^{12}C

The 1919 paper "The constitution of the elements" by Aston can be considered the discovery of ^{12}C (1919As01). ^{12}C was identified using the positive-ray mass spectrograph in Cambridge, England. "Of the elements involved hydrogen has yet to be investigated; carbon and oxygen appear, to use the terms suggested by Paneth, perfectly "pure"... A fact of the greatest theoretical interest appears to underlie these results, namely, that of more than forty different values of atomic and molecular mass so far measured, all, without a single exception, fall on whole numbers, carbon and oxygen being taken as 12 and 16 exactly, and due allowance being made for multiple charges."

Adapted from reference (2012Th01)

1919As01 F. W. Aston, Nature **104**, 393 (1919).
2012Th01 M. Thoennessen, At. Data Nucl. Data Tables **98**, 43 (2012).

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