

the passage by Martin Golec doesn't read the best and the reader may get lost in the arguments dedicated to the existence of a lower, older palaeolithic layer in the cave, all the published information is completely relevant and readers can be furnished with entirely different – not a historical overview of the archaeological location, but a "genus loci" that people have been drawn to for thousands of years. Although the book was published in a Moravian Museum edition, its format and focus fits perfectly into the concept of monographs on the Moravian Karst caves, as published by the Karst Cave Administration of the Czech Republic.

The most important thing almost did not make publication of the book and therefore had to be inserted in the introduction: radiocarbon dating obtained from a human thigh bone, which had come from the Paleolithic layer after calibration date corresponding to the findings of the Hallstatt period (p. 11).

Zdeňka Nerudová

Lenka Varadinová: **From Aswan to Khartoum.** Czech Archaeological explorations between the Nile cataracts. Charles University in Prague. Prague 2016. ISBN: 978-80-7308-672-5. 55 pp. Paperback.

The author of the book, Lenka Varadinová, in recent years, has focused on the area of Northeastern Egypt, where she has been working on research into rock art (Upper Egypt and Western Desert, Libya, Jebel Uweinat), landscape and archaeological survey in in Egypt, Bahriya Oasis, and in the recent past was the Sabaloka Project Director (exploration of the prehistoric occupation on the west bank of the Nile in the Sabaloka Dam Region). Besides many special publications that arose from this activity (see <https://cuni.academia.edu/LenkaSukov%C3%A1>) she released last year, a slim book summarizing her research of the Czech Institute of Egyptology in the Nile cataracts.

Concisely but clearly informing us about the geomorphology of the River Nile and the historical importance of the cataracts (the Nile is interrupted by stretches of rapids =

cataracts), which in the past have significantly affected the lives of inhabitants and also defines the boundaries between Upper and Lower Nubia and Central Sudan. There is a table with a timeline running from -30,000 to +2,000 comparing key events in the three areas, from the start of the Mesolithic, the first rock carvings and paintings until the construction of the first temples or the rule of North Africa by the Romans and then the Arabs. The first wider interest of Europeans in the Nile Valley is connected with Napoleon's campaign in Egypt; until the development of historical study; first Archaeological Survey of Nubia was between 1907 and 1911, after it, between the wars there was a second Archaeological Survey of Nubia. In the 1950s in the area of the 5th Nile Cataract there started construction of the Aswan Dam, and with the patronage of UNESCO, there was the rescue of the sites here. At the end of the 1950s, the Czechoslovak Institute of Egyptology was founded at Charles University in Prague and they immediately got involved in the rescue work in Egypt, during which time they discovered significant finds (243) rock inscriptions with important historical texts, picture "galleries" in Lower Nubia – in total there were 1,200 new sites with more than 6,000 pictures and there was an archaeological excavation of a tumulus cemetery at Wadi Qitna.

Czech Egyptologists went back to Nubia in 2009, when they started new research in Sudan in the area of Jebel Sabaloka and Usli. Jebel Sabaloka was at the time an unexplored place; the first explorations here uncovered numerous evidence of settlements from the palaeolithic until the middle ages (16th century). Czech Egyptologists here in collaboration with scientists studied sedimentation processes and transformations of the landscape and its use in historical eras. Geological mapping has uncovered temples and palaces in an unknown town in the area of Usli.

This brochure is not a scientific text, nevertheless, it is, with its many quality colour pictures, a documentary work on Czech (Czechoslovak) Egyptologists and thanks to its publication in English it is available to a wider audience.

Zdeňka Nerudová

Martin Oliva. **Umění moravského paleolitu.** Atlas sbírky Ústavu Anthropos Moravského zemského muzea. Palaeolithic Art of Moravia. The Anthropos Collection of the Moravian Museum. Anthropos – Studies in Anthropology, Palaeoethnology, Palaeontology and Quaternary Geology Vol. 38 (N. S. 30), MZM, Brno. 2015. 172 pp.

This publication is another contribution to the comprehensive topic of Paleolithic art, which worldwide has garnered lots of attention, as evidenced by the extensive bibliography. Martin Oliva's book, with a contribution from Martina Lázníčková Galetová (Chapter VII) is some respects different. As the title implies, the main focus of the book is to catalogue *almost every* art object and decoration from Moravia (in the Czech Republic), which are stored in the collection at the Anthropos Institute of the Moravian Museum in Brno. It's maybe a shame that the author didn't do an wholly complete catalogue, nonetheless there is a note in the introduction which explains why (only in Czech, unfortunately). With the disputed pieces (e.g. the controversial female figures from the Mammoth metapod in Předmostí where there is only one representative exemplar), these were not put in also several less important items or ornaments. In the catalogue section of the book there are very high quality pictures, with good contrast and faithful colour and more cases the various patterns are visible on the objects. Each item carries a legend which gives all the important data, location, dimensions and any important bibliographical information. All the available information has been critically evaluated by the author and corrections have been made to some misinformation and interpretation, which could be very beneficial. Unfortunately the legend to individual subjects is not strictly bilingual, only at the end of the catalog are translated some terms so that foreign readers will access certain information.

The book is not only a catalogue, it's filled with thematic chapters, in which the author has capitalised on his extensive knowledge of contemporary literature. The first of these, (Chapter II, "The History of

Paleolithic Art Research") provides the reader with a robust cross-section of the history of research, some of the information is completely new, or at least little known. The text is supplemented by a series of contemporary photographs or illustrations.

Equally interesting is chapter III: "The origin of the interpretation. Moravian Paleolithic art in the mirror of older literature" that shows how during the development of Czech and Moravian archaeology, the view of Paleolithic art changed, and which direction the preferred interpretation went. This part of the book can be very useful for those researchers who will want to quickly navigate to a given topic, or to foreign researchers, who can obtain information from available sources is difficult, often published only Czech.

Chapter IV is particularly heterogeneous. "The symbolism and other sides of Palaeolithic art." The author himself points out, that suggests rather a handful of reflections on the findings and themes that attracted him. The Chapter has unifying line, sometimes it jumps between themes, some themes could have been more thoroughly investigated. This is evident for example in the confrontation of the symbolic behaviour of Neanderthals and their contemporary, anatomically modern, humans, where the author rightly points out that the differences are striking, however, he presents a theory of L. Binford, according to whom Neanderthals did not plan and produce tools for immediate consumption without mentioning, that this opinion is now essentially obsolete. This paragraph is somewhat ambiguous in tone.

In the paragraphs that deal with possible aesthetic and symbolic records of the Middle Palaeolithic, it would be appropriate to explicitly emphasize that findings from Africa are not associated with Neanderthals, but older forms of anatomically modern humans. In subsequent chapters this bipolarity, although mentioned, but less informed reader may at this issue harder to navigate. In places the examples of certain phenomenon are included in the text in an unsystematic manner. For example, in the chapter on dyes, there is mention of bones with grooves, without these necessarily having anything to do with dyes. On the other hand, this chapter contains a number of very valuable and inspirational reflections, which is perhaps more important. The author points out often in the context of art and decorative objects the incorrect use of the term symbolism. What is interesting is the idea that not every work of art must be strictly symbolic significance. In this context, there are valuable reflections on the so-called, Venus. For an explanation of some of the ideas the author uses various examples from our current behavior or ethnological records; mostly unexpected, but otherwise very poignant metaphors. Especially for Czech readers it may be interesting in the second part of the chapter summarizing the Gravettian and Magdalenian art from different perspectives. The author mentions also some lesser known examples from European environments.

The book also has a separate chapter VII: "Notes on technology creation Moravian Palaeolithic art," written by

specialist Martina Lázníčková-Galetová. Definitely an interesting overview of the production technology of art and decorative items, it is accompanied by a series of illustrations, particularly focused on details of the described items. In some parts, the text deserves careful proofreading, because the content of some chapters is not entirely in line with what the title promises. Given the title of an entire chapter, we would expect a more detailed focus on technology. It is a striking example in the treatment of mammoth ivory, where instead of describing the operational chains or their own making techniques, there are descriptions of objects that are in a slightly different form than those shown in other parts of the book. Similarly, we expect that as the process of perforations will be described in detail, it is still only a technological process, which is not normally known to archaeologists. But otherwise the chapter clearly structured according to the materials and processing techniques, allowing you to get a clear picture of the complexity of the problem. Unfortunately Chapter VII, unlike the rest, is not translated into English.

Overall, we consider the book an important contribution to the fund of publications about the Paleolithic art. Due to the extensive English summaries of most chapters of the book have a significant international dimension, which is expected to be of use.

Petr Neruda