

A maze of small, narrow corridors, even smaller passages and entrance openings, numerous areas plunged into eternal darkness. Staircases lit from above and stairs leading to the second floor or to the roofs. Charred corners. Everywhere magical signs and monograms scratched on the walls. This human made anthill was built of millions mud bricks. In total its one hectare of dense domestic area surrounded with defensive walls. Monumental church in the middle of this settlement was frequently visited by pilgrims from all over the Nile Valley. This is how at first glance medieval settlement in Banganarti (in Nubian language *Locust Island*) looks like. In an opinion of modern researchers, the site is claustrophobic with incredible lack of space. This raises the question of how people managed to live there.

Archaeological research have been conducted in Banganarti since 2001 and documented the evolution of five churches that existed here, raised on the ruin of its predecessor as over a thousand wall inscriptions and sixty religious paintings and portraits of Nubian kings have been documented. In this huge research effort past inhabitants, common people, ordinary citizens of Banganarti have been lost. We know very little about their everyday life, division of daily responsibilities in the family and a place of household in the settlement. It's a pity because the mud houses are a mine of information, one only needs to know how to read it. This is a task for archeology of daily life and household archeology. They developed methodologies to study daily life in detail. Cooking deposits in the vessels, the remains of bone, pollen, organic waste, *etc.* can provide a wealth of information about life in Banganarti between the sixth and sixteenth centuries. Why most of the houses didn't have any kitchen, how life was changing during time of war, and how it looked like in time of peace? How religion and the proximity of the holy place affected everyday life? What was the interaction between local communities living in Banganarti and pilgrims? This relations could have been complex because the pilgrims could have stayed in Banganarti for months submitting to incubation and waiting for a prophetic dream in the St Raphael church. They lived in *ksenodocheia* guesthouses erected specially for them. One was located near the church, and the other just behind the enclosure walls. Pilgrims left more than 1,000 inscriptions scratched in the plaster of the church, in which they recommended themselves to the care of the saints, in particular to the patron of the church - Archangel Raphael.

Residents of the settlement were tending fields on nearby fertile Tanqasi Island and on the banks of the Nile fertilized by annual river flood. They profited from the pilgrimages as well, selling them food. Those more educated were hired to scratch votive inscription on the church plaster on behalf of mostly illiterate newcomers.

People from medieval Banganarti were living their life according to local traditions. They didn't lock themselves, however, to news and new solutions brought by the pilgrims who sometimes came from far away. Fortifications were protecting the settlement from Bedouin attacks, the perfect drainage system protected them from rainwater that could dissolve their mud brick houses. Garbage was thrown outside the walls - thus facilitating the work of archaeologists. Houses had toilets with toilets seats made of terracotta which had no equal in the whole of Africa, including Egypt.

The main objective of the project *Archangels and Locusts* is to reconstruct everyday life, in the world of pilgrims and residents of religious center in Banganarti, in the heart of the medieval Nubia. Specialists will join a team working in Banganarti since 2001 to establish socio-political and cultural environment that influenced the evolution of local architecture, settlement and household activities in the Christian Kingdom of Makuria. Based on laboratory analysis of materials coming from houses and shelters for pilgrims, a team of experts from Poland and UK will examine how medieval villagers and their guests have adapted to changing environmental conditions, both at community and regional level.

The work will be focused on the analysis of individual houses, their history and various activities that took place in them. Models of space development and use of everyday objects will be built based on ethnographic analogies and study of modern communities living around Banganarti. These people are mainly Nubians who still use traditional methods of making pottery, burning coal, baking bread, *etc.* At the same time excavations on a larger scale than before will be conducted in individual houses. A team of experts specialized in the study of everyday life, will conduct multiple analysis of the materials coming from the excavations. Through this comprehensive research we will gain a better understanding of medieval residents and pilgrims diet, the environmental conditions in which they lived and how they were dealing with the problems of everyday life. These analyses also will determine whether ethnographic analogies are justified.

The project will pave new ways for research in the archeology of Nubia. The study will focus on the history of these areas that so far have not been analyzed in detail.