



Openness, Secrecy, Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Renaissance

Pamela O. Long

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In today's world of intellectual property disputes, industrial espionage, and book signings by famous authors, one easily loses sight of the historical nature of the attribution and ownership of texts. In *Openness, Secrecy, Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, Pamela Long combines intellectual history with the history of science and technology to explore the culture of authorship. Using classical Greek as well as medieval and Renaissance European examples, Long traces the definitions, limitations, and traditions of intellectual and scientific creation and attribution. She examines these attitudes as they pertain to the technical and the practical. Although Long's study follows a chronological development, this is not merely a general work. Long is able to examine events and sources within their historical context and locale. By looking at Aristotelian ideas of Praxis, Techne, and Episteme. She explains the tension between craft and ideas, authors and producers. She discusses, with solid research and clear prose, the rise, wane, and resurgence of priority in the crediting and lionizing of authors. Long illuminates the creation and re-creation of ideas like "trade secrets," "plagiarism," "mechanical arts," and "scribal culture." Her historical study complicates prevailing assumptions while inviting a closer look at issues that define so much of our society and thought to this day. She argues that "a useful working definition of *authorship* permits a gradation of meaning between the poles of authority and originality," and guides us through the term's nuances with clarity rarely matched in a historical study.

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