

Miller

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 Abstract: An examination of the activities of the Royal Society of London during the 18th century. according to conventional wisdom a relatively fallow period for an institution in the doldrums. The reasons for this low level of esteem are traced to lax criteria for membership, poor leadership, and a shift to indiscriminate eclectic concern with natural curiosities and antiquarianism. The society had become a kind of holding company managing the representation of various groups and institutions and focusing on influence and patronage. The eventual preeminence of experimental science was a political achievement, not a historical given, and the Royal Society of the 18th century played a role in encouraging such activities.
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- loose structure & standards for membership - admitted dilettante & welcomed virtuosi (up to end of 18th c.).
 - collection & interest in curiosities often intertwined w/ experimental science.
 John Heilbron (during Newton's presidency: "such matters [monsters & knickknacks] made a constant noise against which on such a small signal, the concern of active members of the R.S. w/ subject of physics" (157)
 - overlap between R.S. & Society of Antiquaries.
 natural φ & vs. experimental. Physics @ R.S. during Newton's Presidency. (1983), 4.
- there were seen by some to be complementary in methodology.
 Ypt there was a strong move toward more experienced methods & stricter membership standards.