Solventless Extraction and Enrichment Methods for Compound-Specific Isotope Analysis

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vorgelegt von Maik André Jochmann aus Marl (Westfalen)

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Dekan: Prof. Dr. Peter Grathwohl

- 1. Berichterstatter: Prof. Dr. Stefan B. Haderlein
- 2. Berichterstatter: Prof. Dr. Torsten C. Schmidt

Die Natur und der Wahnsinn finden immer einen Weg.

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Summary

Contamination of groundwater with polar and volatile organic compounds such as fuel enhancers, aromatic and chlorinated hydrocarbons is a serious problem in industrialized countries. Due to their adverse environmental effects, legal threshold values for most of these contaminants are in the low µg/L range. A very useful tool for the assessment of contaminant sources, tracking of contaminant flow paths and determination of degradation processes at contaminated sites is compound specific isotope analysis (CSIA). Unfortunately, compound specific isotope analysis with gas chromatography isotope ratio mass spectrometry (GC/IRMS) systems is less sensitive compared with gas chromatography mass spectrometry (GC/MS) systems and its applicability outside the source area of contaminated sites is often limited. To extend the fields of CSIA application to lower contaminant sites, it was the goal of this work to develop suitable enrichment and extraction techniques for various polar and volatile groundwater contaminants. To this end solventless, microextraction approaches such as headspace solid-phase dynamic extraction (HS-SPDE) and in-tube extraction (ITEX) were validated by GC/MS for the enrichment of volatile groundwater contaminants such as ethers, alcohols, halogenated methanes, ethanes and ethenes.

A HS-SPDE method was evaluated for three ethers and twelve alcohols. In this evaluation four different SPDE needle coatings with different phase polarities and sorption properties (WAX, 1701, PDMS, PDMS/AC) were tested. Lowest method detection limits (MDLs) in ng/L range were obtained with the WAX and the PDMS/AC phase. The second investigated HS-SPDE method was evaluated for halogenated hydrocarbons such as halomethanes and halogenated ethylenes. The method was thoroughly validated with method detection limits in ng/L range and precisions between 3.1-16 % for the investigated analytes were obtained. An ITEX method was evaluated and optimized for the determination of nineteen priority groundwater contaminants including halogenated volatiles and monoaromatic compounds. Method detection limits for monoaromatic compounds were between 28 ng/L (ethylbenzene) and 68 ng/L (1,2,4-trimethylbenzene). For halogenated volatile organic compounds MDLs between 48 ng/L (chloroform) and 799 ng/L (dichloromethane) were obtained. The precision of the method was between 3.1 % (toluene) and 7.4 % (1,2,3-TMB). Both investigated microextraction methods provide high sensitivities, short sample preparation and extraction times and a high sample throughput. For the HS-SPME methods the applicability to real samples was shown. For both methods the MDLs were determined by GC/MS and an evaluation of these two methods by GC/IRMS will be done in future works.

Finally, a commercially available purge and trap system was modified for the extraction of higher sample volumes to reach lower detection limits. The method was evaluated for twenty halogenated hydrocarbons and BTEX groundwater contaminants. Method detection limits for monoaromatic compounds between 0.07 and 0.35 µg/L are, the lowest MDLs reported so far for continuous-flow isotope ratio measurements using an automated system. MDLs for halogenated hydrocarbons were between 0.76 and 27 µg/L. The environmental applicability of the P&T-GC/IRMS method in the low µg/L range was shown in a case study on groundwater samples from a VOC contaminated former military air field. In connection with the purge and trap method validation a new approach to determine method detection limits in GC/IRMS based on an iterative moving mean method is presented. The results show that P&T offers the lowest method detection limits for volatile organic compounds in combination with P&T. Headspace solid-phase dynamic extraction as well as HS-ITEX in combination with GC/IRMS will be in the range between HS-SPME-GC/IRMS and P&T-GC/IRMS.

Zusammenfassung

Die Kontamination von Grundwasser mit polaren und flüchtigen Verbindungen wie Antiklopfmitteln, aromatischen- und chlorierten Kohlenwasserstoffen stellt ein ernstzunehmendes Problem in industrialisierten Ländern dar. Wegen ihrer nachteiligen Wirkung auf die Umwelt wurden für die meisten dieser Stoffe, Grenzwerte in µg/L Bereich festgesetzt. Als besonders nützliches Hilfsmittel bei der Erkundung kontaminierter Standorte in Bezug auf die Identifikation von Kontaminationsquellen, der Bestimmung von Fliesspfaden und Abbauprozessen im Aquifer hat sich die komponentenspezifische Isotopenanalyse erwiesen. Unglücklicherweise ist die komponentenspezifische Isotopenanalyse mittels Gaschromatographie Isotopenverhältniss Massenspektrometrie (GC/IRMS) im Vergleich mit Gaschromatographie Massenspektrometrie (GC/MS) Methoden wenig sensitiv, was die Anwendung auf hoch kontaminierte Standorte beschränkt. Um das Gebiet der komponentenspezifischen Isotopenanalytik auch auf gering kontaminierte Standorte zu erweitern, war es das Ziel dieser Arbeit neue, geeignete Anreicherungsund Extraktionsmethoden für unterschiedlichste polare- und flüchtige polare Grundwasserkontaminanten zu entwickeln. Zu diesem Zweck wurden lösungsmittelfreie, Mikroextraktionsmethoden wie dynamische Gasraum Festphasenextraktion (SPDE) und die In-tube Extraktion (ITEX) für die Anreicherung polarer Grundwasserkontaminanten wie Ether, Alkohole, halogenierte Methane, Ethane and Ethene mittels GC/MS validiert.

Die erste HS-SPDE Methode wurde für drei Ether und zwölf Alkohole evaluiert, wobei vier verschiedene Extraktionsphasen unterschiedlicher Polarität (WAX, 1701, PDMS, PDMS/AK) und Sorbtionseigenschaften getestet wurden. Die geringsten Nachweisgrenzen in ng/L Bereich wurden mit der WAX und der PDMS/AK Phase erreicht. Die zweite hier untersuchte HS-SPDE Methode wurde für halogenierte Kohlenwasserstoffe wie Halomethane und halogenierte Ethylene durchgeführt. Die Methode wurde eingehend validiert, wobei die Nachweisgrenzen in ng/L Bereich, und die Präzision der Methode zwischen 3.1 und 16 % lagen.

In-tube Extraktion wurde für 19 leichtflüchtige halogenierte Kohlenwasserstoffe und monoaromatische Benzolderivate evaluiert und optimiert. Für die aromatischen Verbindungen wurden Nachweisgrenzen zwischen 28 ng/L (ethylbenzene) und 30 ng/L (1,2,3-Trimethylbenzol) erreicht. Für die leichtflüchtigen halogenierten Verbindungen wurden Nachweisgrenzen zwischen 48 ng/L (Chloroform) und 799 ng/L (Dichlormethan) ermittelt. Alle Untersuchten Methoden liefern hohe Sensitivität kurze Probenvorbereitungs- und Extraktionszeiten sowie einen hohen Probendurchsatz. Für die HS-SPDE Methoden wurde die Anwendbarkeit anhand von Realproben gezeigt. Sowohl die Evaluierung der SPDE Methoden als auch der ITEX Methode wurden Am GC/MS durchgeführt und anschließende Arbeiten sind nötig um die Methoden am GC/IRMS zu evaluieren.

Zusätzlich zur Evaluation dieser Methoden wurde ein kommerziell erhältliches Purge und Trap System so modifiziert, dass damit die Extraktion größerer Probenvolumina möglich wurde, um eine höhere Extraktionsausbeute zu erreichen. Die Methode wurde für zwanzig monoaromatische und halogenierte Kohlenwasserstoffe evaluiert. Die für monoaromatische Verbindungen erhaltenen Nachweisgrenzen liegen zwischen 0.07 und 0.35 µg/L und sind die bis jetzt niedrigsten erhaltenen Nachweisgrenzen für die Kombination von P&T und GC/IRMS. Für die halogenierten Kohlenwasserstoffe wurden Nachweisgrenzen zwischen 0.76 µg/L und 27 µg/L ermittelt. Die Anwendbarkeit der Methode wurde an realen, kontaminierten Grundwasserproben eines stillgelegten Militärflugplatzes getestet. Im Zusammenhang mit der Purge und Trap Methode wurde ein neurer Ansatz zur Ermittlung der Nachweisgrenze für GC/IRMS Methoden, beruhend auf einem iterativen

Mittelwert Verfahren verwendet. Die dynamische Festphasenextraktion sowie ITEX werden in Bezug auf die Nachweisgrenze im Bereich zwischen SPME-GC/IRMS und P&T-GC/IRMS anzusiedeln sein.

1 General Introduction and Theory

1.1 Compound Specific Isotope Analysis (CSIA)

Compound specific isotope analysis (CSIA) by using on-line continuous flow gas chromatography isotope ratio mass spectrometry (GC/IRMS) has found a wide application range in different disciplines such as geochemistry, environmental chemistry, archaeology, forensic-, bio- and food sciences.¹⁻

Figure 1.1 The compound specific isotope analysis (CSIA) by GC/IRMS gives additional information on origin and fate of analysed compounds.

In the last years CSIA has become a useful tool also in contaminant hydrology. Supplementary to qualitative and quantitative GC/MS analysis, compound specific isotope analysis opens another dimension (Figure 1.1) in the assessment of contaminated sites due to (i) identification of contaminant sources, (ii) tracking of contamination pathways⁵, (iii) identification^{6, 7} and quantification of chemical or biological remediation processes⁸. Especially, the determination of natural remediation processes in an aquifer is of high economic interest, because a time consuming and expensive technical remediation of contaminated sites is often not necessary. Thus, CSIA in combination with other hydrogeochemical parameters is the most promissing tool to characterise and quantify such natural remediation processes.^{3, 9} Compound specific isotope analysis employs the determination of the ratio R_x between two stable isotopes of an element *E* (e.g. ¹³C/¹²C, ²H/¹H, ¹⁸O/¹⁶O, ¹⁵N/¹⁴N) in a single compound *x*₁ The δ-notation and the system of differential measurements were introduced in the late 1940 by Urey and his collaborators to report comparable stable isotope data.^{10, 11} In equation 1.1 it is defined as the relative difference in parts per thousand (per mil, ‰) between the compound's isotope ratio *Rx* and the isotope ratio of an international reference standard, *Rreference*.

$$
\delta E_x = \left(\frac{R_x - R_{reference}}{R_{reference}}\right) \times 1000 \text{ [per mil]}
$$
 (1.1)

In case of carbon isotope measurements, Vienna Peedee Belemnite (VPDB) is used as international reference standard. For VPDB an internationally accepted $^{13}C/^{12}C$ ratio of 0.0111802 has been reported.12 The measurement of relative differences in isotopic ratios instead of absolute ratios is used, because systematic errors can be eliminated, more precise values can be obtained and massdiscriminating effects in a single instrument can be corrected^{3, 4}. More detailed information on referencing strategies in stable isotope ratio mass spectrometry is given in the literature. ^{4, 12}

1.2 Compound Specific Isotope Analysis Instrumentation

The hyphenation of gas chromatographic separation to an isotope ratio mass spectrometer was introduced by Matthews and Hayes in 1978^{13} . In Figure 1.2, a schematic setup and a description of a gas chromatography-combustion-isotope ratio mass spectrometer GC/C/IRMS for carbon isotope ratio determination is shown.

Figure 1.2 Schematic overview of a GC/C/IRMS for determination of δ^{13} C values. After injection, chromatographic separation of the analytes in a gas chromatograph takes place. After separation the analytes are completely combusted in a 940 °C hot catalytical reactor to $CO₂$ and $H₂O$. The catalyst in the reactor consists of PT/NiO/CuO wires. Nitrogen oxides that are formed during the combustion of nitrogen containing compounds are reduced to N_2 in the following reduction oven. Disturbing water is removed by a Nafion[™] membrane. The water is removed to prevent formation of ¹²CO₂H⁺ (m/z 45) during ionisation. Following combustion the CO₂ is ionized in the ion source of the mass spectrometer. After ionisation the formed isotopologues ¹²CO₂ (m/z 44),
¹³CO₂ (m/z 45) and ¹²C¹⁸O¹⁶O (m/z 46) are diverted according to their masses in the magnetic fiel in separate faraday cups. The amplification of the faraday cups is adapted to the natural isotope abundances of the detected isotopes. Mass 46 is used for correction of the relative abundance of ¹⁷O by determination of ¹⁸O in the mass 46 isotopologue.

Since the first commercially available system for carbon isotope ratio determination in 1988 the method was extended in 1992 to $15N^{14}N$ ratio measurements and more recently in 1996 to $18O^{16}O$ ratio determination.⁴ In Table 1.1 an overview of the elements measureable by on-line GC-IRMS is given.

Stable isotope	Natural abundance of the heavier isotope $\frac{1}{2}$	Conversion gas	Measured m/z	Detection limits (nmol of element on-column)	Precision (%)
$^2H/H$	0.015	\rm{H}_{2}	2,3	$8 - 10$	
$^{13}C/^{12}C$	1.11	CO ₂	44, 45, 46		0.2
$15N^{14}N$	0.366	$\rm N_2$	28, 29, 30	$0.8 - 1.5$	0.5
$18O^{16}$	0.204	CO.	28, 29, 30		0.8

Table 1.1 With GC/IRMS measurable stable isotope ratios.^{a)}

a) Values adapted from Ref.³

However, GC measurements are limited to GC compatible substances, i.e. compounds establishing relatively low boiling points, mass to charge ratios lower than about 350 and sufficient stability against thermal decomposition. Other important points are that for accurate and precise GC/IRMS measurements a base line separation (chromatographic resolution $R_s > 1.5$) and a low chromatographic background noise are required.⁴ Base line separation is required because integration over the entire peak from baseline to baseline gives the isotopic signature of one compound. If peaks are not baseline separated, a part of the later eluting lighter isotopologue form the first compound is mixed with a part of the earlier eluting heavier isotopologue of the following compound and a wrong isotopic ratio for both compounds is the result. The second point is that a high background noise caused by unresolved organic matter or column bleeding leads to a dilution of the isotopic signal.

Anoter restriction is that a derivatisation may lead not reproducible $\delta^{13}C$ values.¹ An extended discussion on derivatisation in GC/IRMS is given in chapter 1.5.1. To overcome some of these problems and to expand the field of CSIA to compounds not amenable to GC, several attempts to hyphenate liquid chromatography with isotope ratio mass spectrometry (LC/IRMS) have been reported.¹⁴⁻¹⁷ More recently, a commercially available LC/IRMS was introduced.¹⁸ The method applies wet chemical combustion of the analytes by an oxidizing agent such as ammonium peroxodisulfate at elevated temperatures. The $CO₂$ is separated from the liquid phase by a membrane and introduced by a Helium stream into the source of an IRMS. The method is restricted though to carbon isotopic measurements and water as eluent. In this study, only the separation by gas chromatography should be emphasized.

A major drawback of compound-specific stable isotope analysis in environmental applications is its rather poor sensitivity.³ For a precise isotopic measurement, this represents at least \sim 1 nmol carbon of a given compound on-column for commercially available $3 \text{ kV } GC/IRMS$ instruments. ¹⁹ That means that, e.g. 66 mg/L TCE have to be injected in 1μ L solvent.³ However, environmental concentrations of interest are frequently lower, even at contaminated sites. For this reason the method is restricted to laboratory experiments or highly contaminated sites. This shows clearly that it is necessary to hyphenate efficient extraction and enrichment techniques with GC/IRMS in order to fully exploit the potential of the method. Unfortunately all extraction and enrichment methods involve the danger of isotopic fractionation and this caused by phase transfer processes. 19 Therefore it is necessary to evaluate these methods thoroughly. Table C 1.1 in the appendix gives an overview of the extraction and injection techniques for common groundwater contaminants used prior to GC/IRMS determination.

1.3 Extraction and Enrichment

 \overline{a}

Extraction and enrichment is one of the most important and often the most time consuming step in an analytical procedure.²⁰ Compared with sophisticated separation and detection techniques, extraction is often neglected or considered as analytical step of minor importance.²¹ Nevertheless, the importance of extraction can not be overemphasised because all errors that occur in this step of the analytical process can not be corrected for by the best subsequent separation or detection method. Before a successful application of chromatographic methods, extraction is typically necessary in order to separate analytes from interfering matrix components and enrich them. A separation from matrix is especially important if non-specific detectors (e.g. flame ionisation detector FID, thermal conductivity detector TCD etc.) are used. As pointed out in chapter 1.2, a special and delicate example is GC/IRMS; here all mentioned factors are of importance. (i) A very good separation of analytes from matrix components to get accurate and precise isotope values is compelling $(1, 22, 23)$ and (ii) for field applications enrichment and clean up is necessary.³ In particular, the extraction of polar contaminants from aqueous matrices is often a challenge. Their environmental behaviour and fate is more difficult to evaluate and extraction is complicate because of their additional molecular interactions and high affinity to the aqueous matrix. Furthermore, polar organic compounds are becoming more important in the water cycle. Especially in the last years, a shift in focus in environmental chemistry towards polar compounds can be observed. 24 Reasons for this shift are (i) their importance in industrial production and wide application as functional additives (ii) their environmental formation during the degradation of non-polar precursors, (iii) their high environmental mobility as well as their persistence, and (iv) adverse effects for human beings and ecosystems. 25

Here, the classification for non-polar and polar compounds according to Goss and Schwarzenbach will be used.²⁶ After this classification organic compounds can be categorized by their interaction forces in three groups. The first group contains apolar compounds such as alkanes and PCBs that interact only by van der Waals interactions. The second group, the monopolar compounds such as BTEX and chlorinated hydrocarbons interact by van der Waals forces and either as H-acceptors or H-donors. The third group, the bipolar compounds are able to interact by van der Waals interactions as well as Hdonors and H-acceptors. Compounds that can be assigned to the last group are e.g. alcohols (phenols), carboxylic acids and amines. In this review the focus is set to monopolar and bipolar compounds. Another criterion, applied here for the reviewed compounds is an octanol-water partitioning coefficient, $K_{o/w}$ of less than 1000 (*log* $K_{o/w} \leq 3$).

1.4 Established Extraction and Enrichment Approaches; their Advantages and Limitations

1.4.1 Static Headspace

For PVOCs the method of choice used to be static headspace gas chromatography (staticHS/GC). ²⁷ The method has the advantages, that a clean-up can be avoided because disturbing matrix components remain in the solution and the method is completely solventless. A major disadvantage is the often rather low sensitivity caused by low air-water partitioning constants (K_{aw}) of the target analytes. In combination with GC/IRMS, staticHS analysis was applied in different studies.²⁸⁻³³

As pointed out in Table 1.2, headspace injection does not fractionate significantly for MTBE 28 , 29 $BTEX$ ³⁰⁻³² and chlorinated ethylenes. 3^{2} Hunkeler et al., however, found significant isotopic fractionation between 1.03 to 1.29 ‰ for chlorinated methanes.³³ Method detection limits for $\delta^{13}C$ staticHS-GC/IRMS applications are between 100 to 500 μ g/L for BTEX ³⁰⁻³², 4000-5000 μ g/L for MTBE^{28, 29}, 800-3300 µg/L for chlorinated methanes³³ and 400 µg/L for chlorinated ethylenes.³² For δ^2 H measurements, staticHS-GC/IRMS with about ten times higher method detection limits were obtained.28

1.4.2 Purge and Trap

 \overline{a}

To overcome the relatively low sensitivity of staticHS, exhaustive dynamic headspace methods, e.g. purge and trap (P&T) were developed. P&T was developed thirty years ago³⁴, and in combination with GC/MS it is nowadays a routine method for trace analysis of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in water samples. Especially in the US, several EPA protocols for the determination of volatiles in drinking, waste and hazardous waste water rely on it. 35 Static headspace as well as P&T can be easily automated. Neither P&T nor static headspace can be used directly for an extraction in the field but a more recent development is a continuous on-line purge and trap method.³⁶

Application of P&T-GC/IRMS has been reported several times $19, 37-41$ and showed lowest detection limits in CSIA for VOCs by achieving highly reproducible compound-specific isotope enrichments $(0.2\n-0.9\%)$.^{3, 19} A more detailed overview of P&T as enrichment method for CSIA is given in section 5.1.

The extraction of analytes from aqueous matrices can be subdivided in traditional and non-traditional techniques (microextraction approaches).⁴² The most common traditional and widespread method is liquid-liquid extraction (LLE). It is based on analyte partitioning between water and an immiscible organic solvent. LLE is simple, and many US-EPA protocols for environmental analysis still rely on LLE.^{43, 44} These methods typically need large volumes of sample and organic solvent (100-250 mL or even more) as well as repeated extraction for sufficient enrichment yields, clean-up and concentrating by evaporation or distillation are necessary. These multiple working steps make the methods laborious and time consuming. Other drawbacks of LLE include possible formation of emulsions, errors by repetitive manual operations and potential losses during the procedure.^{21, 45} Additionally, LLE can hardly be automated and used for field analysis.^{44, 46} The organic high purity solvents used are usually toxic, harmful for the environment and not negligible quantities of solvent waste have to be handled. A problem that especially occurs in the extraction of polar organics is that the used polar solvents dissolve to a certain content in the water phase. At the latest, since the Montreal Protocol´ treaty and the limited use of ozone layer destroying chlorinated solvents, e.g. chloroform and dichloromethane (often used in LLE), the analytical chemists developed alternative extraction methods.^{21, 42, 47} One group of these alternatives is solid phase extraction (SPE). In water analysis, SPE is nowadays the most widely used sample preparation technique for non-polar compounds.⁴⁴ It offers a wide field with a lot of applications and was often subject of detailed reviews⁴⁸⁻⁵⁰, and monographs.⁵¹ An aqueous sample passes through a solid sorbent bed, packed inside a disk or cartridge, in which the analytes are trapped on an immobilised phase and later re-extracted by organic solvents. Advantages of SPE are often lower (but not negligible) amounts of organic solvents, suitability for field sampling and automation of the sampling process. $44, 45$ SPE with subsequent thermal desorption was applied by Vreuls et al. ^{52, 53} and Mol et al. ⁵⁴ In these methods a liner, filled with a sorbent material was used as SPE extraction device. After extraction it was inserted directly into a programmable thermal vaporizer (PTV). Water was removed through the split vent of the injector by evaporation in the carrier gas stream whereby analytes stay trapped in the coating and were subsequently thermally desorbed into the GC column for separation. This technique is strongly related to large volume injection (LVI) and direct aqueous injection (DAI) $55, 56$ into GC, combined with previous separation of water and was reviewed several times in this context. ⁵⁷⁻⁶⁰ Limited efficiencies by insufficient retention (low breakthrough volumes) can be observed for volatiles and very polar compounds. 43, 61 More recently, micro-SPE methods were introduced with the aim of sample and sorbent reduction. ^{62, 63} SPE as well as micro-SPE uses breakthrough sampling for enrichment, what means that the analyte is trapped as long as the capacity of the sorbent in suffient. Gum-phase extraction (GPE) is very similar to SPE but as trapping material a bed of polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS) is used instead of an adsorptive solid package. 64-66

1.5 Microextraction approaches and techniques

A dominant trend in sample preparation is miniaturisation and over the last 15 years different solventless or solvent-reduced extraction methods on a micro scale approach were developed. After Lord and Pawliszyn, microextraction is defined as a technique where the volume of the extraction phase is very small in relation to the sample volume. ⁶⁷ Another criterion for microextractions, in contrast to exhaustive methods is that only a fraction of the analytes is extracted.²⁴ Because of this, microextraction devices can be used as equilibrium sampling devices (ESDs) that have a negligible impact to the sample.⁶⁸ Miniaturized extraction has several advantages. (i) The devices can be used directly in the field without long preparation and with less equipment. (ii) It is often easier to implement miniaturized devices in already existing systems and a connection with GC or HPLC is often straightforward. (iii) Miniaturized devices or techniques have lower operating costs and are less laborious and time consuming. (iv) Another dominant point is that these methods can be partly or fully automated, which leads to higher sample throughput, better reproducibility and simple on-line hyphenation. A detailed overview of automation of solid-phase microextraction was given by O´Reilly et al. .69 Here, an overview over recent developments in microextraction techniques and new developments in solid-phase microextraction (SPME) should be given. SPME will be discussed in much less detail and the reader is referred to monographs $44, 70$ and reviews $42, 61, 71-73$ for more detailed information.

All extraction methods whether they base on large scale extraction or on a microextration approach have in common, that one or more compounds are depleted in a sample and enriched in an extraction phase. The sample matrix can be manifold. Here the focus is set on water as sample phase or the headspace above the water phase, respectively. The extraction phases used for analyte enrichment from aqueous matrices are usually organic solvents, solid adsorbents, liquid state polymers or mixtures of the latter two materials. Two fundamental extraction processes can be distinguished. In case of the liquid coatings partitioning into the extraction phase with additional solvation of the molecules by the liquid coating takes place. Analyte molecules can diffuse in the whole liquid coating within the extraction time by diffusion. Solid sorbents have a defined crystalline structure and due to very low diffusion coefficients in solids, in an adequate timescale only adsorption on the sorbent surface takes place. Because only a limited space is available, a competition of analytes for free adsorption sites at higher concentrations can occur. This causes displacement (competition effects) of analytes with lower affinity to the sorption phase. 19

1.5.1 Solid-Phase Microextraction (SPME)

 \overline{a}

Solid-phase microextraction (SPME) was the first microextraction method that was introduced by Pawliszyn and co-workers in the early $1990s^{74}$, 75 and it is nowadays the most prominent and widely used microextration method with a wide range of applications and hundreds of publications. The method combines several steps such as sampling, enrichment and sample clean-up. A thin fused silica fiber coated with extraction phase is utilized for the extraction of analytes from aqueous samples. This fragile fiber is fitted in a special syringe holder for its protection during penetration of vial and GC injector septa. Fibers are used in two application modes. One mode is the direct immersion of the fiber (DI-SPME) into the sample, the other one is analyte extraction from headspace above the sample as shown in Figure 1.3 a and b. Different extraction phases are commercially available. The classical absorption coating for non-polar compounds is liquid phase polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS). For polar and volatile polar compounds, polyacrylate (PA), polyethylenglycole (Carbowax) or mixed phase coatings, with embedded sorbent particles in the liquid extraction phase such as carboxen™/polydimethylsiloxane (CAR/PDMS) can be used. Two approaches are followed to expand the application range for polar analytes. One approach is the development of derivatisation techniques for polar compounds. A review of derivatisation for polar compounds and SPME was given by Quintana and Rodriguez. 24 Two derivatisation strategies were used; the first is on-fibre and the second in-port derivatisation. In the first case, the derivatisation reaction occurs before or during

the extraction. In the second case polar analytes with acid-base properties are extracted as ion pairs, which are thermally decomposed in the GC injector. ²⁴ However, derivatisation prior to GC/IRMS is not recommended because of ¹³C dilution by carbon added during derivatisation, kinetic isotope effects during the derivatisation reaction and changes in the isotopic signature. $\frac{1}{1}$ A second approach to expand SPME to more polar compounds is the development of polar extraction coatings. The use of sol-gel reactions seems to be a promising approach. By sol-gel processes the extraction phase can be chemically bonded to the silica rod and highly cross-linked phase networks can be synthesised. As a result, higher thermal stabilities and surface areas can be obtained.⁷⁶ Higher mechanical and pH stabilities were reached with surface-bonded sol-gel titania hybrid organic-inorganic⁷⁷ and zirconium based materials. 78 Other types of coating materials are electrochemically polymerised polyaniline for the extraction of phenols⁷⁹ and aliphatic alcohols 80 from water and anodized zinc 81 , aluminium 82 or copper wires. 83 A more detailed discussion of customary SPME coatings for polar analytes can be found elsewhere. 24, 84

Main drawbacks of SPME are limited lifetimes of relatively expensive fibers. Several problems result from the technical construction of the SPME device itself. The most common practical problems facing SPME are mechanical damage of the coating due to scraping, needle bending and fiber ruption caused by the fragility of the fused silica support. Several attempts to overcome these mechanical related drawbacks were done, such as the introduction of bendable StableFlex fibers with an alloy core. ²⁴ Because of these drawbacks and the limited applicability to polar compounds, several new microextraction approaches were developed to overcome such problems (see below).

1.5.2 Solid-Phase Microextraction and CSIA

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Solid-phase microextraction was used in direct immersion^{19, 33, 85} as well as headspace extraction^{28, 86} mode. As shown in Table 1.2 direct immersion SPME reached method detection limits between 9-22 μ g/L and showed no significant isotopic fractionation for BTEX compounds. ^{19, 85} For MTBE, headspace SPME showed slight fractionation for δ^{13} C measurements (-0.9 ‰²⁸ and -0.67 ‰ ⁸⁶) and method detection limits between 11-350 μ g/L. For MTBE extraction by direct immersion SPME no significant isotopic fractionation was observed. ¹⁹ Hunkeler et al. found a significant negative deviation for SPME analysis of TBA (-1.18 ‰)⁸⁶. Because of this, Hunkeler et al. used corrections in order to allow a comparison with data generated by different methods.⁸ If fractionation is observed it tends to yield negative deviations from pure phase standards, i.e., the lighter compound partitions stronger into the fiber. This is in principle the same isotope type of effect as found in gas chromatography. Although this effect is often quite small, for highly chlorinated compounds Zwank et al. 19 found substantial deviations (-7.3 ‰) using direct immersion SPME, which could not be explained. However SPME is a useful tool in combination with GC/IRMS when all parameters are hold constant and a previous evaluation for possible isotopic fractionation has been carried out.

1.5.3 Stir Bar Sorptive Extraction (SBSE), High Capacity Headspace Extraction (HSSE) and Rod Extraction

Stir bar sorptive extraction (SBSE) utilizes a glass incorporated magnetic stir bar coated with a polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS) extraction phase as shown in Figure 1.3 d. The method was introduced by Sandra et al. ⁸⁷ and is based on the same principle as solid-phase microextraction but exhibits a bigger extraction phase volume and due to this a higher sorption capacity. As example, a 100 µm PDMS fiber with a length of 1 cm has a volume of about 0.6 µL compared with volumes between 24-126 µL for the commercially available PDMS stir bar coatings. PDMS coated stir bars were commercialised under the brand name "Twister™" by Gerstel (Mülheim a.d. Ruhr, Germany). In various studies, a correlation between the PDMS/water partitioning coefficent $(K_{PDMS/w})$ and the octanol-water partitioning coefficient $(K_{\alpha/\omega})$ was made, according to the following equation:

$$
K_{o/w} \approx K_{PDMS/w} = \beta (m_{PDMS} / m_w)
$$
\n(1.2)

where, β is the phase ratio between the volume of the aqueous sample and the volume of the PDMS phase and m_{PDMS} , m_w are the masses of the solute in the PDMS phase, and the solute in the water phase, respectively. With this estimation it is also possible to calculate theoretical recoveries:

$$
m_{PDMS}/m_o = \frac{\left(\frac{K_{o/w}}{\beta}\right)}{1 + \left(\frac{K_{o/w}}{\beta}\right)}
$$
(1.3)

where, m_0 is the original amount of solute in the aqueous phase. According to equation 1.3 low recoveries (under 50 %) are expacted for compounds with $K_{\alpha/w}$ values <10000 (log $K_{\alpha/w}$ < 4) for a 0.5 µL PDMS SPME fiber and a 10 mL sample. With coated stir bars of a volume ranging from 25-125 µL PDMS, theoretical recoveries close to 100 % are achieved under the same conditions for solutes with $K_{\phi/\psi}$ values larger than 500 (log $K_{\phi/\psi} > 2.7$). Due to these considerations, quantitative extraction can be obtained for more polar analytes with much lower $K_{\phi/\psi}$ in SBSE and HSSE compared with a PDMS SPME fiber.^{87, 88}

As shown in Figure 1.3 c and d, the stir bar is either placed directly into the sample or in case of highcapacity headspace sorptive extraction (HSSE), in the headspace above the sample. In case of direct immersion into the sample, the bar is stirred for a fixed time with a fixed stirring speed. Typical stirring times are between 30 and 60 minutes.⁸⁹ After extraction, the bar is removed from the sample solution with tweezers and dried with a lint-free tissue. After this, thermal desorption (SBSE-TD) or desorption with a solvent, followed by large volume injection (SBSE-LVI)⁹⁰ into a GC is carried out. For thermal desorption, the bar is transferred into a glass thermal desorption tube and introduced automatically into a thermal desorption module. Desorbed compounds are transported under helium flow and cryofocused with liquid nitrogen in a programmed temperature vaporizer (PTV). Different studies dealing with extraction of priority water contaminants by $SBSE^{88, 91}$ and off-flavour compounds.⁹²⁻⁹⁶ The analyte spectrum includes polar compounds such as pesticides⁹⁷⁻¹⁰², endocrine disruptors^{90, 103-105}, as well as polar phenols $^{106-111}$ and bisphenol A.¹¹² An overview of SBSE extraction for polar compounds is given in appendix C (Table C 1.1). For liquid desorption of stir bars and subsequent large volume injection, the bar is introduced in a low volume of an organic solvent (e.g. isooctane) for a certain time under stirring at room temperature. An aliquot of up to $250 \mu L$ is than introduced in a LVI capable GC injector. Serôdio et al. used this combination for screening of more than 60 endocrine disrupting chemicals, including herbicides, organochlorines and organophosphorous pesticides, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, polychlorinated biphenyls, biocides, phthalates and alkylphenols in water samples. 105 As in SPME, in-situ derivatisation was applied several times to convert analytes into GC amenable compounds and to lower polarity by transformation of polar functional groups. Derivatisation leads often to sharper peaks, better separation and higher sensitivity. ^{113, 114} In situ-derivatisation of phenols and chlorophenols¹¹³ with acetic acid anhydride was perforemed has been reported several times.

A special derivatisation method, named in-tube silylation was used by Kawaguchi et al. .¹⁰⁸ The derivatisation takes place in the thermal desorption unit. For this a glass capillary tube is placed behind the PDMS stir bar and the derivatisation reagent (*N,O*-bis(trimethylsilyl)acetamide, BSTFA) is transported in the gas stream to the bar, where the derivatisation takes place.

High-capacity headspace sorptive extraction (HSSE) was described by Tienpont et al. for extraction of 45 volatiles from aqueous solutions as well as flavour aroma compounds of coffee and bananas. 115 As shown in Figure 1.3 c, headspace bars consist of a glass rod of ca. 5 cm length with a PDMS tubing over the last cm and are very similar to SPME fibers. These rods are mounted in the screw caps of headspace vials or Erlenmeyer flasks. After extraction, the rods are manually put in an empty glass tube for thermal desorption as used for SBSE extraction. Headspace bars with 50 and 100 mg PDMS coating are available (Gerstel, Mühlheim a.d. Ruhr, Germany). Tienpont et al. compared in their

work, HSSE rods (50 mg, 51.5 µL PDMS) with SPME (100 µm, ~0.6 µL PDMS) for hydrocarbon, aromatic hydrocarbon, chlorinated hydrocarbon and ester model compounds (with log $K_{\text{o/w}}$ between 1.1 and 6.7) under identical extraction conditions. Limits of detections (0.02-0.150 ng/L) obtained for HSSE with a 51.5 μ L extraction phase, were in the same order of magnitude as for SBSE with a 55 μ L phase in the liquid phase (0.01-0.5 ng/L) for similar compounds. ^{87, 115} Montero et al. used an ordinary PDMS rod (see Figure1 e) for the extraction of unpolar chlorinated aromatic compounds and PCE by shaking those over head in sample bottle. ¹¹⁶ With subsequent thermal desorption he this overcomes high costs for coated stir bars with comparable results, and thus could be a viable alternative.

Figure 1.3 Various microextraction methods and applied desorption techniques : a) Headspace solid-phase microextraction (HS-SPME) drawn after Ref.⁷³; b) Direct immersion solid-phase microextraction (DI-SPME) drawn after Ref. 73 ; c) High capacity headspace sorptive extraction (HSSE) drawn after Ref.: 115 and 117 ; d) Stir bar sorptive extraction (SBSE) drawn after Ref.:⁸⁹and Dual twister after Ref.: 118 ; e) Rod extraction re-drawn according to Ref.: 116

As alternative methods, SBSE, HSSE and rod extraction have also some drawbacks. A major one is that a few laborious manual steps such as removing of the stir bar (or PDMS rod) with tweezers, rinsing and drying are necessary and can lead to errors.¹¹⁹ Because of these drawbacks, procedures with less intermediate steps for minimizing errors and higher sample throughput were developed. An automated high-capacity sorption probe that utilizes a PDMS rubber tubing mounted on a rod was presented by Pettersson et al.. 119 The PDMS phase volume is with 120 μ L comparable with a stir bar of 2 cm length and a 1000 μ m film thickness (126 μ L). The sampling procedure was completely carried out by a robotic autosampler and the system was evaluated for 44 environmentally harzardous compounds (amines, chlorinated aromatics, nitro aromatics, PAHs). The extraction efficiencies for compounds with a log $K_{\text{obs}} \leq 3$ were between 5.2 and 14.4 % for one hour extractions with RSD between 4.7-6.2 % ($n = 5$). It was shown that the increased volume and surface area of the extraction phase leads to high extraction rates at the initial state of the extraction, indicated by fast increasing sorption profiles. Although higher recoveries for polar compounds can be achieved with bigger PDMS sorption phase volumes, limits in effectiveness and extraction yields of these methods for polar organic compounds were observed. ¹¹⁵ Recently, Bicchi et al. introduced a dual-phase twister. ¹¹⁸ This twister consists of a short PDMS tube closed at both ends with two magnets (Figure 1.3 c). The inner volume is filled with an activated carbon packing material. In a preliminary study he investigated the applicability of this twister for volatiles from coffee, whiskey and atrazine spiked water. They observed for atrazine a 80 % increase in absolute percent recovery for a dual-phase twister compared with a conventional SBSE twister. So far, SBSE-TD-GC/IRMS was applied only one time for the determination of MTBE, TBA and TBF by Veld and coworkers but so far no published results are available. 120

1.5.4 In-needle, in-tube microextraction techniques

Different in-needle or in-tube extraction (ITE) techniques were developed to overcome, fiber related drawbacks such as fragility, low sorption capacity¹²¹ and bleeding from thick film coatings.¹²² In-tube techniques can be used either in a static or a dynamic mode. In the static mode, analytes are transferred to the sorbent only by diffusion. In dynamic mode the analytes are transferred actively by pumping or under gravitational flow of sample phase through the needles or tubes. 73 The techniques can be divided in methods that apply either a coating as internal extraction phase immobilized in the needle or capillary wall and methods that use a sorbent packing material as extraction phase.

1.5.4.1 Methods with Extraction Coatings

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In-tube SPME is a sample preparation technique that uses, open tubular fused silica GC capillaries with stationary phase coatings instead of externally coated fibers. Eisert and Pawliszyn developed intube SPME for hyphenation with HPLC because fiber-SPME hardly can withstand aggressive HPLC solvent conditions.^{73, 123} They placed a PEG wax coating between the autosampler needle and the injection valve. In their work they described the theoretical aspects of in-tube SPME and demonstrated the applicability of this method for six phenylurea pesticides. 123 The method was subject of several reviews. 72, 89, 124

In-tube solid-phase microextraction was also coupled with gas chromatography. Although this approach was named in-tube SPME, it is basically similar to open tubular trapping (OTT) ¹²⁴ In OTT, a short capillary GC column is also used for the extraction of analytes from water. The method was developed as alternative to solid phase extraction and the main advantage of the method was the easy removal of water by purging a short gas plug through the column.¹²⁵ Desorption of the trapped analytes is done either with a small amount of solvent or by thermal desorption. OTT or In-tube SPME overcomes mechanical instability problems inherent in conventional SPME, but this approach suffered

from complex instrumental setups and unfavourable sampling conditions as high pressure drops for long traps and limited sample flow rates. ¹¹⁵

A method that applies only a short piece of coated column is sol-gel capillary microextraction (solgel-CME). It was used for extraction of phenols, alcohols and amines from water samples. ¹²¹ For the extraction, a special in-house-assembled-gravity-fed sample dispensing unit as illustrated in Figure 1.4 c, was used. An aqueous sample of 25 mL was filled in the dispenser and was allowed to flow through the extraction capillary under gravity. After extraction, the capillary was purged with helium gas and connected to the injection port of a GC. The method offers very low detection limits in the low ppt range (see appendix C, Table C 1.2) for GC-FID measurements. The authors reported for polar and non-polar analytes run to run RSD values for GC peak areas smaller than 6 % and 4%. For desorption, they connected the capillary with the extracted analytes to the inlet end of the GC column by using a two-way press fit fused silica connector inside the GC injector. This procedure can not be automated, is time consuming and seems to be a real drawback to the method. Nevertheless, the sol-gel approach seems to be promising, perhaps if it is used in combination with easier automatable methods. Other methods that use inside coated needles, are capillary adsorption trap (INCAT) by McComb¹²⁶ and Shojania ^{127, 128} and solid-phase dynamic extraction(SPDE) that has been evaluated in this work. Shojania et al. used the INCAT device as passive and active sampler for BTEX from air samples by using colloidal graphite paint as extraction phase. They reported reproducibility's for mixed BETX solutions and active sampling between 6.3-9.3 % RSD. ¹²⁸ In another study, they used the device for fingerprint analysis of different fuels, paint thinners and lighter fluids with a detection limit of 65 ppb for benzene and a reproducibility for GC fingerprints with an average RSD of 9.8 %.¹²⁷ In case of SPDE, syringes with PDMS (polymdimethylsiloxane), PDMS/AC (polymdimethylsiloxane+10% active charcoal), CT-5 (5% diphenyl / 95% dimethyl polysiloxan, Carbowax™ (polyethylenglycol PEG), CT-1701 (14% cyanopropyl / 86% dimethylpolysiloxan), CT-225 (50% cyanopropyl / 59% polysiloxane) and custom made coatings are commercially available. SPDE needle coatings possess around 4-6 times larger extraction phase volumes compared to a 100-um PDMS SPME fiber. 129 130 The first SPDE paper dealing with pesticides in water samples was published by Lipinski et al. ¹³¹ in 2001 and since this time only a few papers and application notes appeared. Lipinski used an ordinary steel GC capillary for extraction of pesticides from water samples. Recently, SPDE has been applied in forensic, food and environmental analysis for various analytes. Forensic applications were reported for cannabinoids 132 , amphetamines 133 and synthetic designer drugs in hair samples.¹²⁹ Bicchi et al. used HS-SPDE for the analysis of volatile flavors in aromatic plants and food matrices.¹³⁰

Figure 1.4 In-needle and in-tube techniques with internal coatings as extraction phase. a) Inside needle capillary adsorption trap (INCAT) re-drawn after Ref.^{126} . Type 1 utilizes a 2.5 cm long GC capillary (DB-5) as extraction phase. In Type 2 a carbon coating (colloidal graphit paint was used as sorbent). b) Solid-phase dynamic extraction (SPDE) c) Sol-gel CME gravity extraction device re-drawn after $Ref.^{121}$.

1.5.4.2 Methods with Extraction Fillings

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All previously discussed in-tube or in-needle techniques, employ stationary phase films coated inside on the tube wall. The following in-needle techniques make use of different types of sorbent particle beds inside the needle. These methods show particularly similarities to SPE. A method that is very similar to SPE, is a cartridge filled with PDMS particles introduced by Baltussen et al.. ⁶⁴ The method was used for retention modelling of pesticides. PAHs and for the determination of acetylated phenols from water samples. 65 For the determination, 10 mL sample containing derivatized phenols were enriched onto such a PDMS cartridge and then thermodesorbed in a thermodesorber unit as it is used for SBSE or HSSE. Limits of detections were between 1–5 ng/l (S/N: 8/1) with recoveries between 72-109 % (RSD: 2-16 %, 0.1 ppb standard, $n = 3$). An in-needle trap was developed by Berezkin and Kubinec.¹³⁴ A similar method by Kubinec utilizes a 5 mL glas syringe connected via a micro valve to a 9 cm long stainless steal needle. The needle is filled as shown in Figure 1.5 with Porapak Q and aluminium oxide. The syringe needle is immersed directly into the sample which is then aspirated into the syringe. By passing the Porapak Q and the aluminium oxide bed, analytes were adsorbed. The device is then flushed with air to remove residual water. After valve closing, analytes were thermally desorbed into the hot injector. Aluminium oxide functions as water reservoir. During the thermal desorption this water evaporate and transports the analytes with the vapour stream out of the needle. These techniques are easy to implement in existing autosampler systems. A disadvantage of all these direct immersion in-needle techniques is that even very tiny particles are able to block the needles and tubes, which requires very clean samples or headspace extraction. All inside needle techniques have in common, that have not yet found such a wide acceptance as SPME.

Another device, that uses a filling inside a stainless steel needle is the needle trap (NT) by Wang and Pawliszyn. ¹³⁵ This needle trap is either filled with Carboxen 1000™ or with a mixed packing of PDMS, DVB and Carboxen particles. Wang et al. reported detection limits between 0.23 ng/L – 2.10 ng/L for benzene gas samples. By Saito et al, a needle extraction device for GC/MS analysis of VOCs (Toluene, ethyl acetate) was presented¹³⁶. As extraction phase a copolymer bed of methacrylic acid and ethylene glycol dimethacrylate was used.

All in-tube or in-needle microextraction techniques provide low method detection limits and relatively good precision. So far no application of these methods in combination with CSIA has been reported.

Figure 1.5 In-needle and in-tube techniques utilizing sorbent packing material as extraction phase. a) Needle trap device re-drawn from Ref.¹³⁵. NT-1 is filled with three different types of sorbent particles. NT-2 is filled with Carboxen 1000 as sorbent packing material. b) In-needle extraction device re-drawn after Ref.:¹³⁶ c) Needle concentrator re-drawn after Ref.: 137 d) In tube extraction device (ITEX) from BGB-Analytik.

1.5.5 Liquid-Phase Microextraction Techniques

Liquid-phase microextraction (LPME) is a simple extraction approach that combines classical liquidliquid extraction with microextraction by greatly reducing the solvent to sample phase ratio. For extraction, a very small drop of a water immiscible solvent or in case of headspace measurements, a high boiling solvent is applied for analyte extraction from water samples. Drop volumes are in the micro- to picoliter range, and the technique can be categorized by the used sample volumes. Here only microdrop-LPME is included considered. The method was introduced by Jeannot and Cantwell in 1996 with detailed theoretical considerations about mass-transfer in the extraction process. ¹³⁸ The target analyte (4-methylacetophenone) was extracted by an 8 µL organic solvent drop (n-octane) containing an internal standard by direct immersion into the sample. ¹³⁹ The drop was located at the top of a teflon rod, which was screwed in a 1 mL vial, as shown in Figure 1.6 a. After extraction, the rod with the solvent drop was withdrawn from the sample solution and a 1 µL aliquot of the organic extract was injected by a microsyringe into a GC injector. The method was later simplified by suspending a drop directly from the tip of a microsyringe needle that is either immersed inside the sample 139 solution or in the headspace above the sample (Figure 1.6 a-b). $^{140, 141}$ Different reviews about drop extraction techniques were published. $24, 44, 84, 142-144$ In literature, synonymously used terms for liquid phase microextraction are single-drop microextraction (SDME), single drop extraction (SDE), solvent microextraction (SME), liquid-liquid microextraction (LLME), micro liquid-liquid extraction (mLLE) or in case of headspace sampling headspace solvent microextraction (HSME) and headspace liquid-phase microextraction (HS-LPME).¹⁴² An overview of the techniques is given in appendix C (Table C 1.3). Different requirements for the used solvent have to be taken into account: (i) the solvent should extract the analytes efficiently and has to be adjusted for the analytes, (ii) for headspace extraction, the vapour pressure of the solvent should be low to minimize losses during extraction, and for direct immersion the water solubility of the solvent should be as low as possible. Another physicochemical aspect is that the solvent should have (iii) a high surface tension for a stable drop formation and especially for unspecific detection it is necessary that the solvent peak should be readily separated from the analyte peak. As extraction solvents for direct immersion, n-hexane, noctane, isooctane, cyclohexane, n-hexadecane, toluene, chloroform, butylacetate and diisopropyl ether were reported. For headspace analysis, n-octane, n-decane, n-hexadecane, toluene, *o*-xylene, cyclohexane, 1-octanol, benzyl alcohol, ethylene alcohole, diethylphthalate were utilized. ¹⁴² Due to the substantial water solubility of polar solvents, the direct immersion method is restricted to nonpolar solvents. Another problem of the direct immersion sampling is the formation of emulsions, especially when dealing with Complex sample matrices.²⁴ Considerations about the used drop size and volume lead to the result, that a bigger organic drop results in higher extraction efficiencies but makes manipulation more elaborate and less reliable. ¹⁴⁵ It was observed that drops with volumes larger 5 μ L became buoyant and could not be withdrawn back into the syringe.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, solvent volumes between 1-3 µL are commonly used. As shown in the zoomed view in Figure 1.6 b, an agitation in the drop ($\geq 1 \mu L$) is introduced by convection in the stirred sample, which leads to higher extraction rates. 44, 138

Figure 1.6 Liquid-phase microextraction techniques. a) Microdrop extraction device re-drawn after Ref. :¹³⁹ b) Microdrop extraction at a needle tip re-drawn after Ref.: $^{139, 140}$ c) d)Hollow fiber liquid-phase microextraction re-drawn according to Ref.: ¹⁴⁶

The reported applications of microdrop-LPME for polar compounds from aqueous matrices (see Table 1.5), include alcohols 141, chlorobenzenes, halogenated hydrocarbons, BTEX, fuel oxygenates such as MTBE ¹⁴⁷, nitroaromatic explosive ¹⁴⁸, warfare agents. ¹⁴⁹ Apart from headspace and direct immersion, another modes for LPME are possible. This approach is dynamic-LPME. In dynamic-LPME, 1 uL of solvent is withdrawn into a 10 µL microsyringe. Than the syringe tip is inserted into the sample. In the next step 3 µL of sample are withdrawn in a time of 2s (dwell time) in the syringe and left there the next 3s for extraction. After this extraction step, the withdrawn 3 μ L sample are pushed out within 2s. This process is repeated several times. At the end of the process, the organic solvent with the enriched target compounds is injected into the GC injector. $\frac{145}{2}$ Simply said, the glas body of the syringe is used as micro separation funnel. 148 In dynamic LPME, an organic solvent film is formed on the inner surface of the syringe by withdrawing the plunger. Mass transfer occurs between this organic film and the aqueous sample plug. Film formation is controlled by solvent characteristics as surface tension and solvent viscosity. He and Lee introduced this method for chlorobenzenes. ¹⁴⁵ In their work they considered a theoretical model on mass transfer and kinetics of the system, and compared static-LPME with dynamic-LPME.

LPME with its very low solvent amounts is compared with SPME, SBSE and other microextraction techniques extremely inexpensive. In case of thermal desorption into the GC injector, the method does not lead to peak broadening and tailing by slow analyte desorption as it mightbe the case for desorption from polymer coatings and no carry over effects can occur. Another advantage is that the method can be completely automated with an ordinary autosampler. In contrast, if these methods are carried out manually, drop sizes in static-LPME and withdrawing volumes and dwell times in dynamic-LPME are hardly reproducible. Saraji derivatised phenols with N,Obis(trimethylsilyl)acetamide inside the syringe barrel after liquid-phase microextraction.¹⁵⁰ In case of in syringe derivatisation (ISyD) it is not possible to automate the complete method, because the needle has to be closed with a septum, to prevent losses by evaporation during reaction at higher temperature.

Another LPME approach is strongly related to membrane extraction techniques. Hollow fiber liquidphase microextraction (HF-LPME) as shown in Figure 1.6 d utilizes a short piece of membrane tube as support for the solvent at the tip of the syringe. An automation of the method is hardly possible, because the membrane has to be removed from the needle tip before injection. Because of their simplicity, low costs and low solvent consumption, LPME could have a high potential for future developments and a combination with GC/IRMS seems possible but was so far not reported.

1.6 Scope of the present work

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As described in the previous sections, the determination of isotope ratios by CSIA for environmental applications is restricted by the low sensitivity of the used isotope ratio mass spectrometers. To overcome this problem, two approaches can be taken. One path is the development of improved isotope ratio mass spectrometers; the other is the development of extraction, enrichment and clean-up methods to achieve sufficiently high analyte concentrations for precise isotope measurements. The latter approach seems to be the easier and more likely to succeed. Thus, the main goal of this work was the development and evaluation of potential extraction and enrichment techniques for the compound specific isotope analysis and the improvement of existing extraction methods for common polar and polar volatile groundwater contaminants. As main target compounds in this work, ethers, alcohols, halogenated methanes, ethylenes, and BTEX compounds were continued. As pointed out in the previous sections, a special focus was set on microextraction approaches. Reasons for this are advantages including absence of toxic solvents, simplicity for automatization, high throughput). Especially the advantages of in-needle techniques such as low fragility, easy implementation in existing systems and higher sorption capacities initiated their evaluation and application for polar groundwater contaminants. Therefore, two different commercially emerging methods were investigated while were commercially available. The first one, SPDE, applies an internal polymer coating as extraction phase and the second one, ITEX, uses a packed sorbent for extraction.

In chapter two, a SPDE method was developed and evaluated for alcohols and ethers. The varius extraction phases were compared and method related parameters were investigated. Chapter three addresses the development of a SPDE method for chlorinated hydrocarbons. Chapter four deals with the development of an ITEX method for nineteen common groundwater contaminants. As for SPDE methods the method was thoroughly validated.

Finally, in chapter 5 a new approach to determine method detection limits in the μ g/L range for CSIA was developed and applied for a modified P&T method. The P&T was modified to allow extraction of larger sample volumes in order to reduce method detection limits. All method parameters have been evaluated for potential isotopic fractionation.

2 Solid-Phase Dynamic Extraction for the Enrichment of Polar Volatile Organic Compounds from Water

2.1 Introduction

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Over the last decade, several solvent-free microextraction techniques based on a compound's partitioning between a liquid or gas phase and a fixed stationary extraction phase have been introduced in gas chromatography for many different matrices and analytes ¹⁵¹. All these techniques have in common the absence of toxic organic solvents, simplicity and ease of automation. Solid-phase micro extraction (SPME), has become the most prominent and widely used solventless micro extraction technique for organic compounds in aqueous samples 75, 152. However, different variations adopted from SPME, such as stir bar sorptive extraction (SBSE) and headspace sorptive extraction (HSSE), have been developed to increase sorption capacity and to overcome some drawbacks of SPME, such as fiber fragility 87, 115. Other approaches utilize flow through techniques where the stationary phase is coated or packed inside a fused silica capillary column or stainless steel needle, including opentubular trapping (OTT) 125 , inside needle capillary adsorption trap (INCAT) 126 , in-tube-SPME coupled to LC 123 and GC 153 , capillary microextraction (CME) 121 , and needle trap (NT) 135 . A recently commercialized technique based on the same principle is solid-phase dynamic extraction (SPDE). As seen in Figure 1, SPDE utilizes a 2.5 mL headspace syringe with a needle that is coated on the inside similar to a fused silica GC column with an immobilized extraction phase. SPDE needle coatings possess around 4-6 times larger extraction phase volumes compared with a 100-um SPME fiber ¹⁵⁴. For the extraction, the needle can be immersed directly into the sample or in the headspace above it. The syringe plunger is moved up and down several times for a dynamic extraction of the sample, and the analytes are sorbed in the internal coating. After several extraction cycles (aspirating and dispensing) the analytes are thermally desorbed from the coating in the GC injector.

So far, there have been very few systematic investigations on extraction parameters and applications of SPDE, restricted to chlorinated pesticides in water 131 , volatile flavours in plants and food 117 , and cannabinoids, amphetamines and synthetic designer drugs in hair samples 129, 132, 133. In this work, we aimed at the analysis of polar volatile organic compounds (PVOC) such as ethers and alcohols as probe compounds since these are more difficult to extract from water than nonpolar compounds. In the case of ethers, 1,4-dioxane, methyl *tert*-butyl ether (MTBE) and tetrahydrofuran (THF) were selected because of their frequent occurrence in environmental aqueous matrices (rain, surface and groundwater) $^{155-157}$. Some of the small chain alcohols are also used as fuel oxygenates 158 or are present in fuel at low concentrations 159, are used as partitioning tracers for the characterization of residual nonaqueous phase liquids ^{160, 161}, and are important analytes in food science, e.g., because of their presence in alcoholic beverages ("fusel oils"). The occurrence of 2-ethylhexanol in drinking water has been reported, probably from its presence in polymers as a by-product of 2-ethylhexyl phthalate synthesis ¹⁶². Some of the investigated compounds, e.g., MTBE, tetrahydrofuran, and 2ethylhexanol have been selected as candidates for further investigations in the OECD Screening Information Data Sets (SIDS) because of their high production rates, toxicity and physicochemical behavior 163.

The main objective of this work was to provide a sensitive, robust and fast method for determination of PVOC in aqueous matrices using SPDE. To this end, we (i) studied in detail the effects of the most important extraction parameters on partitioning of the target compounds (i.e., extraction temperature, ionic strength, and number of extraction cycles), (ii) compared different extraction phases for the

probe compounds with regard to achievable method detection limits (MDLs), and (iii) demonstrated the application of SPDE for the determination of fusel oils in alcoholic beverages and of salting out constants (Setschenow constants).

Figure 2.1 Schematic overview of the various steps in a HS-SPDE procedure. The left part shows the conditioning of a needle in the flush station before first use and after each analysis. In the middle part, the dynamic extraction of the headspace is shown. The right part describes the aspiration of a desorption volume at the gas station and subsequent thermal desorption in the injector.

2.2 Experimental

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2.2.1 Chemicals and Reagents

Methanol (99.9 %) from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany) was used to prepare stock solutions. The methanol was checked by GC-MS for its purity and the absence of the investigated low chain alcohols. As solvent for the preparation of standard solutions, Milli-Q water was used from a Milli-Q Plus water purification system (Millipore, Bedford, MA, USA). Ethanol (99 %) and tetrahydrofuran (99.9 %) were obtained from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany), *tert*-butanol (99.5 %), 2-butanol (99.5 %), 1 pentanol (99+ %), 1-propanol (99+ %), 3-methyl-1-pentanol (99 %), 1-hexanol (98 %) and 2 ethylhexanol (99.6 %) from Aldrich (Steinheim, Germany), isopropanol (99.5 %), isobutanol (99 %), methyl *tert*-butyl ether were purchased from Acros Organics (Geel, Belgium) and 1-butanol (99.5 %), 3-pentanol (99.5 %), 1,4-dioxane (99.5 %) were purchased from Fluka (Buchs, Switzerland). *Tert*butanol-d₁₀ (99 %) from Acros Organics (Geel, Belgium) and 1,4-dioxane-d₈ (99+ %) from Aldrich (Steinheim, Germany) were used as internal standards. Table 2.1 shows the physico-chemical properties of the investigated analytes. Sodium chloride (> 99.5%) purchased from Fluka (Buchs, Switzerland) was used to vary the ionic strength of the water samples.

2.2.2 Stock Solutions and Standard Mixtures

Methanolic stock solutions with a concentration of 1000 mg/L were prepared with a 100 µL gastight glas syringe in 10 mL volumetric flasks. These primary stock solutions were transferred for storage in 10 mL brown screw cap glass bottles without headspace, sealed with PTFE septa and kept in the refrigerator at 4 °C in the dark and were prepared monthly. Standard solution mixtures of 1 ppm_v were prepared from individual stock solutions in Milli-Q water and discarded weekly. Lower concentrated solutions for calibration and MDL determination were prepared likewise by volumetric dilution to the required concentration level.

Table 2.1 Physicochemical properties of target compounds

^a Specification from manufacturer

 $\rm ^b$ Data from SRC Phys Prop Database (http://esc.syrrees.com)
c Ref. ¹⁶⁴

^d adapted from Ref.¹⁶⁵

n.a.: not available
2.2.3 Instrumentation

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All samples were measured using a TraceGC 2000 (ThermoFinnigan, Milano, Italy) gaschromatograph coupled to a TraceDSQ (ThermoFinnigan, Austin TX, US) single quadrupole mass spectrometric detector. SPDE was performed with a CTC-CombiPAL autosampler supplied by Chromtech (Idstein, Germany). Data acquisition, processing and evaluation were carried out using Xcalibur Data System Version 1.3 (ThermoFinnigan, Austin TX, US). The analytes were separated on a Restek Stabilwax fused-silica capillary column (60 m x 0.32 mm ID, 0.5 µm film thickness, Restek Corp., Bellefonte PA, US). The temperature program used to obtain separation of the target compounds was as follows: 1 min at 40° C, 7° C/min to 110° C, 3° C/min to 130° C, 7° C/min to 180° °C, at 180 °C hold for 8 min. The temperatures for the transfer line and the ion source were set to 250 and 220 \degree C, respectively. The initial GC oven temperature was held at 40 \degree C to trap the analytes before separation in order to prevent peak broadening. The GC was equipped with a programmable temperature vaporizer BEST PTV (ThermoQuest, Austin TX, US) that was used in the splitless mode at an injection port base temperature of 200 $^{\circ}$ C and a splitless time of 1.5 min. A 2 mm I.D. deactivated silcosteel liner (BGB, Anwil, Switzerland) was used, and the transfer time was adjusted to 20 s. Carrier gas was Helium 5.0 (Messer, Griesheim, Germany) with a constant flow rate of 1.5 mL/min. The MS was in the electron impact ionization mode (EI) at 70 eV. Full-scan mode (m/z = 30-150) was used for all measurements, including the real samples. The obtained chromatogram under optimized conditions is shown in Figure 2.2. 1,4-dioxane (RT: 12.78 min) was later included in the investigation and was evaluated separately under the same GC and SPDE conditions. 2.2.4 SPDE equipment and evaluation

The autosampler was supplied with a heatable CTC agitator (Chromtech, Idstein, Germany) for incubation and shaking, an additional gas station (Chromtech, Idstein, Germany) to aspire desorption gas, and a heated flushing station for conditioning of the SPDE needles and reconditioning after each analysis to prevent carryover. The gas station and the syringe body were flushed with nitrogen (purity 5.0). The syringe body was held at a temperature of 35°C in the syringe adapter heater. All steps of SPDE were fully controlled by the CTC-CombiPAL with custom-made software macros.

Four different commercially available SPDE needle coatings with different polarities ranging from a polar WAX to a non-polar PDMS were tested for their efficiency for alcohol and ether extraction. The four SPDE coatings were: (1) a polar polyethylene glycol WAX phase (50 µm film thickness and 56 mm film length), (2) a cyanopropylphenyl / polydimethylsiloxane 1701 phase (50 μ m film thickness and 56 mm film length), (3) a non-polar polydimethylsiloxane PDMS phase (50 µm film thickness and 56 mm film length), and (4) a polydimethylsiloxane with 10% embedded activated carbon PDMS/AC phase (50 µm film thickness and 56 mm film length). All needles were obtained from Chromtech (Idstein, Germany). The needles were pre-conditioned in the flush station. The WAX, PDMS and 1701 were conditioned for 30 min at 220 °C, 250 °C and 250 °C, respectively and the PDMS/AC for 60 min at 280 °C. During the pre-conditioning, the syringe was flushed with nitrogen gas through the needle side port. The pre-extraction time for establishing of headspace-sample partition equilibrium in the vial was tested at 70 °C between 2 and 40 min. No significant changes in the obtained peak areas were observed and a pre-extraction time of 5 min was generally used. Investigated parameters using a WAX phase included extraction temperature (30, 40, 50, 60, 70 °C), number of extraction cycles (1, 2, 5, 10, 30, 50), and ionic strength (0, 5, 10, 15, 25 % (w/w) sodium chloride). During evaluation of these parameters, all measurements have been carried out in triplicate using 1 ppm_v standard solution mixtures.

Figure 2.2 Upper chromatogram shows target compound separation with a combination of reconstructed ion chromatograms of a 1 ppm_v standard solution of alcohols and ethers (without 1,4-Dioxane). M/*z* values used for the upper chromatogram are given in Table 1. The lower chromatogram shows a 1 ppm, standard solution of $1,4$ dioxane.

2.2.5 HS-SPDE parameters for MDL determination and quantitative analysis

Twenty-mL screw cap headspace vials were filled with 3.33 g sodium chloride. In case of alcoholic beverage samples, the samples were diluted by a factor of 50 with Milli-Q water in a 25-mL volumetric flask to prevent possible matrix and co-solvent effects. 10 mL standard solution mixture or diluted real sample were transferred to the vials that were sealed with PTFE coated silicone septa and magnetic screw caps. It was necessary to shake the vials at least for ten minutes in order to ensure complete dissolution of the salt. The samples were placed on a heatable tray (Chromtech, Idstein, Germany), which was set to a constant temperature of 50 °C. Before measuring, the samples were shaken for 5 min at 70 °C in the agitator at a speed of 500 rounds per minute (agitator on time: 5 s, agitator off time: 2 s). Afterwards, the SPDE needle was inserted 20 mm through the septum into the vial for dynamic extraction of the headspace. Fifty 2.5-mL extraction strokes with an extraction flow rate of 125 µL/s were done. After the extraction, a desorption volume of 1 mL nitrogen gas was aspirated into the syringe at the gas station before thermal desorption into the injector with a desorption flow rate of 50 μ L/s, i.e. total desorption time was 20 s. Following desorption, the needle removed from the injector and was flushed with nitrogen for 5 min in the needle flush station at a temperature of 200°C, in order to prevent carry-over effects.

2.3 Results and Discussion

2.3.1 Extraction Temperature

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In this study, a temperature range between 30 °C and 70 °C was investigated. Experimental extraction data for each compound could be fitted well by exponential functions, as shown in Table 2 und exemplary for six compounds in Figure 2.3. As shown in Figure 2.3, the highest peak area was always observed at a temperature of 70 °C and all compounds showed a similar behavior. In order to compare the increase in extraction efficiency between the compounds, the ratios between the highest and the lowest peak areas were calculated (Table 2.2). The highest increase of extraction efficiency was observed for 3-pentanol with a factor of \sim 9 and the lowest for MTBE with an increase of \sim 4. According to the calculated ratios of obtained peak areas, a stronger temperature dependency was observed for the alcohols than for the ether. Similar to HS-SPME, there are two major processes involved in the SPDE extraction. The first one is the partitioning of the analytes between headspace and water, the second the partitioning between the analytes in the headspace and the sorbent.

Figure 2.3 Dependency of peak areas on temperature. Triplicate measurements were carried out for each point. Error bars indicate the standard deviation but are often smaller than the symbol size.

Table 2.2 Obtained exponential curve fits, their correlation coefficients and ratios of the peak area between highest and lowest investigated temperature for each compound.

The temperature influences not only the air-water partitioning, but also the partitioning between headspace and sorbent. To evaluate the influence of the temperature on the air- sorbent partitioning, the ratio of the measured peak area of four analytes to their analyte fraction in the headspace was plotted against temperature (Figure 2.4). The initial analyte fraction in air, *fair*, was calculated by equation 2.1:

$$
f_{air} = \frac{1}{1 + \frac{V_{sample}}{K_{aw} \cdot V_{hs}}}
$$
(2.1)

where K_{aw} is the air-water partitioning constant, V_{sample} the sample volume and V_{hs} the headspace volume. This calculation was done for all compounds for which temperature dependent K_{aw} were available from literature or could be calculated by the van´t Hoff-type equation:

$$
\ln K_{\text{aw}} \cong -\frac{A}{T} + B \tag{2.2}
$$

where A and B are compound-specific constants. Values for A and B are given in Table 2.1. Figure 2.4 shows that the extracted amount on the extraction phase *relative to the concentration in the headspace* decreases with increasing temperature. This indicates that the increase in the headspace concentration at higher temperatures due to a higher *Kaw* is partially offset by a lower sorbent-air partition constant K_{sa} . Higher sorbent temperatures decrease K_{sa} because sorption is an exothermic process. This might also explain previous findings of maximum extraction yields at intermediate temperatures with a decrease at higher temperatures $117, 166$. In order to maximize extraction efficiency, the extraction phase was held as cool as possible by keeping the syringe body temperature at 35 °C. Other authors used higher temperatures to prevent a condensation of water vapor in the syringe body ¹³¹ but in our system such a condensation was not observed and reproducibility was not affected.

2.3.2 Number of Extraction Cycles

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In SPDE, the number of extraction cycles (aspirating and dispensing of the syringe) is directly correlated with the extraction time. The volume of the aspirated headspace in each cycle was kept constant at 2.5 mL to exchange the highest possible headspace volume. The volume flow rate was held constant at 125 μL/s because literature data suggests that the volume flow for the extraction of volatile compounds did not show a substantial influence on the extraction yield ¹¹⁷. Before the first extraction cycle, equilibrium between air and water was established. One to 50 extraction cycles, corresponding to extraction times between 0.66 and 33.3 minutes, were tested. Exemplary extraction profiles are shown in Figure 2.5.

Experimental data could be fitted with sigmoidal functions and show similarities with typical SPME equilibration time profiles. All analytes show stable responses after 50 cycles, meaning that additional cycles do not further increase peak areas. However, the differences in individual extraction profiles are relatively high, especially for the first 10 aspiration cycles. Since with the chosen experimental settings a laminar flow in the needle is obtained (Reynolds number R_e of around 22), the equilibration time increases linearly with the sorbent-air partitioning coefficient K_{sa} ¹⁶⁷. The rapid equilibration for MTBE compared with the low chain alcohols shown in Figure 5 thus seems to be caused by a rather low K_{sa} value.

Figure 2.4 Ratio of peak area (extracted amount) of a given analyte over analyte fraction in air (*fr_{air}*) depending on temperature. Error bars indicate the estimated uncertainty from error propagation.

Figure 2.5 Exemplary extraction profiles for four of the investigated compounds. Triplicate measurements were done for each point; error bars indicate the standard deviation. Lines give fitted extraction profiles using a sigmoidal function.

2.3.3 Addition of Salt and Determination of Setschenow Constants

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The influence of electrolyte addition (sodium chloride) to the sample solution on extraction yield was tested by using 50 extraction cycles and an extraction temperature of 70 °C. Five different concentration levels from 0 % to 25 % NaCl (w/w) were used. Higher concentration levels were not

used because of (i) approaching the sodium chloride water solubility and inadequately long dissolving times, and (ii) previous reports of decreased sensitivities for MTBE and no substantial increase in sensitivity for ethanol, *tert*-butanol and isopropanol for salt concentrations above 25 % (w/w) ^{168, 169}. The addition of salt increases the sample volume and therefore volume correction factors were determined experimentally for the tested salt concentrations and applied in all subsequent calculations. Figure 2.6 shows that salt addition leads to significantly higher extraction efficiencies for all the investigated compounds and internal standards. Peak areas for all compounds increased by factors between 2.4 and 3.7 (Table 2.3). Note that for ethanol and MTBE ratios are given for 15 % NaCl (w/w) because at 25 % smaller peak areas were obtained. Apart from these two compounds, best results were generally obtained for the highest salt concentration. For ethanol, isopropanol, TBA, and MTBE our results are in good agreement with previous studies using SPME for extraction ^{168, 169}.

Figure 2.6 Effect of ionic strength on extraction yield for six exemplary compounds. Triplicate measurements were done for each point, error bars indicate the standard deviation.

For a quantification of the effect of salt concentration on extraction, salting out or Setschenow constants K^s were determined according to equation 2.3 using measurements at various salt concentrations 170:

$$
\log\left(\frac{\gamma_{w,salt}}{\gamma_w}\right) = K^s \left[salt\right]_{total}
$$
 (2.3)

where γ_w is the activity coefficient of the compound in pure water, $\gamma_{w, salt}$ is the activity coefficient in the saline aqueous solution, and $[salt]_{total}$ is the total molar salt concentration. Note that K^s values are salt-specific, thus the given values are strictly valid only for sodium chloride. The ratio of ^γ*w* to ^γ*w,salt* can be calculated with equation 2.45 using the known air-water partitioning constant K_{aw}^{171} :

$$
\frac{\gamma_{w,salt}}{\gamma_w} = \frac{r}{1 + (1 - r)K_{aw}}
$$
\n(2.4)

The parameter $r = C_{g,salt}/C_g$, the ratio of the analyte concentrations in the gas phase with salt addition and without, is equal to the ratio of measured peak areas, *PA,* obtained with salt addition and without: $r = PA_{sal}/PA$. Using the calculated *K*^s the modified air-water partitioning constant K_{aw}^{salt} can be calculated by equation 2.5:

$$
K_{aw}^{salt} = K_{aw} 10^{K^s[salt]}_{total}
$$
\n(2.5)

For the determination of the Setschenow constants total salt concentrations up to 3 mol/L (15% (w/w)) were used. As discussed above, at higher salt concentrations than 15 % (w/w) considerable deviations from the behavior described by equation 2.5 were observed (i.e., decreasing peak areas at higher salt concentrations). Therefore, values at 25 % (w/w) were not considered for K^s calculation. The obtained correlation coefficients (n = 3-4 points) were between 0.962 (isopropanol) and 0.999 (1,4-dioxane). As shown in Table 2.3, Setschenow constants in the range 0.08 to 0.17 L/mol were obtained.

Table 2.3 Obtained ratios of the peak area between highest and lowest investigated salt concentration for each compound and determined Setschenow constants.

Compound	Peak area (25% NaCl)/ peak area $(0\%$ NaCl)	Setschenow constant, K^s [L/mol]	Corr. coeff. R for K^s determination		
methyl <i>tert</i> -butyl ether	3.1 ^a	0.17	0.995		
tetrahydrofuran	2.9	0.16	0.988		
1,4-dioxane	2.4	0.08	0.999		
ethanol	2.4^{a}	0.13	0.992		
1-propanol	2.5	0.13	0.980		
isopropanol	2.8	0.13	0.962		
1-butanol	2.8	0.12	0.985		
2-butanol	3.4	0.15	0.978		
isobutanol	3.2	0.15	0.982		
<i>tert</i> -butanol	3.7	0.16	0.976		
1-pentanol	3.2	0.14	0.982		
3-pentanol	3.5	0.14	0.973		
3-methylpentanol	3.2	n.a.	n.a.		
1-hexanol	3.4	0.14	0.974		
2-ethylhexanol	3.4	0.15	0.976		

With 0.08 L/mol, 1,4-dioxane showed an exceptionally low salting-out constant. Except for MTBE (Setschenow constant of 0.11 L/mol)¹⁷¹, no data are available in the literature for comparison. However, the values agree rather well with values for other polar compounds such as phenol (0.13 \pm 0.02) whereas higher values have been reported for less polar compounds such as BTEX, chlorinated hydrocarbons and PAHs ¹⁷⁰. Contradicting these observations, in SPME and static headspace literature it was reported that the salting out effect is much more pronounced for polar than for nonpolar compounds 27, 152 Finally, the Setschenow constants given in Table 2.3 have been determined at 70 °C. Although the temperature effect on K^s is probably not very high, there is no data available in literature to corroborate this assumption. The salting out effect is important both in analytical chemistry (as utilized in this study to enhance air-water partitioning) and environmental chemistry (e.g., air-sea water partitioning) but surprisingly little systematic work on it has been carried out so far.

Thus, further investigations in this field are much needed to foster our understanding of salt effects in air-water systems.

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2.3.4 Method Detection Limits and Precision

Method detection limits (MDLs) were determined according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency procedure ¹⁷² using the optimized conditions indicated in the experimental section. To this end, seven replicates were measured at an approximate signal:noise ratio of 5:1, and standard deviations for these were calculated. For each compound, three point calibrations bracketing the test level were used for quantification, Finally, MDLs were calculated according to equation 2.6 by multiplying the standard deviation s_d with the student t-factor:

$$
MDL = t_{N-1, 0.99} \times s_d
$$
 (2.6)

The MDLs for the probe compounds using each of the four phases were calculated and are summarized in Table 2.4. In general, lowest MDLs were achieved with the WAX and the PDMS/AC phase. Such a result was expected for the WAX phase due to its polarity. The comparison between the PDMS and the PDMS/AC shows that the adsorption on the embedded char coal particles has a pronounced effect on the extraction yield. On all phases, 1-propanol and ethanol showed the highest MDLs. A comparison with MDLs obtained by other enrichment techniques are given in Table 4. Note that the given values depend on the procedure used for the determination of MDLs as has been discussed recently for fuel oxygenates ¹⁷³. For MTBE, reported methods using SPME give within one order of magnitude comparable results. For some alcohols no other studies indicating MDLs are available. The rather high MDL for 2-ethyl-1-hexanol in comparison with the smaller chain alcohols was due to an ubiquitous background signal that might be caused by 2-ethylhexyl phthalate from the GC injector septa or other sources in the lab.

The achievable precision of the overall method was estimated for the WAX phase by averaging the relative standard deviations of all triplicate measurements $(1 ppm_v)$ that had been carried out during SPDE evaluation over several weeks under different conditions. The average RSDs ranged from 2% (THF, 1-pentanol, 1-hexanol, 2-ethylhexanol) to 14% (ethanol). This indicates a good repeatability of measurements over extended usage times.

2.3.5 Application to Real Samples

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The applicability of SPDE in the analysis of real samples was tested with different kinds of alcoholic beverages such as beer, wine, brandy, and rum. In Figure 2.7, the chromatogram for a white wine sample is shown. In this sample, 45.8 mg/L 1-propanol, 91.7 mg/L isobutanol, 2.25 mg/L 1-butanol and 6.4 mg/L 1-hexanol have been found. Because of the high sensitivity of the method, the samples can be diluted with water to suppress matrix and cosolvent effects. As can be seen in Figure 2.7, in addition to the target analytes investigated here, HS-SPDE is also applicable to the analysis of small chain ester aroma components in such a matrix. The esters were not included in the evaluation, but an adaptation of the HS-SPDE method to this compound class should be rather straightforward.

Figure 2.7 Full-scan chromatogram of a white wine sample (diluted 50 times) obtained under standard conditions described in the experimental part using a WAX coating (without internal standard).

2.4 Conclusions

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The results reported here show that HS-SPDE is suitable for the trace determination of polar volatile organic compounds (PVOC) in aqueous matrices. The adjustment of parameters such as salt concentration, temperature, sorption and desorption conditions has a significant influence on the extraction yields. The comparison of MDLs for four coatings has shown that the most efficient materials are the polar WAX and the nonpolar polydimethylsiloxane with embedded activated carbon particles (PDMS/AC). The needle showed a lower fragility than SPME fibers and a longer lifetime: With only one WAX coated needle more than 500 headspace measurements (the whole method evaluation) have been carried out without noticeable adverse effects on extraction efficiency. In particular for polar WAX phases this is a significant improvement in comparison with SPME Carbowax coatings. Furthermore, except for MTBE, the obtained MDLs with SPDE are comparable or even better than with other injection/enrichment techniques.

Table 2.4 HS-SPDE method detection limits for target analytes in µg/L using four different coatings in comparison with literature data. Bold values indicate lowest MDLs within a 30% range.

n.a.: no literature data available, HSME: headspace solvent microextraction, SPME: solid-phase microextraction, LLE: liquid-liquid extraction

3 Determination of Halogenated Volatile Organic Hydrocarbons in Water Samples by Solid-Phase Dynamic Extraction

3.1 Introduction

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Contamination of groundwater with chlorinated solvents and benzene is a widespread environmental problem due to the toxicity, suspected carcinogenity and persistence of these compounds.^{183, 184} Chlorinated solvents such as perchloroethylene (PCE) and trichloroethylene (TCE) are used in dry cleaning and electronic industry as degreasers, as extraction solvents in chemical processes and as heat-exchange fluids. 185 TCE, cis-1,2-dichloroethylene (*cis*-1,2-DCE) and vinyl chloride (VC) are frequently found as degradation products in contaminated groundwater aquifers. ^{8, 186} Halomethanes such as chloroform, bromoform, and dichloromethane (DCM) are used as industrial solvents and are formed as disinfection by-products when chlorine reacts with natural organic matter and bromides in drinking water.¹⁸⁷

Several methods using liquid-liquid extraction (LLE), solid-phase extraction (SPE), headspace (HS) 27 , purge and trap (P&T) and solid-phase microextraction $^{185, 188-194}$ have been reported in the literature for the analysis of halogenated VOCs in water. $^{195-197}$ P&T is the pre-concentration method for VOCs from water most frequently used in routine analysis in the US. Several EPA protocols in the 500, 600 and 8000 series, e.g. EPA method 524.4 for measurement of purgeable organic compounds in water, rely on P&T.¹⁹⁸ Due to higher sample volumes, exhaustive extraction and higher sorption capacities of the trap, lowest MDLs can be obtained with P&T. 19 An inter-laboratory study which compared SPME with P&T and static HS was done by Nilsson and co-workers. ¹⁹¹ SPME and other microextraction techniques offer several advantages over other analytical methods such as the absence of toxic organic solvents, short preparation times, capability of field sampling ¹⁹³ and the opportunity for complete automation. $69, 193$

In the last few years, different types of in-needle or in-capillary microextraction methods and devices were developed to overcome some SPME related drawbacks such as fiber fragility and low sorption capacities.^{12f} These methods utilize two different approaches. One approach uses an immobilized coating on the walls inside a needle 128 or capillary $^{46, 121, 125}$ as extraction phase. The other approach uses packings or fillings with sorbent material for extraction. ^{199, 200}

Enrichment by solid-phase dynamic extraction (SPDE) utilizes a 2.5 mL headspace syringe with a needle that is coated on the inside walls with an immobilized extraction phase. For extraction, the syringe plunger is moved up and down several times for a dynamic extraction of the sample headspace; thereby the analytes are sorbed in the internal coating. After several extraction cycles (aspirating and dispensing) the analytes are thermally desorbed from the coating in the hot GC injector. A schematic overview of the procedure is given in Figure 2.1 and in the literature. 129, 201 SPDE needle coatings possess around 4-6 times larger extraction phase volumes compared with a 100- μ m SPME fiber 129 and nowadays all coating types that have been commercialized in SPME are available for SPDE as well. The applicability of HS-SPDE has been demonstrated for a limited number of analytes in environmental 131 , food $^{130, 201}$ and forensic analysis.¹²⁹

In this work, we aimed at the analysis of volatile halogenated hydrocarbons such as halomethanes (dichloromethane (DCM), chloroform, carbon tetrachloride (CT), bromoform), and halogenated ethanes and ethylenes (1,2-dichloroethane, 1,2-dibromoethane, *cis*-1,2-dichloroethylene, *trans*-1,2 dichloroethylene (trans-1,2-DCE), trichloroethylen, tetrachloroethylene) in groundwater samples. The main objective was to provide a sensitive, robust, fully automated method with the lowest expenditure in sample preparation. SPDE can be easily implemented in an existing autosampler system and is an alternative to a P&T system with relatively high purchasing costs. Compared with SPME, the method offers higher sorption capacities and a higher stability of the used extraction phase with regard to bending and breaking of fibers. Additionally, the applicability of a dynamic headspace extraction technique for volatile compounds should be tested. To this end, we (i) studied in detail the effects of the most important extraction and desorption parameters of the target compounds, (ii) determined method detection limits and precision as well as (iii) showed the applicability for determination of VOCs in groundwater samples from a contaminated field site.

3.2 Experimental

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3.2.1 Chemicals and Reagents

Methanol (99.9 %) from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany) was used to prepare stock solutions. As solvent for the preparation of standard solutions, millipore water was used from a Milli-Q Plus water purification system (Millipore, Bedford, MA, USA).

Trichloroethylene (99.5 %) and dichloromethane (≥99.9 %) were obtained from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany), cis-1,2-dichloroethylene (97%), trans-1,2-dichloroethylene (98%), tetrachloroethylene $(99.9 + \frac{9}{6})$, bromoform $(99 + \frac{9}{6})$, carbon tetrachloride $(99 + \frac{9}{6})$ from Aldrich (Steinheim, Germany), and chloroform (99.5 %) and benzene (99,5%) from Fluka (Buchs, Switzerland). Vinyl chloride was obtained as methanolic standard (2000 μ g/mL) from Supelco (Bellefonte, PA, US). The physicochemical properties of the investigated analytes are summarized in Table 1. Sodium chloride (>99.5%) purchased from Fluka (Buchs, Switzerland) was used to vary the ionic strength of the water samples. The salt was pulverized in a mortar and heated over night at 180°C in an incubator to remove possible organic residues.

3.2.2 GC/MS Equipment and Method

All measurements were carried out with a TraceGC 2000 (ThermoFinnigan, Milano, Italy) gaschromatograph coupled with a TraceDSQ (ThermoFinnigan, Austin TX, US) single quadrupole mass spectrometric detector. SPDE was performed with a CTC-CombiPAL autosampler supplied by Chromtech (Idstein, Germany). Data acquisition, processing and evaluation were carried out using the standard software Xcalibur Data System Version 1.3 (ThermoFinnigan, Austin TX, US). The analytes were separated on a RTX-VMS capillary column (60 m x 0.32 mm ID, 1.8 µm film thickness, Restek Corp., Bellefonte PA, US). The temperature program used to obtain separation of the target compounds was as follows: 10 min at 40 °C, 4 °C/min to 100 °C, 10 °C/min to 170 °C. Total GC runtime was 34 min. The temperatures for the transfer line and the ion source were set to 250 and 220 °C, respectively. The initial GC oven temperature was held at 40 °C to trap the analytes before separation in order to minimize peak broadening. The GC was equipped with a programmable temperature vaporiser BEST PTV (ThermoQuest, Austin TX, US) that was used in the splitless mode at an injection port base temperature of 300°C and a splitless time of 2 min. A 2 mm I.D. deactivated silcosteel liner (Restek Corp., Bellefonte PA, US) was used. Highest desorption efficiency was observed with an injector temperature of 300°C. Higher temperatures than 300 °C were not used to prevent degradation of the extraction phase and thus prolong its lifetime. Carrier gas was Helium 5.0 (Messer, Griesheim, Germany) with a constant flow rate of 1.5 mL/min. The MS was in the electron impact ionization mode at 70 eV. Full-scan mode $(m/z = 49-300)$ was used for all measurements, including the real samples. A chromatogram under optimized conditions is shown in Figure 3.1.

Table 3.1 Physicochemical properties of target compounds

^{a)} Ref \cdot ²⁰²

 $^{\rm b)}$ Ref.: 165

^{c)} liquid phase

^{d)} Values calculated for 25 °C with van't Hoff type equation $\log K_{_{\scriptscriptstyle{GW}}} = A - B\,T$

n.a. : not available

3.2.3 SPDE Equipment and Method

The autosampler was additionally equipped with a single magnet mixer, a gas station to aspire desorption gas, and a heated flushing station for conditioning and reconditioning of the SPDE needles (all from Chromtech, Idstein, Germany). The gas station and the syringe body were connected via the autosampler to a nitrogen gas cylinder (purity 5.0). The syringe body was held at a temperature of 35 °C in the syringe adapter heater. All steps of the SPDE method were fully controlled by the CTC-CombiPAL with custom-made software macros.

A needle coated with a PDMS/AC phase (polydimethylsiloxane with 10% embedded activated carbon) with 50 μ m film thickness and 56 mm film length was used. Needles were obtained from Chromtech (Idstein, Germany). The needles were pre-conditioned in the flush station for 90 min at 280 °C. During the pre-conditioning, the syringe was flushed with nitrogen gas through the syringe side port. Samples were placed on a heatable tray (Chromtech, Idstein, Germany), which was set to a constant temperature of 60 °C. Before measuring, the samples were stirred for 5 min at 60 °C in the single magnet mixer at 700 rounds per minute to establish equilibrium between headspace and water phase. Afterwards, the SPDE needle was inserted 12 mm through the septum into the vial for dynamic extraction of the headspace under continuous stirring. Fifteen 1-mL extraction strokes with an extraction flow rate of 50 μ L/s corresponding to an extraction time of 10 min were done. After extraction, a desorption volume of 1 mL nitrogen gas was aspirated into the syringe at the gas station before thermal desorption into the injector with a desorption flow rate of 10 μ L/s. Following desorption, the needle was removed from the injector and flushed with nitrogen for 2 min in the needle flush station at a temperature of 280°C, in order to prevent carry-over effects.

Figure 3.1 Full-scan chromatogram of the ten VOC target compounds with a combination of reconstructed ion chromatograms of a 100 μ g/L standard solution under optimized conditions. m/z values used for quantification are given in Table 3.2.

3.2.4 Stock Solutions and Standard Mixture

Mixed methanolic stock solutions with a concentration of 2000 mg/L were prepared weekly and were stored at 4 °C in the dark refrigerator. Vinyl chloride was available as 2000 mg/L standard methanolic solution. Standard solutions were prepared before each experiment from these primary stock solutions in millipore water. Lower concentrated solutions for calibrations, MDL determination and optimization were prepared likewise by volumetric dilution to the required concentration levels. During evaluation of method parameters, all measurements have been carried out in triplicate using 100 µg/L standard solution mixtures.

3.2.5 Preparation of Standards and Groundwater Samples

A 20-mL screw cap headspace vial (BGBAnalytik, Anwil, Switzerland) was filled with 0.52 g (5 % (w/w)) sodium chloride and a 8 mm glass coated stir bar (FisherScientific, Ulm, Germany). Then, 10 mL of standard solution mixture or real sample were transferred immediately with a 10-mL gastight Hamilton syringe (BGBAnalytik, Anwil, Switzerland) to the vial that was sealed immediately with a PTFE coated silicone septum and a magnetic screw cap. It was necessary to shake the vials for at least ten minutes in order to ensure complete dissolution of the salt.

Groundwater samples from a former waste oil recycling facility were stored without headspace in 1 L brown glass bottles in a dark cool storage room (4 °C). Ten mL aliquots of groundwater were processed as described above. Quantification was carried out by an external standard calibration, therefore identical sample and headspace volumes were used in the standards and the samples.

3.3 Results and Discussion

3.3.1 Evaluation of Extraction Parameters for SPDE

As for other microextraction methods, desorption and extraction parameters including desorption temperature, extraction time and temperature, as well as salting out have to be optimized for highest extraction yields. In case of solid-phase dynamic extraction additional parameters originating in the dynamic process have to be optimized. These additional parameters are pre-desorption time, desorption flow rate, desorption volume, and extraction flow rate.

3.3.2 Extraction Cycles

 \overline{a}

In solid-phase dynamic extraction the number of extraction cycles correlates directly with the extraction time. One to fifty extraction cycles, corresponding to extraction times between 0.66 and 33.3 min, were investigated. During the extraction process the temperature was held at 25 °C and before extraction the samples were equilibrated for 2 h in the heated tray. The extraction flow rate and volume were set to 50 $\mu L/s$ and 1 mL, respectively. Fig. 3.2 shows that a stable response could be observed after 15 cycles (10 min), i.e., additional cycles led to no further increase in peak areas for most of the target analytes. Bromoform shows a lower slope in the extraction profile, especially for the first extraction cycles and does not reach equilibrium within fifty cycles.

Figure 3.2 Extraction profiles for the investigated compounds at 25 °C. Triplicate measurements were done for each point , error bars indicate the standard deviation. The logarithmic scale for peak areas was chosen for a better interpretation of the curves over the large peak area range for the different analytes

The large difference for bromoform compared with the other compounds is due to its ten times smaller air-water partitioning coefficient. In contrast to bromoform, vinyl chloride has the highest air-water partitioning coefficient and shows the highest slope and fastest extraction. This indicates that the limiting factor in the extraction process is the air-water partitioning coefficient. Similar results are known for HS-SPME 203, 204 For VC, *trans*-DCE and dichloromethane decreases in peak areas can be observed for more than 15 extraction cycles. This decrease could either be explained by a competition with other compounds, or by evaporation through the hole in the septum along the SPDE needle. The latter explanation was given by Nilsson et al., who found the same slightly decreasing peak areas for light VOCs.¹⁹³ The former result was reported by Shojania et al. during active sampling of BTEX compounds with the INCAT device. In their study, active sampling of all BTEX compounds simultaneously led to a distinct competition trend, preferring the heavier compounds. ¹²⁸ The curves obtained here for chloroform, CT, TCE and benzene are comparable with extraction time profiles found for HS-SPME. 205 For the optimized method, 15 extraction cycles were used.

3.3.3 Extraction Temperature

 \overline{a}

A temperature range between 20 °C and 70 °C was investigated in this study. For the evaluation, the extraction flow rate was held at 50 μ L/s, extraction volume at 1 mL, and 15 extraction cycles were done. In Figure 3.3a, the extraction temperature is plotted against the peak area. In this plot, a maximum peak area was observed for most of the components.

Figure 3.3 a) Effect of the extraction temperature on extraction yield. Measurements were carried out in triplicate for each point. Error bars indicate the standard deviation but are often smaller than the symbol size. **b)** Ratio of peak area (extracted amount) of a given analyte over analyte fraction in air (*fair*) depending on temperature. Error bars indicate the estimated uncertainty from error propagation.

This behavior is well known and a similar maximum could be observed in SPME for a variety of volatile and semivolatile compounds. 185, 206, 207 As in SPME, two counteracting processes play a role. First, the air-water partitioning constant K_{aw} increases with increasing temperature but at the same time the sorbent-air partitioning coefficient K_{sa} decreases with increasing temperature, because the molar change in enthalpy for the sorption process is positive and the sorption process is exothermic. In this work, the extraction phase was held as cool as possible, therefore the syringe body was set to 35 °C. During extraction one fifth of the needle was introduced in the vial headspace. The rest of the steel needle is in contact with room temperature which was held at 20 °C. Nevertheless, with increasing temperature in the vial the temperature of the steel needle and the coating increases. For a better evaluation of temperature influence on the air-sorbent partitioning, the ratio of measured peak areas to the analyte fraction in air *fair* was plotted in Fig. 3.3b against the temperature. The fraction in air was calculated according to literature 201 , 202 by using the air-water partitioning coefficients in Table 1. Figure 3.3b shows that the extracted amount in the coating decreases with increasing temperature relative to the concentration in the headspace and the higher K_{aw} is partially compensated by the lower

Ksa. Most compounds show a decrease of *Ksa* with temperature, while TCE and PCE have a maximum for K_{sa} at a vial incubation temperature of 30 °C. Another factor that could decrease K_{sa} is the humidity in the system that increases with temperature. ²⁰⁶

3.3.4 Extraction Flow Rate

 \overline{a}

Fig. 3.4 shows the effect of extraction flow rate on peak areas for the investigated compounds. With decreasing extraction flow rate an increase in the extraction yield can be observed.

Obviously, the diffusion into the extraction phase is reduced by a higher flow rate. The best fit for this trend was achieved by potential functions of the type $PA = aV^{-b}$, were *PA* is the peak area, *V* the extraction flow rate and *a*, *b* are fitting parameters. The fitting parameters for the extraction flow rate are given in Table 3.2. For very volatile compounds such as VC the effect is not as pronounced as for compounds with lower air-water partitioning constants. A possible explanation for the observed trend is a higher diffusion coefficient into the coating for the very volatile compounds. For adequate extraction times an extraction flow rate of 50 μ L/s was used for the optimized method with a constant extraction volume of 1 mL.

Figure 3.4 Dependency of peak areas on extraction flow rate. Measurements were carried out in triplicate for each point. Error bars indicate the standard deviation but are often smaller than the symbol size.

3.3.5 Effect of Ionic Strength and Determination of Setschenow Constants

The influence of salt addition to the sample solutions on extraction yields was tested by using 15 extraction cycles at an extraction temperature of 25 °C. Six different electrolyte concentrations, ranging from 0% to 25% NaCl (w/w) were used. Higher salt concentration levels were not used because of approaching the sodium chloride water solubility and inadequately long dissolving times. The addition of salt increases the sample volume and therefore volume correction factors were determined experimentally for the tested salt concentrations and applied in all subsequent calculations. Figure 3.5 shows that salt addition leads to higher extraction efficiencies for most investigated compounds.

Comparing peak areas at a concentration of 25% (w/w) NaCl with 0% (w/w) NaCl shows that extraction yields for all compounds increase by factors between 1.0 and 3.0. The values are in rather good agreement with literature data obtained at full saturation ¹⁸⁵ but smaller than reported in a previous study for a 7.5 % (w/w) NaCl solution. 208 To quantify the effect of salt concentration on extraction, salting-out constants (Setschenow constants) K^s were determined exemplarily for some of the investigated compounds. ^{189, 202, 209}

For the determination of Setschenow constants, total salt concentrations up to 1.9 mol/L (10 % (w/w)) were used. Higher salt concentrations lead to considerable deviations that could not be described by the used equations. ^{171, 201} The obtained correlation coefficients (n = 3 points) were between 0.987 and 0.999. As shown in Table 2, Setschenow constants range between 0.152 and 0.213 L/mol. For benzene a somewhat lower constant than in literature was obtained, and for TCE and PCE a good agreement with a previous report ²⁰⁹ was found. For the optimized method 5 % (w/w) NaCl (0.52 g) was used. As shown in Figure 3.5, higher salt concentrations lead to higher standard deviations and lower reproducibility.

Figure 3.5 Effect of ionic strength on extraction yield of the target analytes. Measurements were carried out in triplicate for each point at 25°C. Error bars indicate the standard deviation but are often smaller than the symbol size.

Table 3.2 Fitting parameters for desorption and extraction flow rates as well as obtained ratios between highest and lowest investigated salt concentration, and determined Setschenow constants compared with constants reported in literature

Compounds in elution order		Extraction flow rate			Desorption flow rate		Peak area (25 $%$ NaCl) /	Determined Setschenow constants ^{c)}				literature K^s in L mol ⁻¹	Setschenow constants from			
						peak area 0 %			Gosset et al. ^{a)}		Dewulf et al. b)					
	A	b.	\mathbb{R}^2	a	b.	\mathbb{R}^2	NaCl)	$(L \mod l^{-1})$ \boldsymbol{K}^s	\mathbb{R}^2	\boldsymbol{K}^s $(L \mod I)$	\mathbb{R}^2	\boldsymbol{K}^s $(L \mod 1)$	\mathbf{R}^2			
vinyl chloride				3×10^{7}	-0.7894	0.9878	2.5		$\overline{}$	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.			
dichloromethane	4×10^{6}	0.06480	0.8644	$2 \times 10'$	-0.4467	0.9853	2.4	$\overline{}$	$\overline{}$	0.107	0.998	n.a.	n.a.			
<i>trans-1,2-dichloroethylene</i>	4×10^{7}	0.23180	0.9946	8×10^{7}	-0.4941	0.93	2.4	0.179	0.999	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.			
$cis-1,2$ -dichloroethylene	2×10^{7}	0.22260	0.9948	5×10^{7}	-0.4570	0.9872	3.0	0.137	0.999	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.			
chloroform	2×10^6	0.20020	0.9854	1×10^6	-0.4032	0.5589	1.0	$\,$	\blacksquare	0.107	0.998	0.153	0.976			
carbon tetrachloride	2×10^4	0.06390	0.0337	225470	-0.7830	0.8565	1.7	-	$\overline{}$	n.a.	n.a.	0.185	0.999			
benzene	7×10^{7}	0.32510	0.9774	1×10^8	-0.4777	0.9953	2.8	0.152	0.999	n.a.	n.a.	0.173	0.982			
trichloroethylene	$3 \times 10'$	0.23360	0.9595	1×10^8	-0.4191	0.9859	2.4	0.178	0.997	0.187	0.999	0.182	0.991			
tetrachloroethylene	2×10^{7}	0.15660	0.9553	1×10^8	-0.4176	0.9846	1.8	0.213	0.987	0.213	0.994	0.150	0.962			
bromoform \sim	3×10^6	0.17080	0.9679	335624	-0.4456	0.6878	2.7	\blacksquare	\sim	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.			

a) Ref.: 209

b) $\frac{161...}{189}$

^{c)} Determined at 25 °C at salt concentrations between $0 - 10$ % NaCl (w/w)

-: could not be fitted with a linear function

 $-$ ^{*}): could not be fitted by exponential function n.a.: not available

3.3.6 Desorption Temperature and Pre-desorption Time

The pre-desorption time, is the time, in which the needle is inserted into the hot injector to achieve thermal equilibrium of the extraction phase, before the syringe plunger is moved down for desorption. For the evaluation, three different pre-desorption times (0, 5, 10 s) were investigated. As in a previous study ²⁰¹, the pre-desorption time showed no significant influence on the sensitivity. A longer predesorption time leads to peak tailing and splitting, as described previously in literature. 129 Wang et al. observed the same phenomenon during the needle trap evaluation and suggested that the air volume in the needle expands significantly due to the high injector temperature. Parts of the analytes are then swept with expanded air into the GC column, which leads to peak splitting and broadening. ¹³⁵ Corroborating these results no pre-desorption time was used further, i.e., the plunger was moved down immediately after needle injection into the injector.

3.3.7 Desorption Flow Rate

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The desorption flow rate was varied between 10 μ L/s and 1000 μ L/s with a constant desorption volume of 1000 µL. These desorption flow rates correlate with desorption times between 100 s and 1 s. In Figure 3.6 the peak area of the analytes is plotted vs. the desorption flow rate. Fig. 3.6 shows that the sensitivity is significantly influenced by the nitrogen flow rate during desorption. The obtained results could be fitted by the same expression as for the extraction flow rate. The fitting parameters are reported in Table 3.2. The explanation for inverse proportional relationship between peak area and desorption flow rate is that the analytes need time to diffuse from the coating into the nitrogen gas stream. These results agree with previous reports for other compounds on highest sensitivities at low desorption flow rates. ¹²⁹ In the optimized method a flow rate of 10 μ L/s was therefore used.

Figure 3.6 Dependency of peak areas on desorption flow rate. Triplicate measurements were carried out for each point. Error bars indicate the standard deviation but are often smaller than the symbol size.

3.3.8 Desorption Volume

The desorption volume has, according to literature a significant influence on the desoption process. ^{129,} ¹³⁰ Musshoff et al. found the highest efficiency with the highest possible syringe desorption volume of 2.5 mL. ¹²⁹ Bicchi et al. found that no significant change in peak areas occurred for desorption volumes higher 1 mL for volatile food aromatics. ¹³⁰ In disagreement with these results, we found in this study that significant changes of peak areas did not occur for desorption volumes between 0.5 mL and 1 mL for any component (Fig . 7). From 1 mL to 2.5 mL a decrease in the peak areas was observed with peak tailing and even peak splitting at higher desorption volumes. The reason for this seems to be the slow transfer of the analytes to the capillary column in the injector at higher desorption volumes. Therefore, a desorption volume of 1 mL was used in the optimized method. Using a column cryofocusing unit should prevent this phenomenon and would also lead to sharper peaks.

Figure 3.7 On the left hand side, the dependency of peak areas on desorption flow rate is shown. Triplicate measurements were carried out for each point. Error bars indicate the standard deviation but are often smaller than the symbol size. On the right hand side the splitting of the peaks by increasing the desorption volume is shown exemplarily for benzene and trichloroethylene.

3.4 Validation of the Method

 \overline{a}

Method detection limits (MDLs) were determined according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency procedure. ²¹⁰ The first step was to find individual test level concentrations in preliminary measurements for all compounds at a signal to noise ratio of about 5:1. Nine replicates were measured at this concentration and standard deviations for these measurements were calculated. For each compound, six point calibrations (each point in triplicate) bracketing the test level was used for

quantification. Finally, MDLs were calculated by multiplying the standard deviation s_d with the student *t*-factor for a degree of freedom $f = 8$. MDLs for all target compounds were determined accordingly, and are presented in Table 3.3. The MDL were between 12 ng/L for *trans*-DCE and *cis*-DCE and 870 ng/L for VC. These method detection limits are comparable with reported detection limits for SPME-GC/ITMS methods. ^{204, 211} However, reported MDL values are difficult to compare because of different methods to determine or calculate these values.

The precision of the method was determined with nine replicates each at two concentration levels: once from the replicates used for MDL determination, once at a higher concentration level of 100µg/L. Relative standard deviations at the low concentration level were between 1.0 % for bromoform and 16 % chloroform. At the higher concentration level relative standard deviations between 3.2 % for benzene and 7.5 % for vinyl chloride were observed. Precisions are comparable with precisions reported in literature for SPME methods. 206, 208, 211

Compounds in elution order	Target ions used for quantification $(m/z)^{a)}$	Retention times (min)	Minimum linear range $(\mu g/L)^{b)}$	Correlation coefficient R^2	Method detection limit (ng/L)	Precision at low concentration $(\frac{6}{6})^c$	Precision at high concentration (%) ^{d)}
vinyl chloride	62, 64	4.43	$0.870 - 83$	0.993	870	4.0	7.5
dichloromethane	84, 49	9.08	$0.119 - 23$	0.991	119	5.0	6.6
$trans-1,2-$ dichloroethylene	96, 61	9.61	$0.012 - 23$	0.999	12	3.1	5.1
$cis-1,2$ -dichloroethylene	96, 61	13.61	$0.012 - 24$	0.998	12	1.5	5.1
chloroform	83, 119	14.58	$0.018 - 25$	0.998	176	16	3.7
carbon tetrachloride	117, 119	14.97	$0.019 - 27$	0.997	19	4.8	6.8
benzene	78, 51	16.44	$0.013 - 15$	0.998	13	3.7	3.2
trichloroethylene	130, 95	18.37	$0.013 - 28$	0.997	13	3.6	4.9
tetrachloroethylene	166, 131	24.40	$0.028 - 29$	0.990	28	5.7	5.0
bromoform	173, 252	30.41	$0.022 - 60$	0.996	22	1.0	6.8

Table 3.3 Validation data for the SPDE-GC/MS method

^{a)} Base peak used for quantification is underlined.

b) Linear range measured for MDL determination

^{c)} Relative standard deviations ($n = 9$, fortification level approx. five times higher than MDL for individual compounds)

^{d)} Relative standard deviations ($n = 9$, fortification level 100 μ g/L)

3.5 Analysis of Groundwater Samples

The SPDE-GC/MS method was applied to the analysis of several groundwater samples from a former oil recycling facility. Samples from eight different wells of the contaminated site were investigated for the target compounds. The quantification was based on a six point external standard calibration curve that was generated by spiking Milli-Q water samples with the target analytes. Calibration and real water samples were analyzed using the optimized method parameters described above. Each sample was analyzed three times using the optimized SPDE method. The determined concentrations are reported in Table 3.4. In Figure 3.8, a typical chromatogram of a real sample is shown. It should be emphasized here that the method is also applicable for the determination of other BTEX compounds than benzene and even low molecular weight PAHs such as acenaphtene as can be seen in the chromatogram. The concentrations given in Table 3.4 agree rather well with those measured by a commercial laboratory two months before using a standardized method for BTEX determination.

Figure 3.8 Full-scan chromatogram with a combination of reconstructed ion chromatograms for the quantification masses of chlorinated ethylenes from well B 6 obtained under optimized conditions described in the experimental part. PDMS fragments from the SPDE coating occur in the chromatogram. At retention times longer than 30 min, dimethyl naphthalenes and acenaphthene occur in the chromatogram.

Concentration in examined groundwater wells (µg/L) Compounds										
B 1	$\bf{B}2$	B 3	B 4	B 5	B 6	B 7	B 8			
		3.6 ± 0.7	0.9 ± 0.3	$\overline{}$	0.5 ± 0.1	\blacksquare	$\overline{}$			
2.5 ± 0.8	$\overline{}$	22 ± 6	28 ± 5	0.8 ± 0.4	119 ± 12	44 ± 1.3	0.5 ± 0.3			
		30 ± 7	21 ± 2	$\overline{}$			$\overline{}$			
1.3 ± 0.1	Ξ.	0.11 ± 0.01	0.1 ± 0.08	0.6 ± 0.09	60 ± 6	14 ± 0.8	1.2 ± 0.06			
21 ± 1			\blacksquare	73 ± 13	72 ± 5	1052 ± 17	464 ± 22			

Table 3.4 Detected VOCs in groundwater samples from a former oil recycling facility

-: not detected

 \overline{a}

63

4 In-tube Extraction (ITEX) for Extraction of Volatile Organic Hydrocarbons from Groundwater

4.1 Introduction

 \overline{a}

Around 15 years ago solid-phase micro-extraction (SPME) was introduced as solventless equilibrium microextraction method. Since this time, other related micro-extraction methods such as stir bar sorptive extraction (SBSE), liquid-phase micro-extraction (LPME) and several in-tube or in-needle extraction techniques were developed to overcome some fiber related drawbacks such as fiber fragility, diminished lifetimes of polar coating materials and low sorption capacities. 24 In-tube or inneedle extraction techniques roughly can be divided in methods that either apply a coating on the inner surface or a sorbent material packed inside a tube or a needle. Methods with sorbent packings, such as ITEX offers the advantage that a variety of commercial available sorbent materials and higher amounts of sorbent material can be used to obtain higer extraction yields than possible with coated extraction phases. Early approaches used gas chromatography capillary columns such as so called open tubular traps (OTT). 125 A very similar method is known as in-tube SPME, which was originally developed in combination with HPLC, 123 for the determination of chlorinated hydrocarbons²¹² and pesticides. 122 A shorter capillary with a sol-gel coating (sol-gel CME) was used by Bigham et al. for determination of compounds such as PAHs, aldehydes and ketones as well as for more polar compounds such as phenols, alcohols and amines. ¹²¹ Other in-tube techniques such as in - capillary extraction (INCAT) 127 or solid-phase dynamic extraction (SPDE) $^{201, 213, 214}$ use a needle as support for the extraction phase. These needle based methods have the advantage that thermal desorption can be carried out directly in the injection port of a gas chromatograph and the whole process can easily be implemented in an auto-sampler. To achieve higher extraction yields, efforts were made to increase the amount of extraction phase by applying packed sorbent materials. A method to determine BTEX compounds that applies a sorbent bed was developed by Berezkin and Kubinek.²¹⁵ Another needle based device that uses a packed sorbent is the needle trap (NT) by Wang and Pawliszyn. ¹³⁵ This needle trap is either filled with Carboxen 1000 or with a mixed packing of PDMS, DVB and Carboxen particles. A similar needle extraction device for GC/MS analysis of VOCs (toluene, ethyl acetate) was presented by Saito and co-workers, by using a copolymer bed of methacrylic acid and ethylene glycol dimethacrylate.¹³⁶

ITEX enhances the advantages of previous needle-based methods by applying a stainless steel needle that is divided into two parts. Compared with SPME, the method offers a higher roubustnes with regard to bending and breaking of fibers. As shown in the schematic illustration of the ITEX procedure in Figure 4.1, the lower part consists of an ordinary needle canula with a hole on the side for vial and septum penetration. The upper part with a bigger diameter contains the sorbent material. The upper part of the ITEX needle is surrounded by a heater for thermal desorption after the extraction process. Compared with other in-needle techniques the thermal desorption occurs outside the GC injector, which makes the method independent from the injector temperature profile and offers a gradient free desorption. After thermal desorption, the sorbent material is flushed with nitrogen at elevated temperature for cleaning. In this study, Tenax TA® was used as packing material for extraction of the target analytes. The ability to apply relatively high amounts of a variety of packing materials, e.g. as used in P&T, is a special advantage of the method and opens a wide range of applications to various compound classes with different polarities.

In this work, in-tube extraction (ITEX) was evaluated for the determination of nineteen priority groundwater pollutants 183 , 216 such as volatile halogenated hydrocarbons (dichloromethane groundwater pollutants ^{183, 216} such as volatile halogenated hydrocarbons (dichloromethane, chloroform, carbon tetrachloride, bromoform, 1,2-dichloroethane, 1,2-dibromoethane, *cis*-1,2 dichloroethylene, *trans*-1,2-dichloroethylene, trichloroethylene, tetrachloroethylene) and BTEX compounds (toluene, ethylbenzene, propylbenzene, 1,2,4-trimethylbenzene, benzene, 1,3,5 trimethylbenzene, 1,2,3-trimethylbenzene, *para*-xylene). All these compounds have adverse effects to environmental systems and human health and most of the components are known or probable human carcinogens. 184

The main objective was to evaluate a sensitive, robust method that applies a solid sorbent material as extraction phase, with the ability to use the wide range of sorbent materials that were available for purge and trap and air sampling.To this end, in this work the evaluation of (i) the most important extraction and desorption parameters, as well as the (ii) determination of validation parameters such as method detection limits and precisions for volatile organic compounds was done.

4.2 Experimental

4.2.1. Reagents

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Methanol (99.9 %) from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany) was used to prepare stock solutions. As solvent for the preparation of standard solutions, Milli-Q water from a Milli-Q Plus water purification system (Millipore, Bedford, MA, USA) was used. Trichloroethylene (99.5 %), dichloromethane (≥99.9 %) and toluene (99.9 %) were obtained from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany). *Cis*-1,2-dichloroethylene (97%), *trans*-1,2-dichloroethylene (98%), tetrachloroethylene (99.9+ %), bromoform (99+ %), 1,2 dichloroethane (99.8%), 1,2-dibromomethane (99 %), carbon tetrachloride (99+ %), isopropylbenzene (99 %), *para*-xylene (99 %), ethylbenzene (99.8 %), propylbenzene (98 %), 1,2,4-trimethylbenzene (98 %) were purchased from Aldrich (Steinheim, Germany) and chloroform (99.5 %), benzene (99.5 %), 1,3,5-trimethylbenzene (99 %), 1,2,3-trimethylbenzene (90-95 %) from Fluka (Buchs, Switzerland). Fluorobenzene (99 %) from Aldrich (Steinheim, Germany) was used as internal standard. Sodium chloride (>99.5%) purchased from Fluka (Buchs, Switzerland) was used to vary the ionic strength of the water samples. Sodium chloride was pulverized for a faster dissolution in a mortar and heated over night at 180°C in an incubator to remove possibly existing organic residues. Abbreviations used for the compounds were explained in Table 5.1 in section 5.1.

4.2.2 GC/MS Equipment and Method

All samples were measured using a TraceGC 2000 (ThermoFinnigan, Milano, Italy) gaschromatograph coupled with a TraceDSQ (ThermoFinnigan, Austin TX, US) single quadrupole mass spectrometer. ITEX was performed with a CTC-CombiPAL autosampler supplied by Chromtech (Idstein, Germany). Data acquisition, processing and evaluation were carried out using the standard software Xcalibur Data System Version 1.3 (ThermoFinnigan, Austin TX, US). The analytes were separated on a RTX-VMS capillary column (60 m x 0.32 mm ID, 1.8 µm film thickness, Restek Corp., Bellefonte PA, US). To obtain sharper peaks, especially for the early eluting chlorinated hydrocarbons, 1 m of a 0.53 i.d. deactivated capillary column was used as retention gap between the injector and the analytical column. The temperature program used to obtain separation of the target compounds was as follows: 14 min at 40 °C, 4 °C/min to 100 °C, hold for 2 min, 10°C/min to 170 °C and hold for 5 min. The total runtime of the GC program was 36 minutes and the temperatures for the transfer line and the ion source were set to 250 °C and 220 °C, respectively.

Figure 4.1 Schematic overview of the different operation steps of the ITEX method. The left part shows the dynamic extraction of the sample headspace. In the middle part, the thermal desorption into the injector by heating the desorber is shown. In the right part, the trap is cleaned by flushing the heated trap

The initial GC oven temperature was held at 40 °C to trap the analytes before separation in order to prevent peak broadening.

The GC was equipped with a programmable temperature vaporiser BEST PTV (ThermoQuest, Austin TX, US) that was used in the splitless mode at an injection port base temperature of 170 °C and a splitless time of 2 min to compensate pressure caused by the gas injection. The PTV was programmed such that during the injection phase the column flow was set to 1mL/min to minimize the pressure during injection of the gas volume. After 2 min it was set to a constant column flow of 1.5 mL/min for the rest of the chromatographic separation. A 1 mm I.D. deactivated silcosteel liner (Restek Corp., Bellefonte PA, US) was used. As carrier gas Helium 5.0 (AirLiquide, Düsseldorf, Germany) was used. The MS was in the electron impact ionization mode (EI) at 70 eV. Full-scan mode (m/z = 49-300) was used for all measurements, including the real samples. A chromatogram of a 5 µg/L standard obtained under optimized conditions is shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Full-scan chromatogram of the 19 chlorinated volatile hydrocarbons and BTEX target compounds with a combination of reconstructed ion chromatograms of a 5 µg/L standard solution under optimized conditions. Quantifier m/*z* and retention times are given in Table 4.2. Internal standard (IS) fluorobenzene with a retention time of 18.35 min (m/*z* = 96 and 70).

4.2.3 ITEX - Equipment and Procedure

The autosampler was equipped with a single magnet mixer (Chromtech, Idstein, Germany) and a temperature controlled tray holder (Chromtech, Idstein, Germany). The samples were placed in the thermostated tray holder (45 °C). Before extraction the sample was stirred for 15 min in the single magnet mixer at an incubation temperature of 50 °C to establish equilibrium distribution of the analytes between aqueous and gas phase in the vial before extraction. The extraction volume of the gas phase was set to 1000 µL and 20 extraction cycles were used for the optimized method. The plunger speed during the extraction was set to 100 μ L/s. For thermal desorption, the desober was heated up to 170 °C and 700 µL of the sample were transferred by a desorption flow rate of 10 µL/s into the hot injector. After desorption, the ITEX device was flushed with nitrogen gas at a desorber temperature of 210 °C for 20 min.

4.2.4 Stock Solutions and Standard Mixture

Mixed methanolic stock solutions with a concentration of 2000 mg/L were prepared weekly and were stored at 4 °C in the dark refrigerator. Standard solutions were prepared before each experiment from these primary stock solutions in Milli-Q water. Lower concentrated solutions for calibrations, MDL determination and optimization were prepared likewise by volumetric dilution to the required concentration levels. During evaluation of optimized parameters, all measurements have been carried out in triplicates using 100 µg/L standard solution mixtures.

4.2.5 Preparation of Stock and Standard Solutions

Twenty-mL screw cap headspace vials (BGBAnalytik, Anwil, Switzerland) were filled with 0.52 g (5 $\%$ (w/w)) sodium chloride, 8 mm glass coated stir bars (FisherScientific, Ulm, Germany) and 10 mL of standard solution mixture were transferred immediately with a 10 mL gastight Hamilton syringe (BGBAnalytik, Anwil, Switzerland) into the vials that were sealed immediately with PTFE coated silicone septa and magnetic screw caps. It was necessary to shake the vials for at least ten minutes in order to ensure complete dissolution of the salt.

4.2.6 Method detection limits, Precision

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Method detection limits (MDLs) were determined according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency procedure ²¹⁰ by using the optimized conditions indicated in the experimental section. To this end, seven replicates were measured at an approximate signal to noise ratio of 5:1, and standard deviations for these were calculated. For each compound, six point calibrations curves bracketing the test level were used for quantification. Finally, MDLs were calculated by multiplying the standard deviation s_d with the student *t*-factor for the corresponding degree of freedom ($f = 6$). The precision was determined at the fortification level concentration used for MDL determination as well as at the end of the determined linear range.

4.3 Results and Discussion

4.3.1 Evaluation of Extraction and Desorption Parameters for ITEX

The optimization of polymer based microextraction methods include various extraction and desorption parameters. Such parameters are the extraction temperature and time as well as the influence of the ionic strength and the desorption temperature. To obtain highest extraction yields for dynamic inneedle extraction methods additional parameters concerning the dynamic headspace extraction process have to be optimized, i.e., desorption flow rate, desorption volume, extraction flow rate as well as the extraction volume.

4.3.2 Number of Extraction Cycles

As shown in Figure 4.3, one to fifty extraction cycles corresponding to extraction times of 0.66 to 33.3 min were evaluated. During the extraction process the temperature was held at 30 °C and before extraction the samples were equilibrated for 2 h in the 25 °C heated tray to establish equilibrium before starting the extraction. The extraction flow rate and volume were set to 40 μ L/s and 1000 μ L, respectively. The desorption flow rate and extraction volume were held constant at 50 µL/S and 700 µL, respectively. Figure 4.3 shows that a state of equilibrium could not be observed for most of the investigated compounds after 50 cycles. Only for PCE equilibrium was established after 30 cycles (20 min). Compared to HS-SPDE in section 3.3.2, a longer time is needed to attain equilibrium. This can be explained by different chemical and physical properties (e.g., porosity, tortuosity) of the different extraction phases used as well as by differences in sorbent to extraction volume ratio or the geometric design of the extraction chamber. However, as an adequate extraction time, a fixed value of 20 extraction cycles was chosen for the optimized method.

Figure 4. 3 Extraction profiles for the investigated compounds at 30 °C for a) chlorinated hydrocarbons and b) aromatic hydrocarbons as a function of extraction time (i.e., extraction cycles) . Triplicate measurements were done for each point; error bars indicate the standard deviation.

4.3.3 Extraction Temperature and Ionic Strength

The effect of extraction temperature on extraction efficiency was studied within a range between 30 °C and 60 °C. For this evaluation, the extraction flow rate was held constant at 50 µL/s and the extraction volume for each extraction cycle at 1000 µL. Twenty extraction cycles corresponding to an extraction time of 13.3 min and a total extraction volume of 20 mL were carried out. The desorption volume was set to 700 µL and a desorption flow rate of 10 μ L/s was used. As shown in Figure 4.4, most BTEX compounds show optimum extraction yields at 50 °C with a slight decrease at 60 °C. Only the trimethylbenzene isomers showed highest extraction yields at 60°C. For the halogenated compounds an increase up to 60°C was observed for most compounds, only CT, TCE and PCE showed a slight decrease at the highest temperature. However, the extraction yields for BTEX as well as chlorinated hydrocarbons increase between 30°C to 50°C on average by a factor of 1.6 and for the optimized method an extraction temperature of 50 °C was used.

Figure 4. 4 Dependency of extraction yield on extraction temperature for a) chlorinated and b) monoaromatic hydrocarbons. Measurements were carried out in triplicates for each point. Error bars indicate the standard deviation but are often smaller than the symbol size.

Compared with extraction temperature profiles for HS-SPME 217 the optimum extraction temperature was about 20 °C higher both for HS-ITEX as well as for HS-SPDE ²¹⁸ (see section 3.3.3). This may be rationalized as follows. In HS-SPME, the entire extraction phase is immersed completely into the heated headspace of the sample during extraction while in HS-SPDE the tip of the needle with a short part of extraction phase and in HS-ITEX only the needle is in direct contact with the heated headspace, and the lower temperature of the extraction chamber of SPDE and ITEX allows a more efficient extraction due to the exothermic nature of the gas phase to solid sorption processes. Thus, higher temperatures for promoting the air-water partitioning (endothermic processes) can be applied in SPDE and ITEX without compromising the extraction yields by lowering the air-sorbent partitioning coefficients.

According to the results obtained in section 3.3.5 for SPDE, a salt concentration of 5 % (w/w) NaCl (0.52 g) was used for the final method.

4.3.4 Extraction Flow Rate and Volume

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Figure 4.5 shows the effect of the extraction flow rate on the extraction yields (signified by peak areas) of the investigated compounds. The extraction flow rate was has been varied between 10 μ L/s and 150 µL/s at otherwise constant method parameters (desorption volume: 1 mL; 15 extraction cycles; desorption flow rate: 50 μ L/s). Under these conditions the corresponding extraction times were between 3.3 and 50 minutes. The peak areas increased by a factor of 1.3 for 1,3,5-TMB to 2.6 for

DCM. With decreasing extraction flow rate an increase in the extraction yield occurred indicating a higher degree of non-equilibrium sorption due to rate limiting diffusion into the extraction phase at higher extraction flow rates. Variations of the extraction volume were examined in a range from 500 – 2500 µL at an extraction flow rate of 50 µL/s, an incubation temperature of 30 $^{\circ}$ C and at 15 extraction cycles. As shown in Figure 4.6 an almost linear increase of extraction yields with extraction volume occurred, the maximum increase depended on the analytes and ranged from a factor of 1.8 (*trans*-DCE) to 4.8 (bromoform). An extraction flow rate of 50 μ L/s was used for the optimized method with a constant extraction volume of 1 mL.

Figure 4. 5 Dependency the extraction yield on extraction flow rate for a) chlorinated and b) monoaromatic hydrocarbons. Measurements were carried out in triplicates for each point. Error bars indicate the standard deviation but are often smaller than the symbol size.

Figure 4. 6 Dependency of extraction extraction yield on extraction volume for a) chlorinated and b) monoaromatic hydrocarbons. Measurements were carried out in triplicates for each point. Error bars indicate the standard deviation but are often smaller than the symbol size.

4.3.5 Conditions for the Desorption Step: Temperature, Flow Rate, Volume

As presented in Figure 4.7 the desorption flow rate showed a strong influence on the extraction yield. The desorption flow rate was varied from 10 - 500 μ L/s at a constant desorption volume of 1 mL, which correlates to desorption times between 1 s and 100 s. During the evaluation of this parameter, the extraction volume as well as the extraction flow rate were kept constant at 1000 μ L and 50 μ L/s, respectively. For desorption flow rates of 10 μ L/s, a factor of 4 (DCM) to 26 times higher peak areas (ethylbenzene) than for 100µL/s were obtained indicating a rate limiting diffusion of the analytes from the coating into the nitrogen gas stream during the desorption step. These results agree with results for the HS-SPDE method evaluated in section 3.3.7 of this work and and also with similar results reported in the literature. 129 Thus, in the parameter set of the optimized method a desorption flow rate of 10 µL/s was used.

Figure 4.7 Dependency of peak areas on desorption flow rate for a)chlorinated hydrocarbons and b) monoaromatic hydrocarbons. Triplicate measurements were carried out for each point. Error bars indicate the standard deviation but are often smaller than the symbol size.

A fixed desorption temperature of 170 °C was used during the evaluation of other method parameters as well as in the parapeter st of the optimized method. Although higher desorption temperatures might increase desorption rates, this temperature was chosen to assure a prolonged lifetime of the extraction phase and thus unchanged properties of the fibre over extended use times.

The effect of the desorption volume on peak areas was investigated between 500 µL and 1000 µL, but no significant influence on the extraction yield was observed (Figure 4.8). This observation is in agreement with results obtained for a solid-phase dynamic extraction method for chlorinated hydrocarbons²¹⁸ and alcohols.²⁰¹ In this study only a slight peak area increase was observed for desorption volumes of 700 µL compared with 500 µL. For some compounds such as *trans*-DCE and benzene a decrease in the peak area can be observed when using 1000 µL. At a desorption flow rate of 500 µL the standard deviation for some compounds, e.g. carbon tetrachloride is relatively high. A desorption volume of 700 µL was used in the parameter set of the optimized method.

Figure 4.8 The diagrams show the dependency of desorption volume on extraction yield for a) chlorinated and b) monoaromatic hydrocarbons. Measurements were carried out in triplicates for each point. Error bars indicate the standard deviation but are often smaller than the symbol size.

4.4 Validation of the Method

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The linear dynamic range of the ITEX method was investigated over six orders of magnitude between 0.028 – 1218 µg/L and linear correlation coefficients between 0.990 and 0.998 were obtained. Method detection limits (MDLs) were determined as described in the experimental part according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency procedure. ²¹⁰ Method detection limits for all target compounds were determined with and without fluorobenzene as internal standard.

Compounds in elution order	Target ions used for quantification $(m/z)^{a)}$	Retention times (min)	Linear dynamic range $(\mu g/L)$ without IS	R^2	MDL (ng/L) without IS \overline{b})	MDL (ng/L) with $ISb)$	Precision without IS $(\%)^c$	Precision without IS $(\%)^{d)}$
DCM	84, 49	8.13	$0.799 - 618$	0.991	799	413	50	18
trans-DCE	96, 61	8.63	$0.365 - 523$	0.993	365	261	31	3.9
cis -DCE	96, 61	13.20	$0.061 - 521$	0.992	61	116	4.6	1.2
chloroform	83, 119	14.64	$0.048 - 611$	0.993	48	242	3.1	3.2
CT	117, 119	15.11	$0.072 - 676$	0.992	72	124	4.3	1.4
benzene	78, 51	16.88	$0.036 - 360$	0.992	36	44	4.0	1.3
DCA	62,98	17.61	$0.071 - 510$	0.990	71	157	5.6	1.0
TCE	130, 95	18.83	$0.049 - 602$	0.990	49	71	3.2	2.0
toluene	92, 91	23.00	$0.035 - 364$	0.998	35	19	3.8	2.4
PCE	166, 131	24.04	$0.057 - 683$	0.992	57	67	3.3	3.1
EDB	107, 188	25.76	$0.081 - 920$	0.991	81	327	3.6	3.4
ethylbenzene	106, 91	27.25	$0.028 - 360$	0.998	28	24	3.1	1.9
<i>para-xylene</i>	106, 91	27.62	$0.029 - 360$	0.998	29	24	3.2	2.0
bromoform	173, 252	28.67	$0.129 - 1218$	0.992	129	418	4.3	4.2
isopropylbenzene	105, 120	29.30	$0.041 - 362$	0.990	41	50	4.4	2.7
propylbenzene	91,120	30.14	$0.048 - 361$	0.992	48	62	5.5	2.1
$1,3,5$ -TMB	120, 105	30.57	$0.180 - 369$	0.992	47	71	5.7	1.8
$1,2,4$ -TMB	120, 119	31.35	$0.047 - 359$	0.991	47	67	5.2	2.0
$1,2,3$ -TMB	120, 77	32.24	$0.068 - 369$	0.991	68	75	7.4	2.6

Table 4.2 Validation data of the ITEX-GC/MS method

a) Base peak used for quantification is underlined.

^{b)} (n = 7, fortification level 0.4 μ g/L)

^{c)} RSD at fortification level $(n=7)$

^{d)} Relative standard deviation $(n=3)$ at highest calibration level

IS: internal standard fluorobenzene with a retention time of 18.35 min (m/*^z* = 96)

By using fluorobenzene as internal standard higher MDLs (Table 4.2) as well as lower precisions (Figure 4.9) especially for the chlorinated compounds were obtained. This observation is in agreement with results found for HS-SPDE. Especially for the chlorinated compounds (e.g., EDB), fluorobenzene is not an ideal internal standard. DCM and *trans*-DCE deviate from this trend. These two very volatile and early eluting compounds are very susceptible to the desorption parameters. We expect improved precisions and MDLs for such compounds by using a cryofocus unit .

The method detection limits for the BTEX compounds without internal standard ranged between 28 ng/L for ethylbenzene and 68 ng/L for 1,2,3-TMB. MDLs for chlorinated hydrocarbons without internal standard were between 48 ng/L for chloroform and 799 ng/L for dichloromethane.

All MDL values given refer to concentrations of the analytes in the water phase.

Figure 4.9 Comparison of the relative standard deviations obtained at a 0.4 µg/L fortification level with and without fluorobenzene as internal standard.

In Table 4.1 a comparison between the HS-ITEX-GC/MS method, the HS-SPDE-GC/MS method evaluated in section 3 and other extraction methods as HS-SPME and P&T is shown. When comparing the obtained data one needs to take into account that different extraction phases and different methods for MDL determination were used. It can be seen from Table 4.1. that with mixed extraction phases such as Carboxen/polydimethylsiloxane (CAR/PDMS) lower MDLs can be obtained than with pure partitioning phases as polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS). This trend can also be observed for benzene, determined by the HS-SPDE/MS method in section 3.4 compared with the HS-SPDE method evaluated by Ridgway et al. . ²¹⁴ Here a 30 times lower method detection limit was found with the PDMS/AC coating compared with PDMS in their study. Another important point is that MDLs for an enrichment method obtained using an electron capture detector (ECD) are not comparable with data obtained by an MS because of the much higher sensitivity of the former one for polyhalogenated compounds. The HS-SPDE-GC/MS method showed a factor of 2 to 30 times lower MDLs than the HS-ITEX-GC/MS method by using a PDMS/AC extraction phase. However, the method showed one order of magnitude lower detection limits than the comparable HS-SPME/MS method by Wypych et al. 208 , which used the same MDL determination method as used in this study. Compared with a P&T-GC/MS method by Martinez et al. ²¹⁹ two to three orders of magnitude higher MDLs were obtained by HS-SPDE/MS.

The precision was determined as relative standard deviation at around five times higher concentrations than the method detection limit for (n=7) measurements. Good precisions between 3.1 % (ethylbenzene) and 7.4 % (1,2,3-TMB) were obtained for most of the compounds. The first two eluting compounds dichloromethane and *trans*-DCE show very high relative standard deviations of 50 % and 31 %. These poor precisions can be explained by the low response factor of these compounds in a quadropol MS detector as well as the broad shape of their peaks caused by not optimal desorption conditions (lack of cryo focusing). The precisions for the other analytes were comparable to those obtained for the SPDE-GC/MS method for chlorinated hydrocarbons in Table 3.3 in section 3.4. The precisions for high concentrations of analytes were determined by calculating the relative standard deviations (n=3) at the highest concentration level of the linear range. The obtained precisions without internal standard were in the range 1.0 % (DCA) to 18 % (DCM). These results are also comparable with results obtained by the HS-SPDE method in section 3.4. Except the low precisions for dichloromethane and *trans*-DCE the precisions are comparable with other microextraction methods. ²⁰⁸

Method	ITEX- GC/MS Tenax TA b) PDMS/AC ^{b)}	SPDE-GC/MS		HS-SPME-GC/MS			HS-SPME- GC/ECD	P&T-GC/MS	
Extraction phase			PDMS 214	CAR/PDMS ^a 220	PDMS ^{b)} 208	PDMS 205	PDMS 206	CAR/PDMS ^a 217	Tenax ^{a)} 219
DCM	799	119		1237					62
trans-DCE	365	12							
cis -DCE	61	12		38					
chloroform	48	176		15	670	2960	1332	1.4	$\overline{2}$
CT	72	19		632	450	2754	162		$\overline{2}$
benzene	36	13	400	8.8	200	528			$\sqrt{2}$
DCA	71							3.7	$\overline{2}$
TCE	49	13		73	280		730	13	10
toluene	35		480	8.7		174			$\overline{7}$
PCE	57	28		16			16.2	0.08	14
EDB	81			22					
ethylbenzene	28			8.6					14
para-xylene	29								
bromoform	129	22					86.7	$0.3\,$	27
isopropylbenzene	41								58
propylbenzene	48								
$1,3,5$ -TMB	180			8.8					
$1,2,4$ -TMB	47			$8.8\,$					
$1,2,3$ -TMB	68								

Table 4.1 Comparison between MDLs of HS-ITEX-GC/MS and other micro enrichment methods. Note that different extraction phases as well as different MDL determination methods were used.

^{a)}Signal to Noise ratio (S/N \geq 3/1)

 $b)$ MDL = $s_d \times t_{(0.99, f=6)}$

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4.5 Conclusions

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The here reported results show that the ITEX-GC/MS method is suitable for the trace determination of volatile organic compounds in aqueous matrices. The effects of the governing parameters for the method optimization of ITEX is very similar to the SPDE method discussed in section 3. The obtained method detection limits and precisions for ITEX are comparable to values achieved by SPDE-GC/MS. Thus, the ITEX method is a very suitable alternative to solid-phase microextraction (SPME) because it provides lower fragility and longer extraction phase lifetimes as well as lower MDLs. A special advantage to the otherwise similar SPDE method is the external desorber around the needle body, which makes the ITEX method independent of the injector temperature profile (gradient between the hot injector and the oven interior), whereby a cooling of the injector would be possible to further enhance peak shapes, extraction yields and detection limits.

A cooling of the needle packing during the extraction, e.g. by using electrical Peltier cooling would be a future improvement for this method because of the negative sorption enthalpies. Further investigations with other extraction phases such as Carboxen would most likely lead to lower method detection limits, comparable those of HS-SPDE/MS.

5 A New Approach to Determine Method Detection Limits in the µg/L Range for Compound Specific Isotope Analysis

5.1 Introduction

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Halogenated hydrocarbons such as chlorinated solvents and monoaromatic hydrocarbons represent some of the most common groundwater contaminants.¹⁸³ Halogenated solvents, e.g. tetrachloroethylene, trichloroethylene and dichloromethane have been used as dry cleaning agents, degreasers in electronic and metal industry and as solvents in the chemical industry. Therefore these compounds are often found in groundwater at commercial and production sites.³⁹ Other, very persistent halogenated organics such as DCA and EDB (for abbreviations see Table 5.1) were used as fuel additives and reach the groundwater table often together with fuel derived contaminants such as benzene and its monoaromatic derivatives.²¹⁶ All these compounds show adverse effects to the ecosystem and some are carcinogenic.²²¹ Due to environmental concerns, threshold values in OECD countries are in the low µg/L range and the assessment and remediation of such contaminated sites is often mandatory. In the case of chlorinated ethylenes, remediation is often hampered by the fact that these compounds are present as dense non aqueous phase liquids (DNAPLs) rendering conventional pump-and-treat remedial strategies ineffective.⁴⁰ For these reasons, in situ bioremediation of such pollutants has become an inexpensive alternative remedial method. CSIA has become a useful tool in contaminant hydrology and environmental forensics for the assessment of in situ degradation processes at such contaminated sites.³ Additionally, the spectrum of applications in this field has grown enormously and include, nowadays, tracking of contaminant flow paths⁵, allocation of contaminant sources in groundwater, identification and quantification of pollutant degradation⁹ as well as determination of the involved reaction mechanisms.^{6, 7} The major drawback of CSIA with GC/IRMS for environmental applications is its rather poor sensitivity.³ To overcome this problem and to increase the sensitivity injection methods such as headspace injection 32 and extraction methods such as solid-phase microextraction^{33, 85, 221-223} and P&T^{19, 38, 39, 41, 224} have been used. All enrichment and extraction processes involve a potential for isotopic fractionation. 19 Particularly chromatography, as well as evaporation and discrimination of analytes in the GC injector, are possible sources of artifacts due to isotopic fractionation.^{225, 226} Thus, a detailed evaluation of extraction or enrichment methods for possible fractionation is mandatory.^{19, 32, 226}

Extraction with purge and trap (P&T) was developed thirty years ago^{34} , and in combination with GC/MS it has become a routine method for trace analysis of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in water samples.²²⁷ Especially in the US, several EPA protocols for the determination of volatiles in drinking, waste and hazardous waste water, e.g. EPA method 524.4 for measurement of purgeable organic compounds in water, rely on P&T.¹⁹⁸ P&T has been applied previously in combination with GC/IRMS for compound specific isotope analysis. Often the used apparatus was custom-made and automated on-line measurement was not possible. Extraction of chlorinated ethenes and ethanes from groundwater samples for $\delta^{13}C^{224,39,40}$ and $\delta^{37}Cl^{39}$ analyses at contaminated sites was performed several times.³⁹ Isotopic values of fuel enhancers and their degradation products such as methyl *tert*buthyl ether (MTBE)³⁸ and *tert*-butanol (TBA) were determined by P&T-GC/IRMS with method detection limits of 5 μ g/L and ~60 μ g/L, respectively.²²⁸ More detailed evaluations that emphasize the necessity of a closer reflection on the method and method detection limits were done by Kelley et al., Zwank et al. and Morrill and co-workers. $^{19, 41, 229}$ Kelley et al. used a P&T connected to a GC ion trap MS and a GC/IRMS for the determination of concentration and isotope ratios of BTEX compounds in gasoline contaminated groundwater.²²⁹ Reported standard deviations for duplicate or triplicate measurements were less than 0.5 ‰. The variability of the δ^{13} C values of BTEX standards over one year showed deviations between ±0.5 ‰ (*para*- and *meta*-xylenes) and ±1.9 ‰ (ethylbenzene) for mass 44 amplitudes lower than 1 volt (V). Smaller standard deviations were observed for mass 44 amplitudes higher than 1 V which corresponds to BTEX concentrations between 200 and 300 ppb. An on-line dynamic headspace method was evaluated by Morrill and co-workers.⁴¹ The difference between this and other P&T methods is a dynamic extraction of the headspace above the sample. This

method obtained reproducible δ^{13} C values for TCE and *cis*-DCE at concentrations of 50 and 75 µg/L. Conservative limits of quantitation were calculated based on an operational limit of mass 44 peak amplitude >0.2 V and the assumption that there is an inversely linear relationship between concentration and trapping time. Zwank et al. evaluated in a comparative study the performance and applicability of on-column, split/splitless injections as well as SPME and P&T for monoaromatic compounds, chlorinated hydrocarbons and MTBE.¹⁹ A fully automated commercially available P&T concentrator connected to a GC/IRMS was used. In this study it was pointed out that P&T in combination with GC/IRMS showed the most efficient pre-concentration with the lowest method detection limits between 0.25 µg/L for toluene and 5 µg/L for carbon tetrachloride. A threshold value of 500 mV was used for setting the method detection limit. Another interesting finding of this study was that P&T showed high reproducibility and a smaller isotopic fractionation than extraction methods such as SPME.

Because of its potential for low detection limits, minimal isotopic fractionation and high reproducibility, one objective of this study was to enhance the sensitivity of the P&T method. Therefore a commercially available P&T was modified in a way that made it possible to purge larger sample volumes to achieve lower detection limits for CSIA measurements. Another objective was a detailed evaluation of the influence of extraction parameters on δ^{13} C values and the development of a new approach to determine MDLs for CSIA.

 Table 5.1 Pysicochemical properties of the investigated compounds

 $^{\sf a)}$ Ref.: 202

^{b)} Data from SRC Phys Prop Database (http://esc.syrrees.com)

 $^{c)}$ Values calculated for 20 °C with van't Hoff type equation $\log K_{_{a\!w}}$ = A – B / $T\,$ according to Ref.: ^{165 230}

n.a.: not availablen.a.: not available

5.2 Experimental

5.2.1 Chemicals and Reagents

As a solvent for the preparation of standard solutions, millipore water from a Milli-Q Plus water purification system (Millipore, Bedford, MA, USA) was used.

Trichloroethylene (99.5 %), dichloromethane (≥99.9 %), toluene (99.9 %) were obtained from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany), cis-1,2-dichloroethylene (97%), trans-1,2-dichloroethylene (98%), tetrachloroethylene (99.9+ %), bromoform (99+ %), 1,2-dichloroethane (99.8%), 1,2-dibromomethane (99 %), carbon tetrachloride (99+ %), isopropylbenzene (99 %), *para*-xylene (99 %), ethylbenzene (99.8 %), propylbenzene (98 %), 1,2,4-trimethylbenzene, fluorobenzene (99 %) from Aldrich (Steinheim, Germany) and chloroform (99.5 %), benzene (99.5 %), 1,3,5-trimethylbenzene (99 %), 1,2,3-trimethylbenzene (90-95 %) from Fluka (Buchs, Switzerland). The physico-chemical properties of the investigated analytes are summarized in Table 5.1.

5.2.2 Gas Chromatography Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometry

The compound specific isotope ratios were determined using a Trace GC (Thermo Finnigan, Milan, Italy) coupled to an isotope ratio mass spectrometer (Delta^{PLUS} XP, Thermo Finnigan MAT, Bremen, Germany) via a combustion interface (GC Combustion III, Thermo Finnigan MAT, Bremen, Germany) maintained at 940 °C. The GC was equipped with a programmable temperature vaporizer (PTV) injector (Optic 3, ATAS GL International B.V., Veldhoven, Netherlands). Injector and transfer line temperatures of the purge and trap were held at 250 °C. Analytes were trapped in a deactivated pre-column (0.4 m x 0.53 mm; BGB, Anwil, Switzerland) with cooled nitrogen gas by an on-column cryo-focusing unit (ATAS GL International B.V., Veldhoven, Netherlands), which was held at -100°C during analyte transfer from the P&T. For the thermal desorption process, the cryofocusing unit was heated with a ramp rate of 30 °C/s to 240°C. The analytical separation was carried out with a Rtx-VMS capillary column (60 m x 0.32 mm, 1.8 µm film thickness; Restek Corp., Bellefonte, PA). Helium 5.0 (Air Liquide, Düsseldorf, Germany) at a constant flow of 1 mL/min was used as carrier gas. In addition to the IRMS, the GC was equipped with a flame ionization detector (FID) that received 10% of the eluting carrier gas. The temperature program used to obtain baseline separation of the target analytes was as follows: 10 min at 40 °C, then to 100 °C at 4 °C/min, 2 min at 100 °C, then to 170 °C at 10 °C/min, 2 min at 170 °C, then to 200 °C at 10 °C/min and hold 2 min at 200 °C. The isotopic signatures of all compounds relative to VPDB were obtained using $CO₂$ that was calibrated against a referenced CO_2 standard. The IRMS was tuned to maximum linearity. Similar to findings by Zwank et al.¹⁹, it was necessary to oxidize the NiO-CuO-Pt catalyst frequently, particularly for the measurement of halogenated compounds. The reoxidation frequency was between 35-40 samples.

5.2.3 δ13C Determination of Pure Liquid Phase

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 δ^{13} C values are defined in equation 1.1, where R_{sample} and $R_{reference}$ are the ratios of the heavy isotope to the light isotope (here, ${}^{13}C/{}^{12}C$) in the sample and an international standard material, respectively. For determination of elemental analyzer values, an aliquot of the pure liquid standards was introduced into the combustion furnace of an elemental analyzer (EA) (NC2500, Thermoquest, San Jose, CA) coupled to an IRMS (Delta XL, Thermo, Bremen). The isotopic signatures of the analytes were corrected in order to obtain δ^{13} C values relative to Vienna Pee Dee Belemnite (VPDB). The correction was obtained using a linear regression derived from the δ^{13} C determination of a solid reference material

measured with the same instrumental setting and the same internal reference $CO₂$. EA values as reported in Table 5.2 are measured in triplicate.

5.2.4 Purge and Trap System

A purge and trap concentrator Tekmar VelocityXPT™ together with an autosampler TekmarAQUATek 70 (Tekmar-Dohrmann, Mason, OH) were coupled online to the PTV injector of the GC/IRMS system. The autosampler tray holder was modified to carry twenty 100-mL amber glass bottles. The bottle positions were placed in a way that corresponded to predefined positions by the software. To purge higher sample volumes (up to 100 mL), a commercially available 25-mL fritted sparger was modified as shown schematically in Figure 5.1. The standard 25-mL sample loop was replaced by a 50 m x 1.6 mm ID (3.2 mm OD) Teflon sample loop to hold up to 100-mL of aqueous sample. A modified tray holder, a frit sparger and the sample loop were purchased from PAS Analytik (Magdala, Germany). The aqueous samples were filled without headspace into the 100-mL glass bottles sealed with PTFE coated, silicone septa screw caps. Unfortunately, it was not possible to lower the transfer needle of the autosampler deeper than the value predefined by the manufacturer. Because of this, a 76-mL aliquot of the water samples was transferred by the autosampler into the fritted glassware sparger. The purge time for the optimized method was 15 min. As a purge gas, helium with a purity of 6.0 (Air Liquid, Düsseldorf, Germany) was used with a purge gas flow rate of 50 mL/min. The loop transfer time was optimised to 2.80 min and the sample transfer time to the sparger was set to 3.20 min.

Figure 5.1 Schematic overview of the differences between a) the commercially available 25-mL frit sparger and b) the applied modified frit sparger for higher sample volumes.

The analytes were trapped on a *Vocarb*™ *3000 Trap* (Supelco, Bellefonte, PA, US) at room temperature. The dry purge time of the trap was set to 4.0 min with a dry purge flow of 200 mL/min. The desorbtion pre-heating temperature was set to 220 $^{\circ}$ C. By heating the trap to 240 $^{\circ}$ C for 2 min, the analytes were thermally desorbed and transferred to the cryofocusing unit maintained at -100 °C. The transfer line temperature was held at 250°C during desorption. The GC temperature program began with the heating of the cryofocusing unit. After desorption the analyte trap was baked out at 270 °C for 20 min at a bake flow of 400 mL/min to prevent possible carry over. After each extraction the sample loop and the sparger were rinsed with 90°C hot Milli-Q water also to prevent carry over.

Figure 5.2 P&T-GC/IRMS chromatogram.The lower graph shows an on-line P&T-GC/IRMS chromatogram of an aqueous standard mixture. The concentrations of the different analytes were adjusted to achieve similar signal intensities. In the upper graph, the isotopic swings expressing the ratios of mass 45 ($^{13}CO_2$) to mass 44 ($^{12}CO_2$) are shown. The first three peaks correspond to the reference $CO₂$ gas. The second reference peak was used for calculation.

5.2.5 Preparation of Stock Solutions, Standards and Environmental Samples

Aqueous stock solutions of the volatile organic compounds were prepared by injection of pure organic substance aliquots by a 10-µL gastight Hamilton syringe through a PTFE/silicone septum into a 1-L amber Schott screw cap glass bottle (FisherScientific, Ulm, Germany). The bottles were shaken for 24 hrs with an overhead shaker to dissolve all compound completely. Stock solutions were prepared daily, before preparation of standard solutions, for the GC/IRMS experiments. Standard solutions for method optimisation were prepared by injecting aliquots of the stock solution into a known volume of Milli-Q water in 100-mL amber screw cap bottles (BGB Analytik, Anwil, Switzerland) sealed with PTFE/silicone septa.

5.2.6 Determination of Method Detection Limits

To quantify method detection limits, the mean δ^{13} C values of the three highest concentration levels were determined. A ± 0.5 ‰ interval was set around the calculated mean value. This interval incorporates the total analytical error including the internal reproducibility on triplicate measurements as well as the accuracy of the measurement with respect to international standards.^{5, 32} This moving mean procedure was repeated consecutively by including the δ^{13} C value of the next lower concentration level into the mean value calculation. The last concentration for which the $\delta^{13}C$ value was within this iterative interval or for which the standard deviation was lower ± 0.5 % for triplicate measurements was defined as the method detection limit.

5.3 Results and discussion

5.3.1 Chromatographic Conditions

As shown in Fig. 5.2, baseline separation for all twenty investigated compounds was achieved with a cryofocusing temperature of -100 °C. Especially for early eluting analytes such as *trans*-DCE, *cis*-DCE, CT, and chloroform, a pronounced tailing and tendency to overlap of peaks was observed for higher cryofocusing temperatures. Preliminary experiments indicated that for vinyl chloride even a temperature of -130 °C was necessary to reach adequate peak shapes (data not shown). Another prerequisite to obtain sharp peaks was to heat the trap rapidly with a temperature rate of 30°C/s to 240 $^{\circ}$ C. In every chromatogram unidentified peak was observed after a retention time of \sim 550 s (see Fig. 5.2). The peak height depended on extraction time and flow rate. This peak was not detected during a full GC/MS scan of the standards headspace under the same chromatographic conditions thus identification failed. The stability of the retention times of all analytes is shown in Table 5.2 Improved relative standard deviations and retention time stabilities can be observed for later eluting compounds.

5.3.2 Optimization of Purge & Trap Parameters

Three different groups of P&T parameters can be adjusted. The first group influences the sample transfer to the sparger (time for transferring the sample into the loop, transfer time of the sample to the sparger). Both times were optimized manually by visual investigation of the sample loop and the sparger. For the loop transfer time a value of 2.80 minutes was evaluated and for the sample transfer time to the sparger a time of 3.20 min was used to ensure a complete transfer.

5.3.3 Purge Flow Evaluation

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The second group includes the actual parameters of the P&T process such as purge gas flow rate and purge time. Because these parameters determine the phase-transfer process and could potentially cause isotopic fractionation^{41, 231}, a more detailed evaluation was carried out. In Fig. 5.4 the evaluation of the purge flow rate on extraction yields (here expressed as amplitude of mass 44 in mV) and on $\delta^{13}C$ values (in ‰) is shown for four representative compounds. Four different purge gas flow rates between 40 mL/min and 80 mL/min were investigated. As in the work of Zwank et al., the purge time for this experiment was held constant for 11 min.¹⁹ The results show a maximum peak height for mass 44 at a purge flow rate of 50 mL/min for most of the compounds. For compounds with very low dimensionless air-water partitioning constants K_{aw} such as bromoform (0.02) and EDB (0.02) and DCA (0.4) an increase in the extraction yield was observed up to a flow rate of 80 mL/min. The carbon isotope values did not vary with purge flow rate as shown in Figure 5.3.

24000

20000

16000

12000

8000

4000

 θ

m

Amplitude mass 44 in mV

 \overline{a}

 $1a)$

 -30.37

 -31.37

 $\pm 0.5 \%$

Figure 5.3 Schematic illustration of MDL determination for fluorobenzene. In 1a) the determination of the moving mean of mean δ^{13} C values (each n=3) for the first three concentration levels is shown. A ± 0.5 ‰ interval was set around this moving mean value. All δ^{13} C mean values are within this interval. Because of this, in 1b), the next moving mean value with the next lower δ^{13} C value mean was calculated. This procedure was iterated as long as either the first δ^{13} C value was outside the ± 0.5 ‰ interval around the moving mean or the standard deviation of a mean δ^{13} C value was higher ± 0.5 ‰. In 1, c), both abort criteria can be observed. The MDL is then defined as the last concentration with a δ^{13} C mean value that fits both criteria.

5.3.4 Evaluation of purge time

In the lower graphs of Figure 5.5, theoretical purge extraction efficiency (solid curve) is compared with measured extraction yields. The theoretical purge efficiency was determined by the following equation, adjusted from the literature:²⁰²

$$
\frac{Amp_{(mass\ 44)}}{Amp_{(mass\ 44)}^t} = 1 - e^{(-K_{aw}G/V_w)t} \times 100\%
$$
\n(5.1)

where $Amp_{(mass\ 44)}^{total}$ and $Amp_{(mass\ 44)}^t$ are peak amplitudes, the former a total amplitude for 100 % extraction and the latter an amplitude at a specified time, *t*, before reaching 100 % extraction for a compound. V_w is the volume of the aqueous sample (e.g. 76 mL/min), *G* the purge gas flow rate (e.g. 50 mL/min), and *Kaw* the dimensionless air-water partitioning constant. Calculated *Kaw* values for 20 °C are compiled in Table 5.1. For the determination of the theoretical curve, the mass 44 amplitudes were normalized with respect to the highest amplitude that was set to 100 %. As shown in Figure 5.5, experimental extraction efficiencies could be predicted quite well for the chlorinated compounds such as CT. For the BTEX compounds the measured values reach 100 % extraction efficiency faster than predicted by the dynamic phase equilibrium model. As can be seen in Figure 5.5, the amplitude of mass 44 decreases for purge times longer than 15 min for CT and 25 min for benzene. This decrease indicates analyte breakthrough through the trap, which was also observed by Zwank et al. .¹⁹ The shift to a lower carbon isotope ratio for CT at 60 min purge time could be a result of this breakthrough. Generally, after 15 min purge time stable carbon isotope ratios were observed for all of the compounds. Compounds with low air-water partitioning constants, e.g. bromoform, EDB and DCA do not reach 100 % extraction efficiency within 60 min but show stable carbon isotope values after 15 min. Longer purge times lead also to an unacceptable high water content in the source. As an example, mass 18 amplitude of 7000 mV was observed after 18 measurements obtained for this evaluation. For 18 measurements at a purge time of 15 min and a purge flow of 50 mL/min, the value was stable at around 1000 mV. In Table 3, δ^{13} C-values for all compounds at 15 min and a purge flow rate of 50 mL/min (optimized conditions) are presented. A comparison of this values with EA values of the pure liquid phase showed no significant deviations $(<0.5\%$) except for chloroform with a deviation of -1.48 ‰. The third group of parameters that can be optimized include the dry purge time to remove water from the trap and prevent high water content in the mass spectrometer as well as the desorption temperature for analyte desorption from the analyte trap. The desorption temperature was adapted from literature but the time was prolonged by 1 min.¹⁹ The remaining parameters are mentioned in the experimental section.

Table 5.2 Retention times of the target compounds for the optimized method and equations of the linear curve fits as well as correlation coefficients from the consecutive dilution steps from method detection limit determination.

^{a)} RSD: relative standard deviations for $(n = 12-33)$

 \overline{a}

Figure 5.4 Evaluation of the purge flow rate and its influence on δ^{13} C values. Here the evaluation of four of the twenty investigated compounds is shown exemplarily. The squares represent the δ^{13} C values in per mil and the diamonds show the amplitude of mass 44 in mV. Triplicate measurements were done for each point; error bars indicate the standard deviation.

5.3.5 Determination of method detection limits

For the determination of method detection limits, consecutive dilutions were prepared from the aqueous stock solution. Within the tested concentration range the relationship between peak amplitude of mass 44 and the concentration showed very good linear correlations for all the investigated compounds (Table 5.2) that may be used even for a quantification of the analytes.

The method detection limit was determined according to a new methodology described in the experimental part. For the four compounds in Figure 5.6, detection limits are for benzene 0.20 µg/L (0.16 nmol C), *para*-xylene 0.07 µg/L (0.04 nmol C), CT 19µg/L (0.72 nmol C) and *cis*-DCE 0.76 μ g/L (0.14 nmol C). These points are highlighted by arrows in Figure 5.6.

In Table 5.3 method detection limits for the P&T method are listed with their corresponding carbon isotope values and mass 44 amplitudes. As pointed out by Zwank et al., 19 even lower peak amplitudes may yield reliable isotope data because of the absence of a solvent and the use of cryofocusing. Figure 5.6 and Table 5.3 show that stable isotope values for BTEX compounds can be obtained down to amass 44 amplitude of \sim 200 mV. For chlorinated methanes but not for chlorinated ethanes and ethylenes, this value is approximately ten times higher. So far, there is no convincing explanation for this behaviour but it seems likely that conversion processes in the combustion oven are responsible. The reproducibility (Table 5.3) was determined by measuring and then calculating of the mean and standard deviation of all δ^{13} C values from the highest concentration to the defined MDL concentration $(n = 12 - 33)$.

5.3.6 Application to environmental samples at trace level concentration

The method applicability for the determination of carbon isotope values at low μ g/L levels of monoaromatic and halogenated volatile organic compounds was tested with jet fuel contaminated groundwater from a former military air field in eastern Germany. The groundwater at this contaminated site contains BTEX as well as chlorinated volatile organic compounds. In Figure 5.7, a P&T-GC/IRMS chromatogram of a well with BTEX concentrations smaller 4 µg/L (TCE) and 6mg/L (PCE) is shown. The achieved MDLs with P&T-GC/IRMS allow the reliable analysis of ${}^{13}C/{}^{12}C$ ratios at these low contaminant concentrations.

5.4 Conclusions

In this paper, we present the applicability of a modified P&T concentrator combined with GC/IRMS for the determination of ${}^{13}C/{}^{12}\tilde{C}$ ratios. For BTEX compounds and chlorinated ethylenes, fractionation effects caused by the analytical method are negligible relative to chemical and microbiological transformation processes.³ P&T as a pre-concentration method may also be a useful tool when lower analyte concentrations needed for the isotope ratio determination of other elements $(^{2}H/^{1}H, ^{15}N/^{14}N,$ $^{18}O/^{16}O$).

Figure 5.5 Evaluation of purge time. In the upper part, the influence of purge time on δ^{13} C values is shown exemplarily for carbon tetrachloride and benzene. The squares represent δ^{13} C values in ‰ and the diamonds show the amplitude of mass 44 in mV. Triplicate measurements were done for each point and vertical bars indicate the standard deviation. The lower part shows the influence of purge time on extraction efficiency compared with theoretically predicted extraction efficiency using eq 2 with K_{aw} values calculated for 20 °C (Table 1).The purge gas flow rate and the sample volume was 50 mL/min and 76 mL, respectively.

Figure 5.6 Evaluation of method detection limits (MDLs) for four exemplary compounds. The squares represent the δ^{13} C values in per mil and the diamonds show the amplitude of mass 44 in mV. The linear curve fit and the correlation coefficient are shown in each graph. Triplicate measurements were done for each point; error bars indicate the standard deviation. The horizontal broken lines represent the iteratively calculated mean value. The solid lines around the mean value represent the ± 0.5 ‰ interval including the total analytical error that incorporates the internal reproducibility on triplicate duplicate measurements as well as the accuracy of the measurement with respect to international standards.

Figure 5.7 P&T-GC/IRMS chromatogram of a jet fuel contaminated groundwater sample from a former military air field in eastern Germany. The first three peaks correspond to the reference $CO₂$ gas. The second reference peak was used for evaluation of each compound.

Table 5.8 Evaluated parameters (‰ vs VPDB)^{a)}

a) Uncertainties correspond to standard deviations of replicate measurements, ^{b)}(n = 3), ^{c)} value at a purge gas flow rate of 50 mL/min and purge time of 15 min,^{d)}(n=12-33) n.d.: not determined

6 General Conclusions and Outlook

As evaluated in the previous chapters, the in-needle extraction techniques, SPDE as well as ITEX, provide high sensitivities with method detection limits in the ng/L range for GC/MS. The methods are robust and provide high throughput analysis by relatively low sample preparation times. Both systems have the potential to overcome GC/IRMS related sensitivity problems and should be evaluated for possible isotopic fractionation in future studies. Preliminary results, which are not presented in this thesis, showed that no significant fractionation can be expacted for BTEX compounds, but more work on this topic has to be done. The SPDE method for ethers and alcohols is not restricted to groundwater but can be applied in food science as well in investigations of adulteration on alcoholic beverages by using the method in combination with isotopic fingerprinting. A special advantage of the ITEX method is the independence from the injector temperature profile during thermal desorption into the injector. Because of this a cryofocusing inside the injector is possible. Preliminary results during the optimization showed that even a determination of vinyl chloride by ITEX at room temperature was possible but leads to adverse peak shapes. In future studies and especially for the evaluation of ITEX with CSIA a cool trap for the syringe body is recommended.

Due to the fact that so far, no general rules on the determination of method detection limits for CSIA exists, an attempt for the definition of MDLs was presented in this work.

By enhancing the sensitivity of GC/IRMS to the low μ g/L or ng/L range, a distinction between contaminant emission by point or diffusive sources into the groundwater could be achieved. As in previous studies it could be confirmed, that P&T showed lowest detection limits and low isotopic fractionation for carbon isotope measurements of volatile organic compounds. Future work in the field of P&T-GC/IRMS will be the development of water removal traps to allow for purging of higher sample volumes and the applicability of this method for other elements in CSIA. A drawback in this work was the limitation of the autosampler needle penetration depth, so that not the complete sample volume could be used. This software related problem should also be solved in cooperation with the supplier of the P&T system.

As discussed in the introduction, many microextraction methods have been developed and used prior to gas chromatographic separation. Not much work has been dedicated to the use of these methods in conjunction with GC/IRMS. In the future, it would for example be also interesting to evaluate liquidphase microextraction techniques. Especially the combination of dynamic-liquid phase microextraction in bigger syringes with subsequent large volume injection could be an interesting approach. However, as it was shown in this work the here investigated methods have potential for GC/IRMS measurements and should be investigated more detailed for this purpose.

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Appendix A

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Physicochemical properties

A 1 Structures of the investigated compounds

- A 1.2 Structures of ethers and alcohols
- A 1.3 Structures of chlorinated hydrocarbons
- A 1.4 Structures of monoaromatic hydrocarbons

A 2 Physicochemical properties

- A 2.1 Physicochemical properties of ethers and alcohols
- A 2.2 Physicochemical properties of chlorinated hydrocarbons
- A 2.3 Physicochemical properties of monoaromatic hydrocarbons

A 1 Structures of the investigated compounds

A 1.3 Structures of chlorinated hydrocarbons

A 1.4 Structures of monoaromatic hydrocarbons

A 2.1 Physicochemical properties of ethers and alcohols

a) Specification from manufacturer

b) Data from SRC Phys Prop Database (http://esc.syrrees.com)

^{c)} Adapted from: ¹

^{d)} Adapted from: ²

^{e)} Values calculated for 25 °C with van't Hoff type equation $\log K_{aw} = A - B/T$

n.a.: not available

A 2.2 Physicochemical properties of chlorinated hydrocarbons

a) Adapted from: ³

 $^{b)}$ Adapted from: 2

^{d)} liquid phase

 $^{c)}$ Values calculated for 25 °C with van't Hoff type equation $\log K_{_{\mathit{aw}}} = A - B \, / \, T$

n.a. : not available

A 2.3 Physicochemical properties of monoaromatic hydrocarbons

a) Adapted from: Schwarzenbach³

b) Data from SRC Phys Prop Database (http://esc.syrrees.com)

 $^{\circ}$ Values calculated for 20 °C with van't Hoff type equation $\log K_{_{GW}}$ $=$ A B $/$ T $\,$ according to Ref.: 2,4

n.a.: not available
Appendix B

Data

B 1 Parameter of Solid-Phase Dynamic Extraction evaluation for ethers and alcohols

- B 1.1 Evaluation of extraction temperatures for ethers and alcohols
- B 1.2 Salting out effect for ethers and alcohols
- B 1.3 Number of extraction cycles for ethers and alcohols

B 2 Parameter of Solid-Phase Dynamic Extraction evaluation for VOCs

- B 2.1 Injector temperature
- B 2.2 Pre-desorption time
- B 2.3 Desorption flow rate
- B 2.4 Extreaction flow rate
- B 2.5 Applicability of SPDE-GC/MS for real groundwater samples

B 3 Parameter of In-tube Extraction (ITEX) evaluation for VOCs

- B 3.1 Desorption temperature
- B 3.2 Desorption flow rate
- B 3.3 Desorption volume
- B 3.4 Number of extraction cycles
- B 3.5 Extraction volume
- B 3.6 Extraction flow rate

 \overline{a}

B 3.7 Extraction temperature

B 1 Parameter of Solid-Phase Dynamic Extraction evaluation for ethers and alcohols

B 1.2 Evaluation of extraction temperatures for ethers and alcohols

B 1.2 Salting out ether and alcohols

25% was outlier in T-test

5% was outlier in T-test

5% was outlier in T-test

B 1.3 Number of extraction cycles for ethers and alcohols

1-hexanol

36960158 54028793 85277848 117622752 148143193 161927355 172062747

B 2 Parameter of Solid-Phase Dynamic Extraction evaluation for VOCs

B 2.1 Injector temperature

B 2.2 Pre-desorption time

B 2.3 Desorption flow rate

<u> 1980 - Johann Barnett, fransk politik (f. 1980)</u>

B 2.4 Exreaction flow rate

<u> 1989 - Johann Barn, mars eta bainar eta idazlea (</u>

<u> 1980 - Johann Barnett, fransk politik (f. 1980)</u>

B 2.6 Applicability of SPDE-GC/MS for real groundwater samples

trichloroethylene

B 3.1 Desorption temperature

<u> 1980 - Johann Barn, mars ann an t-Amhain Aonaich an t-Aonaich an t-Aonaich ann an t-Aonaich ann an t-Aonaich</u>

<u> 1989 - Johann Stoff, fransk politik (f. 1989)</u>

B 3.2 Desorption flow rate

<u> 1980 - Johann Barn, fransk politik (f. 1980)</u>

B 3.3 Desorption volume

<u> 1980 - Johann Stoff, deutscher Stoff, der S</u>

<u> 1989 - Johann Barn, mars eta bainar eta baina e</u>

B 3.4 Number of extraction cycles

<u> 1980 - Johann Barn, fransk politik (f. 1980)</u>

<u> 1980 - Johann Barn, mars ann an t-Amhain Aonaich an t-Aonaich an t-Aonaich ann an t-Aonaich ann an t-Aonaich</u>

B 3.5 Extraction volume

<u> 1980 - Johann Barn, mars ann an t-Amhain Aonaich an t-Aonaich an t-Aonaich ann an t-Aonaich ann an t-Aonaich</u>

<u> 1989 - Johann Stoff, deutscher Stoffen und der Stoffen und der Stoffen und der Stoffen und der Stoffen und der</u>

<u> 1980 - Johann Stoff, deutscher Stoff, der Stoff, deutscher Stoff, der Stoff, der Stoff, der Stoff, der Stoff</u>

B 3.6 Extraction flow rate

<u> 1980 - Johann Barn, mars ann an t-Amhain Aonaichte ann an t-Aonaichte ann an t-Aonaichte ann an t-Aonaichte a</u>

<u> 1980 - Johann Barbara, martxa amerikan personal (h. 1980).</u>

B 3.7 Extraction temperature

<u> 1980 - Johann Barn, mars ann an t-Amhain Aonaich an t-Aonaich an t-Aonaich ann an t-Aonaich ann an t-Aonaich</u>

<u> 1989 - Johann Stoff, deutscher Stoffen und der Stoffen und der Stoffen und der Stoffen und der Stoffen und der</u>

<u> 1980 - Johann Stoff, deutscher Stoff, der Stoff, deutscher Stoff, der Stoff, der Stoff, der Stoff, der Stoff</u>

Appendix C

Tables of enrichment techniques

C 1 Tables of enrichment techniques

Table C 1.1 Extraction techniques used in combination with CSIA for common groundwater pollutants (adapted and updated from $Ref.^5$)

LXIII

^{a)} Analyte dissolved in solvent. ^{b)} On column injection. ^{c)} Splitless injection. ^d) Not reported in reference. ^e) No significant fractionation (<0.5‰) observed.

Table C 1.2 Application of stir-bar-sorptive extraction (SBSE) and headspace sorptive extraction (HSSE) for aqueous water contaminants

Table C 1.2 continued.

Table C 1.3 In-needle, in-tube and syringe based techniques

film thickness; i.d.: internal diameter; o.d.: outer diameter; PDMS/AC: Polymdimethylsiloxane + 10 % active charcoal; Carbowax: polyethylenglycol PEG;

Table C 1.4 Liquid-phase microextraction for polar compounds from aqueous samples

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Maik André Jochmann

geboren am 1.9.1975 in Marl (Westfalen)

