

Editor's preface

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My original involvement with this project was the result of a note from Ingolf Thuesen (Director of the Institute for Cross-Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen) to the effect that there was some more recent news on the chronology front. According to Ingolf, there was now a completely reliable radiocarbon date for the Minoan eruption of Santorini from Thera itself. It was Danish, but it was from Thera and not Greenland; if I was interested, I should contact Jan Heinemeier and Walter Friedrich in the Faculty of Sciences at Aarhus University.

Ingolf's attitude was that the archaeologists should stop quibbling about details of chronological arguments which belonged to the past, and simply discuss the chronological and historical implications of the new date. Ingolf knew that my interest in chronology and lack of bias in this particular case might be of some use here. Ingolf himself was wise enough not to get too involved – we both knew that combining typological, stratigraphical, astronomical, dendrochronological, and radiocarbon dates was a hazardous enterprise at best. However, for me it was a methodological challenge – and the evidence and the methodology looked persuasive.

Ingolf's proposition that I contact Walter Friedrich and Jan Heinemeier was based on the recent developments. Firstly because Tom Pfeiffer, a student of Friedrich's in Geology, had found the now famous branch which allowed Heinemeier, Director of the AMS laboratory at Aarhus, to establish the date (the tale of which is retold here again). Erik Meineche Schmidt, Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Aarhus University, had immediately grasped the importance and interdisciplinary nature of the project, and enthusiastically supported (through generous funding) the idea of holding a workshop on the subject.

I am affiliated with the Faculty of Theology at Aarhus – and not Natural Sciences – but after discussions, Jan and Walter took me on board. They thus allowed me to co-ordinate the organization of the workshop, and I immediately contacted Erik Hallager, Director of the Danish Institute in Athens; together with Annette Højen Sørensen, a doctoral candidate in Classical Archaeology at Aarhus, I put together a long list of potential participants for a workshop, and I eventually set about dispatching invitations.

In all this I was particularly guided by all of the above mentioned individuals. This nevertheless proved to be a difficult process, as a number of the potential participants were unable to participate for various different reasons. However, ultimately I think that we had a good meeting with a representative spectrum of views. If P. Åström, M. Bietak, H.-G. Buchholz, Ch. Doumas, S. Hiller and W.-D. Niemeier are among those who were regrettably unable to attend, nor to submit a paper, a good many were; and H. Hunger and R. Krauss were among those who were willing to come – although this issue lay well beyond the fringe of their domain.¹ And – as readers will note – many of the contributors who did attend co-signed with others, and thus the participation is actually much larger than that of the workshop. Fortunately, I was also able to rope in a good number of those who did not attend to serve as peer-reviewers, and their

¹ I note at the present time that when persuading Rolf to contribute, I said that I would aid with the preparation of the paper for publication. Although the paper is his, in the end, he decided that my name should be added, but the original idea was to have him, and not to have me as a contributor. When completing the volume, I took the liberty of adding a "Postscript" to "our" contribution.

efforts have certainly made my task easier. Most of those present have submitted papers, and a couple who were unable to make it to the workshop submitted papers which appear here, including Ch. Bronk Ramsey, S. Manning, R. Merrillees and M. Wiener.

I am certain that the discussions would have been livelier and the volume even more interesting had all of those I wished to invite been able to come. However, since everyone held out a hand in one way or another, there are a large number of people who have aided me in many different ways in the course of preparing the workshop and going over the texts. We not only have the discoverers and the organizers, but also all of those whom I consulted about invitations and peer-reviewing, and others who served as peer-reviewers. Most of those who remain anonymous in this preface (*i.e.* the peer reviewers) are actually mentioned somewhere in bibliography and the footnotes with references to their own work.

Thus all of the papers have been peer-reviewed. However, in order to present a balanced spectrum of archaeological views some laxity was necessary in accepting the selection of papers for publications. In any case, not everything submitted was accepted and most of the authors profited from the peer-reviews to improve their papers.

Of particular importance for me throughout the entire project has been the unstinting support of Erik Hallager and Annette Højten Sørensen, each of whom offered help not only with finding contacts, but also in editorial matters of substantial import. Brigitte Henderson at the Department of Physics and Astronomy also aided in untold ways less visible to me, but all of us profited directly from her work which included the actual preparations and execution of the workshop.

Yet the true contribution has come from Walter Friedrich and Jan Heinemer of the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Aarhus University, without whom there would not have been a chance of resolving this issue. And somehow I managed to persuade Jan that it would be worth having a publication. At the time, I obviously did not realize what I had done, as once the decision was taken, Jan and Erik seem to have decided that I would edit the volume.

Thus the dedication of this book, for the simple reason that although her parents are both archaeologists, Margareth has opted for physics. Once there, however, she may not only discover that archaeology is not all that far off – but also experience the dangers of trying to make distinctions in a world dominated by Heisenberg's *Unschärfe Relation*. And she will hardly be alone in realizing that the observer is somehow always interfering in the results.

In the same fashion, the observers examining this book will doubtless note my own failings as an editor. However, if my efforts at unifying terminology, punctuation, language, references, bibliography and the coherency of arguments, as well as the spelling of royal names and toponyms have been less than successful, I trust that all will appreciate that I did refrain from unifying the dates. All will appreciate Erik Hallager's craftsmanship which has made the book what it is.

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