



in-situ TEM observations of irradiation damage in boron carbide

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In situ TEM observations of irradiation damage in boron carbide

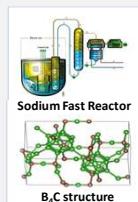
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General Background



Generation IV Sodium Fast reactor (SFR)

Neutron absorber: Boron carbide B_4C

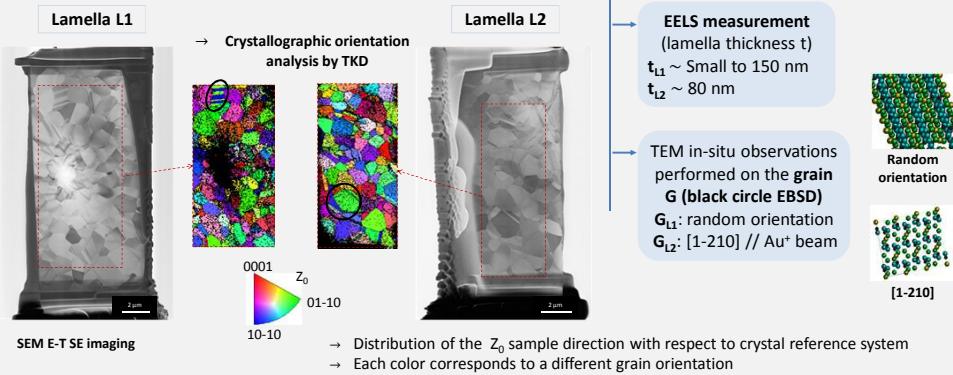
Behavior under irradiation:
role of ballistic and electronic damage

Aim of the study

- Observe the formation of ballistic damage induced by heavy ions (Au^+) irradiation
- Observe the crystallographic orientation effects on the damage formation
- Identify the amorphisation threshold (comparison with recent results of D. Gosset et al.*)

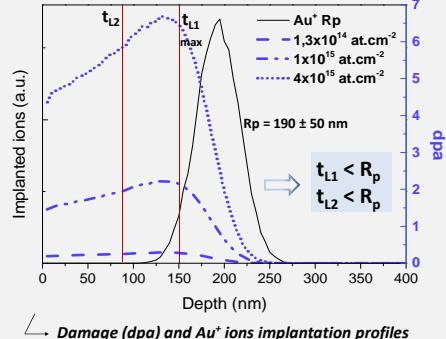
Experimental protocole

→ Lamella preparation using the **Focused Ion Beam (FIB)** technique



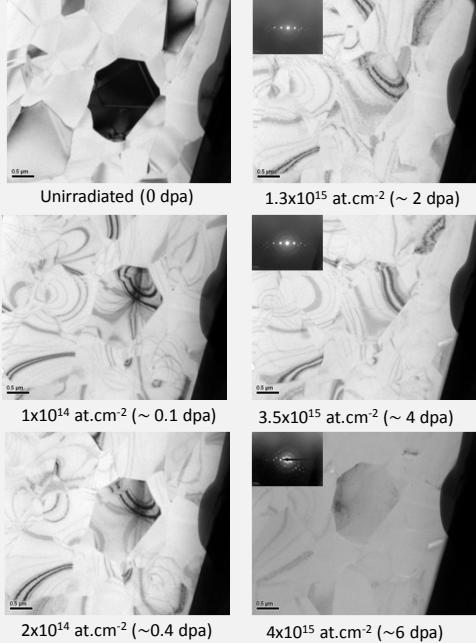
Irradiation conditions simulated by SRIM:

- 1 MeV Au^+ ions at RT
- Fluence: from 1×10^{13} to $4 \times 10^{15} \text{ at.cm}^{-2}$



Main results

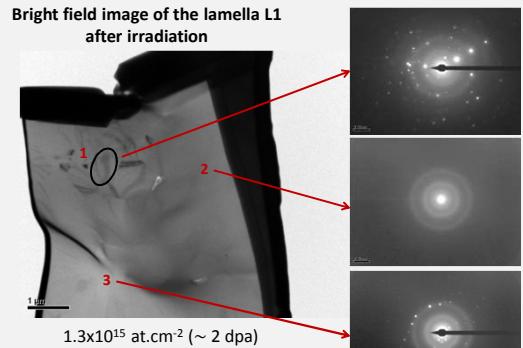
Irradiation of lamella L2 (Bright field)



Damage formation:

- 0 to $2 \times 10^{14} \text{ at.cm}^{-2}$: 0 to 0.4 dpa
Local curvature of the sample due to an important stress induced in the material
- $1.2 \times 10^{14} \text{ at.cm}^{-2}$: ~ 0.2 dpa
Appearance of « black dots »
- $1 \times 10^{15} \text{ at.cm}^{-2}$: ~ 1.6 dpa
Growth of the « black dots » until observation of larger stress field of :
→ Dislocation loops ~ 20 nm
- $2.5 \times 10^{15} < \phi < 4 \times 10^{15} \text{ at.cm}^{-2}$
 $4 < x < 6 \text{ dpa}$
Amorphisation threshold

Irradiation of lamella L1:



Diffraction patterns:

- In the area observed in-situ under constant electron beam irradiation - 1
- In a thick part of the lamella (~ 150 nm) - 2 After irradiation
- In a thin part of the lamella (< 100 nm) - 3

Observations - Conclusion

No crystallographic orientation effect:

→ defects created homogeneously in the whole lamella, whatever the grain orientation

Effect of the electron beam :

→ Self-healing of the material under electron beam combined with the ballistic effect of the ion beam

Effect of the ion implantation:

→ Amorphisation at fluences 2-3x lower when presence of Au atoms:
 1.3×10^{15} instead of $3-4 \times 10^{15} \text{ at.cm}^{-2}$

*Reference: D. Gosset et al., Nucl. Instr. Meth. Phys. Res. Sect. B, 365 (2015) 300-304

Acknowledgments

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