



A Solemn Praise to an 11th century West-Tibetan Councillor at Kharul, Purik

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Nils Martin

A Solemn Praise to an 11th century West-Tibetan Councillor at Kharul, Purik¹

1. Introduction

The hamlet of Kharul,² set along the left bank of the Shingo River at its confluence with the Suru River about 5 km north of Kargil (maps 1-2), comprises one of the most important ensembles of petroglyphs anywhere in Purik and in Ladakh. It nevertheless escaped the attention of Francke, and seems not to have been noticed by the successive scholars who have conducted surveys in Ladakh in more recent times. In 2007, Tashi Ldawa documented several petroglyphs at Kharul, while in 2016 and 2017 Quentin Devers conducted a thorough survey of the site as part of an Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) listing project supervised by Kacho Mumtaz Khan. As of February 2018, over 300 petroglyphs have been documented at Kharul on numerous boulders. A preliminary study of the petroglyphs was published online in 2016 by Devers, Kacho Mumtaz Khan, Tashi Ldawa, and myself, with particular emphasis on a large boulder finely engraved with a *mchod rten* and a long Tibetan inscription. On account of the mention of the *mnga' bdag* of Purangs 'Od lDe (r. circa 1024-1037/1060) in the inscription, we proposed a reconsideration of the dating and historical context of comparable petroglyphs of *mchod rten* at Alchi Khargok, Balukhar, Khaltse, and further sites in Ladakh and more distant regions.³ However, a comprehensive presentation of the inscription was

¹ I wish first of all to thank Quentin Devers for having informed me of the important discovery of the petroglyphs and inscriptions of Kharul in Summer 2016, and Dieter Schuh for having invited me to publish the results of my research on the inscription in these pages. Dieter Schuh was also kind to send me one of his own photographs of the inscription, on which the syllables *nyam[s]* (R8) and *khru*g (R9) are clearly observable. Following his advice, it has led me to reconsider this part of the inscription. I am also grateful to Charles Ramble, Bettina Zeisler, Matthew Kapstein, Kacho Mumtaz Khan, Emanuela Garatti, Lewis Doney, Brandon Dotson, and Dan Martin for their advice on difficult passages of the inscription; and to Tashi Ldawa, Jaroslav Poncar, John Vincent Bellezza, Mueezuddin Hakal, Klaus Sagaster, Harald Hauptmann, John Mock, Samara Broglia de Moura, Helga Uebach, Amy Heller, Nelly Rieuf, Helmut Tauscher, and Christian Luczanits for having provided me with precious information and photographs used for this research. My warm greetings go to Utsavi Singh, Kacho Sikundar Khan, and Hassan Khan for their cheerful company during my visits to Purik in 2016 and 2017; and my thanks to Marie Adamski and Ghislaine Beyel for proofreading and support during the writing process. This research would not have been possible without the financial support received from the project Narrativity (PRES Sorbonne Paris Cité) for my fieldwork in Summer 2016.

² In the following, toponyms are rendered phonetically since, in several cases, definitive Wylie transliterations are impossible to achieve because of the various spellings encountered in local documents and more distant sources, as well as their occasionally dubious or recent Tibetan etymologies. For instance, in the pre-16th century sources considered below, Spituk is spelled either *dpe' thug*, *dpe tug*, or *dpe dug*. As far as I know, the spelling *dpe thub*, which prevails today but does not correspond to the local pronunciation, appears only in post-16th century sources. The names of temples and fortresses, as well as personal names, however, are indicated in Wylie, as their transliteration is less problematic.

³ There are numerous petroglyph sites in Ladakh and Purik that comprise petroglyphs of *mchod rten* associated with Tibetan donor inscriptions, notably those on the plateau of Khargok, near the bridge between Alchi and Saspol (see Francke 1906a, 325-328; Denwood 1980, 155-163; Orofino 1990, figs. 1-20; Takeuchi 2012); Balukhar (see Francke 1905; Denwood and Howard 1990, 81-85); the vicinity of Khaltse (see Francke 1906b; 1907b; Orofino 1990, figs. 29-30 and 35-40; Takeuchi 2012, inscriptions K1-K7), Hipti, Domkhar (see Francke 1902, 362), Narmo, and Lehdo (see Devers et al. 2016); Mulbek (see Schuh 2015, 309-313); Pashkyum (see Schuh 2015, 196-200); Yarchok, Namsuru and Kharul (see Devers et al. 2016). As regards the petroglyphs of *mchod rten* and associated inscriptions at Kargok and Khaltse, Denwood (1980, 163) and Orofino (1990, 177) have proposed an early dating from the second half of the 8th century to the first half of the 9th century. Takeuchi (2012, 55) has, however, proposed a later dating from the second half of the 9th century to the 11th century, stating that "these rock carvings near Alchi were made by the troop leaders who migrated to Ladakh after the collapse of the Tibetan Empire to establish the first Ladakh kingdom, having been inspired by the regional tradition of rock carvings."

Further petroglyphs and rock paintings of *mchod rten* are found downstream along the Shyok River at Saling, opposite Khapulu (see Schuh 2011-2012, 3, 674-696), and at Yugo and Fongnak (see Jettmar 1990, fig. 9; Schuh 2011-2012, 4, 317-336); downstream of the Indus River at Parkuta (see Schuh 2011-2012, 4, 337-349), at Gol (see Jettmar 1990, fig. 8; Schuh 2011-2012, 4, 372-379), and at Chaghdo, near Nar (see Hauptmann 2007, 35-37; Schuh 2011-2012, 2, 360-372); at Shigar (see Jettmar 1990, figs. 2-7; Schuh 2011-2012, 4, 239-254) and at another unknown location in Baltistan, perhaps Khar-mang (see von Ujfalvy 1884, 248 and pl. XVIII-XIX; Schuh 2011-2012, 1, 106-109); on the Deosai plain (see Rashid and Khawar 2013, 19); perhaps at Chilas, in Diamer (see Thewalt 2000 and 2008, Chilas I, 8.1; Bellezza 2018); at Gakuch, in

beyond the scope of this preliminary study. The present contribution provides a first annotated edition and translation of the inscription, whose characteristics and historical context are discussed below. An appendix by Quentin Devers, Tashi Ldawa, Kacho Mumtaz Khan, and myself further comprises illustrations of all the petroglyphs of stepped shrines (St) – most commonly *mchod rten* – documented on boulders (Bo) at Kharul as of February 2018, with an edition and translation of the few associated Tibetan donor inscriptions.

2. The boulder

The large boulder (Bo12) bearing the inscription is located along the left – northern – bank of the Shingo River, about 400 m upstream of its confluence with the Suru River (Appendix maps 1-2). It can be reached easily by walking down from the road toward the bank of the Shingo River just before the first fields of the hamlet (fig. 1).



Fig. 1: boulder 12 below the road leading to Kharul.

Boulder 12 is of complex shape and measures about 2 m high. Its south face, orientated toward the river, features an almost even surface and a dark red-brown patina, therefore constituting an ideal support for petroglyphs and inscriptions (fig. 2). The surface, however, presents several traces of weathering. Part of the bottom has split off, and significant scaling can also be observed on the left side and upper right part, which seems to have taken place at different periods on account of the patina of the rock below. Moreover, there is a dark stripe along the entire height of the south face, which might result from rainwater run-off. Finally, the lower right part of boulder 12 was partially covered by earth, stones, and various detritus until it was cleared away in 2017, and it has retained a soiled aspect until now. Further mechanical and intentional alterations of the surface of the south face constitute the core of the present contribution. A small geometric motif, perhaps identifiable as a stepped shrine despite its fragmentary condition, was chiseled superficially on the upper left part of the south face, while a large *mchod rten* along the sides of which runs a long Tibetan inscription in two parts (Bo12-St1; fig. 3) was engraved on the central part.

Punyal (Jettmar and Sagaster 1993; Denwood 2007, 49-50); near the Darkot Pass (see Francke 1928; Denwood 2007, 49-50; Mock 2013); as well as in Wakhan at Chap Dara and along the approach to the Khora Bhort and Irshad passes in the Little Pamir (see Mock 2016 and 2018). Early petroglyphs of *mchod rten* are also found in the regions of Nubra (see Devers et al. 2015, 15), Zangskar (see Linrothe 2016), and Ruthok, as well as further to the south and east (see Bellezza 2014; 2015a; 2015b; 2017-2018; 2018). See also Francke 1906c; 1907c; Bruneau 2007.



Fig. 2: the south face of boulder 12.

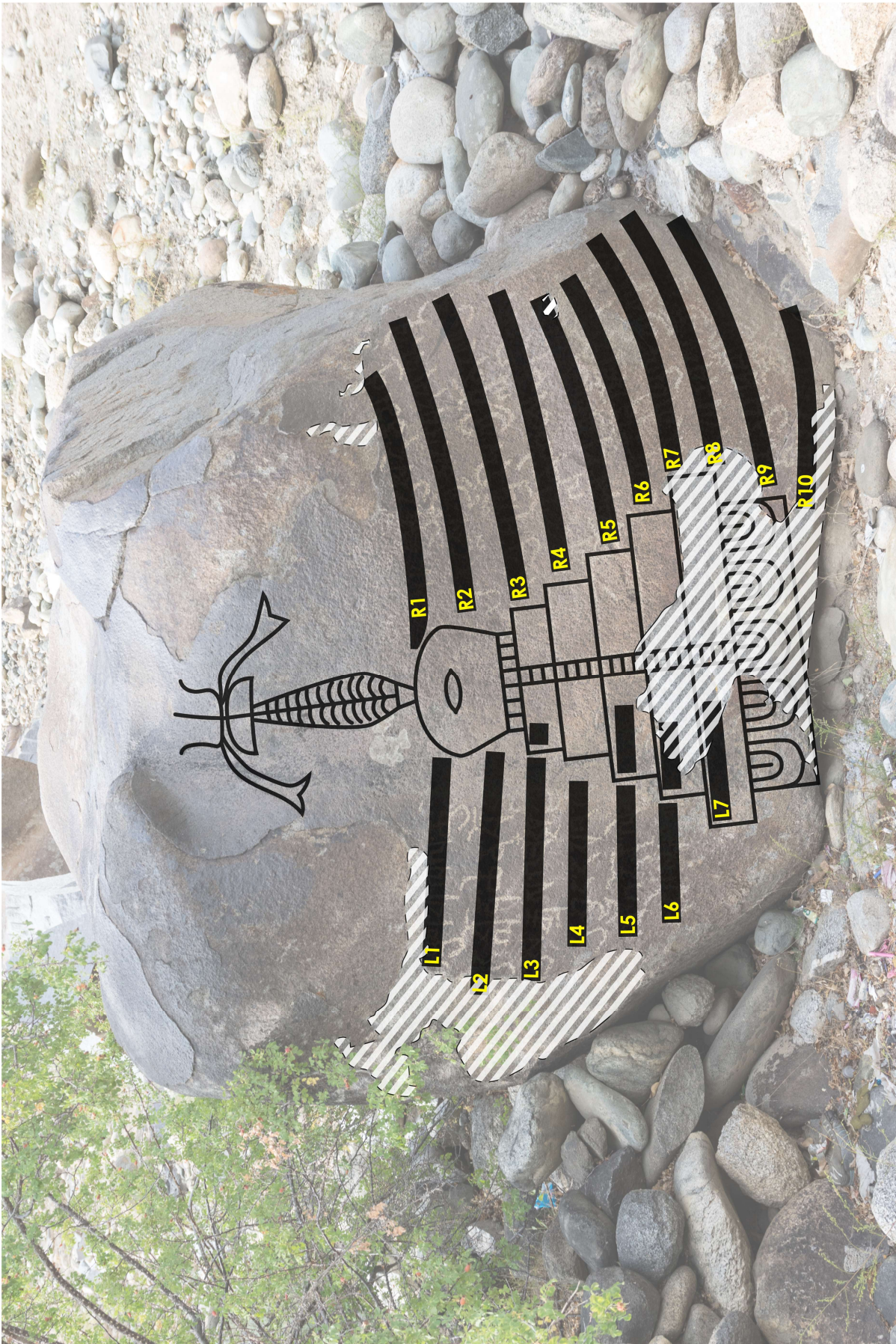


Fig. 3: the engraving of the south face and its main damaged areas.

3. The central *mchod rten*

The central *mchod rten* is engraved of a few millimetres deep and is clearly visible thanks to the contrasting colour of the dark red-brown patina of the untouched surface around it. It occupies almost the entire height of the south face, measuring about 1,80 m high (fig. 4). The ambitious dimensions of the *mchod rten* and the very fine quality of its engraving distinguish it from most other petroglyphs of *mchod rten*. They further imply the painstaking work of (a) skilled lapicide(s).



Fig. 4: the central *mchod rten*.

At the base of the *mchod rten* hang lotus petals, which seem to be enclosed in a rectangular frame. The scaling of the surface, however, makes it impossible to be certain about this section. Above, a platform of greater width supports four receding steps, at the centre of which runs an axial stairway. The last step is surmounted by a sort of drum (*bum gdan*) featuring regular marks that could represent small lotus petals. Above the drum, the dome broadens progressively up to two-thirds of its height, beyond which it curves inward. Inside it, at two-thirds of its height, is engraved an eye. Above the dome rests the balustrade (*harmikā/pu shu*), trapezoidal in shape and with a smaller base. It is surmounted by an ensemble of apparently thirteen disks, which broadens until the fourth disk and recedes progressively beyond. Above the disks rests the umbrella. The *mchod rten* is crowned by a tricuspidate finial with diverging lateral sprongs, to which are attached two banners.

Petroglyphs of *mchod rten* featuring an axial stairway such as this one have been designated as *lha bab mchod rten* ('stūpa of the Descent from [the realm of] the gods') in reference to one of the eight *mchod rten* commemorating the Eight Great Events in the life of the Buddha (for instance Howard 1995, 62; Pema Dorjee 1996, 79). This designation, however, should probably be avoided for isolated *mchod rten* of an early date (pre-13th century) since the latter's stairway might reflect an architectural device observed on the monumental *mchod rten* built in Ladakh⁴ and more distant regions rather than indicate the Great Event of the Descent from the realm of the thirty-three gods at Sāṃkāśya.⁵ For instance, the depiction of the Life of the Buddha on the entrance wall of the 'Du khang of Alchi (mid- to late-12th century) comprises a group of eight *mchod rten*, corresponding to the eight shares of relics distributed after the cremation of the Buddha, seven of which feature an axial stairway (fig. 5).



Fig. 5: the eight *mchod rten* containing the relics of the Buddha, entrance wall of the 'Du khang of Alchi (mid- to late-12th century). Courtesy of Jaroslav Poncar.

Intriguing features of the *mchod rten* engraved on boulder 12 comprise its tricuspidate finial and the eye engraved inside its dome. The origin and the signification of the tricuspidate finial, whether Buddhist or not, is uncertain.⁶ In any case, however, it is evident that this motif was engraved in Tibetan Buddhist context by the 11th century. For instance, at Balukhar⁷ and Gol,⁸ *mchod rten* featuring a tricuspidate finial were engraved together with inscriptions praising the Three Jewels. At Gyalading, in Guge, as well as in other sites, the tricuspidate finial further appears as an elegant stylization of the classical Buddhist sun and crescent moon motif (Bellezza 2014; fig. 15 being reproduced in fig. 6). As for the eye engraved inside the dome, it might represent the (enlightened) wisdom eye (*ye shes spyan*), as suggested by Bellezza (2014) for three comparative examples at Gyalading, or the compassionate eye (*thugs rje'i spyan*). At least in regard to the *mchod rten* of Gyalading, whose eyes feature an iris (fig. 6), one may wonder if the engraving of the eye or its iris could not have been part of the consecration of the petroglyphs. At Gyalading, the inscription of the *dhāraṇī* of dependent origination inside the base of two of the *mchod rten* might bear further testimony of their Buddhist consecration.⁹ Another petroglyph of *mchod rten* whose dome is ornamented by an eye has

⁴ See for instance the *mchod rten* of Tirisa in Devers et al. 2015, 16.

⁵ See also Pakhoutova 2009, 34-36.

⁶ See Bruneau 2007, 66; Bellezza 2017-2018.

⁷ See Francke 1905, pl. VII, No. 4; also Bellezza 2017-2018. A re-examination of the inscription supports the reading: {l. 1} *dkon* {l. 2} *mchogsom* ('Three Jewels').

⁸ See Jettmar 1990, fig. 8. Part of it reads: *kon chog sum* ('Three Jewels').

⁹ For the role of the opening of the eye (*spyān dbye*) in Tibetan Buddhist consecrations, see Bentor 1996, 33-39. For the consecrative use of the *dhāraṇī* of dependent origination, see Bentor 1992. I thank Christian Luczanits for having opened my eyes on the latter subject.

been documented at Bragyam, in Ruthok, by Bellezza (2017-2018, petroglyph 19t), whereas a mural depicting a comparative *mchod rten* was documented by Pritzker (2008, fig. 4b) in the cave-temple of Nyag, near Khartse, in Guge.

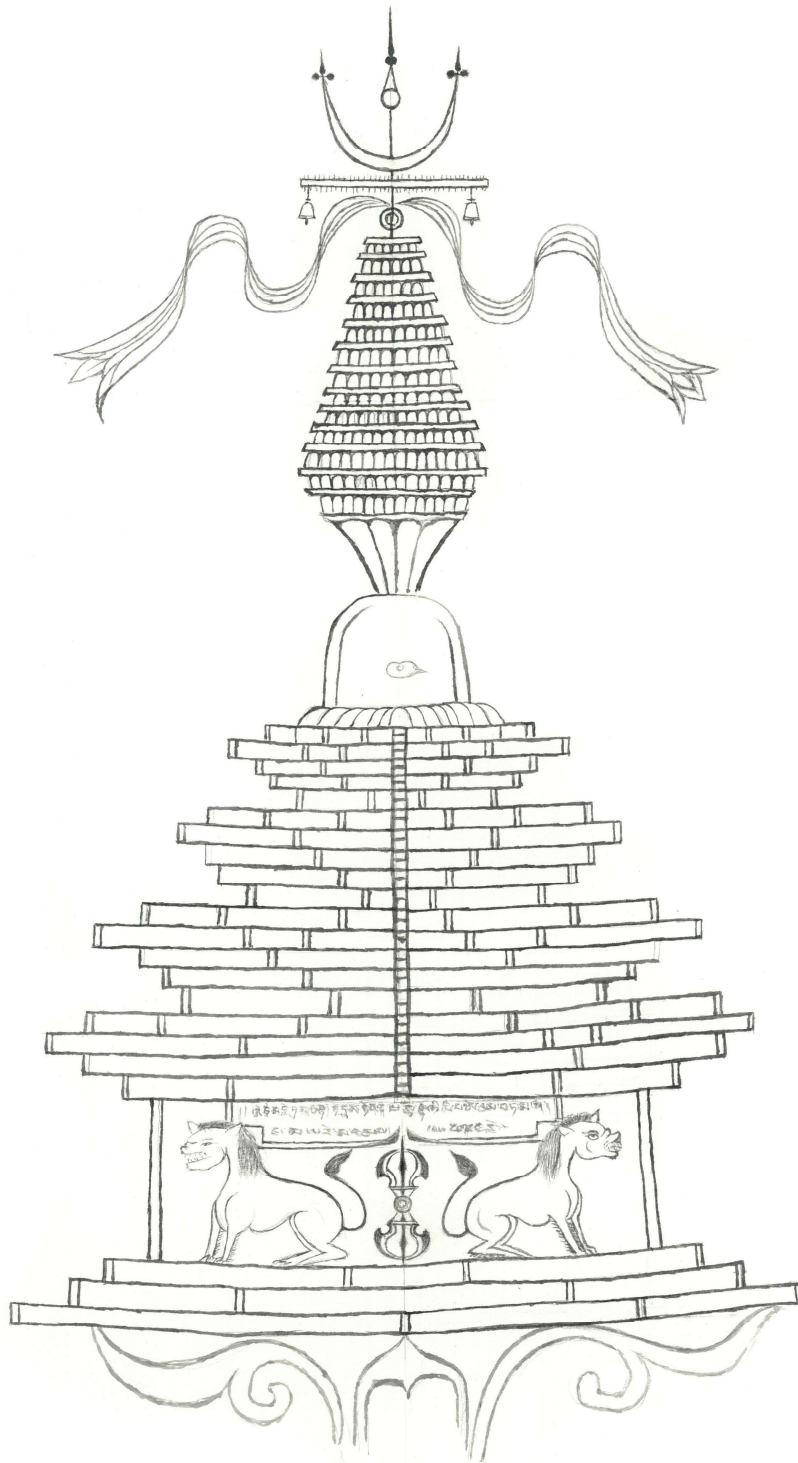


Fig. 6: petroglyph of a *mchod rten* at Gyalading, drawing by Lingsang Kalsang Dorjee and workshop. Courtesy of John Vincent Bellezza (first published in Bellezza 2014, fig. 15).

In Ladakh and further to the west are numerous petroglyphs of *mchod rten* featuring a base or plinth adorned with lotus petals, four receding steps with an axial stairway, and an axial pole surmounted by an umbrella and a tricuspidate finial, but only a few have a dome ornamented by an eye. Six were documented by Jettmar at Gakuch, set along the right bank of the Gilgit River at its confluence with the Ishkoman River, about 72 km upstream of Gilgit, in Punyal (Jettmar and Sagaster 1993, stones 2-4; 6-7; and 11; stone 2 being reproduced

below in fig. 11), which present further analogies with the *mchod rten* of boulder 12. A couple of others were documented at Parkuta by Schuh (2011-2012, 4, figs. 109-111; fig. 109 being reproduced in fig. 6), whereas two others were documented by von Ujfalvy (1884, pl. XVIII-XIX; the first one being reproduced below in fig. 13) at another unknown location in Baltistan, perhaps Kharmang (von Ujfalvy 1884, 48).



Fig. 6: petroglyph of a *mchod rten* whose dome is ornamented by an eye at Parkuta.
Courtesy of Dieter Schuh (first published in Schuh 2011-2012, 4, Abb. 109).

Interestingly, Devers has also documented the petroglyph of a *mchod rten* whose dome is marked by the shape of an eye at Kharul itself (Bo23-St4). It belongs to an ensemble of at least eight petroglyphs of *mchod rten* distinguished by their relatively large dimensions, fine engraving, and accurate geometry, two of which were probably broken into pieces between 2007 and 2016 in order to serve as local construction material (Bo36-St1 and Bo37-St1). Among the eight *mchod rten*, three are apparently of the same type as the *mchod*

rten of boulder 12 (Bo09-St1; Bo23-St4; and Bo36-St1), and four are of the ‘cross-shaped’ type (Bo11-St1-2; Bo23-St3; and Bo37-St1). Moreover, four of the *mchod rten* (two of each type: Bo09-St1; Bo23-St3; Bo36-St1; and Bo37-St1) are associated with Tibetan donor inscriptions. The latter invariably identify the donor of the petroglyphs and inscriptions as an individual named Nya na.¹⁰ Three (Bo09-St1; Bo36-St1; and Bo37-St1) give his position/title (*thabs*): *yi ge ba*, ‘scribe’, or perhaps more judiciously in this context, ‘lapicide’(?); and one (Bo23-St3) adds his clan name (*rus*): ‘[this] is the inscription of the *yi ge ba* Nya na of rBang kling’.¹¹

A receptacle of the Mind of the Buddha theoretically equivalent to a built *mchod rten*, the central *mchod rten* of boulder 12 was engraved in order to generate merit. Following Mahāyāna principles, the latter must have been ultimately directed to the attainment of enlightenment by all sentient beings through completing the two accumulations of merit and wisdom. Yet, it might further have been dedicated toward particular purposes, such as letting a deceased attain enlightenment, purifying one’s own defilements, or increasing one’s dynasty.¹²

4. The inscription

On both sides of the central *mchod rten* runs a long Tibetan inscription divided into two parts. It was engraved with the same technique as the central *mchod rten*, although perhaps slightly less deeply. It starts at the level of the dome of the *mchod rten*, probably because the surface of the south face above already presented important scaling on each side, recognizable today by its pale red-brown patina. It is also evident that the two parts of the inscription were engraved after the central *mchod rten* was completed, with special care given to respecting its outlines, albeit at a close period on account of their similar patina. The left part of the inscription (L; fig. 7) might have been further constrained on its left side by the small stepped shrine superficially chiseled on the upper part, as well as by ancient traces of scaling. It comprises seven lines, three of which extend into the central *mchod rten*, and the last – short – one being engraved within the plinth of the *mchod rten*. The extension of the scaling on the top and left sides of the left part has led to the loss of small parts of the letters of the three first lines, whereas a substantial part of lines 6 and 7 is entirely lost due to

¹⁰ It is doubtful that Nya na is a Tibetan name. Rather, it might be a transliteration of a foreign name. Sanskrit names, or sanskritized forms of Tibetan names, in particular, were borne by religious and lay members of the West-Tibetan elite. It is well-known that the sons of Ye shes ‘Od, Khri lDe mGon bTsan, also called Devarāja, and lHa ‘Khor bTsan, also called Nāgarāja, respectively received the ordination names Devaprabha and Nāgaprabha, whereas his nephew, lHa lDe bKra shis bTsan, received the ordination name Dharmaprabha (*mNga’ ris rgyal rabs*, 59-60 and 61). Captions identifying lay and religious figures depicted in the late 10th-mid-11th century murals of the gTsug lag khang of Tabo corroborate the Sanskrit names of Ye shes ‘Od’s sons, and further identify two other individuals who bore Sanskrit names. The layman ‘Bodhibhadra of [the clan] sNye’l ‘or’ (*snyel ‘or bo di ba dra*) appears in the second row of the assembly of laymen depicted on the north wall of the entry hall (Luczanits 1999, 112), whereas the ordained ‘mahācārya of Buddhist terminology Guṇavarman from [the place/the clan] Te ‘or’ (*chos sg-a’i slob chen po gu na bar ma / te ‘or*) appears in the donor rows depicted on the entrance wall of the main hall (translation after Luczanits 1999, n. 72). In this regard, it is interesting to find the consistent transliteration of the Sanskrit noun *jñāna* as *gnya’ na* instead of the later classical spellings *dza nya* and *dznyā na* in early Tibetan sources. Therefore, the name Nya na could result from an erroneous spelling of an ancient transliteration of *jñāna*, the Sanskrit equivalent of the Tibetan name Ye shes. At least another Sanskrit noun appears to have been borne as a name in combination with the Tibetan syllable *dpal* among the donor inscriptions of Alchi Khargok, Balukhar, Khaltse, and further abovementioned sites. It is that of Arya dPal (*arya dpal*), a *blon* of the sMer clan, mentioned in two donor inscriptions at Alchi (see Orofino 1990, fig. 16, with *arya dpal gyis bris pa* misread as *xskyad (bkyed?) pa*; identical to Takeuchi 2012, inscription 10; a second hitherto unpublished inscription that I have documented in 2016 reads: {l. 1} *sm[e]r blon aya dpal* {l. 2} *[gy]is bris pa*).

¹¹ The clan rBang kling or Rwang kling appears in several donor inscriptions on boulders at Alchi Khargok (see Takeuchi 2012, inscriptions 3; 6-a; 8-b; 13a-c; and 65a-b), Balukhar (see Francke 1905, plate VII, No. 1, erroneously read by Francke), and Khaltse (see Francke 1907b, tafel III, Nr. 2; and tafel IV, Nr. 2, probably erroneously read by Francke). It has been linked by Denwood (1980, 162) and Takeuchi (2012, 54) to the designation ‘bro’i rong lings yul bzung, which appears on a wooden slip from Māzar Tāgh, near Khotan (M.Tagh b.i.0060, see Thomas 1935-1963, 2, 303). According to Takeuchi (2012, 54), “yul-bzung must be a personal name (*ming*) and Rong-lings a clan name. And this person was subject to the ‘Bro family.” In this regard, it is noteworthy that half of the members of the Rwang kling clan who authored donor inscriptions at Alchi Khargok had non-Tibetan names, possibly of Chinese origin. Moreover, except for the donor inscription of Kharul under consideration, none of the donor inscriptions authored by members of the rBang kling clan gives the position of its donor. As suggested by Nicolas Tournadre (personal communication), one may also wonder if *rbang kling/rwang kling* might not be derived from ‘bangs gling, ‘the realm of the subjects’.

¹² After Dargyay 1986, 187. On merit dedication, see also Jackson 1984, 51-52, and Martin forthcoming, 152. On the purpose of the petroglyphs of *mchod rten*, see also Bruneau 2007, 72.

the splitting of the base. The dark stripe running along the left side of the central *mchod rten* also makes the reading of the end of the lines more difficult.

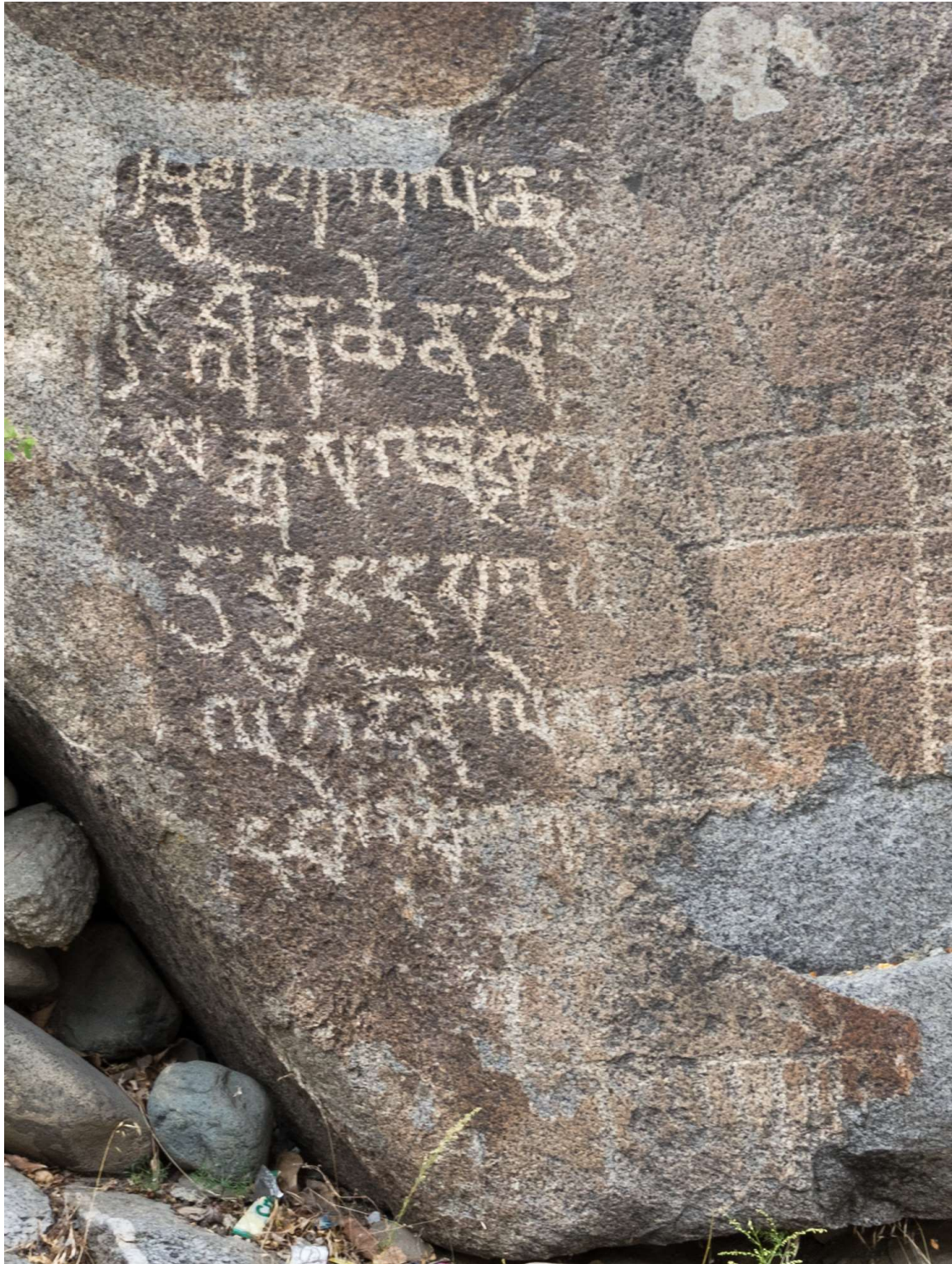


Fig. 7: the left part of the inscription (L).

The right part of the inscription (R; fig. 8) comprises ten lines. The lines start immediately to the right of the outlines of the central *mchod rten* and run almost until the right edge of the south face. They present only a few small losses due to scaling at lines 1, 7, 8, and 9. The splitting of the bottom of the south face has, however, led to the partial loss of the tenth line, as well as, possibly, to the complete loss of a hypothetical eleventh line. For physical and compositional reasons, it is doubtful that the right part could have extended further below a hypothetical eleventh line or that the lines could have extended further to the right, except

perhaps for a few more letters at the end of lines 8, 9, and 10. An archaeological excavation of the site might make it possible to unearth lost fragments of the inscription and therefore provide further interpretational elements.

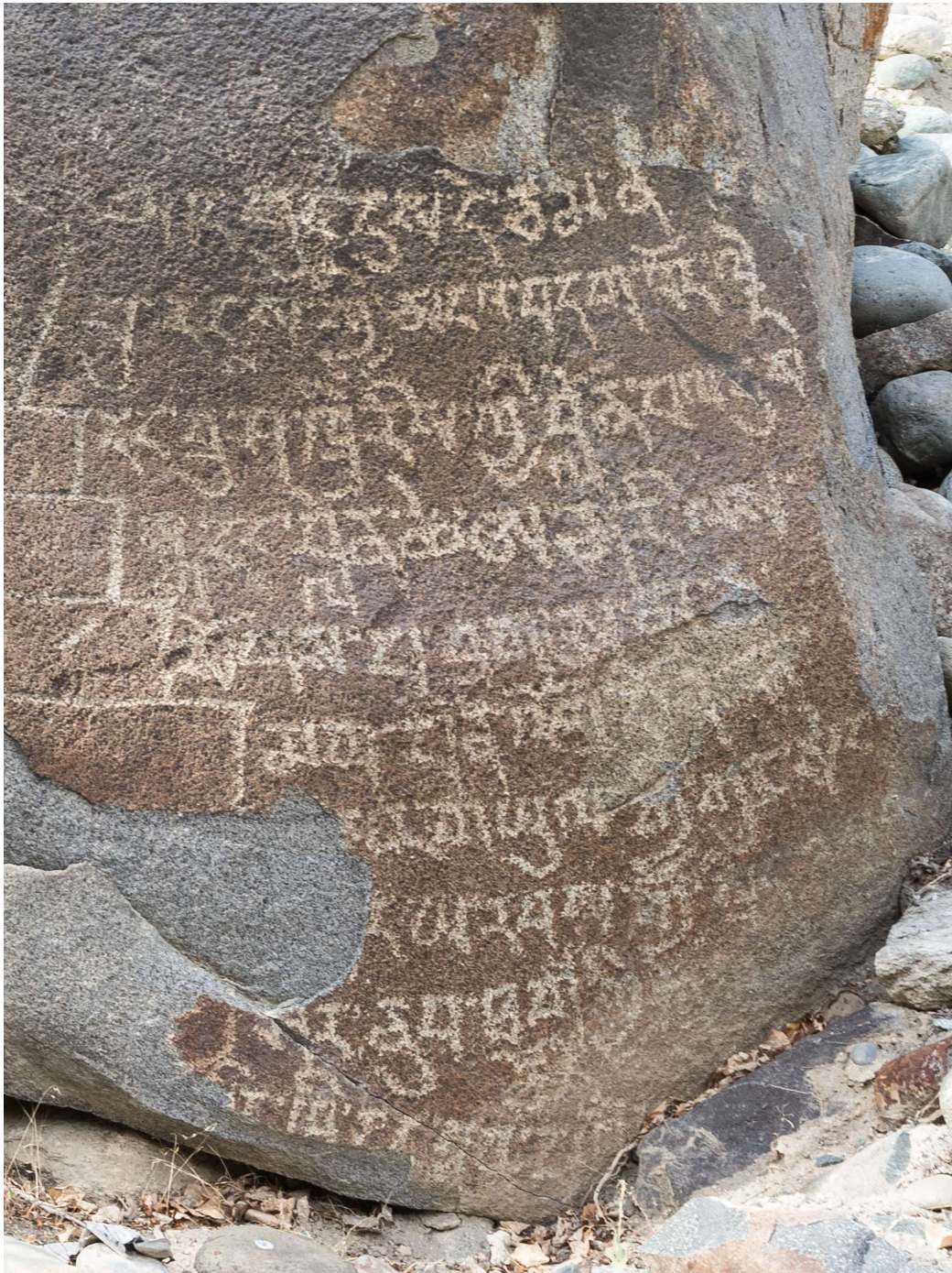


Fig. 8: the right part of the inscription (R).

5. Paleography and orthography

The inscription shows a consistent technique and style throughout its two parts. It is written in headed script (*dbu can*) with medium to rather wide strokes and without apparent shading (i.e. a differentiation in the width of the strokes). The letters *ka*, *ga*, *da*, *na*, and *sha* have a medium to long descender stroke; the letters *nga* and *da* have second and third strokes that tend to be curved and to form obtuse angles; and the letters *pa* and *ba*, as well as the heads of the letters *kha* and *ga* tend toward a triangular form. Moreover, the letter 'a' does not feature a hook, and the intersyllabic dot (*tsheg*) is always placed at the level of the head-stroke. Finally, the inscription contains only a few archaic or noteworthy orthographical peculiarities, including one case of the superabundant suffix ' (L6: *dpe'*) and one case of separated 'i' (L5: *pa' i*).

It therefore differs in several respects from Tibetan inscriptions of the Imperial period,¹³ as well as from the inscriptions of Shey Yogma and Shey Khar,¹⁴ Leh,¹⁵ in Ladakh, and Manthal, in Baltistan,¹⁶ which show strong analogies with the imperial inscriptions. The latter are engraved more sharply and those at Shey and Manthal, at least, were also enhanced with red pigments. Moreover, their letters tend to be more angular, and seemingly inscribed within squares. They also feature several archaic orthographic peculiarities, including notably the superabundant second suffix *d* and the reversed vowel sign *i* (*i*). The inscription of Pu, in Khunu,¹⁷ probably resembles more the inscription of Kharul. Both in technique and style, however, the best matches are observable among the donor inscriptions on boulders at Alchi Khargok, Balukhar, Khaltse, and other abovementioned sites, which show a great variety of styles. The donor inscriptions of the *yi ge ba Nya na* of rBang kling, in particular, show one idiographic mark that is also observable in the inscription of boulder 12, in addition to numerous other similarities.¹⁸ In these inscriptions, the subscripts *ra* and *la* are linked to the leg of the radical letter by a short tick that extends further downward by up to half of its entire length, and tends to form a small obtuse angle with the leg of the radical letter (figs. 9–10).

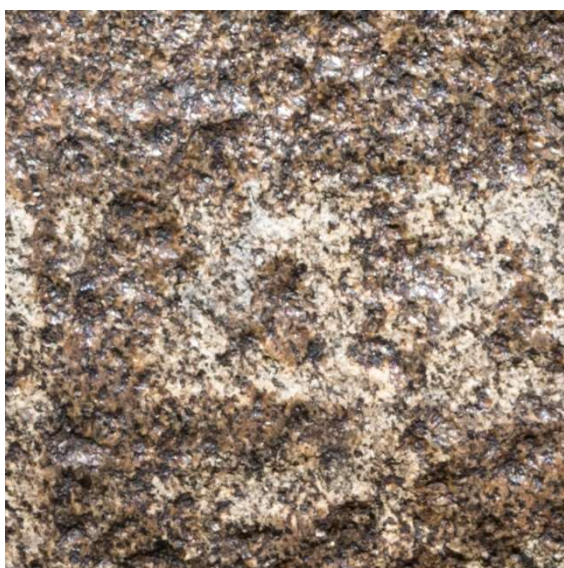


Fig. 9: detail of the subscript *ra* in the donor inscription of Bo12-St-1 (R5).



Fig. 10: detail of the subscript *ra* in the donor inscription of Bo23-St-3.

Unfortunately, the short length and limited content of the donor inscriptions of the *yi ge ba Nya na* of rBang kling prevent from drawing more extensive comparisons, but it is significant that the paleographic analysis of the inscriptions is corroborated by the art-historical analysis of the petroglyphs of *mchod rten*. It can therefore be assumed that both the central *mchod rten* and the inscription of boulder 12 were engraved at the same period and by the same lapicide(s), most likely the *yi ge ba Nya na* of rBang kling.

6. A solemn commemoration

The solemn nature of the inscription can be guessed from its external aspect: it is engraved on a large boulder that can be seen from afar; its length differs greatly from the donor inscriptions mentioned above, and so does the care that it received. The lapicide(s) even indicated, by means of two small crosses, where omitted letters should be inserted (L3: 'za^x_{ngS}; R9: *thag*^x_{chod}).

The internal analysis of the inscription further indicates that it is a praise addressed to the councillor dPal 'Dus sGra,¹⁹ or better, a commemoration of his decisive role in the resolution of a territorial conflict. The

¹³ For the paleography and orthography of Imperial Tibetan documents, see notably van Schaik 2014 and Dotson and Helman-Ważny 2016, 72–116. For the development and diffusion of Old Tibetan, see also Takeuchi 2013.

¹⁴ See Francke 1907a, 93–97; Denwood 2007, 50–51.

¹⁵ See Francke 1907a, 98; Alexander and van Schaik 2011, 427–431.

¹⁶ See Schuh 2011, 338–357; Schuh 2013.

¹⁷ See Thakur 1994; Richardson 1995; Denwood 2007, 51–52.

¹⁸ Dalton et al. (2007) have set the bases for a new paleographic approach to the manuscripts of Dunhuang by adapting the techniques of forensic handwriting analysis, the terminology of which is used here.

¹⁹ See notes 96.

syntactic and conceptual structure of the inscription follows its engraving in two parts on both sides of the central *mchod rten*. The right part is a narrative that appears to set the context of the deeds performed by dPal 'Dus sGra. During a benighted period(?) (R1), the rule exerted by the *mnga' bdag* of Purangs 'Od lDe and several other governmental authorities was impaired (R2-8) and a conflict for (re)determining (a) boundary(/ies) ensued (R9). The last line(s) cannot be reconstructed at the present state of research. The left part of the inscription constitutes the praise itself. It starts with a temporal and geographical indication (L1) that should probably be read in reference to the right part (R9). It continues praising dPal 'Dus sGra for having set 'the paragon of a resolution of eminent bravery'.

There is no indication about the occasion for which this inscription and the central *mchod rten* were engraved, neither of the identity of their author. It is probable that the engraving of boulder 12 followed closely the resolution of the territorial conflict that it commemorated. Its author might have been dPal 'Dus sGra himself or a higher authority such as the *mnga' bdag* of Purangs 'Od lDe or his son rTse lDe (r. circa 1057/1060-1080/1088). Another – yet not incompatible – possibility is that the engraving of boulder 12 commemorated the death of dPal 'Dus sGra. In this event, the inscription should be considered as an epitaph and the central *mchod rten* as a particular means to benefit the deceased. In any event, the engraving of boulder 12 cannot have postdated the rule of 'Od lDe by more than a few decades, hence a probable dating of the inscription to the last three quarters of the 11th century.

7. The councillor dPal 'Dus sGra

The recipient of the praise, dPal 'Dus sGra, is mentioned twice in the inscription: first, as the *blon* ('councillor') of Brusha *khri ris*,²⁰ in second position after the *mnga' bdag* of Purangs 'Od lDe among the governmental authorities in the right part (R2-3); and secondly, as the *gung blon chen po* (great councillor in charge of external affairs) praised for his role in the resolution of the territorial conflict in the left part (L2-3). These two titles might either be complementary, or they might indicate successive positions held by dPal 'Dus sGra, respectively at the time of the territorial conflict and after its resolution. As the *gung blon chen po*, it is plausible that dPal 'Dus sGra had the authority to intervene in place of the *mnga' bdag*, especially in peripheral regions.²¹ As the *blon* of Brusha *khri ris* – and despite the uncertain meaning of *khri ris* (perhaps a territorial designation) – it is evident that dPal 'Dus sGra was in charge of the dominion of Brusha, at least until the territorial conflict. Therefore, he would have probably governed over Gakuch, in Punyal, where a few petroglyphs of *mchod rten* resemble the central *mchod rten* of boulder 12. This is significant, since the donor inscription associated with one of the latter (stone 2; fig. 11) mentions a *gung blon chen po*.

It was transliterated and translated by Jettmar and Sagaster (1993, 128), with the help of Loden Sherab Dagab, as follows (my edition and translation from German):

1. ? < > *su mor blon ch[en]*
2. *srid* < > *kyi gung blon*
3. *chen* < > *po'i bd[ud]*
4. 'dul < > ?

'...to discipline the demons (*māra/bdud*) of the honorable state minister, the minister Su(?) mor...'

Jettmar and Sagaster (1993, 133-135) have attributed the latter inscription as well as the other petroglyphs of *mchod rten* and associated Tibetan inscriptions to the Tibetan imperial period, adding that some might comprise unintelligible Bon formulae. Denwood (2007, 50) has further stated that: "one can envisage the Gakuch inscriptions being produced between 722 and 753, perhaps between 755 and 815, or between 820 and the 850s." A re-examination of the inscriptions, however, does not necessarily support this early dating, in regard to their palaeography and orthography. It also discards the presence of Bon formulae. Except for stone 8, the inscriptions consist of the names of the donors who authored the associated petroglyphs of *mchod rten*, in certain cases preceded by the mention of their place of origin or clan and/or their title.²²

²⁰ See notes 94 and 95.

²¹ See note 109.

²² The inscription on stone 5 (Jettmar and Sagaster 1993, 128; Abb. 8) apparently names one Li dPal ({l. 1} *li dpal*). As John Mock pointed out to me (personal communication, 16/02/2018), it differs strikingly from the reading *ja ya ma ni* (?) *ja ya (ma ni svā hā) ja ya ma* proposed by the authors as being perhaps a Bon mantra. Unless stone 6 would turn out to have been inscribed on more than one side, I would suggest that the latter reading was mistakenly applied to the inscription on stone 5, whereas it must have related to another inscription documented by Jettmar. In this regard, it is noteworthy that a boulder of Gol documented by Schuh (2011-2012, 4, Abb. 150) bears an inscription that could be read

As regards the inscription of stone 2, in particular, the following transliteration and translation might be supported by a re-examination of Jettmar's photograph:

1. *||<> chu· mor· -on· chab
2. srid· <> kyi· gung· blon·
3. chen· <> po dbang
4. 'dus <> 'gra

'[Engraved] at the river [by] the [...] gung blon chen po of the government dBang 'Dus sGra.'

In the absence of further documentation of the inscription, however, this reading must remain tentative.²³ In any case, however, the petroglyph of a *mchod rten* and its associated donor inscription on stone 2 at Gakuch present remarkable similarities with those on boulder 12 at Kharul, which may testify to a common history.



Fig. 11: petroglyph of a *mchod rten* and associated donor inscription on stone 2 at Gakuch.
(after Jettmar and Sagaster 1993, Abb. 5)

as proposed by Jettmar and Sagaster. Jettmar himself led investigations in Baltistan in 1984 and 1985 and published a photograph of one of the boulders of Gol (see Jettmar 1990, fig. 8). As regards the inscription on stone 6 (Jettmar and Sagaster 1993, 130; Abb. 9), far from being a Bon *dhāraṇī*, it names the author of the associated petroglyph of *mchod rten*: a member of the Nam pu shud clan apparently named sTa(?) mo myi tse(?) ({l. 1} *nam pu shud sta* {l. 2} *mo myi tse*). John Mock, who has documented another petroglyph authored by a member of this clan in Wakhan (see Mock 2016, fig. 7; Mock 2018), concurs to this reinterpretation (personal communication, 11/02/2018).

²³ According to Jettmar and Sagaster (1993, 126), stone 2 was not brought to Gilgit after Jettmar informed the local authorities of the great historical significance of the petroglyphs and associated inscriptions, perhaps because it was trapped between several larger rocks. Not a single boulder bearing a petroglyph of *mchod rten* or a Tibetan inscription was, however, found by Tsuchiya, who carried out searches for this purpose in March and September 1995 at Lower Gakuch, and discovered in 1996 that some boulders bearing petroglyphs of *mchod rten* from Lower Gakuch were on display in the Museum of Islamabad (see Tsuchiya 1999, 366-367; 371). According to Harald Hauptmann (personal communication, 15/02/2018), stones 4 and 5 are currently stored in the Taxila Museum, whereas the other stones remain in Gilgit. Mueezuddin Hakal (private communication, 20/04/2018) has further let me know that some of the latter are in the Department of Archaeology and Museums of Gilgit; one is in the John Biddulph Library; and two are in private collections. Whether stone 2 is among them, however, remains to be determined.



Fig. 12: petroglyph of a *mchod rten* and associated donor inscription at Khaltse.

Another donor inscription, located on the left bank of the Indus River near the bridge of Khaltse (fig. 12), might also be attributed to dPal 'Dus sGra. It is written in a rudimentary headed script to the right of the petroglyph of a *mchod rten*. It has been published by Francke (1907b, 602), Orofino (1990, fig. 38; after a photograph by Gherzi 1935), and Takeuchi (2012, inscription K.4-b), who have proposed different readings for it.²⁴

A re-examination of the inscription *in situ* supports the following reading:

1. *rum·pal·dus*
 2. *gra·zheng*
 3. *su·sol ba*
- 'Made at the request of(?) Rum dPal 'Dus sGra.'

Among the inscriptions that might be attributed to dPal 'Dus sGra, it is the only one to give a place of origin or clan name: Rum. The latter name appears in a few sources²⁵ and designates a region of Guge (Luczanits 1999, n. 139), as well as a prominent clan of Zhangzhung that might have held estates in Spiti as well. In regard to the captions of donors inside the ambulatory of the gTsug lag khang of Tabo, Luczanits (1999, n. 32) has stated that: "evidently the Rum people were the most prominent donor group for the renovation." According to the renovation inscription of the temple, it is probable that the construction of the gTsug lag

²⁴ Francke 1907b, 602: "inschrift von *Rum pal dub gra*"; Orofino 1990, fig. 38: *rtsam pal dub (?) gra zheng su sol ba*; Takeuchi 2012, inscription K.4-b: {l. 1} [ca]m p[u]l [du]ng {l. 2} [g zha] {l. 3} ba / [---].

²⁵ Rum appears as a place of origin or clan name in a petition manuscript from Miran (circa 9th century) (see Thomas 1935-1963, 2, 148-151, M. I. xxviii, 002; Takeuchi 1997-1998, 2, n°606), as well as in captions of donors on the murals of the entry hall (circa 996) and ambulatory hall (circa 1042) of the gTsug lag khang of Tabo (see Luczanits 1999, 108 and 143). In the *Chos la 'jug pa'i sgo* (494), *rum yul* designates the region of the hermitage of Pa sgam (see Vitali 1996, 251-255, in which *lcog la yul sbeg mkhar* and *rum yul pa sgam* are questionably considered as being the same place; Petech 1997b, 233). The *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* (429-430) further mentions the Rum Wer as one of the 'five Zhangzhung siblings' (*zhang zhung mched lnga*) who dominated Zhanzhung in a distant past (see Jahoda 2017, 144-146), although the location of their estates is obscure (430: *rum pa ra mkhar she la khyung bzung*). Finally, among the clan names of Spiti documented by dGe rgan, there appear Rum po' pa and Rum pa (see Jahoda 2017, 153-155).

khang was initiated by Ye shes 'Od (947-1019/1024) in 996 and its renovation by Byang chub 'Od (984-1078), the brother of 'Od lDe, in 1042.²⁶

8. The *mnga' bdag* of Purangs 'Od lDe

The *mnga' bdag* of Purangs 'Od lDe appears first among the governmental authorities listed in the right part, before even dPal 'Dus sGra, which clearly indicates the West-Tibetan perspective of the inscription. He is moreover the sole authority named in the inscription to be otherwise known from Tibetan historical sources. Below, the most significant passages of the latter are examined in detail, with a view to the historical context of the engraving of boulder 12.

'Od lDe/'Od lDe bTsan is well known from a variety of sources to have succeeded his father lHa lDe (r. circa 996-1024), the nephew of Ye shes 'Od, on the throne of Purangs. The sources, however, cannot all be reconciled as regards his dates and his fate.²⁷ The most detailed narrative of 'Od lDe's life is found in the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* (448-450), composed by Gu ge Paṇ chen Grags pa rGyal mtshan dPal bZang po (1415-86),²⁸ which is worth translating at length:

lHa lDe bKra shis bTsan, the eldest of the three sons of Kho re, had in his turn three sons, among whom the eldest was the *mnga' bdag* 'Od lDe. He was born in the Sheep year (995/1007) and was of extremely great strength, great vigor and dexterity, full of courage. From an early age, he was full of rage and keen to show his courage and to fight. At 15 years old, in the Bird year (1009/1021), he made the *hu pu*(?) war. Again, at 26 years old, in the Bird year (1021/1033), he made war on Khotan {449} and incorporated it into his dominions. In that same year, when many foreign soldiers, including *gar log* men, arrived, the attackers were vanquished and repulsed, and he obtained victory. Again, he went to the place of Khotan and enacted a great assignment of duties (*skos chen po*) to lay administrators (*mi sde*). In that same year, he laid the foundation of the gTsug lag khang of Nyarma. After two years, he [consecrated it by] inserting [consecrated objects] at its base(?) (*zhabsu chud*) and he established the monastic community, as well as monastic schools. In the third year, in the Rat year (1024/1036), he went to Maryul and founded the temple of Spituk. He established the monastic community and provided donations and funds in great quantity for the supports of the deities and for the temples. As support for the monastic community, he distributed the villages, the estates of fields, the houses and so forth in great number. He invited the *paṇḍita* Puṇaśrī, who translated the scriptures, the Buddha's teachings, and its commentaries, and he received ancient teachings. He engaged in meditation to a small degree and made pious offerings. In particular, he practiced sMan bla (Baiṣa-jyaguru) and prayed to him. At the end, he made war for the second time in the land of the *gar log*. There, he was captured(?) (*dbu 'jams*).

His younger brothers Byang chub 'Od and {450} Zhi ba 'Od paid a ransom [for 'Od lDe] but were told that a quantity of gold equal to his weight was needed. As they did not have it, ['Od lDe] remained there at this time. His mother made offerings and prayers to sMan bla. In his sleep, her son ('Od lDe) dreamt that eight monks came from the east and freed him from his iron chains and that he escaped. [Waking up], he was spontaneously freed from his chains and both lord and subject(s) escaped. Because of his former deeds, he was poisoned with iron and died on the way to Guge. At that time, his younger brother Byang chub 'Od went to the goldmine of Nakra and to Jangs, in Us, in order to collect gold for paying the ransom of his elder brother. He took away a great quantity of gold and went back via the upper route. In Mangyul, at Skyidrong, he was graced by the *jo bo*. Then, he went to Gungtang. There, when he heard that his elder brother 'Od lDe had passed away, he entrusted the gold to Nag tsho Lo tsā ba and rGya brtson Seng, and he sent them to invite Jo bo rJe (Atiśa).

The *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* (450) concludes its account of 'Od lDe's life by comparing his outstanding martial qualities with the ones of Indian *deva* and *asura*. The abridged narrative contained in the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* (61-64; trans. 115-117), a second 15th century source from Guge whose authorship is debated,²⁹ resembles the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* except for the identification of 'Od lDe's last military campaign, which is located

²⁶ See Steinkellner and Luczanits 1999 and Tropper 2008a. See also Klimburg-Salter 1997.

²⁷ The order of birth of 'Od lDe and his two brothers, bKra shis 'Od, alias Byang chub 'Od, and Yongs Srong lDe, alias Zhi ba 'Od, is also at variance in the sources (see van der Kuijp 2015).

²⁸ For the authorship and recent publication of this important source, see van der Kuijp 2013, 330-331; Jahoda and Kalantari 2015, n. 12.

²⁹ The attribution of the *mNga' rigs rgyal rabs* to the dGe lugs scholar Ngag dbang Grags pa (active 15th century) by Vitali (1996, 89-97; 1997) has been questioned by Petech (1997a, 107-108; 1999a) and van der Kuijp (2015).

in Brusha without mention of the *gar log*.³⁰ As noted by Vitali (1996, 281-291), the narrative of the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* shows some resemblance with that of the king of Zangskar Shā kya thub pa, contained in the *Zangs dkar chags tshul lo rgyus* (Francke 1926, 153; Schuh 1983, PH I, l. 10-13; 231-232). This narrative, which is embedded in an array of regional stories of stranger kingship (Martin forthcoming), reads as follows:

At that time, since thefts and robberies occurred [and] great resentment arose, the one known as *lha chen* Shā kya Thub pa was invited to come from Spiti-Guge and all the people of Zangskar enthroned him as king. A queen was brought for him from Brusha and, the next year, they went on a nuptial tour [to Brusha]. On the way, as Yab sgod pa (the Turkic title *yabǵu*) abducted the queen, king Shag Thup (Shā kya Thub pa) died. (partly adapted from the translation of Vitali 1996, n. 429)

As stressed by Vitali (1996, 284-285), the identification of 'Od lDe with Shā kya Thub pa might be corroborated by a passage in the *gDung rabs kyi zam 'phreng* (dGe rgan 1976, 339), which indicates that 'Od lDe married a queen of Brusha named rGyan ne, from whom he fathered a child called either Brusha-son (*bru shal tsha*) or sGyur chen.³¹

In both the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* and the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs*, the narrative is tied to the literary topos of the ransom of gold used by Byang chub 'Od for the invitation of Atiśa (982-1054). According to most chronicles, the ransom was not intended to free 'Od lDe but Ye shes 'Od, who had ventured into foreign lands in search of gold and was imprisoned there. The authenticity of this version, however, has been refuted by Vitali (1996, 181-185), Petech (1997b, 236), and Tshe ring rGyal po (2005, 74-92). Vitali and Tshe ring rGyal po, in particular, have proposed that the narrative originally concerned 'Od lDe, and was later transposed to the religious figure of Ye shes 'Od.³² If so, the death of 'Od lDe should be dated before the departure of Nag 'tsho Lo tsā ba Tshul khri ms rGyal ba for inviting Atiśa from India to Western Tibet, which is well known to have taken place in 1037 (Vitali 1996, 180). The continuous and hectic chronological sequence of the deeds attributed to 'Od lDe in the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs*, from his military campaign at Khotan (1021/**1033**) to the foundation of the temple of Spituk (1024/**1036**), moreover, seems to support a short chronology for his life (1007-*circa* 1037; years indicated in bold). Otherwise, there would be a blank of about thirteen years in between his foundation of the temple of Spituk (1024/**1036**) and his death (*circa* 1037).³³

As noted by Petech (1999b, n. 7), however, the dating of 'Od lDe's death to *circa* 1037 is contradicted by the accounts of the *Chos la 'jug pa'i sgo* of bSod nams rTse mo (1142-1182) and the *Deb ther sngon po* of 'Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dPal (1392-1481). According to a difficult passage in the *Chos la 'jug pa'i sgo* (494), the *mnga' bdag* 'Od lDe bTsan was still alive in 1057,³⁴ and according to the *Deb ther sngon po* (70), it was during the time of 'Od lDe that Atiśa was invited to Western Tibet, where he arrived in 1042.³⁵ Therefore, Petech (1997b, 236) has proposed that 'Od lDe's rule be dated to *circa* 1025-1060. It might be argued, however, that the authors of the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* and the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* must have had access to a far greater number of

³⁰ For the identification of the *gar log*, see Petech 1999b, 249-250. For the identification of the place where 'Od lDe passed away according to the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs*, see Tropper 2008b, n. 226.

³¹ Interestingly, Laurent (2013, 206) has proposed a link between this matrimonial alliance and the arrival of an 8th century Gilgit bronze in Western Tibet.

³² As already noted by Vitali (1996, 290-291), other variants of this topos exist in Tibetan literature. Most fascinating, perhaps, are the narratives contained in the *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud* of Nyang ral Nyi ma 'Od zer (1136-1204) and the Bon po *bsTan 'byung* of Kun grol Grags pa, in which the perspective is at least partly reversed. The *Chos 'byung* of Nyang ral (ff. 500r-v) recounts that Ye shes 'Od asked the herdsmen of the highlands (*sa sgang 'brog mi*) for gold in compensation for the death of his chaplain and used it for building the temples of Khochar, in Purangs, Tabo, in Picok, Nyarma, in Maryul, and Shiling/Shaling, in Purik. According to the narrative of the *bsTan 'byung* (see Vitali 1996, n. 217 and 446; Hoffmann 1969, 139; trans. 141-142), a king of Tibet attacked Brusha four times from the border of Western Tibet (*mnga' ris skor gsum*) and captured its king, gNam gsas. In exchange for his release, the people had to pay a ransom of gold equal to the weight of gNam gsas.

³³ As noticed by Vitali (1996, 291), the *Bai ser*, repeating the *dGa' ldan chos byung* of mKhar nag Lo tsā ba (see Vitali 2012, 73), corroborates the claim that 'Od lDe went to Mangyul (i.e. Maryul) in a Rat year, when he was 30 year old, and founded a temple at Spituk. According to the *bsTan rtsis kun las btus pa* (154), apparently drawing from the *Bai ser* but on the basis of a method of calculation that is not explained, the Rat year in question was the Wood Rat year of 1024 (see also Vitali 1996, 292).

³⁴ See Vitali 1996, 295; Petech 1997b, 238; Tropper 2008b, n. 229.

³⁵ Another source in which the invitation of Atiśa is attributed to 'Od lDe, together with his brothers Byang chub 'Od and Zhi ba 'Od, is the *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung* (see Tshe ring rGyal po 2005, 84).

original documents and ancient sources about the rule of 'Od lDe at the court of Guge, than any historian in the central regions of Tibet.

Among the ancient sources that the authors of the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* and the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* might have consulted is a 12th century West-Tibetan chronicle contained in two incomplete bound manuscripts discovered inside a cave of Tsarang (Pa tshab Pa sangs dBang 'dus 2012, 25) or a *mchod rten* of Tholing (Khyung bdag 2013, 68), in Guge, in one case, and at Matho (EN36, unpublished), in Ladakh, in the second. It features several interesting but obscure passages about the rulers of Purangs, which further vary greatly between the two witnesses. 'Od lDe and his brothers, in particular, are collectively called 'the three peaceful and wrathful brothers' (*zhi khro mched gsum*), alluding to the bellicose temper of 'Od lDe – here the middle brother – in opposition to the religious zeal of the eldest, Byang chub 'Od, and the youngest, Zhi ba 'od (1016–1111). The chronicle further acknowledges that the rule of 'Od lDe was marked by several conflicts, which obliged him to call for a grand conscription.³⁶ The identity of 'Od lDe's opponents, however, is not clear and apparently no mention is made of his alleged capture in a foreign land, or of the ransom of gold used by Byang chub 'Od for the invitation of Atiśa. To the contrary, an ambiguous passage of the chronicle might imply that 'Od lDe abdicated to become a monk,³⁷ whereas the invitation of Atiśa is attributed to the rule of 'Od lDe's father, lHa lDe.

A close examination of the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* (abbreviated here as **NYI**) and the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* (**NGA**) in comparison to the two witnesses of the 12th century West-Tibetan chronicle (**GUGE** and **EN36**) demonstrates that an obscure verb compound or epithet related to 'Od lDe, *dbu 'byams (pa)/sku 'byams (pa)*,³⁸

³⁶ The complete account of 'Od lDe's life, contained in the manuscript EN36 of Matho, reads as follows:

Later, on the part of the great *rje mnga' bdag* 'Od lDe bTsan: the strength of his faith and his wisdom were vast. Nevertheless, as he was offended by a few superficial – not penetrating – actions of his other relatives, keeping in mind his other good subjects(?) (or perhaps: 'the other good dominion-shares [of his relatives]?'), he rejoiced(?) (*dbu 'byams*) in fighting others from an early age. Although he did not have the leisure to accomplish great deeds of the Body (i.e. the commission of Body Supports), or to practice virtuous activities comfortably, because he feared that people would blame him if he did not follow in the steps of his good ancestors, and because he feared that he would be regretful if he did not engage in some virtuous activities, he eventually performed numerous such [deeds] as commissioning the foundation of the temple of Spituk [on] the road, orientation toward wisdom, and so forth, and these great deeds were carried out with respect to the Three Jewels. Later, at a time when, because a conflict started against others, even the '*brog pa* in between the lands were slightly afflicted, and there was [no more difference between being] close to or far from the heart [of the *mnga' bdag*], [or any difference between] high and low [status] among [the subjects of] Zhangzhung, in a time of great difficulties, he ('Od lDe) issued a command saying that except for every man [who was engaged in] the troops, [all men] should be struck to their vital points and their lungs be scattered(?) (or perhaps: 'should be lost to the heart [of the *mnga' bdag*]'), and he promulgated [it] widely. Only one man whose heart was immodest did not do so, whereas he ('Od lDe) brought about supreme happiness for the subjects of the core of Zhangzhung and they were touched by his kindness(?) (or perhaps: 'the subjects of the core of Zhangzhung made his supreme happiness, and he was touched by their kindness?')."

{14v, l. 4} ...*slad nas rje mnga' bdag chen po 'od lde btsan gyi* {l. 5} *zhal snga nas / sku dad pa'i shugs dang dgam dkyel rgya che yang phyogs* {l. 6} *rigs gzhan gyi yab mched myi sgab pa rnams kyis mdzad la phigs* {l. 7} *pa 'gas spyen la phog pas / dnga' ris bzang po gzhan thug bzhag pas* {l. 8} *sku nas gzhan nu nas phyogs gzhan 'khrug pa la dbu' 'byams ste* {l. 9} *sku rgya ma dang dge sbyor bde mor mdzad pa'i phyag long myi mnga' yang* {l. 10} *yabs mes bzang po'i zhabs rjes ma sleb na myis spyas kyis dogs pa* {l. 11} *dang / dge sbyor sna cig ma byas na thugs'gyod kyis dogs pa dang tha* {15r, l. 1} *na 'dron lam dpe' tug gyi gtsug lag khang bzhengs su gsol ba dang* {l. 2} *shes rab phyogs sgyur tu lasogs pa mang du mdzad rgya ma de tsam* {l. 3} *dkon mchog mnyan nas mdzad / phyis gzhan du 'khrug pa'i sna* {l. 4} *zug pas sa bar gyi 'brog pa cung zhig sna gzer kyang zhang zhung gyi blo ba nye* {l. 5} *ring dang mthon dman ma mchis par dus tshigs la bab cig mdzad* {l. 6} *shin tu dka' ba'i dus su dmag pho re re las ma gtogs par gnad* {l. 7} *msnun cing blo ba stor ba'i dka' mchid dang dka' babs spyi khyab tu* {l. 8} *glo bas pas pa cig kyang ma 'dzad cing zhang zhung snying tshoms kyi 'bangs* {l. 9} *kyi gung skyid chen po bgyis ste / dka' dran gyis phog par mdzad pa lags*

For an edition and discussion of the corresponding passage of the manuscript of Guge, see Pa tshab Pa sangs dBang 'dus 2012 and Khyung bdag 2013.

³⁷ See note 40.

³⁸ See also van der Kuijp 2013, n. 43. The two following passages of the 12th century West-Tibetan chronicle demonstrate clearly that *dbu 'byams pa* was an epithet of 'Od lDe:

GUGE: *slad na rje mnga' bdag chen po dbu 'byams pa'i zha snga nas /*

(Later, on the part of the great *rje mnga' bdag dbu 'byams pa*...)

EN36 (14v, l. 4–5): *slad nas rje mnga' bdag chen po 'od lde btsan gyi zhal snga nas /*

(Later, on the part of the great *rje mnga' bdag 'Od lDe bTsan*...)

was given two different meanings by later authors. In a passage about 'Od lDe's youth, *dbu 'byams/sku 'byams* was interpreted as a misspelling for *'jam*, 'gentle', with a meaning close to *dges*, 'rejoiced',³⁹ whereas in a second passage it was interpreted as a verb compound indicating the capture of 'Od lDe in a foreign land, and thereby linked to the literary topos of the ransom of gold used by Byang chub 'Od for the invitation of Atiśa.⁴⁰ It is hoped that future research will clarify this issue. At present, it seems impossible to reconcile the different sources and therefore to establish a secure dating for the rule of 'Od lDe. It is manifest, however, that the latter constituted a period of conflicts.

9. The West-Tibetan rule in Maryul and Brusha

Following the *mnga' bdag* of Purangs 'Od lDe, several other governmental authorities are listed in the right part of the inscription:

- the *blon* of Brusha *khri ris dPal 'Dus sGra*
- the *blon che* A rga ri (and so forth)
- the *a ma ca* of Brag
- the *dmag pon*

GUGE: *yab dbu 'byams pa'i sras lags pas* |

(As there was a son [to] the father *dbu 'byams pa...*)

EN36 (15v, l. 11-16r, l. 1): *yab dbu 'byams pa'i sras lags pas* |

(As there was a son [to] the father *dbu 'byams pa...*)

³⁹ GUGE: *sku na gzho nu nas phyogs gzhan gyi 'khrug pa la sku 'byams te*

(From an early age, he *sku 'byams* in fighting others.)

EN36 (14v, l. 8): *sku nas gzhon nu nas phyogs gzhan 'khrug pa la dbu 'byams ste*

(From an early age, he *sku 'byams* in fighting others.)

NYI (448): *gzhon nu nas thugs rgyal can du 'khrungs pas dpung dang 'khrug pa la dges* |

(From an early age, he was full of rage and *keen* to show his courage and to fight.)

NGA (61): *sku nas gzhon nu nas thugs rgyal can du 'khrungs pa | 'khrug pa la 'jam...*

(From an early age, he was full of rage and *gentle* in fighting.)

⁴⁰ GUGE: *slad na sku tshe smad la rje mnga' bdag chen po ni dbu 'byams | rje mnga' bdag chen po ni rab byung mdzad nas bzhugs pa'i dus su mnga' ris mnga' bdag tu rang babs...*

(Later, during the later part of (Zhi ba 'Od's) life, as for the great *rje mnga' bdag: dbu 'byams*. When the great *rje mnga' bdag* ('Od lDe?), having become a monk, was staying [at the monastery], it fell to him (Zhi ba 'Od) to be the *mnga' bdag* of the dominion-share...)

EN36: {15v, l. 8} ...*slad nas sku tshe smad la* {l. 9} *rje mnga' bdag 'od lde brtsan sku 'byam | rje bla chen po rab tu byung nas bzhugs pa'i dus su mnga' ris kyi mnga' bdag tu rang babs...*

(Later, during the later part of (Zhi ba 'Od's) life, the *rje mnga' bdag 'Od lDe bTsan sku 'byam*. When the *rje bla chen po* ('Od lDe or Zhi ba 'Od?), having become a monk, was staying [at the monastery], it fell to him (Zhi ba 'Od) to be the *mnga' bdag* of the dominion-share...)

NYI (449-450): *'jug tu gar lo'i yul du dmag thebs gnyis pa mdzad pa der dbu 'jams so | chung byang chub 'od dang zhi ba 'od sku blus pas* |

(At the end, he made war for the second time in the land of the *gar log*. There, **he was captured(?)**. His younger brothers Byang chub 'Od and Zhi ba 'Od paid a ransom.)

NGA (62): *'jug tu bru sha'i yul du dmag mdzad pas | der dbu 'jam so | gcung gnyis kyis sku blus pas* |

(At the end, he made war in the land of Brusha. There, **he was captured(?)**. His two younger brothers paid a ransom.)

Vitali (1996, n. 152) has proposed to translate *dbu 'jam* as 'made prisoner' in another passage of the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* (76), which is corroborated by the context of a military defeat against the *gar log*. Examining the usages of *dbu 'byams* in the 12th century West-Tibetan chronicle (Guge), Pa tshab dBang 'dus (2012, 32) has proposed to interpret the latter in reference to the usages of *'jam* and *dbu 'jam* in the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs*. He adds that:

The mention of *'khrugs pa 'jam thengs gcig* signifies that he averted a war(?) (or perhaps: 'he was made free of preoccupations relative to a war'? *dmag 'khrugs gcig 'jam 'chags su btang ba*) and *dbu 'jam so* signifies that he was cast into prison on the battlefield, for it is said in the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* that after this *mnga' bdag* was cast into a prison of Brusha, his younger brothers Byang chub 'Od and Zhi ba 'od collected gold and paid his ransom, but could not save him. (my translation from Tibetan)

The methodology of Pa tshab dBang 'dus, however, is problematic, as he has interpreted *dbu 'byams* in reference to its own later – potentially inaccurate – interpretations in the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* and tied it to the story of the ransom of gold, which is absent in the 12th century chronicle. Moreover, his interpretation of *'khrugs pa 'jam* (actually *'khrugs pa la 'jam*) might be contradicted by the equivalent passage of the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs*, in which *'khrug pa la dge* can hardly convey another meaning than 'Od lDe's delight in fighting. As for *thengs gcig* ('once'), it actually relates to the following event, i.e. the commission of a temple at Spituk by 'Od lDe when he once went to Maryul.

- the 'og pon
- the gung seng of mar g.yul
- the noblemen (of mar g.yul?)

The latter authorities appear hierarchically in decreasing order of rank, from the *blon* of Brusha *khri ris* dPal 'Dus sGra (otherwise known as the *gung blon chen po*) and the *blon che* A rga ri down to the anonymous noblemen (of *mar g.yul*?). It is therefore evident that they represent, at least in the West-Tibetan perspective of the author, the elaborate government of a single party led by the *mnga' bdag* of Purangs 'Od lDe whose dominions extended from Purangs down to Brusha, rather than two or multiple parties. Among the governmental authorities, it is also significant that three correspond to military positions: *dmag pon*, 'og pon, and probably *gung seng* of *mar g.yul*. It might testify to the military nature of the rule exerted by the *mnga' bdag* and his party over the regions of Mar(yul) and Brusha, mentioned in the inscription, and probably over Purik and Baltistan as well, located in between Maryul and Brusha if not actually included into one or the other region.

The rule of 'Od lDe over Maryul is well attested by the accounts of the 12th century West-Tibetan chronicle, the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* and the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs*, which concur that he founded the temple of Spituk. In Maryul, 'Od lDe's line might have replaced the branch descending from dPal gyi mGon (r. 10th century). This, at least, is suggested by his artificial inclusion in the *gDung rabs kyi zam 'phreng* (dGe rgan 1976, 339) in the direct filiation of 'Gro mgon, the younger son and second successor of dPal gyi mGon after his elder brother, *mnga' bdag* Chos mGon. In another chronicle studied by Vitali (1996, 575-579), 'Gro mGon is similarly followed by 'Od lDe, although the latter is called ambiguously *lha chen po* ('great god'), a designation that may derive from the West-Tibetan title *bla chen*. Finally, according to a passage of the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* (83; trans. 132), kinsmen of 'Od lDe might have dwelled in the vicinity of Leh and Shey until at least 1399, when they revolted against the *mnga' bdag* of Maryul, Khri bTsan lDe.⁴¹ It is evident, however, that the previous rulers of Guge and Purangs, namely Ye shes 'Od and lHa lDe, already had a strong influence in Maryul, and as far as Purik. The *Chos 'byung me tog snying po'i sbrang rtsi'i bcud* (ff. 500r-v), attributed to Nyang ral Nyi ma 'Od zer (1136-1204), recounts that Ye shes 'Od founded temples at Nyarma, in Maryul, as well as at Shaling, in Purik.⁴² The *La dwags rgyal rabs* (35; trans. 95) might also artificially include Ye shes 'Od as a direct descendant of *lha chen* Grags pa lDe, grandson of dPal gyi mGon, under his posthumous title *byang chub sems dpa'*.⁴³ As for lHa lDe, the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* (446) recounts that he founded a temple at Shey, containing a golden *thang ka* of Byams pa (Maitreya).⁴⁴

The situation of Brusha and Baltistan about the time of 'Od lDe is more difficult to assess on literary grounds for reasons partly discussed above. Vitali (1996, 286-287) has proposed that the region of Brusha was seized by the Qarakhanids during the rule of 'Od lDe, on the basis of the abovementioned narratives of the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* and the *Zangs dkar chos kyi lo rgyus* in which the names of Turkic origin *gar log* and *yab sgod pa* appear. That the Qarakhanids held the silver mines of Bazar Dara, about 210 km north of Gakuch as the crow flies, is attested by archaeological findings (Kočnev 2001, 46), but their influence further south is unsure. The description of the region of Brusha/Bolor, contained in the so-called Saka itinerary (Bailey 1936 and 1968, 70-73), an account of a journey from Khotan to Kashmir during the rule of the king of Kashmir Abhimanyu (958-972), and in two works of Al-Bīrūnī composed circa 1030, are probably the best sources for the period immediately preceding the rule of 'Od lDe in the region. On the basis of these works, Jettmar (1993, 104) has proposed that the regions of Bolor (Brusha) and Darada (the region south of Gilgit) were united under a dynasty bearing the Sanskrit name *bhaṭṭavaryān* ('eminent lords'). Following closely the description of the surroundings of Kashmir contained in Al-Bīrūnī's *India* (1, 206-207), Alafouzo (2014, 188) has identified the *bhaṭṭavaryān* as non-muslim Turkish tribes. However, regarding the identification of Turkish and Tibetan populations in the works of Al-Bīrūnī, it is worth recalling the following observation by Stein (1900, 2, 363, n. 64), quoted by Jettmar (1993, 102):

Albērūnī's Bhatta may possibly represent the term Bhūtṭa or Bhautṭa (the modern Kashmiri But^a) which is applied in the Sanskrit chronicle to the population of Tibetan descent generally, from Ladākh to Baltistan. Albērūnī calls their language Turkish, but it must be remembered that he had

⁴¹ See also Vitali 1996, 493-500, who has identified 'Od lDe's kinsmen (*spun*) with the inhabitants of Shey (*she ye ba*).

⁴² For the identification of Shaling in the vicinity of Wakha, see Schuh and Munshi 2014, 58.

⁴³ For the identification of this posthumous title of Ye shes 'Od, see Scherrer-Schaub 1999.

⁴⁴ A similar account is found in the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* (61; trans. 115). See also Vitali 1996, 245-246.

spoken previously of ‘the Turks of Tibet’ as holding the country to the east of Kaśmir. There Tibetans in Ladākh and adjacent districts are clearly intended.

Leaving aside the difficult interpretation of these passages of Al-Bīrūnī’s India, the regions of Brusha and Baltistan do not appear to have been part of the territorial share of dPal gyi mGon, the eldest son of sKyid lDe Nyi ma mGon, although at least one late chronicle, the *Bod rje btsad po’i gdung rabs* of Kaḥ thog Rig ’dzin Tshe dbang Nor bu (1698-1755), recounts that his dominions extended down to Brusha.⁴⁵ The rule of West-Tibetans in Baltistan and Brusha during the rule of ’Od lDe is, however, unequivocally supported by the inscription of boulder 12, which identifies dPal ’Dus sGra as the *blon* of Brusha *khri ris*, and perhaps by the inscription on stone 2 at Gakuch as well.

10. The lesser governmental authorities and the allocation of estates

There is no straightforward indication in the concise narrative of the right part of the inscription as regards the decline that struck the rule exerted by the *mnga’ bdag* of Purangs ’Od lDe and his party. Whether it resulted from external and/or internal factors, in particular, cannot be determined with certainty. That it was ensued by a conflict ‘for (re)determining east and west’, however, may betray the loss of part of its dominions by the party of the *mnga’ bdag*, or even the split of his party.⁴⁶ The mention of several governmental authorities after the *mnga’ bdag* and the *blon* of Bru sha *khri ris* dPal ’Dus sGra might further indicate that lesser authorities were concerned by the territorial conflict as recipients of estates.

The allocation or confirmation of estates was probably concurrent with the assignment of (hereditary) duties to authorities of various positions and ranks. It might as well have been granted in recognition of outstanding (military) services. An ambiguous passage of the *Zangs skar chos kyi lo rgyus* may allude to such an allocation of estates:

In response, the ten-thousand army of Guge was sent and all the villages of Zangskar and so forth [were destroyed by fire. Many people were slaughtered.] All that remained was carried away and the land became empty. Thereafter, people came from various places [and the land was repopulated.] Padum was taken by the *zhang rung*; Jangngos was taken by the *skya pa*; and Stongde was held by the *lha pa*, the *gung blon*, and the *khyi shang*. (translation based on Schuh 1983, PH I, l. 7-10; completed in brackets with reference to Francke 1926, 153)

In the latter passage, it is evident that *zhang rung* (for *zhang drung*) and *gung blon* are titles corresponding to high governmental positions: respectively ‘true maternal uncle [of the ruler]’⁴⁷ and councillor in charge of external affairs. At a later period, the same names probably came to designate the father-brother groups (*pha spun*) descending from these title-holders.⁴⁸ The implantation of prominent West-Tibetan clans in Maryul as a consequence of assignments of duties is further known from the inscription n°7 of Alchi, located inside the gSum brtsegs lha khang (late 12th to early 13th century), which records the genealogy of the founder of the temple, the *slob dpon* Tshul khri ms ’Od of the ’Bro clan. As regards the great-grandfather of the latter, a councillor of the *pho brang* dBang lDe,⁴⁹ the inscription reads:

At that time(?),
[as if] he emerged from the lake, [as if] he descended from the glacier,
he settled at Nyar ma of Upper Mar yul(?)
and he acted as the *blon po* of the *pho brang* dBang lDe.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ For the partition of the dominions sKyid lDe Nyi ma mGon among his three sons, see Vitali 1996, 153-161. For a translation of the passage of the *Bod rje btsad po’i gdung rabs* under consideration, see Vitali 1996, n. 434. See also note 91.

⁴⁶ Taking *srid* in the more restricted sense of ‘dominions’ rather than ‘rule’, the narrative of the right part of the inscription would precisely point to the loss of part of the dominions of the *mnga’ bdag*. See also note 89.

⁴⁷ See Dotson 2004, 81.

⁴⁸ See Jahoda 2017, 137. The list of *pha spun* of Zangskar collected by dGe rgyan and adapted by Jahoda on p. 158-159 notably comprises the following *pha spun*: *blon chen pa* (‘great councillor’); *lha pa*; *skya pa*; and *zhang rung pa*.

⁴⁹ Presumably the grandson of ’Od lDe, who succeeded rTse lDe in the late 11th century (Martin 2017).

⁵⁰ {l. 25} [=====] *skabs de tsam na* ||
mtsho’ las bo zhing gangs las [== ||]
mar {l. 26} [yul st] *od kyi nyar mar bsad* ||
pho brang dbang lde’i blon po byas ||

See also Denwood 1980, 138; trans. 148; Heller 2018.

The 'Bro clan is well known to have held estates in Purangs,⁵¹ hence perhaps the mention of the lake (Mapam Yumtso) and the glacier (Gangs Tise), whence the great grandfather of Tshul khrim 'Od migrated to Nyarma, in Upper(?) Maryul. By the time of Tshul khrim 'Od, the estates of the 'Bro clan in Maryul probably also comprised Alchi and Sumda, whereas the neighbouring village of Mangyu was held by members of the sMer clan (Martin 2017). Interestingly, one Ka shi sGra, probably a *dmag pon* of the sMer clan, authored a short donor inscription in headless script (*dbu med*) associated with the small petroglyph of a *mchod rten* at Kharul itself (Bo26-St1).⁵² In the inscription of boulder 12, the double title of dPal 'Dus sGra, as the *blon* of Brusha *khri ris* in the right part and as the *gung blon chen po* in the left part, might refer respectively to his being a recipient of estates and to his governmental position.

The possible rise to prominence of such authorities in peripheral regions might explain the origin of numerous lineages of rulers in Maryul and Baltistan, in particular the *āmāca* of Shigar and the *dmag pon* of Skardo. This is not to say, however, that the *a ma ca* of Brag and the *dmag pon* listed among the governmental authorities in the right part of the inscription had received estates respectively at Shigar and Skardo and rose to local prominence there, but that the authority of the rulers of Shigar and Skardo might have resulted from a similar process. It is also doubtful that the *a ma ca* of Brag and the *dmag pon* of the inscription could have corresponded to established lineages of rulers of Shigar, Skardo, or any other local chiefdom, since the hierarchical order in which they appear in the inscription suggests a more elaborate form of government.

Among the governmental authorities listed in the right part of the inscription, the inclusion of the *a ma ca* of Brag is significant, insofar as this is a non-Tibetan title otherwise attested for the highest officials of Khotan, as well as for the rulers of Shigar, in Baltistan.⁵³ It bears witness to the continuous authority of foreign officials within the dominions of the *mnga' bdag* of Purangs 'Od lDe. Following a model of governance already imposed on Khotan and probably also on Bolor by the Tibetan Empire in the 8th and early 9th century, subjugated non-Tibetan regimes may have retained their positions locally, but were probably subordinated to West-Tibetan authorities with obligations "to pay tribute and supply troops when ordered to do so."⁵⁴ In this regard, it is worth recalling the account of the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs*, according to which 'Od lDe twice waged war in Khotan, where, on the second occasion, he assigned duties to lay administrators. A similar scenario might have occurred in Baltistan and in Brusha as well, despite a lack of literary evidence. In the region of Khotan, the West-Tibetans would have been in serious competition with the Qarakhanids, who were established in Kashgar and may have ruled over Khotan from circa 1006 onward.⁵⁵

11. A boundary stone at the river?

There is no straightforward indication neither in the praise of the left part of the inscription as regards the resolution that was achieved by dPal 'Dus sGra. On account of the narrative of the right part (R9), however, it can be assumed that it comprised the (re)determination of (a) boundary(/ies), either to the east and west of a central territory, or in between territories lying to the east and west of it. The 'river' (*chu mo*) in reference to which dPal 'Dus sGra is praised in the left part of the inscription (L1) and/or boulder 12 bearing the inscription itself might have marked one of these boundaries.

Outside Kharul, the toponym *chu mo* appears in the donor inscription of stone 2 at Gakuch (fig. 11). As stated above, the latter was authored by a *gung blon chen po* who might further be identified as dPal 'Dus sGra, the recipient of the praise of the Kharul inscription. Therefore, the possibility that *chu mo* might refer to the confluence of the Gilgit and Ishkoman Rivers at Gakuch should be examined. As for Alchi Khargok, Balukhar, and Khaltse, there was probably a Tibetan fort at Gakuch. The latter would have been necessary for controlling the main routes leading eastward to Gilgit, further down the Gilgit River; southward to Darel, along the Singal Valley; westward to Chitral, through the Ghizer Valley, the Shandur pass, and the Mastuj Valley; and

⁵¹ According to the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* (438-440) and the *La dwags rgyal rabs* (35; trans. 93), sKyid lDe Nyi ma mGon travelled to Purangs at the invitation of dGe bzher bKra shis bTsan, a member of the Seng dkar branch of the 'Bro clan who offered him his daughter 'Khor skyong, who bore him three sons. According to the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs*, dGe bzher bKra shis bTsan also offered sKyid lDe Nyi ma mGon the fort of sKu mkhar nyi zung, which became his capital. See also Vitali 1996, 196-207. For an inscription authored by a member of the 'Bro clan at Cogro, in Purangs, see Jahoda and Kalantari 2009. For some other estates of the 'Bro in Western Tibet, see Dotson 2012, 180-186.

⁵² See note 101.

⁵³ See note 99. To a lesser degree, the non-Tibetan name of the *blon chen* A rga ri (R4) invites similar questions.

⁵⁴ Takeuchi 2004, 55 on the Tibetan colonisation of Khotan "and probably also other small kingdoms, such as Nanzhao in Yunnan and Little and Great Balur in eastern Tokharistan and the Pamirs."

⁵⁵ For the extension of the dominions ruled by the Qarakhanids, see Kočnev 2001; Horlemann 2007, 95-96, in which the actual control exerted by the Qarakhanids over Khotan during most of the 11th century is questioned.

northward to Wakhan, through the Yasin Valley, crossing the Darkot and Baroghil passes; or through the Ishkoman and Karambar valleys, crossing the Khora Bhort Pass (Tsuchiya 1993, 13; 1999, 365-366). The strategic situation of Gakuch did not escape Drew (1877, 162-163), who visited it in November 1870:

The highest point in the valley to which I went was Gâkûj. This is the last village in Puniâl; it is the farthest in this north-west corner to which the Maharaja's power or influence extends – and hence it is the farthest to which the influence of the Government of India reaches. Gâkûj is, by my observations, 6940 feet above the sea; it is on a knob of rock behind which is a sloping plain. It is a cold windy place; snow falls there in winter to a depth varying from six inches to one foot six inches, and it stays three months; here only one crop is grown, while a few hundred feet down, two crops are got from the land. There is a strong fort at Gâkûj, containing within it a spring of water; the garrison is composed of the villagers – about fifty fighting men.



Fig. 13: petroglyph of a *mchod rten* and associated donor inscription in Baltistan.
(after von Ujfalvy 1884, pl. XVIII)

There is no reason, however, for the usage of the toponym *chu mo* to have been restricted to Gakuch. *De facto*, it was used to designate at least one other location in Baltistan, perhaps near Kharmang, as demonstrated by the donor inscription of a petroglyph of a *mchod rten* documented by von Ujfalvy (1884, 48 and pl. XVIII; fig. 13).

It reads:

1. *chu mor rkon dbang*
 2. *phyug skus bzhengs pa*
- ‘Made by rKon(?) dBang phyug sKu(?) at the river.’⁵⁶

The toponym *chu mo* could have also well designated Kharul itself because of its situation at the confluence of the Shingo and Suru rivers. Similarly to Gakuch, Kharul constituted a strategic crossing-place for controlling the main routes leading southward to Purik and further to Zangskar and Ladakh; northward to Baltistan, following the Shingo and the Indus rivers; and westward to Gilgit, through the Shigar Valley, the Deosai

⁵⁶ Schuh 2011-2012, 1, 108: {l. 2} *rgu mar rkon dbang* {l. 3} *phyug skus bzhengs pa*: ‘erected by Phyug sku, the *rkon dbang*(?) of rGu mar’, ‘erected by rKon dbang Phyug sku from rGu mar’, or ‘at rGu ma, erected by rKon dbang Phyug sku’. (my edition and translation from German)

Plateau, and the Astore Valley, and to Kashmir, through the Dras Valley, the Zoji Pass, and the Sind Valley (maps 1-2).⁵⁷ It may be for this reason that it appears in the donation inscription of the late(?) 14th century Nyi ma lha khang of Mulbek, in which the great deeds of the patron of the temple are praised as follows:

As for [...]: [as] he was not born from a mother, this name was bestowed on him by the gods. He installed the communities [of] the kingdom of his father in happiness. When the army of the Ce appeared at Phokar, he was victorious. The sultan being pleased, he gave [him] many villages of Kashmir. The fort of Khar(y)ul too [was placed under the protection of his] kingdom(?).⁵⁸

In the latter passage, Kharul is apparently emphasised with regard to its fort (*khar*, for *mkhar*). It is also significant that the spelling of Khar(y)ul (*kha r(y)ul*) itself might derive from an original *mkhar yul*, ‘the village of the fort’, despite the problematic distinction of the syllables *ryul* and *rul* in the donation inscription of the Nyi ma lha khang of Mulbek (Martin forthcoming, appendix II, n. 75). The strategic importance of Kharul is further supported by later historical events. In 1720, the capture of Kharul, along with Chutuk, by the armies of Sot and Kartse, caused the king of Ladakh to send his general Tshul khrims rDo rje, who attacked the rebellious chiefdom of Sot.⁵⁹ Later, during the revolt of the Baltis against the Dogras in 1842, the capture of the fort of Kharul by the Dogras was a major blow for the Balti revolt.⁶⁰ Ruins of this fort, set atop the right bank of the Shingo River in order to watch over a probable crossing place below, were surveyed by Devers in 2016, whereas another fort, located above the hamlet, could not be surveyed, as it is presently in a military restricted area (Devers et al. 2016).

Since the establishment of the Cease-fire Line by the Karachi Agreement (1949) and the Line of Control by the Shimla Agreement (1972), Kharul is the last village under Indian control along the left bank of the Shingo River. Its strategic situation might have made it a potential boundary between Purik and Baltistan in the past as well. Traditionally, the villages set along the north bank of the Shingo River belonged to the chiefdom of Khartaksho and they are still known as Balti villages today (Schuh 2014). The crossing over the Shingo River at Kharul would therefore have marked the boundary between Purik and Baltistan. Besides, it might as well have marked the boundary between the latter regions and Dras/Kashmir. In a – comparatively eastern – West-Tibetan perspective, the latter would have been a western boundary.

Western boundaries of Maryul and related kingdoms are mentioned in the *La dwags rgyal rabs* and the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs*. The *La dwags rgyal rabs* (35; trans. 94) indicates the boundaries of the dominion-share (*mnga' ris*) of Maryul ruled by dPal gyi mGon, the eldest son of sKyid lDe Nyi ma mGon, in all four directions. According to this work, the share of Maryul extended westward up to the stone with (a) hole(s) (*rdo bug pa can*), at the base of the Kashmir Pass (*kha che'i la rtsa*), obviously designating the Zoji Pass. Therefore, Maryul would have included Purik and neighbored Baltistan and Kashmir. The *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* (73; trans. 125) indicates slightly different western boundaries for the dominions of 'Od lDe's son, rTse lDe. According to it, rTse lDe's dominions would have extended westward up to the walled trade-mart (*tshong 'dus 'ba' ra*) and the top of the peak(?) of Kashmir (*kha che'i tse steng*), perhaps designating respectively Dras and the Zoji Pass, whereas another location is more difficult to ascertain.⁶¹ These discrepancies regarding the location of the western boundaries might well be explained by the great distance of both sources from the early period of dPal gyi mGon (r. 10th century) and rTse lDe that they recount. Yet, it is also plausible that the boundaries shifted over time.

Francke (1914, 106) searched for the western boundary of Maryul in Dras, a village situated about halfway from Kharul to the Zoji Pass, whose inhabitants confirmed to Francke that the location was known as the base of the pass (*la rtsa*). It should be remarked, however, that Kharul, as the lowest place of the valley leading up to the Zoji Pass, might also correspond to the Tibetan definition of the base of a pass: ‘the lowest place

⁵⁷ See also Schuh 2014.

⁵⁸ For an edition and translation of this inscription, see Martin forthcoming.

⁵⁹ See Francke 1926, 228–35, ‘The Services of General Tshul-khrims-rdo-rje according to the account of King Bde-skyon-rnam-rgyal’; in particular p. 232.

⁶⁰ See Kaul and Kaul 2004, 88–89.

⁶¹ See Vitali 1996, n. 526. This location, spelled *ra gan gyi 'bren shing*, has been tentatively identified by Vitali as mines of copper (*ra gan*) located to the north of Kashmir in Shina lands. It also appears in the *La dwags rgyal rabs* (35, trans. 96) with a slightly different spelling as one of the westernmost places conquered by Ut pa la, together with Stak and Khutsur (Katsura?), which Francke identified as Balti villages along the Indus. If Vitali's identification is right, the associated passage of the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* might indicate that rTse lDe reconquered part of the western dominions lost by his father 'Od lDe.

of the path leading up to a mountain [pass]' (*Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, 2747: *ri lam gyen du 'gro sa'i dma' shos*). Moreover, the Dras Valley, a trade-country, has shown a marked and continuous Kashmiri influence from an early period. This is notably demonstrated by the description of a place named Andrās, located two days of Kashmir coming from Bolor, as being inhabited by both Indians and Tibetans, in the 10th century *Ḥudūd al-Ālam* (121), and by the presence of Buddhist carvings associated with Śārada inscriptions near Dras.⁶² According to Schuh (2014), Dras must have been under the political influence of petty kings from Kashmir or Kishtwar during the 11th and 12th century. The political influence of Kashmir over the valley might also be suggested by the passage of the donation inscription of the Nyi ma lha khang of Mulbek translated above. In the latter, the control exerted over the fort of Khar(y)ul by the patron of the temple, the ruler of a petty kingdom based at Phokar and largely depending on Kashmir, seems to have been correlated with the donation of Kashmiri villages to him by the sultan (of Kashmir). Finally, when Moorcroft (1841, 2, 41) visited Dras in 1820, it was the joint property of the king of Ladakh and the Malik of Kashmir, whose position would have been instituted by the Mogul emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605).⁶³ Therefore, it seems that the Dras Valley constituted a sort of buffer state between Kashmir and Purik (Maryul) at different periods.

Francke (1914, 106) did not find in Dras the stone with (a) hole(s) (*rdo bug pa can*) mentioned in the *La dwags rgyal rabs*. The exact appearance of the latter is unknown, but its function as a boundary stone is evident.⁶⁴ Another type of boundary stones might have been constituted by stone-pillars (*rdo ring*).⁶⁵ Because of its high visibility and its location near the probable ancient crossing place of Kharul, boulder 12 bearing the inscription itself might also have served as a boundary stone between Purik and Baltistan, as well as, perhaps, between the latter regions and Dras/Kashmir.

12. Conclusion

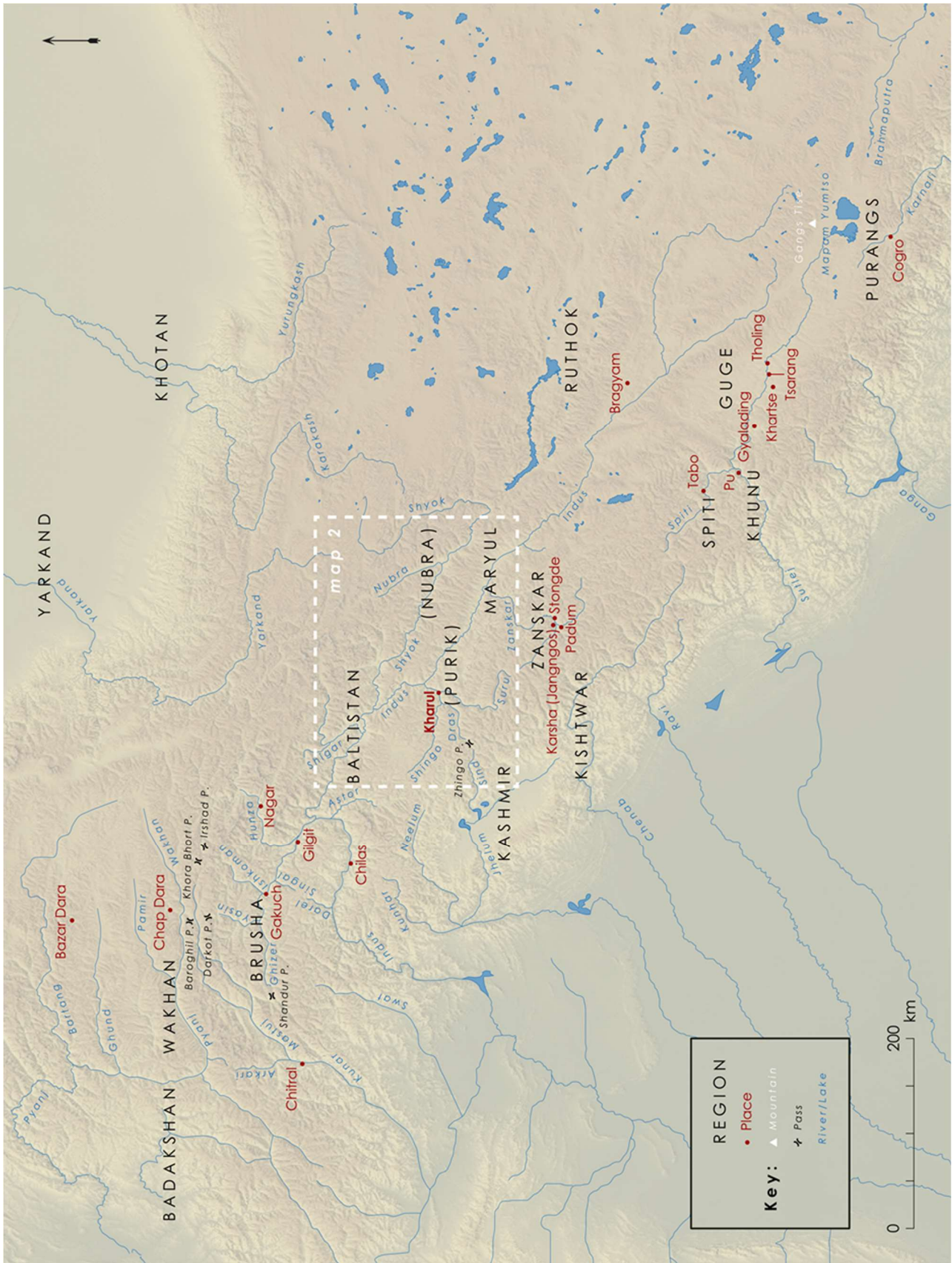
The boulder of Kharul that forms the focus of this contribution is distinguished from most boulders bearing petroglyphs of *mchod rten* and Tibetan donor inscriptions at Alchi Khargok, Balukhar, Khaltse, and other abovementioned sites by the high ambition of its engraving and the solemn nature of its content. Its central *mchod rten* and long Tibetan inscription in two parts were engraved at the same period and by the same lapicide(s), most likely the *yi ge ba* Nya na of the rBang kling clan. The inscription commemorates the decisive role played by dPal 'Dus sGra, a West-Tibetan councillor in charge of the dominions of Brusha, in the resolution of a territorial conflict that ensued from the decline of the rule of 'Od lDe (r. circa 1024-1037/1060) and lesser governmental authorities. Probably the resolution of dPal 'Dus sGra comprised the (re)determination of (a) boundary(/ies). Boulder 12 of Kharul, located at a strategic crossing, might itself be a stone boundary marking the westernmost extension of the impaired dominions of the latter authorities toward Baltistan and, perhaps, toward Kashmir as well. In any event, it constitutes a major document for the secular history of the kingdom of Purangs and the modalities of its ephemeral expansion westward down to Brusha. Last but not least, it provides the first securely established temporal landmark for assessing the chronology and the historical context of the petroglyphs of *mchod rten* and Tibetan inscriptions at Alchi Khargok, Balukhar, Khaltse, and other sites listed above.

⁶² See Schuh and Munshi 2014, 95-108.

⁶³ See also Schuh 2014.

⁶⁴ For another stone with (a) hole(s) (*rdo bug pa can*), at Kharak in Central Tibet, marking the western boundary of the dominions held by the sNel pa during the mid-15th century, see Sørensen and Hazod, 2007, n. 562.

⁶⁵ Scherrer-Schaub 2013, 144. For the probable etymology of *rdo ring*, see Scherrer-Schaub 2013, n. 5.



Map 1: Purik and Kharul within the large scope of the neighbouring and more distant regions and places.



ZAS 46 (2017)

General notes on the edition and the translation of the inscription

The transliteration proposed here is based on a thorough observation and photographic documentation of the inscription, undertaken in the course of two visits to Kharul in 2016 and 2017 together with Quentin Devers. A careful and systematic comparison of the letters, singled out in a chart, has further permitted what I hope to be a reasonable reading in the most dubious cases. The editorial conventions used hereafter aim at making the condition of the inscription and its paleographic peculiarities as apparent as possible, despite their possible complexity. The notation of the intersyllabic dot, in particular, is worthwhile, for its absence indicates in most cases the end of a line.

All conjectures and emendations are indicated in footnotes following the system established by Tropper (2016, 19): “there, the reading of the inscription is first repeated and then the respective conjecture or emendation is given after a colon; slightly doubtful cases are followed by a question mark in brackets and in more speculative instances the brackets are omitted.” In the translation, slightly doubtful cases are similarly followed by a question mark in brackets, whereas more speculative instances are either italicized (*khri ris; marg.yul*) or marked by an ellipsis (...). Besides, all categories of title-holders and the titles (*thabs*) designating individuals – occasionally impossible to distinguish from one another – are italicized. Toponyms are rendered phonetically whereas personal names (*ming* or *mkhan*) and clan names (*rus*) are transliterated in Wylie for reasons explained above (note 2).

The right part of the inscription is presented first as it appears to set the narrative context for the praise contained in the left part, with the mention of a ‘conflict’ (R8) being repeated in the latter (L1). Further documentation of the inscription will hopefully confirm this working hypothesis.

Editorial signs

*	<i>mgo yig</i>
	<i>shad</i>
·	<i>tsheg</i>
<i>ng</i>	uncertain reading
=	illegible ‘letter’
-	illegible letter ⁶⁶
[ca]	text partly or completely lost
[+=?]	sufficient space for up to two lost supplementary ‘letters’
x	cross indicating the normal position of an inserted text
<i>chod</i>	text inserted under the line
< >	space occupied by an outline of the central <i>mchod rten</i>

⁶⁶ See Steinkellner and Luczanits 1999, 15, n.12: “we differentiate ‘letters’ which means in MTH any combination of letters in the Tibetan alphabet that occupy in vertical arrangement of the letter sequence the space of a single grapheme, from letters which refers to the single signs for consonants or vowel modification only.”

Edition of the inscription

Translation of the inscription

Right part (R)

1. */ dgung· dus· de· tsam· na
2. pu· rangs· gyi· mnga'· bdag· 'od· lde
3. dang· bru· sha· khri· ris· kyi· blon· pal· dus
4. sgra⁶⁷ dang· blon· che· a· rga· ri· las·
5. sogs· pa⁶⁸ brag⁶⁹ a· ma· [ca]·
6. mag· pon⁷⁰ 'og· pon⁷¹ dang
7. [ma]r· g.yul⁷² gyi· gung· seng⁷³
8. [=]ng⁷⁴ ya· rabs· gyi· srid· nyam[s⁷⁵ +==?]
9. [sha]r· nub· thag^{xchod} kyi· khrug===[+===?]
10. [-i=⁷⁶ kh-i⁷⁷ =ng⁷⁸ th-]b pa⁷⁹i[+=====?]
11. [+...?]

During a benighted period(?),⁸⁸ the rule of⁸⁹
the mnga' bdag⁹⁰ of Purangs⁹¹ 'Od lDe,⁹²
the blon⁹³ of Brusha⁹⁴ khri ris⁹⁵ dPal 'Dus sGra,⁹⁶
the blon che⁹⁷ A rga ri,⁹⁸ and so forth,
the a ma ca⁹⁹ of Brag,¹⁰⁰
the dmag pon,¹⁰¹ the 'og pon,¹⁰²
and the gung seng¹⁰³
and the noblemen¹⁰⁴ of mar g.yul(?)¹⁰⁵
was impaired(?).
A conflict for determining east and west¹⁰⁶ (...) ¹⁰⁷

Left part (L)

1. [+==? khrug⁸⁰ gi· l-]⁸¹ la· chu· mor⁸²
2. [g]ung blon· chen· po· dpal
3. dus· rgras⁸³ 'za^xngs· kyi⁸⁴ phu< >l
4. du· byung· dpa'· yi⁸⁵
5. la· 'dor⁸⁶ leg< >s· pa· 'i
6. dpe'· b=g⁸⁷< >=[-i +==?]
7. < >-u=[-u +==?]

In the year of the conflict(?),¹⁰⁸ at the river,
the gung blon chen po¹⁰⁹
dPal 'Dus sGra,
has set(?) unobstructedly(?)
the paragon of a good resolution
of eminent bravery
(...)

⁶⁷ pal· dus sgra : dpal· 'dus· sgra. The letters *p* and *b* are very similar throughout the inscription. However, on both sides (R3 and L2), a very small space can be observed in between the head stroke and the leg of the radical letter of the first syllable, therefore indicating the reading of *pal* (R3) and *dpal* (L2).

⁶⁸ An archaic spelling of *la sogs pa*.

⁶⁹ According to Dieter Schuh (personal communication, 20/03/2018) the latter might be an irregular spelling of *sbrag*, usually found with the associative particle *dang*, with the meaning of 'together with [the abovementioned authorities]'.
⁷⁰ A variant spelling of *dmag dpon*.

⁷¹ A variant spelling of 'og *dpon*.

⁷² Given that the other lines all begin to the left of the outline of the central *mchod rten*, there are probably no more than two 'letters' before *g.yul*. The extant strokes support the reading *mar*, with the loop of the letter *ma* partly damaged on the left. The second letter, in particular, cannot be read as 'a with a hook, for none of the other occurrences of 'a in the inscription features a hook.

⁷³ There is a small mark at the bottom of the leg of the radical letter *sa* that could be interpreted as a minimalist subscript *r*. Compared to the syllable *srid* engraved at the next line (R8), however, the leg of the radical letter *sa* is too short to support such reading. The vowel sign and the suffix are not clear either. Again, in comparison to the syllable *srid* at the next line (R8), the vowel sign does not feature the typical curve of a vowel sign *i*, and should therefore rather be read as *e*. As for the suffix, its lower stroke seems shorter than that of a *d*, therefore supporting its reading as *ng*.

⁷⁴ [=]ng : dang(?). The extant strokes could support the reading *dang*, which would fit well the overall structure of the inscription. Otherwise, the second letter might also be read as *r*. The vertical stroke, however, appears to be either straight or forming an obtuse angle with the head stroke, in contrast to the other occurrences of *r* in the inscription, in which the vertical stroke forms an acute angle with the head stroke.

⁷⁵ The absence of a *tsheg* after *nyam* and the extant strokes support the reading of a second suffix *s*.

⁷⁶ The extant strokes are too limited to permit a sufficient degree of certainty in the reading of this syllable. The extant strokes on the left could support the reading of any radical letter or superscript with a right leg, whereas the strokes on the right support the reading of a suffix *ng*, *d*, *n*, or *r*.

⁷⁷ [*kh-i*] : *khri*(?).

⁷⁸ [=ng] : *dang*(?). The vertical stroke of the radical letter clearly forms an obtuse angle with the head stroke, therefore supporting its reading as *da* or *nga*.

⁷⁹ [*th-*] *b pa* : *thub pa*(?), or *thab pa*? (an irregular spelling of 'thab pa?).

⁸⁰ An irregular spelling of 'khrug(?). The reading of *brug* (for 'brug, 'dragon') could also be supported by the extant strokes, assuming that the first extant stroke would be a *shad*. However, the appearance of *khrug* in the right part of the inscription (R9) strongly suggests the first reading.

⁸¹ [*l-*] : *lo*.

⁸² A variant of *chu bor*(?).

⁸³ *dpal dus rgras* : *dpal 'dus sgras*.

⁸⁴ *za^xngs kyis* : *zangs kyis*(?), also spelled *zang gis*, 'without obstruction', 'freely' (see *brDa dkrol gser gyi me long*, 794-795).

⁸⁵ There is a dark mark starting after the syllable *yi* and running across the outline of the central *mchod rten*, but it does not appear engraved enough to be part of the inscription.

⁸⁶ *la 'dor* : *blang dor*(?), a compound composed of the verbal forms *blang ba* (ft. of *len pa*, 'to accept') and *dor ba*, (ft. of 'dor ba, 'to reject'), with a meaning akin to 'determining between what is to be accepted and rejected', 'resolution'; perhaps also related to *la zlo ba*, 'to decisively resolve'.

⁸⁷ *b=g* : *bzhag*(?). According to Dieter Schuh (personal communication, 9/04/2018) the latter might as well be an irregular spelling of *gzahs* (*pa*), a synonym of *brgyan pa* ('adorned', see *brDa dkrol gser gyi me long*, 776), determining *dpe* ('a beautiful example').

⁸⁸ This translation was suggested to me by Brandon Dotson (personal communication, 20/04/2018). According to him, "dgung dus could be used in an expanded temporal sense to indicate something like a 'benighted era' or 'benighted time'." There are, however, other possible translations for *dgung dus*. The latter might for instance indicate an 'intermediate period' of decline (*nyams*) that ended thanks to the good resolution of dPal 'Dus sGra, or a 'celestial time', perhaps in reference to the first kings of Tibet who used to return to heaven at the end of their rule, or the time of the passing of the king ('Od lDe), as an abbreviation of *dgung du gshegs pa'i dus* ('the time when he went to heaven'). One should also keep in mind the possibility that *dgung dus* might be a honorific form of *dus* (see *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, 444), in reference to the mention of *khrug gi lo la* on the left part(?), or even that it might be an abbreviation of *gung blon gyi dus* ('the time of the *gung blon*') (personal communication of Dieter Schuh, 20/04/2018). I do not know, however, any example of the use of *dgung dus* as a honorific form of *dus*, whereas the last hypothesis seems too contextual. Both interpretations would also suggest that the left part of the inscription should be read first, which seems less likely in regard to the narrative nature of the right part and its mention of *khrug* (R9) probably setting the context of the praise contained in the left part. A similarly ambiguous passage is found in the *lDe'u* of Jo sras (108).

⁸⁹ I have considered *srid* as the main noun determined, in an elaborate genitive construction, by a list of authorities starting with *pu rangs gyi mnga' bdag 'od lde* and ending with *mar g.yul gyi gung seng dang ya rabs*. In this context, it may as well have the sense of 'government', as a group of ruling authorities, or 'dominions', as the territory ruled by the latter. To a lesser degree, *srid* could be determined by *mar g.yul gyi gung seng dang ya rabs*, or even by *ya rabs* only, with a meaning akin to 'the government of the noblemen', and therefore standing as the last authority in the list headed by *pu rangs gyi mnga' bdag 'od lde*.

⁹⁰ The use of the title *mnga' bdag*, 'master' or 'ruler', to designate 'Od lDe and his successors in charge of the secular affairs (*mi chos*) of Purangs and Guge is well attested from a variety of early sources. In the colophons of three translations of texts supervised by Zhi ba 'Od, 'Od lDe's brother, discussed by Karmay (1980a, 7-8; 10), *mnga' bdag* is part of the extended title borne by rTse lDe, the son and successor of 'Od lDe on the throne of Guge, if not of Purangs as well. 'Od lDe is further designated by this title in the *Chos kyi 'jug pa'i sgo* (494), as well as in the 12th century West-Tibetan chronicle contained in the two manuscripts of Guge (see Pa tshab Pa sangs dBang 'dus 2012 and Khyung bdag 2013) and Matho (EN036, unpublished). For the complete coronation names of the kings of Purangs, conforming to the model dPal lHa btsan po Khri bKra shis *mnga' bdag 'X' lde btsan*, see Petech 1997b, n. 32.

⁹¹ According to the *Chos 'byung* of Nyang ral (ff. 494v), the ancestor of 'Od lDe, sKyid lDe Nyi ma mGon, established his rule in Purangs peacefully by initiating trade links and ending a shortage of food (see Vitali 1996, 554), whereas, according to the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* (438-440), sKyid lDe Nyi ma mGon was invited to rule over Purangs by a member of the 'Bro clan who offered him the fort of sKu mkhar nyi zung, which became his capital, as well as his daughter 'Khor skyong, from whom he fathered three sons known as the three *mgon* (see also note 51). Most sources agree that the rule over Purangs and neighbouring Guge was inherited by the second son, bKra shis mGon, whereas the share of the eldest, dPal gyi mGon, was constituted of Maryul, and the share of the youngest, lDe gTsug mGon, comprised Spiti and Zangskar (see Vitali 1996, 153-161; Petech 1997b, 232). This partition, however, does not go without exception, as demonstrated by the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* (441), according to which dPal gyi mGon and lDe gTsug mGon exchanged their shares in resolution of a dispute. The same source recounts that the territory of bKra shis mgon was again divided between his sons: Khor re ruled over Purangs, and Srong nge, better known under his religious name Ye shes 'Od (Prāññaprabha), ruled over Guge. The lineage of Ye shes 'Od, however, was cut, and rule over Guge was transferred to

Khor re's lineage. This account, however, is contradicted by the self-designation of Ye shes 'Od as king of Purangs (*pu hrangs kyi rgyal po*) in his ordinance (*bka' shog*) (Karmay 1980b, 156; trans. 153), as well as other sources. During the time of Khor re's grandson 'Od lDe, Guge and Purangs were reunited under the same rule, before they were again divided between 'Od lDe's sons, bTsan Srong ruling – at least theoretically – over Purangs, and rTse lDe ruling over Guge. At least until that time, Purangs must have been regarded as the territorial core of the dynasty, and Guge as a dependency. For instance – and as already mentioned – Ye shes 'Od designated himself as the king of Purangs, leaving aside Guge, in his ordinance (Karmay 1980b, 156; trans. 153), just as Zhi ba 'Od did in his own ordinance (Karmay 1980a, 18; trans. 14). See also Petech 1997b, 232.

⁹² See the discussion of this ruler above.

⁹³ Lit. 'councillor', a Tibetan title. See also note 109.

⁹⁴ The exact extent of Brusha is unsure, as reflected in its varying association with the Bolor of the Chinese sources (Palula in local inscriptions), or with Lesser Bolor, one of its two historical parts distinguished by the Korean pilgrim Huichao, along with Greater Bolor. Whereas several scholars have identified Greater Bolor as Baltistan and Lesser Bolor as the region of Gilgit, recent research by Denwood (2008), Zeisler (2009, 381–388) and Schuh (2011–2012, 1, 198–223), following von Hinüber's pioneering study (2004) on the inscriptions of the Palula Ṣahī dynasty, has tended to demonstrate that Greater Bolor was centred around Gilgit and Chilas and Lesser Bolor around Yasin. According to the *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (385; 405; 417) of Mīrzā Ḥaidar (1500–1551), Bolor as a whole would have comprised a large territory “bounded on the east by the provinces of Kashgar and Yarkand; on the north by Badakhshan; on the west by Kabul and Lamghan; and on the south by the dependences of Kashmir”, therefore comprising also Chitral to the west and Hunza-Nagar to the east. The identification of Brusha, however, does not necessarily have to be tied up with that of Bolor and its two parts since it reflects a different – Tibetan – perspective that may further have changed over time. The term *bru sha* (among other spellings) is “evidently related to the Burushaski-speaking Burusho people now inhabiting Hunza-Nagar and Yasin” (Denwood 2008, 13). In the *Old Tibetan Annals* (127–128), Brusha is mentioned as one of two dominions lost by the Tibetans during the reign of Khri lde gTsug brtsan (r. 712–755), along with Gok (*gog*), a territory identified as Wakhan by Beckwith (1987, 133). In the *Chos 'byung* of Nyang ral (ff. 493v), Brusha (*bru sha*) and Baltistan (*sbal ti*) designate two neighbouring regions and in the *La dwags rgyal rabs* (33; trans. 87), Brusha is again mentioned as one of the two dominions conquered by Khri Srong lDe bTsan in the west along with Baltistan. Therefore, it seems that Brusha comprised a large territory in between Wakhan and Baltistan, perhaps with the area of Gilgit at its core. During the period of the Tibetan empire, it is known to have constituted a military government (*khrom chen*) (Uray 1980, 314). Later, its status with respect to Tibet is unknown. On the account of the so-called Saka itinerary (Bailey 1936 and 1964, 70–73), during the third quarter of the 10th century, the king of Brusha (*prūśavā*) usually resided at Gilgit (*gīḍagittā*) and several Buddhist monasteries (*saṃghārāma*) stood in the kingdom.

⁹⁵ The meaning of *bru sha khri ris kyi blon* is unsure for both syntactic and semantic reasons. Indeed, in the noun phrase *bru sha khri ris*, the relations between *bru sha* and *khri ris*, probably itself a compound, are left to speculation. In the event that *bru sha* and *khri ris* composed a coordinate compound (according to Sanskrit grammar, a *dvandva*), *khri ris* – like *bru sha* – should be interpreted as a toponym. It might correspond to Kiris/Keris, an ancient kingdom of Baltistan, located on the north bank of the Shyok River near the confluence of the Indus and Shyok rivers, upstream of Skardo (see Schuh 2011–2012, 3, 596–619). The latter name, however, is spelled *kye ris* and *skye ris* in the *La dwags rgyal rabs*.

If *bru sha* and *khri ris* were a determinative compound (according to Sanskrit grammar, a *tatpuruṣa*) or a descriptive compound (according to Sanskrit grammar, a *kharmadhāraya*), *khri ris* could designate an object located in Brusha, or it could be semantically identical to Brusha. Leaving aside the possibility that *khri ris* could be a partly non-Tibetan title (like Khri-Sultan, for instance) or a toponym, it could be interpreted in several ways. The syllable *khri* commonly means ‘throne’ or ‘ten thousand’. In its sense of ‘throne’, or perhaps ‘star’ (see Zeisler 2015), it was also added during the Imperial period before the name of a prince at his coronation (Dotson 2015, 11) and it might also allude to the ruler himself as a ‘throne[-holder]’. As for *ris*, it might either stand for a frontier or for what it encloses (see Thomas 1935–1963, 3, 127: “mñah ris, government, country”; 178: “yul-ris, country, local boundary”). Dotson (2006, 363–374) has notably discussed the *dbang ris bco bgyad* (‘the eighteen shares of power’) designating, in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, the administrative arrangement of the territories at the core of Imperial Tibet. The syllable *ris* might also be a variant of *rigs*, as in *cho ris/cho rigs* (‘extraction’, ‘lineage’). Therefore, *bru sha khri ris kyi blon* could be tentatively translated as: ‘the councillor [in charge] of the ten thousand [houses] unit [of] Brusha’, akin to a *khri sde* although not attested elsewhere; or ‘the councillor [in charge] of the share [of] the *khri* (‘Od lDe) [consisting of] Brusha’; or, to a lesser degree for external reasons, ‘the councillor [in charge] of the frontier [with] the *khri* [of] Brusha’; or ‘the councillor of the lineage [of] the *khri* of Brusha’.

⁹⁶ See the discussion of this official above. His three-syllabic Tibetan name could be translated as ‘Sound of Condensed Glory’, although it cannot be determined with certainty if it constitutes a personal name (*ming*) or a renown name (*mkhan*). Richardson (1967) has discussed the six different associations of clan name (*rus*), position/title (*thabs*), personal name, and renown name found in Old Tibetan documents, concluding that the association of a position/title and a renown name was most common. It should be noticed, however, that dPal 'Dus and 'Dus dPal both appear in the list of personal names that he collected (Richardson 1967, 15). Finally, the syllable *sgra* was commonly borne at the end of three-syllabic names, as exemplified by the names Khri brTsan sGra, borne by the donor of the circa 9th century stele

of Cogro (see Jahoda and Kalantari 2009, 370-371), and g.Yu Thog sGra, borne by the paternal uncle of Lo tsā ba Rin chen bZang po (see note 109).

⁹⁷ Lit. 'great councillor', a Tibetan title (see also note 109). In far-off regions, the duty of a *blon* (po) could have been close to that of a governor. Locally, the title *blon che* further appears in relation to two ancient dominions of Purik and Baltistan. It designates an ancient chiefdom of Purik that comprised the present villages of Gond Mangalpur, Kanoor, Saliskote, Tambis, and Trespon (see Schuh and Munshi 2014, 281-283). Moreover, according to the founding stories of Baltistan recounted by Khan (1987, 5), one Lonche (*blon che*) would have come from Gilgit and settled below Katsura, on the left bank of the Indus River downs

⁹⁸ The postposition of a *rga ri* after the title ZAS 46 (2017) clearly indicates that it stands for the personal name of this *blon che* rather than for a clan name or a toponym. Interestingly, it is probably not a Tibetan name but the transliteration of a foreign name that does not appear in the Tibetan documents of Turkestan studied by Thomas (1935-1963) and Takeuchi (1997-1998) or in any other Tibetan source that I am aware of. It might be related to the Indic root *argh*, 'to be worth, be of value', also in the form *arghārha*, 'worthy of or requiring a respectful offering', 'a superior' (see Monier-Williams 1899, 89); or to the Arabic nouns 'askarī, 'soldier', or *aşğar*, 'the younger' (see Wehr 1980, 516 and 613), preserved in Persian, although it is doubtful that the superscript *r* could render the sounds [s] or [ʃ]. A *rga ri* could also derive from the Turkic word *arka:r*, 'the mountain sheep (*Orvis argali*)' (see Clauson 1972, 216-217). In regard to the latter, the Turkic linguist Rémy Dor (personal communication, 18/01/2018) has informed me that, in Old Turkic *arka:r* actually designates the female of the mountain sheep, the ewe. However, at a later period and outside the Turkic centres, it might equally have come to designate the mountain sheep without distinction of sex. Assigning characteristics or names of animals to prominent men was a persistent motif in Turkic lore (Dankoff 1977). The rulers and high officials of the Qarakhanids, in particular, bore animal names as titles (Pritsak 1953-1954, 19-23), but the ram does not appear among the latter. Finally, the proximity of the name *A rga ri* with that of the Arkari valley, north of Chitral, is noteworthy. This valley was described as "for long stretches, arid and uninhabited" by Ottley (1936, 46) who visited it in August 1934, whereas Ottley also noted the presence of "an old fortification beyond which the valley narrows again" above the village of Arkari itself, the last village of the valley coming from Chitral. The valley is inhabited by Kho people, speaking Khovar (a Dardic language also called Chitrali). However, I have not been able to find any related noun in the dictionaries and vocabularies of Khovar (O'Brien 1924), Shina (Bailey 1924), and Burushaski (Berger 1998) languages.

⁹⁹ A title perhaps deriving from the Sanskrit *amātya* ('councillor', 'minister') via the Khotanese *āmāca*. During the 8th century, it was apparently bestowed on the kings of Kashgar and Khotan by the Chinese government (Thomas 1927, 122), while by the time of the second Tibetan occupation of Khotan at the end of that century it designated the highest officials placed under the supervision of the Tibetan prefects (*rtse rje*) (see Takeuchi 2004, 55; Scherrer-Schaub 2007, 289). It also appears as the name of the councillor of the country of Byang ka' snam bryad in a catalogue of countries (*yul*) found in the PT1060, studied by Lalou (1965, 192) in comparison with other similar catalogues. In this text, Byang ka' snam bryad must designate a Turkic country, for inside its castle resides the *dru gu'i lha lha yol dang re*, 'the god of the Turks Yol dang re'. Last but not least, the title *āmāca* has also been long associated with the rulers of Shigar, in Baltistan. In the list of the rulers of Shigar noted down by Cunningham (1854, 33), it appears as the name of the first ruler of the dynasty, whose rule Cunningham estimated at 1440-1455. In the *Story of the creation of Shigar*, translated by Schüler (1978; see also Khan 1987, 99-100), is contained a typical narrative of stranger kingship explaining the origin of the *āmāca* dynasty in Shigar:

At that time, the prince of Hunza, Maghloto, brought [his] army upon Nagir, made war, defeated Nagir, and brought it into his own hands. The prince of Nagir, Chatham, having fled, came through Gantol Pass and arriving in upper Ghandu, became a close servant of Mashid. It is said that within a short time, because of his behavior, he rose and rose, became a minister of Mashid, and commanded over all. Both old and young went to Chatham and said: "If you kill this Mashid, who has [such a] bad character, we will all make you prince." One day, Chatham, seeing an opportunity, killed Mashid in Polpol Khar, and calling himself "Amacha", became prince. Even now, those of Amacha's lineage are thus the "cho" (those of the princely family) in Shigar. (Schüler 1978, 108-109)

The text continues with a list of the accomplishments of the successive members of the *āmāca* dynasty of Shigar. Schüler (1978, 105) has further noted that: "if the average reign is estimated at 25 years, then Chatham, the first ruler to use the name Amacha, would have ruled from 1190 to 1215." This estimation, of course, is extremely risky considering the nature of the text (a collection of founding stories) and the great age of the events allegedly recorded in it. Perhaps for the same reasons, the meaning of the name *āmāca* is not clarified in the *Story of the creation of Shigar*, although it might relate to Nagar, from whence the prince Chatham escaped, or to the latter's position as a minister of Mashid in Shigar. The ministerial position of *āmāca* might have existed beyond Kashgar and Khotan, in Baltistan, or the title associated with this position might have been adopted by the rulers of Baltistan, designating themselves after their great neighbours. The rulers of Baltistan probably held political and marital ties with the rulers of Khotan, as could be demonstrated by the narrative of the *Vimalaprabhāpariprcchā/Dri ma med pa'i 'od kyis zhus pa*, a Khotanese text preserved in Tibetan and the date of which is disputed (Thomas 1935, 137-258; see also Zeisler 2009, 420-425). In the latter, the king of Skardo (probably corresponding to the city of Skardo, located upstream of Shigar, in Baltistan) is to pay a ransom to the Tibetan invaders of Khotan, after which he will rule over Li and appoint a subordinate king in

Skardo. Zeisler (2009, 425) has further pointed out that: “the region H̄brusoloña, which is certainly to be connected with Bruža (var. Bruša, H̄bružal, H̄brušal, Gruža, or Gruša), is counted not only as part of Khotan in the Khotanese Annals, but is associated with the legendary establishment of Khotan rulership.” Khotan, Baltistan, and Brusha finally compose one of the three *skor* of mNga’ ris in a few sources, which, according to Zeisler (2009, 387), reflects the situation during the late Tibetan Empire.

¹⁰⁰ The occurrence of *brag* before the title or position *a ma ca* probably indicates that it stands for a place of origin or a clan name (otherwise, see note 69). The syllable *brag* is also found in this position in two of the numerous donor inscriptions on stones at Alchi Khargok, studied by Takeuchi (2012). One reads: {l. 1} *lugi lo la brag od las* {l. 2} *bris* (‘Engraved in the Sheep year by Brag Od la’; see Takeuchi 2012, inscriptions 12a-b); the other reads: {l. 1} *yos bu brag myi tses* (‘[Engraved in] the Hare year by Brag Myi tse’; see Takeuchi 2012, inscription 21). Interestingly, the names Od la and Myi tse may not be of Tibetan origin, but could be transliterations of foreign – possibly Chinese – names, which Takeuchi (2012, 54) has already suggested for other names comprising the syllable *tse* in the donor inscriptions of Alchi Khargok. The syllable *brag*, however, does not appear as a place or clan name in the Tibetan documents of Turkestan studied by Thomas (1935-1963) and Takeuchi (1997-1998). In the founding stories of Skardo and Shigar (Schüler 1978 and Khan 1987, 4-11), it is borne by three prominent characters in their names: Braq (*brag*) Mayure; his young enemy Bukha Magpon (*dmag pon*), a typical figure of returning stranger-king (see Martin forthcoming); and Braq Bio (*brag bya*). According to Khan (1987, 5) Barq Mayor (i.e. Braq Mayure) would have come to Baltistan from Gilgit and settled in Barq naq (*brag nag*), a village located on the right bank of the Indus River, opposite to Skardo, hence perhaps his name. The *Story of the creation of Shigar* (Schüler 1978, 109-110; see also Khan 1987, 5) recounts that Braq Mayure took the occasion of the dynastic transition between the late ruler of Skardo, Behram Magpon, and his young son, Bukha Magpon, to lead an attack on the latter’s kinsmen. He killed them all except for Bukha Magpon himself, for, said the minister Gachepa, the young boy was a harmless deaf-mute. This, however, was a trick of Gachepa, who remained loyal to the Magpon dynasty. When Bukha Magpon was in age to take back the throne, Gachepa killed Braq Mayure and his kinsmen. According to Khan (1987, 8) Bokha (i.e. Bukha) was put on a particular rock and honoured by the people. Hence, he was named Barq Magpon (*brag dmag pon*, ‘the *dmag pon* of the rock’). According to the *Story of the creation of Shigar*, Braq Mayure had a suckling child taken care of by a foster-mother in Hoto, a village located on the left bank of the Indus River downstream of Skardo. After Braq Mayure was killed, the foster-mother, fearing for the child’s safety, put him in a milking-pail and travelled by way of the Gantol Pass, circling along the river, to Shigar, whose ruler, Amacha (*āmāca*) Gaziri, was the maternal uncle of the child. The foster-mother, who was herself pregnant during the journey, delivered a boy in a ravine, and he was named Braq Bio, (*brag bya*, ‘cliff bird’). As for the child of Braq Mayure, he was named Ghzwachuskor (...*chu bskor*), as he was carried in a milking-pail, around rivers and mountains, and later served Amacha Gaziri as minister.

¹⁰¹ Lit. ‘army chief’, a Tibetan title. It appears only once in the numerous donor inscriptions on stones at Alchi Khargok, associated with the petroglyph of a *mchod rten* (see Takeuchi 2012, inscription 70). A re-examination of the inscription, written in headless script, supports the following reading:

1. *|| *smyer*| *dmag*
 2. *pon*| *ka*| *shi sgras zheng su*| *sol*| *ba*
- ‘Made at the request of(?) the sMer *dmag pon* Ka shi (bKra shis?) sGra.’

For stylistic and paleographic reasons that I will explain in detail elsewhere, at least two other donor inscriptions of Alchi Khargok (Orofino 1990, figs. 2-3; corresponding to Takeuchi 2012, inscriptions 71-a and b; a second hitherto unpublished inscription that I have documented in 2016 reads: {l. 1} *|| *ka shi* {l. 2} *sgras*) and another one located at Kharul itself (Bo26-St1) are probably to be attributed to the same author, whereas an additional donor inscription of Kharul (Bo07-St1) was authored by another member of the sMer clan.

Locally, *dmag pon* also appears as the dynastic name of the ancient rulers of Skardo (Khan 1987, i), as well as Tolti (Khan 1987, ix) and Parkuta (Cunningham 1854, 31; also Francke 1926, 191) or rather Khartaksho (Khan 1987, vi; see Schuh 2011-2012, 4, 737). Two versions of the founding story of the *dmag pon* dynasty of Skardo are recounted by Vigne (1842, 251) and Khan (1987, 6). See also note 100.

For the title *dmag pon* borne by two members of the Hrugs wer/Rugs wer clan appearing in the donor panels of an early 11th century *mchod rten* at Tholing, see also Heller 2010, 70.

¹⁰² Lit. ‘under-chief’, a Tibetan title. In this context, it probably designates a military officer under the command of the *dmag pon*.

¹⁰³ Probably lit. ‘the leopards and lions’, a category of noblemen or officials related to the *ya rabs* (‘[men of] superior extraction’, ‘noblemen’).

Taking into account the overall structure of the inscription, *gung seng* must be considered as a conjunct of *ya rabs*, engraved on the next line (R8), and might therefore designate a category of people. In this perspective, the description of the characteristics of the inhabitants of Alchi, contained in the inscription n°2 of Alchi (Denwood 1980, 126-128; trans. 144-145), located inside the ‘Du khang (mid- to late-12th century), is worth mentioning. The latter starts by praising the venerable monks who follow the Buddhist teachings, and goes on to praise the lay nobles of Alchi in regard to their gender and age: noblemen; noblewomen; and young men. The couple of verses praising the noblemen, in particular, could be read in different ways, as the syntax of the verses is minimalistic:

Because the noblemen are endowed with the morality and modesty [of?] leopards and lions (*gung seng*),

(or perhaps: 'Because the noblemen [and?] the *gung seng* are endowed with morality and modesty?')
 they are the source of all continuation [for] the ancient customs.
 ({l. 30} ... /*ya rabs gung seng ngo tsha khrel ldan* {l. 31} *ldan pas* /
 /*gna' gzhung phyi thag thams cad 'byung pa'i gnas* /)

In the latter, the coordinate compound *gung seng* could also be considered as a main noun determined by the unmarked genitive *ya rabs*, designating a particular group of noblemen.

The use of the feline terms *gung* (a sort of Tibetan leopard) and *seng* (lion) to characterize men of high value is not restricted to the inscription n°2 of Alchi. It also appears in the double cycle of ten catalogues and, in particular, in the catalogue of the six lesser insignias (*ne*) contained in the 12th century manuscript EN036 of Matho. It reads:

The six *ne* [are bestowed] in acknowledgment for bravery: falcon-like bravery; dog(?) -like bravery; yak-like bravery; lion-like bravery; leopard-like bravery; tiger-like bravery. Leopard, tiger and lion are eminent(?) (lit. real) positions(?). Yak-like bravery is...

({29v, l. 9} ...*ne drug ni dpa'* {l. 10} *ba'i ngo 'phrald ste | nas kyi khra' dpa' de nas khri dpa' | de nas g.yag* {l. 11} *dpa' | de nas seng ge dpa' | de nas gung dpa' | de nas stag dpa' dang drug* {l. 12} *las | gung stag seng ge gsum ni thabs dngos so || g.yag ltar dpa' ba ni* {the next folios of the manuscript are lost})

In conclusion, it can be assumed that the coordinate compound *gung seng* designates a group of noblemen or second class officials distinguished for their high morality or bravery, which would have constituted the best of the noblemen (*ya rabs*) or a distinct category.

¹⁰⁴ Lit. '[men of] superior extraction' (see also note 103). For reasons explained above (note 89), I have considered *gung seng* and *ya rabs* as two equal conjuncts determined by *mar g.yul*. Alternatively, they could be considered separately: 'the *gung seng* of *mar g.yul* and the noblemen'.

¹⁰⁵ A determinative compound possibly designating a 'battle' or 'war', a 'battlefield', or an 'army' staged in – or attached to – the 'lower [land]' or 'Mar(yul)'; or the region of Maryul (*mar yul*) itself. I cannot decide on a translation of *mar g.yul*, although it probably relates to the ancient region of Maryul intersecting with present day Ladakh.

The translation of *g.yul*, as 'battle' or 'war', 'battlefield', or 'army' (see *brDa dkrol gser gyi me long*, 868) could be supported by the inclusion of military authorities in the list, such as the immediately preceding *dmag pon* ('army chief') and 'og pon' ('under-chief'), and the *gung seng*, who could be regarded as second class officers distinguished for their bravery (note 103). Alternatively, *g.yul* could be considered as an ancient or erroneous spelling for *yul*, 'region' or 'village'.

As for *mar*, it could be translated simply as 'lower [land]', in reference to the lower elevation of the regions of Purik and Baltistan compared to the regions upstream of the Indus, such as Western Tibet. However, the signification of *mar* might be further entangled with the complicated issue of the identification of Mar(yul), notably discussed by Petech (1977), Uray (1990), Denwood (2008), and Zeisler (2009). Zeisler (2009, 437-438) has recapitulated the possible signification of *mar* as follows:

The Old Tibetan Annals mention neither Ladakh nor Maryul or Manjyul. Only one single entry in OTA 719 (l. 213) alludes to a province Mard, namely together with *Žanžun*, and in connection with a *phalos*, a conscription or registration of the male population: *Žanžunday Mardkyi phalos bkug*. The actual local pronunciation might well have been **Mars*, as the alleged Chinese equivalent *Moluosuo* would suggest (Uray 1990, 220).

No further indication is given, but since locations are quite often enumerated from west to east, one should be able to preclude a location to the west of *Žanžun*, e.g. in present-day Ladakh. The latter identification is also precluded for the reason that Ladakh was included in either *Žanžun* *stod* or *smad*. Since Mard is mentioned besides *Žanžun*, it was probably an entity not yet fully incorporated into *Žanžun*, and this would make sense if it lay at the border to India. It is quite conspicuous that the name does not reappear.

The designation *Mard* as much as *Maryul* could reflect the *Žanžun* epithet *smar* ~ *smra* 'golden'. In a more involved way, it could refer to a tribal group, the Rma (or Rmu), whose name is either related to the word *smra* 'speak' or to the 'monkey ancestor' of the Qiang [...]. Finally, the epithet could perhaps be related to *s/dmad* 'low'.

As noted by Zeisler (2009, 436-437), Maryul might be mentioned for the first time in the inscription n°3 of the 'Du khang of Alchi (mid- to late-12th century) in reference to the monastic compound of Nyarma (see Denwood 1980, 128-130; trans. 145-146), and again in the inscription n°7 of the *gSum brtsegs lha khang* (late 12th to early 13th century), Alchi being situated in Lower Maryul (*mar yul smad*) (see Denwood 1980, 138-139; trans. 148) and Nyarma perhaps in Upper Maryul (*mar yul stod*) (see the discussion of the lesser authorities and the distribution of estates above). It also appears in the 12th century manuscript EN036 of Matho (ff. 24r, l. 8) as the region in which the temple of Nyarma was erected. A passage of the manuscript EN036 of Matho (ff. 29r, l. 8-29v, l. 1) exposing a regional version of the catalogue of the eight profits (*khayer*), i.e. temples erected by eight Tibetan generals to purify their sins (see Dotson 2006, 230-237), distinguishes between the regions of Maryul and Baltistan (*sbal yul*), where the temples of Shey (*sha ce*) and Shigar (*shi gar*) were respectively erected. Moreover, a passage contained in the *Chos 'byung* of Nyang ral, (ff. 500v) distinguishes between the regions of Maryul and Purik, where the temples of Nyarma and Shiling/Shaling were respectively erected by Ye shes 'Od. On account of these passages, it can be assumed that, by the 11th or 12th century, *mar yul* designated primarily a region lying along the Indus River, extending westward at least down to Alchi and probably Khaltse as well, distinct from Purik and Baltistan.

In two later sources, however, *mar yul* appears to designate a larger territory, including either Baltistan or Purik. A first

passage was discussed by Zeisler (2009, 437; after Tucci 1971, 396) as follows:

The biography of Orgyanpa Rinchen Senge Dpal (1230-1293) contains the travelogue of his pilgrimage to Orgyan (Uḍḍiyāna/Swat) which he undertook some time after 1260. There he describes the river Sindhu (Indus) as arising from the Kailāsa, flowing through Maryul (clearly Ladakh and Baltistan), then through Bruša on the north of Kashmir (which he describes as bordering on Zaṅsḍkar and Purig) and Stagzig (here apparently referring to Chilas), before reaching Orgyan (which should here be the Buner valley).

In a second passage, contained in the *La dwags rgyal rabs* (35; trans. 94), the share (*mn̄ga' ris*) of Maryul ruled by dPal gyi mGon, the eldest son of sKyid lDe Nyi ma mGon, apparently includes Purik (see the discussion of the boundary stone at the river above).

¹⁰⁶ It cannot be determined with certainty whether *shar nub* refers to eastward and westward boundaries of a single territory, or to territories lying eastward and westward of a central boundary.

¹⁰⁷ I have left this line untranslated as I could not reach a sufficient degree of certainty regarding the translation of the syllables (*-i=*) *khri* and *th-b pa*, as well as the construction involved by the particles *dang* and *i*. Assuming that *th-b pa* would stand for *'thab pa*, 'to fight', the particle *dang* could have an adversative function and (*-i=*) *khri* could designate the number (*khri*, 'ten thousand') of enemies (*srin*?) fought. Alternatively, assuming that *th-b pa* would read *thub pa*, 'the capable one', an epithet of the Buddha (Śākyamuni/Shag kya thub pa), (*-i=*) *khri* and *thub pa* could be considered as two equal conjuncts determining what followed, with *khri* perhaps designating the 'throne[-holder]', the highest secular authority. Such reading could further relate to the distinction of *mi chos*, 'secular affairs' falling to the ruler, and *lha chos*, 'Buddhist affairs'.

¹⁰⁸ In the event that the first syllable would be *brug*, the Dragon year in question could be 1028, 1040, 1052, or 1064. See the discussion of the dates of 'Od lDe above.

¹⁰⁹ Lit. 'great high councillor', or perhaps 'great councillor [seated at the] elevated centre'(?), in reference to one of the two most prominent positions in the row of an assembly, described in the *bShad mdzod yid bzhin nor bu* of Don dam sMra ba'i Seng ge (see Jackson 1984, 62ff; Jahoda 2016, 325); a Tibetan title designating a great councillor, possibly in charge of external affairs. It appears in Imperial Tibetan inscriptions as well as in the *Section on Law and State* contained in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, the *lDe'u chos 'byung* and the *lDe'u of Jo sras* studied by Dotson (2006). The *Section on Law and State*, in particular, contains within its double cycle of ten catalogues three catalogues relative to the *gung blon*. In the catalogue of the nine great councillors (*che*), there are three types of councillors: *gung blon*, *nang blon* ('councillors of the interior'), and *bka' yo gal 'chos pa* ('impartial executors of orders') distinguished by their duties, each category being further subdivided according to great, middle, and lesser ranks. The duty of the three *gung blon* is distinguished from those of the three *nang blon* and the three *bka' yo gal 'chos pa* as follows:

The duty of the great high minister is, like a husband, to deal with external affairs and to decide them wholly and completely (*phyi rgya rlabs kyis gcod*). The duty of the minister of the interior is, like a wife, to tend to internal affairs. The justice is like a chosen mystic dagger (*bdams kyi phur-pa*). To the good, he bestows gifts even on an enemy's son provided he has acted well, and to the wicked, he punishes even his own son if he is wicked. (Dotson 2006, 218-219, after the *lDe'u chos 'byung*; according to Dan Martin (personal communication, 21/04/2018), *bdams kyi phur pa* should be read as *'dam gyi phur pa*, 'swamp stake', perhaps in reference to the flexibility that justice should keep)

The catalogue of the six insignias (*na*) further states that:

As for the insignia of rank (*yig-tshang*), the excellent ones are gold and turquoise, the middle-rank are silver and gold-plated silver (*phra-men*), and last are copper and iron. This makes six, but each rank is divided into two – large and small – thus making twelve all together. Thus the great 'high minister' (*gung-blon*) is given the large turquoise insignia, the mid-rank 'high minister' and great minister of the interior (*nang-blon chen-po*) are given the small turquoise insignia. The lesser 'high minister', the mid-rank minister of the interior, and the great impartial justice (*bka' yo-gal 'chos-pa chen-po*), these three, are given the great gold insignia and the lesser minister of the interior and the mid-rank judicial minister (*bka'-blon*) are given the small gold insignia. The lesser judicial minister is given the gold-plated silver insignia. (Dotson 2006, 248-249, after the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*)

Following this catalogue are also exposed different amounts of blood money to be paid in compensation for the death of a councillor depending on his rank (Dotson 2006, 218-226). Dotson (2006, 223) has, however, noticed that the content of these catalogues does not correspond to the duties and ranks of the nine councillors found in the Sino-Tibetan inscription of 821/823 at Lhasa, in which a *gung blon chen po* appears in fourth position (north face, l. 12-13; see Iwao et al. 2009, 38).

Local versions of the double cycle of ten catalogues were further circulated in Western Tibet and Ladakh after the Imperial period, as exemplified by passages of the 12th century manuscript EN036 of Matho. The latter notably contains catalogues of nine councillors (*che*) and associated insignias (*na*) that read as follows:

As for the 9 *che* [attached to] the latter: there are nine *che zhang blon* (councillors). They possess the nine insignias and the laws rely on(?) the nine *na*. As for the nine *na* insignias, there are three turquoise insignias, four golden insignias, and two gold-plated silver insignias, making nine in total. As for the custom of coupling the nine *na* insignias and the nine *na zhang blon*: the great *gung blon* possesses the large turquoise insignia; the lesser *gung blon* and the great *nang blon* possess the small turquoise insignias, making three turquoise insignias.

The under-chief *gung blon* and the great *nang blon* impartial executor of orders possess the large golden insignias; the mid-rank *nang blon* and the mid-rank *dbang blon* impartial executor of orders possess the small golden insignias, making four golden insignias. The lesser *nang blon* and the lesser *dbang blon* impartial executor of orders possess the gold-plated silver insignias.

{27v, l. 1} ...*de la che rgu* {l. 2} *ni zhang blan che rgu ste yig gtsang rgu la dbang zhing bka' khirms* {l. 3} *na rgu la brtan ba'o / de la yig gtsang na rgu ni g.yu gsum gser* {l. 4} *bzhi / gphra men gnyis ste rgu'o / yig gtsang na rgu dang zhang blon* {l. 5} *na rgu gnyis bsbyar lugs ni gung blon chen po g.yu'i yi ge chen po* {l. 6} *dbang / g.yu'i yi ge chung du la gung blon chung du ldang nang blon chen* {l. 7} *dbang ste / g.yu gsum gung blon 'og phon dang bka' g.yo' gal 'chos* {28r, l. 1} *pa'i nang blon chen po gser gyi yi ge chen po dbang te / nang blon* {l. 2} *'bri po dang / bka' yo gal 'chos pa'i dbang blon 'bring po gser gyi yi ge chung la* {l. 3} *dbang ste / gser bzhi / nang blon chung du ni bka' 'og 'gal 'chos pa'i dbang blon chung du* {l. 4} *na phyā med la dbang ste / ...*)

Whether these principles were simply pronounced faithfully in reference to Imperial Tibet or actually applied in some way in the government of Western Tibet cannot be determined with certainty. In any case, the title *gung blon* was still borne by nobles of Guge and Purangs during the 10th-11th centuries, as exemplified by the genealogy of Lo tsā ba Rin chen bZang po, found in the medium-length hagiography (*rnam thar*) attributed to his disciple dPal Ye shes (see Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980, 101-111; trans. p. 85-98). According to the latter (101; trans. 85), the paternal uncle of Lo tsā ba Rin chen bZang po was himself a *gung blon chen po* named g.Yu Thog sGra, belonging to the illustrious clan Hrugs wer. Finally, the title *gung blon* is also employed in the hagiography of the 'Bri gung master Shes rab 'Byung gnas (1187-1241) (*sPyan snga 'bri gung gling pa'i rnam thar snyan pa'i 'brug sgra*, 24; see also Vitali 1996, n. 687) to designate Sin thig Bhag, the envoy of the *gar log* whom Shes rab 'Byung gnas met at the northern Tibetan frontier in order to obtain the support of the *gar log*. In this case, the use of the title *gung blon*, of course unknown to the *gar log*, must have been chosen to evoke in the mind of the Tibetan reader a prominent official in charge of external affairs.

Locally, the title *gung blon chen po* is found in another inscription documented by Devers, Ldawa and Mehta at Thangburtse, near Hanuthang. At the present state of research, however, the latter remains partly undeciphered.

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