An Introduction to Western Classical Culture

西方古典文化概论

詹琍敏　彭家海　著

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内容简介

古希腊、古罗马及圣经文化是西方文化的三大组成部分，是西方文化的根。本书重点介绍了那些对历史、对今天仍有重要影响的思想文化。文化的学习和研究是一个不断循环的过程。对于同一种文化，不同社会、不同时代的人们会站在不同的角度来审视它。这就是我们今天来审视西方古典文化的意义之所在。

古希腊人讨论得很多的问题我们今天仍在讨论（如真理、美德等）；人类经过了几千年的发展，我们能从这些思想发展的轨迹中获得什么启示呢？文化的发展离不开社会经济的发展，把社会、经济、文化融为一体，从社会、历史的发展中寻找文化发展的轨迹正是本书的最大特点。

本书主要是为英语专业本科生和研究生深入了解西方文化而撰写的，也可作为高校文科专业西方文化课的教材使用，还可供广大英语学习者以及热衷于文化交流和文化研究的人员阅读使用，也可供从事高校英语教学工作的教师作为教学参考书使用。

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詹琍敏

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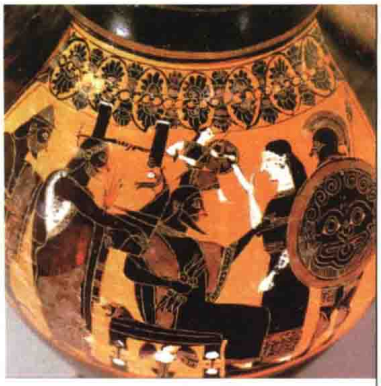
作者简介



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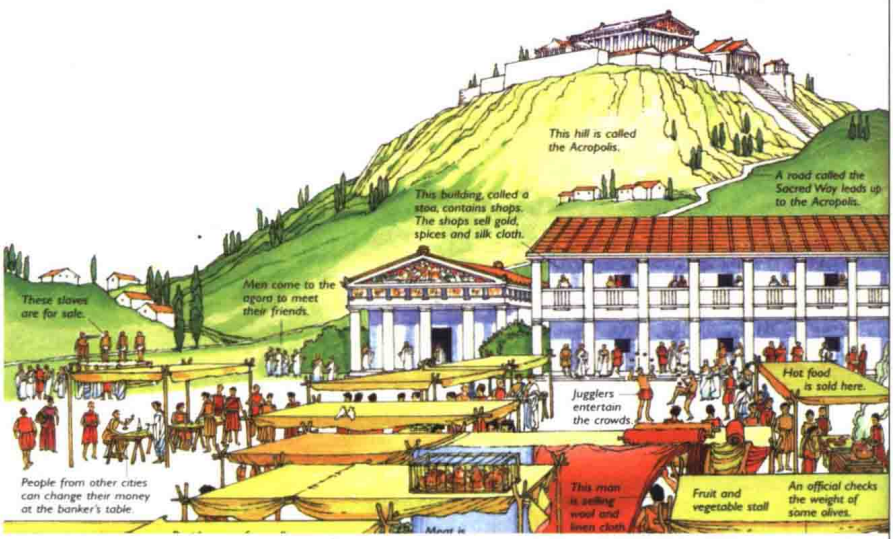

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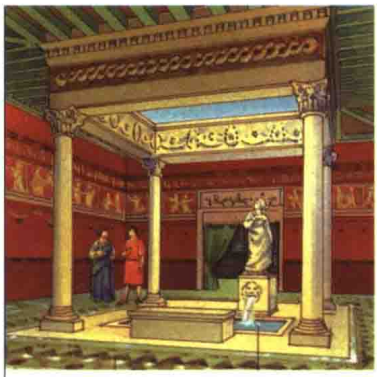

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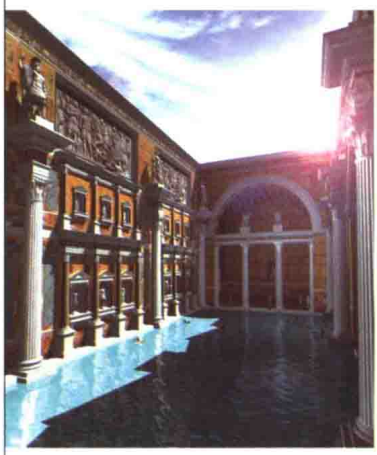

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前　言

现在人们常常讨论和研究经济的一体化，其实，文化也正在实现一体化。世界变得“越来越小”。在这越来越小的世界里，人们需要相互了解以避免相互冲突，建立一个和平、和谐的世界。而促进相互了解的最好方法就是学习彼此的文化。事实上，人们正在朝着这方面努力：很多西方国家为了了解中国，也为了解决他们自己的问题正在研究和学习中国文化，如儒家思想；很多中国人也正忙于介绍和研究西方文化。

基于同一个目的，本书比较系统地介绍了西方古典文化（古希腊、古罗马文化）和圣经文化。古希腊、古罗马和圣经文化是西方文化的根，是广大读者了解西方现代社会不可缺少的背景知识。

读者可以通过很多渠道了解西方古典文化，但本书的最大特点是把社会、经济、文化等各方面融为一体，从社会历史的发展中寻找文化发展的轨迹。因为离开社会、经济、历史的发展看文化是不可能真正了解文化的。另外，本书作者还力图用简单易懂的语言帮助读者了解西方文化。

本书主要为英语专业本科生和研究生深入了解西方文化而撰写，也可作为高校文科专业西方文化课的教材使用，还可供广大从事高校文化课程教学的教师作为参考用书，还可供广大英语学习者以及热衷于文化交流和文化研究的人员阅读使用。

请读者在阅读本书以前思考以下问题：

什么是西方古典文化?

西方古典文化探究的是古希腊、古罗马人的生活和文化，包括他们生活的每一个方面：他们想什么、吃什么、喝什么、玩什么，他们的战争、艺术、建筑、文学、哲学等。

为什么要了解西方古典文化?

西方古典文明这一时期产生了西方文明最渊博的思想家、最伟大的文学作品和最完美的艺术作品。历史学家常用“前无古人，后无来者”来形容西方古典文明的文化成就。西方古典文化对后来的西方文化，包括现在的西方文化

都有很深刻的影响。所以，学习西方古典文化不仅能使我们欣赏到西方文化的根，还可以帮助我们从另一个角度来了解今天的西方社会。

中国人学习西方古典文化的方式和西方人是一样的吗？

文化的学习和研究是一个不断循环的过程。对于同样一种文化，不同的社会、不同的时代的人们会站在不同的角度来审视它。这就是我们今天来审视西方古典文化的意义所在：我们将以中国人的眼光来审视西方古典文化。对历史和文化的研究是为现实服务的，西方人与我们的社会背景不一样，他们研究的目的和着重点也与我们不一样。我们将从西方古典文化中挖掘出有利于我们中国文化建设的思想内容。我们的研究也将服务于我们的现实、解决我们的问题。

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INTRODUCTION

Now we have much discussion about economic globalization, and it is believed also important to think of cultural globalization. The world is developing so fast that it is becoming "smaller and smaller each day". As a result of a "smaller space", people need to understand each other in order to avoid conflicts and to build a world of peace and harmony, and the best way to understand each other is to study each other's culture. In fact, people are doing it now: American educators are now studying Confucianism both for learning something to solve their own problems and for understanding China; many Chinese people are busy studying and introducing Western culture...

With the same aim in mind, the author of the book is trying to write an introductory book to ancient Greek and Roman culture and the *Bible*, which are believed to be at the roots of Western civilization.

The book is especially written for the English majors in China who have English literature as a required course, but have no knowledge of ancient Greek and Roman culture. As it is known to all, the lack of this knowledge always stands in the way of the students' understanding of English literature, let alone appreciating it. Without appreciation, students can hardly get interested in it. And that is the very reason why so many students fail in the studying of English literature, which is, of course, the biggest loss as English majors. For what are they specialized in then?

Students can read about ancient Greece and Rome in other books. But one of the efforts we are trying to make here is to make those things easier to understand and enjoyed by the Chinese students. These efforts include the choice

of words, sentence structures, the arrangement of the contents, the way of explanation, the way of narration and so on.

Students using the book are hoped to read the following questions and their answers first.

What is Western classical civilization?

Western classical civilization is an exploration of the life and culture of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Almost every aspect of ancient life — what the ancients thought, what they ate and drank, the warfare and combat, what they did for fun — will be examined. Students will be able to study the art, architecture, and literature of these cultures.

Why do the Chinese students study Western classical civilization?

This period in Western civilization produced some of the greatest literature, the most profound moral and political thought and finest art of all time. For this reason alone, the study of this ancient world is enjoyable and rewarding. This ancient world also had a deep impact on later Western civilizations, including the present time. So by studying the ancient world, the Chinese students can not only appreciate the roots of Western culture but also understand the Westerners' relation to their past and gain a perspective on the contemporary West.

Do the Chinese students study Western culture in the same way the Westerners do?

The study of culture is a circulating process which keeps the study of culture alive and stimulate new interest and fresh research. Different societies, different cultural backgrounds or different ages see the same culture in different ways. Why do people study culture and history? Because people use it to solve the present-day problems. So when the Chinese study the ancient Greek and Roman culture, they will find things which are useful for them to solve their own problems, and they will get feelings which are different from the Westerners. In other words, they will enjoy the culture in their own way.

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