



Introduction to Ancient Nubia

In ancient times, the people living along the banks of the river Nile developed sophisticated civilizations. Ancient Egypt, stretching from the First Cataract to the Mediterranean Sea, is probably the most well-known ancient culture in this area. This web page illustrates the art and life-styles of a less well-known groups of people, the Nubian's. The Nubian's inhabited the area along the river Nile from the First Cataract south to the Sixth Cataract.

	Lower NUBIA	Upper	EGYPT
3100 BC	A-Group		Prehistoric
2500 BC	Bronze Age		Early Dynastic
2000 BC	C-Group	Kerma	Old Kingdom
1500 BC	Colombel Period		Middle Kingdom
1000 BC	Napatan		New Kingdom
	Kingdom of Nubia & Egypt		3rd Intermediate
900 BC	Napatan		Late Period
0	Meroitic		Ptolemaic
500 AD	X-Group		Roman Period
1000 AD	Christian		Islamic Period
1500 AD	Islamic		

The cataracts serve as markers of Nubia's borders. The First Cataract, just to the south of Aswan, marks the northern boundary of Nubia. The southern border, though it fluctuated over time, lies near the Sixth Cataract. The eastern and western borders are generally marked by the extent of the cultivated fields on either side of the river. The cataracts also divide Nubia into different zones, which differ from one to another topographically. Nubia is generally divided into Lower Nubia, Upper Nubia, and Southern Nubia.

The landscape in Lower Nubia is quite different from that of Upper Nubia. The Nile Valley in Lower Nubia is similar to the Nile Valley in Egypt. The river here is broad and easily navigated, with a wide floodplain available for cultivation. Upper Nubia on the other hand, often presents a much harsher environment. Based on topography, Upper Nubia and Southern Nubia can be divided into five zones: (1) Batn el Hajar, (2) Abri-Delgo Reach, (3) Dongola Reach, (4) Abu Hamed Reach, and (5) Shendi Reach. Each of these zones, defined by cataracts, display a different type of riverine environment.