



大学生英语分级阅读（二年级）

THE RENAISSANCE

文艺复兴

Wallace K. Ferguson 原著

张琼 张冲 翻译

支顺福 注释

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1 The Background of the Renaissance

THE PROBLEM OF THE RENAISSANCE

The word “Renaissance” has long carried overtones of glamor¹, such as have been associated with no other period in European history. To the average reader it evokes a brilliantly colored picture of an age when all life was a work of art, an age of versatile supermen, of cultured princes and condottieri², of classical scholars, and divinely gifted painters and sculptors, “the age of the discovery of the world and of man.” The component elements of this picture have been selected from the age itself, but the picture as a whole is the legacy left by the creative genius of Jakob Burckhardt³. For more than a generation, however, scholarly critics have been attacking Burckhardt’s conception of the Renaissance from the most varied points of view, so that, though it remains a commonly recognized historical period, there is no longer any general agreement as to its character, its causes, or even its geographical and chronological limits. It has become, in fact, the most intractable problem child of historiography⁴.

The study of the Renaissance here presented is intended as an essay in interpretation rather than a narrative of events. The civilization of any age presents a bewildering confusion of varied and often conflicting characteristics. It is one of the most important duties of the historian to select and arrange these characteristics so that they form part of a reasonably intelligible picture, for, until that task has been performed, history remains a meaningless chaos, without form and void. The historian will, of course, endeavor above all things to make his presentation of the period conform as closely as possible to reality⁵. Yet, in the end, it must appear as seen through his eyes, from his point of view, and interpreted through the medium of his understanding. And, since history is in this sense created by the historian, and he, in turn, is the product of his age and environment, history varies from generation to generation and must be constantly reinterpreted. That does not mean that history written in the past is not of great value. It is, indeed, indispensable to the student, for each portrayal of an age illuminates it from a different angle and calls attention to essential factors which might easily be overlooked in the disorganized confusion of the original sources⁶. It may be well, therefore, to begin our study by noting briefly the various

1 overtones of glamor 充满魅力的联想色彩。

2 condottieri *n.* 雇佣军首领。

3 Jakob Burckhardt 雅各布·布克哈特(1818–1897), 瑞士历史学家, 著有《文艺复兴时期的意大利文化》。

一 文艺复兴的背景

文艺复兴之感

长久以来，“文艺复兴”这个词汇一直蕴含着迷人的魅力，这是欧洲历史上任何其他时期所没有的。对普通读者而言，它能让人联想起一幅色彩瑰丽的时代画卷，在那个时代，整个生命就是一件艺术作品，那是一个产生全才超人、高雅君主和雇佣军头领、古典学者以及具有神奇天赋的画家和雕塑家的时代，是“发现世界和人类的时代”。这幅画卷的各个元素都是该时代自身的精品，而整幅画卷却是创作天才雅各布·布克哈特的遗赠。然而，不止一代的学者从各个不同的角度对布克哈特的文艺复兴观进行了抨击，因此，尽管文艺复兴依然被普遍认为是一个历史时期，可是它的特征、成因，甚至是地域和年代的范围等，却没有一致的共识。事实上，它已成了历史学上最难以处理的问题。

本书的文艺复兴研究，主要在于解释，而不是对事件进行叙述。任何时代的文明都展现出一种棘手的困惑，其中充满各种相互冲突的特征。历史学家最重要的任务之一就是挑选和梳理这些特征，把它们拼成一幅合乎情理、清晰可辨的图画，因为不完成这样的任务，历史就依然是一片毫无意义的混沌，空洞无形。当然，在对这一时期作出诠释时，历史学家首先会竭力符合事实。不过，我们最终是通过历史学家的眼睛，站在他的视点，经过他的理解，来认识历史的。而且，鉴于历史是如此由历史学家来揭示的，而专家自身又是具体时代和环境的产物，因此历史对每一代人都是不同的，它必须被不停地再诠释。这并不意味着过去记载的历史就没有重要价值了。对学生而言，历史不可或缺，因为每个时代的叙述都从不同的角度展现历史，让人们关注到一些重要因素，而这些信息往往因为原始材料的杂乱无章很容易被忽视。因此，作为研究的入手点，我们首先应该简略地说明一下以往人们是从哪些不同

4 the most intractable ... historiography 历史学上最难以处理的问题。

5 conform ... to reality 尽可能符合事实。

6 the disorganized ... sources 原始材料的杂乱无章。

points of view from which the Renaissance has been presented in the past.

The idea that there was a great revival or rebirth of literature and the arts, after a thousand years of cultural sterility¹, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries originated with the Italian writers of the Renaissance themselves. Finding the feudal and ecclesiastical² literature and Gothic art³ of the Middle Ages uncongenial⁴ to their taste, they turned for inspiration to the civilization of Roman and Greek antiquity, and as their reverence for classical culture grew, it strengthened their contempt for the unclassical forms of medieval art and letters. Thus, from the beginning, the double conception of medieval darkness and subsequent cultural rebirth was colored by the acceptance of classical standards. Thanks to the predominance of the classics in European education, this attitude continued to exert a powerful influence on the interpretation of cultural history for centuries, the “revival of antiquity” being generally accepted as the essential mark of differentiation between the culture of the Renaissance and that of the Middle Ages, as well as the most valid justification of the former’s claim to superiority. The prejudice of the classicists was also reenforced and provided with a broader intellectual basis by the Rationalists of the eighteenth century. In his penetrating *Essai sur les moeurs*⁵ (1756), Voltaire⁶ presented the Middle Ages as a dark era of priestly tyranny, in contrast to which the age of the “renaissance des lettres”⁷ shone with the bright light of liberated reason⁸. It was much in this spirit that Hallam⁹ and Michelet¹⁰ later characterized the Renaissance, and echoes of their thought still ring through more recent histories. But if the classical and rationalist¹¹ interpretations exercised a wide and lasting influence, they were not left unopposed. A reaction began with the Romanticism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The romantic writers turned a more sympathetic eye on the Middle Ages. They discovered the vigor of early Germanic¹² culture, the grandeur of Gothic art, and the sentimental appeal of medieval piety and chivalry¹³. On the other hand, they were shocked by the cold rationalism and pagan¹⁴ immorality they saw in the Renaissance, and regarded it with a sort of fascinated horror.

It was with this background of classical, rationalist and romantic traditions, qualified¹⁵ by Hegelian¹⁶ philosophy and his own esthetic revolt against the utilitarian standards of the mid-nineteenth century, that Burckhardt constructed his masterly synthesis of *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860). Here the Italian Renaissance appeared for the first time as a distinct epoch in cultural history, with every aspect of its civilization fitted

1 sterility *n.* 沉寂, 无生气。

2 ecclesiastical *a.* 教会的。

3 Gothic art 哥特式艺术, 12至16世纪盛行的艺术风格, 主要体现在建筑上, 特点是高耸的尖顶、门窗上的桃形拱券、嵌花玻璃等。

4 uncongenial *a.* 趣味不投的。

5 *Essai sur les moeurs* 《论风俗》。

6 Voltaire 伏尔泰(1694—1778), 法国哲学家、启蒙运动重要思想家。

7 renaissance des lettres 文学的复兴。

8 liberated reason 解放了的理性。

的角度来认识文艺复兴的。

在长达一千年的文化沉寂之后，14和15世纪时出现了一次伟大的文学和艺术的复兴和重生，这就是文艺复兴，持这一观点的正是意大利文艺复兴时期的作家。他们不喜欢中世纪的封建和教会文学，不喜欢哥特式艺术，转而从罗马和希腊古文明中获取灵感，随着他们对古典文化的日益推崇，非古典的中世纪艺术和文学形式就越发被轻视。因此，中世纪的黑暗和随之而起的文化复兴，这两个概念从一开始就共同带有接受古典标准的意味。由于欧洲教育对古典文学极为推崇，几个世纪以来，人们对文化历史的认识一直受到这种态度的巨大影响，“古典的复兴”被广泛接受，它不仅成为文艺复兴文化和中世纪文化之间的分水岭，也是前者占据优势地位的最有力证词。同样，18世纪的理性主义者不仅使古典主义成见更加根深蒂固，还为此提供了更广泛的文化基础。伏尔泰在其充满睿智的著作《论风俗》(1756)中，把中世纪描述为一个黑暗的宗教专制时期，和闪耀着自由理性光芒的“文学的复兴”时期形成对比。此后，哈勒姆和米什莱就赋予文艺复兴这样的精神特质，而他们的思想在新的历史时期依然为人们所倡导。可是，如果说古典和理性主义的诠释产生了广泛和持久的影响力，人们对它们也并非毫无异议。18世纪末与19世纪早期的浪漫主义就最先提出反对意见。浪漫主义作家对中世纪颇有好感，他们由此发现了早期日耳曼文化的魅力、哥特艺术的伟大之处以及中世纪虔诚和骑士风尚的动人情感。另一方面，他们对文艺复兴所显现的冰冷的理性主义和异教的不道德行为感到震惊，并对其在想像中充满恐慌。

正是在这样的古典主义、理性主义和浪漫主义传统的背景下，在黑格尔哲学以及黑格尔自身对19世纪中期功利主义标准的美学反叛的前提下，布克哈特才推出了著名的《意大利文艺复兴的文明》(1860)。书中，意大利文艺复兴首度在文化史上作为特定时代出现，其文明

9 Hallam 哈勒姆(1777—1859)，英国历史学家，著有《中世纪欧洲国家观》。

10 Michelet 米什莱(1789—1874)，法国历史学家，著有《法兰西史》、《法国革命史》等。

11 *rationalist a.* 理性主义的。

12 *Germanic a.* 日耳曼的。

13 *piety and chivalry* 虔诚和骑士风尚。

14 *pagan a.* 异教的。

15 *qualified* 加以修正。

16 *Hegelian a.* 黑格尔(Hegel)的。

into place as part of a unified concept. It was now no mere revival of letters or art, but a general awakening or rebirth of human intellect and personality, the beginning of the modern world. In estimating the origins of this phenomenon, Burckhardt made a brilliant analysis of the influence of the Italian cities and of Italy's unique social and political organization; but he found the essential motive forces in the revival of antiquity and "its union with the genius of the Italian people." He insisted throughout on the rational and esthetic attitude of the Italians of that age, which made every part of their life a work of conscious art. For the rest, his picture of the Renaissance leaves a vivid impression of rampant individualism, creative energy and moral chaos, with the supernatural sanctions¹ and Christian traditions of the Middle Ages giving way to something more like the ancient pre-Christian ways of thought.

The rounded completeness² of Burckhardt's synthesis made an irresistible impression. Renaissance historiography during the following generation was devoted almost exclusively to amplifying and illustrating his interpretation, often enough without the qualifications³ which the master himself had been careful to make. And the Renaissance in the northern countries was interpreted, in the light of his conception of the Italian Renaissance, as resulting directly from the migration of Italian culture and classicism across the Alps.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, however, a reaction set in⁴, somewhat reminiscent of the Romantic reaction of a century earlier. In 1885, Henry Thode⁵ called attention to the influence of the Franciscan⁶ religious revival on the art of the early Renaissance, and less than a decade later Paul Sabatier's life of St. Francis⁷ aroused an enthusiastic interest in the early Franciscans. From this arose a new interpretation of the Renaissance, which found the origins of its creative spirit and individualism in the religious mysticism⁸ of the later Middle Ages. This was the first serious challenge to Burckhardt's emphasis on the rational and classical elements in Renaissance civilization. Other interpretations soon followed, minimizing the importance of both the "Italian genius" and the revival of antiquity. Patriotic scholars from the North began to insist on the spontaneous development of their own national cultures without dependence on Italy. A group of German historians, in particular, claimed all that was creative in the Renaissance as the natural outgrowth of the Germanic culture of the Middle Ages.

Meanwhile, increasingly intensive research in medieval history tended to modify still further the Burckhardtian conception of the strong contrast between medieval and Renaissance civilization. Closer examination of the Middle Ages led to the discovery of the "Renaissance of the Twelfth Century" and to the realization that many of the characteristics of the Renaissance were already in existence in the preceding period.

1 supernatural sanctions 超自然的约束力(指对神明的敬畏)。

2 rounded completeness 缜密的完备性。

3 qualification *n.* 限制。

4 set in 开始出现。

5 Henry Thode 亨利·托德(1857—1920)，德国艺术史家，著有《圣方济各与意大利文艺复兴艺术之肇始》。

的各个方面相互整合，形成了一个完整的概念。它已不仅仅是文学或艺术的复兴，而是人类智慧和个性的整体复苏或新生，它开启了现代世界。在分析这一现象的起源时，布克哈特详尽而清晰地分析了意大利城市以及独特的社会与政治组织所带来的影响，但他却由此将其原动力归因于古典复兴和“它与意大利人民的才智产生结合”。他自始至终坚持这样的观点，即那个时代的意大利人具有理性和美学的态度，使其生活的每一个部分都成了自觉的艺术品。此外，他的文艺复兴画卷使人深刻体会到恣肆的个人主义、创造力和道德混乱，中世纪超自然的约束力和基督教传统让位于某种更像是古代前基督教的思维方式。

布克哈特缜密周全的推论让人记忆犹新。在这之后，关于文艺复兴的史评几乎都专注于对布克哈特的观点进行补充和阐释，甚至时常超越了大师本人谨慎设下的限度。根据布克哈特关于意大利文艺复兴的观点，欧洲北部国家的文艺复兴就是意大利文化和古典主义跨越了阿尔卑斯山脉的直接结果。

然而，19世纪末时，一股反作用力开始出现，这多少能让人回想起一个世纪之前的浪漫主义反拨。1885年，亨利·托德提出要关注方济各会宗教复兴对早期文艺复兴艺术的影响，之后不到十年，保罗·萨巴蒂耶所写的圣方济各传记又激发起人们对早期方济各会修道士的兴趣，由此产生了对文艺复兴的一种新的诠释，而这种解释正是从中世纪后期的宗教神秘主义中发现了文艺复兴的创新精神和个人主义起源。这是针对布克哈特在文艺复兴文明中关于理性和古典元素的强调所发出的首次正式挑战。随后，其他解释相继出现，它们淡化了“意大利天才”和古典复兴的重要性。北方的爱国学者也开始强调本民族文化的自发发展，而非对意大利的依赖。尤其是一群德国历史学家，他们提出，文艺复兴中一切具有创造性的东西都是中世纪日尔曼文化的自然产物。

同时，对中世纪历史的研究也如火如荼地进行着，人们企图进一步修正布克哈特关于中世纪与文艺复兴文明的强烈比照。通过对中世纪的细致研究，学者发现了“12世纪的文艺复兴”，从而认识到文艺复兴的许多特征早在之前的历史中就存在了。于是荷伊兴哈与其他学

6 Franciscan *a.* (天主教)方济各会的。

7 Paul Sabatier's *life of St. Francis* 保罗·萨巴蒂耶所写的圣方济各传记。萨巴蒂耶(1858—1928)，法国神学家。圣方济各(1182—1226)，方济各会创始人。

8 mysticism *n.* 神秘主义。

Conversely, Huizinga¹ and others called attention to the continuation of much that was medieval through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. From this double approach has grown a healthy emphasis on the continuity of development from the one period to the other, though it has left the chronological limits of the Renaissance vague in the extreme² and has destroyed much of the integrity that Burckhardt gave it. Finally, there has been of late³ a growing tendency to stress the importance of economic and social changes, and to find in them a clue to the other changes in the culture of the age.

It is this last tendency that suggests what seems to be the most satisfactory interpretation of the Renaissance. None of the other interpretations mentioned above furnish an adequate explanation of the fundamental changes in European civilization which occurred at the end of the Middle Ages, nor do they provide a sufficiently inclusive characterization of Renaissance culture. Too often, cultural historians have considered only the literary, artistic, philosophical or religious manifestations of the Renaissance, treating each as though it had an independent existence; while the political and economic historians have usually been content to leave these to the specialist. An adequate synthesis must include not only the intellectual and esthetic elements of Renaissance civilization but also the economic, social and political, and the former can best be understood by approaching them from a study of changing economic conditions in their interrelation with social and political institutions.

It is, of course, impossible to find in economic conditions a directly traceable cause or a sufficient explanation of all the intellectual and artistic, or even the social and political phenomena of any age. There are too many other factors that must be taken into consideration, such as the creative contribution of individual men of genius and the qualifying effect⁴ of religious, philosophical, literary and artistic traditions inherited from the past. Moreover, there is a constant interplay⁵ among the various elements of a changing civilization, so that the development of economic life may itself be influenced by intellectual preconceptions and by established political and social institutions. Nevertheless, economic conditions, the way men make a living, form the necessary basis of civilization. They determine in large part⁶ the character and interests of the social classes and set a limit to the variety of cultural forms possible at any given time⁷. Together with the political and social organization of the age, they form the environment in which writers, artists, preachers, and thinkers live, and they exercise an inescapable influence upon their ideas and attitudes. And when there is a fundamental change in this necessary basis of civilization, it is only reasonable to expect roughly corresponding changes in the political, social and cultural superstructure, though the latter may be delayed and modified by the force of tradition and custom.

1 Huizinga 荷伊兴哈(1872—1945)，荷兰历史学家，著有《中世纪的衰落》。

2 has left ... in the extreme 使年代学上文艺复兴的(起止)界线变得极为模糊。

3 of late 近年来。

4 qualifying effect 制约作用。

者运用反向思维，提请人们关注14和15世纪期间中世纪特质的延续。这一双重研究方式产生了一种积极的观点，即强调不同时期之间的延续性发展，虽然这样做使年代学上的文艺复兴时间界限变得极为模糊，也使布克哈特所给予的完整性也遭受了很大的破坏。近年来终于又出现了这样一种趋势，它强调经济和社会变化的重要性，并由此找到线索，从而发现当时文化中的其他变化。

正是最后这种研究趋势，才对文艺复兴作出了似乎最为令人满意的解释。上述其他解释都没有对中世纪末欧洲文明的根本变化加以充分说明，也没有全面和综合地揭示文艺复兴文化。文化历史学家们往往只考虑文艺复兴在文学、艺术、哲学或宗教上的表现，将它们分别对待，视为独立的个体；而政治经济史学家们又往往满足于将这些研究交给专家进行。一项充分的研究不仅要包括文艺复兴文明的知识和美学方面，还必须考虑其经济、社会和政治的因素；要充分理解前者，我们需要考虑相应的社会和政治体制，并对变化的经济状况加以分析和研究。

当然，关于特定时期的知识和艺术以及社会和政治现象，我们不可能从经济状况中直接找到答案或充分的解释，因为有太多的其他因素必须考虑在内，例如天才个体所给予的创造性贡献以及宗教、哲学、文学和艺术传统的制约作用等。此外，在文明变化的诸多因素之间，还存在着一种持续的相互影响，因而经济生活的发展，其自身也受到知识先见以及既有的政治和社会体制的影响。然而，经济状况（即人们维持生计的方式）形成了文明的必要前提。它们在很大程度上决定了社会各阶层的总体特征和兴趣，并限定了某一特定时期可能出现的文化形式的类型。它们与当时的政治和社会组织一起，形成了作家、艺术家、传教士以及思想家生活的环境，并对这些人的观念和态度产生必然影响。当这一文明的必要前提发生本质变化，政治、社会和文化上层建筑就势必产生相应的巨变，虽然后者的变化会因为传统和习俗的力量而延后和缓减。

5 *interplay n.* 相互影响。

6 *in large part* 在很大程度上。

7 *at any given time* 在某一特定时期。

Such a change took place in Western Europe at the end of the early Middle Ages with the revival of commerce and the growth of towns in the midst of what had been an almost purely agrarian¹ economy. These dynamic forces gradually altered the foundations of medieval society, though for more than two centuries the feudal and ecclesiastical classes retained their dominant position, set the tone of² European culture, and maintained the traditional framework of political and social life. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, however, the economic change had begun to effect a radical alteration³ in both the political and social structure of the Western countries. But even then, the aftermath⁴ of corresponding intellectual change was beginning only in Italy. It did not appear in the North till a century or more later. As a period in the history of European civilization, the distinguishing characteristic of the Renaissance is to be found in this transformation of culture, the result of the change from a natural economy to one based on money, from a rural society to one in which the influential classes dwelt in cities and drew their wealth directly or indirectly from trade. The Renaissance grew out of the Middle Ages and was a period of gradual transition. But its most typical culture was that of the cities and their people. From this point of view, it may be said that the Renaissance began when the new urban and secular⁵ elements in European culture began to weigh down the balance against⁶ the feudal and ecclesiastical elements which had dominated the civilization of the Middle Ages.

THE CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS IN MEDIEVAL CIVILIZATION: FEUDALISM

The life of the High Middle Ages⁷, both temporal and spiritual, was set in the mould provided by the two universal institutions of Western Christendom: feudalism and the church. Save⁸ in the towns, the forms of political, social and economic activity followed the pattern of the former, while the ideas which inspired or rationalized all aspects of life were shaped by the latter. These two institutions were inextricably interwoven⁹. Feudal society was bound by unquestioning faith to the divinely ordained¹⁰ church. On the other hand, the church held vast accumulations of land, which bound it by political and economic ties to the feudal system. Both feudalism and the church reached their highest point of development in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, yet neither was the product of that vigorous age. When Western Christendom awoke to new activity with the revival of commerce in the eleventh century, both the feudal system and the church had already acquired their major characteristics, though they were still capable of further growth.

1 agrarian *a.* 农业的。

2 set the tone of ... 定下……的基调。

3 to effect a radical alteration 造成根本的变化。

4 aftermath *n.* 波及的影响。

5 secular *a.* 世俗的。

这样的变化就发生在中世纪早期最后几年的西欧，当时，在这个几乎是纯农业经济的核心出现了商业的复兴和城镇的发展。尽管封建和教会阶层在长达两个多世纪里一直占据着统治地位，为欧洲文化定下基调，并维持着政治和社会生活的传统格局，可这些充满生机的力量却渐渐改变着中世纪社会的基础。然而，14世纪初时，经济变化就开始对西方各国的政治和社会结构造成根本改变。不过，即使在那时，因受到波及而发生思想改变的，也只有意大利。直到一个世纪甚至更长的时间之后，北方国家才发生相应变化。作为欧洲文明历史的一个时期，文艺复兴的典型特征必须在文化转型中得以彰显，而这种文化转型正是自然经济转变为货币经济所带来的结果，也是农业社会发生变革的结果，当时社会出现了新的格局，势力阶层开始居住在城市，其财富直接或间接来自贸易。文艺复兴产生于中世纪，是一个逐步转型的时期，而其最具典型的文化是关于城市和城市居民的。从这一点看，我们可以这样认为：在欧洲文化中，当全新的城市和世俗的影响力开始渐渐超过之前统治中世纪文明的封建和教会势力时，文艺复兴就应运而生了。

中世纪文明的保守因素：封建主义

在中世纪的全盛时期，无论是世俗还是精神生活，其模式都由西方基督教世界普遍存在的两大体系所决定，即封建主义和教会。除了在城镇，其他地方的政治、社会和经济活动都遵循前者所规定的模式，而对生活各个领域作出引导或规范的思想则受制于后者。这两大体系密不可分地交织在一起。封建社会对负有神圣使命的教会是绝对遵从的。另一方面，教会占有大片土地，而这些区域在政治和经济上又附属于封建制度。12和13世纪，封建制度和教会发展到鼎盛期，可它们都不是那个强盛时代的产物。11世纪时，随着商业的复兴，西方基督教世界开始了新的运动，而那时，封建制度和教会早已具备其基本特征，尽管它们依然有发展潜力。实际上，在之后的两个世纪里，教会一直具有强劲的文化活力，在使西方文明化

6 to weigh down the balance against ... 重要性超过，对……占上风。

7 the High Middle Ages 中世纪的全盛时期。

8 save prep. 除了。

9 were inextricably interwoven 密不可分地交织在一起。

10 divinely ordained 负有神圣使命的。

The church, indeed, displayed an enormous cultural vitality during the next two centuries, and made great progress in its task of civilizing the western world. But its organization and its social doctrines, like those of feudalism, were already hardening into conservatism. The clergy, like the feudal nobility, had gained their dominating position and their characteristic attitudes in an earlier and simpler society. Both tended to oppose any social change that might imperil¹ their position or the ideals for which they stood².

Feudalism was not a planned or centrally coordinated system. It had arisen during the ninth century from a multitude of personal bargains³, inspired by individual necessity or greed. Its immediate political cause was the collapse of effective central government with the dissolution of the Carolingian Empire⁴. Hampered by the primitive economic conditions of the age, the Carolingian rulers proved unable to carry out the duties of government or to guarantee protection to their people after the Scandinavian Vikings⁵ and the wild Magyar⁶ horsemen had begun to ravage every part of Western Europe. As a result, men sought protection from private lords on whatever terms were offered, while the lords seized the political and judicial powers that fell from the hands of the helpless rulers. The political and social structures of feudalism thus became almost identical, both composed of the same personal relations. Both rested, moreover, on the same economic base, the tenure of land⁷.

The origins of many particular institutions in the feudal system may be traced far back into the Germanic or Roman past. These, together with the immediate political events, all played their part in the formation of feudalism. But a more general and fundamental cause for its whole evolution is to be found in the unique economic condition of Europe from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. By the ninth century, or possibly earlier, Western Europe had sunk back⁸ into a purely agricultural economy. At the beginning of the eighth century the Moslem⁹ conquests had cut it off from all effective commercial contact with the Mediterranean, which had hitherto been the focal center of European trade. Shortly after, the raids of the Northmen¹⁰ blocked the western and northern coasts. The Frankish Empire¹¹, which included almost all that was left of Catholic Christian Europe, was thus left land-locked¹². The effect of this, as Pirenne¹³ points out, was that "the interruption of commerce brought about the disappearance of the merchants, and urban life, which had been maintained by them, collapsed at the same time." The practical disappearance of trade and town life left the agricultural communities without outside markets, thus forcing the great estates into a position of

1 imperil *v.* 使处于险境, 危及。

2 for which they stood 他们所代表的(短语动词原形即stand for)。

3 personal bargains 出于私利的讨价还价。

4 the dissolution of the Carolingian Empire 加洛林帝国的瓦解(“加洛林”(Carolus)系拉丁文, 即“查理大帝”(Charlemagne, 约742—814))。

5 the Scandinavian Vikings 斯基的纳维亚(北欧)海盗。

6 Magyar (匈牙利人自称)马札尔人。

的过程中起着重要作用。然而，教会组织及其社会教条就像封建主义一样，变得越来越僵化保守。神职人员也和封建贵族一样，已经获得了统治地位，具备了在较早期更简单的社会中已成形的典型观念。两者对会危及他们的地位和理念的社会变革都倾向于持反对态度。

封建主义并不是一个有计划的或是具有核心协调性的系统。它形成于9世纪，当时充斥着出于私利的讨价还价活动。正是在个人需求和欲望的激发下，封建主义才得以崛起。封建主义直接的政治成因则是：随着加洛林帝国的瓦解，之前具有效力的中央政府垮台了。在当时原始经济状况的制约下，加洛林帝国的统治者无力执行政府职能；当斯堪的纳维亚海盗和野蛮的马札尔骑兵开始洗劫西欧的各个角落时，他们也无法保护自己的民众。最后，人们就不计条件地向封建领主寻求庇护，而领主就从走投无路的统治者手中夺取了政治和司法权。于是封建主义的政治和社会结构就变得近乎一致，两者都具有相同的人际关系。此外，它们拥有同样的经济基础，即土地占有权。

封建制度的许多特殊机构都脱胎于遥远的日耳曼或罗马时期。这些机构以及随后很快就发生的政治事件共同缔造了封建主义。不过，在总体发展上，有一个更普遍、更基本的动因，它存在于9至11世纪独特的欧洲经济之中。到了9世纪，或许更早一些，西欧已退回到纯粹的农业经济。8世纪初，穆斯林征服切断了西欧和地中海地区之前很活跃的商业联系，而这些活动当时已经成为欧洲贸易的核心。此后不久，北欧人的侵略又封锁了西部和北部港口。当时的法兰克帝国包括天主教的基督教欧洲之外的所有领域，因此是没有出海口的。这种状况，就像庇兰所说，“商业的中断导致了商人的消失，而由商人所维持的城市生活也随之崩溃。”贸易和城市生活的实际消亡，使得农业群体丧失了外部市场，迫使大片土地陷于孤立隔绝的境地。从9世纪到11世纪，除了一些地方性买卖，几乎没有货物交易，因此很少有

7 tenure of land 土地的占有权。

8 had sunk back 退回。

9 Moslem=Muslim 穆斯林。

10 the Northmen 北欧人。

11 the Frankish Empire 法兰克帝国，即加洛林帝国。

12 land-locked 无出海口的，内陆的。

13 Pirenne 庇兰(1862—1935)，比利时历史学家，著有《中世纪欧洲经济社会史》。

isolated independence. From the ninth to the eleventh century, there was little exchange of goods save on a local scale, and hence little need for money. A natural economy of barter and exchange of services largely replaced the money economy inherited from the ancient world. Meanwhile, the rural isolation of society was further intensified by the lack of adequate means of communication and by the appalling dangers and difficulties of travel.

Natural economy and poor communications do not necessarily lead to political disintegration¹, but they do put almost insuperable² obstacles in the way of central government. When the wealth of a country can neither be exchanged for money nor shipped without great difficulty, the income of the central government must be exceedingly limited, and what income there is cannot be effectively mobilized to meet governmental expenses. Under such circumstances, the natural solution was for the state to pay for military, judicial and administrative services by grants of land, or to concede³ practical rights of sovereign jurisdiction to those whose possession of land enabled them to exercise authority over the people living upon it. The function of government and land tenure thus became identified, and both tended, through custom, to become hereditary⁴ and to be regarded as inalienable⁵ private possessions.

Further, since land was the only productive form of wealth, all classes were forced to depend upon it, directly or indirectly, for their living, and their status in society was determined by their relation to it. The peasant worked his lord's land and paid a part of his own crop in return for protection and the use of the land granted to him. The lord, in turn, held his land from a higher lord and gave military and other services in return for it. Thus, from the servile⁶ peasant to the great noble, land was the essential factor in the complex of personal relations that alone held society together.

From every point of view, then, feudalism was adapted to the purely agricultural economy in which it had taken shape. And long after money economy had been reintroduced by the revival of commerce, it still retained the characteristics impressed upon it by the economic conditions of its origin. In the era of social, political and economic change following the growth of money economy, feudalism and the feudal classes became conservative forces, dragged along unwillingly or unwittingly⁷ by more active agents of change. The nobles, who had everything to lose by any change in the social or political system, were almost instinctively conservative. Even the peasants, who had less to lose, were suspicious of any alteration in the immemorial⁸ custom that formed the framework of their lives. And this conservatism was not limited solely to the sphere of practical affairs. It extended into the world of ideas, or at least into so much of that *terra incognita*⁹ as the feudal classes ever cared to explore. The seed of new ideas found

1 disintegration *n.* 解体。

2 insuperable *a.* 无法逾越的。

3 concede *v.* 让出，交出。

4 hereditary *a.* 世袭的。

5 inalienable *a.* 不可剥夺的。