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► To cite this version:

Frédéric Gérard, Céline Blitz, Philippe Hinsinger, Loïc Pagès. Coupling root dynamics with reactive transport processes in soil-method and example application to phosphorus acquisition from a mineral source in alkaline soils. 5. International EcoSummit: Ecological Sustainability: Engineering Change, Aug 2016, Montpellier, France. 2016. hal-02739636

HAL Id: hal-02739636

<https://hal.inrae.fr/hal-02739636v1>

Submitted on 2 Jun 2020

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Coupling root dynamics with reactive transport processes in soil

Method and example application to phosphorus acquisition from a mineral source

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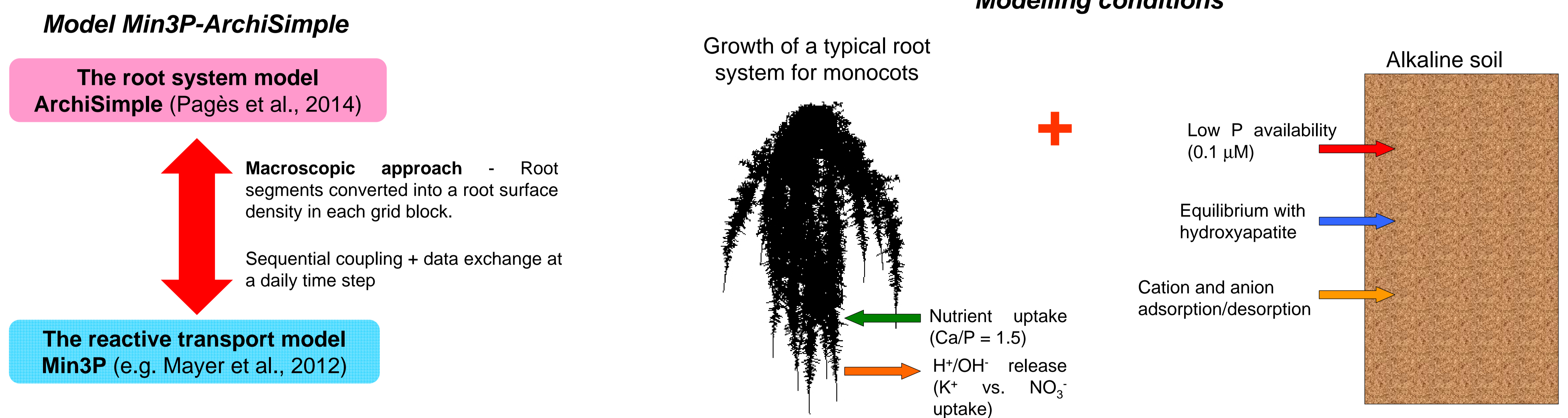
Introduction

Numerical models that couple root systems and related functions with soil processes are limited with respect to the description of reactive transport processes in soil, particularly with respect to soil chemistry. For example, aqueous speciation is not taken into account (e.g. Dunbabin et al., 2013). This lack precludes with a comprehensive modelling of soil chemistry using chemical thermodynamic and kinetic principles (e.g. law of mass action, chemical affinity).

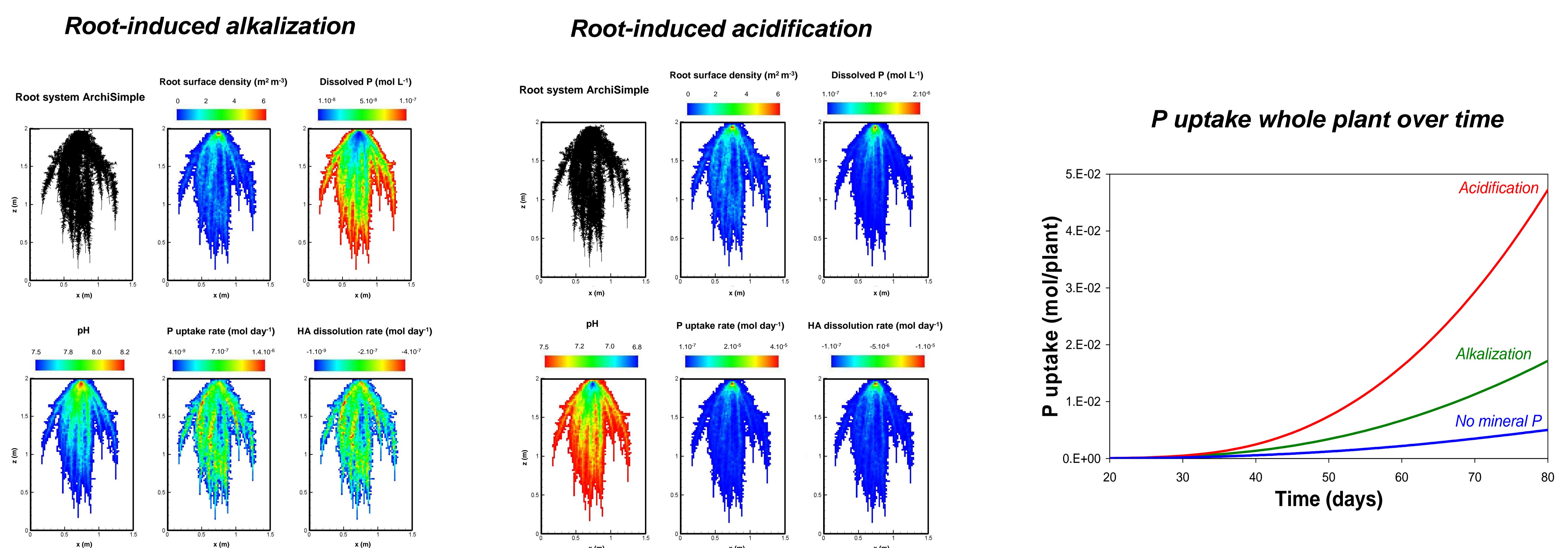
Our objectives were two-fold (Gérard et al., 2016):

- (1) To develop a soil-plant model that comprehensively describe geochemical processes.
- (2) To illustrate its relevance for studying soil-plant interactions. We investigated for illustration purposes the problem of P acquisition from a mineral P source as mediated by nutrient uptake and pH changes in the rhizosphere. This is an important ecological process for the sustainable intensification of agro-ecosystems (e.g. Richardson et al. 2011).

Methods



Results



Conclusions

We developed an innovative soil-root system model that comprehensively describes chemical processes (reaction thermodynamics and kinetics) coupled with mass transport processes.

The present application showed that most of the plant P can be issued from hydroxyapatite when root-induced alkalization occurs, thanks to the influence of Ca and P uptake, and confirmed that acidification is much more efficient.

References

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