

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02812-8 - Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective

Wang Haicheng

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

WRITING AND THE ANCIENT STATE

Writing and the Ancient State explores the early development of writing and its relationship to the growth of political structures. The first part of the book focuses on the contribution of writing to the state's legitimating project. The second part deals with the state's use of writing in administration, analyzing both textual and archaeological evidence to reconstruct how the state used bookkeeping to allocate land, police its people, and extract taxes from them. The third part focuses on education, the state's system for replenishing its staff of scribe officials. The first half of each part surveys evidence from Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Maya lowlands, Central Mexico, and the Andes; against this background the second half examines the evidence from China. The chief aim of this book is to shed new light on early China (from the second millennium B.C. through the end of the Han period, ca. A.D. 220) while bringing to bear the lens of cross-cultural analysis on each of the civilizations under discussion. The compiling of lists – lists of names, or of names and numbers – is a recurring theme throughout all three parts. A concluding chapter argues that there is nothing accidental about the pervasiveness of this theme: in both origin and function, early writing is almost synonymous with the listing of names.

Wang Haicheng is Mary and Cheney Cowles Endowed assistant professor in the School of Art at the University of Washington, Seattle. His research centers on the art and archaeology of ancient China and the comparative study of early civilizations. Recent and forthcoming publications include a book chapter on the material record of the Erligang civilization, a chapter on urbanization and writing in *The Cambridge World History*, and papers on calligraphy and the archaeology of agency. He has lectured widely in the United States and China.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02812-8 - Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective

Wang Haicheng

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02812-8 - Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective

Wang Haicheng

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

WRITING AND THE ANCIENT STATE

Early China in Comparative Perspective

WANG HAICHENG

University of Washington



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-02812-8 - Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective
Wang Haicheng
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107028128

© Wang Haicheng 2014

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2014

This publication is made possible in part by the Barr Ferree Foundation Fund for Publications, Princeton University.

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data

Wang, Haicheng, 1975–

Writing and the ancient state : early China in comparative perspective / Haicheng Wang.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-02812-8 (hardback)

1. China – Politics and government – To 221 B.C. 2. China – Politics and government – 221 B.C.–220 A.D. 3. Writing – China – History – To 1500. I. Title.

DS741.75.W36 2014

931–dc23 2013021179

ISBN 978-1-107-02812-8 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02812-8 - Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective

Wang Haicheng

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

To my parents 王杰 *and* 林玉生

To my teachers 林梅村 *and* Robert Bagley

獨學而無友，則孤陋而寡聞。

Learning alone, without companions, makes one feel solitary, shallow, and ignorant.

Li ji “XUEJI”

I shall make you love writing more than your mother; I shall make its beauties be shown to you. Now, it is greater than any other profession. There is not its like in the land.

The Teaching of Khety, ancient Egyptian school text

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02812-8 - Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective

Wang Haicheng

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	page ix
<i>List of Tables</i>	xiii
<i>List of Text Boxes</i>	xv
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xxi
Introduction	1
I. WRITING AND THE LEGITIMATION OF THE STATE: HISTORY AS KING LIST	19
1 The Near East and the Americas	21
2 China	40
II. WRITING AND THE WEALTH OF THE STATE: PEOPLE AND LAND, CENSUS AND LAND REGISTER	53
3 The Near East and the Americas	55
4 China	175
III. WRITING AND THE PERPETUATION OF THE STATE: SCRIBAL EDUCATION, LEXICAL LISTS, AND LITERATURE	239
5 The Near East and the Americas	241
6 China	275
Conclusion	301
<i>Notes</i>	309
<i>References</i>	343
<i>Index</i>	373
	vii

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02812-8 - Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective

Wang Haicheng

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ILLUSTRATIONS

1.1	Three inscribed colossi and their original setting at Coptos, Egypt.	<i>page</i> 22
1.2	Two seal impressions from Abydos, Egypt.	23
1.3	Hieroglyphic Stairway 1 at Yaxchilan, Mexico; the temple of Seti I at Abydos, Egypt.	25
1.4	Altar Q from Copan, Honduras; tomb painting of the priest Amenmes, Egypt.	26
1.5	Stela 18 from El Mirador, Guatemala; Stela 2 from Abaj Takalik, Guatemala; Stela 31 from Tikal, Guatemala.	27
1.6	Stucco frieze from the south palace of Group H, Uaxactun, Guatemala.	28
1.7	Inka mummy in parade; mummy bundle recorded in Codex Magliabechiano; Maya seated burial from Uaxactun, Guatemala.	29
1.8	The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty and the Assyrian King List.	33
1.9	Reconstructed floor plan of the Royal Palace of Qatna, Syria, and reconstruction drawing of the Royal Hypogeum.	35
1.10	Cuneiform prism and a hand copy with the Sumerian King List; part of a wooden writing board from Giza.	37
2.1	Plan of Zhengzhou, China.	43
3.1	Land tenure in Mesopotamia.	57
3.2a	Hypothetical sketch of an agricultural cell in South Mesopotamia.	58
3.2b	Field patterns in South Mesopotamia.	59
3.3	Proto-Elamite tablet containing an account of cereal rations for the labor gangs of two supervisors.	60
3.4	Tomb U-j at Abydos.	71
3.5	Sign repertory from tomb U-j.	72
3.6	The Palermo Stone.	73
3.7	The Narmer Macehead.	74
3.8	A niche stone from Saqqara, Egypt.	75
3.9	Drawing from a relief in the tomb of Mereruka at Saqqara, Egypt.	76
3.10	Names of royal domains and estates recovered from Abydos and Saqqara.	78
3.11	List of the funerary estates displayed on a wall of King Sneferu's temple at Dahshur, Egypt.	85
3.12	Plan of Kahun, Egypt.	90
3.13	Scenes of field survey in Egyptian art.	98

List of Illustrations

3.14	Scenes of the punishment of tax collectors.	102
3.15	The distribution of major state farms and storage facilities in relation to the Inka roads.	115
3.16	Plan of the Inka provincial center Huánuco Pampa.	116
3.17	Guzman Poma's illustration of a storehouse accountant at Huánuco Pampa reporting to the emperor.	117
3.18	Workshop guilds at Chan Chan and U-shaped administrative structures.	120
3.19	Map of Teotihuacan, Mexico.	122
3.20	Teotihuacan and Aztec compound glyphs.	123
3.21	The forty-two glyphs in the La Ventilla compound at Teotihuacan.	124
3.22	Construction of <i>chinampa</i> fields by the Aztec state.	127
3.23	Aerial photograph of Aztec <i>chinampas</i> .	128
3.24	The Maguey Plan.	130
3.25	Tenochtitlan's <i>chinampa</i> gardens.	132
3.26a	Pictorial household census in the Códice de Santa María Asunción.	135
3.26b	Pictorial land register in the Códice de Santa María Asunción.	136
3.26c	Pictorial land register in the Códice de Santa María Asunción.	137
3.27	Glyphic conventions and the calculation of taxes in Mexican codices.	138
3.28	Reconstructed cadastral map of the piedmont land parcels at Tepetlaoztoc, Mexico.	140
3.29	Soil glyph variants in the Códice de Santa María Asunción.	141
3.30a	Tax units for a local ruler's children as recorded in Códice Kingsborough.	143
3.30b	The income of a local ruler in Códice Kingsborough.	143
3.31	Maps of the Aztec empire.	145
3.32a	Folio 21v of the Codex Mendoza.	147
3.32b	Folio 37r of the Codex Mendoza.	148
3.33	Settlement maps of Caracol and its terrace area, Belize.	158
3.34	Settlement maps of Tikal (Guatemala) and Calakmul (Mexico).	159
3.35	The relationship between terracing and the site core at Caracol.	160
3.36	The Inka settlement at Ollantaytambo and its immediate surroundings.	161
3.37	Surveyed sites between Yaxchilan and Piedras Negras, Guatemala; the site core of Tecolote, Guatemala.	166
3.38	The fortress of Shalfak in the Second Cataract area of Nubia.	167
3.39	The fortress at Semna, Nubia.	168
3.40	Partial map of Petexbatun, Guatemala.	170
3.41	Urban gardens at Tamarindito, Guatemala; map of Sayil, Mexico.	172
3.42	The Classic Maya village buried by a volcanic eruption at Cerén, El Salvador.	173
4.1	Three stages in the history of Structure 2 at Yanshi, China.	180
4.2	Diagram showing elements of migration.	189
4.3	Plan of a village of Western Zhou date, Anhui Huoqiu, China.	192
4.4	Topographic map of north China in the A.D. twentieth century.	194
4.5	Map showing major states of the Warring States period.	200

List of Illustrations

4.6	One of a set of seven maps made in the state of Qin and a modern map showing the area covered by the Qin maps.	201
4.7	Two Qin maps labeled with military and administrative information.	202
4.8a	Military map from Mawangdui Tomb No. 3 (168 B.C.).	205
4.8b	Symbols and their designees on the Mawangdui military map.	206
4.9	A comparison between the Giza pyramid plateau and the First Emperor of Qin's mausoleum complex.	221
4.10	A comparison between the Egyptian work camp at Giza and a cemetery of laborers near the First Emperor of Qin's mausoleum.	223
4.11	An Eastern Han tomb mural depicting the submission of accounts at the provincial level.	234
5.1	A composite copy of the proto-cuneiform lexical list of vessels.	242
5.2a	The find spots of tablets in the palace at Ebla, Syria.	246
5.2b	The archive room at Ebla.	247
5.3	Excavation plans of Tablet Hill at Nippur, Iraq.	250
5.4	A school tablet from Nippur.	251
5.5	Vowels and consonants in ancient Mesopotamian, Maya, and modern Philadelphia schools.	252
5.6	A Type II school tablet from Nippur.	253
5.7	A Middle Kingdom onomasticon.	260
5.8	Student exercises for learning Egyptian.	265
5.9	Structure M8–10 at Aguateca, Guatemala.	268
5.10	Panel 2 from Piedras Negras.	269
6.1	An inscribed potsherd from Anyang; student exercise on paper from Dunhuang.	276
6.2	A Tang dynasty student's writing exercise from Dunhuang.	278
6.3	Master copies of the Han primer <i>Cangjie pian</i> from northwest China and central China.	283
6.4	Conventional formats for school texts in China and Mesopotamia.	287

PLATES

Color plates follow page xxiv.

- I Pictorial king lists from *Primeros Memoriales* and the Florentine Codex.
- II Plans of Chan Chan, Peru, and its Cuidadala Rivero; wooden models showing funerary ceremony at Chan Chan.
- III A kingly tomb at Erlitou, China.
- IV Inscribed stone tablets and bronze *ge*-blades of the Anyang period.
- V Bronze *ding* vessels from Erlitou and Zhengzhou.
- VI Inscriptions from Xiaoshuangqiao, near Zhengzhou.
- VII *Shi Qiang pan* and its inscription.
- VIII *Lai pan* and its inscription.
- IX The slab stela of Nefretiyabet.
- X Depiction of a records office from the tomb chapel of Tjay at Thebes, Egypt; an inscribed plaque for storing books.
- XI Agricultural terraces of the Inka state.

List of Illustrations

- XII Page 1 of the screen-fold almanac in Codex Borgia, with a diagram.
- XIII Pictorial household census in the Códice de Santa María Asunción.
- XIV Folio 46r of the Codex Mendoza.
- XV The “subway” diagram of Maya polities.
- XVI The Fenton Vase from Nebaj, Guatemala.
- XVII Maya vase, Kerr no. 3413.
- XVIII Maya vase, Kerr no. 5453.
- XIX Reconstruction of Room 1 wall paintings, Bonampak, Mexico, by Heather Hurst and Leonard Ashby.
- XX Maya vase, Kerr no. 8728.
- XXI A late Shang inscribed bronze vessel.
- XXII Da Ke *ding* and its inscription.
- XXIII Tallies issued by the king of Chu to Lord E of Qi.
- XXIV List making in early Maya art.
- XXV Maya vase, Kerr no. 1196; a monkey scribe and a human scribe from Guatemala.
- XXVI Master models and student copies of the Han primer *Jijiu pian* found in northwest China.

TABLES

I.1	Comparative chronology of early states.	<i>page</i> 15
I.2	Major historical periods and dynasties of Mesopotamia.	16
I.3	Major historical periods and dynasties of Egypt.	16
I.4	Major historical periods and dynasties of China.	17
I.5	Major historical periods in the Maya lowlands.	17
I.6	Major historical periods of Central Mexico.	17
I.7	Major historical periods of the Andes.	18
3.1	Inka decimal units from 10 to 10,000 households.	108
3.2	Tabulation of labor assignments recorded in Text 3.22.	110
3.3	The Inka life stages.	112
3.4	Income of Tepetlaoztoc's ruler Don Diego.	144
3.5	Tribute in goods from the Aztec empire's central provinces.	150
3.6	Population estimates at selected Maya polities.	156
3.7	A selection of labels on Maya vases.	174
4.1	Households and tax for Dongyang county, middle or late Western Han.	232
5.1	A mathematical tablet from Nippur.	255

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02812-8 - Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective

Wang Haicheng

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

TEXT BOXES

1.1	Molina's account of royal ancestral ceremony in Cuzco.	page 28
1.2	Commentaries to the Aztec king list in <i>Primeros Memoriales</i> .	31
1.3	The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty.	32
1.4	Epilogue to the Code of Hammurapi.	36
1.5	The Sumerian King List.	36
2.1	Reconstructing the Shang king list from oracle bone inscriptions.	44
2.2	Sima Qian on the Mandate of Heaven.	45
2.3	The Mandate of Heaven in <i>Lü shi chun qiu</i> .	46
2.4	Inscription of the <i>Shi Qiang pan</i> .	47
2.5	Inscription of the <i>Lai pan</i> .	49
2.6	Inscription of the <i>Da Yu ding</i> .	50
3.1	Ur III yearly inspection of the labor force.	60
3.2a	Ur III summary accounts of agriculture for three years.	62
3.2b	Ur III summary accounts of agriculture for ten years.	62
3.3	Ur III record of the annual expenditures of a province.	63
3.4	A letter to the king of Mari from one of his generals.	66
3.5	Census of troops in the Old Babylonian period.	67
3.6	Neo-Assyrian list of tax exemptions.	68
3.7a	Egyptian offering formula of the Fourth Dynasty.	77
3.7b	Egyptian offering list of the Sixth Dynasty.	77
3.8	A Fifth Dynasty entry in the Palermo Stone.	80
3.9	Inscription from Metjen's tomb chapel of the Fourth Dynasty.	80
3.10	Inscription of the Maništusu Obelisk.	82
3.11	Inscription of a Mesopotamian <i>kudurru</i> .	83
3.12	A Middle Kingdom Egyptian decree concerning laborers.	86
3.13a	A Middle Kingdom Egyptian list of servants.	88
3.13b	A Middle Kingdom register of fugitives.	88
3.14a	A Middle Kingdom house register from Kahun: first stage.	91
3.14b	A Middle Kingdom house register from Kahun: second stage.	92
3.14c	A Middle Kingdom house register from Kahun: third stage.	92
3.15	A New Kingdom town-register.	93
3.16a	New Kingdom investigation record of tomb robberies.	94
3.16b	New Kingdom investigation record of the traders for looted goods.	95
3.17	A census of the workmen's village at Deir el-Medina.	95

Text Boxes

3.18a	Text A of the Wilbour Papyrus.	96
3.18b	Text B of the Wilbour Papyrus.	97
3.19	<i>Duties of the Vizier.</i>	99
3.20	An Egyptian text from the <i>Miscellanies</i> .	101
3.21	Papyrus Harris I.	102
3.22	Spanish transcription of the labor tax paid to the Inka.	108
3.23	Using insignia as group identification in the Inka empire.	111
3.24	Two Spanish accounts of the counting of the people by the Inkas.	113
3.25	Spanish commentary to the tribute pages in the Codex Mendoza.	149
3.26	Ur III expenditure of labor for shipping taxes to the capital.	152
3.27	Keeping inventory of the Aztec warehouses.	152
3.28a	Inscription of Senusret III.	165
3.28b	Excerpt from Papyrus Harris I.	165
3.29	A Middle Kingdom dispatch from Semna.	169
4.1	Shang divination records about state farms.	181
4.2	Traces of Shang bookkeeping.	182
4.3	An oracle inscription resembling a dispatch.	182
4.4	Inscription of the <i>Shi Chen ding</i> .	185
4.5	A New Kingdom record of investiture.	186
4.6	Inscription of the <i>Mao Gong ding</i> .	187
4.7	Inscription of the <i>Yi Hou Ze gui</i> .	188
4.8	Inscription of the <i>Da Yu ding</i> .	189
4.9	Inscription of the <i>He zun</i> .	191
4.10	Inscription of the <i>Da Ke ding</i> .	196
4.11	Inscription of the <i>Fifth Year Qiu Wei ding</i> .	196
4.12	Inscription of the <i>San Shi pan/Ze Ren pan</i> .	197
4.13	Han Ordinances on Fords and Passes.	207
4.14a	A possible title page from a Han passport.	207
4.14b	A possible identity page from a Han passport.	208
4.14c	A Han government instruction on describing wanted criminals.	208
4.15a	Inscription of the Lord E of Qi boat tally.	208
4.15b	Inscription of the Lord E of Qi wagon tally.	209
4.16	The Nauri Decree of Seti I.	210
4.17	Inscription of the <i>Xiao Yu ding</i> .	211
4.18	Sima Qian on Shang Yang's reforms.	212
4.19	Qin model texts from the Shuihudi documents.	213
4.20	Warring States quality-control inscriptions on bronze weapons.	216
4.21	Qin statutes on artisans from the Shuihudi documents.	217
4.22	The notation of commoners' names.	219
4.23	Registering youths in Chu.	225
4.24	A Chu legal document from Baoshan Tomb 2.	226
4.25	A Chu legal document from Baoshan Tomb 2.	227
4.26	A Western Han will.	228
4.27a	Qin statues on granaries from the Shuihudi documents.	229
4.27b	Qin statues on food rations from the Shuihudi documents.	230
4.28	Notice to transfer a population register.	230

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02812-8 - Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective

Wang Haicheng

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Text Boxes*

4.29	Qin statutes on agriculture from the Shuihudi documents.	231
4.30	Annual accounts from the Yinwan documents.	232
4.31	A covenant text from the Houma documents.	235
5.1a	Nippur list of trees and wooden objects.	251
5.1b	Subsection for chariots in the list of trees and wooden objects.	254
5.2	Cuneiform model contracts concerning the sale of a house.	255
5.3	Praise of Lipit-Eshtar.	256
5.4a	A supervisor's advice to a young scribe.	257
5.4b	In praise of the scribal art.	257
5.5a	Mathematics in public works.	258
5.5b	A mathematical problem from the Rhind Papyrus.	258
5.6	A Middle Kingdom onomasticon.	259
5.7	A New Kingdom onomasticon.	261
5.8	A Middle Kingdom execration text.	262
5.9	A Mesopotamian poem inspired by a lexical list.	263
5.10	An Egyptian model letter.	263
5.11	<i>Satire on Trades.</i>	264
5.12	In praise of the teacher.	271
5.13	Calancha's account of the activities of the "kipu makers."	271
5.14	An Egyptian tribute to learning.	273
6.1	Han statute on scribes.	280
6.2	<i>Er ya</i> ("Approaching what is correct").	281
6.3	<i>Cangjie pian</i> ("Bamboo Bundles by Cangjie").	282
6.4	<i>Jijiu pian</i> ("Bamboo Bundles for Quick Reference").	284
6.5a	A poem from the <i>Odes</i> .	289
6.5b	Praise of Lipit-Eshtar.	290
6.6	<i>Nanshe and the Birds.</i>	290
6.7	A Qin model forensic report from the Shuihudi documents.	291
6.8a	A passage from the <i>Han Feizi</i> .	294
6.8b	A passage from <i>Meng qiu</i> ("Initiate").	294
6.9a	A poem in praise of King Wen from the <i>Odes</i> .	296
6.9b	A hymn in praise of King Šulgi.	296
6.10a	A hymn from the <i>Odes</i> .	298
6.10b	Inscription of the <i>Shi Hui ding</i> .	299
6.11a	A poem from the <i>Odes</i> .	299
6.11b	King Šulgi built schools.	300

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02812-8 - Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective

Wang Haicheng

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ABBREVIATIONS

ASAE	<i>Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte</i>
BS	<i>Baoshan chumu</i> . Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1991, 2 vols.
CAJ	<i>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</i>
CANE	<i>Civilizations of the Ancient Near East</i> . Jack M. Sasson, John Baines, Gary Beckman, and Karen S. Rubinson (eds.). New York: Scribner, 1995, 4 vols. Reprinted in a two-volume format by Hendrickson (Peabody, MA) in 2000.
CEO	<i>Creating Economic Order: Record-Keeping, Standardization, and the Development of Accounting in the Ancient Near East</i> . Michael Hudson and Cornelia Wunsch (eds.). Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2004.
CHAC	<i>The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.</i> Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
CSSH	<i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i>
EC	<i>Early China</i>
ECT	<i>Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide</i> . Michael Loewe (ed.). Berkeley, CA: Society for the Study of Early China, 1993.
EE	<i>Explorations in Ethnohistory: Indians of Central Mexico in the Sixteenth Century</i> . H. R. Harvey and Hanns J. Prem (eds.). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984.
ETCSL	<i>Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature</i>
FW	<i>The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process</i> . Stephen D. Houston (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
HC	<i>The History of Cartography</i> . J. B. Harley and David Woodward (eds.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987 and 1994, 2 vols.
HJ	<i>Jiaguwen heji</i> . Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1978–82, 13 vols.
HM	<i>Houma mengshu</i> . Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1978.
IAS	<i>The Inca and Aztec States 1400–1800: Anthropology and History</i> . George A. Collier, Renato I. Rosaldo, and John D. Wirth (eds.). New York: Academic Press, 1982.
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JC	<i>Yinzhou jinwen jicheng</i> . Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1984–94, 18 vols.
JCS	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02812-8 - Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective

Wang Haicheng

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Abbreviations*

JFA	<i>Journal of Field Archaeology</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
LSCQ	<i>Lü shi chun qiu jiaoshi</i> . Shanghai: Xuelin Chubanshe, 1984, 2 vols.
MDAIK	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo</i>
NSECH	<i>New Sources of Early Chinese History: An Introduction to the Reading of Inscriptions and Manuscripts</i> . Edward L. Shaughnessy (ed.). Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies and Society for the Study of Early China, 1997.
RA	<i>Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale</i>
SHD	<i>Shuihudi Qinmu zhujian</i> . Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1990.
<i>Shi ji</i>	<i>Shi ji</i> . Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1982, 10 vols.
SSJZS	<i>Shisanjing zhushu</i> . Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1980, 2 vols.
WWS	<i>The World's Writing Systems</i> . Peter Daniels and William Bright (eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZJS	<i>Zhangjiashan Hanmu zhujian (247 hao mu)</i> . Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2001.
ZLW	<i>Zhongguo lishi wenwu</i>
ZQQJ	<i>Zhongguo qingtongqi quanji</i> . Zhongguo qingtongqi quanji bianji weiyuanhui (ed.). Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1993–98, 16 vols.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish I had kept a tablet recording my debts to all those who have helped me in writing this book. Even though I would never be able to balance my account, as a good scribe should, I could at least inscribe them in a book. But the help has been too generous and too constant, and I have been too neglectful of my duties. I can only provide a list of names (this at least serves my book's theme), hoping I have not overlooked any.

There is no neat order to my list, but Robert Bagley must be at the top. His powerful reasoning and sharp observation have shaped my book, from the largest argument to the minutest use of semicolons (don't use them, he says). It was also by his introduction that I became acquainted with John Baines and Stephen Houston, two great scholars of early writing, walking encyclopedias of the Egyptian and Maya systems of communication. Or perhaps I should say, online encyclopedias: to judge by the speed of their replies to my endless strings of queries, they never leave their email. The third member of my battery of experts is Norman Yoffee, who not only keeps me posted on the latest bibliography in cuneiform studies but has also drawn me into an ever-widening circle of comparativists, opening up whole new vistas for me. James Scott, an author I first encountered through Norman's work, generously read my last draft and showered encouraging notes on a distant admirer. For matters related to the ancient Near East, I have benefited from classes taken with Steve Tinney and Tom Hare, as well as from discussions with Jerrold Cooper, Gonzalo Rubio, Hans Nissen, and David Wengrow. For the Americas, John Pohl and Gary Urton are my valued informants. Many specialists of early China have offered their suggestions and comments at various stages of my writing: Anthony Barbieri-Low, William Boltz, Lothar von Falkenhausen, Hou Xudong, David Keightley, Lai Guolong, Michael Nylan, David Schaberg, and Edward Shaughnessy. The book might also be said to owe its existence to a historian of modern China, my colleague Madeleine Yue Dong, who for five years has constantly prodded me to finish it. I also thank the anonymous reviewers for their expert advice.

Several institutions have been indispensable in supporting my research over the years. I list them in chronological order: at Princeton University, the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, the Program in East Asian Studies, the P. Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for East Asian Art, and the Department of Art and Archaeology; in Kyoto, the Metropolitan Center for Far Eastern Art Studies; at the University of California, Berkeley, the Center for Chinese Studies; at the University of Washington, the Mary and Cheney Cowles Endowed Professorship. A generous grant from the Barr-Ferree Foundation Publication Fund at Princeton University has significantly

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02812-8 - Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective

Wang Haicheng

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgments*

enriched the book's complement of illustrations, and the Millimann Endowment at the University of Washington has spared me the labor of making the index myself. For handling with ease the difficult task of production I am deeply grateful to the experts at Cambridge University Press: Beatrice Rehl, Asya Graf, Camilla Knapp, James Dunn, Betsy Hardinger, and Catherine Fox.

For generous help in obtaining photographs I am grateful to Guillemette Andreu, Felix Arnold, John Baines, Ma Baojun, Claudia Brittenham, Annie Caubet, Zhang Changping, Paul Collins, Sharon Day, Duan Dexin, Günter Dreyer, Joshua Englehardt, Imre Galambos, Song Guoding, Ulrich Hartung, Stephen Houston, Xu Hong, Mimi Huang, Wang Hui, Shao Jun, Barbara and Justin Kerr, Ángeles Lázaro, Peter Manuelian, Mary Miller, Steven Owyong, Richard Parkinson, Rachel Roberts, Elizabeth Saluk, Joann Schwendemann, Payson Sheets, Samantha Sherbourne, Eric Shnittke, Adam Smith, Shannon Sweeney, Santiago Uceda, Gary Urton, Bruce White, Lei Xingshan, Zhou Ya, Shan Yueying, and Liu Yun. The site plans in Figures 2.1 and 4.3 were redrawn by Kyle Steinke.

My greatest debt of gratitude is to my family. My parents were my first teachers in literacy and they are my model of ceaseless learning – they have learned to use Skype to monitor my progress! I hope that they are pleased to see their names in their native script on the dedication page. My sisters, Ruili and Ruina, have shouldered all the responsibilities of taking care of our parents so that I can pursue my research in a remote country. My children Silu (Sheila) and Damo (Andrew) have become accustomed to my working over weekends and holidays; in my absence they have somehow become ferocious readers of adventure stories and energetic writers of mystery stories. They laugh at their parents' awkward usage and weird pronunciation of English ("It's scientifically impossible for you guys to speak correct English," as Andrew would say), but parental dignity and authority are fortunately saved by their mother's lessons in Chinese: Molly is the wise headmistress, patient teacher, and wonderful cook of our cottage school, from which none of us will ever want to graduate.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02812-8 - Writing and the Ancient State: Early China in Comparative Perspective

Wang Haicheng

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

WRITING AND THE ANCIENT STATE