



Goodbye Professor— Uncompromising Evžen Neustupný



Evžen Neustupný († January 14, 2021) throughout his life fulfilled the adjective of his surname (Neustupný = Pertinacious). He truly led his entire professional life with incredible determination, firmness of opinion and admirably systematic thinking. Perhaps that is why he influenced the development of world archaeology in such an exceptional way. His scientific contribution lies not only in his deep experience and method of work, but above all in his intuition in recognizing and solving the key topics of archaeological research. A number of phenomena and relationships he discovered were further developed in his own research, but also in the work of a number of researchers worldwide, whom he inspired with his work. Professor Neustupný thus significantly influenced the development of archaeological research, both methodologically and, above all, theoretically.

Already at the beginning of his career, he made a significant contribution to the synthetic conception of Czechoslovak archaeology, when together with his father Jiří Neustupný he introduced a completely new conception of prehistoric development in the *Outline of Czechoslovak Prehistory* (Neustupný & Neustupný, 1960). Already this book, which was also published in the world edition of *Ancient Peoples and Places* (Neustupný & Neustupný, 1961), indicated his departure from the cultural-historical

paradigm, which was dominating Central European archaeology at the time. The formation of a completely new approach towards the archaeological data and the interpretation of social relations can be seen in his study *Towards the Beginnings of Patriarchy in Central Europe* (Neustupný, 1967). Neustupný here freed himself from the traditional cultural and historical schemes of Central European archaeology and used Marxist (unburdened by communist ideology) categories of reconstruction of social relations. He emphasized the importance of introducing the ploughing and fallowing system of agriculture and the use of secondary dairy products for the society of the European Eneolithic, a topic that was later addressed by archaeologists in Western Europe (e.g. Sherratt, 1981).

According to Evžen Neustupný, in the 1960s and 1980s, a progressive group of Czechoslovak archaeologists was moving towards something paradigmatically comparable to processualism, but the cultural and historical paradigm still completely prevailed (Neustupný, 2017, 160). Neustupný inspired himself with processualism in many ways, but he himself did not directly lean either to the New Archaeology or later to post-processualism; he sought a way to his own paradigm.

With the invasion of Warsaw Pact troops in August 1968, hopes for the democratic development of Czechoslovak society were dashed and for Evžen Neustupný, as for many other scholars, difficult times of communist normalization came. Although Neustupný himself did not believe in the attempts of the reform communists to create socialism with a “human face”, for him the brutal end of the Prague Spring was a great disillusion and a hard turning point in his life. Although the new reality was not a return to the rigid Stalinism of the 1950s, there could be no question of a plurality of political views and scientific debate.

Archaeologists from the Eastern bloc not only were not sent to conferences and internships in the West, but were advised by the Communist Party’s political oversight to refrain from personal communication with Western researchers who came to the “peace camp” (Neustupný, 2017, 161–162). In addition to the restriction of movement, ideological and paradigmatic influence from the West was also prevented by actual censorship of postal correspondence (Turek, 2018).

Neustupný, a world-renowned scientist at the time, received offers to develop his research freely in the USA, but decided not to follow his brother Jiří and did not emigrate. He himself was saying: “Someone had to stay here.” It was a very lucky decision for Czech archaeology, but less so for himself. He spent the period of normalization in the 1970s and 1980s in constant uncertainty about keeping his position at the Prague Archaeological Institute. Neustupný here was exposed to considerable isolation and very limited research opportunities. However, he accepted the isolation as

an opportunity to develop his ideas and, in fact, to build his own paradigm.

He dealt with methods of archaeological data processing and later including programming of his own analytical tools. He became world famous for the methodology of calibration and processing of radiocarbon data (Neustupný, 1970). As Sir Colin Renfrew said in a laudation on the occasion of the Neuron Foundation Prize: “Neustupný taught us how to work with radiocarbon data.”

Neustupný also dealt with the issues of demography of prehistoric populations (Neustupný, 1983) and the reconstruction of nutrition in prehistory (Neustupný–Dvořák, 1983), but above all he formed the theory of settlement areas (community areas) of prehistoric farmers (Neustupný, 1986, 1991). This internationally recognized concept of the spatial division of the landscape according to the areas of activity has become the basis of many spatial analytical studies of prehistoric landuse (Neustupný, 1998).

Neustupný also contributed in a fundamental way towards the discussion on the meaning and content of the concept of prehistoric cultures (Neustupný, 1976, Paradigm lost), migration processes (Neustupný, 1982) and understanding of chronological-formal changes of artefacts within broader symbolic systems (*Significance of Facts*, Neustupný, 1995—concept of the *Eneolithic-Bronze Age ceramic complex*).

The end of communism and the advent of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 completely changed the position of Evžen Neustupný in the Czech archaeological community. In 1990 he became the director of the Institute of Archaeology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague. In this position he fully manifested his organizational and conceptual abilities and visions. Thanks to Neustupný, a network of regional institutes of archaeological heritage was established in the Czech Republic and, with its consent, the first non-governmental archaeological units started their active role in archaeological monuments protection.

Neustupný, as an important European thinker, influenced the methodology and thinking of a number of archaeologists, who often even subconsciously mastered his terminology and theory.

On behalf of Czechoslovakia, he participated in the establishment of the Malta Convention (Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of Europe) in La Valletta on January 16, 1992. He was also involved in the establishment of the European Association of Archaeologists (Ljubljana 1994). Neustupný himself had a relatively Eurosceptic view of the EU's political future, but he de facto greatly contributed to the cultural and intellectual reunification of Europe. His lifelong contribution is also reflected in the international awards, such as the Europa Prize—the 1999 Annual Prehistoric Society Award or the 2014 Neuron Foundation Award for Contribution to World Science.

It would seem that this is more than enough for one human life. However, Neustupný continued to work to capitalize on his experiences and ideas, and so at a time when many are retiring, he opened another chapter of his life. In 1998, he founded the Department of Archaeology at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, which he headed until 2005 and turned into a top academic institution. As part of building his own school of archaeology, he wrote important theoretical and methodological monographs (Neustupný 2007: *Method of Archaeology*; in English: *Archaeological Method*, Neustupný, 1993; and Neustupný 2010: *Theory of Archaeology*). Even later, as an emeritus, he professionally led the doctoral theses of many students and thus directly influenced a whole generation of young archaeologists.

Evžen Neustupný fundamentally influenced archaeological thinking and his paradigmatic legacy continues to shape the theory of archaeology. Our thanks go to him for that.

Honour his memory!

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