



Society of Chemists and Technologists of Macedonia

Сојуз на хемичарите и технолозите на Македонија

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BOOK of ABSTRACTS

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Society of Chemists and Technologists of Macedonia 20–

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PHYSICAL, STRUCTURAL CHEMISTRY, SPECTROSCOPY AND ELECTROCHEMISTRY

POSTER PRESENTATION

PSSE P-1	<u>I. Dimitrievska</u> , A. Grozdanov, P. Paunovic Comprehensive Structural Analysis of Gamma Irradiated Carbon Nanomaterials	129
PSSE P-2	A. Leniart, M.-M. Dzemidovich, A. Kosińska, B. Rudolf and <u>S. Skrzypek</u> The First Electrochemical Studies of Metallo-carbonyl Complexes with Imides	130
PSSE P-3	<u>J. Sela</u> , L. Stojanov, M. Bukleski, A. Reka, S. Dimitrovska-Lazova, V. Mirčeski, S. Aleksovska Cyclic Voltammetry Study of DMAPbI₃ Perovskite Material	131
PSSE P-4	<u>K. Najkov</u> , V. Stefov, V. Koleva, M. Najdoski Structural, Spectroscopic and Thermal Analysis of Hydrogenphosphate Salts Ca₂MH₇(PO₄)₄·2H₂O (M = K⁺, NH⁺)	132
PSSE P-5	<u>R. Idrizovska</u> , <u>M. Organdjieva</u> , L. Stojanov and V. Mirceski Oxidation Mechanism of Dopamine and Serotonin Using Cyclic and Square-Wave Voltammetry	133
PSSE P-6	<u>I. Škugor Rončević</u> , M. Buzuk, M. Buljac, J. Dugeč, and N. Vladislavić Micro-Dendritic Electrodeposited Bismuth and Food Coloring Sensing	134
PSSE P-7	<u>S. I. Stevanović</u> , D.L. Milošević, D. V. Tripković, N.D. Nikolić, V. R. Čosović and V. M. Maksimović Design of PtSnZn Nanocatalysts for Anodic Reactions in Fuel Cells	135
PSSE P-8	<u>A. Cvetkovski</u> and E. Drakalska Correlation of H-bonding Distances and Strengths in API Solvates Case Study on Nitrofurantoin and Pyridoxine	136
PSSE P-9	<u>T. Tushev</u> , S. Harizanova, R. Stoyanova and V. Koleva Phosphate-Based Mixed Polyanion Compounds as Promising Electrode Materials for Post-Lithium Ion Batteries	137
PSSE P-10	<u>A. Simović</u> and J. Bajat <i>Pinus Nigra</i> Essential Oil and Its Main Active Components as Sustainable Compounds for Mitigation of Carbon Steel Corrosion	138
PSSE P-11	<u>N.D. Nikolić</u> , J.D. Lović, V.M. Maksimović and S.I. Stevanović Correlation Between Morphology and Structure of Galvanostatically Electrodeposited Tin Dendrites	139
PSSE P-12	<u>J.D. Lović</u> , N.D. Nikolić, P. M. Živković, M. Stevanović Facile synthesis of Sn-Pd catalysts with high performances for ethanol electro-oxidation in alkaline medium	140
PSSE P-13	<u>V. S. Cvetković</u> , N. M. Petrović, D. Feldhaus, L. Prasakti, B. Friedrich, J. N. Jovičević Greenhouse gas emission from the rare earth metals electrolysis	141
PSSE P-14	V. S. Cvetković, N. D. Nikolić, M. G. Košević, T. S. Barudžija, S. B. Dimitrijević and J. N. Jovičević Copper Electrodeposition onto Palladium from a Deep Eutectic System Based on Choline Chloride	142
PSSE P-15	<u>D. L. Milošević</u> , S. I. Stevanović and D. V. Tripković Formic Acid Electrooxidation on Cr-Supported Platinum Thin Film Catalyst	143

PSSE P-13

Greenhouse gas emission from the rare earth metals electrolysis

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Rare earth metals, mainly related to neodymium, praseodymium or dysprosium are usually produced by molten salt electrolysis in which oxy-fluoride or chloride molten salt systems are used as the electrolytic bath. Minimizing the perfluorocarbon compounds (PFC) emission in rare earth electrolysis should be the primary goal owing to their high global warming potential¹. There is growing interest in the oxygen and fluoride ions oxidation reactions on the graphite anode, particularly in the mechanism of C-F in the PFC formation. In the present work, we investigated the off-gas emission during the Nd and Pr electrodeposition from oxy-fluoride melts by the in-situ FTIR-spectrometry to understand the nature of the reactions taking place on the anode and the mechanisms behind them. During the electrolytic reduction of rare earth metals in the oxy-fluoride system with tungsten or molybdenum used as cathode, tungsten as a reference electrode and a GC electrode used as an anode, the produced oxygen species subsequently react with carbon and generate CO and CO₂. With F⁻ ions present, PFC compound emission, such as CF₄ and C₂F₆ gases also can be evolved from the GC anode as well. During the electrolysis, carbon monoxide was evolved in variable quantities, but always below 1000 ppm. Evolved quantity of CO₂ was around 200 ppm during the potentiostatic deposition. The quantity of recorded CF₄ was well below 10 ppm. At the same time C₂F₆ was not detected under the applied potentiostatic regime of the electrolysis. To suppress greenhouse gas emissions and to achieve high-purity Nd and Pr metal production on the working substrate we chose low-deposition overpotential.

Keywords: rare earth metals, electrodeposition, greenhouse gas emission

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