Minimally invasive interventions were a source of controversy as early as the beginning of the 1960s in stone removal. A group of young, aggressive urologists gradually shortened the standard approach to the kidney to a few centimetres, developed special instruments for this purpose, and entered into competition with the general surgeons who were carrying out cholecystectomies via mini-incisions. The arguments – shortening hospital stay, decreasing the need for postoperative pain therapy – were the same, until PNL and ESWL achieved better results.

Age and experience have always been the enemies of progress, but this did not prevent the development of laparoscopic techniques in urology, beginning with the detection of cryptorchid testes and retroperitoneal lymphadenectomy. Ten years ago I counselled one of my most dextrous pupils to avoid laparoscopy. He ignored my advice and is now one of the most sought-after urologists in Belgium.

In the evolution of surgical techniques the wheel of history has often rolled backwards. The widespread use of clamps in intestinal surgery is perhaps one of the most instructive examples of a broad return to conventional techniques, with the newer methods becoming restricted to particular indications.

It is only natural to mistrust a new technique – in this case EERPE – that one cannot perform oneself.

In the field of laparoscopy the investment in robots is so immense that a retreat in the foreseeable future seems unlikely. In the USA – the land of unlimited opportunities – robot-assisted radical prostate surgery has become one of the financial pillars of 500 urological clinics, with up to three operations per day. It thus seems likely that industry will exert more influence than ever on the diffusion of laparoscopic techniques.

Word of mouth, however, remains the strongest influence on individual patients, who gravitate to the centres where satisfaction is highest. Distance and time play an ever-decreasing role in their decisions.

The Centre of Urologic Laparoscopy at the University of Leipzig is among the leading institutions in terms of numbers of patients treated, and is peerless in the number of courses offered each year and the number of participants. This book is thus a product of 10 years’ experience of performing and teaching EERPE. All that has been learned is contained between its covers.

The reader just needs to glance at the chapter on topographical anatomy to become enthralled by the innovative three-dimensional functional depiction of the pelvic organs and their internal innervation. The computer-aided portrayal sets new standards for the future. The succinct text clearly outlines what we already know and what remains to be discovered.

The same is true for all the other chapters. Particular mention should be made of the unrivalled depth of focus of the photographs and Gottfried Müller’s excellent illustrations.

In contrast to other books on this topic, a chapter is dedicated to the prevention and management of complications.

The editors and authors are to be congratulated on a splendid volume. The effort invested in anatomical studies, illustrations and animal experiments exceeds by far that in other comparable titles.

Mainz, March 2007

R. Hohenfellner
Endoscopic/laparoscopic extraperitoneal radical prostatectomy has been established in the literature as an intriguing therapeutic option for the management of carcinoma of the prostate. Endoscopic and robotic approaches have proved to be equally effective for the management of localized prostate cancer. Nerve-sparing endoscopic/laparoscopic and robotic radical prostatectomy should aim to maintain sexual function and restore continence early after surgery without impairing the final oncological outcome.

The advent of laparoscopy and robotics has revitalized the discussion pertaining to the anatomy of the structures surrounding the prostate gland. Despite the different approaches for radical prostatectomy the key to better results is full understanding of the anatomy of the prostate, the bladder neck and the urethra. A special chapter has thus been devoted to the anatomy of the prostate and its surrounding structures.

There is a plethora of urology textbooks describing laparoscopic procedures in different ways. The present book is more an atlas than a conventional textbook. Our main goal is to guide the urologist step by step through the procedure, aiming to make this highly standardized technique reproducible. Every procedure is presented with numerous endoscopic images and diagrams so that the reader can fully comprehend the different surgical steps. Complications and useful tips and tricks for their management are described in detail.

We would like to thank Jens Mondry and Gottfried Müller for their significant contributions with regard to computer imaging and design creation, respectively. Furthermore, we would like to express our gratitude to all contributing authors for their significant scientific input.

Jens-Uwe Stolzenburg
Matthew T. Gettman
Evangelos N. Liatsikos
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>a</td>
<td>external iliac artery</td>
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<tr>
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<td>abdominal wall</td>
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<tr>
<td>bl</td>
<td>bladder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bm</td>
<td>bladder mucosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bn</td>
<td>bladder neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bo</td>
<td>bladder outlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bp</td>
<td>bulb of penis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bu</td>
<td>bulbourethralis glands (Cowper's glands)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ca</td>
<td>common iliac artery</td>
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<tr>
<td>dl</td>
<td>detrusor lamellae</td>
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<td>dv</td>
<td>Denonvillier's fascia</td>
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<td>endopelvic fascia</td>
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<td>epigastric vessels</td>
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<td>la</td>
<td>levator ani muscle</td>
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<td>nvb</td>
<td>neurovascular bundle</td>
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<td>obturator externus muscle</td>
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<tr>
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<td>seminal vesicle</td>
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<td>urethra</td>
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<tr>
<td>ul</td>
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<td>ureter</td>
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<td>urethral sphincter</td>
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<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>external iliac vein</td>
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<tr>
<td>va</td>
<td>(superior) vesical artery</td>
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<tr>
<td>vd</td>
<td>vas deferens</td>
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<td>vesical sphincter</td>
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Endoscopic extraperitoneal radical prostatectomy: evolution of the technique and experience with 2400 cases.

OBJECTIVES We report the outcome of 2400 endoscopic extraperitoneal radical prostatectomy (EERPE) cases performed in three institutions, with emphasis on the evolution of the EERPE technique. Endoscopic Extraperitoneal Transvesicocapsular Adenomectomy of Prostate (EETAP): A New Operative Method with an Innovative Learning Protocol for Its Performance. Reduced Port Extraperitoneal Laparoscopic Radical Prostatectomy. The data demonstrate that endoscopic extraperitoneal radical prostatectomy can be performed with efficacy and results equal to those of laparoscopic radical prostatectomy, while providing the benefits of a totally extraperitoneal approach. Therefore, totally endoscopic extraperitoneal radical prostatectomy represents a technical improvement of laparoscopic technique because it completely obviates intra-abdominal complications and combines the advantages of minimally invasive laparoscopy and the retropubic open approach. PMID: 12771721.