

B 800

B 800 lies parallel to and about 50 m southwest of B 500. It was an Amun temple that seems to have been built by the earliest known Napatan kings (ca. 800-750 BC) as a temporary substitute for B 500, while that temple was undergoing restoration. Unlike most of the other Barkal temples, B 800 had no New Kingdom antecedent, and it appears to have been built quickly of mud brick so that the cult of Amun of Napata could continue uninterrupted in temporary quarters, while the old New Kingdom temple of Amun, B 500, of necessity, became a construction site.

When Reisner excavated B 800 in 1916, he found that it presented two pre-Dynasty 25 construction phases. The earliest was a small building of irregular shape ("B 800 nucleus"), which included a stone-paved open court, four stone columns, a roofed antechamber, and an off-center tripartite sanctuary (**fig. 1a**). Its walls, he stated, "were of the cheapest available material, crude-brick, and... poorly built even for that material." He then speculated that its builder had been Kashta "or his immediate predecessor" (whom we now know bore the name of Alara).

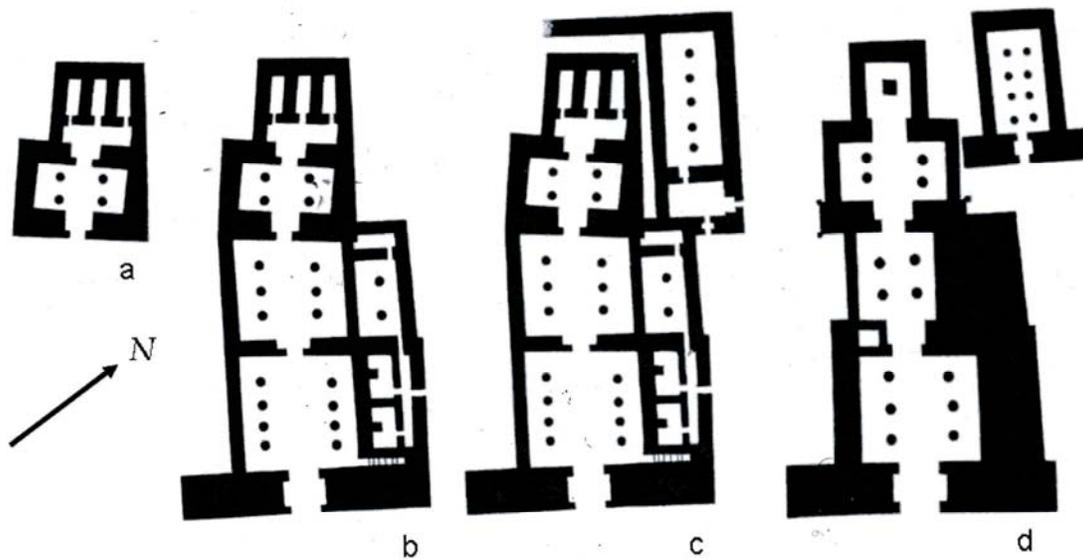


fig. 1. *The evolution of the complex B 800-900: a) "B 800 nucleus" (attributed to Alara); b) "B 800-first" (attributed to Kashta); c) "B 800-first" with "B 900-first" (dated to the late reign of Piankhy); and d) "B 800-second" (Napatan) with "B 900-second" (Meroitic).*

Soon after completion of the nucleus, two outer courts and a pylon were added to it, as well as a series of side rooms, all constructed of mud brick (**fig. 1b**). This enlarged structure, "B 800-first" was striking for its lack of refinement: its columns were hand-cut and not perfectly round, and, flanking the entrance, there were at least four crude sandstone rams, which appear to be the earliest large-scale statues attempted by native Kushite sculptors. (The best preserved example can now be seen at the entrance to the Jebel Barkal Museum. **fig. 2**)

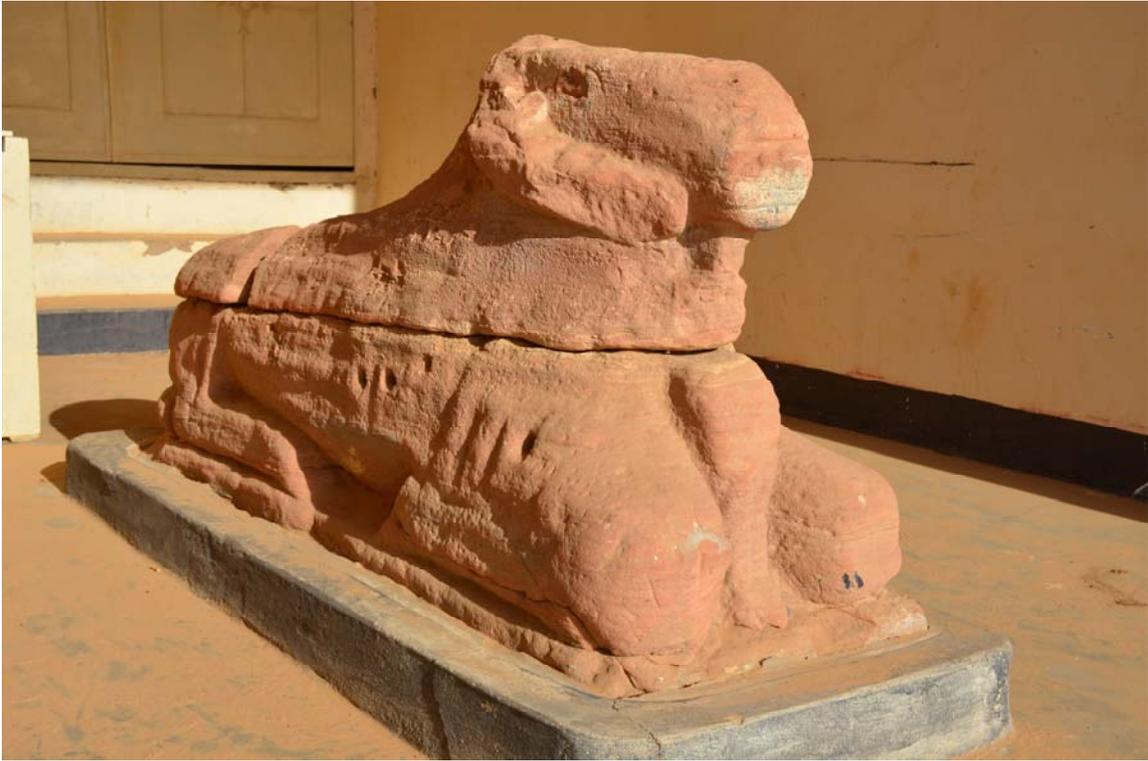


fig. 2: One of at least four ram statues erected at the entrance of Kashta's "B 800-first", ca. 760-750 BC.

Sometime after the expulsion of the Kushites from Egypt in the mid-seventh century BC, B 800 was rebuilt in stone ("B 800-second") (**fig. 1d**), indicating that its role as a temporary residence for Amun of B 500 had changed, for the god's original temple had been fully operational since the reign of Piankhy. At this point, B 800 must have acquired a new permanent meaning, independent of B 500, since its old mud walls were now sheathed in red sandstone, and its tripartite sanctuary was dismantled and rebuilt as a single sanctuary containing a bark stand. It was, to be sure, a second Amun temple, but dedicated to what form of the god? The answer surely lies in an examination of the local Amun iconography.

In local monuments at Jebel Barkal the god Amun is commonly represented in two forms, which seem to have symbolized different directions (**fig. 3**). The god's human-headed form nearly always appeared on monuments or temple walls on the left or downstream (southwest) side, which indicated north and Egypt. The god's ram-headed form nearly always appeared on the right or upstream (northeast) side, which indicated south and Nubia. The human-headed Amun was, of course, the Egyptian god of Thebes, Amun of Karnak, while the ram-headed Amun was the Nubian Amun of Napata, "who dwells within Jebel Barkal." It stands to reason, therefore, that since the "southern" temple (B 500) housed Amun of Napata, B 800, the "northern" temple, must have housed the Amun of Karnak.

Since the Kushites had lost direct or easy access to Karnak in the latter seventh century BC, it appears that the new stone temple B 800, which seems to have been completed by Anlamani about 620 BC, became the ritual substitute of Karnak temple at Napata and housed the human-headed (Theban) Amun.

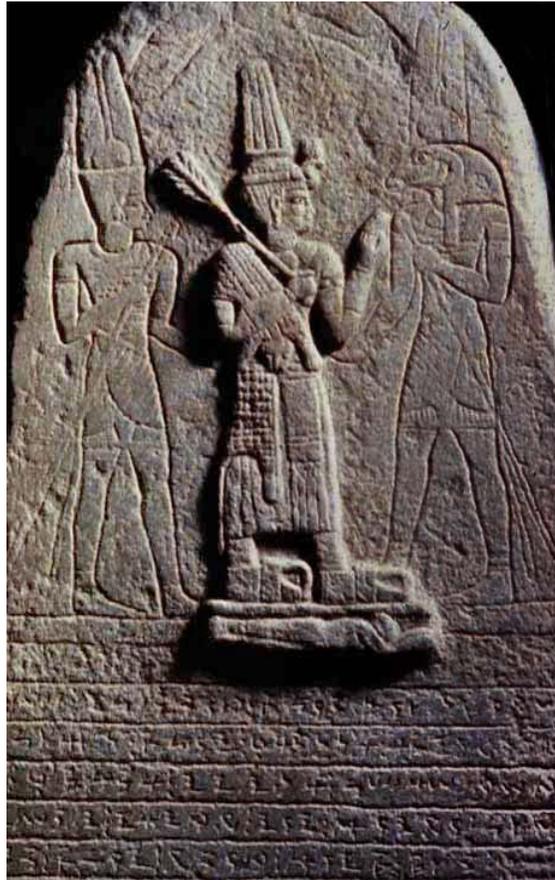


fig. 3. *The top of the granite stele of the Meroitic king Tanyidamani (ca. 180-140 BC), found at Jebel Barkal. The king is dressed as high priest and wears the crown of Shu (see B 200-300, B 500: statue cache). He is flanked by the two primary forms of Amun: Amun of Napata at right (on the "south"), and Amun of Karnak at left (on the "north"). Height 158 cm. Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Expedition. MFA 23.736. Photo © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*

Ref. T. Kendall, "Reused Relief Blocks of Piankhy from B 900: Toward a Decipherment of the Osiris Cult at Jebel Barkal," in J. R. Anderson and D. A. Welsby, eds. *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond: Proceedings of the 12th International Conference for Nubian Studies*. Leuven: 2014. pp. 663-686.)