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Overview on nuclear corrosion - Corrosion in the nuclear cycle

D. Feron

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Nuclear corrosion summer school | NuCoSS-15, Bled, Slovenia | July 5-10, 2015

Damien Féron, CEA/DEN/DPC/SCCME

JULY 2015

Content: illustrations of corrosion processes in the nuclear cycle but far from the “traditional” water corrosion phenomena

Background

Reactors

Liquid metal

Gas

Reprocessing plants

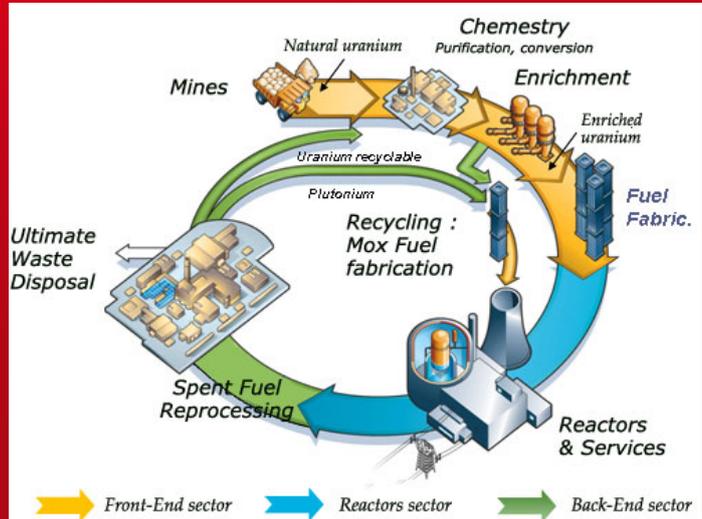
Nitric acid

Geological disposal

Long term

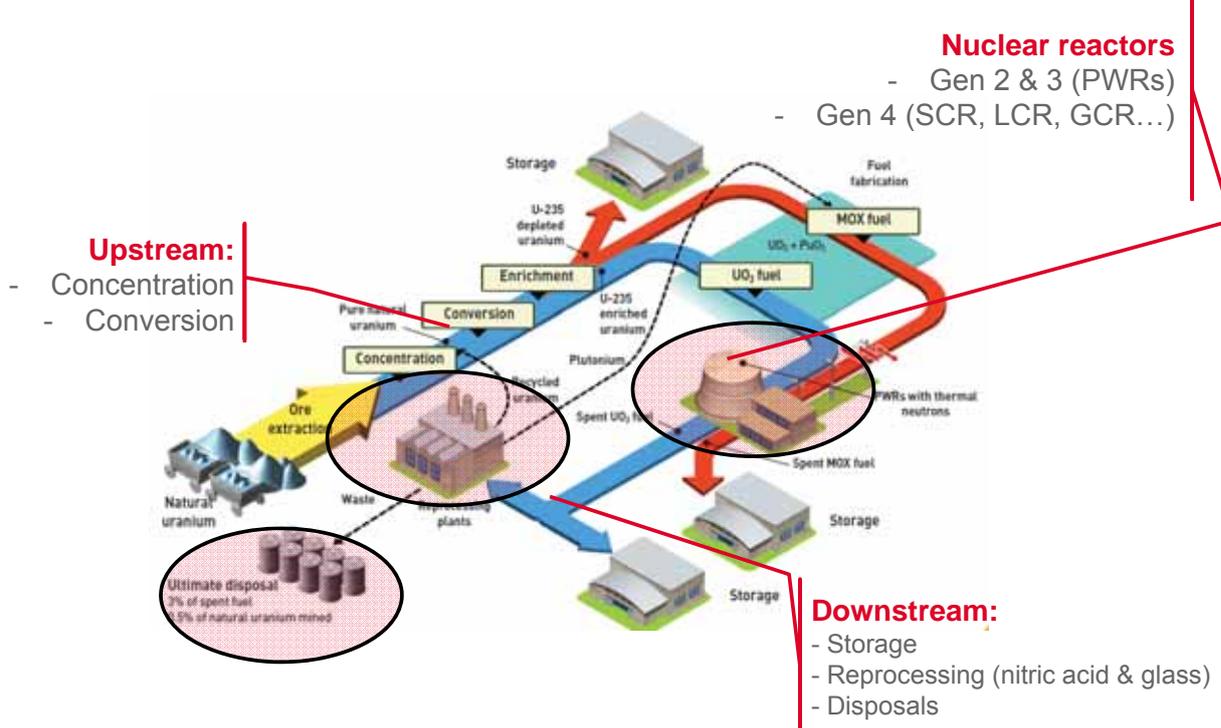


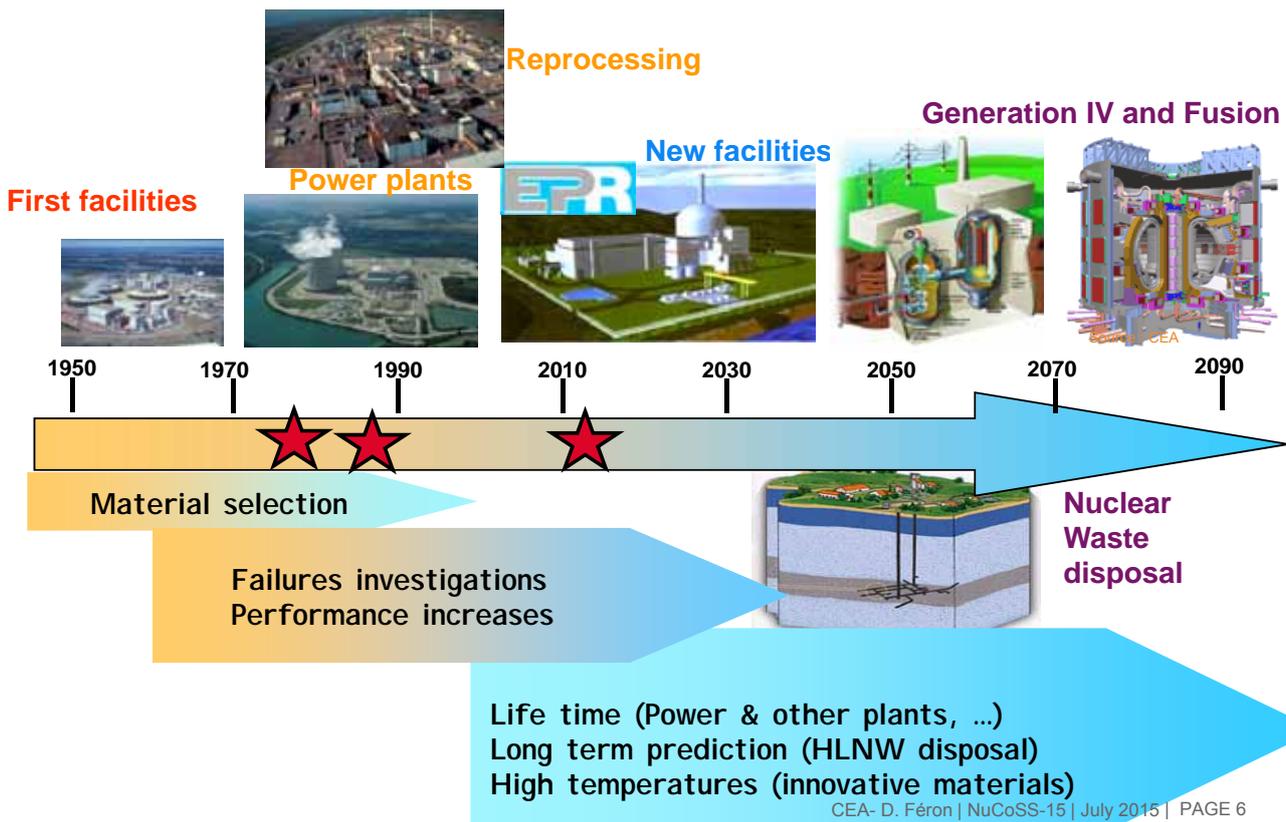
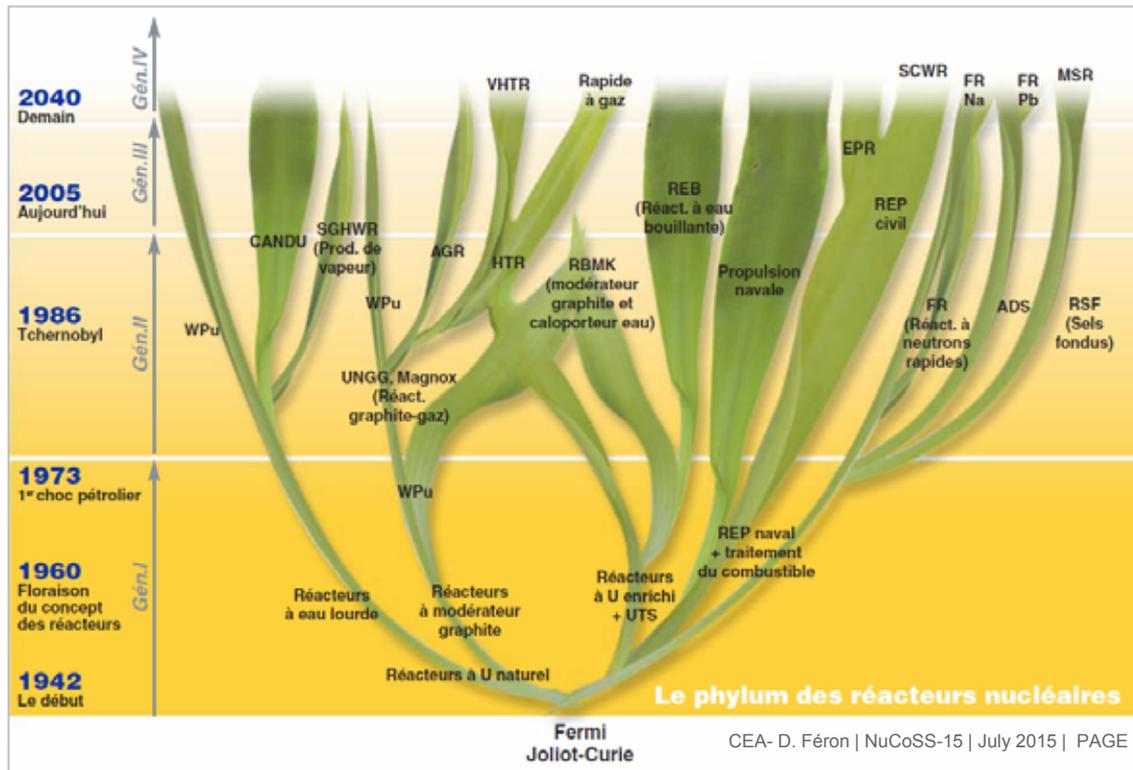
BACKGROUND



FROM DEVELOPMENT TO TERRITORY **cea den** Background | Na & He Reactors | Reprocessing plant | Geological disposal

NUCLEAR CYCLE & CORROSION





Safety improvements

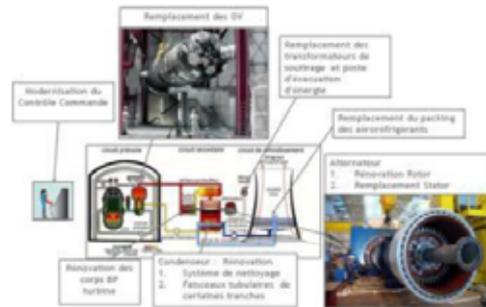
- **Ten-year inspection reevaluation**
Safety inspection every ten years
One file per reactor submitted by EDF
- **40-year key stage: enhance the safety with the objectives of new reactors**
REDUCE the consequences of a core meltdown
REDUCE the probability of a core meltdown occurring
Meet WENRA* requirements as closely as possible
- **Coexistence of GEN 2 and GEN 3 (EPR)**

Confirmation of objectives and acceleration after Fukushima

*Western European Nuclear Regulators Association

Ageing management

- **Replaceable components: Define the best compromise between routine maintenance/preventive replacement**



- **Non-replaceable components**

Vessel: Demonstration of endurance until 60 years

Containment: Repairs



From C. Ancelin, Fontevraud 8, September 2014

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Upstream

- Sulfuric acid and fluorine environments

Fission power plants

- Light water reactors
- Heavy water reactors
- Supercritical water reactors
- Liquid metal reactors (Na, Pb & Pb-Bi)
- Gas cooled reactors (helium)
- Molten salt reactors



Fusion

- Liquid metal (Li, Pb-Li)
- Gas
- Water

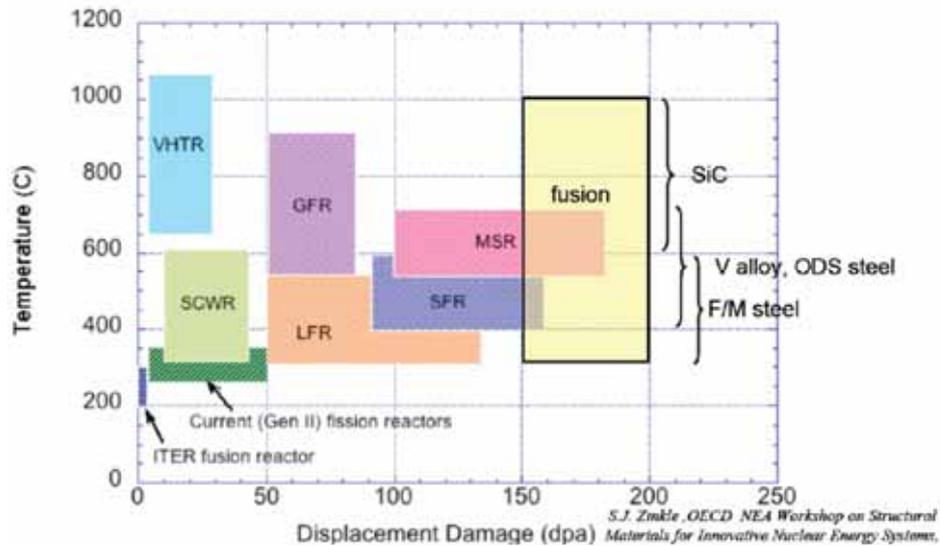
Downstream

- Nitric acid (reprocessing plants)
- Liquid glass (high radioactive nuclear waste)
- Atmospheric corrosion (interim storage)
- Geological environments (final nuclear waste disposals)



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Comparison of Gen II – Gen IV and fusion environments of structural materials



Three main evolutions

- Increase of temperatures from 350°C to >1000°C
- Increase of dose from 10 dpa to 200 dpa
- Increase operating time from 40 years to

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Non specific and specific materials

Materials with “standard” properties

- **functions:**
 - Structural materials
 - Containment barriers
 - Confinement matrix
- **types:**
 - Metallic alloys
 - oxides (ceramics, glass...)
 - graphite
 - concrete
 - polymers

Materials with nuclear properties

- **functions:**
 - Fuel
 - Neutron absorbing materials
 - Neutron non- absorbing materials
- **types:**
 - ceramics (UO₂, B₄C)
 - Metallic alloys (AlC, Zircaloy)

from bibliography I

Example of specific and non-specific materials with Zr alloys (« common » and « nuclear » materials)

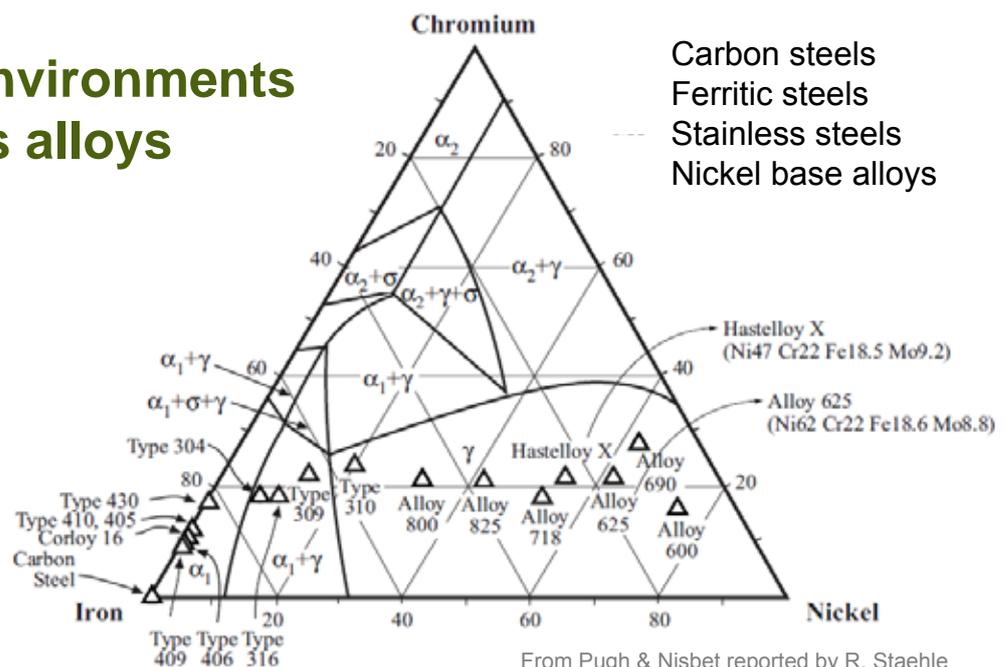
Alloy	Zr	Zr 702*	Zircaloy 2	Zircaloy 4	Zr- 1 Nb	Zr- 2.5 Nb
Sn %			1.2-1.7	1.2-1.7		
Nb %					1	2.4-2.8
Fe %		0.20% max (Fe+Cr)	0.07-0.20	0.18-0.24		
Cr %			0.05-0.15	0.07-0.13		
Ni%			0.03-0.08			
O ppm		0.16% max	1200-1400	1200-1400	1200-1400	1200-1400
Co ppm	20		20	20	20	20
Hf ppm	100	4.5% max	100	100	100	100
U ppm	3.5		3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Application	Reprocessing plants	Reprocessing plants	LWR	LWR	LWR	LWR

from bibliography I

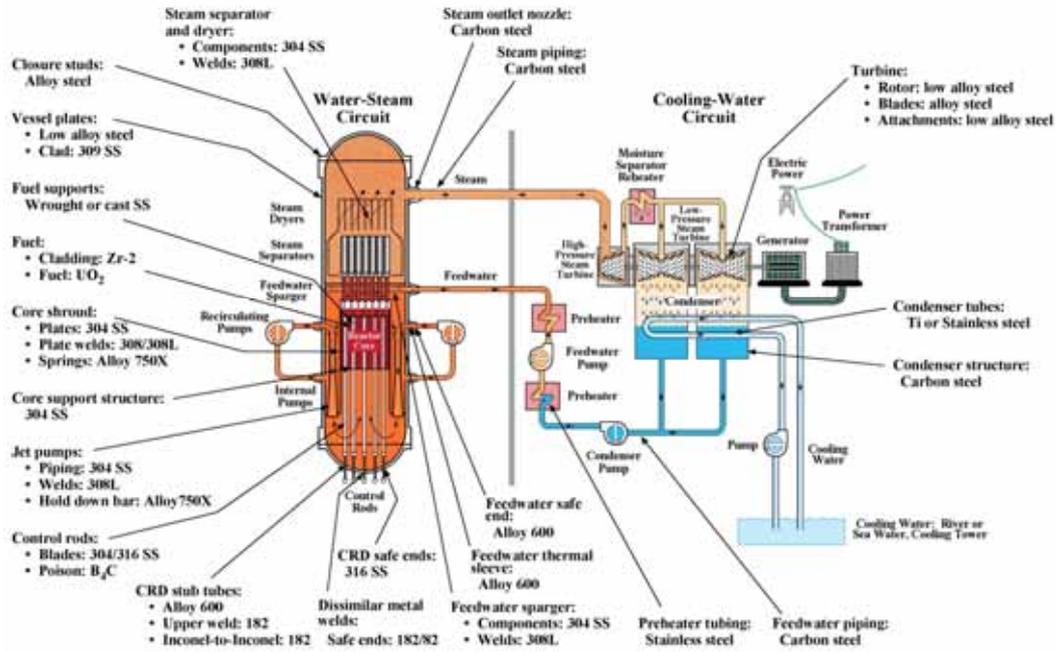
Zr alloys without Hafnium have been developed specifically for cladding application

Various environments
Numerous alloys

Carbon steels
Ferritic steels
Stainless steels
Nickel base alloys



BWR Components and Materials



From R. Staehle

MATERIALS/ENVIRONMENTS IN NPP

Reactor type	BWR	PWR	SFR	GFR	LFR	VHTR	SCWR	MSR
Coolant	Water	Water	Sodium	Helium	Lead or lead alloys	He	Water	Molten salts (fluorines)
temperature	288°C	280-330°C	370-550°C	450-850°C	550-800°C	400-950°C	280-550°C 24MPa	500-720°C
Cladding	Zirconium alloys	Zirconium alloys	Austenitic stainless steels / F/M ODS	SiC-SiC / Refractory metals	F/M steels ODS steels	Graphite SiC	Ni alloys and F/M steels	Graphite and carbon base materials
Structure	Stainless steels	Stainless steels (SG: Ni alloys)	316LN F/M steels	Refractory metals/ Ni alloys	High Si F/M steels	Ceramics ODS Ni alloys	Ni alloys and F/M steels	Graphite, carbon base materials, Hastelloy N
Dose (cladding)	10dpa (2-4dpa/an)	10dpa (2-4dpa/an)	200 dpa*	60/90dpa	150 dpa	7/25 dpa		

Cladding and structural materials used for present reactors and planned for innovative NPPs

MAIN CHALLENGES & ISSUES

↪ Long term

- nuclear facilities (60 years)
- interim storage (100-300 years)
- geological disposal (thousands of years)



↪ High temperatures

- Gen 4
- Fusion



Source : EDF

Source : ANDRA

↪ Safety & liability

- Confidence
- Evolution



Major challenges linked with corrosion behaviour

Rapsodie



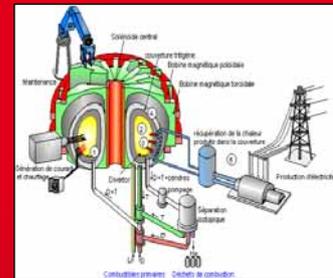
Phenix



Superphenix



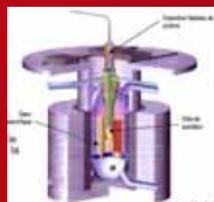
LIQUID METAL



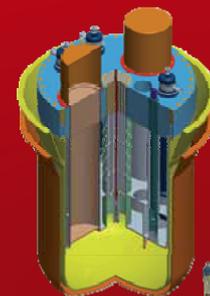
Fusion facilities



Astrid



ADS



Myrrha

- **Liquid metals** with high thermal conductivity, high boiling point and adequately high specific heat are used to enhance **heat transfer**.
- The coolant of a **fast neutron reactor** should possess low neutron absorption cross section and be a poor moderator for achieving high neutron economy and for sustaining the hard neutron spectrum. **Liquid sodium** has been the coolant of choice for the fast neutron reactors.
- **Liquid lithium** in its pure form or as low melting **Pb-17Li** eutectic is considered as tritium breeder coolant in **fusion reactor** systems.
- **Liquid Pb and lead-bismuth** eutectic (LBE) alloy are the candidate coolants for ADS.

Thermo-physical properties of liquid metal coolants

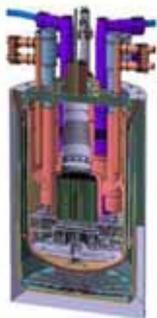
Property	Coolant					
	Sodium	Lithium	Pb-Li	Pb	LBE	H ₂ O
Melting Point (K)	371	453.5	507	600.5	398	273
Boiling Point (K)	1156	1620	-	2018	1901	373
Density Kg/m ³ at 773K	845	487	9486	10520	10150	0.99 (at 323K)
Thermal conductivity at 773K (W/(K.m))	68.8	53.5	17	17.1	14.2	0.67 (at 323K)
Heat capacity kJ/(kg.K) at 773K	1.269	4.212	0.187	0.150	0.146	1.339 (at 323K)
Vapour pressure(Pa) at 773K	2 at 573K	0.08	0.002	0.002	0.0024	101325 Pa at 373K
Electrical Resistivity, Ω.m at 800K	28.28* 10 ⁻⁸	38.2* 10 ⁻⁸	135.2* 10 ⁻⁸	103.6* 10 ⁻⁸	125.8* 10 ⁻⁸	182 * 10 ³ at 298K

from bibliography I

Reactor (Country)	Th. Power (elect.) MW	First start	Shutdown	Number of operating years
EBR-I (États-Unis) (NaK)	1,4 (0,2)	1951	1963	12
BR-5/BR-10 (Russie)	8 (0)	1958	2002	44
DFR (Royaume-Uni) (NaK)	60 (15)	1959	1977	18
EBR-II (États-Unis)	62,5 (20)	1961	1991	30
EFFBR (États-Unis)	200 (61)	1963	1972	9
RAPSODIE (France)	40 (0)	1967	1983	16
BOR-60 (Russie)	55 (12)	1968		44
SEFOR (États-Unis)	20 (0)	1969	1972	3
BN-350 (Kazakhstan)	750 (130)	1972	1999	27
PHÉNIX (France)	563 (250)	1973	2009	36
PFR (Royaume-Uni)	650 (250)	1974	1994	20
JOYO (Japon)	50-75/100 (0)	1977		35
KNK-II (Allemagne)	58 (20)	1977	1991	14
FFTF (États-Unis)	400 (0)	1980	1993	13
BN-600 (Russie)	1 470 (600)	1980		32
SUPERPHÉNIX (France)	3000 (1240)	1985	1997	12
FBTR (Inde)	40 (13)	1985		27
MONJU (Japon)	714 (280)	1994		18
CEFR (Chine)	65 (25)	2010		2
PFBR (Inde)	1 250 (500)	En construction		
BN-800 (Russie)	2 100 (880)	En construction		
Total				418

from AIEA

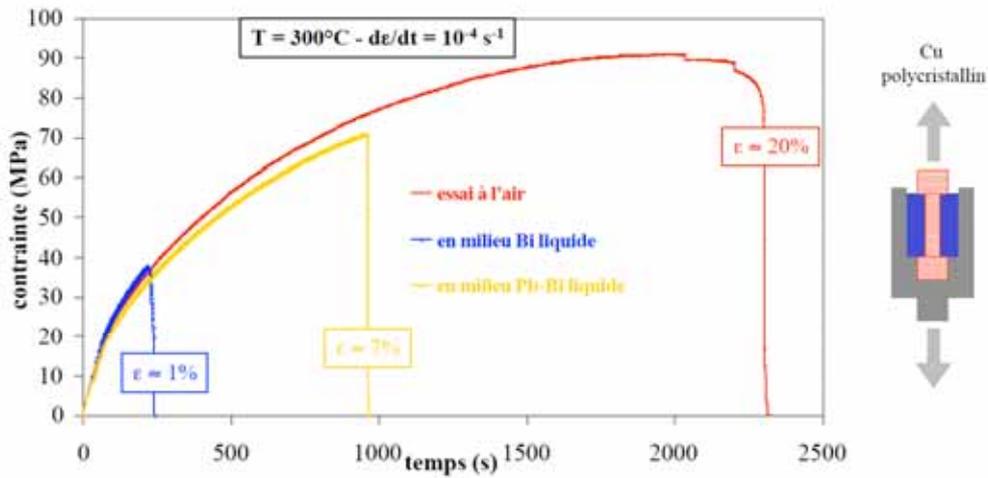
Liquid metals



- Sodium - SFR
- Lead - LFR, Hybrid R. (secondary circuits of SFR)
- Lead-bismuth - LFR
- Lithium
- Lead-lithium } Fusion

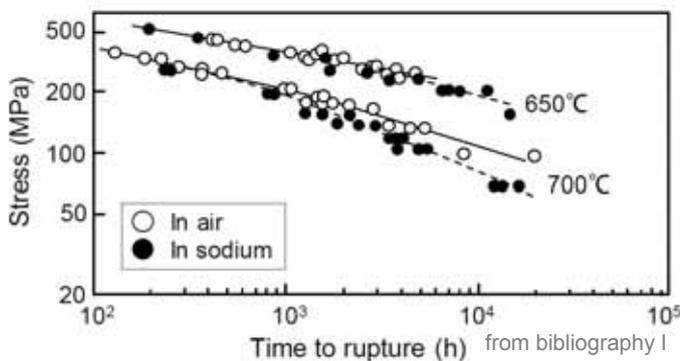
Corrosion/compatibility solid/liquid metals

- Liquid metal embrittlement « process resulting in a decrease of the toughness or ductility »
- General corrosion: Reaction/ Dissolution / Oxidation...
- Transfer processes (non-isothermal systems)



Dramatic decrease of the mechanical properties (solid copper in liquid bismuth a liquid Pb-Bi at 300°C)

liquid sodium

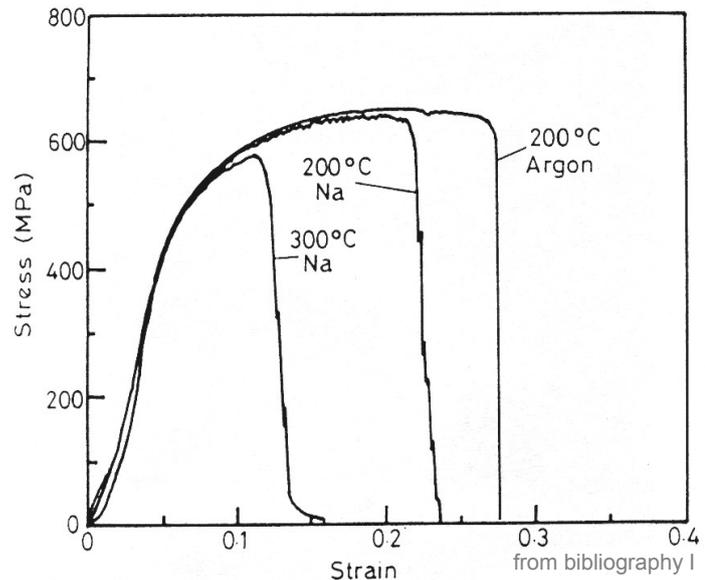


On 316L, same behaviour in pure sodium than in air (constant load testing)

Liquid metal embrittlement (LME) is often affecting metals and alloys stressed and in contact with molten metals: a major issue for components exposed to some liquid metals.

In pure liquid sodium (with low impurity content), it is generally assumed that there are no deleterious effects (or no major effects) on rupture behaviour for ferritic and austenitic steels under constant load test conditions.

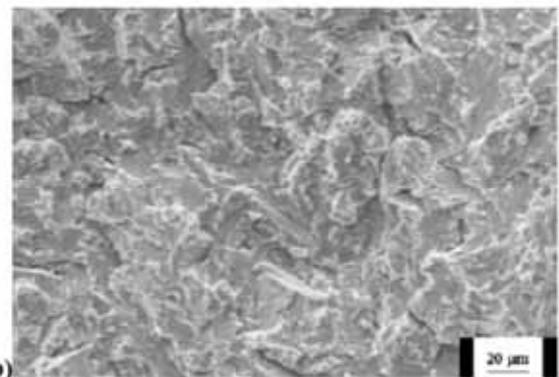
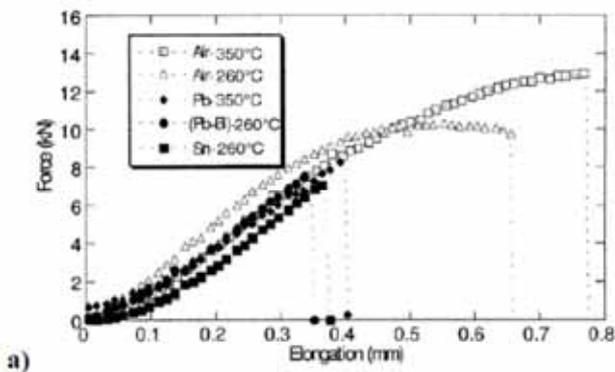
For environmental purities typical of sodium-cooled reactors, embrittlement has been reported only for low alloyed steels under severe loading conditions during slow strain tests : not relevant in normal SFR operating conditions



Stress-strain curves for low alloyed steel in sodium and in argon at 200°C and 300°C, at 10^{-6} s^{-1}

FUSION reactors (systems)

IN LEAD, LEAD BISMUTH (AND TIN), A LOSS OF DUCTILITY IS OBSERVED ON STEELS (T-91)



from bibliography I

- Intermetallic compounds formation linked to phase diagrams between the solid metal and the liquid metal

→ Thermodynamics

- Oxidation of the steel elements (Fe, Cr, Ni, Mn, ...) of the surface in contact with the liquid metal, if the oxygen content is high enough, then dissolution of the oxides and transfer of corrosion products (reaction with other dissolved species)

→ Oxygen concentration (concentration of impurities)

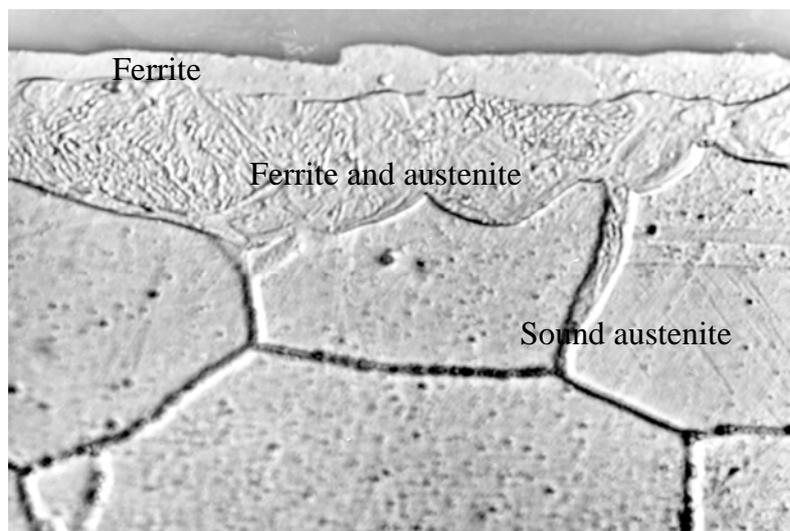
- Reaction with other impurities (C, N...)

→ Activities in solid and liquid metals

- Dissolution of the steel elements (Fe, Cr, Ni, Mn, ...) of the surface in contact with the liquid metal, then transfer and a deposition on the reactor structures

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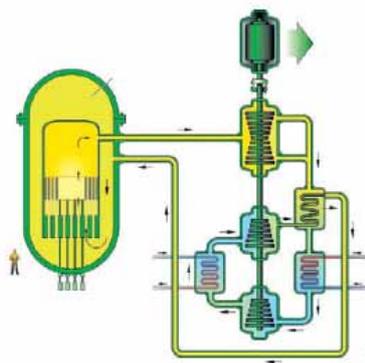
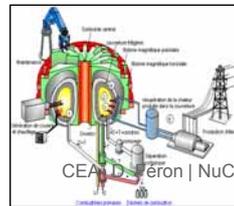
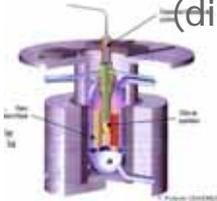
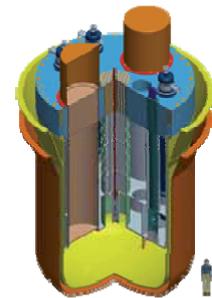
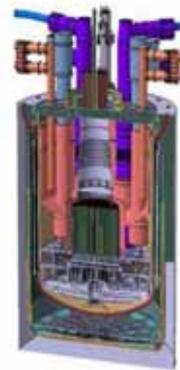
General corrosion in liquid metal "dissolution"



from bibliography VIII

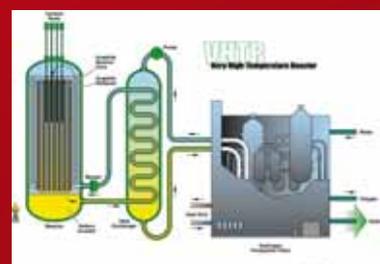
General corrosion : formation of a ferrite film at the surface (ferrite/ferrite and austenite /Sound austenite)

- ✓ Dissolution at low oxygen content: dissolution in Li, Na and Pb with low oxygen
- ✓ Oxidation may lead to a more or less protective layer.
- ✓ Ni solubilities are generally high and Ni alloys are not suitable.
- ✓ Liquid metal embrittlement: main issue for lead and lead eutectics.
- ✓ Importance of the transfer processes between hot and cold parts of a circuit (dissolution/deposition).



GAS (HELIUM) CORROSION

HELIUM COOLED REACTORS & FUSION



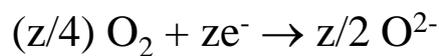
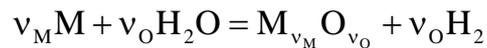
Background

Chemical or electrochemical reaction between two phases
(heterogeneous reaction)

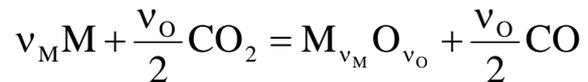


High temperature oxydation
by oxygen

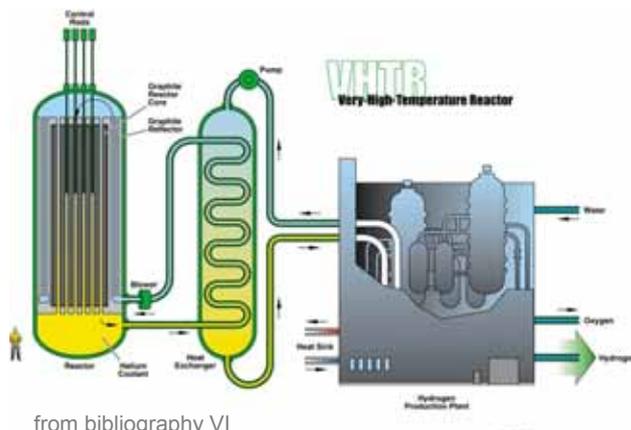
➤ Water vapor



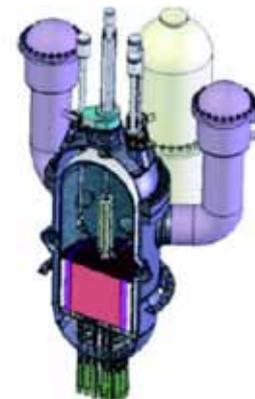
➤ Carbonic gas



BEHAVIOR OF CHROMIA-FORMING ALLOYS IN HELIUM AT HIGH TEMPERATURE (VHTR)



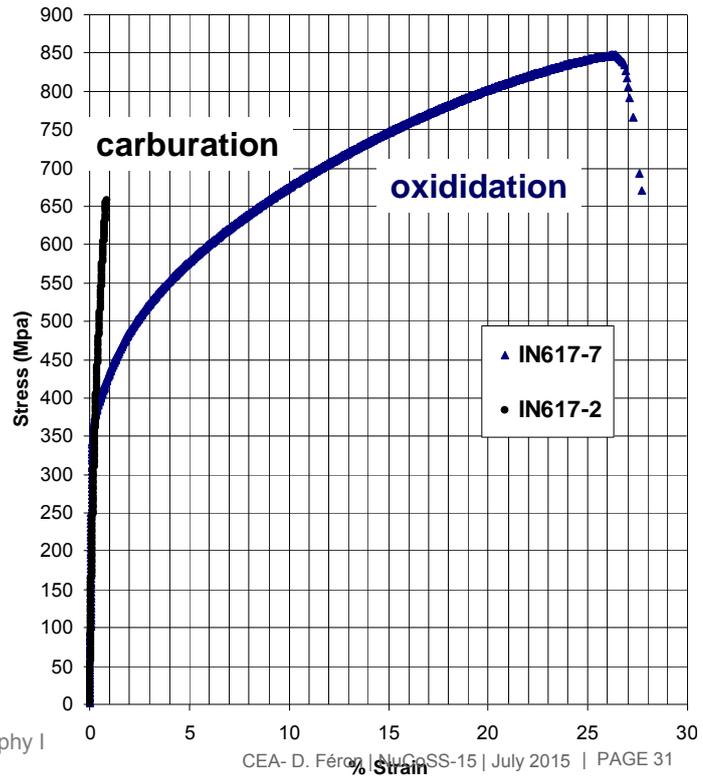
from bibliography VI



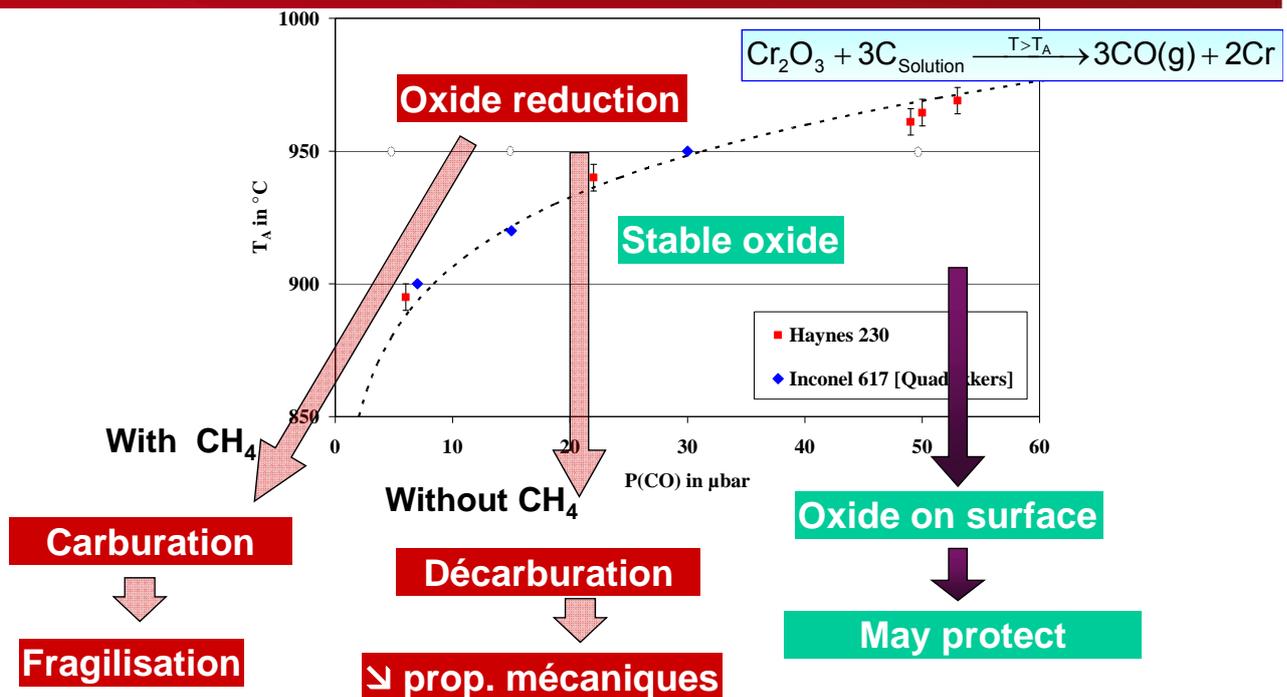
Effect of the carburation on mechanical properties

Carburized Alloy 617 specimens exhibit nil ductility at room temperature

Oxidized Alloy 617 exhibits 26% reduction in area at room temperature

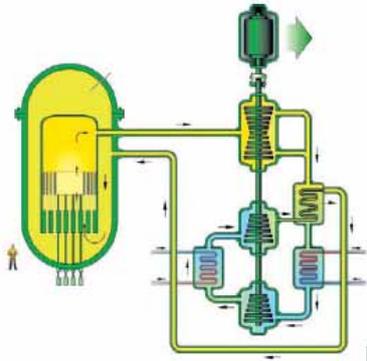


SUMMARY OF THE BEHAVIOR OF CHROMIA FORMING MATERIAL IN HELIUM AT HIGH TEMPERATURES



**! Importance of the gas chemistry!
(control of impurity levels)**

CORROSION IN HELIUM AT HIGH TEMPERATURES (OVER 800°C)



- IMPORTANCE OF THE IMPURITIES
- CHEMICAL CONTROL IS NEEDED
- IMPURITIES ARE NEEDED BUT AT THE RIGHT CONCENTRATIONS
- EVOLUTION OF THE CHEMISTRY WITH TEMPERATURE.....



REPROCESSING PLANTS

NITRIC ACID CORROSION



WHY REPROCESSING SPENT FUEL ?

Composition of the LWR spent fuel assembly (FA) after irradiation

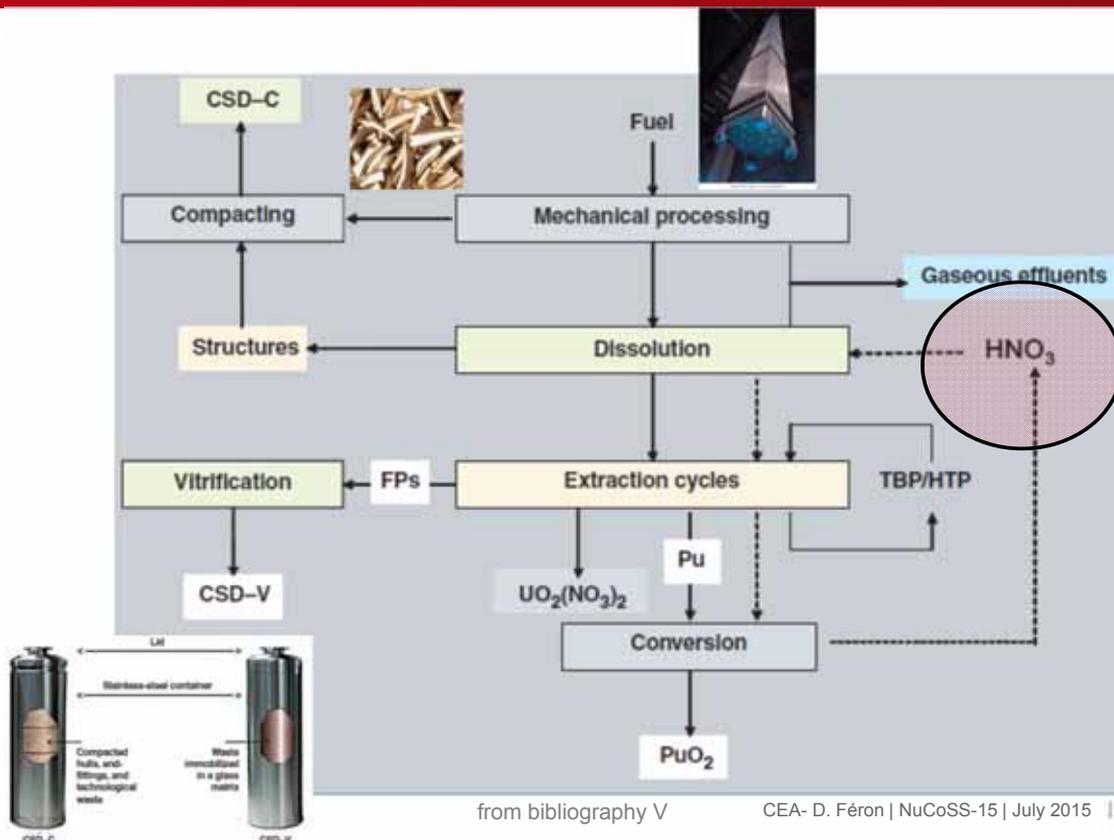
→ 1 LWR fuel assembly: 500 kg uranium before irradiation in the reactor



Recycling U & Pu

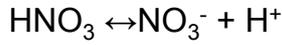
Very stable chemical form (glass) for high radioactive elements

HOW SPENT FUEL REPROCESSING IS DONE?

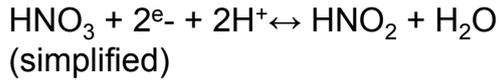


Nitric media

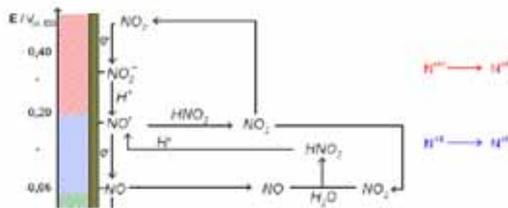
Acid



Oxidant

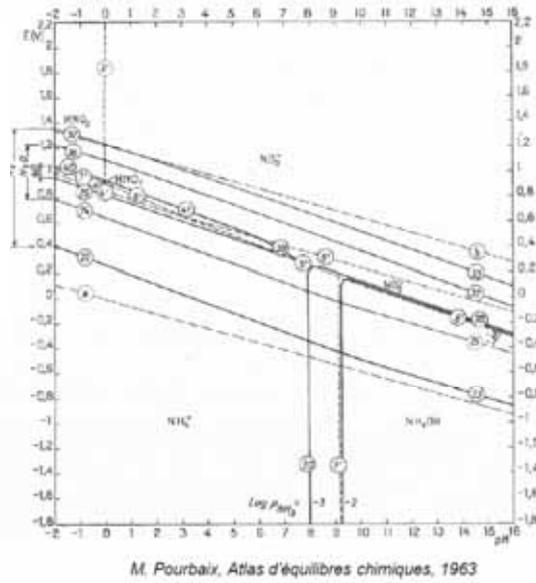


Cathodic reactions



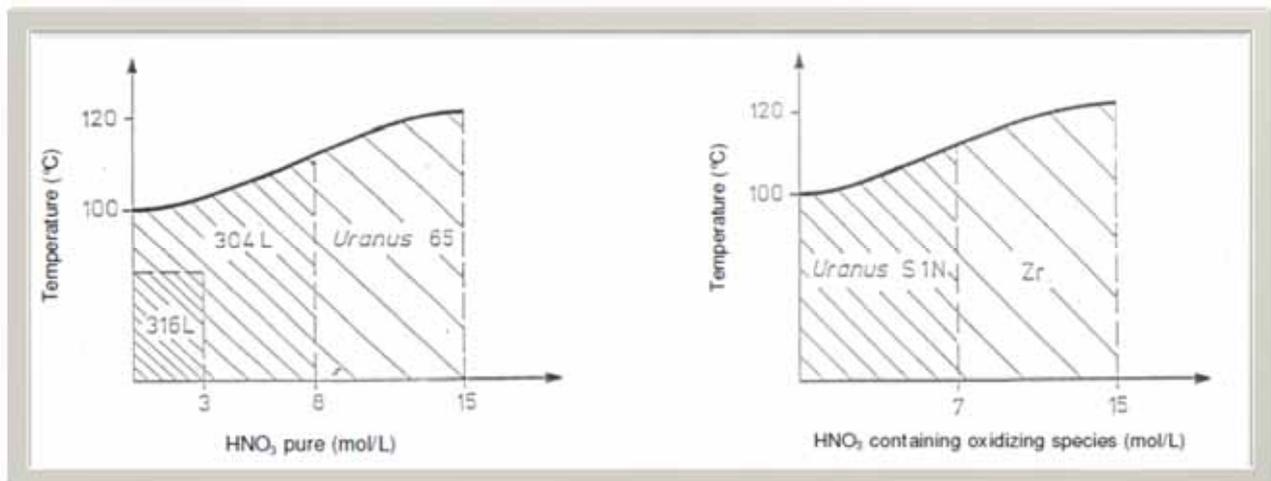
autocatalysis

Fig. 1. — Diagramme d'équilibres transition-pH du système azote-eau, à 25°C.
(Les potentiels partiels indiqués pour NH_4^+ , N_2 , N_2O et NO sont relatifs au cas de solution purement à 1 g d'ion/litres par litre sous l'ensemble des formes $\text{NH}_4^+ + \text{NH}_4\text{OH} + \text{HNO}_2 + \text{NO}_2^- + \text{HNO}_3 + \text{NO}_3^-$.)

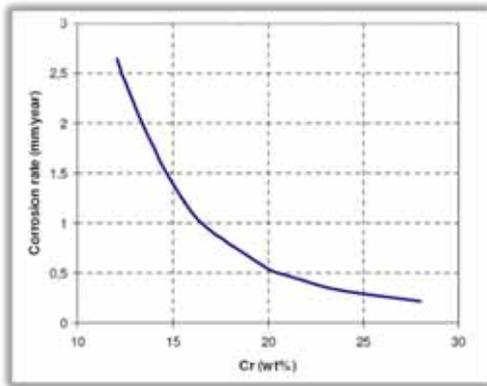


MATERIAL SELECTION IN REPROCESSING PLANTS

Typical limits of the use of austenitic stainless steels in nitric acid



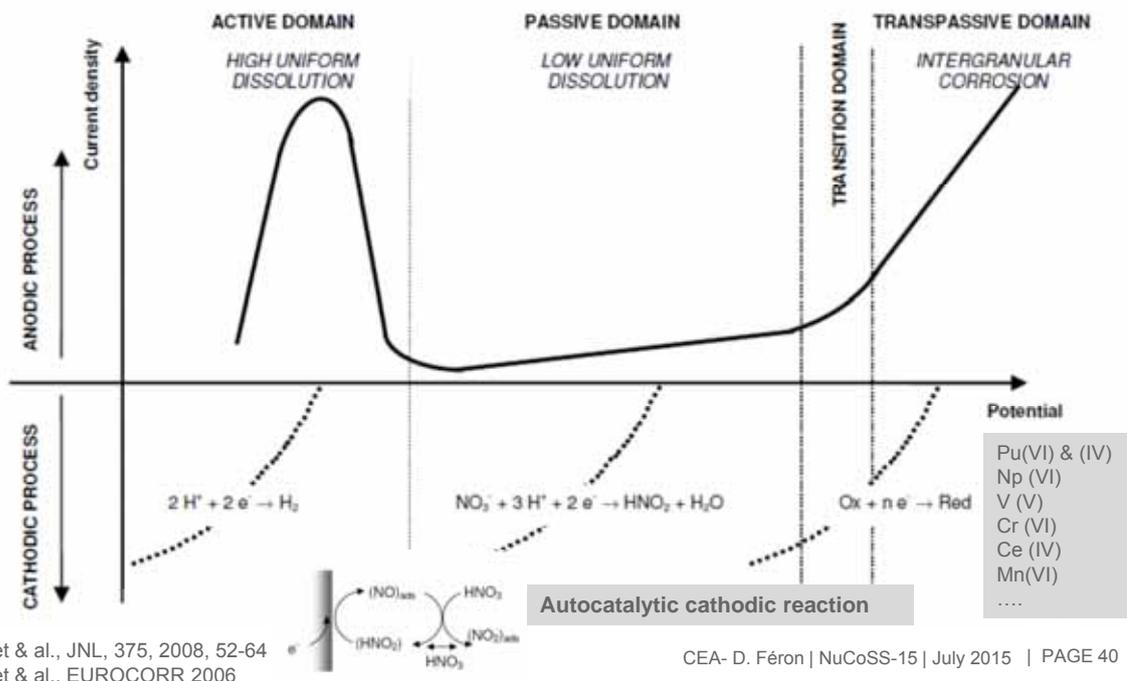
Grades		C	Cr	Ni	Si	S	P	Mo	Mn	N	Nb
AFNOR Z2 CN 18.10	Commercial AISI 304L	≤ 0.03	18	10	≤ 1.0	≤ 0.02	≤ 0.03	-	-	-	-
Z2 CN 25.20	URANUS 65 AISI 310	≤ 0.015	24-26	19-22	≤ 0.25	≤ 0.005	≤ 0.025	≤ 0.5	≤ 2	-	addition
Z2 CND 17.13	AISI 316L	≤ 0.03	17	13	≤ 1.0	≤ 0.02	≤ 0.03	2.5-3	-	-	-
Z1 CNS 17.15	URANUS S1N	≤ 0.015	16.5-18.5	13.5-15	3.8-4.5	≤ 0.005	≤ 0.025	≤ 0.5	≤ 2	≤ 0.035	addition



Corrosion rate as function of the chromium content of austenitic stainless steels in boiling 65% nitric acid

P. Fauvet & al., JNL, 375, 2008, 52-64
P. Fauvet & al., EUROCORR 2006

Electrochemical behavior of stainless steels in nitric acid

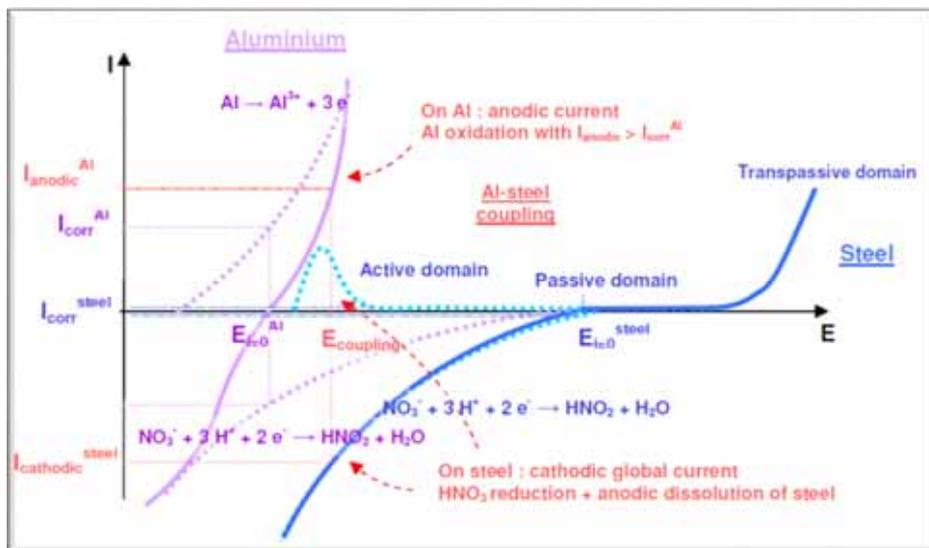


Metallic elements (from the cladding for instance) will be in contact with structural alloys in nitric acid

Metallic elements less noble than passive 304L & 316L	Metallic elements more noble than passive 304L & 316L
Al Zr Ta Ti	Zr (passive) Pt Au Graphite (Platinoïds: Pd, Rh, Ru)

- ✓ Cathodic reaction mainly on the more noble material
- ✓ Anodic reaction increases on the less noble material
- But it does not mean that the corrosion rate of SS decreases when SS is more noble in nitric acid ...

Coupling between aluminium and stainless steels in nitric acid



Coupling \Rightarrow increase of the anodic reactions on Al and on SS, so **increase of the corrosion rates on both materials** (due to the SS active peak)

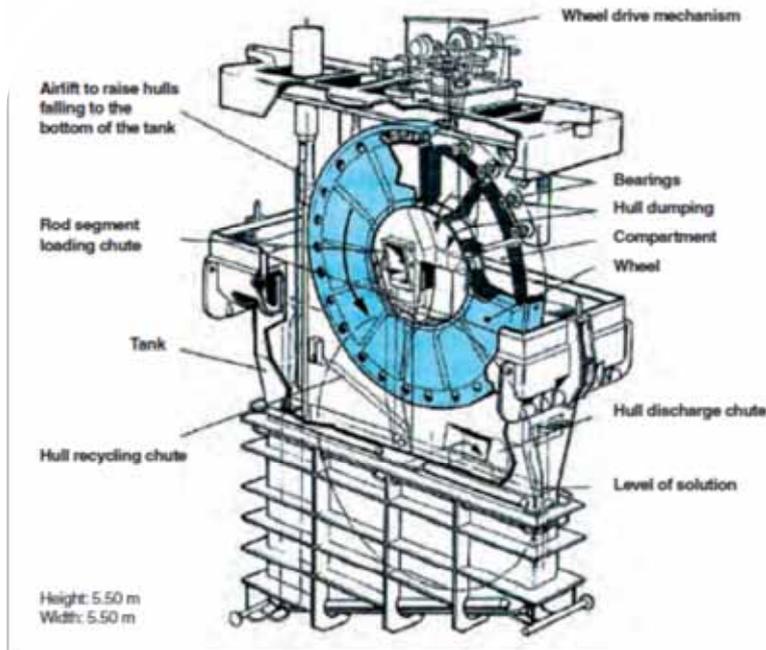


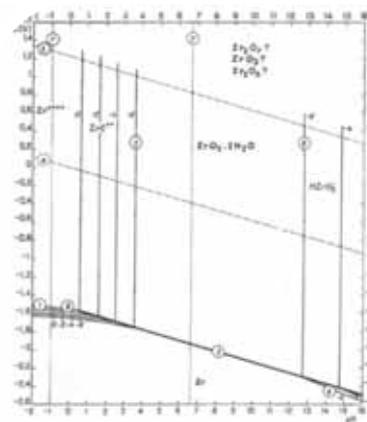
Fig. 35. Schematic, and photographs, of rotating-wheel dissolvers used in the UP3 and UP2-800 plants, at La Hague.

from bibliography V

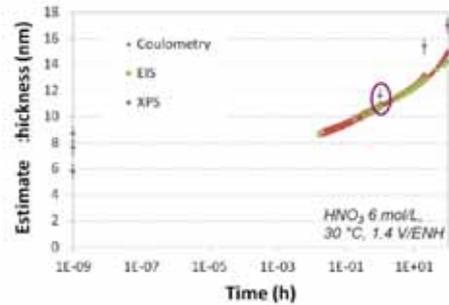
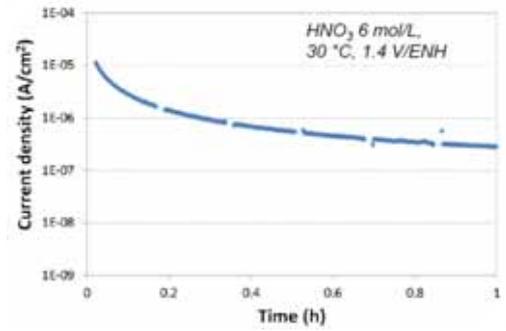
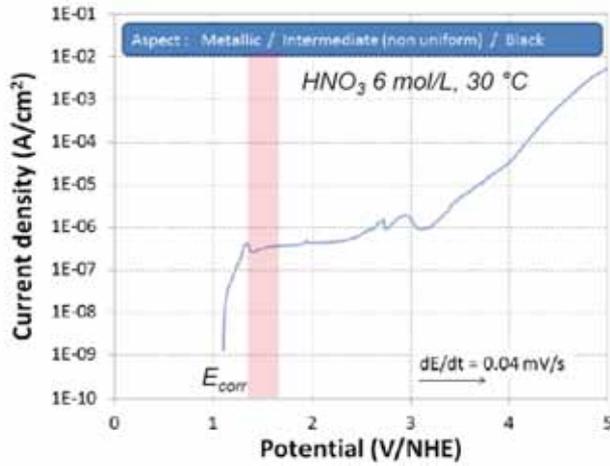
Zirconium behavior

- ❑ Oxidation

$$\text{Zr} \leftrightarrow \text{Zr}^{4+} + 4\text{e}^-$$
- ❑ In acid media, the oxide is not stable thermodynamically
- ❑ At low pH, domain of active corrosion following traditional use of Pourbaix diagrams
- ❑ But, kinetics of formation and of dissolution of the oxide....

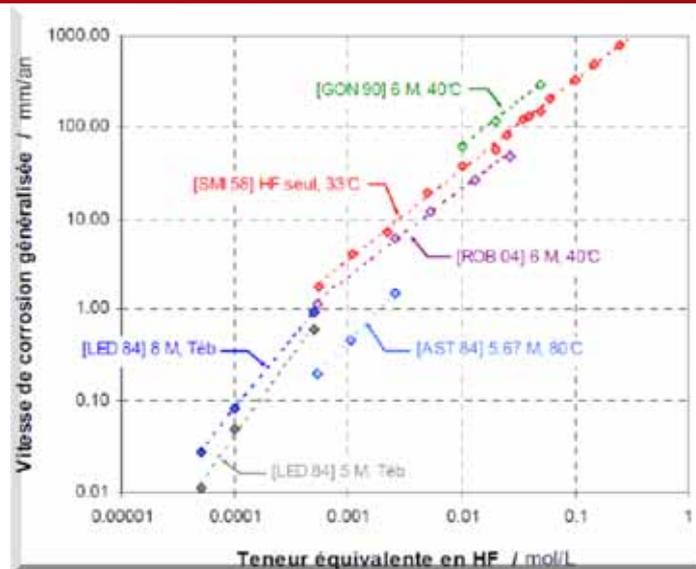


M. Pourbaix, Atlas d'équilibres chimiques, 1963



B. Gwinner & al., 64th ISE meeting, 2013
P. Lagoutharis & al., EUROCORR 2013

Passive behavior of Zr in pure nitric at very low pH



Increase of the corrosion rate with fluorine formation of a soluble complex $(ZrF_n)^{(4-n)}$

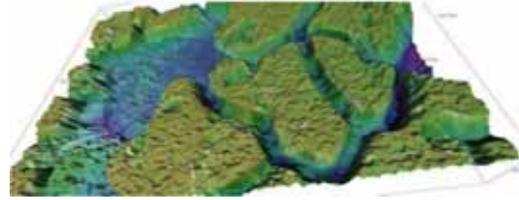
B. Gwinner & al., 64th ISE meeting, 2013

P. Lagoutharis & al., EUROCORR 2013



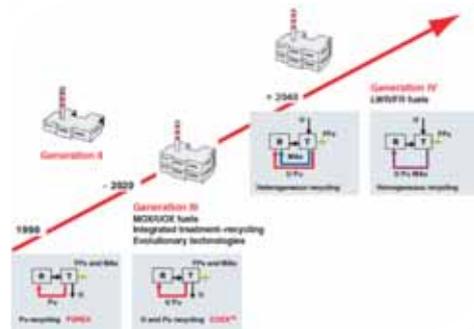
Nitric acid media

- Very different from water
- Autocatalytic HNO_3 reduction
- Oxidising species
- Galvanic coupling



Main alloys

- Austenitic stainless steels
(304L, Uranus 65, 316L, Uranus S1N,...)
- Zirconium
- Titanium



UNDERGROUND REPOSITORY

**HOW TO PREDICT CORROSION FOR
MILLENNIA ?**

How to predict corrosion over millennia ?



Illustration of the links between modelling and analogues

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MODELLING & ARTEFACTS

Corrosion modeling of an iron based alloy in passive conditions

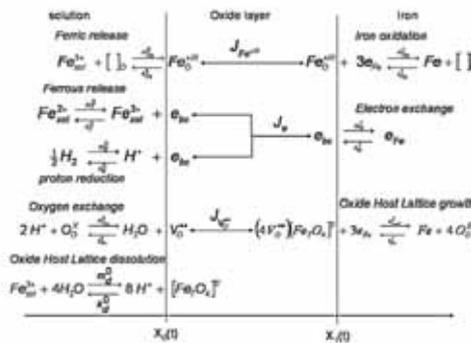


Fig. 3. Flow chart for electrons, octahedral cations and oxygen vacancies. Kröger-Vink notation is used. [] corresponds to a free octahedral site.

C. Bataillon & al. , *Elect. Acta* 55 (2010) 4451-4467

- Corrosion modeling based on Fick and Poisson equations with moving interfaces (Diffusion Poisson Coupling Model - DPCM)
- Electrochemical experiments for data acquisition and verification
- Coupling with geochemical models
- Clay and concrete

Corrosion modeling of an iron based alloy in passive conditions
Example of obtained results

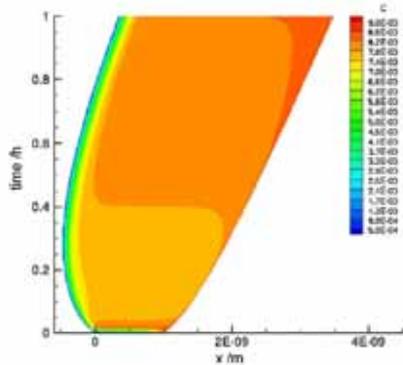
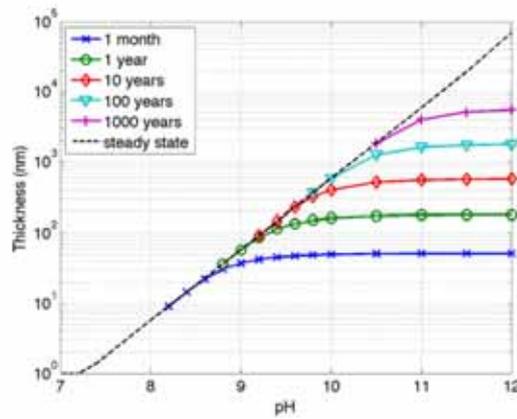


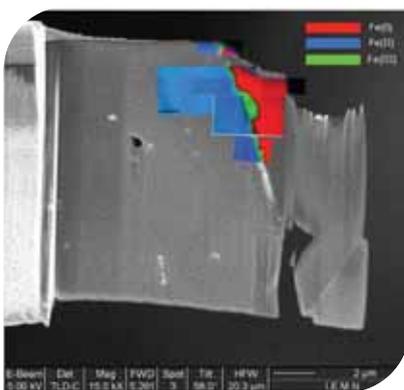
Fig. 36. Evolution of the location of the outer and inner interfaces with time for $V=0.05$ V/DSE. The concentration of oxygen vacancies is indicated by the color on the right hand. (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of the article.)

C. Bataillon & al. , *Elect. Acta* 55 (2010) 4451-4467



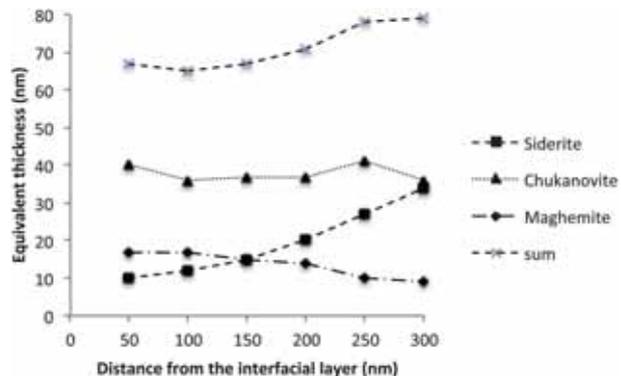
C. Bataillon & al. , *J. Comput. Physics* 231 (2012) 6213-6231

This model is under implantation in the nuclear waste simulations codes



From A. Michelin & al., *JAAS*, 2012

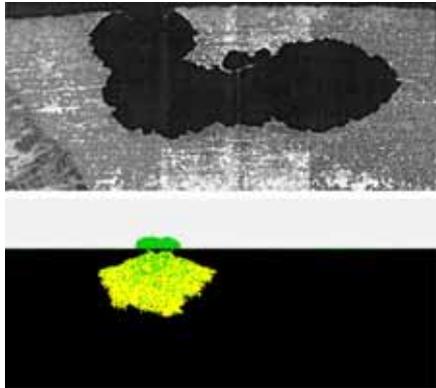
Equivalent thicknesses of the different phases obtained from the fit of the extracted spectra.



Support for modelling

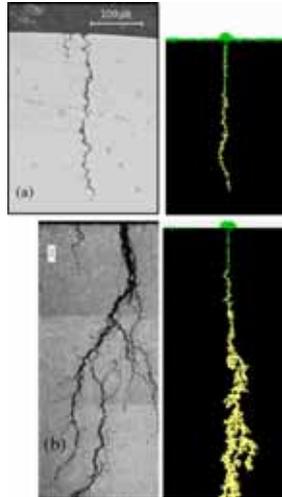
- Corrosion products of a 450 year old archaeological iron nail in anoxic environment were investigated at the nanometer level using STXM
- **Interfacial layer of about 100 nm at the interface metal/oxide**
- Support the hypothesis of a nanolayer controlling the corrosion process (Point Defect Model and associated models)

Use of cellular automata to model corrosion phenomena
Same description / difference: statistic of occurring events

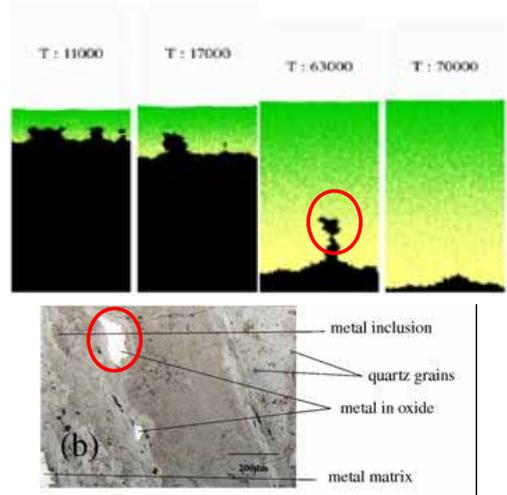


Localised corrosion
 $\lambda = 0.3$ and $\epsilon = 0.005$

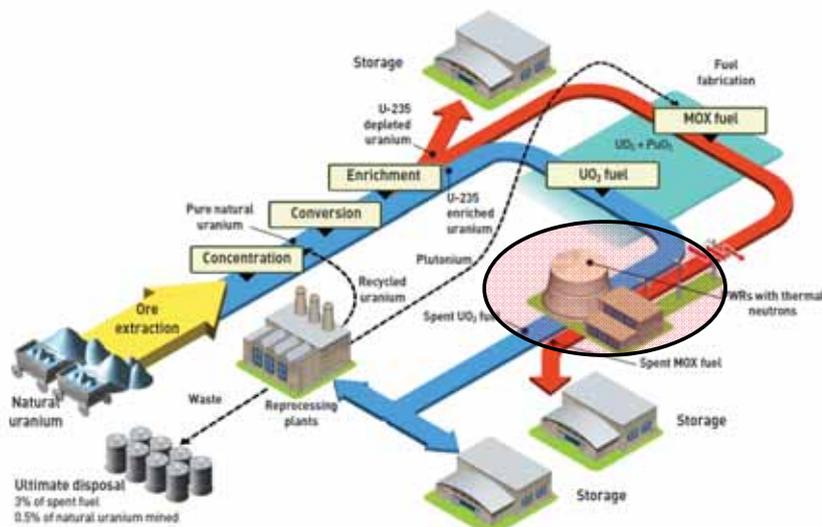
D. di Caprio & al., Corrosion Science 53 (2011) 418–425



Stress corrosion cracking
(a) $\lambda = 0.99$ and $\epsilon = 0.01$,
(b) $\lambda = 0.978$ and $\epsilon = 0.001$.



Evolution of the interface morphology (metal inclusions)
 $\lambda = 0.70$ and $\epsilon = 0.30$



Large number of environments, of materials, of sollicitations
Focus now on LWRs

- I. Nuclear corrosion science and engineering, edited by D. Féron, 2012, Woodhead publishing Lt, Cambridge, GB
- II. Comprehensive of nuclear materials, editor Rudy J.M. Koenungs, 2012, published by Elsevier, USA
- III. Sheir's corrosion, Volume 2, 4th edition, by R.A Cottis, M.J. Graham, R. Lindsay... 2010, published by Elsevier, U.K.
- IV. Corrosion and alteration of nuclear materials, C. Richet & D. Féron, Nuclear energy division monography, 2010, Editions le Moniteur, Paris
- V. Treatment and recycling of spent nuclear fuel, M. Lecomte, Nuclear energy division monography, 2008, Editions le Moniteur, Paris
- VI. Gas cooled reactors, P. Anzieux, Nuclear energy division monography, 2006, Editions le Moniteur, Paris
- VII. Les réacteurs nucléaires à caloporteur sodium, J. Guidez, Nuclear energy division monography, 2014, Editions le Moniteur, Paris
- VIII. Green books of the series of the European Federation of Corrosion (published by Maney or Woodhead - <http://www.efcweb.org/>)

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Have a nice nuclear corrosion summer school

NuCoSS - 15



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Département de physico-Chimie
Service de la corrosion et du
comportement des matériaux dans leur
environnement