



*KTH Royal Institute of Technology
School of Chemical Science and Engineering
Department of Chemistry
Division of Surface and Corrosion Science*

High temperature corrosion in a biomass-fired power boiler

Reducing furnace wall corrosion in a waste wood-fired power plant with advanced steam data

YOUSEF ALIPOUR

Licentiate Thesis in Corrosion Science
Stockholm, Sweden 2013

AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

Som med tillstånd av Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan i Stockholm framlägges till offentlig granskning för avläggande av teknologie licentiatexamen måndagen den 10:e juni 2013, klockan 10.00 vid rum 3, Sveriges Tekniska Forskningsinstitut (SP), Drottning Kristinas väg 45.

Avhandlingen presenteras på engelska.

High temperature corrosion in a biomass-fired power boiler

Reducing furnace wall corrosion in a waste wood-fired power plant with advanced steam data

Licentiate thesis

Copy right © Yousef Alipour, 2013. All rights reserved.

The following items are printed with permission:

Paper I: © VGB PowerTech, 2012

Paper II: © Materials and Corrosions, 2013

TRITA-CHE Report 2013:24

ISSN 1654-1081

ISBN 978-91-7501-741-9

KTH Royal Institute of Technology
Division of Surface and Corrosion Science
Drottning Kristinas väg 51
SE-100 44 Stockholm
Sweden

Printed at E-print, Stockholm, Sweden 2013

Abstract

The use of waste (or recycled) wood as a fuel in heat and power stations is becoming more widespread in Sweden (and Europe), because it is CO₂ neutral with a lower cost than forest fuel. However, it is a heterogeneous fuel with a high amount of chlorine, alkali and heavy metals which causes more corrosion than fossil fuels or forest fuel.

A part of the boiler which is subjected to a high corrosion risk is the furnace wall (or waterwall) which is formed of tubes welded together. Waterwalls are made of ferritic low-alloyed steels, due to their low price, low stress corrosion cracking risk, high heat transfer properties and low thermal expansion. However, ferritic low alloy steels corrode quickly when burning waste wood in a low NO_x environment (i.e. an environment with low oxygen levels to limit the formation of NO_x). Apart from pure oxidation two important forms of corrosion mechanisms are thought to occur in waste environments: chlorine corrosion and alkali corrosion.

Although there is a great interest from plant owners to reduce the costs associated with furnace wall corrosion very little has been reported on wall corrosion in biomass boilers. Also corrosion mechanisms on furnace walls are usually investigated in laboratories, where interpretation of the results is easier. In power plants the interpretation is more complicated. Difficulties in the study of corrosion mechanisms are caused by several factors such as deposit composition, flue gas flow, boiler design, combustion characteristics and flue gas composition. Therefore, the corrosion varies from plant to plant and the laboratory experiments should be complemented with field tests. The present project may thus contribute to fill the power plant corrosion research gap.

In this work, different kinds of samples (wall deposits, test panel tubes and corrosion probes) from Vattenfall's Heat and Power plant in Nyköping were analysed. Coated and uncoated samples with different alloys and different times of exposure were studied by scanning electron microscopy (SEM), energy dispersive x-ray analysis (EDX), X-ray diffraction (XRD) and light optical microscopy (LOM). The corrosive environment was also simulated by Thermo-Calc software.

The results showed that a nickel alloy coating can dramatically reduce the corrosion rate. The corrosion rate of the low alloy steel tubes, steel 16Mo3, was linear and the oxide scale non-protective, but the corrosion rate of the nickel-based alloy was probably parabolic and the oxide much more protective. The nickel alloy and stainless steels showed good corrosion protection behavior in the boiler. This indicates that stainless steels could be a good (and less expensive) alternative to nickel-based alloys for protecting furnace walls.

The nickel alloy coated tubes (and probe samples) were attacked by a potassium-lead combination leading to the formation of non-protective potassium lead chromate. The low alloy steel tubes corroded by chloride attack. Stainless steels were attacked by a combination of chlorides and potassium-lead.

The Thermo-Calc modelling showed chlorine gas exists at extremely low levels (less than 0.1 ppm) at the tube surface; instead the hydrated form is thermodynamically favoured, i.e. gaseous hydrogen chloride. Consequently chlorine can attack low alloy steels by gaseous hydrogen chloride rather than chlorine gas as previously proposed. This is a smaller molecule than chlorine which could easily diffuse through a defect oxide of the type formed on the steel.

Keywords: High temperature corrosion, Waterwalls, Power plant corrosion, NO_x reducing environments, Biomass, Waste wood, Thermodynamic calculation modelling, corrosion-resistance alloy, Furnace wall corrosion

Sammanfattning

Användningen av returträ som bränsle i kraftvärmeverk blir allt vanligare i Sverige (och Europa), eftersom det är koldioxid-neutralt med en lägre kostnad än skogsbränsle. Det är dock ett heterogent bränsle med höga halter av klor, alkali och tungmetaller som orsakar mer korrosion än fossila bränslen eller skogsbränsle.

En del av pannan som drabbats av en hög korrosionsrisk är eldstadsväggen som bildas av rör som svetsas samman. Eldstadsväggar är tillverkade av ferritiska låglegerande stål på grund av deras låga pris, goda spänningskorrosionsmotstånd, låga värmeutvidgning och höga värmeledningsförmåga. Men ferritiska låglegerade stål korroderar snabbt vid förbränning av returträ i en låg NO_x -miljö (dvs. en miljö med låga syrehalter för att begränsa bildandet av NO_x). Två av de viktigaste korrosionsmekanismerna förutom ren oxidation, som tros ske i avfallseldade miljöer, är klor- och alkali-inducerad korrosion.

Även om det finns ett stort intresse från kraftverksägare för att minska kostnaderna kopplade till eldstadskorrosion, har mycket lite rapporterats om eldstadskorrosion i biobränsleeldade pannor. Korrosionsmekanismer i eldstäder undersöks vanligtvis i laboratorier, där analysen av resultaten är lättare. I kraftverk är det mer komplicerat. Svårigheterna med att studera korrosionsmekanismer orsakas av flera faktorer såsom avlagringssammansättning, rökgasflödet, pannutformning, förbränning och rökgassammansättning. Därför varierar korrosionen från anläggning till anläggning och laboratorieexperiment bör kompletteras med fältförsök. Detta projekt kan således bidra till att fylla denna lucka i korrosionsforskningen kopplad till kraftverk.

I detta arbete har olika typer av prover (avskrapade avlagringar, provrörpanel och korrosionssonder) från Vattenfalls kraftvärmeverk i Nyköping analyseras. Belagda och obelagda prov med olika material och olika exponeringstider studerades genom svepelektronmikroskopi (SEM), energidispersiv röntgenanalys (EDX), röntgendiffraktion (XRD) och optisk mikroskopi (LOM). Den korrosiva miljön har också modellerats med hjälp av Thermo-Calc programvara.

Resultatet visade att en ytbeläggning av en nickellegering kan reducera korrosionshastigheten. Korrosionshastigheten för stål 16Mo3 var linjär och oxidskiktet icke skyddande, men korrosionshastigheten för den nickelbaserade Alloy 625 var troligen parabolisk och oxidskiktet mycket mer skyddande. Nickelbaslegeringen och rostfria stålen uppvisade gott korrosionsskydd i pannan. Således kan rostfria stål vara ett bra (och billigare) alternativ till nickelbaseradelegeringar.

Nickellegerings proverna attackerades av en kombination av kalium-bly som gav upphov till en icke-skyddande förening av kalium-blykromat. De lågegerade ståltuberna angreps i huvudsak av kloridinducerad korrosion. De Rostfria stålen angreps av en kombination av klorider och kalium-bly.

Thermo-Calc modelleringen visade att klorgas endast existerar på extremt låga nivåer (mindre än 0,1 ppm), men den hydratiserade formen är termodynamiskt gynnad, dvs

gasformig väteklorid. Följaktligen kan klor attackera lågerat stål genom gasformig väteklorid snarare än klorgas som tidigare föreslagits. HCl är dessutom en mindre molekyl än Cl₂, som därför kan diffundera lättare genom ett defekt oxidskal som bildats på stål.

Nyckelord: Högtemperaturkorrosion, Eldstadväggar, kraftverks korrosion, låg Nox miljöer, biomassa, returträ, Termodynamisk modellering, korrosionsbeständighet legering, eldstadskorrosion

Preface

This Thesis is based on the following appended papers:

Paper I

Y. Alipour, P. Viklund, P. Henderson, "The Analysis of Furnace Wall Deposits from a Low NO_x Waste Wood Fired Bubbling Fluidised Bed Boiler", *VGB PowerTech*, 12, **2012**, 96-100.

The author did most of the SEM and XRD analyses. The author collected all the samples. The paper was mainly written by P. Henderson.

Paper II

Y. Alipour, P. Henderson, P. Szakalos, "The Effect of a Nickel Alloy Coating on the Corrosion of Furnace Wall Tubes in a Waste Wood Fired Power Plant", Accepted for publication in *Materials and Corrosion*, **2013**.

The author did all thermodynamic modelling, conducted all SEM analyses. The paper was mainly written by the author.

Paper III

Y. Alipour, P. Henderson, "Initial Corrosion of Waterwalls Materials in a Waste Wood Fired Power Plant", *Draft, to be presented at Gordon High Temperature Corrosion Conference, USA*, **2013**.

The author did all experimental work, SEM and LOM as well as thermodynamic modelling. The paper was mainly written by the author.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| Abstract | v |
| Sammanfattning | vii |
| Preface | ix |
| Table of Contents | x |
| 1 Introduction | 1 |
| 2 Aim of this work | 3 |
| 3 Fuel | 4 |
| 3.1 Fossil fuel | 4 |
| 3.2 Biomass | 4 |
| 3.2.1 waste wood | 4 |
| 4 Heat and power station | 5 |
| 4.1 Grate firing technology | 5 |
| 4.2 Pulverised firing technology | 5 |
| 4.3 Fluidised bed technology | 6 |
| 4.3.1 Bubbling fluidised bed | 6 |
| 4.3.2 Deep bed | 6 |
| 4.3.3 Circulating fluidised bed | 6 |
| 5 Possible corrosion mechanisms in the furnace wall when burning waste | 8 |
| 5.1 Chlorine/Chloride corrosion | 8 |
| 5.2 Alkali corrosion | 9 |
| 5.3 Molten salt corrosion | 9 |
| 5.4 Thermodynamic background | 10 |
| 5.4.1 Oxide formation and growth | 10 |
| 5.5 Oxidation of different alloys | 12 |
| 5.5.1 Low alloy steels | 12 |
| 5.5.2 Nickel alloys | 13 |
| 5.5.3 Stainless steels | 13 |
| 6 Experimental | 14 |
| 6.1 Deposit samples | 14 |
| 6.2 Test panel tube samples | 14 |
| 6.3 Fin wall probe samples | 15 |
| 7 Analytical techniques | 17 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 7.1 Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM)..... | 17 |
| 7.2 X-Ray Diffraction (XRD)..... | 18 |
| 7.3 Light Optical Microscopy (LOM) | 19 |
| 7.4 Thermodynamic calculation modelling | 19 |
| 8 Results | 20 |
| 8.1 Deposit samples..... | 20 |
| 8.1.1 SEM/EDS | 20 |
| 8.1.2 XRD | 22 |
| 8.2 Test panel tube samples | 22 |
| 8.2.1 Corrosion rate measurement | 22 |
| 8.2.2 SEM..... | 23 |
| 8.2.3 LOM | 25 |
| 8.3 Fin wall probe samples | 26 |
| 8.3.1 Corrosion rate measurement | 26 |
| 8.3.2 SEM..... | 26 |
| 8.3.3 LOM | 30 |
| 8.4 Thermo-Calc results..... | 31 |
| 9 Discussion..... | 33 |
| 10 Summary of presented papers | 36 |
| 9.1 Paper i | 36 |
| 9.2 Paper ii | 36 |
| 9.3 Paper iii..... | 37 |
| 11 Conclusions | 38 |
| 12 Future work | 39 |
| 13 Acknowledgements..... | 40 |
| 14 References | 41 |