

EFFECTS of Kr and Xe ION IRRADIATION on the STRUCTURE of Y₂O₃ NANOPRECIPITATES in YBCO THIN FILM CONDUCTORS

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Abstract.

The response of Y_2O_3 nanoprecipitates in a 1- μm $YBa_2Cu_3O_{7-x}$ layer from a superconducting wire Ag/YBCO/buffer metal oxides/Hastelloy to 107 MeV Kr and 167 MeV Xe ion irradiation was investigated using a combination of transmission electron microscopy, diffraction and X-ray energy dispersive spectrometry. The direct observation of the radiation induced tracks in Y_2O_3 nanocrystals is reported for the first time to the best authors' knowledge. Structureless damaged regions of 5-9 nm (average 8 nm) in diameter were observed in Y_2O_3 nanocrystals when the electronic stopping power S_e was about or higher than 4.7 keV/nm. This value of S_e is the upper estimate of the minimum electronic stopping power to create damage in yttria nanocrystals. The electron diffraction patterns and HRTEM/HRSTEM Fourier transform patterns from areas extending a few nanometers around the tracks show that yttria and YBCO keep their respective cubic and orthorhombic pristine structures.

Keywords: yttria, YBCO, Kr and Xe ions, radiation damage, transmission electron microscopy, electron diffraction.

1. Introduction

Yttria (Y_2O_3) nanoprecipitates play a critical role in a number of composite materials, such as oxide dispersion strengthened alloys where precipitates can dissolve depending on irradiation conditions [1] and $YBa_2Cu_3O_{7-x}$ -based high temperature superconductors (YBCO HTS). In YBCO HTS, they attract attention to their possible role as flux pinning centers [2, 3]. Yttria precipitates of nanometer size may form due to deviations from the exact 1:2:3 YBCO

stoichiometry during synthesis, for instance by an excess of yttrium precursor in metalorganic chemical vapor deposition [4].

Heavy-ion irradiation with low fluences [5] is a potential way to improve further the critical current density by creating extra pinning centers with controlled diameters, direction and continuity [6]. In our previous work on the silver coated $\text{YBa}_2\text{Cu}_3\text{O}_{7-x}$ superconducting film deposited on a buffer and Hastelloy, we found that irradiation with 107 MeV $^{84}\text{Kr}^{17+}$ ($\sim 2 \cdot 10^{10}$ and $\sim 6 \cdot 10^{10} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ fluences) increased the critical current by 5%, while the transition temperature remained the same as for non-irradiated samples (90 K), and the adhesion at the Hastelloy / buffer interface improved significantly [7]. Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) and X-ray energy dispersive spectrometry (EDS) investigation show that irradiation under such conditions creates spherical or prolate damaged regions of 3-5 nm in diameter in the YBCO grains. In the absence of any diffraction contrast or lattice image contrast they are considered as structureless while the surrounding matter retains the pristine YBCO orthorhombic structure Pmmm [8]. The present work extends the investigation to the irradiation damage in the buried Y_2O_3 nanocrystals.

The cubic form of yttria (space symmetry group Ia) [9] is the most stable structure up to a temperature of 2705 K [10]. Swamy et al [11] reported that above this temperature it was believed that cubic form transforms to the hexagonal structure. A phase transformation from the cubic a to monoclinic phase (space group C2/m) has been induced by dynamic compression (shock-loading to 12-25 GPa) of a sintered powder in a propellant gun [12] or high energy ball milling powders of 50 μm particles [13]. Alternatively, yttria nanocrystals with monoclinic structure can be directly synthesized using furnace-based heating and condensation [14], ultra-fine yttrium particles oxidation [15], flame aerosol [16] and gas phase flame methods [17]. The reverse transition is reported when yttria in monoclinic phase, stable at a 2.5 GPa static pressure

and 1273 K temperature and higher, is annealed in air at 1000°C and atmospheric pressure for several hours [18].

A phase transition from the normal cubic yttria structure to the monoclinic high temperature/high pressure induced by swift ions irradiation at room temperature and pressure is reported for Mo [19, 20], Pb [20, 21], S, Cd, Ta [20, 22], and Xe [23] ions of different energies (electronic stopping powers in the range 3 to 38 keV·nm⁻¹) and fluences (from 0.3·10¹² to 1·10¹⁶ cm⁻²). These studies were performed by X-ray diffraction (XRD) and the most prominent changes on diffraction patterns were observed in samples prepared by sintering yttria nanoparticles obtained by ball-milling coarser powders [19, 20, 22] whereas additional observation on thin yttria sputtered coatings on silicon were obtained in [23] by SAED/TEM and EELS. The transformation mechanism under irradiation was attributed to an abrupt increase of the lattice temperature up to melting in a cylindrical region around the ion path followed by a rapid quenching together with an induced pressure wave that could trig the cubic to monoclinic transition in the whole nanocrystal about 20 nm or less in size [21].

However, Som et al. [24–26] did not observe any cubic - monoclinic phase transformation. in Y₂O₃ doped phosphors powders after irradiation by energetic Ni⁷⁺ ($S_e \sim 11.5$ keV/nm), Ag⁹⁺ ($S_e \sim 18.2$ keV/nm) and Au⁸⁺ ($S_e \sim 20.8$ keV/nm) ions with fluences ranged from 1·10¹¹ to 1·10¹³ ions/cm². Instead they report a reduction in particle size from 65 nm to 20 nm (mode diameters in histograms) that they attributed to the fragmentation of grains under the swift heavy ion irradiation.

Beside the aspect of pinning flux in superconductors, a better knowledge on the possible phase transition in yttria nanoprecipitates induced by irradiation is also highly desirable with regard to mechanical properties since this transformation is accompanied by a density increase from 5.032 to 5.468 g/cm³ and a molecular volume decrease by about 8 % [18, 14].

Several experimental techniques can be used to gather information on the electronic stopping power threshold or the size of the region damaged by irradiation like Rutherford backscattering spectrometry in channeling geometry [27, 28], atomic force microscopy [29, 30], profilometry [31], X-ray diffraction [32], Mössbauer spectroscopy [33], transmission electron microscopy [34, 35]. Their results are most often partial and require indirect interpretation based on models with exception of transmission electron microscopy (TEM) that provides a direct access to morphological and structural information to the micro- to atom scale.

Yttria is one of the materials whose parameters based on direct observation of latent tracks are still missing. The present TEM study is aimed at a characterization of damaged regions in Y_2O_3 nanoprecipitates in YBCO layer after irradiation by ^{84}Kr and ^{131}Xe ions with different energies and finding the electronic energy loss (or electronic stopping power S_e) threshold for track formation. A particular attention was also given toward the stability of yttria nanoprecipitates in order to ascertain the existence or absence of the cubic to monoclinic transition.

2. Materials and methods

The studied 2G HTS tapes from Super Power Inc. are made of a silver cap, a 1 μm thick YBCO film, a multilayer buffer metal oxides LaMnO_3 / MgO / Y_2O_3 / Al_2O_3) and a 100 μm thick Hastelloy substrate. Coupons of size 1.0 x 0.5 cm^2 were irradiated at room temperature with 167 MeV $^{131}\text{Xe}^{27+}$ and 107 MeV $^{84}\text{Kr}^{17+}$ ions to fluences of 10^{11} cm^{-2} and $5 \times 10^{11} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ in the IC-100 cyclotron at the Flerov Laboratory of Nuclear Reactions of the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research. To prevent sample heating the samples were mounted with double sided carbon tapes on water-cooled copper holders kept at 20 °C and irradiated by scanning Xe and Kr ion over the whole specimen surface with an average ion flux of $2 \times 10^8 \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$. In order to get energies lower than those of the primary 1.2 MeV/amu beams, aluminum degraders 6.5 and 9.5 μm thick were

used to lower the primary ion energy to that chosen for irradiation. The energy lowering by the degraders and the electronic stopping power S_e were calculated using the SRIM2013 code [36].

The dispersion and structure of the yttria nanocrystals in YBCO before and after irradiation was investigated by conventional TEM and scanning TEM (STEM) Bright and High Angle Annular Dark Field modes (BF STEM and HAADF STEM) and Selected Area Electron Diffraction (SAED) under a Tecnai Osiris/FEI microscope (200 kV with a high brightness X-FEG field emission gun). The study of the structure down to the atom level was carried out by High-Resolution Transmission Electron Microscopy (HRTEM), BF and HAADF HRSTEM under a Titan G³ 80 - 300 kV/FEI and a Libra 200 FE HR/Zeiss 200 kV microscope. Care was taken to prevent electron irradiation damage using an illumination intensity as low as possible, avoiding unnecessary exposition to the beam during the search and setup and a short exposure time to record images.

The elements distribution in the layered structure of the tape was observed with an EDS ChemiSTEM X-ray energy dispersive spectrometer fitted on Osiris (0.9 sr collection angle Super-X/FEI with 4 30mm² detectors at 22° take-off angle and Esprit 1.9 Quantax/Bruker quantification software).

Thin samples for (S)TEM were prepared in plan-view and cross-sections. Mechanical polishing from the tape substrate side followed by 6 keV Ar ion milling (Gatan) at room temperature (reduced to 1 keV and about 1° grazing incidence for final polishing) was used for plan-view samples. Their wedge-shaped electron transparent area over a few μm along the edge combines the advantages of a large field of view and the choice of the most suitable thickness between 10 and ~ 70 nm for HRTEM and the defect distribution observation respectively. Alternatively a FEI Helios Nanolab 600i and a FEI Versa 3D DualBeam scanning electron ion

microscopes/focused ion beams were used to get cross-sections and plan-view lamellas with a constant thickness of approximately 30 - 40 nm.

Prior to interpretation, the Gatan Digital Micrograph software (Gatan, Inc., Pleasanton, CA, USA) was used to optimize image contrast, reduce noise and calculate Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) diffractograms from HRTEM and HRSTEM images. Crystal structure determination was obtained from indexing SAED and FFTs patterns with the Java Electron Microscopy Software (JEMS) [37] using the crystal data for cubic and monoclinic Y_2O_3 , and orthorhombic YBCO (**Table 1**) from the ICSD database (FIZ Karlsruhe).

3. Results and Discussion

Figure 1a shows a HAADF STEM cross-section overview of the whole layer structure of the tape parallel to the irradiation direction. Yttria nanoprecipitates are visible with a higher magnification in the HAADF STEM image (Fig.1b) and X-ray EDS element map (background counts subtracted) (Fig.1c). They are mainly lying in randomly distributed planes parallel to the layered structure of the tape. This behavior is consistent with the hypothesis that yttria precipitates form because of fluctuations of the yttrium precursor pressure during YBCO deposition. The BF TEM image (Fig.1d) shows parallel columnar tracks left by 167 MeV Xe ions in YBCO and in Y_2O_3 precipitates.

The profiles of energy loss dE/dx of ions to the target electrons (or electronic stopping power S_e) along the Kr or Xe ion track were calculated with the SRIM program for a model of 2 μm thick Ag coating on a 1 μm thick YBCO layer containing two 20 nm thick yttria buried 300 and 700 nm below the Ag/YBCO interface (Fig. 2). It shows that the energy of ions slowly decreased with abrupt jumps at the transition between adjacent materials (Ag and YBCO layers, YBCO matrix and Y_2O_3 nanocrystals, YBCO layer and buffer layer). Owing to the small thickness of the yttria layers, ions have nearly the same energy at their entrance and exit faces.

According to the data given by Tombrello [41] we can expect nearly continuous tracks if electronic dE/dx is between 30 and 20 keV/nm. Ions with lower initial energies provide isolated damaged regions in the form of ellipsoids (dE/dx is between 10 and 20 keV/nm) or spheres (dE/dx is below 10 keV/nm). In this work, nearly continuous columnar tracks along the ion's path were observed in the YBCO layer (Fig.1d) irradiated with 167 MeV ($21.9 \leq dE/dx \leq 20.0$ keV/nm after the Ag layer) Xe ions.

Heavy ion-induced damaged regions were observed in tapes irradiated by Kr (107 and 45 MeV) and Xe (167, 77 and 46 MeV) ions with energies corresponding energy deposition of about 4.7 keV/nm or higher. This value of electronic stopping power S_e is the upper estimate of the minimum electronic stopping power to create damage in yttria nanocrystals. Table 2 summarizes ion's energy and ion's energy loss to electrons at which defects in crystals were observed.

Figure 3a is a BF TEM plan-view image of a [001] YBCO layer irradiated with 107 MeV Kr ions. Its characteristic domain structure is seen along or close to [001], 3 - 5 nm rounded irradiation damage regions and yttria nanoprecipitates are present in the imaged area. The white arrows point on healthy precipitates and the white-black one point on a Y_2O_3 precipitate struck by an ion. The 5 - 20 nm Y_2O_3 precipitates are semi-coherent with the matrix and easily observed in domains with diffraction contrast thanks to Moiré fringes. The SAED pattern (Fig.3b) contains strong reflections from [001] YBCO and weak reflections from cubic Y_2O_3 precipitates seen along their $\langle 001 \rangle$ and $\langle 101 \rangle$ zone axis. Some YBCO and Y_2O_3 reflections are superimposed due to their close interplanar spacings, for instance, (010) and (100) of YBCO with (220) of Y_2O_3 (0.3872, 0.3823 and 0.3749 nm respectively). The detailed indexations are given in Fig. 3c, 3d and 3e leading to 3 orientation variants: $[001](200)Y_2O_3/[001](110)YBCO$ and $[101](020)Y_2O_3/[001](010)YBCO$ and $[\bar{1}01](101)Y_2O_3 // [001](010)YBCO$ in agreement with [4].

The diffraction conditions of imaging the sample oriented along the exact zone axis or close to it are well suited for obtaining two-phase SAED patterns for unambiguous identification of YBCO and Y_2O_3 phases and their crystallographic orientation relationships. The irradiation-induced damaged regions are visible as 3 - 5 nm bright spots in diffracting YBCO grains (dark area) and are not or hardly visible elsewhere where the orientation is far from strong diffraction conditions that leads only to weak mass scattering contrast (Fig. 3 a).

Figure 4 shows plan-views of the YBCO matrix with healthy yttria nanocrystals indicated with white arrows, damaged yttria nanocrystals (white-black arrows) and damaged regions (bright or black rounded contrasts in BF TEM or HAADF STEM images respectively) induced by Xe ions with energies of 167 MeV (Fig. 4a), 77 MeV (Fig.4b) and 46 MeV (Fig.4c). Yttria nanocrystals have parallelepiped shapes and sizes of about $5\div 10$ nm x $5\div 10$ nm x $10\div 20$ nm in the whole sample

To estimate the density of damaged regions, yttria nanocrystals and relative part of yttria nanocrystals struck by swift heavy ions in YBCO, high resolution TEM and STEM images were obtained with magnification suitable to distinguish radiation damaged regions from yttria nanocrystals of the similar size. The density of precipitates and damaged regions was measured by averaging over several images for each ion energy. It was found that precipitates have the density of about $0.5 - 1.8 \cdot 10^{11} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ in projection of the 30-40 nm thick sample. This is rather rough estimate because of the nonhomogeneous distribution of yttria nanocrystals in the YBCO volume. The density of radiation defects is found to be $0.9 - 1.4 \cdot 10^{11} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ in projection for all samples what corresponds to fluences applied in this work within the measurement uncertainties. Comparative analysis showed that sizes, distributions and shapes of yttria nanoprecipitates before and after irradiation remained essentially unchanged as well no evidences were obtained for

1 irradiation induced precipitation. These results are consistent with the observations of Little et al.
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3 [42] in the study of irradiation effects on microstructure of yttria containing ODS alloys.
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6 Analysis of (S)TEM images showed that about 12 – 25 % of yttria precipitates were
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8 struck by ions. However, the occurrence of an ion interaction in the yttria nanoprecipitate center
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10 is seldom owing to the close size between the irradiation region diameter and the yttria precipitate
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12 width. Therefore, most events extend in both YBCO and yttria across their interface. Figures 5a
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14 and 5c show two high resolution BF STEM images where damaged regions induced by 167 MeV
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16 Xe ions are lying in the Y_2O_3 precipitate (Fig. 5a) or at the YBCO – Y_2O_3 interface (Fig. 5c). Fig.
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18 5b and 5b' are FFT of the whole area of Fig. 5a for the two orientation variants $[001](020)Y_2O_3 //$
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20 $[001](110)YBCO$ and $\langle 101 \rangle (020)Y_2O_3 // [001](010)YBCO$. The two yttria precipitates d and e
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22 in Figure 5c were damaged by ions travelling close to their corners. It is worth noting that these
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24 corners are crystalline and spill out onto circular projection of the damaged region in YBCO. The
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26 BF HRSTEM image and FFT's from the corresponding square areas (Fig. 5d and 5e) confirm that
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28 precipitates retained their pristine cubic structure after damage. Another damaged region on top
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30 of figure 5a lies along an yttria/YBCO interface. Together with precipitates d and e it shows that
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32 the damage does not extend deep in yttria when the ion trajectory is close but outside the
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34 precipitate. That can be understood as a higher resistance of yttria than that of YBCO to damage
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36 by a radiation excitation stemming from YBCO.
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43 Figures 6a shows the HRSTEM image of the damaged area when a 167 MeV Xe ion
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45 passed through an yttria precipitate. The FFT pattern in Figure 6b was obtained from a reduced
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47 area $(4 \times 4) \text{ nm}^2$ at the arrow tip pointing to the undamaged part of the Y_2O_3 nanoprecipitate
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49 while the FFT pattern of Figure 6c was taken from the square area around the whole Y_2O_3
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51 nanocrystal, its damaged region and the surrounding YBCO matrix. From the center of mass of
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53 the damaged region the ion trajectory was inside the precipitate at a distance about 1 nm or
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1 slightly larger from its interface with YBCO. The lattice image contrast disappeared in both
2 phases to let a structureless circular area of about 7.5 - 8 nm diameter (Fig.6 d) in contrast with
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4 the damage areas of the top precipitate in fig 5a and precipitates d and e in fig. 5c. The absence
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6 of a visible YBCO lattice structure in this region implies that its volume extends through most if
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8 not all the TEM sample thickness and that therefore it has a prolate ellipsoid or tube shape with
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10 its axis parallel to the ion trajectory.
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15 HRTEM observation (Fig. 7a) is confirming the extension of the damaged volume in both
16 phases when an ion is passing through the center of a precipitate. The FFT pattern of Fig. 7b was
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18 taken from the square areas around the whole Y_2O_3 nanocrystal, its damaged region and the
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20 surrounding YBCO matrix. All FFTs (Fig. 6b and 6c; Fig. 7b) show that Y_2O_3 nanocrystals keep
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22 their cubic structure in orthorhombic YBCO with the epitaxial orientation relations $\langle 101 \rangle (020)$
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24 $Y_2O_3 // [001] (010)$ YBCO.
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29 Thus TEM, HRSTEM and electron diffraction show that both Y_2O_3 nanocrystals and
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31 YBCO matrix retain their pristine structure out of the tracks (cubic [14] and orthorhombic [8],
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33 respectively) under all irradiation conditions applied in this work. The presence of tracks was
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35 observed in Y_2O_3 nanoparticles with an electronic stopping power as small as $S_e = 4.7$ keV/nm,
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37 which may be considered as an upper estimate of the minimum energy loss for track formation.
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39 In this work, the electron diffraction patterns and HRTEM/HRSTEM FFTs did not show the
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41 phase transformation from cubic to monoclinic structure in Y_2O_3 nanoprecipitates. We suggest
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43 that the cubic to monoclinic phase transformation observed by XRD in yttria under irradiation
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45 reported in the literature [19-22] may result of a synergy effect between irradiation and the
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47 presence in the original material of monoclinic seeds, crystal defects or stresses after the
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49 mechanical preparation [43].
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More experimental investigation are planned to get the precise chemical composition of the amorphous track content and structure of the track wall.

4. Conclusions

High energetic heavy Kr and Xe ions induce the formation of damaged regions in yttria nanoprecipitates buried in YBCO layer when the specific ionization energy loss is about or above 4.7 keV/nm. No radiation damage in YBCO and Y₂O₃ precipitates was observed with 23 MeV Kr ions ($3.7 \leq dE/dx \leq 1.8$ keV/nm). The damaged regions are tubes or prolate ellipsoids in the direction of the ion trajectory. Lattice image contrast and diffraction contrast have disappeared in such regions to let structureless circular areas about 6-9 nm in diameter that confirms they contain an amorphous material and extend through the whole thickness of the yttria precipitates and beyond into YBCO. When ions travel in YBCO very close to an interface with yttria or corner the damaged regions extend only very little in yttria. This could be understood as if the perturbation stemming from YBCO does not propagate easily in yttria, or as yttria is more resistant to it. The electron diffraction and HRTEM/HRSTEM Fourier transform patterns from areas extending a few nanometers around the track shows that yttria and YBCO have the same yttria cubic and YBCO orthorhombic structures as before irradiation. The Y₂O₃ – YBCO crystallographic orientation relationships remained unchanged.

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Table 1. Space group and lattice parameters of Y_2O_3 and YBCO

Compound	Space group	Lattice parameters				Ref.
		a [nm]	b [nm]	c [nm]	β [°]	
Y_2O_3	Ia $\bar{3}$	1.060	1.060	1.060	90.0	[9] ICSD 23811
Y_2O_3	C2/m	1.3880	0.3513	0.8629	100.09	[38] ICSD 647650
Y_2O_3	C2/m	1.38714	0.34487	0.85862	100.12	[39]
Y_2O_3	C2/m	1.4060	0.3536	0.8567	100.0	[40] ICSD 192863
YBCO	Pmmm	0.3824	0.3888	1.1690	90.0	[8] ICSD 63688

Table 2. Energy of Kr and Xe ions and ion's energy loss to electrons Se for which radiation induced damaged areas have been observed by (S)TEM.

Ion	Energy of ions entering Ag coating [MeV]	Energy of ions entering YBCO [MeV]	Energy of ions exiting YBCO [MeV]	Se (entrance YBCO) [keV/nm]	Se (exit YBCO) [keV/nm]	Damaged areas
Xe	167	101	80.6	29.8	16.1	yes
	77	34.4	23.3	15.3	7.5	yes
	46	17.4	11.0	8.9	4.7	yes
Kr	107	62.1	46.7	20.8	14.0	yes
	45	16.4	9.2	7.7	4.6	yes
	23	6.2	3.0	3.9	1.8	no

Figure captions

Figure1. HAADF STEM image of cross-section of the Ag/YBCO/buffer metal oxides/Hastelloy tape. The arrow points to the irradiation direction with 167 MeV Xe ions (a), HAADF STEM image with $\sim 5 \times 5 \times 20 \text{ nm}^3$ yttria precipitates (b) and element X-ray EDS map (c), BF/TEM of YBCO with Y_2O_3 and nearly continuous columnar tracks (d).

Figure 2. Calculated profiles of ion's energy loss to electrons across the model multilayer $2 \mu\text{m}$ Ag / 300 nm YBCO / 20 nm Y_2O_3 / 360 nm YBCO / 20 nm Y_2O_3 / 300 nm YBCO / buffer for 107, 45 and 23 MeV Kr and 167, 77 and 46 MeV Xe ions.

Figure 3. Plan-view BF/TEM image of an irradiated YBCO layer (107 MeV Kr) containing yttria nanoprecipitates revealed by Moiré patterns. The white arrows point on healthy precipitates and the white-black one point on a Y_2O_3 precipitate struck by an ion (a), SAED pattern from the full area of the image (YBCO matrix and Y_2O_3 precipitates) (b), indexing the SAED pattern for 3 different orientation relationships: $[001]\text{Y}_2\text{O}_3 // [001]\text{YBCO}$ (c), $[101]\text{Y}_2\text{O}_3 // [001]\text{YBCO}$ (d), $[\bar{1}01]\text{Y}_2\text{O}_3 // [001]\text{YBCO}$ (e).

Figure 4. Plan view of YBCO matrix with yttria nanocrystals and damaged regions (white and black-white arrows points on healthy and damaged yttria precipitates respectively): the regions damaged by Xe 167 MeV have a dark HAADF STEM contrast (a); the regions damaged by Xe 77 MeV have a bright BF TEM contrast (b); the absence of HAADF HRSTEM atom lattice in the regions damaged by Xe 46 MeV shows that the track extends through the whole TEM sample thickness (c).

Figure 5. BF HRSTEM plan view of yttria in YBCO with irradiation-induced damaged regions by 167 MeV Xe ions close to the precipitate/matrix interfaces (a), corresponding FFT from the full area of (a) showing two orientation variants of yttria $[001]\text{Y}_2\text{O}_3 // [001]\text{YBCO}$ and $[101]\text{Y}_2\text{O}_3 // [001]\text{YBCO}$ (b, b'); BF/HRSTEM image of Y_2O_3 nanocrystals in YBCO with

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2 radiation defects close to corners of the Y_2O_3 (c), corresponding FFTs (d, e) from undamaged
3
4 parts of yttria nanocrystals in (square areas d and e).
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6 **Figure 6.** HAADF HRSTEM image of an 8 nm region damaged by a 167 MeV Xe ion passing
7 through an yttria precipitate about 1 nm of its interface with YBCO (a); FFT from the undamaged
8 part of the Y_2O_3 crystal 4 nm x 4 nm at the position of the black-white arrow tip (b); FFT from
9 the square area (c), enlarged and filtered HAADF HRSTEM image highlighting the amorphous
10 structure in the damaged areas (d).
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18 **Figure 7.** BF HRTEM image of the damage by a 167 MeV Xe ion passing through near to the
19 center of an Y_2O_3 precipitate (a); FFT from the area inside the white square (b); enlarged
20 HRTEM image of amorphous structure in the damaged area in the yttria nanoprecipitate (c).
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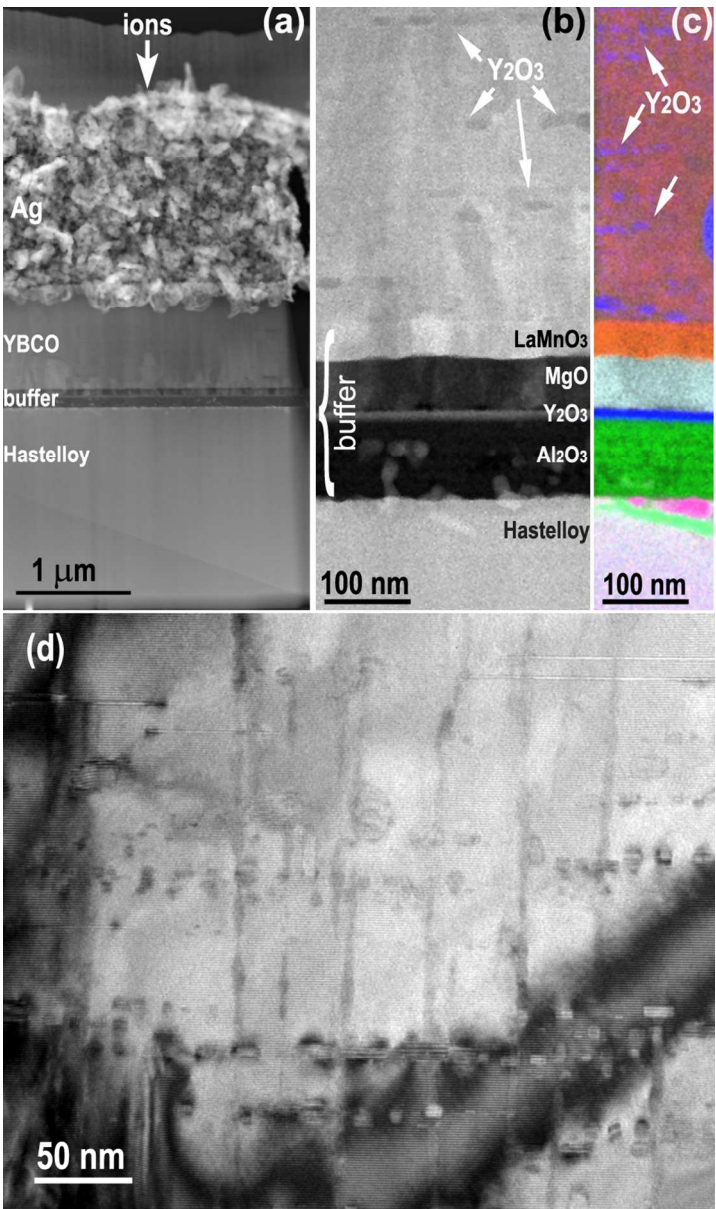


Figure 1. HAADF STEM image of cross-section of the Ag/YBCO/buffer metal oxides/Hastelloy tape. The arrow points to the irradiation direction with 167 MeV Xe ions (a), HAADF STEM image with $\sim 5 \times 5 \times 20 \text{ nm}^3$ yttria precipitates (b) and element X-ray EDS map (c), BF/TEM of YBCO with Y₂O₃ and nearly continuous columnar tracks (d).

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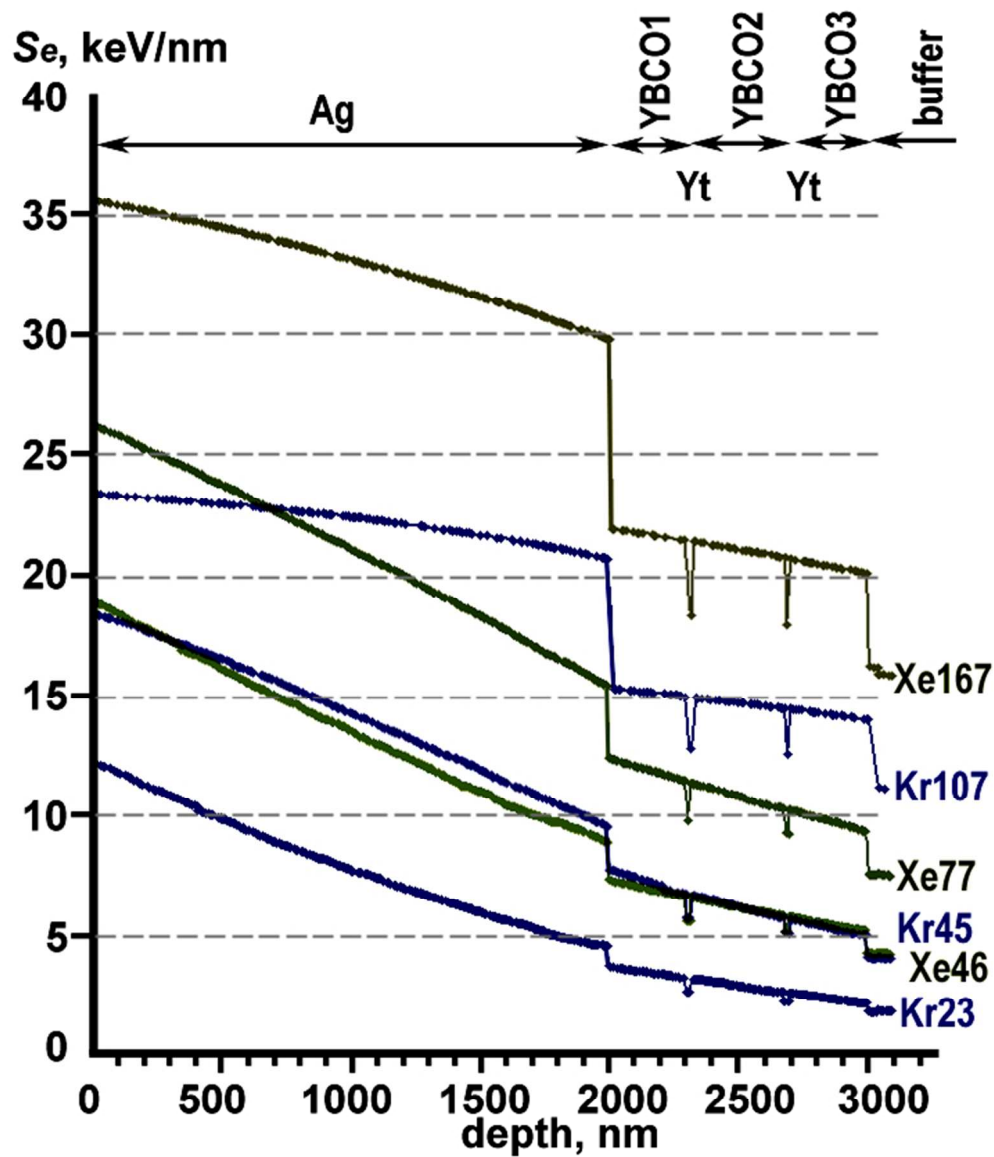


Figure 2. Calculated profiles of ion's energy loss to electrons across the model multilayer 2 μ m Ag / 300 nm YBCO / 20 nm Y2O3 / 360 nm YBCO / 20 nm Y2O3 / 300 nm YBCO / buffer for 107, 45 and 23 MeV Kr and 167, 77 and 46 MeV Xe ions.

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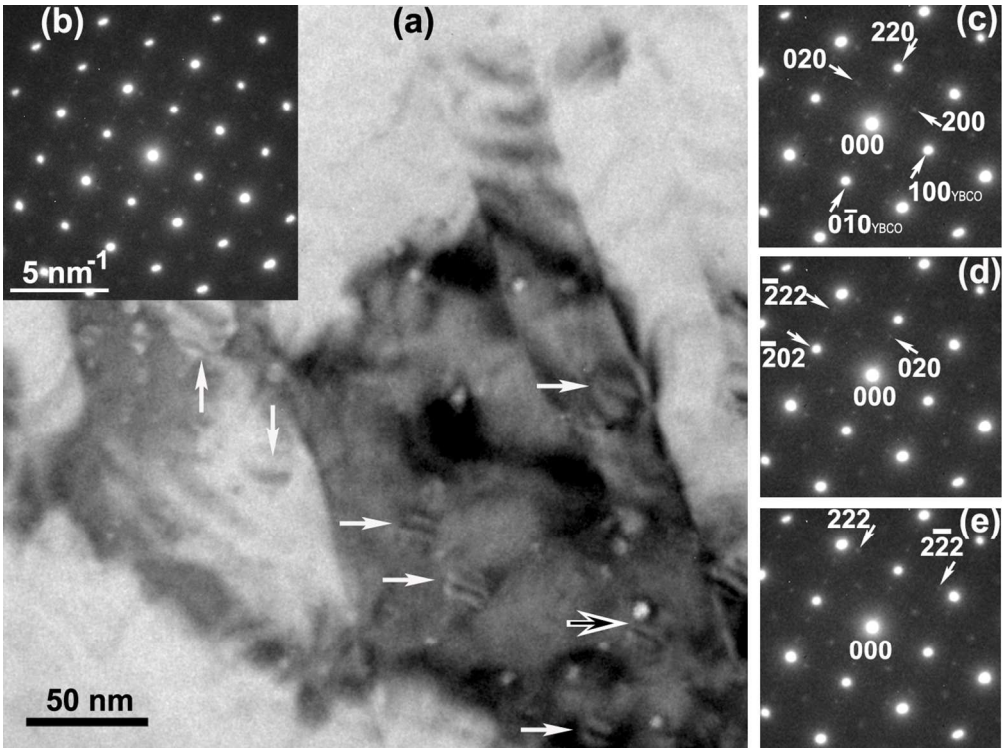


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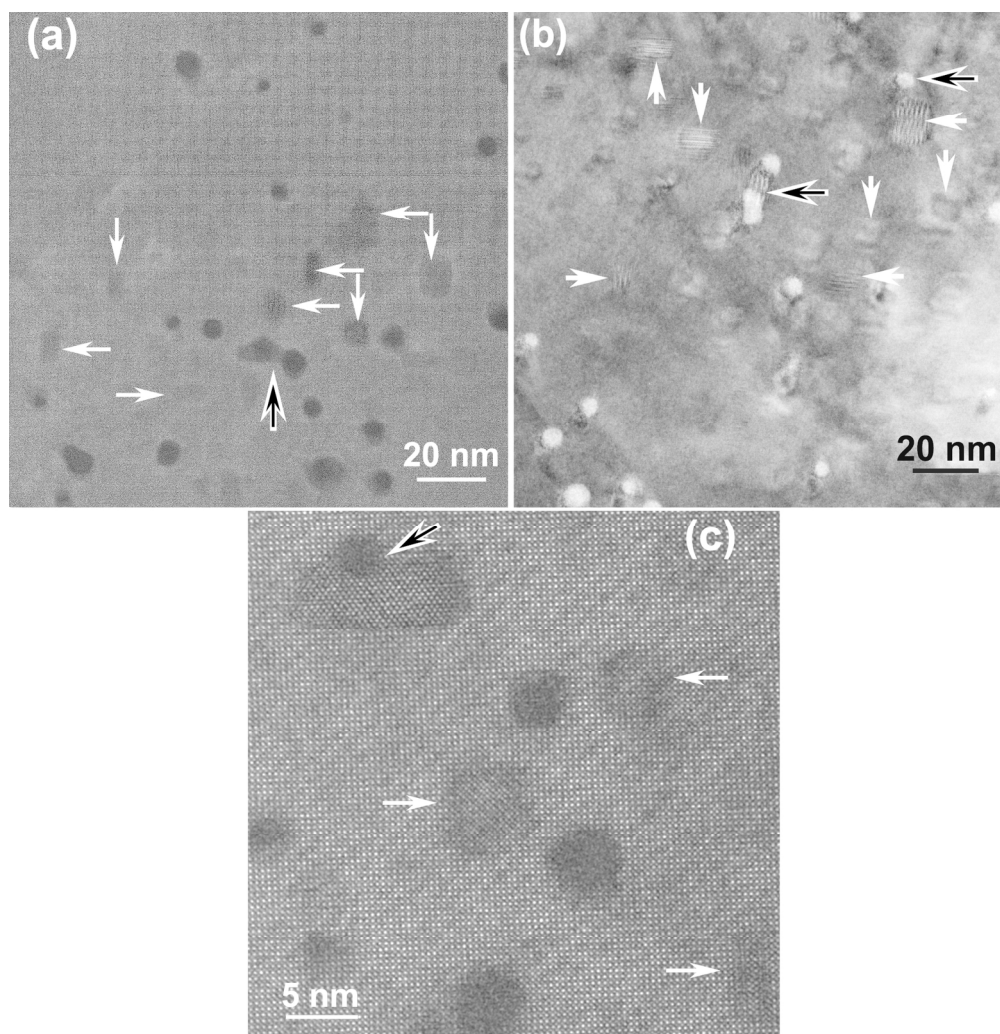


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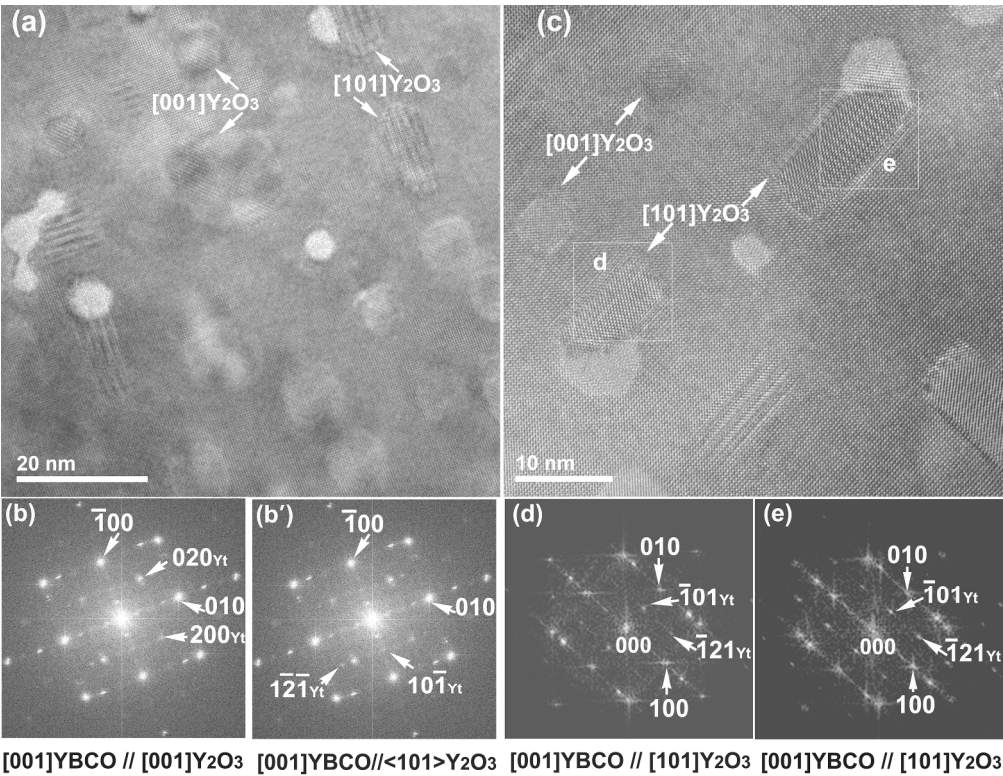


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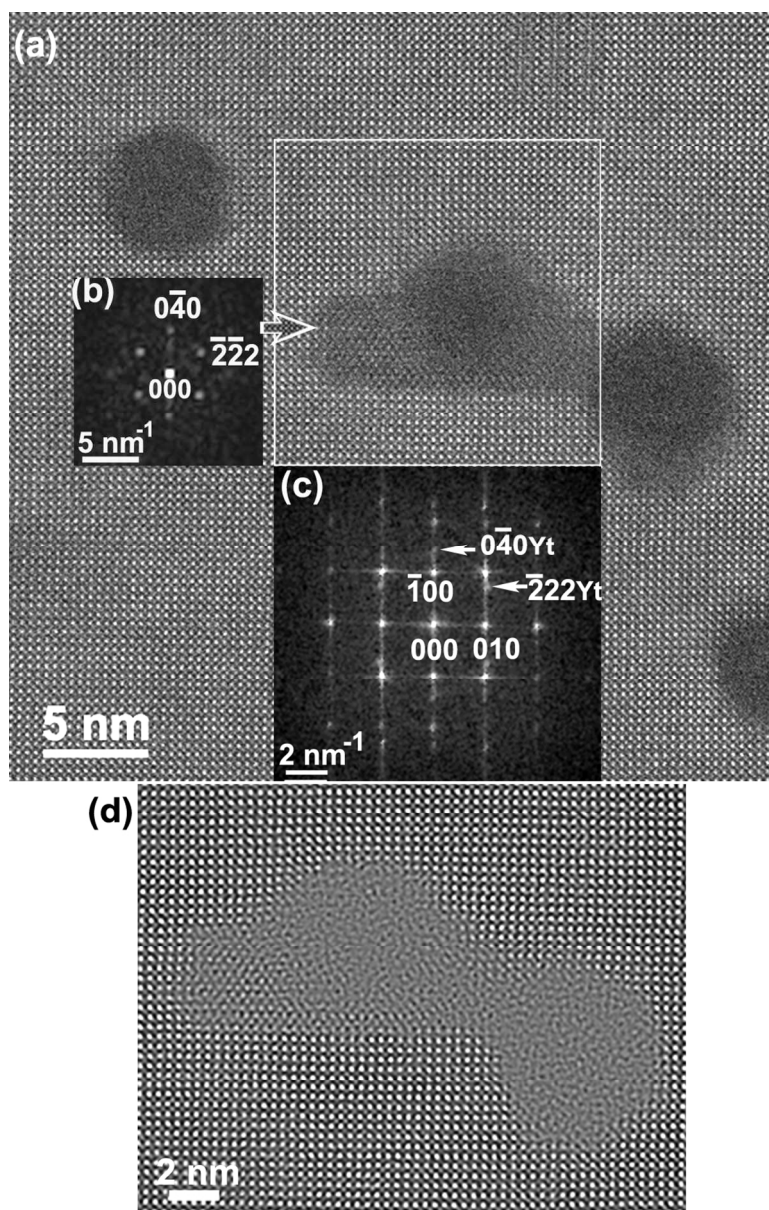


Figure 6. HAADF HRSTEM image of an 8 nm region damaged by a 167 MeV Xe ion passing through an yttria precipitate about 1 nm of its interface with YBCO (a); FFT from the undamaged part of the Y₂O₃ crystal 4 nm x 4 nm at the position of the black-white arrow tip (b); FFT from the square area (c), enlarged and filtered HAADF HRSTEM image highlighting the amorphous structure in the damaged areas (d).

150x233mm (180 x 180 DPI)

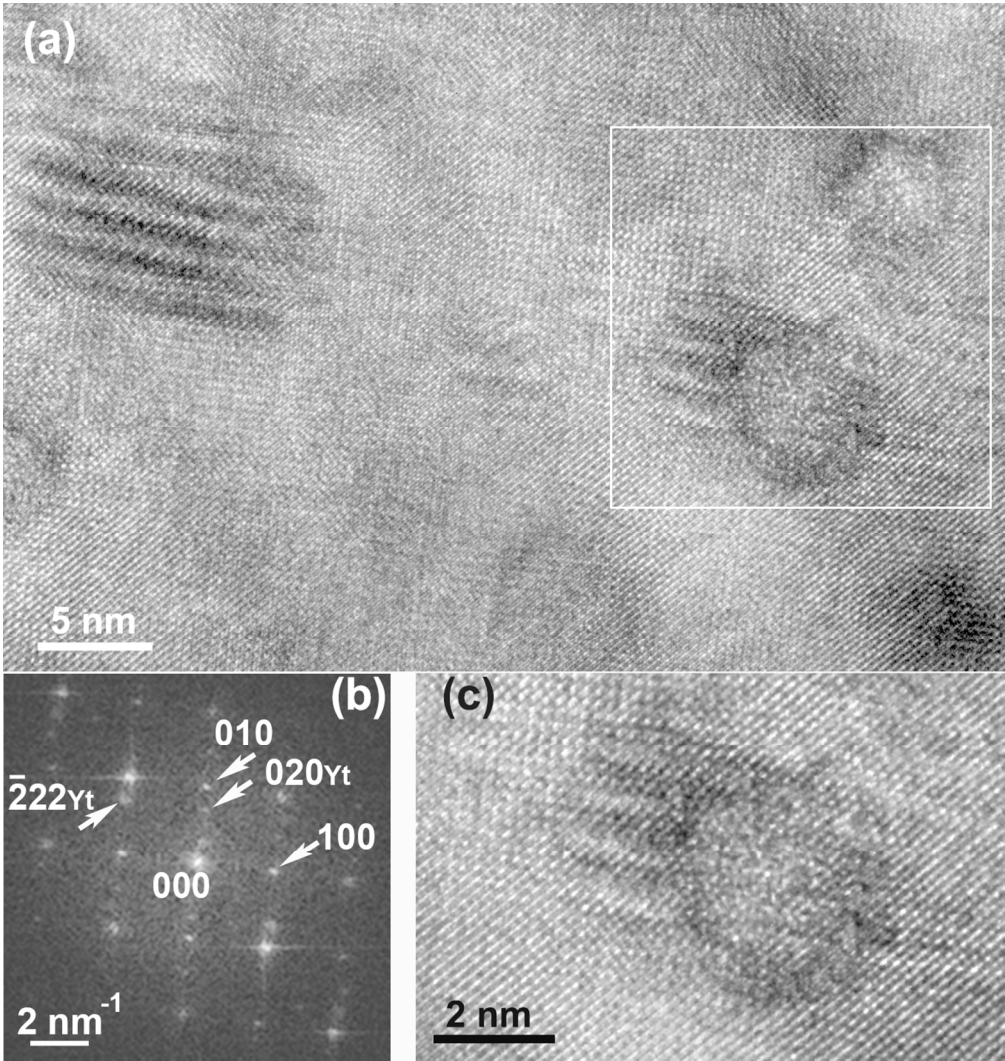


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160x169mm (214 x 214 DPI)