

Jostedalalen – a brief historical overview

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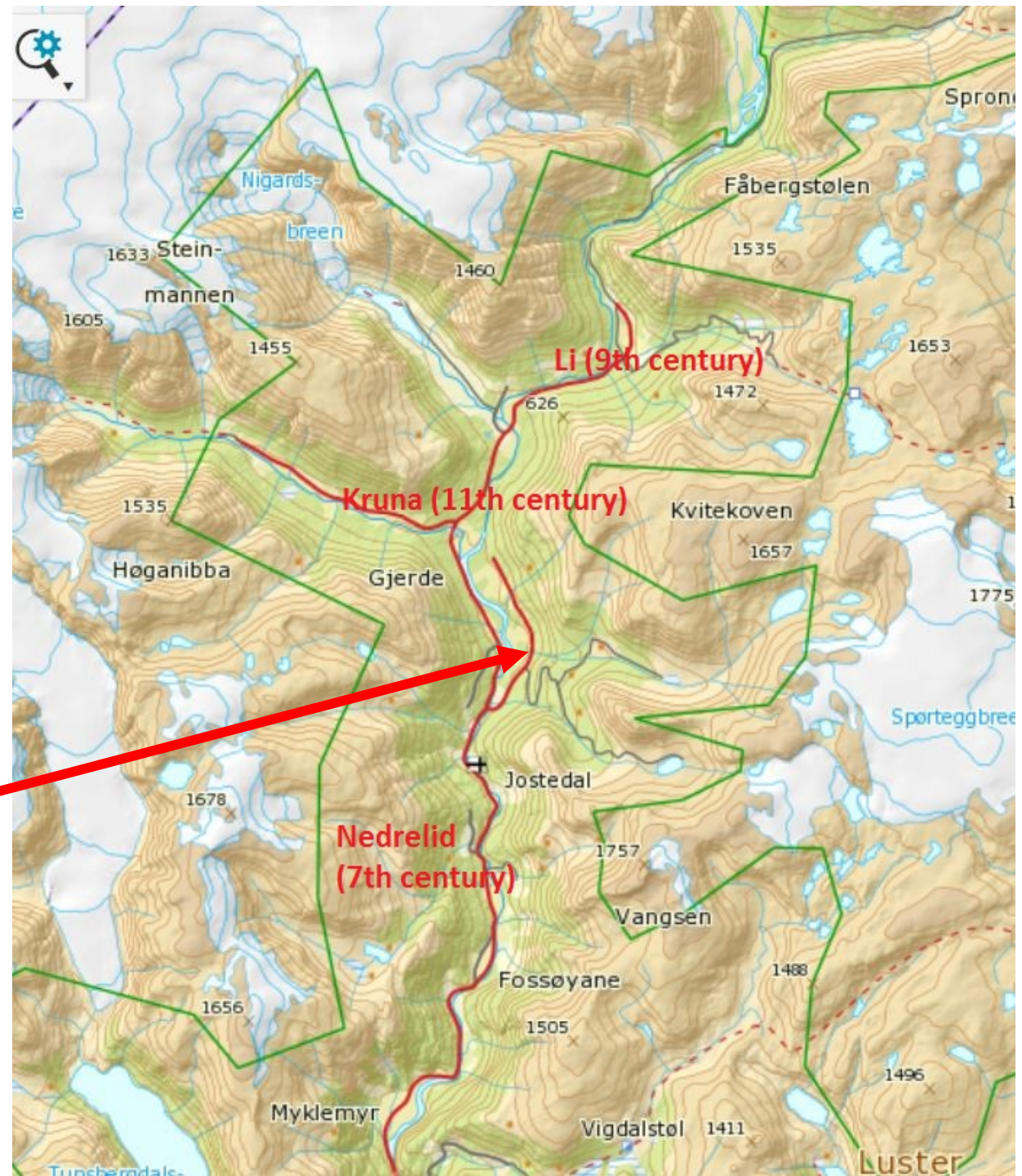
Pre-modern Jostedalen (<1900)

- Isolated
- Marginal agricultural area
- Small farms
- Poverty
- A small *bygd* (village, local community) – few and poor tax payers
- The pastor in the Jostedal: lowest income of all church districts in Norway



The first settlement

- The Viking Age
- Growing population
- Archeological research
- One Viking axe (Kjervik)



The medieval society

- We know almost nothing
 - Jostedal mentioned in three written sources (ca 1320)
 - Some archeological traces
- A church and a pastor
- Farms probably on the same places as today, but not in the bottom of the valley
- Some of the mountain pastures (*stølane*) on a higher attitude than today



Fossen

Fossøyane



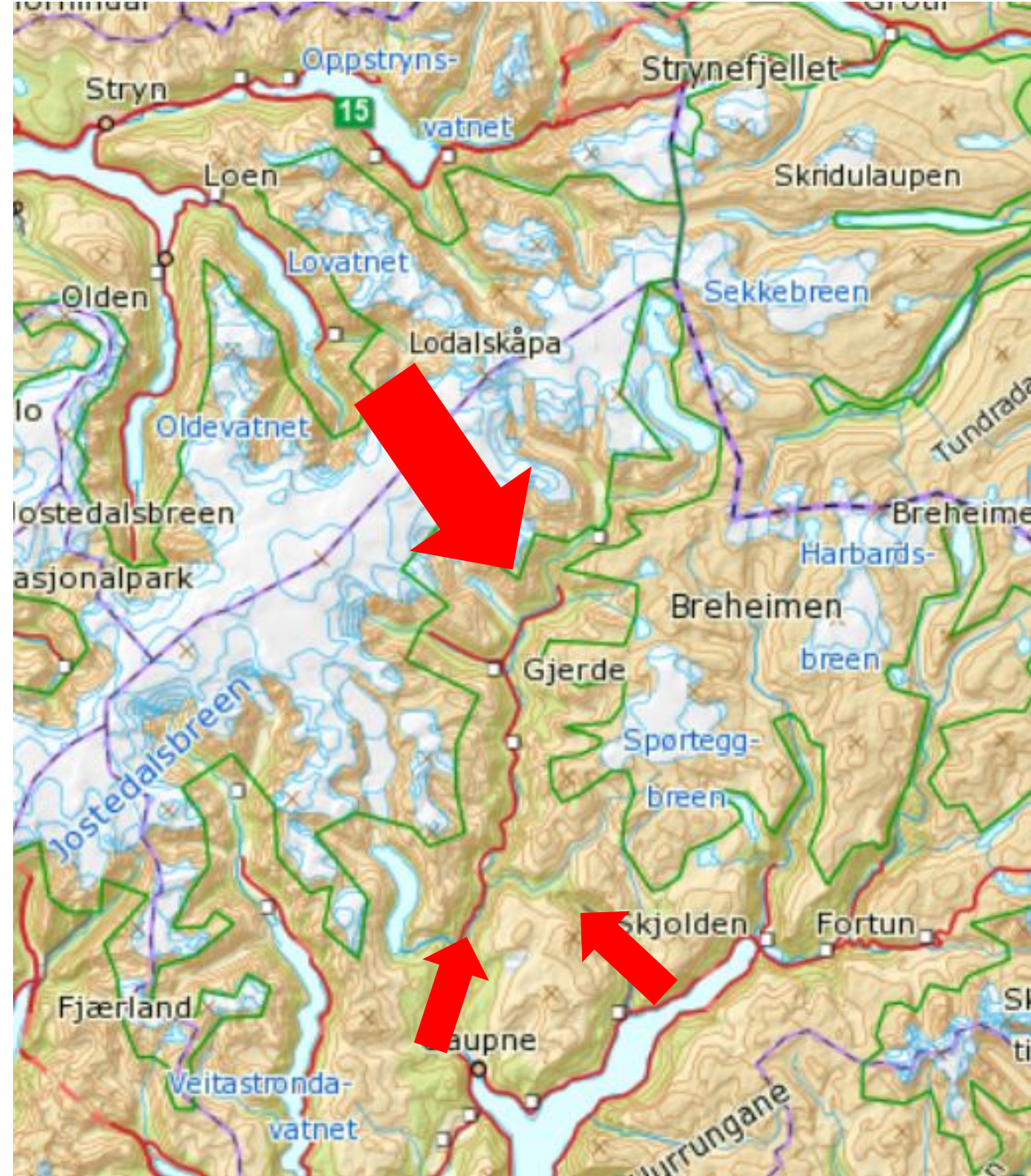
The great disaster (14th century)

- 1349: The Black Death to Norway
- 2/3 of the population died
- The famous legend *Jostedalsrypa* (Snow Hen)
- Bjørkehaugen



The second settlement

- After 1500: growing population in Norway
- Ca 1596: the first written source (a tax record)
- A church, a pastor, 25 farmers
- Settlers from Luster and Nordfjord
- Place names from Nordfjord: Grov, Bergset, Høgenibba (in Krundalen)



10
Et sidste Differensrechnung Bønder.
Liggen Under Gjørdals Copull som nu nu
Oenduel Nøjligne optagne Liggende 3 ræder
af som Miler Længde af tillige indly og giffes
Gode Dagur som Hærlighe til sin Under
Holding off Gode rigt ved sig. Gode ræder
Og som Læsse Indkomst Gudm af
Dag Mængde nu forordnet Oden 2 Hall
Lagt under Lærerne alle væk som sum
af som afffølgende.
Læser Mjøllemjær — 7 ræder of
Gæuff. Hø Mjøllemjær — 11 gindstind,
Læser Læser — 11 gindstind.



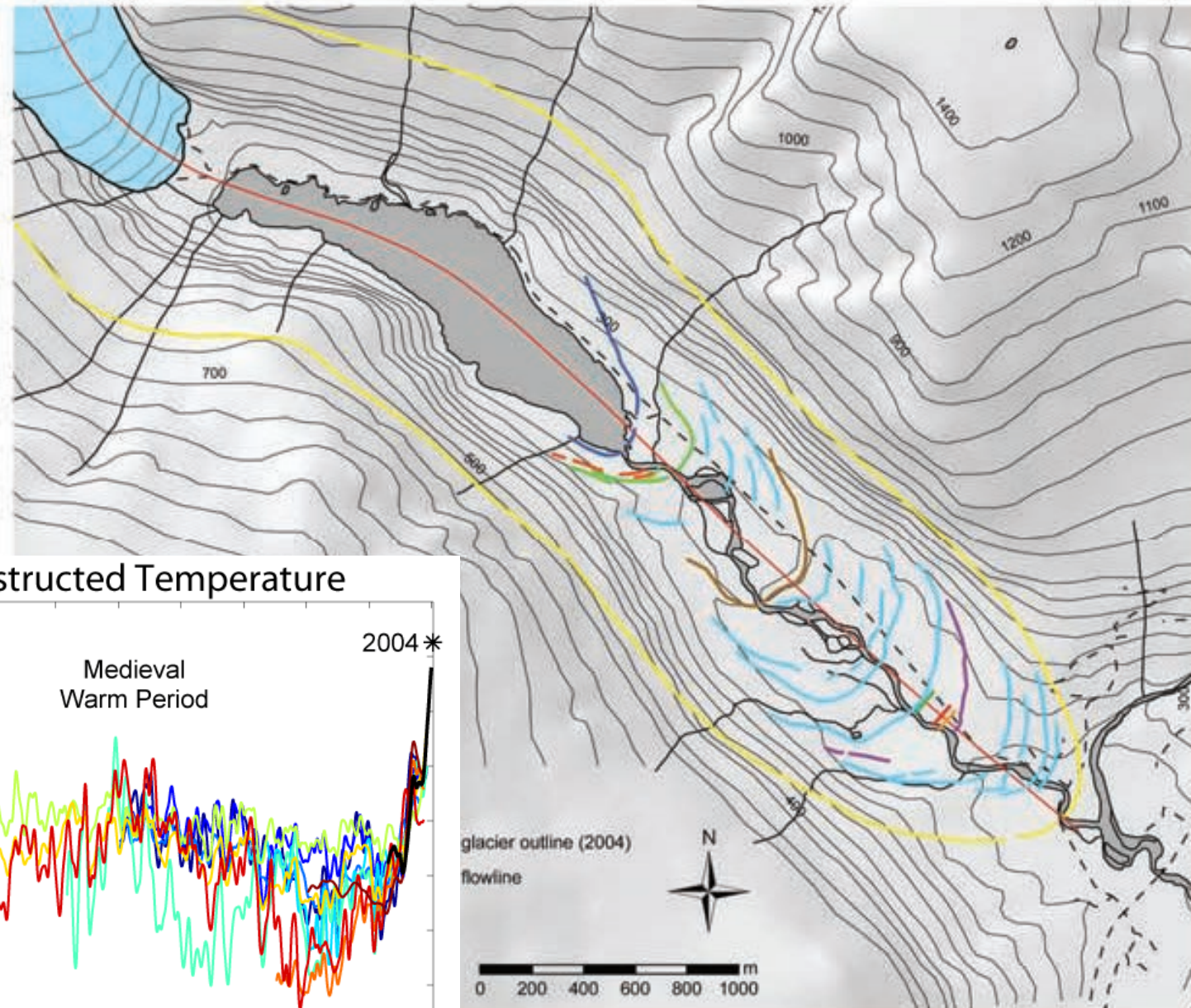
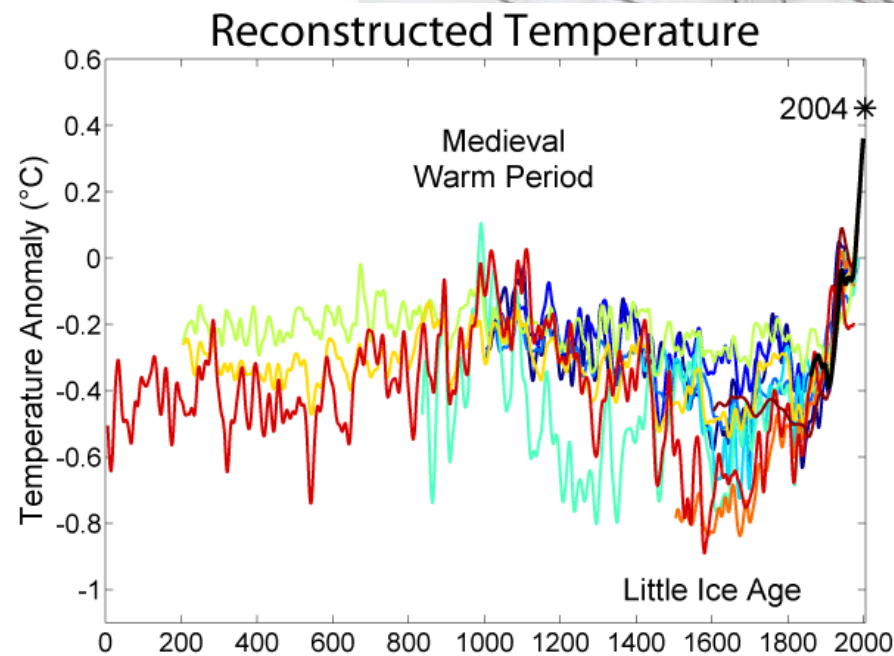
Jostedal Church (1660)

- The most important historical monument in Jostedal
- Middle Ages: a stave church
- Late 16th century: the stave church probably rebuilt and extended
- 1656–1660: the new church constructed
- The heart of the village in pre-modern rural societies



The Little Ice Age

- Forced major problems in marginal grain areas
- Lower summer temperatures, more snow in the winters
- During several years the grain did not get ripe (barley, *bygg*)
- Expanding glaciers



Advancing glaciers

- 1740s: The farm Nigard destroyed
- Pasture areas destroyed (Nigardsbreen, Krundalen)
- 1742–43: emergency aid to Jostedalen (200 barrels of grain)

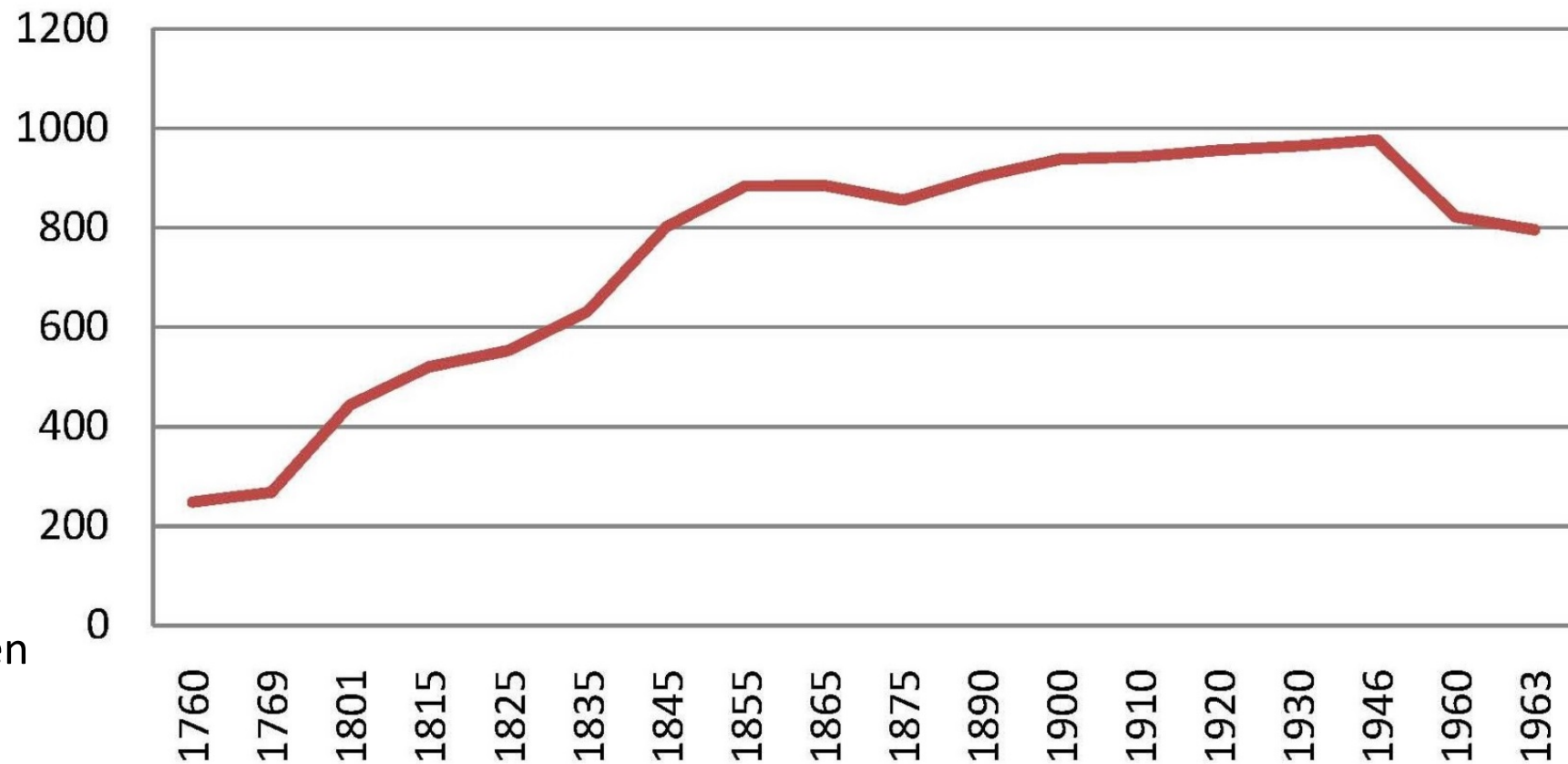


Farming and farmers

How did they survive?

- Grain cultivation (>1800 potatoe)
- Cattles and sheep
- Hunting
- Trade

The population in Jostedalen
1760–1963



Emigration

- The 1885 census: 885 people in Jostedal
- 1851–1930: >800 people emigrated from Jostedal to North America
- Visitors from USA/Canada every summer
- The dream of a better life



Getting there

- «The isolated valley»
- Before the 1870s: only paths
- A trip to Gaupne/Luster/Marifjøra: 2–3 days
- Traffic across the glacier
- The cattle trade
- The first glacier guides (1826)



Tourists discover Jostedalen

- ...and Jostedalen discovers the tourists
- 19th century: some adventurers (artists, scientists)
- 1880s: mass tourism reaches the Fjords (cruise tourism)
- 1916: car transport Sogndal–Jostedalen
- 1920: Jostedalsbredens Turisthotel



Mass tourism in Jostedalen

- Post WWII: privat car tourism
- 1951: Solvang kafe og pensjonat (Jostedal hotell 2002)
- 1954: Nigardsbreen gjesteheim (Fjellheim) (*post card 1964*)
- 1958: Brevegen
- 1972: the first boat on Brevatnet
- 1987: Jostedalen breførarlag
- 1993: Breheimsenteret
- 2003: IceTroll





Mormona

Jostedalen after WWII

- An underdeveloped traditional community based on old-fashioned farming
- 1958: electric grid (last municipality in Sogn og Fjordane)
- Decreasing population – Årdal
- 1963: Jostedal municipality merged with Luster and Hafslo – Gaupne the new centre

Jostedal kommunehus (town hall) after the 1979 flood



The new Jostedalen

- 1970-/80s: two powerplants (Leirdøla, Jostedal)
- Jostedalen integrated in the modern welfare state
- Largest employer: the municipality
- Modern agriculture, tourism, industry
- Better roads – possible to work in Gaupne (and even Sogndal)

Jostedal samfunnshus (1986)



Literature

About the history of Jostedalen in English:

- The exhibition at Breheimsenteret
- Introduction in Lars Øyane: *Gards- og ættesoge for Luster kommune. Vol. 5. Jostedal sokn.* 1994, pp. XIV–XXIII.
 - Digital edition: http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digibok_2008020701034
- English chapter abstracts in *Jostedal kyrkje. Fakta, segn og soge gjennom 350 år* (2010)

På norsk:

- historielaget.jostedal.no
- lokalhistoriewiki.no – mange artiklar