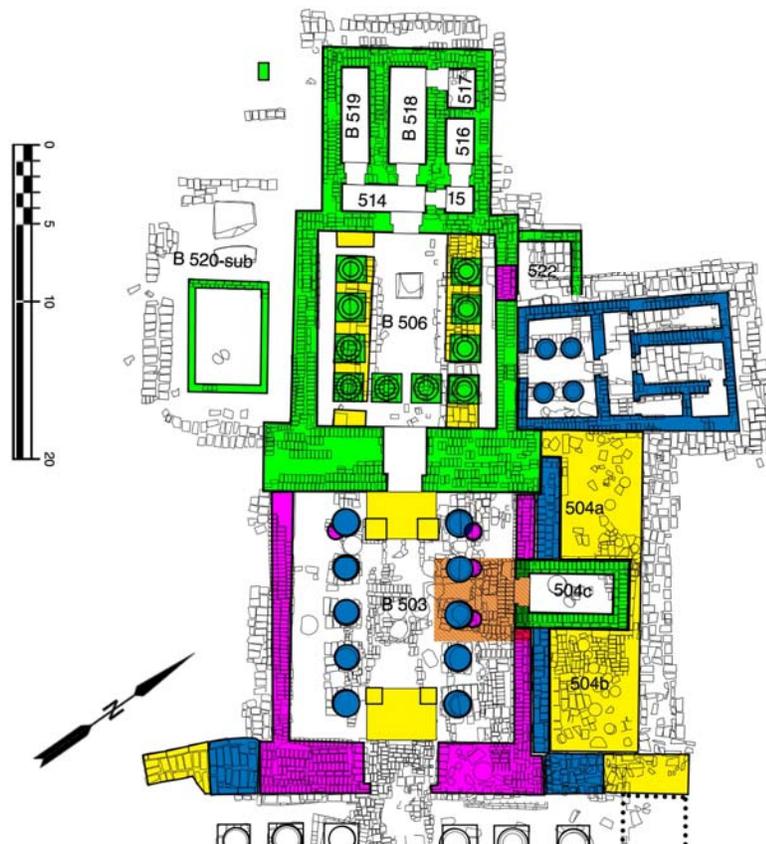


## B 500: The Great Temple of Amun of Napata: New Kingdom Phases.

The Great Temple of Amun of Napata (B 500) was the largest temple ever built in Nubia, with an overall length of 156 m. It did not reach its final size, however, until the reign of the Kushite king Piankhy (ca. 747-716 BC), who completed its hypostyle hall (502) and added its outer court (501). These additions enlarged by two-thirds the original nucleus temple, which had been built in at least six stages by the Egyptian pharaohs from the mid-18th to the 20th (possibly even 21st) Dynasties (ca. 1446-950 (?) BC). The surviving remains of the Egyptian temple are clearly visible in B 500's innermost rooms (fig. 1).



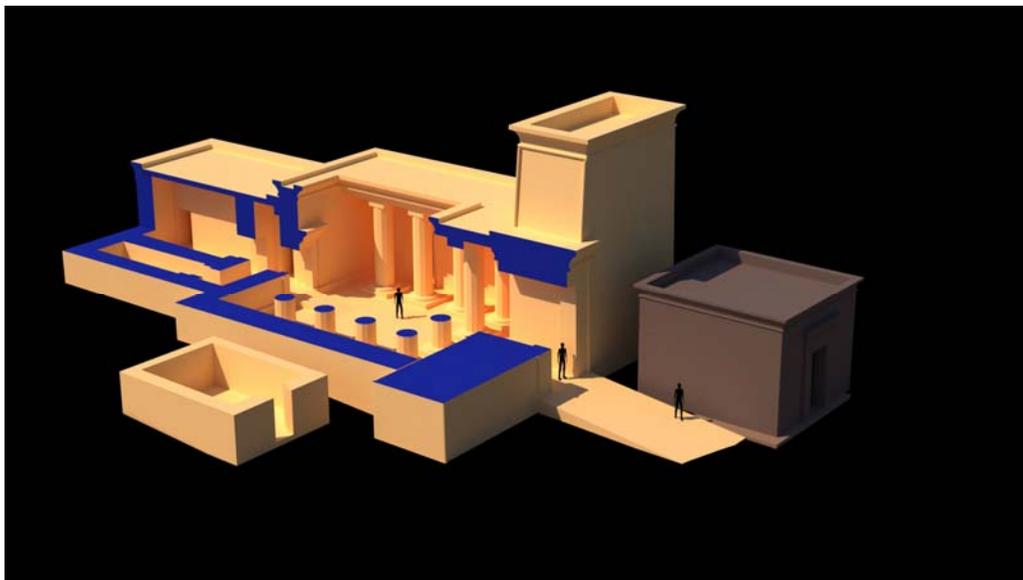
**fig. 1:** *The New Kingdom phases of B 500: 1) Brown: "B 500-sub," traces of an early mud brick structure under the existing pavement, probably a vestige of the first temple erected by Thutmose III; 2) Green: "B 500-Phase I," elements of the first stone temple, built entirely with grey or yellow "talatat" blocks, suggesting a date early in the reign of Amenhotep IV ("Akhenaten"); 3) Purple: "B 500-Phase II," additions made with white sandstone talatat blocks, probably datable to the reigns of Tutankhamun and/or Horemheb; 4) Blue: "B 500-Phase III," additions probably made by Seti I and likely completed by Ramses II early in his reign; 5) Yellow: "B 500-Phases IV-V," additions made later in the reign of Ramses II or in Dynasty 20. (The uncolored outer blocks are assumed to have been added by Piankhy: "B 500-Phase VI") (Survey plan by Robert C. Rosa III and Geoff Kornfeld, based on fieldwork supervised by Heather Wilson).*

### B 500-sub: Thutmose III (?)

The earliest remnant of a temple within the ground plan of B 500 is a fragmentary mud brick foundation, called "B 500-sub," which was discovered under the late 18th Dynasty stone pavement in court B 503 (**fig. 1: brown**). What remains of this structure is assumed to be a fragment of the first Amun temple known to have been built on the site, which was ordered by Thutmose III (1479-1427 BC) shortly after his military occupation of Jebel Barkal, about 1446 BC. The king mentions this temple in his Jebel Barkal Stele (now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), where he called it Amun's "Resthouse for Eternity." Although there is no indication from the surviving remains how large this building was, or what it looked like, it stood on the NE side of what would become the axis of the later temple. Its presence is indicated in the rendering below (**fig. 2**) as the small gray building (*purely hypothetical* in form) on the right of the later ramp.

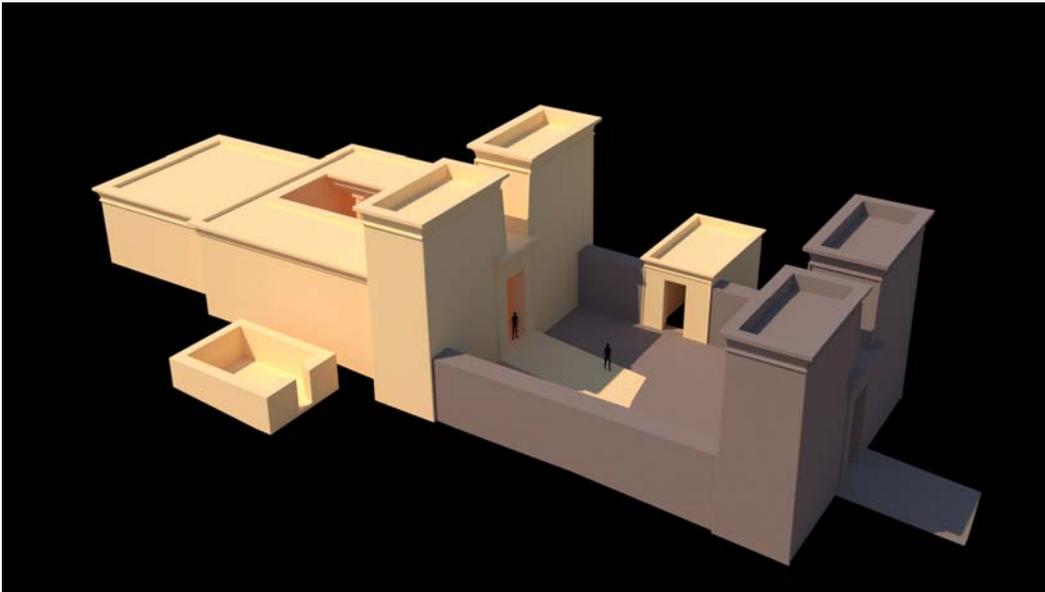
### B 500-Phase I: Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten

"B 500-Phase I" is the first stone phase of B 500 and the first whose remains are actually visible on the surface (**fig. 1: green**). This temple may actually have been built in two stages: the first (Phase Ia), 30.5 m long, being the complete small temple built behind B 500-sub, as pictured in **fig. 2**. Because no earlier remains could be found under its foundations, it was apparently built on virgin ground while B 500-sub was probably still standing in front of it, functioning as the god's active cult place.



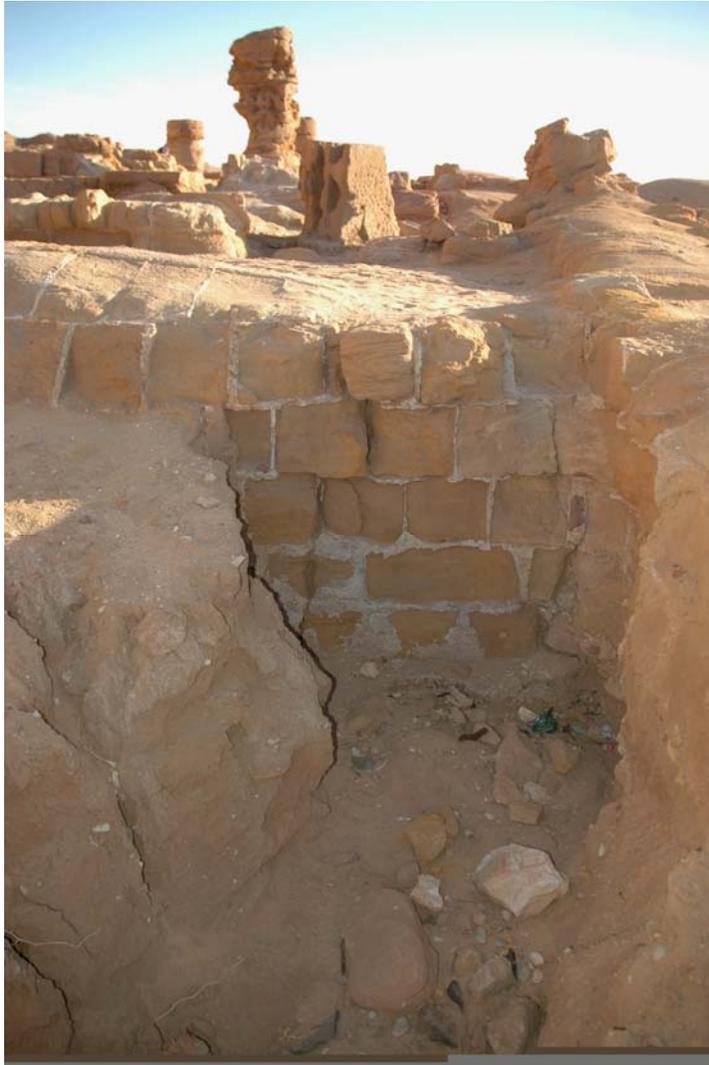
**fig. 2.** The original temple of Amun, built by Thutmose III, was probably of mud brick. A vestige of it may be the mud brick foundation ("B 500-sub"), found under the floor in court B 503 on the northeast side of the later temple axis (**fig. 1**). Its presence is suggested above by the small structure at right, which seems to have been replaced early in the reign of Amenhotep IV with the first stone temple (B 500-Phase Ia), shown behind it in cutaway view. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 Learning Sites, Inc.)

B 500-Phase Ia possessed three parallel sanctuaries (516-519), an antechamber (514-515), an open forecourt with a peristyle of ten faceted columns (506), an open porch on its northeast side (522), an unroofed(?) structure (B 520-sub) on its southwest side and a stone pylon (**fig. 1**). When this temple was completed and put into service, B 500-sub was probably then dismantled and replaced with further additions, designated "Phase Ib." These included at least the stone chapel 504c (built perpendicular to the temple's axis), which was constructed over the place where B 500-sub had stood. That this chapel belongs to Phase I is clear because it is built with the same yellowish sandstone blocks employed in the original temple. Since it is doubtful that chapel 504c (judging by its later importance) would have been built to stand outside the Phase Ia temple compound, one suspects that it was part of a secondary extension which included a mud brick outer court (503) and a second pylon (**fig. 3**). If this hypothetical court wall and pylon actually existed, they would themselves have been removed without a trace and replaced with stone in Phase II (**fig. 6**).



**fig. 3.** *B 500-Phase Ia-b (hypothetical). Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.*

B 500 Phase Ia and chapel B 504c were built entirely with the small brick-like stone blocks known as *talatat*. Well known in Egypt, these blocks were regularly one Egyptian cubit (about 52.3 cm) in length by 1/2 cubit (26 cm) in width. Since they were invented and used mainly by Amenhotep IV/"Akhenaten" (ca. 1352-1336 BC), with only brief later use by his immediate successors, their presence here allows us to date B 500 Phase I fairly precisely to the late 18th Dynasty. That all of the stone features identified here as "B 500 Phase I" were built more or less contemporaneously is suggested by the fact that all were constructed with *talatat* of grayish or yellow sandstone (**fig. 4**). These blocks differ markedly in color from those used in Phase II, which are all white sandstone (**fig. 8**), making the two phases easily distinguishable.



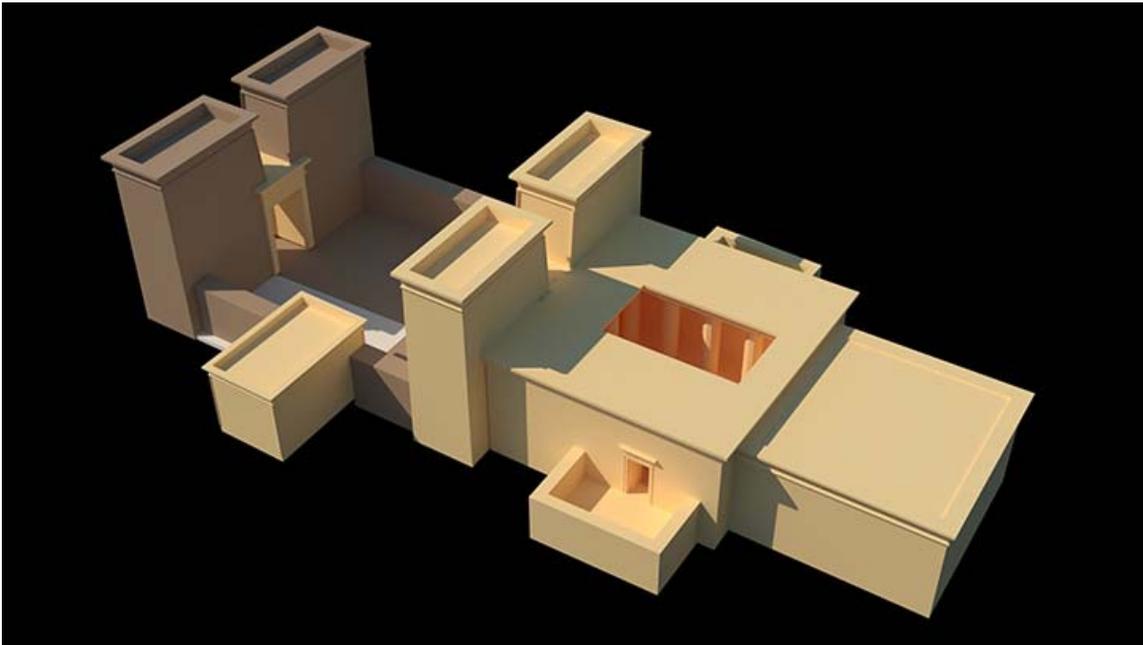
**fig. 4.** *Yellow sandstone talatat blocks in the foundations of B 500-Phase I.*

If B 500 was indeed built by Amenhotep IV/ "Akhenaten," how are we to understand its function as an Amun temple? Amenhotep IV was the king most famous in Egyptian history for attempting to eradicate the Amun cult and to replace it with direct, open-air worship of a new sun god, the deified sun disk, known as the Aten, which he considered to be the sole god - to the virtual exclusion of all others.

Because B 500 Phase I appears to have incorporated both closed and open-air sanctuaries, it gives the impression of having been built possibly to incorporate both the traditional cult of Amun (as Re, "Sun"), who was worshiped in closed sanctuaries, and the Aten, who was worshiped in open-air sanctuaries. In Phase I the closed sanctuaries are rooms 517-19 and 504c, while the open air sanctuaries or offering places would seem to be B 520-sub and terrace 522 (**figs. 1, 2, 5**). B 500 Phase I, therefore, may well belong to the "proto-Amarna" period: that is, to the period very early in the reign of Amenhotep IV, before he changed his name to "Akhenaten" - and before his complete break with the

Amun priesthood - when he was likely ruling jointly with his father Amenhotep III (ca. 1388-1351 BC) and when the worship of both Amun (as Re) and Aten "under one roof" may have been possible.

Other near contemporary structures on the site are the roofless chapels B 700-sub 1 and 3 (q.v.), which were built with the same gray and yellow sandstone *talatat* blocks seen in B 500-Phase I. These appear to be roofless offering chapels for the Aten. The presence of these on the site, and examples of the erasure of Amun's name from a number of local monuments at the site, clearly indicate that during the king's seventeen year sole rule the Aten must have supplanted Amun as the chief god of Jebel Barkal, just as it did elsewhere in Egypt.



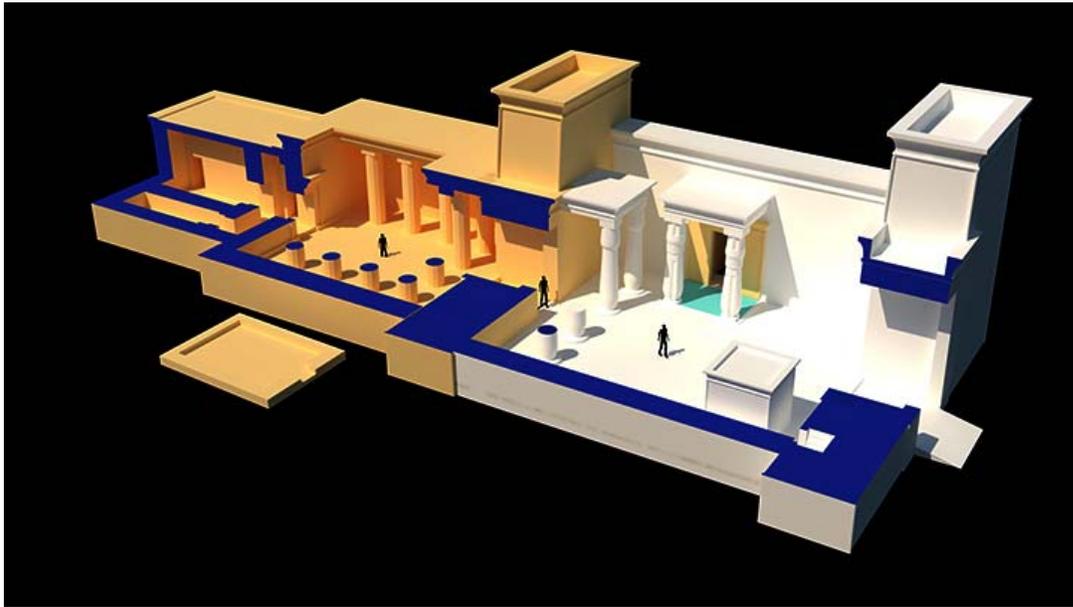
**fig. 5.** *If B 500-Phase I appears to be a conventional Amun temple with enclosed sanctuaries, it seems to have had open-air sanctuaries on either side - possibly for making direct offerings to the Aten. The terrace in the foreground, B 522, was deliberately overbuilt in Phase II and its doorway sealed up with the white stones of Phase II - suggesting that its use (i.e. for Aten worship?) had ceased after Phase I (See fig. 13).*

### **B 500-Phase II: Tutankhamun and Horemheb**

"B 500-Phase II" is believed to be the temple as it was rebuilt and refurbished for Amun after Akhenaten's death by his presumed son Tutankhamun (1336-1327 BC) and that king's successor Horemheb (1323-1295 BC) (**fig. 6, 7**). Its features consisted of a new open court (503) and forward pylon built with white sandstone *talatat* blocks (**fig 8**). These additions are thought to have replaced the theoretical earlier mud brick wall and pylon of Phase Ib (**fig. 3**). The new stone additions increased the length of the original temple to 50 m.

In Phase II, the new outer court 503 was open and paved with white *talatat*. Now, however, it featured a pair of columned porticos in front of the inside pylon and another in front of the chapel 504c. Fragments of these columns still remaining in place under later pavements reveal that the columns of the pylon porticos were round in section while those of the chapel portico were of fine, sculptured papyrus-bundle type. The floor under the 504c portico roof during Phase II was also entirely paved with green-glazed tiles, emphasizing the cultic importance of this chapel (**figs. 6, 7, 9**). From its elongated shape, one suspects that 504c may have housed a portable bark (i.e. boat shrine) of Amun, which on festival days would have been carried outside the temple on shoulder poles by files of priests (See B 500 kiosks, pp. 74-75).

In the seemingly empty southwest corner of court 503 there may have stood another small *talatat* chapel, for under the floor here were found a number of finely carved blocks that had apparently belonged to a small dismantled structure dedicated to Amun by Amenhotep-Huy, Tutankhamun's Viceroy of Kush, and his wife (**fig. 10**).



**fig. 6.** *Cutaway view of B 500-Phases I and II, showing the contrasting colors of the talatat blocks they employed. The earlier phase used blocks exclusively cut from grey and yellow sandstone; the later phase used blocks exclusively of white sandstone. In Phase II the open-air offering platform 522 (for Aten worship ?) ceased to be used (see **figs. 5, 13**); the same may have been true of B 520-sub (left foreground), which may also have been an open-air offering chapel for the Aten comparable to B 700-sub 1 and 3 (q.v.). (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)*



**fig. 7.** *Reconstruction of court 503 in the time of Tutankhamun and/or Horemheb. Note the elaborate papyrus bundle columns and green tile floor in front of chapel 504c. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)*



**fig. 8.** *View of the white talatat blocks used in the southwest wall of 503, B 500-Phase II. (Photo: T. Kendall).*



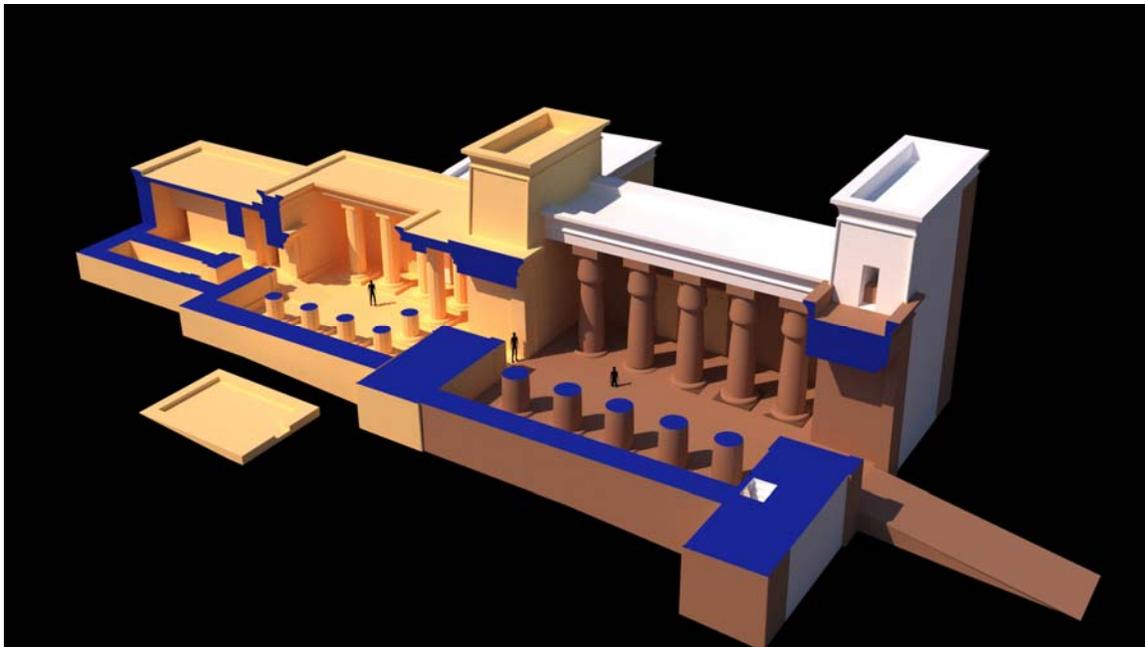
**fig. 9.** *Green tile flooring and a papyrus bundle column base from B 500-Phase II, visible under the Phase III sandstone pavement and column base. (Photo: T. Kendall).*



**fig. 10.** *Finely carved talatat block from a small chapel probably erected in the southwest corner of court 503 during Phase II by Amenhotep-Huy, Tutankhamun's Viceroy of Kush, and his wife Ta-em-wadj-sy. The blocks were found reused in the pedestals for the portico columns at the rear of the first pylon in B 500-Phase IV (figs. 1, 15).*

### B 500-Phase III: Seti I

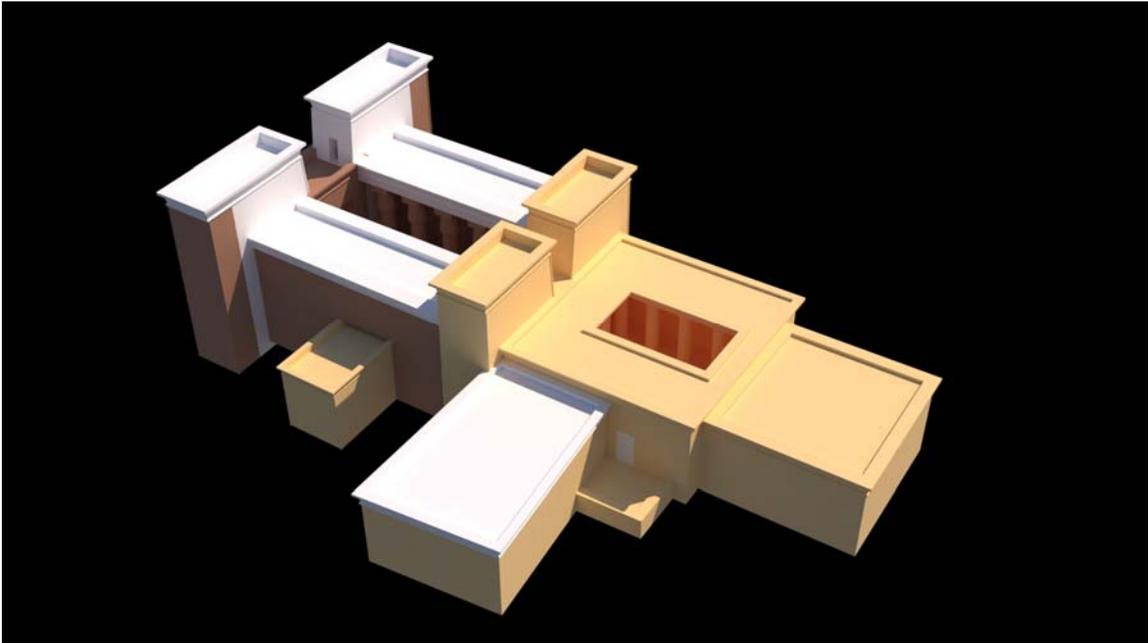
Seti I (ca. 1294-1279 BC) of Dynasty 19 seems to have been responsible for eliminating the Phase II porticos in court 503, replacing them with two rows of five massive columns, and bringing an end to *talatat* construction in the temple (**fig. 11**). The formerly open court 503 was now roofed on two sides while remaining open over the central aisle (**fig. 12**). The same royal builder seems to have increased the width of the front pylon and added, on the northeast side of court 506, a large second sanctuary complex (rooms 508-511) (**figs. 1, 13**). If this feature was indeed initiated by Seti, it was certainly completed by his son Ramses II (ca. 1279-1213 BC), who signed many of the blocks. A badly broken stele of Seti I (now in Khartoum), found reused in a later pavement in 503 describes the king's renovations of the temple and has recently been shown to date to the king's Year 3 (ca. 1291 BC).



**fig. 11.** Cutaway view of B 500-Phase III, attributed to Seti I. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)



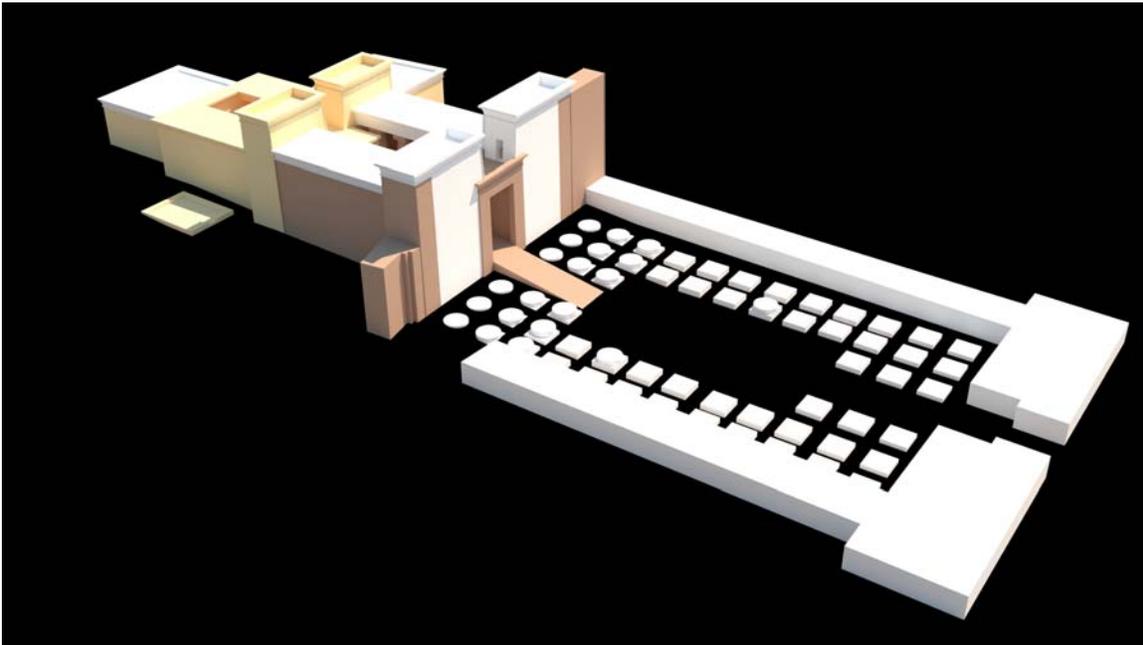
**fig. 12.** *The court 503 of B 500-Phase III, attributed to Seti I. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)*



**fig. 13.** *B 500-Phase III, viewed from the northeast side. During this phase the temple's original triple sanctuary, directed toward the mountain (i.e. northwest) was augmented by a new triple sanctuary directed to the northeast (see fig. 1). Note that this new addition was built over the former open-air porch 522 of Phase I, which may have been used for open-air Aten worship. The door to 522 had already been blocked up with white sandstone talatat blocks in Phase II. The new sanctuary rendered 522 even more obsolete. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites)*

### B 500-Phase IV: Ramses II

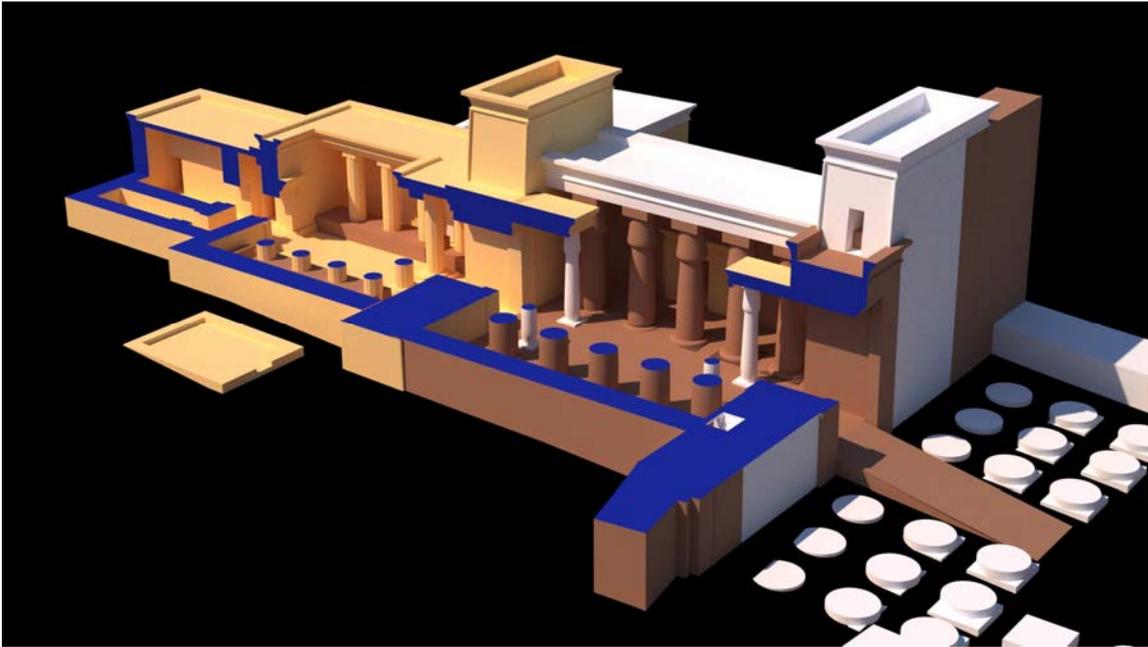
B 500-Phase IV saw significant modifications to the temple, which were made probably by Seti's son Ramses II (ca. 1279-1213 BC). The front pylon was widened and a huge unfinished hypostyle hall of between 56 and 60 columns, was built in front of Phase III in what later became court 502 (**fig. 14**). The construction of this hall, which was planned to have a stone roof, was probably begun late in Ramses' reign and halted at his death. Not one of the columns was built higher than its foundation or circular base. Had it been completed, however, it would have doubled the size of the old temple to 104 m (i.e. 200 Egyptian royal cubits).



**fig. 14.** *B 500-Phase IV included foundations for an unfinished hypostyle hall of 56-60 columns. This construction was probably initiated by Ramses II but halted at his death. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)*

### B 500-Phase V: Dynasty 20

During Dynasty 20 (ca. 1187-1064 BC), minor additions continued to be made to the Phase III-IV temple. A pair of porches, for example, was added to the northeast side of the temple, and porticos shading the rear side of the first pylon and the front of the second pylon were added over the center aisle, which was repaved in white sandstone (**figs. 1, 15, 16**). The last known Egyptian addition to the temple may have been a small chapel sponsored by the Theban High Priest of Amun (later "King") Menkheperre (ca. 1045-992 BC) of Dynasty 21. Several of its blocks were found reused by Taharqa in the pylon of B 200 (**fig. 17**).



**fig. 15.** *Cutaway view of B 500-Phase IV: the Amun temple in Dynasty 20. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)*



**fig. 16.** *Court 503 as it may have looked in Dynasty 20. (Model by Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc.)*



**fig. 17.** Relief block reused in the pylon foundation of B 200, apparently representing the Theban High Priest of Amun, Menkheperre, of Dynasty 21. (Photo: T. Kendall)

Ref. Timothy Kendall and El-Hassan Ahmed Mohamed, with Heather Wilson, Joyce Haynes, and David Klotz, "Jebel Barkal in the New Kingdom: An Emerging Picture," in N. Spencer and A. Stevens, eds. *Nubia in the New Kingdom: Lived Experience, Pharaonic Control, and Local Traditions*. London, 2016. pagination unavailable.