

Professor Aleksej Kansky

A tribute on the occasion of his 80th birthday

It is a pleasure to honor Aleksej Kansky MD, PhD, Professor of Dermatology at the Medical faculty of the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia and Professor and Chairman Emeritus at the Department of Dermatology, Zagreb University Medical School, on the occasion of this his 80th birthday. Aleksej is a most remarkable individual, notable for his vigor whether hiking to Šmarna Gora with his distinguished wife Nuška, or rallying his dermatology colleagues around the world.

This still youthful and dynamic colleague was born on February 23, 1925 in Ljubljana. The University of Ljubljana Faculty of Medicine awarded him an MD degree in 1951 and a PhD degree in 1966. He passed his

specialty examination in dermatovenereology in 1961. He studied chemistry and clinical chemistry, being awarded a Humboldt scholarship (1965-67) to work in Dermatology at the Universities of Mainz and Frankfurt. He was a senior Fulbright Scholar in 1970/71, working at the Department of Dermatology in New York University School of Medicine. His appreciation of dermatopathology was enhanced by attending the course lead by professor A. B. Ackerman at NYU in 1978.

Professor Kansky rose in academia at his alma mater from assistant professor in 1968 to associate professor in 1974 and full professor of dermatovenereology in 1978, and so his contribution to the Department of der-



Fig 1. Professors A. Kansky and R.A. Schwartz in front of the Mithras sanctuary in Ptuj, Slovenia in 2003. The religious building of the pre-Christian Indo-Persian religion (mitreum) was dedicated to the divinity Mithras with the inscription Deo Soli Invicto Mithrae, (to the Unconquered Sun God Mithras).

In the prechristian time Mithras was especially worshiped by military personel. It is worth mentioning that a strong Roman garrison for the defense of the Drava bridge used to be stationed in Ptuj.

matology extends from 1957 through to 1978. He was then recruited to lead dermatology as Professor and Chairman of the Department of Dermatology at the Zagreb University Medical School, a position he held with distinction from 1979 through 1990. He retired officially in 1991, but continues his extraordinary activities. In 1991 he returned to Ljubljana and in 1995 was made Research Consultant in the Department of Dermatovenereology.

In 1974 Professor Kansky started, together with Professor J. Fettich, the dermatological journal *Acta Dermatovenereologica Iugoslavica* (*Acta Derm Iug*), serving as its Editor-in-chief from 1987 to 1991. When Slovenia became independent he founded in 1992 this English-language dermatological journal, the *Acta dermatovenereologica Alpina, Pannonica et Adriatica* (indexed in Index Medicus/Medline/Pubmed as *Acta Dermatovenereologica Alpina, Pannonica et Adriatica*) and has been its Editor-in-Chief ever since, to date, for 15 consecutive years. Its inclusion in Index Medicus/Medline (PubMed) is in itself a great tribute to his dedication. In 1982 he published in Zagreb with his co-workers the textbook *Skin and venereal diseases* for medical students and general practitioners in the Croatian language. The second revised edition came out in 1984 and the third one followed in 1989. He is also co-editor of four Symposia Proceedings. In 2002 he published in Ljubljana the dermatologic textbook *Dermatology and Venereology* in the Slovenian language. He is author and/or co-author of more than 220 published manuscripts.

His research activities have been numerous. He directed the USA-Yugoslav project entitled "Epidemiological and Molecular-biological Studies of Hereditary Disorders of Keratinization in Croatia". At present he is principal investigator for a project on erythropoietic protoporphyria in Slovenia. In the seventies and eighties he organized in Ljubljana within the Department of Dermatology the laboratory for porphyrins and the immunological laboratory, introducing immunofluorescence in the diagnosis of skin conditions. His main fields of interest are hereditary disorders of keratinization, which he has investigated in Slovenia and Croatia, porphyrias and skin disorders provoked by immunological mechanisms.

His work has been honored in many ways. He has delivered guest lectures at a number of European departments of dermatology as well in America at New York University, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and the University of Medicine and Dentistry at New Jersey Medical School. He is a non-resident Fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology, an honorary member of the Czech and Polish dermatologic societies as well as a corresponding member of the Austrian, French, German and Italian dermatologic societies. He is also an honorary member of Sigma Xi, the International Honor Society for Scientific and Engineering Research. During the years 1987 - 1991 he was president of the Yugoslav Dermatovenereologic Society.

R. A. Schwartz and A. Godić