

Photograph of the Month



Tank track fold in a namakier of Hormoz salt in the Zagros Mountains. ©C.J. Talbot.

Whether they consist of Hormoz salt in the Zagros Mountains or Tertiary salt in central Iran, all the subaerial salt extrusions of Iran are smaller and faster natural models of steady-state mountains where deep crustal

layers extrude (as in the Himalaya). Such mountains maintain approximately steady shapes because the rocks from depth are gravity spread and/or eroded as fast as they extrude.

Most Iranian salt extrusions fountain above releasing bends along strike-slip faults, and, because their distal fronts advances like lava flows or caterpillar-tracks, all develop a fundamental tank track fold like that shown here (with Eric Rogers for scale) and figured in the first paper to describe a salt extrusion in detail (Talbot, 1979).

The salt in this "salt glacier" or namakier flows downslope several dm after rain storms — and one marker has advanced several metres over 20 years — but probably only in the few days it was sufficiently damp. Major folds in the upper limb of the tank track fold resemble Helvetic-type nappes and probably record wet intervals in the last 50,000 years (Talbot and Aftabi, 2004).

Please send comments to jsg@uni-mainz.de.

References

- Talbot, C.J., 1979. Fold trains in a glacier of salt in southern Iran. *Journal of Structural Geology* 1 (1), 5–18.
- Talbot, C.J., Aftabi, P., 2004. Geology and models of salt extrusion at Qum Kuh, Central Iran. *Journal of the Geological Society London* 161, 1–14.

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