands and peoples, for example: “I give you the southern Bow-landers as subjugated;” “I give you the South as far as God’s Land; all their inhabitants are under your guidance;” “(I give you) the southern foreign lands to the borders of the sky;” “I give you the gum-lands... the mountain regions.... Punt with its products, and God’s land...” In the same texts Min is called variously the “good Medja of Punt and God’s-land,” “victorious bull, master of the treasures of Punt; before whose *ka* the Nubian Bowmen dance and sing,” and “sublime Horus of the Nubians of Khenethennefer (i.e., Upper Nubia).” Gauthier 1931, 19; Giuliani 2004, 286–289; Minas-Nerpel and de Meyer 2013; Feder 2014, 48, 52–63; Norris 2015, 231–232 and refs.

⁴² Žabkar 1988, 17–25, and see texts quoted below. Min probably had a much more prominent presence in pre-New Kingdom Nubia than we have previously realized, since, being fully syncretized with Horus, he would have been invisible within the numerous Horus cults of Lower Nubia during and after the Middle Kingdom – cults served jointly by Egyptians and Nubians. Among these were Horus of Buhen (dating from the Old Kingdom), Horus, “Lord of Ta-Seti (Nubia),” Horus, Lord of Baki (Kuban),” Horus, Lord of Miam (Aniba),” and Horus, “Lord of Abu Simbel.” In his Kuban stela, Ramses II refers collectively to “the Horus gods of Nubia” (Török 2009, 211–216). That the kings of Kerma worshiped Horus (and hence Min) is evident from the Buhen stele of Sopedhor, an Egyptian official who claims to have restored the Horus temple there “to the satisfaction of the ruler of Kush” (Török 2009, 106). This was surely the same Buhen temple said to have been jointly dedicated to Min and Horus (Török 2009, 158). Note also that, in notes 41 and 43, Min is simply called “Horus.”

⁴³ Lichtheim 1975, I, 204.

⁴⁴ Faulkner 1964, 265.

The god's association with the ram is again expressed in a fragmentary Coffin Text spell 967, also dating to the Middle Kingdom: "[I am] the Ram, I am primeval, my phallus is primeval, my semen is that of the Bull ("Ka") of the sun-folk (of Heliopolis) ... to his 'ka.' I traverse Upper Egypt... My phallus is that of Min on the day of ..., I am the Ram...."⁴⁵

There are many more allusions to Min and his southern origins in the Coffin Texts, most of which do not refer to him by name – as if it were a secret – but they also express his associations with the gods Horus, Khonsu, Re and Osiris, which make his identity unmistakable.⁴⁶ A typical example is CT Spell 334, which calls him "first-born son of Re," addresses him indirectly in "his name as Khonsu", describes him as a "bull" (*Ka*) and one who "becomes high" and wears the White Crown "like his father," and names his mother as both Isis and Hathor. Most striking is that the text identifies his birth- and death-places (and his place of regeneration) as Punt!

Min's southern origins and his physical unity with Amun are again made explicit in the hymn to Amun preserved complete in the 18th Dynasty Papyrus Boulaq 17 (P. Cairo 58038) but whose earliest known fragments date from Dynasties 13–17.⁴⁷ The text addresses Amun in this way:

*Hail, Amun-Re, Lord of the Throne of the Two Lands, foremost in Karnak,
Kamutef, foremost in Upper Egypt,
Lord of the Medja and Ruler of Punt, Eldest of Heaven, first-born of
Earth....
One to whom praise is given in the "Great House" and who is crowned in
the "House of Flame,"
One whose fragrance the gods love when he comes down from Punt...
Beautiful of Face who comes from God's Land...
Min-Amun, firm of horns....
The goodly ruler, crowned with the White Crown,*

Here then is Min, prior to the Egyptian conquest of Nubia, already united with Amun of Karnak as Kamutef, described as a king himself, coming, apparently, as the "royal *ka*" to Egypt from Nubia, where he has been crowned in the two named coronation temples, the "Great House" and the "House

⁴⁵ Faulkner 1978, vol. III, 92.

⁴⁶ Faulkner 1978, vol. I: 36, 47, 187, 195, 214, 318, 334; vol. II, 398, 563; vol. III: 967, 994, 1028, 114

⁴⁷ Assmann 1995, 120–121; Luiselli 2004, XIII, XX, G; XXII, G.

of Flame” (examples of which have been found at Jebel Barkal [see figs. 4 and temple B 1100, figs. 68–71]). By calling him “Min-Amun,” the text emphasizes that when the hymn was composed, Min and Amun were already conceived as One. The epithet “firm of horns” may allude to an imagined shared ram or bull form. And when the text (as in CT 334) repeats that he is “Lord of the White Crown,” it reaffirms his southern origin, his mythical role as first king, and his subsequent role as a physical unity with the living king. It also implies that his real birthplace, like that of the White Crown and Southern kingship itself, was thought *by the Egyptians* to lie somewhere in the deep South, beyond their own borders. We can readily guess that this place was Jebel Barkal not only by the reference to “Throne of the Two Lands” (which was its formal Egyptian name: see below) but also because the White Crown is still so plainly visible in its pinnacle.⁴⁸

Reinforcing these conclusions are texts and reliefs inside the Ramesseum and Medinet Habu at Thebes, which document in detail a ceremony called “the going forth of Min,” evidence for which can be traced back to Dynasty 2.⁴⁹ Here Min-Amun’s Nubian origins are again made clear by the fact that the liturgy was to be performed by a “Nubian of Punt,” who, like the god himself, was pictured with black skin.⁵⁰ (Some of the texts, which have defied translation, are even thought to be in the Puntite language.⁵¹) Behind the priests carrying the statue of the ithyphallic god appear others carrying

⁴⁸ The text of Hatshepsut’s Punt expedition informs us that her officials not only visited coastal Punt but went inland, interacting not just with Puntites but with other Nubian peoples familiar to us as Nile dwellers (“Irem” and “Khenethennefer” [=Upper Nubia: see Török 2009, 158, n. 6]). The objective of the mission was to bring back to Thebes enough myrrh trees and other treasures to create a “Punt in (Amun’s) house ... and garden,” apparently to unite further Min’s domain (and self) with Amun. In Punt, the texts describe Amun as “primeval one of the Two Lands” (just as he is described in Thutmose III’s Barkal Stele) and, like Min, as “Lord of the Medja and Ruler of Punt.” And in an echo of the Sinuhe text, quoted above, Amun of Karnak says of the myrrh terraces: “... *It is a sacred region of God’s Land. It is my place of enjoyment. I created it for myself to gladden my heart with Mut, Hathor, Wereret, mistress of Punt...and Weret-Hekau, mistress of all the gods.*” Here Amun of Karnak is describing a place in “Punt” (probably meaning “the deep South?”), where he dwells together with four great crown goddesses. Since all of them were present at Jebel Barkal (merged as One in the pinnacle), the place alluded to would seem to have been Jebel Barkal itself. (See online translation and transliteration of text by Mark-Jan Nederhof, “The Punt Expedition of Queen Hatshepsut” and refs, also *Urkunden der 18 Dynastie* IV: 319.). On the Nubian name of the “Great Goddess” at Jebel Barkal, see note 73. For the New Kingdom temple of Hathor and Mut at Jebel Barkal, see B 300-sub. For Weret-Hekau at Jebel Barkal, see Kendall 2008, 129–133.

⁴⁹ McFarlane 1995, 187–191.

⁵⁰ Gauthier 1931, 17–32, 59–63, 173–199; Norris 2015, 60–69, 95–97.

⁵¹ Gauthier 1931, 199–204.

smaller statues representing Egypt's most prominent former kings (36 altogether), from the present king going back to Menes, the historical first.⁵² The ceremony implies that the Egyptians recognized the "royal *ka*" as having passed from a primeval Nubian Min (identified in these scenes only as "Amun-Re Kamutef"⁵³) to Menes and thence to all later kings of Egypt to the present!

The most characteristic feature of Min's cult is his peculiar shrine, which makes its first appearance in Egyptian art in the 6th Dynasty (ca. 2200 BC).⁵⁴ This structure, of exotic (non-Egyptian) form, was called a *sehenet*, and the god is often depicted standing in front of it. In most scenes it is a very tall, tubular structure – apparently circular in plan – with a conical top and, usually, a formal rectangular doorway at the bottom (figs. 11, 12). Judging from the heights of its pictured doors, the *sehenet* was many times the height of a man. Its distinctly phallic shape seems to have evoked the god's most conspicuous feature. Typically, the *sehenet* was also accompanied by a tall mast, erected in front of it, topped with a pair of bull horns. This standard was called the "*Ka* ("Bull") of the *sehenet*," and its summit was connected by rope to the side or conical top of the latter.⁵⁵



Fig. 12. Sample images of the *sehenet* shrine of Min, which seem to imitate the shape of the Jebel Barkal pinnacle. For other views of the *sehenet*, see figs. 9 (left) and 11. (Photo: T. Kendall; drawing: Isler 1991, 160, fig. 6).

⁵² Gauthier 1931, 204–206.

⁵³ Gauthier 1931, 137.

⁵⁴ Munro 1983; Giuliani 2004; Feder 1998.

⁵⁵ Norris 2015, 88–94.

What is extraordinary about the *sehenet* is that it has nearly the same shape as the Jebel Barkal pinnacle (fig. 12). Is this mere coincidence, or does it reflect a real relationship between the two? One is of course tempted to suspect that the pinnacle inspired the shape of the *sehenet*, just as it also seemingly inspired the phallic form of the god, as well as the shape of the White Crown. Was the *sehenet* erected for the god wherever he was worshiped to serve as a kind of replica of his acknowledged home at Jebel Barkal? Was the *sehenet*, like the Jebel Barkal pinnacle, believed to house his “ka”?⁵⁶

A hymn of the late Middle Kingdom, known from multiple copies but preserved in its earliest form on a stele now in the National Archaeological Museum in Parma,⁵⁷ has a remarkable text describing Min, which seems to unite all the threads of evidence. It reads:

“Greetings to you, Min-Amun, Lord of the sehenet... May you put the royal ka at your side as the White Crown belongs to your head. Praise you, Horus, Lord of the sehenet. You are high, Lord of the sehenet.... May your heart nestle against the king as the heart of Horus nestled against his mother Isis when he slept on her and gave her (his) heart while his loins were on her loins without ceasing.”

In this text, which again predates the Conquest, Amun, as before, is already merged with Min, who is himself combined with Horus, and all three gods have become “lords of the *sehenet*.”⁵⁸ At the same time, we sense that the words are really speaking about the Jebel Barkal pinnacle, for here the three

⁵⁶ At Abu Simbel there is an extraordinary relief, in which Ramses II, crowned with the *nemes* headcloth and the Double Crown, is represented with the body of the ithyphallic Min-Amun Kamutef. Here king and god are merged as One, who stands in front of a *sehenet*. The caption overhead reads: ‘your ka.’ (Pictured in Gabolde 2018, 546, fig. 274.) See also note 41, where we find Min described as “victorious bull, master of the treasures of Punt; before whose *ka* the Nubian Bow-men dance and sing.”

⁵⁷ Feder 2015.

⁵⁸ At Dokki Gel, Charles Bonnet recovered multiple levels of a round temple, which he described as “native Nubian” in style. The remarkable thing about this building is that it existed as a functioning sanctuary both before and after the Egyptian conquest. Obviously, if this was a temple dedicated to an indigenous Nubian god, it was a god that the Egyptians also knew and honored – and permitted to exist for centuries within their own sanctuary of Amun temples. We suspect that the god of the round temple was a form of Min-Horus/Amun-Kamutef – neither distinguishable from the other – and that the round temple itself was a *sehenet*. (Bonnet 2019b, 73, 76, 89, 91, 97, 112, 118, 121–124, 126, 144, 152, 167). This round temple had scalloped buttressing. At Soleb temple, the ithyphallic Amun appears twice, where each figure of the god stands before a *sehenet* with scalloped sides. Giorgini, Robichon, Leclant and Beaux 1998, pl.122. Here the god is named only “Amun, Lord of Heaven” (*Amun Nb-Pt*), which we suspect may be a pun for “Amun of Napata.”

gods, as One, are said to be “high” as well as united with the “royal *ka*” and the White Crown. His “nestling” with the king is probably to be understood as uniting physically with him, and this is likened to Horus’ physical union with his mother Isis, the great goddess (i.e., uraeus). This is a clear expression of the “Kamutef principle,” that is, the uniting, within a single divine body, of multiple gods and goddesses and a king, their child. It is, as we have seen, the very essence of the pinnacle, and it appears that the *sehnet* conveyed the same meaning.

To draw conclusions from the data, we may imagine that at some point in remote prehistory, the people living around Jebel Barkal singled it out for special veneration because of its pinnacle, which, in their animist imaginations, suggested a gigantic supernatural being combining within himself a phallus, a serpent, and a tall conical crown. They then conceived this figure as a statue imbued with the life-force of a Creator combined with a royal demigod.⁵⁹ Sometime in the early or mid-fourth millennium BC, as the Egyptians, through contacts with Nubian traders and Eastern Desert nomads, became increasingly acquainted with this god, they adopted him as one their own, even while recognizing his foreign origins. By the Archaic Period, his cult had spread throughout Egypt, north and south, and his iconography had become standardized as a male figure, crowned with a pair of tall plumes, grasping his erect phallus with his right hand, holding a flail or supporting it with his upraised left hand. His sacred animal was a white bull.⁶⁰

Surviving sources indicate that both Nubian and Egyptian kings were wearing the White Crown as early as the latter fourth millennium BC.⁶¹ Looking at this crown, we may wonder what could have inspired its tall, knobbed shape in the first place, and why this strange, ungainly headpiece would have come to signify rule only over Nubia and Upper Egypt? It is our be-

⁵⁹ In 1936, two British officials published independent studies in the same issue of *Sudan Notes and Records*, each of whom, traveling in a different part of the Nuba Mountains, recorded observing communities of people, barely affected by Christianity or Islam, who venerated large tubular or upright rocks of phallic shape. These stones they identified as sources of generative power and manifestations of godlike ancestors and serpents, all in one. Each report provides powerful circumstantial evidence that the prehistoric Nubians responded to the Jebel Barkal pinnacle in the very same way. Given its unprecedented scale, though, one would suspect that the pinnacle had a much greater impact on the beliefs of the surrounding peoples – and over a much wider geographic area – than the fetish stones of the Nuba. See Bell 1936; Bolton 1936.

⁶⁰ Williams 1988, 35–47; McFarlane 1995, 157–192, pls. I–IV; Norris 2015, 46–50.

⁶¹ Williams 1987; Morkot 2000, 42–44, 55; Hendrickx et al. 2014–15.

lief that the crown could only have been inspired by the Jebel Barkal pinnacle, which so perfectly models its shape, and that by adopting a crown of this shape a ruler could present himself as the son and heir of the towering god-king (Horus? Osiris? “Royal *ka*”?) manifested in the rock. As a badge of royal legitimacy, we may imagine, the White Crown would have spread widely among early kings from Punt and riverine Nubia to Lower Egypt. All of them, presumably, would have made rival claims both to the crown and to their descent from the god, which in time would have led to conflicts for ever-wider control of the southern lands.⁶²

With the emergence of a powerful Upper Egyptian monarchy at Thebes in Dynasties 11 and 12, the Theban god Amun appropriated the identity of Min and became the Theban king’s recognized father and source of his crowns.⁶³ Five centuries later, in Dynasty 18, after years of conflict with Kush, the Theban pharaohs finally destroyed its monarchy, centered at Kerma, and secured their control of the Nile as far upstream as Jebel Barkal, probably with full knowledge that this mountain was the ultimate cultic and political prize with which to establish their own royal legitimacy in the South. There they would simply have recognized the long-established Nubian god as the “*ka*” of their own Amun of Karnak, and by claiming their descent, crowns and kingship from him, they were now able seamlessly to merge the ancient Nubian cult of kingship with their own, centered at Thebes, to declare them identical, and to merge Nubia with Egypt under a single kingship.

IV. Egypt in Kush: Jebel Barkal and Luxor Temple

Beginning with Thutmose III, nearly every pharaoh of the New Kingdom, at least once during his reign, made – or aspired to make – the arduous journey upstream to Jebel Barkal, apparently to unite “bodily” with his “father,” the primeval “Amun of Karnak,” to reclaim from him his “royal *ka*,” and to celebrate a coronation, which was thought to renew his divinity. (The structure B 600, built by Thutmose IV – the earliest known stone building at the site – seems to have been a royal enthronement pavilion.⁶⁴) Nearly every king, too, whether actually able to make the trip or not, seems to have

⁶² Davies 2003 documents a massed Kushite attack on El-Kab, the city of Nekhbet, goddess of the Upper Egyptian uraeus and the White Crown, during Dynasty 17. Note that El-Kab was also the northern limit of the authority of the Viceroy of Kush, whose southern authority extended to Jebel Barkal. See n.74.

⁶³ Bell 1997, 173.

⁶⁴ Kendall and Wolf 2011.

added some monument or structure to the sanctuary so that by the end of the New Kingdom Jebel Barkal had become the largest and most important cult center in Nubia.

At Thebes, meanwhile, approximately contemporary with their conquest of Nubia and their occupation of Jebel Barkal, the Egyptian kings began building a new temple to Amun at Luxor, which was called cryptically “Southern Sanctuary” and was located 2.7 km south of Karnak (fig. 13). Unlike most Amun temples, which were built on an E-W axis in accordance with the god’s solar persona (“Amun-Re”), this one was built parallel to the Nile with its sanctuary directed upriver,⁶⁵ as if aimed at a form of the god thought to dwell at the Nile headwaters. Even though Luxor was a new temple, it was nevertheless built as a place of Creation. Its god was a primeval, ithyphallic form of Amun, who in several images found in Egypt was represented ram-headed and indistinguishable from the Nubian Amun of Jebel Barkal.⁶⁶

Luxor Temple was the focus of a grand annual festival, called the *Opet* (“Secret Chamber, Harem”).⁶⁷ This rite was celebrated at the time of high Nile (mid-September), in which the king, accompanied by Amun, Mut and Khonsu of Karnak, went in a procession of boat-shrines, carried on the shoulders of priests, from Karnak Temple to Luxor.⁶⁸ When the king and Amun arrived there, they each ritually merged with the Luxor Amun, an event thought to renew the divinity of each. The god was restored to his full powers, and the king was reunited with his “royal ka” and underwent a ceremonial rebirth and coronation, in which he received from the Luxor Amun his multiple crowns. One such crown sported ram’s horns, as if to identify the king as the son of the god’s Nubian self.⁶⁹

Although there is no explicit text to prove it, it appears that the purpose of Luxor Temple was to make it possible for the Egyptian kings, as well as Amun of Karnak, to visit their Nubian progenitor locally and often, without having to travel all the way to Upper Nubia to find him. The symbolic “voyage” of boat shrines appears to have been a ritualized simulation of the long and arduous actual river voyage between Thebes and Napata,⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Bell 1997, 144–148.

⁶⁶ Pamminger 1992, 99–108, fig. 1, Tafs. I–III,

⁶⁷ Bell 1997, 282, n. 2; Darnell 2010; Iwaszczuk 2013.

⁶⁸ Bell 1997, 157–176; Darnell 2010.

⁶⁹ Bell 1997, 170, 173, and 141, fig. 48.

⁷⁰ Pamminger 1992, 109–115.

although it was couched in terms of the Sun God's nocturnal voyage into the Underworld to gain rebirth at dawn.⁷¹

What is remarkable about the Luxor Amun is that both Amun of Karnak and the king, from the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty on, seem to have been entirely dependent on him for their continued health and well-being. It is they who must visit him rather than the other way around, which attests to his primacy over Amun of Karnak.



Fig. 13. *Luxor Temple at Thebes seems to have been built by the pharaohs to house the same primeval Amun whom they imagined dwelt at Jebel Barkal, 1260 km upstream. By building a ritual substitute of the Nubian shrine at their capital, the Egyptian kings made it possible for themselves to visit their imagined “father” locally and on a regular basis without having to make the long and difficult voyage to his true home in Upper Nubia (File photo: internet)*

In Egypt, the cult and existence of a Nubian god who fathered and conferred kingship, and the recognition that his primary residence lay in a foreign land, was always cloaked in secrecy and opaque language, which is probably why the meaning of Luxor Temple has remained so ambiguous to scholars for so long. Its texts were carefully crafted to hide the specific beliefs behind them. But in an ingenious and extremely subtle way, the importance of Jebel Barkal at Thebes was apparently everywhere publicly acknowledged!

Since the early Middle Kingdom Amun of Karnak had been called “Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands” (in Egyptian: *Neb Nesut-Tawy*), a title which

⁷¹ Darnell 2010, p. 8 and refs. In the coronation text of Hatshepsut there is also this phrase: “(The gods) shall set your boundary as far as the breadth of heaven and as far as the twelfth hour of the night....” Breasted 1906, vol. II, p. 92 (225). Jebel Barkal was apparently the terrestrial equivalent of the cosmic, serpent-shrouded hill in the Underworld in which the Sun was believed to be reborn each night. Darnell and Darnell 2018, 127 ff; Kendall 2008, 133 and notes.

from then on was written hundreds of times on Theban monuments, wherever the god's name appeared.⁷² We are thus astonished to read in Thutmose III's Jebel Barkal Stele that Jebel Barkal had two names. It was normally called "Pure Mountain," but, as the text says, it was also called "'Thrones of the Two Lands' before it was known by the People." It is unclear what exactly was meant by this, but the stele makes it quite plain that Jebel Barkal was indeed the "Thrones of the Two Lands" named in Amun's most ancient and common title!

Are we to infer from this (as is usually done) that the name "Thrones of the Two Lands" (*Nesut-Tawy*) was first applied to Jebel Barkal only in Dynasty 18 and that before that the name's origin (and the mountain itself) was "unknown to the People"? Or are we to imagine (as now seems more likely) that Jebel Barkal had, since a time "unknown to the People," been called *Nesut-Tawy* and acknowledged by the Egyptians as the chief Nubian home of the "ka" (=ancestral form) of Amun of Karnak?⁷³ In any case, whenever the name of Amun was coupled with the title "Lord of the Thrones (or "Throne" sing.) of the Two Lands," it discreetly acknowledged his "Pure Mountain" in far-off Nubia, which, in their minds, may indeed have held the gift of the "Throne(s) of the Two Lands."

Among officials in the Egyptian foreign service, Jebel Barkal was certainly well-known as "Throne(s) of the Two Lands." This is evident by the fact that Amenhotep-Huy, Tutankamun's Viceroy of Kush, declared in his tomb biography that his authority extended from "Nekhen (i.e., the ancient town opposite El-Kab) to 'Thrones of the Two Lands.'"⁷⁴ Here there can be no doubt that he was referring to Jebel Barkal, for El-Kab was the Upper Egyptian city of Nekhbet, the uraeus goddess of the White Crown, who was

⁷² Gabolde 2018, 456 ff.

⁷³ A Ramesside ostrakon appears to describe Jebel Barkal and its "great goddess" by using their Nubian names: "As to Degail, (it is) the name of the town, and Tawaww is the name of the cliff. As to Nakhysmekas, (it is) the name of the goddess, (that is) the water from which Amun went out in the land of Kush" (variously translated and discussed in Gabolde 2020, 360, n. 1 and Rondot and Gabolde 2018, 393, 398–400). Gabolde suggests that "Tawaww" was the mountain's Nubian name, to which the Egyptians, after the Conquest, seeking a link with Amun, assigned the derivation "(Nesut)-Tawy," by its phonic similarity, hence retroactively making Jebel Barkal the source of the god's title. (And see n. 4.) Another possibility is that the fusion of the Egyptian and Nubian names had occurred centuries earlier, at a time "unknown to the People." Rondot and Gabolde also cite a recently discovered scene at Luxor picturing a ram-headed deity (in a procession of deities) named "'Thrones of the Two Lands' Mountain," who says to Ramses II: "I come and bring you gold in many bags."

⁷⁴ Gardiner and Davies 1926, 10, pl. VI; cf also Valbelle 2020, p. 329. On the likelihood that Viceroy Huy erected a small chapel within the third court (503) of the Great Amun Temple (B 500) at Jebel Barkal, see Haynes 2021.

also manifested in the Jebel Barkal pinnacle (figs. 3 and 4). In other words, the territory named here – a stretch of river valley some 1200 km in length – was precisely that which was thought to be under the jurisdiction of the White Crown.

For four centuries, from about 1470–1070 BC, the Egyptians governed Kush with an efficient colonial and military administration headed by a Viceroy, called “King’s son of Kush.”⁷⁵ Toward the end of the 20th Dynasty, however, the colonial government began to disintegrate as the Egyptian state faced internal divisions, political fragmentation, and new threats in the North in the form of foreign invaders attempting to settle in the fertile Nile Delta. Some of these marauders came by sea from the east, others, from Libya in the west. The king, combating the threats from his capital now in the north-east Delta, found his authority in Upper Egypt increasingly usurped by a succession of High Priests of Amun at Thebes, who were also generals and who at times were tempted even to assume the title of “King” (fig. 14).⁷⁶ As troops were withdrawn from the South and transferred to the North, Egypt’s Nubian defenses were fatally weakened. Kush and Upper Nubia again became unmoored from Egyptian royal control, and the “Pure Mountain,” with its king-making god, was now set politically adrift, beyond the reach of any Egyptian king seeking to claim from him his “royal *ka*” and his White Crown.



Fig. 14. A reused block found at Jebel Barkal that appears to show the Theban High Priest of Amun (and later “King”), Menkheperre (ca. 1045–992 BC) of Dynasty 21. It is the latest known vestige of Egyptian contact with the site for nearly three centuries (Photo: T. Kendall)

⁷⁵ Török 2002: 169–207; Morkot 2013.

⁷⁶ Myśliwiec 2000; Cline 2014.

V. Kush in Egypt: Jebel Barkal and the Cap Crown

The political fracturing of Egypt that began in the twelfth and eleventh centuries BC was unprecedented and introduced a three-century era, known as the Third Intermediate Period, when Egypt split into two semi-autonomous political domains, which viewed each other with increasing hostility.⁷⁷ What transpired in Sudan during this “Dark Age” is unclear, for nearly all intelligible written and archaeological records cease.⁷⁸

By about 900 BC, a powerful native ruling dynasty appeared at el-Kurru (12 km downstream from Jebel Barkal), consolidated its rule over the old Kushite heartland, and, under the thrall of a missionizing Amun priesthood (probably a recent influx of clerical emigres from Thebes) became passionate devotees of the god of Jebel Barkal.⁷⁹ Since Amun of Jebel Barkal was thought to be an alter-ego of Amun of Karnak, the Nubian kings’ devotion to the local Amun extended downstream to Thebes, so that the Napatan and Theban priesthoods now (apparently) colluded to accept the Kushite rulers as the god’s – and their own – champions.

Just as the Egyptians had built Luxor Temple at Thebes to house the Amun of Jebel Barkal at their capital, the Kushites now built a second Amun temple (B 800) at Napata to house Amun of Karnak at their capital. Convinced now that they were Amun’s new “bodily sons” and possessors of the “royal *ka*,” the Kushites declared themselves kings of Egypt by authority of both Amuns (fig. 15), seeing it as their duty now to reunite Napata with Thebes and to re-establish the “Upper Egyptian” empire as it had existed during the New Kingdom.⁸⁰

Initially the new Napatan kings of Kush claimed for themselves only the kingship of “Upper Egypt” (which included all of Nubia and the Thebaid). In 727 BC, however, when Thebes was threatened by an armed coalition of northern Egyptian princes, the Kushite king Piankhy (a.k.a. “Piye”) led his fleet and troops downstream from Napata, occupied Thebes, then pushed on as far north as Memphis, overwhelming all opposition.⁸¹ Receiving the fealty of the northern Egyptian rulers (fig. 16), he effectively reunited Upper

⁷⁷ Myśliwiec 2000.

⁷⁸ Török 2007, 285–309; Kahn 2014; Williams 2020b, 411–418.

⁷⁹ Kendall 1999; Morkot 2000; Török 2009, 285 ff; Williams 2020b, 418–432.

⁸⁰ Reisner 1931, 89–98; FHN I: 55–62.

⁸¹ Lichtheim 1980, III, 66–84; FHN I: 62–118; Grimal 1981; Myśliwiec 2000: 68–85; Török 2002: 319–328.

and Lower Egypt and established his family as Egypt's 25th Dynasty (ca. 716–653 BC). His resulting empire, which extended (probably) from the confluence of the Blue and White Niles to the Mediterranean, was the largest ever achieved on the Nile in antiquity.



Fig. 15. Detail from the Sandstone Stele found in the Great Amun Temple (B 500) at Jebel Barkal by Reisner in 1920, now in the Sudan National Museum, Khartoum. Here Amun of Jebel Barkal, speaking both for himself and for his alter-ego, Amun of Karnak, declares the kingship of Egypt for the king of Kush and is shown presenting him with the “Cap Crown” (symbolizing the union of Kush and Upper Egypt) and the Red Crown (symbolizing Lower Egypt). The king’s image and name were at one time erased and later restored, leaving his original identity somewhat in doubt, but he is surely to be identified either as Pi(ankh)y (ca. 747–714 BC) or, less likely, an immediate predecessor (Photo: Reisner 1931, pl. V).

The 25th Dynasty kings from Napata, whom the Greeks called “Aithiopian” (“burnt-faced”) for their dark skin, were ethnically Nubian and non-native speakers of Egyptian. Nevertheless, they became thoroughly “Egyptianized,” were famous in antiquity for their piety and devotion to the Egyptian gods, revived the pyramid as the proper royal tomb type (but built their pyramids only in Sudan) and inaugurated Egypt’s last great cultural renaissance, in which they revived many ideals and art styles from the ancient Egyptian past.

Given what we have learned about Jebel Barkal in the last decades, we can perhaps begin to view the rise of this native Nubian dynasty at Napata in a different light: not as the anomaly of history that Egyptologists have tra-

ditionally considered it to be but rather what in the Kushite mind was a re-prise of an event from their legendary past. The event in question is most likely to be the one, described above, reported by Diodorus (3. 3. 2–7): that at the beginning of time Egypt was first settled by Kushites (“Aithiopians”), who introduced civilization there through their leader and first king, Osiris, who also introduced the White Crown (fig. 6).



Fig. 16. Drawing of the scene at the top of the Triumphal Stele of King Pi(ankh)y from Jebel Barkal, now in the Cairo Museum. Here the king, whose figure has been partly erased, receives the submission of nine petty rulers of Lower Egypt, in the presence of “Amun-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, Foremost of Karnak, who dwells in Pure Mountain” and his consort Mut. (The feathered headdress of Amun, pictured here, duplicates that of Min, his ancient predecessor) (Drawing: Grimal 1981, pl. V.)

An intriguing indication that the kings of Dynasty 25 had a memory of Jebel Barkal as the source of Osiris’ kingship and crown is perhaps revealed by the form of their own preferred crown: the so-called “Cap Crown.” This crown was a kind of tight-fitting skullcap, encircled by a wide band, with a pair of uraei on the front, one crowned with the Red Crown and the other with the White Crown (fig. 17 left).⁸² The two snakes made a great S-shaped coil in the front before their two bodies passed over the top of the crown, terminating in a pair of cloth streamers that hung down the king’s back. This headdress was introduced by the Kushites as the unique badge of their kingship in Egypt. (A similar close-fitting crown, lacking the wide band and streamers, and having only one uraeus with a more modest coil, was worn by the Kushite vassal rulers in Egypt and was also briefly adopted by the rulers of Dynasty 26,⁸³ but the Cap Crown with the double-uraeus was exclusive to the Kushites.)

⁸² Russmann 1974; Myśliwiec 1988, 30–47, pls. XXXI–XLVIII; Davies 1982; Török 1997; Leahy 1992; Pompei 2014.

⁸³ Russmann 1974, 29 ff; 1981, 155; Myśliwiec 1988, pls. LIII–LV.

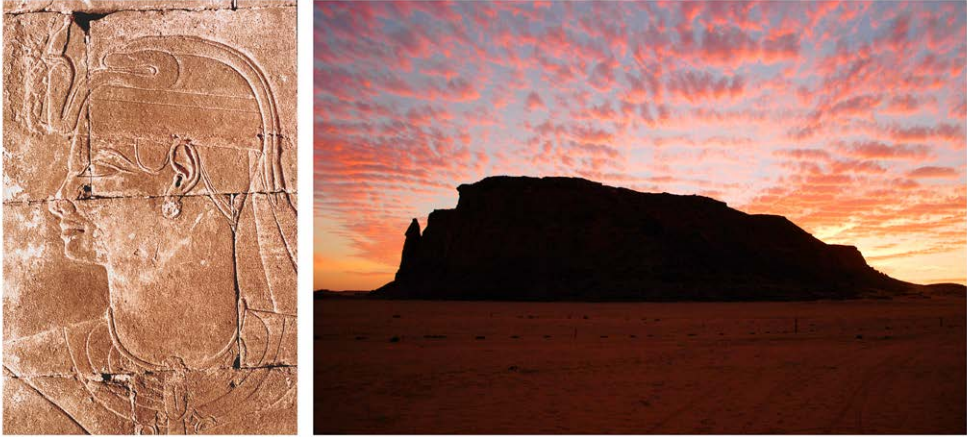


Fig. 17. The shape of the Kushite “Cap Crown” at left was seemingly inspired by the shape of Jebel Barkal (Left: Myśliwiec 1988, pl. 34 [reversed]; Right photo: T. Kendall)

When we look at Jebel Barkal from the northeast side (fig. 17, right), we see that it has the exact profile of the Cap Crown. One can even see in its silhouette the “great coil” of the uraei. Just as the Cap Crown featured two crowned uraei on its front, so did Jebel Barkal with its pinnacle represent the same crowned uraei on its front (fig. 4, and cf B 1100). The parallel can hardly be a coincidence. There seems little doubt, visually, that the mountain inspired the shape of this crown, just as we suspect that some 2500 years earlier the pinnacle inspired the shape of the White Crown. This implies the existence of a very long and continuous memory, among both Kushites and Egyptians, that the mountain was an acknowledged original source of kingship and crowns. By replicating the shape of the mountain, the Cap Crown proclaimed its wearers to be the sons of the ancient god of Napata, the possessors of the “royal ka,” and the only legitimate heirs to the god’s first kingship and crown.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ In the stela of the later Napatan king Nastasen (FHN II, 471 ff), the king’s mother Pelkha is represented on the left side of the lunette. Over and beside her body is written a text, which may be translated this way: “She gave the Cap Crown (to her son?) in Napata because her father (Amun) established (there) the *ka* of the crown of Re-Horakhty.” (Re-Horakhty was a form of the Sun God, combining, like Min, the gods Re and Horus). The text reveals that the “*ka*” of the god’s crown was established at Napata, which is why the queen “gave” the Cap Crown there. What is remarkable is that the word “*ka*” is followed by a pictorial hieroglyph that takes the form of a stylized picture of Jebel Barkal: a dome with a uraeus. (Such pictorial hieroglyphs, added to help the reader’s understanding, are known as “determinatives”). The spelling seems to inform us that the “*ka*” of the god’s crown was Jebel Barkal itself, just as we see in fig. 17. If it seems unusual that an inanimate object like a crown would have a “*ka*,” it is! But we should remember that the crown was also a great goddess, like the uraei. See note 48. For further discussion of this text, see Kendall 2008, 131, n. 34.

Ruling their huge kingdom for about sixty years from Memphis, the Kushites were ultimately expelled from Egypt not by resistance from the Egyptians but by repeated devastating invasions of Egypt by the kings of Assyria, whose armies overwhelmed the combined Kushite-Egyptian forces,⁸⁵ first, of Taharqo (690–664 BC) and then of Tanwetamani (ca. 664–653 BC), compelling each king to retreat for safety back into Nubia.

After the last Assyrian withdrawal from Egypt in 661 BC, a new claimant to the Egyptian throne appeared from the Egyptian Delta city of Sais. This prince, a former Assyrian collaborator, quickly stepped into the power vacuum left by Tanwetamani and seized the Egyptian throne for himself. This was Psamtik I, the founder Egypt's 26th Dynasty (660–525 BC), whose rule in Upper Egypt began in 656 BC when he sent a powerful naval flotilla to Thebes to compel the highest governing nobles there, many of them allied by marriage to the Kushite royal family, to acknowledge him the new king of Upper Egypt.

For six decades the Kushites and Psamtik's successors maintained a tense stand-off at the First Cataract, both making rival claims to the kingship of Upper Egypt, which the kings at Napata would not concede. The issue was not finally settled until the early sixth century BC, when the Saite king Psamtik II (595–589 BC) launched an invasion of Kush with an army composed heavily of Greek and Carian mercenaries.⁸⁶ This force evidently struck at Pnubs (Kerma), Napata, and Sanam Abu Dom, where extensive fire damage has been found, all dating to the reign of the Kushite king Aspelta (ca. 600–580 BC). At Jebel Barkal the royal statues set up in the great temple's first court were deliberately toppled and smashed, and the temple's wooden roof was burned along with Aspelta's splendid new palace B 1200.⁸⁷ One suspects that Napata was the main objective of the Egyptian raid, since Psamtik would have wished to put an end, once and for all, to Kushite pretensions to his throne and to the Amun-oracle there that continued to promote them.

Although, after this devastation, the successors of Taharqo and Tanwetamani were never again able to reassert their authority over Egypt, they solidified their control over much of northern Sudan and Egyptian Nubia, and their heirs continued to preside over a southern kingdom that would last for another millennium.

⁸⁵ See note 9.

⁸⁶ Lichtheim 1980, III, 84–87; Bonnet and Valbelle 2005: 164–171; Bonnet, Honegger et al. 2007: iv–v; Török 2009: 361–362.

⁸⁷ Dunham 1970: pls. I–II, VII–XXIII; Kendall 1996: 468–476; Kendall and Wolf 2007.

In the early sixth century BC, the kings would move their capital to Meroë, 275 km SW of Napata, and establish many important towns above the Fifth Cataract, each with a temple to Amun.⁸⁸ They would, however, retain Napata, with its “Pure Mountain,” as their kingdom’s chief religious center. Throughout the later history of Kush, the kings would routinely journey to Jebel Barkal to consult Amun on matters of war and state. Here, too, following the death of a king, the army, priesthood, royal officials and people would gather to hear the god’s oracular choice for his successor.⁸⁹ And here, replicating ceremonies conducted by the Egyptian pharaohs and (probably) Kerma kings many centuries before, each new king of Kush would be formally crowned. Until the third century BC, the kings would also return to Napata for burial in pyramids built at nearby Nuri (figs. 18, 83, 84).⁹⁰ Even then, when the main royal cemetery was moved to Meroë, a few rulers and members of their family, until the early second century AD, still chose to build their pyramids beside Jebel Barkal (fig. 19).⁹¹



Fig. 18. *Aerial view of the royal cemetery of Nuri, looking north. Here, 10 km from Jebel Barkal and on the opposite bank, were buried Taharqo (ca. 690–664 BC), nineteen of his successors to the late fourth century BC, and fifty-three of their queens (Photo: Enrico Ferorelli 1989).*

In 30 BC, Rome wrested Egypt from the Macedonian Ptolemies, who had ruled it for the previous three centuries. Shortly afterward the new Roman governor of Upper Egypt attempted to impose a tax on Lower Nubia, which

⁸⁸ Edwards 2004, 141–181; Wolf and Nowotnick 2020; Rochleau 2005; Gabolde 2020, 349–353.

⁸⁹ Török 1997, 221–224.

⁹⁰ Dunham 1955.

⁹¹ Dunham 1957a, b; Yellin 2020

the Kushites considered their own province. This action triggered a Kushite attack on the southern Egyptian city of Syene (modern Aswan), in which their army plundered the town. In response, Rome sent an army to attack Napata, which was said to have been “razed to the ground” and its inhabitants enslaved. This is the only time the city of Jebel Barkal figures in an historical incident known and recorded by the classical historians.⁹² These mutually destructive events ultimately led to the signing of a treaty between Rome and Kush, which secured peace between the two neighboring states for as long as their regimes existed on the Nile.



Fig. 19. *On the west side of Jebel Barkal there are at least 25 pyramids, large and small, in various states of preservation, which range in date from the late fourth century BC to the early second century AD. They belonged to several kings, ruling queens and high-ranking members of the royal family. Most of the rulers during these centuries chose to build their pyramids at Meroë, but the “Pure Mountain” of Napata was obviously a burial site still preferred by some. If little is known about the individual owners of these tombs, the Jebel Barkal pyramids remain among the best preserved in Sudan (Dunham 1957; Photo: T. Kendall).*

Although no obvious trace of destruction has yet been found that can be attributed to the Roman attack, the old temples at Jebel Barkal, perhaps as a result of the raid, were completely restored and refurbished in the early first century AD by the energetic Meroitic king and queen (or perhaps king and his mother) Natakamani and Amanitore, who also constructed a massive palace at the site (B 1500), which established a precedent followed by several of their immediate successors (figs. 20, 21).⁹³

⁹² FHN III: 828–835, 876–881, 882–884 and references; see also FHN II: 700–704.

⁹³ Donadoni 1993; Roccati 2004, 2008; Ciampini and Bakowska-Czerner 2014.



Fig. 20. *The restored foundation platform, over 60 m square, of the Meroitic palace (B 1500) built at Jebel Barkal by the royal couple Natakamani and Amanitore in the mid-first century AD. The excavation of this huge structure has been a continuing project of the Italian Archaeological Mission at Jebel Barkal since the 1970's. (Photo: Bryan Whitney, 2018)*



Fig. 21. *Fragmentary sandstone head from a life size, composite statue of Natakamani or Amanitore, found in 1916 by Reisner inside the sanctuary of B 500. The statue, bearing traces of gilding, had inlaid eyes. (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. MFA 24.1797. Kendall 1994).*

The Jebel Barkal sanctuary remained fully operational until the third century AD, when it seems to have been devastated by an earthquake. This catastrophe toppled some of the temples and dislodged huge rocks from the cliff that destroyed others. The site was then left unrestored, and its importance as a cult center quickly waned – like the kingdom itself, which finally flickered out in the mid- or late-fourth century.

VI. A History of Archaeological Exploration of the Site

In 1820–21 the Sudan was invaded and conquered by Egypt's Turkish ruler Mohamed Ali (1769–1849) and, just as in ancient times, the country became an exploited colonial province of Egypt. Accompanying the army were several European travelers, who stopped at Jebel Barkal to record its temple ruins and pyramids and afterwards returned home to publish accounts and drawings of what they saw. Among the most important were the Frenchman, Frédéric Cailliaud (1787–1869)⁹⁴ (fig. 31), the English travelers George Waddington (1793–1869) and Barnard Hanbury (1773–1833)⁹⁵ (fig. 22), and in 1833, the Englishman George A. Hoskins (1802–1863).⁹⁶ The finest drawings were made in 1821 by the Frenchman Louis M. A. Linant de Bellefonds (1793–1883) for the English nobleman Sir William Bankes, but his work remained unpublished until modern times.⁹⁷ These first antiquarians were followed quickly by others, several of whom undertook minor excavations and removed important statues from the site, which are now among the treasures of the British and Berlin Museums (figs. 23, 24).

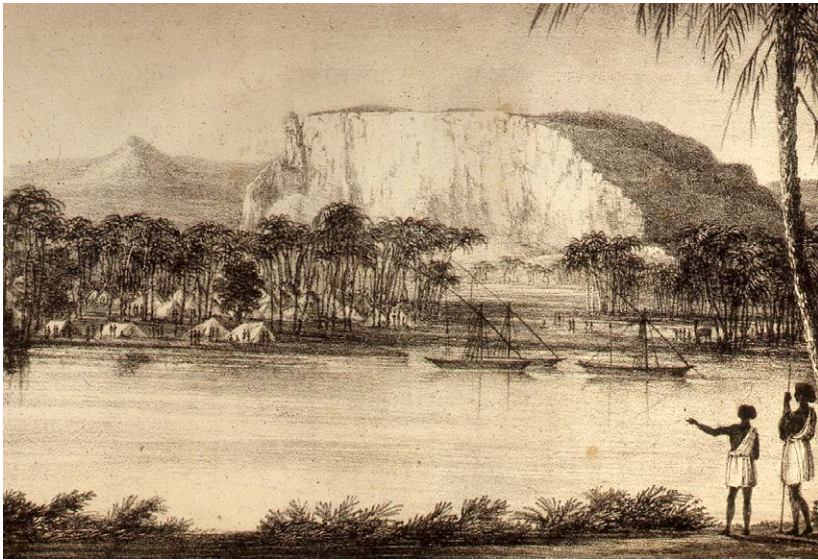


Fig. 22. *Jebel Barkal in 1820, as drawn by Waddington and Hanbury 1822, 166–167.*

⁹⁴ Cailliaud 1826, III, 198–227.

⁹⁵ Waddington and Hanbury 1822, 158–171.

⁹⁶ Hoskins 1835, 134–148.

⁹⁷ Usick 2002.

In May, 1844 the site was visited by the team of surveyors and artists of the Royal Prussian Expedition led by Karl Richard Lepsius (1810–1884), whose goal was to record in superb drawings and maps all of the visible antiquities in Egypt and the Sudan.⁹⁸ Then in 1862 an Egyptian army officer stationed at Jebel Barkal found a trove of Kushite royal stelae, written in Egyptian.⁹⁹ These have since become the foundation of our knowledge of the Kushite monarchy. Among them was the famous Victory Stele of King Piankhy (ca. 747–716 BC), now in the Cairo Museum (fig. 15), which described his invasion and conquest of Egypt about 727 BC – and which inspired the Egyptian national opera *Aida* in 1871.¹⁰⁰



Fig. 23. In 1844 Jebel Barkal was visited by the Royal Prussian Expedition led by Karl Richard Lepsius, whose objective was to document not only this site, but also all of the visible antiquities of Egypt and Nubia in precise survey maps and drawings. Lepsius selected the best preserved of the ram statues standing in the first court of the Amun Temple (B 500) and had it shipped downriver, where it was eventually presented to the Berlin Museum. Originally made for Amenhotep III's temple at Soleb, the statue had later been brought to Jebel Barkal by Piankhy and set up inside the first court of the Great Amun Temple (B 500). Once in Berlin, its horns, ears and solar disk were restored. (Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung 7262. Photo: J. Liepe.)

Between 1883 and 1898, the Sudan was cut off to outsiders during the turbulent years of the *Mahdiyya*, when the Sudan revolted from Egyptian rule

⁹⁸ Lepsius 1842–45; 1852, 248–251.

⁹⁹ Budge 1907, vol. I, 129–152

¹⁰⁰ Kendall 1996b, 153–154.

under the messianic Islamic leader, Mohamed Ahmed, “the Mahdi.”¹⁰¹ But with the British military overthrow of the Mahdist state in 1898, the establishment of British colonial rule and the construction of the Sudan Railway, the first new wave of archaeologists began to visit the site: Wallis Budge of the British Museum in 1897 and 1905,¹⁰² and James H. Breasted of the University of Chicago in 1906, who for the first time documented the site in photographs.¹⁰³

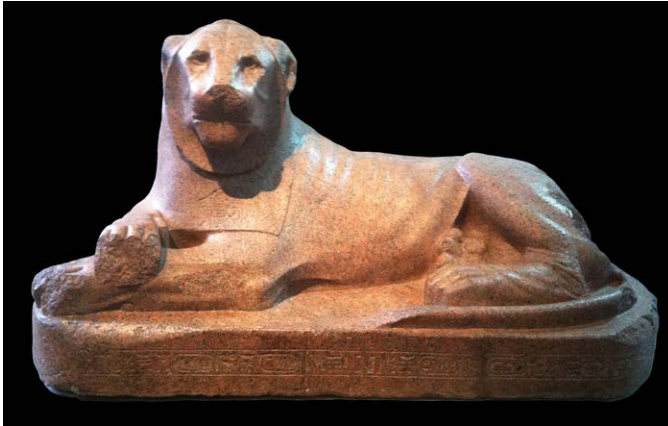


Fig. 24. One of the two lion statues taken from Jebel Barkal in 1829 by the British explorers Algernon Percy (Lord Prudhoe) and Maj. Orlando Felix. Originally made for Soleb Temple and inscribed individually for Amenhotep III and Tutankhamun, the lions were brought to Jebel Barkal, set up behind the palace B 1200, and re-inscribed for the Meroitic king Amanislo (mid-third century BC). This king’s name, at first read “Amonasro,” was used by the composer Giuseppe Verdi as the name of the “Ethiopian” king who was the father of Aïda in his famous opera. (British Museum EA 2. Photo: Bryan Whitney.)

The most important archaeologist of the early twentieth century was the American excavator George A. Reisner (1867–1942) (fig. 25).¹⁰⁴ Sponsored by Harvard University and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Reisner and his team worked at Jebel Barkal four to five months each season from 1916 to 1920 and recovered many more inscribed monuments and statues, now divided between the Sudan National Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and others (figs. 26, 45–49).

¹⁰¹ Barthorp 1984.

¹⁰² Budge 1907, 2 vols.

¹⁰³ Breasted 1943, 173–214.

¹⁰⁴ Manuelian 2022.



Fig. 25. At left, George A. Reisner (1867–1942), Director of the Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Expedition, who first excavated the Jebel Barkal Temples and Pyramids and later the nearby royal cemeteries of el-Kurru and Nuri. At right, his assistant Dows Dunham (1890–1984), who, after Reisner's death, spent his long remaining career publishing the latter's finds. Photographed at Giza, 1927. (Photo: HUM-FA B6205_NS; photographer Mustapha Abu el-Hamid; courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Through his pioneering work, Reisner was able to reconstruct much of the history of the site, from the early second millennium BC to medieval times. He also excavated the nearby royal cemeteries at Jebel Barkal, el-Kurru and Nuri, and in 1921, moved south to Meroë, where during the next three years, he excavated the remaining royal pyramids and reconstructed the names and approximate order of most of the previously unknown rulers of Kush from the 25th Dynasty to the late Roman period. It was one of the greatest achievements of twentieth century archaeology. Almost as much credit must also go to Reisner's student and devoted assistant Dows Dunham (1890–1984), who spent his entire life publishing and interpreting Reisner's finds.¹⁰⁵

No further archaeological work was undertaken at Jebel Barkal until 1973, when an Italian Mission of the University of Rome (*La Sapienza*), under the direction of Prof. F. Sergio Donadoni (1914–2015) reopened excavations at the site. Donadoni, working in areas left unexplored by Reisner, discovered two previously unknown temples (called B 1300 and 1400) east of the mountain as well as an enormous palace (B 1500) belonging to King Naktamani (ca. mid-first century AD) (fig. 20).¹⁰⁶ When, after twenty seasons, Donadoni retired, he turned the Mission's directorship over to his colleague Prof. Alessandro Roccati of the University of Turin, who continued excavating B 1500 and revealed other palatial structures (B 2100, 2400 and 3200).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Dunham 1972.

¹⁰⁶ Donadoni 1993.

¹⁰⁷ Roccati 2004; 2008.

When Roccati retired in 2010, he passed the Mission on to Prof. Emanuele Ciampini of the University of Venice.¹⁰⁸ The Italian team, after nearly fifty seasons, continues to explore the vast area northeast of Reisner's temples, which seems to have been an area of elite residences of the Meroitic era (ca. 3rd century BC to 4th century AD).



Fig. 26. *Sphinx of King Senkamanisken (ca. 640–620 BC), found by Reisner in the first court of the Great Amun Temple (B 500), Jebel Barkal (Khartoum, Sudan National Museum 1852. Photo: Enrico Ferorelli).*

In 1986, the Italian Mission was joined at Jebel Barkal by a new team from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, led by Associate Curator Timothy Kendall, who was granted a license to resume work in the original Reisner concession. After Kendall's departure from the Boston Museum in 1999, he was asked by the Sudan's National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) to continue working there under its authority. In this capacity he led the Mission through nine more seasons, from 2000 to 2011. At that time, it became one of the many projects sponsored by the Nubian Archaeological Research Organization, a joint project of Sudan (NCAM) and Qatar, co-directed by Kendall and his long-time assistant, Al-Hassan Ahmed Mohamed of NCAM. (In 2016, upon his retirement, Kendall transferred the Mission's license to Dr. Geoffrey Emberling of the University of Michigan, while Dr. Mohamed stayed on as Co-Director. The story of the next phase of the Mission can be found at <https://lsa.umich.edu>).

¹⁰⁸ Ciampini 2014 and 2018–19 (with team of the Mission).

Between 1995 and 1997, a third team conducted excavations at the site, sponsored by the Fundacio Clos of Barcelona, Spain, under the direction of Francesca Berenguer.¹⁰⁹ This mission explored the Jebel Barkal cemetery and discovered two previously unknown royal tombs of the later Napatan Period (ca. 4th–3rd century BC), one of them fully painted with an astronomical ceiling. In 2017, a new Spanish team from Wahat Projects, under the direction of Montserrat Diaz de Cerio, resumed archaeological work in this area and reopened these tombs for a detailed re-study.

Because of the enormous size of the Jebel Barkal site, Sudan's NCAM, with the support of Qatar in 2013, granted licenses to four international teams to continue archaeological research there, as well as funds for conservation and publication. These teams were:

- 1) The NCAM Jebel Barkal Mission (part A), co-directed by Kendall and Mohamed: a project to excavate and publish the buildings within the Amun sanctuary.
- 2) The NCAM Jebel Barkal Mission (part B), co-directed by Mrs. Iglal Mohamed Osman El-Malik, head of Conservation for NCAM, and Dr. Maria Concetta Laurenti and a team of Italian conservators for ISCR (*Istituto Superiore per la Conservazione e il Restauro* in Rome): a project to conserve and restore the wall paintings inside Temple B 300 of King Taharqo.¹¹⁰
- 3) The Mission of the University of Venice, Italy, directed by Prof. E. Ciampini: a project to excavate the large palatial structures and their associated buildings north and east of the Amun sanctuary.
- 4) The Archaeological Mission of Wahat Projects, Spain, in collaboration with the University of Dongola (Karima Branch), directed by Dr. Montserrat Diaz de Cerio: a project to excavate the several large Napatan/Meroitic domestic and religious buildings discovered approximately 700–1000 m NE of Jebel Barkal in the Abbasiya district of Karima.¹¹¹

Publications will eventually be produced by each of these teams to present the monuments within their respective concessions. This Guide includes only the buildings explored by the NCAM Mission (part A) and the Spanish Mission (4).

¹⁰⁹ Berenguer 2004.

¹¹⁰ Laurenti and El-Malik 2021.

¹¹¹ Diaz de Cerio 2017.

VII. The Amun Sanctuary: Map and Key to the Known Buildings

The Jebel Barkal archaeological site occupies an enormous area, the true extent of which is unknown. The official antiquities boundary, indicated by a wall or a line of cement posts, extends around the mountain in an arc with a radius varying between 400 and 700 m from its northeast to its southwest side. Within this area lies the Amun sanctuary, which includes at least 14 temples, 3–5 small chapels and 6 palaces, which have been partly or wholly excavated or identified by geophysical means. An equally large area on the west side of the hill was the site of a major royal cemetery, which included at least 25 pyramids. Far in front of the temples still lie buried the remains of the town of Napata, which are only now (2022) being revealed by excavation.

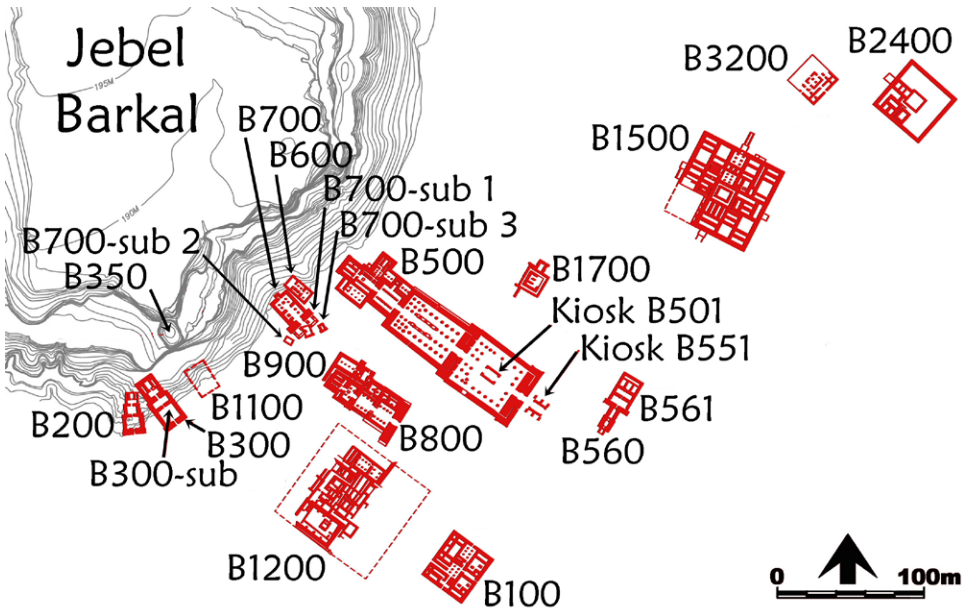


Fig. 27. Map of the Jebel Barkal Amun Sanctuary, showing all the buildings known by excavation or geophysical survey as of 2018. The NCAM concession includes all the buildings SW of B 1700. The Italian concession includes all buildings NE of this line. (Survey map: Robert C. Rosa III.)

Although, as noted above, it seems likely that there was a pre-Egyptian Nubian religious site at Jebel Barkal, no trace of it has yet been found. The earliest known buildings are Egyptian, probably none earlier than Thutmose III (ca. 1479–1425 BC). After his reign, there was continuous Egyptian royal patronage of the site until Dynasty 21. Beginning again in the eighth century BC, the old Egyptian temples were restored and in some cases en-

larged by their Kushite successors, who then added new ones, and the site flourished until the third century AD, when it appears to have been badly damaged by an earthquake.

In 1916 Reisner devised the numbering system now used by all archaeologists to designate the structures at Jebel Barkal. In this system, he gave each building a number, starting with “100,” prefaced by “B” (for “Barkal”), which he increased by one hundred (i.e., B 100, B 200, B 300, etc.) as it was discovered. In this way, he could assign its interior rooms unique numbers ascending by ones (i.e., 101, 102, etc. for rooms in B 100). In exceptional cases Reisner gave small buildings near a major structure a number higher than the highest number of recorded rooms in that structure (eg. B 551). The following pages provide brief descriptions of all the numbered structures presently excavated within the concession areas of the NCAM Mission (part A) and the Italian Mission. Their locations can be identified on the site map (fig. 27).

Note to readers: In studies of the later kingdom of Kush, the terms “Napatan” and “Meroitic” will frequently be encountered. These terms refer to the kingdom’s two main cultural phases or periods. The first, dating from the eighth to the early third century BC, is known as the “Napatan,” when the art and culture of the kingdom was heavily influenced by that of Egypt, when Egyptian was the language used by the rulers for their formal inscriptions, and when Napata was the site of the royal burials. The second, dating from the third century BC to the fourth century AD, is known as the “Meroitic,” when the art and culture of Kush was infused with a great many original and indigenous African traits as well as Greco-Roman elements, when the kings inscribed their monuments in the still imperfectly known native Kushite language and alphabetic script known as “Meroitic,” and when the political center of the kingdom and most of the royal burials, were located at the city of Meroë.

Map Key:

B 100: A Meroitic Palace probably of the 1st century BC, excavated by Reisner in 1916, reburied by him in 1919, and now no longer visible on the surface (figs. 28–29).

B 200: Temple of the goddess Hathor, built by Taharqo. Today only its inner rock-cut chambers survive. Its outer rooms, built of stone blocks, were quar-

ried away centuries ago by stone scavengers. (In its pylon foundations were found reused blocks from a dismantled chapel of the Theban High Priest of Amun [and self-styled “King”], Menkheperre [ca. 1045–992 BC] of Dynasty 21. These blocks are the latest evidence of Egyptian patronage of the site) (figs. 14, 30–31).

B 300: Temple of the goddess Mut (“Mother”), also built by Taharqo. Like B 200, its outer rooms, built of masonry blocks, were torn down and removed by stone scavengers, but its inner rooms were rock-cut and have survived (figs. 32–36). The painted reliefs in its interior chambers have recently been cleaned and restored with spectacular results by an Italian team of conservators and are one of the viewing highlights of the site. (See Laurenti and El-Malik 2021.)

B 300-sub: An Egyptian precursor of B 200 and 300, probably built by Horemheb (ca. 1319–1305 BC). Its foundations, built of “*talatat*” blocks (i.e., the cubit-length blocks unique to the late 18th Dynasty), lie under the exterior courts of B 300. (See also B 1100, for a temple in this same series) (fig. 37).

B 350: A monument placed on the summit of the Jebel Barkal pinnacle by Taharqo (fig. 38).

B 500: The Great Temple of Amun of Napata (figs. 39–44) began life as a small mud brick chapel dedicated to Amun, probably erected by Thutmose III (1479–1427 BC). It was replaced a century later by a stone temple, built of *talatat* (cubit-length “stone bricks”), probably as a joint project by Amenhotep III (ca. 1390–1352 BC) and his son Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) (ca. 1360?–1336 BC) as co-rulers. It was then enlarged by Tutankhamun (ca. 1332–1323 BC), Horemheb (ca. 1319–1307 BC), Seti I (ca. 1294–1279 BC), and Ramses II (ca. 1279–1213 BC), with minor additions by unnamed rulers to the end of Dynasty 20 (i.e., to 1077 BC.). After Dynasty 20, work on the temple was suspended until the reign of the Kushite king Piankhy (ca. 747–716 BC), who restored it and vastly enlarged it, bringing it to its final length of 156 m, making it the largest temple in Nubia. B 500 was restored for the last time in the first century AD by the Meroitic royal couple, Natakamani and Amanitore.

B 501 kiosk: Rest station for the bark (i.e., boat-shaped shrine) of Amun of Napata as it was carried forth from B 500 on the shoulders of priests. It

was built by Natakamani and Amanitore in the mid-1st century AD inside the middle of the first court (501) of the Great Temple (B 500) (figs. 49–51).

B 551 kiosk: Entrance portico for B 500, built by Queen Amanishakheto in the late first century BC or early first century AD (figs. 52–53).

B 560: Kiosk for temple B 561, built by King Amanakhareqerema, late first century AD (figs. 56–57).

B 561: *Mammisi* or “Birth House” for Horus or Khonsu, built by Natakamani and Amanitore in the mid-1st century AD. This is the first to be excavated of perhaps six small temples that flanked the avenue leading into B 500 (figs. 54–57).

B 600: An enthronement pavilion used by the king during coronation ceremonies. Its foundations date to the reign of Thutmose IV (ca. 1401–1391 BC); it was restored after being heavily damaged by a rock fall from the cliff, perhaps about the first century BC (figs. 58–59).

B 700: Temple of Osiris-Dedwen, built by Atlanersa (ca. 653–640 BC) and completed by Senkamanisken (ca. 640–620 BC) (figs. 60–63). The temple was damaged by a rock fall, probably in the same event that damaged B 600, and was subsequently restored, only to be destroyed again, along with B 600, sometime in the second century AD.

B 700-sub 1-3: Three small chapels in a row, built of *talatat* blocks. Their foundations were discovered beside and under the portico of B 700 (figs. 64–65). At least two appear to have been used for the worship of the Aten, the sun god of Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) (ca. 1355–1336 BC), showing that the Amun cult had briefly been proscribed at Jebel Barkal and the site co-opted for the Aten sun cult as long as the king reigned.

B 800: An early Napatan temple built for the Theban Amun of Karnak, with phases attributable to Alara (ca. 785–770 BC), Kashta (ca. 770–747 BC), and Piankhy (ca. 747–716 BC). Later restorations were undertaken by Anlamani (ca. 620–600 BC), and Harsiotef (ca. 400–370 BC) (figs. 66, 67).

B 900: A temple, attached to B 800, with two distinct phases: the first, an Osiris temple (a precursor of B 700?), built by Piankhy [ca. 747–716 BC]), and the second, a sanctuary for the Meroitic Lion God Apedemak, built some seven centuries later (figs. 66, 67).

B 1100: A destroyed temple built in front of the Jebel Barkal pinnacle/"uraeus," identified by an inscription in B 1200 as the sanctuary of the twin royal uraeus goddesses Nekhbet and Wadjet (figs. 68–71). Like neighboring temple B 300, B 1100 exhibits an 18th Dynasty phase (i.e., foundations of *talatat* blocks), probably attributable to Horemheb by the discovery nearby of an inscribed block bearing his name. It later had a Napatan phase, probably attributable to Taharqo, and a Meroitic phase, attributable to Natakamani and Amanitore. Besides containing sanctuaries to the goddesses of the royal uraei, the temple would also have housed the goddess of the royal crowns, Weret-Hekau.

B 1200: The Napatan palace at Jebel Barkal, which presents evidence for at least six levels or building phases: 1) early Napatan (Kashta?: ca. 770–747 BC), 2) Dynasty 25, destroyed by flood (Year 6, Taharqo: 684 BC [?]), 3) Anlamani and Aspelta, destroyed by fire (military attack of Psamtik II, 593 BC[?]), 4) a restoration, late sixth century BC, 5) a renewal by Harsiotef (ca. 400–370 BC), and 6) a final renewal by Amanislo (mid-3rd century BC) (figs. 72–76). The building was probably abandoned in the first century BC and replaced by B 100.

B 1300/1400 (not on map): two small temples about 800 m east of the mountain.

B 1500: A grand palace, 61.5 m sq., built on a high platform by Natakamani and Amanitore (mid-1st century AD) (fig. 20).

B 1700: A small, destroyed palace immediately northeast B 500, possibly a priests' house or the residence of the High Priest of Amun of Napata (figs. 77, 78).

B 1800: A Meroitic peripteral building, probably built by Natakamani and Amanitore (mid-1st century AD).

B 2100: part of a larger edifice characterized by a columned sector; probably part of the same architectural unit with B 2200, dated to the reign of Natakamani and Amanitore.

B 2200: a building (just NW of B 1500, not shown on map) featuring two large stone tubs, thought to have been a royal bath (*hammam*) for ritual use, dated to Natakamani and Amanitore.

B 2300: A badly ruined Meroitic peripteral building (also just NW of B 1500, not shown on map), probably built by Natakamani and Amanitore.

B 2400: A Meroitic palace, 40 x 40 m, probably predating B 1500.

B 2500: (not on map): a temple of unparalleled form on a raised platform, orientated WSW to ENE, with an entrance ramp in front and an exit ramp in rear. Approx. 700 m. N of Jebel Barkal in the Abbaseya district of Karima (fig. 79).

B 2600: (not on map): a large mud brick building, about 70 m SW of B 2500, which appears to have been a private house of the Meroitic period.

B 2700: (not on map): a square structure, interpreted as an altar, formed by large sandstone blocks, about 50 m in front of B 2500.

B 3000: (not on map): a small early Meroitic temple (still unexcavated) on the top of a small hillock directly behind the Jebel Barkal Museum.

B 3200: A pavilion connected with the palace B1500, late first century AD.

VIII. Temple and Palaces in the NCAM Sector

B 100: A Meroitic Palace

B 100 was a late Meroitic palace of the first century BC or early first century AD, excavated in 1916 by Reisner.¹¹² Nearly square in plan, 33.2 m by 37.1 m, it had an entrance in each exterior wall with two internal staircases leading to a second floor, which was entirely lost to erosion. The first floor had 23 rooms, of which most were foundation cells, without doors, built only to support the second floor and to protect the building from Nile floods. After clearing and recording it, Reisner reburied it in 1919 in order to use it as a dump site for the earth he would remove from the first court of neighboring temple B 500. It has thus remained buried and hidden from view ever since then (figs. 28, 29).

¹¹² Kendall 2014b.

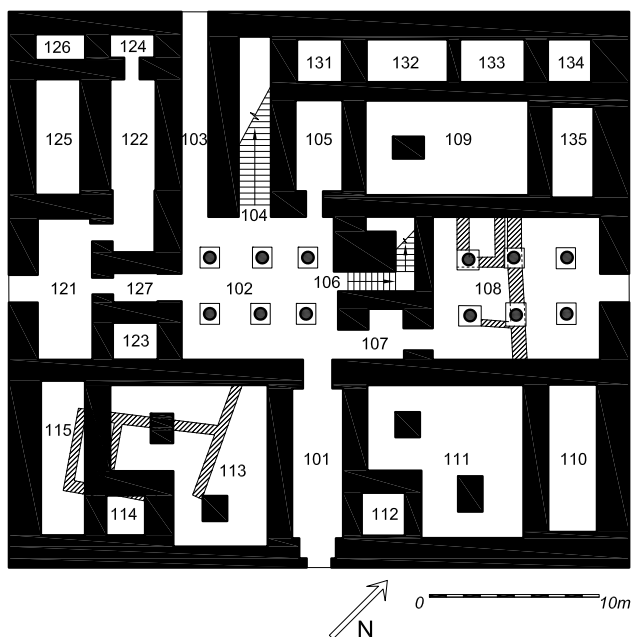


Fig. 28. Ground plan of B 100, with room numbers, reconstructed from Reisner's diary notes and original survey map. (Plan: Geoff Kornfeld).



Fig. 29. Photograph of B 100 following excavation, March 15, 1916, looking north toward B 500. Photo A 2326, from the photographic archive of G. A. Reisner's Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Expedition. Photographer: Mohammedani Ibrahim Ibrahim © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

B 200: Taharqo's Temple to Hathor.

Built by Taharqo (690–664 BC), B 200 was dedicated to the goddess Hathor of Jebel Barkal, who, in her serpent form, was believed to be the uraeus of Amun. The temple was built where it was because it was from this viewing angle that the pinnacle, just to the right, looked most like Amun's uraeus: a rearing cobra crowned with a sun orb (fig. 4). Over the centuries, the temple was almost totally destroyed by stone scavengers, who removed all of its built outer masonry structure, leaving only its three rock cut sanctuaries, showing only very worn reliefs. The computer-generated restoration of the temple (fig. 31) is based on our assumption that the columns of its outer courts were similar to those of its neighboring temple B 300, which was its conceptual twin and built at the same time (fig. 36).

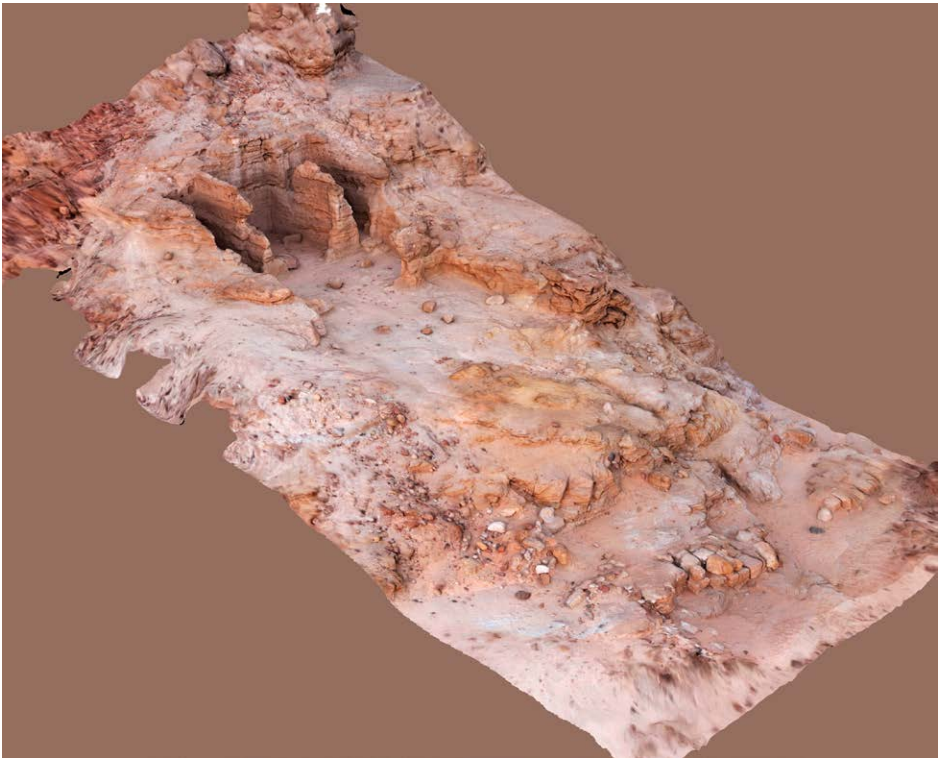


Fig. 30. Photograph of the present state of B 200 (2015). (3D Photoscan: Mohamed Osman Abdulla 2015)



Fig. 31. Cut-away view of B 200, as it is thought to have looked. Model: Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

B 300: Taharqo's Temple to Mut

Built by Taharqo (690–664 BC), temple B 300, directly beside B 200, was dedicated to the goddess Mut (“Mother”), Amun’s consort.¹¹³ Because she shared an identity with Hathor as the cobra of Amun’s uraeus, which was manifested in the pinnacle (immediately to the right), the temple was sited here for the same reason that B 200 was. Furthermore, just as the pinnacle, when understood as phallus, evoked Amun in his role as ultimate “father,” this deeply rock-cut, womb-like temple evoked the presence of the goddess in her role as supreme “mother,” giving the mountain, as a perceived creation site, a dual-sexed nature. Like B 200, its outer courtyards were destroyed by stone scavengers, but its more deeply rock-cut inner rooms still preserve magnificent painted reliefs, newly restored, featuring the gods of Jebel Barkal on the right walls and their Egyptian counterparts on the left (See Laurenti and el-Malik 2021). The temple’s outer courtyards were lined with columns in the form of sacred rattles (*sistra*) (with capitals in the form of cow-eared goddesses) and 4.5 m high statues of the dwarf god Bes. (Two of the former still stand complete. The large Bes columns are now all destroyed except for a partial face fragment still preserved in the Barkal Museum) (figs. 32–36).

¹¹³ Robisek 1989; Laurenti and El-Malik 2021.



Fig. 32. *View of the ruins of B 300 as they looked in 1821. From F. Cailliaud, Voyage à Méroé..., plates, vol. 2 (Paris, 1827), pl. LXVII.*



Fig. 33. *Cut-away view of B 300, as it is believed to have looked when complete. (Model: Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)*



Fig. 34. View of B 300, looking through the axis of the first court to the sanctuary. The large Bes figures and their feathered crowns would have been brightly painted. (Model: Geoff Kornfeld © NCAM Mission and 2015 Learning Sites, Inc.)

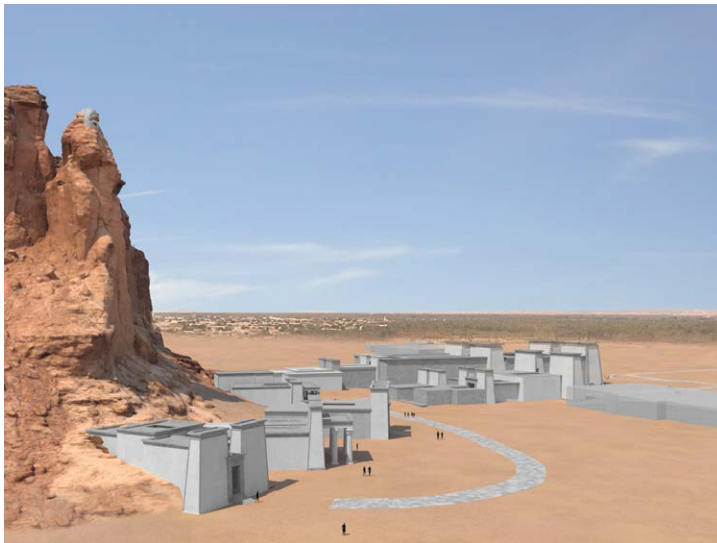


Fig. 35. View of B 200, 300, and B 1100 (i.e., the first three temples at left), as restored, showing their relationship to the pinnacle. (Model: Geoff Kornfeld © NCAM Mission and 2015 Learning Sites, Inc.)

B 300-sub: An Eighteenth Dynasty Precursor to B 200 and B 300

The foundations of a destroyed temple lie beneath the outer court and portico of B 300; Reisner labeled the structure “B 300-sub.” Visible in fig. 37, these white sandstone block layers are now concealed by a new pavement of mud brick. The masonry consisted entirely of the cubit-length stone blocks (each 48–52 cm), known as *talatat*, which indicate that the temple must date from the end of the 18th Dynasty (ca. 1320 BC), about six centuries before B 300 was built. Like B 200 and 300, which were obviously built to replace it, B 300-sub must have been dedicated to the same goddesses, Hathor and Mut, who were believed to be present within the pinnacle (fig. 5).¹¹⁴

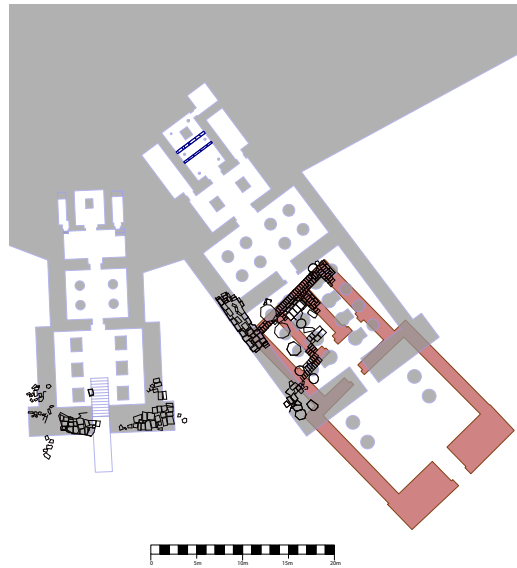


Fig. 36. Restored ground plans of B 200 (left) and B 300 (right), with hypothetical plan of their New Kingdom predecessor B 300-sub (red). Traces of the sanctuaries of B 300-sub are well-preserved, but its outer court(s?) and pylon have completely disappeared. (Plan: R. C. Rosa III and Geoff Kornfeld).

¹¹⁴ Kendall 2009. See note 48.



Fig. 37. The entrance to B 300, as it looked in 2010. The small white “talatat” blocks lying under the level of the standing columns belong to the foundations of the late 18th Dynasty temple called “B 300-sub.” They are now concealed by a modern mud brick pavement. (Photo: T. Kendall).

B 350: The Pinnacle Monument of Taharqo

B 350 is the designation of a monument, which Taharqo placed on the virtually inaccessible summit of the Jebel Barkal pinnacle, at a height of 74m.¹¹⁵ This monument, so high that it can hardly be seen from the ground, was a smoothed, southward-facing panel, 1.20 m x 2.70 m (now very badly weathered), cut on the peak of the rock shaft and inscribed with a text briefly recording the king’s victories over his enemies East and West. Bronze nails and nail holes observed in the dressed stone face indicate that the panel was originally covered with gold sheet. Directly under the panel is a manmade alcove, the floor of which preserves the rear corners of a socket, which apparently secured a small statue (of the king?), about 1 m high. A deep diagonal groove cut on the west side of the pinnacle peak indicates where a crane arm had been set. The crane, operated by men on the cliff, directed by men on the pinnacle summit, would have been used to raise the statue (and other building materials) from the ground. Holes cut in the opposing rock walls of the cliff and pinnacle shaft indicate that up to fifteen wooden

¹¹⁵ Kendall 2004b; 2008.

beams had been raised up into the gorge and set firmly between the rock walls, revealing how the workmen were able to scale the pinnacle summit. The panel inscription names two kings, Taharqo and Nastasen (late fourth century BC), indicating that the original monument was rebuilt and restored by the later king (fig. 38).

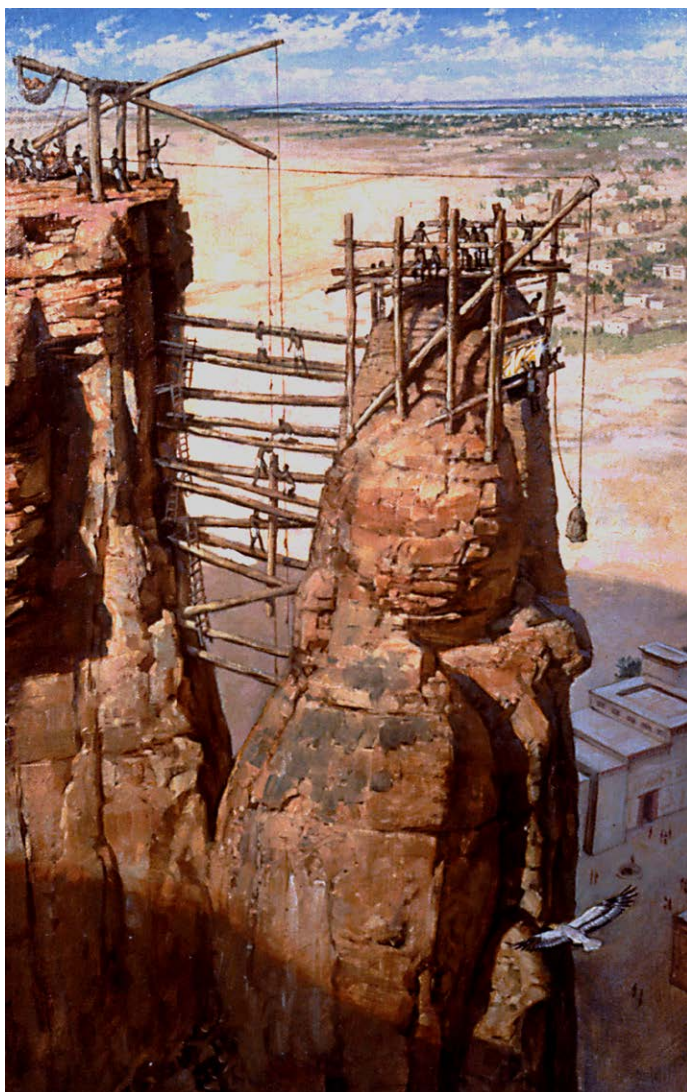


Fig. 38. Artist's conception of Taharqo's pinnacle monument under construction. (Painting by James Gurney for National Geographic, Nov. 1990)

B 500: The Great Temple of Amun of Napata

The Great Temple of Amun of Napata, designated B 500, is the largest temple in Nubia.¹¹⁶ It began life as a small mud brick chapel erected by Thutmose III (1479–1427 BC) or perhaps in his name by his co-regent and stepmother Hatshepsut (ca. 1472–1458 BC). A century later this modest brick structure was dismantled and replaced by a small stone temple, enlarged successively by each Egyptian king (apparently) from Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) (ca. 1353–1336 BC) to the later Ramessides. Akhenaten’s work can be identified by the small, yellowish, sandstone, cubit-length blocks in the inner rooms, known as *talatat*. The whitish sandstone *talatat* addition of the second phase can be attributed to his successors Tutankhamun (ca. 1332–1323 BC) and Horemheb (ca. 1319–1307 BC), while an eastward facing sanctuary was added by Seti I (ca. 1294–1279 BC), completed by Ramses II (ca. 1279–1213 BC). After

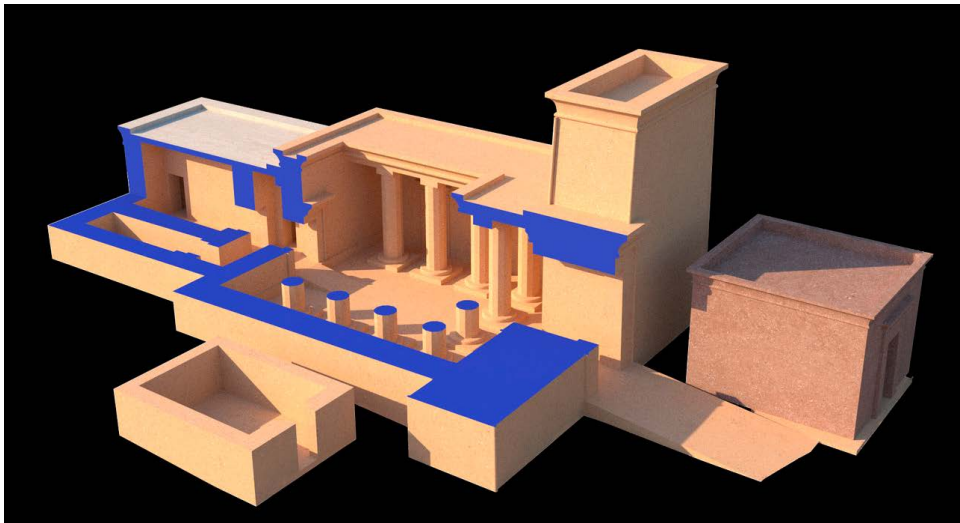


Fig. 39. The first known temple of Amun at Jebel Barkal was built by Thutmose III and/or Hatshepsut. This structure probably survives today in the few courses of mud brick found, slightly to the right of the later temple axis, under the pavement of the first stone temple. Called “B 500-sub,” this mud brick temple is indicated above by the (hypothetical) small brown structure at right. B 500-sub was replaced with a small stone Amun temple (called B 500-Phase I), built of yellowish sandstone *talatat* blocks, typical of the period. When Phase I was completed, the mud brick temple was removed. There are reasons to suspect that Phase I was built in the joint reign of Amenhotep III and Amenhotep IV (before he took the name Akhenaten, and before the proscription of Amun). The small roofless room at left may have been used for early open-air worship of Akhenaten’s new sun god, the Aten. (Model: Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 Learning Sites, Inc.)

¹¹⁶ Kendall 2009; Kendall, T. and E.-H. A. Mohamed with H. Wilson, J. Haynes, and D. Klotz 2017.

Dynasty 20, work on B 500 was suspended until the reign of the Kushite king Piankhy (a.k.a Piye) (ca. 747–716 BC), who vastly enlarged the temple, bringing it to its final length of 156 m, and adorning its walls with scenes (now very badly damaged and buried) of his conquest of Egypt in 727 BC. The temple was restored for the last time in the first century AD by the Meroitic king and queen, Natakamani and Amanitore. For nearly a thousand years, this great temple, the home of the national god of Kush, was maintained as a place of royal coronations and rituals, and as a treasury, where precious cultic implements, donated by past kings, were stored. Filled with statuary, royal monuments and papyri dating from the New Kingdom, it would also have served as the national museum and library of the Kushite state.

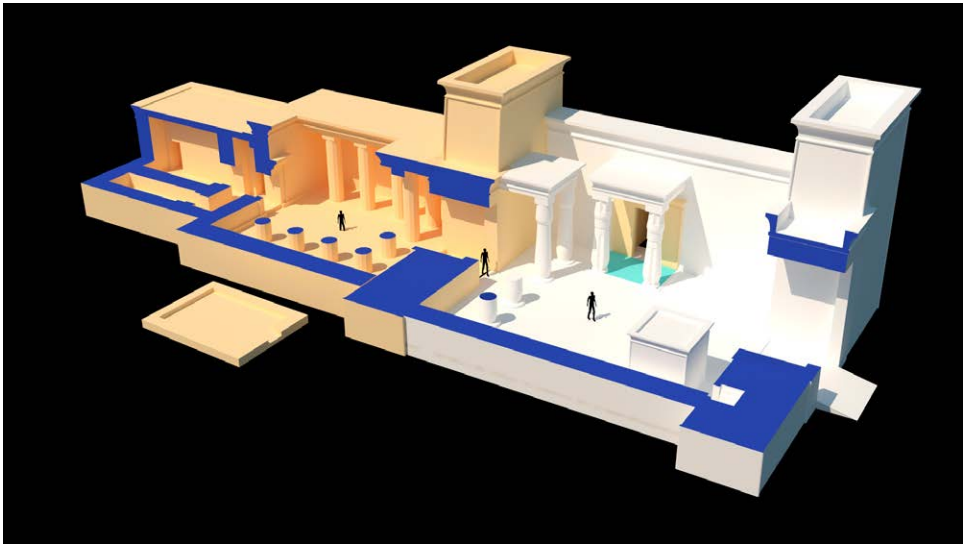


Fig. 40. Following Akhenaten's reign, Phase I was enlarged with an open court and pylon built of white sandstone talatat, sponsored by his successors Tutankhamun (ca. 1332–1323 BC) and Horemheb (ca. 1319–1292 BC). This is known as B 500-Phase II. In the south corner of the court several reused blocks indicate that here probably also stood a small chapel of Amenhotep-Huy, Tutankhamun's Viceroy of Kush. A small chapel on the NE side of the court was fronted by a columned portico with a floor paved entirely with green glazed tiles. The image above shows the complete Eighteenth Dynasty temple in cutaway view. (Model: Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

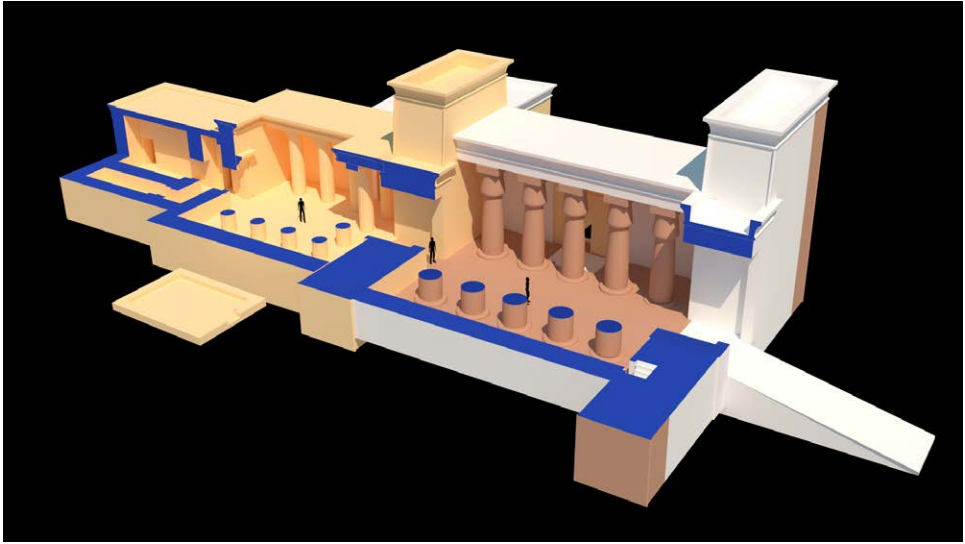


Fig. 41. B 500-Phase III. During the reign of Seti I (ca. 1290–1279 BC), the outer court of Phase II was radically modified with the addition of ten massive sandstone columns, which allowed the court to be roofed on the sides, leaving only a central aisle open. The court was also newly paved with red sandstone, and the towers of the front pylon were widened. A new triple sanctuary was also added to the NE side, which probably included chapels for Re-Atum, Ptah of Nubia and the king himself. (Model: Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

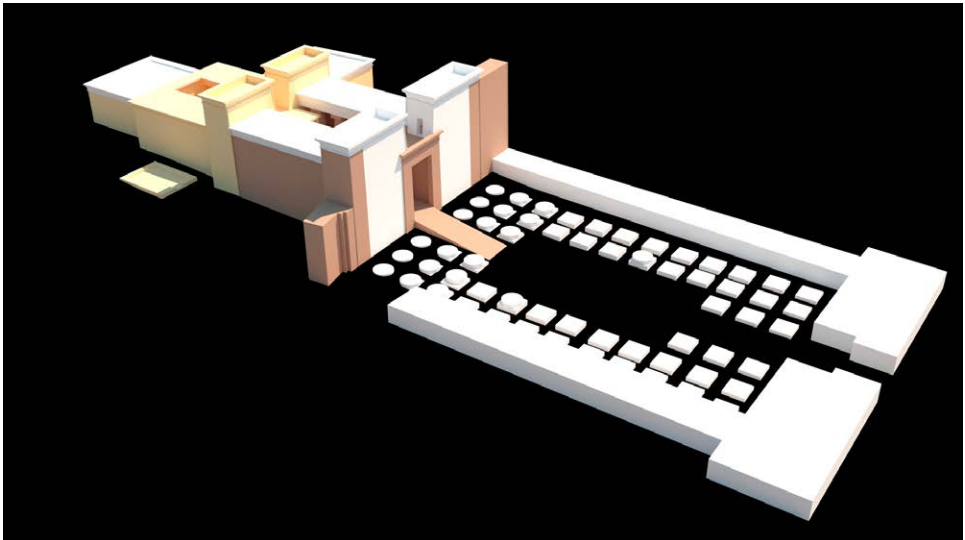


Fig. 42. B 500-Phase IV. After completing his father's work on Phase III, Ramses II (ca. 1279–1213 BC) planned a huge new court with a hypostyle hall of 56–60 columns. Barely had the massive column bases been completed, when the king evidently died, and the hall was left unfinished. (Model: Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

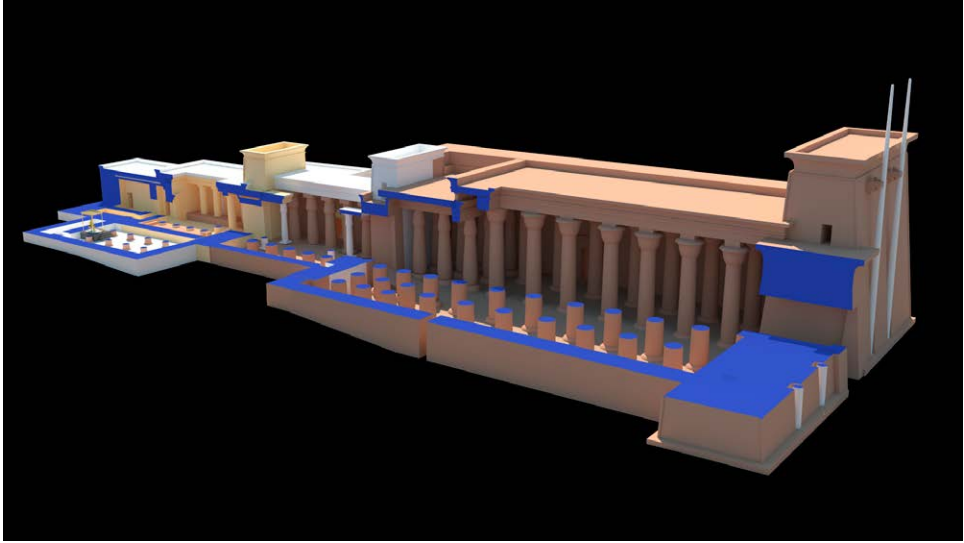


Fig. 43. B 500-Phase VIa, showing Piankhy's completion of Ramses II's planned hypostyle hall (but with 46 columns), about 720 BC. This addition also included a throne room on the NW corner, in which the throne dais was set on a huge black granite base, now broken in two pieces but still in place. (Model: N. Reshetnikova and Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

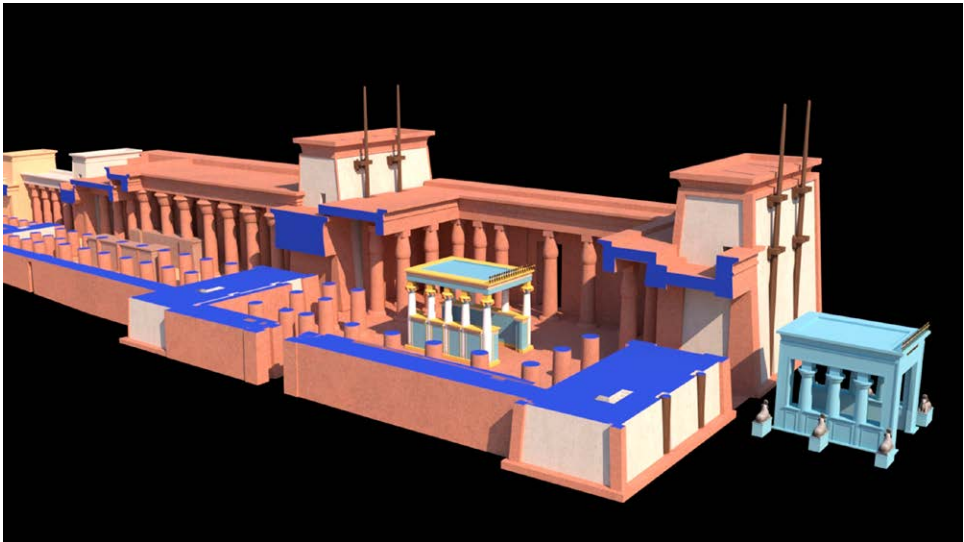


Fig. 44. Cutaway view of B 500, showing Piankhy's second extension of the temple (B 500-Phase VIb). In later Meroitic times, two kiosks were built: one (B 501, of Natakamani and Amanitore) erected inside the first court, and the second (B 551, of Queen Amanishakheto) which was built just in front of the temple. (Model: N. Reshetnikova and Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

The Statue Cache

In 1916, Reisner, by pure chance, discovered a hoard of ten granite royal statues, representing, sometimes in multiple image, Taharqo and four of his five successors on the throne of Kush to the early sixth century BC (figs. 45–48).¹¹⁷ Seven statues were lifesize or nearly so; three were of colossal scale; one represented a queen, and the heads of five were not recovered. The statues were found in two separate groups, about 100 m apart, in which fragments from the first joined those found in the second. In both, the statues had been buried with debris from a fire. Their heads, noses, and right hands had been broken off, and they appeared to have been damaged by an enemy intent on “killing” them. Since the last ruler in the series was Aspelta (ca. 600–580 BC), and since his own throne room in palace B 1200 (excavated in 2007) was found destroyed by fire, the enemy in question is presumed to have been Psamtik II (595–589 BC), the 26th Dynasty Egyptian king known to have launched an attack on Kush in 593 BC, probably to put an end forever to Kushite pretensions to his throne.¹¹⁸ Today the statues are divided among the Sudan National Museum, the Jebel Barkal Museum, the



Fig. 45. The larger statue pit at Jebel Barkal, 20 m northeast of the NE end of the first pylon of B 500, as found by Reisner in 1916. Photo B 2681, from the photographic archive of G. A. Reisner's Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Expedition. Photo: Mohammedani Ibrahim Ibrahim. © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

¹¹⁷ Dunham 1970, 17–24, pls. I–XXIII; Kendall 1996a, 468–476.

¹¹⁸ Kendall and Wolf 2011.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the art museums of Toledo, Ohio, and Richmond, Virginia, in the USA. A similar cache of statues, representing the same kings but in smaller scale, was found by the Swiss archaeologist Charles Bonnet at the site of Dokki Gel (ancient Pnubs) in 2003.¹¹⁹ These have been beautifully restored and are now exhibited as a complete group in the Kerma Museum (fig. 49).



Fig. 46. *The largest statue in the cache, at 4.18m, represented Taharqo. Sudan National Museum, Khartoum 1841 (Photo: Enrico Ferorelli).*

Fig. 47 a, b, c. *Three nearly complete statues in the series are these now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: at left, Senkamanisken (ca. 640–620 BC) and his two sons and successors, Anlamani (ca. 620–600 BC) and Aspelta (ca. 600–580 BC). The first is under life size (ht. 1.47m); that of Anlamani is 3.8 m high; and that of Aspelta, 3.32 m high. (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston MFA 23.731, 23.732 and 23.730).*



¹¹⁹ Bonnet and Valbelle 2006.



Fig. 48 a, b, c. Statue of Senkamanisken as High Priest of Amun, surviving ht. 1.23 m, Jebel Barkal Museum (Photo: F. Lovera); complete statue of Anlamani in Khartoum, ht. 1.96m, Sudan National Museum 1845 (Photo: G. Kornfeld); headless statue of Queen Amanimalolo, ht. 1.43 m, Khartoum, Sudan National Museum 1843 (Photo: E. Ferorelli)



Fig. 49. The cache of statues from Dokki Gel, found in 2003 (Photo: Bonnet and Valbelle 2005, 76).

B 501: The Kiosk of Natakamani and Amanitore

The B 501 kiosk was built as a rest station for the bark of Amun, as the heavy boat-shrine was carried out of the temple by files of priests, who bore it on a



Fig. 50. View of kiosk B 501, as excavated in Dec. 2013. (Photo: Bryan Whitney.)



Fig. 51. View of kiosk B 501 from the same angle as in fig. 50, giving an impression of its original appearance within the court. The column capitals have been restored based on the survival of a large section of a single example. (Model: N. Reshetnikova and Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

pair of carrying poles. The kiosk was erected by King Natakamani and Queen Amanitore in the mid-first century AD in the center of the first court of B 500. Today only its screen walls still stand, but it originally had ten-columns. Traces of light blue, yellow and red pigment on its exterior walls reveal that the structure was brilliantly painted. Its great width, nearly 8 m, indicates that it must have had a roof made from imported cedar beams. (figs. 44, 50, 51)¹²⁰

B 551: The Kiosk of Amanishakheto

B 551 was an entrance portico for B 500, built by Queen Amanishakheto in early first century AD. It was erected between the six ram statues of Amenhotep III (which had been brought from his temple at Soleb and re-erected there by Piankhy). Approximately 7.20 x 9.60 m, this structure differed from the B 501 kiosk by having square corners front and back, with three columns per side rising from the screen walls. Unlike the other, which was multi-colored, B 551 seems to have been painted predominantly (if not entirely) light blue, a color found on all its surviving architectural elements and which was even added to all the adjacent ram pedestals, doubtless at the same time (fig. 44, 52, 53). The opposing inside walls of B 551, now in very poor condition, bore reliefs picturing a queen of great obesity, presumed to be Amanishakheto, followed by a normally proportioned male and another female, nearly as large as the queen. The last two figures would seem to be the great lady's son and daughter. On each wall the royal family is shown approaching an enthroned Amun, followed by standing figures of Mut and Khonsu.

On the left (i.e., downstream) wall, Amun appeared human-headed. On the right (i.e., upstream) wall, he appeared ram-headed. On the two walls, the figures of Mut and Khonsu were identical except for an important detail. On the right wall, signifying the gods of the South, the goddess Mut bears three diagonal grooves on her cheek, indicating the presence of *shulukh*, the traditional Sudanese tribal scars.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Dunham 1970, pl. LII b, c (details of inside NE wall relief).

¹²¹ Kendall 1989, 672–680, figs. 5–8, pl. IV.



Fig. 52. Kiosk B 551 as excavated, March 2014. (Photo: Bryan Whitney.)

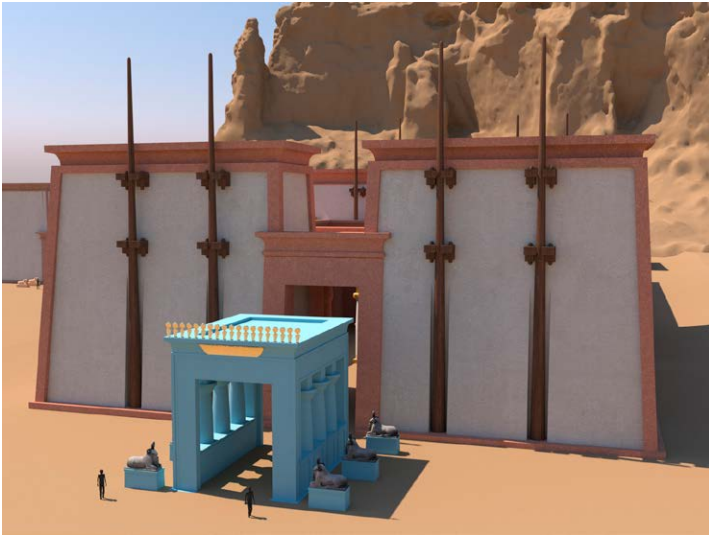


Fig. 53. Kiosk B 551 as tentatively restored, in front of the first pylon of B 500. (Model: Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

B 560/561: The Meroitic Mammisi and Kiosk

In Meritic times, the avenue leading into the Great Temple seems to have been flanked by perhaps six smaller temples (i.e., three on a side), of which only one has yet been excavated. This temple has proven to be a so-called

“mammisi” or “birth house” (B 561), fronted by a kiosk (B 560), a complex built to provide a symbolic setting in which the birth of a child god (Horus or Khonsu) could be celebrated. The temple, built mainly of baked brick, had a stone sanctuary whose inner walls were carved with scenes devoid of inscription (now in very fragile condition) depicting the birth of the child god, with his goddess-mother, surrounded by protective spirits. The builder seems to have been the king Natakamani of the mid-first century AD. The stone kiosk, built in front of this temple, was constructed perhaps a generation later by King Amanakharakerema, whose name survives on one of the architraves.¹²² These two buildings, discovered and excavated in 2014–15, had to be reburied due to their very fragile condition (figs. 54–57).



Fig. 54. B 561 shown from the rear, as excavated March 6, 2015, looking through the axis toward the pylon, which appears to have collapsed forward in an earthquake. The temple, a mammisi or birth house, was built in the first century and destroyed in the third century AD, after which it was occupied by squatters. It appears to be one of perhaps six temples that were built perpendicular to the causeway leading into B 500. These remain to be excavated. (Photo; Bryan Whitney.)

¹²² Kuchertz 2018.



Fig. 55 a, b. Reliefs on the SE and NW door jambs of the sanctuary of B 561, showing the builder-king Natakamani greeting the god Atum (left) and the Moon God Khonsu (right). (Photos: T. Kendall.)



Fig. 56. The kiosk B 560, as excavated, fall 2015. (Photo; Bryan Whitney.)



Fig. 57. B 560 and 561 as they are thought to have appeared when built. Each would originally have had a much more complex color and decorative scheme. (Model: N. Reshetnikova and Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

B 600: An Enthronement Pavilion

B 600, built by Thutmose IV (1390–1352 BC), was the first (known) stone structure erected at Jebel Barkal. It was placed high up against the cliff and was accessed by a frontal stairway, now destroyed.¹²³ In the mid-seventh century BC a new and larger temple (B 700) was built beside it. Probably about the first century BC, both buildings were badly damaged by a cliff collapse and rebuilt.

B 600 was apparently not a temple but a building where the king came before the public to sit upon his throne during coronations and other ceremonies. This is clear by the fact that in the rear chamber there is a stepped throne base. Sets of four holes on its top surface still contained bits of gold foil when excavated, revealing that the king sat on a richly decorated throne here under canopies with gilded legs (figs. 58a, b, 59).

¹²³ Dunham 1970, 63–64; Kendall and Wolf 2011.



Fig. 58a. Aerial view showing the present state of B 600 (foreground) and the Napatan temple B 700 (background).



Fig. 58b. Reconstruction view of B 600 and B 700 as they may have appeared in the first century BC. (Model: N. Reshetnikova and Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

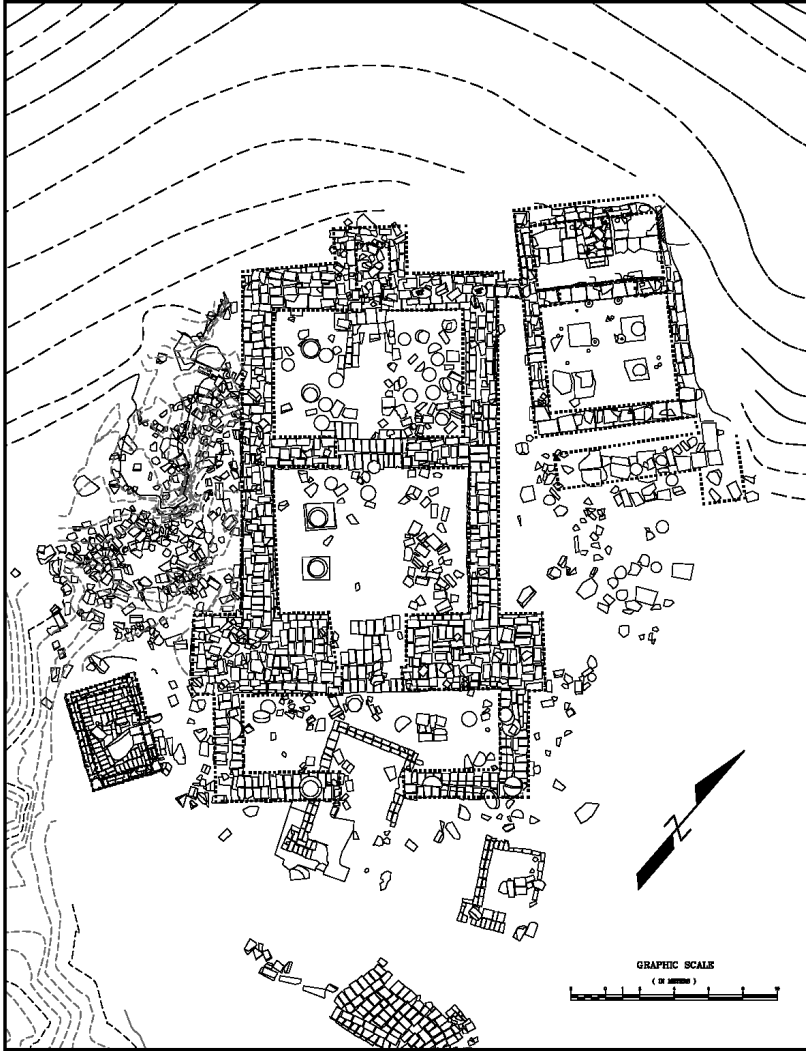


Fig. 59. Map of the existing state of temples B 700, B 600, and the three small *talatat* chapels: B 700-sub 2 (left); B 700-sub 1 (center); and B 700-sub 3 (right). (Plan: Robert R. Rosa III)

B 700: Atlanersa's Temple of Osiris-Dedwen

B 700 was a temple built by the successive Kushite kings Atlanersa and Senkamanisken (ca. 653–630 BC) probably for use in some episode of the coronation ritual (figs. 58, 59).¹²⁴ The temple was dedicated to Amun, but

¹²⁴ Reisner 1918; Kendall 2014b, 675–678.

its sanctuary was inscribed with a long hymn to Osiris, god of the Underworld,¹²⁵ and its rear wall contained a false door appearing to give magical access into the mountain cliff. (Later this was replaced with a small chamber in which small figures of Osiris were found buried under the floor). From mythological texts we know that when Amun, as the sun god Re, set in the West, he was thought by the Egyptians to have temporarily died and to have become a “living *ba*” or “soul” traversing the Underworld by night in a boat.¹²⁶ Each midnight he was thought to arrive at a mound in which Osiris dwelt, and by entering this mound and by uniting with Osiris, he was thought to be reborn as the new sun of dawn. In the middle of the B 700 sanctuary Reisner, in 1916, found a magnificent granite stand for the support of Amun’s gilded boat (“bark”) shrine, which was brought on certain occasions from B 500, borne on carrying poles on the shoulders of priests and set on this stand. (The stand is now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. MFA 23.728) (figs. 60–62).¹²⁷ Since god and king were considered aspects of each other, one assumes that when the bark of Amun was brought from B 500 into this Osirian temple, Amun had temporarily “died” (i.e., figuratively set,

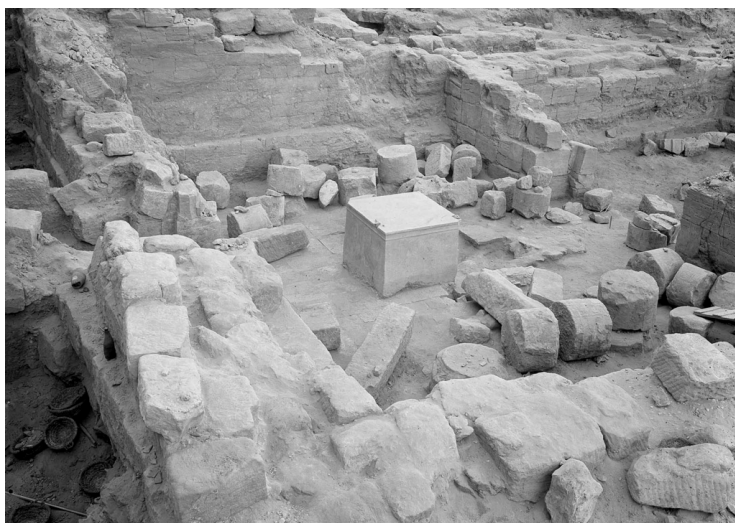


Fig. 60. The granite bark stand of Atlanersa, as found in 1916 by Reisner, inside B 700. Photo B 2742, from the photographic archive of G. A. Reisner’s Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Expedition. Photographer: Mohammedani Ibrahim Ibrahim. April 3, 1916. © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

¹²⁵ Priese 2005.

¹²⁶ Darnell and Darnell 2018, 1–15.

¹²⁷ Dunham 1970, 67–74, pls. XXX–XXXI.

as the Sun) and had become a “living *ba*” – meaning that his earthly counterpart, the king, had probably also died. His “rebirth” could only take place when he “united” with Osiris in his “mound” (i.e., inside B 700), an event which probably coincided with the selection of a new living king, signifying his own “rebirth,” the repeat of Creation, and “sunrise,” which meant that Amun’s bark could again be returned to B 500.



Fig. 61. The granite stand from B 700 made to support the bark of Amun from B 500. The fine relief scenes on all sides show King Atlanersa (ca. 653–640 BC) supporting the heavens and uniting the Nile Valley under his rule. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 23.728.



Fig. 62 a, b. Details from the relief on the sides of the bark stand from B 700: at left, King Atlanersa, wearing the Cap Crown with double uraeus. At right, the king as the air god Shu (and first-born son of the Creator god), supporting the sky.



Figs. 63 a, b. Colossal statues cut to flank the doorway leading into B 700. The statue at left was found by Reisner fallen in front of the entrance to B 700, where it had been set up originally on the west (left) side of the doorway. It was apparently toppled, and its head broken off, during the raid on Napata by the Egyptian army of Psamtik II in 593 BC. The statue was later brought to Khartoum, restored and set up in the Sudan National Museum, Khartoum. (Photo by Enrico Ferorelli). The statue at right, planned to be placed on the east (right) side of the doorway of B 700, was broken in the quarry at Tombos and simply left there (Kendall 2014, 683–684).

B 700-sub Chapels: Open-Air Aten Shrines?

These were three very small, single-roomed chapels, found in front of B 700, each one built out of “*talata*” blocks (figs. 59, 64, 65).¹²⁸ These cubit-long blocks, used only during the late 18th Dynasty, tie these chapels to the period of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten (ca. 1353–1336 BC), who especially favored such buildings for the worship of his new god, the sun as Disk, called the Aten. These tiny buildings are actually identical to a type of small roofless chapel, built by the dozens in long lines, pictured in Akhenaten’s reliefs at Karnak, in which each chapel is shown to contain a single table of offerings over which the divine sun-disk (the Aten) hovers, while the king visits them one by one. Judging by these survivors, there must have been many more such buildings at Jebel Barkal. Their existence here proves that the king probably briefly outlawed the cult of Amun and transformed the Jebel Barkal site into an Aten sanctuary.

¹²⁸ Kendall 2009.



Figs. 64 a, b. *The remains of chapel B 700-sub 1 (left) under the portico walls of the Napatan temple B 700, and the remains of chapel B 700-sub 3 immediately to its right (east) (see fig. 59). (Photos: Pawel Wolf).*



Fig. 65. *The Aten chapels (B 700-sub 1 and 3) restored. (Model: Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)*

B 800/900: The Temple of Amun of Karnak

B 800, founded by the early Napatan kings, was built as the temple of the anthropomorphic “Amun of Karnak” at Jebel Barkal.¹²⁹ By building a temple at Napata to honor the Egyptian Amun, the early Kushite kings were able to establish the Theban god locally to support their claims to the Egyptian throne. The situation was seemingly paralleled in the 18th Dynasty when the Egyptian kings built Luxor Temple at Thebes, which established the Nubian Amun (as source of the “royal *ka*”) in the Egyptian capital to support their own claims to the Nubian throne. B 800 was built 50 m SW (=downstream) of and parallel to B 500, the great temple of the Nubian Amun. The small temple on the north corner of B 800 is known as B 900. In its latest form (fig. 66d), B 900 seems to have been a temple to the Meroitic lion god Apedemak (figs. 66, 67).

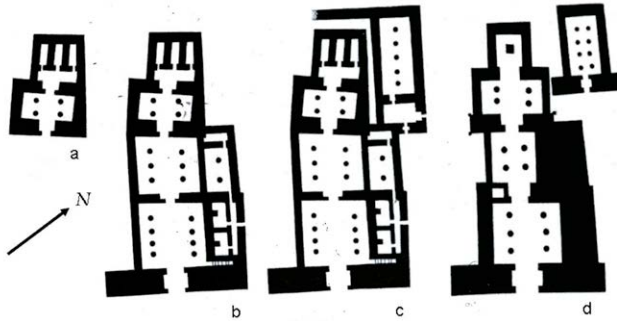


Fig. 66. The evolution of the complex B 800-900: a) “B 800 nucleus” (attributed to Alara, ca. 780–760 BC); b) “B 800-first” (attributed to Kashta, ca. 760–747 BC); c) “B 800-first” with “B 900-first” (dated to the late reign of Piankhy, ca. 720–716 BC); and d) “B 800-second” (Anlaman, ca. 720–700 BC) with “B 900-second” (Meroitic, third century BC or later)



Fig. 67. B 800/900 as it may have looked about the third century BC. (Model: Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

¹²⁹ Reisner 1920; Dunham 1970, 77–81; Kendall 2014b, 663–666.

B 1000: The Great Well

B 1000 was a large well with an internal spiral staircase at the NW corner of B 500. Excavated by Reisner in 1916 and later reburied by him, it was 10 m in diameter. Excavations reached a depth of 5 m before it filled with water. Its location indicates that it was built by the Egyptians in Dynasty 18, contemporaneous with the earliest phases of the temple.

B 1100: The Temple of the Royal Uraeus Goddesses

B 1100 is a destroyed temple 30m to the right (NE) of B 300, directly in front of the pinnacle, used in royal coronation ceremonies (figs. 35, 68–71).¹³⁰ Sadly, so little of it now remains that its ground plan cannot even be reconstructed. Like B 200 and 300, it was almost entirely quarried away by stone scavengers. Its remaining blocks reveal that it had three building phases: an Egyptian phase (late 18th Dynasty), a Napatan phase (probably attributable to Taharqo), and a Meroitic phase, attributable to Natakamani and Amanitore (mid-first century AD). Meroitic relief blocks found here suggest that B 1100 was dedicated to the royal uraeus goddesses Nekhbet and Wadjet, just as B 200 and 300 were dedicated to Amun's uraeus goddesses Mut and Hathor. The temple's position, directly in front of the Jebel Barkal pinnacle, can be no coincidence, for, when viewed from this angle, the pinnacle appears to be a natural colossus of a royal uraeus, crowned with the White Crown (fig. 3, 4). B 1100 almost certainly housed the sanctuaries called "Great House" and "House of Flame," which were those of the twin uraeus goddesses, which the king entered during his coronation to receive his crowns and twin uraei. A rear doorway in B 1200, which leads directly to B 1100, preserves a text indicating that when one went through the door he would arrive at these two shrines. Another goddess said to preside over them was Weret-Hekau, goddess of the royal crowns.

¹³⁰ Kendall 1997, 337–343

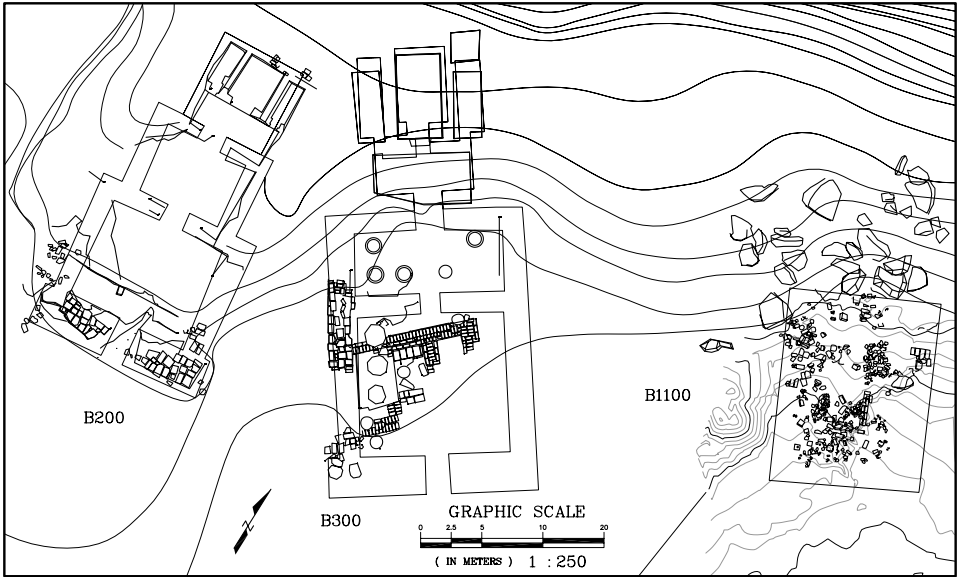


Fig. 68. General plan of temples B 200, B 300 (with B 300-sub) and B 1100 at right (cf. fig. 35). (Map: R. C. Rosa III)



Fig. 69. Photo showing the location of B 1100 in relation to both the pinnacle and B 200 and 300. Notice how closely the pinnacle, from this angle, looks like a uraeus (left) wearing the White Crown.

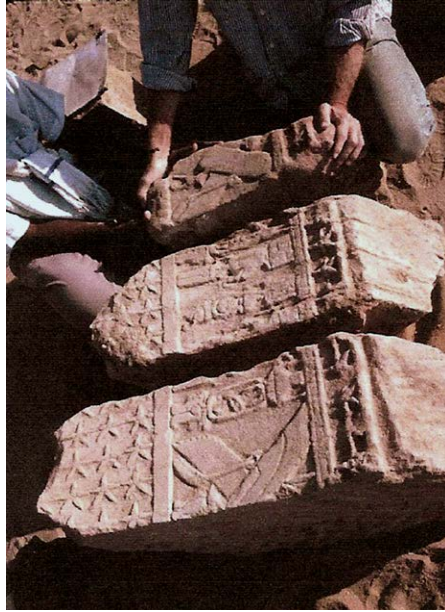


Fig. 70. Meroitic relief blocks from a small, vaulted chamber (see fig. 71), found in the ruins of B 1100. (Photo: Susanne Gänsicke).



Fig. 71. The blocks in fig. 70 show the two royal uraeus goddesses, Nekhbet (left) and Wadjet (right), represented as vultures, flanking a pair of cartouches bearing the throne name of Queen Amanitore. The cartouches flank pairs of squatting figures of Amun, who face the fetish of a goddess, face frontal, who wears the Double Crown. (Photos: T. Kendall)

B 1200: The Napatan Palace

B 1200, the Napatan palace at Jebel Barkal, was in continuous use from about 750 to 100 BC.¹³¹ Until now this sprawling ruin of mud brick walls southwest of B 800 has only been partially excavated, but a recent geophysical examination suggests that it may originally have been about 70m square (figs. 72, 73). It was not one building but perhaps five buildings, built on top of each other, each with a slightly different plan. An inscription of King Harsiotef (late fourth century BC) tells us that in his day “the king’s house” had over sixty rooms. It seems to have been abandoned as a royal residence by the mid-first century BC, replaced by B 100. Excavations in B 1200 have exposed several large rooms, some of which are clearly throne rooms.



Fig. 72. Photo of the excavated walls of B 1200 (foreground) and those of B 100 (background), as revealed by G. A. Reisner in February 1919, as seen from the summit of Jebel Barkal. (Photo A 2757, from the photographic archive of G. A. Reisner’s Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Expedition. Photographer: Mohammedani Ibrahim Ibrahim © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

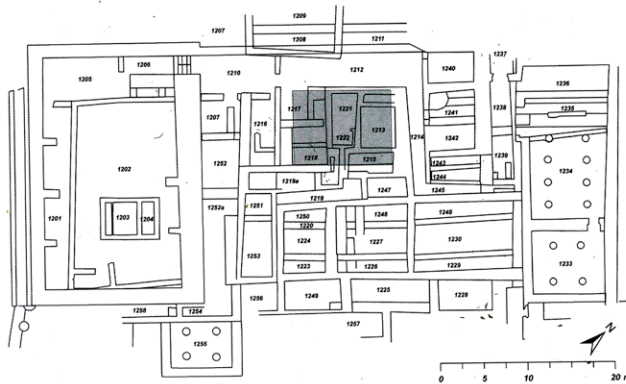


Fig. 73. Plan of the northwestern sector of B 1200, as excavated and drawn by Reisner, showing the location (shaded) of the throne room of Aspelta, beneath later walls, excavated by the NCAM Mission in 2007 (shown in figs. 73–75).

¹³¹ Kendall 1991; Kendall and Wolf 2007.



Fig. 74. Throne room of Aspelta after excavation in 2007, looking northeast. (Photo: Pawel Wolf.)



Fig. 75. Tentative reconstruction of the Aspelta throne room. The walls were extensively painted with murals (today preserved only in tiny fragments); the plastered ceiling was painted with decorative patterns, and the columns were brightly painted, carved with registers of goddesses, and crowned with ram-head capitals. An inscription beside each goddess recorded her words, which were meant to protect the king from harm during the transition from one year to the next during the five epagomenal days of the New Year ceremony, which occurred in mid-summer. (Model: Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)



Fig. 76. One of four ram head column capitals found in the Aspelta throne room, B 1200. (Photo: T. Kendall.)

B 1700: House of the High Priest of Amun?

B 1700 is a building about 30 m northeast of B 500, which was discovered by means of magnetometry in 2000 and clarified by the same process in 2006. It was first excavated in January and February 2015, when about half of it was cleared (figs. 77, 78).¹³² B 1700 has proven to be a palatial structure, about 31x33 m – but so severely denuded that almost nothing of its superstructure survives. Today it exists mainly as a network of doorless mud brick foundation walls, packed with broken pottery, mud bricks, ashes, and weathered sandstone blocks. Some of these blocks bear traces of relief decoration. The exposed walls formed a platform that originally supported stone columns and architectural elements, fragments of which still lie about in very worn remnants. Fragments of glazed tiles scattered in and around B 1700 give evidence that the building was richly decorated. The structure is much too small to have been a royal residence, but, given its proximity and axial similarity to B 500, it may have been a priests' house, perhaps even the residence of the local High Priest of Amun. Radiocarbon dates and the recovered pottery suggest it was in use between the first century BC and the first century AD.

¹³² Lebedev 2021.

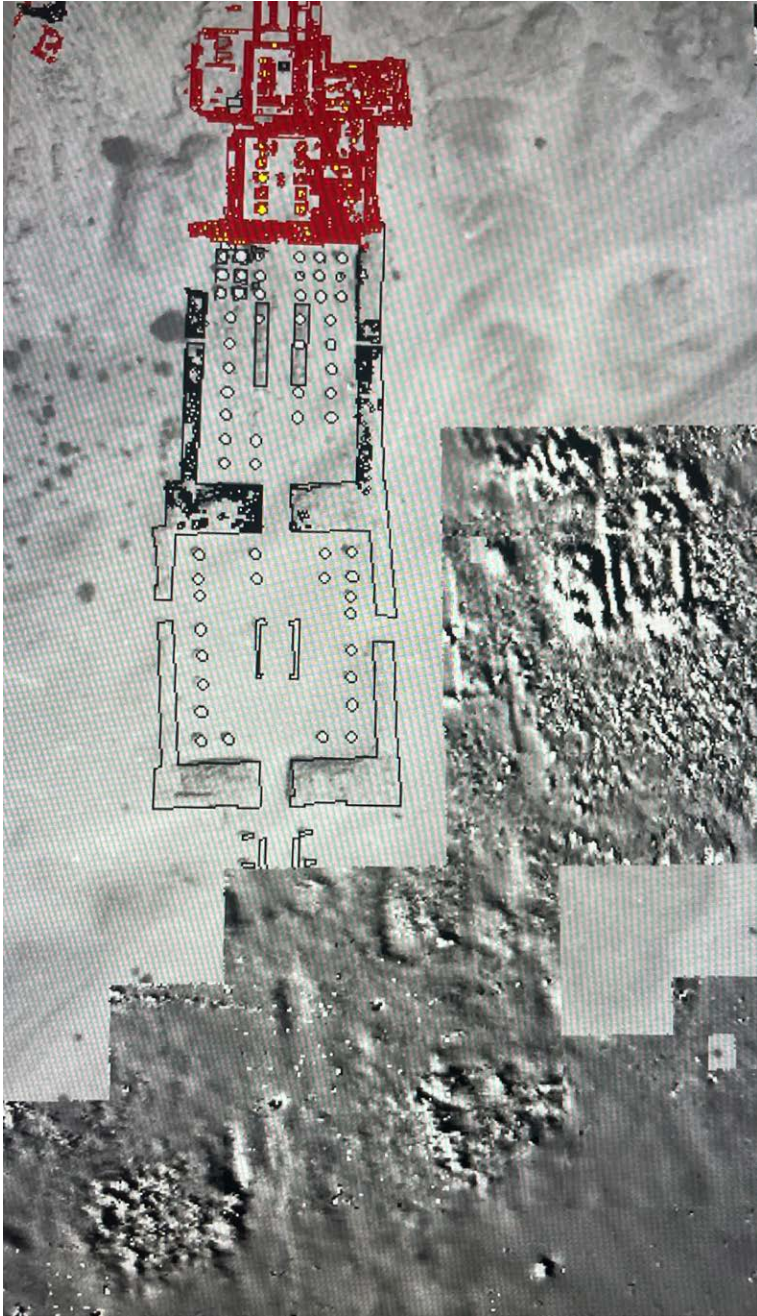


Fig. 77. Magnetic survey image generated in 2006 showing B 500 with previously unknown buried structures not visible from the surface: at right (NE): B 1700; below right: the mammisi temple and kiosk (B 560-561) and opposite that: a still unexcavated temple (B 570). (Geophysics: Meg Watters, T. Goldman, R. Wutzler, Pawel Wolf and Moh. Abdul Wahab.)



Fig. 78. B 1700, under excavation, February 2015, looking south. The first pylon of B 500 is visible in the distance at right. (Photo: T. Kendall)

B 2500: A Meroitic Temple inside Karima Town

B 2500 is a Meroitic temple of unique type, which lies about .7 km east of Jebel Barkal within the town of Karima (Abasseya District) (fig. 79a, b). It was excavated and restored by the Spanish Archaeological Mission of Wahat Projects in 2014–15, led by Dr. Montserrat Diaz de Cerio, in collaboration with the staff of Dongola University (Karima Branch).¹³³ The temple was rectangular in plan, raised on a platform, accessed by ramps (possibly stepped) at front (E) and rear (W). The east ramp, the most monumental, was built with sandstone blocks; the west ramp, with redbrick and mudbrick, following the same constructive pattern as the podium. The temple on the platform was surrounded by brightly painted columns (one of which has been re-erected inside the Barkal Museum). The temple appears to have consisted of a raised rectangular chamber surrounded by columns. The date of the structure seems to be from the second century BC.

¹³³ Diaz de Cerio 2017.

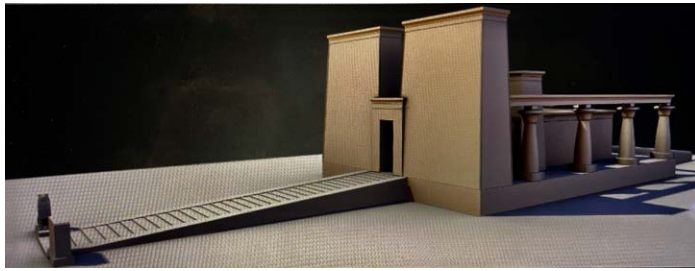


Fig. 79 a, b. *The ramp and platform of temple B 2500, as recently excavated (above), and the temple as imagined and restored (below) by the Spanish team of Wahat Projects.*

The Jebel Barkal Quarries

The temples and pyramids at Jebel Barkal were built of blocks hewn from white and red sandstone beds found in several locations close to the mountain, but the stone of the mountain itself seems never to have been cut, probably because of the hill's sacred status as the residence of a god. Today the largest quarry site, called Khor el-Harazawin (Coordinates N 18° 29.491 E 31° 47.979), is 4.8 km from Jebel Barkal on the south side of the upper road leading to El-Kurru.¹³⁴ The stone workings lie on the west side of a canyon and can be seen at two levels. The upper workings nearly encircle the top of a small hill (figs. 80, 81); the more extensive lower workings are in the wadi below. Overall, the quarry area is about 135 m east-west by 95 m north-south. At both levels the quarry cuts have created nearly continuous, serpentine walls up to 2.5 m high.

¹³⁴ Harrell and Mohamed 2020.

According to noted geologist James Harrell of the University of Toledo:

The two levels produced very different kinds of sandstone with the better quality for building coming from the lower workings....The quarry walls preserve the scars of extracted rectangular blocks in a range of sizes but mostly less than 1 m in maximum dimension, and also of column drums of more uniform size, mostly 70–90 cm in diameter and about 50 cm high. There are also some partially extracted blocks still in the quarry.

The process of block extraction would have been the same in all periods: a vertical separation trench was first cut with a chisel around the target block and this was then detached from the underlying bedrock by hammering one or more chisels (or wedges in the Meroitic period) along the base of the block's open side. The steeply inclined, parallel grooves visible on all the quarry walls were left by the chisels when the separation trenches were cut. In the Napatan and earlier periods, the chisels were probably of bronze with these subsequently replaced by ones of harder iron.... The chisels were struck with wooden mallets and possibly also iron hammers in Meroitic times. Levers, probably of wood, and rope would also have been used to complete the extraction process and maneuver the blocks out of the quarry and onto the sledges or wagons that took them to Jebel Barkal.



Fig. 80. Stone cuttings in the Khor el-Harazawin quarries, with Jebel Barkal visible in the distance nearly 5 km away.



Fig. 81. Stone cuttings at Khor el-Harazawin, with partially cut column drums originally destined for the Jebel Barkal Temples.

IX. Kingship and Ritual at Jebel Barkal¹³⁵

A. The Napatan and Meroitic Periods in Ancient Kush

The 400-year period in Sudan following Kushite rule in Egypt is known as the “Napatan Period,” since it used to be thought that during this era Napata was the political capital of the kingdom. It is now generally assumed that this city, except perhaps in the eighth and seventh centuries BC, may never have been more than the chief religious center of the kingdom and that the real political capital, at least from the early sixth century BC on, was Meroë, about 275 km to the southeast. Throughout the period, though, all royal burials took place in the vicinity Napata: some twenty kings and fifty-three queens at Nuri, with perhaps one king and queen of the third century BC (at the very end of the period) buried at el-Kurru¹³⁶ and possibly five other

¹³⁵ This section has been written using the primary data from the ancient written sources themselves. These sources, both ancient Kushite texts written in the Egyptian language and ancient Greek accounts, have been collected and published in four volumes, available online, with translations and commentaries by T. Eide, T. Hägg, R.H. Pierce, and L. Török. This is the series *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum* (Bergen, Norway: 1994–2002). In the following pages the ancient documents have been cited by references to this work, abbreviated “FHN,” with volume and page number.

¹³⁶ Recent excavations at el-Kurru have shown that the single Napatan king’s pyramid there (Ku. I) may never have been occupied.

kings with their queens buried at Jebel Barkal. Of all the kings of the Napatan Period, however, only seven are known from historical inscriptions. The rest are known only by the names preserved in their tombs.

The surviving royal documents of the period, all written in Egyptian, reveal that the rulers, if indeed they made Meroë their primary residence, continued to make regular visits to Jebel Barkal for their coronations, for the New Year ceremonies which coincided with the annual rise of the Nile (in July), and for consultation of Amun's oracle there on matters of state and the conduct of war. During these journeys, they would also have visited the other sanctuaries of the kingdom further downstream (such as Kawa, Pnubs, and Tabo), celebrated festivals at each, initiated building projects, presented gifts to the local gods, and initiated military actions, if required, against the peoples on their periphery.

The Napatan Period, which came to an end in the mid-third century BC, was an era when the Kushites rather slavishly imitated Egyptian models in art, architecture, and burial customs and practiced a religion little different from that of the Egyptians of the New Kingdom. During this time royal inscriptions were written exclusively in the Egyptian language using Egyptian hieroglyphic writing.

The era in Kush after the Napatan Period – from the mid-third century BC to the fourth century AD – is known as the “Meroitic Period.” This era is thought to have begun when the rulers transferred the site of their pyramids to Meroë, a moment which also broadly coincides with a marked shift away from Egyptian cultural and artistic norms. It was this period which saw the introduction of new gods into the pantheon as well as the appearance of new forms of royal costume and distinctly central African standards of beauty (such as facial scarifications and female obesity),¹³⁷ which also perhaps implies dynastic power shifts to families of more southern origin. The period also saw the introduction of an original Kushite alphabetic script, with both hieroglyphic and cursive letter forms, and the increasingly dominant use of the native language (“Meroitic”) for formal inscriptions.¹³⁸ Since the Meroitic language has not yet been deciphered except at the most rudimentary level, our knowledge of post-Napatan, Meroitic history is dependent almost en-

¹³⁷ Kendall 1989, 655–658, 672–680.

¹³⁸ Rilly 2019, vol. 1, 129–151.

tirely on archaeological data and on a few surviving contemporary Greek and Roman commentaries.

B. Napatan Kingship

Kushite kingship traditions and mythology during the Napatan Period are hardly distinguishable from the Egyptian, although certain non-Egyptian features, such as the rules of succession, clearly indicate an original indigenous kingship tradition. Whether the Kushites had any memory of a native Nubian (Kerma?) kingship prior to the Egyptian conquest is not known, but the chiefs of Napata who appeared out of the mists of the ninth century BC at el-Kurru, and who within a century went on to conquer Egypt, always cast themselves as the direct successors and heirs of the imperial Egyptian pharaohs.¹³⁹ Any true blood relationship between them, however, is almost certainly out of the question. In their minds their relationship to the New Kingdom pharaohs would have been based solely on the myth of their common descent from the primeval Amun at Jebel Barkal via the “royal *ka*” (i.e. the eternal divine essence of kingship inherited physically by each king, as the son of the god, and passed from one king to the next since the beginning of time).

C. The Royal Myth

Like the Egyptians, the Kushites believed that their kingship was handed down to them directly from Amun in his role as Re (the Sun God), from the moment of Creation (FHN I, 56, 236, 237). Just as the pharaohs, at least from the fifteenth century BC, identified Jebel Barkal as the place where the primeval Amun granted the crown, the later Kushites perpetuated this legend and presented their rule over Egypt as a continuity of the rule of the pharaohs. After they lost control of Egypt, first to the invading Assyrians and then to the rulers of Sais (Dynasty 26), they continued to follow the mythic kingship tradition of Jebel Barkal, confident in the belief that they and they alone were the possessors of the original kingship of the Nile Valley, and they reconceptualized the land of Kush as “the Two Lands” (i.e. Egypt) itself (FHN II, 406; 447).

¹³⁹ In FHN I, 221 it is clear that King Anlamani considered his forebears to be the kings of Egypt, yet in FHN I, 132, 172, 220 the royal predecessors of the Kushite kings are referred to simply as “the ancestors.” In FHN I 237, Amun is said to have been “the god of the kings of Kush since the time of Re” (i.e. “since the beginning of time”). Perhaps we are to understand by this that in the Kushite mind the ancient pharaohs and the ancient “kings of Kush” fell into the same category.

Like the king of Egypt, the king of Kush was considered by his people to be a god, the “bodily” son of Amun-Re. He was also conceived as the god’s earthly manifestation, endowed with the same divine creative powers (FHN I 86, 147, 236, 244; II, 405, 431). His coronation, thus, was thought to be a replay of the creation of the world, when the state, by virtue of the new king’s powers, was born anew (FHN I 205). A similar metaphoric repeat of the “beginning of time” also took place on each New Year’s Day in mid-summer, which marked the beginning of the Nile’s rise, the end of the killing heat of summer, and the renewal of life and fertility. The inundation led to the planting and harvest of the crops in the fall, which was followed by the cooling, salubrious days of mid-winter. These in turn led to the rising heat and violent sandstorms of spring and the death-like torpor of summer when the whole cycle repeated. Each of these seasons had festivals that required the active ritual participation of the king to ensure that the kingdom successfully passed through them without undue suffering at the hands of feared deities or rebellious enemy peoples.

D. The Coronation

The most important ritual event in the kingdom of Kush was the coronation of the king, which generally took place first in a great public spectacle at Jebel Barkal, the crown-shaped mountain in which the primary aspect of Amun, as grantor of kingship and the royal crowns, was thought to reside (FHN I 234, II, 402–403, 406, 475, 479) (figs. 3, 4, 5, 6, 17). This ceremony was then repeated on a smaller scale at each of the other great Amun sanctuaries of the kingdom: Sanam, Kawa, Pnubs and perhaps Tabo (FHN I 219, II 412–414).¹⁴⁰ Most of the known royal stelae of the Napatan Period describe this ceremony, and it was even one of the few Kushite rituals described by the Greek historian Diodorus (FHN II, 646). Probably a version of the crowning ceremony was held each New Year during a king’s reign.

In Kush, after the death of a king, the choice of a successor was said to have been left to Amun of Jebel Barkal himself – at least that was the official propaganda (FHN I, 232–244). The reality was that the successor was probably already known before the old king’s death. The god’s formal oracular choice at the mountain simply made it official. We know from their texts that the kings Amannote-irike and Nastasen knew they were to assume

¹⁴⁰ After the early sixth century BC, the temple at Sanam was destroyed by fire and was apparently not restored. Coronation ceremonies outside Jebel Barkal were repeated thereafter only at Kawa and Pnubs.

the royal office even before they went before the god at Napata (FHN II 400–401, 475–479).

Diodorus tells us that the priests “elected” the king from among themselves and that the chosen man was accepted by the multitude when formally “seized” by the god. Once a candidate was identified as the new king, the people immediately prostrated themselves before him and honored him as a god (FHN II, 646). The story parallels almost precisely what we know from actual Napatan texts, except that the royal successor seems to have been chosen not from among the priests but from among the king’s surviving brothers or nephews, most of whom were probably officers in the army. The army, in fact, seems always to have been present at these events (FHN I 234 238, 400–402). Although in Egypt a pharaoh was customarily succeeded by his own son, in Kush he was succeeded by one of his brothers or by the son of one of his sisters (FHN I, 153; 191). Only after his successor’s reign was over could his own son ascend to the throne.

The most complete account of the enthronement ceremony is the Coronation Stele of Aspelta (FHN I, 232–244), dated to about 600 BC. In this text, the king states that after the unexpected death of the reigning king (who was his brother, Anlamani), the army and all the great officials gathered at Jebel Barkal to ask the god (through his priests) to signify his choice of his successor. The priests then entered the great temple together with the army commanders and officials, and, prostrating themselves before the god, put the question to him. Then all the deceased king’s brothers were paraded before Amun (evidently in statue form), who declined to choose any of them. Finally, when Aspelta appeared before Amun, the god spoke: “This is your king.” (How this was done, we may only imagine!). At this point, Aspelta entered the sanctuary, found there the crowns and scepters of former kings, put on the crown of his predecessor, and stepped forth into the open again, where he was acclaimed by the massed throngs and troops (figs. 47b, c).

Other textual data indicate that the king’s mother played a paramount role. We know, for example, that the actual crowning of the king took place in a separate temple called the “Great House,” which at Jebel Barkal was temple B 1100, which was constructed directly beneath its pinnacle.¹⁴¹ As we have seen, this natural rock formation was thought to be a colossal image of the royal uraeus, which was the emblem of kingship (fig. 3, 4). After his

¹⁴¹ See above, pp. 83–85.

formal selection by Amun, the new king went from his palace (B 1200) into the “Great House” (B 1100), which was also sacred to the goddess of the royal crowns, Weret-Hekau (“Great of Enchantments”), and there she was said to put the crown on his head.¹⁴² The Nastasen stele, however, informs us that it was the king’s mother who “gave the crown,” and thus it was apparently she who impersonated the goddess during the ceremony (FHN II, 472). Once crowned, the king presumably moved from B 700, where he honored his deceased predecessor, to B 600, where he mounted the stairway in the presence of the gathered crowd, entered the structure and sat down on the throne, which was raised on a dais and overarched by a double gilded baldachin.

E. Royal Names and Titles

In the Meroitic language, the king of Kush was known as the *Kore* (“king”) (FHN I, 285). In formal texts in the Egyptian language, however, he assumed all the normal titles of an Egyptian pharaoh as well as the pharaoh’s usual series of five names. Only two of these names were used with any regularity: the name he was born with and a special “throne name,” which he received when he was publicly acknowledged by the god as his own son. This name identified the new king as a unique aspect of the “royal *ka*” (or human facsimile) of Amun as the Sun God (FHN I 61, 85, 108, 219–220). Among examples of such names are Ankh-ka-Re “The *ka* of the Sun lives” (Anlamani), Ka-ankh-Re, “Living *ka* of the Sun” (Nastasen), Mery-ka-Re, “Beloved *ka* of the Sun” (Aspelta), Sekhem-ka-Re, “The *ka* of the Sun is Powerful” (Malonaqen), and Nefer-ka-Re, “Beautiful is the *ka* of the Sun” (Analma’aye). While some throne names made no reference to the *ka*, they nevertheless expressed the same sentiment: for example, Sa-mery-Amun, “Beloved Son of Amun” (Harsiotef), or A’a-Kheper-Re, “Great is the manifestation of the Sun” (Amani-nataki-lebte).

F. Royal Insignia.

The preferred crown of the king of Kush was the “Cap Crown” (figs. 17, 46–48, 62a), to which were affixed two uraei (cobra diadems) rather than the usual single uraeus worn by Egyptian kings.¹⁴³ This skull-cap crown, as we have seen, apparently simulated the silhouette of Jebel Barkal, which was

¹⁴² The Kushite archaeological evidence from Jebel Barkal parallels exactly the Egyptian evidence for the coronation, presented by A. Gardiner 1953, 13–31. See also Murnane 1995, 230–234.

¹⁴³ Russmann 1974, 27–44; Török 1987; 1997, 284–287; Leahy 1992, 223–240.

said to be a “*ka* (primeval manifestation) of the crown of Re.”¹⁴⁴ According to myth, this crown – which evolved from the White Crown (visible in the summit of the Jebel Barkal pinnacle) (figs. 3, 6, 15) – was handed down to the kings of Kush at the beginning of time (FHN II, 472). The cap crown was also usually worn with a distinctive cord necklace, which had ram-head pendants, representing the face of the Amun of Jebel Barkal, fastened to it at the throat and from each end. Identical pendants were also often worn by the kings as earrings.

G. The Royal Women

Like the king, who was thought to be a son and living manifestation of Amun-Re (as Sun God), his mother, wives, and sisters were thought to be “daughters of Re” and hence living manifestations of the great goddesses, who were also thought to be the god’s daughters, consorts, and mothers (FHN I, 217, 240). Conceptually these goddesses were also thought to be merged in the god’s uraeus, which was known as the “Eye of Re (=Sun’s Eye)” – and thus they were all believed to be embodied in the Jebel Barkal pinnacle (p. 13 and fig. 5). The king and his mother, sisters, and daughters, therefore, were thought to mirror on earth the family of gods in heaven and thus could assume by magic any of the diverse roles, names, and identities of the deities in rituals (FHN I, 154–155, 223, 240; II, 405). Since the goddesses were understood to be the protectors of Amun-Re, especially when appearing in uraeus-form, the women of the royal family must also have been seen as the king’s protectors and his own living uraei.

The female hierarchy of the royal family was probably based on seniority of bloodline and age, with the king’s mother having the highest status (fig. 82). Since it was her son who was recognized as the child of Amun, it was also she whom the god, disguised as her husband, had obviously chosen to love. She therefore had the venerated status of god’s consort, which made her a living equal of Mut, Hathor, Isis, and all the other great goddesses who were so often represented as divine mothers and wives of the god. Since these goddesses and others often assumed the identities of each other interchangeably, the king’s mother, who was also considered to be their sister, could probably, for ritual purposes, have assumed their identities in the same way (FHN I, 154–155, 223, 240; II, 405). Thus, at times the king’s mother was likened to the sky goddess Nut, mother of the gods (just as her

¹⁴⁴ See note 84.

husband, the king, was likened to Nut's consort, the earth god Geb).¹⁴⁵ Or sometimes she was likened to Mut (just as her husband was to Amun himself). Or she was likened to Hathor, primeval generatrix (just as her husband was to Re-Atum, the ancient Sun God of Heliopolis). Or she was likened to Isis, mother of Horus (just as her deceased husband was to Osiris). The king's mother and/or wife appears on virtually all the royal Napatan stelae, suggesting that no major interaction of the king with the Great God was possible without one of the great royal women being present.

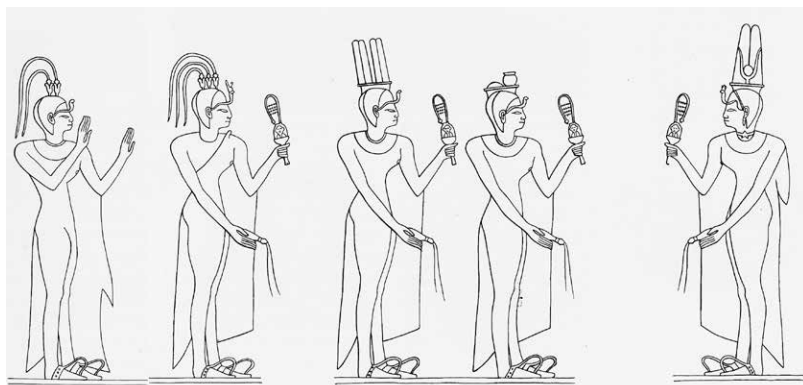


Fig. 82. Royal ladies of the court of King Senkamanisken (ca. 640-620 BC), from reliefs on the inside wall of the now destroyed pylon of temple B 700, as recorded by several of the early European visitors to the site in the 1820's and 30's. Their differing headdresses indicated their rank within the hierarchy of queens. At right was the chief queen ("Great Royal Wife"). To her left was the king's mother, wearing a crown associating her with Nut, the queen of heaven. The third lady from the right was another high-ranking queen. The fourth, wearing three plumes of stiffened horsehair, was a queen of more junior status, who bore the title "King's Wife, King's Daughter and King's Sister." The fifth, with only two horsehair plumes, was more junior still. (drawing: N. Thayer).

Second in status to the king's mother was his "great royal wife," who was probably a daughter of a former king and his chief consort, if indeed she was not the reigning king's very own sister. Although there was only one "great royal wife" at any one time, over the course of a king's lifetime, more than one might accede to the title if the chief queen died and another replaced her.¹⁴⁶ These ladies also performed rituals together with the king, and appear both in the stelae and on temple reliefs.¹⁴⁷ The king also maintained a large harem of lesser wives and concubines, either drawn from the royal

¹⁴⁵ Kendall 1982, 24-25.

¹⁴⁶ Kendall 1999, 40-43, 73-75.

¹⁴⁷ Kendall 1999, 116, fig. 19.

family or political marriages (FHN I, 81). Each king thus must have had many children, but they are never mentioned by name unless they either became kings or assumed high office (FHN I, 138–139, 153, 186, 269, 275; II, 415). Kings' sons could become priests, governors, or military commanders. Kings' daughters or sisters were given as wives to high officials or enlisted to serve high female priestly positions in the Amun temples.

Despite the official dogma that the king was the god's son, Aspelta still felt the need to justify his right to the throne by more orthodox genealogy. In a speech in his Coronation Stela, this genealogy was put in the mouth of Amun-Re, who identified Aspelta's natural father as "my son, the Son of Re (Senkamanisken? [name erased])" and his mother as "King's Sister, King's Mother, Mistress of Kush, Daughter of Re (Nasalsa [name erased])." This was followed by the genealogy of Nasalsa, who, we learn was the direct descendant of six generations of "king's sisters," which also implies that she was the direct descendant of seven generations of kings (FHN I, 240). The male line required no mention, since it was accepted that the king was always the son of Amun (who had impregnated the king's mother disguised as her husband, the previous king). It was the queen's line, therefore, that guaranteed the passage of royal blood. In this case, if there had been any controversy about the correctness of the oracle, Aspelta could show direct royal descent, through the female line, through seven generations (See also FHN I, 141, 474).

H. The King's Activities

Since the king was thought to be a son of Amun-Re, and thus the Sun on earth, the king's daily activities were often described in solar terms. When he awoke in the morning, his rising was likened to the dawn. When he departed his palace, he went forth "as Re shines in the horizon" (FHN I, 236, 244, 254). His mirrors, with their round disks explicitly symbolizing the sun, were designed so that when he gazed into their polished metal faces, he saw his own face reflected in the face of his "father."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Dunham 1955, pl. 91. The mirror of Amani-nataki-lebte, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, has a polished silver disk supported by a handle shaped like a papyrus column and capital. This reveals that the disk symbolized the sun rising from the primeval swamp at the beginning of time. Against the handle, beneath the reflective sides of the disk, are the separate personifications of the sun: Amun and Re, who also symbolized East and West. The sides of the mirror, thus, symbolized the faces of the sun god, in which was reflected the face of the king.

While the king may have engaged in hunting sports, archery, and horse riding, all the traditions suggest that he normally stayed inside his palace compound in godlike seclusion (FHN I, 221; II, 404). He seems to have ventured forth only to visit the temples, to celebrate regular rituals or to embark on certain annual or semi-annual ceremonial journeys to the other towns throughout the kingdom.¹⁴⁹ With the exception of the earlier kings of Dynasty 25, their Napatan successors seem seldom or never to have led their armies in person, although there is good reason to believe that prior to becoming kings, many or all had active careers in the military (FHN I, 139; II, 400).

I. The Palace

Through most of the Napatan period the king seems to have resided primarily at Meroë, but he did have palaces in all the major towns (FHN I, 260). The most important Napatan palace was that at Napata itself (B 1200), to which the king came, probably accompanied by his family and large entourage, to perform the primary coronation and to celebrate such important seasonal rites as the New Year festival and to consult the god's oracle. B 1200 was an enormous mud brick structure, possibly up to 70 m on a side, in which certain rooms were highly decorated and provided with stone columns (see pp. 86–88). Harsiotef remarked that in his day it had sixty rooms (FHN II, 455). B 1200 preserves at least four columned throne rooms on as many levels¹⁵⁰ (p. 87, figs 46–47). The throne itself, as pictured in reliefs at Nuri, was an armless chair with four lions' legs and a pair of lions' heads projecting from the front corners of the seat platform.¹⁵¹

The west end of the Barkal palace preserves a large open kitchen area with many hearths and stone sockets in the ground, probably supports for columns suspending awnings to shade the cooks. Archaeological debris reveals that slaughtered cattle, goats and fowl were cut up here and cooked on the bone. Nile clam shells and date pits suggest other entries on the royal menu.¹⁵² The debris also yielded a great number of mold-made pottery cups, bowls, and plates painted with red rims. Since sherds of this ware were also found in the palace proper, we imagine these vessels to have been the royal tableware, although the quality was hardly luxurious.

¹⁴⁹ On the coronation journeys of the kings, see Török 1997, 220–234.

¹⁵⁰ Dunham 1970, pl. 60B.

¹⁵¹ Dunham 1955, pl. 20A.

¹⁵² Kendall 1997, pp. 334–336.

On a day-to-day basis, the king, while here, probably conducted business in the morning and napped in the heat of the afternoon, as most Sudanese do to this day. The officials most constantly engaged with him were probably those listed in the texts: the “friends of the royal residence,” the palace scribes, the seal bearers, the overseers of the granaries, the priests, military commanders, king’s personal physicians and interpreters of dreams, and of course the members of the king’s family, especially his mother, his chief wives and sisters (FHN I, 234, 260, 264, 270–271; II, 415, 417).

The nature of the daily business can only be guessed, but it surely involved briefings on local and distant events, discussions about the inundation – whether too high or too low, and whether it would have positive or adverse effects on the food supply – what neighboring tribe might be in revolt and the defensive preparedness of the kingdom, etc. The king was expected to pursue wars with the recalcitrant peoples living on the periphery of the kingdom and to seize their livestock as dedications for the Great God, thereby keeping the temples supplied with food (FHN I, 221–222; II, 449, 487, 489). Much of the king’s life, though, centered about the performance of rituals, for it was these that were thought to keep the world in balance and the gods appeased. He was expected to build new temples or to restore and beautify old ones, to furnish them with statuary and precious cult objects, and to keep them staffed (FHN I, 149, 220, 255–256). From the texts as well as archaeological evidence we also know that the kings took much delight in planting gardens around the temples (FHN I, 142, 171–173; II 455, 483).

J. The King’s Death

The king’s death in official inscriptions was a subject treated with the greatest delicacy (FHN I 153, 234; II, 400–401). A report by the Greek historian Agatharcides of Cnidus, written in the late third century BC, may explain why. He stated that prior to this time it was the custom of the most powerful priests to send a message to the reigning king, as if it were an oracle from Amun himself. This message ordered the king to end his reign by taking his own life, and he was expected to do this without delay (FHN II, 647). The custom was said to have been abolished by a king named “Ergamenes,” who upon receipt of his letter, simply marched to the temple (Jebel Barkal?) with his army, put the priests to the sword, and “ordered matters according to his own will.” This “Ergamenes” was surely the historical Arkamani I, who was said to have been a contemporary of Ptolemy II (ca. 285–246 BC).

Although this account has been treated skeptically by scholars, there are good reasons for believing it, at least in part. First, the custom of putting a king to death when he began to grow infirm is a well-known one in many traditional Sudanese and African societies, even as recently as the late nineteenth century.¹⁵³ Killing an old king and replacing him with a younger, healthier man was thought necessary because of the belief that the vitality of the state was dependent on a ruler's good health and vigor. Second, during the Napatan period there was an arduous ten-day overland journey between the royal residence at Meroë and the royal cemetery at Nuri (10 km NE of Jebel Barkal) – 275 km across the Bayuda Desert. If the king normally lived and died at Meroë, we would expect his tomb to be there – as it was beginning with Arkamani I. Yet because Nuri was so far from Meroë, we would have to assume that if the kings died at the capital, their bodies would have had to be preserved at Meroë and transported to Napata for interment there. Although there were indeed Napatan kings who did die naturally at Meroë, such as King Talakhamani (the only deceased king mentioned by name in this context) (FHN II, 401), the presence of a Valley Temple (for mummification of the royal dead) at Nuri suggests that at least some kings were actually mummified there, which means that they must have died locally, before their bodies would have decomposed.¹⁵⁴ How else to explain these data unless we assume that at least some kings of the Napatan era traveled from Meroë alive and came to the royal cemetery at Nuri prepared to die?

K. The King's Burial

The most important surviving monuments of the Napatan Period are the royal pyramids at Nuri (figs. 18, 83, 84).¹⁵⁵ The cemetery was founded by Taharqo about 664 BC and was used for the next four centuries by 19 of his successors and some 53 queens. The concentration of the pyramids at this site indicates that throughout the Napatan period a major workforce was kept continuously employed here whose only purpose was to construct the massive burial monuments of the rulers.

The Nuri pyramids were erected on a pair of parallel ridges about 1.5 km from the Nile, about 10 km northeast of Jebel Barkal on the opposite bank. The kings' pyramids, of solid masonry, averaged about 26 m on a side, and were of variable height, between 20 and 40 m. Probably because Taharqo was recognized as the greatest member of the dynasty, his successors al-

¹⁵³ Kendall 1989, 695 and references.

¹⁵⁴ Dunham 1955, 271 (Nu. 400), fig. 215.

¹⁵⁵ Dunham 1955; Kendall 1982, 33–43.

lowed his pyramid to remain more than twice the size of any of theirs. The queens' pyramids averaged about 9 m on a side, although near the end of the period the pyramids of the primary queens reached 17 m square, attesting to the increasing political power of women, which would culminate in the Meroitic Period. Small chapels were built on the eastern sides of all the pyramids (here facing away from the river toward sunrise); and within these chapels offerings of food and drink could be made to the deceased.



Fig. 83. *The Nuri Pyramids as they appear today. (Photo: T. Kendall)*



Fig. 84. *The Nuri Pyramids, looking north, as they likely appeared in the mid-third century BC (compare with fig. 18). (Model: Wm. Riseman and Geoff Kornfeld, © Learning Sites, Inc.)*

The tombs were cut in the bedrock deep beneath the pyramids. Each tomb was entered by a stairway cut in a descending trench in the rock on the east side. The kings' tombs regularly consisted of three interconnecting chambers; the queens tombs, only two. When well-finished, these rooms were completely painted and carved with Egyptian texts from the "Book of the Dead." After the burials, the stairways were filled in and hidden from the ground, and a masonry chapel was built directly over the tomb's entrance. Unfortunately, this system failed to protect the tombs from being penetrated by tomb robbers. All the tombs, which were excavated by Reisner between 1917–18, were found to be thoroughly looted, although some objects of great importance were recovered and give us an idea of the sumptuousness of the burials.

Typically, Napatan royalty were mummified according to Egyptian fashion. Their bodies were wrapped holding gold crooks and flails, and green stone heart scarabs and gold pectorals were placed over their chests. Their fingers and toes were capped with gold; their faces were covered with gold masks. Their viscera were removed and placed in large canopic jars. The royal mummies were encased within carved wooden anthropoid coffins covered with gold foil and inlaid with colored stones set in designs of falcons or vultures with wings seeming to envelop the body. The eyes of these coffins were inlaid with gilded bronze, calcite, and obsidian. These coffins were then placed within larger anthropoid coffins, covered with gold leaf, and in the cases of the royal brothers Anlamani and Aspelta (fig. 47b and c), the kings' outer coffins were placed within huge, near duplicate, fully decorated granite sarcophagi. Around the walls of the royal burial chambers *shawabti* figures of stone or faience, numbering between several hundred to over a thousand, would be arranged standing. (These were small mummiform figures – miniature images of the deceased – believed to be able to come to life by magic and perform work for him in the Underworld.). Evidence suggests that the kings were also buried with chests of valuable jewelry, perfume and unguent vessels, and other personal possessions. A large numbers of storage jars containing food and drink for the afterlife were also buried in the tombs. Many of the finds from Nuri are presently on exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and in the Sudan National Museum, Khartoum.

X. Members of the Team (1986–2016) and Acknowledgements

Over the years, our team has been joined by many outstanding people, each of whom brought their unique talents and scholarly insights to the Jebel Barkal project, and many of their ideas have shaped the way we have come to understand the site. Besides colleagues from Sudan, our team has had a truly international cast, with members coming also from Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Austria, Poland, Russia, and New Zealand. Here are their names, listed by season. All deserve huge credit for their contributions to the work and have our profound thanks!

Cynthia Shartzert† (US, Project Manager) (1986, 1987, 1989, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2002)
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David Goodman (US, Surveyor) (1989)
Enrico Ferorelli† (It–US, Photographer) (1989)
William Risemant† (US, Architect, Computer Modeler) (1989–1994)
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Margaret S. Watters (US, Geophysicist) (2000)
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Rehab Khidir al-Rashid (Sudan, Inspector, NCAM) (2005)
Max Farrar (US, Surveyor) (2005, 2005, 2007)
Jeremy Pope (US, Egyptologist) (2005)
Martin Pittertschatscher (It, Conservator) (2005)

Silvia Zauner-Mayerhofer (Aus, Conservator, Archaeological Asst.) (2005, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, winter 2014)
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Donald Sanders (US, CEO, Learning Sites, Inc.) (2013–16)
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Dominic Perry (NZ, Egyptologist) (winter 2014)
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Rosa Frey (Canada, Archaeologist) (winter 2014)
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Maksim Lebedev (Rus, Archaeologist) (2015)
Simone Nannucci (Fr, Archaeologist) (2015)

Lyla Pinch-Brock (Canada, Draughtsman) (2015)
David Krathwohl (US, web designer) (2009, 2016)
David Klotz (US, Egyptologist) (2014–2016)

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