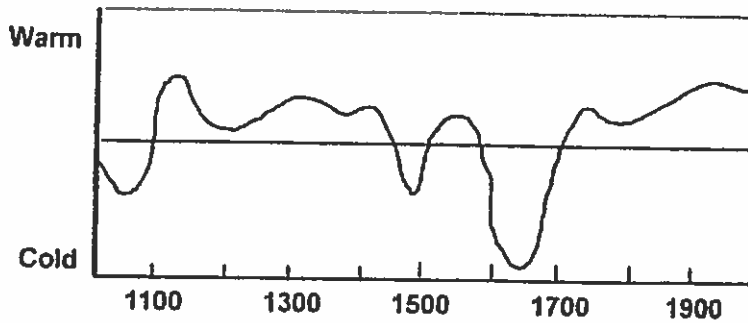


The Crises of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century: Henry Kamen, The Iron Age: 17<sup>th</sup> C. Europe

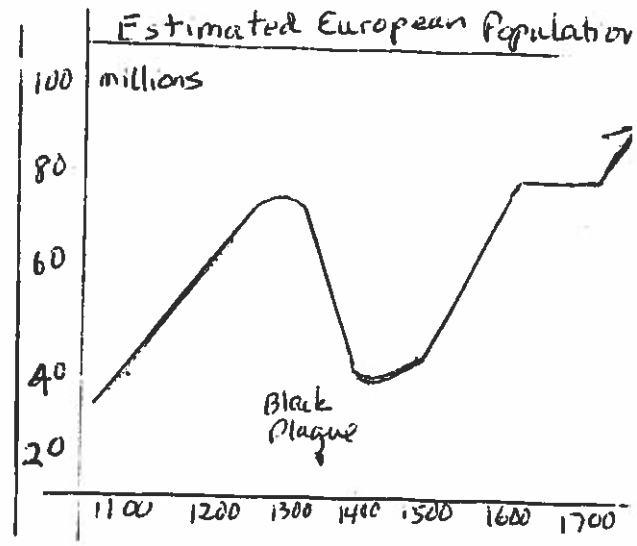
CLIMATE: studied by glacial ice core samples and dendroclimatology (tree rings)

"Little Ice Age" approximately 1400-1800, following the "Medieval Warm" 1100-1400

Result: Subsistence crises, famines due to colder temperatures: 1590's, 1630, 1659-62



Winter severity in Europe, 1000 - 1900. Note two cold periods in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Based on Lamb, 1969 / Schneider and Mass, 1975.



DEMOGRAPHICS (study of populations):

14<sup>th</sup> C. Black Plague: endemic in Europe 1348-1660's

population loss of up to 2/3 of urban populations in 14-15<sup>th</sup> C.

16<sup>th</sup> C. population rise begins, but not until 1600 do populations reach levels of 1300

Prices: differential changes – 16<sup>th</sup> C. inflation due to Spanish gold & silver declines in 17<sup>th</sup> C.

wages: decrease due to population increase, while land, rent, food increase in price

MALTHUSIAN CRISIS: described by Thomas Malthus 1789 *Essay on Principle of Population*:

population increase outruns food production, resulting in demographic scissors," or increase in the death rate.

17<sup>th</sup> C. population stagnant or declining, 1620-1670 period of deflation (prices fall), why?

EUROPEAN MARRIAGE PATTERN

unique demographic pattern found in studies of Europe west of Trieste/St. Petersburg line

later ages of marriage; 15-20% of population never marries (traditionally only 5%)

result: first recorded decline in European birth rate as means of population control

evidence of birth control (abstinence, *coitus interruptus*):

see letters of Madame de Sévigné,, 17<sup>th</sup> c. French aristocrat (over)

POLITICAL CRISES:

GERMANY: Thirty Years War 1618-1648

ENGLAND: English Civil War 1640-1660 and Revolution of 1688

FRANCE: The Fronde 1648-1653

SPAIN: decline of Hapsburg power, revolt of the Netherlands, rise of Dutch Republic  
1640's revolts in Portugal, Catalonia, Naples