# BIOSTRATIGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE ILAM AND GURPI FORMATIONS BASED ON PLANKTONIC FORAMINIFERA IN SE OF SHIRAZ, IRAN

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## Abstract

The study of planktonic foraminifera of the Ilam and Gurpi formations at Sarvestan area (SE of Shiraz) enables me to find the most standard biozones defined in mediterranean regions, especially Tethysian domain. Seven biozones were determined. Biozones I (*Dicarinella concavata* zone) and II (*Dicarinella asymetrica* zone) belong to the Ilam Formation and indicate the Late Coniacian-Early Santonian and Middle-Late Santonian, respectively. Biozones III to VII were determined from the Gurpi Formation. Biozones III (*Globotruncanita elevata* zone), IV (*Globotruncana ventricosa* zone) and V (*Globotruncanita calcarata* zone) represent the Early, Middle and Late Campanian, respectively. Biozones VI (*Globotruncanita stuarti* zone ) and VII (*Gansserina gansseri* zone) suggest the Early and Middle Maastrichtian, respectively. In the Late Maastrichtian, due to decreasing in water depth at the study area, *Abathomphalus mayaroensis* zone defined in Tethysian domain, was not recognised.

Keywords: Ilam Formation; Gurpi Formation; Upper Cretaceous; Planktonic Foraminifera; Biozonation

## Introduction

The Ilam and Gurpi formations are part of the Upper Cretaceous deposits in the Zagros basin.

Deposition of the Ilam and Gurpi formations was coincident with broad marine transgression during Upper Cretaceous.

The plagic argillaceous limestone of the Ilam Formation and shale and marl of the Gurpi Formation were deposited in deep marine environment, while the nereitic carbonate of the Ilam Formation were laid down over shallower areas of the Zagros basin.

Lithologically, the Ilam Formation at the type section (E: 46° 19' 06", N: 33° 35' 09") consists of 190 meters, well bedded grey argillaceous limestones and interlayering thin beds of shale [15,22,27]. The Ilam Formation disconformabaly overlies grey shales of Surgah Formation at the type section.

The Gurpi Frormation at the type section (E:  $49^{\circ}13'$  47", N:  $32^{\circ}26'50"$ ) is composed of 320 meters grey to

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blue marl and shale beds and occasionally thin beds of argillaceous limestones [7,15,22,27].

The Gurpi Formation overlies the Ilam Formation and is disconformably overlain by the Pabdeh Formation at the type section.

Microfauna of the Ilam and Gurpi formations were studied by Kalantary, Jalali and Zahiri [14,16-18,35]. The zonal scheme of the formations established by Wynd and then discussed by Bolz [3,34].

The main purpose of this research was to establish a biostratigraphic zonation and correlation with other universally accepted standard biozones.

#### **Study Area and Methodology**

The studied area is located 50 km to the southeast of Shiraz (Fig. 1). Fieldwork was concentrated at the Sarvestan area. With coordinations of E: 52° 51′; N: 27° 17′.

The thickness of the Ilam Formation is 50 meters and consists of well bedded argillaceous limestone with intercalation of thin beds of shale. This formation unconformably overlies limestone of the Sarvak Formation.

The thickness of the Gurpi Formation is 245 meters of grey marl, calcareous pyritic shale and argillaceous limestones. It conformably overlies the Ilam Formation and is overlain by the Tarbur Formation.

The section was studied in detail. Samples were taken almost every 2 meters. Approximately 145 samples were collected. Hard samples were studied by making thin sections. About 100 g of each dried soft sample was processed by repeated freezing and thawing until disaggregated (usually two or three cycles) in a sodium supersaturated solution of sulphate. Disaggregated sediments were washed thoroughly through a 63 µm sieve, taking care not to lose any sediment, and the residues were separated by filteration and dried overnight. Dried residues were then size sorted through sieves at haif-phi intervals from 500 µm down to 63 µm. Foraminifera were picked and studied from the residue in the 250-355 µm size fraction.

Foraminifera were studied in thin sections and electronic microscope, after particular processes had been carried out.

Foraminiferal taxonomy and nomenclature follows Leoblich and Tappan, Sliter, Hart *et al.*, Longoria and VonFeldt and Georgescu [10,12,19,20,30].

## **Results and Discussion**

#### **Biostratigraphy**

Planktonic foraminifera have proved to be vital in intercontinental biostratigraphy of the Upper Cretaceous

and younger marine sequences. The value of these foraminifera for Correlation has been discussed at length by Bandy [1,2].

Planktonic foraminifera are abundance and diverse in most samples of the Ilam and Gurpi formations at the studied area. Eight genera and 24 species of planktonic forams were recognized. The zonal scheme presented here consists of 7 zones on the basis of the stratigraphic distribution of planktonic foraminifera recognized in thin sections and isolated specimens (Fig. 2).

Biozones I and II occur in the Ilam Formation and biozones III-VII are in the Gurpi Formation.

## I- Dicarinella concavata zone

Author: Sigal [28]

Definition: Interval zone from the first appearance of *Dicarinella concavata* (Brotzen) to the first appearance of *D. asymetrica* (Sigal).

Characteristics: The dominant taxa belong to Marginotruncana renzi (Gandolfi), M. sigali (Reichel), M. schneegansi (Sigal), M. coronata (Bolli), Dicarinella imbricata (Mornod) and D. primitiva (Dalbiez).

Remarks: The last appearance of *Marginotruncana* sigali, *Dicarinella imbricata* and *D. primitiva* occurs within this zone.

Age: Late Coniacian to Early Santonian.

This biozone was recorded from W. Pacific [21,23], Atlantic realm [11,24,25], W. Tethys [32,33] and Central Tethys [9,29] mostly from the Late Coniacian-Early Santonian.

## II- Dicarinella asymetrica zone

Author: Postoma (*Globotruncana concavata carinata* zone) [26]

Definition: Total range zone of Dicarinella asymetrica

Characteristics: The dominant taxa in this zone are: Dicarinella concavata, Marginotruncana coronata, M. schneegansi, Globotruncana lapparenti Brotzen, G. linneiana (d' Orbigny) and Rosita fornicata (Plummer).

Remarks: The zone contains the last appearance of *Marginotruncana renzi*, *M. schneegansi* and the first appearance of *Globotruncana lapparenti*, *G. linneiana* and *Rosita fornicata*.

Age: Middle-Late Santonian

This zone was introduced form W. Pacific [21,23], Caribbean [11]; W. Tethys [32,33] and Central Tethys [9,29] from the Middle-Late Santonian.

#### III- Globotruncanita elevata zone

Author: Dalbiez [6]

Definition: Partial range zone from the last appearance of *Dicarinella asymetrica* to the first



Figure 1. Locality map of studied area.

appearance of Globotruncana ventricosa White.

Characteristics: Whitin this zone numerous representatives of the genus *Globotruncana*: *G. lapparenti*, *G. linneiana*, *G. arca* (Cushman) and *G. bulloides* Vogler are present. *Rosita fornicata*, *Globotruncanita stuartiformis* (Dalbiez) and *Rugoglobigerina rugosa* (Plummer) are also present.

Remarks: The first appearence of Rugoglobigerina

rugosa occurs within this zone.

Age: Early Campanian.

This zone was recorded from Caribbean [11], W. Tethys [34,35], E. Tethys [8] and Central Tethys [9,29] from the Early Campanian.

## IV- *Globotruncana ventricosa* zone Author: Dalbiez [6]



Figure 2. Distribution and planktonic foraminiferal zonation of the Ilam and Gurpi formations at Sarvestan area.



Figure 2. Continue.

Definition: Interval zone from the first appearance of *Globotruncana ventricosa* to the first appearance of *Globotruncanita calcarata* (Cushman).

Characteristics: Globotruncana lapparenti, G. linneiana, G. arca, G. bulloides, Rosita fornicata, Globotruncanita elevata (Brotzen), Globotruncanita stuartiformis are the most common taxa in this zone.

Age: Middle to early Late Campanian.

This zone was recorded from W. Tethys [34,35] from the Middle to early Late Campanian.

#### V- Globotruncanita calcarata zone

Author: Herm [13]

Definition: Total range zone of *Globotruncanita* calcarata

Characteristics: The dominant taxa in this zone are: Globotruncana lapparenti, G. linneiana, G. arca, G. bulloides, G. ventricosa, G. falsostuarti Sigal, Rosita fornicata, Globotruncanita stuarti (de Lapparent), Globotruncanita stuartiformis, Globotruncanita elevata and Rugoglobigerina rugosa.

Remarks: This zone contains the first appearance of *Globotrucanita stuarti* and *Globotruncana falsostuarti*. The last appearance of *Globotruncanita elevata* is recorded from the top of the zone.

Age: Late Campanian.

This zone was introduced from W. Pacific [21,23], Atlantic realm (Premoli-Silva and Bolli, 1973), W. Tethys [34,35] and Central Tethys [9,29] all from the Late Campanian.

## VI- Globotruncanita stuarti zone

Definition: Partial range zone from the last appearance of *Globotruncanita calcarata* and the first appearance of *Gansserina gansseri* (Bolli).

Characteristics: The dominant taxa belong to genera Globotruncana (lapparenti, linneiana, arca, bulloides, ventricosa, falsostuarti, aegyptica Nakkady) and Globotruncanita (stuartiformis, conica (White)). Morever the species Rosita fornicata and Rugoglobigerina rugosa are present in this zone.

Remarks: The first appearance of *Globotruncana aegyptica* occurs within this zone.

Age: Early Maastrichtian.

This zone was recorded from E. Tethys [8] from the Lower Maastrichtian.

#### VII- Gansserina gansseri zone

Author: Bronnimann [4]

Definition: Interval zone from the first appearance of *Gansserina gansseri*. Due to decreasing in water depth and absence of deep water plankton taxa (the taxa which are vital in biozonation such as *Abathomphalus*)

*mayaroensis*) at the studied area, the upper boundary of this zone is not exactly obvious.

Remarks: The last appearance of several late Cretaceous species, such as *Globotruncana lapparenti*, *G. linneiana*, *G. arca*, *G. bulloides*, *G. ventricosa*, *G. falsostuarti*, *G. aegiptica*, *Rosita fornicata*, *Globotruncanita stuarti* and *Globotruncanita conica* occur within this zone. The first appearance of *Rosita contusa* (Cushman) is also recorded from this zone.

Age: Middle Maastrichtian.

This zone has recorded from W. Pacific [5,21,23], Atlantic realm [11,31], W. Tethys [34,35] and Central Tethys [9,29] mostly from the Middle Maastrichtian.

Table 1 also shows the correlation of the proposed biostratigraphic zonation in this study with some zonal schemes from different localities. The proposed scheme most closely resembles those of Fleury, Caron and Sliter [5,9,30]. The differences are mostly in the Early Maastrichtian, especially with the zonal scheme of Caron and Sliter [5,30]. Globotruncanella havanensis (Voorwijk) is absent, and Globotruncana aegyptica is rare in the studied area. Therefore Globotruncanella havanensis and Globotruncana aegyptica zones are not recognized at this area. In the Late Maastrichtian, water depth declines and limestones of the Tarbur Formation (deposited in shallower neritic water) overlies the Gurpi Formation, therefore the recognition of Abathomphalus mayaroensis zone introduced from the different basin is not possible at this area.

#### Conclusions

(a) Eight genera and 24 species of planktonic foraminifera were identified from the Ilam and Gurpi formations at Kohanjan area in SE of Shiraz.

(b) Seven biozones including: I-Dicarinella concavata, II-Dicarinella asymetrica, III-Globotruncanaita elevata, IV-Globotruncana ventricosa, V-Globotruncanita calcarata, VI-Globotruncanita stuarti and VII-Gansserina gansseri were determined.

(c) Biozones I and II belong to the Ilam Formation and indicate the Uppermost Coniacian-Early Santonian and Middle-Late Santonian, respectively. Biozones III-VII were defined in the Gurpi Formation. Biozones III, IV and V represent the Early, Middle and Late Campanian, respectively. Biozones VI and VII show the Early and Middle Maastrichtian, respectively.

(d) The proposed zonal scheme most closely resembles those of Fleury, Caron and Sliter [5,9,30].

(e) Due to decreasing in water depth in the Upper Maastrichtian, *Abathomphalus mayaroensis* zone defined from the Tethysian domain but it was not recognised at the studied area.

STAGE	James and Wynd [15]	Barr (1972) Sigal [29]	Caron [5]	Sliter [30]	
m.y.	Zagros	Central Tethys	Tethys	Tethys	Sarvestan Area (1380)
65	Abathomphalus mayaroensis	Abathomphalus mayaroensis	Abathomphalus mayaroensis	Abathomphalus mayaroensis	
AASTRICHTIAN	Globotruncana stuarti + Pseudotextularia varians	gansseri	Gansserina gansseri	Gansserina gansseri	Gansserina gansseri
		stuarti + falsostuarti	Globotruncana aegyptica	Globotruncana aegyptica	Globotruncanita stuarti
70			Globotruncana havanesis	Globotruncana havanesis	
CAMPANIAN 28	Globotruncana elevata, elevata	calcarata	Globotruncanita calcarata	Globotruncanita calcarata	Globotruncanita calcarata
		elevata + stuartiformis	Globotruncana ventricosa	Globotruncana ventricosa	Globotruncana ventricosa
			Globotruncanita elevata	Globotruncanita elevate	Globotruncanita elevate
SANTONIAN	Globotruncana cancavata + ventricosa carinata	cancavata carinata	Dicarinella asymetrica	Dicarinella asymetrica	Dicarinella asymetrica
82					
JACIAN	Globotruncana schneegansi + sigali	cancavata	Dicarinella cancavata	Dicarinella cancavata	Dicarinella cancavata
CO CO 86			Dicarinella primitiva		

**Table 1.** Correlation of the proposed biostratigraphic zonal scheme at this study with other accepted standard biozones of other parts of the world



Plate 1.



Plate 2.



Plate 3.



Plate 4.



Plate 5.



Plate 6.



Plate 7.

## **Explanation of Plate 1**

Figs. 1-3: *Globotruncana aegyptiaca* Nakkady, 1950, 1: Dorsal view, ×110 2: Lateral view, ×140 3. Ventral view, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early-Middle Maastirchtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Figs. 4-6: *Rosita fornicata* Plummer, 1931, 4: Dorsal view, ×85 5: Lateral view, ×110 6: Ventral view, ×80 Formations: Ilam & Gurpi Age: Middle Santonian-Early Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Figs 7-9 *Globotruncanita stuartiformis* Dalbiez, 1955, 7: Dorsal view, ×100 8: Lateral view, ×110 9: Ventral view, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Figs. 10-12: *Globotruncanita conica* White, 1928, 10: Dorsal view, ×75 11: Lateral view, ×110 12: Ventral view, ×90 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Figs. 13-15: Rugotruncana subcircumndifer Gandolfi.
1955,
13: Dorsal view, ×100
14: Lateral view, ×110
15: Ventral view, ×90
Formation: Gurpi
Age: Late Campanian-Late Maastrichtian
Locality; S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

#### **Explanation of Plate 2**

Figs 1-3: *Rosita contusa* Cushman, 1926, 1: Dorsal view, ×85 2: Lateral view, ×130 3: Ventral view, ×75 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area Figs. 4-6: *Globotruncanita stuarti* De Lapparent, 1918,
4: Dorsal view, ×100
5: Lateral view, ×130
6: Ventral view, ×100
Formation: Gurpi
Age: Late Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian
Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Figs. 7-9: *Globotruncana aegyptiaca* Nakkady, 1950, 7: Dorsal view, ×90 8: Lateral view, ×130 9: Ventral view, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early- Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Figs. 10-12: *Globotruncana arca* Cushman, 1926, 10: Dorsal view, ×100 11: Lateral view, ×130 12: Ventral view, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Figs. 13-15: *Globotruncana linneiana* D'orbigny, 1830, 13: Dorsal view, ×100 14: Lateral view, ×90 15: Ventral view, ×90 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

#### **Explanation of Plate 3**

Figs. 1-3: *Globotruncana lapparenti* Brotzen. 1936, 1: Dorsal view, ×100 2: Lateral view, ×150 3: Ventral view, ×110 Formations: Ilam & Gurpi Age: Late Santonian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Figs. 4-6: *Globotruncana bulloides* Vogler, 1941, 4: Dorsal view, ×100 5: Lateral view, ×150 6: Ventral view, ×110 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Figs. 7-9: *Globotruncana* cf. *falsostuarti* Sigal, 1952, 7: Dorsal view, ×120

8: Lateral view, ×150 9: Ventral view, ×140 Formation: Gurpi Age: Late Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Figs. 10-12: *Globotruncana ventricosa* White, 1928, 10: Dorsal view, ×120 11: Lateral view, ×100 12: Ventral view, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

## **Explanation of Plate 4**

Figs. 1-3: *Gyroidinoides* sp. 1: Ventral view, ×120 2: Lateral view, ×110 3: Dorsal view, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Figs. 4-5: *Lenticulina* sp. 4: Dorsal view, ×100 5: Lateral view, ×120 Formation: Gurpi Age: Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 6: *Heterohelix striata* Ehrenberg, 1840, 6: Ventral view, ×110 Formations: Ilam & Gurpi Age: Late Santonian-Late Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 7: *Tritaxia* sp. 7: Dorsal view, ×110 Formation: Gurpi Age: Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Figs. 8-9: *Heterohelix globulosa* Ehernberg, 1840, 8: Lateral view, ×110 9: Ventral view, ×110 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

### **Explanation of Plate 5**

Fig. 1: *Dicarinella asymetrica* Sigal, 1952, 1: Axial section, ×100

Formation: Ilam Age: Santonian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 2: *Dicarinella concavata* Brotzen, 1934, 2: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Ilam Age: Late Coniacian-Late Santonian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 3: *Dicarinella imbricata* Mornod, 1949, 3: Axial section, ×100 Formation:. Ilam Age: Late Coniacian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 4: *Marginotruncana sigali* Reichel, 1950, 4: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Ilam Age: Late Coniacian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 5: *Marginotruncana renzi* Gandolfi, 1942, 5: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Ilam Age: Late Coniacian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 6: *Globotruncana angusticarinata* 6: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Ilam Age: Late Coniacian-Early Santonian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 7: *Dicarinella primitiva* Dalbiez, 1955, 7: Axial section, ×200 Formation: Ilam Age: Late Coniacian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 8: *Globotruncana lapparenti* Brotzen, 1934, 8: Axial section, ×100 Formations: Ilam & Gurpi Age: Middle Santonian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 9: *Globotruncanita elevata* Brotzen, 1934, 9: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Campanian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 10: Globotruncanita calcarata Cushman, 1927,

10: Axial section, ×100 13: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Middle-Late Campanian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

## **Explanation of Plate 6**

Fig. 1: *Globotruncana aegyptiaca* Tilev, 1951, 1: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Ilam Age: Early-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 2: *Globotruncanita calcarata* Cushman, 1927, 2: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Middle-Late Campanian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 3: *Globotruncana bulloides* Vogler, 1941, 3: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 4: *Globotruncanita stuartiformis* Dalbiez, 1955, 4: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 5: *Rosita fornicata* Plummer, 1931, 5: Axial section, ×100 Formations: Ilam & Gurpi Age: Middle Santonian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 6: *Globtruncana linneiana* D'orbigny, 1839, 6: Axial section, ×200 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 7: *Globotruncanita conica* White, 1928, 7: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area Fig. 8: *Rosita contusa* Cushman, 1928, 8: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

## **Explanation of Plate 7**

Fig. 1: *Globotruncana falsostuarti* Sigal, 1952, 1: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Late Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 2: *Globotruncana ventricosa* White, 1928, 2: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 3: *Globotruncanita stuarti* De'lapparent, 3: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Late Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 4: *Marginotruncana coronata* Bolli, 1945, 4: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Ilam Age: Late Campanian-Late Santonian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Figs. 5, 8: *Gansserina gansseri* Robaszynski & Caron. 5: Axial section, ×100 8: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 6: *Rugoglobigerina rugosa* Plummer, 1926, 6: Axial section, ×200 Formation: Gurpi Age: Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

Fig. 7: *Globotruncana arca* Cushman, 1926, 7: Axial section, ×100 Formation: Gurpi Age: Early Campanian-Middle Maastrichtian Locality: S.E. Shiraz, Sarvestan Area

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