

Kaolinite Dissolution and Precipitation Kinetics at 22°C and pH 4

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ABSTRACT

Dissolution and precipitation rates of low defect Georgia kaolinite (KGa-1b) as a function of Gibbs free energy of reaction (or reaction affinity) were measured at 22°C and pH 4 in continuously stirred flow through reactors. Steady state dissolution experiments showed slightly incongruent dissolution, with a Si/Al ratio of about 1.12 that is attributed to the re-adsorption of Al on to the kaolinite surface. No inhibition of the kaolinite dissolution rate was apparent when dissolved aluminum was varied from 0 and 60 μM . The relationship between dissolution rates and the reaction affinity can be described well by a Transition State Theory (TST) rate formulation with a Temkin coefficient of 2

$$R_{diss} \left(\frac{\text{mol}}{\text{m}^2 \text{s}} \right) = 1.15 \times 10^{-13} \left[1 - \exp \left(\frac{-\Delta G}{2RT} \right) \right].$$

Stopping of flow in a close to equilibrium dissolution experiment yielded at solubility constant for kaolinite at 22°C of $10^{7.57}$.

Experiments on the precipitation kinetics of kaolinite showed a more complex behavior. One conducted using kaolinite seed that had previously undergone extensive dissolution under far from equilibrium conditions for 5 months showed a quasi-steady state precipitation rate for 105 hours that was compatible with the TST expression above. After this initial period, however, precipitation rates decreased by an order of magnitude, and like other precipitation experiments conducted at higher supersaturation and without kaolinite seed subjected to extensive prior dissolution, could not be described with the TST law. The initial quasi-steady state rate is interpreted as growth on activated sites created by the dissolution process, but this reversible growth mechanism could not be maintained once these sites were filled. Long-term precipitation rates showed a linear dependence on solution saturation state that is generally consistent with a two dimensional nucleation growth mechanism following the equation

$$R_{ppt} \left(\frac{\text{mol}}{\text{m}^2 \text{s}} \right) = 3.38 \times 10^{-14} \exp \left[-\frac{181776}{T^2 \ln \Omega} \right].$$

Further analysis using Synchrotron Scanning Transmission X-ray Microscopy (STXM) in Total Electron Yield (TEY) mode of the material from the precipitation experiments showed spectra for newly precipitated material compatible with kaolinite.

INTRODUCTION

The kinetics of mineral dissolution and precipitation are critical to the interpretation and modeling of geochemical processes at the Earth's surface. Some of the most important phases in this regard are the clay minerals, of which kaolinite is perhaps the most important. Kaolinite plays an important role in regulating soil and subsurface aquifer solution chemistry and its precipitation may even control the extent of undersaturation with respect to primary dissolving phases like feldspar (ALEKSEYEV et al., 1997; MAHER et al., 2006; STEEFEL and VAN CAPPELLEN, 1990; ZHU et al., 2004). A number of studies of kaolinite dissolution have been carried out previously (CARROLL-WEBB and WALTHER, 1988; CARROLL and WALTHER, 1990; WIELAND and STUMM, 1992; GANOR et al., 1995; HUERTAS et al., 1999). However, most of those studies focused on the determination of the pH and temperature dependence of the dissolution rates in far from equilibrium, highly undersaturated dilute solutions. The variation of dissolution rates with pH was considered to be related to the adsorption of protons or hydroxyls to the specific sites on mineral surfaces, with the suggestion that edge sites on the kaolinite dominated the rate (CARROLL-WEBB and WALTHER, 1988; WIELAND and STUMM, 1992). Although those studies provided general information on the mechanisms of kaolinite dissolution, the data are of limited use for predicting the kinetic reactions in natural systems since pore fluids in soils or aquifers do not remain indefinitely far from equilibrium.

Compared to dissolution studies, there are relatively few studies on the kinetics of kaolinite precipitation processes and most of the precipitation studies were performed at higher than ambient temperatures. Nagy et al (1991) (NAGY et al., 1991; NAGY and LASAGA, 1993) studied the kinetics of kaolinite dissolution and precipitation at pH 3 and 80 °C. Her study showed a linear dependence of dissolution/precipitation rates on reaction affinity (or Gibbs free energy) at near equilibrium conditions and obtained a Temkin coefficient of 1 for the dissolution reactions with Transition State Theory. Huang (HUANG, 1993) and Snoog (SNOOG, 1992) studied the kinetics of kaolinite precipitation/dissolution at hydrothermal conditions and also

indicated that principle of detailed balancing was applicable at near equilibrium reactions conditions. Devidal et al (DEVIDAL et al., 1997) studied the dissolution and precipitation kinetics of kaolinite as a function of chemical affinity at hydrothermal conditions (150 °C, 40 bars) and concluded that the variation of kaolinite dissolution/ precipitation rates with reaction chemical affinity can be described by a coupled Transition State Theory and Langmuir adsorption model, with the rate controlled by the decomposition of a silica rich/aluminum deficient precursor. However, it remains unclear whether these experiments carried out under hydrothermal conditions are directly applicable to the lower temperatures and pressures of near-surface geologic environments. Therefore, it is important to directly measure the kaolinite dissolution/precipitation rates at ambient temperature and pressure conditions. As is the case with dissolution, it is also essential to determine the dependence of the rate on reaction affinity.

To describe the rates of dissolution and precipitation as a function of reaction affinity, Transition State Theory (TST) has been widely used as a theoretical framework. Recently, Lasaga and Luttge (LASAGA and LUTTGE, 2001; LASAGA and LUTTGE, 2003) proposed an alternative model for mineral dissolution under close to equilibrium conditions involving a step wave dissolution. Dove et al (DOVE et al., 2005) also recently applied the mechanisms of classical crystal growth theory to explain quartz and silicates dissolution behavior with a model that did not follow the classical TST relationship.

This paper reports the first attempt to measure the kinetics of kaolinite dissolution and precipitation at ambient temperature and pressure (22°C and 1 bar) and at a pH of 4. Well crystallized low defect Georgia Kaolinite (KGa-1b from the Clay Mineral Society) was used as seed material to determine dissolution/precipitation rates as a function of reaction affinity and variable Al and dissolved silica concentration. Dissolution and precipitation rates were evaluated as to their reversibility and congruency, and the applicability of various rate laws were investigated.

THERMODYNAMIC AND KINETIC BACKGROUND

The overall kaolinite dissolution and precipitation kinetics under acidic conditions can be expressed as



The equilibrium constant for the reaction is given by

$$K_{eq} = \frac{a_{\text{Al}^{3+}}^2 a_{\text{H}_4\text{SiO}_4}^2}{a_{\text{H}^+}^6}, \quad (2)$$

where a_i represents the thermodynamic activity of the dissolved species and the activities of water and kaolinite are assumed to be 1.

The dissolution and precipitation rates, $R_{diss/ppt}$ (mol. m⁻² s⁻¹), in a well-mixed flowthrough reactor are determined at steady state based on the change in Al and Si according to the following expression

$$R_{diss/ppt} \left(\frac{\text{mol}}{\text{m}^2\text{s}} \right) = \frac{Q}{\eta_i A} [C_{i,in} - C_{i,out}], \quad (3)$$

where Q is the volume flow rate of the input fluid (L/s), $C_{i,out}$ and $C_{i,in}$ are the concentrations of component i (Al or Si in the case of kaolinite) in the output and input solutions, respectively (mol/L), η_i is the stoichiometric coefficient of component i in the reaction (2 in the case of both Al and Si), and A is the surface area (m²). Steady state has been defined as where the output Al or Si concentration was stable with less than 10% variation for at least one pore volume in the effluent, with this interval typically characterized by multiple data points. The dissolution (or precipitation) rates were calculated based on the average results from the data in the steady state interval.

The degree of solution saturation state with respect to the kaolinite dissolution/ precipitation reaction is expressed in terms of the Gibbs free energy of reaction, ΔG_r ,

$$\Delta G_r = -RT \ln \left[\frac{IAP}{K_{eq}} \right] = -RT \ln [\Omega] \quad (4)$$

where R is the gas constant, T is the absolute temperature (K), IAP and K_{eq} are the ion activity product and the equilibrium constant respectively, and $\Omega = IAP/K_{eq}$. To describe the activities of the solutes involved in the reaction accurately, it was necessary to carry out a calculation of

the distribution of aqueous species. For this purpose, the geochemical computer code PHREEQC was used (PARKHURST and APPELO, 1999). Al and Si species and their hydrolysis constants used in the calculation are listed in Table 1.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Source clay and pre-treatment

Kaolinite used in this study is a low defect Georgia kaolinite, KGa-1b, purchased from the Clay Mineral Society, USA. Samples were cleaned prior to dissolution and precipitation experiments to remove amorphous oxy-hydroxide material by washing with 1M NaCl/HCl at pH 3 until the supernatant pH reached 3, followed by repeatedly rinsing with ultra-pure H₂O (18.3 MΩ.cm) and vacuum filtration through 0.1 μm polycarbonate membrane filter until pH > 5. The cleaned and rinsed samples were then dried at 50°C in the oven, gently crushed and stored in a HDPE bottle. The BET surface area determined for the pre-treated kaolinite samples was 11.83± 0.02 m²/g (Micrometrics TriStar 3000 measured with N₂), which is compatible with the value of 10.05± 0.02 m²/g reported by the Clay Mineral Society.

Experimental approach

Experiments were carried out using a well-stirred flowthrough reactor (70 mL in volume) manufactured by Advantec/MFS, Inc. held at room temperature (22±2°C) and pressure. Between 1 and 2 g of kaolinite was allowed to react with a continuously injected fluid of fixed input composition. The flow rates were controlled by a HPLC or syringe pump and ranged from 0.05ml/min to 0.001 mL/min, yielding a residence time within the stirred cell ranging from a minimum of 24 hours to a maximum of 48 days. Stirring of kaolinite and the fluid was controlled by a magnetic stir plate placed directly beneath the reactor using a Teflon-coated stir bar that was mounted on a hanging rod from the top of stirred cell to avoid grinding of the kaolinite within the reactor. Solutions were filtered through the base of the stirred cell reactor with a 0.45 μm nylon and 0.1 μm polycarbonate membrane filter in sequence. Filtered effluents were collected in clean low density polyethylene bottles and polypropylene vials. The solutions collected were analyzed for total Al and Si by inductively coupled plasma optical emission spectroscopy (ICP-OES,

Perkin Elmer DV5300). Each sample was analyzed with 5 replicates. The 95% confident level was reported according to student *t* test value for standard deviations based on the 5 replicates.

Flow rates as low as 1 $\mu\text{L}/\text{minute}$ were used to produce a measurable change in concentration in the reactor effluent. A micro-PFA self-aspirating nebulizer with 50 $\mu\text{L}/\text{minute}$ sample injection tubing was used with the ICP-OES to analyze the small sample volumes that resulted from the low flow rates (typically about 200 μL for the 5 replicates) so as to provide accurate analytical results. The solution pH was measured with an Acute® pH electrode with a reported accuracy of 0.02 pH unit for samples in experiments with high fluid flow rates. For a small number of samples collected at very slow flow rates in precipitation experiments where the effluent volume was less, the pH was measured with an Orion® Micro-pH electrode. After pH measurement, all samples were acidified with 2% ultra-pure HNO_3 (J. T. Baker®) before ICP-OES analysis. Before beginning a new experiment with the same kaolinite, the stirred cell was flushed with new input stock solution for about 2-3 pore volumes at a high flow rate (~ 0.5 ml/min) to eliminate residues of the previous stock solution.

Input stock solutions for aluminum were made by diluting aluminum ICP standard solution (from CPI®, source material AlCl_3 dissolved in ultrapure HNO_3) with 18.3 M $\Omega\cdot\text{cm}$ deionized water. Silica stock solution was made of reagent grade $\text{Na}_2\text{SiO}_3\cdot 9\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (from J.T. Baker®) dissolved in deionized water. The input stock solution was adjusted to the specified pH with diluted ultrapure HNO_3 or reagent grade NaOH solution. The ionic strength of the input solution was adjusted to 0.01M using reagent grade NaNO_3 (Alfa Aesar®). Stock solutions were checked periodically for their purity and fresh stock solutions were made every month.

A total of six different target stock solution compositions were used as input to the flowthrough reactors in this study, three for dissolution and three for precipitation (Table 1). The target compositions of input solutions, coupled with varying fluid flow speeds, were designed to cover a wide range of reaction affinity with respect to kaolinite. To represent the variations in effluent solution chemistry, the experimental duration time of each individual experiment was converted to pore volumes according to the volume of the stir cell reactor used in this study (70 ml) and corresponding fluid flow rates. The effluent solution chemistry was plotted as ΔC_{Al} and ΔC_{Si} (ΔC_{Al} and ΔC_{Si} are defined as $C_{\text{out}} - C_{\text{in}}$ for samples in dissolution experiments and as $C_{\text{in}} - C_{\text{out}}$ for

samples in precipitation experiments), against pore volumes for all experimental results to facilitate comparisons of experimental results using different input stock solutions.

To determine the kaolinite solubility constant at 22°C, flow was stopped in a dissolution experiment run close to equilibrium and the solution was allowed to equilibrate for an additional period of one week. The solubility constant is also bracketed more broadly by the results of the dissolution and precipitation experiments.

The error propagation in the calculated ΔC_{Al} and ΔC_{Si} in the effluent as well as the error in the rates were estimated using the following equations (MILLER and MILLER, 1993)

$$\sigma_{\Delta C} = \sqrt{\sigma_{C_{i,out}}^2 + \sigma_{C_{i,in}}^2} \quad (5)$$

$$\frac{\sigma_r}{r} = \sqrt{\left(\frac{\sigma_{\Delta C}}{\Delta C}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{\sigma_A}{A}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{\sigma_Q}{Q}\right)^2} \quad (6)$$

where σ_r is the uncertainty in the calculated rate, $\sigma_{\Delta C}$ represents the uncertainties of the calculated Al or Si concentration difference (ΔC) between input and output solution, $\sigma_{C_{i,out}}$ and $\sigma_{C_{i,in}}$ are the Al or Si concentration uncertainties (reported at 95% confidence level) in the output and input solutions, respectively, and σ_A and σ_Q are the uncertainties in the surface area and pumping speed, respectively.

Since the differences between the input and output solution concentrations of Al and Si were used for kinetic rate calculations, it was essential to analyze solute concentrations with a high degree of accuracy. Therefore, great efforts were made to obtain high accuracy sample analysis. Even so, it is still difficult to achieve less than 1% relative standard deviation (RSD) during sample analysis, especially for samples with high Si and Al concentrations. Since all data are reported at the 95% confident level, this corresponds to about 1.24 RSD as uncertainties (based on a student t test value for 5 replicate samples). For samples with high Si or Al in the input stock solution, the error propagation will further amplify the uncertainties in the calculated ΔC_{Al} and ΔC_{Si} values. Therefore, experimental results having the smallest uncertainties in the calculated ΔC_{Al} and ΔC_{Si} were those with zero Al and Si in the input stock solution. In order to bring the saturation states of the input solutions close to equilibrium with respect to kaolinite

while keeping them undersaturated with respect to gibbsite, however, the composition of input stock solutions needed to have a high Si/Al ratio in most experiments. This resulted in large uncertainties in the ΔC_{Si} values compared to the corresponding ΔC_{Al} in the precipitation and close to equilibrium dissolution experiments. Therefore, effluent Al concentrations coupled with solution pH was used as main criteria to determine if the steady state had been reached. For the same reason, the steady state change in Al concentration between the input and output solution was used for determination of reaction rates in all experiments to minimize the uncertainties in the rates that are calculated. Although the net change in Al concentration showed a larger uncertainty than did the Si data in the KGa-D3 dissolution experiment because of high Al in the input stock solution, the dissolution rate was still calculated based on Al data to keep this experiment comparable to the other experiments.

Characterization of precipitation samples

A small amount of solid material (original kaolinite plus new precipitate) from the precipitation experiments was mounted on silicon nitride windows manufactured by Silson, Ltd and examined by synchrotron Scanning X-ray Transmission Microscopy (STXM) on Beamline 11.0.2 at the Advanced Light Source of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. The Al spectrum of standard Georgia kaolinite (from the Clay Mineral Society) and gibbsite (from Ward Scientific) were also collected for comparison with those from the precipitation experiments. In order to examine only the surface layer of the reacted samples, the spectrum was collected in Total Electron Yield (TEY) mode. In TEY mode, instead of recording the transmitted or fluorescence X-rays, the elastic electrons generated by incident X-ray are recorded as a function of the energy of incident X-ray. This technique is surface sensitive and has a probing depth of only about 3 nm at the Al K edge (ABBATE et al., 1992; EBEL et al., 1994).

RESULTS

Equilibrium solubility

In order to calculate accurately the Gibbs free energy for kaolinite, we found it necessary to measure the actual equilibrium solubility of the kaolinite used in this study at 22°C. For this purpose, the inlet line of a sample from a close to equilibrium dissolution experiment was

disconnected at the end of the experiment and allowed to further equilibrate with the kaolinite sample for about 1 week as stirring continued. The two sampling points that were measured in this way had very similar aqueous Al and Si compositions and showed only slight differences in the solution pH within the uncertainties of the pH measurement. Accordingly, the averaged results were used to calculate the kaolinite solubility constant. The equilibrium solubility determined in this way was $10^{7.57}$ at the experimental temperature of 22 °C (Table 3). May and co-workers studied the solubility of Dry beach Georgia kaolinite and determined its solubility to be $10^{7.45}$ at 25°C (MAY et al., 1986). Nagy and co-workers derived the equilibrium solubility of Twiggs County Georgia Kaolinite as $10^{3.75}$ at 80 °C (NAGY et al., 1991). From Table 3, it is apparent that the equilibrium solubility value determined in this study is in close agreement with the results of MAY et al (1986) and the extrapolated data from NAGY et al (1991) using the Van't Hoff equation with the enthalpy change of -35.3 kcal/mol (taken from PHREEQC database, PARKHURST and APPELO, 1999) for the kaolinite dissolution reaction. The Gibbs free energies for all of the kinetic experiments reported here were calculated based on the equilibrium solubility derived in this study.

Dissolution experiments

Dissolution experiments were conducted with three separate kaolinite samples (referred to as KGa-D1, KGa-D2, KGa-D3 in Table 4) under five different conditions. Figures 1 through 3 show the variations in ΔC_{Al} and ΔC_{Si} in the effluent of all dissolution experiments over time. Typically, steady state was reached within 10 pore volumes (about 200 hours) in newly started dissolution experiments. In contrast, it required much less time (about 5 pore volumes) to reach a second steady state when only flow rates were adjusted in experiments started from a previously established steady state.

It should be noted that during initial experimental setup, the KGa-D1 sample was used to test the flow through reactor configurations and to verify sample analysis protocols. Thus, it had been pre-reacted in the flowthrough reactor with stock solution 1 and 2 for about 5 months before the start of experiments documented here. This extended dissolution may have affected the character of the kaolinite surface relative to other experiments that had no such extended dissolution period far from equilibrium. The KGa-D1 dissolution experiments were conducted with 2g of kaolinite,

which was first dissolved at far from equilibrium condition with stock solution 1 (no Si, no Al) for about 20 pore volumes until steady state had been established (referred to as dissolution experiment KGa-D1a). Then the input solution was switched to stock solution 2 (0.5mM Si, no Al), which was designed to measure kaolinite dissolution rates closer to equilibrium (KGa-D1b). One gram of kaolinite was used at the start of all other dissolution experiments. In experiment KGa-D2, the kaolinite sample was first dissolved with stock solution 2 at close to equilibrium condition for about 12 pore volumes until a steady state had been reached (KGa-D2a). Then, the fluid flow rate was decreased by a factor of 5 to bring the system closer to equilibrium (KGa-D2b). The KGa-D3 dissolution experiment was conducted with input stock solution 3 (60 μ M Al, no Si) to measure the dissolution rates at conditions moderately far from equilibrium ($\Delta G = -16.4$ kJ/mol). The effluent solution in this experiment reached steady state after approximately 8 pore volumes.

As shown in Figures 1-3 and Figure 4, all dissolution experiments showed slightly incongruent Si/Al release at steady state, with a preferential release of Si. Although the dissolution experiments with high Si in the input solutions had larger uncertainties in the calculated effluent Δ Si concentration, it can be seen that generally effluent Δ Si was larger than the corresponding Δ Al within the experimental uncertainty. Dissolution experiment KGa-D1a was conducted with an input solution having no Al and Si, and thus should have had a minimum uncertainty in the Δ Si and Δ Al measured. It still showed slightly incongruent dissolution with a Si/Al ratio of about 1.12 in the steady state effluent (Figure 4). However, the increase of pH in the effluent of all dissolution experiments was generally congruent with the corresponding Al release at steady states within experimental uncertainties (Figure 5).

Precipitation experiments

Precipitation experiments were conducted with kaolinite that had previously been used in dissolution experiments. Since the precipitation of kaolinite is very slow at 25°C, a syringe pump was used to generate a very low flow rate in the precipitation experiments so as to produce measurable differences between the input and output solutions. As a result it generally took more than one month for the precipitation experiments to reach steady state, with the exception of experiment KGa-P1a. Figure 6-8 show the variation of effluent ΔC_{Al} and ΔC_{Si} for all

precipitation experiments as a function of time. Experiments KGa-P2 and KGa-P3 show a deficiency of about 0.03 pH units (Figure 5) relative to stoichiometric precipitation that is likely the result of the use of a micro-pH electrode in these experiments. Otherwise, the precipitation experiments show stoichiometric decrease of Si, Al, and pH.

KGa-1P precipitation experiment, which was begun with kaolinite used in a dissolution experiment that lasted over 5 months, was noteworthy in showing two quasi-steady states during the course of experiment (Figure 6). The first quasi-steady state was reached after 4 pore volumes (about 95 hours) and lasted an additional 4.5 pore volumes (or about 105 hours). During this period, the effluent solution Si and Al showed continuous stoichiometric precipitation accompanied by a congruent pH drop (Figure 6A). However, after a total of 8.5 pore volumes (or 200 hours), these relatively rapid precipitation rates disappeared and the difference between input and output solution Si and Al concentrations was not measurable. At this point, the fluid flow speed was decreased by a factor of 10 (to 5 $\mu\text{l}/\text{min}$), and after about another 2 pore volumes (about 400 hours at this slower flow rate), the experiment reached a second quasi-steady state which then persisted for the remainder of the experiment. However, the precipitation rate of Si and Al at this second steady state was much slower than that measured in the first quasi-steady state (Figure 6B).

This apparent two stage steady state feature was not observed in the KGa-P2 and KGa-P3 experiments. The pump speed was decreased further to 1 $\mu\text{l}/\text{min}$ in these two experiments. After being reacted in the flow through reactor for about one and half month (approximately one pore volume), the kaolinite samples in those precipitation experiments eventually showed stable congruent precipitation of Si and Al in the effluent solution, indicating that a steady state had been reached (Figure 7 and 8).

Changes in surface area

The kaolinite sample subjected to the longest combined dissolution and precipitation reaction time was used for BET surface area measurement at the end of the precipitation phase. The measured value was 14.27 m^2/g , which indicated an approximately 20% increase compared to its initial value of 11.8 m^2/g . Grinding effects on the kaolinite surface area are indicated in some flowthrough reactor experiments (METZ and GANOR, 2001), although this effect was

minimized in our experiments because of the use of a suspended stir bar. Collision between kaolinite grains and either the stir bar itself or the sides of the reactor still occurred, however, and this is a likely explanation for the increase, since the mass of newly precipitated material is not enough to account for this increase. Considering the long reaction time of over 7 months this sample had been subjected to and the error in BET measurement (typically about 10%), it was assumed that there was no significant change in sample surface area as a result of reaction. The kinetic data of the sample (KGa-D1) subjected to the longest reaction time was normalized according to its final surface area value. The kinetic rate data of all other samples were all normalized to their initial surface area value before any reaction occurred.

Dissolution and precipitation rates

The dissolution and precipitation rates calculated at steady-state with Equation (3) and the corresponding Gibbs free energy of reaction are shown in Table 4 and in Figure 9. As expected, the dissolution rates measured far from equilibrium were faster than those measured close to equilibrium. With the exception of the KGa-P1a precipitation experiment, however, the precipitation rates were much slower than the dissolution rates. An early study of Georgia Dry Branch kaolinite at various temperature and pH conditions in which the reactor volume was stirred (GANOR et al., 1995) gave far from equilibrium dissolution rates that agree very well with the values reported in this study. For example, they measured an Al steady state release rate of 1.46×10^{-13} compared to the rate of 1.15×10^{-13} mol/m²/sec measured in this study at an input pH of 4. The obtained dissolution rate is also broadly consistent with the study of Wieland and Stumm (WEILAND and STUMM, 1992) (2.4×10^{-13} mol/m²/sec) using cornish china clay in a batch reactor in similar conditions. Using the activation energy of 7.0 kcal/mol and a pH dependence of 0.40 for the kaolinite dissolution reaction (GANOR et al., 1995), the dissolution rates determined in this study were also broadly consistent with those reported in Nagy's study at 80°C and pH 3 using Twiggs country Georgia kaolinite (NAGY et al., 1991). However, for precipitation experiments, except for KGa-P1a experiment, most of the obtained precipitation rates are comparatively slower than extrapolated results from Nagy's study (Nagy et al., 1991, 1993) at 80 °C assuming the similar activation energy for the precipitation reaction. The relationship between the rates and reaction free energy are addressed further below.

Characterization of surface precipitates

In the kaolinite precipitation experiments, the goal was to keep the input stock solution supersaturated with respect to kaolinite, but undersaturated with respect to gibbsite and all other potential secondary phases. In order to achieve this, it was necessary to use a high Si/Al ratio in the input stock solutions, which resulted in Si concentrations that were in some cases supersaturated with respect to quartz. Since quartz is known to be very difficult to form at room temperature and pressure, precipitation of quartz is considered very unlikely. The input stock solution for KGa-P3 was slightly supersaturated with respect to gibbsite, but much more supersaturated with respect to kaolinite. Nagy's dual phase precipitation experiments indicated that precipitation of gibbsite on kaolinite seeds was very unlikely even at these higher temperatures and where the solution was not supersaturated with respect to kaolinite (NAGY and LASAGA, 1993). It appears reasonable to assume that because of the relatively low supersaturation with respect to gibbsite in this single experiment, and because there were no gibbsite seed minerals, gibbsite precipitation was very unlikely. All other experiments were undersaturated with respect to gibbsite. To verify that gibbsite did not precipitate, the precipitation samples were further examined by synchrotron Scanning Transmission X-ray Microscopy (STXM) on Beamline 11.0.2 at the Advanced Light Source at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. The STXM beamline has a spatial resolution of 40 nm for sample imaging, but can also perform X-ray absorption spectroscopic analysis of samples. A STXM image of the kaolinite sample from precipitation experiment KGa-P3 is shown in Figure 10A. Although precipitation had occurred for over two months, only a few layer of unit cell kaolinite precipitate was estimated to be formed during the course of the experiments because of the very slow rates of reaction. Under STXM analysis, the kaolinite sample taken from precipitation experiments was not distinguishable morphologically from unreacted kaolinite. In order to verify the phase of the precipitated material formed at the surfaces of seed kaolinite, X-ray absorption spectroscopy was used to compare the Al spectrum of the surface precipitated materials with that of standard kaolinite and gibbsite. X-ray absorption near edge spectra (XANES) is very sensitive to the chemical valence state of an element and its coordination environment within the mineral structure (KONINGSBERGER and PRINS, 1988). It is used as a 'fingerprint' to detect the presence of a particular element and determine its valence, speciation and coordination

environment by comparison with the spectra of its standard compounds (HUGGINS et al., 2000; FENTER et al., 2002). In order to examine only the surface layer of the kaolinite sample, spectra were collected under Total Electron Yield (TEY) mode. The Al spectrum measured in this way on the surface layer of kaolinite from a precipitation experiment (KGa-P3), as well as kaolinite and gibbsite standards, are shown in Figure 10B. These spectra demonstrate that the Al spectrum of surface precipitates on seed kaolinite have very similar features to the standard unreacted Georgia kaolinite, while they are significantly different from the gibbsite spectra. While kaolinite has “gibbsite layer” in its basic structure, thus making the overall structure of Al X-ray absorption near edge spectra appear similar for kaolinite and gibbsite, there are still distinguishable difference between those two minerals due to the presence of silica tetrahedral layers in the kaolinite (as shown in the circled area on Figure 10B). The similarity between the spectra for standard kaolinite and the surface precipitates indicates the actual formation of kaolinite on the seed materials in the precipitation experiments, in agreement with the prediction based on the thermodynamics of the effluent solution chemistry.

DISCUSSION

Incongruent dissolution

It was shown in Figures 1-3 that all dissolution experiments showed a slight preferential release of Si compared to Al. The possible reasons for this incongruent dissolution include back precipitation of an aluminous phase, re-adsorption of released Al, or dissolution of a silica phase present in the kaolinite samples. Arguing against the role of a silica impurity is the fact that the source clays used in this study were well crystallized pure kaolinite standards from the Clay Mineral Society. In addition, samples used in this study had been washed thoroughly in the pre-treatment procedure. The possibility of silica impurities seems even more unlikely in the case of the KGa-D1 sample, which showed a Si/Al ratio slightly higher than stoichiometric despite extensive dissolution for over 5 months.

The effluent in all of the dissolution experiments remained below saturation with respect to all aluminous phases (gibbsite, boehmite, diaspore) because of the low pH (less than 4.15) and the

relatively low Al concentrations. Thus, back precipitation of an aluminous phase appears very unlikely as well.

Carroll et al. (1988) also reported slightly incongruent dissolution of kaolinite at 25°C between pH 2 and 9 in their long term dissolution experiment. This phenomenon was also observed in the studies of Wieland and Stumm (1992) at room temperature in far from equilibrium dissolution experiments and was attributed to the adsorption of Al on to the reactive kaolinite surfaces. Schroth et al. (SCHROTH and SPOSITO, 1997) measured the point of zero net charge to be approximately 3.6 and a permanent structural charge density of -6.3 mmol/kg for of KGa-1 kaolinite, so it appears likely that a small amount of the dissolved Al was re-adsorbed to the kaolinite surface, thus causing the slightly deficiency of Al in the effluent from the reactor.

Evaluation of the effect of dissolved Al on kaolinite dissolution

Oelkers and co-workers reported an Al inhibition effect on silicate mineral dissolution (DEVIDAL et al., 1997; OELKERS et al., 1994). In their studies of kaolinite and albite dissolution at 150°C and 40 bars, the logarithms of the rates at a constant pH showed a linear dependence on aqueous Al concentrations even under far from equilibrium conditions. In this study at 22°C and atmosphere pressure, however, no evidence for Al inhibition was observed. For example, a comparison of dissolution experiments KGa-D3 and KGa-D1b, where the effluent contained 65 and 6.4 μM Al respectively, indicates rates that are the same within experimental uncertainty, or even slightly higher for the higher Al experiment (Table 4). A comparison with all of the other dissolution experiments confirms the lack of an Al effect. The difference in temperature and pressure between the experiments reported here (22°C and 1 bar) and those conducted by Oelkers and co-workers (OELKERS et al., 1994) may explain the difference in the results, although additional systematic experiments over a broader range of pH and Al concentration are needed to further verify this observation at room temperature.

Dependence on Gibbs free energy

Transition State Theory (TST) is the most widely used formulation for kinetic rate laws that provides an integral link between the thermodynamic driving force and the rates of kinetic geochemical processes. It has been applied widely in geochemistry to describe the dissolution

and crystallization rates of silicates minerals (AAGAARD and HELGESON, 1982; LASAGA, 1981; LASAGA, 1995), with a general form given by (AAGAARD and HELGESON, 1982)

$$R_{net} = R_+ \left[1 - \exp\left(\frac{-\Delta G}{\sigma RT}\right) \right] \quad (7)$$

where R_{net} (mol/m²/sec) is the net overall rate of the reaction (forward rate minus reverse rate), R_+ is the forward (dissolution) reaction rate far from equilibrium per unit surface area mineral, R is the gas constant, T is temperature in degrees Kelvin, σ is Temkin's average stoichiometric number, which is the ratio of the rate of destruction of the activated complex involved in the rate-limiting reaction step with the rate of the overall dissolution rate, and ΔG is the Gibbs free energy (= $-A$, the chemical affinity) of the overall reaction (KJ/mol or kcal/mol) and is defined in equation (4). The application of Equation (7) assumes that a single rate limiting step controls the overall rate of reaction and that steady-state conditions are met and that the magnitude of ΔG for each elementary reaction is not much greater than RT .

Using the Gibbs free energy of reaction derived using Equation (4) from the equilibrium constant for kaolinite measured in this study, the kaolinite dissolution and precipitation rates were fitted with the Equation (7). The dissolution rate data and the precipitation rate derived from experiment KGa-P1a can be fit very well with Equation (7) using a Temkin coefficient of 2 (Figure 9)

$$R_{diss} = 1.15 \times 10^{-13} \left[1 - \exp\left(\frac{\Delta G}{2RT}\right) \right] \quad (8)$$

Two distinct regions are apparent in the fit of the dissolutions rates: 1) a far from equilibrium (< -11 KJ/mol or -2 Kcal/mol) region where rates are independent of the chemical affinity, and 2) a close to equilibrium (> -11 KJ/mol, -2 Kcal/mol) region where the rates depend on the chemical affinity, with the width of this zone determined by the Temkin coefficient. This result is in general agreement with the studies of Huang (HUANG, 1993) and Soong (SOONG and BARNES, 1992), who suggested that kaolinite dissolution rates are independent of the saturation index for chemical affinity $<$ about -2 kcal/mol.

Lasaga and Luttge recently proposed a new step wave dissolution model in which dissolution rates decrease sharply when a critical free energy state corresponding to the opening of etch pits in mineral surface is reached (LASAGA and LUTTGE, 2001; LASAGA and LUTTGA, 2003). However, extending this theory from minerals having relative well developed framework crystal structures (e.g., calcite, feldspar or quartz) to layered silicates is problematic, since dissolution may occur primarily along the edges of the layers (WIELAND and STUMM, 1992; BOSBACH et al., 2000). Given the slow rate of kaolinite dissolution at 25°C, it is a real challenge to measure rates very close to equilibrium under these conditions, so evaluation of this dissolution mechanism for kaolinite may need to be carried out at higher temperature where the rates are more rapid and *in situ* techniques involving direct microscopic observation can be used. However, we note that Nagy's data at 80°C, which covered a much narrower range of departure from equilibrium (from 0.12 to 0.5 kcal/mol), showed only a simple linear dependence on the saturation state (NAGY et al., 1991). Evidence collected in this study suggests that the sharp change in dissolution rates predicted by the step wave dissolution model does not occur in the case of kaolinite at room temperature and pressure conditions.

Applying classical crystal growth theory, Dove et al. (DOVE et al., 2005) successfully explained the above room temperature dissolution behavior of quartz, K-feldspar and kaolinite with two proposed dissolution mechanisms: 1) dissolution at dislocation sites, and 2) dissolution by nucleation of vacancy islands. An attempt was made to interpret the data collected in this study with their proposed models, but neither produced a satisfactory fit. Considering the proposed models were based on quartz dissolution data collected at much higher experiment temperature (200°C), it is suggested that direct extrapolating these rate models to lower temperature may not be applicable.

Precipitation experiment KGa-P1, which had been subjected to over 5 months of dissolution prior to the switch to supersaturated conditions, showed quasi-stable reversible precipitation rates for a period of 4.5 days and is well described by the TST rate law given in Equation (8). This strongly suggests that for short times, precipitation may be fully reversible with respect to dissolution, although this result may depend on the development of specific reactive sites via extended dissolution. The rapid precipitation rate observed in early quasi-steady state of KGa-P1a sample are most likely related to re-attachment of Si and Al at high energy sites actually

created as a result of long-term dissolution far from equilibrium, since similar behavior is not observed for kaolinite seed that were subjected to shorter dissolution times. However, after those active sites originating from the dissolution process were filled, precipitation proceeded by a different, slower growth mechanism.

After the drop in precipitation rate in experiment KGa-P1, and in the case of the other two precipitation experiments KGa-P2 and KGa-P3 that were not subjected to long-term dissolution in advance, the precipitation rates could not be described adequately with Equation (8). Longer term kaolinite precipitation rates, therefore, are not reversible with dissolution, implying a change in reaction mechanism between dissolution and long-term, truly steady state precipitation. The precipitation rates data are better described with a linear dependence on the free energy of reaction, ΔG

$$R_{ppt} = 8.0 \times 10^{-15} \left[\frac{\Delta G}{RT} \right] \quad (9)$$

Nagy also obtained a linear relationship between kaolinite precipitation rates and reaction free energy ΔG close to equilibrium at 80 °C and pH 3 (NAGY et al., 1991). The precipitation rates determined by Nagy can be fitted with TST type of rate law, however, with the slopes of the precipitation rates data apparently following the trend of corresponding dissolution rates data within experimental uncertainties. Huang (1993) and Devidal et al. (1997) determined kaolinite precipitation rates at hydrothermal conditions (between 150 ~ 275 °C, at pH 2, 4.2 and 7.8) and their results also indicate reversible dissolution and precipitation close to equilibrium. The fact that microscopic reversibility is not observed in this study (except over relatively short times, as in experiment KGa-P1a), while it was observed in experiments by Nagy and Huang, and Devidal, may be the result of the significantly higher temperatures and perhaps the length of the experiment. This highlights one of the difficulties with investigating reaction mechanisms at higher temperature and then extending these via activation energies to lower temperature. There is no guarantee that the same reaction mechanisms will actually apply.

Although Nagy's experiments (1991, 1993) were performed at less than hydrothermal temperatures, the reacting kaolinite had also been pre-equilibrated at 80°C and pH 3 for over 3 months. At hydrothermal conditions or after extensive pretreatment, the surface of kaolinite may

be activated, thus resulting in the opening of abundant screw locations and kink sites that could serve as templates for the reversible growth of kaolinite. The applicability of the TST rate law given in Equation (8) during the early quasi-steady state period of experiment KGa-P1, which followed extensive dissolution leaching, is consistent with this interpretation.

The kaolinite precipitation experiments in this study covered a range of supersaturation from 4.5 kJ/mol (1.0 kcal/mol) to 14.8 kJ/mol (3.6 kcal/mol). Despite this relatively large range of supersaturation, the precipitation experiments showed a linear dependence on free energy. Although a detailed precipitation rate mechanism is not possible without further microscopic and/or spectroscopic characterization of the newly precipitated kaolinite, it is worth discussing some of the possible growth mechanisms that might apply under these experimental conditions. Crystal growth models have been reviewed extensively in the literature (BENNEMA, 1973; OHARA and REID, 1973; NIELSEN, 1984) and are generally classified as diffusion controlled, or surface integration controlled, or both. Only surface integration growth models will be considered for the precipitation experiments conducted in this study, since kaolinite growth at room temperature is very slow and unlikely to be diffusion controlled. The surface-controlled mechanisms consist of adsorption of lattice ions, spiral growth at screw dislocations, or two-dimensional nucleation on the mineral surface. In the case of two-dimensional nucleation, growth proceeds by the addition of nuclei similar to the template on which they form or through the attachment of growth units to the edge of the nuclei via surface diffusion. A number of two-dimensional nucleation growth models have been proposed in the literature and can be classified into mononuclear or polynuclear mechanisms (OHARA and REID, 1973; NIELSEN, 1984). The main differences between these models are in their assumptions about the rate of surface nucleation and the rate of lateral spreading of the nuclei across the crystal surface. The two-dimensional nucleation growth models can be expressed as (LI et al., 2003)

$$R = k_{sn} F(\Omega - 1) \exp\left(-\frac{\phi^2}{(kT)^2} \frac{1}{\ln(\Omega)}\right), \quad (10)$$

where k_{sn} is the rate constant for mononuclear or polynuclear growth, Ω is the relative supersaturation ratio (Equation 4), $F(\Omega)$ is a function of supersaturation, ϕ is defined as the edge free energy (in KJ mol⁻¹) and k is the Boltzmann constant.

Such two dimensional nucleation growth has been discussed extensively in the case of gibbsite crystal growth that occurs in the industrial Bayer process (FARHADI and BABAHEIDARY, 2002; LI et al., 2003; VEESLER and BOISTELLE, 1994). Gibbsite has an analogous structure to that of the micas and the neutral aluminum hydroxide sheets are typically found to be sandwiched between silicate sheets in important clay groups, such as the kaolinite, illite, and montmorillonite/smectite. In kaolinite, the individual aluminum hydroxide layers are identical to the individual layers of gibbsite (referred to as the "gibbsite layers") and therefore may provide some guidance for possible interpretations of kaolinite precipitation kinetics. Following the simplified mononuclear equation proposed by Botsaris and Denk (BOTSARIS and DENK, 1970) to describe the formation and spreading of two-dimensional nuclei during gibbsite growth, Equation (10) can be simplified as

$$R = k_{sn} \exp\left(-\frac{\phi^2}{(kT)^2} \frac{1}{\ln(\Omega)}\right). \quad (11)$$

According to this simplified equation (which assumes the pre-exponential term depending on the Gibbs free energy is equal to 1), the logarithm of the kaolinite precipitation rates will show a linear trend against the term $\frac{1}{(T^2 \ln \Omega)}$ if the two dimensional nucleation growth model applies

(Figure 11). When plotted in this way, the data show a high degree of linearity between those two parameters (with a R^2 of 0.986), indicating the two-dimensional nucleation model is at least compatible with the precipitation rates determined in this study. The free edge energy determined using the slope of linear regression fitting line from Figure 11 is 3.54 kJ/mol, which is comparable to the value obtained for gibbsite at 55 °C (from 2.6 to 6.0 kJ/mol as reported in the study of Farhadi and Babaheidary (2002)), further supporting the applicability of the above model for kaolinite crystal growth.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Kinetic rates of kaolinite dissolution and precipitation at ambient room temperature and pressure were measured at pH values close to 4 as a function of Gibbs free energy using well crystallized low defect Georgia Kaolinite. Dissolution rates measured close to equilibrium (generally within about 2 kcal/mol) showed an exponential decrease compared to far from equilibrium rates. This

observed trend can be described well within the framework of Transition State Theory with a Temkin coefficient of 2, implying that the activated complexes involved in the rate-limiting step for kaolinite dissolution involved either a single Al or Si atom. Dissolution with input solutions having high Al concentration showed no evidence for significant Al inhibition at the experimental conditions considered in this study.

Long-term precipitation rates at 22°C and close to pH 4 are much slower than the dissolution rates and generally fall off the trend predicted by Transition State Theory. Only a kaolinite sample that was subjected to extensive dissolution for over 5 months under far from equilibrium conditions showed a faster precipitation rate for an initial quasi-steady state that is compatible with the TST model. The fact that this reversible precipitation stage lasted only about 110 hours, at which point precipitation rates decreased by an order of magnitude, suggests that activated sites created during the long-term, far from equilibrium dissolution process became filled and a different growth mechanism ensued. The other two precipitation experiments performed under more supersaturated conditions and with kaolinite seed that had not undergone extensive dissolution far from equilibrium, also showed very slow precipitation rates that are not compatible with a reversible TST rate law based on dissolution rates. The long-term precipitation rates show instead a linear dependence on the Gibbs free energy, with the relationship between the rates and corresponding reaction free energies described satisfactorily with a simplified two dimensional nucleation growth model.

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TABLES

Table 1: Al and Si species and their hydrolysis constant used in the calculation*.

Reaction	$\log K_{eq}$
$Al^{+3} + H_2O = AlOH^{+2} + H^+$	-5.00
$Al^{+3} + 2H_2O = Al(OH)^{2+} + 2H^+$	-10.1
$Al^{+3} + 3H_2O = Al(OH)_3^0 + 3H^+$	-16.9
$Al^{+3} + 4H_2O = Al(OH)_4^- + 4H^+$	-22.7
$H_4SiO_4 = H_3SiO_4^- + H^+$	-9.83

*from PHREEQC (PARKHURST and APPLEO, 1999) database.

Table 2: Target input Si and Al concentrations

Experiment	Si (μM)	Al (μM)
Dissolution		
1	0	0
2	500	0
3	0	60
Precipitation		
4	500	100
5	1000	100
6	1500	200

Table 3: Al and Si concentration in solutions equilibrated with kaolinite for determination of its solubility constant*

Label	pH	Si (μM)	Al (μM)	$\log(a_{\text{H}_4\text{SiO}_4})$	$\log(a_{\text{Al}^{3+}})$	$\log(\text{IAP})$
Sample						
1	4.22	311.98 \pm 3.06	11.42 \pm 0.44	-3.505	-5.336	7.638
Sample						
2	4.20	312.94 \pm 2.47	11.27 \pm 0.37	-3.504	-5.340	7.512

*Average result from this two sampling points were used to calculate the equilibrium solubility of kaolinite sample used in this study

Table 4: Summary of experimental conditions and results

Sample label	Starting material (g)	Pump speed (ml/min)	Input pH	Input Si (μM)	Input Al (μM)	Output Si (μM)	Output Al (μM)	Output pH	Rate from Al ($\text{mol/m}^2/\text{sec}$)	Saturation index	ΔG (kJ/mol)
KGa-D2a	1.000	0.041	4.004	277.63 (± 3.33)	0.21 (± 0.04)	288.83 (± 3.50)	3.76 (± 0.09)	4.049	-1.04(± 0.06) E-13	-2.03	-11.47(± 0.73)
KGa-D2b	1.000	0.012	4.004	277.63 (± 3.33)	0.21 (± 0.04)	295.95 (± 4.58)	8.45 (± 0.14)	4.102	-6.77(± 0.36) E-14	-1.00	-5.65(± 0.85)
KGa-D1a	2.000	0.050	4.001	0.00	0.00	9.84 (± 0.14)	7.88 (± 0.10)	4.076	-1.15 (± 0.06) E-13	-4.17	-23.56(± 0.80)
KGa-D1b	2.000	0.050	3.987	277.33 (± 0.97)	0.00	287.72 (± 3.18)	6.43 (± 0.10)	4.033	-9.37(± 0.14) E-14	-1.66	-9.38(± 0.80)
KGa-D3	1.000	0.049	4.016	0.26 (± 0.04)	60.5 (± 0.58)	6.59 (± 0.09)	65.21 (± 0.80)	4.038	-1.46 (± 0.76) E-13	-2.91	-16.44(± 0.80)
KGa-P1a	2.000	0.050	4.080	493.49 (± 4.24)	106.25 (± 1.10)	478.82 (± 4.35)	96.09 (± 1.17)	3.980	1.47 (± 0.24) E-13	0.80	4.52(± 0.73)
KGa-P1b	2.000	0.005	4.022	498.03 (± 6.39)	113.49 (± 1.68)	494.89 (± 3.40)	106.02 (± 0.89)	3.964	1.04 (± 0.27) E-14	0.82	4.63(± 0.73)
KGa-P2	1.000	0.001	4.135	1030.96 (± 29.67)	118.78 (± 3.32)	1008.11 (± 6.40)	96.27 (± 0.56)	3.950	1.64 (± 0.35) E-14	1.34	7.57(± 0.73)
KGa-P3	1.000	0.001	4.270	1466.85 (± 27.80)	242.18 (± 4.76)	1412.23 (± 20.68)	210.09 (± 6.26)	4.006	2.50(± 0.74) E-14	2.63	14.85(± 0.85)

FIGURES

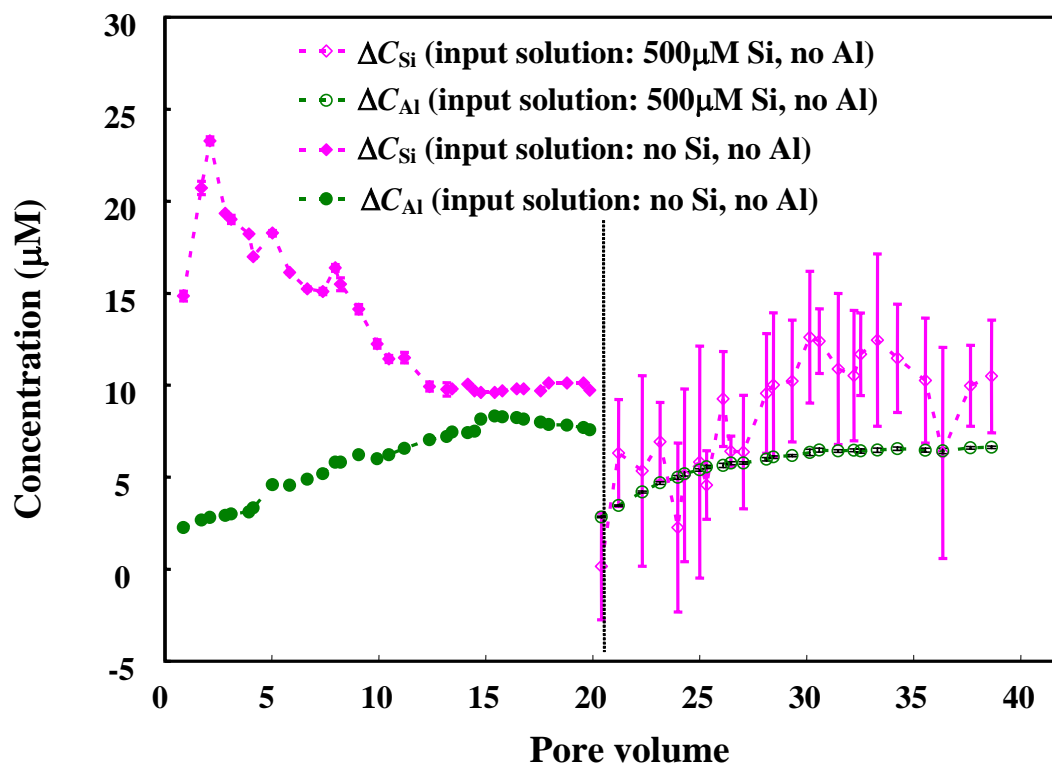


Figure 1: Effluent ΔC_{Al} and ΔC_{Si} variation in KGa-D1 dissolution experiments at pH 4, 22 °C with input solutions having (KGa-D1a) no Si and Al (solid symbol) and (KGa-D1b) 500 μM Si and no Al (open symbol). Pumping speed: 0.05 mL/min.

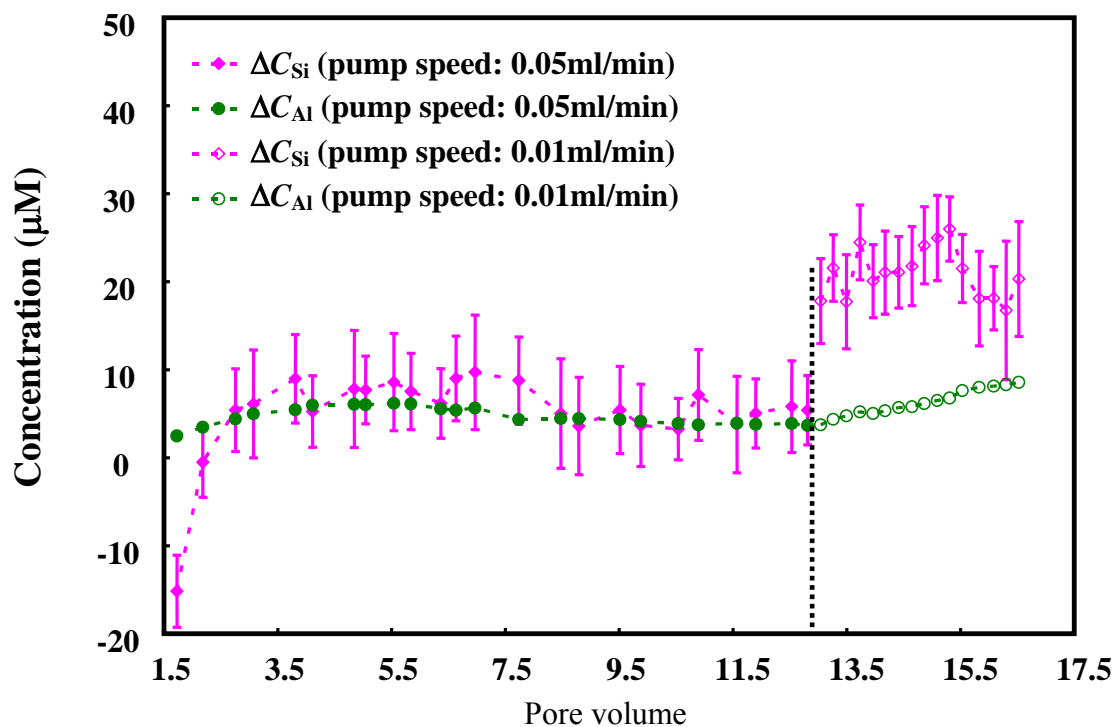


Figure 2: Effluent ΔC_{Al} and ΔC_{Si} variations in KGa-D2 dissolution experiments at pH 4, 22 °C with input solution having 500μM Si and no Al; (KGa-D2a) pump speed: 0.05ml/min (solid symbol) and (KGa-D2b) pump speed: 0.01ml/min (open symbol).

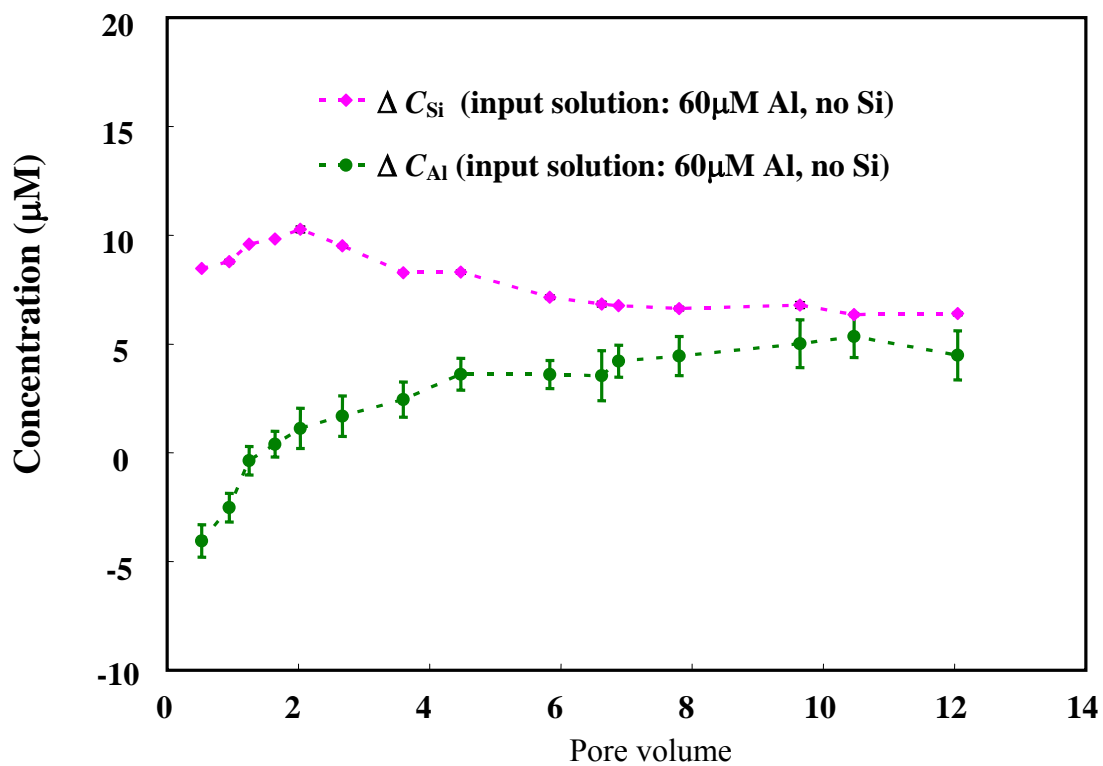


Figure 3: Effluent ΔC_{Al} and ΔC_{Si} variations in KGa-D3 dissolution experiments at pH 4, 22 °C with input solution having 60 μM Al and no Si; pump speed: 0.05ml/min.

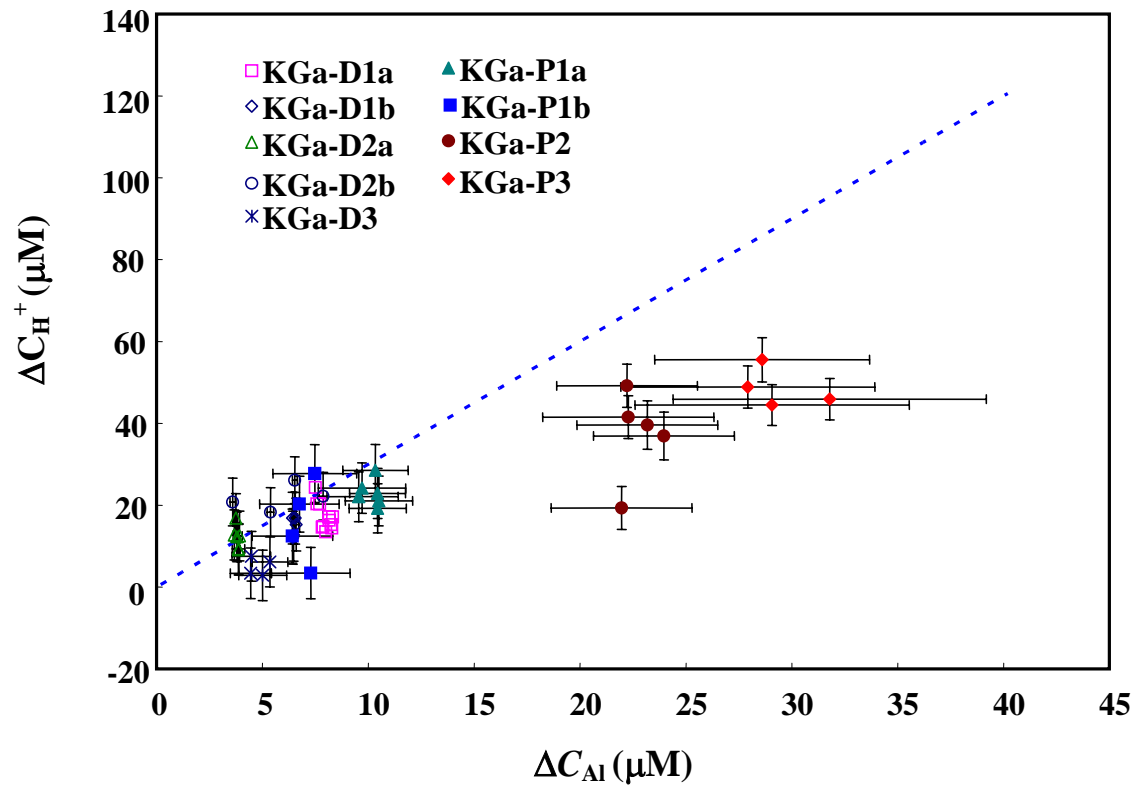


Figure 4: Steady state effluent ΔC_{Al} versus ΔC_{H^+} in the kaolinite dissolution/precipitation experiments at pH 4, 22 °C with varying input solution composition and pumping speed.

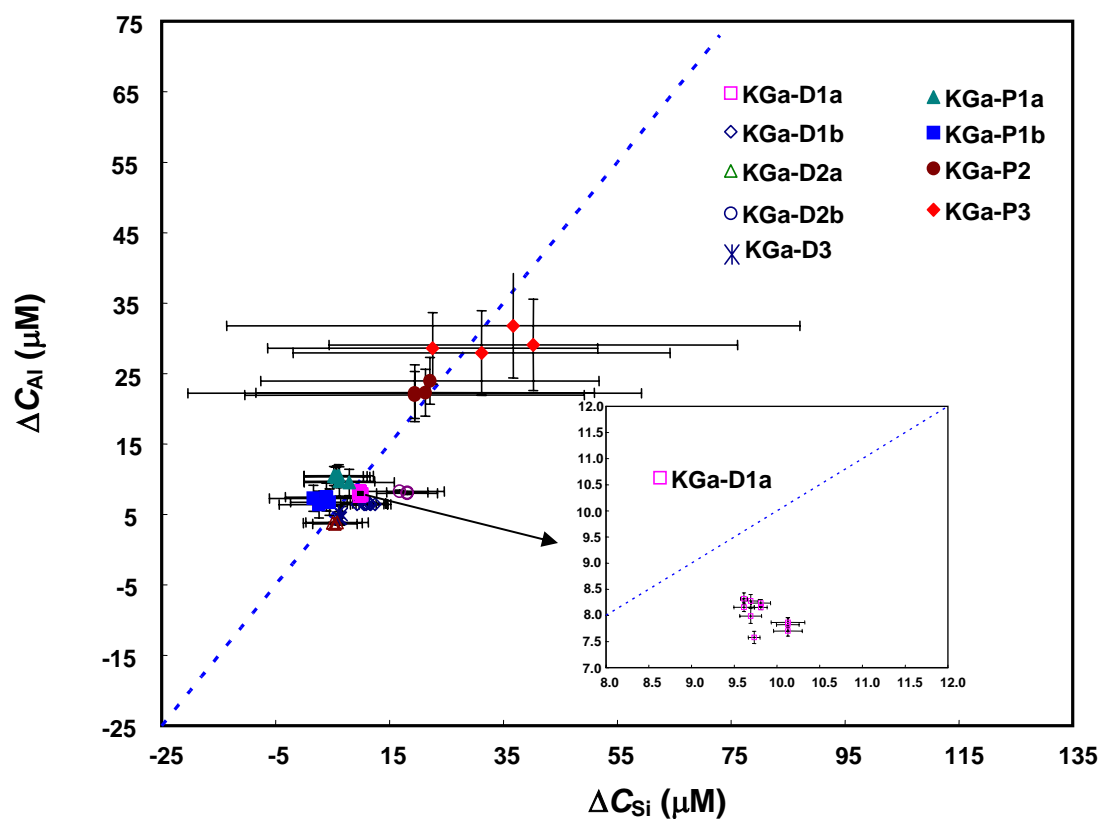
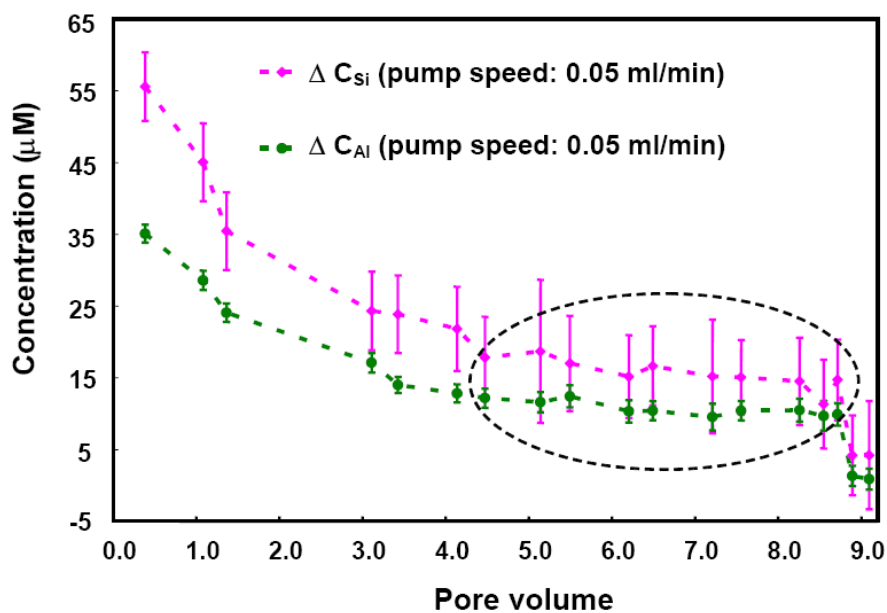


Figure 5: Steady state effluent ΔC_{Al} versus ΔC_{Si} in the kaolinite dissolution/precipitation experiments at pH 4, 22 °C with varying input solution composition and pumping speed. The small graph inside is the zoom in graph of KGa-D1a experiment results.

A.



B.

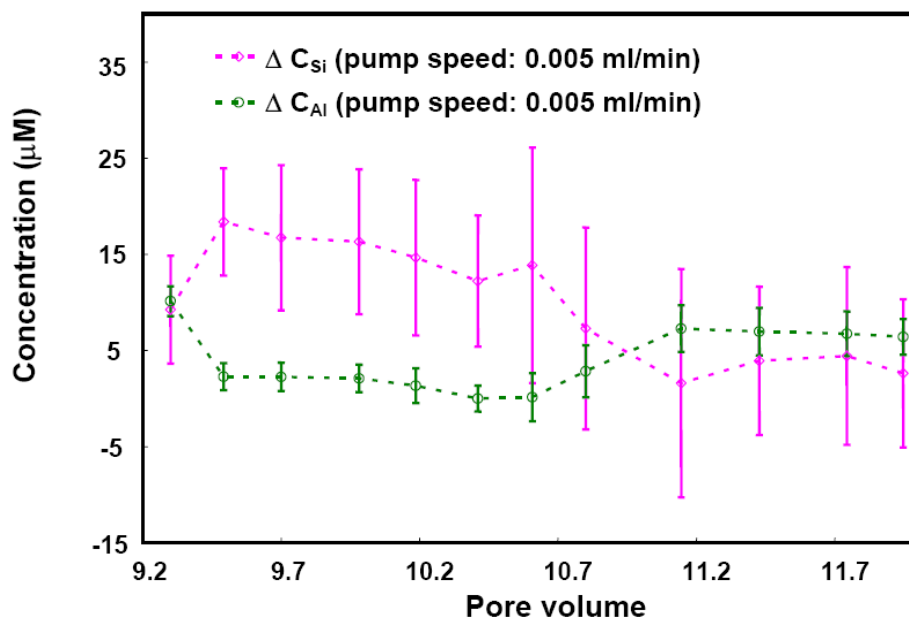


Figure 6: Effluent ΔC_{Al} and ΔC_{Si} variations in the KGa-P1 precipitation experiment at pH 4, 22 °C with input solution having 0.5mM Si and 0.1mM Al; (A)pump speed: 0.05ml/min (solid symbol) and (B) pump speed: 0.005ml/min (open symbol).

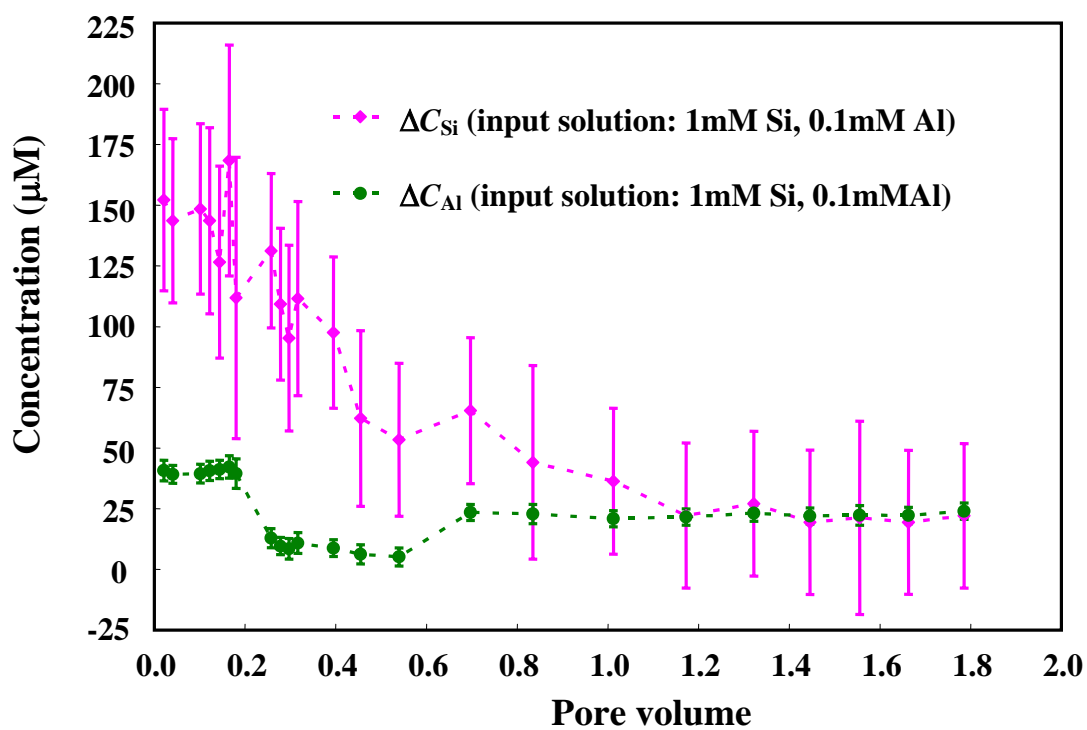


Figure 7: Effluent ΔC_{Al} and ΔC_{Si} variations in the KGa-P2 precipitation experiment at pH 4, 22 °C with input solution having 1mM Si and 0.1mM Al; pump speed: 0.001ml/min.

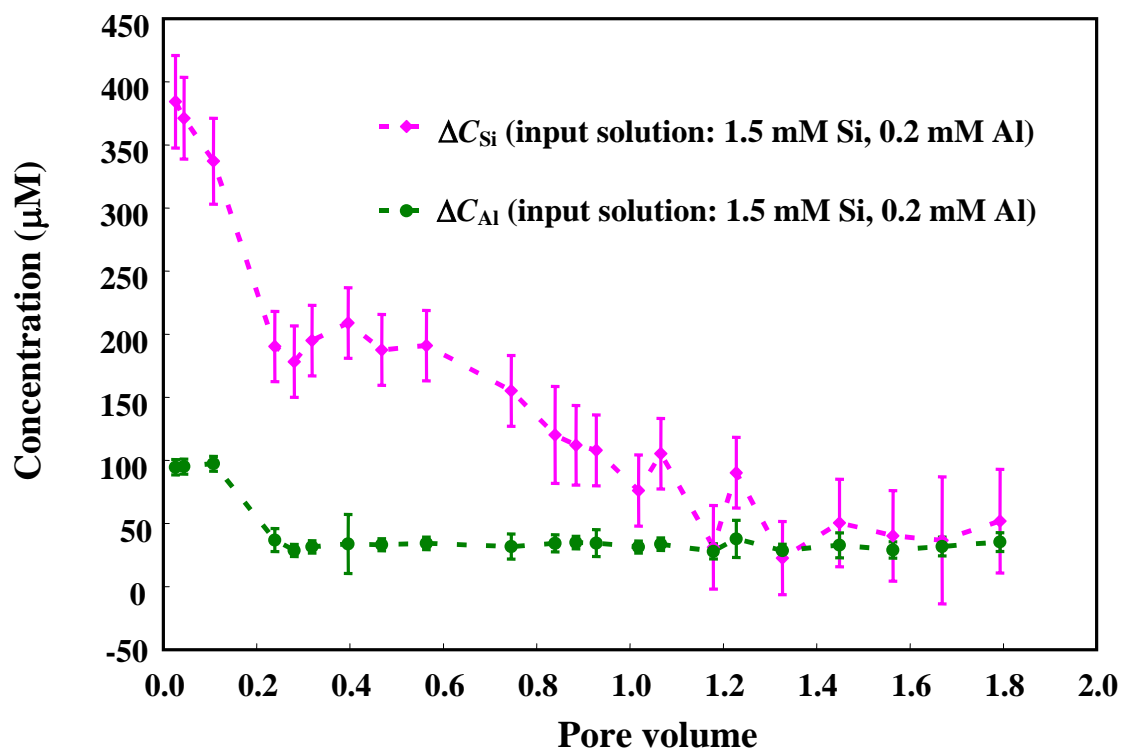


Figure 8: Effluent ΔAl and ΔSi concentration variations in the KGa-P3 precipitation experiment at pH 4, 22 °C with input solution having 1.5mM Si and 0.2mM Al; pump speed: 0.001ml/min.

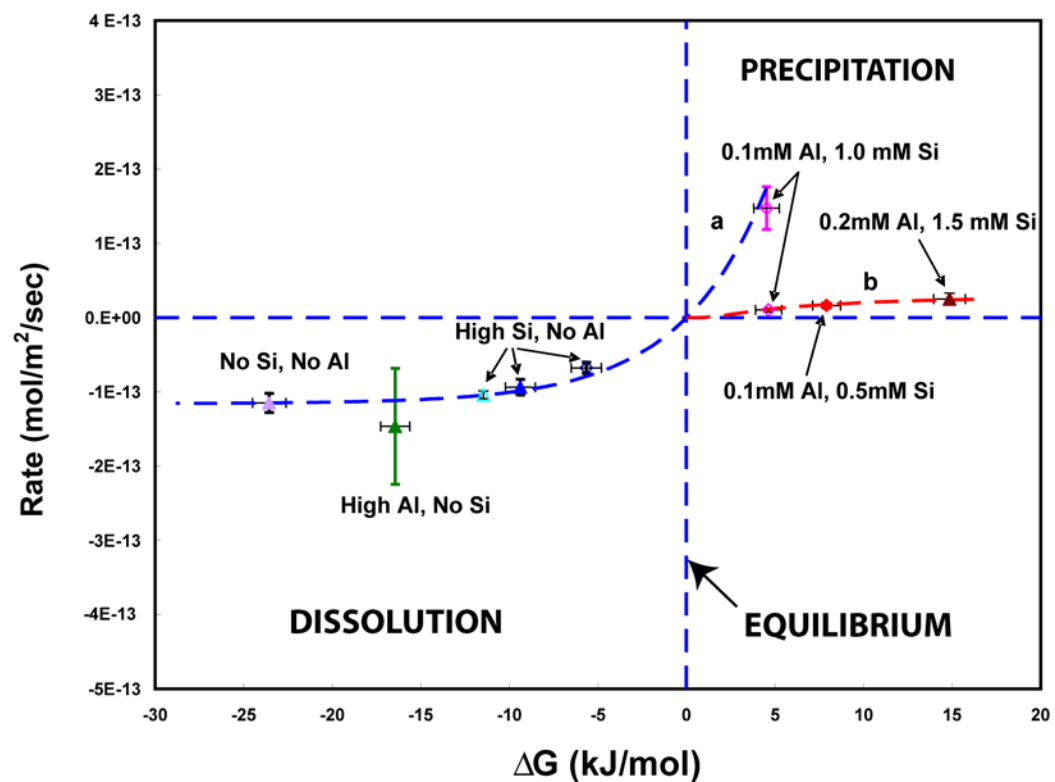


Figure 9: Kaolinite dissolution/precipitation rate vs. chemical affinity at pH 4, 22 °C; the blue dashed line (a) was fitted with TST theory and the red dashed line (b) was fitted with two dimensional nucleation model (for details, see the text in the discussion).

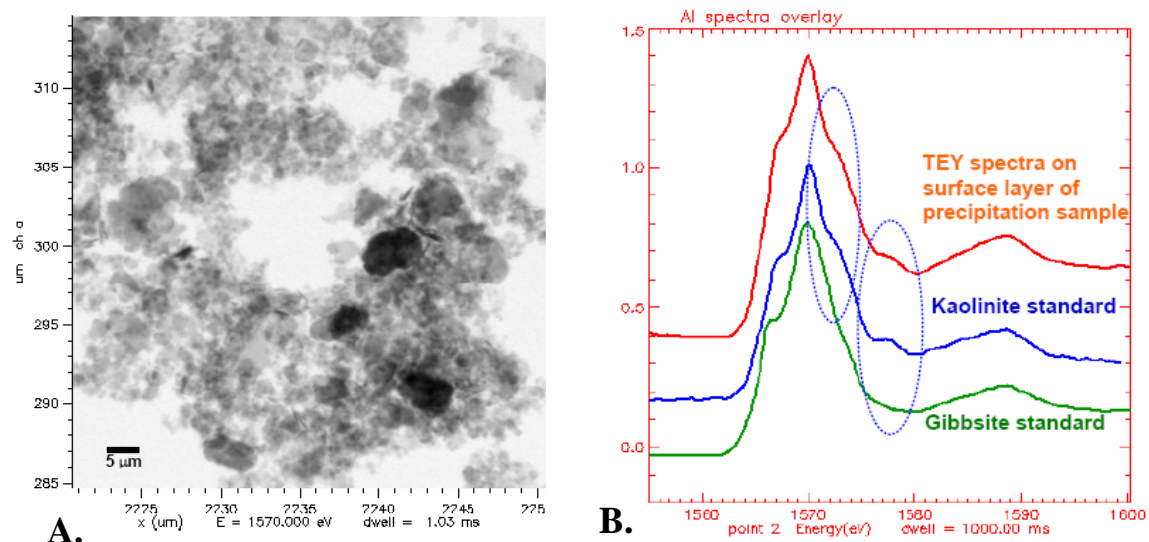


Figure 10. A) STXM image of kaolinite samples in precipitation experiments. B). Al XANES spectra of kaolinite particles by total electron yield mode in precipitation experiments by STXM (circled area highlights the major difference between the spectra).

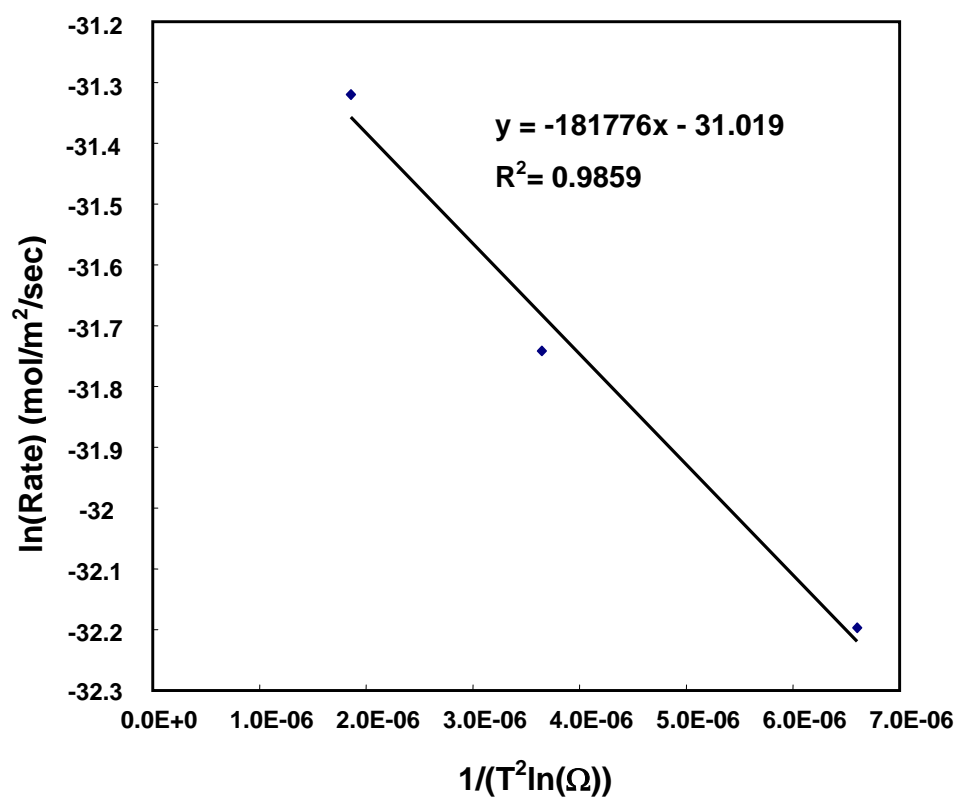


Figure 11: Linear fitting of kaolinite precipitation rate data with a mononuclear two dimensional nucleation growth model at the experimental temperature of 22 °C.