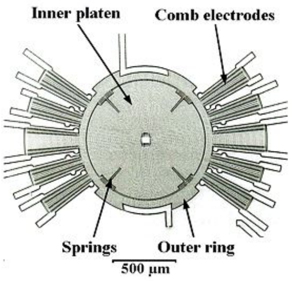
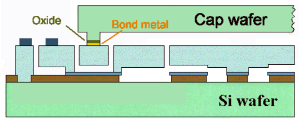
7.2.3 Example for Process Integration

The Goal

- Let's look at an advanced product, a **Ggyro** based on the Coriolis effect as described in some detail in modul 7.1.2.
  - Only a very cursory description will be possible; whatever follows is based on the description given in the **PhD** thesis of W. **Reinert** based on the work he performed at the **ISIT**. Of course, the finished product resulted from the work of many people who cannot all be credited in this context.
- Here is what we would like to produce:



Courtesy ISIT



Courtesy ISIT

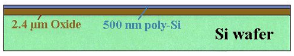
Not to scale, of course!

- Details, e.g. parts of the comb drive, you have seen before. Now let's look at the process sequence needed for manufacturing this MEMS device.

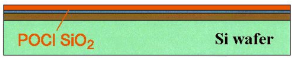
Process Sequence

- We start with some regular **Si** wafer. As far as the **MEMS** part is concerned, it is just a substrate and the only requirements are that it is (extremely) flat, can be oxidized, and is process compatible - all **Si** wafer meet these requirements.

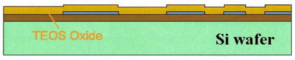
- If you want to have some electronic circuitry on the same substrate, you must now decide upon doping type and concentration, too. Here we take an **n**-type **1.5** Ω**cm** wafer.
- As a first process (always after cleaning etc.) we form a rather thick oxide - **2.4 µm** - that serves in particular as an electrical insulation even at rather high voltages.
  - Obviously (??) we do that with wet oxidation.
- On top of that oxide we deposit **500 nm** of poly-**Si** with a CVD process. It will serve as a buried conductor and therefore is called "Buried poly".



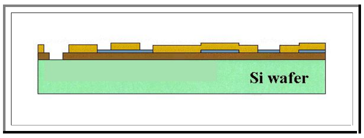
- The poly-**Si** needs to be highly doped if is is to be a conductor, for that we use the old-fashioned (but simple) **POCl process**.
  - **Ar** gas is bubbled through liquid **$POCl_3$**; on the hot wafer heavily **P**-doped **SiO_2** forms that is used as a diffusion source for diffusion of **P** into the poly-**Si**.
  - After the diffusion the **POCl-SiO_2** is removed in a so-called "de-glazing" process (wet chemistry).



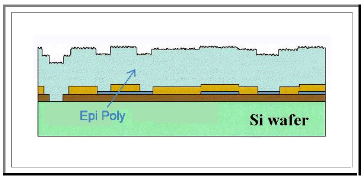
- In the next step the buried poly is structured (lithography and reactive ion etching (***RIE***).
- Then the structured buried poly is completely covered with a **1.6 µm** thick **SiO_2** layer, which will be the sacrificial layer for forming free-standing structures.
  - "Obviously" we use a TEOS CVD process for forming this oxide - fast, low temperature and stress-free.



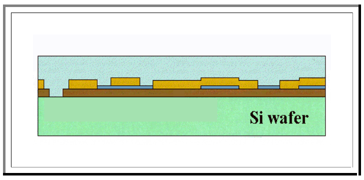
- Next, the sacrificial oxide layer is structured by a **2nd** lithography process, followed by wet chemical etching for removing the exposed oxide. Since the lateral structures are rather large this is good enough.



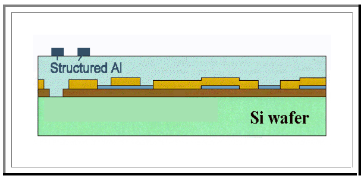
- The third lithography step follows right away, generating some openings in the first oxide needed for contacts to the substrate. All this contacts must be below the openings in the sacrificial oxide for obvious geometric reasons.



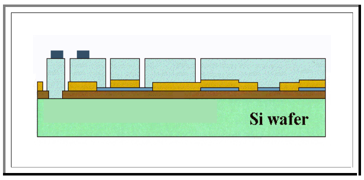
- Now we use a first process very special for **MEMS**. We deposit an *extremely* thick layer of poly-**Si - 13.6 µm**.
  - In a regular **CVD** process this would take forever. So we do it at very high temperature - **1 050 °C**.
  - Since normal **CVD** reactors are not build for this kind of process, we do it in an epitaxial reactor and call the resulting layer, somewhat self-contradictory, "*Epi-poly*". The expression "epi-poly " is certainly a fine ***oxymoron*** but you better get used to things like that.



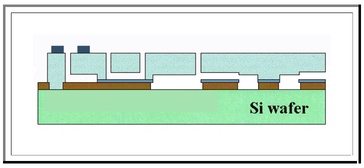
- The epi-poly layer is rather rough, so we now use ***CMP*** (chemical - mechanical polishing), one of the processes we had listed as quite **MEMS** specific, to make it perfectly flat.
  - The epi-poly will contain some mechanical stress - you just can't make a rather thick layer quickly without building up some stress. So we anneal everything ("stress anneal"), for somewhat obscure reasons in an oxygen atmosphere.
  - Since we will then oxidize some of the epi-poly, this oxide needs to be removed in another wet-chemical process step.



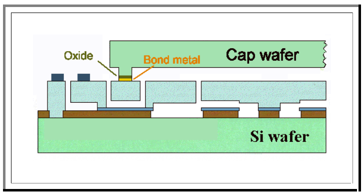
- Now it is time to produce the first metal layer; we take **Al** in this case.
  - It is deposited by sputtering **1.3 µm** on **Al** on top of the epi-poly followed by the **4th** lithography and wet chemical structuring.,



- At this point we need to use another **MEMS** specific process: the *Bosch process* or deep plasma etching. We need to structure the very thick epi-poly layer, and standard microelectronic processes just can't do this.
  - A fifth lithography defines the structures, and the alternating etching -side wall passivation process digs deeply into the layers, possibly creating some steps at interfaces



- A last very typical MEMS process follows: Removal of the sacrificial oxide by **HF** *gas* etching.
  - This is a process we would never use in microelectronics - far too messy and extremely dangerous! So why do we do it?
  - Think about what happens when you wash your hair and withdraw this long flexible fine structures from the liquid water - they stick together because of **capillary forces**.
  - Exactly the same thing happens when you withdraw the flexible fine structures released after dissolving the sacrificial oxide in some liquid - they stick together. But in contrast to your hair they will never ever come apart again - **stiction** takes over.
  - No capillary forces if you etch with gas - but lots of other problems that need to be solved.



- All that remains to be done is to seal the gyro hermetically at a defined pressure that will not change in the next **20** years or so.
  - For this we bond a pre-structured **Si** wafer with some bond layers over the sensitive part, leaving the electrical connections free. We now have used thelast MEMS specific process: *Wafer Bonding*.
  - The total encapsulation process is a whole process sequence in its own right, but here we leave it at that..
- Now we have a functioning gyro. If it works to specification, you now can sell it - for a few **€** a piece, if you are lucky.