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It is a rare and charming treat to find a single-author text that is comprehensive, filled with decades of insights, and illustrated by the same hand, but Dr Neven Olivari’s *Practical Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery* is just that. Dr Olivari is well recognized for his contribution to the development of breast reconstruction with the latissimus flap in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as well as his contribution to oculoplastic surgery in the treatment of ophthalmic manifestations of hyperthyroidism. His text on the latter subject is regarded as an authoritative work. In this text, Dr Olivari demonstrates his mastery of reconstructive surgery beyond the orbit and the breast.

In the preface, the author highlights the pitch of the text, which is directed at junior plastic surgeons-in-training as well as more experienced surgeons looking for ideas in problem cases. The layout starts with a chapter on the history of plastic surgery, followed a chapter on general principles. Chapter 3 covers head and neck surgery, Chapter 4 discusses the chest wall, Chapter 5 addresses abdomen gluteal and perineum regions, Chapter 6 highlights the upper and lower extremities, and Chapter 7 is about burns. The publication does not aim to be a complete textbook of plastic surgery but offers a glimpse into common practice and demonstrates, through photographs and illustrations, “tried-and-tested” solutions to common or important reconstructive problems. The chapters are laid out nicely, such that the preoperative photographs are supplemented by useful illustrations of technique, and postoperative results are always shown.

The first chapter provides some interesting insights into the techniques that laid the historical foundations for modern plastic surgery. Chapter 2 (on basic principles) begins with a brief classification of flaps, but this section fails to mention muscle flaps. Other basic and common flaps are covered well with nice illustrations. There is then a discussion of skin tumors, which is concise but does fall short in not discussing the issue of excision margins with sufficient clarity or accuracy in relation to current guidelines. Chapter 3 was my favorite chapter; in it, the author outlines reconstructive solutions to various defects, such as challenging nasal reconstructions and eyelid tumors, as well blepharoplasty and ptosis correction. The insights into facial cosmetic surgery are also good, but they mostly cover traditional techniques without mention of newer or minimally invasive techniques. The chapter continues with insights into endocrine ocular abnormalities and a section on clefts, with the latter limited to common surgical interventions. Unfortunately, it does not cover any other aspects of cleft surgery such as classification, nomenclature, assessment, and speech. The chapter continues with a discussion of local flaps for reconstruction of facial, lip, and periorbital defects. These sections are good but lack any clear structure, giving the general feel of a continuous series of cases, rather than a structured thesis on reconstruction. The chapter also includes descriptions of free-flap reconstructions, operative solutions for facial nerve palsy, otoplasty and ear reconstructions, and reconstruction of the hair-bearing scalp.

Despite being a book with 1000 pages, the text is more suited to general reading than as a specific source of reference or a concise encyclopedia. Much of its size is taken up with illustrations, so it should not intimidate the casual
reader. Indeed, browsing through the pictures will provide interest and inspiration for occasional “flick-through” reading.

In summary, this text is more for the aficionado of plastic surgery than the surgeon-in-training looking to pass an examination. Some of the content, such as the chapter on melanoma, does not conform to recognized, internationally-accepted guidelines and could land the junior surgeon in hot water if reproduced in the context of an examination. Within its pages, tried and tested solutions to common reconstructive dilemmas are well described and beautifully drawn. The strength of the book lies in the solutions to reconstructive challenges described within, which are often innovative in nature. Perhaps the book may have benefitted from greater involvement of a native English speaker, as sometimes the reader may feel that he or she has lost the delicate nuances because of contextual anomalies. This small criticism aside, I would recommend this text to all connoisseurs of plastic surgery, whatever their interests or subspecialty.

Disclosures
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