

# Mechanism of the Selective Catalytic Reduction of NO by NH<sub>3</sub> over MnO<sub>x</sub>/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>

## I. Adsorption and Desorption of the Single Reaction Components

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The adsorption of NO and NH<sub>3</sub> on MnO<sub>x</sub>/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> catalysts, used for the low temperature selective catalytic reduction of NO, was studied separately by use of TPD (with labelled compounds) and FTIR. Besides, the influence of O<sub>2</sub> on the adsorption of the reactants was investigated. At 323 K, NH<sub>3</sub> can adsorb as coordinated NH<sub>3</sub> and ammonium ions, which both have comparable thermal stability. Hence, both of them, as well as amide species, can be present at reaction temperature (423 K). In the presence of O<sub>2</sub> the relative distribution of these three surface species does not change. NO adsorbs in small quantities on the surface of these catalysts after an inert treatment as Mn<sup>3+</sup>-NO nitrosyls and some nitrites/nitrates. However, it adsorbs in significant amounts after an oxidative pretreatment and in high amounts (NO/Mn ≈ 1) in the presence of gas phase O<sub>2</sub>. At 423 K, the following compounds can be present, in increasing order of thermodynamic stability: linear nitrites, bridged nitrites, monodentate nitrites < bridged nitrates < bidentate nitrates. The formation of these five species is strongly enhanced in the presence of O<sub>2</sub>, and probably proceeds by NO oxidation. In contrast, nitrosylic compounds are unstable in O<sub>2</sub> containing atmospheres. The uptake of NO in the presence of O<sub>2</sub> is lower than the NO<sub>2</sub> uptake, and relatively more stable nitrates are formed in the latter case. The role of O<sub>2</sub> is to oxidise NO at the surface rather than in the gas phase.

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## INTRODUCTION

Selective catalytic reduction (SCR) of NO with NH<sub>3</sub> is a proven technique for the removal of NO<sub>x</sub> from flue gases of stationary sources. A large amount of literature exists on applied and fundamental studies on several SCR catalyst systems. Among them, alumina supported manganese oxides appear to be very active catalysts for this reaction (1–4) in the low temperature range (383–473 K). Hence, they may be considered promising for application in addition units for existing power plants. At low loadings, the high

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activity is combined with a very high selectivity towards N<sub>2</sub> production (5).

Recently, Kapteijn *et al.* (6) published some mechanistic aspects of the SCR reaction over these catalysts using FTIR and TP(R)D experiments. They suggest that the reaction proceeds by adsorption of NH<sub>3</sub> on Lewis acid sites, followed (partly) by H-abstraction yielding a NH<sub>2</sub> surface species. This species would react with NO (weakly adsorbed or gaseous), possibly at an octahedral Mn<sup>3+</sup> site which holds one NO and one NH<sub>3</sub>/NH<sub>2</sub>, to yield the reaction products. The authors proposed four possible roles of oxygen in the reaction mechanism: (1) gas phase oxidation of NO to NO<sub>2</sub>, which adsorbs faster than NO; (2) more readily adsorption of NO on oxidised surfaces, hence enhancing the reaction rate; (3) creation of oxidised sites necessary for H-abstraction of the adsorbed NH<sub>3</sub>; (4) reoxidation of the surface to close the catalytic cycle.

Despite the amount of valuable information presented in (6) some crucial aspects of the mechanism remain unclear:

(1) The role of O<sub>2</sub> in the catalytic cycle must be further elucidated. Because Kapteijn *et al.* performed their FTIR studies in the absence of O<sub>2</sub>, its role in the formation of reactive intermediates is not yet clarified.

(2) It was not unambiguously established whether the reaction proceeds by a Langmuir Hinshelwood (LH) or an Eley Rideal (ER) mechanism. TPD results point towards direct reaction of gas phase NO (6). In contrast, kinetic studies revealed that the reaction order in NO is broken (4) and changes upon concurrent adsorption of H<sub>2</sub>O (3), suggesting a LH mechanism.

(3) Low loaded catalysts deactivate very slowly during the first 200 h in a reaction mixture at 423 K (7). This deactivation calls for an explanation.

These questions, discussed abundantly in mechanistic studies on other SCR catalysts, have to be clarified for the MnO<sub>x</sub>/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> catalysts as finally a reaction rate equation based on a reliable mechanistic model, suitable for reactor

design purposes, is desired. They will be discussed in the present and subsequent paper.

In literature, a number of active intermediates in the SCR catalytic cycle have been proposed. General agreement merely exists on one point: the reaction starts by (strongly) adsorbed NH<sub>3</sub>. Some authors suggest that NH<sub>3</sub> adsorbed as NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> on Brønsted acid sites is the active species (on V<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> and related systems, e.g. (8–10), on Cu-exchanged zeolite Y(11)), whereas others claim that Lewis acid sites are important to obtain active NH<sub>3</sub>-intermediates (on Cu/TiO<sub>2</sub>, e.g. (12), on V<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> (13)). When a LH mechanism is suggested a large variety of adsorbed NO complexes is proposed as active intermediates: nitrosyls (6), nitrosium ion (on Ce/mordenite (14)), several nitrites (on Cu/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (15), CrO<sub>x</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> (16) and Cu/MFI (17)) and nitrates (on Cu-ZSM-5 (18) and Cr<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (19)).

Because of the large number of surface species that can be formed under SCR reaction conditions a detailed, systematic approach is necessary to study the above-mentioned mechanistic questions on MnO<sub>x</sub>/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. In this paper we will discuss the way in which NO and NH<sub>3</sub> can adsorb under reaction conditions on pure and supported manganese oxides, with emphasis on the 2 wt% Mn loaded catalysts, using both TPD and *in situ* FTIR experiments. Labelled components are used during TPD to reveal the origin of the formed compounds. Thermal stabilities of the adsorbed species are compared. Also, the role of O<sub>2</sub> on the adsorption of NO and NH<sub>3</sub> and the role of gas phase NO<sub>2</sub> formation are evaluated. Furthermore, it is important to reveal whether the formed surface compounds are located on manganese sites or on the Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> support, as catalytic activity is related to Mn centres.

In a subsequent paper the specific role of the formed surface and gas phase compounds with respect to the SCR reaction cycle will be established by use of transient response techniques, TPD (with use of labelled components) and FTIR.

## EXPERIMENTAL

### Catalysts

The catalysts were prepared by incipient wetness impregnation of a Ketjen CK300  $\gamma$ -Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> support ( $S_{\text{BET}} = 192 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$ , pore volume  $0.5 \text{ cm}^3 \text{ g}^{-1}$ , and particle size 150–250  $\mu\text{m}$ ) with an aqueous solution of (CH<sub>3</sub>COO)<sub>2</sub>Mn·4H<sub>2</sub>O. Subsequently, the catalysts were dried in stagnant air overnight at 383 K, followed by calcination in O<sub>2</sub> at 573 K for 1 h and at 773 K for 3 h. Due to the limited solubility of the precursor the impregnation was performed in several steps with drying in-between. In this way, samples were prepared of 2 and 15 wt% manganese loading ( $S_{\text{BET}}$  of 172 and  $150 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$ , respectively). A more detailed characterisation of these catalysts was reported previously

(5, 20). As reference materials both unsupported Mn<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> ( $S_{\text{BET}} = 36 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$ ), prepared by thermal decomposition of MnCO<sub>3</sub> (Aldrich) in air at 823 K, and the  $\gamma$ -Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> support were used. These were subjected to the same calcination procedure before use as the supported catalysts.

### Gases

Various gases: 0.40 vol% NO/He, 0.75 vol% <sup>15</sup>NO/He (99% isotopically pure), 0.40 vol% NH<sub>3</sub>/He, O<sub>2</sub> (99.6% purity), 3.5 vol% <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub>/He (99% isotopically pure), and He (99.996%) were used during the flow reactor studies (UCAR). The O<sub>2</sub> was dried before use by molecular sieves (5 A, Janssen Chimica). For *in situ* FTIR experiments pure NO (99.9%), NH<sub>3</sub> (99.998%), and O<sub>2</sub> (99.6%) were used (UCAR).

### Temperature Programmed Desorption (TPD)

The TPD experiments were performed in a setup described elsewhere (21) containing a flow reactor connected on-line with a mass spectrometer (UTI 100C). The accuracy of the analysis of the MS is within 3–5%. The connecting tubing was heated at 385 K to avoid adsorption on the walls. Each experiment started with a pretreatment in 2 vol% O<sub>2</sub>/He or He up to 773 K. In some experiments the pretreatment was performed in 1 vol% <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub>/He. Subsequently, the sample, containing 100 mg of 2 wt% Mn/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, was cooled down to 323 K in the same atmosphere and purged with He to remove any physisorbed O<sub>2</sub>. After this pretreatment a gas mixture containing 1000 ppm NO (with or without 1 vol% <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub> in He) or 1000 ppm NH<sub>3</sub> in He was passed over the catalysts until saturation of the catalyst surface was reached, as apparent from the MS data. Subsequently, the sample was purged in He for about 60 min to remove all physisorbed species. Finally, TPD was carried out in pure He at a heating rate of 5 K min<sup>-1</sup> up to 773 K, followed by a 1 h isothermal period. All flow rates were 50 cm<sup>3</sup> min<sup>-1</sup>. Figures are denoted as follows: pretreatment/adsorption (e.g., O<sub>2</sub>/NO + O<sub>2</sub> means that pretreatment took place in 2 vol% O<sub>2</sub>/He and subsequent adsorption in 1000 ppm NO + 1 vol% O<sub>2</sub>). Whenever either the pretreatment or the adsorption step was performed in the presence of labelled O<sub>2</sub>, <sup>15</sup>NO was used to avoid overlapping MS signals.

### Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR)

Typically, 15–20 mg of material was pressed in self-supporting discs. A detailed description of the *in situ* infrared transmission cell is given elsewhere (22). Spectra were recorded with a Biorad FTS 45 A spectrometer. To obtain a spectrum with 2 cm<sup>-1</sup> resolution over the spectral range 4000–1000 cm<sup>-1</sup> 64 scans were averaged. Samples were *in situ* pretreated *in vacuo* at 673 K for 1 h and subsequently cooled down to 323 K. At this temperature, increasing amounts of NO or NH<sub>3</sub> were adsorbed and spectra were

recorded as a function of both time and partial pressure of the adsorbate. Moreover, co-adsorption of  $O_2$  with either of the reactants was evaluated. The adsorption was followed by evacuation at 323 K and heating up to 673 K *in vacuo*; during heating, spectra were recorded at increments of 25 K.

## RESULTS

### $NH_3$ Adsorption

**Temperature programmed desorption.** The TPD profile of the He/ $NH_3$  experiment for a 2 wt% Mn/ $Al_2O_3$  catalyst is shown in Fig. 1. As reported before for higher Mn loadings (6),  $NH_3$  desorbs in a broad temperature range (350–700 K), characteristic for the presence of several (up to five) adsorbed  $NH_3$  species differing in thermal stability on (low loaded)  $\gamma$ - $Al_2O_3$  surfaces (23, 24). The amount of  $NH_3$  adsorbed per unit surface area is comparable to higher loaded samples (see Table 1 and Ref. (6)). Conversely, the  $NH_3$ /Mn ratio is significantly higher on low loaded samples, suggesting that the  $Al_2O_3$  surface contributes considerably to the  $NH_3$  uptake. In the entire temperature range no  $N_2$  desorption is observed, while only small amounts of  $H_2O$  desorb from the surface above 700 K.

**Infrared spectroscopy.** Adsorption of  $NH_3$  at 323 K followed by evacuation results in a rather complex spectrum (Fig. 2), reflecting the complex chemistry of  $NH_3$  interaction with oxidic surfaces. On  $\gamma$ - $Al_2O_3$ , bands can be found at 1610–1620  $cm^{-1}$  and 1190–1290  $cm^{-1}$  (assigned to the asymmetric and symmetric deformation, respectively, of coordinated  $NH_3$  on Lewis acid sites), 1479 and 1690  $cm^{-1}$  (assigned to asymmetric and symmetric deformation, respectively, of ammonium ions, resulting from  $NH_3$  adsorption on Brønsted acid sites). Moreover, a small shoulder

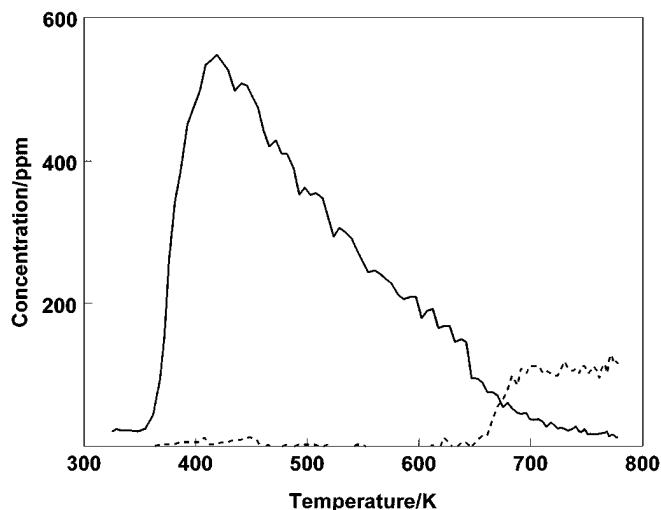


FIG. 1. TPD  $NH_3$ /He after adsorption at 323 K;  $NH_3$  (—);  $H_2O$  (---); 2 wt% Mn/ $Al_2O_3$ .

TABLE 1  
Amounts Desorbed during TPD after Adsorption at 323 K;  
2 wt% Mn/ $Al_2O_3$

| TPD                    | Compound               | $10^{-6}$ moles $m^{-2}$ | Moles/moles Mn |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| He/ $NH_3$             | $NH_3$                 | 2.16                     | 1.02           |
| He/NO                  | NO                     | 0.033                    | 0.016          |
| $^{18}O_2$ / $^{15}NO$ | $^{15}NO$ (450 K)      | 0.126                    | 0.060          |
| $^{18}O_2$ / $^{15}NO$ | $^{15}N^{18}O$ (450 K) | 0.018                    | 0.008          |
| $^{18}O_2$ / $^{15}NO$ | $^{15}NO$ (645 K)      | 0.167                    | 0.079          |
| $^{18}O_2$ / $^{15}NO$ | $^{15}N^{18}O$ (645 K) | 0.030                    | 0.014          |
| $^{18}O_2$ / $^{15}NO$ | $^{16}O_2$ (650 K)     | 0.056                    | 0.026          |
| $^{18}O_2$ / $^{15}NO$ | $^{16}O^{18}O$ (650 K) | 0.008                    | 0.004          |
| He/ $NO_2$             | $NO_{(2)}$ (400 K)     | 0.65                     | 0.30           |
| He/ $NO_2$             | $NO_{(2)}$ (600 K)     | 2.32                     | 1.09           |
| He/ $NO_2$             | $O_2$ (600 K)          | 1.12                     | 0.53           |

around 1510  $cm^{-1}$ , attributed to an amide ( $NH_2$ ) species (scissoring mode) (25, 26), is observed. At 2 wt% Mn loading, the band due to symmetric deformation of coordinated  $NH_3$  shifts to lower wavenumber and contains an additional component at about 1190  $cm^{-1}$ . This band is also found in the spectrum of unsupported  $Mn_2O_3$ , together with absorptions at 1220 and 1130  $cm^{-1}$ ; all of them are attributed to adsorption on different Lewis acid  $Mn^{3+}$  sites. Unsupported  $Mn_2O_3$  shows a very small peak due to ammonium ions (1459  $cm^{-1}$ ), whereas the band due to amide species is relatively strong and centred at 1530  $cm^{-1}$ . Correspondingly, bands are found in the  $NH$  stretching region at 3400, 3358, 3263, and 3143  $cm^{-1}$  (not shown). The 2 and 15 wt% loaded catalysts show a band due to ammonium ions composed of two components, at 1479 and 1459  $cm^{-1}$ , resulting from adsorption at  $Al_2O_3$  and Mn-sites, respectively. When

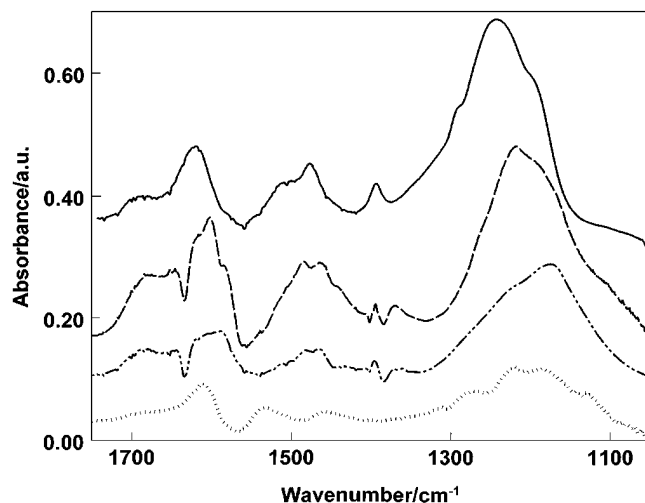


FIG. 2. IR-spectra after adsorption 2 mbar  $NH_3$  at 323 K followed by evacuation:  $\gamma$ - $Al_2O_3$  (—); 2 wt% Mn/ $Al_2O_3$  (---); 15 wt% Mn/ $Al_2O_3$  (····);  $Mn_2O_3$  (— · — · —).

the spectra in Fig. 2 are compared it is clear that the relative content of NH<sub>3</sub> adsorbed on Brønsted acid sites decreases with loading, whereas the relative content of NH<sub>2</sub>-species increases. In the hydroxyl region of the spectra (not shown) the bands due to basic, neutral, and acidic hydroxyls (centred at 3770, 3725, and 3680 cm<sup>-1</sup>, respectively (27)) decrease (especially the basic one), possibly by H-bridging with NH<sub>3</sub> molecules adsorbed on adjacent sites. This perturbation is most clearly observed at the lowest Mn loading and the  $\gamma$ -Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> support. The spectrum observed after NH<sub>3</sub> adsorption and subsequent admission of O<sub>2</sub> at 323 K is comparable to that after NH<sub>3</sub> adsorption, indicating that O<sub>2</sub> does not change the relative distribution of adsorbed NH<sub>3</sub> species.

It should be noted that the formation of all above-mentioned surface compounds proceeds very rapidly; spectra following adsorption during 0.5 min exactly match spectra after adsorption during 10 min. The lower intensity of the Mn<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> sample compared to the supported catalysts is due to the lower surface area (and by consequence a lower concentration of surface compounds) of this sample (28).

After adsorption and subsequent evacuation the samples were heated to 673 K, with spectra recorded at increments of 50 K. As an example, some spectra of the 2 wt% Mn/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> are shown in Fig. 3. All bands progressively decrease in intensity between 323 and 573 K, except for the shoulder due to NH<sub>2</sub> species, the relative intensity of which increases slightly up to 373 K, followed by decreasing intensity at higher temperatures. This indicates that heating to temperatures slightly above 323 K is enough to activate adsorbed NH<sub>3</sub> to form NH<sub>2</sub> species. Clearly, there is no significant difference in thermodynamic stability between NH<sub>3</sub> molecules adsorbed on Lewis and Brønsted acid sites.

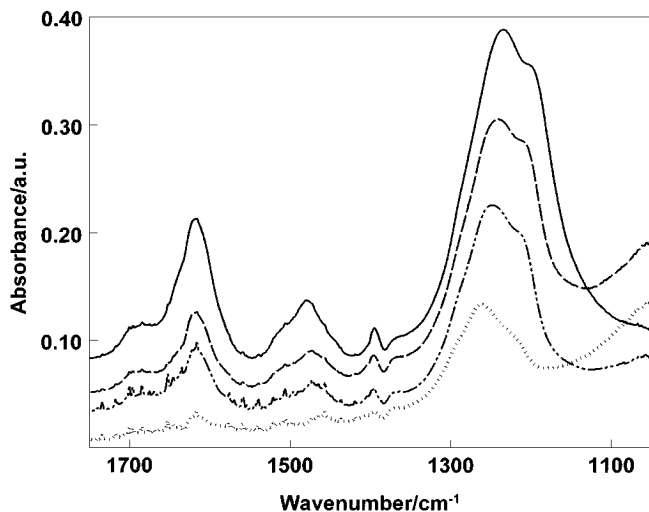


FIG. 3. IR-spectra after adsorption 2 mbar NH<sub>3</sub> at 323 K, followed by evacuation (—), and subsequent heating to 373 K (---), 423 K (- · - ·), and 523 K (·····); 2 wt% Mn/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

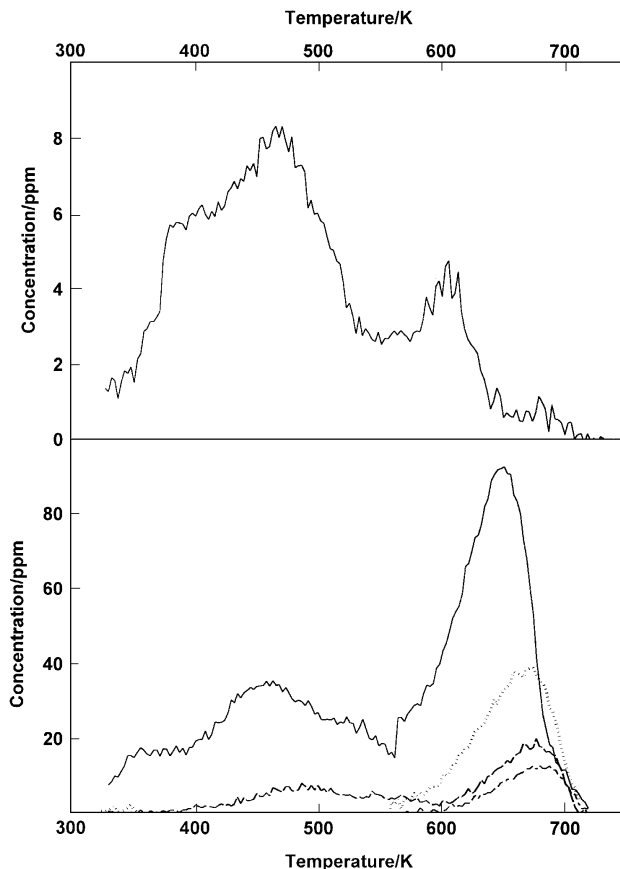


FIG. 4. TPD after adsorption at 323 K: upper He/NO; bottom <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub>/NO; <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O (—); <sup>15</sup>N<sup>16</sup>O (---); <sup>16</sup>O<sub>2</sub> (·····); and <sup>16</sup>O + <sup>18</sup>O (- · - ·); 2 wt% Mn/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

### NO Adsorption

**Temperature programmed desorption.** When 2 wt% Mn/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> is pretreated in inert atmosphere, the adsorption of NO in the absence of O<sub>2</sub> is very limited (see Fig. 4a); two small peaks are observed during TPD at 480 and 600 K. In contrast, after a pretreatment in 2 vol% O<sub>2</sub>/He the amount of adsorbed NO is about 10 times higher; <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub> was used to reveal the origin of the oxygen atoms during desorption. In the TPD pattern in Fig. 4b two desorption peaks are observed, a broad peak in the low temperature range, centred at 450 K (*LT-peak*), and a strong peak at higher temperature, with a maximum at 645 K (*HT-peak*). A minor fraction of the desorbing NO has exchanged its O atom with the <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub> pretreated surface. This second peak is accompanied by desorption of <sup>16</sup>O<sub>2</sub> and a small amount of <sup>16</sup>O<sup>18</sup>O. It should be noted that NO<sub>2</sub> cannot be observed due to fragmentation in the mass spectrometer. Hence, the observed NO may originate from NO<sub>2</sub>. No desorption of N<sub>2</sub> is observed over the entire temperature range. All desorbed quantities are presented in Table 1.

When adsorption of NO is carried out in the presence of O<sub>2</sub> significantly larger amounts are adsorbed (Fig. 5 and

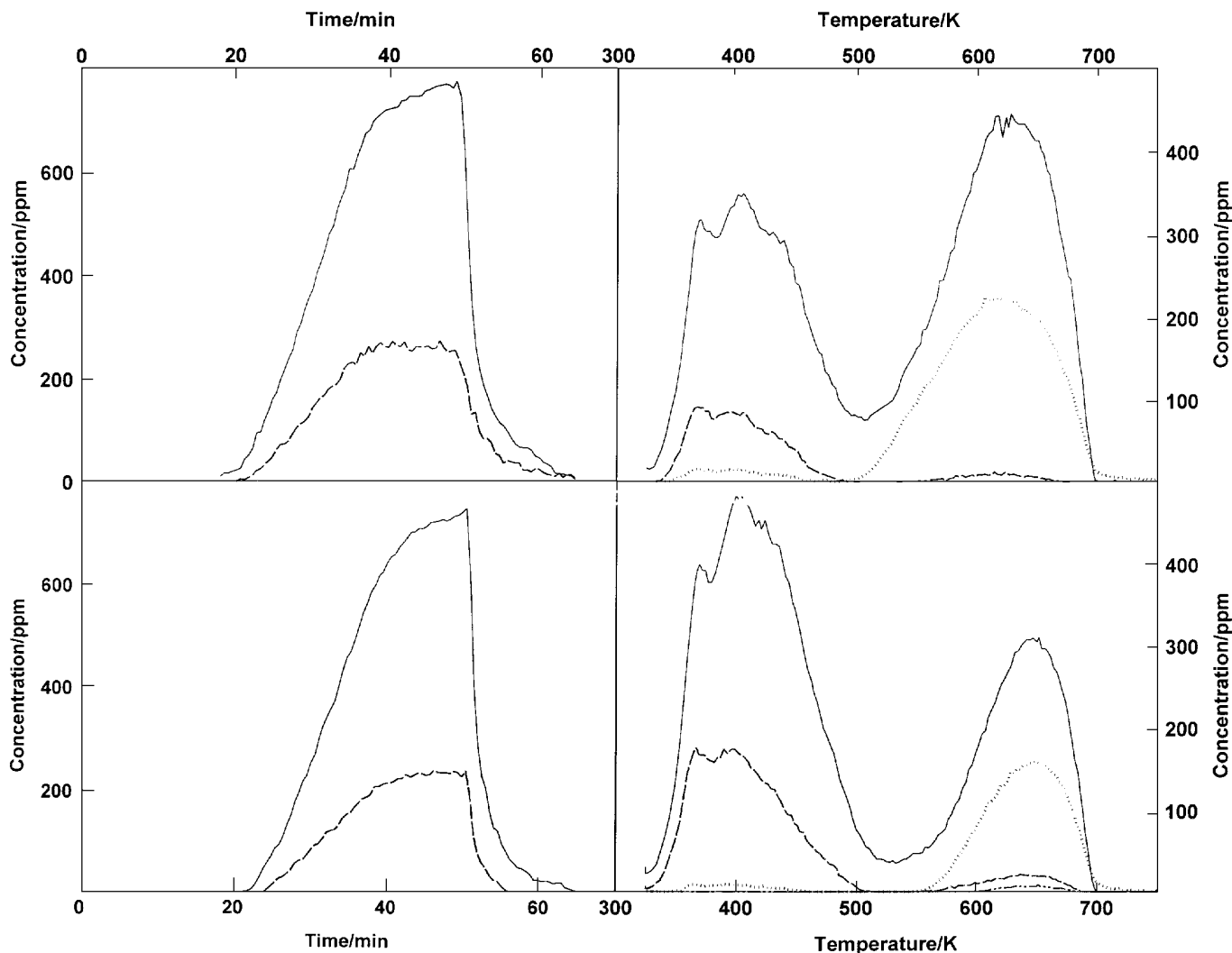


FIG. 5. *Left*: breakthrough curves during adsorption NO in the presence of O<sub>2</sub> at 323 K: <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O (—); <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O (---); and <sup>16</sup>O<sub>2</sub> (▨); *upper*: O<sub>2</sub>/<sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O + <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub>; *bottom*: He/<sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O + <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub>. *Right*: TPD after adsorption at 323 K: *upper*: O<sub>2</sub>/<sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O + <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub>; *bottom*: He/<sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O + <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub>; <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O (—), <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O (---), and <sup>16</sup>O<sub>2</sub> (▨); 2 wt% Mn/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

Table 2). To reveal the origin of the oxygen atoms that desorb after NO/O<sub>2</sub> coadsorption, <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub> was used during adsorption (*not* during pretreatment). The NO breakthrough patterns preceding the desorption experiments (Fig. 5a) show up to 250 ppm of <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O at breakthrough. This species can result either from O-exchange with adsorbed oxygen species or from fragmentation of produced NO<sub>2</sub>. In the latter case, this means that about 50% of the NO (= 500 ppm) is converted to NO<sub>2</sub> as <sup>15</sup>N<sup>16</sup>O<sup>18</sup>O which is fragmented in the mass spectrometer to equal amounts of <sup>15</sup>N<sup>16</sup>O and <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O. As reference, the breakthrough curve of <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O in the presence of <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub> was measured in an empty reactor, leading to 25–35 ppm <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O in the reactor outlet, corresponding to 5–7% NO conversion. Hence, gas phase NO oxidation hardly contributes to the 50% NO conversion observed in the breakthrough curves over MnO<sub>x</sub>/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. Clearly, gas

phase NO oxidation occurs to a small extent to the temperature of the heated tubing (400 K). Again, desorption of NO proceeds in two temperature regions giving a LT-peak (at 410 K) and a HT-peak (at 600 K), although both peaks seem to be composed of more than one species. No N<sub>2</sub> desorption is observed over the entire temperature range. For a pretreatment in He the LT-peak is larger than the HT-peak, whereas the opposite is true for a pretreatment in O<sub>2</sub>. Apparently, a preoxidised surface favours the formation of thermally stable NO containing surface complexes. The low temperature <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O desorption is accompanied by desorption of <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O. Hence, gas phase O<sub>2</sub> is partly involved in the adsorption of the low temperature mode of NO. In contrast, hardly any <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O desorbs at temperatures above 550 K. It is remarkable that desorption of NO at these temperatures is accompanied by desorption of unlabeled O<sub>2</sub>,

TABLE 2

Amounts Desorbed during TPD after Adsorption <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O and <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub> at 323 K; 2 wt% Mn/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>

| Pretreatment                 | Compound                                | 10 <sup>-6</sup> moles m <sup>-2</sup> | Moles/moles Mn |
|------------------------------|---|--|----------------|
| He                           | <sup>15</sup> N <sup>18</sup> O (400 K) | 0.363                                  | 0.17           |
| He                           | <sup>15</sup> N <sup>18</sup> O (615 K) | 0.035                                  | 0.02           |
| He                           | <sup>15</sup> N <sup>16</sup> O (400 K) | 1.14                                   | 0.54           |
| He                           | <sup>15</sup> N <sup>16</sup> O (615 K) | 0.648                                  | 0.31           |
| He                           | <sup>16</sup> O <sub>2</sub> (615 K)    | 0.318                                  | 0.15           |
| <sup>18</sup> O <sub>2</sub> | <sup>15</sup> N <sup>18</sup> O (400 K) | 0.164                                  | 0.08           |
| <sup>18</sup> O <sub>2</sub> | <sup>15</sup> N <sup>18</sup> O (615 K) | 0.016                                  | 0.01           |
| <sup>18</sup> O <sub>2</sub> | <sup>15</sup> N <sup>16</sup> O (400 K) | 0.816                                  | 0.39           |
| <sup>18</sup> O <sub>2</sub> | <sup>15</sup> N <sup>16</sup> O (615 K) | 1.17                                   | 0.55           |
| <sup>18</sup> O <sub>2</sub> | <sup>16</sup> O <sub>2</sub> (615 K)    | 0.622                                  | 0.29           |

which is not found in reference TPD experiments without NO adsorption. The observed ratio of NO/O<sub>2</sub> ≈ 2 corresponds to decomposition and complete desorption of a nitrate species. The results suggest that gas phase O<sub>2</sub> is not directly involved in the formation of thermally stable NO complexes, despite increased NO adsorption in its presence.

Finally, the desorption profiles after adsorption of NO in the presence of O<sub>2</sub> are compared with the profiles after adsorption of NO<sub>2</sub> (Fig. 6). Due to fragmentation of NO<sub>2</sub> only NO and O<sub>2</sub> are detected. The uptake of NO<sub>2</sub> is about 40% higher than the NO uptake in the presence of O<sub>2</sub>. The desorption profile shows again a LT peak and a HT peak, but compared with the profiles after adsorption of NO and O<sub>2</sub>, a higher amount of stable NO surface complexes are formed.

**Infrared spectroscopy.** Spectra of the adsorption of NO in the absence and presence of O<sub>2</sub> are shown in Fig. 7. The

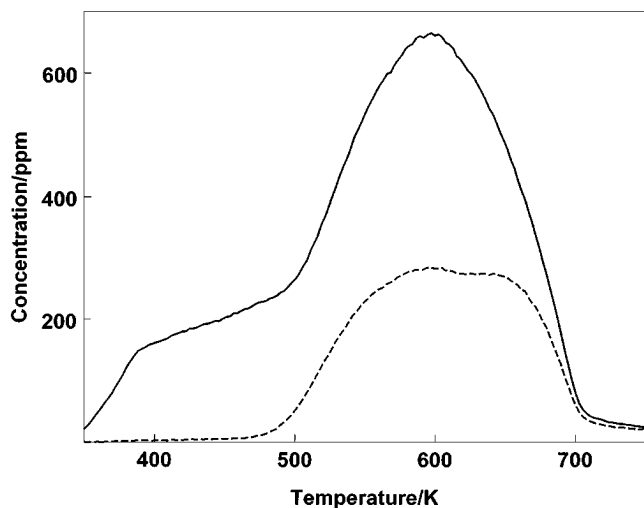


FIG. 6. TPD NO<sub>2</sub>/He after adsorption at 323 K; NO (—), and O<sub>2</sub> (---); 2 wt% Mn/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

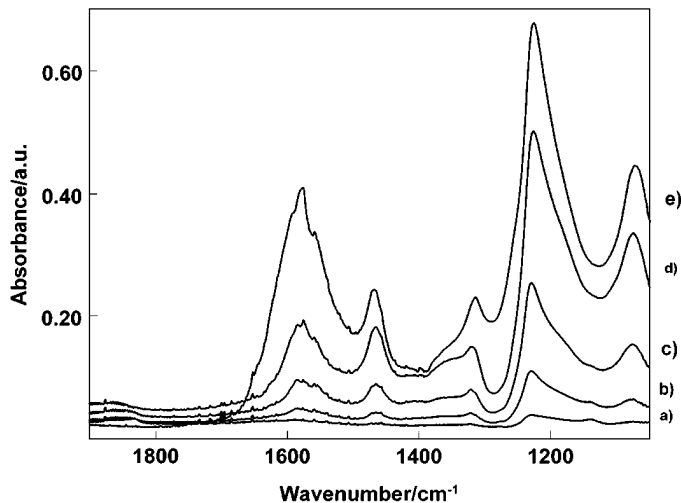


FIG. 7. IR spectra at 323 K after adsorption (a) 1 mbar NO, (b) +10 min, (c) +1 mbar NO, (d) +5 mbar O<sub>2</sub>, and (e) prolonged O<sub>2</sub> adsorption followed by evacuation; 2 wt% Mn/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

partial pressures of both reactants are in the same order of magnitude as those used during the TPD experiments. Upon admission of 1 mbar NO, two weak bands can be observed due to mono nitrosylic species at 1835 and 1864 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Previously, the appearance of two bands was attributed to Mn<sup>3+</sup> species lacking one and zero coordinations, respectively, after adsorption (6). The shift of the mononitrosyl bands to lower frequencies with respect to gaseous NO (1876 cm<sup>-1</sup>) is due to electron donation from (partly) filled *d*-orbitals of Mn<sup>n+</sup> to π\*-orbitals of NO. Furthermore, a strong band appears at 1230 cm<sup>-1</sup>, together with weaker bands at 1136, 1322, 1465, and 1586 cm<sup>-1</sup> due to several nitrite and nitrate species. As hardly any reference material on MnO<sub>x</sub>/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> systems has been published, these bands are assigned using both literature on inorganic Mn containing complexes and NO(+O<sub>2</sub>)/NO<sub>2</sub> adsorption studies on amorphous, oxidic surfaces of other transition metals. According to studies on MgO (29), the band at 1136 cm<sup>-1</sup> can be assigned to chelating (bidentate) nitrites (see also Table 3). The band at 1465 cm<sup>-1</sup> can be assigned to the ν<sub>3</sub> stretch vibration of a linearly coordinated nitrite, as observed on a variety of other oxides (16, 30–32), among which Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (30). Two assignments can be suggested for the band at 1322 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Centi *et al.* (30) also observed this band on Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and assigned it to linear nitrites. On the other hand, bands in the region 1315–1350 cm<sup>-1</sup> have been found on several oxidic systems (16, 31–34) and attributed to a M<sup>n+</sup>-NO<sub>2</sub> species. As linear nitrites are generally characterised in IR by bands at 1466 and 1060 cm<sup>-1</sup> (31, 32), it is more plausible to assign the band at 1322 cm<sup>-1</sup> in our spectra to a M<sup>n+</sup>-NO<sub>2</sub> species. The relatively strong band at 1230 cm<sup>-1</sup> can be attributed to bridged nitrites (30–32). The band at 1586 cm<sup>-1</sup> can be reasonably assigned to one

**TABLE 3**  
**Thermal Stabilities Adsorbed NO Complexes**

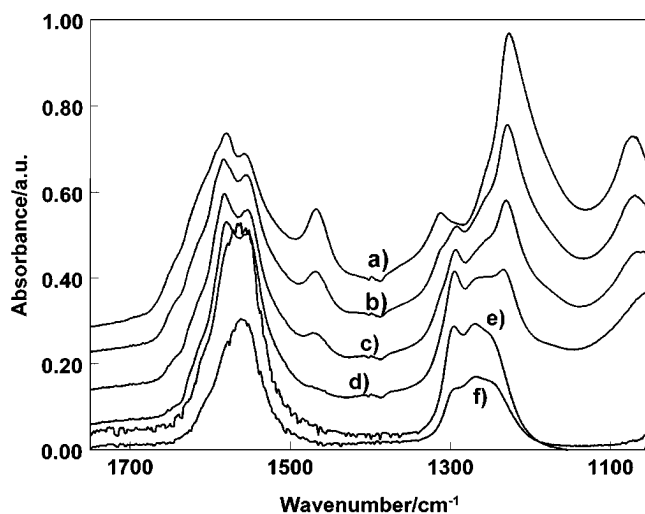
| Species                        | $\nu_3/\text{cm}^{-1}$ | $\nu_3/\text{cm}^{-1}$   | Desorption/<br>decomposition |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Nitrosyl                       | 1835                   | $\text{Mn}^{n+}-\text{N}=\text{O}^{\delta-}$   | 323 K                        |
| Bridged nitrate                | 1620                   | 1220<br>$\begin{array}{c} \text{M}^{n+}-\text{O} \\ \quad \quad \quad \diagdown \\ \quad \quad \quad \text{N}-\text{O} \\ \quad \quad \quad \diagup \\ \text{M}^{n+}-\text{O} \end{array}$ | 423–573 K                    |
| Bidentate nitrate<br>'type II' | 1290                   | 1555<br>$\begin{array}{c} \text{O} \\ \diagdown \quad \diagup \\ \text{M}^{n+} \quad \text{N}-\text{O} \\ \diagup \quad \diagdown \\ \text{O} \end{array}$                                 | 573–698 K                    |
| Bridged nitrate<br>'type I'    | 1580                   | 1220<br>$\begin{array}{c} \text{O} \\ \diagdown \quad \diagup \\ \text{M}^{n+} \quad \text{N}-\text{O} \\ \diagup \quad \diagdown \\ \text{O} \end{array}$                                 | 473–573 K                    |
| Linear nitrite                 | 1466                   | 1075 ( $\nu_1$ )<br>$\text{Mn}^{n+}-\text{O}-\text{N}=\text{O}$  | 323–473 K                    |
| Monodentate<br>nitrite         | 1415                   | 1322 ( $\nu_1$ )<br>$\begin{array}{c} \text{O} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{M}^{n+}-\text{N} \\ \diagup \\ \text{O} \end{array}$  | 323–473 K                    |
| Bridged nitrite                |                        | 1230<br>$\begin{array}{c} \text{O} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{M}^{n+}-\text{O} \\ \diagup \\ \text{N} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{M}^{n+}-\text{O} \end{array}$                                       | 323–523 K                    |

of the split  $\nu_3$  vibrations of bidentate nitrate species. As no band is observed in the 1260–1300  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  region, the corresponding  $\nu_3$  possibly overlaps with the band centred near 1230  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . Hence, both bands can be attributed to a “type I” bidentate nitrate; according to the classification of Schraml-Marth *et al.* (33) on  $\text{CrO}_x$ . These authors classified bidentate nitrates in different types on the basis of thermal stability, but it is not clear which chemical features give rise to these differences. All bands grow considerably in intensity upon prolonged adsorption, except for the bands at 1835  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  and 1136  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The latter is transformed to a shoulder of the band at 1230  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . A new band appears at 1075  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , which is most reasonably assigned to the  $\nu_1$  stretch vibration of linearly coordinated nitrite (31, 32). After adsorption of 2 mbar NO all bands grow further, except for the bands due to nitrosyls. The band at 1586  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  clearly contains a second component around 1555–1560  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . Hence, an additional bidentate nitrate is formed, of the “type II” form (33), the matching  $\nu_3$  of which, expected at 1260–1300  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , is possibly masked by the band at 1230  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .

Admission of  $\text{O}_2$  causes a strong increase in intensity of all nitrite and nitrate bands. The bands of bidentate nitrates contain a third component (maxima at 1585, 1576, and 1560  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) with a shoulder at higher wavenumber attributed to the split  $\nu_3$  vibration of bridged nitrates (13, 19, 31–33, 35); the corresponding  $\nu_3$  of the latter species is expected in the 1200–1230  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  region (31, 32) and probably overlaps with the band at 1230  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The  $\nu_3$  and  $\nu_1$  due to linear nitrites are centred at 1466 and 1075  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , respectively. A sharp negative peak becomes visible at 3770  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  (not

shown), representing an interaction of the basic hydroxyls at the surface with NO, possibly adsorbed on adjacent sites by H-bridging (33). The bands of the nitrosylic species are the only ones that are lowered in intensity upon  $\text{O}_2$  addition. After prolonged adsorption time (10 min), followed by evacuation, all bands in the spectrum are intensified, except for the nitrosylic bands which have totally disappeared (Fig. 7e). Hence, all detected nitrite and nitrate species are resistant towards evacuation. Separate experiments (not shown) show clearly that bidentate nitrate “type II” species (at 1550–1590 and 1260–1305  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) become predominant at both longer contact times or higher partial pressures of NO and  $\text{O}_2$ .

Upon heating to 373 K, the bands at 1074, 1230, 1319, and 1466  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  decrease in intensity (Fig. 8), whereas more pronounced absorption at 1293  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ , assigned to the  $\nu_3$  vibration of bidentate nitrate “type II” species, becomes visible. Concurrently, the bands at 1550–1600  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  slightly intensify, especially the component at 1555  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . At 423 K, the bands at 1074, 1230, and 1466  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  are further reduced indicating that linear nitrites and bridged nitrites desorb/decompose around this temperature, whereas the band at 1293  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  becomes stronger. Moreover, the band at 1230  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  exhibits a shoulder at higher wavenumber (1260  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ). The bands at 1550–1600  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  remain unchanged at this temperature, while the shoulder around 1620  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  is much weaker, which means that decomposition of bridged nitrates starts around this temperature. At 473 K, the bands at 1074 and 1466  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  have disappeared. The band at 1230  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  is reduced and is slightly shifted towards 1233  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The band at 1294  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  and the shoulder at 1260  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  become more intense, while the nitrate band at 1580  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  is unchanged and the component at 1555  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  even



**FIG. 8.** IR spectra after adsorption NO and  $\text{O}_2$  at 323 K followed by evacuation (a) at 323 K, and heating to (b) 373 K, (c) 423 K, (d) 473 K, (e) 573 K, and (f) 673 K; 2 wt%  $\text{Mn}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ .

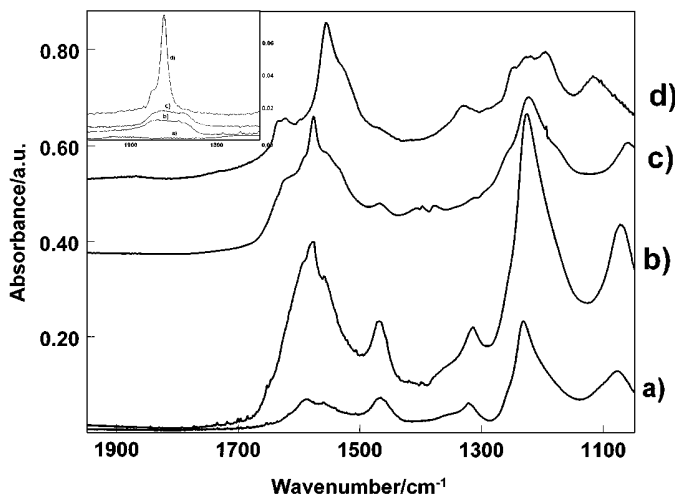


FIG. 9. IR spectra after adsorption NO and O<sub>2</sub> at 323 K at (a)  $\gamma$ -Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, (b) 2 wt% Mn/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, (c) 15 wt% Mn/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, and (d) Mn<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

becomes stronger. This indicates that bidentate nitrates are formed during heating at the expense of less stable nitrites and nitrates. At 573 K, the spectrum exists of a doublet at 1580 and 1555 cm<sup>-1</sup> and a doublet at 1294 and 1269 cm<sup>-1</sup>, indicating that at this temperature mainly bidentate nitrates are present at the surface. Subsequent adsorption of NO and O<sub>2</sub> at 573 K (not shown) yields the same spectrum. The doublets are significantly reduced in intensity at 673 K, whereas all NO containing surface compounds are removed upon 1 h evacuation at 698 K.

Figure 9 shows the spectra after NO adsorption as a function of Mn content. The amount of nitrosylic species (bands at 1862 and 1835 cm<sup>-1</sup>) formed upon adsorption of 2 mbar NO at 323 K (insert, Fig. 9), decreases with Mn loading. Previous experiments (6) already showed that the band at 1860 cm<sup>-1</sup> grows with increasing adsorption time at the expense of the band at a lower wavenumber. At the pure Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> support NO does not adsorb to form nitrosyls. Prolonged NO adsorption, followed by O<sub>2</sub> admission and evacuation yields the spectra shown in Fig. 9. Unsupported Mn<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> exhibits a distinct band due to the  $\nu_3$  of bridged nitrates at 1627 cm<sup>-1</sup> and a sharp band attributed to the  $\nu_3$  of bidentate nitrates “type II” at 1556 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Both species have their corresponding  $\nu_3$  in the triplet band in the region 1200–1280 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Moreover, the band attributed to monodentate nitrite species is clearly observed at 1328 cm<sup>-1</sup>. In contrast to the supported manganese oxides and the pure support, no bands are observed at 1466 cm<sup>-1</sup> and below 1100 cm<sup>-1</sup>. On the other hand, an additional band is observed at 1115 cm<sup>-1</sup>, which can be attributed to chelating nitrites (29). In general, the bands at 1466 and 1320 cm<sup>-1</sup> decrease with increasing Mn content. Furthermore, it is clear that Mn sites are involved in the formation of bidentate nitrates “type II” (1558 cm<sup>-1</sup>).

## DISCUSSION

### Location of Adsorbed Species on Supported Manganese Oxides

Low loaded ( $\leq 2$  wt%) alumina supported manganese oxides contain isolated Mn<sup>3+</sup> sites and small, well dispersed MnO<sub>x</sub> clusters, in which the oxidation state of the Mn is mainly 3+ (5). A monolayer coverage is reached at 8.4 wt%; by consequence, a large part of the exposed surface of low loaded catalysts is  $\gamma$ -Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. As catalytic activity is related to the presence of Mn it is important to understand whether adsorbed species are located only on Mn sites, on the support or on both.

Upon NH<sub>3</sub> adsorption both NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> ions and coordinated NH<sub>3</sub> are formed. An increase in Mn content results in decreased formation of NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> ions and increased formation of NH<sub>2</sub> species. Due to the simultaneous occurrence of both trends at higher loadings, it is not likely that the formed NH<sub>2</sub> results from disproportionation of coordinated NH<sub>3</sub>, according to: 2 NH<sub>3</sub>  $\rightleftharpoons$  NH<sub>4</sub> + NH<sub>2</sub>, as was proposed previously (6). Formation of NH<sub>2</sub> species by hydrogen abstraction from coordinated NH<sub>3</sub>, as observed on many other oxidic systems (12, 25), is more likely. A previous characterisation study on alumina supported manganese oxides (5) provides evidence for the reaction of OH groups of the Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> with the manganese precursor molecule during impregnation. The observed decrease in NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> species with Mn loading is in good agreement with these data. Hence, at the Mn<sup>3+</sup> sites NH<sub>3</sub> is preferentially adsorbed as coordinated NH<sub>3</sub> although formation of Mn(NH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>x</sub> species ( $x > 1$ ) cannot be excluded as, for instance, spectra of the [Mn(NH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>6</sub>]<sup>2+</sup> complex show an IR band on 1134 cm<sup>-1</sup> (36).

Upon NO adsorption, neither of the nitrosylic species is observed on the bare  $\gamma$ -Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> support, in line with work presented by Centi *et al.* (30). Hence, the observed nitrosyls can be described as Mn<sup>3+</sup>-NO species usually indicated with a negative charge at the NO resulting from electron donation from *d*-orbitals of the Mn atom to  $\pi^*$  orbitals of the NO molecule.

In general, for both supported and unsupported manganese oxides NO adsorption occurs predominantly on oxygen atoms rather than metal atoms, thus giving rise to a variety of nitrite and nitrate species.

The nitrite band observed at 1115 cm<sup>-1</sup> is another feature which is due to species located exclusively at MnO<sub>x</sub> sites (Fig. 9). However, as this band is not found in the spectra of the supported catalysts, not even for the highest loading, it is likely that this species is absent on low loaded Mn catalysts.

Linearly coordinated nitrite is not observed at unsupported Mn<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, whereas its bands are seen in the spectra of all Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> containing samples. Its intensity decreases with Mn loading. Hence it is reasonable to presume that these species are formed exclusively on the Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> surface.



Bidentate nitrates are observed for all investigated samples. At unsupported  $\text{Mn}_2\text{O}_3$  the “type II” form (according to the classification presented in (33); bands at 1555 and 1260–1300  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) is the only form observed. On the  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  containing samples all three forms of bidentate nitrates are formed and broad bands in the 1550–1600  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  region are found.

Bridged nitrates are also observed on all investigated samples. However, their content seems to increase with Mn loading. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that formation of these nitrates occurs on the  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  surface, the  $\text{Mn}_2\text{O}_3$  surface, and at the interface, with one Mn and one Al atom. The relative content of the various formed nitrates seems to be independent of Mn loading, in contrast to results for the  $\text{CuO}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  system (30), where increasing nitrate formation was observed with Cu loading. The same holds for the formation of bridged nitrites (band around 1230  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ).

As monodentate nitrites are found on all investigated samples they are supposed to be present on both Al and Mn sites of supported catalysts.

#### *Thermal Stability of the Formed Surface Compounds*

The TPD profiles after  $\text{NH}_3$  adsorption show that the thermodynamic stability of the formed compounds varies considerably. IR spectra reveal that  $\text{NH}_4^+$  ions as well as coordinated  $\text{NH}_3$  progressively desorb over the entire temperature range 323–573 K. Hence, the TPD peak cannot be split in a part with mainly  $\text{NH}_4^+$  desorption and one representing desorption of coordinated  $\text{NH}_3$  desorption. Formation of  $\text{NH}_2$  species is slightly enhanced during the first part of the heating interval (up to 373 K), whereas its content decreases at higher temperatures. Hence, in the absence of NO both  $\text{NH}_4^+$  and coordinated  $\text{NH}_3$ , as well as some  $\text{NH}_2$  species, are present at reaction temperature (423 K) at the surface of low-loaded Mn catalysts.

From the TPD profiles it is clear that the adsorbed NO surface compounds can be divided into two modes with respect to their thermal stability. The fine structure in both peaks indicate that each is composed of more than one NO complex, which agrees with the observation of six adsorbed NO species in the IR spectra. According to these IR results, the most thermodynamically stable compound is the bidentate nitrate “type II” species. For a variety of other oxidic catalytic systems (30, 33) this complex is found to be the most stable one. Thus, the high temperature peak (HT peak) of the TPD profiles must at least partly be due to the decomposition of this complex. Bidentate nitrates “type I” (band 1584  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) mainly decompose between 473 and 573 K, thus are less stable than the “type II” species, in agreement with results on  $\text{CrO}_x$  (33). Bridged nitrates are observed in the IR spectra up to 523 K, thus must be present in the HT TPD peak as well. As the bands due to linearly coordinated nitrates, monodentate nitrites and bridged nitrites decrease in intensity in the spectra recorded

at 348–423 K, these species are likely desorbing in the low temperature peak (LT peak) of the TPD profiles. Nitrosylic species also fall in the category of weakly adsorbed species as they disappear readily upon evacuation at 323 K. However, as the bands of nitrosyls decrease upon admission of oxygen, they are apparently unstable in gas streams containing 2 vol%  $\text{O}_2$  and thus are not part of the LT peak of the TPD profiles shown in Fig. 5. The significant role that was attributed to nitrosyls in the mechanism of the SCR reaction by Kapteijn *et al.* (6) is, by consequence, very doubtful. A summary of the thermal stabilities is presented in Table 3. The IR spectra reveal that bidentate nitrates, although present in small amounts after adsorption of NO and  $\text{O}_2$  at 323 K, are also formed during heating. Hence, part of bidentate nitrates originate from weakly adsorbed NO complexes and are formed by (1) readsorption after desorption at lower temperature or (2) a surface reaction.

In summary, in the absence of  $\text{NH}_3$ , but in the presence of  $\text{O}_2$ , the NO containing species supposed to be present at the surface of low loaded Mn/ $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  catalysts at reaction temperature (423 K), are in increasing order of stability: linearly coordinated nitrites, monodentate nitrites, bridged nitrites, bridged nitrates, and bidentate nitrates.

#### *Role of $\text{O}_2$ during NO and $\text{NH}_3$ Adsorption*

When both the pretreatment and the adsorption of NO at low loaded Mn/ $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  catalysts are performed in the absence of  $\text{O}_2$  few NO molecules adsorb on the surface. Pretreatment in  $\text{O}_2$  increases the amount of reactive oxygen atoms at the surface resulting in enhanced NO adsorption. If  $\text{O}_2$  is present during NO adsorption, large amounts of NO complexes are formed. Recently, Eguchi *et al.* (37, 38), studying the reversible adsorption of NO on mixed Mn–Zr oxide systems, also found a strong enhancement of the adsorption capacity for NO due to the presence of gas phase  $\text{O}_2$ . Comparable effects of  $\text{O}_2$  on the NO adsorption were also reported on  $\text{CuO}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  catalysts (15). Moreover, the formation of thermally stable complexes is favoured if the pretreatment is performed in  $\text{O}_2$ . IR results confirm this:  $\text{O}_2$  accelerates the formation of all adsorbed NO complexes, except nitrosylic compounds. Especially, the formation of bidentate nitrates is favoured by  $\text{O}_2$ .  $\text{NO}_2$  adsorbs more readily on the surface than NO does, even if the latter is adsorbed in the presence of  $\text{O}_2$ . Upon  $\text{NO}_2$  adsorption, formation of bidentate nitrates and bridged nitrates is enhanced with respect to less stable NO surface complexes.

The breakthrough curves at 323 K of  $^{15}\text{NO}$  and  $^{18}\text{O}_2$  show large amounts of  $^{15}\text{N}^{18}\text{O}$ , which can result from (1) oxygen exchange or (2) NO oxidation followed by fragmentation of  $\text{NO}_2$  in the MS. Oxygen exchange ( $^{15}\text{N}^{16}\text{O} \rightarrow ^{15}\text{N}^{18}\text{O}$ ) was reported on a variety of oxidic systems (39–41) but always at temperatures above 600 K. Hence, the observed formation of  $^{15}\text{N}^{18}\text{O}$  is more likely explained by NO oxidation; the  $\text{NO}_2$  formed is completely adsorbed giving rise to sharp

breakthrough curves. Reference breakthrough curves in an empty reactor show that gas phase NO oxidation only contributes to a small extent to the observed NO<sub>2</sub> formation. Therefore, it can be concluded that gas phase oxidation of NO, one of the roles of O<sub>2</sub> in the selective catalytic reduction of NO as proposed by Kapteijn *et al.* (6), cannot contribute significantly to the overall reaction under the applied conditions. Eguchi *et al.* (37, 38) reported Mn oxides to be very active catalysts for NO oxidation even at temperatures as low as 373 K, which is in agreement with the breakthrough data in Fig. 5.

Despite its significant formation upon adsorption, <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O only desorbs in small amounts in the LT peak of the TPD profiles. The ratio <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O/Mn is 0.08, whereas the total NO/Mn ratio of the LT peak is 0.47; this means that only one-third of the LT peak can be due to desorption of NO<sub>2</sub>.

A second role of O<sub>2</sub>, as proposed by Kapteijn *et al.* (6), is the creation of a more oxidised surface, enhancing NO adsorption. This role is confirmed more clearly by the present results. Enhanced NO adsorption after a pretreatment in oxidising atmosphere can thus be explained. Besides, this role of O<sub>2</sub> can explain the accelerated NO adsorption in the presence of gas phase <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub> without the appearance of 50% <sup>18</sup>O in the desorption products. The formation of linear nitrites, mainly on Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, can be visualised by adsorption of <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub> at the surface followed by NO adsorption. As the oxygen atoms in this complex are not equivalent, no <sup>18</sup>O appears in the desorbing NO. Simultaneous formation of bridged nitrites, with two equal O atoms, can account for some desorption of <sup>15</sup>N<sup>18</sup>O at low temperatures. Niiyama *et al.* (42), studying the NO adsorption on amorphous chromia, explained the exchange of oxygen in the desorbed NO at low temperature by a surface equilibrium between linear nitrites and bidentate nitrites. Possibly, this equilibrium can also be established between linear nitrites and bridged nitrites. Bridged nitrates and bidentate nitrates also contain nonterminal oxygen atoms which are not equivalent. If these compounds are formed on a surface partly covered by <sup>18</sup>O, labelled oxygen is expected in the NO/NO<sub>2</sub> or in desorbing molecular O<sub>2</sub>. However, the amount of <sup>18</sup>O desorbing in the HT peak is negligible, while a large amount of <sup>16</sup>O<sub>2</sub> desorbs simultaneously with the HT NO peak, in a ratio NO/O<sub>2</sub> ≈ 2. Hence, the formed bidentate nitrates contain no <sup>18</sup>O, whereas their formation is strongly enhanced by the presence of gas phase (<sup>18</sup>O)<sub>2</sub>. An explanation for this phenomenon is O-exchange of the <sup>18</sup>O atoms with <sup>16</sup>O atoms in the upper and subsurface layer in the temperature region of the HT peak. Boreskov (43) reported significant O-exchange reaction rates for pure MnO<sub>2</sub> at temperatures higher than 475 K. Recently, Chang and McCarty (44) showed that exchange of O atoms from NO with lattice oxygen can occur on ZSM-5 based catalysts at temperatures above 523 K. Oxygen-exchange experiments on the 2 wt% Mn/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> did indeed show some formation of <sup>16</sup>O<sup>18</sup>O and

<sup>16</sup>O<sub>2</sub> at 600 K (not shown), but the exchange rate is too low to result in complete exchange of oxygen with preadsorbed oxygen or lattice oxygen (and thus desorption of <sup>16</sup>O<sub>2</sub> during decomposition of the nitrates). Nevertheless, a higher degree of O-exchange can possibly be established, as <sup>18</sup>O atoms are bound more strongly to the surface in the nitrate complexes than in the form of O adatoms resulting in higher surface coverages with <sup>18</sup>O. At higher temperatures these <sup>18</sup>O atoms do not desorb, but remain at the surface as part of these nitrate complexes and can exchange with preadsorbed or lattice oxygen up to the temperature of nitrate decomposition. An alternative explanation could be that NO can only adsorb as nitrate through bonding with lattice oxygens, thus loosening these from the oxide, if gas phase O<sub>2</sub> adsorbs in the vicinity to compensate for this effect. At present, no definitive explanation can be given for this phenomenon. The appearance of a molecular oxygen peak simultaneously with the HT peak, as observed previously for other SCR catalysts (45–47), is explained by decomposition of nitrate species, leaving reduced metal atoms on the catalytic surface. Unfortunately, no labelled experiments were performed by these authors and thus the origin of the O atoms involved in the nitrate formation remains unknown. The TPD profile after NO adsorption on CuO/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, reported by Sadykov *et al.* (48) is comparable to the one presented in Fig. 5. It shows NO<sub>2</sub> desorption simultaneously with the HT peak of NO, suggesting that the O<sub>2</sub> desorption observed in this study is due to NO<sub>2</sub> desorption and fragmentation in the MS.

The fact that hardly any N<sub>2</sub> desorption is observed during both breakthrough and TPD indicates that NO decomposition does not readily occur at low temperatures on this catalyst.

Previous TPD experiments (6) already showed that the amount of NH<sub>3</sub> that adsorbs hardly depends on the presence of O<sub>2</sub>, which is confirmed by the IR spectra in this work that do not show enhanced intensity of the bands due to adsorbed NH<sub>3</sub> species upon subsequent O<sub>2</sub> admission. Besides, the relative distribution of coordinated NH<sub>3</sub>, NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> ions and NH<sub>2</sub> species is not changed by coadsorption of O<sub>2</sub> at these low temperatures. The role of O<sub>2</sub> appears therefore not to be crucial with respect to the adsorption of NH<sub>3</sub>.

## CONCLUSIONS

The adsorption of NO and NH<sub>3</sub> at the surface of Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> supported manganese oxides was studied by FTIR and TPD (using labelled compounds) to determine which surface complexes may be present during reaction conditions for the selective catalytic reduction of NO.

Upon NO adsorption, nitrosylic species are formed at Mn<sup>3+</sup> sites in the absence of O<sub>2</sub>, but they are very unstable in its presence. By consequence, they are no active reactive intermediates over these catalysts. In contrast, at

423 K the NO complexes which are sufficiently stable in the presence of O<sub>2</sub>, are at increasing order of thermodynamic stability: linear nitrites, bridged nitrites, monodentate nitrites < bridged nitrates < bidentate nitrates. The formation of these five species is strongly enhanced by the presence of gas phase O<sub>2</sub>. Labelling studies reveal that formation of gas phase NO<sub>2</sub> followed by adsorption is, at these low temperatures, only a minor route to the formation of surface species. Creation of additional reactive surface oxygen species, followed by NO oxidation, appears to be the main role of O<sub>2</sub> to establish high NO coverages.

Upon NH<sub>3</sub> adsorption, ammonium ions and coordinated NH<sub>3</sub> are formed. Simultaneously, some adsorbed NH<sub>3</sub> is transformed to NH<sub>2</sub> surface species. No significant differences between the thermal stabilities of these species could be established. Higher Mn loadings tend to favour coordination of NH<sub>3</sub> with subsequent transformation to NH<sub>2</sub> rather than NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> formation. No evidence was obtained for changes in the distribution of adsorbed NH<sub>3</sub> species by gas phase O<sub>2</sub> at low temperatures.

The role of these adsorbed species with respect to the SCR reaction, in relation to the specific questions formulated in the introduction, will be addressed in the subsequent paper.

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