VALIDATION OF CATHARE CODE ON THE 3D ROSA-LSTF PRESSURE VESSEL

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ABSTRACT

The Commisariat à l'Energie Atomique et aux Energie Alternatives (CEA) is performing an important work aimed to validate the 3D modelling for the CATHARE code since the necessity to better simulate the 3D effects observed during nuclear accidents experimental tests. The attention is focused on the reactor vessel behaviour. This paper presents a first validation of the code on the Japanese ROSA-LSTF installation for the test 1 of the OECD/NEA ROSA2 project, an intermediate (17%) hot leg break. An important effort is focused on the 3D modelling of the entire ROSA-LSTF pressure vessel by one single 3D module. Starting from the previous ROSA integral system input deck, the 1D-0D components, generally employed to simulate the entire pressure vessel, are replaced by this single 3D module. A good agreement between calculated and experimental results is obtained and presented in this paper. Furthermore the comparison with the previous 1D-0D results shows a better consistency of the 3D approach with experimental data. It stresses out the importance to better investigate the 3D phenomena and the necessity to carry on with the 3D validation. The non-homogenous temperature distribution at the core exit, the influence of the particular 3D geometry and the presence of the CCFL phenomenon in the core support plate are dealt with in detail. A first validation of CATHARE 3D module is completed and a better understanding of 3D phenomena starting from code results is shown possible, complementary to the experimental evidence.

KEYWORDS: CATHARE, ROSA-LSTF, 3D, validation, pressure vessel

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with the 3D modelling of the pressure vessel of the ROSA-LSTF (Large Scale Test Facility) facility performed with CATHARE 2 V2.5_3 code [1],[4],[5]. One single 3D model is foreseen for this purpose.

The LSTF, the so called ROSA (Ring OF Safety Assessment) facility, is located at the Tokai Research Establishment of the JAEA in Japan. It was used in the frame of the Japanese ROSA-IV and ROSA-V program since 1985 to study thermo-hydraulics responses of LWRs during loss-of-coolant accidents. During the years, different versions of this facility are proposed to simulate specific situations. In this work the attention is focused on the particular version of the LSTF geometry emploied during the Japanese ROSA-V program and the OECD/NEA ROSA and ROSA2 project. Since today, the integral systems are modelled by several 0D-1D elements (zone into the red circle of Figure 1). Purpose of this work is the substitution of a single 3D module into a 0D-1D integral system (Figure 1). Calculated and experimental results may be compared and the CATHARE code validated during different scenarios. The final goal will be the validation of the 3D model in the CATHARE code.

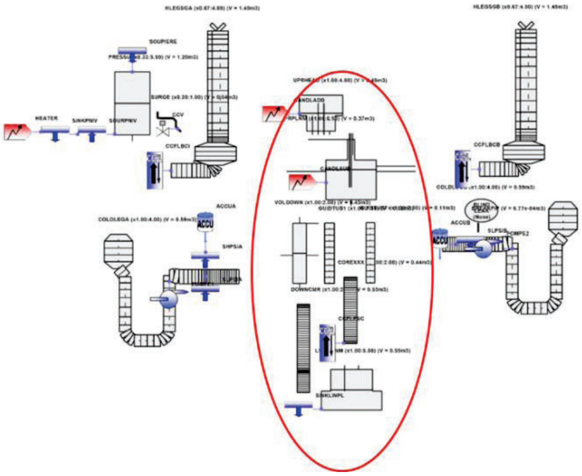

Figure 1. ROSA modelling. Elements into the red circle represent the 1D-0D core vessel.

2. ROSA FACILITY AND TEST SCENARIO

The ROSA-LSTF test facility simulates the full-scale height and 1/48 volumetrically scaled-down representation of a Westinghouse four loops PWR with a thermal power of 3423 MW (see Figure 2). It is composed by two primary loops corresponding to the four-loops of a PWR: the intact loop A and the broken loop B. The pressurizer is connected to the hot leg A. The break nozzle and the break circuit are located on the loop B. The core bundle is composed of 1008 rods electrically heated. Dimensions of these rods (diameter, length, layout…) are those of a 17x17 assembly consistent with a rod bundle used in a PWR. The complete description of the experimental facility can be found in [1].

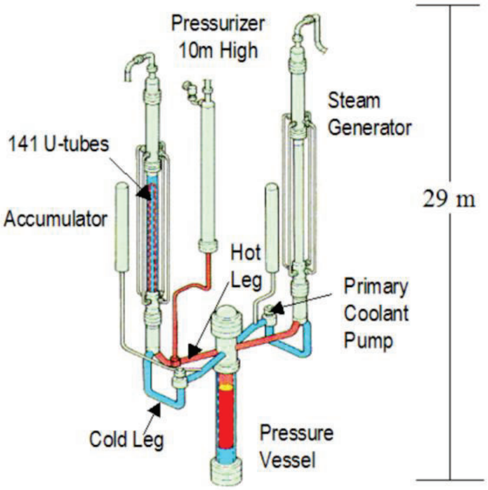

Figure 2. ROSA tests facility [1]

A first validation of the 3D modelling is realised for the test 1, representing an intermediate (17%) hot leg break [3].

Firstly the system is maintained at the initial conditions and the pressurizer is isolated from the primary cooling system by closure of a valve located on the surge line. The experiment starts once all nominal conditions are reached [3]. As the electrical core power is limited to 14 % of the scaled nominal value (10 MW), the primary flowrate is also limited to this value (14 % of the scaled nominal flowrate) in order to reproduce the primary fluid temperature distribution. The accumulator of loop A represents 3 reactor scaled accumulators and the accumulator of loop B represents 1 reactor scaled accumulator. The same distribution is done for the low pressure safety injection. Note that this repartition was chosen although the loop A and B represents two reactor loops and that break is located on the hot leg of the loop B. The break is assumed on the surge line of the pressurizer (17 % of the hot leg flow area) and is experimentally simulated with a 41 mm diameter and 512 mm long nozzle, upward vertically oriented. The test transient starts 70 s after, by the opening of the break valve (t = 0). The SCRAM signal is obtained at 1 s. Other actions are regrouped in the Table I. Total failure of both high pressure injection system and of the auxiliary feedwater is assumed. The accumulators and low pressure injection flow rate is 3:1 to cold legs of intact and broken loops, respectively. Non-condensable gas inflow from ACC tank may take place. This size of break causes a fast transient of phenomena. The detailed experimental conditions for this test and the experimental results are provided by the experimental report [3].

Table I: ROSA test scenario

Events	**LSTF**	**CATHARE**
Pressurizer isolation by valve closure	-63 s	< 0
Break valve open, increase of pump speed	0	0
SCRAM signal, closure of the SG steam stop valve	1 s	1 s
Closure of SG MSIVs	0	0
Initiation of pump coastdown	5 s	5 s
Initiation of decrease of liquid level in SG U-tubes	~10 s	~10 s
Core power decrease	20 s	20 s
Primary pressure below the secondary one	~55 s	~55 s
Accumulator (A & B) injection initiation	~155 s	~155s
Liquid accumulator B injection stops	~240 s	~300 s
Liquid accumulator A injection stops	~250 s	~280 s
LP safety injection initiation	505 s	~250 s
End of the comparison	600 s	600 s

3. 3D MODELLING

This chapter presents the modelling of the entire pressure vessel [5]. Three different spatial discretisation axes are taken into account: twenty-six meshes for the axial, four for the radial and six for the azimuth.

3.1 Axial discretization

A first division is so realized along the vertical line (axial) as shown in Figure 3. Pressure vessel is about 10.9 m high and it is divided into twenty-six meshes of about 400 mm high. Each zone is characterised by meshes with the same porosity and the same hydraulic diameter (the so called ‘zone’). The twenty-six meshes are fixed starting from the axial core discretisation to respect the axial power distribution [1]. Indeed the axial core power is described by a series of nine heat flux steps of about 400 mm high. Starting from this condition, meshes in the entire pressure vessel are automatically defined. Figure 3 well shows the axial discretisation proposed into CATHARE code: the zone 8, for instance, corresponds to the core (meshes 7 to 15) and hot and cold legs are located in the Zone 5 (mesh 20).

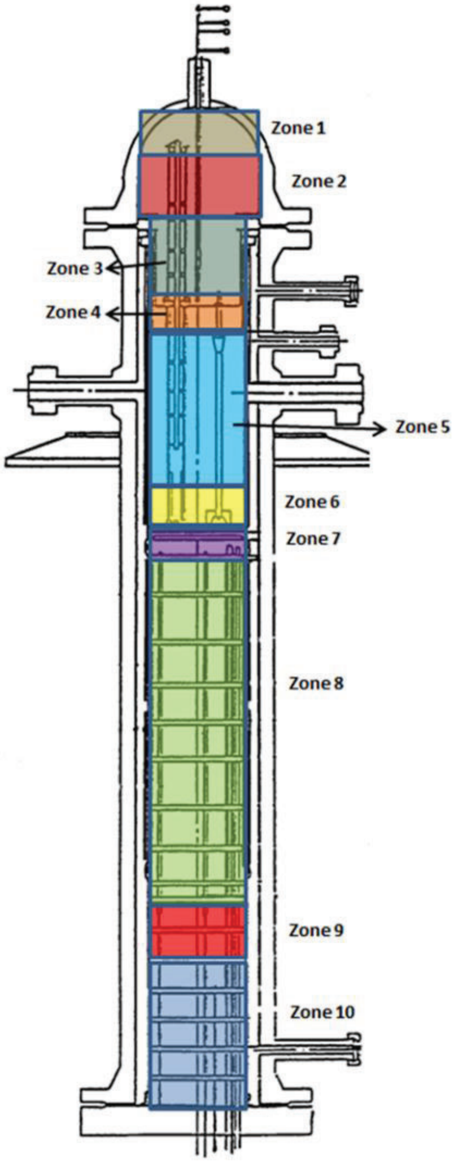

Figure 3. Axial modelling

3.2 Radial discretisation

This second discretisation permits to divide the section of the pressure vessel into four meshes and three zones. This choice is strictly related to the core geometry. Starting from the outside of the pressure vessel, the first external radial mesh represents the downcomer channel (see Figure 4, the red one). At the same time the core is characterised by three power intensity regions as described in the report [1]. For this reason three radial meshes are chosen. Meshes in the core are defined starting from the following (see Figure 4) radii:

- R1 = 0.0 mm
- R2 = 88.2 mm
- R3 = 176.4 mm
- R4 = 257.0 mm

At the same time the core is radially characterised by only two porosity values and so two zones are finally sufficient (the first and the second mesh, starting from the internal one, has the same porosity as figure shows). Remember that the porosity depends on different rods distribution and dimension. Let us so define the two regions for the core: the first one from R3 to R4 corresponding to the green region (Figure 4) and the second one from R1 to R3, corresponding to the blue area. Figure 4 shows the core radial discretisation.

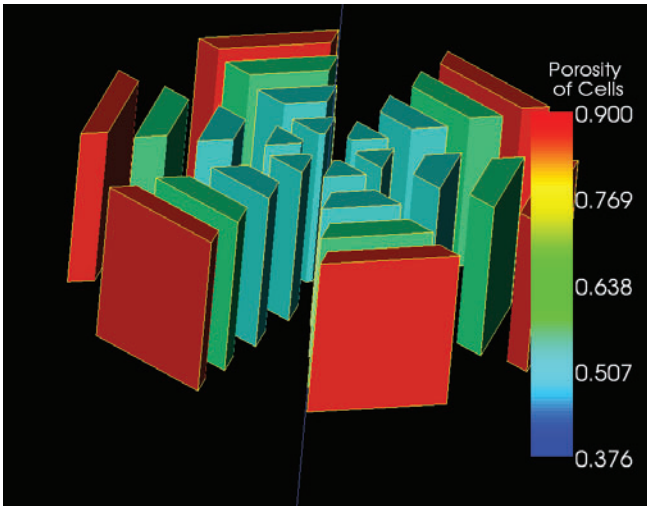

Figure 4. Radial core modelling

3.3 Azimuthal discretisation

Since the presence of two cold and two hot legs, it is suggested to consider six azimuthal zones of 60° each (see Figure 5).

3.4 Wall modelling

Concerning the walls modelling, they are defined starting from the experimental system geometry:

- External walls: the PV external walls made of inox316.
- Core: rod bundles electrically heated.
- Lower plenum: rod bundles that do not produce power (no heat production) but absorb coolant thermal energy.
- Core barrel: since heat exchange between downcomer channel and the core is observed during different transients, an exchanger module is chosen to represent the core barrel.

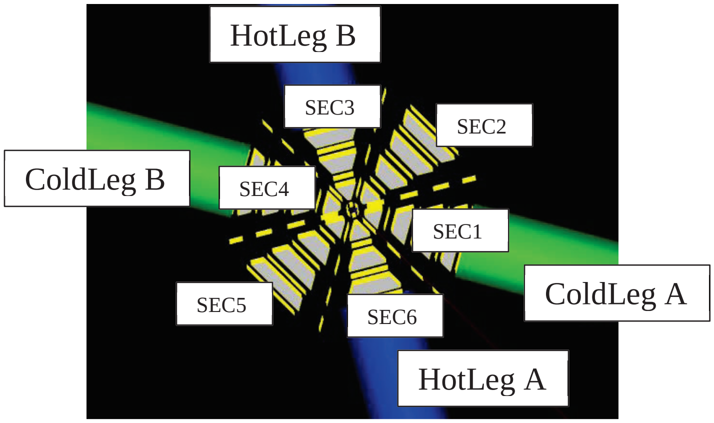

Figure 5. Azimuthal modelling. Definition of six sectors (SEC1-SEC6)

3.5 CCFL modelling

Now, in order to improve the calculation in counter current flow condition and analyse its limitation, CCFL CATHARE operator has been used in the hot legs, at the vertical node after the bend. The correlation used is Wallis type (ECCFL=0) $J_G^{*0.5}+m.\,J_L^{*0.5}=C$, with m = 0.60, C = 0.61 and S_{ratio}=1 [3].
In the previous 1D-0D input deck a second CCFL condition was imposed at the top of the core. In the case of a 3D module the counter current flow phenomenon is taken intrinsically into account. The presence of different meshes at the core exit will simulate the automatic up flow and down flow coolant motion.

Figure 6 presents the porosity in the ROSA pressure vessel.

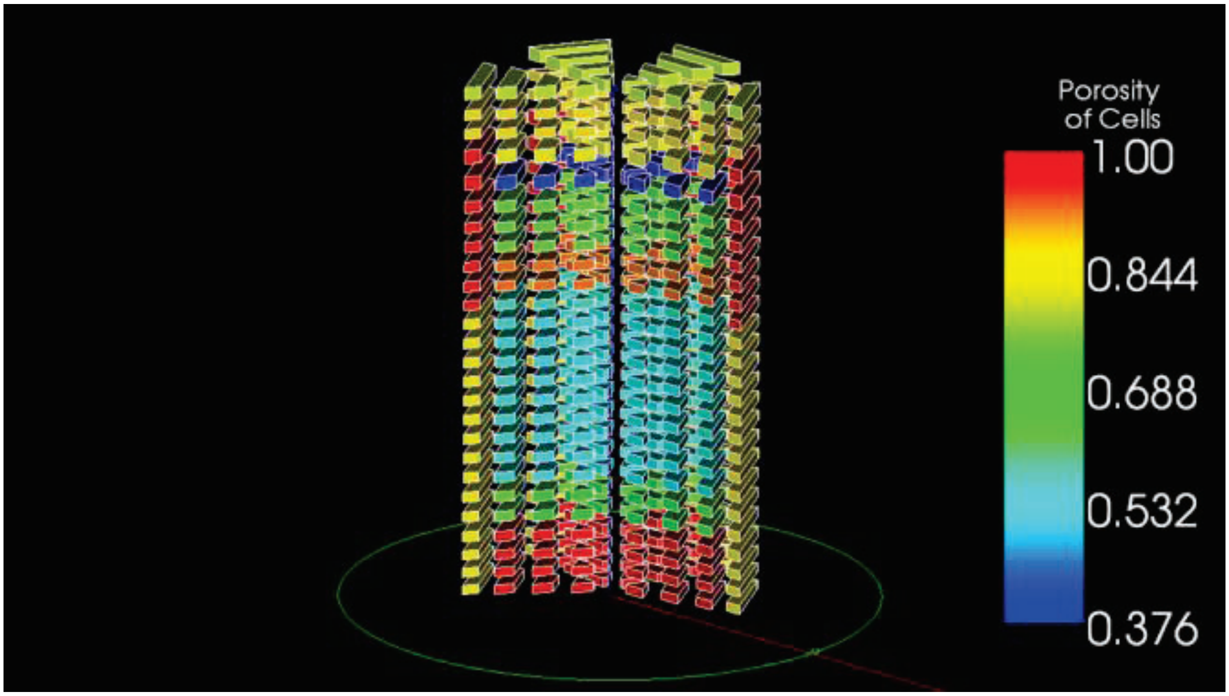

Figure 6. Pressure vessel porosity using GUITHARE visual tool

4. VALIDATION OF THE 3D

This paragraph presents the comparison between CATHARE computations (3D calculations) and experimental results. A further comparison with the previous results obtained using a 1D-0D model (1D-calculations) for the pressure vessel is also proposed. Some interesting results are presented from Figure 7 to Figure 12. The black, the blue (with rhombus) and the red (with circle) lines represent respectively experimental, 3D and the 1D results.

Figure 7 shows the total power produced by electrical heaters (rod bundles). It should represent the shutdown in a real PWR reactor. Starting from a value of about 10.8 MW, power shuts at about 2 MW in 300 s.

The pressure trend taken on the bottom of the pressure vessel is presented in Figure 8. It is clear that pressure values simulated by CATHARE code are in good agreement with experimental results. A first flashing and the corresponding pressure drop are well simulated by the code.

Figure 9, Figure 10 and Figure 11 show DP values measured in the upper plenum, in the core and in the downcomer. Figure 9 shows a very good agreement with the experimental results: the 3D calculation considers a complete voiding of this volume as observed during the experiment. A good correspondence of the DP in the core region is also observed.

Figure 12 shows the comparison of the maximum value of the cladding temperature in the core. Experimental temperatures are measured by thermocouples located inside the Inconel cladding, at 1 mm depth. They are here compared with the calculated ones, which differently correspond to the cladding surface values.

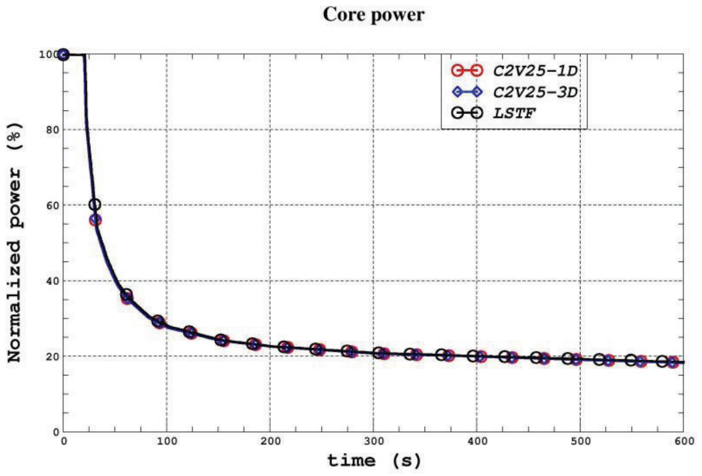

Figure 7. Core power

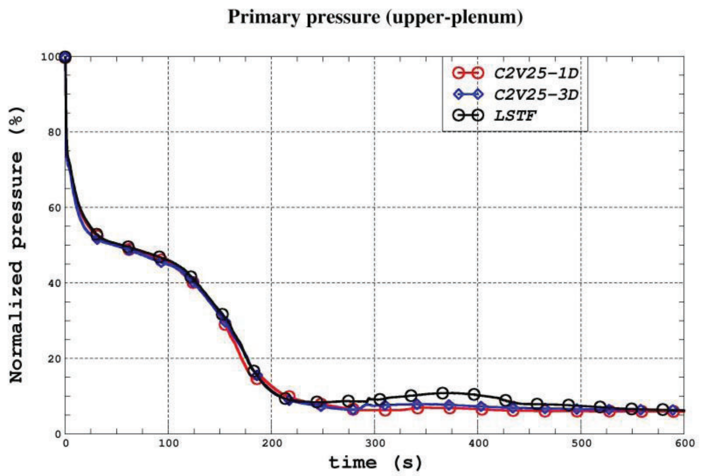

Figure 8. Pressure trend

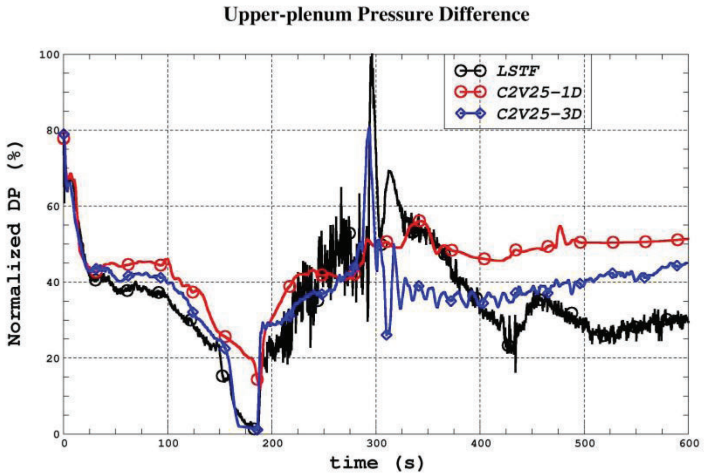

Figure 9. Upper plenum pressure difference

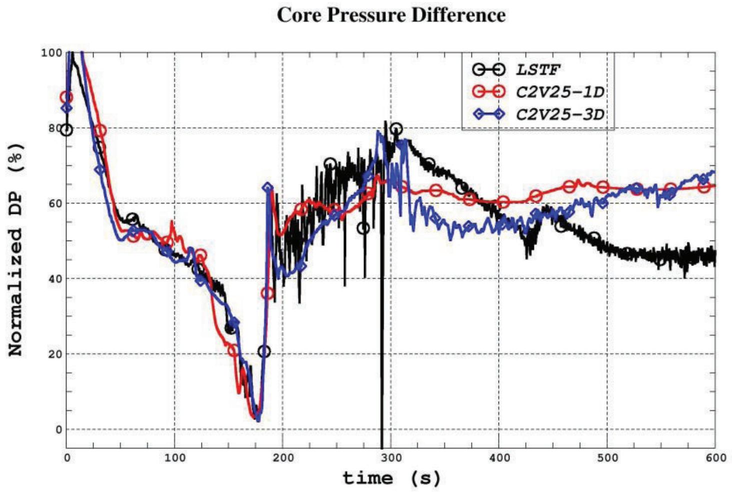

Figure 10. Core pressure difference

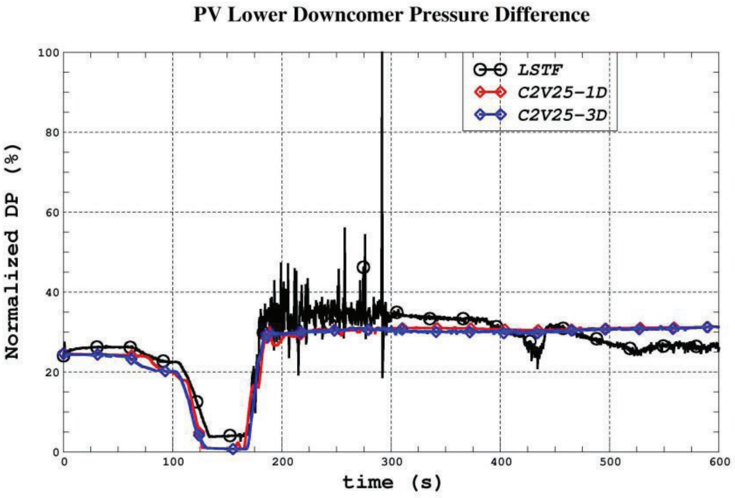

Figure 11. Lower downcomer pressure difference

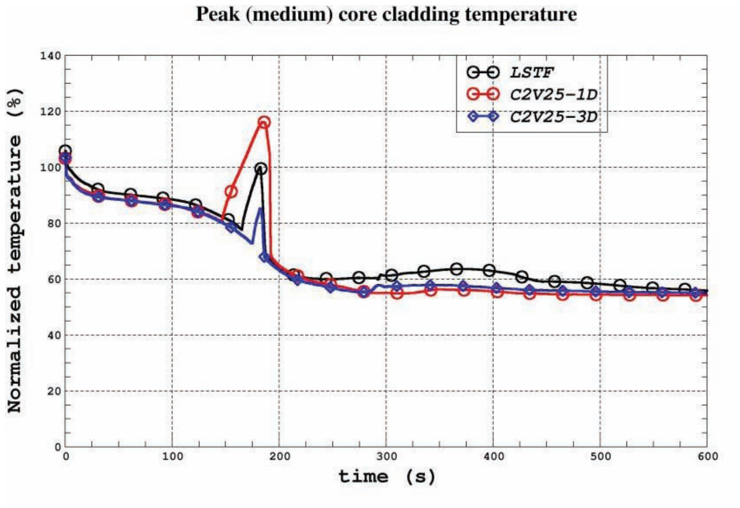

Figure 12. Temperature in the core rod

Previous comparison shows that the 3D calculations are in a good agreement with the experimental results (concerning the liquid levels and pressure trends), having a better behaviour in comparison with the 1D computation. Concerning the liquid fall back, important 3D effects are observed during the core uncovery, both in the experiment and in the 3D computation. In the 1D the overall liquid fall back was underestimated via the CCFL model and the core temperature was higher that experimental one; differently in the 3D. This point will be further investigated in the future analyses.

5. 3D SPECIFICATIONS

Figure 13 and Figure 14 show liquid and gas flowrate calculated by CATHARE code versus time in the ROSA core. Curves correspond to the different angular sectors (from 1 to 6), in the second crown (the middle one), at about 5 m from the bottom of the PV. The 3D behaviour is here well observed: at about 160 s the liquid flowrate may be zero, positive and negative for the different angular sectors. The same for the gas flow rate. Moreover some kind of counter current phenomena (at about 160 s for instance) may be observed starting from this 3D analysis. At this time liquid and gas flowrate are characterised by opposite directions. The same behaviour is observed just before 300 s.

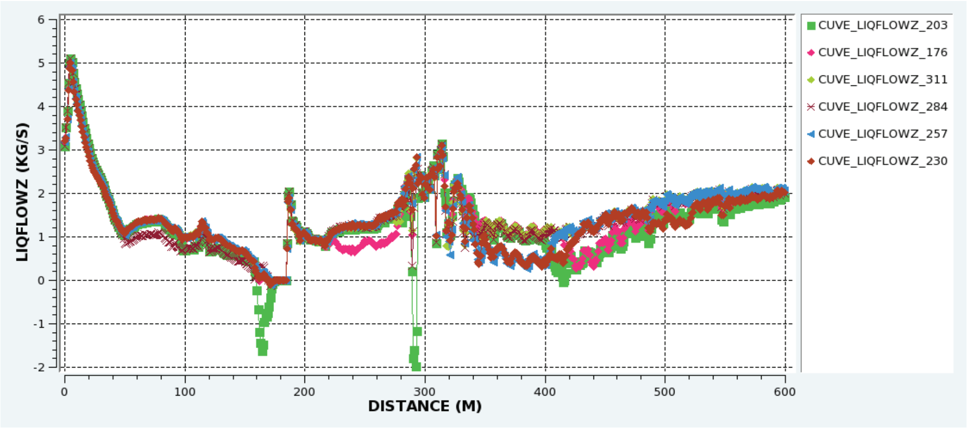

Figure 13. Liquid flowrate vs time. Curves correspond to the different sectors (1 to 6, meshes 203 to 230) in the second crown (the middle one) at about 5 m from the bottom of the PV

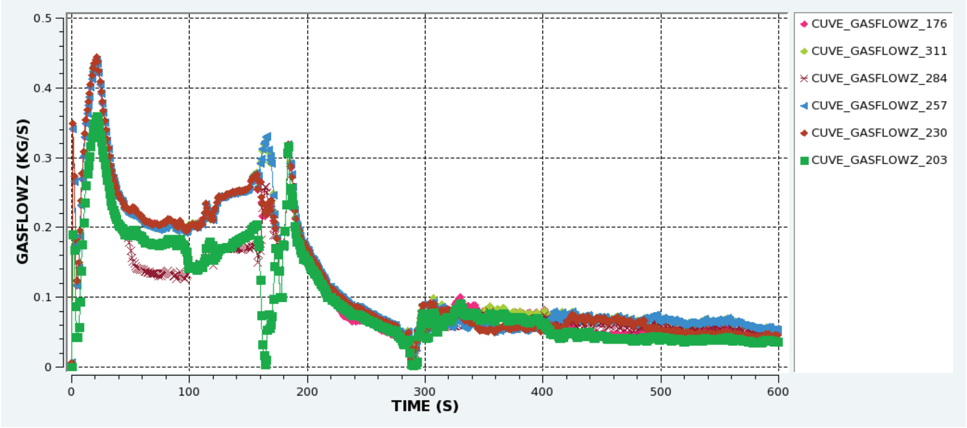

Figure 14. Gas flowrate vs time. Curves correspond to the different sectors (1 to 6, meshes 203 to 230) in the second crown (the middle one) at about 5 m from the bottom of the PV

Figure 15 and Figure 16 show the liquid and gas flowrate at the core exit, just below the end box, at 157 s. An important liquid flowrate goes down, in particular in the external crown (till -3 kg/s). At the same time a counter current is observed in this region since the positive direction of gas flowrate practically everywhere at this elevation. Note that if the positive gas flowrate rises, it carries the liquid mass and the descent liquid flowrate decreases. Important 3D effects are here observed.

Figure 17 shows the void fraction calculated by CATHARE from the bottom to the top of the pressure vessel in the third crown (third radius). Time is between 156 sand 187 s. Just to locate some PV zones; the end box is at about 6 m, the upper plenum is between 6 m and 8 m. The core support plate is at about 9 m. The upper head is between 9 m and 11 m. Figure 17 shows that at about 180 s the core region is completely voided (void fraction = 1) and the upper plenum starts to be completely voided before 170 s. This behaviour is in agreement with Figure 9 since the pressure difference is practically zero at this time.

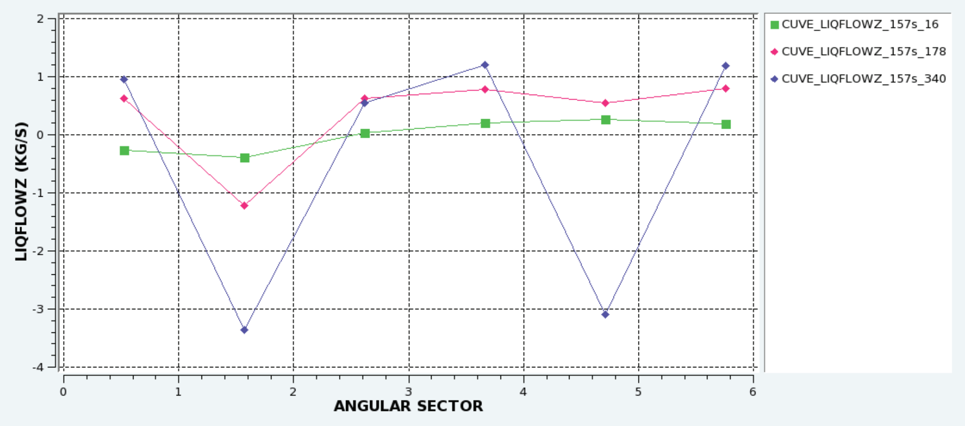

Figure 15. Liquid flowrate at 157 s vs angular sectors. Curves correspond to different core crown (internal-green, medium-red and external-blue)

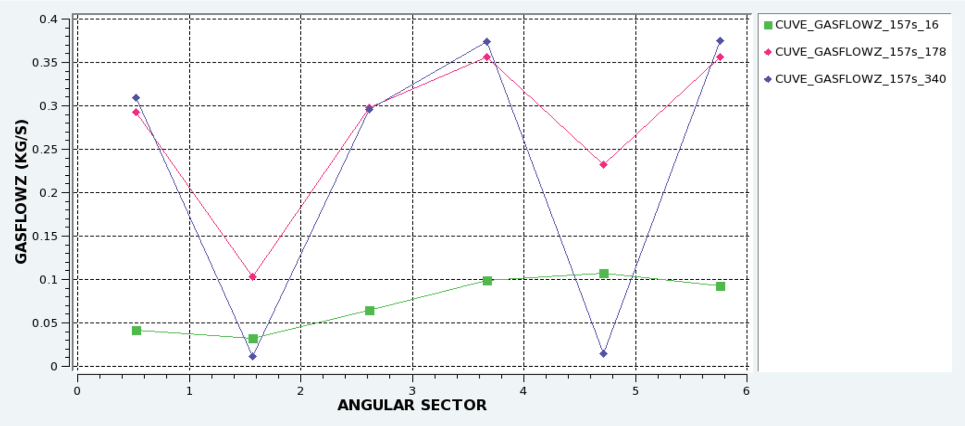

Figure 16. Gas flowrate at 157 s vs angular sectors. Curves correspond to different core crown (internal-green, medium-red and external-blue)

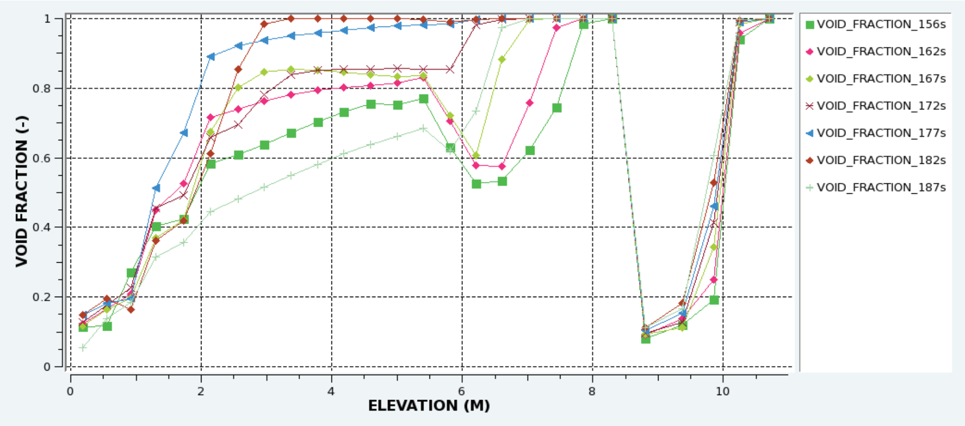

Figure 17. Void fraction vs PV elevation. Curves corresponds to different times (from 156 s to 187 s) measured in the external crown and sector 1.

A useful visualisation of the void fraction evolution (ALFA) is presented in Figure 18. At about 154 s (just at the accumulator injection initiation) the downcomer region is practically voided. It corresponds to the experimental evidence presented in Figure 11. At about 180 s, after the loop seal clearing caused by the accumulator injection, the core zone is practically emptied of liquid (void fraction close to 1), corresponding to Figure 10 and the downcomer zone largely refilled.

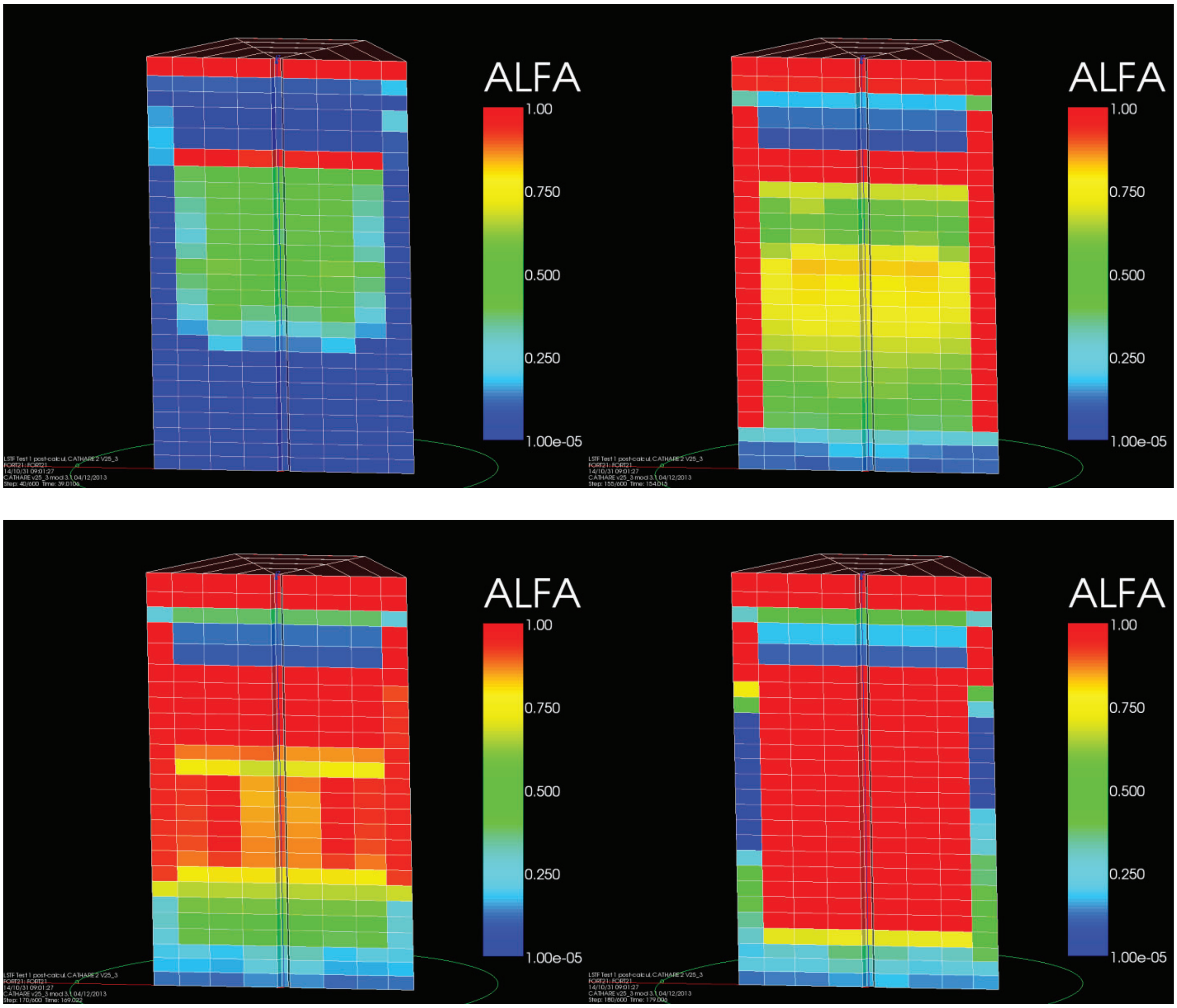

Figure 18. Void fraction vs time (39 s - 154 s - 169 s – 179 s respectively starting from the top on the left, top on the right, bottom on the left and bottom on the right) into the entire pressure vessel.

Figure 19 shows the cladding temperature distribution versus time measured at about 5 m from the bottom of the pressure vessel. This value is plotted for all high power heater rods. Heater rods present in the second crown (CORE2H) are hotter than that present in the external region (CORE3H). The temperature peak difference may be 20 °C. Also in this case the 3D effects are well observed: the temperature distribution is not homogenous.

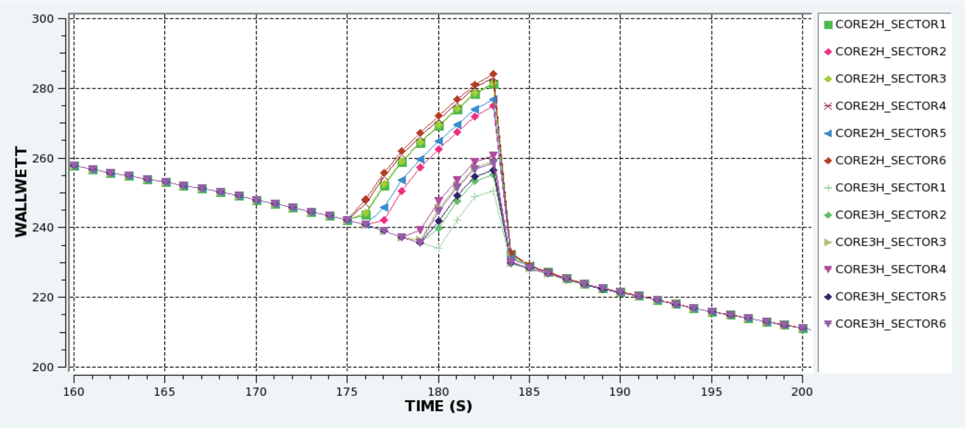

Figure 19. Fuel temperature vs time. Curves correspond to the hotter fuel rods values at 5 m from the bottom of the PV. CORE2H and CORE3H correspond to the medium and external mesh in the core. CORE2(3)H_1 to CORE2(3)H_6 correspond to the different sector zones.

6. CONCLUSIONS

An important work aimed to validate the 3D module of CATHARE code applied to the ROSA installation is here presented. A first comparison of the 3D CATHARE calculation to the measurements and to the 1D calculation for the entire transient corresponding to ROSA2 test n°1 is performed. This comparison shows a good agreement of the 3D calculation with the experiment till the second half of the accumulator injection (roughly 250 s).

A real improvement related to the 1D computation is also observed in particular concerning the fluid distribution between the core and the upper-plenum, the overall liquid fall back, the core heat-up (a good heat-up trend) and the primary depressurization during the core uncovery.

A detailed analysis of the 3D phenomena foreseen by the computation is also presented. Some rather strong 3D effects are predicted during the core level depletion; in particular the liquid flowrates show different directions according the location in the core. Due to the lack of real 3D measurements, these 3D phenomena may be only globally validated, mainly through DP measurements.

The analysis of two other intermediate cold break tests (n°2 and n°7) of OCDE/AEN ROSA2 project is planned for this year. Again the 3D reactor vessel will be introduced in the existing 1D-0D system modelling. Particular attention will be focused on the CCFL phenomenon and its implication in the system behaviour. The final purpose of this work is the validation of the 3D model for different scenarii and different 3D phenomena. This action will permit to obtain a more solid code, able to better represent the entire system and to predict its global behaviour.

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