

## ACAD. PROF. YUCEL KANPOLAT, DISTINGUISHED AND INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED NEUROSURGEON AND FRIEND OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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### ABSTRACT

The sad news about the death of Acad. Yucel Kanpolat (September 17, 2016), a famous scholar, a pioneer in the field of neurosurgery, and a friend of the Republic of Macedonia, saddened the members of the Editorial Board of the journal PRILOZI of the Department of Medical Sciences of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, of which he was a member, as well as the other members of the Academy. Yucel Kanpolat was an international figure, linking Turkey to almost every country in the world. Neurosurgery has lost a very special surgeon, scientist and humanitarian. During the visit to the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts in 2011, we discussed the cooperation between the Turkish Academy of Sciences and the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, which he respected very much, as well as the role of the academies. He delivered a lecture on The Mission of Academia in the Age of Science, PRILOZI, MASA, XXXII, 2, p. 7-10 (2011), which we reprint in addition.

**Keywords:** dead, neurosurgery, mission, science

The sad news about the death of Acad. Yucel Kanpolat (1941 - September 17, 2016), a renowned scientist, a pioneer in the field of neurosurgery, and a friend of the Republic of Macedonia, saddened the members of the Editorial Board of the journal PRILOZI - Contributions of the Department of Medical Sciences of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, of which he was a member from 2012 to 2016, as well as the other members of the Academy. Yucel Kanpolat was an international figure, linking Turkey to almost every country in the world. Neurosurgery has lost a very special surgeon, scientist and humanitarian.

Dr. Kanpolat was born in Sivas, Turkey, and graduated from Gazi High School in Ankara in 1959. He attended Ankara University School of Medicine, obtaining his MD in 1965. He worked in the Turkish public health service from 1965 to 1968, and then went on to residency in the Department of Neurosurgery, Ankara University, from 1968 to 1973. He served as Head of the Haydarpasa Military Neurosurgery Department, Istanbul, during his military service from 1974 to 1975, whereupon he was appointed Assistant Professor at the Department of

Neurological Surgery, Ankara University, ascending to full professor in 1989.

His influence in functional and stereotactic neurosurgery, especially pain surgery, is renowned and will be lasting. He changed our thinking with regard to minimally invasive destructive procedures for pain, through his thorough knowledge of anatomy and physiology. He literally invented a minimally invasive image-driven ablative pain surgery-anterotomolateral cordotomy for somatic pain and trigeminal tractotomy / nucleotomy for facial pain. Many of us owe him a great debt for his teaching and clinical insights.

His scholarly achievement is notable, through 176 international publications, 92 invited lectures, 48 presentations in international congresses, and multiple visiting professorships and named lectures worldwide. He also served as president of the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TUBA) from 2008 to 2012. He was a member of the WFNS, ENS, WFFSN, EANS and a valued member of many journal editorial boards. He was a recipient of numerous awards including the Science Award of the Ankara University, the Turkish Neurosurgery Society Excellence

Service Award (2006), the OHSU Paxton International Professorship (2006) and the Popular Bilim Medical Science Prize (2006).

During his visit to Skopje, Republic of Macedonia we discussed the role of the academy in the development of society, education, the structure of the academies and the scientific cooperation between them. He greatly respected the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts and he wanted a closer cooperation between MASA and the Turkish Academy of Sciences.

He delivered a lecture at the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts on March 22, 2011 on the topic of The Mission of Academia in the Age of Science, published in the journal PRILOZI of MASA, XXXII, 2, p. 7-10 (2011). The ideas of Acad. Yucel Kanpolat are still contemporary, and therefore we are again printing the paper The Mission of Academia in the Age of Science in our journal PRILOZI.

As time passes, we see more and more the great loss of this respected friend of ours, but his work remains.

## EDITORIAL

### THE MISSION OF ACADEMIA IN THE AGE OF SCIENCE\*

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#### *Historical Context*

Historically, when human groups began to live in communities, the education of children gradually emerged as an important privilege, greatly aspired to by parents belonging to the upper echelons. In ancient Greece, children were tutored by well-paid Sophists who taught rhetoric and logic for the pursuit of self-interest and monetary gain. As alternatives to the sophists, the "philosophers" appeared, in search of truth. Ironically, Socrates, the most prominent of the "philosophers", was executed for 'corrupting the young'. In 387 BC, Plato, a pupil of Socrates, established the first "Academy" outside the city walls of Athens, thus maintaining its independence. Over time, Plato's Academy came within the city of Athens, and academicians began to be involved in daily politics. The mission of Plato and the Academia was extended by Aristotle and saw the spread of a variety of disciplines worldwide. The Byzantine Emperor Justinian closed the Academy on the grounds of its pagan ideology in 529 AD. The second group of Academies was established in Baghdad during the reigns of Caliph Harun al-Rashid and his elder son Al-Mamun. The third generation of academies was established in 1603 in Italy (Accademia dei Lincei), then later, in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, in France (Académie des Sciences) and England (the Royal Society). The other academies of the world followed these examples.

In Turkey, there have been numerous endeavours to organise the establishment of a science academy, such as the Encümen-i Daniş Cemiyeti (the Consultative Committee) in 1851, and the Cemiyet-i İlmîyye-i Osmaniyye (the Ottoman Science Society) ten years later. The Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni (the Ottoman History Council), founded in 1909 after several stages of evolution,

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\* Lecture held on 22 March 2011 in the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

was transformed in 1935 into today's Türk Tarih Kurumu (Turkish Historical Society). The Turkish Academy of Sciences (TÜBA) was established in 1993. The main mission of the Turkish Academy of Sciences is as follows:

1. Selection of the best scientists for inclusion in the Academy under the Young Scientist, Associate Member, Active Member and Honorary Member programmes. The age limit for Honorary Members is 70. The Young Scientist programme is open to promising young scientists under the age of 37 or 38 for three years.
2. Consultancy to the government and public at large.
3. Provision of support to society to motivate especially children, teachers and young scientists.
4. Support for education through special programmes to nurture the development of a science society, such as:
  - a. Dictionary of Science;
  - b. Science education for preschool and school children;
  - c. Translation of university books into Turkish and the provision of financial resources for the best publications on science and teaching;
  - d. Open course ware;
  - e. Education of the society.
5. Special working groups in the Academy:
  - a. Cancer group;
  - b. Stem-cell group;
  - c. Environmental group;
  - d. Restoration;
  - e. Cultural inventory.
6. University conferences.
7. Social activities such as forestation, etc.

#### *Contemporary Aspect:*

In today's world, academies should distance themselves from daily politics and focus on global humanitarian and environmental issues. We live in the so-called "information and knowledge society", in which all the vital areas of society are controlled by the actors in the market economy, namely by large companies. In the meantime, "scientific knowledge" is continuously accumulating, but the lack of "scientific thinking", which is necessary for the proper and humanitarian implementation of this knowledge into our daily lives, raises deep ethical problems. In order to overcome this situation, we propose a special con-

sensus and collaboration between the actors in the market economy, scientists/academia and decision-makers.

The importance of the large private sector companies in the world economy cannot be denied. It is a fact that such companies have an important role in conducting and sponsoring research and development activities. However, it is also obvious that the aim of such companies is to generate profit. Sometimes this aim is over-emphasised, deviating from what is "ethical", and needs to be balanced or controlled. Nowadays, in the immediate wake of the economic crisis, we witness that companies force society to be a part of consumption, while the production materials and activity are usually dictated by select companies. Especially women and unprotected children, exposed to media advertisements, are used, even forced, to become consumers for the market economy. There is no doubt that science, research and development contribute greatly to our contemporary society in the areas of transportation, telecommunications and informatics. Nevertheless, we have overwhelming problems related to "Science and Technology", such as environmental pollution, global warming and a lack of understanding of the true nature of phenomena. Instead of promoting production with regard to environmental issues, we prefer using women and children to transform our homes and environment into virtual "trash bins". This dilemma is reflected in many areas:

- In the education sector, information is easily obtainable, with fast and easy communication available to the masses. As a result, we are creating computer-dependent generations, instead of learning through simple games.
- We boast the level of urbanisation in our cities, but recognise that with big cities and mega-apartments we lose the characteristics of the "street" and neighbourly relations. Instead of walking to school, children usually spend their valuable time being transported between home and school. People are generally not interested in sports, healthy nutrition and living healthily. With the help of sports, children and young people can learn the necessity of teamwork and self-confidence indirectly. But in this century, some particular sports have emerged in popularity and are under the domination of the market economy. Consequently, certain values specific to the performance of sports have virtually disappeared.
- Regarding health, the average lifespan has increased. We are creating wonders in the transplantation of organs, including the heart, kidneys, and pancreas, etc., but as a result we now live in a geriatric society.
- The young age group is generally interested in consumption and making money with as little effort as possible.
- The production and use of cosmetics involve a huge economic turnover, but the motivations are disputable. Reconstructive surgery can correct malformations or disfigurements. Instead, people turn to "cosmetic sur-

gery" to attain a physical appearance considered "ideal" by popular culture or to delay the signs of ageing.

- We see the use of high technology in medicine, but the costs are beyond what ordinary people can afford; therefore, governments are expected to cover the costs. Consequently, medical budgets of governments are in collapse worldwide. While governments are very enthusiastic and interested in the treatment of certain specific diseases, preventive medicine and health education are not popular topics of interest.
- High technology is also prominent in the food sector: GMO's (Genetically Manipulated Organisms) are on the market, but who can be sure of their effects on our health in the future?
- Ironically enough, technology enables mankind to produce napalm bombs, landmines, and biological and nuclear weapons for use against its own kind. As the war industry flourishes, we see wars going on around us: thousands of people are killed and their cultural heritage destroyed. No one seems to say or do anything against this drama as the war industry flourishes.

Our aim is not to create a disaster scenario. From all these arguments, we can derive a sense of responsibility for ourselves. We have to recognise our responsibility as science academies on the world stage. Now we can ask the core question for humanity, the world and academicians: who will serve as the conscience of humanity in this age? My personal belief is that scientists, science academies and well-educated intellectuals with vision should/will be the conscience of humanity and should guide people, policy- and decision-makers and companies in order to create a world that benefits humanity. We should realise that this can be a new and realistic mission for academia.

In carrying out this mission, science academies should collaborate with intergovernmental and international organisations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, etc. on solutions to global problems such as healthcare and nutrition, alternative energy sources, poverty and disease mitigation, science education, the protection of children, and racial/gender discrimination.