

# Radiocarbon during the Younger Dryas from Tasmanian Huon pine

Q. HUA<sup>1</sup> M. BARBETTI<sup>2</sup> U. ZOPPI<sup>3</sup> AND D. FINK<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation,  
Menai NSW 2234, Australia; qhx@ansto.gov.au

<sup>2</sup> Radiogenic Isotope Laboratory, University of Queensland,  
QLD 4072, Australia; m.barbetti@emu.usyd.edu.au

<sup>3</sup> AMS Laboratory, Accium Biosciences, Seattle WA 98122,  
USA; uzoppi@acciumbio.com

The Younger Dryas (YD) is the last prolonged cold period (~13,000 to 11,600 cal BP) evident in some parts of the world during the transition from the Last Glacial Maximum to the Holocene. There is immense scientific interest in radiocarbon variations over this period. For the latter part of the YD, atmospheric <sup>14</sup>C is reliably based on an absolute tree-ring chronology from Germany, which now extends back to 12,410 cal BP [1]. For the early part of the episode, <sup>14</sup>C values are derived from terrestrial and marine varve samples, and corals. However, these data are subject to uncertainties in varve counting and in the assumption of a constant marine reservoir correction for marine samples, which may not be valid for periods of large climate change such as the onset of the YD.

We are studying four subfossil Huon pine logs from western Tasmania in the time-span 13,000-12,000 cal BP. One log, catalogue SRT-783, containing 413 rings has been used for examining atmospheric <sup>14</sup>C during the YD. Forty-two samples, mostly decadal, from SRT-783 were pretreated to alpha-cellulose, then converted to graphite and measured by AMS using the ANTARES facility at ANSTO, with a precision of 0.30-0.35% (equivalent to 25-30 <sup>14</sup>C years). The AMS <sup>14</sup>C ages were wiggle-matched with the youngest part of a sequence of <sup>14</sup>C results from Late Glacial subfossil pine in central Europe [2]. It appears that SRT-783 commenced growing about 50 yrs before the full onset of the YD. It is also evident that SRT-783 data record detailed variations in atmospheric <sup>14</sup>C levels more pronounced than those in the Cariaco varve record [3], perhaps implying that the latter are slightly smoothed by air-sea exchange of <sup>14</sup>CO<sub>2</sub> and oceanic circulation.

SRT-783 ends at approximately 12,550 cal BP, just 140 yrs before the point where the absolute tree-ring chronology now begins. Decadal samples from other 3 Huon pine logs (SRT-779, -781 and -782) are being processed for AMS <sup>14</sup>C analysis. These data may close that gap and provide a direct test of the theory that a shutdown of the thermohaline circulation was the cause of the YD cold period in the Atlantic region.

## References

- [1] Friedrich M., et al. (2004) *Radiocarbon* **46**, 1111-1122.
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- [3] Hughen K.A., et al. (2004) *Radiocarbon* **46**, 1161-1187.