

Preface

Hand surgery consists largely of applied anatomy. Therefore, a thorough knowledge of normal anatomy and of possible anatomic variants and biomechanics is indispensable for anyone involved in the surgical or nonsurgical treatment of injured, diseased, or congenitally deformed hands.

Improvements in technique have expanded the possibilities of hand surgery. This in turn has also increased the importance of anatomic details that earlier anatomists regarded as insignificant. Close cooperation between anatomists and clinicians—an idea that first arose in the early 1930s—is necessary to develop an anatomic overview of the hand suitable for clinical use. The hand in particular reveals the fundamental fallacy of the notion that everything in macroscopic anatomy is known, that the structure of the human body is immutable. New findings are published every month. However, most appear in the clinical literature and are contributed by practicing surgeons. In light of this, this book cannot claim to reflect the current state of the art in every detail. We welcome constructive criticism and corrections that can be incorporated into future editions.

This book is intended to bridge the gap between anatomic introductions to topics in orthopedic surgery and specialized reference works. It is aimed at all those who have an interest in the treatment of the hand. Yet it can do more than provide the beginner with basic knowledge; experienced clinicians and clinically minded macroscopic anatomists will find the suggested readings helpful for studying the material in greater depth.

Anatomy is a visually oriented discipline. This calls for a great number of illustrations, and drawings are more readily suited to emphasizing essential features. We have therefore reduced the number of photographs in favor of drawings. Limiting the book to only one print color in addition to black and white admittedly makes it less flexible in its presentations of topographic relationships, and on occasion this will require some imagination on the part of

the reader. However, this technique ensures that the book will remain affordable even for younger health care professionals.

This English edition is aimed at a worldwide readership. It was published on the basis of the German new edition, which came out recently. Since the first German edition the illustrations have been improved, many new drawings included and the literature updated.

We have incorporated the latest nomenclature, especially as defined in the publication *Terminology for Hand Surgery* (2001) by the International Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand (IFSSH) and in *Terminologia Anatomica* (1998). The fast-paced evolution of imaging modalities has made it necessary to replace the respective images or add new ones. New findings occasionally expand our knowledge of anatomy as well. The falciform septum of the interosseous membrane of the forearm and the metacarpal ligament of the thumb are but two examples of structures we have added.

First and foremost, we would like to express our profound thanks to Albrecht Hauff, who became an ardent supporter of our project, Gerhard Kohnle's artistic skill and esthetic insight have left their mark on this book. With great patience, he took pains to accommodate even the authors' most unusual wishes.

Dr. Michael Wachinger managed the book project for the publisher, and we especially thank him and Dr. Cliff Bergman, who managed the English edition, for considering our many wishes. We thank Gert A. Krüger for putting our ideas into technical practice.

It is our hope that this book will help to extend the anatomic knowledge of the hand, this fascinating and so uniquely human organ, and thus improve the treatment that can be given to the many hand patients.

Bonn and Bad Neustadt,
Hans-Martin Schmidt

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