

IV. Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, an attempt has been made to give a picture of the Balochi language as the product of its specific history, reflecting a variety of factors and influences: first, the North Western Iranian heritage; second, the intense contact with neighbouring languages, among which Persian has occupied a place of pre-eminent importance; and third, the dialectal diversity, echoing, among other things, the precarious ecological environment and the differing occupation of the speakers as shepherding nomads or settled farmers. The preceding pages attempt to show how these factors interact and are mirrored in the Balochi lexicon.

In conclusion, the question arises of how the position of Balochi among North Western Iranian languages of past and present times may be described in the light of the issues raised.

At first sight, it seems that Balochi occupies a position apart from all other Western Iranian languages since the Old Iranian stops and affricates appear as such in the Southern and Western dialects and presumably in Common Balochi, while they undergo modifications in the closely related languages Parthian and Persian.¹

OIr. C /V_V	Balochi (S, W)	Parthian (classical)	Middle Persian (classical)
<i>b, d, g</i>	<i>b, d, g</i>	<i>β, δ, γ</i>	<i>w, y, y</i>
<i>p, t, k</i>	<i>p, t, k</i>	<i>b, d, g</i>	<i>b, d, g</i>
<i>č</i>	<i>č</i>		
<i>ǰ</i>	<i>ǰ</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>z</i>
<i>ž</i>	<i>ž</i>		
1. Stops and affricates in Western Ir. languages			

This well-known fact has appeared striking to all researchers who have dealt with the subject.

1 In the tables to follow, "classical" Parthian / Middle Persian denotes the stage reflected in the orthography of the Manichæan texts from Turfan. As for Parthian, this stage is termed "Mittelmittelparthisch" by SUNDERMANN 1989a:123.

It seems to have generally been assumed that the OIr. stops and affricates have been preserved in Balochi up to the present day. The only change would be that of the OIr. fricatives to Bal. stops (bold type marks elements which are changed in Balochi):

Old Iranian	*Middle Balochi ²	New Balochi	classical Parthian
<i>b, d, g /V_</i>	<i>b, d, g</i>		<i>β, δ, γ</i>
<i>p, t, k /V_</i>	<i>p, t, k</i>		<i>b, d, g</i>
<i>f, θ, x</i>			<i>f, h, x</i>
<i>č /V_</i> , <i>ǰ, ž</i>	<i>č</i> , <i>ǰ, ž</i>		<i>ž</i>
OIr. > <i>voiceless fricatives ></i> [-voiced, +cont] >	*Middle, New Balochi <i>stops</i> [-voiced, -cont]		
2. Model A (preservation of OIr. stops and affricates)			

The remaining Western as well as Eastern Middle Iranian languages show a lenition of postvocalic stops. As the preceding chapters have shown, there is ample evidence for continuing and intense contact between Balochi and neighbouring languages. So one is bound to wonder whether it is a likely hypothesis that Middle Balochi did not take part in a development shared by all neighbouring Iranian languages.

If one assumes that Balochi underwent the same lenition that operated elsewhere,³ the lenition products must have later been reversed to their original state. This reversal might have been the same process that changed the Old Iranian fricatives of whatever source to stops, thereby coalescing with the product of OIr. stops (elements which have changed in the same way in Balochi and Parthian are underlined in the following tables):

2 The term "Middle Balochi" will be used to denote the (reconstructed) Middle Iranian stage of Balochi.

3 Note that the lenition of postvocalic *b, d, g* is termed "common throughout Iranian" by SIMS-WILLIAMS 1996:650.

Old Iranian	*Middle Balochi	New Balochi	classical Parthian
<i>b, d, g /V_</i>	<i>β, δ, γ</i>	<i>b, d, g</i>	<i>β, δ, γ</i>
<i>p, t, k /V_</i>	<i>b, d, g</i>	<i>p, t, k</i>	<i>b, d, g</i>
<i>f, θ, x</i>	<i>f, θ, x</i>		<i>f, h, x</i>
<i>č /V_</i> , <i>ǰ, ǰ̇</i>	<i>č</i> , <i>ǰ, ǰ̇</i>	<i>č</i> , <i>ǰ, ǰ̇</i>	<i>ž</i>
OIr. >	*Middle Balochi >	New Balochi	
	<i>voiced stops ></i>	<i>voiceless</i>	
	[+voiced, -cont] >	[-voiced, -cont]	
	<i>fricatives ></i>	<i>stops</i>	
	[+cont] >	[-cont]	
3. Model B (lenition and reversal of stops from a classical MIr. stage)			

This model has the advantage of bringing Middle Balochi considerably nearer to Parthian, but the disadvantage of needing one more change than model A to effect the New Balochi state of affairs, the two changes not being necessarily logically related. It is thus not clear which model is the better one.

A closer look at the MIr. data, specifically the development of the stops and affricates in Parthian, appears necessary. The following table shows the Prth. results of OIr. stops, fricatives and affricates in the stage of Parthian represented by the Nisa ostraca and certain names ("Prth. 1" here, cf. SUNDERMANN 1989a:123), in the stage reflected in the Prth. loanwords in Armenian ("Prth. 2")⁴ and in a postclassical stage ("Prth. 4").⁵ The resulting picture is as follows (changes in Parthian in bold type):

4 This stage is called "Frühmittelparthisch" by SUNDERMANN 1989a:123f. The older Prth. loanwords in Armenian show the OIr. voiceless stops and *č* in unchanged form (e.g. *spitak* "white", *řočik* "daily bread"), but fricatives for OIr. voiced stops: Ir. *β* is rendered by Arm. *v* (e.g. *žanvar* "sedan chair" < *ǰani-bara- "carrying women"), and Ir. *δ* by Arm. *r*.

5 This stage is called "Spätmittelparthisch" by SUNDERMANN 1989a:122ff.

Old Iranian	New Balochi	Parthian			
		Prth. 1	Prth. 2	Prth. 3 (class.)	Prth. 4
<i>b, d, g /V_</i>	<i>b, d, g</i>	<i>b, d, g</i>	<i>β, δ, γ</i>	<i>β, δ, γ</i>	<i>β, δ, γ</i>
<i>p, t, k /V_</i>	<i>p, t, k</i>	<i>p, t, k</i>	<i>p, t, k</i>	<i>b, d, g</i>	
<i>f, x</i>		<i>f, x</i>	<i>f, x</i>	<i>f, x</i>	<i>f, x</i>
<i>ϑ</i>		<i>h</i>	<i>ϑ</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>h</i>
<i>h</i>	<i>h</i>				
<i>č /V_</i>	<i>č</i>	<i>č</i>	<i>č</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>ž</i>
<i>ǰ</i>	<i>ǰ</i>	<i>ǰ⁶</i>	<i>ž</i>		
<i>ž</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>ž</i>			

4. Stops and affricates in Old Iranian, Balochi and Parthian

The Prth. stage that Balochi seems to share most characteristics with is "Parthian 1". However, the assumption that Balochi is derived from the Middle Ir. stage represented by Parthian 1 would amount to a model of the same structure as model A discussed above; it does not offer any advantages in comparison with the assumption that Balochi is derived directly from the OIr. stage.

An alternative possibility would be to assume that Middle Balochi corresponds to the MIr. stage represented by Parthian 2:

6 I have not seen evidence that OIr. *ǰ* is preserved in "Parthian 1", but assume it here for systematic reasons.

Old Iranian	*Middle Balochi	New Balochi	Parthian 2
<i>b, d, g /V_</i>	<i>β, δ, γ</i>	<i>b, d, g</i>	<i>β, δ, γ</i>
<i>p, t, k /V_</i>	<i>p, t, k</i>	<i>p, t, k</i>	<i>p, t, k</i>
<i>f, θ, x</i>	<i>f, θ, x</i>		<i>f, h, x</i>
<i>č /V_</i>	<i>č</i>	<i>č</i>	<i>č</i>
<i>ǰ, ǰ̣</i>	<i>ǰ, ǰ̣</i>	<i>ǰ, ǰ̣</i>	<i>ǰ̣</i>
OIr. > *Middle Balochi > New Balochi <i>fricatives > stops</i> [+cont] > [-cont]			
5. Model C (lenition and reversal of stops from an older Mlr. stage)			

This model combines the advantages of models A and B: it brings Middle Balochi nearer to a known stage of Parthian (like model B); it needs only one change to derive Balochi from Middle Iranian and is thus as simple as model A.

It may be noted in passing that the change assumed here (MBal. fricatives > CBal. stops) would also produce the CBal. result from the Sogdian state of affairs as far as the stops and fricatives are concerned:

Old Iranian	*Middle Balochi (model C)	New Balochi	Parthian 2	Sogdian
# <i>b, d, g</i> – <i>b, d, g</i>	# <i>b, d, g</i> – <i>β, δ, γ</i>	<i>b, d, g</i>	# <i>b, d, g</i> – <i>β, δ, γ</i>	<i>β, δ, γ</i>
# <i>p, t, k</i> – <i>p, t, k</i>	<i>p, t, k</i>	<i>p, t, k</i>	<i>p, t, k</i>	<i>p, t, k</i>
<i>f, θ, x</i>	<i>f, θ, x</i>		<i>f, h, x</i>	<i>f, θ, x</i>
# <i>č, ǰ, ǰ̣</i> – <i>č, ǰ, ǰ̣</i>	<i>č, ǰ, ǰ̣</i>	<i>č, ǰ, ǰ̣</i>	# <i>č, ǰ̣</i> – <i>ǰ̣</i>	<i>č, ǰ̣</i>
6. Stops, fricatives and affricates in Balochi, Parthian and Sogdian				

The only difference between Middle Balochi as assumed here and Parthian is that Balochi preserves two OIr. phonemic oppositions which got lost in Parthian, viz. OIr.

θ vs. *h* and *ǰ* vs. *ž*. Had Balochi experienced the change of OIr. *θ* > *h* seen in Parthian 2 and following stages, it would have been impossible to reverse only those cases of *h* to *t* which go back to OIr. *θ* without affecting *h* from OIr. *h* (cf. II 2.1.2.1). Similarly, it seems that OIr. *ǰ* and *ž* fall together in Parthian 2 while Balochi preserves the three phonemes (*rōč* "day", *bōǰ*- "save", *dūžah* "hell", cf. II 2.1.2.2, 2.1.2.4). It follows that Balochi cannot go back to Parthian 2, 3 or 4. These differences (MBal. *θ* vs. Prth. 2 *h*, MBal. *ǰ* vs. Prth. 2 *ž*) would thus remain; they might be considered quite minor dialectal differences between two neighbouring MIr. dialects.⁷

These dialectal differences are by no means isolated phenomena, but may be grouped with other features. Balochi differs from all known varieties of Parthian in several points: for instance, Parthian shows *sy*- from OIr. *sī*- as is seen in *syāw(ag)* "black" and reflected in Arm. *seaw* "black" and *siramarg* "peacock" while Balochi shows *š*- in *šān* "black" and *šēnak* "falcon" (cf. II 2.2.2.3). It is noteworthy that the existence of a NWIr. language from Middle Iranian times with *š*- for OIr. *sī*- is anyway implied by Arm. *šava*^o, Georg. *šav*- "black".

While the product of PIr. **r* is *ur* in labial contexts and *ir* otherwise in Parthian, Balochi shows *ir* in palatal contexts and *ur* otherwise (cf. II 2.3.2.1). Particularly telling examples are pairs like Prth. <*tyrs*- / *tyrs'd*> *tirs*- / *tirsād* "fear", <*tryfš*> *trifš* "sour" and <*kyrd*> *kird* "done" vs. Bal. *turs*- / *tursit*, *trupš* and *kurt*, respectively. Even if <*y*> in e.g. Prth. <*tyrs*->, <*kyrd*> stands for *e* as has been assumed for MP, forms like *kerd* are unlikely to have been the protoforms of the Balochi words since there is no labial context and no analogy in sight which might have motivated a change to *turs*-, *kurt*.

It would follow that Balochi goes back to a Middle Ir. dialect which corresponds to Parthian in a number of respects, but differs from it in others. The existence of more than one NWIr. idiom in Middle Iranian times, a priori highly likely, is not only presupposed by doublets like Arm. *seaw*, *šava*^o "black", both commonly assumed to have been borrowed from "Parthian", but also by evidence from other contemporary Ir. languages. The Western Ir. languages (with only two of them attested in manuscripts, inscriptions etc.) may have formed a continuum of dialects at Middle Ir. times.⁸

7 Note that the preservation of OIr. *θ* has been considered a typically Eastern Ir. feature; some EIr. languages show a change of *θ* > *t* (SIMS-WILLIAMS 1996:650).

8 It seems indeed that all Middle Ir. languages (including the Eastern ones) formed a continuum of dialects (SIMS-WILLIAMS 1996:650).

The origin of Balochi as a WIr. language whose ancestor is similar to, but not identical with Parthian can thus be established. Other findings complicate the picture at once, however. While a number of Bal. sound changes correspond to those of neighbouring NWIr. languages as one might expect (e.g. OIr. postvocalic *č*, *ǰ*, *ž* preserved in Balochi vs. Pers. *z*, e.g. *rōz*, *bōz-*, *dōzax*; PIE **ǵ* > Bal. *z* vs. Persian *d*), other Balochi sound laws are the Persian, not the NWIr. ones (e.g. PIE **tr* > Bal. *s(s)*, cf. II 2.1.2.4). A similar statement may be made for Kurdish, whereas Zazaki shows NWIr. features in all these cases. Balochi and Kurdish thus occupy a position between the NWIr. and the SWIr. languages and might in this respect be called "Transitional Western Iranian languages".

If one looks at the NWIr. and SWIr. features of contemporary Western Iranian languages from a purely synchronic point of view (cf. PAUL 1998), one might get the incorrect impression that the languages hitherto called North Western Iranian started out as NWIr. idioms and gradually came more and more under the influence of Persian, with Balochi and Kurdish occupying the positions next to New Persian in terms of "South-Westerness" or "lack of North-Westerness". However, increasing absorption into the Persian sphere does not adequately describe the data as the SWIr. characteristics of Balochi and Kurdish date from widely differing periods (cf. KORN 2003:53ff.), beginning with the treatment of PIE **tr* where already Old Persian shows *ç* (> MP *s*) vs. Av. *θr*.

The NWIr. characteristics of Middle and New Iranian languages are predominantly of the type that Parthian etc. preserves certain OIr. sounds while Persian shows some sort of innovation (e.g. OIr. *rz*, *rd* retained in NWIr. languages vs. NP *l*). The only innovations seen in Parthian (all of them also found in Zazaki) are the development of OIr. *θu* > *f* (vs. MP *h*), OIr. *du-* > *b-* (vs. MP *d-*) and OIr. *hu-* > *wx-* (or devoiced *w-*), if the latter can be called an innovation, vs. MP *xw-*. Balochi seems to share the latter two features (cf. II 2.2.1.5.3, 2.2.1.5.4) while unfortunately no data are available which would permit one to say anything about the first one (cf. II 2.2.1.5.2). Kurdish, on the other hand, goes with Persian again and does not share any NWIr. innovation. Other changes which have been considered as common NWIr. innovations (e.g. *m* > *w*) will rather be independent developments (cf. KORN 2003:56ff.).

The question remains whether the "Transitional WIr. languages" may be established as a group in the sense of being a third member in between North and South Western Iranian, i.e. whether (preferably typologically marked) features can be found which are

neither present in the NWIr. nor in the SWIr. languages. Evidence for this scenario has not yet been discovered. For the time being, it seems that the characteristics which have lent a partially SWIr. look to Kurdish and Balochi may be explained by the influence of Persian at various points during history, starting with the time of the Achaemenian empire (thus e.g. *s(s)* for PIE *tr). Unfortunately, the data do not permit us to determine the character of the contacts with the Persian language and its speakers. The term "Transitional Western Iranian" thus designates languages which have witnessed the repeated, if not continuing, influence of Persian – an influence which has been strong enough to effect the adoption of typically Persian sound changes.

The impression of continuous contact with Persian is confirmed by the Balochi vocabulary. Among the lexical items of various semantic fields, one finds an impressive number of Persian words from different periods, the oldest stage being represented by *dap* "mouth" which recalls Av. *zafar/n-*, but with typically Persian treatment of the word-initial consonant, the MP period by words like *pahlūg* "side" and *k^hard* "portion", and the NP time by a host of words from literally every sphere and including numerous words of Arabic origin. But the Persian loanwords are by no means the only borrowings in the Balochi lexicon: words from several Indic languages play a considerable role as well, e.g. (to cite but a few) *pupī* "father's sister", *pul(l)* "flower", *sik(k)- / sik(k)it* "learn", *lēt- / lētīt* "lie down". Not so numerous, but not less remarkable are borrowings from Pashto (*kuṛāsag* "grandchild", *kōṭa* "room") and Brahui (*bal(l)uk* "grandmother", *sil* "skin"). Interdialectal borrowing is not rare either.

A particularly interesting group of loanwords is the terms for animals such as horses and camels (whereas the word for the smaller animals, *pas*, is inherited). Along with the fact that many terms for colours as well as the Balochi (and Kurdish) numerals have been borrowed from Persian, this situation mirrors a social situation of the Baloch as shepherds coming to the bazaar to sell the products of their sheep and to buy what they do not produce themselves, including the bigger animals and cloth, from people who speak other languages. The kinship terms (cf. III 2), a sizeable portion of which comes from Sindhi and Urdu, reflect, among other things, intense contact on the family level with the settled population of the Indus valley.

It is to be expected that the position of Balochi as a Transitional Western Ir. language can be confirmed by the study of Balochi historical morphology, and by studies of the history of neighbouring Iranian languages. Such studies are thus an urgent desideratum.