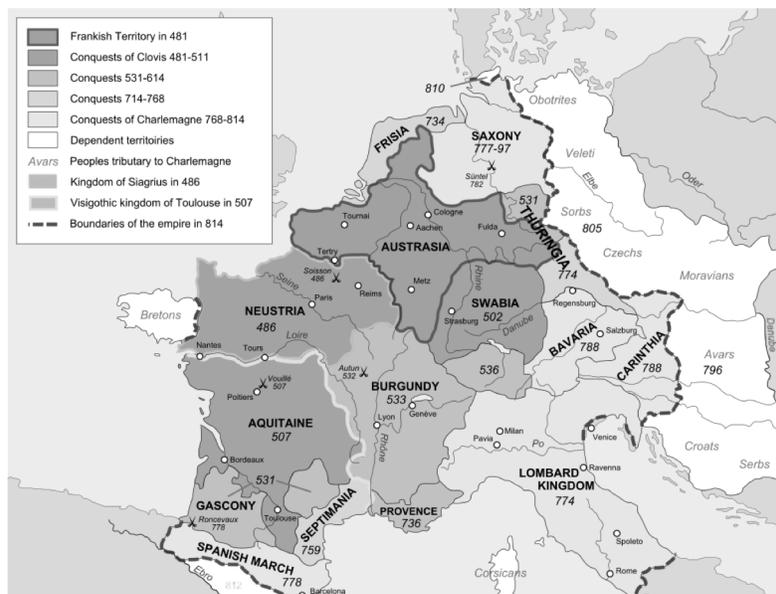
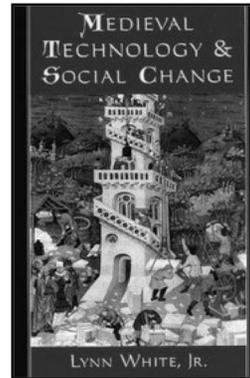


- Lynn White, *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (1962)



- Charles Martel (c. 688 – 741)
 - Frankish statesman and military leader
 - ruler of Francia from 718 to 741
 - led many military campaigns
 - established rule over Gaul
- Charlemagne (742-814)
 - King of Franks from 768
 - united much of Western Europe during Early Middle Ages
 - expanded Frankish state
 - called Carolingian Empire



What is Lynn White's Argument?

- Start here:
- With stirrup, the rider was much more stable on a horse
 - Horse + rider + technology = highly effective fighting machine
 - Shock combat
- Then White talks about the classic theory on the origins of feudalism:
 - Brunner
 - what was his argument?
 - move from infantry to cavalry
 - at the same time, Charles Martel confiscates church lands to give to cavalry
 - read p. 4
 - vassalage + benefice = feudalism
 - Why change from infantry to cavalry in early 8th century?
 - Brunner said it was conflict with Arabs ("saracens")
- White says Brunner's arguments hold up but...
 - key question remains: read p. 11 and p. 13



- Lynn White focuses on the stirrup which appears among Franks in early 8th century
- where did the stirrup come from?
- according to White
 - rudimentary stirrup in India (2nd century)
 - then in China by 5th century
 - then in Persia (modern Iran)
 - then to Arabs & Central Asia (p. 19)
 - then in ‘West’ in early 8th century
 - what kind of evidence does he use?
 - archaeology
 - art
 - language
 - describes process of diffusion and adaptation

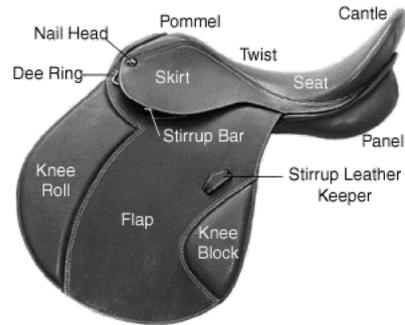
- White’s core argument about the stirrup
- mounted knight first appeared in Carolingian France
 - they were extremely effective instruments of war
 - ‘mounted shock combat’
 - read p. 2 top
 - required:
 - saddle, bit, stirrup
 - Knights were expensive!
 - horses, attendants, sword, lance, shield, boots (w/spurs), helmet, armor, etc.
- How to pay for them?
 - King paid them in land (*benefice*)
 - land conditional upon future service to King
 - the warrior became king’s *vassal*
 - vassalage + benefice = “feudalism”
- feudalism
 - began to include other obligations besides fighting
 - created a new elite
 - was hereditary
 - spread to other areas of Europe



Knight pledging fealty

Critique of White

- Stirrups may have not been used widely in Carolingian age
 - May not have been valued
- Martel's land policies may not have reflected vassal-benefice relationship
- Most important: stirrup was but one element of a system
 - The development of mounted shock combat depended not just on the stirrup but also on:
 - A cantle (back part) on a saddle
 - A high pommel (front part)
 - Double girthing
- read Roland, pp. 577-578



The Problem of “Feudalism”

- Confusing, abused term
 - Traditional view of feudalism has been called into question
 - Historians disagree about meaning/usefulness
 - Marx - stage of economic development
 - Some use it to describe political/social structures
 - But all agree that there was no such thing as an all-encompassing feudalism
 - let alone that such a system was uniform across Europe



Charlemagne & his men

Conclusion

- White: compelling argument about the origins of “feudalism”
- Has value since it shows the importance of a single artifact (stirrup)
- But simplifies many things
 - ‘feudalism’
 - ignores social context of the stirrup
 - need to see the artifact (stirrup) as a network of bigger things
 - Need to look at a multitude of factors for explanations

