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The architectural achievements of Ancient Rome are remarkable—and all the more so for their use of concrete. From the Pantheon to Trajan’s market, Romans used a type of concrete made from combining volcanic ash, water, and quicklime in their buildings: they also used it to construct massive marine walls to protect harbours and serve as extensive anchorages for ships. These seawalls can still be seen along the Italian coastline, after almost two millennia. This is remarkable, given that modern portland cement tends to erode within decades in marine environments, let alone millennia. So what was the Roman’s secret? A team of US scientists, led by Professor Marie Jackson of the University of Utah, now thinks they have the answer—and it lies in a very rare mineral found in Roman cement: aluminous tobermorite (Al-tobermorite).

According to the scientists, when seawater percolated through the concrete in the Roman maritime structures, it dissolved components of the volcanic ash, allowing new minerals to grow from the highly-alkaline leached fluids—and specifically, the Al-tobermorite. The Al-tobermorite contains platy crystal-like formations that reinforce the cementing matrix, increasing the concrete’s resistance to brittle fracture.

“Contrary to the principles of modern cement-based concrete, the Romans created a rock-like concrete that thrives in open chemical exchange with seawater,” Jackson said in the American Mineralogist paper announcing her findings.

The discovery also seems to verify an observation that Pliny the Elder made around A.D. 79: Pliny wrote in his Naturalis Historia that the concrete habour structures become “a single stone mass, impregnable to waves and every day stronger.” Ultimately, the endurance of Roman concrete in maritime environments owed more to chance that any particular mineralogical genius on the part of the ancients: according to Jackson, they were just lucky in the type of rock that they had to work with. “We don’t have those rocks in a lot of the world,” the University of Utah scientist added.

Despite this, a Roman-type concrete would have potential benefits in the modern world: Jackson has already proposed its use for the construction of a tidal lagoon power plant in Swansea, Wales.

“I think Roman concrete or a type of it would be a very good choice [for the lagoon],” Jackson told the BBC in January of this year. “That project is going to require 120 yr of service life to amortise the investment.” Typical portland cement-based concretes with steel reinforcements would “surely corrode in at least half of that life time.”

There is also the potential to use such concretes in the seawalls that protect communities around the world that are vulnerable to sea-level rise. “As ice melts at the poles, even more water will surge into rising seas,” wrote Erin Blakemore on Smithsonian.com. “Given predictions of more extreme weather events driven by rising atmospheric temperatures, that means there will be a continued focus on sea walls to keep communities near shores safe.”

The potential of Roman-type cement is therefore intriguing. Some large question marks remain, however, not least over the exact concrete mix the Romans used. As Jackson noted: “The recipe was completely lost.” So far modern science has not been able to recreate it. Roman cement also takes time to develop its strength from seawater and features less compressive strength that portland cement.

It is not then a panacea to the problems faced by concrete construction in maritime conditions. That said, Jackson intends to continue her research and hopes to unlock more secrets of Ancient Rome. As she concluded: “The Romans were concerned with this. If we’re going to build in the sea, we should be concerned with it too.”
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France  LafargeHolcim to upgrade kiln at Martres-Tolosane plant

LafargeHolcim is to invest €100 million to modernise the Martres-Tolosane cement plant in southwest France. According to a company statement, it will be its largest investment in the country in 40 yr and will see the construction of a new kiln. The new kiln will improve the plant’s productivity and reduce its environmental impact, allowing the plant to use alternative fuels.

“This modernisation will enable the recycling and recovery of waste, helping the Martres-Tolosane plant to reduce its energy consumption and CO₂ footprint through the use of alternative fuels,” said the company.

Work will begin in the third trimester of 2018 and will be completed by mid-2020. Following the upgrade, the aim is to run the plant on 80% alternative fuels.

“This investment reaffirms not only our confidence in the competitive energy and longevity of French industry, but also our commitment to an environmentally conscious method of production, using circular economy strategy to make best use of our resources,” said Bénédicte de Bonnechose, CEO of Lafarge France.

Lafarge France employs around 4000 people at over 400 sites. It is the country’s largest cement maker and concrete producer, as well as the third-largest producer of aggregates. The Martres-Tolosane plant is located in the Occitane region of France.

Bangladesh  Meghna Cement Mills inks deal with FLSmidth

FLSmidth is to supply a cement grinding plant to Meghna Cement Mills Ltd in Mongla Bangladesh. The contract covers engineering, procurement, and supply of equipment for a 415 tph plant that will produce portland composite cement at 3800 Blaine.

The order is a “significant one”, said Per Mejnert Kristensen, President of FLSmidth’s Cement Division. “We are proud to partner with one of the biggest cement companies in Bangladesh.”

Meghna Cement Mills produces around 1 million tpy, according to its website, and is part of Bashundhara Group, one of the largest conglomerates in Bangladesh. The contract includes a range of equipment from the Danish engineering company and its subsidiaries. Cement will be ground using an FLSmidth OK 54-6 mill with planetary gear from FLSmidth MAAG Gear. Environmental pollution control will be provided by fabric filters from FLSmidth Airtech, while weighfeeders will be provided by FLSmidth Pfister and the plant control system by FLSmidth Automation.

“Bangladesh is an important market for FLSmidth,” said Carsten Riisberg Lund, Country Head of FLSmidth India. “With the growth expectations and the many infrastructure projects in the pipeline to support this growth, we expect an increasing level of activity in Bangladesh in the coming years.”

Bangladesh’s construction industry is expected to grow at an annual average rate of 8.5% over the next decade, according to BMI Research, on the back of strong foreign direct investment and government initiatives. Its strategic location in the Indian Ocean has seen the country benefit from interest from Chinese, Indian, Middle Eastern, and Japanese companies. Meanwhile, the government has renewed its focus on infrastructure development in the country – a trend that should be positive for demand for building materials.

India  Ambuja Cement gets approval on new grinding plant

The state government of Odisha, India, has approved a new cement grinding plant to be set up by Ambuja Cement. According to local media reports, the new plant will be built at Jharsuguda, an industrial hub in the north of Odisha, which is on the east coast of India.

The facility represents an investment of INR4.3 billion (around US$66.43 million) by Ambuja Cement, part of the LafargeHolcim group. It will be located on a 125-acre site and is expected to generate around 300 direct and indirect jobs.

Ambuja currently operates five integrated cement plants and eight grinding plants across India. Its production capacity currently stands at 29.65 million t, according to the company website.

The approval was one of three handed out by the state government, worth a total of INR11.88 billion (US$183.5 million). In addition to Ambuja’s grinding plant, an expansion of an Emami Paper Mills plant and the construction of a biscuit manufacturing unit by Surya Food & Agro were also given the go ahead.
Turkey  Votorantim opens new Sivas plant

Votorantim Cimentos has inaugurated a new cement plant in Sivas, Turkey, continuing the expansion of the company’s strategy of investing in markets with high growth potential. The new plant will replace an old facility in Sivas, which is about 500 m from the Turkish capital, Ankara, and 900 km from Istanbul. The €140 million plant has a production capacity of 1.8 million tpy and will serve strategic regions in Turkey, the company said in a statement. It will also boost Votorantim’s participation in the Turkey’s growing infrastructure market.

According to BMI Research, Turkey’s construction industry will grow at 5.6% year-on-year in 2017, as infrastructure continues to garner significant government support. Growth is expected to continue in the medium and longer term with average growth rates of 4.2% and 4.1% over the next five and ten years, respectively.

Turkish demand for cement, meanwhile, is expected to be around 3% by 2019, Votorantim noted.

“This expansion makes our Sivas operation not only more competitive and efficient, but also better aligned with new technologies and environmental regulations,” said Walter Dissinger, CEO of Votorantim Cimentos, at the opening of the plant.

In addition to its investment in Turkey, Votorantim is also investing in expansions at Charlevoix in the US and San Luis in Argentina. Both of these projects should be completed by 2018, added Dissinger.

Bosnia & Herzegovina  Fons Technology replaces clinker cooler at Fabrika Cementa Lukavac

Fons Technology International (FTI) has replaced the existing clinker cooler at the Fabrika Cementa Lukavac (FCL) cement plant in Tuzla city, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The new clinker cooler is designed for 2100 tpd and, after erection and commissioning, it has achieved the targeted process figures with a very smooth mechanical operation.

The cooler was tailor-made by FTI for FCL’s clinker cooler replacement project. FTI was able to reduce the initial investment costs by reusing the existing cooler casing, existing refractory, four of the existing fans, and the existing hammer crusher.

Mexico  First clinker produced at new Tula production line

The first clinker has been produced at the new cement production line at Cementos Fortaleza’s Tula plant in Mexico, following the commissioning of the FCB Kiln from French engineering group, Fives, in June.

In addition to the FCB Kiln, the new pyroprocessing line includes a FCB Zero-NOx Prece, FCB Preheater, and Pillard NovaFlam burner. The new line will have a production capacity of 3300 tpd.

The successful start up of clinker production follows the commissioning of two cement grinding plants equipped with FCB Horomills in December 2016 and January 2017, as well as the commissioning of a FCB Horomill for raw meal grinding in June 2017. A FCB B-mill will also be installed for petcoke grinding.
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UK Cauldon cement plant celebrates its 60th anniversary

Founded in 1957 by G&T Earles, part of British Portland Cement Manufacturers Ltd (BPCM), as the first dry-process cement plant in the UK, Cauldon cement plant celebrates its 60th anniversary this year. Nestled in the heart of the Staffordshire countryside, the 960 000 tpy plant sits in close proximity to the villages of Cauldon and Waterhouse, which have grown and thrived due to the employment opportunities provided by the plant.

Limestone activity on the site goes back several centuries, being first recorded in the 1700s, but permission for the plant itself was first granted in the 1950s. Unfavourable ground conditions, bad weather, and post-war steel shortages caused delays, meaning that work did not begin on the site until 13 July 1954. Construction took two years and ten months to complete, and cost around £3.5 million. The first kiln, a German Lepol design that would soon be followed by kilns two and three, was first lit on 25 April the same year, with the official opening ceremony taking place shortly afterwards, on 27 September 1957.

Originally sold under G&T Earle’s Pelican brand, which was discontinued in 1966, Cauldon’s cement was then marketed under the Blue Circle brand. In 1978, BPCM was merged into its parent company, Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers Ltd (APCM) to form Blue Circle Ltd.

One of the most significant changes came between 1982 and 1985, when the plant underwent substantial reconstruction. This included a new precalciner tower, warehouses, control building and silos. At the same time, the first Lepol kiln was replaced with a more technologically-advanced 850 000 tpy, suspension preheater, precalciner kiln. Kilns two and three, also of Lepol design, were then removed in 1986, leaving the plant with the single kiln that it has today.

Further changes awaited the plant when Blue Circle Ltd was acquired by Lafarge in 2001, before merging with Tarmac in 2013. The most recent development, the merger between Lafarge and Holcim, which took place in 2015, has also led to significant changes in the running of the site. The site was retained by LafargeHolcim and is now managed by the company’s UK subsidiary, Aggregate Industries, along with the cement plant at Cookstown in Northern Ireland, the Cauldon Low quarry, and the cement terminal at Belfast Docks. This was the first time that Aggregate Industries’ portfolio included cement.

Cauldon itself has always been known for its high-quality cement, due to the excellent limestone reserves that it draws from, but the name had been associated with Tarmac for a number of years. This meant that, when Tarmac took its brand names, LafargeHolcim had to work hard to rebuild its brand. The strong identity of the Lafarge brand in other areas, alongside the fact that Aggregate Industries did not have a brand of its own, led to the decision to market the cement produced at Cauldon under the Lafarge name, once any pre-existing deals from Tarmac had been completed.

The team has leveraged pre-existing relationships through Aggregate Industries to offer a complete package directly to builder’s merchants and rebuild its market presence. The last twelve months has also seen Lafarge put significant investment into a portfolio of new products, further development its market presence.

Vietnam Bim Son Cement orders Loesche vertical roller mill

Loesche has received an order for a vertical roller mill to grind clinker and granulated blast furnace slag (GGBS) for Bim Son Cement in Vietnam. The order will bring the total number of Loesche mills in operation in the southeast Asian country to 35. The new Loesche mill will have a capacity of 250 tph and will supplement Bim Son Cement’s existing plant in Thanh Hoa province, south of Hanoi. The complete scope of supply also includes a silo, blower, filter, and packing plant.

The new mill is expected to be commissioned in August 2017. It will join two existing Loesche mills for cement raw meal and coal that are already in operation at the plant.

Bim Son Cement is a subsidiary of the Vietnam National Cement Corp. It is one of the largest cement manufacturers in the country, as well as supplying other building materials, such as ready-mixed concrete.
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Bolivia WEG supplies electric motors to Yacuses

Brazilian manufacturer of electric motors, WEG, has installed a number of its products at the Yacuses integrated cement plant in Bolivia. WEG’s scope of supply included W22 IP66 high-performance low-voltage motors and medium-voltage slip-ring motors with a brush lifting system, suitable for continuous operation in harsh environments.

The motors will be installed on the mill drives, crushers, and fans at the new cement plant. Similar motors have already been installed at several other cement plants owned by Votorantim Cimentos, one of the main shareholders in Yacuses’ owner, Itacamba.

“We at Votorantim Cimentos establish long-term relationships with our suppliers,” said Vitor Kazuo Shin-Ike, an Electrical Engineer at Votorantim. “WEG electric motors are a good example of this approach.”

In addition to the supply of motors, WEG will offer aftersales support located in Bolivia. WEG also undertook an interchangeability study for the plant, aiming to reduce the number of different motors used onsite – and thus the number of spare motors required.

Located in the German Busch province of Bolivia, the Yacuses plant was inaugurated in February of this year by Bolivian President Evo Morales. Representing an investment of US$220 million, the plant has a production capacity of 0.95 million t.

For more on Latin America, read this month’s regional report: pp. 16 – 25.

India Ramco Cements orders Fives classifier

Fives has received an order from AMCL Machinery Ltd to supply a new FCB TSV classifier 4500 THF. The order forms part of the Ramco Cements expansion project in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

The classifier will be installed at the R R Nagar plant and is designed to be fed either from the top or bottom, according to project requirements.

The order markets the fourth time Ramco Cements has opted from a FCB TSV classifier. Other units are located at the company’s Kolagat, Salem, and Chengalpattu plants.

Kenya Bamburi expands production capacity

Kenya-based Bamburi Cement, part of LafargeHolcim, is to expand capacity at its Athi River cement grinding plant by 0.9 million tpy to 2.4 million tpy. Following the upgrade, Bamburi’s total production capacity in Kenya will stand at 3.2 million tpy.

The new plant will take 18 months to build. Excavation works at the project have been completed, with civil works currently underway. Structural work is expected to start next month. The plant will include a new 140 tph Loesche vertical roller mill (VRM), cement storage silos from CNBM, and a new 120 tph Haver & Boecker cement packing plant, as well as auxiliary equipment.
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RHI installs new strapping machine at Giessen plant

The world’s largest producer of refractory products, RHI, has installed an OMS Model 06RP horizontal automatic strapping machine at its facility near Giessen, Germany. RHI has 30 production sites worldwide, employs over 7500 people, and produces more than 1.5 million t of refractory bricks, mixes, and mortars per year.

Before installing the new strapping machine in August 2016, RHI had been packaging its products manually using steel strapping. As well as speeding up the packaging process and offering an opportunity to redeploy labour, the new machine has allowed RHI to significantly reduce packaging costs by switching from steel to 16 mm PET (polyester) strapping.

“The OMS 06RP is a high-performance strapping machine that is proven in the toughest working environments within the building products industry,” said Daren Spice, Sales & Marketing Director at Gordian Strapping, a major distributor of Italian-based packaging machinery producer, OMS. “Features include rear strap alignment bars that ensure accurate, repeatable strap placement, and a rack-and-pinion system that eliminates the costs involved with chains and poly belts.”

The TR1400HD strapping head features precise, repeatable strap feeding that avoids jams and increases up-time, and a ‘strap in place’ confirmation, meaning that a pack cannot leave the machine without being strapped. The modular design of the head means that the clamping and welding units can quickly be removed and replaced to ensure minimum downtime. Furthermore, OMS TR-Series heat seal strapping heads only require major servicing every 200 000 cycles.

Holcim Romania completes new cement terminal in the east of the country

Holcim Romania, a subsidiary of LafargeHolcim, has inaugurated a new cement terminal in the town of Roman in the east of Romania. The terminal will supply cement to customers in the Moldavia region of Romania on the border with Moldova, and completes the company’s network of terminal and warehouses in the country.

The new terminal cost RON12.5 million (around US$3.1 million) and covers an area of 13 120 m². It is connected to Romania’s rail network and can be used for both loading and unloading bulk and bagged cement. The unloading/loading process is automated for faster order fulfilment, the company said in a statement.

The cement will be delivered to the terminal from Holcim Romania’s two cement local cement plants in Câmpulung in central Romania and Alesd in the northwest of the country.

Holcim Romania has been active in the building materials industry in Romania for over 20 yr. In addition to the two cement plants and Roman terminal, the company also operates terminals in Turda in the central part of the country and in Bucharest, the country’s capital.
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MODERN, SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE

Victor Aceituno and Jose Rivera, Cemex Guatemala, talk through the latest upgrade work at the Arizona cement plant, as well as the company’s health and safety, and CSR work.
Introduction
Cemex Guatemala is committed to contributing to the development of the country. As part of that, the company has recently invested in more and better cement production and packing lines at Arizona cement plant.

The Cemex Arizona plant is strategically located on the south coast of Guatemala, in the department of Escuintla. It is 98.5 km away from Guatemala City, the country’s capital. The plant’s finish mill capacity was increased this year to 0.545 million tpy through the installation of an integrated control system for cement grinding. The plant has also recently installed a second packing line, adding a rotary packer with a nominal capacity of 3500 bags/hr.

Upgrading the plant
The new integrated control system for cement grinding allows Arizona plant to adjust the process parameters automatically based on cement quality data. The automation of the process enables the plant to have better and immediate control of the process variables. It will also make the grinding process more efficient.

In addition to the integrated control system, the power transmission was upgraded and the design of the recirculation bucket elevator was reconfigured to transport more material. In addition, modifications to the ID fan were made in order to increase its rotation speed with controlled vibration.
Cement fineness is controlled with a dynamic separator. Periodic fineness tests are done in the plant’s Quality Assurance Laboratory. The cement fineness is measured with a 325M sieve (45 µm). The percentage of the sample that consists of particles smaller than 45 µm is measured. The dynamic separator and the ID fan rotation speed are adjusted, if the set interval of fineness is not accomplished. Those particles that have not been ground to a minimum size are recirculated to the mill. On the other hand, the particles that are able to pass through the dynamic separator are directed to a baghouse, where cement is captured and separated from air.

The cement that is separated in the bag house is then stored in silos. Depending on the clients’ needs, cement is dispatched as bulk or packed cement. The investment that was made in 2016 consisted in installing a new bulk line and a new cement packing line. The new bulk line will permit faster dispatches, reducing clients waiting time.

The new packing line consists of a packer and palletiser system. The cement is extracted from the silos and packed in paper bags of 42.5 kg. The cement bag weight is thoroughly controlled. The packed cement capacity is 0.510 million tpy.

As aforementioned, the quality of every process is assured in the Quality Assurance Laboratory. This has allowed Cemex to certify its production process with ISO 9001 and ISO 14001.

Proper maintenance is given to the plant’s equipment in order to decrease the failure probability of the process, with a reliability centered maintenance approach used in the operations.

**Safety: the most important value**

Cemex is characterised by placing safety as its most important value. Arizona plant has carefully designed traffic management. The objective is to minimise the probability of suffering a traffic accident. Cemex LatAm has made important investments in planning and executing traffic management projects at all of its plants. The project consisted of pedestrian isolation from vehicles. Routes and traffic signals were distributed throughout the plant, so that any pedestrian can be guided by them and find the location that they are looking for.

In addition, truck driver training is constantly given in order to gain awareness of the risks of driving a vehicle inside the plant.

Not only does the company care about driving safely inside the plant, but also on road. That is the reason why we provide constant training and reminders on driving safely on road. The plant has also placed safety features in the mobile equipment that is used for the operations. These devices alert the driver when a pedestrian has approached his mobile equipment.

In addition, the company enhances safety everyday by discussing safety topics. Since safety is
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our most important value. Cemex employees start their day reading, listening to, and discussing safety topics. Safety material is shared within all of the countries in which Cemex operates, spreading best practices and areas for improvement. The company also operates a system of reporting unsafe conditions. Once an unsafe condition has been identified, an employee completes a card that describes the unsafe condition, and deposits it into a “mailbox”. The engineer in charge of safety collects all of the cards that have been deposited and works to correct the unsafe conditions immediately by communicating the information to the rest of the team.

Environmental care and social responsibility

Cemex is committed to taking care of the environment. It has various controls that are crucial to decreasing waste production. The company also controls dust emissions by providing periodic maintenance to the bag filters in all the areas and monitoring dust emissions constantly. These actions are in accordance with the company’s motto: building a better future.

Finally, an important part of the operation at the Arizona cement plant is the different social responsibility programmes and activities of the company.

Cemex Guatemala develops many social and ecological activities: for example, reforestation programmes with volunteers, beach and river cleaning, and environmental workshops with members of the local community in Arizona, Escuintla.

By recollecting data of the plant’s activities, the company has achieved the following results:

- More than 30 t of garbage recollected.
- More than 3000 trees planted.
- More than 500 hr of environmental workshops.

In addition to all of these activities, Cemex also has programmes with long-term environmental impact. One of these programmes is the Eko-Estufas (ecological stoves): well-designed stoves made of concrete that require little firewood as fuel and replace more dangerous stoves used by Guatemalan families in rural areas, which pose a greater risk of accidental burning and respiratory disease.

The Eko-Estufas reduce the risk of accidental burning by containing the heat within a concrete oven. It has also reduced the risk of respiratory disease and reduced the use of firewood by up to 75%, freeing up time for more productive activities. The stove also has a larger capacity than traditional ovens and provides a work space for placing pots, pans, and other cooking materials without risk of breakage.

Cemex sells the Eko-Estufas to families through different credit models, allowing families with low income access to modern, safe, and fuel-efficient cooking.

Conclusion

Following the recent upgrades, Cemex Guatemala’s Arizona plant has a well-designed cement-making process. Its cement reaches high quality standards and is produced in a safe working environment. The social responsibility activities are very important to the company because they help to create ecological awareness in every person impacted or involved. The company impacts positively with these activities and reaches the goal of contributing to the community and the environment in different ways as part of the company’s operation.
THAT WAS A SAMPLE OF WORLD CEMENT® AUGUST ISSUE

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