

Documents

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Sequential in situ STM imaging of electro-dissolving copper single-crystal domains in aqueous perchloric acid: Kinetics and mechanism of the interface evolution

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Abstract

The evolution of Cu crystal surfaces in an aqueous perchloric acid solution at both null ($j=0$) and constant anodic apparent current density ($j=6 \mu\text{A cm}^{-2}$) at room temperature was followed by in situ scanning tunneling microscopy sequential imaging. For $j=0$, the Cu surface turns out to be highly dynamic as terrace growth step displacement, and smoothening of small pits can be observed. These processes lead to a small decrease in the value of the root-mean-square roughness (ξ). On the other hand, for $j=6 \mu\text{A cm}^{-2}$, an inhomogeneous attack proceeds with a marked increase in ξ . In this case, while some surface domains become progressively rough others develop nm-sized etched pits that turn the interface unstable. The evolution of the Cu topography under the experimental conditions of this work was simulated using a Monte Carlo algorithm based on a dissolution model in which surface processes are influenced by inhomogeneity stabilizing cavities.

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