

Re: The origin of science

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In article <d1sk51\$84c@odds.stat.purdue.edu>, Herman Rubin <hrrubin@odds.stat.purdue.edu> wrote:

>

>*Did science flourish any more in Greece than in Egypt or
>Babylonia or India or China? In fact, the Greeks tended
>to avoid observational science, believing that it could
>all be deduced logically.*

I thought there were two streams of greek science, one of them being the one you describe, this branch eventually finding its greatest expression with Aristotle, but also a second stream that died out which →was← experimentalist. Erastosthenes and others who had an empirical, observational, and experimental approach. (Erastosthenes measured the circumference of the Earth by measuring the distance from Aswan to Alexandria, having verified that the sun cast no shadows at the summer solstice in the former and measuring the angle from the vertical in Alexandria at the solstice.

>*What the Greeks did was to introduce the idea of proceeding
>from axioms to conclusions.*

That too... A lot of the previous achievements seem to have been misunderstood by the Romans (or simply ignored since they couldn't quite "get" it; Pliny completely mangles the account of Erastosthenes measurement, for example).

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"It's not denial. I'm just very selective about
what I accept as reality."

--- Calvin ("Calvin and Hobbes")

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