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## **Balochi gw(a)á-, Pahlavi -w(a)á- and New Persian -bá-: Preservation and Loss of /g/ in Iranian Historical Phonology**

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### **Abstract:**

*Balochi is the only ancient language of Iran, which has still preserved its phonological, morphological and syntactical structures, while the other modern Iranian languages mostly lost their ancient phonological, morphological and syntactical structures. In this research paper, the preservation of proto-Iranian (PI) sound of Balochi gw(a)á- which is converted -w(a)á- in Pahlavi and -bá- in other Iranian languages. the other ancient languages like Avesta (Av), Old Persian (OP), and Pahlavi Aškānī (PahAš) have lost the -/g/- of gw(a)á- and converted it -w(a)á- in Pahlavi and -bá- in New Persian. In this paper, we will thoroughly study the sound gw(a)á- and w(a)á- and Persian bá- to know the reduction of old Iranian /g/ sound, its reduction in Pahlavi (Pah) and New Persian and preservation in the Balochi language.*

**Keywords:** Balochi, Pahlavi, New Persian, sound reduction, sound change and sound preservation

### **Introduction:**

The Balochi language is one of the ancient Northwestern Iranian languages, belonging to the broader Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. It shows deep historical and structural relationships with Median, Avestan, Old Persian, and Arsacid Pahlavi (*Aškānī Pahlavī*), which, in this study, is regarded as (Middle Balochi). Beyond these historical connections, Balochi has preserved an outstanding number of Proto-Iranian (PI) and Proto-

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Indo-European (PIE) phonological features, many of which have been lost or significantly changed in other modern Iranian languages.

Among the contemporary Iranian languages, Balochi stands out for its exceptional conservatism, mainly in phonology, verbal morphology, and grammatical structure. As noted by Agnes Korn, Balochi has retained archaic phonological and morphosyntactic features that have disappeared elsewhere in the Iranian linguistic continuum. She emphasizes that a serious comparative study of Iranian languages necessitates familiarity with Balochi, as it provides critical evidence for reconstructing older Iranian linguistic stages. (Korn; 17:2003)

One of the most salient features of Balochi is its retention of ancient Iranian consonantal sounds, such as *ç*, *p*, *t*, *j*, *k*, *g*, *gw*, *gwa*, and *gwá*, which have undergone regular phonological shifts in other Iranian languages. In Modern Persian, these sounds have frequently changed into *z*, *b*, *d*, *h*, and *h*, reflecting widespread processes of lenition, spirantization, and labialization.

For example, Balochi *réc* ‘to pour’ corresponds directly with Av. *réc* and Pahl. *réc*, whereas New Persian has shifted the sound to *réz*, replacing *ç* with *z*. Similarly, Balochi *ábát* ‘cultivated, prosperous’ conserves the ancient *t*, in alignment with Avestan and Pahlavi *ábát*, while New Persian *ābād* reflects a voiced dental stop (*t > d*). Another descriptive example is Balochi *kadag* ‘house, home’, which corresponds with Pahlavi *kadag*, whereas New Persian *kadah* shows a shift from *k* to *h*.

Predominantly, Balochi’s preservation of the Proto-Iranian labiovelar clusters *gwa*- and *gwá*-, while Pahlavi simplified these clusters to *-wá*-, and Modern Persian further reduced them to *bá(a)*-, Balochi has retained their original phonetic structure. For example, Balochi *gwát* ‘air, wind’ corresponds to Pahlavi *wāt* (air, wind) and Persian *bād* (air, wind), where New Persian reflects both the reduction of *gw/w* to *b* and the voicing of *t* to *d*. Likewise, Balochi *gwar* ‘side, breast’ aligns with Pahlavi *war* and Persian *bar*, again demonstrating the systematic phonological innovations in Persian in contrast to Balochi’s conservatism.

This article primarily observes the historical development and phonological transformation of the *gwá(a)* in Balochi, *wá(a)*- in Pahlavi and *bá(a)*- in Persian clusters transversely ancient and modern Iranian languages, with specific emphasis on Balochi as the most conservative source of these archaic forms. Through comparative analysis, the study highlights Balochi’s central role in understanding the phonological evolution of Iranian languages and in reconstructing their ancient linguistic heritage.

### Review of Literature:

*According to Mockler , the Balochi is an Aryan tongue of the Iranian group, and appears to be a sister language to the Pehlavee, on which at any rate branched off from the Old Persian (OP), about the same time as the Pehlavee(Pahlavī) did, and may, I think be fairly considered and offshoot of Old Persian, developed in Makrán, and to this extent an original language(Mockler; ix:1877)*

*As said by Dames, ‘Balochi belongs to the eastern group of Iranian languages. It is more similar to the Old Persian (OP), than Avesta (Dames; 1913:633), while Grierson describes that ‘linking Balochi with the Old Persian (OP) is not true. Old Persian was the language of Achaemenid Empire, but the Balochi language has its own individual importance, which is very similar to the Old Avestan than Old Persian. (Grierson; 1921:327).*

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*Todesco relates the Balochi language as the part of northwestern Iranian family languages (Todesco: 1921: 252), Mackenzie relates it as Median area and Macdonell relates it to the Avestan branch of Median territory (Macdonell;1927:197)*

*Mayer is possibly the first who considers the Baloch to be the remnants of Medians or western Iranians whose language bears signs of affinity to the language of Medes. The later linguists and scholars approved this concept. In 1925, Gilbertson found certain affinities between Kurdish and Balochi, but Todesco placed pre-Balochi in the center of western Iran (Media Greater) or Zagros range, but names refer to the abode of it to be around the Caspian Coasts (Cosa-bír, a Baloch tribe), Todesco, however, puts pre-Balochi among the North-western dialects of west Iran, including the present Caspian dialects like, Taylshi (Tayl), Gilaki (Gil), Mazandarani (Maz) and Semnani (Sem).*

*Mackenzie (1961) & Paul Ludwig (2008) also places Kurdish in north or northeast of Persia (the ancient Perso region of Iran). Balochi in central-west Iran (the Media area). Todesco recognized Parthian (Aškání Pahlavi) as Northwestern dialect belonging to the Balochi-Caspian group in the Zagros-hills (Media Greater) rather than Alburz hills (Media Raghae). Windfuhr (1975) in his isoglosses, Sketch on Persia and Parthians, Kurds and Medes, writes that Kurdish shares a number of features with the Median (Med) band of dialects. However, it also exhibits a cluster of innovations and lexical items which it shares with dialect group now adjacent to Kurdi, namely Persian and Balochi, he includes both Balochi and Bakhtiyari in the Northwestern group of Iranian languages. Mason writes that 'Balochi is another Aryan language akin to Old Persian (Old Iranian (OI), Achaemenid /Median). (Mason; 1945: 325)*

*According to the German linguist Geiger 'Balochi is very alike to the Pahlavi and retained its Old Iranian sounds, while Morgenstierne deliberates it western Iranian language. He illustrates that while Balochi is a western Iranian language which is now spoken in eastern Iran, but quite different from Eastern Iranian languages and its very near to the Old Persian. (Morgenstierne; 1969:57).*

*Brevity being the soul of wit, the Baloch (Balochi) Language should be one of the wittiest in the world. We may consider it that the Balochi is the remnant of the Old Median (OM), silver-breasted kingdom; well horsed and famous for their mares (Madhián). (Mayer, Preface. I: 1975)*

*According to Prof Haug the Pahlavi language developed from the mixture of Semitic and Iranian elements on the frontier of Persia and Chaldea in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Later it split into two distinct dialects. the 1<sup>st</sup> Chaldeo-Pahlavi developed during the Arsacid Period (249 BC-227AD) and the other called Sassanian Pahlavi, developed in the Sassanid period (228 AD-632AD). D.R Shifqi writes that the word 'Pahlavi' originates from Parazav, and Arsacid tribe (akin to the Baloch tribe Puzh). (Mengal: 1990:4)*

*According to Sadiq Kiya, an Iranian linguist, 'Parazav or Puž which comes in the Perso-Arabic books of the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD, as Pužak or Prazák a variation seen, in other proper names denoting peoples such as Muğ or Muğak. Kird, Kurd or Kurdak and Gil or Gilak,*

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*Er or Erak. The Purzae, like Dahae and Sagadi was a Saka tribe who the Achaemenid inscriptions mention as 'Parthva'. (Mengal: 1990:5).*

*In view of Elfenbein, "Balochi belongs to the eastern group of Iranian Languages like Parthian (Parth) or Arsacid Pahlavi (Aškanī Pahlavī). The predecessor of Balochi was neither Parthian nor middle Persian (Sassanid Pahlavi) but a lost language which thus while sharing a number of characteristic features with either, some with both, had a pronounced individuality of his own. This language may have been a variety of Median speech since the Kurdish dialects, which have a noteworthy affinity with Balochi are to be traced, in Minorasky's opinion, to the ancient Median". (Ency. of Islam, Vol.1,1960/Mengal:1990:7).*

*'No doubts, Balochi stands closer to the Achaemenids, the court language of the Achaemenid kings who spoke Persian (Old Persian) at home and also shares features with the Avesta dialect of Median language, the one in the Gathas or Hymens of secrets knowledge', called Gat in Balochi. (Ency. of Islam, Vol. 1,1960/Mengal: 7:1990).*

*According to the phonemical characters, the Balochi language is more similar to Avesta and Pahlavi, and it looks like the Balochi is older than the Dari and Persian and contemporary to the Pahlavi (Aškanī and Sāsānī). (Siddiqui; 2001: 205).*

*Balochi is in all prerequisites a northwestern Iranian language, closely related to the middle Iranian Parthian (Pahlavī Aškanī) and modern Kurdish, Tātī, Taylšī and other dialects of northwestern Iran. The Balochi language, which is nearly similar to the Old Persian (also Avesta), the court language of Achaemenid is very older than Old Persian. (Buzdar; 2024:25)*

### ***Balochi gwá-, Pahlaví -wá- and Persian bá-:***

Linguists are divided regarding the origin and classification of the Pahlavi language. A considerable number of scholars associate *Pahlaví* with the Median language, while others consider it as a mixture of linguistic system influenced by both Aramaic and Iranian elements. However, according to the contemporary linguists, neither of these explanations adequately accounts for the historical and topographical realities of Pahlavi, mainly *Pahlavī Aškanī*, which is predictably identified as the language of the Parthians.

Historical evidences illustrate that *Pahlavī Aškanī* was spoken primarily in the northeastern regions of the Alburz Mountains, extending across Khorasan, present-day Balochistan, and parts of modern Afghanistan regions that are historically and contemporarily inhabited by Baloch people. On this basis, modern theorists argue that the Parthians were either Baloch or direct ancestors of the Baloch people, and that the *Pahlavī Aškanī* (Parthian also Arsacid Pahlavi) signifies a dialect of Middle Balochi, matching most closely to what is now known as the *Raxšānī Balōčī* (Rakhshani dialect of the Balochi language).

Balochi exhibits wide structural and lexical similarities with Parthian or *Aškanī Pahlavi*. At the same time, Balochi preserves linguistic topographies of even greater antiquity, features that pre-exist not only Pahlavi and Avesta, but also Median and Old Persian. One such character is the prefix *gwá-*, which represents an older Proto-Iranian form than the *-wá-* showed

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in Pahlavi and Avesta. In these latter languages, the Proto-Iranian initial /g/ was lost (e.g., (g)wá > wá), whereas Balochi has constantly retained this consonant, preserving the archaic form gwá-.

Here we elucidate some examples of the loss of /g/ >w and the gwá >wá- and also analyses the preservation of /g/ namely gwá in Balochi.

**gwáč** 'to whisper', Pah. wáč 'to whisper', NP. zamzama 'to whisper'.

**gwáčénag** 'to abduct, take someone by force', Pah. wáčitan 'to abduct, take someone by force', NP. burdan, hamal kardan 'to abduct, take someone by force'.

**gwáč kurtan.** 'Pray before eating food', Pah. wáč kartan 'pray before eating food', NP. duá xwandan péš az gízá xórdan 'pray before eating food'.

**gwáč(z)íg** 'to play', Pah. wáčíg(k) 'to play', NP. bází 'to play'. In Balochi sometimes ç > z in a few dialects. For example, tírání gwáčí(g) buag 'come under bullets'.

**gwáčíšt** 'abduction, taken by force', Pah. wáčíšn 'abduction, taken by force' NP. amal burden 'abduction, taken by force', here the Persian has lost root word completely.

**gwahmán** 'excuses, why and wherefore, reasons and explanations', Pah. wáhmán 'excuses, why and wherefore, reasons and explanations', NP. čunén o čunán 'excuses, why and wherefore, reason and explanation'. Persian has lost the root word and adopted a new word. For example, pilán o gwahmán kanag 'to make excuses for not doing a work or a thing', in Persian, bahána kardan 'make excuses'.

**gwál (-ag)** 'saddlebag' also hurjín in Balochi, Pah. gwál(ak), NP. xurjín 'saddlebag'. Bal. gwál(ag)-dóc 'saddlebag stitcher, saddlebag needle', Pah. gwál(ak)-dóc 'saddlebag stitcher, saddlebag needle', NP. juwál-dúz 'saddlebag stitcher, saddlebag needle'.

**gwám** 'step' also gám, Pah. gám 'step', NP. gám, qadam 'step'. Bal. g(w)ám janag /g(w)ámēnag 'step forward', Pah. gámītan 'step forward', NP. qadam ba jalo 'step forward'. In Persian it may be gāmīdan, but this is not used commonly.

**gwáménag** 'vomiting', Pah. wámītan 'vomiting', NP. istifrág kardan 'vomiting'.

**gwán** 'attack, assault', Pah. wán 'attack, assault', NP. hamla 'attack, assault'.

**gwáništ** 'victory, success', Pah. wánišn 'victory, success', NP. píruzí 'victory, success'.

**gwánk** 'call' (Hashmi: 2000: 704), Pah. wánk 'call', P. báng 'call'. In common Balochi, báng (a Persian form) is used for call for prayers, but bang is not Balochi form. For example, sangatán gwánk jan it ke nán tayár int 'call the friends that the food is ready'. Bal. gwánk jatan 'to call, call someone', Pah. wánk zatan 'to call, call someone P. bang zadan, faryád kardan 'to call, call someone'. Bal. gwánk dayag 'to call someone', Pah. váng(k) zatan 'to call someone', NP. báng zadan, faryád kardan 'to call someone', Bal. gwánk janag 'to call someone', váng zatan 'to call someone', bang zadan 'to call someone', Bal. gwánk kaššag 'to shout, scream', Pah. váng kaššitan 'to shout, scream', NP. bang kašīdan, sadá buland kardan 'to shout, scream',

**gwánzag** 'cradle, cot' (Hashmi: 2000:704), Pah. wánz(ak) 'cradle, cot', NP. gázeh 'cradle, cot'.

**gwáp** 'texture' (Hashmi: 2000: 704), Pah. wá(f)p 'texture, weave', NP. báf 'texture, weave'. Bal. gwapag 'to texture, weave' Pah. wáf(p)tan 'to texture, weave', P. báftan 'to texture, weave' Bal. gwaptag 'textured, weaved', Pah. wáf(p)tan 'textured, weaved',



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- NP. *bafta šuda* 'textured, weaved'. Bal. *gwaptagén* 'textured, weaved', Pah. *váf(p)titan* 'textured, weaved', NP. *bafta šuda* 'textured, weaved'.
- gwapš** 'cool, cold', Pah. *vapš* 'cool, cold', NP. *sard, xunak* 'cool, cold', Bal. *gwapšén šap* 'cold night', Pah. *vapš i šap* 'cold night', NP. *šab e xunak, šab e sard* 'cold night'. for example, *gwapšén bán(m)gwáhé jahjatag bél o sangatán* 'in the cool morning, friends and companions arose'. (jahandideh: 2041-2042)
- gwár** 'to rain, raining' (Hashmi:2000: 703) also *haur e gwárag* 'raining of the rain' in Balochi 'haur is noun used for rain and the opening of rain is called as gwárag, Pah. *wár* to rain, raining', NP. *báridan* 'to rain, raining'.
- gwárán** 'rain', Pah. *warán* 'rain', NP. *báran* 'rain'.
- gwáránig áp** 'the rain water', Pah. *waránig áp* 'the rain water', NP. *áb e báran* 'the rain water'.
- gwáránig** 'pertaining to rain', Pah. *waránig(k)* 'pertaining to rain', NP. *báraní* 'pertaining to rain'.
- gwárišt** 'the process of raining', Pah. *wárišn* 'raining', NP. *báriš* 'raining'.
- gwáritan or gwárenag** 'cause to rain', Pah. *wáritan* 'cause to rain', Pah. *báridan* 'to rain'.
- gwášag** 'to say, say a word', Pah. *wáčag* 'to say, say a word', NP. *wážah* 'word'.
- gwástar** 'meadow, grassland, pasture' Pah. *wástar* meadow, pasture, grassland'. NP. *muratta, čarágáh* 'meadow, grassland, pasture'.
- gwát** 'wind, air'(Jahandideh:1347 hij :2026-2027; Hashmi; 2000:702), Pah. *wát* 'wind, air', NP. *bád* 'wind, air'. Bal. *gwát kaššít* 'the wind blows', NP. *bád míwazad* 'the wind blows', Ba. v. *gwát janag* ', P. *wázidan e bád* 'blowing of wind', Bal. *gwát dayag* 'to fill air/wind in someone or ignite someone', NP. *pur az bád kardan* 'to ignite some for fighting', Bal. *gwát girag* 'fill up with air', NP. *warm kardan* 'full up with air'.
- gwátám čamm** 'almond-eyed', Pah. *wátám čašm* 'almond-eyed', NP. *bádám čašm* 'almond-eyed'. In some dialects of the Balochi language the sound gwá- is has been changed into bá-, because of Persian language dominancy in western Balochistan, where Balochi is not the language of communication as well as the language of education.
- gwát-bar** 'air-taker, wind-taker', Pah. *wát-bar* 'air-taker, wind-taker', NP. *bád-bar* 'air-taker, wind-taker'. the wind which takes the sand and dust particles beneath the trees. (Jahandideh: 1394hj.p.2028)
- gwát-band** (jahandideh: 1394 hij: 2028) 'the place where the wind does not pass through', Pah. *wát-band* 'the place where the wind does not pass through', in NP this word does not exist in the dictionaries. but this may be 'band e bád'.
- gwát-dar** 'air channel, wind channel'(Jahandideh; 1347 hij: 2028), Pah. *wát-dar* 'air channel, wind channel', NP. *bád-dar* 'air or wind channel'.
- gwát-dém** 'wind-way', Pah. *wát-dém* 'wind-way', NP. *jái ke dar muqábil e waziš e bád bášad* 'the place where the wind passes through'.
- gwátám** 'almond', Pah. *wátám* 'almond', NP. *bádám e kóhí* 'almond'. (jahandideh, 1394jh. 2028).
- gwátáp** 'air and water', Pah. *wátáp* 'air and water', NP. *bádáb* 'air and water'. Balochi *gwát-ápus* 'telling lie'
- gwátgard** 'Tornado, cyclone' also *siyáh-gwát*, Pah. *wát-gart* also *siyáh-wát* 'tornado, cyclone', NP. *gard-bád* 'tornado, cyclone'.
- gwátgír** 'palace, a building'(Hashmi; 2000: 702; Jahandideh:, *wátgír* 'palace, a building', P. *bádgír* 'palace, building'. Basically, gwátgír is a multi-storied building with several
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- windows in which the air enters easily and passes through all room and all storeys. For example, the Baloch poet Mullah Fazul narrates, *ništag kamán-miyán mán gwátgíré nakšén* 'the gorgeous lady was sitting in the Palace'.
- gwátár** 'the thing which brings water', Pah. wátár 'the thing which brings water', NP. bádár 'the thing which brings water'.
- gwátás** 'grindstone, watermill', Pah. wátás 'grindstone, watermill', NP. ásyáb 'grindstone, watermill'.
- gwátdamag(k)** 'wind direction', Pah. wátdamak 'wind direction', NP. dama e bád 'wind direction'.
- gwátén** 'of wind', Pah. wátén 'of wind', NP. bádén or az hawá 'of wind'.
- gwátgard(t)ag** 'air circulation, wind circulation', Pah. wátgartak 'air circulation, wind circulation', NP. gard e bád 'air circulation, wind circulation'.
- gwátgeh** 'clean air', wátvéh 'clean air', P. hawá í xúb 'clean air'.
- gwátgír** 'palace, edifice', Pah. wátgír 'palace, edifice', P. bádígír 'palace, edifice'.
- gwátgis** 'wind-house', Pah. wátgis 'wind-house', P. bádígés 'wind-house'.
- gwát-gól** 'whirlwind', Pah. wá-gól 'whirlwind', NP. gard o bád 'whirlwind'.
- gwát-gwárán** 'rain with stormy wind', Pah. wát-wárán 'rain with stormy wind', NP. báridan dar bád 'rain with stormy wind'. The rain which comes with stormy wind like the tornado or cyclone and destruct all things.
- gwát-gwattir** 'bad-air, bad-wind', Pah. wátwattir 'bad-air, bad wind', NP. bád e badtir 'bad-air, bad-wind'.
- gwátíg** 'of wind, related to wind', Pah. wátík(g) 'of wind, related to wind', NP. bádí 'of wind, related to wind'.
- gwátpán** 'sail', Pah. wátpán 'sail', NP. bádbán 'sail'.
- gwátpull** 'a flower or blossom that does not give seeds', Pah. wát-pull 'a flower or blossom that does not give seeds', NP. gul e bád 'a flower or blossom that does not give seeds. (
- gwátring bó(e)** 'cucumber smelled', Pah. wátring bó(e) 'cucumber smelled', NP. bádring bó(e) 'cucumber smelled'.
- gwátring** 'cucumber', Pah. wátring 'cucumber', NP. bádring 'cucumber'.
- gwát(o)-róp** 'basil' in Balochi it's also call názbó, Pah. wát-róp 'basil', NP. niyázbó 'basil'.
- gwát-šalwár** 'aired-pant' (jahandideh: 2029), Pah. wát-šal(r)wár 'aired pant', NP. bád dar šalwár 'aired-pant'.
- gwáz** 'breadth, vastness, a measurement', Pah. wáz 'breadth, vastness, a measurement', NP. vas 'at, gustardagí 'vastness, breadth'. Bal. gwáz kanag 'to pass through, to measure', Pah. wázítan 'to pass through, to measure', NP. ubúr kardan, guzar kardan 'to pass through to pass into',
- gwázišt** ' ', Pah. wázišn 'passing' NP. nawaxtan álat e músíqí 'musical instrument'.
- gwázénag** 'to pass someone to', Pah. wázítan 'to pass someone to', NP. guzrandan 'to pass someone to'.
- gwázíg** 'to play', Pah. wázíg 'to play', NP. bází 'to play'. Bal. gwází(g) kanag 'to play', wázítan 'to play', NP. bází kardan 'to play'. Bal. gwází(g) barag 'to wind', Pah. wázíg burtan 'to win', NP. barinda šudan dar bází or pírúz šudan 'to win, to be succeeded'. Bal. gwází(g)jáh 'playground', wází(g)jáh 'playground', NP. maidán e bází 'playground'. Bal. gwází(g)gir 'actor', Pah. wází(g)gar 'actor', NP. bázígar 'actor'.

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**Bal. gwa- >Pah. wa> NP. ba:**

**gwačak** 'boy, chick', Pah. wačak 'boy, chick', P. bača 'boy'. in modern Balochi, bačakk is commonly used in all dialects, where /g/ has been changed into /b/. The main reason of this change is the dominancy of Persian was the court language of Indian subcontinent, Iran and Afghanistan. The court language of Balochistan was Persian along with Balochi, where the Persian brought a little bit phonological change in Balochi. (Jahandideh:2042)

**gwačak-rang** 'like a boy, like a chick' also bačakk, Pah. wačak-rang 'like a boy, chick', NP. misl e bača 'like a boy'.

**gwahrám** 'Sassanian king of kings', Pah. wahrám 'Sassanian king of kings', p. bahrám 'Sassanian king of kings. this name is also found in other Iranian and Indo-Aryan languages such as Av. Wahrama and Skt. Wahrama or Wahaman.

**gwahrám gór** 'a renowned Sassanian king of Kings', Pah. wahrám gór 'a renowned Sassanian king of kings', P. bahrám gór 'a renowned Sassanian king of kings. The Sassanid ruler of Iran. He was the son of Yazdgerd-I and a great warrior. It is said that after the death of his father, when the struggle for the throne began among the three brothers, the court decided that the 'royal crown' should be placed between two hungry lions and the one among the three princes who brought the crown would be considered worthy of the kingdom. the brothers of Wahrám couldn't courage to snatch the crown from the lion, Wahrám took the crown out of the lion's paws. He defeated the White Hun invaders and hunted them across the Oxus River. The white Huns even vowed not to attack Iran in the future. According to some historians, he had also attacked India and included Sindh and Makran in his empire. He was very fond of hunting, especially the wild ass. Once, while hunting, he got stuck in a swamp and died. (Shahriyari; 2024:83-97 & Ahmadipayam; 2024:164-174)

**gwahrám šát** 'a common Iranian name', Pah. wahrám šát 'a common Iranian name', NP. bahrám šád 'a common Iranian name'.

**gwahrám wand(đ)** 'name of a place', Pah. wahrám wand 'name of a place', NP. bahrám wand 'name of a place'.

**gwahrámán** 'pertaining to the Fire of Wahrám', Pah. wahrámán 'pertaining to the Fire of Wahrám', P. bahrámán 'pertaining to the Fire of Wahrám'.

**gwan** 'Pistacia khanjak Pah. wan 'Pistacia khanjak, P.ban 'Pistacia khanjak'.

**gwab(p)z** 'wasp', Pah. vapz 'wasp', NP. zambūr e asal 'wasp'.

**gwanjišk** 'bird, sparrow', Pah. wanjišk 'bird, sparrow', NP. jīnjišk 'bird, sparrow'. In common Balochi, jingul is also used.

**gwap** 'weaving', Pah. wa(f)p 'weaving', NP. báf 'weaving'. Bal. gwaptag 'weaved', Pah. vaf(p)ta 'weaved', NP. bafta-šuda 'weaved'.

**gwar** 'breast, side', Pah. war 'breast, side', NP. bar, pistán 'breast, side'. Bal. gwar-jámag 'worn-shirt'. Pah. var-jámag(k) 'worn-shirt', NP. bar-jáma 'worn-shirt'.

**gwarag** 'lamb', Pah. warag(k) 'lamb', NP. barah 'lamb'

**gwarág** 'crow', Pah. warág 'crow' NP. kalág 'crow'. Ar. guráb 'crow'. the Ar. guráb has been borrowed from Pah. warág or Av. varáh.

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*gwarán* 'lust', Pah. *warán* 'lust' NP. *hawas* 'lust'.

*gwarán kámag* 'lustful', Pah. *warán kámag* 'lustful', NP. *mail ba šahwat* 'to wish for lust'.

*gwarán(đ)* 'ram', Pah. *warán* 'ram', NP. *qóč, gwasfand e nar e baliğ e ahlī* 'ram'.

*gwaráníg* 'lustful', Pah. *waráníg* 'lustful', NP. *hawasbáz* 'lustful'.

*gwar-čamm* 'side-eyed, one who sees someone from side', Pah. *war-čašm* 'side-eyed, one who sees someone from side', NP. *ba čašm dar sīna* 'one who see someone's chest'.

*gwardág(sk)* 'Partridge', Pah. *wartág(k)* 'partridge', P. *barděj* 'Partridge'.

*gwardag*, Pah. *wartag(k)*, NP. *zan e háiz*

*gwarép* 'crooked', Pah. *warép* 'crooked', NP. *kaj* 'crooked'.

*gwargá(g)k* 'bull', Pah. *warzág(k)* 'bull', NP. *gáu e nar* 'bull'.

*gwarīšag* 'a type of falcon', Pah. *warīšag* 'a type of falcon', P. *šáhín* 'falcon'.

*gwarjámag* 'garments', Pah. *warjámag* 'garments', NP. *jameh* 'garments'.

*gwarm* 'lake', Pah. *warm* 'lake', NP. *barm, ábgír* 'lake'.

*gwarpán* 'brazier', Pah. *warpán* 'brazier', NP. *barwán* 'brazier'.

*gwarr* also *jarr* 'garment', Pah. *warr* 'garment', NP. *libás* 'garment'.

*gwart o gwár* 'raining of the rain' Pah. *wart o vár* 'raining of the rain', NP. *báriš o bārán* 'raining of the rain'.

*gwartéč* 'partridge', Pah. *wartéč* 'partridge', NP. *barděj* 'partridge'.

*gwask* 'calf', Pah. *wask* 'calf', P. *gaosala* 'calf'.

*gwastan* 'to pass', Pah. *wazitan* 'to pass', NP. *guzištān, harkat kardan* 'to pass'.

*gwaz* 'to pass' Pah. *waz* 'to pass', NP. *ubúr, ubúr kardan* 'to pass'.

*gwazind* 'loss, harm', Pah. *wazind* 'loss, harm', NP. *gazind, nuqs* 'loss, harm'.

## Conclusion

The present study has confirmed that the Balochi phoneme *gw(á)a* signifies a conservative phonological feature congenital from Proto-Iranian and, ultimately, Proto-Indo-European. The study shows that this sound has been fully retained in Balochi, while it has undergone regular reduction and absorption in other Iranian languages. In Pahlavi, *gw(á)a* is reduced to *-w(á)a-*, and in New Persian it is further weakened and reduced as *-bá(a)*.

Similar processes of reduction are also obvious in Avestan, indicating a wider historical propensity toward phonological simplification across Iranian languages, with the notable exception of Balochi.

This historical deviation highlights the incomparable conservativeness of Balochi phonology, which has preserved an ancient sound that could not be retained in Avesta, Pahlavi and New Persian. The subsistence of *gw(á)a* in Balochi is not an inaccessible phenomenon but reflects a wider pattern of archaic features maintained within the language. Such sign strongly supports the view that Balochi occupies a dominant position in the historical reconstruction of Iranian phonology.

Accordingly, Balochi may be regarded as one of the oldest living Iranian languages, functioning as an archaic source of Proto-Iranian features that have then been lost or hidden in related languages. The findings of this study highlight the importance of Balochi for relative Iranian linguistics, as its phonological system offers crucial data for reconstructing previous stages of Iranian and Indo-European sound systems. An organized and focused study of

Balochi, therefore, has the potential to meaningfully contribute to the reshaping and re-evaluation of recognized models of Iranian historical linguistics.

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**Abbreviations:**

Av.	Avesta
Gil.	Gilaki
Maz.	Mazandarani
Med.	Median
NP.	New Persian
OI.	Old Iranian
OP.	Old Persian
Pah.	Pahlavī
Parth.	Parthian
PahAš.	Pahlavī Aškānī
PIE.	Proto- Indo-European
PI.	Proto-Iranian
Sem.	Semnani
Tay.	Taylish