

# A comprehensive model to describe radiolytic processes in cement medium

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## Abstract

Basic mechanisms controlling the radiolysis in cementitious matrices are reviewed in the specific context of the gamma irradiation, in closed system without upper vapour space, at 25°C, with a pore solution representative of a Portland cement paste. A general survey of data corresponding to each phenomenological area is given, particularly with a list of reactions for alkaline medium and a revised description of equilibria related to calcium hydroxide. Simulations as a function of dose rate, liquid saturation in the porosity or initial amount of H<sub>2</sub> are carried out with the *CHEMSIMUL* code. They show the existence of several ways in the radiolysis regulation involving calcium peroxide octahydrate precipitation, a law of mass action through the bulk general system, or the particular activation of an Allen's type chain reaction. This latter seems faster in alkaline medium (pH > 13) where radicals H• and OH• are respectively replaced by e<sup>-</sup><sub>aq</sub> and O<sup>•-</sup>. Excepted when a strong reducing agent is initially present, O<sub>2</sub> is normally produced by radiolysis and CaO<sub>2</sub>.8H<sub>2</sub>O cannot be responsible of its disappearance.

PACS : 82.20.Wt ; 82.33.Ln ; 82.40.Qt ; 82.50.Kx

## 1. Introduction

Widely employed in nuclear industry, concretes, mortars and grouts can be subjected to radiations in a number of situations (structural concretes and shield materials, matrices for conditioning or embedding of radioactive wastes). Residual pore water in these materials is affected by a decomposition (radiolysis) whose intensity is a function of many factors : dose rate, radiation type, and initial chemical composition of the pore solution. With the *in situ* emission of hydrogen gas or escape into the operational area, consequences of the radiolysis create problem of safety whose analysis is essentially based on the accurate evaluation of the H<sub>2</sub> source-term, in other words on the complete description of the radiolysis and its associated phenomena. This evaluation is made particularly difficult because of the composite and porous character of the cementitious materials where the presence of gas and solid phases strongly interfere with the pore water radiolysis. In a first approach [1], the interaction between Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> (present in hydrated cement) and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (radiolytic product) to form the calcium peroxide octahydrate has been evoked in order to complete the already known reaction mechanisms and to try to explain the O<sub>2</sub> disappearance, frequently observed under  $\gamma$  irradiation, by an immobilization in the form of solid peroxide. The formation of CaO<sub>2</sub>.8H<sub>2</sub>O may be the mechanism of O<sub>2</sub> removal. However, this conclusion seems to be now erroneous insofar as :

- the solubility and the precipitation threshold were not taken into account (*a minima*, solubility product of the solid must be exceeded before CaO<sub>2</sub>.8H<sub>2</sub>O precipitation),

- the reality of mineralogical equilibrium has been neglected (the heterogeneous equilibrium solid-solution forbids the concentration of peroxide ions, in consequence the  $O_2$ 's one too, to diminish as far as zero).

At the origin of a virtual oxygen pump, these oversights have been corrected in a more recent monograph [2] describing the different basic phenomena and their coupling. On the other hand, in order to simulate radiolysis at longer or shorter times, this work must reconcile reactions usually neglected for their slowness (Haber-Weiss reactions) but involving indirectly the production of  $H_2$  *in fine*.

Coming back to the understanding of the basic mechanisms of radiolysis within the cementitious matrices, we will here restrict ourselves to a chemical point of view, starting from a standard configuration : matrix of ordinary Portland cement (OPC) subjected to a gamma irradiation in closed system, at a temperature of 25°C. The necessity of working out a model integrating the largest number of mechanisms is an essential step in the interpretation of experiments which are carried out with this type of cement. The physico-chemical complexity of blended cements (for example blast furnace slag-based cements with presence of  $S^{2-}$ ) does not yet allow such an approach.

## **2. Composition of the pore solution**

The residual liquid occupying the porosity of the cementitious material is not pure water but an aqueous solution in equilibrium with the constituent minerals of the hydrated cement paste ( $Ca(OH)_2$ , hydrated hydroxi-silicate and sulfo-aluminate of calcium), added up with labile elements (Na, K). In first approximation, the composition of this liquid is assimilated with a solution of NaOH at  $pH > 13$ , equilibrated with

Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> (portlandite). Considering the case of a reference liquid with 0,24 mol/kg of sodium, molal concentrations of these species in solution (Table 1) can be calculated with the help of the data in Table 2. These data result themselves from a refinement of the constants related to the description of a solution equilibrated with portlandite.

Calculations use electroneutrality equation, ionic product of water [3], pH and total calcium of the saturated solution [4,5], complexation constants of CaOH<sup>+</sup> and NaOH<sup>°</sup> [6]. Activity coefficients are calculated from Eq.(1) (Davies formula), with a = 0.5092 and 2.0368 respectively for mono- and bi-charged ions, that is justified for a ionic strength I < 0.3 mol/kg :

$$\gamma = 10^{-a \left( \frac{\sqrt{I}}{1+\sqrt{I}} - 0.3I \right)} \quad (1)$$

Water activity is defined in first approximation by its molar fraction :

$$(H_2O) = \frac{[H_2O]}{[H_2O] + \sum_i [solute_i]} \quad (2)$$

$$\text{where } [H_2O] = \frac{I}{\mathcal{M}_{H_2O}} = 55.5084 \text{ mol/kg}_{\text{solvent}}$$

Taking everything into account (iterative calculation), total concentration of the solutes, ionic strength and pH of the solution are respectively equal to :

$$\sum_i [solute_i] = 4.6742 \times 10^{-1} \text{ mol/kg}_{\text{solvent}} \quad (3)$$

$$I = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i z_i^2 [solute_i] = 2.257 \times 10^{-1} \text{ mol/kg}_{\text{solvent}} \quad (4)$$

$$pH = 13.225 \quad (5)$$

In addition, the solution is characterized by a density and a mass of solutes per mass of solvent equal to :

$$\rho_{liq} = 1007.71 \text{ kg/m}^3, \quad (6)$$

$$\sum_i \mathcal{M}_i [solute_i] = 9.778 \times 10^{-3} \text{ kg}_{\text{solute}}/\text{kg}_{\text{solvent}} \quad (7)$$

These two data allow to translate molalities into molarities with the help of a coefficient for concentration units conversion (CUC) :

$$CUC = \frac{10^{-3} \rho_{liq}}{1 + \sum_i \mathcal{M}_i [solute_i]} = 0.998 \text{ kg}_{\text{solvent}}/\text{dm}^3_{\text{solution}} \quad (8)$$

The high pH of the solution forces a fairly low concentration of the calcium ( $2.412 \times 10^{-3}$  mol/kg) where the neutral complex  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2^0$  is the dominant aqueous species. It is recalled that the concentration of this species, independent of the pH, is determined by a product of constants (see Table 2) :

$$[\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2^0] = K_{\text{port}} \cdot K_1 \cdot K_2 \quad (9)$$

### 3. Primary products

#### 3.1 Primary production

Within  $10^{-7}$  to  $10^{-6}$  seconds as the gamma radiation passed, the water decomposition leads to the formation of 8 primary species (4 molecules :  $\text{H}_2$ ,  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ ,  $\text{OH}^-$ ,  $\text{H}_3\text{O}^+$  and 4 radicals :  $e_{\text{aq}}^-$ ,  $\text{H}^\bullet$ ,  $\text{OH}^\bullet$ ,  $\text{HO}_2^\bullet$ ) uniformly distributed in the solution (homogeneous step). At this stage, the primary production of these species proceeds from a zero order kinetics, i.e. independent of the concentrations or the amount of solvent. Keeping  $\text{H}_2$  for example, the primary production kinetics in solution is defined by :

$$\left( \frac{d[\text{H}_2]}{dt} \right)_{\text{prim}} = \frac{CUC}{c_{\text{en}} N_A} \times D'_{\text{H}_2\text{O}} \times G_{\text{H}_2} \text{ mol dm}^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1} \quad (10)$$

where  $D'_{H_2O}$  is the dose rate in water ( $J\ kg_{water}^{-1}\ s^{-1} = Gy/s$ ),  $G_{H_2}$  is the primary yield of  $H_2$  (molecule/heV<sup>1</sup>),  $c_{en} = 1.602176462 \times 10^{-17}$  J/heV is an energy conversion factor and  $N_A = 6.02214199 \times 10^{23}$  is the Avogadro number. Because of the dispersion of the interstitial solution within the porous material, the interaction radiation-material affects the entirety of the solid and liquid phases, and the dose rate in water is more correctly described by the kerma rate (Kinetic Energy Released in MAtter). This latter takes into account the sum of the initial kinetic energy of every charged ionizing particles induced by incident photons, including Compton electrons. Considering the kerma rate for the two constituent atoms of the solvent, the dose rate in water is given by :

$$D'_{H_2O} = \frac{N_A}{M_{H_2O}} (2\ kerma'_H + kerma'_O) \text{ Gy/s} \quad (11)$$

where  $M_{H_2O} = 18,01528 \times 10^{-3}$  kg/mol is the water molar mass,  $kerma'_H$  and  $kerma'_O$  are the respective kerma rates on the atoms H and O ( $J\ atom^{-1}\ s^{-1}$ ).

### 3.2 Primary yields

Particularly studied with gamma radiation, evolution of the primary yields is sensitive in alkaline medium, especially in the pH 12-14 interval where radicals products show a fairly pronounced increase when molecular products show a more moderated decrease (Fig. 1). In consideration of the variability of the alkali contents in industrial cements, this means that there is no standard value of the primary yields for cement matrices (so,  $G_{H_2}$  can vary from 0.435 to 0.384 between pH 12.45 and 14). Concerning the pH of the reference pore solution, plots fitted from experimental values of Hayon [7] and Haïssinsky [8] allow to calculate a complete set of primary yields

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<sup>1</sup> heV = 100 eV

(Table 3) keeping the writing convention  $e_{aq}^- = H_2O^-$  and respecting the fundamental relation :

$$3 G_{HO_2\cdot} + 2 G_{H_2O_2} + G_{OH\cdot} = 2 G_{H_2} + G_{e_{aq}^-} + G_{H\cdot} = G_{\text{water}} \quad (12)$$

#### 4. Homogeneous secondary reactions

After the primary step, species that have diffused in the whole volume of solution can react with the solvent ( $H_2O$ ) and its main active solute ( $OH^-$ ), or between themselves, respectively through at least 7 acido-basic equilibria (Table 4) and about sixty reactions (Table 5). Corresponding to the decomposition of an alkaline water devoid of any other reagent solute, these reactions lead to the secondary production of molecules and radicals, either already known as primary products, either new ( $O_2$ ,  $O_3$ , etc). For a given species, the kinetic evolution due to secondary reactions results from the observed associations with the other species, as a product or as a reagent. The example of  $H_2$  figures among the simplest :

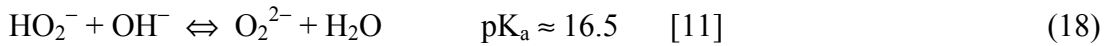
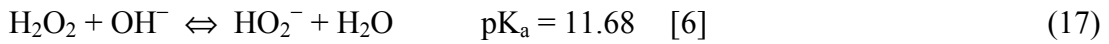
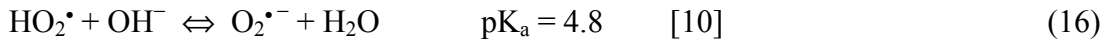
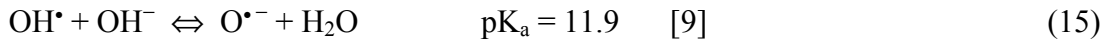
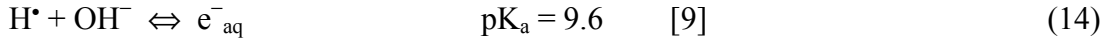
$$\left( \frac{d[H_2]}{dt} \right)_{sec} = + k_1 [e_{aq}^-]^2 + k_2 [e_{aq}^-][H\cdot] + k_{12} [H]^2 + k_{13} [H\cdot][H_2O] \quad (\text{as product})$$

$$- k_{22} [O\cdot^-][H_2] - k_{31} [OH\cdot][H_2] \quad (\text{as reagent})$$

(13)

##### 4.1 Acido-basic equilibria

Owing to the fact that  $pK_a$  values of acido-basic couples involved in water radiolysis are clearly lower than the pH of the pore solution (excepted for  $HO_2^-/O_2^{2-}$ ), all the primary species are mainly converted into their basic equivalent :



Reactivity of the new species is distinct, systematically stronger for the  $e^-_{aq}$  radical, and generally weaker for the different deprotonated species of oxygen like superoxide radical  $O_2^{\bullet-}$ , much reactiveless than its homologue  $HO_2^\bullet$ . As a consequence,  $O_2^{\bullet-}$  radical can reach significant concentrations in alkaline solution under irradiation. The case of the radical oxide  $O^{\bullet-}$  is similar, except when it attacks  $H_2$  with a kinetic rate three times higher in comparison with the  $OH^\bullet + H_2$  reaction. For basic peroxide species, the behaviour is indifferent or not well known ( $O_2^{2-}$ ). It can be noted that, because of the existence of two equilibria, peroxides speciation at the pH of the pore solution leads to the coexistence of 97.77 %  $HO_2^-$ , 2.10 %  $H_2O_2$  and 0.13 %  $O_2^{2-}$ . Through it is marginal, the last species nevertheless has a considerable role in the formation of a solid peroxide (cf. § 5).

Detailed in the Table 4, each equilibrium is presented in the form of a reactions couple for which, at least one of the kinetic constants is known, the other one being inferred from the value of  $pK_b$  ( $= pK_w - pK_a$ ). The couple  $H^\bullet/e^-_{aq}$  is a particular case,



insofar as the theoretical equilibrium value is not observed because of the simultaneous production of both species at the primary stage. Both “equilibrium“ reactions are described with Arrhenius law when  $T < 423 \text{ K}$  [12,13]. For the couples  $\text{OH}^\bullet/\text{O}^{\bullet-}$ ,  $\text{HO}_2^\bullet/\text{O}_2^{\bullet-}$  and the water equilibrium, Arrhenius law is not really applicable and one of both reactions is described with a polynomial function of the temperature [14].

#### 4.2 Reactions

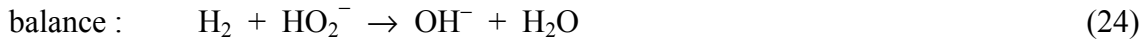
Reactions collected in Table 5 are usable to describe the radiolysis evolution in a strong alkaline medium. The  $\text{H}_3\text{O}^+$  ion is logically absent in it, unless otherwise specified. The list, non standard, is principally based on the critical review of A.J. Elliot [14], completed by twenty or so contributions [16-35]. Within this comprehensive list, some crossed reactions or feed-back reactions hold the attention in consideration of their regulating role towards radiolysis.

1) Effective in neutral medium with no poison solute like  $\text{O}_2$ , the chain reaction leading to the control of the molecular primary products and to the water re-formation is known under the denomination of « Allen chain » [36] :

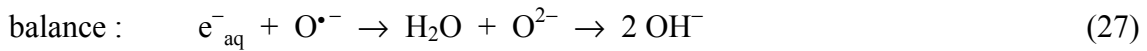


Because of the reagents conversion into their basic form, this « classic » chain is replaced by a strictly equivalent chain in very alkaline medium :





Characterized by higher kinetic constants (index is related to reaction number in Table 5), this new chain reaction, appears more efficient and faster to reach a steady state where the  $\text{H}_2$  concentration becomes stable. Continually, the system then destroys no less  $\text{H}_2$  by secondary way that it creates by primary channel. Like in the original chain, the initial condition in solution  $[\text{H}_2]/[\text{O}_2] > 2$  is determining in order to reach the steady state and this latter is easily broken by  $\text{O}_2$  poisoning. An alternative chain reaction, even faster than reactions 5 and 22, is then set up :



Being not regulated, decomposition of the alkaline solution produces  $\text{H}_2$  and  $\text{O}_2$  (simultaneously) in these conditions.

2) In alkaline medium, both species of the acido-basic couple  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2/\text{HO}_2^-$  are led to dismute by the reaction 57 [35], with a maximum decomposition rate when  $\text{pH} = \text{pK}_a = 11.68$ .



In spite of a higher pH of the pore solution and a very low kinetic constant, this reaction is not negligible, especially when the dose rate decreases or when the system is relaxing after the irradiation stops. In this case, reaction 57 can be at the origin of a delayed production of  $\text{O}_2$ .

3) More efficient than the previous one, the Haber-Weiss reaction is also a dismutation reaction (between peroxide and superoxide) leading to the  $\text{O}_2$  formation.

Initially described in acidic medium (reaction 46 [28]), it knows two derived forms in neutral or alkaline medium :



The kinetic constant of this last reaction, prevailing in the pore solution, is here estimated assuming that the  $k_{41}/k_{40}$  ratio is the mean of the constants ratios related to  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  and  $\text{HO}_2^-$  observed with the neighbouring radicals  $\text{O}^{\bullet-}$  and  $\text{O}_3^{\bullet-}$  :

$$\left( \frac{k_{41}}{k_{40}} \right)_{\text{O}_2^{\bullet-}} = \sqrt{\left( \frac{k_{26}}{k_{25}} \right)_{\text{O}^{\bullet-}} \left( \frac{k_{52}}{k_{51}} \right)_{\text{O}_3^{\bullet-}}} \approx 1.59 \quad (32)$$

Not very much sensitive at short term, the effect of reaction 40 limits the accumulation of  $\text{O}_2^{\bullet-}$  radical when the irradiation duration is long.

## 5. Calcium peroxide octahydrate precipitation

In the presence of calcium hydroxide, which is widely available within the cementitious matrix,  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  and its derived species are apt to react for giving a metastable solid phase : the calcium peroxide octahydrate [1]. However, this compound is not formed at the beginning of the irradiation, but only comes when the peroxide accumulation in solution reaches, *a minima*, the solubility product  $K_{\text{per}}$ . On account of the corrections provided to the speciation of both peroxides and calcium in equilibrium with  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  (respectively Tables 6 and 2), the  $K_{\text{per}}$  value is here slightly corrected :

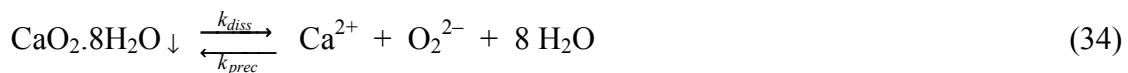
$$K_{\text{per}} = [\text{Ca}^{2+}] [\text{O}_2^{2-}]^2 (\text{H}_2\text{O})^8 \cdot \gamma_2^2 = 2.51 \times 10^{-11} \quad (33)$$

Within the context of an heterogeneous precipitation, directly on the  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  substrate, supersaturation in peroxide ion is not necessary. Considering a concentration  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}] = 6.9 \times 10^{-4} \text{ mol dm}^{-3}$  in the pore solution (Table 1),  $K_{\text{per}}$  is then reached as soon as  $[\text{O}_2^{2-}] = 4.2 \times 10^{-7} \text{ mol dm}^{-3}$ , that is for a total concentration  $[\text{O}_2^{2-}] + [\text{HO}_2^-] + [\text{H}_2\text{O}_2] = 3.35 \times 10^{-4} \text{ mol dm}^{-3}$ . Beyond this threshold, the composition of the pore solution becomes regulated by two minerals :

- $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  (control of total calcium),
- $\text{CaO}_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (control of total peroxide)

Appearance of this mineralogical super-buffer results in a limitation of the chemical variations for the medium under irradiation, especially those related to  $\text{O}_2$ , and indirectly to  $\text{H}_2$ , whose net production is regulated through the medium of equilibria and secondary reactions previously evoked. Nevertheless, it no longer can be considered that the cementitious matrix is an anoxic medium under irradiation (special features excepted for initial conditions) as this hypothesis has been previously proposed [1].

Once it is formed, calcium peroxide octahydrate keeps up with the interstitial liquid an equilibrium in the course of which instantaneous variations of matter are limited. Within this scope, the description of the precipitation and the dissolution can make do with the principle of micro-reversibility stating that the one proceeds contrary to the other at the molecular scale, as summarized in Eq. (34).



Dissolution rate being of zero order with regard to the solid phase, and precipitation rate being proportional to the ionic product, this leads to the relation :

$$\frac{k_{\text{diss per}}}{k_{\text{prec per}}} = K_{\text{per}} \quad (35)$$

As a result, instantaneous variation of the solid peroxide and its constituent ions is written :

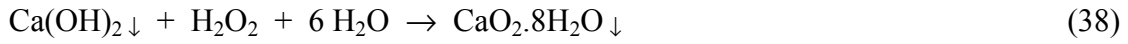
$$\frac{d [CaO_2 \cdot 8H_2O]}{d t} = -k_{diss \ per} \cdot S \left( 1 - \frac{[Ca^{2+}] [O_2^{2-}] \cdot \gamma_2^2 \cdot (H_2O)^8}{K_{per}} \right) \quad (36)$$

$$\frac{\partial [Ca^{2+}]}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial [O_2^{2-}]}{\partial t} = - \frac{d [CaO_2 \cdot 8H_2O]}{d t} \quad (37)$$

Precipitation and dissolution affecting  $Ca(OH)_2$  can be described in the same way. In addition to the term of relative super-saturation (dimensionless, in brackets), the first kinetic equation shows an interfacial solid-solution area  $S$  ( $m^2$ ) and a constant for dissolution kinetics  $k_{diss \ per}$  ( $mol \ dm^{-3} \ s^{-1} \ m^{-2}$ ). Because the configuration of the porous network does not allow for the whole solid phase to be instantaneously in equilibrium with the whole interstitial liquid,  $S$  value appears relatively independent of the considered volume of material and can be arbitrarily selected. The dissolution constant of  $CaO_2 \cdot 8H_2O$ , for its part, has not yet been determined ;  $k_{diss \ per}$  could take place between the values characterizing  $Ca(OH)_2$  ( $k_{diss \ port} = 2.2 \times 10^{-4} \ mol \ dm^{-3} \ s^{-1} \ m^{-2}$  [37]) and a salt *a priori* rather near and slightly soluble,  $CaC_2O_4 \cdot H_2O$  ( $k_{diss \ oxal} = 3.5 \times 10^{-7} \ mol \ dm^{-3} \ s^{-1} \ m^{-2}$  [38]).

The synthesis of  $CaO_2 \cdot 8H_2O$  which is described in [39] in order to provide a detailed characterization leads to predict a great instability at room temperature (necessity of a preservation at  $-18^\circ C$ ). Thereby, decomposition in aqueous medium, out of irradiation, rapidly shows bubbles of nascent  $O_2$  whose origin could be simply the dismutation reaction of  $H_2O_2$  on  $HO_2^-$ . From the viewpoint of the pore liquid evolution under irradiation (generation of peroxide species), the balance formation - decomposition

comes finally to consider a transitional storage of the oxygen in solid form with a catalytic role for the calcium :



## 6. Gaseous exchanges

After hardening in sealed condition, the cementitious matrix presents a porous network partially occupied by the interstitial liquid. Under these conditions, the complementary porous volume stores residual gases in equilibrium with initial water ( $\text{N}_2$  et  $\text{O}_2$ ) and gases formed during the radiolysis ( $\text{H}_2$  et  $\text{O}_2$ ). Although it is highly dispersed within the solid phase for forming a network of fractal type, the porous system of the cementitious matrix can be schematized by an equivalent configuration where exchange area is much less developed (Fig. 2) but which allows an easier understanding of the gas transfers. According to the interfacial film theory [40, 41] and considering  $\text{H}_2$  for example, molecular flux characterizing the interface crossing by gaseous species is given by Eq. (44) :

$$J = 10^3 k_{w\text{H}_2} ([\text{H}_2] - [\text{H}_2]^*) \quad (\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}) \quad (44)$$

where  $[H_2]$  is the true concentration in solution ( $\text{mol}/\text{dm}^3$ ),  $[H_2]^*$  is the virtual concentration in solution at the equilibrium ( $\text{mol}/\text{dm}^3$ ) and  $k_{wH_2}$  is the interfacial transfer constant for a smooth and at rest interface ( $\text{m}/\text{s}$ ).

According to Henry law, concentration in aqueous phase at the equilibrium is given by :

$$[H_2]^* = P(H_2) \cdot \frac{[H_2O] + \sum_i [solute_i]}{K_{H_2}} \quad (\text{mol}/\text{dm}^3) \quad (45)$$

where  $K_{H_2}$  is the Henry law constant (Pa). In addition, for a given gaseous volume,  $V_{\text{gaz}}$ , it is possible to define a pseudo-concentration of the gaseous species from the amount of matter corresponding to its partial pressure (relation for ideal gases), divided by the solution volume  $V_{\text{liq}}$  :

$$[H_2g] = P(H_2) \cdot \frac{V_{\text{gas}}}{RT} \cdot \frac{1}{10^3 \cdot V_{\text{liq}}} \quad (\text{mol}/\text{dm}^3) \quad (46)$$

Combination of the two previous equations gives a relation between  $[H_2]^*$  and  $[H_2g]$  allowing to redefine the flux as a function of the amounts of matter present in solution and in gas phase. As transfer kinetics is proportional to flux  $J$  and to interfacial area  $\mathcal{A}$ , kinetics of gaseous exchanges ( $\text{mol} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ ) is finally described by Eqs. (47) and (48) :

$$\left( \frac{d[H_2]}{dt} \right)_{\text{exch}} = - \frac{J \mathcal{A}}{10^3 V_{\text{liq}}} = - k_{wH_2} \mathcal{A} \left( \frac{[H_2]}{V_{\text{liq}}} - \frac{[H_2g]}{V_{\text{gas}}} \cdot \frac{10^3 RT ([H_2O] + \sum_i [solute_i])}{K_{H_2}} \right) \quad (47)$$

$$\left( \frac{d[H_2g]}{dt} \right)_{\text{exch}} = - \left( \frac{d[H_2]}{dt} \right)_{\text{exch}} \quad (48)$$

Following this model, the description of gaseous exchanges considers that the thickness of liquid covering or filling the pores are low enough to neglect the transport by aqueous diffusion. In return, the ratio between the transfer coefficients of the different

gases depends on the value of respective aqueous diffusion coefficients according to the Deacon's theory [40] for a smooth and at rest interface :

$$\frac{k_{w\ gas\ 1}}{k_{w\ gas\ 2}} = \left( \frac{D_{gas\ 1}}{D_{gas\ 2}} \right)^{2/3} \quad (49)$$

Assuming for O<sub>2</sub> gas a transfer constant of the order of 10<sup>-6</sup> m/s [42], values of k<sub>w</sub> for other gases are deduced from Eq.(49). The transfer [14, 43] and solubility [44-46] data (Table 7 ) entitle to infer that H<sub>2</sub>, less soluble than O<sub>2</sub>, should be also faster than this latter to migrate into the gas phase.

Finally, as the surface of all the meniscus, by definition of the same size because corresponding to a condensation limit (Kelvin-Laplace law), the interfacial area  $\mathcal{A}$  can be roughly estimated at several thousands of m<sup>2</sup> per kilogram of matrix, after interpretation of the Baroghel-Bouny's work [47] about the material characterization.

## 7. Simulation of the radiolysis

Integration of previous descriptive elements constitutes the basis of a model from which it is possible to simulate radiolysis with the help of an appropriate calculation tool. With diversified entry formats and a great versatility, *CHEMSIMUL* [48] makes easy the application of this model and allows to carry out different simulations where the previously evoked phenomenologies are coupled (primary production, homogeneous secondary reactions, phase conversion solution/gas or precipitation-dissolution). In order to restrict the number of configurations, it seems judicious to illustrate the behaviour of the Portland cement paste exposed to a gamma irradiation of long duration as a function of three essential parameters : dose rate, pore saturation degree and initial



content of H<sub>2</sub> in the porosity. With no connection to a particular application, the pattern studied system is defined by the following characteristics :

- Material : paste of pure Ordinary Portland cement (OPC) with initial mass ratio water/cement  $w/c = 0.35$ , without entrapped air, cured in sealed system until the hydration degree is maximum (initial cement 83.33 % hydrated) ; total porosity  $n = 0.3188$  occupied at 74.79 % by the interstitial liquid (nominal condition).
- Irradiation : gamma source delivering an homogeneous and constant dose rate in the sealed matrix, without additional space for gas above the material, at 25°C, during one year ; nominal dose rate with respect to water is 0.1 Gy/s.
- Chemistry : composition of the pore solution as defined in § 6, without extraneous solutes such as carbonate, sulphide, organics, etc ; the system is initially in equilibrium with atmosphere, that implies presence of air and water vapour in porosity unoccupied by liquid phase, and a starting concentration  $[O_2] = 2.6 \times 10^{-4} \text{ mol/dm}^3$  in the pore solution (nominal but penalizing condition) ; N<sub>2</sub> is considered as inert.

In such a system, the production of radiolytic gases is uniform within the porosity and creates a global variation of pressure without gradient or transport. Evolution of species in the pore solution during the radiolysis of the reference system is represented in Fig. 3. It leads very progressively to an equilibrium state at about one year, after a significant increase of H<sub>2</sub>, HO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> and O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup>. It is observed that O<sub>2</sub> increases in more moderate proportions, permanently limiting the e<sub>aq</sub><sup>-</sup> radical at a very low level.

Antagonistic of H<sub>2</sub>, the O<sup>•-</sup> radical decreases for its part with the medium enrichment in dihydrogen. In spite of its implication in number of reactions (among them, dismutation), the high level of concentration reached by O<sub>2</sub><sup>•-</sup> confirms its statute of the

less reactive oxygenated radical, all the more in alkaline medium. Within the latter, strongly buffered, none pH variation is observed during radiolysis ( $\text{H}_3\text{O}^+$  is constant). In term of gas pressure in the porous volume, doubling of the total pressure with regard to its starting value is due, not only to the formation of  $\text{H}_2$ , but also to the doubling of the  $\text{O}_2$  partial pressure with, at term,  $P(\text{O}_2) < P(\text{H}_2)$  (Fig. 4). Unlike a previous assertion [1], production of  $\text{O}_2$  seems then to be possible in a cementitious matrix under irradiation.

### 7.1 Influence of the pore saturation

For a dose rate equal to 0.1 Gy/s, two new configurations can be derived from the reference's one, characterized by a saturation degree close to 0.75 : the first one considers that all the porous volume is occupied by the liquid phase (saturation degree = 1), the second one envisages a partial desiccation so far as to obtain a saturation degree of 0.5. Considering these properties, assumed to be realized at the irradiation beginning, simulations show that in term of total pressure, increase of the gaseous volume is responsible for a delayed equilibrium state, whereas the suppression of this volume is followed, on the contrary, by a swift equilibrium state (Fig. 5). In addition, in the case where  $\text{sat} = 1$ , the virtual pressure value obtained with the help of Henry law (cf. § 6) is significantly less than these associated to an unsaturated porosity. In the absence of a buffer reservoir for gases, this result proceeds from the fact that, all of  $\text{H}_2$  being available in aqueous phase, attack rate by the  $\text{O}^{\bullet-}$  radical is maximum (*idem* for  $\text{O}_2$  attacked by  $e_{\text{aq}}^-$ ).

An instantaneous rate for H<sub>2</sub> recycling can be defined by Eq. (50) :

$$R = 1 - \frac{\left( \frac{d \Sigma[H_2]}{d t} \right)_{actual}}{\left( \frac{d [H_2]}{d t} \right)_{primary}} \quad (50)$$

where  $\Sigma[H_2]$  refers to the actual concentration of aqueous and gaseous H<sub>2</sub>. It can be observed in Fig. 6 that before the equilibrium reaching, R is all the higher since the pore saturation degree is high itself. As a consequence of the mass action law, there is then a possibility to reduce the intensity of the gamma radiolysis and the pressure of gases for the cementitious matrices near the saturation state.

If the possible appearance of CaO<sub>2</sub>.8H<sub>2</sub>O in the system is now considered, the plot of the relative saturation index defined by

$$\sigma = \frac{[Ca^{2+}] [O_2^{2-}] \cdot \gamma_2^2 \cdot (H_2O)^8}{K_{per}} - 1 \quad (51)$$

reveals that, at the nominal dose rate of 0.1 Gy/s, precipitation cannot take place, whatever the pore filling by the liquid phase (Fig. 7). The precipitation of calcium peroxide octahydrate does not present then a systematic character and is not, in this case, at the origin of the observed radiolytic equilibrium.

## 7.2 Influence of the dose rate

For a pore saturation degree set to 0.75, two configurations complete the reference case ( $D' = 0.1$  Gy/s), considering successively dose rates of 0.2 and 0.4 Gy/s. Fig. 8 shows that when  $D'$  increases, the initial build-up of the total pressure is bigger. On the other hand, conditions leading to an equilibrium state seem to have a different nature when  $D'$

$\geq 0.2$  Gy/s. In this case, total pressure goes through a maximum and becomes stable after that, all the sooner since  $D'$  is higher. Paradoxically, equilibrium pressure seems as the lowest when  $D'$  is the highest (0.4 Gy/s). As a consequence, variation of  $P_{\text{total}}$  is not linear with  $D'$  that otherwise suggests the occurrence of a peculiar regulating phenomenon. In term of recycling rate for  $H_2$ , Fig. 9 shows also that equilibrium reaching is all the earlier since  $D'$  is higher, with an anomaly for  $D' \geq 0.2$  Gy/s : stabilization occurs after an episode where the  $H_2$  consumption is greater than the primary production. It can be considered that in the case where  $D' = 0.4$  Gy/s, the net resulting destruction of  $H_2$  causes the diminution of the total pressure and its plateau value. Fig. 10 allows to see that this behaviour is related to the  $CaO_2 \cdot 8H_2O$  precipitation which occurs after a relatively short time. Although the slight supersaturation momentarily associated to this precipitation quickly impacts  $P_{\text{total}}$  ( $D' = 0.4$  Gy/s), physico-chemical inertia of the system is such that pressure equilibrium arises a lot after the beginning of the precipitation (Fig. 8). At the equilibrium, the amount of precipitated peroxide remains constant, corresponding to few grammes, at the maximum, for a volume of pore solution of  $1 \text{ dm}^3$  (Fig. 11). Such a small amount decomposes completely in case of irradiation stopping, that has been always seen by X ray diffraction analysis executed with a time-lag.

Contrary to the interpretation given in [1], the precipitation of  $CaO_2 \cdot 8H_2O$  does not make  $O_2$  disappearing, but just leads to a stabilization of this species at a level all the lower since  $D'$  is higher. When porosity is totally saturated, simulations carried out at high dose rate (non represented) show in the mean time that the system equilibrium is obtained very quickly without precipitation of calcium peroxide, in fact prevented. Regulating power of the homogeneous reactions system appears then more efficient than the one of the mineralogical control of the solution due to  $CaO_2 \cdot 8H_2O$ .

### 7.3 Influence of the initial presence of $H_2$

Coming back to the reference configuration (sat = 0.75 ; 0.1 Gy/s) for which the achievement of an equilibrium state is the slowest, a simulation is performed by permuting the starting values of  $P(N_2)$  and  $P(H_2)$ , without modification of  $P(O_2)$ . After a very fast re-equilibration between gases and pore solution, initial ratio of the concentrations in solution is such as  $[H_2]/[O_2] = 3.5$ . Evolution of this configuration is particularly spectacular because it leads in less than 1 month to a very different equilibrium from the previous where the  $CaO_2 \cdot 8H_2O$  precipitation has no time enough to occur (Fig. 12). After an initial evolution of the species in solution similar to the one seen in Fig. 3, the chemical system shows a general *collapsus* following a large consumption of  $O_2$ . After this event, the  $O_2$  concentration is stabilized at a very low value ( $2.7 \times 10^{-16}$  mol/dm<sup>3</sup>), while the concentrations hierarchy for other species is completely inverted. Fig. 13 shows that in term of pressure, the quasi-disappearance of  $O_2$  is also accompanied by a significant diminution of  $H_2$ , the system reaching a depression state. In this configuration, the initial condition  $[H_2]/[O_2] > 2$  makes the chain reaction 5-22 being highly activated, according to a scenario similar to the one used within the nuclear reactors of the PWR type in order to inhibit radiolysis. It is worthy of note that composition of the system at equilibrium is not very influenced by the dose rate, this one governing only the appearance time (shorter when  $D'$  increases).

## 8. Discussion

Gamma radiolysis of a confined cementitious matrix results from complex mechanisms leading to an equilibrium in a general case. This result is consistent with the oldest experiments [49]. More precisely, the nature of this steady state and the varying characteristics which are related to it show a great sensitivity of the system towards initial conditions (dose rate, pore saturation degree or initial composition of the gas phase). When the configuration of the cementitious medium is poorly defined, this unfortunately contributes to diminish the predictive character of the model, both with respect to the time of the equilibrium appearance and with respect to the final state of the system. As a matter of fact, with respect to the initial conditions combination, steady state of the radiolysis proceeds either from a law of mass action on the reactions system in solution, either from the specific activation of the chain reaction 5-22, or whether from the mineralogical control of the pore solution by  $\text{CaO}_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$ . About this last point, involvement of the calcium peroxide in the  $\text{O}_2$  disappearance [1] seems indeed as an erroneous hypothesis because the existence of this phase is obligatory associated to the presence of oxygenated species. As a consequence, it is advisable to provide an another explanation for the  $\text{O}_2$  consumption so often observed in cementitious matrices under irradiation [49,50,51]. From this point of view, oxidation of organic additives or metallic iron issuing from the cement grinding could be a serious cause, especially since it would be able to establish precociously the condition  $[\text{H}_2]/[\text{O}_2] > 2$ .

From a classical approach, the model at the basis of this work considers radiolysis of interstitial liquid without the contribution of the porous context, using primary yields and kinetic constants determined in solution. In the light of a recent work about the water radiolysis in porous glasses [52], it seems however that primary mechanisms

within an heterogeneous matrix are deeply modified, leading to an exaggerated production of the molecular species  $H_2$  and  $H_2O_2$ . Within the pores whose diameter stretches over few nanometers up to several dozens nanometers (that corresponds to intrinsic porosity of the main hydrate phase in OPC pastes), such modifications were previously forecasted [53], noticing the possible interference with the radicals diffusion length, and the effect on their recombination probability. If such a behaviour was demonstrated in cementitious medium, the model could then be dealt with new improvements. For instant, the model remains applicable because it is too early to describe a set of precise mechanisms (do primary yields keep any significance in ultra-confined volumes ? is reactivity modified by the surfaces ? do chemical events observed in the finest porosity have a consequence on chemical kinetics in the coarse porosity ?). It can be also supposed that the existence of the chemical and mineralogical buffers in the cementitious matrix could strongly soften the full significance of phenomena revealed in glasses at neutral pH.

## 9. Conclusion

Basis mechanisms of the radiolysis in cementitious matrices have been presented in the specific context of gamma irradiation, in closed system, without upper vapour space, and at 25°C, for a solution representative of an interstitial liquid of Portland cement. All the data collected in support comprise, among other things, a reaction list for radiolysis especially suitable for very alkaline media, as well as a revised description of equilibria related to calcium hydroxide. Under irradiation, the very high pH of the pore solution brings about the generation of basic radiolytic species whose own reactivity remains

compatible with the existence of a chain reaction of the Allen type, faster than in neutral medium. Favoured in very alkaline medium, build-up in  $O_2^{\bullet-}$  radical moreover encourages to not neglect the Haber-Weiss reactions which are limiting the concentration of this species at long-term. Simulations show that the  $CaO_2 \cdot 8H_2O$  precipitation is not systematic, only occurring if preliminary accumulation of peroxide ions is sufficient, which essentially depends on the dose rate. This precipitation becomes critical between 0.1 and 0.2 Gy/s, leading to the appearance of a mineralogical super buffer, constituted by  $CaO_2 \cdot 8H_2O$  and  $Ca(OH)_2$ , which succeeds in regulating progressively all the species in solution, then in gas phase. Subject to decomposition, solid peroxide does not accumulate, which justifies a description of precipitation-dissolution based on micro-reversibility.

Presence of a gas phase in the material porosity softens the efficiency of the Allen type chain reaction, because it favours the change of  $H_2$  into gaseous form and decreases the  $H_2/O_2$  ratio in solution. On the other hand, complete saturation of the pores results in a  $H_2$  recycling and in an equilibrium state of the system much more efficient than in the presence of solid peroxide, without revealing an anoxic state for all that. Except the initial presence of powerful reducing agents in the cementitious matrix, there is not then an intrinsic evolution under irradiation leading to  $O_2$  disappearance in the presence of calcium (secondary reactions producing  $O_2$  are on the contrary numerous enough). Among the conditions allowing such a disappearance, the initial ratio  $[H_2]/[O_2] > 2$  guarantees to arrive at the result, excluding the action of any other regulating mechanism. Appearing time of equilibrium is all the shorter as the dose rate is higher, like in the case of the  $CaO_2 \cdot 8H_2O$  precipitation.



In conclusion, cementitious matrix exposed to gamma irradiation in closed system presents different regulating mechanisms able to limit radiolysis effects, or even to make this latter non dangerous (no important pressurization in the material). This behaviour cannot be extrapolated to open systems or alpha irradiation.

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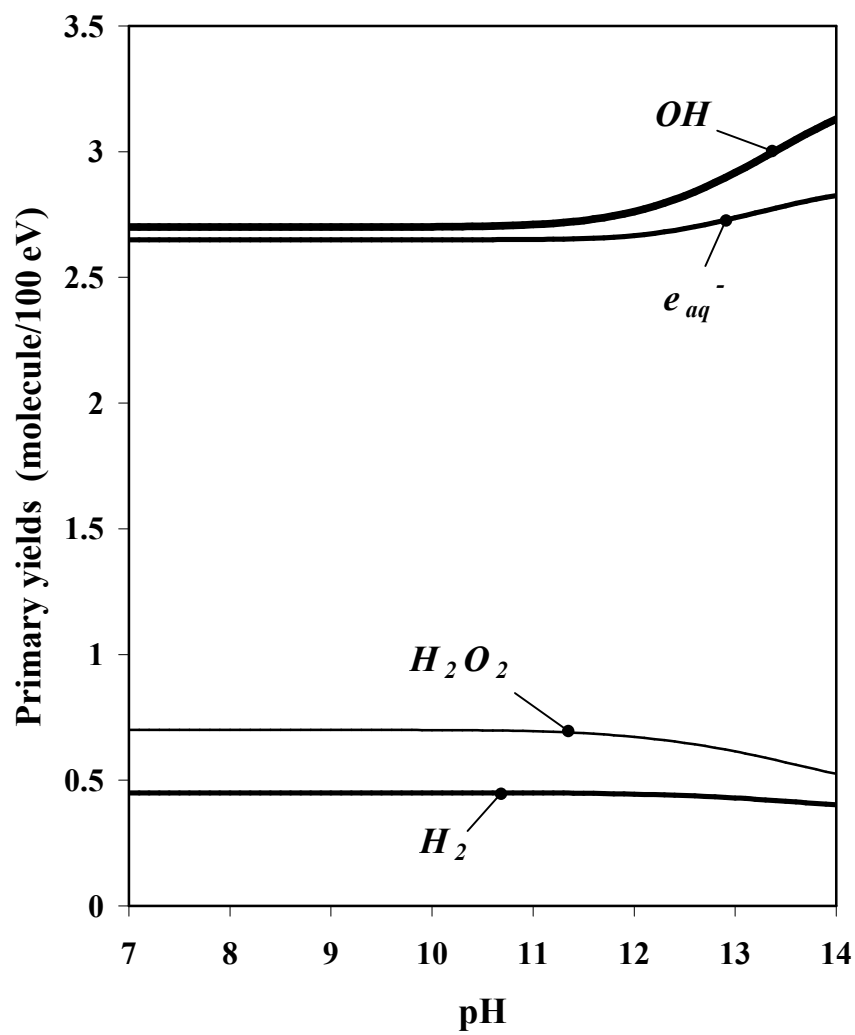
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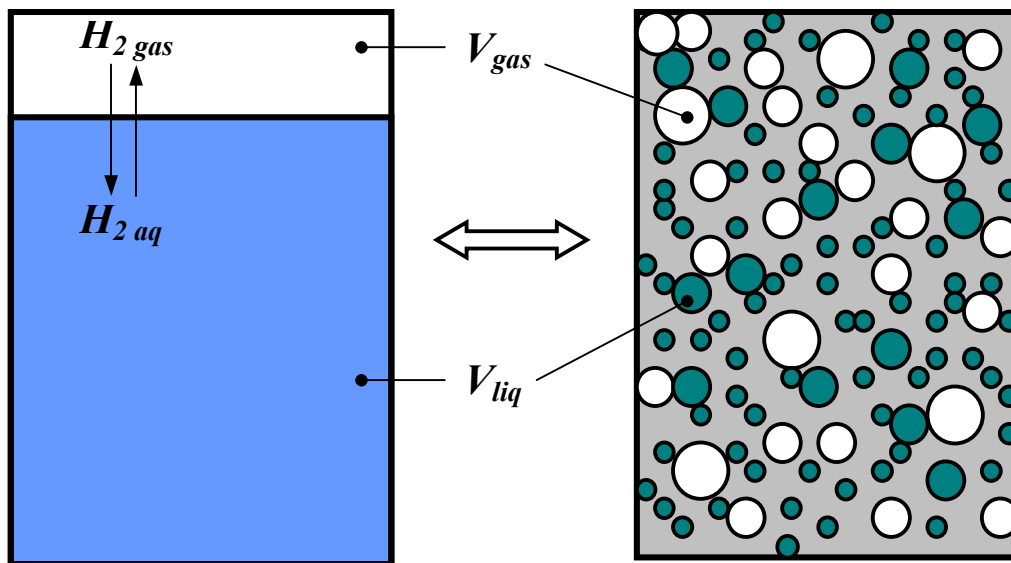
**Figure 1**

Evolution of gamma primary yields for the main radiolytic species at 25°C as a function of pH



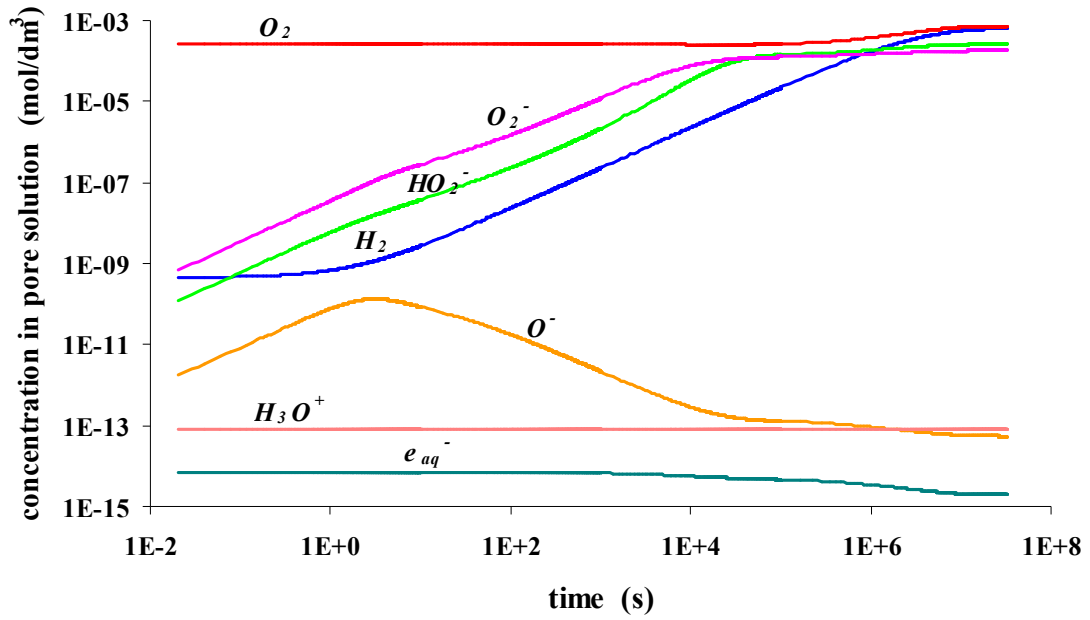
**Figure 2**

Schematic representation of the cement paste porosity with its equivalent diphasic configuration (closed system)



**Figure 3**

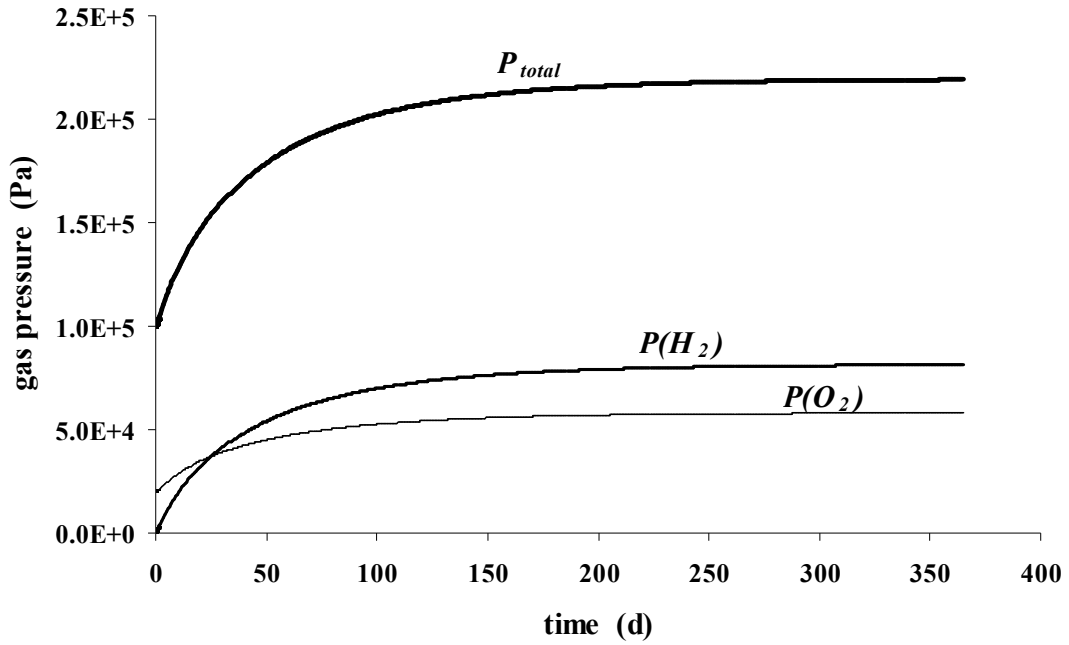
Evolution of the main radiolytic species as a function of time in a confined cement matrix under gamma radiation at 0.1 Gy/s for a liquid saturation degree of 0.75





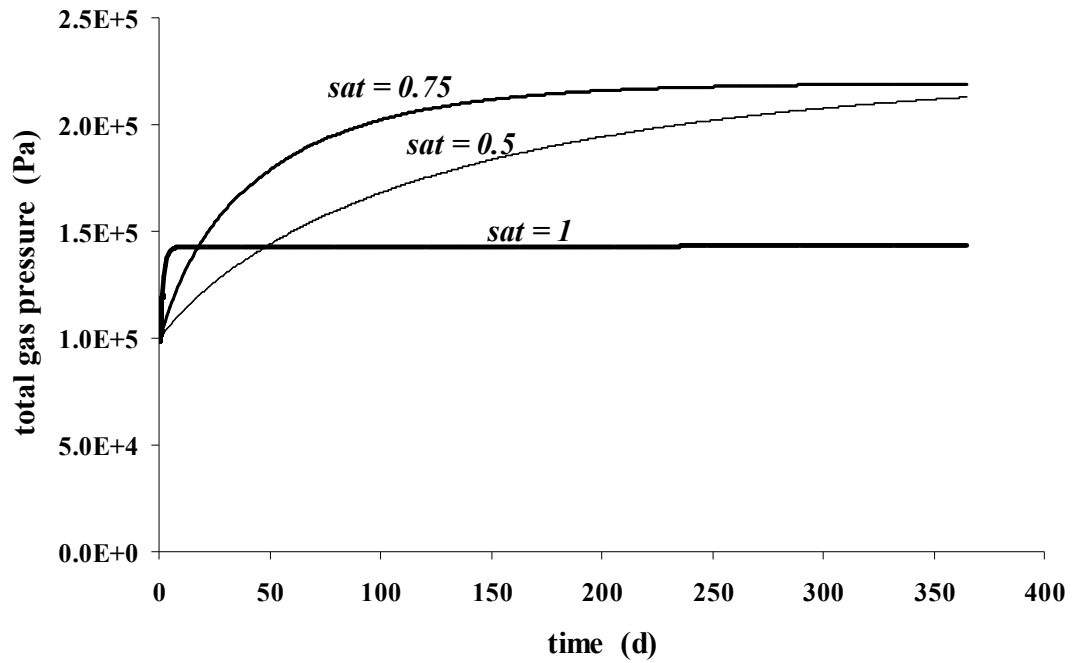
**Figure 4**

Evolution of gas pressures as a function of time in a confined cement matrix under gamma radiation at 0.1 Gy/s for a saturation degree of 0.75 ( $N_2$  and  $H_2O$  vapour are not plotted)



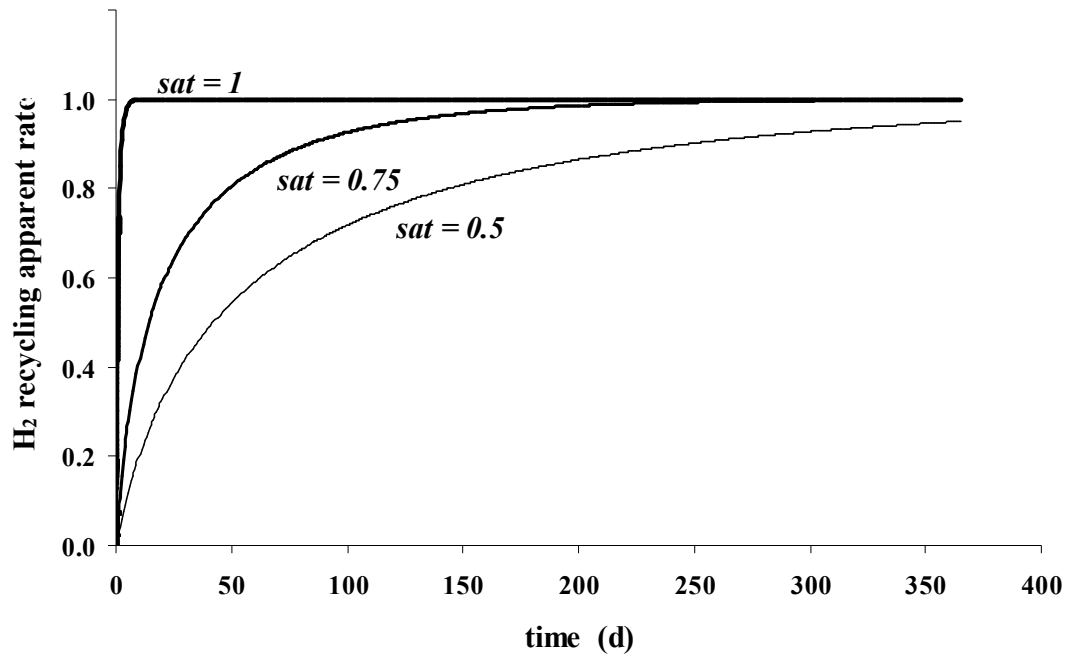
**Figure 5**

Comparison of total gas pressures as a function of time for different liquid saturation degrees in a confined cement matrix under gamma radiation at 0.1 Gy/s



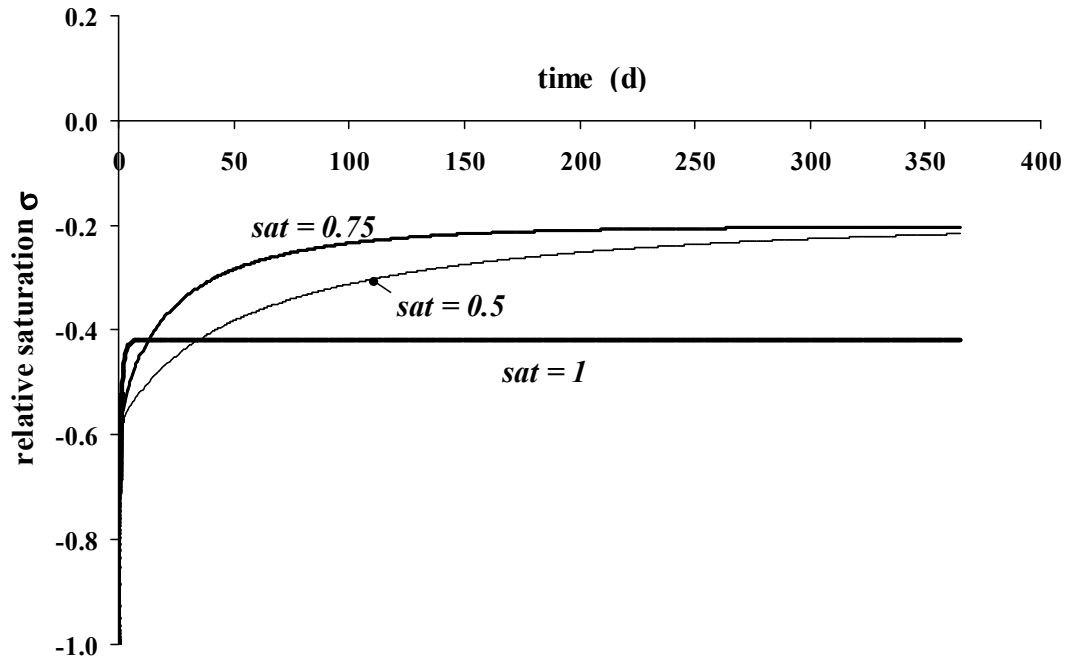
**Figure 6**

Comparison of H<sub>2</sub> recycling rates as a function of time for different liquid saturation degrees in a confined cement matrix under gamma radiation at 0.1 Gy/s



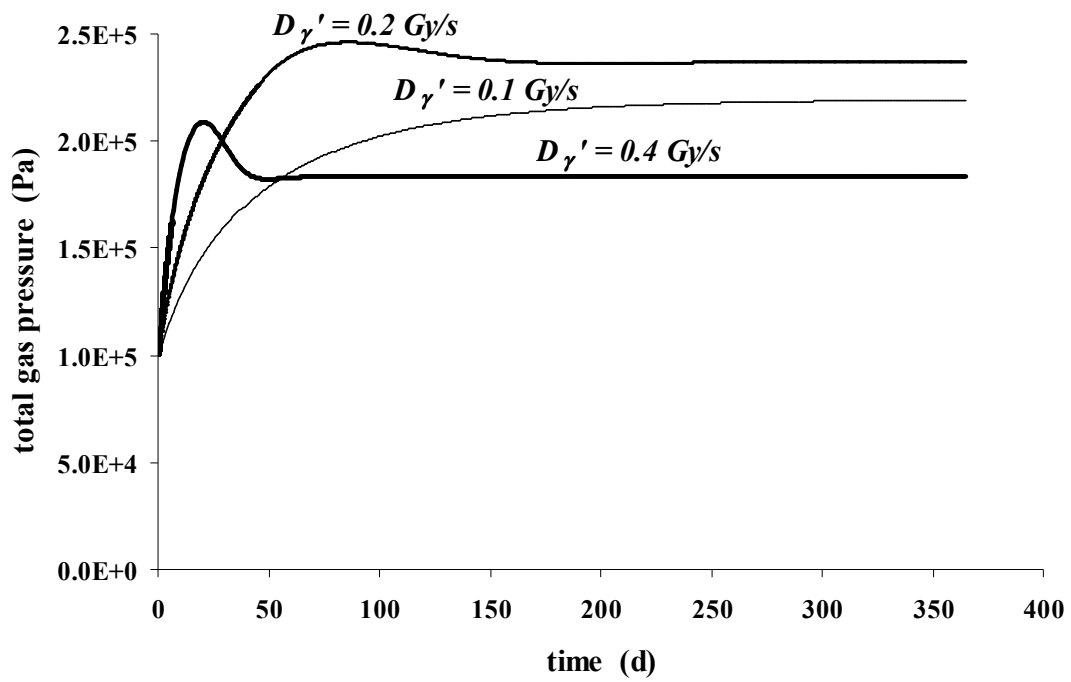
**Figure 7**

Evolution of relative saturation index (with respect to  $\text{CaO}_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$  phase) as a function of time in a confined cement matrix under gamma radiation at 0.1 Gy/s for different liquid saturation degrees



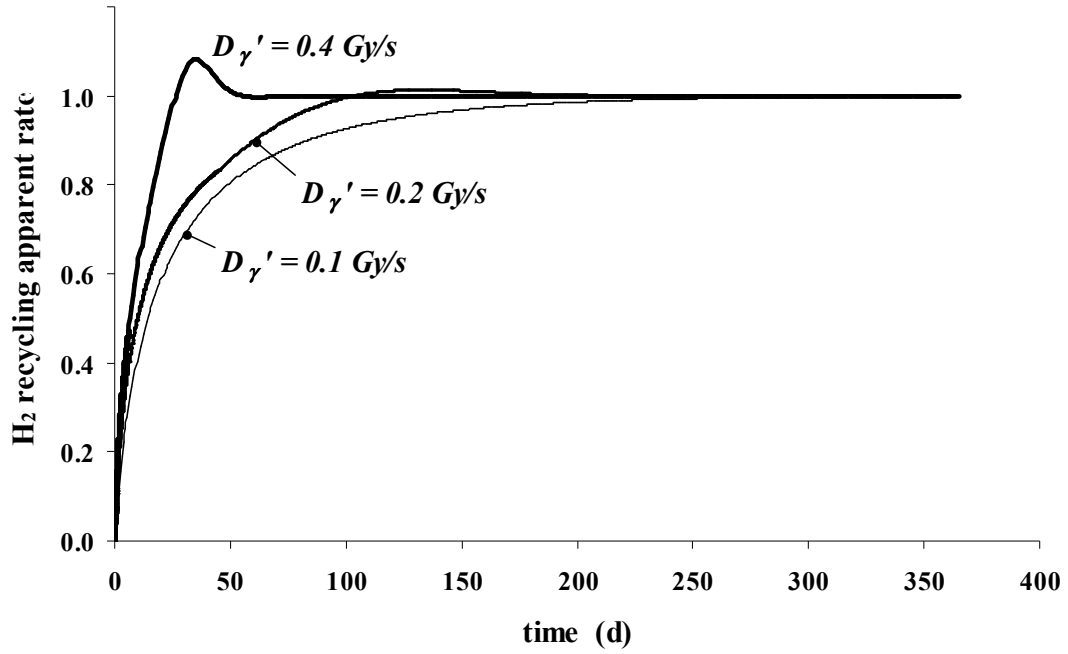
**Figure 8**

Comparison of total gas pressures as a function of time in a confined cement matrix under gamma radiation at different dose rates for a liquid saturation degree of 0.75



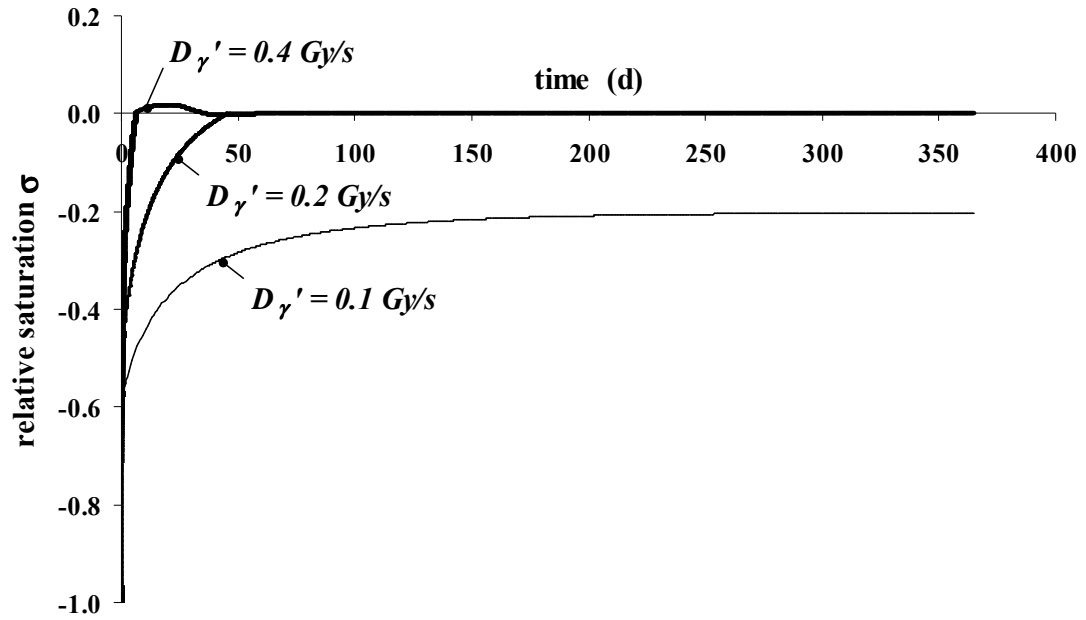
**Figure 9**

Comparison of H<sub>2</sub> recycling apparent rates as a function of time at different dose rates in a confined cement matrix under gamma radiation for a liquid saturation degree of 0.75



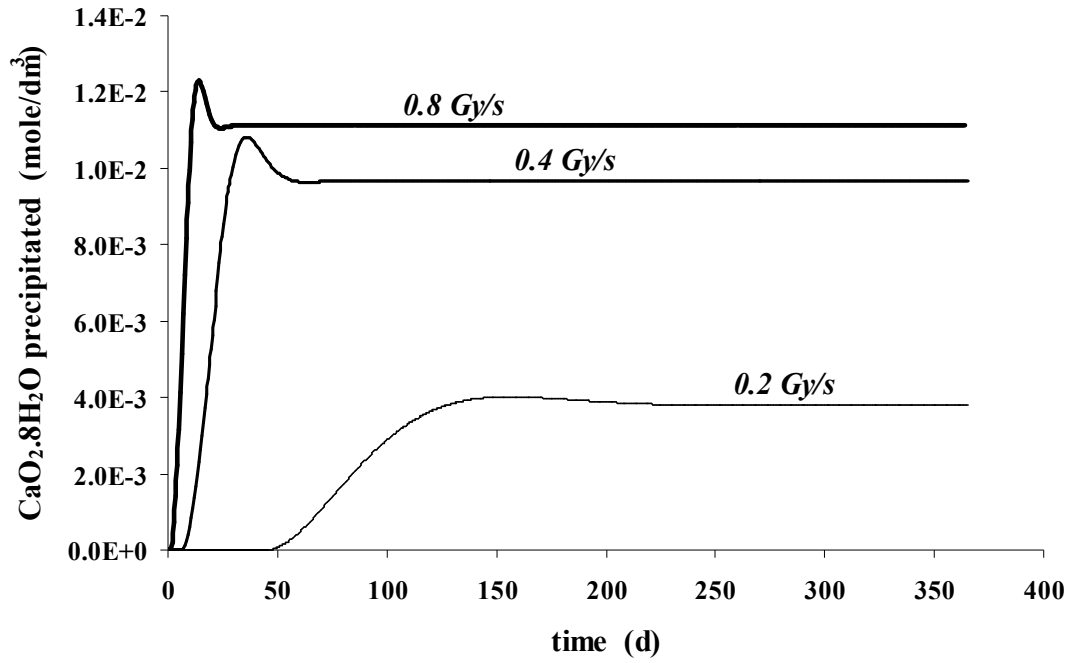
**Figure 10**

Evolution of relative saturation index (with respect to  $\text{CaO}_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$  phase) as a function of time in a confined cement matrix under gamma radiation at different dose rates for a liquid saturation degree of 0.75



**Figure 11**

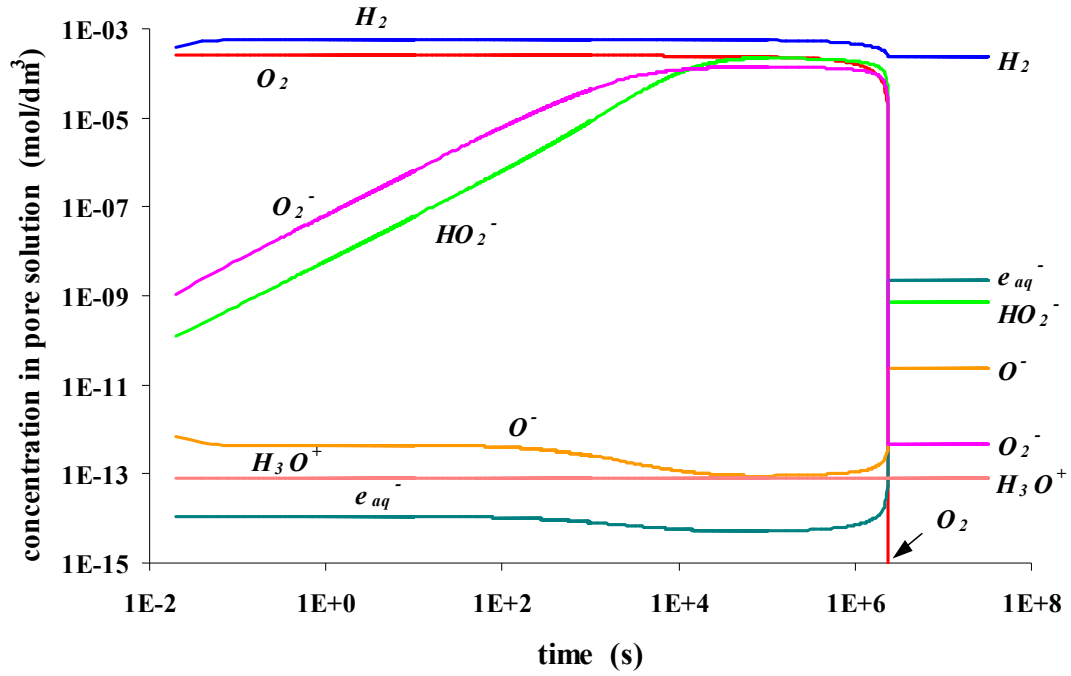
Amounts of  $\text{CaO}_2 \cdot 8\text{H}_2\text{O}$  precipitated per unit volume of pore solution in a confined cement matrix under gamma radiation at different dose rates for a liquid saturation degree of 0.75





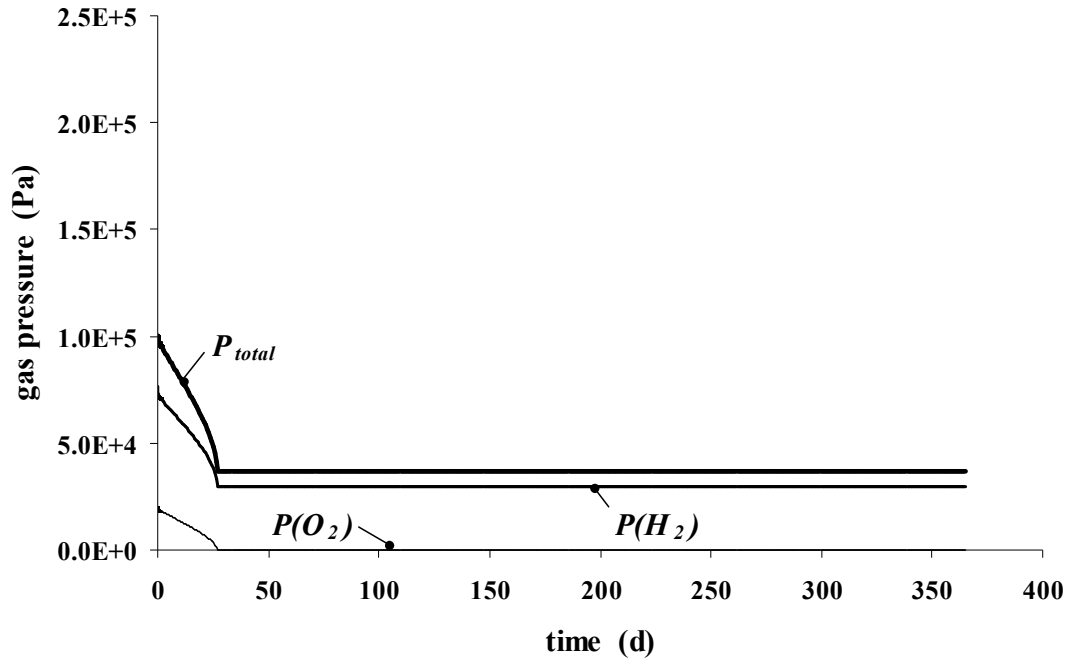
**Figure 12**

Evolution of the main radiolytic species as a function of time in a confined cement matrix under gamma radiation at 0.1 Gy/s for a liquid saturation degree of 0.75 with initial  $H_2$



**Figure 13**

Evolution of gas pressures as a function of time in a confined cement matrix under gamma radiation at 0.1 Gy/s for a saturation degree of 0.75 with initial  $H_2$  ( $N_2$  and  $H_2O$  vapour are not plotted)



**Table 1**

Calculated molal concentrations of species in a simplified pore solution of OPC at 25°C  
(mol/kg<sub>water</sub>)

Cations		Molecules		Anions	
[H <sub>3</sub> O <sup>+</sup> ]	= 8.021 × 10 <sup>-14</sup>	[H <sub>2</sub> O]	= 55.5084	[OH <sup>-</sup> ]	= 2.250 × 10 <sup>-1</sup>
[Na <sup>+</sup> ]	= 2.229 × 10 <sup>-1</sup>	[NaOH <sup>°</sup> ]	= 1.705 × 10 <sup>-2</sup>		
[CaOH <sup>+</sup> ]	= 6.837 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>	[Ca(OH) <sub>2</sub> <sup>°</sup> ]	= 1.038 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>		
[Ca <sup>2+</sup> ]	= 6.902 × 10 <sup>-4</sup>				

**Table 2**

Mineralogical and complexation equilibria used in the calculation of the pore solution at 25°C

Species	Equilibrium constant	Value	Ref.
solvent H <sub>2</sub> O	$K_w = [H_3O^+][OH^-] \cdot \gamma_1^2 \cdot \left( \frac{[H_2O] + \Sigma[solute_i]}{[H_2O]} \right)^2$	10 <sup>-13.9953</sup>	[3]
portlandite Ca(OH) <sub>2</sub>	$K_{port} = [Ca^{2+}][OH^-]^2 \cdot \gamma_2 \cdot \gamma_1^2$	10 <sup>-5.2338</sup>	this work
complex CaOH <sup>+</sup>	$K_1 = \frac{[CaOH^+]}{[Ca^{2+}][OH^-] \cdot \gamma_2}$	10 <sup>1.1618</sup>	[6]
complex Ca(OH) <sub>2</sub> <sup>0</sup>	$K_2 = \frac{[Ca(OH)_2^0]}{[CaOH^+][OH^-] \cdot \gamma_1^2}$	10 <sup>1.0882</sup>	this work
complex NaOH <sup>0</sup>	$K_3 = \frac{[NaOH^0]}{[Na^+][OH^-] \cdot \gamma_1^2}$	10 <sup>-0.2096</sup>	[6]

**Table 3**

Set of primary yields for gamma radiation at 25°C and pH = 13.225 (pore solution)  
 Values in molecule/100eV

$G_{H_2}$	$G_{e_{aq}^-}$	$G_H$	$G_{OH^-}$	$G_{-H_2O}$ <sup>a</sup>	$G_{H_3O^+}$	$G_{OH}$	$G_{H_2O_2}$	$G_{HO_2}$
0.4126	2.7813	0.55	0	9.7191	2.7813	2.9651	0.5957	0

<sup>a</sup>  $G_{-H_2O} = G_{-water} + 2G_{H_3O^+} - G_{HO_2} \approx G_{-water} + 2G_{e_{aq}^-}$  due to the convention  $e_{aq}^- = H_2O^-$

**Table 4**

Acido-basic equilibria and rate constants used for radiolytic chemistry within the cement pore solution with ionic strength  $I = 0.2257$  mol/kg and water activity = 0.9917

n°	Reactions	Pre-exponential factor A	Activation Energy EA (kJ/mol)	$k_{25^\circ\text{C}}^{\text{a}}$ ( $\text{dm}^3 \text{mol}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$ )	$\text{pK}_{\text{a}}$ $_{25^\circ\text{C}}$	Reference
E01	$\text{e}_{\text{aq}}^- + \text{H}_2\text{O} = \text{H} + \text{OH}^- + \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$3.6 \times 10^8$	31.7	$1.006 \times 10^3$	9.77 <sup>a</sup>	[12]
E02	$\text{H} + \text{OH}^- = \text{e}_{\text{aq}}^-$	$1.3 \times 10^{14}$	38.4	$2.51 \times 10^7$		[13]
E03	$\text{O}^- + \text{H}_2\text{O} = \text{OH} + \text{OH}^-$			$1.815 \times 10^6$	11.9	
E04	$\text{OH} + \text{OH}^- = \text{O}^- + \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$7.22\text{E}9 + 1.62\text{E}8 \text{ T} + 2.4\text{E}6 \text{ T}^2 - 7.81\text{E}3 \text{ T}^3 + 1.06\text{E}1 \text{ T}^4$ <sup>b</sup>		$1.265 \times 10^{10}$		[14]
E05	$\text{O}_2[-] + \text{H}_2\text{O} = \text{HO}_2 + \text{OH}^-$			$1.442 \times 10^{-1}$	4.8	
E06	$\text{HO}_2 + \text{OH}^- = \text{O}_2[-] + \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$7.22\text{E}9 + 1.62\text{E}8 \text{ T} + 2.4\text{E}6 \text{ T}^2 - 7.81\text{E}3 \text{ T}^3 + 1.06\text{E}1 \text{ T}^4$ <sup>b</sup>		$1.265 \times 10^{10}$		[14]
E07	$\text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{H}_3\text{O}^+ = \text{OH}^- + \text{H}_3\text{O}^+$			$6.461 \times 10^{-7}$	13.9953	
E08	$\text{OH}^- + \text{H}_3\text{O}^+ = 2 \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$6.62\text{E}10 + 1.48\text{E}9 \text{ T} + 1.28\text{E}7 \text{ T}^2 - 6.03\text{E}4 \text{ T}^3 + 1.28\text{E}2 \text{ T}^4$ <sup>b</sup>		$1.103 \times 10^{11}$		[14]
E09	$\text{O}^{2-} + \text{H}_2\text{O} = 2 \text{OH}^-$		Unavailable data	$10^{10}$	$\approx 36$	estimation
E10	$\text{OH}^- + \text{OH}^- = \text{O}^{2-} + \text{H}_2\text{O}$		Unavailable data	$1.005 \times 10^{-10}$		
E11	$\text{HO}_2^- + \text{H}_2\text{O} = \text{H}_2\text{O}_2 + \text{OH}^-$			$4.718 \times 10^4$	11.684	
E12	$\text{H}_2\text{O}_2 + \text{OH}^- = \text{HO}_2^- + \text{H}_2\text{O}$	$1.063 \times 10^{12}$	18.8	$5.407 \times 10^8$		[15]
E13	$\text{O}_2^{2-} + \text{H}_2\text{O} = \text{HO}_2^- + \text{OH}^-$	$3.39 \times 10^8$	14.2	$1.103 \times 10^6$	16.5	[15]
E14	$\text{HO}_2^- + \text{OH}^- = \text{O}_2^{2-} + \text{H}_2\text{O}$			$3.506 \times 10^5$		

<sup>a</sup> theoretic equilibrium, not realized

<sup>b</sup> kinetics non defined by Arrhenius law

**Table 5**

Reactions and rate constants used for radiolytic chemistry within the cement pore solution.; by convention,  $e_{aq}^- = H_2O^-$

n°	Reaction	Pre-exponential factor A	Activation Energy EA (kJ/mol)	$k_{25^\circ C}^a$ (dm <sup>3</sup> mol <sup>-1</sup> s <sup>-1</sup> ) <sup>b</sup>	Reference
R01	$e_{aq}^- + e_{aq}^- \rightarrow H_2 + 2 OH^-$	$2.33 \times 10^{13}$	20.3	$6.47 \times 10^9$	[14]
R02	$e_{aq}^- + H \rightarrow H_2 + OH^-$	$7.2 \times 10^{12}$	14.0	$2.54 \times 10^{10}$	[14]
R03	$e_{aq}^- + O^- \rightarrow 2 OH^-$	$5.6 \times 10^{11}$	7.9	$2.31 \times 10^{10}$	[14]
R04	$e_{aq}^- + OH \rightarrow H_2O + OH^-$	$1.2 \times 10^{13}$	14.7	$3.19 \times 10^{10}$	[14]
R05	$e_{aq}^- + HO_2^- \rightarrow H_2O + O^- + OH^-$	$1.75 \times 10^{12}$	15.4	$3.51 \times 10^9$	[14]
R06	$e_{aq}^- + H_2O_2 \rightarrow H_2O + OH + OH^-$	$7.0 \times 10^{12}$	15.6	$1.29 \times 10^{10}$	[14]
R07	$e_{aq}^- + O_2^- \rightarrow H_2O + O_2^{2-}$	$3.1 \times 10^{12}$	13.6	$1.28 \times 10^{10}$	[14]
R08	$e_{aq}^- + HO_2 \rightarrow H_2O + HO_2^-$	$3.1 \times 10^{12}$	13.6	$1.28 \times 10^{10}$	[14]
R09	$e_{aq}^- + O_2 \rightarrow H_2O + O_2^-$	$5.44 \times 10^{12}$	14.17	$1.79 \times 10^{10}$	[14]
R10	$e_{aq}^- + O_3^- \rightarrow 2 OH^- + O_2$			$1.6 \times 10^{10}$	[16]
R11	$e_{aq}^- + O_3 \rightarrow H_2O + O_3^-$			$3.6 \times 10^{10}$	[17]
R12	$H + H \rightarrow H_2$	$2.36 \times 10^{12}$	15.05	$5.45 \times 10^9$	[14]
R13	$H + H_2O \rightarrow H_2 + OH$			$5.5 \times 10^2$	[18]
R14	$H + O^- \rightarrow OH^-$			$2 \times 10^{10}$	[19]
R15	$H + OH \rightarrow H_2O$	$3.51 \times 10^{11}$	7.77	$1.53 \times 10^{10}$	[14]
R16	$H + HO_2^- \rightarrow OH + OH^-$	$4.2 \times 10^{13}$	25.6	$1.38 \times 10^9$	[20]
R17	$H + H_2O_2 \rightarrow OH + H_2O$	$1.8 \times 10^{11}$	21.1	$3.62 \times 10^7$	[20]
R18	$H + O_2^- \rightarrow HO_2^-$	$7.2 \times 10^{11}$	10.6	$1.00 \times 10^{10}$	[14]
R19	$H + HO_2 \rightarrow H_2O_2$	$7.2 \times 10^{11}$	10.6	$1.00 \times 10^{10}$	[14]
R20	$H + O_2 \rightarrow HO_2$	$9.57 \times 10^{11}$	10.61	$1.32 \times 10^{10}$	[14]
R21	$H + O_3 \rightarrow OH + O_2$			$2.2 \times 10^{10}$	[17]
R22	$O^- + H_2 \rightarrow OH^- + H$	$3.2 \times 10^{10}$	13.8	$1.22 \times 10^8$	[21]
R23	$O^- + O^- \rightarrow O_2^{2-}$			$1.0 \times 10^8$	[22]
R24	$O^- + OH \rightarrow HO_2^-$	$1.7 \times 10^{11}$	7.7	$7.61 \times 10^9$	[14]
R25	$O^- + HO_2^- \rightarrow OH^- + O_2^-$			$4.0 \times 10^8$	[9]
R26	$O^- + H_2O_2 \rightarrow O_2^- + H_2O$	$3.0 \times 10^{11}$	15.6	$5.55 \times 10^8$	[14]
R27	$O^- + O_2^- \rightarrow O^{2-} + O_2$			$6.0 \times 10^8$	[23]
R28	$O^- + O_2 \rightarrow O_3^-$	$3.5 \times 10^{11}$	11.2	$3.82 \times 10^9$	[24]
R29	$O^- + O_3^- \rightarrow 2 O_2^-$			$7.0 \times 10^8$	[23]
R30	$O^- + O_3 \rightarrow O_2^- + O_2$			$1 \times 10^9$	[25]
R31	$OH + H_2 \rightarrow H_2O + H$	$6.31 \times 10^{10}$	18.15	$4.17 \times 10^7$	[14]
R32	$OH + OH \rightarrow H_2O_2$	$1.04 \times 10^{11}$	7.65	$4.75 \times 10^9$	[14]
R33	$OH + HO_2^- \rightarrow H_2O + O_2^-$	$4.5 \times 10^{12}$	15.6	$8.32 \times 10^9$	[14]
R34	$OH + H_2O_2 \rightarrow H_2O + HO_2$	$1.57 \times 10^{10}$	15.62	$2.88 \times 10^7$	[14]
R35	$OH + O_2^- \rightarrow OH^- + O_2$	$8.75 \times 10^{11}$	10.85	$1.10 \times 10^{10}$	[14]
R36	$OH + HO_2 \rightarrow H_2O + O_2$	$1.04 \times 10^{11}$	5.62	$1.08 \times 10^{10}$	[14]
R37	$OH + O_3^- \rightarrow OH^- + O_3$			$2.5 \times 10^9$	[26]
R38	$OH + O_3^- \rightarrow HO_2 + O_2^-$			$8.5 \times 10^9$	[26]
R39	$OH + O_3 \rightarrow HO_2 + O_2$			$1.1 \times 10^8$	[27]
R40	$O_2^- + HO_2^- \rightarrow O_2 + OH^- + O^-$			$8.23 \times 10^{-2}$	estimation
R41	$O_2^- + H_2O_2 \rightarrow O_2 + OH^- + OH$			$1.3 \times 10^{-1}$	[28]
R42	$O_2^- + O_2^- \rightarrow O_2 + O_2^{2-}$	$4.89 \times 10^8$	52.59	$2.99 \times 10^{-1}$	[29, 14]
R43	$O_2^- + HO_2 \rightarrow O_2 + HO_2^-$	$2.44 \times 10^9$	8.6	$7.60 \times 10^7$	[10]
R44	$O_2^- + O_3^- \rightarrow 2 O_2 + O^{2-}$			$1 \times 10^4$	[16]
R45	$O_2^- + O_3 \rightarrow O_2 + O_3^-$			$1.5 \times 10^9$	[17]
R46	$HO_2 + H_2O_2 \rightarrow O_2 + OH + H_2O$			$5 \times 10^{-1}$	[28]
R47	$HO_2 + HO_2 \rightarrow O_2 + H_2O_2$	$1.48 \times 10^9$	19.1	$6.67 \times 10^5$	[14]
R48	$HO_2 + O_3 \rightarrow OH + 2 O_2$			$5 \times 10^8$	[16]
R49	$O_3^- \rightarrow O^- + O_2$	$2.75 \times 10^{11}$	45.7	$2.71 \times 10^3$	[14]
R50	$O_3^- + H_3O^+ \rightarrow OH + H_2O + O_2$			$9 \times 10^{10}$	[26]
R51	$O_3^- + HO_2^- \rightarrow O_2^- + OH^- + O_2$			$8.9 \times 10^5$	[30]
R52	$O_3^- + H_2O_2 \rightarrow O_2^- + H_2O + O_2$			$1.6 \times 10^6$	[31]
R53	$O_3 + OH^- \rightarrow O_2 + HO_2^-$			$4.8 \times 10^1$	[32]
R54	$O_3 + HO_2^- \rightarrow O_2 + OH + O_2^-$			$5.5 \times 10^6$	[33]
R55	$O_3 + H_2O_2 \rightarrow O_2 + OH + HO_2$	$2.8 \times 10^{11}$	73.5	$3.72 \times 10^{-2}$	[34]
R56	$H_2O_2 + HO_2^- \rightarrow H_2O + O_2 + OH^-$			$4.5 \times 10^{-4}$	[35]

<sup>a</sup>  $k = A \exp(-EA/RT)$

<sup>b</sup> excepted for R49 (s<sup>-1</sup>)

**Table 6**  
Mineralogical and acido-basic equilibria used in the calculation of the pore solution under irradiation at 25°C

Species	Equilibrium constant	Value	Ref.
Ca peroxide hexahydrate CaO <sub>2</sub> ·8H <sub>2</sub> O	$K_{per} = [Ca^{2+}][O_2^{2-}]^2 (H_2O)^8 \cdot \gamma_2^2$	10 <sup>-10.5998</sup>	this work
couple H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub> /HO <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	$K_3 = \frac{[H_2O_2][OH^-]}{[HO_2^-] (H_2O)}$	10 <sup>-2.3112</sup>	[6]
couple HO <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup> /O <sub>2</sub> <sup>2-</sup>	$K_4 = \frac{[HO_2^-][OH^-] \gamma_1^2}{[O_2^{2-}] (H_2O) \gamma_2}$	10 <sup>2.5047</sup>	[11]
couple OH <sup>•</sup> /O <sup>•-</sup>	$K_5 = \frac{[OH][OH^-]}{[O^-] (H_2O)}$	10 <sup>-2.0953</sup>	[9]
couple HO <sub>2</sub> <sup>•</sup> /O <sub>2</sub> <sup>•-</sup>	$K_6 = \frac{[HO_2][OH^-]}{[O_2^-] (H_2O)}$	10 <sup>-9.1953</sup>	[10]
couple OH <sup>-</sup> /O <sup>2-</sup>	$K_7 = \frac{[OH^-]^2 \gamma_1^2}{[O^{2-}] (H_2O) \gamma_2}$	10 <sup>22.0047</sup>	estimated

$$^a (H_2O) = \frac{[H_2O]}{[H_2O] + \Sigma[solute_i]}$$



**Table 7**

Aqueous diffusion coefficients, interfacial transfer constants and Henry law constants in pure water at 25°C

Gas	D (m <sup>2</sup> /s)	k <sub>w</sub> (m/s)	K (Pa)
H <sub>2</sub>	4.80 × 10 <sup>-9</sup> [14]	1.587 × 10 <sup>-6</sup>	7.1785 × 10 <sup>9</sup> [44]
O <sub>2</sub>	2.40 × 10 <sup>-9</sup> [14]	1 × 10 <sup>-6</sup> [42]	4.4199 × 10 <sup>9</sup> [45]
N <sub>2</sub>	3.05 × 10 <sup>-9</sup> [43]	1.173 × 10 <sup>-6</sup>	8.5687 × 10 <sup>9</sup> [46]