

## The connections between three Romanian centers of pathology outlined by Professor Augustin Mureșan (1908–1985)

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### Abstract

The Romanian School of Pathology has a complex history, which must be thoroughly known to be appreciated at its value. The research includes data on the pathology' evolution in our country, the overview of the most important research centers and their dealings. It also contains landmarks about the most important Romanian pathologists, their activities etc. Among them was Augustin Mureșan (1908–1985). He was member of three important Romanian pathology centers: Cluj, Bucharest and Timișoara. Cluj was the place of his career debut and the place where he ended his professional activity. In Bucharest, his professional training and career took place over two decades. In Timișoara, he taught pathology courses for students for two years. Among his professional achievements, it should be noted that under his editorship was published the unique textbook of pathology for Romanian faculties of medicine (1962). He also supervised doctoral theses for more than 20 years. He described the first three cases of histoplasmosis in Romania, and he was one of the first Romanian researchers who studied liver biopsies (1942) and kidney biopsies (1947).

**Keywords:** pathology, Augustin Mureșan, Faculty of Medicine of Cluj, Faculty of Medicine of Bucharest, Faculty of Medicine of Timișoara.

### Introduction

The Romanian School of Pathology has a solid tradition and a significant prestige, well known in Romania and abroad. Victor Babeș (1854–1926) created this School, when he was Professor at the Faculty of Medicine of Bucharest (1887–1926). Then, when he was Professor at the Romanian Faculty of Medicine of Cluj (in the first semester of the academic year 1919/1920), he initiated the Cluj Section of this School. Babeș' successor was his pupil Titu Vasiliu (1885–1961), who was Professor and Director of the Cluj Department of Pathology from 1920 to 1947. Then, for a decade (1948–1958), the Head of this Department was Professor Rubin Popa (1901–1958). After two years of interim leadership, Professor Augustin Mureșan (1908–1985) (Figure 1) took over the management of this Department. He had this position until 1973. Although Mureșan belonged specifically to the Cluj medical tradition, he was also member of the didactic staff of the Bucharest Faculty of Medicine and of the Timișoara Faculty of Medicine. Thus, he made the connection between three Romanian higher education centers of pathology. This article is a tribute to his memory, on the commemoration of four decades since his death (August 1, 1985).

### Short biographical data about Augustin Mureșan

He was born on July 12, 1908, in the village of

Chimitelnic, in the former Turda–Arieș County (currently in Mureș County).



**Figure 1** – Portrait of Augustin Mureșan (unknown author).

Augustin Mureșan attended high school in Târgu Mureș and in Blaj [1]. Then, since 1927 until 1933, he was student at the Romanian Faculty of Medicine of Cluj. He had prestigious Professors, such as: Victor Papilian (1888–1956) – at Anatomy, Ioan Drăgoiu (1878–1941) – at Histology, Titu Vasiliu – at Pathology, Dimitrie Negru (1883–1955) – at Radiology, Iacob Iacobovici (1879–1959) – at Surgery,

and Iuliu Hațieganu (1885–1959) – at Internal Medicine. These Professors had a special formative influence on their students, both in terms of medical professionalism and medical humanism. During this period, Mureșan had many righteous colleagues. Part of them became Professors at the same medical education institution from Cluj: the neurologist Dezideriu Duma (1906–1988), the balneologist Eugen Morariu (1907–1985), the surgeon Aurel Nana (1907–1989), the hygienist Salvator Cupcea (1908–1958), the pediatrician Eugenia Mihalca (1909–1989), the ophthalmologist Ioan Păcurariu (1910–1991), etc. These examples show the level of seriousness and perseverance that Augustin Mureșan's colleague had.

As student, in 1933 Mureșan made his debut in the teaching career as tutor at the Department (then entitled Institute) of Pathology of Cluj. Thus, he became disciple of Titu Vasiliu. From him, Mureșan learned the anatomical and clinical manner of analyzing the pathological processes. In 1935, he obtained the title of Doctor of Medicine and Surgery [2].

A change in Augustin Mureșan's professional trajectory happened in 1938, when he transferred to the Department of General Pathology of the same Faculty. The Head of this Department was Professor Mihail Botez (1881–1960). Augustin Mureșan opted for this Department in order to get a more complex perspective of pathological processes.

Tracing the evolution of his career, discontinuity occurred in 1939. Then, he left Cluj and settled in Bucharest, as Assistant Professor at the Department of Pathology of the Faculty of Medicine. The Head of the Department was Emil Crăciun (1896–1976). It is possible that Professor Crăciun asked Mureșan to continue his career in Bucharest.

There were many Professors from the Faculty of Medicine of Cluj, who continued their careers in Bucharest. We give some examples: the surgeon Iacob Iacobovici, the forensic doctor Nicolae Minovici (1868–1941), the pediatrician Titu Gane (1883–1956), the gynecologist Cristea Grigoriu (1883–1951), the cardiologist Aurel Moga (1903–1977), the physiologist Grigore Benetato (1905–1972), the ophthalmologist Petru Vancea (1902–1986), etc.

Returning to Augustin Mureșan, we note that at the age of 34 (in 1942), he was promoted Lecturer at the Department of Pathology of Bucharest. A decade later, in 1952, he became Associate Professor and Head of the Chair of Pathology at the Bucharest Training Institute for Physicians. He held the position until 1957 [3].

The third medical and academic Romanian center in which Augustin Mureșan activated was Timișoara. Here, in the academic years 1956/1957 and 1957/1958, he taught pathology at Faculty of Medicine [4]. It is significant that between 1948 and 1977, this academic institution benefited from the valuable contributions of many Professors trained in Cluj. Among them were: the surgeon Alexandru Pop (1895–1954), the dermatologist Petru Țârlea (1901–1975), the pediatrician Iuliana Țârlea (1901–1982), the otorhinolaryngologist Ștefan Gârbea (1907–1992), the psychiatrist Eduard Pamfil (1912–1994), the gastroenterologist Octavian Fodor (1913–1976), the anatomists Gheorghe Corondan (1913–?), Ioan Albu (1920–2012), etc.

It is interesting that Augustin Mureșan did not want to continue his activity in Timișoara. Probably because he knew that the young pathologist Leonida Georgescu

(1919–1991) had the qualities to become a Professor at that Department. Leonida Georgescu was one of Emil Crăciun's most worthy disciples.

In this context, in 1958, Augustin Mureșan returned to the Pathology Department of the Faculty of Medicine of Bucharest. Here he had the same teaching rank – Associate Professor.

At that time, he was colleague with well-known Professors, such as the internist Nicolae Gh. Lupu (1884–1966), the inframicrobiologist Ștefan S. Nicolau (1896–1967), the histologist Ion T. Niculescu (1895–1957), the endocrinologist Ștefan-Marius Milcu (1903–1997), the urologist Theodor Burghel (1905–1977), etc. These masters of higher medical education from Bucharest have created a stimulating climate for the development of many of members of the teaching staff, as well as for the students.

Reaching the peak of his career, Augustin Mureșan decided to return definitively to the Faculty of Medicine of Cluj. Thus, in 1960 he took over the positions of titular Professor and Head of the Discipline of Pathology. In addition, he became Head of the Department of Pathology and Forensic Medicine of the same Faculty.

Being a personality in the field of Romanian pathology, Augustin Mureșan (Figure 2) was supervisor of the doctoral program in pathology at Cluj, for 21 years (between 1962 and 1983). It is necessary to specify that in the late 70s and early 80s in Romania there were only two university centers having professors as doctoral supervisors in pathology: Bucharest and Cluj.



**Figure 2 – Professor Augustin Mureșan in his office from Cluj in the 60s.**

Augustin Mureșan retired in 1973, at the age of 65. He continued to be active in the medical field as a Consulting Professor and worked voluntarily at the Pathology Laboratory of the Oncology Institute [5].

In recognition of his achievements, he received the title of Exceptional PhD (1961) and Doctor Emeritus (1973).

Professor Augustin Mureșan's successor at the Head of the Discipline of Pathology of Cluj was Associate Professor Alexandru Șerban (1920–1977), who held this position for only four years, as he died at the age of 57 [6]. About Al. Șerban, Professor Mureșan wrote an obituary.

#### ☞ **Augustin Mureșan's in hospital's pathology services**

During the period in which he developed his career in

Bucharest, he was a prosecutor at Colentina Hospital (between 1939 and 1960). Meantime, he was Senior Pathologist at the Ilie Pintilie Hospital and at the Prosecution Service in the same city.

After definitively return to Cluj, Professor Augustin Mureșan led the Pathology Laboratory of the Oncology Institute (1960–1973). At that time, the Director of the Institute was the oncological surgeon Professor Ion Chiricuța (1918–1988).

### ☞ The didactic activity of Augustin Mureșan

The teaching activity of Augustin Mureșan was concerted in several significant books. At the beginning of his career, he was in an unusual situation, because he contributed to the writing of a course in forensic medicine. Its title was “Lectures of Forensic Medicine, after the lessons taught by Mr. Lecturer M. Kernbach MD” [„Curs de medicină legală, după lecțiile ținute de Dl. Docent Dr. M. Kernbach”]. In writing this volume, Mureșan collaborated with Dorin Ionescu. After only a year, Mureșan was the only one who wrote this course, also after the lessons taught by Professor Mihail Kernbach (1895–1976) [2].

Mureșan was co-author of a course of pathology (1950), and of the “Histopathological technique” [„Tehnică histopatologică”] monograph (1953). At the second book, he collaborated with Gheorghe Diaconița (1915–1985), Alexandru Eskenazy (1919–1989), Ardeal Hagi-Paraschiv (1892–1976), etc. Mureșan was also co-author of the “Guide on the indications and technique of taking biopsy material” [„Îndreptar privind indicațiile și tehnica prelevării materialului biptic”] (1954) and of the “Pathology of the cardiovascular system” [„Morfopatologia aparatului cardiovascular”] treatise, edited by Emil Crăciun (1959) [2].

The unique Textbook of Pathology was published in 1962, under the editorship of Augustin Mureșan. His principal co-authors were András Antalffy – from Târgu Mureș, Șerban Brătianu – from Iași, etc. The second, abridged edition, of this book was edited in 1964, under the editorship of E. Crăciun. It is useful to note that at that time there were no courses published by the heads of discipline from each university medical center in Romania, but only a textbook, published at Bucharest. Nearly the end of his career, Mureșan and the team of his Chair wrote a course of pathology for the students of the Faculty of Medicine of Cluj [4].

### ☞ Scientific contributions

Augustin Mureșan described the first three cases of histoplasmosis in Romania (1955). He was one of the first Romanian researchers who studied liver biopsies (1942) and kidney biopsies (1947). In the study of these biopsies, he collaborated with Emil Crăciun [7].

Other research topic of Augustin Mureșan were visceral mycoses, reticuloendothelial system pathology, epidemic hepatitis, cancer, etc. [1, 8].

An example of remarkable paper elaborated by Augustin Mureșan was entitled “Contributions to the study of the muscular lesions in certain cardiovascular disease and collagenoses” (1963). The co-authors were Alexandru Șerban, Marius Moraru and E. Diaconu.

Professor Augustin Mureșan was member of important scientific societies in Romania. Thus, he was secretary of the Anatomical Society of Bucharest (1939–1947), member of the committee of the Bucharest Branch of the Society of Medical Sciences (1949–1956), secretary of the Romanian Society of Morphology (1955–1959). He was also president of the Morphology Section in Cluj (1960–1977) [2].

He contributed to the realization of different medical journals. He was editorial secretary of the “Bulletins and Memoirs of the Medical Society of the Bucharest Hospitals” [« Bulletins et Mémoires de la Société Médicale des Hôpitaux de Bucharest »] (1942–1944) and associate editor of the “Morphology” [„Morfofologia”] journal (1956–1959). He was also member of the editorial boards of “Oncology – Radiology” [« Oncologie – Radiologie »], “Medical Cluj” [„Clujul Medical”] and “Cytology Studies and Research” [„Studii și Cercetări de Citologie”] journals.

He was a member of the international editorial board of the fifth section (“General Pathology and Pathological Anatomy”) of the “Excerpta Medica” journal in Amsterdam. As further recognition of his prestige, he was a founding member of the *European Society of Pathology* (1964) [2].

It is significant that A. Mureșan had a special respect for Titu Vasiliu. Thus, on the occasion of Titu Vasiliu’s centenary, Mureșan wrote the article “Titu Vasiliu and his anatomoclinical method and conception”, published in “Morphology and Embryology” journal in 1985.

As a final message of the article, it can be stated that Augustin Mureșan remained in the memory of those who knew him as man of exceptional moral character and great professional and scientific value [9].

### Conflict of interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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*Received: November 30, 2025*

*Accepted: January 2, 2026*