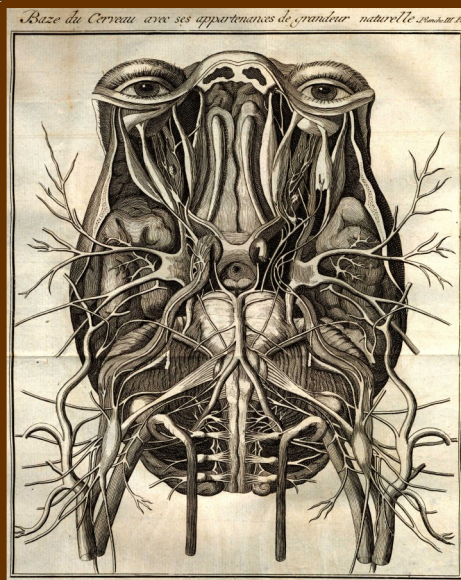


Notes from the John Martin Rare Book Room September 2012

CLAUDE NICOLAS LE CAT (1700-1768). *Traité des sens*. Nouvelle ed. Amsterdam: Chez J. Wetstein, 1744.



Le Cat, a man of many interests, was one of France's foremost surgeons and researchers. Le Cat was interested in the physiology of the nervous system. He was a contemporary of Haller and incorrectly believed, contrary to Haller, that the dura mater and arachnoid were the seat of sensation. Haller first clearly localized the functions of sensation and motion in the brain and determined that sensation and muscular contraction were mediated by the nerves. In keeping with theories of

his day, Le Cat postulated that the nerve force was a fluid which passed through tiny canals within the nerves. Le Cat opposed Haller's doctrine of irritability even though he reported in his essay some of the same results as Haller. Le Cat stated that his clinical experience led him to believe that the brain tissue possesses significant sensitivity which, of course, it does not. The book's six sections include an introduction to sensation, touch, taste, smell, hearing, and vision.



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