



## Effect of non-zero mean stress bending-torsion fatigue on fracture surface parameters of 34CrNiMo6 steel notched bars

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### Abstract

Modern methods of testing materials require the use of the latest technologies and combining measurement and calculation methods. It is important to find a quantitative way of describing, among other things, the failures so that it can help to design with high accuracy. This paper studies loading orientations on crack shape and fracture surface changes. The advantage of the entire fracture surface method is simplicity and applicability in studies on other materials, shapes and loadings. A higher values of fracture surface parameters ( $S_x$ ,  $V_x$ ) was observed in failure specimens with lower  $\sigma/\tau$  (B/T) ratios. It has been observed that largest crack lengths with a small number of cycles occur for loading combinations different then B=T. As well as analyzed surface parameters  $S_x$ ,  $V_x$ , are higher for larger number of cycles to crack initiation ( $N_i$ ) values.

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## 1. Introduction

Engineering materials with different geometries and shapes are with their nuances increasingly reflected in fatigue tests (Kowal and Szala, 2020; Ulewicz et al., 2014; Ulewicz et al., 2019; Trško et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2020; Robak, 2020). Loading generation also needs to be developed to get as close as possible to the service conditions, both by standard and a special performance of fatigue machines (Jamali et al., 2019; Rozumek et al., 2018; Saito et al., 2020; Pejkowski et al. 2018). Fatigue and Fracture of metals under bending with torsion loading have been studied by authors of this work (Branco et al., 2018; W. Macek et al., 2020). Similar studies were rarely carried out in the past, but for bending-torsion fatigue studies we would like to mention the publications (Böhm et al., 2015; Carpinteri et al., 2008; Rozumek et al., 2018; Singh et al., 2019; Slámečka et al., 2010; Lachowicz and Owsiański, 2020). Singh et al. (Singh et al., 2019) and Susmel with Petrone (Susmel and Petrone, 2003) also analyzed this type of loading for fatigue crack initiation and propagation behavior. Pawliczek and Prazmowski (Pawliczek and Prazmowski, 2015)

have tested S355 steel specimens with mean block bending loadings. Samples after fatigue tests were subjected to metallographic examinations. These papers show how important it is to look at the surface and morphology of material in different scales, e.g. from nano- to macro-scale.

The application of metrological technologies and techniques to understand the fracture mechanisms of studied materials have expanded along with the development of measuring technologies, as noted by among others, Jollivet and Greenhalgh (Jollivet and Greenhalgh, 2015) in composite materials, as well as Goldsmith et al. (Goldsmith et al., 2019) for in-service aircraft crack research, respectively. Vanderesse et al (Vanderesse et al., 2020) have used three techniques for evaluating the fracture mechanisms, as X-ray computed tomography (XCT), laser scanning confocal microscopy (LSCM), and scanning electron microscopy (SEM). Their studies were conducted for pre-mortem and post-mortem characterizations. Sinha et al. (Sinha et al., 2020) have used X-ray microscopy to examine specimens subjected to tension and found that microstructural flexibility induced different tendencies for void

growth and ductile fracture mode. Also optical and laser apparatus for areal surface topography investigation, that allow measure at broad range of scales, are becoming more and more popular. This is recognized and concluded by Feng et al (Feng et al., 2019) as well as Senin et al. (Senin et al., 2017) on the example of optical technologies measurements covered, among others, by imaging confocal microscopy (ICM), chromatic confocal microscopy, phase shifting interferometry, coherence scanning interferometry (CSI), point autofocus instruments (PAI), and focus variation microscopy (FVM). Stemp et al. (Stemp et al., 2019) and also Macek et al. (Macek et al., 2020a) used FVM measurement systems for their research on stone tools and fracture surfaces, respectively. Fonte et al. (Fonte et al., 2007) showed results for the fatigue crack surface roughness  $R_a$  and  $R_z$  according to ISO 4287 (ISO, 1997) with the fatigue crack propagation direction at the center of fracture surface. Although similar roughness results were achieved at the center and at the both sides of the fracture, areal surface  $S_x$  parameters according to ISO 25178 (ISO, 2012; Arsalani et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2019) give complete information because a single line cannot identify pits or valleys and show the relationship between surface function, as confirmed by Stach et al. (Stach et al., 2017). The combination of fatigue testing with the surface metrology by the authors of this work (Macek, 2019a, 2019b) gave promising results in previous studies. Therefore, it was decided to develop this methodology, based on the entire fracture surface, for testing other materials subjected to bending with torsion.

## 2. Experimental

### 2.1. Material

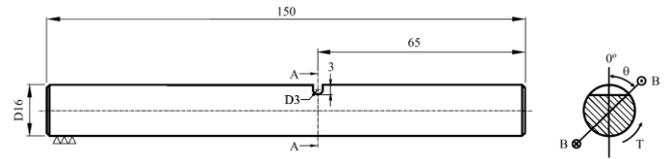
The fracture analysis and the fatigue tests were done using cylindrical specimens (see Fig. 1) made of low alloy steel grade 34CrNiMo6 (Szala, 2017). The samples were oil quenched and tempered according to the procedure described elsewhere (Branco et al., 2016). The chemical composition and the main mechanical properties are shown in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

**Table 1.** Nominal chemical composition (wt%) of DIN 34CrNiMo6 steel (Branco et al., 2016)

C	Si	Mn	Cr	Mo	Ni
0.34	≤ 0.40	0.65	1.50	0.22	1.5

**Table 2.** Mechanical monotonic properties of the DIN 34CrNiMo6 steel (Branco et al., 2016)

Mechanical property	Value
Yield strength, $\sigma_{YS}$ (MPa)	967
Tensile strength, $\sigma_{UTS}$ (MPa)	1035
Young's modulus, E (GPa)	209.8
Poisson's ratio, $\nu$	0.296



**Fig. 1.** Specimen geometries (in millimetres)

## 2.2. Methods

### 2.2.1. Fatigue test

The fatigue tests were carried out using the fatigue test stand exhibited in Fig. 2. The tests were conducted under constant amplitude loading with three ratios of the bending moment (B) to torsion moment (T), more precisely  $B/T=2$ ,  $B/T=1$ , and  $B/T=2/3$ . Three orientations of the bending moment with respect to the notch geometry were considered (see Fig. 1), i.e.  $\theta=0^\circ$ ,  $45^\circ$ , and  $90^\circ$ . A stress ratio equal to 0 was used.



**Fig. 2.** Fatigue test stand with own-made gripping system

### 2.2.2. Fracture surface measurement

The measurements of surface topography were undertaken through the InfiniteFocus G4, with a FVM technology by Alicona, which was placed on the antivibration table (see Fig. 3).

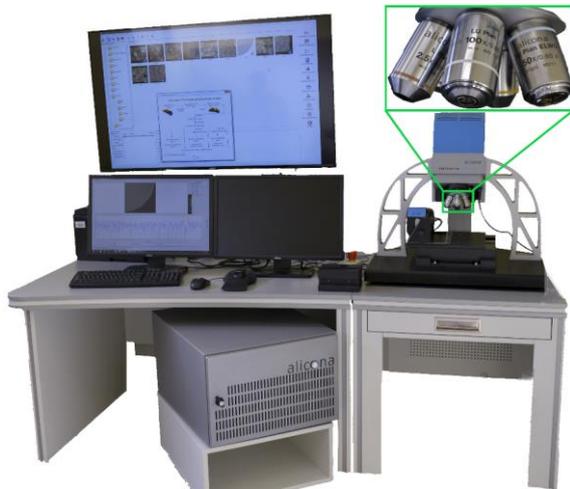


Fig. 3. FVM Alicona G4 setup

The scanned surfaces, whose textures can be seen in Annex A, have been extracted to the form exhibited in Figure 4. The individual steps for cutting the proper surface are also shown in the first fragment of Figure 6.

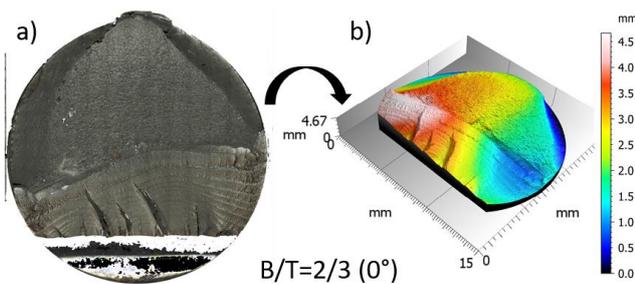


Fig. 4. Fracture texture visualization a) original merged photo, b) extracted colour simulation

### 3. Theory and calculation

#### 3.1. Fatigue parameters

In the fatigue tests, the crack length was evaluated at periodic intervals varying between 2000 and 10,000 cycles using a high-resolution digital camera. The number of cycles to crack initiation was defined from the curves relating the surface crack length with the number of cycles for a crack length equal to the characteristic material length,  $a_0 = 129 \mu\text{m}$ .

#### 3.2. Surface parameters and their definitions

For the purposes of checking the fracture surface dependency on the fatigue loading history, selected parameters were measured and calculated. Table 3 defines the parameters used in this paper which were selected according to ISO 25178 standard.

Height parameters are a class of surface parameters that quantify the Z-axis perpendicular to the surface. They are included in the ISO 25178 standard. The reference plane for the calculation of these parameters is the mean plane of the measured surface.

Table 3. Selected parameters for the fatigue fracture surface description according to ISO 25178

Height parameters			
Sq	$\mu\text{m}$	Root-mean-square height	$Sq = \sqrt{\frac{1}{A} \iint_A z^2(x,y) dx dy}$
Ssk		Skewness	$Ssk = \frac{1}{Sq^3} \left( \frac{1}{A} \iint_A z^3(x,y) dx dy \right)$
Sku		Kurtosis	$Sku = \frac{1}{Sq^4} \left( \frac{1}{A} \iint_A z^4(x,y) dx dy \right)$
Sp	$\mu\text{m}$	Maximum peak height	$Sp = Sz - Sv$
Sv		Maximum pit height	
Sz		Maximum height	Height between the highest peak and the deepest valley
Sa		Arithmetical mean height	Mean surface roughness $Sa = \frac{1}{A} \int_A  z(x,y)  dx dy$
Functional Parameters (Volume)			
Vm	$\text{mm}^3$		Material volume
Vv			Void volume
Vmp			Peak material volume
Vmc			Core material volume
Vvc			Core void volume
Vvv			Pit void volume

Functional parameters (Volume)  $V_x$  represent an evolution of the functional indices and are defined, like the family of  $S_x$  parameters. A graphical interpretation of functional parameters is presented on the Abbott curve represented in Fig. 5 (Abbott and Firestone, 1933; Kaplonek et al., 2016).

Both sides of specimens are fixed to the grips, but both move during the tests. One side rotates, and the other one has rotation and translation movements. The side which was measured and analysed corresponds to the former case. Skewness  $Ssk$  means the absence of symmetry distribution, and kurtosis  $Sku$  indicates how the results obtained are arranged in relation to the normal distribution.

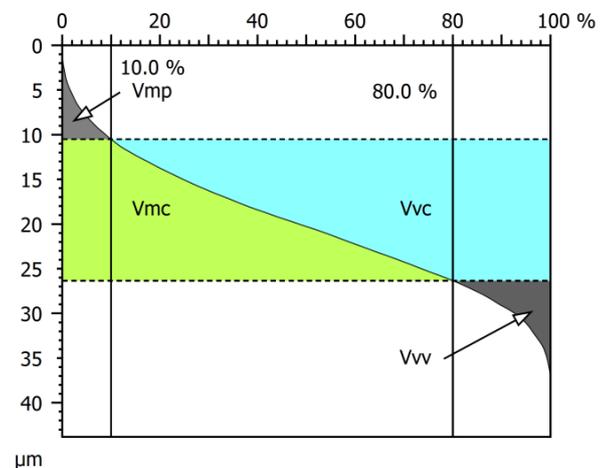


Fig. 5. Example of the Abbott curve with selected Functional Parameters (Volume),  $V_x$

4. Results

The methodology of extracting areas and selected results obtained for the fatigue fracture surface by the InfiniteFocus® IF G4 focus variation microscope during the experimental investigations is graphically presented in Fig. 6. All 3D parameters have been calculated on the whole current surface, as marked in Fig. 6. The whole current surface was reduced to eliminate the final break, discontinuities and "non-sampling" areas.

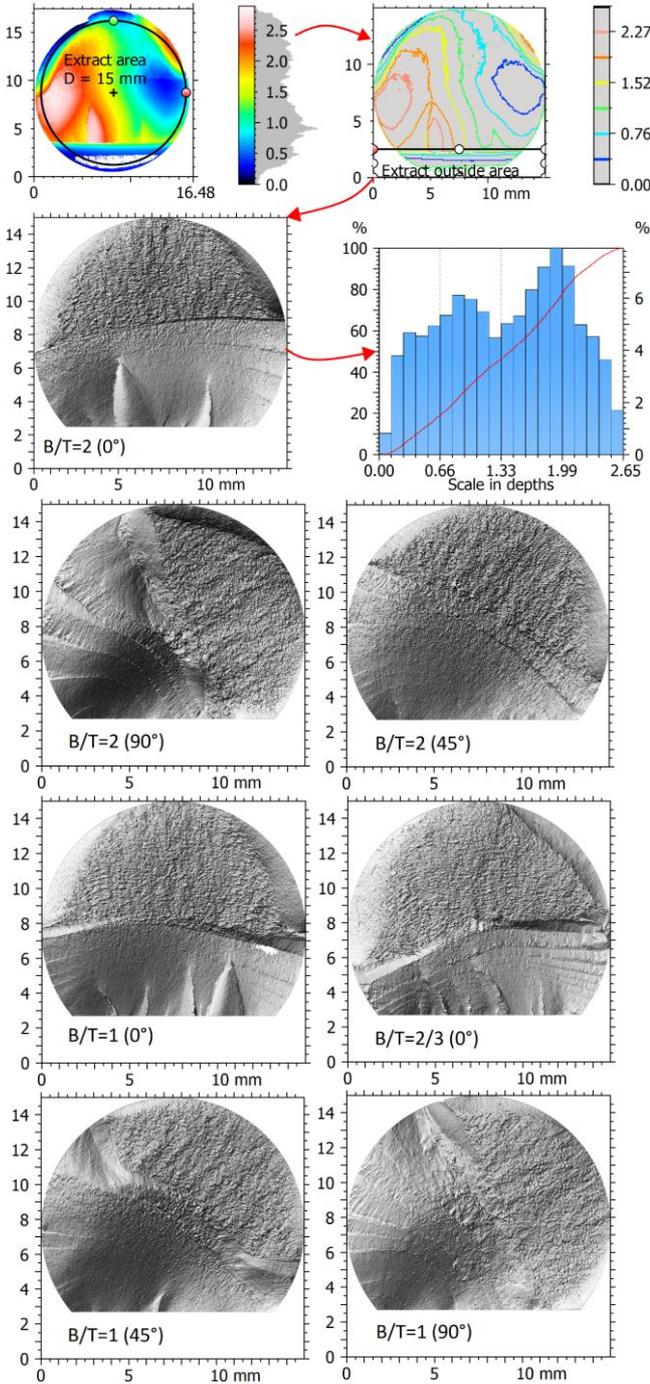


Fig. 6. The whole current reduced surfaces

The effect of B/T ratio on height parameters  $S_x$  is shown in Figures 7 and 8. The effect of B/T rati on functional (volume)  $V_x$  parameters is displayed in Figure 9. For the sake of clarity, the B/T ratios are accounted for in terms of normal stress to shear stress ratios ( $\sigma/\tau$ ), i.e.  $\sigma/\tau = 2$ ,  $\sigma/\tau = 4$ ,  $\sigma/\tau = 4/3$ , which correspond to  $B/T=2$ ,  $B/T=1$ , and  $B/T=2/3$ , respectively.

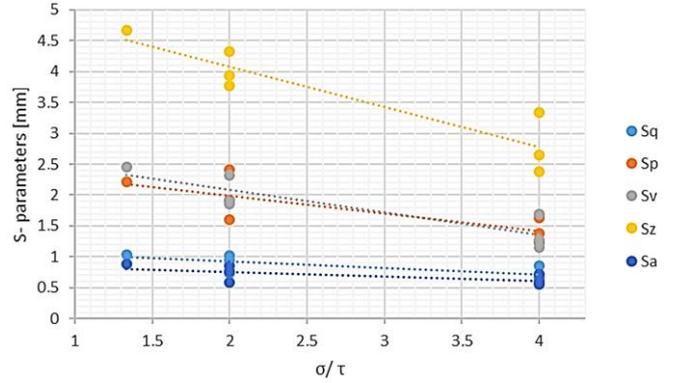


Fig. 7. Height parameters  $S_x$  of the investigated fracture surfaces for different bending-torsion ratios

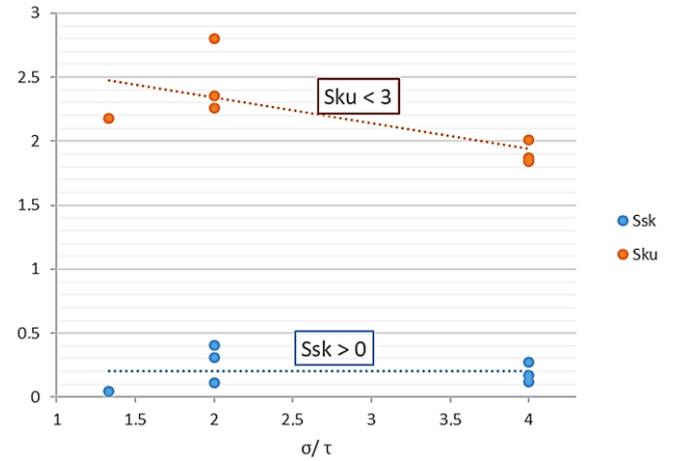


Fig. 8. Kurtosis  $S_{ku}$  and skewness  $S_{sk}$  of the investigated fracture surfaces for different B/T ratios

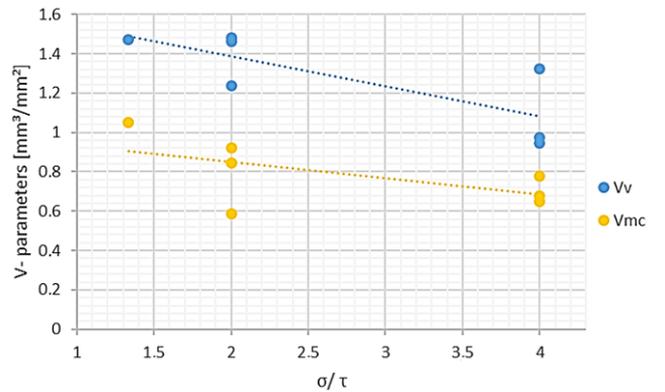


Fig. 9. Functional parameters (volume) for investigated fracture surfaces

Generally, positive Ssk indicates the presence of more peaks, while negative Ssk shows the presence of more valleys; a Ssk value close to zero indicates symmetrical distribution of surface irregularities. The normal value distribution has a Sku value equal to 3. The Sku parameter reveals the presence of excessively high peaks or deep valleys on the surface for  $Sku > 3$ , and lack of these features for  $Sku < 3$ .

The same parts of the sample (grip side) were used for the study of surface topography, which is confirmed by the re-

sults. All Ssk values were positive, which indicates the predominance of peaks on the surface. While all Sku values were less than 3 what is related to the absence on the surface of inordinately high peaks or deep valleys.

There is a linear relationship with the  $\sigma/\tau$  (B/T) ratio for both the Sx and Vx parameters presented in Figures 7 and 9, respectively.

Figure 10 presents crack length 2b relative to number of cycles N for different loading scenarios.

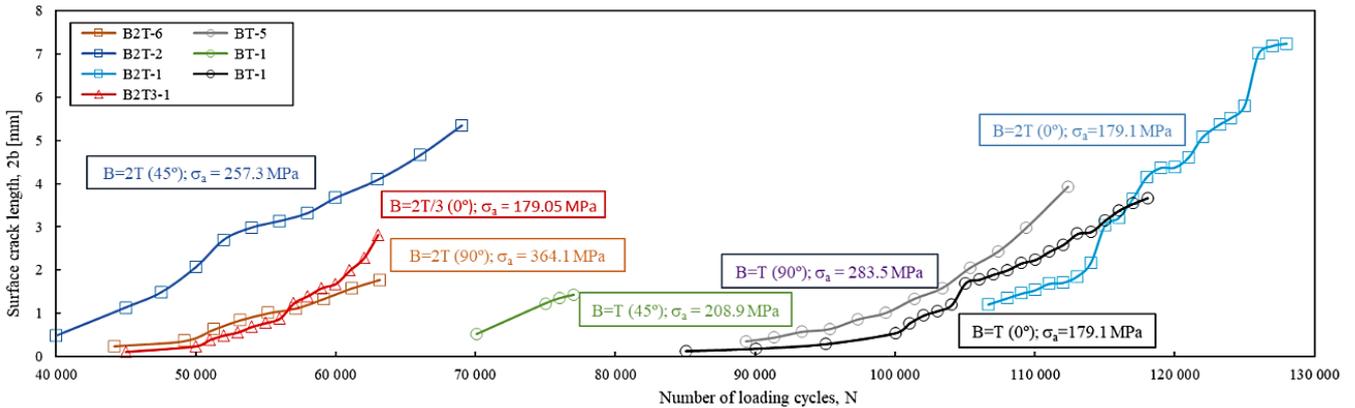


Fig. 10. Crack length 2b vs. Number of cycles N

### 5. Discussion

Fig. 11 shows the number of cycles to crack initiation  $N_i$  vs. surface roughness parameters Sa and Vv. The surface parameters Sa and Vv were selected from the group Sx and Vx, respectively, as the most representative. Analyzing the results of experimental tests shown in the diagram, one can see that the values of both Sa and Vv are higher for larger number of cycles to crack initiation  $N_i$  values. Smaller values, for both surface parameters and the number of cycles, occur for B/T=2 loadings, while for the other loading combinations the values tend to be higher.

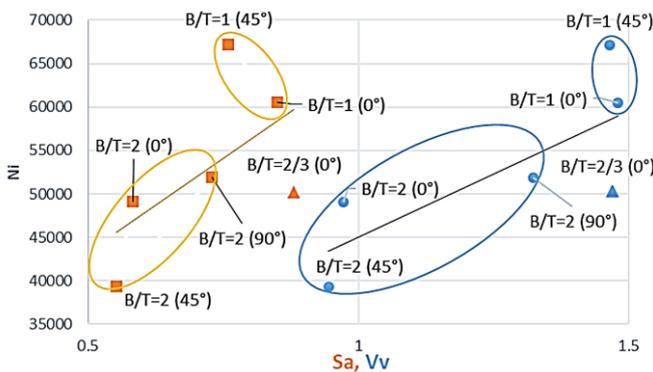


Fig. 11. The number of cycles to crack initiation  $N_i$  in function of surface roughness parameters Sa and Vv for different loading cases

Figure 12 presents selected surface fracture parameters (Sa, Vv) in function of the bending moment angle and the bending-torsion ratio. It is a box and whisker chart, where the mean marker of the selected series is shown as “x”, and “o” represents the data points that lie between the lower whisker and

the upper whisker lines. The median is excluded from the calculation if the number of values in the data is odd. The two boxplots, showing the average values of the surface parameters Sa and Vv from the bending-torsion ratio, display the same relationships. That is, the smallest average values of Sa and Vv occur for B/T=2, while the largest occur for B/T=2/3. However, the maximum values were found for two subsequent boxplots presenting the average values of the surface parameters Sa and Vv at a bending moment angle equal to 0 (i.e.  $\theta=0^\circ$ ).

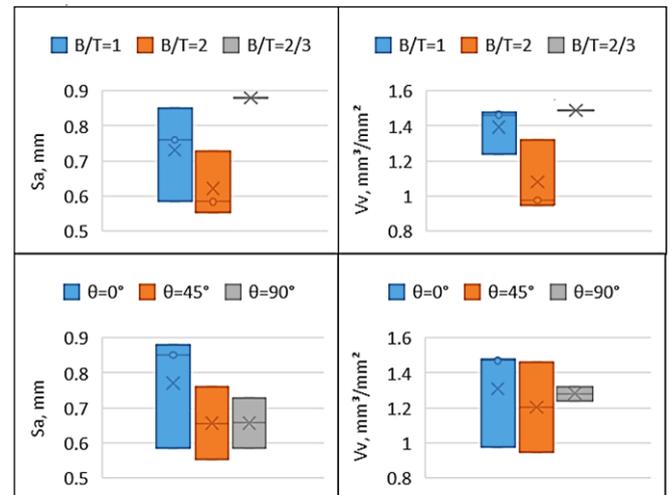
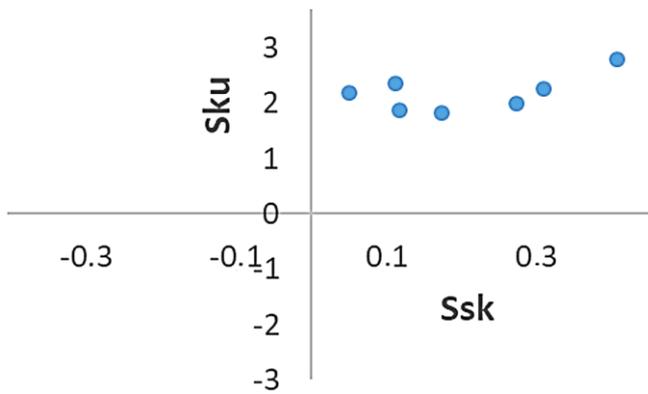


Fig. 12. Boxplot characterising Sa and Vv in the function of the bending moment angle  $\theta$  and bending-torsion ratio

Surface parameters changes during the crack process do not influence the characteristics of the surface. This is clear by comparing the results of Sku–Ssk presented in Figure 13, since

they are close which means that there was no change in configuration of parameters  $S_{ku}$  and  $S_{sk}$ .



**Fig. 13.** The map of kurtosis ( $S_{ku}$ ) versus skewness ( $S_{sk}$ ) for investigated fractures surfaces

As mentioned before, all  $S_{sk}$  values were positive, which indicates the predominance of peaks on surfaces. While all  $S_{ku}$  values were less than 3 which is connected with the absence of inordinately high peaks or deep valleys on surfaces. Such high compliance results from the measurements of only one (the same) sides of broken specimens.

## 6. Conclusions

The presented analysis shows that the method used to measure the fatigue fracture is adequate for investigating fractures for a wide range of cases. The most significant results of this study can be presented as follows:

- The highest values of  $S_x$  and  $V_x$  occur for  $B/T = 2/3$  and affects on smaller values for next both levels  $B/T=1$  and  $B/T=2$ , respectively;
- High compliance of  $S_{sk}$  and  $S_{ku}$  parameters proves the large dependence of these parameters on the grip side and, thus, the way it affects the material;
- Surface parameters ( $S_x$ , and  $V_x$ ) are higher for higher values of the number of cycles to crack initiation ( $N_i$ );
- The smallest values of the number of cycles to crack initiation ( $N_i$ ) and of the surface parameters ( $S_x$ , and  $V_x$ ) were found for  $B/T=2$ ;
- The largest values of the number of cycles to crack initiation ( $N_i$ ) and of the surface parameters ( $S_x$ , and  $V_x$ ) occurred for  $B/T=1$ ;
- The two conclusions mentioned above confirm the dependence between the surface roughness and the bending-torsion ratio.

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## 非零平均应力弯曲扭转疲劳对34CrNiMo6缺口钢板断裂表面参数的影响

### 關鍵詞

多轴疲劳 弯曲扭转 缺口效应 疲劳断裂 表面形貌

### 摘要

现代的材料测试方法要求使用最新技术，并结合测量和计算方法。找到定量描述故障的方法很重要，这样它可以帮助进行高精度设计。本文研究了裂纹形状和断裂表面变化的加载方向。整个断裂面方法的优点是在研究其他材料，形状和载荷方面简单易行。在具有较低  $\sigma / \tau$  ( $B / T$ ) 比的破坏样本中观察到较高的断裂表面参数 ( $S_x, V_x$ ) 值。已经观察到，与  $B = T$  不同的载荷组合会出现具有少量循环的最大裂纹长度。对于较大数量的裂纹起始 ( $N_i$ ) 值循环，分析的表面参数  $S_x, V_x$  也会更高。