

This study comprises an investigation of identity among the inhabitants of Old Dongola, a city located between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Nile Cataracts, during the Funj period (16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century). The city was, at that time, the capital of a small kingdom in an area dominated by the Funj Sultanate, with its own capital in Sinnar.

In this study identity is perceived as a means of defining one's self in relation to others and the ways of interacting and creating relationships on a person level or as a group of people in relation to the world. At the same time, identity is a result of such relations. This dissertation is an archaeological study and thus it focuses on interactions between people and the material world. Its main goal is to characterise processes of creation, maintenance and expression of identity among the inhabitants of Old Dongola in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century, which is the last identified phase of the settlement.

The first part of this dissertation is devoted to the household and relationships occurring therein which affect the process of identity creation among house dwellers. It presents the way in which the process of building a house, reproduction of its shape through generations, and use of particular building materials shape family identity. Dongolese house forms and the influence of organisation of space on formation of family and gender relations were analysed. Furthermore, activity areas within houses were reconstructed based on architectural forms, domestic installations, spatial distribution of artefacts and geochemical analysis of floors. Attribution of tasks to particular household members, mostly connected with food preparation, enabled identification of the prominent position of women in Dongolese households. Such prominence is attested by the central position of their work as well as by the lack of spatial divisions, partially anticipated by the presence of Islam, and separation of the sexes. This part of the dissertation also includes comparison of house compounds in terms of form, size, building materials, used objects and resources. Such a comparison was made in order to determine the nature of social diversification, which proved to be egalitarian with the exception of the so-called house of the *mekk* (king), which was inhabited by members of the Dongolese elite.

The second part of this dissertation comprises analysis of relations occurring outside of the household that also contribute to the creation of identity among the city dwellers. Cities of the Funj sultanate, according to travellers visiting them, consisted of districts inhabited by related families. Thus, relations between house compounds in Old Dongola were analysed in

regard to the formation of neighbourhoods. Other meeting places for dwellers of the city, where the differences and similarities between them were created, were marketplaces; places for the exchange of commodities produced in the city and its vicinities. Various elements that contributed to the creation of city dwellers' identities also originated from outside of the middle Nile valley. Among imported goods were jewellery, used for expressions of gender identity, and textiles, for the production of clothes, which were subjects of sumptuary laws. Stimulants, like tobacco and alcohol, also participated in the creation of groups, for example good Muslims avoiding intoxication. Finally, Sudanese Islam is characterised, especially Sufi groups and the activity of holy men. Facing scarcity of material evidence of Islam in Old Dongola, veneration of holy men after their death focused around their tombs, providing a basis for the investigation of religious identity among the Dongolese people. Such religious identity was strongly connected with family identity, being built on affinities with holy men. A good example of this phenomenon is the veneration of *sheikh* Mohammed bin Isa bin Salih, a 17<sup>th</sup>-century holy man whose family preserves his memory to the present day.