

# SUDAN & NUBIA

The Sudan Archaeological Research Society



*Bulletin No. 13*

*2009*





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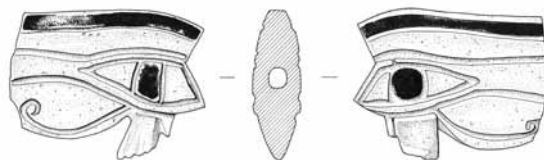
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*Front cover:* The head of a Kushite king, excavated in 2008, from the Amun temple at Dangeil. It has been tentatively identified as Aspelta (593-568 BC) based upon comparisons with statues of this king discovered at Jebel Barkal and Dokki Gel-Kerma. (Photo © J. R. Anderson, Berber-Abidiya Archaeological Project).



# Reports

## ***Talatat* Architecture at Jebel Barkal: Report of the NCAM Mission 2008-2009<sup>1</sup>**

*Timothy Kendall*

### **Introduction**

Since 2005 the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums' Jebel Barkal Mission has focused its efforts on mapping and recording the extensive *talatat* constructions visible on the site (Figure 1). *Talatat* are small stone blocks, bonded with mortar and regularly cut to dimensions of about 520 x 260 x 22mm (= 1 x 1/2 x 3/7 Egyptian royal cubit). So-named in the last century by Egyptian workmen, who encountered them by the tens of thousands at Karnak,<sup>2</sup> they have since become recognized as the unique medium with which Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten built the temples for his revolutionary Aten cult (Vergnieux 1999, fasc. I, 1-15). Whatever Akhenaten's religious justification for the new masonry may have been, its practical advantage was that single blocks could be easily carried by individual workmen, which allowed the king to build his Aten temples with extraordinary rapidity. Its chief disadvantage, however, was that the same temples could also be dismantled just as quickly, which they were by his immediate successors Horemheb, Seti I and Ramesses II. In Egypt these kings shunned the use of *talatat* as a building medium for their own monuments but freely used the blocks from Akhenaten's destroyed temples as hidden fill within them (Redford 1984, 227-231; 1999, 391).

Unlike the *talatat* found in Egypt, which are generally carved on one side and form pieces of colossal relief scenes of Akhenaten and his family performing rituals, the *talatat*

found thus far at Jebel Barkal are nearly all undecorated, with the exception of a few rare blocks, bearing cartouches of Ramesses II, associated with two buildings of a clearly later date than the other *talatat* structures. When George A. Reisner excavated at Jebel Barkal between 1916 and 1920, he was unaware of the specific link between the *talatat* and Akhenaten but based on internal archaeological evidence from the site, he was able to date them to the late 18<sup>th</sup>, or early 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. He generally referred to them as "small blocks...of the New Empire."<sup>3</sup>

At Jebel Barkal *talatat* appear in the earliest phases of temples B 500 (rooms 503-522), B 300 (B 300-sub/"first"), B 1100 and B 700-sub 2, all of which were revived and overbuilt in Kushite times and exhibit Napatan and/or Meroitic phases. Other small buildings at the site - B 700-sub 1 and 3 - utilize *talatat* exclusively, but had only one phase of occupation. Reisner discovered two or three more such tiny structures in area B 500 A, below the famous cachette of Napatan statues, but we have still not yet been able to examine these (Reisner 1917, 217-218; 1931, 77). He further reported seeing the small blocks in fragmentary walls between B 800/900 and B 500 and he found more reused in foundation pavements of the early Napatan temple B 800, where one bore the name of Ramesses II (Reisner field diary, Mar. 27, 1920). Many *talatat* can be seen today, built into the walls of the nearby rectangular tomb (*dhareeh*) of Sheikh Ahmed Karsani (late 19<sup>th</sup> century) in the Muslim cemetery, 90m west of the temples (Colour plate I). Several of these also bear the cartouches of Ramesses. The Karsani shrine appears to be built from stones taken from B 300-sub and B 1100, which have almost entirely disappeared, due to stone scavengers. In B 1100, a preserved section of *talatat* wall was closely associated with a loose red sandstone architrave, bearing the throne name of Horemheb (Plate 5), attesting to that king's activities at Jebel Barkal.

This paper summarizes what we have thus far observed of these structures, up to March, 2009. Although we have not yet found Akhenaten's name, or fragments of his distinctive reliefs, I believe that a convincing case can be made to connect him with most of these buildings on purely archaeological grounds. The evidence for this is presented below. It is clear from these and related finds from other sites that at the very beginning of his reign Akhenaten imposed his Aten cult on all of Nubia to its southern limit and singled out Jebel Barkal - the Nubian "Karnak" - for special development. The data even raises the possibility that the Aten cult may have been influenced in its evolution as much by Nubia's sacred landscape as by Egypt's. It also provides new evidence with which to evaluate the nature of the Aten cult in its formative stages, how the cult was perceived in the post-Amarna period, and how it was remembered centuries later by the kings of Kush.

<sup>1</sup> In March, 2002, while visiting Luxor, I had the pleasure of being invited to dinner at Chicago House, where I met Ray Johnson and discussed with him some recent finds at Jebel Barkal. When I described the small masonry on the site, he said, "Those blocks sound like *talatat*." The next day he showed me the stores of *talatat* from Luxor Temple and I realized at once that his assessment was absolutely correct. In 2005 the NCAM Mission commenced a block-by-block survey of the Barkal sanctuary, commencing with the inner rooms of B 500, where most of the *talatat* can be seen. Following our 2008 and 2009 seasons, I felt we had enough information to present a preliminary report on *talatat* at the site and this paper is the result. This study would not have been possible without the dedicated work and insights of my colleagues on the project: el-Hassan Ahmed Mohamed, Pawel Wolf, Heather Wilson, Manja Wettendorf-Lavall, Silvia Zauner-Mayerhofer and surveyors Robert Rosa and Max Farrar. We are profoundly grateful to Hassan Hussein Idriss, Director General of NCAM, to Profs Robert Hall and Emmett Price of the African-American Studies Department, Northeastern University, Boston and to Thomas and James Woodruff of the J. A. and H. G. Woodruff Charitable Trust for making this research possible.

<sup>2</sup> The name *talatat* is thought to derive either from the Arabic word for "three" (*thalata*), possibly because the short side of each block was three hand-widths wide, or from the Italian *tagliata* ("cut stone masonry").

<sup>3</sup> Reisner's field diary Feb. 25, March 26 and April 5, 1916 (now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, library of the Department of the Art of the Ancient World); see also Reisner 1917, 222-223; 1931, 76.



Figure 1. Map of the Jebel Barkal temples, showing talatat structures (highlighted) excavated by the NCAM Mission, as of 2009.

### The *talatat* phases of B 500

The largest concentration of *talatat* at Jebel Barkal can be seen in the standing walls and pylons of the nucleus of the Great Amun Temple B 500 (Figure 2). The number of blocks used in this early stage of the temple can be estimated to have exceeded 40,000. Given that this was the core of what later became the primary Amun temple in Nubia, Reisner naturally assumed that it post-dated Akhenaten and speculated that its builders were Tutankhamun, Horemheb, and/or Seti I, all known restorers of the Amun cult, with signed additions by Ramesses II (Reisner 1917, 222-223). Because B 500 has not yet been widely recognized as a *talatat* temple (since Reisner's published work long predated the general use of that term), his post-Amarna date for its nucleus has never been questioned. Today, however, if we accept Reisner's dating, we are compelled to assume that the earliest Amun temple at Jebel Barkal was built with *talatat* by kings who, at least in Egypt, did not build with it. On the other hand, if we date the core temple to Akhenaten, as would seem to be required by the blocks, we must assume something even more unexpected: that what later became the most important Amun temple in Nubia was founded by the very king who tried to suppress the Amun cult!

In 2009 we extensively exposed the *jebel* floors and *talatat* foundation walls of the B 500 sanctuary (rooms 514-519), first court (B 505-507) and second court (503). Since textual evidence reveals that an earlier Thutmosid temple existed at the site (Reisner and Reisner 1933a, 26) and possible reused fragments of it were recovered in front of B 200 (Reisner 1931, 77), we expected to find elements of it *in situ* under the *talatat* temple - a temple sequence which would have matched that recently found at Pnubs/Dokki Gel (Bonnet *et al.* 2007, 192-200, 213-221). The B 500 site, however, still gives the appearance of being devoid of earlier remains.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, we found that all the *talatat* walls of the sanctuary, even the cross-walls, still rested on their original foundations. This proved that the original plan of the temple had remained unaltered throughout its long subsequent life - a fact that seemed also to suggest a continuity of the cult from the

<sup>4</sup> The only place where Reisner felt certain of having seen remains earlier than the *talatat* walls was in the two contiguous rooms on the north-east side, 504a and 504 b. Our own examination of these rooms in 2005, however, has led us to seriously doubt these assertions. These rooms appear to post-date Phase V (see below) (cf. Reisner 1917, 219 and pls XLIII-XLVII).



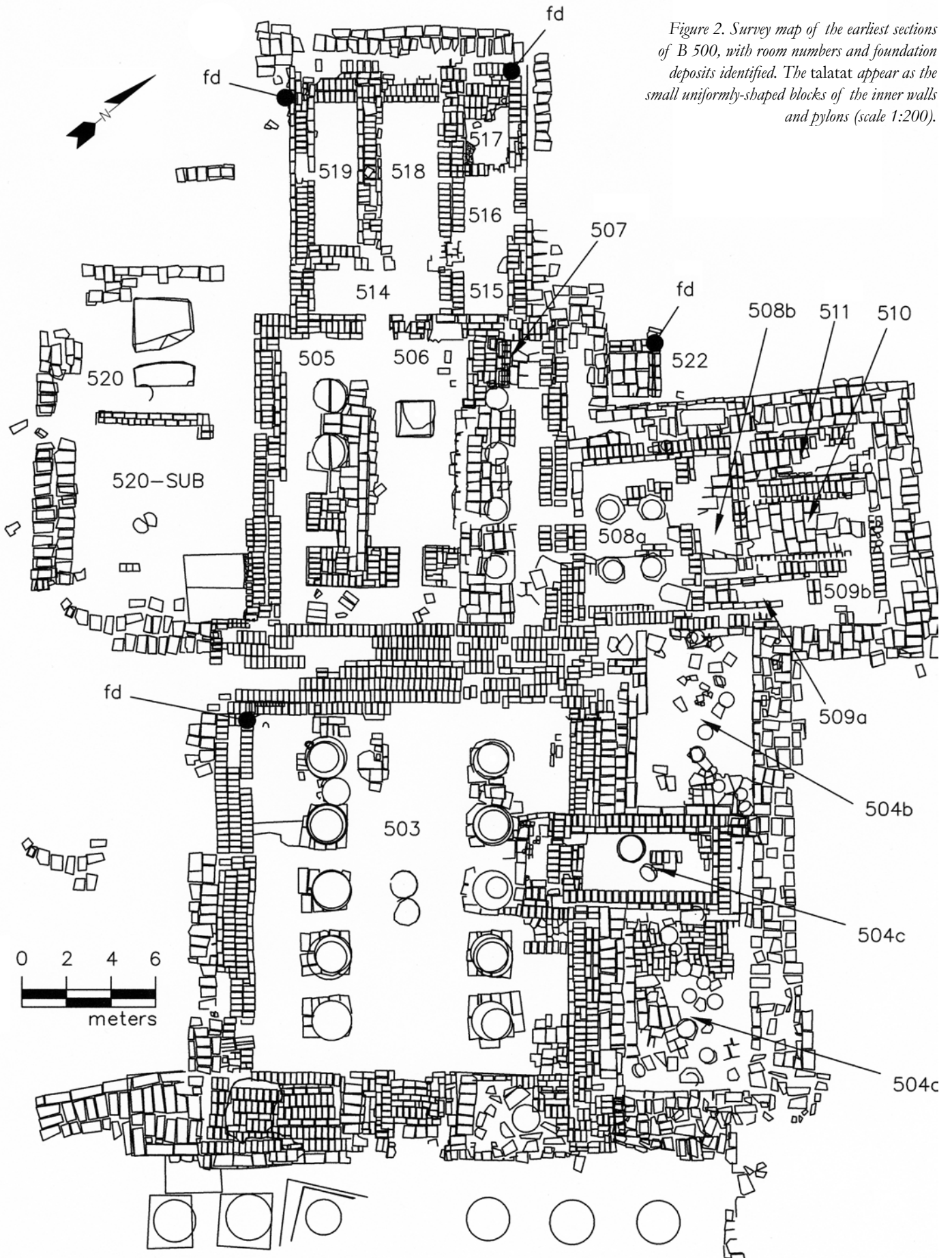


Figure 2. Survey map of the earliest sections of B 500, with room numbers and foundation deposits identified. The talatat appear as the small uniformly-shaped blocks of the inner walls and pylons (scale 1:200).

founding of the temple to its end in the late Meroitic period.

The *talatat* core of B 500 exhibits five construction phases, of which only the last two can be linked securely by epigraphic evidence to Seti I and Ramesses II respectively. It is the first three phases that seem most likely to be Akhenaten's work.

Phase I of B 500 includes the sanctuary (rooms 514-519), the first court with its ten square piers (505-507), a pylon and room 522 (Figure 3a). This original temple, built entirely of *talatat*, was 30.5m in length and appears to have been designed and built as a unit. The walls of the sanctuary were 2 cubits (1.046m) thick, with a rear wall 1½ cubits (789mm) thick. All these walls were laid within foundation trenches of a similar depth, approximately 1.4m below the level of the contemporary surface. Within the trenches, the *talatat* were founded on a layer of thick white pebbly cement which itself had been laid over a hard soil level 450-500mm deep within the trenches. At a height of three *talatat* courses above foundation level, the walls met the floor level of the chambers. This was formed by the levelled pre-existing surface, which was probably originally paved. In each of the three sanctuary chambers (517, 518 and 519) the rear meter of floor space was paved neatly with two rows of *talatat* laid longitudinally end to end (Plate 1) again resting on three layers of blocks set within foundation trenches. Their presence suggests that initially the rear wall was to be constructed on this line but during the construction phase the plan was modified and a meter was added to the length of the rooms.



Plate 1. B 519 interior, showing levelled *jebel* floor and *talatat* pavement at rear of room.

The *talatat* used in the sanctuary were cut from three different types of stone. The most common - and durable - was a fine, hard, grey sandstone, the blocks of which remain in almost perfect condition today and bear delicate diagonal chisel marks on all sides except the smooth outer face. The chiseling was obviously done to improve the bond with the mortar. Other blocks were cut from crumbly yellow, or soft grey sandstone, the former being the next most common. Both the latter types of blocks show severe weathering when exposed at the surface and in some cases they have almost entirely disappeared, leaving behind only the mortar shell

that had held them in place, the mortar being more durable than the stone itself.

In 1916 Reisner discovered two foundation deposits under the corners of the sanctuary, one buried in a hole under the upper left (west) corner of 519 and the other under the upper right (north) corner of 517. In his published account of these finds he described them as “undisturbed” (Reisner 1917, 220), but in his diary he remarked of FD 519 that “the objects were dumped in the hole – not laid out in order” (Reisner diary, April 15, 1916). While each deposit contained a full complement of model tools and vessels, neither contained a name plaque identifying the royal builder, possibly suggesting that the plaques had been subsequently removed to conceal his identity.

Attached to the sanctuary was a forecourt, with pylon (505-507). Like the sanctuary walls, its walls were 2 cubits (1.046m) thick, but unlike them, its *talatat* were predominantly of soft yellow sandstone. Its pylon, 4.5 x 17.5m, had towers only minimally wider than the side walls. By excavating the central aisle (506) and south-west aisle (505), we could observe that the walls and pylon were also laid within rock-cut trenches, filled with leveled beds of hard soil and set on thick layers of pebbly cement. The floor, now lacking its pavement, was founded on the leveled *jebel*.

Court 505-507 also preserves remains of several 1.65m square piers of *talatat* (Plate 2). Reisner once believed that there might originally have been as many as 16 of these (Reisner 1917, pls XLIII-XLVI), but with the discovery this season of a definite rise in the natural *jebel* floor on which the Taharqa bark stand had stood (following its removal to the Barkal Museum by British Museum conservators in February 2009), it became clear that the original number of piers could not have been more than ten: four along each side wall and two in the front. The rise in the floor there suggested that this court (which was originally open) had been occupied by a similar object (an altar?) from the moment Phase I was completed.

An important feature of Phase I is the fragmentary side room Reisner designated “B 522”. This appears to be a corner of the first temple, which projects outside the heavy Kushite



Plate 2. Square *talatat* pillar or column pier in B 506 (1.65m square).

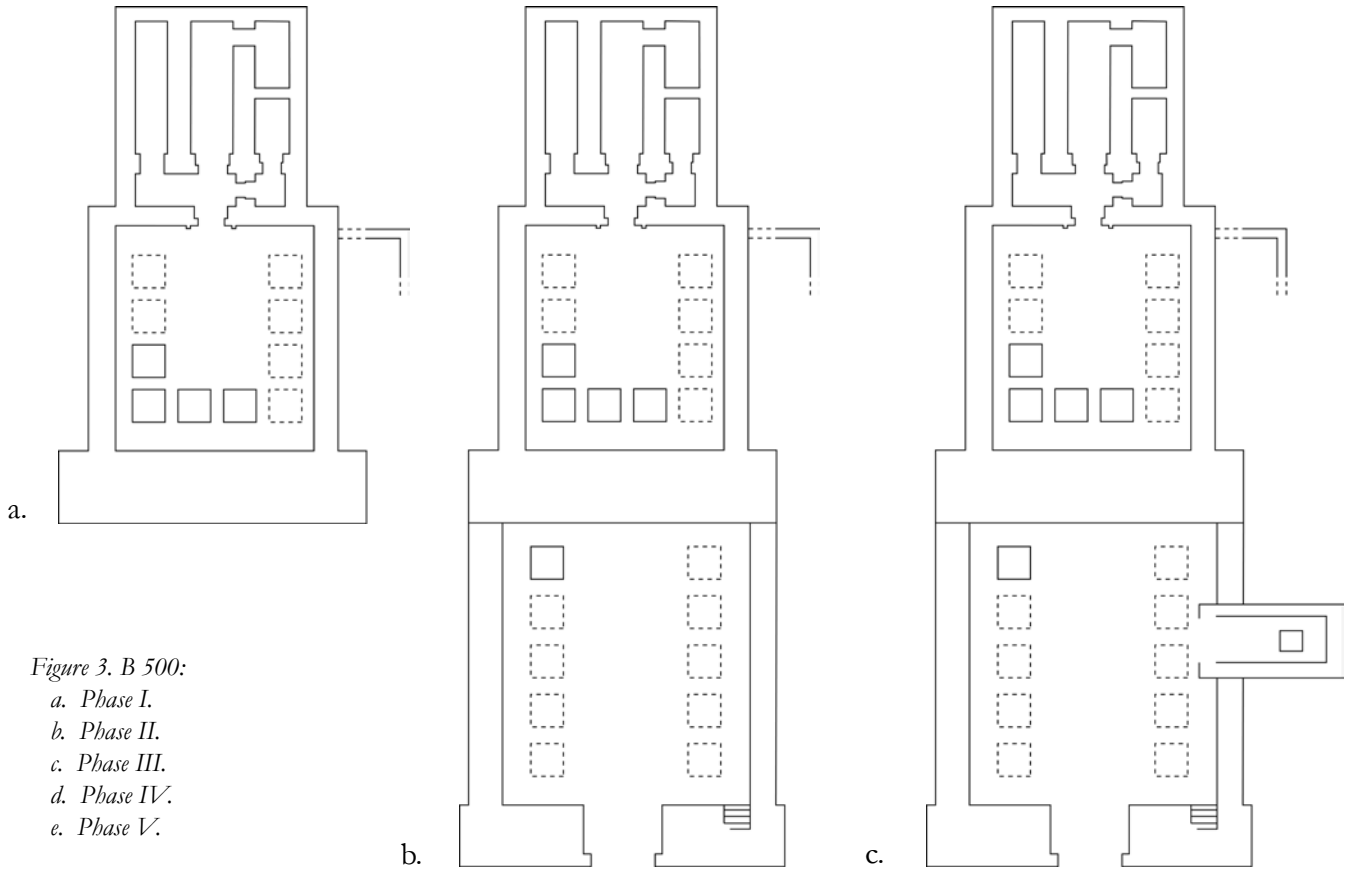
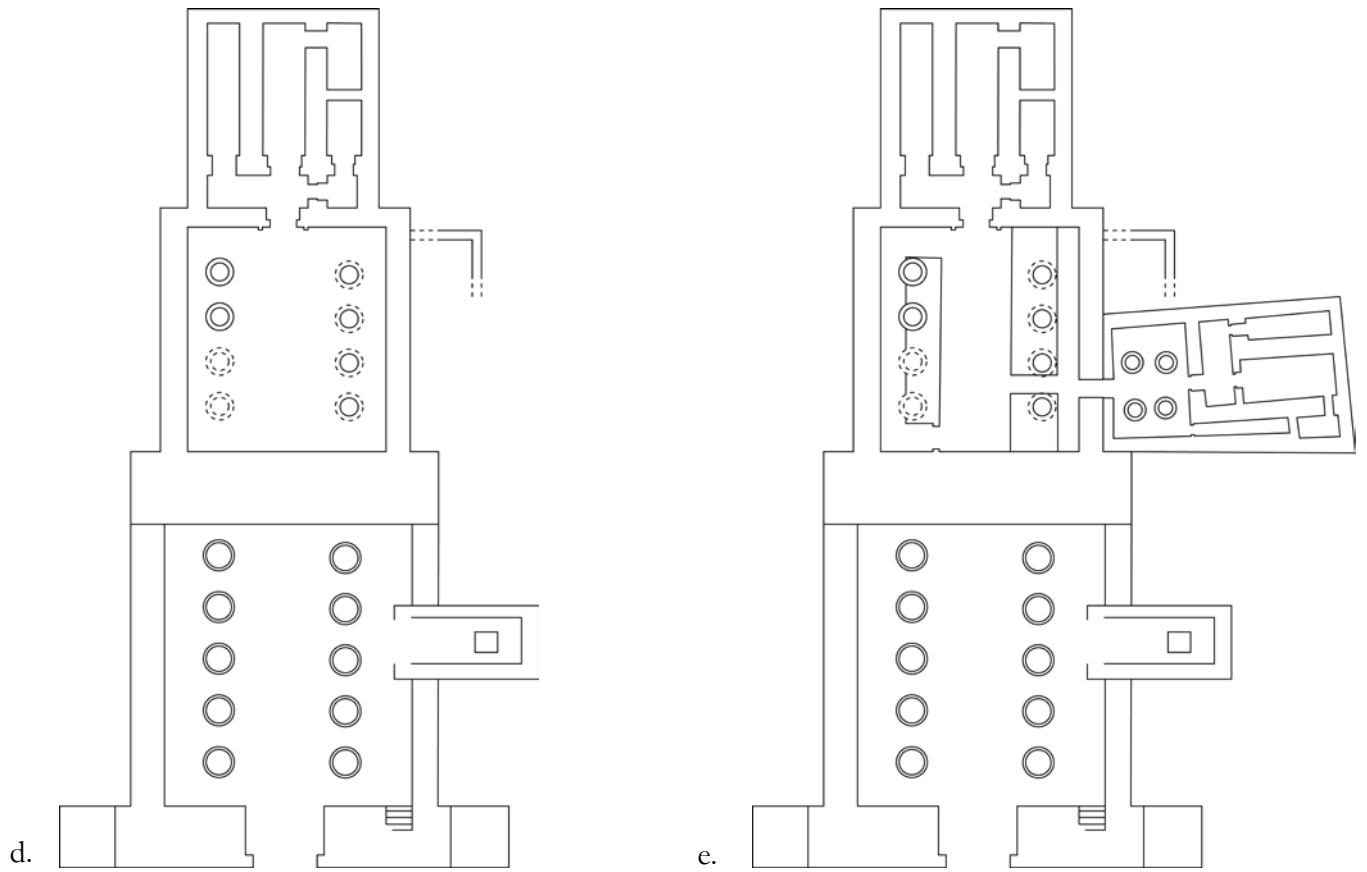


Figure 3. B 500:  
a. Phase I.  
b. Phase II.  
c. Phase III.  
d. Phase IV.  
e. Phase V.





sheathing wall built around B 500 in early Napatan times (this wall cuts right through it; see Figure 2). By trenching around the walls of B 522, we found that they, too, had been founded in a rock-cut trench, here about 400mm deep, cut into the natural *jebel*. The lowest blocks were again set on a layer of cement mixed with pebbles and crushed stone. The walls were only one cubit (two blocks) thick. The floor was formed by a levelled *jebel* surface paved with large flagstones which had once been plastered. The thin walls of B 522, as well as the white sandstone blocks lining the inside face of the north-east wall (i.e. directed toward the sunrise), suggested that B 522 might have been an unroofed platform used for solar rituals, perhaps indicative of Aten worship.

As we excavated the ancient construction trench around the perimeter of B 522, we noticed on the north-west side of the corner an oval depression with a rough rounded stone standing upright in it like a stela. A small cavity could be seen opening under the corner block. After carefully digging into this depression, we found a rock-cut hole, 540mm wide and 850mm deep, filled with stones. As we cleared it, it gave access to another cavity extending 750mm under the corner, in which we expected to find an intact foundation deposit (Plate 3). After several days of careful excavation, however,



Plate 3. B 522, showing its foundation deposit cavity after excavation.

we found the hole to be completely empty, filled only with layers of water-washed mud. It appeared that either no foundation deposit had ever been buried here or that someone had later excavated the hole, removed the foundation deposit and carefully sealed it up again.

Probably soon after the completion of Phase I, a larger court and pylon (503) were added to it, comprising Phase II (Figure 3b). That 503 was a new construction is clear because its side walls abutted the facade of the earlier pylon, without being integrated into its masonry and its blocks were predominantly of a new type of gritty white sandstone, showing that a new quarry was being exploited.

Today in 503 the lower stumps of ten massive columns are visible, arranged in two rows of five against the side walls. Resting on piers made of very heavy sandstone blocks, these columns were clearly of a later phase. Under the uppermost

column on the south-west side, part of an original *talatat* pier could be seen under one of these column supports. Its fragments allowed us to restore its original size at about 1.65m square. This was the same size as the piers in 505-507, suggesting that Phases I and II were the work of the same architect and that the latter had followed soon after the former.

Under the juncture of the south-west wall of 503 with the Phase I pylon, we discovered another large cavity for a foundation deposit, neatly sealed with stones (Plate 4). Just as in 522, we found, after careful excavation, no trace of a foundation deposit. It had been removed and the hole had been plugged with thirty medium-sized stones.



Plate 4. Foundation deposit cavity in B 503, still sealed with stones. The hole, found empty, was cut under the juncture of the south-west wall of 503 with the Phase I pylon.

With the addition of court 503, the temple attained a length of just over 50m, which made it 12m longer than the Akhenaten temple at Pnubs/Dokki Gel (Bonnet *et al.* 2007, 197, fig. 20). Its south-west wall was now three cubits (1.57m) thick; its north-east wall, 2½ (1.3-1.38m). Its pylon was 3.6 x 18m in size and like the first pylon, was barely wider than the side walls – a detail again suggesting the work of Akhenaten (Bonnet and Valbelle 2005, 57-58).

The final addition to this first temple was the small east-directed chapel (504c), built perpendicular to the axis of 503, off its north-east wall and having an entrance between the third and fourth columns. This was Phase III (Figure 3c). This chapel, 2.6 x 6.8m, was paved with *talatat*; on its central axis were remnants of a *talatat* altar and its *talatat* walls were 1½ cubits (789mm) thick. Its blocks were primarily of a soft pale yellow sandstone, contrasting with the white side walls of 503 and suggesting that it was a still later addition. The Dokki Gel temple seems to have had a similar chapel (Bonnet *et al.* 2007, 197, fig. 20).

It is evident that in its earliest form the temple had either square pillars of *talatat* or square *talatat* piers supporting columns. There were ten such pillars or bases in the first court and ten more in the second. If Phases I-III were indeed built by Akhenaten, we may assume that these rooms and columns



were fully decorated with Amarna iconography. Following Akhenaten's death, this iconography would have had to be removed and the interior of the temple redecorated in order to render it acceptable to Amun. It is these changes that can probably be detected in Phase IV, when the old *talatat* piers were replaced with the columns now visible in the two courts (Figure 3d). Coincident with these changes might also have been the removal of Akhenaten's name from the foundation deposits. Given the presence of Horemheb's name at the site (Plate 5), we would probably be correct in suspecting that he initiated the first renovations. The stela of Seti I, found face-down in a later pavement in front of 504c, explicitly states that Seti renewed a *wsht* ("columned hall") for his "father" [Amun] in *inr ḥd nfr* ("beautiful white stone"). This sounds like confirmation for the completion of the changes (Reisner and Reisner 1933b, 74, 76). The post-Amarna renovation program doubtless also included the widening of the second pylon by 3m on each side. Seti seems to have been similarly engaged at Dokki Gel and Sesebi (Bonnet and Valbelle 2005, 63).



Plate 5. Red sandstone block inscribed with the throne name of Horemheb, found on the surface about 10m east of the B 1100 *talatat* wall.

The next obvious alteration to the temple (Phase V) was the addition of a second tripartite sanctuary, built against the north-east side of 506, at a slightly less than 90° angle from the temple axis (Figure 3e). This addition indicates major conceptual changes to the cult at Jebel Barkal and confirms by its acknowledgement of multiple gods that we have moved beyond the Amarna period. Although slightly smaller than the original sanctuary (514-519) and having walls thinner and not quite parallel, it had virtually the same configuration of rooms - after one passed beyond the entrance hall of four columns (508a). The complex was surrounded by a *talatat* wall 1½ cubits (730mm) thick, while the interior walls separating the cult chambers were 2 cubits (1.04m) thick.

Despite its delicate *talatat* construction, this chapel exhibits several noteworthy, non-Amarna, features. For example, a

few red sandstone blocks, larger than *talatat*, can be seen still resting on the fourth (and highest) *talatat* course surviving in the visible walls. This suggests that the upper walls may have been of red sandstone blocks rather than *talatat*. The sub-floor masonry is all of *talatat*, but the floors were paved with large slabs of red or yellow sandstone, laid over the *talatat*. Much of this pavement has been pulled up in modern times and the stones removed but it still survives in rooms 508a, 510 and 511. There are also three massive roofing stones of red sandstone in the complex, with a fourth resting in the west corner of 504b. Two of these blocks still bear Ramesses II's name. This proves that Ramesses at least partly roofed this sanctuary in stone. These roofing stones as well as several inscribed *talatat* that Reisner found here with a frieze of Ramesses' cartouches, led him to refer to this complex as the "Ramesses Chapel" (Reisner 1917, 223-224).

The construction of the "Ramesses Chapel" had a major impact on court 505-507. It was almost certainly at this time that screen walls of heavy red sandstone blocks, mortared together, were laid between the eight Phase IV columns, over the *talatat* piers of Phase I. This construction now divided the court into three distinct rooms: 505, 506 and 507. Room 505 was accessed by a door immediately to the left of the pylon entrance; a second door at the far end of 505 allowed re-entry into 506. On the other side, the screen wall creating 507 had its only opening between the first and second columns. This door opened onto the axis of the "Ramesses Chapel." These screen walls were never more than two courses high, since at the upper end of the north-east wall of 506, a course of fine grey *talatat* blocks is laid on top - all reused and bearing a fragmentary Meroitic bark-carrying scene in high relief.

## Other *talatat* structures at Jebel Barkal

### B 520-sub

In room 520 of B 500, just in front of the black granite throne base of Piankhy, fragments of *talatat* walls can be seen below the Napatan floor level (Figure 2). These were parts of the front and rear walls of a small rectangular building, which we termed "B 520-sub" (cf. Reisner 1917, pls XLIII, XLVII). Lying 2m from the south-west wall of 506 and parallel to it, 520-sub could be reconstructed as 4.3m in width and 6.2m in length, which is nearly the same size as B 700-sub 2 (see below). The surviving blocks are of gritty white to grey sandstone, suggesting it was built contemporaneously with B 500, Phase II.

### B 700-sub 3

In 1916 Reisner discovered two small *talatat* structures and a patch of paving in front of Kushite temples B 700 and 600 (Reisner 1918, pl. X). In 2008, we cleared this same area and exposed three small *talatat* structures - the last of which, we realized, had been concealed by the pavement and only exposed sometime after Reisner's departure (1921) when most of the paving stones were removed by stone scavengers (Figure 4). Reisner named the central and western structures

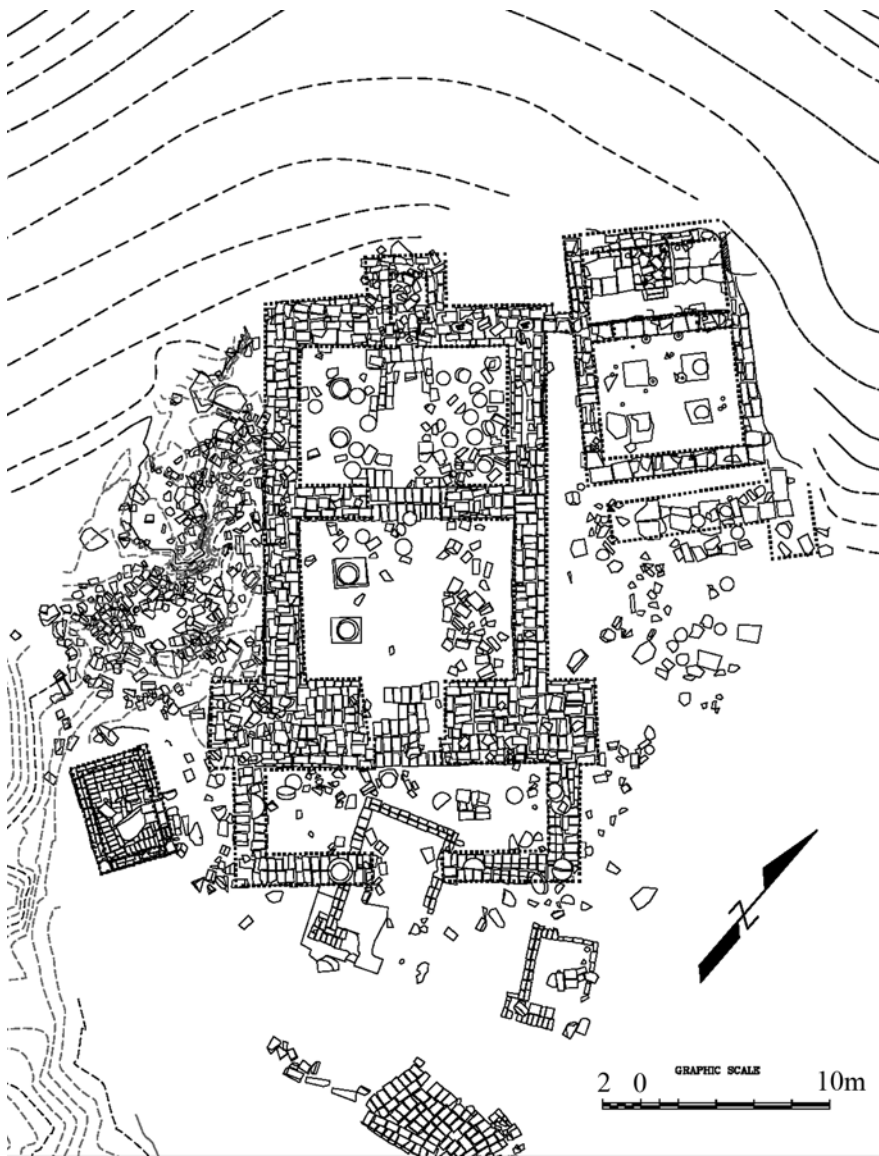


Figure 4. Survey map of temples B 700 and 600, fronted by the three small talatat structures. From left to right, they are: B 700-sub 2, B 700-sub 1, and B 700-sub 3 (scale 1:400).

“B 700-sub 1” and “B 700-sub 2” respectively. We named the newly-found eastern structure “B 700-sub 3.” All of them appeared to be tiny chapels and B 520-sub and B 1100 (see below) seemed to be part of the same series.

B 700-sub 3 lay immediately north east of the corner of the portico of B 700 (Colour plate III). Its internal dimensions were 2.7 x 3.4m; its external dimensions were 3.9 x 5.2m and it had an earthen floor. Like 700-sub 1, next to it to the south west, its front wall extended beyond the ends of its side walls to create a small pylon. Its blocks were cut from gritty white sandstone, grading to yellow, comparable to those in B 500, Phases II and III. The blocks show a wide variation in size: 470-580mm by 260-290mm.

This tiny structure had been dismantled to its foundation course, before the end of the New Kingdom, probably shortly after the Amarna period. Its eastern wall had disappeared and was rebuilt with a single line of *talatat*, which seems to

have been the work of squatters (a wind-break?). Inside the walls we found traces of a hearth and occupation debris. Eventually the surviving foundation was deliberately buried under a shallow earth layer, which was paved with red and white sandstone slabs. One might suspect that the purpose of the pavement was to erase the memory of the structure, but if this were the intention, it would have been far easier simply to remove the remaining foundation blocks. It seems likely, thus, that the real purpose of the pavement was to protect what remained of the old building, which suggests the work of the Kushites, who must have venerated it.

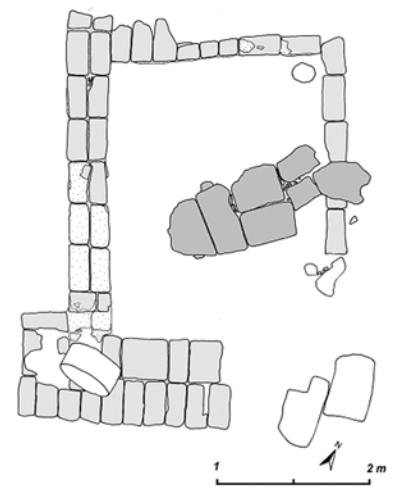


Figure 5. Ground plan of talatat temple B 700-sub 3, excavated March, 2008. Drawn by Manja Wetendorf-Lavall. The darker blocks are the only surviving paving stones that once entirely concealed it (scale 1:100).

#### B 700-sub 1

Like the previous structure, B 700-sub 1 was a rectangular foundation with pseudo-pylon and earth floor (Colour plate IV). It lies under the entrance to the portico of B 700 and is partly overbuilt by it. Its internal dimensions are 6.5 x 4.2m; its external dimensions are 8 x 5.2m. The Napatan builders of B 700 seem to have taken remarkable pains to leave its masonry undisturbed as they erected the new temple portico over it. Where the new walls passed over the *talatat* blocks, the Kushite masons made precise cuts through them so that they could remain in place. This practice, which can also be seen in B 522, again seems to demonstrate a pious Kushite regard for the ancient buildings.

Most of the stones used in B 700-sub 1 were cut from the same gritty, white sandstone visible in the walls and pylon of 503 and in B 700-sub 2 and 3, although some are of a pale, friable, yellow sandstone, comparable to that used in 504c.

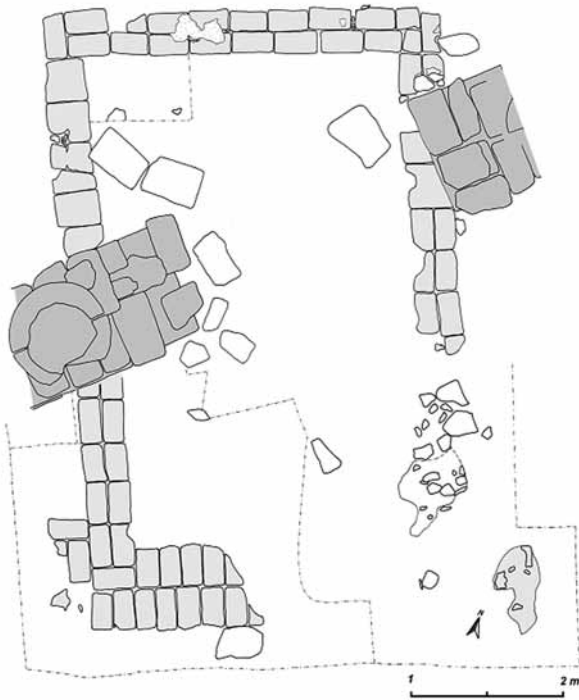


Figure 6. Ground plan of talatat temple B 700-sub 1, excavated March, 2008. Drawn by Manja Wetendorf-Lavall (scale 1:100).

The darker blocks are the portico walls of B 700 as they cut through and pass over the older temple.

Thus, like the other small buildings, B 700-sub 1 would seem to be contemporary with B 500, Phases II-III.

Like B 700-sub 3, only B 700-sub 1's foundation blocks survived, which were already wind-scoured to less than half their original thickness, when the Napatan blocks were laid over them. This suggests that the structure had been dismantled to its foundation probably at the same time as B 700-sub 3 and that the foundation stones had been exposed to the elements for some time. The eastern corner of the structure had been entirely lost due to water erosion.

It is hard to imagine that this and the other small buildings in this series (B 520, B 700-sub 2, 3 and B 1100) could have been much greater than human height, since their walls were so thin (530-600mm). Given the frequent depiction of what appear to be identical structures in Amarna art, all apparently roofless (see below, and Figure 8), there seem good reasons to suppose that none of them were roofed and that they had all been open to the sun.

#### B 700-sub 2

The third *talatat* structure in the B 700-sub series, B 700-sub 2, lay directly beside B 700 on its south-west corner (Colour plate V). It differed from B 700-sub 1 and 3 in that it had no pylon-like extension on its front wall, it was entirely paved with *talatat* and the *talatat* of the walls and pavement were laid without mortar. Its interior dimensions were 3.14 x 4.74m; its exterior, 4.2 x 5.72m. Unlike B 700-sub 1 and 3, its blocks were very precisely cut, with little variation in length (505 to 540mm) or width (255 x 275mm). Most were cut from the

same gritty white sandstone visible in 503, again suggesting that it was contemporary with B 500 Phase II.

Of the three B 700-sub chapels, this was the best preserved and constructed. It was also the only one of the three revived as a cult place in Kushite times, when a Napatan superstructure was erected over it. This later phase survives today only as six heavy red sandstone blocks still *in situ*, two of which formed part of a miniature pylon tower, lacking batter but having a round molding at the corner. The rest of the Napatan blocks were hauled away within the last century by stone scavengers.

Resting on the *talatat* floor of B 700-sub 2, but not quite centered on it, is a large rough natural boulder of hard black ferricrete sandstone, about 1.8 x 1 x 0.6m. On its reverse (north-west) side this stone bears a New Kingdom two-lined inscription, naming at least one official.<sup>5</sup> This great stone had obviously been moved from elsewhere at considerable labor and set down on this floor. Later, Kushite builders incorporated it into the foundation of the structure which they built over the Egyptian floor. One naturally wonders why the stone was placed here and if it was itself a cult object.

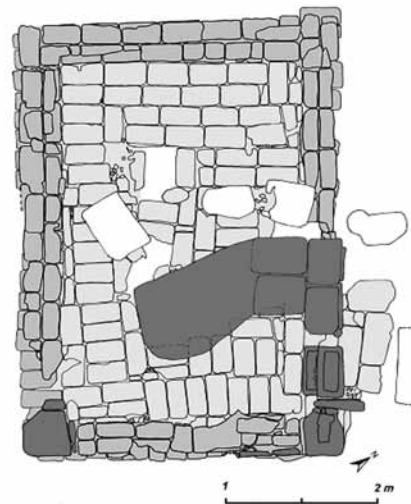


Figure 7. Ground plan of talatat chapel B 700-sub 2 excavated March, 2008. Drawn by Manja Wetendorf-Lavall (scale 1:100).

The dark blocks are Kushite or stones reused in Kushite times; the irregular mass in the center is the large natural boulder with a New Kingdom inscription on its rear face.

The *talatat* floor of B 700-sub 2 had two rectangular holes in it. Each was about the same size (350 x 750mm). From the hard earth in the rear (north-west) hole we excavated about 200 beads and a few small fragments of bronze and ivory. The beads indicated that the deposit was Egyptian and contemporary with the floor. We could not excavate the other hole, since it was partly covered by the large stone.

The Kushite "pylon" of B 700-sub 2 did not rise from the front corner of the *talatat* foundation but 1.56m behind

<sup>5</sup> Vivian Davies has kindly examined a photograph of the text and comments: "The second line appears to read: 'Standard-bearer of the company of the Great House Hwyt.'" Further study is intended.

it, where its own foundation cut into the north-east *talatat* wall and partly rested on the large stone. This meant that the Kushite revival of this building must have had a portico, perhaps with two wooden columns – each placed on one of the square forward corner blocks.

Because the interior space of B 700-sub 2 was largely occupied by the large stone, which would have blocked any frontal entrance, this building was entered from the side. At the south-east corner of the north-east wall, there are two steps and several white sandstone slabs forming a pavement, indicating the location of a door. Presumably the visitor entered by this side door, walked the length of the portico (past the large stone and the wall built over it), turned right beyond it, passed through another door and entered the tiny sanctuary, which had an interior space no greater than 2.14 x 3.79m.

Just inside the entrance we came upon a surprising ritual deposit. At the point of the threshold, a sandstone box (690 x 380 x 300mm) was built into the wall. Its hollow interior space was nearly the size of a *talatat* block: 520mm long x 210 x 170mm depth. We found the pink sandstone lid of the box beside it, where it had later been turned on its side and built into the wall. This stone box and a second smaller stone box directly behind it exactly fitted the width of the *talatat* wall. Probably the first box, sealed by its lid, formed the doorstep leading into the building.

In the stone box and permeating the earth around the forward perimeter of the large stone, within an area of about 1m<sup>2</sup> of the entrance, we recovered an enormous cache of oddly-shaped natural pebbles, which had been carefully collected from the desert and deposited here one by one. Reisner found similar deposits of stones in the tomb of Queen Khensa, a wife of Piankhy, at el-Kurru (Ku. 4) (Kendall 1981, 28-29) and others have been found in a cache within the early Kushite temple at Soniyat (Żurawski 2003, 246).<sup>6</sup> We recovered about 620 of them, but there were more we could not recover, since they lay under the Kushite pylon foundation and excavating them would have undermined the latter. Most of these stones were natural sandstone concretions or nodules, consisting of natural spheres, twinned spheres, multiple conjoined spheres, coral-shaped stones, hollow stones forming natural cups, stones with suggestive natural shapes (i.e. steatopygous or pregnant female torsos, muscular male torsos, phalli, bird and animal shapes, etc.). In addition, there were beautifully wind-polished, or water-worn, natural stones of many shapes, colors and veining patterns (Colour plates VI and VII, Plates 6-9).

Accompanying this collection, there were also a few rare man-made objects. Several were polished stone rings and a ground stone mace head of Nubian origin (the latter found, with several of the odd natural stones, inside the stone box). Others were Egyptian objects, all seemingly

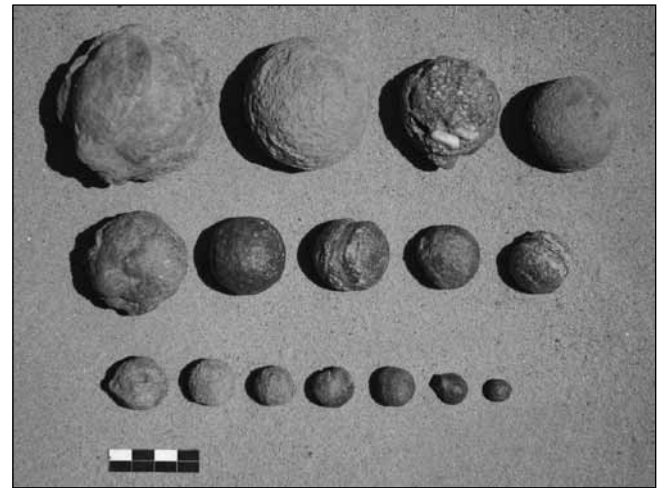


Plate 6. A selection of the natural spheres found in B 700-sub 2.

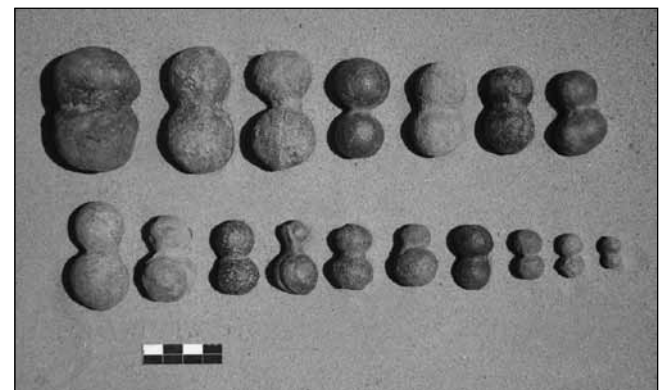


Plate 7. A selection of the natural conjoined spheres found in B 700-sub 2.

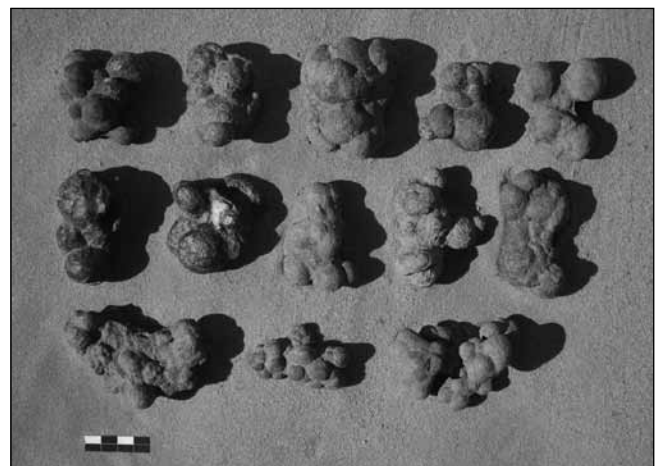


Plate 8. A selection of the natural multiple conjoined spheres found in B 700-sub 2.

contemporary with the *talatat* floor: a small finely-carved sandstone palmiform capital, possibly from a baldachin, a green faience conical offering vessel, two fragmentary glass Egyptian earrings and a very large green stone disk-shaped

<sup>6</sup> A lump of natural stone resembling a human leg, reflecting a similar practice, was found within the temple built by Taharqo at Kawa (Macadam 1955, 26).

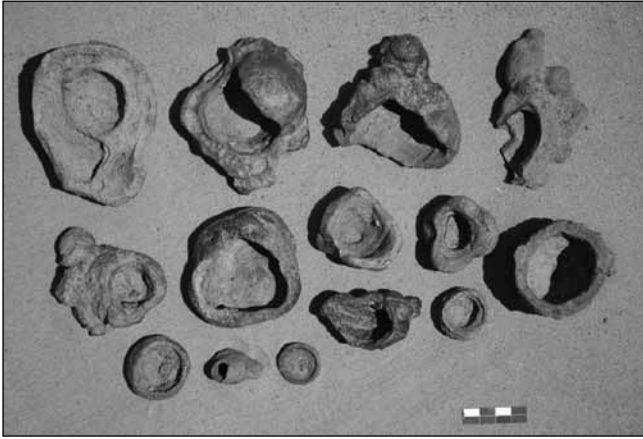


Plate 9. A selection of the natural cups found in B 700-sub 2.

earplug, 67mm in diameter (Colour Plate VIII).<sup>7</sup> The latter was carved with radiating ‘*nad*’ signs, which had been filled with colored paste and inlays of carnelian (of which only one still remained); the petal-like spaces between them inlaid with green glass cylindrical plugs. This object, 15mm thick and having a concave groove around its circumference, was worn in the pierced and stretched earlobe.<sup>8</sup>

#### B 1100

In 1997, south west of B 700 on the other side of a large spoil heap of Reisner’s, we discovered the poorly preserved remains of another *talatat* structure, comparable to the previous (Figure 1). This proved to have walls of the same thickness (i.e. about one cubit = 530mm). We called it “B 1100” (cf. Reisner 1917, 214-215). The temple had been built directly in front of the Jebel Barkal pinnacle, with which its



Plate 10. The surviving section of *talatat* wall in B 1100. This small building was built in front of the Jebel Barkal pinnacle with its axis directed on it and was repeatedly overbuilt in Napatan and Meroitic times. It is now almost totally destroyed.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. MFA 1982, cat. 301, 302, 303; Aldred 1978, 144, pl. 68, top, center; Andrews 1990, 114-115, fig. 94.

<sup>8</sup> Earplugs of this type and size can be seen modeled by an extraordinary wooden head of the reign of Amenhotep III found at Saqqara (Zivie 1990, 81-86); such earplugs are still worn by the Swahili women of Paté and Lamu Islands (Fisher 1984, 288-289).

axis was aligned. Although *talatat* blocks were scattered here and there among its loose stones, the only intact section of wall occurred on its north-east side (Plate 10). This was a fragmentary, double row of stretchers over a foundation of headers, 2.4m. long. The blocks show a remarkable uniformity. Of the seven measurable blocks, six had lengths between 520 and 530mm; one block was 550mm long. The width varied from 250 to 280mm. They were also of the gritty white and yellow sandstone of B 500, Phases II and III.

In 1999 we cleared 240m<sup>2</sup> of the site and mapped all the scattered stones. About 10m east of the preserved *talatat* wall, we found on the surface a red sandstone block bearing the throne name of Horemheb (Plate 5). Over the *talatat* level we found the clear remains of at least two later Kushite phases of the structure: one of red sandstone Napatan blocks, some showing reuse and bearing 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty reliefs and, over these, a level of Meroitic relief blocks from the walls and ceiling of a small vaulted chamber. One of these bore the throne name of Amanitore.

B 1100 evidently started its life, like the others, as a small chapel built of *talatat*, but like B 700-sub 2, it was restored in Kushite times – in this case multiple times, probably after damage caused by periodic rock falls from the cliff. Given its alignment on the Jebel Barkal pinnacle/“*uraeus*” and other evidence, I suggested that this building may have been one of the two temples to the uraeus goddesses: *Pr-Wr* or *Pr-Nsr*, into which the king went to receive his crowns (Kendall 1997, 338-343). Such shrines are apparently represented in Akhenaten’s reliefs at Karnak (Gohary 1992, 21-22); they are mentioned in Horemheb’s coronation inscription (Gardiner 1953, 15; Murnane 1995, 230-233); and a *Pr-nr* is pictured in Taharqa’s Kawa reliefs (Macadam 1955, 95, pl. 22). Sadly, the site has been almost totally destroyed by stone scavengers.

#### B 300-sub

About 30m west of B 1100 is the last *talatat* temple in evidence in this row (Figure 1). It lies under the site of the now destroyed outer courts of the Mut Temple (B 300) of Taharqa. Reisner called it “B 300-sub” or “B 300-first.” It was the old temple to which Taharqa referred in his B 300 inscription: “Now his majesty found this temple-compound built from stone by the ancestors in humble workmanship; then he had this temple-compound built in excellent, enduring workmanship” (FHN 1994, 132). Given that Taharqa’s temple was dedicated to Mut, Hathor and Sekhmet and his adjacent temple B 200 was dedicated to Hathor and Tefnut, one would suppose that the tripartite temple B 300-sub was dedicated to the same goddesses (Kendall 2008, 125-128).

B 300-sub was a much more substantial structure than the single-roomed shrines, described previously. It possessed a tripartite sanctuary similar in layout and size both to the B 500 main sanctuary (514-519) and to the so-called “Ramesses chapel” (508-511). In its original plan, it probably would have been very similar to B 500, Phases I-II. Since the temple was dedicated to multiple deities beyond those of B 500, it cannot



be attributed to Akhenaten. In fact, the *talatat* blocks here are of a size comparable to those in the “Ramesses Chapel”: 490–540mm in length and between 250mm and 280mm in width (with some laid sideways) and since the paving stones are very similar to those in the latter, one would naturally equate B 300-sub with Ramesses II. This attribution would seem to be confirmed by the presence of several *talatat* blocks bearing cartouches of Ramesses both on the site and built into the walls of the nearby tomb of Ahmed Karsani (Colour plate I).

## Interpretation

Although Jebel Barkal may have been fortified as early as the reign of Thutmose I and provided with a small mud-brick Amun shrine (Kendall 2007; cf. Bonnet *et al.* 2007, 217), surviving archaeological evidence confirms Egyptian occupation only as early as the middle of Thutmose III's reign (Reisner 1931, 76–77, 80–81; Reisner and Reisner 1933a; Dunham 1970, pl. 47 H). No architectural remains from the site, however, can be dated earlier than the reign of Thutmose IV, whose small temple B 600 seems to have been a coronation or *Heb-Sed* pavilion, judging from its surviving Kushite elements (Kendall and Wolf, in press; Reisner 1917, pl. XLV, 1; 1918, 99–100). Oddly, the foundations of a Thutmosid Amun temple are conspicuously absent. The only known material evidence for such a temple are two reused blocks (now lost), which Reisner reported finding in 1919 in front of B 200 (Reisner field diary, Jan. 13, 1919; Reisner 1931, 76–77). One bore the fragmentary throne name *Mn-[hpr(w?)]-rꜥ* (Thutmose III or IV) and another preserved the phrase: ... *ir n.f m mnw n it.f Imn..* (“He made as a monument for his father Amun...”).

Since the earliest phases of B 500 are of *talatat* masonry, one would suspect that, as at Pnubs/Dokki Gel, Akhenaten built the temple after ordering the destruction of an older temple (cf. Bonnet *et al.* 2007, 198). That an earlier Amun temple existed where B 500 was built is implied by its orientation, which, rather than being directed toward the east, as one might expect for a solar temple, is directed toward the mountain (i.e. toward a divine occupant of the mountain, such as Amun of Napata). It is noteworthy in this regard that the Dokki Gel temple also occupies the exact spot of its destroyed predecessor and, by its orientation, also makes no obvious reference to a solar cult.

Both B 500 and the Dokki Gel temple have conventional tripartite sanctuaries which have little in common with other known Aten temples (Bonnet *et al.* 2007, 197, fig. 20; Badawy 1968, 201–214; Wilkinson 2000, 140–141). This suggests that they date from the earliest phase of Akhenaten's reign, before many of his innovations had been instituted and when he was still using the name Amenhotep (IV). This is also the period when he was known to have been active at Sesebi (Fairman 1938) and probably also at Kawa (Baines 1998, 297–298; Bonnet and Valbelle 2005, 60–63).

Our excavations in B 500 have revealed that the plan of its sanctuary dates to Phase I and that all the walls stand on their original *talatat* foundations. Remarkably, it was this same

plan that remained unaltered throughout the remaining life of the temple, suggesting (paradoxically?) that the cult itself also remained unchanged.

Given its orientation, its static sanctuary plan and its long history as an Amun temple, one might logically conclude that B 500 was first built after the death of Akhenaten by Tutankhamun and/or Horemheb, utilizing *talatat* (cf. Reisner 1917, 223). Certain details however, quickly force us to suspect Akhenaten as the true founder. For example, the narrow pylons of B 500, Phases I and II, mirror those of the king's other known temples (Bonnet *et al.* 2007, 197, fig. 20; Wilkinson 2000, 140–141) and the square piers of *talatat* evoke those in his Gem-pa-Aten at East Karnak (Redford 1984, 102–122; 1991; 1999). The small, east-directed room 522 also looks like an open, roofless platform that might have been used in solar rituals. Finally, of the four foundation deposit cavities found, two lack the name plaques of the royal builder (FD 517, 519) and two others are completely empty (FD 503, 522). The evidence from B 500, Phases I–V, leaves us to conclude that a concerted effort was made, on the one hand, to eradicate the name of the temple's original builder but on the other, to preserve the temple and to convert it into a sanctuary for Amun, in which the god could be seamlessly merged with the original cult. We now must consider what sort of cult the latter might have been.

At the very beginning of Akhenaten's reign, the king favored the Heliopolitan sun god Re-Horakhty, who was depicted in traditional manner, as a falcon-headed man. In his first building project, the king undertook construction of “a great *benben*” for the god at Karnak (Vergnienx 1999, fasc. 1, 153–163). This was a symbolic facsimile of the Heliopolitan stone fetish, which took phallic or obelisk form and symbolized the god's creative act upon the mythical Primeval Mound (Baines 1970; Kemp 1989, 85–88). Fragmentary reliefs depicting this monolith reveal that it stood on, or beside, an elevated structure called *Kꜣy Wꜥb* (“Pure Hill”= Primeval Mound) of Re” - later called the “Pure Hill of Aten” (Vergnienx 1999, fasc. 1, 161).

When the “great *benben*” was completed, the king's conception of Re-Horakhty had evolved to the point where he insisted that the god be identified by a new “dogmatic name,” which had to be written within cartouches, as if to indicate that the deity was both royal and divine, like the king. The god's name was “Re-Horakhty, who rejoices in the horizon // in his name as Shu (i.e. Light), who is in the Aten.” The name implies that the king regarded Re-Horakhty as an aspect of the god Shu, who was the first born son of the Heliopolitan Creator god Atum, traditional god of the Primeval Mound. Through a pun on his name, Shu (“Air”) was reconceived as “Sunlight.” The king evidently considered Re-Horakhty/Shu as the offspring (“Sunlight”) of a new creator sun god, the Aten, who like Atum, he associated with a primeval mound.

Prior to the Middle Kingdom, the creator and father of the king was thought to be the sun god Re of Heliopolis, together with his chief aspects Atum (the primeval sun god



as father of Re) and Re-Horakhty (the youthful sun god as Horus, son of Re). By Dynasty 12, Amun, the Theban dynastic god, was combined with Re, as Amun-Re, so that Amun could absorb all of Re's mythology and aspects. The merging of these two gods also resulted in the conceptual merging of their chief sanctuaries, with the result that, by the reign of Hatshepsut, Karnak (*Ipt swt*) had come to be called "Southern Heliopolis" (*Iwnw šm'w*) (Roehrig 2005, 150-151, n. 19) and Jebel Barkal (*Dw W'rb* = "Pure Mountain"), which had been discovered and sanctified at about the same time, had come to be recognized both as a southern "Karnak" and "Heliopolis" (Kendall 2007, 3-4; 2008, 124-125). All three sites, Heliopolis, Karnak and Jebel Barkal, therefore, came to be seen as regional manifestations of each other and primary residences of the same gods, who could either be conceived as distinct deities, or seen as merged within the mysterious being of Amun (Kendall 2008, 126, 138).

With Akhenaten's special interests, positive and negative, in the respective cults of Re and Amun, one may assume that he would have developed each site – Heliopolis, Karnak, and Jebel Barkal (and others) – simultaneously to promote his unique religious ideology favoring Re over Amun. At Heliopolis he is known to have built a sanctuary, but almost nothing is known of it (Redford 1984, 139). He certainly recreated for Re the "Primeval Mound" and *benben* of Heliopolis at Karnak, and similar structures (however miniaturized) we would probably expect to find at Jebel Barkal, the Nubian "Karnak." This small isolated mountain at the southern limit of the empire had, since its discovery, been thought to manifest the "Primeval Mound," and, with its natural 74m high pinnacle, had also been seen to possess a "*benben* of Heliopolis" (so-called in the Jebel Barkal stela of Seti I [Reisner and Reisner 1933b, 74, line c-4]). We must therefore wonder whether "the great *benben*" of Re-Horakhty at Karnak on the *K3y W'rb* ("Pure Hill") was built as a response to "the great *benben*" at Heliopolis or to that of the *Dw W'rb* ("Pure Mountain") of Nubia or both and whether Akhenaten furnished all three sites simultaneously with a *Hwt-bnbn* ("Mansion of the Benben") of Re-Horakhty. In any case, we can suspect that B 500, Phases I-III, and the *talatat* shrines that accompanied it, were built within the first five years of the king's reign and dedicated to Re-Horakhty in his "dogmatic name" – before the god had become fully merged with – and indistinguishable from – the Aten (Vergniew 1999, 189-194). During this period, Akhenaten would still have considered Re-Horakhty, like Aten, a god of the "Primeval Mound" and a "resident in the *benben*." This could explain the apparent anomaly of B 500, as an Aten temple, being directed toward Jebel Barkal. Since in the orthodox Amun cult, Re-Horakhty was simply a solar aspect of Amun, the king's early promotion of Re over Amun may not at first have been seen as a repudiation of the latter.

By his second year, Akhenaten had become fully focused on the construction of an enormous complex at Karnak, east of the Amun *temenos*, in which he intended to celebrate

a *Heb-Sed* at the end of Year 3 (Gohary 1992). This vast complex was entirely built of *talatat* and was called the *Gm-p3-Itn* (Gem-pa-Aten = "the Aten is found/He who finds the Aten"). It was surrounded by an even larger mud-brick *temenos* called the *Pr'Itn* ("House of the Aten") and it (probably) housed three temples, one of which was the "Mansion of the *Benben*" containing the "great *benben*" of Re-Horakhty and its "Pure Hill of Re/Aten".

The surrounding walls of the Gem-pa-Aten were decorated on the interior with enormous relief scenes of the king and his family celebrating the *Heb-Sed* and making offerings to the Aten, but the great gods, even Re-Horakhty in his standard form, were nowhere represented. In front of these walls, regularly spaced square pillars of *talatat* provided supports for roofs over the reliefs. On the south side of the complex, the pillars supported colossal statues of the king, shown alternately wearing the double crown of kingship (which was also the usual guise of Atum) and the feathered crown of Shu (Redford 1999, 56). These figures are notable for the ambiguity of their sexual attributes, a trait apparently alluding to the bisexual nature of Atum, who self-engendered the first brother-sister pair of gods, Shu and Tefnut, on the Primeval Mound (Rundle-Clark 1991, 41-48). In these images the king portrays himself both as Atum and as that god's own son Shu, so that he appears as his own father and son – a simple re-expression of the "Kamutef principle" (Traunecker 2001; Kendall 2008, 139). The cartouches carved on the bodies of the statues, however, identify each as "Re-Horakhty" in his dogmatic name.

Obviously the Gem-pa-Aten at Karnak was thought to actualize Heliopolis at Thebes, but with the statues arrayed only against the south wall, one also suspects an acknowledgment of the Nubian mythological landscape and its own "Heliopolis" at Jebel Barkal (perhaps connected with the notion of "source of the Nile = source of life = source of Creation"). The Nubian connection may be further indicated by the name Gem-pa-Aten, which echoed that of the Nubian town (modern Kawa), which was likely founded by Akhenaten at about the same time (Baines 1998, 297-298).

At Jebel Barkal the *talatat* piers in B 500, Phases I-II, look very much like those against which the statues in the Gem-pa-Aten were erected. Whether these piers were supports for similar statues cannot be known since no evidence survives, but the Karnak statues emphasize the king's devotion to Re-Horakhty, Atum and Shu, even within the increasing exclusivity of the Aten cult. There thus can be little doubt, given the extreme importance of these three gods at Jebel Barkal after the Amarna period (Kendall 2008, 126-143), that Akhenaten's B 500 must have been dedicated to them (and to himself) as aspects of Re/Aten, set against the backdrop of the Nubian "Primeval Mound" and its pinnacle/"*benben* of Heliopolis". To emphasize the continued importance of the Heliopolitan cult at Barkal in Kushite times, one need only cite the colossal Napatan statues found at Jebel Barkal, in which Taharqa, Alamani and Aspelta all wear the feathered

crown of Shu (Dunham 1970, pls VII-VIII, XIX, XXI). To have reintroduced Amun into this divine company after Akhenaten's death would have posed little difficulty, since all of these gods were understood by the orthodox to be forms of Amun. Only the images of the discredited pharaoh would have had to be removed.

In many fragmentary relief scenes in the Gem-pa-Aten, Akhenaten is shown visiting numerous small roofless single-room chapels, containing individual tables of offerings to the Aten (Gohary 1992: 35, pls XXVIII-XXXVII; Tewfik

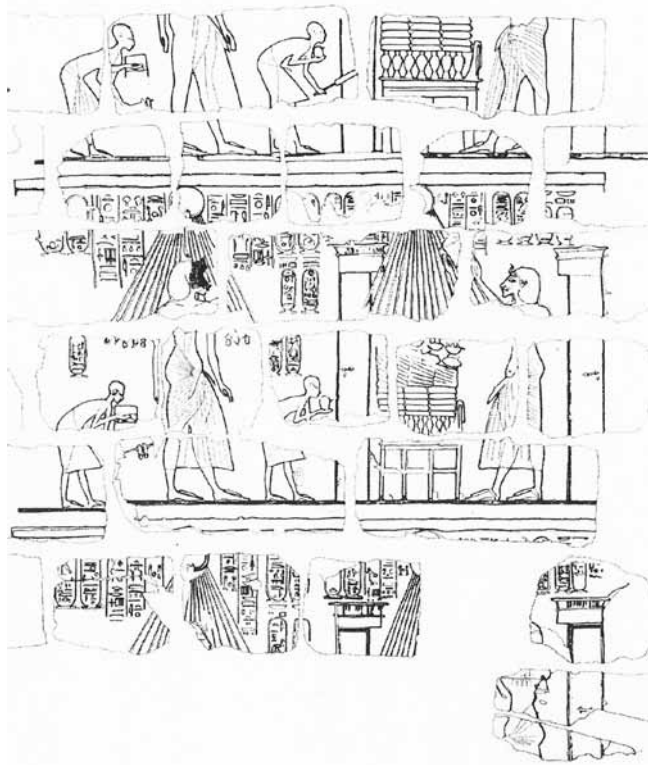


Figure 8. Akhenaten making offerings to the Aten in small roofless chapels, comparable to B 700-sub 1 and 3. From a series of reassembled talatat reliefs from Karnak, now in the Luxor Museum (Hari 1985, pl. IX).

1976, pls 7, 75, 76). The king stops before these, one after another, where he privately ministers to the Aten who hovers overhead beaming his life-giving rays to the king (Figure 8). These chapels look precisely like the small *talatat* structures at Jebel Barkal - B 520-sub, B 700-sub 1 and 3 and perhaps B 1100. Since the stone used in their construction appears to be the same as that used in Phases II and III of B 500, we can conclude that the construction of all these buildings was completed simultaneously with the Gem-pa-Aten at Karnak and were probably used for the performance of the same rituals, which here presumably would have been conducted by priestly surrogates of the king.

According to Redford (1984, 78; 1999, 393), the reliefs associated with Akhenaten's "Mansion of the *Benben*" at Karnak depict only Queen Nefertiti offering to the Aten. The king does not appear, which may imply that his essence was

embodied within the stone it housed, just as Re-Horakhty was said to be "within the *benben*" (Vergnienx 1999, fasc. 1, 162). At Jebel Barkal I have demonstrated that the pinnacle, besides being conceived as phallus and uraeus (thus presenting male and female aspects simultaneously) was also thought to represent the figure of a standing king, which personified all aspects of kingship, past, present and eternal (i.e. Atum, Osiris, and royal *ka*) (Kendall 2008, 136-143). It may be that the queen, personifying the female creative principle, was the prime ministrant to the *benben*, as symbol of the male creative principle. It is thus tempting to draw a parallel between what we know of the *benben* shrine at Karnak and the tiny building B 700-sub 2 at Barkal, which also housed a large natural stone. Could this have been the "Mansion of the Benben of Heliopolis" mentioned in the Seti I stele (Reisner and Reisner 1933b, 74, line c-4) and did it or the stone it housed have any ritual relationship with the pinnacle? Given the unusual emphasis on Nefertiti in the Karnak shrine, we note with great interest that in B 700-sub 2 the ritual offerings left there were not only odd natural stones (often associated with Hathor, goddess of sexual stimulation) (Pinch 1993, 204-210) but primarily women's ornaments – the most remarkable being the large earplug which was clearly the property of a high-born lady of the Amarna period (Colour plate VIII)!

Akhenaten's departure from Thebes, his name change and his move to Akhetaten occurred during his fifth regnal year and this also coincided with a kingdom-wide attack on Amun's name and images; it also included the suppression of all other gods as well. Even Re-Horakhty was included, who at Akhetaten was simply merged with the sun disk as Re ("Sun") (Redford 1984, 137-142). At Jebel Barkal, traces of Akhenaten's program of iconoclasm are abundant. The name of Amun and his images have been erased on the Thutmose III stele (Reisner and Reisner 1933a); the god's name has also been cut out of several statues at Barkal, notably that of Thutmose, Akhenaten's own viceroy of Kush (Dunham 1970, 17, 19, 28-30). A fragment from B 600, bearing the word "gods" has been changed to read "god" (Kendall and Wolf, in press, figs 8a-b). However, the blocks, mentioned above, believed to come from the destroyed Thutmoseid Amun temple, preserve the god's name intact, which shows that whatever structure they belonged to had been dismantled prior to Year 5.

It is astonishing to think that B 500, the "Karnak" (*Ipt-sw*) of Nubia, began its life as an Aten temple, yet, as I have suggested above, its conversion for Amun-Re following the Amarna period would have posed no doctrinal problems, since the god resumed his status as supreme sun god and would thus simply have become Aten and *vice versa*.

Centuries later in Kushite times, Akhenaten himself may have been forgotten, but the memory of the Aten as a benign god still lived on in Nubia. His name survived in the ancient name of Kawa, Gem-Aten/Gem-pa-Aten and, since "Amun of Gem-pa-Aten" became the town's chief god after the Amarna period, it is clear that he had simply merged with Aten and taken his place, just as he presumably did at Jebel



Barkal. Most unexpected are the Napatan references to the god Aten, dating from the reign of Aspelta, in which the “Disk” figures as an important local deity. In one text, recalling Akhenaten’s Karnak effigies, the king is called “the good god, likeness of Re, Atum of the beginning, ...counterpart of Aten” (FHN 1996 II, 254). In another, the king’s mother beseeches Amun: “Make numerous (Aspelta’s) years of life on earth, like Aten of Napata” (FHN 1996 I, 233).

Who was this “Aten of Napata”? Taharqa’s Karnak prayer to Amun provides the clue:

“[O Amun-Re, lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands, who is before Karnak, the *ba* that rises in heaven, [whose ima]ges [are secret], whose appearances are numerous, whose (true) form is unknown...through whose manifestations all manifestations manifest themselves, great Aten who darts forth his rays...great elder...who was the first to come into existence...father of fathers, mother of mothers...King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Amun-Re...lord of heaven, earth, water, and mountains.”

(FHN 1994, 181-183)

He was, it seems, the One God – primeval, solar, male, female, and royal - by just another name.

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*Colour plate I. Jebel Barkal. The tomb of Sheikh Ahmed Karsani in the Muslim cemetery west of Jebel Barkal. The walls incorporate many reused talatat blocks.*



*Colour plate II. Jebel Barkal. Exterior wall of B 519, showing talatat foundation and construction trench cut in the natural jebel.*



*Colour plate III. Jebel Barkal. Talatat chapel B 700-sub 3. Torn down to its foundations soon after the Amarna period, it was later paved over – probably by the Kushites – apparently to preserve it.*





Colour plate IV. Jebel Barkal. Talatat chapel B 700-sub 1, which lies under the portico of Napatan temple B 700. Note that the Napatan builders did not remove the old structure to build B 700 but carefully cut through its old stones to lay the later walls – as if to integrate the two.



Colour plate VI. Jebel Barkal. A selection of the 620+ natural pebbles found in B 700-sub 2.

Colour plate VIII. Jebel Barkal. Green stone earplug, inlaid with glass, carnelian and coloured paste, 67mm dia, found with the stone deposit in B 700-sub 2; Egyptian, 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The deposit also included fragmentary polished stone rings of Nubian manufacture (hair ornaments?), a ground stone macehead, a small carved sandstone palmiform capital from a baldachin (?), and several smaller Egyptian earrings and earplugs, also 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.



Colour plate V. Jebel Barkal. Talatat chapel 700-sub 2. Unlike the others, this structure was built of talatat, mortar-free, and its floor was paved with talatat. It housed a large rough natural boulder inscribed by New Kingdom officials. A tiny Kushite shrine, now largely destroyed, was built on top of it. The entrance was from the side, over a threshold formed by a stone box.



Colour plate VII. Jebel Barkal. A selection of the 620+ natural pebbles found in B 700-sub 2.







*Polish excavations within the Cathedral at Faras in progress  
(SARS Adams Archive, ADA S001.05).*



*Wall painting depicting an eparch under the protection  
of Christ within the Cathedral at Faras  
(SARS Adams Archive, ADA S001.08).  
This painting is now in the National Museum,  
Warsaw no. 234033.*



*The New Kingdom temple dedicated to Dedwen and  
Sesostris III within the fortress at Semna  
(SARS Adams Archive, ADA S002.04).*

*Aerial photograph of the Semna  
Cataract looking downstream  
(SARS Adams Archive,  
ADA S002.02).*

