

GLISH

高等学校英语专业文化通识教育基础教程

A Brief History of European Civilization  
—From Antiquity to Early Modernity

# 欧洲文明简史

——从上古时代到现代初期

宋晓堃 主编



广东高等教育出版社  
Guangdong Higher Education Press



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# 前 言

本书是根据我国大学英语专业《欧洲文化入门》或《西方文明入门》课程的教学需要而编写的一部教科书。

2000年,教育部颁布《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》,对我国21世纪的英语教育提出了新的要求。新教学大纲规定,英语专业学生培养方案需在文化通识教育、博雅教育的基础上发展学生听、说、读、写四大核心语言技能。《欧洲文化入门》或《西方文明入门》课程体现了新教学大纲精神,成为英语专业文化通识教育的基础课程。

自2001年以来,在张华鸿老师的带领下,华南师范大学外国语言文化学院为英语专业全日制本科、成人夜大、网络学院、辅修专业和非英语专业等不同层次学生开设了《欧洲文明入门》文化通识教育课程,迄今已有10余年,选课学生累计达5000余人。在此期间,本课程教师团队结合国内外现有教材和网络资源,自行编写讲义,并不断修改、完善。

2007年,《欧洲文明简史》纳入了华南师范大学“十一五”重点教材规划项目。教材编写组由宋晓堃、尚劝余、张华鸿、詹俊峰、梅园五位老师组成,宋晓堃任组长,具体主持和协调教材编写。经过四年的通力合作和辛勤笔耕,《欧洲文明简史——从上古时代到现代初期》终于编写完成并由广东高等教育出版社出版。

与目前国内为数不多的相关教材相比,本教材具有如下几个特点。

1. 目前国内学者编写的相关英文教材,在内容上侧重于狭义的文化层面的介绍,即宗教、文学、艺术等上层建筑领域的主要成就的介绍,缺乏对欧洲文明或文化的历时性与共时性相结合的全面揭示,使学生只知其然而不知其所以然。本教材旨在从历时性与共时性相结合的角度,对各时期经济—社会—政治基础和不同领域重大文化或文明成就进行综合梳理,避免以条目形式简单罗列各项史实,以期帮助学生了解西方文明或文化的内在历史逻辑和联系,建立动态的立体的文明史观,既知其然,亦知其所以然。

2. 目前国内也引进了一些国外学者撰写的有关欧洲文明史或西方文明史的大学原版教材,但这些原版教材对我国大多数学生来说,存在语言难度较大、内容与原有的中学知识无法顺利衔接等问题。本教材针对我国大多数学生的实际情况,在语言方面尽可能避繁就简,通俗易懂,在句法上尽量使用简单句式,在词汇上尽量选用大学英语四、六级词汇表范围内的词汇,在内容上以中学世界历史、世界地理和国际政治三门课程所覆盖的知识为基础,注重与中学人文知识的衔接。

3. 目前国内外有关欧洲文明史教材的编写都是上起古代下至20世纪,但国内许多

大学通识教育基础课程一般都在一个学期完成教学，因此教学内容偏多，至少需要一个学年以上才能完成。本教材上起古代近东地区文明的发轫，下至16世纪西欧宗教改革运动，经本教材编写组成员多年的实际教学检验，正好上满一个学期。此外，到16世纪，欧洲文明各基本要素已然显现并相互杂糅，形成独具一格的欧洲文明风貌，其后西欧各国在世界范围扩张，欧洲文明陆续在美洲、大洋洲出现变异体，需另书介绍。

4. 与目前国内相关教材相比，本教材在编写体例上别具一格。为了帮助学生掌握课文的组织结构和中心要点，本教材每章开篇设有章节提纲（Chapter Outline）和重点问题（Focus Questions）；为了帮助学生理解课文，附有旁注和脚注，对重大事件、地名、人名、语言难点或学生不容易理解的地方做出注释。同时，每章后都结合课文重点，设计名词解释题、判断正误题及多项选择题，这些练习题不仅可以帮助学生记忆各种信息，巩固和提高文化和语言知识，还可以帮助学者复习、归纳所学内容，便于自学。

总之，本教材不仅适用于我国大学英语专业学生，而且也适用于非英语专业学生、自学者和高中学生。

本教材编写具体分工如下：

宋晓堃：第一章、第四章、第五章、第九章；尚劝余：第六章、第七章；张华鸿：第八章；詹俊峰：第二章；梅园：第三章。宋晓堃负责全书的统稿，并对一些章节进行了修改或重写。高级汉—英—法同传专家 William White 先生，资深英语外籍教师 Peter Gordon 和 Thomas Ackerman 先生对书稿进行了耐心细致地审读，编写组对他们的辛劳表示衷心感谢。

编写组抱着认真负责的态度开展编写工作，在编写过程中尽量考虑到我国英语专业基础阶段学生的语言能力、文化知识储备情况和学生常用的学习策略，但是百密一疏，教材中一定还会有诸多疏漏，我们恳请广大教师和学生提出宝贵的批评意见，以便有机会再版时改进。

宋晓堃

2011年9月

于华南师范大学

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## Part | Ancient World

Civilization began along major river valleys in the eastern hemisphere and along coastal areas in the western hemisphere. The major early civilizations in ancient world are Mesopotamian Civilization around the Tigris-Euphrates River in the West Asia, Egyptian Civilization around the Nile River in North Africa, Indian Civilization around the Indus River in South Asia, Chinese Civilization around the Yellow River in East Asia, Greco-Roman Civilization around the Aegean Sea and Mediterranean Sea in Western Europe, Native American Civilization along coastal areas in America.

Among these early civilizations, some are closely linked with European civilization. It is widely accepted that the Ancient Near East Civilization (i. e. Mesopotamian Civilization and Egyptian Civilization) is the cradle of human civilization; but it is only recently established that the ancient Near East is also the source of European civilization. To understand the birth of European civilization, we need to go back to the ancient Near East, where people in Mesopotamia and Egypt developed organized societies and created the ideas and institutions that we associate with civilization. The ancient Greeks and Romans, who created Greco-Roman Civilization and played such a crucial role in the development of Western civilization, were themselves nourished and influenced by these older societies in the ancient Near East.

The Greco-Roman Civilization which has been influencing the West broadly and profoundly up to today is considered the fountain-head of European civilization. The Greco-Roman Civilization is also called Classical Civilization. It starts from Minoan Civilization and ends with the fall of Western Roman Empire. It includes Hellenic (or Greek) Civilization (29<sup>th</sup>—4<sup>th</sup> century BC), Hellenistic Civilization (4<sup>th</sup>—1<sup>st</sup> Centuries BC) and Roman Civilization (753 BC—476 AD). Classical Civilization emphasized matters concerning mankind and the making of this world into a better place; hence the classical tradition stresses rational and secular knowledge, liberty, freedom of inquiry, the nobility of human achievement, and the worth of the individual. These values form the core of Western civilization.



# Chapter 1

## Civilizations in the Ancient Near East

### CHAPTER OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. Civilization in **Mesopotamia**
3. Ancient Egyptian Civilization
4. The **Hebrews**: History and Religion
5. Conclusion

**Mesopotamia** *n.* 美索不达米亚, 两河流域

**History** *n.* 希伯来人(的)

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. In what ways did geography influence the historical development of civilizations in Mesopotamia and Egypt?
2. What were the similarities and differences in the religious belief of the Sumerians, Egyptians, and Hebrews?
3. In what ways did civilizations and cultures in the ancient Near East influence the development of European civilization?

#### **The Abduction of Europa (欧罗巴的掳掠)**

In Greek mythology (神话), Europa was the beautiful daughter of the Phoenician king, Agenor. One day, Zeus, the King of the Olympian gods, saw Europa as she was gathering flowers by the sea and immediately fell in love with her.

Driven by his love for Europa, Zeus transformed himself into a magnificent white bull (公牛) and appeared on the sea shore where Europa was playing with her maidens. The great bull walked gently over to Europa and knelt at her feet. The great animal looked so gentle and friendly that Europa had no fear of it. She hung flowers about the bull's neck and even climbed upon its back.

But suddenly, the bull jumped into the Mediterranean Sea (地中海), carrying Europa away. When it finally reached the island of Crete (克里特岛) Zeus transformed back into his human form and made Europa his lover beneath a tree. Europa became the first queen of Crete and had three sons by Zeus. The land was later named after Europa (Europe) and the people living there were called Europeans.



**cradle** *n.* 摇篮

**Cornell University** 康奈尔大学

**origins** *n.* 起源

**stirred up** *v. pr.* 激起

**controversy** *n.* 争议

**approximately** *adv.* 大约

**corresponding to** *v. pr.*

相当于

**Armenia** 亚美尼亚

**Cyprus** 塞浦路斯

**Iran** 以色列

**Lebanon** 黎巴嫩

**Archeological** *adj.* 考古学的

**relics** *n.* 遗物, 遗迹

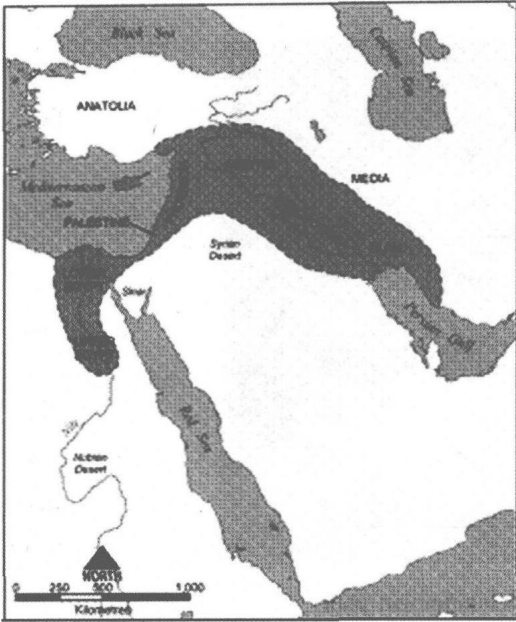
**Mesopotamian** *adj.* 美索不达米亚的, 两河流域的

**Hebrew** *adj.* 希伯来的

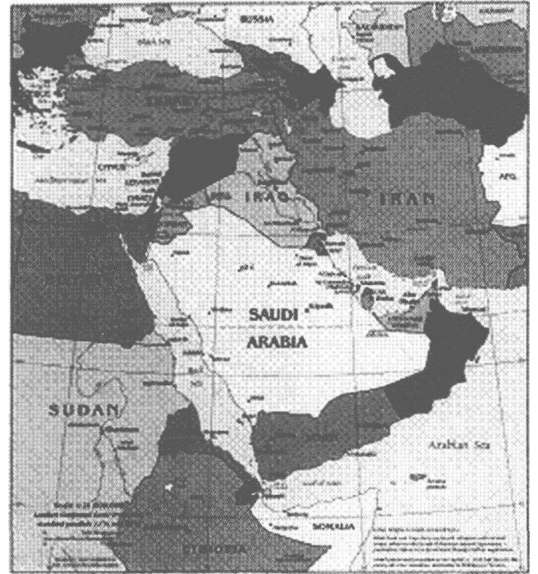
## 1. Introduction

People traditionally regard ancient Greece as the **cradle** of European civilization. However, in recent years, questions have been raised about the truth of this general understanding. In 1987 Professor Martin Bernal at **Cornell University** published a book entitled *Black Athena: The Afro-Asiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*. In this book, he puts forward a new theory of Greek cultural **origins**. Based on large amounts of historical evidence, Professor Bernal argues that the emergence and development of ancient Greek culture was influenced much more greatly by civilizations in the ancient Near East than had previously been acknowledged. Bernal's new account of the origins of ancient Greek culture has **stirred up** heated discussions. Was ancient Greek culture created in Europe and by Europeans only? Or was its development a result of cultural exchanges and interactions between people in ancient Greece and their neighbors outside of Europe? To find an answer to this **controversy**, this chapter will examine the development of early cultures and civilizations in the ancient Near East.

The term “ancient Near East” refers to a historical region **approximately corresponding to** much of the modern Middle East; **Armenia, Cyprus, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and a major part of Egypt**. But the region was no longer called “ancient Near East” after it was conquered by Alexander the Great (356—323 BC) conquered the region in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. **Archeological** evidence suggests that this is the area that gave birth to the earliest human civilizations. Different peoples living in this region created many amazing cultures; **relics** and traditions of which survive to the present day. As it is impossible to cover them all in one chapter, we will focus on the development of two civilizations and one culture in the region, namely, the **Mesopotamian** civilization, the Egyptian civilization, and the **Hebrew** culture.



Map 1 Ancient Near East



Map 2 Modern Middle East

## 2. Civilization in Mesopotamia

From the mountains in today's **Turkey** two great rivers—the **Tigris** and **Euphrates**—separately start their long journeys. On their way, the two rivers grow bigger as many smaller rivers join them. These rivers create many small plains and lowlands. Towards the end of their journeys, the two rivers meet each other and flow into the **Persian Gulf**. Ancient Greek people called the land between the Tigris and Euphrates “Mesopotamia”, meaning “the land between the two rivers”. To the north of Mesopotamia lies the mountainous **Iranian plateau** and to its south the **Syrian desert**, both areas dry and hot. The climate in Mesopotamia is also hot but humid and fertile, thanks to the rivers.

Every year in late spring or early summer, snow in the Turkish mountains melted. Melting snow caused the flooding of the Tigris and Euphrates which would wash **silt** down from the mountains adding new layers of rich soil to the plains. The rich soil and humid climate provided a wonderful environment for early agriculture. According to **legends**, this is where the **Garden of Eden**—the garden created by God for the first man, Adam—was situated. And the Tree of Life grew right on the spot where the Tigris meets the Euphrates. When seen on a map, the green plains in Mesopotamian form the shape of a new moon. This is why this area is also called “**the fertile crescent**”.

**Turkey** 土耳其  
**the Tigris** 底格里斯河  
**the Euphrates** 幼发拉底河

**Persian Gulf** 波斯湾

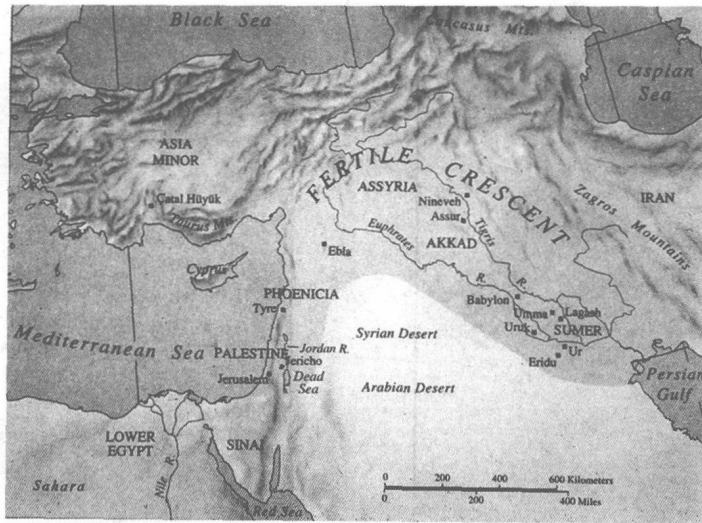
**Iranian plateau** 伊朗高原  
**Syrian desert** 叙利亚沙漠

**silt** *n.* 沉积土

**legend** *n.* 传说

**Garden of Eden** 伊甸园

**the fertile crescent** 富饶的新月地



Map 3 A bird-view of the Mesopotamian plain

Around 8000 BC, people in Mesopotamia started producing food by farming. Although the two rivers provided a plentiful water supply, and the soil in the river plains was very rich, farming was not easy. The Mesopotamian people were faced with two natural challenges. First, the annual floods between April and June were **irregular**. It was very difficult for people to predict and control the flooding. Often the floods caused great damage. Second, in such a hot region, the tremendous heat would cause rapid **evaporation** of the river water. When the water evaporated, large amounts of salt from the water would be left in the soil, making farming impossible.

One way to solve both problems was to build **irrigation** systems. **Dams** and **canals** were built to control the flooding and to water the land. Farming supported by these irrigation systems required **division of labor** and cooperation. Different people took care of different tasks: some planted the crops, some built the dams, some dug the canals, some supervised the activities, and still some prayed to gods for more rain and few floods. As systematic agriculture began to provide a **consistent** food **surplus**, populations grew and small villages developed into larger towns and cities. More **complex** social structures appeared in these towns and cities. The first human civilization was born.

## 2.1 Brief history of Mesopotamia

It is important to bear in mind that the so-called Mesopotamian

**irregular** *adj.* 不规则的

**evaporation** *n.* 蒸发

**irrigation** *n.* 灌溉

**dam** *n.* 水坝

**canal** *n.* 运河

**division of labor** 分工

**consistent** *adj.* 持续的

**surplus** *n.* 剩余

**complex** *adj.* 复杂的

civilization was not one single civilization. It included cultures, customs, ideas and traditions developed by different groups of people over the course of several thousand years. Some of the early civilizations whose ideas were **assimilated** by the Mesopotamians included the **Sumerians**, **Akkadians**, **Babylonians** and **Assyrians**. When different groups lived in the same area without natural boundaries, cultural contacts and exchanges were frequent, but conflicts were also inevitable. One after another, these peoples ruled the region, either through economic or military power. Because of the absence of natural boundaries, neighboring regions also had a great influence on Mesopotamian history. Foreign invasions were frequent. Finally, in 539 BC, the Persians—a group of people from what is now modern day Iran—conquered the region and put an end to the Mesopotamian civilization.

The creators of the Mesopotamian civilization were the Sumerians. Although today we regard the Sumerians as the founders of the first human civilization, we know very little about their origin. We assume that the Sumerians were not native in Mesopotamia. This assumption is mainly based on linguistic evidence. The most widely spoken language in the region was the **Semitic language**. Semitic-speaking populations at the time included **Akkadians**, **Amorites**, **Phoenicians**, **Hebrews**, and Arabs among many others.<sup>①</sup> But the Sumerians were the only non-Semitic speaking people there. So we assume that the Sumerians arrived in Mesopotamia from somewhere else, but we have no idea where they came from. On foot from today's Iran, **Afghanistan**, or even India? Or by sea from some other region? No one knows. Wherever they came from, the Sumerians arrived in southern Mesopotamia and settled down there. **Archeological** evidence shows that the earliest Sumerian economic and social activities in Mesopotamia dated back to about 5500 BC.

The Sumerians were the first people to start systematically farming the land. Over time the Sumerians learned to control the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers by constructing irrigation systems. They began intensive, year-round agriculture in southern Mesopotamia which produced a stable food supply. Over time, systematic agriculture and stable food surplus allowed Sumerian villages to **evolve into** self-governing city-states. By 3000 BC a number of Sumerian independent

**assimilate** *v.* 吸收

**Sumerians** 苏美尔人

**Akkadians** 阿卡德人

**Babylonians** 巴比伦人

**Assyrians** 亚述人

**Semitic language** 闪语

**Akkadians** 阿卡德人

**Amorites** 亚摩利人

**Phoenicians** 腓尼基人

**Hebrews** 希伯来人

**Afghanistan** 阿富汗

**archeological** *adj.* 考古学的

**evolve into** *v. pr.* 演变成

① 演化至今，现代闪语主要包括阿拉伯语和希伯来语。