Distribution of dissolved inorganic carbon and related parameters in the Thermaikos Gulf (Eastern Mediterranean)

KRASAKOPOULOU E. Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Institute of Oceanography, P.O. Box 712, P.C. 19013, Anavyssos, Attiki

ANAGNOSTOU CH. Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Institute of Oceanography, P.O. Box 712, P.C. 19013, Anavyssos, Attiki

SOUVERMEZOGLOU E. Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Institute of Oceanography, P.O. Box 712, P.C. 19013, Anavyssos, Attiki

PAPATHANASSIOU E. Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Institute of Oceanography, P.O. Box 712, P.C. 19013, Anavyssos, Attiki

RAPSOMANIKIS S. Department of Environmental Engineering, Demokritos University of Thrace, 67100, Xanthi

http://dx.doi.org/10.12681/mms.178

Copyright © 2006

To cite this article:

KRASAKOPOULOU, E., ANAGNOSTOU, C., SOUVERMEZOGLOU, E., PAPATHANASSIOU, E., & RAPSOMANIKIS, S. (2006). Distribution of dissolved inorganic carbon and related parameters in the Thermaikos Gulf (Eastern Mediterranean). Mediterranean Marine Science, 7(1), 63-78. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.12681/mms.178
Distribution of dissolved inorganic carbon and related parameters in the Thermaikos Gulf (Eastern Mediterranean)

E. KRASAKOPOULOU*, CH. ANAGNOSTOU*, E. SOUVENZOGLOU*, E. PAPATHANASSIOU* and S. RAPSOMANIKIS*

*Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Institute of Oceanography, P.O. Box 712, 190 13, Anavissos, Attica, Greece

1Department of Environmental Engineering, Demokritus University of Thrace, 67100, Xanthi, Greece

e-mail: ekras@ath.hcmr.gr

Abstract

Data on the distribution of dissolved inorganic carbon (measured as TCO2) and related parameters in the Thermaikos Gulf were obtained during May 1997. High TCO2 concentrations were recorded close to the bottom, especially in the northern part of the gulf, as a result of organic matter remineralisation. The positive relatively good correlation between TCO2 and both apparent oxygen utilisation (AOU) and phosphate at the last sampling depth confirmed the regenerative origin of a large proportion of TCO2. The comparatively conservative behaviour of alkalinity, together with the relatively low value of the homogenous buffer factor $\beta$ ($\beta = \frac{\partial \ln fCO2}{\partial \ln TCO2}$) revealed that calcification or carbonate dissolution takes place on a very small scale, simultaneously with the organic carbon production. The correlations between fCO2 and chlorophyll $\alpha$, as well as AOU and the surface temperature, revealed that the carbon dioxide fixation through the biological activity is the principal factor that modulates the variability of fCO2.

A rough first estimate of the magnitude of the air-sea CO2 exchange and the potential role of the Thermaikos Gulf in the transfer of atmospheric CO2 was also obtained. The results showed that during May 1997, the Thermaikos Gulf acted as a weak sink for atmospheric CO2 at a rate of -0.60 - -1.43 mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$, depending on which formula for the gas transfer velocity was used, and in accordance to recent reports regarding other temperate continental shelves.

Extensive study of the dissolved inorganic carbon and related parameters, and continuous shipboard measurements of fCO2$^*_a$ and fCO2$^*_w$ during all seasons are necessary to safely quantify the role of the Thermaikos Gulf in the context of the coastal margins CO2 dynamics.

Keywords: Eastern Mediterranean; Thermaikos Gulf; Continental shelf; Dissolved inorganic carbon; Air-sea CO2 exchange.

Introduction

Continental shelves and slopes have frequently been considered as a small area of the ocean and therefore, unimportant in terms of the global carbon cycle. Although ocean margins comprise less than 10% of the surface area of the world’s oceans, they account for up to one-third of global marine primary production (ALONGI 1998), ~80%
of organic matter burial, ~90% of sedimentary mineralisation and ca 50% of calcium carbonate deposition (PERNETTA & MIL-LIMAN, 1995). They also exchange nutrients and inorganic and organic carbon with the open ocean intensively across marginal boundaries, thus constituting the major link between the terrestrial and the open ocean environments and consequently play a key role in the global carbon cycle by linking the terrestrial, oceanic and atmospheric reservoirs. However, nowadays there is a great uncertainty about the overall role of coastal ecosystems in global carbon cycling and the question of whether shelf seas act as a sink or source for carbon dioxide still remains open.

Coastal waters are characterised by large spatial and temporal variations of the parameters of the CO2/carbonate system, associated with intensive physical, chemical and biological processes occurring in these sites. The role of the shelves in the inorganic carbon cycle is uncertain because it results from the integration of production/remineralization/export of organic carbon, burial/dissolution of carbonates in the shallow sediment and input of inorganic carbon from rivers and coastal upwelling. One major challenge in studying the carbon cycling of coastal areas arises from the complexity and heterogeneity of the systems. Field data on the distribution of carbonate system species are needed in order to provide information on the carbon cycling and the biogeochemical processes in the coastal zone, as well as to assess the effective role of the coastal zone in the global carbon cycle.

In contrast to the open ocean, the dynamics of the CO2/carbonate system in coastal regions have only begun to receive more attention in recent years (BAKKER et al., 1996; FRANKIGNOULLE et al., 1996; TSU-NOGAI et al., 1999; FRANKIGNOULLE and BORGES, 2001; DEGRANDPRE et al., 2002; IANSON et al., 2003; WANG et al., 2005; BOZEC et al., 2005 and references therein). In the Mediterranean Sea a few measurements on the carbonate system mainly focused on its western part, have been published (MILLERO et al., 1979; COPIN-MONTEGUT, 1993; DELGADO & ESTRADA, 1994; COPIN-MONTEGUT & BEOVIC, 2002 and references therein), as well as some on the northern Adriatic (SOURVERMEZOGLOU & KRASAKOPOULOU, 1999).

In this work we attempt to study, for the first time, the distribution of the inorganic carbon species and their relationships with other properties such as salinity, temperature, dissolved oxygen and chlorophyll a in an eastern Mediterranean regime. In addition, the air-sea CO2 flux is estimated using an indirect method, in order to assess the potential role of the Thermaikos Gulf as a source or sink of atmospheric CO2 during late spring of 1997.

Study area

The Thermaikos Gulf is an elongated basin characterised by an extensive shelf (depths <200m) located in the NW Aegean Sea. The northern part of the gulf (inner Thermaikos Gulf) comprises the Bay of Thessaloniki, where the city of Thessaloniki (population ca 1.2 million) is found, and the Gulf of Thessaloniki (Fig.1). Three major rivers Axios, Aliakmon, Pinios, and two smaller ones, Loudias and Gallikos, discharge along its northern and western boundaries and transport significant nutrient loads, which eventually enter the coastal ecosystem, mostly through episodic flooding events (KARAGEORGIS et al., 2005). In addition to the riverine nutrients inputs, the gulf receives the urban effluents from the city of Thessaloniki and the adjacent industrial zone. Due to the increased influx of inorganic and organic material at the shelf area, the inner part of the gulf exhibits higher plankton biomass and productivity than the oligotrophic Aegean Sea and the trophic status of the area is characterised as a eutrophic one (GOTSIS-SKRETAS & FRILIGOS, 1990; BALOPOULOS & FRILIGOS 1993; PAGOU et al., 2000; PAGOU, 2005).
Considerable production of carbon dioxide, particularly in the bottom layer, is to be expected from the decomposition of the external imported organic matter (mainly from the rivers and the sewage pipes) and of that produced in situ in the Thermaikos Gulf.

The forcing mechanisms that control shelf circulation in the Gulf of Thermaikos are air-sea interaction (wind and surface heating/cooling), land-sea interaction (buoyancy due to river discharge), and coastal deep-sea interaction (intrusion of Aegean waters onto the continental shelf). Topography also plays an important role due to the presence of both gradual and steep shelf slopes (KONTOYIANNIS et al., 2003). Generally, saline waters from the Aegean enter the gulf from its central and eastern part, flow northwards and as they turn towards the southwest, they mix with freshwater originating from the rivers and flow southwards along the western coastline (ROBLES et al., 1983; POULOS et al., 2000; HYDER et al., 2002).

Materials and Methods

Sampling
Sampling was conducted during May 1997 with R/V Aegaeo within the framework of the EU Metro-Med project (Dynamics of matter transfer and biogeochemical cycles: Their modelling in coastal systems of the Mediterranean Sea). Twenty-four stations were sampled in the Thermaikos Gulf, covering the areas of the Thessaloniki Bay and the Thessaloniki Gulf (TP stations) and the continental shelf (M stations) (Fig. 1). Seawater samples were collected with a General
Oceanics rosette equipped with 12 Niskin bottles of 10 L mounted on a SeaBird SBE-911+ conductivity-temperature-depth (CTD) profiler. Two depths (surface and bottom) were sampled in most stations and three to four depths in the stations TP5, TP25, M24; a total of 52 samples were analysed. The seawater samples were drawn into 500-1000 mL borosilicate glass bottles sealed with glass stoppers according to the collection methods of DOE (1994). The samples were poisoned with 1mL/L of saturated HgCl2 to prevent further biological activity, stored at room temperature away from light and analysed on shore the as soon as possible. The apparent oxygen utilisation (AOU) was calculated according to the difference of the measured oxygen values to the oxygen saturation given by the algorithm of MILLERO (1986).

**Determination of TCO₂ and TA**

The carbon dioxide system in the oceans can be characterized using any two of the four measurable parameters, pH, total alkalinity (TA), partial pressure (pCO₂) or fugacity (fCO₂) of carbon dioxide and the total inorganic carbon (TCO₂), providing that constants are available for the other acid/base species in seawater. Dissolved CO₂ constitutes less than 1% of the dissolved inorganic carbon content of seawater, which otherwise consists of bicarbonate, carbonate and a negligible amount of carbonic acid: TCO₂ = [CO₂(aq)] + [H₂CO₃] + [HCO₃⁻] + [CO₃²⁻]. Dissociation constants of carbonic acid are needed to calculate the components of the CO₂ system from these measurements.

Dissolved Inorganic Carbon (TCO₂) and Total Alkalinity (TA) were measured simultaneously with a precise potentiometric method, based on the analytical and calculation procedure described by DYRSSEN & SILLENN (1967), EDMOND (1970) and BRADSHAW et al. (1980 & 1981). The seawater is considered as a weak base and is titrated by hydrochloric acid 0.1 N. The progress of titration is monitored using a glass electrode/reference electrode pH cell. The TA corresponds to the carbonic acid endpoint and the TCO₂ concentration is computed by the difference between the two endpoints. The two endpoints of the titration are calculated using a modified Gran approach, a procedure recognised by DOE (1994). The analytical precision on replicate seawater samples was about 0.3%. The results are expressed in μmol/kg for the TCO₂ and μeq/kg for the TA. The system was calibrated using certified reference material (CRM) supplied by Dr A.G. Dickson of Scripps Institution of Oceanography, La Jolla, CA. The fugacity of carbon dioxide (fCO₂) was calculated from TA and TCO₂ measurements and the dissociation constants of carbonic acid of MEHRBACH et al., (1973) and the solubility constants of WEISS & PRICE (1980) using the software of LEWIS & WALLACE (1998). The fCO₂ at 1 atm total pressure is 0.3-0.4% lower than its partial pressure (pCO₂) due to the non-ideal behaviour of carbon dioxide. 

**Results and Discussion**

**Spatial trends in TCO₂ concentrations**

Dissolved inorganic carbon concentrations in the Theraikos Gulf ranged from 2351 μmol/kg at the surface of TP11 to 2706 μmol/kg close to the bottom of TP5 (Thessaloniki Bay); the bottom samples of the same station also showed the lowest values of dissolved oxygen and the highest of nutrients (O₂<3.0ml/l, NO₃~0.04 μmol/L, SiO₄~5.9 μmol/L and PO₄~0.15 μmol/L). The surface values of TCO₂ are lower than those of the last depth (Fig. 2) reflecting the consumption of inorganic carbon by photosynthesis. In particular, the difference between the mean surface and the mean bottom values of TCO₂: 2451 and 2517 μmol/kg, respectively, is statistically significant at the 99% confidence level (n=24, t-test value=4.38). Lower surface TCO₂ concentrations appear near the north-western shore in response to the inflow of riverine waters. On the other hand, the increase of TCO₂ concentrations in the deeper layer, especially in the inner part of the gulf,
implies that there is a formation of TCO$_2$ species in the near bottom waters. In addition, in the northern part of the gulf the bottom distribution of TCO$_2$ fits inversely with that of oxygen (Fig. 2), namely, the maximum TCO$_2$ values correspond to the minimum oxygen concentrations, implying a probable relationship between the two parameters.

Generally the concentrations of the TCO$_2$ found in the Thermaikos Gulf are significantly lower than those reported in the literature for the extreme environment of the Black Sea (GOYET et al., 1991), in the same order of magnitude as those measured in the shallow northern Adriatic Sea (SOUVERM-EZOGLOU & KRASAKOPOULOU, 1999) and higher than those reported for the central part of the NW Mediterranean Sea (COPIN-MONTEGUT & BEGOVIC, 2002).

**Fig. 2: Horizontal distribution of (a) TCO$_2$ at the surface layer, (b) TCO$_2$ at the last sampling depth and (c) dissolved oxygen at the last sampling depth in the Thermaikos Gulf during the May 1997 cruise.**

**Relationships of TCO$_2$ and TA with salinity and temperature**

The variation of TCO$_2$ and TA with salinity has been described by different investigators using linear regressions (e.g. COPIN-MONTEGUT, 1993; BAKKER et al., 1996; IANSON et al., 2003; BOZEC et al., 2005). If these relationships are truly linear then they suggest that both TCO$_2$ and TA concentrations are controlled by dilution (evaporation, precipitation, river runoff). Biological processes (uptake/release of TCO$_2$ during photosynthesis/respiration, CaCO$_3$ dissolution/formation) that occur at different water depths (and thus salinities) as well as surface TCO$_2$ exchange, which is temperature dependent, cause non linear variations of TCO$_2$ with...
Salinity. In contrast to other variables of the CO₂/carbonate system (i.e. TCO₂, pH, fCO₂), biological processes such as photosynthesis and oxidation of organic matter have a rather small, negligible influence on the alkalinity (MILLERO et al., 1998; BOEHME et al., 1998). In the process of calcium carbonate dissolution/formation, TA would change with TCO₂ at a ratio of 2 to 1, due to the chemical equilibrium involved in solid carbonate production (i.e. Ca²⁺ + 2HCO₃⁻ ⇌ CaCO₃ + CO₂ + H₂O). In anoxic environments, TA change would be significant due to consumption of H⁺ during anaerobic respiration. Since the waters of the inner Thermaikos Gulf are not anoxic, anaerobic respiration should be negligible.

Linear regressions (Model II) between our TCO₂ and TA data and salinity were calculated (Figs. 3a and b) in order to investigate the TCO₂ and TA characteristics of the water masses and to discuss deviations from linearity. In this figure we can distinguish the large difference between the TCO₂ and TA values per salinity of the TP-stations (circles) and those of the M-stations (crosses). Salinity ranged from 31.854 in front of the Aliakmon river estuary to 38.434 at 68m depth in the easternmost part of the study area (Station M30). Elevated values of both parameters appear at higher salinities; however, the data appear linear only when the TP-stations are considered. The lower values of the correlation coefficient which are obtained when the data of both the TP- and M-stations are used (0.273 for TCO₂ and 0.463 for TA) are probably due to the narrower variation of salinity of the M-stations. The M-stations are mainly influenced by the saline Aegean waters and exhibit higher salinity than the TP-stations, which are also influenced by the riverine water inputs. The weaker linear relationship between TCO₂ and salinity than is the case for TA is related to the larger modification of

![Figure 3](http://epublishing.ekt.gr)
TCO₂ by biological processes and to the air-sea exchange of CO₂. In addition, the stronger correlation of TA with salinity relative to TCO₂ indicates that calcium carbonate dissolution/precipitation processes are likely to be negligible and that dilution exerted the major control over TA in the Thermaikos Gulf during May 1997.

In order to remove the effects of changes in salinity due to mixing, fresh water runoff, precipitation and evaporation, the TCO₂ and TA values were normalized to a salinity of 37 representing the average salinity during the cruise; thus normalized data = measured data × 37/measured salinity. Consequently, changes in the normalized TCO₂ and TA can be attributed to the production and oxidation of plant material and formation and precipitation of CaCO₃. The salinity normalized data of both parameters (NTCO₂ and NTA) are inversely proportional to salinity (Figs. 3c and d). The strong linear relationship of NTA with salinity (r²=0.917) confirms the almost conservative character of alkalinity that results from the mixing of the saline Aegean waters with the fresh waters of the inner gulf. The scatter around the line observed in the case of NTCO₂ gives evidence that additional processes occur and cause the variations of the TCO₂ concentrations in the study area during May 1997.

**Relationships of TCO₂ with oxygen and nutrients**

The enrichment of the bottom waters in TCO₂ is probably caused by the oxidation of the sinking organic matter. The organic material which is transported by the rivers and/or is produced in situ, falls into the deeper layer and undergoes remineralisation by consuming oxygen and producing equivalent amounts of carbon dioxide and of regenerated nutrients. According to the simplest stoichiometric formula of organic matter in the ocean \([(CH₂O)₁₀₆(NH₃)₁₆H₃PO₄]\), an increase of 106 moles of carbon dioxide and a consumption of 138 moles of dissolved oxygen occurs, when this molecule is completely oxidised (AOU:C:N:P = -138:106:16:1; REDFIELD et al., 1963). The positive linear correlation between TCO₂ and Apparent Oxygen Utilisation (AOU) for the samples collected at the last depth of the stations (Fig. 4a) confirms that carbon dioxide is released proportionately to the dissolved oxygen utilisation. The experimental ratio of carbon regeneration, i.e. the TCO₂ to AOU slope, is 1.63, almost double the predicted value from simple theory, 0.768 (striped line, Fig. 4a), but close to the value observed in the Jabuka Pit in the middle of the Adriatic Sea (KRASAKOPOULOU et al., 2005). The TCO₂ data from the last sampling depth were also plotted against phosphate (Fig. 4b). Phosphate was chosen rather than nitrite+nitrate because these waters have the potential complication of denitrification in the water column (MARTY et al., 2001), as well as in the sediments.

**Fig. 4:** TCO₂ vs. (a) AOU and (b) phosphate for the samples from the last depth of the TP- and M-stations.
ments, and which can affect the nitrogen to carbon balance. The relatively good correlation between TCO$_2$ and phosphate ($r^2=0.591$) indicates that in the close to the bottom layer of the Thermaikos Gulf a large proportion of both parameters originates from the remineralisation of organic matter. However, there is more carbon and less phosphorus regenerated than the amounts predicted from the oceanic model (almost 10 times). The composition of the organic matter that is remineralised -particularly rich in carbon in relation to phosphorus- could be a possible reason for the value of the ratio.

During May 1997, both the estimated oxygen consumption and phosphate and carbon regeneration rates in the Thermaikos Gulf are considerably higher in relation to the open ocean estimates, indicating an excess in TCO$_2$, and/or a deficit in AOU and phosphate and should probably be attributed to the proximity of the study area to the coastal zone and/or to the quantity and quality of the organic matter that is remineralised.

**The fugacity of CO$_2$ in seawater (fCO$_2$)**

The main factors controlling the variation of sea surface fCO$_2$ in the open ocean are the warming and cooling of surface waters (temperature), and the balance between photosynthetic carbon fixation and release of CO$_2$ by respiration or oxidation of organic matter. In coastal seas the same processes take place, yet with more intensity and variability. One common aspect of the coastal CO$_2$ studies is the large variability of fCO$_2$ measured in surface waters, significantly greater in both space and time than typically observed in open ocean environments.

In the Thermaikos Gulf during May 1997 the surface fCO$_2$ varied between 273 μatm (TP01) and 383 μatm (TP16), while the surface temperature ranged between 13.9 (TP13) and 18.3 °C (TP01). In the greater part of the gulf the fCO$_2$ values (Fig. 5) are lower (average: 332 μatm) than the present atmospheric annual mean value of about 365 μatm (CHAMARD et al., 2001), the surface waters of the Thermaikos appear undersaturated with respect to the atmosphere and the region could act as a sink for atmospheric CO$_2$.

Temperature affects the equilibrium constants of inorganic carbon and particularly the solubility coefficient of CO$_2$; heating decreases the solubility of CO$_2$ and increases the fugacity of CO$_2$ in seawater (e.g. for a temperature increase of 1 °C, pCO$_2$ rises ~4%), which may induce CO$_2$ oversaturation in many cases and a CO$_2$ source to the atmosphere. The fCO$_2$ data are normalised to a fixed temperature of 16 °C (fCO$_2^T$), representing the mean surface water temperature during the cruise, in order to eliminate the thermodynamic effect on fCO$_2$. Model II regressions were calculated between the temperature-normalised fugacity data and chlorophyll $\alpha$, temperature and AOU in order to analyse the factors behind the fCO$_2$ variability.

The correlation between chlorophyll $\alpha$ and fCO$_2^T$ is negative (Fig. 6a); the maximum fCO$_2^T$ values were recorded in the southern part of the gulf where the phytoplanktonic biomass was low. The minimum fCO$_2^T$ coincides with the maximum concentration of
chlorophyll $\alpha$ in the innermost part of the gulf, where biological activity leads to the draw down of CO$_2$ and thus strongly reduces f$\text{CO}_2$ levels. Moreover, the dynamics of inorganic carbon resulting from photosynthesis are highly dependent upon the types of organisms present and whether they are calcifying or not. Photosynthesis and calcification have opposing effects on the f$\text{CO}_2$ and the final result of their concomitance depends on their relative importance. A convenient parameter to study the importance of calcification, the homogenous buffer factor $\beta$, which is defined as the relative variation of the f$\text{CO}_2$ to that of TCO$_2$ ($\beta = \partial \ln \text{fCO}_2 / \partial \ln \text{TCO}_2$), was also employed. The factor $\beta$ ranges from ~12, when no calcification occurs during organic matter production to ~7, when precipitation/dissolution of CaCO$_3$ is the only occurring process (FRANKIGNOULLE, 1994). The calculated $\beta$ value of 5.31 (Fig. 6b) indicates that calcification or carbonate dissolution takes place on a very small scale, simultaneously with organic carbon production, in agreement with the comparatively conservative character of TA (section 3.2).

In addition, the f$\text{CO}_2$ drastically decreases instead of increasing as expected from the temperature increase and shows a moderate negative correlation with temperature (Fig. 6c). This fact arises from a correlation between warm waters of low f$\text{CO}_2$ with cold waters of high f$\text{CO}_2$ levels and suggests that the spatial variability of f$\text{CO}_2$ is mainly driven by photosynthetic activity, which seems to overwhelm the expected variability due to temperature differences.

The negative AOU values (i.e. oxygen production) over the whole study area and the positive correlation between AOU and f$\text{CO}_2$ (Fig. 6d) strengthens the view that the principal factor that modulates f$\text{CO}_2$ variability is primary productivity.

**Air-sea CO$_2$ exchanges**

A concentration difference of carbon di-

---

**Fig. 6:** Plots and Model II regressions of (a) f$\text{CO}_2$ vs. chlorophyll $\alpha$, (b) lnCO$_2$ vs. lnTCO$_2$ (c) f$\text{CO}_2$ vs surface temperature and (d) f$\text{CO}_2$ vs AOU in the Thermaikos Gulf during May 1997.
oxide (CO$_2$) across the air-water interface drives the net gas exchange. A common assumption is that a concentration gradient of CO$_2$ exists only near the air-water interface and that the gas is well mixed in bulk air and bulk water.

Air-sea exchange slowly brings the concentration of dissolved CO$_2$ in surface water towards an equilibrium with the atmospheric CO$_2$ content. More rapid physical and biological disturbances of the concentration of CO$_2$ in water generally prevent this equilibrium from being established.

The net flux of CO$_2$ through the air-sea interface ($F_{\text{CO}_2}$, mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$) is described as:

$$F_{\text{CO}_2} = K_w \times S \times (f_{\text{CO}_2}^w - f_{\text{CO}_2}^a)$$  (1)

where $K_w$ (cm h$^{-1}$) is the gas transfer coefficient, $S$ (mol L$^{-1}$ atm$^{-1}$) is the solubility of CO$_2$ in seawater, and $f_{\text{CO}_2}^w$ and $f_{\text{CO}_2}^a$ (μatm) are the fugacity of CO$_2$ in seawater and air, respectively. Several parameterizations of $K_w$ have been proposed based on laboratory and field studies, taking into account a wide variety of factors affecting air-sea exchange: wind, bubbles, turbulence, temperature, atmospheric boundary layer stability, and drag coefficients (SMETHIE et al., 1985; LISS & MERLIVAT, 1986; WOOLF, 1997; TANS et al., 1990; WANNINKHOF, 1992; WANNINKHOF & MCYER, 1999; MCYER et al., 2001). In our calculations, we use the $K_w$-wind speed algorithms proposed by LISS & MERLIVAT (1986), WANNINKHOF (1992), WANNINKHOF & MCYER (1999) and MCYER et al., (2001), hereafter referred to as LM86, W92, WM99 and MG01, respectively. In fact, it is difficult to choose one relationship because even the latest experiments using the most recent tracer techniques could not reliably distinguish which was the more favourable relationship. In addition, the fluxes reported in the literature are usually computed using only one of the above mentioned relationships and thus, for comparative reasons, it is useful to have the values calculated using the various relationships. We, therefore, chose to report the results computed with the different formulations.

To evaluate the air-sea CO$_2$ exchanges, the $f_{\text{CO}_2}^a$ must be known. However, during this study atmospheric measurements were not performed. The spatio-temporal variability of the atmospheric molar fraction of CO$_2$ ($x_{\text{CO}_2}^a$) is much smaller than that of seawater ($x_{\text{CO}_2}^w$), mainly because of the high lateral atmospheric mixing rates, which tend to rapidly homogenize $x_{\text{CO}_2}^a$. Therefore, we can compute the flux of CO$_2$ across the air-sea interface, assuming a constant atmospheric $f_{\text{CO}_2}^a$ during the cruise, using the values of atmospheric $f_{\text{CO}_2}^a$ from Lampedusa Island in the central Mediterranean Sea, which is the nearest marine site of atmospheric CO$_2$ monitoring to the Thermaikos Gulf (CHAMARD et al., 2001).

Wind speed data for the period of our observations were obtained from the ECMWF MARS database and correspond to the available measurements from the meteorological station located at Thessaloniki airport (40.517N 22.967E); however, wind speed measurements of a higher resolution, both temporally and spatially, are likely to be necessary in order to estimate more realistically the air-sea CO$_2$ exchanges. The data from an onboard meteorological station would be most appropriate to calculate the gas transfer coefficient; nevertheless, through the use of the available data, both of $f_{\text{CO}_2}^a$ and wind speed, a rough first assessment of the role of the Thermaikos Gulf in air-sea CO$_2$ exchange can be obtained.

This simplistic approach to calculating the air-sea CO$_2$ flux involves several major assumptions, but the approximate magnitude and the relative role of the Thermaikos Gulf in the uptake or release of atmospheric CO$_2$ can be determined.

The results of the four formulations show that during May 1997 the net flux of CO$_2$ through the air-sea interface is negative and the whole Thermaikos Gulf absorbs atmos-
pheric CO$_2$ at a rate between -0.60 and -1.43 mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$, depending on which gas transfer coefficient is used (Table 1). The obtained results are in agreement with the direction of the CO$_2$ fluxes reported in other temperate continental shelf areas. Existing data on air-sea CO$_2$ fluxes suggest that temperate marginal seas act as sinks for atmospheric CO$_2$ (e.g. East China Sea, TSUNOGAI et al., 1999; Gulf of Biscay, FRANKIGNOULLE & BORGES, 2001; US Middle Atlantic Bight, DEGRANDPRE et al., 2002; RIA DE VIGO, NW Spain, GAGO et al., 2003; North Sea, BOZEC et al., 2005). Comparing the magnitude of the fluxes to the data from other coastal seas during spring-summer (Table 1), our study shows that the Thermaikos Gulf acted as a weak sink for atmospheric CO$_2$ during May 1997.

During winter, higher gas transfer velocities are expected due to the usual increase in wind force; this higher wintertime transfer of carbon dioxide is also provoked by the temperature decrease of surface waters, which drives a decrease of fCO$_2^*$ values and enhances the penetration of atmospheric CO$_2$. In addition, the dense water formed due to the water cooling in the shallow northern part of the gulf (KONTOYIANNIS et al., 2003) and the subsequent slow spreading and mixing transports this enriched in dissolved inorganic carbon water into the deeper layer of the outer gulf. Therefore, it is quite possible that during winter the Thermaikos Gulf could be a more effective CO$_2$ sink than in late spring. This scenario is likened to the ‘continental shelf pump’ that has been employed recently by TSUNOGAI et al., (1999) to explain the observed large net absorption of CO$_2$ in the East China Sea during winter.

### Table 1

| Thermaikos gulf | Range of fCO$_2^*$ (μatm) | -273 to -383 |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Range of ΔfCO$_2$ (μatm) | -92.5 to -17.6 |
| Average of ΔfCO$_2$ (μatm) | -33.5 |
| Average wind speed (m s$^{-1}$) | 4.6 |
| F$_{CO2}$ ± σ (mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$) - LM86 | -0.72 ± 0.42 |
| F$_{CO2}$ ± σ (mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$) - W92 | -1.43 ± 0.84 |
| F$_{CO2}$ ± σ (mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$) - WMG99 | -0.60 ± 0.35 |
| F$_{CO2}$ ± σ (mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$) - MG01 | -1.35 ± 0.79 |

| Other continental seas | North Sea F$_{CO2}$ (mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$) - LM86$^1$ | -2.1 to -1.5 |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| North Sea F$_{CO2}$ (mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$) - W92$^2$ | -3.4 to -1.6 |
| North Sea F$_{CO2}$ (mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$) - WMG99$^3$ | -1.8 |
| Baltic Sea F$_{CO2}$ (mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$) - W92$^2$ | -6.4 |
| Ria de Vigo F$_{CO2}$ (mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$) - LM86$^4$ | -1.31 ± 0.39 |
| East China Sea F$_{CO2}$ (mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$) - LM86$^4$ | -3.3 to -1.8 |
| East China Sea (mmol m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$) - W92$^4$ | -6.5 to -4.7 |

$^1$ BOZEC et al. (2005); $^2$ THOMAS & SHNEIDER (1999); $^3$ GAGO et al. (2003); $^4$ WANG et al. (2000).
Conclusions

The present study enabled us to describe the distribution of dissolved inorganic carbon and related parameters in the Thermaikos Gulf waters during May 1997. Surface concentrations of TCO₂ were lower than those recorded close to the bottom. The decomposition of the organic material, imported directly from external sources (rivers, sewage) and produced in situ in the Thermaikos, resulted in an increase of the concentration of dissolved inorganic carbon, particularly in bottom layer. The positive relatively good correlation between TCO₂ and both AOU and phosphate at the last sampling depth confirmed the regenerative origin of a large proportion of TCO₂. The correlations between surface fCO₂, calculated from the TA and TCO₂ measurements, and chlorophyll α as well as AOU revealed that the carbon dioxide fixation through biological activity was the principal factor modulating the variability of fCO₂.

Moreover, a simplistic first estimate of the role of the Thermaikos Gulf in air-sea CO₂ exchange was obtained. The results showed that during May 1997, the Thermaikos Gulf acted as a weak sink for the atmospheric CO₂ at a rate of -0.60 - 1.43 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹, depending on which formula for the gas transfer velocity was used.

Extensive study of the dissolved inorganic carbon and related parameters, continuous shipboard measurements of fCO₂ and fCO₂w during all seasons would be necessary to safely quantify the role of the Thermaikos Gulf in the context of the coastal margins CO₂ dynamics. Simultaneous measurements of the in situ processes affecting the dissolved inorganic carbon system may yield a better understanding of the mechanisms involved.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the EU MAST-III ELOISE Project METRO-MED (Dynamics of Matter Transfer and Biogeochemical Cycles: Their Modelling in Coastal Systems of the Mediterranean Sea), contract MAS3-CT96-0049. We wish to thank Dr A. Papadopoulos for providing the wind data from the EMECF database and Dr K. Pagou and G. Assimakopoulos for the chlorophyll a data.

References

ALONGI, D.M., 1998. The coastal ocean I. The coastal zone In: Coastal ecosystem processes CRC Press, Boca Raton, Florida, 419 p.

BARKER, D.C.E., de BAAR, H.J.W. & de WILDE, H.P.J., 1996. Dissolved carbon dioxide in Dutch coastal waters. Marine Chemistry, 55, 247-263.

BALOPOULOS, E. & FRILIGOS, N., 1993. Water Circulation and Eutrophication in the Northwestern Aegean Sea, Thermaikos Gulf, Environmental Science & Health, A28(6), 1311-1329.

BOEHME, S.E., SABINE, C.L. & REMERS, C.E., 1998. CO₂ fluxes from a coastal transect: a time series approach. Marine Chemistry, 63, 49-67.

BOZEC, Y., THOMAS, H., ELKALAY, K. & de BAAR, H.J.W., 2005. The continental shelf pump for CO₂ in the North Sea - evidence from summer observation. Marine Chemistry, 93, 131-147.

BRADSHAW, A.C. & BREWER, P.G., 1980. The titration of sea-water with strong acid. Technical report. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

BRADSHAW, A.C., BREWER, P.G., SHAFER, D.K. & WILLIAMS, R.T., 1981. Carbon dioxide and alkalinity by potentiometric titration in the GEOSECS program. Earth and Planetary Science Letters, 55, 99-115.

CHAMARD, P., CIATTAGLIA L., DI SARRA, A. & MONTELEONE, F., 2001. Atmospheric CO₂ record from flask measurements at Lampedusa Island, In ‘Trends: A Compendium of Data on Global Change’, Carbon Dioxide Informa-
COPIN-MONTEGUT, C., 1993. Alkalinity and carbon budgets in the Mediterranean. *Global Biogeochemical Cycles* 7, 915-925.

COPIN-MONTEGUT, C. & BEGOVIC, M., 2002. Distributions of carbonate properties and oxygen along the water column (0-2000 m) in the central part of the NW Mediterranean Sea (Dyfamed site): influence of winter vertical mixing on air-sea CO₂ and O₂ exchanges. *Deep-Sea Research II*, 49, 4355-4367.

DELGADO, O. & ESTRADA, M., 1994. CO₂ system in a Mediterranean frontal zone. *Scientia Marina* 58, 237-250.

DOE, 1994. Handbook of methods for the analysis of the various parameters of the carbon dioxide system in sea water, version 2, A.G. Dickson & C. Goyet (Eds.), ORNL/CDIAC-74. Available at: http://cdiac.esd.ornl.gov/oceans

DYRSSEN, D. & SILLEN, C.G., 1967. Alkalinity and total carbonate in sea-water; a plea for P. T. independent data. *Tellus*, 19, 113-121.

EDMOND, J.M., 1970. High precision determination of titration alkalinity and total CO₂ of sea-water by potentiometric titration. *Deep-Sea Research* 17, 737-750.

FRANKIGNOULLE, M., 1994. A complete set of buffer factors for acid/base CO₂ system in seawater. *Journal of Marine Systems* 5, 111-118.

FRANKIGNOULLE, M., ELSKENS, M., BIONDO, R., BOURGE, I., CANON, CH., DESGAIN, S. & DAUBY, P., 1996. Distribution of inorganic carbon dioxide and related parameters in surface seawater of the English Channel during spring 1994. *Journal of Marine Systems*, 7, 427-434.

FRANKIGNOULLE, M. & BORGES, A.V., 2001. European continental shelf as a significant sink for atmospheric carbon dioxide. *Global Biogeochemical Cycles*, 15(3), 569-576.

GAGO, J., GILCOTO, M., PEREZ, F.F. & RIOS, A.F., 2003. Short-term variability of fCO₂ in seawater and air-sea CO₂ fluxes in a coastal upwelling system (Ria de Vigo, NW Spain). *Marine Chemistry*, 80, 247-264.

GOTSIS-SKRETAS, O. & FRILIGOS, N., 1990. Contribution to Eutrophication and Phytoplankton Ecology in the Thermaikos Gulf, *Thalassographica*, Vol. 13/Suppl. 1: 1-12.

GOYET, K., BRADSHAW, A.L. & BREWER, P.G., 1991. The carbonate system in the Black Sea. *Deep-Sea Research*, 38, S1049-S1068.

HYDER, P., SIMPSON, J.H., CHRISTOPOULOS, S. & KRESTENITIS Y., 2002. The seasonal cycles of stratification and circulation in the Thermaikos Gulf Region Of Freshwater Influence (ROFI), north-west Aegean. *Continental Shelf Research*, 22, 2573-2597.

IANSON, D., ALLEN, S.E., HARRIS, S.L., ORIANS, K.J., VARELA, D.E. & WONG, C.S., 2003. The inorganic carbon system in the coastal upwelling region west of Vancouver Island, Canada. *Deep-Sea Research* 1, 50, 1023-1042.

KARAGEORGIS, A.P. & ANAGNOSTOU, CH., 2003. Seasonal variation in the distribution of suspended particulate matter in the northwest Aegean Sea. *Journal of Geophysical Research*, 108(C8), 3274, doi:10.1029/2002JC001672.

KARAGEORGIS, A.P, SKOURTOS, M.S., KAPSIMALIS, V., KONTOGIANNI, A.D., SKOULIKIDIS, N.TH., PAGOU, K., NIKOLAIDIS, N.P., DRAKOPoulos, P., ZANOU, B., KARAMANOS, H., LEVKOV, Z. & ANAGNOSTOU, CH., 2005. An Integrated Approach to
Watershed Management within the DP-SIR Framework: Axios River catchment and Thermaikos Gulf. *Regional Environmental Change*, 5, 138-160.

KONTOYIANNIS, H., KOURAFALOU V. H. & PAPADOPOULOS, V., 2003. Seasonal characteristics of the hydrology and circulation in the northwest Aegean Sea (eastern Mediterranean): Observations and modeling, *Journal of Geophysical Research*, 108(C9), 3302, doi:10.1029/2001JC001132.

KRASAKOPOULOU, E., SOUVERMEZOGLOU, E., MINAS, H.J. & SCOULLOS, M., 2005. Organic matter stoichiometry based on oxygen consumption-nutrients regeneration during a stagnation period in the Jabuka Pit (middle Adriatic Sea). *Continental Shelf Research*, 25, 127-142.

LEWIS, E. & WALLACE, D.W.R., 1998. Program developed for CO₂ system calculations. ORNL/CDIAC-105. Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, US. Dept. of Energy, Oak Ridge, TN.

LISS, P.S. & MERLIVAT, L., 1986. Air-sea gas exchange rates: Introduction and synthesis. In: Buat-Menard, P. (Ed.), The Role of Air-sea Exchange in Geochemical Cycling. Reidel Publishing, Dordrecht, pp. 113-127.

MARTY, D., BONIN, P., MICHOTHEY, V. & BIANCHI, M., 2001. Bacterial biogas production in coastal systems affected by freshwater inputs. *Continental Shelf Research*, 21, 2105-2115.

McGILLIS, W.R., EDSON, J.B., WARE, J.D., DACEY, J.W.H., HARE, J.E., FARRALL, C.W. & WANNINKHOF, R., 2001. Carbon dioxide flux techniques performed during GasEx-98, *Marine Chemistry*, 75, 267-280.

MEHRBACH, C., CULBERSON, C.H., HAWLEY, J.E. & PYTKOWICZ, R.M., 1973. Measurement of the apparent dissociation constants of carbonic acid in seawater at atmospheric pressure. *Limnology and Oceanography*, 18, 897-907.

MILLERO, F.J., MORSE, J. & CHEN, C.-T., 1979. The carbonate system in the western Mediterranean Sea. *Deep-Sea Research I*, 26, 1395-1404.

MILLERO, F.J., LEE, K. & ROCHE, M., 1998. Distribution of alkalinity in the surface waters of the major oceans. *Marine Chemistry*, 60, 111-130.

MILLERO, F.J., 1986. Solubility of oxygen in seawater. In: UNESCO Technical Papers in Marine Science, No 50, 13-16.

PAGOU, K., 2005. Eutrophication in Hellenic coastal areas, p.: 311-317 In: State of the Hellenic Marine Environment. E. Papathanassiou & A. Zenetos (Eds), Inst. Oceanography, HCMR publ., 360 p.

PAGOU, K., ASSIMAKOPOULOU, G., KRASAKOPOULOU, E. & PAVLIDOU, A., 2000. Nutrient input, fluxes and cycling in relation to the biological production in Mediterranean ecosystems influenced by river discharges: Thermaikos Gulf. Final Scientific Report of the EU-MAST-III ELOISE Project METROMED: ‘Dynamics of Matter Transfer and Biogeochemical Cycles: Their Modelling in Coastal systems of the Mediterranean Sea (CT 960049), Part A: Synthetic Part’, November 2000, pp. 50-81.

PERNETTA, J.C. & MILLIMAN, J.D., 1995. Land ocean interactions in the coastal zone: implementation plan. IGBP Report 33, 1-215.

POULOS, S.E., CHRONIS, G., COLLINS, M.B. & LYKOUSIS, V., 2000. Thermaikos Gulf coastal system, N.W. Aegean Sea: an overview of water/sediment fluxes in relation to air-land-ocean interactions and human activities. *Journal of Marine Systems*, 25, 47-76.

REDFIELD, A.C., KETCHUM, B.H. & RICHARDS, F.A., 1963. The influence of organisms on the composition of seawater. in: The sea, ideas and observations, vol. 2, A.R. Robinson (Ed.). Springer Verlag, Berlin, 3-15.

ROBLES, F. L. E., COLLINS, M. B. & FER-
ENTINOS, G., 1983. Water masses in Thermaikos Gulf, northwestern Aegean Sea. *Estuarine Coastal Shelf Science*, 16, 363-378.

SMETHIE, W.M., TAKAHASHI, T., CHIMP-MAN, D.W. & LEDWELL, J.R., 1985. Gas exchange and CO₂ flux in the tropical Atlantic Ocean determined from ²²²Rn and pCO₂ measurements. *Journal of Geophysical Research*, 90, 7005-7022.

SOUVERMEZOGLOU, E. & KRASAKOPOULOU, E., 1999. Sources and sinks of dissolved inorganic carbon (TCO₂) in the Northern and Middle Adriatic Sea. In: Hopkins, Artegiani, Cauwet, Degobbis, Malej (Eds) Ecosystems Research Report Series - The Adriatic Sea, EU/Environment, Brussels, 215-223.

TANS, P.P., FUNG, I.Y. & TAKAHASHI, T., 1990. Observational constraints on the global atmospheric CO₂ budget. *Science*, 247, 1431-1438.

TSUNOGAI, S., WATANABE, S. & SATO, T., 1999. Is there a “continental shelf pump” for the absorption of atmospheric CO₂? *Tellus*, 51B, 701-712.

WANG, S.-L., CHEN, C.-T.A., HONG, G.H. & CHUNG, C.-S., 2000. Carbon dioxide and related parameters in the East China Sea. *Continental Shelf Research*, 20, 525-544.

WANG, A.W., CAI, W.-J., WANG, Y. & JI, H., 2005. The southeastern continental shelf of the United States as an atmospheric CO₂ source and an exporter of inorganic carbon to the ocean. *Continental Shelf Research*, 25, 1917-1941.

WANNINKHOF, R., 1992. Relationship between wind speed and gas exchange over the ocean, *Journal of Geophysical Research*, 97 (C5), 7373-7382.

WANNINKHOF, R. & MCGILLIS, W.R., 1999. A cubic relationship between air-sea CO₂ exchange and wind speed, *Geophysical Research Letters*, 26, 1889-1892.

WEISS, R.F. & PRICE, B.A., 1980. Carbon dioxide solubility in water and seawater. *Marine Chemistry*, 8, 347-359.

WOOLF, D.K., 1997. Bubbles and their role in gas exchange. In: Liss, P.S., Duce, R.A. (Eds.), The sea surface and global change. Cambridge Press, Cambridge, pp. 173-206.

Accepted in March 2007
