HOMAGE TO DIMITAR KADANOFF - THE GRAND TEACHER IN BULGARIAN ANATOMY

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ABSTRACT

Academician Dimitar Dimitrov Kadanoff is the first academician of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) in the field of Anatomy and founder of the Anthropologic section of the Morphologic Institute of BAS. Kadanoff is widely considered to be the most influential figure in Bulgarian Anatomy and the “Grand Teacher”. He remains one of the most highly respected Bulgarian scientists on an international level, with a total of 91 articles referenced in PubMed to his name, which are still highly cited.

Keywords: *Dimitar Kadanoff, History of Anatomy, Anatomy in Bulgaria*

*To hold my **teacher** in this art equal to my own parents
to make him partner in my livelihood...*

The Hippocratic Oath

Academician Dimitar Dimitrov Kadanoff (alternatively spelled Kadanov due to different Cyrillic-Latin transliteration concepts), born on the 12th of April 1900 in Shumen, Bulgaria, is the first academician of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) in the field of Anatomy. Kadanoff is widely considered the most influential figure in Bulgarian Anatomy and the “Grand Teacher” (Fig. 1).

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Fig. 1. *Dimitar Kadanoff (1900-1982)*

After graduating from the male high school in his hometown of Shumen, Kadanoff studied two semesters of Philosophy and Pedagogics in Sofia University, but quickly transferred to Prague, Czechoslovak Republic and later transferred again, this time to studying medicine in Wurzburg, Germany, where he graduated with honors in 1925, immediately defended a PhD thesis and was appointed as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anatomy. After eight years, four of which as a parallel lecturer and having a prolific research period he made the difficult decision of immigrating back to Bulgaria in 1933, due to the rising tension against foreigners in the then national-socialist Germany (1).

Working parallel as a medical practitioner and Assistant Professor of Anatomy in both the Medical Faculty of Sofia University, Sofia, Bulgaria and the National Academy of Arts, Sofia, Bulgaria, Kadanoff was elected as Associate Professor of Anatomy in 1939, Professor in 1942, Doctor of Medical Sciences in 1955 and Academician of BAS in 1965 (1).

From 1939 until 1965 Kadanoff was the Head of the Department of Anatomy at the Medical Faculty of Sofia University (1). During that time period he published the second, factologically up to date and most sophisticated, as to this day, two-volume textbook of Human Anatomy in Bulgarian together with an edited and translated two-volume edition of Prof. Verner Spalteholz's forgotten three-volume masterpiece – Handheld Atlas of Human Anatomy. During this period he implemented a highly sophisticated German-rooted method of teaching Anatomy, personally trained more than 150 students as anatomy demonstrators, enjoyed a research Renaissance and was highly respected by both students and colleagues as an academic *Persona Grande*. As such he was often invited to lecture in international medical institutions.

Kadanoff's main research interests were in the field of embryology, gross morphology, anatomical variations, receptor micromorphology and anthropology, most of which he introduced for the first time to the Bulgarian scientific community and for all of which he carried out original research, published in highly regarded international scientific journals (1). His research in the field of anthropology, for which he was also appointed as Head of the

Anthropological Section of the Morphological Institute of BAS, was the basis for the anthropological and morphometrical standards set in Bulgaria, still used nowadays.

Dimitar Kadanoff remains one of the most highly respected Bulgarian scientists on an international level, with a total of 91 articles referenced in PubMed to his name (69 under the Kadanoff spelling and 22 under Kadanov), which are still highly cited (2-3).

Academician Dimitar Kadanoff passed away on the 7th of October 1982 in Vienna, Austria, aged 82 during a congress where he held an academic lecture (1).

Additional facts

The first ever football match in Sevlievo, Bulgaria was held in 1912 with a football owned by the then 12-year-old participant Dimitar Kadanoff.

As proposed by one of his many students - George Chaldakov - the Bulgarian Anatomy Society launched the Dimitar Kadanoff Memorial Award for young scientists in the field of Anatomy (4). The latest awardee of which is Associate Professor Stoyan Pavlov, MD, PhD, awarded during the XXIII Congress of the Bulgarian Anatomical Society.

One of Kadanoff's anecdotes shared among his students was "They told me, to tell you, that Soviet science is the most advanced in the world, ... well the other aren't behind it, but let's continue with the educational process" (5), often modified to the occasion, such as "They told me, to tell you, that the great Soviet science has created a satellite, that at this time is circling around the planet, ...well let the satellite circle the planet and let us continue with the educational process".

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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