

# Book Reviews

## Auriculotherapy

Raphael Nogier (Translated by Peter Beauclerk)  
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Auriculotherapy is the English translation of Raphael Nogier's 2006 French language book of the same name. Raphael Nogier is the son of the late Paul Nogier, the originator of auriculotherapy. Since Paul Nogier's death in 1996, Raphael has further developed his father's work and continues to teach auriculotherapy and practise medicine in Lyon, France. Auriculotherapy is a clinical handbook aimed at clinicians who have previously been exposed to the principles and practice of auriculotherapy. This is not a TCM book. Indeed the usual audience for this work in France are western medical doctors, and this is evident throughout the book in the way various conditions are categorised and discussed.

The first half of the book is a basic introduction to auriculotherapy. The different types of auricular points (pressure sensitive points and neurovascular points) are discussed, followed by the anatomy and innervation of the auricle. The spine and nervous system is located on the auricle followed by the mapping of tissues by their embryonic mesodermal, endodermal and ectodermal origins. Master points are identified and the methods of point detection and then treatment are outlined. Absent is any discussion of the function or indications for individual points. The first half of the book concludes with a repertoire of 25 common conditions, including tobacco addiction treatment, common musculoskeletal complaints, infertility,

anxiety and asthma. Raphael Nogier has a particular interest in food allergies and runs seminars on identifying allergens using the VAS pulse and substance test rings (not discussed in this volume). It is no surprise then that the need to identify food allergies and remove the offending foods from the diet is a frequent commentary in many of these conditions.

The second half of the book delves superficially into the intricacies of auricular medicine, which will be unfamiliar to many TCM practitioners. In 1968 Paul Nogier discovered the Vascular Auricular Sign, or VAS pulse as it is usually called. The VAS pulse led to a deeper exploration of the auricle and new diagnostic and therapeutic techniques. The use of these methods is usually referred to as auricular medicine rather than auriculotherapy.

Also in the second half of the book the three phase relationships are discussed, along with point locations on the posterior surface of the ear. Geometric point relationships, alignment of points and the prioritisation of points for treatment are explained, along with the VAS pulse. It is noteworthy that Nogier states that this is a very difficult pulse quality to master. The principles of cutaneous photoperception and their relationship to auricular diagnosis is covered next. The seven Nogier frequencies along with their roles in diagnosis and treatment are outlined.

The treatment of three conditions which draw on the intricacies of part two are then briefly considered, namely peripheral neuropathies, fibromyalgia and depressive disorders. The ability to reliably identify the VAS pulse is essential to the utilisation of the material presented in part two. Appendices include a glossary, recommendations for special equipment and supplies and recommendations for further reading.

This work's greatest strength is also its greatest weakness. The book is presented in an easy-to-follow outline style with illustrations. Indeed the first half of the book is reminiscent of lecture notes I made when attending Raphael Nogier's introductory lectures in Lyon in 2000. This outline style allows a lot of territory to be covered in a small volume and facilitates finding key information. This makes the book an ideal companion for a course on auriculotherapy. This outline style also means the work is short on detail and explanation. This lack of depth would soon frustrate a keen student who would seek further information from one of the volumes discussed later. Similarly, a novice without some hands-on instruction would find insufficient detail to make much use of the concepts of the second half.

Nogier's Auriculotherapy should be compared to Brian Frank's Auricular Medicine and Auricular Therapy: A Practical Approach (Author house, 2007), and Terry Oleson's Auriculotherapy

Manual: Chinese and Western Systems of Ear Acupuncture (3rd edition, Churchill Livingstone, 2002). Each of these books contains a preface by Raphael Nogier and both authors studied under the late Paul Nogier. Brian Frank is a Texan anaesthetist, pain management specialist and medical acupuncturist, and Terry Oleson is a Los Angeles psychologist and auriculotherapist.

Frank's text is written in a narrative style and would appeal to those seeking a more detailed explanation of the Nogier work, especially the concepts presented in the second half regarding auricular medicine. Frank gives a more thorough description of locations of points in all three phases and notes on clinical considerations for each point. A useful chapter on blockages to healing is provided and the important concept of cerebral laterality is discussed more thoroughly than Nogier. The second half of Frank's

book introduces auricular medicine, and protocols for both basic and advanced auricular medicine treatment are given. The ability to reliably identify the VAS pulse is essential to utilising the advanced ideas presented in Frank's work as well; while it fleshes out the detail, the second part of this work is also more suited to clinicians with some previous training in the European style of auriculotherapy.

Oleson's book is a compendium of western (Nogier style) auriculotherapy and Chinese style ear acupuncture. A comprehensive overview of the development of each system along with their similarities and differences are presented. The principles of auricular medicine are comprehensively addressed, offering further explanation than in Nogier's volume. The tone of Frank's and Nogier's books is very much of clinicians explaining their work.

Oleson's in contrast is more academic, ensuring that all of the territory is well documented. Arguably the most valuable feature of this book is the comprehensive repertoire which offers a good starting point for the treatment of over 250 conditions using both Chinese and European point selections.

Each of these books has a place on the shelf of the enthusiast of auriculotherapy. Nogier's is a quick reference and course companion; Frank's offers a deeper understanding of the intricacies of point indications and auricular medicine; Oleson's allows the user to dip into sections of interest, whether Chinese or European style, and find inspiration for point selection.

*Reviewed by Stephen Janz*