



Measuring Shadows: Kepler's Optics of Invisibility

Raz Chen-Morris

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In *Measuring Shadows*, Raz Chen-Morris demonstrates that a close study of Kepler's *Optics* is essential to understanding his astronomical work and his scientific epistemology. He explores Kepler's radical break from scientific and epistemological traditions and shows how the seventeenth-century astronomer posited new ways to view scientific truth and knowledge. Chen-Morris reveals how Kepler's ideas about the formation of images on the retina and the geometrics of the camera obscura, as well as his astronomical observations, advanced the argument that physical reality could only be described through artificially produced shadows, reflections, and refractions.

Breaking from medieval and Renaissance traditions that insisted upon direct sensory perception, Kepler advocated for instruments as mediators between the eye and physical reality, and for mathematical language to describe motion. It was only through this kind of knowledge, he argued, that observation could produce certainty about the heavens. Not only was this conception of visibility crucial to advancing the early modern understanding of vision and the retina, but it affected how people during that period approached and understood the world around them.



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