

João Lobo Antunes, 1944–2016

Antonio Gonçalves Ferreira¹

Received: 20 December 2016 / Accepted: 21 December 2016 / Published online: 23 January 2017
© Springer-Verlag Wien 2017

João Lobo Antunes was born June, 4, 1944, in Lisbon, Portugal. His father was professor of neurology and a well-known neuropathologist who became chairman of the neurology department of the Lisbon Faculty of Medicine. João Lobo Antunes made all of his pre-graduate studies in Lisbon and was graduated in the field of medicine by Lisbon University in 1968. He was a brilliant student.

In 1971, he relocated to New York City, USA, to the Department of Neurosurgery of the New York Neurological Institute, Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center and completed his residency in neurosurgery. He was fellow of the Fulbright and the Matheson Foundations. Later he was nominated as associate professor of neurosurgery of the New York Neurological Institute.

He remained in New York for 13 years and then returned to Lisbon in 1984. In the meantime, he completed his doctorate at Lisbon University in 1983 with a thesis titled “the nervous regulation of the reproductive function”. In 1984, he became professor and chairman of neurosurgery of the Lisbon Faculty of Medicine. Some years later, he became head of the Neurosurgery Department of the University Hospital Santa Maria, the hospital associated with the Lisbon Faculty of Medicine.

Throughout his academic career, he published not only many scientific papers on neurosurgery but also texts on different matters, namely cultural and ethical issues. He wrote eight books, one of them a biography of the Portuguese Nobel Prize-awarded Egas Moniz. He delivered many lectures and talks on a vast range of subjects for a wide audience:

science and innovation, education and training, knowledge and literacy, ethics and medical errors. He was indeed an outstanding and eloquent speaker.

Since he was professor of neurosurgery in Lisbon, he had important academic and medical positions in the Faculty of Medicine and the university: he was Chairman of the Pedagogical Council and of the Scientific Council of the Faculty, member of the General Council of the University, Chairman of the Ethics Committee of the Faculty and Hospital. In 2002, he founded and chaired the *Instituto de Medicina Molecular (IMM)*, which became a huge biomedical research institute where many notable Portuguese researchers returned to from abroad. The IMM is associated with the Faculty of Medicine and the University Hospital; all together they form the Lisbon Academic Medical Center. He was one of the promoters of the fusion between the two main Lisbon public universities in 2012.

He also held significant positions in private institutions and medical associations: he was the main neurosurgeon of the hospital CUF, one of the greatest private hospitals in Lisbon; he was consultant of several private foundations (Luso-Americana, Merck Sharp & Dohme, Francisco Manuel dos Santos, Champalimaud); he was president of the Lisbon Academy of Medical Sciences and of the Portuguese Medical Academy.

He played an important role in politics, too. In the Ministry of Health, he chaired the National Council for Ethics in Life Sciences and the National Committee of Medical References Centers. In the Ministry of Science and Education, he chaired the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation and the National Agency for the Evaluation and Creditation of the University Courses. In the Ministry of Justice, he was member of the National Medical Legal Council. He was *Conselheiro de Estado* (President’s Counselor) of two consecutive presidents of the Republic of Portugal.

✉ Antonio Gonçalves Ferreira
ajgonfer@medicina.ullsboa.pt

¹ Neurosurgery Department, Lisbon Faculty of Medicine, University hospital Santa Maria, Lisbon, Portugal

His international commitments were outstanding: he played a decisive role in the constitution of the Portuguese Neurosurgical Society (until then it was a chapter of the Spanish-Portuguese Society, the second oldest in Europe). He was WFNS vice-president for Europe in 1990. He was member of the EANS Research Committee and he was EANS secretary before becoming EANS President in 1999–2003. He was the honorary president of the EANS congress 2007 and of the ESSFN Congress 2012, both held in Lisbon.

He was member of numerous international scientific and professional societies other than EANS, namely the American College of Surgeons, the American Association of Neurological Societies, the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (USA), La Soci t  de Neurochirurgie de Langue Fran aise, and The Academic Eurasiana Neurochirurgia. He integrated the editorial board of several known neurosurgical journals like *Clinical Neurosurgery*, *Journal of Neurosurgery*, *Neurosurgery*, *Acta Neurochirurgica*, *Advances and Technical Standards*, and *British Journal of Neurosurgery*.

He won many prizes for his scientific and professional achievements and he was awarded with several National High Honors.

Jo o Lobo Antunes was a bright, intelligent man, with high scientific and cultural standards. His erudition together with his sightedness (he was a great chess player) and vigorous personality made him a strong leader, sometimes polemical, in every matter in which he was involved, from his own department to the board of EANS. He was an intransigent apologist of excellence with a clear elitist perspective. He proceeded to a deep renovation of his department that became a reference among others, where his character and options left indelible marks, even if controversial. Teaching students and residents was always for him an obsession, with a special concern with the training quality.

His neurosurgery department was one of the first units to have the training certification of the EANS. His great medical and political authority was decisive for the acquisition of major technical advances for the department and the hospital.

Jo o Lobo Antunes was a great man: a renowned neurosurgeon, a celebrated professor, a remarkable citizen, and a distinguished president of The EANS. He will be remembered for a long time and by many in the neurosurgical community.

