The adjacent temples B 200 and B 300 were built by Taharqa (ca. 690-664 BC) to honor the goddesses Hathor "of Pure Mountain" and Mut "of Napata" respectively, both of whom, as consorts of Amun, were believed to dwell together with him inside Jebel Barkal. Hathor and Mut were not only closely associated with each other but they were also identified with a goddess called the "Eye of Re" (or "Sun's Eye"), who personified the god's uraeus (i.e. cobra diadem), which was worn on his crown and was believed to protect him from his enemies. In the Egyptian language, the words for "eye" (iret, udjat) and "uraeus" (i'ret, wadjyt) were nearly identical, which explains how goddesses of the "Eye" and Uraeus could be conceived as the same being.

The two temples were built side by side on the west side of the Jebel Barkal pinnacle because, when viewed from its west side, this towering rock was thought to resemble a colossal statue of a uraeus crowned with a sun disk, which was the typical form of the "Eye of Re" (fig. 1a). A relief inside the first rock-cut chamber of B 300 actually represents the pinnacle in just this way - as a sun-crowned uraeus hanging from the Jebel Barkal cliff (fig. 1b, 2). (A short distance to the east of B 200 and 300 lie the ruins of another temple in the same series: B 1100 (q.v.), which was dedicated to the goddesses of the king's uraeus, which was known as the "Eye of Horus." This temple was built directly in front of the pinnacle, from which angle the rock was thought to resemble the shape of a royal uraeus wearing the White Crown of Upper Egypt)

fig. 1a:  The Jebel Barkal pinnacle, seen from the west (and from the site of  B 200).
fig. 1b:  The Jebel Barkal pinnacle, as represented inside B 300 (see fig. 2).
fig. 2: Relief scene on the eastern wall of the first rock cut chamber of B 300, as it appears today. Here Taharqa (at right), followed by his chief queen, make offerings to Amun and Mut, who are pictured inside Jebel Barkal. The mountain takes the form of a flat-topped shrine with the pinnacle shown as a sun-crowned uraeus (the "Eye of Re"), hanging from the cliff (fig. 1a-b). (Note: The masonry blocks in the center belong to an early 20th century fill of a hole in the wall). (Photo: Bryan Whitney).

The interior reliefs of both temples allude to the myth of the "Eye of Re," which went something like this: At the beginning of time, the Creator and ancient Sun god (here personified by Amun) had a daughter called the "Eye," who was his protector. In time, they quarreled and she left him, taking up residence in distant Nubia, where, in her anger, she transformed into a raging lioness (thus becoming one of the frightful lion-headed goddesses Tefnut and/or Sekhmet). Her father, now blind, was desperate to make peace with her so that she would return again to his forehead and resume her role as his protector. He thus dispatched to Nubia his son (and her brother) Shu to find her and to bring her back. Discovering her hiding place, and charming her with his powerful magic, he managed to pacify her and to coax her back to Egypt. On the journey, as her anger subsided, she transformed from lion to human form. And once back in Egypt, she reconciled with her father, assumed serpent shape, and again took her place on his crown as his protective "eye"/uraeus.

Already in Dynasty 18, the pinnacle on Jebel Barkal had been identified as a giant natural statue of a uraeus, which seemed to prove to ancient onlookers that this remote mountain was the place in Nubia where the "Eye"/Uraeus had dwelt in exile. On the back walls of both B 200 and B 300 each goddess's transformation from lion-headed (=unpacified) to human-headed (=pacified) form was represented, as she traveled from Nubia (represented on the right, or upstream, side of the temple) to Egypt (represented on the left, or downstream, side of the temple). (Note: the gods of Jebel Barkal appear on the right walls, while their Egyptian counterparts appear on the left walls) (fig. 3). In both temples Taharqa had himself depicted as Shu, wearing that god's tall, four-feathered crown (see figs. 2 and 3) and escorting the goddess down to Egypt on behalf of his
"father" Amun. In this way the king represented himself as the reincarnation of Amun's first-born son, who saved the world by restoring to the god his protective goddess.

**fig. 3:** View of the unpublished back wall of B 300. It depicts Taharqa at right (i.e. in the south=Nubia), wearing the crown of Shu and embraced by the ram-headed Amun of Jebel Barkal, accompanied by the goddess Mut in lion form (as Sekhmet). At left (in the north=Egypt), the king, still wearing the crown of Shu, is embraced by the human-headed Amun of Karnak and accompanied by the goddess Mut in her human form. In each case, the goddess holds the hieroglyph for "year," indicating that the temple served some special purpose during the New Year festival - or rather, during the five epagomenal days before New Year's Day, when the world was imagined to be threatened by Mut's alter-ego, the dangerous leonine goddess Sekhmet, who had to be appeased with elaborate spells and offerings in order to avert her destructive powers. (Photo: Bryan Whitney)

Taharqa's temples to Hathor and Mut at Jebel Barkal were of highly original design and conception. Both had outer courts and pylons built of cut stone masonry and inner chambers cut directly into the mountain. Tragically, during the nineteenth century, both temples were so severely plundered for stone that today most of their exterior structures have disappeared, leaving mainly only those parts hewn from the mountain.
Of the two temples, that of the goddess Mut (B 300) is the best preserved. It was originally about 35 m in length. Sketches left by European travelers in the early nineteenth century (figs. 4, 5) reveal that it was fronted by a pylon with portico and two outer courts lined with columns in the form of sistra (i.e. sacred rattles topped with heads of the cow-eared Hathor) and of Bes, the dwarf god of music and dance. (The soothing sounds of the sistra, and the amusing form and behavior of Bes, were both thought to assuage the imagined destructive anger of the resident goddess before she even emerged from her temple.) A pair of smaller Bes columns supported the roof of the first rock cut chamber (fig. 5).

![fig. 4: View of the ruins of B 300 in 1821 by Frédéric Cailliaud, Voyage à Méroé..., plates, vol. 2 (Paris, 1827), pl. LXVII.](image)

Today only two of the Hathor columns still survive in front of B 300 (fig. 6), but sadly, all the large Bes columns from the outer court have disappeared - except for a single face fragment, now in the Jebel Barkal Museum. One of the Bes columns, however, still survived complete in the early nineteenth century, when it was carefully sketched by several of the early European travelers (fig. 7).
fig. 5: View inside the first rock cut chamber of B 300 as it was in 1821 by Frédéric Cailliaud, Voyage à Méroé, plates, vol. 2 (Paris, 1827), pl. LXXIV.

fig. 6a. The surviving Hathoric columns in front of B 300 (Photo: Enrico Ferorelli).

fig. 6b: The single standing Bes column from the outer court of B 300 as recorded in 1844 by the Royal Prussian Expedition of C.R. Lepsius, Denkmaeler aur Aegypten und Aethiopien... Abt. V, Bl. 6. Berlin: 1849-59.
The five carved and painted rock-cut chambers of B 300 are presently (2015-2018) being cleaned and restored by a conservation team from the Istituto Superiore per la Conservazione e il Restauro in Rome under the joint direction of Mrs. Iglal Mohamed Osman El-Malik, Director of Conservation at the Sudan National Museum, and Dr. Maria Concetta Laurenti. The spectacular results of their work are soon to be published in a separate guidebook.

The Temple of Hathor (B 200), which was originally about 27 m in length, has almost entirely disappeared (fig. 7). All that remains of it now are its pylon foundations and the badly worn walls of its three parallel sanctuaries. It is clear, however, that its main level was built on a rock shelf 3 m above its pylon gate. After passing through the gate at ground level, visitors apparently climbed a stairway, which led up through the floor of the first court. This court, built up of masonry on the rock ledge behind the pylon, probably had six columns (2 x 3). After passing through this room, the visitor then entered a second chamber with four columns. Although the columns no longer survive here, there can be little doubt that they were very similar to those in the outer courts of B 300, representing figures of Bes and sistra with Hathor heads. The two temples - like their resident goddesses - were, after all, conceptual twins.

Fig. 7: Photograph of the present state of B 200 (2015). (3D Photoscan: Mohamed Osman Abdulla 2015)
Passing through the second room, the visitor stood in an antechamber facing three doorways, which gave access to three parallel sanctuaries, each of which was sacred to a form of Hathor in one of her transformation states. As in B 300, the goddess appears in the right chamber with a lion's head (embodifying the leonine goddess Tefnut); in the central she appears as herself, crowned with a pair of horns and a sun disk, while followed by a leonine alter-ego crowned with a uraeus - a personification of her serpent aspect. In the left chamber, her final image has unfortunately been lost to erosion.

The three sanctuaries were rock cut, but, unlike those in B 300, they were open to the sky, requiring built roofs of wooden beams, overlaid by woven mats and mud brick. Being perishable, these roofs would have quickly disappeared when the temple ceased to be maintained, leaving the interiors exposed to centuries of scouring wind and sand. The reliefs inside B 200, thus, are in very poor condition today.

Despite the heavy damage suffered by the two neighboring temples over the centuries, both can be restored with a fair degree of confidence in computer models, which can convey some idea of their ancient grandeur (figs. 8-16).

**fig. 8.** B 200 and 300 in their proper relationship, as they are thought to have appeared from the outside. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)
**fig. 9.** B 200 and 300 from the west, as they are thought to have appeared in relation to the Jebel Barkal pinnacle, with B 500 in background. (Compare with fig. 1) (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

**fig. 10.** B 300 and 200 as seen from the Jebel Barkal cliff. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)
**fig. 11.** Cut-away view of B 300, restored. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

**fig. 12.** Interior view of B 300, looking through the axis of the first court to the sanctuary. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © NCAM Mission and 2015 Learning Sites, Inc.)
**fig. 13.** View from the first rock-cut chamber of B 300 into the central sanctuary, with its cult statue visible (hypothetical). (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

**fig. 14.** Cut-away view of B 200, as it is thought to have looked. (Compare with fig. 7). (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)
fig. 15. Hypothetical view into the first court of B 200 from the pylon gate and stairway. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)

fig. 16. Hypothetical interior view of the landing of first court of B 200. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)
B 300-sub. The Eighteenth Dynasty antecedent of B 200 and 300.

Inside B 300 a preserved building inscription of Taharqa records that he built the temple "for his mother Mut" of "beautiful, fine, white sandstone" to replace an older temple "built by the ancestors in humble workmanship." The foundations of this older temple, known as "B 300-sub", can be seen today where the paved floors of the outer courts of B 300 were once laid (fig. 17). The blocks of this older temple are all white sandstone, of the peculiar cubit-long blocks (=52.3 cm) called talatat, which indicates that it was built in the late 18th Dynasty.

B 300-sub had three parallel sanctuaries, much like B 200 and B 500, and, from its location, we can see that it must have honored the same goddesses as Taharqa's temples. This confirms, what was noted above, that even in the 18th Dynasty visitors to the site believed that Jebel Barkal, with its uraeus-shaped pinnacle, was the place in Nubia where the "Eye of Re" had sought refuge and dwelt in all her forms: serpentine, leonine, and human.

The brick-like talatat blocks from which B 300-sub was built were the invention and preferred building medium of Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten, who is most famous in history for attempting to eradicate the Amun cult and for demanding that his subjects worship as sole deity a new sun god, called the Aten (or "Sun Disk"). Because B 300-sub was built of talatat but was also dedicated to multiple goddesses, we should probably suspect that it was built shortly after Akhenaten's death, either by his presumed son Tutankhamun (1336-1327 BC) or by that king's near successor Horemheb (1323-1295 BC), both of whom restored the old pantheon, with Amun again at the center. At Jebel Barkal, talatat buildings believed to be assignable to Akhenaten's reign are built of yellowish or grayish sandstone, such as B 500-Phase I, B 520-sub, and B 700-sub 1 and 3 (q.v.). Temples assumed to have been built soon after his death are built of white sandstone talatat, as here, and in 500-Phase II, B 1100-Phase I, and B 700-sub 2 (q.v.).

fig. 17. The entrance to B 300, as it looks today. The small white "talatat" blocks lying under the level of the standing Hathoric columns belong to the foundations of the late 18th Dynasty temple "B 300-sub".
fig. 18. Restored ground plan of Taharqa's temples B 200 and B 300, with hypothetical plan of the New Kingdom version of B 300 ("B 300-sub") (red). Traces of its sanctuaries are well-preserved, but its outer court(s?) and pylon have completely disappeared. (Plan: R. C. Rosa III and Geoff Kornfeld).