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Nota di contenuto	Acknowledgments -- Appendixes -- List of Illustrations -- Abbreviations -- 1 On the Linguistic Frontier in Canton -- A Cross-Cultural Approach to Language Learning -- 1.1The Earliest Glimmer of Chinese Studies in America -- 1.2Recovering Carter's Story: Perspectives and Approaches -- 1.3Learning the Language of the Other: The Place of Chinese Studies in Europe and America -- 2 Finding a Calling -- Carter's Transcontinental Journey to Chinese Studies -- 2.1 Restless in America: Family and Early Life -- 2.2Opportunities in China: 1798-1806 -- 2.3Fulfillment in Europe and Disappointment at Home: 1806-1831 -- 2.4From Curiosity to a Lifelong Pursuit -- 3 Reconstructing a Personalized Curriculum -- Textbooks, Dictionaries, and Study Notes -- 3.1Learning Chinese the Chinese Way -- 3.2 From Linguistic Translation to Cultural Translation -- 3.3Entering the Chinese World: Carter's Chinoiserie Letter to Conseequa -- 4 Chinese Instructors and Their Anglophone Students -- A Reappraisal -- 4.1

Learning Chinese in Canton and Macao -- 4.2 Abel Yen and His Anglophone Students -- 4.3 Language Instructor as Diplomatic Translator -- 4.4 The American Consul Wishes for an Interpreter -- 5 Agent of Global Knowledge: Carter in London, Paris, and New York -- 5.1 Career Ambition: Consul Interpreter -- 5.2 An Early American Encounter with European Sinology -- 5.3 Academic Ambition: University Educator -- 6 The Rise of American Chinese Studies: Changes in Foreign Policy, Academic Foci, and American Perceptions of China -- 6.1 Carter's View of China and the Chinese -- 6.2 American Curiosity about Chinese Knowledge -- 6.3 The Missionary Roots of the American Sinological Tradition -- 6.4 The Interpreter as Diplomat -- 6.5 America's First Course in Chinese Studies -- 6.6 The Chinese Language: Barrier or Gateway? -- 6.7 The Treasures in the Cushing Collection -- 7 Concluding Remarks: Carter in Perspective -- 7.1 The Origin of Chinese Studies in America: An Alternative Pathway -- 7.2 Teaching and Learning Chinese in China at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century -- 7.3 Creation, Exchange, and Circulation of Chinese Knowledge on a Global Scale -- 7.4 Cross-Cultural Dialogues: Carter, the Canton Dialect, and Contemporary China-America Relations -- Appendix -- Bibliography -- Index.

Sommario/riassunto

Benjamin Bowen Carter (1771-1831), one of the first Americans to speak and read Chinese, studied Chinese in Canton and advocated its use in diplomacy decades before America established a formal relationship with China. Drawing on rediscovered manuscripts, this book reconstructs Carter's multilingual learning experience, reveals how he helped translate a diplomatic document into Chinese, describes his interactions with European sinologists, and traces his attempts to convince the US government and American academics of the practical and cultural value of Chinese studies. The cross-cultural perspective employed in this book emphasizes the reciprocal dynamics of Carter's relationships with Chinese and European "others," while Carter's story itself forces a rewriting of the earliest years of US-China relations.
