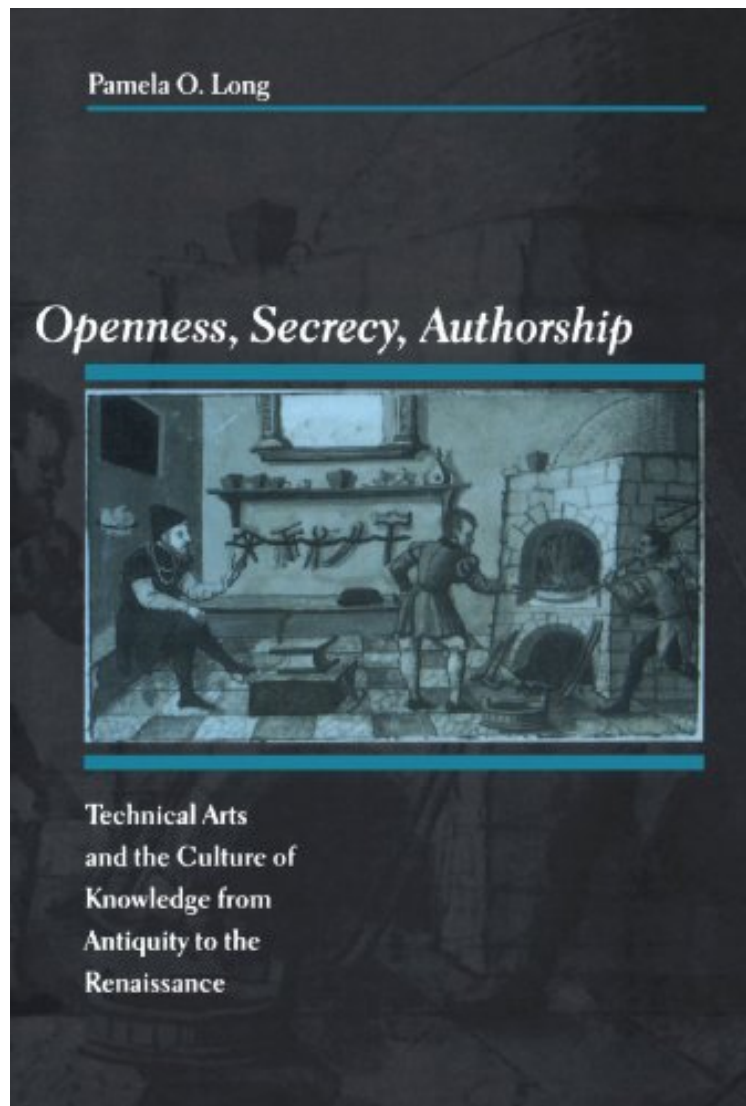


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# Openness, Secrecy, Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Renaissance

*Pamela O. Long*

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## Renaissance:

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.

"In our well-defined world of classicists, medievalists, and early modernists, books like *Openness, Secrecy, Authorship* have become increasingly rare. Pamela Long, ignoring all those unspoken caveats about periodization has courageously gone where few others dare to go by crafting an argument that extends from antiquity to the Renaissance and beyond." (Andre Wakefield *Technology and Culture*) "This thorough and learned book is a significant addition to our knowledge of artisanal culture and writing, the history of authorship, the history of the book, and the history of science. It thus belongs on the bookshelf of scholars in a wide variety of fields." (Kevin Dunn *American Historical Journal*) "A historical argument of sweeping scale... In considering the shifting notions of openness and secrecy with respect to technical knowledge, and the varying styles and rewards of technical authorship over many centuries, Long sheds greater light on the fruitful interactions between craft practitioners, learned scholars, and the patrons who supported both... An engaging and detailed history of technical authorship." (Eric H. Ash *Early Science and Medicine*) "Long's book inaugurates a new standard in the ongoing effort to breach field boundaries in pursuit of historical knowledge. It represents a welcome addition to the ongoing discussion and revision of renaissance intellectual history." (*Sixteenth Century Journal*) "Long discusses above all the ways in which practical know-how and discursive traditions of knowledge have interwoven with each other to produce (just over the temporal horizon the seventeenth-century experimental philosophy mentioned in the book's 'Epilogue')." (Peter Dear *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*) "Through insightful interpretation of her sources, Long demonstrates how written texts can, in fact, provide evidence of secrecy. In the process, she provides a nuanced understanding of the relationship between knowledge, texts, power, and work." (Beverly Sauer *Renaissance Quarterly*) "This important study examines the roles and implications for technical fields of what we would now call 'intellectual property,' from antiquity through the Renaissance. Much has been made, and rightly so, about changes in attitudes and access to technological knowledge and innovations during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries... To identify, examine, and explain such changes over a broad span of time requires extensive, broad investigation and careful source reading. Long demonstrates both in a work that repays careful reading." (Ann E. Moyer *Speculum*) "A fascinating overview of an enormous variety of writings in technical, craft and practical traditions from antiquity to the early modern period." (*British Journal for the History of Science*) "Long's book revises several received views of attitudes to secrecy and ownership of craft traditions and it also contributes to the ongoing investigation of the relationship of craft traditions in the emergence of the new philosophy (what came to be known as 'science') in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In both these areas, it provides new information and a new approach. This book will appeal to historians of science and technology, and it is a significant addition to literature in these fields." (Pamela H. Smith, Pomona College, Claremont) From the Publisher "Long's book revises several received views of attitudes to secrecy and ownership of craft traditions and it also contributes to the ongoing investigation of the relationship of craft traditions in the emergence of the new philosophy (what came to be known as 'science') in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In both these areas, it provides new information and a new approach. This book will appeal to historians of science and technology, and it is a significant addition to literature in these fields." Pamela H. Smith, Pomona College, Claremont "I am deeply impressed by her research, by the range of her work, as well as by the depth of understanding she has achieved. It is rare enough to find someone who has a working knowledge of even one of the many writers she discusses to find that she can work with such a range of materials and not become superficial in the least is quite unusual. A worthwhile study." Bert S. Hall, professor at the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology in Toronto

and author of *Weapons and Warfare in Renaissance Europe; Gunpowder, Technology, and Tactics* About the Author Pamela O. Long is a historian who has taught at Barnard College, St. Mary's College of Maryland, and Johns Hopkins University. She has been a fellow at the Folger Institute for Renaissance and Eighteenth Century Studies, a Senior Fellow at the Dibner Institute for the History of Science and Technology at M.I.T, an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Post-Doctoral Rome Prize fellow at the American Academy in Rome, and a fellow at the Davis Center at Princeton University. Her articles have appeared in *Isis*, *Technology and Culture*, and elsewhere. She is the editor of *Science and Technology in Medieval Society*; and the author of *Technology, Society and Culture in Late Medieval and Renaissance Europe, 1300-1600*; and *Technology and Society in the Medieval Centuries: Byzantium, Islam and the West, 500-1300*.