



Maria S. Merian Cruise 1 leg 3

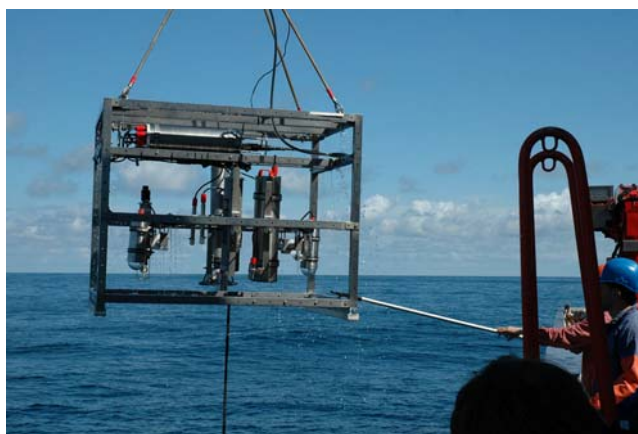
First weekly report: 12. - 18. 04. 2006

MARIA S. MERIAN cast off at Bollhörn Kai in Kiel at 10:12h on 12. 04. starting the third leg of expedition No. 1. On board were a party of 23 scientists and a group of distinguished guests and journalists. The visitor group left the ship after entering the Kiel Kanal locks at Holtenau and was replaced by a second visitor group which joined us for the 99km passage through the Kiel Kanal. The passage through the canal took 9 hours to reach the locks at Brunsbüttel where the second visitor group was disembarked. We continued our journey down the Elbe estuary into the North Sea. During the night we passed through the German Bight and continued our journey along the Dutch and Belgian coast during Thursday.

We passed the Channel during the next night and steamed along the English south shore under moderate weather conditions. In the afternoon we changed our course to approach Brest to take over two technicians from IXSEA for the still outstanding calibration of the Posidonia USBL system.

We progressed towards Brest during Friday night and reached Brest roadstead at mid day for the rendezvous with the pilot boat. We then proceeded towards Brest Harbour where we took over the technicians from a pilot boat. Maria S. Merian left immediately and headed for Cape Finistere. In the late evening we started to calibrate the Posidonia system at the continental slope (ca. 1600m depth). Unfortunately the system was not working when attached to the deck unit. Since the reason for the malfunction could not be located we decided to dismantle the whole Posidonia system for an inspection at IXSEA in France. We agreed to disembark the technician and the Posidonia parts in Vigo on Monday morning.

During Sunday we crossed the Bay of Biscay. At 12:30h we stopped the ship to test the LWL-cable in combination with the OFOS System at a sounding depth of 4830m. We paid out 4900m of LWL cable to get a sea floor view and towed the OFOS system with a speed of 1kt 1,5m above the sea bed for about 10min. The colour TV-transmission was very good and all systems triggered by the telemetry unit functioned well. The spooling of the deep sea winch went smoothly. Afterwards we continued our progress to Vigo.



Test deployment of the Ocean Floor Observation System (OFOS) on the LWL cable at 4830m depth in the Bay of Biscay.

We reached the anchorage outside Vigo on Monday morning where we dropped anchor. After a boat took ashore the IXSEA technicians and the Posidonia equipment we continued our journey along the Lusitanian coast towards the Gulf of Cadiz.

We reached our first station the Bonjardim Mud Volcano in the western Gulf of Cadiz on Tuesday afternoon (18. 04.) at 17:30 h, where we started station work with a CTD/Rosette water sampler cast at 3100m depth. During the night we mapped the Bonjardim MV area with the multi beam and run several OFOS transect across the mud volcano.

An Bord sind alle wohlauf.

Es grüssen.

O. Pfannkuche und alle Fahrtteilnehmer