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# Kinetics of precipitation of non-ideal solid-solutions in a liquid environment.

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We present a theoretical formalism which, for the first time, accounts for the nucleation, growth and/or redissolution of binary non-ideal solid-solutions, whether mineral or bimetallic, in solution. It yields the time evolution of all ion activities, together with the particle population characteristics: number, size and composition profile of particles as a function of time and of their time of nucleation. It is shown that depending on the Guggenheim parameter values which drive the non-ideality of the solid-solution, on the ratio of the solubility products of the end-members and on initial conditions, different scenarios of precipitation may take place, in which particles display composition profiles which may be smooth or discontinuous. An illustration of the characteristics of precipitation in the various scenarios is given, by simulations performed under some simplifying assumptions and qualitative predictions are made for the precipitation of some mineral solid solutions of geochemical interest. To our knowledge, this is the first time, in the fields of both geochemistry and metallic alloys, that these out-of-equilibrium precipitation processes of non-ideal solid-solutions are fully described.

Highlights:

- Theoretical and numerical model for out-of-equilibrium precipitation of non-ideal solid solutions in a liquid medium.
- For the first time, nucleation, growth and/or redissolution processes are fully described.
- Particle size distribution functions and composition profiles are obtained.
- The formalism applies to mineral  $A_{1-x}B_xC$  as well as bimetallic  $A_{1-x}B_x$  nanoparticle formation.
- Four scenarios are highlighted; predictions for the precipitation of mineral solid solutions of geochemical interest are made.

*Keywords:* nucleation and growth, non-ideal solid solutions, miscibility gap, clay minerals, bimetallic nanoparticles, alloy nanoparticles, core-shell nanoparticles, wet-chemical synthesis, kinetic simulation, Nanokin code.

PACS numbers:

## I. INTRODUCTION

In natural water-rock interaction systems on the Earth surface, primary minerals are often in a thermodynamic nonequilibrium state. This is the key-condition for the alteration which takes place in the water cycle, including both weathering processes near surface and hydrothermal alteration at depth. The resulting spontaneous dissolution of primary minerals leads to the formation of secondary minerals which are generally not defined compounds but often solid solution phases (SS), with compositions that adjust to the evolution of the chemical composition of the aqueous solution (AS). The most frequent example of this property is the formation of clay mineral phases in the alteration of rock-forming silicates (Millot, 1970; Meunier and Velde, 1989), but many oxides, carbonates, and sulfates also share this property (Drever, 1984; Geiger, 2001; Rhada and Navrotsky, 2013).

In another context, formation of bimetallic nanoparticles is often the aim of wet chemistry experiments in the laboratory, due to their interesting properties for plasmonics (Major et al., 2009), catalysis (Zhang et al.,

2011) or electrocatalysis (Peng and Yang, 2009) applications. Similarly to their mineral counterparts, these alloys may display an ideal SS behavior, or, alternatively, a tendency towards ordering or demixing (phase separation), depending upon the sign and strength of their mixing enthalpy of formation (Ferrando et al., 2008).

The equilibrium behavior of a SS in contact with an AS, whether ideal or non-ideal, is now well established (Lippmann, 1982; Glynn and Reardon, 1990), as reviewed by Ganguly (2001) or Prieto (2009). The relationship between the SS composition and the distribution of ions in the AS may be represented by the classical Lippmann's or Roozeboom's diagrams (Lippmann, 1980; Roozeboom, 1904). Recent theoretical studies of non-ideal mineral SSs at equilibrium mainly concern cements and concretes interacting with the AS, particularly in the field of nuclear waste storages and clay barriers (Börjesson et al., 1997; Walker et al., 2007) but carbonate SSs have also been considered (Kulik et al., 2010; Katsikopoulos et al., 2009).

As far as the kinetics of SS formation are concerned, experiments making use of counter-diffusion of reactants

through a porous medium (Prieto et al., 1997; Sánchez-Pastor et al., 2006) or in situ atomic force microscopy studies of the growth of SSs in a fluid cell (Pina et al., 2000; Putnis et al., 2002; Astilleros et al., 2003; Astilleros et al., 2006) have provided important information on growth mechanisms and particle composition for various mineral SSs.

Inclusion of kinetic effects in the modeling of a SS formation still remains a difficult task. In the water-rock interaction model KINDIS (Madé et al., 1994) and its extension for treating reaction and transport (Nourtier-Mazauric et al., 2005), kinetic dissolution and precipitation at equilibrium of ideal SSs were included but without considering nucleation and growth. In these works, a single SS was allowed to precipitate for a given set of end-members, corresponding to the least soluble phase or, equivalently, to the phase with the highest supersaturation. More recent approaches rely on empirical rate equations, not considering explicitly nucleation, size-dependent growth and nucleation (Shtukenberg et al., 2010, Brandt et al., 2015). The same was true in the coupled reaction and transport model by Lichtner and Carey (2006) who represented the SS by a discrete set of stoichiometric solids with fixed composition. On the other hand, atomistic Monte Carlo simulations of ideal SSs under constant supersaturation have specified how the distribution coefficients vary with the supersaturation at kink, step and terrace sites of the growing particles (Matsumoto and Kitamura, 2001; Matsumoto et al., 2005). Only in the work of Pina and Putnis (2002) did a generalized expression for the nucleation rate appear, and the composition of the critical nucleus was determined from the maximum of the nucleation frequency. However, growth and feed-back effects were not included in this work.

To our knowledge, only in our previous works (Noguera et al., 2010; Noguera et al., 2012), were the full dynamics of a SS formation fully accounted for, with the inclusion of nucleation processes, size dependent growth, particle population and out-of-equilibrium composition of the critical nuclei and deposited layers during growth. This has led to the creation of a second version of the NANOKIN code (Noguera et al., 2010), which previously could only account for the kinetics of formation of minerals with fixed composition (Fritz et al., 2009). However, this second version was restricted to ideal binary SSs.

It is our goal, in the present work, to propose a theoretical description of nucleation and growth of *non-ideal* binary SSs. As will appear clearly in the following, it does not consist in merely introducing activity coefficients in the nucleation and growth equations. Depending on the strength of the enthalpy of mixing, which will be represented by a Guggenheim expansion restricted to two terms (sub-regular SS), and depending on the composition of the AS, several scenarios may take place in which the composition profiles of the formed particles and the precipitation dynamics are distinctly different. Each of these scenarios will be exemplified by a numerical simu-

lation, under some simplifying assumptions and predictions will be made for various mineral SSs of geochemical interest to assess which scenario applies to each of them.

The formalism primarily aims at describing SSs of the  $A_{1-x}B_xC$  type, relevant e.g. to mineral SSs with homovalent substitution, like  $(Ba,Sr)CO_3$ . However the generalization to SSs of the  $A_{1-x}B_x$  type, such as bimetallic SSs, is straightforward because it only requires skipping the C activities. In that way, our work can also be useful in the field of metallic alloys in which, to our knowledge, only thermodynamic aspects of the formation of bimetallic nanoparticles in wet chemistry experiments have been considered. We will use the generic term "aqueous" solution to refer to the solution in which precipitation takes place, whether it contains water or not.

The paper is organized as follows. In section II, we introduce thermodynamic concepts which are required for describing binary non-ideal (sub-regular) SSs in contact with an AS. We propose a new representation of the stoichiometric saturation condition, distinct from the Roozeboom diagram. It is more compact than the latter and turns out to be extremely useful in understanding the scenarios of precipitation of strongly non-ideal SSs. In section III, IV and V we present the theoretical background and master equations for nucleation, growth and feed-back effects on the chemical composition of the AS, respectively. Then, in Section VI, we discuss the characteristics of the precipitation process as a function of the degree of non-ideality of the SS and the initial conditions. We highlight four possible scenarios of precipitation and we devise a diagram of their occurrence as a function of the solid and AS characteristics. Finally, we illustrate the characteristics of precipitation in the various scenarios, by simulations performed within some simplifying assumptions, and we make qualitative predictions of the precipitation characteristics of SSs of geochemical interest (Section VII), before concluding. The text is complemented by five appendices in which most of the formal equations are derived.

## II. THERMODYNAMIC CONCEPTS

In this section we first recall some useful concepts relevant for a SS in contact with an AS of given composition. This will allow us to introduce quantities, such as the stoichiometric solubility product, the stoichiometric saturation state of the AS with respect to the SS, and the concept of stoichiometric saturation. Then we will discuss in detail how the latter depends on the non-ideality characteristics of the SS, which will be a useful step before addressing out-of-equilibrium processes.

We consider a SS of composition  $A_{1-x}B_xC$  ( $0 < x < 1$ ), with AC and BC its end-members. In the following, A, B and C will represent the relevant aqueous species in the AS and [A], [B] and [C] their activities, respectively. The solubility products of the end-members, denoted

164  $K_{AC}$  and  $K_{BC}$ , are functions of the standard changes  
165 in Gibbs free energy,  $\Delta G_{AC}$  and  $\Delta G_{BC}$ , for dissolution:206

$$\begin{aligned} K_{AC} &= \exp(-\Delta G_{AC}/RT) \\ K_{BC} &= \exp(-\Delta G_{BC}/RT) \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

166 in which  $R$  is the gas constant and  $T$  the temperature.

167 Considering the SS as a single component stoichiomet-  
168 ric solid, the change of Gibbs free energy  $\Delta G(x)$  during  
169 the dissolution of one mole of composition  $x$  may be writ-  
170 ten as:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta G(x) &= (1-x)\Delta G_{AC} + x\Delta G_{BC} + \Delta G_M^E(x) \\ &\quad -RT(x \ln x + (1-x) \ln(1-x)) \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

171 The sum  $(1-x)\Delta G_{AC} + x\Delta G_{BC}$  represents the change  
172 of Gibbs free energy for a mechanical mixture of AC and  
173 BC. It is complemented by the ideal entropy of mix-  
174 ing (on the second line), assuming full disorder of the  
175 A and B species in the SS.  $\Delta G_M^E(x)$  is the excess free  
176 energy of mixing, which includes the excess entropy of  
177 mixing  $\Delta S_M^E(x)$  and the enthalpy of mixing  $\Delta H_M(x)$ :  
178  $\Delta G_M^E(x) = \Delta H_M(x) - T\Delta S_M^E(x)$ . We will neglect  
179  $\Delta S_M^E(x)$  which may originate from non-configurational  
180 entropy (Benisek and Dachs, 2012) or deviations from  
181 perfect randomness. As regards  $\Delta H_M(x)$ , whose varia-  
182 tions with the SS composition are usually represented by  
183 the Guggenheim expansion (Guggenheim, 1937), we will  
184 only keep its first two terms, and thus restrict ourselves  
185 to sub-regular SS:

$$\Delta H_M(x) = -RTx(1-x)[A_0 + A_1(2x-1)] \quad (3)$$

186 The two dimensionless parameters  $A_0$  and  $A_1$  charac-  
187 terize the non-ideality of the SS.  $A_0$  may be related to  
188 first neighbor pairwise interactions. Its sign drives the  
189 tendency to ordering (if negative) or to unmixing (if pos-  
190 itive). When  $A_0$  exceeds some critical value, the SS pos-  
191 sesses a miscibility gap, which means a range of compo-  
192 sitions in which phase separation takes place. The  $A_1$   
193 coefficient introduces an asymmetry of  $\Delta G_M^E(x)$  about  
194  $x = 1/2$ .

195 The stoichiometric solubility product of the SS:  
196  $K(x) = \exp(-\Delta G(x)/RT)$  is equal to:

$$K(x) = K_{AC}^{1-x} K_{BC}^x (1-x)^{1-x} x^x e^{x(1-x)[A_0 + A_1(2x-1)]} \quad (4)$$

197 One can deduce the stoichiometric saturation state  $I(x)$   
198 of the AS with respect to a SS of composition  $x$  (some-  
199 times called  $\beta(x)$  (Prieto et al., 1993)), equal to the ratio  
200 between the ionic activity product  $Q(x) = [A]^{1-x}[B]^x[C]$   
201 and  $K(x)$ :

$$I(x) = \left[ \frac{I_{AC}}{(1-x)} \right]^{1-x} \left[ \frac{I_{BC}}{x} \right]^x e^{-x(1-x)[A_0 + A_1(2x-1)]} \quad (5)$$

202 In this expression,  $I_{AC}$  and  $I_{BC}$  are the saturation states  
203 of the AS with respect to the pure end-members AC and  
204 BC, respectively:

$$I_{AC} = \frac{[A][C]}{K_{AC}} \quad ; \quad I_{BC} = \frac{[B][C]}{K_{BC}} \quad (6)$$

$I(x)$  can also be written in terms of the activity coeffi-  
cients  $\lambda_{AC}$  and  $\lambda_{BC}$  of the end-members:

$$I(x) = \left[ \frac{I_{AC}}{(1-x)\lambda_{AC}(x)} \right]^{1-x} \left[ \frac{I_{BC}}{x\lambda_{BC}(x)} \right]^x \quad (7)$$

The coefficients  $\lambda_{AC}$  and  $\lambda_{BC}$  depend on  $x$  and, for a  
sub-regular SS, are equal to (Glynn, 1991):

$$\begin{aligned} \lambda_{AC}(x) &= e^{x^2[A_0 + A_1(4x-3)]} \\ \lambda_{BC}(x) &= e^{(1-x)^2[A_0 + A_1(4x-1)]} \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

Thermodynamic equilibrium between the SS and the  
AS is reached when simultaneously  $I(x) = 1$  (equivalent  
to  $\Delta G(x) = -RT \ln Q(x)$ ), and  $I(x)$  is maximum with  
respect to  $x$ . These two conditions determine the compo-  
sition  $x_0$  of the SS and that of the AS (through the  
values of  $I_{AC}$  and  $I_{BC}$ ) at thermodynamic equilibrium.  
They can be recast under the standard form:

$$\begin{aligned} I_{AC} &= (1-x_0)\lambda_{AC}(x_0) \\ I_{BC} &= x_0\lambda_{BC}(x_0) \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

In the following, we will focus on the characteristics  
of the *stoichiometric saturation state*, obtained from the  
single condition that  $I(x)$  is maximum with respect to  
 $x$ . Indeed, the goal of our work is to describe the *ki-*  
*netics* of precipitation and not the thermodynamic equi-  
librium between an AS and a SS, which is only found  
at infinite time of the precipitation process. Using the  
stoichiometric saturation amounts to considering the SS  
with respect to which the AS is the most supersaturated  
(Prieto, 2009). Its composition  $x_{st}$  is the solution of the  
implicit equation (Appendix A):

$$\frac{I_{AC}}{\lambda_{AC}(x_{st})(1-x_{st})} = \frac{I_{BC}}{\lambda_{BC}(x_{st})x_{st}} \quad (10)$$

Such a relationship is often graphically represented in a  
Roozeboom plot  $(x_{st}, [B]/([A]+[B]))$  (Mullin, 1993). The  
discussion which follows, based on Equation 10, paves  
the route to understanding the composition of the critical  
nuclei which will be the subject of the following section.

As shown in Appendix A, Eq. 10 may have one or  
three roots, depending on the values of  $A_0$ ,  $A_1$ , and on  
the composition of the AS. The latter enters in a compact  
way through the ratio  $W$ , which is equal to:

$$W = \frac{I_{BC}}{I_{AC}} = \frac{[B]K_{AC}}{[A]K_{BC}} \quad (11)$$

When Eq. 10 has a single root,  $x_{st}$  varies smoothly as a  
function of  $W$ . When there are three roots, two corre-  
spond to maxima of  $I(x)$  (i.e. minima of  $-\ln I(x)$ ) and  
one to a minimum (Figure 11 in Appendix A). The com-  
position  $x_{st}$  is equal to the root associated with the low-  
est value of  $-\ln I(x)$ . In Figure 1 are represented typical  
variations of the three roots of Eq. 10 as a function of  $W$   
and of the corresponding three values of  $-\ln(I(x)/I_{AC})$

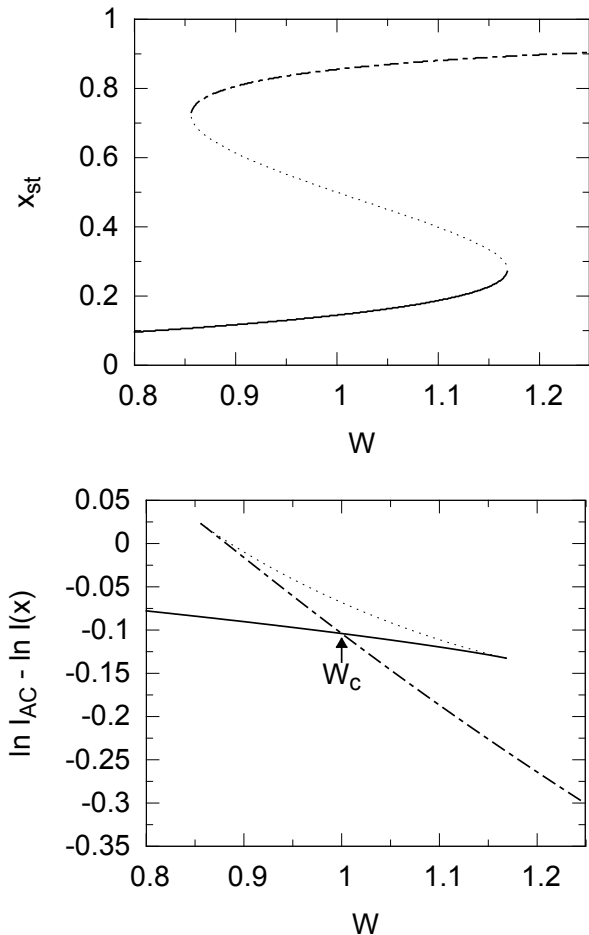


FIG. 1: Top panel: the three roots of Eq. 10, as a function of  $W = I_{BC}/I_{AC}$ , when  $A_0 = 2.5$  and  $A_1 = 0$ . The full and dashed-dotted curves display the variations of the minima of  $-\ln I(x)$  while the dotted one is associated with the maximum of this function. Bottom panel, corresponding values of  $\ln I_{AC} - \ln I(x)$ . The composition  $x_{st}$  of the SS at stoichiometric saturation corresponds to the lowest value of this function. The crossing of the curves at  $W_c$  is associated to a discontinuity of  $x_{st}$ .

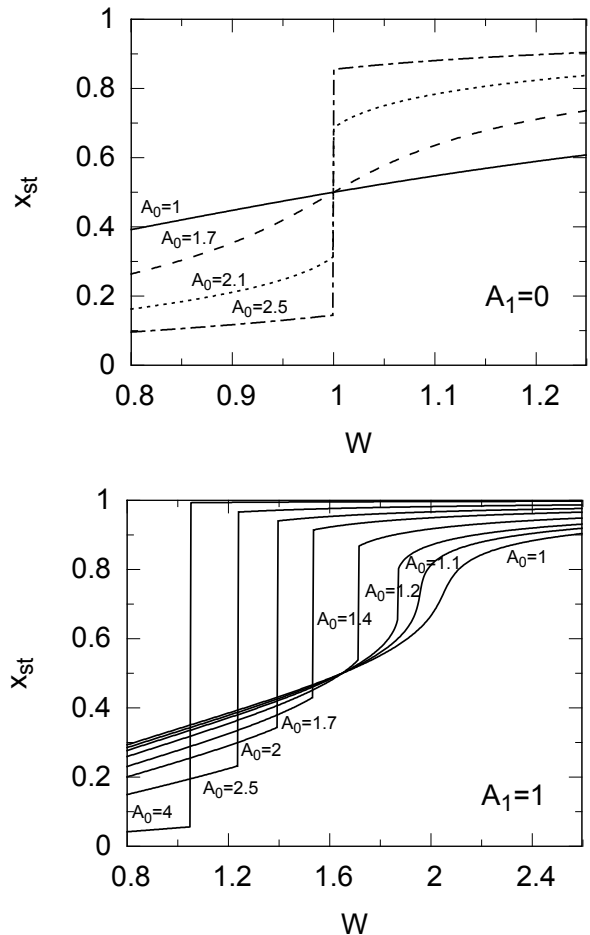


FIG. 2: Composition  $x_{st}$  of a SS at stoichiometric saturation with an AS whose composition is characterized by  $W = I_{BC}/I_{AC}$ , for various values of  $A_0$  when  $A_1 = 0$  (top panel) or  $A_1 = 1$  (bottom panel).

in the case of a strongly non-ideal SS. Because the lat-  
 244 ter cross each other, a discontinuity in  $x_{st}$  between two  
 245 values  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  takes place for some AS composition  
 246 characterized by  $W = W_c$ , at which the two phases of  
 247 composition  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  have the same Gibbs free energy  
 248 per mole. When  $W = W_c$ , the solid phase may become  
 249 spatially inhomogeneous and separate into two phases of  
 250 compositions  $x_1$  and  $x_2$ .

Figure 2 shows the variations of  $x_{st}$  as a function of  $W$   
 253 for several values of  $A_0$  and  $A_1$ . In the case of regular  
 254 SSs ( $A_1 = 0$ ),  $x_{st}$  varies smoothly (single root in Eq.  
 255 10) as long as  $A_0$  remains smaller than 2.  $x_{st}$  is less  
 256 than 0.5 (which means that the SS is richer in A ions  
 257 than in B ions) whenever  $W < 1$  and larger than 0.5 in  
 258 the opposite case. When  $A_0$  exceeds 2, a discontinuity  
 259 occurs at  $W_c = 1$ , whose height increases with  $A_0$  (e.g.  
 260  $x_2 - x_1 \approx 0.4$  for  $A_0 = 2.1$  and  $0.7$  for  $A_0 = 2.5$ ). The

symmetry of the miscibility gap about  $x_{st} = 1/2$  is to be  
 linked to the shape of the Gibbs free energy of mixing.

In sub-regular SSs ( $A_1 \neq 0$ ), the transition between  
 smooth and discontinuous variations of  $x_{st}$  occurs at  
 smaller values of  $A_0$  and the discontinuity (when it ex-  
 ists) takes place at varying values of  $W_c$ .  $x_1$  and  $x_2$   
 are no longer symmetric about 0.5.

The dependence of  $W_c$  on  $A_0$  is represented in Figure  
 3 (top panel).  $W_c$  decreases (resp. increases) asymptotically  
 towards  $W_c = 1$ , as  $A_0$  becomes larger if  $A_1 > 0$   
 (resp.  $A_1 < 0$ ). On each curve, there exists a minimum  
 value of  $A_0$  below which the discontinuity disappears  
 and  $x_{st}$  recovers a smooth variation as a function of  
 the AS composition. The range of parameters  $\{A_0, A_1\}$   
 for which  $x_{st}$  has no discontinuity lies inside the region  
 delineated by the two curves drawn in Figure 3 (bottom  
 panel).

Compared to the Roozeboom plot, the representation  
 of  $x_{st}$  as a function of  $W = ([B]K_{AC})/([A]K_{BC})$  that  
 we propose presents several advantages. First it acknowl-  
 edges the fact that, at constant values of the Guggenheim

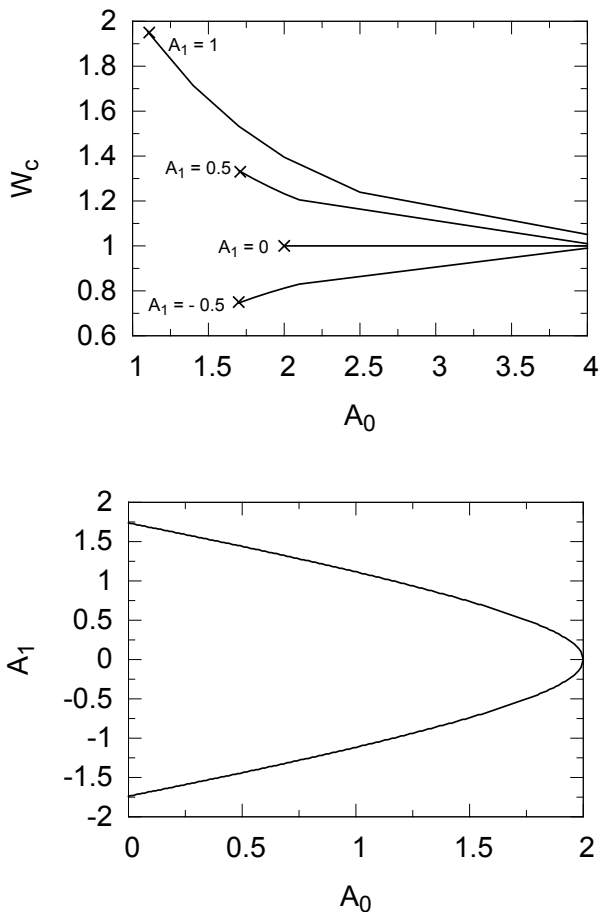


FIG. 3: Top: position  $W_c$  of the  $x_{st}$  discontinuity as a function of  $A_0$  for  $A_1=1, 0.5, 0$ , and  $-0.5$ . At constant  $A_1$ , the crosses mark the critical  $A_0$  value above which a discontinuity starts taking place. This critical value is represented in the bottom panel as a function of  $A_1$ . In the region between the two lines, Eq. 10 has a single root whatever  $W$ , which means that  $x_{st}$  varies smoothly as a function of the composition of the AS.

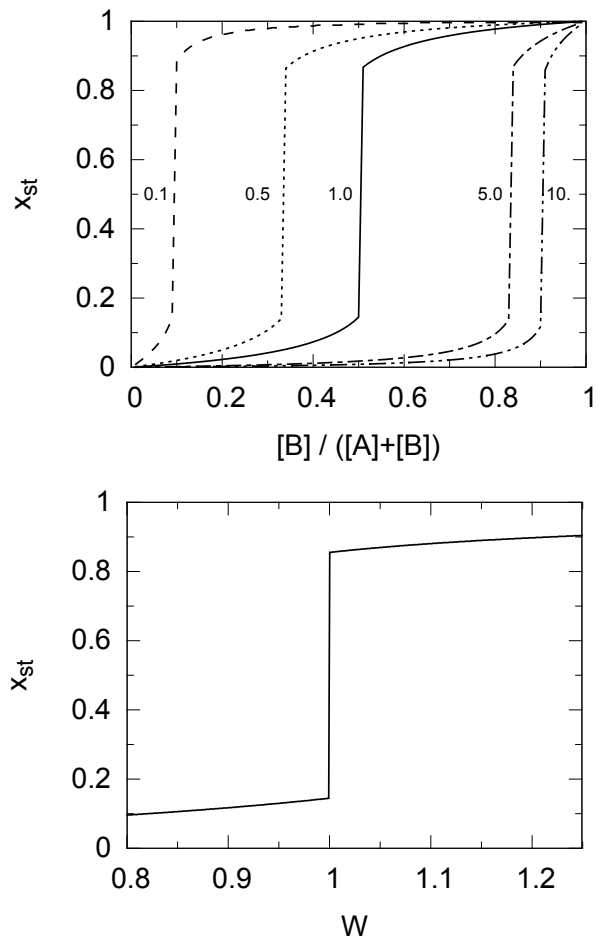


FIG. 4: Two representations of the relationship between the SS composition  $x_{st}$  and the AS composition. Top: Roozeboom plot as a function of  $[B]/([A] + [B])$  for various values of  $K_{BC}/K_{AC}$ . Bottom: Representation as a function of  $W = ([B]K_{AC})/([A]K_{BC})$ . In both case the SS is characterized by Guggenheim parameters  $A_0 = 2.5$  and  $A_1 = 0$ .

282 parameters,  $x_{st}$  is uniquely defined by the value of  $W$ ,<sup>299</sup>  
 283 and not separately by the ratios  $[B]/[A]$  and  $K_{BC}/K_{AC}$ <sup>300</sup>  
 284 as in the Roozeboom representation. The latter, for<sup>301</sup>  
 285 which one plot is needed for each value of  $K_{BC}/K_{AC}$ ,<sup>302</sup>  
 286 is convenient when one considers a specific system. At<sup>303</sup>  
 287 variance, the representation of  $x_{st}$  as a function of  $W$ <sup>304</sup>  
 288 is unique whatever the value of  $K_{BC}/K_{AC}$  (Figure 4).<sup>305</sup>  
 289 It will help highlight the generic behavior of sub-regular<sup>306</sup>  
 290 SSs during precipitation, which is the goal of our work.<sup>307</sup>  
 291 As will be shown in the next sections, a representation<sup>308</sup>  
 292 of the same type will be extremely useful to characterize<sup>309</sup>  
 293 the composition of the critical nuclei and layers deposited<sup>310</sup>  
 294 during growth, and to discriminate the various scenarios<sup>311</sup>  
 295 of precipitation.<sup>312</sup>

### III. NUCLEATION

In this section and the two following ones, we extend the formalism of nucleation and growth previously established for the precipitation of minerals with fixed composition (Noguera et al., 2006a,b) and ideal SSs (Noguera et al., 2010) to the formation of non-ideal SSs. Nucleation is treated within the framework of the classical theory of nucleation, in its continuum limit (Markov, 1995; Adamson, 1960). It is described in the following for homogeneous nucleation of spherical particles. The extension to heterogeneous nucleation (i.e. nucleation of particles on foreign solids) and non-spherical particle shapes is given in Appendix B. Moreover, we send the more complex treatment of precipitation of SSs whose surface energy depends on composition to Appendix C.

Under these conditions (homogeneous nucleation, spherical particles and constant surface energy), the

change in Gibbs free energy  $\Delta G(n, x)$  in the formation of a nucleus containing  $n$  formula units of composition  $x$  is the sum of two terms ( $k_B$  the Boltzmann constant):

$$\Delta G(n, x) = -nk_B T \ln I(x) + n^{2/3} v(x)^{2/3} X \sigma \quad (12)$$

The first (bulk-like) term  $-nk_B T \ln I(x)$ , with  $I(x)$  the stoichiometric saturation state given by Eq. 7, represents the gain (if  $I(x) > 1$ ) of Gibbs free energy when ions from the AS condense into a solid phase. The second term  $E_s = n^{2/3} v(x)^{2/3} X \sigma$  is the total surface energy of the nucleus. In this expression,  $v(x)$  is the volume of a formula unit of composition  $x$ , that will be assumed to vary linearly between its end-member values (no excess molar volume):  $v(x) = (1-x)v_{AC} + xv_{BC}$ . The geometric factor  $X$  is equal to  $X = (36\pi)^{1/3}$  for spherical particles and  $\sigma$  is the surface energy per unit area.

When  $I(x) > 1$ ,  $\Delta G(n, x)$  displays a maximum as a function of  $n$ , which defines the characteristics of the critical nucleus: its size  $n_m(x)$  and the barrier to be overcome for its nucleation  $\Delta G_m(x) = \Delta G(n_m(x), x)$ :

$$n_m(x) = \frac{2u(x)}{\ln^3 I(x)} \quad \text{with } u(x) = \frac{4X^3 \sigma^3 v(x)^2}{27(k_B T)^3} \quad (13)$$

and :

$$\frac{\Delta G_m(x)}{k_B T} = \frac{u(x)}{\ln^2 I(x)} \quad (14)$$

Assuming that the flow of nuclei through size and composition space is confined to a path through this point only (Reiss and Shugard, 1976), the composition of the critical nuclei is determined by the condition that the nucleation frequency  $F(x)$  is maximum with respect to  $x$ .  $F(x)$  depends exponentially on the nucleation barrier  $\Delta G_m(x)$ :

$$F(x) = F_0 \exp\{-\Delta G_m(x)/k_B T\} \quad (15)$$

There have been attempts to theoretically estimate the prefactor  $F_0$  for specific systems. However, in most cases, it has resulted in huge (several orders of magnitude) discrepancies with measured values, even in the case of minerals of fixed composition. For this reason, we will assume it to be a constant, with a value that must be empirically determined. The maximum nucleation rate is thus obtained when  $\Delta G_m(x)$  is minimum with respect to  $x$ , in which case the critical nuclei correspond to a saddle point in the  $\Delta G(n, x)$  energy surface.

Taking these expressions into consideration, after some algebra (Appendix D), the minimization of the nucleation barrier yields the critical nucleus composition  $x^*$ , solution of the implicit equation:

$$\left( \frac{I_{AC}}{(1-x^*)\lambda_{AC}(x^*)} \right)^{v_{BC}} = \left( \frac{I_{BC}}{x^*\lambda_{BC}(x^*)} \right)^{v_{AC}} \quad (16)$$

For ideal SSs, Eq. 16 has a single root. For regular or sub-regular SSs, there may be one or three roots and one

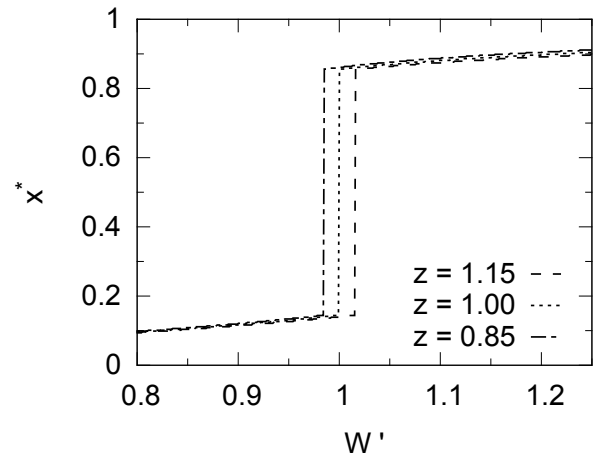


FIG. 5: Composition of the critical nuclei  $x^*$ , as a function of the ratio  $W' = I_{BC}/I_{AC}^z$ , for several values of  $z = v_{BC}/v_{AC}$ . All curves have been drawn for  $A_0 = 2.5$  and  $A_1 = 0$ . When  $z = 1$ ,  $x^* = x_{st}$ .

must determine the one which minimizes the nucleation barrier. To make a link with the previous section, one notes that, except for the exponents  $v_{AC}$  and  $v_{BC}$ , Eq. 16 strongly resembles Eq. 10, and, indeed, finding its solution(s) amounts to minimizing  $-\ln I(x)/v(x)$ . When  $v(x)$  does not depend on  $x$ , the composition  $x^*$  of the critical nucleus is thus equal to  $x_{st}$ , determined previously. When  $v$  varies with composition, the minimization of  $-\ln I(x)/v(x)$  is mathematically more involved (Appendix D). The solutions can be shown to be functions of  $A_0$ ,  $A_1$ ,  $z = v_{BC}/v_{AC}$  (parameter related to the end-member structures), and of the ratio:

$$W' = \frac{I_{BC}}{I_{AC}^z} \quad (17)$$

function of the composition of the AS. Depending upon whether the Guggenheim parameter values are located outside or within the region of the miscibility gap,  $x^*$  varies smoothly as a function of the AS composition or displays a discontinuity at a value  $W'_c$  function of  $A_0$ ,  $A_1$  and  $z$ . Usually  $z$  does not differ much from 1, especially for isomorphic end-members, because otherwise there would be no possibility to form an actual SS. As a result, in all cases, the composition  $x^*$  of the critical nucleus remains very close to  $x_{st}$ . Figure 5, for example, shows how  $x^*$  varies with  $W'$  for three values of  $z$ , in the case of a strongly non-ideal regular SS with  $A_0 = 2.5$ . The curve associated with  $z = 1$  represents the variations of  $x_{st}$ .  $W'_c$  varies by  $\pm 1.6\%$  when  $z = 1 \pm 0.15$ . The  $\{A_0, A_1\}$  range, in which a discontinuity of  $x^*$  occurs, nearly exactly coincides with that for  $x_{st}$  (Figure 3 bottom panel) within a precision of 0.001 on the limiting values of  $A_0$  and  $A_1$ .

Nucleation may start as soon as  $I(x^*) > 1$ . However, it becomes efficient (more than one nucleus per second and liter of solution), only if  $I(x^*)$  exceeds a critical value

388  $I_c(x^*)$  defined by:

$$\ln I_c(x^*) = \sqrt{\frac{u(x^*)}{\ln F_0}} \quad (18)$$

389 All quantities related to a given critical nucleus:  $x^*$ ,  
390  $n^* = n_m(x^*)$ ,  $\Delta G^* = \Delta G_m(x^*)$  and  $F(x^*)$ , depend on  
391 the time  $t_1$  at which nucleation occurs. This time depen-  
392 dence comes from the instantaneous values of the satu-  
393 ration states  $I_{AC}(t_1)$  and  $I_{BC}(t_1)$  of the AS with respect  
394 to the pure SS end-members, entering Eq. 16 which de-  
395 termines  $x^*(t_1)$ .

#### IV. GROWTH

397 Growth involves the condensation of ions from the AS  
398 on the surface of the particles. A growth law which cor-  
399 rectly describes such processes has to be size-dependent,  
400 but its expression depends upon the rate limiting pro-  
401 cess: diffusion in the liquid or the gaseous phase, contin-  
402 uous interfacial effects, and two-dimensional nucleation  
403 on flat faces or spiral growth (Burton et al., 1951; Baron-  
404 net, 1982; Parbhakar et al., 1995). In the following, we  
405 will restrict ourselves to a continuous growth mechanism,  
406 limited by the incorporation of growth units at the sur-  
407 face of a rough nucleus (Markov, 1995; Pina et al., 2000).  
408 Furthermore, we will define an average rate of incorpora-  
409 tion, so that the particle keeps the same shape as the  
410 critical nucleus (Wulff or Wulff-Kaishev shape) during its  
411 growth. Actually, the particle size may increase or de-  
412 crease according to whether it is larger or smaller than  
413 the instantaneous size of the critical nuclei. This is the  
414 Ostwald ripening process (Ostwald, 1900; Lifschitz and  
415 Slyozov, 1961). We will consider the two cases of positive  
416 growth or redissolution (negative growth) separately.

##### A. Positive growth

418 The energetic cost to increase the dimensions of a par-  
419 ticle may be related to its change of volume  $\delta V$  and its  
420 change of total surface energy  $\delta E_s$ :

$$\delta \Delta G(x) = -\frac{\delta V}{v(x)} k_B T \ln I(x) + \delta E_s \quad (19)$$

421 In the following, we will make the assumption of local  
422 equilibrium at the particle-solution interface. It amounts  
423 to considering that short-range transport across the in-  
424 terface is rapid enough to equilibrate the ions in the liquid  
425 and solid layers in contact. It is valid provided that the  
426 interface motion is slow enough (Aziz, 1988). When this  
427 is the case, the chemical potentials of ions at the surface  
428 of the particle are equal to those in the aqueous solu-  
429 tion. The composition  $x$  of the layer which is deposited  
430 is obtained from the condition that  $\delta \Delta G(x)$  is minimum  
431 with respect to  $x$ . The  $x$  dependence of  $\delta \Delta G(x)$  is in-  
432 cluded in  $-\ln I(x)/v(x)$ . Determining the composition

433  $x$  of the incremental layer thus amounts to minimizing  
434 this quantity. Because it is the same quantity which ap-  
435 pears in the determination of the critical nucleus compo-  
436 sition, the composition of the incremental layer at time  $t$   
437 is thus equal to  $x^*(t)$ .

Usually, and especially at low temperatures, solid state  
diffusion is very slow compared to all other characteristic  
times. We will neglect it, and assume that the composi-  
tion of a given layer remains fixed once formed (Doerner-  
Hoskins precipitation (Doerner and Hoskins, 1925)). The  
particles thus display composition profiles due to the time  
variation of  $x^*$ .

The dimensions and number of growth units of a par-  
ticle at time  $t$  depend on two time indices:  $t_1$  the time at  
which the particle has nucleated, and  $t$  the time of ob-  
servation. One has thus to write:  $n(t_1, t)$  and  $\rho(t_1, t)$  ( $\rho$   
the radius of the particle). At variance, the composition  
of the outer layer of growing particles only depends on  $t$ ,  
because it is the same for all particles.

In the regime of increasing particle size  $d\rho(t_1, t)/dt >$   
0, the growth equation used for particles of fixed compo-  
sition can be straightforwardly generalized to SSs (Noguera  
et al. 2010):

$$\frac{d\rho(t_1, t)}{dt} = \kappa \left( I(t, x^*(t)) - \exp \left[ \frac{2u(x^*(t))}{n(t_1, t)} \right]^{1/3} \right) \quad (20)$$

In Eq. 20, it is the saturation index relative to the com-  
position of the deposited layer, and thus relative to a SS  
of composition  $x^*(t)$ , which must be used.

##### B. Redissolution

417 Whenever the right hand-side of Eq. 20 is negative, i.e.  
418 whenever  $n(t_1, t) < n^*(t)$ , the particles decrease in size  
419 ( $d\rho(t_1, t)/dt < 0$ ). During such a redissolution stage, lay-  
420 ers formed at anterior times are progressively dissolved.  
421 A layer corresponding to a radius  $\rho(t_1, t)$  which reaches  
422 the particle/solution interface at time  $t$ , had been de-  
423 posited at time  $t_2$  such that:

$$\rho(t_1, t_2) = \rho(t_1, t) \quad (21)$$

$t_2$  is specific to the particle and thus depends on  $t_1$  and  
 $t$ . At time  $t_2$ , the layer composition was equal to  $x^*(t_2)$ .  
Consequently, in the redissolution regime, the growth  
rate reads:

$$\frac{d\rho(t_1, t)}{dt} = \kappa \left( I(t, x^*(t_2)) - \exp \left[ \frac{2u(x^*(t_2))}{n(t_1, t)} \right]^{1/3} \right) \quad (22)$$

As a whole, the growth laws written in Eqs. 20 and 22  
allow positive or negative growth of particles, depending  
on the relative value of their size with respect to the  
critical nucleus size. The process of Ostwald ripening is  
thus included in the present formalism. At variance, a



476 growth law of the type:

$$\frac{d\rho(t_1, t)}{dt} = \kappa(I^p(t, x(t_1, t)) - 1)^q \quad (23)$$

477 as often assumed in the literature (Lasaga, 1984; 524  
478 Parkhurst and Appelo, 1999), is unable to lead the solid 525  
479 phase toward equilibrium, whatever the values of the em- 526  
480 pirical exponents  $p$  and  $q$ . In the long term, it correctly 527  
481 drives the saturation state of the AS towards 1 if the 528  
482 feed-back effect of growth on the AS composition is in- 529  
483 cluded, but because all nucleated particles survive, the  
484 total surface energy of the solid phase is not minimized. 530  
485 The lowest energy configuration (a single particle with  
486 all available matter in it) is never reached.

## 487 V. FEED-BACK EFFECT ON THE SOLUTION 534

488 At a given time  $t$ , the particle population consists of all 536  
489 the particles which have nucleated at times  $t_1 < t$ , and 537  
490 with nucleation frequencies and sizes equal to  $F(t_1)$  and 538  
491  $n(t_1, t)$  respectively. The amounts  $q_M(t)$  of end-members  
492 M (M=AC or BC) which have been withdrawn from the  
493 AS at time  $t$  are thus equal to: 539

$$q_M(t) = \int_0^t F(t_1)(n^*(t_1) - 1)X_M(t_1)dt_1 + \int_0^t F(t_1)dt_1 \int_{t_1}^t dt_3 \frac{dn(t_1, t_3)}{dt_3} X_M(t_3) \quad (24)$$

494 The first term represents the contribution of nucle- 546  
495 ation, with  $X_M(t_1)$  the molar fractions of the end- 547  
496 members equal to  $(1 - x^*(t_1))$  and  $x^*(t_1)$  for M=AC and 548  
497 BC, respectively. The second term is due to the size evo- 549  
498 lution of the particles.  $n^*(t_1) - 1$  is written rather than 550  
499  $n^*(t_1)$  to signal that more than one growth unit is neces- 551  
500 sary to determine if a solid phase is formed. In the case of 552  
501 redissolution  $X_M(t_3)$  must be put equal to  $X_M(t_2)$  with 553  
502  $t_2$  determined by the condition that  $\rho(t_1, t_2) = \rho(t_1, t_3)$  554  
503 (Equation 21). From these quantities and an ionic spe- 555  
504 ciation model, one can calculate all activities in the AS 556  
505 and the saturation indexes  $I_{AC}(t)$ ,  $I_{BC}(t)$  and  $I(t, x)$ . 557

506 Including feed-back effects on the AS allows an evolu- 558  
507 tion of its composition towards thermodynamic equilib- 559  
508 rium. When  $t \rightarrow \infty$ ,  $I(t, x^*)$  tends to 1 and, combining 560  
509 Equations 5 and 16, it is easy to check that  $x^* \rightarrow x_0$ , as 561  
510 it should. 562

511 The equation giving  $q_M(t)$  (Equation 24), together 563  
512 with those which fix  $I(t, x)$ ,  $x^*(t_1)$ ,  $n^*(t_1)$ ,  $\Delta G^*(t_1)$ , 564  
513  $F(t_1)$ , and  $\rho(t_1, t)$  form a complete set which, together 565  
514 with the speciation equations, allow the full determina- 566  
515 tion of the precipitate and aqueous solution characteris- 567  
516 tics at all times. 568

517 The present formalism represents an important ad- 569  
518 vance with respect to our previous work (Noguera et 570  
519 al., 2010) which was restricted to ideal solid solutions, 571

spherical particles and homogeneous nucleation. The de-  
velopment of the NANOKIN code to include these new  
functionalities is presently under progress, and its ap-  
plication to a realistic precipitation process will be the  
subject of a forthcoming paper. In the following, we will  
highlight some generic characteristics of the precipitation  
of non-ideal SS, and, under some approximations, we will  
present some numerical simulations exemplifying various  
scenarios which may be encountered in the precipitation  
of SSs of geochemical interest.

## VI. PRECIPITATION SCENARIOS

In this section, we first discuss the characteristics of  
the precipitation process as a function of the degree of  
non-ideality of the SS and we evidence four possible pre-  
cipitation scenarios (Section VIA). We then discuss their  
conditions of occurrence, under some simplifying assump-  
tions, and we represent them graphically as a function of  
the ratio of the solubility products of the end-members  
and the Guggenheim coefficient  $A_0$  (Section VIB).

### A. The four scenarios

540 First we recall that when the Guggenheim coefficients  
541  $A_0$  and  $A_1$  belong to the zone included in between the two  
542 lines drawn in Figure 3 (lower panel), the equations which  
543 fix  $x_{st}$  and  $x^*$  have a single root and the precipitation  
544 scenario bears strong resemblances to that of an ideal  
545 SS. When  $A_0 > 0$ , the only difference with truly ideal  
SSs lies in the corrections due to the activity coefficients  
 $\lambda_{AC}$  and  $\lambda_{BC}$ . In that case the precipitation scenario  
will be called *Precipitation Scenario #1* (Sc. #1).

When the contribution of the enthalpy of mixing of the  
SS to the Gibbs free energy of dissolution is negative, the  
SS displays a tendency towards ordering. It is generally  
associated with negative values of the first Guggenheim  
coefficient <sup>1</sup> and is usually interpreted as resulting from  
short range attraction between dissimilar first neighbors,  
which favors A-B pairs over A-A or B-B pairs. Which  
order is actually achieved depends on a contribution of  
the entropy of mixing which is specific to each case. Be-  
cause at the present stage our study remains generic, we  
do not introduce it, so that this limit is not well-treated  
by our approach and will not be further discussed.

In the limit of strong non-ideality of the SS, a miscibil-  
ity gap is present which is revealed by a jump of  $x^*$  from  
 $x_1$  to  $x_2$  at a critical value  $W'_c$  of  $W' = I_{BC}/I_{AC}^z$  (see e.g.  
Figure 5). This occurs when the Guggenheim coefficients  
 $A_0$  and  $A_1$  belong to the regions of the diagram in Figure  
3 above or below the two lines.  $x_1$ ,  $x_2$  and  $W'_c$  are solely  
determined by the values of  $A_0$ ,  $A_1$  and  $z = v_{BC}/v_{AC}$   
(See Appendix D). For example, in the special case where  
 $A_1 = 0$  (regular SSs) and  $z = 1$ ,  $x_2$  is equal to  $1 - x_1$   
and the critical value for  $W$  is equal to  $W'_c = 1$  (see Sec-  
tions 2 and 3). The question of phase separation in the

<sup>1</sup> For sub-regular SSs, the  $A_1$  coefficient should also be taken into  
account. However, in the logics of the Guggenheim expansion  
and its truncation,  $A_1$  is expected to be smaller than  $A_0$ , in  
absolute value, so that extension of the zone of existence of a  
miscibility gap towards negative  $A_0$  values in Figure 3 appears  
meaningless.

critical nuclei or in the deposited layers becomes relevant only when  $W' = W'_c$  because then the nucleation barrier (Eq. 14) takes equal values for  $x^* = x_1$  and  $x^* = x_2$  and the same is true for the interfacial Gibbs free energy for growth (Eq. 19).

Consequently, the scenario of precipitation depends on whether and how the condition  $W' = W'_c$  is met during the time evolution of the system. The initial conditions (embedded in the value of  $W'$  at time  $t = 0$ ) and the sign of  $dW'/dt$  in the vicinity of the discontinuity are the relevant factors in that respect. We first note that, in the presence of a miscibility gap,  $W'(t)$  has a slope discontinuity at  $W' = W'_c$ , due to the different values  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  of the SS composition for  $W' < W'_c$  and  $W' > W'_c$ , respectively (Appendix E). We will note  $dW'_1/dt$  and  $dW'_2/dt$  the associated two time derivative values of  $W'(t)$ , respectively. This allows discrimination of the following scenarios:

- conditions are such that during the precipitation process the discontinuity is not met. This takes place if, at  $t = 0$ ,  $W' < W'_c$  and close to the discontinuity  $dW'_1/dt < 0$ , or if, at  $t = 0$ ,  $W' > W'_c$  and close to the discontinuity  $dW'_2/dt > 0$ . This scenario will be referred to, in the following, as *Precipitation Scenario #2* (Sc. #2).
- conditions are such that, during the precipitation process, the discontinuity is met but  $dW'/dt$  has the same sign on both sides of the discontinuity. The discontinuity is thus crossed but the time spent by the system at  $W' = W'_c$  is irrelevant. No phase separation takes place. This scenario will be referred to as *Precipitation Scenario #3* (Sc. #3).
- finally, it may be that the discontinuity is met but  $dW'/dt$  has opposite signs on both sides of the discontinuity, which tends to bring it back towards  $W' = W'_c$  on both sides. There is then a conflict between the variations of  $W'$  forcing it to stay constant and equal to  $W'_c$  (Lyapunov stable equilibrium point (Lyapunov, 1992)). It is in this case that phase separation takes place, in order to allow the condition  $dW'/dt = 0$  to be fulfilled. This scenario will be referred to as *Precipitation Scenario #4* (Sc. #4).

To go further, one has to determine the sign of  $dW'/dt$  on the left and right of the discontinuity. It is possible to derive formal expressions for  $dW'_1/dt$  and  $dW'_2/dt$  from the feed-back equations, as described in Appendix E, and also to deduce the relative percentages  $\alpha$  and  $(1 - \alpha)$  of the two SSs with composition  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  when phase separation occurs. These expressions may then be quantitatively estimated for specific cases.

Aside from this numerical approach, in the following in order to gain some physical insight into practical conditions of occurrence of the four scenarios, we restrict the discussion to regular SSs and some simplified conditions of precipitation. This will allow us to devise a dia-

gram of occurrence of the scenarios as a function of some parameters (ratios of the solubility products of the two end-members, degree  $A_0$  of non-ideality of the SS and initial conditions of precipitation), and to make qualitative predictions of the precipitation characteristics of realistic SSs of geochemical interest.

## B. Conditions of existence of the four scenarios for regular SSs

The simplifying assumptions are the following:

- the SS is regular ( $A_1 = 0$ )
- the formula unit volume as well as the surface energy of the SS are assumed to be independent of  $x$ . For example they may be set equal to the average of the corresponding values of the end-members. Consequently, there are no surface excess quantities (Appendix C) and  $z = 1$ .
- the A, B and C species are the dominant forms of the elements in the AS, and no mineral other than the SS may dissolve or precipitate. The time evolution of the [A], [B] and [C] activities thus only comes from the precipitation of the SS under consideration. Moreover, for SSs with a miscibility gap, we assume that, at the time when the  $x^*$  discontinuity is met, redissolution is negligible. Both hypotheses imply that the contribution  $W''$  to  $dW'/dt$  which is continuous at  $W'_c$  vanishes (Appendix E).

Under these hypotheses, in strongly non-ideal SSs ( $A_0 > 2$ ), the miscibility gap is symmetric ( $x_2 = 1 - x_1$ ) and  $W'_c = 1$ . At the discontinuity, the last equality means that  $[B]/[A] = K_{BC}/K_{AC}$ . Moreover, close to the discontinuity (Appendix E):

$$\frac{1}{W'} \frac{dW'}{dt} \propto - \left( x^*(t) - (1 - x^*(t)) \frac{K_{BC}}{K_{AC}} \right) \quad (25)$$

with  $x^*$  equal to  $x_1$  or  $x_2$  when  $W'_c$  is smaller or larger than 1, respectively.

As a consequence:

- $dW'_1/dt > 0$  if  $x_1/(1 - x_1) < K_{BC}/K_{AC}$
- $dW'_1/dt < 0$  otherwise
- $dW'_2/dt > 0$  if  $x_2/(1 - x_2) < K_{BC}/K_{AC}$
- $dW'_2/dt < 0$  otherwise

Using these inequalities, the conditions of occurrence of Scenario #2 read:

$$\frac{[B(t=0)]}{[A(t=0)]} < \frac{K_{BC}}{K_{AC}} < \frac{x_1}{1 - x_1} \quad (26)$$

669 OR:

$$\frac{x_2}{1-x_2} < \frac{K_{BC}}{K_{AC}} < \frac{[B(t=0)]}{[A(t=0)]} \quad (27)$$

670 Scenario #3 requires that the three ratios  $[B(t=0)]/[A(t=0)]$ ,  $x_1/(1-x_1)$  and  $x_2/(1-x_2)$  are simultaneously either smaller than  $K_{BC}/K_{AC}$  or larger than it. Finally, Scenario #4 takes place when the following inequalities are fulfilled:

$$\frac{x_1}{1-x_1} < \frac{K_{BC}}{K_{AC}} < \frac{x_2}{1-x_2} \quad (28)$$

675 whatever the value of  $[B(t=0)]/[A(t=0)]$

676 These conditions are graphically represented in Figure 6, as a function of  $\ln K_{BC}/K_{AC}$  and the degree  $A_0$  of non-ideality of the SS. The boundaries between the zones of existence of the scenarios #1, #2, #3, and #4 include the vertical line  $A_0 = 2$  on the left of which only Scenario #1 takes place, and the two lines  $\ln K_{BC}/K_{AC} = \ln x_1/(1-x_1)$  and  $\ln K_{BC}/K_{AC} = \ln x_2/(1-x_2)$ . In between the two latter, phase separation takes place within Scenario #4.

677 Outside these regions, Scenarios #2 or #3 may take place, depending on the initial conditions. When  $\ln K_{BC}/K_{AC} > \ln x_2/(1-x_2)$ , the discontinuity is not crossed (Scenario #2) if  $[B(t=0)]/[A(t=0)] > K_{BC}/K_{AC}$  and otherwise it is crossed (Scenario #3). Symmetrically, when  $\ln K_{BC}/K_{AC} < \ln x_2/(1-x_2)$ , the discontinuity is not crossed (Scenario #2) if  $[B(t=0)]/[A(t=0)] < K_{BC}/K_{AC}$  and otherwise it is crossed (Scenario #3). The difference between the two scenarios, i.e. the existence of a composition discontinuity inside the particles, is thus only fixed by the initial conditions in these regions.

## 697 VII. NUMERICAL SIMULATION AND RELEVANT EXAMPLES

698 In this section, we present results of numerical simulations which highlight the generic characteristics of the precipitation kinetics under conditions such that scenarios #1, #2, #3 or #4 take place. We will make use of the same assumptions as in subsection VIB and also assume that the particles have a spherical shape. Although these assumptions are rather simplistic, they help provide a first insight into the precipitation characteristics of SSs of geochemical interest.

### 708 A. Weakly non-ideal SS: precipitation Scenario #1

709 When the Guggenheim coefficient  $A_0 < 2$ , the SS which forms is weakly non-ideal. The only difference from truly ideal SSs lies in the corrections due to the activity coefficients  $\lambda_{AC}$  and  $\lambda_{BC}$ . The dynamics of precipitation presents many common characteristics with that of ideal

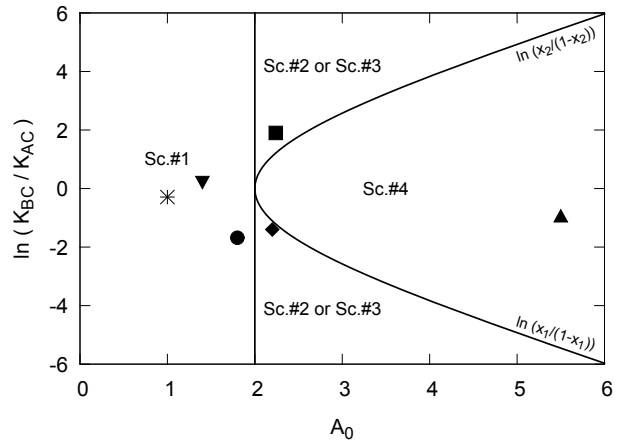


FIG. 6: Diagram  $\ln K_{BC}/K_{AC}$  as a function of the degree  $A_0$  of non-ideality of the SS, representing the zones of existence of the scenarios #1, #2, #3, and #4.  $K(\text{Cl,Br})$ ,  $(\text{Mg,Fe})\text{CO}_3$ ,  $(\text{Ba,Ra})\text{SO}_4$ ,  $(\text{Ca,Zn})\text{CO}_3$ ,  $\text{Ca}(\text{SO}_4, \text{SeO}_4)$  and  $(\text{Ca,Sr})\text{CO}_3$  SSs are located in this diagram, represented by triangle-down, circle, star, diamond, square and triangle-up, respectively (see text).

SSs, which we have analyzed in a previous work (Noguera et al., 2010). Two typical examples are shown in Figure 7, for  $A_0 = 1$  and two values of the solubility product ratio  $K_{BC}/K_{AC}$ .

In both cases, due to nucleation and growth, the AS is impoverished in A, B, and C species as time passes and  $I(t, x^*(t))$  decreases towards 1, until thermodynamic equilibrium is reached in the long term. The time variation of the critical nucleus composition is very dependent on the ratio  $K_{BC}/K_{AC}$ . When the solubility products of the two end-members are close to each other, the range of  $x^*$  values is small and the composition profile of the particles is smooth, as exemplified in Figure 7 (left panels) where  $K_{BC}/K_{AC}$  was chosen equal to 1. At variance, when the two end-members have largely different solubility products,  $x^*$  varies in a larger range as shown in Figure 7 (right panels) for which  $K_{BC}/K_{AC} = 10$ . The surviving particles may display either a core-shell structure, with a smooth interface between core and shell, or nearly constant composition, depending on the initial conditions. In any case, when thermodynamic equilibrium is reached, the last surviving particle has a non-homogeneous composition, at variance with thermodynamic models of SSs which assume an homogeneous composition.

$\text{KCl}_{1-x}\text{Br}_x$  was shown to be a quasi-regular SS, with  $A_0 = 1.4$  and a very small  $A_1$  coefficient (Glynn et al., 1990) and the two end-members have a small solubility product ratio ( $K_{BC}/K_{AC} = 1.68$  (Blanc et al., 2012)). The particles formed during precipitation are thus expected to have a smooth composition profile. This is also the case for the  $(\text{Ba,Ra})\text{SO}_4$  SS with a ratio of solubility products  $K_{BC}/K_{AC}$  equal to 0.512 (Hummel

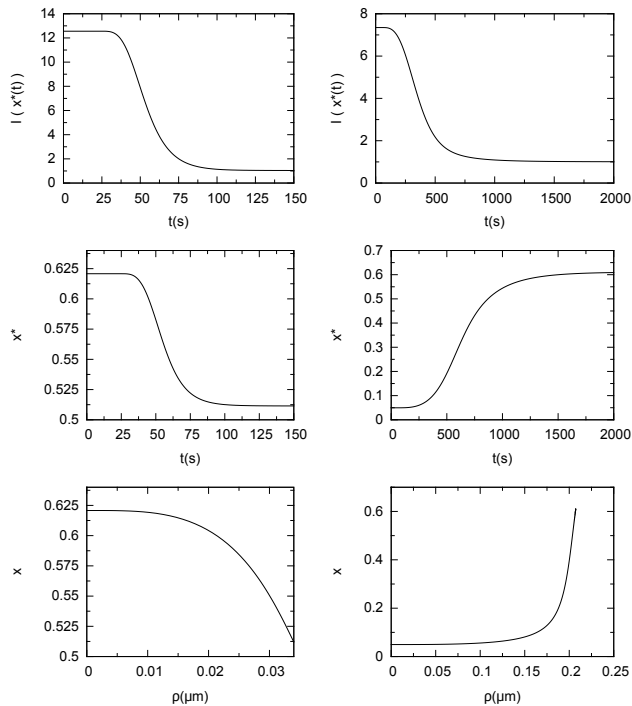


FIG. 7: From top to bottom: time dependence of the saturation state  $I(t, x^*(t))$ , time dependence of the critical nucleus composition  $x^*$  and concentration profile of the surviving particles at the end of the simulation. Left and right panels refer to  $K_{BC}/K_{AC} = 1$  and 10, respectively. All curves have been drawn for  $A_0 = 1$ ,  $A_1 = 0$ ,  $F_0 = 10^{19}$  particles per second and liter of solution,  $\sigma = 50$  mJ/m<sup>2</sup> independent on composition,  $\kappa = 10^{-10}$  m/s,  $v_{AC} = v_{BC} = 50$  Å<sup>3</sup>,  $K_{AC} = 10^{-6}$  and initial activities:  $[A(t=0)] = 7 \cdot 10^{-4}$ ,  $[B(t=0)] = 9 \cdot 10^{-4}$ ,  $[C(t=0)] = 10^{-2}$ .

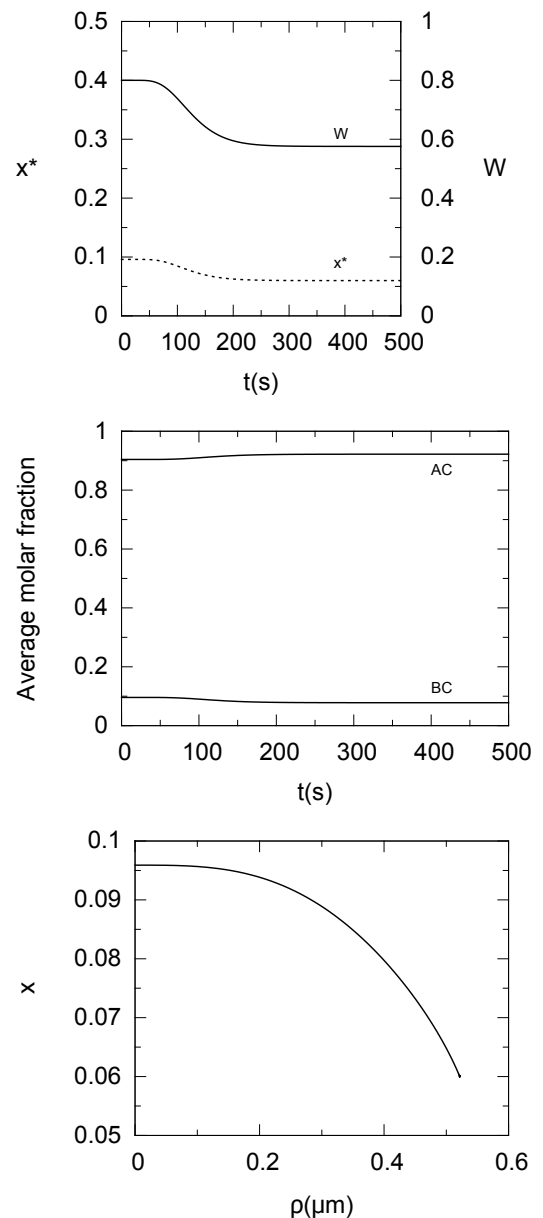


FIG. 8: From top to bottom: time dependence of  $W$  and the critical nucleus composition  $x^*$ , time dependence of the end-member average molar fractions  $q_{AC}/(q_{AC} + q_{BC})$  and  $q_{BC}/(q_{AC} + q_{BC})$ , and composition profile of long lasting particles. All curves have been drawn for  $A_0 = 2.5$ ,  $A_1 = 0$ ,  $F_0 = 10^{19}$  particles per second and liter of solution,  $\sigma = 50$  mJ/m<sup>2</sup> independent on composition,  $\kappa = 10^{-9}$  m/s,  $v_{AC} = v_{BC} = 50$  Å<sup>3</sup>,  $K_{AC} = 10^{-6}$ ,  $K_{BC} = 10^{-7}$  and initial activities:  $[A(t=0)] = 6 \cdot 10^{-4}$ ,  $[B(t=0)] = 48 \cdot 10^{-6}$ ,  $[C(t=0)] = 10^{-2}$ .

747 et al., 2002). This SS has recently been studied by  
 748 Brandt et al. (2015) who confirmed a Guggenheim co-  
 749 efficient  $A_0 = 1$  as theoretically predicted (Vinograd et  
 750 al., 2013). At variance, particles of  $\text{Mg}_{1-x}\text{Fe}_x\text{CO}_3$ , for  
 751 which  $A_0 = 1.8$  (Chai and Navrotsky, 1996) should dis-  
 752 play a core-shell structure because the solubility products  
 753 of the end-members differ by about two orders of magni-  
 754 tude ( $K_{BC}/K_{AC} = 0.02$  (Blanc et al., 2012)). The infor-  
 755 mation for the three SSs described above are reported in  
 756 Figure 6.

## 757 B. Strongly non-ideal SS: precipitation Scenario 758 #2 without composition discontinuity

759 We present here simulation results for the precipita-  
 760 tion of a strongly non-ideal SS ( $A_0 = 2.5$ ,  $x_1 = 0.1448$   
 761 and  $x_2 = 0.8552$ ), under conditions relevant for scenario  
 762 #2 (Conditions 26 or 27). In Figure 8, initial conditions  
 763 and ratios of solubility products have been chosen such  
 764 that  $W' < 1$  at  $t = 0$  and  $dW'_1/dt < 0$ . The system  
 765 thus does not encounter the composition discontinuity  
 766 and the time dependence of  $x^*$  is smooth. The critical

nuclei and the deposited layers remain AC rich during the whole precipitation process, consistent with average molar fractions of the AC and BC end-members in the precipitate,  $q_{AC}/(q_{AC} + q_{BC})$  and  $q_{BC}/(q_{AC} + q_{BC})$ , close to 90% and 10%, respectively. A typical particle composition profile at the end of the process is shown in Figure

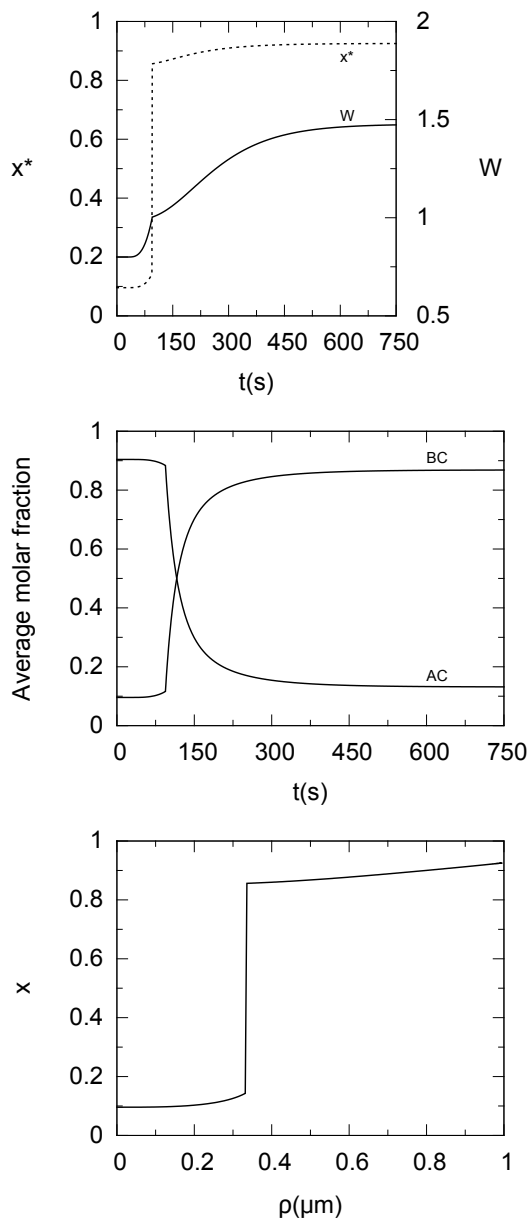


FIG. 9: From top to bottom: time dependence of  $W$  and the critical nucleus composition  $x^*$ , time dependence of the end-member average molar fractions  $q_{AC}/(q_{AC} + q_{BC})$  and  $q_{BC}/(q_{AC} + q_{BC})$ , and composition profile of long lasting particles. Same parameter values as in Figure 8, except  $K_{BC} = 10^{-5}$  and  $[B(t=0)] = 48.10^{-4}$ .

### C. Strongly non-ideal SS: precipitation Scenario #3 with a crossing of the composition discontinuity

This is another example of precipitation of a strongly non-ideal SS, with the same characteristics as the previous one ( $A_0 = 2.5$ ,  $x_1 = 0.1448$  and  $x_2 = 0.8552$ ), but under conditions relevant for scenario #3, i.e. such that the discontinuity in the  $x^*$  versus  $W'$  curve is met and crossed (same sign of  $dW'/dt$  on both sides of the discontinuity).

The precipitation characteristics shown in Figure 9 have been obtained under conditions close to those of the previous subsection, except for the initial activity  $[B(t=0)]$  and for the ratio of solubility products. At  $t = 0$ ,  $W' < 1$  and  $dW'_1/dt > 0$ . The system thus meets the composition discontinuity at the time  $t_c$  when  $W' = 1$ . This clearly shows up in the time dependence of  $x^*$  which displays a 70% jump, and in the slope discontinuity in the time dependence of  $W'$ . Before  $t_c$ , the critical nucleus and deposited layer compositions are AC rich ( $x \approx 15\%$ ). They become BC rich ( $x \approx 85\%$ ) after  $t_c$ . This sudden change is reflected in the time dependence of the molar fractions of the end-members in the precipitate which displays a crossing point at some time posterior to  $t_c$ . The composition profile of the particles at the end of the process also reflects the discontinuity which has occurred at  $t_c$ . The particles have a core-shell structure, with an AC-rich core and a BC-rich shell and an abrupt interface between core and shell (Figure 9, bottom panel).

$\text{Ca}_{1-x}\text{Zn}_x\text{CO}_3$  and  $\text{Ca}(\text{SO}_4)_{1-x}(\text{SeO}_4)_x$  SSs may display precipitation scenarios #2 or #3 depending on the initial value of the  $[\text{Zn}]/[\text{Ca}]$  or  $[\text{SeO}_4]/[\text{SO}_4]$  activity ratios. Indeed, for both SSs, the Guggenheim coefficients  $A_0$  are equal to 2.2 (Glynn and Reardon, 1990) and 2.24 (Fernández-González et al., 2006), respectively, and their solubility products locate them, respectively, in the lower and upper regions of Figure 6 where scenarios #2 or #3 take place. ( $K_{BC}/K_{AC} = 0.03$  for  $\text{Ca}_{1-x}\text{Zn}_x\text{CO}_3$  (Crocket and Winchester, 1966) and  $K_{BC}/K_{AC} \approx 80$  for  $\text{Ca}(\text{SO}_4)_{1-x}(\text{SeO}_4)_x$  (Parkhurst and Appelo, 1999)). During their formation by precipitation, the particles are thus expected to display smooth profiles or core-shell structure depending on initial conditions which will determine whether scenarios #2 or #3 apply.

### D. Strongly non-ideal SS: precipitation Scenario #4 with phase separation

Keeping the characteristics of the SS unchanged with respect to the two previous subsections ( $A_0 = 2.5$ ,  $x_1 = 0.1448$  and  $x_2 = 0.8552$ ), we now consider conditions relevant for scenario #4, i.e. such that the discontinuity is met but  $dW'/dt$  has opposite signs on both sides of the discontinuity. This happens if, at  $t = 0$ ,  $W' < 1$  and close to the discontinuity  $dW'_1/dt > 0$  and  $dW'_2/dt < 0$ , or if, at  $t = 0$ ,  $W' > 1$  and close to the discontinuity

8 bottom panel. The particles are non-uniform in com-  
position and become more AC-rich close to their surface.  
However, the variation of composition  $x$  between the core  
and the surface is small, of the order of 4%.

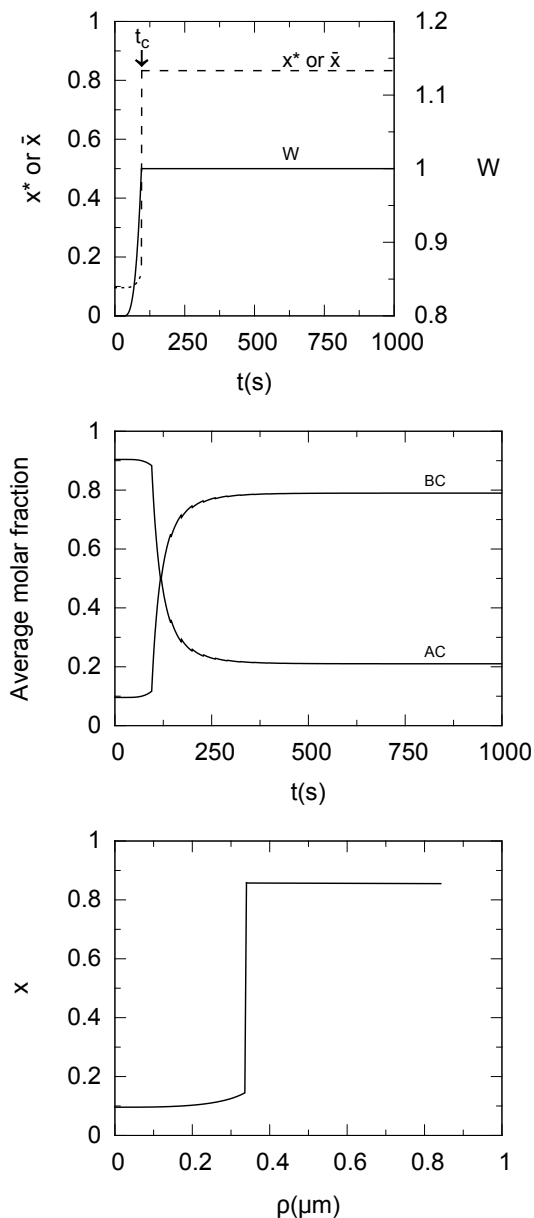


FIG. 10: From top to bottom: time dependence of  $W$ , time dependence of the critical nucleus composition  $x^*$  (when  $t < t_c$ ) or  $\bar{x} = \alpha x_1 + (1 - \alpha)x_2$  (when  $t > t_c$ ); time dependence of the end-member average molar fractions  $q_{AC}/(q_{AC} + q_{BC})$  and  $q_{BC}/(q_{AC} + q_{BC})$ ; composition profile of a long lasting particle. Same parameter values as in Figure 8, except  $K_{BC} = 5.10^{-6}$  and  $[B(t=0)] = 24.10^{-4}$ .

$dW'_1/dt < 0$  and  $dW'_2/dt > 0$  (Condition 28).

For the example shown in Figure 10, initial conditions and ratios of solubility products have been chosen so that  $W' < 1$  at  $t = 0$ , and simultaneously  $dW'_1/dt > 0$  and  $dW'_2/dt < 0$  at the discontinuity. All other parameters are equal to those of the preceding examples. The system encounters the composition discontinuity at a time  $t_c$ . The conflicting variations of  $W'$  on the left and right of the discontinuity force  $W'$  to remain constant and equal

to 1 at all posterior times (Figure 10, top panel). For all times  $t > t_c$ , the ratio of B and A activities remains constant ( $[B(t)]/[A(t)] = K_{BC}/K_{AC}$ ), although the saturation states  $I_{AC}$  and  $I_{BC}$  of the AS with respect to the end-members decrease. Phase separation between phases of compositions  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  takes place at  $t > t_c$ , with relative amounts  $\alpha$  and  $1 - \alpha$  (Eq. 61 in Appendix E). It is not easy to tell how the two phases will be spatially organized, but an average composition in the critical nucleus or the instantaneous deposited layers may be defined at each time  $t > t_c$  as  $\bar{x} = \alpha x_1 + (1 - \alpha)x_2$ . Because  $\alpha$  remains constant, the same is true for  $\bar{x}$ , which in the present example is equal to 0.833. Because it is closer to  $x_2$  than to  $x_1$ , the end-member molar fractions  $q_{AC}/(q_{AC} + q_{BC})$  and  $q_{BC}/(q_{AC} + q_{BC})$  strongly vary for  $t > t_c$  and tend to approximately  $1 - \alpha$  and  $\alpha$ , respectively, in the long term. A typical particle profile is shown in the lowest panel of Figure 10, highlighting a core-shell structure and an abrupt interface between them.

$\text{Ca}_{1-x}\text{Sr}_x\text{CO}_3$  is a strongly non-ideal SS characterized by a Guggenheim coefficient equal to 5.5 (Casey et al., 1996), indicating poor solubility of Sr in aragonite and a miscibility gap occupying most of the phase diagram ( $x_1 \approx 0.004$  and  $x_2 \approx 0.996$ ). Whatever the initial conditions of precipitation, a phase separation is expected, as in the example shown in Figure 10.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

We have developed a formalism which describes the precipitation kinetics of non-ideal SSs from an initially supersaturated AS. It treats the time evolution of the AS composition and the formation, growth or redissolution of particles. It extends our previous work, which was restricted to ideal SSs, spherical particles and homogeneous nucleation. The formalism is relevant to both mineral SSs and bimetallic nanoparticle formation. To our knowledge, it is the first time, in the fields of both geochemistry and metallic alloys, that these out-of-equilibrium processes are fully taken into account for non-ideal SSs.

This work highlights how particle composition and size vary with time, resulting in composition profiles which may be smooth or discontinuous, depending on the Guggenheim parameter values which drive the non-ideality of the SSs, and the ratio of the solubility products of the end-members. We have shown that even for strongly non-ideal SSs, phase separation is not the general case and that other scenarios may take place. We have specified their characteristics and under which conditions they may be encountered. Numerical simulations have been performed to exemplify them for a regular SS, under a few simplifying assumptions, and qualitative predictions of the precipitation characteristics of some mineral SSs have been made.

The development of the NANOKIN code to include these new functionalities is presently under progress, and its application to a realistic precipitation process will be

895 the subject of a forthcoming paper. In the context of  
 896 water-rock interactions, our work provides enhanced possibilities  
 897 for analyzing precipitation processes for various  
 898 SS types, such as carbonates, sulfates or clay minerals,  
 899 among others.

### 900 Appendix A: Condition of stoichiometric saturation

901 In this appendix, we analyze the mathematical properties  
 902 of the function  $-\ln I(x) = \ln K(x) - \ln Q(x)$  whose  
 903 minimum determines the stoichiometric saturation condition  
 904 (Eq. 10 in the text).  $-\ln I(x)$  reads:

$$\begin{aligned} -\ln I(x) = & -(1-x)\ln I_{AC} - x\ln I_{BC} \\ & +x(1-x)[A_0 + A_1(2x-1)] \\ & +x\ln x + (1-x)\ln(1-x) \end{aligned} \quad (29)$$

906 or:

$$\begin{aligned} -\ln \frac{I(x)}{I_{AC}} = & -x\ln W + x(1-x)[A_0 + A_1(2x-1)] \\ & +x\ln x + (1-x)\ln(1-x) \end{aligned} \quad (30)$$

907 after introducing the ratio  $W$  of the saturation states of  
 908 the AS with respect to the pure end-members:

$$W = \frac{I_{BC}}{I_{AC}} \quad (31)$$

909 In the following we analyze the variations of the func-  
 910 tion  $f(x)$  equal to the right hand side of Eq. 30. Its first  
 911 derivative is:

$$\frac{df(x)}{dx} = \ln \frac{x}{W(1-x)} + A_0(1-2x) - A_1(1-6x+6x^2) \quad (32)$$

912 and its second derivative is:

$$\frac{d^2f(x)}{dx^2} = -2A_0 + 6A_1(1-2x) + \frac{1}{x} + \frac{1}{1-x} \quad (33)$$

913 There are regions of the parameter space  $\{A_0, A_1\}$   
 914 where  $d^2f(x)/dx^2 > 0$  whatever  $x$ . In that case,  $f(x)$   
 915 is a convex function, with a single minimum. This hap-  
 916 pens, for example when  $A_1 = 0$  and  $A_0 < 2$ . Otherwise,  
 917  $f(x)$  may display one minimum, or two minima and a  
 918 maximum, depending upon the value of  $W$ .

919 Figure 11 exemplifies this latter case when  $A_0 = 2.5$   
 920 and  $A_1 = 0$ . At low or high values of  $W$  (typically less  
 921 than 0.86 or more than 1.14),  $f(x)$  has a single minimum  
 922 at  $x$  smaller or larger than 0.5, respectively. For inter-  
 923 mediate values of  $W$ ,  $f(x)$  has two minima. The compo-  
 924 sition  $x_{st}$  which corresponds to stoichiometric saturation  
 925 is the one for which  $f(x)$  is the lowest.  $x_{st}$  displays a dis-  
 926 continuity between  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  at a critical value  $W_c = 1$   
 927 for which  $f(x_1) = f(x_2)$ . This behavior is represented in  
 928 Figure 1 in the main text.

929 Similar reasoning for different values of  $A_0$  and  $A_1$   
 930 leads to Figure 2, which shows that  $W_c$  remains equal

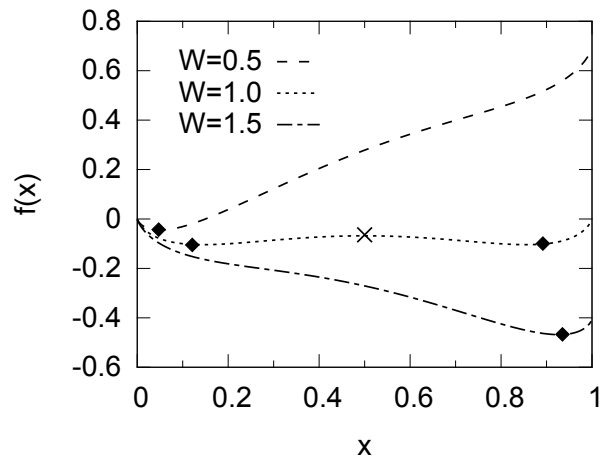


FIG. 11: Curve representative of  $f(x)$  (right hand side of Eq. 30) for  $A_0 = 2.5$ ,  $A_1 = 0$  and  $W = 0.5, 1.$  and  $1.5$ . The three curves exemplify the cases when  $f(x)$  presents a single minimum at small value of  $x$ , two degenerate minima or a single minimum at large  $x$  value. The diamonds on the curves mark the positions of the minima and the cross the maximum.

931 to 1 whatever the value of  $A_0 > 2$  if  $A_1 = 0$ , but varies  
 932 with  $A_0$  when  $A_1 \neq 0$ .

933 Finally, the limiting values of  $A_0$  and  $A_1$  between re-  
 934 gions of discontinuities in  $x_{st}$  and regions where it varies  
 935 smoothly, are obtained from the condition that simul-  
 936 taneously  $d^2f(x)/dx^2 = 0$  and, when increasing  $W$ ,  
 937  $df(x)/dx = 0$  has, for the first time, three roots. They  
 938 are represented in Figure 3, bottom panel in the main  
 939 text.

### 940 Appendix B: Precipitation of particles with various shapes

941 The formalism associated with the homogeneous nucle-  
 942 ation and growth of spherical particles has been presented  
 943 in the main text. However, most solids, except amor-  
 944 phous ones, are non-isotropic and their external shape,  
 945 which departs from the sphere, reflects the relative ener-  
 946 gies of their low index faces, as recognized by Wulff  
 947 (Müller and Kern, 2000 and references therein). Indeed,  
 948 Wulff theorem states that, at equilibrium, the distance  
 949 from the center of a particle to its external facets is pro-  
 950 portional to the surface energy of these facets. For ex-  
 951 ample, according to Wulff theorem, the aspect ratio of  
 952 tetragonal particles (basal dimensions  $l \times l$  and thickness  
 953  $e$ , Figure 12), is given by the ratio between the surface  
 954 energies of the basal and lateral faces ( $\sigma_{bas}$  and  $\sigma_{lat}$ , re-  
 955 spectively):

$$\frac{e}{l} = \frac{\sigma_{bas}}{\sigma_{lat}} \quad (34)$$

This result can be extended to the case of particles in  
 equilibrium with a substrate on which they lie on their

basal face. In this case,  $\sigma_{bas}$  is relevant for the face in contact with the AS, and  $\sigma_{bas} - W_{adh}$  for the one in contact with the substrate ( $W_{adh}$  the adhesion energy). Their aspect ratio is then given by the Wulff-Kaishev theorem:

$$\frac{e}{l} = \frac{\sigma_{bas} - W_{adh}/2}{\sigma_{lat}} \quad (35)$$

If, instead of the basal face, one of the lateral faces is in contact with the substrate, their equilibrium shape involves three inequivalent dimensions  $l$ ,  $l'$  et  $e$ . The ratio between these lengths is then equal to:

$$\frac{e}{\sigma_{bas}} = \frac{l}{\sigma_{lat}} = \frac{l'}{\sigma_{lat} - W_{adh}/2} \quad (36)$$

The corresponding expression for rhombohedral particles lying on a substrate on their basal face is:

$$\frac{e}{l} = \sqrt{3} \frac{\sigma_{bas} - W_{adh}/2}{\sigma_{lat}} \quad (37)$$

Similar reasoning can be done for other particle shapes.

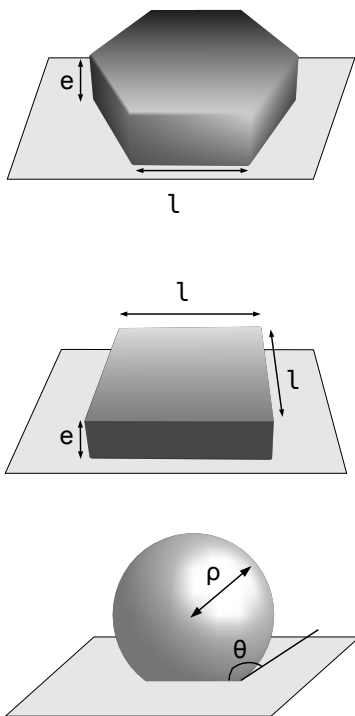


FIG. 12: Representation of rhombohedral, tetragonal and spherical cap particle shapes (from top to bottom).

With these elements in mind, one can consider homogeneous as well as heterogeneous nucleation of particles assumed to have the Wulff (homogeneous nucleation) or

Wulff-Kaishev (heterogeneous nucleation) shapes (Müller and Kern, 2000). The generalized expression of the change in Gibbs free energy for the formation of a critical nucleus then reads:

$$\Delta G(n, x) = -nk_B T \ln I(x) + n^{2/3} v(x)^{2/3} X \bar{\sigma} \quad (38)$$

The geometric factor  $X$  and the average surface energy  $\bar{\sigma}$  have the following expressions for simple nucleus shapes and for homogeneous or heterogeneous nucleation (Fritz et al., 2009):

- spherical particles:

$$X = (36\pi\Phi(\theta))^{1/3} ; \bar{\sigma} = \sigma \quad (39)$$

$\theta$  is the wetting angle with the substrate, given by the Young-Dupré equation  $-\sigma \cos \theta = \sigma - W_{adh}$ , and  $\Phi(\theta) = (1 - \cos \theta)^2 (2 + \cos \theta) / 4$ . For a strong adhesion to the substrate, the wetting angle is equal to  $0^\circ$ , and it is equal to  $180^\circ$  when no wetting occurs (which is also the case for homogeneous nucleation).

- tetragonal particles lying on their basal face:

$$X = 6 ; \bar{\sigma} = (\sigma_{lat}^2 (\sigma_{bas} - W_{adh}/2))^{1/3} \quad (40)$$

- tetragonal particles lying on their lateral face:

$$X = 6 ; \bar{\sigma} = (\sigma_{lat} \sigma_{bas} (\sigma_{lat} - W_{adh}/2))^{1/3} \quad (41)$$

- hexagonal particles lying on their basal face:

$$X = 36^{1/3} \sqrt{3} ; \bar{\sigma} = (\sigma_{lat}^2 (\sigma_{bas} - W_{adh}/2))^{1/3} \quad (42)$$

To obtain the time evolution of all dimensions during growth, one assumes that the particles keep their equilibrium shape, which allows the use of equations similar to 20 and 22 of the main text for one dimension, deduction of the others from the relationships written above for the ratios between  $e$ ,  $l$  and  $l'$ , and estimation of the volume  $V$  of the particle and finally the number of formula units  $n = V/v$ .

### Appendix C: Precipitation of a SS with composition dependent surface energy

This appendix specifies the modifications to introduce in the formalism which describes SS precipitation when their surface energy depends on composition. The main difference from the simplified treatment, presented in the main text, comes from the existence of surface enrichment effects  $n_{ACs}$  and  $n_{BCs}$  of AC and BC composition. Starting from a reference state in which the nuclei have a sharp boundary with the aqueous solution (Gibbs dividing surface), such surface excess quantities have to be introduced, so that the Gibbs adsorption equation can be fulfilled (Adamson, 1960; Laaksonen et al., 1999; Noppel et al., 2002; Gaman et al., 2005).



1015 The change in Gibbs free energy  $\Delta G(n, x)$  for nucle-1050  
1016 ation now reads:

$$\Delta G(n, x) = -nk_B T \ln I(x) + n^{2/3} v(x)^{2/3} X \overline{\sigma(x)} - n_{BCs} k_B T \ln\left(\frac{I_{BC}}{x \lambda_{BC}(x)}\right) - n_{ACs} k_B T \ln\left(\frac{I_{AC}}{(1-x) \lambda_{AC}(x)}\right) \quad (43)$$

1017 The  $X$  parameter and the average surface energy  $\overline{\sigma(x)}$   
1018 have been defined in Appendix B for particles of various  
1019 shapes. Here  $\overline{\sigma}$  is explicitly a function of  $x$ . The two last  
1020 terms in Eq. 43 involve surface excess quantities  $n_{ACs}$   
1021 and  $n_{BCs}$ , multiplied by the corresponding changes in  
1022 chemical potential  $\Delta\mu_{AC}$  and  $\Delta\mu_{BC}$ . The surface ex-  
1023 cesses are algebraic quantities, which can take positive  
1024 as well as negative values.

1025 The expression of the critical nuclei size  $n_m(x)$ , ob-  
1026 tained from the maximum of  $\Delta G(n, x)$  with respect to  
1027  $x$  is the same as in Equation 13. In order to obtain the  
1028 critical nucleus composition, via the maximum of the nu-  
1029 cleation rate, the derivative of  $\Delta G_m(x)$  with respect to  
1030  $x$  has to be performed, with  $\Delta G_m(x) = \Delta G(n_m(x), x)$   
1031 equal to:

$$\frac{\Delta G_m(x)}{k_B T} = \frac{u(x)}{\ln^2 I(x)} - n_{BCs} k_B T \ln\left(\frac{I_{BC}}{x \lambda_{BC}(x)}\right) - n_{ACs} k_B T \ln\left(\frac{I_{AC}}{(1-x) \lambda_{AC}(x)}\right) \quad (44)$$

1032 and  $u(x)$  given in Equation 13. The part which de-  
1033 pends on  $d\overline{\sigma(x)}/dx$  and the excess quantities  $n_{ACs}$  and  
1034  $n_{BCs}$  vanishes, because it represents the Gibbs adsorp-  
1035 tion isotherm equation (Adamson, 1960):

$$n(x)^{2/3} v(x)^{2/3} X \frac{d\overline{\sigma(x)}}{dx} = -n_{ACs} \frac{d\Delta\mu_{AC}}{dx} - n_{BCs} \frac{d\Delta\mu_{BC}}{dx} \quad (45)$$

1036 A particularly simple choice for the Gibbs dividing sur-  
1037 face is that for which the surface energy does not de-  
1038 pend upon the curvature of the surface, in which case  
1039 the surface excesses fulfill the relationship  $n_{ACs} v_{AC} +$   
1040  $n_{BCs} v_{BC} = 0$  (Laaksonen et al., 1999). Associated with  
1041 Eq. 45, it leads to the following values of  $n_{ACs}$  and  $n_{BCs}$ :

$$n_{ACs}(x) = \frac{n(x)^{2/3} X x (1-x) v_{BC}}{k_B T v(x)^{1/3} [1-2x(1-x)\{A_0 + A_1(6x-3)\}]} * \frac{d\overline{\sigma(x)}}{dx} \quad (46)$$

$$n_{BCs}(x) = -\frac{n(x)^{2/3} X x (1-x) v_{AC}}{k_B T v(x)^{1/3} [1-2x(1-x)\{A_0 + A_1(6x-3)\}]} * \frac{d\overline{\sigma(x)}}{dx}$$

1042 They depend on  $x$  and are proportional to the critical  
1043 nucleus area, while  $n(x)$  is proportional to the nucleus  
1044 volume. They vanish if the surface energy is composition  
1045 independent. In the absence of detailed information on  
1046 the  $x$  dependence of  $\sigma(x)$ , a linear law may be assumed  
1047 between the end-member values of  $\sigma$ .

1048 Excess quantities also contribute to the variation of  
1049 Gibbs free energy during growth. The energetic cost to

change the dimensions of a particle  $\delta\Delta G(x)$  reads:

$$\delta\Delta G(x) = -\frac{\delta V}{v(x)} k_B T \ln I(x) + \delta E_s - \delta n_{BCs} k_B T \ln\left(\frac{I_{BC}}{x \lambda_{BC}(x)}\right) - \delta n_{ACs} k_B T \ln\left(\frac{I_{AC}}{(1-x) \lambda_{AC}(x)}\right) \quad (47)$$

It is related to its change of volume  $\delta V$ , its change of  
total surface energy  $\delta E_s$  (now a function of  $x$  through  
 $\overline{\sigma(x)}$ ), and its change in excess surface quantities  $\delta n_{ACs}$   
and  $\delta n_{BCs}$ . In the minimization of  $\delta\Delta G(x)$ , the part  
which depends on  $d\overline{\sigma(x)}/dx$  and the excess quantities  
 $\delta n_{ACs}$  and  $\delta n_{BCs}$  is formally similar to that written for  
nucleation, and yields similar expressions for  $\delta n_{ACs}$  and  
 $\delta n_{BCs}$  (Equation 46).

Finally, excess quantities have to be taken into account  
in the feed-back equations (M=AC or BC):

$$q_M(t) = \int_0^t F(t_1) (n^*(t_1) - 1) X_M(t_1) dt_1 + \int_0^t F(t_1) dt_1 \int_{t_1}^t dt_3 \frac{dn(t_1, t_3)}{dt_3} X_M(t_3) + \int_0^t F(t_1) n_{Ms}(t_1) dt_1 \quad (48)$$

#### Appendix D: Composition of the critical nuclei

The methodology to determine the composition  $x^*$  of  
the critical nucleus is very similar to that used to find the  
composition  $x_{st}$  of the SS at stoichiometric saturation  
(Appendix A). Indeed,  $x^*$  is obtained from the minimum  
of the nucleation barrier  $\Delta G_m(x)$ :

$$\frac{\Delta G_m(x)}{k_B T} = \frac{u(x)}{\ln^2 I(x)} \propto \left(\frac{v(x)}{\ln I(x)}\right)^2 \quad (49)$$

In the right hand side of this equality, we have evidenced  
the terms which depend on  $x$ . Minimizing  $\Delta G_m(x)$  with  
respect to  $x$  thus amounts to minimizing  $-\ln I(x)/v(x)$ .

By comparison with Appendix A, it first appears ob-  
vious that the composition  $x^*$  of the critical nucleus is  
equal to  $x_{st}$  when the formula unit volume  $v(x)$  of the  
SS is independent on  $x$ , because then only the minimiza-  
tion of  $-\ln I(x)$  must be found. Moreover, we note that  
the minimum of  $-\ln I(x)/v(x)$  coincides with that of  
the function  $g(x)$  equal to:

$$g(x) = -\frac{\ln I(x)}{v(x)} + \frac{\ln I_{AC}}{v_{AC}} \quad (50)$$

$g(x)$  can also be written:

$$v(x)g(x) = x \ln x + (1-x) \ln(1-x) + x(1-x)[A_0 + A_1(2x-1)] - x \ln W' \quad (51)$$

Aside from the parameters  $A_0$  and  $A_1$ , it depends on  
the ratio  $z = v_{BC}/v_{AC}$  of the end-member formula unit

volumes ( $v(x) = v_{AC}[1 - x + zx]$ ) and on the composition of the aqueous solution, which enters in a compact way via the ratio  $W' = I_{BC}/I_{AC}^z$ .

The derivative of  $g(x)$  is such that:

$$\frac{v(x)^2}{v_{AC}} \frac{dg(x)}{dx} = \ln x - z \ln(1-x) - \ln W' + A_0 [(1-x)^2 - zx^2] + A_1 [4x^3(1-z) + 3x^2(z-3) + 6x - 1] \quad (52)$$

The terms which depend on  $A_0$  and  $A_1$  turn out to be equal to  $\ln \lambda_{BC} - z \ln \lambda_{AC}$ , so that equating  $dg(x)/dx$  to zero leads to the implicit equation which determines  $x^*$  (Equation 16 in the main text):

$$\left( \frac{I_{AC}}{(1-x^*)\lambda_{AC}(x^*)} \right)^{v_{BC}} = \left( \frac{I_{BC}}{x^*\lambda_{BC}(x^*)} \right)^{v_{AC}} \quad (53)$$

The composition  $x^*$  of the critical nucleus is thus obtained when simultaneously  $dg(x)/dx = 0$  and  $g(x)$  is minimal. The discussion proceeds along steps similar to those relevant for  $x_{st}$ . Depending upon the regions of parameter space  $\{A_0, A_1\}$  (which now depends on  $z$ ),  $g(x)$  may be a convex function with a single minimum. Alternatively, it may display one minimum, or two minima and a maximum, depending upon the value of  $W'$ . When the latter case occurs, the composition of the critical nuclei is equal to the root  $x$  which corresponds to the lowest value of  $g(x)$ .

### Appendix E: Conditions of occurrence of the various scenarios of precipitation

In this appendix, we derive formal relationships allowing the determination of  $dW'/dt$ , a crucial quantity to assess which scenario will take place. Moreover, we specify the relative percentage of each phase when phase separation takes place in Scenario #4.

We recast the feed-back equation under the following form:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{d[A]}{dt} &= -D_0(t)(1-x^*(t)) + D_A(t) \\ \frac{d[B]}{dt} &= -D_0(t)x^*(t) + D_B(t) \\ \frac{d[C]}{dt} &= -D_0(t) + D_C(t) \end{aligned} \quad (54)$$

In these expressions,  $D_0(t)$  represents the time derivative of the number of formula units withdrawn from the AS with composition  $x^*$ , while  $D_A(t)$ ,  $D_B(t)$  and  $D_C(t)$  are the variations of A, B and C activities due to either particle redissolution (thus with a surface composition different from  $x^*(t)$ ) or dissolution/precipitation of other minerals present in the AS.

The time derivative  $\ln W'$  reads:

$$\frac{1}{W'} \frac{dW'}{dt} = \frac{1}{[B]} \frac{d[B]}{dt} - \frac{z}{[A]} \frac{d[A]}{dt} + \frac{(1-z)}{[C]} \frac{d[C]}{dt} \quad (55)$$

which, after some algebra and using Eq. 54, may be recast under the following form:

$$\frac{1}{W'} \frac{dW'}{dt} = W'' - D_0(t) \left( \frac{x^*(t)}{[B]} - \frac{z(1-x^*(t))}{[A]} \right) \quad (56)$$

with:

$$W'' = \frac{D_B}{[B]} - \frac{zD_A}{[A]} + \frac{(1-z)D_C}{[C]} - D_0(t) \frac{(1-z)}{[C]} \quad (57)$$

We have separated the contribution  $W''$  to  $dW'/dt$  which does not present a discontinuity, from the one (second term on the right hand side of Eq. 56) which does present a discontinuity, due to the jump of  $x^*(t)$  between  $x_1$  and  $x_2$ . In Eqs. 54, 56 and 57, all terms relative to  $[C]$  have to be skipped when precipitation of bimetallic  $A_{1-x}B_x$  particles is considered.

Whenever Scenario #4 takes place, the cancellation of  $dW'/dt$  when  $W' = W_c$  yields the relative amounts  $D_0(t)\alpha$  and  $D_0(t)(1-\alpha)$  of the two SSs with composition  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  when phase separation occurs. From Eq. 56, one obtains:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{W'} \frac{dW'}{dt} = 0 = & W'' - D_0(t)\alpha \left( \frac{x_1}{[B]} - \frac{z(1-x_1)}{[A]} \right) \\ & - D_0(t)(1-\alpha) \left( \frac{x_2}{[B]} - \frac{z(1-x_2)}{[A]} \right) \end{aligned} \quad (58)$$

and thus:

$$\alpha = \frac{W'' - D_0(t) \left( \frac{x_2}{[B]} - \frac{z(1-x_2)}{[A]} \right)}{D_0(t)(x_1 - x_2) \left[ \frac{1}{[B]} + \frac{z}{[A]} \right]} \quad (59)$$

All these expressions may be easily evaluated numerically to assess which is the scenario relevant for the case under study and, in the case where Scenario #4 applies, Eq. 59 gives the extent of phase separation and its time dependence.

In particular, under the assumptions made in Sections VIB and VII,  $dW'/dt$  takes the simplified form:

$$\frac{1}{W'} \frac{dW'}{dt} \propto \left( \frac{x^*(t)}{[B]} - \frac{z(1-x^*(t))}{[A]} \right) \quad (60)$$

which allows the slope discontinuity between  $W' < W'_c$  and  $W' > W'_c$  to be evaluated by replacing  $x^*$  by  $x_1$  or  $x_2$ , respectively. Moreover, under the same assumptions, when phase separation takes place, the relative percentages  $\alpha$  and  $(1-\alpha)$  of the two SSs with composition  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  are given by:

$$\alpha = - \frac{(x_2 - (1-x_2) \frac{K_{BC}}{K_{AC}})}{(1-2x_2) \left( 1 + \frac{K_{BC}}{K_{AC}} \right)} \quad (61)$$

and are independent of time.

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## LIST OF SYMBOLS

## Latin characters

$A_0, A_1$	First and second coefficients of the Guggenheim expansion (dimensionless)
$[A]$	Activity of the aqueous species A
$D_0$	Time derivative of the number of formula units withdrawn from the AS with composition $x^*$
$D_A, D_B, D_C$	Contributions to the time derivative of [A], [B] or [C] which are continuous at $W'_c$
$E_s$	Total surface energy (J)
$F(x)$	Nucleation frequency (number of nuclei/s/liter of solution)
$F_0$	Prefactor of the nucleation frequency (number of nuclei/s/liter of solution)
$\Delta G_M$	Standard changes in Gibbs free energy for the dissolution of the M end-member (M=AC or BC)
$\Delta G(x)$	Change of Gibbs free energy for a SS of composition $x$ during precipitation or growth
$\Delta G_M^E(x)$	Excess change of Gibbs free energy of mixing for a SS of composition $x$
$\Delta G(n, x)$	Change in Gibbs free energy for the formation of a nucleus containing $n$ formula units of composition $x$
$\Delta G_m(x)$	maximum of $\Delta G(n, x)$ with respect to $n$
$\Delta H_M(x)$	Enthalpy of mixing for a SS of composition $x$
$I_M$	Saturation state of the AS with respect to the pure end-member M (M=AC or BC)
$I(x)$	Stoichiometric saturation state of the AS with respect to a SS of composition $x$
$I_c(x^*)$	Critical saturation state of the AS with respect to a SS of composition $x$
$k_B$	Boltzmann constant ( $1.3806504 \times 10^{-23}$ J/K)
$K_M$	Solubility product of the end-member M (M=AC or BC)
$K(x)$	Stoichiometric solubility product of a SS of composition $x$
$l(t_1, t)$	Lateral length at time $t$ of a rhomboedral or a tetragonal particle created at time $t_1$ (m)
$n_m(x)$	Number of growth units in a particle of composition $x$ at the maximum of $\Delta G(n, x)$ with respect to $n$
$n(t_1, t)$	Number of growth units at time $t$ in a particle created at time $t_1$
$n_M(x)$	Surface excess quantities of end-member M in a particle
$Q(x)$	Ionic activity product of a SS of composition $x$
$q_M(t)$	Amount of end-member M withdrawn at time $t$ from the AS (formula unit/liter of solution)
$R$	Gaz constant (8.314472 J/K/mol)
$T$	Temperature (K)
$x_0$	Composition of a SS at thermodynamic equilibrium with an AS
$x_{st}$	Composition of a SS at stoichiometric saturation with an AS
$x^*$	Critical nucleus composition
$x_1, x_2$	Values of the SS composition at the limit of the discontinuity in strongly non-ideal SSs
$\bar{x}$	Mean composition value of the SS when phase separation occurs
$v_M$	Volume of one formula unit of end-member M ( $m^3$ )
$v(x)$	Volume of one formula unit of a SS of composition $x$ ( $m^3$ )
$W$	Ratio of the saturation states of the pure end-members $W = I_{BC}/I_{AC}$
$W_c$	Critical value of $W$ at the composition discontinuity
$W'$	$W' = I_{BC}/(I_{AC})^z$
$W'_c$	Critical value of $W'$ at the composition discontinuity
$dW'_1/dt, dW'_2/dt$	Slopes of $dW'/dt$ on the left and right of the discontinuity, respectively
$W''$	Contribution to $dW'/dt$ which is continuous at $W'_c$
$W_{adh}$	Adhesion energy, in the case of heterogeneous nucleation (J/m <sup>2</sup> )
$X$	Geometric factor entering the total surface energy of the particles
$z$	Ratio of end-members formula unit volumes $z = v_{BC}/v_{AC}$

## Greek characters

$\alpha$	Percentage of the two SSs of composition $x_1$ and $x_2$ when phase separation occurs
$\Delta\mu_M$	Change in chemical potential of one formula unit of the M end-member during precipitation (M=AC or BC)
$\kappa$	Linear growth constant (m/s)
$\lambda_M$	Activity coefficient of the end-member M in the SS (M=AC or BC)
$\rho(t_1, t)$	Radius at time $t$ of a spherical particle created at time $t_1$ (m)
$\sigma(x)$	Mean surface energy per unit area of SS particles of composition $x$ (J/m <sup>2</sup> )
$\sigma_{lat}, \sigma_{bas}$	Lateral and basal surface energies per unit area of non-spherical particles (J/m <sup>2</sup> )
$\theta$	Wetting angle