

## THIS WEEK'S CREATION MOMENT

### Radio-Carbon and Vikings



*Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart? – Job 38:36*

It has become axiomatic among many less scientific creationists to state that carbon dating is inaccurate. We have tried to explain that this is incorrect. In fact, none of the radiometric measurements are inaccurate insofar as they correctly, and accurately, measure the relative quantities of radioactive materials, and the stable daughter material into which they decay. Where the techniques go wrong is in making wrong assumptions by which to calculate the ages.

The oldest radio-carbon dates, of between 50,000 and 100,000 years, are notoriously problematic, even by evolutionary standards. But this disguises the fact that much younger radio-carbon dates are actually quite accurate and are well within biblical timescales.

One such dating recently made concerns the Viking Great Army which defeated the King of Mercia in the midlands of modern England in 873 AD. In the 1980s, a mass grave of 300 was found in Repton, Derbyshire. Many showed signs of violent injury but gave every appearance of having been buried at different times. More recently, radio-carbon dating has shown that all the bodies were killed at a single event in 873, so it is likely to be the grave of dead Viking soldiers from their invasion of Mercia. This use of carbon dating is good because it shows that, correctly used, technology is of great benefit to our understanding.

Ref: Catrine L. Jarman, Martin Biddle, Tom Higham, Christopher Bronk Ramsey. The Viking Great Army in England: new dates from the Repton charnel. *Antiquity*, 2018; 1 DOI: 10.15184/aqy.2017.196. Image: Derby Museum Viking Display, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic.

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