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| 1. Record Nr. | UNINA9910973614603321 |
| Autore | Ochs Sidney |
| Titolo | A history of nerve functions : from animal spirits to molecular mechanisms // Sidney Ochs |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | Cambridge : , : Cambridge University Press, , 2004 |
| ISBN | 1-107-14138-9 1-280-54118-0 9786610541188 0-511-21389-1 0-511-21568-1 0-511-21031-0 0-511-31396-9 0-511-54635-1 0-511-21387-5 |
| Edizione | [1st ed.] |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (ix, 438 pages) : digital, PDF file(s) |
| Disciplina | 573.8/5/09 |
| Soggetti | Axonal transport - History Nerves - History Neurology - History |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Note generali | Title from publisher's bibliographic system (viewed on 05 Oct 2015). |
| Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references (p. 367-420) and index. |
| Nota di contenuto | COVER; HALF-TITLE; TITLE; COPYRIGHT; CONTENTS; PREFACE; 1 INTRODUCTION: GREEK SCIENCE AND THE RECOGNITION OF NERVE AS A CHANNEL; 2 GALEN'S PHYSIOLOGY OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM; 3 NERVE, BRAIN, AND SOUL IN THE MIDDLE AGES; 4 RENAISSANCE AND THE NEW PHYSIOLOGY; 5 NEW PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL MODELS OF NERVE IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT; 6 NEW SYSTEMATIZATIONS OF NERVE FUNCTION IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT; 7 ELECTRICITY AS THE AGENT OF NERVE ACTION; 8 NERVE FIBER FORM AND TRANSFORMATION; 9 WALLERIAN DEGENERATION: EARLY AND LATE PHASES; 10 NERVE REGENERATION; 11 CHARACTERIZATION OF AXOPLASMIC TRANSPORT 12 MOLECULAR MODELS OF TRANSPORT13 ACTIONS OF NEUROTOXINS AND NEUROPATHIC CHANGES RELATED TO TRANSPORT; 14 |

PURPOSEFUL REFLEXES AND INSTINCTIVE BEHAVIOR; 15 NEURAL EVENTS RELATED TO LEARNING AND MEMORY; 16 EPILOGUE: WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE RELATION OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM TO MIND; BIBLIOGRAPHY; INDEX

Sommario/riassunto

Recent developments have extended our knowledge of the basic functions of nerves: notably, the demonstration of the mechanism within nerve fibers which transports a wide range of essential materials. In order to understand how this discovery occurred, it is necessary to examine its history. The story begins in ancient Greece when nerves were conceived of as channels through which animal spirits carried sensory impressions to the brain. As science developed, the discoveries of various physical and chemical agents supplanted the agency of animal spirits until the molecular machinery of transport was recognized. In this fascinating and complete history, Sidney Ochs begins with a chronological look at this path of discovery, followed in the second half by a thematic approach wherein the author describes the electrical nature of the nerve impulse, fiber form and its changes in degeneration and regeneration, reflexes, learning, memory and other higher functions in which transport participates.
