Laser Induced Circular Texture in Bi-2212 bulk

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Introduction

Laser Zone melting (LZM) has been widely used to induce texture in Bi-2212 bulk materials, both in cylindrical geometries and in monolithic planar samples. Texture is induced due to its strong crystal structure anisotropy, obtaining a microstructure characterized by planar superconducting grains with the a-b plane aligned perpendicular to the solidification front.

In this work we present the use of Laser Zone melting techniques to process planar monolithic samples either with a ring geometry or with more complex shapes, such as helical, or meander, where the current path direction is not constant, and therefore superconducting grains have to change their growth direction. Combining different sample movements LZM processing it is possible to assure that the solidification front is always perpendicular to the current path direction. We have performed a microstructural analysis of these samples in order to analyse the effect of changing growth direction during processing for the different analysed geometries.

Laser processing set-up

A linear laser beam has been obtained combining different cylindrical lenses. This produces a linear laser beam but with a gaussian energy distribution. The laser is a CW Nd:YAG continuous system. Sample is placed on a rotating platform that can be hitched to a linear stage to obtain a movement combination for different geometries.

Texturing process

Circular samples (disks or rings) with external diameters between 18 and 40 mm have been processed. The width of the rings was 5 mm.

Before the texturing treatment initial rotation steps are performed at 1, 0.7, 0.5, 0.3, 0.2, 0.15 and 0.1 rpm in order to initiate the densification process. Typical rotation speeds between 0.01 rpm and 0.1 rpm have been used in the final texturing process.

Influence of the rotation speed

At high speeds the surface microstructure shows a central structure whose origin are grains nucleated in both lateral borders of the textured region. At intermediate speeds two different regions are observed. The internal one with big grains and a high misorientation with respect to the tangential direction. The external region has smaller grains but with a better alignment.

At lower speeds, this external region increases. It has been observed that this region is the most important in the sample for rotation speeds of 0.01 rpm in samples with an external diameter of 18 mm (linear speed, 34 mm/h).

Developing of the texture in the longitudinal and transverse sections

It is important to control the shape of the solidification front. Grain texture has been determined by measuring the orientation of the Bi-free phases (black contrast in the images). Bi-2201 grains are near parallel. Bi-2212 are obtained after annealing following a similar microstructure.

Grains accommodate to this geometry by creating colonies with misorientation angles of the order of 10-25º.

When the external part of the sample is polished, the amount of Bi-free phases is strongly reduced.

The transverse cross section of the samples shows a thickness distribution that reflects the gaussian energy distribution of the laser beam. Efforts to obtain a more uniform distribution are being done.

Conclusions

Laser can be used to texture Bi-2212 materials in circular geometries. Superconducting Bi-2212 grains can accommodate to circular geometries with a microstructure based on grain colonies with grain boundary angles of the order of 10-25º when low rotation speeds are used.

When rotation speed is increased two different regions are clearly observed in the samples. This can be used to process samples with circular, helical or meander geometries with lower anisotropy in the microstructure than when the standard linear process is used. More homogeneous energy distributions are required to improve the microstructure of these samples.

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