Structural studies of Co nanoparticle arrays on fluorite surfaces

Nikolai SOKOLOV*, 1, Sergey SUTURIN1, Reginald KYUTT1, Andrey LOMOV2, Masao TABUCHI3 and Yoshikazu TAKEDA4
1Ioffe Physical-Technical Institute, St.Petersburg 194021, Russia
2Shubnikov Institute of Crystallography, Moscow 17333, Russia
3Venture Business Laboratory, Nagoya University, Nagoya 464-8603, Japan
4Department of Crystalline Materials Science, Nagoya University, Nagoya 464-8603, Japan

Introduction
The demand for new magnetic memories with higher density of information storage is well-known. Cobalt on fluorite (CaF2) surfaces is an interesting materials system for studies in this field. CaF2(111) surface can be grown atomically flat, while CaF2(110) surface is {111}-facetted with grooves and ridges running along [1-10] direction. Epitaxial commensurate (3:2) growth of Co on CaF2 was earlier demonstrated by electron diffraction [1,2]; however no detailed structural information was obtained.

Experimental
The samples were grown on Si(111) by molecular beam epitaxy (MBE). Calcium fluoride buffer layer was deposited on atomically clean Si(111) or Si(001) surface providing isotropic (111) or anisotropic (110) template for further Co overgrowth. Studied in this work, arrays of Co nanoparticles were grown at 300-500°C using E-beam source and covered with thin (2-3 nm) CaF2 cap layer. Prior to GIXRD studies, the structures were characterized by electron diffraction [1,2]; however no detailed structural information was obtained.

Results and discussion
Figure 1 shows intensity distribution along -1 0 L rod measured for the sample #6031 (14 nm Co@500°C on CaF2/Si(111)). One can see that the strongest peaks are due to the metastable at room temperature fcc phase with 11-1 and 220 reflections corresponding to the A-type epitaxial relation (not rotated by 180°) at the Co(111)/CaF2(111) interface; weaker 002 peak belongs to the rotational twin. Less intense peaks at L=0.5 and 1.0 can be associated with minor amount of the hcp phase.

To analyse shapes of Co and CaF2 reflections a CCD detector was used for measurements of intensity distribution. For the sample with Co nanoparticles grown at 500°C on the grooved and ridged CaF2(110) surface a series of 2D images was taken around the Co(111) reflection (see upper part of Fig.2). By carrying out a 3D reconstruction of the CCD images, one can conclude that the Co reflection has two inclined CTRs indicating that the nanoparticles have 100 and 010 facets (see lower part in Fig.2). Interestingly, the revealed ridges of Co nanoparticles are rotated by 90° relative to the ridges of CaF2(110) buffer layer.

Fig.2. Series of 2D images taken at different azimuthal angle \( \varphi \) and revealing (100) and (010) facets of Co nanoparticles grown on the grooved and ridged CaF2(110) surface (#6039).

Similar measurements were carried out for the Co nanoparticles grown on the (111) surface where the reflection maps revealed Co and CaF2 CTRs normal to the substrate surface. Thus the measurements allowed determination of crystal structure and epitaxial relations. Moreover, 3D analysis of the reflection shape revealed Co nanoparticle faceting, which was not observed by atomic force microscopy because of its insufficient resolution.

References

* nsokolov@fl.ioffe.ru