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Folding pattern in the Fars province, Zagros folded belt: case study on the Karbasi and Khaftar anticlines, interior Fars, Iran

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Abstract

The anticlines in Fars region, which are located in Zagros fold-thrust belt, are valuable because they possess several hydrocarbons and this area is easily recognized by the NW–SE trending parallel anticlines that verge to the SW. According to the geological classification, the study area is located in Interior Fars region. Due to increasing complication of structural geometry in Fars region and necessity to explore activities for deeper horizons especially the Paleozoic ones, the analysis of fold style elements, which is known as one of the main parts in structural studies, seems necessary.

The Karbasi and Khaftar anticlines are case study anticlines in the interior Fars sub-basin (Fassa area). These anticlines have an asymmetric structure and some faults with large strike separation are observed in these structures. Due to increasing complication of structural geometry in Fars region and necessity to explore activities for deeper horizons especially the Paleozoic ones, the analysis of fold style elements, which is known as one of the main parts in structural studies, seems necessary. Description of fold geometry is important because it allows comparisons within and between folds and also allows us to recognize patterns in the occurrence and distribution of fold systems. The main aim of this paper is to determine fold style elements and folding pattern in the study area. This paper presents a part of the results of a regional study of Fars province in the Zagros Simply folded belt, based on satellite images, geological maps, and well data.

In the Interior Fars area, it seems that folding pattern is controlled by structural elements such as the Nezamabad basement fault and Dashtak formation. In fact, as a middle detachment unit, Dashtak formation plays an important role regarding folding geometry and fold in style in the study area.

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1 Introduction

The Zagros fold-thrust belt in Iran lies on the northeastern margin of the Arabian plate. This fold thrust belt with northwestern–southeastern strike extends from Tarus mountain in the northeast of Turkey and Kurdistan in north of Iraq up to Strait of Hormuz in southwest of Iran (Fig. 1). More than 65 % (~ 107.5 billion m³) of the remaining prove oil resources (~ 159.6 billion m³) and nearly 34 % (~ 49.5 trillion m³) of the total gas resources (~ 146.4 trillion m³) of the world are accumulated in numerous giant and super giant hydrocarbon fields of the Middle East. Clearly, the accumulation of hydrocarbons in the Middle East has been intricately related to the stratigraphy and structural evolution of the Zagros fold-thrust belt (Alavi, 2007). As one of the valuable oil-rich provinces, this belt provides approximately 2/3 of oil-resources and 1/3 of gas-resources of the world.

The anticlines in Fars region, which are situated in Zagros fold-thrust belt, are valuable because of possessing numerous hydrocarbons and this area is easily recognized by the NW–SE trending parallel anticlines that verge to the SW in a 6–12 km cover sequence (Colman-Sadd, 1978; Dehbozorgi et al., 2010). According to the geological classification, this understudy area is located in the Interior Fars region (Fig. 1).

So far, a large number of studies have been done in the study area based on stratigraphy and geophysical exploration, but no studies have been conducted based on folding geometry and folding style in order to indicate structural oil traps with emphasis on basement complexities and basement faults activity. On the other hand, a few studies should be done on understudy area based on kinematics pattern of folding in this fold-thrust belt.

Fold geometric form and mechanical stratigraphy evolution are affected by thickness, detachment unit's ductility, and stratigraphy sequence of formations. Moreover, fold geometric form and mechanical stratigraphy evolution depend on the above-mentioned cases (Ehsani and Arian, 2015; Arian and Aram, 2014; Qorashi and Arian, 2011; Alavi, 1994). Numerous studies have been conducted according to variation of structural style

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and effects of detachment folding on folding pattern (Sherkati and Letouzey, 2004; Sherkati et al., 2005). These investigations mentioned above confirm the effects of mechanical stratigraphy on folding geometry in Zagros but did not study the relationship of folding patterns with middle detachment horizons in the Paleozoic horizons based on the relationship of kinematics with main folds.

Other researchers such as O'Brien (1957) mentioned the effects of detachment layers on folding process for the first time. On the other hand, in the recent years, geologists have presented different types of geometric and mechanical models and the obtained results of these studies have increased researchers' information. Other researchers such as Jamison (1989) and Mitra (2002, 2003) have presented papers which have brought about an increase in geologists' information about cases mentioned above.

Geometry of anticlines in Zagros is affected by type of deformation and mechanical behavior of stratigraphic units. Detachment units such as Dashtak formation in Zagros are important in controlling folding pattern especially in Fars region. Dashtak formation with Triassic age belongs to Kazeron group and this formation have evaporates units such as shale and dolomite. On the other hand, other detachment formations in this area are Kazdomi and Gachsaran formation.

Based on Maleki et al. (2014) the Khaftar anticline is an asymmetric structure and activity of the Nezamabad sinistral strike slip fault has caused main changes to the fold style characteristics in the study area. One of the case study anticlines in Fars region is Karbasi anticline. These anticlines have asymmetric structures and their stratigraphic units are affected by many faults in this region. Some of these faults may affect the Dehram horizon in this region. As the result of the effects of these faults that exist in stratigraphic units, faults activity may affect gas reservation in this horizon (based on geological map of the Karbasi anticline, 2001c). Due to increasing complication of structural geometry in Fars region and necessity to explore activities for deeper horizons especially the Paleozoic ones, the analysis of fold style elements, which is known as one of the main parts in structural studies, seems necessary.

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Specific features are important in describing folds and understanding how they develop (Twiss and Moors, 1992). According to the cases mentioned above, we tried to analyze and investigate the complications in the study area with fold element style analysis, structural map, modified structural sections.

- 5 Description of fold geometry is important because it allows comparisons within and between folds and allows us to recognize patterns in the occurrence and distribution of fold systems. The main aim of this paper is to determine fold style elements and folding pattern in the study area.

2 Material and methods

- 10 This paper presents part of the results of a regional study of Fars province in the Zagros Simply folded belt, based on satellite images, thin sections, geological maps, well data and original fieldwork. Our fieldwork in the study area and some data such as geological maps (Jahrom and Kushk, 2001) and geological regional data were prepared and provided by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). In the study area, there are no
15 seismic data provided by Oil Companies in this region to analyze and discuss the structural features. All geological reports have been studied and all the elements of fold style have been calculated and analyzed. We used fold style elements analysis methods (description of folds) base on Twiss and Moors (1992), Rickard (1971), Ragan (1985) and Ramsay (1967). We used Tectonics FP software to prepare and analyze stereoplots of
20 the Karbasi and the Khaftar anticlines. In addition, we used Global Mapper Software to prepare 3-D SRTM of the study area and 3-D Path Profile (along cross sections) based on Global Mapper Software. 3-D SRTM has been prepared base on Digital Elevation Model (DEM) and geological map of study area (in scale 1 : 100 000, 1 : 250 000 and 1 : 1 000 000 – published by the National Oil Company and the Geological Survey of
25 Iran).

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3 Geological and geographical setting

- In this paper, the study area is located in the Zagros Simply Folded Belt of Iran and Fars region (Fig. 1). The Zagros fold-thrust belt is home to one of the largest petroleum producing reservoirs in the world. Based on geological facies, Fars region consists of
5 three sub-basins; Interior Fars, Coastal Fars and Sub-Coastal Fars (Beydoun et al., 1992) and the study area is located in the Interior Fars sub-basin. This area is easily recognized by the NW–SE trending parallel anticlines that verge to the SW in a 6–12 km cover sequence (Colman-Sadd, 1978).

- In the Zagros fold-thrust belt, the oldest known stratigraphic unit with 2000–1000 m
10 thickness is estimated to be Hormuz Series (Ala, 1974) and is exposed in the form of salt domes in Fars region. Structures in this area have complications and the oldest stratigraphy unit that outcropped in the Khaftar anticline on the surface belongs to Hormuz Series (salt plug). The age of Hormuz Series is Pre-Cambrian–Cambrian (Fig. 2).

- 15 Anticlines which outcrop stratigraphic units in most structures in Fars region often include Upper Cretaceous stratigraphic units (Campanian to the present) and in the sub-coastal Fars region, includes the Lower Cretaceous stratigraphic units (Neocomian to the present). The youngest formations that outcrop in the study area are Aghajari and Bakhtiari and Razak formations. Also, in the study area, the oldest outcrop is Hormuz
20 Series which are observed in the Khaftar, Kuh-e Qazi and Surmeh anticlines (e.g. Beydoun et al., 1992; Dehbashi Ghanavati, 2008).

- The Khaftar and Karbasi anticlines are located in the Interior Fars region (Fasa area). Trend of the Khaftar anticline has three orientations consisting North–Northeast, East–
25 West and South–Southwest. This anticline is bounded from north by Kuh-e Qazi anticline, from north–northeast by Qutbad anticline, from south–southeast by the Karbasi anticline and from southwest by Sim anticlines (Fig. 1). The trend of the Karbasi anticline is N60° W. This anticline is bounded from south by the Chaghal, from southwest by the Noura, from north–northeast by the Khaftar and from north–northeast by the

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F–F' structural sections, moreover a second order fault introduced in relationship with the Nezamabad fault. In different parts of the Karbasi anticline, Dashtak formation, as a middle detachment unit, plays an important role regarding folding geometry, which may be affected by the Nezamabad main fault and the second order fault. According to Maleki et al. (2014) folding analysis of the Khaftar anticline, reveals that folding pattern in the study area may be affected by Nezamabad.

6 The description of folds

Descriptions of fold geometries are important because they allow comparisons within and between folds and allow us to recognize patterns in the occurrence and distribution of fold systems. For example, orogenic belts contain characteristic fold systems: along their flanks are large fold and thrust belts, with little metamorphism, but underlain by décollements; and in core zones where intense folding has been accomplished, accompanied by high-grade metamorphism under high temperature and pressure.

Top formations tested in the analysis of folds are top formations of Kazeron group, i.e. Neyriz–Dashtak formation, and also those of Bangestan group. According to given results, limbs in the Karbasi anticline are of unequal length.

Twiss and Moors (1992) described the geometry of folded surface by specifying three style elements: aspect ratio, tightness and bluntness. Based on these cases we will analyze the geometry of fold style of the Karbasi anticline. As some parts of anticline are affected by faults and fault effects were observed on surface, we were not able to measure and calculate some parameters in these parts. There are three chief descriptors of a folded surface: aspect ratio: the ratio of the fold amplitude to the distance between two adjacent inflection points, tightness: or the interlimb angle, bluntness: a measure of the curvature of the surface in the zone of closure. In this part, we mentioned methods of calculation and measurement of this parameters in the studied area. Finally, given results are illustrated by comparable diagram (Table 1).

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7 Elements of fold style

The style of a fold is the set of characteristics that describe its form. Over years of working with folds, geologists have identified certain features as particularly useful in describing folds and understanding how they develop (Twiss and Moors, 1992).

Since the Karbasi anticline, has complicated structure, the analysis of fold style elements seems necessary. Therefore, for more studies on this structure the changes of fold style elements will be analyzed and investigated from east to west in the different parts of this anticline. As the Nezamabad fault may produce effects on the Karbasi anticline, we have evaluated and calculated elements of fold style in this structure. In this respect, cylindricality and symmetry have been evaluated in the geometry of axial plane and Folding Mechanism.

Folded surface forms a symmetric fold if in profile, the shape on one side of the hinges a mirror image of the shape on the other side, and if adjacent limbs are identifiable in length (Twiss and Moors, 1992). Based on previous studies in the Karbasi and Khaftar anticlines, these anticlines are asymmetric. The Karbasi anticline is an asymmetric anticline that the dip of its southern flank is greater than the northern flank. Southern flank is changing from 15 to 75° and in northern flank dip value is changing from 3 to 57°. In the southern flank, dip of layers is greater than the northern flank on the Asmari formation horizon. The Southern flank layers have dip changes from about 60 to 88° and dip value in the northern flank ranges from about 35 to 50° (Maleki et al., 2014).

8 The description of folds

Descriptions of fold geometries are important because they allow comparisons within and between folds and allow us to recognize patterns in the occurrence and distribution of fold systems. For example, orogenic belts contain characteristic fold systems: along their flanks are large fold and thrust belts, with little metamorphism, but underlain by dé-

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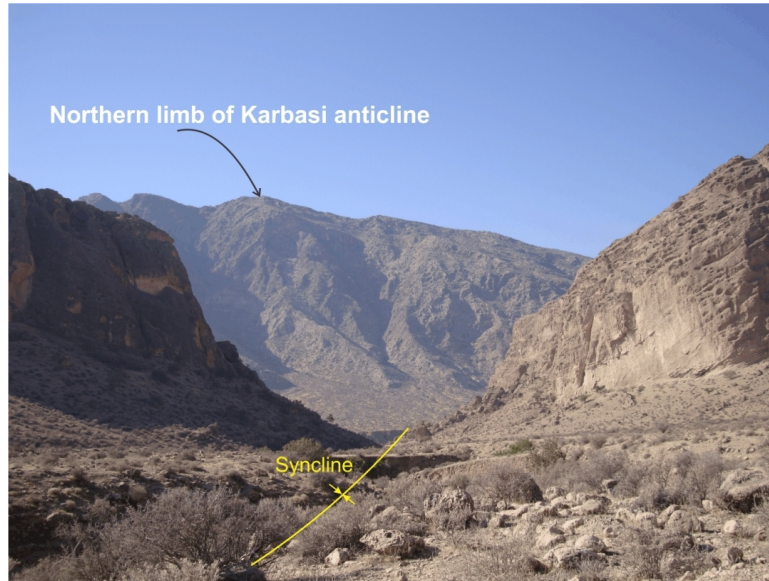


Figure 4. View to the south-west that shows Northern limb of the Karbasi anticline and syncline between the Karbasi anticline in northern limb and the Khaftar anticline in southern limb.

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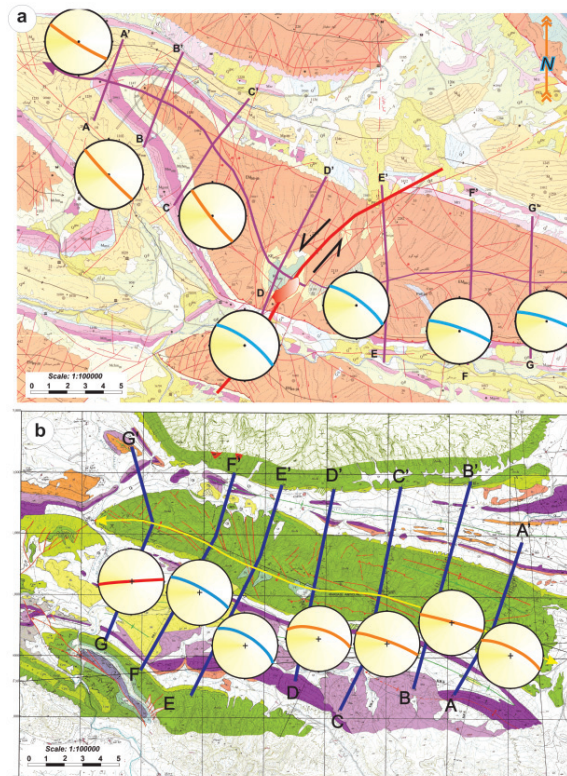


Figure 5. (a) Axial plane of the Khaftar anticline and (b) axial plane of the Karbasi anticline based on gave results in cross sections.

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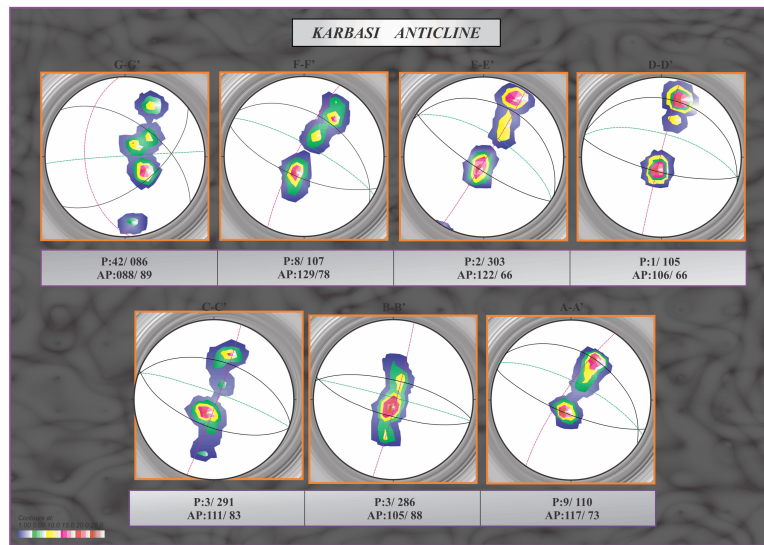


Figure 6. Stereoplots showed axial plane (AP), cylindricity (AC) for seven sections of the Karbasi anticline.

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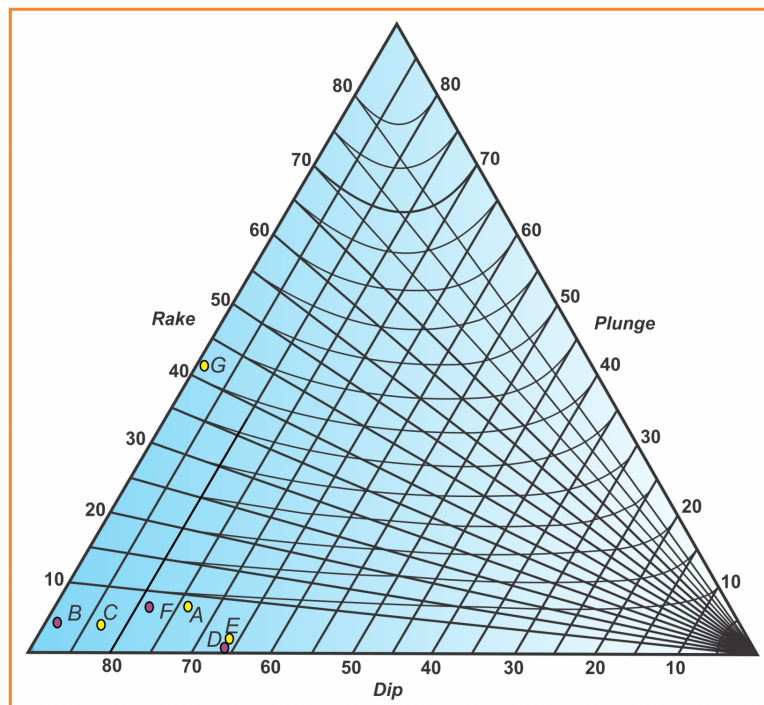


Figure 7. Triangle form diagram showed type of fold in seven sections of the Karbasi anticline, based on Rickard (1971). This Diagram gave based on Rickard classification. Type of fold in Part G (G–G’ section) is different to other section completely.

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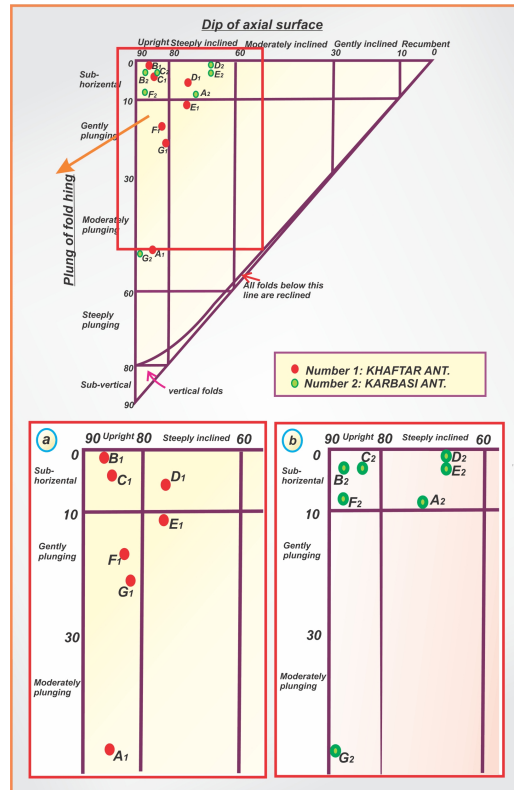


Figure 8. This figure showing the classification for orientation of the Khaftar and Karbasi anticlines based on Ramsay (1967).

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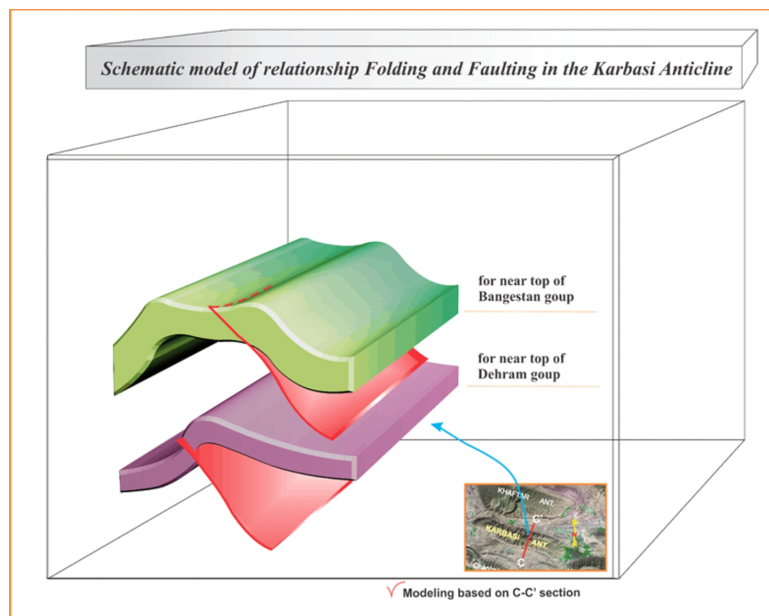


Figure 9. Schematic model for relationship between folding and faulting for near top of Bangestan group and near top of Dehram horizon in C–C’ part of the Karbasi anticline that observed fault rapture in surface. This modelling is based on information of C–C’ structural cross section with 3-D modelling software.

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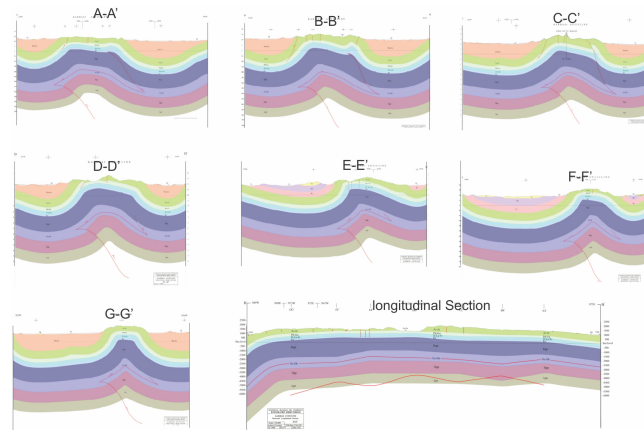


Figure 10. Structural cross sections of the Karbasi anticline (based on Geological map of the Karbasi anticline, 2001).

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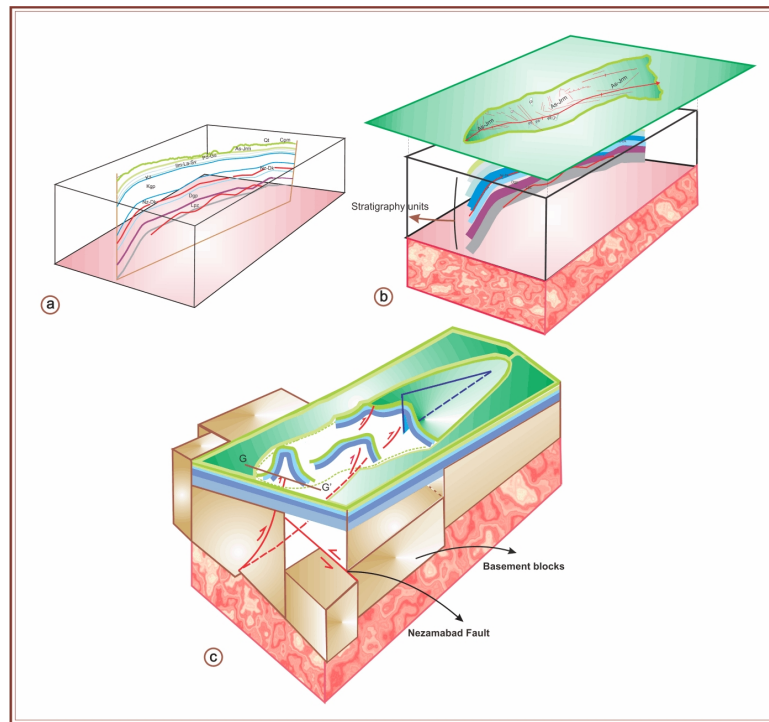


Figure 11. (a) 2-D model of longitude structural cross section of the Karbasi anticline. (b) Forms of fold with location of longitude structural cross section. (c) Relationship between the Nezamabad Fault and the Karbasi anticline, 3-D model (based on structural cross section from A-A' to G-G').

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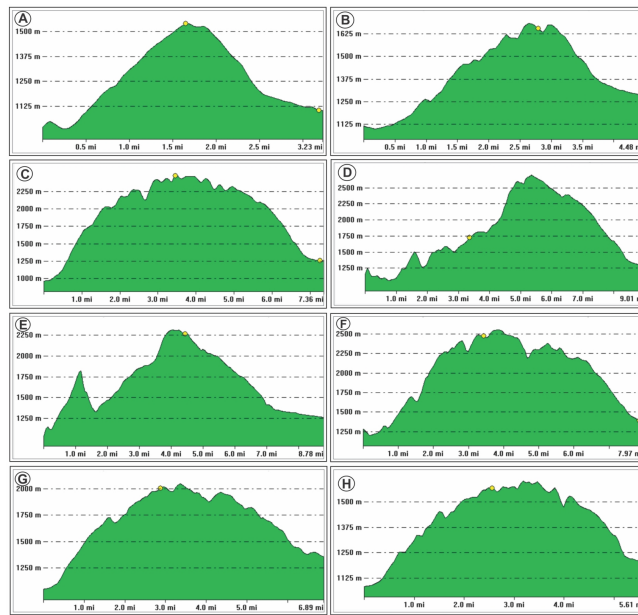


Figure 12. These diagrams showing 3-D path profiles of the Khaftar anticline (location of these profiles is located along the cross sections A–A' to G–G' in the Fig. 5). The horizontal axis and vertical axis showing distance (mile) and elevation (meter).

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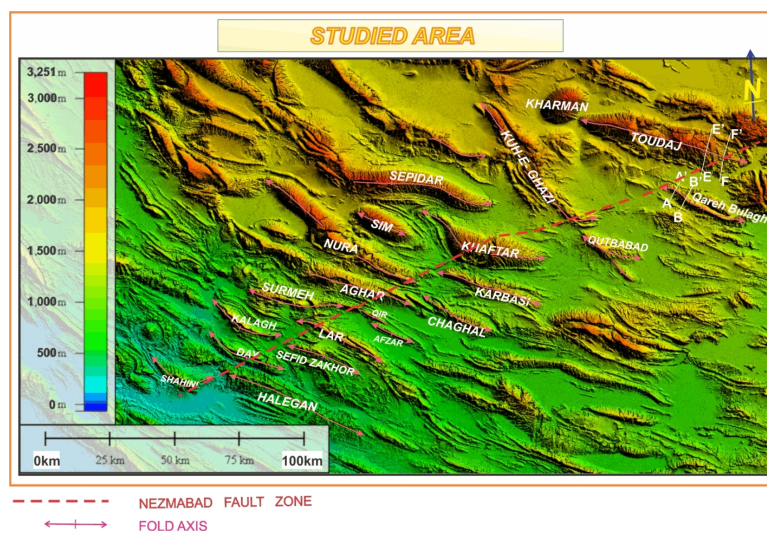


Figure 13. The map pattern of the Nezmabad fault related to surrounding structures.

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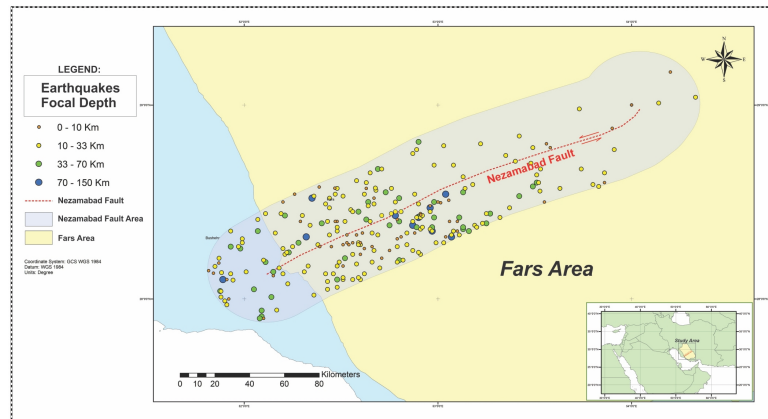


Figure 14. The distribution map of epicenters and focal depths of instrumental earthquakes along the Nezamabad fault.