
Preface

Five years have passed since the first edition of the *Practical Guide to Neck Dissection*, and I must say that the book has brought me great satisfaction. Many colleagues have told me that they keep it locked in the cupboard in the operating theatre to be ready whenever needed. The name of an artery, a suturing procedure, the surgical steps of dissection... If it is true that the surgeon's work starts off from structured medical knowledge and multicentral statistical studies from which guidelines are obtained, it is also true that in the end, it is the empirical work of a craftsman, often carried out individually, in a kind of workshop where the operator has brought together good tools, knowledge of materials, and can rely on the precious help of his colleagues and, perhaps, on a handbook like this one.

The second edition is subtitled “focusing on larynx” and involved the collaboration of Duilio Della Libera, an anatomopathologist with whom I have been working for many years. The reader will be able to appreciate the splendid histological macrosections. We shared the passion for laryngeal oncology with our Maestri Giorgio Carlon and Italo Serafini.

Professor Italo Serafini, who inspired this work, passed away on 20 July 2010. Perhaps it was only good luck that we met such a Maestro when making our way in the profession. Proceeding alone, on a teach-yourself basis, requires great effort, and justified doubts often arise concerning the correctness of the professional path you are taking. You don't sleep well. But when the Maestro takes the stage, it's like getting into a carriage. The journey may still be long and tiring, but it is so satisfying to understand where you went wrong and what you can do to improve. Without a Maestro, it's a bit like walking among the clouds...

Vita brevis, ars longa, occasio praeceps, experimentum periculosum, iudicium difficile is a Latin phrase meaning “Life is short, art is long, opportunity fleeting, experiment dangerous, judgement difficult”.

It is an aphorism by Hippocrates of Kos in which he stresses the importance of studying and the difficulty of diagnostic analysis. It means substantially that in all the arts, one man's life is not sufficient to achieve perfection, which requires the progressive contribution of several generations.

We hope we may be up to the task.

Vittorio Veneto, August 2012

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Practical Guide to Neck Dissection

Focusing on the Larynx

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