

IN MEMORIAM

**Georges Olivier
(1912-1996)**

Georges Olivier, Professor of Anthropology at the Faculty of Sciences in Paris and Professor of Anatomy at the Faculty of Medicine in Lille, passed away on March 13, 1996. He was the main initiator of European Anthropological Association (E.A.A.), and he was the first President of the Association from 1976 to 1979. Professor Olivier was proclaimed the Honorary life Member of the European Anthropological Association, at the E.A.A. Congress in Budapest in 1988. He was also one of the Founders of the scientific organization G.A.L.F. (*Groupement des Anthropologistes de Langue Française*).

Georges Olivier was a member of many distinctive associations, societies and commissions such as the Board Member of *La société d'Anthropologie de Paris* (Member in 1957-1972, President in 1958, General Secretary in 1970), Member of the C.N.R.S. Commissions (1967-1971), International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES), International Association of Human Biologists in 1966-1976, President of *La Société d'Anthropologie Dento-Faciale* in 1973, Honorary Member of the Polish Society of Anthropology in 1963 and the Czech Society of Anthropology in 1966, to mention a few.

Born in Paris on September 6th, 1912, Georges Olivier became Doctor of Medicine at *la 'Service de Santé Colonial Français*, Paris in 1938. Later, he was appointed Professor of Anatomy of the Faculty of Medicine of Lille in 1953, and Professor of Anthropology of the Faculty of Sciences of Paris in 1963. He obtained his *Doctorat d'Etat* in Anthropology in Paris with a thesis entitled "Les populations du Cambodge" in 1955. He was the Laureate of *L'Académie des Sciences* in 1965 and of *L'Académie de Médecine* in 1956 and 1964.

In 1969, Georges Olivier founded *Le Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Biologique* at the Faculty of Sciences, later on named *Université Paris VII (Campus Jussieu)* and he was the Director of this Laboratory until he retired in 1978. During this period, he gathered a valuable collection of human skeletons and founded an important anthropological library. He designed courses in three main fields: "Comparative anatomy of human and non-human primates", "Paleoanthropology", and "Ecology and biology of human living populations". Excellent team of researches contributed to the quality of the educational and research activities in the Laboratory of Georges Olivier, which was highly appreciated by many French and foreign students. He provided guidance for numerous graduates and postgraduates thesis and dissertations, and was member of many examining boards for the same.

Professor Georges Olivier considerably marked the European history of Biological Anthropology with his valuable work. Since 1945, Georges Olivier published 187 books and papers in various national and international journals. His first scientific contributions were concerned with morphology, biology and dermatoglyphics of living populations from Africa (Cameroon), Japan, Melanesia, Indochina (Laos, Vietnam), Cambodia, India (Tamouls), Assam, China. He also studied the migration (Franco-Vietnamese, Chinese-Cambodian), and cross-breeding of this populations. His main anthropological works were: "Les Populations du

Cambodge” (1956), “L’Anthropologie des Tamouls du Sud de l’Inde” (1962), “Anthropologie des métis Franco-Vietnamiens” (1967). As a Doctor of Medicine, Georges Olivier also produced numerous papers on human anatomy, comparative anatomy of human, non-human and fossil skeletons, as well as on human foetal and post-natal biometry. He was also interested in the study of the process of evolution.

Professor Olivier was always interested in numerous fields of anthropology. He analysed morphology, demography, dermatoglyphics, secular trend, blood groups, influence of the size of family on the morphology of rural and urban people, and biological differences among social classes. He also studied the influence of socio-economic and cultural factors on physical and mental capacities, consanguinity, endogamy, psychometric tests, urbanisation, family size and intellectual development. He based the study of French population on the sample of conscripts. His productive life continued after his retirement, when he published 25 papers. His last work, published in 1992, was “Egalité des chances et milieu social”. International intellectual community will certainly remember Professor Olivier’s owing to his books: “Pratique Anthropologique” (1960), “Morphologie et Types Humains” (1961), “L’Evolution et l’Homme” (1965) and “L’Ecologie Humaine” (1975).

We believe that we share the opinion of many colleagues and friends of Professor Georges Olivier when we state that, with his leave, the European Anthropology lost one of its last great men. Through his life and work, Professor Olivier showed what does it mean, and how to live as a scientist and as a human.