

哈佛

蓝星双语名著导读

Today's Most Popular Study Guides

坎特伯雷故事集

The Canterbury Tales

〔英〕 Geoffrey Chaucer 原著
Patrick Gardner 导读
Miriam Jacobson
陈赞 翻译

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天津科技翻译出版公司

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致读者

亲爱的读者,在这个多元文化的世界里,渴望知识、钟情文学、热爱英语的你是否希望站在巨人的肩膀上摘星呢?

“哈佛蓝星双语名著导读”系列是全美最风行的经典名著导读笔记,由哈佛学生们融会名著阅读和文学学习精华,亲笔撰写而成。蓝星系列精选了来自世界各国的杰出经典著作,以经典性和流行性并重的名著为素材,以明晰的风格和地道的语言,解读名著精华和具有时代性的主题和思想。每一分册都包括名著的创作背景、人物分析、主题解析、篇章讲解、重要引文释义、作品档案,并且附有相关的思考题、推荐论文题、小测验以及延伸阅读篇目。

如今“蓝星”漂洋过海,轻轻落在了国内英语学习读者的掌中,读者不需走出国门,即可轻松掌握哈佛课堂上的知识。蓝星系列丰富的内容编排,使我们不仅仅停留于名著内容的了解,而且对著作的精华和内涵有更全面、深入的掌握,进而对英语语言和文化做更进一步的了解和研究。蓝星精辟、明晰的编写风格让“半天阅读一本名著”成为现实,使我们在有限的闲暇时间内阅读更多的书,同时迅速增强英语水平,提高文学修养,增加谈资。

天津科技翻译出版公司之前推出的“蓝星”系列 50 册,在图书市场上收到了很好的反响。本次新推出的品种同样精挑细选了国外近现代经典作品,以期进一步丰富该系列的内容。本次出版仍由天津外国语学院张滨江教授和青年教师负责翻译和审校,并严格按照原作的风格,提供原汁原味的英语环境,让读者自由地阅读、想象和发挥。

蓝星闪耀,伴你前行!

CONTEXT

The *Canterbury Tales* is the most famous and critically acclaimed work of Geoffrey Chaucer, a late-fourteenth-century English poet. Little is known about Chaucer's personal life, and even less about his education, but a number of existing records document his professional life. Chaucer was born in London in the early 1340s, the only son in his family. Chaucer's father, originally a property-owning wine merchant, became tremendously wealthy when he inherited the property of relatives who had died in the Black Death of 1349. He was therefore able to send the young Geoffrey off as a page to the Countess of Ulster, which meant that Geoffrey was not required to follow in his ancestors' footsteps and become a merchant. Eventually, Chaucer began to serve the countess's husband, Prince Lionel, son to King Edward III. For most of his life, Chaucer served in the Hundred Years War between England and France, both as a soldier and, since he was fluent in French and Italian and conversant in Latin and other tongues, as a diplomat. His diplomatic travels brought him twice to Italy, where he might have met Boccaccio, whose writing influenced Chaucer's work, and Petrarch.

In or around 1378, Chaucer began to develop his vision of an English poetry that would be linguistically accessible to all—obedient neither to the court, whose official language was French, nor to the Church, whose official language was Latin. Instead, Chaucer wrote in the vernacular, the English that was spoken in and around London in his day. Undoubt-

来龙·去脉

《坎特伯雷故事集》是14世纪后期英国诗人杰夫瑞·乔叟最为著名和值得称道的作品。乔叟的个人生活情况鲜为人知，关于他的教育状况则流传更少，但现有的一些资料记载了他的职业生涯。乔叟14世纪40年代早期出生于伦敦，是家中的独子。他的父亲是一个酒商，拥有一定资产，1349年又从死于“黑死病”的亲戚那里继承了一笔遗产，从而变得特别富有。正因为如此，年轻的乔叟才能够在阿尔斯特伯爵夫人的家中充当少年侍从，而不用子承父业去经商。最后，乔叟被安排服侍伯爵夫人的丈夫莱昂内尔王子——爱德华三世的儿子。乔叟一生中大部分时间都效劳于英法“百年战争”。他既是一名士兵也是一名外交官，因为他对法语和意大利语驾轻就熟，还精通拉丁语和其他语言。在乔叟的外交生涯中，曾两次出访意大利，在那里他可能见过薄伽丘和彼特拉克。薄伽丘的作品对乔叟的创作产生了影响。

1378年左右，乔叟开始创作能为所有人理解的英文诗歌，既没有采用宫廷用语——法语，也没有采用教会用语——拉丁语，而是采用了他那个时代伦敦及其附近地区的英语土话。毋庸置疑，他受到了但丁、彼特拉克和薄伽丘的佛罗伦萨式的写作风格的影响，他们用意大利方言创

edly, he was influenced by the writings of the Florentines Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, who wrote in the Italian vernacular. Even in England, the practice was becoming increasingly common among poets, although many were still writing in French and Latin.

That the nobles and kings Chaucer served (Richard II until 1399, then Henry IV) were impressed with Chaucer's skills as a negotiator is obvious from the many rewards he received for his service. Money, provisions, higher appointments, and property eventually allowed him to retire on a royal pension. In 1374, the king appointed Chaucer Controller of the Customs of Hides, Skins and Wools in the port of London, which meant that he was a government official who worked with cloth importers. His experience overseeing imported cloths might be why he frequently describes in exquisite detail the garments and fabric that attire his characters. Chaucer held the position at the customhouse for twelve years, after which he left London for Kent, the county in which Canterbury is located. He served as a justice of the peace for Kent, living in debt, and was then appointed Clerk of the Works at various holdings of the king, including Westminster and the Tower of London. After he retired in the early 1390s, he seems to have been working primarily on *The Canterbury Tales*, which he began around 1387. By the time of his retirement, Chaucer had already written a substantial amount of narrative poetry, including the celebrated romance *Troilus and Criseyde*.

Chaucer's personal life is less documented than his professional life. In the late 1360s, he married Philippa Roet, who served Edward III's queen. They had at least two sons

作。甚至在英国，这种佛罗伦萨风格也变得越来越普遍，尽管有很多诗人还是沿用法语和拉丁语写作。

乔叟服侍过的国王和贵族（1399年以前为理查二世，后来是亨利四世）非常欣赏他的谈判技巧，给予他很多奖赏：金钱美食、高官厚禄，还赐给他皇家终身年金。1374年，国王任命他为伦敦港羊毛和皮革关税总督，也就是说，他是与布料进口商打交道的政府官员。他经常对笔下角色的服饰面料进行详尽描述，也许正是与这段监督进口布料的经历有关。乔叟在海关任职12年后，离开伦敦前往肯特郡（也就是坎特伯雷的所在地），出任那里的治安法官，可是却负债累累。后来他又被委任为皇室修缮大臣，负责维修威斯敏斯特宫和伦敦塔等。1387年左右他开始计划《坎特伯雷故事集》，但直到14世纪90年代初他退休后才集中精力进行创作。在此之前，他已经创作了相当数量的叙事诗，其中包括著名的爱情长诗《特罗伊罗斯和克瑞西达》。

相比较他的职业生涯，对乔叟个人生活的记载要少得多。14世纪60年代后期，他与英国王后（当时国王是爱德华三世）的侍女菲丽芭·罗艾特



together. Philippa was the sister to the mistress of John of Gaunt, the duke of Lancaster. For John of Gaunt, Chaucer wrote one of his first poems, *The Book of the Duchess*, which was a lament for the premature death of John's young wife, Blanche. Whether or not Chaucer had an extramarital affair is a matter of some contention among historians. In a legal document that dates from 1380, a woman named Cecily Chaumpaigne released Chaucer from the accusation of seizing her (raptus), though whether the expression denotes that he raped her, committed adultery with her, or abducted her son is unclear. Chaucer's wife Philippa apparently died in 1387.

Chaucer lived through a time of incredible tension in the English social sphere. The Black Death, which ravaged England during Chaucer's childhood and remained widespread afterward, wiped out an estimated thirty to fifty percent of the population. Consequently, the labor force gained increased leverage and was able to bargain for better wages, which led to resentment from the nobles and propertied classes. These classes received another blow in 1381, when the peasantry, helped by the artisan class, revolted against them. The merchants were also wielding increasing power over the legal establishment, as the Hundred Years War created profit for England and, consequently, appetite for luxury was growing. The merchants capitalized on the demand for luxury goods, and when Chaucer was growing up, London was pretty much run by a merchant oligarchy, which attempted to control both the aristocracy and the lesser artisan classes. Chaucer's political sentiments are unclear, for although *The Canterbury Tales* documents the various social tensions in the manner of the popular genre of estates satire, the narrator refrains from

结婚,并至少生育了两个儿子。菲丽芭与冈特的约翰(兰开斯特公爵)的妻子是姐妹。乔叟为冈特的约翰创作了他早期的诗作之一《公爵夫人的书》,这首诗是为了悼念约翰年轻的妻子——布兰切早逝而写的。历史学家对于乔叟是否有过婚外情意见不一。据1380年的一份法律文件记载,一位叫塞西莉·乔佩格妮的妇女取消了对乔叟的控告,这份控告说乔叟曾侵犯过她,但究竟乔叟是强奸了她,还是与她通奸或是诱拐了她的孩子并不清楚。不过,可以肯定的是,乔叟的妻子菲丽芭是1387年去世的。

在乔叟生活的那个时代,英国社会动荡不安。在乔叟的童年时代爆发的黑死病几乎摧毁了英国,之后又蔓延开来,使英国人口骤减三分之一,甚至达到一半。其社会后果是,劳工势力日渐壮大,要求雇主增加工酬,因而又引起了贵族和有产阶级的不满。1381年,在手工劳动者的响应支持下,农民起义进行反抗,给了这些贵族有产阶级沉重的一击。与此同时,商人也逐步确立了其合法地位。因为百年战争英国获利,对奢侈品的需求增加,商人们利用这一需求,控制贵族和手工劳动阶层。在乔叟成长的年代,伦敦几乎已成为一个商人主宰的社会。乔叟的政治观点并不明确。因为尽管《坎特伯雷故事集》通过来自各个阶层的朝圣客之间相互嘲讽和挖苦的通俗手法表述了各种社会矛盾,故事的叙述者却刻意没有作任何的政治评判,而且即使叙述者表明了他的政治观点,也不能说就代表了乔叟自己的政治倾向。



making overt political statements, and what he does say is in no way thought to represent Chaucer's own sentiments.

Chaucer's original plan for *The Canterbury Tales* was for each character to tell four tales, two on the way to Canterbury and two on the way back. But, instead of 120 tales, the text ends after twenty-four tales, and the party is still on its way to Canterbury. Chaucer either planned to revise the structure to cap the work at twenty-four tales, or else left it incomplete when he died on October 25, 1400. Other writers and printers soon recognized *The Canterbury Tales* as a masterful and highly original work. Though Chaucer had been influenced by the great French and Italian writers of his age, works like Boccaccio's *Decameron* were not accessible to most English readers, so the format of *The Canterbury Tales*, and the intense realism of its characters, were virtually unknown to readers in the fourteenth century before Chaucer. William Caxton, England's first printer, published *The Canterbury Tales* in the 1470s, and it continued to enjoy a rich printing history that never truly faded. By the English Renaissance, poetry critic George Puttenham had identified Chaucer as the father of the English literary canon. Chaucer's project to create a literature and poetic language for all classes of society succeeded, and today Chaucer still stands as one of the great shapers of literary narrative and character.

Language in The Canterbury Tales

The Canterbury Tales is written in Middle English, which bears a close visual resemblance to the English written and spoken today. In contrast, Old English (the language of Be-