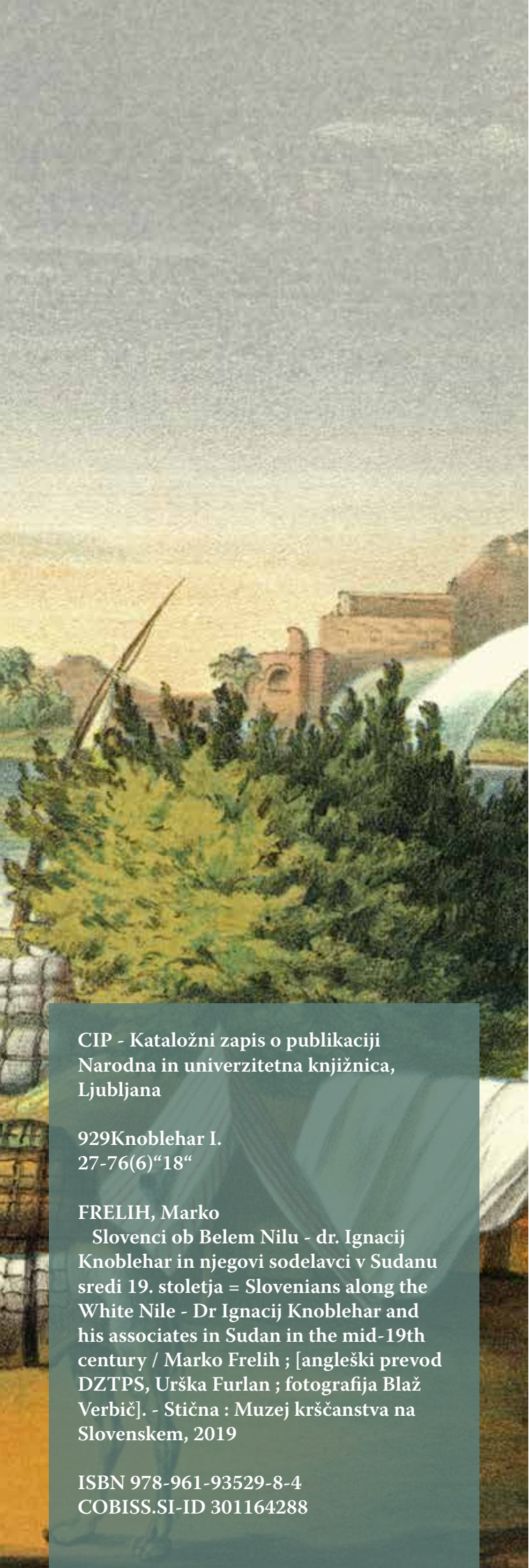


MARKO FRELIH

SLOVENCİ OB BELEM NILU

SLOVENIANS ALONG THE WHITE NILE





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**SLOVENCİ OB BELEM NILU - DR. IGNACIJ KNOBLEHAR
IN NJEGOVI SODELAVCI V SUDANU SREDI 19. STOLETJA**
***SLOVENIANS ALONG THE WHITE NILE- DR IGNACIJ KNOBLEHAR
AND HIS ASSOCIATES IN SUDAN IN THE MID-19TH CENTURY***



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Marko Frelih



SLOVENC OB BELEM NILU



SLOVENIANS ALONG THE WHITE NILE



Dr. Ignacij Knoblehar in njegovi sodelavci v Sudanu sredi 19. stoletja



Letos mineva 200 let od rojstva znanega slovenskega misijonarja **dr. Ignacija Knobleharja**. Ob njegovem rojstvu 6. julija 1819 v vasi Škocjan na Dolenjskem so starši in sorodniki zelo verjetno razmišljali o njegovi prihodnosti v mejah domačega kraja. Kot najstarejši sin bi moral praviloma naslediti očetov poklic gostilničarja in mesarja, toda življenjska pot je Knobleharja že v zgodnji mladosti vodila k višjemu cilju. Pod vplivom rojaka Friderika Ireneja Baraga, misijonarja z območja Velikih jezer v Severni Ameriki, se je odločil, da bo tudi sam postal oznanjevalec Kristusovega nauka med poganskimi ljudstvi.

Po končanem študiju teologije v Ljubljani se je odpravil v Rim in se na posebni ustanovi, ki se je imenovala Kongregacija za širjenje vere (Propaganda Fide), začel pripravljati za delo v katoliških misijonih. Prizadevno je študiral, sredi marca 1845 opravil novomašniško posvečenje, nato pa je končal še doktorski študij iz teoloških ved. Toda vodstvo Propagande ni prav dobro vedelo, kam z njim. Enkrat so ga nameravali poslati v Indijo, drugič na Švedsko, pa potem v Avstralijo, nato v Perzijo. Naposled so ugotovili, da bi morda lahko ostal v Rimu kot podravnatelj in profesor na Ukrajinskem zavodu. Knoblehar je potrpežljivo čakal in čakal, nato pa je sledilo presenečenje: izbran je bil za misijonarja v Afriki!

Zaradi širjenja islama iz Egipta in iz severnega Sudana v smeri proti jugu je papež Gregor XVI. 30. marca 1846 podpisal odlok o ustanovitvi apostolskega vikariata v osrednji Afriki s sedežem v Kartumu. Vodstvo vikariata je bilo zaupano jezuitu **Anettu Casolaniju**, škofu iz Malte. Poleti 1846 je Knoblehar skupaj z duhovnikom **Angelom Vincom** odplul s francoskim parnikom »Sesostris« proti Aleksandriji. Iz velikega sredozemskega pristanišča je za nekaj mesecev odpotoval v Sveto deželo in v Libanon, kjer je živel med maroniti in z njihovo pomočjo izpopolnjeval znanje arabskega jezika.

Ko se je misijonska skupina junija 1847 zbrala v Aleksandriji, je bilo vzdušje med prisotnimi precej klavrno. Zaradi nejasnih okoliščin se je škof Casolani odpovedal vodenju vikariata. Njegovo mesto je prevzel nekdanji ravnatelj Propagande jezuit **Maksimiljan Ryllo**, po rodu Poljak, doma iz pokrajine Samogitije (danes Litve). Več sreče so imeli z urejanjem dokumentacije in dovoljenj za potovanje do Kartuma, saj jim je pri tem pomagal slovenski rojak **Anton Lavrin**, avstrijski generalni konzul v Aleksandriji. Misijonarjem je bil v veliko pomoč, zlasti ko je bilo treba posredovati pri turško-egiptovski vladi, da zagotovi varnostna pisma. Lavrin je Knobleharja seznanil s francoskim inženirjem D'Arnaudom, ki je večkrat plul po Belem Nilu in je zelo dobro poznal naravno okolje velike afriške reke in različna ljudstva. Knobleharjevo druženje z Lavrinom je verjetno vplivalo na misijonarjev odnos do dediščine starega faraonskega Egipta. Avstrijski konzul je bil namreč strasten zbiratelj staroegipčanskih predmetov, v Aleksandriji si je ustvaril veliko zbirko, ki je kasneje končala v dvorcu Miramare pri Trstu, danes pa je delno razstavljena v Umetnostnozgodovinskem muzeju na Dunaju. Za svoje rojake v domovini je Lavrin iz Egipta poslal pravo egipčansko mumijo in nilskega krokodila, svojim pokojnim staršem v rodni Vipavi in umrlemu sinu pa je namenil večni počitek v pravih sarkofagih. Mumija in krokodil sta danes v Narodnem muzeju Slovenije, granitna sarkofaga, stara okoli 4500 let, pa sta del družinske grobnice na pokopališču v Vipavi. Anton Lavrin velja med Slovenci 19. stoletja za najboljšega poznavalca Egipta in njegove izjemne kulturne dediščine.

Skupina misijonarjev je 24. julija 1847 končno zapustila Aleksandrijo in z jadrnico odplula proti Kairu. Poleg Knobleharja so bili v skupini še naslednji člani misije: Ryllo, Casolani, Vinco in zadnji – jezuit **Emanuele Pedemonte**, ki se je pridružil naknadno. Do konca septembra je pet mladih misijonarjev v Kairu nakupilo vso opremo in hrano za plovbo po Nilu in za prečkanje Nubijske puščave, da so se izognili kataraktom, rečnim brzicam na jugu Egipta.

O potovanju proti jugu je Knoblehar zapisal nekaj vtisov: »*Videli smo prijazne kraje v Egiptu, porasle s palmami, visoke gore in pečine, ruševine utrdb starih nubijskih kraljev, starodavna, trdna visoka znamenja nekdanjih faraonov. Človeku se milo stori, ko primerja nekdanje velikanske in umetniško zidane templje z ubožnimi, iz blata narejenimi kočami sedanjih prebivalcev. Mnogo teh templjev je bilo pozneje posvečenih pravemu, živemu Bogu; na stenah so sledovi slik iz davnih krščanskih časov.*«

Knoblehar je poznal zgodovino Egipta toda zapuščina faraonov nanj ni naredila posebnega vtisa. Med egipčanskimi ruševinami je iskal sledi krščanstva, tako je bilo tudi na otoku File, kjer je nekoč stalo znamenito svetišče velike boginje Izide. Misijonarji so med dobro ohranjenimi prostori svetišča našli prostor za maševanje. Če bi bili vraževerni, bi lahko verjeli, da se jim je boginja maščevala, saj je v Filah vodja odprave Ryllo hudo zbolel. Potovanje se je upočasnilo in medtem so v Evropi nekateri časopisi poročali, da so Nubijci vse pobili. Misijonarji, na srečo živi, toda precej izčrpani, so po štirih mesecih in pol, 11. februarja 1848, prispeli v Kartum. Uredili so si začasno namestitev in se lotili

iskanja primerne kraja za misijonsko postajo. Našli so zelo dobro parcelo z velikim vrtom tik ob Modrem Nilu, ki priteče z etiopskega višavja in se v Kartumu združi z Belim Nilom. Konec maja so že imeli zgrajeno kapelo, kmalu zatem so dokončali še stavbo za bivanje in šolo. Toda spodbuden začetek je prekinita smrt. Maksimiljan Ryllo je za vedno končal misijonsko delo in se preselil v večno domovanje, ki so mu ga prijatelji namenili kar na domačem vrtu. Takrat nihče ni slutil, da se bo del misijonskega vrta zelo hitro spremenil v pokopališče.

Ryllo se je že dovolj zgodaj pred smrtjo zavedal resnega stanja in je pravočasno imenoval Knobleharja za namestnika in bodočega vodjo vseh načrtovanih misijonskih dejavnosti. Knoblehar se je v novi vlogi dobro znašel in je takoj ukrepal: Casolanija je poslal v Evropo, da v Rimu pridobi finančna sredstva, kmalu zatem pa je domov v Verono poslal tudi Vinca, ki je hudo zbolel. V Kartumu je ostal skupaj s Pedemontejem in nadaljeval s šolanjem otrok, predvsem dečkov, ki jih je kupoval na trgu s sužnji. Decembra se jima je pridružil jezuit **Gaetano Giuseppe Zara** iz Verone.

Revolucionarno leto 1848 je pretreslo Evropo, posledice pa so v valovih dosegle tudi misijon v Kartumu. Finančne razmere so bile neznosne in v najbolj kritičnem trenutku so Knobleharja reševali njegovi rojaki, ki so mu do konca življenja stali ob strani in ga podpirali v njegovi misijonski viziji. Najpomembnejšo vlogo je zagotovo imel ljubljanski knezoškof Anton Alojzij Wolf, ki je Knobleharja kot mladega fanta spodbujal pri njegovi odločitvi za misijonski poklic. V veliko podporo mu je bil tudi prijatelj in duhovnik Jožef Partelj, doma iz Bučke, vasi blizu Škocjana. Partelj je vestno spremljal delo svojega rojaka kot študenta, mu pošiljal denar in predvsem strokovno literaturo v nemškem jeziku in celo knjige v hebrejščini, ki jih je bilo lažje dobiti v Ljubljani kot v Rimu. Partelj je leta 1853 kot duhovnik v Tomišlju razmišljal, da bi odpotoval v Sudan, toda iz neznanih razlogov je ostal doma in še naprej pomagal Knobleharju. Na srečo se je v Kartum vrnil Angelo Vinco.

Načrti glede organizacije katoliškega misijona v Sudanu so bili usmerjeni v iskanje primernih lokacij za postavitev bivališč in cerkva. Nujno je bilo treba čim prej za nekaj mesecev zapustiti Kartum in odpotovati na jug, kjer so živela različna ljudstva, ki še nikoli niso slišala za Sveto pismo, Kristusa in – misijonarje. Medtem ko je Zara ostal v Kartumu, so Knoblehar, Pedemonte in Vinco 13. novembra 1849 ob dveh popoldan odpluli proti ekvatorju. Na tem potovanju se je Knoblehar seznanil z različnimi ljudstvi in njihovimi poglavarji, ki so ga sprejeli z velikim zaupanjem, saj je bilo očitno, da namen njegovega obiska ni trgovanje s sužnji in slonovino. Stike z domačini je navezal tudi z igranjem na harmoniko, dokler si je ni zaželel eden od poglavarjev. Knoblehar mu jo je prijazno podaril, saj je verjetno že takrat vedel, da bo naslednjič namesto harmonike pripeljal kar cerkvene zvonove. Nekaj let kasneje se je to tudi zares zgodilo.

Med plovbo je imel Knoblehar dovolj časa, da se je posvetil področju, ki mu je bilo poleg duhovnega poklica najbližje – naravoslovju. Z bogatim znanjem, ki ga je pridobil med študijem v Rimu, se je lotil pisanja ladijskega dnevnika. Med plovbo je skrbno zapisoval podatke o smeri kompasa, hitrosti ladje, geo-

grafski položaj, vremenske razmere, temperaturo ozračja in vode, zračni pritisk. Opisal je tudi rečno strugo z vsemi otoki, nevarnimi skalami in obrežje. V posebno razpredelnico je za vsak dan plovbe narisal vertikalno skico struge in posebej opisal desni in levi breg. V dnevnik je s svinčnikom narisal tudi štiri risbe: dve s krajinskim motivom in dve z motivom bivališč domačinov. Besedilo v ladijskem dnevniku je napisano v nemški gotici in je lepo čitljivo. Posebej so zanimivi podrobni geografski opisi pokrajine in predstavitev različnih ljudstev, s katerimi je imel stike med plovbo. V Avstrijski narodni knjižnici na Dunaju hranijo Knobleharjev ladijski dnevnik s prvega potovanja, v istem zvezku pa so opisana tudi potovanja leta 1853, 1854 in 1857. Posamezna poglavja iz dnevnika je Knoblehar objavil tudi v različnih katoliških tiskih (*Zgodnja Danica - Katoliški cerkveni list*, *Jahresbericht des Marien-Vereines zur Beförderung der katholischen Mission in Central-Afrika*, *La Nigritia*, *Stern der Neger*). Natančni podatki o plovbi po Belem Nilu so naredili močan vtis na ameriškega pisatelja in popotnika Bayarda Taylorja, ki je v letih 1851 in 1852 večkrat obiskal Knobleharja v Kartumu. Ker se je zanimal tudi za južni Sudan, mu je misijonar odstopil svoje popotniške dnevnike in skice. Leta 1854 je Taylor v knjigi z naslovom *A Journey to Central Africa: Life and Landscapes from Egypt to the Negro Kingdoms of the White Nile* podrobno opisal Knobleharjevo raziskovanje Belega Nila.

V Kartum so se Knoblehar, Pedemonte in Vinco vrnili 7. marca 1850, potovanje pa je trajalo 113 dni. Dovolj dolgo, da je Knoblehar temeljito premislil, kaj mora storiti, da bi uspešno uresničil svoje misijonske načrte. Zavedal se je, da ima dovolj informacij o jugu Sudana, kjer je možno postaviti misijonske postojanke, če bo na razpolago dovolj denarja in novih sodelavcev. Vse to se mu je posrečilo, saj je na Dunaju navdušil mladega cesarja Franca Jožefa I., ki mu je obljubil osebno pokroviteljstvo nad misijonom in ustrezno gmotno podporo, v Rimu pa je odločno stopil pred papeža Pija IX. in mu v eni uri pojasnil, pod kakšnimi pogoji lahko ustvari uspešen afriški misijon.

Toda njegov obisk leta 1850 je ostal nepozaben predvsem med rojaki, ki ga sploh niso prepoznali, ko se je po ljubljanskih ulicah in po drugih slovenskih krajih sprehajal oblečen 'po turško', v dolgi halji in s svilenim šalom okoli glave. Bil je prava atrakcija, še bolj pa njegova afriška zbirka, ki jo je širši javnosti predstavil v liceju, kjer je imel prostore Kranjski deželni muzej. Poleg predmetov so bili razstavljeni različni kamni, naravna barvila, rastline, preparirani ptiči, živ puščavski skakač in ihnevmon. Sredi poletja 1850 so se Slovenci tako prvič srečali s kulturno dediščino različnih ljudstev ob Belem Nilu. Obiskovalce razstave je kakih tristo predmetov, ki so bili na ogled, naravnost navdušilo in osrednji ljubljanski časopis *Laibacher Zeitung* je objavil celoten seznam predmetov v Knobleharjevi afriški zbirki. Promocija njegovega sudanskega misijona je bila premišljena načrtovana, kakor da bi jo zasnovali promotorji javnih dogodkov sodobnega časa. Poleg predavanj je odmevno razstavo spremljala posebna knjižica v slovenskem in nemškem jeziku o misijonskem delu v Sudanu in Knobleharjevem prvem potovanju po Belem Nilu.

Z obiskom domovine pa je uspešen misijonar uspel pritegniti pozornost predvsem tistih ljudi, ki so gojili tiho željo, da mu sledijo v Afriko. Knoblehar je rad sprejel vsakogar, toda postavljal je tudi resne zahteve, saj je upravičeno slutil, da se kandidati ne zavedajo, pred kakšno odločitvijo stojijo. Samo v nekaj stavkih je izpostavil pričakovane vrline bodočih misijonarjev: *»Potrpežljivost, velikodušnost, neomajna in hladnokrvna vztrajnost, žrtvovanje v premagovanju samega sebe, predvsem pa neomahljivo zaupanje v božjo usmiljenost, vsemogočnost in dobroto, združeno z otroško vdanostjo v njegovo sveto voljo. Te lastnosti morajo biti neločljive tovarišice vsakega misijonarja, pa naj deluje med omikanimi narodi ali pa naj nastopa med takimi, ki so v svojem stanju še neskončno daleč od omike. /.../ Pri tem si naj pa misijonar ne domišlja, da je že zaradi nekaterih dobrih lastnosti izbran od Boga in popolnoma usposobljen poganom oznanjati evangelij.«*

Knoblehar je kot karizmatični vodja katoliškega misijona v Sudanu postavil visoke kriterije pri izbiranju novih sodelavcev in v nekaj letih je pridobil več deset prostovoljcev iz različnih avstrijskih dežel. Propagandna akcija za iskanje ljudi, ki so bili pripravljeni zapustiti domovino, je segala od Dunaja do Tirolske in Benečije. Med njimi je bilo tudi veliko Slovencev, ki so vsak na svoj način zapustili nevidne sledi ob Belem Nilu, nekateri med njimi pa tudi svoje mlado življenje.

S Knobleharjem se je 27. avgusta 1851 v Trstu vkrcalo na parnik »Italia« šest novih sodelavcev. Avstrijska ladijska družba Lloyd je misijonarjem in njihovim laičnim pomočnikom omogočila brezplačen prevoz v 2. razredu. Mimo Krfa in Krete je ladja s posadko dalmatinskih Hrvatov po šestih dneh prispela v Aleksandrijo.

V Kairu je Knobleharjeva skupina počakala še dva duhovnika, ki sta prihajala iz lavantinske škofije, ki jo je vodil knezoškof Anton Martin Slomšek. Pridružil pa se jim je tudi slovenski kovač, ki je živel v Kairu. Na kratko bom predstavil devet misijonskih novincev, le z nekaterimi posebnostmi, ki so zaznamovale njihovo bivanje v Afriki.

Duhovnik **Jernej Mozgan** se je rodil 1823 v Koprivni pri Železni Kapli. Najprej je z Dovjakom in Trabantom delal na misijonski postaji Gondokoro med ljudstvom Bari na jugu Sudana. Uradno se je naselje imenovalo »Sancta Maria ad Flumen album« (Sveta Marija ob Beli reki). Kasneje je Mozgan vodil postajo Sveti Križ ob Belem Nilu na območju, kjer je živelo ljudstvo Kik. V majhni cerkvi je bila shranjena dragocena relikvija Jezusovega križa, ki jo je za misijon podaril knezoškof Slomšek. Postajo Sv. Križ so domačini imenovali Kanisa, tj. cerkev, njena natančna lokacija pa ni znana; bila je blizu zaselka Abū Kūka, med naseljema Shambe in Bor. Leta 1857 je Mozgana obiskal znani italijanski raziskovalec Carlo Piaggia. Misijonar je Piaggia seznanil z naravnim okoljem in ljudstvi na območju misijona pri Svetem Križu. Mozgan je umrl v istem letu kot Knoblehar, 26. januarja 1858.

Iz lavantinske škofije je prišel tudi duhovnik **Oton Trabant**, ki je bil tri leta starejši od Knobleharja, rojen leta 1816 v Pišecah. Med postankom v Kairu je

obiskal Gizo in se povzpел na najvišjo Keopsovo piramido. Morda je bil prvi Slovenec, ki je splezal na znamenito gradbeno mojstrovino faraonskega Egipta, saj mi niso znani podatki o Slovencih, ki so stali na vrhu piramide pred letom 1851. Trabanta je očitno zanimala preteklost, med ogledom ruševin nekdanje nubijske prestolnice Meroe je našel kar nekaj starih predmetov in jih v pločevinasti škatli poslal v Ljubljano. Kaj natančno je odkril, ni znano, sled za predmeti se je namreč kmalu zabrisala. Kot misijonar je delal največ v Gondokoru, danes mesto Džuba (Juba), ki je prestolnica leta 2011 ustanovljene Republike Južni Sudan. Trabant je bil 15. marca 1854 pokopan na vzpetini med dvema hrastoma nekje blizu Kartuma.

Duhovnik **Martin Dovjak** je bil rojen 1821 v Šentjerneju na Dolenjskem. Kot kaplan v Sostrem se je prijavil za delo v misijonu. Bil je zvest Knobleharjev sodelavec vse do konca kratkega življenja, ki se je končalo po treh letih prihoda v Afriko, 15. januarja 1854. Dovjak je pomagal tudi pri hidroloških, meteoroloških in astronomskih meritvah z novimi merilnimi napravami, ki jih je Knoblehar kupil z denarjem dunajske akademije. Leta 1859 je rezultate Knobleharjevih in Dovjakovih opazovanj objavil priznani dunajski astronom Karl Kreil. Kot misijonar je Dovjak delal v Gondokoru.

Najmlajši duhovnik v skupini je bil **Janez (Ivan) Kocjančič**, ki se je leta 1826 rodil v Črnavcu pri Brezjah. Ko je 25. novembra 1853 umrl, so ga prijatelji pokopali na misijonskem vrtu blizu Ryllovega groba. Kocjančič ni imel nobenih izkušenj s plovbo in upravljanjem večje barke, kakršna je bila nova misijonska ladja, značilna arabska dahabija. Knoblehar jo je kupil v Kairu od nadzornika dokov v пристanišču Bulaq. Ladjo je 15. oktobra 1851 blagoslovil in krstil z latinskim imenom *Stella Matutina* ali po slovensko »Jutranja zvezda«. To ime so ljudje v domovini dobro poznali, saj se je osrednje katoliško glasilo imenovalo *Zgodnja Danica*. Jutranja zvezda je tudi simbol božje matere Marije, ki je bila zavetnica Knobleharjevega misijona. *Stella Matutina* je imela trup obložen z železnimi ploščami, veliko kajuto na zadnjem delu ladje pa je dal Knoblehar predelati za svoje bivalne prostore in za namestitve stalne posadke, ki je štela 14 članov. V kajuti je bila tudi kapela, na palubi pa sta bila nameščena dva topiča. Knoblehar se je zavedal, da bo treba na jugu Egipta ladjo spraviti čez vseh šest brzic, t. i. kataraktov, s plovbo proti močnemu toku, polnem grozečih vrtincev in skalnih preprek. Celotno logistiko za izvedbo izjemnega podviga je prepustil Kocjančiču, za pomočnika pa mu je dodelil Trabanta. Dva mlada duhovnika sta se spopadla z mogočno naravno silo afriškega vodovja, ki od pradavnine vzbuja strahospoštovanje. Številni posamezniki so poskušali uresničiti plovbo proti toku navzgor, toda vsi poizkusi so se končali na dnu reke ali pa se ujeli v skalne ožine. Kocjančič si je prve brzice ogledal s čolnom na vesla, potem pa je bilo vse bolj nevarno in je raje s kopnega določil vse pasti rečne struge. S pomočjo lokalnih veljakov, nubijskih šejkov, je zbral od 150 do 200 ljudi, ki so kot težaki opravili poglavitno delo, saj so morali na nekaterih predelih brzic z vrvjo vleči ladjo proti toku. »Kaj takega v zgodovini plovbe še ni bilo,« je pisalo v časopisu leta 1852. To je bil čudež na Nilu! Zanj je poskrbel komaj 26 let star duhovnik Janez Kocjančič z

Gorenjske, ki je z ladjo *Stella Matutina* po več kot treh mesecih hudega boja s podivjanim vodovjem zaplul v umirjeni zgornji tok reke.

V Kartumu je bil Kocjančič zelo priljubljen, saj je bil za duhovnika neverjetno spreten pri različnih obrtniških delih. Izvrstno je govoril arabski jezik, domačini pa so ga klicali Abuna Hanna, t. j. naš oče Janez. Knoblehar ga je imenoval za prokuratorja, vrhovnega oskrbnika celotnega misijona.

Med duhovniki je bil v prvi skupini tudi **Matevž Milharčič**, ki je bil starejši od Knobleharja, rojen 1812 v Slavini. Bil je Knobleharjev namestnik in vodja misijonske šole. V Kartumu je bil kratek čas, umrl je že po dveh letih misijonskega dela, 7. oktobra 1853. Pokopan je v puščavi blizu mesta Berber, kamor se je odpravil z namenom, da pričaka nove sodelavce iz domovine.

V skupini so bili tudi trije sodelavci posvetnega stanu, ki so na Dunaju opravljali različne poklice. **Jakob Danninger** je bil po izobrazbi učitelj in organist. Ta poklic je opravljal tudi v Kartumu do leta 1857. Ko se je vrnil domov, je med prtljago imel tudi slonova zoba in 23 kosov ebenovine. To je bilo Knobleharjevo darilo za novo cerkev na Dunaju (Votivkirche).

Leta 2008 sem v Avstriji obiskal posestvo družine Danninger in gospodar Johann mi je pokazal nekaj sudanskih predmetov, med njimi z velikim ponosom tudi znani portret Ignacija Knobleharja. Gospod Danninger je povedal, da nima nobene Jakobove slike in zato ga Knobleharjeva podoba posredno spominja na njegovega znanega prednika.

Morda je priimek **Andreja Hruške** zaznamoval češkega vrtnarja, da si je na Dunaju ustvaril sloves na samem dvoru in od cesarja Franca Jožefa I. pridobil dovoljenje za delo v misijonu in jamstvo za dobro plačilo. V Kartumu je zgledno uredil misijonski vrt z velikim sadovnjakom in vinsko trto.

Učitelj arabščine s priimkom **Hudaj** je bil rojen v Siriji, za seboj pa je imel že deset let lektorskih izkušenj na Dunaju. Čeprav je imel pogodbo za pet let, se je kmalu po prihodu v misijon premislil in se vrnil na Dunaj.

Deveti član novih sodelavcev je bil **Anton Knavs** iz Osilnice ob Kolpi. Že nekaj časa je živel v Kairu in opravljal delo kovaškega pomočnika. Knoblehar je z njim sklenil pogodbo za tri leta.

Ob prihodu v Kartum konec decembra 1851 so se takoj lotili različnih opravil v misijonski postaji. Novembra 1852 so Knoblehar, Dovjak, Mozgan in Trabant odpluli na jug, da uredijo vse potrebno za gradnjo novih misijonskih naselbin.

Zanimanje za misijon je naraščalo in leta 1853 so po nekaterih župnijah stekle priprave za izbor ustreznih prostovoljcev, ki želijo odpotovati v Sudan. Aprila je časopis *Zgodnja Danica* objavil Knobleharjeva navodila za potovanje v Sudan. Slovenci so prvič v zgodovini v svojem maternem jeziku prebrali praktične nasvete izpod peresa izkušenega popotnika po Egiptu in Sudanu. Knoblehar je v slogu sodobnih turističnih vodnikov, na primer Lonely Planet, najprej opisal potovanje iz Trsta v Aleksandrijo, kamor so ladje plule dvakrat na mesec. Nato

je s koristnimi informacijami opisal plovbo iz Kaira do Kartuma z nekajdnev-
nim preходом skozi puščavo na relaciji Korosko-Berber. Knobleharjev opis je
enostaven, zanj je bila to rutinska zadeva, kot da bi iz domačega Škocjana šel
do reke Krke in po njej odplul do Novega mesta. Toda misijonar je dobro vedel,
da ljudje nimajo prave predstave, kako pomembna je resna priprava za poto-
vanje po Afriki. Zato je v članku posebej izpostavil pomen pravih oblačil, kje
kupiti hrano, se oskrbeti s primernimi količinami kruha in vode. Zanimivo, da
Knoblehar kot veljavno tujo valuto v Sudanu priporoča tolarje cesarice Marije
Terezije.

Sredi maja 1853 se je Knoblehar v spremstvu barijskega poglavarja Muge vrnil
v Kartum in takoj nadaljeval pot proti severu v Aleksandrijo, kamor so 1. sep-
tembra z ladjo »Calcutta« iz Trsta prispeli novi misijonski sodelavci.

Med njimi je bilo nekaj zelo zanimivih oseb iz slovenskih krajev. Duhovnik
Luka Jeran je bil rojen v Javorjah v Poljanski dolini leta 1818. Slovel je kot velik
zagovornik misijona v Sudanu, kot urednik časopisa *Zgodnja Danica* pa je bil
najbolj zaslužen, da so Slovenci skoraj deset let redno spremljali dogajanje ob
Belem Nilu. Zbolel je že v Kairu in se je moral vrniti v domovino. Kasneje je še
enkrat prišel v Egipt in se zaradi bolezni spet vrnil v Ljubljano. Duhovnik **Jožef
Lap** iz Preddvora je bil rojen istega leta kot Knoblehar. Čeprav sta bila sošolca
v srednji šoli in v bogoslovju, Knoblehar očitno ni bil navdušen nad njegovim
prihodom in ga je popolnoma ignoriral. Medtem ko so vsi dobili svoje delo in
namestitev, je Lap ostal prepuščen sam sebi. Kmalu je zbolel in po nekaj mese-
cih umrl, star 36 let. O tej žalostni epizodi iz Kartuma piše obrtnik **Jakob Šašel**
v svojih spominih leta 1863. V Kartumu je kot tajnik zdržal nekaj mesecev, po-
tem pa se je vrnil v Evropo. Zelo so dragocene njegove risbe v spominski knji-
gi, kjer opisuje potovanje v Afriko. Originalni ilustriran rokopis je shranjen v
Mestnem muzeju v Karlovcu. Obrtnik **Jakob Kobilica** nikoli ni videl Kartuma,
saj je moral spremljati bolnega Jerana nazaj v Ljubljano. Več sreče je imel trdo-
živi obrtnik **Janez Klančnik**. Izmed Knobleharjevih sodelavcev je bil Klančnik
zadnji Slovenec, ki je najdlje vztrajal v Afriki. Še leta 1863 je v Gondokoru kot
vodič popotniške ekspedicije spremljal odpravo slavne nizozemske pustolovke
Alexandrine Tinné.

Obrtnik **Franc Bališ** je hitro obupal nad razmerami v Kartumu in že leta 1855
je bil spet doma v Moravčah. V skupini novincev sta bila tudi duhovnika iz
briksenške škofije, **Jožef Gostner** in **Alojzij Haller**, medtem ko je duhovnik
Ignacij Kohl prihajal iz Sankt Pöltna. Med prostovoljci je bil tudi učitelj **Martin
Ludvik Hansal** z Dunaja. Knoblehar ga je zelo potreboval za misijonski tisk,
saj je bil Hansal v dvorni tiskarni izučen za arabskega in etiopskega črkostavca.

Poleg novincev je v Aleksandrijo prispelo tudi 30 zabojev z različnimi potreb-
ščinami. Posebno pozornost so pritegnili trije zvonovi za Gondokoro, ki jih je
v Ljubljani vlil znani mojster Anton Samassa. Na velikem zvonu je bil napis s
priimki pionirjev misijona v Sudanu: Knoblehar, Dovjak, Mozgan, Trabant in
Vincó. Najmanjši gondokorski zvon pa je imel napis v slovenščini: *Slovensko
milo zvonjenje vas vabi v božje češčenje*.

Knoblehar, poglavar Muga in novi misijonski sodelavci so 29. decembra 1853 prispeli v Kartum. Medtem sta že umrla Milharčič in Kocjančič, kar je bilo samo uvod v agonijo sudanskega misijona, ki je vsako leto zahteval nove in nove žrtve. Mladi fantje so umirali zaradi malarije in drugih bolezni, ki jih takrat še niso znali zdraviti. Jesen v letu 1857 je prinesla slutnjo o zatonu sudanskega misijona, saj je Knoblehar hudo zbolel. Želel si je vrnitve v rodni Škocjan, toda omagal je na sredi poti v Neaplju, 13. aprila 1858, star 38 let.

Kakšna pa bi bila usoda Jakoba Kobilce, če bi šel v Kartum in še dalje na jug, danes ne vemo. Glede na takratne razmere morda upravičeno sklepamo, da mu je Knoblehar rešil življenje, ko ga je določil, da se z bolnim Jeranom vrne v Ljubljano. Kobilca na Afriko ni več pomislil, poročil se je z Marijo Škofič in v zakonu se jima je leta 1861 rodila hčerka Ivana. Tako je tudi najbolj znana slovenska slikarka postala del zgodbe o Slovencih ob Belem Nilu v 19. stoletju.



Dr Ignacij Knoblehar and his associates in Sudan in the mid-19th century



This year marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of a well-known Slovenian missionary **Dr Ignacij Knoblehar**. When he was born on 6 July 1819 in the village of Škocjan in Dolenjska region, his parents and relatives probably did not think the future would take him beyond the borders of his birthplace. Being the eldest son, he was supposed to follow in his father's footsteps and become an innkeeper-cum-butcher; however, from an early age, Knoblehar followed a higher calling. Influenced by his compatriot Irenej Friderik Baraga, a missionary in the Great Lakes area of North America, he decided to become a proclaimer of Christ's teachings among the pagan peoples.

After completing his studies of theology in Ljubljana, he moved to Rome where he began preparing for Catholic missions at a special institution called the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Propaganda Fide*). He was a diligent student and in mid-March 1845, he was ordained a priest and completed his doctoral studies in theology. But the leadership of Propaganda Fide did not know exactly what to do with him. At first, they planned to send him to India, then to Sweden, then to Australia, and even to Persia. Eventually, they realized that he could remain in Rome as the Vice Principal and professor at the Ukrainian College. After a long period of waiting patiently for a decision to be made, a major surprise followed – he was appointed a missionary to Africa!

Due to the expansion of Islam from Egypt and north Sudan southwards, Pope George XVI signed, on 30 March 1846, a decree on establishment of the Apostolic Vicariate of Central Africa with its principal mission station in Khartoum. The management of the vicariate was entrusted to the Jesuit **Anetto Casolani**, a bishop from Malta. In the summer of 1846, Knoblehar sailed out towards Alexandria together with a priest **Angelo Vinco** on a French steamboat "*Sesostris*". From this major Mediterranean port, he travelled to the Holy Land and to Lebanon for a few months, where he lived among Maronites and, with their help, improved his knowledge of Arabic.

When the missionary group gathered in Alexandria in June 1847, the atmosphere among those present was quite dismal. Due to unclear circumstances, the Bishop Casolani gave up management of the vicariate. The Polish Jesuit **Maximilian Ryllo** from the province of Samogitia (today's Lithuania), former head of Propaganda Fide, took his place. They had better luck with arranging documents and permits for their travel to Khartoum, as they were assisted by a Slovenian, **Anton Lavrin**, the Austrian Consul General in Alexandria. He provided great help to the missionaries, especially when it was necessary to intervene with the Turkish-Egyptian government to provide guarantee letters. Lavrin acquainted Knoblehar with a French engineer D'Arnaud, who had frequently sailed down the White Nile and was very familiar with the natural environment of this great African river and the various peoples. Knoblehar's socialising with Lavrin probably affected the missionary's attitude towards the heritage of the ancient Pharaonic Egypt. The Austrian consul was a passionate collector of ancient Egyptian artefacts and he acquired a large collection in Alexandria, which later ended up in the Miramare Castle near Trieste. A part of this collection is now exhibited in the Art History Museum in Vienna. To his compatriots in his homeland, Lavrin sent a real Egyptian mummy and a Nile crocodile, and laid his parents in his home town of Vipava and his son to eternal rest in proper sarcophagi. Today, the mummy and the crocodile are in the National Museum of Slovenia, while the two granite sarcophagi that date back about 4,500 years are part of the family tomb at the cemetery in Vipava. Of all the 19th-century Slovenians, Anton Lavrin is considered to have acquired the most extensive knowledge of Egypt and its exceptional cultural heritage.

On 24 July, the group of missionaries finally left Alexandria and took a sailing boat to Cairo. Besides Knoblehar, the missionary group comprised the following members: Ryllo, Casolani, Vinco and the Jesuit **Emanuele Pedemonte** as the last one who joined subsequently. By the end of September, five young missionaries purchased the equipment and food in Cairo for their voyage along the Nile and for crossing the Nubian Desert in order to avoid the cataracts, river rapids in the south of Egypt.

Knoblehar recorded his impressions from the trip southwards: *"We saw some friendly places in Egypt, covered with palm trees, high mountains and cliffs, the ruins of the fortifications of the ancient Nubian kings, the ancient, strong, tall symbols of the former Pharaohs. It makes one sad to compare the former colossal and artistic masonry temples to poor, mud huts of the present inhabitants. Many of these temples were later dedicated to the true, living God; there are traces of paintings from ancient Christian times on the walls."*

Knoblehar was familiar with the history of Egypt but was not particularly fascinated by the legacy of the Pharaohs. He searched for traces of Christianity among the Egyptian ruins, as he also did on the Philae Island, where once stood the famous temple dedicated to the goddess Isis. The missionaries found a place to celebrate the Mass within well-preserved parts of the temple. Had they been superstitious, they could have believed that the goddess sought revenge,

because on the Philae Island, the leader of the expedition, Ryllo, fell seriously ill. The voyage slowed down, and meanwhile some newspapers in Europe reported that the Nubians had killed them all. After four months and a half, on 11 February 1848, the missionaries reached Khartoum quite exhausted but fortunately alive. They arranged a temporary accommodation and began to search for a suitable location for their mission station. They found a very suitable plot with a large garden right next to the Blue Nile which originates in the Ethiopian Highlands and joins the White Nile in Khartoum. By the end of May, a chapel had already been built, and soon afterwards, they completed a building used as a dwelling and as a school. But the encouraging start was disrupted by death. Maximilian Ryllo completed his missionary work and found his final resting place which his friends prepared for him in the home garden. At that time, nobody suspected that a part of the mission's garden would soon be turned into a cemetery.

Ryllo had already been aware of his serious condition well before his death and, in time, appointed Knoblehar as deputy and future leader of all planned missionary activities. Knoblehar coped with the new role successfully and took immediate action: He sent Casolani to Europe to obtain funds in Rome, and soon after that, he sent Vinco, who became seriously ill, back home to Verona. He stayed in Khartoum with Pedemonte and continued educating children, especially the boys he was buying at the slave market. Jesuit **Gaetano Giuseppe Zara** from Verona joined them in December.

The revolutionary year of 1848 shook Europe and the consequences reached in waves the mission in Khartoum as well. The financial situation at the time was unbearable, and in the most critical moment, Knoblehar received help from his compatriots who, until his death, stood by his side and supported him in his missionary vision. Anton Alois Wolf, the Prince Bishop of Ljubljana, who had encouraged Knoblehar in his decision for the missionary profession when Knoblehar was a student, certainly had the most important role. His friend and priest Jožef Partelj from Bučka, a village near Škocjan, was also a tremendous support. During Knoblehar's student years, Partelj had closely followed his work and supported him by sending him money, academic literature in German, and even books in Hebrew which were easier to obtain in Ljubljana than in Rome. In 1853, Partelj was priest in Tomišelj and was thinking of travelling to Sudan, but for unknown reasons he stayed at home and continued helping Knoblehar. Fortunately, Angelo Vinco returned to Khartoum.

Plans regarding the organisation of the Catholic mission in Sudan were aimed at finding locations where dwellings and churches could be constructed. It was necessary to leave Khartoum for a few months as soon as possible and travel to the south where different peoples lived, who had never heard of the Bible, Christ and missionaries. While Zara remained in Khartoum, Knoblehar, Pedemonte, and Vinco sailed towards the equator on 13 November 1849 at two in the afternoon. During this voyage, Knoblehar became acquainted with different peoples and their chiefs, who welcomed him with great trust, as it was

obvious that the purpose of his visit was not slave and ivory trade. He initiated contact with the locals also by playing on the accordion until one of his chiefs wanted it for himself. Knoblehar kindly gave it to him, as he probably knew that next time, instead of the accordion, he would bring church bells. A few years later, this is exactly what happened.

During the voyage, Knoblehar had enough time to focus on a field which was, in addition to the spiritual profession, the closest to him – natural science. With the wealth of knowledge that he had gained during his studies in Rome, he started writing a logbook. During the voyage, he carefully recorded all data relating to compass course, the ship's speed, geographical position, weather conditions, temperature of the atmosphere and water, and air pressure. He added descriptions of the riverbed with all the islands, dangerous rocks and the river bank. In a separate table, he drew a vertical sketch of the riverbed for each day of navigation, and described the right and left banks. In the logbook, he drew four drawings with a pencil – two landscape drawings and two drawings of the locals' dwellings. The text in the logbook is written in the German Gothic script and is easily legible. Particularly interesting are the detailed geographical descriptions of the landscape and the presentation of the various peoples with whom he had contact during the voyage. Knoblehar's logbook from the first voyage is kept in the Austrian National Library in Vienna. The same book also contains descriptions of the 1853, 1854, and 1857 voyages. Knoblehar also published individual chapters of the logbook in various Catholic periodicals (*Zgodnja Danica – Katoliški cerkveni list*, *Jahresbericht des Marien-Vereines zur Beförderung der katholischen Mission in Central-Afrika*, *La Nigrizia*, *Stern der Neger*). Detailed information on sailing down the White Nile made a strong impression on the American writer and traveller Bayard Taylor, who visited Knoblehar in Khartoum on several occasions in 1851 and 1852. Since he was also interested in south Sudan, the missionary gave him his travel journals and sketches. In 1854, in a book titled *A Journey to Central Africa: Life and Landscapes from Egypt to the Negro Kingdoms of the White Nile*, Taylor described Knoblehar's exploration of the White Nile river in detail.

Knoblehar, Pedemonte and Vinco returned to Khartoum on 7 March 1850, after being on a journey for 113 days. The journey was long enough for Knoblehar to carefully think about what to do to achieve his mission plans. He knew that he had enough information about the south of Sudan, where it was possible to set up mission posts if there would be enough money and new associates available. He succeeded in getting both by impressing the young Emperor Franz Joseph I in Vienna, who promised him sponsorship of the mission and proper financial support under his auspices. In Rome, Knoblehar resolutely approached Pope Pius IX and explained in one hour the conditions that had to be met in order to establish a successful African mission.

However, his visit in 1850 remained unforgettable especially among his compatriots who did not even recognize him when he walked down the streets of Ljubljana and other Slovenian cities dressed 'Turkish-style' in a long robe and a

silk scarf wrapped around his head. He was quite an attraction, and even more so his African collection which he presented to the general public in the lyceum building where the Carniolan Provincial Museum had its premises. In addition to the objects, various stones, natural dyes, plants, taxidermied birds, a living gerbil and an Egyptian mongoose were exhibited. In the mid-summer of 1850, Slovenians met with the cultural heritage of the various peoples living along the White Nile for the first time. The visitors of the exhibition were absolutely thrilled to see some 300 items that were on display, and the Ljubljana newspaper *Laibacher Zeitung* published a full list of items in Knoblehar's African collection. The promotion of his Sudanese mission was carefully timed, as if it had been conceived by modern promoters of public events. In addition to the lectures, the high-profile exhibition was accompanied by a special booklet presenting in Slovenian and German the missionary work in Sudan and Knoblehar's first voyage along the White Nile river.

By visiting his homeland, the successful missionary managed to attract attention especially of those who silently desired to follow him to Africa. Knoblehar was willing to accept anyone, but he also set serious requirements, as he reasonably felt that the candidates had no inkling of what decision they were facing. In only a few sentences, he highlighted the expected virtues of future missionaries: *"Patience, generosity, unwavering and cold-blooded perseverance, sacrifice in overcoming oneself, and, above all, unfaltering trust in God's mercy, omnipotence, and kindness combined with childhood devotion to His holy will. These qualities must be the inseparable companions of every missionary, whether he should work among the civilised nations or act among those who are still infinitely far from being civilised. / ... / However, just because he might have some good qualities, the missionary should not imagine that he has been chosen by God and is fully qualified to preach the gospel to the pagans."*

As the charismatic leader of the Catholic mission in Sudan, Knoblehar set high standards in selecting new associates and within a few years, he got dozens of volunteers from all across Austria. From Vienna to Tyrol and Venetia, a promotional campaign was launched to search for people willing to leave their homeland. Among them there were also many Slovenians who, each in their own way, left invisible marks by the White Nile river where some of them lost their young lives.

On 27 August 1851, six new associates accompanied Knoblehar as he boarded the steamer *"Italia"* in Trieste. The Austrian Lloyd Shipping Company provided the missionaries and their laymen with free transport in the 2nd class. The ship crewed by Dalmatian Croats passed by Corfu and Crete, and arrived in Alexandria six days later.

In Cairo, Knoblehar's group waited for two other priests coming from the Lavantine diocese which was headed by the Slovenian Prince Bishop Anton Martin Slomšek. A Slovenian blacksmith from Cairo also joined them. Let me briefly present the nine new missionaries with only a few features that characterised their stay in Africa.

Priest **Jernej Mozgan** was born in 1823 in Koprivna near Železna Kapla. First, he worked with Dovjak and Trabant at the Gondokoro missionary station among the Bari people in the south of Sudan. Officially the village was named "*Sancta Maria ad Flumen album*" (Saint Mary by the White River). Later, Mozgan was the head of the Holy Cross by the White Nile missionary station in an area inhabited by the Kyk people. The small church held a relic of the True Cross. This precious relic was gifted to the mission by Prince Bishop Slomšek. Holy Cross by the White Nile was called Kanisa by the locals, i.e. a *church*. It laid somewhere near the settlement of Abū Kūka, between settlements Shambe and Bor, although its exact location is still unknown. In 1857, Mozgan was visited by the famous Italian explorer Carlo Piaggia. The missionary familiarised Piaggia with the natural environment and the peoples in the Holy Cross mission area. Mozgan died on 26 January 1858, in the same year as Knoblehar.

Oton Trabant, a priest born in 1816 in Pišece, i.e. three years earlier than Knoblehar, was also from the Lavantine diocese. During their sojourn in Cairo, he visited Giza and climbed the Great Pyramid. He might have been the first Slovenian to get to the top of the famous Pharaonic Egypt's masterpiece of engineering, although I do not have any data on Slovenians who managed to get to the top of the pyramid before 1851. Trabant was obviously interested in the past as during a tour of the ruins of the former Nubian capital Meroe, he found several artefacts and sent them to Ljubljana in a tin-can box. It is unknown what exactly he had discovered as all the traces of the artefacts were soon lost. As a missionary he mostly worked in Gondokoro, now known as the city of Juba, the capital of the Republic of South Sudan, established in 2011. On 15 March 1854, Trabant was buried somewhere near Khartoum on a hill between two oaks.

Priest **Martin Dovjak** was born in 1821 in Šentjernej in the Dolenjska region. He was a chaplain in Sostro when he applied to work in a mission. He was Knoblehar's trusted colleague until the end of his short life which ended on 15 January 1854, three years after his arrival to Africa. Dovjak also helped with hydrological, meteorological and astronomical measurements with new measuring devices purchased by Knoblehar using the money from the Vienna Academy. In 1859, the results of Knoblehar's and Dovjak's observations were published by a renowned Viennese astronomer Karl Kreil who worked as a missionary in Gondokoro.

The youngest priest in the group was **Janez (Ivan) Kocjančič**, born in 1826 in Črnič near Brezje. When he died on 25 November 1853, his friends buried him in the mission garden near Ryllo's grave. Kocjančič had no experience in navigating and operating a large boat such as the new mission ship, a typical Arabian *dahabiya*. Knoblehar bought it in Cairo from a dock supervisor at the port of Bulaq. On 15 October 1851, he blessed and christened the ship with a Latin name *Stella Matutina* which means "Morning Star". This name was well known to people in the homeland since the main Catholic newspaper was called *Zgodnja Danica* (Early Morning Star). The morning star is also a symbol of Virgin Mary, the patroness of Knoblehar's mission. *Stella Matutina* had a

hull lined with iron plates. Knoblehar had the cabin in the stern of the ship remodelled into living quarters and a place to accommodate his permanent crew of 14 members. There was also a chapel in the cabin, and on the deck, there were two small canons. Knoblehar was aware that in the south of Egypt, the ship would have to pass all six rapids, the so-called cataracts by navigating upstream against a strong current, full of dangerous vortices and rocks. He delegated the complete logistics of this extraordinary venture to Kocjančič, and assigned Trabant as his assistant. The two young priests confronted the mighty natural force of the African waters, which has been inspiring awe since prehistoric times. Many individuals had tried to navigate upstream, but all attempts ended up at the bottom of the riverbed or caught in the rocky straits. Kocjančič inspected the first rapids in a rowing boat, but from then on, the situation became increasingly dangerous so he examined all the perils of the riverbed from the land. With the help of local dignitaries, the Nubian sheikhs, he gathered 150 to 200 labourers to do most of the work which included dragging the ship upstream with a rope in some parts of the cataracts. "This has never happened in the history of navigation," wrote a newspaper in 1852. This was the miracle of the Nile! It was the 26-year old priest Janez Kocjančič from Gorenjska region who was responsible for this miracle. After more than three months of struggle against the wild waters, the *Stella Matutina* finally reached the tranquil upstream of the river.

In Khartoum, Kocjančič became very popular due to his incredible skills at various crafts. He spoke excellent Arabic and the local people called him *Abuna Hanna*, i.e. our father John. Knoblehar appointed him as the procurator, the supreme administrator of the entire mission.

Matevž Milharčič born in 1812 in Slavina, thus older than Knoblehar, was also one of the priests in the first group. He was Knoblehar's deputy and head of the missionary school. He lived in Khartoum only for a short time as he died on 7 October 1853, after only two years of missionary work. He was buried in the desert near the town of Berber where he went with the intention to wait for new associates arriving from his homeland.

The group also included three secular associates who worked in different professions in Vienna. **Jakob Danninger** was a teacher and an organist. He was working in this profession in Khartoum until 1857. When he returned home, he brought in his luggage elephant tusks and 23 pieces of ebony. This was Knoblehar's gift for the new church in Vienna (Votivkirche).

In 2008, I visited the Danninger family estate in Austria, and Johann, the owner of the estate, showed me some Sudanese items. He proudly showed me the well-known portrait of Ignacij Knoblehar. Mr Danninger did not have any paintings of Jakob, which is why the painting of Knoblehar indirectly reminded him of his famous ancestor.

Perhaps it was his surname that contributed to the Czech gardener's reputation at the Vienna Court. **Andrej Hruška** received permission from the Emperor

Franz Joseph I to work in the mission and a guarantee of good payment. In Khartoum, he planted an impeccable mission garden with a large orchard and a vineyard.

Arabic teacher named **Hudai** was born in Syria and had worked ten years as a proofreader in Vienna. Although he had a five-year contract, he changed his mind shortly after arriving to the mission and returned to Vienna.

The ninth new associate was **Anton Knavs** from Osilnica near Kolpa river. He had already lived in Cairo for some time and worked as a blacksmith's assistant. Knoblehar signed a contract with him for three years.

On their arrival in Khartoum at the end of December 1851, they immediately undertook various tasks at the missionary station. In November 1852, Knoblehar, Dovjak, Mozgan, and Trabant sailed to the south to arrange everything necessary for the construction of new mission settlements.

The interest in the mission was increasing and in 1853, some parishes started preparing to select suitable volunteers wishing to travel to Sudan. In April, the *Zgodnja Danica* newspaper published Knoblehar's guide for those travelling to Sudan. For the first time in history, Slovenians could read practical tips penned in their mother tongue by a traveller who had experience travelling around Egypt and Sudan. In the style of a modern tourist guides, such as the *Lonely Planet*, Knoblehar first described his journey from Trieste to Alexandria where ships sailed to twice a month. Furthermore, he provided the description and useful information about sailing from Cairo to Khartoum with a few days' transition through the desert in Korosko-Berber route. Knoblehar's description was simple; for him, this was a routine matter, like going from his home village Škocjan to the Krka river and then sailing to the nearby town of Novo mesto. But the missionary knew very well that people could not imagine how vital was the preparation when travelling to Africa. That is why he highlighted, in his guide, the importance of suitable clothing, places to buy food and supply oneself with enough bread and water. Interestingly, Knoblehar recommended using Maria Theresa thalers as a valid foreign currency in Sudan.

In mid-May 1853, Knoblehar returned to Khartoum accompanied by the Bari chief Muga, and immediately continued his journey northwards to Alexandria, where on 1 September, new missionary associates arrived from Trieste on the ship "*Calcutta*". Let's take a look at some of the most interesting people from the Slovenian land.

Priest **Luka Jeran** was born in Javorje in the Poljanska valley in 1818. He was known as a great advocate of the mission in Sudan. As the editor of the *Zgodnja Danica* newspaper, it was in large part thanks to him that for almost ten years, Slovenians could regularly read about the events happening by the White Nile river. Unfortunately, he got sick in Kairo and had to return to his homeland. Later, he tried going to Egypt again, but had to return to Ljubljana due to an illness. Priest **Jožef Lap** from Preddvor was born in the same year as Knoblehar. Although they were classmates in high school and during the theology studies,

Knoblehar was apparently not impressed by his arrival because he completely ignored him. While everyone else was assigned work and accommodation, Lap was left to his own devices. He soon fell ill and died after a few months at the age of 36 years. This sad episode from Khartoum is described in the 1863 memoirs of a craftsman **Jakob Šašel**. In Khartoum, he served as a secretary for several months, after which he returned to Europe. The drawings in his memoir, describing his journey to Africa, are particularly valuable. The original illustrated manuscript is stored in the Karlovac City Museum. Craftsman **Jakob Kobilca** never saw Khartoum since he had to accompany the ill Jeran on his way back to Ljubljana. The resilient craftsman **Janez Klančnik** was more fortunate. Of all Knoblehar's Slovenian associates, Klančnik was the one who persisted in Africa the longest. As late as 1863, he worked in Gondokoro as a guide of the famous Dutch adventurer Alexandrine Tinné's travel expedition.

Craftsman **Franc Bališ** was quicker to give up on the situation in Khartoum and returned to his home in Moravče in 1855. In the group of newcomers, there were also two priests from the Diocese of Brixen, **Josef Gostner** and **Alois Haller**, and the priest **Ignatius Kohl** was from St. Pölten. **Martin Ludwig Hansal**, a teacher from Vienna, was also in the team of volunteers. Knoblehar really needed him for the missionary printing press since Hansal was a trained Arabic and Ethiopian typesetter in the court printing press.

In addition to the newcomers, 30 containers with various supplies arrived in Alexandria. Three bells for Gondokoro, which were cast in Ljubljana by the famous master Anton Samassa, attracted much attention. The biggest bell bore the surnames of the pioneers of the Sudan mission: Knoblehar, Dovjak, Mozgan, Trabant, and Vinco. The smallest bell had an inscription in Slovenian: *Slovensko milo zvonjenje vas vabi v božje češčenje* (English: Slovenian soft tolling of the bells invites you to a godly worship).

Knoblehar, the tribal chief Muga, and new missionaries arrived in Khartoum on 29 December 1853. Meanwhile, Milharčič and Kocjančič had already died, which was only a prelude to the agony of the Sudanese mission, which claimed more and more victims each year. Young men died of malaria and other illnesses that were incurable at the time. The autumn of 1857 brought a foreboding premonition of the decline of the Sudanese mission as Knoblehar fell seriously ill. He wanted to return to his native village Škocjan, but he succumbed in the middle of the voyage to Naples on 13 April 1858, at the age of 38.

Today, we can only guess what the fate of Jakob Kobilca would have been, had he gone to Khartoum and farther south. In view of the circumstances, we may reasonably conclude that Knoblehar saved his life when he ordered for him to return to Ljubljana with the ailing Jeran. Kobilca never thought of Africa again. Instead, he married Marija Škofič and in 1861, they got a daughter Ivana. This is how the most famous female Slovenian painter became part of the story of Slovenians by the White Nile in the 19th century.



SLIKA 1: Dr. Ignacij Knoblehar (1819–1858)

FIGURE 1: Dr. Ignacij Knoblehar (1819–1858)



SLIKA 2: Stavba Kongregacije za širjenje vere (Propaganda Fide) v Rimu

FIGURE 2: The building of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples (Propaganda Fide) in Rome

SLIKA 3: Maksimiljan Ryllo (1802–1848)

FIGURE 3: Maximilian Ryllo (1802–1848)



SLIKA 4: Angelo Vinco (1819–1853)

FIGURE 4: Angelo Vinco (1819–1853)





SLIKA 5: Avstrijski cesar
Franc Jožef I.

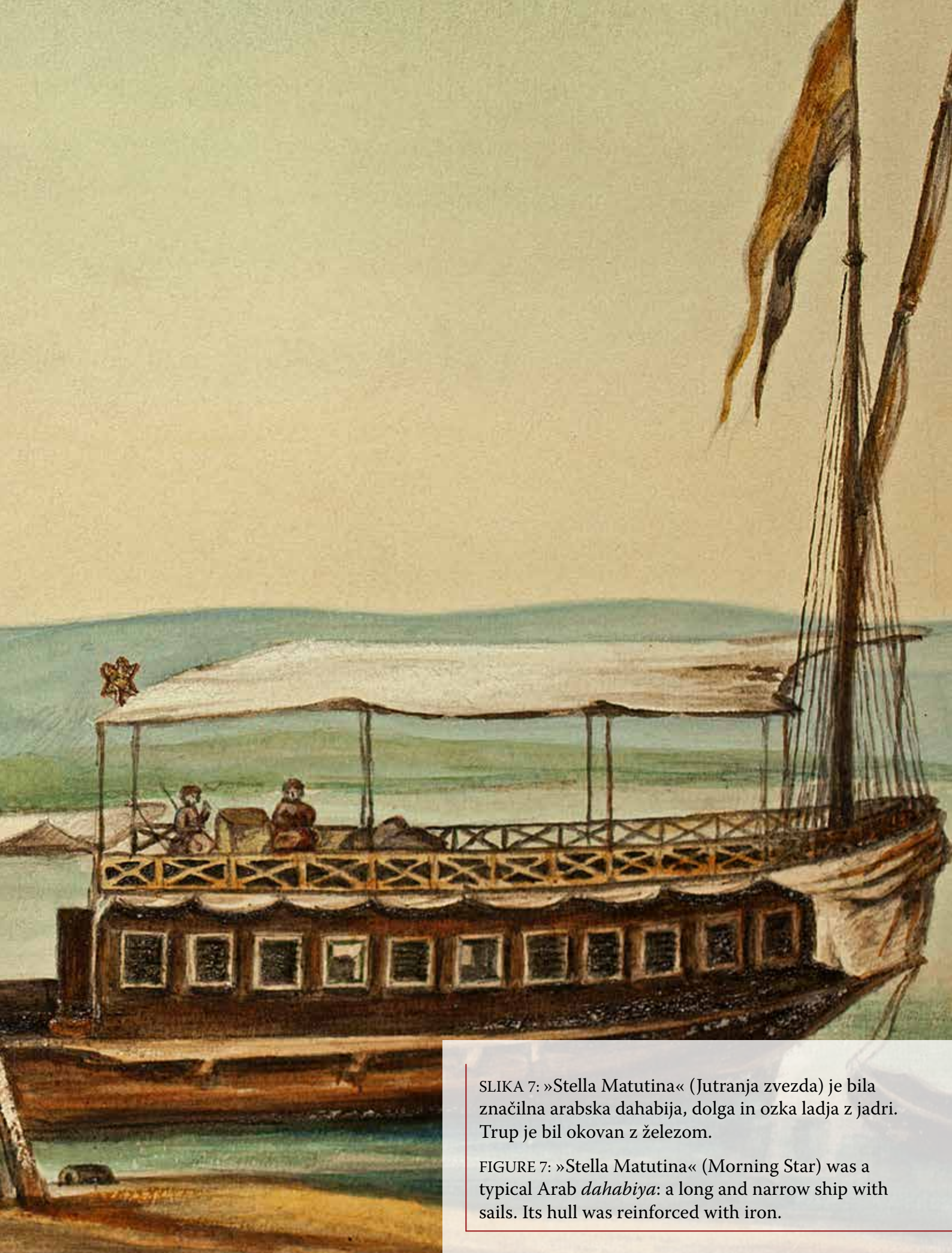
FIGURE 5: Austrian
emperor Franz Joseph I.



SLIKA 6: Papež Pij IX.

FIGURE 6: Pope Pius IX.





SLIKA 7: »Stella Matutina« (Jutranja zvezda) je bila značilna arabska dahabija, dolga in ozka ladja z jadri. Trup je bil okovan z železom.

FIGURE 7: »Stella Matutina« (Morning Star) was a typical Arab *dahabiya*: a long and narrow ship with sails. Its hull was reinforced with iron.



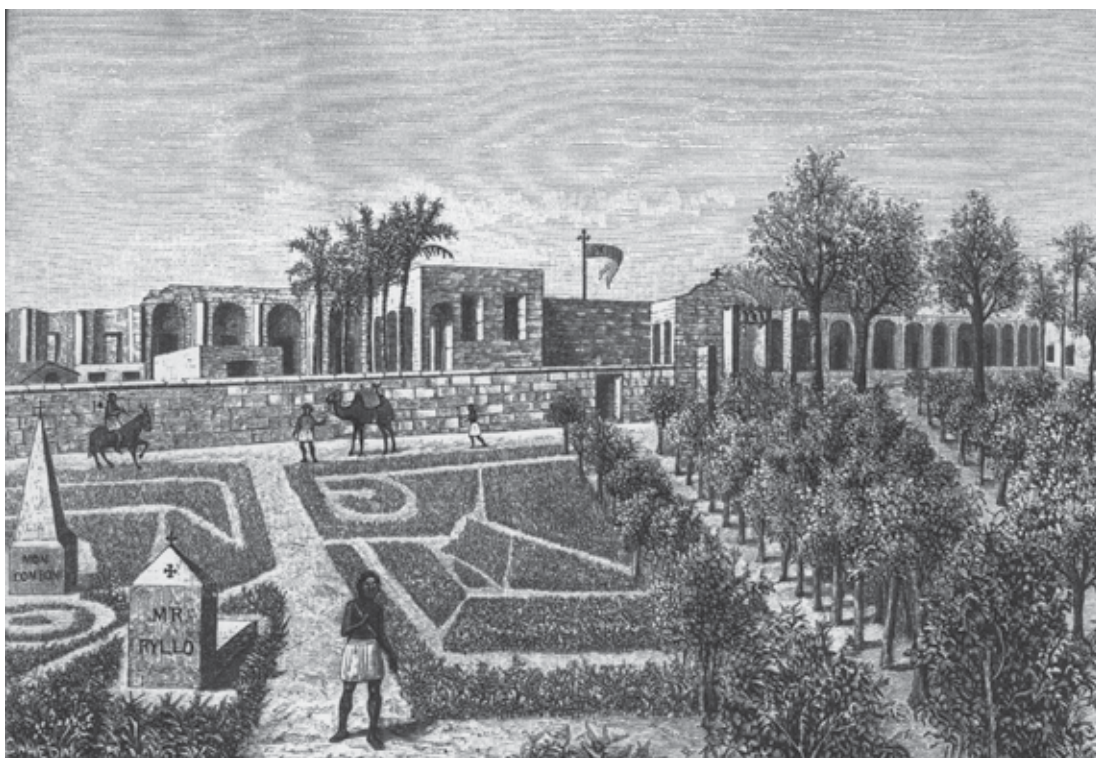
SLIKA 8: Prve Nilove
brzice pri Asuanu

FIGURE 8: The First
Cataract in Aswan

SLIKA 9: Kartum. Na levem bregu Modrega
Nila je za obzidjem stal misijonski kompleks

FIGURE 9: Khartoum. On the left side of the
Blue Nile, behind the walls, stood the complex
of the mission.





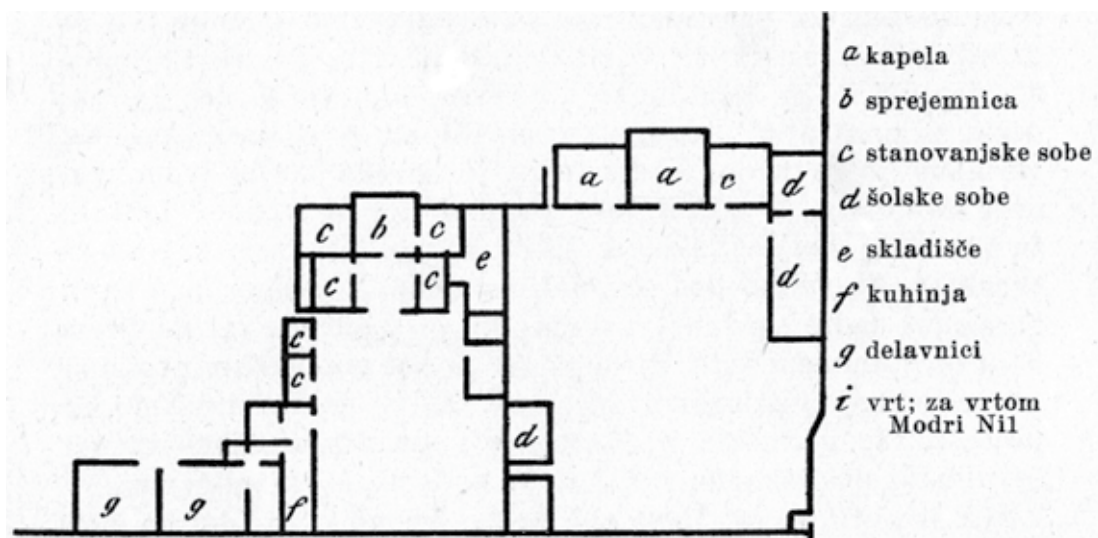
SLIKA 10: Kartum. Misijonski stavbni kompleks z vrtom in s sadovnjakom. Na vrtu so bili pokopani tudi nekateri misijonarji (Ryllo, Kocjančič, Comboni).

FIGURE 10: Khartoum. The complex of the mission with a garden and orchard. Some of the missionaries were buried in the garden (Ryllo, Kocjančič, Comboni).



SLIKA 11: Hodnik ob misijonskem vrtu je nudil primerno senco.

FIGURE 11: The corridor next to the garden of the mission offered a pleasant shade.



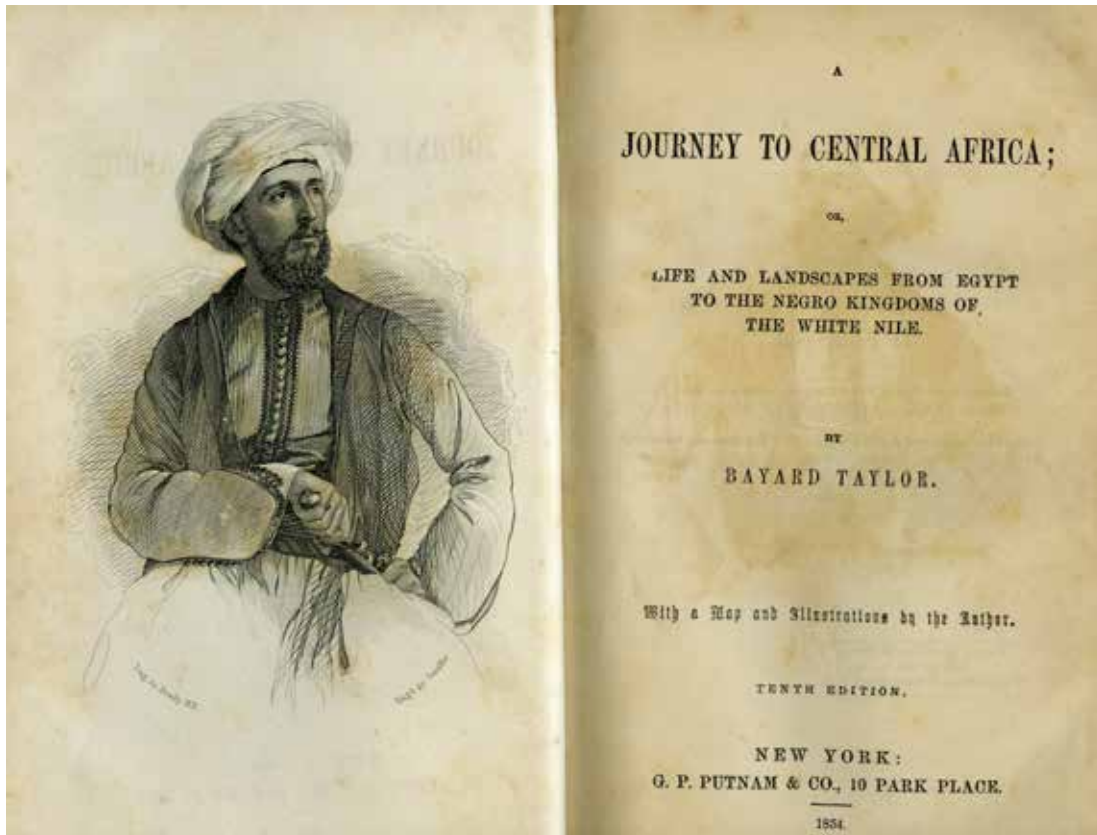
SLIKA 12: V tlorisu so označeni posamezni prostori: kapela (a), sprejemnica (b), stanovanjske sobe (c), šolske sobe (d), skladišče (e), kuhinja (f), delavnici (g), vrt (i).

FIGURE 12: The plan is marked with individual areas: chapel (a), reception (b), dormitories (c), school rooms (d), storage (e), kitchen (f), two workshops (g), garden (i).



SLIKA 13: Leta 1885 so muslimanski skrajneži, t. i. mahdijevci, misijonski kompleks opustošili. Pozneje je celotno območje zakupila sudanska vlada za gradnjo upravnih stavb.

FIGURE 13: In 1885, the Muslim extremists called Mahdi ravaged the complex of the mission. Later the entire area was bought by the Sudanese government for the construction of an administrative building.



SLIKA 14: Bayard Taylor (1825–1878)

FIGURE 14: Bayard Taylor (1825–1878)

Landstut.
 Peter in Laibach am 1. Juli 1853.

Jakob Kobilica, Schmied, Magerndale.
 Michael Gril Tischlermeister a. f. d.
 Josef Kramar Tischlermeister.
 Landvolkmeister Schuchel Landwirtsch.
 Landvolk. Krieger Tischlermeister.
 Martin Jank Schmied.
 Johann Franisch Schmied, Magerndale a. f. d.
 Valentin Schauer Schmied, Hof, Schmied.
 Matthias Alsch, Schmied, Tischler, Magerndale.
 Johann Alois Ruzsnyai a. f. d. Tischler.
 Ludwig Leyski Tischler.
 Simon Schen Tischler.
 Wilhelm Scherer Tischler.
 Adolf Milcic Schneider.

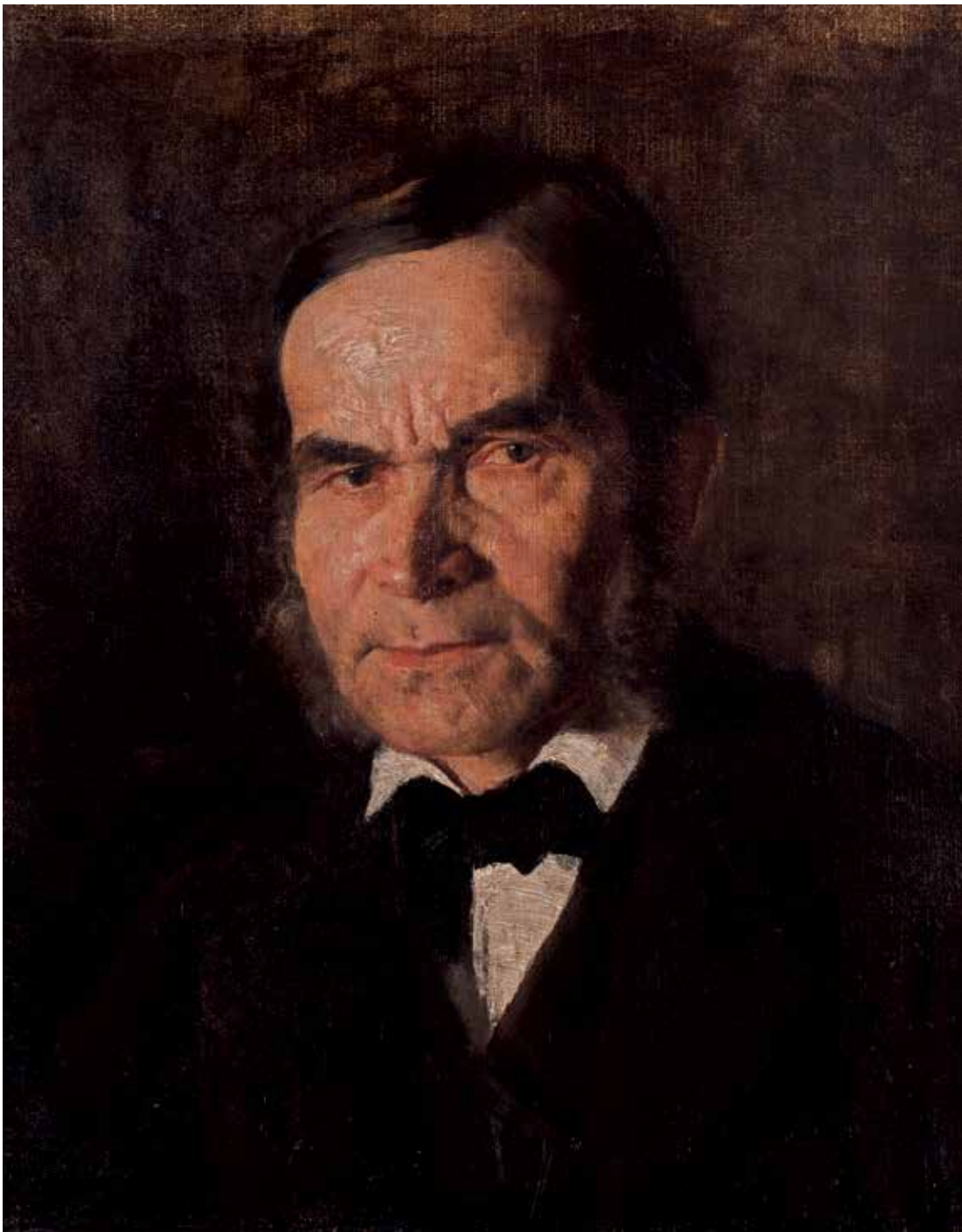
SLIKA 16: Za misijon se je 1. julija 1853 prijavilo 14 obrtnikov. Sprejeta sta bila samo dva, Jakob Kobilca in Jože Kramar.

FIGURE 16: On 1st of July 1853, 14 craftsmen applied for the mission. Only two were accepted, Jakob Kobilca and Jože Kramar.



SLIKA 17: Luka Jeran (1818–1896)

FIGURE 17: Luka Jeran (1818–1896)



SLIKA 18: Jakob Kobilca (1820–1899), kot ga je naslikala njegova hčerka Ivana leta 1886.

FIGURE 18: Jakob Kobilca (1820–1899), as painted by his daughter Ivana in 1886.



SLIKA 19: Jakob Šašel (1832–1903),
avtoportret

FIGURE 19: Jakob Šašel (1832–1903),
a self-portrait



SLIKA 20: Kairo in piramide v Gizi

FIGURE 20: Cairo and the
pyramids of Giza

SLIKA 21: Kačji ples v Kairu

FIGURE 21: Snake dance in Cairo



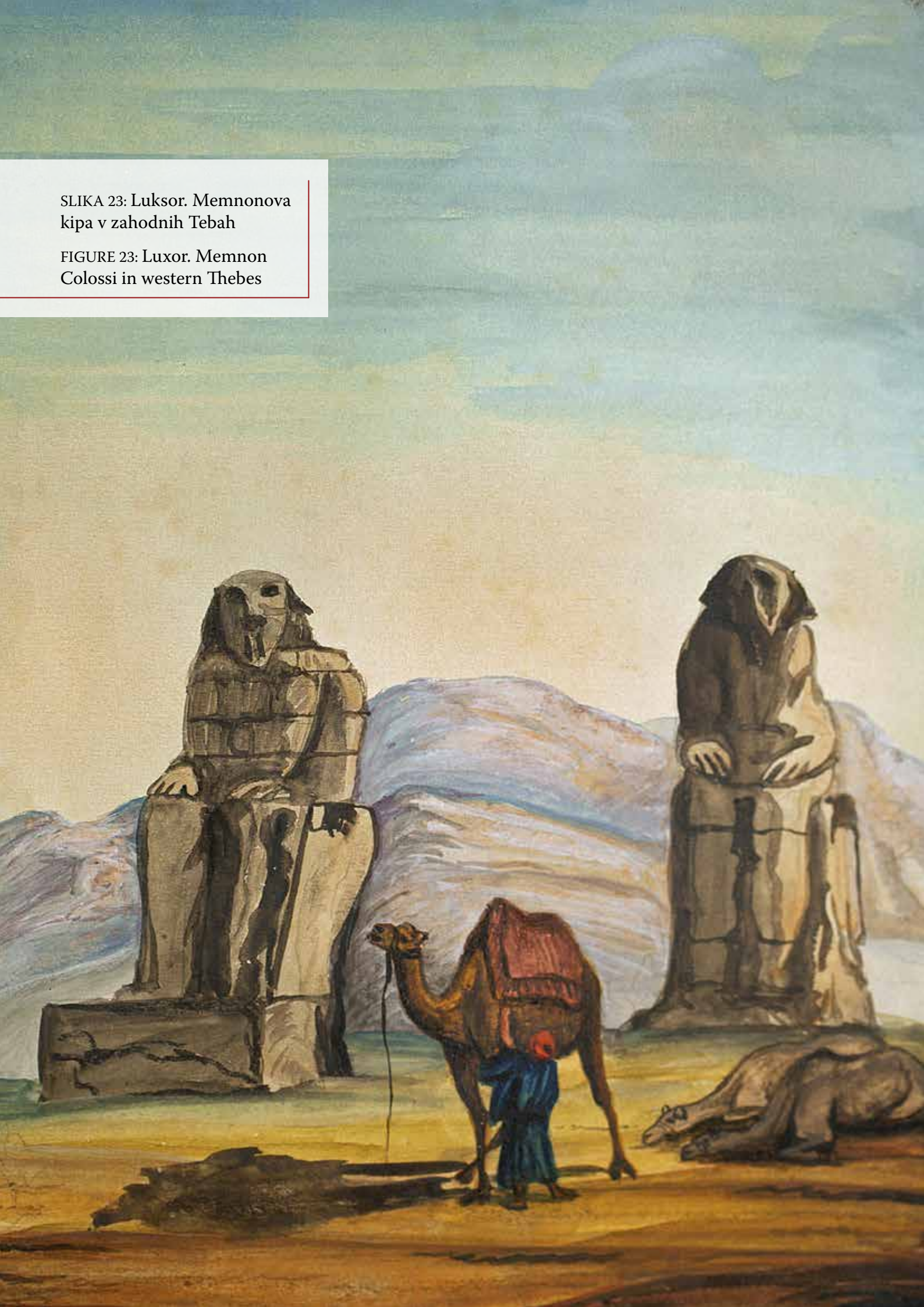
SLIKA 22: Knobleharjevi sodelavci so si v Kairu običajno ogledali tudi sikomoro, ki je rastla na kraju, kjer se je ustavila Sv. Družina.

FIGURE 22: Knoblehar's colleagues usually visited the sycamore (tree of the Virgin) in Cairo that grows in a place where the Holy Family had stopped.



SLIKA 23: Luksor. Memnonova
kipa v zahodnih Tebah

FIGURE 23: Luxor. Memnon
Colossi in western Thebes





SLIKA 24: Barijski poglavar
Muga na risbi Jakoba Šašla

FIGURE 24: Bari chief Muga
depicted by Jakob Šašel



SLIKA 25: Tabor v Filah. Raztovarjanje ladijskega tovora na kamele oktobra 1853. V ozadju so vidni ostanki arhitekture Izidinega svetišča na otoku File. Knoblehar je v tem templju celo maševal.

FIGURE 25: Camp in Philae. The loading of the ship's cargo onto camels in October 1853. The remains of the temple of Isis on the island of Philae can be seen in the background. Knoblehar even offered Mass at the temple.





SLIKA 26: Puščavska karavana decembra leta 1853:
prvi je jahal vodnik, za njim Knoblehar.

FIGURE 26: Desert caravan in December 1853:
the first in the line of riders was the guide,
followed by Knoblehar.



SLIKA 27: Jakob Šašel je narisal tudi karavano s sužnji.

FIGURE 27: Jakob Šašel also drew a caravan with slaves.

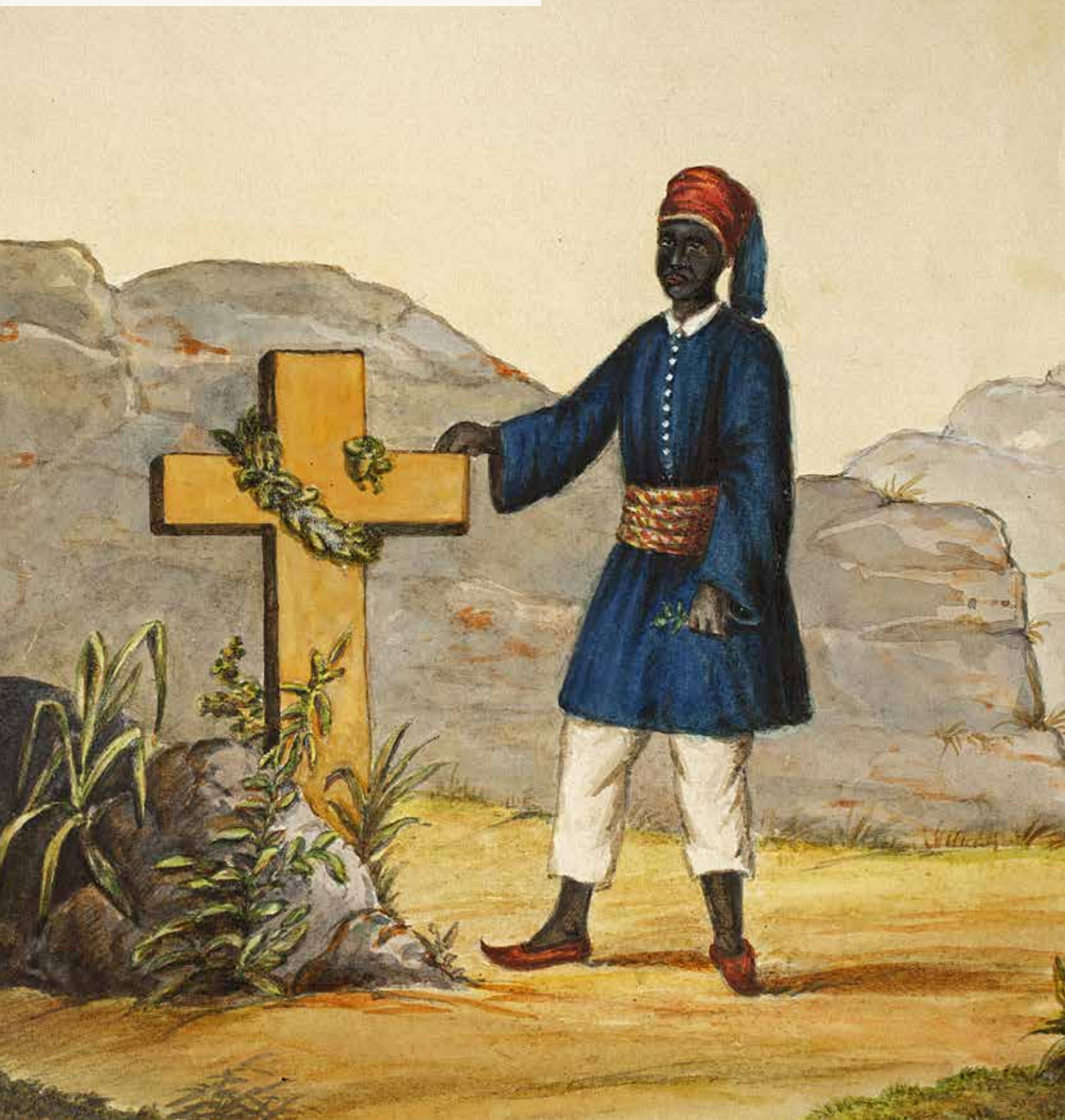
SLIKA 28: Decembra leta 1851 se je misijonska karavana na poti v Kartum ustavila v bližini nekdanje prestolnice Meroe.

FIGURE 28: In December 1851, the mission's caravan travelling to Khartoum stopped near the former capital of Meroe.



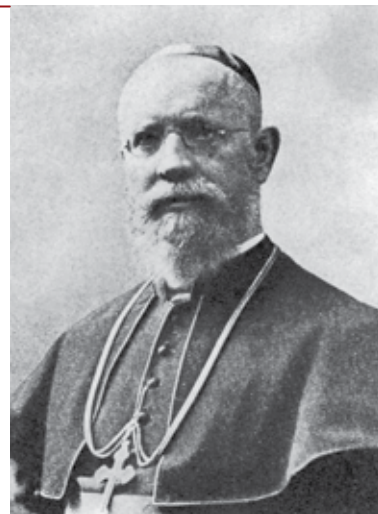
SLIKA 29: V značilni uniformi stoji misijonski gojenec ob grobu misijonarja.

FIGURE 29: Missionary bearer in his typical uniform, standing next to a grave of a missionary.



SLIKA 30: Nemški katoliški misijonar in škof Francis Xavier Geyer je leta 1912 začel z gradnjo nove misijonske postaje v Gondokoru.

FIGURE 30: In 1912, German catholic missionary bishop Francis Xavier Geyer began the construction of the new missionary station in Gondokoro.



SLIKA 31: Sudanski misijonar Pij Hilarij

FIGURE 31: Sudanese missionary Pius Hilarius



SLIKA 32: Daniele Comboni (sedi na sredini) je leta 1877 prevzel vodenje misijona v Kartumu. S sodelavci je bil aktiven predvsem na zahodu in severu Sudana.

FIGURE 32: In 1877, Daniele Comboni (sitting in the centre) took over the leadership of the mission in Khartum. He and his colleagues were active mostly in the west and north of Sudan.



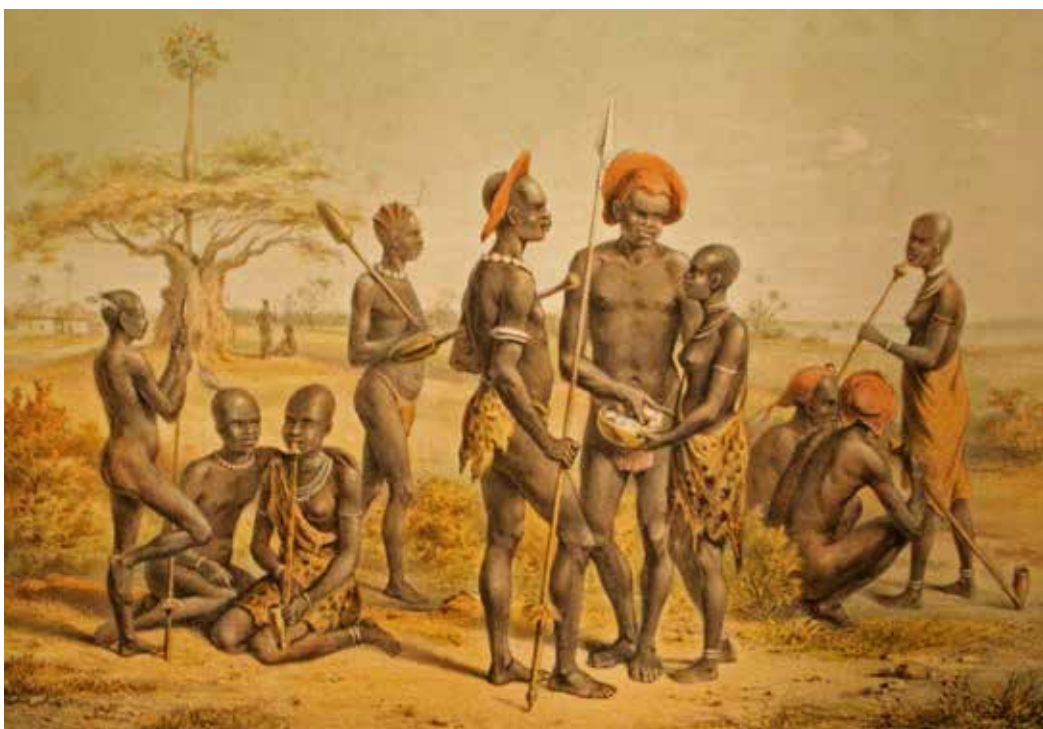
SLIKA 33: Misijonska postaja Sveti Križ. Na bregu stoji belo pobarvana misijonska cerkvica, v kateri je bila relikvija Jezusovega križa. Relikvijo je podaril škof Anton Martin Slomšek.

FIGURE 33: The Holy Cross missionary station. On the riverbank stands the white-coloured missionary church which held the relic of the Jesus's cross. The relic was donated by the bishop Anton Martin Slomšek.

SLIKA 34: Ljudstvo Kiki

FIGURE 34: The Kyk people



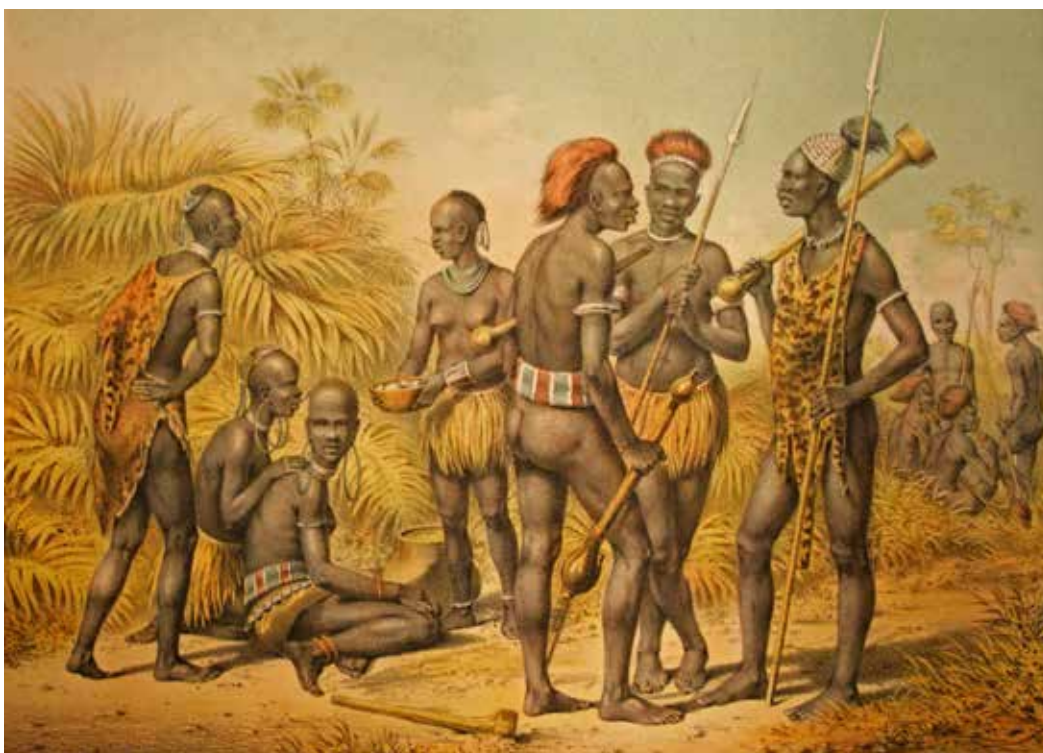


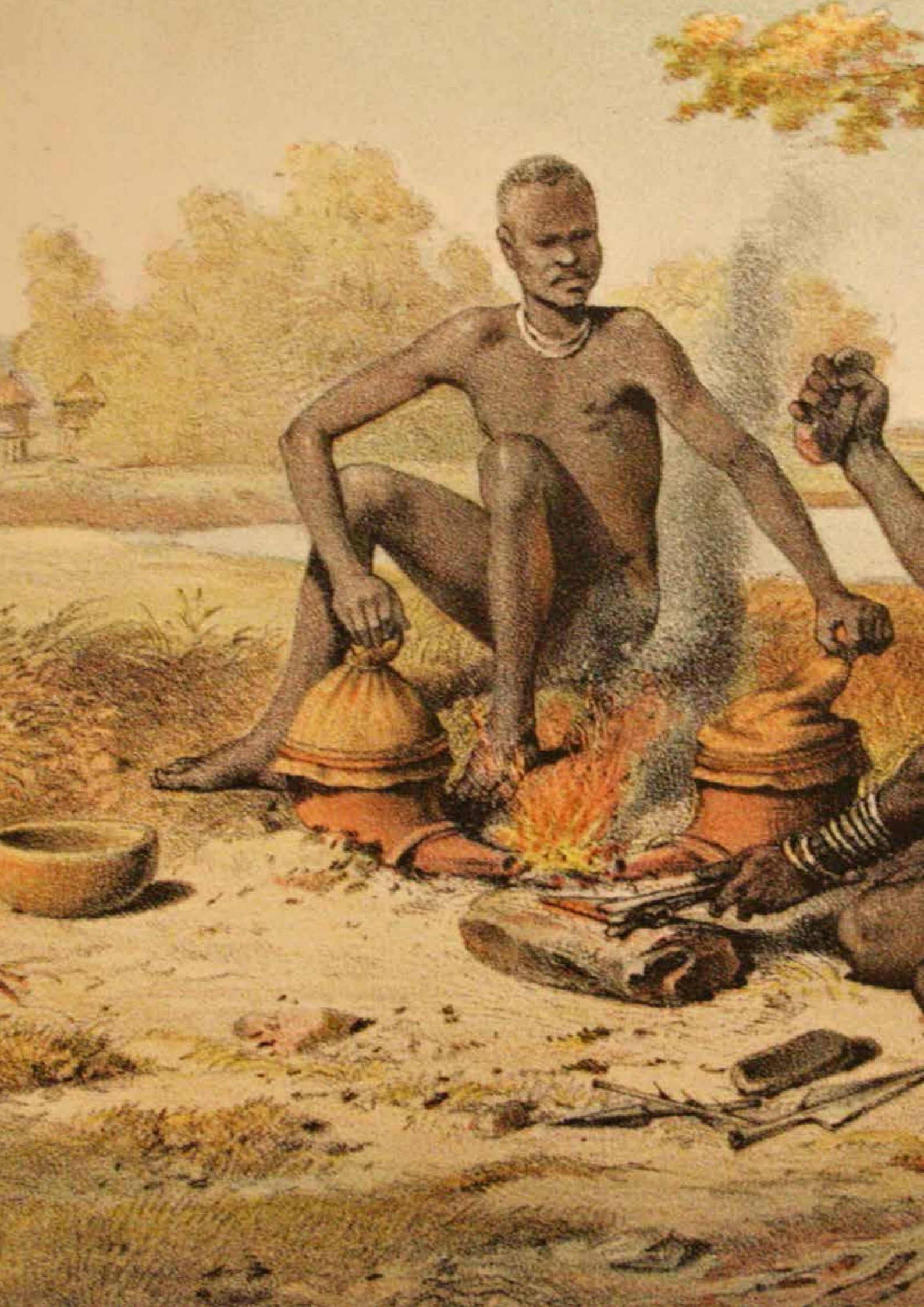
SLIKA 35: Šiluki

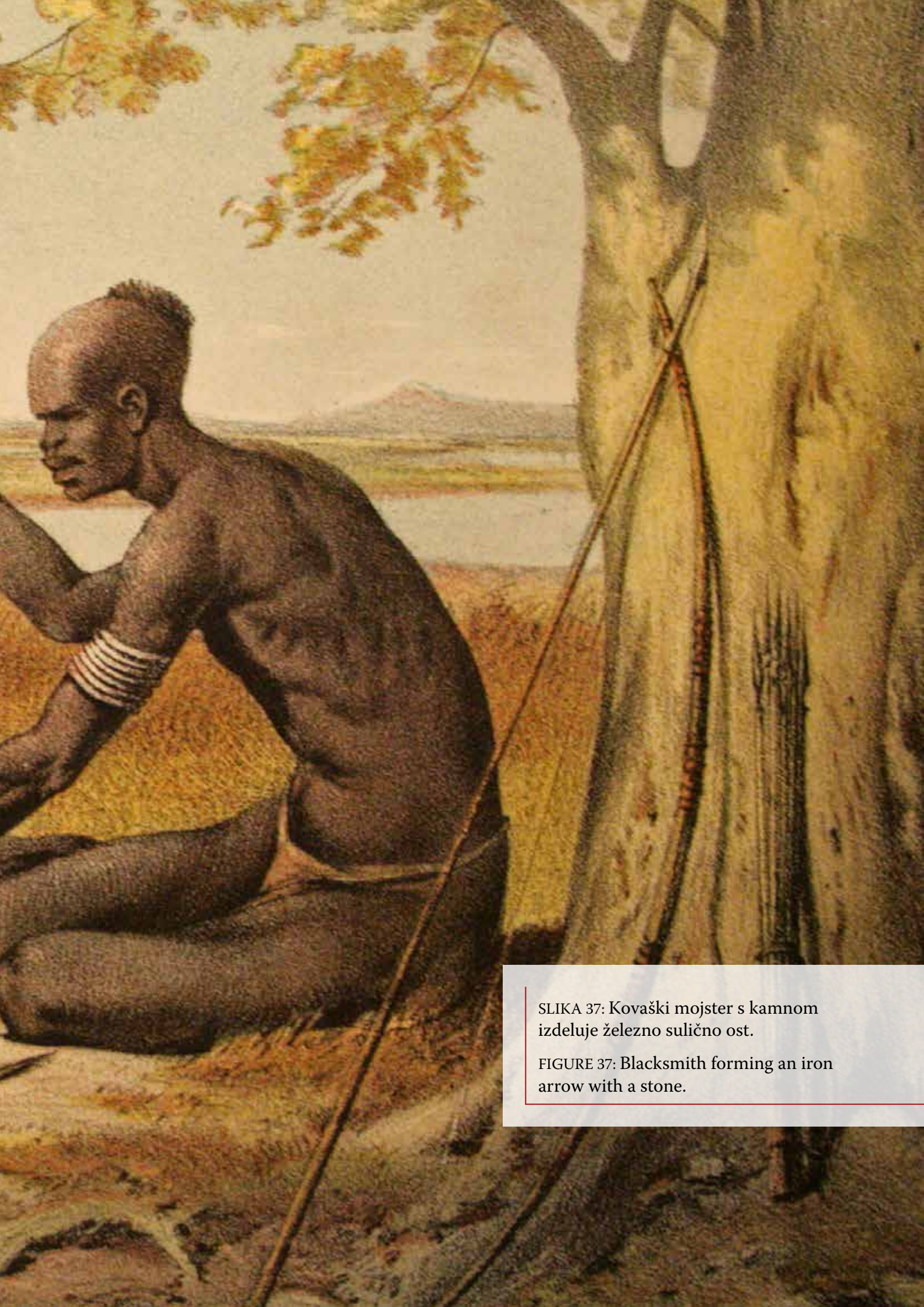
FIGURE 35: The Shiluk people

SLIKA 36: Nueri

FIGURE 36: The Nuer people

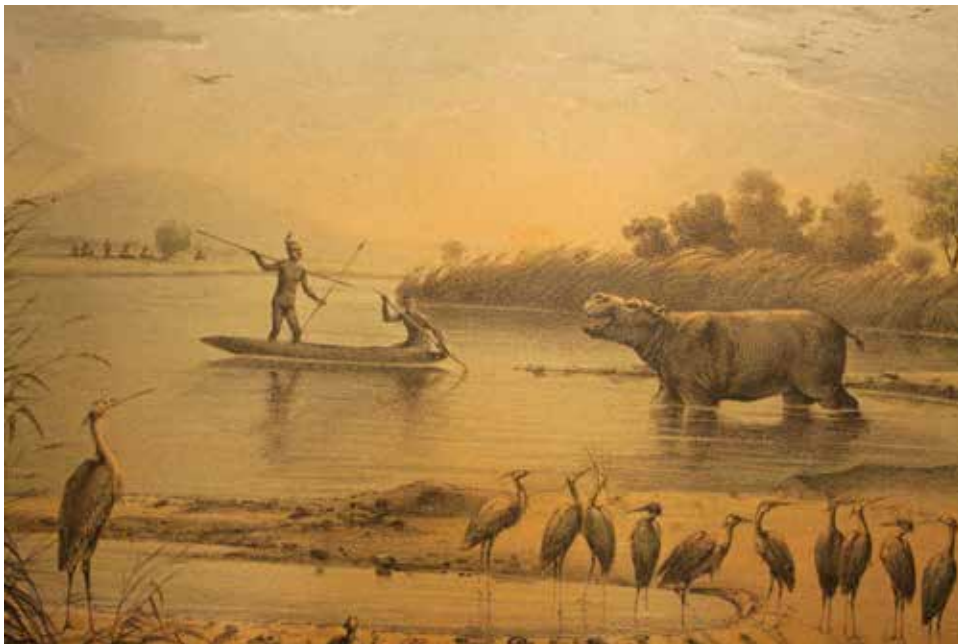






SLIKA 37: Kovaški mojster s kamnom izdeluje železno sulično ost.

FIGURE 37: Blacksmith forming an iron arrow with a stone.



SLIKA 38: Domačina med lovom na povodnega konja

FIGURE 38: Two locals hunting hippopotamus

SLIKA 39: Čreda bivolov na sliki Wilhelma von Harnierja

FIGURE 39: A herd of buffaloes painted by Wilhelm von Harnier





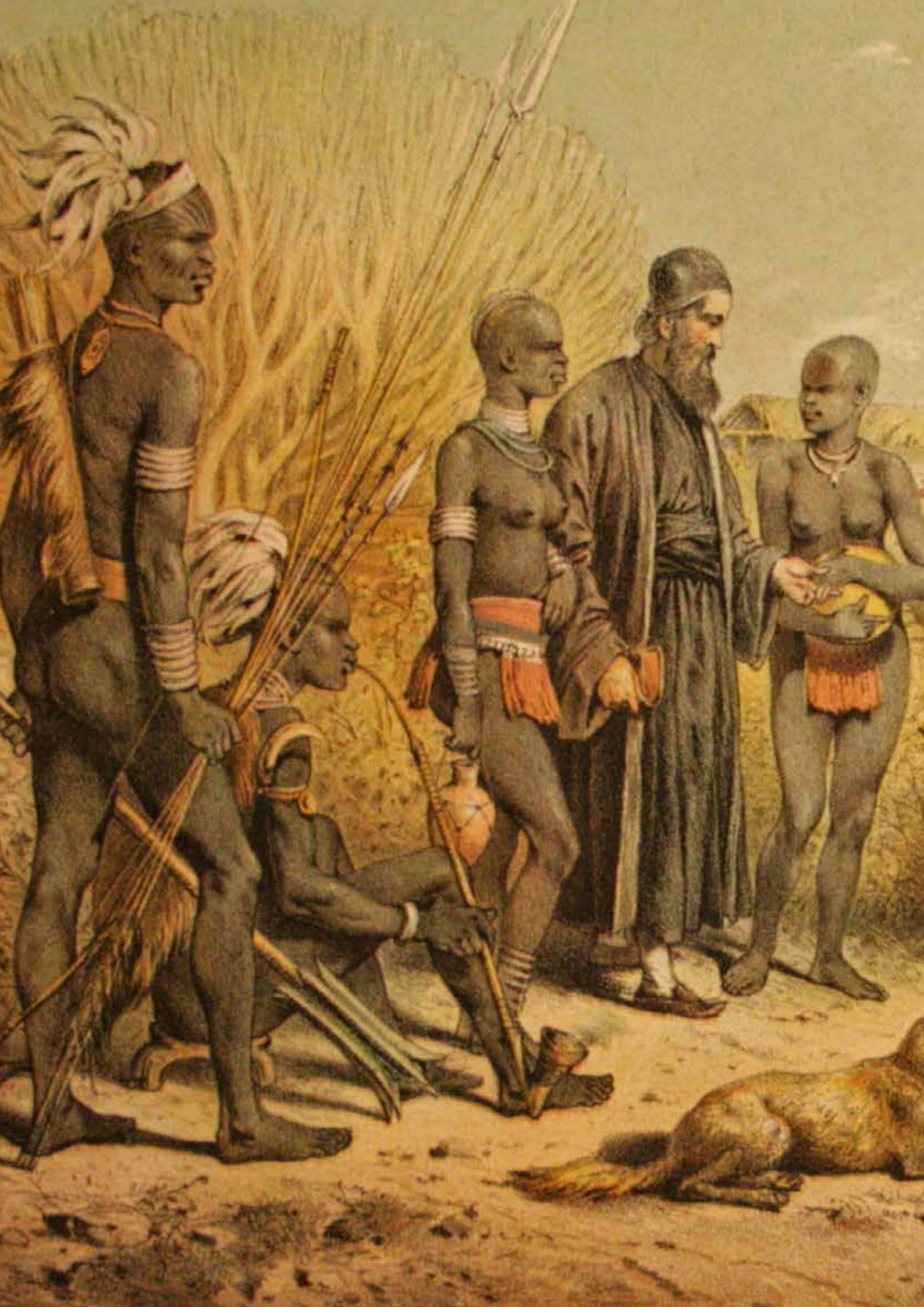
SLIKA 40: Evropejci med ljudstvom Čir delijo meso razkosanega bivola.

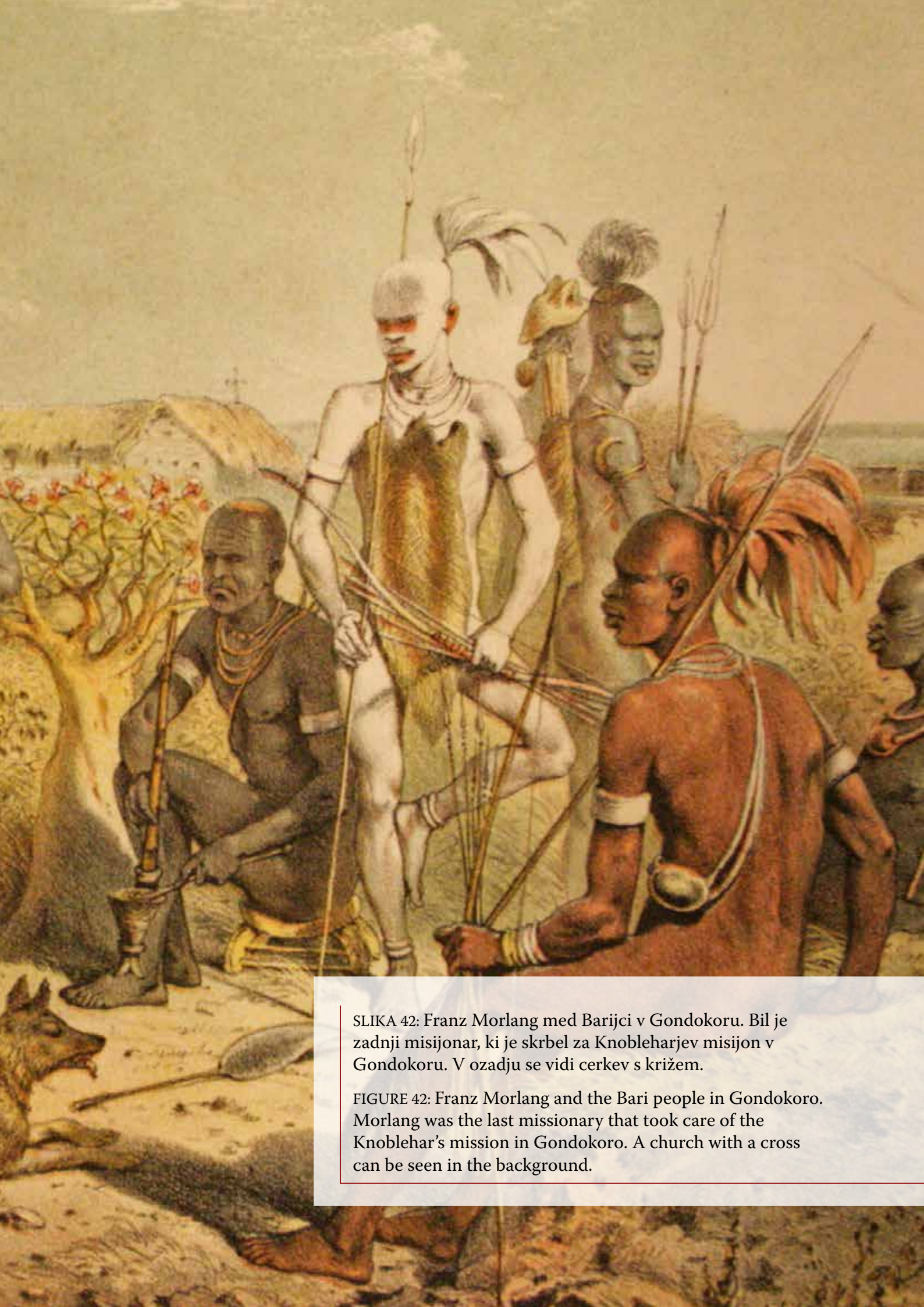
FIGURE 40: Europeans sharing buffalo meat amongst the Chir people.

SLIKA 41: Misijonska postaja Gondokoro. Na obrežju stoji cerkev, posvečena Mariji - *Sancta Maria ad Flumen Album* (Sveta Marija ob Beli reki).

FIGURE 41: The Gondokoro missionary station. The church of the Blessed Virgin stands on the riverbank: *Sancta Maria ad Flumen Album* (the Blessed Virgin on the White River).







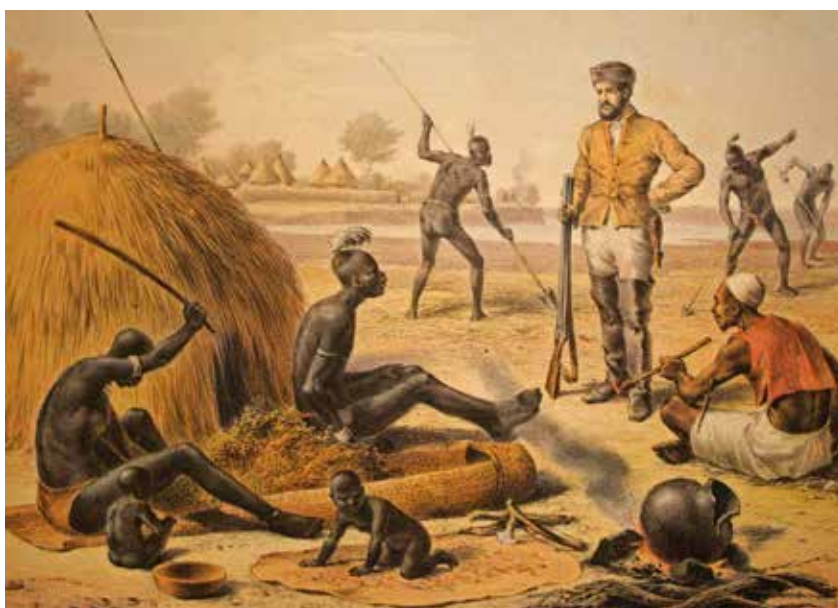
SLIKA 42: Franz Morlang med Barijci v Gondokoru. Bil je zadnji misijonar, ki je skrbel za Knobleharjev misijon v Gondokoru. V ozadju se vidi cerkev s križem.

FIGURE 42: Franz Morlang and the Bari people in Gondokoro. Morlang was the last missionary that took care of the Knoblehar's mission in Gondokoro. A church with a cross can be seen in the background.



SLIKA 43: Knoblehar je že leta 1850 priplul do 606 metrov visoke vzpetine Logvek in na skalnem vrhu pustil vklesan podpis »I K«.

FIGURE 43: In 1850, Knoblehar sailed to the 606 metres high hill Logvek, and chiselled his initials »I K« on the rocky top of the hill.



SLIKA 44: Slikar Wilhelm von Harnier je sam sebe narisal med domačini. Mladega nemškega slikarja je pokončal bivol, nedaleč od misijonske postaje Sv. Križ. Star je bil 25 let.

FIGURE 44: Painter Wilhelm von Harnier draw his self-portrait amongst the locals. The young German painter was killed by a buffalo near the Holy Cross missionary station. He was 25 years old.



SLIKA 46: Hribovje Nyamer. Knoblehar je na prvi plovbi po Belem Nilu v dnevnik narisal štiri risbice s svinčnikom.

FIGURE 46: Nyamer hills. During his first travel on the White Nile, Khnoblehar draw four pencil drawings in his journal.



SLIKA 47: Vas Šilukov Tunan

FIGURE 47: Tunan, a village of the Shilluk people



SLIKA 48: Vas Nuerov

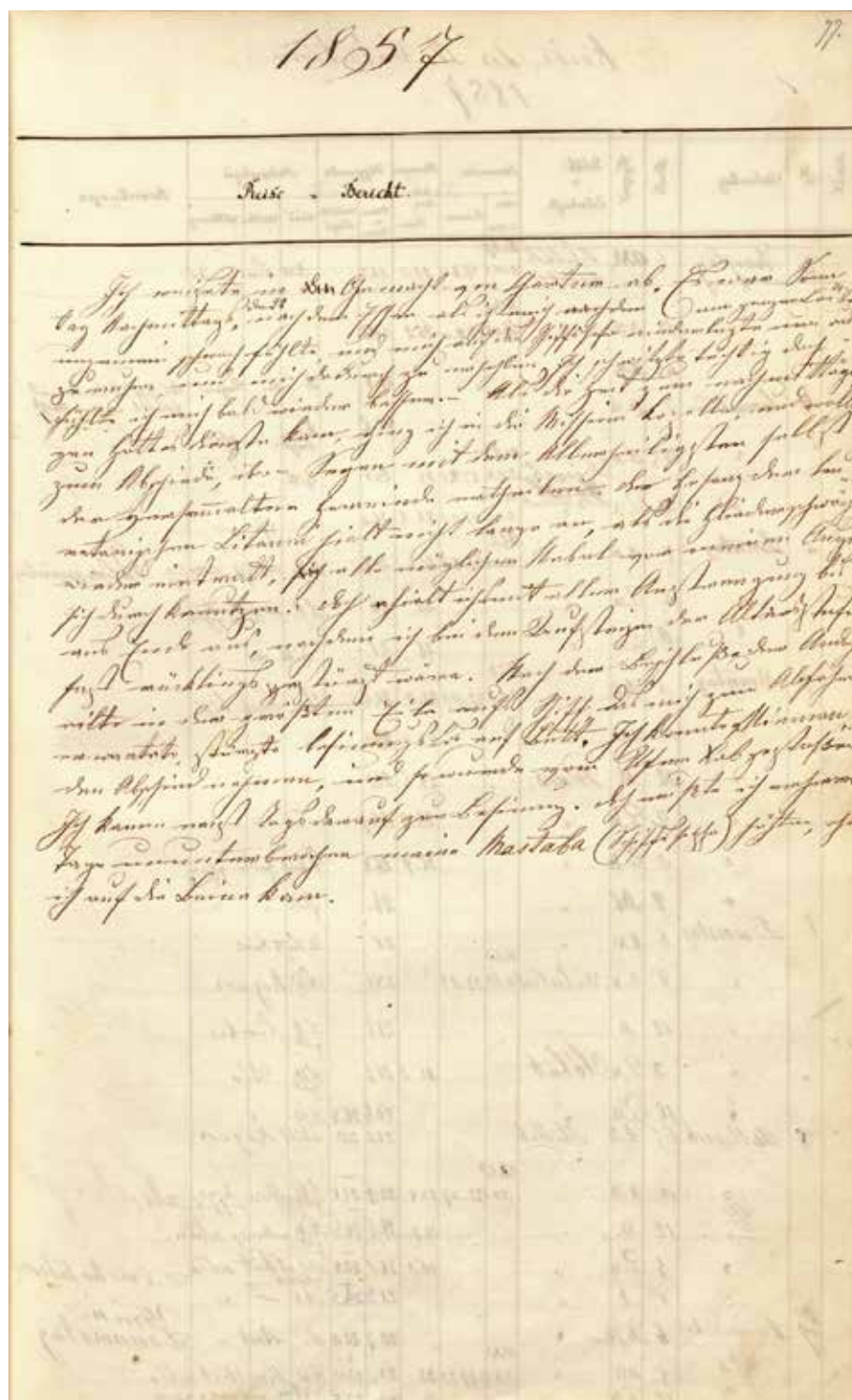
FIGURE 48: Village of the Nuer people

*Küchreise am Bord der Stella Matutina
aus dem Gebiethe der Bary nach Karlsen
im Jahre 1853.*

Tag	Wochentag	Jahr	Ort	Wetter		Wind	Wasser	Luft	Föhn	Morgen	Mittern.	Abend	Bemerkungen
				Wolke	Wind								
17	Sonntag	17	Bary										
18	Montag	18	Bary										Der Barykronen abgemessen
19	Dienstag	19	Bary										Abgemessen
20	Mittwoch	20	Bary										Abgemessen
21	Donnerstag	21	Bary										Abgemessen
22	Freitag	22	Bary										Abgemessen
23	Sonntag	23	Bary										Abgemessen
24	Montag	24	Bary										Abgemessen
25	Dienstag	25	Bary										Abgemessen
26	Mittwoch	26	Bary										Abgemessen
27	Donnerstag	27	Bary										Abgemessen
28	Freitag	28	Bary										Abgemessen
29	Sonntag	29	Bary										Abgemessen
30	Montag	30	Bary										Abgemessen
31	Dienstag	31	Bary										Abgemessen

SLIKA 49: Stran ladijskega dnevnika iz leta 1853

FIGURE 49: A page of a ship's logbook from 1853



SLIKA 50: Stran ladijskega dnevnika iz leta 1857, kjer Knoblehar omenja svoje zelo slabo zdravstveno stanje.

FIGURE 50: A page of a ship's logbook from 1857 where Knoblehar mentions his very poor health.



SLIKA 52: Ob sliki Ignacija Knobleharja se je gospod Johann Danninger tudi leta 2008 spomnil na svojega prednika Jakoba Danningerja.

FIGURE 52: Johann Danninger, in 2008, next to the image of Ignacij Knoblehar remembering his ancestor Jakob Danninger.



SLIKA 53: Otroška ogrlica s spiralo. Starodavni simbol dvojne spirale je kot amulet varoval otroke.

FIGURE 53: This children's necklace with a spiral. The ancient symbol of the double spiral as an amulet protected children.

SLIKA 54: Spiralno zavita železna zapestnica

FIGURE 54: Spirally twisted iron bracelet







SLIKA 55: Barijski stolček in vzglavnik

FIGURE 55: Stool and headrest
of the Bari people





SLIKA 56: Amuletna ogrlica

FIGURE 56: Amuletic necklace



SLIKA 57: Velika keramična pipa z leseno cevjo

FIGURE 57: Large ceramic pipe with wooden stem

SLIKA 58: Keramične kadilne pipe

FIGURE 58: Ceramic smoking pipes





SLIKA 59: Naglavni okras iz peres

FIGURE 59: Feather Headdress





SLIKA 60: Žlice iz roževine

FIGURE 60: Horn spoons

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Risba na naslovnici

Tabor v Filah. Raztovarjanje ladijskega tovora na kamele jeseni 1853. V ozadju so vidni ostanki arhitekture Izidinega svetišča na otoku File. Misijonarji so si na poti v Kartum vedno z zanimanjem ogledali enega večjih templjev, posvečenih slavnemu egipčanski boginji. Knoblehar pa je v tem templju celo maševal. Na risbi tiolskega misijonarja Josefa Gostnerja je v modrem šotoru, pred katerim stoji drog z avstrijsko zastavo, upodobljen Knoblehar, ki sedi levo ob vhodu.

Front page drawing

Camp in Philae. The loading of the ship's cargo onto camels in autumn 1853. Remains of the temple of Isis on the island of Philae can be seen in the background. On their way to Khartoum, the missionaries explored one of the largest temples dedicated to the famous Egyptian goddess. Knoblehar even said mass at the temple. In this drawing by the Tyrolean missionary Josef Gostner Knoblehar is depicted sitting to the left of the entrance of the blue tent, in front of which a flagpole with an Austrian standard stands.



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