

The fate of cities varied greatly, with periods of significant decline, and with periods of increased urbanization buoyed by rising productivity and expanding trade networks.

DOWNFALL OF THE CITIES

FREEMAN-PEDIA

INVASIONS

All of the classical societies (Rome- Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Gupta- White Huns, Han- Xiongnu) fell to invaders. In their wake, the former foci of civilization were left in pieces. Feudalism took root as the socio-political standard of the era. The great Classical cities fell to disrepair.



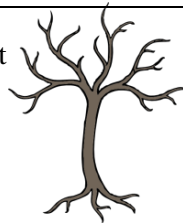
DISEASES

Justinian's Plague (Bubonic) of the late 6th Century killed as many as 1/4 of Europe's population. A smallpox/measles outbreak killed off huge chunks of the Han Chinese in 162, 221, and 322. By 742, China had lost 1/4 of its population. Increased Classical trade led to the easy spread of these diseases.



AGRICULTURAL DECLINE

With the lack of Political authority/safety, the agricultural output of the major cultural centers decreased. The chaos that ensued insured a lower crop yield. Along with the weather change known as the "Little Ice Age", there was simply not enough food production to feed a large urban center.



LITTLE ICE AGE

At the end of this era (roughly 1250-1850; different groups have different ideas as to when this occurred), there was a period of cooling that directly affected population and agricultural output. Winters were colder. Glaciers encroached. Rivers/canals froze. Generally it affected temperatures by only a few degrees and was not a "true Ice Age" in the technical terms.



OLD CITIES IN DECLINE

ATHENS, ROME, ALEXANDRIA, CHANG'AN, PATALIPUTRA

While cities in general continued to play the roles they had played in the past as governmental, religious, and commercial centers, many older cities declined at the same time that numerous new cities emerged to take on these established roles.

RISE OF THE CITIES

FREEMAN-PEDIA



END OF INVASIONS

The invasions that ended the last era come to a close. Germans settled into Europe. White Huns settled into the Caste System of India. The Xiongnu integrated into Chinese society as well. There are invasions to come in this era; Massive groups that change the shape of the planet forever (*Mongols, Vikings, Turks*), but most of these occur later in the era.

SAFE/RELIABLE TRANSPORT



Several large empires will form in this era. These large empires (*like the Roman/Han ones in the Classical Period*) will control large amounts of land (*including the largest-MONGOL*). Providing safety, including safe trade routes, allows for new centers of trade/commerce to arise (cities). Every city listed at the bottom is a trade city. Safe trade routes lead to economic prosperity & advancement (but also death/plague).

RISE IN COMMERCE/TEMPERATURE



Although it doesn't have as cool of a name; the Medieval Warm Period (AKA Medieval Climactic Anomaly... *it sounds cooler*), preceded the Little Ice Age. This was from around 950 to 1250. Prior to the 20th Century, this was the hottest era on record (so not as hot as today) according to Paleo-climatologists. Probably the most visual example of this can be seen in the Viking colonization of Greenland (*later wiped out by the Little Ice Age*). This was also a shift of about one degree (which sounds lame, but can have huge effects on crop yields, sea levels, rainfall, etc.) Also, Commerce increased (see above).

INCREASED AGRICULTURE=INCREASED POPULAT



Agriculture expanded greatly during this era. In Europe, they had the "Great Clearances" which vastly increased the amount of arable land. Plus, formerly sparsely populated areas were populated with more and more people. New technologies, techniques, lands, etc. aided in the increase. Plus, with raids from nomadic groups ending (except the Mongols...), and the increase in temperature; Europe reached its highest population that it will have for centuries. (Note: At the end of this era, with the Little Ice Age, Black Death, Great Famine, etc. populations did decrease dramatically. But we are talking about centuries of time...) Here's a basic formula for human growth: **FOOD + PEACE= POPUL. GROWTH**

GREATER AVAILABILITY OF LABOR



If you add up the above factors, you come to one conclusion: There is less invasion, more trade, more food, and more people. So, there is also a greater availability of LABOR (people to do work). As we will see, LABOR will take on many different forms in this era (most often remembered by **FEUDALISM & the GUILD SYSTEM**).

NEW CITIES ON THE RISE

NOVGOROD, TIMBUKTU, HANGZHOU, CALICUT, BAGHDAD, MALACCA, VENICE