Plasma wall interactions from a material perspective in fusion devices

Presented by H.T. Lee

Graduate School of Engineering, Osaka University, Suita, Osaka, 565-0871, Japan
With material generously supplied by K. Krieger, Max Planck Institut fuer Plasmaphysik, Germany

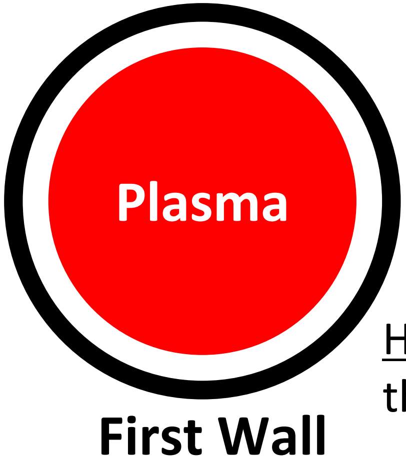
第49回プラズマ若手夏の学校
六甲スカイヴィラ
2010年8月10日

Aim of this talk

Introduce how plasma-material interactions and plasma confinement are interlinked.

Introduce materials used in present and future Tokamaks (ITER).

Presentation overview



Set of Conditions for sustained or “burning” fusion reactions

Plasma operation

How does the *interaction* with the first wall affect these conditions?

Edge transport physics
(Erosion/ Transport/
Re-deposition cycle).

Material operation

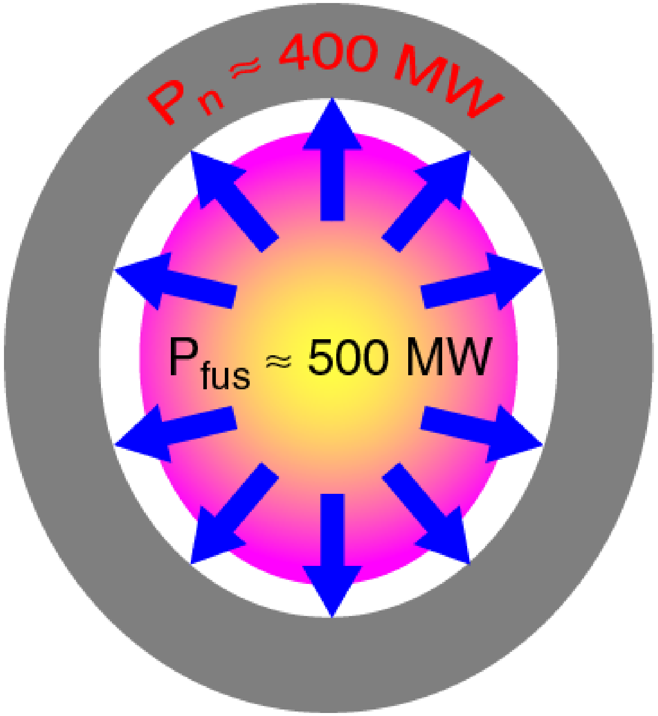
How does the *interaction* affect the first wall materials?

What materials can be used?
What are their properties?
(Carbon/ Beryllium/ Tungsten)

Edge Plasma ⟺

How do these conditions change for a reactor?

Role of material



$P_\alpha \approx 100$ MW
$P_{aux} \approx 40$ MW

1. VACUUM CONDITIONS

Unlike the sun, a fusion plasma can only be maintained under ultra high vacuum conditions -

base pressure $\approx$ *O*(10^{-8} *mbar*)

2. EXTRACTION OF POWER

The α-particle power and auxiliary injected power used to heat the plasma must be finally extracted through the plasma facing wall

Power carried by neutrons is converted to heat in blanket wall

neutrons also breed tritium in blanket

3. HELIUM REMOVAL

The removal of the helium ash requires thermalisation and neutralisation of plasma ions

Slide by K. Krieger

Power balance

In 1957 Lawson introduced power balances:

$$P_{fus} = n_D \cdot n_T \cdot \langle\sigma \cdot v\rangle \cdot E_{fus} \geq P_{bremsstrahlung} = c_1 \cdot n_e^2 \cdot Z_{eff} \cdot (kT)^{1/2} + P_{loss} = 3\, n\, kT / \tau_E$$

Fusion power

Loss by radiation

Loss by transport (diffusion, convection, charge-exchange)

where E_{fus} is the **α** particle heating, $c_1 = 5.4 \cdot 10^{-37}$ $\mathrm{Wm^3keV^{-1/2}}$, and $Z_{eff} = \Sigma f_i Z_i^2$ is the effective plasma charge.

Simplifying assumptions: 1) $2n_D = 2n_T = n$ and $n_\alpha << n$

2) $T_i = T_e = T$

Fusion product:

$$n\,\tau\,T = \frac{12\,(kT)^2}{\langle\sigma \cdot v\rangle \cdot E_{fus} - 4\,c_1\,Z_{eff}\,(kT)^{1/2}}$$

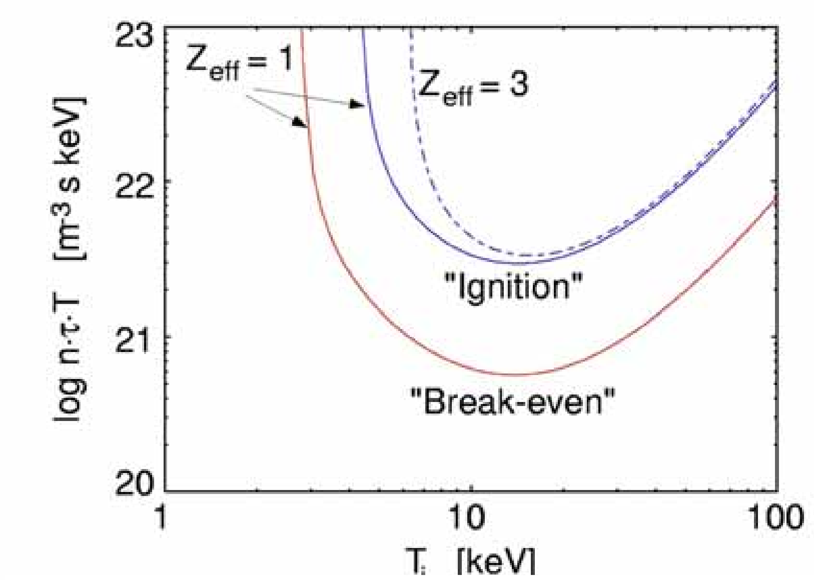
Impurity effect

Break-even: the fusion power equals the loss by radiation, and by transport

Ignition Criteria

The neutrons leave the plasma, the α-particles are confined and heat it. Only their energy should enter the balance

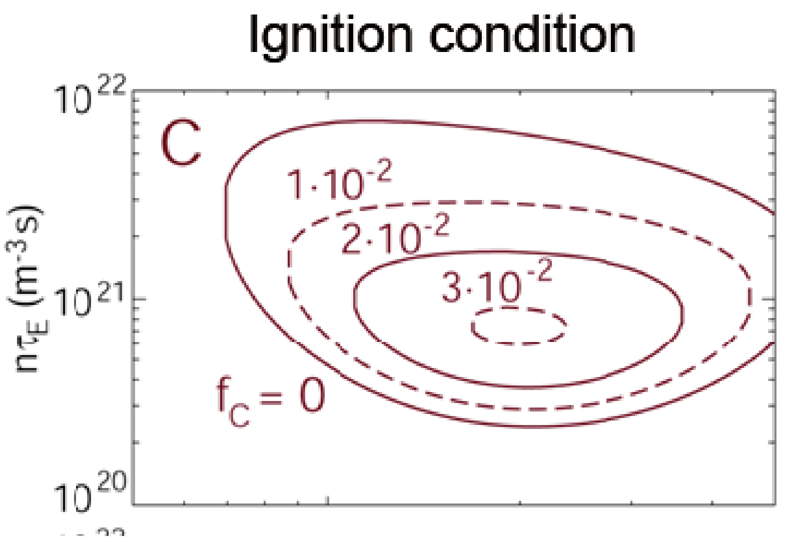
$E_{fus} \rightarrow E_{\alpha}$



Impurity effect:

Fuel Dilution /Loss by line radiation

Result in closed curves and vanishing operation regime with increased impurity concentration



Outline

1. Plasma wall interactions
2. Physical concepts
3. ITER materials
4. Mixed materials
5. Reactor conditions

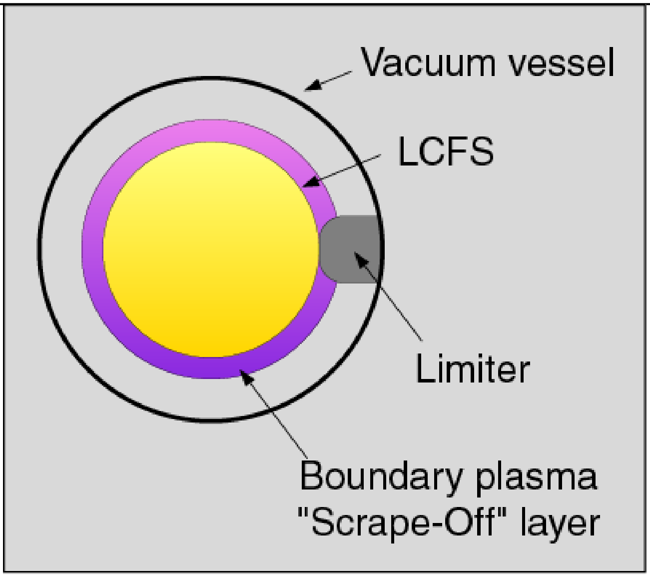
PLASMA WALL INTERACTIONS

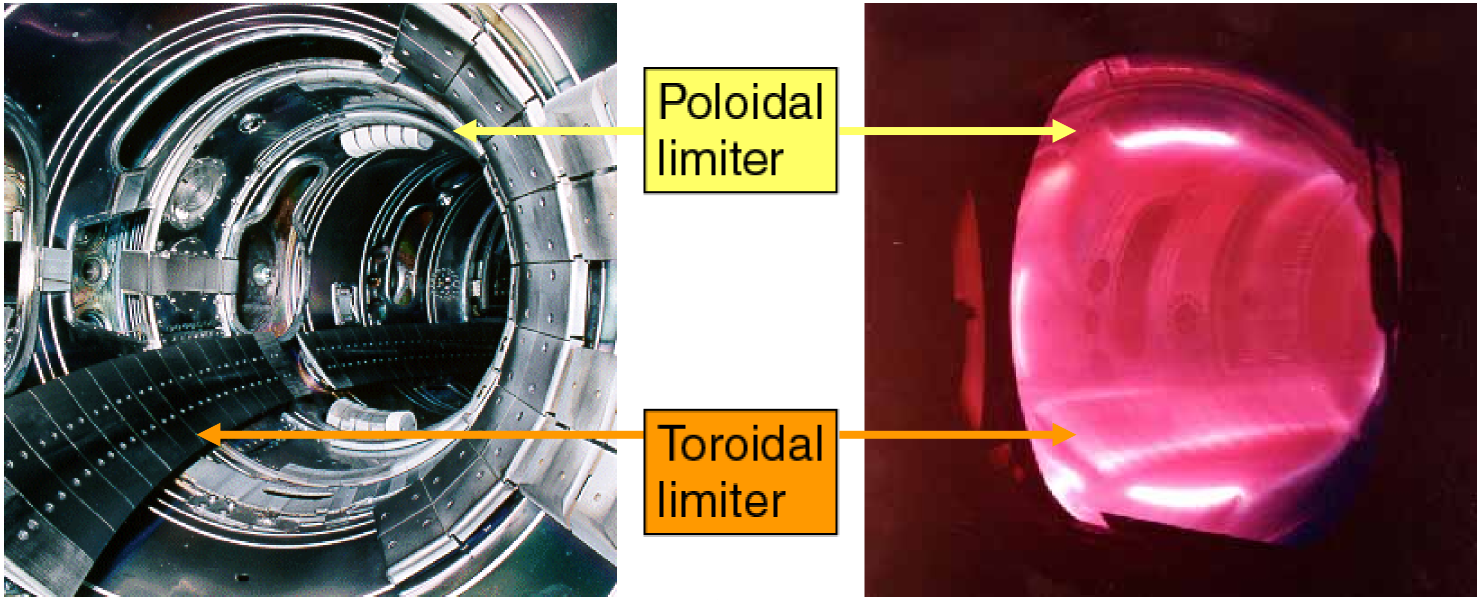
Plasma limiter

Limiter:
A material structure protruding from the main wall used to intercept particles at the plasma edge.

Last Closed Flux Surface (LCFS):
The magnetic surface that touches the innermost part of the limiter.

Scrape-off Layer (SOL):
The plasma region located in the limiter shadow i.e. between the LCFS and the vessel wall.



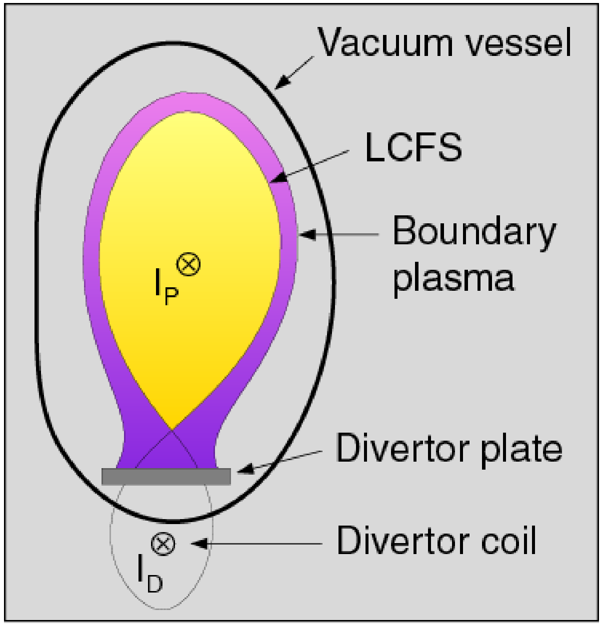


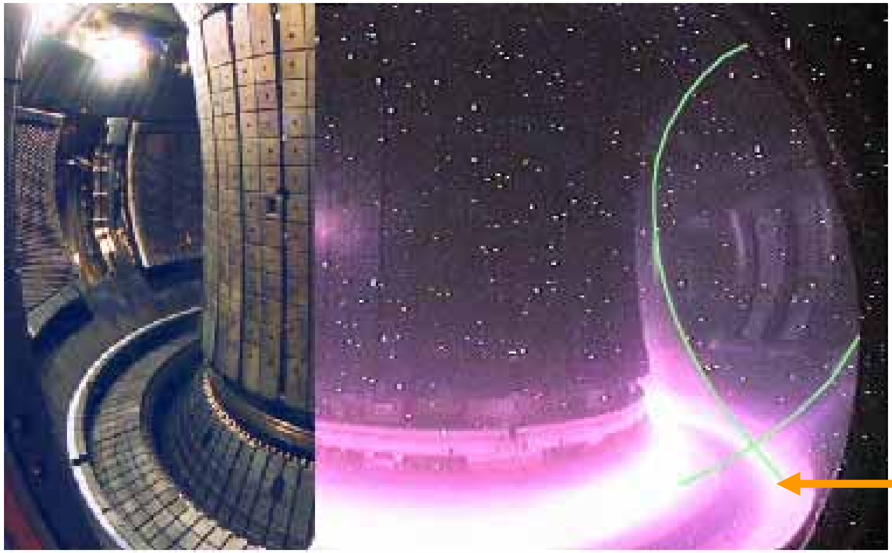
Slide by K. Krieger

Plasma divertor

Divertor:
A separate region in the vacuum vessel to which escaping ions are exhausted || B by means of auxiliary magnetic coils.

The magnetic boundary between confined plasma and edge/divertor plasma is called **separatrix** ≡ LCFS



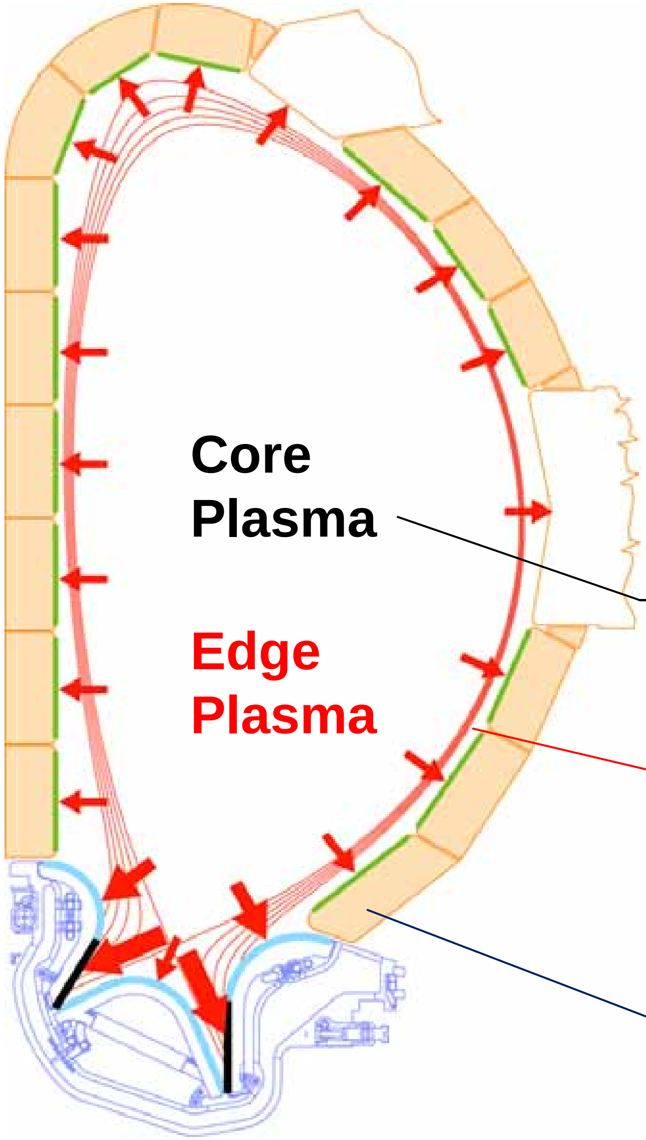


Additionally, divertor exhausts He by increasing neutral pressure

The divertor in ASDEX Upgrade

Slide by K. Krieger

Key interactions/ implications I



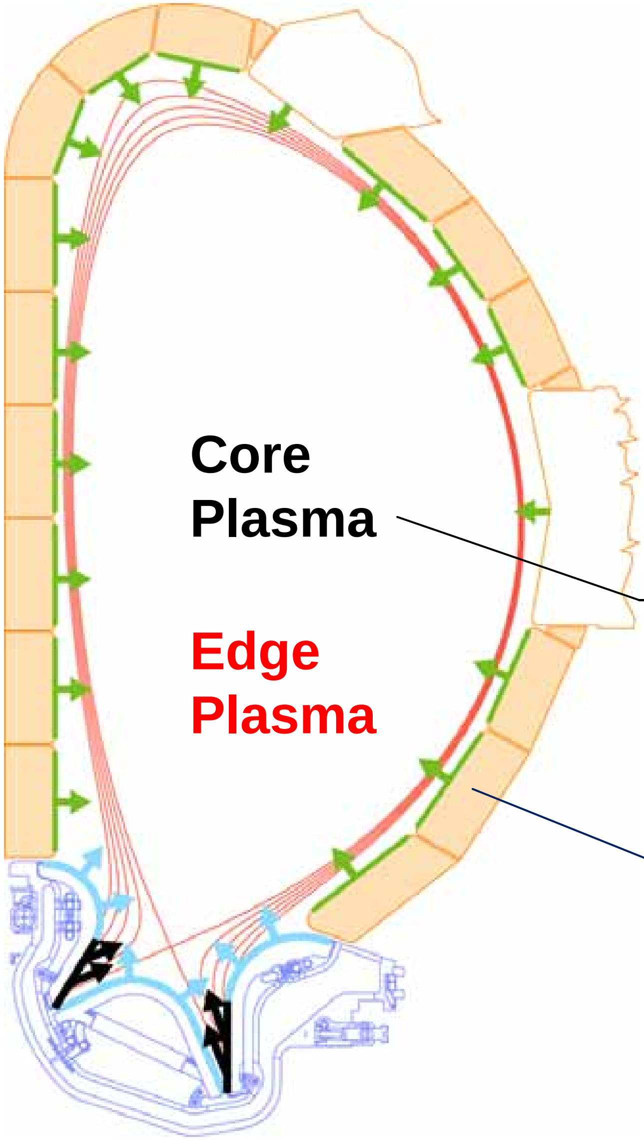
Interaction: Fuel ions + atoms (charge exchange) + impurity ions *bombard* the materials covering the wall

Implication: Hydrogen retention and recycling

- Fuelling efficiency
- Plasma density control
- Density of neutrals in edge plasma

  ↳ Particle and energy transport
- Tritium safety

Key interactions/ implications II



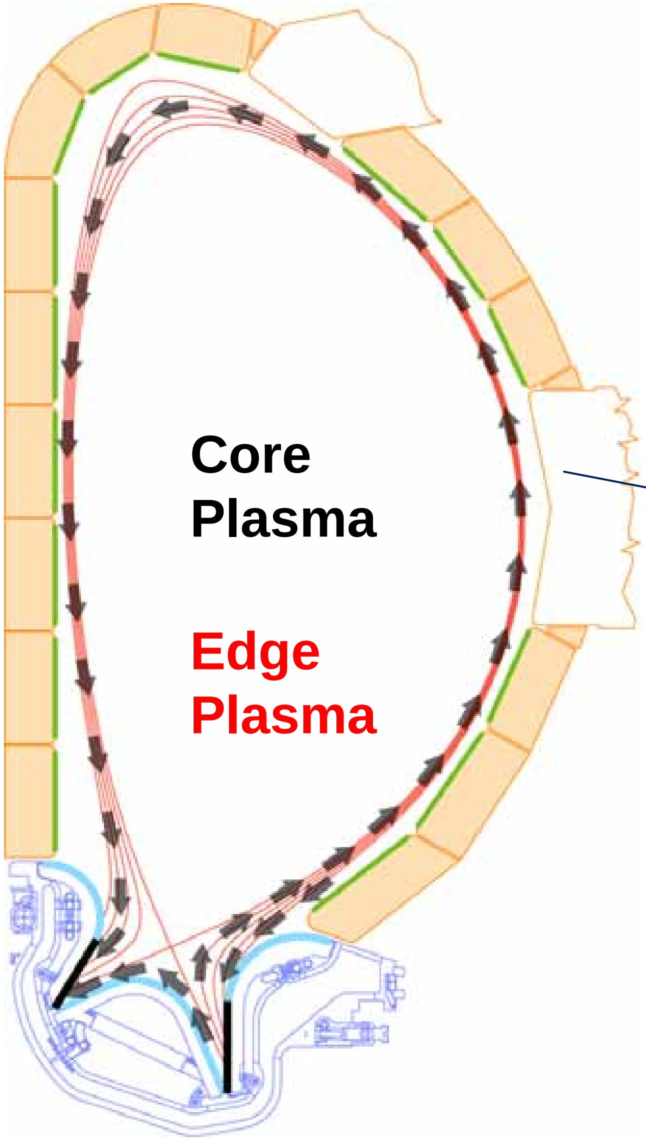
Interaction: Particle bombardment and power deposited causes *erosion* of the material.

Implication: Impurity generation

- Fuel dilution
- Cooling by radiation

- Component lifetime for net erosion

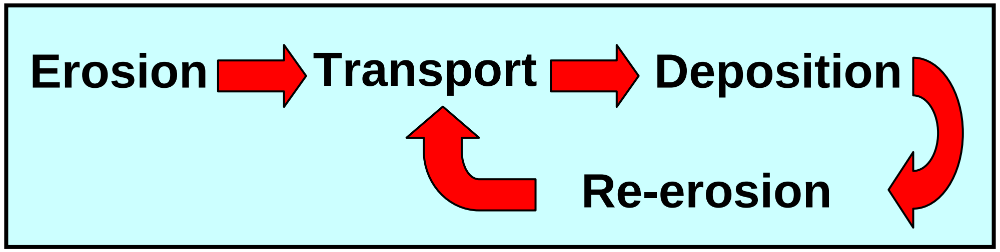
Key interactions/ implications III



Interaction: Migration of impurities

Implication: Alters the surface of plasma facing materials/ dust issues

- Mixed material issues
- Layer deposition



Erosion → **Transport** → **Deposition** → **Re-erosion** → **Transport**

Summary of key issues

Plasma

A) Material migration/ Edge transport affecting core τ_E

1. Increase in density results in Greenwald limit: *implication* - disruptions and subsequent termination of plasma.
2. L/H mode confinement: function of external heating power + plasma material interaction.
3. Edge localized modes (ELMs)

B) Plasma startup – wall conditioning

C) Fuel dilution/ Impurities

Material

A) Erosion (Component lifetime issue)
1)Net vs. Gross erosion
2)Heat load effects

B) Tritium Retention (Safety issue)
1)Helium effects
2)Neutron effects
3)Mixed material effects
4)Co-deposition

PHYSICAL CONCEPTS

Erosion process I

A) Physical sputtering

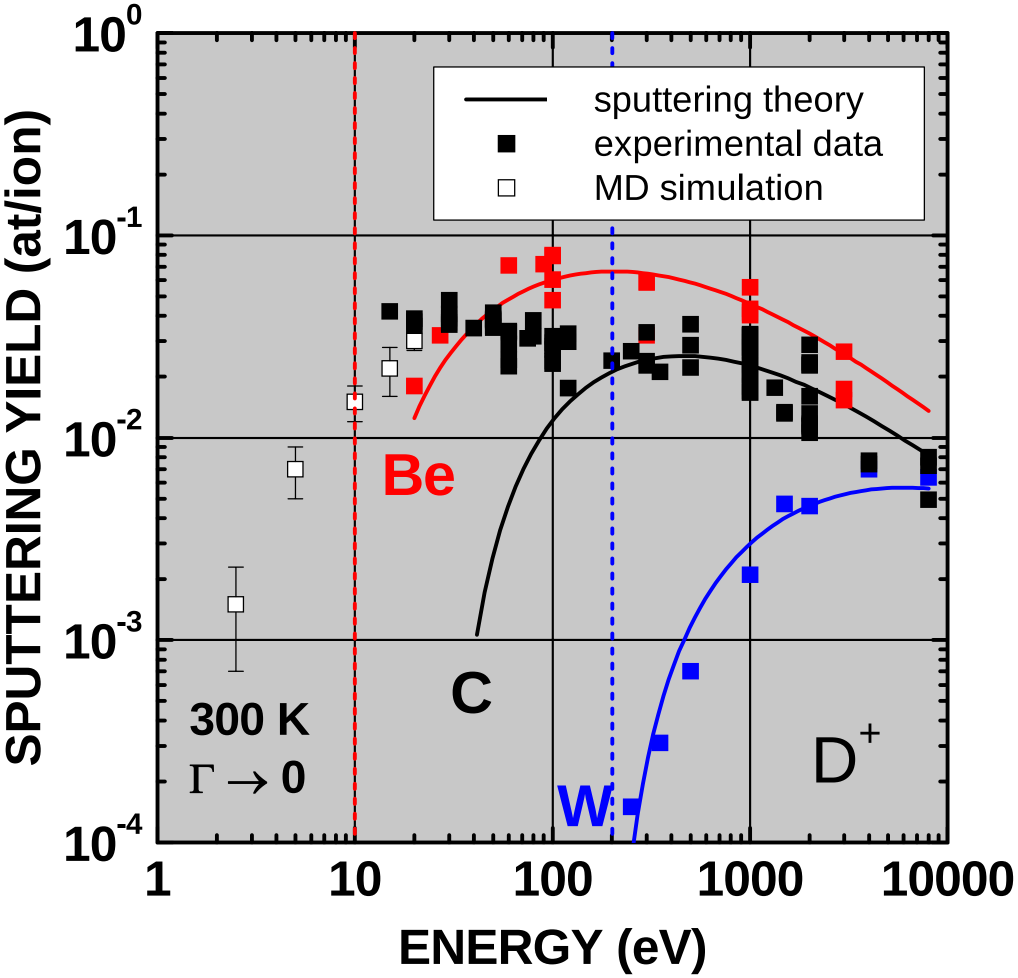
Momentum Transfer
(Energy threshold)

Collision cascades.

Sputtering when the surface binding energy (SBE) can be overcome.

$$Y = \frac{\text{atoms removed}}{\text{incident particle}}$$

Function of incident energy.



Erosion process II

B) Chemical effects

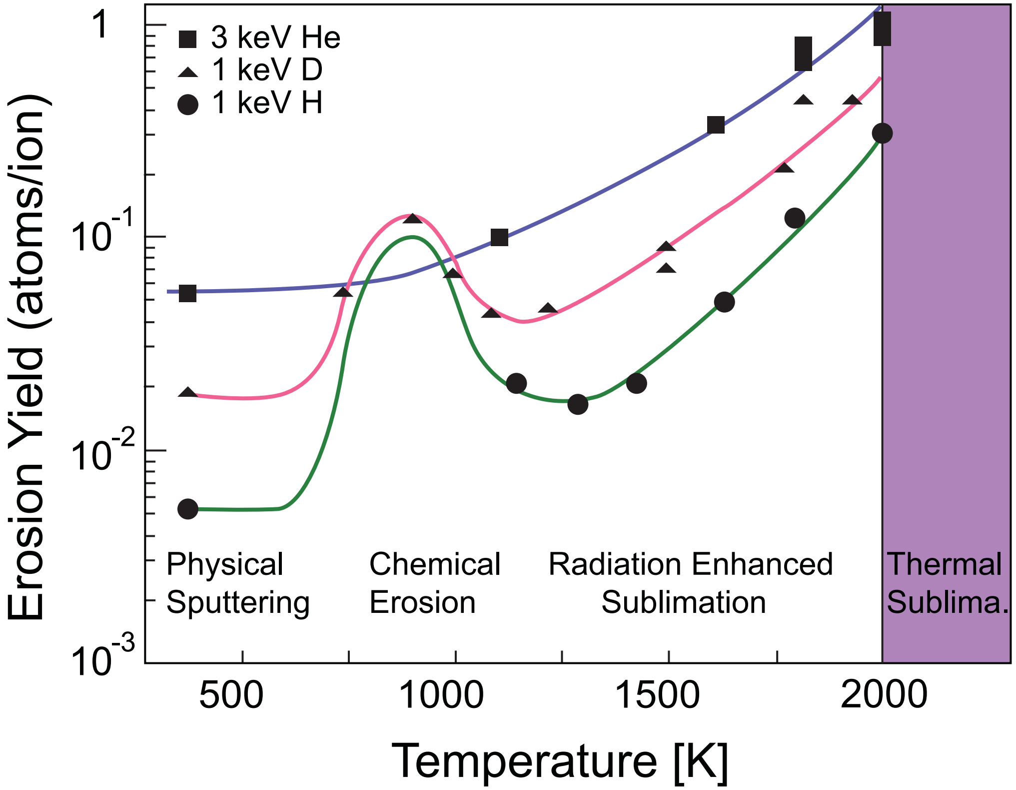
Formation of volatile species
(No energy threshold)

Chemical Erosion
reaction between incident species with target atom.

Chemical Sputtering
production of volatile species induced by incident species.

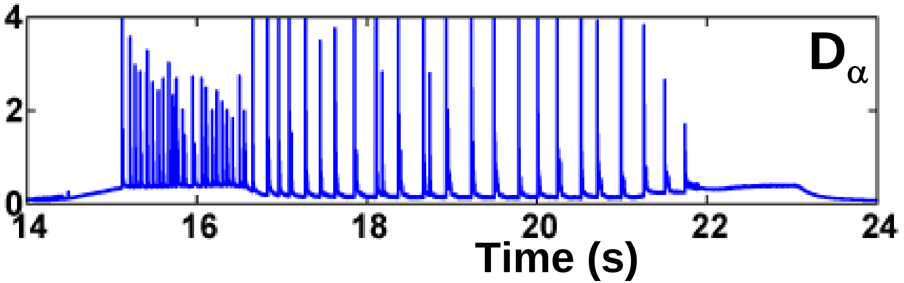
Function of temperature and energy.

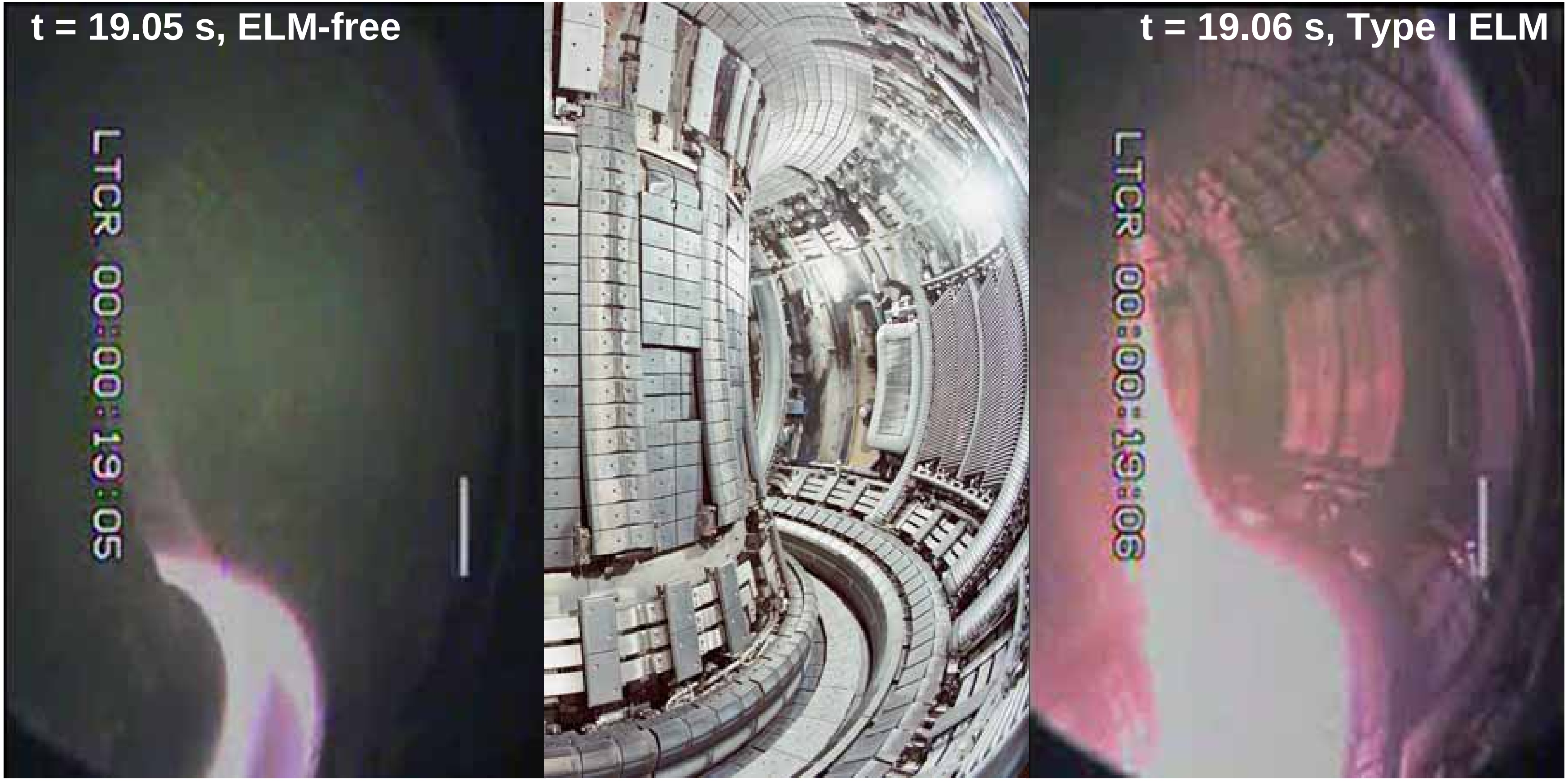
Volatile species are hydrocarbons



Transient heat loads (ELMs)

Plasma instabilities can lead to transient heat load excursions



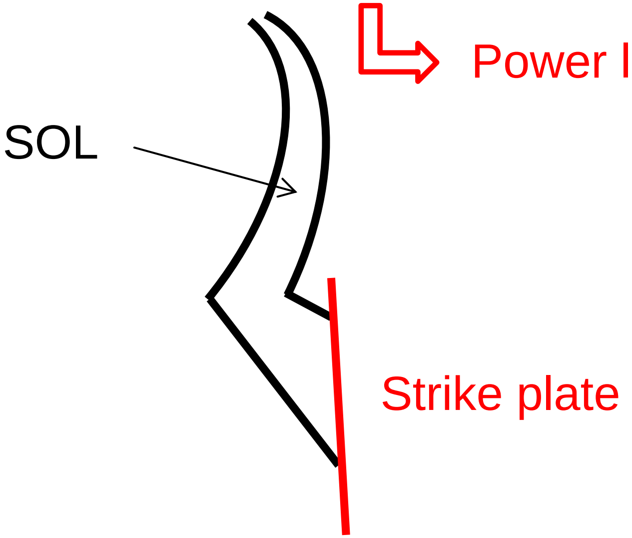


JET #62218

Slide by K. Krieger

Erosion by ELMs

λ_Q ~ O(1 cm) : power concentrated in the near SOL.

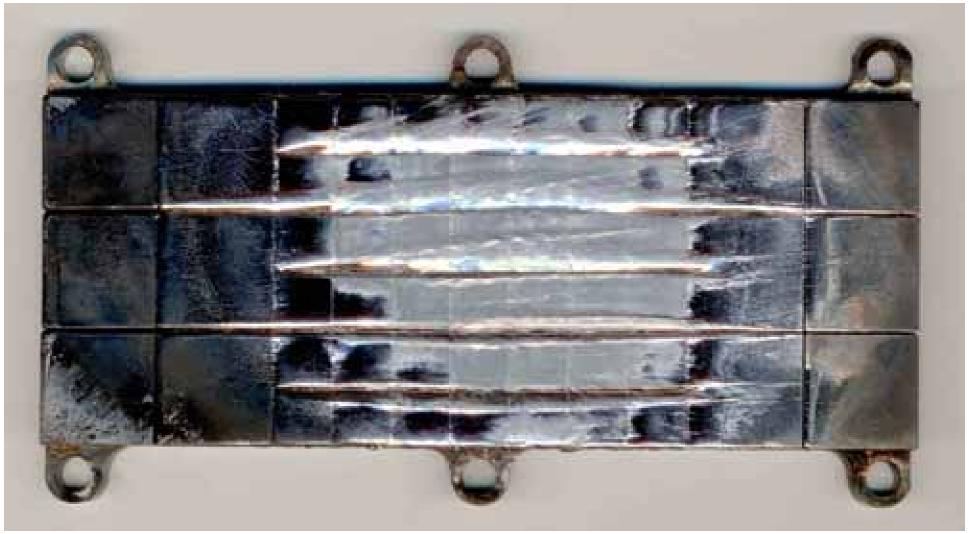


Power limited to very small areas in short pulses. O(GW/m^2)

Most of the parallel power flux must be prevented from reaching the plates by divertor detachment and high radiative loss

Plasma gun

W exposed to 100 pulses of 1.5 MJ/m^2



M. Merola, ITPA (2009)

Material requirements

Low erosion rates:
→ low power loss by dilution /radiation originating from impurities
→ long lifetime of PFCs
→ low dust production
→ low T co-deposition

Low atomic number
→ low radiation loss parameter

Low tritium retention
→ safety operation

Low hydrogen/helium embrittlement and nuclear activation
→ component lifetime

High thermal conductivity and resistance to thermal fatigue
→ reduce cracking and failure

ITER MATERIALS

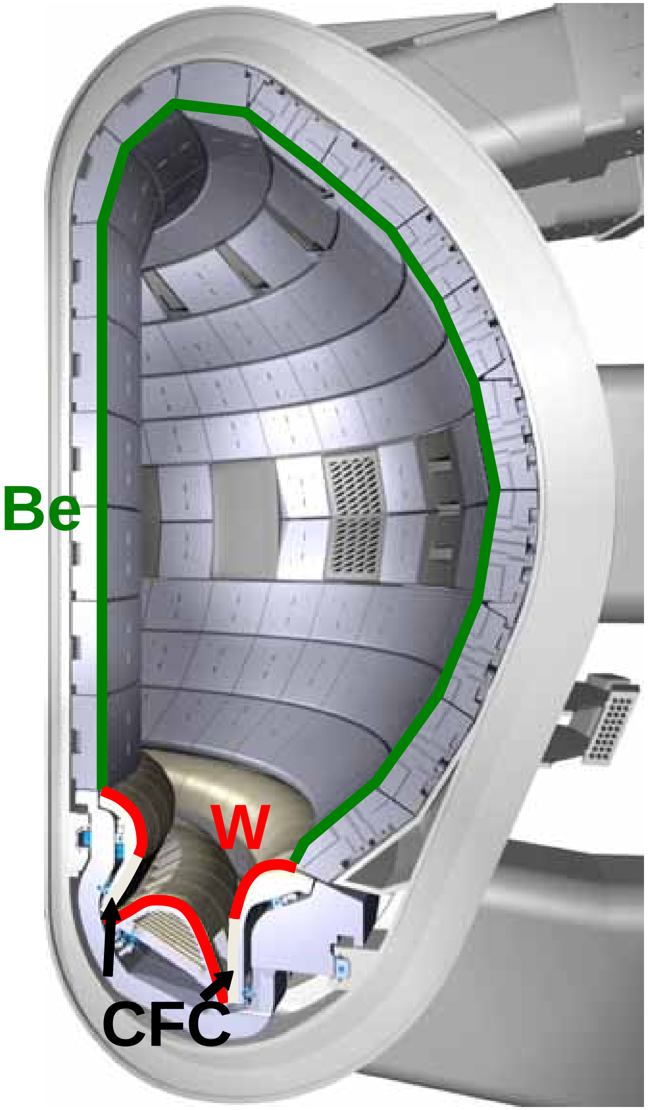
ITER Materials

Wall materials in ITER

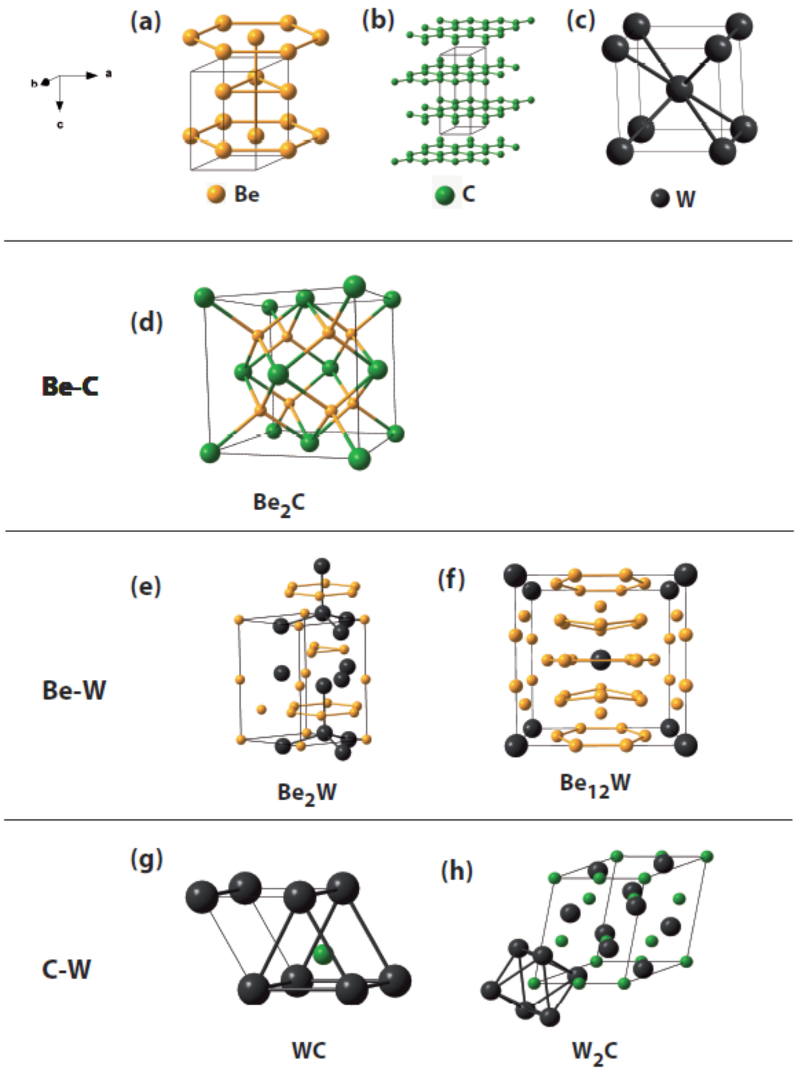
- **690 m^2 Be**: first wall and start-up limiter modules
- **140 m^2 W**: divertor dome / baffle region
- **55 m^2 CFC**: divertor strike point areas

1) Properties: Advantages/Disadvantages

2) Material mixture: Implications



ITER Material Properties



A) Beryllium

- Low atomic number
- Oxygen gettering capability
- No chemical sputtering
- High thermal conductivity

B) Carbon

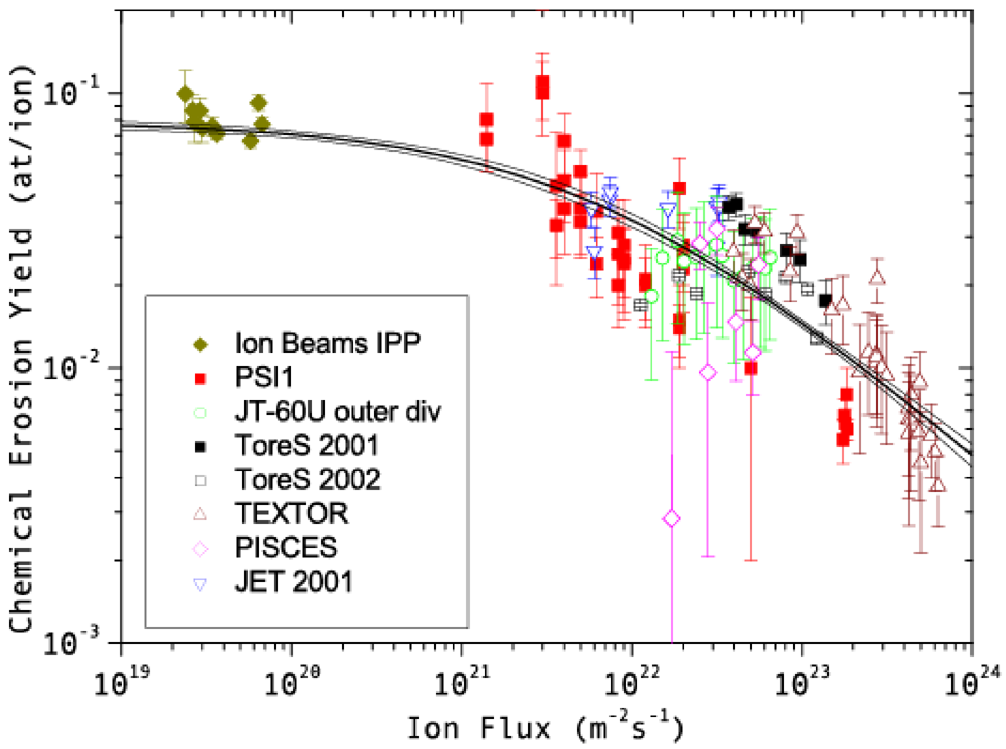
- Low atomic number
- No melting
- Excellent thermal shock resistance
- High thermal conductivity

C) Tungsten

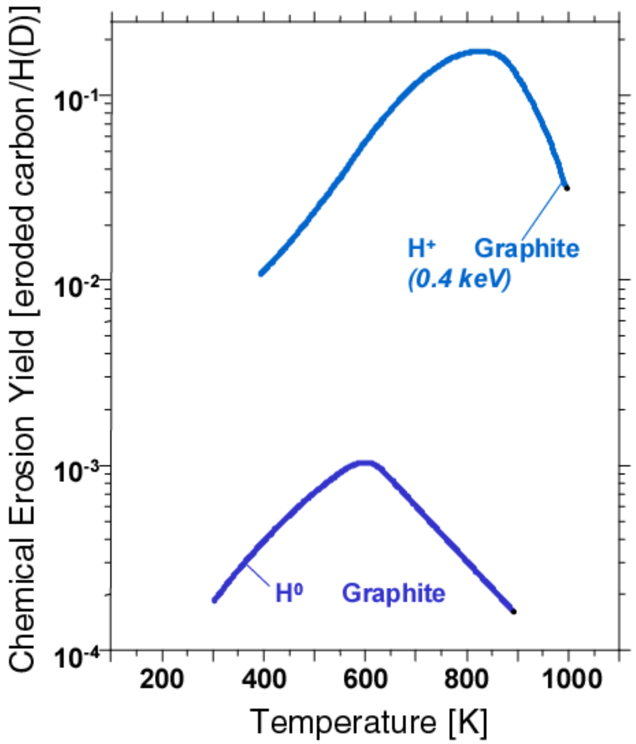
- Lowest sputtering
- Highest melting point
- High thermal conductivity
- Limited tritium inventory

Carbon

chemical erosion decreases for high Γ_D



chemical erosion vanishes at high T_{surf}

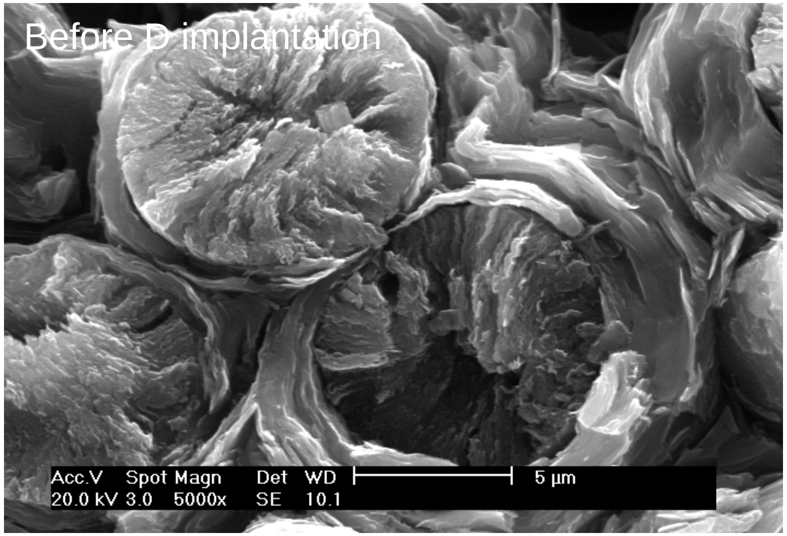


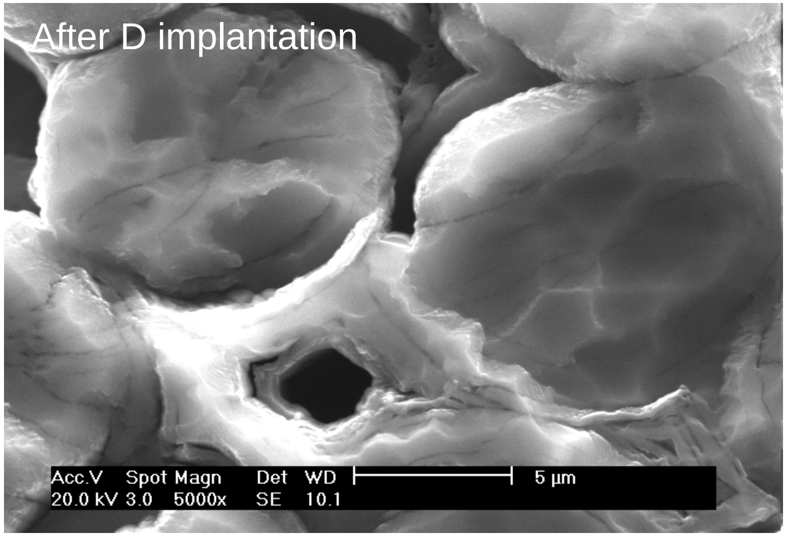
↳ good for divertor strike point conditions!

Slide by K. Krieger

Carbon fibre composites

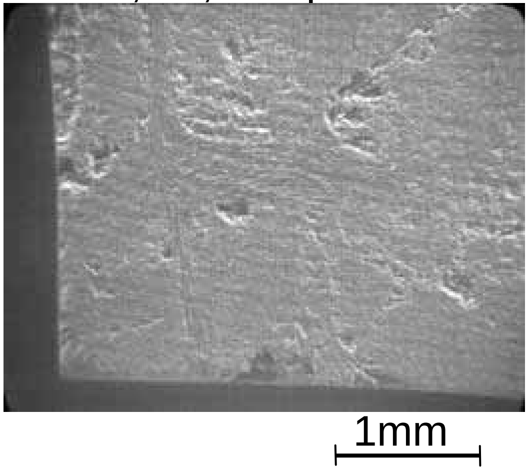
Osaka University



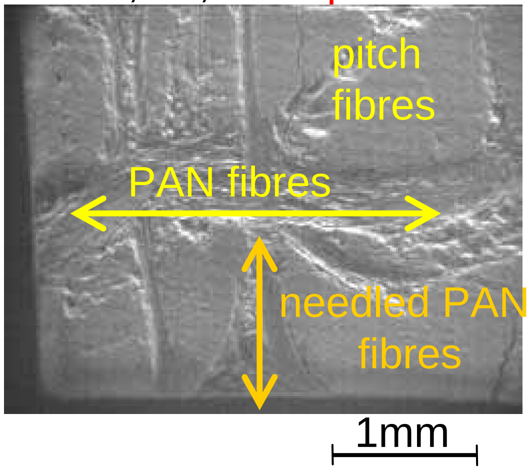


Plasma gun

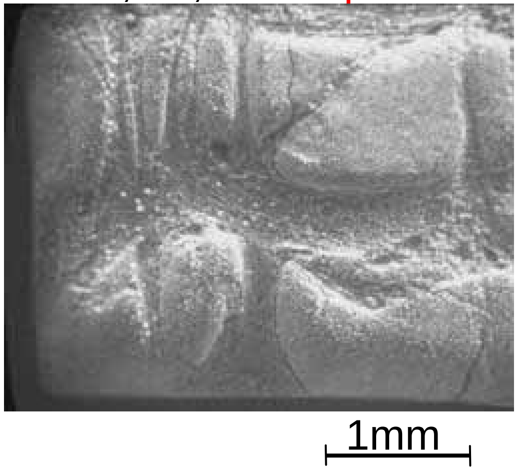
CFC4, L3, 0 exposures



CFC4, L3, 20 exposures



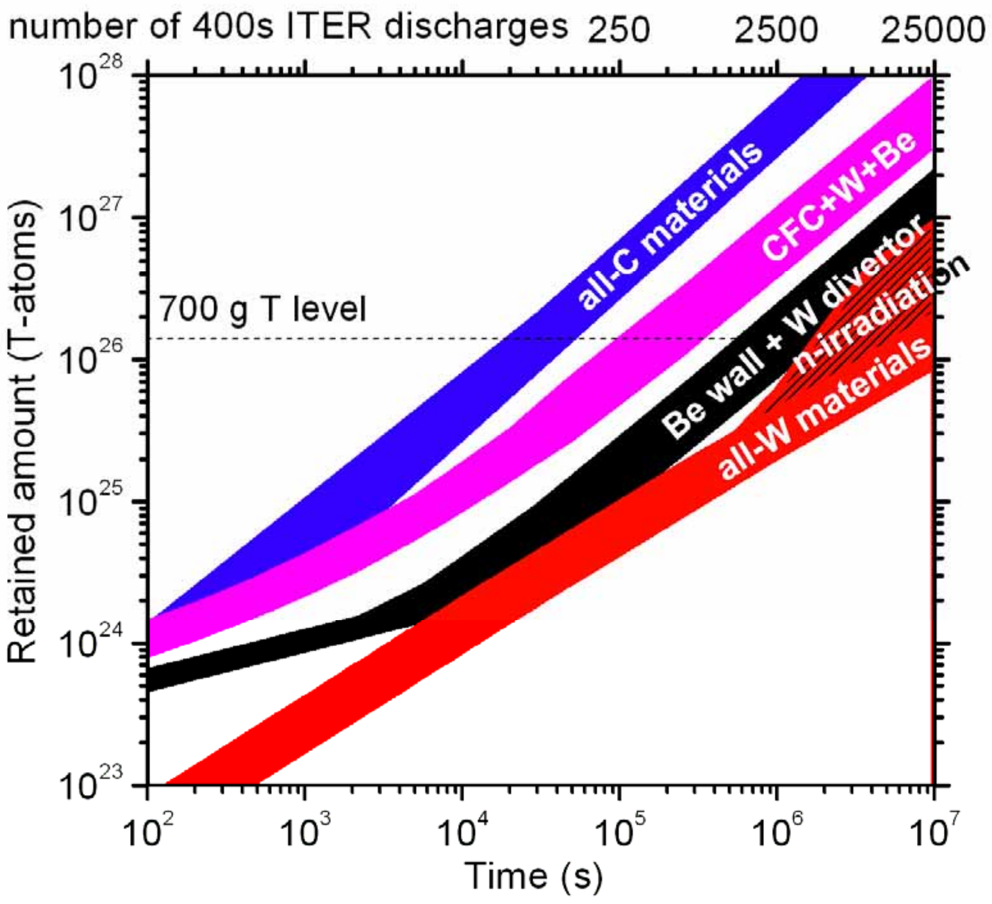
CFC4, L3, 100 exposures



M. Merola, ITPA (2009)

Tritium retention

Osaka University

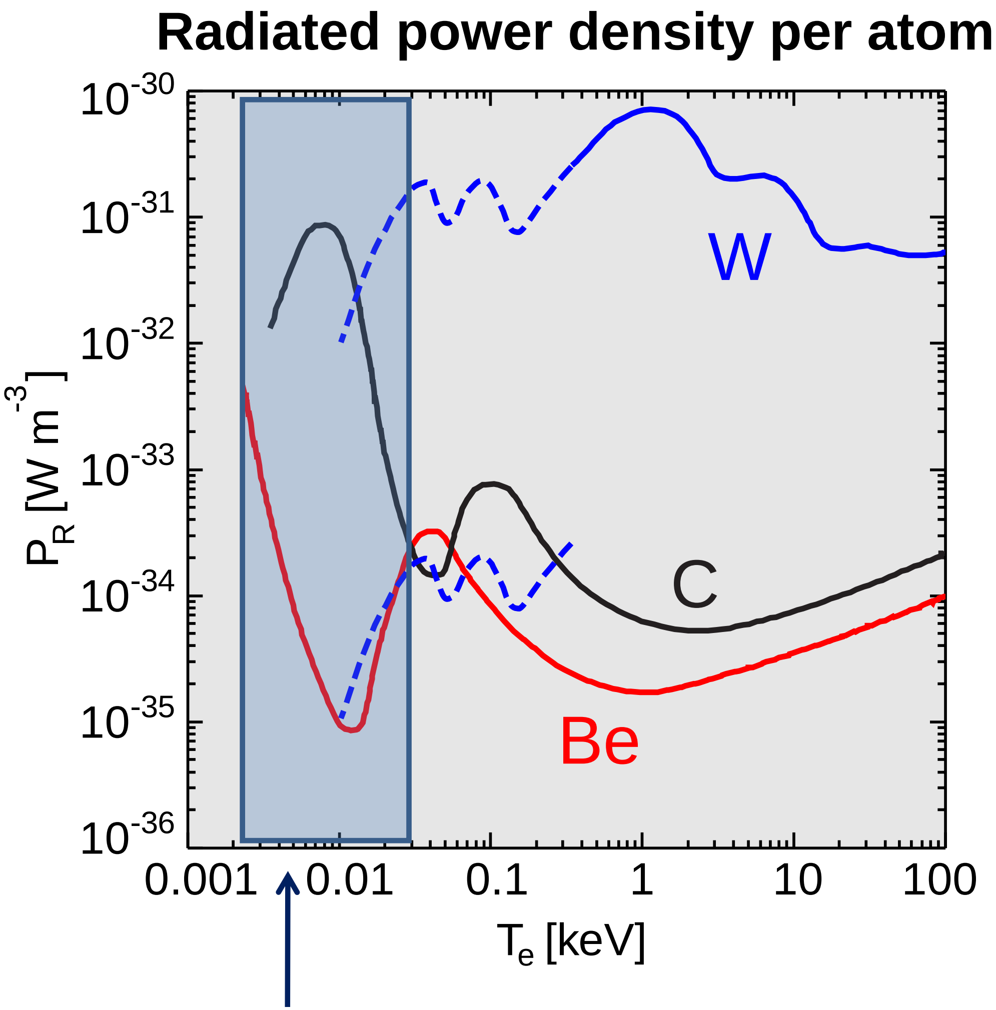


The use of Carbon is foreseen to be limited by its large impact on Tritium retention.

ITER is planning to use a full W divertor for the D-T campaign.

J. Roth, PPCF (2008)

Tungsten

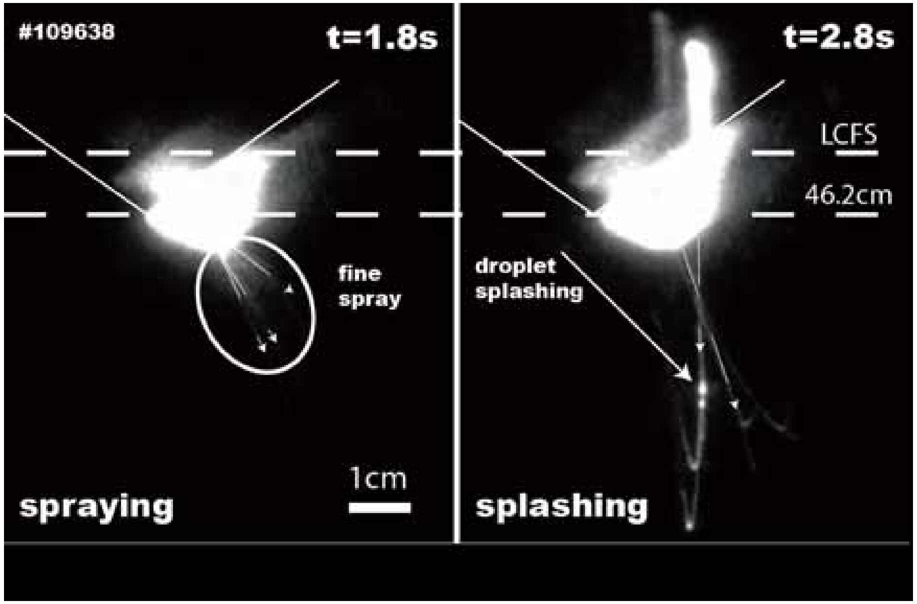


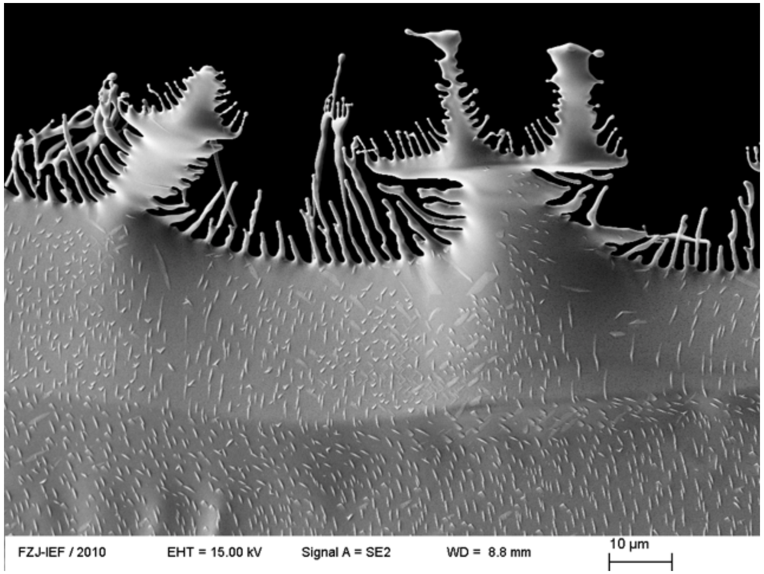
Tungsten qualification is mainly dependent on erosion under heat Loads due to the restricted W concentration allowed in the core:

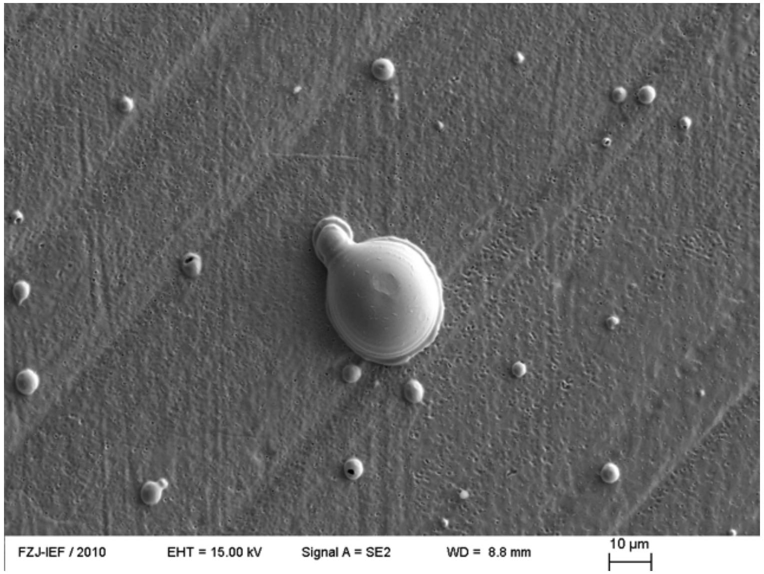
No ignition for core W conc. > 10^{-4}

Divertor region: Elimination of C results in intrinsic radiation loss.
Seeded impurities (Ar/Ne) are required.

Tungsten melting



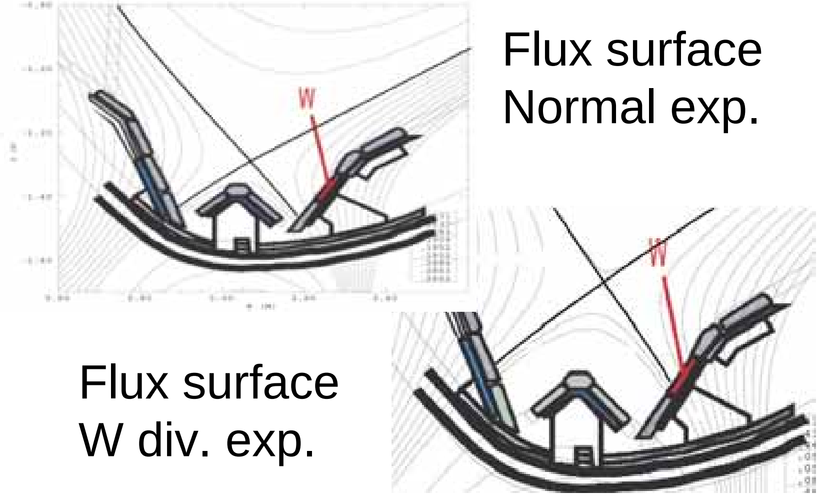




Tungsten exposed to TEXTOR limitor plasma results in spraying and splashing of the molten tungsten.

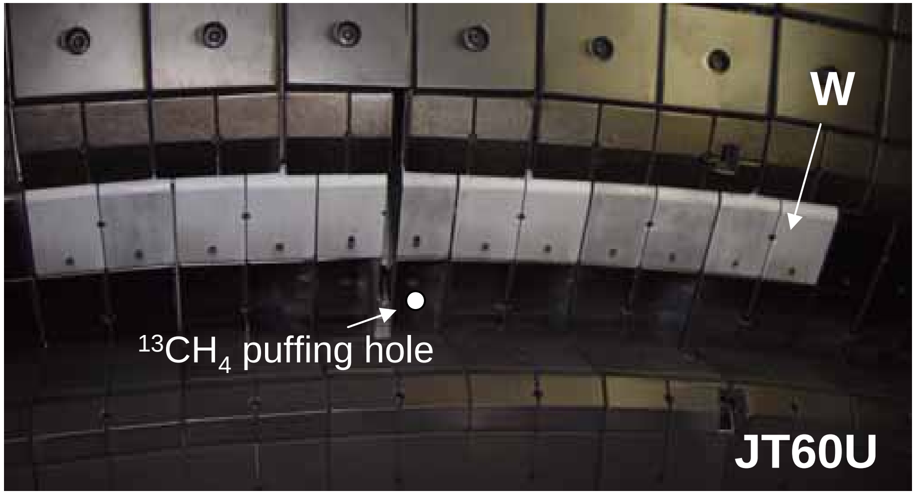
J. Coenen, PSI 19 (2010)
Forschungszentrum Juelich

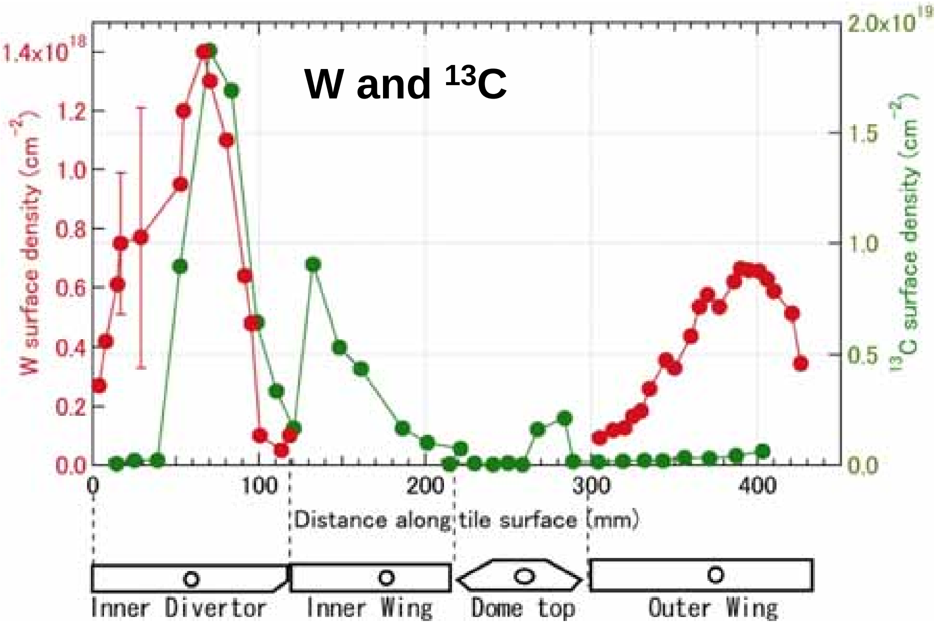
Tungsten transport



Flux surface
Normal exp.

Flux surface
W div. exp.





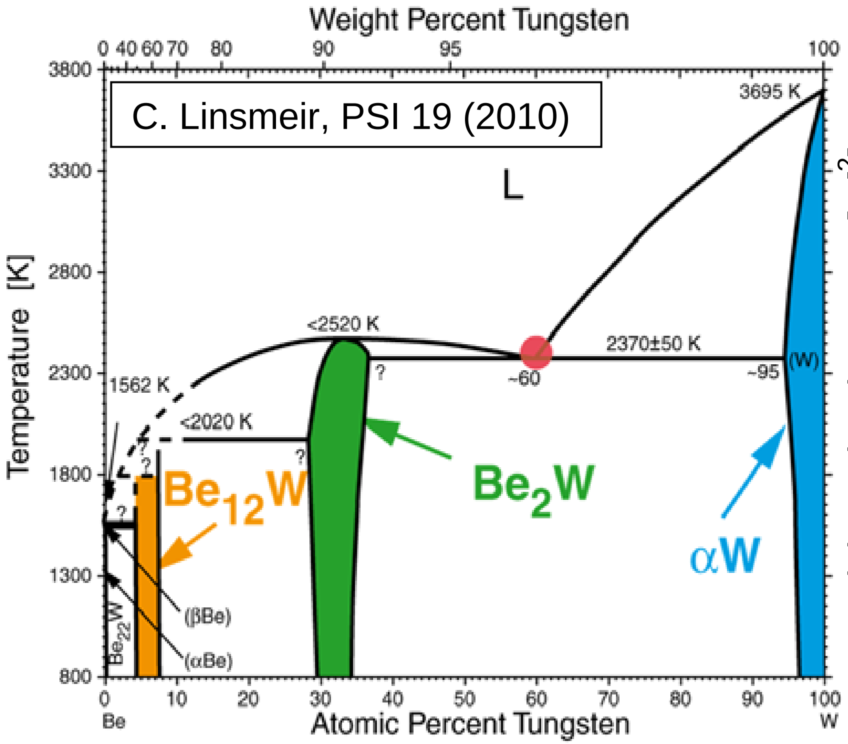
On the inner divertor tile, thick W & C mixed layer was observed beneath ^{13}C layer. In addition, W deposition profile has a tail in the upper side of the tile. This tail structure could be formed by lift-up of inner strike points and W flow in SOL region.

Y. Ueda, PSI 17 (2006)

MIXED MATERIALS

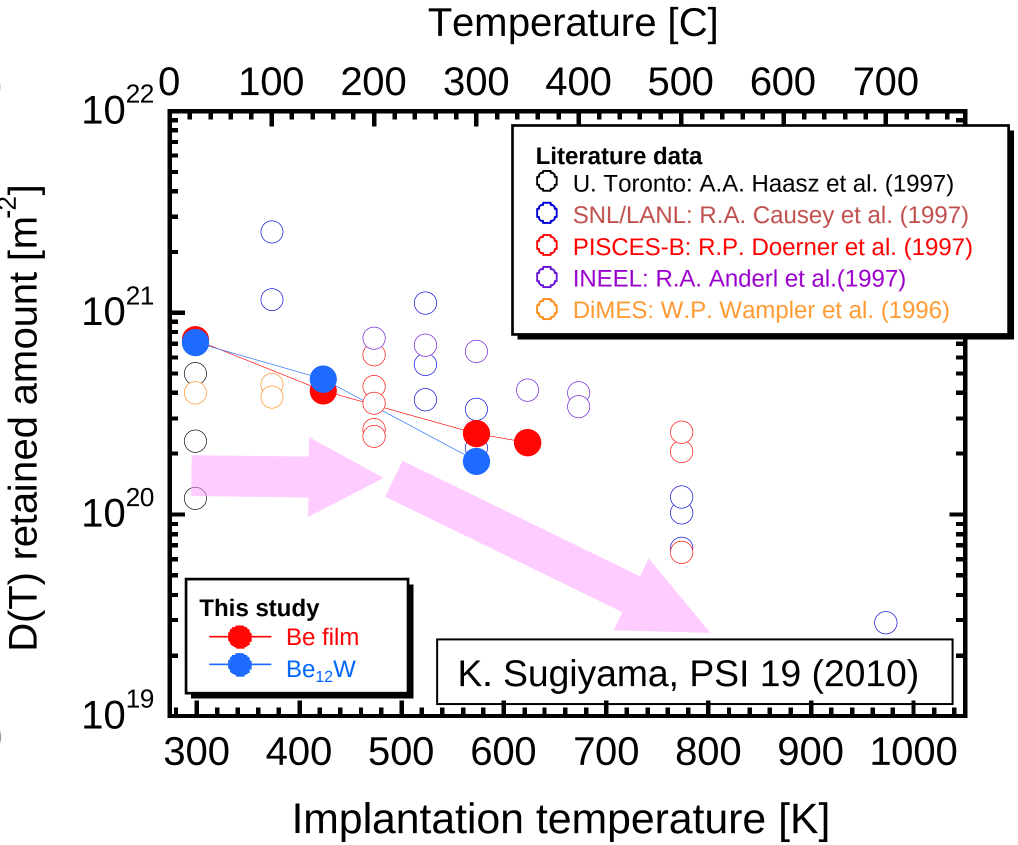
Alloy formation

A) Erosion properties



C. Linsmeir, PSI 19 (2010)

B) Retention properties



K. Sugiyama, PSI 19 (2010)

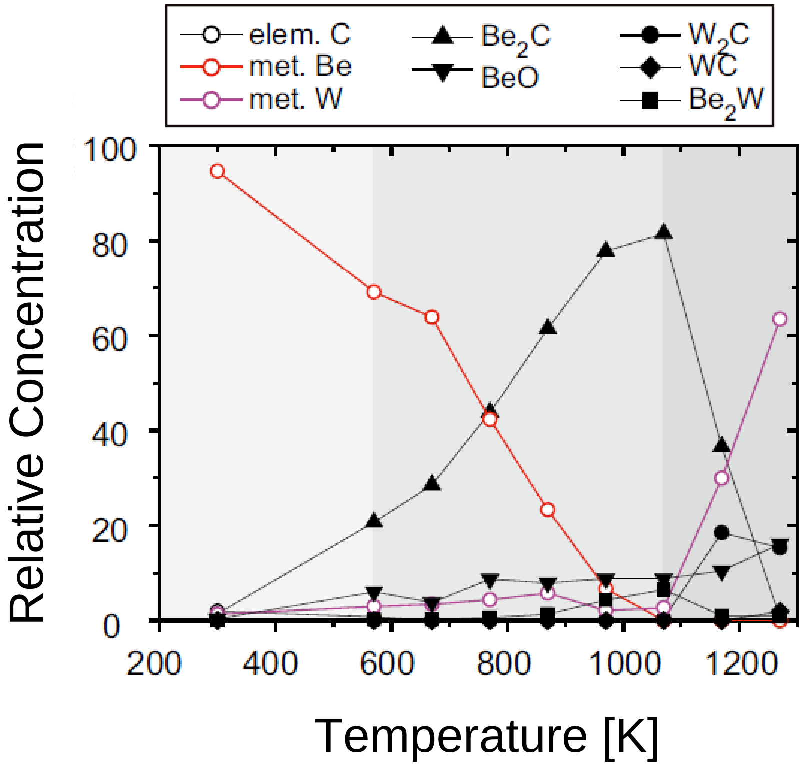
Reduction of melting temperature (but…)

Similar to retention in pure Be

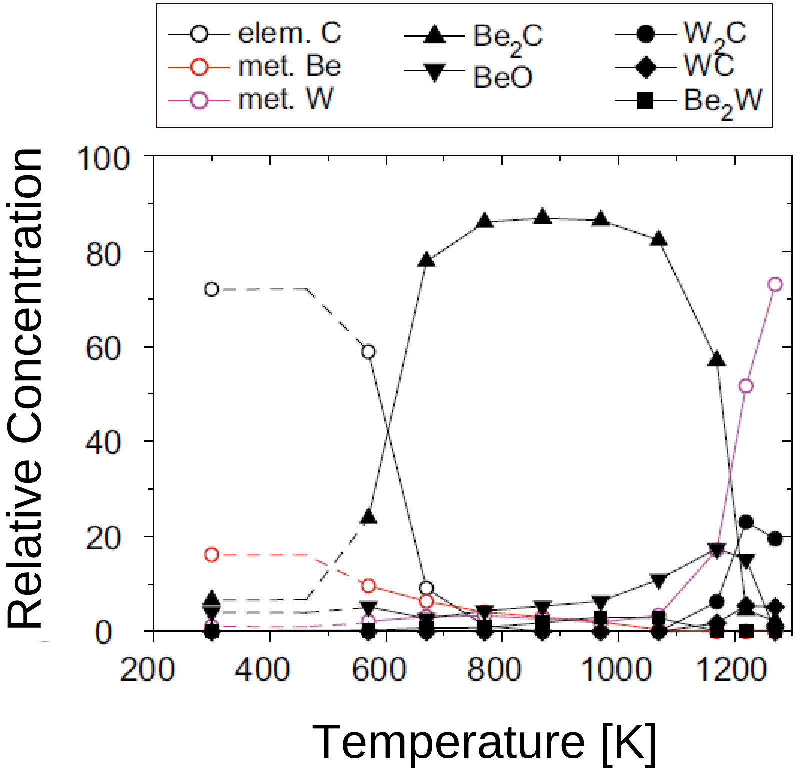
Carbide formation

Which carbide dominates in Be/ C/ W system?

1) Be on C on W substrate



2) C on Be on W substrate



In both cases, Be2C dominates at T<1170K. At T>1170 K tungsten carbides dominate.

F. Kost, PhD thesis, IPP (2009)

Be_2C formation - implication

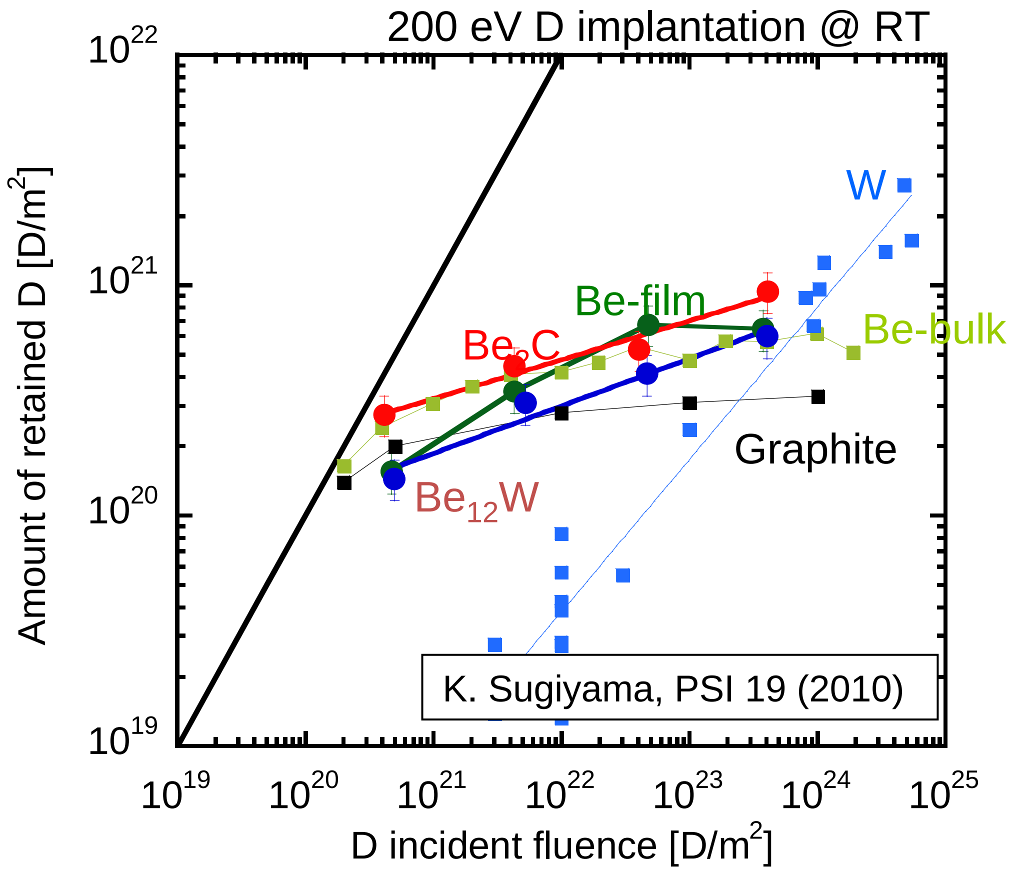
A) Erosion properties

- No chemical sputtering/erosion.

- **In the strike points, Be_2C will not survive due to the high temperature. There is no gain in the reduction of erosion.**

- **In other areas, the formation of Be_2C may be beneficial in trapping carbon thus negating effects of co-deposition. Carbon in Be_2C-state cannot trap hydrogen.**

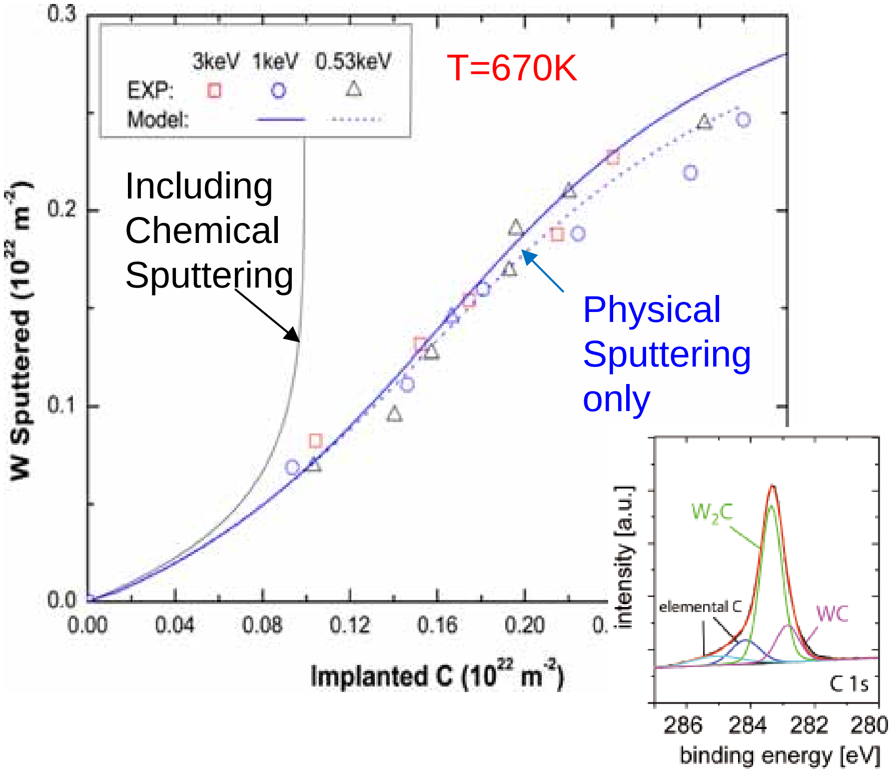
B) Retention properties



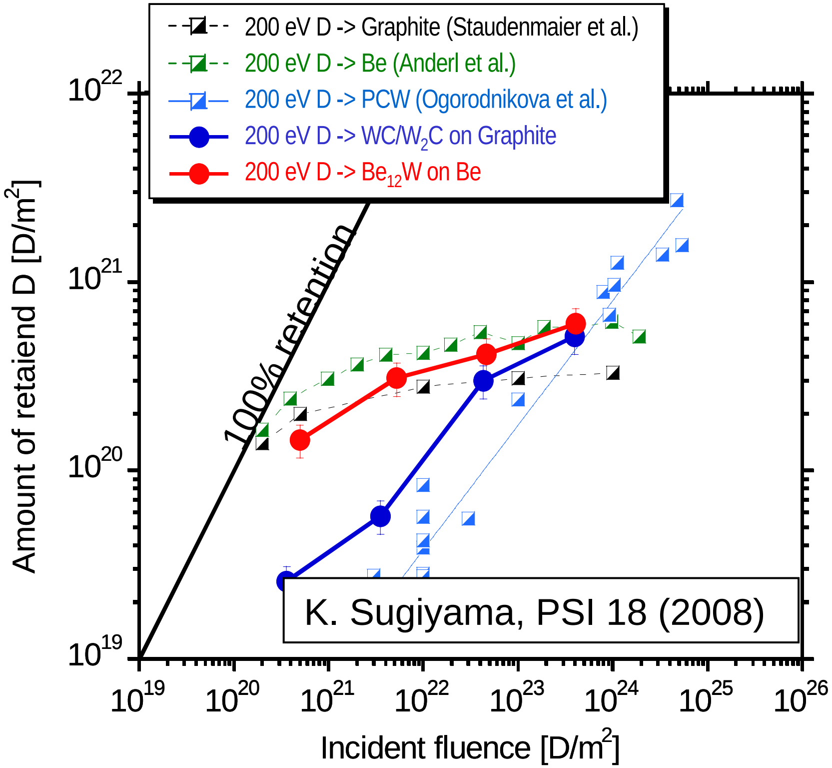
K. Sugiyama, PSI 19 (2010)

W_2C / WC formation - implication

A) Erosion properties



B) Retention properties



K. Sugiyama, PSI 18 (2008)

- No chemical sputtering of C-W mixed material at elevated temperature.
- Tungsten sputter yield will be reduced due to carbon coverage of surface.

- Factor of two increase in retention compared to pure W.
- Follows hydrogen trapping in W with increasing temperature (not Carbon).

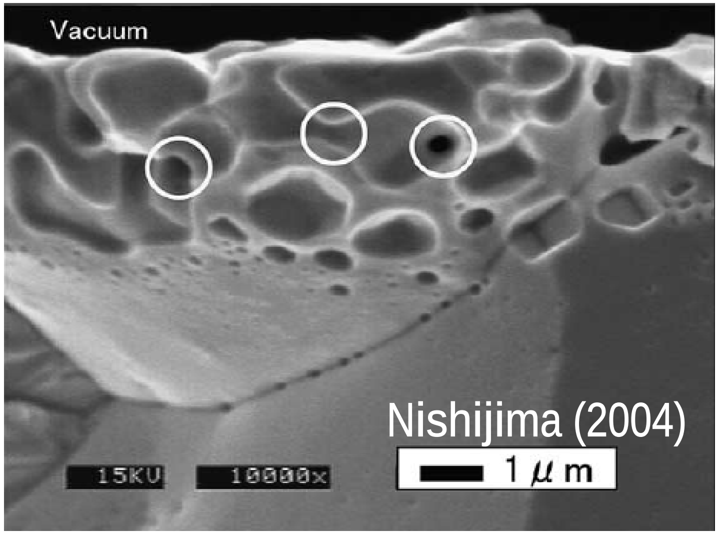
H.T. Lee, PhD thesis, IPP (2009)

Mixed materials - summary

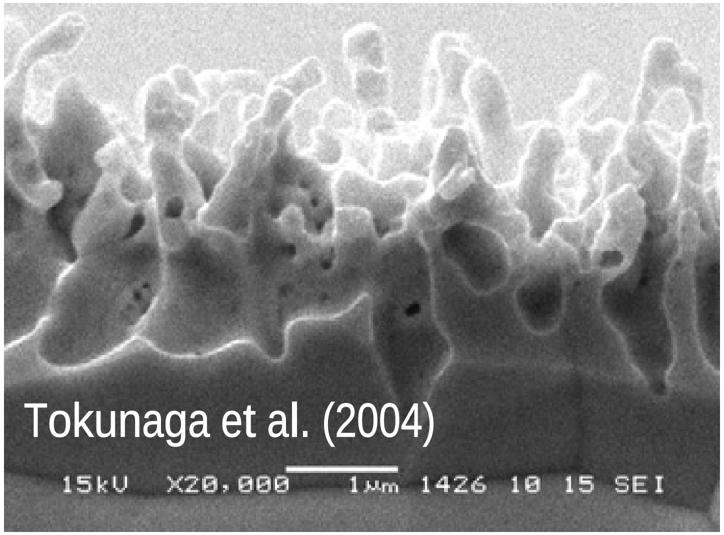
Tentatively, laboratory data indicates that the formation of mixed materials will not significantly alter the favorable properties of each material.

But we have no data regarding mixed material formation coupled with transient heat loads. Possible synergistic effects maybe present.

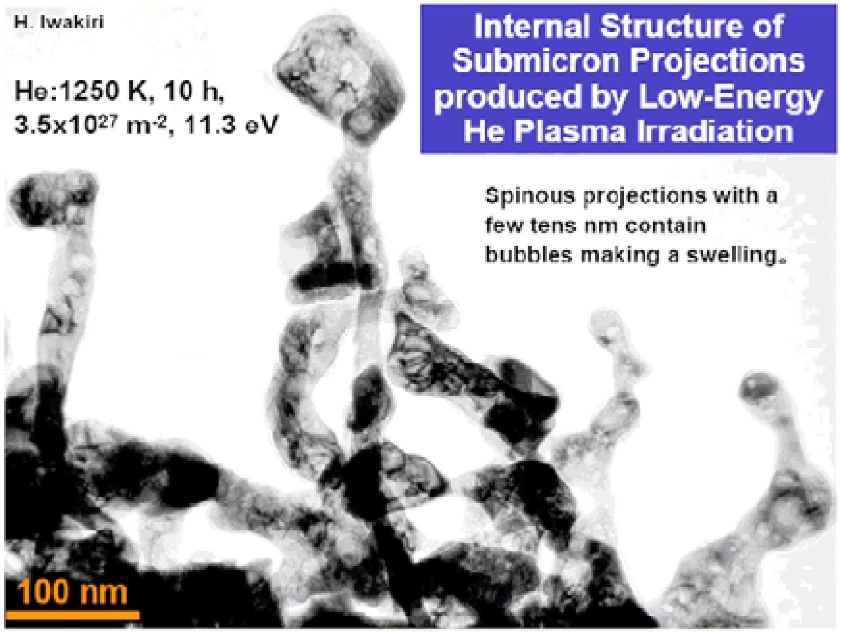
Helium effects - tungsten



Nishijima (2004)



Tokunaga et al. (2004)



H. Iwakiri

He:1250 K, 10 h, 3.5×10^{27} m^{-2}, 11.3 eV

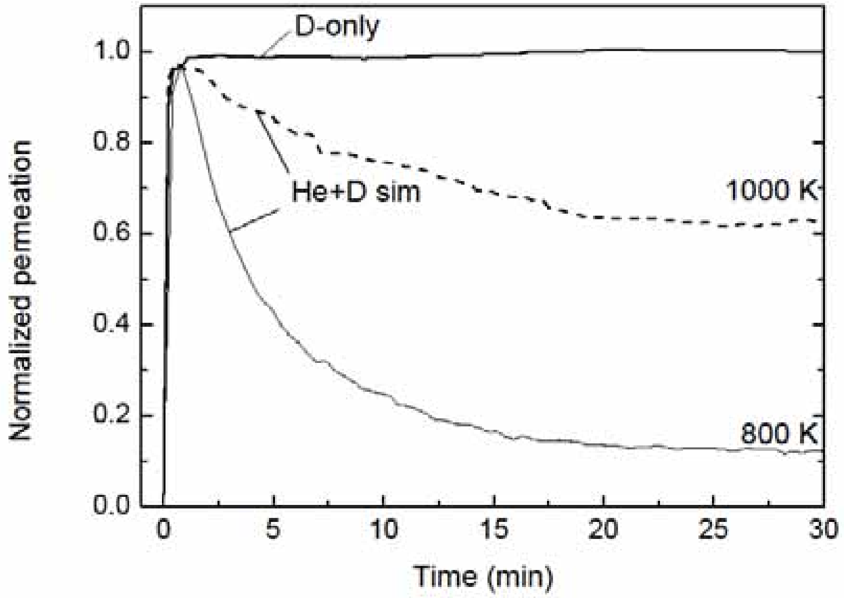
Internal Structure of Submicron Projections produced by Low-Energy He Plasma Irradiation

Spinous projections with a few tens nm contain bubbles making a swelling.

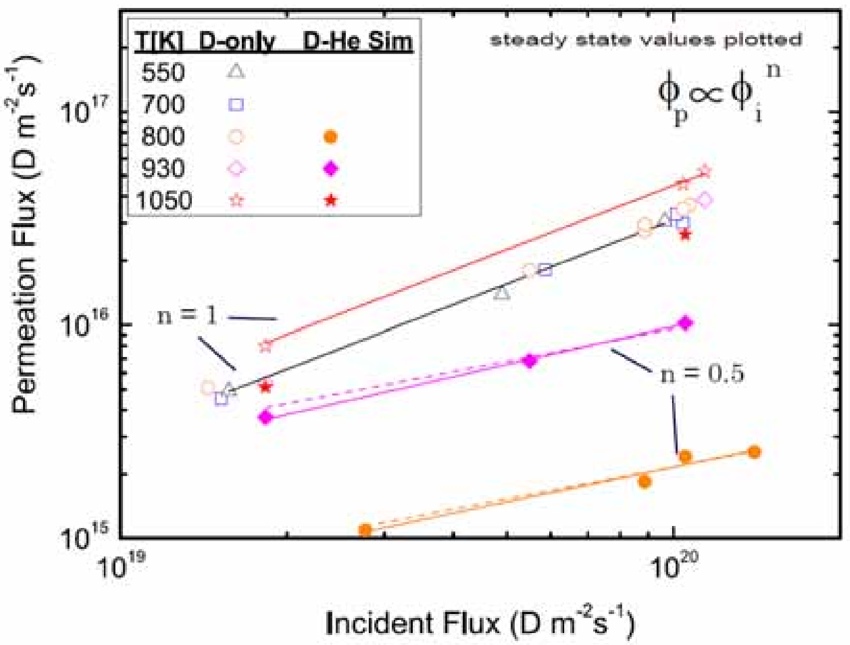
From Prof. Takamura presentation at ITPA sol./div meeting, Toronto, Nov. 2006.

Helium effects - permeation

Helium reduces hydrogen permeation



- The effect is greater with decreasing temperature



- Flux dependence shifts from linear to square root
- Interpreted as increased diffusion at the front surface

H.T. Lee, PSI 19 (2010)

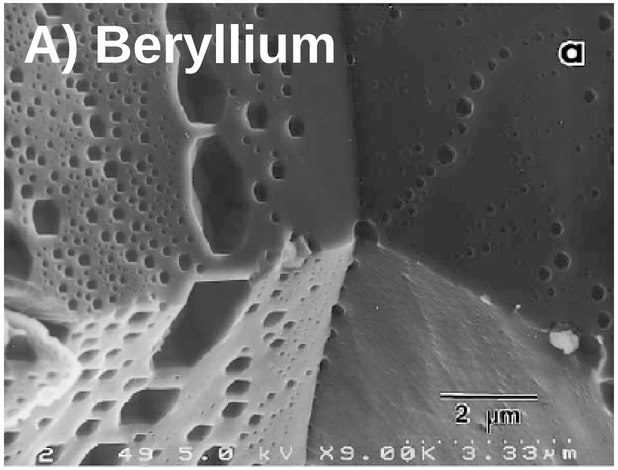
REACTOR CONDITIONS

Expected neutron load

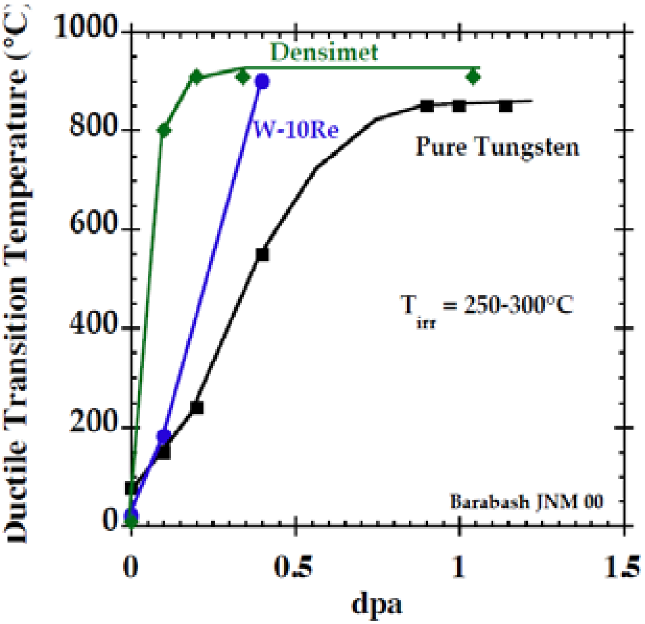
	ITER	DEMO	*Reactor*
Fusion Power	**0.5 GW**	**2-2.5 GW**	***3-4 GW***
Heat Flux (First Wall)	**0.1-0.3 MW/m^2**	**0.5 MW/m^2**	***0.5 MW/m^2***
Neutron Wall Load (First Wall)	**0.78 MW/m^2**	**< 2 MW/m^2**	***~2 MW/m^2***
Integrated wall load (First Wall)	**0.07 MW/m^2 (3 yrs inductive operation)**	**5-8 MW.year/m^2**	***10-15 MW.year/m^2***
Displacement per atom	**<3 dpa**	**50-80 dpa**	***100-150 dpa***
Transmutation product rates (First Wall)	**~10 appm He/dpa ~45 appm H/dpa**	**~10 appm He/dpa ~45 appm H/dpa**	

J. Boutard, EFDA (2008)

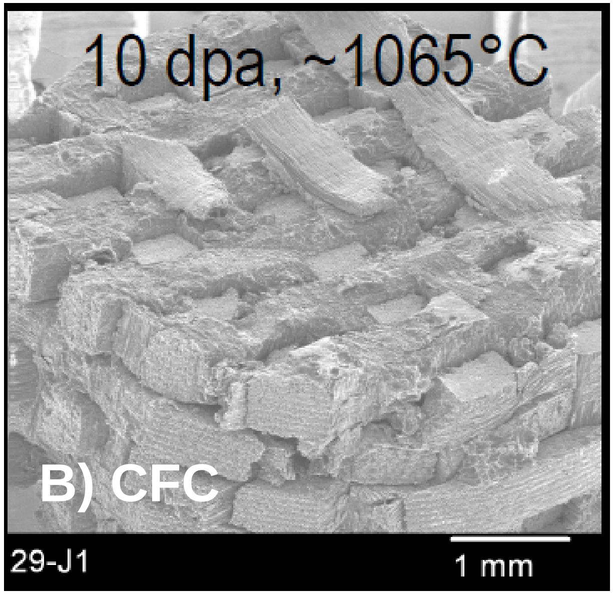
Neutron effects



Embrittlement/ Swelling



Changes in dimension due to swelling perpendicular to basal plane and shrinkage within planes



C) Tungsten

Ductile to Brittle temperature increases

No material developed today fully meets the engineering criteria for reactor operations.

L. Snead, PSI 19 (2010)

どもありがとうございます

Simple schematic of fusion reactor