

SEVEN MILLENNIA FOR ICING: *DISCOVERING THE ICEMAN*

Discovering the Iceman. Shelley Tanaka. Illus. Laurie McGaw. Scholastic/Madison Press Books, 1996. 48 pp. \$19.99 cloth. ISBN 0-590-24950-9.

This well-illustrated book has few, if any, errors of fact. This is especially refreshing to a professional reader of children's literature. Historical consultants Janet E. Levy, Walter Leitner, and Konrad Spindler are to be congratulated, with Shelley Tanaka, for attention to scientific accuracy.

An excellent read, *Discovering the Iceman* is superbly illustrated, with a strong story line which flows easily and captures the reader for a cover-to-cover reading. My concerns are minor. The opening two pages, for instance, are visually distracting — likely due to complexity of the page 2 illustration, which draws the reader's eye away from the opening text. The inset scientific discussions of the find or its context are very informative but I question whether there is enough in-depth discussion to capture the reader for repeated visits to the book. The central reconstruction of a possible story of the Iceman's life is very well written but occupies a bit too much of the book; I would have liked to see less of the conjectural story and more of actual data on lifeways of this time period. Presentation of a time-line at the very end of the book seems a mistake. It is difficult to place the Iceman in his regional, temporal, and cultural context — at least on a rigid scientific basis. I missed the use of established names for archaeological time periods and cultures. The radiocarbon age of the Iceman is presented as an actual age rather than as a statistical probability. Presentation of a possible age range for the Iceman's life and death would be more appropriate. Today, we have calibrated radiocarbon ages with suggested intercepts with calendar years.

None of the above concerns affect the scientific integrity or appeal of *Discovering the Iceman*. I could quibble about the interpretation of tattoo marks — they could be guild or social group identifiers, rather than healing marks — but this is opinion, not fact. The basic facts are correct, many divergent opinions are presented, and the story line is kept intact.

In use of colour, there is a heavy emphasis on browns in the water colour illustrations of the Iceman's village life, but this is consistent with the fall season. Photographs are usually clear, but sometimes their small size makes object identification difficult.

Any problems could be solved by lengthening the book by perhaps ten pages — more scientific data, larger photos, and a bit more diversity of scientific opinion. I don't like to be critical of a book like *Discovering the Iceman* when it clearly is done well and gets its information across to young readers in a professional and entertaining way.

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