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LASERS, OPTICS, AND OPTOELECTRONICS (PACS 42)

- 9429 Photonic crystal polarizers and polarizing beam splitters
D. R. Solli, C. F. McCormick, R. Y. Chiao, J. M. Hickmann
- 9432 Photocurrents of 14 μm quantum-well infrared photodetectors
Y. Fu, M. Willander, J. Jiang, Ning Li, W. Lu, H. C. Liu
- 9437 Efficient KTIPO_4 blue-light converter for monochromatic 1.3188- μm emission line of pulsed Nd:YAG laser
Xiaodong Mu, Wei Shi, Yujie J. Ding
- 9441 Emission properties of $\text{PbO}-\text{Bi}_2\text{O}_3-\text{Ga}_2\text{O}_3-\text{GeO}_2$ glasses doped with Tm^{3+} and Ho^{3+}
Jay Hyok Song, Jong Heo, Se Ho Park
- 9446 Spectroscopic characterization of 1450 nm semiconductor pump laser structures for Raman amplifiers
S. B. Constant, S. Tomić, D. Lock, T. E. Sale, S. J. Sweeney, T. J. C. Hosea
- 9456 Ultraviolet-light-induced near-infrared photorefractivity and two-color holography in highly Mg-doped LiNbO_3
Guoquan Zhang, Yasuo Tomita
- 9460 Optical transitions and upconversion properties of Ho^{3+} doped $\text{ZnO}-\text{TeO}_2$ glass
J. C. Boyer, F. Vetrone, J. A. Capobianco, A. Speghini, M. Bettinelli
- 9466 Light-induced absorption in photorefractive BaTiO_3 crystals
Ravinder Kumar Banyal, B. Raghavendra Prasad

PLASMAS AND ELECTRICAL DISCHARGES (PACS 51–52)

- 9470 Laser-guided, intersecting discharge channels for the final beam transport in heavy-ion fusion
C. Niemann, S. Neff, A. Tauschwitz, D. Penache, R. Birkner, C. Constantin, R. Knobloch, R. Presura, F. B. Rosmej, D. H. H. Hoffmann, S. S. Yu
- 9477 Characteristics of hard x-ray emission from laser-induced vacuum spark discharges
Akira Ohzu, Kazunori Ito
- 9483 Abatement of perfluorinated compounds using microwave plasmas at atmospheric pressure
Y. Kabouzi, M. Moisan, J. C. Rostaing, C. Trassy, D. Guérin, D. Kéroack, Z. Zakrzewski
- 9497 The CN free radical in acetonitrile discharges
Peng Li, Wai Yip Fan
- 9503 Radio frequency magnetron sputtering deposition of calcium phosphate coatings: The effect of resputtering on the coating composition
B. Feddes, J. G. C. Wolke, J. A. Jansen, A. M. Vredenberg
- 9508 Model of a He-Xe low-pressure dc positive column plasma
S. Gortchakov, H. Lange, D. Uhrlandt
- 9516 Three-dimensional self-consistent radiation transport model for the fluid simulation of plasma display panel cell
H. C. Kim, S. S. Yang, J. K. Lee

STRUCTURAL, MECHANICAL, THERMODYNAMIC, AND OPTICAL PROPERTIES OF CONDENSED MATTER (PACS 61–68, 78)

- 9523 Relation between the molecular orientation of a liquid crystal monolayer and the underlying polyimide film exposed to linearly polarized ultraviolet light
Kiyooki Usami, Kenji Sakamoto, Sukekatsu Ushioda
- 9529 Laser-induced decompression shock development in fused silica
Junlan Wang, Richard L. Weaver, Nancy R. Sottos
- 9537 Spectroscopic ellipsometry of thin film and bulk anatase (TiO_2)
G. E. Jellison Jr. Boatner, J. D. Budai, B.-S. Jeong, D. P. Norton
- 9542 Micro-Raman study of electronic properties of inversion domains in GaN-based lateral polarity heterostructures
M. Park, J. J. Cuomo, B. J. Rodriguez, W.-C. Yang, R. J. Nemanich, O. Ambacher

(Continued)

- 9548 Imaging subwavelength holes using an apertureless near-field scanning optical microscope
- 9553 Physical and optical properties of sol-gel nano-silver doped silica film on glass substrate as a function of heat-treatment temperature
- 9562 Wigner function modeling of quantum well semiconductor lasers using classical electromagnetic field coupling
- 9576 Effect of liner thickness on electromigration lifetime
- 9583 Annealing-induced Ge/Si(100) island evolution
- 9591 Growth diagram and morphologies of AlN thin films grown by molecular beam epitaxy
- 9597 Improved brightness and efficiency in Ce codoped ZnS:TbOF electroluminescent thin films
- 9604 Surface acoustic wave propagation characteristics of aluminum nitride thin films grown on polycrystalline diamond
- 9610 Broadband photopyroelectric thermal spectroscopy of a supercooled liquid near the glass transition
- 9615 Band-tail characteristics in polysilicon
- 9620 Kinetics of highly spin-polarized electron photoemission from an InGaAlAs strained layer by energy and spin-resolved measurements
- 9625 Dynamical analysis of relaxation luminescence in ZnS:Er³⁺ thin film devices
- 9630 Field-induced microdomain liquid-crystal display modes
- 9634 Observation of population transfer to dark exciton states by using spin-diffracted four-wave mixing
- 9639 High pressure behavior of titanium-silicon carbide (Ti₃SiC₂)
- 9644 Model for high-strain-rate deformation of uranium-niobium alloys
- 9655 Optical studies of strained type II GaAs_{0.7}Sb_{0.3}/GaAs multiple quantum wells
- 9659 Spin-dependent recombination electron paramagnetic resonance spectroscopy of defects in irradiated silicon detectors
- 9665 Effect of (10 $\bar{1}$ 0) crystal orientation on many-body optical gain of wurtzite InGaN/GaN quantum well
- 9669 Optical characterization of polymer dispersed liquid crystals for holographic recording
- 9675 Guiding characteristics of surface acoustic waves visualized using photoluminescence quenching
- 9679 Electronic thermal pressure and equation of state of gold at high temperature and high pressure
- 9683 Fluorination of copper phthalocyanines: Electronic structure and interface properties
- F. Formanek, Y. De Wilde, L. Aigouy
- Wenyan Li, Sudipta Seal, Edward Megan, Jeff Ramsdell, Kirk Scammon, Gerald Lelong, Laurent Lachal, Kathleen A. Richardson
- Philip Weetman, Marek S. Wartak
- E. G. Liniger, C. -K. Hu, L. M. Gignac, A. Simon
- Yangting Zhang, Jeff Drucker
- G. Koblmüller, R. Averbek, L. Geelhaar, H. Riechert, W. Höslér, P. Pongratz
- J. P. Kim, M. R. Davidson, P. H. Holloway
- G. F. Iriarte
- E. H. Bentefour, C. Glorieux, M. Chirtoc, J. Thoen
- J. H. Sun, W. Z. Shen, F. Y. Meng
- Yu. Mamaev, H.-J. Drouhin, G. Lampel, A. Subashiev, Yu. Yashin, A. Rochansky
- Yu-Jiang Wang, Chen-Xu Wu, Mou-Zhi Chen, Mei-Chun Huang
- Hiroshi Ohno, Hiroyuki Okada, Hiroyoshi Onnagawa
- O. Ikeuchi, S. Adachi, H. Sasakura, S. Muto
- J. L. Jordan, T. Sekine, T. Kobayashi, X. Li, N. N. Thadhani, T. El-Raghy, M. W. Barsoum
- F. L. Addessio, Q. H. Zuo, T. A. Mason, L. C. Brinson
- T. T. Chen, C. H. Chen, W. Z. Cheng, W. S. Su, M. H. Ya, Y. F. Chen, P. W. Liu, H. H. Lin
- V. Eremin, D. S. Poloskin, E. Verbitskaya, M. P. Vlasenko, L. S. Vlasenko, R. Laiho, T. O. Niinikoski
- Seoung-Hwan Park
- D. E. Lucchetta, L. Criante, F. Simoni
- Y. Takagaki, M. Ramsteiner, K. H. Ploog
- Masanori Matsui, Nobuyuki Shima
- H. Peisert, M. Knupfer, T. Schwieger, G. G. Fuentes, D. Olligs, J. Fink, Th. Schmidt

(Continued)

- 9693 Quantum-well-width dependencies of postgrowth thermal annealing effects of InGaN/GaN quantum wells
Yi-Yin Chung, Yen-Sheng Lin, Shih-Wei Feng, Yung-Chen Cheng, En-Chiang Lin, C. C. Yang, Kung-Jen Ma, Cheng Hsu, Hui-Wen Chuang, Cheng-Ta Kuo, Jian-Shih Tsang
- 9697 Growth and characterization of GaN:Mn epitaxial films
T. Graf, M. Gjukic, M. Hermann, L. Görgens, J. B. Philipp, O. Ambacher, M. S. Brandt, M. Stutzmann
- 9703 Evaluation of acoustic physical constants of LiNbO₃ at hypersonic frequencies
H. S. Lim, J. D. Huang, V. L. Zhang, M. H. Kuok, S. C. Ng
- 9709 Be diffusion in molecular beam epitaxy-grown GaAs structures
R. Mosca, P. Bussei, S. Franchi, P. Frigeri, E. Gombia, A. Carnera, M. Peroni
- 9717 Mechanism for linear and nonlinear optical effects in crystals of the Sr₂Be₂B₂O₇ family
Zheshuai Lin, Zhizhong Wang, Chuangtian Chen, Shyong K. Chen, Ming-Hsien Lee
- 9724 Free-standing porous silicon single and multiple optical cavities
M. Ghulinyan, C. J. Oton, G. Bonetti, Z. Gaburro, L. Pavesi
- ELECTRONIC STRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT (PACS 71–73)**
- 9730 Electronic and positron properties of zinc-blende structure of GaN, AlN, and their alloy Ga_{1-x}Al_xN
Yarub Al-Douri
- 9737 Carrier-type reversal in metal modified chalcogenide glasses: Results of thermal transport measurements
R. Rajesh, J. Philip
- 9743 Effects of a resonant shallow state on the electrical properties of Te-doped Al_xGa_{1-x}Sb
C. Ghezzi, R. Magnanini, A. Parisini, E. Gombia, R. Mosca
- 9749 A semiclassical approach to Coulomb scattering of conduction electrons on ionized impurities in nondegenerate semiconductors
N. A. Poklonski, S. A. Vyrko, V. I. Yatskevich, A. A. Kocherzhenko
- 9753 Geometrical modeling of surface profile formation during laser ablation of materials
S. R. Vatsya, E. V. Bordatchev, S. K. Nikumb
- 9760 Characterization of the metal-insulator interface of field-effect chemical sensors
A. Elisabeth Åbom, Richard T. Haasch, Niklas Hellgren, Nancy Finnegan, Lars Hultman, Mats Eriksson
- 9769 Evidence of three DX centers in Al_{0.28}Ga_{0.72}As:Si from Hall experiments
A. Triki, F. Rzigga-Ouaja, H. Mejr, A. Selmi
- 9773 Diffusion and electrical activation of indium in silicon
S. Scalese, M. Italia, A. La Magna, G. Mannino, V. Privitera, M. Bersani, D. Giubertoni, M. Barozzi, S. Solmi, P. Pichler
- 9783 Size dependence of luminescent properties for hexagonal YBO₃:Eu nanocrystals in the vacuum ultraviolet region
Zheng-Gui Wei, Ling-Dong Sun, Chun-Sheng Liao, Xiao-Cheng Jiang, Chun-Hua Yan, Ye Tao, Xue-Ying Hou, Xin Ju
- 9789 Investigation of quantum effects on the Bloch electron velocity around closely spaced bands at high electric fields
A. Martinez, U. Lindefelt, H.-E. Nilsson
- 9797 Minority carriers recombination in *n*-InP single crystals
I. Tsimberova, Y. Rosenwaks, M. Molotskii
- 9803 Effect of TiO_x on the formation of titanium silicide layer
H. El Omari, J. P. Boyeaux, A. Errkik, M. Lemiti, A. Laugier
- 9812 Multitone quantum simulations of saturating tunnel junction mixers
S. Withington, P. Kittara, G. Yassin
- 9823 Effects of pulsed anodic oxide on the intermixing in InGaAs/GaAs and InGaAs/AlGaAs quantum wells
Shu Yuan, C. Y. Liu, F. Zhao, M. C. Y. Chan, W. K. Tsui, L. V. Dao, X. Q. Liu

(Continued)

MAGNETISM AND SUPERCONDUCTIVITY (PACS 74-76)

- 9830 Transferred hyperfine interaction for ^{87}Rb and ^{133}Cs in AMnCl_3 ($A=\text{Rb}$ and Cs) single crystals
Ae Ran Lim, Jae Kap Jung, David B. Zax
- 9834 Influence of water molecule coordination on the magnetic properties of polyamine copper dinitrate complexes
N. Guskos, S. Glenis, V. Likodimos, J. Typek, H. Fuks, M. Wabia, R. Szymczak, C. L. Lin, T. A. Perkowska
- 9839 Torsion-dependent magnetoimpedance in FeCuNbSiB nanocrystalline wires with vanishing or transverse anisotropy
Y. F. Li, M. Vázquez, D. X. Chen
- 9845 Modeling of ferromagnetic semiconductor devices for spintronics
N. Lebedeva, P. Kuivalainen
- 9865 Computer simulations of magnetization switching of elongated magnetic particles with shape defects
Hiraku Endo, Yasutaro Uesaka, Yoshinobu Nakatani, Nobuo Hayashi, Hiroshi Fukushima
- 9869 Flux line lattice structure and behavior in antiphase boundary free vicinal $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-\delta}$ thin films
J. H. Durrell, S. H. Mennema, Ch. Jooss, G. Gibson, Z. H. Barber, H. W. Zandbergen, J. E. Evetts
- 9875 Angle effect on the estimation of exchange coupling constant J for antiferromagnetically coupled medium
H. B. Ren, J. P. Wang
- 9880 Effects of thermal annealing on the radiation produced electron paramagnetic resonance spectra of bovine and equine tooth enamel: Fossil and modern
Robert A. Weeks, James S. Bogard, J. Michael Elam, Daniel C. Weinand, Andrew Kramer
- 9890 Domain-wall structure and domain-wall strain
W. T. Lee, E. K. H. Salje, U. Bismayer
- 9898 Magnetic properties of sputtered barium ferrite thick films
S. Capraro, J. P. Chatelon, H. Joisten, M. Le Berre, B. Bayard, D. Barbier, J. J. Rousseau
- 9902 Thickness and growth temperature dependence of structure and magnetism in FePt thin films
Michael F. Toney, Wen-Yaung Lee, Jonathan A. Hedstrom, Andrew Kellock
- 9908 Perpendicular magnetic anisotropy and stripe domains in ultrathin Co/Au sputtered multilayers
O. Donzelli, D. Palmeri, L. Musa, F. Casoli, F. Albertini, L. Pareti, G. Turilli
- 9913 Magnetic characteristics and frequency dependence of permeability in Fe-B-N thin films
M. H. Phan, S. C. Yu, J. S. Chung, J. S. Kim, Y. M. Kim
- 9916 Giant magnetoelectric effect of a hybrid of magnetostrictive and piezoelectric composites
J. G. Wan, J.-M. Liu, H. L. W. Chand, C. L. Choy, G. H. Wang, C. W. Nan
- 9920 Structural magnetic properties and spin-glass behavior in $\text{La}_{0.9}\text{Te}_{0.1}\text{MnO}_3$
G. T. Tan, P. Duan, S. Y. Dai, Y. L. Zhou, H. B. Lu, Z. H. Chen

DIELECTRICS AND FERROELECTRICITY (PACS 77)

- 9924 Dielectric and electromechanical properties of $\text{Pb}(\text{Mg}_{1/3}, \text{Nb}_{2/3})\text{O}_3\text{-PbTiO}_3$ thin films grown by pulsed laser deposition
N. J. Donnelly, G. Catalan, C. Morros, R. M. Bowman, J. M. Gregg
- 9930 Phase transitions in $(\text{Ba}_{0.7}\text{Sr}_{0.3})\text{TiO}_3/(001)\text{MgO}$ thin film studied by Raman scattering
Yu. I. Yuzyuk, J. L. Sauvajol, P. Simon, V. L. Lorman, V. A. Alyoshin, I. N. Zakharchenko, E. V. Sviridov
- 9938 Infrared and electrical properties of amorphous sputtered $(\text{La}_x\text{Al}_{1-x})_2\text{O}_3$ films
R. A. B. Devine
- 9943 Two-dimensional structures of ferroelectric domain inversion in LiNbO_3 by direct electron beam lithography
J. He, S. H. Tang, Y. Q. Qin, P. Dong, H. Z. Zhang, C. H. Kang, W. X. Sun, Z. X. Shen
- 9947 Mechanisms of electrostriction and giant piezoelectric effect in relaxor ferroelectrics
V. S. Vikhnin, R. Blinc, R. Pirc
- 9953 Slow relaxation of polar impurities in amorphous carbon thin films through capacitive spectroscopy
R. Bouzerar, M. Benlahsen, B. Racine, J. C. Picot

(Continued)

9961 Simple model of polarization offset of graded ferroelectric structures

L. Pintilie, I. Boerasu,
M. J. M. Gomes

9968 Plasma radiation during laser-induced breakdown of dielectrics

Nitikant, A. K. Sharma

NANOSCALE SCIENCE AND DESIGN

9972 Complex structure of carbon nanotubes and their implications for formation mechanism

Dan Zhou, Lee Chow

9977 Probing local electric field distribution of nanotube arrays using electrostatic force microscopy

Long Ba, Jian Shu, Zuhong Lu,
Juntao Li, Wei Lei, Baoping Wang,
Waisang Li

9983 Electrical properties and phase transition of CoFe_2O_4 nanocrystals under pressure

Zhenyu Wu, Zhongxing Bao,
Li Cao, Cuixia Liu, Qianshu Li,
Sishen Xie, Bingsuo Zou

9988 Nanostructure and infrared photoluminescence of nanocrystalline Ge formed by reduction of $\text{Si}_{0.75}\text{Ge}_{0.25}\text{O}_2/\text{Si}_{0.75}\text{Ge}_{0.25}$ using various H_2 pressures

Gianni Taraschi, Sajan Saini,
Wendy W. Fan,
Lionel C. Kimerling,
Eugene A. Fitzgerald

9997 Electron states in modulated nanowires

L. C. Lew Yan Voon, M. Willatzen

10001 Hysteresis curve of magnetic nanocrystals monolayers: Influence of the structure

V. Russier, C. Petit, M. P. Pileni

10011 Nanoscale ferromagnetic rings fabricated by electron-beam lithography

L. J. Heyderman, C. David,
M. Kläui, C. A. F. Vaz,
J. A. C. Bland

10014 Injection of molecules onto hydrogen-terminated Si(100) surfaces via a pulse valve

Yasuhiko Terada, Byoung-Ki Choi,
Seiji Heike, Masaaki Fujimori,
Tomihito Hashizume

DEVICE PHYSICS (PACS 85)

10018 Electrostatic actuation of thin-film microelectromechanical structures

J. Gaspar, V. Chu, J. P. Conde

10030 Low frequency noise in GaN/AlGaIn heterostructure field effect transistors in non-ohmic region

S. L. Rumyantsev, N. Pala,
M. S. Shur, M. E. Levinshtein,
M. Asif Khan, G. Simin, J. Yang

10035 Measurement of built-in electrical potential in III-V solar cells by scanning Kelvin probe microscopy

Chun-Sheng Jiang, H. R. Moutinho,
D. J. Friedman, J. F. Geisz,
M. M. Al-Jassim

10041 Admittance of a slot diode with a two-dimensional electron channel

V. Ryzhii, A. Satou, M. S. Shur

10046 Analysis of dislocation scattering on electron mobility in GaN high electron mobility transistors

R. P. Joshi, S. Viswanadha,
B. Jogai, P. Shah,
R. D. del Rosario

10053 Submicron probes for Hall magnetometry over the extended temperature range from helium to room temperature

K. S. Novoselov, S. V. Morozov,
S. V. Dubonos, M. Missous,
A. O. Volkov, D. A. Christian,
A. K. Geim

INTERDISCIPLINARY AND GENERAL PHYSICS (PACS 1-41, 43-47, 79, 81-84, 89-99)

10058 Copper in glazes of Renaissance luster pottery: Nanoparticles, ions, and local environment

S. Padovani, C. Sada, P. Mazzoldi,
B. Brunetti, I. Borgia,
A. Sgamellotti, A. Giulivi,
F. D'Acapito, G. Battaglin

10064 Microstructural and macroscopic properties of cold sprayed copper coatings

C. Borchers, F. Gärtner,
T. Stoltenhoff, H. Assadi, H. Kreye

10071 Response of a Pt-polyyne membrane in surface acoustic wave sensors: Experimental and theoretical approach

Cinzia Caliendo, Ilaria Fratoddi,
Maria Vittoria Russo,
Claudio Lo Sterzo

10078 Bubble size control and measurement in the generation of ferrofluid foams

W. Drenckhan, F. Elias, S. Hutzler,
D. Weaire, E. Janiaud, J.-C. Bacri

10084 Least action principle for the estimation of the slowness and the attenuation of pseudo surface acoustic waves

Vincent Laude, Mikael Wilm,
Sylvain Ballandras

(Continued)

- 10089 Macroporosity free aluminum alloy weldments through numerical simulation of keyhole mode laser welding
- 10097 Effects of Ag and In addition on the optical properties and crystallization kinetics of eutectic $\text{Sb}_{70}\text{Te}_{30}$ phase-change recording film
- 10104 Electrodeposition of Ni/SiC contacts
- 10110 Silicon nanocrystals and defects produced by silicon and silicon-and-gold implantation in silica
- 10114 Polarization effects in AlGaIn/GaN and GaN/AlGaIn/GaN heterostructures
- 10119 Formation of interfacial layer during reactive sputtering of hafnium oxide

COMMUNICATIONS

- 10125 Elliptical air hole waveguides in slab photonic crystals
- 10128 Large magnetic entropy change in the metallic antiperovskite Mn_3GaC
- 10131 Quantum-well optical modulator at terahertz frequencies
- 10134 Simultaneous imaging of ionic conductivity and morphology of a microfluidic system
- 10137 Magnetism and giant magnetoresistance of HeFe_6Ge_6 -type $\text{Y}_{0.7}\text{Ce}_{0.3}\text{Mn}_6\text{Sn}_6$ compound
- 10140 Infrared optical absorbance of intersubband transitions in GaN/AlGaIn multiple quantum well structures
- 10143 Quantitative correlation between the local coercivity variation and magnetization reversal dynamics in Co/Pd multilayer thin films
- 10146 Comment on "($\text{Ta}_{1-x}\text{Nb}_x$) $_2\text{O}_5$ films produced by atomic layer deposition: Temperature dependent dielectric spectroscopy and room-temperature I - V characteristics" [J. Appl. Phys. **90**, 4532 (2001)]

ERRATA

- 10148 Publisher's Note: "Sample-detector coupling in atomic resolution magnetic resonance diffraction" [J. Appl. Phys. **92**, 7345 (2002)]

INDEX

- 10149 Summary of the Physics and Astronomy Classification Scheme—2003
- 10150 PACS Headings Used in the Present Index
- 10159 Subject Index to Volume 93
- 10268 Author Index to Volume 93

H. Zhao, T. DebRoy

Yung-Chiun Her, Hung Chen,
Yung-Sung Hsu

Gerko Oskam, Parimal J. Patel,
John G. Long, Peter C. Searson

C. Barthou, P. H. Duong, A. Oliver,
J. C. Cheang-Wong,
L. Rodríguez-Fernández,
A. Crespo-Sosa, T. Itoh,
P. Lavallard

Sten Heikman, Stacia Keller,
Yuan Wu, James S. Speck,
Steven P. DenBaars,
Umesh K. Mishra

Bing-Yue Tsui, Hsiu-Wei Chang

M. M. Sigalas, E. Chow

Ming-Hui Yu, L. H. Lewis,
A. R. Moodenbaugh

A. V. Maslov, D. S. Citrin

Cristian Ionescu-Zanetti,
Karen Cheung, Ratneshwar Lal,
Luke P. Lee

Jin-lei Yao, Shao-ying Zhang,
Mi Yan, De-ren Yang, Ru-wu Wang,
Li-gang Zhang, Bao-gen Shen

Qiaoying Zhou, Jiayu Chen,
B. Pattada, M. O. Manasreh,
Faxian Xiu, Steve Puntigan, L. He,
K. S. Ramaiah, Hadis Morkoç

Hyuk-Jae Jang, Sug-Bong Choe,
Sung-Chul Shin

R. Brazis, P. Pipinys

Mladen Barbic, Axel Scherer

Laser-induced decompression shock development in fused silica

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Laser-induced weak shock formation in fused silica is studied using standard wave mechanics and applied to thin-film laser spallation experiments. Due to the negative nonlinear elasticity of fused silica, a laser-induced Gaussian stress pulse evolves into a shock after traveling a certain distance in a fused silica substrate. Experimental observations confirm theoretical predictions of shock development. A decompression shock forms and greatly enhances interfacial failure of a thin film deposited on the substrate. The effects of laser fluence and substrate thickness (attenuation) on shock development are also investigated. © 2003 American Institute of Physics.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Laser pulse absorption generates high amplitude, short duration stress wave pulses that can be used to load the interface between a film and a substrate. The subsequent failure of the film is then related to the known dynamic stress state thereby allowing the strength of the interface to be inferred. The laser spallation technique, introduced by Yang,¹ Vossen² and further developed by Gupta *et al.*^{3–8} is shown schematically in Fig. 1. A high-energy laser pulse (duration of nanoseconds) from a *Q*-switched laser ($\lambda = 1064$ nm) impinges onto a thin metallic absorbing layer (AL) sandwiched between a thin confining layer (CL) and the back surface of the substrate (S). The energy-absorbing layer is chosen to be much thicker (typically $0.5\ \mu\text{m}$) than the critical penetration depth (on the order of tens of nm) of laser light at this wavelength. Under this consideration, it is assumed that the total laser energy is deposited at the interface of the confining layer and the absorbing layer. The sudden expansion of the confined layer generates a compressive stress wave of rise time comparable to the laser pulse that propagates towards the test film/substrate interface. Reflection of the compressive wave packet from the free surface of the test film creates a tensile pulse, which leads to spallation of the film. The fall time of the compressive stress profile generated in the substrate is a critical parameter governing film failure. The tensile stress developed at the interface is proportional to the time derivative of the substrate stress, hence a faster fall time enhances the ability to fail the film.

Theoretical analysis⁹ reveals that the compressive stress pulse generated in the substrate is a copy of, and proportional to, the deposited laser pulse at the interface (i.e., a Gaussian laser pulse deposition results in a Gaussian stress pulse in the substrate). The amplitude of that stress is determined by the material properties of the two adjacent media. In many cases, the pulses that are generated have compressive stress amplitudes of the order of GPa, corresponding to strains ϵ_{max} of

the order of 1%. Such a pulse can be expected to evolve a weak shock in times proportional to the time scales of the laser pulse and inversely proportional to ϵ_{max} . The generation of a shock and in particular the precise time and distance also depend on the nonlinear parameters of the medium and on the competing effects of absorption and attenuation. Because the test film interface is loaded by the difference between the stress at one time and the stress at a time $2h/c$ earlier (due to reflection from the free surface) (where h is the film thickness, c is the longitudinal wave speed in film),¹⁰ the development of a shock with an extremely rapid rise (or fall) time will significantly affect that load. The several-nanosecond rise time Gaussian pulse generated by the laser is inefficient for the purpose of spalling a $1\ \mu\text{m}$ film. For such a film, the interface load is related to the pulse's stress change over a time difference of 0.33 ns (0.66 ns for shear waves). The stress difference on the interface is therefore substantially less than the peak stress developed in the Gaussian stress pulse. If a shock develops with a sub-nanosecond rise (or fall) time, the peak stress on the interface can approach the peak value in the pulse. Therefore, materials with nonlinear properties that enhance shock development are desirable for testing thin-film interface properties.

Because fused silica has the unusual property of softening under modest compression, the development of weak shocks in fused silica has received considerable attention in the literature. Wackerle¹¹ first reported the basic characteristics of compressive wave shapes in fused silica, including a ramp-wave front up to ~ 4 GPa (40 kbar). He concluded that fused silica behaves as a nonlinear elastic solid up to the phase change at 9.8 GPa. Later, Barker and Hollenbach¹² demonstrated the existence of rarefaction shocks in fused silica (as opposed to the more common compression shocks found in other materials). They refined Wackerle's compressive wave data in the low stress region and confirmed Wackerle's assertion of elasticity by determining that the release stress-strain path followed in a rarefaction wave coincided with the compressive stress-strain path, which determines the compressive wave shape. Barker and Hollenbach¹² also

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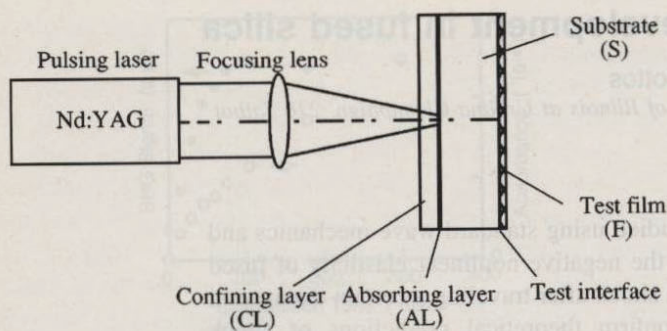


FIG. 1. Schematic of the tensile laser-spallation technique.

fitted the compressive wave data into a fourth-order stress-strain relation

$$\sigma = \alpha\epsilon + \beta\epsilon^2 + \gamma\epsilon^3 + \zeta\epsilon^4, \quad (1)$$

where σ is the stress in GPa, $\alpha = 77.6$ GPa, $\beta = -415.9$ GPa, $\gamma = 3034.0$ GPa and $\zeta = -6926.0$ GPa. Equation (1) is valid for stresses up to the phase transition at about 9.8 GPa. The stress-strain relation in Eq. (1) is plotted in Fig. 2(a) for stresses up to 9.8 GPa. By taking the derivative of Eq. (1) with respect to ϵ , one obtains the relation between the tangent modulus and stress (or strain), which is plotted in Fig. 2(b). Under compressive stress below 4 GPa (corresponding to a strain of 6.5%), the tangent modulus decreases or "softens" with increasing stress. For stresses

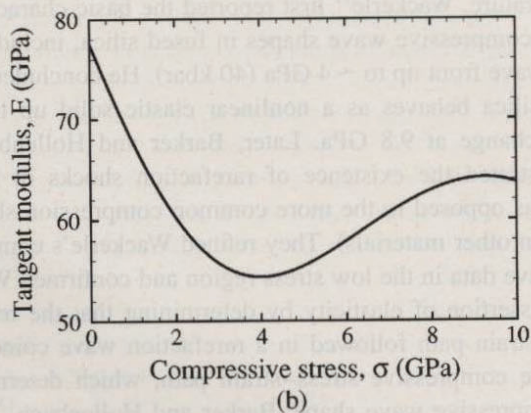
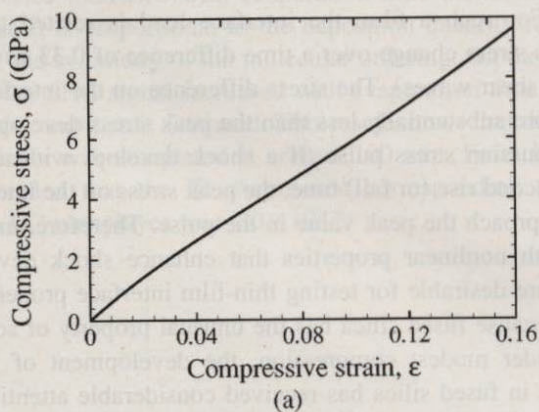


FIG. 2. Nonlinear elastic properties of fused silica: (a) stress-strain relation; (b) tangent modulus as a function of stress.

above 4 GPa, the tangent modulus increases or "hardens" with increasing stress. In the low stress region, fused silica has the potential for developing a shock.

II. THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SHOCK DEVELOPMENT

Standard wave-propagation theory in nonlinear elastic solids¹³ is used to analyze the shock development problem in fused silica. First, the wave motion is considered in the reference frame (X, t) . The governing equations are

$$\rho_0 \frac{\partial v}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial X} \quad (\text{balance of momentum}), \quad (2)$$

$$\frac{\partial \epsilon}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial v}{\partial X} \quad (\text{conservation of material}), \quad (3)$$

where ρ_0 is the density, $v(X, t)$ and $\sigma(X, t)$ are the material velocity and stress, respectively. Assuming a constitutive relation of the form

$$\sigma = \sigma(\epsilon), \quad (4)$$

and that v is a single valued function of σ , one may write

$$\frac{\partial v}{\partial t} = \frac{\partial v}{\partial \sigma} \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial t}, \quad \frac{\partial v}{\partial X} = \frac{\partial v}{\partial \sigma} \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial X} \quad (5)$$

and Eqs. (2) and (3) become

$$\rho_0 \frac{\partial v}{\partial \sigma} \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial t} - \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial X} = 0, \quad (6)$$

$$\frac{\partial \epsilon}{\partial \sigma} \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial t} - \frac{\partial v}{\partial \sigma} \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial X} = 0. \quad (7)$$

Solving Eqs. (6) and (7) leads to

$$\rho_0 \left(\frac{\partial v}{\partial \sigma} \right)^2 = \frac{\partial \epsilon}{\partial \sigma}. \quad (8)$$

For a given function of $\sigma(\epsilon)$, $\partial \epsilon / \partial \sigma$ is fixed function of σ , thus Eq. (8) has two solutions for $v = v(\sigma)$. Once the root is chosen, a speed of propagation of characteristics can be identified [from Eq. (6)]

$$c(\sigma) = \frac{1}{\rho_0 \frac{\partial v}{\partial \sigma}} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\rho_0 \frac{\partial \epsilon}{\partial \sigma}}} = \sqrt{\frac{1}{\rho_0} \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial \epsilon}}. \quad (9)$$

The time it takes the stress wave to propagate through a distance L is given by

$$t_L = \frac{L}{c(\sigma)} = \frac{L \sqrt{\rho_0}}{\sqrt{\frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial \epsilon}}}. \quad (10)$$

For a fused silica substrate with the stress-strain relation provided by Barker and Hollenbach¹² [Eqs. (9) (10)], the speed of the propagation of characteristics is

$$\begin{aligned}
c(\sigma) &= \sqrt{\frac{1}{\rho_0}(\alpha + 2\beta\sigma)} \quad (\text{second-order approximation}) \\
&= \sqrt{\frac{\alpha}{\rho_0} \left(1 + \frac{2\beta\sigma}{\alpha}\right)} \quad (\text{first-order approximation}) \\
&= \sqrt{\frac{\alpha}{\rho_0} \left(1 + \frac{\beta\sigma}{\alpha^2}\right)} \quad ((1+a)^{1/2} \approx 1 + a/2) \\
&= c_0 \left(1 + \frac{\beta\sigma}{\alpha^2}\right), \tag{11}
\end{aligned}$$

where $c_0 = \sqrt{\alpha/\rho_0}$ coincides with the low-amplitude dilatational sound velocity in fused silica, 5.9391 mm/ μ s. The time/travel-distance ratio is given by

$$\frac{t_L}{L} = \frac{1}{c_0} \left(1 - \frac{\beta\sigma}{\alpha^2}\right). \tag{12}$$

Equations (11) and (12) reveal that in the low stress region, the speed of the stress wave as well as the time/travel-distance ratio are linear functions of the compressive stress. Higher amplitude stress has a lower travel speed, and thus higher time/travel-distance value, i.e., the higher amplitude compressive stress travels slower. In the actual laser spallation experiments, the stress pulse generated at the absorbing layer interface is a compressive Gaussian stress pulse. When it travels through a fused silica substrate, the Gaussian stress pulse will be deformed according to the relation given in Eq. (12). The low stress at the front of the pulse travels most quickly. The peak stress, initially a few nanoseconds behind the front of the pulse, will be retarded relative to the front of the pulse. The rising part of the compression pulse will be stretched and eventually evolve into a linear ramp. The falling part of the stress pulse evolves in a very different manner. The tail of the initial pulse propagates more quickly than the peak. After certain time, the tail overtakes the peak and a discontinuity in stress (and therefore in material velocity) develops. The time it takes for the tail of the stress pulse to overtake the peak, t_{sh} , can be estimated using the material properties apparent in the slope of the ramp in Eq. (12), the fall time of the laser pulse T , and the peak stress of the Gaussian stress pulse σ_p as

$$t_{sh} = \frac{T\alpha^2}{\beta\sigma_p}. \tag{13}$$

The deformed profile of an initial Gaussian stress pulse at any location x before it forms the shock is given by the stress-time of arrival relation

$$t = t_0 + \frac{x}{c_0} \left(1 - \frac{\beta\sigma}{\alpha^2}\right), \quad \text{for } x < c_0 t_{sh}, \tag{14}$$

where t_0 is related to stress σ by Eq. (15), i.e.

$$\sigma(t_0) = \sigma_{\max} \exp\left(-\frac{2t_0^2}{T^2}\right), \tag{15}$$

where $\sigma_{\max}$ is the peak compressive stress.

Equation (13) indicates that the time for a stress pulse to evolve into a shock is directly proportional to the fall time of the laser pulse and inversely proportional to the amplitude of

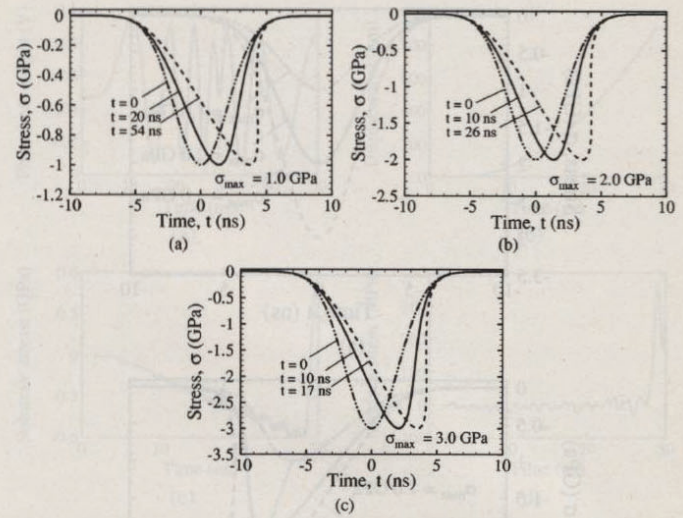


FIG. 3. Evolution of the Gaussian stress pulse in fused silica with time: (a) 1.0 GPa peak stress; (b) 2.0 GPa peak stress; (c) 3.0 GPa peak stress.

the stress. The laser used in our experiments has a fixed fall time of 4.1 ns.⁹ Thus, the higher the amplitude of the compressive stress, the shorter it takes the stress to evolve into a shock. From the values of T , α and β provided earlier, Eq. (13)'s estimated time for a shock to develop for a 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 GPa stress pulse are 58, 28, and 19 ns, respectively. Figure 3 shows the evolution process of a 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 GPa initial Gaussian stress pulse over time, calculated using Eqs. (14) and (15). A shock is developed for all three stress pulses at times similar to those estimated in Eq. (13). Clearly, stress pulses with higher peak values develop a shock in a shorter time.

In Fig. 4, the initial Gaussian stress pulses with peak values of 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 GPa are plotted together in (a), and the deformed stress pulses after traveling 20 ns in the media are plotted in (b). The peak stresses from the three pulses are fitted into a linear equation. The slope of the linear fit, -0.724 GPa/ns, is exactly predicted from Eq. (12).

After the shock is formed, the stress profile will continue to evolve according to the equal-area rule.¹⁴ The evolution process can be explained using the simplified model shown in Fig. 5. The total area under the stress profile is A_0 , the duration of the ramp is D , and the peak stress at an arbitrary moment is σ_p . Once a discontinuity has developed at the trailing edge of the profile, it will move with the speed equal to the average of the wave speeds behind and ahead of the shock¹³

$$v_{sh} = \frac{v_{sh+} + v_{sh-}}{2} = c_0 \left(1 + \frac{\beta\sigma_p}{2\alpha^2}\right). \tag{16}$$

Thus, the shock will move more slowly than the front of the linear ramp (zero stress). The ramp part will continue to be stretched and D will increase with time. According to the equal-area rule, the area A_0 will remain constant and thus

$$D = \frac{2A_0}{\sigma_p}, \tag{17}$$

$$\frac{\partial D}{\partial t} = -\frac{c_0\beta\sigma_p}{2\alpha^2}. \tag{18}$$

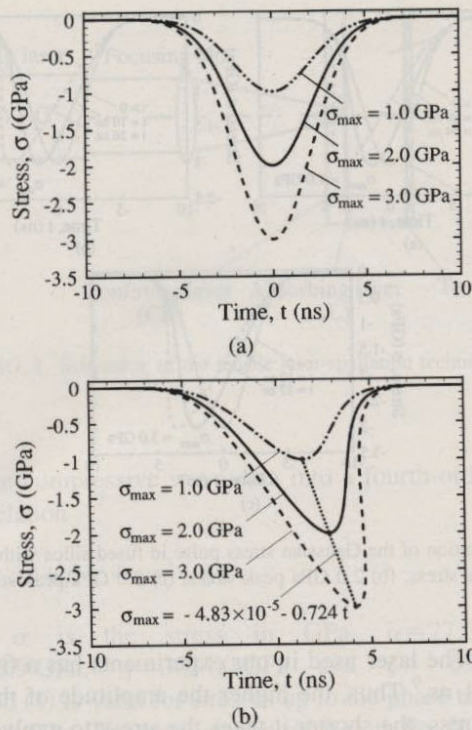


FIG. 4. Evolution of the Gaussian stress pulse in fused silica with time: (a) the initial Gaussian stress pulse of 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 GPa peak value; (b) the stress pulse in (a) traveled 20 ns in the substrate.

Substituting Eq. (17) into Eq. (18), one obtains

$$\frac{\partial \sigma_p}{\partial t} = \frac{c_0 \beta}{4A_0 \alpha^2} \sigma^3. \quad (19)$$

The solution of Eq. (19) takes the form

$$\sigma_p = \frac{1}{\sqrt{C_0 - \frac{c_0 \beta}{2A_0 \alpha^2} t}}, \quad (20)$$

where C_0 is a constant. Application of the initial condition

$$\sigma_p = \sigma_{p0} \quad \text{at } t = t_{sh}, \quad (21)$$

where σ_{p0} is the peak stress at the time the shock forms, yields

$$C_0 = \sigma_{p0}^{-2} + \frac{c_0 \beta}{2A_0 \alpha^2} t_{sh}. \quad (22)$$

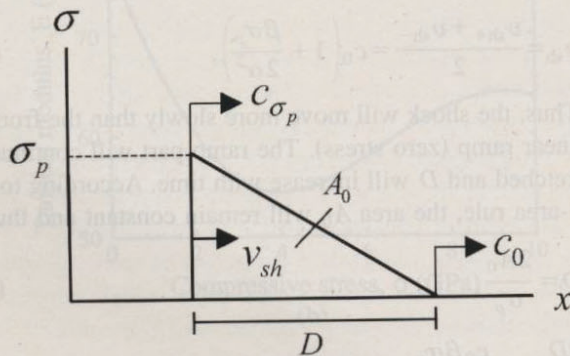


FIG. 5. Schematic of the shock motion.

Substituting the value of C_0 into Eq. (20) and simplifying, one obtains

$$\sigma_p = \frac{\sigma_{p0}}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{c_0 \beta}{2A_0 \alpha^2} (t - t_{sh}) \sigma_{p0}^2}}. \quad (23)$$

Therefore

$$A_0 = \frac{1}{2} D \sigma_{p0} \approx \frac{1}{2} (2c_0 T) \sigma_{p0} = c_0 T \sigma_{p0}. \quad (24)$$

Substituting Eqs. (24) and (13) into Eq. (23), one finally obtains

$$\sigma_p = \frac{\sigma_{p0}}{\sqrt{3/2 - \frac{\beta \sigma_{p0}}{2T \alpha^2} t}}, \quad \text{for } t > t_{sh}. \quad (25)$$

For fixed substrate thickness L

$$\sigma_p = \frac{\sigma_{p0}}{\sqrt{3/2 - \frac{\beta \sigma_{p0} L}{2c_0 T \alpha^2}}}. \quad (26)$$

The above equation is valid only after the shock has formed. In order to guarantee shock development before the stress travels through distance L , σ_{p0} must satisfy

$$\sigma_{p0} \geq \sigma_{p0}^{\min} = \frac{c_0 T \alpha^2}{\beta L}. \quad (27)$$

For a 1.5-mm-thick fused silica substrate the minimum peak stress is, $\sigma_{p0}^{\min} = 0.234$ GPa and for a 3-mm-thick fused silica substrate, $\sigma_{p0}^{\min} = 0.116$ GPa. In Fig. 6, the values of the attenuation factor σ_p / σ_{p0} and σ_p are plotted as functions of σ_{p0} for two substrate thicknesses, 1.5 and 3 mm, respectively.

As expected from Eq. (26) for the same initial peak stress σ_{p0} , greater attenuation occurs in the thicker substrate. For the same substrate thickness, L , greater attenuation occurs for larger initial peak stress σ_{p0} . The remaining peak stress σ_p , however, is still greater for greater initial peak stress σ_{p0} because $\sigma_p \propto (\sigma_{p0})^{1/2}$, for large σ_{p0} .

III. EXPERIMENTAL VERIFICATION

A. Procedure and sample preparation

Laser-induced shock development in fused silica was investigated using the spallation experiment described previously (Fig. 1). Samples consisted of a fused silica substrate with a thin aluminum test film and absorbing layer evaporated onto either side. Two different substrate thicknesses, 1.5 and 3.0 mm were tested. The Al deposition rate was held between 10 and 15 Å/s and the bell jar controlled at 2–5 mTorr. The test film thickness ranged from 0.5 to 1.1 μm depending on the substrate thickness. The optimal absorbing layer thickness was 0.4 μm for all samples.¹⁰ Waterglass was chosen for the confining layer based on previous research.^{7,10} The thickness of the waterglass layer significantly affected stress wave generation. As a result, waterglass thickness was varied between 0.4 and 30 μm depending on the substrate

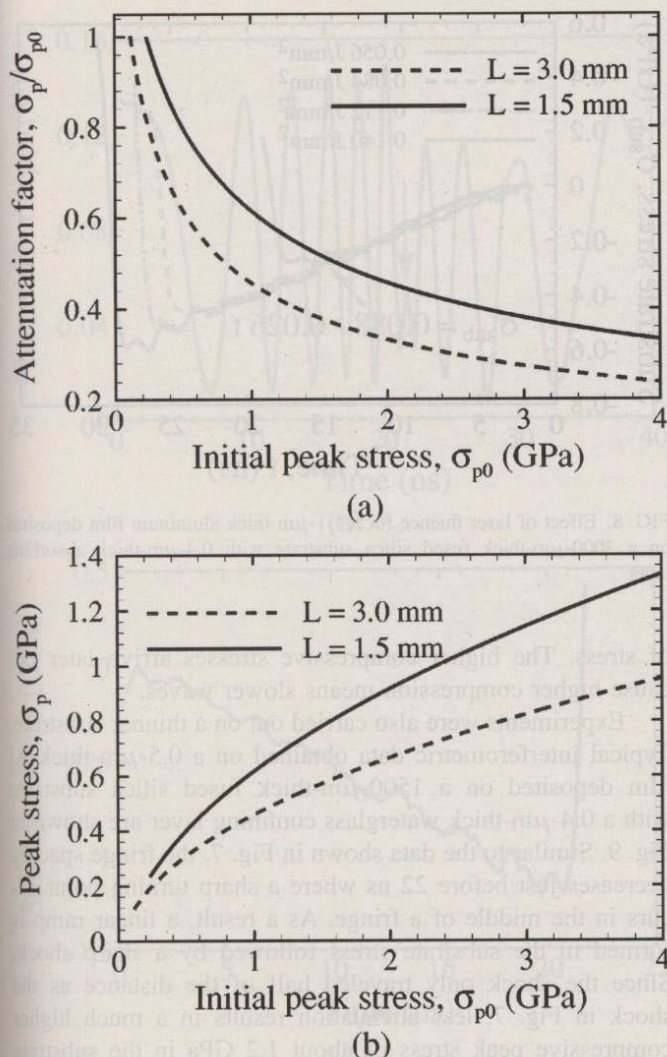


FIG. 6. Shock attenuation in fused silica: (a) attenuation factor as a function of initial peak stress and substrate thickness; (b) remaining peak stress as a function of initial peak stress and substrate thickness.

thicknesses. For thick waterglass layers (above 8 μm), waterglass solution was applied to the sample with a swab. For thinner layers, a standard photolithography spinner (Headway Research Inc., Garland, TX) was required. The final layer thickness was governed by the spinner rpm and the viscosity of the waterglass solution. The viscosity of the solution was adjusted by diluting the as received waterglass.

Samples were tested with an infrared, Nd:YAG (yttrium-aluminum-garnet) laser pulse ($\lambda = 1064$ nm) with a variable energy content between 1 and 110 mJ and a rise time on the order of 5 ns. The nominal diameter of the YAG laser beam was 3.5 mm. This beam was focused to a 1-mm-diam spot on the absorbing layer. (The theoretical analysis of Sec. II modeled the wave propagation as essentially one dimensional. This is justified for sufficiently short acoustic wavelength λ , or large diameter source or short propagation distance. One may invoke the usual acoustician's rule that the near field extends from a piston source of diameter D a distance $D^2/4\lambda$. Taking D to be 1 mm and λ to be 60 μm (corresponding to the nominal wavelength of the initially generated compressive pulse) one finds that the center of the beam remains plane-wave like for a propagation distance of 4 mm,

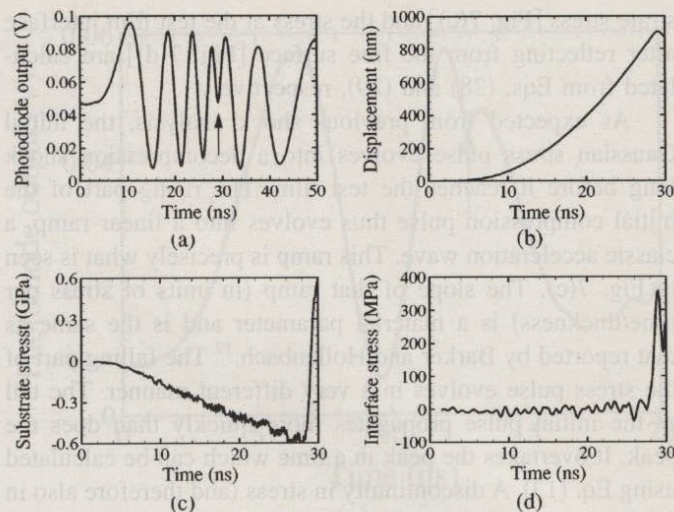


FIG. 7. Typical data profile for a 1.0- μm -thick Al film deposited on a 3000- μm -thick fused silica substrate (laser fluence of 0.140 J/mm²): (a) interferometric fringe pattern, arrow points to turning point; (b) displacement profile; (c) substrate stress profile; (d) interface stress profile.

greater than the thickest substrate used in the current experiment. If the appropriate λ is that of the shock, this distance is even greater.) By controlling the laser fluence, stress waves were generated with sufficient amplitude to fail the film/substrate interface. The out-of-plane displacement at the test film surface was measured with a Michelson interferometer.

From displacement measurements at the free surface, the stress history at the interface is inferred using standard wave mechanics¹⁵ and the maximum stress acting on the interface calculated. Details of the interferometric displacement measurement are provided in Wang, Weaver, and Sottos.¹⁰ Once the free surface displacement, u , is obtained, the compressive stress propagating from the absorbing layer towards the substrate is calculated using simple one-dimensional wave mechanics

$$\sigma_{\text{sub}} = -\frac{1}{2}(\rho c)_{\text{sub}} \frac{\partial u}{\partial t}. \quad (28)$$

For small film thickness h , the interface stress is calculated using

$$\sigma_{\text{inter}} = -(\rho h)_{\text{film}} \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2}. \quad (29)$$

B. Experimental results

A typical interferometric signal measured for a 1.0- μm -thick Al film deposited on a 3000- μm -thick fused silica substrate is shown in Fig. 7(a). The fringes develop over 20–30 ns and become more tightly spaced with time, indicating acceleration. At 29 ns, a turning point occurs (marked by an arrow) where the material velocity changes direction in the middle of a fringe. The displacement profile of the film free surface [Fig. 7(b)] is calculated from the fringe data [Fig. 7(a)]. Each full fringe corresponds to half wavelength ($\lambda/2 = 257$ nm) out-of-plane displacement. The compressive sub-

strate stress [Fig. 7(c)] and the stress at the test film interface after reflecting from the free surface [Fig. 7(d)] are calculated from Eqs. (28) and (29), respectively.

As expected from previous shock analysis, the initial Gaussian stress pulse evolves into a decompression shock long before it reaches the test film. The rising part of the initial compression pulse thus evolves into a linear ramp, a classic acceleration wave. This ramp is precisely what is seen in Fig. 7(c). The slope of that ramp (in units of stress per time/thickness) is a material parameter and is the same as that reported by Barker and Hollenbach.¹² The falling part of the stress pulse evolves in a very different manner. The tail of the initial pulse propagates more quickly than does the peak. It overtakes the peak in a time which can be calculated using Eq. (13). A discontinuity in stress (and therefore also in material velocity) develops when the tail overtakes the peak. That sufficient time has occurred in the present case for a decompression shock to develop is evident. After traveling through the substrate, the rising front edge of the pulse has stretched from about 4.1 to 20 or 30 ns. The falling tail end of the pulse has compressed by the same amount. An initial fall time of a few nanoseconds has therefore been reduced to nearly zero and this occurs long before the pulse arrives at the test film.

The experimental picture is complicated somewhat by the presence of a tensile wave, reflected from the back of the confining layer. The surface properties of that confining layer are not well controlled. Assuming a plausible longitudinal wave speed in the confining layer, the original compressive pulse is followed, about 30 ns later, by a tensile pulse of comparable magnitude. Being tensile, it propagates faster than the peak compressive stress, and faster than the low stress tail of the main pulse. It eventually overtakes the compressive pulse. In Fig. 7, the shock is followed by a regime in which the velocity has changed sign indicating that the tensile pulse has overtaken the compression pulse.

To verify the effect of the initial peak stress, different laser fluences were deposited onto different spots to generate stress pulses with different amplitudes. The sample has a test film thickness of 1.1 μm , fused-silica substrate thickness of 3000 μm , absorbing layer thickness of 0.4 μm and confining layer thickness of $\sim 20 \mu\text{m}$. The YAG laser fluence was stepped from 0.056 to 0.140 J/mm^2 as the YAG laser was moved to different positions on the sample. Figure 8 shows the development of stress with increasing laser fluence. As laser fluence increases, the maximum compressive substrate stress also increases. At 0.056 J/mm^2 laser fluence, the maximum substrate stress of 0.28 GPa is achieved in a rise time of 18 ns; while for 0.140 J/mm^2 laser fluence a maximum substrate stress of 0.6 GPa is obtained in 28.5 ns. The higher maximum stress always occurs at later times and is approximately proportional to the laser fluence. The shock profiles in Fig. 8 are consistent with the nonlinear behavior of fused silica. The slope of the ramp is fitted by a linear function. The average slope of the stress ramps, $-0.026 \text{ GPa}/\text{ns}$, is close to the theoretical value, $-0.028 \text{ GPa}/\text{ns}$, obtained using Barker's material parameters.¹² From these stress profiles, an effective wave speed can be extracted as a function

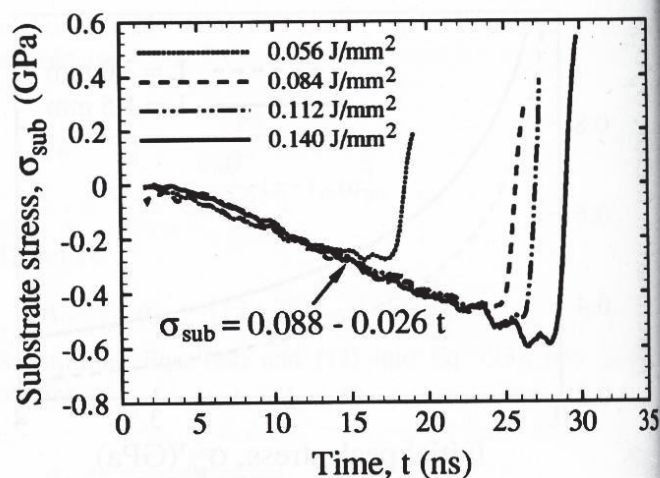


FIG. 8. Effect of laser fluence for a 1.1- μm -thick aluminum film deposited on a 3000- μm -thick fused silica substrate with 0.4- μm -thick absorbing layer.

of stress. The higher compressive stresses arrive later because higher compression means slower waves.

Experiments were also carried out on a thinner substrate. Typical interferometric data obtained on a 0.5- μm -thick Al film deposited on a 1500- μm -thick fused silica substrate with a 0.4- μm -thick watrglass confining layer are shown in Fig. 9. Similar to the data shown in Fig. 7, the fringe spacing decreases just before 22 ns where a sharp turning point occurs in the middle of a fringe. As a result, a linear ramp is formed in the substrate stress followed by a sharp shock. Since the shock only traveled half of the distance as the shock in Fig. 7, less attenuation results in a much higher compressive peak stress of about 1.2 GPa in the substrate and a very high tensile stress of about 420 MPa at the film interface. Thus the development of the shock significantly enhances the interface failure, especially for a very thin film or a thick substrate.

Experiments on both 3000 and 1500 μm reveal that watrglass confining layer thickness influences the measured shock stress profiles possibly through affecting the amplitude of the generated Gaussian stress pulse. Typical interferometric data obtained on a 0.5 μm Al film on a 1500- μm -thick fused silica substrate with a slightly thinner watrglass confining layer thickness, 0.25 μm , are shown in Fig. 10. Fewer fringes were developed before the turning point and a much lower substrate stress, only about 0.52 GPa, is generated. Thus thinner watrglass results in lower substrate stress, and also less film damage.

A series of experiments done with different watrglass thickness on the two substrate thicknesses, 3000 and 1500 μm indicated that different substrate thickness requires different optimum watrglass thickness to generate enough stress to fail the interface. The optimum thickness for the 1500- μm -thick fused silica is about 0.4 μm and the optimum watrglass thickness for 3000- μm -thick fused silica is above 8 μm . The exact thickness is hard to determine due to the difficulty in accurately controlling the watrglass thickness above 8 μm , but is approximately 30 μm .⁹ A watrglass layer below the optimum thickness will not generate a stress high enough to fail the film and a watrglass layer much

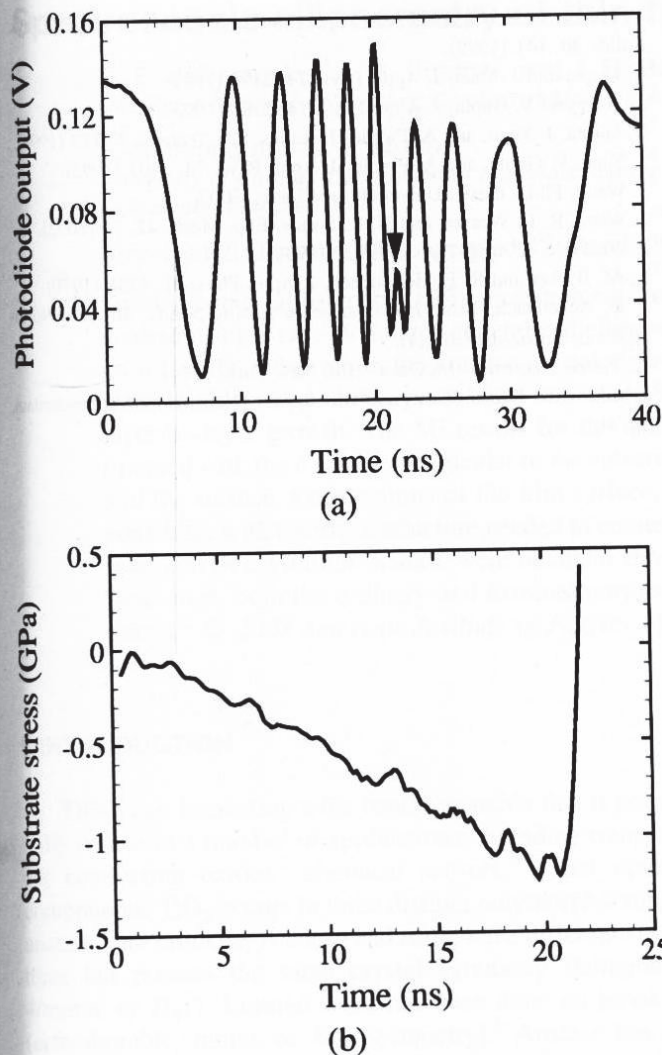


FIG. 9. Interferometric signal obtained for a 0.5- μm -thick aluminum film deposited on a 1500- μm -thick fused-silica substrate with 0.4- μm -thick waterglass (laser fluence of 0.140 J/mm²): (a) photodiode output; (b) substrate stress. Arrow points to the position where fringes suddenly changed direction.

thicker than the optimum thickness tends to generate a very high stress level, resulting in excessive film failure. Thus, substrate thickness, film thickness, waterglass thickness and the laser fluence need to be carefully coordinated to optimize interfacial failure.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Weak shock development following the deposition of a Gaussian laser pulse in fused silica was analyzed using standard wave mechanics and verified experimentally in a spallation test. Using the well documented negative nonlinear elastic properties of fused silica, theoretical predictions revealed that a decompression shock formed in time directly proportional to the rise time and inversely proportional to the peak value of the initial pulse. Evolution of the shock followed the equal-area rule and thus the peak stress attenuated as it traveled through a longer distance.

Experimental measurements confirmed theoretical considerations. A decompression shock was clearly evident in

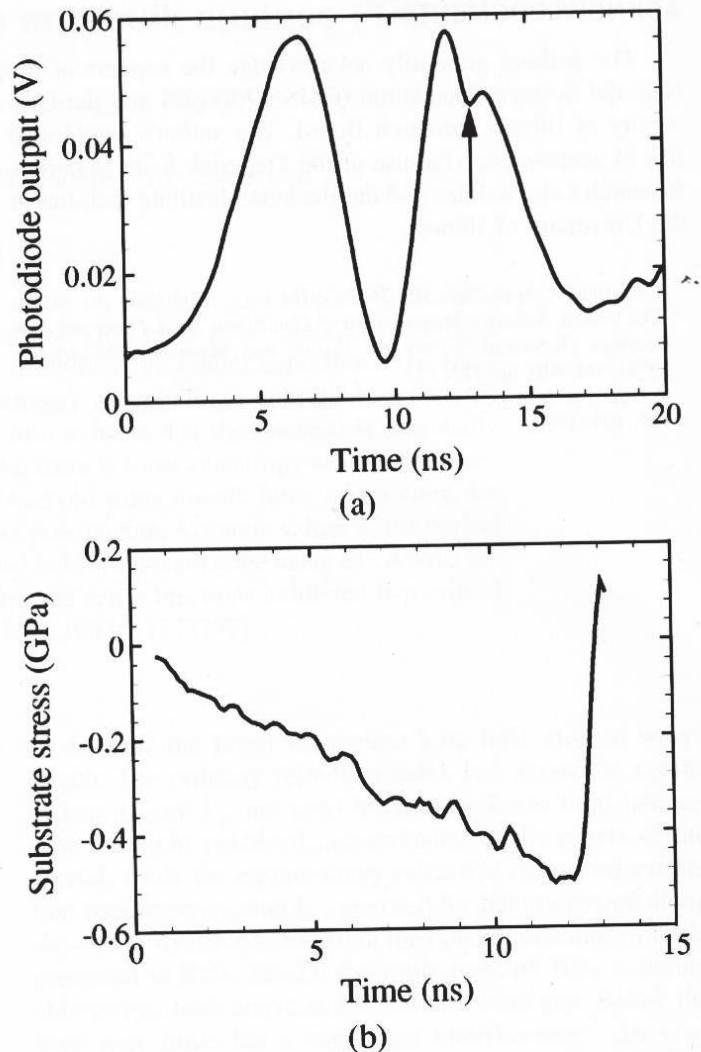


FIG. 10. Interferometric signal obtained for a 0.5- μm -thick aluminum film deposited on a 1500- μm -thick fused-silica substrate with 0.25- μm -thick waterglass (laser fluence of 0.140 J/mm²): (a) photodiode output; (b) substrate stress. Arrow points to the position where fringes suddenly changed direction.

the interferometric data obtained during a tensile spallation experiment. The slope of the characteristic stress ramp was identical to the value for fused silica reported by Barker and Hollenbach¹² from early flyer plate experiments. The maximum stress developed in the substrate increased nonlinearly with laser power and decreased significantly with substrate thickness due to attenuation. The waterglass confining layer was also shown to play an important role in the shock formation. A thicker confining layer helped to generate a higher compressive stress in the substrate, but if the confining layer was too thick excessive film damage occurred. In all of the experiments, the fast fall time of the shock wave resulted in significant tensile loading of the planar interface between the substrate and the test film.

The development of the shock greatly enhances the ability to fail the interface, even at moderate laser fluences. This technique of laser-induced shock wave loading holds significant promise for testing interface properties of ultrathin films (below 100 nm) that are difficult to fail due to their small mass [see Eq. (29)].

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