

GLOBAL ANALYTICAL SOLUTIONS



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AppNote 1/1999

## An Automated Sorptive Extraction-Thermal Desorption GC-MS System for the Analysis of Aqueous Samples

Erik Baltussen, Hans Gerd Janssen, Carel Cramers  
*Laboratory of Instrumental Analysis, Eindhoven University of Technology, P.O. Box 513, NL-5600 MB Eindhoven, The Netherlands*

Frank David  
*Research Institute for Chromatography, Kennedypark 20, B-8500 Kortrijk Belgium*

Pat Sandra  
*Department of Organic Chemistry, University of Gent, Krijgslaan 281 S4, B-9000 Gent, Belgium*

Andreas Hoffmann  
*Gerstel GmbH & Co. KG, Eberhard-Gerstel-Platz 1, D-45473 Mülheim an der Ruhr, Germany*

### INTRODUCTION

An alternative system for the enrichment of aqueous samples is presented based on the extraction of the analytes into a sorption phase followed by thermal desorption and GC-MS analysis.

Analytes are partitioned into the extraction phase and retained in the bulk of the sorption material.

This is in sharp contrast with most alternative extraction materials where analytes are adsorbed on an active surface (e.g. SPE).

Advantages of this new analytical approach are:

- Sorption mechanism (dissolution) instead of adsorption
- Highly inert retaining phase (similar to GC column)
- Retention properties well-known from Gas Chromatography
- Thermally stable
- Degradation products can easily be recognized with the use of MS

- Sorption isotherms are linear up to high concentration levels
- Desorption occurs thermally, ensuring transfer of all sample analytes onto the column --> very high sensitivity !

In practice two sorption materials are applied:

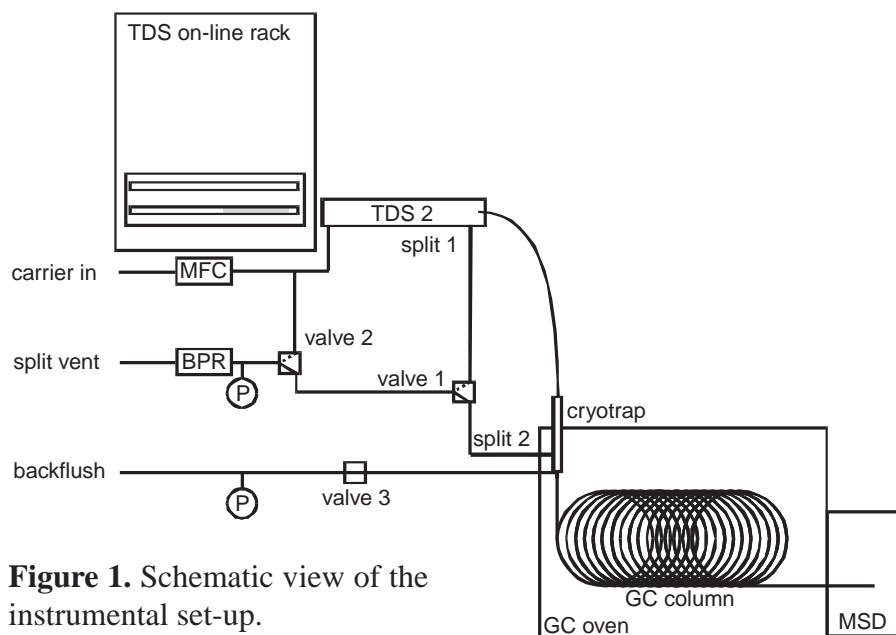
- Commercially available polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS) tubes
- Experimental polyacrylate tubes which have an improved performance for polar solutes

## EXPERIMENTAL

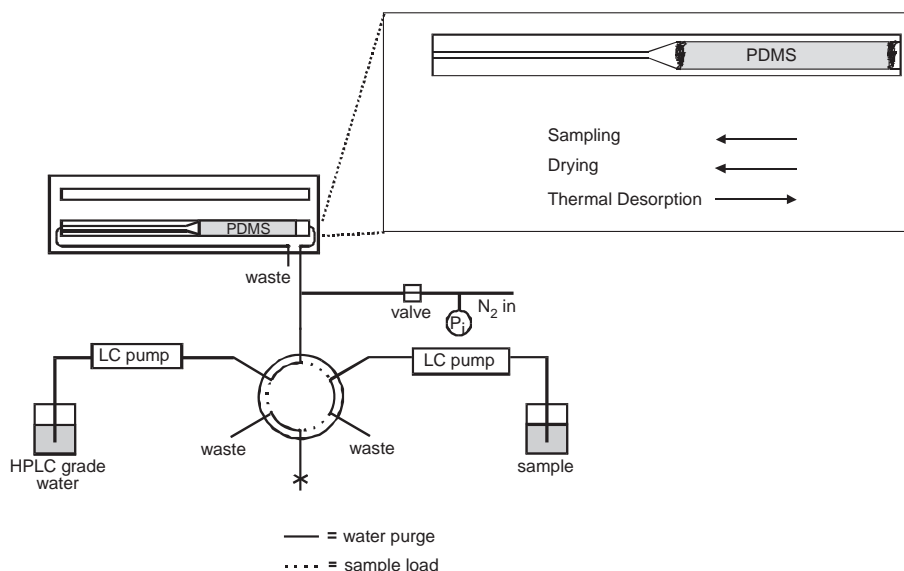
The experimental setup consists of:

- a thermal desorption unit (TDS-2, Gerstel, Mülheim an der Ruhr, Germany)
- a cryotrap (CIS-4, Gerstel)
- a TDS on-line rack autosampler (Gerstel)
- a GC/MS system (6890/5972 GC/MSD, Hewlett Packard, Little Falls, DE, USA)

A schematic view of the set-up is given below:

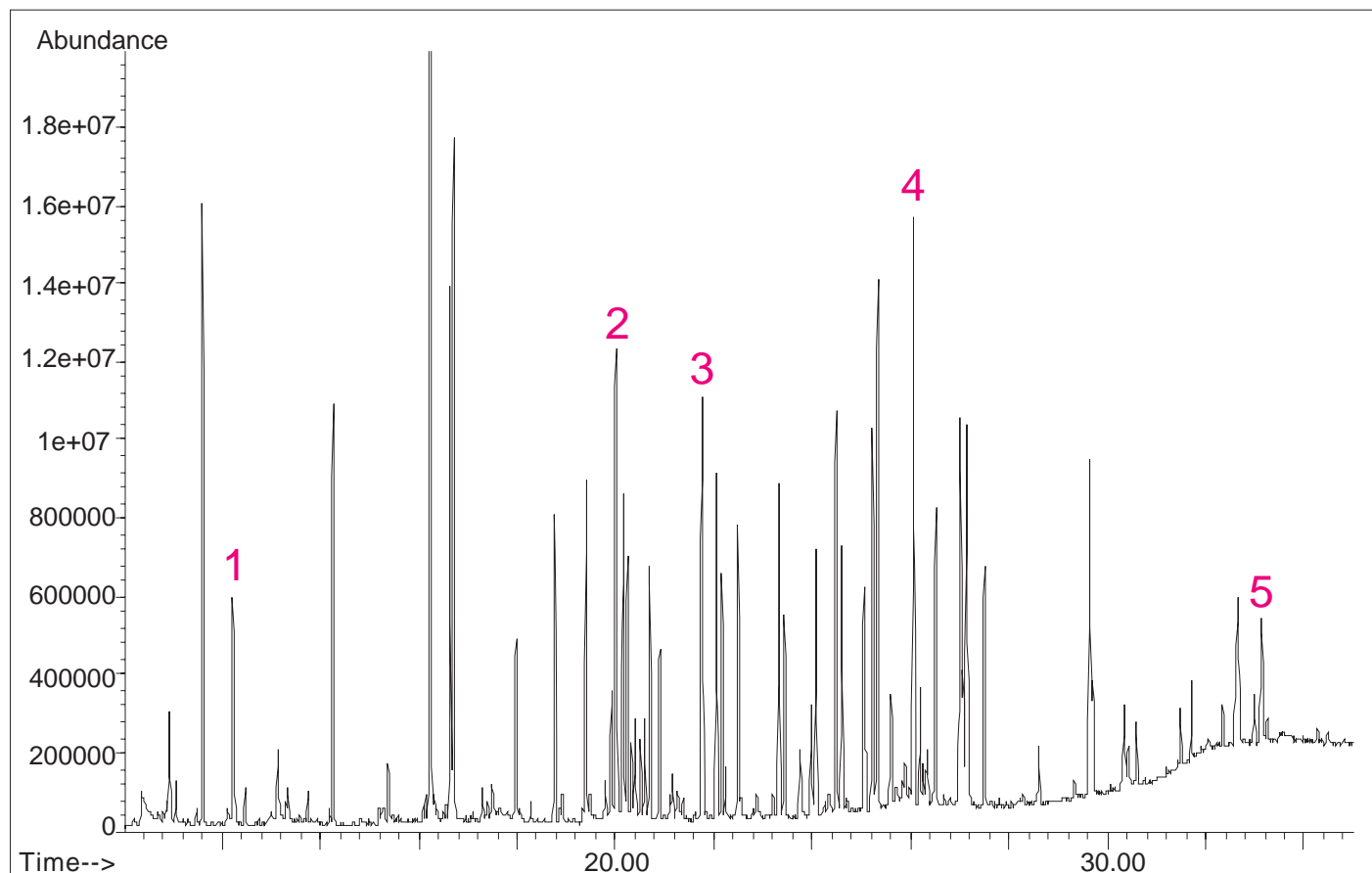


**Figure 1.** Schematic view of the instrumental set-up.



**Figure 2.** System used for loading the liquid samples onto the PDMS-traps.

## RESULTS WATER-TD-GC



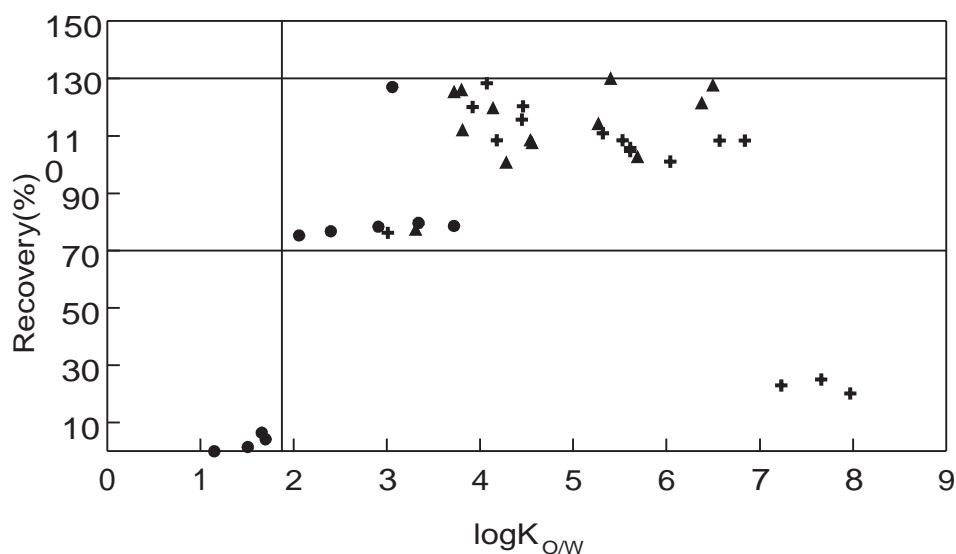
**Figure 3.** Determination of organochlorine pesticides(18), PAHs(16) and triazines(13) in tap water (spiked, ca. 1 µg/l).

Sample volume: 10 ml (sampled at 1 ml/min)

Desorption: Thermal 225°C (5 min)

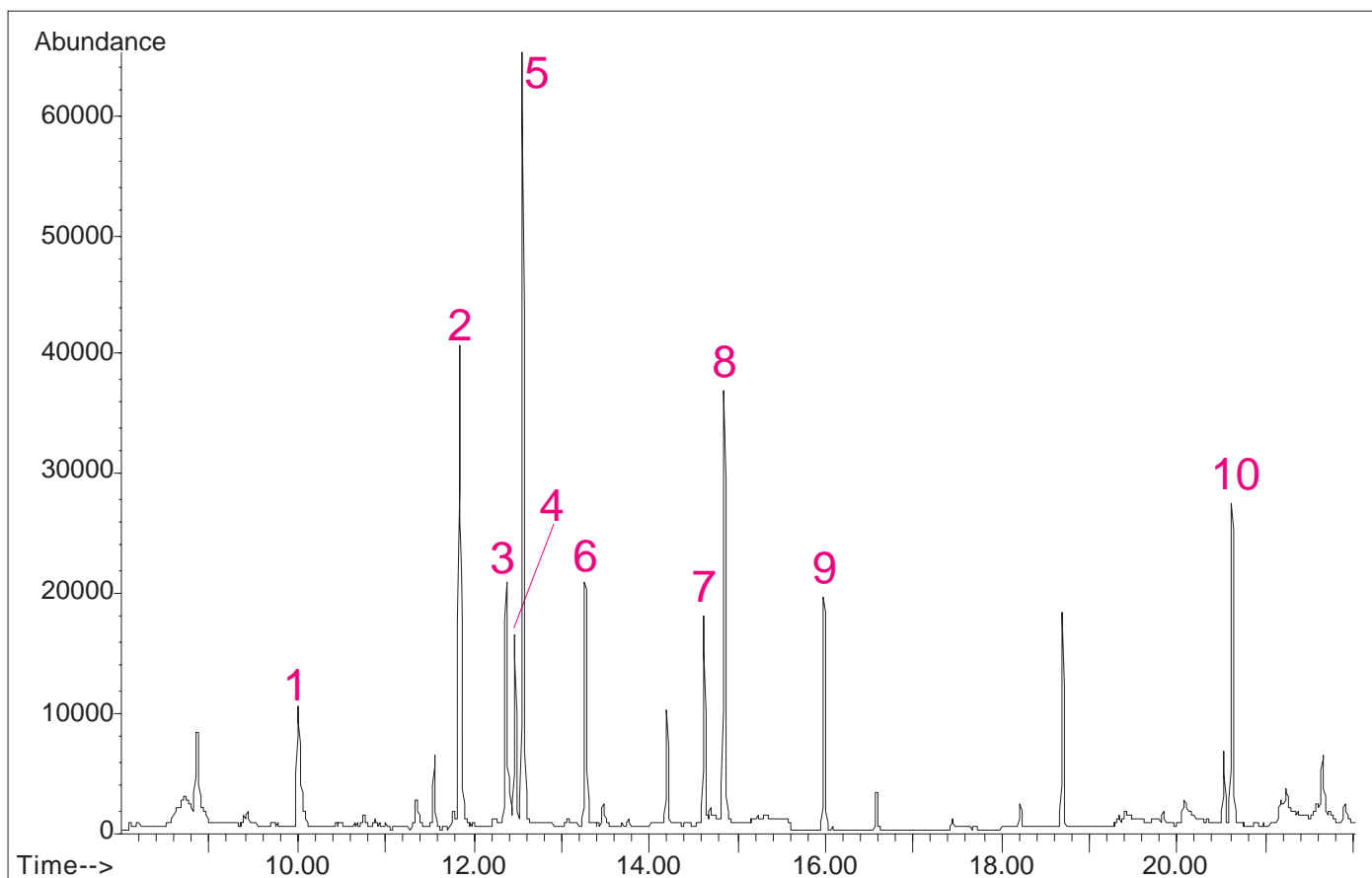
Detection: Mass Selective Detector (SCAN 40-400 amu, 2.2 scans/s)

+ PAHs      ▲ OCPs      ● TRIA



loss of polars: lack of retention  
 loss of apolars: system adsorbtion  
 theory:  $\log K_{ow} = 1.8$

**Figure 4.** Recovery vs logK<sub>ow</sub>



**Figure 5.** Determination of phenols in tap water (spiked at 0.1 mg/l, acetylated with acetic anhydride).

List of compounds:

- 1 Phenol
- 2 4-Methylphenol
- 3 2-Chlorophenol
- 4 2,6-Dimethylphenol
- 5 2-Ethylphenol
- 6 p-Isopropylphenol
- 7 2,4-Dichlorophenol
- 8 2,3,5-Trimethylphenol
- 9 2,4,6-Trichlorophenol
- 10 Pentachlorophenol

Sample volume: 10 ml (sampled at 1 ml/min)

Desorption: Thermal 225°C (5 min)

Detection: Mass Selective Detector (SIM 2 ions/component)

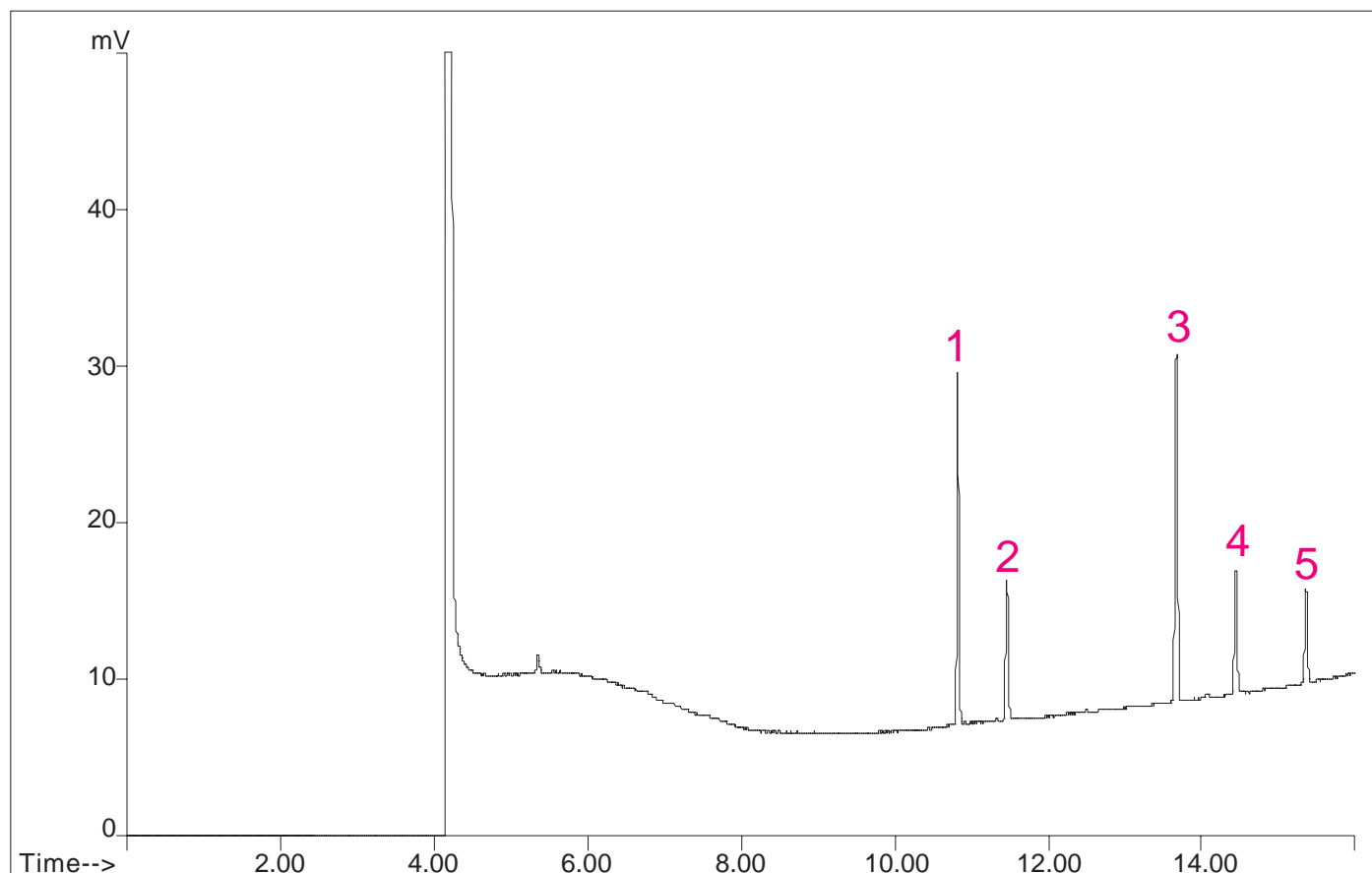


Figure 6. Determination of amines in water (spiked at 1-2 mg/l, derivatized with pentafluorobenzoylchloride).

List of compounds:

- 1 Dimethylamine
- 2 Ethylamine
- 3 Dipropylamine
- 4 Pentylamine
- 5 Hexylamine

Sample volume: 1 ml (sampled at 0.5 ml/min)

Desorption: Thermal 225°C (5 min)

Detection: Nitrogen Phosphorous Detector

## CONCLUSIONS

- Sorptive enrichment was shown to perform well for the analysis of PAHs, pesticides, phenols and amines from water.
- PDMS degradation products do not interfere with the analysis of the target analytes.
- Derivatization of analytes widely extends application range.
- The system described here allowed fully automated, unattended water enrichment and analysis.
- Repeatability and recoveries were good at the 0.1 ppb concentration level.
- Using 10 mL samples and mass selective detection, detection limits were in the 1-10 ng/L range.



**GERSTEL GmbH & Co. KG**

Eberhard-Gerstel-Platz 1  
D-45473 Mülheim an der Ruhr  
Germany

☎ +49 (0) 208 - 7 65 03-0  
☎ +49 (0) 208 - 7 65 03 33  
@ gerstel@gerstel.com  
🌐 www.gerstel.com

**GERSTEL Worldwide**

**GERSTEL, Inc.**

701 Digital Drive, Suite J  
Linthicum, MD 21090  
USA

☎ +1 (410) 247 5885  
☎ +1 (410) 247 5887  
@ sales@gerstelus.com  
🌐 www.gerstelus.com

**GERSTEL AG**

Wassergrabe 27  
CH-6210 Sursee  
Switzerland

☎ +41 (41) 9 21 97 23  
☎ +41 (41) 9 21 97 25  
@ gerstel@ch.gerstel.com  
🌐 www.gerstel.ch

**GERSTEL K.K.**

1-3-1 Nakane, Meguro-ku  
Tokyo 152-0031  
SMBC Toritsuudai Ekimae Bldg 4F  
Japan

☎ +81 3 5731 5321  
☎ +81 3 5731 5322  
@ info@gerstel.co.jp  
🌐 www.gerstel.co.jp

**GERSTEL LLP**

Level 25, North Tower  
One Raffles Quay  
Singapore 048583

☎ +65 6622 5486  
☎ +65 6622 5999  
@ SEA@gerstel.com  
🌐 www.gerstel.com

**GERSTEL Brasil**

Av. Pascoal da Rocha Falcão, 367  
04785-000 São Paulo - SP Brasil

☎ +55 (11)5665-8931  
☎ +55 (11)5666-9084  
@ gerstel-brasil@gerstel.com  
🌐 www.gerstel.com.br

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