

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Motivation	1
1.2	Background	2
1.2.1	Geothermal systems in the Southern Volcanic Zone	2
1.2.2	Groundwater age and the use of environmental tracers	4
1.3	Research questions and aims of this study	7
1.3.1	Objectives	7
1.3.2	Hypothesis	7
1.4	Structure of the thesis	9
1.5	Publications and abstracts resulting from this dissertation	9
1.6	Publications resulting from side projects	10
2	STABLE ISOTOPE AND ANTHROPOGENIC TRACER SIGNATURE OF WATERS IN AN ANDEAN GEOTHERMAL SYSTEM	11
2.1	Introduction	12
2.2	Geological background	14
2.2.1	Regional tectonic and structural setting	14
2.2.2	Subsurface geology and geothermal reservoir potential	14
2.2.3	Climate of the study area and groundwater occurrence	16
2.3	Sampling and analytical techniques	16
2.4	Results	18
2.4.1	Physicochemical parameters and fluid chemistry	18
2.4.2	Stable isotope composition	18
2.4.3	Dissolved anthropogenic tracer concentration	24
2.5	Discussion	24
2.5.1	Hydrothermal system recharge	24
2.5.2	Sources of inorganic carbon	29
2.5.3	Groundwater residence times and mixing of fluids of different ages	32
2.5.4	Conceptual model of fluid circulation	37
2.6	Concluding remarks	39
3	CONCLUSIONS	40
3.1	Scientific contributions of this dissertation	40
3.2	Future work	41
	Bibliography	42
	Appendix A – Supplementary material	52
A.3	Data for constructing the local meteoric water line	52
A.4	PHREEQC code	54
	Appendix B – Rayleigh fractionation model	55

List of Figures

1.1	Geological map of the Central Southern Volcanic Zone (37–41°S)	3
1.2	Box plot of Cl/B ratios in thermal waters of the central SVZ, based on water type and fault domain	5
1.3	Schematic illustration showing the use of environmental tracers to characterize time-scales along a flow-path	6
1.4	Schematic cross-section illustrating different types of groundwater flow and mixing at sampling point	8
2.1	Map of the study area	15
2.2	Piper diagram	22
2.3	$\delta^{18}\text{O}$ vs. $\delta^2\text{H}$ plot	23
2.4	$\delta^{18}\text{O}$ vs. sampling elevation of waters	26
2.5	TDIC vs. $\delta^{13}\text{C}$	29
2.6	Saturation indices of calcite and dolomite in water samples	31
2.7	Effects of CO_2 degassing and calcite precipitation on $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values of fluid	31
2.8	Apparent recharge year of thermal and cold groundwater samples	33
2.9	Environmental tracer plots	35
2.10	Conceptual model of fluid circulation	37

List of Tables

1.1	Major regional-scale geochemical differences between LOFS-associated and ATF-associated geothermal fluids.	4
2.1	Chemical composition, isotopic signature, and atmospheric tracer concentration of water samples in the study area.	19
2.2	Summary characteristics of hot and cold springs	27
A.1	Isotope precipitation data from the Araucanía Region, Southern Chile.	52
B.1	Boundary conditions for the Rayleigh-fractionation model	57