# University of Niš Faculty of Mechanical Engineering



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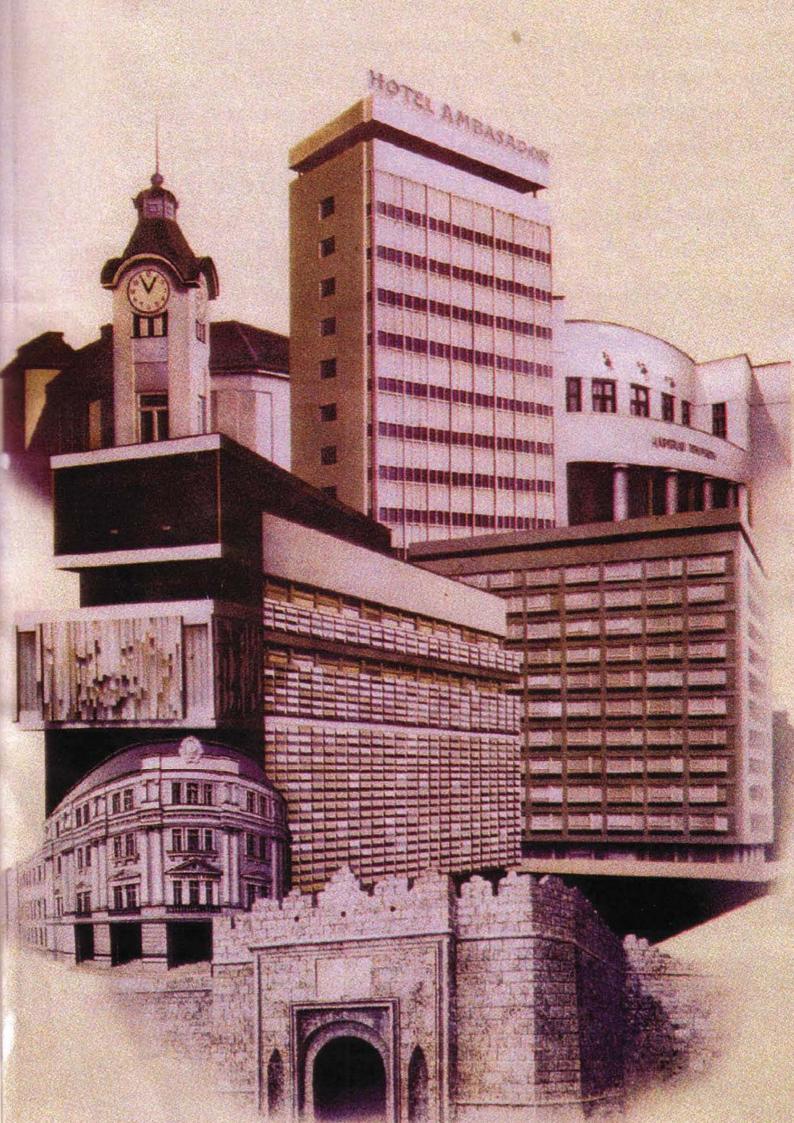
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## OPTIMIZATION OF THE SADDLE SUPPORT STRUCTURE OF THE FREIGHT WAGON TYPE SHIMMNS

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Marko TOPALOVIĆ<sup>5</sup>

Abstract — This paper presents the optimization process of the saddle support structure of the freight wagon type Shimmns intended for the transportation of the sheet coils using the Finite Element Method. Analysis of the information about the similar wagons and their behavior in exploitation, reveals that there are common characteristic critical areas where the initial cracks occurs, and those are the welded joints in saddle support structure. Due the existence of coil sheets with different dimensions, the whole range of coil sheets is modelled to cover all possible load cases in according to standards. Based on the results of the initial analysis, it is concluded that the greatest impact on the crack formation in the critical area has the fatigue of the material in welded zone caused by the cyclic fatigue loads in vertical direction. After the reason has been established, reconstruction was done in such a way that prevents the occurrence of the cracks on a new wagon. With reconstruction completed, new wagon with the modified support structure was analyzed in accordance with appropriate standards in the freight wagon industry for all of the load cases. Results with optimized support structure showed improvement, especially of stress reduction in critical areas.

Keywords - Optimization, FEM, Freight Wagon, Fatigue, Coil Sheet

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Shimmns wagons are used for transportation of the metal sheet coils (primarily steel), which can have different diameter, width, and subsequently mass, as well as different placement on the wagon saddles, therefore a wagon must be able to withstand a wide range of load cases set by the International Union of Railways (UIC). Particular standards used are TSI [1] and BS EN 12663-2 [2].

Numerical analysis for 134 load cases, according to standards [1] and [2] was performed using the Finite Element Method (FEM) [3]. FEMAP software [4] is used as pre and post-processor for the FEM mesh generation and display of the results. FEM analysis itself was done using NX Nastran solver, which is built in FEMAP. The initial results show that for all of the static load cases, wagon satisfies safety criteria, i.e. maximum calculated stresses are lower than permissible stress. However, according to

Eurocode 3 [5], in order to insure fatigue strength for important structural segments, permissible stress is reduced using the scale factor for safe life, and for some load cases, there are small areas of the wagon structure that have stress concentration above permissible limit, those spots are located in the characteristic welds of the saddle support structure. By analyzing similar wagons of the same type from other manufacturers and collecting the information about their behavior in exploitation, it is confirmed that these are common characteristic critical areas where the initial crack occurs.

Detail modelling of these zones is conducted, including mesh convergence testing in several iterations. Optimization performed in FEMAP reduces stresses in these areas, and the proposed modifications ensures safety in exploitation with minimal and cost effective changes in the wagon design.

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### 2. THE SHIMMNS WAGON MODEL

A technical description of four-axle bogie wagon type Shimmns is given in [6]. The wagon is designed for transportation of sheets coils that are loaded in the horizontal position onto five cradles. Transported coils need to be protected from weather conditions as it can be seen in the Fig. 1.



Fig.1. Partially uncovered Shimmns wagon

The main characteristics of the Shimmns wagon, according to [6] are given in Tab. 1.

Tab. 1. Technical data of wagon type Shimmns

Track width	1435mm
Gauge	TSI G1
Number of wheelsets	4
Length over buffers	12040mm
Central bolts distance between	7000mm
Load opening width	2400mm
Wagon height from the rail	~4275mm
Tare weight	22t±2%
Max. cargo weight	68t
Max. axle load	22.5t
Max. speed (empry/loaded)	120/100km/h
Bogie type	Y25 Lsi(f) - C
The smallest curve radius	35m

Technical drawing, and FEM model of Shimmns wagon are shown in Fig. 2. and Fig. 3. respectively.

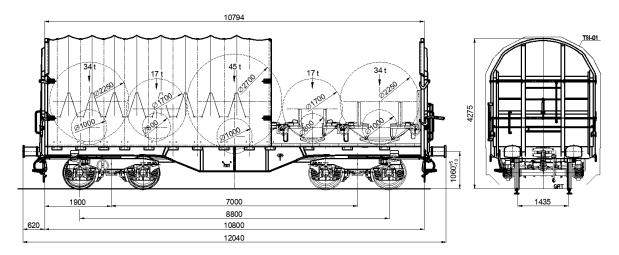


Fig. 2. Technical drawing of Shimmns wagon

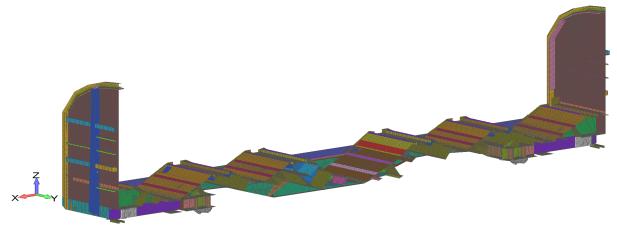


Fig.3. FEM model of Shimmns wagon

The FEM model is used to analyze wagon support structure, and does not include bogies, cover and other additional elements, which are represented in the model as loads and constraints. Due to symmetry, one half of the wagon is modeled in FEM. Shell elements of the appropriate thickness and 3D elements (for modeling of support elements) were used for creating the finite element mesh. The structure is modeled in details with 212991 elements and 218890 nodes and within the calculation there is a system of about one million and three hundred thousand equations being solved. General element side length is about 20 mm, with local mesh refinement in area of interest, (Fig. 4).

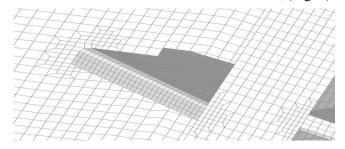


Fig.4. Mesh refinement around welded joints

The wagon is made of steel S355J2+N [6], with the following characteristics, shown in Tab. 2.

Tab. 2. S355J2+N material characteristics

Physical Characteristics			
E [N/mm <sup>2</sup> ]	ρ [kg/mm³]	ν	
$2.10 \cdot 10^5$	7.85·10 <sup>-6</sup>	0.3	
Mechanical Characteristics			
R <sub>e</sub> [N/mm <sup>2</sup> ]	$R_m [N/mm^2]$	$KV[J]^1$	
355	490-630	27	

The Table 3 shows range of diameters and weight of the steel coils for each cradle [5].

Tab. 3. Maximum loading of the cradle and dimensions of the steel coils

Cradle no.	Coil diameter [mm]	Load [t]
1	1000 - 2250	34
2	800 – 1700	17
3	1000 - 2700	45
4	800 – 1700	17
5	1000 - 2250	34

Total weight of steel coils that one wagon can carry is 68 tons (see Tab. 1.) and this weight can be attained using the combination of different diameter and width of the coils shown in Tab. 3.

Not all combinations are simulated, instead the focus was on boundary cases with the maximum width or maximum diameter of coils as it is assumed they are most critical. For these extremes, we analyzed different combination of coil size and placement, examples of some considered load cases are shown in Fig. 5 and Fig. 6.

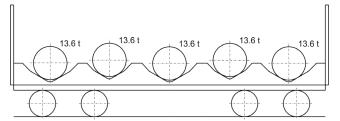


Fig. 5. Evenly distributed load on all 5 cradles

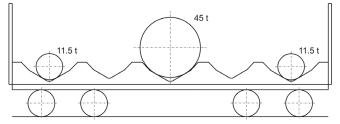


Fig. 6. Big coil in the middle. smaller on front and back cradle

These are just 2 examples of the vertical load scenarios, which are analyzed for both maximum width and maximum diameter cases. The final report also includes longitudinal load cases for buffers and the coupling areas, lifting, jacking, as well as load combinations and service fatigue loads. In total 134 load cases were analyzed, and since the initial shape failed to meet safety criteria for some load cases, several iterations were made until final design was obtained.

These changes were performed using engineering experience and FEM analysis in FEMAP, adopting the different design approaches, adding the reinforcement ribs, for example.

## 3. OPTIMIZATION USING FEMAP AND EXPERIENCE

3 types of optimization are shown in Fig. 7.

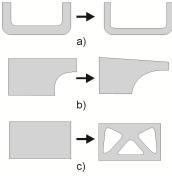


Fig. 7. Different optimization types: a) parametric; b) shape; c) topology

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> KV – material fracture toughness at -20°C

Parametric optimization changes only properties of the structures while the geometry remains the same, this primarily means changing the plate thickness until the stress is reduced below permissible levels [1]. This optimization improved overall behavior of wagon for certain load cases, however, dynamic loads, such are buffing test and loading, create stress concentration in small areas, that needed to be addressed differently.

Shape optimization changes dimensions and layout of existing features, and it is more complex since it requires changes in FEM mesh, so it's usually done only when necessary. We used the shape optimization for the wagon design to alleviate the stress concentration.

Topology optimization implies the creation of the new features, mostly free shape openings for even stress distribution, but in this case, added features are strengthening ribs and plates.

### 4. OPTIMIZATION RESULTS

In this section we will show design improvements and stress reduction achieved by the optimization. In Fig. 8. the actual crack on a wagon in exploitation is shown. FEM model of the initial design is shown in Fig. 9., and the new optimized model in Fig. 10. Von Misses stress for the vertical load shown in Fig. 5., for central saddle support structure, viewed from below the wagon is shown in Fig. 9. and Fig. 10.



Fig.8. Crack in the welded joint on the actual wagon

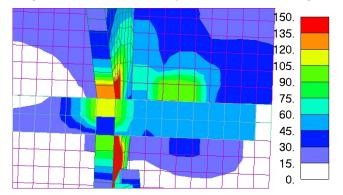


Fig.9. Stress concentration in the initial model

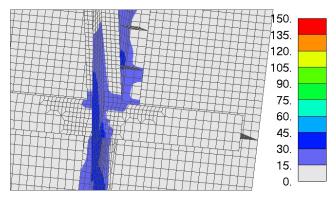


Fig. 10. Stress reduction in the optimized design

As it can be seen from Fig. 10., mesh needed to be refined, U profile bar (bottom of Fig. 8. and Fig. 9.) was removed, and strengthening ribs were added in the final model.

### 5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the methodology used for the analysis of fatigue crack formation, and reconstruction of wagon structure which will prevent recurrence of the cracks in the refurbished wagons, and to make the new wagons impervious to cracks. The analysis was conducted for 134 load cases, according to the standards defined in [1],[2] and during the process of design improvement, several iterations of mesh refinement and geometry changes were made resulting in an optimized wagon which satisfy all safety criteria and is more resilient to fatigue crack formation.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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