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The Tradition Of Technology: Landmarks Of Western Technology In The Collections Of The Library Of Congress (Distributed For The Library Of Congress)



Synopsis

The collections of the Library of Congress include first editions works by many of the best-known names in the history of technology--among them Gutenberg, Fulton, Watt, Marconi, Leeuwenhoek, Mercator, Fahrenheit, Daguerre, Bell, Goddard, Babbage, and Wright. Seminal works of Greece and Rome, as well as technical works by such men of science as Galileo, Boyle, Huygens, Kepler, Leibniz, Franklin, and Van Newman, further enrich the library's holdings. In *The Tradition of Technology* Leonard C. Bruno describes in detail more than 350 significant works from this vast collection, conveying both the excitement of first discovery and the distinctly human aspects behind each technological achievement. Richly illustrated with 240 photographs, engravings, reproductions, and maps (eleven in color), this monumental guide offers a comprehensive and authoritative tour through the library, as well as a sweeping survey of the history of technology, from Greek and Roman times through the late twentieth century. In addition to presenting the works of scientific greats, Bruno also describes the accomplishments of lesser known individuals, such as the fourteenth-century poetess Christine de Pisan, who was an informed source on classical warfare; the Roman cook Apicius, who offers a glimpse into the cooking and eating habits of Rome's elite; Francesco di Giorgio, a painter, sculptor, architect, and engineer who was a precursor of Leonardo; and Oliver Evans, America's first real technological genius. He also relates the technological discoveries of persons better known in other fields--including Geoffrey Chaucer on the astrolabe, Albrecht Dürer on fortification, Niccolò Machiavelli on warfare, René Descartes on the microscope, and Blaise Pascal on the barometer and calculating machine.

Book Information

Series: Distributed for the Library of Congress

Hardcover: 366 pages

Publisher: Library of Congress (October 24, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0844408883

ISBN-13: 978-0844408880

Product Dimensions: 1.5 x 9.5 x 11.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

Some have suggested that modern humans be given the species name *Homo faber*, for "tool-making man." Our long, rich history of manipulating our environment with increasingly clever equipment has only recently been deemed worthy of note, so we are often forced to piece it together from notes, diagrams, and the surviving tools or structures themselves. The Library of Congress has a vast treasury of such materials, and Senior Science Specialist Leonard C. Bruno has explored its depths to create *The Tradition of Technology*, a beautifully illustrated volume that guides the reader from ancient Greece to the 20th century via the traditions of architecture, medicine, warfare, and communication. Amazing and curious stories surround the development of such artifacts as Hero of Alexandria's automatic door-opener, the flying buttresses of Gothic architecture, and our own beloved transistor. Bruno tells these stories and more, documenting not just the papers contained within the Library, but also the attitudes of people toward their creations: the Greek disdain for practical applications, the Renaissance fascination with the beauty of technology, our own obsession with efficiency. Throughout, he warns that the accelerated pace of technological development is so great that we must be clear about the tools we possess and how we mean to use them if we are to maintain the traditions we have inherited. --Rob Lightner

Leonard C. Bruno is a Senior Science Specialist in the Science and Technology Division of the Library of Congress. His earlier book, *The Tradition of Science: Landmarks of Western Science in the Collections of the Library of Congress*, is a companion volume to this one. He is also the author of *On the Move: A Chronology of Advances in Transportation*.

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