



Bronze Age Nubia (3100-1100 b.c.)

The Bronze Age is a long period, extending over almost 2,500 years. In this time there is much change in Nubia and its cultures. The Bronze Age follows the earlier Neolithic Period (the last phase of the Stone Age). During the Neolithic, people began producing food by farming and raising animals rather than just collecting and hunting food from the wild. In the Bronze Age, which followed the Neolithic, we see in Nubia, as in other parts of the world, societies that became more advanced. This development was based on both the production of food and trade with neighboring lands. Leaders emerged who controlled the resources and managed the trade. These people were the chiefs and kings of the Nubian cultures.

The Bronze Age is therefore a time when we have evidence for the organization of Nubia into large chiefdoms and kingdoms. There are three major cultures that are currently known to have flourished during the Bronze Age: (1) the A-Group, (2) the C-Group, (3) the Kerma culture. The A-Group and C-Group were located in Lower Nubia. The Kerma culture was located farther south, in Upper Nubia. These cultural groups are not the only ones to have left archaeological remains in Bronze Age Nubian sites; further excavation will undoubtedly bring to light more information about this time period.

The history of Lower Nubia in the Bronze Age is closely tied to the history of Egypt. Several times during the Bronze Age, the Egyptian pharaohs took control of Lower Nubia. This often had drastic consequences for the people of Lower Nubia, as we will see. In Upper Nubia, the Kerma people created a powerful and important state that extended control north into Lower Nubia. Kerma was an important source of the products of Africa, which it traded north to Egypt and other lands of the Eastern Mediterranean. Archaeologists still have much to learn about the Kerma culture. Most of the knowledge we have of the A-Group and C-Group comes from salvage excavations. Since Lower Nubia has now vanished forever beneath the waters of Lake Nasser, our knowledge of the A-Group and C-Group is limited to what archaeologists were able to save before the destruction of Lower Nubia.