

**Ain Shams University
Faculty of Science
Geology Department**



**PETROGRAPHIC EVALUATION AND PHYSICO-
MECHANICAL PROPOERTIES OF CONCRETE
MADE WITH DIFFERENT KINDS OF NATURAL
AGGREGATES**

Thesis submitted to award Ph.D in Science (Geology)

**By
Mohamed Ezzat Taha
*M.Sc. in Geology (2011)***

To

**Geology Department
Faculty of Science
Ain Shams University
Cairo - A R E**

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ABSTRACT

Concrete is a rapidly continuously changing system, starting from its mixing to its placement. The strength, durability, and dimensional stability of concrete have been recognized as the three fundamental parameters for a good concrete. This research aims to shed highlight on the role of petrographic evaluation of aggregates and experimental concretes subjected to the influence of induced physical (heat) and chemical (alkali attack) deteriorations, with the aid of basic scientific methods in diagnosing concrete problems, in a trial to solve possible associated durability issues.

This research involves assessment of Wadi Abu-Saiyala dolomite, Widan El-Faras basalts, and Homra El-Girigab granite aggregates to test their suitability in concrete industry. Further, for this purpose casting three experimental concretes with arbitrary mix design 1: 2 : 4 (cement: fine aggregate: coarse aggregate, w/c 0.55), and further water curing and subjecting to the influence of elevated temperatures (300°, 600°, and 800°C) with duration of two hours, and alkali attack (1.25% Na₂O equivalent of cement) on concrete prisms for a whole year were carried out. These water cured and influenced concretes are evaluated for their performance; visually, mineralogically, physically, chemically, mechanically, and petrographically using transmitted (thin sections) and reflected microscopes (fluorescent slabs), with detailed micro structural investigations conducted on polished concrete sections using SEM (BSE).

The assessment of different kinds of aggregates; physically, chemically and mechanically revealed that all the used aggregates are considered suitable for concrete purposes. The petrographical investigation performed according to ASTM C295 (2013), disclosed that the examined dolomite is distinguished in two lithofacies; dolosparstone and dolomicrosparstone, the examined basalts show occasional altered grains, and the examined red granites partially contain seritized potash feldspars.

The results of physico-mechanical investigations on water cured concretes; disclosed that they are categorized as normal weight concrete, and that the concretes casted with dolomite and granite aggregates is comparatively performed good, while the concrete casted with basalt aggregates is comparatively performed badly. The petrographic evaluation of concretes cured in water for 28 days and 12 months examined under transmitted and reflected light, indicated that the chemical interaction which is shown in dolomite aggregates, while the mechanical interaction is shown in basalts and granite aggregates is

largely responsible for the concrete performance. Further, the petrographical evaluations and SEM investigations revealed probable signs of deterioration, occurring in concrete casted with basalt aggregates, owing to swelling of clay minerals encountered in basaltic matrix.

The alkali attacked concretes, were evaluated petrographically and investigated using SEM, for possible occurrence of alkali aggregate reactions (AAR) confirming to ASTM C1293 (2008) and ASTM C856 (2013), revealed that some dolomite grains showed alkali carbonate reaction (ACR), resulting from dedolomitization occurring along peripheries of dolomite grains. Whereas some reactive basalts and granite grains showed expansive alkali silica reaction (ASR), resulting from partial dissolution of their mineral components, and deposition of the reaction products (alkali silica gel) in cracks and voids.

The heated concretes evaluated physically, mechanically, petrographically, and micro structurally, using SEM (BSE), revealed that the mineralogic composition, chemical transformations (dehydration of cement paste, decarboxylation of portlandite, dehydroxylation of clay minerals, and decarbonation of dolomite), textural properties (intercrystalline cracks and cleavage planes), thermal incompatibility, thermal conductivity, and thermal expansion occurring in cement paste and aggregates, are the key factors controlling the performance of concrete subjected to elevated temperatures.

In order to obtain a good performing and durable concrete, which can withstand physical and chemical deteriorations, appropriate aggregate should be used; avoiding alterations, mineral disorders, textural defects, and large thermal incompatibility, between the used aggregates and cement paste in concrete.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Aim of the present study	8
1.3 Location of aggregate quarries.....	10
1.4 Methodology.....	11
1.4.1 Aggregates.....	13
1.4.1.1 Physical tests	14
1.4.1.2. Chemical tests	17
1.4.1.3 Mechanical test.....	21
1.4.1.4 Mineralogical examination	21
1.4.1.5 Petrographic investigation.....	22
1.4.2 Concrete.....	23
1.4.2.1 Mix design, casting, and curing.....	24
1.4.2.2 Heated and chemically attacked concrete...	26
1.4.2.3 Mineralogical examinations.....	26
1.4.2.4 Physico-mechanical tests.....	26
1.4.2.5 Petrographic investigations.....	29
1.4.2.6 Chemical tests.....	33
1.4.2.7 SEM investigations.....	34
1.5 Geological background	35
1.5.1 Dolomite aggregates quarry.....	35
1.5.2 Widan El-Faras basalt aggregates quarry.....	37
1.5.3 Homra El-Girigab red granite quarry.....	43
2. Assessment of aggregates and concrete.....	49
2.1 Introduction.....	49
2.2 Coarse aggregates.....	49
2.2.1 Physical properties investigations	49
2.2.2 Chemical properties investigations	51
2.2.3 Mechanical property investigations.....	56
2.2.4 Mineralogical investigations	59
2.2.5 Petrographic evaluation.....	61
2.2.5.1 Dolomite aggregates.....	61
2.2.5.2 Basalt aggregates.....	63

2.2.5.3	Granite aggregates.....	64
2.3	Fine aggregates.....	67
2.4	Cement.....	68
2.5	Concrete.....	69
2.5.1	Mix design and curing regime.....	70
2.5.2	Physico-mechanical investigations.....	72
2.5.3	Petrographic evaluation of concrete.....	74
2.5.4	Cement paste/aggregate interface.....	79
2.5.5	SEM investigations.....	80
3.	Petrographic evaluation of alkali aggregate reactions in concrete.....	85
3.1	Introduction.....	85
3.2	Dolomite concrete.....	88
3.2.1	Petrographic evaluation.....	88
3.2.2	SEM investigations.....	89
3.3	Basalt concrete.....	91
3.3.1	Petrographic evaluation.....	91
3.3.2	SEM investigations.....	95
3.4	Granite concrete.....	96
3.4.1	Petrographic evaluation.....	96
3.4.2	SEM investigations.....	99
4.	Petrographic evaluation of heated concrete.....	103
4.1	Introduction.....	103
4.2	Heated basalt concrete.....	103
4.2.1	Macroscopic investigations.....	103
4.2.2	Mineralogical investigations.....	105
4.2.3	Physico-mechanical investigations.....	106
4.2.4	Petrographic evaluation.....	109
4.2.4.1	Stereomicroscope investigations	109
4.2.4.2	Ordinary polarized microscope investigations.....	113
4.2.5	SEM investigations.....	115
4.3	Heated dolomite concrete.....	117
4.3.1	Macroscopic investigations.....	117

4.3.2	Mineralogical investigations.....	120
4.3.3	Physico-mechanical investigations.....	121
4.3.4	Petrographic evaluation.. ..	123
4.3.4.1	Stereomicroscope investigations.....	123
4.3.4.2	Ordinary polarized microscope investigations.....	127
4.3.5	SEM investigations.....	127
4.4	Heated granite concrete.....	130
4.4.1	Macroscopic investigations.....	130
4.4.2	Mineralogical investigations.....	133
4.4.3	Physico-mechanical investigations.....	133
4.4.4	Petrographic evaluation.....	136
4.4.4.1	Stereomicroscope investigations	136
4.4.4.2	Ordinary polarized microscope investigations.....	138
4.4.5	SEM investigations.....	140
5.	Image analysis.....	144
5.1	Introduction.....	144
5.2	Image acquisition.....	145
5.3	Image processing.....	145
6.	Summery and Conclusion	152
	References.....	161
	Arabic summary	

FIGURES

Figure (1)	Satellite Google image (2015) showing location map of aggregates quarries.....	12
Figure (2)	Procedures for casting concrete prism according to ASTM C1293 (2008).....	20
Figure (3)	Flowchart presentation of procedures of concrete mixing, curing, induced deterioration, and examination.....	28
Figure (4)	A specimen cutting out of half of 100 mm cube.....	32
Figure (5)	Geological map of Gabal Ataqa (modified after El-Akkad and Abdallah ,1971).....	39
Figure (6)	Stratigraphic sequence of Wadi Abu-Saiyala, Suez (after Wanas, 2001).....	40
Figure (7)	Geological map of El-Fayum depression (after Kushy et al., 2011).....	44
Figure (8)	Stratigraphic sequence of El-Fayum area modified (after Naim et al., 1993).....	45
Figure (9)	Geological map of Gabal Homra El-Girigab (modified after Egyptian general petroleum corporation, 1: 500, 000).....	48
Figure (10)	Grading curves of concrete coarse aggregates	52
Figure (11)	Alkali expansions of concrete prisms (ASTM C1293, 2008).....	57
Figure (12)	XRD pattern of Wadi Abu-Saiyala dolomite aggregates.....	60
Figure (13)	XRD pattern of Widan El-Faras basalt aggregates.....	60
Figure (14)	XRD pattern of Homra El-Girigab granite aggregates	61
Figure (15)	Photomicrographs of thin sections of dolomite aggregate, XPL.....	62

Figure (16)	Photomicrographs of thin sections of basalt aggregate, XPL.....	64
Figure (17)	Photomicrographs of thin sections of granite aggregates, XPL.....	66
Figure (18)	Photographs of concrete polished slabs showing basic macro structure of Portland cement concretes	71
Figure (19)	Compressive strength of water cured concretes.....	74
Figure (20)	Photomicrographs of thin sections showing one month verses one year water cured concretes, XPL.....	76
Figure (21)	Fluorescent photomicrographs of polished sections of basalt concrete.....	77
Figure (22)	Photomicrographs of polished sections of one year deteriorated basalt concrete.....	78
Figure (23)	Photomicrographs of thin sections showing mineralization in one month granite concrete air void, XPL.....	79
Figure (24)	Photomicrographs of polished sections showing the cement paste/aggregate concrete interfaces	81
Figure (25)	SEM-BSE micrographs showing micro structure of one year water cured concretes.....	84
Figure (26)	Photomicrographs of polished sections of dolomite concrete with ACR.....	90
Figure (27)	Photomicrographs of thin sections of dolomite concrete showing dedolomitization and carbonate halo formation along dolomite grain periphery, XPL.....	90
Figure (28)	SEM-BSE micrographs and EDX spectra of reacted dolomite aggregate in dolomite concrete.....	92

Figure (29)	Photomicrographs of polished sections of basalt concrete with reactive basalt grains.....	94
Figure (30)	Photomicrograph of thin section of basalt concrete showing a partially filled air void with alkali silica, XPL.....	95
Figure (31)	SEM-BSE micrographs and EDX spectra of reactive basalt grain in basalt concrete.	97
Figure (32)	Photomicrographs of polished sections of granite concrete with ASR.....	100
Figure (33)	Photomicrograph of a thin section of granite concrete showing an air void filled with alkali silica gel, XPL.....	101
Figure (34)	SEM-BSE micrographs and EDX spectra of granite in concrete.....	102
Figure (35)	Photographs showing the change in colouration and surface texture of the surface of heated basalt concrete cube specimens.....	105
Figure (36)	XRD patterns of heated basalt concrete...	106
Figure (37)	Weight loss in heated basalt concrete cube specimens.....	108
Figure (38)	Residual compressive strength of heated basalt concrete	108
Figure (39)	Photomicrographs of polished sections of heated basalt concrete showing change in cement paste and minerals colouration and fluorescence degree, and increasing of micro crack density with increasing temperature.....	112
Figure (40)	Photomicrographs of a thin sections heated basalt concrete showing discolouration and development of micro crack in minerals and cement paste with increasing temperature, XPL.....	114

Figure (41)	SEM-BSE micrographs showing change in micro structure and grey levels of the components of heated basalt concrete with increasing temperature	118
Figure (42)	Photographs showing the change in colouration and surface texture of the surface of heated basalt concrete cube specimens.....	120
Figure (43)	XRD patterns of heated dolomite concrete.....	121
Figure (44)	Weight loss in heated dolomite concrete cube specimens.....	122
Figure (45)	Residual compressive strength of heated dolomite concrete	122
Figure (46)	Photomicrographs of polished sections of heated dolomite concrete showing change in cement paste and minerals colouration and fluorescence degree, and increasing in micro crack density with increasing temperature.....	126
Figure (47)	Photomicrographs of a thin section of heated dolomite concrete showing discolouration of minerals and cement paste with increasing temperature, XPL..	128
Figure (48)	SEM-BSE micrographs showing change in micro structure and grey levels of the components of heated dolomite concrete with increasing temperature.....	131
Figure (49)	Photographs showing the change in colouration and surface texture of the surface of heated granite concrete cubespecimens....	132
Figure (50)	XRD patterns of heated granite concrete	133
Figure (51)	Weight loss in heated granite concrete cube specimens	134

Figure (52)	Residual compressive strength of heated granite concrete.....	136
Figure (53)	Photomicrographs of polished sections of heated granite concrete showing change in cement paste and minerals colouration and fluorescence degree, and increasing in micro crack density with increasing temperature.....	139
Figure (54)	Photomicrographs of a thin sections of heated granite concrete showing discolouration and development of micro cracks in minerals and cement paste with increasing temperature, XPL	141
Figure (55)	SEM-BSE micrographs showing change in micro structures and grey levels of the components of heated granite concrete with increasing temperature.....	143
Figure (56)	Histogram of heated basalt concrete image.....	147
Figure (57)	Image analysis of BSE image of basalt concrete heated to 300°C.....	149
Figure (58)	Image analysis of BSE image of basalt concrete heated to 600°C.....	150
Figure (59)	Image analysis of BSE image of basalt concrete heated to 800°C.....	151

TABLES

Table (1)	Advantages of petrographic examination of concrete.....	6
Table (2)	Thermal conductivity of used materials (after Japan Concrete Institute, 1982).....	8
Table (3)	Physical properties of examined concrete coarse aggregates.....	50
Table (4)	Mechanical and chemical properties of examined concrete coarse aggregates.....	58
Table (5)	Physical and chemical properties of examined concrete fine aggregates.....	68
Table (6)	Physical and mechanical properties of OPC.....	68
Table (7)	Chemical analysis of OPC.....	69
Table (8)	Concrete mix proportions.....	72