

ΤΑ ΝΕΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΕΕΕΘ

**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΟΝΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑ ΕΔΑΦΟΜΗΧΑΝΙΚΗΣ
ΚΑΙ ΘΕΜΕΛΙΩΣΕΩΝ**

Επί του «παιστηρίου»:

Ενεκρίθη από το Πρωτοδικείο Αθηνών η τροποποίηση του κατασταστικού της ΕΕ-ΕΕΘ, η οποία αφορά στο όνομα, που πλέον γίνεται «ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΟΝΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑ ΕΔΑΦΟΜΗΧΑΝΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΓΕΩΤΕΧΝΙΚΗΣ ΜΗΧΑΝΙΚΗΣ» και στον τρόπο διεξαγωγής των αρχαιρεσιών για την ανάδειξη των μελών της Εκτελεστικής και της Εξελεγκτικής Επιτροπής (δυνατότητα ταχυδρομικής αποστολής ψηφοδελτίου).

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Ανασκόπηση Γεγονότων Γεωτεχνικού Ενδιαφέροντος

Ημερίδα «Εφαρμογές Γεωσυνθετικών Υλικών»

Στα πλαίσια των δραστηριοτήτων της Ειδικής Επιστημονικής Εδαφομηχανικής και Θεμελιώσεων του ΤΕΕ, συνδιοργανώθηκε από το ΤΕΕ και την Ελληνική Εταιρεία Γεωσυνθετικών Υλικών (HGS) ημερίδα

Διακρίσεις

Ανάληψη Προεδρείας και Γραμματείας Κανονιστικής Τεχνικής Επιτροπής CEN / TC 341

Στα πλαίσια της συμμετοχής του στην Ευρωπαϊκή Κανονιστική διαδικασία, ο ΕΛΟΤ ανέλαβε τον Οκτώβριο του 2006 από τη CEN τη Γραμματεία της Κανονιστικής Τεχνικής Επιτροπής CEN/TC 341 «Διερεύνηση του Υπεδάφους: Εργαστηριακές και Επιτόπου Δοκιμές». Ως Γραμματέας της ανωτέρω Επιτροπής ορίστηκε ο συνάδελφος και μέλος της ΕΕΕΕΘ Πρόδρομος Ψαρρόπουλος, Δρ. Πολιτικός Μηχανικός ΕΜΠ. Την Γραμματεία της TC 341 κατείχε την τελευταία εξαετία ο Γερμανικός Οργανισμός DIN, με Γραμματέα τον κ. R. Cors και Πρόεδρο τον Καθηγητή κ. R. Katzenbach. Η ανωτέρω επιτροπή, καθώς και η Επιτροπή CEN/TC 288: «Ειδικά Γεωτεχνικά Έργα», είναι ουσιαστικά συμπληρωματικές Επιτροπές του Ευρωκώδικα 7: Γεωτεχνικός Σχεδιασμός.

Στα μέσα Ιανουαρίου 2007 πραγματοποιήθηκε στην Αθήνα, με την διοργάνωση του ΕΛΟΤ, συνεδρίαση της TC 341, στην οποία παρέστησαν 15 εκπρόσωποι των χωρών-μελών της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Κατά τη συνάντηση αυτή έγινε και εκλογή για ανάδειξη νέου Προέδρου της TC 341, για την τριετία 2007 – 2010. Ο εκπρόσωπος του ΕΛΟΤ στην υπ' όψη Επιτροπή συνάδελφος Ανδρέας Αναγνωστόπουλος, Ομότιμος Καθηγητής ΕΜΠ και Γενικός Γραμματέας της ΕΕΕΕΘ, εξελέγη παμψηφεί ως Πρόεδρος.



Ενημερωτικά - Επιστημονικά Άρθρα

Bimrocks – Part 1: Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

Bimrocks (block-in-matrix rocks) include weathered rocks, fault rocks, and melanges. Bimrocks can be found in many geologic regions of the world, including Northern Greece and many Greek Isles. Despite different formative processes, these globally common soil/rock mixtures have a similar fabric of relatively hard blocks of rock surrounded by weaker matrix rocks. Characterization, design and construction with in bimrocks is challenging because of their considerable spatial, lithological and mechanical variability, and geotechnical engineers and engineering geologists often mischaracterize them.

Two articles are presented in this Bulletin to increase awareness by geotechnical engineers. Recognition of bimrocks and implementation of the available procedures for their characterization may result in significant reduction in the expensive surprises that often occur in slope and landslide analyses, and in the design and construction of foundations, earthwork, deep excavations and tunnels. This first article presents some fundamental attributes of bimrocks. In the next Bulletin, the

second article will present case history experiences and some guidelines to characterization.

The information presented in the articles is abstracted from comprehensive resources freely provided at <http://bimrocks.geoengineer/resources.html>.

TYPES OF BIMROCKS

The term "block-in-matrix rocks" was originally coined by Raymond (1984) for melanges and olistostromes, geological words which have firm and important connotations for geologists but are generally meaningless to engineers. To focus on the fundamental engineering problems related to the characterization of these and many other "rock/soil" mixtures, Medley (1994) coined the neutral word "bimrocks", which has no geological connotations. Bimrocks are defined as "a mixture of rocks, composed of geotechnically significant blocks within a bonded matrix of finer texture." The expression "geotechnically significant blocks" means that there is mechanical contrast between blocks and matrix, and the volume and size of the blocks influence the rock mass properties at the scales of engineering interest.

Bimrocks are widespread and include weathered rocks, which are mixtures of decomposed soil surrounding fresher corestones (Figure 1). Fault rocks (Figure 2) exist at many scales, with blocks ranging between several tens to hundreds of meters in size to millimeter-sized fragments within gouge (Riedmüller et al, 2001, 2004). Melanges (French: *mélange* or "mixture") are heterogeneous, complex geological mixtures containing competent blocks of varied lithologies, embedded in sheared matrices of weaker rock (Figure 3). Melanges and olistostromes are found in over 60 countries and are associated with mountainous areas in ancient and modern tectonic subduction zones (including Greece, Crete, Italy and Turkey: Medley, 1994). Although the geological literature contains thousands of references on melanges, there are few treatments related to geoengineering (Medley, 1994).



Figure 1: Decomposed granite: a weathered rock located in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California. Hard blocks (corestones) surrounded by "gruss", granite completely decomposed to dense sandy soil. (Photo: E. Medley).



Figure 2: Wall of a quarry located within major fault zone, California. Sheared rock surrounds hard blocks of relatively intact rock. Blocks range between centimeters to tens of meters in size. (Photo: E. Medley/Geosyntec Consultants).



Figure 3: Franciscan Complex melange, northern California. Blocks buttress base of slope between landslides in sheared shale matrix. (Photo: E. Medley/Exponent, Inc.).

Geoengineers often neglect the contributions of blocks to overall bimrock strength, choosing instead to design on the basis of the strength of the weak matrix. However, this practice may be too conservative for many bimrocks and often results in ignoring the presence of blocks altogether, to the detriment of accurate characterizations. As block proportions increase, stiffness increases and deformation decreases depending on the relative orientation of blocks to applied stresses (Lindquist, 1994; Lindquist and Goodman, 1994). Stress distributions in bimrocks depend on the lithologies; size distributions; orientations and shapes of blocks; and the orientations of matrix shears, all of which influence slope stability (Medley and Sanz, 2004) and underground excavations (Button et al, 2003; Moritz et al, 2004; Riedmueller and Schubert, 2002).

SOME ENGINEERING CHARACTERISTICS OF MELANGES

The melanges of the Franciscan Complex (the Franciscan) of northern California are similar to melanges in appearance, properties and the problems they present globally to geengineers. Melanges are the most difficult of bimrocks to characterize, hence lessons learned from studies of Franciscan melanges can be applied to the characterization of other, more tractable bimrocks. The matrix of Franciscan melanges is composed of shale, argillite, siltstone, serpentinite or sandstone, some-

times pervasively sheared to the consistency of soil. Landslides are common in block-poor Franciscan melanges (Medley and Sanz, 2004) but large blocks appear to add buttress support (Figure 3).

Medley (1994) estimated that the greatest proportion of blocks in Franciscan melanges were greywacke sandstone, with lesser proportions of volcanic, chert, serpentinite, limestone and exotic metamorphic blocks. Large blocks in melanges and fault rocks tend to be ellipsoidal to irregular in shape. Blocks are relatively erosion-resistant and often protrude above the ground surface in melange landscapes, a characteristic of melanges also evident in Greece (Figure 4).

The weakest elements in bimrocks are the contacts between blocks and matrix (Figure 5). Only modest mechanical contrast between competent blocks and weaker matrix is required to force failure surfaces to negotiate tortuously around blocks (Medley, 1994; Sönmez et al, 2004, 2006a, 2006b). Matrix shears generally pass around blocks via the block/matrix contacts (Figure 6) with the most intense shearing often present adjacent to the largest blocks. Blocks within the shears are often entrained within, and oriented sub-parallel, to shears. Since shears have a tortuous path through the rocks mass, the overall orientation of entrained blocks can also abruptly change from place to place within the rockmass.



Figure 4; Blocks in melange protrude from hillside along proposed right-of-way, Egnatia Highway, Greece. (Photo: late Professor Gunter Riedmueller/GGG, Austria)



Figure 5: Weakest element in a bimrock is generally the block/matrix contact. Gwna Melange, Anglesey, Wales. (Photo: E. Medley).

PROBLEMS WITH MAPPING AND DRILLING OF BIMROCKS

A very common error is to map outcrops in melanges, fault rocks and other bimrocks as part of continuous strata, although that mistake is less likely to be made by a knowledgeable geologist (Wakabayashi and Medley, 2004). When mapped, the largest dimension of exposed blocks can be recorded. When drilled, the block dimensions are indicated by chords, the lengths of the intersection between blocks and the drilled core. However, the observed dimensions of blocks generally underestimate their "sizes" (Figure 6). Accordingly, the word "size" or "diameter" should not be used when describing the dimensions of blocks, unless those are known.

Having a mental picture like Figure 6 is essential when characterizing bimrocks. Despite the apparent interlayered appearance of drill core recovered from bimrocks, it is preferable not to log borings in bimrocks with expressions such as "interbedded shales and sandstones" since this term implies stratal continuity (Figure 6). Boring logs in bimrocks provide suspect basis for drawing continuous stratigraphic contacts between borings, such as shown in Figure 7 (Wakabayashi and Medley, 2004).

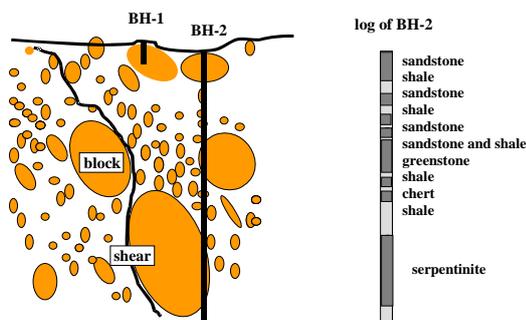


Figure 6: Block/core intersections (chords) do not generally indicate true block sizes. Sandstone/shale sequence in core is not "interbedded shale and sandstone"!! Improbable juxtaposition of rocks (e.g.: greenstone and shale) strongly suggest melange. Note that shears in the matrix negotiate tortuously around blocks.

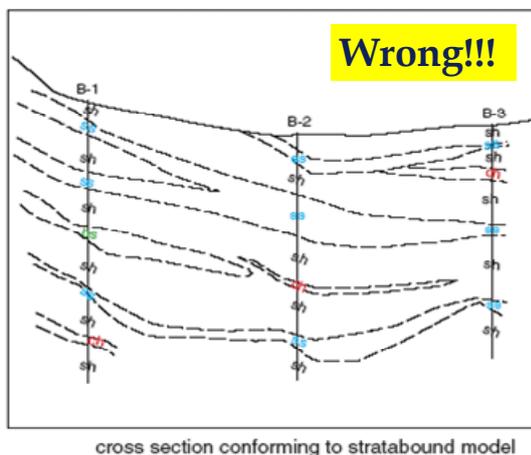


Figure 7: Bimrocks generally cannot be accurately characterized on cross-sections (Wakabayashi and Medley, 2004). Borehole contacts should be shown

with question marks and not connected between borings.

WHAT IS BLOCK AND WHAT IS MATRIX?

It is important to recognize that block sizes in Franciscan melanges (which are typical of melanges world-wide) can exceed seven orders of magnitude, ranging between millimeters and tens of kilometers (Medley, 1994; Medley and Lindquist, 1995). Figure 8 and its insert are photographs taken at different scales of the same outcrop of Franciscan melange. Small blocks at one scale of interest (detail photo in Figure 8) are part of the matrix at the larger scale photo of Figure 8. Blocks at one scale that are assigned to matrix do not contribute to the mechanical behavior of the bimrock and relative to the definition of bimrocks, are not "geotechnically significant" at that scale, although they may be at larger scales.

Since blocks exist at many scales of engineering interest in bimrocks: what is block and what is matrix? Because of the scale independence of block sizes (Medley and Lindquist, 1995) a "characteristic engineering dimension, L_c " must be defined (Medley, 1994) which is analogous to the scale bar in the insert photograph of Figure 8. The characteristic engineering dimension changes as scales of interest change at a project. L_c may variously be: 1) an indicator of the size of the entire site, such as the square root of A (\sqrt{A}) where A is the area of the site; 2) the size of the largest block (d_{max}) at the site; 3) the thickness of a failure zone beneath a landslide; 4) the height of a slope or excavation; 5) a tunnel diameter; 6) a footing width or; 7) the dimension of a laboratory specimen; and so on.



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Figure 8: Franciscan Complex melange, northern California. Note shearing in "matrix" adjacent large headland block with blocks oriented sub-parallel to shearing. Block sizes range between tens of meters and meters. Detail shows "matrix" in at circled area also has block-in-matrix fabric at scale of 3.1 meter long bar. (Photo: E. Medley).

The smallest geotechnically significant block within a volume of bimrock is about $0.05 L_c$, which is the threshold size between blocks and matrix at the chosen scale (Medley, 1994). For any given volume of bimrock, blocks smaller than $0.05 L_c$ constitute greater than 95 percent of the total number but contribute less than 1 percent to the total volume of bimrock and thus have negligible effect on the bimrock strength. The largest block (d_{max}) is approximately $0.75 L_c$.

BIMROCK STRENGTH

Geotechnical engineers and engineering geology practitioners commonly follow soil mechanics tradition and assume that the mechanical behavior of bimrocks is adequately represented by the properties of the weak matrix materials. In many circumstances, this assumption is too conservative. Lindquist (1994) and Lindquist and Goodman (1994) determined that the overall strength of a bimrock is related to the volumetric proportions of the blocks. As shown in Figure 9, Lindquist (1994) conservatively established that below about 25 percent volumetric block proportion the strength and deformation properties of a bimrock is that of the matrix; between about 25 percent and 75 percent, the friction angle and modulus of deformation of the bimrock mass proportionally increase (and cohesion decreases); and, beyond 75 percent block proportion, the blocks tend to touch and there is no further increase in bimrock strength. Goodman and Ahlgren (2000) identified contributions to overall bimrocks strength at volumetric block proportions much lower than 25 percent.

The overall strength of a bimrock is independent of the strength of the blocks. Blocks greater than the block/matrix threshold contribute to strength: as long as there is sufficient mechanical contrast, the presence of blocks with a range of sizes adds strength to a bimrock by forcing tortuous failure surfaces to tortuously negotiate around blocks (Irfan and Tang, 1993; Lindquist, 1994; Lindquist and Goodman, 1994; Goodman and Ahlgren, 2000; Sönmez, et al, 2006a, 2006b).

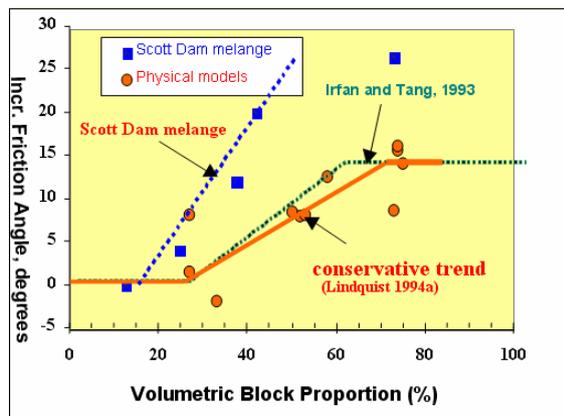


Figure 9: Strength of bimrocks increases with volumetric block proportion. The increase is added to the strength of the matrix. (After Medley, 1999; from data of Lindquist, 1994a; Irfan and Tang, 1993).

ESTIMATION OF VOLUMETRIC BLOCK PROPORTIONS

As indicated above, to predict the mechanical properties of bimrocks, the volumetric block proportion must be estimated. The volumetric block proportion of a bimrock can be approximated by measuring linear block proportions of drilled cores which, given enough sampling, are equivalent to volumetric proportions (Weibel, 1980, Medley, 1994). The linear block proportion is the ratio of the total lengths of blocks intersected to the total length of sample lines. Other methods include measurement of the areal block proportions from outcrops using image analysis (Medley, 1994). However, erroneous estimates will result if volu-

metric block proportions, bimrocks strengths, and total block volumes are estimated from a few borings (or outcrops), as indicated by the typically extreme variability indicated by Figure 10. During earthwork construction very useful information may be collected to refine the strength estimate of the bimrock and evaluate the assumptions made (Medley, 1997).

34.7	25.9	6.3	0.0	27.0	13.3	22.5	26.8	31.1	41.7
40.0	33.3	44.0	29.6	18.5	39.7	42.5	25.3	19.1	40.3
31.3	24.5	25.3	21.1	27.8	41.3	53.6	23.4	41.4	23.4
34.0	33.8	10.1	22.9	56.6	39.0	34.0	23.2	52.6	27.0
27.2	34.2	21.8	17.0	57.0	51.3	42.4	54.8	51.3	42.0
26.3	28.1	16.3	26.0	46.7	54.3	45.1	46.1	60.9	46.3
44.2	28.0	29.9	34.2	57.0	58.8	37.5	41.2	46.9	29.6
31.3	36.7	41.3	39.5	32.6	30.3	21.9	30.7	33.5	32.7
50.0	41.5	40.7	26.5	28.0	23.8	27.6	13.0	35.9	36.4
58.9	45.5	30.5	11.1	28.1	23.3	17.6	30.3	32.4	47.6

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Figure 10: Plan view of an array of 100 linear block proportions ranging between 0% and 61% measured for a physical model bimrock with actual volumetric block proportion of 32%. The range in spatial variability is indicated by the circled values (After Medley, 1997).

CONCLUSIONS

Bimrocks are common and problematic for geotechnical engineers in many countries, including Greece. Bimrocks should be purposefully characterized for design and construction even where there is great uncertainty in the characterization, or when the volumetric proportion of blocks is too little to provide geomechanical benefit. Conceptual understanding of the nature of bimrocks aids accurate characterizations. Procedures to characterize and analyze bimrocks are available. Implementation of these procedures may reduce expensive surprises by focusing the practitioner's attention on the difficulties that may be encountered during design and construction.

The second article in this series will present case histories and some guidelines for performing disciplined characterizations of bimrocks. Readers with questions arising from this first article may email the author at emedley@geosyntec.com and where possible answers will be included in the next article.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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BIOGRAPHY

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Photo: Geosyntec Consultants

is an Editor of two international geoenvironmental Journals.

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Figure 8: Franciscan Complex melange, northern California. Note shearing in “matrix” adjacent large headland block with blocks oriented sub-parallel to shearing. Block sizes range between tens of meters and meters. Detail shows “matrix” in at circled area also has block-in-matrix fabric at scale of 3.1m long bar. (Photo: E. Medley).

34.7	25.9	6.3	0.0	27.0	13.3	22.5	26.8	31.1	41.7
40.0	33.3	44.0	29.6	18.5	39.7	42.5	25.3	19.1	40.3
31.3	24.5	25.3	21.1	27.8	41.3	53.6	23.4	41.4	23.4
34.0	33.8	10.1	22.9	56.6	39.0	34.0	23.2	52.6	27.0
27.2	34.2	21.8	17.0	57.0	51.3	42.4	54.8	51.3	42.0
26.3	28.1	16.3	26.0	46.7	54.3	45.1	46.1	60.9	48.3
44.2	28.0	29.9	34.2	57.0	58.8	37.5	41.2	46.9	29.6
31.3	36.7	41.3	39.5	32.6	30.3	21.9	30.7	33.5	32.7
50.0	41.5	40.7	26.5	28.0	23.8	27.6	13.0	35.9	36.4
58.9	45.5	30.5	11.1	28.1	23.3	17.6	30.3	32.4	47.6

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Figure 10: Plan view of an array of 100 linear block proportions ranging between 0% and 61% measured for a physical model bimrock with actual volumetric block proportion of 32%. The range in spatial variability is indicated by the circled values (After Medley, 1997).