Preface

This book was written as a summary of my long-standing interest in rare earth elements, which had started already when I was a master student at Utrecht University in the 1980s. Having begun seriously to tackle the topic early in 2009, it appeared that, during the so-called rare earth crisis from 2009 to approximately 2013, I was considered a kind of ‘sole expert’ in the Netherlands on rare earth element resources. This led me to being asked to give numerous presentations.

As a result of these many presentations, I realised that there was little or no information on the rare earth elements for the well-educated non-expert. So, in June 2014, after having given the umpteenth presentation on rare earth elements for an audience of members of the Groningen Department of the Royal Dutch Chemical Society (KNCV), I started with the preparations for writing this book.

This book is thus intended for the well-educated but non-expert reader, from any natural science discipline. This also explains the numerous footnotes scattered throughout the book, which are intended to elucidate the used terminology, or to supply short background information.

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