

## ANOTHER RADIOCARBON DATING ANOMALY?

Every ten years a high powered international scientific conference is held to discuss the latest archaeological and geological findings regarding the Bronze Age volcanic eruption of the island of Thera, or Santorini, to the north of Crete. In the recently published proceedings of the latest conference, held on Thera, the highly respected Greek archaeologist Spyros Iakovidis is quoted as follows:

'In relation to the reliability of radiocarbon dating, I would like to mention something which happened to me during my excavation at Gla [Boeotia, Greece], I sent to two different laboratories in two different parts of the world a certain amount of the same burnt grain. I got two readings differing by 2,000 years, the archaeological dates being right in the middle. I feel that this method is not exactly to be trusted.

Source: *Thera and the Aegean World III*, Proceedings of the Third International Congress, Santorini, Greece, 3-9 Sept. 1989, vol 3 (Chronology), 1990, p.240.

## RADIOACTIVE MUMMIES

This may be just a piece of media moonshine, but on 27 December *The Times* ran an apparently serious front page story 'Strange return of the radioactive mummies'. This reported that a medical professor at Cairo University, who had happened to be carrying a Geiger counter in the vicinity of the Egyptian Museum's mummy collection, found that this began registering unusually high levels of radioactivity. Was this coming from the mummies? The medical professor thought the phenomenon sufficiently serious to be concerned for the museum staff's health.

Media-wise the story inevitably provided an opportunity to revive the tired old yarns of the 'curse of the pharaohs', and as yet the finding is insufficiently corroborated. But if it is confirmed, it raises a quite new possibility for how the Shroud carbon dating might have been skewed. How Egyptian mummies and/or the body of Christ could have acquired unusually high levels of radioactivity goes, of course, unexplained. But certainly, exposure to some source of radioactivity is the one sure way the radiocarbon date of any ancient object can be falsified.