Release of compressive intrinsic stress in ultraclean thin nickel films as a result of adsorption of gases

Citation for published version (APA):

DOI:
10.1063/1.1658129

Document status and date:
Published: 01/01/1969

Document Version:
Publisher’s PDF, also known as Version of Record (includes final page, issue and volume numbers)

Please check the document version of this publication:
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Figure 2. A wide-beam-transmission topograph from a selenium single crystal with a 003 reflection. Dislocations of small-angle boundaries (dark in the figure) are visible at the point of the arrows. Magnification 20.

Figure 3. A wide-beam-transmission topograph from a tellurium single crystal with a 003 reflection. Dislocations of small-angle boundaries (dark in the figure) are visible at the point of the arrows. Magnification 20.

The work reported herein represents one phase of a program designed to better understand the properties of clean metals. The eventual objective of these studies is to relate this understanding to the phenomenon of stress corrosion cracking and environment-enhanced fatigue failure.

Thin nickel films were evaporated onto extremely well-outgassed soft glass or Vycor brand glass substrates at 35°C in equipment similar to that used by Neugebauer. The evaporations were performed at room temperature in the vacuum system in which the films were prepared. The vacuum during measurement was better than $5 \times 10^{-10}$ Torr. Under these vacuum conditions it is believed that no appreciable gas adsorption takes place during film preparation and measurement. Thermal stresses, associated with the small difference between deposition and measurement temperature, were neglected. Stresses in films were determined by ferromagnetic resonance (Varian V-4502 EPR spectrometer). During the measurements, the film plane was perpendicular to the main magnetic field; this arrangement yields the most accurate values of $K$. $K$ is the anisotropy constant for magnetization in a direction perpendicular to the film plane. All contributions to $K$, other than isotropic stress, were neglected. This approximation is justified in view of the strong magnetoelastic coupling in Ni and the relatively high stress levels involved. Under this condition $K$ is equal to $3.5A^2$, where $S$ is the isotropic stress value and $\lambda$ is the magnetostriiction constant ($-37 \times 10^{-6}$ for polycrystalline nickel). For the film-field geometry mentioned above, the isotropic stress can be expressed in terms of the resonance fields (the field where adsorption of microwave power is maximal) as

$$S = (M_s/\lambda_0)(H_{Rt} - H_{Rk})$$

(1)
(compressive stress) results in a deflection of the plate indicating tensile stress. The FMR method is however limited to ferromagnetic materials with a large value of λ.

The films as prepared in UHV all show high values of $H_{rb}$, indicating compressive stress (upper band, Fig. 1). In the range of $-4 \times 10^5$ to $-5 \times 10^5$ dyn/cm², Hoffman¹ suggests six sources for intrinsic stresses in films, most of them relating to tensile stress. The obvious choice for the compressive stress encountered here is surface free energy. The apparent stress caused by surface free energy can be presented by

$$S = -\frac{(\gamma_1 + \gamma_2)}{t}$$

where $\gamma_1$ and $\gamma_2$ are the surface free energies of the metal at the film/vacuum and film/substrate interface, respectively, and t is the film thickness. If the substrate is assumed to be indiffused with respect to the film, $\gamma_2$ becomes equal to $\gamma_1$. An approximate value for $\gamma_1$ at 298°K of 2500 erg/cm² was estimated. In Fig. 1 curve (A) represents the $H_{rb}$ values calculated from Eq. (2), substituting $\gamma_1 = \gamma_2 = 2500$ erg/cm² and using Eq. (1) to convert stresses into resonance fields. $H_{rb}$ values of clean films thicker than 60 Å agree acceptably with the calculated values. The fact that these $H_{rb}$ values are mostly higher than predicted and widely scattered may be due to variations in the roughness factor of the films. Equation (2) is valid for a film with roughness factor 1, in practice the roughness factor has a value between 1 and 2. For films thinner than 60 Å, the agreement with Eq. (2) is poor.

Adsorption of gases such as pure H₂, H₂O, O₂, N₂O, CO, and air appeared to reduce the compressive stresses. The values of $H_{rb}$, in practice the roughness factor has a value between 1 and 2. For films of 100 Å and thinner, the apparent stress changes sign. The reason for this change is now being explored. Several explanations are possible: (a) A change of stress from compressive to tensile (as indicated in Fig. 1) due to the interaction of adsorbed gases with imperfections in the film or due to the surface layer formed by adsorption; (b) no change of sign in stress but the presence of islands instead of a continuous film, leading to a demagnetizing factor less than 4$\pi$; (c) an extra (negative) contribution to K due to film roughness.

Release of stress proceeded at very low pressures; H₂ was active at 5×10⁻⁴ Torr and other gases were active at slightly higher pressures. Stress release took at least 30 min for H₂ at 5×10⁻⁴ Torr, for example. This time is longer than the time required to form a monolayer when the sticking coefficient is between 0.1 and 1, indicating the release of stress is accompanied by diffusion of gas atoms into the film or to the metal/substrate interface. For H₂, H₂O, and CO, stress release was not as complete as for O₂, N₂O, and air; admission of air resulted in a small additional release of stress. N₂ showed no activity but is reported in the literature not to adsorb on Ni at room temperature.

Neugebauer² studied, by torque measurements, the influence of the adsorption of pure H₂ and O₂ on thin Ni films prepared in UHV. From the values of K, it was concluded that the films as prepared were under tensile stress and that admission of H₂ had no final effect on the value of K. These two observations are in contradiction to those reported here. To explain the observed change in the value of K after admission of O₂, Neugebauer suggested an increase in tensile stress due to matching between nickel atoms in the nickel oxide and the underlying nickel film. On the basis of the work presented here, it is obvious that superimposed on the tensile stress in a clean film is the compressive stress due to surface free energy. Admission of O₂ releases the compressive component of the stress, resulting in an apparent increase in tensile stress. It remains to be explained why Neugebauer invariably found tensile stress in Ni thin films; these films being apparently equivalent to those investigated in this study.

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⁴ This research was supported by the Advanced Research Projects Agency, Department of Defense, through the Office of Naval Research under Contract No. NONR 610(66).

⁵ On leave from Laboratory for Physical Chemistry, Technological University, Eindhoven, Netherlands.


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**Thermal Expansion Coefficients of Ruby Muscovite Mica**

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(Received 23 December 1968; in final form 29 January 1969)

In connection with efforts to grow thin single crystals of noble metals by vapor deposition on mica substrates, we have been concerned with the degree of anisotropy of the thermal expansion of mica and with the effects of such expansion on the quality and properties of the metal crystal. Our work has been concerned with specimens of ruby muscovite mica purchased from Asheville-Schoonmaker Mica Company, Newport News, Virginia. Mica crystallizes in the monoclinic system. It cleaves easily into thin sheets perpendicular to the c axis. The lattice constants of the specimens with which we worked were $a = 5.184$ Å, $b = 9.043$ Å, and $c = 19.92$ Å, which agree well with corresponding values in the literature. For example, Donnay⁴ quotes values of $a = 5.19$ Å, $b = 9.03$ Å, and $c = 20.05$ Å. Our measurements of the β angle did not reveal any significant difference from the value of β = 93°46' quoted by Donnay. Our primary interest in this investigation was in the relative expansions of the $a$ and $b$ axes and the possible changes in the β angle with temperature.

There are very few data concerning the relative thermal expansions of the $a$ and $b$ axes in the literature. Much of the available data on the thermal expansion of mica has been collected in a table prepared by the National Bureau of Standards in 1945.² Most of the measurements reported there were carried out by dilatometry and strain-gage techniques. Although several reasonably consistent values for Δc/ε are listed, data of the type in which we were interested are not included. In general, only