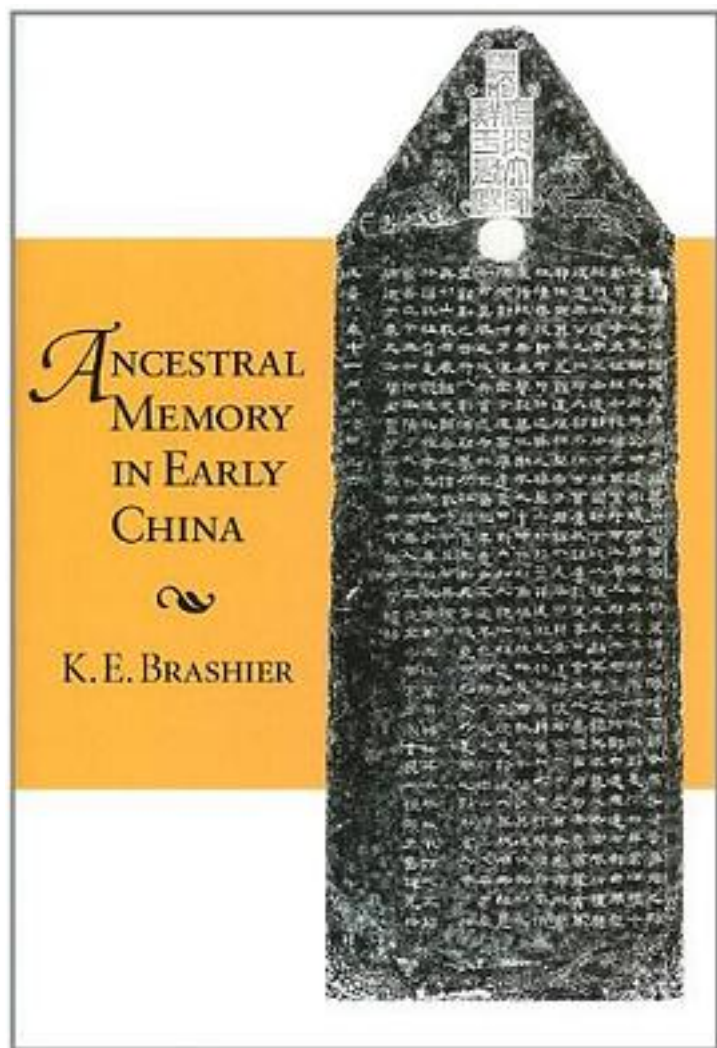


Ancestral Memory in Early China



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著者:K. E. Brashier

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Ancestral ritual in early China was an orchestrated dance between what was present (the offerings and the living) and what was absent (the ancestors). The interconnections among the tangible elements of the sacrifice were overt and almost mechanical, but extending those connections to the invisible guests required a medium that was itself invisible. Thus in early China, ancestral sacrifice was associated with focused thinking about the ancestors, with a structured mental effort by the living to reach out to the absent forebears and to give them shape and existence. Thinking about the ancestors—about those who had become distant—required active deliberation and meditation, qualities that had to be nurtured and learned.

This study is a history of the early Chinese ancestral cult, particularly its cognitive aspects. Its goals are to excavate the cult's color and vitality and to quell assumptions that it was no more than a simplistic and uninspired exchange of food for longevity, of prayers for prosperity. Ancestor worship was not, the author contends, merely mechanical and thoughtless. Rather, it was an idea system that aroused serious debates about the nature of postmortem existence, served as the religious backbone to Confucianism, and may even have been the forerunner of Daoist and Buddhist meditation practices.

作者介绍:

K. E. Brashier is Professor of Religion at Reed College.

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标签

海外中国研究

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思想史

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金石

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秦汉

评论

也是匆匆翻过，没有public memory那本看得明白，认知角度切入很有意思。每章最后的小结部分都是“思想实验”，都是“image if you will……”，很有趣。如作者所言，哪个文化中人都是要死的，死后存在的符号，魂灵能动性等等，并不是中国独有，独特的是所有层次都统摄在一套元话语。

老师的书…里德文科教授基本人手一套巴赫金，无一例外……

contrary to Muchoo Poo's book. Poo's book claims that religions in early China is just for the wellare of people's daily life, which is very convincing. Brashier's book claims that ancestral memory and rituals has its own meaning.

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书评

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