



# The Riddle of the Bamboo Annals

*David S. Nivison*

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## **The Riddle of the Bamboo Annals** David S. Nivison

This book is the result of discoveries made by Nivison beginning in 1979. It uses critically (without superseding) his monographs from 1983 through 2002, combined with his discoveries through 2009. Its main thrust is to show that the methods and results of the PRC "Three Dynasties Project" are invalid, and that recovering chronology before 841 BCE can be solved only by using the supposedly spurious Jinben Zhushu Jinian ("Modern Text" Bamboo Annals), combined with the hypothesis that reign lengths of record were normally the years after completion of mourning for the preceding king. Part One presents resulting exact dates from the beginning of Xia, confirmed by discoveries in astronomy by D. W. Pankenier and Kevin Pang. Part Two criticizes the Three Dynasties Project and argues for the post-mourning hypothesis and the high antiquity of the three-years mourning institution. In Part Three, applying a discovery by E. L. Shaughnessy, the author reconstructs the first 303 bamboo strips of the original Bamboo Annals text (perhaps five-sevenths of the whole). In so doing he shows that the entire chronology in the Zhushu jinian is the product of Warring States manipulation of the true chronology; therefore any attempt to recover accurate dates must begin by analyzing the "Modern Text" Zhushu jinian - which the Project ignored completely. Appendices present more data and analysis, notably (Appendix 4) pinpointing the source of the Project's errors in dating late Shang events.

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