



4. The Colonial Period (1550-1100 b.c.)

Around 1550 b.c., the power of the Egyptian pharaohs began to rise dramatically. The pharaohs of the Theban kingdom expelled the foreign rulers of the northern Hyksos kingdom from Egypt. After this, they turned their attention once again southward to Nubia. The Egyptian armies began campaigning in Nubia and tried to place it under control. This was not an easy process because the Kerma kings were powerful opponents. It took almost a century of military campaigns against the kingdom of Kush before Lower and Upper Nubia came completely under Egyptian control; Southern Nubia always remained independent.

By the middle of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt the pharaohs had control over both Lower and Upper Nubia. During this Colonial Period of Nubia's history, Nubia became a province of Egypt. Egyptians called Lower Nubia the land of Wawat and Upper Nubia the land of Kush. The two regions had capital towns that became the centers of Egyptian control. First Soleb and later Amara served as the capital of Upper Nubia, while the town of Aniba was the capital of Egyptian administration in Lower Nubia. All of Nubia was run by a viceroy who was appointed by the Egyptian pharaoh.

Many of the Colonial Period objects have been found in the tombs of Aniba and Buhen. The tombs were for priests in the temple of Aniba or officials in Lower Nubia government. The objects from these graves include jewelry, pottery, and shawabtis (small figurines to serve the deceased person in the afterlife).

At the time that Egypt took control of Lower Nubia, there was an Egyptianization of the population, and the C-Group culture disappeared. This did not mean that its people disappeared, but that they adopted many features of Egyptian culture. Many Egyptians also immigrated into Nubia at this time, although they lived mostly in the major towns. This Egyptianization was strengthened by the fact that some young Nubian's were raised in Egypt at the royal court, in the Egyptian way of life. These people went back to Nubia as important people in the government of their country. The Egyptians did this to strengthen their empire in Asia as well.



During the Colonial Period the Egyptians set up many temples in Nubia. Temples were a very important part of Egyptian culture. Egyptian temples were given grants of land that were used to support people who ran the temples. In Nubia land was granted to both temples located in Egypt and temples the Egyptians built in Nubia itself. Perhaps the most famous temple built by an Egyptian is at Abu Simbel. This temple was built around 1300 b.c. by the pharaoh Ramesses II. It was moved to higher ground in the 1960's, when Lower Nubia was being flooded by Lake Nasser. With the end of the Colonial Period in Nubia, the Bronze Age ends and the Iron Age begins.