Carbonate Reservoirs: Chapter 8. Meteoric Diagenetic Environment (Developments in Sedimentology)

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Shallow-marine carbonate sequences commonly undergo exposure to meteoric waters. These waters are chemically aggressive toward sedimentary carbonate minerals, capable of rapidly dissolving grains and generating secondary porosity. The carbonate derived from dissolution can precipitate as cement, either nearby or hydrologically downstream, decreasing porosity. Thus the potential for restructuring of original depositional porosity is very high in the meteoric diagenetic environment. Chemical signatures of meteoric pore waters and meteoric carbonate cements are distinct and reflect kinetics of the CaCO3–H2O–CO2 system, climatic effects, and hydrologic setting. The meteoric diagenetic environment is subdivided into vadose and phreatic diagenetic zones. Caliches/calcretes are distinctive diagenetic profiles of uppermost vadose zones in semi-arid climates. Porosity development in vadose diagenetic zones is to a large degree a function of relative sea level, which controls the occurrence of localized floating freshwater lenses (during highstands) versus regional meteoric water systems (during lowstands). Detailed examples presented include Quintana Roo (Mexico) strandplains and Oaks Field (North Louisian Jurassic), both highstand prograding shoreline systems, and Great Bahama Bank and Barbados (lowstand platform-wide aquifer systems). Geochemical trends in calcite cements and porosity development patterns characteristic of regional meteoric aquifer systems are illustrated from Mississippian Lake Valley Formation grainstones (southwest New Mexico). Karst processes and porosity styles are described in order that paleokarst features in reservoirs can be recognized and/or predicted. Detailed evaluations of paleokarsted reservoirs include Yates and Ellenburger fields (Permian and Ordovician of West Texas, respectively) and Rospo Mare Field (Cretaceous), Adriatic offshore, Italy. Lastly, the validity and significance of dolomitization associated with meteoric and especially mixed meteoric–marine waters (Dorag model) is evaluated and found to be lacking.

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