

Reaction of Br₂ with Adsorbed CO on Pt, Studied by the Surface Interrogation Mode of Scanning Electrochemical Microscopy

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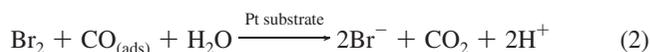
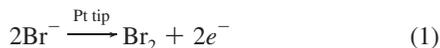
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We studied the reaction of bromine (Br₂) with adsorbed carbon monoxide (CO_(ads)) on polycrystalline platinum in aqueous 0.5 M H₂SO₄, to yield CO₂ and Br⁻, by the recently introduced surface interrogation¹ mode of scanning electrochemical microscopy (SI-SECM).^{2,3} In this technique, a “titrant” is electrogenerated at a tip in close proximity to the surface under investigation, thus allowing the *in situ* detection and quantification of adsorbed intermediates at the solid–liquid interface. In the present Communication, we demonstrate its utility for the evaluation of a new reaction, where Pt acts not only as a support for CO_(ads) but also as a heterogeneous catalyst that promotes the oxidation process.

The adsorption and electrochemical oxidation of CO on Pt, on both single-crystal and polycrystalline surfaces, have been widely studied⁴ by electrochemical techniques^{5–8} and their combination with Raman and IR spectroscopy.^{9–11} Part of the interest in these studies is driven by the identification of CO_(ads) as an important blocking intermediate (i.e., a *poison*) in the oxidation of short-chain alcohols and organic acids¹² for their use in fuel cells.^{3,13} Studies of the electrochemical oxidation of CO_(ads) on Pt have traditionally been carried out by scanning or stepping an electrode into the oxidizing potential regime, where the formed OH^{*}_(ads) radical is proposed to transform CO_(ads) into CO₂.^{5,9,14} With the SI-SECM technique at hand, we sought to find a tip-generated reactive substance that could achieve this transformation, in the hope of providing new strategies for quantification of CO_(ads) in catalytic systems and perhaps for the removal of this strongly adsorbed intermediate. The reactive Br^{*} radical is of particular interest since its precursor, Br₂, can be electrogenerated at a SECM setup^{15,16} and its oxidizing properties are comparable to those of OH^{*}_(ads).¹⁷

Figure 1A shows schematically the SI-SECM mode for the production of Br₂ from bromide (Br⁻, initially present in solution) and its reaction with CO_(ads) at the Pt substrate. Here two ultramicroelectrodes (UMEs), one acting as an interrogator tip and the other as a substrate, were concentrically aligned and separated by a gap of *ca.* 1–2 μm. The substrate was first dosed with CO and maintained afterward at open circuit. The solution was then changed to 1 mM KBr in 0.5 M H₂SO₄ (without disturbing the aligned electrodes). As shown in Figure 1A, after stripping any CO_(ads) on the interrogator tip (*E*_{rest} = 0.75 V vs Ag/AgCl), the tip was scanned across an appropriate potential range (0.75–1.156 V vs Ag/AgCl) to produce Br₂, as shown in eq 1; we assume the overall reaction of Br₂ with CO_(ads) at the Pt surface proceeds according to eq 2.



Reaction 2 regenerates the initial bromide anion, which produces a transient positive feedback loop¹⁸ at the interrogator

tip as long as there is CO_(ads) with which to react.¹ This transient positive feedback loop produces an increase in the current at the interrogator tip due to an enhanced flux of Br⁻ because of the proximity of the Pt substrate to the tip.² Figure 1B shows a SI result in the cyclic voltammetry (CV) mode and its comparison to the negative feedback (NF) mode, i.e., a blank experiment with the Pt substrate at open circuit, and to the electrochemical positive feedback (PF) mode, i.e., a blank experiment with the Pt substrate set at a potential where it can reduce Br₂. The theory of the SI mode¹ shows that, during chemical reaction at the substrate, the current of the interrogator electrode is within the electrochemical window shown in the inset of Figure 1B. Consumption of the adsorbate causes the response of the

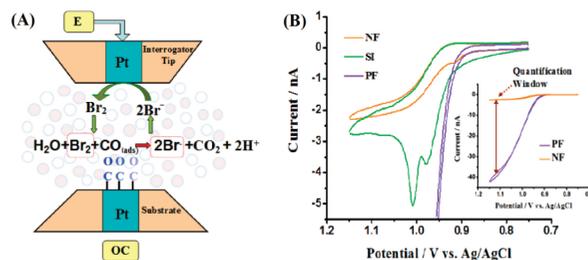
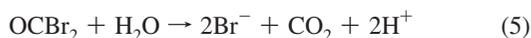
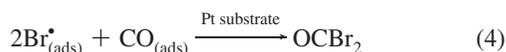
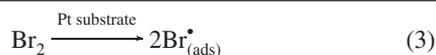


Figure 1. SI-SECM detection of CO_(ads) on a Pt UME substrate. (A) Production of reactive Br₂ from electrochemical oxidation of Br⁻ (initially present in solution) at the interrogator tip. Br₂ diffuses and reacts with CO_(ads) at the Pt substrate, which is kept at open circuit, to yield CO₂ and regenerate Br⁻, which is recycled to the interrogator tip, giving a transient positive feedback. (B) Comparison of negative feedback (NF), positive feedback (PF), and SI; all scans *v* = 20 mV/s, all solutions 0.5 M H₂SO₄ with 1 mM KBr, Ar-purged, and kept under an Ar blanket. Interrogator tip held for 20 s at 0.75 V and then scanned from 0.75 to 1.15 V vs Ag/AgCl in all runs. Pt substrate conditions: SI, held at open circuit and predosed with CO (5 min at 0.1 V vs Ag/AgCl); NF, held at open circuit, no predosing; PF, held at 0.75 V vs Ag/AgCl, no predosing. Inset shows comparison of NF and PF.

interrogator tip to decay to NF. The SI scans (Figure 1B) revealed a response that consisted of two peaks, often merging into a single peak with a shoulder (e.g., see Figure S1, Supporting Information). Independent of shape, the quantification of the amount of adsorbate was consistent in all runs. This was done by integration of the SI scans to yield the reacted charge of the adsorbate, which we compared to the charge for the underpotential deposition of hydrogen on Pt¹⁹ for a series of experiments, as shown in Table S1 (Supporting Information). We found the CO coverage on polycrystalline Pt, θ_{CO} , to be ~ 0.5 , which is lower than the result recently reported for Pt (111) (~ 0.68).⁶

A possible route for the oxidation of CO_(ads) by Br₂ is shown in eqs 3–5:



In fact, the product of reaction 4, OCBr_2 or “bromophosgene” (an analogue of phosgene), has been reported (but also debated)²⁰ to be the product of a photosensitized low-yield reaction of Br_2 and CO in the gas phase in the absence of catalyst, where the radical-forming reaction 3 proceeds through photochemical excitation. In our experiment, the Pt substrate provides a catalytic surface where reaction 3 happens more readily. The hydrolysis process in reaction 5 is thermodynamically allowed²¹ and provides the Br^- necessary for the transient positive feedback as well as a source of oxygen for the production of CO_2 . If CO is not supported on Pt and only dissolved in solution, Br_2 is unable to oxidize it, as shown by CV on a macroelectrode (Figure S2, Supporting Information).

A second SI experiment involved the co-adsorption of CO and cyanide (CN^-) on the Pt UME surface.²² A cyanide-covered Pt UME was used to limit the amount of $\text{CO}_{(\text{ads})}$ at Pt in order to verify its reaction with Br_2 , as shown in Figure S3 (Supporting Information). The SI-SECM results show that, with CN^- , the adsorption of CO is blocked and furthermore that, despite the isoelectronic nature of CN^- and CO , their reactivity toward Br_2 is different. This suggests that the formation of OCBr_2 is an important step in the reaction scheme or that CN^- blocks sites for the dissociation of Br_2 .

Finally, a bulk experiment was carried out to identify CO_2 as the end product of the reaction. A beaker with 10 mmol of Br_2 in 100 mL of 0.5 M H_2SO_4 was bubbled with CO through an inlet where Ar was also continuously passed; Pt black was added as a catalyst. The outlet of the beaker was connected to a container with 100 mL of a saturated and Ar-purged solution of $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2$ (transparent). A control experiment, in which no Pt black was added, showed only cloudiness in the $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2$ solution after 5 min of CO bubbling. This is attributed to small impurities of CO_2 in the CO feed. When Pt black was added to the reaction mixture, an abundant precipitate of BaCO_3 was observed in the $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2$ solution. The precipitate was identified as the carbonate through the “carbonate-acid test”. The addition of AgClO_4 solution to the residue of the reaction mixture showed the precipitation of whitish-yellow AgBr , which also supports Br^- as an end product. This experiment confirms that CO can be oxidized to CO_2 by Br_2 through the catalytic action of Pt.²³

In conclusion, the SI-SECM technique allowed the production of Br_2 on an interrogator tip, which reported transient positive feedback (due to Br^- regeneration) as an indication of the reactivity of this halogen with $\text{CO}_{(\text{ads})}$ on a Pt substrate. $\text{CO}_{(\text{ads})}$ under saturation conditions was reproducibly quantified at the polycrystalline Pt surface with $\theta_{\text{CO}} \approx 0.5$. The reaction is shown to be blocked by the action of pre-adsorbed cyanide, which demonstrates the surface character of the process. The formation of CO_2 as an end product was further tested in a bulk experiment. The use of SI-SECM provided access to the study of a reaction that has not been previously reported to be catalyzed by Pt, a finding that would

otherwise be difficult to prove with conventional electrochemistry on a single electrode.

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Supporting Information Available: Additional experimental details, surface interrogation scan, and figures. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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- Caution!** Because of the possibility of forming bromophosgene (eq 4), these experiments were performed in a hood at all times, and extensive Ar purging of the reaction products was done after the conclusion. OCBr_2 is unstable in basic solution, so the $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2$ traps it in addition to the CO_2 .

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