

2022
MIANI
150°

*Tribù dei falla
confine con i Beni
tribù in alto con una
ma la India il la
Questo popolo
d'origine
arabica
nomade*

GIOVANNI MIANI

JOURNEY
TO DISCOVER AN
EXPLORER
1810 | 1872

MIANI'S EXPEDITION 1859 - 1860

After long dreaming and planning it, in 1859 Miani set off on his great quest in search of the sources of the Nile. He travels over 4000 kilometers in little more than 10 months, up the river by boat, over waterfalls and shallow waters, covering large stretches by land, through deserts and dense forests, up to the village of Galuffi, the southernmost point ever reached by a European. There, exhausted, ill and misled by wrong directions, he is forced to turn back. Before leaving Galuffi he engraves his initials on the bark of a large tamarind, known since then as the "traveler's tree". The adventures, the vicissitudes, but also the bitterness he experienced, are faithfully noted by the explorer who writes them down on his return to Venice in a handwritten diary, enriched with suggestive pencil drawings.

MAP'S LEGEND

- MAY 10, 1859: DEPARTURE FROM **Cairo**
- JULY 20 - DECEMBER 5, 1859: STAY IN **Khartoum** AND EXPLORATION OF THE BLUE NILE
- FEBRUARY 12 - MARCH 16, 1860: STAY IN **Gondokoro**, THE LAST TRADING POST ALONG THE NILE
- MARCH 26, 1860: ARRIVAL IN **Galuffi**, ONLY A FEW DAYS AWAY FROM LAKE ALBERT

ROUTE "RIVER NILE"
ROUTE "MIANI 1859-60"



Five-string lyre
musical instrument with two wooden arms stuck on a leather-covered tortoise shell acting as a soundbox



Necklace
ornament made of small ostrich-egg discs, pierced and strung on a plant fibre cord, interspersed with black seeds



Wicker shield
artefact dyed black to highlight the central area; the intertwined diamond pattern was the emblem of the group to which the warrior belonged



Sickle-like knife
tool with ivory handle, decorated with a characteristic small-circles pattern; the holes at the base of the blade seem related to the owner's number of wives



Plant fibre skirt
female garment (*kaffira*) having a sort of plume at the rear, which gave rise to the legend of the "tailed women"



Headrest stool
artefact probably representing a stylized elephant with its trunk and two tusks, carved from a single piece of wood

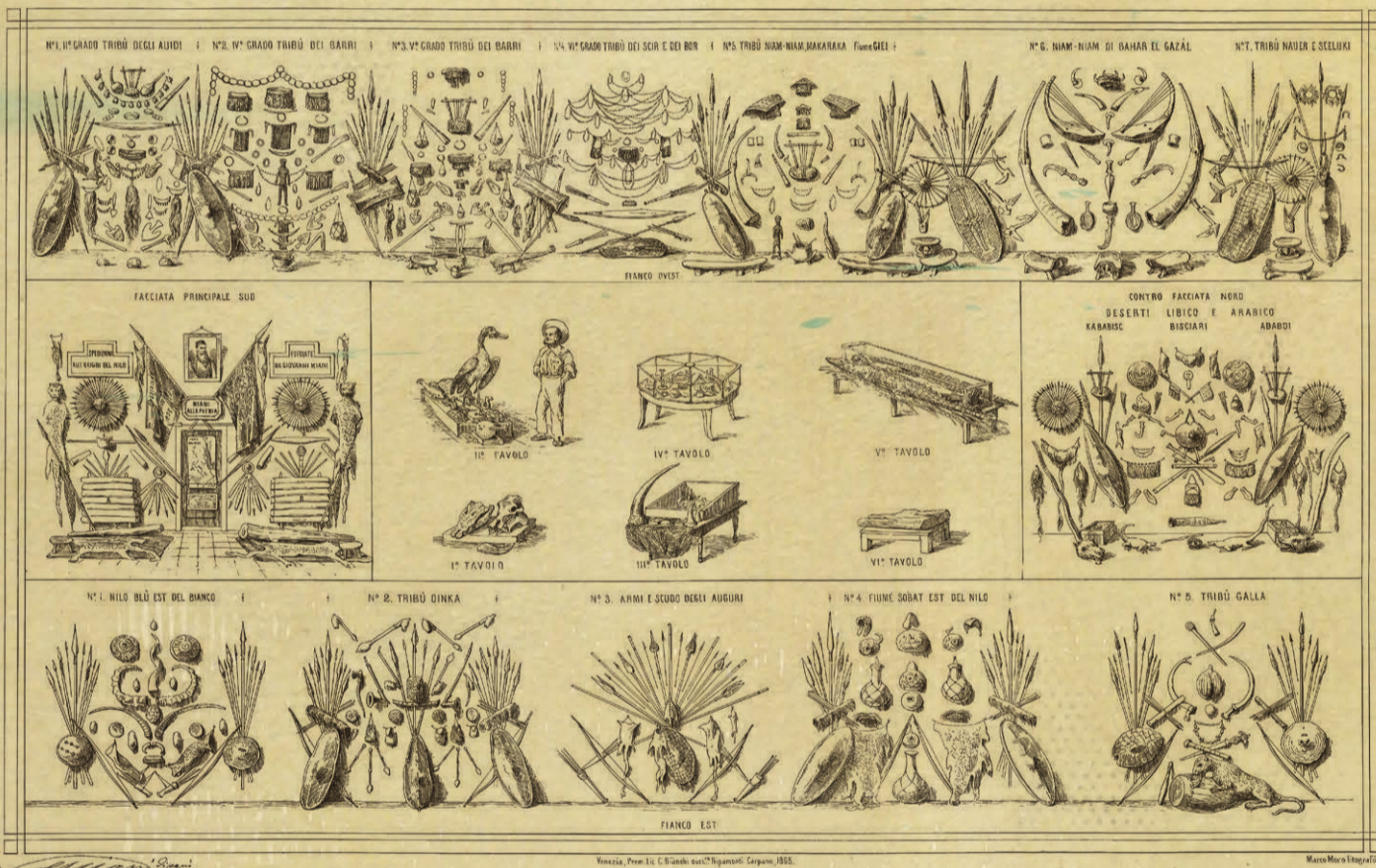
THE COLLECTION

All the objects exhibited in the room were collected by Giovanni Miani between 1859 and 1861, during his expeditions in search of the sources of the Nile. Most of them are weapons, musical instruments and everyday objects, representative of the numerous ethnic groups encountered during his journey.

The current arrangement of the finds follows as closely as possible the original set up conceived and illustrated by Miani himself in a lithograph; this document seems to be the oldest evidence of a museographic project in the ethnographic field in Europe.



Headgear
valuable sheepskin artefact decorated with shells (cowries, gen. *Monetaria*); the headgear falls over the shoulders and is embellished with an ostrich feather tuft



lithograph, Miani 1865



Pumpkin pot
container made from an hollowed-out and sun-dried pumpkin, decorated on the surface with hunting scenes

Priestess of the crocodiles
egyptian female mummy found in a cave, along with other mummies of humans and of myriad crocodiles; Miani found her body bandaged and her face covered with a gold mask



Monitor lizard (*Varanus* sp.)
the monitor lizard skin, cut into thin strips, is used in the finishing of numerous objects in the collection, such as bows, spears and jewellery



Brachial shield
artefact made of giraffe hide with concentric decorations and central eyelets to hold the inner handle in place



Two-sided drum
instrument (*nugara*) made of wood and antelope hide, used to communicate at a distance, Miani names it "telegraph of the savages"



Foot scrubber
crocodile-shaped terracotta artefact; the base with herringbone engravings allows its use for the body care



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