



**The Historical Origin of the Term “Meningioma”: The Rise of Nationalistic Neurosurgery**  
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**Introduction**

The historical origin of the “meningioma”-nomenclature unravels interesting social and political aspects about the development of neurosurgery in the late 19th century. The terminology itself was the subject of advancement in the rise of medicine in Continental Europe as a professional social enterprise.

**Methods**

In this study, we delineate the uniqueness of the term “meningioma” as it developed within the historical framework of continental European concepts of tumor genesis, disease states, and neurosurgery as an emerging discipline leading to the culmination of Cushing’s Meningiomas text.



**"Tumeurs Cancéreuses des Méninges"**



Jean Cruveilhier, Courtesy of the University of Iowa Libraries

**Results**

During the intellectual apogee of the French Enlightenment, Antoine Louis published the first known scientific treatise on meningiomas. Like his father, Louis was a renowned military surgeon whose accomplishments were honored with admission to the Académie Royale de Chirurgie(ARC) in 1749. His treatise, “Sur les tumeurs fongueuses de la dure-mère,” appeared in 1774.

The resulting anarchy was eventually quelled through legislation aiming to satisfy Napoleon’s need for qualified military professionals, including physicians and surgeons. These laws laid the foundations for the subsequent flourishing of French medicine throughout the mid-19th-century. Subsequent changes to the “meningioma”-nomenclature were authored by intellectual giants of this post-revolutionary period, e.g. the Limoges-born pathologist, Jean Cruveilhier, known for the term “tumeurs cancéreuses de la dure-mère,” and the work of histopathologists like Lebert who were influenced by Pasteur’s germ theory and Bernard’s experimental medicine.

**Harvey Cushing**



Courtesy of the National Library of Medicine

**Conclusions**

The final development corresponded to the rise of American Neurosurgery as a formal academic discipline in Cushing’s text Meningiomas. This was the next historical period of growth and set the scientific stage for the modern developments in meningioma research and surgery that we employ today.

**Selected References**

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