

**Essai metaphysique, physique et phisiologistique
relativement à la découverte de M. Mesmer, 1786**

1786

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American Philosophical Society
105 South Fifth Street
Philadelphia, PA, 19106
215-440-3400
manuscripts@amphilsoc.org

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Summary Information

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- Mesmer, Franz Anton, 1734-1815

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Other Descriptive Information

This is a handwritten essay on Franz Mesmer and his claims to have healing and other metaphysical powers. Mesmer is today thought of as an early user of hypnosis. Throughout the 1770s and 1780s, he captivated French society. Marie Antoinette was particularly interested in his abilities. Finally, King Louis convened a scientific body in 1784 to examine the claims of Mesmer and his disciples. Benjamin Franklin, still in France as an American envoy, headed the committee, which debunked Mesmerism. The

report can be found in the Papers of Benjamin Franklin and in the Diary of Benjamin Franklin Bache, both of which are at the APS.

This essay, written in French in 1786, came after this committee's report. Mesmer still had wide appeal and was living in London at the time. This rather long essay (250 pages) offers a detailed analysis of Mesmerism and the possible scientific reasons for its purported powers.