

CORAL BLEACHING RECORDED DURING THE LITTLE ICE AGE

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ABSTRACT: When corals are exposed to stressors such as high solar radiation, sedimentation, pollution, reduced salinity or when water gets warmer or colder than normal, the corals expel the symbiotic algae and, consequently, get bleached. It is widely believed that coral bleaching is a phenomenon first observed less than 50 years ago. However, coral bleaching was first observed more than 150 years ago by Eugen von Ransonnet, during the period called the little ice age (*ca.* 1300 – *ca.* 1900). This neglected report is highlighted here. Clarification of past-time coral symbiont types could be done by the use of sequencing ancient DNA from old coral specimens in museum collections.

Keywords: coral bleaching, little ice age
