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Interaction of small hydrocarbon ions and Ar^+ with carbon-fibre-composite surfaces at room temperature

Alan Keim[a], Bilal Rasul[a,1], Nikolaus Endstrasser[a], Paul Scheier[a], Tilmann D. Märk[a], Zdenek Herman[a,b,*]

[a] *Institut für Ionenphysik und Angewandte Physik, Leopold-Franzens Universität Innsbruck, Technikerstr. 25, 6020 Innsbruck, Austria*
[b] *V. Čermák Laboratory, J. Heyrovský Institute of Physical Chemistry, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Dolejškova 3, 18223 Prague 8, Czech Republic*

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ABSTRACT

Surface-induced interactions of projectile ions CD_3^+, $C_2D_2^+$, $C_2D_4^+$, $C_2D_5^+$, $C_2D_6^+$, and Ar^+ with room-temperature (hydrocarbon-covered) surfaces of carbon-fibre-composite (CFC) were investigated over the incident energy range of the projectile ions from a few eV up to about 100 eV. Mass spectra of the product ions and their dependence on the incident energy of the projectiles were obtained. The results showed that the extent of fragmentation of the incident molecular ions and their chemical reactions at surfaces (in case of radical cations) were similar to the interactions of these ions with room-temperature carbon (HOPG) surfaces and indicate that the hydrocarbon coverage of the surfaces primarily determines both the energy transfer at surface and its chemical reactivity. The only substantial difference was that the present mass spectra contained a certain amount of sputtered alkali ions K^+ and Na^+, most probably contaminants of the CFC material from the process of their production. Mass spectra obtained with the projectile ion Ar^+ contained sputtered ions from the surface material, namely alkali ions K^+ and Na^+ and the usual ions characterizing sputtering of surface hydrocarbons.

1. Introduction

Efficient operation of fusion devices requires the use of plasma facing materials of the first wall compatible with the operating conditions of reactor grade plasmas. Understanding interaction of ions with the material of the first wall is one of the challenges of the present fusion research. Information on surface processes of hydrocarbons and other ions, most likely vacuum contaminants in plasma devices, are essential as atomic and molecular data for modelling predictions of the ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) system. These data should include interaction with a variety of surfaces of materials that could be suitable materials for fusion vessels.

In our earlier work we studied interaction of hydrocarbon ions C1–C3, C6, C7, and some other non-hydrocarbon ions with room-temperature (and in some cases heated) surfaces of carbon [1–5], tokamak tiles [6], tungsten [7], beryllium [8] and, for comparison, stainless steel [9–13] and various types of diamond [14]. Surface-induced dissociation of the projectile ions in inelastic collisions with surfaces, chemical reactions at surfaces, and sputtering of surface material was observed. Information on energy partitioning in surface collisions [15,16] could be derived. Data on survival probabilities of ions colliding with room temperature and heated surfaces of the above materials were obtained [1,2,4,7] and correlations between the survival probability and ionization energy of the projectile ions on different surfaces were derived [7,8].

The results showed that at room temperature the studied surfaces were covered with a layer of hydrocarbons that determines many basic properties of the ion-surface interactions (extent of fragmentation, chemical reactions at surfaces) and the quality of the underlying surface is reflected in smaller or larger deviation from these characteristics (extent of fragmentation, inelastic energy losses, survival probabilities).

The role of hydrocarbon coverage of room-temperature surfaces is of importance in plasma and fusion devices and considerable effort has been directed to its investigation to control the impurity level of the fusion plasmas caused by erosion of the first wall. The growth of hydrocarbon C:H films by deposition of different neutral hydrocarbon species and properties of these films have been investigated [17]. The presence of hydrocarbons can be detected by sputtering or by observation of chemical reactions of some hydrocarbon ions at surfaces [18].

One of the surfaces of interest for possible use in fusion research is the surface of carbon-fibre-composite (CFC). In this communication we describe results obtained in our study of the interaction of selected C1 (CD_3^+), C2 ($C_2D_2^+$, $C_2D_4^+$, $C_2D_5^+$, $C_2D_6^+$) and some non-

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[*] Corresponding author at: V. Čermák Laboratory, J. Heyrovský Institute of Physical Chemistry, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Dolejškova 3, 18223 Prague 8, Czech Republic. Tel.: +420 2 6605 3514; fax: +420 2 8658 2307.
E-mail address: zdenek.herman@jh-inst.cas.cz (Z. Herman).

[1] Present address: Department of Physics, University of Sargodha, 40100 Sargodha, Pakistan.

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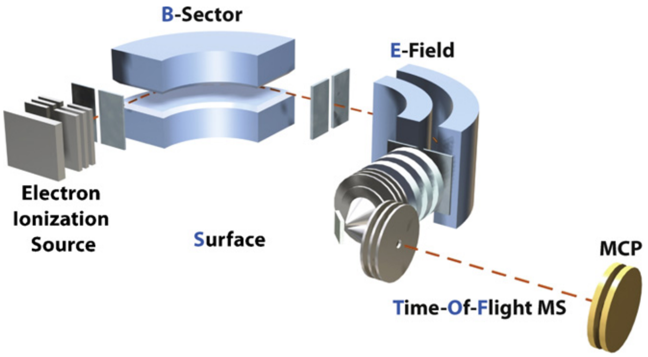

Fig. 1. Schematics of the tandem mass spectrometer BESTOF (details see text).

hydrocarbon (Ar^+) ions with this surface held at room temperature. The aim was to find similarities or differences in the ion-surface behaviour of the CFC surface in comparison with other (carbon) surfaces.

2. Experimental

2.1. Apparatus

The experiments were carried out with the tandem mass spectrometer BESTOF described in detail in our earlier papers [19,20]. In brief, the instrument consists of a double-focusing two-sector-field mass spectrometer (reversed geometry, Varian MAT CH5-DF) combined with a linear time-of-flight mass spectrometer (Fig. 1). Projectile ions were produced in a Nier-type ion source (the original commercial mass spectrometer source) by electron ionization (75 eV energy) on molecules of the gas under study. The ions produced were extracted from the ion source region and accelerated to 3 keV for mass and energy analysis by the double-focusing two-sector-field mass spectrometer. After passing the mass spectrometer exit slit, the ions were refocused by an Einzel lens and decelerated to the required incident energy, before interacting with the target surface. Shielding the target area with conical shield lenses minimized field penetration effects. The incident impact angle of the projectile beam was kept at 45° and the scattering angle was fixed at 46° (with respect to the surface). The incident energy of ions impacting on the surface was defined by the potential difference between the ion source and the surface. The energy spread of the primary ion beam was determined by measuring the (reflected) ion signal as a function of the increasing positive surface potential in the same geometry. The energy spread of the primary beam of the projectile ions was in the range of 250 to 300 meV (full-width at half-maximum). A fraction of the product ions formed at the surface exited the shielded chamber through a 1 mm diameter orifice. The ions were then subjected to a pulsed deflection-and-acceleration field that initiated the time-of-flight analysis of the ions. The second mass analyzer was thus a linear time-of-flight (TOF) mass selector with a flight tube of about 80 cm length. The mass selected ions were detected by a double-stage multi-channel plate connected to a multi-channel scaler (time resolution of 10 ns per channel) and a computer. The product ion intensities were obtained by integration of the recorded signals. The pressure in the ion source was $2–6 \times 10^{-6}$ Torr, the bakeable surface chamber and the TOF analyzer were maintained under ultra-high vacuum conditions (10^{-9} Torr) by a turbo-pump. However, even these ultra-high vacuum conditions did not exclude deposition of a layer of hydrocarbons on the surface, whenever the valve between the sector field mass spectrometer and the surface chamber was opened and the pressure in the surface region increased to the 10^{-8} Torr range.

Mass spectra of the product ions from collisions of the projectile ions with the CFC surfaces kept at room temperature were recorded at a series of incident energies and relative abundances of the product ions were plotted as a function of the projectile ion energy (energy-resolved-mass-spectra, ERMS curves).

2.2. CFC surface

The carbon-fibre-composite used was of the type NB-31, obtained from the Max-Planck Institute of Plasma Physics in Garching. The samples of this carbon-fibre-composite material were kept during the experiments at room temperature. Under these conditions, the surfaces were covered with a layer of background hydrocarbons, despite a surface chamber vacuum of the order of 2×10^{-9} Torr. The occurrence of H-atom transfer reactions between radical projectile ions ($C_2D_4{}^+$ etc.) and terminal H-atoms of the hydrocarbons on the surface [1–3,7,8,16] is a strong evidence for this surface coverage.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Ar^+

Mass spectra of product ions from collisions of Ar^+ (energies up to 100 eV) with the CFC surface at room temperature (Fig. 2, left) may contain ions from sputtering of the surface material and from the chemical reaction of H-atom transfer with the surface hydrogen

$$Ar^+ + CH_3\text{–}S \rightarrow ArH^+ + {}^{\bullet}CH_2\text{–}S \qquad (1)$$

Assuming an average bond strength of $H\text{–}CH_2$— in the terminal group of surface aliphatic hydrocarbons of 2.1 ± 0.3 eV [1] reaction (1) is exothermic by about 1.6 eV and may occur. However, the intensity of m/z 41 in the spectra does not exceed considerably the intensities of ions at m/z 42 and 43 that should result from sputtering of surface hydrocarbons. The ratio of intensities at m/z 41/43 is 1.5–1.7 for collisions of Ar^+ of incident energies of 30–100 eV with room-temperature CFC (see Fig. 2) and this ratio is similar to the ratio of intensities at m/z 41/43 from collisions of $CD_3{}^+$ with room-temperature CFC (see also Fig. 3 later on), 1.6 (at 30 eV) and 3.0 (at 75 eV), where no reaction analogous to reaction (1) can occur and the contribution of carbon chain build-up reactions leading to C3 ions is negligible [1]. Therefore, it appears that reaction (1) does not contribute significantly to the intensity of the ion of m/z 41 and product ions at m/z 40–43 result from sputtering of the surface hydrocarbons.

Product ions at m/z 23 (Na^+) and m/z 39 (K^+) indicate the presence of alkali ions. However, the intensity at m/z 39 is likely to contain contributions from both sputtered K^+ and sputtered hydrocarbon ion $C_3H_3{}^+$. Contribution of the sputtered hydrocarbon ion may be estimated from experiments on Ar^+ collisions with other surfaces in which no alkali ions were detected. From studies of Ar^+ collisions (incident energy 30–100 eV) with room-temperature (hydrocarbon-covered) plasma-sprayed tungsten surfaces [21] and O-terminated diamond surface [14] it follows that the ratio of sputtered ion intensities $I(C_3H_3{}^+)/I(C_3H_5{}^+)$ (m/z 39/43) is 0.6–1.0. If we correct the intensity of m/z 39 by subtracting this contribution of the intensity at m/z 43, the remaining intensity at m/z 39 should be that of K^+. This intensity is then slightly larger than the intensity of sputtered Na^+ (m/z 23). The data are summarized in Fig. 2, left

The remaining product ion in the mass spectra from Ar^+-CFC collisions are sputtered hydrocarbon ions at m/z 27 ($C_2H_3{}^+$) and 29 ($C_2H_5{}^+$), 41 ($C_3H_5{}^+$) and 43 ($C_3H_7{}^+$), 55 ($C_4H_7{}^+$) and 57 ($C_4H_9{}^+$), and at higher incident energies small amount of ions at m/z 67 ($C_5H_7{}^+$), 69 ($C_5H_9{}^+$) and 71 ($C_5H_{11}{}^+$). These closed-shell cations are typical for sputtering of surfaces covered with alkanes, indicating that