This book was first published in 1989. At that time the speciality of coloproctology was still in its early days. It has since become one of the leading fields in medicine and surgery. Several major new developments and technologies for the management of both colonic and proctological diseases have emerged. This evolution is demonstrated by the huge number of societies, meetings and publications dedicated to the subject. Indeed, coloproctology covers some of the most common human conditions, as well as more rare and unusual diseases. This important and rapid period of change called for a third edition to include all aspects of our multidisciplinary speciality.

Anorectal and Colonic Diseases – A Practical Guide to Their Management has 49 chapters divided into 4 sections, all written by international experts in their field: principles, anal and perianal diseases, colorectal conditions, and specialist conditions. Each chapter finishes with a self-assessment quiz. A DVD is also provided, offering readers the opportunity to observe practical procedures and refine their technical skills. We are particularly greatful to Karel Skala for his efforts in putting together the video material. Altogether, this material should offer practitioners, surgeons, gastroenterologists and all those interested in the field, updated and practical knowledge in the realms of diagnosis and the medical or surgical treatment of the full range of colorectal-anal diseases.

This preface is also the place to pay a great tribute to the late Professor Marc-Claude Marti (1941–2001). It was he who first conceived the book in 1989 and took the initiative to produce a second edition in 1998. Marc-Claude Marti was a real pioneer in both the scientific and political development of coloproctology in Switzerland, as well as in Europe. We would like to dedicate this third edition to him, in recognition of his particular contribution to the creation of a new speciality.

We wish to thank all of the authors for their contributions. A debt of gratitude is also owed to our dear friend John Nicholls from London for agreeing to write the Foreword. The publisher, Springer-Verlag, again enthusiastically supported the idea to edit this volume and provided us with outstanding assistance.

Jean-Claude Givel
Neil Mortensen
Bruno Roche

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