

Medieval Sourcebook:

Tables on Population in Medieval Europe

No complete population censuses were taken until the 18th century, thus estimates of population levels are notoriously unreliable. Estimated levels vary as a number of "multiplier" factor often have to be taken into account - estimated population density, ages of marriage, and perhaps most importantly the number of people denoted by a "hearth" in those medieval tax surveys that do provide hard numbers. Other expansions of the few hard figures we have are frequently done by using actuarial data from modern world societies with population structures like that of medieval Europe, for instance figures derived from Indian population surveys earlier in the 20th century. Josiah Russell is the historian who has stuck his neck out and made the estimates we have. The following tables are, then, quite speculative, but not insane.

Population Estimates (in millions) at specified times 500-1450

AREA	500	650	1000	1340	1450
Greece/Balkans	5	3	5	6	4.5
Italy	4	2.5	5	10	7.3
Spain/Portugal	4	3.5	7	9	7
Total - South	13	9	17	25	19
France/Low countries	5	3	6	19	12
British Isles	0.5	0.5	2	5	3
Germany/Scandinavia	3.5	2	4	11.5	7.3
Total - West/Central	9	5.5	12	35.5	22.5
Slavia.	5	3			
---Russia			6	8	6
---Poland/Lithuania			2	3	2
Hungary	0.5	0.5	1.5	2	1.5
Total -East	5.5	3.5	9.5	13	9.3
TOTAL EUROPE	27.5	18	38.5	73.5	50

The information here is taken from Josiah C. Russell, "Population in Europe:", in Carlo M. Cipolla, ed., *The Fontana Economic History of Europe*, Vol. I: The Middle Ages, (Glasgow : Collins/Fontana, 1972), 25-71