

Matthias Tomczak: a Distinguished Regional Oceanographer and Water-Mass Expert

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Professor Matthias Tomczak

Matthias Tomczak has devoted more than 40 years to his oceanographic career as a scientist and teacher since he first started a position as a research scientist with the naval oceanographic institution in Kiel during 1965. On October 29, 2006, he celebrated his 65th birthday which marks the beginning of his official retirement as a Professor of Oceanography from the School of Chemistry, Physics and Earth Sciences, Flinders University of South Australia. This special edition of *Progress in Oceanography* titled “A New View of Water Masses after WOCE” commemorates Matthias’ career as a distinguished regional oceanographer and well-known water-mass expert.

Matthias was born in Hamburg, the second largest and principal port city in Germany and second largest port in Europe. His childhood was influenced by the maritime culture of the city as well as by his father who himself was a physical oceanographer and who had worked for several organisations including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome. After graduation from high school, Matthias studied Physical Oceanography at the University of Kiel. He obtained his first degree (*Diplom Ozeanograph*) in 1965 and completed his postgraduate training (*Dr rer nat*) in 1968.

Matthias’ work extends much beyond his documented record as a distinguished Physical Oceanographer. In particular during the last few years of his career as a university teacher, he developed an interest in communicating the contribution the sciences make to society by developing a university course on “Science, Civilization and Society”. Matthias also found time to pursue his many other interests in societal activities and the following article “Matthias Tomczak” contributed by Jens Meincke and John Church will give a systematic portrayal of his European and Australian days as well as his career and scientific achievements.

Matthias’ scientific interest is broad. It includes studies on internal waves, coastal upwelling, tropical oceanography, water-mass analysis and the general large scale circulation of the ocean. He is best recognised by the oceanographic community as a water-mass expert, having in particular improved our understanding of Central Water formation and ventilation. He has published 4 co-authored books and monographs, more than 100 referred papers as well as more than 50 other publications. A full list of his works follows at the end of this preface.

Matthias is a cosmopolitan with extensive international contacts. He has worked in several countries and institutes. In the late 1980s, he was appointed as a guest professor by then the Shandong College of Oceanography, now known as the Ocean University of China. He received scientific visitors and postdoctoral researchers from all over the world which resulted in a significant number of international co-authored publications in various journals. He collaborates with scientists on topics other than physical oceanography including studies in the fields of chemistry, biology, environment and climate.

To many colleagues and students, Matthias is known as an excellent teacher with a great ability to clearly communicate the physical concepts that determine the dynamics of the

ocean. His book “Regional Oceanography: An Introduction”, which was written initially for teaching purpose only developed into an internationally recognised text book. He also contributed several journal articles that focus on the education of students in the ocean sciences from high school onwards. Matthias has also trained many postgraduate students that are working in many prestigious research organizations and universities around the world.

This edition of *Progress in Oceanography* commemorates the significant contribution made by Matthias to the oceanographic community in research and education. It includes seven papers ranging from studies on mode water (Suga et al. and Holbrook and Maharaj), Antarctic Bottom Water (Zenk) and the oxygen minimum zone (Karstensen et al.) to work on long time temperature trend analysis (Sprintall), hydrographic factors affecting sea level change (Morrow et al.) and seiches in a compound harbour (Luick and Himwood).

The paper by Zenk on “Temperature fluctuations and current shear in Antarctic Bottom Water at the Vema Channel” uses moored thermistors and current meters at the Vema Channel to monitor the thermal stratification and current shear of Antarctic Bottom Water (AABW) passing through the channel from Argentine Basin to Brazil Basin. The mooring was deployed at a depth of 4580 m on April 21, 1998 and recovered on March 8, 2000. He finds that the abyssal stratification to form the AABW benthic boundary layer has a frequency of 1-2 weeks. His calculation of the bulk Richardson number indicates evidence of 15% turbulent mixing at the interface between Weddell Sea Deep Water and Circumpolar Deep Water in the two year long observation.

Suga et al. provide insight into the “Ventilation of the North Pacific subtropical pycnocline and mode water formation”. They use isopycnally averaged hydrographic climatology combined with high resolution winter mixed layer climatology and various wind stress climatologies from ship reports, numerical weather prediction and satellite products to calculate the annual subduction rate of the North Pacific subtropical gyre. The resulting peaks correspond to Subtropical Mode Water (STMW), Central Mode Water (CMW) and Eastern Subtropical Mode Water (ESMW). They are able to calculate the renewal time of permanent pycnocline water, estimated as the volume of the water divided by the subduction rate, with 2-4 years for ESMW, 2 years for the lighter STMW, 5-9 years for the denser STMW, 10-20 years for the lighter CMW, 20-30 years for the middle CMW and 60 years or longer for the denser CMW.

Holbrook and Maharaj’s study entitled “Southwest Pacific Subtropical Mode Water: a climatology” deals with STMW in the South Pacific. The data base used for the analysis is the Digital Atlas of Southwest Pacific upper Ocean Temperatures (DASPOT) obtained using mechanical bathythermograph (MBT) and XBT casts between 1955 and 1988 for a depth of 450 m. With a temperature gradient criterion, they present the spatial distribution of STMW thickness across the entire southwest Pacific. By quantifying volume changes for all the seasons, they derive a maximum volume in October and a minimum in May. The interannual variation of thickness is observed to correlate with El Niño with a 20 m thicker layer.

Sprintall's paper on "Long-term trends and interannual variability of temperature in Drake Passage" employs high resolution XBT data from 1969 to 2004 in Drake Passage to examine interannual temperature variation and warming/cooling trends. She discovers statistically significant warming trends of $\sim 0.02 \text{ }^\circ\text{C yr}^{-1}$ north of the Polar Front (PF) which is largely depth independent between 100-700 m and cooling trends of $\sim 0.07 \text{ }^\circ\text{C yr}^{-1}$ at the surface and warming at depth south of the PF.

Karstensen et al. use cruise data, gridded observations and model data to study the oxygen minimum zones (OMZ) in the eastern tropical Atlantic and Pacific Ocean in a depth of 100-900 m and contribute a paper on the "Oxygen minimum zones in the eastern tropical Atlantic and Pacific Oceans" They find that the OMZ is associated with weak ventilation but is not obviously related with enhanced consumption. The relatively higher oxygen minimum values in the tropical Atlantic than the Pacific is due to the compensation of the import of water from the well ventilated South Atlantic.

Morrow et al.'s study, entitled "Observed subsurface signature of Southern Ocean sea level rise", utilises 13 years of repeat hydrographic data from WOCE-SR3 sections, the SURVOSTRAL XBT and surface salinity data. The study focuses upon the strong increase in sea level in various parts of the Southern Ocean that is shown in satellite altimetry data over the 1990s. The causes are found in changes of the vertical temperature and salinity structure which in turn are associated with changes in precipitation, wind stress and an upward trend of the Southern Annular Mode.

Luick and Hinwood apply water level data and a numerical model to study seiche modes in a compound harbour. They report their findings in a paper on "Water levels in a dual basin harbour in response to infragravity and edge waves". They discover that a variety of harbour oscillations are present with periods up to 67 minutes. Periods longer than 25 minutes exceed resonant modes of the harbour. The characteristics and causes for open basin modes are addressed. Their work has practical implications to port design.

Matthias Tomczak publications

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