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Phys. Rev. Lett. **109**, 026802 — Published 13 July 2012

DOI: 10.1103/PhysRevLett.109.026802

Controlling the topology of Fermi surfaces in metal nanofilms

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Properties of metal crystals are governed by electrons of the highest occupied states at the Fermi level and they are determined by Fermi surfaces, the Fermi energy contours in momentum space. Topological regulation of the Fermi surface has been an important issue in synthesizing functional materials, which we found to be realized at room temperature in nanometer-thick films. Reducing the thickness of a metal thin film down to its electron wavelength-scale induces the quantum size effect and the electronic system changes from 3- to 2-dimensional, transforming the Fermi surface topology. Such an ultrathin film further changes its topology through 1-dimensional (1-D) structural deformation of the film when it is grown on a 1-D substrate. In particular, when the interface has 1-D metallic bands, the system is additionally stabilized by forming an electron energy gap by hybridization between 1-D states of the film and substrate.

PACS numbers: 73.22.-f, 79.60.Dp

A Fermi surface, which is an energy contour in momentum space for electrons at the Fermi level, provides important information to understand the solid-state properties of metal crystals such as electron transport and phase transitions. The shapes of Fermi surfaces have been topologically categorized[1] and electronic phenomena, *e.g.*, Peierls transitions, and quantities, *e.g.*, Berry's phase, exist that are specific to each topological rank. The Fermi surface topology can be varied by changing the dimensionality of an electron system. For example, while a Fermi surface is a sphere for the three-dimensional (3-D) free electron model, it is a circle in 2-D, and two points in 1-D. On other hand, the topology can also differ between closed and open Fermi surfaces. While the closed loop, such as a Fermi circle, only allows circular motion of an electron in a magnetic field, the open trajectory, *e.g.*, a Fermi line, corresponds to infinite motion, which gives different Berry's phases for conducting electrons[1].

In the present research, we regulate the Fermi surface topology, namely the electronic topological transition[1, 2], for metal thin films on semiconductor substrates. As the thickness of a bulk metal crystal is scaled down to the order of its Fermi wavelength, the electronic system changes from 3-D to 2-D by the quantum size effect[3]. Such variation of the dimensionality shifts the topological rank accordingly. Moreover, the ultrathin metal film in the quantum regime further changes its topology through the interface atomic layer. We observed the electronic topological transition, opening of the Fermi surfaces, by introducing a 1-D array of indium (In) atomic chains with a 1 nm period into the interface[4] between a 2-D silver (Ag) film with a thickness of 1 nm and a semiconducting silicon (Si) substrate. Because this demonstration has been carried out on metal films with a thickness of several atomic layers at room temperature, the results of the present research develop both the topological physics and quantum devices in atomic-scale systems.

Electronic structure and atomic structure of the film were examined by angle-resolved photoemission (ARPES) and x-ray diffraction (XRD) measurements at the VUV-photoemission beamline[5] at Elettra (Trieste, Italy) and beamline 33-ID-E[6] at Advanced Photon Source (Argonne, USA), respectively. At each beamline station, an experimental chamber system is equipped with metal evaporators, enabling *insitu* measurements of the samples prepared in ultra high vacuum (UHV). A Si(111)4×1-In surface[4] was prepared by depositting In on a Si(111)7×7 clean surface at 350 °C. To prepare a single-domain surface, we used a vicinal Si wafer (n-type 2∼15 Ωcm), whose normal was 1.8° -off from (111) toward the $[\bar{1}\bar{1}2]$ direction. Ultrathin Ag(111) films were epitaxially formed by depositing Ag below 150K on the Si(111)4×1-In and Si(111)7×7 surfaces, followed by post-annealing at room temperature[7–9]. Film thickness of Ag was determined by thickness monitor and a completion of the $\sqrt{3} \times \sqrt{3}$-Ag phase on Si(111). Crystallinity of films and surface superstructures were comfirmed by *insitu* observation by electron diffraction.

Figure 1 shows an in-plane (k_x,k_y) photoemission intensity map at the Fermi level for 1 nm-thick Ag(111) films on a Si(111) substrate with (a) a 2-D 7×7 surface phase, and (b, c) a 4×1 In surface phase[8] composed of an array of atomic In chains with a period of a_{int}=1.3 nm. In the present paper, the x and y axes are defined as perpendicular and parallel to the directions of the In chain, respectively. Ultrathin Ag(111) films were epi-

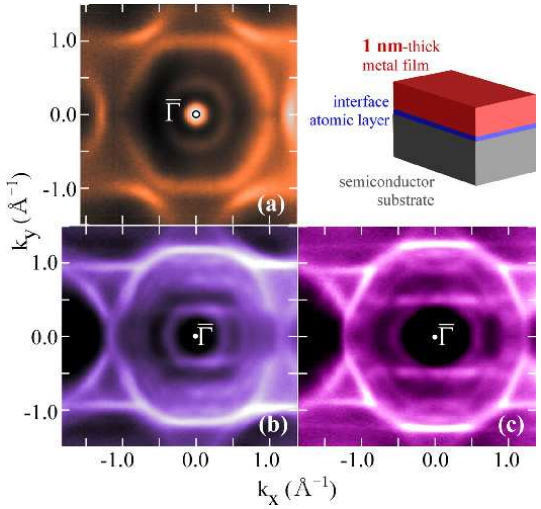

FIG. 1. In-plane (k_x,k_y) photoemission intensity map at the Fermi level for (a) 1.4nm(6ML)-thick Ag(111) film on Si(111)7×7, (b) 1.4nm(6ML)-thick and (c) 0.7nm(3ML)-thick Ag films on Si(111)4×1-In, measured at $h\nu$=50 eV at room temperature. The difference is due to the change of an atomic layer at the interface between the metal film and semiconductor substrate. The brightness is proportional to the intensity of photoemission.

taxially grown by depositing 3 and 6 monolayers (MLs, 1ML=2.36 Å^{-1}) of Ag. The films were thin enough to induce the quantum confinement effect along the surface normal (z-axis), so electronic system in the film is purely 2-D. All of the bands in Fig.1 belong to the quantum-well states (QWSs)[3, 7, 9–13] except for an Ag(111) surface state[14] at $\bar{\Gamma}$. In contrast to the isotropic contours for the film with the 2-D film/substrate interface in Fig.1(a), strong 1-D anisotropy is clearly observed for those with a 1-D atomic layer at the interface in Fig.1(b) and (c).

Figure 2(a)-(c) traces energy contours at the Fermi level from the photoemission maps of the QWS subbands in the Ag nanofilms. For the film on Si(111)7×7, the Fermi surfaces are a circle and hexagons for QWSs with quantum numbers of n=1 and n=2-5, respectively. Therefore, the contours are rings and have only closed components. On the other hand, the 1-D anisotropic energy contours for the 6ML and 3ML-thick Ag films grown on the Si(111)4×1-In surface contain open sections. This indicates a change of the topological rank. As a result, the QWSs in the ultrathin film system exhibit electronic topological transitions due to the interface atomic layer.

Focusing on the n=1 QWS subbands at $\bar{\Gamma}$ for the 6ML film in Fig.2(b), the shape of the Fermi surfaces is 1-D curves (open Fermi surface) and a periodic array of ellipsoids (closed Fermi surfaces) along the k_x axis[15]. For the 3ML film, the photoemission map in Fig.2(c) is overlapped schematically by the original two Fermi rings, a circle for n=1 and a dodecagon for n=2, arranged in rows with the $2\pi/a_{int}$ period along the k_x direction. The

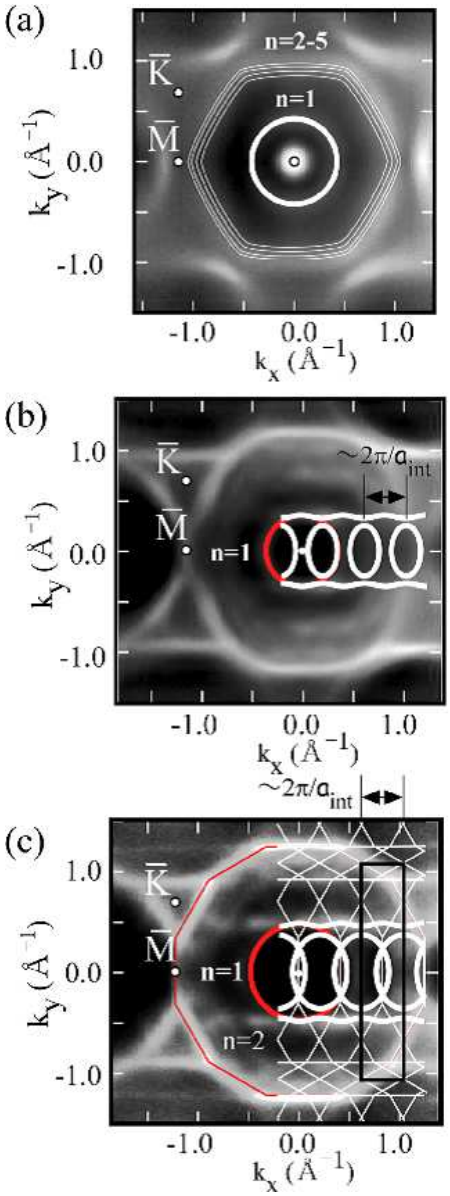

FIG. 2. (a-c)Photoemission intensity maps in Fig.1, superimposed by white traces of observed contours for the QWS subbands. In (b) and (c), the unperturbed Fermi surfaces of the films without 1-D modulation are shown in red. The unit cell is shown as a rectangle in (c).

experimental intensity map is reproduced when one introduces anticrossing at the intersection between the two adjacent Fermi circles and crossing between the other combinations of the rings. For the n=1 QWS subband, the original closed circle has changed into two open lines and a closed chain. It is of note that these 1-D intensity lines are not simply a result of Fermi level crossing of the n=1 QWS band, as described further below. In contrast to the rest of the QWS subbands in this paper, the 1-D band shows an electronic feature that is specific to this topology.

During the growth of an ultrathin film, it interacts structurally and electronically with the substrate[16]. The additional 1-D potentials in the Ag films are likely to be related to these interactions. The atoms in the film rearrange to match with the substrate lattice, while the electronic states in the film hybridize with those in the substrate. Starting with the structure effect, it has been found by scanning tunneling microscopy (STM) observation and theoretical calculations that a 6ML-thick Ag film on Si(111)4×1-In contains periodic stacking faults inside the film[8, 15, 17]. This is caused by the distinctive difference in lattice structure between a face-centered cubic (fcc) Ag(111) crystal film and the Si(111)4×1-In surface. Here, the film undergoes structural deformation to match the periodicity of the substrate.

To examine the atomic structure of the films, XRD measurements were carried out. A 2-D profile of XRD pattern for the film in Fig.3(a), measured along H (k_x) and L (k_z) directions at hν=19.9 keV, is reproduced by a model with the stacking faults in Fig.3(c), as indicated by red arrows. On the other hand, the 3ML-thick Ag film/4×1-In/Si(111) system in Fig.3(b) shows that the film structure does not contain any stacking faults, as was confirmed by the absence of the corresponding XRD signals. However, it is also different from the genuine fcc structure shown in Fig.3(d). The existence of 1-D structural modulation of a 3ML film has been confirmed by observation of a 1-D periodic structure by STM[8], and by streaks in the electron diffraction pattern in the present research. These results indicate that the 1-D structures in the 6ML- and 3ML-thick films on Si(111)4×1-In are distinctive.

Turning our attention to the electronic structure, prominent features in the Fermi surfaces are the appear-

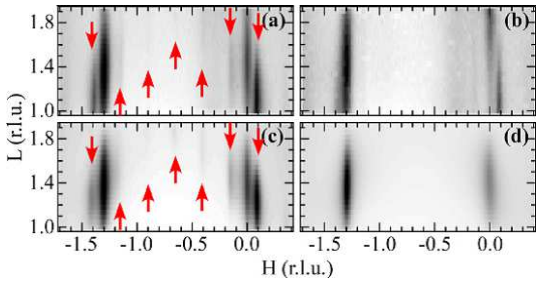

FIG. 3. 2-D intensity maps of 19.9 keV X-ray in reciprocal space, (H,K=1.33,L). The data in (a)and (b) are experimental results obtained at room temperature on (a) 6ML-thick and (b) 3ML-thick Ag films on Si(111)4×1-In, while those in (c) and (d) are simulations of a 6ML-thick fcc-Ag(111) film with and without stacking faults, respectively. The red arrows point to the same diffraction spots found in (a) and (c). The reciprocal lattice units (r.l.u.) are defined by the fundamental length of the Si(111)1×1 reciprocal vector. H and L are along x and z directions, respectively. K is along the <112> symmetry axis, which is rotated by 30° by the y-direction.

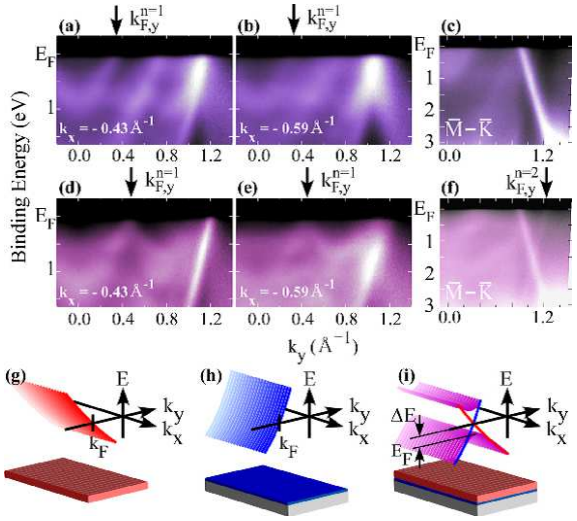

FIG. 4. (a-f) Photoemission band diagrams of (a-c) 6ML-thick, and (d-f) 3ML-thick Ag films on Si(111)4×1-In along the k_y axis at the selected k_x points and at the $\bar{M}$-$\bar{K}$ line. The $k_{F,y}$ points of the 1-D Fermi lines of the intensity maps in Fig.2 and 3 are indicated by arrows. (g-i) Schematic diagrams for modeling 1-D band dispersion curves for the (g) 3ML-thick Ag film, (h) Si(111)4×1-In substrate, and (i) 1-D modulated Ag(111)/Si(111) 4×1-In system.

ance of a 1-D line in the intensity map at $k_{F,y}$ = 0.3 Å^{-1} and 0.5Å^{-1} for 6 and 3ML films, respectively. Dispersion curves of the 1-D bands, originating from the n=1 QWS subband, are shown along the k_y axis at the selected k_x points in Fig.4. The Fermi level crossings of the bands for the 6ML film occur at $k_{F,y}^{n=1}$, indicated by arrows, in Fig.4(a) and (b). In contrast, the edges of the Fermi level appear at $k_{F,y}^{n=1}$ for the 3ML film in Fig.4(d) and (e). If these 1-D Fermi lines consist only of the QWS subbands in the 1-D modulated films, the dispersion along the k_y axis must be parabolic and form a 1-D electron pocket over the k_x axis, as shown in Fig.4(g). Thus, the 1-D dispersion curve for the 3ML-thick Ag film on Si(111)4×1-In is extraordinary. On the other hand, it is known from previous photoemission research[4] that the Si(111)4×1-In surface has 1-D metallic bands with the Fermi vector at $k_{F,y}$∼0.5 Å^{-1}, forming a hole pocket over the k_x axis (Fig.4(h)). Therefore, as shown in Fig.4(i), it is naturally deduced that these two 1-D metallic bands hybridize with each other and eventually form an energy gap (ΔE) at $k_{F,y}$∼0.5 Å^{-1}, and the 1-D photoemission lines of the 3ML film in Fig.2(c), correspond to the topmost or hole pockets of such a 1-D hybrid band.

In Fig.2(c), a photoemission intensity line is also observed at $k_{F,y}$=1.2 Å^{-1}. This 1-D spectral appearance is part of the Fermi surfaces of the n=2 QWS subband in the 3ML-thick Ag film. The dispersion curve of the 1-D state along the $\bar{M}-\bar{K}$ line, as presented in Fig.4(f), shows the clear Fermi level crossing and intersects with the adjacent n=2 QWS band. This feature was not found for

the 6ML film, as shown in Fig.4(c), indicating that the two films possess different electronic structures. From these results, the mechanisms of the transitions at thicknesses of 3 and 6ML are distinctive in terms of both atomic and electronic structures.

It is worth noting that the minimum thickness for an atomically flat Ag film is 3ML on a Si(111)4×1-In surface, while it is 6ML on a Si(111)7×7 surface. Ag films with a thickness of 6ML have successfully been described by the so-called "electronic growth" model on various semiconductor surfaces[18, 19]. Thus, another mechanism is needed to explain the formation of the 3ML Ag film on Si(111)4×1-In. It is inferred from the present results that the system is electronically stabilized by the 1-D energy gap opening at the Fermi level, which is shown as ΔE in Fig.4(i). We emphasize that the present observation reveals an intriguing topological property that the 2-D metal film has introduced into itself 1-D structural deformation to form 1-D electronic states, and that the total system is electronically stabilized by hybridization with the 1-D electronic states at the interface atomic layer.

In summary, we report that a 1nm-thick Ag crystal film on a semiconductor substrate exhibits a topological transition upon changing the interface atomic layer from a 2-D clean surface to a periodic array of In atomic chains. The present results demonstrate, by focusing on individual QWS subbands, that the Fermi surfaces can be varied from closed to open. Thus, by choosing films with an appropriate combination of material and substrate, the Fermi surface topology can be controlled. Transport experiments of the film prepared by the present process will allow study of various issues in topology physics, *e.g.*, the observation of anisotropic electric conduction, the variation of Berry's phase, and examination of the Novikov conjecture[1]. It is worth noting that measurements of such nanofilms have now become possible using microscopic probes[20, 21].

This work was funded by 1) JSPS (KAKENHI 18360018), 2) Italian MIUR Grant No. PRIN 20087NX9Y, 3) Executive Program of Cooperation in the Fields of Science & Technology between the Government of Italy and the Government of Japan, and 4) the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Science, Office of Basic Energy Sciences, under contract no. DE-AC02-06CH11357 (operations of APS) and grant no. DE-FG02-07ER46383 (T.-C. C.). The supporting experiment at the Photon Factory was performed at BL-18A under grant no. 2008G100. Naoka Nagamura, Osamu Sugino and Takashi Uchihashi are acknowledged for their valuable comments.

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