

A History of Chinese and European Civilizations

何平 编著

中国和欧洲
文明史比较

(英文版)



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何平，牛津大学博士，曾为牛津大学、剑桥大学、巴黎高师、巴黎第十大学、台湾淡江大学和香港浸会大学等校客座教授和客座研究员。已出版数十篇（部）论著，其中有世界著名出版社出版的英文学术著作，以及入围国家新闻出版总署2007年“三个一百原创图书”的作品。



内容介绍

本书以简明扼要的方式叙述中国和欧洲文明的发展线索及主要历史事件，配有适量图片，可作为高等学校人文历史和社会科学研究生专业英语教材使用，也适合其他专业大学生、研究生，以及一般读者阅读。

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Chapter 1

Prehistory of the Greek Civilization

Crete's Golden Age (Late Minoan Age)

The first homes of civilized man were Mesopotamia and Egypt. Originally, Europe was barbarous. Between 3500 and 2500 BC the southeastern part of Europe was illuminated by the culture of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. After this region had basked for a time in the light of oriental civilization, barbarians swooped down from the north, destroyed part of the highly civilized life they found there, and then became civilized in turn. There barbarians, these invaders, were the Greeks, who afterward proudly spoke of themselves as the torch-bearers of civilized life, whereas they had been originally nothing but barbarians and destroyers of civilization. Everything that they had had in the field of civilization, they had received from other peoples. Although afterwards the Greeks referred to these peoples as "barbarians," they could not hide from posterity the knowledge that they themselves had been the original barbarians. The Greeks in turn fell before a people that was located still farther to the West.

THE BACKGROUND OF THE GREEK HISTORY

In Crete and the Aegean area, the man who was in the late Stone Age was generally called the Early Minoan Period, had made considerable

progress by 300 BC. Owing to the abundance of ores, they had reached the age of metals in southeastern Europe and Asia Minor, and were doing considerable trading with other peoples. Such articles as pottery, beads, copper trinkets, and metal daggers or axes formed objects of bargaining, both with Western Asia and with Egypt. In some respects, though, this man was backward: he had not learned to write, he had no ships worthy of the name, and he had developed no hewn or stone masonry.

Crete's Golden Age (Late Minoan Age)

The golden age of Cretan (Minoan) civilization lasted from about 1700 to 1400 BC, when huge palaces were constructed for the kings and when Cretan ships extended the sway of Cretan political power over the islands of the Aegean Sea and the west coast of Asia Minor. In some respects the Cretans surpassed both the Egyptians and the Babylonians, for they invented an ingenious system of water supply and drainage.

Among other centers of Cretan civilization may be mentioned the celebrated city of Troy in the northwestern corner of Asia Minor, and Mycenae in southern Greece. Excavations have shown a marked similarity between the cultures of the original center, Crete and those that were dependent on it. They flourished between 1500 and 1200 BC. Being situated on the mainland, they required heavy fortifications, which are not to be found in Crete. Troy owed much of its prosperity to its position near the present site of Constantinople (Istanbul), where the straits lead from the Black Sea to the Aegean and where the land route connects Europe with Asia. The tolls levied upon commerce led to friction with the Greeks, who seem to have carried on a war with Troy, according to the first great Greek writer, Homer. Homer, however, ignores the economic background, and pictures the war as caused by the abduction of a beautiful Greek woman (Helen of Troy).

EARLY GREEK COLONIZATION

The original Greeks were Indo-Europeans, and were from the grasslands of southeastern Europe. They were a nomadic pastoral people, less civilized than the Cretans or Hittites. The first bands, called Achaeans, probably reached the Greek peninsula about 2000 BC. The next group, the Dorians, reached southern Greece about 1100 BC, conquered the Achaeans and took possession of the country, including Crete, Troy, and the coast of Asia Minor. Sparta became their leading city. The Ionians settled around Athens, while the Aeolians dwelt farther north. By 1000 BC, these peoples had conquered the Aegean world. Armenian and Phrygian invaders also invaded Asia Minor in two waves and conquered the Hittites.

Fusion of Greeks and Aegeans

The invaders kept their own language, but adopted much of the civilization of their foes. The arts almost disappeared. (Hesiod calls this period the Age of Iron.) The two peoples intermarried and thus produced the later Greek.

The invaders had a tribal government, with a chief to lead the tribe. The smallest unit, the clan, consisted of several families related by blood. Several clans in a tribe often united into a polity to supersede the tribe. The chief held his place so long as he could win victories in war. An assembly of the armed men, meeting infrequently, discussed only important questions. A smaller group, the Council of Elders, met oftener and aided the chief in governing. Influenced by the Aegeans, the invaders made kings of their chiefs, quit wandering, took to seafaring and farming, began to live in cities, and adopted city-state government.

THE AGE OF THE KINGS (1000–750 BC)

The Aegeans and the Phoenicians influenced Greek life. The Phoenicians brought them the products of the civilized world, such as the alphabet. This gift the Greeks perfected to meet their needs.

Before 800 BC, the noble, with his chariot and weapons of iron or bronze, was a heroic figure, as he is pictured in the Homeric Poems, notably the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. The bard Homer has been credited with their authorship, but a number of singer's doubtless composed them. Because they tell also of the deeds of the gods, these songs became the sacred book of the Greeks.

Before the Homeric songs the Greeks spiritualized nature. To them almost all natural objects had spirits, and might be worshipped with gifts of food or sacrifices. Gradually the Greeks added many gods and goddesses. A partial list follows: Zeus was the supreme god; Poseidon was god of the sea; Hera, wife of Zeus; Ares, god of war; Apollo, god of light, agriculture, and destruction; Demeter, earth mother; Dionysus, god of suffering and wine; Athena, protectors of cities; Aphrodite, goddess of love; Artemis, goddess of the moon and hunters; and Hermes, messenger of the gods. These gods showed human defects, but were immortal. Mount Olympus was their home, but they often visited the earth. Hades, a gloomy region ruled by Pluto and Persephone, where almost everyone went after death; Heroes and a favored few, the spirits the good, went to the Elysian Fields. Tartarus was a region below Hades peopled by the very wicked. The earth was a curved disk with Olympus as the center. Temples and oracles were built in honor of Zeus, Apollo, and Athena.

THE GREEK CITY STATES

In the world history, no other country as small as Greece and no other part of any other country as large as Greece has shown such a profusion of learning, sane standards of living, enlightened experiments in practically every known form of government, industrial and commercial development, successful colonization, and artistic production as did the Greeks in the short period from 600 to 300 BC.

Almost every city had a harbor, which was dotted with ships. The perils of seafaring were many, but the profits of successful voyages were large. Money was used more and more to pay citizens for state service, to erect temples, theaters, and other public undertakings. To defray the costs of war and military service, Athens worked mines, collected a one percent tariff and levied tribute on her subject cities in the Delian League.

Pericles was the outstanding leader and the greatest orator from 461 to 431 BC. Pericles led Athens for forty years. So prominent was he that this period was named after him. Few really wealthy people were to be found. Land ownership was the most desirable form of wealth, but service to the state and enjoyment of life were placed above riches. There were many workers and farmers in or near Athens, and all participated in the government. Slaves sometimes outnumbered freemen. They were often honored and trusted, and dressed like freemen.

The Parthenon, built on the Acropolis or great hill in honor of Athena, was unrivalled in architecture. On the south side of the Acropolis was the theater of Dionysius, which seated 30,000 people. Several great play writers appeared: Sophocles, who exalted the gods; Aeschylus, who dramatized legends of old heroes and taught moral lessons; and Euripides, who introduced a note of realism in his versions of the ancient stories. Comedy developed later than tragedy and centered on topics of the day. Aristophanes, supreme in this field, subjected men and events to ridicule and laughter, and though

his plays are ribald, his aim was partly that of a reformer. Athenian plays had almost no scenery, but they reached an astonishing degree of literary perfection, and exerted a tremendous influence upon Athenian life and character.

Three great historians were outstanding: Herodotus, whose work on the Persian wars is brilliant, but unreliable; Thucydides, whose treatise on the Peloponnesian war is scholarly and reliable; and Xenophon, himself a soldier, who later wrote on the Expedition of the Ten Thousand. Phobias was the greatest sculptor, but Parietals, who lived later, was a siring rival. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were the greatest philosophers, and Remoistens was the greatest orator. No city in world history could boast of so proudly a democracy, so many great men, or so highly cultured a citizenship, as could Athens. Most of these great men will be discussed in greater detail in the section devoted to the civilization of the Greek city-states.

THE CULTURE OF GREECE

The Greek arts evolved under the tutelage of the Egyptian and Babylonian masters, but they revealed also unmistakable evidence of genius and independence on the part of the Greeks. Since stone and marble were to be found in abundance, the Greeks freely used them, though printed dwellings continued in many casts to be built of dried brick, as was also the case in ancient Mesopotamia. The Greek temples are most impressive, though they were not as large as some of the buildings constructed by the Assyrians or the Persians. The use of the column was also not new. The typical Greek temple was made up of a rectangular hall, at the ends of which were placed one or two rows of columns, while sometimes columns were also placed along the sides of the building. Occasionally porches were provided as well. The hall and porches were covered with a roof made of wooden beams and protected by tiles.

The earliest style is the Doric, and the most famous example the Parthenon, built on the hill at Athens called the Acropolis. The Ionic type was marked by a more slender column which was adorned with spiral volutes at the top (the capital). A superb example is the temple of Erechtheum, also on the Acropolis. An earlier Ionic temple was that of Artemis (Diana) at Ephesus, which was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The third style is the Corinthian, which evolved from the Ionic and is more complex than the two earlier forms. The best known example of this type may be the choragic monument of Lysicrates in Athens.

Greek sculpture, even more than its architecture, illustrates the high qualities of the arts developed by the Greeks. They were one of the few peoples in the ancient world who were not dominated by religion, but applied themselves wholeheartedly to the things of "this world." Consequently, they freely portrayed the nude human body, depicted with ardor the beauties of nature, and drew upon their active imagination. Taught by the environment in which they found themselves, they developed the motto of "Nothing in excess, and everything in proportion," the combined simple lines with proper proportions. They also were true to nature patient and full of joy, free from restraint and void of superstition. For these reasons their statues and other figures carved out of stone and marble, as well as out of bronze, gold, and silver, are superior to nearly all similar productions of other peoples in the ancient or medieval world. Their greatest sculptor Phidias, perfected the huge statue of the goddess Athena placed before the Parthenon. Since most of the Greek paintings have been destroyed, we can say only that they probably resembled the sculpture in the admirable qualities just mentioned. One of the outstanding painters was Polynotus.

EPIC AND LYRIC POETRY BEFORE 450 BC

Very remarkable were the contributions made by the Greeks in the field of literature. Homer, no doubt assisted in the composition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The two chief writers of lyric poetry were the poet Pindar (about 450 BC) and the poetess Sappho (about 600 BC). Both tragedy and comedy of the Greek drama reached its greatest in the period from 525 to 400 BC, when the three famous writers, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, flourished. Aeschylus was noted for his description of scenes in the Persian Wars, in which he had fought. He was a serious-minded, philosophical person, given over to a sense of duty and patriotism, as may be seen in his *Agamemnon*, *Prometheus Bound*. Perhaps *Agamemnon* is even better known. In which he tells of the return of a hero from Troy and his murder by a rival, the lover of his own wife. Sophocles was more interested in ordinary human activities and relations than in heroic deeds. His finest work is the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, but it is probable that, since only seven out of perhaps over a hundred of his plays are still extant, some of his lost works even surpass that just mentioned. Euripides wrote plays which represented the gods as very human. He directs one's sympathies toward mortals, as may be seen in his beautiful work, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*. Aristophanes wrote satirical comedies, including the *Frogs*, in which he satirized Euripides, and the *Clouds*, which ridicules Socrates, representing him as one of the less capable Sophists.

HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

The most famous composer of orations was Demosthenes (385 – 322 BC), who's best work was entitled *On the Crown*. In this and other orations he warned against the Power of Philip of Macedon. The two greatest

Greek historians were Herodotus and Thucydides, both of whom lived in the fifth century BC. Herodotus has left a painstaking work dealing with the Persian Wars, and excellent descriptions of society in the many countries he visited, such as Egypt, Babylonia, and Italy. Thucydides wrote about the civil war between Athens and Sparta. He was much more accurate than his predecessor, Herodotus.

The classical literature of Greece is noted especially for simplicity of expression, realism (a truthful description of things as they are), appreciation of beauty and grave, both in the theme and the style, and superb literary technique. There has never been a people that was able to surpass the Greeks in these respects.

Socrates (469 – 399 BC) was prominent in this field, who taught that there is but one God and that the soul is immortal. Socrates argued that one must learn to “know himself,” meaning that a person should not waste so much of his time thinking and talking about things that are of no great importance, such as sports, the making of money, amusements, heavy eating and drinking, and the like, but should discuss virtue and seek it. He taught by means of the dialog (the Socratic Method) and left no writings of his own.

Plato (427 – 347 BC) was the most famous pupil of Socrates and the greatest philosopher of antiquity. The only things that are real and eternal are spiritual forces, or ideas. Ideas, in Plato, are general concepts, which can be known only by the reason.

Aristotle (384 – 322 BC). Though a pupil of Plato, differed considerably from his master in that he was immensely interested in the world of material objects.

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were vastly superior to that host of popular teachers called the Sophists. Some of these were good and capable men, but many were mere quacks. The latter gave rise to the term “sophisticated,” for they emphasized elegance of speech and manners at the expense of learning and virtue. Led by the more intelligent ideas of Democritus and Empedocles, but not understanding them, they developed materialistic conceptions of the universe and of human society.

They scoffed at popular piety and were in turn despised by such profound thinkers as Socrates and Plato. The latter taught a sort of realism which conflicted with the sheerly materialistic view of evolution held by Empedocles, who stated that air, fire, water, and earth are the four primary and indestructible elements in the universe.

Very interesting was the great religious festivals intended to propitiate the deities of the respective states. One of these made appealed to the inhabitants of all the Greek states, and it was naturally held in honor of Zeus, chief of all the gods. The place selected for the event was Olympia and gave rise to the Olympic games—racing with horses and chariots, wrestling, running, jumping, and so forth. Participants arrived from many Greek states and colonies.

THE HELLENISTIC AGES (338 – 133 BC)

The period from 338 to 133 BC is called the Hellenistic Age, because the old Greek city-states had made room for the empire of Alexander the Great and the empires of his successors, with the result that the whole of the Near East became Greek in culture and language. Greece itself was subjected to intellectual and moral decline.

Significant Date

Philip II of Macedonia Conquers Greece, 338 BC

Reign of Alexander the Great, 336 – 323 BC

Fall of the Seleucid Empire, 196 BC

Rome Annexes Macedonia, Greece, 146 BC

Pergamon Annexed by Rome, 133 BC

Egypt Annexed by Rome, 31 BC