Particle-into-Liquid Sampler
Instrument Handbook

TB Watson

March 2016
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Instrument Handbook

TB Watson, Brookhaven National Laboratory

March 2016

Work supported by the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Science, Office of Biological and Environmental Research
### Acronyms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAF</td>
<td>ARM Aerial Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARM</td>
<td>Atmospheric Radiation Measurement Climate Research Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDL</td>
<td>data descriptor indicating “Below Detection Limit”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-1</td>
<td>Gulfstream-1 aircraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC</td>
<td>ion chromatographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOP</td>
<td>intensive operational period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAOS</td>
<td>Mobile Aerosol Observing System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-ohm</td>
<td>mega-ohm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG</td>
<td>data descriptor indicating “No Good”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PILS</td>
<td>Particle-into-Liquid Sampler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOC</td>
<td>total organic carbon</td>
</tr>
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1.0 Instrument Title

Particle-into-Liquid Sampler

2.0 Mentor Contact Information

Thomas B. Watson
Brookhaven National Laboratory
Environmental and Climate Sciences Department
Building 815E
Upton, NY 11973
Phone: (631) 344-4517
Fax: (631) 344-2887
E-mail: twatson@bnl.gov

3.0 Vendor/Developer Contact Information

3.1 PILS Extraction Unit

Applikon Analytical B.V.
De Brauwweg 13, P.O. Box 149,
3100 AC Schiedam
The Netherlands
Phone: +31 10 298 35 55
Fax: +31 10 437 96 48
E-mail: analyzers@applikon.com

3.2 Ion Chromatographs

Metrohm
6555 Pelican Creek Circle
Riverview, FL 33578
Phone: (866) 638-7646
http://www.metrohmusa.com/en-us
3.3 Total Organic Carbon Analyzer

GE Power and Water Process Technologies
6060 Spine Road
Boulder, CO 80301
Main: (303) 444-2009
Main (toll-free): (800) 255-6964
Technical Support: (888) 245-2595
Main: (303) 444-9543
Sales: (303) 444-9543
Orders: (303) 527-1797
Service: (303) 444-6272
geai@ge.com

4.0 Instrument Description

The Particle-into-Liquid Sampler (PILS) is an aqueous-solution-based online technique for determining bulk chemical composition of ambient aerosol particles. As shown in Figure 1, the instrument consists of two units, briefly described below:

1. An aerosol extraction unit where particles are passed through a growth chamber saturated with water vapor, liquid droplets are grown, and the resulting liquid collected and transferred to the detection system.

2. The detection system that includes ion chromatographs (IC) or a total organic carbon detector (TOC).

Figure 1. PILS aerosol extraction unit.
Ion chromatography is performed using two Metrohm ICs—one for positive ions and one for negative ions—with conductivity detectors.

The TOC is detected using a GE TOC analyzer.

The instrument can be run in either the ion detection mode or the TOC mode.

5.0 Measurements Taken

5.1 Inorganic Ionic Species

The PILS measures the following particulate ionic inorganic species: \( \text{NH}_4^+ \), \( \text{Na}^+ \), \( \text{Li}^+ \), \( \text{Mg}^{2+} \), \( \text{K}^+ \), \( \text{Ca}^{2+} \), \( \text{SO}_4^{2-} \), \( \text{NO}_3^- \), \( \text{Cl}^- \), \( \text{Br}^- \), and \( \text{H}_2\text{PO}_4^- \).

5.2 Organic Ionic Species

The PILS measures the following particulate ionic organic species: \( \text{HCO}_2^- \), \( \text{CH}_3\text{CO}_2^- \), \( \text{CH}_3\text{SO}_3^- \), and \( \text{C}_2\text{O}_4^{2-} \).

The ions and their approximate retention times detected by the PILS using the Metrohm ICs are given in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ion</th>
<th>Retention Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Li</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{NH}_4^+ )</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mg</td>
<td>12.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ca</td>
<td>13.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cl</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Br</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{NO}_3^- )</td>
<td>9.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{PO}_4^- )</td>
<td>9.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \text{SO}_4^{2-} )</td>
<td>11.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxalate</td>
<td>13.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Total Organic Carbon

The PILS measures particulate TOC when used with the GE TOC detector.
6.0 Data Object Description

Data are presented in text files in the following formats:

Column 1: UTC Time yyyy/mm/dd hh:mm:ss

Column 2–24: Ion_flag Data descriptor indicating below detection limit (BDL) or no good (NG) or text concentration value in µg/m$^3$ with all calculated digits (not all significant)

Column 3–25: Ion_conc Concentration value in µg m$^3$ with all digits significant. Blanks where data are BDL or NG

The reported time is corrected for the sample delay time. Even columns are in text format and contain data flags and numerical data that are not rounded to reflect significant figures. Odd columns contain ion concentration data in µg/m$^3$ and are rounded to reflect significant figures. All concentrations are reported at ambient temperature and pressure.

Data are reported at 1-s intervals, but because there is only one data point taken by the PILS every 3 min in the aircraft and every 15 min for the ground-based instrument, the reported data are padded so the time between every data point is filled with the same value. An example of this is given in Figure 2, which shows the individual data points and the padded data.

![Figure 2](image.png)

**Figure 2.** Individual data points (red crosses) and the padded (black line) data for SO$_4$ data during Flight 3 on July 14, 2012.

6.1 Mass Calculation

The concentration data determined from the chromatograms are converted into mass concentration of the aerosol at ambient pressure and temperature using the following expression.
\[ [X]_m = [X]_{\text{liq}} \times F_{\text{liq}} \times M_w \div F_{\text{air}} \]

where:

\[ [X]_m \] = ion concentration in (µg/m³)
\[ [X]_{\text{liq}} \] = molar ion concentration
\[ F_{\text{liq}} \] = PILS carrier solution flow rate (L/min)
\[ M_w \] = molecular weight (µg/mole)
\[ F_{\text{air}} \] = flow rate of sample air through the PILS body (15 L/min at ambient conditions).

6.2 Data Ordering

Data ordering is addressed at [http://www.arm.gov/xdc](http://www.arm.gov/xdc).

7.0 Technical Specification

7.1 Ion Chromatographs

- Time resolution
  - 15 min in the ground-based configuration
  - 3 min in the aircraft-based configuration.
- Analysis time
  - 14.5 min
- Aerosol particle diameter size range
  - Approximately 70 nm to 2.5 µm

7.2 Total Organic Carbon

- Analysis time
  - 4 min
- Range
  - 0.03 ppb to 50 ppm

7.3 Units

µg/m³
7.4 Accuracy

7.4.1 Ion Chromatographs

The uncertainty associated with the mass measurements was estimated by combining the uncertainties in flow rates and IC calibrations. Uncertainties of both liquid and air flow rates are approximately 4%. Uncertainties in the IC calibration for sulfate, nitrate, and ammonium were determined by comparisons with measurements of independent traceable standards from the National Institute of Standards and Testing. Comparisons immediately following IC calibrations were within 3 to 5% and 5 to 10% after running for an extended period. The overall uncertainty of the measured ionic species is estimated to be approximately 10% (Orsini et al. 2003).

7.4.2 Total Organic Carbon Detector

The Seivers TOC detector has an accuracy of ±2%.

7.5 Limits of Detection

- Anions: ~0.05 µg/m³
- Cations: ~0.1 µg/m³
- TOC: ~0.5 µg/m³

8.0 Instrument System Functional Diagram

Figure 3. Schematic of the instrument configured to measure ions.
9.0 Instrument/Measurement Theory

Ambient air containing aerosol is drawn into the PILS growing chamber at approximately 15 L/min. There, the sample is mixed with a smaller, approximately 1.5 L/min, turbulent flow of 100°C steam. The steam is cooled by mixing with the sample flow to create a condition in which the chamber is supersaturated with water vapor. In the supersaturated conditions, aerosol particles are activated and grow into droplets approximately 1 µm and larger in diameter. The droplets are collected on a single-orifice impactor. The liquid sample collected on the impactor surface is removed using a small, constant flow of purified water that also contains an internal standard (Figure 4). This liquid sample is then analyzed using IC or TOC techniques to quantify the ionic species or TOC contained in aerosol particles. Because gas-phase compounds also are present in ambient air samples, gas-phase denuders are placed in the sample line upstream of the PILS aerosol extraction unit.

10.0 Operation of Instrument

Currently, two PILS systems are operating at ARM facilities. One is located at the in the Mobile Aerosol Observing System (MAOS) (Figure 5), and the other is used as needed on the Gulfstream-1 (G-1) aircraft in support of field programs of the ARM Aerial Facility (AAF).

11.0 Software

The ICs are controlled by proprietary software, Magicnet IC, developed by Metrohm. This software is used to control the operation of the chromatographs and in data processing.
12.0 Calibration

12.1 Ion Chromatography

Calibration of the ICs is performed using standard solutions made from serial dilution of primary standards. The primary standards are made gravimetrically. Stock solutions are prepared at 0.1 or 0.05 M (±1%) using 18 M-ohm purified H2O in plastic 100-mL volumetric flasks. The compounds used for calibrating the ICs are given in Table 2. Serial dilution is then used to produce intermediate and final calibration standards. Concentrations of the final standard are given in Table 3. Intermediate and final calibration standards must be prepared immediately prior to each calibration to ensure accurate concentrations. The chemical degradation of low concentration solutions can occur if they are not used immediately. An example of a calibration curve is given in Figure 6.
Figure 5. Schematic of MAOS C inlet system including the sample line supplying the PILS.
Table 2. Compounds used to calibrate the ICs, their molecular weights, and the masses used in preparation of the primary standards at 100 and 50 mM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chemical</th>
<th>M. W.</th>
<th>For 0.100 M, gm</th>
<th>For 0.05 M, gm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LiClO₄•3H₂O</td>
<td>160.4</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NaAct</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CaCl₂</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KBr</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH₄NO₃</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KH₂PO₄</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MgSO₄•7H₂O</td>
<td>246.5</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na₂C₂O₄</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Nominal concentrations of final ion standards and volume of intermediate standard used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Nominal Concentration, µM</th>
<th>Volume, µL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Calibration curve for NH₄ determined from averages of a total of 61 points at concentrations of 1, 2, 3, and 4 mM.

12.2 Total Organic Carbon

The total organic carbon detector is calibrated using certified reference materials containing potassium hydrogen phthalate and sodium carbonate. These standards are supplied by the instrument manufacturer.
12.3 Calibration Frequency

12.3.1 Ion Chromatographs

The ground-based ICs and TOC detector should be calibrated with a full range of standards at least once a week. The PILS operated on the aircraft should be calibrated at the end of every flight with at least one standard concentration.

12.3.2 Total Organic Carbon

The TOC should be calibrated before and after every intensive operational period (IOP) or once a month.

13.0 Inlet System

Ambient aerosol-laden air is brought to the instruments at 800 L/min through an 8-in. diameter external stack extending nominally 10 ft above the roof (Figure 7) of the enclosure. Inside the stack, sample air flows through a 2-in. diameter stainless-steel pipe in the center of this larger flow at 120 L/min. This flow is split inside the enclosure into four, 30-L/min sample lines, one of which supplies the PILS as well as other instruments. The proton transfer reaction mass spectrometer is connected to this line with a tee fitting. This line is insulated to prevent condensation in the line in the air-conditioned interior of the instrument enclosure.

Figure 7. AOS instrument enclosure with 10-m sampling stack.
14.0 Maintenance

14.1 Solutions

Solutions necessary for operation of the PILS in the ionic measurement mode are given in Table 4. These solutions must be prepared with ultra-pure deionized water with a conductivity of 18 M-ohm.

Table 4. Solutions needed to operate the ion chromatographs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Flow Rate mL/min</th>
<th>Preparationa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Purified H₂O</td>
<td>Steam H₂O supply and TOC background</td>
<td>Purified H₂O (18 M-ohm cm TOC &lt;50 ppb)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>18 M-ohm H₂O from EasyPure II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Carrier solution</td>
<td>For washing off aerosol sample from impactor</td>
<td>2 μM LiClO₄ (internal standards)</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Anion IC eluent</td>
<td>For anion column elution</td>
<td>1.0 mM NaHCO₃ 3.2 mM Na₂CO₃</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>One sachet of stock into 800 mL H₂O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cation IC eluent</td>
<td>For cation column elution</td>
<td>2.5 mM oxalate</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Anion IC suppressor solution 1</td>
<td>For suppressing anion IC background signal</td>
<td>100 mM H₂SO₄</td>
<td>0.06@ setting = 1</td>
<td>available from Metrohm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Anion IC suppressor solution 2</td>
<td>For suppressing anion IC background signal</td>
<td>Purified H₂O</td>
<td>0.06@ setting = 1</td>
<td>Purified H₂O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Calibration standards</td>
<td>For calibrating the ICs</td>
<td>0.5-3.0 μM</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prepared from 1 mM intermediate standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a All solutions prepared from purified H₂O (ASTM Type 1)

14.2 Peristaltic Pump Tubing

Peristaltic pump tubing should be replaced before every IOP, or after 1 month of semi-continuous operation.

14.3 Columns

Columns should be replaced before every IOP or when they show signs of degradation. Symptoms of degradation are the appearance of spurious peaks or inadequately separated peaks when running calibration standards.
14.4 Denuders

The Honeycomb denuders are applied to remove acid and base gas species, including SO$_2$, HNO$_3$, and NH$_3$, to eliminate positive concentration biases of these soluble species to aerosol SO$_4^{2-}$, NO$_3^-$, and NH$_4^+$. Two denuders are used in series to eliminate gas-phase compounds. The denuders are coated with:

- 1% (by weight) Na$_2$CO$_3$ in a solution of 1% glycerol in a 50% methanol/50% water mixture
- 2% citric acid in 1% glycerol in methanol.

15.0 Safety

Safety glasses, gloves, and lab coats should be used in the preparation of all operational and calibration solutions.

16.0 Citable References

