

16/07/03

2003041704

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

CORRECTED VERSION

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau(43) International Publication Date
8 August 2002 (08.08.2002)

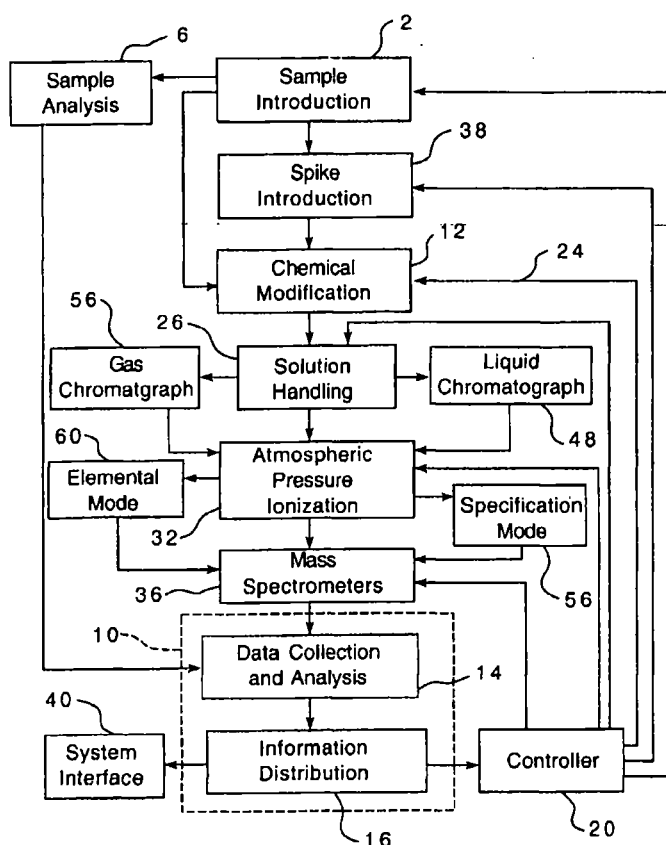
PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 02/060565 A1

- (51) International Patent Classification⁷: B01D 59/44, H01J 49/00
- (21) International Application Number: PCT/US01/46539
- (22) International Filing Date: 5 December 2001 (05.12.2001)
- (25) Filing Language: English
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data: 60/264,748 29 January 2001 (29.01.2001) US
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- (81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.
- (84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR,

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: AUTOMATED IN-PROCESS ISOTOPE AND MASS SPECTROMETRY



(57) Abstract: A method and associated apparatus for in-process automated analysis employing a modified form of isotope dilution mass spectrometry is disclosed. It involves elemental and speciation threshold measurement that is optimised for quality assurance at and is capable of functioning at and near quantitative instrumental detection limits. The system is automated and may be employed in an unattended operation for identification and quantification of elemental or specie contaminants. In a preferred aspect of the method, a sample(2) is subjected to equilibration with at least one spiked stable isotope element or specie (38) after which it is subjected to ionization in an atmospheric ion generator (32) and processed by a mass spectrometer with the output of the mass spectrometer being processed by a microprocessor which through a controller(20), coordinates operation of sample and spike delivery and equilibration as well as, the operation of the atmospheric ion generator and mass spectrometer (36). The method may in the alternative be employed qualitatively.



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GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

(15) Information about Correction:

see PCT Gazette No. 40/2002 of 3 October 2002, Section II

Published:

— *with international search report*

(48) Date of publication of this corrected version:

3 October 2002

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.