

Ghassen Yahiaoui

**Film Cooling Investigations  
for Rocket Nozzle Flows with a  
New Test Facility Technique**

Untersuchungen zur Filmkühlung in  
Raketendüsen mit einer neuen  
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Von der Fakultät für Maschinenwesen  
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Berichte aus der Luft- und Raumfahrttechnik

**Ghassen Yahiaoui**

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For my person, the working environment at the laboratory was in general harsh and hostile. Besides a short first period, I was mainly my self instructor and supervisor. Leading this project toward its end despite all encountered difficulties and obstacles required a huge amount of mental strength, sacrifices and endurance. Several attempts to earlier publish the findings of the second part of this work about supersonic film cooling experiments in a scientific journal were internally prevented. I am very proud having succeeded this project while preserving principle, personality as well as confidence. Moreover, I did not resign but I became determined, mentally stronger and forced the outcome despite the negative impacts which I had to accept while taking this path.

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# Abstract

To survive and prevail in a world of high economic competition, it is imperative for industrial manufacturers to enhance their products and push the optimizing capabilities to their limit. To achieve this goal, high technology companies which are operating in the aerospace sector are considerably investing in research and development. For example, rocket engines manufacturer are concerned with designing long-life reusable motors with increased thermodynamic cycle performances and less weight. This allows launcher operators to increase their payload offer and/or accomplish longer missions, making them more competitive. However, increasing the performance of rocket motors is a very challenging task due to the excessive thermal loads imposed to the flow path materials. These materials are generally exposed to gas temperatures exceeding by far the limit of their structural integrity. Thus, to guarantee its survivability, innovative thermal management techniques are necessary. Among these techniques, film cooling is a promising cooling method which has been implemented in several engines such as the Vulcain 2 and J-2X. Film cooling has been studied since early years, however, its mechanics is not yet well understood especially in complex flow regimes. Therefore, it remains an actual research topic where considerable effort in research is invested.

Consequently, the rising demand for reliable supersonic film cooling (SSFC) data for rocket nozzle design applications led to the development of a new type of facility. Most of the former experimental data on SSFC in the literature were gathered in conditions, far from that encountered in real engines and combustion gas generators. Thus, they are not appropriate for the validation of computational tools and the resulting effectiveness correlations are inaccurate in the prediction of film cooling performances. The new experimental platform developed within this thesis work is intended to solve this problem by its capability to nearly match most of these conditions. Furthermore, it allows for the investigation of several engine relevant aerothermodynamic problems such as nozzle flow separation and nozzle exhaust plume interactions etc.

In the new facility, high nozzle reservoir pressures and temperatures are achieved by means of the detonative combustion of a premixed gas in a confined tube. A detonation wave produces a high-enthalpy flow which expands through a nozzle to the desired experimental flow conditions. The facility simulates engine-like flow conditions in a combustion environment for various oxidizer-fuel mixture ratios. It is therefore capable to reproduce realistic gas-to-wall temperature ratios similar to that encountered in combustion chambers, turbine blades, power plants, rocket engines etc. if the wall temperatures are matched. This way, the new short duration flow device affords a simple and cost-effective research tool for harsh flow environment testing in laboratories. Its intermittent nature allows for a relative large number of tests within a short period of time in chamber conditions which are not feasible with conventional wind tunnels. Hence, it will signifi-

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cantly contribute to the understanding of complex rocket nozzle flow phenomena, the validation of numerical tools as well as correlations.

# Kurzfassung

Um in einer Welt mit hohem wirtschaftlichen Wettbewerb bestehen zu können, ist es für industrielle Hersteller unerlässlich, ihre Produkte kontinuierlich zu verbessern und die Optimierungsmöglichkeiten an ihre Grenzen zu bringen. Um dieses Ziel zu erreichen, investieren Hightechunternehmen, die in der Luft- und Raumfahrtbranche tätig sind, erheblich in Forschung und Entwicklung. Zum Beispiel befassen sich Raketentriebwerkshersteller mit der Konstruktion langlebiger wiederverwendbarer Motoren mit erhöhten thermodynamischen Zyklusleistungen und weniger Gewicht. Dies ermöglicht Betreibern von Trägerraketen ihr Nutzlastangebot zu erweitern und/oder längere Missionen durchzuführen, wodurch sie dadurch wettbewerbsfähiger werden. Die Erhöhung der Leistung von Raketenmotoren ist jedoch eine sehr schwierige Aufgabe aufgrund der übermäßigen thermischen Belastungen, denen die Materialien des Strömungswegs ausgesetzt sind. Im Allgemeinen sind diese Materialien Gastemperaturen ausgesetzt, die die Grenze ihrer strukturellen Integrität überschreiten. Um eine zuverlässige Betriebsfähigkeit zu gewährleisten, sind innovative Wärmemanagementmethoden erforderlich. Unter diesen Methoden ist die Filmkühlung eine vielversprechende Kühlstrategie, die in mehreren Motoren wie dem Vulcain 2 und J-2X umgesetzt wurde. Die Filmkühlung wurde seit langer Zeit untersucht, ihre Mechanik ist jedoch insbesondere in komplexen Strömungsumgebungen noch nicht ausreichend verstanden. Daher bleibt es ein aktuelles Forschungsthema, in das erhebliche Forschungsaufwendungen investiert werden.

Folglich führte die steigende Nachfrage nach zuverlässigen Daten der Überschallfilmkühlung für Raketendüsensdesigns zur Entwicklung eines neuen Anlagentyps. Denn die meisten der früheren experimentellen Daten über Überschallfilmkühlung in der Literatur wurden unter Strömungsbedingungen erzeugt, die denen in realen Motoren und Gasgeneratoren nicht entsprechen. Daher sind die für die Validierung von Strömungslöser nicht geeignet und die resultierenden Korrelationen für die Kühleffektivität sind ungenau bei der Vorhersage der Filmkühlungsgüte. Die neue Anlage, die im Rahmen dieser Arbeit entwickelt wurde, soll dieses Problem lösen, indem es die meisten dieser Strömungsbedingungen nahezu emuliert. Darüber hinaus ermöglicht es die Untersuchung von verschiedenen motorrelevanten aerothermodynamischen Problemen, wie z. B. die Strömungsablösung in der Düse als auch Wechselwirkungen im Düsenstrahl usw.

In der neuen Anlage werden hohe Totaldrücke und Temperaturen durch die detonative Verbrennung eines vorgemischten Gases in einem geschlossenen Rohr erreicht. Eine Detonationswelle erzeugt eine Hochenthalpieströmung, die sich durch eine Düse auf die gewünschten experimentellen Strömungsbedingungen einstellt. Die Einrichtung erzeugt motorähnliche Strömungsbedingungen in einer Verbrennungsumgebung für verschiedene Mischungsverhältnisse zwischen Brennstoff und Oxidator. Es ist daher in der Lage, realistische Gas-zu-Wand-Temperaturverhältnisse ähnlich denen in Brennkammern, Turbinenschaufeln, Kraftwerken, Raketentriebwerken usw. zu reproduzieren, wenn die Wandtemperaturen übereinstimmen. Auf diese Weise bietet die neue Kurzzeitströ-

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mungsanlage eine einfache und kosteneffektive Forschungsplattform für Versuche unter extreme Strömungsbedingungen in Laboratorien. Die intermittierende Natur der Anlage erlaubt eine relativ große Anzahl von Tests innerhalb eines kurzen Zeitraums unter Reservoirbedingungen, die mit herkömmlichen Windkanälen nicht möglich sind. Damit wird es wesentlich zum Verständnis komplexer Raketendüsenströmungsphänomene, zur Validierung numerischer Strömungslöser sowie Korrelationsmodelle beitragen.

# Contents

|                                                           |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>List of Figures</b>                                    | <b>viii</b> |
| <b>List of Tables</b>                                     | <b>xii</b>  |
| <b>Nomenclature</b>                                       | <b>xiv</b>  |
| <b>1. Introduction</b>                                    | <b>1</b>    |
| 1.1. Engine Performance and Heat Transfer . . . . .       | 1           |
| 1.2. Thermal Management and Film Cooling . . . . .        | 8           |
| 1.3. Motivation and Objectives . . . . .                  | 9           |
| 1.4. Thesis Outline . . . . .                             | 11          |
| <b>2. Film Cooling Theory</b>                             | <b>12</b>   |
| 2.1. Introduction . . . . .                               | 12          |
| 2.2. Theoretical Approach . . . . .                       | 13          |
| 2.3. Review of Film Cooling Modeling . . . . .            | 15          |
| 2.3.1. Boundary Layer Mixing Model . . . . .              | 16          |
| 2.3.2. Discrete Layer Model . . . . .                     | 22          |
| 2.3.3. Wall-Jet Model . . . . .                           | 23          |
| 2.3.4. Empirical Model . . . . .                          | 24          |
| 2.3.5. Numerical Model . . . . .                          | 25          |
| <b>3. New Facility Development</b>                        | <b>27</b>   |
| 3.1. Introduction . . . . .                               | 27          |
| 3.2. Film Cooling Facilities . . . . .                    | 28          |
| 3.2.1. Long-Duration Facilities . . . . .                 | 29          |
| 3.2.2. Short-Duration Facilities . . . . .                | 29          |
| 3.3. Detonation Fundamentals . . . . .                    | 30          |
| 3.3.1. Ideal Detonation Waves and the C-J State . . . . . | 30          |
| 3.3.2. Taylor-Zeldovich Expansion Waves . . . . .         | 32          |
| 3.3.3. Deflagration-Detonation Transition . . . . .       | 34          |
| 3.4. Design of the New Facility . . . . .                 | 35          |
| 3.4.1. Working Principle . . . . .                        | 35          |
| 3.4.2. Operating Conditions . . . . .                     | 36          |
| 3.4.3. Nozzle Design Aspects . . . . .                    | 47          |
| 3.4.4. Testing Time . . . . .                             | 53          |

|                                                           |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>4. Experimental Setup</b>                              | <b>56</b>  |
| 4.1. Introduction . . . . .                               | 56         |
| 4.2. Facility Overview . . . . .                          | 56         |
| 4.2.1. Detonation Tube . . . . .                          | 56         |
| 4.2.2. Gas Mixture Supply System . . . . .                | 57         |
| 4.2.3. Convergent-Divergent Nozzles . . . . .             | 58         |
| 4.2.4. Catch Tank . . . . .                               | 64         |
| 4.2.5. Settling Chamber . . . . .                         | 64         |
| 4.2.6. Opening Diaphragms . . . . .                       | 66         |
| 4.2.7. Ignition System . . . . .                          | 67         |
| 4.2.8. Coolant Gas Supply System . . . . .                | 67         |
| 4.2.9. Control System . . . . .                           | 70         |
| 4.3. Measurement Techniques . . . . .                     | 70         |
| 4.3.1. Pressure Sensors . . . . .                         | 70         |
| 4.3.2. Temperature Measurement . . . . .                  | 72         |
| 4.3.3. Schlieren Photography . . . . .                    | 73         |
| 4.3.4. Data Acquisition and Signal Conditioning . . . . . | 75         |
| 4.4. Instrumentation of the Facility . . . . .            | 75         |
| 4.4.1. Detonation Tube . . . . .                          | 75         |
| 4.4.2. Measuring Inserts . . . . .                        | 76         |
| 4.5. Data Reduction . . . . .                             | 78         |
| 4.5.1. Stagnation Conditions . . . . .                    | 79         |
| 4.5.2. Nozzle Main Flow . . . . .                         | 79         |
| 4.5.3. Nozzle Coolant Flow . . . . .                      | 80         |
| 4.5.4. Measurement Uncertainties . . . . .                | 81         |
| 4.6. Test Procedure . . . . .                             | 82         |
| <b>5. Results and Discussion</b>                          | <b>84</b>  |
| 5.1. Detonation Tube Performance . . . . .                | 85         |
| 5.2. Tube with Attached Nozzle . . . . .                  | 89         |
| 5.2.1. Reservoir Conditions . . . . .                     | 89         |
| 5.2.2. Main Flow Calibration . . . . .                    | 90         |
| 5.3. Tests with Foreign Gas Injection . . . . .           | 101        |
| 5.3.1. Influence of the Blowing Ratio . . . . .           | 104        |
| 5.3.2. Influence of the Stagnation Conditions . . . . .   | 107        |
| 5.3.3. Influence of the Slot Height . . . . .             | 110        |
| 5.3.4. Influence of the Coolant Gas Properties . . . . .  | 110        |
| 5.3.5. Influence of the Expansion Angle . . . . .         | 111        |
| 5.3.6. Influence of the Coolant Mach Number . . . . .     | 114        |
| 5.3.7. Correlation of the Results . . . . .               | 117        |
| <b>6. Conclusions</b>                                     | <b>125</b> |
| 6.1. Summary . . . . .                                    | 125        |
| 6.2. Outlook . . . . .                                    | 127        |
| <b>References</b>                                         | <b>129</b> |

|                                            |            |
|--------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>A. Appendix</b>                         | <b>143</b> |
| A.1. Jump Conditions                       | 143        |
| A.1.1. The One- $\gamma$ Model             | 143        |
| A.1.2. The Strong Detonation Approximation | 143        |
| A.1.3. Isentropic Reservoir Conditions     | 144        |
| A.2. Hot-Flow Transport Properties         | 147        |
| A.3. Technical Details                     | 148        |
| A.3.1. Sensor Details                      | 148        |
| A.3.2. Data Reduction: Coolant Flow        | 150        |
| A.3.3. Engineering Drawings                | 153        |

# List of Figures

|                                                                                                                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1.1. Launch of Ariane 5 flight 112. . . . .                                                                                       | 2  |
| 1.2. The liquid propellant rocket engine. . . . .                                                                                 | 3  |
| 1.3. Specific impulse for different liquid propellant mixtures. . . . .                                                           | 3  |
| 1.4. Relevant cooling techniques used in LREs. . . . .                                                                            | 9  |
| 2.1. Film cooling concept of Vulcain 2. . . . .                                                                                   | 12 |
| 2.2. The boundary layer of an ideal film cooled wall. . . . .                                                                     | 13 |
| 2.3. The boundary layer model showing the possible flow regions past a blowing slot. . . . .                                      | 16 |
| 2.4. The heat conduction model without mixing. . . . .                                                                            | 22 |
| 3.1. The subscale combustion chamber (BKE) with nozzle extension at the test bench P8. . . . .                                    | 28 |
| 3.2. The production of a high-enthalpy combustion nozzle flow by means of a gaseous detonation. . . . .                           | 28 |
| 3.3. Shadowgraph of a detonation front. . . . .                                                                                   | 30 |
| 3.4. Control volume over a combustion wave. . . . .                                                                               | 31 |
| 3.5. Rankine-Hugoniot curve and Rayleigh lines in the $(p, 1/\rho)$ plane . . . . .                                               | 32 |
| 3.6. Space-time diagram of the flow field behind a propagating detonation wave in a closed tube. . . . .                          | 33 |
| 3.7. Typical $x - t$ diagram of the ideal wave system in the detonation tube. . . . .                                             | 35 |
| 3.8. Sketch of velocities across an incident detonation and a reflected shock in the stationary reference frame. . . . .          | 37 |
| 3.9. Facility operating reservoir conditions (without damping section). . . . .                                                   | 40 |
| 3.10. Schematic showing the pressure profile inside the tube during the propagation of a detonation wave. . . . .                 | 43 |
| 3.11. Unit Reynolds/Mach number chart. . . . .                                                                                    | 45 |
| 3.12. Unit Reynolds number at the injection slot position for different operating conditions. . . . .                             | 45 |
| 3.13. Unit Reynolds number at the injection slot for various ROFs. . . . .                                                        | 46 |
| 3.14. Post-reflected pressure attenuation using a 3-m-long damping section. . . . .                                               | 47 |
| 3.15. The time dependent combustion process during a test. . . . .                                                                | 48 |
| 3.16. Variation with time of the reservoir conditions and the local convective heat transfer due to the blow-down effect. . . . . | 49 |
| 3.17. Viscous effects at the subscale nozzle throat for a given range of stagnation conditions and $d_t = 16$ mm. . . . .         | 50 |
| 3.18. Effect of the nozzle throat section size on the heat fluxes at $\mathcal{E} = 1$ for various stagnation conditions. . . . . | 52 |
| 3.19. Nominal test-time chart for a given set of initial pressures and various ROFs. . . . .                                      | 54 |

|                                                                                                                                                                        |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 3.20. Calculated testing time of the detonation tube without and with the attachment of a 3 m damping section for a given set of initial pressures. . . . .            | 54 |
| 4.1. Sketch showing the main components of the experimental facility. . . . .                                                                                          | 57 |
| 4.2. Schematic of the gas mixture supply system. . . . .                                                                                                               | 58 |
| 4.3. Sketch of the conical nozzle contour. . . . .                                                                                                                     | 58 |
| 4.4. Schematic of the planar nozzle design and the test section showing the main features. . . . .                                                                     | 60 |
| 4.5. Main components of the planar nozzle. . . . .                                                                                                                     | 61 |
| 4.6. Setup with the conical nozzle showing the main features. . . . .                                                                                                  | 62 |
| 4.7. Cooling gas injection concept of the conical nozzle. . . . .                                                                                                      | 63 |
| 4.8. Round-to-square transition reservoir. . . . .                                                                                                                     | 65 |
| 4.9. Sketch showing the working principle of the cooling gas supply chain. . . . .                                                                                     | 68 |
| 4.10. Start-up time of the coolant plenum pressure $p_{0c}$ for different gases. . . . .                                                                               | 70 |
| 4.11. Example of measured pressures in the cooling gas (He) supply chain. . . . .                                                                                      | 70 |
| 4.12. Toepler Z-type optical schlieren set-up. . . . .                                                                                                                 | 74 |
| 4.13. Schlieren photograph of a reference run without coolant injection. . . . .                                                                                       | 74 |
| 4.14. Sensor taps of the upper nozzle wall, $\mathcal{E}$ values for $\alpha = 15^\circ$ and $s = 0.5$ mm. . . . .                                                     | 77 |
| 4.15. A Pitot probe for nozzle flow calibration. . . . .                                                                                                               | 78 |
| 4.16. Sketch showing the instrumentation of the cooling nozzle chamber. . . . .                                                                                        | 79 |
| 4.17. Sequential logic of the signal timing. . . . .                                                                                                                   | 83 |
| 4.18. Test configuration with the instrumented planar nozzle showing the main components. . . . .                                                                      | 83 |
| 5.1. Test configuration with closed tube ends. . . . .                                                                                                                 | 85 |
| 5.2. Measured and calculated stagnation pressures: 10 m-long tube without damping section, $p_1 = 18$ bar, and $\text{ROF} = 8$ . . . . .                              | 87 |
| 5.3. Measured and calculated stagnation pressures: 10 m tube without damping section, $p_1 = 5.99$ bar, and $\text{ROF} = 6$ . . . . .                                 | 87 |
| 5.4. Measured pressure histories: closed tube setup without damping section, $p_1 = 6.01$ bar, and $\text{ROF} = 8$ . . . . .                                          | 88 |
| 5.5. Measured pressure histories: closed tube setup with damping section, $p_1 = 6.11$ bar, and $\text{ROF} = 8$ . . . . .                                             | 88 |
| 5.6. Test setup for the attached nozzle configuration. . . . .                                                                                                         | 89 |
| 5.7. Nozzle reservoir pressures for different initial conditions. . . . .                                                                                              | 89 |
| 5.8. Tube without damping section: The reflection of the reflected shock wave at the nozzle throat. Core-flow condition II-8. . . . .                                  | 90 |
| 5.9. Time variation of pressure $p_i$ in the detonation tube and $p_0$ at the nozzle transition plenum. Core-flow condition II-8. . . . .                              | 91 |
| 5.10. Time variation of static pressure at $x = 73.5$ mm downstream the nozzle throat. Core-flow condition II-8. Planar nozzle: $\alpha = 15^\circ$ . . . . .          | 92 |
| 5.11. Mach number at the injection slot position, $\text{ROF} = 8$ . Planar nozzle: $\alpha = 15^\circ$ . . . . .                                                      | 92 |
| 5.12. Variation with time of the measured heat fluxes at several nozzle locations. Core-flow condition I-8. Planar nozzle: $s = 0.5$ mm, $\alpha = 10^\circ$ . . . . . | 94 |
| 5.13. Reference heat fluxes behind the injection slot for different reservoir conditions. Planar nozzle: $\alpha = 15^\circ$ , $s = 0.5$ mm. . . . .                   | 96 |
| 5.14. Reference heat fluxes behind the injection slot for different reservoir conditions. Planar nozzle: $\alpha = 10^\circ$ , $s = 0.5$ mm. . . . .                   | 96 |
| 5.15. Variation with time of the static pressures at several nozzle locations. Core-flow condition V-8. . . . .                                                        | 97 |
| 5.16. Averaged static pressure over the steady state period. Core-flow condition V-8. . . . .                                                                          | 97 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 5.17. Displacement thickness $\delta^*$ in the test section of the conical nozzle. . . . .                                                                                                                                                                       | 99  |
| 5.18. Nozzle flow acceleration parameter $K_p$ for various reservoir conditions. . . . .                                                                                                                                                                         | 100 |
| 5.19. Reference heat fluxes for different reservoir conditions. Conical nozzle. . . . .                                                                                                                                                                          | 100 |
| 5.20. Static pressure of the hot gas at the coolant exit plane. Core-flow condition II-8.<br>Planar nozzle: $\alpha = 10^\circ$ , $s = 0.5$ mm. . . . .                                                                                                          | 101 |
| 5.21. Infrared images recorded during a test with helium injection $F = 1.13$ . Planar<br>nozzle: $\alpha = 10^\circ$ , $s = 0.5$ mm. . . . .                                                                                                                    | 102 |
| 5.22. Heat-fluxes without and with helium injection. Core-flow condition I-8. Planar<br>nozzle: $\alpha = 15^\circ$ , $s = 0.5$ mm. . . . .                                                                                                                      | 104 |
| 5.23. Cooling efficiency with helium injection. Core-flow condition I-8. Planar nozzle:<br>$\alpha = 15^\circ$ , $s = 0.5$ mm. For matched static pressures at the ejection plane, $F \approx 1.6$ . . . . .                                                     | 105 |
| 5.24. Cooling efficiency with nitrogen injection. Core-flow condition II-8. Planar nozzle:<br>$\alpha = 15^\circ$ , $s = 1.5$ mm. For matched static pressures at the ejection plane, $F \approx 5.2$ . . . . .                                                  | 106 |
| 5.25. Cooling efficiency with helium injection. Core-flow condition II-8. Conical nozzle,<br>$s = 0.564$ mm. For matched static pressures at the ejection plane, $F \approx 1.4$ . . . . .                                                                       | 106 |
| 5.26. Tests at different Reynolds numbers, $F = 0.31$ (He injection). Planar nozzle:<br>$\alpha = 15^\circ$ , $s = 0.5$ mm. . . . .                                                                                                                              | 107 |
| 5.27. Flow acceleration parameter deduced for different reservoir conditions, $F = 0.31$<br>(He injection). Planar nozzle: $\alpha = 15^\circ$ , $s = 1.5$ mm . . . . .                                                                                          | 108 |
| 5.28. Effect of slot height for nearly equal injection rates $F \cdot s$ (helium). Core-flow<br>condition II-8. Planar nozzle: $\alpha = 15^\circ$ , solid lines: $s = 1.5$ mm and dash-dotted<br>lines: $s = 0.5$ mm. . . . .                                   | 111 |
| 5.29. Heat flux variation downstream the blowing slot for different cooling gases.<br>Core-flow condition I-8. Planar nozzle: $\alpha = 15^\circ$ , $s = 0.5$ mm. . . . .                                                                                        | 112 |
| 5.30. Cooling efficiencies downstream the blowing slot for different cooling gases.<br>Core-flow condition I-8. Planar nozzle: $\alpha = 15^\circ$ , $s = 0.5$ mm. . . . .                                                                                       | 112 |
| 5.31. Static pressure distribution downstream the injection slot. Core-flow condition I-8.<br>Planar nozzle: $\alpha = 15^\circ$ , $s = 0.5$ mm. . . . .                                                                                                         | 113 |
| 5.32. Flow acceleration parameter $K_p$ past the blowing slot for two different expansion<br>angles without film injection. Core-flow condition I-8. Planar nozzle: $s = 0.5$ mm. . . . .                                                                        | 114 |
| 5.33. Comparison between cooling efficiencies measured with two different expansion<br>angles, $10^\circ$ and $15^\circ$ . Core-flow condition I-8. . . . .                                                                                                      | 115 |
| 5.34. Coolant Mach number effect for nearly matched mass flow rates. Core-flow<br>condition II-8, $s_1 : Ma_c = 2.03$ and $s_2 : Ma_c = 1.85$ . . . . .                                                                                                          | 116 |
| 5.35. Cooling efficiency for different cooling gases correlated with Goldstein's correlation<br>parameter $\xi_G^*$ , Eq. (2.18). Core-flow condition I-8. Planar nozzle: $\alpha = 15^\circ$ ,<br>$s = 0.5$ mm. . . . .                                         | 119 |
| 5.36. Cooling efficiency for He injection correlated with Goldstein's correlation parameter<br>$\xi_G^*$ , Eq. (2.18). Core-flow condition II-8, conical nozzle. . . . .                                                                                         | 119 |
| 5.37. Cooling efficiency for He injection correlated with Goldstein's corrected correlation<br>parameter for variable flow properties, Eq. (2.21). Core-flow condition II-8, conical<br>nozzle. . . . .                                                          | 120 |
| 5.38. Cooling efficiency for He injection correlated with Carlson's correlation parameter,<br>Eq. (2.24). Core-flow condition II-8, conical nozzle. . . . .                                                                                                      | 121 |
| 5.39. Cooling efficiency for different cooling gases, correlated with the ratios of heat<br>capacity, thermal conductivity and Prandtl number $(k_e Pr_e) / (k_e Pr_e)$ . Core-flow<br>condition I-8. Planar nozzle: $\alpha = 15^\circ$ , $s = 0.5$ mm. . . . . | 123 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 5.40. Cooling efficiency for He injection correlated with Goldstein's corrected correlation parameter for variable flow properties, Eq. (2.21), and the factor $(k_c Pr_c) / (k_e Pr_e)$ . Core-flow condition II-8, conical nozzle. . . . . | 123 |
| 5.41. Cooling efficiency for He injection correlated with Carlson's correlation parameter, Eq. (2.24), corrected with the factor $(k_c Pr_c) / (k_e Pr_e)$ . Core-flow condition II-8, conical nozzle. . . . .                               | 124 |
| A.1. Calibration curve of a 7bar Kulite pressure sensor. . . . .                                                                                                                                                                             | 149 |
| A.2. Schematic of the dashboard showing the piping concept of the facility. . . . .                                                                                                                                                          | 152 |
| A.3. Isometric view of the mounted planar nozzle. . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                    | 154 |
| A.4. A cut view of the conical nozzle showing the main components. . . . .                                                                                                                                                                   | 155 |

# List of Tables

|                                                                                                                                                         |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1.1. Operating conditions of some LOX/LH <sub>2</sub> rocket engines. . . . .                                                                           | 4   |
| 3.1. Calculated pressures and temperatures of the different states in the tube for various initial conditions. . . . .                                  | 41  |
| 3.2. Calculated stagnation condition for several initial gas states. . . . .                                                                            | 41  |
| 3.3. Chamber hot-flow composition for two different stagnation conditions. . . . .                                                                      | 41  |
| 3.4. Chamber hot-flow composition and properties for different ROF's. . . . .                                                                           | 42  |
| 3.5. Calculated chamber conditions for different gas mixtures of commonly used fuels. . . . .                                                           | 42  |
| 3.6. Calculated mainstream quantities at the selected injection plane at $\mathcal{E} = 14$ for various reservoir conditions. . . . .                   | 44  |
| 3.7. Comparison between relevant dimensionless numbers for flow similarity of a realistic and a subscale rocket nozzle at different stations. . . . .   | 52  |
| 4.1. Geometric data of the tested convergent-divergent nozzles. . . . .                                                                                 | 59  |
| 4.2. Coolant nozzle main characteristics for tests with the planar nozzle. . . . .                                                                      | 60  |
| 4.3. Coolant nozzle main characteristics for tests with the conical nozzle. . . . .                                                                     | 63  |
| 4.4. Cooling gas transport properties at ambient conditions. . . . .                                                                                    | 81  |
| 5.1. Computed stagnation conditions for various initial states. . . . .                                                                                 | 86  |
| 5.2. Measured stagnation conditions for various initial states at ambient temperature. . . . .                                                          | 86  |
| 5.3. Film cooling parameters for the tests with the conical nozzle shown in Fig. 5.34. . . . .                                                          | 116 |
| A.1. Calculated detonation velocities and stagnation conditions for various initial states of GOX/GH <sub>2</sub> mixtures, $T_1 = 295$ K. . . . .      | 145 |
| A.2. Calculated detonation velocities and stagnation conditions for various initial states of GOX/GH <sub>2</sub> mixtures, $T_1 = 395$ K. . . . .      | 146 |
| A.3. Polynomial coefficients for temperature dependent transport properties and various stagnation conditions. Temperature range: 400 – 3800 K. . . . . | 147 |
| A.4. Inverse coefficients for type E thermocouples. . . . .                                                                                             | 148 |
| A.5. Coolant flow quantities at the blowing slot for experiment performed with Insert                                                                   |     |
| 1. Isentropic method: $Ma_c = 2.03$ , $T_{0c} = 295$ K. . . . .                                                                                         | 151 |

# Nomenclature

## Latin symbols

---

|              |                          |                                                                                        |
|--------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| $A$          | [m <sup>2</sup> ]        | Cross-sectional area                                                                   |
| $a$          | [m/s]                    | Speed of sound                                                                         |
| $b_n$        | [m]                      | Nozzle width                                                                           |
| $c^*$        | [m/s]                    | Characteristic velocity                                                                |
| $c_D$        | [−]                      | Nozzle discharge coefficient, $c_D = \dot{m}_r / \dot{m}_{is}$                         |
| $c$          | [−]                      | A constant                                                                             |
| $C_f$        | [−]                      | Low-speed adiabatic skin-friction coefficient, $2\tau_w / \rho_e u_e^2$                |
| $c_p$        | [J / (kg K)]             | Specific heat at constant pressure, $\gamma R / (\gamma - 1)$                          |
| $d$          | [m]                      | Hydraulic diameter of circular duct                                                    |
| $F$          | [−]                      | Blowing ratio, $F = \rho_c u_c / \rho_e u_e$                                           |
| $g_0$        | [m <sup>2</sup> /s]      | Gravitational acceleration at earth's surface, $g_0 \approx 9.81 \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ |
| $h$          | [J/kg]                   | Specific enthalpy                                                                      |
| $h^0$        | [J/kg]                   | Heat of reaction extrapolated to zero temperature                                      |
| $h$          | [m]                      | Nozzle height                                                                          |
| $h_g$        | [W / (m <sup>2</sup> K)] | Convective heat-transfer coefficient of the bulk-flow                                  |
| $I_{sp}$     | [s]                      | Specific impulse                                                                       |
| $K_p$        | [−]                      | Acceleration parameter, Eq. (5.3)                                                      |
| $k$          | [W / (m K)]              | Thermal conductivity                                                                   |
| $L$          | [m]                      | Length                                                                                 |
| $L_n$        | [m]                      | Length of divergent nozzle section                                                     |
| $Ma$         | [−]                      | Mach number                                                                            |
| $Ma_C$       | [−]                      | Convective Mach number, $Ma_C = (u_e - u_c) / (a_e + a_c)$                             |
| $\dot{m}$    | [kg/s]                   | Mass flow rate                                                                         |
| $Nu$         | [−]                      | Nusselt number, Eq. (1.7)                                                              |
| $Pr$         | [−]                      | Molecular Prandtl number, $Pr = \nu / \alpha$                                          |
| $p$          | [Pa]                     | Pressure                                                                               |
| $Q$          | [−]                      | Non-dimensional heat of reaction                                                       |
| $\mathbf{q}$ | [J/kg]                   | Heat of combustion                                                                     |
| $\dot{q}$    | [W/m <sup>2</sup> ]      | Heat flux density                                                                      |
| $R$          | [mm]                     | Radius from nozzle axis to wall                                                        |
| $R$          | [J / (Kg K)]             | Mixture specific gas constant                                                          |
| $\Re$        | [J / (mol K)]            | Universal gas constant, $\Re = 8.314 \text{ J/mol K}$                                  |
| $Re$         | [1/m]                    | Unit Reynolds number                                                                   |
| $Re_\theta$  | [−]                      | Reynolds number based on momentum thickness, $u_e \theta / \nu_e$                      |

|             |                   |                                                                    |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| $Re_c$      | [—]               | Coolant film Reynolds number based on slot height, $u_c s / \nu_c$ |
| $Re_\Delta$ | [—]               | Reynolds number based on energy thickness, $u_e \Delta / \nu_e$    |
| $Re_d$      | [—]               | Reynolds number based on hydraulic diameter, $u_e d / \nu_e$       |
| $Re_x$      | [—]               | Reynolds number based on distance along wall, $u_e x / \nu_e$      |
| $r$         | [—]               | Adiabatic recovery factor                                          |
| $r_c$       | [mm]              | Radius of axial curvature at the throat                            |
| $S$         | [K]               | Sutherland constant                                                |
| $St$        | [—]               | Stanton number, Eq. (1.8)                                          |
| $s$         | [J/(kg K)]        | Specific entropy                                                   |
| $s$         | [mm]              | Blowing slot height                                                |
| $T$         | [K]               | Temperature                                                        |
| $T_{aw}$    | [K]               | Adiabatic wall temperature                                         |
| $T_r$       | [K]               | Bulk-flow recovery temperature                                     |
| $T_{ref}$   | [K]               | Reference temperature                                              |
| Tu          | [—]               | Turbulence intensity                                               |
| $t$         | [s]               | Time                                                               |
| $t_s$       | [mm]              | Splitter thickness                                                 |
| $u, v, w$   | [m/s]             | Mean velocity components in $x$ , $y$ and $z$ directions           |
| $V_v$       | [m <sup>3</sup> ] | Volume of vacuum tank                                              |
| $\bar{W}$   | [kg/kmol]         | Mixture molecular weight                                           |
| $W$         | [kg/kmol]         | Molecular weight                                                   |
| $w$         | [mm]              | Cooled width (slot circumference in cylindrical duct)              |
| $X_s$       | [mm]              | Virtual streamwise length of the boundary layer, Eq. (2.20)        |
| $X_c$       | [mm]              | Virtual streamwise length of the boundary layer, Eq. (2.25)        |
| $X$         | [—]               | Mass fraction of species                                           |
| $x$         | [m]               | Axial distance to throat                                           |
| $x_e$       | [m]               | Effective distance, Eq. (1.22)                                     |
| $x_s$       | [m]               | Distance along wall originating at the blowing slot                |
| $y$         | [m]               | Normal wall distance                                               |
| $z$         | [—]               | Dimensionless enthalpy, Eq. (1.24)                                 |

## Greek symbols

---

|               |                                            |                                                                                              |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| $\alpha$      | [ $\mu\text{V/K}$ ]                        | Seebeck coefficient                                                                          |
| $\alpha$      | [deg]                                      | Nozzle expansion half-angle                                                                  |
| $\alpha_d$    | [m <sup>2</sup> /s]                        | Thermal diffusivity, $\alpha_d = k / (\rho c_p)$                                             |
| $\beta$       | [W $\sqrt{\text{s}}$ /(K m <sup>2</sup> )] | Thermal effusivity, $\beta = \sqrt{\rho c k}$                                                |
| $\Gamma$      | [—]                                        | A gas constant defined by Eq. (1.2)                                                          |
| $\mathcal{E}$ | [—]                                        | Expansion area ratio, $\mathcal{E} = A/A_t$                                                  |
| $\epsilon$    | [—]                                        | Emission coefficient                                                                         |
| $\omega$      | [—]                                        | Exponent of temperature dependence of viscosity                                              |
| $\sigma$      | [W/(m <sup>2</sup> K <sup>4</sup> )]       | Stefan-Boltzmann constant, $\sigma = 5.670367(13) \cdot 10^{-8} \text{ W/(m}^2 \text{ K}^4)$ |
| $\gamma$      | [—]                                        | Isentropic exponent, $\gamma = c_p/c_v$                                                      |
| $\tau$        | [s]                                        | Nominal test time                                                                            |
| $\Delta$      | [mm]                                       | Boundary-layer energy thickness                                                              |
| $\delta$      | [mm]                                       | Boundary-layer thickness                                                                     |
| $\delta^*$    | [mm]                                       | Displacement thickness                                                                       |
| $\theta$      | [mm]                                       | Momentum thickness                                                                           |

|             |                      |                                            |
|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| $\mu$       | [Pa s]               | Dynamic viscosity                          |
| $\nu$       | [m <sup>2</sup> /s]  | Kinematic viscosity, $\mu/\rho$            |
| $\phi_i$    | [—]                  | Constant defined by Eq. (3.54)             |
| $\varphi_m$ | [—]                  | Turbulent mixing coefficient               |
| $\rho$      | [kg/m <sup>3</sup> ] | Density (mass per unit volume)             |
| $\eta$      | [—]                  | Cooling efficiency                         |
| $\xi$       | [—]                  | Correlation parameter                      |
| $\pi$       | [—]                  | Pythagorean constant, $\pi = 3.14159\dots$ |

## Subscripts

---

|       |                                                                      |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| $a$   | Ambient condition                                                    |
| $aw$  | Adiabatic wall condition                                             |
| $bl$  | Boundary layer                                                       |
| $c$   | Coolant film at point of injection, with coolant injection           |
| $cc$  | Combustion chamber                                                   |
| $CJ$  | Chapman-Jouguet state                                                |
| $d$   | Detonation wave                                                      |
| $e$   | Quantity at the hot-flow boundary layer edge or nozzle exit plane    |
| $h$   | Hot-gas                                                              |
| $hm$  | Hot-gas mixed with coolant film                                      |
| $i$   | Species index                                                        |
| $iw$  | Isothermal wall condition                                            |
| $nc$  | Without cooling                                                      |
| $r$   | Reflected shock wave                                                 |
| $ref$ | Reference condition or value                                         |
| $s$   | Injection slot                                                       |
| $T$   | Detonation tube                                                      |
| $t$   | Nozzle throat                                                        |
| $w$   | Wall value                                                           |
| 0     | Stagnation value                                                     |
| 1     | Initial, undisturbed region in the detonation tube                   |
| 2     | Region immediately behind detonation wave after reaction is complete |
| 5     | Region behind reflected shock wave                                   |

## Superscripts

---

|         |                                 |
|---------|---------------------------------|
| $< . >$ | Averaged quantity               |
| $(.)$   | Mass-weighted-averaged quantity |
| $(.)^*$ | Reference value                 |

## Acronyms

---

|     |                                        |
|-----|----------------------------------------|
| BK7 | Optical Borosilicate Glass             |
| BNC | Bayonet Neill-Concelman                |
| CEA | Chemical Equilibrium with Applications |

|           |                                                                       |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CFD       | Computational Fluid Dynamics                                          |
| DAQ       | Data Acquisition                                                      |
| DDT       | Deflagration to Detonation Transition                                 |
| DNS       | Direct Numerical Simulation                                           |
| FLIR      | Forward-Looking Infrared                                              |
| GOX       | Gaseous Oxygen                                                        |
| JANAF     | Joint Army, Navy, Air Force                                           |
| JP-10     | Jet Propellant-10, (exo-tetrahydrodicyclopentadiene, $C_{10}H_{16}$ ) |
| KASIMIR   | Kanalsimulation im Rechner                                            |
| LabVIEW   | Laboratory Virtual Instrument Engineering Workbench                   |
| LES       | Large Eddy Simulation                                                 |
| LOX       | Liquid Oxygen                                                         |
| LOCI-CHEM | Density-Based Navier-Stokes Solver                                    |
| LRE       | Liquid Rocket Engine                                                  |
| MATLAB    | Matrix Laboratory                                                     |
| MMH       | Monomethylhydrazine, $CH_3N_2H_3$                                     |
| NASA      | National Aeronautics and Space Administration                         |
| NIST      | National Institute of Standards and Technology                        |
| NTO       | Nitrogen Tetroxide (Dinitrogen), $N_2O_4$                             |
| PCI       | Peripheral Component Interconnect                                     |
| PDE       | Pulse Detonation Engine                                               |
| PXI       | PCI eXtensions for Instrumentation                                    |
| RANS      | Reynolds-Averaged Navier-Stokes                                       |
| ROCFLAM   | Rocket Flow Analysis Module                                           |
| ROF       | Mass Ratio of Oxidizer to Fuel                                        |
| SSFC      | Supersonic Film Cooling                                               |
| SSME      | Space Shuttle Main Engine                                             |
| SWL       | Shock Wave Laboratory                                                 |
| TDK       | Two-Dimensional Kinetics                                              |
| TTL       | Transistor-Transistor Logic                                           |
| UDMH      | Unsymmetrical Dimethylhydrazine, $C_2H_8N_2$                          |