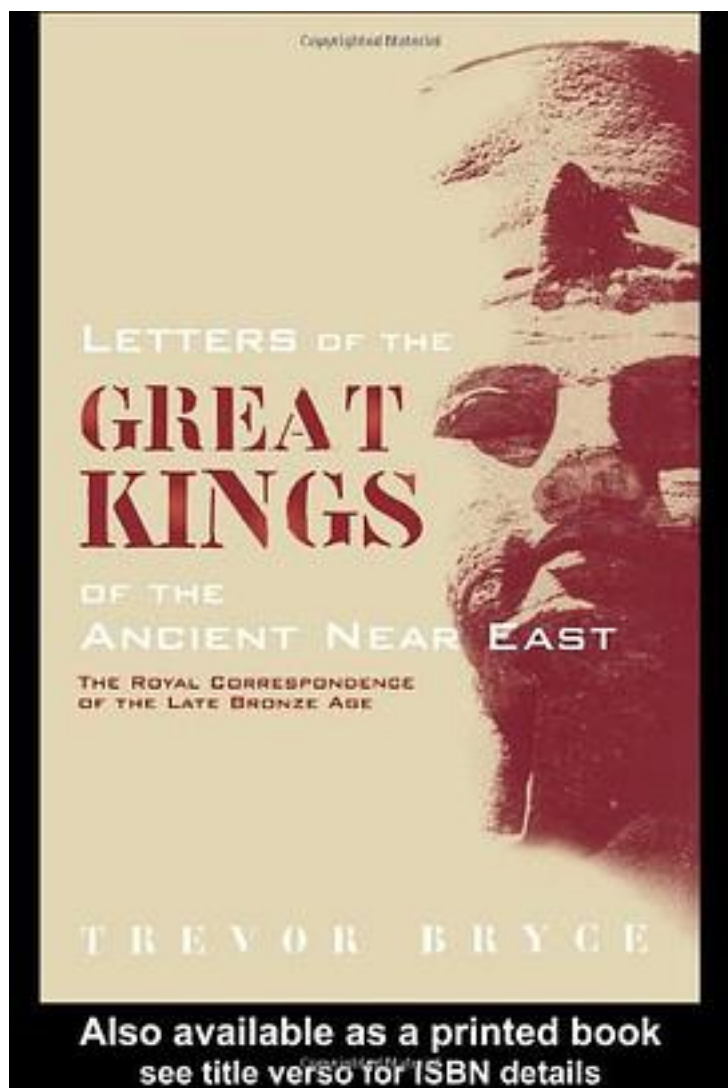


# Letters of the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East



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From the 17th to the 12th centuries BCE, the five Great Kings of Egypt, Babylon, Hatti (the kingdom of the Hittites), Mitanni and Assyria ruled over vast, complex territories. One of the secrets to their control was frequent communication by letter. Many of these letters survive to the present day, offering fascinating insights into the people and politics of the ancient near Eastern kingdoms.

Trevor Bryce uses the letters as the focus of a fresh look at this turbulent and volatile region in the late Bronze Age. He begins with a comparative study of the history of all five kingdoms, followed by a survey of how the kings controlled the widespread subject territories under their rule, and a clear account of the international relationships of the period.

This sets the scene for an exploration of the logistics of communication in the ancient near east -- the preparation of letters, their conveying between kingdoms by messengers and envoys, the hazards of travel, and the reception of diplomats in the host court. Succeeding chapters deal with the diplomatic protocols, ethical values and social customs, which the letters reflect; the personalities of the writers and addressees, and the interactions between them; the stories, personal anecdotes, and historical episodes, which the letters record.

Throughout the book, numerous extracts from the letters themselves are constantly interwoven into the fabric of narrative and discussion. This lively approach allows us to witness history through the eyes of the people who lived it, revealing the personalities and reactions of kings, queens, princes, princesses and royal officials more than 3,500 years ago to the current events of the day.

作者介绍:

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