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Petrography and stable isotope geochemistry of Oligocene-Miocene continental carbonates in south Texas: Implications for paleoclimate and paleoenvironment near sea-level

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Abstract

Cenozoic sedimentary rocks in the southern Texas Gulf Coastal Plains contain abundant continental carbonates that are useful for reconstructing terrestrial paleoclimate and paleoenvironment in a region near sea-level. Our field observations and thin section characterizations of the Oligocene and Miocene continental carbonates in south Texas identified three types of pedogenic carbonates, including rhizoliths, carbonate nodules, and platy horizons, and two types of groundwater carbonates, including carbonate-cemented beds and carbonate concretions, with distinctive macromorphologic and micromorphologic features. Based on preservations of authigenic microfabrics and variations of carbon and oxygen isotopic compostions, we suggest these carbonates experienced minimal diagenesis, and their stable isotopic compositions reflect paleoclimate and paleoenvironment in south Texas. Our Oligocene and Miocene carbonate clumped isotope temperatures $(T(\Delta_{47}))$ are 23-28°C, slightly less than or

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