

**IMPACT OF PULSED AND STEADY STATE
PLASMA OPERATION ON NUCLEAR
TESTING IN ITER**

MOHAMED A. ABDOU

**ITER Workshop on Testing Program
Garching, FRG
July 1988**

Importance of Steady State Operation for the Nuclear Testing Phase in ITER

- To Substantially Increase the Capability for Meaningful Nuclear Technology Testing
- To Reduce the Failure Rate and Improve the Reliability of Many of the Basic ITER Components

Effects of Pulsed Plasma Operation on Nuclear Technology Testing

- Time-Dependent Changes in Environmental Conditions for Testing:
 - Nuclear (volumetric) heating
 - Surface heating
 - Poloidal magnetic field
 - Tritium production rate
- Result in Time-Dependent Changes and Effects in Response of Test Elements that:
 - Can be more dominant than the steady-state effects for which testing is desired
 - Can complicate tests and make results difficult to model and understand

Length of Burn Time?

Length of Dwell Time?

Response (e.g., Temperature):

Burn: $F = F_0 (1 - e^{-t/\tau})$

Dwell: $F = F_0 e^{-t/\tau}$

τ = characteristic Time Constant

Allowable Variation (During a Specific Test)

- The goal is not just reaching equilibrium. It is to stay at equilibrium during test
- Small changes in some fundamental quantities result in large changes in key parameters

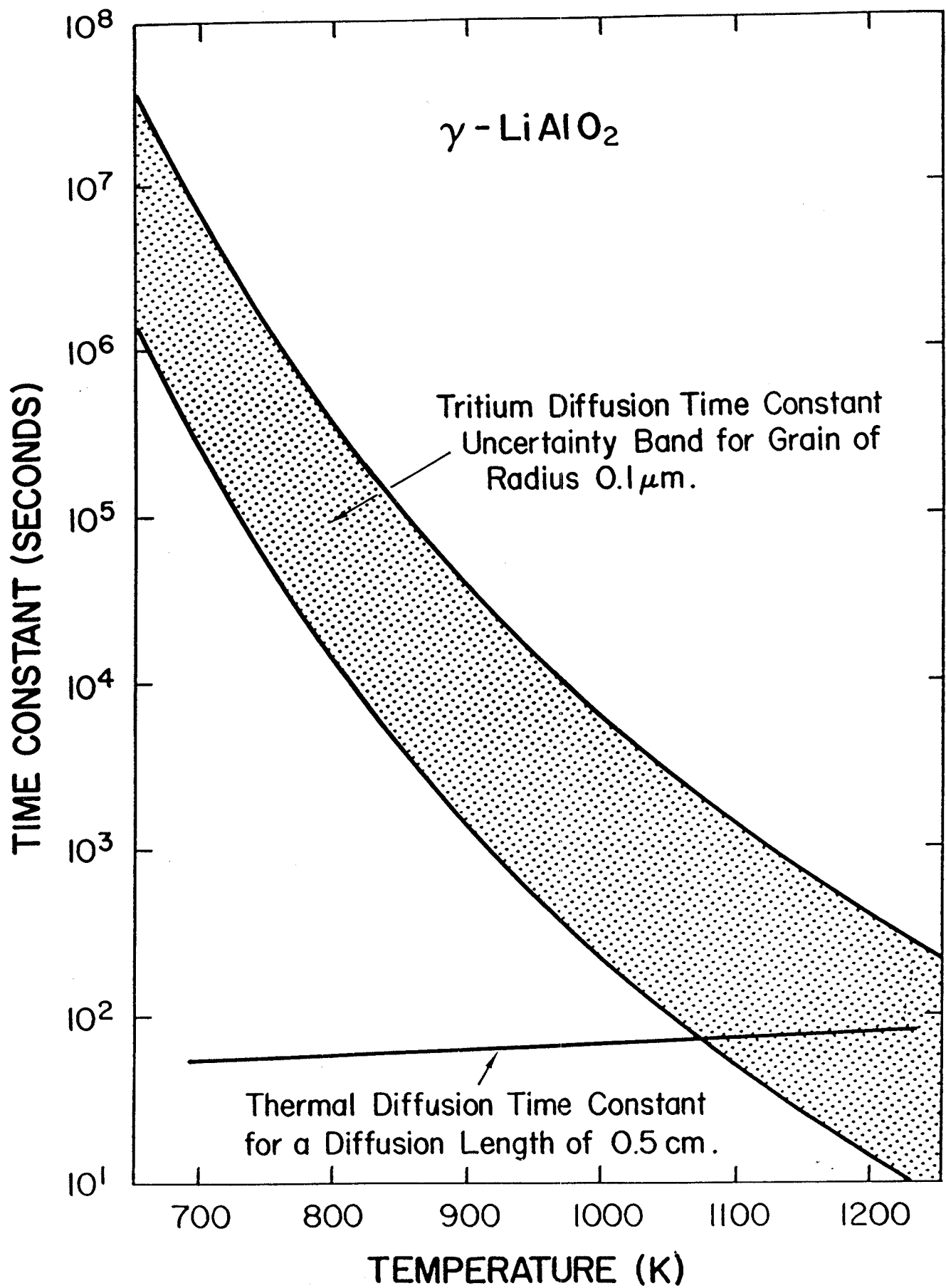
e.g., 5% change in SB temperature results in a factor of 5 change in Tritium Diffusion Time Constant

Guidelines (95 % Level)

burn time > 3 τ

dwell time < 0.05 τ

Note: Doubling or tripling the allowable variation will not significantly alter conclusions



VARIATION OF TEMPERATURE WITH TIME FOR DIFFERENT DWELL TIMES (LIALO2 BREEDER)

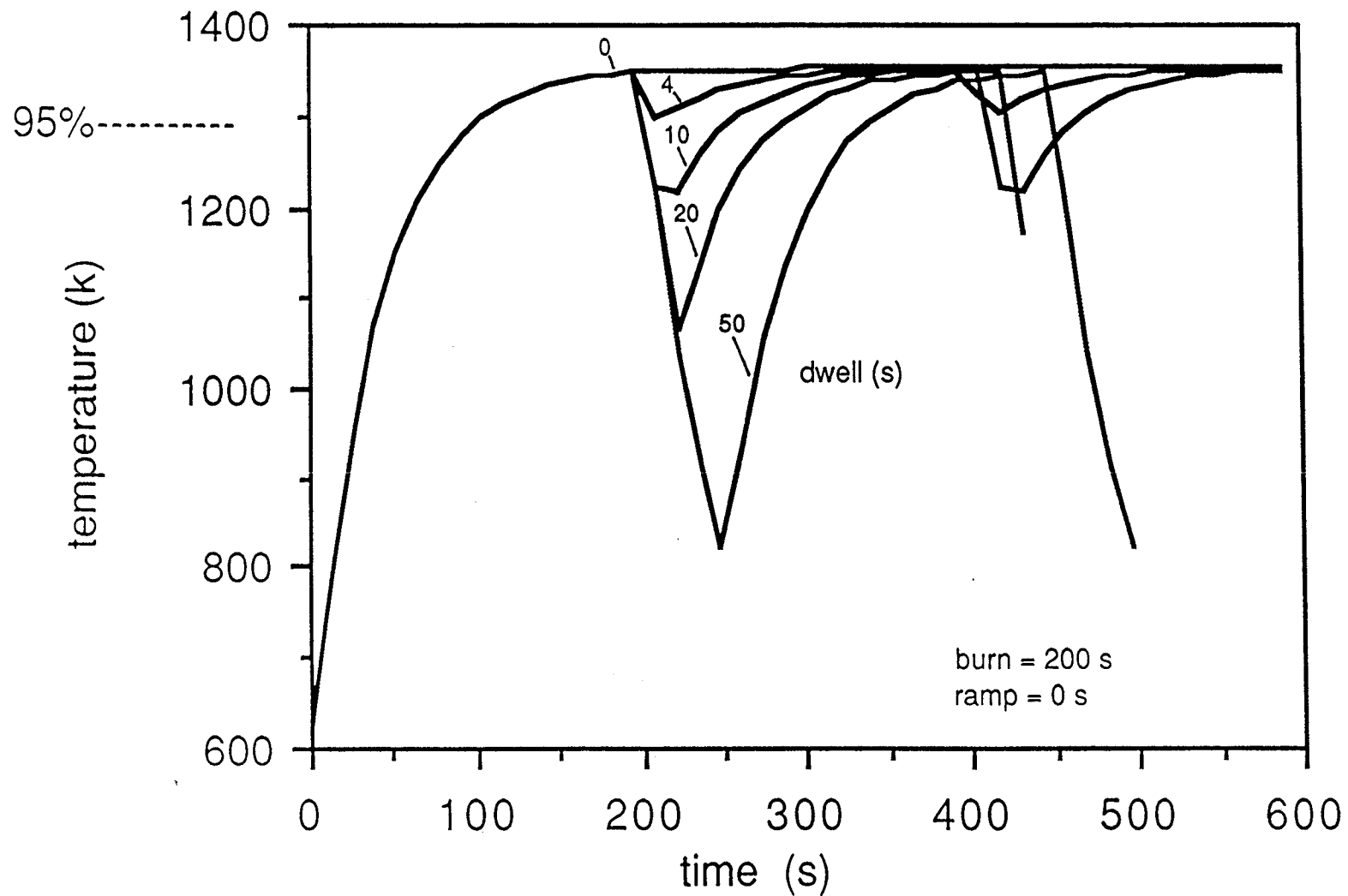


Table 3-5 Approximate Characteristic Time Constants
in Representative Blankets

<u>Flow</u>	
Solid Breeder Purge Residence	6 s
Liquid Breeder Coolant Residence	30 s
Liquid Breeder Cooling Circuit Transit	60 s
<u>Thermal</u>	
Structure Conduction	4 s
Structure Bulk Temperature Rise	20 s
Liquid Breeder Conduction (Li)	30 s
Solid Breeder Conduction ($\frac{1}{2}$ -cm plate)	50-100 s
(1-cm plate)	200-400 s
Coolant Bulk Temperature Rise (200 K at 4000 MW _t)	
Li	100 s
LiPb	1500 s
Solid Breeder Bulk Temperature Rise (LiAlO ₂ , 300-1000°C)	
Front (Near Plasma)	120 s
Back (Away from Plasma)	1800 s
<u>Material Interactions</u>	
Dissolution of Fe in Li (500°C)	40 days
<u>Tritium</u>	
Diffusion Through Solid Breeder (LiAlO ₂ , 0.2 μm grains)	
1250 K	8-200 s
750 K	13-300 hours
Surface Adsorption (LiAlO ₂)	3-10 hours
Diffusion Through SS316	
800 K	10 days
600 K	150 days
Inventory in Solid Breeder (Water-Cooled LiAlO ₂ , 0.2 μm grains)	
67% of equilibrium	6 months
99% of equilibrium	4 years
Inventory in Liquid Breeder	
LiPb	30 minutes
Li	30 days

TIME CONSTANTS FOR KEY NUCLEAR PROCESSES RANGE FROM VERY FAST TO VERY SLOW

		<u>Time Constants</u>
		Fast
		Seconds
Heat Conduction		
Flow Processes		
		Minutes
Thermal Processes		
		Hours
Tritium Processes		
Material Interactions		
Stress Relaxation		
		Days
Tritium Release		
		Weeks
Tritium Inventory		
Radiation Effects		
Synergistic Effects		
Subsystem Interactions		
		Slow

Most Critical Nuclear Issues for Testing in the Fusion Environment Have Two Characteristics:

- 1) Processes with long time constants
- 2) Crucial dependence on other processes with short time constants

(It takes a long time to establish equilibrium;
a short time to ruin it)

Most Critical Nuclear Issues
For Testing in the Fusion Environment
Involve Many Processes/Phenomena

- 1) some with very short time constants
- 2) some with very long time constants

Burn Time?

Must be longer than 3τ for the process with longest time constant

$$t_b > \text{Days for Many key Processes}$$

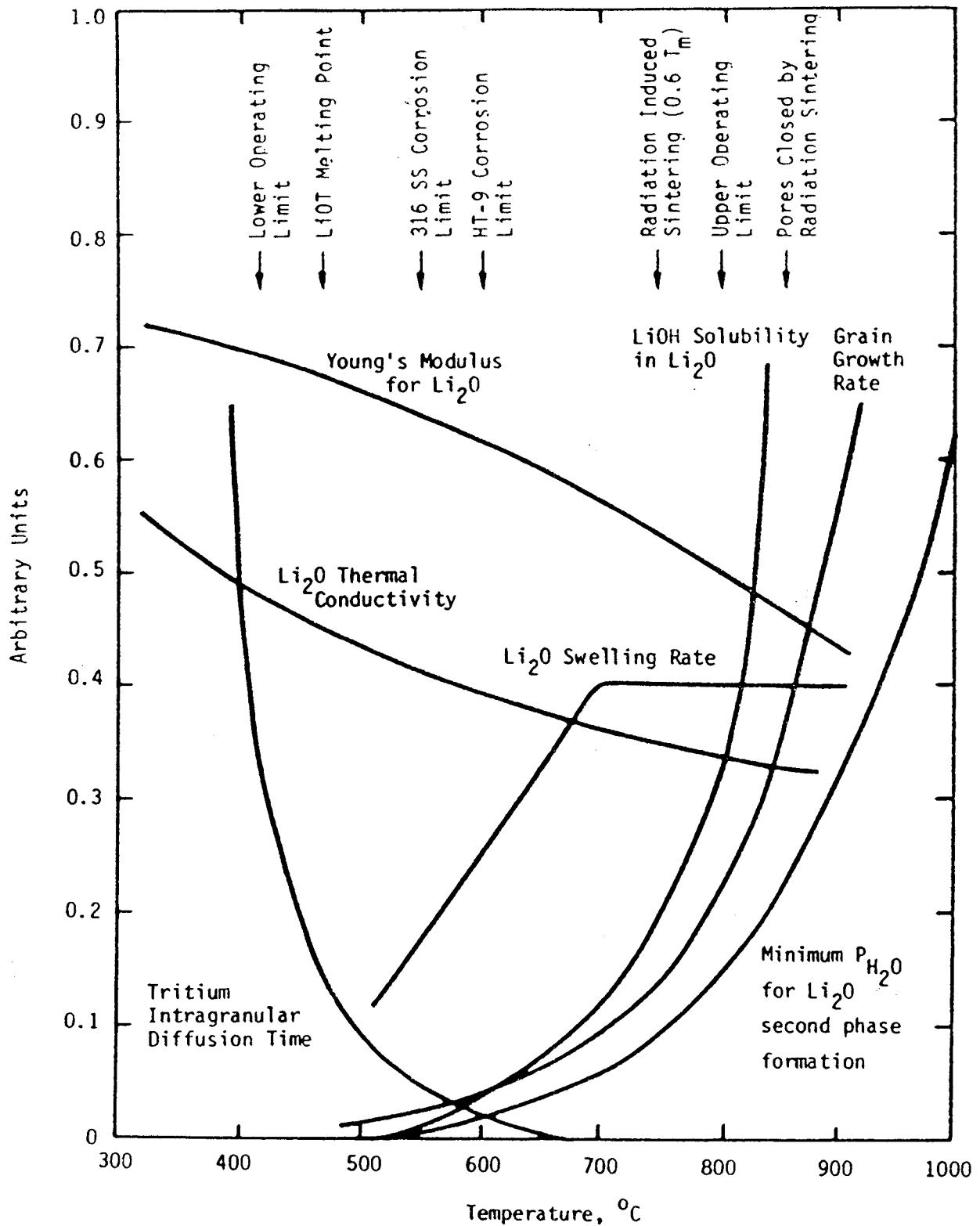
Dwell Time?

Must be shorter than 0.05τ for the process with shortest time constant

$$t_s \ll 5 \text{ s for Many key Processes}$$

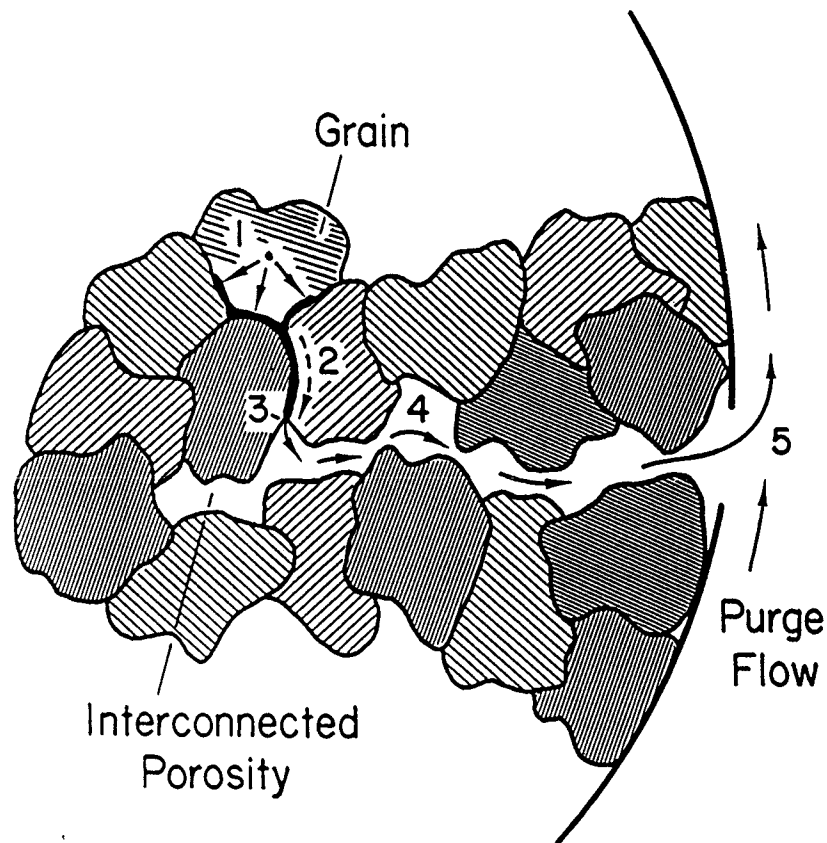
Examples of Critical Issues Involving Processes with Widely Different Time Constants

Issue	Fast Response	Slow Response
Tritium Release from Solid Breeders	Tritium Production (~0 s) Nuclear Heating (~0 s) Temperature (seconds) Tritium Diffusion (high temp. 1200K) (seconds) Temperature Gradient (seconds)	Low Temp. (700K) Tritium Diffusion (days) Surface Adsorption/Desorption (hours) Radiation Effects (very long) (can markedly slow down pore diffusion)
Corrosion/Redeposition	Nuclear Heating (~0 s) Temperature (<5 s) Temperature Gradients (<5 s)	Loop Temperature ($\frac{1}{2}$ hr) Dissolution of Fe in Li (40 days) Chemical Equilibrium - Concentration Buildup (months)
Structural Response	Primary Stresses (seconds) Thermal Stresses (minutes)	Thermal & Irradiation Stress Relaxation (months) Radiation Damage (months to years) Effects of Cycling and Power Variations (months to years) Surface Damage (e.g., erosion, corrosion)



THE HEAT SOURCE (MAGNITUDE AND TIME DEPENDENCE) DETERMINES TEMPERATURES IN THE BLANKET, WHICH ACTIVATES MANY IMPORTANT ENGINEERING PROCESSES

Tritium Transport in Solid Breeders

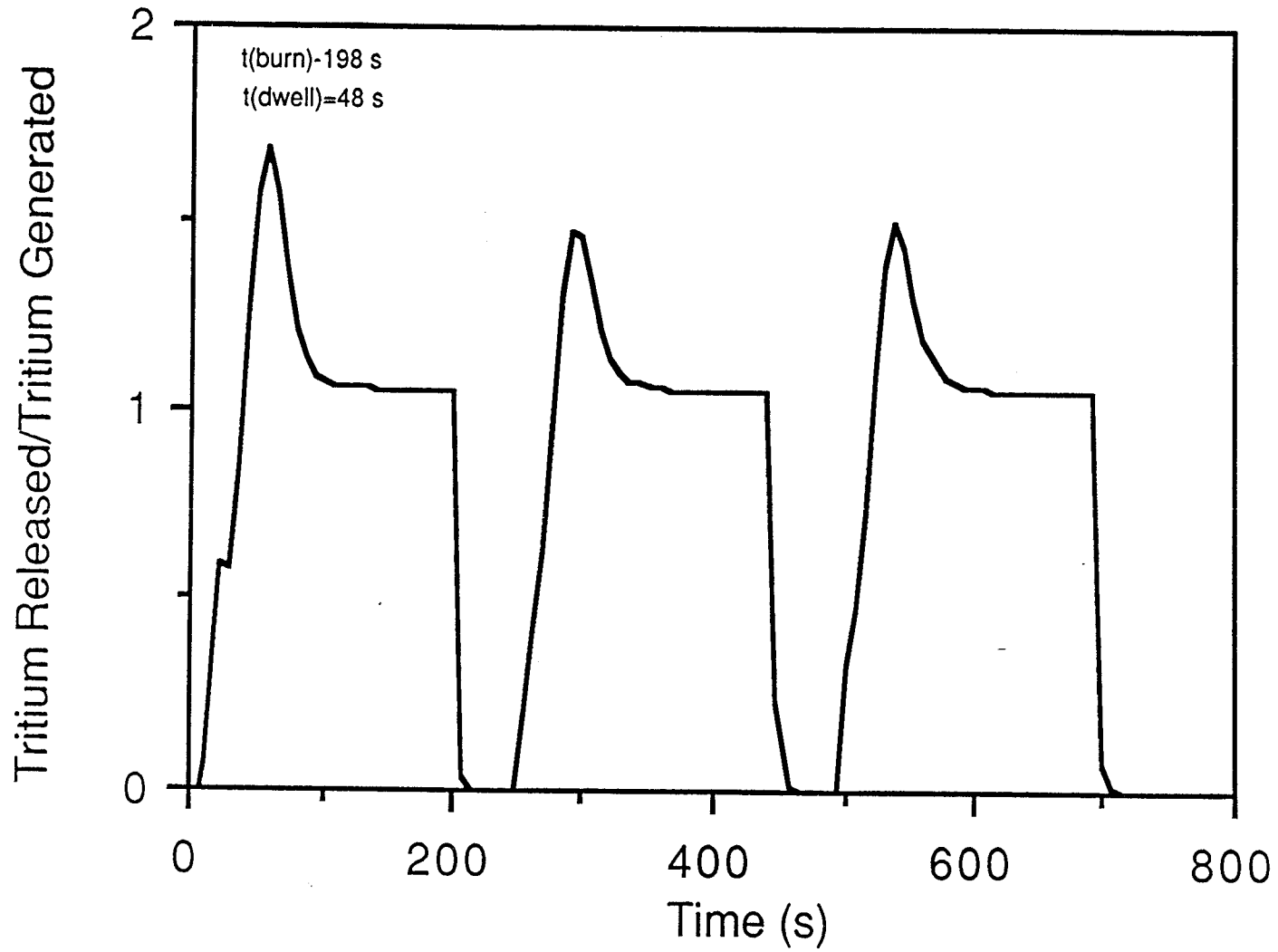


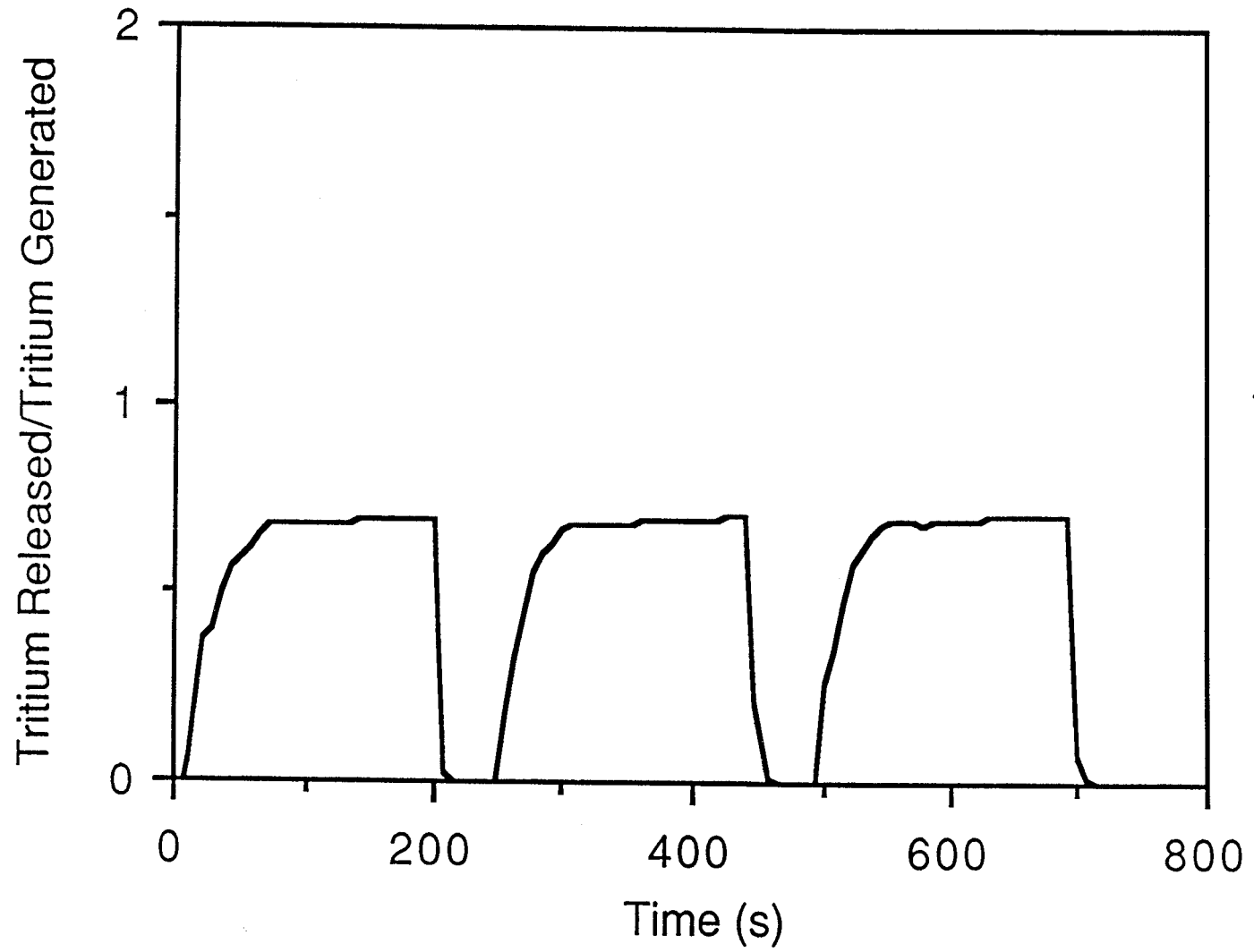
Mechanisms of Tritium Transport

- 1) Intragranular Diffusion
- 2) Grain Boundary Diffusion
- 3) Surface Adsorption/Desorption
- 4) Pore Diffusion
- 5) Purge Flow Convection

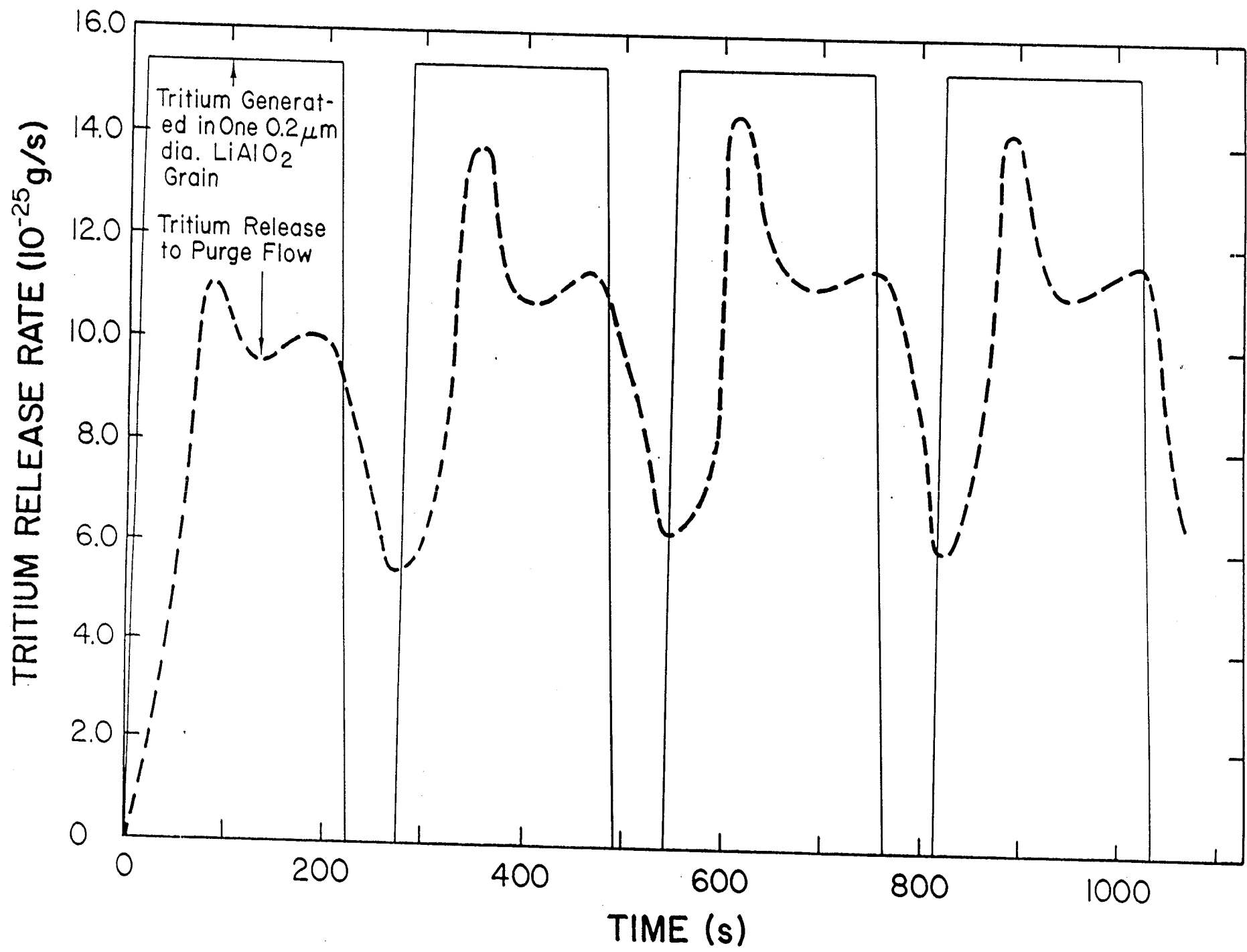
- These mechanisms have different time-dependent behavior
- Results from pulsed tests will be very difficult to understand and extrapolate

Tritium Release: Diffusion

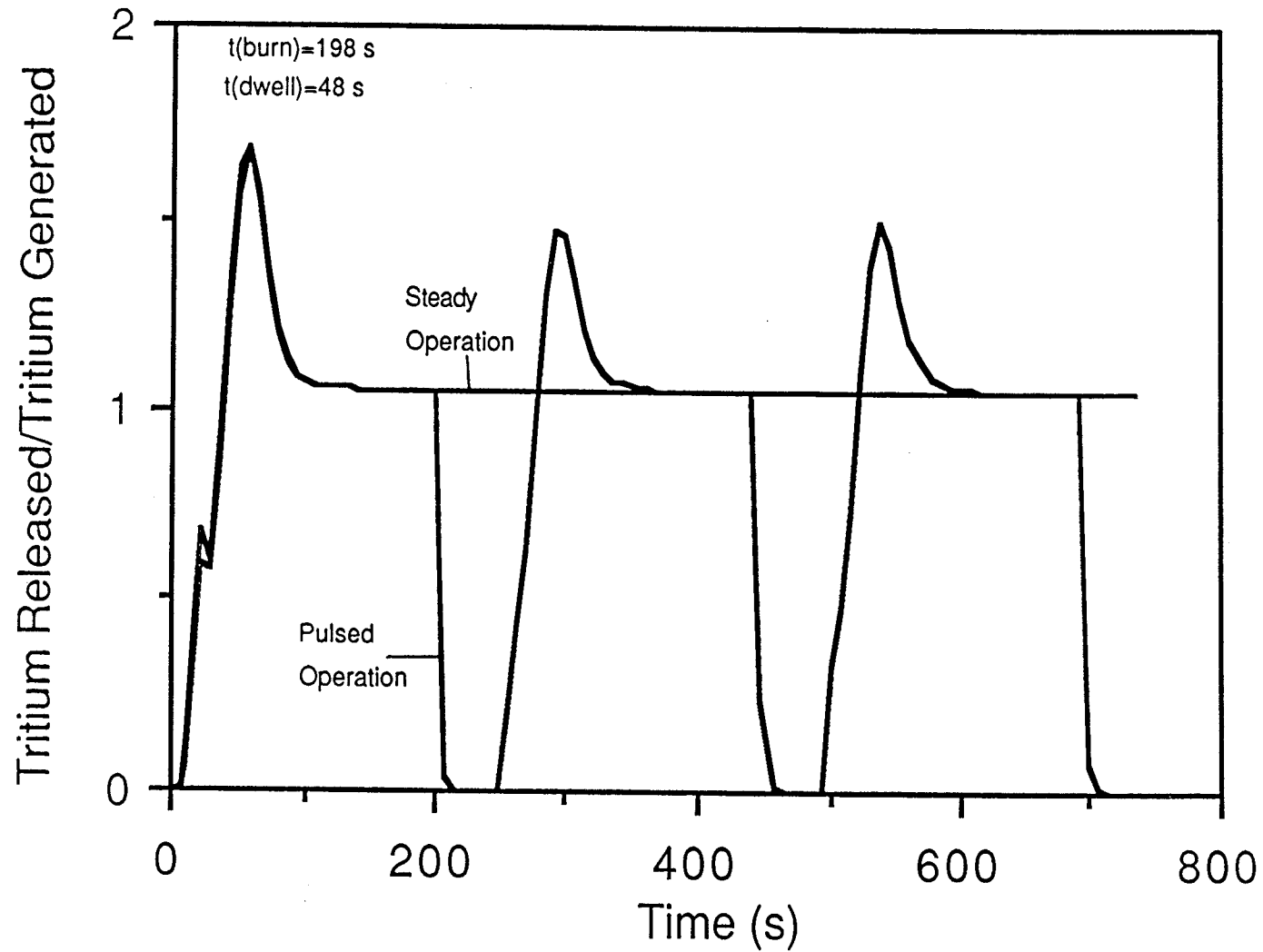




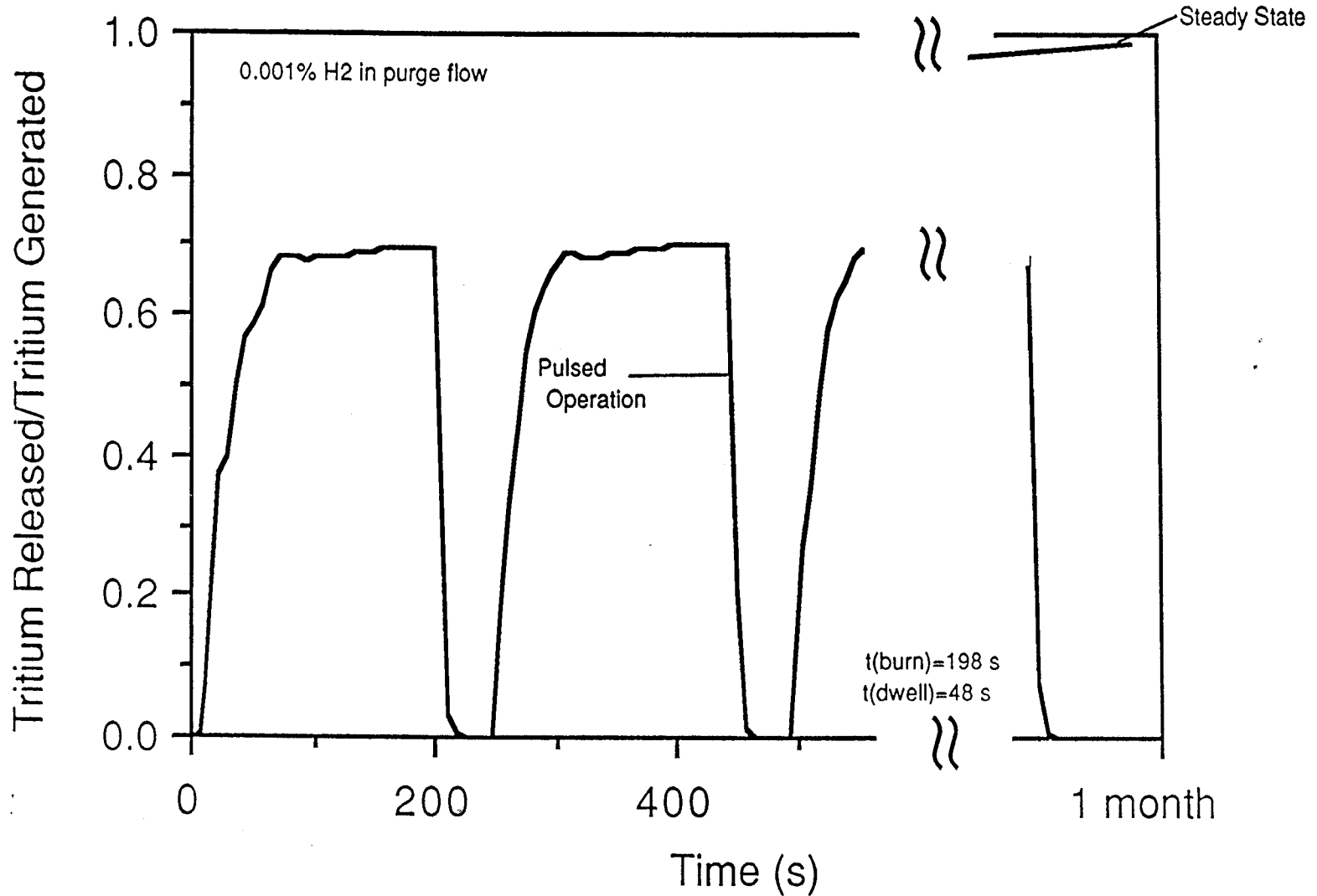
Tritium Release: Adsorption/Desorption



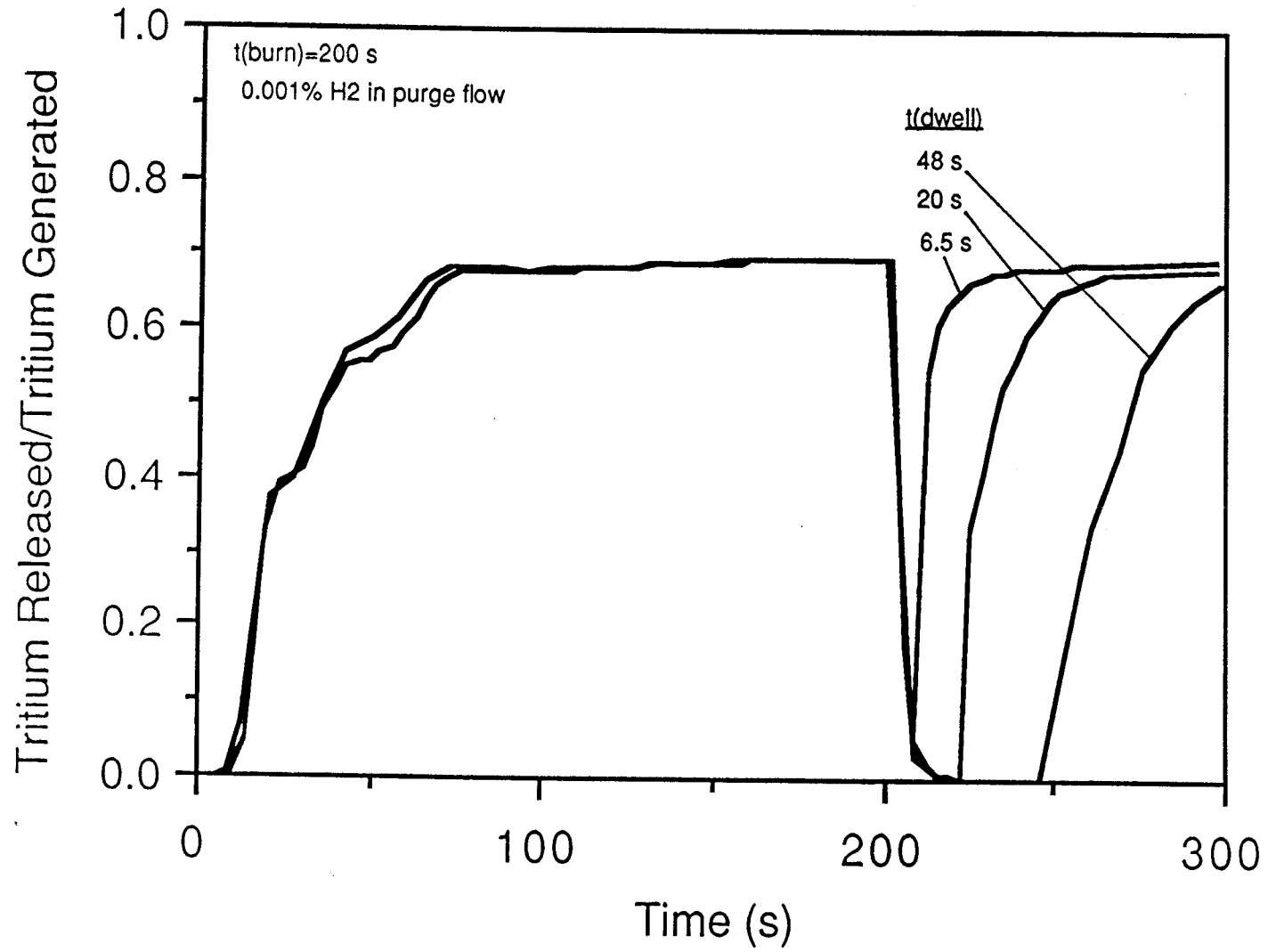
Tritium Released as a Function of Time for Steady vs. Pulsed Operation (No Adsorption/Desorption)



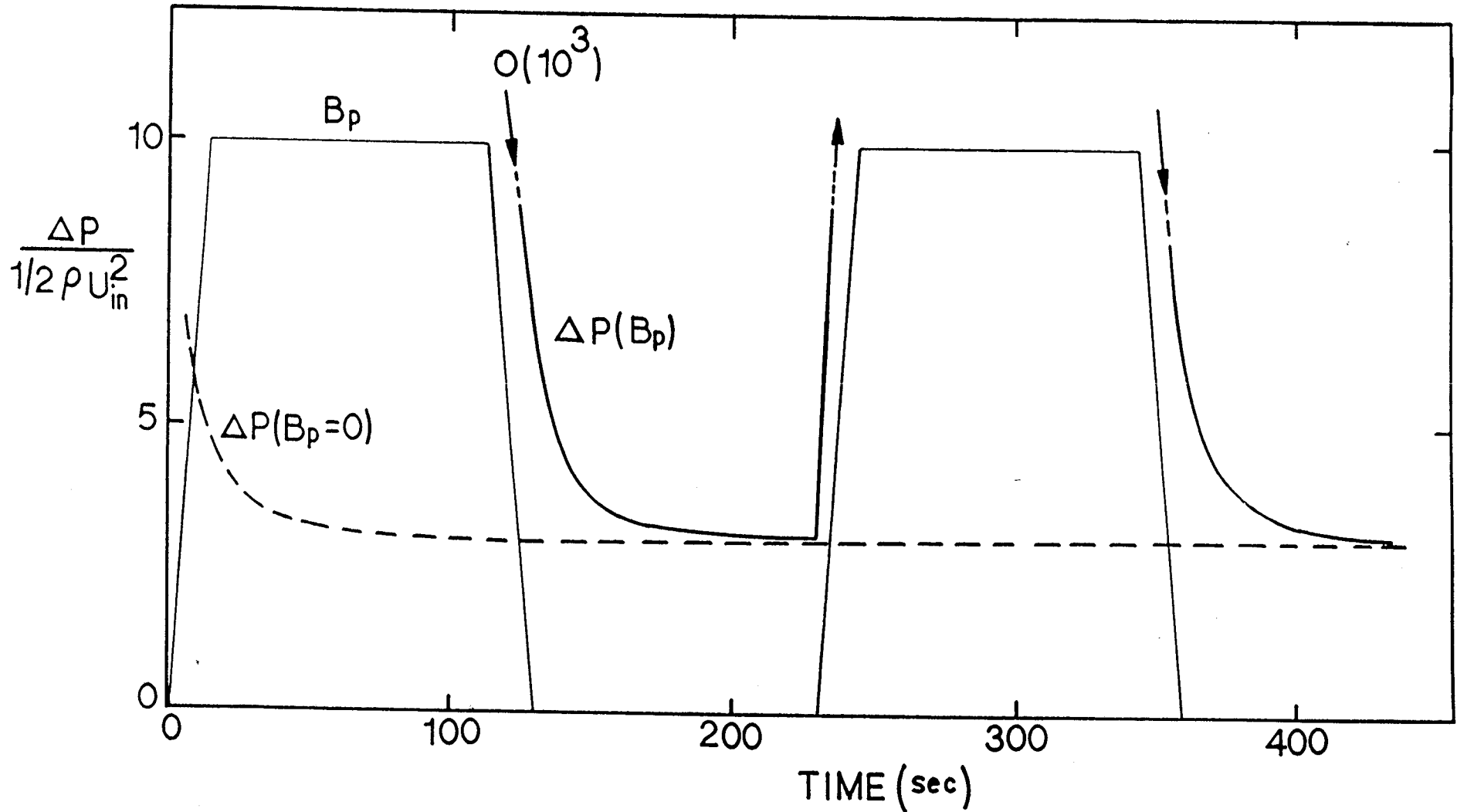
TRITIUM RELEASED AS A FUNCTION OF TIME FOR STEADY STATE VS. PULSED OPERATION



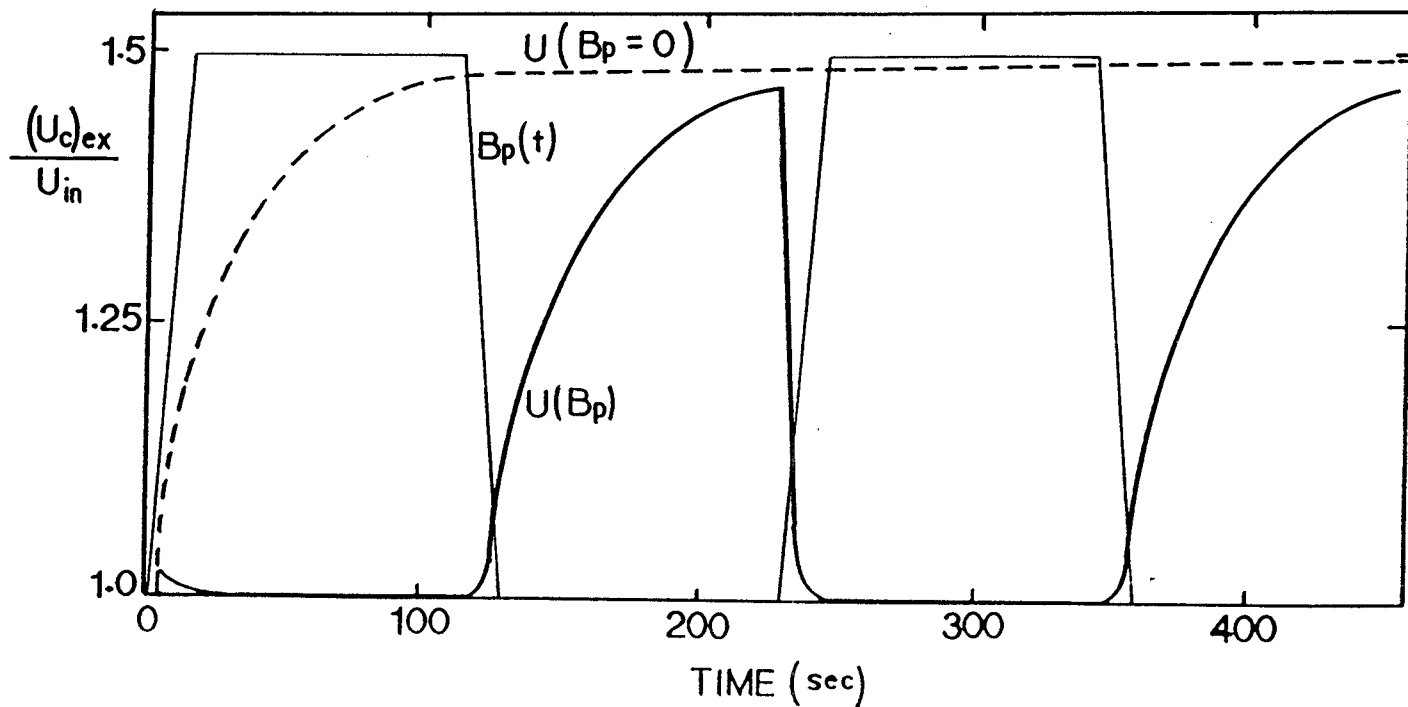
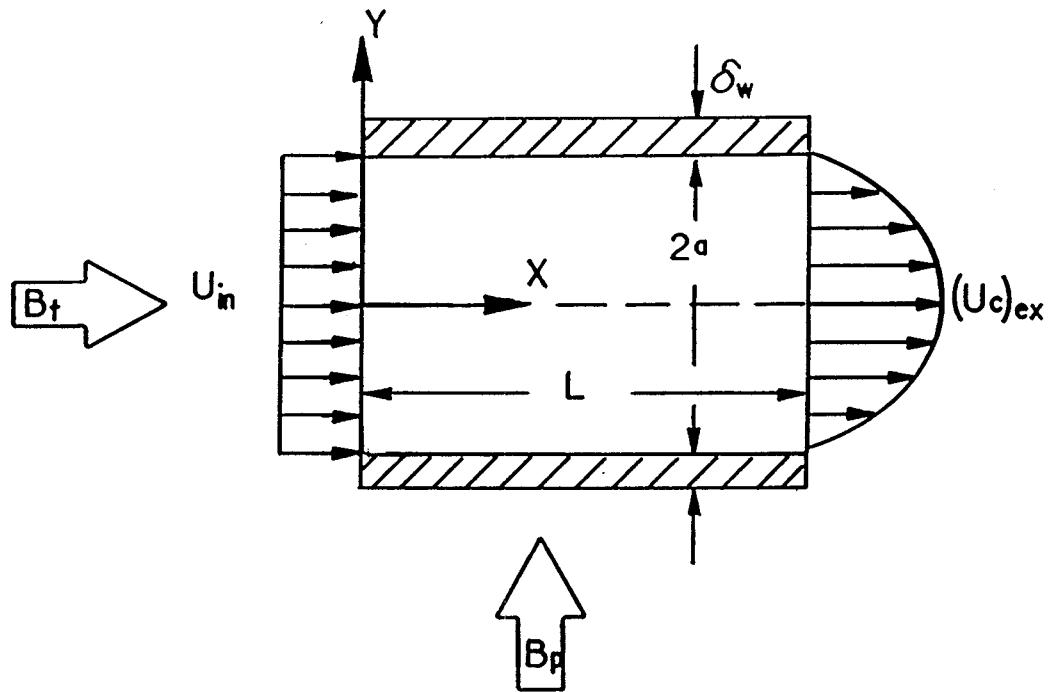
Different Dwell Times (tritium release)



Effect of Time-Dependent Changes in Poloidal Magnetic Field on Pressure Drop in Liquid Metal Tests



Effect of Time-Dependent Changes in Poloidal Magnetic Field on Velocity Profile for Liquid Metal Tests



Important Remarks on Pulsed vs. Steady State Operation During Nuclear Testing Phase in ITER

- There are some issues that can be tested with ~500 s plasma burn
 - e.g., neutronics
 - shielding
 - (some) fluid flow processes

- However, most critical nuclear issues for testing in the unique fusion environment of ITER require striving for steady state operation
 - e.g., Tritium Recovery from Solid Breeders
 - Liquid Metal Corrosion/Redeposition
 - Structure Response and Failure Modes
 - Subsystems Interactions

- Pulsing does not yield average response in many cases. It often yields different results (activate different phenomena and threshold effects)

- Many key nuclear issues involve several processes with widely varying time constants
 - require very short dwell time(near zero)
 - require very long burn time (days)
 - difficult to reproduce synergistic effects with pulsing

- In Summary: Pulsing substantially degrades the engineering simulation; makes it difficult to understand the results and extrapolate to future fusion devices