

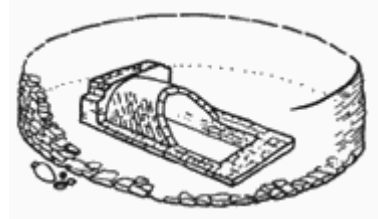


2. The C-Group Culture (2500-1500 b.c.)

Around 2500 b.c. we again have evidence for people living in Lower Nubia. Archaeologists call this culture the C-Group. It is believed that the C-Group developed in Upper Nubia and spread northward into Lower Nubia around this time. In its earliest phases, the C-Group is related to another Nubian culture called the Kerma culture, which developed in Upper Nubia. The Egyptians traded with the early C-Group and recorded in written texts the names of three Nubian regions, Wawat, Irjet, and Setju, which were ruled by powerful chieftains.

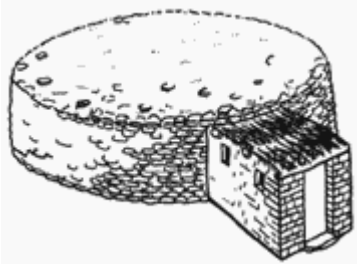
Like the earlier A-Group, the C-Group people lived along the fertile banks of the Nile and buried their dead in cemeteries along the desert edges. Many C-Group cemeteries have been excavated, and this tells us something about the way C-Group people lived.

In their graves, the C-Group people buried finely made pottery, which is quite different from that of the A-Group. The C-Group people produced small bowls decorated with finely incised patterns. Polished red and black bowls were also very common. Rough jars were another kind of pot they made. These were buried with the dead to allow them to eat and drink in the afterlife. Herding of cattle was important in the life of the C-Group people. Some C-Group graves had stones next to them decorated with inscriptions of cows.



In the earlier C-Group, there was active trade with the Egyptians. Many Egyptian objects were buried in the C-Group graves from this time. Beginning in 2000 b.c., however, the might of Egypt began to rise again, and the pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom (2000-1800 b.c.) took control of Lower Nubia. They built a series of fortresses throughout Lower Nubia and staffed them with soldiers. The Egyptians seemed to have wanted to control the resources of Lower Nubia and to govern directly the trade with the southern regions. In the region of the Second Cataract there was a great cluster of fortresses on the islands and river banks. These were all within signaling distance of one another. The Second Cataract area was the southern frontier of Egyptian control. The Egyptians strengthened this frontier because to the south was the powerful Kerma culture of Upper Nubia.

The C-Group people seem to have been directly controlled by the Egyptian state. Egyptian records tell us that C-Group chieftains were forced to pan gold in one of the gold-rich wadis. One stela records words of an Egyptian pharaoh, saying that only Nubian's who obey will be justly treated, and Nubian's who oppose Egyptian control will meet with punishment. In the C-Group cemeteries of this time there are very few Egyptian objects, unlike in previous times. It might be that the C-Group people were not allowed by the Egyptians to trade on their own, or they might have developed a dislike of Egyptian objects because of the Egyptian control of their country.



After 1800 b.c., however, Egyptian control of Lower Nubia ended. During this time, the C-Group seems to have benefited again from trade. The chieftains of the late C-Group (1800-1500 b.c.) built larger and richer graves. In this period, the most powerful region of Nubia was Upper Nubia, where the Kerma culture flourished.