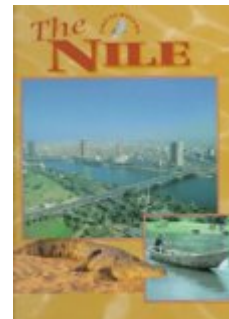


**Michael Pollard.** *The Nile*. New York: Benchmark Books, 1997. 45 pp. \$22.79, cloth, ISBN 978-0-7614-0503-0.



**Reviewed by** Izak Cornelius

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The book introduces the reader to various aspects of the longest river on earth. Its eighteen parts deal with, respectively, the geographical characteristics of the Nile (flow, sources, flooding), history (ancient Egypt, Nile legends and the search for its sources), different sections (Victoria Nyanza, White Nile, Blue Nile, Sudd, Sudanese Nile, Aswan high dam), life on the Nile (Nile valley, cities of the Delta, countries dependent on the Nile, wildlife, tourism), and finally its future. There is a wealth of statistics for those interested in such matters, but these are presented and integrated in such a way into the text that the reader does not get bored. A positive part of the book is that it does not merely give a geographical and geo-physical description of the Nile, but also deals with human ecology and the relationship of humans with the Nile. The book makes it clear that the survival of many thousands of people is dependent on the Nile. Future developments--both political and economic--will determine the future of the river and therefore of the people living along its banks. The Nile has in the past united nine states and directly determined the lives of four (Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Uganda). Only

through a united and combined endeavour will the future of these countries and the Nile be determined. This will be one of the future challenges for the Nile and its peoples. Eco-tourism is also a matter that deserves attention.

The book is well illustrated with colour photographs of the Nile itself, but also of the people living there, the animals, and human activity on its banks. Perhaps more attention could have been devoted to the fauna and flora of the Nile valley and the various cultures on the Nile. Egypt as the most ancient Nile civilization gets all the attention, but somewhat neglected are a very ancient civilization like the oldest Nubia and smaller cultures such as the Nuer.

The book is recommended. It does not display any major flaws as far as content and presentation is concerned. It can be read in conjunction with more elaborate and lavishly illustrated books (e.g. *The Nile* with photography by Kazuyoshi Nomachi. Hong Kong: Odyssey, 1989).

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