The Old Tibetan Chronicle
Chapter I

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Preamble

Despite the enormous strides which the study of Old Tibetan texts, in particular the Annals and Chronicle, have taken in the intervening decades since the publication of Bacot et al. (1940), a full translation of the Chronicle into a European language has not to my knowledge been attempted since that time.[1] I intend to one day complete such a translation, but in the meantime it seems prudent to make this preliminary translation of the first chapter available, so that any work achieved thus far may see light, even should the task *entière* remain unrealized, and so that, through the learned responses of colleagues, my understanding of this difficult text may be improved. My interest in the text is philological and not historical; this will be noticed in the translation. I must apologize that I have taken insufficient account of Chinese language publications, in particular the study of Ms. Huang Bufan (2000). I follow the text of Wang and Bsod nams skyid (1988: 34-38), finding it of excellent quality when compared against the facsimiles. I follow the Wylie system of transliteration with the exception that the 23rd letter of the Tibetan alphabet I write *v* rather than the confusing <'>, and the *gigu inversé* is here written ĭ.[2]

Translation

l.1. The time when Dri·gum·btsan·po was yet young, [people] said « what name should [he] be given? ». When to the nurse Gro·zha·ma skyi·brling·ma [this] was asked, from the words of the nurse:

l.2-3. The red[3] stone [of] Skyi, does [it] crumble, or not crumble?
The vbri pasturage [of] Dang·ma, do [they] burn with fire, or not burn?
The lake Dam·le·dbal·mtsho, does [it] dry or not dry?

l.3. Thus she said.

l.3. The stone crumbles not,
nor dries the lake,
nor burns the pasturage with fire.[4]

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[1] Brandon Dotson at Oxford University has prepared an excellent English translation of the Annals, which I hope soon reaches publication.

[2] My work on this translation has been done in the course of my duties at the Sonderforschungsbereich 441, Projekt B11, at Universität Tübingen. It has been my pleasure to discuss the text with my colleague Bettina Zeisler. This translation represents my own views however, and differs in many regards from the version that may be eventually produced by Projekt B11.

[3] I read *dmar* for *mar*, this giving better sense than 'butter' or 'lower.' Bacot et al. similarly translate « rouge » (1940: 123).

[4] The three verbs *rnyil* 'crumble,' *tshig* 'burn,' and *skams* 'dry' appear to be present stems. They are here unexpectedly negated with *ma* rather than *mi*. Bacot et al.

l.3-4. When answered thus, the nurse Gro·zha·ma, having aged, heard with rebellious[5] ear:

l.4. Even the stone crumbles;
even the pasturage burns with fire;
even the lake dries.

l.4. Thus [she] heard.

l.5. Well then, because of *chu dgum sri dgum*[6] name [him] as Dri·gum·btsan·po!

l.5-8. Thus [she] said. [They] named [him] as Dri·gum·btsan·po. Regretting being named [thus, it] entered [his] mind.[7] The divine son, not like unto men,[8] because [he] had great gifts and magical powers such as

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translate these passages with the *passé composé* (1940: 123), and Haarh with a present perfect (1969: 402). To me present makes better sense. If these events had taken place very far in the past the nurse would already know about them. Additionally, to ask about them in the past implies some expectation on part of the nurse that they are likely, whereas a present simply asks about their current condition.

5   The sense is naturally that she is hard of hearing. The verb *log* does mean 'revolt.' Upon reading this line I was immediately reminded of *Hamlet*, Act II, scene ii, lines 68-70, « His antique sword, / Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls, / Repugnant to command. »

6   This expression is rather opaque. Bacot et al. give « pour tuer les humeurs et les Sri » (1940: 127) with a note « Démons s'attaquant spécialment aux enfants » (loc. cit. n.3). Haarh prudently translates « because there is *water-death*, and there is *sri-death* » (1969: 402, emphasis original). Wang and Bsod rnams skyid give the following note « *chu shi sri shi zer ba ni bon gyi chos skad du chu la lhung te shi ba dang grivi vog tu shi ba zhes pavi don* [the Bon expression *chu shi sri shi* means to 'die after falling into water', and 'die under a knife'] » (1988:79 n. 127). Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan paraphrases « *chur lhung ste vchi bavam grivi vog tu vchi bavi don yin par bkral pa yod kyang / chu sri ni brda rnying du chab srid kyi don la vjug pas / vdir chab srid nyams dams su vgyur vgro bavi don ma yin nam snyam la / sri ste gdon gyis bgeg bar chad byed pavi don lavang vjug pa vdra* [I explain that this means 'to die having fallen into water, or die under the sword.' *chu sri* is an archaic equivalent of *chab srid* 'government.' I wonder whether the meaning here is not that the government is going to become weak. *Sri* probably means 'to face misfortune.'] » (1995: 16 n. 1 on p. 21). Bettina Zeisler (2004: 417-418) suggests that it is poetic periphresis for *chu sri dgum* « to overcome (lit. kill) the water demon » and one could point to the periphresis of *pha-tshan* in line eight as a parallel.

7   The verb *nongs* has three meanings. 1. To be a mistake. 2. To regret. 3. To die (of royalty, but not the emperor, cf. Hill, forthcomming 'death'). In this context the first two are both possible « it was a mistake to name him thus » or « he regretted having been named thus. » I feel that the second makes a better story.

8   This phrase *myĭ vi myi tshul te* is difficult. The converbial ending -*te* though rare suffixed to nouns is otherwise attested (cf. Zeisler 2004: 226-284 esp. 227). The second *myi* could either mean 'man' or 'not' i.e. « the divine son was not like of men » or « the divine son was like a man of men » the first makes better sense given the context. This use of the genetive here is however peculiar.

really going to heaven,[9] unable to bear arrogance and heat, the emperor, having vied and chased,[10] to nine paternal bondsmen-cousins[11] and three maternal bondsmen-cousins:

l.8-9. Dare [you] to fight [me] as an enemy, before a yak.[12]

l.9-10. When [he] spoke thus. Each respectively said « [I] dare not ». Although groom Lo·ngam also said « [I] dare not. » [the emperor] did not permit [it]. Then Lo·ngam said:

l.10-12. If, thus, [you] do not permit, if [you] give to me (*bdag*)[13] the divine treasures such as the self-stabing spear, self-cutting knife,[14] self-doning mail, and self-perrying shield, the great magical treasures which [you] posses, then [I shall] dare.

l.12-14. Thus [he] said. Then [the emperor] gave [Lo·ngam] all the divine treasures. Then the groom Lo·ngam went near to the castle Myang·ro-

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[9]   The phrase *dgung-du gshegs* is used to describe the deaths of all three emperors who die in the Old Tibetan Annals, and of no other figure in that text. The point here is that for Dri-gum-btsan-po 'going to heaven' was not a euphemism or a metaphor, i.e. he was able to come back, cf. Hill (forthcoming 'death') and Haarh (1969: 119).

[10] *btsan vdran bdav* Bacot et al. translate « Ayant provoqué à la lutte » (1940: 122). Haarh suggests three translations: « 1. accused of contending, vying; 2. contending for, he chased; 3. fighting and hunting » (1969: 402 n. 5 on p. 453). He opts for the third in his translation. Wang and Bsod nams skyid interpret it as « *btsan shed kyis vgran bsdur byed bcug* [with imperial authority he made [them] contend and fight] » (1988: 34 n. 129 on p. 81). Jacques similarly translates this phrase as « et il poussait (ses sujets) à participer à des épreuves de force (avec lui) » (2005). Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan notes « *btsan vdran / vtsan vgran te vdpav rtsal vgran pavi don /* [The phrase *btsan vdran*, i.e. *btsan vgran* means 'to dual, combat.'] » (1995: 16 n. 4 on p. 21). I think it simpler to see *btsan* 'emperor' as the topic and *vdran bdav* as a description of his action or state at the time that he proposed to his subjects that they vie with him.

[11] It seems very likely that *vbangs-pha* and *vbangs-tshan* are both meant to be understood as *vbangs-pha-tshan*, otherwise the sense would have to be 'male paternal bondsman' and 'a series of / many maternal bondsmen.'

[12] One would expect *drung* to be a verb here, since it is followed by an auxillary verb. I wonder however if it could be odd syntax for *g.yag-du drung dgra-ru rgal phod dam ?*. Bacot et al. give « il leur demanda s'ils oseraient le combattre en ennemi et le traiter en yak » (1940: 123), the only difficulty with which is how to get « traiter » from *drung*. I do not understand Haarh's translation « Can we fight the *Enemy*? Are we equal in prudence to the *Yak*? » (1969: 402 emphasis original). Wang and Bsod nams skyid suggest reading *g.yog* 'servant' instead of *g.yag* (1988: 34). This emmendation seems unwarrented. Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan suggests that « *dgrar vthab pa de g.yag rgod de vgrog gis rwa vdzing byed pa ltar phod dam / zhes pavi don yin pa vdra* [The meaning is probably 'do you dare to fight as an enemy like the nomad taking the wild yak by the horns.'] » (1995: 16 n. 5 on p. 21).

[13] The word *bdag* emphasizes the humility or deference of the speaker, whereas *nga* is neutral (cf. Haller 2000: 50; Hill 'pronouns'). In English, this difference is hard to capture, so the first person pronoun of the original has been left in parentheses

[14] Like Bacot et al. (1940: 124) and Haarh (1969: 402 n. 10 on p. 453), I read *ral-gri* instead of *ral-gyi*.

sham·po. The emperor also went to Myang·ro-sham·po. The battle spread in the Myang·ro dusty woods.

l.14-19. Then, from the mouth of the groom, [the groom] requested that [the emperor] cut the dbuv·vbreng zang·yag, and requested that [he] turn down the dbuv·skas sten·dguv.[15] These two things, [the emperor] granted as [asked]. Then Lo·ngam affixed two hundred golden spear tips on one hundred oxen on the horns,[16] and spread dust on [their] backs. The oxen fought among eachother,[17] and the dust stirred up. Within that [haze] Lo·ngam attacked. Lde·bla-gung·rgyal tried to pull emperor Dri·gum into the sky,[18] but Lo·ngam pulled a monkey from [his][19] shoulder. Lde·bla gung·rgyal was cast into the womb of the snow mountain Ti·tse, and died. The emperor Dri·gum was also killed there.

l.19-21. The corpse [of the emperor] was put inside of one hundred closed copper vessels, and placed in the middle of the Rtsang river. It went

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15 I prefer to leave the *termini techni* 'dbuv·vbreng zang·yag' and 'dbuv·skas sten·dguv' untranslated. Bacot et al. translate the passage « Je te prie de couper tu courroie de chef et d'abaisser ton gorgerin » (1940: 124), with the note « Nous restituons ske au lieu de skas, qui se prononce de même. Demeurent non traduit sten dgu et zaṅ yak. Il s'agit visiblementdu pièces du casque. » (ibid. n. 1). The equation of *ske* and *skas* can be dismissed because it ignores historical phonology (cf. Stein 1952: 82). Wang and Bsod nams skyid gloss 'dbuv vbreng' as « 1. *rmog*. 2. *dmu thag* [1. helmet. 2. sky-rope] » and *dbuv skas* as « 1. *dbugs skyob / srog skyob / khrab*. 2. *dmu skas* [1. respiratory aid, life support, armour. 2. sky-ladder.] » (1988: 35 n. 131 and 132 on p. 80). Concerning the phrase *dbuv vbreng zang yag* Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan gives the note « *dbuv vbreng zang yag / dbu vbrengs zangs yag ste ko dang zangs las bgyis pavi rmog dang rmog thag dang bcas pavi dgra lhavi rten dang / yang na / dbu phreng zangs yag ste dbu rgyan rmog dang bcas pavi gtsug rgyan yin pa vdra /* [*dbuv vbreng zang yag* is probably either *dbu vbrengs zangs yag* 'good copper leather head' the talismans of a warrior god, which includes a helmet and helmet cord made from copper and leather, or *dbu vphreng zangs yag* 'good copper rosary head' an ornament for the crown of the head (*gtsug rgyan*) which includes a head ornament (*dbu rgyan*) and a helmut] » (1995: 17 n. 7 on p. 22 where it is given as n. 8). Concerning the phrase dbuv skas sten dguv he follows the untenable interpretation of Bacot et al. writing (1995: 17 n. 8 on p. 22 where it is given as n. 9). The word *dbuv* means 'head,' and *skas* 'ladder;' this much seems to me certain.

16 Wang and Bsod nams skyid read this word as *sbal* (1988: 35). Bacot et al. translate « aux cornes » (1940: 124) suggesting a reading *rwa-la*, despite the *rbal* given in their transliteration (ibid 98). Haarh similarly translates « like horns » also reading *rbal* (1969: 403). Wang and Bsod nams skyid gloss 'sbal btags' with « *gcig la gcig la snga thag phyi thag byas pa* [he tethered them to eachother] » (1988: 35 n. 133 on p. 80). Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan actually reads the text *rwa-la*. An examination of the facsimilies convinces me that the text has *rwa la*, though hastily written such that the *r* obscures and combines with the following *tsheg*. (Macdonald and Imaeda 1979: pl. 557).

17 I have here treated *nang* as an adverb describing the fighting. This may not be philologically justified but the only other option is to translate « Lo-ngam fought among the oxen. » In view of the next sentence this alteranative seems unlikely. In addition, a *nang·du* or the like would then be expected. Bacot et al. translate similarly « Les bœufs s'entrebattirent » (1940: 124), and Haarh simply « the oxen fought » (1969: 303).

18 Zeisler discusses this passage as an example of a past tense *de conatu* to show failed attempt (2004: 412).

19 The text is ambiguous as to whose shoulder the monkey comes from.

to the pure fissure [at the] water's end, into the stomach of the serpant Vod·de·bed·de·ring·mo. The two sons named Sha·khyi and Nya·khyi were banished to the land of Rkong and scattered.

l.21-23. After that, both Rhya·mo·rhul·bzhi·khugs and Sna·nam·btsan·bzhong·rgyal spread poison on the fur of the great dog of the realm famous as Von·zugs·ya and both [the bitches] Zu·le·ma·vjang of Vjang and Von·rku.[20] After [the dogs] passed the slate stone of the defile, when the sign was examined on the male [dog], the sign was good.[21]

l.24-26. When [the dogs] come near to the land [of] Myang·ro sham·po, they traverse [it] by means of a trick. Now our groom, having lead the dogs with poison on their fur, the good dog [is] stroked by Lo·ngam's hand, because our groom spread poison on the fur of the dog, as [Lo·ngam] rubs [his] hand, [he] will have died. [We are] revenged.

l.26-28. Later, a son of Bkrags, born into the family [of the] divine sons, fought with his paternal cousins against the paternal cousins [of the] Rhya. The Rhyas cut off the heritage [of the] Brags, and confiscated their livestock (*dud sna pho·lo*).[22] One consort[23] of Bkrags fled, [she] escaped into the land of

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[20] This is a difficult passage because it is unclear where the numbers belong. For instance is the word *bzhi* a number or part of the name *Rhya·mo·rhul·bzhi· khugs·*. One would expect an ergative marker (*-gyis*) on the agents of the spreading. The only criterion I have used to separate people and dogs is that all things following the word 'dog' are presumably dogs, and thus the two things mentioned before are people. Haarh (1969: 403) and Bacot et al (1940: 125) have reached the same solution. Except that Bacot understands *Rhya·mo* and *Sna·nam* as place names.

[21] It is hard to know where the direct quotation begins, but it seems likely that the quotation is the interpretation of the sign, quotation is sometimes introduced with the semi-final converb (*-ste*), so this seems like the logical place for quotation to begin. Bacot et al. and Haarh consider this section still outside of the quotation. Bacot et al. translate « Quand ils eurent dépassé 'Phran-po'i brag-gya'-bo, ils examinèrent le chien mâle et l'examen fut satisfaisent. Le chien gagna le pays de Man-ro śam-po et se transforma par ruse » (1940: 125) and Haarh « Trembling [g.yav-bo] they passed *'Phan-po'i brag* (the rock at the narrow foot-path) and when looking at the signs of the male(s) these were good omens. When they reached the foot of *Myan-ro-śam-po* they proved otherwise » (1969: 403).

[22] The word *dud* here refers to livestock (cf. Uray 1966: 250 ff.). Haarh sees the word *sna* as a contraction for *sna·tshogs* 'various' (1969:403 n. 17 on p. 453), but I perfer to see it as meaning 'nose' and here used as a classifier word for cattle as synecdoche, in part because it seems likely that no cattle would have been specifically spared. Haarh (ibid.) is certainly correct to read *pho·lo* as *phol·lo*, i.e. as a past tense finite verb. He suggests connecting it to *dbol* 'to drain,' *vbol* 'a cushion,' and *vbal* 'to pluck,' none of these seem likely to me. Although I am uncertain what verb to assign this form to, the meaning is clear from context, i.e. something one does to cattle after war.

[23] It is tempting to understand *chung-ba* here as 'child' like Bacot et al. (1940: 125) and Haarh (1969: 403) do. However, a child of Bkrags would have no land of its father to return to. In view of this, and that the 'small one' must be a women (because of bearing a child), it is best to understand like Gnyav gong mkon mchog tshes brtan that with *chung* is meant *chung·ma* 'wife, consort' (1995: 18 n. 12 on p. 22 where it appears as n. 23).

[her] father and brother.[24] [She] left carrying a child in [her] belly, and [it] was born.[25] As soon as the noble son was able to stand, to his mother:

l.28-29. If to every man and every bird there is a lord, who is my lord?
If to every man and every bird there is a father, who is my father?

l.29. Thus [he] said.

l.29. Tell me (*nga*) [this]!

l.29. When [he] said thus, from the words of the mother:

l.29-30. Oh, little fellow, don't be big.
The little colt is not strong.
I don't know.

l.30. When [she] said thus, from the words of the noble son Ngar·le·skyes :

l.30-31. If [you do] not tell me, [I am] going to die.

l.31. Thus [he] said, and [his] mother told [him] what [he] wanted:

l.31-34. As for thy[26] father he was killed by Rhya. As for thy lord, he was killed by the groom Lo·ngam. The corpse was put inside of one hundred closed copper vessels and placed in the middle of the Rtsang river. It went to the pure fissure [at the] water's end, into the stomach of the serpent Vo·de·ring·mo. The two sons, the siblings named Sha·khyi and Nya·khyi were banished to the land of Rkong and scattered.

l.34-35. Then from the words of the noble son Ngar·la·skyes:

l.35. I (*nga*) will go to follow the path of the destroyed man, and find the filth of the destroyed water.

l.35-36. Thus [he] said, and left. In Bre-snar [in] the land [of] Rkong [he] met with the sons Sha·khyi and Nya·khyi, [he] also met with the serpent Vo·de·bed·de·ring·mo.

l.36-37. For what desire will [you] randsom the corpse of the Emperor?

l.37. Thus [he] said.

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24 It is true *mying* means 'name' as Bacot et. al. (1940 : 125) translate, but *mying*-po Jäschke gives as 'brother in relation to a sister' (1881).
25 My translation takes the mother as the topic of *song·ba* and the child as the topic of *byung·ngo*. I am not fully satisfied with this solution, however the child is born before the next sentence in any event. The other possible translation would be 'she left [where she was], and arrived [where she was going].' The employment of finite verbs immediately after verbal nouns deserves special study.
26 It is important to distinguish *khyod* 'thou' from *khyed* 'you.' Second person pronouns added for the felicity of the English are uniformly 'you.'

l.37-38. [I] do not desire other than one who has the eyes of a man which are like the eyes of a bird, closing from below.

l.38-39. Thus [she] said. The noble son Ngar·la·skyes searched in the four directions, but[27] did not find one who has the eyes of a man which are like the eyes of a bird, closing from below. [His] provender run out, [his] shoes pierced through, [he] came back to [his] mother.

l.40-42. [I] was able to follow[28] the path of the destroyed man, also [I] found the filth of the destroyed water. [I] met with the sons Sha·khyi and Nya·khyi, [I] also met the serpent Vo·de·ring·mo. As randsom for the corpse [she] said [she] wants one who has the eyes of a man like the eyes of a bird, closing from below. But [I] have not found any such. Even now, [I] must go to search. Give [me] provisions!

l.42-45. Thus [he] said, and left. [He] went below Gang·par vphrun. [He] went near to a sleeping girl with a bird-man head.[29] The child, in a crib,[30] was one who had eyes like eyes of a bird closing from below. [He] asked the mother: « What do [you] want as randsom for that [girl]. »[31] The mother [said]:

l.45-47. [I] don't want other than [this]: Forever more, when the consort and the lord emperor die,[32] bind a vphren·mo[33] top-knot, rub the face[34] with

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[27] It is odd to see *kyang* directly after a verb.

[28] For the use of the imperative stem as a *potentialis* cf. Zeisler (2002).

[29] The phrase *cho myi bya·vi bu·mo* is not altogether straight-forward. Haarh translates it as « a daughter of *Cho·myi·bya* » (1969: 405), this is of course possible, but it then seems odd to follow it immediately by « It was the daughter of *Klu·ljo·na* » (*bu khu ljo na vdug·pa zhig*) (Haarh 1969; 405). Bacot et al. translate « née d'un homme et d'un oiseau » (1940: 127) their translation is certainly to be commended for making sense of *myi·bya* in a narrative context, but it ignores the word *Cho*. In Zhang (1985) the word *co* is defined as an archaic word for 'head.' It is because of this that I have the translation I have proposed, the difference in aspiration between *co* and *cho* being hardly relevant (cf. Hill, forthcomming 'aspiration').

[30] Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan points out that *khu ljo* is equivalent to the term *khul zho* 'crib' « *khu ljo / khul zho dang don mtshungs te byis pa vjog snod / der vdzong (vdzung) khug kyang zer* [*khu ljo* has the same meaning as *khul zho*, a container for babies. Here, a cylindrical cavity.] » (1995 : 19 n. 16 on p. 17). Wang and Bsod nams skyid approached this solution, defining *ljo* with the remark: « *bu phrug sgal par khur snod kyi smyug slel lta bu* [a vessel, like a reed basket, for carrying a child on the small of the back] » (1988: 36 n. 142 on p. 80).

[31] I am unsure of the function of *-na* here. Perhaps a more accurate if less felicitous translation would be 'if [you] were to randsom that, what would you want?

[32] As pointed out by Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan (1995: 19 n. 17 on p. 22 where it appears as n. 18), the word *dbyal* means 'wife' (cf. Richardson 1985: 35 n. 2, Li and Coblin 1987: 338-39, Uebach 1997: 60 n. 14 and the respective citations). The word *nongs* is never used of emperor in the *Old Tibetan Annals*, but is routinely used of his consort (Hill, forthcomming 'death'). In view of these facts I am tempted to translate the phrase as « when the consort of the emperor dies » but because the corpse of the emperor is mentioned just a few words later, it must instead be that both the emperor and empress die.

vermillion, lay down the body,[35] pierce[36] the corpse of the emperor, expell the men, eat food, drink. Will [you] do like this or not do [like this]?

l.47-51. After [she] said thus. [He] swore a high oath,[37] gave his sacred word,[38] to do like that. Then [he] left, leading the girl with the bird-man head. [He] placed [her] in the stomach of the serpent Vo·de·ring·mo as randsom for the corpse. Both Nya and Lha[39] withdrew the corpse of the emperor. [They] built a tomb as a tent[40] pitched high [as] Gyang·to. The younger brother Nya·khyi performed the father's funeral. The older brother Sha·khyi went to attend to the father's blood.[41] Nya·khyi was the white man [of] Rkong. [Sha·khyi] went with three thousand three hundred soldiers. [They] went to castle Pying·ba.

l.51-53. Since the lord of the fatherland does not reign
The trusty herdsmen of Pyi go fleeing.
Since there has been no rain for the father's ears (of grain)
The seeds [of] the earth and corpse decay.[42]

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33 Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan glosses *vphren mo* as *phra mo* 'thin, fine' (1995:19 n. on p. 22 where it is given as n. 19).

34 Haarh (1969: 405) takes the word *ngo* to mean 'surface' of the body, while this is possible, face makes more sense in the triplet 1) top-knot, 2) face, 3) body.

35 My translation takes *bzhags* as the past of *vjog*, but according to Zhang (1985) the word *bzhags* can also mean 'to decorate, beautiful.' Wang and Bsod nams skyid give « *lus povi thog la thig btag* [annoint the body] » (1988: 37 n. 143 on p. 80). Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan gives « *lus la ni mdzes par brgyan* [beautifullly ornament the body] » (19 n. 19 on p. 22 where it is given as n. 20).

36 Wang and Bsod nams skyid give « *brdung* [beat, strike] » (1988: 37 n. 144 on p. 80). Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan gives « *spur la nyar tshags legs por gyis* [embalm the corpse] » (19 n. 20 on p. 23 where it is given as n. 21).

37 The term *mnav mthov* occurs at ll. 154 and 156

38 The phrase *dam·tshig* is likewise to be construed as one word.

39 Presumably *Sha* is meant.

40 In fact *mgur* is throat, but I follow Bacot et al. (1940: 127) and Haarh (1969: 405) translating as if *gur* 'tent' and this seems likely because the verb *vbubs* means specifically 'to pitch a tent.' Gnyab gong dkon mchog tshes brtan offers the alternative explanation « *mgul dang mtshungs te vdir ri sked la go dgos pa 'dra* [meaning 'throat,' it must here refer to a mountain cavern] » (1995: 20 n. 21 on p. 23 where it is given as n. 22).

41 The phrase *sku mtshal gnyer*, Haarh translates as « took care of the father's *skul-mtshal*» (1969: 405) and writes in a note « *sKu-mtshal*, generaly an expression for blood. Here a respectful form of mtshal, vermillion or cinnabar » (1969: 405 n. 24 on p. 453). Bacot et al. translate « prit en charge le sang de son père » (1940: 127). Wang and Bsod nams skyid give a note equating this phrase with « *khrag lan blangs* [to draw blood]. » The context would admit either 'blood,' or 'vermilion' as possibilities. Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan understands this phrase as a euphemiscm for revenge (1995: 20 n. 23 on p. 23 where it is given as n. 24).

42 This stanza is difficult. Haarh translates as follows: « As there was no ruler of the *yul-yab*, / It was so that the *pyi-'brog* had to flee./ As there was nobody who was equal to the *dog-yab*, / The corpse had to decompose upon the earth » (1969 : 405). Bacot et al. translate: « Si je ne demeure le premier des pères du pays, les pasteurs confiants des marches (4) s'enfuiront (5). Si je ne suis la pluie fécondant le sol, le cadavre errera sur la terre. » (1940 : 127), with the notes « (4) pyi. Littéralement : de l'extérieur. Un peu plus loin, dans une réplique de ce passage, nous avons yul pyi, qui précise le sens. » and « (5) pyol pyol gyi cha 'o : nous

l.53-56. Thus [he] said. [They] passed through the pass of Men·pa·vphreng·ba. [They] passed through the long ravine of Ting·srab·ba. [They] went to Ba·chos Gung·dang. After [they] went to Myang·ro·sham·po, [they] over-turned[43] a hundred copper vessels onto the heads of one hundred male Lo·ngams, and [the Lo·ngams] fell to [their] deaths. One

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restituons byol byol ». Wang and Bsod nams syid give the three notes « *vbrog gdengs : vbrog·gnas* [pasture land] » (1988: 37 n. 149 on p. 80), « *pyol pyol : byol byol, bros pa* [to flee] » (ibid. n. 150) and « *von·bu : nga·tsho* » and 152 « *spur (sbur) : sbur·nag zer·ba vbu zhig* [an insect called the black bettle] » (ibid n. 151). Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan interpretes the first line thus « *phyi vbrog gdengs byol byol te phyi vbrog dgon gyi sbrul bros zhes pavam / yang na / phyi vbrog pavi gdang thag las phyugs zog bros pas lhas ra stongs / zhes pavi don /* [In updated orthograph *phyi vbrog gdengs byol byol.* This either means 'the snakes of moutain solitude flee away' or 'the domenstic animals having escaped from the nomads' tether ropes outside, their pens are empy] » (1995: 20 n. 24 on p. 23 where it is given as n. 25). The morpheme *–na* is not always condition in Old Tibetan, so there is no need to construe it as Bacot et al. have done, and in particular nothing to suggest a first person singular. Their translation can be commmended however for paying attention to the change of tense between the first and third line on the one hand and the second and forth on the other. Both translations ignore the word *gdengs* 'trustworthy' and it seems most natural to me to translate *vbrog gdengs* as 'trusted herdsmen.' The equivalences of Wang and Bsod nams skyid are unconvincing. The unanimous explanation of *pyog* I can offer no improvement on, however the use of the genetive to connect two verbs seems odd. The most difficult part is *sa von bu spur*. Surely *sa* means 'earth' and *spur* 'corpse.' However, given that the context is an agricultural metaphor a pun on *sbur* 'chaff' seems very likely. I do not understand how Wang and Bsod nams skyid intend to construe *von bu* as 'we.' According to Zhang (1985), the word *von* itself can be a concessive conjunction, a verb meaning 'be/go deaf,' or an archaic verb meaning *ston* 'show' or *len* 'take.' None of these possibilities seems satisfactory, and I do not see how Haarh and Bacot et al. arrive at 'on the earth.' In agreement with Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan (1995: 20 n. 25 on p. where it is given as n. 26) I connect *sa von bu* with the word *sa bon* 'seed' and translate 'the seed and chaff (i.e corpse) rot.' In support of a phonetic alternation between *v-* and *b-* one might point to the diminutive suffix *-bu*, which also takes the form *-vu*. Also, for the word *ri-bong* 'rabbit' a number of Tibetan dialects point instead to **ri-vong* (or even **ri-kong/*ri-gong*). Lhasa dialect has ri¹¹ kõ¹⁴ , Bsang-chu, Reb-gong, Rdo-sbis, and Rme-ba dialects re-ɣoŋ, Ba-ya-mkhar dialect rok-ɣoŋ, and Them-chen dialect re-rgoŋ (Hua 2001: 80-81 #369). Haller, in contrast to Hua, gives reɣuŋ as the Them-chen pronunciation (2004: 303, 392). Finally, one might also mention Laufer's remark « statt *na-bun* ['fog'] findet sich in einer alten Ausgabe des Milaraspa *naun* [i.e. *navuṇ*] » (1898/9, part II: 106-107; 1976: 91-92). Such a citation is unfortunately unverifiable.

43 *phub* is the past tense of *vbubs* 'to cover up, cover over.' Haarh translates « The hundred male Lo-ṅam took a hundred copper vessels, Put them over their heads, and sought death by precipitation. » (1969: 405). One could first make a grammatical objection to this interpretation, the Lo·ngam are in the absolute and not the ergative case, and *vbubs* expects the ergative (though perhaps not when used reflexively). More importantly this interpretation makes little sense. In the face of the enemy the Lo·ngam subject themselves to an odd sort of suicide. It makes better sense that in recompense for the fate of Dri·dgum·brtsan·po they have the pots put over their heads, and then because of lake of vision they fall to their deaths.

hundred female Lo·ngams pressed iron pans to their breasts and fled.[44] [They] sacked Myang·ro·sham·po. The folk they took as captives and the cattle they took as wealth.[45] [They] went to Ba·chos Gung·dang. [He/they] sang this song.

> l.57-58. *va ba nyi nye pa nyid* [46]
> In the bird corpse, corpse, the tip of a spear *nig*
> In the hare corpse, corpse, the mass of a shoe *nig*[47]

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[44] The verb *ngog-go* Zhang gives as « *(rnying) non·no* [(archaic) was overcome, daunted.] » and *ngog·na* is given as « *(rnying) song-na* [(archaic) if someone went] » (1985). Wang and Bsod nams skyid give it as equivalent to *bros* 'fled' (1988: 37 n. 154 on p. 80). Bacot et al. render it as « s'enfuirent » (1940: 127). Thus, despite a lack of convincing argumentation there can be said to be an *opinio communis* which I am reluctant to disagree with. Haarh translates the verb as « precipitated themselves » (1969: 406) presumably in order to parallel the *lcebs* of the gentlemen. He adds a note (1969: 406 n. 26 on p. 453) suggesting that this word is related to *dngo* 'shore, bank' or and *ngogs* 'slope, shore.'

[45] Uray (1966: 245 n. 21) tentatively suggests that *mnangs* is the past tense of a verb 'to kill' and related as the causative to the verb *nongs* 'to die.' Zhang (1985) defines the word as 'wealth.' It seems unlikely that an invading army would kill animals when it had enslaved people. A parallel gramatical structure also argues that *mnangs* describes how the animals are *bcad*. Alhtough *bcad* does mean 'cut' it can have very wide meanings such as *rjes-bcad* 'follow a path.' This word occurs in another Dunhuang document where it surely must be interpreted as the object of *bcad* and not as a verb. OL_0751,38a2-4 « *lha sras dbu·rmog brtsan·po dang / blon·po dpav·vdzangs·ldan zhIng dgra thabs mkhas·pavI skyims·kyIs dgra·la phog-pa dang   / dmag mang·povI mthu brtsan-pos dgravI mkhar phab·pa dang / g-yu bzlog·pa·dang / yul bcom-ba-dang / mnangs bcad·pa·la stsogste /* …[the divine son, the helmut, the emperor and the minister Skyims who knows the enemies ways and has wisdom and bravery fall upon the enemy, and having subdued the power of many armies sack the enemy castles, and overthrow the turquoise, and conquer the land, and snatch away the wealth, etc. …] »

   Haarh adds a note which I believe is entirely erroneous « mNaṅs, *√naṅ inside, related to mna', take an oath, and gnaṅ-ba, to command. The expression mnaṅ-su-bc(h)ad has a phonetic similarity to dbaṅ-su bcad, to subjugate. The expression therefore means 'brought to take the (feudal) oath' or 'brought under command.' » (1969: 406 n. 29 on p. 454).

[46] Bacot et al. translate « De près ou de loin » (1940 : 127). Haarh writes « This introductory line indicates the melody or rhythm to be employed reciting the song. For similar lines see 191.494. » (310 n. 6 on page 450). Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan paraphrases this line « *e ma nyin shad tsam la* [Ah! For a few days]» (1995: 20 n. 26 on p. 23 where it is given as n. 27).

[47] Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan paraphrases, and remarks on these two lines « *bya ro che che na mdung gi rtse la btags / yos te ri bong ro che che na lham gyi yu ba byas zhes pavi don te spu lde gung rgyal gyis yab kyi dgra sha len par lo ngam pa tshar bcad pa de bya dang ri bong bsad pavi dper sbyar pavo* [The significance of 'In the very large bird corpse is the point of a lance affixed. In the very large hare, i.e. rabbit corpse has been put the leg of a boot.' is that Spu-lde-gung-rgyal destroying the enemy of the father Lo-ngam is linked to the example of killing a bird and rabbit] » (1995: 20 n. 26 on p. 23 where it is given as n. 27). The only other occurance of the syllable *nig* I can find happens in the *Old Tibetan Annals* Or_8212,0020 where it appears to be a part of a name identified by Beckwith, as Shugh nan (Beckwith 1987: 145, n. 8). Bacot et al. see *nig* as a verb 'to die' (1940 127 n. 8).

The thigh is beaten;[48]
The corpse is planted
There is no *vwo·de*, there is no *spu·de*.[49]

l.58. Thus [he] said, and went back to [castle] Pying·ba Stag·rtse.

l.59-60. [I] am come as lord of the fatherland;
The trusty herdsmen of the Pyi land will no more go fleeing.
Since there is rain for the father's ears (of grain)
The seeds [of] the earth and corpse will no more decay.

l.60-61. [He] sang the song. When [he] erected the hearth-stone below, copper stones fell from above, [he] went as lord.

l.61-62. In birth, Spu·de·gung·rgyal,
in death, a cold bronze[50] dome erected.
He came the lord of black headed men
because of love[51] toward furry animals.

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[48] Haarh equates *brlav* with *bla* (1969: 406 n. 34 on page), and translates the phrase *brlav brdungs* as « The power of life is broken » (1969: 406). Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan agrees with this equation (19 n. 27 on p. 23 where it is given as n. 28). Rgya ye bkra bho, after a thorough summary of other opinions, also argues in favour of this interpretation. He says *brlav brdungs* « *Sha-khris Lo-ngam vkhor dang bcas-pa bsad-rjes/ re-re-nas "brla"-rus kyang brdungs-shing bcags-nas de-dag-gi "bla" yang med bzos-pavi don yin-pa-dang* [means that after Sha-khri killed Lo-ngam together with his retinue he broke the "brla" bone and brdungs-tree of each, and annihilated the "bla" out of these] » (2003: 325). This is an appealing interpretation, but I require more convincing about the substitution of *bla* for *brlav*, and for the time being translate literally, following Jäschke who gives *brla* as 'thigh' (1881), and Bacot et al. who translate « J'ai fustigé sur les cuisses » (1940: 127).

[49] Gnyav gong dkon mchog tshes brtan refers *vwo de* back to the serpent Vo de ring mo and refers *spus de* back to Spu de gung rgyal (19 n. 27 on p. 23 where it is given as n. 28).

[50] *bse = zangs* according to (Ngag dbang tshul khrims 1997).

[51] *chags* as a verb can either mean 'become' in which case it is monovalent, or 'to love' in which case it normally would take the allative (*la*).

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