

INTEREST IN GARZA-VALDES'S BIOPLASTIC HYPOTHESIS

From Manchester Museum Egyptologist Dr. Rosalie David

Quite aside from its implications for the Turin Shroud, Dr. Garza-Valdes's identification of bioplastic accretions to ancient linen powerful enough to skew carbon dating readings has become of inevitable interest to archaeologists. And one prominent British Egyptologist who has been in touch with Dr. Garza-Valdes in this very regard is Dr. Rosalie David, well-known to BSTS textile expert the late John Tyrer as keeper of Egyptology at the Manchester Museum, and author of 16 books on Egyptology, including the popular *Mysteries of the Mummies* published in 1978. According to the Spring issue of the University of Texas house journal *The Mission* Dr. David has commented of Dr. Valdes's bioplastic finding: 'This could be a great breakthrough in understanding the ancient world. If this theory is correct, and there seems to be a lot of evidence it is, this would be a spot check to tell if artifacts in museums or for sale on the market are genuine or fakes.'

According to the same issue of *The Mission* the University of Arizona in Tucson is preparing carbon dating procedures to test Garza-Valdes's hypothesis on an ibis bird mummy that stylistically dates c.330-30 BC. Physicists will sample collagen from bone and compare its date to their dating of the mummy wrappings. Two mummy wrapping samples will be tested - one that will be cleansed of contaminants by the usual means employed for samples for radiocarbon dating, the other using a method developed by Valdes and Mattingly. This will be done to check if conventional cleaning fails to remove the bioplastic coating, as Dr. Valdes claims it does.

Dr. Rosalie David has joined this project, and supplied samples from a museum mummy to the Arizona laboratory. Douglas Donahue of the Arizona laboratory, who worked on the carbon dating of the Turin Shroud, is quoted as saying of the project: 'I am a bit sceptical, but I don't want to dismiss the theory. It is possible that contaminants could throw off the dates somewhat, but by how much?'