

# Introduction of Prof. René Küss, Honorary member of ESOT

by Prof. B. Charpentier, President of ESOT

Dear Professor Küss, Dear Professor Starzl, Sir Roy, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, you cannot imagine how proud I'm, to introduce Prof. R. Küss and as new ESOT President, to be in front of Sir Roy, the first ESOT President.

The ESOT Council, and all the ESOT members are deeply honoured that you have accepted, along with Prof. T. Starzl and Prof. Roy Calne to be honorary members of our Society, and more than honorary, real founders of our Society.

In fact, if you had not existed, if you had not done your pioneering work, we would not be here to day and Transplantation should perhaps be kept miles or years back.

René Küss, one word is not in your vocabulary, it is "Fear", you had never feared, except you told me, during the second world war when you served in the Marine and especially at Mers El Kebir, of a sinister memory and when you were sunk down with your destRoyer "Le Mogador".

You were not fearing during the race car of Tour de France Automobile in 1954, you were not fearing when in the O.R. you invented two surgical techniques, which will remain for eternity, the technique of Boari-Küss on the ureterer elongation and the Küss technique of kidney transplant extraperitoneal implantation in iliac fossa anastomosing renal artery and femoral artery and not in the inguinal site, as D. Hume did.

When your boldness come?  
When your motivation for talent come?

Very early, medicine and surgery were a long familial tradition and your father was the chief of the General Surgery Division in the hospital "la Charité", hospital which became Broussais years after...

Thus, it was natural that you thought to become also a surgeon. Some students think of that during the internship, at the age of 25 years old, you thought of that, 20 years before than normal, at the age of 4. You saw your first O.R., with your father at the age of 7, and you entered in medicine as a vocation.

This picture shows you as a medical student in 1932, in the unit of Gaenecology and surgery of Broca hospital, directed by Prof. Robert Proust, the brother of the well known and famous french writer Marcel Proust "A la recherche du temps perdu"...!

You became "Interne des Hôpitaux de Paris" in 1937, in the full explosion of the progress in surgery, anesthesiology, radiology...

The war came, you did your military service and you operated... You were modestly an hero during the Paris Liberation in 1944, manipulating alternatively scalpels and grenades.

During your internship, you met prof. FEY, Chief of Urology in Cochin hospital and then your career was directed, you wished to be an urologist. Why urology? Because renal cavity opacification, namely IVP, appeared in 1937, and then an urological operation was preceded by an exploratory phase of diagnosis by radiology.

You became Assistant Professor in Prof. Fey unit, and then full professor seven years after, Prof. of surgical pathology and then when a post of Chief of Urology was vacant in St Louis hospital, you were the Chief of 2 services of Urology in the same time, St Louis Hospital and Foch Hospital, and then happened this historic 12 day period in January 1951 when René Küss, Charles Dubost and Marceau Servelle first performed the extraperitoneal renal transplantation procedure which is in common use today and is called Küss operation. Dubost and Servelle obtained their renal allografts from the same guillotined convict donor, whereas R. Küss used a free kidney that had been removed from another patient for therapeutic purpose. This phase was preceded by a large experimental work and by the

fact that you were shocked by the death of hundred of young patients dying of incurable chronic renal insufficiency in the unit of your friend Prof. M. Legrain in Foch hospital.

A total of nine patients were transplanted, all nine patients rejected their graft and you predicted in your famous publication that in Mem. Acad. Chir. (1951) "about some cases of renal allograft in human", " in the present state of knowledge, the only rational basis for kidney replacement would be between monozygotic twins..."

You were right, because your immunological condition was only the ABO blood group and like Jaboulay, Voroney having done before, xenotransplantations to come up against a new discipline which was just starting : Immunology and transplant immunology, the most complicated aspect of immunology...

After the first success by Murray in 1959 at the Brigham on twins and then in dizygotic twins with T.B.I., you obtained in 1960 the first long term graft survival (18 months was an achievement at that time!) in three recipients grafted in allogenic situation. You have used in 1960 also for the first time the immunosuppressive regimen based on chemotherapy invented by Tom Starzl and Roy Calne, so all three are present in this room and they are like the holy trinity and it is why ESOT is so proud to have them today with us.

You also aimed at graft perfusion with blood, warm and cold ischemia in animals and the concept of "brain death" with Mollaret and Goulon and harvesting of perfused organs into a deceased cadaver.

In 1966 you did your first xenotransplantation, pig kidney in man with hyperacute rejection and ignorance at that time of xenoantibodies, recalling the first experiment of Jaboulay in Lyon in 1906 and the pioneering work of Alexis Carrel when Jaboulay transplanted a goat kidney to a young uremic patient by anastomosing renal artery to humeral artery at the elbow - and the first description of xenorejection came.

Then afterwards, you accumulated invention and honour, creating the French Transplantation Society in 1971, the need for a regional sharing organ program to avoid long ischemia time, you described the pyelographic signs of rejection on IVP, the ex-vivo resection of kidney cancer and iliac reimplantation. You became President of the French Academy of Medicine in 1988, your name is engraved on marble in Pitié-Salpêtrière with your urologic school around you and you received the Medawar price in 2002 by the hands of your friend, Tom Starzl.

But were you only a giant of the operating room like Vulcan in his forge?

Of course, not! You were also a hunter, an explorer, but mostly you like fine arts, and especially paintings. You were the friend as soon as 1933 at Honfleur with the main French painters, Dufy, Friez, Saint Delis, Gernez, Herbo, you became President of the Honfleur Artists Society, with famous retrospective like the one from Boudin in 1992.

You have one of the most beautiful collection of paintings, worth of a Museum.

Lastly, as a mentor, you made a school, the Küss school of urology.

So you travelled these last decades like a meteorite, giving sparks to start the fire in each of us, you are a greek divinity associating strongness and grace, your courage is legendary, you are an example for the young, you are a great man. This is why the ESOT is so proud that with your triple Tom Starzl, Roy Calne, René Küss as Remus, Romulus and Renatus, Renatus means born again thanks to christening and we do not forget that you are Protestant and Alsatian, because all three, you founded transplantation like ancient Rome, Magna Roma, was founded by Remus and Romulus. You have all accepted to be honorary members and founders of our society.

Thank you for all, from myself but merely on behalf of all the worldwide Transplant Community and of course ESOT, Europe, the daughter of all Gods. I wish to finish by the Ecclesiastes sentence in latin: "Facio quod potui, faciant meliora potentes" and for the following generation: "I did what I could the most, try to do better..."

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