

# Liquid metals in energy technology

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### Content



- Technical appearance of liquid metal flows
  - Conventional conversion processes and
  - nuclear engineering
- Specific properties of liquid metals
- Measurement techniques in liquid metals
- Turbulent heat exchange
  - Analogies between momentum and heat exchange & Closure methods for turbulent heat flux
  - Examples: Backward facing step, heated pipe, heated rod
- Turbulent free surface flows
- Engineering -Pumps
- SUMMARY and outlook



# Technical Liquid Metal flows

- Liquid metals are known to mankind since about 6000 years (natural Mercury)
- They are refined and casted since more than 4000 years (bronze, copper)
- Production of iron started in Turkey since 3000 years
- Alumina and alloy production on large scales in the last 200years

- Industrial interest:
  - Adaptive materials with certain properties for specific use in e.g. car insdustry, aeronautics, etc. like AlLi-alloys
  - Minimization of primary energy input during refinement
  - Higher demand on quality of surfaces and reduction of number of secondary machining processes

#### **Requirements:**

Measurement techniques, heat transport phenomena, free surface shape

phase change problems



#### Liquid mercury in glass capsule



Bronze casting



#### Raw iron refinement



#### Alumina preparation for casting



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Liquid metals in energy conversion

- Conventional systems
  - Solar towers
  - Coolant for high heat flux components
  - Surface conditioning
- Nuclear systems
  - Fusion reactors
    - ITER (liquid metal cooled blankets, divertors, HEX)
    - IFMIF (International Fusion Material Irradiation Facility)
  - Fission systems
    - ADS (Accelerator Driven Systems aimed to minimize nuclear waste production)
    - Fast breeders (lead or sodium cooled)
  - Nuclear physics







# Conventional: Solar Towers or Heliostats

**Basic Principle** 



- Solar furnace using a tower to receive the focused sunlight
- Collected from a set of mirrors
- Heat stored by circulating liquid metals or salts in containers (preferred Na or NaNO<sub>3</sub> KNO<sub>3</sub>)
- Energy conversion in steam cycle.



PS10 Sevilla-Spain (11MW<sub>el</sub>)

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# Conventional: High performance HEX

#### Background: CPU-Cooling

- trend towards higher frequencies (computing power) and
- miniaturization yields high surface powers with
- degradation by melt of electric circuits
- $\Rightarrow \quad \text{Forced convective cooling with low } \Delta T \text{ in chip} \\ \text{structures} \end{cases}$
- ⇒ Use of liquid metals (NaK, GaInSn)







NaK-EM-Pump
CPU-Cooling



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# Conventional: Floating glass process

Production of highly flat glasses (inventor Pilkington, 50's)

- Molten glass ejected to tin bath
- Inmiscible glass and liquid metal
- Controlled homogeneous cooling along axis



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### Fusion: LM Blankets for ITER

**Blankets:** 

Heat Removal
Breeding Tritium
Shielding magnets







#### a) Water cooled blanketWCLL, Giancarli et al. 2000

#### b) Helium cooled blanket HCLL, Giancarli et al. 2000

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### **Fusion: IFMIF** (Int. Fusion Material Irradiation Facility)

**Targets**:

Secondary particle production (neutrons, fragments,... Heat removal

#### **Development Structure**

- ensure film height to attain neutrons with a
- flow velocity avoiding Li boiling in vacuum.





# Fission: MYRRAH

- a planned 50MW Experimental ADS

#### Features

- Free surface target
- Criticality k<sub>eff</sub>~0.95
- Thermal power P<sub>th</sub>=50MW
- Proton beam 350MeV at 5mA
- Lead bismuth cooled

#### Critical issues

- Free surface flows with turbulence
- Mixed convection (Buoyancy) in the core
- LM technology in Target and Core
- Instrumentation and monitoring



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# Fission: Fast Reactors (Na/Pb cooled)

#### Challenges

- Potential capability for transmutation
- **High Temperature** application (electricity and hydrogen prod.)
- Single phase heat transfer in the primary system
- Component development and monitoring at high temperatures





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### Nuc. Physics: Super-FRS-Target

- Ion accelerator at GSI (U<sup>238</sup>-Ions, 10<sup>12</sup> Particles/Spill, 2GeV, Puls duration 50ns) for particle physical experiments for medical applications (www.gsi.de/fair/index.html)
- Solid targets faile since the instantaneous power release: 12 kJ/50 ns → 240 GW
- Generation of a stable Li-Jets in direction of gravity field





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# Specific properties of liquid metals

#### **GENERAL FEATURES**

- opaque, totally reflecting
- high temperatures,
- corrosive,
- large surface tension
- high thermal conductivity

#### HEAVY LIQUID METALS

- high density
- Iow kinematic viscosity,

		Unit	$Pb^{45}B^{i55}$	Lithium	Water
melting point at 0.1 MPa		[°C]	125	180.5	0
boiling point at 0.1MPa		[°C]	1670	1317	100
			300°C	300°C	25°C
density	ρ	$[kg/m^3]$	10325	505	1000
heat capacity	C <sub>p</sub>	[J/(kgK)]	146.33	4279	4180
kinematic viscosity	ν	$[m^{2}/s]$ ·10 <sup>-7</sup>	1.754	9	9.1
heat conductivity	λ	[W/(m K)]	12.68	29.2	0.6
electric conductivity	$\sigma_{ m el}$	$[A/(V m)]$ $\cdot 10^5$	8.428	33.5	$2.10^{-4}$ (tap)
thermal expansion	α	/	<b>6.7</b> <sup>-3</sup>	<b>43.6</b> ·10 <sup>-3</sup>	6.10-3
coefficient					
surface tension	σ	[N/m]·10 <sup>-3</sup>	410	421	52 (tap)



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## Specific properties of liquid metals

**Conservation equations** 

mass,

mass, 
$$\nabla \cdot \vec{u} = 0$$
  
momentum,  $\vec{\frac{du}{dt}} = f - \frac{1}{\rho} \nabla p + v \nabla^2 \vec{u}$ ,

energy,  $\frac{dT}{dt} = \frac{\lambda}{\rho c_p} \nabla^2 T + \frac{\mu}{\rho c_p} \Phi$ . 





Force ratio		$X_{PbBi(300^{\circ}C)}$	X <sub>Li(300°C)</sub> /	Energy ratio		X <sub>PbBi(300°C)</sub> /	X <sub>Li(300°C)</sub> /
		$\Lambda_{\text{Water}(25^{\circ}\text{C})}$	$\Lambda_{\text{Water}(25^{\circ}\text{C})}$			$A_{Water(25^{\circ}C)}$	$\Lambda_{Water(25^{\circ}C)}$
Reynolds	$\operatorname{Re} = \frac{u \cdot l}{v}$	5	0.98	Peclet	$Pe = \frac{u \cdot l}{\kappa}$	0.017	0.01
Weber	$Wb = \frac{\rho \cdot u^2 \cdot l}{\sigma}$	1.31	0.062	Eckert	$Ec = \frac{u^2}{c_p \cdot \Delta T}$	28.6	0.98
Grashof	$Gr = \frac{g \cdot \alpha \cdot \Delta T \cdot l^3}{v^2}$	30	7.4	Fourier	$Fo = \frac{l^2}{\kappa \cdot t}$	0.017	0.01
Material ratio							
Prandtl	$\Pr = \frac{v}{\kappa}$	$\frac{0.02}{6.3}$	$\frac{0.05}{6.3}$	heat conduct. $[m^2/s]$	$\kappa = \frac{\lambda}{\rho \cdot c_p}$	58.5	94.1

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#### **Consequences**

- Nearly all technically relevant heavy liquid metal flows are turbulent.
- Due to large surface tension free jets shrink rather rapidly  $(stability) \rightarrow time scale of u$ -field and shape separates.
- Small viscosity yields large Grashof numbers (influence of buoyancy in nearly all heat transfer experiments).
- Heat conduction is preferred to convection leading to a scale separation of thermal and viscous boundary layer (problematic for turbulence models).



### Measurement: Flow rate

#### Electro-magnetic frequency flow meter (EMFM)



#### **Measurement principle**

 Dragging of magnetic fields lines by the flow (RMS-Value ~Q)

$$\mathbf{Re} = \frac{\mathbf{v}_0 \cdot \mathbf{d}}{\left(\frac{1}{\mu\sigma}\right)}$$

- Determination of flow direction by sign of signal
- Determination of time delay between Emitter-Sensor

(or Phase Angle)  $\Delta t \sim Q$ 

 $\Rightarrow$  2 independent gross-output quantities for Q



## Measurement: Flow rate-EMFM



#### **Design wishes**

- High penetration depth δ of field *B* into duct (-> low *f* f=frequency AC current supply)
- High magnetic field strength (high  $\Delta \Phi_{RMS}$ )
- Large amount of windings ( ~n n=wire turns)

#### **Counter arguments**

- Low *f* yield high sensitivity to ambient stray signals
- High *B* modifies the flow Hartmann number *Ha*<<1 (*Ha*=(EM-forces/viscous forces))

$$Ha = d \cdot B \sqrt{\frac{\sigma}{\rho v}}$$

Too large f yield skin-effect

$$f d^2 \mu \sigma << 1$$



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### Measurement: Intrusive methods

#### Pitot and Prandtl tubes

 measurement of pressure or pressure differences in fluid domains (coupled with TC)

#### Advantages

- Sufficient time resolution.
- Simple set-up.

#### **Disadvantages**

- Disturbance of flow (intrusive method).
- Limited spatial resolution (boundary layer).
- Several corrections required.
- High fabrication effort in miniaturizing
- Sophisticated fill and drain necessary.
- Variable measurement ranges necessary for resolution of smallest fluctuations.
- Only one component measurable (flows in complex geometries ?)



# Measurement :Ultra-Sound Doppler Velocimeter (UDV)

#### **Principle (particle tracking)**

- Distance change from sensor due to motion from 1→2 between two pulses.
- Determination of the time difference from the phase shift between received echoes
- ➡ Velocity at a discrete distance

#### Profile

- Separation of sound path in time intervals (gates ∆t) allows recording of a velocity profile. Therefore,
  - Coupling of a time t<sub>i</sub> with a measurement position
  - Determination of the local velocity u<sub>i</sub> in the interval i



#### Measurement: UDV (2)



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#### Result in the boundary layer

- All parts of the viscous boundary captured by UDV
- Max. deviation in the transition regime of 5%
- UDV-measurements possible into the viscous sublayer (y<sup>+</sup>=3 ~46µm)
- Temporal resolution currently up to 30Hz

#### Problems

- Long-term wetting of the sensor
- Temporal resolution (Turbulence spectra)
- What are the scattering particles ?
- More effective wave guides (Temperature, sound losses)
- Enhancement of math algorithm effectivity
- Only applicable in isothermal flows.
- Only one velocity component (3D-flows ?)

PhD Thesis C.-H. Lefhalm 2004

UDV-Sensor developed in cooperation with FZR



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### Measurement- Free surface detection

#### Optical method containing

- Color encoding (error estimate, filtering, cross-correlation)
- Scanner (point, line and area acquisition)
- High speed camera







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### Measurement- Free surface detection



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### Measurement- Free surface detection



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# Turbulent heat transfer : General

Turbulent energy equation

$$\rho c_p \left( \frac{-\partial \overline{T}}{\partial x} + \frac{-\partial \overline{T}}{\partial y} \right) = -\frac{\partial}{\partial y} \left( -\lambda \frac{\partial \overline{T}}{\partial y} + \rho c_p \overline{v'T'} \right)$$



- Analogous to turbulent viscosity  $\varepsilon_M = \mu_t / \rho$  a turbulent heat flux appears and thus
- a turbulent eddy heat diffusivity  $\varepsilon_H = \lambda_t / (\rho c_p)$  can be defined,

 $\Rightarrow$  the turbulent Prandt number  $Pr_t$ 

$$Pr_{t} = \frac{\varepsilon_{M}}{\varepsilon_{H}} = f\left(Re, Pr, \frac{y}{R}\right) = \frac{\overline{u v}}{v T} \frac{\frac{\partial T}{\partial y}}{\frac{\partial u}{\partial y}}$$

#### **Consequences**

- $Pr_t$  is far of being a constant (in reality a tensor)
- Difficult to measure directly, since it is a measure of
  - dimensions and
  - available sensor sizes as well as the
  - temporal resolution)
- Involves several modelling problems



# Turbulent heat transfer : General

#### **Closure methods for turbulent heat flux**

- Semi-empirical models of zero and first order developed since late fourties yield mostly to **Reynolds analogy** results and to  $Pr_t = f(Pr, \varepsilon_M/\nu)$  (momentum-field temperature field).
- Turbulent Prandtl Pr<sub>t</sub> number from analytic solutions account for the statistics of the turbulence field (see Yakhot et al., 1987), but only applicable to simple geometries problematic with buoyant flows.

$$\frac{\left[\left(Pr_{eff}^{-1}-1.1793\right)\right]^{0.65}}{\left(Pr^{-1}-1.1793\right)} \left[\frac{\left(Pr_{eff}^{-1}+2.1793\right)}{\left(Pr^{-1}+2.1793\right)}\right]^{0.35} = \frac{1}{\left(1+\varepsilon_{M}/\nu\right)} \quad \text{with} \quad Pr_{eff} = \frac{\left(1+\varepsilon_{M}/\nu\right)}{\left(\frac{\varepsilon_{M}}{Pr_{t}}+\frac{1}{Pr}\right)}$$

- Turbulent heat transport **modelling by** means of **transport equations** (e.g. the turbulent fluxes  $u_i T'$  temperature variance  $T'^2$ , and its dissipation  $\varepsilon_{T'}^2$  (TMBF –model) but each higher level of modelling leads to new constant and triple correlations a priori not known. Potential Solution approach: Determination of constants and triple correlations from
- Direct numerical simulation (DNS) of *u* and *T* field in simple geometries
- CURRENT STATUS: sophisticated models for *u*-field but 0-dim. for *T*-field





# Turbulent heat transfer : Numerical methods

#### Backward facing step

- Stratification problem (buoyancy) at large axial  $\Delta T$
- Flow separation at geometry discontinuities

#### Approach

• Choice of small *Pr*-Fluid ( $Pr_{Sodium}$ =0.007)  $\Rightarrow$ LES *u*-Field is DNS of *T*-Field

#### Goal

- Validity limits of CFD codes
- Development of advanced turbulent heat flux models

**Benchmark problem:** 

 Reliability threshold of design correlations





# Turbulent Heat Transfer : Heated Pipe

 Fully developed turbulent (hydraulically and thermally) flow heated with a constant heat flux at different Reynolds (*Re*) and molecular Prandtl numbers (*Pr*)



- Result:
  - Mean turbulent Prandtl number ( $Pr_{t,mean}$ ) depends on molecular Prandtl number Pr.
  - Mean turbulent Prandtl number ( $Pr_{t,mean}$ ) is a function of the Reynolds number Re.
  - But, for model development an unacceptably large uncertainty exists.



## Turbulent Heat Transfer : Heated Pipe

• Measured local turbulent Prandtl number  $(Pr_t)$  in a fully developed turbulent flow heated with a constant heat flux at different Reynolds (*Re*)



- Result:
  - Local turbulent Prandtl number  $(Pr_t)$  is a function of the Reynolds number Re and the radial coordinate y/R.
  - But, be careful with experimental data because boundary conditions and buoyancy play a considerable role.

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# Turbulent Heat Transfer : Heated Pipe

- The problem of free convection distortion. Liquid metals exhibit due to their large thermal expansion and low kinematic viscosity buoyancy distortion effects even at large *Re* (Hg, PbBi at *Re*>10<sup>5</sup>)
- The horizontal pipe



- Result:
  - Even large *Re* does not ensure a pure forced convective flow.

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#### Turbulent Heat Transfer : Heated Rod

Background : Pin is single element of a fuel assembly

- - Development of models for turbulent heat flux;
    - Determination of Nu-correlations;
    - Evaluation of transitional regimes (model validity).



Scope

Measure:

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### Turbulent Heat Transfer : Heated Rod

• CFD with SST-model,  $y^+ \sim 1$  in heated part, but use of Reynolds-analogy with a prescribed & constant  $Pr_t$  (mostly  $Pr_t = 0.9$ ),



Conditions:  $Re = 3.1 \cdot 10^5$ ,  $P_{HR} = 9kW(\sim 40W/cm^2)$ , d=8.2mm,  $T_{in}=300^{\circ}C$  at z/d=51 (half heated length)

- Coincidence of measured and computed velocity.
- Resonable temperature agreement of CFD with Experiment at fluid- wall interface. But,
- Thermal boundary layer is thicker in experiment like expected (different heat fluxes).

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### Turbulent Heat Transfer : Heated Rod

- Along the axis (z-direction) the temperature rise yields transition from forced convective heat transfer  $\rightarrow$  mixed convective heat transfer
- At high heat fluxes along the flow path second transition occurs mixed convective heat transfer  $\rightarrow$  buoyancy dominated heat transport
- Each transition alters turbulent heat fluxes in wall normal distribution and magnitude

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# Turbulent heat transfer: Summary

## Turbulent heat exchange modelling

- State of the art Pr<sub>t</sub>-correlations in codes!,
- Better buoyant flow modeling (+Qualified user),
- At least ASM based turbulent heat flux models (u'T')
- DNS required to improve and validate advanced heat flux models to be embedded in commercial codes

#### Measurement techniques

- Improved sensors to capture local flow velocities (accuracy, multi-components and spatial and especially temporal resolution, best non-intrusive)
- Defined benchmarks (regarding CFD,LES and DNS but also related to the BC's with supplementary water experiments)



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# Turbulent free surface flows

Different types of free surface targets under development

- Geometry driven designs (MYRRAH)
- Semi-bounded designs relying on centrifugal stabilization (IFMIF, FRANZ)
- Gravity driven designs (FAIR, DIRAC)

#### Myrrah-type target



IFMIF-type target





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FAIR-type target

### Turbulent free surface flows

#### Problems-CFD

- Different statistics of *u* and *h*-field (damping times/diffusion times).
- Large density differences between liquid and gas phase ( $\rightarrow \infty$  for vacuum).
- Coupling of turbulent *u*-field with *h*-field (lack of adequate models: e.g. level-set methods)
- Scale separation of u and h (viscosity<<surface tension)</li>
- Potential phase transition requires LM adapted cavitation models.
- Flow mostly transient  $\rightarrow$  time step given by *p* and *u*-fluctuations.
- Complex geometries of induce secondary flows (e.g. edges, curved planes) leading to large computation times.

#### **Problems Experiment**

- Development of rree surface detection sensors with high temporal & spatial resolution
- Lack of experiments with simultaneous u and h-field measurements (unknowns statistics and diffusion times)





# Turbulent free surface flows- faucet problem

- Surface tension contracts the stream
- Shear stress/surface tension in causes inversion of jet (twist)
- At discontinuities capillary waves are generated.







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### Turbulent free surface flows- faucet problem

Problem described by:

- Weber number
- Geometry ratios

- Surface roughness
- Nozzle inflow, pressure oscillations, .....



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# Turbulent free surface flows

- RANS model simulations are suitable to predict mean surface shape (interaction of steady events).
- LES or DNS must used to capture temporal effects
  - Flow detachment
  - Velocity osciallations
  - Görtler vortices



Vertical Sodium jet with  $u_0$ =2.5m/s

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#### Liquid metal components

Design, Computation and Construction of MHD pumps 

Annular Linear Induction Pump (ALIP)







# Summary

- Liquid metal operated fusion and fission exhibit in many fields similar features originating mainly from the specific properties of the liquid metals.
- Commercial CFD-tools exhibit considerable deficits in MHD flows, heat transfer problems and free surface flows in low Prandtl number fluids even in the steady case because of
  - Strong anisotropic turbulence due to geometry, heat load,...
  - Scale separation of the boundary layers BL (viscous BL<< thermal BL,...)</li>
  - Deficits of adequate coupling of free surface modeling with turbulence modeling
- The progress in measurement techniques achieved in the past decade enabled a first access to the rather complex flow phenomena occurring in the individual problems.
- This development process enables to define generic experiments aimed to
  - Develop more advanced physical models for the heat transfer and free surface problems.
  - To generate a data base and local correlations (for heat transfer) for the design of complex innovative nuclear systems.







#### SUPPLEMENTARY FIGURES

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#### Nuc. Physics: **MEGA-WATT PILOT Experiment (MEGAPIE)**

#### **Demonstration of a high power**

#### liquid metal cooled spallation target

- Power: 1MW in 82 Litres Pb<sup>45</sup>Bi<sup>55</sup> PbBi-Inventory (incl. pump, HEX, gas system and instrumentation)
- irradiated from July-Dec. 2006
- Potential  $\Delta \Phi$ =630MeV, I=1.4mA

#### Crucial aspects

Thermalhydraulics of the components especially the heat loaded target shell



\*Megapie.web.psi.ch

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# PbBi Loop THESYS



Development of measurement techniques for flow, temperature and pressures

#### Benchmark experiments

Temperature	200-550°C		
Flow rate	16 m³/h		
Electr. power	250 kW		
Test ports	2+2		
Oxygen control	yes		
PbBi inventory	300 I (3 t)		
Operating hours	2000		

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# Corrosion PbBi-Loop CORRIDA



- Corrosion tests, 32 test
   specimen
- Mechanical tests
- Coating tests

# for beam windows and structural materials







Temperature	400-650°C	
Flow rate	9 m³/h	
Electr. power	250 kW	
Test ports	2	
Oxygen control	yes	
PbBi inventory	280 I (3 t)	
Operating hours	17000	

#### MHD Pump and Recuperator

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### Na- or Li-Loop ALINA





Test of windowless targets and small scale heat transfer tests for generic nuclear physics

Secondary Coolant: Diphyl/THT

Temperature	150-400°C		
low rate	21 m³/h		
Electr. power	120 kW		
Fest ports	1		
Na inventory	150 litres		
Commissioning	2007		

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### Pb-Loop TELEMAT





Commissioning

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# Velocity :Ultra-Sound Doppler Velocimeter (UDV)





#### Transient start-up behaviour of EM pump in THESYS Loop

- Fluid temperature: 400°C
- Temperatur compensation durch (Wave Guide)
- Inclination angle: 45°
- Tube diameter: 60 mm







# UDV Fluctuation measurements in boundary layer in a tube





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### LM-Flow measurement





#### Ultra-Sound Doppler Velocimeter (UDV) 1,4 1,2 1.0 0,8 u /u 0,6 0,4 Reichardt Re = 80.0000,2 UDV Re = 81.943 0,0-0,0 0.2 0.4 0,6 0,8 1,0 r/R

- Excellent agreement between measurement and literature profile
- Detailed resolution of the velocity profile
- Deviation from literature profile for r/R>0.6 less than 0.5%

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### LM-Free surface measurement





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### LM- free surface measurement

#### Validation at inclined known mirror surface





Typical frame picture before processing





#### Result

- •Proof of principle (accuracy, spatial+temporal resolution) shown
- •Optimization of algorithms (multiple reflection, calibration)
- •Validation in LM experiment

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# CFD-Calculation strategies for liquid metal flow



Model-Procedure	Momentum	Heat	Time horizon	Comment
Mixed models	<i>k</i> -ε-model <i>k</i> -Ω-model hybrides (SST) (isotropic)	Reynolds Analogy	current	isotropic in all scales WF, mesh,
		$Pr_t$ -correlations $Pr_t$ =f( $Re, Pr, y^+$ ) +adequate wall functions for $T^+$	near	
TMBF model	<u>k-ε-model</u> (isotropic)	Transport equations $\overline{u'T'}, \overline{T'^2}, \varepsilon_{T'}$ (still problems with temp. variance dissipation)	near not in comm. codes	performance in conv. purely buoy. flow ? + low Pe ?
mixed higher order	kubic <i>k</i> -ɛ-model	Transport equations $\overline{u'T'}, \overline{T'^2}, \varepsilon_{T'}$ (Constants fort ransport eq.	req. scientific benchmark	promising results (lacking exp. data)
	RSM	from DNS)		
Exact solution	DNS	DNS	future benchmark	



0<sup>th</sup> order direct coupling



2<sup>nd</sup> order Tensorial GDH

exact solutions

Model coefficients depend also (!) on Re, Pr, geometry

1<sup>st</sup> order Gradient diffusion hypotesis

Similar classification for LES

