

**Growth and Thermal Stability of V-Al-C Thin Films and Infiltration and
Oxidation Resistance of Al₂O₃ Infiltrated Iron Foam**

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approved thesis

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Abstract

The goals of the current thesis is to contribute towards understanding (1) the growth of V₂AIC MAX phase thin films and (2) the influence of temperature on the thickness homogeneity of α-Al₂O₃ that is infiltrated into open porous cellular iron.

V-Al-C thin films were deposited on Al₂O₃(1120) substrates at 500°C by DC magnetron sputtering using a powder metallurgical composite target with 2:1:1 MAX phase stoichiometry. TEM and XRD results suggest that a hexagonal Al-containing vanadium carbide solid solution (V,Al)₂C_x was formed. The films exhibited a strong basal plane texture. The lattice parameter of the hexagonal solid solution was dependent on the annealing temperature: the c lattice parameter decreased by 3.45% after annealing for 1 hour at 750°C compared to the as deposited film. Based on the comparison between experimental and theoretical lattice parameter data, it is reasonable to assume that this annealing induced change in lattice parameter is a consequence of atomic ordering. Meanwhile, the formation of V₂AIC MAX phase was observed at 650°C and phase-pure V₂AIC was obtained at 850°C. TEM images support the notion that V₂AIC forms by nucleation and growth.

V-Al-C thin films were deposited from a powder metallurgical composite target by DC magnetron sputtering and High Power Impulse Magnetron Sputtering (HIPIMS) at 500°C with an average power of 250 W. The effect of pressure, distance, substrate bias potential as well as duty cycle of HIPIMS on the film composition was investigated. The results show that nano crystalline V₂AIC MAX phase is formed in a (V,Al)₂C_x matrix at 500°C during HIPIMS at 3-10% duty cycle. Film composition and ion energy flux appear to be prerequisites for MAX formation at this temperature.

The second part of this thesis focuses on chemical vapour deposition/infiltration and oxidation.

Open porous cellular iron may be used as structural material but also in filters and heat exchangers due to its large specific surface area, low density, and good thermal

conductivity. Currently, the low oxidation resistance of iron limits its use. One way to enhance the oxidation resistance is to deposit a protective α -Al₂O₃ coating onto the cellular iron surface using chemical vapour infiltration. Here, I investigate the influence of deposition temperature on the α -Al₂O₃ coating thickness homogeneity. X-ray diffraction results show that phase-pure α -Al₂O₃ coatings grow at 950~1100°C. Homogeneous coating thickness is favoured at infiltration temperatures below 1000°C, which is a prerequisite for efficient oxidation protection. In-line processing integrating annealing on green cellular iron sample and TiN infiltration treatment steps in one process was successfully carried out. The oxidation resistance before and after CVI is investigated by thermo gravimetrical analysis (TGA). The reaction products, surface morphologies and cross sections are investigated by X-ray diffraction, chemical analysis and electron microscopy. α -Al₂O₃ infiltrated cellular iron samples exhibit up to 6 orders of magnitude lower oxidation rate at an oxidation temperature of 600°C, compared to the unprotected cellular iron. In addition, the infiltrated sample shows good resistance during thermal cycling up to this temperature.

Abstrakt

Das Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es, zum Verständnis (1) der Wachstumsmechanismen von V₂AIC MAX-Phasen Dünnschichten und (2) des Einflusses der Temperatur auf die Dicken homogenität von α -Al₂O₃, welches in offenporiges zelluläres Eisen infiltriert wird, beizutragen.

V-Al-C Dünnschichten wurden auf Al₂O₃(1120) Substraten bei 500°C mittels Gleichstrom Magnetron Sputtern abgeschieden. Dazu wurde ein pulvermetallurgisches Target mit V₂AIC-Stöchiometrie benutzt. Transmissionselektronenmikroskopie (TEM) und Röntgenbeugung (XRD) deuten darauf hin, dass ein hexagonaler Al-haltiger Vanadiumkarbid-Mischkristall (V,Al)₂C_x gebildet wurde. Die Filme zeigten eine starke Basalebenen-Textur. Der Gitterparameter des hexagonalen Mischkristalls war abhängig von der Glühtemperatur: der c-Gitterparameter sank um 3,45% nach Glühen für 1 Stunde bei 750°C. Basierend auf dem Vergleich zwischen experimentellen und theoretischen Gitterparametern, ist es vernünftig anzunehmen, dass diese durch Glühen induzierte Änderung des Gitterparameters eine Folge der atomaren Ordnung ist. Die Bildung von V₂AIC MAX-Phase wurde bei 650°C beobachtet und reines V₂AIC wurde bei 850°C erhalten. TEM-Bilder bekräftigen, dass V₂AIC durch Keimbildung und -wachstum gebildet wurde.

Darüber hinaus wurden V-Al-C Dünnschichten von einem pulvermetallurgischen Target mittels High Power Impulse Magnetron Sputtern (HIPIMS) und Gleichstrom Magnetron Sputtern bei 500°C abgeschieden. Die zeitlich gemittelte Leistung wurde in beiden Fällen bei 250 W konstant gehalten. Der Einfluss von Druck, Abstand und Substrat-Potential auf die Zusammensetzung des Films wurde untersucht. Nanokristalline V₂AIC MAX-Phase wurde bei 500°C Substrattemperatur als Minderheit in einer (V,Al)₂C_x Matrix beobachtet, wenn HIPIMS mit 3-10% Einschaltzeit benutzt wurde. Die Zusammensetzung und der Ionenenergiefluss scheinen Voraussetzung für die MAX-Phasen-Bildung bei dieser Temperatur zu sein.

Der Schwerpunkt des zweiten Teils dieser Arbeit liegt auf chemischer Gasphasenabscheidung, -infiltration und Oxidation.

Offenporiges zelluläres Eisen kann als Baumaterial verwendet werden, allerdings auch als Filter und Wärmetauscher aufgrund seiner großen spezifischen Oberfläche, geringen Dichte und guten Wärmeleitfähigkeit. Derzeit beschränkt die geringe Oxidationsbeständigkeit von Eisen seine Verwendung. Ein Weg, um die Oxidationsbeständigkeit zu verbessern, ist, eine schützende α - Al_2O_3 Beschichtung auf der zellulären Eisenoberfläche mittels chemischer Gasphaseninfiltration aufzubringen. Hier wird der Einfluss von Beschichtungstemperatur auf die Homogenität der α - Al_2O_3 Beschichtungsdicke untersucht. Das Ergebnis von der Röntgenbeugung zeigt, dass reine α - Al_2O_3 Beschichtungen bei 950-1100°C wachsen. Eine homogene Schichtdicke wird bei Infiltrationstemperatur unterhalb von 1000°C begünstigt, was eine Voraussetzung für einen effizienten Schutz vor Oxidation ist. In-line Prozessführung wurde erfolgreich durchgeführt, so dass das Glühen eines zellulären Eisengrünkörpers und TiN Infiltration in einen Prozess integriert wurde.

Preface

The work presented in this Ph.D. thesis is the research work carried out in Materials Chemistry, RWTH Aachen University, Germany.

Publications contribute to this thesis:

1. ***Infiltration of Open Porous Cellular Iron with $\alpha\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$***
Y. Jiang, D.E. Hajas, and J.M. Schneider, Steel Research Int., 81 (2010) No.8.
2. ***Oxidation Resistance of $\alpha\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$ Infiltrated Open Porous Cellular Iron***
D.E. Hajas, Y. Jiang, S. Angel, S.L. Schulze, W. Bleck, and J.M. Schneider, Steel Research Int., 81 (2010) No.11.
3. ***Growth and Thermal Stability of $(V,\text{Al})_2\text{C}_x$ Thin Films***
Y. Jiang, R. Iskandar, T. Takahashi, J. Zhang, M. to Baben, J. Emmerlich, J. Mayer, and J.M. Schneider, Journal of Materials Research, 27 (2012) No.19, 2511-2519.
4. ***Growth of V-Al-C Thin Films by Direct Current and High Power Impulse Magnetron Sputtering from a Powder Metallurgical Composite Target***
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