



## Electrochemical Behaviours and Electrocatalytic Properties of the $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$ (Collagen- $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>n</sub>/Cysteamine Modified Gold Electrode

L. LIU, Y.H. SONG, C.Y. CHEN, M. ZHANG, H.Z. YUAN and L. WANG\*

College of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, Jiangxi Normal University, Nanchang 330022, P.R. China

\*Corresponding author: Tel/Fax: +86 791 8120861. E-mail: lwang@jxnu.edu.cn

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A novel multilayer of the type I collagen and  $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$  was successfully constructed on cysteamine modified gold electrode. Electrochemistry and atomic force microscopy (AFM) were used to characterize the  $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>n</sub> multilayer modified gold electrode. Atomic force microscopy images showed that the  $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$  preferentially deposited on the collagen network to produce the three-dimensional  $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$  network. Electrochemical results indicated that the modified electrode exhibited good electrochemical behaviours and electrocatalytic activity towards the reduction of  $NO_2^-$ . The electrochemical behaviours and electrocatalytic properties of the modified electrode were investigated in detail.

**Key Words:** Electrochemistry, Electrocatalysis, Collagen,  $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$ ,  $NO_2^-$ .

### INTRODUCTION

Polyoxometalates (POMs) have attracted much attention not only due to their especially intrinsic structure<sup>1,2</sup> but also due to their potential application in the field of material science, catalysis, biology and medicine<sup>3-7</sup>. Polyoxometalates, as a class of structurally well-defined anionic clusters with an enormous disparity in size, composition and function, can accept and release several electrons, which makes these compounds very suitable candidates in electrode modification and electrocatalytic research<sup>8-10</sup>.

Some methods have been exploited to attach polyoxometalates to the surface of various electrodes, such as adsorption<sup>11</sup>, electrochemical deposition<sup>12</sup>, incorporation into conductive polymeric matrices<sup>13</sup> and layer-by-layer (LBL) deposition<sup>14-16</sup>. Among these methods, electrochemical deposition has become a popular method owing to its properties of quick assembly and simple operation. By this method, polyoxometalates have been successfully attached to cysteine<sup>17</sup>, cysteamine<sup>18</sup> and poly(ferrocenylsilane)<sup>19</sup> modified electrode.

Type I collagen is composed of right-handed supercoils of three left-handed polyproline helices with major sequences of (Gly-Pro-Hyp)<sub>n</sub><sup>20,21</sup>. Under acidic circumstance ( $pH \leq 3.5$ ) and low ionic strength, type I collagen molecules could form stationary solution under any temperature<sup>22</sup>. The collagen molecule could also self-assemble into various structures on a solid surface. Whereas these structures strongly depended on temperature. For example, the fibrils and some films with various

densities could form at various temperatures. Generally, the density of collagen film increased as the temperature increased. When the temperature is below the physiological level and the concentration of collagen is below 0.3 mg/mL, it will form a network film with the low packing density. Therefore, type I collagen has been extensively employed to modify surface. For example, type I collagen has been used to construct collagen-silver nanoparticles multilayer for the application in surface-enhanced Raman spectrum<sup>23</sup>. The type I collagen network on an electrode surface was used to control the formation of silver nanoparticles during the electrodeposition process<sup>24</sup>. Even if, some collagen mimics with redox centers (ferrocene) have been synthesized to modify an electrode<sup>25</sup>.

In this work, the type I collagen network was used to modify electrode and then  $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$  was electrodeposited on the collagen network. By recycling the assembly of collagen and electrodeposition of  $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$ , the Au electrode modified with  $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$ (collagen- $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>n</sub> was successfully fabricated. There are two advantages in the fabrication of the  $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$ (collagen- $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>n</sub> modified electrode. For one thing, the type I collagen molecules will be protonated to become anion in acidic conditions and so the negatively charged  $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$  can strongly adsorb on it. The strong electrostatic interaction between positively charged collagen and negatively charged  $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$  will enhance the stability of the modified electrode. The other thing, the type I collagen can form three-dimensional network film. So it can not only elevate  $PW_{12}O_{40}^{3-}$  on the electrode surface but also improve

the electrolyte ion transfer so as to enhance electron transfer in the multilayer. The resulted electrode exhibited good electrochemical behaviours and electrocatalytic properties towards the reduction of nitrite. The electrochemical and electrocatalytic properties of the modified electrode were investigated in detail.

## EXPERIMENTAL

Type I collagen from calf skin and cysteamine were purchased from Aldrich-Sigma.  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  was obtained from Beijing Pure Chemical Plant (China). Other chemicals were purchased from Beijing Chemical Reagent Factory (Beijing, China) and were of analytical grade. All the reagents were used as received without further purification. The aqueous solutions were prepared with triple-distilled water.

All electrochemical experiments were performed by a CHI 430A electrochemical workstation (Shanghai, China). A conventional three-electrode system was used with  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )/cysteamine/Au electrode as working electrode, a platinum wire as auxiliary electrode and a saturated calomel electrode (SCE) as reference electrode. The auxiliary electrode, SCE and the naked Au electrode were purchased from CHI (Shanghai, China). Magnetic stirrer (IKA RH basic 1) was used to stir the solution. All experiments were carried out in 0.1M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  solution at room temperature. Electrolyte solutions were purged with high purity nitrogen prior to experiments and blanketed with nitrogen during electrochemical experiments.

Atomic force microscopy (AFM) measurements were carried out with an AJ-III (Shanghai Aijian Nanotechnology) in tapping mode. Standard silicon cantilevers (spring constant, 0.6-6.0 N/m) were used under its resonance frequency (typically, 60-150 kHz) at room temperature under ambient condition.

**Fabrication of  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )/cysteamine/Au electrode:** Gold electrode was polished with 1, 0.3 and 0.05  $\mu\text{m}$   $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  powders to obtain a mirror-like surface before experiments and then was rinsed with triple-distilled water and absolute ethanol in an ultrasonic bath for 3 min, respectively. The polished electrode was immersed in a 1 mM ethanol solution of cysteamine for 24 h and followed by ultrasonication with absolute ethanol and by rinsing with triple-distilled water to remove off the unbound cysteamine from the surface of gold electrode. Subsequently, the cysteamine modified gold electrode was placed into a 0.1M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  solution containing 1.0 mM  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  and was cycled for 50 times in the potential range of -0.2-0.8 V at 100 mV/s. Then the type I collagen (0.1 % solution in 0.1 M acetic acid) was dropped on the prepared electrode and dried for 4 h, which formed the collagen/  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ /cysteamine/Au electrode. Finally, the assembly of collagen and electroadsorption of  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  were repeated and produced  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )/cysteamine/Au electrode. The constructed process was illustrated in Fig. 1.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Atomic force microscopic images:** Fig. 2 shows the surface morphologies of the bare Au substrate and  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen-

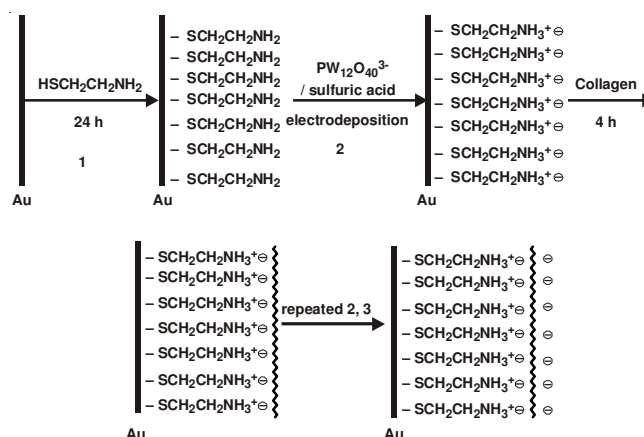


Fig. 1. Schematic representation of the procedure for the electrode construction

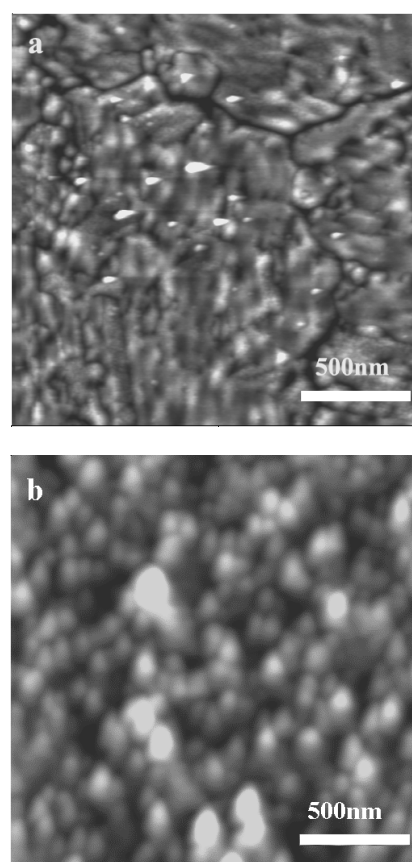


Fig. 2. AFM images of bare Au substrate (a) and  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )/cysteamine/Au electrode (b). The z range: 10 nm (a) and 20 nm (b)

$\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )/cysteamine/Au electrode. The AFM image of the bare gold substrate presented a smooth and homogeneous surface. Its root-mean-square (RMS) value of the surface roughness was 1.23 (Fig. 2a). After the type I collagen and  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  were deposited onto the gold substrate, the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )/cysteamine/Au electrode exhibited three-dimensional (3D) porous structure with some small particles (Fig. 2b). The small particles could be ascribed to the cluster of  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ . The RMS value of the surface roughness was increased to 2.74 nm for  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen-  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )/cysteamine/Au substrate. These results suggested that the collagen and  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  were successfully assembled on the

gold substrate and formed three-dimensional porous films. The fabrication of the modified electrode is mainly based on the electrostatic interaction between  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  and the collagen. Under acidic condition,  $-\text{NH}_2$  of the collagen molecules would accept a proton and became  $\text{NH}_3^+$ . The positive  $\text{NH}_3^+$  was helpful to attract negative  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  anion. When the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ /cysteamine/gold electrode was dipped into acetic acid solution of collagen, the positive collagen molecules could strongly adsorb on the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ /cysteamine/gold electrode and form network film. Subsequently, the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  preferentially electrodeposited on the collagen networks to produce  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  networks in the electrochemically cyclic sweeps. As a result, the fabrication of  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au substrate could be constructed successfully.

**Electrochemical behaviours of  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>n</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode:** The electrochemical behaviours of  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>n</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode was investigated in 0.1M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  solution. The corresponding cyclic voltammograms (CVs) were showed in Fig. 3A. The  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode showed three pairs of obvious redox peaks in 0.1M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  solution (curve a) as compared to collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ /cysteamine/Au electrode (curve b),  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ /cysteamine/Au electrode (curve c) and cysteine /Au electrode (curve d), suggesting the three pairs of redox peaks resulted mainly from the immobilized  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ . The three pairs of redox peaks corresponded to one-electron, two-electron and one-electron processes, respectively<sup>26</sup>. The peak-to-peak separations of three pairs of redox peaks were 8 mV (I-I'), 95 mV (II-II') and 6 mV (III-III'), respectively (Fig. 3B), showing a good reversibility. The peak currents increased linearly as the scan rates increased from 10-400  $\text{mV s}^{-1}$  and the peak-to-peak separations were almost invariable as shown in Fig. 4, indicating the electron transfer reactions associated with a surface-confined process and the electron transfer was very fast. In addition, the peak current (taking the second anodic peak current as a representative) increased gradually as the numbers of layer increased (Fig. 5). In initial five layers, the increase of peak current was very slow. When the number of layers exceeded five layers, the increase of peak current became very fast. After seven layers, the peak current was invariable. This behaviour could be ascribed to the preparation of the modified electrode. As mentioned above, the collagen assembled on  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ /cysteamine/gold electrode and formed collagen network. The  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  preferentially deposited on the collagen network and produced the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  network. In the initial step of the electrode preparation,  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  networks resulted in a few collagen molecules assembled on the electrode surface. As the layers increased, the mesh of the network gradually decreased and consequently a large number of  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  assembled on the electrode surface. Therefore, the increase of peak current was slow firstly and then became very fast. After seven layers, the loading of collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  reached the maximum value and the peak current became constant.

According to Faraday's law,  $I_p = nFQv/4RT = n^2F^2\Gamma^*v/4RT$ , the surface average concentration of electroactive  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  ( $\Gamma^*$ ,  $\text{mol cm}^{-2}$ ) on the Au electrode was estimated as follows:  $\Gamma^* = Q/nFA$ , where  $I_p$  is the reduction current (A),  $v$  is scan

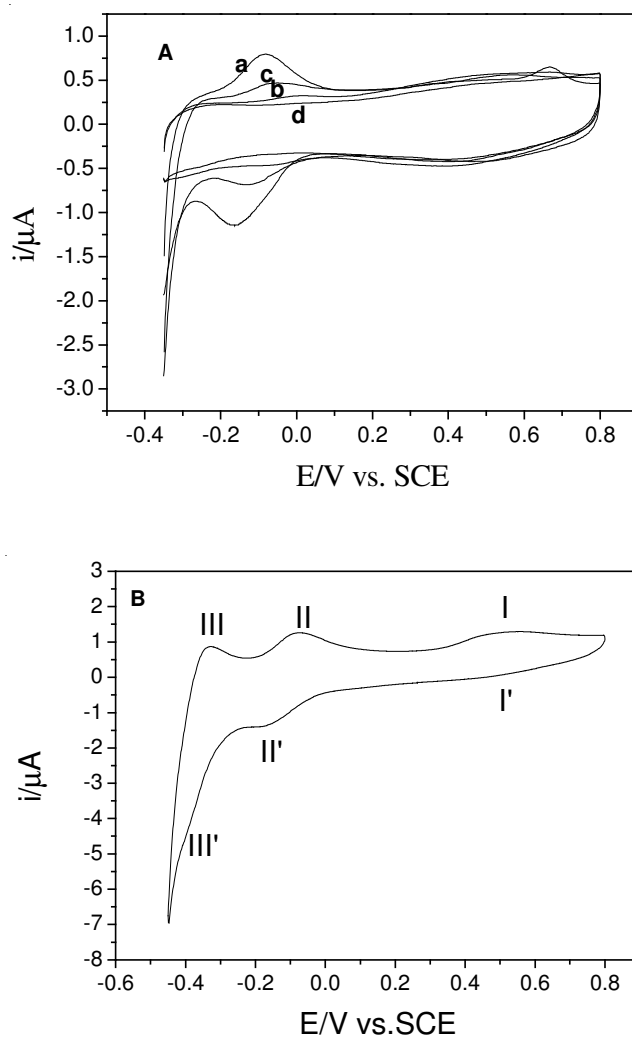


Fig. 3. (A) Cyclic voltammograms of various modified electrodes:  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode (a), collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ /cysteamine/Au (b),  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ /cysteamine/Au (c) and cysteine/Au (d). (B) CVs of  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode in 0.1M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  solution. The scan rate was 50  $\text{mV s}^{-1}$ .

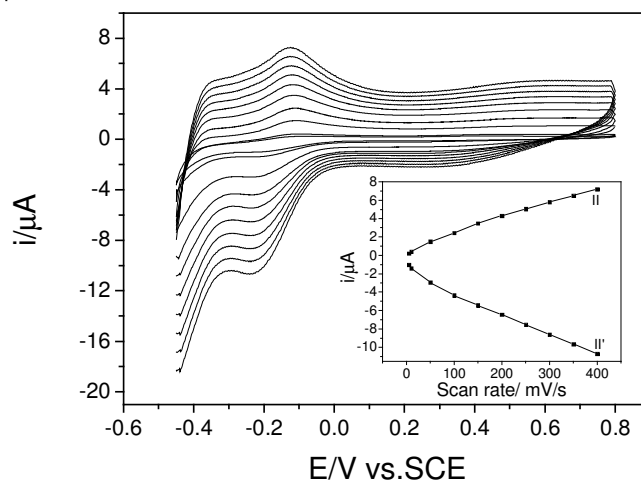


Fig. 4. Cyclic voltammograms of the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode in 0.1M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  solution at different scan rates (from inner to outer: 10, 50, 100, 150, 200, 250, 300, 350, 400  $\text{mV s}^{-1}$ ). The inset showed variation of the peak current with the scan rates



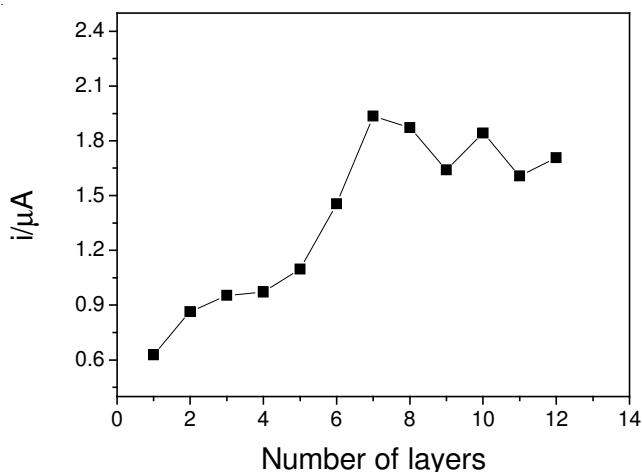


Fig. 5. Plots of anodic peak current (peak II) versus number of layers. The data were obtained in 0.1M H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> solution at 50 mV s<sup>-1</sup>

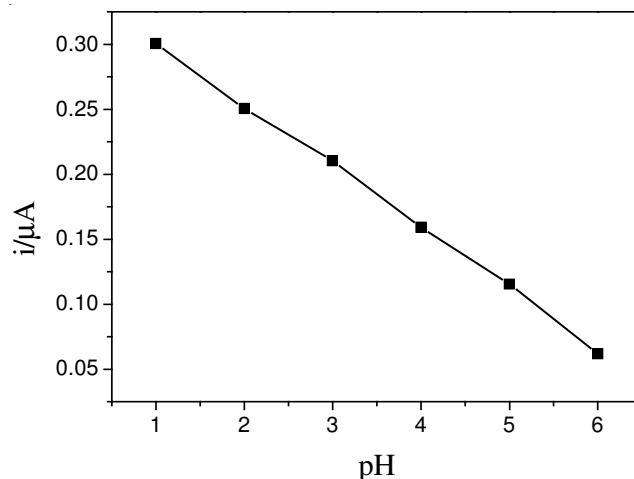


Fig. 6. Plots of anodic peak current (peak II) versus the pH. The data were obtained in 0.1M H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> solution at 50 mV s<sup>-1</sup>

rate (V s<sup>-1</sup>), Q is the charge (C) by integrating of the anodic peak of the PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup> modified electrode, n is the electron transfer number, F is the Faraday constant (F = 96493 C mol<sup>-1</sup>) and A is the geometric area (cm<sup>2</sup>) of the Au electrode (φ = 2 mm). The surface average concentration of electroactive PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup> on the Au electrode were 4.2 × 10<sup>-12</sup> mol cm<sup>-2</sup> for PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>/cysteamine/Au electrode and 3.48 × 10<sup>-11</sup> mol cm<sup>-2</sup> for PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>(collagen-PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>)<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode, respectively (Table-1). The value of Γ\* increased with the number of layers increasing. Besides, the electron transfer rate k<sub>s</sub> is also estimated according to k<sub>s</sub> = αnFv/RT, where α is the cathodic electron transfer coefficient, n is the electron transfer number, R is the gas constant (R = 8.314 J mol K<sup>-1</sup>), T is the temperature in Kelvin (T = 298 K) and F is the Faraday constant<sup>32</sup>. The heterogeneous electron transfer rate of PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>(collagen-PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>)<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode was similar to that of PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>/cysteamine/Au electrode as shown in Table-1, suggesting the 3D porous structure was helpful to the electron transfer. Some other key parameters were also listed in Table-1.

#### Effect of pH on electrochemical behaviours of PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>(collagen-PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>)<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode:

In general, the reduction of PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup> was accompanied by protonation<sup>33</sup> and the assembly of the PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>(collagen-PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>)<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode was also based on the protonation of NH<sub>2</sub> of collagen and cysteamine. Thus, the pH of the solution might possibly play a crucial role in the electrochemical behaviours and stability of the PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>(collagen-PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>)<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode. As shown in Fig. 6, the peak currents decreased regularly with the increase of pH in the range of 1.0-6.0, suggesting the PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>(collagen-PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>)<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode only was stable in acidic solution.

**Electrocatalytic activity of PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>(collagen-PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>)<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode:** The PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>(collagen-PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>)<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode showed a good electrocatalytic activity toward the reduction of nitrite (NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>). As shown in Fig. 7A, an obvious reduction current appeared when the PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>(collagen-PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>)<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode was scanned in 0.1M H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> solution in the presence of 2 mM NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> (curve e). This current is obvious as compared to that of in the absence of NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> (curve a). The reduction current for cysteamine/Au electrode (curve b), PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>/cysteamine/Au electrode (curve c) and collagen/PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>/cysteamine/Au electrode (curve d) were obviously weak. The results suggested that the current resulted mainly from the PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup> electrocatalytic reduction of NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>. With the increase of NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> in the electrolyte solution, the cathodic peak current (II', III') increased obviously while the corresponding anodic peak current (II, III) decreased and other peak was almost unchanged (Fig. 7B). At sufficiently acidic conditions, NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> undergoes a disproportionation reaction leading to the formation of NO<sup>+</sup> (pKa = 3.3), which involves reductive centers in the polyoxometalate<sup>34</sup>. Therefore, the above result indicates that the second and the third redox processes catalyzed the reduction of NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>, which corresponds to the reduction of PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup> to PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>6-</sup> and PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>6-</sup> to PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>7-</sup>, respectively.

The amperometric response of the PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>(collagen-PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>)<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode toward the reduction of NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> was studied by successive injections of NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> with different concentration into a stirred 0.1M H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> solution. Fig. 8 showed the typical current-time curve. The reduction current increased rapidly to achieve 95 % of the steady state current within 2 s after an aliquot of NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> was added into the stirred solution. The fast response was attributed to the network structure of the modified electrode that could result in

TABLE-1  
COMPARISON OF THE KEY PARAMETERS OF THE PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>/CYSTEAMINE/Au AND PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>(COLLAGEN-PW<sub>12</sub>O<sub>40</sub><sup>3-</sup>)<sub>4</sub>/CYSTEAMINE/Au ELECTRODES

	Q (C)	Γ* (mol cm <sup>-2</sup> )	k <sub>s</sub> (s <sup>-1</sup> )	Linearity (mM)	Detection limit (μM)
PW <sub>12</sub> O <sub>40</sub> <sup>3-</sup> /cysteamine/Au	2.55 × 10 <sup>-8</sup>	4.2 × 10 <sup>-12</sup>	2.82	0.14-33.94	1.71
PW <sub>12</sub> O <sub>40</sub> <sup>3-</sup> (collagen-PW <sub>12</sub> O <sub>40</sub> <sup>3-</sup> ) <sub>4</sub> /cysteamine/Au	2.11 × 10 <sup>-7</sup>	3.48 × 10 <sup>-11</sup>	2.80	0.14-51.94	1.29

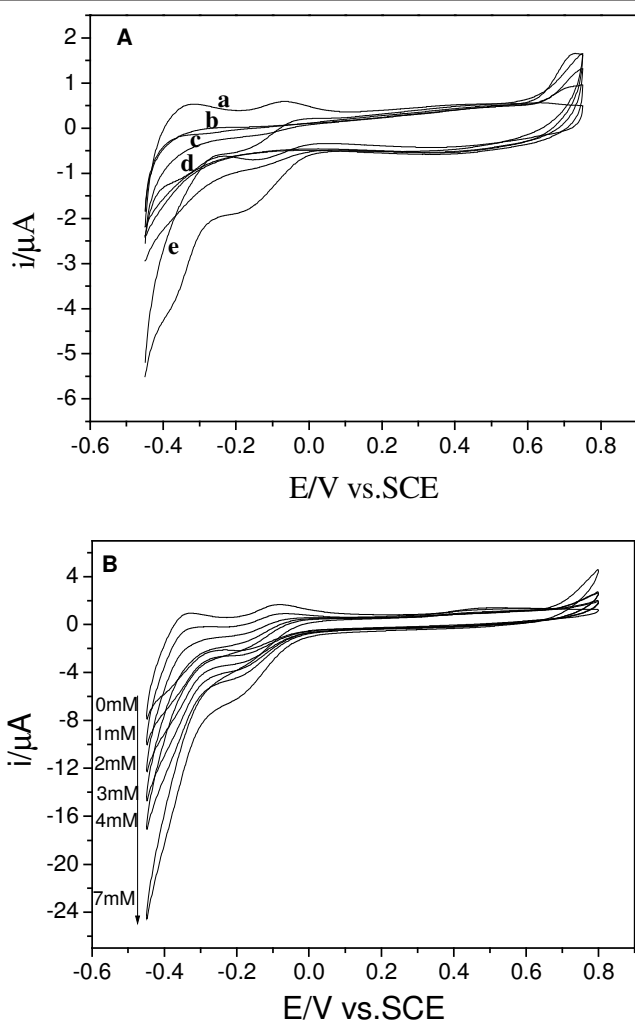


Fig. 7. (A) CVs of the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode (a, e), cysteine/Au electrode (b),  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ /cysteamine/Au electrode (c), collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ /cysteamine/Au electrode (d) in 0.1M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  solution containing 0 mM (a) and 2 mM  $\text{NO}_2^-$  (b, c, d, e). (B) CVs of the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode in 0.1M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  solution containing  $\text{NO}_2^-$  with various concentrations. Scan rate:  $50 \text{ mV s}^{-1}$

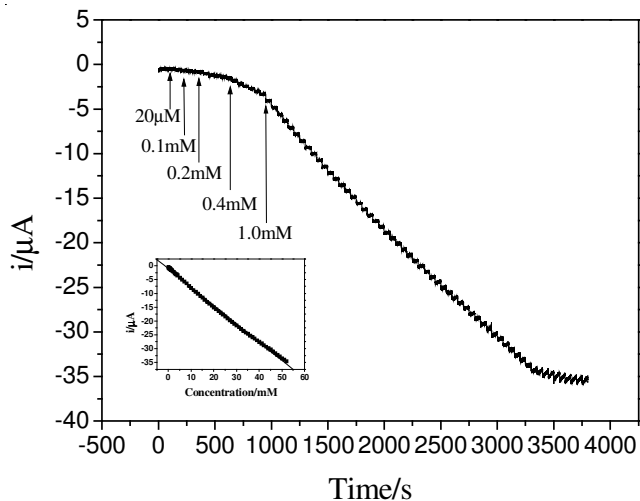


Fig. 8. Amperometric response of the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode at  $-390 \text{ mV}$  upon successive additions of different concentration  $\text{NO}_2^-$  into 0.1 M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  solution. Inset was plot of steady-state current *versus*  $\text{NO}_2^-$  concentration

fast penetration of the  $\text{NO}_2^-$ . The inset showed the calibration curve for reduction of  $\text{NO}_2^-$ . As the concentration of  $\text{NO}_2^-$  increased, the reduction current increased linearly. The response time is faster and the linear range ( $S/N = 3$ ) is wider than the reported results of some other electrodes as sensors for  $\text{NO}_2^-$  detection as shown in Table-2. The comparison of the parameters of POMs and some other inorganic materials modified electrodes as sensors for  $\text{NO}_2^-$  were listed in Table-2.

**Response of the sensor for the possible interfering materials:** Possible interference is inevitable in the determination of  $\text{NO}_2^-$ . Some interfering agents were investigated by addition of them with different concentration into 1.0M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  solutions in the presence of 1 mM  $\text{NO}_2^-$ . As shown in Table-3, the common interfering agents such as KCl in a 1-fold concentration and  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$  did not show interference to  $\text{NO}_2^-$  detection, while  $\text{KBrO}_3$ ,  $\text{KIO}_3$  and KCl in a 5-fold concentration displayed serious interference.

**Stability of the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode:** The stability of the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode was investigated by the cyclic scan in 0.1M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  in the potential from  $-0.45$  to  $0.8 \text{ V}$  at  $50 \text{ mV s}^{-1}$  (Fig. 9). The peak current only dropped by 8 % after fifty cycles and then maintained stable, which suggested the good stability of the modified electrode in such condition. Moreover, after the modified electrode was exposed to air at  $4^\circ\text{C}$  for 6 days, the peak current ( $I-I'$ ) increased 83 % while other peak currents ( $II-II'$ ,  $III-III'$ ) decreased 39 and 50 %, respectively (curve c).

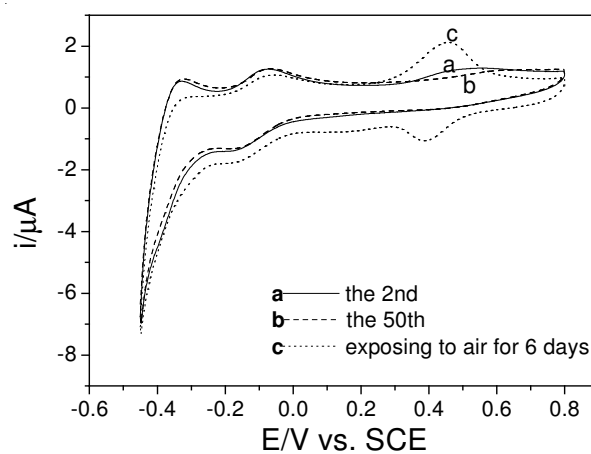


Fig. 9. CVs of the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode in 0.1M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  solution at  $50 \text{ mV s}^{-1}$  for 2 cycles (a) and for 50 cycles (b). (c) CVs of the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>4</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode exposed to air for 6 days in 0.1M  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  solution at  $50 \text{ mV s}^{-1}$  for 2 cycles

## Conclusion

A multilayer composed of type I collagen and  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  has been successfully fabricated on the cysteine modified gold electrode surface by recycling the assembly of the type I collagen network and electrodeposition of the  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ . The resulted  $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$  (collagen- $\text{PW}_{12}\text{O}_{40}^{3-}$ )<sub>n</sub>/cysteamine/Au electrode exhibited good electrochemical behaviours and electrocatalytic properties towards the reduction of  $\text{NO}_2^-$ . This sensor showed an extremely fast amperometric response, a low detection limit and a wide linear range for  $\text{NO}_2^-$  detection.

TABLE-2  
COMPARISON OF THE PARAMETERS OF POMs AND SOME OTHER INORGANIC  
MATERIALS MODIFIED ELECTRODES AS SENSORS FOR NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>

	Response time (s)	Detection limit (μM)	Linear range (mM)	Sensitivity (μA mM <sup>-1</sup> )	Reference
PW <sub>12</sub> O <sub>40</sub> <sup>3-</sup> (collagen-PW <sub>12</sub> O <sub>40</sub> <sup>3-</sup> ) <sub>4</sub> /cysteamine/Au	2	1.29	0.14-51.94	0.71	This paper
P <sub>2</sub> W <sub>18</sub> -modified sol-gel electrode	<10	5	0.02-34	3.25	27
P <sub>2</sub> Mo <sub>18</sub> /OMC/GC	<25	1.78	5.34 × 10 <sup>-3</sup> -24		28
POM-modified T-CPE		22	0.1-15		29
POM-modified IL-CPE		0.45	0.1-15		
PMo <sub>12</sub> -l-Cys/Au		5	2 × 10 <sup>-3</sup> -0.2		17
PMo <sub>12</sub> -AT/Au		0.02	10 <sup>-4</sup> -0.1		30
Tungsten oxide		700	1.6-20		31

TABLE-3  
EFFECTS OF INTERFERENCES ON THE CATALYTIC REDUCTION OF NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> TO FOLLOWING  
SPECIES (RECORD IN 0.1M H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, SCAN RATE 50 mV/s)

Responding substrates concentration: 1 mM	Interferences substrates (mM)						
	KCl		KBrO <sub>3</sub>	KIO <sub>3</sub>	Na <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub>		
	1	5	1	1	1	5	10
NO <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	o <sup>a</sup>	• <sup>b</sup>	•	•	o	o	o

a: No interference (variance of catalytic current ≤ 6 %); b: Interference (variance of catalytic current > 6 %).

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