Development and validation of a NO$_x^+$ ratio method for the quantitative separation of inorganic and organic nitrate aerosol using CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM

Farhan R. Nursanto[1], Douglas A. Day[2,3], Roy Meinen[4], Rupert Holzinger[4], Harald Saathoff[5], Jinglan Fu[5,6], Jan Mulder[6], Ulrike Dusek[6], and Juliane L. Fry[1]

[1]Meteorology and Air Quality, Environmental Sciences Group, Wageningen University and Research, 6708PB Wageningen, the Netherlands
[2]Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences, University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, CO, USA
[3]Department of Chemistry, University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, CO, USA
[4]Department of Physics, Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Research Utrecht, Utrecht University, Princetonplein 5, 3584CC Utrecht, the Netherlands
[5]Institute of Meteorology and Climate Research, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Eggenstein-Leopoldshafen, Karlsruhe, Germany
[6]Centre for Isotope Research, Energy and Sustainability Research Institute Groningen, University of Groningen, 9747AG Groningen, the Netherlands

Correspondence: Farhan R. Nursanto (farhan.nursanto@wur.nl) and Juliane L. Fry (juliane.fry@wur.nl)

Abstract. Particulate nitrate is a major component of ambient aerosol around the world, present in inorganic form mainly as ammonium nitrate, and also as organic nitrate. It is of increasing importance to monitor ambient particulate nitrate, a reservoir of urban nitrogen oxides that can be transported downwind and harm ecosystems. The unit-mass-resolution time-of-flight aerosol chemical speciation monitoring equipped with capture vaporizer (CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM) is designed to quantitatively

5 monitor ambient PM$_{2.5}$ composition. In this paper, we describe a method for separating the organic and ammonium nitrate components measured by CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM based on evaluating the NO$_2^+$/NO$^+$ ratio (NO$_x^+$ ratio). This method includes modifying the ACSM fragmentation table, time averaging, and data filtering. By using the measured NO$_x^+$ ratio of NH$_4$NO$_3$ and a plausible range of NO$_x^+$ ratio for organic nitrate aerosol, the measured particulate nitrate can be split into inorganic and organic fractions. Time averaging and data filtering results in a concentration limit of 0.6 µg m^{-3} total particulate nitrate, above

10 which this method could be used. We show that this method is able to distinguish periods with inorganic or organic nitrate as major components at a rural site in the Netherlands. A comparison to a high-resolution time-of-flight aerosol mass spectrometer equipped with a standard vaporizer (SV-HR-ToF-AMS) shows a good correlation of particulate organic nitrate fraction between the instruments (CV/SV = 1.59; r^2 = 0.92). We propose that researchers use this NO$_x^+$ ratio method for CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM to quantify the particulate organic nitrate fraction at existing monitoring sites in order to improve understanding of nitrate

15 formation and speciation.

1 Introduction

In the current age of decreasing sulfur emissions, nitrate is becoming a principal aerosol component globally and regionally (Adams et al., 1999; Metzger, 2002; Liao et al., 2003; Rodriguez and Dabdub, 2004; Feng and Penner, 2007; Bauer et al., 2007; Paulot et al., 2016; Bian et al., 2017; Vasilakos et al., 2018; Drugé et al., 2019; Lu et al., 2021). In addition to an increasing aerosol fraction of ammonium nitrate (NH_4NO_3), ambient organic nitrates (ON) produced through the oxidation of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the presence of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) can condense into the particulate phase or grow new particles (Huang et al., 2019a, b; Song et al., 2024). The particulate ON (pON) contribution to total particulate nitrate mass (pNO_3) is substantial (Ng et al., 2017), with an average fraction of 17%-31% in China (Yu et al., 2024), 34%-44% in Europe (Kiendler-Scharr et al., 2016), and large differences between urban and rural areas (Fisher et al., 2016; Schlag et al., 2016; Romer Present et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2024). Improved understanding of pON fraction in different regions can provide insight into chemical mechanisms of secondary aerosol formation (Pye et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2016; Ng et al., 2017; Zare et al., 2018).

ON flux worldwide accounts ~25% of the total nitrogen deposition (Jickells et al., 2013). Zare et al. (2018) estimated, via WRF-Chem simulations in the southeast United States, that 60% of NO_x loss is related to ON chemistry. Similar to inorganic nitrate, ON also can be regarded as a NO_x reservoir, because thermal or photolysis processes can re-release NO_x. The partitioning between the gas-phase and particulate ON (Zare et al., 2018) can affect this reservoir lifetime, and thus the spatial scale of transport of urban nitrogen emissions from their source, determining how far downwind these emissions can harm natural habitats (Fields, 2004; Bobbink and Hicks, 2014; Erisman et al., 2015; Melillo, 2021).

The NO_x^+ ratio method, first described by Farmer et al. (2010), is a robust method to separate the total pNO_3 signal measured by high resolution-aerosol mass spectrometers (AMS) into particulate ammonium nitrate (pAmN) and particulate organic nitrate (pON) using the variation of NO_2^+/NO^+ ion ratios (subsequently referred to as NO_x^+ ratios) in the mass spectra observed. This method has been successfully used to analyze pON composition in several studies (Fry et al., 2013; Pye et al., 2015; Kiendler-Scharr et al., 2016; Ng et al., 2017; Fry et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2019a, b; Brownwood et al., 2021; Day et al., 2022a). The basis of the NO_x^+ ratio method comes from the empirical observation that nitrates attached to an organic moiety have different fragmentation patterns in the mass spectrometer's vaporizer and ionizer compared to nitrate in the form of NH_4NO_3. Thus, inorganic and organic nitrates will have different NO_x^+ ratios, R_ν, as shown below in Eq. 1 (Day et al., 2002; Francisco and Krylowski, 2005; Farmer et al., 2010; Drewnick et al., 2015; Hu et al., 2016b; Day et al., 2022a).

$$R_\nu = \frac{(C_{NO_2^+})_\nu}{(C_{NO^+})_\nu}$$ (1)

ν: nitrate compound or mixture measured

The NO_x^+ ratio of the observed air (R_{obs}) falls between the NO_x^+ ratios of pure pAmN (R_{pAmN}) and pure pON (R_{pON}). The time-varying mass fraction of particulate organic nitrate (f_{pON}, referring to pON existing as pON), and particulate ammonium nitrate (f_{pAmN}, referring to pNO_3 existing as pAmN) can be extracted from this time-varying R_{obs} using Eqs. 2 and 3 (Farmer

et al., 2010).

$$f_{\text{pON}} = \frac{(R_{\text{obs}} - R_{\text{pAmN}})(1 + R_{\text{pON}})}{(R_{\text{pON}} - R_{\text{pAmN}})(1 + R_{\text{obs}})} \tag{2}$$

$$f_{\text{pAmN}} = 1 - f_{\text{pON}} \tag{3}$$

50   The aerosol chemical speciation monitoring (ACSM; Aerodyne Inc.) is a unit-mass resolution (UMR) mass spectrometry instrument intended for continuous ambient aerosol monitoring (Ng et al., 2011; Fröhlich et al., 2013), unlike its predecessor, the aerosol mass spectrometer (AMS; Aerodyne Inc.) which is designed primarily for research (Drewnick et al., 2005). In this work, we explored whether the ACSM can be used to determine pAmN and pON in the same way as has been successfully demonstrated for the AMS. ACSMs are used extensively in monitoring networks, such as the sites in the Aerosol, Clouds and

55   Trace Gases Research Infrastructure (ACTRIS) network in Europe (https://www.psi.ch/en/acsm-stations/overview-full-period, last access: 6 November 2024) and the Atmospheric Science and Chemistry mEasurement NeTwork (ASCENT) network in the USA (https://ascent.research.gatech.edu, last access: 6 November 2024).

For monitoring purposes, a capture vaporizer (CV) and an intermediate pressure lens (IPL) are recommended by Aerodyne for improved quantification, relative to a standard vaporizer (SV) and standard lens (Zheng et al., 2020). Almost half of

60   the ACSMs in the ACTRIS network in Europe use CV. The CV is designed is to increase particle collision events with the vaporizer surface by having a narrow entrance, resulting in a particle collection efficiency (CE) of 1 and better mass closure of $PM_{2.5}$ monitoring (Jayne and Worsnop, 2016; Hu et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2024). The enhanced thermal decomposition, however, shifts the fragmentation pattern toward smaller ion fragments (Hu et al., 2017, 2018a; Xu et al., 2017; Zheng et al., 2020). Therefore, the NO_x^+ ratio is substantially lower with CV compared to SV due to favored NO^+ formation.

65   In consequence, the NO_x^+ ratio method's applicability in CV-based measurements is limited by the NO_2^+ detection limit (<0.1 µg m^{-3}; Hu et al. (2017)).

While high resolution mass spectrometers can separate non-NO_x^+ peaks which are detected at the same nominal m/z (mass-to-charge ratio) as NO_x^+ peaks (30 for NO^+ and 46 for NO_2^+), UMR analysis requires estimations based on related ions at other m/z. These estimations are incorporated into data workup by the implementation of a fragmentation table, which subtracts

70   an estimated amount of organic at m/z 30 and m/z 46, based on the signal at another related organic-only m/z. The default fragmentation table typically applied for the analysis of UMR spectra is based on generalized fragment mass composition of ambient aerosol composition measured using SV-based instruments (Allan et al., 2004; Ulbrich et al., 2009), and thus not suitable for CV-UMR-ToF spectra that have different fragmentation patterns. Using a CV-HR-ToF-AMS, Hu et al. (2017) determined the organic fragment interference to NO^+ in m/z 30 and to NO_2^+ in m/z 46 for CV-UMR measurements in a

75   biogenically-dominated dataset, but no study has yet shown this calculation adapted to general ambient aerosol composition.

This work aims to adapt the NO_x^+ method to separate pAmN and pON signals to CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM measurements. We first provide a revised fragmentation table for m/z 30 and m/z 46 compatible with CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM measurements with varying composition to better calculate NO^+ and NO_2^+ concentrations. Second, we show the variation of empirical NO_x^+ ratio for pAmN in CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM instruments and determine the NO_x^+ ratio for pON. Third, we demonstrate the capability

80   of data pre-treatments (filtering and time averaging) to overcome the low and noisy ratio signals produced by CV in ambient

measurements. Fourth, the proposed NO_x^+ ratio method is applied to an extended ambient dataset (at the Cabauw site of the Ruisdael Observatory Network) to test its robustness for changing ambient aerosol mixtures. Lastly, the formation of pAmN and pON in a chamber experiment measured using CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM is used for method validation by comparing results with SV-HR-ToF-AMS.

2 Instrumentation

2.1 Description of ToF-ACSM

A ToF-ACSM (Aerodyne Inc.) is the main instrument used in this study, allowing the chemical analysis of non-refractory organics (Org), ammonium (NH_4), nitrate (NO_3), sulfate (SO_4), and chloride (Chl) in the aerosol phase (Ng et al., 2011; Fröhlich et al., 2013). In comparison to compact time-of-flight (cToF)-AMS (Drewnick et al., 2005) and HR-ToF-AMS (DeCarlo et al., 2006), ToF-ACSM is more compact in size, lower in price and operational cost, simpler in analysis, and requires less user intervention, which makes this instrument practical for long-term monitoring but still comparable to the AMS (Fröhlich et al., 2013). ToF-ACSM uses a three-way valve system that allows automatic switching between the sample and filter mode, unlike ToF-AMS, which has a mechanical chopper that physically blocks the particle beam. The lack of a chopper (but with the use of particle time-of-flight chamber) in the ToF-ACSM, however, removes the particle sizing feature, which makes it similar to the quadrupole-ACSM (Q-ACSM) but with better mass resolution and detection limits.

To conduct the various analyses in this paper, we primarily use data from two ToF-ACSM instruments with identical setup. The instruments are managed by Utrecht University (UU) and University of Groningen (RUG), part of a larger monitoring network of Ruisdael Observatory in the Netherlands (https://ruisdael-observatory.nl, last access: 6 November 2024). We label the instruments as ACSM-UU and ACSM-RUG. The instrument setup for ambient measurements uses a combination of a $PM_{2.5}$ size-cut cyclone, an intermediate-pressure lens ($PM_{2.5}$ aerodynamic lens), and a capture vaporizer (CV, ~525 °C, Jayne and Worsnop (2016)) that has been aligned to be centered on the vaporizer. Together, they configure the ToF-ACSM as a $PM_{2.5}$ monitor (Xu et al., 2017) with unit mass resolution. The instrument provides UMR mass spectra with default 10 min time resolution, analyzed using Tofware v3.3 in Igor Pro 8. The fractions of the UMR signal are assigned to different aerosol species using the fragmentation table.

2.2 Ambient measurements with ACSM

We use an ambient dataset measured using ACSM-UU deployed in Cabauw, the Netherlands, for method development and case studies. The ambient data were measured between 18 April 2023 to 15 April 2024 with some gaps (net 205 days of data) as part of the continuous monitoring of the Ruisdael Observatory network. Aerosol measurements were carried out with an inlet height of 4.5 m above the ground at the Cabauw tower (51.97 °N, 4.93 °E), an infrastructure of the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI, the Netherlands, https://www.knmi.nl/home, last access: 9 November 2024). The site is surrounded by agricultural lands in the province of Utrecht, the Netherlands, a relatively nitrogen-polluted rural site.

Ambient air is sampled through a stainless-steel inlet system with a PM$_{2.5}$ size-cut cyclone (URG-2000-30ED) and a Nafion dryer with a sampling flow rate of $\sim$2 L min^{-1}, of which in average 1.23 cm^3 s^{-1} (0.07 L min^{-1}) is sampled by the ACSM. The calibrations of ionization efficiency (IE) and relative IE (RIE) were performed using 300 nm particles from ammonium nitrate (NH$_4$NO$_3$) and ammonium sulfate ((NH$_4$)$_2$SO$_4$)) solutions (size-selected with a differential mobility analyzer, model TSI 3081 and co-sampled with a condensation particle counter, model TSI 3750). The average IE value for the instrument is 169 ions pg^{-1} for NO$_3$, and RIE values are 1.40, 1.58, 1.30, and 3.37 for Org, SO$_4$, Chl, and NH$_4$, respectively. RIE's used for Org and Chl were not measured, and instead applied as default values, as is common practice. The detection limits at 10 min time resolution are 0.38 µg m^{-3} for Org, 0.12 µg m^{-3} for NH$_4$, 0.07 µg m^{-3} for NO$_3$, 0.07 µg m^{-3} for NO$^+$ (m/z 30), 0.04 µg m^{-3} for NO$_2^+$ (m/z 46), 0.11 µg m^{-3} for SO$_4$, and 0.09 µg m^{-3} for Chl.

2.3 Chamber measurements with ACSM and AMS

ACSM-RUG was deployed to measure aerosol in chamber experiments conducted in Aerosol Interaction and Dynamics in the Atmosphere (AIDA) chamber, a facility maintained by Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), Germany. Chamber experiments were conducted in 2023 and 2024 as part of the Cloud-Aerosol Interactions in a Nitrogen-dominated Atmosphere (CAINA) project (https://sites.google.com/view/cainaproject/, last access: 6 November 2024).

Chamber air is sampled using stainless steel tubing equipped with a Nafion dryer and a sampling flow of $\sim$2 L min^{-1} of which in average 1.44 cm^3 s^{-1} (0.09 L min^{-1}) is sampled by the ACSM. The average IE value for the instrument is 152 ions pg^{-1} for NO$_3$. The ACSM instrument is run with 2 min time resolution unlike the default setting to capture more variation in the aerosol composition. The detection limits at 2 min time resolution for the ACSM-RUG instrument are 0.20 µg m^{-3} for Org, 0.19 µg m^{-3} for NH$_4$, 0.17 µg m^{-3} for NO$_3$, 0.17 µg m^{-3} for NO$^+$ (m/z 30), 0.03 µg m^{-3} for NO$_2^+$ (m/z 46), 0.02 µg m^{-3} for SO$_4$, and 0.05 µg m^{-3} for Chl.

In addition, a high-resolution time-of-flight aerosol mass spectrometer (HR-AMS, Aerodyne Research Inc.) from KIT is connected to the chamber via a 6 mm (4 mm internal diameter) stainless steel tube. The instrument is equipped with a PM$_{2.5}$ aerodynamic lens to measure the non-refractory PM$_{2.5}$ components, at a time resolution of 1 min (DeCarlo et al., 2006; Canagaratna et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2013), averaged to 2 min for this comparison. The operation of the AMS is explained in previous publications (Huang et al., 2019a; Song et al., 2022). Briefly, chamber air is sampled with a flow of 1.08 L min^{-1}, of which in average 84 cm^3 min^{-1} is sampled by the AMS (Gao et al., 2022). The aerosol particles are then focused into a narrow beam by a PM$_{2.5}$ aerodynamic lens with an effective complete transmission for particle sizes ranging from 70 to 2500 nm (vacuum aerodynamic diameter; D_{va}) and heated by a standard vaporizer at 600 °C. The resulting vapors are ionized by electron impact (70 eV) and characterized by a time-of-flight mass spectrometer. The AMS ionization efficiency is calibrated using 300 nm dried NH$_4$NO$_3$ aerosol particles to give an average IE NO$_3$ of 185.0 ions pg^{-1}. The AMS data are analysed using the software packages SQUIRREL 1.66E and PIKA 1.26E in Igor Pro 8. To account for the effect of particle bouncing loss, chemical-composition-based collection efficiency (0.5) are applied to calculate the particle mass concentration (Middlebrook et al., 2012).

3 Development of a fragmentation table for CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM from AMS spectral database and ACSM chamber experiment spectra

3.1 General fragmentation table for typical ambient dataset

In the UMR-ACSM instruments, ions detected at m/z 30 and m/z 46 can originate both from nitrate (NO^+ and NO_2^+) and organic fragments. However, it is known that some fragments produced by processes in the vaporizer and ionizer can be correlated to one another (Allan et al., 2004). For instance, UMR peaks at m/z 29, m/z 42, m/z 43, and m/z 45 are mainly the product of further fragmentation of fragments at m/z 30 and m/z 46 and assumed to be exclusively organic. The aim of the fragmentation table, with respect to the NO_x^+ species, is to predict the mass concentration of organic fragments at m/z 30 and m/z 46 based on the masses measured at m/z 29, m/z 42, m/z 43, and m/z 45, and subsequently to extract the signal that can be attributed to NO^+ and NO_2^+.

Our starting point is the default fragmentation table from Allan et al. (2004) (see Table 1). A fragmentation table consists of columns dividing the raw mass spectra into chemical species, with rows denoting entries for different UMR nominal masses. Thus, each entry consists of components which are added up to obtain the species concentration at a specific nominal mass. These components can be the whole peak of an m/z x, referred to as an integer number (with square brackets in this paper, "[x]"), or the contribution of a certain species to m/z x in the fragmentation table, denoted as "frag_species[x]." A multiplier a (positive or negative) is added if the addition or subtraction of the component is fractional. The fragmentation table for ToF-AMS and ToF-ACSM are identical, except that gas-phase species contribution must also be removed in ToF-AMS. For the ACSM, due to the automatic filter sampling cycle and subtraction, gas-phase species are already removed. The fragmentation table developed in this paper, therefore, is applicable to any UMR aerosol mass spectrometer with a CV inlet.

Table 1. Excerpt of fragmentation table for Org and NO_3 species in m/z 30 and m/z 46. Second and third column shows entries originated from the default fragmentation table of Allan et al. (2004) (used in Tofware v3.3). Fourth and fifth column shows entries proposed to develop revised CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM fragmentation table in this study.

m/z	Allan et al. (2004), default fragmentation table		Proposed for general CV-ToF-ACSM	
	Org	NO_3	Org	NO_3
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
30	0.022 · frag_Org[29]	[30], -frag_Org[30]	$a_{Org[30],[i]}$ · frag_Org[i] [(a)]	[30], -frag_Org[30]
46	-	[46]	$a_{Org[46],[i]}$ · frag_Org[i] [(b)]	[46], -frag_Org[46]

i represents UMR masses tested against m/z 30 and m/z 46 in this study, which includes frag_Org[29], frag_Org[42], frag_Org[43], and frag_Org[45]. See the list in the footnote of Table S3 of SI.

(a) $a_{Org[30],[i]}$ is the multiplier for frag_Org[30] component, obtained from the slope of ODR fit between frag_Org[30] and frag_Org[i].

(b) $a_{Org[46],[i]}$ is the multiplier for frag_Org[46] component, obtained from the slope of ODR fit between frag_Org[46] and frag_Org[i].

In the default fragmentation table (which was developed using an SV inlet), the signal at m/z 46 is assigned exclusively to NO_2^+, and only a minor contribution of the signal at m/z 29 (2.2%) is assumed to be correlated to the organic signal at m/z 30. Fry et al. (2018) found substantially larger organic fragments at m/z 30 and m/z 46 than the default fragmentation table in
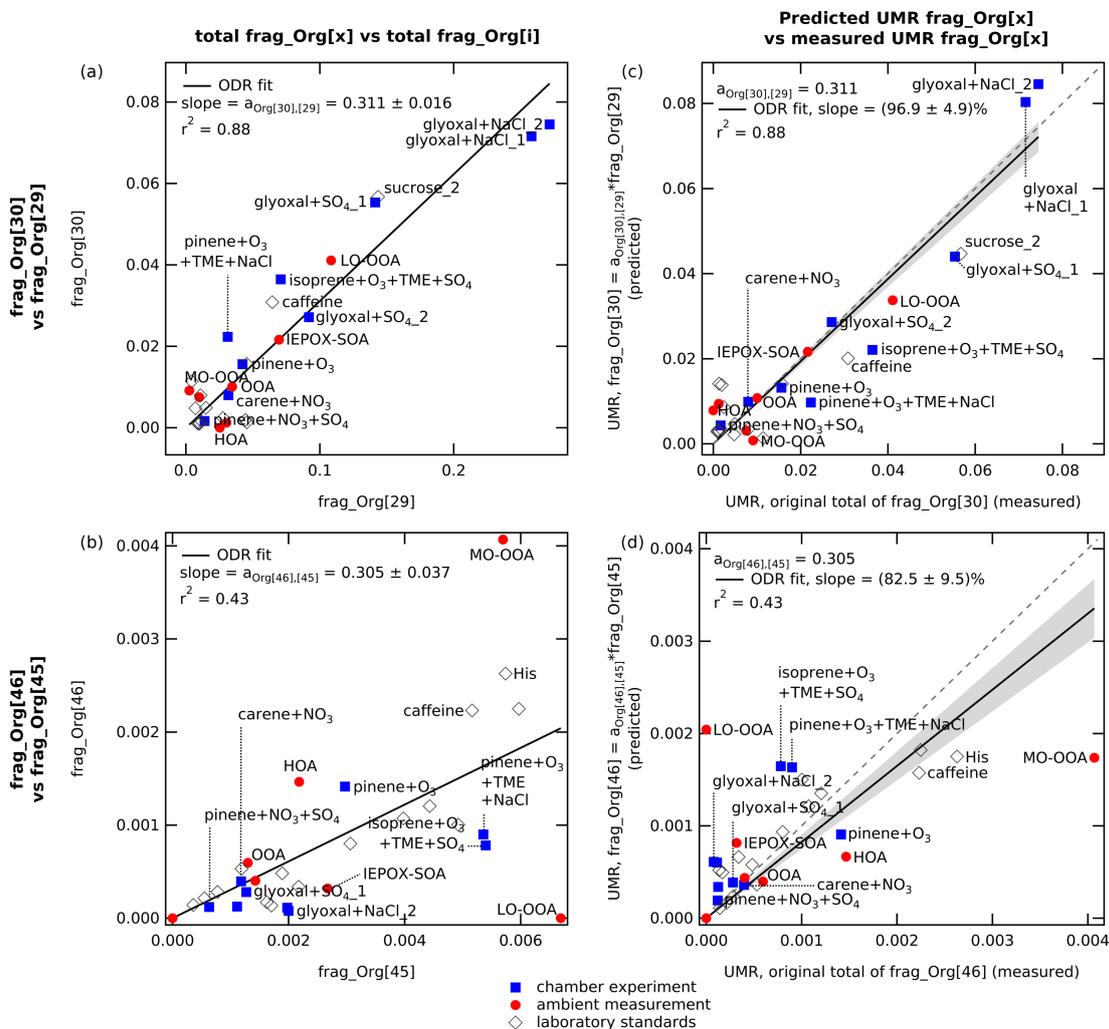
Figure 1. The left-hand panels show the best ODR fits (set to zero intercept) which are found in the correlation between the concentrations of (a) frag_Org[30] vs frag_Org[29], and (b) frag_Org[46] vs frag_Org[45]. The correlations of all mass pairs are summarized in Table S3. The right-hand panels show the predicted organic contributions (based on the new multipliers) at each m/z versus the measured amount. Plot (c) shows the predicted UMR frag_Org[30] against the measured total Org fragments in m/z 30, and plot (d) shows the predicted UMR frag_Org[46] against the measured total Org fragments in m/z 46. The figure demonstrates that the predicted frag_Org[x] slightly underestimates (slope = 0.83) but approached the measured frag_Org[x].

a semi-polluted biogenically-influenced air analyzed with an SV-HR-ToF-AMS. Switching from SV to CV can also modify the concentration ratio between organic and inorganic fragments at m/z 30 and m/z 46, because of greater organic fragmentation in CV (Hu et al., 2018a). Therefore, modifications to frag_NO$_3$[46] and frag_NO$_3$[30] entries (later referred to as $C_{\mathrm{NO_2^+}}$ and
170 $C_{\mathrm{NO^+}}$ to calculate $\mathrm{NO_x^+}$ ratio outside fragmentation table context) must be established for CV-based instruments.

To make a revised fragmentation table applicable for general ambient SOA mixtures, a variety of organic aerosol profiles is necessary. We use 25 CV-HR-ToF-AMS spectra (including both nitrates and non-nitrate organics) from the AMS spectral database (http://cires1.colorado.edu/ jimenez-group/AMSsd_CV, last access: 6 November 2024) and 6 CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM spectra from chamber experiments. The CV-HR-ToF-AMS database mass spectra include 3 chamber experiments, 7 factors

175 of positive matrix factorization (PMF) analysis from ambient measurements, and 15 laboratory standards measurements (Hu et al., 2017; Carlton et al., 2018; Hu et al., 2018a, b), summarized in Table S1 in the Supplementary Information (SI). The CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM mass spectra were measured from experiments conducted in the AIDA chamber (see Section 2.3).

Using these data, we determine the multipliers a used in a revised calculation of frag_Org[30] and frag_Org[46] (see Table S1, third and fourth column). The new multipliers are determined by performing orthogonal distance regression (ODR)

180 constrained to a zero intercept of mass spectra in UMR. For HR-AMS spectra, the dataset is "degraded" from HR into UMR spectra by summing HR Org fragments to their respective nominal mass in each AMS spectrum. Note that for UMR-ACSM spectra, because we cannot separate species at the same nominal m/z, we only use chamber experiments that are assumed nitrate-free or to contain negligible nitrate (no seed or precursor for inorganic and organic nitrate). Therefore, all signals at m/z 30 and m/z 46 are exclusively organic fragments. We perform ODR fits of frag_Org[30] and frag_Org[46] against a list

185 of chemically related masses (frag_Org[i]). The slope of the ODR fits to determine the multiplier $a_{\text{Org}[30],[i]}$ and $a_{\text{Org}[46],[i]}$ are summarized in Table S3, alongside the list of fragments of i that contribute to each nominal mass, in the footnote. Fig. 1a shows that frag_Org[30] is best correlated with frag_Org[29], where $a_{\text{Org}[30],[29]} = 0.311 \pm 0.016$ (mean $\pm$ uncertainty, $r^2 = 0.88$). On the other hand, Fig. 1b shows that frag_Org[46] is correlated best with frag_Org[45], compared to other frag_Org[i], where $a_{\text{Org}[46],[45]} = 0.305 \pm 0.037$ (mean $\pm$ uncertainty, $r^2 = 0.43$). The final revised fragmentation table in CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM is

190 summarized in the conclusions (see Table 4).

We apply these new multiplier values to the full dataset and compare the results with those from multipliers described in Allan et al. (2004), the SI of Fry et al. (2018), and the SI of Hu et al. (2017) (see in Table S4). The result suggests that the multiplier $a_{\text{Org}[46],[45]}$ determined here gives the best predicted frag_Org[46] over multipliers from other studies (see Fig. 1c,d and Table S4 third and seventh columns in the SI). Meanwhile, the multiplier $a_{\text{Org}[30],[29]}$ determined here performs similarly

195 with the multipliers obtained from Hu et al. (2017) (SV and CV) for a dataset dominated by biogenic SOA. The plot of predicted UMR frag_Org[30] against the measured total Org fragments in m/z 30 (see Fig. 1c) shows that the multiplier determined here is able to estimate on average $96.9 \pm 4.9\%$ of the measured frag_Org[30]. Meanwhile, the similar plot for frag_Org[46] against the measured total Org fragments in m/z 46 (see Fig. 1d) shows that the multiplier determined here estimates on average $82.5 \pm 9.5\%$ of the measured frag_Org[46]. The low concentration of both m/z 46 and m/z 45 may

200 cause this underestimation and suggests that frag_Org[46] and frag_Org[45] may have a more complicated relationship; their correlation may vary substantially depending on the aerosol mixture. Therefore, it may be appropriate to modify the entry for frag_NO$_3$[46] according to the type of aerosol mixture analyzed. On the other hand, for complex ambient mixtures, the ensemble composition may produce spectra that are more similar to the average determined here. Analysis of CV-HR spectra from a variety of ambient samples would be required to determine the actual variation of organic contributions at m/z 46.

3.2 Composition-specific fragmentation table

The multipliers determined in Section 3.1 are designated for typical ambient aerosol composition. In some cases, a composition-specific fragmentation table may be more appropriate to use. For instance, from a field study with biogenically-dominated composition, Hu et al. (2017) reported $a_{\text{Org[30],[29]}} = 0.32$ and $a_{\text{Org[46],[45]}} = 0.68$. By using selected chamber experiments in the same dataset, we can explore different multipliers that are compatible for different composition profiles. For chamber experiments that involves glyoxal (and its oligomers), we obtain $a_{\text{Org[30],[29]}} = 0.291 \pm 0.022$ (mean $\pm$ uncertainty, $n = 4$, $r^2 = 0.90$) and $a_{\text{Org[46],[45]}} = 0.082 \pm 0.036$ (mean $\pm$ standard deviation, $n = 4$, $r^2 = 0.35$). For chamber experiments that involve only terpenes (e.g., isoprene, α-pinene), we obtain $a_{\text{Org[30],[29]}} = 0.476 \pm 0.067$ (mean $\pm$ uncertainty, $n = 5$, $r^2 = 0.82$) and $a_{\text{Org[46],[45]}} = 0.204 \pm 0.055$ (mean $\pm$ uncertainty, $n = 5$, $r^2 = 0.33$) which can be applied for chamber experiments with terpene as precursor. The ODR fit plots are given in Fig. S1. The multipliers to revise the fragmentation table in CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM for specific aerosol composition subsets is summarized in the conclusions (see Table 4).

4 Determination of NO_x^+ ratios for the CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM

4.1 NO_x^+ ratio of pure pAmN

To quantify the inorganic NO_x^+ ratio typical value and variability produced by the CV, we use repeated measurements from regular pAmN calibration from the two ACSM instruments described in Section 2. The R_{pAmN} of ACSM-UU is found to be 0.0237 ± 0.0009 (mean $\pm$ uncertainty, $n = 5$), and R_{pAmN} of ACSM-RUG is 0.0115 ± 0.0002 (mean $\pm$ uncertainty, $n = 3$). The values are similar but lower than other studies where R_{pAmN} with CV was found to be 0.04-0.07 (Hu et al., 2016a), and all are $\sim$10 times lower than the typical R_{pAmN} measured with the SV, 0.3-0.7 (Day et al., 2022b). We found that R_{pAmN} values are very consistent for each instrument over time. A summary of R_{pAmN} values and regression fit parameters from each measurement can be found in Table S5 in the SI.

Hu et al. (2017) found that the NO_x^+ ratio is affected by the aerodynamic lens alignment. The influence is greater in the CV since the vaporizer opening diameter is $\sim$2.5 mm (SI of Hu et al. (2018b)), smaller than that of SV, which is $\sim$3.8 mm (Drewnick et al., 2005). For optimum particle detection, the aerodynamic lens must point the particle beam at the center of the vaporizer. Directed into the center, the particles enter the CV cavity and experience augmented thermal decomposition, at which the NO_2^+ concentration is at its minimum, while the NO^+ concentration is highest. The NO_2^+ concentration increases as the particle beam moves closer to the edge of the vaporizer, where the thermal decomposition is not as extensive as in the center, resembling how the SV works. Thus, it is important to consider performing lens alignment to obtain the correct result for the NO_x^+ ratio method. Monitoring the behavior of m/z 30 and m/z 46 in during pAmN calibration is a good way to determine whether the aerodynamic lens is well aligned. Combining the result of this study and the R_{pAmN} range in Hu et al. (2017), value of R_{pAmN} in the range of 0.01-0.07 can be used as reference to indicate properly aligned lens. Plotting the profile of the NO_x^+ ratio with movement in both the vertical and horizontal directions obtained during the alignment is the best diagnostic.

4.2 NO_x^+ ratio of pure pON

To obtain a NO_x^+ ratio for pON, one would ideally measure pure atmospherically-relevant ON, prepared through synthesis or in a chamber experiment. Often, such standards are not available and therefore experimental R_{pON} cannot be easily determined for each instrument. To overcome this challenge, Day et al. (2022a) used the strategy of a "ratio-of-ratios" ($RoR = R_{pAmN}/R_{pON}$)

240 which can be used to calculate R_{pON} for any arbitrary instrument from its routinely-measured R_{pAmN}, and an average value for the RoR measured across many instruments under varying conditions. Day et al. (2022a) found that based on the relationship between R_{pAmN} and R_{pON} over a large range of measurement conditions, SV produces RoR of 2.75 ± 0.41 (mean $\pm$ uncertainty).

There have not been enough studies yet that have determined R_{pON} values in CV-based instruments in order to determine a

245 robust RoR estimate for CV instruments. In the work of Hu et al. (2017), a chamber experiment producing pure pON yielded $R_{pON} = 0.0045$, and with comparison to $R_{pAmN} = 0.06$ of their instrument, the value $RoR = 13.3$ is obtained. With R_{pAmN} being 0.01 in CV as found in this study, using this RoR of 13.3, R_{pON} would be 0.0008 (approaching zero).

Similar to the approach of Kiendler-Scharr et al. (2016) that used the minimum measured value of NO_x^+ ratio to set a fixed R_{pON} value, to estimate R_{pON}, we use the lowest measured NO_x^+ ratio from a chamber experiment in which we expected to

250 produce pON, with no inorganic nitrate present. The selected experiment used glyoxal as SOA precursor, NO_2 and O_3 to produce NO_3 radical as the major oxidant, and sodium chloride (NaCl) seed to form SOA containing organic nitrates at 90% relative humidity. This experiment was conducted in the AIDA chamber at IMK KIT, Germany as part of CAINA project. For the spectra analysis, we use the fragmentation table specific for glyoxal-related chamber experiment, as described in Section 3.2.

255 While this experiment should produce pure organic nitrate aerosol, during pON formation, we observe an increase in NH_4 which could happen for two reasons. First, ammonium nitrate impurities can be formed from reactions or chamber wall repartitioning. Second, particulate water can be incorrectly assigned as NH_4 through fragmentation table correction at the m/z 16 and m/z 17 (see complete fragmentation table in Allan et al. (2004)). Both can result in a higher NO_x^+ ratio than as we would have if the total nitrate were purely pON. Therefore, we derive two bounding R_{pON} values from the glyoxal chamber experi-

260 ment. First, we determine the R_{pON} from the experiment by assuming pure pON formation to obtain an upper limit. Second, to obtain the lower limit of R_{pON}, we assume all observed NH_4 increase is NH_4NO_3 aerosol and subtract this equivalent amount of inorganic nitrate, with the inorganic NO_x^+ ratio, from the total NO_3, in order to obtain a lower limit of pON time series and calculate the R_{pON}. This strategy has been described as the "excess NH_4" method in Takeuchi and Ng (2019). By rearranging the Eq. 2 to Eq. S2, we can obtain R_{pON} using f_{pON}, R_{pAmN}, and R_{obs} for the lower limit experiment (see details in Section S3

265 of SI).

The upper limit experiment gives $R_{pON} = 0.0035$ (see Fig. 2a). If we compare to $R_{pAmN} = 0.0115 \pm 0.0002$ (measured separately with pure AmN), $R_{pON} = 0.0035$ obtained from the upper limit experiment gives $RoR = 3.29$ (see Fig. 2a). This value is higher than RoR for SV-AMS but lower than RoR obtained from Hu et al. (2017).
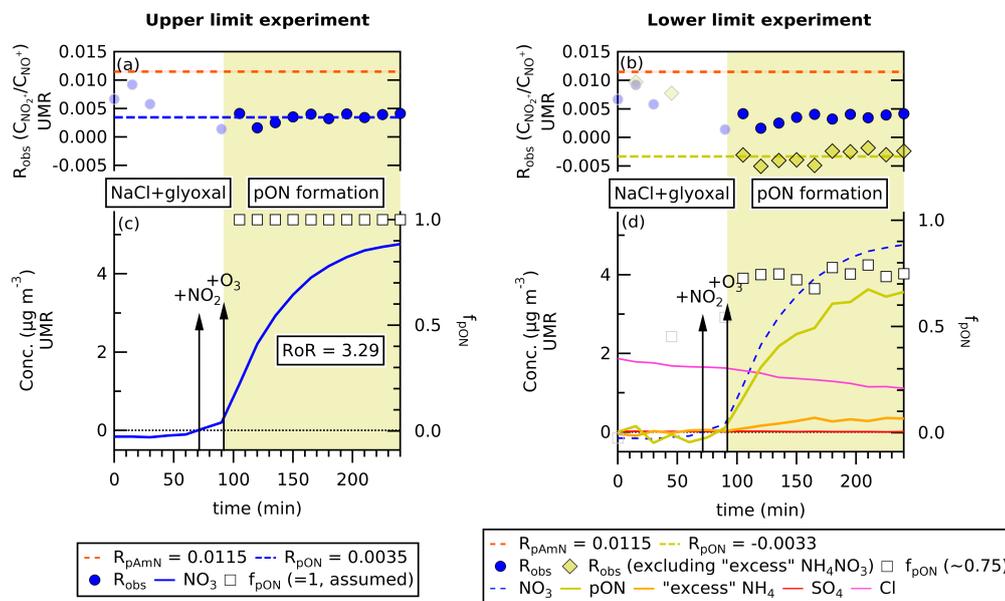
Figure 2. The time series of (a and b) NO_x^+ ratio, (c and d) ACSM species concentration (in $\mu g\ m^{-3}$, left bottom axis), and f_{pON} (right bottom axis) of glyoxal+NO_3 chamber experiment at 15 min time averaging. The UMR fragmentation table specific for glyoxal is used to obtain C_{NO^+} and $C_{NO_2^+}$. Panels (c) and (d) shows the progression of pNO$_3$ formation alongside the NO_x^+ ratio during the formation of pON. By averaging R_{obs} after pON formation started, the left-hand panel shows that R_{pON} = 0.0035 is obtained when assuming f_{pON} = 1. When possible inorganic impurity is removed by assuming "excess" NH_4 are NH_4NO_3, the average f_{pON} is found to be 0.75. The excess NH_4 concentration is obtained by subtracting total NH_4 concentration by the average NH_4 concentration before the addition of NO_2 and O_3 (to exclude any possible NH_4Cl contribution). By calculating R_{pON} using the obtained f_{pON} from "excess NH_4" method, R_{pAmN} and R_{obs}, the value R_{pON} = -0.0033 is obtained, suggesting an overcorrection (see text). The value R_{pON} = 0.0035 from the lower limit experiment and R_{pAmN} = 0.0115 ± 0.0002 (mean ± uncertainty) give a ratio-of-ratios ($RoR = R_{pAmN}/R_{pON}$) of 3.29.

On the other hand, the lower limit experiment gives R_{pON} = -0.0033 (see Fig. 2b). A negative (or below zero) R_{pON} value

270 is not chemically possible for concentration ratio. This value indicates an overcorrection, or that R_{pON} is varying around the zero value (small positive and negative) when the air mixture is strictly inorganic nitrate free. Thus, for calculation purposes, we use R_{pON} = 0.0001 to represent the smallest possible NO_x^+ ratio for CV-ACSM measurements.

As the RoR from the experiments (including Hu et al. (2017), RoR = 13.3) are very different, we set the upper limit of R_{pON} to be R_{pON} obtained using RoR = 3.29, and the lower limit to be R_{pON} = 0.0001 in CV. The calculated R_{pON} for two

275 CV-ToF-ACSM deployed in this study are summarized in Table 2. These limits are used to determine the uncertainty of f_{pON} calculation. We use the geometric mean to establish the expected central value of R_{pON} in the dataset.

Since the R_{pAmN} values are quite different for the two ACSMs used in this study as we see in Table 2, the upper limit R_{pON} are also different by almost a factor of 2. However, since the lower limit of R_{pON} approaches zero, the geometric means of the upper and lower limits for the two instruments differ by only 25%. While calibrating every instrument with a pure

Table 2. Summary of measured R_{pAmN} (including uncertainties) and calculated R_{pON} (upper and lower limits as determined from pON in glyoxal+NO_3 chamber experiment). The geometric mean is considered as central value since R_{pON} is likely approaching zero. Values are for ACSM-UU (employed for ambient measurements in Cabauw) and the ACSM-RUG (employed for AIDA chamber experiments).

Instrument	ACSM-UU		ACSM-RUG	
Measurements	Cabauw ambient air		chamber experiment	
Value	R_{pAmN}	R_{pON}	R_{pAmN}	R_{pON}
Upper limit		0.0072[a]		0.0035[b]
Geometric mean	0.0237 ± 0.0009	0.0008[c]	0.0115 ± 0.0002	0.0006[c]
Lower limit		0.0001[d]		0.0001[d]

[a] Calculated using RoR = 3.29. The RoR is obtained using R_{pON} from the upper limit experiment of glyoxal+NO_3 and measured R_{pAmN}, using ACSM-RUG (see Fig. 2).

[b] Experimental NO_x^+ ratio value from the lower limit experiment of glyoxal+NO_3 using ACSM-RUG (see Fig. 2a).

[c] Geometric mean of the upper and lower limit R_{pON}.

[d] Set as the lowest possible NO_x^+ ratio in CV-based instruments, approaching zero.

280 organic nitrate aerosol standard would be a preferable way to establish R_{pON}, we recognize the unlikeliness of that for all monitoring ACSMs. Therefore, we recommend this RoR-based approach. As will be shown in the following section, despite the uncertainties outlined here based on potential impurities in our "pure pON" chamber experiment, the nitrate splitting performs encouragingly well, with both ACSMs.

5 Development of NO_x^+ ratio method for CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM

285 ### 5.1 Challenges in NO_x^+ ratio method application to CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM dataset

Applying the NO_x^+ ratio method to separate pAmN and pON in CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM datasets is a greater challenge than with SV inlets, due primarily to the higher detection limit of NO_3. The detection limit of pNO_3 in CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM is 0.01-0.08 μg m^{-3} (from this work and Zheng et al. (2020) converted), around 10-100 times higher compared to those in SV-cToF-AMS ($\sim$0.6 ng m^{-3} from Drewnick et al. (2009)) and SV-HR-ToF-AMS (0.1-4.0 ng m^{-3} from DeCarlo et al. (2006)),

290 all converted to 10 min time resolution.

The poor detection limit for NO_x^+ ratios in CV-ToF-ACSM results from the low signal for m/z 46 relative to m/z 30 that are used to calculate frag_NO3[30] ($C_{\mathrm{NO^+}}$) and frag_NO3[46] ($C_{\mathrm{NO_2^+}}$). For instance, using the ACSM-UU, the detection limits of NO_2^+ and NO^+ are comparable ($C_{\mathrm{DL,NO_2^+}}$ = 0.044 μg m^{-3}; $C_{\mathrm{DL,NO^+}}$ = 0.066 μg m^{-3}; both in 10 min time resolution). However, the magnitude of observed NO_2^+ from ambient measurements is 25-500 times lower than NO^+ in CV-ToF-ACSM.

295 This means the NO_2^+ concentration is regularly close to the detection limit, particularly when the total pNO_3 concentration is low. This behavior also leads to noisy R_{obs}, due to a computation of very low or negative NO_2^+ concentrations, poor baseline, or both.

5.2 Data pre-treatment: Time averaging and data filtering

To determine which data points are reliable for R_{obs} calculation in the dataset, we could discard observed NO_2^+ concentration
300 that are below the detection limit. However, this would result in removing nearly all the data, including data that, while low and
noisy, can still provide quantitative information with adequate averaging. Therefore, we use observed NO^+ ion concentrations
as the filtering parameter. The NO^+ concentration accounts for ~95% of the total concentration of NO_3 species measured by
ToF-ACSM (no RIE applied), and thus is a good indicator of when both NO^+ and NO_2^+ concentrations are too uncertain.

Eq. 4 describes the NO^+ concentration limit ($C_{NO^+,lim}$) which assures reliable separation of f_{pON} and f_{pAmN} calculated using
305 the detection limit of NO_2^+ (C_{DL,NO_2^+}) and R_{pAmN} as filter NO_x^+ ratio. We choose the larger R_{pAmN} value, which is a less strict
limit relative to R_{pON} value, but still keeps any data with sufficiently good signal-to-noise ratio to have measurable inorganic
nitrate (having a reliable f_{pAmN}, which means reliable f_{pON}). The measured data points with observed NO^+ concentration
below these criteria are replaced with not-a-number (nan).

$$C_{NO^+,\,lim} = \frac{C_{DL,NO_2^+}}{R_{pAmN}} \tag{4}$$

310 On this basis, we recommend data pre-treatments by time averaging and data filtering using observed NO^+ concentration
as parameter. Time averaging over longer time periods allows the reduction of the electronic noise coming from the instrument
response and low counting statistics associated with sampling ambient air. Meanwhile, the data filtering serves to determine
the minimum pNO_3 concentration at which reliable R_{obs} can be obtained to calculate f_{pON} and f_{pAmN}.

The values of C_{DL,NO_2^+} and $C_{NO^+,lim}$ in different time averaging are evaluated in Table 3 for the CV-ToF-ACSM deployed
315 for ambient measurements in Cabauw, the Netherlands. The concentration limit is lower as the time resolution increases due
to the improvement of detection limit with better statistics. For measurements in this study, the minimum reliable C_{NO^+} for 10
min, 30 min, 60 min, and 120 min time resolution are 1.88, 1.08, 0.77, and 0.54 µg m^{-3}, respectively.

With these $C_{NO^+,lim}$, we performed data filtering to the ambient measurement time series from Cabauw in different averaging
of the time series. The time averaging (generated by Tofware v3.3) is applied first before the data filtering to maximize retained
320 data in the concentration average.

Table 3. Detection limits of NO_2^+ and concentration limits for NO^+ across different time averaging with R_{pAmN} as filter NO_x^+ ratio for the
CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM deployed for ambient measurements in the rural site of Cabauw, the Netherlands (ACSM-UU).

Concentration (µg m^{-3})	10 min	30 min	60 min	120 min
C_{DL,NO_2^+}	0.044	0.026	0.018	0.013
$C_{NO^+,lim}$ (filter: $R_{pAmN} = 0.0237$)	1.88	1.08	0.77	0.54

Chemical coordinate plots of R_{obs} and f_{pON} against the total concentration of particulate nitrate (C_{pNO_3}) are shown in Fig.
3. These plots show the quantile average of the output variable on the y-axis (i.e. R_{obs} or f_{pON}) as a function of concentration
bins in the x-axis (C_{pNO_3}). Fig. 3a,b shows that data filtering removes extreme R_{obs} and f_{pON} values near detection limit level.

The fact that the chemical coordinate trends are consistent across different averaging times indicates that filtering to remove
325   noisy data will not bias the interpretation of the ensemble dataset.

The combination of data filtering and time averaging shows an improvement in the minimum concentration reliable for
calculation (pNO$_3$ concentration limit, vertical dashed lines) due to the improvement of $C_{\mathrm{DL,NO_2^+}}$. For measurements in this
study, the minimum reliable $C_{\mathrm{pNO_3}}$ for 10 min, 30 min, 60 min, and 120 min time averaging are 2.0, 1.2, 0.9, and 0.6
µg m^{-3}, respectively. This result suggests that the NO$_x^+$ ratio method in CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM is more reliable to analyze
330   nitrate pollution episodes or chamber experiments, and not for low background pNO$_3$ concentrations. Because there is a trade-
off between time resolution and minimum reliable concentrations, for a given dataset, the timescale of typical variations should
be assessed in order to determine the appropriate averaging time.
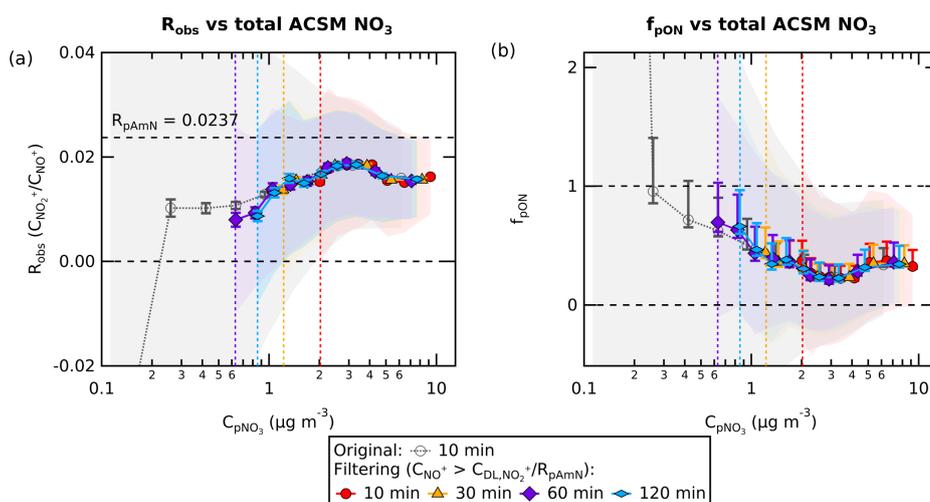
Figure 3. Chemical coordinate plots (a) between R_{obs} against $C_{\mathrm{pNO_3}}$ in Cabauw, and (b) between the f_{pON} calculated using geometric mean
of R_{pON} ($R_{\mathrm{pON}} = 0.0008$) against $C_{\mathrm{pNO_3}}$. The revised fragmentation table for typical ambient dataset is used to obtain $C_{\mathrm{NO^+}}$ and $C_{\mathrm{NO_2^+}}$.
The line and marker traces represent the quantile average. The colored shading represents the standard deviation of each quantile while
the whisker is the standard error. The standard deviation and standard error both include the uncertainty of ion counting statistics from
measurements and uncertainty from ODR fit slope of fragmentation table correction. For f_{pON} (plot b), the standard deviation and standard
error also include the uncertainty from lower and upper limit of R_{pON} ($R_{\mathrm{pON}} = 0.0001$; $R_{\mathrm{pON}} = 0.0072$). All analyses were done using the 10
min, 30 min, 60 min, and 120 min averaging of the time series, with data filtering. The original 10 min data without pre-treatment is also
included as comparison. The combination of data filtering and time averaging reduces the noise compared to original data and improves the
minimum concentration reliable for apportionment calculation (pNO$_3$ concentration limit for each time average, as indicated with vertical
dashed lines).

5.3 Error propagation

We propagated uncertainties from the variables in f_{pON} using simplified propagation of uncertainties using standard error (Day
335 et al. (2023); see Section S4.3 of SI for details). The uncertainty of the final function (s_f) is calculated using the standard error
(s_{x_i}) and partial derivative of the function $(\frac{\partial f}{\partial x_i})$ of each measurand (x_i) using Eq. 5.

$$s_{f(x_i, x_{i+1}, ...)} = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^{N} \left(\frac{\partial f(x_i, x_{i+1}, ...)}{\partial x_i} \right)^2 \cdot s_{x_i}^2} \tag{5}$$

The uncertainty of f_{pON} arises from three terms: R_{obs}, R_{pAmN}, and R_{pON}. For R_{obs}, the uncertainty is further composed
of 6 components that make up NO^+ and NO_2^+ concentrations (the uncertainties of m/z 29, m/z 30, m/z 45, and m/z 46
340 related to precision uncertainty from electronic noise and ion counting statistics, and the uncertainties of the fragmentation
table multipliers, represented by the uncertainty of ODR fit slope. For R_{pAmN}, we propagate the uncertainty of the mean NO_x^+
ratio from repeated NH_4NO_3 measurements using ODR fit to consider the instrument stability in acquiring the NO_x^+ ratio over
time. For R_{pON}, the uncertainty is set to zero. Instead, the lower and upper limit of R_{pON} (see Table 2) serve to give a range of
final propagated uncertainty, which includes R_{obs}, R_{pAmN}, and R_{pON}.
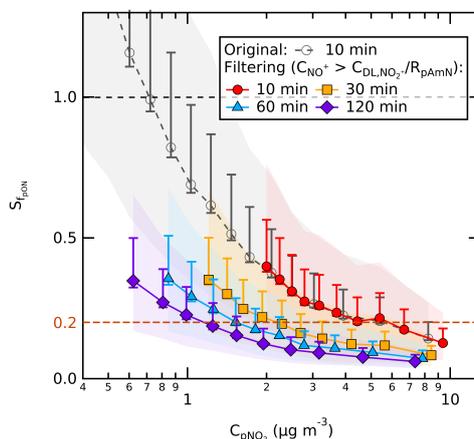
Figure 4. The chemical coordinate plot (quantile average) between $s_{f_{pON}}$ and C_{pNO_3} with $R_{pAmN} = 0.0237$ as filter NO_x^+ ratio at various
averaging of the time series. The line and marker trace represents the average uncertainty produced from the geometric mean of f_{pON}. The
uncertainty consists of uncertainties of ion counting statistics from measurements, uncertainty from ODR fit slope of fragmentation table
correction, and uncertainty of R_{pAmN}. The colored shading represents the standard deviation of each quantile, while the whisker is the standard
error. The shading and whisker both include the uncertainty of R_{pON} coming from the lower and upper limit of R_{pON} ($R_{pON} = 0.0001$ and
$R_{pON} = 0.0072$), and also the uncertainty of the average quantile. In general, data pre-treatment improves the pNO_3 concentration limit of
reliable measurements (below ± 0.5 uncertainty) for each time-fold of averaging. Uncertainties of f_{pON} <0.2 (absolute value) is reached at
pNO_3 concentration of 7 µg m^{-3} for 10 min averaging, while at 60 min, it is reached already at concentrations of 2 µg m^{-3}.

Fig. 4 shows that low pNO$_3$ concentrations produce larger uncertainties in f_{pON} (s_{pON}) compared to higher concentrations. If we compare the analysis with and without data filtering, we observe that filtering targets data points with high absolute s_{pON} (above ± 0.5). We avoid removing many data points in the low concentration range by performing time averaging, where the average uncertainty decreases by $\sim \sqrt{N}$ for each N-fold of averaging from 10 min. Meanwhile, the uncertainties from R_{pAmN} and R_{pON} (RoR) remain unaffected by time averaging because the values remain constant in the time series.

If we use the lower range of f_{pON} in China (17%) described by Yu et al. (2024) as reference for the minimum uncertainty needed for reporting reliable f_{pON}, we can observe that the lowest pNO$_3$ where we obtain below ± 0.2 uncertainty decreases along with time averaging as well. For the original 10 min data, uncertainties below ± 0.2 is reached at pNO$_3$ concentration >7 µg m^{-3}, while at 60 min time averaging, it is reached already at concentration of 2 µg m^{-3}.

6   Case studies demonstrating $\mathrm{NO_x^+}$ ratio method for CV-ToF-ACSM

6.1   Trend of f_{pON} and f_{pAmN} vs. ACSM Org and $\mathrm{NH_4}$ at rural site

In order to demonstrate the efficacy of this method, we investigate the trend of f_{pON} and f_{pAmN} in the dataset observed at Cabauw. The ambient concentration time series of pAmN and pON (using $R_{\mathrm{pAmN}} = 0.0237$ and $R_{\mathrm{pON}} = 0.0008$) is compared with the ACSM measured Org and NH4 fractions, shown in Fig. 5. The time series is averaged to 60 min and filtered using $R_{\mathrm{pAmN}} = 0.0237$ (values of $C_{\mathrm{NO^+}} < C_{\mathrm{DL,NO_2^+}}/R_{\mathrm{pAmN}}$ are discarded). We observe that f_{pON} is proportional to the fraction of organic aerosol concentration in total ACSM PM$_{2.5}$ ($C_{\mathrm{OA}}/C_{\mathrm{PM_{2.5}}}$, from 48% to 64%), whereas the f_{pAmN} is proportional to the fraction of particulate ammonium concentration in total ACSM PM$_{2.5}$ ($C_{\mathrm{pNH_4}}/C_{\mathrm{PM_{2.5}}}$, from 8% to 15%). This shows that the organic nitrate fraction is correlated with availability of organics (particularly at high organics fraction), while the inorganic fraction increases with available NH$_4$ (particularly at low ammonium fraction).

We also investigate specific nitrate episodes to show the composition of pON and pAmN in ambient pollution events. The time series of the $\mathrm{NO_x^+}$ ratios, ACSM species concentrations (OA, pNH$_4$, pNO$_3$), pAmN and pON concentrations are shown in Fig. 6. Four nitrate episodes from spring (15 May 2023), summer (23 June 2023), autumn (05-06 September 2023), and winter (11 January 2024) are shown. The uncertainty of the concentration is obtained by combining the uncertainty from the nitrate fraction (f_{pON} or f_{pAmN}), the total ACSM NO$_3$, and the R_{pON} value range (see Eqs. S14 and S15). Note that the reported uncertainties are only related to precision uncertainty, and not to concentration quantification (e.g., ionization efficiency) like the one described by Bahreini et al. (2009) (see details in Section S4.3 of SI). We observe that the adapted $\mathrm{NO_x^+}$ ratio method is able to separate contributions of pON and pAmN to the total pNO$_3$ concentration. In Fig. 6i,ii,iv, we can see that the time series of pON tracks with total OA, while pAmN tracks with pNH$_4$ in the rural site. In Fig. 6iii, no significant trend is observed for pON due to lower mass loading of pNO$_3$.
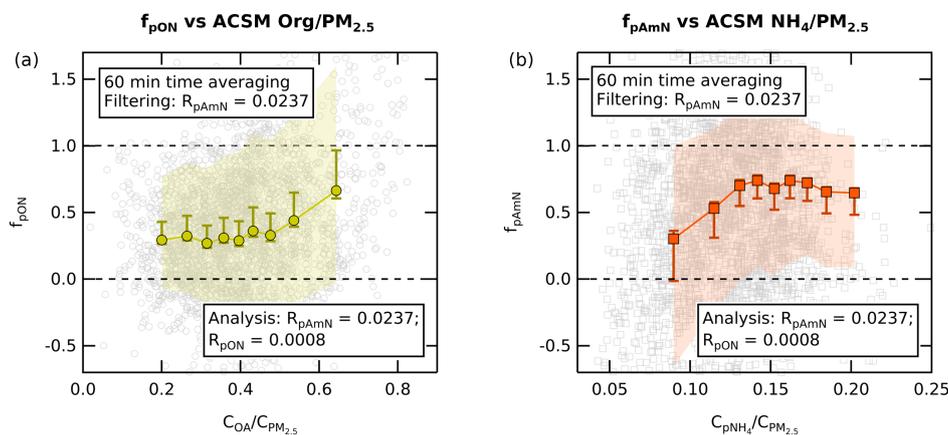
Figure 5. (a) The chemical coordinate plot (quantile average) of f_{pON} against $C_{OA}/C_{PM_{2.5}}$ shows an average increase of f_{pON} as OA fraction increases from 48% to 64%, where the f_{pON} varies from 33% to 66%. (b) The chemical coordinate plot (quantile average) of f_{pAmN} against $C_{pNH_4}/C_{PM_{2.5}}$ shows an average increase of f_{pAmN} as pNH$_4$ fraction increases from 8% to 15%, where the f_{pAmN} varies from 30% to 74%. Note: All quantile averages were calculated using the 60 min averaging of the time series. The colored shading is the standard deviation of each quantile average, while the whiskers represent the standard error. They include the uncertainties of ion counting statistics from measurements, uncertainty from ODR fit slope of fragmentation table correction, and R_{pON} range value.
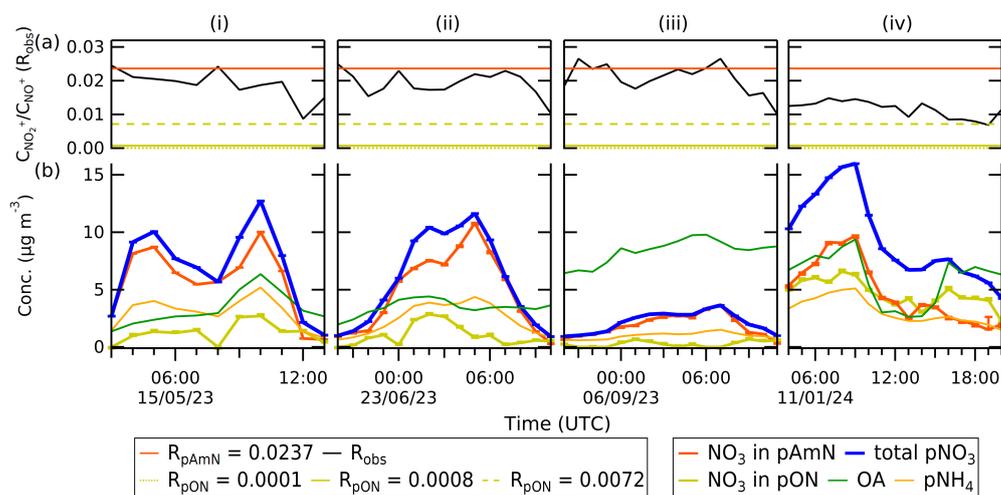
Figure 6. The time series for select periods of (a) R_{obs}, with horizontal lines indicating the values for R_{pAmN} and R_{pON}, (b) mass concentration of ACSM-measured total OA, pNH$_4$, and pNO$_3$, and pAmN and in pON. The separation of pAmN and pON is calculated using $R_{pAmN} = 0.0237$ and $R_{pON} = 0.0008$. The whiskers represent the uncertainty from nitrate fraction (f_{pON} or f_{pAmN}), precision uncertainty of total ACSM NO$_3$ from Tofware v3.3, and the R_{pON} value range. The time series (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) represents representative composition in spring, summer, autumn, and winter, all in 60 min time averaging.

6.2 pAmN and pON formation in chamber experiment

375 We investigated the pAmN and pON formation in a chamber experiment using limonene precursor, NO_3 oxidant, and with AmN seed aerosol. The experiment was carried out in the AIDA chamber. Alongside CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM (ACSM-RUG), a SV-HR-ToF-AMS managed by IMK KIT was also deployed.

The ACSM data is analyzed using the revised fragmentation table specific for terpene chamber experiments (see Section 3.2), while the AMS data is analyzed using Squirrel 1.66E and PIKA 1.26E with the default ion list. Although the time resolution

380 is 2 min, time averaging and data filtering is not necessary since the experiment involves high concentrations. The lower limit, geometric mean, and upper limit of R_{pON} (R_{pON} = 0.0001; 0.0006; 0.0035, respectively) are employed to estimate the uncertainty of f_{pON}, alongside R_{pAmN} = 0.0115 (see Table 2). For the AMS instrument, the measurements of pure pAmN give R_{pAmN} = 0.68 ± 0.05 and the R_{pON} value is calculated using RoR = 2.75 ± 0.41 Day et al. (2022a), which gives R_{pON} = 0.22; 0.25; 0.29 as lower limit, mean, and upper limit, respectively.
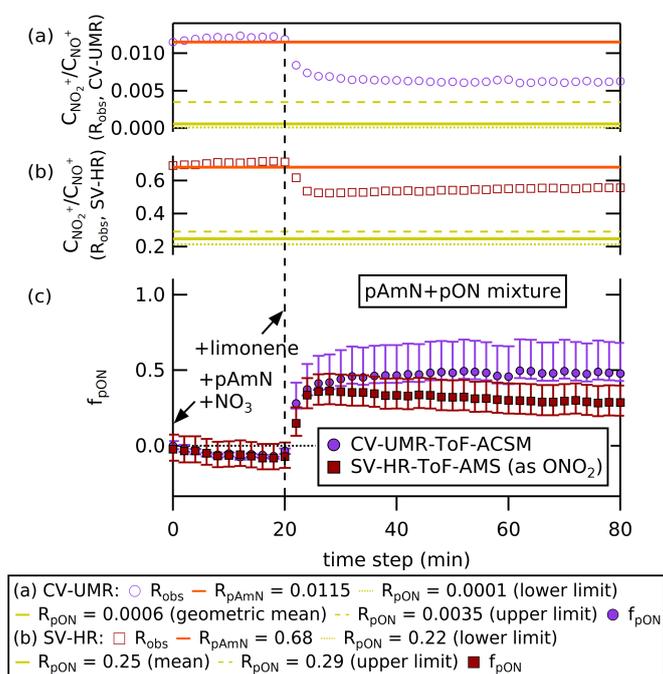
Figure 7. (a,b) The time series of R_{obs}, R_{pAmN}, and R_{pON} measured by CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM (top) and SV-HR-ToF-AMS (middle). The fragmentation table specific for glyoxal is used to obtain the C_{NO^+} and $C_{NO_2^+}$ of the chamber experiment. (c) The time series in 2 min resolution of f_{pON} from SV-HR-ToF-AMS and CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM. The markers represent geometric mean for CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM (circle) and mean for SV-HR-ToF-AMS (square). The whiskers represent the uncertainties from the value range of R_{pON} combined with the uncertainties from electronic noise, ion counting statistics, fragmentation table (for UMR), and R_{pAmN}.
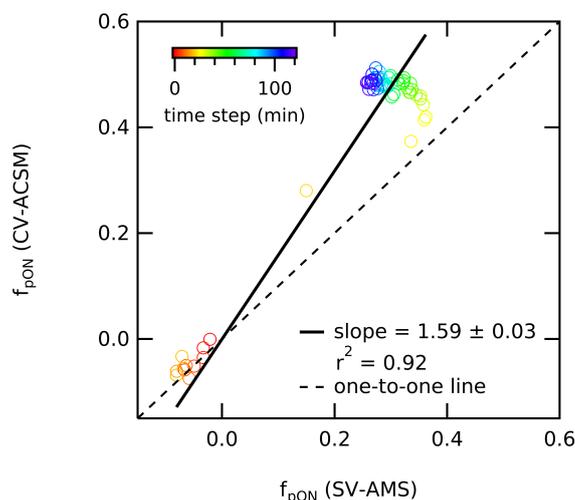
Figure 8. Plot of f_{pON} from CV-ACSM (y-axis) against f_{pON} from SV-AMS (x-axis) using ODR fit. The color scale represents the time step of the experiment in the chamber. The fit shows a good correlation ($r^2 = 0.92$). It also suggests that the NO_x^+ ratio method applied to CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM reports ∼1.6 times higher value than SV-HR-ToF-AMS (including correction from Takeuchi et al. (2024)).

385   The NO_x^+ ratio and f_{pON} time series for the limonene SOA experiment are shown in Fig. 7. The whiskers around the mean f_{pON} represents the uncertainties coming from the value range of R_{pON} combined with the uncertainties from ion counting statistics, electronic noise, fragmentation table (for UMR), and R_{pAmN} (see Section 5.3). The initial mixture of NH_4NO_3 seed and NO_3 radical from NO_2 and O_3 gives a ratio that matches R_{pAmN} from an offline calibration, where f_{pON} is close to zero for both instruments. After the limonene injection, the R_{obs} rose to values in between R_{pAmN} and R_{pON}, indicating the formation 390   of a mixture of pAmN and pON inside the chamber.

Based on observations of Takeuchi et al. (2024), pON measured with the SV-AMS is only quantitatively detected as $-NO_2$ moiety, not $-ONO_2$. The reasoning for this difference in detection of $RONO_2$ and NH_4NO_3 is thought to be due to thermal decomposition of pON producing NO_2 gas in the vaporizer, while NH_4NO_3 would more likely decompose to HNO_3, and thus dominantly ionizing gases of different molecular weights. The "missing oxygen" is generally retained bound to the carbon, and 395   thus accounted as organic moiety. Thus, f_{pON} needs to be corrected for this phenomenon using molar mass ratio of NO_3/NO_2 (62 g mol^{-1}/46 g mol^{-1}) to recalculate the pON mass. For the SV-AMS, pON represents ∼32% of the nitrate mixture when reported as $-ONO_2$. Without that correction, the measured pON would be underestimated. For the CV, f_{pON} represents on average ∼50% of the total pNO$_3$ concentration, higher than the SV (ODR fit slope CV/SV = 1.59, $r^2 = 0.92$; see Fig. 8). There is no study yet assessing the necessity of correcting f_{pON} in CV, and we suggest that it is likely unnecessary due to the more 400   complete thermal decomposition that shifts the fragmentation pattern of both NH_4NO_3 and $RONO_2$ to NO_2 and NO.

Both SV-AMS and CV-ACSM show a similar response to the injection of limonene, whereupon f_{pON} increases rapidly from 0 to ∼0.5. The agreement between the two instruments on this initial pON production is encouraging. However, after this initial jump, the f_{pON} of CV-ACSM remains steady, while the SV-AMS shows gradually decreasing f_{pON}. This suggests that

changing contributions of organics at m/z 30 and m/z 46 that may be taken into account by HR peak fitting but not by the

405   UMR fragmentation table causes a divergence as the chamber aerosol dilutes. Further investigation of the detailed response of

each instrument to changing aerosol composition is needed to resolve this discrepancy. Nevertheless, we are encouraged by the

match in responses upon formation of organic nitrate, indicating that the NO_x^+ ratio method is similarly sensitive to changing

nitrate speciation in both instruments.

7   Conclusions and recommendations

410   We have successfully shown the separation of particulate ammonium nitrate (pAmN) and particulate organic nitrate (pON) sig-

nal from total particulate nitrate (pNO$_3$) signal measured using time-of-flight aerosol chemical speciation monitoring equipped

with capture vaporizer in unit mass resolution (CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM), using an adapted NO_x^+ ratio method with a revised

fragmentation table and data pre-treatment. The shift of fragmentation pattern towards smaller ion fragments in the capture

vaporizer (CV) compared to the standard vaporizer (SV) affects the signals of NO^+ and NO_2^+ fragments and interferences by

415   Org fragments used to calculate the NO_x^+ ratio in UMR. Therefore, we recommend updating the default fragmentation table

from Allan et al. (2004) for entries shown in Table 4 before applying the NO_x^+ ratio method, according to the aerosol composi-

tion. As noted previously, substantial corrections to the fragmentation table for these terms have been shown to be needed for

measurements using the SV under some conditions (Fry et al., 2018).

Table 4. Proposed m/z 30 and 46 entries for Org and NO$_3$ in the revised fragmentation table adapted for NO_x^+ ratio method in CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM. The multipliers ($a_{Org[x],[i]}$) are applied according to the aerosol composition. The entries that are not included in this table should follow the fragmentation table of Allan et al. (2004) for AMS and adapted without gas-phase corrections (frag_air) for ACSM.

m/z	Revised fragmentation table for CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM		$a_{Org[x],[i]}$			
	Org	NO$_3$	General	Biogenic[a]	Glyoxal	Terpene
30	$a_{Org[30],[29]}$*frag_Org[29]	[30], -frag_Org[30]	0.311	0.32	0.291	0.476
46	$a_{Org[46],[45]}$*frag_Org[45]	[46], -frag_Org[46]	0.305	0.68	0.082	0.204

[a]Retrieved from Hu et al. (2017).

The shift of fragmentation pattern in the CV towards more formation of NO^+ fragments and less of NO_2^+ fragments changes

420   the magnitude of the NO_x^+ ratio for both pure pAmN and pure pON. The NO_x^+ ratio in CV is affected by the aerodynamic lens

alignment, and therefore we recommend users to align their aerodynamic lens to obtain the correct NO_x^+ ratio.

To separate the pAmN and pON signal from total pNO$_3$ and calculate the particulate organic nitrate fraction (f_{pON}), the

regular ammonium nitrate calibration should be used to obtain the NO_x^+ ratio for pure ammonium nitrate (R_{pAmN}), where a

value of 0.01-0.07 is expected. On the other hand, we observed from a chamber experiment that the R_{pON} value approaches

425   zero in the CV. Therefore, we recommend analyzing using three R_{pON} values, to describe the upper limit (R_{pON} calculated

using RoR = 3.29), geometric mean, and lower limit (R_{pON} = 0.0001), which also provides f_{pON} uncertainty. If possible,

we recommend constraining the RoR for more accurate results (e.g., performing chamber experiment to form pure organic

nitrate). Through this study, we hope to inspire more research regarding R_{pON} measurement in CV-based instruments to obtain more precision in analyzing organic nitrate concentrations.

430   The observed NO_x^+ ratio (R_{obs}) tends to have more noise in CV-based measurements compared to SV. Data filtering using the instrument's R_{pAmN} and NO_2^+ detection limit has shown that the adapted NO_x^+ ratio method in the CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM is reliable for analyzing pollution episodes with a lower total nitrate concentration limit ranging from 0.6 to 2.0 $\mu g\ m^{-3}$, depending on time averaging. The data pre-treatment is found to filter data points with high fraction uncertainty (above ± 0.5) and decrease the average uncertainty by $\sqrt{N}$ for each N-fold of averaging from 10 min. Therefore, time averaging can be

435   performed to improve the detection limit and decrease the nitrate concentration limit reliable for determination of f_{pON} and f_{pAmN}. We recommend users to average the time series to 30 min or 60 min to retain information about real ambient variation, while improving the reliable nitrate concentration limit. This may also be convenient when comparing to auxiliary data that are typically reported half-hourly or hourly. In studies where noise is not a problem (e.g., chamber experiments with high particle concentration), time averaging may be unnecessary. With a similar approach, this method can be used for SV-UMR-ToF-ACSM

440   observations as well, with a fragmentation table suited for SV-based measurements. The adapted NO_x^+ ratio method on rural nitrate episodes can distinguish periods with pAmN or pON as the major component, confirmed by relation to the ammonium and organic aerosol composition, respectively. Co-located high-resolution time-of-flight aerosol mass spectrometry equipped with standard vaporizer (SV-HR-ToF-AMS) and RoR to determine R_{pON} in a chamber experiment shows a good correlation ($r^2 = 0.92$) of f_{pON} with CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM observation, with the latter estimating ~ 1.6 times higher fraction than the

445   former. The adapted NO_x^+ ratio method for CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM demonstrated in this study can be used at monitoring sites to monitor regional f_{pON} and improve understanding of particulate nitrate sources and evolution.

Data availability. The CV-HR-ToF spectra used to build the revised fragmentation table are retrieved from the open access AMS spectral database (http://cires1.colorado.edu/jimenez-group/AMSsd_CV, last access: 6 November 2024). The CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM dataset were col-lected as part of the Ruisdael Observatory network monitoring (https://ruisdael-observatory.nl, last access: 6 November 2024) and are avail-

450   able upon request. The chamber experiment measurements using SV-HR-ToF-AMS and CV-UMR-ToF-ACSM (ACSM-RUG) were collected as part of the Cloud-Aerosol Interactions in a Nitrogen-dominated Atmosphere (CAINA) project (https://sites.google.com/view/cainaproject/, last access: 6 November 2024) in the Aerosol Interaction and Dynamics in the Atmosphere (AIDA) chamber managed by the Institute of Meteorology and Climate Research (IMK) in Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), Germany.

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455   RM, RH, SH, JF, JM, and UD: resources, reviewing, and editing.

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