Mechanical Behavior at Small Scales — Experiments and Modeling
Mechanical Behavior at Small Scales — Experiments and Modeling

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CONTENTS

Preface ................................................................................................................................. ix

Materials Research Society Symposium Proceedings ................................................. x

Nanostructured Materials

Variable Elastic-Plastic Properties of the Grain Boundaries and Their Effect on the Macroscopic Flow
Stress of Nano-Crystalline Metals ......................................................................................... 3
Malgorzata Lewandowska, Romuald Dobosz, and Krzysztof J. Kurzydlowski

Deformation Behavior of Nanocrystalline Co-Cu Alloys ................................................. 9
Motohiro Yuasa, Hiromi Nakano, Kota Kajikawa, Takumi Nakazawa, and Mamoru Mabuchi

* Interface Effects on the Mechanical Properties of Nanocrystalline Nanolaminates ................................................................................................................................. 15
Alan Jankowski

Residual Stress Reduction in Sputter Deposited Thin Films by Density Modulation ................................................................................................................................. 27
Arif S. Alagoz, Jan-Dirk Kamminga, Sergey Grachev, Toh-Ming Lu, and Tansel Karabacak

High-Throughput Optimization of Adhesion in Multilayers by Superlayer Gradient ................................................................................................................................. 33
Sergey Grachev, Coraly Cuminatto, Elin Sondergard, and Etienne Barthel

Development of a Biaxial Tensile Module at Synchrotron Beamline for the Study of Mechanical Properties of Nanostructured Films ................................................................................................................................. 39
Eric Le Bourhis, Baptiste Girault, Pierre-Olivier Renault, Philippe Goudeau, Guillaume Geandier, Dominique Thiaudière, Rado N. Randriamazao, Rémy Chiron, Damien Faurie, and Olivier Castelnau

* Invited paper
Micromechanical Testing of Nanostructured NbTiNi Hydrogen Permeation Membranes ................................................. 4 Tetsuya Kusuno, Yusuke Shimada, Mitsuhiro Matsuda, Masaaki Otsu, Kazuki Takashima, Minoru Nishida, Kazuhiro Ishikawa, and Kiyoshi Aoki

Mechanical Properties of Nanostructured Hard Coating of ZrO$_2$ ................................................................................. 5 Renat Sabirianov, Fereydoon Namavar, Xiao C. Zeng, Jaeil Bai, and Wai-Ning Mei

The Micromechanisms of Deformation in Nanoporous Gold ......................................................................................... 5 Rui Dou and Brian Derby

Elastic Properties of Mimetically Synthesized Model Nanoporous Carbon ................................................................. 6 Xi Mi and Yunfeng Shi

Microstructural and Mechanical Properties of Boron Carbide Ceramics by Methanol Washed Powder ......................... 6 Kyoung Hun Kim, Jong Pil Ahn, Joo Seok Park, Jae Hong Chae, Sung Min So, and Hyung Sun Kim

Temperature Variation in Energy Absorption System Functionalized by Nanomaterials .................................................. 7 Yu Qiao, Zhongyuan Sun, Weiye Lu, and Aijie Han

Polymers & Composites

Anisotropic Strain and Training of Conducting Polymer Artificial Muscles Under High Tensile Stresses ................................. 8 Keiichi Kaneto, Hikaru Hashimoto, Kazuo Tominaga, Tomokazu Sedai, and Wataru Takashima

Size-Dependent Mechanical Properties of Polymer-Nanowires Fabricated by Two-Photon Lithography .......................... 8 Satoru Shoji, Sana Nakanishi, Tomoki Hamano, and Satoshi Kawata

Electrospun Polymer/MWCNTs Nanofiber Reinforced Composites “Improvement of Interfacial Bonding by Surface Modified Nanofibers” ......................................................................................... 9 Elif Ozden, Yusuf Z. Menceloglu, and Melih Papila
Multiscale Computer Simulation of Tensile and Compressive Strain in Polymer-Coated Silica Aerogels

Brian Good

Correlating Nanoparticle Dispersion to Surface Mechanical Properties of TiO2/Polymer Composites

Yongyan Pang, Stephanie S. Watson, Aaron M. Forster, and Lipiin Sung

Atomistic Simulations of the Mechanical Response of Copper/Polybutadiene Joints Under Stress

Fidel O. Valega Mackenzie and Barend Thijsse

Simulations & Modeling

MD Simulation of Dislocation Dynamics in Copper Nanoparticles

Yoshiaki Kogure, Toshio Kogugi, Tadatoshi Nozaki, and Masao Doyama

Size Effect in the Shear-Coupled Migration of Grain Boundaries Pinned by Triple Junctions

Javier Gil Sevillano, Aitor Luque, Javier Aldazabal, and José M. Martinez-Esnaola

Towards a Virtual Laboratory for Grain Boundaries and Dislocations

Sebastian Echeverri Restrepo and Barend Thijsse

Application of a 3D-Continuum Theory of Dislocations to Problems of Constrained Plastic Flow: Microbending of a Thin Film

Stefan Sandfeld, Michael Zaiser, and Thomas Hochrainer

Transition Pathway Analysis of Homogeneous Dislocation Nucleation in a Perfect Silicon Crystal

Hasan A. Saeed, Satoshi Izumi, Shotaro Hara, and Shinsuke Sakai

The Vibrational Modes of Model Bulk Metallic Glasses

Peter Derlet, Robert Maaß, and Jörg F. Löffler
First-Principle Investigation of Electronic Structure and Mechanical Properties of AlMgB_{14}
Liwen F. Wan and Scott P. Beckman

Effect of Alloying Elements on the Elastic Properties of γ-Ni and γ'-Ni3Al From First-Principles Calculations
Yunjiang Wang and Chongyu Wang

Microcompression & Nanoindentation

Twining and Slip Activity in Magnesium <11-20> Single Crystal
Gyu Seok Kim, Sangbong Yi, Yuanding Huang, and Erica Lilleodden

* Indentation Crystal Plasticity: Experiments and Multiscale Simulations
Hyung J. Chang, Marc Verdier, and Marc Fivel

Dislocation Dynamics Simulations of Metal Nanoimprinting
Yunhe Zhang, Erik Van der Giessen, and Lucia Nicola

On Effective Indenters Used in Nanoindentation Data Analysis
Guanghui Fu, Ling Cao, and Tiesheng Cao

Similarity Relationships in Creep Contacts and Applications in Nanoindentation Tests
Jinhaeng Lee, Cong Zhou, Caijun Su, Yanfei Gao, and George Pharr

Effect of Surface Roughness on Determination of Creep Parameter Using Impression Creep Technique
Wuzhu Yan, Bin Zhao, and Zhufeng Yue

Effect of Dilatation on the Elasto-Plastic Response of Bulk Metallic Glasses Under Indentation
Anamika Prasad, Ming Dao, and Upadrasta Ramamurti

* Invited paper
Stumbling on Extrinsic Effects in Super-Hard Nanobuttons

Antonio Rinaldi, Pedro Peralta, Cody Friesen, Dhiraj Nahar, Silvia Licoccia, Enrico Traversa, and Karl Sieradzki

Author Index

Subject Index
Symposia FF: “Mechanical Behavior of Nanomaterials—Experiments and Modeling” and GG: “Plasticity in Confined Volumes—Modeling and Experiments,” were presented Nov. 30–Dec. 4, 2009 at the 2009 MRS Fall Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. Symposium GG began with a very attractive tutorial on experimental and simulation methods for the study of plasticity in small volumes. The strongly related themes of these two symposia motivated the publication of a single proceedings volume. These two symposia each brought experimentalists and modelers together within a single forum to exchange their ideas about the mechanical behaviour of materials where size, be it microstructural or geometric, plays an important role.

Symposium FF was focused on the understanding of the mechanical behavior of nanostructured materials, such as nanoscale thin films, nanowires, nanotubes, and nanoparticles, as well as nanoporous, nanograined and nanotwinned materials. Such materials with sub-micron length scales are important building blocks for next-generation functional devices and materials systems. In order to help them fulfill their promise, mechanics at small-length scale must be carefully investigated to understand the deformation and failure mechanisms of these material entities.

Symposium GG was focused on understanding how micron and sub-micron external and internal micro-structural length scales control the mechanical behavior, such as strength and ductility, of materials. Modern atomistic and mesoscopic simulation methods have elucidated a diverse range of atomic and meso-scale processes that can contribute to the emergent plasticity of such complex materials, ranging from dislocation dynamics in micron-sized confined volumes, and the interaction between dislocations and grain boundaries in bulk and thin-film nanocrystals, to atomic scale activity associated with grain boundary accommodation processes, as well as shear-transformation zones in metallic glasses. With the development of miniaturized mechanical testing facilities, as well as leading edge ex-situ and in-situ methods, it now becomes experimentally possible to directly probe both the spatial and temporal dynamics of such processes.

The papers herein span a representative range of topics, which have been organized in four general topic areas: nanostructured materials, polymers & composites, simulations & modelling, and microcompression & nanoindentation.
We would like to thank the authors for their contributions to this volume, as well as the presenters and session chairs for their involvement in the symposia. We greatly appreciate the excellent administrative and technical support provided by the MRS staff, which was a major contribution to the success of these symposia. We also want to extend special thanks to the Institute of Metal Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences and Nanofactory Instruments, Inc. for their financial support of symposium FF.

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