Elle Clifford, Paul Bahn: Everyday life in the Ice age. A New study of Our Ancestors. Archaeopress Archaeology, 2022. 292 Pp. (e-Pdf). ISBN 978-1-80327-258-0. ISBN 978-1-80327-259-7 (e-Pdf).

The book, whose preface was written by Don Johanson, aims to introduce readers to the lifestyle of biologically modern humans in Europe between roughly 40 and 12 thousand years ago through the use of numerous data sources from the fields of archaeology, historical and contemporary ethnology, and knowledge about humans, animals and plants. And not only the physical needs, but also the psychological, social structure, economic and practical aspects of the daily life of human groups of the Upper Palaeolithic. How they managed to deal with climate changes, their needs, and what their limits and survival skills were. Geographically, the work describes cases from the area of the European continent, but because the subject is so rich, it occasionally must stray to other regions, and it also does not completely allow itself to be constrained by a specific time period. The book is divided into six basic chapters. Chapter 1: Introducing the People: Appearance, Abilities and Disabilities; Chapter 2: Setting the Scene: Ice Age Environments and Home Comforts; Chapter 3: Our Crafty Ancestors; Chapter 4: How to Make a Living: Survival and Subsistence; Chapter 5: Ice Age People: From Womb to Tomb; Chapter 6: Keeping in Touch: Communication, Social Life and Organization. Following the summary (Conclusion), there is an additional chapter: a Case Study on the locations of El Mirón and Covalanas, as well as an Appendix dedicated to The Fake 'Venus' of Abri Pataud.

Each chapter includes a brief introduction to the topic, a number of thematic subsections, and a summary. In addition to regular pictures, each chapter includes "break-out boxes" with additional information on the topic highlighted graphically and in colour. For example, in the sub-chapter about burials, this "break-out box" gives more information and pictures about Dolní Věstonice's triple burial. In the sub-chapter, "Who would live in a place like this?," there are break-out boxes called, "Use of deep caves," "Cave comforts," and "Have you got a light?". Anyone who has written a similar work knows that the information is so intertwined, especially for the Upper Palaeolithic, that it is difficult to avoid repetition. It is impossible to discuss cave settlements without mentioning cave art, burials, or possibly tent dwelling types. When discussing burials, the description of the burial equipment must include art objects, the materials used in their manufacture, how the ornaments were made, and even the nutrition of the buried individuals.

In the introduction, the authors state that they hope their book will "dispel some of the many myths and assumptions about our early ancestors." At this point, it is important to note that, no matter where the reader comes from, it seems that, thanks to school teaching, a large (lay) public still believes that our ancestors were rather primitive, non-thinking beings who constantly fought for food and fire and whose only weapon was a wooden club. This is also why Elle Clifford and Paul Bahn emphasise how complicated the lives of Palaeolithic hunters and gatherers were. Many aspects of the lives of our ancestors can be interpreted in a variety of ways; for many, our interpretations will always remain speculative. The life of Stone Age hunters and gatherers was not easy, but they had many skills and experiences that we, as modern humans, cannot even imitate. Some people believe that life in the past was superior to ours in numerous ways (Lieberman, 2013). To best illustrate the complexity of Palaeolithic daily life on the one hand, and to disprove common clichés on the other, the authors present examples that, according to them, "[are] of major importance or interest and that shed significant light on ice age ways of life."

Despite the erudition of both authors, there are inaccuracies in some formulations due to the concept and broad geographical scope of the book, which partly result from not citing original sources, but instead adopting quotations that have already been taken several times, or simple omissions. On page 48, the authors state: "Despite a total lack of evidence, one assumes that ice age people must also have eaten juniper berries, sorrel, dandelions, nettles, roots, bark and fungi. Similarly, we have no evidence for consumption of honey...". Unfortunately, there is a lot of direct and indirect evidence supporting the consumption of plants and mushrooms, so we are unable to agree with this statement. Surprisingly, some of the documents are presented by the authors themselves; they simply forgot to connect the various pieces of information. On the other hand, it is important to point out that some of the woody plants or herbs mentioned above are not preserved in the pollen spectra of the archaeological sites under investigation. For example, dandelion or nettle. Nettle is also mentioned on page 92 in connection with fabric weaving, but it is not documented in the pollen spectrum at any of the Pavlovian sites. It is similar to some trees, such as alder, yew, or linden, whose occurrence is common in the Holocene, while only minimally present in the Palaeolithic cold periods.

By the way, the authors cited the El Mirón site, which provided direct evidence for the consumption of mushrooms and plants (Power et al. 2015). The presence of bee colonies and honey collecting in the south of Europe is probably documented in the Epipalaeolithic, which is indirectly illustrated by the rock painting in Aragna Cave (Spider Cave) in Spain, discovered in 2013, and properly published very recently (Bea Martnez et al. 2021). At that time, beeswax was used to seal stone arrowheads

(Baales et al. 2017). The truth is that the honey bee migrated to the south of Europe from North Africa as a result of the gradual warming of the climate at the end of the ice age, from where it gradually spread to areas north of the Alps.

The asymmetrical but real head of a woman carved from mammoth ivory from Dolní Věstonice (Ivory carving of a human head from Dolní Věstonice) was never associated with the middle individual in the triple grave (page 42) as in his depiction, but with the burial of a "shaman woman". The existence of an Epigravettian "object" rather than a Gravettian "object" at Moravany-Dlhá (rather than Žakovská, as the authors claim) was convincingly refuted as an arranged period scene (page 62). The reader may be perplexed by the locations mentioned, some of which are in Ukraine and some of which are in Russia (p. 66). The authors dismiss mammoth hunting as a "myth" (page 134), despite citing direct evidence of mammoth hunting. They argue for a preference for other, more suitable fauna, but do not explain why isotopic analyses show humans ate mammoth meat. The authors' assertion that "moving any portions of mammoths around would have required a tremendous amount of labour and effort" seems to be at odds with what we know about how large and heavy volumes of game are processed and moved from ethnological parallels.

On page 94 there is an interesting claim that: ..."the most widely accepted is that [numerous perforated antler batons] they were used to straighten the shafts of spears – but it seems quite clear that many of them were involved in the making of horse-hair rope by twisting single strands together." The second part of the statement, I think—and many of my colleagues will concur—is a little bit exaggerated.

Experimenters would argue that the so-called bâton perforé were almost certainly used to straighten the spikes, because the spikes like to bend due to air humidity and it is simply impossible to shoot in an arc, while the holes in the bâtons are so wide that it is unclear how they could be used for braiding a rope.

It is the practice of not citing citations directly in the text, but only in a summary at the very end of the book, which makes it difficult for the reader to distinguish between the authors' original ideas and previously acquired information. Although both authors explain this in the introductory chapter, I find it unfortunate that only a small number of sources, some of which are inaccurate, are cited. I am afraid that thanks to this, in some cases, even if unintentionally, new myths will arise. Some published claims encourage it directly.

Nonetheless, even in the context of recent publications, the book can be regarded as exceptionally well-written and exhaustive. It is highly recommended not only to archaeology and anthropology students seeking an overview of the Upper Palaeolithic, but to the general public as well.

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Peter Frost: European Hair, Eye, and Skin Color: Solving the Puzzle. Washington: Academica Press, 2022. 169 Pp. ISBN 9781680538724 (hardcover), 9781680538731 (e-book).

"European Hair, Eye, and Skin Colour: Solving the Puzzle" is written by Dr Peter Frost, a Canadian anthropologist. According to Dr Frost's extensive publication record, the study of human pigmentation has long been the focus of his research. The book has 163 pages and is divided into 13 unnumbered chapters. Title of the book and summary promise a comprehensive overview of current knowledge about the biological nature of human skin, hair, and iris pigmentation, supplemented by the theory of sexual selection associated with various and rare phenotypes. Pigmentation research and subsequent phenotyping is a hot topic not only for anthropologists, but it also has important practical implications for forensic science. Thanks to knowledge of biological skin, hair, and eye colour determination, it is possible to determine these characteristics from DNA and use the results in forensic investigations.

In the "Introduction", the author describes the genetic basis of pigmentation and outlines the objectives of the subsequent text. The majority of "European Hair, Eye, and Skin Colour: Solving the Puzzle" is devoted to the neglected and under-researched issue of pigmentation and sexual selection, as another evolutionary tool for the application of new alleles and, consequently, different phenotypes. Even if the reader is not an expert in the natural sciences, a concise summary of the scientific methods used to investigate the attractiveness and variability of pigmentation would be helpful. The evidence presented for the preference of certain phenotypes is primarily based on ethnographic and historical examples rather than scientific experiments.

The book, "European Hair, Eye, and Skin Colour: Solving the Puzzle" contains a respectable number of references from the fields of biological and sociocultural anthropology. Unfortunately, the most up-to-date literature was not always chosen. The author frequently refers to sources from the middle of the twentieth century and does not supplement knowledge with