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Superconducting energy gap in $Bi_{1.8}Pb_{0.4}Sr_2Ca_2Cu_3O_{10+\delta}$ studied by photoemission spectroscopy

C. Gu, B. W. Veal, R. Liu, A. P. Paulikas, and P. Kostic
Materials Science Division, Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, Illinois 60439

H. Ding and J. C. Campuzano
Materials Science Division, Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, Illinois 60439
and University of Illinois-Chicago, P.O. Box 4348, Chicago, Illinois 60680

B. A. Andrews, R. I. R. Blyth, and A. J. Arko
Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico 87545

P. Manuel, D. Y. Kaufman, and M. T. Lanagan
Energy Technology Division, Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, Illinois 60439
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We report photoemission measurements on highly textured polycrystalline samples of $Bi_{1.8}Pb_{0.4}Sr_2Ca_2Cu_3O_{10+\delta}$ (Bi-2223, $T_c = 104$ K). High-resolution data show a superconducting gap opening below T_c. The gap-spectrum line shape suggests an anisotropic gap structure in the Brillouin zone. The maximum gap in Bi-2223 is estimated to be 29 meV so that $2\Delta/kT_c \sim 6.5$, somewhat larger than the reduced gap in $Bi_2Sr_2CaCu_2O_8$ (Bi-2212). A spectral dip feature is observed at 72 meV in the superconducting state. The results are compared with angle-resolved experiments on Bi-2212 single crystals.

Since the superconducting gap in $Bi_2Sr_2CaCu_2O_8$ (Bi-2212) was successfully measured with high-resolution photoemission spectroscopy (PES),[1,2] a number of important findings have been revealed with this technique. It was reported[3] and confirmed[4] that significant gap anisotropy exists within the a-b plane in Bi-2212. The maximum gap was found along the Cu-O bond direction near the Brillouin zone boundary of the Cu-O_2 lattice (near the M point),[3,4] where, in the normal state, an unusually flat band exists near the Fermi level (extended Van Hove singularity).[5–11] The observed maximum gap value is much larger than the BCS weak-coupling prediction.[1,4] The gap appears to be minimal along the diagonal directions of the Cu-O_2 lattice [Γ-(X/Y) in Bi-2212]. In addition, an anomalous spectral dip feature was observed, below T_c, at the higher binding energy side of the electron condensation peak.[12,13] These photoemission observations have been incorporated in descriptions of new pairing mechanisms for cuprate superconductors. The anisotropic gap structure is consistent with theories that imply d-wave pairing[14] or anisotropic s-wave order parameters.[15] It has also been suggested that an extended Van Hove singularity band near E_F might play a key role in the enhancement of T_c in the cuprate superconductors[16] and in driving the metal-insulator transition.[17] Regarding the spectral dip feature, several distinctly different explanations have been offered, but no consensus description to account for this feature has been achieved.[18–22]

To date, Bi-2212 is the only cuprate superconductor that consistently shows an observable superconducting gap in photoemission measurements. It is very important to find other high-T_c cuprates that can be studied to obtain order-parameter information and to explore their common electronic properties. We have undertaken an ultrahigh-resolution study on polycrystalline, but highly textured (c-axis oriented) $Bi_{1.8}Pb_{0.4}Sr_2Ca_2Cu_3O_{10+\delta}$ (Bi-2223) and have measured energy distribution curves at low electron binding energies. Below T_c, the spectral function clearly exhibits a superconducting gap and electronic condensation. The results are compared with measurements on Bi-2212 single crystals.

The Bi-2223 samples were synthesized by a two-step process.[23] Processed powders of $Bi_{1.8}Pb_{0.4}Sr_2CaCu_2O_x$, Ca_2CuO_3, and CuO were packed into a silver tube, which was drawn, rolled and extensively heat treated. The resulting tape contains high-purity, dense $Bi_{1.8}Pb_{0.4}Sr_2Ca_2Cu_3O_{10+\delta}$ polycrystals that are approximately c-axis oriented. The Ag-clad tape (25×5 mm^2) has a T_c transition at 104 K ($\sim$3 K transition width) and a large transport critical current density of $\sim$17 000 A/cm^2 at 77 K in the tape plane, measured in zero field. The photoemission experiment was carried out at the Synchrotron Radiation Center, Stoughton, WI, using the 4m-NIM beamline, and at Brookhaven National Laboratory, using the U3C beamline. Sections of the Bi-2223 tape were cleaved at 13 K in a vacuum of 3×10^{-11} Torr. The cleaved surface was later examined with electron and optical microscopes, showing densely packed grains (1–10 μm in size) with specular a-b planes exposed.

Figure 1 shows an energy distribution curve (EDC) from the Fermi level to Bi $5d$ levels measured from Bi-2223 with 74 eV photons. The valence band spectrum was also studied with 19 eV photons with 0.05 eV resolution; an EDC is shown in the inset. Like Bi-2212 and $YBa_2Cu_3O_{6.9}$,[24] these materials are highly two-dimensional, so that significant valence band dispersion in the a-b plane, but very little dispersion in the c direction are expected. Since the samples are polycrystalline, however, valence band spectra show little angle dependence, and they should be viewed as (a-b plane) momentum integrated. A Fermi edge cutoff at the top of the

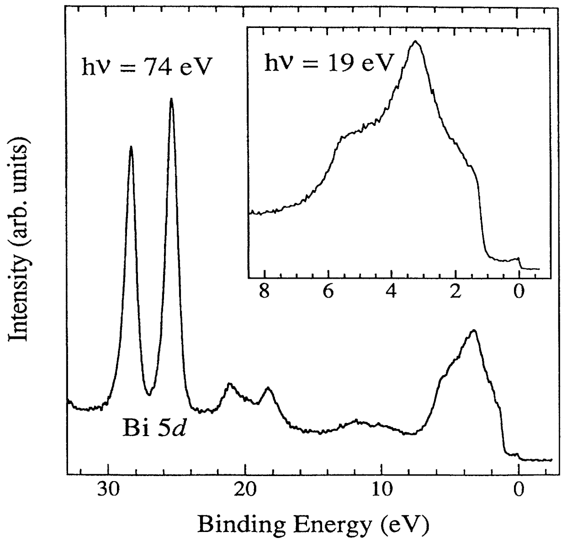

FIG. 1. Energy distribution curve (EDC) taken, with $h\nu$=74 eV, from Bi-2223, scanning the valence band from E_F to Bi $5d$ levels. The inset shows the valence band in greater detail; these data were taken with 19 eV photons. Because samples are polycrystalline, data are effectively angle integrated.

valence band is clearly seen in Fig. 1. The valence bandwidth (~6.5 eV) is in close agreement with PES studies of other cuprate superconductors.[24] The Bi $5d_{5/2}$ peak is located at 25.38 eV binding energy with a FWHM (full width at half maximum) of 0.96 eV after correcting for the instrument broadening (0.18 eV). For Bi-2212 single crystals, the Bi $5d_{5/2}$ level was found at 25.2–25.4 eV (depending on oxygen doping) with a width of ~1.05 eV.[25,26] The sharp Bi $5d$ data indicate a pure Bi bonding configuration for the cleaved Bi-2223. Other features in Fig. 1 include Pb $5d$ at 18.3 and 21 eV, which overlap O $2s$, and Bi $6s$ near 11 eV.[25] A Cu d^8 satellite resonance feature near 12 eV was also reported for cuprate superconductors;[27] this might also appear in the spectrum of Fig. 1. No (contaminant) C $1s$ level was detectable. These results suggest that a clean cleaved surface is obtained which represents the metallic Bi-2223 material. The successful cleavage of the polycrystalline Bi-2223 tape is probably due to the exceptionally good bonding between grains in this highly textured material.[28]

The superconducting energy gap, that opens below T_c in Bi-2223, is illustrated in Fig. 2. The leading edge of the valence band was measured at 106 K and 13 K, respectively, with an overall instrument resolution of 14 meV. The Fermi-level position was referenced to the Fermi edge of a co-grounded platinum sheet. Electronic drift, which can cause uncertainty in the Fermi edge position, was less than 0.2 meV. At T=13 K, the leading edge of the valence band shifts to higher binding energy and a spectral pileup appears at 25–35 meV. In addition to the formation of the gap and electron condensation, a dip or weight loss feature is apparent in the spectrum at ~72 meV binding energy when measured at T=13 K.

It is useful to compare these spectral changes, that occur as the sample goes superconducting, to those reported in previous studies of Bi-2212. Angle-resolved photoemission spectroscopy (ARPES) measurements on Bi-2212 single crystals showed significant gap anisotropy within the a-b plane.[3,4] Figure 3 shows a comparison of the Bi-2223 spectrum and an angle-resolved EDC for Bi-2212 taken near M (along Γ-M, from Ref. 4), where a maximum gap opening (22 meV) was observed. The condensation peak and dip feature in Bi-2223 are located at ~7 meV higher binding energies than they are in the Bi-2212, indicating a larger gap opening in Bi-2223. The leading edge of the Bi-2223 condensation peak, however, does not shift rigidly to higher

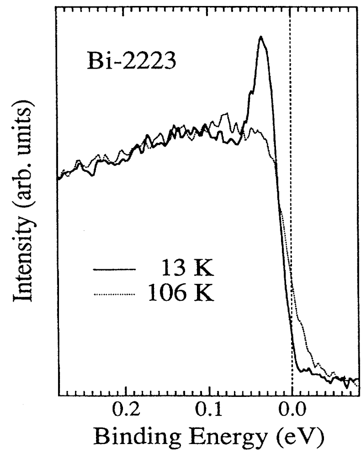

FIG. 2. EDC's taken from Bi-2223, with high resolution, in the normal (T=106 K) and superconducting (T=13 K) states. At T=13 K, a superconducting gap opens at the leading edge of the valence band.

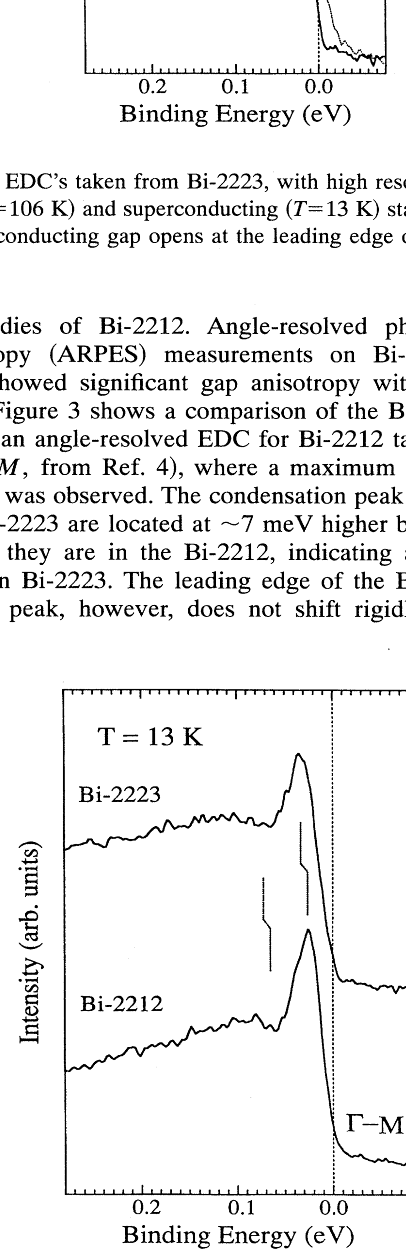

FIG. 3. Comparison of the Bi-2223 data at 13 K with the angle-resolved spectrum from Bi-2212 (T_c=85 K, taken from Ref. 4). The Bi-2212 data were collected along Γ-M where the energy gap is largest.

binding energy. Some spectral weight still remains at very low energies near the Fermi level. In fact, the leading edge of the Bi-2223 data at 13 K is ~25 meV wide (measured at 10–90 % of peak intensity), which is broader than the combined instrument and thermal broadening measured from the reference platinum Fermi edge at 13 K (15 meV). It is likely that the broadened edge in the Bi-2223 data at $T=13$ K is caused by a gap structure that is nonuniform throughout the Brillouin zone.

In Bi-2212, electronic states near E_F measured from different regions of the Brillouin zone show large intensity variations. EDC's taken near the M point, where the gap opening is largest, were typically more intense than EDC's taken along Γ-(X/Y), where the gap has its minimum value.[4] It is likely that the Bi-2223 gap spectrum (Fig. 3) will be broadened near E_F by the low-intensity contributions from regions of the zone where the gap is small (or zero). Further, ARPES studies on $YBa_2Cu_3O_{7-\delta}$, Bi-2212, and Bi-2201 have found an extended flat band near the zone edge (CuO_2 plane) along the Cu-O bond direction (near M for Bi-2212).[5–11] If a flat band near E_F also exists in Bi-2223 and it has a significant photoemission cross section, it should contribute significantly to the k-integrated data because of its extensive spread in k space. The Bi-2223 data in Figs. 2 and 3, contributed by all states near E_F, might represent a substantial spectral weight from the extended flat band where the gap is largest. Weaker spectral contributions near E_F, from elsewhere in the zone, where the gap is small, cause broadening of the leading edge.

The similarity of the Bi-2223 data and the Bi-2212 spectrum near M enables us to estimate the maximum gap value in Bi-2223. From the Bi-2212 data, a gap value of 22 meV ($2\Delta/kT_c \sim 6.1$) was obtained by a fit in Ref. 4. We estimate the maximum gap for Bi-2223 to be at least 29 meV (we add the 7 meV shift in the condensation peak to the gap value for Bi-2212). The resulting reduced gap $2\Delta/kT_c = 6.5$ for Bi-2223, suggesting that the scaling factor for cuprates increases with increasing T_c. Tunneling measurements of the gap in Bi-2201 ($T_c \sim 6$ K, $2\Delta/kT_c \sim 3.5$) (Ref. 29) are also consistent with this conclusion.

We have have noted that, in addition to the formation of the superconducting gap and the spectral pileup, a dip feature is also apparent in the spectrum at ~72 meV binding energy when measured at $T=13$ K (Fig. 3). A dip feature was also observed in electron tunneling experiments on a number of high-T_c superconductors, including Bi-2212, Bi-2201, $Nd_{2-x}Ce_xCuO_4$ (Ref. 29), and $YBa_2Cu_3O_{6.9}$.[30] So far there is no consensus explanation for physical origin of the dip feature. Dessau *et al.* have argued that the dip might be an intrinsic feature of the superconducting state.[12] Anderson[18] suggested that the dip is a consequence of band splitting in the superconducting state that appears as a result of an interlayer coupling interaction. Arnold *et al.*[19] have considered that it might be caused by a bosonic interaction with electrons near E_F. Modeling the PES results, they obtained a strong peak at 10 meV in the Eliashberg spectral function α^2F. However, bosonic mechanisms in high-T_c cuprates that could give rise to such behavior in α^2F have not been verified.[19] Littlewood and Varma[20] have shown that in the marginal-Fermi liquid model a two-peak spectral structure might appear at the superconducting transition, with one sharp peak between Δ and 3Δ, and a second broad peak appearing at higher energies with an onset at 3Δ. Coffey and Coffey[21] argued that the dip feature observed in the tunneling and photoemission data is an effect resulting from quasiparticle decay in the two-dimensional superconductors. They argued that the energy where the dip occurs in the tunneling conductance spectra (about three times the gap) tends to support a d-wave, rather than isotropic s-wave, pairing order parameter. Liu and Klemm[22] suggested that interband pairing, with hopping energies comparable to the critical temperature, might induce two peaks (separated by a diplike feature) in the electronic spectrum. The energy positions and strengths of these peaks appear to be strongly dependent on the model parameters.[22] The present photoemission observation of the dip structure at ~72 meV in Bi-2223, with $T_c=104$ K shifted by ~7 meV from the dip in Bi-2212 ($T_c=85$ K) provides additional information to assist in the development of a satisfactory quantitative theory of the high-T_c cuprates.

To summarize, we have successfully used high-resolution photoemission spectroscopy to measure electronic structure in the superconducting state of Bi-2223. Using highly textured (c-axis aligned) polycrystalline samples, measurements were effectively momentum integrated. A superconducting gap was observed; the gap appears to display a nonuniform structure in the Brillouin zone. A maximum gap value of ~29 meV was estimated (about 7 meV larger than Bi-2212). The resulting reduced gap ($2\Delta/kT_c \sim 6.5$) is larger than the reduced gap for Bi-2212 ($2\Delta/kT_c \sim 6.1$). A spectral weight loss (dip) feature is observed at 72 meV in the superconducting state, also shifted by ~7 meV from a corresponding feature in Bi-2212.

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