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IMPLEMENTATION OF
MICROREACTOR TECHNOLOGY
IN **BIOTECHNOLOGY**

BOOK OF EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

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Pectinolytic, xylanolytic and cellulolytic potential of the mixed population during acidogenesis of orange juice processing wastewater in an anaerobic bioreactor system

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Processing of oranges constitutes a major sector of the agro-industrial businesses around the globe. The main orange juice producers are located in the Mediterranean basin, the United States, Brazil, Mexico and China (1). More particularly, Greece's orange juice industries represent the 1.5% of the global production, making this manufacturing sector a main pillar of the Greek economy (2). However, this manufacturing sector generates high quantities of waste, which represent over 50% of the processed fruit and are composed of soluble and insoluble carbohydrates, such as pectin, hemicellulose and cellulose, which approximately corresponds to 50% of orange's dry weight (3). Among such biopolymers, hemicellulose and cellulose are slowly hydrolyzed, thus resisting biodegradation and compromising energy recovery during anaerobic digestion of orange processing wastes. For this reason, the hydrolysis of such polysaccharides should be carried out by specialized microbial consortia capable of breaking down the β -glycosidic bond, releasing sugar monomers and facilitating their enzymatic hydrolysis. On the other hand, despite the slowly hydrolysis of hemicellulose and cellulose content of such wastes, wastewaters generated by the orange juice producing factories are characterized by high organic load, making them a suitable source for anaerobic digestion and energy gain from the biogas production (4). Thus, the aim of this work is to uncover the pectinolytic, xylanolytic and cellulolytic potential of the mixed microbial population during acidogenesis of the orange juice processing wastewater in an anaerobic bioreactor system, treating such effluent under mesophilic conditions. Methodologically, the pectinolytic, xylanolytic and cellulolytic potential in the acidogenic reactor was assessed through the determination of intracellular and extracellular polygalacturonase, endo-1,4- β -xylanase, 1,4- β -xylosidase, endo-1,4- β -D-glucanase, exo-1,4- β -D-glucanase and β -1,4-D-glucosidase activities. Extremely low extracellular and intracellular endo-1,4- β -D-glucanase, β -1,4-D-glucosidase, 1,4- β -xylosidase and exo-1,4- β -D-glucanase activities were detected, although high polygalacturonase and endo-1,4- β -xylanase activities were detected at steady state conditions, reaching values up to 7.47 and 17.04 U/mg protein, respectively. The fact that higher intracellular than extracellular polygalacturonase and endo-1,4- β -xylanase activities were detected indicates that surface cell-bound pectinases and xylanases were involved in wastewater hydrolysis (5,6). It is concluded that the high pectin and hemicellulose content of such wastewater was degraded by a specialized pectinolytic and xylanolytic mixed population, which was favored during acclimatization of the acidogenic biomass in this anaerobic bioreactor.

Keywords: orange juice processing wastewater, anaerobic digestion, glucanases, xylanases, pectinases

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