B 700: The Temple of Osiris-Dedwen.

B 700 was built by the successive Napatan kings Atlanersa and Senkamanisken during the period from about 650-630 BC. Its function is somewhat mysterious, for while it appears to have been dedicated to Amun (like B 500 and B 800), its sanctuary contained a very long inscription to Osiris, god of the Underworld, whose name here is coupled with that of Dedwen, a Nubian god associated with deceased kings. In the ruins were also found fragments of a false door inscribed for Osiris, which gives the sanctuary of this temple something of the appearance of a tomb chapel. Furthermore, in the small sanctuary annex (704), added in early Meroitic times, small bronze figures of Osiris were found buried under the floor. (Note that the walls of 704 are also made from the reused slabs of the Osiris inscription, originally installed in 703).

B 700 was built against the Jebel Barkal cliff directly beside the old temple B 600, which had been ordered by Thutmose IV. The proximity of these two buildings suggests that the function of B 700 was closely tied to that of B 600. As Reisner discovered during his excavations of the two in 1916, both had been severely damaged by a cliff collapse, probably in the early third century BC. After this event both were restored. Later, perhaps in the second or early third century AD, the two temples were again damaged by falling rocks - this time, they were so badly damaged that they were left in ruins. This
last destruction was probably the result of the same earthquake that shattered B 560 and 561 (q.v.). Further degradation of B 600 and 700 resumed in the 19th and early 20th centuries, when their ruins were used as a quarry by the local people, who methodically knocked down most of their remaining standing walls and carried away their stones for reuse (fig. 2, 3).

As suggested above, B 600 (q.v.) was a royal enthronement pavilion, in which the king, probably immediately following his coronation, mounted a stairway in order to take his seat upon the canopied throne inside. The evidence from B 700, on the other hand, suggests that it was the place where each new king, following the death of his predecessor, went first in order to be confirmed in his new role by Amun, thus allowing the "royal ka" to pass from one king to the other and giving the office of kingship renewed life.

B 700 had four chambers: a roofed, columned portico in front of its pylon (701), a columned court, which was open over the center aisle (702), and a roofed sanctuary (703), to which was added a small chapel (704) at the rear, as part of the temple's restoration in early Meroitic times (fig. 3). The temple's founder was Atlanersa, who seems to have died prematurely but ruled long enough to complete its construction and the relief decoration in its two original interior rooms (702, 703). It was completed by his successor Senkamanisken, who inscribed the columns in 702, added relief to the pylon, and donated a small obelisk (found in 702; now in the MFA Boston).
fig. 3. Plan of B 700, with rooms numbered, showing B 600 at right rear, with the small 18th Dynasty talatat chapels arrayed in front, from left to right: B 700-sub 2, B 700-sub 1, and B 700-sub 3. The tumbled blocks on the west side of B 700 are the remains of its walls, which were pulled down in the 19th century by stone quarriers. (Survey map: Robert C. Rosa III).

If most of the temple's relief decoration has been lost to stone quarriers, the relief on the NE pylon tower was still well-enough preserved in 1821 to inspire two early European travelers to sketch it (figs. 4, 5).
In 1821, F. Cailliaud recorded the pylon relief in particular detail (fig. 5). It depicted King Senkamanisken holding a cluster of ten enemy captives by the hair and executing them before a human-headed Amun "of Karnak." Here the god repeats his famous decree of authority for the new king, which also appears on the sandstone stele of Piankhy (found in B 500; now in the Sudan National Museum):

"I said of you (while you were still) in your mother's womb that you were to be ruler of Kemet ("Black Land"=probably Egypt and Kush). I knew you in the semen, while you were in the egg, that you were to be lord. I made you receive the Great Crown, which Re (the Sun god) caused to appear on the first good occasion. (Inasmuch as) a father makes his son excellent, it is I who decreed (the kingship) to you. (So) who shall share it with you? For I am the Lord of Heaven. As I give to Re, (so) he gives to his children, from gods to men. It is I who gives you the royal charter.... No other (can) decree (who is to be) king. It is I who grants kingship to whomever I will."
This text, in which the god stresses his role as kingmaker, strongly suggests that the temple played a paramount role in the king's coronation. What exactly that role was is suggested by other clues.
In 1916, after removing the tons of rubble and fallen stones from the cliff that filled the sanctuary, Reisner found a great granite “altar” in place, beautifully carved on all sides with images of King Atlanersa holding up the heavens and inscribed with texts revealing that it was made to support the portable “bark” of Amun of Napata from B 500 (figs. 6, 7). This made it clear that Amun of Napata did not permanently reside in B 700 but was brought here from B 500 only on special occasions by the priests, who set the boat shrine, containing the god's image, temporarily on the stand, where it would have remained for the duration of the ritual for which it was required. After that it would have been carried back to B 500. But what was this ritual? Why was Amun of B 500 brought here? And why did the sanctuary have a funerary aspect?

![The Atlanersa bark stand, from 703.](image)

The bark of Amun from B 500 was considered to be a replica of the boat in which, in his role as Re ("Sun"), the god was believed to sail the heavens by day and the Underworld by night. In the Egyptian view, the Sun "died" at sunset, whereupon, according to the royal funerary text known as the *Amduat* ("What is in the Underworld"), he entered the world below (or the world of Night) as a "ba" or "spirit seeking resurrection." The Egyptian word "ba," which duplicated the sound a goat makes, was also the word for a type of sheep with horizontal horns. This is probably why in the Underworld the Sun God, as "ba", was typically represented as a man with the head of a ram of this species, wearing a sun disk on his head (see fig. 8).
The ram-headed Sun God on his "night bark" traveling through the Underworld after sunset. The great snake protecting him, called Mehen ("Coiler"), appeared suddenly on the boat at around midnight. (Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum, Papyrussammlung P 3005).

As the god progressed on his boat through the hours of night, sometimes being towed by jackals, and sometimes fighting mythical enemies, his journey simulated a tortuous river voyage upstream - not unlike the Nile journey over the cataracts from Egypt into Upper Nubia, which the king (as living Sun-god-on-earth) made as his own journey of conquest. In other words, the king's journey into Nubia and the god's nightly journey into the Underworld seemed to be reflections of each other.

At midnight, as pictured in the *Amduat*, the god on his boat was suddenly enshrouded by a great protective serpent (fig. 8). Simultaneously he was thought to have arrived at a mountain, which took the form of a similar serpent, under which sat enthroned a form of the god Osiris (or "Flesh of Osiris") (fig. 9). The coincidence of these two gods appearing together under identical snakes representing mountain profiles apparently indicated that they had come together and merged under the same mountain.

The serpent mountain at the bottom of the Underworld, under which sits the god "Flesh of Osiris," with whom the sun god Re was thought to unite each night at midnight to gain rebirth as the new sun at dawn. (Vignette from the tomb of Amenhotep II, in A. Piankoff, The Tomb of Ramesses VI, Texts. New York, 1954. fig. 80, opp. p. 277).
Within this serpent mound the Sun God merged momentarily with Osiris, an act which was believed to allow him to repeat life and to be reborn magically as a child sun at dawn. (In this context, "Flesh of Osiris" was understood to be the Sun God's mummy. Just as human beings, after death, were thought to be reborn each new day as "living ba's," by uniting with and resting within their mummies each night, so the Sun God was believed to be reborn every day in the same way.) Perhaps not coincidentally, this mountain of the Sun God's birth and rebirth in the Underworld was represented in much the same way as Jebel Barkal was represented (fig. 10).

**fig. 10.** Amun of Napata seated under a snake, symbolizing Jebel Barkal, as represented in the intaglio (impression) of a gold ring, from the "Ferlini Treasure." tomb of Queen Amanishakheto, Meroë (Beg. N. 6) (From C.R. Lepsius, Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien, Abth. V, Berlin 1842-45: Bl. 42, no. 103). Just as Osiris' Mound in the Underworld was the place in which the sun god Re was thought to be rejuvenated each night by uniting with his deceased alter-ego, Jebel Barkal in remote Upper Nubia seems to have been the Mound where the king was thought to be able to merge with his divine parent, the primeval creator, to attain "rebirth" and revival.

If the mythical Mound in the Underworld and Jebel Barkal were thought to be manifestations of each other, we can probably discern the function of B 700. When the bark of Amun of Napata was brought from B 500 into B 700, it would have signified that the Sun God had temporarily "died" - that is, passed into the Underworld as at sunset - and that he was seeking rebirth in union with Osiris, who was imagined to dwell within Jebel Barkal (behind the sanctuary of B 700). Since Amun and the king were considered physical aspects of each other, the transport of the bark from B 500 to B 700 must have signified that the old king - the old "Sun-God-on-earth" - had also died. Inside the temple, in other words, Amun-Re was transformed into Osiris-Dedwen. "Rebirth" for the god would have occurred when a new king was named and crowned. This event would then have allowed the god in his boat to be returned to B 500, to resume his identity as Amun, while the newly crowned king would probably have emerged from B 700 and mounted the stairs to take his throne inside B 600.
The general correctness of this theory is suggested by the colossal statue found fallen in front of the main entrance to B 700 (fig. 7). Now set up in Khartoum, it had once stood on the left (west) side of the door (fig. 8). The statue represents the god Atum (dressed like a king wearing the Double Crown), who personified the Sun God at the moment of his sunset ("death") in the west. The statue would have conveyed the meaning that whoever passed through the temple entrance had "set," like the Sun, and had entered the Underworld, seeking revival and rebirth.

fig. 11. Colossal statue found by Reisner fallen in front of the entrance to B 700, where it had been set up originally on the west side of the doorway. It was apparently toppled, and its head broken off, during the raid on Napata of Psamtik II in 593 BC. It was subsequently buried under a raised floor level. Photo C 7186, from the Reisner archives of the Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Expedition. Photographer: Mohammedani Ibrahim Ibrahim. April 3, 1916. Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

fig. 12. The same statue restored and erected in the Sudan National Museum, Khartoum. (Photo: Enrico Ferorelli).

Although in B 700 there was no comparable statue found on the right (east) side of the doorway, there is at Tombos, some 200 km downstream, another statue, cut from the same stone and having virtually the same dimensions, which can be seen, lying on its side, in the granite quarry where its head had cracked just before it reached completion, resulting in the statue's simply being left there. We can guess that this statue represented Atlanersa, that it was intended to be shipped to Jebel Barkal, and that it was carved to stand on the east side of the doorway of B 700. It appears to have been the symbolic
counterpart of the other statue, for it would have represented the ruler as the personification of Sunrise. In other words, when god and king emerged from the temple, both were imagined to have achieved new life, as at dawn.

**Fig. 13.** A statue of the same stone and virtually the same dimensions as that in figs. 7, 8, lying in the Tombos granite quarries. This statue, too, was evidently intended to stand in front of the doorway of B 700. (Photo: T. Kendall)

**Fig. 14.** The portico B 700, reconstructed. In this view the temple appears from the same angle as it did in 1821, when drawn by Linant de Bellefonds (see fig. 3). (Model by N. Reshetnikova and Geoff Kornfeld © 2015 NCAM Mission and Learning Sites, Inc)