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Fall 10-4-2015

Chemomechanical effects in thin film and bulk oxides

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Recommended Citation

Steve Bull and Noushin Moharrani, "Chemomechanical effects in thin film and bulk oxides" in "Nanomechanical Testing in Materials Research and Development V", Dr. Marc Legros, CEMES-CNRS, France Eds, ECI Symposium Series, (2015). $http://dc.engconfintl.org/nanomechtest_v/90$

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CHEMOMECHANICAL EFFECTS IN THIN FILM AND **BULK OXIDES**



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Introduction

The long-term environmental sensitivity of the surface mechanical properties of materials has long been recognised and properties such as creep, fracture and fatigue are known to be susceptible to changes in environment [1]. A particular subgroup of these phenomena concerns the short-term effects of environment on the indentation hardness of ceramic materials, which, in the past, have been observed in small-scale near-surface-sensitive experiments such as microindentation tests.

Objectives

The objective of this study is to use results from experiments using higher spatial resolution techniques than microindentation, such as nanoindentation, to try and resolve some of the previous controversies and ambiguities emerging from microindentation studies, thus enabling clearer mechanisms to be established for chemomechanical effects. The overall aim is to improve materials selection for tribological performance with due attention to in-service environmental effects.

Experimental

Samples: A range of amorphous, as well as single and polycrystalline bulk oxide samples from commercial suppliers were compared to 400nm PVD coatings deposited onto architectural glass

>Microindentation

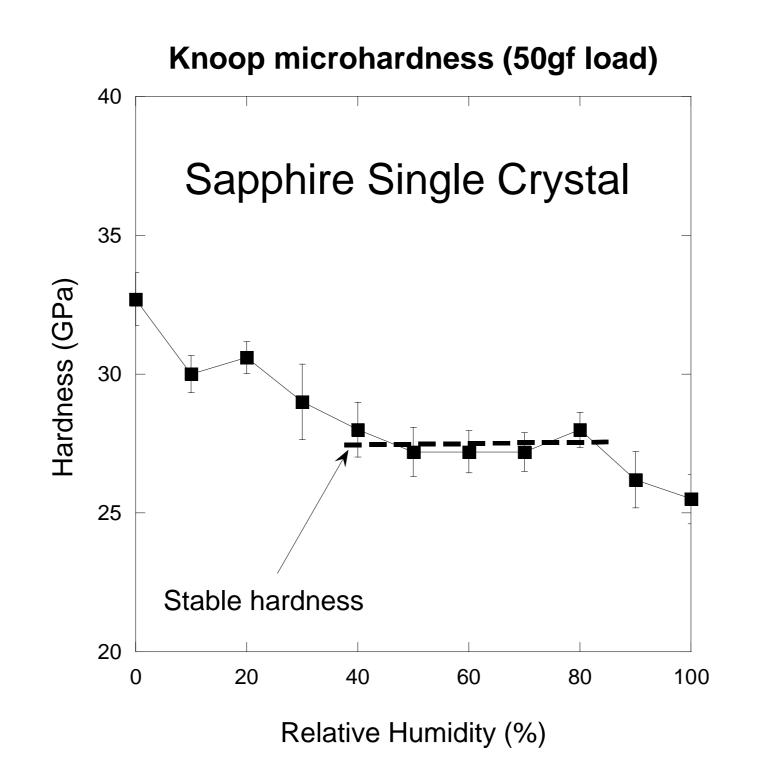
Indentations were performed using a Leitz Miniload fitted with a Vickers or Knoop indenter located in a humidity cabinet:

Samples were tested in three different conditions

ℜ As-received (stored in lab air). **#** Heated to 100°C to drive off water and quenched in methanol (bulk oxides) or ethanol (coatings) # Heated to 100°C and quenched into water.

Samples were removed from the liquid and dried at 50°C in flowing air before testing

Hardness was determined from measurement of indentation diagonals by reflected light microscopy and SEM

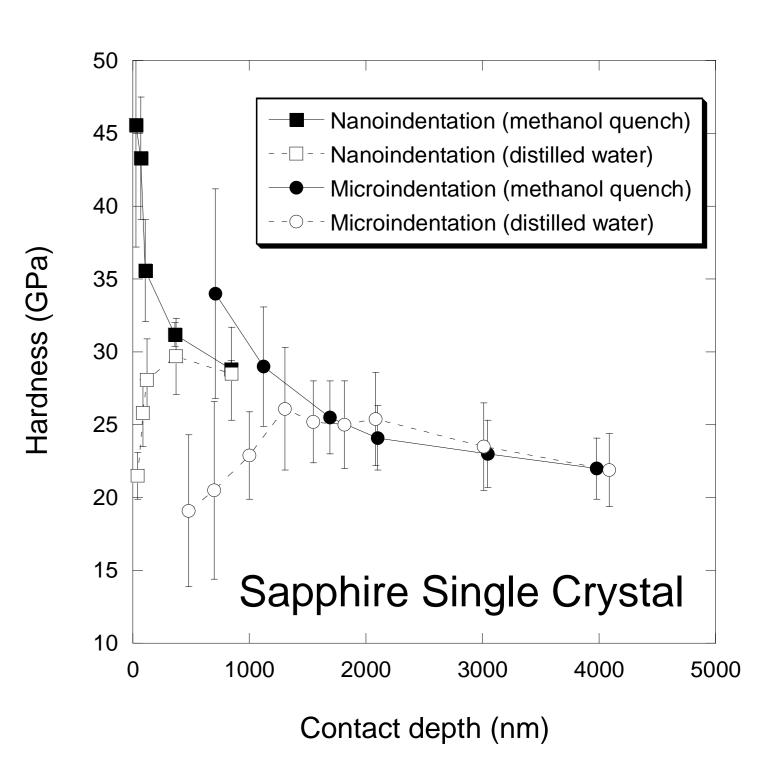


Stable results between 40 and 80% RH

>Nanoindentation

Nanoindentation tests carried out using a Hystiron Triboindenter fitted with a well-characterised Berkovich tip (end radius 109nm) located in a humidity controlled lab (50% RH). **#** Samples were prepared as for microhardness testing but were allowed to equilibrate in the lab for 2h after drying to reduce thermal drift # Indentation load-displacement curves were analysed by the Oliver Pharr method to and extract hardness.

AFM images were obtained using the Berkovich indentation tip before after indentation for pile-up and assessment.



Chemomechanical effects clearly apparent in the nanoindentation data



PVD Tin Oxide on **Soda-lime Silica Glass**

Soda-lime

Ethanol quenched –**–**ZnO Solvent quenched -D- Water quenched Å 400 -D-- Distilled water ----SnO 300 (GPa) 200 (GPa) (MN) (A.U.) sity As-received After exposure to methano After exposure to water Displacement (nm) Contact depth (nm) Contact depth (nm) AFM of water-exposed indentations **Sapphire Single Crystal** 400nm ZnO on Sodalime Glass 400nm ZnO on Sodalime Glass 20 (degrees) Ethanol quencl Strong chemomechanical 400 Water guench (GPa) Distilled water 350 **PVD ZnO on** 300 effects only observed for 200 a) crystalline bulk oxide (m) Load (mN) 0.4 materials and coatings. **Silica Glass** Chemomechanical effects 250 As-received only observed in plasticity, □ After exposure to methano After exposure to water not in elastic response 100 150 Contact depth (nm) Contact depth (nm) Displacement (nm)

Analysis and Discussion

Mechanisms for the effect [2]:

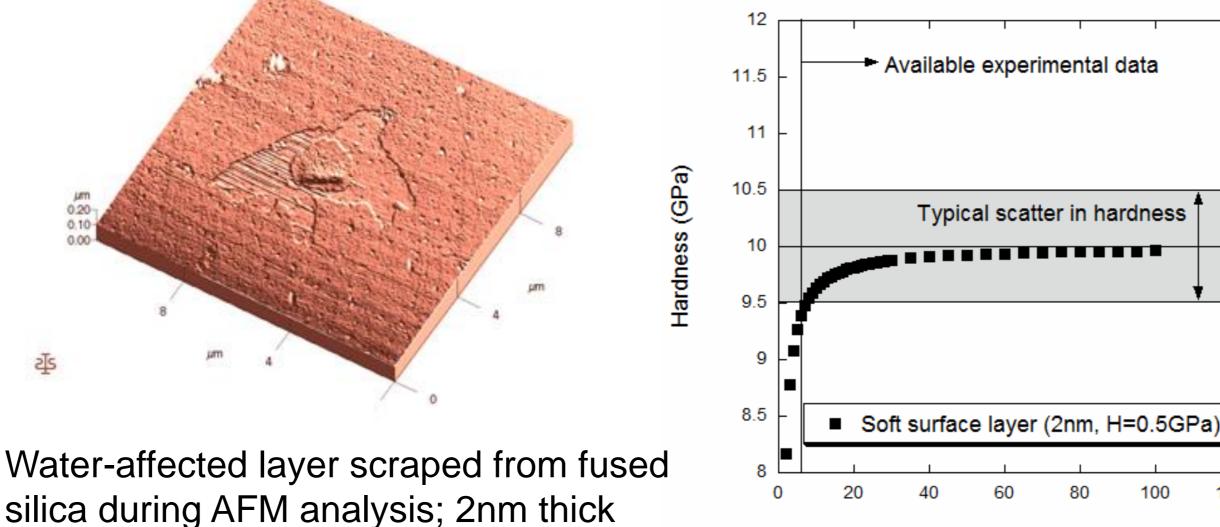


Fused Silica

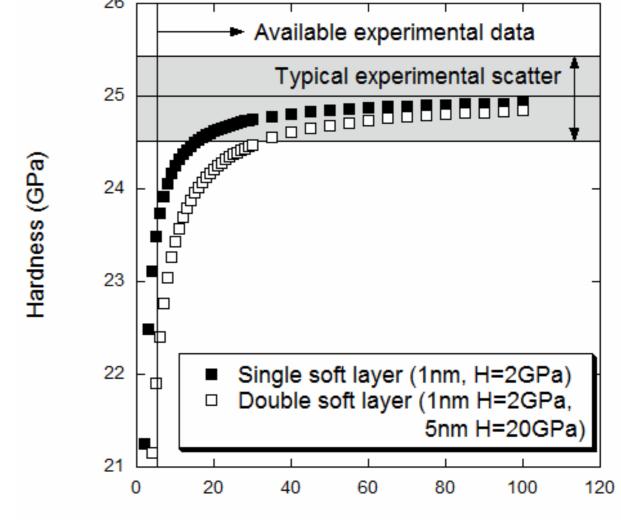
Contact depth (nm)

Sapphire

- Thick surface reaction layer (>5nm, not seen)
- Modification of indenter/surface friction (expected for all materials)
- Adsorbate effects
 - Thin surface reaction layer (2nm)
 - Dislocation mobility (crystalline materials)
 - Charged defects (small effect)



2nm Adsorbate modified layer too thin to explain sapphire results [3]. Thicker layer where dislocation mobility is increased by band bending due to surface adsorbates required.



Contact depth (nm)

Concluding Remarks and Future Work

Conclusions:

Careful nanoindentation testing can give reliable data to unequivocally demonstrate chemomechanical effects for oxide ceramics

The hardness water-exposed alumina is lower than after solvent quenching in ethanol or methanol.

#The contact modulus is not affected by exposure.

The effect of the adsorbed layer is too small to be detected for most amorphous materials but in crystalline materials band bending-induced increases in dislocation mobility can generate considerable softening.

Future work:

Determine the effect of surface treatments which modify surface charge and adsorbate layers on chemomechanical effects.

Relate calculated surface band structure to chemomechanical response for different materials

References

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- Westwood ARC, Ahearn JS, Mills JJ (1981) Colloids and Surfaces 2:1-35.
- 3. Bull SJ, Moharrami N, Hainsworth SV, Page TF (2015) J. Mater. Sci., in press.