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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.
