



Application Note AN-EC-033

Utilizing hyphenated EC-Raman to study a model system

Example of the reduction of 4-nitrothiophenol

The combination of Raman spectroscopy and electrochemistry, known as hyphenated EC-Raman, is a powerful tool for researchers. More information can be extracted from this combination than can be gained from either technique alone.

4-nitrothiophenol (4-NTP) is a strongly Raman-active molecule that is also electrochemically active. At mildly cathodic potentials, 4-NTP undergoes a six-electron proton-coupled reduction to 4-aminothiophenol (4-ATP). Therefore, the reduction

can easily be monitored using traditional electrochemical techniques (e.g., cyclic voltammetry) but also through the changes to the Raman spectrum. In the past, 4-NTP has served as a model system for studying the SERS (surface-enhanced Raman spectroscopy) effect and has relevance for example in corrosion [1] and electrocatalysis [2] applications. This Application Note presents a walkthrough of a hyphenated EC-Raman experiment on 4-NTP.

EXPERIMENTAL

A Metrohm EC-Raman solution was used consisting of a VIONIC powered by INTELLO potentiostat and a Metrohm i-Raman Plus 532H system. A specialized cell for EC-Raman was employed (RAMAN ECFC, RedoxMe). The cell consists of three electrodes: an Ag/AgCl reference electrode, Pt wire counter electrode, and an Au disk working electrode.

A SERS substrate was prepared in-situ by electrochemically roughening the Au disk electrode. The 4-NTP was immobilized in a surface monolayer, prepared by drop casting onto an electrochemically

roughened Au SERS substrate. The surface was thoroughly rinsed with ethanol before use. The cell was then filled with 0.05 mol/L H_2SO_4 .

All Raman spectra were acquired with an i-Raman Plus 532H controlled by SpecSuite software. A potential step experiment was performed where the potential was stepped from 0.2 V to -0.55 V in 0.05 V, 40-second steps. Raman spectra were acquired at each potential step. The Raman spectra were acquired at 100% laser power with a 10 s integration time and averaged three times.

RESULTS

The cyclic voltammogram (CV) of the 4-NTP monolayer is shown in **Figure 1**. This provides information about which potentials will be needed later in the potential step experiment.

The CV also reveals a single, irreversible cathodic peak at approximately -0.3 V vs Ag/AgCl. This peak corresponds to the complete reduction of 4-NTP to 4-ATP (**Figure 1**, insert).

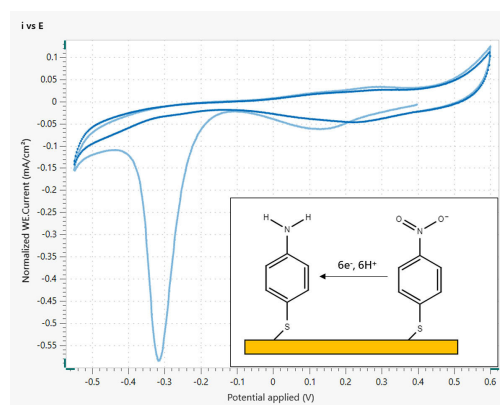


Figure 1. Cyclic voltammogram of 4-NTP adsorbed onto a roughened Au surface in 0.05 mol/L sulfuric acid.

RESULTS

The electrochemical response recorded during the potential step experiment is shown in **Figure 2**. VIONIC sends TTL pulses to the i-Raman plus system which triggers the measurement of a new spectrum at the beginning of each step.

For clarity purposes, only the first and last recorded Raman spectrum (corresponding to 0.2 V and -0.55 V, respectively) are shown in **Figure 3**.

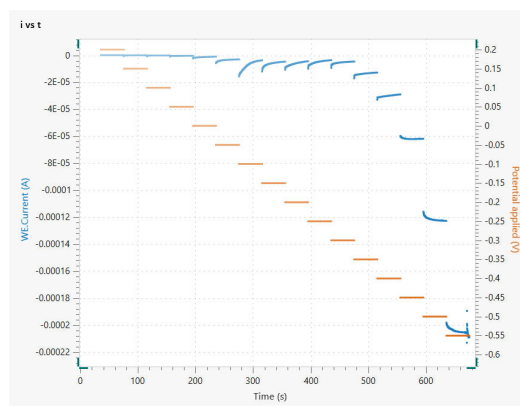


Figure 2. The electrochemical response of the 4-NTP monolayer recorded during the potential Step experiment in 0.05 mol/L sulfuric acid.

The transformation of 4-NTP to 4-ATP is most easily recognized by the loss of the NO_2 stretching mode at 1337 cm^{-1} . The C-C stretching mode at 1572 cm^{-1} in 4-NTP also shifts to higher wavenumbers in 4-ATP (1578 cm^{-1}). A full assignment of the observed bands is provided in **Table 1**.

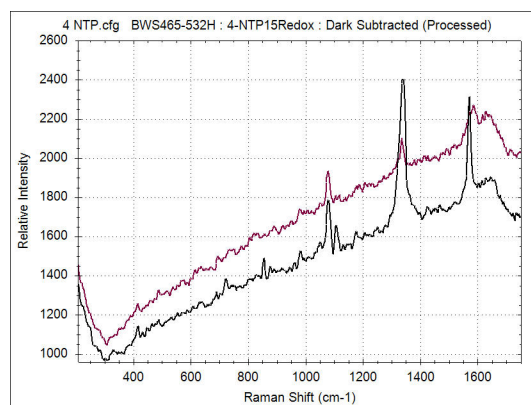


Figure 3. Raman spectra acquired at the first and last potential step during the potential step experiment (Figure 2).

Table 1. Raman shifts and associated vibration modes [3,4] of 4-NTP and 4-ATP as measured during this experiment.

Compound	Raman Shift (cm ⁻¹)	Vibration Mode
4-NTP	1078	C-H bending
	1105	C-H bending
	1337	NO ₂ stretching
	1572	C-C stretching
4-ATP	1078	C-H bending
	1578	C-C stretching

CONCLUSION

A walkthrough of a model experiment for EC-Raman was shown using the example of 4-nitrothiophenol. While the molecule itself is useful in testing new materials for the SERS effect, EC-Raman presents researchers with a convenient way to track the

reduction of the molecule.

In general, hyphenated EC-Raman gives excellent molecular insights into electron-transfer reactions occurring in organic molecules.

REFERENCES

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3. Lopez-Ramirez, M. R.; Aranda Ruiz, D.; Avila Ferrer, F. J.; et al. Analysis of the Potential Dependent Surface-Enhanced Raman Scattering of p-Aminothiophenol on the Basis of MS-CASPT2 Calculations. *J. Phys. Chem. C* **2016**, *120* (34), 19322–19328. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.jpcc.6b05891>.
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CONFIGURATION



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- Mode flottant sélectionnable
- Seconde électrode de détection (S2)
- Scan analogique



Spectromètre Raman portable i-Raman Plus 532H

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