



Fig. 1 Eugen Strouhal examining the skull of Iufaa (photo K. Voděra)

## ***In memoriam* Eugen Strouhal (24.1.1931 – 20.10.2016) – physician, anthropologist, archaeologist**

*Miroslav Verner*

Quite recently, at the age of 85 years, the renowned Czech scientist, Prof. MUDr., PhDr. Eugen Strouhal, DrSc., passed on. No doubt, his obituaries will appear very soon both in Czech and in foreign scientific journals, summarizing his comprehensive work and contributions to our knowledge of the field of anthropology, paleopathology and the history of medicine. However, the author of this brief personal memoir would like to remember Eugen Strouhal's important contribution to Egyptology, both inside and outside of the Czech Republic.

I met Eugen – all of us who knew him and worked with him called him Evžen by the Czech version of his name – as a student in the early 1960s on the Czechoslovak expedition to Nubia, which took part in the international archaeological operation of UNESCO to save the monuments threatened by the water of the High Dam in Aswan. The expedition worked in Lower Nubia for several years and had two major tasks: an epigraphic and archaeological survey on two concessions that the Egyptian authorities had assigned to us. The epigraphic survey was directed by Zbyněk Žába, director of the expedition, and the archaeological survey by Evžen, an erudite archaeologist and physician. It is impossible to itemize in detail in this brief address the dozens of

archaeological sites and architectural monuments and hundreds of archaeological artefacts which the small team led by Evžen discovered and recorded.

With the consent of the director of the expedition, at the end of the survey, Evžen selected two sites for overall archaeological research – Wadi Qitna and Kalabsha-South – with extensive tumulus cemeteries spanning the Late Roman to the Early Byzantine Periods. He presented the results of his explorations, with the contributions of several other scholars, in a two-volume work, of which only the first, *Wadi Qitna and Kalabsha-South. Volume I. Archaeology*, was published in 1984. The second volume is in press. From that time, he also began to collaborate on the documentation and publication of anthropological finds made in Nubia by

other foreign expeditions. The results of his research have significantly contributed to the knowledge of the demography and palaeopathology of the population of ancient Nubia.

However, Evžen not only researched in Nubia as an archaeologist and anthropologist, but also functioned as a physician. He took care of the health condition of the Czechoslovak team and, perhaps even more than the members of the team, he treated the few Egyptian workmen who accompanied the expedition to Nubia. He sometimes faced very precarious situations. For example, when a scorpion had stung a workman and the expedition had no snake and scorpion serum, he cured the man. But even such uncertain situations Evžen, “doktour tawil,” as the Egyptian workmen called him due to his slim and tall figure, successfully managed to resolve. His friendly relations with the local people and their respect helped him carry out, at the end of the expedition’s work in Nubia, anthropological research of the modern Nubian population. He eventually presented his experiences from Nubia to a broad circle of Czech readers in his book, *Sedmkrát do Núbie* (Seven Times to Nubia) in 1989.

Besides the work in Nubia, Evžen also took part in the exploration of the mastaba of Ptahshepses in Abusir, which continued for many years after his departure from Nubia. He did not interrupt his collaboration with the Czechoslovak Institute of Egyptology when he began to work in the Náprstek Museum of African, Asian and American cultures, a section of the National Museum in Prague.

Along with the Egyptologist, Ladislav Bareš, he published in 1983 a large collection of the secondary burials, in and around the Ptahshepses mastaba, in a monograph entitled *Secondary Cemetery in the Mastaba of Ptahshepses at Abusir*. In a number of articles and chapters in scientific monographs, he continued to publish anthropological finds made by the Czech team in the pyramid cemetery at Abusir. At the same time, he also maintained his collaboration with Egyptian and other foreign archaeological teams, and this involved, for example, the examination of invaluable skeletal remains of some Egyptian kings. His profound knowledge of the health and diseases of the ancient Egyptians can be seen in a three volume monograph, *Lékařství starých Egyptanů*, which appeared in 2010, and also in English as *The Medicine of the Ancient Egyptians. 1: Surgery, Gynecology, Obstetrics, and Pediatrics* in 2014. A final work, with two more to appear, he prepared in collaboration with the Egyptologists, Břetislav Vachala and Hana Vymazalová.

Evžen’s professional career culminated in 1995 with his appointment as Professor of the History of Medicine in the 1<sup>st</sup> Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Prague. All of us who knew him and worked with him shall deeply miss his knowledge, friendship and kindness.

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Fig. 2 Eugen Strouhal assisting the transportation of archaeological finds from Abusir to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (photo M. Zemina)