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Temperature-Induced Structural Transitions in Gallium-Based MIL-53 Metal-Organic Framework

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Abstract

We report a structural and thermodynamic investigation of the phase behavior of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53, a gallium-based MOF having the MIL-53 topology containing 0.7 wt% fluorine bonded to the metal. Despite some small structural differences, especially for the hydrated form, the overall physical chemistry behavior of Ga(OH,F)-MIL-53 is very similar to standard fluorine free Ga-MIL-53 material. A combination of in situ X-ray diffraction, in situ Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy, differential scanning calorimetry and heat capacity measurements allowed to establish that Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 under vacuum (i.e. in the empty material) exhibits two stable phases: a nonporous narrow-pore (np) phase favored at low temperature and a large-pore (lp) phase favored at high temperature, accompanied by a huge hysteresis effect. Structure determination of the hydrated material Ga(OH,F)-MIL-53_np_H₂O obtained after synthesis, activation and rehydration, was also performed. Density functional theory calculations show that it is not a stable structure of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 in absence of adsorbed water molecules. Instead, this hydrated structure is a swollen variant of the np phase, where the flexible framework has expanded to accommodate water molecules.

Keywords: metal-organic frameworks, porous materials, structural transitions, density-functional theory, in situ X-Ray diffraction, FTIR

Introduction

Within the last fifteen years, the development of a new class of organic–inorganic hybrid compounds called metal–organic frameworks (MOFs) has experienced a large acceleration^{1,2,3,4}. Such solids are synthesized from metal and organic sources and give rise to one-dimensional, two-dimensional or three-dimensional porous structures where the inorganic sub-network is made up of clusters, chains, layers or even three-dimensional networks. The tremendous interest in this family of solids can be related to their extremely large range of crystal structures and host–guest properties, giving them a major potential impact in adsorption/separation technologies for strategic gases (e.g. H₂, CO₂ and CH₄) linked with energy supply and environmental problems.^{5,6} The combination of tunable porosity, functionalization of the internal surface together with structural flexibility of the host framework opens the way to an extremely rich host–guest chemistry, putting this class of materials in a unique position. Depending on their characteristics (porosity, structure, nature of the organic linker), many subtypes of MOF's have been defined in the literature as PCP's (Porous Coordination Polymers), MMOF's (Microporous MOF's), ZMOF's (Zeolite-like MOF's), ZIF's (Zeolitic Imidazolate Frameworks), or SPC's (Soft Porous Crystal).

This last-mentioned family consists of materials behaving in a remarkable guest-responsive fashion. Soft porous crystals¹ exhibit a variety of large amplitude dynamic behaviors of their frameworks in response to external stimuli of weak intensity (light, electric field, gas exposure...). The change in the framework of SPC's in response to the external constraint is reversible and maintains the crystalline character of the solid. As an example, one may cite the MIL-53 type frameworks^{2,7,8,9,10,11} which exhibit guest-induced structural phase transitions upon guest adsorption and desorption, called “breathing” transitions. The bistable behavior of this system is controlled by the gas pressure that acts as the external stimulus but temperature, mechanical stress, liquid phase adsorption can also induce structural transitions^{12,13,14}.

The solids of the MIL-53 type family solids are obtained from terephthalic acid (H₂BDC) and a variety of metals such as Al, Cr, Fe, Ga, V, In, Sc, Mn, ... It has been shown that the nature of the metal strongly affects the behavior of the solid^{15,16,17} as well as functionality of the linker molecules^{18,19,20,21}.

In 2008, Vougo-Zanda *et al.*²² published the syntheses and the structures determined by single crystal X-ray diffraction of two gallium based MOFs having the MIL-53 topology, that is, Ga(OH)(BDC)·0.74H₂BDC and Ga(OH,F)(BDC)•0.74 H₂BDC. Since then, several teams published gallium-containing MIL-53 type materials. In particular, Férey's group, pioneer team of the MIL-53 family²³, and our group with the synthesis of gallium-containing MIL-53, named IM-19^{9,24,25}. In the present paper we report a study of the latter material named hereafter Ga(OH,F)-MIL53, which partially contains fluorine in the framework in contrast to the conventional Ga-MIL-53²³ that is fluorine free and the Al(F)-MIL53²⁶ in which all the OH groups are replaced by fluorine atoms²⁶.

One of the specificities of the gallium based MIL-53, is that upon dehydration a narrow pore (np) structure is observed at room temperature, in contrast to well-studied aluminum or chromium based MIL-53 for which the stable phase of the bare material at room temperature is an open form (large pore, lp). Structure characterization of gallium based MIL-53 has been performed in the presence of H₂BDC (benzenedicarboxylic acid), DMF (dimethylformamide) or water and without guest molecules.^{9,23} Depending on the presence or not of guest molecules, their nature and temperature, an expansion/shrinkage phenomenon is observed.

However, some questions still subsist about the thermodynamics of the solid-solid phase transition in the empty material (i.e. under vacuum): its reversibility and its energetics.

In the present paper, we have used a combination of experimental and theoretical tools to shed light onto these issues. We performed a complete study of the solid-solid phase transition in Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 under secondary vacuum in a large temperature range, by using in situ X-Ray Diffraction (XRD), in situ Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR), Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC) as well as Density Functional Theory (DFT) calculations.

Experimental and theoretical details

Synthesis

All reagents and chemicals were used without any further purification. The metal source, gallium nitrate hydrate $\text{Ga}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot x\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (99.99 %), was purchased from Strem Chemicals. The organic linker, H_2BDC (99 %), was supplied by Fluka. The solvents, DMF (≥ 99 %) and ethanol (EtOH, ≥ 99.8 %), were provided by Sigma-Aldrich and VWR, respectively. Hydrofluoric acid (HF, 40 %) was purchased from Prolabo.

Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_{np}-H₂O. Crude form of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 (*i.e.* Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_{lp}-H₂BDC) was hydrothermally prepared from a mixture of $\text{Ga}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot x\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (8.19 g; 32.02 mmol by assuming $x=0$), H_2BDC (10.64 g; 64.04 mmol), HF (1.60 g; 32.02 mmol) in deionized water in 1/2/1/100 molar ratio. The mixture was heated at 493 K for 3 days in a Teflon®-lined stainless steel autoclave. The solid was filtered, washed with hot DMF (for removing the unreacted molecules of H_2BDC), ethanol and dried at room temperature. White crystals were obtained with a yield of 45 % based on Ga (5.35 g; 14.25 mmol). Then, the as-made material was treated with DMF in a Teflon®-lined stainless steel autoclave at 433 K for 6 days. The solid (*i.e.* Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_{lp}-DMF) was recovered by filtration, washed with DMF and dried at room temperature. Finally, Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_{np}-H₂O was obtained from Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_{lp}-DMF after removal of DMF by immersion in EtOH at room temperature during 24 h. After filtration, the white crystals were heated in air at 548 K for 1 day. After cooling down, a white crystalline powder was recovered. The presence of fluoride anion was evidenced by ^{19}F NMR spectroscopic analyses in both liquid (after dissolution of the solid) and solid phases, the former characterization technique having enabled in addition the quantification of fluorine in the hydrated solid (Figures S1 and S2). These results combined with the one of thermogravimetric analysis (not shown) converge on the following formula, $\text{Ga}(\text{OH}_{0.9}\text{F}_{0.1})(\text{BDC}) \cdot 0.9\text{H}_2\text{O}$, for Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_{np}-H₂O. It is worth noting that elemental analysis performed in the work of ref. 9 did not allow evidencing the traces of fluorine that ^{19}F NMR clearly shows here.

Powder XRD and Rietveld refinement

High resolution powder XRD pattern of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_{np}-H₂O was first recorded by collecting the data on a STOE STADI-P diffractometer equipped with a curved monochromator Ge(111) and a linear position sensitive detector, in the 8–90° (2θ) range (step size: 0.01°, time acquisition/step: 150 s) and in the Debye-Scherrer scan mode by using $\text{CuK}\alpha_1$ radiation ($\lambda = 0.15406$ nm). The Rietveld refinement was performed with the GSAS package²⁷. More details on data collection are given in Supporting Information. The final Rietveld refinement gave excellent reliability factors; the final Rietveld plot is displayed in Figure S3 and crystal as well as Rietveld refinement parameters are listed in Table S1. Atomic parameters are listed in Table S2 and selected bond distances and angles are given in Table

S3. Figure S4 displays the asymmetric unit of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O. A crystallographic information file (CIF file) of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O can be obtained from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, quoting deposition numbers CCDC 912634.

Besides in situ XRD patterns were recorded using Cu K α radiation on a D8 Advance Bruker apparatus equipped with a Vantec linear detector. Measurements were performed under vacuum ($< 10^{-3}$ hPa) at increasing then decreasing temperatures within the thermal stability temperature range 298-573 K, by using a MRI TC-Radiation chamber.

FTIR

In situ FTIR absorption measurements were performed in an optical cell specially built to study the interaction of a gas on a nanoporous material. This cell is a stainless steel six-way cube equipped with two KBr windows and two view ports for high vacuum, each of them being placed on opposite sides of the cube. The lower part of the cube is closed by means of a fixed solid flange and the upper part is connected to a heat chamber and to both a vacuum line and a gas inlet. The windows are located at a short distance from each other of about 10 mm in order to optimize the signal-to-noise ratio and to allow the exploration of a wide domain of pore filling of the adsorbent. The sample is dispersed between two KBr discs and placed in the sample holder, which can be moved up and down from the heat chamber to the optical cell, by using a magnetic sample transporter. After a thermal treatment under vacuum up to 573 K the sample holder is moved to the optical cell where the spectra are recorded at room temperature over a wide range of controlled pressure from 10^{-4} to 10^3 hPa. The FTIR spectrometer was a Bruker Equinox 55 instrument equipped with a globar source, a DTGS detector and a KBr beamsplitter. All spectra were recorded at a resolution of 2 cm^{-1} by summing 40 scans in transmission mode. Each spectrum was referenced to a background spectrum recorded in the same conditions without sample.

DSC

Calorimetric measurements were carried out by means of a C80 Setaram Tian-Calvet differential calorimeter. The sample mass was around 300 mg. The heat capacity was measured by increasing the sample temperature step by step from 298 to 553 K. Temperature increment was 10 K and the heating rate was $0.5\text{ K}\cdot\text{min}^{-1}$. The change of enthalpy at the phase transition was measured under vacuum by heating the sample from 298 to 553 K with a heating rate of $0.1\text{ K}\cdot\text{min}^{-1}$. In all measurements the sample was kept under a dynamic vacuum of 10^{-5} hPa. In both cases, blank experiments without sample were performed under the same conditions in order to take into account the thermal deviation of the calorimetric apparatus.

First principles calculations

Experimental crystallographic structures of the Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 and Ga-MIL53 materials were fully relaxed by optimizing both atomic positions and unit cell parameters. We performed first principles calculations in the density functional theory approach with periodic unit cell, full use of the crystals' symmetry elements and localized basis sets as implemented in the CRYSTAL09 code.²⁸ We used the B3LYP hybrid exchange-correlation functional^{29,30} with empirical correction for the dispersive interactions following the scheme of Grimme.³¹ All electron basis sets were used for all atoms involved: 6-311G(d,p) for H, C and O,³² 8-511G* for Al³³ and 86-4111d41G for Ga.³⁴

Results and discussion

1. Structure determinations: crystallography and first-principles calculations

The structure of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O is compared with the one of Ga-MIL-53_np_H₂O, both at room temperature, in Figure 1. Like all the MOFs displaying the MIL-53 topology, it is built from 1D chains of MO₆ (M=Ga here) octahedra sharing OH vertices (running along the *c* axis) which are linked by terephthalate ligands to generate a 3D framework with rhombus-shaped channel. Moreover, liquid and solid state ¹⁹F NMR analyses evidence the presence of fluorine in the framework. The amount of fluorine determined by liquid state ¹⁹F NMR analysis is 0.7 wt % (Figure S1) which corresponds to a F/OH ratio around 1/9, *i.e.* one amongst ten bridged positions is occupied by one fluorine atom (nine others by OH groups). Besides, it is worth noting that because of, firstly, the small amount of fluorine in the framework and, secondly, the similarity of F and OH scattering factors, the Rietveld refinement of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O based on powder XRD pattern has been carried out without explicitly considering the presence of fluorine. The refined unit cell chemical composition taking into account the fluorine amount obtained from chemical analysis of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O is Ga(OH_{0.9}F_{0.1})(BDC)·0.83 H₂O (see Table S1). The refined number of water molecules is in good agreement with the one obtained by TG analysis.

Both Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O and Ga-MIL53_np_H₂O crystallize in monoclinic system (Table 1). Nevertheless the main difference resides on different space groups, *i.e.* non-centrosymmetric *Cc* group for Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O and centrosymmetric *P2₁/c* group for Ga-MIL-53_np_H₂O with a double unit cell volume. As a result of the lowering of the symmetry, in Ga-MIL53_np_H₂O, we observe a tripling of the gallium and a doubling of the water crystallographic sites compared with Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O for which a unique crystallographic site is observed for gallium and water, respectively. Accordingly, two types of rhombus-shaped channels exist for Ga-MIL53_np_H₂O as depicted in Figure 1b whereas only one type of channels appears for Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O. This could be expressed by the twist angles between the terephthalate linker's planes. Indeed, for Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O the angle formed by neighboring aromatic moieties, *i.e.* the ligands involved in the sharpest angle of the lozenge, is unique and around 35.3°. For Ga-MIL53_np_H₂O the value of this angle depends on the nature of the channel. For A-type channels, one counts two values, 24.4 and 41.4° whereas for B-type channels the unique value of 31.3° is observed.²³

It is however difficult to rule on the reason of the structural difference between the two materials which can be considered as similar. The presence of fluorine in the framework in Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O even at 0.7 wt % and the shorter heating duration for the preparation of the crude form of Ga-MIL53 could be underlined. It should also be noticed that the number of water molecules in the structure is slightly lower in the case of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O (=0.83, see table S2) than in the case of the hydrated Ga-MIL53 (=1, see ref. 23), possibly linked to the hydrophobic character of fluorinated materials.

We further investigated the nature of the difference between the various structures obtained experimentally by performing first principle energy minimization calculations in the Density Functional Theory formalism. The level of theory used is state-of-the-art for the determination of MOF structures, coupling a hybrid exchange–correlation function and corrections accounting for dispersion interactions. The details of our calculations are reported in ref. 35.

We first characterized the structure of the large pore phase. As no experimental structure has been resolved for an adsorbate-free large pore material (either Ga-MIL-53 or Ga(OH,F)-MIL53), we used as a starting point the experimental crystallographic structure of Ga(OH,F)(BDC)-C₅H₅N synthesized by Vougo-Zanda *et al.*²² The published structure was edited to remove the guest pyridine molecules contained in its pores and add hydrogen atoms. The structure obtained was of in *Imma* space group, which is consistent with the indexing of the X-ray diffraction patterns for the empty high-temperature phase of Ga-MIL-53.²³ Energy minimization then yielded a structure in good agreement with the experimental unit cell parameters for MIL-53(Ga)_ht of Volkringer *et al.*²³ (unit cell volumes of 1452.7 Å³ vs. 1479.7 Å³; unit cell parameters are given in Table 2).

In a second time, we studied Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_empty, a narrow-pore structure with no adsorbed molecule. Using the experimental structure for Ga-MIL-53, published by Volkringer *et al.*,²³ as a starting point, we minimized the atomic positions and unit cell parameters in the *C2/c* space group. The energy minimization converged to a structure close to the experimental one, with a slight increase in unit cell volume (from 886.3 Å³ to 899.0 Å³). Details of the unit cell parameters are given in Table 2. A geometrical analysis of accessible pore volume showed the resulting structure to be non-porous for a probe molecule of the size of water (kinetic diameter of 2.4 Å): the largest sphere that can access the pores has a diameter of 2.2 Å. We confirmed this geometrical analysis with Grand Canonical Monte Carlo simulations of water adsorption. No water molecule was adsorbed in the range of pressure up to $P_{\text{sat}} = 3.5$ kPa, the saturation pressure of water at 300 K.

Finally, we turned our attention to the hydrated narrow-pore phase whose experimental structure was determined by X-ray diffraction, for both the Ga-MIL-53 and Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 materials. Starting from the experimental structure of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O (space group *Cc*), we first relaxed the hydrated structure, leading to a small shrinking of the unit cell (from 973.4 Å³ to 948.6 Å³). We then removed the water molecules and optimized the empty structure: the material underwent a contraction of larger amplitude, yielding a final structure almost identical to the Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_empty structure discussed in the above paragraph (volume of 897.9 Å³ vs. 899.0 Å³; see Table 2 for all unit cell parameters). As a conclusion, our quantum chemistry calculations reveal that the conformation of the Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O framework is not a stable structure in the absence of adsorbed water molecules. Instead, removal of water spontaneously leads to the formation of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_empty.

We then performed the same analysis on the hydrated Ga-MIL-53_np material reported by the Férey group. The structure of this latter is slightly different from the Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O, in that it has been indexed in a double unit cell (and space group *P2₁/c*). As discussed above, its super structure is composed of two different channels with two distinct crystallographic sites for water molecules (named sites A and B). Upon removal of water molecules from hydrated Ga-MIL-53_np and energy minimization of the structure, we observed that the structure relaxation proceeds in two clearly separated stages. At first, the aromatic rings of the material rotate from their initial “twisted” position. This leads to more symmetric structure, in which the differentiation between channel types A and B has been lost. During later steps of the energy minimization, the framework then contracts into a nonporous structure, similarly to what was observed for Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O. The final crystalline structure has, however, a lower unit cell volume ($V = 840.7$ Å³). We conclude again that Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 and Ga-MIL-53 behave in a similar fashion despite small structural differences which are still to be fully elucidated. The less reasonable structure obtained when starting from Ga-MIL-53 may be attributed to difficulties in the optimization

of this complex molecular crystal, starting from a geometry that is more distorted than Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O (and twice its size). Further theoretical work on this aspect is ongoing.

2. *In situ* XRD characterization of phase transitions

The XRD patterns of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 recorded at 303 K under air and vacuum are compared in **Figure 2**. It is worth noting that under vacuum, all water molecules are desorbed from the sample at room temperature (see the thermodesorption curve shown in supporting information, Figure S6). Thus, the removal of water molecules from Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O results in formation of another phase, which has been previously observed and designated phase p1 at $T > 353$ K under ambient atmosphere.⁹ The XRD pattern of this phase is the same as that observed for the structure referred to as MIL-53(Ga)_lt in ref. 23 for which the structure was determined to be a narrow pore form of MIL-53. Our XRD data thus allows us to conclude that the stable form of the guest-free Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 at 303 K is a narrow pore form, that we hereafter call Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_empty.

Further heating of the solid under vacuum in its thermal stability range (characterized by thermodesorption experiment, see Figure S6) induces a progressive transformation of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_empty into another phase, identical to phase p2 identified under air by Chaplais *et al.*⁹ The corresponding diffraction pattern is similar to those of MIL-53(Al)_ht and MIL-53(Cr)_ht, where it was identified as a large pore structure.³⁶ This phase is designated here as Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_lp. The np_empty \rightarrow lp transformation under vacuum occurs in the same temperature range as for the sample heated in air⁹: it begins at 423 K and it is complete at 523 K (Figure 3).

To verify the reversibility of the phase transition under vacuum, the sample was cooled down from 573 K (Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_lp) to 303 K. The XRD patterns of the sample were then recorded every 194 min (**Figure 4**). The cooling to 303 K induces a partial structural transformation of lp into np_empty as can be inferred from the appearance of the characteristic peaks (the most intense being the (110) peak located at $2\theta = 13.5^\circ$). On further aging at 303 K, the intensity of the peaks of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_empty slightly increases, but after *ca.* 6 h it remains constant. The structural phase of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 at 303 K under vacuum appears therefore to be dependent on the thermal history. After water desorption at 303 K, the stable phase is the narrow pore form Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_empty. By contrast after heating to 573 K and cooling, the solid consists of a mixture of lp and np_empty structures, with a majority of lp structure. Such a behavior is indicative of a large temperature hysteresis in the structural transition for Ga(OH,F)-MIL53, similar to what has been observed in MIL-53(Al)³⁷.

3. *In situ* FTIR characterization of phase transitions

After outgassing under vacuum at room temperature, the infrared spectrum of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 undergoes modifications in the wavenumber range 4000-400 cm⁻¹ due to the phase transition from np_H₂O to np_empty during dehydration. This structural transformation induces the disappearance of at least five vibrational bands characteristic of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O. The first one, located at 1626 cm⁻¹, is assigned to the fundamental ν_2 (H₂O) band of encapsulated water. The second one, at 1123 cm⁻¹, corresponds to the δ (OH) band of

μ_2 -hydroxo group hydrogen bonded to adsorbed water molecules $[\text{H}_2\text{O}\dots\text{H-O}(\text{Ga})_2]$. The last three bands, located at 983, 624 and 582 cm^{-1} , can also be assigned to bands arising from the interaction of water with Ga(OH,F)-MIL53. All other vibrational bands are almost unchanged upon dehydration at room temperature.

Upon heating under vacuum, the infrared spectrum of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_empty undergoes further strong modifications due to the np_empty-lp structural transition. Over the nineteen vibrational bands examined in the range 2000-400 cm^{-1} , only six are not modified during the phase transition. Ten vibrational bands are blue or red shifted by jump at either 453 or at 499 K, depending on the nature of the vibration (**Figure 5**). The shifts are at least 5 cm^{-1} for the band referenced as ν_{17B} and located at 890 cm^{-1} , and they can reach 19 cm^{-1} for the $\nu_{\text{as}}(\text{CO}_2^-)$ vibrational mode of the terephthalate ligands that is located at 1546 cm^{-1} in the np_empty form. As specified by Volkringer et al.²³ for the vibrational band located at around 1020 cm^{-1} and referenced as 18A in **Figure 5**, these shifts reflect the opening phenomenon of the Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_empty network to give the lp phase. One another band located at 544 cm^{-1} disappears after heating above 453 K (Figure S7) and two new bands located at 513 and 580 cm^{-1} , characteristic of the lp phase appear at temperature higher than 499 K (Figure S8).

From this analysis of the location of vibrational bands as a function of the temperature it is clear that the np_empty and lp phases exist as pure phases in the temperature ranges below 453 K and above 499 K, respectively. Between 453 and 499 K, the coexistence of characteristic bands of the two structures indicates the presence of a mixture of the np_empty and lp phases.

The values of the temperature of phase transition determined by in situ FTIR spectroscopy and XRD are in good agreement, as can be seen on the diagram shown in Figure 6. The small discrepancy between the values of the temperature from which the lp phase appears can be attributed to differences of sensitivity of the techniques or to the accuracy on measured values of temperature from one technique to another.

4. Calorimetric measurements

In order to shed light onto the energetics of the phase transitions observed in Ga(OH,F)-MIL53, we performed calorimetric measurements upon dehydration and heating of the material. The heat absorbed during the dehydration step led to an integral enthalpy of dehydration close to +49 kJ per mole of water desorbed. From this value, close to the standard vaporization enthalpy of water (+44 $\text{kJ}\cdot\text{mol}^{-1}$), we could conclude that the water is not strongly bound to the surface. Moreover, this integral enthalpy is the sum of two thermal effects: the endothermic desorption of water and the exothermic phase transition from np_H₂O to np_empty structures. So, the energy of interaction between the water molecules and the channel surface should be greater than 49 $\text{kJ}\cdot\text{mol}^{-1}$.

The temperature dependence of the heat capacity of anhydrous Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 is shown in Figure 7 (green circles): it ranges from 50 to 180 $\text{J}\cdot\text{K}^{-1}\cdot\text{mol}^{-1}$. For comparison, the standard heat capacity of gallium oxide Ga₂O₃ is equal to 83.6 $\text{J}\cdot\text{K}^{-1}\cdot\text{mol}^{-1}$ at 323 K³⁸ and that of terephthalate acid is equal to 199.6 $\text{J}\cdot\text{K}^{-1}\cdot\text{mol}^{-1}$ at 298 K³⁹. At 450 K, the slope of the Cp-T curve changes, and remains surprisingly constant between 450 and 553 K. Comparing with XRD and FTIR results, this change of slope can be attributed to the appearance of an lp

phase. The constancy of C_p above 450 K may be explained by the endothermic $np_empty \rightarrow lp$ phase transition, which interferes with C_p measurements. This suggests that the $np_empty \rightarrow lp$ transition occurs gradually from a temperature of about 450 K, and that it is complete at 553 K. The existence of a biphasic domain characterized by DSC is in good agreement with experimental results obtained by in situ XRD and FTIR (Figure 6c).

The heat flux was measured by the calorimeter upon heating Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 from 298 to 553 K under dynamic vacuum (blue curve in Figure 7), and compared to a blank experiment performed without sample (red curve). While the variation of heat flux for the blank experiment is linear with temperature, this is not the case in presence of the sample: an endothermic effect is observed. This means that the enthalpy does not jump at the phase transition, which takes place at around 450 K, but varies continuously upon heating above this temperature.

As it is not possible to measure directly the enthalpy change of the $np_empty \rightarrow lp$ phase transition, we estimated it in two steps. We thus measured the integral enthalpy of dehydration under vacuum of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 at room temperature ($np_H_2O \rightarrow np_empty$ transition), as well as that of hydration of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 at room temperature after activation at 553 K ($lp \rightarrow np_H_2O$, lp being metastable at room temperature):

$$\Delta H_{np_empty - lp} = -(\Delta H_{np_H_2O - np_empty} + \Delta H_{lp - np_H_2O})$$

Results are collected in Table 3. From this estimation, the integral enthalpy of the phase transition from np_empty to lp is of about 5.5 kJ.mol^{-1} . This value is only an estimate, because the interaction energy of water with the np_empty phase is certainly different from that observed with the lp phase.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we used a wide array of experimental techniques over the 300–600 K temperature range in order to study the solid-solid phase transition in Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 under vacuum. Results obtained from in situ X-Ray Diffraction (XRD), in situ Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) and Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC) were all found to be in good agreement. We showed that, in addition to the hydrated 300 K structure resulting from the synthesis, Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 exhibits two different phases under vacuum: a nonporous narrow-pore phase (np), thermodynamically favored at lower temperature, and a large-pore phase (lp), favored at high temperature. Experimental measurements (both XRD and FTIR) upon heating and cooling Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 revealed large hystereses of the temperature-induced structural transitions, highlighting the importance of the material's thermal history to its physical and chemical properties. Finally, geometry optimization of the experimental crystallographic structures within the framework of the Density Functional Theory enabled us to conclude that the hydrated phase at low temperature is not a stable structure in the absence of adsorbed water molecules. Instead, the hydrated structure is a swollen variant of the narrow-pore phase, where the framework has expanded to accommodate water molecules. Giving that the behavior of guest-free Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 as a

function of temperature has now been established, work is ongoing to assess its behavior in presence of adsorbates, and particularly in presence of water in vapor or liquid state.

Finally, it is now clear that despite some small structural differences, Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 should be considered as displaying a similar physical chemistry behavior to the standard Ga-MIL53, especially with respect to the phase behavior and the breathing phenomenon. It turns out that, just like the other MIL-53 (M) ; M= Cr, Al, Fe, ... materials, the empty gallium based MIL-53 material exhibits two, and only two stable phases, something that was not clear up to now.

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Table 1: Unit cell parameters of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O, MIL-53(Ga)_np_H₂O, MIL-53(Al)_np_H₂O

| Material <i>Original name in italic</i> | | Unit cell volume (Å ³) | Space group | Unit cell parameters (Å et °) |
|--|--|--|-------------------------|---|
| Ga-MIL-53_lp | <i>Ga-MIL-53(Ga)_lp_pyr</i> containing pyridine | 1449.2 | <i>Imma</i> | $a = 17.29, b = 6.73, c = 12.46^{22}$ |
| | Ga-MIL-53_lp <i>MIL-53(Ga)_ht</i> ²³ high temperature | 1479.7 | | $a = 6.72, b = 16.68, c = 13.21^{23}$ |
| Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_lp <i>phase p2</i> ⁹ (high temperature activation; room temperature measurement) | | 1502.7 | <i>Imma</i> | $a = 6.75, b = 16.68, c = 13.35$ |
| Ga-MIL-53_np_empty <i>MIL-53(Ga)_lt</i> ²³ | | 886.3 | <i>C2/c</i> | $a = 19.83, b = 6.86, c = 6.71$ $\beta = 103.88^{23}$ |
| Ga-MIL-53_np_H₂O <i>MIL-53(Ga) {H₂O}</i> ²³ | | 1938.6 (= 2 × 969.4) | <i>P2₁/c</i> | $a = 19.71, b = 15.16, c = 6.68$ $\beta = 103.79^{23}$ |
| Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_empty <i>phase p1</i> ⁹ | | 897.2 | <i>C2/c / Cc</i> | $a = 19.77, b = 6.97, c = 6.70$ $\beta = 103.95^a$ |
| Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O <i>phase h</i> ⁹ | | 973.4 | <i>Cc</i> | $a = 19.66, b = 7.64, c = 6.67$ $\beta = 103.88$ |
| Al-MIL-53_np_H₂O <i>MIL-53(Al)_lt</i> ³⁶ | | 946.7 | <i>Cc</i> | $a = 19.51, b = 7.61, c = 6.58$ $\beta = 104.24^{36}$ |

* double cell

^a unit cell parameters refined with the Le Bail method (GSAS²⁷, $a = 19.77488(22)$ Å, $b = 6.96751(8)$ Å, $c = 6.70007(8)$ Å, $\beta = 103.9429(12)$ °, $V = 895.947(19)$ Å³, $Rwp = 0.0591$, $Rp = 0.0392$, $\chi^2 = 4.254$). See Figure S5 for final refinement plot.

Table 2: Unit cell volumes, space groups and parameters for crystalline structures calculated by quantum chemistry

| Material | | Unit cell volume (Å ³) | Space group | Unit cell parameters (Å et °) |
|---|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Ga-MIL-53_lp | Starting from MIL-53(Ga)_lp containing pyridine | 1452.7 | <i>Imma</i> | $a = 17.65, b = 6.84, c = 12.03$ |
| Ga-MIL-53_np_empty | Starting from MIL-53(Ga)_np_empty | 899.0 | <i>C2/c</i> | $a = 21.61, b = 7.03, c = 6.68$ $\beta = 117.57$ |
| | Dehydrated from MIL-53(Ga)_np_H ₂ O | 1681.3 (= 2 × 840.7) | <i>P2₁/c</i> | $a = 19.40, b = 13.27, c = 6.66$ $\beta = 101.09$ |
| Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_empty | Dehydrated from Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H ₂ O | 897.9 | <i>Cc</i> | $a = 21.62, b = 7.02, c = 6.67$ $\beta = 117.38$ |
| Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O | Starting from Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H ₂ O | 948.6 | <i>Cc</i> | $a = 20.55, b = 7.23, c = 6.65$ $\beta = 106.04$ |

Table 3: Enthalpy of dehydration of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 at 298 K under dynamic vacuum, enthalpy of hydration of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 at 298 K under 18 hPa after activation at 553 K and enthalpy of the phase transition from np_empty to lp.

| Type of transformation | Enthalpy change / kJ.mol ⁻¹ |
|---|--|
| Dehydration and np_H ₂ O → np_empty phase transition of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 | +49.3 |
| Hydration and lp → np_H ₂ O phase transition of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 | -54.9 |
| np_empty → lp phase transition | +5.6 |

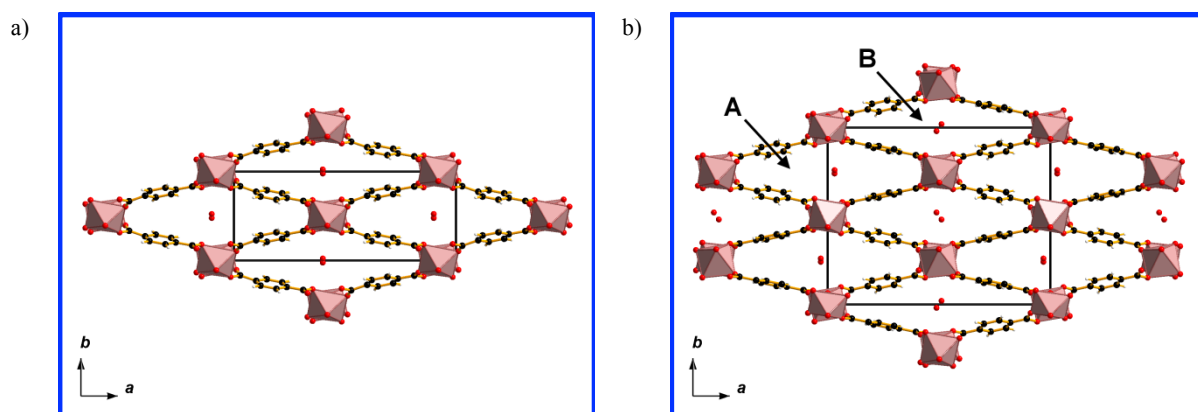


Figure 1: Structural representations of a) Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O and b) Ga-MIL-53_np_H₂O

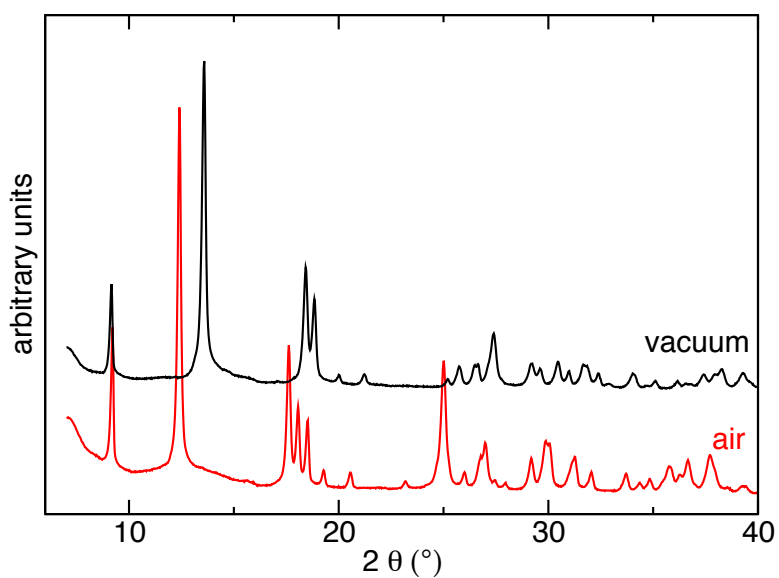


Figure 2: XRD patterns of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_H₂O under air (red curve) and Ga(OH,F)-MIL53_np_empty under vacuum (black curve) at room temperature.

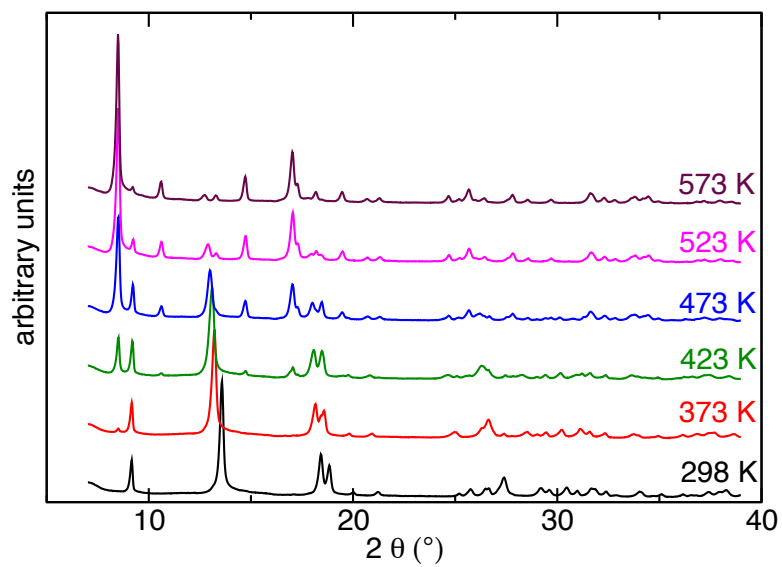


Figure 3: Evolution of the XRD patterns of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 under vacuum as a function of temperature.

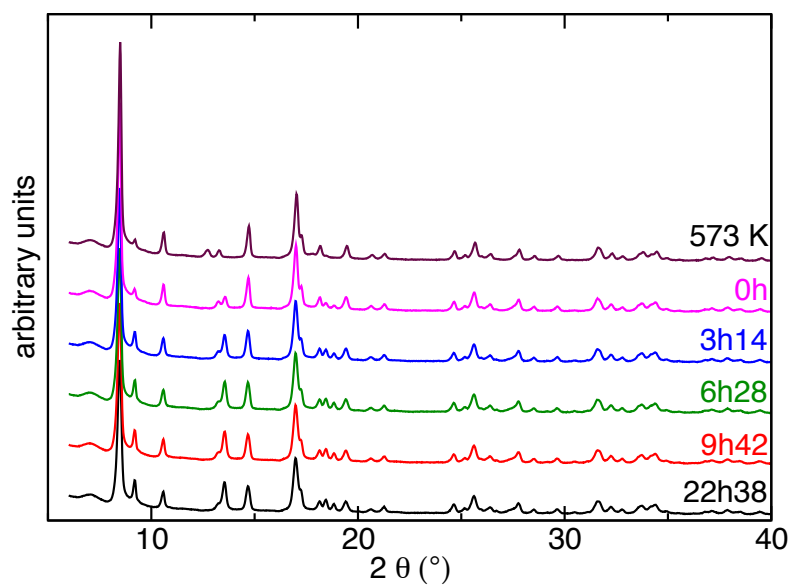


Figure 4: Evolution of the XRD pattern of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 on cooling under vacuum from 573 to 303 K.

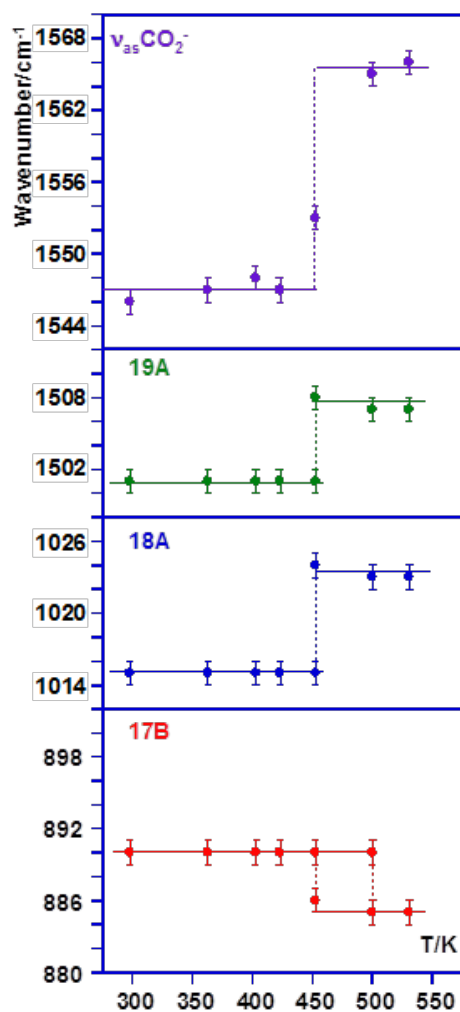


Figure 5: Variation of the position of the $\nu_{as}(\text{CO}_2^-)$ vibrational modes and the ring stretching $\nu(\text{C}=\text{C})$ (referenced as ν_{19A}) vibrational mode, the $\delta(\text{C}-\text{H})$ (referenced as ν_{18A})⁴⁰ in plane vibrational deformation modes and the $\gamma(\text{C}-\text{H})$ (referenced as ν_{17B})⁴⁰ out of plane vibrational deformation modes of the terephthalate ligands of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 with temperature, under vacuum.

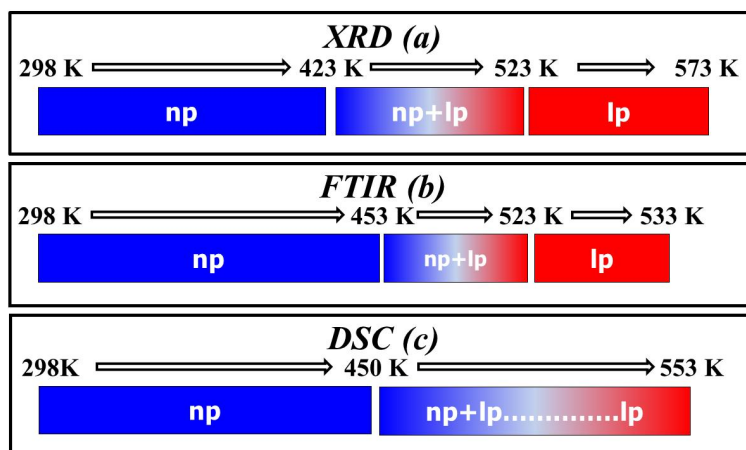


Figure 6: Schematic diagram reporting the values of temperature of the phase transition of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 determined under vacuum by XRD (a), FTIR (b) and DSC (c), (np for np_empty: narrow pore form; lp: large pore form).

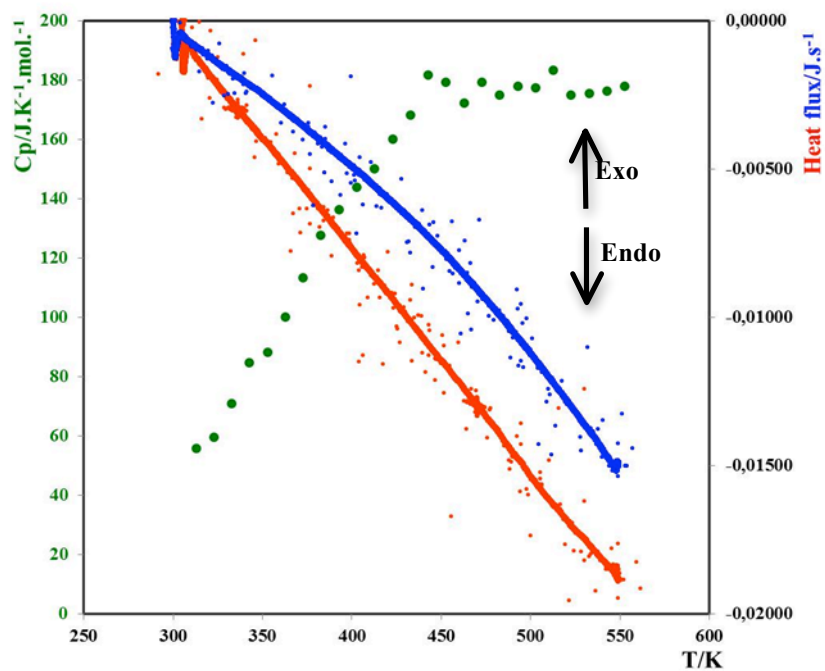


Figure 7: Heat capacity (green curve) of Ga(OH,F)-MIL53 and heat flow measured by the calorimeter during heating from 298 to 553 K under dynamic vacuum (blue curve: sample experiment with Ga(OH,F)-MIL53; red curve: blank experiment without sample).

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