

Atlas of Human Anatomy and Surgery

The Complete Coloured Plates of 1831-1854

JM Bourgerie & NH Jacob. Eds Jean-Marie Le Minor & Henri Sick

Taschen

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When it first appeared in 1854, Jean Marc Bourgerie's *Atlas* was a major milestone in medical history, and it remains the most comprehensive and beautiful of anatomical treatises. The hand-coloured lithographs were by Bourgerie's friend, Nicolas Henri Jacob, who had studied with the French painter Jacques Louis David. The images, which were done life-size, are exceptional for their clarity and vivid colouring. As the editors say in their introduction: "Unlike the descriptive text, which has lost much of its interest for today's reader, 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."

In its original form, the *Atlas* comprised eight volumes of text with 2,108 pages and 725 plates, representing 3,750 figures. The development of lithography meant that surgeons were able to own detailed diagrams of body parts without having to refer to a central medical library. For the present edition, the descriptions of the plates have been completely rewritten to reflect modern idiom and medical science. All text is given in French, English and German. This is a magnificent addition to the Taschen facsimile reprints. It's so massive it almost requires a lectern. Highly recommended for all those curious about the history of surgery.

Edward Young