
CONTENTS

PREFACE xi

ABOUT THE AUTHOR xiii

1 INTRODUCTION 1

- 1.1 Historical Background 1
- 1.2 Scope of the Discipline 4
 - 1.2.1 What Are Stable Isotopes? 5
 - 1.2.2 Which Elements and Why? 7
- 1.3 Abundances of the Rare Isotopes of Light Elements 7
- 1.4 Characteristics of Elements That Undergo Significant Isotopic Fractionation 7
- 1.5 Applications in the Earth Sciences 9
- 1.6 Isotope Effects 10
 - 1.6.1 Kinetic Isotope Effects 10
 - 1.6.2 Equilibrium Isotope Effects 11
- References 13

2 TERMINOLOGY, STANDARDS, AND MASS SPECTROMETRY 15

- 2.1 Overview 15
- 2.2 Isotopologues, Isotopomers, and Mass Isotopomers 15
- 2.3 The Delta Value 17
- 2.4 Isotope Exchange Reactions 20
- 2.5 The Fractionation Factor 21
- 2.6 $10^3 \ln \alpha$, Δ , and the ϵ Value 22
- 2.7 Reference Standards 24
 - 2.7.1 Hydrogen 25
 - 2.7.2 Carbon 28
 - 2.7.3 Nitrogen 28
 - 2.7.4 Oxygen 29
 - 2.7.5 Sulfur 30
- 2.8 Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometry 30
 - 2.8.1 The First Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometers 30
 - 2.8.2 Modern Conventional Mass Spectrometers 31
 - 2.8.3 Gas Chromatograph Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometry (GC-IRMS) 33
 - 2.8.4 Gases Measured in Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometry 33

2.8.5	Relations between Measured and Desired Isotopic Ratios	35
2.8.6	Ion Microprobe Analyses of Stable Isotope Ratios	36
	References	39

3 EQUILIBRIUM ISOTOPIC FRACTIONATION 40

3.1	Introduction	40
3.2	Theoretical Determination of Stable Isotope Fractionation Factors	41
3.2.1	Free Energy of Reaction	41
3.2.2	The Internal Energy of a Molecule	42
3.2.3	Vibrational Partition Function	43
3.2.4	Translational and Rotational Partition Function	45
3.2.5	The Complete Partition Function Ratio	46
3.2.6	Extension to More Complex Molecules	46
3.2.7	Relationship to Temperature	46
3.2.8	“Empirical” Theoretical Methods	47
3.3	Experimental Determination of Fractionation Factors	47
3.3.1	Introduction	47
3.3.2	Mineral–Water Exchange Reactions	49
3.3.3	Mineral–Calcite Exchange Reactions	51
3.3.4	Mineral–CO ₂ Exchange Reactions	51
3.3.5	The Three-Phase Approach	52
3.4	Empirical Determination of Fractionation Factors	52
3.5	Other Potential Factors Controlling Isotope Partitioning	53
3.5.1	Pressure Effect	53
3.5.2	Composition and Structure	54
3.6	So Which Fractionation Factors Are Correct?	56
3.6.1	An Example from Quartz–Calcite Fractionation	56
	References	60

4 THE HYDROSPHERE 64

4.1	Overview	64
4.2	Natural Abundances of the Isotopologues of Water	65
4.3	Meteoric Water	67
4.4	The Meteoric Water Line	68
4.4.1	General Features of the GMWL	69
4.4.2	Variations in Slopes and Intercepts of Local MWLs	69
4.4.3	Meteoric Waters in Arid and Semiarid Environments	70
4.5	The Deuterium Excess Parameter	71
4.6	Evaporation and Condensation	74
4.6.1	Evaporation	74
4.6.2	Condensation: Closed-System (Batch) Isotopic Fractionation	75
4.6.3	Condensation: Open-System (Rayleigh) Isotopic Fractionation	78
4.7	Factors Controlling the Isotopic Composition of Precipitation	80
4.7.1	Temperature	80
4.7.2	Distance or Continentality Effect	82
4.7.3	Latitude Effect	83
4.7.4	Altitude Effect	83
4.7.5	Amount Effect	84
4.7.6	Seasonal Effects	86

4.8	Groundwater	86
4.9	Geothermal Systems	88
4.10	Basinal Brines and Formation Waters	89
4.11	Glacial Ice	91
4.11.1	Underlying Bases for Glacial Paleoclimatology	92
4.11.2	Determining the Age of Glacial Ice	93
4.11.3	Thinning of Ice Layers	94
4.11.4	The Example of Camp Century, North Greenland	94
4.11.5	Example of the GRIP Summit Core: Flickering Climates	97
	References	100
5	THE OCEANS	103
5.1	Overview	103
5.2	Oxygen Isotope Variations in Modern Oceans	104
5.2.1	Salinity- $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ Relations in Shallow Marine Waters	104
5.2.2	Salinity- $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ Relations in Deep Ocean Waters	105
5.3	Depth Profiles in Modern Oceans: $\delta^{18}\text{O}(\text{O}_2)_{\text{aq}}$ and $\delta^{13}\text{C}(\Sigma\text{CO}_2)$	108
5.4	Isotopic Compositions of Ancient Oceans	109
5.4.1	Primitive Oceans	109
5.4.2	Secular Changes in $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ of Marine Sediments	111
5.5	Seawater-Basalt Interactions: Buffering the $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ Value of the Ocean	112
5.5.1	Low-Temperature Alteration	112
5.5.2	High-Temperature Alteration	113
5.5.3	Evidence from Drill Core Material	114
5.5.4	Evidence from Obducted Material	114
5.6	Buffering the $^{18}\text{O}/^{16}\text{O}$ Ratio of Ocean Water	116
5.6.1	Summing the Processes Affecting the $^{18}\text{O}/^{16}\text{O}$ Ratio of Seawater	116
5.6.2	Model Calculations	116
5.6.3	Unresolved Controversy	117
	References	118
6	BIOGENIC CARBONATES: OXYGEN	120
6.1	Introduction	120
6.2	The Phosphoric Acid Method	121
6.2.1	A Major Breakthrough	121
6.2.2	Acid Fractionation Factors	123
6.2.3	Applicability	124
6.3	The Oxygen Isotope Paleotemperature Scale	125
6.4	Factors Affecting Oxygen Isotope Paleotemperatures	129
6.4.1	Variations in $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ of Ocean Water in Space and Time	130
6.4.2	Vital Effects	131
6.4.3	Diagenesis	133
6.4.4	Ecology of the Organism	138
6.5	Applications of Oxygen Isotope Paleothermometry	139
6.5.1	The Quaternary	139
6.5.2	The Paleogene and Neogene (Cenozoic)	140
6.5.3	Older Samples	140

- 6.6 Application to Continental Carbonates 141
- References 145

7 CARBON IN THE LOW-TEMPERATURE ENVIRONMENT 149

- 7.1 Introduction 149
- 7.2 The Carbon Cycle 150
 - 7.2.1 Carbon Isotope Budget of the Earth 153
- 7.3 Carbon Reservoirs 153
 - 7.3.1 Mantle 153
 - 7.3.2 Plants 153
 - 7.3.3 Organic Carbon in Sediments 157
 - 7.3.4 Methane 159
 - 7.3.5 Atmospheric CO₂ 160
- 7.4 $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ Values of Carbonates 161
 - 7.4.1 Introduction 161
 - 7.4.2 General Characterization of Carbonates 162
 - 7.4.3 The Vital Effect 162
 - 7.4.4 Carbonate Speciation Effects 165
 - 7.4.5 Controls on the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ Value of Marine Carbonates over Long Timescales 165
 - 7.4.6 Variations in the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ Value of Marine Carbonates at Short Timescales 169
- 7.5 $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ Studies of Terrestrial Carbonates 171
- References 174

8 LOW-TEMPERATURE MINERALS, EXCLUSIVE OF CARBONATES 179

- 8.1 Introduction 179
- 8.2 Phosphates 179
 - 8.2.1 Analytical Techniques 180
 - 8.2.2 Applications to Marine Paleothermometry 181
 - 8.2.3 Application to Mammals: Theory 183
 - 8.2.4 Sample Applications 186
- 8.3 Cherts 189
 - 8.3.1 Application to Precambrian Chert Deposits 189
 - 8.3.2 Application to Phanerozoic Cherts 190
 - 8.3.3 Diagenesis 191
 - 8.3.4 Application to Recent Sediments 193
 - 8.3.5 Other Silica Applications 194
- 8.4 Clay Minerals 195
 - 8.4.1 Early "Bulk" Sample Studies 195
 - 8.4.2 Grain-Size Considerations 196
- 8.5 Iron Oxides 199
- References 201

9 NITROGEN 206

- 9.1 Introduction 206
- 9.2 The Nitrogen Cycle 207

- 9.3 Nitrogen Isotope Fractionation 208
 - 9.3.1 Nitrogen Fixation 209
 - 9.3.2 Mineralization 209
 - 9.3.3 Assimilation 210
 - 9.3.4 Nitrification 210
 - 9.3.5 Denitrification 210
- 9.4 The Characteristic $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ Values of Various Materials 211
 - 9.4.1 Plants and Soil 212
 - 9.4.2 Other Terrestrial Reservoirs 212
 - 9.4.3 Nitrogen in the Oceans 213
- 9.5 Nitrogen Isotope Ratios in Animals 216
- References 219

10 SULFUR 222

- 10.1 Introduction 222
- 10.2 Analytical Techniques 223
- 10.3 Equilibrium Fractionations and Geothermometry 225
- 10.4 Sulfate and Sulfide Formation at Low Temperatures: The Sedimentary Sulfur Cycle 228
- 10.5 Secular Variations in Sulfur 231
 - 10.5.1 Long-Term Variations 231
 - 10.5.2 Alternative Approaches: Barite and Trace Carbonates 232
 - 10.5.3 Time Boundaries 233
 - 10.5.4 Archean Sulfates: Clues to the Early Atmosphere 234
 - 10.5.5 Sulfur Isotope Anomalies: Mass-Independent Fractionation 235
- 10.6 Sulfur Isotope Ratios in the Terrestrial Environment 238
- 10.7 Oxygen Isotope Variations in Sulfates 236
- References 239

11 IGNEOUS PETROLOGY 242

- 11.1 Introduction 242
- 11.2 The Mantle 243
 - 11.2.1 Oxygen 243
 - 11.2.2 Carbon 247
 - 11.2.3 Nitrogen 251
 - 11.2.4 Hydrogen 252
 - 11.2.5 Sulfur 254
- 11.3 Emplacement of Plutonic Rocks: Interactions with the Crust and Hydrosphere 255
 - 11.3.1 Normal Igneous Rocks 256
 - 11.3.2 Shallow-Level Hydrothermal Alteration by Meteoric Water: Low $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ Plutonic Rocks 256
 - 11.3.3 High- $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ Igneous Rocks 258
- 11.4 Calculating Fluid/Rock Ratios 259
- 11.5 Other Processes: Degassing, Assimilation, and Fractional Crystallization 261
 - 11.5.1 Magmatic Volatiles 261
 - 11.5.2 Assimilation–Fractional Crystallization (AFC) Processes 263
- References 266

12 METAMORPHIC GEOLOGY 272

- 12.1 Introduction 272
- 12.2 Stable Isotopes as Geochemical Tracers 273
 - 12.2.1 Closed System: Protolith Identification and Alteration 273
 - 12.2.2 Open Systems: Volatilization and Fluid Infiltration Processes 274
- 12.3 Fluid Sources and Fluid–Rock Interaction 280
 - 12.3.1 Oxygen and Hydrogen 280
 - 12.3.2 Carbon 282
 - 12.3.3 Sulfur 283
- 12.4 Scales of Equilibration During Metamorphism 284
 - 12.4.1 Regional-Scale Exchange 284
 - 12.4.2 Localized Exchange 285
- 12.5 Quantifying Fluid–Rock Ratios and Fluid Fluxes 286
 - 12.5.1 Simple Mixing Models: Zero-Dimensional Water–Rock Interaction Models 286
 - 12.5.2 One-Dimensional (Directional) Water–Rock Interaction Models 287
- 12.6 Thermometry 291
 - 12.6.1 Introduction 291
 - 12.6.2 Oxygen Isotope Thermometry in Metamorphic Rocks: Testing for Equilibrium 293
 - 12.6.3 Applications of Stable Isotope Thermometry 295
- 12.7 Retrograde Exchange: “Geospeedometry” 296
- 12.8 State of the Art 300
- References 302

13 EXTRATERRESTRIAL MATERIALS 309

- 13.1 Introduction 309
- 13.2 Classification of Meteorites 310
- 13.3 Oxygen Isotope Variations in Meteorites 310
 - 13.3.1 Introduction 310
 - 13.3.2 Discovery of an ^{17}O Anomaly 312
 - 13.3.3 Possible Explanations: Mixing of Two Distinct Reservoirs 313
 - 13.3.4 Mass-Independent Fractionation 316
- 13.4 Hydrogen 318
 - 13.4.1 Introduction 318
 - 13.4.2 Meteorites 319
- 13.5 Carbon 320
- 13.6 Nitrogen 322
- References 325

APPENDIX A Standard Reference Materials for Stable Isotopes 329

APPENDIX B Sample Calculation of the Correction Procedure for Adjusting Measured Isotope Data to Accepted IAEA Reference Scales 332

INDEX 334