

## Atlas of Human Anatomy and Surgery: The Complete Coloured Plates of 1831–1854

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<b>REVIEWER</b>	John Lowry
<b>STAR RATING</b>	*****

This book is essentially a tribute to Jean Babtiste Marc Bougery (1797–1849) who together with Nicolas Henri Jacob (1782–1871), a student of the French painter Jacques Louis David, wrote and illustrated an eight-volume treatise *Atlas of Anatomy* over two decades, commencing in 1831, the final one of which was not published until five years after Bougery's death.

This reprint, reproduced from an original copy in the possession of Simon Finch, includes the complete set of 726 colour plates. It is beautifully produced in large folio format on high-quality paper and delivered in an outer protective cardboard carrying case. The press release by no means exaggerates the fact that 'Jacob's spectacular hand-coloured, life-size lithographs are remarkable for their clarity, colour and aesthetic appeal, reflecting a combination of direct laboratory observation and illustrative research'. Indeed, few would argue that 'the images are to this day unsurpassed in anatomical illustration'. Their accuracy, even taking into consideration an element of artistic and presentational licence, is most impressive. I guess they would even be valued by the modern medical student and basic surgical trainee, perhaps now less privileged than earlier generations who had the opportunity to study anatomy in greater depth.

The text is written in English, French and German and, although not repeated for each, is relatively simplistic and even easy to follow for the non-linguist. It is divided into eight 'tomes', each representing a summary of a volume of the full Atlas. The earlier sections include a technical description of the way that the lithographs were produced and the Atlas developed. The chapters then progress topographically through osteology; muscles, tendons and fasciae; the nervous system; angiology and the heart; and the thoracic and abdominal regions.

However, I found the later equally impressively illustrated sections even more enticing with descriptions of surgical instruments and techniques, including methods of holding a scalpel, before progressing through operative procedures of the day. These ranged from control of haemorrhage, for example by external compression apparatus; insertion of drains; phlebotomy and the extraction of teeth through removal of sequestra; amputations; surgery of the ear, nose and throat including cleft lip and palate; tracheostomy; management of herniae; procedures on the urethra and prostate; hysterectomy and Caesarean section. Finally, there are sections on comparative anatomy, embryology and histology, including microscopy of the blood.

The book is aimed not only at those in the medical field but also artists, students and those interested in the study of the human body. Clearly, it would be a most desirable acquisition, especially as for the medical historian it provides a glimpse as the publishers state of 'a monumental work of the 19th century'. At £100, it represents extremely good value and is most attractive.