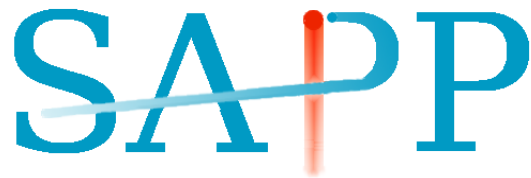


17th Symposium on Application of Plasma Processes



Visegrad Workshop on Research of Plasma Physics



Book of Contributed Papers

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An Eulogy to Ján Dušan Skalný 1944-2008



It is difficult to be present at this SAPP meeting and not see our great friend and colleague Professor Ján Dušan Skalný, for this was very much a conference series in his image, good science discussed in a wonderful location by a scientific family for which Dušan was the ‘father’. His sudden and unexpected death on October 17, 2008 was particularly tragic for me and my colleagues at the Open University where Ján Dušan has been a visiting Leverhulme Professor since May, 2008. Although we had been fortunate to have him visit us on many occasions this extended (one year) fellowship was proving to be a wonderful experience both for its scientific productivity and the social interactions that his presence attracted. In his last few months he made a whole new set of friends, from the academic and research staff, students to the administrative and technical staff, his death was grieved by many who had known him but a short time but who will never forget his zest for science and for life.

It is therefore fitting that we dedicate this SAPP conference to him and take the opportunity to review his long and distinguished career. Ján Dušan Skalný will always be associated with the Comenius University in Bratislava, where he started his professional career as a researcher and scientist in 1966 in the Department of Experimental Physics. His original research was focused on the development of high pressure discharges and it was a field in which he established an international reputation, indeed it was the topic of his Leverhulme Professorship and we were working on a joint paper on cluster ions produced in atmospheric discharges in the week of his death. Anyone who knew Dušan would recognise that he was not likely to take too kindly to direction and accordingly during the communist era in the former Czechoslovakia his career was restricted and he was only able to flourish after the collapse of the iron curtain in 1989. In 1991 was finally appointed associated professor and in 1998 to full professorship in Plasma Physics at Comenius’ University. From 1996 (when I first met him) to 1999 he was Head of the Department of Plasma

Physics at the Comenius University and quickly sought to ensure that the Department built ties with other International groups and 'joined the New Europe'. Soon his students were visiting many of our laboratories as Dušan sought to promote the careers of many young Slovak physicists. Ján Dušan was quick to engage with international projects on the European level being the Slovak representative on many of the EU programmes we have, as a community, benefited from in last decade (EPIC, RADAM, EIPAM, and ECCL) and since 2006 he was Head of the Research Unit of the Slovak Association to the EURATOM Fusion. He was member of several international scientific committees (e.g. HAKONE, ESCAMPIG) and a referee for many journals, always providing authors with thoughtful insight and often a list of relevant references they had not quoted! Ján Dušan also willingly organised many conferences, always taking great care not only to ensure a strong scientific programme but that the conference has plenty of time for networking and building those personal links that lead to so much of our science, he was truly an excellent host.

We have therefore not only lost a close scientific colleague but a true friend. Whilst we will remember him at this SAPP meeting I am sure he would want us to continue with the traditions and style of these meetings which so reflect his character; *work hard and play hard, live life to the full, and do so in an environment of friendship and camaraderie.*

Nigel Mason

Contents

Sponsors	11
Visegrad Workshop on Research of Plasma Physics	19
Invited Lectures.....	21
IL 01 Microwave Plasmas for Hydrogen Production M. Jasinski, M. Dors, H. Nowakowska, Z. Zakrzewski, J. Mizeraczyk	23
IL 02 Corrosion Removal in Low Temperature RF Pulsed Discharge F. Krčma, V. Sázavská, N. Zemánek, R. Přikryl, O. Kozák	27
IL 03 Plasma Sterilization: The Applicability of Discharge and Post-Discharge Plasmas for Medical Sterilization K. Kutasi, V. Guerra, J. Loureiro, C. D. Pintassilgo, P. Sá.....	31
IL 04 Plasma Assisted Preparation of Chitosan-Based Materials and their Applications J. Ráhel, V. Procházka, D. Erben, O. Ševela, H. Polášková	35
Progress Reports.....	39
PR 01 Electron Attachment to Building Blocks of DNA J. Kopyra, C. Koenig, I. Bald, E. Illenberger.....	41
PR 02 Synthesis of Nanopowders in RF Thermal Plasma Reactor J. Szépvölgyi, I. Mohai and Z. Károly	43
PR 03 Temperature Dependence of Binary and Ternary Recombination of H_3^+ Ions with Electrons in Low Temperature Plasma R. Plašil, I. Korolov, T. Kotřík, O. Novotný, P. Hlavenka, P. Dohnal, J. Varju, V. Kokoouline, Chris, H. Greene, J. Glosík.....	45
PR 04 Surface Properties of High-Density Polyethylene Functionalized by Low-Temperature Plasma I. Novák, I. Chodák, I. Krupa, T. Nedelčev, M. Števiar, V. Pollák	47
17 th Symposium on Application of Plasma Processes.....	51
Invited Lectures.....	53
IL 05 Electron Controlled Reactions E. Illenberger	55
IL 06 Air Plasma Chemistry under the Influence of Sprites F. J. Gordillo-Vázquez.....	59
IL 07 Ionization and Oxidation of Organic Pollutants in Atmospheric Plasmas C. Paradisi, E. Marotta, M. Schiorlin and M. Rea	63
IL 08 Chemistry Driven by Low-Energy Electrons at Ultra-Low Temperatures F. Ferreiro da Silva, S. Jaksch, H. Schöbel, P. Waldburger, A. Aleem, A. Mauracher, M. Dampc, F., Zappa, D. K. Bohme, O. Echt, E. Illenberger, T. D. Märk, S. Denifl, P. Scheier	67
IL 09 Molecular Dynamics Simulation on Plasma Surface Interaction - from Industrial Plasma Processing to Fusion Applications M. Yamashiro, A. Suzuki, M. Isobe, and S. Hamaguchi	71
IL 10 Resonances and their Role in Hydrogen Plasma J. Horáček	75
IL 11 Plasma-Enhanced CVD Processes for Synthesis of Carbon Materials F. Le Normand, M. Guláš, P. Veis, C. S. Cojocar, S. Farhat.....	79

IL 12	Selected Ion Flow Tube Mass Spectrometry, SIFT-MS, and Flowing Afterglow Mass Spectrometry, FA-MS, in Medical and Biological Research	
	P. Španěl	81
IL 13	Electron Heating in Capacitively Coupled Radio Frequency Discharges	
	J. Schulze, B. G. Heil, Z. Donkó, D. Luggenhölscher, T. Mussenbrock, R. P. Brinkmann, U. Czarnetzki	85
Progress Reports.....		89
PR 05	Effects of Tungsten Needle Electrodes on Production of H₂O₂ by Pulsed Corona Discharge in Water	
	P. Lukes, M. Clupek, V. Babicky, I. Tothova, V. Janda.....	91
PR 06	Simulation of Titan's Atmosphere in Positive Corona Discharge Fed by Admixtures of N₂ and CH₄ - an Analysis of Gaseous and Solid Products	
	G. Horváth, J. D. Skalný, N. J. Mason, M. Zahoran, J. Országh	93
PR 07	Experimental Determination of Electron Mobility in N₂ and Ar at Ambient Pressure	
	M. Stano, M. Kučera and Š. Matejčík.....	95
PR 08	Investigation of the Carbon-Based Nanocomposites' Properties Synthesized by Thermionic Vacuum Arc Technology	
	R. Vladoiu	97
PR 09	The Viability of Real-Time and Non-Invasive Breath Analysis for Disease Screening	
	C. A. Mayhew and M. E. O'Hara	99
PR 10	Low-Energy Electron Transport Through High Aspect Ratio Al₂O₃ Nanocapillaries	
	A. R. Milosavljević, J. J. Jureta, Gy. Víkor, Z. D. Pešić, D. Šević, M. Mátéfi-Tempfli, S. Mátéfi-Tempfli and B. P. Marinković	103
PR 11	Modeling of Crater Formation in a Direct Current Glow Discharge	
	A. Derzsi, Z. Donkó and P. Hartmann	105
PR 12	Characterization of High Frequency Bipolar Pulse Plasma Discharges Generated in Liquid Solution	
	P. Baroch, Š. Potocký, N. Saito, O. Takai	107
PR 13	Plasma Properties of the Discharge in air Channel with Liquid Wall	
	I. Prsyazhnevych, V. Chernyak, V. Yukhymenko, S. Olzewskij.....	109
PR 14	Degradation of Water-Soluble Organic Compounds in Plasma Torch	
	M. Hlina, J. Domlatil, V. Brozek, M. Hrabovsky	111
PR 15	Modification of Glass Surface by Atmospheric Pressure Plasma	
	T. Homola, A. Buček, A. Zahoranová, D. Velič, M. Černák.....	113
PR 16	Biomass Gasification in Thermal Plasma Reactor	
	M. Konrad, M. Hrabovsky, M. Hlina, and V. Kopecky.....	115
PR 17	Electron Attachment to Unstable Molecules	
	T. A. Field, K. Graupner, D. D. Morrison, D. J. Adams, A. E. Slattery, C. A. Mayhew.....	117
PR 18	Selected ion Flow Tube Mass Spectrometry, SIFT-MS: Fumes of Industrial Explosives	
	K. Dryahina, K. Sovová, J. Kubišta, S. Civiš and P. Španěl.....	121
PR 19	Bio-Decontamination by Transient Spark and Corona Discharges with Electro-Spray	
	Z. Machala, L. Chládková, B. Pongráč, I. Jedlovský, L. Šikurová	123
PR 20	Absolute Dissociative Electron Attachment Cross Sections for Acetylene and Diacetylene	
	O. May, J. Fedor, B. C. Ibanescu, and M. Allan.....	125

PR 21	New Results in Cold Electron Scattering in Gases and Solids D. Field, N. Jones, L. Feketeova, P. Cicman, R. Balog, T. Field, J. P. Ziesel, K. Hoydalsvik, R. Čurik, M. Šulc.....	127
PR 22	Probing Ion-Ligand Binding Motifs in Small Aromatic Cation Clusters J. Langer, A. Patzer, H. Knorke and O. Dopfer	129
PR 23	The Influence of Air Flow on the Temperature of Plasma with Copper Vapour I. L. Babich, V. F. Boretskij, A. N. Veklich	131
PR 24	Investigation of Near Cathode Emissions in One-Sided Barrier Discharges T. Hoder, R. Brandenburg and K.-D. Weltmann	133
Posters	135
P 01	Effect of the Temperature on Dissociative Electron Attachment to Halohydrocarbons A. Aleem, M. Mahmoodi Darian, B. Rittenschober, Š. Matejčík, J. Kočíšek, S. Denifl, T. D. Märk and P. Scheier.....	137
P 02	Resonant Structure of Diacetylene Revealed by Absolute Elastic, Vibrational Excitation and Dissociative Electron Attachment Cross Sections M. Allan, O. May and J. Fedor	139
P 03	Electron Stimulated Double Dehydrogenation of N,N'-diphenylanthracene-9,10-diamine N. L. Asfandiarov, S. A. Pshenichnyuk, V. G. Lukin, A. S. Vorobyev, G. S. Lomakin, A. V. Kukhta, I. N. Kukhta	141
P 04	Chemical Sputtering as Important Etching Mechanism in Plasma Sterilization J. Benedikt, C. Flötgen, L. Byelykh, O. Kylian, F. Rossi, V. Raballand, A. von Keudell.....	143
P 05	On the Vertical Properties of Diffuse Coplanar Surface Barrier Discharge J. Čech, T. Hoder, A. Buček, J. Ráhel', M. Černák	145
P 06	Electron Affinity of the Uracil Molecule: CCSD(T) Calculations Using the Optimized Virtual Orbital Space (OVOS) Approach P. Dedíková, M. Šulka, P. Neogrády, M. Pitoňák, M. Urban.....	147
P 07	Experimental Study of Binary and Ternary Recombination of D₃⁺ Ions with Electrons in He/D₂ Plasma P. Dohnal, I. Korolov, R. Plašil, T. Kotřík, J. Varju, J. Glosík.....	149
P 08	Absolute Dissociative Electron Attachment Cross Sections for Acetylene and Diacetylene J. Fedor, O. May, B. C. Ibanescu, M. Allan.....	151
P 09	Remarks on Probe Measurements on Plasma Pencil Discharge J. Ferdinand, V. Kapička, P. Slavíček.....	153
P 10	Plasma Parameters and Coating Structure Studies in Reactive HIPIMS Discharge Y. Aranda Gonzalvo, A. P. Ehiasarian, A. Vetushka.....	155
P 11	Manipulation of Nano- and Molecular Films by Low-Energy Electrons from a Scanning Tunnelling Microscope (STM) Tip M. Hager, S. Jaksch, R. Stijepovic, P. Scheier	157
P 12	Experimental Investigation of the Collective Dynamics in a Single Layer Dusty Plasma Crystal I. Mohácsi, P. Hartmann, Z. Donkó	159
P 13	The Aging of PECVD TiO₂ Thin Films Modified by Ag Clusters P. Hájková, P. Špatenka.....	161

P 14	Coplanar Surface Barrier Discharge Assisted Generation of Discharges inside the Honeycomb Monolith K. Hensel, M. Leštinský, T. Homola, J. Ráhel'	163
P 15	Carbon Arc Plasma: A Source of Nanocarbons and Spectral Diagnostics A. Huczko, M. Bystrzejewski, H. Lange, O. Łabędź	165
P 16	Physical Properties of Plasma Systems with the Transversal Electrical Discharges and its Applications V. Chernyak, S. Olszewski, I. Prysiazhnevych, V. Yukhymenko, V. Naumov, D. Levko, A. Shchedrin, A. Rybatsev, V. Demchina, V. Kudryavtsev	167
P 17	Experimental and Theoretical Researches of Syngas Generation at the Ethanol Reforming in Plasma – Liquid System V. Ya. Chernyak, V. V. Yukhymenko, A. I. Shchedrin, D. S. Levko, S. V. Olshevskii, V. A. Zrazhevskij, M. O. Verovchuk, V. P. Demchina, V. S. Kudryavzev	169
P 18	Effect of Anode Attachment and Hydrodynamic Instability on Fluctuations of Thermal Plasma Jet O. Chumak, V. Kopecky, T. Kavka, M. Hrabovsky	171
P 19	Evaluation of Characteristics of Plasma Generated in DC Arc Torch with Gas-Water Stabilization of Arc. T. Kavka, A. Maslani, M. Hrabovsky	173
P 20	DC Study of Micro Hollow Cathode Discharge in Ar M. Klas, M. Stano, S. Matejčík	175
P 21	Electron Ionization of Tetravinylsilane: Activation Energies and Relative Cross Sections of Selected Reaction Channels J. Kočišek, J. L. Cayao D., Š. Matejčík	177
P 22	RBS and XPS Measurements of Ag and Er Implantation into the Silica Glass Substrates M. Kormunda, P. Malinský, A. Macková, B. Švecová, P. Nekvindová	179
P 23	Properties of Magnetron Deposited Variable Fe Doped SnO₂ Thin Films for Gas Sensors Applications M. Kormunda, J. Pavlik, P. Malinský	181
P 24	Atmospheric-Pressure Surface Treatment of Polypropylene Nonwoven Textile Using Dielectric Barrier Discharges of Different Electrode System Arrangement D. Kováčik, J. Kubincová, J. Ráhel', A. Zahoranová	183
P 25	Fragmentation of Tetravinylsilane in Pulsed RF Discharge F. Krčma, K. Flamíková, J. Studýnka	185
P 26	Influence of Surface Modification to Abrasion Resistance of the Ropes P. Kříž, P. Špatenka, J. Cerman	187
P 27	Electron Impact Dissociation of Saturated Compounds B. C. Ibanescu, D. Kubala, M. Allan	189
P 28	Electron Impact Ionization of Fully and Partially Deuterated Methane – Partial Cross Section D. Kubala, Š. Matejčík	191
P 29	Continuous Hydrophilic Plasma Surface Treatment of Thick Polypropylene Nonwoven Textile at Atmospheric Pressure Using Diffuse Coplanar Surface Barrier Discharge J. Kubincová, D. Kováčik, A. Zahoranová, M. Černák	193
P 30	Investigation of Negative Ions in Air Using Ion Mobility Spectrometry M. Kučera, M. Stano, Š. Matejčík	195

P 31	Passivation of Iron Nanoparticles Synthesized in Microwave Plasma O. Jašek, P. Synek, V. Kudrle, B. David, J. Buršík, N. Pizúrová, R. Hanzlíková	197
P 32	Theoretical investigation of clustering of NO₃⁻ with neutral molecules. P. Mach, J. Urban, M. Krajčí	199
P 33	Beryllium Hydrides – Calculation of Ionization Potentials, Electron Impact Ionization Cross Sections P. Mach, M. Probst, L. Horný, J. Urban, J. Matúška	201
P 34	Production Metalocarbon Compounds Perspective to Create a Highly-Efficient Reversible Hydrogen Storage V. Chernyak, I. Veremii, S. Filatov, S. Olszewski, E. Safonov	203
P 35	RF Magnetron Sputtering of Tin in Ar/n-hexane Working Gas Mixture J. Matousek, J. Pavlik, Z. Stryhal, L. Kovacik, S. Novák, P. Bartipanova	205
P 36	Absolute Cross Sections for the Dissociative Electron Attachment to HCl, HBr and their Deuterated Analogs O. May, J. Fedor, and M. Allan	207
P 37	Recombination Processes in Nitrogen-Argon Post-Discharge V. Mazánková, F. Krčma, M. Žáková	209
P 38	Conductivity of Printed Structures on Plasma Treated Foils and Papers. M. Mikula, J. Panák, V. Jančovičová	211
P 39	Influence of Methane to Vibrational Population of Hydrogen Produced by Atom Recombination on Metallic Surface Studied by Dissociative Electron Attachment A. R. Milosavljević, S. Markelj and I. Čadež	213
P 40	Utilization of Plasma in Textile Treatment P. Nasadil, P. Benesovsky	215
P 41	Underwater Diaphragm Discharge for Textile Treatment G. Neagoe, A. Brablec, J. Ráhel', P. Slavíček, M. Zahoran	217
P 42	Improved Surface Properties of Polyethylene Films by Atmospheric Pressure Plasma Treatment A. Oravcova , I. Hudec , V. Sestakova, T. Homola	219
P 43	Ozone Production in Coaxial Negative Corona Discharge – Effect of Electrode Material J. Országh, J. D. Skalný, N. J. Mason, G. Horváth	221
P 44	Modelling of Chemical Kinetics of Negative Ions in Negative Corona Discharge in N₂/O₂ Mixtures J. Páleník, P. Papp, Š. Matejčík	223
P 45	Quantum Chemical Studies of Dissociative Electron Attachment to Gas Phase Amino Acids – Serine Molecule P. Papp, J. Kočíšek, Y. V. Vasil'ev, P. Mach, J. Urban, Š. Matejčík	225
P 46	Collisional Quenching Rates of N₂⁺(B₂Σ_g⁺, v=0) P. Paris, M. Aints and F. Valk	227
P 47	Decomposition of Foaming Agents by Pulsed Electrical Discharge J. Pawłat, S. Ihara, C. Yamabe	229
P 48	Ammonia Measurement Method Using Photonic Bandgap Fiber J. Pawłat, X. Li, Y. Zimin, T. Matsuo, T. Ueda	231
P 49	Plasma Treatment of Alumina Surface by DCSBD V. Prysiazhnyi, P. S'ahel, M. Cernak	233

P 50	Determining the Tangent Delta for Dielectric Barrier Discharge Intended Materials J. Ráhel, D. Galusek, K. Ghillányová.....	235
P 51	Ion Mobility Spectrometry in Negative Corona Discharge in O₂ M. Sabo, Š. Matejíček.....	237
P 52	Cleaning of Corrosion Layers from Iron by RF Low Pressure Hydrogen Plasma V. Sázavská, F. Krčma.....	239
P 53	Dependence of Negative Ion Formation on Inhomogeneous Electric Field Strength in Atmospheric Pressure Negative Corona Discharge K. Sekimoto and M. Takayama	241
P 54	Studies of the Anode Fireball Formation in a Low-Pressure Argon Discharge P. Simon, Z. Donkó and P. Hartmann.....	243
P 55	Coplanar Plasma Treatment of CYTOP™ and PEDOT:PSS for the Preparation of an OFET B. Trnovec, G. Schmidt, R. Ullmann, M. Stanel, A. C. Hübler.....	245
P 56	Surface Analysis of Silicon Nanoparticle Films by AES and XPS R. Stijepovic, C. Kahler, S. Jaksch, P. Scheier, N. Memmel.....	247
P 57	Well Defined Structures of SnOx Nanoparticles Z. Stryhal, M. Stofik, J. Maly, J. Pavlik.....	249
P 58	Near IR CRDS Study of HCN and HNC J. Varju, I. Korolov, T. Kotrík, R. Plašil, J. Glosík.....	251
P 59	Higher Harmonic Frequencies of Discharge Voltages as Extremely Sensitive Marker of State of RF Reactive Magnetron Sputtering Deposition Process P. Vasina, P. Dvorak	253
P 60	Complex Analysis of Time-of-Flight Spectra of Pulsed Gold Ion Currents A. Velyhan, K. Jungwirth, J. Krása, E. Krouský, L. Láska, M. Pfeifer, K. Rohlena, J. Skála, J. Ullschmied	255
P 61	Morphological and Structural Characterization of the C-W Nanocomposites R. Vladioiu, V. Ciupina, A. Mandes, M. Contulov, V. Dinca, C. Porsnicu, C. P. Lungu	257
P 62	Multi-Exponential Model of Negative Ions Decay A. S. Vorobyev, N. L. Asfandiarov, V. G. Lukin, G. S. Lomakin.....	259
P 63	Plasma Based Decontamination of Water by Means of Diaphragm Discharge J. Vrajová, Z. Kozáková, L. Hlochová, F. Krčma.....	261
P 64	Temperature Dependence of Low Energy Electron Attachment to Simple Organic Acids J. Wnorowska, J. Kopyra, I. Szamrej, M. Forys	263
P 65	Immobilisation of Iron-Oxide Nano-Particles onto the Plasma Activated Textile Materials M. Wolfova, L. Cernakova, R. Szabova, M. Zahoran, M. Cernak	265
P 66	Atmospheric-Pressure Non-Equilibrium Plasma Treatment of Aluminium Surface A. Zahoranová, L. Bónová, T. Homola, D. Kováčik, M. Zahoran	267
	List of Participants.....	269

Low-Energy Electron Transport Through High Aspect Ratio Al₂O₃ Nanocapillaries

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Abstract

Transmission of low-energy electrons (2-250 eV) through high aspect ratio Al₂O₃ nanocapillaries of different diameters (40, 140 and 250 nm) has been investigated. Two different experimental systems were used allowing various measurements of angular, energy, time and current dependence of either total or only elastically transmitted electron intensity. The total intensity of transmitted current appears to be weakly dependent on the incident electron energy and the angle defined with respect to the capillary axis, which is significantly different when only elastically transmitted electrons are detected. The results contribute to better understanding of the transport of low-energy electrons through insulating nanocapillaries and suggest possible applications.

Introduction

A great interest is devoted in recent years to the controlled transport of charge particles on a nanoscale [1-3]. Particularly, the guiding of positive ions by insulating polyethylene terephthalate (PET) nanocapillaries was first demonstrated in 2002 [3] and have been attracting a considerable attention since then. However, although a large number of results have been published on guiding of positive ions through different types of insulating nanocapillaries (PET, Al₂O₃, SiO₂), only very recently the first experiments were reported with electrons used as projectiles [4,5]. This gives new possibilities both for a fundamental understanding of the guiding phenomenon and applications.

In this contribution we present preliminary results on a comprehensive investigation of transmission of electrons in the energy range 2-250 eV through Al₂O₃ nanocapillaries of different high aspect ratios. The measurements were performed on two experimental systems where energy and angular dependences of transmitted electron current were investigated both using an energy analyzer and only a channeltron as a detector. The results suggest a complex nature of transmission of electrons through insulating nanocapillaries, which cannot be explained simply by a guiding model proposed for positive ions but include several different channels.

Fabrication of Al₂O₃ nanocapillaries

A highly ordered hexagonally close packed Al₂O₃ nanochannels array was prepared in Louvain-la-Neuve using the self-ordering phenomenon during a two-step anodization process of a high purity (99.999%) 0.5 mm thick aluminium foil. To prevent a macroscopic charge-up of the target surface, niobium layers of 20 nm thickness were deposited by dc-sputtering on both sides of the final well-ordered honeycomb membrane. A more detailed description of the fabrication process has been given elsewhere [6]. The diameter of the used Al₂O₃ capillaries is about 40, 140 and 270 nm, the intercapillary distance about 100, 320 and 450 nm, respectively, while the length is about 15 μm. The calculated geometrical transparency is about 14.2%, 8.4% and 28.5%, respectively.

Experimental setup

The measurements were performed on modified electron beam spectrometers placed at the Institute of Physics Belgrade, which were described elsewhere [7,8]. The first one (UGRA) [7] is characterized by the energy resolution of about 0.5 eV and allows measurement with higher electron energies (100-350 eV);

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variation of both tilt angle and observation angle, and energy analysis of transmitted electrons. The second one (SPEPRA) [8] possesses a resolution of about 0.05 eV and allows using low electron energies (2-120 eV); variation of only the tilt angle and both energy analysis of transmitted electrons and integral detection (channeltron). Both systems are equipped with a turbomolecular pump producing base pressure of about $2-4 \times 10^{-7}$ mbar.

Results

The intensity of the signal of transmitted electrons as a function of the incident energy is shown in figure 1a. For the integral acquisition the measured signal slowly decreases with decreasing the electron energy and considerable counts were measured even below 5 eV. However, the energy dependence of elastically transmitted electrons shows a steep decrease with incident energy, in contrast to the integral measurements. Also, the measured intensity of the transmitted electrons as a function of the tilt angle (figure 1b) shows flat distributions for the integral detection, while a rapid decrease is obtained for elastic signal.

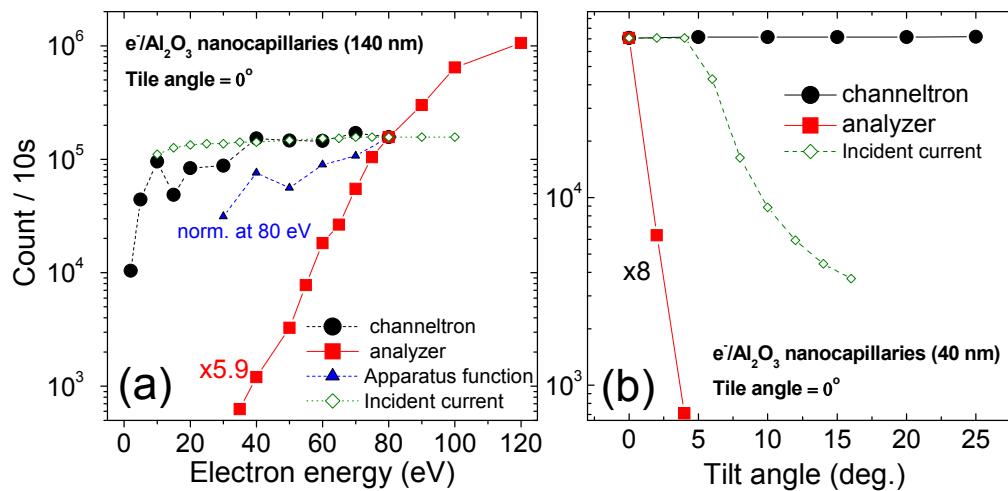


Fig. 1: Intensity of the signal of electrons transmitted through Al_2O_3 nanocapillaries measured as a function of the incident energy (a) and the tilt angle defined by the incident beam direction and the capillary axis (b).

To conclude, electron-wall interaction and secondary electron emission seem to influence strongly the electron transport through insulating nanocapillaries. The present results also suggest a possibility to manipulate electrons at significantly low energies on a nanoscale.

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