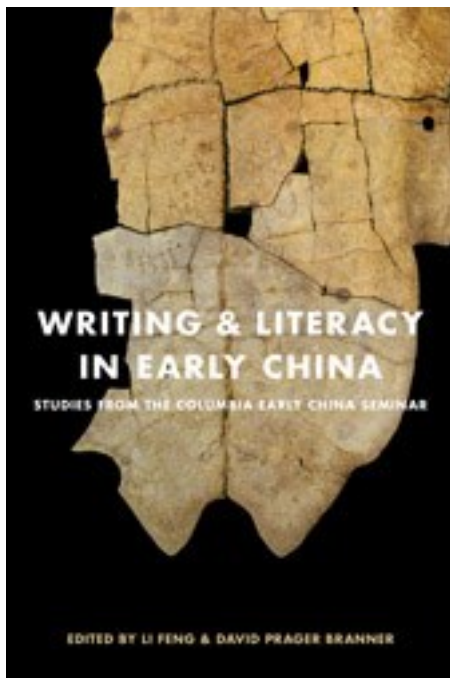


# Writing and Literacy in Early China



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出版者:University of Washington Press

出版时间:2011-11-22

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780295991528

Writing and Literacy in Early China examines a topic of international importance: the emergence and spread of literacy in ancient human society. Writing arose separately in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Mesoamerica, and China. Modern Chinese orthography preserves logographic principles shared by its most ancient forms three thousand years ago, making it unique among all present-day writing systems. In the past three decades, the discovery of previously unknown texts dating to the third century BCE and earlier as well as older versions of known texts has revolutionized the study of early Chinese writing.

The long-term continuity and stability of the Chinese written language allow for this

detailed study of the role literacy played in early civilization. The widely informed and highly respected contributors to this volume inquire into modes of manuscript production, the purposes for which manuscripts were produced, and the ways in which they were actually used. In all these areas, the book carefully evaluates the current evidence and offers groundbreaking new interpretations. *Writing and Literacy in Early China* illuminates the nature of literacy for scribes and readers.

Li Feng is associate professor of early Chinese history and archaeology at Columbia University. David Prager Branner is a lexicographer of Chinese, retired as a professor of Chinese at the University of Maryland. The other contributors are Anthony Barbieri-Low, William Boltz, Constance Cook, Lothar von Falkenhausen, David Pankenier, Matthias Richter, Adam Smith, Ken-ichi Takashima, and Robin Yates.

"An excellent and multifaceted survey of writing and literacy in ancient China." - Edward Shaughnessy, University of Chicago

"*Writing and Literacy in Early China* is a major contribution to the study of literacy, not just in China but globally. It presents an abundance of original research and novel interpretations, and is certain to have a significant impact on how we look at the role of Chinese characters in society and government from the Shang dynasty through the Qin-Han period." - Victor Mair, University of Pennsylvania

#### 作者介绍:

Li Feng is associate professor of early Chinese history and archaeology at Columbia University. David Prager Branner is a lexicographer of Chinese, retired as a professor of Chinese at the University of Maryland. The other contributors are Anthony Barbieri-Low, William Boltz, Constance Cook, Lothar von Falkenhausen, David Pankenier, Matthias Richter, Adam Smith, Ken-ichi Takashima, and Robin Yates.

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