
Preface

Milan, Italy, in autumn of 1984: a young student in his 3rd year of the 6-year curriculum at the School of Medicine, University of Milan, I had just started an internship at the 1st Surgical Department, chaired by Giuseppe Pezzuoli, where I met Jannis Spiropoulos from Greece. He was doing his residency in surgery, and with the eagerness of a person who had migrated to find a better life he had already picked up a considerable knowledge of ultrasound and was running a service for the department. Jannis trusted me and I could learn the basics of ultrasound from him. He became my first Master – in fact, without him this book would never have been written.

Then, shortly before graduation, late in 1988, I had the privilege to meet Tito Livraghi, worldwide recognized pioneer of interventional ultrasound and of ablation techniques for liver tumors, the most cited radiologist in the medical literature within the last 60 years: he became my mentor and taught me interventional ultrasound and ultimately I had the honor of co-authoring some important papers with him. He is my second Master, and in fact, without him this book would never have been written.

Having proven my firm intention to complete my residency in surgery, rather than becoming a radiologist, Livraghi introduced me to Masatoshi Makuuchi. I was still a resident in surgery, when in the summer of 1992 I travelled to Matsumoto, Japan, and had the honor to meet Professor Makuuchi in person, the worldwide recognized pioneer of modern liver surgery, living donor liver transplantation, and of intraoperative ultrasound: this encounter should definitely change my life. Having attained his sympathy he arranged for me a prestigious fellowship of the Foundation for the Promotion of Cancer Research, and employed me as Assistant Professor – with patience and trust he taught me to carry out liver surgery and most of the things that I write about in this book. Masatoshi Makuuchi has been my third Master, and truly, without him this book would never have been written.

From the year 2000, back in Italy, it was Natale Olivari who gave me the opportunity to start my own program of liver surgery in his Surgical Department at Lodi, a small town nearby Milan, and in 2004, Marco Montorsi offered me to continue that program at the University of Milan. In the last 15 years – from Tokyo to Milan and Lodi – I have

worked passionately and met other inspiring personalities in my field who supported my program within the national and international surgical communities. Jacques Belghiti, with whom I have had the honor of organizing meetings around the world, has been particularly supportive and I cherish his strong appreciation and continued support, and am particularly grateful of being his friend. Gennaro Nuzzo and Lorenzo Capussotti offered their warm and friendly consideration as I returned to Italy from Japan – their support has helped me to become accepted, respected, and now well established within the Italian surgical community. Henri Bismuth then asked me to coauthor two book chapters with him, which I consider a particular honor.

But this book is also inspired by the many great surgeons and colleagues who I've had the privilege of meeting, sharing time and exchanging ideas with, many of which are now good friends, some having made valuable contributions to this book. All, in their own way, have helped with their trust and efforts and expertise.

My strongest appreciation goes to my beloved mother and my late father: a poor family of workers who always trusted me and always unconditionally supported my studies. Most importantly, the most important person in my life, my wife Chiara, a doctor like me, and mother of our three wonderful children, has provided everything to make this possible: my professional life (the clinic, the many meetings, and ... this book!) has stolen from them and from myself quite many days and nights. To them, I wholeheartedly address my love and recognition.

This book, in the complexity of its contents, is the result of the efforts, talents, and passion of my fellows and of friends who accepted to contribute with their expertise. It is a book focused on a way of interpreting surgery, from the simple act to the more complex procedures, as ready sequence of sophisticated maneuvers aimed to treat a disease, respecting the organ and respecting the patients and their lives: an approach and attitude which has been endowed on me by my master Masatoshi Makuuchi. I see it as part of my responsibility to transmit such wisdom to my fellows, and I hope you will sense this between the lines. The readers, especially the younger readers, may possibly feel initially discouraged by the apparent high degree of complexity of the techniques and maneuvers. For them, I have recalled my personal encounters, which profoundly changed my life, and which I hope will draw out the importance of trust and passion, which feature each of those prominent stages and encounters in my own life....trust, being passionate, and breathing the passion of your masters...if even a glimpse of this is conferred to you by this book, it will already be worth all the effort and a reason to be proud of.

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