Democritus Encyclopedia Article

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Democritus

c. 460-c. 370 B.C.

Greek philosopher, best known for his atomic theory, who also contributed to the study of geometry. It was Democritus who first stated that the volume of a cone is one-third that of a cylinder with the same base and height, and that the same relationship exists for a pyramid and prism. Half a century later, Eudoxus of Cnidus (c. 408-c. 355 B.C.) proved this proposition. Among Democritus's mathematical writings were *On Numbers, On Geometry, On Tangencies, On Mappings,* and *On Irrationals.* All these works have been lost.