PART I

INTRODUCTION

Introducing the *Old Tibetan Annals*

The *Old Tibetan Annals* is Tibet's oldest extant history. Principally a bureaucratic register of events, it is the single most reliable source for the history of the first half of the Tibetan Empire. This record was maintained more or less contemporaneously with the events it describes, with entries added at the end of each year. In each yearly entry the *Annals* records information such as the summer and winter residences of the Tibetan emperor (Btsan-po), the place at which the summer and winter councils (*'dun-ma*) were convened, who convened them, and what, if any measures were taken (taxes, promotions, censuses, etc.). From 692 onward, the location of the council in Mdo-smad, in eastern Tibet, its convenors, and any measures taken there are often recorded as well. Visits from foreign dignitaries, military engagements, dynastic marriages, the birth of a future sovereign, the deaths of important figures, and the performance of funeral rites for the royal family are also recorded.

Standing at the very beginning of Tibet's long and extremely rich historiographical tradition, the *Old Tibetan Annals* occupies a privileged place among the various sources for Tibetan history. It is perhaps worth considering briefly the major sources for early Tibetan history of which the *Annals* forms only a small, albeit very important part. In the study of early Tibetan history, and the period of the Tibetan Empire (600—850) in particular, we can first divide sources into two general categories: those that are roughly contemporary with the events they describe, and those composed retrospectively. These latter sources are often written by Buddhist or Bon-po historians who, from the tenth century onwards looked to the fallen empire as a golden age and eulogized it as such in their histories. In this way figures such as Srong-btsan Sgam-po and Padmasambhava came to the fore in the revealed treasure (*gter-ma*) literature of the Rnying-ma school of Tibetan Buddhism, and another imperial-era sage, Dran-pa Gnam-mkha' (and one of his sons), was mythologized in a similar way by the Bon-po. These later sources, coming as they do after the fall of the Tibetan Empire, are often referred to as "post-dynastic," and they take the shape of religious histories, of which there are various subgenres.[1]

On the other side, the early sources also fall into a number of categories. In the first place, there are Tibetan documents, Chinese documents, and documents written in other languages such as Khotanese and Arabic. Among the early Tibetan documents, there are inscriptions carved into standing stelae, messages and records written onto small wooden slips, and documents written with paper and ink. The vast majority of the latter that have come down to us were recovered from the famous Mogao Cave 17, generally known as the cave library at Dunhuang, and most of these are now kept in the British Library in London and the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. The cave library included documents written in many different languages, and the Tibetan texts form a large and only partially explored corpus in which the *Old Tibetan Annals* and the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* are perhaps the best-known documents. This corpus has been and continues to be catalogued, and studies and translations of Tibetan Dunhuang documents are multiplying as the field of early Tibetan studies grows both internationally and inside Tibet and China.[2] These texts, which may have been the property of a local temple, were sealed in the cave probably in the first decade of the eleventh century, and were not disturbed until the turn of the twentieth century (Rong 1999–2000). Their isolation accounts in part for their value to scholars: sitting untouched in a Central Asian cave, these documents knew nothing of later developments in Tibetan cultural history, but rested unedited, unread, and free from (later) tampering.

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[1] For a general discussion see van der Kuijp 1996.

[2] For a brief overview of the many catalogues of collections of Tibetan Dunhuang documents, see Takeuchi 1995: 2, n. 3.

The fragmentary histories from Dunhuang, particularly the *Old Tibetan Annals* and the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, are sometimes seen as a means to "correct" the narratological and mythological excesses of post-dynastic religious histories. Indeed Giuseppe Tucci used the *Annals* as a sort of baseline for testing (and demonstrating) the validity of the post-dynastic Tibetan historical tradition concerning the outlines of the royal period and the regnal dates of the Tibetan emperors (Tucci 1947). Privileging the early sources, while sometimes justified, must also take account of the imperatives at work even in the earliest texts, be they mythological, royalist, or otherwise. Further, it is evident that the later Tibetan historical tradition is based on equally ancient non-extant histories, some of which were similar to the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, so there is little point in dismissing post-dynastic histories as universally corrupted by a veneer of myth (van der Kuijp 1991: 95).[3]

Along with pillar inscriptions and wooden slips, the Tibetan Dunhuang documents are the earliest corpus of Tibetan writing and represent a vast array of genres. The breadth of the collection of Tibetan Dunhuang documents is particularly interesting considering the conditions under which many of these texts were written. Dunhuang was a crucial, but distant outpost in Tibet's colonial regime. It was held by the Tibetans from 786 until 848, when a Tibetan colonial regime ruled over Dunhuang's multi-ethnic population. Located at a key point of the eastern end of the Silk Road, Dunhuang was a center of cultural and economic exchange. It remained so after the fall of the Tibetan Empire, when for at least the next two centuries the Tibetan language was used as a *lingua franca* in Dunhuang and in its dealings with neighboring states (Uray 1981; Uray 1988a; Takata 2000; Takeuchi 2004b).

The social and cultural context of the Tibetan Dunhuang documents and the periodization of Old Tibetan writing is becoming better understood, but in many cases questions remain unanswered. It is clear, for example, that many of the documents were written by non-Tibetans who were only semi-literate, or by those fulfilling tax obligations by serving as scribes. In other cases, individual professional scribes have been identified through forensic handwriting analysis, with themes in their work sometimes apparent (Dalton, Davis, and van Schaik 2007). Perhaps most fundamental is the question of whether the Dunhuang corpus, as a product of its particular time and place, provides information that can be applied to the rest of the Tibetan Empire. This question looms large in analyses of legal and administrative documents, the analysis of general protocols for letters and contracts, and also in matters of religious expression.[4] In the case of the *Old Tibetan Annals* and many other key documents, it is apparent that they were sent from central Tibet to Dunhuang, and do not represent a regional tradition particular to Dunhuang. The presence of the *Annals* in the Dunhuang corpus is as a result of its chief importance to the Tibetan courtly tradition of record keeping, for which it served as an exemplar.

The tradition of keeping annals probably originated in the early-to-mid-650s, the earliest period the *Old Tibetan Annals* describes (Uray 1975: 161–62; Uray 1984: 344). According to post-dynastic Tibetan histories, such as the mid-to-late thirteenth-century *Rgya bod gyi chos 'byung rgyas pa* of Mkhas-pa Lde'u, Tibet's legal and administrative practices were first inscribed on wooden slips, and then later transferred to paper.[5] It is quite possible that this is true of the *Old Tibetan Annals*, and that the early entries were initially written on wooden slips. This is also suggested by the brief and laconic nature of the early entries.[6]

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[3] For a case study demonstrating this point, see Uray 1967.

[4] In the case of religious expression, the argument that Dunhuang materials overlap to a large degree with central Tibetan materials and those found elsewhere has been made convincingly in recent studies by Cathy Cantwell and Rob Mayer, who have documented the close relationship between Dunhuang materials and texts found in the *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum* (Cantwell and Mayer 2007: 3–4; Cantwell and Mayer 2008). Similar arguments can also be made in terms of the ostensibly non-Buddhist texts from Dunhuang, which overlap to a significant extent in their content with Bon-po texts recently unearthed from a stupa in Gtam-shul, and also with liturgies found in the *Klu 'bum* other later Bon-po ritual texts (Stein 1971: 484; Karmay 1998 [1991]; Wangdu and Glang-ru 2007; Bellezza 2008: 480–98; Dotson *forthcoming a*).

The form of the *Annals* and the bureaucratic practices involved may have been influenced by Tibet's contacts with China (Uray 1975: 69; Bjerken 2001: 28–29). The *Old Tang Annals (Jiu Tangshu)* records Srong-btsan Sgam-po's (c. 605–649) impressions of Chinese culture following the arrival in Tibet in 641 of the Chinese princess, Wencheng.

> He also discarded his felt and skins, put on brocade and silk, and gradually copied Chinese civilization. He also sent the children of his chiefs and rich men to request admittance into the national schools to be taught the classics, and invited learned scholars from China to compose his official reports to the emperor. (Bushell 1880: 445; cf. Pelliot 1961: 5; Lee 1981: 10–11).

Though it is possible that the Chinese historiographers exaggerated the Tibetan emperor's Sinophilic tendencies, there is little reason to assume that the report is incorrect altogether. The last line in particular indicates that Chinese men of letters handled the task of official correspondence at the Tibetan court. This relates to a period shortly before the annalistic tradition began in Tibet, so it is not unlikely that the Tibetans were directly influenced, if not guided by, Chinese bureaucratic practices. The relationship between the Tibetan Empire and the Tang was perhaps closer at this time than in any other period of their relations.

The *Old Tibetan Annals* itself served the purpose not only of acting as a record of events, but also as a bureaucratic manual for government scribes. Annals of this sort were kept by the central Tibetan authority, and also by the regional assemblies such as that of the 'A-zha, those of the various colonial military governments (*khrom*) on Tibet's borders, and that of Bde-blon-khams, a massive province bordering China in the northeast and stretching over the Tibetan Empire's northern borders.

In addition, the formulaic start to the entry for each year—"in the year of the [animal] the Btsan-po resided in [place name]"—served also as a date marker for contracts and for bureaucratic correspondence by distinguishing, for example, one year of the tiger in the twelve year cycle from another year of the tiger falling twelve years before or after. As such, the formula played a similar, though more precise role than the five elements that were later added to the twelve animals to constitute the sixty-year cycle. In this way, time itself was centralized by the figure of the Tibetan emperor.

In the various military governments the date would be reckoned without the mention of the Tibetan emperor's residence, but using a similar formula: "in the year of the [animal], [official's name] convened the summer / winter council at [place name]."[7] This formula served not only to date the document, but to place it geographically. Unfortunately, as this dating system relied on widespread knowledge of the identities and careers of important officials and the residence of the Tibetan emperor in a specific year, it usefulness faded as these facts were forgotten. The role of the *Annals* as an example on which other regional military governments could model their own annals may well be the reason for its presence and survival in Dunhuang.

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[5] The relevant passage is as follows: "Concerning the six institutions, the administration (*khod*) of Tibet was carried out at Kyi Sho-ma-ra. The one who arranged the administration was Mgar Stong-btsan. He had six *mdzo*-loads of paper brought, and wrote down what had been previously arranged using pebbles and wooden slips, but was frustrated by the inappropriateness of his legal manual." (*khod drug ni/ bod kyi khod kyi shod ma rar byas/ khod shom mkhan mgar stong btsan gyis byas te/ shing bu dang rde'u yan chad rtsis nas/ shog bu mdzo khal longs pa la bris pas khrims byang ma thebs par 'khrugs te/*) (*Lde'u*: 271; 152a, l.7—152b, l.1). Cf. the parallel passage in *KhG*: 185. The "six institutions" (*khod-drug*) form a part of the *Section on Law and State*, a chapter containing numerous legal and administrative catalogues, and which is found in several post-dynastic histories. The three most complete versions are found in *Rgya bod kyi chos 'byung rgyas pa* of Mkhas-pa Lde'u (hereafter abbreviated *Lde'u*), the *Chos 'byung chen po bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan* of Lde'u Jo-sras (hereafter, *Jo sras*) and the mid-sixteenth-century *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston* of Dpa'-bo Gtsug-lag Phreng-ba (hereafter, *KhG*). A comparison of these three main versions with parallel Old Tibetan traditions forms the basis of Dotson 2007a.

[6] I am indebted to Tsuguhito Takeuchi for this observation, made at the Old Tibetan Workshop of the 11th Himalayan Languages Symposium, Bangkok, 9 December 2005. In the *Annals* we indeed find explicit reference to the adoption of paper for administrative measures, such as the red tally, that previously employed wooden slips (Uebach 2008; *infra*, entry for 744-745; and fn. 215 to the entry for 702-703).

The chronology of the *Old Tibetan Annals* deserves some explanation. Each entry (apart from the preamble and some of the entries in Version II; see *infra*) begins with the dating formula, "it fell on the year of the [animal]." For example, the first full entry, for the year 650-651, states, "it fell on the year [of] the dog" (*khyI lo la bab ste*). The entry then contains a record of that year. The Tibetan year, based on both solar and lunar calendars, does not correspond to the Gregorian calendar, so each entry in the *Annals* is not a record of the events from 1 January to 31 December. During the imperial period, before the adoption of the sexagenary cycle from China and the subsequent adoption of the Kālacakra calendar in 1027, the Tibetan year was divided into four seasons, each with three months.[8] To these there was often added an intercalary or "extra" (*ldab-ma*) month. In some entries in the *Old Tibetan Annals* (675-676, 704-705), the year begins in spring, while in others (701-702, 708-709, 725-726, 726-727) it ends in spring. Based on this, and also on the fact that another Old Tibetan document, PT 1089, refers to the fourth day of the third month of spring as belonging to the same dog year as the subsequent summer months, Yamaguchi (1984: 408) argues that the Tibetan year began with the third month of spring. To this we can add the dating formulae found in the fragmentary *Annals of the 'A-zha Principality*, where a few entries begin, "The new year['s day] of the [animal] year…they celebrated the great *sku-bla* ceremony of the first summer month" (*xxx lo'i lo sar dang…dbyar sla ra ba'i sku bla chen po gsol*) (Uray 1978: 556).[9] This indicates that the first summer month was shortly after the new year (*lo-sar*), if not the new year itself. Yamaguchi further argues that the third spring month was roughly equivalent to the fourth lunar month of the Tang calendar. In fact, we find a short Chinese–Tibetan vocabulary in the Dunhuang document Pelliot chinois 2762 that includes all of the months of the year, and this states that the first month of spring (*dpyid-sla ra-ba*) corresponds to the first Chinese month, and the last month of spring (*dpyid-sla tha-cungs*) to the third Chinese month (Pelliot 1961: 143–44). Working with very rough equivalences due to the non-correspondence of the calendars, this equates roughly to April of the Gregorian calendar. As a result, a yearly entry in the *Annals* in fact comprises the last three quarters or so of one year and the first quarter or so of the next in the Gregorian calendar. It is for this reason that many scholars refer to years in the *Annals* with two separate years, usually separated by a forward slash (e.g. the first entry, for the year of the dog, is "650/651"). To avoid giving the impression that this signifies vacillation between two years, I adopt a different format, e.g., "650-651." Again, with the caveat that we are dealing here with only rough equivalence, the old Tibetan calendar's correspondences with the Western calendar's months of the year can be sketched as follows:

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[7] In the various colonial military governments (*khrom*), assemblies were held in both summer and winter. See, for example, Takeuchi 1995: 139–44.

[8] For further details on the early Tibetan calendar, see Haarh 1969: 422–23. On the Tibetan use of the Chinese sexagenary cycle of twelve animals combined with five elements, see Uray 1984.

[9] See, however, Yamaguchi 1984, where *sar* in this year change formula is read as a verb.

Tibetan month	Western month
Last spring month (*dpyid sla tha-cung*)	April
First summer month (*dbyar sla ra-ba*)	May
Middle summer month (*dbyar sla ’bring-po*)	June
Last summer month (*dbyar sla tha-cung*)	July
First autumn month (*ston sla ra-ba*)	August
Middle autumn month (*ston sla ’bring-po*)	September
Last autumn month (*ston sla tha-cung*)	October
First winter month (*dgun sla ra-ba*)	November
Middle winter month (*dgun sla ’bring-po*)	December
Last winter month (*dgun sla tha-cung*)	January
First spring month (*dpyid sla ra-ba*)	February
Middle spring month (*dpyid sla ’bring-po*)	March

Although this is far from precise, it at least demonstrates that when referring to events described in the *Annals*, one can, for example, assume that the summer council in the snake year 693-694 fell in 693, and allow for the possibility that the winter council of the same year took place in 694.

Like the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, the *Old Tibetan Annals* only contains information up to the reign of Khri Srong-lde-btsan (ruled 756–c.800), ending with the sack of the Chinese capital and the victorious return of Tibet’s generals in 764. The practice of keeping the yearly entries in the *Annals* did not end, however, in 764; it is only our misfortune that a complete set of *Annals* has yet to come to light. This is confirmed by the fact that included in the introduction to the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* is an entry dating to the reign of Khri Lde-srong-btsan (ruled c.798–815):

> In the year of the horse,[10] Emperor Khri Lde-srong-btsan’s court resided in 'On-cang-do in Skyi. The old armies of the upper and lower regions were rotated, and they subdued the great thieves. A Gar-log emissary paid homage. Chief minister Zhang Khri-zur Ram-shags and Mang-rje Lha-lod and others took many gifts from China, and offered to the hands [of Khri Lde-srong-btsan] several camels, horses and oxen. He bestowed rewards on everyone from the rank of minister downwards. At that time... (*rta’i lo la btsan po khri lde srong btsan pho brang skyi’i ’on cang rdo na bzhugs/ stod smad kyi dmag rnying rjed dang rkun chen btul/ gar log gi pho nyas phyag btsal/ blon chen po zhang khri zur ram shag dang / mang rje lha lod la sogs pas rgya las gnangs mang po bcad de/ rnga rta dang lang phal mo che phyag tu phul/ zhang blon man chad so sor bya dga’ stsal ba’i lan la*).[11]

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[10] This can be either 802-803 or 814-815, with the later date the more likely one.

[11] This transliteration is based on the critical edition in Ishikawa 1990: 1. For a French translation, see Uray 1975: 159, and for an English translation see Kapstein 2000: 52. By way of comparison, Simonsson (1957: 239–41) analyzed this passage from the version of the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* contained in the “*Oslo Bstan ’gyur*,” and translated it into German.

While most documents would simply recount the year and the residence of the emperor or the site of the council as a dating formula, the importance of this document as part of the imperial project of Buddhist translation seems to have warranted the inclusion of an entire entry.[12]

In addition to such fragments, a damaged section of another set of annals, the *Annals of the 'A-zha Principality*, covering the years 706-707 to 714-715 and the arrival in Tibet of the Chinese Princess of Jincheng (Kim-sheng Kong-co), has been published by Thomas (1951: 8–16) and treated by Petech (1956), Yamaguchi (1970a), and Uray (1978).

Though referred to here as a single text, the *Old Tibetan Annals* as such is non-extant. What we have instead are two fragmentary versions of the *Old Tibetan Annals*. Version I covers the years from 650-651 to 747-748 and the redactor, presumably excerpting the *Annals* for the benefit of a civil board, seems to have focused mostly on what might be called civil matters, prompting Uray (1975: 165) to dub it the "civil version." Version II of the *Annals* is not nearly as long as the Version I, and only overlaps with it for five years, from its beginning in 743-744 through 747-748. After 747-748 there is a hiatus of seven years until the next entry in 755-756. The entries then continue up to 764-765, after which the entries for 764-765, 761-762, and then 762-764[13] are repeated clumsily in a different hand in what I refer to as the "Annals Fragments." The events narrated in these annals are mostly of a military nature, and, again following Uray, who assumes that the redactor excerpted the military features in the original text of the *Annals* for the benefit of a military board, I refer to Version II sometimes as the "military version."

Like many other Old Tibetan Dunhuang documents, Version I has been broken into pieces. The first part of this document resides in the Bibliothèque nationale de France under the shelf mark Pelliot tibétain 1288, while the rest is held in the Stein Collection of the British Library under the shelf mark IOL Tib J 750 (also abbreviated ITJ 750). Version I of the *Annals* was probably compiled in the mid-ninth century (Uray 1975: 163), but as mentioned already, the data it contains are nearly contemporaneous with the dates in the yearly entries, probably entered at the end of each year, and are certainly not retrospective creations. Bacot translated Version I of the *Annals* into French in 1940–1946 (*DTH*: 13–52).

Concerning the first section of the Version I, although the first dated entry is for 650-651, there are some entries that precede it. Tragically, the paper is torn at this point, so towards the top of the page only half of each sentence can be read. Because of the missing portions, it is difficult to tell how far the text goes back chronologically. Due to the fact that several of these same events are recounted in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, however, Richardson (1998 [1965]: 7–11) was able to plausibly reconstruct several of the missing parts of the text, and my translation, though it does not follow his readings entirely, is greatly indebted to his work. This also brings up another point about the preamble, namely that its content is more closely related to the narrative of the *Chronicle* than to the subsequent entries of the *Annals*. This, along with some of its linguistic features which will be considered below, signals the preamble as something apart from the rest of the *Annals*. Version I of the *Old Tibetan Annals*, like so many other Old Tibetan Dunhuang documents, is written on the reverse side of a Chinese Buddhist sutra, in this case the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, in 224 columns (Enoki 1962: 248; *CD2*: 31–32).

Version II of the *Annals*, previously held in the British Museum, is now housed in the British Library with the shelf mark OR 8212 (187). The document post-dates the Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang in c.786, but it is difficult to date with any precision (Uray 1965: 163). As with the Version I, however, the information was originally compiled almost at the same time as the events it describes, and what remains is only a copy, or perhaps even a scribal exercise based on a copy. Thomas translated this version into English in 1940–1946 (*DTH*: 53–75). Like Version I, Version II is written on the back of a Chinese medicine Buddha sutra, the *Yao shi jing* (Barnett: 215).

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[12] Further such scattered annalistic entries, including those found in the Drepung and Tabo versions of the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*, are translated in Appendix One.

[13] The entry here, recording the Tibetan sack of the Chinese capital in fact comprises not one, but two years (Uray 1991: 205–06).

To complicate matters, several entries in Version II of the *Annals* do not contain the opening dating formula, but leave a blank space where it was to have been entered. Because of the overlap of the two versions of the *Annals* from the first entry of Version II in 743-744 through 747-748, and due to the dating formulae found in all but the first of these entries in Version II, the dates it covers may be identified. As mentioned above, Version II jumps several years at this point. I have stated that the next entry is for the year 755-756, but this is not undisputed, and the dating formula is again missing in the first entry after this lacuna. The only date found from here until the end of Version II is in the next entry, for the year of the monkey, which must correspond to 756-757. This period between 755-756 and 764-765 is a highly eventful one in Tibet and China. Both were rocked by internal turmoil, with the Anlushan rebellion in China erupting at the end of 755 and the assassination of the Tibetan emperor, Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan, probably in the same year. Tibet made significant military campaigns into Chinese territory at this time as well, leading to their famous, albeit short-lived capture of the Chinese capital in 763. These events are recorded in Chinese sources in some detail, and the difficulty of harmonizing these accounts with that of the *Old Tibetan Annals* lies at the heart of the chronological problems concerning Version II. As a preliminary solution, Beckwith (1987: xvii–xviii; 146, n. 14; 148–49, n. 23) dated the last part of Version II to between 756 and 764. This was a tentative solution, however, and Beckwith noted that the matter could only be resolved through a close comparison of the Chinese and Tibetan sources. Fortunately, Géza Uray undertook just such a meticulous study not long after, and demonstrated a workable solution: the final part of Version II covers the years from 755-756 to 764-765, and this is achieved by the fact that the penultimate entry is not for a single year, but for two. In other words, the penultimate entry is for both the tiger year 762-763 and the hare year 763-764, and the final entry is for the dragon year 764-765 (Uray 1991: 203–05).

The document on which Version II is written ends with the "Annals Fragments." This consists of entries for the years 764-765, 761-762, and 762-764, and close with an answer to a petition from a local Chinese subject king. The "Fragments" were not translated by Thomas, but may be found in the OTDO transliteration (Imaeda and Takeuchi *et al.* 2007: 358). They are written in a very rough hand, include no punctuation, and are full of spelling mistakes. If nothing else, the presentation of the "Annals Fragments" here makes for a salutary lesson in just how sloppy Old Tibetan writing can be.

The history of the study of the *Old Tibetan Annals* bears witness to the internationalization of Tibetan studies and some of the attendant political issues that have accompanied its rise. The documents comprising the *Annals* were taken from Dunhuang by Aurel Stein and Paul Pelliot, to be housed in the British Museum and British Library in London and in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. This act is viewed in China as a theft of Chinese cultural inheritance, and continues to be raised as an issue. Due in part to their privileged access to the documents in Paris and London, Jacques Bacot and F.W. Thomas respectively translated Version I and Version II of the *Old Tibetan Annals* in 1940–1946. Bacot's work was not solitary, however, and he was not confined to the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. Indeed he travelled to Sikkim where he enlisted the help of Mthar-phyin Bha-bu-lags, the famous Christian convert and publisher of the first Tibetan newspaper, *Melong*. It was through Mthar-phyin that Bacot's trajectory intersected with that of another path-breaking historian of early Tibet, Gendun Chömpel, who Tharchin enlisted to help with translating and making sense of the documents Bacot had brought with him, presumably reproductions of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle,* the *Royal Genealogy,* and the *Old Tibetan Annals*. Chömpel was aggrieved by what he perceived among his countrymen as indifference to their own history, and he was fascinated by inscribed pillar edicts, Chinese histories such as the *Tang Annals*, and by the ancient documents that came to him from Bacot by way of Tharchin (Stoddard 1985: 206).

Tragically, the study of Tibetan history that Chömpel envisioned as his magnum opus was derailed when he was imprisoned and his notes were appropriated. Published posthumously in his collected works and independently as the *Deb ther dkar po*,[14] Gendun Chömpel's work on early history has acted as a foundation stone for the study of early Tibetan history within Tibetan and Chinese scholarship, and his glosses are cited approvingly in later works by Wang Yao and Chen Jian (2001 [1992]), Gnya'-gong Dkon-mchog Tshe-brtan (1995), Huang Bufan and Ma De (2000), and numerous others.

Tibetan and Chinese engagement with the *Old Tibetan Annals* and other Old Tibetan documents came comparatively late, and was by necessity informed by reproductions of these documents in international publications. Much of the Dunhuang Tibetan corpus is now available online, and has also been reproduced in recent Chinese publications, giving added momentum to an already flourishing subfield of Old Tibetan studies in Tibet and China.[15]

Prior to this recent boom in early Tibetan studies on the Tibetan plateau, the study of the *Annals* and other Old Tibetan documents thrived in Europe, Japan, and the United States, where scholars improved upon the pioneering work of Bacot and Thomas. In particular, Chang Kun (1959–60) wrote a long article on the *Annals*, organized thematically, and Uray (1975) wrote a solid introduction to the *Annals*, as did Bjerken (2001: 20–30). Petech (1967), in an important article, analyzed the most problematic entries in the *Annals* and discussed issues of historical geography. In addition to these works, there are several others that deal more generally with Tibetan history and language, and which come to bear directly on the *Annals*. Salient among these are the contributions of Uray (1960, 1962a, 1962b, 1971, and 1978), Uebach (1988, 1997, 2003, and 2008), Bogoslovskij (1972 [1962], Stein (1952 and 1963), Yamaguchi (1969, 1970a), Róna-tas (1978), Richardson (1998 [1965]), and Beckwith (1983, 1987). The profusion of scholarship on the *Annals* and on early Tibetan social and cultural history both internationally and within Tibet and China make it possible now to offer a full translation of the *Annals* that can significantly improve upon previous works.

The Tibetan Empire, a Brief Survey

Here I will give a brief synoptic history of the first half of the Tibetan Empire, and then underline the contributions of the *Old Tibetan Annals* to certain historical issues of this period.

The Yar-lung Kingdom expanded to become the Tibetan Empire through a process of conquest that began in earnest in the mid-sixth century.[16] This was initiated by Srong-btsan Sgam-po's grandfather, Stag-bu

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[14] The *Deb ther dkar po* seems to have been first published in Darjeeling in or before 1960. For more on this work and a review of Samten Norboo's 1978 English translation, see Richardson 1988 [1978]. In fact, Chömpel's work was more focused on the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* and the *Tang Annals*, and he only treated the first thirty entries in Version I of the *Old Tibetan Annals*.

[15] In terms of the status of Old Tibetan studies in Tibet and China, special mention must be made of the recent publication of a large volume on Old Tibetan studies edited by Kha-sgang Bkra-shis Tshe-ring (2003). In a recent article on "Tibetan Tibetology," Kapstein (2007) reviews this volume and considers the identity politics underlying such work, along with the field and its prospects.

[16] I consciously differentiate the "Yar-lung Kingdom" and the "Tibetan Empire" based on the fact that the former was confined to Yar-lung and 'Phyong-rgyas, while the latter expanded to control disparate peoples and territories, and thus warrants the name empire. This is a welcome standardization, as all too often these terms are mistakenly employed as if they were interchangeable. In a recent article, for example, Cuevas (2006: 51) makes a noble effort to standardize the periodization

Snya-gzigs. At this time, Stag-bu Snya-gzigs was the ruler of just one of many rival kingdoms. As recounted in the third chapter of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, Yar-lung's northern neighbor, the kingdom of Ngas-po, had grown powerful by conquering Yel-rab Sde-bzhi and Klum [ro] Ya-gsum, the lands of Zing-po-rje Stag-skya-bo. The ruler of Ngas-po, known by the similar name Zing-po-rje Khri-pangs-sum, alienated his subjects by his harsh and unjust rule, and some of them, notably members of the Dba's, Myang, Gnon, and Tshes-pong clans, secretly pledged their allegiance to Stag-bu Snya-gzigs, and together plotted to overthrow Zing-po-rje Khri-pangs-sum. As with so many other political intrigues in Tibet's history, this one also involved marriage, since Stag-bu Snya-gzigs' sister was one of Zing-po-rje Khri-pangs-sum's wives.

This plan was thwarted, however, when Stag-bu Snya-gzigs was kidnapped by the 'Ol-god clan, who, having provided him with an heir-bearing wife, stood in relation to him as his bride-givers and as his heir's maternal uncle clan (*zhang*). The 'Ol-god clan controlled the area called Gnubs-mtsho Gling-dgu near Yar-'brog Lake. After seizing King Stag-bu Snya-gzigs, they turned him over to Klu-dur, the king of Lho-brag, who kept Stag-bu imprisoned and demanded a ransom.[17] This may have been the event that led to King Stag-bu's death and the postponement of the plot against Zing-po-rje Khri-pangs-sum.[18] The plot against Zing-po-rje Khri-pangs-sum was taken up, however, by Stag-bu Snya-gzigs' sons, Slon-mtshan and Slon-kol, and the former conquered Ngas-po, seized territories stretching down to Rkong-po, and became the first Tibetan ruler to preside over what could justly be called an empire. Through alliance and conquest, he soon added to his empire the lands of Sum-pa and Gtsang-Bod, the latter corresponding generally to Upper Gtsang (Hazod, *infra*, Part III).

These conquests all adhered to a model whereby ministerial / clan interests and imperial interests coincided. The case of Gtsang-Bod illustrates this model perfectly: Khyung-po Spung-zad Zu-tse defected from Zhang-zhung, conquered Gtsang-Bod, and offered its twenty-thousand households to Emperor Slon-mtshan. Slon-mtshan promptly granted them back to Zu-tse as his own lands. More than empty ceremony, this formality enshrined the Tibetan Empire's model of expansion as one in which self-interest and imperial interest coincided, and it served to hold together this coalition of conquests through patron–client relationships centered on the figure of the Tibetan emperor.

Gnam-ri Slon-mtshan was poisoned, and his death precipitated the revolt of several of the newly conquered territories. This rebellion was fiercely put down, however, by Slon-mtshan's young son and successor, Khri Srong-btsan, alias Srong-btsan Sgam-po. During his reign, Srong-btsan Sgam-po conquered Zhang-zhung, attacked the 'A-zha and the Turks, and won a battle for succession by orchestrating the death of his brother, Btsan-srong. At this point, Tibet was truly an empire, and would soon enter into alliances with its neighbors and govern disparate peoples such as the 'A-zha, Mthong-khyab, and Chinese.

The Tibetans came into conflict with the 'A-zha, a Turkic people who, known to the Chinese as the Tuyuhun 吐谷渾, constituted a buffer state between China and Tibet. It was as a direct result of Tibet's growing military power on China's western border that the Chinese emperor, Taizong 太宗 (626–649) in 641 granted a marriage with Princess Wencheng 文成. This marked the true beginning of Tibet's long and tenuous relationship with China.

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of Tibetan history, but unfortunately refers to the period of the Yar-lung Kingdom as the "early imperial period." Needless to say, there is nothing "imperial" about a small kingdom composed of local, more or less identical, clan-based units.

[17] This is recounted in the *Chronicle Fragments* relating to Stag-bu Snya-gzigs (PT 1144).

[18] Later Bon histories, however, such as the *Bsgrags pa gling grags* and the *Rgyal rabs bon gyi 'byung nas*, whose relevant passage is based on the former text, maintain that Stag-bu was rescued by a Bon-po (Uray 1972a: 37–38, n. 91). Whatever the case may be, this scrap of narrative, referred to by Uray as part of the "*Chronicle Fragments*," illustrates the precarious nature of the Yar-lung Kingdom not long before its period of rapid expansion.

The fledgling empire was held together by powerful ministers such as Khyung-po Spung-sad Zu-tse and Myang Mang-po-rje Zhang-snang, who governed large areas of territory as their personal fiefs during the first half of the seventh century. These ministers came into conflict with one another, however, and the preamble to the *Annals* contains fragments relating to Myang Mang-po-rje Zhang-snang's fall from grace. As narrated in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, this was the result of slander and plotting by Khyung-po Spung-sad Zu-tse. Zu-tse, however, would soon meet a similar fate when his plot to assassinate Srong-btsan Sgam-po was uncovered by Mgar Stong-rtsan, resulting in Zu-tse's death. This dynamic of deadly rivalry between ministers is found throughout the history of the Tibetan Empire, and ministerial plots to assassinate the Btsan-po are also quite common, and indeed resulted in the deaths of emperors Gnam-ri Slon-mtshan (c.612), Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan (c.755), and probably also Khri Gtsug-lde-brtsan (841).

The most powerful minister in the *Old Tibetan Annals*, and perhaps in the history of Tibet, was Mgar Stong-rtsan Yul-zung, who served under both Srong-btsan Sgam-po (reigned c.612–649) and Khri Mang-slon Mang-rtsan (reigned 649–676). As recorded in the *Annals*, Mgar standardized the administrative and legal systems of the Tibetan Empire in 654-655 and 655-656, and played a central role in the conquest of the kingdom of 'A-zha in 663, after which it became part of the Tibetan Empire as a "minor kingdom" (*rgyal-phran*) under Tibetan domain. After his death, Mgar Stong-rtsan's sons served as chief ministers, and eventually their power grew to rival that of the Tibetan emperor.

Khri Mang-slon Mang-rtsan was likely no more than seven years old when he became emperor in 649 upon the death of his grandfather, Srong-btsan Sgam-po, and he remained in Nyen-kar and Mer-ke for the first eight years of his reign. He died in 676, and his son, Khri 'Dus-srong, was born shortly after. For the first thirteen years of his reign, Khri 'Dus-srong remained in Nyen-kar. It was during his reign that the Mgar clan built their own empire in Bya-phu and in the northeast among the 'A-zha. Once Khri 'Dus-srong reached adulthood (he was coronated in 685), however, he put down the Mgar rebellion, and his song of chastisement in this context is one of the most famous songs in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*.[19] This conflict became heated in 695, and was resolved in 699 when Khri 'Dus-srong defeated Mgar's forces in battle, and the survivors fled to China.

This period of Mgar supremacy, sometimes referred to as the "Mgar Shogunate," transpired at a time when the Tibetan emperors were young and incapable of ruling on their own. This in some ways prefigures the later dynamic whereby Tibet was ruled by powerful regents during the minorities of the Dalai Lamas, many of whom died young, and in suspicious circumstances. During this period, Tibet's empire expanded at an astounding rate. By 670, they controlled the area around Kashgar, conquered the city-states of Khotan and Kucha, and accepted the submission of the powerful empire of the Western Turks (Beckwith 1987: 30–34). These would all be contested conquests that the Tibetans would lose and win back more than once in their efforts to gain the upper hand in exacting tribute from the Central Asian city-states on the Silk Road, the main prize sought by the Chinese, Turks, Arabs, and Uighurs throughout this period.

After his defeat of the Mgar, Emperor Khri 'Dus-srong continued his campaigns, and went to the southeast to subjugate the Mywa people in what would become the Nanzhao Kingdom. He died there in 704, just after the birth of his son, Rgyal Gtsug-ru, who would later be coronated with the name Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan. Khri 'Dus-srong's untimely death led to a battle for succession between Rgyal Gtsug-ru and his half brother, Lha Bal-po. The former was supported by his grandmother, Lady Khri-ma-lod, and her clan, the 'Bro. Similarly, Lha Bal-po was supported by his mother, Princess Ga-tun, who was either a Turkic or 'A-zha princess.[20] At this time, Lady Khri-ma-lod was the most powerful political figure in Tibet, and her candidate won out. Princess Ga-tun died not long after, and her funeral is recorded in the *Annals'* entry for 708-709.

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[19] For Bacot and Toussaint's French translation, see *DTH*: 161–65. Chab-spel (1993: 423–26) translated the song into modern Tibetan, and portions of the song have been translated into French by Macdonald (1971: 352) and into English by Karmay (1998 [1996]: 439), Beyer (1992: 276–77), and Zeisler (2004: 321, 324, 341, and 427), the latter with grammatical annotation.

The most important royal figure during the period of these infant rulers was undoubtedly "Empress" 'Bro Khri-ma-lod, first as the mother of Khri 'Dus-srong, and then as the grandmother of Rgyal Gtsug-ru / Khri Lde-gtsug-rtsan. The entries for the years from 700-701 to 712-713 faithfully record her whereabouts as if she were a Tibetan emperor, and after her death in the winter of 712-713 she is accorded a royal burial at Phying-ba in the winter of 713-714. The only other burials at Phying-ba recorded in the *Annals* are those of Emperor Khri Srong-btsan (Srong-btsan Sgam-po), Emperor Khri Mang-slon, and Emperor Khri 'Dus-srong. As such, it would not be a stretch to regard her, like her Chinese contemporary, Wu Zetian 武則天 (690–705), as nothing less than an empress.

Before the coronation of Rgyal Gtsug-ru as Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan in 712, the second Chinese princess, Kim-shang Kong-co (the Princess of Jincheng 金城), arrived as the young Rgyal Gtsug-ru's bride. This is recorded in the *Annals*' entry for the dog year 710-711. Although she was unhappy in Tibet, and plotted to escape in 723, the second Chinese princess seems to have been instrumental in introducing Buddhism to the Tibetan court. In fact, many of the great deeds, temple building and so forth attributed to the first Chinese princess by later Tibetan historians were probably the efforts of the Princess of Jincheng (Richardson 1998a).

The first half of the eighth century was a time of great military strength for the Tang, who recaptured many of the territories they had lost to the Tibetans. To the northwest, the Arabs made strong inroads as well, sacking Bukhara, Samarkand, and other territories. In the 750s, Tibet was at its weakest, and was riven by a civil war and the assassination of Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan in c.755. Intriguingly, this period of extended bad news is missing from Version II of the *Old Tibetan Annals*, where there are no entries for the years from 747-748 to 754-755. It is evident that the manuscript was cut at this point, with another part of it adhesed, and that this accounts for the missing years (*infra*, "Linguistic and Orthographic Features of the *Old Tibetan Annals*"). The events that marked this troubled period are alluded to by parts of the entry for the sheep year 755-756: "[t]he soldiers sacked the father's entourage... They banished the bondservants of Lang [and] 'Bal; they were sent to Mtong sod... They assessed (confiscated) wealth of the disgraced Lang [and] 'Bal." The likely reason for these reprisals directed against Lang and 'Bal is explained in the Zhol Pillar inscription, which dates to c.764. Lines 1–20 of the south face inscription read:

> During the reign of Emperor Khri Lde-gtsug-rtsan, Ngan-lam Klu-khong carried out his loyal duties. 'Bal Ldong-tsab and Lang Myes-zigs, though acting as chief ministers, became disloyal and did harm to the body of the Btsan-pho, the father, Khri lde-gtsug-rtsan, and he departed to heaven. They came close to harming the body of the Btsan-pho, the son, Khri Srong-lde-brtsan. The realm of black-headed Tibetans being in a state of strife, Klu-khong demonstrated the fact of 'Bal and Lang's disloyalty, and offering it to the ears of the Btsan-pho, the son, Khri Srong-lde-brtsan, 'Bal and Lang's disloyalty became true [evident] and they were disgraced. Klu-khong was loyal. (*btsan pho khrI lde gtsug rtsan gyI ring la'// #//ngan lam klu khong gyis// glo ba nye ba'i rje blas byas pa // 'bal ldong tsab dang/ lang myes zigs/ blon po chen pho byed byed pa las/ glo ba ring*$_s$ *nas// btsan pho yab khrI lde/ gtsug rtsan gyi sku la dard te/ dgung du gshegs so/// btsan pho sras khrI srong lde brtsa*$_n$ *gyi sku la ni dard du nye// bod mgo nag po'i srid nI 'khrug du byed pa las/ klu khong gis/ 'ba*$_l$ *dang/ lang glo ba rings pa'I gta*$_n$ *gtsigs//*

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[20] Beckwith (1987: 73) finds it likely that he was the son or relative of Queen Ga-tun (meaning "princess" in Turkish; *qatun*), whose funeral is recorded in the winter of the snake year 708-709. Uebach (1997b: 59, n. 12) extends the possibility that she was a daughter of the 'A-zha Khagan. Vitali (1990: 26, n. 31) advances the theory that Khri-ma-lod forced Khri 'Dus-srong to the margins even before his death, and that Lha Bal-po accompanied him. Were this to be substantiated, it would reveal two factions: Khri 'Dus-srong and Lha Bal-po on the one hand and Khri-ma-lod and Rgyal Gtsug-ru / Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan on the other.

> *btsan pho sras khrI sro*$_{ng}$ *lde brtsan gyi snyan du gsold na*$_{s}$ *'bal dang / lang glo ba rings / bden par gyurd te/ khong ta nI bkyon phab ste// klu khong glo ba nye'o*).[21]

It is evident from the first sentence for the entry of 755-756, "[t]he soldiers sacked the father's entourage," that the turmoil had not yet ended even then. The written edict accompanying the Bsam-yas Pillar inscription, preserved in *KhG*, further states:

> After the Btsan-po, the father, departed to heaven, it being an example of the manner in which we were carried away by turmoil (*pan-pun*), the Lhun-gyis 'grub Temple [Bsam-yas Monastery] was firmly established on the seventeenth day of the first month of spring in the year of the sheep... (*btsan po yab dgung du gshegs pa'i phyi nas/ ban bun khyer ba'i dpe tshul yod pa nas/ gtsug lag khang lhun gyis 'grub tu/ lug gi lo la dpyid zla ra ba'i tshes bcu bdun la rten btsugs pa'i tshe/*) (*KhG*: 371; 108b, ll. 6–7).[22]

The annalistic entries for this period almost certainly did exist, but seem to have ended up on the cutting room floor.

The final few entries in the *Annals* record the Tibetan sack of the Chinese capital, which is also detailed in the Zhol Pillar and in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* (see *infra*, Appendix Three). There was constant warfare from the late 750s until this monumental event. The Tibetans installed on the Chinese throne as a puppet emperor one of the Princess of Jincheng's relatives, but this state of affairs lasted less than one month.

It is here that the *Old Tibetan Annals* ends. Conveniently, it is to this very period that the first pillar inscriptions date. These, along with fragmentary Old Tibetan documents, many of which date to the period during which Tibet controlled Dunhuang (c.786–848), the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, and Chinese histories such as the *Tang shu*, are the most reliable sources for reconstructing the history of the latter half of the Tibetan Empire. Here I will only offer a brief summary, since this extends beyond the period covered by the *Annals*.

The period from the sack of the Chinese capital in 763 to the peace treaty with the Chinese in 821-822 was the apogee of Tibet's military expansion. The Tibetans allied themselves with the kingdom of Nanzhao, and routed the Chinese on numerous occasions. In particular, they seized control of many of the territories to the far northeast, Shazhou / Dunhuang and Liangzhou being primary among them as a strategic base for exerting control over the Silk Road. It was only with the Nanzhao defection to the Tang in 794, and the rise of the Uighur Empire in the early ninth century, that Tibetan military power was effectively reined in.

By the mid-eighth century, Tibetans had become familiar with the religious and cultural traditions of their neighbors, particularly China. Chinese classics, Chan Buddhist teachings, and apocrypha are among those Chinese works translated into Tibetan. Translation occurred on a large scale, and the vocabulary is standardized enough to suggest some sort of centralized organization, if not royal patronage (Stein 1983). Buddhist texts and teachers from India also made significant inroads into Tibet at this time. The most significant development in this regard was the arrival in Tibet of Śāntarakṣita, a brilliant Indian Buddhist philosopher who had served as abbot of Nālanda Monastery.

Buddhism, as the religion of most of Tibet's neighbors, held a certain appeal to the Tibetans. In addition to its international status, Buddhist scholarship also offered Tibetans an integrated educational system that produced literacy and discipline (Kapstein 2006: 71). As such, one might suppose that these were attractive features for an expanding empire, and that they contributed to the royal adoption of Buddhism in c.779. This was marked by the consecration of Bsam-yas Monastery, a royal pillar inscription, and two royal edicts proclaiming the Tibetan conversion to Buddhism. These edicts would be reaffirmed in pillar inscriptions and edicts by Khri Srong-lde-btsan's son, Khri Lde-srong-btsan (ruled c.798–815).

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[21] The transliteration generally follows Richardson 1985: 6–9. See also Li and Coblin 1987: 143, 158.

[22] See also Richardson 1998 [1980]: 92.

These two rulers also sponsored a royal translation committee to regulate and standardize translations of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit to Tibetan, along with projects to catalogue extant translations. Buddhist monks soon formed an important part of the royal court, and the clergy became a new route to political power. This would become particularly evident during the reigns of emperors Khri Lde-Srong-btsan and Khri Gtsug-lde-btsan (alias Ral-pa-can) (815–841), when the monks Myang Ting-nge-'dzin Bzang-po and Bran-ka Dpal gyi Yon-tan held prominent positions in the government (Richardson 1998b). There are indications that the latter figure, as chief minister, effectively ruled Tibet for a time due to Ral-pa-can's illness and / or inability (Richardson 1998 [1961]).

When Khri Gtsug-lde-btsan's brother, 'U'i Dum-brtan (Glang Dar-ma), took the throne in 841, he seems to have curtailed the political power of the clergy or reduced public expenditure for their support. The later Tibetan Buddhist historians caricature this king as an evil, anti-Buddhist ruler whose crimes against the Sangha, such as the transformation of temples into granaries, almost prefigure scenes from the Cultural Revolution. In fact, we find among the Old Tibetan Dunhuang documents prayers dedicated to him, evidence that he constructed temples, and one of the imperial Buddhist catalogues, the *'Phang thang ma*, even attributes to him a Buddhist commentary (Halkias 2004: 57–58). In one of the most evocative scenes in Tibetan religious histories, this ruler is assassinated in spectacular fashion by a monk named Lha-lung Dpal gyi Rdo-rje. While the narrative color may be a later elaboration, this monk was most certainly a Buddhist hierarch in central Tibet at the time, and his name is found inscribed on a small, broken pillar inscription at Brag Yer-pa. His assassination of 'U'i Dum-brtan in 842 marked the death knell of the Tibetan Empire, but its throes would be felt for another few decades.

The battle for succession that followed 'U'i Dum-brtan's death was not new. Srong-btsan Sgam-po seems to have murdered his brother Btsan-srong; Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan (r. 712–c.755) took the throne only after his half brother, Lha Bal-po, was deposed; and Khri Lde-srong-btsan (r. c.798–800, c.802–815) had prolonged battles with his brother, Mu-rug-brtsan (r. c.800–c.802), which were only resolved with the latter's apparent death in 804 (Dotson 2007c: 12). The problem of succession following 'U'i Dum-brtan's death, however, was that there seemed not to be an heir who, according to the rules of succession, could be deemed legitimate. This split the ministerial aristocracy, with the most powerful section of the aristocracy—those maternal relatives (*zhang*) who provided queen mothers for the royal line, the 'Bro clan principal among them—forming the most influential group. The Dba's clan strongly opposed the 'Bro and the rest of the matrilateral aristocracy. This led to civil war, acted out on the battlefields of eastern Tibet until the mid-860s.

Meanwhile, Tibet's hard-fought conquests fell away from its weakened imperial grasp. This is traditionally conceived of in later Tibetan histories as the reverse of the process by which the Yar-lung Kingdom expanded to become the Tibetan Empire. In this way, the minor kingdoms were subjugated and united under the flag of the Tibetan Empire, and on its collapse the Tibetan plateau was once again characterized by scattered polities in what is referred to as the "Period of Fragments" (Bod sil-bu). Several of these small principalities made claims to royal blood, as did the dynasty founded in western Tibet, but none of them, nor any other rulers in the subsequent history of Tibet, would ever rule over a realm as large as the Tibetan Empire at its height.

The *Old Tibetan Annals*' Contributions to Tibetan History

Within the history of the Tibetan Empire there are many thorny issues that are debated by historians. The *Old Tibetan Annals*, as the most reliable document for the history of the first half of the Tibetan Empire, clarifies a number of these issues, and serves in some ways as a corrective against the often imaginative creations of Tibet's later historians. Among the most salient of the *Annals'* contributions is its revelation that Princess Wencheng, who arrived in Tibet in 641, came as the bride of Gung-srong, the son of Srong-btsan Sgam-po, and that the father took to wife his son's widow when Gung-srong died in c.646. This episode was partially transferred by post-dynastic Tibetan historians to involve not the first, but the second Chinese princess, the Princess of Jincheng. There are other such instances of suppressed or transferred historical episodes that the *Old Tibetan Annals* lays bare.

The preamble to the *Old Tibetan Annals* records the arrival in Tibet of the Chinese princess, Mun-chang Kong-co (Princess Wencheng). This heralds the beginning of Tibet's lasting relationship with China, and creates a ritual relationship with very complex dynamics. The *Jiu Tangshu* briefly describes the marriage of the Chinese princess and the Tibetan emperor in the following terms:

> The 15th year of Chenkuan (641) the Emperor gave Princess Wencheng, of the imperial house, in marriage. He appointed the President of the Board of Rites, Daozong, Prince of Jiangxia, to preside over the ceremony, and he was given special credentials, and escorted the princess to Tufan. Lungtsan led his warriors to await her arrival at Pohai, and went himself to receive her at Heyuan. He received Daozong most respectfully, with the rites due from a son-in-law. (Bushell 1880: 444–45; Pelliot 1961: 4–5; and Lee 1981: 9–10).

It has always been assumed that Princess Wencheng came to Tibet as the bride of Srong-btsan Sgam-po. It is evident from the *Old Tibetan Annals* that these two were indeed married, but that the princess may have first come as someone else's bride. Yamaguchi (1970a) has argued that Wencheng was initially the bride of Srong-btsan Sgam-po's son, Gung-srong Gung-rtsan. While Gung-srong is absent from the *Annals*, his existence is implied in two entries. The last entry in the preamble, dating to 649, reads as follows: "[t]hen after six years Btsan-po Khri Srong-rtsan departed to heaven. He had cohabited to Princess Mun-cang Kong-co for three years" (*btsan mo mun cang kong co dang dgung lo gsum bshos so/*). At this point the princess had been in Tibet for nine years, so we are left to ponder what she was doing for the six years when she was not wed to Srong-btsan Sgam-po. This passage, coupled with the *Royal Genealogy*'s statement that Gung-srong Gung-rtsan and Kong-co Mang-mo-rje Khri-skar bore the son Mang-slon Mang-rtsan (*DTH*: 82, 88; Dotson 2004: 88), indicates that the Chinese princess probably came to Tibet as the bride of Srong-btsan Sgam-po's son, Gung-srong Gung-rtsan. His absence in the preamble to the *Annals* and his absence in contemporary Chinese sources suggest, however, that he did not rule as emperor.[23] It is interesting if Srong-btsan Sgam-po took his son's wife, and cohabitated with her until his death three years later in 649, since this partly confirms a statement concerning the Tibetans in the *Beishi*, a Chinese source that offers a vignette of Tibetan culture at the turn of the seventh century, which might otherwise be viewed as a typical bit of ethnocentrism: "[t]hey marry their widowed mothers and sisters-in-law—when a son or younger brother dies, the father and elder brother(s) also take his wife." (Beckwith 1977: 106).

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[23] Sato (1959: 11, English summary) offers the alternative explanation that Srong-btsan Sgam-po was campaigning against Zhang-zhung from 644 to 649 and that he and the Chinese princess cohabitated for three years from 641 to 644. As discussed below, the preamble to the *Old Tibet Annals* has some peculiar linguistic features, and should not be treated as being of a piece with the body of the *Annals* in terms of its reliability.

The first entry of the *Annals*, for the dog year 650-651, also explicitly points to the existence of another generation between Srong-btsan Sgam-po and Mang-slon Mang-rtsan by referring to the former as the "grandfather" (*mes*), and to the latter as the "grandson" (*sbon*). It remains unclear, however, why Gung-srong is not mentioned in the *Annals*. One possibility is that Srong-btsan Sgam-po's marriage to his deceased son's wife (or whatever marriage existed) was considered somewhat irregular, and that the present record reflects the resulting whitewash. Otherwise, it may simply be due to the fact that Gung-srong never reigned as emperor.

The matter of whether or not Chinese blood ran through the Tibetan royal lineage is a touchy one, with scholars such as Uebach and Yamaguchi offering strong arguments on either side of the issue. On the face of it, the situation is rather clear-cut: the *Royal Genealogy* (PT 1286) plainly states that Gung-srong Gung-rtsan and Khon-co Mang-mo-rje KhrI-skar bore the son Mang-slon Mang-rtsan. Uebach's counterargument to this, however, is based on an entry in the *Old Tibetan Annals* for the horse year 706-707 in which it states that "the grandmother (*pyi*) Mang-pangs died." This year falls, of course, during the reign of grandmother (*pyi*) Khri-ma-lod, in the minority of Rgyal Gtsug-ru / Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan. Based on the fact that Khri-ma-lod was the grandmother of Rgyal Gtsug-ru / Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan, and based also on the fact that *pyi / phyi* can indicate either grandmother or great-grandmother, Uebach (1997b: 57) argues that Mang-pangs was the great-grandmother of Rgyal Gtsug-ru / Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan, thus making her the mother of Khri Mang-slon Mang-rtsan and the chief queen of Khri Gung-srong. Quite correctly, Uebach takes the source value of the *Annals* to be greater than that of the *Royal Genealogy*. Uebach (1997b: 66) concludes that "there is no doubt that the *Geneology* providing the Chinese title *kung-chu* in Tibetan rendering *khon-co* preceding the Tibetan name Mang-mo-rje Khri-skar is corrupt." Uebach thus demonstrates that the Chinese Princess Wencheng never bore a Tibetan emperor. This is well argued, and hinges on the *Old Tibetan Annals*' consistency in its use of the kinship terms *yum* and *phyi* to refer to mothers and grandmothers of the Tibetan emperors. The only possible objection would be that *phyi* could refer to a maternal grandmother, but this is far-fetched: only ladies of the paternal line were accorded the prestige associated with these terms that set them apart from other royal ladies as having given birth to an emperor.[24] The question we must ask, then, would seem to be this: why does the *Royal Genealogy* present Khon-co Mang-mo-rje KhrI-skar as Mang-slon's mother when this was not the case? Is this merely textual corruption, or was there some reason to attribute to this Tibetan emperor a Chinese mother? As we shall see, there was a later literary episode in which the Sna-nam clan and the second Chinese princess, the Princess of Jincheng, both claimed Khri Srong-lde-btsan as their son, and the outlines of this narrative tradition may have their basis in the events that informed the diverging testimonies of the *Old Tibetan Annals* and the *Royal Genealogy* concerning Khri Mang-slon's mother.

This marriage of the aging Srong-btsan Sgam-po to Princess Wencheng would seem to be the historical basis for a tradition in later Tibetan historiography according to which the second Chinese princess, the Princess of Jincheng, married an old, bearded Tibetan emperor, Mes Ag-tshoms. According to several post-dynastic Tibetan histories, the Princess of Jincheng, whose arrival in Tibet the *Annals* records in the entry for 710-711, was intended to be the bride of Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan's son, but was then wed to the father upon the son's untimely death. As demonstrated by Yamaguchi (1970a), this episode has obviously been transferred from the events surrounding Princess Wencheng's marriage to Gung-srong Gung-btsan and her subsequent remarriage to Khri Srong-btsan for the final three years of his life after her husband's death. In terms of such transference, the second Chinese princess suffered mightily, with many of her cultural and religious contributions stripped from her by later historians and added to the legacy of the first Chinese princess.[25]

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[24] One possible exception to this is the term *sru*, used for royal ladies. Though this usually means maternal aunt, it can also indicate a half sister, for which see *infra*, "Mothers, Grandmothers, Heir-Bearing Queens, and Junior Queens: Maternal and Affinal Relatives," fn. 41.

As Kapstein (2000: 23–30) pointed out in a brilliant analysis, later Tibetan historians did the Princess of Jincheng one favor in that they made her the mother of Emperor Khri Srong-lde-btsan, and in doing so transformed his actual mother into a usurper. This was achieved through an authorial sleight of hand that still convinces many of its truth. Specifically, they conflated Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan's son, Lhas-bon, with his elder half brother, Lha Bal-po.[26] With Lhas-bon out of the way, they made Khri Srong-lde-btsan the son of the Princess of Jincheng, which, given his and the princess' mutual interest in the Buddhist religion, fit well with the authorial imperatives of Tibet's Buddhist monk historians.

The *Old Tibetan Annals* puts the lie to this literary episode in two ways. First, it records the death of the Chinese princess in the winter of the hare year 739-740, three years before it records the birth of Khri Srong-lde-brtsan to Sna-nam Mang-mo-rje Bzhi-steng in the horse year 742-743. This demonstrates beyond any doubt that Khri Srong-lde-btsan was the son of the Sna-nam princess, and not the Princess of Jincheng. Secondly, the *Annals* lays bare the fallacy of conflating Lha Bal-po with Lhas-bon: Lha Bal-po is referred to in the snake year 705-706 as the Btsan-po's elder brother (*btsan-po gcen*), while Lhas-bon is called the Btsan-po's son (*btsan-po sras*) in the entries for the hare year 739-740 and the snake year 741-742.[27] In both instances it is Rgyal Gtsug-ru / Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan who is indicated by the term Btsan-po, so his elder brother cannot be the same person as his son.[28]

Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan's son, Lhas-bon, is only mentioned twice in the *Annals*, once for his death and once for his funeral. His death in the summer of 739-740 was followed shortly thereafter by the death of the Princess of Jincheng in the winter, and in the winter of the next year their funeral(s) were held.[29]

One other possible instance of transference concerns the battle for succession between Lha Bal-po and Rgyal Gtsug-ru / Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan, both of whom were championed, respectively, by mother and grandmother of separate bloodlines. The dynamic of one royal lady and her infant royal scion vying with another royal lady and her chosen successor is reminiscent of post-dynastic accounts of the rivalry over one century later between 'Od-srung and Yum-brtan, the "sons" of Glang Dar-ma 'U'i Dum-brtan. The possibility should thus not be discounted that the rivalry between the two queens and their two candidates for the throne in the early eighth century served as a template for the muddled narrative of 'Od-srung and Yum-brtan's struggle in the mid-ninth century (Dotson 2007c: 11, n. 42).[30]

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[25] For further discussion of Gung-srong and this marriage, see Yamaguchi 1969 and 1970a and Beckwith 1987: 23, n. 54.

[26] See, for example, the *Sba bzhed* (Stein 1961a: 2) and *Lde'u*: 300. In other cases this conflation was not made, but Lhas-bon was simply transformed into the child of another foreign princess, from Ljang (Kapstein 2000: 217).

[27] This could also be translated as "the Btsan-po, the elder brother" and "the Btsan-po, the son," where Btsan-po is read in apposition with these kinship terms. Still, the obvious point of reference is the reigning emperor.

[28] This has been treated in some detail by Kapstein (2001: 216–218).

[29] The ambiguity of the passage, *btsan po sras lhas bon dang/ btsan mo khong co gnyIs gyI mdad btang*, allows for two interpretations: one funeral was performed for both of them, or there were two funerals, one for each. The former solution is supported by Beckwith (1983: 7, n. 20), who explicitly states that they were "buried together." Were this so, it would be the only joint funeral ceremony recorded in the *Annals*, and would suggest that Lhas-bon was the son of the Chinese princess, most likely by Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan. This theory would obviously be correct were Khong-co called "mother," but she is not. Also, Lhas-bon seems to have been Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan's only son at that point. This in itself would constitute a crisis, since his succession to the throne would potentially subordinate Tibet to its maternal relatives, in this case China. His death, and the death of his mother, could be read as a pre-emptive strike against such an eventuality, as suggested by Vitali (1990: 28, n. 65) but, I hasten to add, the sources are clear that the Chinese princess died of plague (*TLTD1*: 61–62; Emmerick 1967: 84–85; Beckwith 1983: 7; Kapstein 2001: 41–42). Still, his birth three years after the death of the ostensible crown prince might go some way towards explaining later preoccupations with Khri Srong-lde-btsan's legitimacy and parentage.

By recording these events in a reliable form, the *Old Tibetan Annals* reveals some very interesting features of Tibetan historiography. The processes by which transference occurs, as in the case of Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan, the seven-year-old groom of the Princess of Jincheng, who was transformed by later historiographers into the "Bearded Grandfather" (Mes Ag-tshoms) with his child bride, or in the case of the two royal ladies championing their respective scions as heirs to the throne in 704 and 705 being transferred to a period one hundred and forty years later, are various and not always clear. One possibility that presents itself is that these events were suppressed, as in the case of Gung-srong Gung-rtsan's absence in the *Annals*, and then later re-emerged as creative episodes within Tibetan historiography. Another possibility, which may have worked in tandem with suppression, is that these instances of transference developed out of creative folk etymologies, as in the traditional explanation of the name Yum-brtan as meaning "supported by his mother." Likewise, faced with the name "Bearded Grandfather" (Mes Ag-tshoms), Tibetan historiographers perhaps applied the suppressed history of the Gung-srong — Srong-btsan Sgam-po — Wencheng oblique marriage to Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan's marriage to the Princess of Jincheng.[31] Perhaps a more obvious circumstance giving rise to these types of transference of events from one time to another is the religious transformation of Tibetan historiography. From as early as the *Bka' chems ka khol ma*, the life of Srong-btsan Sgam-po was mythologized and filled with the magical deeds of this emanation of Avalokiteshvara and his Chinese and Nepalese queens. The elaboration of this narrative of Srong-btsan Sgam-po as Tibet's great religious king and the focal point of the early *gter-ma* tradition left little room for matters such as the relationship between Gung-srong and Wencheng, and it seems that this was put to the side, only to be recycled in chapters on one of the more "mundane" emperors, in this case Khri Lde-gtsug-btsan. The *Old Tibetan Annals* informs these and many other such historical issues, and it is for this reason that it constitutes such an invaluable resource for early Tibetan history.

Succession and Marriage and the Tibetan Royal Line

Genealogies, and royal genealogies in particular, have a tendency towards simplification. The reason for recording a royal genealogy, a clan lineage history, or indeed a spiritual lineage is, after all, to glorify the living members of the lineage by linking them to their heroic predecessors and ultimately to a divine source, and this is best achieved not by listing every one of its members or detailing their activities, but by presenting a simple unbroken chain with one representative in each generation. So it is that in many royal genealogies we are presented with one king after another with no mention of queens, calling to mind the lists of Biblical begattings. Those documents such as the Old Tibetan *Royal Genealogy* that do mention the mothers of the kings still present a unifying linear march from the heavenly ancestor to the present incumbent of the throne, leaving no clue that behind this lies a many-limbed family tree of great complexity (see *infra*, Appendix Two). Apart from his mother, grandmother, and his chief queen who bears his heir, the Tibetan emperor was also surrounded by his junior queens or consorts, who were junior wives that wielded less power than his mother, grandmother, and chief queen. Sometimes the chief queen gave birth to more than one son, and the junior queens would also give birth to sons by the emperor, leaving the heir to the throne with brothers and half brothers. Many of these same women bore daughters who served as princesses that forged ties with foreign powers through their marriages, often becoming de-facto rulers of their adopted countries. The *Old Tibetan Annals* reveals the names of some of these figures who are not included in royal genealogies. More importantly, we can use the *Annals* and other texts to gain a better understanding of the Tibetan emperor's place between brothers and half brothers who might challenge him, maternal relatives who might act as a guard against such challenges, but who could also overpower the throne, and the bureaucratic elite who, though equally self-interested, also depended on the perpetuation of the kingship.

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[30] Richardson (1998 [1971]: 53) hypothesized that this later rivalry between 'Od-srung and Yum-brtan developed from an error by Tibetan historiographers, who misread the name Glang Dar-ma 'U'i Dum-brtan as indicating two emperors—Glang Dar-ma and Yum-brtan. Richardson (1998 [1971]: 55) later distanced himself from his theory.

[31] There are many more such instances of "transference" in Tibetan historiography, whereby events pertaining to one period are mistakenly attributed to another. For an interesting discussion of this phenomenon in the context of Bon-po historiography, see Blezer *forthcoming*.

The formative events in the founding of the Tibetan Empire shaped the dynamics of these relationships. The struggle between Khri Srong-btsan (Sgam-po) and his unfortunate brother Btsan-srong, resulting in the latter's death*,* informed the practice of degrading the brothers or half brothers of the emperor by giving them new clan names and setting them aside from the succession as "frères écartés" (Chayet 1994a: 121–22). Similarly, the kidnapping and imprisonment of Emperor Stag-bu Snya-gzigs by the clan of his chief queen, 'Ol-god-bza' Stong-btsun—effectively postponing the conquest of Ngas-po and the birth of the Tibetan Empire—set up the most important dynamic throughout the history of the royal line: its uneasy relationship with the matrilateral aristocracy (*zhang*) who formed the core of the administration but also threatened to exercise control over the throne itself through key figures such as the emperor's grandmother, mother, wife, and maternal uncle. The marriage of Princess Sad-mar-kar, a sister of Srong-btsan Sgam-po, to the king of Zhang-zhung serves as a prime example of the crucial political role of Tibetan princesses sent to foreign lands. It was Princess Sad-mar-kar's coded instructions, given in song, that spurred her brother to attack and conquer Zhang-zhung, and several other Tibetan princesses mentioned in the *Old Tibetan Annals* were sent "to conduct politics" in neighboring lands. In this way the emperor's paternal aunts, sisters, and daughters—Tibet's princesses—were in many ways his greatest diplomats, for it was through these women that Tibet subordinated its vassal or client kingdoms and forged ties with neighboring powers.

Royal Brothers and Half Brothers

Amidst all of these self-interested factions, between the emperor's wives, mothers, and grandmothers and their clans, the princesses (the emperor's paternal aunts, sisters, and daughters), agnatic relatives (brothers, half-brothers, paternal cousins), and the ministerial aristocracy, the Tibetan emperors succeeded against all odds in becoming strong rulers and in maintaining an apparently unbroken royal lineage until at least the year 843. The principles of royal succession are only partially understood, and may not have remained constant over the entire history of the Tibetan Empire. In considering principles of succession, it is not primogeniture or ultimogeniture that is most at issue, but a rather less intuitive principle that has been perpetuated by Tibetan historians from at least the thirteenth century onwards, and taken up by several modern scholars, namely that the Tibetan king took the throne at the age of thirteen, accompanied by the ritualized death of his father.[32]

The notion that the succession took place when the heir reached the age of thirteen enjoys no currency for the period described in the *Annals.* The date of Mang-slon Mang-rtsan's birth is not recorded in the *Old Tibetan Annals*, neither is his coronation, which is indicated by name-bestowal. We can assume that he was very young when he inherited the throne upon his grandfather Khri Srong-btsan's death in 649 based on the fact that like other emperors in their minority, he stayed in one or two residences rather than travelling throughout the empire.[33] Khri 'Dus-srong (676–704) was born after the death of his father Khri Mang-slon Mang-rtsan in the winter of the rat year 676-677, he was coronated in the winter of the bird year 685-686, and died in the winter of the dragon year 704-705. Even by Tibetan reckoning, the young Btsan-po was only ten years of age when he took the throne. Likewise, Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan (704–c.755) was born Rgyal Gtsug-ru in the third month of spring (i.e., just after new year) in the dragon year 704-705, and he was coronated as Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan the winter of the rat year 712-713 at the tender age of nine. Khri Srong-lde-brtsan (742–c.802), on the other hand, was born Srong-lde-brtsan in the horse year 742-743, and did not take the throne until the age of fifteen in the summer of the monkey year 756-757, when he was coronated as Khri Srong-lde-brtsan following the assassination of his father. This conclusively demonstrates that succession never occurred at age thirteen between 650 and 764.

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[32] It was Tucci's article, "The Secret Character of the Kings of Ancient Tibet," that truly established this notion. I hope to critically reassess this theory of ritualized regicide and the principles of Tibetan sacred kingship in a forthcoming study and translation of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*.

Other principles of succession have been studied in some detail by Anne Chayet. Chayet notes that neither primogeniture nor ultimogeniture, but succession by the middle brother was an ideal type (Chayet 1994a: 116, 118). This is expressed in the *Royal Genealogy*, for example, when the heavenly father of the first Tibetan king is the middle child of seven siblings. Also, while in the earliest version of the myth of Dri-gum Btsan-po there are two sons, and the elder takes the throne, in later versions such as that found in the sixteenth-century *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (163), there are three, and the middle son becomes king. This ideal type, however, seems rarely if ever to have materialized in an actual succession event.

The emperor's brothers and half brothers were without a doubt the greatest challenge to the throne. We have already mentioned the struggle between Srong-btsan Sgam-po and his brother Btsan-srong, resulting in the latter's death. There was also a struggle for succession from 704–705 between half brothers, a similar struggle for succession from 800–804 between Khri Lde-srong-btsan and Mu-rug-btsan (Haarh 1960; Dotson 2007c: 14), and the apparent murder of Khri Gtsug-lde-brtsan by his brother Khri 'U'i Dum-brtan, an event whose narration has taken on almost Shakespearian hues.

The Tibetan emperor insulated himself from competition from brothers and half brothers through a number of means. In the first of the above succession struggles, Srong-btsan Sgam-po, of whom the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* tells us that he put down revolts from both maternal and paternal relatives when he took the throne in his youth, relied mostly upon the strength of his ministers. In the second struggle for succession, the challenge to Rgyal Gtsug-ru / Khri Lde-gtsug-btsan from his half brother was countered by the strength of the latter's matrilateral relatives, particularly his grandmother and her clan, the 'Bro. The third example, though less clear, seems to have followed this same pattern, with the usurper Mu-rug-btsan being opposed, and possible slain, by the Sna-nam clan whose deceased empress, Mang-mo-rje Bzhi-steng, was Khri Lde-srong-btsan's grandmother (Dotson 2007c: 13). In the final example, which is not narrated in extant Old Tibetan sources, ministerial and matrilateral groups seem to converge to engineer a coup and place the emperor's brother, Khri 'U'i Dum-brtan, on the throne. A final battle for succession following the latter's death only a year or so later seems to have pit the matrilateral aristocracy (*zhang*), particularly the 'Bro clan, against the ministerial aristocracy, represented chiefly by the Dba's clan. In all of this we can see that from the origins of the Tibetan Empire to its fall competition between the emperor and his agnatic relatives was the single most dangerous threat to the throne's stability.

An interesting practice developed in order to guard the emperor against this threat from his brothers and half brothers, whereby these royal agnates were distanced from the royal line by associating them closely with their mothers and by stripping them of membership to the royal clan. The former practice only worked, of course, in the case of half brothers by a different mother. This identification with their mothers' clans served to set them apart from the succession (Chayet 1994a: 122). So it is that *Jo sras* tells us, for example, that Mang-slon Mang-rtsan's younger half brother who was set apart from the succession was called 'A-zha-tsha. This is not in fact a proper name, for it simply means "son of a lady of 'A-zha," or from another angle, "uterine nephew of 'A-zha." In other words, the term *tsha* is suffixed to the mother's clan name, ethnicity, or place of origin, as in the case of Gesar's famous Chinese half brother, Rgya-tsha. Similarly, later histories refer to Khri Srong-lde-btsan's elder half brother, Lha-bon, as Ljang-tsha Lha-bon. This serves to attach the half brother to his mother's family and distance him from the royal clan of his father.

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[33] This is conveniently demonstrated in the Table of Royal Residences, Council Sites, Foreign Visits, and "Royal Events," *infra*.

This practice of identifying potential rivals for the throne with their maternal lineage rather than the royal paternal lineage was only one part of the strategy for distancing them from the throne. In addition, a new clan name was created for those brothers and half brothers who were set apart from the succession. According to *Jo sras* (104), which is almost unique in its preservation of this fascinating knowledge, this custom was an early innovation by Tibet's wise ministers (Chayet 1994a: 118–19). A passage concerning a group of early kings who are generally considered to be mythological in nature states that one king's brother, the son of a woman named Thod-dkar, was set aside from the throne, and that he and another similarly debased royal elder brother then came to be known by the clan name Zhang-lnga cen-po. The text goes on to say that "at this time, since the kings had become numerous and were competing, the wise ministers put one on the throne [lit. 'on the royal place / capital'] and degraded the others. The lineages of the two who were degraded were [thereafter] known as Yar-gar-gnang and Zhang-lnga cen-po." (*'di dus na blon po rig pa can gyis rgyal po mangs na 'gran zlar gyur pas gcig rgyal sar bzhag nas gzhan thang mtshams su 'bebs te 'di gnyis thang mtshams su phab pa rigs ni yar gar gnang zhes bya ste zhang lnga cen po zhes bya'o*) (*Jo sras*: 104; Chayet 1994a: 119).[34]

Here it is the ministers who act as kingmakers with the power to decide matters of succession. This is particularly interesting from a comparative perspective, since when considering the fate of the royal line between competing agnatic lineages and encroaching maternal relatives in Chinese history, it is the bureaucrats who in the Ming effectively win the day and act as caretakers of the succession by curbing the influence of the emperor's grandmother, mother, wife, and their relatives (Holmgren 1991: 74–75).

The new lineage name given to a debased brother or half brother is somewhat vexing. In the above example, the name Zhang-lnga cen-po is given to one of the debased elder brothers. Another passage referring to the reign of a later, though still mythical king, Rgyal-to-to-re Long-btsan, reveals that when this king's younger brother Ltab-nag was degraded, his lineage (*rgyud*) was known as Zhang-lnga gcung-pa.[35] So we have greater / elder and lesser / younger branches of the Zhang-lnga clan. What’s more, Zhang-lnga means “five maternal uncles / fathers-in-law / bride-givers,” so once again the royal brothers are associated with matrilateral relatives (Chayet 1994a: 122–23). The existence of this clan is also attested in Old Tibetan sources and indeed in the *Old Tibetan Annals*. A Zha-snga clansman is also mentioned in *Annals’* entry for the sheep year 731-732 as an outgoing commissioner (*brung-pa*) of Rtsang-chen. In the edict of Khri Lde-srong-btsan preserved in *KhG*, two members of the Zha-snga clan are listed as retainers (numbers three and fifteen), and another is included as number twenty-eight in the list of governors, generals, and ministers of the exterior (*infra*, Appendix Five). While this is almost certainly the same clan name as *Jo sras*’ Zhang-lnga, the name Zha-snga means literally “the presence [of the emperor].” Of course the literal meaning of a clan name is sometimes meaningless, but in this case it is important because it has been artificially created as a category for degraded members of the royal lineage. This latter orthography, found in Old Tibetan sources, should probably be privileged over Zhang-lnga, which may well be a folk etymology. Zha-snga also has a more direct function of evoking distance from the emperor, since it is used respectfully to avoid directly referring to the emperor himself by instead indicating his presence.

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[34] Chayet has demonstrated that term *thang mtshams su phab pa* indicates the setting apart from the succession of a royal brother or half brother. While she does not resolve the precise etymology of the phrase, she offers that in Amdo a bastard is called a "child found on the plains" (*thang rnyed-pa*). While circumstantial, this is eminently relevant in that this degradation effectively bastardizes the son as he is stripped of his father's name and distanced, perhaps even literally, from the royal line. The power of naming is already evident in the name bestowal ceremony that marks the emperor's coronation and assumption of power. One can imagine an inverse ceremony for these agnatic relatives as they are stripped of membership to the royal clan and given a new clan name, along with perhaps a ministerial post to keep them sufficiently at bay. Indeed it would resemble almost a parody of the Tibetan marriage ceremony, in which the outgoing bride is ritually separated from her natal home and its gods, then ritually attached her marital home and its gods (Shastri 1994: 760). A literal translation of *thang mtshams su phab pa* would be something like, "they brought him down to the border [of the] plain," or, if one reads *thang* in the sense of a level, jurisdiction, benchmark, or criterion, then "degradation" becomes less figurative a translation. On the term *thang*, see *infra*, "Land and Taxation," fn. 73.

[35] *rgyal to to re long btsan gyi gcung po thang mtshams su phab pa ni gcung ltab nag bya ba yin pas de'i rgyud la zhang lnga gcung pa zhes grags so/* (*Jo sras*: 105). The division of the Zhang-lnga into "elder brother" (*cen-po*) and "younger brother" (*gcung-pa*) lineages also points to succession by the middle brother as an ideal type.

Mothers, Grandmothers, Heir-Bearing Queens, and Junior Queens: Maternal and Affinal Relatives

Among those set aside from succession to the Tibetan throne were half brothers born to the “wrong” mother. In some cases, such as the sons of foreign princesses, this is presumably down to obvious political considerations, since an heir with a foreign mother could become beholden to his maternal relatives and thus imperil Tibet. In the case of the Tibetan aristocracy, there were other considerations determining which clans were permitted to supply heirs in a given generation. As I have argued elsewhere, the royal succession operated according to a system of “*zhang* (bride-giving clan) rotation,” by which a given clan that supplied an heir-bearing empress was permitted to contract such heir-producing unions only after a certain number of generations—usually five—had passed since the last such union (Dotson 2004: 95). Formally, members of only four clans, the 'Bro, Mchims, Tshes-pong, and Sna-nam, bore the title *zhang*, but other clans, such as the 'Ol-god and the Mong, also mothered Tibetan emperors. The members of these four *zhang* clans dominated Tibetan officialdom, as may be seen from the numerous *zhang* officials mentioned in the regimes of Khri Srong-lde-btsan, Khri Lde-srong-btsan, and Khri Gtsug-lde-brtsan (*infra*, Appendix Five). While this was a restrictive practice admitting only a few elite clans, it was not a closed marriage circle, and could open itself to new heir-supplying maternal clans if and when their political stars rose. Similarly, a given clan might enjoy heir-bearing status at one point, and then be relegated to providing junior queens in subsequent generations. This was the case for example with the Ru-yong clan, who mothered Lha Tho-do Snya-brtsan according to the *Royal Genealogy* (*infra*, Appendix Two), but are scarcely mentioned again save for a reference in *Jo sras* (119) to three half brothers of Khri 'Dus-srong set aside from the succession due to their birth to a certain Ru-yong-bza' (Chayet 1994a: 120).[36]

The situation of a restrictive, but open marriage circle between the royal line and the most important aristocratic clans is reminiscent also of imperial marriage practices in China (Holmgren 1991: 60–61, 92, n. 15). Traditionally, the senior widow, that is, the Chinese emperor’s mother or grandmother, also had the power to select his spouse. As this was often the grandmother, who chose a spouse in her own interests, it also created a rivalry between her clan and that of the emperor's mother (Holmgren 1991: 63–66). There are certainly hints that a similar custom may have existed in early Tibet. The most powerful female figure in early Tibetan history is, after all, Grandmother Khri-ma-lod of the 'Bro clan, who ruled from 705 to 712 during her grandson's minority. Furthermore, while there are many titles for royal ladies in the *Annals*, such as "princess" (*btsan-mo, je-ba*) and "(junior) queen" (*jo-mo*), the highest are "mother" (*yum*) and "grandmother" (*phyi*).[37] In fact, the title *jo-mo*, meaning "(junior) queen," may have functioned to set apart from the heir-bearing queen the junior queens whose children had no rights to succession. This is clear from the case of Khri Lde-srong-btsan, who, according to the *Royal Genealogy*, sired Khri Gtsug-lde-brtsan and 'U'i Dum-brtan by Lady 'Bro-bza' Lha-rgyal Mang-mo-rje (*infra*, Appendix Two), and in whose Skar-chung Edict is recorded the names of three "[junior] queen sisters" (*jo-mo mched*), Jo-mo 'Bro-bza' Khri-mo-legs, Jo-mo Mchims-rgyal-bza' Legs-mo-brtsan, and Jo-mo Cog-ro-bza' Brtsan-rgyal. First we can observe that these three ladies are from separate clans, so they are obviously not sisters. Why then refer to them as such? One possibility would be that they are classificatory sisters in a royal marriage arrangement that borrows this term from sororal polygyny (Uebach 2005b: 47). Another mystery is the apparent absence of the chief queen in this edict, indicating perhaps that she had died by c.812. Whatever the case may be, it shows that among the junior queens, we have one from the same clan as the chief queen, one from another *zhang* clan, the Mchims, and one from a non-*zhang* clan, the Cog-ro.

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[36] The text in fact says Ru-spong-bza', but this is due to a transcription error from the *dbu-med* original into the *dbu-can* printed book format, an all too common occurrence in the modern publications of both *Jo sras* and *Lde’u* (and no doubt many other works). Fortunately, a reproduction of the *Lde’u dbu-med* manuscript has recently been published in China (see bibliography).

Returning to the pre-eminence of mothers and grandmothers, royal widows in Tibet may or may not have enjoyed the power of selecting the emperor's chief wife, but Grandmother Khri-ma-lod played an even larger role in championing an heir to the throne in the struggle for succession in 704–705. In this case we can also observe that the proscription against heir-bearing marriage with any single bride-giving (*zhang*) clan until a certain number of generations—perhaps five—had passed, may also have played a role in this succession. Rgyal Gtsug-ru / Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan was not yet a year old when his father died in the winter of the dragon year 704-705. His elder half brother—born possibly as the son of a Pa-tshab clan lady or a Western Turk or 'A-zha lady—was installed on the throne.[38] Rgyal Gtsug-ru / Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan was the son of a Mchims lady, however, and five intervening generations had passed since the Mchims had last mothered a Btsan-po, Emperor Stag-bu Snya-gzigs. According to the established pattern of exchange with the royal line, it was effectively the Mchims clan's "turn" to provide an heir. 'Bro Khri-ma-lod, who had mothered a Btsan-po one generation earlier according to the same custom (five generations after the last such instance of a 'Bro heir-bearing queen), served as the guarantor of this system of succession, deposing the usurper clan's candidate in favor of the Mchims scion, Rgyal Gtsug-ru. This may have been opportunistic at the same time, since Khri-ma-lod ruled the country in Rgyal Gtsug-ru's minority until the rat year 712-713, when she died shortly after his coronation as Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan.[39]

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[37] Uebach (1997b: 54–55) has treated these terms in her article on the women mentioned in the *Old Tibetan Annals*, and my work draws heavily on her path-breaking research. It should be explained, however, that we translate these terms and titles somewhat differently. While Uebach translates *btsan-mo* with "empress," in parallel with *btsan-po*, and explains that this can refer either to a consort of the emperor or to a princess, I have opted to translate it only with "princess." I do so because the consorts of the Tibetan emperor who the *Annals* refers to as *btsan-mo* are foreign: Kong-co, the first Chinese princess, and Ga-tun, a Western Turk or 'A-zha lady (her "name" is in fact a title, *qatun*). So these are princesses from the perspective of their homelands—they are women who participate in or are eligible to participate in dynastic marriages between countries. This, in fact, is a good working definition of a princess, and explains why it is used both for the aunts, sisters, and daughters of the Tibetan emperor on the one hand and for his foreign brides on the other. In the case of other two women whom Uebach cites as consorts possessed of the title *btsan-mo*—Khri-mo-lan in 675-676 and Mang-mo-rje in 696-697—it is far from clear that they are in fact consorts and not female relatives of the emperor. Similarly, Uebach's assumption that the emperor's chief wife enjoyed the title *btsan-mo* until she gave birth to an heir, at which point she became "[the emperor's] mother" (*yum*), is attested only in one instance, and here it may be explained according to my above definition of a princess (Uebach 1997b: 66). This is in the *Annals of the 'A-zha Principality*, where Khri-bangs, a Tibetan princess who went to 'A-zha in dynastic marriage and bore an heir to the throne, is referred to as "the Mother [of the lord of the 'A-zha], Princess Khri-bangs" (*yum btsan-mo khri-bangs*) (ITJ 1368, l. 12). Further refinements of the translation of these terms will be given below in discussing Tibet's princesses and dynastic marriages.

[38] As Kapstein points out, *Jo sras* (120) calls Lha Bal-po "the elder brother Lha Bal-po, child of the Pa-tshab [lady]" (*gcen lha bal po pa tshab tsha*). Kapstein (2000: 216) rightly observes that it is unsafe to take *Jo sras*' claim at face value, but this remains nonetheless the only clear statement concerning Lha Bal-po's parentage.

The Tibetan emperor's precarious place between rival agnatic kin and extremely powerful maternal relatives goes some way towards defining the domestic politics of the Tibetan Empire. It also underlines some of the interesting structural imbalances at work in the exchange patterns of the Tibetan royal line. In Tibetan society in general, and indeed in the dynastic marriages we will see below, bride-givers (*zhang*) stand in a position of superiority to bride-receivers (*dbon*). And the pressures of hypergamy and the benefits of dynastic marriage meant that ladies of the royal clan generally married foreign rulers. At the same time, the emperor was reluctant to accept foreign brides unless they were junior (non-heir-bearing) queens, since an heir to a foreign queen might fall under the undue influence of his mother and her countrymen. Under these circumstances, heir-bearing unions with Tibetan clans, even though they structurally subordinated the royal line to its bride-givers, seem to have been one of the only viable options. This is another instance where the circumstances of royal succession lead to a break between royal patterns of exchange and those within the larger society.

As a result of these exchange patterns, the emperor's bride-receivers tended to be foreign kings, while his bride-givers were the native Tibetan aristocracy. There is at least one case, however, where a very important Tibetan clan, the Dba's, appear to have been granted a bride from the royal family. In chapter five of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, Dba's Dbyi-tshab addresses Srong-btsan Sgam-po and mentions the role of Srong-btsan's father, Gnam-ri Slon-mtshan, in Dbyi-tshab's marriage. "As for the Btsan-po the father, he granted the spreading of the carpet [ceremony] for my wife." (*btsan po yab nI bdagI mchis brang du gdan bting yang gnang*) (PT 1287, ll. 252–53; *DTH*: 111, 144). The "spreading of the carpet" (*gdan-bting*) is one of the phases of a Tibetan marriage ceremony where a carpet is spread out for the bride. This was incorporated as the third part of the eight-part marriage ceremony devised by Kong-sprul (Karmay 1998 [1975]: 153). This is a fascinating passage because it reveals that the Dba's clan stood as bride-receivers (*dbon*) in relation to the Tibetan emperor. This put them in a weak position in relation to the royal line, but also implicates the Dba's as a non-threatening ally to be called upon against the emperor's rival agnatic kin and overweening maternal relatives. This circumstance in fact goes some way towards explaining the prominence of the Dba's as ministers, their opposition to the *zhang* clans in the civil war, and also perhaps the pretense of one of their members to declare himself Btsan-po after the fall of the empire.

Dynastic Marriage and International Relations

On an international level, the emperor's aunts, sisters, and daughters played a key role as the agents of dynastic marriages contracted with neighboring powers. Tibet's princesses conducted politics in foreign countries and gave birth to heirs who they inevitably guided into cooperation with or subordination to Tibet.

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[39] One objection to this solution is raised by Beckwith (1983: 8–9), who claims that Rgyal Gtsug-ru is an odd and unlikely name for a proper heir, as it differs too markedly from the coronation name, Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan. This can be countered with reference to PT 1290, which contains a coronation verse offered by Bran-ka Dpal gyi Yon-tan to Prince Mu-cu-brtan, who receives the regnal name Khri Gtsug-lde-brtsan (Macdonald 1971: 317–18). Rgyal Gtsug-ru is no stranger a pre-coronation name than Mu-cu-brtan. The problematic historiography of this period has been treated in Petech 1967: 255–58; Petech 1988; Beckwith 1983; Vitali 1990: 2, 26, 28, 29; and Kapstein 2000: 215–17.

In their alliances and conquests and in their relative freedom of movement, Tibetan princesses are almost analogous to Tibet's great ministers who, in the formative period of the empire especially, conquered lands both for themselves and for the empire. Again, this is not unlike the situation in China, where princesses enjoyed massive retinues and played a crucial pro-Chinese role in foreign courts (Holmgren 1991: 66–67). Just as certain Chinese princesses (the Princess of Jincheng among them) exercised great political influence among the foreign courts into which they were wed, so Tibetan princesses played a very active role in spreading the *pax tibetica* to vassal kingdoms.

The high status of Tibetan princesses can be seen also from their titles in the *Old Tibetan Annals* and in Old Tibetan legal documents. Btsan-mo, grammatically the female equivalent of Btsan-po (Tibetan emperor), was used to refer to Tibetan princesses, that is, those ladies of the royal family who were eligible to contract dynastic marriages. Similarly, it was used to refer to foreign princesses who married in to the Tibetan royal line, such as Princess Wencheng. The *Old Tibetan Annals* mentions a number of royal ladies who are known by different terms or titles. In translating these terms, I have not taken a overly literal view, which is why both *btsan-mo* and *je-ba* are translated with "princess," since a princess is a woman of the royal line who marries out, or a foreign bride who has married in.[40] Similarly, a chief queen or heir-bearing queen or "empress" is to be distinguished from junior queens or junior wives (*jo-mo*), even though there appears to be no clear term for the former before she is called "mother" or "grandmother." The term *jo-mo* also implies a high status, and the male equivalent, *jo-bo*, means "lord." Further distinctions between royal ladies are suggested in two Old Tibetan legal documents that treat penalty for theft (PT 1075 and ITJ 753), which list punishments according to the status of the victim and begin at the top of the class hierarchy with royal ladies. These are, in order (and here one presumes they appear in order of rank as well), *btsan-mo*, *lcam*, *sru*, and *jo-mo* (ITJ 753, ll. 64–72). princesses (*btsan-mo*), sisters (?) (*lcam*), half sisters (?) (*sru*), and junior queens (*jo-mo*) (ITJ 753, ll. 64–72). Apart from *sru*, all of these titles are found in the *Annals*. This leaves a number of gaps. We can add to this the emperor's mother and grandmother, who have the highest status, and his wife who, upon bearing an heir, is also called "mother." The term *btsan-mo*, as we've seen already, can indicate foreign princesses who've married in, but it also indicates Tibetan princesses, apparently of the highest rank. These come before *lcam* and *sru*, which would appear to be lower ranking princesses. How these might translate into kinship terms is not entirely clear, though one might assume that *btsan-mo* were the emperor's sisters and daughters, with *lcam* and *sru* slightly further removed.[41] Below these, according to these legal clauses, are the *jo-mo*, who appear to be junior wives. The legal context seems here to privilege the emperor's blood relatives, but elsewhere, such as in the Skar-chung edict, and in the bell inscriptions, *jo-mo* appear to have considerable prestige. We must therefore take into account the possibility that these terms changed over the course of the period covered by the *Annals*, and observe that they might be used differently in different texts and contexts.

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[40] There may indeed be cases where an out-marrying princess is not in fact of royal blood ("bone" in Tibetan terms), but a sister-in-law of the Btsan-po, and this is one possible definition for the term *je-ba*; see *infra*, fn. 294.

[41] The term *lcam* is problematic, since it can mean sister or wife. Uebach (2005b: 39) translates *lcam* in the *Annals* with "co-wife." *Lcam* could conceivably be read as an honorific prefix for *sru*, and indeed, in a previous work I read *lcam sru* as one term rather than two (Dotson 2007b: 16). Given that *lcam* appears in the *Annals* when *lcam* Lha-spangs dies in 730-731, it is perhaps best to read *lcam* and *sru* as two separate terms. This is also followed by Uebach (2005b: 48). My rendering of the term *sru* with "half sister (?)" also requires some explanation. *Sru* or *sru-mo* usually means mother's sister or mother's brother's wife. In some contexts, however, it can refer to a half sister. This is seen, for example, in the first chapter of the *Hor gling g.yul 'gyed*, *Gling sgrung gces btus series*, p. 23, where Ne'u chung refers to her half sister 'Brug-mo as *sru* (their respective fathers, Sngo-lo Ston-pa and Skya-lo Ston-pa, are brothers). One might assume that *sru* similarly refers to the Btsan-po's half sisters rather than maternal aunts because all of the other terms for eminent royal ladies seem to indicate either blood relatives or wives and co-wives, and *sru* as maternal aunt would make an exception to this rule. On the other hand, the emperor's mother's brother had great importance, so it is not entirely surprising that his wife should enjoy a status alongside the princesses and queens. The matter requires further investigation.

Princess Sad-mar-kar's marriage to the king of Zhang-zhung and her part in the conquest of Zhang-zhung was cited above as a model for the political role of the Tibetan princess. In fact, there are a few other examples of Tibetan princesses in this formative period of the Tibetan Empire's expansion. If we look back two generations to the Yarlung Kingdom and its all-important conquest of Ngas-po, we find two dynastic marriages with a similar, perilous theme. Neither has the epic quality of the Sad-mar-kar narrative; they are only mentioned as circumstances alongside other, larger events. The first of these two dynastic marriages is mentioned when Stag-bu Snya-gzigs agrees to the plot to conquer Zing-po-rje Khri-pangs-sum put to him by the Dba's, Myang, Mnon, and Tshes-pong clans. "Although a sister of mine indeed resides in Zing-po-rje's whereabouts, I shall do as you say." (*nga'i sring mo zhig kyang / zing po rje 'i ga na 'dug mod kyi / / khyed zer ba bzhin bya 'o zhes bka' stsal nas*) (PT 1287, ll. 158–59). This demonstrates that a dynastic marriage existed between Yar-lung and Ngas-po, with Stag-bu Snya-gzigs' sister wed to Zing-po-rje Khri-pangs-sum. Stag-bu Snya-gzigs' planned conquest of his brother-in-law would be postponed, however, due to Stag-bu's kidnapping and imprisonment by his own chief wife's clan, the 'Ol-god (see *supra*, "The Tibetan Empire, A Brief Survey"). In both of these dynastic marriages we find bride-givers (*zhang*) dominating their bride-receivers (*dbon*). One cannot underestimate the importance of these events and their power in informing Tibet's subsequent dynastic marriages and international relations. The clear, two-edged theme that emerges is this: the chief queen and her family are dangerous; and one can conquer foreign lands through the agency of dynastic marriage.

The marriage of Princess Sad-mar-kar to Lig Myi-rhya, the king of Zhang-zhung, was underpinned by this same logic of gaining the upper hand by marrying a Tibetan woman into a foreign court. Moreover, Lig Myi-rhya was well aware of the power dynamics involved in such marriages, and, as Uray (1972b: 36) has pointed out, his understanding that a Zhang-zhung king with a Tibetan mother would weaken his country informed his sexual avoidance of Princess Sad-mar-kar.

The political importance of dynastic marriage probably accounts for the fact that the *Annals* records several. The first and by far the most famous of these is the found in the preamble to the *Annals*, which mentions the arrival of Princess Wencheng. This marriage has become the stuff of folklore, and forms a model for Tibetan marriage, where it figures in the songs exchanged between the bride's and groom's parties. Generations of Tibetologists have picked away at Wencheng's legacy, proving that many of the achievements attributed to her were in fact those of the second Chinese princess, the Princess of Jincheng. We have also seen the details of Wencheng's oblique marriage to her father-in-law following her husband's death, and the evidence against her ever having mothered a Tibetan emperor. Of course all of this diminishes Princess Wencheng as a cultural phenomenon not one whit. More importantly for our purposes, her modest historical reality did not prevent the Chinese and the Tibetans from looking to her marriage as the creation of a lasting, formal relationship between their two countries. Known as the *dbon-zhang* relationship, this term indicates son-in-law in relation to father-in-law, nephew in relation to maternal uncle and bride-receiver in relation to bride-giver. Generally, and within Tibetan society at large, it is a hierarchical relationship in which the son-in-law / nephew / bride-receiver is subordinate to the father-in-law / maternal uncle / bride-giver. While such concerns might not always be germane to the special case of dynastic marriage, we have seen how the power dynamics worked here, with the bride-receivers fearing the bride-givers, practicing sexual avoidance to forestall the birth of a compromised heir, and often falling under the power of their bride-givers as in the case of Stag-bu Snya-gzigs, Zing-po-rje Khri-pang-sum, and Lig Myi-rhya. As a structural relationship, *dbon-zhang* is not limited to two individuals, but extends to families, clans, and in the case of dynastic marriage, countries. So it is that even after the fall of the Tibetan Empire we find Tibetan writers referring to "Uncle China" (*zhang-po rgya*) (*KhG*: 334).[42]

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[42] These dynamics are explored in further detail in Dotson *forthcoming b*.

In considering the matrimonial relationship between Tibet and China, it is interesting to note their respective approaches to this custom. As is often the case when looking to the origins of a particular Tibetan custom, we find in the case of dynastic marriage a parallel Chinese practice of engaging in political marriages with neighboring countries. China's dynastic marriages with foreign, usually Central Asian dynasties were known as *heqin* 和親 or "peaceful marriage arrangements" (Pan 1997: 95). In a study of such marriages from the Han to the Tang, Pan Yihong concludes that China's marriages with Central Asian peoples tended to adapt to the practices of such nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples as the Xiongnu and the Turks, among whom dynastic marriages were presumably a normative feature of their international relations (Pan 1997: 122). In this sense, China was perhaps "doing as the Romans do," but it is interesting to question the extent to which this "Chinese" model may have influenced Tibet's dynastic marriages, particularly in terms of the rights and duties obtaining between royal houses (and by extension kingdoms), and the political role of Tibetan ladies sent as brides to foreign countries. Famously, the Chinese only gave brides to foreign peoples, never receiving them. This implies that the latter situation would indicate the acceptance of a somehow submissive role, and such a contention is partially demonstrated in the case of Tibet's dynastic marriages, and in particular in the vassal status of Tibet's nephews / sons-in-law / bride-receivers, Dags-po and 'A-zha.

Tibet's *dbon-zhang* relationship with China began in 641 when Princess Wencheng married Khri Gung-srong, the son of Srong-btsan Sgam-po. After his death in c.646, she married his father, Srong-btsan Sgam-po, and lived as his wife for the three years leading up to his death. The Tibeto-Chinese *dbon-zhang* relationship was renewed three generations later when Khri Lde-gtsug-btsan married the Princess of Jincheng in 710. Over one hundred years after this second marriage, the bilingual inscription of the Lhasa Treaty Pillar of 821-822 refers to the *dbon-zhang* relationship between the Tibetans and Chinese as follows:

> Twenty-three years of the Tang era having passed from when the first lord of China, Li, assumed the throne. After one generation, the divine emperor, Khri Srong-brtsan, and the Lord of China The'i-tsong BUn-bU Sheng-Hwang-te [Taizong] both agreed to unite their kingdoms.[43] In the Ceng-kwan year Mun-sheng Kong-co was married to the Btsan-po. Later, the divine emperor Khri Lde-gtsug-brtsan and the Chinese lord Sam Lang kha'e 'gwan sheng bUn shIn bU Hwang-te [Xuanzong], agreed to unite their kingdoms, and building on their relationship (*gnyen*), Kim-shing Kong-co was wed to the Btsan-po in the keng-lung year. Having become *dbon* [and] *zhang*, they rejoiced. . .in this way, as neighbors and relatives (*gnyen*), and acting precisely in the manner of *dbon* [and] *zhang*. . ." (*dang po rgya rje lI rgyal sar zhugs nas// de'i tang gi srId lo nyi shu rtsa gsum lon// rgyal rabs gcIg gi 'og du// 'phrul gyi lha btsan po khri srong brtsan dang// rgya rje the'e tsong bUn BU zheng hwang te gnyIs// chab srid gcIg du mol nas// ceng kwan gyI lo la/ mun sheng kong co// btsan po'i khab du blangs// phyis 'phrul gyI lha btsan po khri lde gtsug brtsan dang// rgya rje sam lang kha'e 'gwan sheng bUn shIn bU hwang te [gnyIs]// chab srid gcIg du mol te// gnyen brtsegs nas// keng lung gI lo la kIm shang kong co// btsan po'I khab du blangs nas// dbon zhang du 'gyur te dgyes pa las// ...'di ltar nye zhIng gnyen pa yIn na// dbon zhang gI tshul kho na ltar//*).[44]

We see in this bilingual treaty inscription the sorts of rights and duties attached to the relationship, and the idea that there is a prescribed manner (*tshul*) in which each party should act.

Apart from the two Chinese princesses, all of the other marriages mentioned in the *Annals* have Tibetan princesses going to different countries as brides. This is not to say, however, that Tibet did not accept other foreign princesses in marriage besides the two Chinese princesses. In recording the death of a certain Princess Ga-tun (where *ga-tun* is a transcription of *qatun*, a Turkic term meaning "princess") in 708-709, the

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[43] This may be a euphemism for marriage.

[44] Lines 21–33 (with some elisions) of the east inscription; for translation and transliteration, see Richardson 1985: 110–13 and Li and Coblin 1987: 48–49, 96–97.

Annals reveals that Tibet accepted a bride in dynastic marriage from either the 'A-zha or the Western Turks. Furthermore, if we look to post-dynastic histories, we find foreign brides for Tibetan rulers in nearly every generation. This information must temper any statements to the effect that Tibet emulated the Tang in seeking always to be bride-giver and never bride-receiver in such dynastic marriages. The key point from the Tibetan perspective was whether or not a princess was a chief, heir-bearing queen in her new abode. This was the case when Tibetan princesses went to Dags-po and 'A-zha, but it was never the case—Princess Wencheng and her treatment in the *Royal Genealogy* notwithstanding—for foreign princesses marrying into the Tibetan court. As a result we cannot say that the Tibet–China *dbon-zhang* relationship subordinated Tibet to China.[45]

The *dbon-zhang* model was not limited solely to the Tibeto-Chinese relationship, and the *Old Tibetan Annals* describes in greater detail Tibet's matrimonial relationships with Dags-po and 'A-zha, both of whose rulers were referred to as nephew / son-in-law (*dbon*) in relation to the Tibetan emperor. Each minor kingdom constituted a subordinate unit of the empire itself, with a limited degree of autonomy. In the case of Dags-po, this autonomy appears to have ended in the first half of the eighth century. In both of these cases Dags-po and 'A-zha are in the subordinate position of bride-receivers vis-à-vis Tibet, and this seems to have been Tibet's preferred diplomatic arrangement. Most importantly, the Tibetan princesses in these cases bore heirs to the thrones of Dags-po and 'A-zha. In this way the bride-receivers / sons-in-law (*dbon*) also became uterine nephews (*dbon*).

The first time the term *dbon* appears in the *Annals* is in the entry for the pig year 675-676: "Princess Khri-mo-lan gave a great banquet. 'Bon Da-rgyal Khri-zung bestowed great gold and copper, and. . ." As Uray (1963: 206) demonstrated, Da-rgyal / Dar-rgyal was the name of the royal lineage of Dags-po.[46] They enjoyed a matrimonial relationship with the royal line as one of the "ancient relatives of the four borders" (*gna' gnyen mtha' bzhi*). This ancient relationship may be the reason for their privileged epithet, "nephew / son-in-law / bride-receiver" (*'bon / dbon*), but it is evident that this matrimonial relationship was renewed during the period covered by the *Annals*.

Khri-zung is referred to as 'Bon Da-rgyal Khri-zung each time he appears in subsequent entries for the years 687-688 and 688-689, as Dbon Da-rgyal in 690-691, and as 'Bon Da-rgyal in 694-695, the year of his death. The entry for the rat year 688-689 states that Princess (Btsan-mo) Khri-mo-stengs went to Dags-yul "to [conduct] politics" (*dags-yul du chab-srId la gshegs*). Stein (1973: 413, n. 5; 2003 [1985]: 572, n. 9) believes that rather than meaning "waging a war," this expression has to do with marriage. While this interpretation may be correct in this case and in some others, it is certainly not so in every case in which the phrase *chab-srid la gshegs* appears in the *Annals*.[47] *Chab-srid* refers to political alliance and to the realm. Thus in the treaty pillar quoted above, the rulers of China and Tibet agree to unify their realms (*chab-srid gcig du mol*). In the entry for 756-757, Khri Srong-lde-btsan "takes the realm in hand" (*cab-srid pyag du bzhes*), and in the entry for 762-764, the political alliance is destroyed (*chab-srid zhig*) preceding the Tibetan invasion of the Chinese capital. Thus while the meaning of *chab-srid* is wide enough to include marriage in the sense that it is integral to unifying realms, this is but one aspect of the term. In the case of the visit by Princess Khri-mo-stengs to Dags-yul, *chab-srid* may indicate a matrimonial alliance in which she had gone to marry 'Bon Da-rgyal Khri-zung (Uebach 1997b: 61), but it more explicitly underlines her importance as a member of the ruling house capable of governing.

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[45] Kapstein (2000: 221, n. 77) may be correct, however, in his observation that the two parties understood the relationship differently, with the Chinese reading it as indicative of subordination. In the treaties negotiated between the Tibetan Empire and the Tang, and in particular in the famous treaty of 821–822, the diplomatic language recognizes China and Tibet as equals, and there are numerous instances where one side attempted to outmaneuver the other in such negotiations (Richardson 1998 [1970]; Stein 1988).

[46] As pointed out by Uebach (1997b: 61, n. 17), this fact was overlooked by Petech, Richardson, and Yamaguchi, who all followed Thomas' assumption that Dbon Da-rgyal was to be identified with Dbon 'A-zha rje. Though their errors may stem from Thomas, a text published by Thomas himself in fact demonstrates that Da-rgyal was the ruler of Dags-po. ITJ 734, published by Thomas (1957) as text four, states in lines 333–34 (pp. 76, 94) that Dar-rgyal Sprog-zin was the ruler of Dags-yul Shing-nag. This is further corroborated by the catalogue of minor kingdoms of PT 1286, in which Dags-rgyal gyi Sprog-zin is named as the ruler of Dags kyi Gru-bzhi (PT 1286, ll. 18–19).

[47] Stein is probably in error, for example, when he translates *btsan po chab srid la mywa la gshegs pa* in the entry for 704-705 with "le roi va prendre épouse au Nan-tsh'ao" (Stein 1973: 413, n. 5). It would then follow that the Tibetan emperor was

Princess Khri-mo-stengs seems to have mothered Da-rgyal Khri-zung's successor, 'Bon Da-rgyal Btsan-zung, who is mentioned in entries for the years 706-707, 707-708, 711-712, 712-713, 713-714, and 714-715 (Uebach 1997b: 61). This was a successful dynastic marriage for Tibet, as it brought Dags-po under Tibetan control. Having revolted during the minority of Khri Srong-btsan, Dags-po was one of the few territories under the Btsan-po's domain that still enjoyed the status of a semi-independent minor kingdom (*rgyal-phran*) within the Tibetan Empire. Princess Khri-mo-stengs' marriage and the accession of her son to the throne of Dags-po effectively ended this status quo, and Dags-po was incorporated territorially into the Tibetan Empire with the completion of the red tally of Dags-po in the horse year 718-719 (Uebach 1997b: 61).

Another semi-autonomous minor kingdom, 'A-zha, also stood in relation to Tibet as bride-receiver / nephew, and it is in the context of this relationship that we find the *Annals'* only mention of the term *dbon-zhang*. Unlike Dags-po, 'A-zha was a very large and powerful kingdom, and was ethnically Turkic rather than Tibetan. 'A-zha also managed to retain its semi-autonomous status even after the birth of an heir to a Tibetan mother. The entry for the ox year 689-690 states: "Princess Khri-bangs went as a bride to the lord of the 'A-zha." In the *Annals of the 'A-zha Principality*, which covers the years from 706-707 to 714-715, the ruler of 'A-zha, who is referred to by the title Ma-ga tho-gon Kha-gan, is most certainly the son of this Tibetan princess, who is called "the mother, Princess Khri-bangs" (*yum btsan-mo khri-bangs*) (Yamaguchi 1970a: 63). The Tibetans seem to have referred to the rulers of the 'A-zha by their titles, and the *Old Tibetan Annals* uses the term "lord of the 'A-zha" (*'a zha rje*) to refer to successive rulers.

The ruler of the 'A-zha does not appear again in the *Annals* until the hare year 727-728, where it states that the Btsan-po "met with 'Bon 'A-zha rje [as] bride-giver and bride-receiver (*zhang dbon gdan tshom*)." This relates to a new ruler of 'A-zha who is referred to by the same title. The passage most likely indicates the renewal of the Tibetan–'A-zha matrimonial relationship.[48] Dbon 'A-zha-rje is mentioned once again in the *Old Tibetan Annals*' entry for 745-746. Dbon 'A-zha-rje also appears in the edicts (*bka'-tshigs*) of Khri Srong-lde-btsan and his son Khri Lde-srong-btsan preserved in *KhG* (372–73; 411–12; *infra*, Appendix Five). These date to c.779 and c.812, respectively, and, together with the Chinese example, demonstrate the longevity of this sort of relationship.

The *Old Tibetan Annals* records two other instances of dynastic marriage where the Tibetan emperor, and, by extension, Tibet, stands as bride-giver (*zhang*) in relation to a subjected and subordinate bride-receiver (*dbon*). The entry for the dog year 734-735 states, "Princess (*je-ba*) 'Dron-ma-lod was sent as a bride to the

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also on such matrimonial missions in 701-702, 739-740, and 741-742. The latter entry has an especially martial context that would tend to disagree with such an interpretation.

[48] The phrase *gdan-tshom* may simply be an expression for an intimate meeting such as a summit, but it is also similar to a phrase used in a matrimonial context: the "spreading of the carpet" (*gdan-bting*) is one of the phases of a Tibetan marriage ceremony where a carpet is spread out for the bride. This was incorporated as the third part of the eight-part marriage ceremony devised by Kong-sprul, for which, see Karmay 1998 [1975]: 153.

Dur-gyis Kha-gan."[49] The marriage served to formally seal the Tibetan-Türgiś alliance (Beckwith 1987: 111). The entry for the dragon year 740-741 records a similar relationship with Bru-zha (Little Palûr): "Princess (*je-ba*) Khri-ma-lod was sent as a bride to the lord of Bru-zha." Just a few years earlier, in the summer of 737-738, Tibet attacked Bru-zha and conquered its pro-Tang king. This marriage on the heels of conquest is therefore not unlike that between the Tibetan princess, Sad-mar-kar, and Lig Myi-rhya, king of Zhang-zhung, and once again underlines the highly political role of dynastic marriage.

Historical Geography and the *Old Tibetan Annals*

The *Old Tibetan Annals* contains quite a lot of information regarding the historical geography of the Tibetan Empire and the surrounding countries, so it will be useful to give an overview here with reference to Guntram Hazod's historical-geographical study that comprises Part III of this book.

As described in the brief survey of the history of the Tibetan Empire, the Yar-lung Kingdom expanded to become the Tibetan Empire through a process of conquest that began in earnest in the mid-sixth century. Stag-bu Snya-gzigs, the grandfather of Srong-btsan Sgam-po, was at this time the ruler of just one of many rival kingdoms. We are aware of these polities in two ways. In the first place, we know of the "minor kingdoms" (*rgyal-phran*) as symbolizing the fragmented chaos that precedes the centralizing order of empire. Catalogues of these minor kingdoms are found in the *Royal Genealogy* and in Old Tibetan ritual texts, where they are invoked as a model of the known world. These formulaic minor kingdoms are loosely based on historical realities pertaining to the empire's expansion, or, on what one might call "non-formulaic minor kingdoms." The earliest records of these conquests, the *Old Tibetan Annals* and the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, name a number of small polities conquered by the Yar-lung Kingdom and brought into the imperial fold. Furthermore, these polities, once subjugated by the Tibetan Empire, were often still referred to as "minor kingdoms," as was the case with Dags-po, 'A-zha, Kong-po, and Myang-yul. Within this second group of "non-formulaic minor kingdoms" we therefore can further distinguish the earlier "(competing) minor kingdoms" from the later "(vassal) minor kingdoms" as a change in status reflecting the rise of the empire.

The first sort of minor kingdoms is formulaic in that it is a conscious representation of the known world. It is evoked as such in ritual literature, where healing tales are set in each kingdom as antecedents to empower and heal the patient (PT 1285, ITJ 734, Dotson *forthcoming a*). Most often, these liturgies follow the path of the Gtsang-po River from west to east, and the official catalogue of minor kingdoms in the *Royal Genealogy* follows this same pattern. While their formulaic nature might lead some to reject them out of hand as sources of any historical-geographical value, to do so would be slightly reactionary, since their contents do overlap with the non-formulaic minor kingdoms mentioned in the *Annals*, the *Chronicle,* and other Old Tibetan texts.

Turning to the second sort of minor kingdoms, there are those mentioned in the *Annals* or in the narratives of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* and other Old Tibetan documents. Among these are the Yar-lung Kingdom, ruled by Stag-bu Snya-gzigs; the kingdoms of Yel-rab Sde-bzhi and Klum [ro] Ya-gsum, ruled by Zing-po-rje Stag-skya-bo; the kingdom of Ngas-po, ruled by Zing-po-rje Khri-pangs-sum; Gnubs-mtsho Gling-dgu, ruled by the 'Ol-god clan; and the kingdom of Lho-brag, ruled by Klu-dur. The first three are mentioned in chapter three of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, and the last two are found in the "Chronicle Fragments" relating to Stag-bu Snya-gzigs. Chapter four of the *Chronicle*, together with chapter three, forms the narrative of the empire's expansion, and mentions a number of other realms conquered or annexed by Tibet. Among these are Gtsang-Bod, ruled by Mar-mun; the kingdom of Dags-po; the kingdom of Sum-pa;[50] and Mon. We can add to these the kingdom of To-yo-chas-la in Northern Zhang-zhung, ruled by Bor-yon-rtse (mentioned in the "Chronicle Fragments" relating to Khyung-po Spung-sad Zu-tse; ITJ 1284); Zhang-zhung itself, ruled by King Lig Myi-rhya; the kingdom of 'A-zha; the kingdom of Kong-po; and the kingdom of Myang-yul, to the north of Kong-po. Together, these kingdoms constitute the political topography of the Tibetan plateau in the late sixth and early seventh century.

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[49] The term *je-ba* is otherwise unknown. One possibility is that it refers to sisters of the Btsan-po's co-wives, in which case they are not in fact of the royal clan (*infra*, fn. 294). This is a pertinent distinction, and one the Tibetans were surely aware of, for the *Xin Tangshu* reveals that the Tibetans sent a marriage request in 679 via Princess Wencheng for a Chinese princess who was in fact a daughter of the emperor (Pan 1997: 115).

The correspondence between formulaic and non-formualic minor kingdoms is significant: they both include Zhang-zhung, Gnubs-yul, Ngas-po, Dbye-ro / Yel-rab, Klum-ro, Dags-yul, Kong-yul, Myang-yul, and Sum-pa. Other such formulaic catalogues, such as that of PT 1060, name Rtsang-stod and Lho-ga Lang-drug, which may overlap respectively with Rtsang-Bod and Lho-brag.

For Hazod's maps of these minor kingdoms, including detailed information about the possible burial sites of some of these dynasties, see now Map 3 *et passim* in Part III of this book.

When these kingdoms were conquered, they were brought into the Tibetan Empire through the creation of new territorial units. Initially, Tibet's territories, along with central Tibet itself, were ruled by administrative chiefs (*khos-dpon*), an institution that likely dates to the mid-630s (Uray 1972a: 41). There were five administrative chiefs, and they carried out the administration of Tibet, Zhang-zhung, Sum-pa, Chibs, and Mthong-khyab (Uray 1972a: 32–45; Rong 1990–1991: 251–54; Dotson 2007a: 314; Hazod, *infra,* Part III). This marked the beginning of a process by which new structures of "state territory" replaced the borders drawn by the old kingdoms or local ruling clans. Among the first attempts to institute state territory was the eighteen "shares of power" (*dbang-ris*), also known as the "administrative arrangement of territories" (*yul gyi khod bshams-pa*). This measure formally assigned specific territories to specific clans. In all likelihood, this merely formalized the de-facto situation and enshrined previously held clan territories within the new state-sanctioned divisions. It inaugurated a process, however, by which autonomies became administrable units of the Tibetan Empire.

For Hazod's map and documentation of the eighteen shares of power, see now Map 4 *et passim* in Part III of this book.

The phrase "administrative arrangement of territories" (*yul gyi khod bshams-pa*) is reminiscent of the entry in the *Old Tibetan Annals* for the tiger year 654-655: "[Mgar] divided the fierce (military) and tame (civilians), and made the manuals for creating the great administration. So one year." (*/ rgod g.yung dbye zhIng/ mkho sham chen pho bgyI ba'I rtsis mgo bgyI bar lo gchIg/*) (cf. *infra*). These measures may be the source not only of the eighteen "shares of power," but for the more well known tradition of "Horns" (*ru*), or "Divisions."

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[50] The location of the minor kingdom of Sum-pa / Sum-yul is a difficult matter. The area was inhabited by the Sum-pa people, known to the Chinese as Su pi. They were once thought to correspond to the inhabitants of the "Land of Women" (*nu guo*) mentioned in Chinese sources such as the *Sui shu*, but this has since been ruled out. According to the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, Minister Myang Zhang-snang subjugated the Sum-pa without recourse to serious violence. Like another such early conquest, that of Zhang-zhung, the Sum-pa appear to have been assimilated to Tibetan culture more successfully than later conquests. This is evident from the fact that an Old Tibetan administrative document, PT 1089, refers to the officials of Tibet and Sum-pa together and in contrast to those Chinese or barbarian officials. Aspects of Sum-pa cultural heritage are preserved in a collection of folk sayings, ITJ 730. Part, if not all of Sum-pa was legislated in 703 as Sum-ru or Sum-pa's Horn. For a thorough discussion of the geography of Sum-pa, see Denwood *forthcoming*.

The Horn system likely began with only three Horns: Central Horn, Left Horn, and Right Horn. In this formulation that Central Horn is conceived of as facing south. Thus Right Horn is to the west and Left Horn is to the east. With the addition of Branch Horn, which lay to the south of Right Horn and to the south of the Gtsang-po River, the famous "four Horns of Tibet" (*Bod khams ru-bzhi*) came into existence. Thereafter, the phrase "the four Horns" was often used to refer to central Tibet and to Tibet in general even up to the present day. In addition to this core area of Tibet, Sum-ru was legislated in the winter of 702-703, and Zhang-zhung was brought under administration and divided into thousand-districts, but not referred to as a Horn.[51]

The four Horns of Tibet, Sum-pa's Horn, and Zhang-zhung, along with areas of eastern Tibet, were made up of subordinate units called thousand-districts (*stong-sde*), each comprised of one thousand households (Takeuchi 1994: 81, n. 36). This likely also indicates that each thousand-district supplied one thousand soldiers; in Tang China and in later Tibetan history, the soldier tax, like most other taxes, was levied at the household level, so a thousand-district, comprised of approximately one thousand households, may likewise have been responsible for supplying approximately one thousand soldiers. This was but one aspect of the thousand-district, which cannot be considered a strictly military unit such as a "division." As Richardson (1998 [1990b]: 171) notes, heads of thousand-districts also mediated civil disputes and were responsible for the equitable distribution of surplus grain, and thousand-districts included those whose duties were not strictly military in nature.

In addition to thousand-districts, the Horns also contained "administrative districts" (*yul-dpon-tshan / yul-sde*), which were either units of five hundred households subordinate to the thousand-districts, as Uebach (1997a: 999–1001) proposes, or parallel divisions of territory. Whatever the case, these "administrative districts" were located in agricultural areas, and were administered by local officials (*yul-dpon*) and interior ministers (*nang-blon*) (Dotson 2007a: 149–50).

First created in the second half of the seventh century, the thousand-districts were not equitably distributed at first. In 744-745, with the "administration" (*mkhos*) of the four Horns, the thousand-districts were balanced so that there were then ten thousand-districts in each Horn (Uebach 1985a). Four of these were located in the "upper" part of the Horn, and four in the "lower" part. Each of these halves was headed by a *ru-dpon*, a rank that was apparently synonymous with general (*dmag-dpon*). The ninth thousand-district was a "sub-thousand-district" that probably consisted of less than a thousand households, and the tenth was a "royal guard thousand-district" (*sku-srung stong-sde*). As a result, there were forty thousand-districts in the four Horns of Tibet, and four of these were "royal guard thousand-district," each designated by a cardinal direction. It appears that these served as the personal guard of the emperor, and were stationed on all four sides of the Tibetan imperial court.

For Hazod's maps of the borders of the four Horns and the thousand-districts and administrative districts of the four Horns, see now Map 5 *et passim* and Map 6 *et passim* in Part III of this book.

At this point, in the middle of the eighth century, there are indications that thousand-districts acted as corporate entities rather than simply as units from which soldiers and provisions could be levied. Soldiers were conscripted from the individual estates of these thousand-districts, which were then responsible for provisioning the soldiers to war (Dotson 2007b: 57). In some cases, the thousand-districts also appear to have operated like military colonies, moving *en masse* to colonize recently conquered territories, particularly on the border with China. Thus, for example, the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* informs us that the thousand-districts of Dor-te, Pyug-tshams, and Ste-'dzom, all from central Tibet, distinguished themselves in battle with China during the Tibetan sack of the Chinese capital in 763 (PT 1287, ll. 385–86; *DTH*: 115,

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[51] For a detailed summary of this process, see Uray 1960.

154; Sangs-rgyas Mkhar 2003; *infra*, Appendix Three). This demonstrates that the troops supplied by the thousand-districts did not serve as local militias guarding only their own area, but were sent all over the Tibetan Empire.

The leadership of Tibet's thousand-districts was also associated with particular clans, a factor that served to preserve traditional clan territory within the new administrative units. As an administrative unit, however, the thousand-district was fundamentally geographical, encompassing about a thousand households of a given area. While this overlapped with clan territory, there are indications that the thousand-district as a territorial unit later served to undermine the clan as a fundamental part of a person's identity. This is seen, for example, in the fact that the names of soldiers inscribed in Old Tibetan documents and on wooden slips begin first with a soldier's thousand-district, and only then proceed to clan name and personal name (Uray and Uebach 1994). The trend away from clan solidarity and towards an imperial identity is part and parcel of the Tibetan imperial administration, and lies behind many of the changes in the thousand-districts.

Later, during the ninth century, the military system appears to have become far more sophisticated in breaking up regional and clan identity among its ranks. Assigning soldiers to watchpost duty, for example, it is evident that the authorities made a conscious effort to post together men who were neither from the same thousand-district nor the same clan (Takeuchi 2003).

These two trends—that of military colonies constituted by population transfer from central Tibet to the borders, with thousand-districts and clans as the basic units of identity, and that of an administrative policy that militated against regional and clan identity to forge an imperial identity—seem to be at odds with one another. There is strong evidence for both, and while the former may have given way to the latter, it is also quite possible that the two models overlapped for some time or existed side by side in separate contexts. Moreover, it is this push and pull between self interest and imperial interest that, as we have seen in the formation of the empire through ministerial conquests, constituted the creative dynamic driving the expansion of the Tibetan Empire.

The Extent of the Empire

The heart of the Tibetan Empire consisted of the four Horns and Sum-pa's Horn. In eastern Tibet, political power was devolved to a political council in Mdo-smad that operated in the same manner as the central Tibetan council. The *Old Tibetan Annals* records the sites of the political council of Mdo-smad, the first of which is recorded in the entry for the dragon year 692-693. The territorial unit certainly existed prior to this, and is mentioned in the entry for the year 653-654. Unfortunately, very few of the Mdo-smad council sites are identified. It can be supposed, however, from its existence as early as 653, prior to the conquest of the 'A-zha, that Mdo-smad did not include any far-flung territories. Its probable location is therefore in modern-day Khams and A-mdo to the south of the Yellow River (Huang he) (Uebach 2003: 24).[52]

Appended to the four Horns, Sum-pa's Horn, and Mdo-smad were the regions of Zhang-zhung and 'A-zha, both of which were conquered in the mid-seventh century. The latter enjoyed the status of a "minor kingdom" (*rgyal-phran*) and nominal autonomy within the Tibetan Empire. The 'A-zha people, referred to as Tuyuhun 吐谷渾 in Chinese, occupied the area around Lake Kokonor, and in particular the areas to the west, probably stretching into the Qaidam Basin.[53] Their main centers were located at Dulan in modern Dulan County, Qinghai Province, and at Mantou, a garrison town at the eastern end of the Qinghai Nanshan mountains and Qishui in modern Kung he County (Sato 1993: 8–10). The former, Dulan, is the site of a stunning archaeological find that includes several impressive tombs (Xu 1996: 7–8; Heller 1998).

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[52] See also Uebach 1990: 405–06. According to Uebach (1990: 406), Mdo-smad was governed by a powerful minister known as the Great Mdo-blon (*mdo-blon chen-po*). While this may be the case, the *Old Tibetan Annals* never refers to the convenor(s) of the Mdo-smad council as Mdo-blon, and the jurisdiction of the Mdo-blon is by no means certain, with the other obvious candidate as a territory under his control being Mdo-khams (see *infra*). The most commonly recurring sites for the Mdo-smad council are Gtse-nam-yor, Dbu-le, Yol, and Rag-tag.

When Tibet conquered the 'A-zha in 663, half of them fled to Liangzhou, where the Chinese created a new province to accommodate them, Anlezhou 安樂州, meaning "pacified district." Tibet conquered Liangzhou 涼州 in early 758 and made this the center of one of their colonial military governments (*khrom*).

Zhang-zhung, on the other hand, did not enjoy any autonomy, and was divided into upper and lower halves, each consisting of five thousand-districts. One of these districts was Gu-ge, the traditional center of Zhang-zhung.

The furthest reaches of Tibet's imperial apparatus were colonial military governments (*khrom*), which served to legislate newly conquered areas through direct military rule (Uray 1980: 314). There appear to have been eight or nine such colonial military governments, each of them coming into existence at different times following a major conquest, with new *khrom* sometimes replacing older *khrom*. Their chain of command was military in nature, with a general at the top, and below him several town prefects (*rtse-rje*) who governed the larger settlements or cities. These colonial military governments were full of subordinate units such as ten-thousand-districts (*khri-sde*),[54] thousand-districts, sub-thousand-districts, units of fifty households (*tshan*), and smaller *tshan* units.

Many of the colonial military governments were located in the northeast, reflecting its importance as the primary arena in Tibet's military expansion. Among these is Rma-grom, first mentioned in the *Annals*' entry for the year 704-705, and whose re-establishment is recorded in the *Annals*' entry for 755-756. Rma-grom was located at the bend of the upper Yellow River, near Mgo-log.[55] Khri-bshos khrom, the military government of the Kokonor region, is mentioned in the *Annals*' entry for 676-677 (Uray 1980: 313–14). To the east of Lake Kokonor was Mkhar-tsan khrom at Liangzhou (Uray 1991), which certainly existed by the time of the 821–822 peace accord celebrated in the *Prayers of De ga g.yu tshal*, and may have existed for decades earlier.[56] Another colonial military government, Dbyar-mo-thang khrom chen-po, is mentioned in PT 1089, but its location is uncertain. Richardson (1998 [1990b]: 169) believed it to have come into existence in the wake of the Tibetan offensive to Changan from 760–764. This is in line with Uray, who locates Dbyar-mo-thang to the northeast of Kokonor. Most recently, Kapstein (2004: 104–06; Kapstein *forthcoming*) has suggested a different, much larger area for Dbyar-mo-thang from the upper Yellow River basin in the south extending to the regions south and west of Kokonor and up to the northwest in the direction of Dunhuang. This massive area would overlap with both Rma-grom and Kwa-cu khrom. The latter included Guazhou 瓜州, Suzhou 肅州, and Shazhou 沙州 / Dunhuang 敦煌 (Richardson 1998 [1990b]: 173). Further to the west, another military government, likely called Tshal-byi khrom, administered the Lop-nor region. At the northwestern reaches of this chain of colonial military governments was the *khrom* with jurisdiction over the kingdom of Khotan—though here it is more a question of indirect than direct rule—, and the military government of the land of Little Palûr (Bru-zha'i yul gyi khrom) (Uray 1980: 313–14). To the other extreme, forming the southeast end of the chain of military governments, there was most likely another *khrom*—its name is not known—that controlled the western part of modern Sichuan province (Uray 1991: 206–07, n. 60).

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[53] On the 'A-zha, see Molè 1970.

[54] Kazushi Iwao has demonstrated that unlike a thousand-district, which comprised one thousand households, a ten-thousand-district (*khri-sde*) could range widely in size, with some *khri-sde* too poor in arable land to constitute even a thousand-district. More generally, the *khri-sde* was "an administrative unit established in densely populated areas such as already existing oasis cities" (Iwao 2007a: 220–21). Iwao argues that in common with the military systems of nomadic states, units of ten thousand should not be approached in a strictly numerical sense.

[55] Intriguingly, Rma-grom persisted as an independent realm after the collapse of the Tibetan Empire, as is evident from a tenth-century missive from the Uighur Khagan (Uray 1980: 313; Ishikawa 2003).

[56] This depends on the date of PT 1089, the administrative document discussed in some detail below in the context of rank order and chain of command.

The locations of these military governments provide some idea of the Tibetan Empire's massive geographical reach. They also bear witness to the Tibetan Empire's inroads into Chinese territory to the northeast, and its conquest of Khotan and Little Palûr in the far northwest.

The colonial military governments were connected with the Tibetan imperial administration through the creation of new provinces that included several of the *khrom*. One such province was the "realm of the pacification minister" (Bde-blon khams or Bde-blon ris), a term that may have been borrowed from the Chinese Anlezhou, which had been created by the Tang to accommodate the 'A-zha (Li 1981: 178; Richardson 1990b: 173). Bde-blon khams stretched along the northeastern borders of the empire and included at least three colonial military governments: Mkhar-tsan khrom at Liangzhou, Kwa-cu khrom, and Tshal-byi khrom in the Lop-nor region.[57]

As is evident from the name of this province, it was governed by an extremely powerful figure, the "pacification minister" (*bde-blon*). The *bde-blon* had jurisdiction over a large area, including Dunhuang, which is why the Tibetan Dunhuang documents contain so many references to this office and a number of official letters bear the seal of the *bde-blon*. In this way the colonial administration of this area was centralized to a striking degree on the office of the *bde-blon*. At the same time, many official and legal matters still required mediation or approval from the central Tibetan authorities.

In playing an important role in integrating the colonial military governments with the central Tibetan administration, the *bde-blon* was not alone. Uray (1990a: 424) has demonstrated that there were also "governors" (*dbang-po*) to whom the generals of the colonial military government were subordinate. These "governors" are found offering auspicious words in the *Prayers of De ga G.yu tshal* (PT 16 and ITJ 751), an official document that inaugurates the treaty temple celebrating the 821–822 treaty between Tibet, China, the Uighurs, and Nanzhao. Prayers by Tibetan functionaries are offered in order, almost certainly in accordance with rank and prestige, and while the authors of the first prayer are unidentified due to the fact that the first part of the manuscript is missing, it is evident that the second prayer comes from Dbyar-mo-thang khrom chen-po, and is offered "by the governors of Mdo-gams—the great central region—and by all the subjects" (*dbus kyi khams chen po mdo gams gyi dbang po man cad 'bangs yongs kyis*; PT 16, ll. 34 r. 3–4; Uray 1990a: 422). The third, fourth, and fifth prayers are offered by the *bde-blon*, Mkhar-tsan khrom chen-po, and by Kwa-chu khrom chen-po, respectively.[58] Allowing for the possibility that this order may be situational to the extent that it highlights those most involved in winning the peace, the placement of Dbyar-mo-thang ahead of the *bde-blon* is striking, and supports Kapstein's contention that Dbyar-mo-thang was quite massive. It further demonstrates that the great colonial military government of Dbyar-mo-thang overlapped with or included the region of Mdo-gams, which was headed by one or more governors (*dbang-po*).

Many aspects of the historical geography of the Tibetan Empire remain vexed issues. This is in large part due to the fact that territorial administration was not static, but changed as the Tibetan Empire expanded, consolidated its conquests, and adapted existing local structures. It would seem, for example, that Dbyar-mo-thang khrom chen-po would have taken over some of the areas previously included in Mdo-smad. Similarly, it may have overlapped with Rma-grom. The precise chronology and the relationship between these administrative districts is now being carefully reconstructed by able scholars, and should be clarified through further research.

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[57] See, however, Scherrer-Schaub (2007: 278, n. 70), who holds out the possibility that Bde-blon-khams had some manner of jurisdiction over territories as far to the west as Khotan.

[58] For a more complete outline of the contents, see Kapstein *forthcoming*.

For Hazod’s map of Tibetan Empire, including the colonial military governments, see now Map 2 *et passim* in Part III of this book.

As the Tibetan Empire expanded, it came into contact with neighboring countries, forged alliances, and operated in a state of nearly constant warfare. The *Old Tibetan Annals* records the Tibetan Empire’s contacts with China, 'Jang / Ljang (indicating first the pre-Nanzhao polities, then, after the mid-eighth century, Nanzhao itself),[59] the Western Turks (Dru-gu), the Eastern Turks ('Bug-cor), the Türgis (Dur-gyis), Sogdians (Sog-dag), ‘Iran’ (Ta-chig), Little Palûr (Bru-zha), Ladakh (Mard), and others. The biggest prize at stake in this nearly constant state of warfare was control over the trade on the Silk Road, mostly in the form of tribute and taxes imposed on the oasis city-states of the Tarim Basin.

The Emperor's Court and the Political Councils

One could easily make the mistake of assuming that Lhasa served as the capital of imperial Tibet in the same sense that it did under the administration of the Dalai Lamas. While it was an important area, and is referred to as a capital in the *Jiu Tangshu*, it was but one of many key places, and we cannot refer to a single place as the center or capital of the Tibetan Empire. This is for the simple reason that the ritual and political center of the empire was the emperor himself, and he travelled with a large mobile court. While the Tibetan emperors had ancestral strongholds such as Phying-ba Stag-rtse, the *Old Tibetan Annals* demonstrates that the emperor’s court (*pho-brang*) was a massive encampment that generally moved twice each year, and was stationed in separate places in summer and winter. This moveable center included attendants, officials, ritual specialists, monks, and soldiers. Among these, it is evident that the central judiciary (*pho-brang ’khor gyi zhal-ce-pa*), formed part of this court (Dotson 2007b: 33–34), as most likely did the “royal guard thousand-districts” of the four directions. With the introduction of Buddhism, the emperor’s personal *sangha* (*pho-brang ’khor gyi dge-’dun*) also formed part of the mobile Tibetan court (Dotson 2007c: 3).

A passage in the *New Tang Annals* (*Xin Tangshu*) pertaining to the Sino-Tibetan treaty of 821-822 describes the Tibetan emperor’s tent in picturesque language:

> The northern valley of the Tsang River is the summer residence of the tsanp’u. His tent was surrounded by a fence of spears; and a hundred halberds, with long handles and hooked heads, stood upright, with an interval of some ten paces between them; while in the middle large flags were erected. There were three gates, each a hundred paces distant from the other. Armed warriors guarded these gates, and sorcerers recited prayers, with bird-shaped hats and tiger-girdles, beating drums the while. All comers were searched before they were allowed to enter. In the centre there was a high platform, surrounded by a circle of jewelled balusters. The tsanp’u was seated in the centre of the tent, which was ornamented with gold figures of dragons, lizards, tigers, and leopards. He was dressed in a plain cloth costume, his head enveloped in the folds of bright red-coloured silk, and he was girt with a sword inlaid with gold. (Bushell 1880: 521; Pelliot 1961: 130–31).

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[59] See, however, Stein 1983: 216, where Ljang is taken to indicate not Nanzhao but certain Qiang peoples.

Though this description pertains to the encampment during a famous treaty ceremony, where the court was no doubt more elaborate than during the usual state of affairs, it still offers an approximation of the scale of the court. This "moveable center" of the Tibetan Empire also served to make the emperor physically present before his subjects, and no doubt also offered aristocratic clans a method of earning prestige by inviting the Tibetan court to sojourn on their lands. Equally, it emphasized the emperor's dependence on his subjects, without whose assent he could not station the court (Hazod 2003: 36–37; *infra,* Part III).

Some places appear over and over again in the *Old Tibetan Annals* as the favored court sites. In particular, Nyen-kar, Mer-ke, Bal-po, and Brag-mar stand out as the most popular court sites. These sites all have in common the fact that they sheltered a Tibetan emperor during his minority, establishing a pattern by which the emperors seem to have been protected in their youth before striking out with their courts when they come of age.

In such a way, Srong-btsan Sgam-po's grandson, Khri Mang-slon, remained in Mer-ke and in Nyen-kar from 650 through 658. Mer-ke, as Hazod (*in press*) notes, was located in Byang on the upper course of the Skyid-chu River. This area was referred to as Dbu-ru-lung, and the river here, of which Mer-ke forms the main side valley, is called the Lha-chu.

Nyen-kar served as a haven not only for the young Emperor Khri Mang-slon, but also for his son, Khri 'Dus-srong, who, after his birth at Lha-lung in Sregs in the summer of 676-677, remained in Nyen-kar from 677-678 through 693-694, with the exception of 689-690, which he spent elsewhere. The location of Nyen-kar has been the source of some debate, due in part to the fact that there seems to have been more than one site in central Tibet known by this name. From the compound toponyms in the *Annals* it is evident that Nyen-kar was a large area; apart from Nyen-kar itself, we find the royal residences of Nyen-kar Lcang-bu (willow grove)[60] and Nyen-kar gyi Thang-bu-ra (plane). Chapter three of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* states that Snyen-kar Rnying-pa (Old Snyen-kar) was the residence of Zing-po-rje Stag-skya-bo, the evil king of Yel-rab Sde-bzhi and Klum Ya-gsum (*DTH*: 133). Neither of these latter two areas have been identified with any certainty, but one of Sad-mar-kar's songs in the *Chronicle* reveals that Klum-ro was near Mal-gro (*mal tro nI klum dang nye /*) (PT 1287, l. 422; *DTH*: 158).[61] This is only very general, however, and the extent of Zing-po-rje Stag-skya-bo's realm is unclear. Chapter five of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* injects a bit of precision. The text states that when Emperor Khri Srong-brtsan went from Nyen-kar to Skyi-lung, the retired minister Phang-to-re Dbyi-tshab requested to make an offering to him at La-mo Chag-pa phrum (*/ la mo chag pa prum du pyag thab tsam zhIg gsol du ji gnang*) (PT 1287, l. 253). This most likely corresponds to the La-mo Valley east of Ganden Monastery, which lies at the crossroads between Mal-gro, 'Phan-po, and central Skyid-shod. Specifically, it is probably identical with the site of La-mo Chag-de'u, an early Phyi-dar temple founded by Klu-mes (Hazod, *infra,* Part III). A further hint regarding Nyen-kar's location is found again in the songs of Sad-mar-kar in the *Chronicle*, one line of which states that Nyen-kar is near Dog (*nyen kar nI dog dang nye /*) (PT 1287, l. 422; *DTH*: 158). Unfortunately, the location of Dog is unknown.[62]

There are further indications that Nyen-kar lies in the vicinity of modern La-mo. In their studies of royal residences and council sites, both Uebach (1988) and Hazod (2003: 36–37; *infra*, Part III, map 7.7) assume that the normal pattern of movement from one season to the next did not entail arduous journeys, but typically went from one half of a Horn to the other half, and remained in generally the same province. For the most part, these royal court sites were located in Central Horn. If we follow this assumption, then it is possible to gain a general idea of a given court site's location based on where the court was stationed in the preceding and following seasons. In the case of Nyen-kar, we find the following temporally "adjacent" sites: Mer-ke (650-651, 654-655), Tshang-bang-sna (676-677), Bal-po (690-691), 'On gyi 'A-ga-tshal (690-691), Mal-tro'i Brdzen-thang (694-695, 714-715), Zrid-mda' (696-697), Zhe-shing gi Rtsibs (715-716), Stod gyi Mkho (759-760), and Myang-sgrom (760-761). Mer-ke is identified in Byang, and Bal-po is located near Yar-'brog Lake (see below). Mal-tro'i Brdzen-thang corresponds to Greater and Lesser Byan, and the site of Btsun-mo-tshal, a Gelug monastery just east of La-mo (Hazod 2003: 34). 'On gyi 'A-ga-tshal, while not precisely identified, is to be found in the 'On Valley across the mountains separating Central Horn from Left Horn. The other sites are unidentified, but Stod gyi Mkho should be found in Stod-lung.[63]

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[60] Nyen-kar Lcang-bu should not be confused with the royal court sites of Byar gyi Lcang-bu and Stod gyi Lcang-bu, the latter of which most likely includes the site of Lcang-bu Temple and its pillar inscription, located in the courtyard of Mtshur-phu Monastery in Stod-lung (Richardson 1985: 92). See also Petech 1967: 243.

[61] Sato (1978, map seven) places Klum-ro to the northeast of 'Dri-gung.

[62] Bacot translates *dog* as a synonym for earth (*sa*), and while this term does indeed carry this meaning, particularly with reference to the ruler who descends from the heavens to the earth, *dog* is here almost certainly a toponym.

Perhaps most importantly for our purposes, in 695-696 there were two winter court sites. The winter court site was first in Brag-mar, and then moved to Nyen-kar Lcang-bu, indicating that these two sites cannot have been too far distant. Brag-mar corresponds to Brag-dmar, the famous retreat center just northwest of Bsam-yas Monastery, but the place name also refers to the area around Bsam-yas itself.[64] In considering the court's movement from Brag-mar in the winter, one recalls the well-known routes between here and both Ganden Monastery and Stag-rtse. The latter point may be relevant to our discussion, since we find in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* the toponym Nyen-kar Stag-rtse. This would put Nyen-kar in modern Stag-rtse County, probably at Old Stag-rtse, present day Zhog-mda'. This is close to La-mo, and corresponds well with the Sad-mar-kar's indication that Klum, probably contiguous with Klum-ro Ya-sum, part of Zing-po-rje Stag-skya-bo's realm, was near Mal-gro. Most importantly, Guntram Hazod has recently confirmed the location of Nyen-kar based on evidence from the field and local histories. It is the old name of Lo, directly to the east of Zhogs (Hazod, *infra,* Part III).

Nyen-kar as a royal residence is probably to be identified with Nyen-kar Rnying-pa, the site of Zing-po-rje Stag-skya-bo's stronghold. As "Old Nyen-kar," it is distinguished from another Nyen-kar located to the west.[65] This Nyen-kar in the west was first a thousand-district of Right Horn. Then, with the reorganization of the Horns in 744, it came under the jurisdiction of Central Horn. It follows that this Nyen-kar thousand-district was located on the border of these two Horns, which was marked by the Snye-mo and Gzhu Valleys (Uebach 1985a: 150). This Nyen-kar is therefore to be found either in modern 'Dam-gzhung or Stod-lung Counties.

Another extremely popular court site was Bal-po, and the young emperor Khri Gtsug-lde-brtsan stayed there from 709 until his enthronement in the winter of 712-713. Even more so than Nyen-kar, the location of Bal-po has been a source of debate. It is, of course, the Tibetan name for Nepal, and so was taken by some to indicate the Kathmandu Valley. While Tucci originally held this view, he later altered this in order to take account of the toponym Bal-po Bri'u-tang ("female yak plain") by asserting that Bal-po is to be found in a nomadic area on the borders between Right Horn and Central Horn (Tucci 1958: 35–36). According to Petech (1967: 245), the *Xin Tangshu* holds the key to Bal-po's location: it states that the Tibetan emperor resides sometimes at Lhasa and sometimes at Ba bu 拔布. The latter is found in the same work's itinerary from Kokonor to Lhasa as Ba bu lake 拔布海, and Petech concludes that this refers to Dpal-sde Lake or Yar-'brog Lake. Later, Sato (1975) made a thorough study of this itinerary, and concluded that the area of

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[63] One possibility is that it is identical with Ko-ba-brag (Sørensen and Hazod 2007: 80).

[64] This is evident from the Bsam-yas edict preserved in *KhG* (371), which refers to Bsam-yas Monastery as "the spontaneously completed temple of Bsam-yas in Brag-dmar" (*brag dmar gyi bsam yas lhun gyis grub kyi gtsug lag khang*).

[65] Sato (1978: map seven), on the other hand, places Nyen-kar Rnying-pa on the Gtsang-po in the eastern part of Right Horn. This is Sato's gloss of the toponym Nye-mkhar mda', and is most probably an error. It may relate, however, to Nyen-kar thousand-district.

Ba bu, also referred to as the Ba bu River 拔布川, in fact indicated the Skyid River just to the southwest of Lhasa, past 'Ba'-phug Pass, where the river is called the 'Ba'-phug-chu. Sato (1975: 16) in this way rejects the identity of Ba bu and Bal-po. The possibility remains, however, that Petech is correct in his location of Bal-po (but not Ba-bu) in Modern Dpal-sde district near Yar-'brog Lake.

As with our treatment of Nyen-kar, we can look to those court sites that preceded and followed royal sojourns in Bal-po. These are Zhe-shing (675-676), 'On gyi Sna-bo (675-676, 690-691), Nyen-kar gyi Thang-bu-ra (689-690), 'On gyi 'A-ga-tshal (690-691), Re'u-tsal (694-695), Brag-mar / Brag-mar gyi Tsal-ka (697-698, 707-712, 717-719, 721-723), Phar (699-700), Dold gyi Mar-ma (699-700), and Dron (706-707). 'On, Nyen-kar and Brag-mar are identified, as is Dold gyi Mar-ma, which is in the south across the Gtsang-po from Rdo-rje Brag in modern Gong-dkar County (Petech 1967: 243–44). Re'u-tsal, Phar, and Dron, the latter a key residence site, are unidentified.

As with Nyen-kar, the sheep year 695-696 holds an important key to the location of Bal-po. Just as there were two winter court sites this year, there were two summer sites as well, and the summer court moved from Bal-po to Ltam. The latter is most likely equivalent to Gtam-shul, southeast of Yar-'brog Lake. This is not too far distant from the proposed site for Bal-po on the west side of this same lake, or nearer to Lhasa.

Bal-po and Brag-mar were summer and winter court sites, respectively, for many years during the reign of Khri Gtsug-lde-brtsan (712–c.755). Brag-mar's royal connotations as a court site, along with those of nearby Zung-kar, may have influenced the decision to situate here Bsam-yas Monastery, the royal temple *par excellence*.

While the emperor was by no means only a figurehead, most of the governance of the empire was left to the chief minister and administrative council, which met in the summer and winter at various sites throughout central Tibet. The itinerant nature of the council could be interpreted as a creative response to the demands of a rapidly expanding empire: creating a system of government that is not spatially fixed may have been intended to combat regionalist trends within the previously autonomous areas that now constituted the Tibetan Empire. As with the court sites, some council sites were used several times, and the areas along the Skyid River and in Glag in central Tibet, along with Mal-gro to the east, stand out as favorites.

For Hazod's map of the court and council sites named in the *Annals*, including details on the location of Nyen-kar based on recent fieldwork, see now Map 7 *et passim* in Part III of this book.

Administration and Administrators in the *Old Tibetan Annals*

The *Old Tibetan Annals* is concerned primarily with imperial Tibet's administrative and bureaucratic practices, so it will be useful to review this in some detail before proceeding to the *Annals* itself. It was mentioned above that the extant copies of the two versions of the *Old Tibetan Annals* were likely preserved to serve as exemplars of record-keeping. These were in no way intended to serve a pedagogical purpose as administrative manuals, however, and they assume that any reader has a full understanding of the various administrative measures it describes. As a result, the *Annals* is full of administrative *hapax legomenae*. The translation of these terms has been and remains problematic, only occasionally rising above educated guesswork. Other aspects of early Tibet's administrative practices have become increasingly clear due to the work of Bogoslovskij, Uray, Uebach, Takeuchi, Iwao, and others. Here I will contextualize generally the administrative measures and functionaries recorded in the *Annals*, focusing primarily on land legislation, taxation, transportation, corvée labor, and the roles of Tibet's administrators.

Land and Taxation

We have already sketched the political geography of the Tibetan Empire, but the demarcation of administrative and territorial units tells us little of their utility in terms of legislation and taxation. As an administrative record, one of the principal themes of the *Old Tibetan Annals* is the legislation and taxation of land, and imperial Tibet's practices in this arena are illuminated by a number of other Old Tibetan documents. Here I will outline basic administrative approaches to land, such as the distinction between royal lands (*rje-zhing*) and service tenure lands (*khol-yul*). I will also explore taxable units of arable land such as *rkya* and *dor*, the various types of taxes (*khral, kwa / khwa, chad-ka*) and tribute (*dpya*), and the officials responsible for these measures.

The most fundamental work on the Tibetan empire's social history and administrative organization is Bogoslovskij's *Essai sur l'histoire du peuple Tibétaine ou la naissance d'une société de classes*, published in its original Russian version in 1962 and translated into French by Alexander Macdonald a decade later. Not unlike much of the scholarship produced in Tibet today, Bogoslovskij's writing is informed by political imperatives, chiefly, the need to place early Tibetan society in that spot marked "feudal" on a Marxist evolutionary continuum. In practice—and this may be equally true of methodological statements in general—such ideological imperatives tend only to tinge introductions and conclusions, and leave the body of the work quite at ease. Indeed, apart from introductory bombast that refers to the "new and happy life" that followed the "peaceful liberation of Tibet," Bogoslovskij's *Essai* is a model of diligence and clarity, and remains probably the best introduction to the social history of the Tibetan Empire.

Bogoslovskij's approach dictated that he attend closely to the means of production and its control, which, in the context of the study of an agrarian society, entailed a detailed investigation of land legislation. His principal conclusions may be summarized as follows: 1) the emperor is the nominal or titular owner of all of Tibet's land; 2) land is administratively divided into two types, a) the royal lands (*rje-zhing*); and b) service tenure lands (*khol-yul*) over which ministerial aristocrats and their descendants held usufruct rights contingent upon their undying loyalty to the emperor (Bogoslovskij 1972 [1962]: 67–79). Of these two types of lands, the royal lands (*rje-zhing*) were parceled out as taxable units over which subjects could hold usufruct rights (Bogoslovskij 1972 [1962]: 69). The service tenure lands (*khol-yul*), on the other hand, were aristocratic domains that were not subject to the same type of taxation. These were bequests by the emperor to an aristocratic lineage, and could be revoked at any time (Bogoslovskij 1972 [1962]: 70–72). As such, it is inadvisable to speak of these service tenure lands as private property.

Royal lands are mentioned four times in the *Old Tibetan Annals* in the entries for 718-719, 719-720, and 720-721. In each case, they come in pairs. The officials carry out the felt roll [tax] and fodder roll [tax] of the *glings* (grazing lands?)[66] and the royal lands of the three Horns (*ru gsum gyI rje zhing glIngs gyI pying rIl dang/ sog rIld bgyIs*) in the winter of 718-719, and make an account of this in the summer of 719-720 (*ru gsum gyI rje zhing gyI phying rIl gyI rtsis dang/ sog ma'I rtsis...bgyis*). Similarly, in the winter of 719-720, they levy the felt roll [tax] on the royal lands of Rtsang-chen, and make an account of this in the summer of 720-721. This pattern recurs throughout the *Annals*: administrative measures are first carried out, and then recorded. As seen from the entries for 718-719, 719-720, and 720-721, the royal lands in question were located all over Tibet: in the three Horns and in Rtsang-chen.

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[66] The term *glings* is a *hapax legomenon* that might mean "grazing lands." This is based on the context of the felt roll tax, where felt is made from the wool of animals kept by farmers, nomads, and those combining these two lifestyles (*sa-ma-'brog*). This is presumably based on the word *gling*, meaning "island," "continent," and "isolated place," with the additional suffix being either collective or resultative in the sense expounded by Uebach and Zeisler (2008). On the other hand, one notes that in the entry for the next year *glings* is elided, suggesting that *rje-zhing* and *rje-zhing glings* are not very different from each other.

Service tenure lands are not mentioned in the *Annals*, but are found in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, pillar inscriptions, and in Old Tibetan legal texts. Given their nature as lands whose usufruct rights were on a sort of "long lease" to aristocratic lineages, they seem not to have come under the direct remit of imperial Tibet's taxation regime, so their absence from the *Annals* is not particularly surprising. In the Zhol Inscription, Emperor Khri Srong-lde-btsan (reigned 756–c.800) awards legal protection to Minister Stag-sgra Klu-khong and his descendants: "I grant that within the lineage of Zla-gong, if one paternal lineage is extinguished, the service tenure lands and livestock / wealth of the extinguished lineage will not be taken by the administration, but will be granted to whichever clansman is nearest" (*zla gong gi bu tsha peld las la la zhig / rabs chad na rabs chad gyI khol yul dang / nor pyugs / blar myi bzhes par / pu nu po gang nye ba stsald par gnango ///*) (north face, ll. 27–31; Li and Coblin 1987: 149, 171, 178–79). In a similar passage in the Lcang-bu Inscription, Khri Gtsug-lde-btsan (reigned 815–841) grants that if Zhang Nya-sto's lineage should ever die out, "his service tenure lands and all else that he owns will not be confiscated by the authority, and will not be given [to anyone else], but will be added to the provisioning of this temple" (*nam zhIg na // zhang nya sto la / bu tsha rgyud yong myed pa zhIg du gyur na // khol yul las stsogs pa dbang ngo cog // blar yang myI bshes / gyang myI sbyin bar // gtsug lag khang 'dI rkyen / du bsnan par // bka's gnang ngo /*) (ll. 35–39; Li and Coblin 1987: 303, 309). Srong-btsan Sgam-po makes similar promises regarding service tenure lands to Dba's Dbyi-tshab and his descendants in an oath in chapter five of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* (*DTH*: 110, 146).

The above passages demonstrate that while service tenure lands could be seized and legally confiscated, they were understood as being otherwise inalienable, and are mentioned in the same breath as "all that one owns" (*dbang ngo cog*). That the seizure of service tenure lands may be considered a drastic measure may be seen from a passage in the Old Tibetan legal text PT 1071, where a commoner is banished for his cowardice, but his service tenure lands are allowed to remain within his paternal lineage. The clause in question concerns a case in which a copper-ranked minister or equal who, having fallen under a yak, is not rescued by a bystander from the ranks of *gtsang-chen* down to the lowest commoner, yet survives the ordeal.[67] The cowardly bystander is punished as follows:

> As punishment for cowardice, a fox tail will be attached [to him], and his treasury and livestock being given to him, he will be banished together with those [of his family] who have not established their own households. If [one of] his sons has set up his own household, then the banished man's service tenure lands will be given to that son. If there is no son who has set up his own household, then it will be given to the [banished man's] father." (*snar ma'I chad par / 'o dom btags [btab] ste / bang za phyug nor / stsald te / sdum pa ma phub pa dang spyugo / spyug pa'I khol yul / ni bu sdum pa phub pa mchis na / bu stsaldo / bu sdum [sdu] pa phub ma mchIs dang pha stsaldo /*) (PT 1071, ll. 369–70).

We can perhaps conclude that while it is incorrect to speak of these service tenure lands as "private property," it is also true that once they were awarded they were rarely confiscated. The ministerial aristocracy could therefore be more or less content in the knowledge that the Tibetan Empire preserved the status quo as long as it remained loyal to the Btsan-po. While this surely contributed to the stability of the empire, it also meant that the core of Tibet's tax revenue had to come from the royal lands, which, by necessity, did not infringe on the traditional lands of those aristocratic clans forming the basis of the administration itself. The fiscal impetus for conquest, and the conflict of interest between clan and empire—two factors that loom large in the Tibetan Empire's eventual collapse—are readily apparent.

These categories of royal lands and service tenure lands have clear parallels in similar arrangements under the administration of the Dalai Lamas, where those lands belonging to the central government (*gzhung*

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[67] On the rank of *gtsang-chen* and members of the ministerial aristocracy, see *infra*, "Ennoblement and Ministerial Aristocracy," fn. 84.

rgyugs-pa) were legislated differently than aristocratic estates such as Sa-skya and Lha-rgya-ri, and monastic estates such as Bkra-shis Lhun-po (Samuel 1993: 55–63).

One of the most fundamental terms for Tibetan governance, found in fourteen entries of the *Annals*, is "administration" (*mkhos*), or "to make an administration," "administrate" (*mkhos bgyis*). Uray (1972a: 18–19, n. 3) discusses the terms *mkhos, khod,* and *khos* in some detail, and concludes that they mean "institution, administration, settlement of the state," and are related to the word group of verbs including "to appoint" (*sko*), "to establish" (*'god*), and "to sit down," "to dwell" (*'khod*).[68] The term first appears in the entry for 654-655, when Chief minister Mgar Stong-rtsan "made the manual / protocols for creating the great administration" (*mkho-shams chen-pho bgyI-ba'I rtsis-mgo bgyI*). The term *mkho-shams* means "arrangement of the administration," and Mgar here has authored the blueprint for Tibetan governance. It was this draft that presumably formed the basis for the many subsequent "administrations" found in the *Annals*.

With one exception, these "administrations" fall generally into two categories.[69] First are those instances where large territories are administrated. This is the case with Zhang-zhung in 662-663, 675-676, and 724-725; 'A-zha in 696-697, 714-715, and 742-743; Sum-ru in 702-703, Mdo-smad in 715-716; Mtong-sod in 730-731; a colonial military government in 741-742; and the four Horns of Tibet in 744-745 (Version II). As is evident from the last area mentioned, it would be wrong to conclude that these administrations concerned only foreign colonies. The second category is the administration of pastureland: this is mentioned in the entries for 673-674, 693-694, 709-710, and in both versions of the entry for 746-747. The single exception to these two categories appears in the entry for 744-745, which contains a "great administration of soldiers." This is the only instance where *mkhos* refers explicitly to people rather than places. Because this term is so broad in its remit, it likely includes not only territorial legislation, but the initial organization and subsequent renewal of the imperial administration and its policies. This latter point is stressed by Petech (1989: 156), who, in little more than a brief note, suggests that *mkhos* does not signify the beginning of an institution, but "rather a revision or reorganization of the local administration." The logic of this point is evident from the four "administrations" of Zhang-zhung and the three of 'A-zha.

More recently, Iwao (2006: 11–16) has refined the definition of *mkhos* in his study of an important document, PT 1078bis, a judgement in the case of a land dispute between two Chinese families in Dunhuang. The background to the dispute begins, "...in the year [of] the rat, they attached the inhabitants of Shazhou to the *rkya* and made an administration (*mkhos*) of fields, and [the fields] were received as *rkya* fields" (*byi ba lo la / / sha cu pa rkyar sbyar / zhing mkhos m[dzad] las rkya zhing du mnos te*) (PT 1078bis, ll. 7–8). This phrase, the first part of which occurs again in the document at line 29, demonstrates that the *mkhos* of Shazhou / Dunhuang entailed the parceling off of land into taxable units called *rkya* (Iwao 2007b: 118 and 8, English summary). This measure in fact formed the basis for the Tibetan Empire's administration and taxation, because the *rkya* was a fundamental unit for legislating land and people. This is made perfectly clear by a passage from another document studied by Iwao, PT 1111, which contains the accounts of two granaries in Dunhuang.

> "Autumn of the year of the rat. The Chinese inhabitants of Shazhou have 684 *rkya* in the three thousand-districts, and every single *rkya* offers two loads (*khal*) each as tax (*khva*), so that makes 1,368

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[68] The term is also related to *khos* and *khod*, which are found in the catalogues of the "six institutions" and "thirty-six institutions" that form a large part of the *Section on Law and State*, the earliest extant Tibetan *corpus iuris*, which contains information relating both to the imperial period and to later times. On the *Section on Law and State*, see Uray 1972a, Uebach 1992, and Dotson 2007a.

[69] The *mkhos* of the *Annals* (and one from the *Chronicle*) are summarized in Uebach 2003, an article dedicated to the meaning of the term.

> loads of barley..." (*rta'i lo'i ston rgya sha cu pa stong sde gsum la rkya drug brgya' brgyad cu rtsa bzhi mchis pa / rkya gchig kyang khwa khal gnyis gnyis 'bul ba bsdoms na nas khal stong sum brgya' drug cu rtsa brgyad byung ba dang*) (PT 1111, ll. 14–16; Iwao 2007b: 113; Iwao *forthcoming c*).

In other words, the *rkya* unit or *rkya-zhing* "crop field," laid out through an "administration" (*mkhos*), forms the basis for taxation and also for the creation or revision of larger units such as thousand-districts. Indeed Iwao (2007a: 217–19) has determined that Tibet's thousand-districts consisted of approximately 230 *rkya* each. It is in this light also that we can better understand how the *mkhos* recorded in the entry for 744-745 in Version II of the *Annals* resulted in the redistricting of Tibet's thousand-districts. Furthermore, this allows us to see in more practical terms the early history of Tibet's land legislation as outlined in the *Section on Law and State* found in post-dynastic histories. There, in a measure likely dating to the mid-630s, Tibet is divided into six (actually five) "administrations" (*khod*): Tibet, Zhang-zhung, Sum-pa, Chibs, and Mthong-khyab, each of which is overseen by an "administrative chief" (*khos-dpon / khod-dpon*). With the completion of these administrations and the institution of the *rkya* system, interim measures such as the "eighteen shares of power" (*dbang-ris bco-brgyad*), which were based mainly on traditional clan territory, would have given way to thousand-districts, and taxation would become stabilized. Similarly, Uebach (2008: 64, n. 19) has shown that the *mkhos* probably also included the red tally of soldiers for conscription, demonstrating further how these "administrations" lie at the root of Tibet's territorial and military systems.

The above quotation shows how simply a tax burden can be calculated once the *rkya* system was in place. It also shows that taxes were paid in kind, in this case as loads of barley, but the same document also mentions wheat, millet, and peas. These were then accounted and stored in granaries. The term used for these sorts of taxes is *khwa*, and the tax was managed by, among others, the *khwa-mgnan*, a fiscal governor.

PT 1078bis records the process by which land was administrated, and testifies to the existence of other units besides *rkya-zhing*. The text states in one place, "the estate fields were tallied as equal to five and one half *dor* each, and after this was written in the register of the field-records..." (*rkya zhing dor phyedang drug drug mnyaM bar khram du btab las/ / zhing yig dkar cag 'dris pa'i 'og du nI/*) (PT 1078bis, l. 16). The text goes on to list the measurements of several other fields, in *dor*, according to the register of the field-records (*zhing-yig dkar-cag*) (Bsod-nams 2004: 393–96; Iwao 2006: 6). This valuable document demonstrates that agricultural fields were initially measured by means of a tally (*khram*), and then recorded in an official register of field-records (*zhing-yig dkar-cag*). The unit *dor* is a loan from the Chinese *tu* 突, a basic land unit that could be further subdivided into ten *mou* 畝, and which was roughly equivalent to 1.5 acres. Under the Tibetan administration of Dunhuang, it was common to allot one *dor* to each person in a farming household (Khrin chin Dbyin 2003: 254–55). Like *rkya*, *dor* were also subject to tax, which in this case was called *dor-kha / dor-ka* (Iwao 2007b: 8, English summary). Given that each member of a farming household was responsible for one *dor*, this was a very specific and minutely divided system of taxation.

Under later Tibetan administrations, the basic taxable unit was the household. It is unclear from the *Annals* and from other Old Tibetan documents whether this was true of the Tibetan Empire. We know from a celebrated list of land grants in chapter four of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* that "bondservant households" (*bran khyim*) were a unit of some sort, if not the basic economic unit, because Gnam-ri Slon-mtshan grants thousands of such bondservant households as rewards to his co-conspirators after the defeat of Zing-po-rje Khri-pangs-sum and the conquest of Ngas-po.[70] The importance of the household as an economic unit is evident from the existence of "household registers" (*khyim-yig*), kept by estates as records of their subject or tenant households, and used for tax purposes (Dotson 2007b: 49).

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[70] For Róna-tas' translation and commentary on this passage, see Róna-tas 1955.

It is evident that one type of tax, the *ka / kwa / khwa*, was an agricultural tax levied on units of arable land (*rkya* and *dor*), but there were other types of tax. For example, we find "tax" (*khral*) in the entry for 746-747 in Version II of the *Annals*. In the corresponding entry in Version I of the *Annals*, the "additional tax" (*khral-thud*) is reduced. The same entry also mentions "taxpayers" (*khral-pa*), which are found earlier in the entry for 726-727. In addition, the *Annals* also mentions "extraordinary taxes" (*chad-ka*) in the entries for 738-739 and 758-759, which appear to be occasional taxes levied according to need (Bogoslovskij 1972 [1962]: 88).

Beyond these taxes, tribute (*dpya*) was claimed from subjugated territories. Tribute should be divided into two types, the first being a sort of ceremonial relationship between kingdoms, and the latter a regular sort of tax, not unlike those mentioned above, levied on ostensibly foreign colonies. Kazushi Iwao's careful work on land legislation, political organization, and tax offers us a clear understanding of this latter type of tribute or "tribute tax." Iwao has demonstrated, for example, that such tribute (*dpya*) was accounted every three years, at which time the accounts of the previous two years were also settled. He has also shown that "tribute" (*dpya*) and "tax" (*khral*) were levied at the same time, and that the goods involved did not overlap. In particular, tribute included such goods as cloth and paper, while tax mainly concerned grain (Iwao *forthcoming b*). Iwao further notes that this sort of tribute continued after foreign territories were occupied by the Tibetan Empire, and that the sort of goods involved must have necessarily varied according to the local economies.

We find in the *Old Tibetan Annals* numerous measures that relate to land legislation and taxation. We have already seen a few of these, the "felt roll [tax]" (*phying-rild*) and "fodder roll [tax]" (*sog-ril*), above in the analysis of royal lands. Like so many other difficult administrative terms in the *Old Tibetan Annals*, *p(h)ying-ril(d)* has been discussed by generations of scholars. Bacot translated it with "delimitation des champs," and related *phying* to the verb *'bying,* meaning "immerger, inonder, enfoncer, d'où enfouir, ensevelir, et aussi irriguer, labourer" (*DTH*: 36, n. 5). Bogoslovskij (1972 [1962]: 157, n. 3) opted for a more literal reading of this term, concluding that it indicates an official register of estates kept on a roll of paper wrapped in felt. Relating this to the establishment of the *phying-ril* in the royal lands and its subsequent account in the entries for 718-719 through 720-721, Bogoslovskij (1972 [1962]: 69) concluded that the measure relates to the division of the royal lands into taxable units. Five years later, Petech (1967: 273) outlined this problematic term once again, and concluded that it is not to be read literally, but should be translated with a more general term, such as "registri catastali." Róna-Tas (1978) then devoted an entire article to the term *phying-ril*, and opted for a more literal interpretation of *ril* as "round" or "roll," related to the *dril* in *shog-dril* "scroll." Further, Róna-Tas emphasized that in the felt-manufacturing process, yak hair is pressed into rolls, and that these rolls then form the raw materials for clothing, boots, hats, and tents. This echoes Laufer's studies of felt-making in Tibet, where, like Róna-Tas, Laufer cites the *Jiu Tangshu*'s statement that the Tibetan noblemen dwell in large felt tents, and the *Xin Tangshu* passage according to which the Tibetan emperor lived in a camp of several large tents that could hold hundreds of people (Laufer 1930: 7–8; Róna-Tas 1978: 362–62; Pelliot 1960: 2, 80). More recently, Wang Yao and Chen Jian (2001 [1992]: 166, n. 6) read *ril* as "to gather in that which is scattered; to gather taxes or rent."[71] In the end, Wang Yao and Chen Jian echo Bogoslovskij and Petech by concluding that *zhing gi phying-ril* designates a tax on fields or a lease or rental fee for fields, but do not clarify their reading of the term *phying*. A decade later, Huang Bufan and Ma De (2001: 60, n. 3) followed this conclusion, stating that *phying* meant "to hand out," while *ril* meant "to collect." Gnya'-gong Dkon-mchog Tshes-brtan (1995: 67, n. 9) throws doubt on the interpretation that *phying-ril* is a field tax, but is also uncertain that it is a felt tax. Unfortunately, he offers no further hypothesis.

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[71] The authors further claim that the term *ril* carries this same meaning in A-mdo dialect (which dialect is not specified), and appears in phrases such as "collecting farmer / servant tax" (*myi khral ril*), "collecting tax on livestock" (*zog khral ril*), "collecting horse tax" (*rta khral ril*), "collecting wool tax" (*bal khral ril*), and "collecting fodder tax" (*rtswa khral ril*). One notes, however, that *ril* in the compound *phying-ril* is not a verb, but a noun.

In my opinion, Róna-Tas' solution is the most attractive for its literal reading of "felt roll" (*phying-ril*), and its emphasis of the importance of felt to Tibet's material culture. Bogoslovskij's literal interpretation of *phying-ril* as referring to the physical, written record of fields protected by a felt wrapper cannot be verified, and, as we will see in the discussion of the red tally (*khram dmar-po*), it seems that paper was not widely used in Tibetan administrative practice until 744-745. Another problem the readings of Bacot, Bogoslovskij, Wang Yao and Chen Jian, and Huang Bufan and Ma De is that their readings of *phying-ril* often create difficult problems for the translation of *sog-ril*, which occurs as a parallel and related term. As noted by Róna-Tas (1978: 359), a comparison of the measure in 718-719, *ru gsum gyI rje zhing glIngs gyI pying rIl dang/ sog rIld bgyIs*, and its account in 719-720, *ru gsum gyI rje zhing gyI phying rIl gyI rtsis dang/ sog ma'I rtsis...bgyis*, demonstrates that "*sog-ril(d)* of the first sentence is identical in its meaning with the *sog-ma* of the second."[72] *Sog-ma* means "straw," "hay," or "fodder grass," which is stored for the winter. Hence we are dealing here with material goods, and not with field records or taxes on fields, and the same holds true for *phying-ril*, a measure that relates to *phying-ba* "felt."

A number of other administrative measures in the *Old Tibetan Annals* come to bear on taxation, but are concerned more with people and record keeping than with land. Chief among these are the tally (*khram*), the "census" (*pha-los*), and the account (*rtsis*).

The term *khram* refers to the tally, the implement for the tally—the tally stick—and the notch or incision on the tally stick. Róna-Tas (1956) made an interesting study of the tally stick and its adoption in wrathful iconography as a tally of one's misdeeds. While there is evidence for the use of the tally in the earliest ritual lexicon, particularly in the context of funeral rites (Uebach 2008: 58, n. 8), their primary role was probably administrative. Tally sticks were employed to relay messages and to keep records and accounts by a system akin to double-entry book-keeping whereby the tally stick was divided into two identical halves. These were used by the military to record disbursements of provisions and to send messages (Takeuchi 2003, 2004a; Chos-'phel 2003 [1990]). These were also used to relay legal decisions from the center to the periphery (Dotson 2007b: 33–35). The term *khram* is most often used in the *Annals* to refer to the tally as an administrative measure, and not to the physical tally stick itself. We find references to the tally in the entry to 707-708: "they transferred the tally of the fiscal governor's revenue office (*mngan gyi khab-so'i khram spos*)." This generally associates the tally with the revenue office and the fiscal governors, whose posts are examined below. The fiscal governors are connected with the tally again in the entries for 721-722 and 728-729, which, like the entry for 742-743, concern the "tally of jurisdiction" (*thang-khram*).[73] Aside from a general tally, there are two specialized types of tallies in the *Annals*, the red tally (*khram dmar-po*), and the pale tally (*kram skya*).[74] In the entry for 690-691, ministers make a red tally of the men of Rtsang-chen; in 692-693 they make the red tally; in 708-709 they take account of a red tally of the royal guards (*sku-srung*); in 712-713 they take account of a red tally of the three Horns; in 718-719 they make a red tally of Dags-po; and in 744-745 the red tally is transferred, by royal decree, to yellow paper. In a recent article on the tally, Helga Uebach argues that this measure in 744-745 marks the introduction of the use of paper for administrative purposes. Further, in surveying the entries on the red tally just given, she concludes that the red tally is in fact a conscription of soldiers (Uebach 2008: 59–62).[75] The pale tally (*kram skya*), is also recorded in this entry for 744-745, where they take account of the pale tally of soldiers in each region. Uebach (2008: 63) demonstrates that this, unlike the red tally, was a record "written in black and white on paper," and this is in fact what the term "pale" (*skya*) describes. In light of Uebach's recent conclusions, we can revise Bogoslovskij's view that the tally played a role in bringing newly absorbed territories into line with Tibet's administration, as in the case of Rtsang-chen and Dags-po, and that the tally was concerned with the registration of taxable subjects (Bogoslovskij 1972 [1962]: 139). Indeed the tally did have a unifying effect, and in so far as conscription was a form of tax, Bogoslovskij was correct. The emphasis here, however, is squarely on the military side of things, and the tally of 744-745, along with the census that preceded it, played a key role in reorganizing the thousand-districts and the Horn system in the decades leading to Tibet's most significant victories over the Tang in the northeast. Moreover, it is exactly to this period that our extant catalogues of thousand-districts date, and some of these surely owe their existence to the measures recorded in the entry for 744-745.

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[72] Bogoslovskij works around the identification of *sog-ril* with *sog-ma* by reading *sog-ril* as an abbreviation of *sog-ma phying-ril*, an interpretation that seems slightly forced, even if it is not entirely implausible.

[73] *Thang* is an important term that can mean "authority," "rank," and also "rate," "value," "valuation," and "level" (Uray 1962b: 359–60, n. 16; Uebach 2008: 58). Examining the occurences of *thang-khram* in the *Annals*, Uray (1962b: 359, n. 16), reads *thang-khram* as a single term having to do with "organizational and personal changes in offices," and both he and Uebach (2008: 58, n. 7) translate it with "tally of authority." *Thang-khram* appears in three entries in the *Annals*: in 721-722 they make a "great tally of authority (*thang-khram*) of the fiscal governors (*mngan*) and upper and lower way-station [officials] (*slungs*)"; in 728-729 they make "the tally of authority reducing the great fiscal governors from eight to four"; and in 742-743 they make a tally of authority after one minister is removed and replaced with another. The second of these three entries is most valuable, and proves Uray's point that it relates to personnel changes. Further, this took place two years after the dispatch of "representatives to announce the reduction of great fiscal governors from eight to four" in 726-727, allowing us to further deduce that the *thang-khram* records changes in personnel and jurisdiction that are already accomplished. It also suggests that the *thang-khram* might have had something to do with jurisdiction. This is supported by an examination of the appearances of the term *thang* in the *Annals*. *Thang* appears first in 726-727, where it probably relates to the personnel changes and

One measure in the *Annals* that has almost always been taken to indicate a registration of the population is the "census" (*pha-los*). Uray (1972a: 28, n. 64) offers a very literal translation of this term as "certification, verification of the fathers," and notes Chos-grag's definition of the term as "registration or review of the heads of the families." Uebach (2003: 22–23) follows this same line, and assumes that the *pha-los* was a convocation of representatives of the populace. Most recently, Uebach revisited the term in an article co-authored with Bettina Zeisler, in which the authors conclude that the second part of the compound, *los*, holds

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administrative changes recorded in the preceding years: "[t]hey fixed the fiscal governors' *thang* (*thang sbyard*)." The verb *sbyard* means "to stick," "to adhere," so one might translate this more freely as "they assigned the fiscal governor's *thang*." *Thang* also appears twice in Version II of the *Annals*, in 746-747 and in 764-765: "[t]hey established the *t[h]ang* concerning Minister [Dba's] Skyes-bzang Stag-snang"; and "Zhang [Mchims-rgyal] Rgyal-zigs [Shu-theng] was bestowed the great turquoise insignia and praised for saying he was content with the *thang* of Mgar 'dzi-rmun." In this last entry, Mgar 'dzi-rmun refers to a post, not a person (*infra*, fn. 366 to the entry for 764-765). We find a similar use of *thang* in the Zhol Pillar inscription: "the descendants of minister Stag-sgra Klu-khong's father, Zla-gong, are awarded the *thang* of those of ministerial insignia (*zhang lon yI ge pa'I thang*) (*infra*, "Ennoblement and Ministerial Aristocracy"). This is echoed in a passage of the east face inscription at Zhwa'i Lha-khang: "[e]ven the commoners among the lineage of minister Snang-bzang 'Dus-kong who enjoy the personal rank of *gtsang*[*-chen*] and head of thousand-district and so forth are given the *thang* of those holding ministerial insignia (*zhang-lon yI-ge-can gyi thang du gnang-ba*) (*infra*, "Commoners and Bondservants"). We can see from this last passage that *thang* differs from rank (*thabs*), since those concerned are bestowed a different *thang* than that of their ranks (*gtsang*[*-chen*] and *stong*[*-dpon*]). This is also apparent from the entry for 746-747, where a minister's *thang* is established. From this it seems apparent that what is meant by *thang* is something more like "jurisdiction" and "rights and duties," and I have used the former to translate the term throughout.

[74] On the translation of *skya* with "pale," see Uebach 2008: 62–63.

[75] In her discussion, Uebach also attempts to shed some light on redness of the red tally. On the one hand, the color red is associated with the Tibetan military and with blood, so this might be figurative, but on the other hand there are among the extant tally sticks some marked with red paint or blood (Uebach 2008: 62). In closing, Uebach (2008: 65) makes the interesting point that "...with regard to the system of two pieces inherent of the tally...so far it is unknown whether the Red Tally was a tally only in name or whether each soldier of the Tibetan army was provided with one part of the tally perhaps as a token for identification....or whether each unit or subunit received the respective number of tallies for its files."

within it simultaneous notions of year, age, report, able-bodied, and capable for service. As a result, they render *pha-los* "[registration of] the male able-bodied adults." This is in itself a translation of convenience, they state, since one can not easily convey the polysemy of *los*. As a matter of further convenience, I will refer to this sometimes as a census, where "census" should be taken as a shorthand for "[registration of] the male able-bodied adults." In the *Annals*, a census is taken in 673-674, 711-712, 719-720, 734-735, and 743-744. The last three are the most interesting, as they concern, respectively, Zhang-zhung and Ladakh (Mard), 'A-zha, and the civil and military population of Tibet. The entry for 743-744 (Version I) also reveals that the medium for the census was, up until this year, the wooden slip: "they abolished the wooden slips for the census (*pha-los gyi byang-bu bor*)." This demonstrates its close relationship (material, in any case) with the tally.

The most fundamental administrative measure in the *Old Tibetan Annals* is surely the "account" (*rtsis*). Like the *Annals* itself, the account is a bureaucratic record, and in the *Annals* ministers make accounts of several measures, most often the removal and appointment of functionaries (719-720, 723-724, 730-731, 731-732, 742-743, 745-746). In this context, and with the spelling *rtsis*, "account" in the *Annals* is unambiguously a noun, and it is almost always accompanied by the verb "to make" (*bgyis*). I have therefore translated this literally with "to make an account," although "to record" is equally accurate.

These accounts (*rtsis*) are not to be confused with two related terms, *rtsis-mgo*, meaning "manual" or "protocol," and the verb *brtsis*, "to take account of," "to calculate." (The term *rtsis* is also found as a verb in Old Tibetan administrative documents, but in the *Annals* it is always a noun.) The phrase *rtsis mgo bgyis* is not a verb-auxiliary compound meaning, "to begin an account," or "to make the beginning of an account," but a noun, *rtsis-mgo*, meaning "manual" or "protocols," followed by the verb *bgyis*. The term is found in the entry for 654-655, which, as reviewed already, records Chief minister Mgar Stong-rtsan's creation of the "manual / protocols (*rtsis-mgo*) for creating the great administration"; and in the entry for 690-691, which records Chief minister Mgar Khri-'bring's creation of the "manual / protocols (*rtsis-mgo*) for soldiers / conscripts (*mun-mag*)."[76] The verb *brtsis* is the perfect tense form of the verb *rtsis*, meaning "to calculate, to count." This verb appears fourteen times in the *Annals*, with five of these instances pertaining to the "calculation" of the wealth of someone who has been exiled or disgraced (680-681, 699-700, 707-708, 755-756, 756-757). In these cases, it is easy to surmise that this is a euphemism for "confiscation." The enumerative value of *brtsis* is evident in its application to the "surplus and deficit of the *thugs-nyen* of the revenue office" in 722-723, the similar "deficit and surplus of the soldiers" in 729-730, and "extraordinary taxes" in 738-739. In other cases, such as in its application to the "red fire-raising [stations]" in 674-675 and 709-710, and to tallies in 708-709, 712-713, and 744-745, I have opted for a more figurative translation of this verb as "to take account of," which emphasizes its relationship to the accounts (*rtsis*). Its use with tallies recalls Petech's theory that the meaning of the verb as both "to calculate" and "to take account of," or "rendre compte," grew out of the initial meaning of the term, which was "to incise," and related to record-keeping on tally sticks (Petech 1967: 276).[77]

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[76] Basing oneself solely on the linguistic evidence of the *Annals*, one could translate *rtsis mgo bgyis* with "they made the beginning of an account" in parallel with such phrases as "they made the beginning of the census" (*pha-los gyi mgo mdzad*; 743-744, Version II) and "they completed the end of the account" (*rtsis gyi mjug bcade*; 747-748, Version II) (*DTH*: 31; Uray 1972a: 27). Admitting the evidence of other legal and administrative documents, we find two other occurences of *rtsis-mgo* demonstrate its unambiguous identity as a noun. The first is in PT 1111, the record of granaries: "...when they were in Shazhou, they received of one hundred loads of barley and ten loads of millet [but] the notes, were not in accordance with the protocols (*rtsis-mgo*) of the granary supervisor..." (*sha cu na mchis pa'i tshe / nas khal brgya' dang khre ci khal bcu nos pa / stsang dam zhag gi rtsis mgo / reg zig dang myi sbyar zhing*) (PT 1111, ll. 19–21). The second example comes from ITJ 740 (2), a document concerning the use of divination dice as a means for legal judgements: "...if one adheres to the manual / protocols (*rtsis-mgo*) for gathering soldiers and the pronouncements of the authority" (*mun mag btus pe'i rtsis mgo dang bla'I bka' gsung ba' dag dang sbyar na*) (ITJ 740 (2), ll. 337–38; Dotson 2007b: 55). From these two passages we can infer that *rtsis-mgo* is a noun that is of a piece with terms such as pronouncements of the authority (*bla'I bka' gsung ba'*). We can add to this the appearance of this term in the *Dba' bzhed*, which also supports the above conclusions: "[f]or a whole morning the complete *rtsis-mgo* and the good law (*chos lugs bzang po*) were announced to the assembled subjects without any mistake by law and official order" (*bka' khrims dang bka' nan gyis rtsis mgo dang chos lugs bzang po ril ma nor bar snga dro thog thag 'bangs 'tshogs pa la bka' zhal gyis stsal to*) (Wangdu and Diemberger 2000: 29 and n. 33); Wangdu and Diemberger's translation is given above, but one might read the ergative as a genetive, and render this as "a manual *for* law and suppression." The possibility remains that the meaning of this term derives from a more literal meaning such as "the beginning of an account," which, in setting out how a measure was to be completed, would not be a far cry from a manual or a protocol.

The difference between making an account (*rtsis bgyis*) and taking account (*brtsis*) is mostly grammatical, but their subtle difference can be illustrated by two entries dealing with the same topic. In the entry for 738-739, officials "imposed extraordinary taxes (*chad-ka bcad*)" and then calculated / took account of the extraordinary taxes (*cad-ka brtsis*)." In the entry for 758-759, by contrast, they "counted the extraordinary taxes (*chad-ka bgrangs*)" and then "made an account of the extraordinary taxes (*chad-ka'I rtsis bgyis*)." Analyzing these two entries, there emerge three stages in the collection of the extraordinary tax: it is imposed and collected (*bcad*), it is counted (*brtsis* or *bgrangs*), and it is recorded (*rtsis bgyis*). Therefore the "calculation" or "taking account" (*brtsis*) precedes the final "making of the account" (*rtsis*).

Conscription, the Transport Network, and the Alert System

Apart from many sorts of taxes and tributes, the subjects of the Tibetan Empire were also liable for conscription into the military, and held responsible for the transport network through mandatory contributions of corvée labor. A fascinating Old Tibetan legal document, "Replies Concerning the Dice Statutes from the Tiger Year Dice Edict" (ITJ 740 (2)), reveals that the soldier tax was levied at the level of the estate (*gzhis*). Military administrators from the thousand-district would come to an estate and conscript suitable bondservants (*bran*) as soldiers (*mun-dmag / dmag*). Despite the fact that he had lost part of his labor force, the estate holder was still responsible for provisioning his bondservants as soldiers throughout their duties. The allotted provisions were put into bales and sent to the authorities of the thousand-district, who then distributed them as appropriate (Dotson 2007b: 54–59). This created a one-to-one system of provisioning accountability, and presumably maintained a healthy balance between soldiers and agriculturalists, since the former depended upon the latter, and over-conscription would result in the collapse of the provisioning system. This was viewed as an onerous tax, a fact evident from the legal document's inclusion of a clause concerning punishment—sometimes death or banishment—of those who fail to provision their conscripted bondservants.

Another tax that has traditionally been viewed as the most onerous for Tibet's taxpayers is that of corvée labor along the transport network. Under the regimes of the Dalai Lamas, Tibet was divided into major routes and subdivided into stations (*sa-tshig*), each a half-day's walk from the next, so that a round-trip journey could be made in one day. The central government issued permits, and on the presentation of such a permit, the bearer could demand transportation and riding animals, sometimes numbering in the hundreds. All this came at no cost to the bearer or the central government as the labor was unpaid, and it facilitated the movement of people and goods throughout Tibet (Goldstein 1989: 4). Due to such high demands, and due to the weakness of the central government, some aristocratic families that were strong enough or brazen enough refused to fulfill their corvée labor obligations (Carrasco 1959: 25). In this way, the transportation system for relaying goods was an important measure of the government's reach.

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[77] Indeed Uebach and Zeisler (2008: 318) follow this line in their translation of part of the entry for 708-709: "the red notch of the Guards was cut [on the tally]" (*sku srungs gyI khram dmar po brtsis*).

While there is a lack of such detailed information on the transport network and corvée system under the Tibetan Empire, it is evident that something very similar existed at this time, probably with all the attendant resentment as well. This is evident from another clause from the Old Tibetan legal document ITJ 740 (2), where a man entrusted with goods and horses loses these items and is punished for this loss, even if it is no fault of his own (Dotson 2007b: 39–40). It is further evident from Nepalese inscriptional evidence that the corvée system existed as early as 695, when the Licchavi king Śivadeva II included in the Lagantol Inscription a provision for corvée labor on the Tibetan trade route (Davidson 2005: 132).

This movement of goods and services overlapped in part with the postal relay system, which together with the transport system operated a network of stations (*slungs-tshangs*) that were not unlike the *sa-tshig* mentioned above. Messengers (*pho-nya*) traversed these areas bearing sealed messages and official and military correspondence, about which we find a number of strict protocols in Old Tibetan documents (*TLTD3*: 190; Macdonald 1971: 325; Stein 1984: 263–64). Messengers were regulated by *slungs* officials (*slungs-dpon*) who were responsible for provisioning the messengers and punishing them should they fail in their duties (Bsod-nams Skyid 2003: 277). In a thorough study of *slungs* drawing on Old Tibetan and Tang sources, Bsod-nams Skyid (2003: 276) estimates that *slungs*, as a term for a unit of distance traversed by a messenger, constituted about thirty *li* (*le-dbar*), that is to say approximately fifteen kilometers. The importance of this communications and transport network to Tibet's administrative and military success, in combination with its instrumentalization of Tibet's newly acquired literacy, cannot be underestimated.

The *Old Tibetan Annals* mentions *slungs* in the entry for 721-722, when ministers "carried out a great tally of the ranks of the fiscal governors and upper and lower way-station [officials] (*slungs*)." Here, however, *slungs* seems to be shorthand for *slungs-dpon*.

While "messengers" (*pho-nya*) are found throughout the *Annals*, these are in fact not domestic messengers or postal officials, but foreign emissaries dispatched on political missions to Tibet. The diplomatic nature of these emissaries is readily evident, but is further emphasized by the entry for 756-757, in which "Pa-gor Na-'dod and Ce Snang-rtsan were proclaimed as reciprocal emissaries" to countries in the upper (northwestern) regions.

Similarly, there was also a complex system of watch posts designed to raise the alarm in case of trouble. These hill stations (*ri-zug*) were managed by officials known as *tshugs-pon*, and have been studied in some detail by Takeuchi (2003, 2004a). This may relate to an obscure term in the *Annals*, *zhugs-long dmar-po*, which appears in the entries for 674-675, 691-692, and 709-710, and which may indicate "red fire-raising [stations]" responsible for lighting beacons or signaling to raise an alarm. Considering the context, in the first and last of these three instances, the *zhugs-long dmar-po* are calculated / accounted for (*brtsis*). In the entry for 691-692, ministers make "a selection / conscription for red fire-raising [stations]." As with other *hapax legomenae* of the *Annals*, *zhugs-long dmar-po* has been subjected to a number of interpretations. Ishikawa (1999: 113), based on the premise that *zhugs-long* is the honorific for *me-long*, meaning "mirror," and reasoning that "mirror" is used to mean "history" or "document," believes that the *zhugs-long dmar-po* must be a "record" of some type, likely related to the red tally. Dge-'dun Chos-'phel (2005 [1990]: 103), on the other hand, takes it to be the name of a military division. An entirely different interpretation is given by Huang and Ma (2000: 64), who understand *zhugs-long* as "spark," and hypothesizes that *zhugs-long dmar-po* is a slat of wood with a spark design used in the course of troop conscription.

Given that *zhugs-long dmar-po* can be calculated, and require conscription, presumably of troops, and in consideration of the etymology of the term *zhugs-long*, which seems to be the honorific for *me-long*, meaning "mirror," signaling may be more to the point.[78] Still, "red mirror" does not immediately evoke a beacon station, and one wonders if the etymology of *zhugs-long* is somewhat different than simply the honorific for mirror. One possibility is that *long* comes from the verb *lang*, "to rise" of which it is a variant of the present tense stem, and that it acts as a verbalizer for fire similar to *me gtong* "to set fire," *me 'bar* "to blaze," or *me shor* "to catch fire." In this case the use of the honorific *zhugs* might distinguish a "fire-raising [station]" (*zhugs-long*) from a mirror (*me-long*). Then the term would indicate beacon stations that use fire and smoke to raise an alarm and communicate over distance, not unlike the Chinese beacons (*feng* 烽), which had been operating for centuries, and indeed at Dunhuang. In fact, we find in the *Jiu Tangshu* the statement that "[w]hen the country is invaded the smoke-fires are lighted, there being a tower every hundred *li*" (Bushell 1880: 441; Pelliot 1961 1–2; and Lee 1981: 3). Therefore I provisionally translate *zhugs-long* with "fire-raising [station]" and render *zhugs-long dmar-po* as "red fire-raising [station]," where red is a color associated both with fire and with soldiers.

Functionaries in the *Old Tibetan Annals*

Having sketched in some detail the main administrative measures recorded in the *Old Tibetan Annals* and contextualized them within Tibetan imperial praxis, it remains to offer the same treatment to the many types of functionaries and ministers who appear in the *Annals*.

Concerned as it is with administration and bureaucracy, the *Old Tibetan Annals* includes in its entries a number of functionaries. We have already seen in the treatment of the tally that this measure involved at least two particular types of officials, the revenue officer (*khab-so*) and the fiscal governor (*mngan*). These two types of officials, along with another, the commissioner (*brung-pa*), appear in the *Annals* far more often than any others.

The *mngan* is the first functionary to appear in the *Annals*, in the entry for 653-654, when Spug Gyim-rtsan Rma-chung is installed as fiscal governor (*mngan*) of the land of Zhang-zhung, which had only recently been conquered. Spug Gyim-rtsan Rma-chung appears in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* as a messenger between Srong-btsan Sgam-po and his sister, Sad-mar-kar, who lives in Zhang-zhung with King Lig Myi-rhya. According to this heroic retelling of Tibet's conquest, the message she relays to her brother through Spug contains coded language that instructs him on how to defeat Zhang-zhung (*DTH*: 155–58). Seen in this light, Spug's appointment as fiscal governor of Zhang-zhung is likely a reward for his role in its conquest.

Based on the internal evidence of the *Annals* itself, the *mngan* is a high-ranking post, as there were at most eight *mgnan* at a given time. This is apparent from the reduction of the fiscal governors of Rtsang-chen from four to two in 684-685, the appointments that brought the total number up to six in 692-693, and the reduction from eight to four that was carried out in 726-727 and finally accounted for in 728-729. In terms of the nature of the post, the entry for 707-708 states that they "transferred the tally of the fiscal governors' revenue office" (*mngan gyi khab so'i khram spos*), indicating that the *mngan* were responsible for the revenue office and its tally. This latter point is confirmed in the Lhasa Treaty Inscription, which names among the Tibetan officials the "fiscal governor official, head of all the revenue offices" (*mgnan-pon khab-so 'o-chog gI bla*) (Li and Coblin 1987: 61, 118, 123–25; *infra*, Appendix Five). The entry for 717-718 records an account of fiscal governors' households (*mngan gyi khyim rtsis bgyis*). This most likely indicates those households that lived under the jurisdiction of the fiscal governor and his revenue office. Similarly, after the number of fiscal governors was reduced from eight to four in 726-727, the *Annals* states that "they assigned the revenue office's taxpayers," probably meaning that those households that had been under the jurisdiction of the dismissed fiscal governors were now part of some other functionaries' responsibilities.

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[78] Another possibility is that it is related to *zhugs-ling*, which indicates a fireplace or hearth (Dung-dkar 2002: 1776). One intriguing, albeit circumstantial bit of evidence connecting *zhugs-long* to signaling with mirrors and with the hill stations (*ri-zug*), is the name of one such hill station, "sacred mirror" (*'phrul gI mye-long*) (Takeuchi 2004a: 52–53). These stations were manned by teams of four, headed by a *tshugs-dpon*, but it would be a stretch to relate *zug* and *tshugs* here to *zhugs*. Furthermore, while there is evidence for fire and smoke beacons, signaling with mirrors is not well attested in early Tibet.

Bogoslovskij (1972 [1962]: 135–37), working from the *Annals* and other Old Tibetan sources, demonstrated that the fiscal governors were also entrusted with documents, and that there were some known as *chu-mgan* and *stsang-mngan* who were put in charge of water and grain, respectively. Iwao (*forthcoming b*) also notes the presence of *dpya-mngan*, who were concerned with tribute. This wide range of duties, along with an apparently regional authority, indicate that the *mngan* were regional governors in charge of matters extending beyond taxation.

The term *khab-so* can be used to refer to the revenue office, but also to the revenue officers, who were subordinate to the fiscal governors, and were responsible for the tally and for taxation, as seen in the entries for 717-718 and 726-727, discussed above. The etymology of the term is obscure, and Uray and others translated it as "palace guards," despite their patently fiscal responsibilities.[79] Whatever, the case, the *khab-so* appear to have been the Tibetan Empire's accountants and tax collectors.

The role of the commissioners (*brung-pa*) is less apparent in the *Annals*. They are first mentioned in 682-683 when the commissioner Lho 'Bring-po Rgyal-sum-sregs "offered a banquet with libations at Nyen-kar." That this was recorded in the *Annals* indicates that Lho held a position of some prestige, as the only other such banquet mentioned is one given by Da-rgyal, a minor (vassal) king. The five other appearances of *brung-pa* (707-708, 714-715, 715-716, 731-732, and 745-746) are all cases of relief and replacement where the officials' names are given. This again suggests the importance of the office, since similar promotions and transfers to and from other posts are not mentioned in the *Annals*. Uray (1962b) emphasizes these points in his study of the office of the commissioner, and also points out their regional jurisdiction and their role in integrating the territory of Rtsang-chen with the four Horns of Tibet. Further, as Bogoslovskij (1972 [1962]: 140) pointed out, the commissioners are involved in the legal confiscation of wealth: in ITJ 753, an Old Tibetan legal fragment concerning theft, the property of an executed or exiled man is turned over to the commissioners (Thomas 1936: 280). Based on this somewhat sketchy picture of the office, I have provisionally translated *brung-pa* with "commissioner."

There are a number of officials mentioned in the *Old Tibetan Annals* who are concerned with territorial and military governance. Many of these concern the thousand-districts (*stong-sde*), which are mentioned in the entries for 746-747 and 755-756. A head of thousand-district (*stong-dpon*) is mentioned in the entry for 762-764, and the royal guard (*sku-srung*), which the later sources count as a thousand-district, is mentioned in 708-709. In the entry for 707-708 the great [heads of] five hundred [households] (*lnga-brgya chen-po*), mentioned also in 693-694, are transformed into heads of little thousand-districts (*stong-bu rje*). Oddly, the [heads of] five hundred [households] are mentioned again twenty years after this when their appointment is recorded in the entry for 713-714.

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[79] Li and Coblin (1987: 61, 118, 123–25) discuss some of the possible solutions to this problem, in particular the reading of *so* in the sense of the verb *bsos*, "to nourish." This suggests a reading of *khab-so* as similar to "welfare" (*kha-bso*) or, less likely, "good fortune" (*kha-bsod*). A simpler reading would take *so* to be a rare nominal suffix, which occurs in such words as "urethral orifice" (*chu-so*), "glory, honor" (*ngo-so*), and "tomb" (*bang-so*), in which case *khab-so* would be an obvious precursor to *nang-so*, "customs officer" (Gyurme 1992: 135; Zhang *et al.* 1998 [1994]: 1511). See also Uebach 1985b: 30; and Wangdu and Diemberger 2000: 73–74, n. 271.

Among the few other officials of note in the *Annals* are the "investigator" (*snom-bu-pa*), mentioned in the entry for 685-686, and the "representative of the emperor" (*ring-lugs*), found in the entries for 726-727 and 747-748. The former is obscure, as there are very few references to anything resembling early Tibetan police. As such, it remains one of the *Annals' hapax legomenae* that is translated mostly from context. The term *ring-lugs*, however, has been the subject of an article by Michael Walter, who demonstrated that *ring-lugs* is a functionary upholding the presence (*ring*) of the emperor (Walter 1998b).

More important than any of these is the term *zhang-lon*, found in the phrase "great ministers" (*zhang-lon chen-po*), in the final entry of the *Annals*. This term, which indicates not only ministers, but the entire class of ministerial aristocracy and all its attendant privileges, will be considered in some detail in the next section of the introduction, which investigates class, rank, exchange, and inheritance to offer a vignette of the social fabric of the Tibetan Empire.

Class and Rank in the Tibetan Empire

It has already been stated that the royal court was the moveable center of the Tibetan Empire. It does not follow from the absence of a fixed center, however, that the Tibetan Empire was a decentralized polity. In nearly all research into Tibetan governance, there is a strong focus on the dialectic of centralization and regionalism (Carrasco 1959; Cassinelli and Ekvall 1969; Goldstein 1971a; Samuel 1993). This has led some to characterize Tibetan government, particularly that of the Dalai Lamas, as exercising a sort of "soft power" in which the central government does not enjoy firm political control over its "subordinate" parts, but rather stands in a more symbolic relation to them as patron to client. In considering such issues as social stratification, order of rank, and chain of command, regional variation becomes the rule, and bedevils any attempt at sweeping generalization. There is no reason to believe that matters were any simpler during the age of empire. As will be demonstrated below, however, there are some important differences. While the emperor and the central Tibetan ministers devolved power to a number of regional assemblies, and to several colonial military governments on the borders, there are indications of legal and administrative centralization that go beyond that achieved by any subsequent Tibetan government. Another major difference is the emphasis on clan and lineage, a feature of Tibetan society that dissipated gradually from the time of the empire to the present day.

The social stratification of the Tibetan Empire can be presented from any number of angles. This is due to the intersection of different systems of rank or class, each with their respective prerogatives. There is, for example, the Tibetan royal family, and those linked to it as kin. This system of rank is headed by the emperor and the immediate royal family. Just outside of this tier are the bride-giving (*zhang*) clans who supply the heirs to the royal line. The discussion of dynastic marriage revealed that the Dba's clan stood in relation to the royal family as bride-receivers (*dbon*), and they belong here in the hierarchy, alongside the emperors' *zhang*. Lower in practical terms, but perhaps more important in ceremonial matters are those "semi-royal" lineages spawned by the half brothers of the emperors. These scions, born not to *zhang* queens, but to those ladies not authorized to provide an heir to the throne, became the heads of new collateral lineages whose practical influence in government was minimal.

Similar to this, in that it is kin based, is the relationship between the Tibetan emperor and the minor kings or vassal kings with whom the royal line had contracted dynastic marriages. As foreigners, however, these do not really belong in the same category as the royal family and its Tibetan kin.

Alongside these kin-based strata is a system of ministerial rank that is wed to ministerial posts and estates. Each rank on this scale included an attendant degree of ennoblement, including a minister's relatives, and a commensurate land grant. The minister was also entitled to wear the epaulets, graded according to a valuation of precious metals, denoting his rank. This gradated system, with its marked similarities to earlier Chinese systems of rank, was not rigidly applied across the breadth of the empire, but adapted to local situations in the many areas under Tibetan rule. Thus, for example, a silver-rank minister in Khotan would not necessarily be commensurate in rank and status with a silver-rank minister in Dunhuang, or indeed one in central Tibet.

Similar to the less than standard valuation of the ministerial ranks in different regions of the Tibetan Empire, there were also local rulers who, regardless of their technical rank, effectively governed the area under their jurisdiction. The chief ministers of the Mdo-smad council and the *bde-blon*, who ruled over the northern and northeastern reaches of the empire, are prime examples of this. Similarly, the generals of each colonial military government (*khrom*) enjoyed regional political authority, as did the governors (*dbang-po*) above them.

Given this plurality of ranking systems, to say nothing of how this all translated into actual practice, it is probably inadvisable to try to weave this into a single spectrum of social and political rank. We have already treated the Tibetan kin of the royal family and those foreign houses linked to Tibet through dynastic marriage (*supra*, "Dynastic Marriage"). What remains, therefore, is to clarify the system of ennoblement and ministerial rank.

Ennoblement and Ministerial Aristocracy

Old Tibetan legal and administrative documents encode the values and assumptions surrounding the social stratification of the Tibetan Empire. Like many pre-modern legal systems, that of the Tibetan Empire meted out punishments according to the social class of the complainant and that of the defendant in a given case. This is seen most explicitly in PT 1071, an Old Tibetan legal document dealing mainly with blood money or restitution when someone is accidentally shot with an arrow during the course of a hunt. Richardson (1998 [1990a]) outlined this text in some detail, and the gradations of punishment according to class are clearly given in his work. The legal document decides punishments according to the status of the victim, beginning with the four great ministers, and proceeding through turquoise, gold, gold-inlaid silver (*phra-men*), silver, brass (*ra-gan*), and copper-rank ministers, all the way down to the lowest class of Tibetan society comprising bondservants and barbarian prisoners (*lho-bal btson-pa*). Investigating the categories of victims, or complainants, nine tiers of social strata are apparent. These nine strata should not be seen as in any way static, for they refer only to a particular time and place, and during the course of the Tibetan Empire there were surely many developments and variations in the system of ranks.

I The four great ministers (*zhang-blon chen-po bzhi*):

a. Chief minister (*blon chen-po*).

b. Great minister of the interior (*nang-blon chen-po*).

c. The veritable maternal uncle of the Btsan-po, endowed with political authority (*btsan po'i zhang drung chab srid la dbang ba*).[80]

d.Deputy to the chief minister (*blon chen-po'i 'og-pon*).

Also included in this echelon of rank are the fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers of any of the above. The most severe penalties are meted out for crimes committed against this group, the strictest being capital punishment accompanied by the loss of one's property and wealth and the execution of one's family line, which was known as the *sgor rabs bcad* penalty. The strictest monetary fine also applies to crimes against this group, reaching 10,000 *srang*. There is no mention of any particular type of insignia (*yi-ge*) that distinguishes this group from the others, but they stand at the apex, just above the turquoise-rank ministers. The *Old Tibetan Annals* mention a number of promotions made in the dragon year 764-765 following the successful campaign against the Chinese capital, where it states, "Chief minister Snang-bzher was bestowed *ke-ke-ru* insignia and appointed as chief minister." The *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, describing the very same events, states that Chief minister Snang-bzher Zla-brtsan was bestowed the precious jewel insignia (*nor-bu rin-po-che 'i yi-ge*).[81] It might thus be surmised that this highest level, sometimes referred to only as *chen-po* instead of *zhang-lon chen-po*, were holders of a special type of insignia, either white chrysoberyl (*ke-ke-ru*), or precious jewel, that distinguished them from the other ministers.

II Turquoise-rank ministers (lit. "ministers with turquoise insignia"; *zhang-lon g.yu'i yi-ge pa*), along with their fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers. Also included in this group are the relations of the four great ministers: "from the sons and their descendants (*bu-po-spad*) down to his patrilateral parallel cousins and their descendants (*pha-spun-spad*)—these without insignia—, along with the stepmother(s) (*ma yar-mo*), daughter(s)-in-law (*mna'-ma*), wife / wives (*khyo-mo*), and unmarried daughter(s) and sister(s)..."[82]

III Gold-rank ministers (*zhang-lon gser gyi yi-ge-pa*), their fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers. Also included in this rank are the relations of turquoise-rank ministers: "from the sons and their descendants down to his patrilateral parallel cousins and their descendants—these without insignia—, along with the step-mother(s), daughter(s)-in-law, wife / wives, and unmarried daughter(s) and sister(s)."

IV Gold-inlaid-silver-rank (*phra-men*)[83] ministers, their fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers. The relations of gold-rank ministers (as above).

V Silver-rank ministers, their fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers. The relations of gold-inlaid silver-rank ministers (as above).

VI Brass-rank ministers, their fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers. The relations of silver-rank ministers (as above).

VII Copper-rank ministers, their fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers. The relations of brass-rank ministers (as above).

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[80] The term *drung* implies that *zhang* is meant in the sense of the kinship term, and that this post is filled by the actual bride-giver / maternal uncle / father-in-law (*zhang*) of the Btsan-po. This distinguishes it from the *zhang* in *zhang-blon* or *zhang-lon*, a compound that simply means "minister" (Dotson 2004: 79–82).

[81] For translation and transliteration of this passage, see *infra*, Appendix Four.

[82] *zhang lon chen po bzhI'i phu bo spad phan cad/ pha spun spad tshun cad/ yI ge ma mchis ba'I rnams/ dang ma yar mo dang/ bna' ma dang/ khyo mo dang/ bu sring khyo ma mchis pa dang/ 'di rnams/.* See below for a more detailed discussion of these kinship terms.

[83] On this term, which means either gold-inlaid silver or silver and gold alloy, see below.

VIII A *gtsang-chen*,[84] and the relations of copper-rank ministers (as above). Also included in this stratum are royal military subjects, bondservants attached to the estates (*rkya*) of an aristocrat or a commoner, and the fiscal governor's attaché (*rgyal-'bangs rgod-do-'tshal dang zhang-lon [dang] dmangs kyi bran rkya la gtogs-pa dang mngan gyi mngan-lag*).

IX Civilian royal subjects (*rgyal-'bangs g.yung-ngo-'tshald*), bondservants not attached to the estates (*rkya*) of an aristocrat or a commoner (*zhang-lon dang dmangs kyi bran rkya la ma gtogs-pa*),[85] ordinary civilians (*g.yung-ngo-'tshald*), and barbarian prisoners (*lho-bal brtson-pa*).

The system of rank order according to valuations based on precious metal insignia has distinct Chinese echoes, a point made already by Demiéville (1952: 286, n. 2). In Tang China, he notes, there was a system of rank by which "fish bags," in two parts, served as official insignia, and were decorated with precious metals. In a decree from 674, we find the following materials corresponding to ranks, in descending order: gold and jade appliqué, gold, silver, and brass, with copper or bronze (and perhaps iron) applying to commoners (Demiéville 1952: 286, n. 2). It may well be the case, therefore, that the Tibetan system of insignia of rank partly modeled itself on similar Chinese practices.

The Tibetan imperial system of ranks according to insignia (*yi-ge*) is also found in a valuable passage in the *Xin Tangshu.* Bushell (1880: 442) translates the passage as follows: "[t]he officers in full costume wear as ornaments—those of the highest rank *ze-ze* [瑟瑟 pinyin: *sè sè*], the next gold, then gilded silver, then silver, and the lowest copper—which hang in large and small strings from the shoulder, and distinguish the rank of the wearer."[86] The description corresponds exactly to those found in the Old Tibetan legal texts PT 1071, PT 1072, and PT 1073, save for the omission of brass (*ra-gan*) between the ranks of silver and copper, and it further indicates that the Tibetan insignia (*yi-ge*) can be considered to be akin to epaulets. We can note that *sè-sè*, meaning something like "aquamarine," probably indicates turquoise (Demiéville 1952: 285, n. 2). Here "gilded silver" (金塗銀 pinyin: *jīn tú yín*) means "silver inlaid with gold," or "vermeil," as Demiéville (1952: 284, n. 2) rendered it, and should therefore be translated with "gold-inlaid silver." This corresponds to the Tibetan *phra-men*, thus clarifying an obscure term (Takata 2006: 164; Dotson 2007b: 8–9, n. 7).[87]

The above groups from I to IX are defined according to the status of the complainants in cases of someone being hit by an arrow during a hunt, and the prices for blood money range from 10,000 cash (*srang*) for the killing of one with the rank of the four great ministers (group I) by any person ranking from turquoise to gold-inlaid-silver rank or of equal status (groups II, III, and IV), all the way down to 50 *srang* for the murder of those in group IX by one of equal status. Any failure to pay, no matter the amount required, constituted grounds for execution. The gradation of fines indicates the likely correspondence of rank to personal wealth and provides some general information about the monetary system and the extent of the divide between rich and poor.

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[84] A *gtsang-chen*, like other designations such as "silver-rank minister," appears to describes a rank, and not a post. However, *gtsang-chen* does not appear to indicate a type of insignia: there is no construction here such as *gtsang-chen gyi yi-ge-pa*. This is evident from PT 1089, where a man appointed "great official of fields in [Sha-cu in] general" (*spyI'i zhing-pon ched-po*) is described as having the rank (*thabs*) of a *gtsang-chen*: "LI pu hwar is appointed the great official of fields in [Sha-cu in] general. He is of *gtsang-chen* rank." (*lI pu hwar spyI'i zhing pon ched por bskoste// thabs gtsang chen mchis pa/*) (PT 1089, l. 61). The translation of *spyi* as indicating Sha-cu in general is justified by the appearance in PT 1089 of the phrases "great tax official for the Chinese in general" (*rgya spyI'i khral-dpon ched-po; ll. 50, 83) and* "enemy-subduing minister for Sha-cu in general" (*sha-cu spyI'i dgra-blon; ll. 49, 82) (*cf. Iwao *forthcoming b).* On the other hand, Scherrer-Schaub (2007: 284, n. 87) understands *gtsang-chen* as a post relating to land management.

[85] While PT 1071(ll. 289, 300, 311) has *rkya la gtogs pa here*, PT 1072 (ll. 8, 18, 30) has *rkya la ma gtogs pa* in its versions of these clauses. Given that the former would make for a repetition of *rkya la gtogs pa* from group VIII, I am inclined to follow PT 1072. Cf Iwao 2007b: 107–08 and 8, English summary.

[86] Cf. Pelliot 1961: 80.

[87] Demiéville (1952: 285, n. 2) did not equate this with the corresponding Chinese term, and rendered *phra-men* as "joyaux?". See also Takata 2006: 164, where *phra-men* is translated with "silver inlaid with gold."

Investigating the groups of defendants rather than complainants, we can also further qualify the ranking system in the eyes of the law by observing the partition of defendants into three separate legal groups:

a. Ranks I, II, III, and IV (i.e., from those of the rank of chief minister down to those of gold-inlaid-silver rank).

b. Ranks V, VI, and VII (i.e., from those of silver rank down to those of copper rank).

c. Ranks VIII and IX (i.e., from the rank of *gtsang-chen* down to the lowest commoner).

This division only applies to crimes committed against groups I and II, after which defendants are further simplified into two distinct groups: those ranking from great minister to minister of copper rank (ranks I—VII), and those from *gtsang-chen* downwards (ranks VIII and IX). This latter, more fundamental division essentially separates ministers (*zhang-lon*) from commoners (*dmangs*), the latter category being comprised of all those who are not *zhang-lon*, i.e., those from *gtsang-chen* rank downwards. This is further demonstrated by the fact that from the rank of a *gtsang-chen* downwards, kin are not included in one's legal status. Below the rank of a *gtsang-chen*, this is probably also a practicality, as we are no longer dealing with ennobled aristocracy.

A similar, though less well-defined divide between upper and lower classes in this legal document is expressed as the difference between the *dge-ba* and the *ngan-pa*. While these terms usually mean "virtuous" and "wicked," respectively, in this context they indicate social rank. This is also demonstrated by King Zing-po-rje Khri-pang-sum's rash statement in chapter three of the *Chronicle* that "[i]f an aristocrat [lit: "virtuous man"] (*dge-ba*) kills non-aristocrat, he is killed—that is all." (*dge bas myi dge ba bsad na / bsad du zad do*) (PT 1287, l. 146). This is also partly evident from numerous petitions sent to various government officials, which often contain the humilific formula "a lowly man such as I" (*bdag ngan-pa*).[88]

Order of rank alone is insufficient to gain a clear understanding of the social and political values of ennoblement and ministerial aristocracy. Such matters are described in some detail, however, in a number of inscribed pillar edicts and in other Old Tibetan sources. The north side of the Zhol Pillar demonstrates quite clearly the correspondence between insignia of rank (*yi-ge*), aristocracy (*dku-rgyal*), and ministerial aristocracy (*zhang-lon*). The north face inscription begins: "[a] summary of the edict bestowing ennoblement on minister Stag-sgra Klu-khong" (*blon stag sgra klu khong/ dku rgyal gtsigs gnang ba'I mdo*) (Li and Coblin 1987: 148) After recounting a few grants, the text reads:

> As long as there is one among the descendants of minister Stag-sgra Klu-khong who holds in his hand the insignia of ennoblement, even if the lineage dies out or is disgraced, the silver insignia shall not be taken back. The great silver insignia is bestowed in perpetuity on whoever is nearest among the lineage of minister Stag-sgra Klu-khong and of Zla-gong. [I grant that] the descendants of minister Stag-sgra Klu-khong's father, Zla-gong, are awarded the jurisdiction of those of ministerial insignia, with three hundred soldiers. (*blon stag sgra klu khong/ gi bu tsha rgyud peld/ dku rgyal gyi yi ge' lag na 'chang 'chang ba zhIg rabs chad dam bkyon bab na yang dngul gyI yi ge blar myI bzhes par/ blon stag sgra klu khong/ dang/ zla gong gi bu tsha rgyud gang nye ba gcIg dngul gyI yi ge chen po g.yung drung du stsald*

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[88] For references to examples of this formula, see Coblin 1991: 92. Richardson (1998 [1990a]: 163, n. 26) also treated the problem of defining *dge-ba* in this context, and came to the plausible conclusion that "[i[f a religious meaning is to be ruled out, the term may be something like *ya-rabs*, person of good birth."

> *par gnang ngo// /blon stag sgra klu khong gi pha zla gong gi bu tsha rgyud 'pheld gyi rnams/ zhang lon yI ge pa'I thang dang dmag sum rgyar gnang ngo*).[89]

This crucial passage demonstrates the identity of aristocratic insignia or insignia of ennoblement (*dku-rgyal gyi yi-ge*) with ministerial insignia (*zhang-lon yi-ge*), and shows clearly that ennoblement was accompanied by the acquisition of a ministerial post.[90] The passage also demonstrates that each insignia of rank was divided into greater and lesser tiers, a fact that may be verified in numerous other Old Tibetan documents.

In a celebrated passage from chapter four of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, Gnam-ri Slon-mtshan rewards his co-conspirators after the defeat of Zing-po-rje Khri-pangs-sum, lord of Ngas-po.

> Then Gnam-ri Slon-mtshan pointed with his whip and granted Sdur-ba, the castle of Mnyan 'DzI-zung, along with one thousand five hundred bondservant households as Myang Tseng-sku's reward. He granted Za-gad, the territory of Gshen [Khri-bzher 'Dron-kong], and one thousand five hundred bondservant households from the area of Mal-tro as Dba's Dbyi-tshab's reward. He granted one thousand five hundred bondservant households from [Mnon 'Dron-po's] own Mnon clan, and others, as Mnon 'Dron-po's reward. He granted three hundred bondservant households from Smon-mkhar in 'On as Tshes-pong Nag-seng's reward.
>
> Myang Tseng-cung and his patrilateral parallel cousin (*pha-spun-po*[91]), Mu-gseng, both joined the plot [against Zing-po-rje], and he indeed admitted them to the aristocracy (*dku-rgyal*).[92] He admitted to the aristocracy Dba's Dbyi-tshab's grandsons (*tsha-bo*), Stag-po-rje Myes-snang and Mang-po-rje Pu-tshab, the two.[93] He admitted to the aristocracy Tshes-pong Nag-seng's younger brother, Na-gu.
>
> Thus Myang and Dba's, with Mnon making three, and Tshes-pong, the messenger, making four, were loyal, and he granted them many bondservant households and great lands. He appointed them as the Btsan-po's ministers. (PT 1287, ll. 191–98).[94]

This passage forms the prototype for later ennoblements, and contains nearly all of the features that are found in later such grants: admission into the aristocracy, appointment to a ministerial post, and the award of a land grant. There is a good degree of parity in these land grants, and some poetic justice as well. Myang, Dba's, and Mnon each receive the same number of bondservant households, while Tshes-pong, who played a lesser role as the "messenger," receives three hundred bondservant households. Myang and Dba's are also given the territories of their respective former tormenters, Mnyen 'Dzi-zung Nag-po and Gshen Khri-bzher 'Dron-kong.

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[89] North face inscription, ll. 31–41 (Li and Coblin 1987: 149, 171). See also Richardson 1985: 20, 21.

[90] Róna-tas (1955: 263–69) argues that the term *dku-rgyal* denotes aristocracy, and he further points out its close relationship with the possession of insignia (*yi-ge / yig-tshang*) and the title "minister / ministerial aristocrat" (*zhang-lon*). Denwood (1991: 134) injects some linguistic precision into the argument, reading *dku-rgyal* as "overcomer of intrigue," but essentially upholds Róna-tas' claims.

[91] See below for a discussion of this term.

[92] I believe a play on words is intended here, with the author teasing out the forgotten meaning of *dku-rgyal*, the common term for aristocracy, as "overcomer of intrigue." This is juxtaposed with the justified intrigue (*dku*) they committed against Zing-po-rje Khri-pang-sum. This reading was first suggested by Denwood (1991: 134).

[93] These two are mentioned again in the oath of Dba's Dbyi-tshab in chapter five of the *OTC*. In that oath, they are qualified as part of the "sons and brothers" (*spad-spun*) and lineage (*bu-tsha*), so I am inclined to read *tsha* here as grandson, and not as nephew.

[94] For text, see *CD2*: pls. 563–64. For transliteration, see *CD3*: 23–24. For Bacot and Toussaint's French translation, see *DTH*: 138–39. For Beckwith's English translation, see Beckwith 1979: 207–08. For Róna-tas' translation and commentary on this passage, see Róna-tas 1955. For Uray's translation of most of this passage, see Uray 1967: 502.

Nepotism, Guilt By Association, Exchange, and Inheritance

A ministerial aristocrat's relatives were affected, both positively and adversely, by their relationship to him. This reveals the prevalence of a culture of nepotism and also suggests a high degree of clan, or at least lineage, solidarity. This sort of practice is evident from two fundamental principles found in royal grants of land and benefits. In the first place, these grants are usually given retroactively to the honored minister's grandfather, which serves to spread its benefits to more of his kinsmen. Secondly, such grants often include a guarantee protecting innocent kinsmen from charges brought against a criminal among them. In other words, it guards the minister and his lineage from guilt by association with his cousins who might run afoul of the emperor.

As mentioned already, relatives of a ministerial aristocrat (*zhang-lon*) are also ennobled by virtue of their kinship ties. A minister's father, grandfather, mother, and grandmother hold the same insignia of rank as the minister. Another group of relatives are ennobled not to the same status as the minister, but to one tier below. These are:

> ...from the minister's non-ranking sons and their descendants (*bu-po-spad*) down to his patrilateral parallel cousins and their descendants (*pha-spun-spad*), along with the step-mother (*ma-yar-mo*), daughter-in-law (*mna'-ma*), wife (*khyo-mo*), and unmarried daughters and sisters... (*bu po spad phan cad/ pha spun spad tshun cad/ yI ge ma mchis ba'I rnams/ dang ma yar mo dang/ bna' ma dang/ khyo mo dang/ bu sring khyo ma mchis pa dang/ 'di rnams/*).[95]

These kinship terms require some explanation, but a detailed investigation of their meaning and their relationship to other Tibetan kinship terms would take this analysis too far off course. There are some points, however, that demonstrate how imperial Tibetan society and its patterns of exchange compare with subsequent Tibetan societies. Suffice it to say that *bu-po-spad* is not a lineage (*bu-tsha*), but a kindred, or more specifically, a patrilineal egocentric kin group descending from ego's generation and including his own male descendants. Similarly, *pha-spun-spad* is a patrilineal egocentric kin group descending from ego's own generation where it begins with his father's brothers' sons and extends to their descendants (FBSS / FBSC; father's brothers' sons' children). Thus *pha-spun-spad*, as implied by the grammar of the phrase "from *bu-po-spad* down to *pha-spun-spad*," are genealogically further removed than *bu-po-spad*, and comprise a larger range of relatives, all of whom are more distant than one's own filial kindred (*bu-po-spad*) or paternal lineage (*bu-tsha*).[96]

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[95] See Richardson 1998 [1990a]: 151.

[96] Elsewhere in the same Old Tibetan legal document (PT 1071, ll. 431–34), the pair of terms *bu-po-spad* and *pha-spun-spad* are replaced by another pair, "lineage" (*bu-tsha*) and "branch relatives" (*ya-lag-pa*), which appear to qualify the first pair of kinship terms. Gnya'-gong (1995: 312, n. 15) glosses *ya-lag-pa* as *yan-lag-pa* or *rtsa-lag-pa*, meaning "relatives" or "family." It also means "upper branch," or "supplement," and this meaning should probably be considered in a genealogical sense. The term *bu-po-spad*, literally means "son son," which is to say "sons and their sons (S, SS)" or "sons' sons (SS)." *Spad* literally means "son," but there may be grounds for reading it in this instance as "descendants," in which case *bu-po-spad* might be taken as a synonym for lineage (*bu-tsha*), or its honorific, *sras-dbon*, and would thus indicate a lineage. The argument advanced above is that *bu-po-spad* differs from lineage (*bu-tsha*) in that while *bu-tsha* literally means "sons and grandsons," and indicates a paternal lineage in a wider sense extending several generations, *bu-po-spad* is probably a more restrictive term indicating "sons and their sons / descendants." On the distinction between lineage and kindred, see Fox 1967: 67.

The second kinship term in the clause, *pha-spun-spad*, is more familiar than *bu-po-spad* in that the terms *pha-spun* and *pha-spun-po* are found in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* and are still used today in various parts of the Tibetan cultural area (cf. Guigo 1986: 82, 89–90, 96; Crook 1994: 501–05; Brauen 1980). As mentioned above, *ya-lag-pa*, meaning "relatives," was used as a synonym for *pha-spun-spad*. *Pha-spun-spad* literally means "father brother son," that is, "father's brothers and their sons (FB, FBS)," or "father's brothers' sons (FBS)." Within the phrase "from one's *bu-po-spad* down to one's *pha-spun-*

The term *ma yar-mo*, often spelled *ma g.yar-mo* (lit. “borrowed mother”) indicates step-mother. While this is most often due to a father’s remarriage following the death of one’s mother, it is odd that remarriage should be so common as to be found in the standardized formula of a legal document such as PT 1071. It is more likely, therefore, that the term indicates generally a father’s wife who is not one’s birth mother. This would indicate, then, the practice of polygyny among the ministerial aristocracy. The other terms in the list make it clear that women left their natal home upon marriage for their husband’s home, and that they were not always alone: the term, “in-marrying bride” (*mna’-ma*) unequivocally indicates the practice of virilocal marriage, that is, of the wife residing in her husband’s home. The practice of virilocal marriage is further confirmed by the inclusion in the ennobled relatives of “daughter(s) and sister(s) without husbands” (*bu-sring khyo-ma mchis-pa*), who in this way are indicated as dependents until they are married off.

Aside from revealing that the Tibetan aristocracy practiced virilocal polygyny, and perhaps oblique marriage as well, PT 1071 reveals other interesting facts about patterns of exchange during the Tibetan Empire. Regarding the inheritance of an executed man’s property by his son, the clauses concerning those executed for failing to rescue someone who had fallen under a yak explicitly distinguish between two classes of sons. In the case of a copper-rank minister or his equal who, having fallen under a yak, is not rescued by a bystander from the ranks of *gtsang-chen* down to the lowest commoner, yet survives the ordeal, the cowardly bystander is punished as follows:

> As punishment for cowardice, a fox tail will be attached [to him], and his treasury and livestock being given to him, he will be banished together with those [of his family] who have not established their own households. If [one of] his sons has set up his own household, then the banished man’s service tenure lands will be given to that son. If there is no son who has set up his own household, then it will be given to the [exiled man’s] father. (*snar ma’I chad par / ’o dom btags [btab] ste / bang za phyug nor / stsald te / sdum pa ma phub pa dang spyugo / spyug pa’I khol yul / ni bu sdum pa phub pa mchis na / bu stsaldo / bu sdum [sdu] pa phub ma mchIs dang pha stsaldo /*) (PT 1071, ll. 369–70).

The phrase “to set up a household” (*sdum-pa phub-pa*) is glossed in a later clause dealing with those ranked from *gtsang-chen* down to the lowest commoner, in which it states that a man will be exiled along with his sons who have not established their own households (*bu-po khyim ma phub-pa*) (PT 1071, l. 382). This is an important point, as it offers a window into the working practice of inheritance and residence among not only the aristocracy as in the clause translated above, but also among the commoners, as in the clause just quoted. These clauses inform us that sons were considered dependants until they had set up their own household (*sdum-pa / khyim*).

Such an arrangement seems to reflect a situation quite the opposite of what is found in many areas of the Tibetan cultural region today, where emphasis is placed on the maintenance of a household or estate with as little division as possible, be it through polyandry or other means.[97] The situation described in the legal

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spad,” *bu-po-spad* are defined as being in closer proximity than *pha-spun-spad*. Thus *pha-spun-spad* are close kinsmen (*phu-nu-po drung*) who are more distant than one’s own paternal lineage (*bu-tsha*) or filial kindred (*bu-po-spad*). This being the case, Richardson’s translation of *pha-spun-spad* as “members of the father’s clan and their children” (Richardson 1998 [1990a]: 151) seems to be too broad, as this would be indicated simply by “clansmen” (*phu-nu-po*). These kinship terms are also treated briefly in Gnya'-gong 2003: 219–20.

[97] Properly speaking, this type of marriage is more accurately referred to as monomarital polygamy, as the marriage patterns of a single family on a single estate can move from polyandry to polygynandry to polygyny to monogamy without any inherent contradiction of the monomarital principle and the maintenance of a single undivided estate (Berreman 1975). For cultural, economic and environmental factors giving rise to this type of marriage, see Levine 1988; Goldstein 1971b; Crook 1994; and Thargyal 2007: 163–68.

It should be noted, however, that the division of property within the family can coexist with neolocality. In the case of Nubri in northern Nepal, for example, a son inherits his share of the household’s property and moves into a separate home clauses of PT 1071 and PT 1072 reflects, possibly, a strategy driven by an imperative of expansion, whereby sons start their own households apart from their natal homes. This model of inheritance, coupled with the practice of virilocal or neolocal polygyny, is in fact consonant with the needs of an expanding empire that operated colonial regimes in its territories. Further, it demonstrates once again the fluidity and adaptability of Tibetan patterns of exchange.

Commoners, Subjects and Bondservants

Though it seems that ennoblement usually extended only to an aristocrat's immediate relatives, in some cases the favors of ennoblement, or, reciprocally, the punishment of guilt by association, extended to large swathes of an aristocrat's family, and even to his bondservants. The entry for 755-756 in the *Old Tibetan Annals* demonstrates that in some cases the aristocracy and their bondservants shared the same fate; in this year the bondservants (*bran*) of the disgraced ministers, Lang Myes-zigs and 'Bal Ldong-tshab, were exiled to Mtong-sod. This demonstrates that the bondservants were deemed guilty by association with their masters and could be punished for the latter's crimes.[98] That servants were tarred with the same brush as their masters does not necessarily mean that there existed a sense of solidarity between the aristocracy and their bondservants, though the possibility of this type of relationship should not be rejected out of hand.[99]

One of the later inscriptions at Zhwa'i Lha-khang, probably dating to 812, reveals that there were often both ministerial aristocrats and commoners (*dmangs*) within a single lineage. Lines 25–28 of the east inscription read:

> Even the commoners among the lineage of minister Snang-bzang 'Dus-kong who enjoy the personal rank of *gtsang*[-*chen*] and *stong*[-*dpon*] (head of thousand-district) and so forth are given the jurisdiction of those holding ministerial (*zhang-lon*) insignia. *(blon snang bzang 'dus kong gi bu tsha 'phel rgyud dmangs kyi rnams kyang gtsang dang stong*[100] *las stsogs pa sgor bde ba'I rnams/ zhang lon yI ge can gyi thang du gnang ba*).[101]

Though the analysis of PT 1071 and other related documents has shed ample light on the ranking system within the upper echelons of Tibetan society, the document's unique value is its treatment of the lower classes, about whom sources like the *Old Tibetan Annals* and the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* have little to offer. As demonstrated above, *dmangs* is employed in PT 1071 to apply to all of those who are below the rank of *zhang-lon*, that is to say rank VIII, comprising *gtsang-chen*, the relations of a minister of copper rank, all royal military subjects, bondservants attached to the crop fields (*rkya*) of a commoner or a minister, and fiscal governor's attaché; and rank IX, comprising all civilian royal subjects, bondservants not attached to the crop fields (*rkya*) of a minister or a commoner, ordinary civilians, and barbarian prisoners. It is obvious that within this group, as within the general group called *zhang-lon*, there is a high degree of stratification.

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when his wife gives birth to a son. The new father then inherits one half of the property, or, if he has a marriageable younger brother, one third. The remainder belongs to the father, but this is eventually given to the sons when the older generation moves to the grounds of the local monastery during the last part of their lives (Childs 2003: 103–04). On neolocality in the context of a pastoral estate in Khams, see Thargyal 2007: 155–61.

[98] It is possible the servants were involved in the treason apparently perpetrated by their two masters or that they had a hand in the civil strife that followed.

[99] For an insightful discussion of the relationship between these two classes in the context of a pastoral estate in premodern Tibet, see Thargyal 2007: esp. 198–99.

[100] A note by Richardson (1985: 56–57) suggests the reading *gstang* [*chen*] *dang stong* [*dpon*], and I have followed this gloss in my translation.

[101] See Richardson 1985: 56–57 and Li and Coblin 1987: 271–72, 292.

This is evident also from the use of the term *dmangs mtha'-ma*, meaning "lowest commoner." As such, *dmangs* is a very general category and is probably best translated by the non-specific term "commoners."

Commoners (*dmangs*) are differentiated, however, from subjects (*'bangs*). As is obvious from the frequently occurring compound *btsan-po rjes 'bangs*, meaning "the emperor and subjects," *'bangs* can indicate anyone who is subject to the Btsan-po. This is highlighted by the phrase "gathered as subjects," translated slightly less literally with "subjugated" (*'bangs su bkugs*), which is commonly used to describe a Tibetan conquest. Bogoslovskij (1972: 81–84) also notes the meaning of the term *'bangs* as designating all of the Btsan-po's subjects, whether aristocrats or commoners. Consonant with its use in English, however, the term "subject" can refer not only to all those who are subject to a ruler or monarch, but those subject to a petty lord as well. In PT 1071, for example, half of the service tenure lands of an executed man are sometimes bestowed on his subjects and his bondservants, thus indicating that while all members of Tibetan society may be subjects of the Btsan-po, some are also subjects of the landed gentry. This is in fact a crucial element of the text, for it also reveals that there were circumstances under which the subjects and bondservants could inherit land.

That land ownership (or, more accurately, usufruct rights) was not restricted to the landed gentry is further demonstrated by the legal category "bondservants of a commoner or a minister who are attached to the *rkya*" (*zhang-lon dang dmangs kyi bran rkya-la-gtogs*), since it demonstrates that not only ministers, but also commoners could be in possession of bondservants. It is further evident that bondservants could own their own goods that they were free to sell or barter. In his study of Old Tibetan contracts, Takeuchi treated PT 1094, a text in which an aristocrat's bondservant sells an ox to another man. Not only the seller, but also the guarantor for the sale was a bondservant, further confirming the ability of this class to buy and sell goods.[102]

The lot of a bondservant was most often linked to the land, as is evident from the term "bondservants attached to the *rkya*" (*bran rkya la gtogs pa*), where *rkya* is a taxable land unit. Also, most land given in grants was awarded together with bondservants. Bogoslovskij (1972: 95–96) notes, however, that some *bran* were not field servants but artisans, and that *bran* could be attached to monasteries, private estates, and to the army as well. Iwao (2007b: 107–08 and 8, English summary) notes a status distinction here whereby bondservants attached to or belonging to a *rkya* (*bran rkya la gtogs pa*) enjoy a higher status than those who are unattached to a *rkya* (*bran rkya la ma gtogs pa*). As such, it seems that the ancient Tibetan *bran* parallels in many ways the pre-modern *mi-ser*, for among the former category are some who are not much more than slaves, some who are field servants attached to the land, some who are landless and therefore lower in status, and some who are artisans.[103]

Bogoslovskij (1972: 94–95) points out quite correctly that bondservants were treated as property in much the same way as land, and that *bran* could be requisitioned for various tasks, exchanged, bought, and sold. Concerning the treatment of bondservants as property, Takeuchi analyzed two documents concerning the sale of bondservants, the first from Miran, and the second from Dunhuang. In the first case, a layman buys a male bondservant from a monk for the price of three *dmar srang*.[104] The buyer and seller both appear to be Tibetan, but the bondservant is Chinese (Takeuchi 1995: 35–38, 159–61). The second text, which Takeuchi dates to 820 (plus or minus one twelve year cycle), records a sale in which two brothers sell their sister to another man as his wife. All parties involved are Chinese, and the price is seven *dmar srang* (Takeuchi 1995: 38–40, 161–64). Despite the fact that the person sold in both examples was Chinese, neither is referred to as a barbarian prisoner (*lho-bal btson-pa*), and in the former case the man sold is explicitly called a bondservant (*bran*). Therefore while the possibility of obtaining land and buying and selling goods did exist for some in this social class, it was also the case that bondservants were the object of sale or grant themselves rather than buyer, seller, or guarantor.

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[102] Takeuchi (1995: 139–44) dates the text to either 832 or 844.

[103] For a summary of the various types of *mi-ser*, see Goldstein 1986. On Tibetan corvée labor during the imperial period, see Takeuchi 1995: 264–67 and Dotson 2007b: 39–40.

[104] The interpretation of *dmar srang* or "*srang* of *dmar*" is uncertain, but Takeuchi (1995: 26) hypothesizes that one *srang* of *dmar* may be equivalent to one string of copper coins worth 1,000 cash.

Regarding social mobility in the Tibetan Empire, Róna-tas (1955: 262) observed that a servant could become an aristocrat (*dku-rgyal*). It should be noted that in Róna-tas' example from the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*—Myang Tseng-sku, the bondservant (*bran*) of a minister of the Mnyan clan, being ennobled by Gnam-ri Slon-mtshan after the conquest of Ngas-po—the ennoblement in question was brought about due to treason and defection from one kingdom to another, not due to promotion within the class hierarchy of a single bounded society. As such, the passage cannot be used to demonstrate the degree of social mobility within the early Tibetan Empire, and this remains an unresolved issue.

Rank Order and Chain of Command

While the system of rank according to precious metal insignia is quite clear, the order of rank and the actual posts and duties of Tibetan officials remain to be demonstrated. As mentioned above, there are regional circumstances that complicate the chain of command. Starting from the center, and moving outward, however, we begin with the royal court. As described already in the section on historical geography, the emperor's court was a massive establishment comprised of soldiers, monks, ritual specialists, and officials. Its gravitational pull as the center of the empire is evident from the legal clauses of the Old Tibetan text ITJ 740 (2). Here legal matters arising on the periphery are relayed to the judges of the court retinue (*pho-brang 'khor gyi zhal-ce-pa*) for a decision. The cases are notable for their mundane nature: local magistrates did not forward only cases of murder or treason to the court, but simple cases such as marital separation (Dotson 2007b: 34–35). This suggests that imperial Tibetan law and administration was more centralized, and enjoyed a longer geographical reach than in subsequent Tibetan administrations. A similar dynamic of centralization has been discussed recently by Iwao in his analysis of a group of Old Tibetan documents pertaining to the requisition of copies of the *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*. Here local officials in Dunhuang required approval of expenditure from the relevant office of the *bde-blon*, but it seems that both the *bde-blon* and the Dunhuang officials also required approval from the authorities in central Tibet.[105]

Apart from the emperor's court, the central political council (*'dun-ma*), often convened by the chief minister, was the highest political authority in the land, and it was here that most important legislative decisions were taken. Like the court, this was also a mobile center, and its sites are recorded in detail in map seven *et passim* in Part III of this book.

While the central council was perhaps the most prestigious, it is best viewed as the "*primus inter pares*" of many such councils. The *Annals* also records the council of Mdo-smad in eastern Tibet, and other Old Tibetan administrative documents and letters reveal the existence of a council of the *bde-blon* (*bde-blon gyI 'dun-sa*; PT 1089, l. 6), regional councils in Kwa-cu regional military government (*kwa-cu khrom gi 'dun-tsa*; PT 1078, l. 4), and the land of 'A-zha (ITJ 1368). There were, no doubt, several other regional councils.

The chief minister and the other high-ranking ministers from central Tibet were by no means restricted in their activities to the core regions of the four Horns of Tibet. From the outset, ministers made their names through conquest, winning distant lands for the empire and for themselves. Nevertheless, their practical influence in the governance of these conquered territories tended to wane over time, and was delegated to regional officials. So, while political power was concentrated at the top with the emperor and powerful bride-giving clans, the business of running the empire was also the responsibility of local, regional officials in a long chain of command.

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[105] This information comes from Kazushi Iwao, "The costs of copying *Śatasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā* in Tibetan ruled Dunhuang," a paper presented at the Mediaeval Tibeto-Burman Languages Symposium, School of Oriental and African Studies, 17 September 2008.

The ceremonial order of rank is evident from the edicts of Khri Srong-lde-btsan, Khri Lde-srong-btsan, and from the Lhasa Treaty Inscription. The regimes listed in these edicts are presented in Appendix Five. There we see that this ceremonial order was relatively constant, with a few variables. After queens and minor (vassal) kings, the first Tibetan ministers to swear are the "great ministers participating in the [deliberation of] state affairs" (*zhang-blon chen-po bka' la gtogs-pa*). This became a stock expression such that the "orders" or "deliberation of state affairs" (*bka'*), as Uray (1990a: 421) translated it, was essentially a synonym for political cabinet (Macdonald 1971: 325). Following these, we have, in order, the ministers of the interior, ministers of the exterior, and then governors and generals. As a ceremonial hierarchy emanating from the center, these edicts certainly reflect a central Tibetan bias.

Such a bias is also evident in other Old Tibetan administrative documents, where, for example, heads of thousand-districts from Tibet and Sum-pa outrank those of Mthong-khyab and 'A-zha (PT 1089; Scherrer-Schaub 2007: 286).

To gain a better understanding of the chain of command and order of rank in a particular situation, we must turn to PT 1089, an Old Tibetan document dealing with the order of rank in Shazhou / Dunhuang. This document records an answer to a petition by Chinese officials in Shazhou, who are essentially disaffected due to their subordination to Tibetans. The main issue raised in this document is the request by the Chinese "commanders" (*to-dog*) for higher insignia.[106] They complain that Tibetan heads of thousand-district and little heads of thousand-district were promoted and given equal or higher insignia than the Chinese officials such as the "commanders."[107] In particular, they request to be given higher insignia than these Tibetan officers. Their line of argument is fascinating, as it reveals the varied adaptations of the local indigenous governments to the Tibetan Empire's system of ranks in the empire's colonial regimes. In particular, they point to Khotan, where the vassal ruler, while functionally subordinate to the Tibetan minister, outranked him in terms of insignia. They argue for a similar symbolic superiority to their Tibetan counterparts in Shazhou (PT 1089, ll. 21–28; Lalou 1955: 177, 181; Scherrer-Schaub 2007: 288–89). What the Chinese officials argue, with considerable tact, is that there is a fundamental distinction between rank order with its attendant insignia, and a post itself. Recognizing the subordinate nature of "barbarians" such as themselves and the Khotanese, they assert that they should be placated (or compensated) with higher symbolic, but arguably meaningless, insignia of rank.

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[106] The term *to-dog* is a loan from the Chinese *dudu* 都督 "commander," a term which fell into disuse in the Tang by the middle of the eighth century (Demiéville 1952: 197). It is not an equivalent rank, however, since the *to-dog*, while the highest-ranking Chinese officers in the Tibetan administration, were by no means "commanders" in the sense of their Tang counterparts (Iwao *forthcoming a*). Indeed Scherrer-Schaub (2007: 267) notes that based on the evidence of PT 1089, "on est tenté de penser qu'ils étaient devenus dans le marges de l'empire une manière de seigneurie héréditaire." See also the "note additionelle" on page 326.

[107] "Even at Sha-cu, formerly, though the heads of thousand-districts from Tibet appointed to a higher place were [ranked] as *gtsang-chen-pa*, from last year onwards the Chinese inhabitants of Sha-chu were selected as soldiers, districts were divided and heads of thousand-districts and little heads of thousand-districts [appointed]. They gave the heads of thousand-districts the rank of small brass, and gave the little heads of thousand-districts the rank of great copper." (*sha cu na yang sngon nI bod las stong dpon gong tsar bskos pa'/ btsang cen pa zhig mchis par yang bas/ na nIng slad kyIs rgya sha cu pa rgod du bton nas// stong pon stong cung yang sde bcad nas// stong pon nI thabs ra gan chungu [ya] stsald// stong cung nI thabs/ zangs ched po stsald/*) (PT 1089, ll. 8–10; Lalou 1955: 176, 180; Scherrer-Schaub 2007: 284–85).

Lalou (1955) translated and analyzed the text, and dated the document to the end of the eighth century, with the earliest date, that of the rat year, being 784. Later, Stein (1983: 206, n. 102) dated it to 820 or 832, and Rong Xinjiang (1990–1991: 270–271) placed it in about this same period. Most recently, Scherrer-Schaub (2007) made a diplomatic annotated translation and edition of the document, though without taking a firm position on its date.[108] One passage of the document records the order of rank, and lists several different posts, revealing a good deal about the lower echelons of Tibetan imperial bureaucracy. This is the order of ranks in Mkhar-tsan regional military government as decided by the great ministers (*zhang lon chen po*).

> The order of ranks:
>
> Horn officials (*ru-dpon*);
>
> Heads of ten-thousand-districts (*khri-dpon*);
>
> Great war (lit. “enemy [subduing]”) ministers (*dgra-blon chen-po*);
>
> Brass [rank] town prefects (*rtse-rje ra-gan-pa*);
>
> Great agriculture officials (*zhing-dpon chen-po*);
>
> Great ministers of strongholds (*mkhar-dpon chen-po*);
>
> Great estates chief of the wealth / livestock of the mountains and plains (?) (*stod smad gyI phyug-ma’I gzhIs-pon chen-po*);[109]
>
> The Horn inspectors appointed from the inner retinue (*ru spyan nang kor las bskos-pa rnams*);
>
> The middle-rank war ministers (*dgra-blon ’bring-po*);
>
> The ru-theb;[110]
>
> The lesser-rank war ministers (*dgra-blon chungu*);
>
> The great tax officials (*khral-po[n] chen-po*);
>
> The great secret scribes (*gsang gi yi-ge-pa chen-po*);
>
> The great accounts ministers / chancellors (*rtsis-pa ched-po*);
>
> The great justices (*zhal-ce-pa ched-po*);
>
> Heads of thousand-districts of Tibet and Sum-pa (*bod sum gyI stong-pon*);
>
> Heads of thousand-districts of Mthong-kyab and 'A-zha (*mthong-kyab dang ’a-zha’i stong-pon*);
>
> Copper [rank] town prefects (*rtse-rje zangs-pa’*);
>
> Secret messengers (*gsang gI pho-nya*);
>
> Middle rank secret scribes (*gsang gI yige-pa ’bring-po*);
>
> Lesser secret scribes (*gsang gI yige-pa chungu*);

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[108] See especially Scherrer-Schaub’s criticism of Rong’s dating of the rat year to 820 (Scherrer-Schaub 2007: 272–73, n. 56). As Scherrer-Schaub (2007: 273, n. 56) notes, the dating of PT 1089 depends also on a detailed analysis of related Tibetan and Chinese documents. Kazushi Iwao, who works with many of these documents, including PT 1089, believes that the rat year mentioned in PT 1089 must precede tribute (*dpya’*) texts such as PT 1128, and has demonstrated that it must be earlier than 826 and later than 795 (Iwao *forthcoming b*).

[109] This translation is uncertain, and follows that of Scherrer-Schaub (2007: 292, n. 116): “régisseur des domaines de plaine et de montagne,” though this seems to fail to take account of the word *phyug-ma*, which may indicate wealth or livestock.

[110] Scherrer-Schaub 2007: 292 has “[l]e substitut du commandant de *ru*.”

spyI gcod;[111]

Little heads of thousand-districts of Tibet and Sum-pa (*bod sum gyI stong-cung*);

Translators of Chinese and Turkish (*rgya drugI lo-tsa-pa*);

Generals of Lung and Dor belonging to the grade of copper-rank officials (*lung dor gyI dmag-pon/ zangs-pa sna la gtogs-pa*);[112]

Accounts inspectors (*rtsIs spyan*);

Little heads of thousand-districts of Mthong-kyab and 'A-zha belonging to the grade of those with large tiger girdles (*mthong-kyab dang 'a-zha'i stong-cung* / *stagI zar cen* [*can*][113] *pa sna la ma gtogs-pa*);

Collectors and distributors of secrets (*gsang gI rub-ma-pa dang 'gyed-ma-pa'*);

Inspectors of the estates officials (?) (*gzhIs-pon spyan*);[114]

Great caretakers (?) (*byung 'tsho ched-po*);[115]

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[111] Based on Btsan-lha 1997: 157, where *gcod dpyong gi ring lugs* is defined as a term for a judicial officer, Scherrer-Schaub (2007: 293) translates *spyi-gcod* with "[l]e juge (*gcod*) général (*spyi*) [à savoir chargé de prononcer les peines]." While this is certainly possible, I still find the term vexing enough to leave untranslated at present.

[112] The reading of Lung and Dor as place names follows Scherrer-Schaub 2007: 262, n. 17 and 293. Up until this point, a division stroke (*shad*) is found between each office, such that one could easily read *lung dor gyI dmag-pon* and *zangs-pa sna la gtogs-pa* as two separate posts (Lalou 1955: 182; Rong 1990–1991: 269–70). This sort of mechanical reflex is proved somewhat less likely when one considers that the list mentions almost exclusively posts, not ranks, and "copper-rank officials attached to the *sna*" can only be a rank. Further, it creates difficult problems with the interpretation of *sna*, and what it means to belong to or be attached to the *sna*. Btsan-lha (1997: 423), relying on ll. 394–96 of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, which concern a conflict with 'Jang, probably in 791, defines *sna la gtogs pa* as "a name for minor officials" (*dpon chung-ngu'i ming*). Richardson, in his partial translation of PT 1089 kept in his papers at the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford (Ms OR. Richardson 44, p. 4), read *sna la ma gtogs pa* as "not part of the general order." With Scherrer-Schaub's solution, these cumbersome explanations are rendered completely unnecessary. The notable exception to the rule that the passage lists only posts and not ranks is the appearance of "those with small tiger girdles" on their own further along.

[113] The translation of *zar* is uncertain; it literally means "pitchfork," but this is obviously unacceptable in the present context. The correction of *zar-can* to *zar-cen* is justified not only by the fact that a tiger's small *zar* [rank] (*stagI zar cung-pa*) appears immediately below in the text, but also by the appearance of *stagi zar-cen* in other Old Tibetan texts such as PT 1217, ll. 3–4: *bdag ngan pas snga slad chab srid kyi 'dab du dpen pa 'i zho sha phul pa'i rngo 'phul stagi zar cen gnang ba tsaM zhig / 'og dpe phyag rgya 'ga' 'cang bar chi gnang zhes*. Rong (1990–1991: 270) translates *stagi zar can pa* with one "having as mark a tiger skin on his shoulder," but offers no explanation. Presumably, Rong takes *zar* to be a noun derived from the verb *'dzar*, and its causative equivalent *gzar*, "to hang down," "to hang or throw over, the toga over one's shoulder" (Jäschke 1998 [1881]: 464). It is in this sense that I have translated *zar* with "girdle," assuming that it is a piece of clothing that hangs down, and comes in larger and smaller varieties. While this might be a garment that can be worn over one's shoulder, "girdle" at least echoes the *Xin Tangshu* (*supra*, "The Emperor's Court and the Political Councils"), but the problem will probably find its resolution through an iconographic study of the paintings from Dunhuang that depict warriors clad in tiger skins, and perhaps also with recourse to wrathful iconography, which has managed to sublimate a number of the martial and administrative features from the imperial period. Alternatively, *zar* could be a variant for *gzar*, a type of saddle blanket, but tiger skin seems wholly inappropriate for this. One further possibility is that it is similar to a *rmed-'dzar*, which a "[p]iece of red cloth attached to the crupper" of a saddle (LaRocca 2006: 286).

Note that the construction of this post, and the placement of the *shad* follows the same logic as in *lung dor gyI dmag-pon/ zangs-pa sna la gtogs-pa.*

[114] The translation of *gzhis* is uncertain. I have read it as estates, but Scherrer-Schaub (2007: 294) translates it with "biens fonds," and Rong (1990–1991: 270) translates it with "granaries."

[115] Rong 1990–1991: 270: "the high official in charge of administrative properties"; Scherrer-Schaub 2007: 294: "[l]e grand [préposé au] ravitaillement." This office could be in charge of receiving and looking after grain, or in its distribution. As

> Those with small tiger girdles [rank] (*stagI zar cung-pa*);
>
> Deputy officials of estates (?) (*gzhIs-pon ’og-pon*);
>
> Lesser secret scribes (*gsang gI yi-ge-pa phra-mo*);
>
> Lesser barbarian generals (*lho-bal gyI dmag-pon chungu*);
>
> Lesser caretakers (?) (*byung ’tsho chungu*);
>
> Accountants of *chos* (religious affairs?) (*chos gyi rtsIs-pa*);
>
> Tally officials and wooden-slip-makers (*khram-pa/ sam mkhan*).[116]

> *gral thabs la/ /ru dpon/ /khrI dpon/ /dgra blon chen po/ /rtse rje ra gan pa/ /zhang lon chen po/ /mkhar dpon chen po/ /stod smad gyI phyug ma’I gzhIs pon chen po/ /ru spyan nang kor las bskos pa rnams/ /dgra blon ’bring po/ /ru theb/ dgra blon chungu/ /khral po chen po/:/gsang gI yige pa ched po/ /rtsis pa ched po/ /zhal ce pa ched/ po/ /bod sum gyI stong pon/ /mthong kyab dang ’a zha’i stong pon/ /rtse rje zangs pa’/ /gsang gI pho nya/ /gsang gI yige pa ’bring po/ / gsang gI yige pa chu ngu/ /spyi gcod/ /bod sum gyI stong cung/ /rgya drugI lo tsa pa/ lung dor gyI dmag pon/ zangs pa sna la gtogs pa/ rtsIs/ spyan/ /mthong kyab dang ’a zha’I stong cung/ /stagi zar can pa sna la ma gtogs pa/ /gsang gI rub ma pa dang ’gyed ma pa’/ /gzhIs pon spyan/ byung ’tsho ched po/ /stagi zar cung pa/ gzhIs pon ’og pon/:/gsang gI yige pa phra mo/ lho bal gyI dmag pon chungu/ byung ’tsho chungu/ chos gyi rtsIs pa/ khram pa/ sam mkhan* (PT 1089, ll. 33–43; Lalou 1955: 177–78, 182–83; Rong 1990–1991: 269–70; Scherrer-Schaub 2007: 292–94, 306–07, 322).

This fascinating passage is perhaps the most comprehensive picture of the lower ranks in Tibetan imperial administration to be found in the Dunhuang manuscripts. Several of these ranks are military in nature, and their functions are self-evident. A full analysis of all that it reveals would take this introduction too far off course, but some brief comments are in order. The racial dynamics found in this list are particularly interesting. As noted above in the discussion of historical geography, the four Horns of Tibet and Sum-pa’s Horn formed the core of the Tibetan Empire. This is evident in the present list, where heads of thousand-districts from Tibet and Sum-pa (*bod sum gyI stong-pon*) are mentioned separately from, and indeed above, the Mthong-kyab and 'A-zha heads of thousand-districts. Further, PT 1089 also demonstrates that the local Chinese were generally subordinate to the Tibetans, as in the case of the Tibetans serving as heads of thousand-districts while the Chinese served as their attachés (*stong-zla*).

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such, it seems unlikely that it goes together with the next phrase, *stagI zar cung pa*, since whatever its specific meaning, the tiger’s *zar* is almost certainly a military distinction.

[116] Scherrer-Schaub (2007: 294, n. 130), basing herself on the *Tshig mdzod chen mo*’s entry for *sam Ta*, which states that it is a writing surface or a wooden slip (Zhang *et al.* 1998 [1984]: 2918), translates *khram pa / sam mkhan* with “celui qui tient les registres (*khram*) ou/et celui qui tient les tablettes en bois [*sam* (*khra*)].” Alternatively, one could read *sa mkhan,* and translate this with “guide.”

Linguistic and Orthographic Features of the *Old Tibetan Annals*

The *Old Tibetan Annals* holds a place of great importance for the study of Old Tibetan orthography and palaeography. Of course the most reliable, dated sources for such work are the inscribed pillars, the oldest of which dates the middle of the eighth century. Version I of the *Annals*, as stated at the beginning of this long introduction, has a strong claim to being the oldest extant Tibetan *composition*. The present document is of course a later copy, but the original entries were most likely composed from the early to mid-650s. This brings up a very interesting problem. Namely, in the course of copying the text, have variant orthographies been "corrected?" Early Old Tibetan (mid-seventh to mid-eighth century) differs a good deal from the middle Old Tibetan of the mid-eighth to mid-ninth century, which was far more standardized and had been refined by translation to and from Chinese and Sanskrit. This latter period also includes the Tibetan domination of Dunhuang (786–848), and most of the Old Tibetan texts employed here date to this time.[117] Were it the case that the scribe retained the original orthographies, Version I of the *Old Tibetan Annals* would constitute a series of snapshots of the language and its development year by year from the mid-650s to 747-748, all restricted to the same narrow literary genre. Needless to say, this would make it a treasure trove for Old Tibetan linguistics. In fact, there are some indications that the original orthography of the yearly entries was left generally intact. Nathan Hill, in his study of the so-called "*a-chung,*" notes that this letter's occurance as a final consonant, which he argues to be an archaism, is found with far greater frequency in the first part of Version I of the *Annals* (643-644 to 659-660) than in the later part (Hill 2005: 117).

It was mentioned in the introduction that the damaged preamble to Version I of the *Annals* does not form a entirely coherent piece with the *Annals* proper in that it is more narrativized does not cover the same subject matter (e.g., emperor's residences, council sites, administrative measures) that one would expect. This is doubly true from a linguistic standpoint. In the first place, the dating formula found at the beginning of each entry in the *Annals* is not present in any of the "entries" in the preamble. The *Annals* entries begin, *xxx gyi lo la babste*, which can be translated with "it fell on the year of the [animal]," or "the year of the [animal] arriving," or, more fluently, and in accord with the phrase "at the appropriate time" (*dus la 'bab pa*), it could be translated with "so the year of the [animal]." Sometimes an entry simply begins "in the year of the [animal]" (*xxx gyi lo la*). In the preamble, however, we find neither of these dating formulae, but a different sort of formula: "then after three years" or "in three years after that" (*de nas lo gsum na*) and "then after six years" (*de nas lo drug na*) in the penultimate and final entries, respectively. This has allowed scholars such as Hugh Richardson to work backwards and supply plausible dates for these entries. This move to date this tantalizingly fragmentary opening to our most fundamental historical text for the early Tibetan Empire has not been matched, however, by an equally driven imperative to compare its form and content with the document it ostensibly introduces.

In fact, the variant dating formula is a relatively minor divergence from the *Annals* when we consider the grammar of the preamble. Nowhere in the *Annals* do we find the final declarative particle known in traditional Tibetan grammar as the *rdzogs-tshig*, but the preamble is littered with eight of them in its sixteen fragmentary lines.[118]

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[117] After early Old Tibetan and middle Old Tibetan, late Old Tibetan (late-ninth to early-twelfth century) was a *lingua franca* along the Silk Road, and the language of post-imperial Tibetan Buddhist documents from Dunhuang. Texts were composed mostly by non-Tibetans such as Chinese and Khotanese, but also by Tibetans in Liangzhou, the Tsong-ka kingdom, western Tibet and elsewhere on the Tibetan plateau. Tibetan was also spoken during this period by Chinese and Khotanese as a second language. This periodization of Old Tibetan is based on that suggested by Prof. Takeuchi in a paper at the Old Tibetan workshop of the 11th Himalayan Languages Symposium, Bangkok, 2005.

In addition, the preamble refers to the famous Tibetan minister, Mgar Stong-rtsan Yul-zung, by his full name, and this comes in the context of his invitation of the Chinese princess to wed the Tibetan emperor. Mgar Stong-rtsan is mentioned in every entry in the *Annals* from 652-653 to 667-668 simply as "Chief minister Stong-rtsan." Taken together with the preamble's parallel passage in the *Old Tibetan Annals* and its abnormal (for the *Annals*) use of the final declarative particle, it is fair to conclude that the "preamble," far from being recorded from memory with the advent of the annalistic tradition in the mid-650s, was a significantly later composition. One might even venture so far as to suppose that the preamble's faux-annalistic formula was an attempt to make its narrative fit more smoothly with the form of the *Annals*. All of this is not to discredit the preamble as a source for Tibetan history, but only to put it on a par with the more epic-toned narrative of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, and to separate it from the body of the *Annals* in terms of its genre and its reliability.

Turning now to the two versions of the *Annals, they* differ not only in content, but in their form as well. Version I of the *Annals* is written on a long scroll, 25.8 cm wide x 434 cm long. PT 1288 makes up the first 70 cm, and the remaining 364 cm comprise ITJ 750 (Lalou 1961: 2; La Vallée Poussin 1962: 236). The text of Version I of the *Annals*, including the preamble, is neat and clear. The letters are large and square with regular spacing, as if written with the aid of a ruler. This is in keeping with many of the official documents found in Dunhuang, of which the *Annals* in particular, in its page-setting and in the proportion of its letters, appears similar to inscribed pillar edicts. Double *tsheg* and reverse *gi-gu* are found throughout the text, along with typical variations in spelling between aspirated and unaspirated consonants. The years are written in vermillion ink, which has faded, and the entries are written in black. The entire text appears to be the work of a single hand. Every entry but one begins with an introductory "head mark" *yig-mgo*. This is usually in vermillion like the dating formula that follow it, but is in black in the entries for 663-664, 664-665, 667-668 to 669-670, and 672-673 to 675-676. Here it can be seen especially clearly that while what has come to be seen as the "standard" *yig-mgo* curls in with its "tail" to the left, this one curls down with its tail to pointing upwards.[119]

The scroll ends in the middle of the entry for the year 747-748. Only one other entry is incomplete, which is for the year 716-717, which includes only the dating formula and the generic beginning of an entry. The absence of the remainder of the entry is inexplicable until one recalls that the *Annals* may have been written on wooden slips that were only later collated to create a document on paper. The missing entry for 716-717 could therefore be the result of the misplacement of a single missing wooden slip.

Version II of the *Old Tibetan Annals* is a far shorter scroll measuring 26.5 cm wide x 143.5 cm long. The dating formula, where it appears, is in red. Where there is no dating formula, a space is left blank where it should appear, suggesting that the scribe did not have vermillion ink at his disposal. This does not apply to the "Annals Fragments," however, which leaves no such space for the dating formula. Only in the latter does a "head mark" appear, which is not unlike that found in Version I. The scribes responsible for Version II employ different writing styles and orthographies. By contrast with the nicely ruled lines of Version I, the lines incline upward or downward. Both the writing itself and the spacing between lines is cramped in some places and open in others. The writing is evidently the work of three different hands, while a fourth hand composed the "Annals Fragments."

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[118] I am grateful to Dongzhi Duoje for sharing this observation.

[119] For more on these opening symbols and their development, including examples, see Scherrer-Schaub 1999: 17–19, 25, and plate V.

One of the most striking aspects of Version II is that the first eleven lines are upside down. This is not apparent from the photographic reproductions published in *CD3* (plate 592), where the first eleven lines are shown right side up, followed by white space, and then the rest of Version II. The photographic reproductions included here show the document as it is, and it is evident that paper containing the first eleven lines of the scroll was cut and pasted. The dried paste is red in color, and is visible on the Tibetan verso of the scroll. These first eleven upside-down lines contain the entries for 743-744 to 747-748. After the cut, the main part of the scroll begins—right side up—in the middle of the entry for 755-756. On the recto, the cut comes just three lines before the end of the Chinese *Yao shi jing*. This creates something of a puzzle, since one might assume that it was the Chinese scribes who cut the scroll and reattached it with no regard to how this affected the Tibetan document on the verso, in the process discarding the fifteen or so centimeters of scroll that contained the entries for 748-749 to 754-755. Examining the Chinese, however, it is obvious that this was not the case. This version of the *Yao shi jing*, the *Foshuo guanding jing*, corresponds to Taisho vol. 21, no. 1131, and was translated during the Easter Jin dynasty (4th / 5th century) in China by the Kucha monk Shrimitra (Chinese: Bo shi li mi duo luo; died 343). Our fragment begins some way (about two-fifths) into the text, but the most interesting aspect is the cut. It is obvious that this cutting and pasting of the scroll in no way renders the Chinese coherent, since it in fact cuts out more than half of the sutra, as can be seen on the final plate of the photographic reproductions at the end of this book. What we are left with is only about 20 percent of the *Yao shi jing*, and the knowledge that the portion of the scroll removed by the cut must have been approximately 4.5 meters long. When intact, our scroll would have measured about 7.5 meters. Only a portion of this cut was rescued and adhesed to the end of the Chinese text (and the beginning of the Tibetan text).[120] From the Tibetan, it is evident that at least some of this cut portion contained Version II of the *Old Tibetan Annals*, and it is obvious that the surviving fragment did not mark the point where the scribe began. We can fairly assume, therefore, that the prior to the disfiguration of this document, the scribes had a much longer scroll of the "military version" of the *Old Tibetan Annals* perhaps going as far back as Version I does, that is to say, to the year 650-651. In fact, the missing portion would have left more than enough space for this. We can only hope that this missing fragment of the *Yao shi jing*, and, more importantly, its Tibetan verso, will some day come to light.

In transliterating the *Annals*, I have attempted to render the text as it appears in the original documents and made as few corrections as possible in order to retain the original orthographies and irregularities. I have not bothered to correct some of the more obvious liaisons, such as *stagi* for *stag gi*, *be'i* for *ba'i*, or *bsduste* for *bsdus te*. Likewise, I have left untouched most variants between aspirated and unaspirated consonants and also retained attested variant spellings. For example, the term "nephew / son-in-law / bride-receiver" (*dbon*) appears as *'bon* and as *dbon*, the royal honorific for corpse, *spur*, appears throughout as *dpur*, and the term "gift" or "reward" (*bya-dga'*), is consistently spelled *bya-sga*. Further, I have taken note of the employment of single and double *tsheg*. I have retained these older orthographies in order to underline them, as they are good examples of common types of variation found in Old Tibetan. Glosses that are not otherwise obvious are given in the footnotes.

The text employs only *gi / gis* and *gyi / gyis* for the genitive and ergative particles; there is no use of *kyi / kyis* following *d*, *b,* or *s* suffixes, which are instead followed by *gyi / gyis*. Further, *gi / gis* hardly ever stands on its own, but is usually attached to a syllable, as in the above example, "*stagi*" for "*stag gi*." As a result, *gyi / gyis* often follows *g* and *ng* suffixes, as at line 11: "*yul zung gyIs*." Taking account in Version I of those instances where a genitive or ergative particle appears after *g* and *ng* suffixes, instead of the expected *gi / gis*, we find an imbalance of 47 to 7 in favor of *gyi / gyis*.

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[120] One can at least be satisfied that the Tibetan text was pasted on upside down in relation to the body of the scroll, since it would have otherwise caused even greater chronological headaches of the sort that we are faced with in dealing with PT 1287 and the order of paragraphs in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* (Uray 1992).

I present my own transliteration here both for ease of reference and to demonstrate the pattern of use of the double and single *tsheg* in the text. I mark the double *tsheg* with a colon and the single *tsheg* with a full stop in the transliteration. In order to disambiguate, I have therefore used the dash to mark off a *ga* prefix before a *ya* root letter (e.g., *g-yag,* not *g.yag*). This is only so in the body of the *Annals* transliteration appearing below each entry. Everywhere else I have followed the standard practice according to Wiley transliteration (e.g., *g.yag*).

Further editing conventions are as follows:

I	Reverse *gi-gu*.
î	Indiscriminate *gi-gu*.[121]
M	Circle over a syllable indicating an abbreviation for *m*.
[±#]	Approximate number of syllables (not graphemes) missing due to damage in the original.
[abc]	Letters missing or illegible but reliably construed from context.
[abc]	Intentional deletions in the original.
abc$_{\text{abc}}$abc	Text intercalated below line.

Heavier editing can be found in the OTDO transliteration (Imaeda and Takeuchi *et al.* 2007: 230–48, 355–58).

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[121] This is a *gi-gu* that is neither normal nor reverse.