

The Mythology of Modern Dating Methods by John Woodmorappe
Institute of Creation Research, El Cajon, California. 1999, 118 pages, \$13

Radiometric dating is considered by many creationists and most uniformitarians as the single greatest body of evidence for an old earth. Creationists have critiqued it in a variety of ways, but none has done as thorough and convincing a job as that contained within the pages of this excellent monograph by John Woodmorappe. Woodmorappe takes a decidedly different slant from many other creationists who see inherent structure and organization in the raw data and are searching for a non-chronometric or an alternate chronometric explanation of the perceived organization in the data. The RATE research project, underway at the Institute of Creation Research is an example of

this type of approach. Woodmorappe instead seeks to demonstrate that the elegant conjunction of the numerous data points presented in the literature is an artifact of multiple overlapping subjective factors in data selection and presentation, and a probabilistic agreement that would be statistically expected. The basic premise of this book is sound. If the results of isotopic dating cannot possibly be wrong (due to numerous *ad hoc* explanations), then they cannot possibly be scientifically valid or of evidentiary weight.

As the title advertises, the structure of the work is developed along the presentation of numerous “myths” of isotopic dating, organized into the various chapters, and

followed by irresistible refutation of each myth—often by the exhaustive citation of the technical literature. The most interesting chapter of the book for me was Chapter 9, “How Often Do Dating Methods Agree by Chance? An Exploratory Study.” In this chapter, Mr. Woodmorappe makes a strong statistical case for the non-concordance of isotopic dates. This is a fertile area for any statisticians in the CRS. I would eagerly anticipate additional work in this area, and believe that such research would be of great value to creationism.

This is not an easy book to read, especially if you have no background in the various isotopic methods, but it is rewarding and in my opinion, it stands as the definitive refutation of isotopic dating arguments to date and will proba-

bly remain so until Mr. Woodmorappe decides to put out a second edition! I strongly recommend that serious creationists put this book in their library. If you find it initially intimidating and not an easy read, you will find it an invaluable trove the next time that you face a serious question about isotopic dating. Finally, the book is valuable in its implicit condemnation of those Christians who insist that the “data” demand an old earth—another myth exploded by Mr. Woodmorappe. In light of their persistent refusal to accept God’s Word as their primary historical resource, I hope that they at least have the decency to blush after reading this excellent book.

John K. Reed