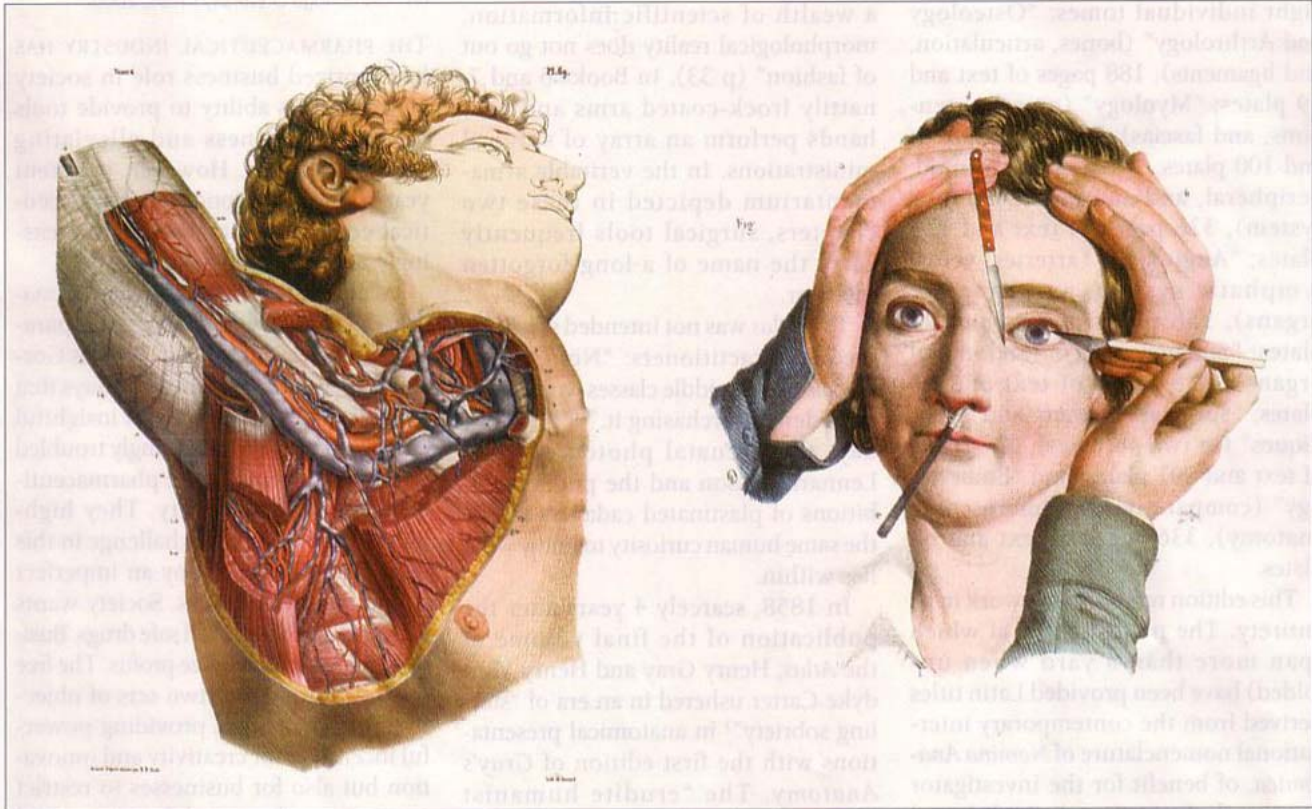


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Left: Veins of the axillary region. Right: Surgery of the eye and lacrimal pathways. From *Atlas of Human Anatomy and Surgery: The Complete Colored Plates of 1831-1854*, by Jean Marc Bourguery and Nicholas Henri Jacob, edited by Jean-Marie Le Minor and Henri Sick, Los Angeles, Calif, Taschen, 2006. Reproduced by permission.

Anatomy, Surgery, History

Atlas of Human Anatomy and Surgery: The Complete Colored Plates of 1831-1854, by Jean Marc Bourguery (1797-1849) and Nicolas Henri Jacob (1782-1871), originally *Atlas D'Anatomie Humaine et de Chirurgie*, in English, French, and German, edited by Jean-Marie Le Minor and Henri Sick, 714 pp, with illus, large format, \$200, ISBN 3-8228-3129-8, Los Angeles, Calif, Taschen, 2005.

Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.

Ezekiel 37:5-6

THE *ATLAS OF HUMAN ANATOMY AND SURGERY* of Bourguery and Jacob is a colorful bouquet of scientifically accurate surgicoanatomical plates, as

alive today as 150 years ago. It is a big book (12 × 16 × 3 inches), and even without the original 2108 pages of scientific text, this volume of 725 plates representing 1439 figures weighs in at a bounteous 14 pounds.

The trilingual (French, English, and German) preface introduces Jean Marc Bourguery, whose story of career changes, frustration in competition for academic postings, loss of a mentor, and never-ending search for support inside and outside the university has a decidedly contemporary resonance.

The early 19th century witnessed the fortuitous confluence of a burgeoning interest in anatomic science in the Parisian art academies, an availability of cadaveric material, and “a

novel and yet already a perfectly mastered technique” (preface, p 27)—lithography.¹ Nicolas Henri Jacob and his artistic collaborators, salon artists and draftsmen (including Charlotte Hublier, a rare woman in a male field, the student, collaborator, and wife of Jacob), were able to progress from monochrome illustration in the first volume of 1831-1832, to pattern coloring in the first edition, to chromolithography by the second edition of 1866. In 1832, Bourguery’s mentor Georges Cuvier stated, “One might say that without the art of drawing, natural history and anatomy as they exist today, would have been impos-

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sible" (p 25). How right was the great Cuvier.

The *Atlas* was originally published over a span of more than 20 years, in eight individual tomes: "Osteology and Arthrology" (bones, articulation, and ligaments), 188 pages of text and 59 plates; "Myology" (muscles, tendons, and fascias), 138 pages of text and 100 plates; "Neurology" (central, peripheral, and autonomic nervous system), 326 pages of text and 114 plates; "Angiology" (arteries, veins, lymphatic system, and thoracic organs), 158 pages of text and 98 plates; "Splanchnology" (abdominal organs), 336 pages of text and 96 plates; "Surgical Anatomy and Techniques" (in two volumes), 627 pages of text and 191 plates; and "Embryology" (comparative and microscopic anatomy), 336 pages of text and 67 plates.

This edition retains the artwork in its entirety. The plates (some of which span more than a yard when unfolded) have been provided Latin titles derived from the contemporary international nomenclature of *Nomina Anatomica*, of benefit for the investigator utilizing the Latin, French, English, and German indexes.

The original text of the *Atlas* encompassed the broad themes of descriptive anatomy, surgical anatomy and operative medicine, and philosophical anatomy. Like the Father of Anatomy, Herophilus of Chalcedon (334-280 BC), "the first man to search into the causes of disease,"² Bourguery found *la grande synthèse* in the study of anatomy: "We hope to be able to show how knowledge of the organism should serve as the basis of ethics, legislation and political economy" (p 32). Although recondite for the contemporary reader, Bourguery's views on ontogeny and phylogeny should be considered in light of his studies under Jean Baptiste de Lamarck and the influence of Joseph de Maistre.

Editors Le Minor and Sick provide a valid assessment of the descriptive anatomy plates: "The illustrations, based on original dissections, have

remained very modern; the result of rigorous observation and accurate depiction, these anatomical illustrations continue to convey, even today, a wealth of scientific information: morphological reality does not go out of fashion" (p 33). In Books 6 and 7, nattily frock-coated arms and bare hands perform an array of surgical ministrations. In the veritable armamentarium depicted in these two chapters, surgical tools frequently carry the name of a long-forgotten inventor.

The *Atlas* was not intended solely for medical practitioners: "Non-professionals of the middle classes would have considered purchasing it."^{1(p 88)} In our day, the prenatal photography of Lennart Nilsson and the public exhibitions of plastinated cadavers satisfy the same human curiosity to know what lies within.

In 1858, scarcely 4 years after the publication of the final volume of the *Atlas*, Henry Gray and Henry Vandyke Carter ushered in an era of "sterling sobriety"³ in anatomical presentations with the first edition of *Gray's Anatomy*. The "erudite humanist picture-books of anatomy"³ of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment have yielded to the "plain technical textbook"³ of today. But who knows, perhaps the contemporary reader of Bourguery's noble book will experience once more an admiration and respect for the giants of yesterday, while wondering at the temerity of "scientists" who denigrate Anatomy.

A bibliophile's delight, the *Atlas of Human Anatomy and Surgery* will please lovers of art and history. I recommend this excellent book for all medical libraries.