

**Aspects of the determination of the platinum group elements and arsenic by inductively
coupled plasma mass spectrometry**

by

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CONTENTS

	Page
Summary	i
Samevatting	iii
List of abbreviations used	v
1. The technique of inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry	1
1.1 The inductively coupled plasma	1
1.1.1 Torch and plasma	1
1.1.2 RF coupling	3
1.1.3 Sample introduction	4
1.1.4 Sample history	4
1.1.5 Plasma populations	7
1.1.6 Distributions of ions in the plasma	7
1.2 Ion extraction	10
1.2.1 Boundary layer and sheath	10
1.2.2 Plasma potential and secondary discharge	12
1.2.3 Supersonic jet	13
1.2.4 Gas dynamics	14
1.3 Ion focusing	15
1.3.1 Operation of ion lenses	15
1.3.2 Ion lenses in ICP-MS	17
1.3.3 Space charge effects	17
1.4 Quadrupole mass spectrometers	18
1.4.1 Quadrupole configuration	19
1.4.2 Ion trajectories	19
1.4.3 Characteristics of mass spectra from quadrupoles	20
1.4.4 Scanning and data acquisition	21

1.5	Ion detection	21
1.5.1	Channeltron electron multipliers	21
1.5.2	Signal measurement by pulse counting	22
2.	Optimisation of instrument parameters in inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry	23
2.1	Introduction	23
2.2	Experimental	23
2.2.1	Instrument	23
2.2.2	Multi-element solution	24
2.3	Effect of parameters on ICP-MS signals	25
2.3.1	Effect of torch adjustment	25
2.3.2	Effects of coolant and auxiliary gas flow rates	35
2.3.3	Effect of power and aerosol carrier gas flow rate	41
2.3.4	Effect of ion lens settings	52
2.4	Conclusion	74
3.	The quantitative determination of the platinum group elements and gold by ICP-MS	77
3.1	Introduction	77
3.2	Experimental	79
3.2.1	Preparation of solutions	79
3.2.2	Optimisation of the ICP-MS	80
3.2.3	Mass scans of the platinum group elements and gold	80
3.2.4	Data acquisition	80
3.3	Results and discussion	80
3.3.1	Mass scans of a solution of the platinum group elements and gold	80
3.3.2	Intensities as measured	81
3.3.3	The effect of aqua regia concentration on the ratios of the isotopes of the platinum group elements and gold to the isotopes of the internal standards	82

3.3.4	Calibration curves	98
3.3.5	Concentrations as calculated from the calibration curves	100
3.4	Conclusion	111
4.	The quantitative determination of mono-isotopic arsenic in acidic matrices	112
4.1	Introduction	112
4.1.1	Aspects of the toxicity of arsenic	112
4.1.2	Levels of arsenic in the human body	112
4.1.3	Techniques employed	113
4.2	Polyatomic ion interferences	113
4.2.1	Characteristics of polyatomic ions	113
4.2.2	Possible procedures for the correction of polyatomic interferences	114
4.3	Arsenic determinations in biological samples	115
4.4	Experimental	115
4.4.1	Preparation of solutions	115
4.4.2	Optimisation of the instrument	116
4.4.3	Mass scans of arsenic and the internal standards in the various acidic matrices	117
4.4.4	Data acquisition	117
4.5	Results and discussion	118
4.5.1	Mass scans of a $20 \mu\text{g dm}^{-3}$ As solution in various acidic media	118
4.5.2	Analysis without employing correction factors	126
4.5.3	Effect of using molecular (mass 75 / mass 77) corrections in a 0.10% v/v HCl matrix on the quantitative determination of arsenic	135
4.5.4	Effect of using molecular (mass 75 / mass 77) corrections in a 0.50% v/v HCl matrix on the quantitative determination of arsenic	143
4.5.5	Effect of using molecular (mass 75 / mass 77) corrections in a 1.00% v/v HCl matrix on the quantitative determination of arsenic	152
4.5.6	Effect of using molecular (mass 75 / mass 77) corrections in a 1.50% v/v HCl matrix on the quantitative determination of arsenic	160

4.5.7	Effect of using molecular (mass 75 / mass 77) corrections in a 2.00% v/v HCl matrix on the quantitative determination of arsenic	169
4.5.8	Effect of using molecular (mass 75 / mass 77) corrections in a 2.50% v/v HCl matrix on the quantitative determination of arsenic	177
4.5.9	Effect of using molecular (mass 75 / mass 77) corrections in a (0.10% v/v HNO ₃ + 0.10% v/v HCl) matrix on the quantitative determination of arsenic	186
4.5.10	Effect of using molecular (mass 75 / mass 77) corrections in a (0.50% v/v HNO ₃ + 0.50% v/v HCl) matrix on the quantitative determination of arsenic	194
4.5.11	Effect of using molecular (mass 75 / mass 77) corrections in a (1.00% v/v HNO ₃ + 1.00% v/v HCl) matrix on the quantitative determination of arsenic	203
4.6	Conclusion	211
5.	The quantitative determination of the platinum group elements and gold in a certified reference material	213
5.1	Introduction	213
5.2	Certified reference material	214
5.3	Lead fire assay	214
5.3.1	Flux reagents	215
5.4	Literature survey of the analysis of SARM 7	216
5.5	Experimental	222
5.5.1	Lead fire assay procedure	222
5.5.2	ICP-MS procedure	223
5.6	Results and discussion	224
5.6.1	Results of the analysis of SARM 7	224
5.6.2	Recovery of Au	225
5.6.3	Recovery of Ir	227
5.6.4	Recovery of Pd	227
5.6.5	Recovery of Pt	227
5.6.6	Recovery of Rh	227
5.6.7	Recovery of Ru	228

5.6.8	Lead fire assay as pre-concentration technique for the platinum group elements and gold	228
5.6.9	ICP-MS procedure	229
5.6.10	Comparison of ICP-MS procedure with those of other workers	229
5.7	Recommendations	230
5.8	Conclusion	231
6.	The quantitative determination of arsenic in a certified reference material	232
6.1	Introduction	232
6.2	Certified reference material	232
6.3	Literature survey	233
6.4	Experimental	241
6.4.1	Reconstitution of Seronorm Trace Elements Urine	241
6.4.2	ICP-MS procedure	241
6.5	Results and discussion	242
6.6	Recommendations	243
6.7	Conclusion	244
	References	245
	Addendum A: Averages of the intensities measured of the isotopes of the internal standards, the platinum group elements and gold	254
	Addendum B: Calibration data for the isotopes of the platinum group elements and gold	258

SUMMARY

Aspects of the determination of the platinum group elements and arsenic by inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry

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Inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry is an extremely sensitive analytical technique for the detection of the isotopes of the elements.

The principles of the technique and the instrumentation associated with it were discussed with emphasis being placed on the inductively coupled plasma, ion extraction, ion focusing, quadrupole mass spectrometers and ion detection.

In order to set up a procedure for the optimisation of the inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometer and due to the complex nature of the technique a study was made of the effects of instrument parameters on the signals of the light elements, the heavy elements, the background intensities and the formation of interferences, for example polyatomic oxides and doubly charged ions. The parameters investigated include torch adjustment in the x , y and z directions, the coolant and auxiliary gas flow rates, the power, the aerosol carrier gas flow rate as well as ion lens settings.

An attempt was made to optimise and refine the method of quantitative determination of the platinum group elements (iridium, palladium, platinum, rhodium, ruthenium) and gold by means of inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry. Selected isotopes of argon, scandium, yttrium and lanthanum were considered as possible internal standards for such determinations. The effect of the concentration of aqua regia present in solution on the ratios of the isotopes of the analytes to the isotopes of the internal standards was determined. Extensive regression data were compiled for calibrations involving the isotopes of the platinum group elements and gold with the mentioned isotopes as internal standards. The accuracy of quantitative determinations using these calibration curves was then determined in matrices comprising of various concentrations of aqua regia.

The quantitative determination of mono-isotopic arsenic in acidic matrices was investigated. Interferences render the quantitative determination of arsenic in a chloride containing matrix almost impossible. The reason for this is the fact that the argon isotope of mass 40, which is present due to the plasma, and the chlorine isotopes of masses 35 and 37, which is usually present due to the sample matrix or introduced via reagents, combine to form polyatomic ions at masses 75 and 77. The only naturally occurring isotope of arsenic is detected at mass 75. Various procedures for the correction of these polyatomic interferences on the analyte signal of arsenic were investigated in an attempt to make the accurate detection of low levels of arsenic by means of inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry possible. In order to test the viability of using these correction procedures and to verify the accuracy thereof, molecular correction factors, employing the formation of polyatomic ions at masses 75 and 77, were determined in a number of acidic matrices. The effects of these correction factors combined with the use of several isotopes of chlorine, argon, scandium, yttrium and lanthanum as internal standards, on the quantitative determination of arsenic in various acidic matrices, including nitric acid, hydrochloric acid and combinations thereof, were monitored.

Certified reference materials were analysed in order to verify the validity of the developed methods.

SAMEVATTING

Aspekte van die bepaling van die platinum groep elemente en arseen deur middel van induktief gekoppelde plasma massaspektrometrie

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Induktief gekoppelde plasma massaspektrometrie is 'n baie sensitiewe analitiese tegniek vir die bepaling van die isotope van die elemente.

Die basiese beginsels van die tegniek en die instrumentasie wat daarmee geassosieer word, is bespreek en klem is gelê op die induktief gekoppelde plasma, ioon-ekstraksie, ioon-fokusering, kwadrupool massaspektrometers en ioon-deteksie.

Ten einde 'n prosedure daar te stel vir die optimisering van die induktief gekoppelde plasma massaspektrometer en as gevolg van die komplekse aard van die tegniek, is 'n studie gemaak van die effek van instrument veranderlikes op die seine van die ligte elemente, die swaarder elemente, die agtergrond intensiteite en die vorming van steurders, byvoorbeeld poli-atomiese oksides en dubbel gelaaië ione. Die veranderlikes wat ondersoek is, is onder andere verstelling van die fakkel in die x -, y - en z -rigtings, die vloeiempo's van die verkoelings- en plasmagasse, die plasmadrywing, die vloeiempo van die verstuiwergas asook die verstellings van die ioon-lense.

'n Poging is aangewend om die metode van kwantitatiewe bepaling van die platinum groep elemente (iridium, palladium, platinum, rodium, rutenium) en goud deur middel van induktief gekoppelde plasma massaspektrometrie te optimiseer en te verfyn. Sekere isotope van argon, skandium, yttrium en lantaan is oorweeg as moontlike interne standaarde vir sodanige bepalings. Die effek van die konsentrasie van koningswater teenwoordig in oplossing op die verhoudings van die isotope van die analiete tot die isotope van die interne standaarde, is bepaal. Omvattende regressie data vir kalibrasies van die isotope van die platinum groep elemente en goud met die genoemde isotope as interne standaarde, is bepaal. Die akkuraatheid van kwantitatiewe bepalings

deur van hierdie kalibrasie kurwes gebruik te maak, in matrikse wat uit verskeie konsentrasies van koningswater bestaan, is vasgestel.

Die kwantitatiewe bepaling van arseen, wat slegs een isotoop het, in verskillende suurmatrikse is ondersoek. Steurders maak die kwantitatiewe bepaling van arseen in 'n chloried-bevattende matriks bykans onmoontlik. Die rede hiervoor is die feit dat die argon-isotoop van massa 40, teenwoordig as gevolg van die plasma, en die chloor-isotope van massas 35 en 37, teenwoordig as gevolg van die monster se matriks of as gevolg van reagense gebruik, kombineer om poli-atomiese ione van massas 75 en 77 te vorm. Die enigste isotoop van arseen wat natuurlik voorkom, word waargeneem by massa 75. Verskeie prosedures om die korreksie van hierdie poli-atomiese steurders op die analiet-sein van arseen te bewerkstellig, is ondersoek. Dit is gedoen in 'n poging om die akkurate bepaling van lae vlakke van arseen deur middel van induktief gekoppelde plasma massa spektrometrie moontlik te maak. Om die haalbaarheid van hierdie korreksie-prosedures te toets en die akkuraatheid daarvan te verifieer, is molekulêre korreksie-faktore, wat berus op die vorming van poli-atomiese ione van massas 75 en 77, bepaal in 'n aantal suurmatrikse. Die effek van hierdie korreksie-faktore, gekombineer met die gebruik van verskeie isotope van argon, chloor, skandium, yttrium en lantaan as interne standaarde, op die kwantitatiewe bepaling van arseen in verskeie suurmatrikse, insluitende salpetersuur, soutsuur en kombinasies daarvan, is vasgestel.

Gesertifiseerde verwysingsmateriale is geanaliseer om die geldigheid van die ontwikkelde metodes te toets.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ICP-MS:	Inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry or Inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometer
ICP-AES:	Inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectrometry or Inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectrometer
RF:	Radio frequency
RSD:	Relative standard deviation
XRF:	X-ray fluorescence spectrometry
AAS:	Atomic absorption spectrometry
GFAAS:	Graphite furnace atomic absorption spectrometry