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Phosphorus, Sulfur, and Silicon and the Related Elements

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713618290>

SULFONATION OF 9-ALKYLANTHRACENES

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To cite this Article van de Griendt, Freek and Cerfontain, Hans(1979) 'SULFONATION OF 9-ALKYLANTHRACENES', Phosphorus, Sulfur, and Silicon and the Related Elements, 6: 1, 109

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/03086647908080328

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03086647908080328>

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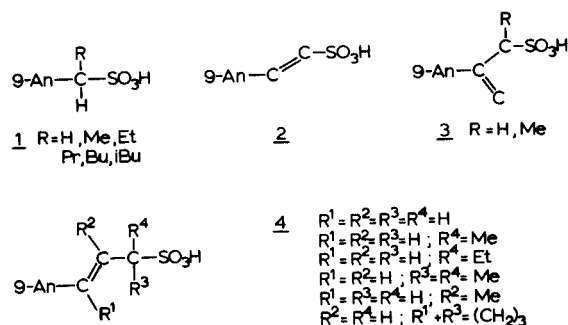
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SULFONATION OF 9-ALKYLANTHRACENES

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The reaction of anthracene, 9-phenylanthracene and some 9-alkylanthracenes with dioxan-SO₃ has been studied. Anthracene yields the 1-, 2- and 9-sulfonic acid in a ratio of 24 : 6 : 70. 9-Phenyl- and 9-neopentyl-anthracene both yield a mixture of the 4- and 10-sulfonic acids in a ratio of 33 : 67 and 15 : 85 respectively. Unexpectedly, 9-methylanthracene yields, in a more rapid reaction, exclusively 9-anthrylmethanesulfonic acid (1, R=H) 9-Alkylanthracenes of which the alkyl group contains at least one α-H yield as main product(s) the α-sulfonic acids 1 and/or (depending on the further structure of the alkyl group) the sulfonic acids 2-4.



A mechanism for the formation of the sulfonic acids will be proposed. The formation of the unsaturated sulfonic acids proceeds via the corresponding 9-alkenylanthracenes which are formed from the 9-alkylanthracene and SO₃ in a redox reaction. Supporting evidence in favour of the mechanisms to be proposed comes from the sulfonation of behaviour of the 9-alkenyl-anthracenes proper, and of their benzene analogues.