

Radiogenic Isotope Geology

Modern isotope geochemistry is a rapidly expanding field that has a part to play in a broad range of Earth and planetary sciences – from extra-solar-system processes to environmental geoscience. This new edition of a popular textbook is completely updated and places more emphasis on the uses of radiogenic isotopes in environmental Earth science.

The author reviews the field of radiogenic isotope geology in a concise and visual manner to provide a comprehensive introduction to the subject and its wide variety of applications. For each technique, current ideas are presented in their historical context to allow the reader to understand the development of the theory. The latest ideas and methods, classic papers and case studies all come under scrutiny within this book.

An accessible introduction for scientists from other disciplines and an important reference for students and researchers working in isotope geology.

ALAN DICKIN has held a teaching position at McMaster University for 18 years. The first edition of this textbook was published in 1995, and has become widely established as the standard reference in the field.

Cambridge University Press
0521823161 - Radiogenic Isotope Geology, Second Edition
Alan P. Dickin
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Radiogenic Isotope Geology

Second Edition

Alan P. Dickin

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Frontmatter
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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa
<http://www.cambridge.org>

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First published 1995
Second edition published 2004

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typefaces Times 9.5/11 pt. and Frutiger System $\LaTeX 2\epsilon$ [TB]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Dickin, Alan P.
Radiogenic isotope geology / Alan P. Dickin.—2nd ed.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0 521 82316 1 — ISBN 0 521 53017 2 (paperback)
1. Isotope geology. 2. Radioactive dating. I. Title.

QE501.4.N9D53 2004
551.7'01—dc22 2003069588

ISBN 0 521 82316 1 hardback
ISBN 0 521 53017 2 paperback

Cambridge University Press
0521823161 - Radiogenic Isotope Geology, Second Edition
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to Margaret

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page xiii</i>		
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xv</i>		
1 Nucleosynthesis and nuclear decay	1		
1.1 The chart of the nuclides	1		
1.2 Nucleosynthesis	2		
1.2.1 Stellar evolution	3		
1.2.2 Stages in the nucleosynthesis of heavy elements	4		
1.3 Radioactive decay	7		
1.3.1 Isobaric decay	7		
1.3.2 Alpha- and heavy-particle decay	9		
1.3.3 Nuclear fission and the Oklo natural reactor	10		
1.4 The law of radioactive decay	11		
1.4.1 Uniformitarianism	12		
References	13		
2 Mass spectrometry	15		
2.1 Chemical separation	16		
2.1.1 Rb–Sr	16		
2.1.2 Sm–Nd	17		
2.1.3 Lu–Hf	17		
2.1.4 Lead	17		
2.2 Ion sources	18		
2.2.1 Thermal ionisation	19		
2.2.2 Plasma-source mass spectrometry	20		
2.2.3 Mass fractionation	21		
2.3 Magnetic-sector mass spectrometry	24		
2.3.1 Ion optics	25		
2.3.2 Detectors	27		
2.3.3 Data collection	28		
2.4 Isotope dilution	29		
2.4.1 Analysis technique	30		
2.4.2 Double spiking	31		
2.5 Applications of MC-ICP-MS to radiogenic isotopes	32		
2.5.1 Hf–W	33		
2.5.2 Lu–Hf	33		
		2.5.3 U–Th	33
		2.5.4 Pb–Pb	33
		2.5.5 U–Pb	33
		2.5.6 Sm–Nd	34
		2.6 Isochron regression-line fitting	34
		2.6.1 Types of regression fit	35
		2.6.2 Regression fitting with correlated errors	36
		2.6.3 Errorchrons	36
		2.6.4 Dealing with errorchrons	36
		References	38
		3 The Rb–Sr method	42
		3.1 The Rb decay constant	42
		3.2 Dating igneous rocks	43
		3.2.1 Sr model ages	43
		3.2.2 The isochron diagram	43
		3.2.3 Erupted isochrons	45
		3.2.4 Meteorite chronology	47
		3.3 Dating metamorphic rocks	48
		3.3.1 Open mineral systems	48
		3.3.2 Blocking temperatures	49
		3.3.3 Open whole-rock systems	51
		3.4 Dating ore deposits	52
		3.5 Dating sedimentary rocks	54
		3.5.1 Shales	55
		3.5.2 Glauconite	56
		3.6 Seawater evolution	57
		3.6.1 Measurement of the curve	57
		3.6.2 Modelling the fluxes	62
		3.6.3 The effects of Himalayan erosion	63
		References	66
		4 The Sm–Nd method	70
		4.1 Sm–Nd isochrons	70
		4.1.1 Meteorites	70
		4.1.2 Low-grade meta-igneous rocks	71
		4.1.3 High-grade metamorphic rocks	73
		4.1.4 High-grade metamorphic minerals	75

viii Contents

4.2 Nd isotope evolution and model ages	76	6 Isotope geochemistry of oceanic volcanics	136
4.2.1 Chondritic model ages	77	6.1 Isotopic tracing of mantle structure	136
4.2.2 Depleted-mantle model ages	78	6.1.1 Contamination and alteration	136
4.3 Model ages and crustal processes	80	6.1.2 Disequilibrium melting	138
4.3.1 Sedimentary systems	80	6.1.3 Mantle plumes	139
4.3.2 Meta-sedimentary systems	82	6.1.4 Plum-pudding mantle	140
4.3.3 Meta-igneous systems	83	6.1.5 Marble-cake mantle	141
4.3.4 Partially melted systems	84	6.2 The Nd–Sr isotope diagram	141
4.4 The crustal-growth problem	85	6.2.1 Box models for MORB sources	142
4.4.1 Crustal-accretion ages	85	6.2.2 The mantle array and OIB sources	144
4.4.2 Sediment-provenance ages	87	6.2.3 Mantle convection models	146
4.4.3 Archean depleted mantle	88	6.3 Pb isotope geochemistry	148
4.4.4 Early Archean crustal provinces	89	6.3.1 Pb–Pb isochrons and the lead paradox	149
4.5 Nd in the oceans	91	6.3.2 The development of HIMU	151
4.5.1 Modern seawater Nd	92	6.3.3 The terrestrial Th/U ratio	151
4.5.2 Ancient seawater Nd	93	6.3.4 The upper-mantle μ value re-examined	155
4.5.3 Tertiary seawater Nd	94	6.4 Mantle reservoirs in isotopic multispace	156
4.5.4 Quaternary seawater Nd	95	6.4.1 The mantle plane	156
References	97	6.4.2 The mantle tetrahedron	157
5 Lead isotopes	101	6.5 Identification of mantle components	160
5.1 U–Pb isochrons	101	6.5.1 HIMU	160
5.1.1 U–Pb dating of carbonates	102	6.5.2 EMII	161
5.2 U–Pb (zircon) dating	103	6.5.3 EMI	162
5.2.1 Lead-loss models	104	6.5.4 Kinematic models for mantle recycling	163
5.2.2 Upper intersection ages	105	6.5.5 Depleted OIB sources	164
5.2.3 Ion-microprobe analysis	107	6.6 Island arcs and mantle evolution	165
5.2.4 Lead 207/206 ages	109	6.6.1 Two-component mixing models	166
5.2.5 Inherited zircon	111	6.6.2 Three-component mixing models	168
5.2.6 Alternative presentations of U–Pb data	112	References	169
5.2.7 Alternative U–Pb dating materials	113	7 Isotope geochemistry of continental rocks	174
5.3 Common (whole-rock) Pb–Pb dating	115	7.1 Mantle xenoliths	174
5.3.1 The geochron	116	7.1.1 Mantle metasomatism	176
5.4 Model (galena) ages	118	7.2 Crustal contamination	178
5.4.1 The Holmes–Houtermans model	118	7.2.1 Two-component mixing models	178
5.4.2 Conformable leads	119	7.2.2 Melting in natural and experimental systems	180
5.4.3 Open-system Pb evolution	120	7.2.3 Inversion modelling of magma suites	182
5.5 Pb–Pb dating and crustal evolution	123	7.2.4 Lithospheric mantle contamination	186
5.5.1 Archean crustal evolution	123		
5.5.2 Paleo-isochrons and metamorphic disturbance	124		
5.6 Environmental Pb	126		
5.6.1 Anthropogenic Pb	127		
5.6.2 Pb as an oceanographic tracer	128		
5.6.3 Paleo-seawater Pb	130		
References	131		

7.2.5 Phenocrysts as records of magma evolution	188	9.4 The La–Ce and La–Ba systems	245
7.3 Petrogenesis of continental magmas	188	9.4.1 La–Ba geochronology	246
7.3.1 Kimberlites, carbonatites and lamproites	188	9.4.2 La–Ce geochronology	246
7.3.2 Alkali basalts	190	9.4.3 Ce isotope geochemistry	247
7.3.3 Flood basalts	191	9.5 The K–Ca system	249
7.3.4 Precambrian granitoids	195	References	251
7.3.5 Phanerozoic batholiths	197	10 K–Ar and Ar–Ar dating	254
References	199	10.1 The K–Ar dating method	254
8 Osmium isotopes	203	10.1.1 Analytical techniques	254
8.1 Osmium analysis	203	10.1.2 Inherited argon and the K–Ar isochron diagram	257
8.2 The Re–Os and Pt–Os decay schemes	204	10.1.3 Argon loss	258
8.2.1 The Re decay constant	204	10.2 The ⁴⁰Ar–³⁹Ar dating technique	259
8.2.2 Meteorite isochrons	205	10.2.1 ⁴⁰ Ar– ³⁹ Ar measurement	259
8.2.3 Dating ores and rocks	206	10.2.2 Irradiation corrections	260
8.2.4 Os normalisation and the Pt–Os decay scheme	208	10.2.3 Step heating	260
8.3 Mantle osmium	209	10.2.4 Argon-loss events	262
8.3.1 Bulk Silicate Earth	209	10.2.5 Excess argon	264
8.3.2 Lithospheric evolution	210	10.2.6 Dating paleomagnetism: a case study	265
8.3.3 Primitive upper mantle	213	10.2.7 ³⁹ Ar recoil	267
8.3.4 Enriched plumes	214	10.2.8 Dating glauconite and clay minerals	268
8.3.5 Osmium from the core	216	10.3 Laser-probe dating	269
8.3.6 Asthenospheric mantle heterogeneity	218	10.3.1 Method development	269
8.4 Petrogenesis and ore genesis	219	10.3.2 Applications of laser-probe dating	271
8.4.1 The Bushveld Complex	219	10.4 Timescale calibration	272
8.4.2 The Stillwater Complex	220	10.4.1 The magnetic-reversal timescale	272
8.4.3 The Sudbury Igneous Complex	222	10.4.2 The astronomical timescale	274
8.4.4 Flood-basalt provinces	223	10.4.3 Intercalibration of decay constants	275
8.5 Seawater osmium	223	10.5 Thermochronometry	276
8.5.1 Seawater Os isotope evolution	224	10.5.1 Arrhenius modelling	276
8.5.2 Os fluxes and residence times	225	10.5.2 Complex diffusion models	279
References	228	10.5.3 K-feldspar thermochronometry	282
9 Lu–Hf and other lithophile isotope systems	232	References	286
9.1 Lu–Hf geochronology	232	11 Rare-gas geochemistry	291
9.1.1 The Lu decay constant and the CHUR composition	232	11.1 Helium	291
9.1.2 Dating metamorphism	234	11.1.1 Mass spectrometry	291
9.2 Mantle Hf evolution	235	11.1.2 Helium production in nature	292
9.2.1 Hf zircon analysis	235	11.1.3 Terrestrial primordial helium	293
9.2.2 Archean sediments	236	11.1.4 The ‘two-reservoir’ model	294
9.2.3 Western Greenland	237	11.1.5 Crustal helium	298
9.2.4 Mantle depletion and recycling	239	11.1.6 Helium and volatiles	300
9.2.5 Sediment recycling	242	11.1.7 Helium and interplanetary dust	301
9.3 Seawater hafnium	244		

x Contents

11.2 Neon	303		
11.2.1 Neon production	303		
11.2.2 Solar neon in the earth	304		
11.2.3 Neon and helium	306		
11.3 Argon	307		
11.3.1 Terrestrial primordial argon	307		
11.3.2 Neon–argon	311		
11.3.3 Argon-38	313		
11.4 Xenon	314		
11.4.1 Iodogenic xenon	314		
11.4.2 Fissiogenic xenon	317		
11.4.3 Solar xenon	318		
References	319		
12 U-series dating	324		
12.1 Secular equilibrium and disequilibrium	324		
12.2 Analytical methods	325		
12.2.1 Mass spectrometry	327		
12.3 Daughter-excess methods	328		
12.3.1 ²³⁴ U dating of carbonates	328		
12.3.2 ²³⁴ U dating of Fe–Mn crusts	330		
12.3.3 ²³⁰ Th sediment dating	331		
12.3.4 ²³⁰ Th– ²³² Th	332		
12.3.5 ²³⁰ Th sediment stratigraphy	334		
12.3.6 ²³¹ Pa– ²³⁰ Th	335		
12.3.7 ²¹⁰ Pb	338		
12.4 Daughter-deficiency methods	339		
12.4.1 ²³⁰ Th: theory	339		
12.4.2 ²³⁰ Th: applications	340		
12.4.3 ²³⁰ Th: dirty calcite	343		
12.4.4 ²³¹ Pa	345		
12.5 U-series dating of open systems	346		
12.5.1 ²³¹ Pa– ²³⁰ Th	346		
12.5.2 ESR– ²³⁰ Th	347		
References	349		
13 U-series geochemistry of igneous systems	353		
13.1 Geochronology of volcanic rocks	354		
13.1.1 The U–Th isochron diagram	354		
13.1.2 Ra–Th isochron diagrams	356		
13.1.3 U-series model age dating	358		
13.2 Magma-chamber evolution	359		
13.2.1 The Th isotope evolution diagram	359		
13.2.2 Short-lived species in magma evolution	360		
13.3 Mantle-melting models	363		
13.3.1 Melting under ocean ridges	363		
		13.3.2 The effect of source convection	365
		13.3.3 The effect of melting depth	367
		13.3.4 The effect of source composition	369
		13.3.5 Evidence from short-lived species	370
		13.3.6 Evidence for mantle upwelling rates	372
		13.3.7 Evidence from Th–Sr and Th–U mantle arrays	373
		13.3.8 Evidence for crustal melting and contamination	374
		13.3.9 Sources of continental magmas	375
		13.4 Subduction-zone processes	376
		13.4.1 U–Th evidence	376
		13.4.2 Ra–Th evidence	378
		References	380
		14 Cosmogenic nuclides	383
		14.1 Carbon-14	383
		14.1.1 ¹⁴ C measurement by counting	385
		14.1.2 The closed-system assumption	386
		14.1.3 The initial-ratio assumption	386
		14.1.4 Dendrochronology	387
		14.1.5 Production and climatic effects	389
		14.1.6 Radiocarbon in the oceans	391
		14.1.7 The ‘Ocean Conveyor Belt’	393
		14.2 Accelerator mass spectrometry	395
		14.2.1 Radiocarbon dating by AMS	396
		14.3 Beryllium-10	398
		14.3.1 ¹⁰ Be in the atmosphere	399
		14.3.2 ¹⁰ Be in soil profiles	399
		14.3.3 ¹⁰ Be in snow and ice	401
		14.3.4 ¹⁰ Be in the oceans	402
		14.3.5 Comparison of ¹⁰ Be with other tracers	405
		14.3.6 ¹⁰ Be in magmatic systems	407
		14.4 Chlorine-36	410
		14.5 Iodine-129	413
		14.6 <i>In situ</i> cosmogenic isotopes	414
		14.6.1 Al-26 meteorite exposure ages	414
		14.6.2 Al–Be terrestrial exposure ages	415
		14.6.3 Chlorine-36 exposure ages	417
		References	420
		15 Extinct radionuclides	426
		15.1 Production and decay	426
		15.2 Extant actinides	426

15.3 Xenon isotopes	429	16 Fission-track dating	451
15.3.1 I–Xe	429	16.1 Track formation	451
15.3.2 Pu–Xe	431	16.2 Track etching	453
15.3.3 I–Xe chronology	432	16.3 Counting techniques	454
15.4 Very-short-lived species	434	16.3.1 The population method	454
15.4.1 Al–Mg	434	16.3.2 The external-detector method	455
15.4.2 Ca–K	437	16.3.3 Re-etching and re-polishing	456
15.4.3 Be-10	438	16.4 Detrital populations	456
15.5 Short-lived species in planetary differentiation	440	16.5 Track annealing	457
15.5.1 Pd–Ag	440	16.6 Uplift and subsidence rates	459
15.5.2 Mn–Cr	440	16.7 Track-length measurements	462
15.5.3 Fe–Ni	442	16.7.1 Projected tracks	465
15.5.4 Hf–W	442	16.7.2 Confined tracks	466
15.5.5 ^{146}Sm – ^{142}Nd	445	16.8 Pressure effects	468
15.6 Absent species	446	References	469
15.6.1 Cm–U	446		
15.7 Conclusions	447		
References	447	<i>Index</i>	472

PREFACE

The objective of this book is to review the field of radiogenic isotope geology in a concise manner, in order to give readers an overview of the subject and to allow them to critically assess the past and future literature.

The approach is historical for three reasons: firstly, to give an impression of the development of thought in the field so that the reader can understand the origin of present ideas; secondly, to explain why past theories have had to be modified; and thirdly, to present 'fall back' positions lest current models be refuted at some future date. The need for this type of approach has been illustrated by several recent papers that have attempted to 'resurrect' old theories that had been discarded in the face of apparently strong evidence against them. Hence, we see that a knowledge of the 'classic work' in the field is an important starting point for current research.

The text is focussed on three types of literature. Firstly, it attempts to give accurate attribution of new ideas or methods; secondly, it reviews classic papers, although these may not have historical precedence; and thirdly, it presents case studies that have evoked controversy in the literature, as examples of alternative interpretations of data.

The radiogenic isotopic systems described in this book offer an analytical 'tool-box' of methods. The varied physical and chemical properties of different parent–daughter pairs suit them to a range of different dating and tracing tasks. Together, they allow constraints to be placed on the behaviour of complex natural systems in the solid and environmental Earth sciences.

The book is organised so that each chapter is a nearly free-standing entity covering one segment of the field of radiogenic isotope geology. However, the reader may benefit from an understanding of the thread, which, in the author's mind, links these chapters together.

Chapter 1 introduces radiogenic isotopes by discussing the synthesis and decay of nuclides within the context of nuclear stability. Decay constants and the

radioactive decay law are introduced. Chapter 2 then provides an experimental background to many of the chapters that follow by discussing the details of mass spectrometric analysis (TIMS and ICP-MS) together with isochron regression fitting.

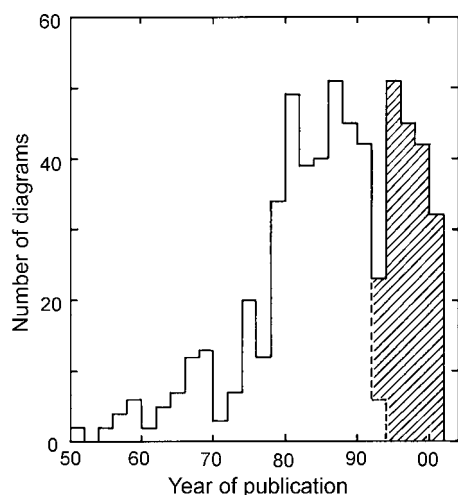
The next three chapters introduce the three pillars of lithophile isotope geology, comprising the Sr, Nd and Pb isotope methods. The emphasis is on their applications to geochronology and their evolution in terrestrial systems. Chapter 3 covers the Rb–Sr system, since this is one of the simplest and most basic dating methods. Chapter 4 covers the Sm–Nd system, including the use of Nd model ages to date crustal formation. Chapter 5 examines U–Pb geochronology and introduces the complexities of terrestrial Pb isotope evolution in a straightforward fashion. Each chapter ends with an examination of these isotopes as environmental tracers, focussing particularly on the oceans.

Chapters 6 and 7 apply Sr, Nd and Pb, as geochemical tracers, to the study of oceanic and continental igneous rocks. This is appropriate, because these isotopes are some of the basic tools of the isotope geochemist, which together may allow an understanding of the complexities of mantle processes and magmatic evolution. These methods are supplemented in Chapters 8 and 9 by insights from the Re–Os, Lu–Hf and other lithophile isotope systems, arising from their distinct chemistry.

Chapter 10 completes the panoply of long-lived isotopic dating systems by introducing the K–Ar and Ar–Ar methods, including their applications to magnetic and thermal histories. This leads us naturally in Chapter 11 to the consideration of rare gases as isotopic tracers, which give unique insights into the degassing history of the Earth.

Chapter 12 introduces the short-lived isotopes of the uranium decay series, covering classical and recent developments in the dating of Quaternary-age sedimentary rocks. This prepares us for the complexities of Chapter 13, which examines U-series isotopes as tracers in igneous systems. Short-lived processes in

xiv Preface



Histogram of the numbers of figures used in the second edition of *Radiogenic Isotope Geology* according to their publication dates (in biennial samples). The hatched area represents new material added since the publication of the first edition.

mantle melting and magma evolution are the focus of attention.

Chapter 14 examines the most important of the cosmogenic isotopes. These are not 'radiogenic' in the strictest sense, but represent a vast and growing field of chronology and isotope chemistry that is especially pertinent to environmental geoscience.

Finally, in Chapters 15 and 16, we examine two specialised fields that are on the fringes of radiogenic

isotope analysis, but which provide powerful geological tools. The 'extinct' nuclides discussed in Chapter 15 are used to throw light on the early evolution of the solar system. Lastly, Chapter 16 examines the use of (radiogenic) fission-track analysis as a specialised dating tool for low-temperature thermal histories.

The text is gathered around a large number of diagrams, many of which are classic figures from the literature. Because of the centrality of these figures in the text, they give an indication of the historical coverage of the field in this book. The adjacent figure shows a 'snap-shot' of this data set, in the form of a histogram of the numbers of diagrams used from a series of two-yearly periods over the past fifty years. This analysis shows a 'period of emergence' of isotope geology in the first thirty years, followed by a 'mature period' with essentially uniform coverage over the last twenty years. The period of coverage ends in December 2002. Material from 2003 and subsequent years will be reviewed on the web site that supports this book (radiogenic.com).

I am very grateful to Conrad Guettler for his encouragement to begin this work, and to subsequent CUP editors Matt Lloyd and Sally Thomas for their ongoing assistance with the updating of the text. I also thank the many members of the geological community who gave helpful comments on the text during its evolution, and acknowledge the many authors and publishers for permission to reproduce their classic figures. Finally, and especially, I thank my family for their support and encouragement over the years, without which this book would not have been completed.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to the publishers listed below for permission to redraw figures from journals and books for which they hold the copyright. Author acknowledgement for all figures is given within individual figure captions, and corresponding titles, journal names, volumes and pages are contained in the list of cited references at the end of each chapter.

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<i>Australian Journal of Earth Sciences:</i>	3 figures

xvi Acknowledgements

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<i>Zeitschrift für Physik</i> :	1 figure
Total books	64 figures
Own	42 figures