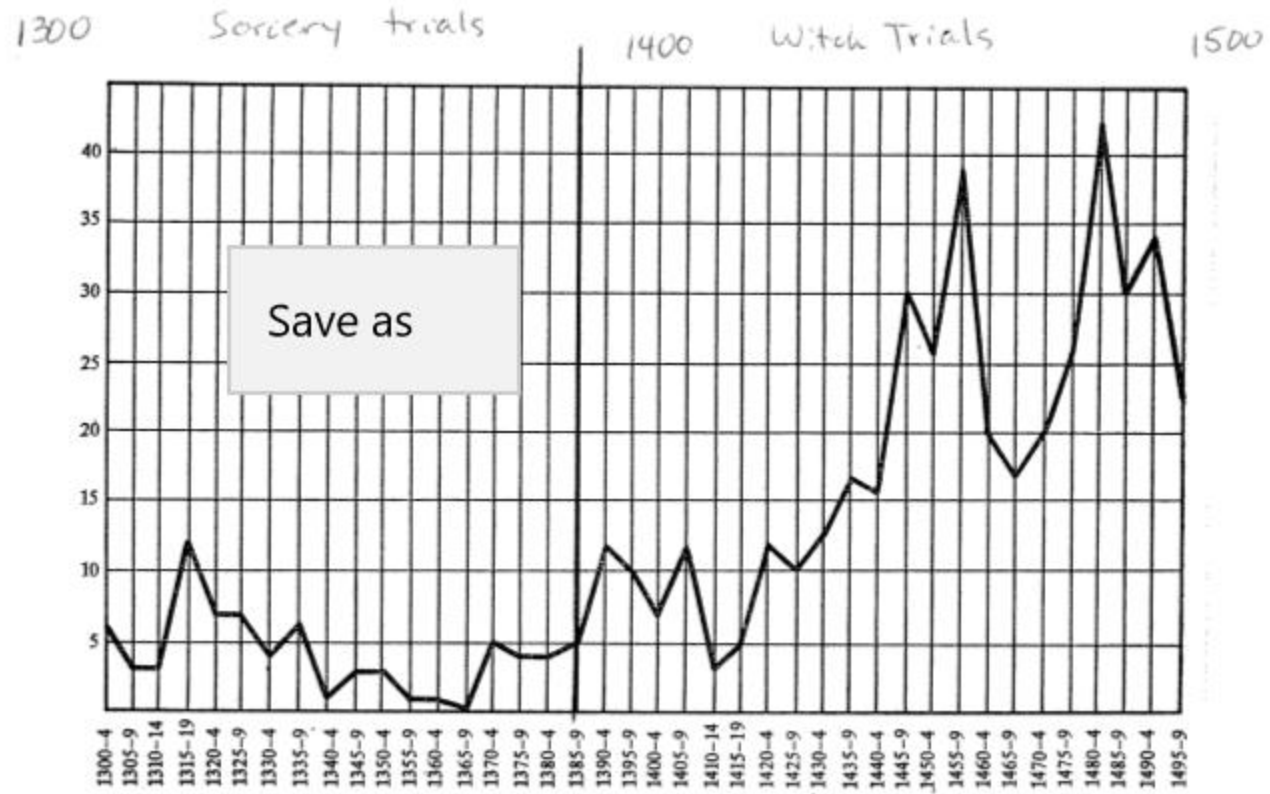


14-15th C.

Early 14th C. Sorcery Trials at French court & in Avignon

15th C. First Witch Trials – “combined” image of witch

14th Century Sorcery Trials to 15th Century Witch Trials



I. New elements in witch trials: Switzerland 1420-1430's

1428 VALAIS (Swiss Canton)

large group trial by Bishop of Sion
executes over 100 for maleficium and diabolism.

1438 Lausanne, Neuchatel (Switzerland)

full description of Sabbath: "Synagogues of Satan"
or VAUDERIE (term from Waldensians)

includes collective apostasy "From Christ to Devil"
signs of allegiance to demon:

Devil's mark, intercourse with devil, infant sacrifice
flying to Sabbath: distance as "reality factor"

1459--ARRAS, Burgundy (France) 34 tried, 12 burned

escalation of trial from individual to group through torture
mass trials conducted by Inquisitor and Bishop
intervention of secular ruler:

Duke of Burgundy stops trial

accused nobleman appeals to

PARLEMENT OF PARIS (royal appeals court)

1491 -- posthumous rehabilitation of victims

15TH CENTURY WITCH THEORY AND WITCH HUNTING

The "New Crime" of Witchcraft in 15th century

Fusion of: Secular crime of maleficium with
Spiritual crime of apostasy (devil worship)

Fusion of: Popular image of the witch as malefica with
Learned theory of witchcraft as diabolism
or devil worship

WITCH HUNTING in 15th C. Germany

by Heinrich KRAMER AND Jakob SPRENGER

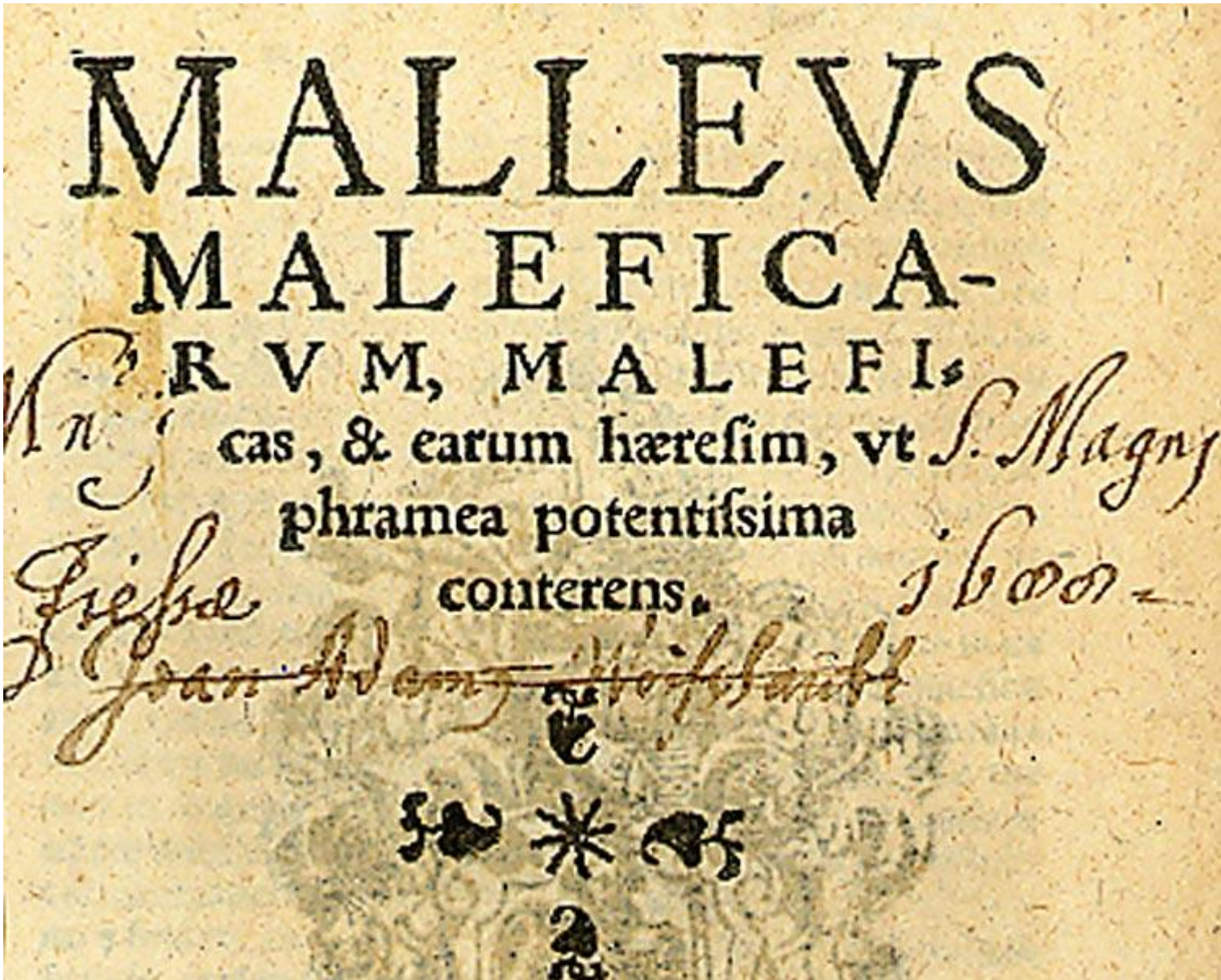
1481-1486 38 executed in German Rhineland

1484: Papal bull of Innocent VIII (“witch bull”)

SUMMIS DESIDERANTES AFFECTIBUS

(Desiring with supreme ardor)

authorizes Dominican Inquisitors Kramer and Sprenger
to stamp out witchcraft (maleficium) and devil worship



Note gender of nouns:

Maleficarum,
Maleficas
= feminine due to "a"

Title:
Hammer of Witches,

Subtitle:
Witches and their
heresy, so they may be
crushed by this most
powerful weapon.

1487 MALLEUS MALEFICARUM "The Hammer of (female) Witches"

Epigraph: "NOT TO BELIEVE IN W/C IS THE GREATEST OF HERESIES"

Organization of book:

- Pt 1 Definition of Crime: Devil, Witch, Divine Permission
including "Why it is that chiefly women are addicted to
evil superstitions" (last week's reading)
- Pt 2 Witchcraft i. How it operates (diabolical pact)
ii. How it may be opposed (remedies)
- Pt 3 How to try a witch (judicial manual) (this week's reading)

Witchcraft as CRIMEN EXCEPTUM (exceptional crime)

can be tried in any court, criminal or church related

Circulation: 1486-1520 = 13 editions
1574-1669 = 16 editions

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM

THE FIRST PART

THE FIRST PART TREATING OF THE THREE NECESSARY
CONCOMITANTS OF WITCHCRAFT, WHICH ARE THE DEVIL, A WITCH,
AND THE PERMISSION OF ALMIGHTY GOD

[Question I](#)

Whether the Belief that there are such Beings as Witches is so Essential a Part of the Catholic Faith that Obstinacy to maintain the Opposite Opinion manifestly savours of Heresy.

[Question II](#)

If it be in Accordance with the Catholic Faith to maintain that in Order to bring about some Effect of Magic, the Devil must intimately co-operate with the Witch, or whether one without the other, that is to say, the Devil without the Witch, or conversely, could produce such an Effect.

[Question III](#)

Whether Children can be Generated by Incubi and Succubi.

[Question IV](#)

By which Devils are the Operations of Incubus and Succubus Practised?

[Question V](#)

What is the Source of the Increase of Works of Witchcraft? Whence comes it that the Practice of Witchcraft hath so notably increased?

[Question VI](#)

Concerning Witches who copulate with Devils. Why is it that Women are chiefly addicted to Evil superstitions?

<http://malleus-maleficarum.org/downloads/MalleusAcrobat.pdf>

[Question VI](#)

Concerning Witches who copulate with Devils. Why is it that Women are chiefly addicted to Evil superstitions?

[Question VII](#)

Whether Witches can Sway the Minds of Men to Love or Hatred.

[Question VIII](#)

Whether Witches can Hebetate the Powers of Generation or Obstruct the Venereal Act.

Hebetate: diminish, blunt

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The First Part

[Question IX](#)

Whether Witches may work some Prestidigatory Illusion so that the Male Organ appears to be entirely removed and separate from the Body.

[Question X](#)

Whether Witches can by some Glamour Change Men into Beasts.

[Question XI](#)

That Witches who are Midwives in Various Ways Kill the Child Conceived in the Womb, and Procure an Abortion; or if they do not this Offer New-born Children to Devils.

[Question XII](#)

Whether the Permission of Almighty God is an Accompaniment of Witchcraft.

[Question XIII](#)

Herein is set forth the Question, concerning the Two Divine Permissions which God justly allows, namely, that the Devil, the Author of all Evil, should Sin, and that our First Parents should Fall, from which Origins the Works of Witches are justly suffered to take place.

Solutions of the Arguments.

appears to be entirely removed and separate from the Body.

[Question X](#) *Whether Witches can by some Glamour Change Men into Beasts.*

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Solutions of the Arguments.

[Question XIV](#) *The Enormity of Witches is Considered, and it is shown that the Whole Matter should be rightly Set Forth and Declared.*

[Question XV](#) *It is Shown that, on Account of the Sins of Witches, the Innocent are often Bewitched, yea, Sometimes even for their Own Sins.*

[Question XVI](#) *The Foregoing Truths are Set out in Particular, this by a Comparison of the Works of Witches with Other Baleful Superstitions.*

[Question XVII](#) *A Comparison of their Crimes under Fourteen Heads, with the Sins of the Devils of all and every Kind.*

MALLEUS MALEFICARUM: AUTHORITY & EXPERIENCE

Authoritative character of the work

1. Academic reputation of authors:

scholastic theologians at Cologne University

Sprenger as University Dean

2. printed with book:

Papal Bull "Summis Desiderantes" 1484

letter of support from Theology Faculty at Cologne

Appeals to authority within the work

Textual authorities:

Scripture, Church Fathers (Augustine, John Chrysostom)

Scholastic Theologians (Thomas Aquinas)

Kramer & Sprenger: Authority & Experience (cont.)

Appeal to "experience" as evidence:

- 1) their own and others' witch trial experiences
especially witches' confessions (like Nider's quotation
of Judge Peter Von Greyerz / Stedelen trial)
- 2) "common knowledge" about witches, including
popular stories, jokes (bird's nest)
- 3) "modernity" of the witch cult – why has witchcraft
increased at this time?

Issues of reality versus illusion -- K & S decide
for nightflying as real (against Canon Episcopi)
against "shape shifting" as demonic illusion
against castration by witches as illusion

RISE OF WITCHCRAFT TRIALS

Why do witch trials start in the 15th century?

Background outlined in course so far

12- 13th C.: rise of towns, heresies (Cathars, Waldensians)

major industry in towns is cloth making; cloth workers as heretics

13th C: creation of **mendicant orders and medieval Inquisition**

rise of universities, scholastic theology, especially the theory of diabolical pact

14th C. sorcery trials involving invocation of demons in
courts of French king and Avignon Pope John XXII

15th C. witch trials beginning in Switzerland (late 14th C Stedelen.)
then Italy, France, Germany

All the above factors contribute to 1) increasing elite involvement in witch beliefs
especially creation of theological theories about magic

2) the judicial process under which witch trials would be conducted
especially inquisitorial procedure & use of torture in secular and church courts

Popular perceptions of maleficium at the local level

Are these constant or do they change as well?

What conditions might lead to intensified charges of maleficium at the village level?

Historical climatology: past climate changes measured by

ice core sampling (glaciers moving up or down a mountain)

dendroclimatology (measurement of annual tree ring growth)

1527



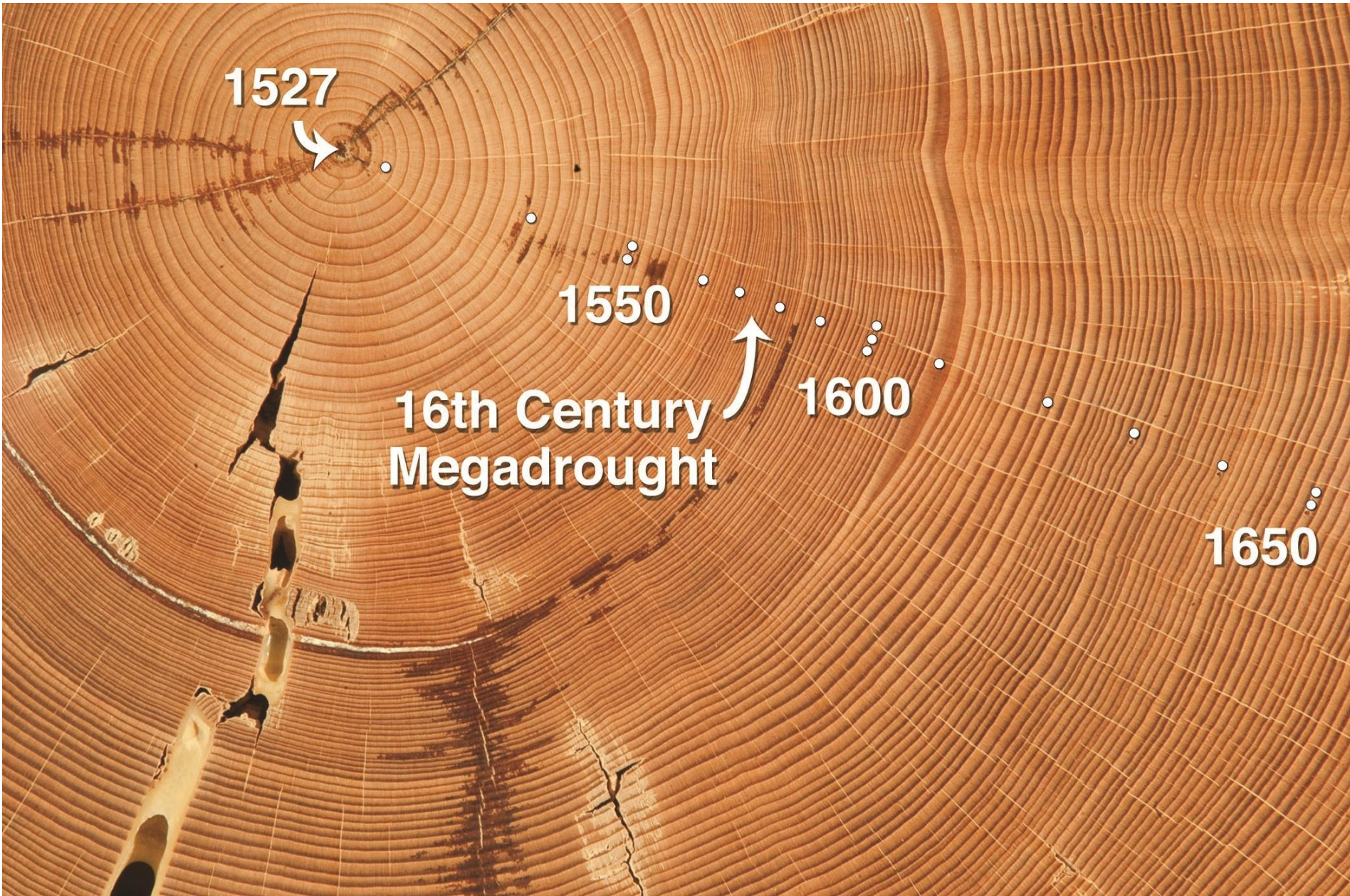
1550



16th Century
Megadrought

1600

1650





Drawing of glacier at the source of the Rhone River extending downhill during a cooling period during 19th c

10-14th C: “**The Medieval Warm**” starts around the year 1000

global warming period, average temperatures one degree Celsius higher than 20th C. average

results: expansion of arable land (arable = land under cultivation)

deforestation to clear more land, expansion of population

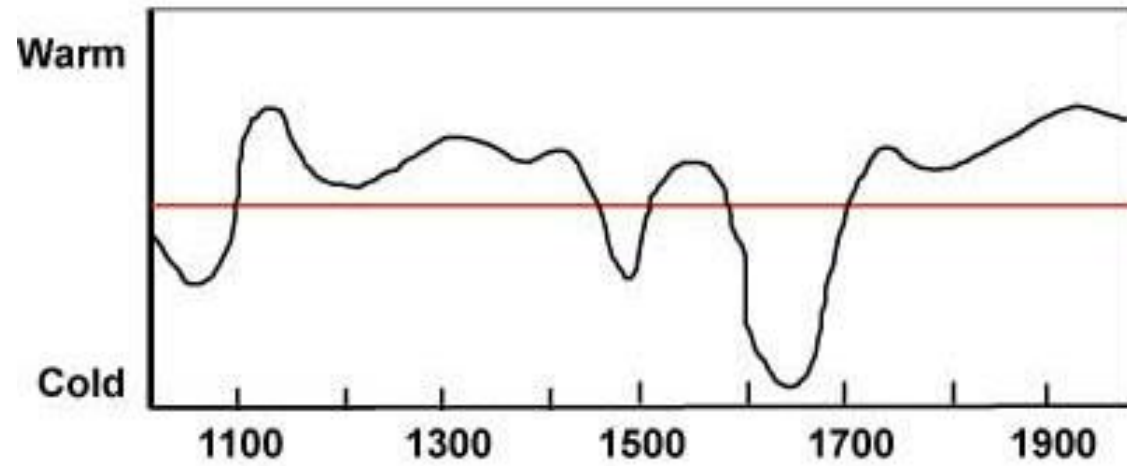
rise of medieval towns (with cathedrals, universities, and heresies)

14-17th C: “Little Ice Age”: end of “the medieval warm”

cooling trend leads to temperature drop
of about 2 degrees Celsius
results: crop failures, beginning in the north,
famine, abandonment of marginal lands,
reduction of areas under cultivation,
overall population decrease

Black Plague 1347 to late 17th C: preceded by famines, which
weakens resistance to infection;
accelerates population decrease
in first outbreaks, 1/3 to 1/2 of population dies

Cooling trend begins in late 15th C
Coldest temperatures in late 16th and 17th C
Warming trend throughout 18th C.



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

Reconstructed Temperature

