

Obituary

Professor J.G. Koritké (1928-1996)



Professor Jean-Georges Koritké was born at Strasbourg on 17 July 1928. He was a member of that generation of Alsations who had their primary schooling in French, their secondary education in German and their higher education in French. After his matriculation in 1946 he hesitated between the Conservatoire of Music and the Faculty of Medicine. He opted for medicine and enrolled at the PCB in October of 1946. In the first year of the medical course he was taught anatomy by the Dean André Forster, and by Professor Georges Winckler, teachers whose research was directed towards functional and comparative anatomy. When Koritké was in his second year, Professor Philippe Bellocq returned from Lille to Strasbourg.

The exceptional teaching (medico-surgical topographic anatomy) and pedagogic talents of Philippe Bellocq greatly impressed the young student. Koritké's anatomic career can be outlined as follows. In 1950 he became a demonstrator of anatomy as well as a hospital extern (1950-1954), and then successively Assistant, Senior Tutor (1955) and Associate Professor of the Faculties of Medicine (1958, at the age of 30); he was appointed at Besançon (1958) and at Strasbourg (1960), becoming untenured Professor in 1960. He was appointed titular Professor of Anatomy at Strasbourg on

March 1, 1966, replacing Professor Pierre Meyer after the latter's premature death. He was formally installed as titular Professor of Normal Anatomy, Biologist to the Hospitals and Head of Department from 1967 to 1993. He continued his university activities until August 1994. He died on 1 August 1996.

He carried on his activities in teaching, research and its hospital applications to the full.

Forty decades of students were influenced by his teaching. To the discipline of his teacher, Ph. Bellocq he added the extreme precision and elegance of his drawings. He published two textbooks : *Éléments d'anatomie de l'appareil locomoteur* and an *Atlas*

d'ostéologie humaine. As regards his students - future doctors, dentists, physical or occupational therapists or teachers of physical education - he did not confine himself to teaching. He saw himself as also responsible for the education of the young. His benevolent gaze succeeded in conveying the authority necessary to ensure the respect of the very young students for an Institution governed by principle. Every student in distress was aware that he was always available to listen, to advise and to encourage.

His research work reflects the complementarity of the two systems : French (anatomo-clinical) and German (biologic and functional). With his collaborators he investigated several topics, illustrated by numerous publications in the international journals. In the topographic anatomy of the living subject his publications dealt with the topography of the sternum during respiration and the topography of the skin creases in relation to the skeleton. In the functional anatomy of the vascular system a wide field was investigated radiologically or by means of the techniques of microvascularisation : the collateral arterial circulation after exclusion of the aortic bifurcation, microvascularisation of the periventricular organs, the angioarchitectonics of the spinal cord, brainstem and central gray nuclei, the microvascularisation of the heart, bone marrow, alimentary tract and of lymphatic tissue and fat. In the functional anatomy of the locomotor system, he devoted attention to the bony architecture of the sternum and the malar

bone and to the functional structures of the joints. In sectional anatomy his atlas of serial sections of the human body appeared simultaneously in French, German and English. His work was associated with the spread of the use of scanner images in clinical practice and preceded MRI. The influence of Professor Koritké at an international level was further marked by his editorship of the *Archives d'Anatomie, d'Histologie et d'Embryologie* and by his participation in the reading committees of major journals of morphology.

At the hospital level, Professor Koritké undertook the management of the laboratory of biometric functional studies and was much involved in the administration of the University Hospital Schools of Strasbourg. Through his numerous pupils, whether physiotherapists, occupational therapists or midwives, he shared in the life of the hospital and university as a whole.

He was elected as a member of the Faculty Council, administered the Support Service of the Medical Faculty, greatly exerted himself in the promotion

of educational gymnastics, and conducted the medical students' choir as it went from ward to ward to sing the joys of Christmas to the patients.

Those who knew him appreciated his courtesy, modesty and profound humanity. Some of us were fortunate enough to share his passion for mountaineering, his immense musical culture or the pleasure of being gathered together around a good table.

H Sick