

B 100: a Meroitic palace.

When George A. Reisner began his work at Jebel Barkal in 1916, the first building he excavated was a large Meroitic structure, which he numbered "B 100." Dating to the late first century BC or early first century AD, it was nearly square in plan, 33.2 m (NE to SW) by 37.1 m (NW to SE), with a doorway in each exterior wall (**fig 1**). Although at the time he could describe B 100 only as an "administrative building," it is now certain that it was a palace. In its square plan it parallels all other known Meroitic palaces that have been found since, and in its orientation (90° to the left of the front gateway of B 500, the great Amun temple [q.v.]) it occupies the very position of Egyptian palaces. It was built as a replacement for B 1200 (q.v.), the old Napatan palace, which lay approximately 40 m behind it to the NW. B 1200, first constructed in the eighth century BC (probably over a Ramesside antecedent), had been rebuilt perhaps six times, but by the late first century BC it had outlived its usefulness and was replaced by B 100.

B 100 had two staircases leading to a second floor, but Reisner found its upper level entirely lost to erosion. The lower floor had 23 rooms, but most of these were doorless foundation cells, built only to support the rooms on the upper level and to protect the building from Nile floods. Two large halls, each with six columns (3 x 2), reveal the main axis, which led to the northeast side, where a main doorway gave access in a straight line to the front gate of B 500 (**fig. 2**).

After fully recording B 100 in 1916, Reisner reburied it three years later in order to use it as a dump site for the earth he would remove from his excavations in B 500. B 100 has thus remained buried and hidden from view ever since.

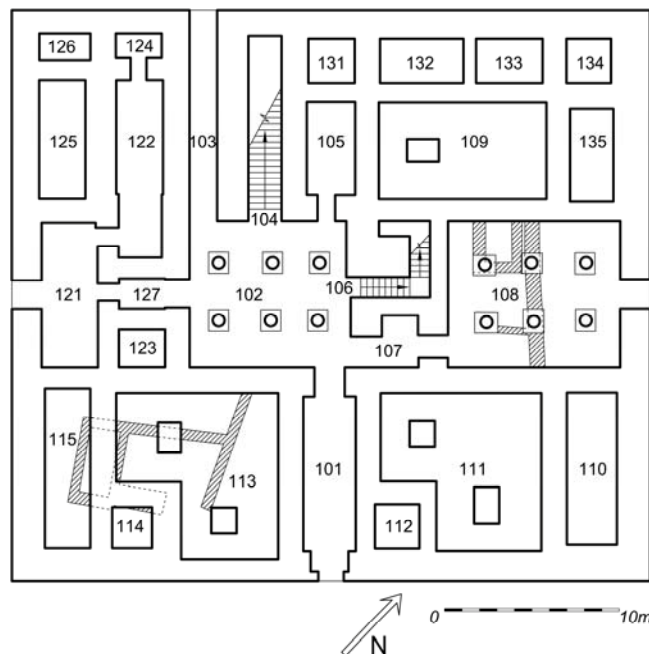


fig. 1: Ground plan of B 100, reconstructed from Reisner's diary notes and his original survey map (Geoff Kornfeld).



fig. 2: *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.*

Refs.

T. Kendall, "B 100: A little-known Meroitic palace at Jebel Barkal," *Orientalia* 83, fasc. 1 (2014), 63-75.

M. Maillot, "The Palace of Muweis in the Shendi Reach: A Comparative Approach," in J. R. Anderson and D.A. Welsby, *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond: Proceedings of the 12th International Conference for Nubian Studies* (Leuven-Paris-Walpole, MA), 782-795.

