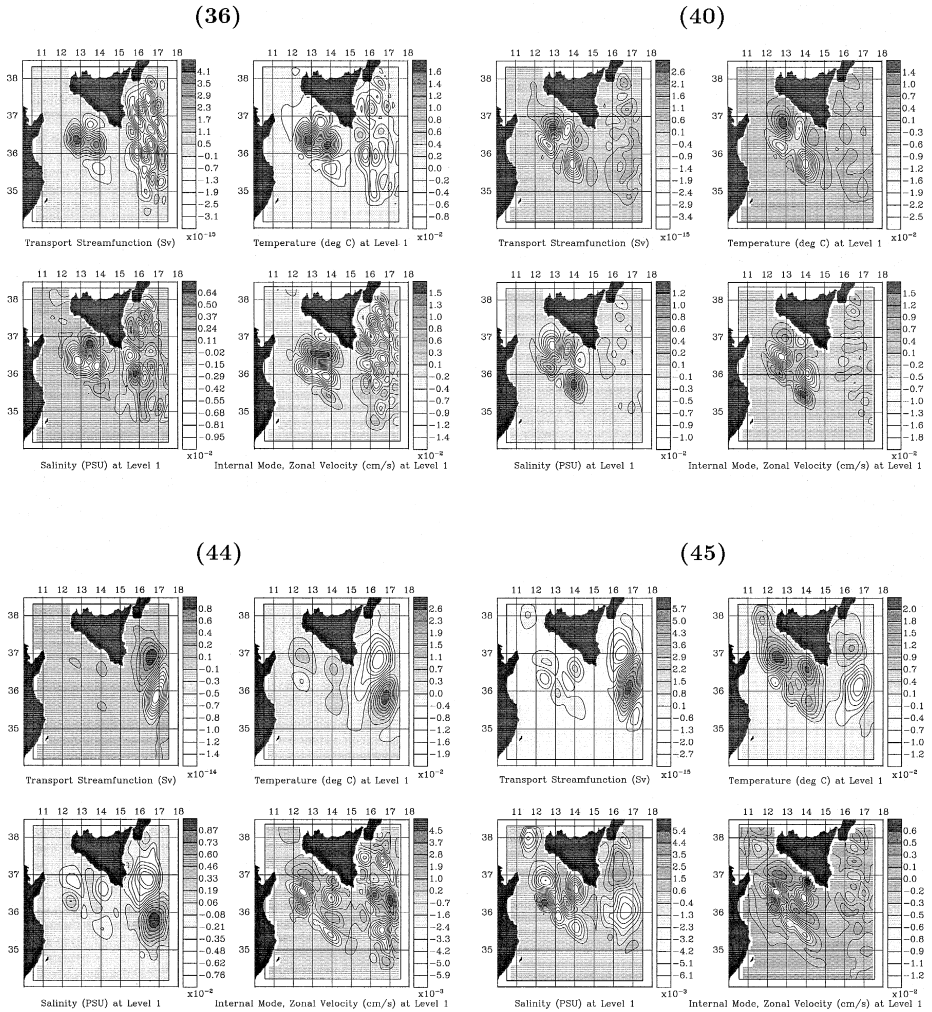

Fig. 11. As for Fig. 9, but for the surface values of eigenvectors (36, 40, 44, 45). The variables shown are indicated by the bottom titles. These four vectors account for eventual couplings between Ionian slope processes and phenomena of the Pantelleria and Malta Islands basin.

variability along the slope, and for salinity within 200 to 500 m, depths of the MLIW variability along the slope. The tracer perturbations are mainly limited to these depths. For both vectors, T and S in the surface layer have opposite horizontal phases, with similar normalized amplitudes, hence adding effects on the density anomaly. The internal velocity signature is close to thermal-wind balance. It is mainly limited to the surface 500 m, with a small amplitude first-baroclinic mode structure below. At depths, the barotropic transport anomaly is the dominant field. This indicates that barotropic current data should be most useful in this region. The PE vectors 3 to 30 contain patterns similar to those of vectors 1–2, but different phases, scales and three-dimensional