



Schools of
Mechanical and Chemical Engineering

The University of Adelaide

Investigating the use of Concentrated Solar Energy to Thermally Decompose Limestone

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Thesis Submitted for the
Degree of Doctorate of Philosophy
May 2010



Calcination

Splendor Solis (1532-35)

Abstract

The objectives of this research investigation are to answer fundamental questions regarding the effectiveness of using concentrated solar energy as the sole heating source for the thermo-chemical decomposition of limestone-marble, supplied by Penrice, Angaston. Specifically, scientific analyses are used to investigate the energy requirements for the efficient manufacture of quicklime using solar thermal energy. To achieve these aims, the energy requirements for an industrial scale solar lime manufacturing system were first evaluated. The main conclusion from this analysis is that the thermal efficiency of a solar energy supplied lime manufacture system compares favourably with the best fossil fuelled system. A good heat recovery system as well as a comprehensive preheating system is recommended to minimise the energy losses from the system.

A zero dimensional model was then used to determine that the most energy efficient shape for a travelling grate solar furnace is a triangular cross section. This shape maximise the exposure of the limestone to the radiant energy while minimising structural heat losses. This analytical evaluation also identified that the open area of entrance and exit openings, which allow the process materials to flow through the kiln and for the exhaust gases to escape the kiln, should be minimised. Thirty three times more heat flux is lost through these openings than through the kiln structure. Minimising the openings area therefore improves kiln thermal efficiency.

This investigation then evaluated the maximum bed thickness for the limestone when using a grate bed system within the proposed solar furnace. Due to the nature of radiation it is recommended that the limestone layer be no thicker than 2.5 times the nominal diameter of the limestone in use. This thickness optimises the exposure of the stone to the direct radiation and increases the heat transfer to the stones lower within the bed and allows for the unrestricted diffusion of CO₂ away from these stones.

The investigation then experimentally quantified the effects of radiant heat flux intensity on the calcination kinetics of the Penrice, Angaston marble as a function of stone size. This experimental investigation involved comparing results from an electric muffle furnace, an atmospherically open solar radiation furnace, and an enclosed triangular shaped solar radiation furnace. The muffle furnace provided a baseline values to which the solar calcination rates could be compared.

The open system solar calcination experiments showed that the preheating time of the stone is directly proportional to the illuminated surface area of the stone and the intensity of the heat flux to which it is exposed. Additionally, the reaction rate is directly proportional to the radiant heat flux, and is independent of the stone size for heat fluxes greater than 430kW/m^2 .

The enclosed solar furnace experiments identified a 45% improvement in decomposition time could be achieved by using the triangular shaped solar furnace compared to the open solar system calcination. This benefit to the calcination time is best for the more intense heat fluxes and for the larger stone sizes. The measured calcination times were similar to those found for a conventional rotary kiln. This demonstrates the practicalities of using solar radiation technology for interchange with, or as a supplementary heating source to, a combustion driven lime manufacturing industrial plant.

A multi-zone two dimensional mathematical model was then used to evaluate the radiant heat exchange within the triangular solar furnace. The developed mathematical scheme provides a comprehensive package with a validated base model for future evaluations of solar furnace designs. A modified shrinking core calcination model was then developed, which uses an energy balance approach to calculate the preheating times and calcination rates for the Penrice marble exposed to various intensities of radiant heat flux. This version of the heat transfer based shrinking core model was used after considering the one sided heating of the stone from the point source radiation.

Declaration of Originality

This work contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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Signed:

Richard Alexander Craig

on this 1st day of May, 2010

Acknowledgments

It is with great thanks and the generosity of many people that I see the completion of this research project. I would like to start by thanking Professor Gus Nathan and Associate Professor Peter Mullinger for their generous support, advice and guidance throughout this very rewarding process. Their academic and practical views provided significant balance to this daunting task.

I would like to thank the academic and general staff from both the School of Mechanical Engineering and School of Chemical Engineering for their help and support during my post graduate studies. In particular A.Prof Bassam Dally for heat transfer advice, Mr Bill Finch and Mr Silvio De Ieso for technical assistance with the experimental rig construction, A.Prof Peter Ashman and A.Prof Richard Kelso for professional research advice and Billy Constantine for his computer wizardry in code writing and saving my data on more than one occasion.

To the friends that I made within the Department of Mechanical Engineering: Joshua Smith, Ricky Morgans, Tonia Camporeale, Jackie Munn, Daniel Handley, Kelly Parish, Cris Birzer, Eyad Hassan, Matthew Tetlow, Shahrooz Afshar, Grant England, Kimberly Clayfield and David Thompson thanks to all of you for your advice, assistance, comic relief, creative diversions and friendship over the years.

Parts of this project could not have been conducted without the help of colleagues and fellow members of the Turbulence, Energy and Combustion (TEC) Group from The University of Adelaide whom helped with data processing and theoretical modeling solutions that made aspects of this research somewhat easier. Special acknowledgment goes to Burkhard Seifert whom spent considerable time assisting with the heat flux measurements.

Acknowledgment also goes to Dr Barry Jenkins for his modeling guidance and providing assistance and access to his version of the Hottel zero dimensional model.

A big thank you goes to Graham Kelly from the Mechanical Engineering Thebarton Research Laboratory whose technical support, interesting conversations and worldly advice will always be remembered.

Thanks to Andrew Graetz at Penrice Quarry, Angaston and to Penrice Soda Holdings Limited for the marble samples and allowing me exclusive access to the quarry. Thanks also to Mark Joraslafsky and Northern Cement Limited for providing access to the Mataranka limestone quarry.

This work was financially supported by the South Australian State Energy Research Advisory Committee (SENRAC). I would like to thank SENRAC for the valuable experience and opportunities that I have gained from this project.

Most importantly, a million thanks to my lovely Alice. I could not have completed this work without your wonderful love and support during the course of this project. Sorry it has taken so long.

This Thesis is dedicated to my clever and beautiful daughters Tahlia and Charlotte. May it inspire you to achieve your dreams also.

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Nomenclature

Abbreviations and Constants

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| °C | Degrees centigrade |
| CaCO ₃ | Calcium Carbonate, Limestone, Marble |
| CaO | Calcium Oxide, Lime, Quicklime |
| CMOS | Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor |
| CO ₂ | Carbon Dioxide |
| ETSF | Enclosed Triangular Solar Furnace |
| g | grams |
| K | Kelvin |
| kg | kilograms |
| kW | kilowatt |
| m | metre |
| MJ | megajoule |
| mm | millimetre |
| N ₂ | Nitrogen |
| 0-D | Zero-Dimensional |
| OSS | Open Solar System |
| SCM | Shrinking Core Model |
| TGA | Thermogravimetric Analyser |
| TIFF | Tagged Image Files Format (also TIF) |

Roman Symbols

| | |
|----------------|---|
| b_d | limestone bed depth (mm) |
| C_A | reactant gas concentration |
| d_c | marble / limestone nominal diameter (mm) |
| D | furnace/kiln diameter (m or mm) |
| D' | dimensionless firing density |
| D_e | effective diffusivity through the product layer (mm ⁻¹) |
| D_{eq} | furnace/kiln characteristic equivalent diameter (mm) |
| D_b | radiation beam diameter (mm) |
| dm | conversion gradient of CaCO ₃ to CaO |
| E_a | activation energy of the reaction (kJ/kg or kJ/mol) |
| gg, GG | gas to gas heat exchange |
| gs, GS | gas to surface heat exchange |
| $(GS_1)_R$ | total exchange area with allowance for effect of surface zones in radiative equilibrium |
| g | gas phase (Italic) |
| h | enthalpy (J) |
| H | kiln height (m or mm) |
| H_F | enthalpy flux in the feed stream entering the chamber per hour |
| $I_{measured}$ | bit level of each pixel within the image |
| I_n | irradiation normal to the surface |
| k | Arrhenius rate constant (sec ⁻¹) |
| K | attenuation factor (extinction coefficient) (m ⁻¹) |
| K_p | equilibrium constant |
| k_s | reaction rate constant |
| L | kiln length (m or mm) |

Roman Symbols (Cont)

| | |
|----------------|--|
| L | number of volume elements |
| M_B | molecular weight of the solid reactant (g/mol) |
| M | number of surface elements |
| m_o | initial mass of limestone (g) |
| m_t | mass of calcining sample at any time (t) |
| m_3 | mass of calcining sample equal to 3% of the stones final mass (g) |
| m_{50} | mass of calcining sample equal to 50% of the stones final mass (g) |
| m_{75} | mass of calcining sample equal to 75% of the stones final mass (g) |
| m_{100} | final mass of calcining sample at 100% calcination (g) |
| N_g | number of gray gases |
| P | total resistance pressure (pa) |
| P_{CO_2} | partial pressure of CO ₂ (pa) |
| P_v | vapour pressure (pa) |
| q | radiant heat flux (W/m ²) |
| Q | heat (or power), (W) |
| Q' | dimensionless furnace efficiency |
| Q_{out} | energy leaving a surface or gas zone (J/s) |
| R | Universal Gas Constant = 8.314 J/ K. mol |
| R^2 | coefficient of determination |
| r | distance between each zone (m) |
| r_c | radius of the un-reacted limestone core at any time (mm) |
| r_o | initial radius of the solid limestone (mm) |
| S | distance from the focal point along radiation beam (m) |
| Ss, SS | surface to surface heat exchange |
| sg, SG | surface to gas heat exchange |
| T | temperature (K) |
| t | time (s or min) |
| t_{50} | time to achieve 50% calcination (s or min) |
| t_{75} | time to achieve 75% calcination (s or min) |
| t_{100} | time to complete (100%) calcination (s or min) |
| T_{AF} | adiabatic flame temperature (K) |
| $T_{ambient}$ | ambient temperature (K) |
| T_{board} | measured board temperature (K) |
| T_o | base temperature (K) |
| $T_{Platform}$ | temperature of calcination platform (K) |
| T_F | muffle furnace temperature (K) |
| W | kiln width (m or mm) |
| X | fractional calcination |
| X_{CO_2} | molar fraction of carbon dioxide |
| X_{Is} | rate of conversion of limestone used in Arrhenius equation |
| X_{N_2} | molar fraction of nitrogen |
| y_1 | constant mole fraction of CO ₂ |

Greek Symbols

| | |
|---------------|--|
| α | absorptivity |
| ε | emissivity |
| ρ_m | bulk density of the reacting particle |
| ρ | reflectivity |
| σ | Stefan-Boltzmann constant = $5.67 \times 10^{-8} \text{ W/m}^2 \cdot \text{K}^4$ |

Greek Symbols (Cont)

| | |
|----------|--|
| Δ | Change in Parameter |
| θ | Roof angle for triangular shaped furnace (deg) |
| τ | transmissivity factor |

Subscripts

| | |
|-------|---|
| Air | ambient air |
| B | bulk phase |
| b | stoichiometric coefficient |
| beam | within the radiation beam |
| d,c | calculated bed depth |
| d,m | measured bed depth |
| elec | calculated from electrical power |
| Ex | exhaust gases |
| g | gas phase |
| Lime | quicklime |
| LS | limestone |
| m1 | mirror position 1 |
| m2 | mirror position 2 |
| max | maximum |
| os | open system |
| React | calcination reaction |
| s | solid phase |
| temp | calculated from temperature measurement |
| TSF | triangular solar furnace |

Superscripts

| | |
|---|-------------|
| e | equilibrium |
| i | interfacial |