

# A thermodynamic study of nickel ion interaction with bovine carbonic anhydrase II molecule

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**Abstract** A thermodynamic study on the interaction of bovine carbonic anhydrase II (CAII) with nickel ions was performed by using isothermal titration calorimetry (ITC) at 27 °C in Tris buffer solution at pH = 7.5. The enthalpies of  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  + CAII interaction are reported and analysed in terms of the new solvation theory. It was indicated that there are three identical and non-cooperative sites for  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ . The binding of a nickel ion is exothermic with dissociation equilibrium constants of 81.306 and 99.126  $\mu\text{M}$  at 27°C and 37°C, respectively. The binding of nickel ions can cause some changes in the stability of the enzyme at low and high  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  concentrations.

**Keywords** Bovine carbonic anhydrase · Nickel ion · Isothermal titration calorimetry

## Introduction

Metal ions play a crucial role in many biological processes such as: catalytic activity of metalloenzymes, regulation of nucleic acids replication, pharmacological activity of many metal complexes [1].

The carbonic anhydrase (CA, EC 4.2.1.1) is ubiquitous zinc enzymes, presents in Archaea, prokaryotes and eukaryotes, being encoded by three distinct, evolutionarily unrelated gene families: the  $\alpha$ -CA,  $\beta$ -CA and the  $\gamma$ -CA [2–4]. CA is one of the fastest enzymes known, with a maximal turnover rate for  $\text{CO}_2$  hydration of  $\sim 10^6 \text{ s}^{-1}$  at 25°C, which is probably the reason why the activation of CA has not been much studied. In contrast, inhibition of CA has been widely investigated and several crystal structures of CA complexes with inhibitor molecules have been reported [1, 5]. Seven distinct isozymes are presently known in higher vertebrates, though their physiological function is not completely known.

CAII is novel as a metal protein due to its unusually high affinity for zinc, so that the  $\text{CAII} + \text{Zn}^{2+}$  dissociation constant is 1–10 pM [1]. The role of highly conserved aromatic residues surrounding the zinc binding site of human carbonic anhydrase II (CAII) in determining the metal ion binding specificity of this enzyme has been previously examined by mutagenesis [6, 7]. Residues F93, F95, and W97 are located along a  $\beta$ -strand containing two residues that coordinate zinc, H94 and H96, and these aromatic amino acids contribute to the high zinc affinity and slow zinc dissociation rate constant of CAII. Substitutions of these aromatic amino acids with smaller side chains enhance the copper affinity (up to 100-fold) while decreasing the affinity of both cobalt and zinc, thereby altering the metal binding specificity up to  $10^4$ -fold. Furthermore, the free energy of the stability of native CAII, determined by solvent-induced denaturation, correlates positively with increased hydrophobicity of the amino acids at positions 93, 95, and 97 as well as with cobalt and zinc affinity. [8, 9] Conversely, increased copper affinity correlates with decreased protein stability. Although CAII is loaded with zinc in its physiologically relevant format, it

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can bind a number of other metal ions in the zinc binding site, such as  $\text{Co}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Cd}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Hg}^{2+}$  and  $\text{Pb}^{2+}$  with various affinities [4, 7].

Some Zn(II) and Cu(II) metal complexes of sulfonamides incorporating polyaminopolycarboxylated tails have also been reported, which indeed showed very good in vitro CA inhibitory activity against isoforms CA I, II, and IV. Rami et al. reported the preparation and inhibition assay of some Cu(II) complexes of aromatic/heterocyclic sulfonamides incorporating EDTA and DTPA tails. In addition, such copper (II) derivatives with potent CA IX/XII inhibitory activity might also be important for developing positron emission tomography (PET) imaging agents for tumor hypoxia [10, 11]. In this article the effect of the nickel ion on the stability of the CAII, in addition to some investigations on the binding parameters of  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  to the enzyme has been considered.

## Materials and method

Erythrocyte bovine carbonic anhydrase was obtained from Sigma. Nickel (II) nitrate was obtained from Merck. The buffer solution used in the experiments was 30 mM Tris, pH = 7.5, which was obtained from Merck. All the experiments were carried out in two temperatures of 300 and 310 K. The experiments were performed with the 4-channel commercial microcalorimetric system, Thermal Activity Monitor 2277, Thermometric, Sweden. Each channel is twin heat conduction calorimeter (multijunction thermocouple plates) positioned between the vessel holders and the surrounding heat sink. Both sample and reference vessels were made from stainless steel. The limited sensitivity for the calorimeter is 0.1  $\mu\text{cal}$ . Nickel nitrate solution (5 mM) was injected by use of a Hamilton syringe into the calorimetric titration vessel, which contained 1.8 mL CA, 30  $\mu\text{M}$ , in Tris buffer (30 mM), pH = 7.5. Thin (0.15 mm inner diameter) stainless steel hypodermic needles, permanently fixed to the syringe, reached directly into the calorimetric vessel. Injection of nickel nitrate solution into the perfusion vessel was repeated 30 times and each injection included 20  $\mu\text{L}$  nickel nitrate solution. The calorimetric signal was measured by a digital voltmeter that was part of a computerized recording system. The heat of injection was calculated by the ‘‘Thermometric Digitam 3’’ software program. The heat of dilution of the nickel solution was measured as described above except CAII was excluded. Also, the heat of dilution of the protein solution was measured as described above except that the buffer solution was injected to the protein solution in the sample cell. The enthalpies of nickel nitrate dilution were subtracted from the enthalpies of nickel nitrate solutions in CAII solutions. The determined enthalpies for  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ +CAII

**Table 1** Enthalpies of  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ +CAII interactions,  $Q$ , at 300 K(O) and 310 K ( $\square$ )

$[\text{Ni}^{2+}]$ / mM	$[\text{CAII}]$ / $\mu\text{M}$	$Q$ (O)/ $\mu\text{J}$	$Q_{\text{dilut}}$ (O)/ $\mu\text{J}$	$Q$ ( $\square$ )/ $\mu\text{J}$	$Q_{\text{dilut}}$ ( $\square$ )/ $\mu\text{J}$
0.055	29.670	-705.6	-594.7	-620.8	-552.3
0.109	29.348	-1181.2	-1106.5	-1048	-1027.6
0.161	29.032	-1490.9	-1525.4	-1338.3	-1416.5
0.213	28.723	-1697.7	-1881.9	-1539.6	-1747.2
0.263	28.421	-1841.4	-2187.5	-1683.9	-2031.1
0.312	28.125	-1945.4	-2436.1	-1790.9	-2261.9
0.361	27.835	-2023.5	-2653.5	-1872.8	-2463.7
0.408	27.551	-2084	-2840.5	-1937.2	-2637.5
0.454	27.273	-2132.1	-2997.2	-1989	-2783.1
0.500	27.000	-2171.1	-3125	-2031.4	-2901.6
0.544	26.733	-2203.4	-3242.5	-2066.8	-3010.9
0.588	26.470	-2230.5	-3345.5	-2096.7	-3106.5
0.631	26.214	-2253.6	-3438.4	-2122.3	-3192.8
0.673	25.962	-2273.5	-3514.7	-2144.5	-3263.5
0.714	25.714	-2290.8	-3585.2	-2163.9	-3329
0.755	25.472	-2306	-3645.8	-2180.9	-3385.1
0.794	25.233	-2319.4	-3702.2	-2196	-3437.3
0.833	25.000	-2331.4	-3753.4	-2209.5	-3485.1
0.872	24.771	-2342.1	-3800.4	-2221.6	-3528.7
0.909	24.545	-2351.8	-3841.7	-2232.6	-3567.3
0.946	24.324	-2360.6	-3878.6	-2242.5	-3601.6
0.982	24.107	-2368.6	-3911.2	-2251.6	-3631.7
1.018	23.894	-2375.9	-3941.4	-2259.9	-3659.7
1.053	23.684	-2382.6	-3969.6	-2267.5	-3686
1.087	23.478	-2388.8	-3995.2	-2274.5	-3709.9
1.121	23.276	-2394.5	-4017.5	-2281	-3730.7

$\Delta H_{\text{dilut}}$  are the enthalpies of dilution of  $\text{Ni}(\text{NO}_3)_2$  with water. Precision is  $\pm 0.400$   $\mu\text{J}$  or better

interactions, were listed in Table 1 (in  $\mu\text{J}$ ). The microcalorimeter was frequently calibrated electrically during the course of the study.

## Results and discussion

It has been shown previously [12–26] that the enthalpies of interactions of biopolymers with ligands ( $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ + CAII in this case) in the aqueous solvent ( $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ + water in the present case) mixtures, can be reproduced via the following equation.

$$Q = Q_{\text{max}}x'_B - \delta_A^\theta(x'_A L_A + x'_B L_B) - (\delta_B^\theta - \delta_A^\theta)(x'_A L_A + x'_B L_B)x'_B \quad (1)$$

The parameters  $\delta_A^\theta$  and  $\delta_B^\theta$  are the indexes of the CAII stability as a result of interaction with  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  in the low and high  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  concentrations, respectively. Cooperative

binding requires that the macromolecule have more than one binding site, since cooperativity results from the interactions of identical binding sites with some similar ligands. If the binding of ligand at one site increases the affinity for ligand at another site, the macromolecule exhibits positive cooperativity. Conversely, if the binding of ligand at one site lowers the affinity for ligand at another site, the protein exhibits negative cooperativity. If the ligand binds at each site independently, the binding is non-cooperative.  $p < 1$  or  $p > 1$  indicate positive or negative cooperativity of macromolecule for binding with ligand respectively;  $p = 1$  indicates that the binding is non-cooperative.  $x'_B$  can be expressed as follow:

$$x'_B = \frac{px_B}{x_A + px_B} \tag{2}$$

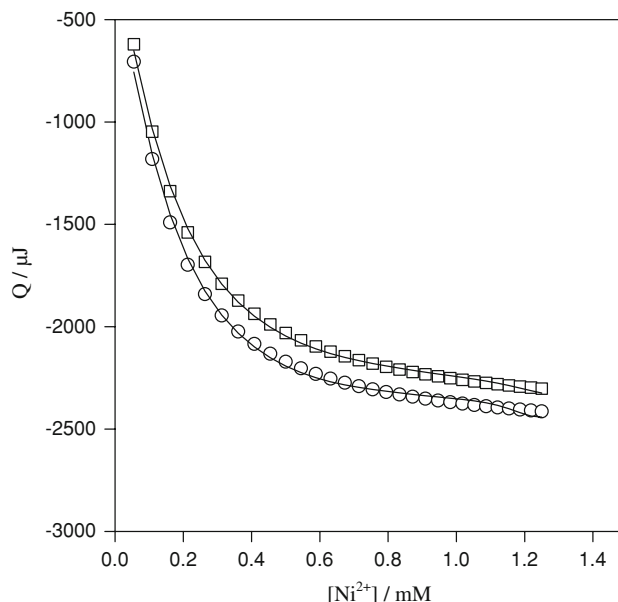
$x_B$  is the fraction of the  $Ni^{2+}$  needed for saturation of the binding sites, and  $x_A = 1 - x_B$  is the fraction of unbounded  $Ni^{2+}$ . Now the model is a simple mass action treatment, with metal ions replacing water molecules, at the binding sites in the present case. We can express  $x_B$  fractions, as the total  $Ni^{2+}$  concentrations divided by the maximum concentration of the  $Ni^{2+}$  upon saturation of all CAII as follow:

$$x_B = \frac{[Ni^{2+}]_T}{[Ni^{2+}]_{max}} \quad x_A = 1 - x_B \tag{3}$$

$[Ni^{2+}]_T$  is the total concentration of nickel and  $[Ni^{2+}]_{max}$  is the maximum concentration of the nickel upon saturation of all CAII. In general, there will be “g” sites for binding of  $Ni^{2+}$  per CAII molecule and  $v$  is defined as the average moles of bound  $Ni^{2+}$  per mole of CAII.  $L_A$  and  $L_B$  are the relative contributions of unbounded and bounded  $Ni^{2+}$  to the enthalpies of dilution with the exclusion of CAII and can be calculated from the enthalpies of dilution of  $Ni^{2+}$  in buffer,  $Q_{dilut}$ , as follows:

$$L_A = Q_{dilut} + x_B \left( \frac{\partial Q_{dilut}}{\partial x_B} \right), \quad L_B = Q_{dilut} - x_A \left( \frac{\partial Q_{dilut}}{\partial x_B} \right) \tag{4}$$

The enthalpies of  $Ni^{2+}$ +CAII interactions,  $Q$ , were fitted to Eq. 1 over the whole  $Ni^{2+}$  compositions. In the procedure, the only adjustable parameter ( $p$ ) was changed until the best agreement between the experimental and calculated data was approached (Fig. 1).  $\delta_A^\theta$  and  $\delta_B^\theta$  parameters have been also optimized to fit the data. The optimized  $\delta_A^\theta$  and  $\delta_B^\theta$  values are recovered from the coefficients of the second and third terms of Eq. 1. The small relative standard coefficient errors and the high  $r^2$  values (0.99999) support the method. The binding parameters for  $Ni^{2+}$ +CAII interactions recovered from Eq. 1 were listed in Table 2. The agreement between the calculated and experimental results (Fig. 1) is striking, and gives considerable support to the use of Eq. 1.



**Fig. 1** Comparison between the experimental enthalpies for  $Ni^{2+}$  + CAII interactions at 300 K (open circle), 310 K (open square) and calculated data (lines) via Eq. 1

**Table 2** Binding parameters for  $Ni^{2+}$  + CAII interactions via Eq. 1

	$T = 300$ K	$T = 310$ K
$K_1/\mu M$	$81.306 \pm 0.036$	$99.126 \pm 0.012$
$K_2/\mu M$	$81.306 \pm 0.036$	$99.126 \pm 0.012$
$K_3/\mu M$	$81.306 \pm 0.036$	$99.126 \pm 0.012$
$p$	$0.800 \pm 0.002$	$0.760 \pm 0.002$
$\delta_A^\theta$	$-0.249 \pm 0.027$	$-0.374 \pm 0.015$
$\delta_B^\theta$	$4.840 \pm 0.041$	$1.932 \pm 0.017$
$\Delta H_{max}/kJ mol^{-1}$	$-23.880 \pm 0.34$	$-23.102 \pm 0.012$

$p$  value (0.800 and 0.76) shows the overall negative cooperativity for the interaction of  $Ni^{2+}$  ions with CAII including both specific and non-specific interactions.  $p < 1$  suggests that  $Ni^{2+}$  ion binds preferentially to partially denatured CAII species

$\Phi$  is the fraction of CAII molecule undergoing complexation with  $Ni^{2+}$  which can be expressed as follow:

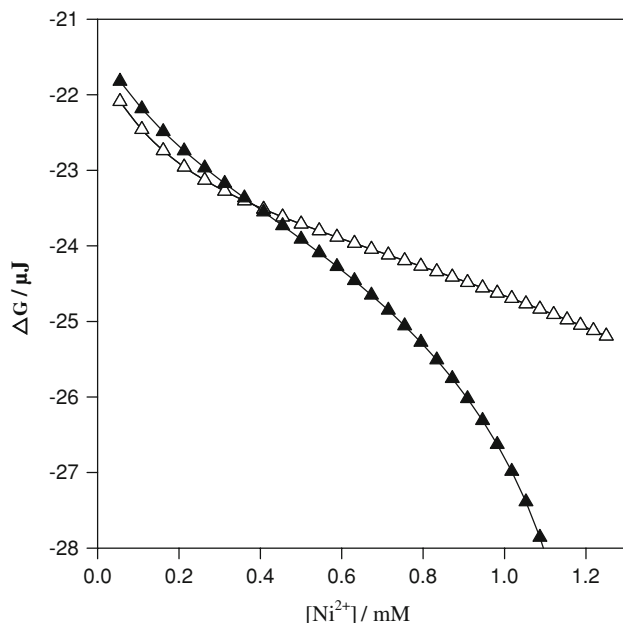
$$\Phi = \frac{Q}{Q_{max}} \tag{5}$$

$Q_{max}$  represents the heat value upon saturation of all CAII. The appearance equilibrium constant values,  $K_a$ , as a function of free concentration of  $Ni^{2+}$ ,  $[Ni^{2+}]_F$ , can be calculated as follow:

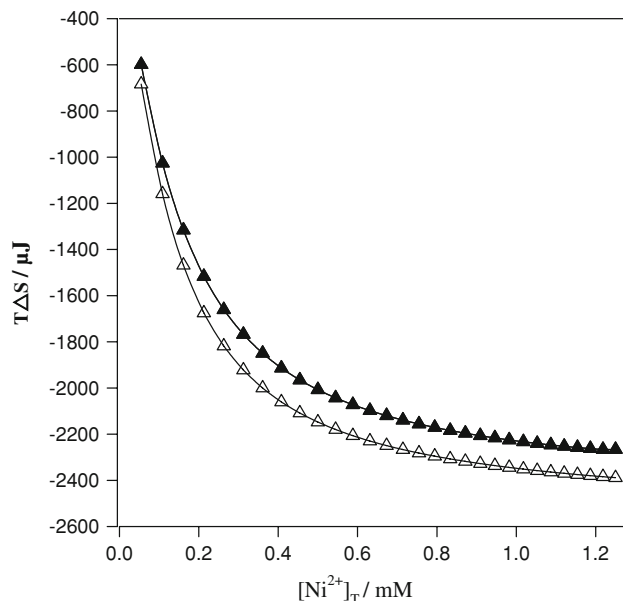
$$K_a = \frac{\Phi}{(1 - \Phi)[Ni^{2+}]_F} = \frac{\Phi}{(1 - \Phi)[Ni^{2+}]_T(1 - x_B)} \tag{6}$$

The Gibbs free energies as a function of  $Ni^{2+}$  concentrations can be obtained as follows:

$$\Delta G = - RTLnK_a \tag{7}$$



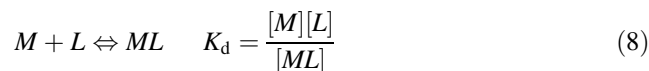
**Fig. 2** Comparison between the experimental Gibbs free energies at 300 K (*open triangle*) and 310 K (*filled triangle*) for  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ +CAII interactions and calculated data (*lines*) via Eqs. 7 and 8. The linearity of  $\Delta G$  against  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  concentrations indicates that the structural effects compensate each other in the free energy which supports the extended solvation model



**Fig. 3** Comparison between the experimental entropies at 300 K (*filled triangle*) and 310 K (*open triangle*) for  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ +CAII interactions in and calculated data (*lines*) via Eqs. 7 and 8

Gibbs energies,  $\Delta G$ , at different temperatures calculated from Eq. 7 have shown graphically in Fig. 2.  $\Delta S$  values were calculated using  $\Delta G$  values at different temperatures and have shown in Fig. 3.

Consider a solution containing a ligand ( $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ ) and a macromolecule that contains “ $g$ ” sites capable of binding the ligand. If the multiple binding sites on a macromolecule are identical and independent, the ligand binding sites can be reproduced by a model system of monovalent molecules with the same set of dissociation equilibrium constant,  $K_d$ , values. Thus, the reaction under consideration can be written:



If  $\alpha$  is defined as the fraction of free binding sites on the biomacromolecule,  $M_0$  is the total biomacromolecule concentration, and  $L_0$  is the total ligand concentration, then the free concentrations of monovalent molecule  $[M]$  and ligand  $[L]$  as well as the concentration of bound ligand  $[ML]$  can be deduced as follows:

$$[ML] = g(1 - \alpha)M_0 \quad (9)$$

$$[L] = L_0 - [ML] = L_0 - g(1 - \alpha)M_0 \quad (10)$$

$$[M] = gM_0 - [ML] = gM_0 - g(1 - \alpha)M_0 = \alpha gM_0 \quad (11)$$

Substitution of free concentrations of all these components in Eq. 8 gives [27]:

$$K_d = \left( \frac{\alpha}{1 - \alpha} \right) L_0 - \alpha gM_0 \quad (12)$$

or

$$\alpha M_0 = \left( \frac{\alpha}{1 - \alpha} \right) \frac{1}{g} L_0 - \frac{K_d}{g} \quad (13)$$

The value of  $1 - \alpha$  as the fraction of occupied binding sites on the biomacromolecule:

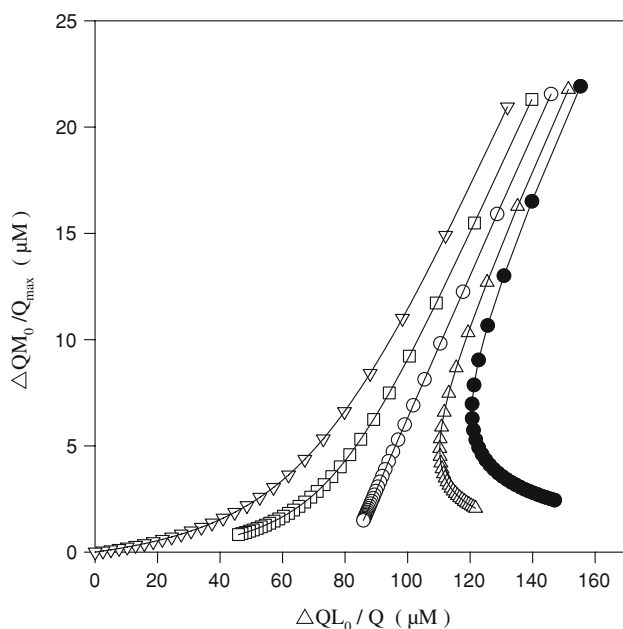
$$1 - \alpha = \frac{Q}{Q_{\max}} \quad (14)$$

where  $q$  represents the heat value at a certain  $L_0$  and  $Q_{\max}$  represents the heat value upon saturation of all biomacromolecules. The combination of Eqs. 13 and 14 yields:

$$\frac{\Delta Q}{Q_{\max}} M_0 = \left( \frac{\Delta Q}{Q} \right) L_0 \frac{1}{g} - \frac{K_d}{g} \quad (15)$$

Where  $\Delta Q = Q_{\max} - Q$ . Therefore, the plot of  $\frac{\Delta Q}{Q_{\max}} M_0$  versus  $\frac{\Delta Q}{Q} L_0$  should be a linear plot with a slope of  $\frac{1}{g}$  and a vertical-intercept of  $\frac{K_d}{g}$ .

The linearity of the plot has been examined by different estimated values for  $Q_{\max}$  to reach the best value for the correlation coefficient. The best linear plot with the correlation coefficient value ( $r^2 \approx 1$ ) was obtained using  $-2574 \mu\text{J}$  and  $-2495 \mu\text{J}$  (equal to  $-23.880 \text{ kJ/mol}$  and  $-23.102 \text{ kJ/mol}$  at  $27^\circ\text{C}$  and  $37^\circ\text{C}$ , respectively). The values of  $g$  and  $K_d$ , obtained from the slope and vertical-intercept plot, are listed in Table 2 and have shown graphically in Fig. 4.



**Fig. 4** A graphical representation of how to approach the best linear plot (open circle) of  $\frac{\Delta Q}{Q_{\max}}M_0$  against  $\frac{\Delta Q}{Q}L_0$  with a slope of  $\frac{1}{g}$  and a vertical-intercept of  $\frac{K_d}{g}$ , using  $-2,576 \mu\text{J}$  (open circle),  $-2,700 \mu\text{J}$  (filled circle),  $-2,650 \mu\text{J}$  (filled triangle),  $-2,500 \mu\text{J}$  (open square) and  $-2,400 \mu\text{J}$  (inverted triangle) as  $Q_{\max}$  in Eq. 15

The calorimetric method described recently allows obtaining the number of binding sites ( $g$ ), the molar enthalpy of binding site ( $\Delta H_{\text{bin}} = \frac{\Delta H_{\max}}{g}$ ) and the dissociation equilibrium constant ( $K_d$ ) for a set of biomacromolecule binding sites. The lack of a suitable value for  $Q_{\max}$  to obtain a linear plot of  $(\Delta Q/Q_{\max})M_0$  vs.  $(\Delta Q/Q)L_0$  may be related to the existence of non-identical binding sites or the interaction between them. Using this method shows that there is a set of three identical and non-interacting binding sites for Nickel ions. Binding parameters for  $\text{Ni}^{2+} + \text{CAII}$  interactions using the new model are listed in Table 2.

The negative value for  $\delta_A^\theta$  ( $-0.249$ ) in the low concentration of  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ , indicates that CAII structure is destabilized as a result of binding to  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  ions. Destabilization of CAII by  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  ions indicates that the nickel ions bind preferentially to the partially unfolded intermediate form of the protein. The  $K_d$  values (Table 2) point toward specific interactions between CAII and  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ , but the  $\delta_A^\theta$  values recovered from Eq. 1 suggest that destabilization is the result of both specific and nonspecific interactions. The negative values for  $\delta_A^\theta$  are characteristic of nonspecific interactions, in that the nonspecific ligand binds weakly to many different groups at the protein/water interface, so that binding becomes a function of ligand concentration and available solvent-exposed protein surface area, which is increased through unfolding events. These results are inconsistent with the specific interactions in the certain sites on CAII, indicating the existence of some partially

unfolded intermediate forms of CAII. Figure 2 shows that there was a relationship, with negative slope, between  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  ion concentration and the  $\Delta G$  values for  $\text{Ni}^{2+} + \text{CAII}$  interaction. The positive value of  $\delta_B^\theta$  (4.840) reflects stabilization of the CAII structure in the high concentration of  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ . In other words, the positive values of  $\delta_B^\theta$  suggest that  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  ions bind preferentially to the native folded state of CAII. The negative slope of  $\Delta G$  values against  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  ion concentration supports this interpretation.  $p$  value (0.800) shows the overall negative cooperativity for the interaction of  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  ions with CAII including both specific and non-specific interactions.  $p < 1$  suggests that non-specific interactions of  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$  ion with partially unfolded CAII species are dominant.

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