Dear Readers,

This year we celebrate 10 years since the foundation of the Research Center for Microscopic Morphology and Immunology.

The Research Center for Microscopic Morphology and Immunology was born in the early 2001, when the Romanian Ministry of Education, taking note of the excellent report from the Accreditation Commission, officially certified its existence.

The “seeds” were planted many years before. Before 1989, researchers from the Histology Department of the Faculty of Medicine started their contractual research work. The first one was with the Enterprise for Charcoal Exploitation in Slatina (Olt department) and aimed to investigate the health status of the people working on this industrial platform, to discover any pulmonary, cardiovascular or neoplastic diseases. The activities were performed in collaboration with other departments of the Faculty of Medicine and lead to results that were highly appreciated by the state officials. Funding from this contract meant, of course, new equipments, good salaries, but most important, the experience that was gained working as a team and collaborating with other departments.

At that time, I was the head of the Histology Department and I had around me people like Dr. Ion Radu, (currently Professor of Histology at the “Transilvania” University in Brașov), Dr. Teofil Mehedinți (currently Professor of Histology at the “Ovidius” University in Constanța), Marin Iacob – biologist, and Amelia Vizintin – laboratory technician. We formed the nucleus that in time grew bigger and bigger by adding other members to the team.

Other contracts with the industrial platforms in Oltenia region (Slatina, Craiova, Râmnicu-Vâlcea, Ișalnița) followed.

After 1990, we started to investigate a pathology that was very abundant at that time, represented by HIV–AIDS. Samples were obtained from the Pathology Department of “Victor Babeș” Clinical Hospital for Infectious Diseases (former No. 3 Clinical Hospital of Craiova).

From 1992 to 1996, our team joined an international research contract financed by the EU authority for the study of the HIV neuropathology, coordinated by Professor Gray from France and including many researchers from Scotland, Ireland, France and Romania. The relationships that were created allowed us to enter the international scientific world. The results of this study were communicated in many prestigious international meetings in Cork (Ireland) in 1994, Stockholm (Sweden) in 1995, and the final results in Paris in 1996.

In 1998, the Medical School of Craiova with its Dentistry and Pharmacy Faculties became the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Craiova, approved by the Law No. 119/May 1998, that I personally initiated during my mandate in the State Senate as Chief of the Senate Commission for Education.

The funding received from all the contracts allowed us to finance our laboratory, obtain a microtome, and set a new Department for Immunohistochemistry. This laboratory constituted the nucleus for the future Research Center for Microscopic Morphology and Immunology.

The initial group of researchers was constituted of myself, as Head of the Histology Department, and also Laurențiu Mogoanță, Monica Baniță, Adriana Bold, Garoța Mateescu, Nicolae Mirescu, as well as the colleagues from the Pathology Department – Bogdan Zaharia, as head of the department, Maria Florescu, Emil Pleșea, Cristiana Simionescu, Camelia Foarfă, Claudia Georgescu, doctors from other Hospitals in Craiova – Dan Enache, Violeta Comănescu, Carmen Popescu, Mihaela Țenovici, Daniela Drăgnei, and many others.

One of the first research contracts won in a national competition by the newly founded research center was CNCSIS (National University Research Council) contract no. 107, financed by the World Bank, entitled “Morphologic study of the tissues of mesenchymal origin, normal and pathologic”.

From the funds received in this contract, we managed to send around 16 young doctors with scholarships to specialize in immunohistochemistry, immunology, electron microscopy and other domains in many countries in Europe (Germany, France, Greece and Italy). They also helped us develop relationships with many research centers and groups in those countries.
The research center was initially organized in three departments – Histology, Pathology and Immunology. From 2005, other two departments were added: the Department for Medical Services and the Department for Dental Medicine.

The research staff grew progressively in number, adding colleagues from Departments of Molecular Biology, Genetics, Dental Medicine and other specialists in morphologic microscopy in Oltenia (Slatina, Târgu-Jiu, Caracal, Turnu-Severin).

In these 10 years of activity, 47 PhD theses were finished and around 14 research grants were won in national competitions.

Every researcher from the Research Center is an active member of the Romanian Society of Morphology affiliated to the Romanian Medical Association. In 2008, we organized the IXth National Congress of Microscopic Morphology, and we aim to organize its Xth edition in 2012.

Every member of the Research Center published articles in the Romanian Journal of Morphology and Embryology, ISI–Thomson indexed since 2008, a journal with a prestigious Editorial Board headed by Professor Laurențiu Mogoantă as Editor-in-chief.

Every year, in May, we organized a National Symposium with international participation. A Scientific Session was also organized, every year, in the second Thursday of December, and grew over the years reaching a national and international level. We intended and succeeded to set a tradition, especially for the December scientific session, for participation of young researchers like teaching assistants and PhD students together with their coordinators in order to present their scientific work.

This year we had the pleasure to reach and celebrate the 10th Annual Symposium of our Center, and we are proud to say that we honored this anniversary meeting in two ways.

First of all, for the first time in these years, we conferred an international dimension to this symposium, by facilitating the active participation of a group of Bulgarian pathologists by modern video conference system, due to the idea and sustained efforts of Professor Iancu Emil Pleșea and the IT Department of our university.

And second, and the most important, we dedicated this supplement of the Romanian Journal of Morphology and Embryology to this anniversary scientific meeting. All participating researchers from our Center and elsewhere were invited to submit papers with their work and results presented during the scientific sessions. Papers that were edited according to the instructions for authors were reviewed, selected for publication and gathered in this anniversary supplement by the care and efforts of Professor Laurențiu Mogoantă.

In the end, I wish you all great success in your research and academic careers and invite you to join our annual meetings.

With my best regards,

Florin BOGDAN
Professor Emeritus of Histology
Head of the Research Center for Microscopic Morphology and Immunology