

A R o b b i e R e a d e r



# Natural Disasters

## The Volcanic Eruption of Santorini, 1650 BCE

Jim Whiting



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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Jim Whiting has been a remarkably versatile and accomplished journalist, writer, editor, and photographer for more than 30 years. He has made numerous trips to Greece, including three visits to Santorini. A voracious reader since early childhood, Mr. Whiting has written and edited more than 250 nonfiction children's books on a wide range of topics. He lives in Washington state with his wife and two teenage sons.

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To reflect current usage, we have chosen to use the secular era designations BCE ("before the common era") and CE ("of the common era") instead of the traditional designations BC ("before Christ") and AD (*anno Domini*, "in the year of the Lord").

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Words in **bold** type can be found in the glossary.



## CHAPTER ONE

# Living the Good Life

Thousands of years ago, the citizens of Akrotiri (ak-roh-TEER-ee) were living very well. Their town was on the island of Calliste, between Greece and Crete in the Aegean (uh-JEE-un) Sea. On a modern-day map, Calliste is called Santorini (san-tuh-REE-nee).

Crete was also quite **civilized**, and the two islands traded goods. Sailors would leave Calliste in the morning and arrive at Crete before dark. They would spend a few days exchanging their products and seeing the sights. Then they would sail home.

The climate in the Aegean was ideal. The sun shone regularly during most of the year, and people enjoyed being outdoors.



Ancient murals show how people lived on Calliste. From the murals, we know that fish were important to the people of Calliste.

The people on Calliste also enjoyed their large homes. Some houses had two, three, or even four stories. A few had as many as thirty rooms. Homeowners could afford to have artists paint murals on their walls. Many of these murals have survived through the centuries. They showed workers such as fishermen. They also showed well-dressed people who ate good food and liked animals. Some families even had monkeys for pets.

In most other parts of the world, people rarely bathed. Some never did. The people of Akrotiri, though, kept themselves clean. They could take hot baths often.

Their town was also very clean. In other places, people simply emptied **sewage** onto the streets. The filth caused terrible odors and helped spread disease. In Akrotiri, flush toilets emptied into an underground sewage system.

It's no wonder that the inhabitants called their island Calliste. The word means "most beautiful." They had enjoyed their way of life for hundreds of years. They didn't know they were living on a time bomb.

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