Coupled dissolution and precipitation at mineral-fluid interfaces

Christine V. Putnis (1), Encarnación Ruiz-Agudo (2), Jörn Hövelmann (3), Helen E King (4), Håkon Austrheim (5), Andrew Putnis (1,6)

(1) Institut für Mineralogie, University of Münster, 48149 Münster, Germany, (2) Department of Mineralogy and Petrology, University of Granada, 18071 Granada, Spain, (3) Petrology of the Ocean Crust, University of Bremen, 28359 Bremen, Germany, (4) Department of Earth Sciences, Utrecht University, 3584 CD Utrecht, The Netherlands, (5) Department of Geosciences, University of Oslo, 0317 Oslo, Norway, (6) The Institute for Geoscience Research (TIGeR), Curtin artment of Earth Sciences, Utrecht

The basic principle behind reactions occurring at the mineral-fluid interface is that one mineral may be replaced by another more stable mineral by an interface-coupled dissolution-precipitation mechanism. An aqueous fluid will induce some dissolution even in a highly insoluble phase, such as most minerals, producing an interfacial boundary layer of fluid that may be supersaturated with respect to one or more stable phases. One of these phases may then nucleate at the surface of the parent phase initiating an autocatalytic reaction that couples the dissolution and precipitation rate. If an epitaxial crystallographic matching exists between the parent substrate and the product, the nucleation of the new phase transfers crystallographic information from parent to product. In order to propagate a pseudomorphic replacement front, mass transfer pathways must be maintained between the fluid reservoir and the reaction interface. This requires that the replacement process is a volume deficit reaction, and that the resulting product is porous and hence allows continued infiltration of the fluid phase to the interface within the parent phase. Examples will be discussed where this scenario exits in nature to show that this is a ubiquitous mechanism occurring in the crust of the Earth during such processes as metamorphism, metasomatism and weathering.