

# Naming the empire: from *Bod* to *Tibet*—A philologico-historical study on the origin of the polity<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

n Old Tibetan (OT) documents one can find terms such as *bod yul*, *bod khams*, *bod rgyal khams*, *bod ljoñs*, or *bod čhen po*, all denoting the polity founded and ruled by the Yar-luñs dynasty. Some of these terms co-occur in one text, suggesting they belonged to the same historical period. In OT historical documents there is not *one* term that could be reasonably understood as an equivalent of English ‘Tibetan Empire’. Instead, plurality of names prevails. This begs the following questions: if the ‘Tibetan Empire’ did not have an official term to refer to itself, what was ‘Tibetan’ about it? Does this mean that one was not able to think about and speak of one’s own polity, community, and locality in more general or abstract terms? The question leads to another: who was this ‘one’?

A word presumed capable of being the equivalent of Eng. *Tibet(an)* has early on been identified as *bod*, as in the designations quoted above. *bod* received great attention from western scholars who concentrated much of their efforts on providing a sensible etymology for it.<sup>2</sup> What has often been overlooked, however, are the changing references of *bod* in Old Literary Tibetan (OLT). The quest for the etymological meaning of *bod* has suppressed the question of its actual meaning in the given historical contexts. Constantly changing historical circumstances triggered changes in *bod*, determining the right of individuals and groups to be included in it or not. Therefore, who was ‘one’ entails the following question: ‘when?’.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for some examples.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the oldest occurrences of the proper noun *bod* and to track its semantic development in OLT. The paper is a first attempt to answer the questions: why and how did the local (!) name *bod* come to be used as endonym for <Tibet>? This study relies on the assumption that a meticulous investigation of OT texts can positively contribute to our understanding of the socio-linguistic processes underlying the shift.

The historical value of the earliest uses of the term *bod* can be elucidated only when one has reconstructed the earliest period of the expansion of the Yar-luñs dynasty and chronologically arranged the prehistorical events for which no contemporary historical documents have been preserved. Only after reconstructing the chronology of the expansion, can one look at the way *bod* was understood in various periods. As the deep prehistory of the region and its polity/polities remains vastly obscure, the paper focuses on the late prehistory that begins with the Yar-luñs dynasty's rise to power. The temporal framework of the study encompasses the period from the first conquests outside of the Yar-valley to the subjugation of all regions and peoples that were later included in Four Horns. The conquests of the Žań-žuń or the Ya-ža are treated only to the extent that they can help an understanding and ordering of the sequence of other events.

2. The paper consists of three major parts. Part I is historical in character and aims at reconstructing the chronology of the expansion of the Yar-luñs dynasty beyond the Yar-valley. It commences with political alliances of Stag-bu Sña-gzigs, built presumably in the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, and ends with the final conquest of the Ya-ža by Khri Mań-slon Mań-rcań in 663. The last section of this part seeks to establish a few rough dates for events prior to 634 – the date of the first documented encounter with Tang China. The consecutive phases of the expansion are illustrated on four maps that should help to visualise the spatial dimension of the conquests. In addition, Appendix C summarises all the conquests in a tabular form. The historical survey of Part I provides important background information that allows for the philological analyses of Part II. Here the usage of *bod* in OT texts is scrutinised with special consideration being paid to chronological variation. Broadly discussed hypotheses that early European and Chinese sources could mention 'Tibetans' are examined in the last section of Part II against the backdrop of the analyses presented in the paper. Part III puts forward a new etymology of the toponym *Tibet* that relates Old Turkic, Middle Chinese and medieval

European terms to each other and traces them back to an Old Tibetan common noun. Finally, Appendices A and B discuss etymologies of *bod* and *Tibet* that have been put forward in previous studies, whereas Appendix C provides chronological ordering of the events discussed.

3. Several technical remarks regarding terminological and typographical conventions used in the paper are due. Since the paper is based solely on OT documents, all proper names are spelt following the orthography of OLT. I deliberately avoid the ethnonym *Tibetan* or the toponym *Tibet* throughout the paper, unless justified by the context. The decision is motivated by two considerations: 1. ethnic affiliation of certain groups discussed in the paper cannot be established or is debatable; and 2. in the historical reality of the early medieval Tibetan Plateau the reference of the toponym *Tibet* is far from clear. As will be discussed below, the beginnings of the Yar-luñs dynasty were humble but later it grew to control Samarkand, Kabul, Turfan and even the Chinese capital of Chang'an. Rather than speculating whether the name *Tibet* should apply to all these places and their inhabitants, I decided to use the contemporary OLT terms of the examined documents, such as *bod* "Bod", *ru gsum* "Three Horns", *ru bži* "Four Horns" etc. Most frequently, however, I will speak of the 'Yar-luñs dynasty' or the 'Yar-dominion' to refer to the political power and the polity of the royal house whose home territory was located in the Yar-valley.<sup>3</sup> If a term is used anachronistically, it is enclosed within angle brackets. For instance, <Four Horns> refers to the territory of Four Horns as defined from 733/4 although the discussion concerns a period preceding this date; the same concerns toponyms that are only known from post-imperial sources. Titles characteristic of the flourishing empire, such as *bcan po*, are used with respect to the rulers of the Yar-luñs dynasty only if attested in the sources. The frequently used phrase 'Old Tibetan documents/sources/texts' refers to non-translatory records that were composed during the Tibetan Empire. They are written in the language called 'Old Literary Tibetan' that should be distinguished, on the one hand, from Classical Tibetan and, on the other hand, from Old Tibetan. The latter was a spoken language dated approximately to the period

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<sup>3</sup> In OLT, Yar-čhu (HON Yar-čhab) was the name of the river and Yar-luñs the name of the valley. Yar-mo seems to have denoted the territory of the ruling family in the Yar-valley.

640s–800 (Bialek 2018b).<sup>4</sup>

For historical documents such as the *Old Tibetan Annals* (OTA) or OT inscriptions, it is assumed the time of narration equals the time of the texts' composition.<sup>5</sup> The semi-historical *Old Tibetan Chronicles* (OTC) narrate events that had happened long before the text, as we have it, was composed. As it is well-known, the events are not recorded chronologically in the OTC. It was therefore necessary to de-construct the preserved version of the text in order to re-construct the sequence of the relevant events. This might at first be surprising or even confusing to those who are used to read the text linearly, but I believe the results obtained justify this procedure.<sup>6</sup>

### I. Early expansion of the Yar-luñs dynasty and the formation of the Tibetan Empire

4. The primary objective of this part is to establish a relative chronology of the events pertaining to the early (mostly prehistorical) territorial expansion of the Yar-luñs dynasty. Much of our knowledge of this period comes from OT historiographical narratives, foremost the *Old Tibetan Chronicles* (PT 1144, PT 1286, PT 1287, ITJ 1375). Since one event is sometimes recounted twice or even thrice in the OTC,

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<sup>4</sup> OLT differs from CT first of all in its phraseology and the coherent use of titles characteristic to the epoch of the Tibetan Empire.

<sup>5</sup> The *Old Tibetan Annals* is a collective title used for texts preserved in manuscripts with the shelf-marks PT 1288, ITJ 750 (OTA-I), Or.8212/187 (OTA-II), and Dx 12851v (OTA-III). In Bialek (2021: 20) I propose a slightly changed chronology of OT inscriptions: Khri Lde-gcug-rcañ (704–54): Dgay; Khri Sroñ-lde-brcañ (742–97): Žol, Bsam, Bsam B, Rkoñ, Yphyoñ, \*Brag A; Khri Lde-sroñ-brcañ (797–815): Khra, Žwa W, Skar, Žwa E, \*Ldan 2, \*Ybis 2; Khri Gcug-lde-brcañ (815–41): Khri, ST Treaty, Lčañ S, Khrom F, Khrom R, Dun 365, Lho. The dating of the inscriptions marked with an asterisk remains uncertain.

<sup>6</sup> Apart from the above listed records, likewise OT ritual texts speak of *bod* or its derivatives. However, there the name belongs to mythical geography and as such is only of limited value for historical studies.

The Tibetan script is transliterated according to the principles put forward in Bialek (2020b). Tibetan proper names are hyphenated in order to enhance their readability in the text flow. Passages quoted from OT sources have been transliterated on the basis of scans made available on the IDP and Gallica. The OT orthography is strictly followed. The 'reversed *gi gu*' is transliterated as *i*. No distinction is made between a single and a double *cheg* in the transliteration. Reconstructed verb roots (√) are quoted in IPA transcription.

but each time from a different perspective, it was necessary to treat the contents of the narratives independently of the transmitted division of PT 1287 into chapters. Needless to say, the majority of the events predating 640 cannot be dated absolutely (however see § 16). The only exceptions concern several events that have also been documented in Chinese sources. The situation changes for the last years of Khri Sroñ-rcan's reign that are related in the *Preamble* to the OTA. The regular annual entries start in 650/1, providing precise dates for over one hundred years.

The events reconstructed below for the prehistorical period demonstrate that, as the time passed, personal relations between neighbouring families led to strategic alliances. The Yar-luñs dynasty succeeded in politically subordinating some of the families, thus extending its influence zone beyond the Yar-valley. With each conquest new families were introduced into the politics of the Yar-luñs dynasty. In this period, allied families were rewarded for joining the confederation. This ranged from receiving the post of grand councillor (or rather its precursor) to the offer of territories or the right to become bride-givers. The sources available suggest that the Yar-luñs dynasty controlled the amount of power ceded to single families by preventing a family from both becoming a bride-giver *and* obtaining the office of grand councillor.<sup>7</sup> Whatever the mutual relations between the families within the confederation might have been, it is apparent that during the reigns of Stag-bu Sña-gzigs and his successors it was the Yar-luñs dynasty who had the monopoly on the allotment of territories and thus alone decided over the political status of other families.

The temporal frame relevant to the present investigation encompasses the period from the first expansions beyond the Yar-luñs valley during the reign of Stag-bu Sña-gzigs until the conquest of all the territories that were later included into Four Horns. As can be expected, various parts of <Four Horns> came under the sway of the Yar-luñs dynasty in different times, with the western and south-western territories the last to be subjugated. The reconstruction seeks to present known events in a chronological order, taking into account

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<sup>7</sup> The sole exception to the rule in the early phase of the Yar-luñs polity was the Moñ family. The rule was first revoked in the 8<sup>th</sup> c. when Ybro Čuñ-bzañ Yormañ became a grand councillor in 728/9 (ITJ 750: 249–50) even though he came from a bride-giver family. Afterwards, other bride-giver families such as Mčhims and Sna-nam also held the office of grand councillor.

not only historical information, but also geographical data that can be obtained from the sources.

### I.1 Stag-bu Sñā-gzigs

5. The earliest phase of the expansion beyond the Yar-valley is not attested in any historical document of the time and is rarely retold in later records. The Yar-luñs dynasty maintained contacts with other local ruling families along the Rcañ-po (LT Gcañ-po) river, with intermarriage between the dynasty and families occurring (see Hazod 2019: 10f.). On three occasions OT historiographical sources provide lists of such families: 1. *gnay gñen* “ancient affinal relatives” (PT 1286: 1–3); 2. families from which prehistorical Yar-luñs rulers took brides (PT 1286: 59–61); and 3. ‘grand councillors’ (PT 1287: 64–74).<sup>8</sup> Table 1 lists the names of the respective families up to the reign of Stag-bu Sñā-gzigs.<sup>9</sup>

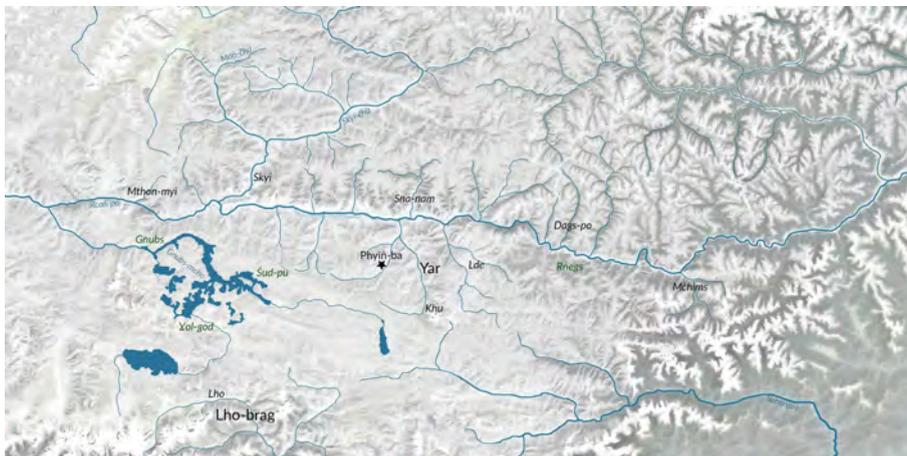
<i>gnay gñen</i>	bride-giver families	councillors	
		Family	Given name
Lde	<i>Ru-yoñ</i>	<i>Ydayr</i>	Stoñ-dañ-rje
Skyi	<i>Gnoy</i>	Rñegs	Dud-kyi-rje
Dags	<i>Ybro</i>	Khu	Lha-bo Mgo-gar
Mčhims	Mčhims	Lho	Thañ-ybriñ Ya-steñs
	Yol-god	Rñegs	Thañ-yoñ Thañ-rje
		Gnubs	Smon-to-re Sbuñ-brcan
		Mthon-myi	Ybriñ-po Rgyal-bcan-nu
		Sna-nam	Ybriñ-tog-rje
		Gnubs	Khri-do-re Mthoñ-po
		Gnubs	Khri-dog-rje Gcug-blon
		Gnubs	Mñien-to-re Ñan-snañ
		Šud-pu	Rgyal-to-re Ña-myi

Table 1. Families in affinal and/or political relationships with the Yar-luñs dynasty

<sup>8</sup> The application of the title *blon che* “grand councillor” to these officials is certainly anachronistic (Hazod 2019). Richardson (1998 [1977]: 57) described the list as “fanciful and unreliable where it relates to personages before the seventh century”. This verdict might be too harsh but certainly special caution is required when dealing with records that narrate prehistorical events.

<sup>9</sup> Famous lists or ‘catalogues’ of principalities (see, e.g., Lalou 1965; Hazod 2009: 170ff.) fall rather under the category of ‘mythologised history’ or ‘state-formative narratives’ as they disregard the time depth of single political units they amalgamated (see also Stein 1972: 47; Dotson 2012: 169ff.).

The homelands or contemporary seats of the families marked in italics could not yet be established for the period in question, but the remaining ones have been localised as illustrated in Map 1.<sup>10</sup>



Map 1. Families in affinal and/or political relationships with the Yar-luñs family in the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century (Image Landsat / Copernicus 01.2021)<sup>11</sup>

The families whose seats could be located are found in a restricted area either south or north of Rcañ-po but in the latter case in its immediate vicinity. This confirms the local dimension of the Yar-dominion in its beginnings; in PT 1286: 1, the affinal relatives Lde, Skyi, Dags, and Mčhims are described as *mthay bži* “of four borders”, i.e. the seats of the four families marked the extent of the dominion at

<sup>10</sup> If not otherwise stated, the identification of the sites follows Hazod (2009 & 2019); some places were already identified by Beckwith (1977: 222ff.). Hazod tentatively identified OLT Lde with later G.ye/Qe on the basis of the toponym Gañs-bar (PT 1286: 1) attested as Gañs-γbar in G.ye (Sørensen and Hazod 2005: 220 & 230). For the Rñegs family Hazod suggested a location “close to ancient Dags-yul (Dwags-po) [...] somewhere between Mčhims and G.ye” (2019: 66). The home territory of Gnubs has been tentatively located in the modern Roñ district (Hazod 2018: 21), but since the Yar-γbrog lake is known in OLT as Gnubs lake (*gnubs mcho*, see ex. (1) below; modern: Nubs-mcho, Hazod 2009: 172), I suggest that the original location of the family was closer to the lake. In PT 1144 (see ex. (1)) the Yol-god family is said to reside in Yar-γbrog. Presuming this Yar-γbrog is in the vicinity of the Gnubs *alias* Yar-γbrog lake (Sørensen and Hazod 2005: 231), the region is still too vast to suggest any concrete location. The same concerns the location of Šud-pu in Yar-γbrog (Hazod 2019: 68).

<sup>11</sup> Legend: Yar = region name; *Sna-nam* = family name; *Rñegs* = approximate location of a family; *G.ye* = toponyms from post-imperial sources; \* Bre-snar = residence.

that time. The last 'grand councillors' listed in Table 1 came from the Gnubs, Mthon-myi, Sna-nam, and Śud-pu families. Apart from Sna-nam, the other three families had their seats in the westernmost part of the area controlled by the Yar-luñs dynasty and therefore one may conclude they were the last ones to join the confederation. The same concerns the Yol-god family who was the bride-giver of Stag-bu Sña-gzigs. From this, a clear picture of expansion from Yar-luñs towards the west emerges.

Textual sources begin to be more concrete in the reign of Stag-bu Sña-gzigs. And so the relation between Stag-bu Sña-gzigs and the Yol-god family is confirmed in a partly damaged passage from PT 1144:

(1)

(v3) *bcan po khri stag bu dañ / yol god yar ybrog gī bdag [p]o[s]*<sup>12</sup> // *gnubs mchoyi glañ [---]ug [---] bres cham bsd[al?]*<sup>13</sup> *nas* (v4) *yol [g]od kyis rgyal stag bu bzuñ ste // lho brag gi [r]gyal klu ñur la phul nas // rgyal klu ñur gi[s] [bcan] po khri stag bu* (v5) *[---] bañ [g]ī nañ du bčug go // yuñ nas rgyal stag buyi bcun mo // yol god za s[t]oñcun [---]n po dañ gco [---]*

After *bcan po* Khri Stag-bu and Yol-god, the lord of Yar-ybrog, [---] of the Gnubs lake<sup>14</sup> [---], Yol-god, having seized king Stag-bu, gave [him] to Klu-ñur, the king of Lho-brag. Then, king Klu-ñur put *bcan po* Khri Stag-bu into a [---]-store-house (i.e. imprisoned). Thereafter, the queen of king Stag-bu, lady Stoñ-[cun] from the Yol-god-[family] together with [---].<sup>15</sup>

The incident with the Yol-god lord displays the political weakness of Stag-bu Sña-gzigs and therefore must have preceded his plans to conquer Nas-po as narrated in PT 1287: 147–64 (see next section).<sup>16</sup> Some time after the incident Stag-bu Sña-gzigs joined a plot to overthrow Ziñ-po-rje Khri-pañ-sum, the lord of Nas-po, despite the fact that his sister was married to the latter (PT 1287: 159). However, he died before the plans, conspired at Phyiñ-ba, could be implemented.

<sup>12</sup> Dotson (2013a: 404) read *[p]o[r]* but terminative after a proper name at the beginning of a clause is improbable.

<sup>13</sup> Dotson amended *bsdal* with *bsnal* (2013a: 403).

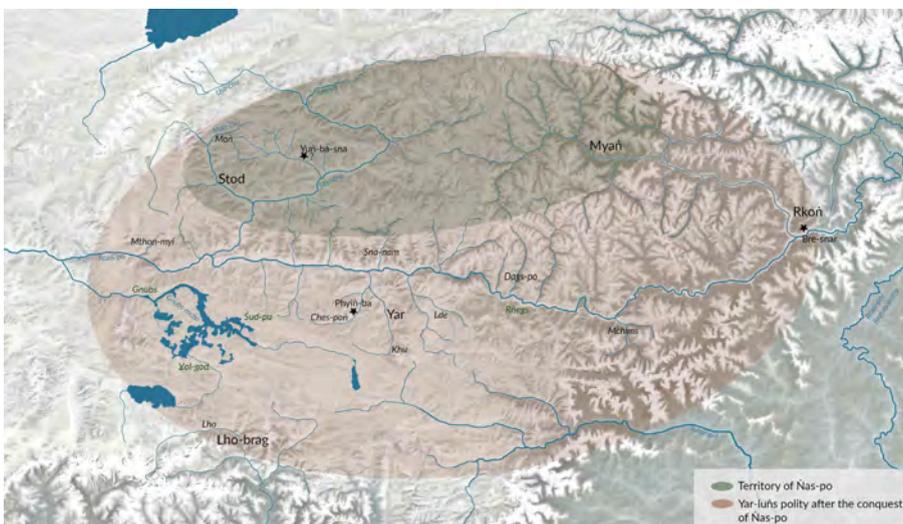
<sup>14</sup> This passage indicates that in the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century Yar-ybrog was a territory in the immediate vicinity of the Gnubs lake that was later renamed as Yar-ybrog lake (LT *yar ybrog mcho*).

<sup>15</sup> The complete document has been translated by Dotson (2013a: 403f.). A later version of the story as narrated in *Rgyal rabs bon kyī ybyuñ gnas* of Khyuñ-po Blo-gros Rgyal-mchan is quoted in Uray (1972: 37f., fn. 91).

<sup>16</sup> A reversed order of the events was presumed by Richardson (1998 [1989]: 130) who maintained that Stag-bu Sña-gzigs “did not survive” the abduction.

## I.2 Khri Slon-mchan<sup>17</sup>

6. *Nas-po* conquest. The conquest of *Nas-po* (renamed as *Yphan-yul*) was prepared during the lifetime of Stag-bu *Sña-gzigs* and so, one can presume it was carried out at the very beginning of the reign of his son Khri Slon-mchan. The conquest can be dubbed the cornerstone of the Tibetan Empire. With it, Khri Slon-mchan is said to have had the territories from *Yuñ-ba-sna* of Phag to *Bre-snar* of *Rkoñ* in his possession (PT 1287: 183–4; see Map 2).<sup>18</sup>



Map 2. Yar-luñs polity after the conquest of *Nas-po* (Image Landsat / Copernicus 01.2021)

Little is known about the status of *Rkoñ* prior to the conquest. From the history of *Nas-po* (PT 1287: 118–72), one learns that before the conquest the *Myañ* family was serving under *Ziñ-po-rje* Stag-skya-bo and after his defeat under *Ziñ-po-rje* Khri-pan-sum. Subse-

<sup>17</sup> Two variants of the name are attested in OLT: *slon bcan* and *slon mchan*. One finds arguments to support both: 1. *slon bcan* > *slon mchan* (progressive assimilation *b-* > *m-* / *-n* \_); but 2. *mchan* is a *lectio difficilior* and could have been replaced by *bcan* as the latter better connoted a connection with royal names. In the paper I decided in favour of *slon mchan*.

<sup>18</sup> According to Kriz and Hazod (2020), *Yuñ-ba* was a region within *Yphan-yul*, i.e. former *Nas-po*. The phrase *phagī yuñ ba sna* and the following *rkoñ bre snar* rather suggest that *Yuñ-ba-sna* was a centre of a region called Phag. The latter remains unidentified, but we may indicate that a certain *Yphags-rgyal* (variant spelling *Phar-kyañ*) is listed in later sources as a *yul sde* “administrative district” of Central Horn (see Hazod 2009: 204).

quently, it became subject to the Yar-luñs dynasty. It seems therefore that Ņas-po extended as far as Myañ.<sup>19</sup> The territories between the Yar-valley and Rkoñ (including Dags-po and Mčhims) must have come under the control of the Yar-luñs dynasty during the reign of Stag-bu Śña-gzigs at the latest.<sup>20</sup> The conquest of Ņas-po was of paramount strategic importance; it secured Khri Slon-mchan the control over the Skyi-valley and, most notably, paved the way for the conquest of the Sum-pa.<sup>21</sup> At this point Upper Stod and the valley of the Mthon-myi family seem to have been the westernmost territories controlled by the Yar-luñs dynasty. Map 2 provides an overview of the lands and families controlled after the conquest of Ņas-po.

7. Rcañ-Bod conquest.<sup>22</sup> For tactical and logistic reasons the subjugation of the Rcañ-Bod must have followed the conquest of Ņas-po.<sup>23</sup> Here are the relevant passages:

(2)

*de yi yog du moñ / (75) khri do re snañ chab kyis byaste // yyañs kyi chad nī / rcañ bod kyi jo bo mar mun brlags te / (PT 1287)*

Thereafter, Moñ Khri-do-re Snañ-chab served [as grand councillor]; as for the measure of [his] wisdom, [he] conquered Mar-mun, the lord of the Rcañ-Bod.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Beckwith (1993: 14) speculated that Ņas-po might have also included Rkoñ. This is not implausible but the hypothesis lacks support from the sources.

<sup>20</sup> His mother Klu-rgyal Nan-mo-mcho was from the Mčhims family (PT 1286: 59–60) and so this might have brought about the control over the Mčhims' territories. Under unknown circumstances the neighbouring Dags-po was also subordinated to the Yar-luñs dynasty although it retained partial autonomy throughout the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>21</sup> Ņas-po is called *ra yul* (PT 1287: 242) "region of Ra", which I interpreted as referring to Ra-sa (2018a: 2.520).

<sup>22</sup> I interpret *rcañ bod* as a synonymic compound (Bialek 2018: 1.185ff.), consisting of two demonyms: \*Rcañ-pa "inhabitants of Rcañ" and Bod "Bod-people". This interpretation is discussed in more detail in § 17 below.

<sup>23</sup> Since the conquest of Ņas-po started the reign of Khri Slon-mchan, the Rcañ-Bod must have been subjugated later, as against Uray's analysis (1972: 40).

<sup>24</sup> Denwood (2009: 149) maintained that (2) does not attribute the conquest of Mar-mun explicitly to Moñ Khri-do-re Snañ-chab but only relates its occurrence during his incumbency as grand councillor. The passage is indeed ambiguous, but because Moñ Khri-do-re Snañ-chab is included in the agent of the following verb *blod* "to discuss" he must be at least co-agent of *brlags* for the following clause does not mark subject-switch (see also Dotson's translation in 2013a: 271). Furthermore, since the conquest took place during the incumbency of Moñ Khri-do-re Snañ-chab as grand councillor, it seems more than likely that he had his share in its success (see below for further arguments).

(3)

*rgyal po ydī yi riñ la // khyuñ po spuñ sad kyis / (199) rcañ bod kyi rjo bo mar mun mgo bčhad de // rcañ bod khyim ñi gri // bcan po yi pyag du pulte / zu ce glo ba ñe yo // (200) yuñ nas / bcan po slon bcan gyis // rcañ bod khyim ñi gri // zu ce glo ba ñe ba yi bya dgayr scal to // (PT 1287)*

During the reign of this king (i.e. Gnam-ri Slon-mchan), Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad [Zu-ce], having cut off the head of Mar-mun, the lord of the Rcañ-Bod, offered twenty thousand households [of] the Rcañ-Bod to the *bcan po*. Zu-ce was loyal. Thereafter, *bcan po* [Gnam-ri] Slon-bcan presented the twenty thousand households [of] the Rcañ-Bod as Zu-ce's reward.

(4)

*bcan po za sñar khyuñ po spuñ sad kyis gsol pay / (319) sñon bcan po yi yab gnam rī yi riñ la // bdaḡis rcañ bod ybañs su bkug pa lta žig // yab kyis spyān gyis ma gzigs // žabs (320) kyis ma bčhags na // bcan po sras kyis spyān gyis gzigs // žabs kyis bčhagste // bdaḡi sdum pa khri bomsu // dgyes skyems / (321) ston mo gsol du ži gnañ žes gsol nas // (PT 1287)*

Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad [Zu-ce] made a request to *bcan po* [Khri Sroñ-rcañ]: "Previously, during the reign of Gnam-ri [Slon-mchan], the *bcan po*'s father, the father did not regard (lit. watched with [his] eyes) me who had subjected the Rcañ-Bod; [he] did not pay [me] a visit (lit. walked with [his] feet). If that's so, would [you] allow [me] to offer delicacies and beverage at Khri-boms, a residence of mine, [if] the *bcan po* the son, regarded [me and] paid [me] a visit?"

The first two passages are in accord when stating that the Rcañ-Bod were ruled by lord Mar-mun. However, (2) attributes the victory over Mar-mun to Moñ Khri-do-re Snañ-chab, whereas (3) and (4) to Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce.<sup>25</sup> Despite their seeming contradictoriness, the two views do not have to exclude each other as suggested by Dotson (2013a: 334, n. 20) and explicitly stated in Bialek (2016: 118). Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce is said to have had his residence in Khri-boms (PT 1287: 320; see Map 3); various OT sources connect the Khyuñ-po family with the Žañ-žuñ. Alternatively, Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce might have previously served Mar-mun and changed the sides to join the Yar-luñs rulers (cf. Hazod 2009: 190). The original seat of the Khyuñ-po family might have been located elsewhere and was moved to Khri-boms after the subjugation of the Rcañ-Bod.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Also in PT 1287: 221–3, Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce praises himself for killing a vulture of Rcañ-brañ (see ex. (5)), which is an apparent allusion to his conquest of Rcañ.

<sup>26</sup> Hazod convincingly argued that Khri-boms shall be identified with the district Khri-bom (other names: Khri-goñ, Khri-dgoñs, Khri-goms, Khri-som) in the area around Glañ-mcho lake (29°12'12.69"N, 87°23'30.21"E) in Nam-riñ County (2009:

The residence of the Moñ family was situated in Moñ of Upper Stod (Hazod 2019: 27); cf. OLT *stod gyī moñ* “Moñ of Stod” (ITJ 750: 136). The fact that Moñ Khri-do-re Snañ-chab held the office of grand councillor under Khri Slon-mchan (PT 1287: 74–8) evinces the importance of his family. He might have been granted the office for his contribution to the conquest of Ānas-po.<sup>27</sup> Moñ-čhu, the name of a river in Upper Stod (Hazod 2019: 120, Fig. 3), suggests that the valley was the original seat of the family from which the family took its name.

If we look at Map 3, it becomes apparent that prior to the conquest of the Rcañ-Bod (whatever their exact locations) the region between Moñ/Mthon-myi and Khri-boms had no documented connection to the Yar-luñs dynasty. I think that the territory of the Rcañ-Bod must be sought in this region (for its concrete location see §§ 19 & 20 below).<sup>28</sup> The conquest of Mar-mun’s territories might have pro-

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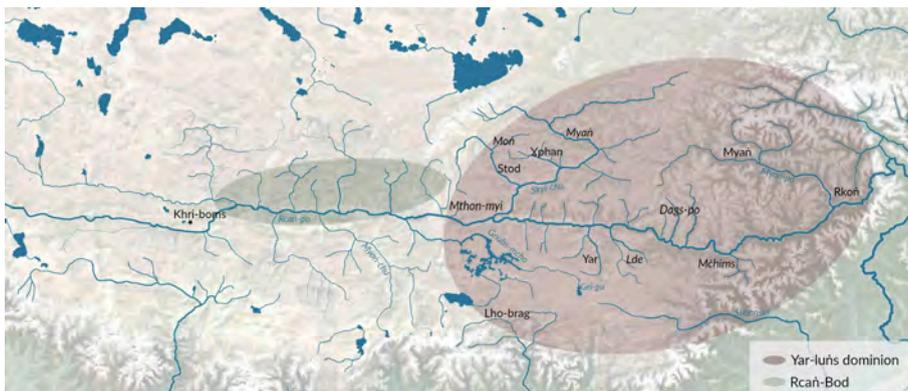
206b and Map 6.1a). On the seat of the Khyuñ-po family, see also Richardson (1998 [1977]: 59) and Hazod (2009: 190).

Zeisler (2021: 328) suggested that the Rcañ-pas might have been vassals of the Žaň-žuñ prior to their conquest by Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce. If so, then Bod must have also been subjects of the Žaň-žuñ (as indeed assumed by Beckwith (1993: 16)), for both were ruled by Mar-mun. The conquest of the Rcañ-Bod from the Žaň-žuñ would have brought the Yar-luñs dynasty in an open conflict with the latter, of which there is no information available.

<sup>27</sup> It is conceivable that he was the first ever grand councillor; the office might have been created after the conquest of Ānas-po as the first step to consolidate the political power of the Yar-luñs dynasty. This break is indicated in PT 1287: 73 with the statement that the councillors who preceded Moñ Khri-do-re Snañ-chab were endowed with transformational powers (*yphrul*), as opposed to the later ones (see also Hazod 2019: 6). The break is confirmed by PT 1144 where Śud-pu Rgyal-to-re Āna-myi (enlisted as grand councillor in PT 1287) is referred to as *guñ blon* of Stag-bu Sña-gzigs. The office of *guñ blon* might have been replaced by that of *blon čhen* by Khri Slon-mchan for in OT sources the former is mentioned only in connection with Stag-bu Sña-gzigs’s reign (cf. also PT 1287: 257).

<sup>28</sup> For the Rcañ-Bod, Richardson suggested a location “around and north-west of Śaňs and Shigatse” (1998 [1989]: 131). Beckwith (1993: 8 & 16) identified the region with modern Dbus-Gcañ but in an earlier work he speculated that Bod “referred to Dbus and the region adjoining it to the northeast” (Beckwith 1977: 232). Denwood (2009: 149) suggested identifying the Rcañ-Bod with Lower Rcañ, whereas Hazod (2009: 171, Map 3) placed the Rcañ-Bod to the west of Rcañ. The latter author understood *rcañ bod* to be a determinative compound, lit. “Bod of Rcañ” (p. 190). This interpretation (apparently also accepted in Zeisler 2021: 324ff.) is not supported by other examples from OLT; on the contrary, whenever an area formed part of a greater region this was expressed with a determinative phrase ‘X+GEN Y’, lit. “Y of X”. In the latter construction, Y customarily denoted a concrete place and not a region. Moreover, Hazod’s interpretation is based on the

ceeded from two directions: from the west he could have been attacked by Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce and from the east by Moñ Khri-do-re Snañ-chab. In this way the information from (2) and (3) can be reconciled, providing an important bridging link to later conquests further to the west, like that of the Žaň-zuñ.



Map 3. Tentative location of the Rcañ-Bod (Image Landsat / Copernicus 01.2021)

8. Žaň-zuñ alliance. Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce describes his contribution to the polity of Khri Slon-mchan in the following song:

(5)

<i>mon ka yī ni stag čhig pa /</i>	A lone tiger of Mon-ka –
<i>stag bkum nī zu ces bkum / [...]</i>	[One] killed the tiger. Zu-ce killed [it]. [...]
<i>rcañ brañ nī ya stod kyī</i>	In Rcañ-brañ, <sup>29</sup> of the heights
<i>thañ prom nī rgod ldiñ bay //</i>	A white-winged one, a soaring vulture –
<i>rgod bkum nī zu ces bkum // [...]</i>	[One] killed the vulture. Zu-ce killed [it]. [...]
<i>tī se ni gañs druñ nas //</i>	From the foot of the Ti-se glacier,
<i>ša dañ nī rkyañ byer bay //</i>	Deer and wild asses that fled,
<i>šam po nī rca la byer // [...]</i>	Fled to Šam-po. [...]
<i>ma pañ nī mcho ygram nas /</i>	From the shore of the Ma-pañ lake,
<i>ñañ dañ nī nur byed ba //</i>	Geese and ducks that fled,
<i>dañ ko ni mcho la byer //</i>	Fled to the Dañ-ko lake. (PT 1287: 221–6)

assumption that *rcañ bod* was a toponym, but in fact it consisted of two demonyms (see fn. 22 and §§ 19 & 20 below) that are also independently attested in the sources.

<sup>29</sup> Beckwith interpreted *rcañ brañ* as “palace of Rcañ”, adding that it must have referred to the seat of Mar-mun (1977: 236). Although in itself plausible, there are two problems with this interpretation: 1. in OLT a seat of a ruler was commonly referred to as *mchar* (see the catalogues of principalities); and 2. Mar-mun ruled over the \*Rcañ-pa and Bod.

Little is known about the conquest of Mon-ka (tiger), but that of Rcañ (vulture) is confirmed in other passages and texts as well (see § 7). The animal metaphors continue with deer and wild asses of Ti-se and geese and ducks of Ma-pañ. They are not killed but brought into the vicinity of the Yar-valley, to the Śam-po mountain and the Dañ-ko lake.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, due to Zu-ce's activities and apparently without a military intervention, the peoples from the far west were made subjects of the Yar-luñs dynasty. The marriage of Sad-mar-kar, the sister of Khri Sroñ-rcañ, with the Žaň-žuň ruler Lig-myi-rhya (PT 1287: 398–9; see § 11) confirms the latter's close relations to the Yar-luñs house and might have in fact resulted from the subordination of the peoples from Ti-se and Ma-pañ alluded to in (5). Thus, following the conquest of the Rcañ-Bod, peoples inhabiting regions further to the west also became subjects of Khri Slon-mchan, possibly instigated by Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce.

9. Revolt. Towards the end of Khri Slon-mchan's reign the Žaň-žuň, Sum-pa, Ņag-ñi,<sup>31</sup> Dags-po, Rkoñ-po, and Myañ-po revolted (PT 1287: 300). This information confirms that all these peoples were considered subjects of Khri Slon-mchan albeit the character of the fealty might have varied for single groups. For instance, Dags-po, Rkoñ, and Myañ have already occurred in the context of previous conquests by Khri Slon-mchan, whereas Lig-myi-rhya, the ruler of the Žaň-žuň, was married to Sad-mar-kar, the sister of Khri Sroñ-rcañ, and his subjects were considered subjects of the Yar-luñs dynasty (see ex. (5)).<sup>32</sup> Yet no information whatsoever is available on the political status of the Sum-pa. If the extension of the Rcañ-Bod as reconstructed in the paper is correct, the first conquest of the Sum-pa must have followed that of the Rcañ-Bod so to prevent the attack from Mar-mun via the corridor of Upper Stod and the Upper Lha-čhu valley. Alternatively, the lord of the Sum-pa might have been married to another Yar-luñs princess. Now taking into account Map 4, it appears

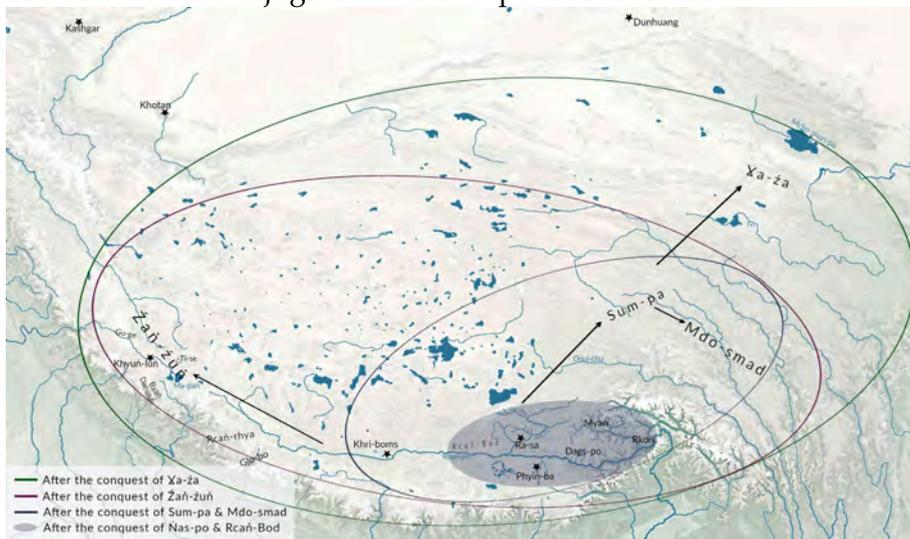
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<sup>30</sup> Beckwith (1977: 236f.) identified Dañ-ko with the modern-day Gri-gu lake (see Map 3) about thirty kilometres as the crow flies southwest from the Yar-lha-śam-po mountain. Beckwith's identification has been accepted by Gyalbo, Hazod, and Sørensen (2000: 204) and Sørensen and Hazod (2005: 257, fn. 60).

<sup>31</sup> For the reading of Ņag-ñi as a toponym, see Uray 1988. As far as I am aware, it remains unidentified, although it must have been located in close vicinity of Dags-po.

<sup>32</sup> On the occasion of the revolt the Žaň-žuň are called *gñen* (PT 1287: 300) "affinal relatives", confirming the existence of matrimonial contacts with the Yar-luñs dynasty (see also Uray 1988: 1503).

that whatever the exact location of the *Žaŋ-žuŋ* and *Sum-pa*, they must have been subjugated after *Nas-po* and the *Rcaŋ-Bod*.<sup>33</sup>



Map 4. *Yar-dominion* (Image Landsat / Copernicus 01.2021)

Shortly before his death *Khri Slon-mchan* appointed *Myaŋ Maŋ-po-rje Žaŋ-snaŋ* a grand councillor (PT 1287: 259). The appointment might have been related to the revolt and *Myaŋ Maŋ-po-rje Žaŋ-snaŋ*'s role in re-gaining of the *Myaŋ* family (and maybe also *Dags-po* and *Rkoŋ*) for *Khri Slon-mchan*.<sup>34</sup>

### I.3 *Khri Sroŋ-rcan*

10. 2<sup>nd</sup> *Sum-pa* conquest. *Khri Slon-mchan* died a violent death (PT 1287: 300–1). His son *Khri Sroŋ-rcan* was young and therefore did not have children yet (PT 1287: 301), but he was old enough to indepen-

<sup>33</sup> For the location of the *Rcaŋ-Bod* on Map 4, see §§ 18–20 below. Denwood, referring to the Tang itinerary of 734–8 (see Satō 1975), established the territory inhabited by the *Sum-pa* as bordering to the northeast on *Ybri-ču* and to the southwest on the *Humang Gorge* located between the *Sog-ču* and *Śag-ču* (2008: 12). Although this location might be roughly correct (it partly overlaps with Tibetan data from post-imperial sources), the itinerary itself does not even allude to the *Sum-pa*, so that the foundation of Denwood's identification remains a mystery.

<sup>34</sup> According to PT 1288: 4–7, *Myaŋ Maŋ-po-rje* was killed and his residence *Sdurbu* destroyed before the first conquest of the *Ya-za*, whereas in PT 1287: 305–16 the order of the events is reversed.

dently take over the rule immediately after the death of his father (PT 1287: 301–2). Hence the assumption can be made that he might have been fifteen to twenty years old. His first goal must have been to re-subdue the Sum-pa and the *Žaň-žuň* after the revolt (§ 9). Grand councillor Myaň Maň-po-rje *Žaň-snaň* was entrusted with the subjugation of the Sum-pa (PT 1287: 84–5). PT 1287: 266–7 preserves the following song sung by Khri Sroň-rcan not long after the conquest of the Sum-pa by Myaň Maň-po-rje *Žaň-snaň*:

(6)

<i>yar mo ni čhu thuňgs kyis //</i>	Because the rivers of Yar-mo were short,
<i>mdo nas nī rcaň du / (267) bsrin /</i>	[They] were extended from Mdo-[smad] to Rcaň.
<i>yar mo ni žeň čhuňgs kyis //</i>	Because the expanse of Yar-mo was small,
<i>lho nas nī byaň du bskyed //</i>	[It] was enlarged from south to north.

Since the dominion under the sway of the Yar-luňs dynasty extended from Mdo-smad in the east to Rcaň in the west, one has to assume that Mdo-smad was conquered immediately after the Sum-pa, although the sources do not mention its conquest. That the territory of the Sum-pa was adjacent to Mdo-smad can be inferred from the following passage:

(7)

*mdo smad gyi dgun ydun nam ldoň prom du khu maň po rje lha (141) zuň daň / blon maň rcaň ldoň žis bsduste / sum ruyi mkos čhen po bgyis / (ITJ 750)*  
 The winter council of Mdo-smad, convened by Khu Maň-po-rje Lha-zuň and councillor Maň-rcan Ldoň-ži at Nam-ldoň-prom, made a great administration of Sum-pa Horn.

It has generally been assumed that the territory of Mdo-smad was located to the east of the Sum-pa, partly overlapping with the latter (see Hazod 2009: 166, Map 2). On the other hand, if the Sum-pa lived between Central Horn and Mdo-smad, it is difficult to explain why they should have been administered from the latter and not from Central Horn.

11. 1<sup>st</sup> *Žaň-žuň* conquest. From (6), it can be inferred that after Khri Sroň-rcan took over the reign, there was a period in which the Yar-luňs dynasty ruled over the Sum-pa and extended its territories as far east as Mdo-smad but did not yet militarily control the *Žaň-žuň*. I think that the famous passage on the conquest of the *Žaň-žuň* ruler

Lig-myi-rhya (PT 1287: 398–434) narrates events that followed the revolt (see § 9). By veiling the story as a matrimonial narrative trope (Dotson 2013b: 211ff.), the narrator wants the reader to believe that it was Sad-mar-kar who instigated the conquest, but the incentive for the attack seems to have come from outside of the royal house:

(8)

*bchan pho źa śnar spuñ sad zu ce dañ / stañ rye mun glo ba ñe ste mčhis nas / (44) lig myi rya la čhab srid mjad nay / rgyal lam myi rgyal źes bthab nay [...] mo bzañ rab / (PT 1047: 43–6)*

If [one] threw [a lot asking]: “If, after [Khyuñ-po] Spuñ-sad Zu-ce and Stañ-rye-mun, being loyal to the *bcan po*, came, [they] would enforce policy against Lig-myi-rya, would [they/we] be victorious or not?” [...] the lot would be very good.

The passage reveals that it was Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce and Stañ-rye-mun who initiated the military action against Lig-myi-rhya. Stañ-rye-mun might have been subject of the *Žaň-žuň* at that time, whereas Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce had already proved his loyalty to the Yar-luñs house through the conquest of the Rcañ-Bod.

As can be inferred from the passages narrating the life of Sad-mar-kar (PT 1287: 402–3 & 408–12), the core of *Žaň-žuň*’s polity was centred around Gu-ge, the lake Ma-p(h)añ, and the mountain Ti-se (see also (5)), i.e. in the Upper Sutlej valley, with Rñul-mkhar of Khyuñ-luñ being its ‘capital’. On two occasions Lig/Leg/Lag-sña-śur is called “lord of Dar-ma/pa”: *dar pa yī rjo bo* (PT 1286: 7) and *źaň źuň dar mayi rje bo* (PT 1290: v5); PT 1290: r3 reads *mayi rje bo leg sña śur* which has been correctly amended as *\*dar ma* on OTDO. This Dar-pa/ma is to be identified with Darma Valley in the eastern part of the Uttarakhand state (Martin 2013: 188), just to the southwest from the Ma-pañ/Manasarovar lake (see Map 4 and Map 2 in Willis Oke (2019: 4)). Nowadays Darma Valley is inhabited by a group which identifies itself and the language they speak as Darma (ibid., p. 2). Darma, Byangkho, and Bangba/Chaudang form a “single ethnic tribe called Rung”<sup>35</sup> (ibid., p. 3; Darma, Byangkho and Bangba languages are classified as West Himalayish, Bodic, Trans-Himalayan). Byang-

<sup>35</sup> The name Rung [rəŋ] (Willis Oke 2019: 3) can be historically identical with *žuň* in *Žaň-žuň* and *tóng* in Yáng-tóng 羊同 (*tóng*: LH *doŋ*/OCM \*dōŋ, Schuessler (2007); MC *duwng*/OC \*l’oŋ, Baxter and Sagart (2014)). Beckwith reconstructed the name of the polity as \*ränggrüŋ (2011: 167).

kho live in Byans/Kuthi Valley,<sup>36</sup> the valley neighbouring Darma Valley to the east (see Map 4). I believe that this Byang/Byan is identical with Byañ in *byañ gi žañ-žuñ* (ITJ 1375: r3). It appears that during the same campaign that led to the 1<sup>st</sup> conquest of the Žañ-žuñ, Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce conquered To-yo-čhas-la, which is described as *byañ gi žañ-žuñ* and ruled by a certain Bor-yon-ce (ITJ 1375: r3).<sup>37</sup>

12. 1<sup>st</sup> Ya-ža conquest. Around 637/8 Tibetans under the command of Khri Sroñ-rcan attacked the Ya-ža (Beckwith 1993: 22). This first conquest of the Ya-ža is documented in Tibetan (PT 1288: 6–7; PT 1287: 305–7), as well as Chinese sources (Bushell 1880: 443f., Pelliot 1961: 3–4), although it might not have brought about any kind of political subordination to the Yar-luñs dynasty.

13. 2<sup>nd</sup> Žañ-žuñ conquest. Against the opinions of scholars who previously investigated the early history of the Yar-luñs dynasty, I hold that Lig-sña-šur, the ruler of the Žañ-žuñ conquered in 644/5 (PT 1288: 13–4), must have been a person distinct from Lig-myi-rhya.<sup>38</sup> Little is known for certain about the reasons for the second

<sup>36</sup> The form Byang seems to be a preferred endonym while Byan is more often used as exonym.

<sup>37</sup> For different localisations of Byañ see Hazod (2009: 172) and Denwood (2008: 10). The reconstructed extent of the Žañ-žuñ polity as including Darma and Byang valleys suggests that the language of the polity could be the last common ancestor of this group of Eastern West Himalayish languages. Likewise Widmer (2017: 52f.) included the Žañ-žuñ language within this sub-branch, although he connected it to the central sub-group that encompasses Bunan, Rongpo, and Sunam spoken further to the northwest from the region under consideration. In an earlier paper Martin (2013) related the Žañ-žuñ language more specifically to the modern Darma language.

<sup>38</sup> See Uray (1968: 296f.), Macdonald (1971: 109f.), Uray (1972: 35 & 40), but also Blezer (2010: 19, & esp. 26f.) who elsewhere mentions the possibility of the two being distinct persons (p. 41). This identification has led to a number of misinterpretations concerning the events but also biographies of persons involved.

Lig-myi-rhya was married to Sad-mar-kar, a sister of Khri Sroñ-rcan. The latter must have been around fifty-sixty years old at the time of the second conquest in 644/5 (PT 1288: 13–4). As Khri Slon-mchan died prematurely when Khri Sroñ-rcan was still a minor, his sister could not have been more than 15 years younger, if at all. Thus, in 644/5 she would have been around forty, which is not the best age for a woman to give birth. Furthermore, later Bon historiographical sources call Lig-myi-rhya “father” (*Rgyal rabs bon kyi ybyuñ gnas* 48.4; *apud* Uray 1968: 293). It is apparent that he was the father of Lig-sña-šur.

The distinctness of Lig-myi-rhya and Lig-sña-šur might also find confirmation in later Bon sources that relate two conquests of the Žañ-žuñ, dating the second one, however, to the reign of Khri Sroñ-lde-brcan (Blezer 2010: 19).

conquest but it seems to have followed the death of Guñ-sroñ Guñ-rcan; Bialek (2021 Forthcoming b) tentatively dated his reign to 641–4 (or less probably 645–7). Since a change on the throne is always a good occasion for a revolt and in this case the official heir to the throne, Khri Mañ-slon Mañ-rcan, was about six years old, the Žaň-zuñ might have seized the opportunity to throw off the yoke of the Yar-luñs rule. On the other hand, the contemporary ruler of the Žaň-zuñ, Lig-sña-śur, is referred to as a “lord of Dar-pa/ma” (see § 11). This designation might indicate that after the 1<sup>st</sup> conquest Tibetans gained control over a vast part of the once Žaň-zuñ territory but there were still remote regions, into which the ruling house could withdraw. Accordingly, the 2<sup>nd</sup> conquest aimed at the final defeat of the Žaň-zuñ now centred in Darma Valley. As a confirmation, PT 1288: 13 reads: *žaň zuñ thams čad ybañsu bkug* “all the Žaň-zuñ were subjugated”.<sup>39</sup>

#### I.4 Khri Mañ-slon Mañ-rcan

14. Conquest of Glo-bo and Rcañ-rhya. In 652/3 grand councillor Mgar Stoñ-rcan Yul-zuñ subjugated Glo-bo and Rcañ-rhya (PT 1288: 21–2). Their exact locations are not known but one can make the following educated guesses: 1. the two regions or people were neighbours; 2. Rcañ-rhya designated a region/people living near Rcañ-po; and 3. Glo-bo is evocative of Glo-bo/Mon-thaň (Dotson 2009: 84, fn. 134), Tibetan name for Mustang, a district in the Gandaki province of Nepal bordering on Tibet. The logical conclusion seems to be that Rcañ-rhya was located somewhere between Rcañ-po and Glo-bo (see Map 4).

15. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ya-ža conquest. From 663/4 to 666/7 grand councillor Mgar Stoñ-rcan Yul-zuñ stayed in the land of the Ya-ža and completed its conquest (PT 1288: 43–47). In 669/70 the Ya-ža paid homage to the *bcan po* who took hostages, most probably from the Ya-ža elites (PT 1288: 50).

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<sup>39</sup> The geographically restricted localisation of various OLT toponyms related to the Žaň-zuñ (Gu-ge, Mi-pañ, Ti-se, Dar-ma, Byañ) and the fact that Lig-sña-śur had his seat in Dar-ma (why not further away from <Four Horns>?) raises the question about the real extent of the Žaň-zuñ polity at the time of its 1<sup>st</sup> conquest. Namely, it does not appear to be a power stretching over Byañ-thaň (up to Gnam-mcho and Gdaň-la range in the east) and bordering on Dru-gu (cf. Denwood 2008: 9ff.).

### 1.5 Absolute dating of the conquests

16. The preceding sections have provided a relative chronology of the early expansions as they can be reconstructed on the basis of OT sources. This section shall now attempt to reconstruct a basic absolute temporal frame within which the conquests took place. Since there are no historical sources for the events prior to 634 on which to base calculations, rough estimation by means of generation counting has been used. Table 2 provides the known dates of birth of four *bcan pos* together with the dates of their first-born sons.

<i>bcan po</i>	Date of birth	First-born son	Heir to the throne	Age
Khri Mañ-slon Mañ-rcan	638 <sup>40</sup>		676	38
Khri Ydus-sroñ	676		704	28
Khri Lde-gcug-rcan	704	739	742	35
Khri Sroñ-lde-brcan	742	760 <sup>41</sup>	?	18
<b>Average age</b>				<b>29,75</b>

Table 2. Dates of birth of *bcan pos*

The Age-column calculates the age of a *bcan po* when his first son was born. As the information in this respect is clearly limited, I surmise that whatever factors determined the relative late age of the *bcan pos* at the time of birth of the heir to the throne (high birth/child mortality, female children, infanticide by vying families etc.), they were also in force in previous times. Thus, according to the data a *bcan po* fathered an heir on average at the age of thirty. Table 3 presents estimations of the dates of birth of the Yar-luñs rulers who preceded Khri Mañ-slon Mañ-rcan. I have made three distinct calculations, taking the length of a generation to be 25, 30, and 35 years on average (i.e.  $30 \pm 5$  years). The starting point for the calculation is the birth year 638 of Khri Mañ-slon Mañ-rcan (Bialek 2021 Forthcoming b).

<sup>40</sup> This date has been reconstructed in Bialek (2021 Forthcoming b).

<sup>41</sup> This son died young and the actual heir to the throne, Khri Lde-sroñ-brcan, was born some time later, but we don't know exactly when (Bialek 2021 Forthcoming b).

<i>bcan po</i>	25	30	35
Guñ-sroñ Guñ-rčan	613	608	603
Khri Sroñ-rčan	588	578	568
Khri Slon-mčan	563	548	533
Stag-bu Sña-gzigs	538	518	498

Table 3. Statistically calculated birth years

These rough calculations do not permit even approximate dating for the early conquests of the Yar-luñs dynasty, but one can make some educated guesses based on them.

The Moñ family became bride-giver owing to its contribution to the conquest of the Rcañ-Bod. Accordingly, by the time of the conquest Khri Sroñ-rčan must have already been born.<sup>42</sup> He took over the reign as a youth, which means not more than fifteen years after the conquest. Thus, according to my calculation (Table 3) the conquest could be dated to ca. 570s or 580s.

Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce conquered the Rcañ-Bod and allegedly contributed to the defeat of Ziñ-po-rje Khri-pañ-sum. Thus, he must have been an adult when Khri Slon-mčan took over the reign. Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce died a violent death in the 630s after his plot against Khri Sroñ-rčan had been revealed by Mgar Stoñ-rčan Yul-zuñ, who was subsequently offered the office of grand councillor.<sup>43</sup> Had the subjugation of the Rcañ-Bod taken place in the 570s, then Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce would have reached an age of over 80 years. This is not impossible but rather improbable considering that none of the dated *bcan pos* aged to much over 60.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, the date of the conquest and the birth of Khri Sroñ-rčan can be now shifted to 580s at the earliest.

All post-imperial historiographical sources agree that Khri Sroñ-rčan was born in an ox year (Bialek 2021 Forthcoming b) which could only be 569, 581, or 593, following Table 3. The year 569 is too early

<sup>42</sup> Political marriages were arranged by parents when the children were still young, as can be seen in the case of Khri Lde-gcug-rčan and the Chinese princess Kim-šañ-khoñ-čo. The latter came to Ra-sa in 710/11 (ITJ 750: 176–7) when Khri Lde-gcug-rčan was seven years old.

<sup>43</sup> It can be reasonably argued that Mgar Stoñ-rčan Yul-zuñ was the highest official of the polity already in 640 when he set out for China to escort the Chinese princess Mun-čañ-koñ-čo (see also Uray 1972: 33ff.).

<sup>44</sup> The longest living *bcan po*, Khri Sroñ-lde-brčan, might have been 62 (Bialek 2021 Forthcoming b).

considering the years of Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce's life, whereas 593 would yield the average age of 22,5 for Khri Sroñ-rčan and his son to become fathers, not impossible but much below the calculated standard.

Towards the end of Khri Slon-mchan's reign, the Žaň-zuñ and the Sum-pa had revolted (see § 9) and were subjugated by his successor Khri Sroñ-rčan. The 'revolt' of the Žaň-zuñ apparently concerned the refusal of Lig-myi-rhya to beget an heir to the throne with Sad-mar-kar (PT 1287: 399–400). This means that the latter was married to Lig-myi-rhya during the reign of Khri Slon-mchan (see § 8). In 653/4 Spug Gyim-rčan Rma-čuñ was appointed a *mñan* of the Žaň-zuñ (PT 1288: 25). The same person is said to have acted as messenger between Khri Sroñ-rčan and his sister Sad-mar-kar while the latter was married to Lig-myi-rhya (PT 1287: 402, 427–8). Logically, Spug Gyim-rčan Rma-čuñ must have been an adult at that point. Considering the age of Spug Gyim-rčan Rma-čuñ, the 1<sup>st</sup> conquest of the Žaň-zuñ (after the revolt) must have taken place in the 610s or 620s. I prefer the latter date for it seems unreasonable to assume that Chinese chroniclers would have remained silent on the military expansion of the Yar-luñs dynasty (including the conquest of the Sum-pa and the Žaň-zuñ) for a very long period. If they became interested in the new growing power on the Tibetan Plateau around 630 (as suggested by the Tang chronicles), it might indicate that the expansion did not start much earlier than in the 620s. An earlier date is less probable if the words of PT 1287: 433–46 is to be believed, where Mgar Stoñ-rčan Yul-zuñ (only a councillor, l. 440) celebrated with Khri Sroñ-rčan the conquest of Lig-myi-rhya. Mgar Stoñ-rčan Yul-zuñ died in 667/8 (PT 1288: 48) so must have been born around 600.

From the discussion it follows that Khri Slon-mchan died around 610 and was succeeded by Khri Sroñ-rčan who thus must have been born in the ox year 593. The conquest of the Rcañ-Bod now shifts to the 590s. For the topic of the present paper, the most important conclusion is that the Rcañ-Bod came under the control of the Yar-luñs dynasty not earlier than in the 580s or even 590s. Needless to say, all the calculations are nothing more than approximations for which no guarantee can be given.

## II. Bod

### II.1 *bod* as a demonym

17. In OLT demonyms could form the basis from which names for regions or polities were coined customarily by adding *yul* “land, region” to a demonym; for example, *ya źa* “the Ṽa-źa people” > *ya źa yul* “the Ṽa-źa land” or *mywa* “the Mywa” > *mywa yul* “the Mywa land”. The historical primacy of demonyms over names of lands is the direct outcome of the economy based on manpower; in pre-modern times it was human labour (not territories) that secured a major economic and therefore also military advantage over other polities (Scott 2017: 171). Accordingly, to have a name for a people was more relevant for controlling human and natural resources than to have a name for a place they inhabited and could change at any time. This cross-linguistic tendency is also confirmed by the fact that OLT did not have other terms to denote peoples as collectives. The morpheme *-pa*, or more seldom the noun *myi* “human”, added to a demonym or a toponym had an individuating function; they formed plural forms as against simple demonyms such as *ya źa* and *mywa* that were collective terms. For instance, *rcañ čhen pha* (ITJ 750: 106) denoted inhabitants (*-pha*) of the region called Rcañ-čhen, but *bod pa* was a person affiliated to the Bod-people (see below).

In its earliest attestations *bod* is used as name of a people and not as toponym. This can be inferred from phrases and clauses like: *rcañ bod khyim ñi gri* (PT 1287: 199, 200) “twenty thousand households [of] the Rcañ-Bod”; *rcañ bod ybañs su bkug* (PT 1287: 319) lit. “to summon the Rcañ-Bod as subjects”; *bod kyis phu dud bya* (Treaty W 46) “respect was shown by the Bod”; *bod mgo nag po* (Žol E 14–5, S 12–3) “black-headed Bod”; *bod gyīs dmag drañ* (Žol S 54) “Bod are leading the army”; *bod gyīs g.yul bzlog* (Žol S 60–1) “Bod won the battle”; *bod las* official+TERM *bskos* (PT 1089 *passim*) “appointed as official from among Bod”, just to mention the most obvious ones. The compound *rcañ bod khyim* can be compared with *bran khyim* in PT 1287: 191–7, in which *bran* has a human referent. Moreover, phrases like *mal tro pyogs nas bran khyim stoñ lña brgyay* (PT 1287: 192) “one thousand five hundred households from the area [of] Mal-tro” and *yon kyī smon mkhar nas bran khyim sum brgyay* (PT 1287: 194) “three hundred households from Smon-mkhar in (lit. of) Ṽon” prove that the region from which households were counted was expressed in relative (*nas*).

Accordingly, it is not possible to render *rcañ bod khyim* as !“households from Rcañ and Bod [regions]”.

Commonly attested derivative *bod yul* “Bod-land” indicates that *bod* alone did not have geographical denotation for otherwise there would be no need to add *yul* “land” to it in order to refer to the region. What’s more, formations such as *bod pa* nor *bod myi* are not known in OLT at all! It is also not obvious that *bod čhen po* “great Bod” in the ST Treaty inscription (*passim*) should be understood as toponym; it is certainly modelled after Chinese *dà táng* 大唐, lit. “Great Tang” (ST Treaty S 1–3, N 1–3; cf. Richardson 1998 [1978]: 84). The same text has another telling passage: *bod bod yul na skyid* (W 58; see also ex. (20) below) “Bod [people] are happy in the Bod-land”, in which *bod* and *bod yul* occur side by side.

The later shift from a demonym “Bod-people” towards a toponym “Bod-land” follows universal trends with cross-linguistic parallels worldwide. On the other hand, in OLT the shift “Bod-land” > “Bod-people” would have necessitated the addition of the nominal particle *-pa* “somebody affiliated to the Bod-land”, i.e. “Bod-inhabitant”.

## II.2 *bod* as a local demonym

18. The earliest use of *bod* in conjunction with a population inhabiting the southern part of the Tibetan Plateau is attested in a series of narratives from PT 1287 that relate events from the reign of *bcan po* Gnam-ri Slon-mchan and his son *bcan po* Khri Sroñ-rcañ (see exx. (2)–(4)). The events concern the conquest of the Rcañ-Bod under the leadership of Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce and Moñ Khri-do-re Snañ-chab.

For his contribution to the conquest, Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce received twenty thousand households of the Rcañ-Bod (see ex. (3)). The Rcañ-Bod with their twenty thousand households must have inhabited a large area as in comparison Myañ Smon-to-re Ceñ-sku, Dbays Phañs-to-re Dbyi-chab, and Mnon Pañ-sum Ydron-po received one thousand five hundred households each for their contribution to the conquest of Nas-po, whereas Ches-poñ Nag-señ was rewarded with only three hundred households (PT 1287: 190–4).

Though no territorial gain is documented for Moñ Khri-do-re Snañ-chab he was likewise rewarded: his family became the bride-giver to the Yar-luñs dynasty. A certain Khri-mo-mñen Ldoñ-sten from the Moñ family became the first queen of Khri Sroñ-rcañ (falsely called Sroñ-lde-brcañ) and later also the mother of *bcan po* Guñ-sroñ

Guñ-rcañ (PT 1286: 62–4). Therefore the claim seems justified that Khri-mo-mñen Ldoñ-sten was a daughter of Moñ Khri-do-re Snañ-chab. The decision of making the Moñ family a bride-giver instead of granting it territories and households (as with Myañ, Dbays, Mnon, and Ches-poñ) might have been strategically motivated; it secured the Yar-luñs dynasty direct access to trade routes towards Central Asia via Upper Stod and Upper Lha-čhu.

The proposed location of the Rcañ-Bod (see Map 4) is supported by other considerations as well. To note, after the conquest of the Rcañ-Bod several new families came to the fore in the politics of the Yar-luñs dynasty, most notably the Mgar family. After Moñ Khri-do-re Snañ-chab, PT 1287: 79–104 lists the following grand councillors from the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century: Mgar Khri-sgra Ÿji-rmun, Myañ Mañ-po-rje Žaň-snañ, Mgar Mañ-žam Sum-snañ, Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce, and Mgar Stoñ-rcañ Yul-zuñ. I believe that the ‘over-representation’ of grand councillors from the Mgar family is not a coincidence. On the basis of post-imperial sources, Hazod (2019: 29f.) identified the homeland of the Mgar family in the Sñe-mo valley and especially in the place called Ba-gor (other spellings: Spa-gor, Sa-gor, Pa-gor; Hazod 2009: 206). As shown on Map 5 (p. 368), Sñe-mo lies in the easternmost part of the area presumably previously controlled by Mar-mun, although the toponym itself is not attested in OT sources.<sup>45</sup> Apparently, shortly after the subjugation of the Rcañ-Bod the Mgar family gained in importance. OT sources remain silent about the reasons for its rise but, considering the historical context, it seems that the family was rewarded for its contribution to the conquest with the office of grand councillor.

19. The syllable *rcañ* recurs in various OT names connected with the western part of <Four Horns>. The simple name Rcañ is mentioned only once in the OTA where it refers to a region that included the council site Gliñ-kar-chal (ITJ 750: 106). Mig-dmar identified the latter with the post-imperial castle (*rjoñ*) of Gliñ-dkar in Upper Ÿo-yug (LT Ÿu-yug; 2005: 86). In the winter 690/1 the council convened at Gliñ-kar-chal of Rcañ prepared tallies for Great Rcañ (ITJ 750: 105–6). Presuming that Mig-dmar’s identification is correct, by the end of

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<sup>45</sup> According to later lists of administrative districts (*yul sde*), Sñe-mo was either the easternmost or second easternmost district of Right Horn; see Hazod (2009: 209, Table 2). But there are also indications suggesting that still earlier, maybe before the administration reform of the 730s, Sñe-mo might have belonged to Central Horn (Hazod 2009: 197).

the 7<sup>th</sup> century ʏo-yug, being part of Rcañ, must have been located close enough to Great Rcañ, allowing for an effective administration of the latter.

Between 684/5 and 731/2 the OTA repeatedly mention Great Rcañ (*rcañ čhen*). Bialek (2018a: 1.536–7, fn. 4) argued that Great Rcañ was an administrative unit distinct from Ru-lag and Three Horns, but integrated into Four Horns in 732/3 or 733/4 (the earliest mention of Four Horns comes from the year 733/4; ITJ 750: 267).<sup>46</sup> Uray (1972: 52f.) drew attention to an interesting pattern in the reports of the OTA: the preparation of sheaves of Great Rcañ is preceded by the same means carried out for Three Horns, cf.:

718/9: *ru gsum gyī rje žiñ gliñs gyī pyiñ rīlđañ sog {ma} bgyīs* (ITJ 750: 208–9)

719/20: *rcañ čhen gyī rje žiñ gyī pyiñ rīl btab* (ITJ 750: 213–4)

In the winter 684/5 certain administrative means for Great Rcañ were carried out from Śaṅs (ITJ 750: 89). In comparison, in the winter 686/7 preparation of sheaves *up to* Śaṅs (seen from the perspective of Central Horn) was undertaken, whereas in the winter of the following year the same means are recorded for Great Rcañ (ITJ 750: 95–8). I agree with Uray's conclusion that Śaṅs was the westernmost area of Three Horns and so demarcated the border between Three Horns and Great Rcañ. This border might be alluded to in 690/1 when a census of border guards was carried out at Cha-steṅs of ʏo-yug (see Map 5), maybe in connection with a revolt in Great Rcañ reported in 687/8 (ITJ 750: 99). It follows that Rcañ encompassed Śaṅs and ʏo-yug, and bordered on Great Rcañ west of Śaṅs.<sup>47</sup> Seen in this perspective the assumption seems justified that after the reform of the 730s Rcañ became <Lower Right Horn> (*g.yas ru smad*) and Great Rcañ –

<sup>46</sup> Uray (1972: 53) identified Great Rcañ with Ru-lag, without however explaining the independent occurrences of both in the OTA.

<sup>47</sup> This position of Rcañ also matches better the course of ritual journeys recounted in PT 1285r. In Dotson's map of the territories, Rcañ (number 1) is located to the far west of all the other places with a large gap in-between (2008: 54). If instead we agree on the suggested location of Rcañ as encompassing Śaṅs and ʏo-yug we obtain a map with a cluster of contiguous territories along the Rcañ-po river. As an aside, the territories listed in PT 1285r indicate that the text is based on a tradition that goes back to the early period of Three Horns – no territories conquered after Rcañ are mentioned in the text.

<Upper Right Horn> (*g.yas ru stod*) with the border between them located west of Śaṅs.<sup>48</sup>

Concerning other toponyms with the syllable *rcañ*, according to PT 1288: 21–2, grand councillor Mgar Stoñ-rcañ Yul-zuñ subjugated Glo-bo and Rcañ-rhyayin 652/3 (see Map 4). Last but not least, Rcañ figures in the OT name of the Gcañ-po river: Rcañ-ču (PT 1287: 20) or Rcañ-po (PT 1287: 32). Thus, in OLT demonyms and toponyms the syllable *rcañ* is strongly associated with the western part of <Four Horns>.

**20.** What about Bod? Here the information is far more sparse. Since the households of the Rcañ-Bod were counted together (see ex. (3)), I presume that the groups were immediate neighbours. According to (6), not long after Khri Sroñ-rcañ had taken over the reign the dominion under the sway of the Yar-luñs dynasty extended from Mdo-smad in the east to Rcañ in the west. Apart from the fact that it did not include the Žaṅ-zuñ yet, Rcañ apparently denoted its westernmost regions.<sup>49</sup> It follows that Bod must have been located to the east of Rcañ. Likewise in the eastern part of Rcañ-Bod was Sñe-mo, the homeland of the Mgar family. I venture the hypothesis that *Bod originally referred to the population that inhabited the eastern part of the Rcañ-Bod's territories and included Sñe-mo* (see Map 5). If Rcañ encompassed Śaṅs and ʸo-yug (see § 19), the territories of the Bod must have been restricted to Sñe-mo and its immediate vicinity. Since the name Sñe-mo is not attested in OT sources, one can speculate that it replaced the earlier local endonym based on the name Bod.

**21.** Now, the pertinent question is: how did the name of a population subdued first during the reign of Khri Slon-mchan manage to become the general name for Tibetan-speaking inhabitants of the Tibetan Empire? I believe the Mgar family played a central role here.

Around the mid-7<sup>th</sup> c. Lower Lha-valley (Hazod: Dbu-ru-luñ) played an important role in the life of Mgar Stoñ-rcañ Yul-zuñ (Hazod 2019: 50), the fact confirmed by the OTA: he was staying in ʸgor-ti (655/6) and Sñiñ-druñ (657/8, 658/9), and died in Ris-pu

<sup>48</sup> For the internal division of Right Horn according to later sources, see Hazod (2009: 197–9 & Map 5).

<sup>49</sup> The song is sung again in PT 1287: 437–8 but there it seems to be misplaced since it follows after the defeat of the Žaṅ-zuñ which extended far beyond Rcañ (see Map 4).

(667/8; see Map 5).<sup>50</sup> In a song sung by Khri Ṽdus-sroñ to deplore Mgar's disloyalty forty years later, in the last years of the 7<sup>th</sup> c., the dominion of the Mgar family is compared with that of Khri Ṽdus-sroñ:

(9)

<i>skyi ču nī sñon mo</i> (469) <i>dañ /</i>	The blue Skyi-river and
<i>yar čhab nī čhu bo čhe /</i>	The Yar-river of vast waters –
<i>gar riñ ni gañ thuñ ba //</i>	Which one is longer, which one is shorter
<i>thañ lha nī ya bžur mkhyen //</i> (PT 1287)	Thañ-lha-ya-bžur knows.

The honorific *čhab* in *yar čhab* as opposed to *ču* in *skyi ču* highlights the superiority of the topography of the Yar-valley. The song identifies the Skyi-river with Mgar's dominion, leaving no doubt that at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century the seat of the Mgar family was located somewhere on the Skyi-river. The song contains other analogous similes: small rock (*bra gu*) Ceñ-ldeñ vs Yar-lha-śam-po, many islands (*gliñ dgu*) of the Gnubs lake vs island glebe (*le goñ*) of the

<sup>50</sup> According to later sources, the Mgar family likewise possessed territories in Upper Stod (Hazod 2019: 29f.). The association of the Mgar family with the Stod-valley (see Hazod 2019: 30) might postdate the disgracing of the Moñ family, following the accusation of a certain Moñ Sñon-po by Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-ce (PT 1287: 201–2). The Moñ family might have lost its territories in the Stod-valley in favour of the Mgar family that was gaining in importance. This would also explain the fact that Mgar Stoñ-rcan Yul-zuñ convened the council of 654/5 in Sral-γjoñ of the upper Moñ valley (PT 1288: 27–8; Sral-γjoñ's location in Map 5 is only approximate). The Mgar family might have been interested in moving closer to the political centre of the burgeoning empire and so changed its old seat in Sñe-mo for the more central Stod-valley.

PT 1286: 11 lists Mgar and Mñan as councillors of Nas-po under the ruler Dgu(g)-gri Ziñ-po-rje Khri-pañs-sum. Whereas a certain Mñan Ṽji-zuñ Nag-po is said to have been a councillor (*blon*) of Ziñ-po-rje Stag-skya-bo (PT 1287: 129) and a subject of Ziñ-po-rje Khri-pañs-sum, the Mgar family is not mentioned in this context. The formulaic character of 'catalogues of principalities' can be made responsible for combining data from different temporal frames; the ruler of Nas-po is the one whom Khri Slon-mchan conquered, one councillor (Mñan) was a councillor of Ziñ-po-rje Stag-skya-bo and Mgar was the 'administrator' of the region during the reign of Khri Sroñ-rcan. The catalogues project a contemporary political situation onto the political situation from the time of the conquest. This explains their almost ritualistic lists providing two councillors for each region; a situation not known from any historical sources. It is conspicuous that the name Mgar is missing from OT catalogues of principalities other than the one included in PT 1286 and, in general, it only surfaces in the OTA and OTC. Neither do similar catalogues from the post-imperial period mention the name (cf., e.g., the lists provided in Dotson 2012: 176f.).

Grañ-po lake,<sup>51</sup> grey house of Pya-mday vs Stag-rce of P(h)yiñ-ba, the small valley of Bya-pu vs the valleys of Yar and P(h)yiñ, barren subjects of Mgar vs prolific Lho and Rñegs (PT 1287: 468–72). Judging by its name, the small rock (*bra gu*) Ceñ-Iden (probably a hill) must have been located near the monastery Ceñ-Iden-sgon-pa, *alias* Gnam-rce-sdiñ-mgon-pa (BDRC G2CN11075), not far away from the Rwa-sgreñ monastery (Dotson 2013a: 350, n. 10; Nyima 2009: 493, n. 1572 and p. 627). I believe that Pya-mday, where the main seat of the family was located at that time, can be identified with the later Bčom-mdo in the lower Smri-ti valley (N 30 17'19.79", E 91 25'4.38"; see also TTT: 0196, Fig. 1).<sup>52</sup> In OLT *mday* was a near-synonym of CT *mdo*; cf. Zrid-mday (PT 1288: 47; ITJ 750: 78 & 123). The change from Pya-mday to Bčom-mdo can be reconstructed as follows: *pya mday* \*[pjamda] > \*[pjamdo] (replacement of the old *mday* by a better connoted *mdo*) > \*[tɕamdo] (palatalisation [pj] > [tɕ]) > \*[tɕomdo] (vowel assimilation) > *bčom mdo* (folk etymology by analogy with *bčom* as in *bčom ldan ydas*). Less certain is the identity of Bya-pu whose first syllable can be preserved in the name of the village Ĵa-rca (Ch. Jiǎzhā 甲扎; N 30 17'6.96", E 91 30'28.29"). If so, the valley west of Ĵa-rca could be the Bya valley of the OTC.

Thus, the Mgar family seems to have systematically extended its territory towards the northeast during the incumbencies of its grand councillors. It seems plausible that with the spread of the Mgar family and the growth of its political power the denotation of *bod* broadened to likewise include populations of the territories that the Mgar family newly acquired. From originally referring to the eastern Rcañ-Bod population, it had now been generalised to also cover populations of Upper Stod, Lower Lha-čhu, and Lower Smri-ti.

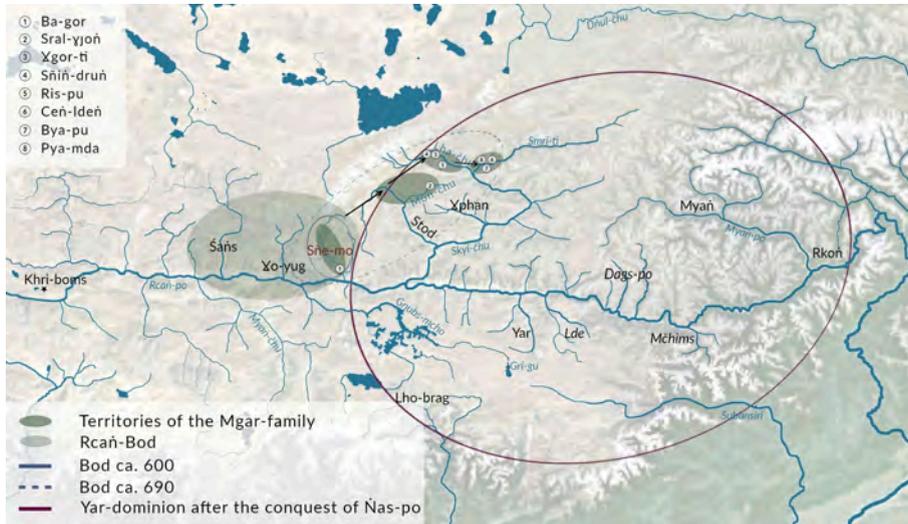
It therefore transpires that Bod was originally a demonym, referring to a population that inhabited the eastern part of the territory ruled by Mar-mun. The group included the Mgar family

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<sup>51</sup> The main seat in Sñe-mo would be an ideal starting point for the expansion of Mgar south towards the Gnubs lake (maybe via Bar-thañ, see Map in Kriz and Hazod 2020).

<sup>52</sup> The river referred to here as Smri-ti (see Map 5) is nowadays locally known as Rwa-sgreñ River (*rwa sgreng gcañ po*), after the name of the famous monastery founded in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (see Map 5; Guntram Hazod p.c. 01.03.2021). The presence of the Čog-ro family in Lower Smri-ti (TTT: 0196) postdates the Mgar family in this region; the first mention of the Čog-ro family in the OTA comes from 711/2 (ITJ 750: 180).

whose homeland in Sñe-mo bordered on the territory controlled by the Yar-luñs dynasty after the conquest of Nas-po. With the instalment of Mgar Khri-sgra ʅji-rmun as grand councillor the Mgar family entered the interregional politics and began to enlarge its zone of influence, gradually extending its sphere of political control and territorial possessions from west to Upper Stod, Lower Lha, and finally Lower Smri-ti. The Mgar family brought its social affiliation with the Bod to its new homeland, thus extending the scope of the term's application to the population of the Stod-Skyi region. These socio-historical processes are illustrated in Map 5.



Map 5. The expansion of the Mgar family (Image Landsat / Copernicus 01.2021)

### II.3 *bod* in the OTA

22. In the OTA *bod* only occurs in the compound *bod yul*. The compound has a remarkable distribution in the OTA-I and OTA-II: it is exclusively used in entries that relate a Mdo-smad council.<sup>53</sup> The following quotations illustrate the usage of *bod yul* in the extant OTA:

<sup>53</sup> For the sake of conciseness I omit the fragments concerning the Mdo-smad councils. This information can be obtained from Dotson (2009). In Bialek (In Preparation a) I argue that a considerable part of the OTA is a patchwork, consisting of at least two versions of the text: one composed in the central chancelleries of the empire, the other being a local version written in Mdo-smad, so-called *Mdo-smad Annals*.

(10) 703/4

*{bo}d yul gyī dgun ydun skyī {bya<r>} li[---]* (Dx 12851v: 3)

The winter council of the [Bo]d-land [convened] at [Byar]-li[ñs-cal] of Skyi.

(11) 704/5

*{bod} yul gyi dbyar* (6) *{ydun}* (Dx 12851v)

The summer [council] of the Bod-land [---].

(12) 727/8

*bod yul gyi dgun ydun skyī lhas gañ chal du / źaň ybriň rchan khyī bus bsdus* (ITJ 750: 246)

Žaň-ybriň-rchan Khyi-bu convened the winter council of the Bod-land at Lhas-gañ-chal of Skyi.

(13) 728/9

*ybrugī lo la / bcan po dbyard mcho bgoe bol gaňs na bźugs pa las / slar bod yul du gśegste* / (ITJ 750: 248)In the dragon year, in the summer, the *bcan po*, upon abiding in Bol-gaňs of Mcho-bgo, came back to the Bod-land.

(14) 739/40

*yos buyī lo la / bcan po dbyard čhab sřid la beg du gśegste* / [...] *bcan po yab dgun bod yul du slar gśegs* / (ITJ 750: 281–2)In the rabbit year, in the summer, the *bcan po* went to Beg for a military campaign. [...] In the winter, the *bcan po*, the father, returned to the Bod-land.(15) 743/4<sup>54</sup>*bod yul gyi pha los gyi [rcis] mg{o} mjad* / (Or.8212/187: 1)

[One] prepared an initial account of the populace of the Bod-land.

(16) 758/9

*blon čhe snaň bźer bod yul du slar mčhīs* (Or.8212/187: 30)

Grand councillor Snaň-bźer came back to the Bod-land.

(17) 762/4

(51) *źaň rgyal zīgs daň źaň stoň rcan las scogs / pas / bum liň lčag zam rgal te // dra čen dran[s] ste* / (52) *ybu śiň kun daň zīn ču daň ga ču las scogs pa / rgyaŷī mkhar maň pho phab / ste / źaň rgyal zigs* (53) *slar bod yul / du / mčhis te* / (Or.8212/187)

Žaň-rgyal-zigs and Žaň-stoň-rcan, among others, having crossed the branch bridge [of] Bum-liň, drew a great expeditionary force [and] conquered many strongholds of the Chinese: Ybu-śiň-kun, Zin-ču, and Ga-ču, among others. Žaň-rgyal-zigs went back to the Bod-land.

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<sup>54</sup> This is the only entry with *bod yul* which does not mention Mdo-smad. However, the entry is incomplete.

(10) and (12) state explicitly that *bod yul* denoted a region that included Skyi.<sup>55</sup> The remaining passages refer to *bod yul* either as a destination to travel to when one was abroad, such as in (13)–(14) and (16)–(17),<sup>56</sup> or as a goal of a census (15). The latter is interesting as the next entry of the same document speaks of the administration of Four Horns (*ru bži mkhos*; Or.8212.187: 3) where the OTA-I has *dmag myi mkhos*, “administration of soldiers” (ITJ 750: 299). Furthermore, the compound *bod yul* occurs in the OTA-II and OTA-III in passages where the OTA-I has no *bod yul*:

	OTA-I (ITJ 750)		OTA-II (Or.8212/187)	
743/4	<i>pha los gyi byañ bu bor /</i>	l. 294	<b><i>bod yul gyi pha los gyi</i></b> {rcis} <i>mg{o} mjad /</i>	l. 1

	OTA-I (ITJ 750)		OTA-III (Dx 12851v)	
703/4	-		<b>{bo}d yul gyi dgun ydun skyi</b> {bya<r>} li[-]	l. 3
704/5	<i>ydun ma brag sgor ydus /</i>	ll. 147–8	<b>{bod} yul gyi dbyar</b> {ydun}	ll. 5–6

Table 4. *bod yul* in the OTA

If Skyi was included in Three/Four Horns *and* in the Bod-land, the question arises as to the mutual relation of the terms ‘Three/Four Horns’ and ‘Bod-land’. Three Horns (*ru gsum*), Dependency of Three Horns (*ru lag*), and Great Rcañ (*rcañ čhen*) were converted into Four Horns in 732/3 or 733/4 as a consequence of an administrative reform. In the OTA, these terms are used in connection with a wide range of administrative means carried out by councils. They are endonyms applied to the respective regions from within the polity. The compound *bod yul*, on the other hand, seems to have had the same denotation but was applied from outside of the polity. It was used in local *Annals* (like the *Mdo-smad Annals* or the OTA-III) to refer to the territory internally covered by Three/Four Horns. This explains why *bod yul* only occurs in those entries that also relate the Mdo-smad councils – they were composed in Mdo-smad, i.e. outside of Three/Four Horns.

Furthermore, the compound is attested in other OT texts where it

<sup>55</sup> Prior to the conquest of the Rcañ-Bod, the territories of the Bod certainly did not include Skyi.

<sup>56</sup> *bod yul* has the same connotation in the *Preamble* to the OTA-I (PT 1288: 11–2).

is clearly used in the context of international relations.<sup>57</sup> (18) and (19) stem from a song sung by Khri Lde-gcug-brcan in the presence of Dwan-čuñ-kog, a councillor of the Mywa king Kag-la-boñ (PT 1287: 345), whereas (20) and (21) come from the ST Treaty inscription.

(18)

*yul mtho ni sa gcañ bas //*

Because the land was high, the ground pure,

*bod yul nī gśaṅ* (read: (g)śoṅ) *du gśegs //* [The divine son] came to the dales of the Bod-land.  
(PT 1287: 353)

(19)

*yul dañ nī sder bčhaste /*

Together with lands and districts,

*bod yul ni thil du bgyis /* (PT 1287: 361) [The divine son] made the Bod-land [their] middle.

(20)

*bod bod yul na skyid //* (59) *rgya rgya yul na skyid paṅyī srid čhen po* (60) *sbyar nas* (ST Treaty W)

The great domains, in which the Bod-people in the Bod-land [and] Chinese in the China-land are happy, have been united.

(21)

*bod* (61) *yul du nī // pho brañ lha sayī śar phyogs sbra stod chal du // bod čhen poṅi* (62) *loṅi myiñ skyid rtag lo brgyad // rgya čhen poṅi loṅi myiñ čaṅ keñ lo* (63) *[g]ñis // čhu pho stag gī loṅi dbyar sla ṅbrñ po ches drug la // dkyil* (64) *ṅkhor la ṅjags te // bod kyis gcīgs bzun ño //* (ST Treaty E)

In the Bod-land, [at] the court, in Sbra-stod-chal to the east of Lhasa, on the sixth day of the middle summer month of the male water-tiger year (the name of the year of Great Bod: the eighth year Skyid-rtag; the name of the year of Great China: the second year Čaṅ-keñ), having ascended the central circle, the Bod accepted the edict.

23. The above analysis, although limited owing to the scarcity of textual sources, has demonstrated that the same polity ruled by the Yar-luñs dynasty was referred to by two different sets of terms depending on the perspective taken by the author: 'Three/Four Horns' in the internal discourse, but 'Bod-land' conceived of either from outside or in the context of international relations. This divergence requires an explanation.

I believe that the special usage of the compound *bod yul* comes

<sup>57</sup> Uray (1978: 567) reconstructed *bod yul* in ITJ 1368: 29 (OTDO: *čuñ bul*), but the reconstruction seems problematic on palaeographical and syntactic grounds.

from the connotation of *bod* with the region of the Lha-čhu valley. In the preceding section I have argued that with the growing importance of the Mgar family and its extending influence zone the demonym Bod (originally restricted to populations around the Sñemo valley) started to be used for communities that inhabited the new territories of the Mgar family as well. These were the Lha-čhu valley, but also the Upper Stod-valley, and later the Lower Smri-ti valley (Map 5). It happens that due to the exceptional topography of the region, the Lha-čhu valley forms the main gate to <Four Horns> for anybody who travels from Central Asia.<sup>58</sup> The territories to the north and northeast of the Skyi-region were the first outside of <Three Horns> subjugated by the Yar-luñs dynasty. Consequently, anybody who was travelling from the Sum-pa territory, Mdo-smad, or Central Asia, be it an 'insider' or a foreigner, first entered the territory of Bod (*bod yul*). It was therefore convenient to indicate *bod yul* as the direction of a journey even though the exact destination might have been strictly-speaking located outside of the Bod-land. As the time passed and the Skyi-region continued to gain in importance due to the shift of the politico-administrative centre from Phyiñ-ba to Ra-sa (later Lha-sa), *bod yul* underwent metonymy to denote the whole polity whose centre was in the Bod-land.<sup>59</sup>

**24.** The 'appropriation' of *bod* for the whole population of <Four Horns> ruled by the Yar-luñs dynasty seems to have occurred first in the second half of the seventh century during the reign of Khri Ydusroñ (676–704). (9) describes the Skyi-region as a dominion of the

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<sup>58</sup> The main travel route during the Tang dynasty led through the valley as attested by an anonymous itinerary dated to 734–8 (Satō 1975, esp. 13f. & 17). Nowadays the Qinghai-Tibet Highway 109 takes the same way along the Upper Lha.

<sup>59</sup> The shift of the political centre of gravity to Ra-sa was most probably related to the establishment of Three Horns as the basic administrative units. Otherwise it would be difficult to account for the Skyi-region as the core of *Central Horn*, with Left and Right Horns to its left and right ordered from the perspective of the Skyi-region looking down the Skyi-river. It was the topography of the region that underlay the conceptualisation of the polity in space rather than the symbolism of the royal centre as suggested by Stein (1972: 44). The shift to Ra-sa was most probably initiated during the reign of Khri Sroñ-rcan, whose person has been strongly associated especially with the Rgya-ma valley (see Hazod 2002, Hazod 2014, and Sørensen 2018) referred to in imperial sources as Mnon (Hazod 2009: 216). With its highest number of royal residences, places of council (Hazod 2009: 213, Map 7.1), and tumuli (Kriz and Hazod 2020), the Skyi-region *alias* Central Horn constituted the administrative, political, and cultural core of the Tibetan Empire.

Mgar family, but the same text uses the title *bod kyi lha* for Khri Ṳdus-sroñ (PT 1287: 519). This is historically the oldest attestation of the title that recurs only once more in OT sources in the Dgay inscription (l. 1) with reference to *bcan po* Khri Lde-gcug-brcan (Lhamchog-rgyal 2011: 2). A survey of official titles that include the syllable *lha* has revealed that they must have been introduced during the reign of Khri Ṳdus-sroñ, for none of the previous *bcan pos* bears the title *lha*.<sup>60</sup> Thus, the shift in the meaning of *bod* from a local demonym to an endonym for Tibetan-speaking subjects of the *bcan pos* must have been completed during the reign of Khri Ṳdus-sroñ. On the other hand, the extant OT documents do not contain any indication that in the Tibetan Empire *bod* was ever used for areas outside of Four Horns.<sup>61</sup>

#### II.4 *bod* in early foreign sources

25. In connection with the prehistorical period, which is the focus of this paper, two groups of non-Tibetan sources have been discussed in the literature: classical European and pre-Tang Chinese historiographies. Both groups have already been sufficiently scrutinised and do not need to be commented upon in detail here.<sup>62</sup> This section attempts to evaluate the conclusions drawn in previous works against the background of the analysis that has been undertaken in the present paper.

26. Ptolemy's *Geography*, written in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, mentions Central Asian people *βαῖται* (other variants: *βαται*, *βαεται*, *βᾶται*) who are assumed to have lived in the vicinity of the Bautisos (*βαυτισος*, *βαῦτις*, *βαυτης*) river (Róna-Tas 1985: 27). Furthermore, Ptolemy's work also mentions other similar names: the mountain range Baition which, however, lies further to the west and south from Bautisos, and the people Batai or Batoi occurring in a chapter on India (*ibid.*, p. 27).

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<sup>60</sup> For a detailed analysis, see Bialek (2021 Forthcoming a). In this context it seems logical to assume that the topos of Tibetan *bcan pos* as coming down from the sky also dates to the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>61</sup> The compound *bod sum* in PT 1083 and PT 1089 indicates that the Sum-pa were not included in Bod.

<sup>62</sup> The most important studies remain Beckwith (1977) and Róna-Tas (1985: 23ff.). Most recently the European sources have been examined by Zeisler (2021). Bushell (1880) and Pelliot (1961) provide translations of chapters related to <Tibet> from chronicles of the Tang dynasty.

In a work written in the 4<sup>th</sup> century by Ammianus Marcellinus the people are called Baetae and the river is Bautis (ibid., p. 28). The identification of the Greek demonyms with Tibetans goes back to Richthofen who located Bautae around Lha-sa (Richthofen: Lāssa; 1877, vol. 1, Map opp. to p. 500), whereas Laufer identified the name *βαῖται* more concretely with *bod* (1914a: 86–7, fn. 2 and 1914b: 118). Notwithstanding the scepticism expressed by Stein (1972: 30; and recently Zeisler 2021), this identification was accepted by Beckwith (1977: 29–30 & 60–1 and 1993: 7, and earlier by Hermanns 1949: 10).

Although it seems possible that words like Indian *bhauṭṭa*/*bhāt-ṭa*/*bhuṭṭa*, Arabic *bhatta*, and Central Asian *bhaṭa* in *bhaṭa hor* are linguistically related to each other, they cannot be brought in any connection with *bod* (even though in later times *bod* seems to have been identified by Indians with *bhauṭṭa* or rendered as *bhoṭa*; Stein 1972: 30).<sup>63</sup> As demonstrated above, as late as in the 580s *bod* was a local demonym. It was used by a relatively small population surrounded from all sides by other Trans-Himalayan (TH) speaking groups with apparently *no direct contact* to Central Asian or Indian peoples, from whom they might have taken over their endonym (Zeisler 2021: 285) or who might have had any knowledge of the Bod which they could have given further to the Greeks in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE (Beckwith 1977: 61). Likewise Róna-Tas' hypothesis that the Tibetan-speaking people calling themselves *bod* (*bhauṭṭa* in Indian languages) might have originally inhabited what later became Baltistan and Ladakh (1985: 30) cannot be accepted for it overlooks the existence of other groups in the western and southwestern parts of the Tibetan Plateau that spoke TH languages. Moreover, languages most closely cognate with Tibetic (e.g., East Bodish and Tshanglic) are nowadays spoken south of Central Tibet, suggesting that their last common ancestor language is to be located in this area as well.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> de la Vaissière rightly observed that Greek *βαῖται*, *βαται*, *βαεται*, *βᾶται* cannot be historically related to *βαυτισος*, *βαῦτις*, *βαυτης*, but only the latter could be compared on linguistic grounds with OLT *bod* (2009: 532). He located the river Bautisos in eastern Tarim Basin (see ibid., Fig. 1 on p. 529).

<sup>64</sup> By way of an intellectual exercise the following scenario can be imagined: in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE a population with the endonym *bod*, living around the Sñe-mo valley, was controlling trade routes from northern India to Central Asia (via Sñe-mo and Upper Lha). Owing to its monopoly on trade in this region, it became powerful and therefore famous enough to go down in history as *βαῖται* or similar. Some time later, due to unknown circumstances, its influence decreased and the group impoverished, becoming one of many small groups on the Tibetan

27. Table 5 presents Chinese terms that are sometimes believed to have referred to either the presumed ethnic group of Tibetans or the polity ruled by the Yar-luñs dynasty. Along with the sources, modern reconstructions of the terms are provided.

Term	Schuessler (2007)	Baxter and Sagart (2014)	Source
<i>fā</i> 發 (in: Fā-qīāng 發羌)	LH <i>puat</i> OCM *pat	MC <i>pjot</i> OC *Cə.pat	<i>Hou Han shu</i> (5th c.)
<i>fù guó</i> 附國	LH <i>buo<sup>c</sup></i> OCM *boh	MC <i>bjuH</i> OC *N-p(r)oʔ-s	<i>Sui shu</i> (656) <i>Bei shi</i> (659)
	LH <i>kuək</i> OCM *kwək	MC <i>kwok</i> OC *[C.q]wək	
<i>tǔ fān</i> 吐蕃		MC <i>thuX</i> OC *thʰaʔ	<i>Jiu Tang shu</i> <i>Xin Tang shu</i>
	LH <i>puan</i> OCM *pan	MC <i>pjon</i> OC *par	

Table 5. Alleged Chinese names for <Tibet>

Examining Chinese sources on Fùguó, Beckwith (1977: 113) concluded: “Fu-guo is simply the name given to the early Tibetan state when it was first encountered during the Sui dynasty (581/589–618)”. The *Suishu/Beishi* describes the polity as the following:

There are Jia-liang barbarians there, who are tribes living in its eastern part. [...] The king of Fu-guo is styled *yi-zeng*. His kingdom is eight hundred *li* from South to North, and a thousand five hundred *li* from East to West. [...] The country had over twenty thousand families. [...] In the fourth year of the *da-ye* period (608 A.D.), their king sent the envoys Su-fu and others, a total of eight persons, to go to court. The next year, he again sent his servant Yi-lin to lead sixty Jia-liang barbarians to give tribute. [...] The Jia-liang have a river sixty *zhang* wide. Fu-guo has a river over a hundred *zhang* wide, and they both flow (or “together they flow”) south. [...] To the south of Fu-guo there are the Bo-yuan barbarians whose customs are also the same; to the west there is the “Women’s Kingdom”. [...] and here and there are Qiang

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Plateau. This scenario is not completely impossible but it certainly lacks support in known historical facts. What’s more, due to the scarcity of written sources, only archaeological excavations could throw light on the respective period.

(tribes). [...] some [Qiang tribes – JB] are subject to the Tuyuhun, some depend on Fu-guo. (Beckwith 1977: 105–10)

On the grounds of other Chinese sources that mention rivers which flow through the assumed territory of Fùguó and Jia-liang, Beckwith (1977: 144) identified the river which flowed through Fùguó's territory with Upper Ybri-čhu *alias* Yangtze, and that of Jia-liang (i.e. Rgyalrong; Beckwith 1977: 148) with Ńag-čhu *alias* Yalong. This identification cannot hold for it is based on a circular argument: because other sources state that Tǔfān (Tang Chinese name for <Tibetans>) lived on river X, river Y from *Suishu/Beishi* must be identical with river X. At the basis of this argument lies the premise that Fùguó was identical with the polity of later Tǔfān, which however is yet to be proven.

According to the calculations presented above (§ 16), Khri Sroñ-rcañ conquered the Sum-pa and Mdo-smad in 610s. It is therefore feasible that he acquired some sort of control over territories as far east as Ybri-čhu. If the conquest occurred a few years earlier instead, it is conceivable that after the victories over the Sum-pa and Mdo-smad he would have sent envoys to the Chinese court in 608 and 609, introducing his person on the international scene.<sup>65</sup> But it cannot be proved that he ever did so and the Chinese sources on Fùguó do not provide any ground to believe that Fù was the people ruled by the Yar-luñs dynasty at that time; *fù* in *fù guó* (see Table 5) cannot be a transcription of Tibetan *spu* as claimed by Beckwith (1977: 120). It might have been a local polity that sought for Chinese help fearing the approaching armies of Khri Sroñ-rcañ.

Notwithstanding their distinct initials, Beckwith (1977: 119ff.; 1993: 7) considered *fā* 發 (see Table 5) a transcription of *bod*,<sup>66</sup> whereas *fù* 附, in his opinion, rendered “an early Old Tibetan name for Tibet”, namely *spu* (1977: 119ff.).<sup>67</sup> Without stating it explicitly Beckwith (1977: 120 & 215) equated *fù* 附 with the Tang Chinese transcriptions of *spu*: *fú* 弗 and *bù* 不 as in *fú-yè* 弗夜 and *bù-yè* 不夜.<sup>68</sup> Table 6 provides their reconstructions.

<sup>65</sup> Beckwith (1977: 221) presumed that the king was Gnam-ri Slon-mchan.

<sup>66</sup> Róna-Tas (1985: 35) and Hill (2006: 88) apparently shared this opinion.

<sup>67</sup> According to Yamaguchi, *fù* 附 was a transcription of *phywa* (1980: 332).

<sup>68</sup> Beckwith understood *fú-yè* and *bù-yè* as transcriptions of the OLT title *spu rgyal*.

	Schuessler (2007)	Baxter and Sagart (2014)
<i>fú</i> 弗	LH <i>put</i> OCM *pət	MC <i>pjut</i> OC *p[u]t
<i>bù</i> 不	LH <i>pu</i> OCM *pə ONW <i>pu</i>	MC <i>pjuw</i> OC *pə
<i>yè</i> 夜	LH <i>ja<sup>c</sup></i> OCM *jah	MC <i>yaeH</i> OC *[ɕ]Ak-s

Table 6. Alleged Chinese transcriptions of *OLT* *spu* and *rgyal*

It is apparent that the MC pronunciation of *fù* 附 differed considerably from those of *fú* 弗 and *bù* 不.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, whereas the latter two could theoretically have transcribed the OT *spu*, *fù* 附 certainly had a distinct basis not related to *spu*. In fact, neither *fā* 發, *fù* 附, nor *fān* 蕃 could have been transcriptions of either *bod*, *spu*, or, for that matter, any other term demonstrably used to refer to the subjects or polity of the Yar-luñs dynasty. If the polities were indeed the same, it is also not clear why the Chinese in the 630s should have coined a new term instead of reviving *fù* 附 that was used ca. twenty years earlier. Accordingly, the earliest verifiable information on the polity ruled by the Yar-luñs dynasty supplied by Chinese sources comes from the chronicles of the Tang dynasty. The identity of the people(s) referred to as *fā* 發 or *fù* 附 remains unknown but they can hardly be associated with the Bod who in the first decades of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. were still a local community and the term was not used self-referentially for the inhabitants of the Yar-luñs polity.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> See also critical remarks in Róna-Tas (1985: 36f.).

<sup>70</sup> Similarly problematic is the frequent statement in the literature that <Tibetans> originated from Qiang (see also Beckwith 1993: 8). Chinese sources attest only that at a certain point (most probably at the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century) the former lived on a territory that was previously inhabited by Western Qiang (Bushell 1880: 439; Pelliot 1961: 12). What follows in the Tang chronicles is a summary of the history of the Western Qiang combined with a story of their descent. The story was quoted with the sole aim to justify the Chinese name for the Yar-luñs polity, i.e. *tǔ fān* 吐蕃, by relating it to its alleged founder *Fán-ní* 樊尼 (*fán*: LH *buan*, OCM \*ban; Schuessler 2007). That this origin story dates from a post-Middle Chinese period is demonstrated by the reconstructions *fān* 樊 < LH *buan* vs *fān* 蕃 < LH *puan*; 蕃 could be explained by 尼 first when their pronunciations converged. It is known that after the conquest of the Sum-pa and Mdo-smad the Yar-luñs polity extended far to the east, most probably also comprising the former territories of the Western Qiang. Finally, in Chinese sources Qiang are

### III. \*tVpVt endo- or exonym?

28. This section begins with a few facts on historical phonetics of EOT.<sup>71</sup> When OT was for the first time written down, i.e. in the 630s or 640s, the pronunciation was rather precisely reflected in the script and *bod* was pronounced as [bod]. Soon thereafter the first sound changes occurred, two of which are most relevant for this discussion:

1. Devoicing of plain consonants in onset in MOT: *dru gu* (~ OTurk. *türk/türük*) attested in 675/6 (ITJ 750: 64); *ga tun* (~ OTurk. *xa:tun*) attested in 708/9 (ITJ 750: 170); *dur gyis* (~ OTurk. *Turgiš*) attested in 732/3 (ITJ 750: 263);
2. Fronting of *o* before alveolar *-n* (and by analogy also before *-d* and *-s*): *bölvn* < OLT *blon* in the Köl Tegin inscription (N 12) from 732.<sup>72</sup>

Any foreign term for <Tibet> coined before ca. 650 and based on OLT *bod* must have had a voiced bilabial in onset and a back rounded vowel.

29. Predecessors of the European toponym *Tibet* are attested as early as in the 8<sup>th</sup> c. Table 7 presents the earliest forms in chronological order.<sup>73</sup>

Form	Date	Language	Source
<i>twpt</i>	7 <sup>th</sup> <sup>74</sup>	Sogdian	Afrāsiyāb, norther Samarkand
<i>tū fān</i>	~ 730	Chinese	Hyecho's <i>Memoir</i> <sup>75</sup>
<i>tūpwāt</i>	732 & 734	Old Turkic	Köl Tegin/Bilge Khagan inscriptions
<i>töpüt</i>		Old Uyghur <sup>76</sup>	

repeatedly described as pastoralists (Beckwith 1993: 5; Róna-Tas 1985: 35), whereas inhabitants of <Four Horns> seem to have been agriculturalists (Stein 1972: 22ff.; Beckwith 1977: 260f.).

<sup>71</sup> See Bialek (2018b: 29ff.) for a more detailed discussion.

<sup>72</sup> Róna-Tas (1985: 47); Aydın (2018: 93).

<sup>73</sup> If not otherwise stated, the data is quoted after Róna-Tas (1985: 35ff.). Bazin and Hamilton (1991) cite further forms attested in later times.

<sup>74</sup> The inscription has been dated on archaeological grounds to the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Bazin and Hamilton 1991: 28), although in a more recent publication Livšić counted it among inscriptions “drawn by the visitors in the period, when the building had obviously been left by its dwellers” (2006: 66). This means that the inscription must be much younger than originally assumed.

<sup>75</sup> Han-Sung et al. 1984: 14ff.

<sup>76</sup> Aydın (2018: 91).

<i>tūptâjê</i>	792 & 795/8	Old Syrian		
<i>twp'yyt</i>	825/6 <sup>77</sup>	Sogdian		
<i>twp't</i>	2nd half of the 9th c.			
<i>t'γwt</i>				
<i>twpyt</i>	9th	Pahlavi	<i>Bahman Yašt</i>	
<i>twft</i>	9th <sup>78</sup>	Persian	<i>Bahman Yašt</i>	
<i>ttāgutta</i>		Khotan-Saka <sup>79</sup>		
<i>tāgutta</i>				
<i>tāha'tta</i> <sup>80</sup>				
<i>ttāgutta</i> <sup>81</sup>	925			Stäel-Holstein roll
<i>ttāgatta</i>				Bailey 1937–9
<i>tū fān</i>	945 / 1060	Chinese	<i>Jiu Tang shu / Xin Tang shu</i>	
<i>t'wbwt</i>	1075	Arabic	al-Kāshgarī	

Table 7. Ancestors of the European toponym Tibet

The data clearly demonstrates that the original form of the name had three consonants but there are two points of disagreement which concern the quality of the middle and the final consonants. On this basis the sources can be roughly divided into three groups:

1. Middle Chinese (MC) \*tVpVn;
2. Old Turkic (OTurk.) \*tVpVt;
3. Khotan-Saka (KS) \*tVgVtV.

Two observations can be made: 1. the forms appear to be historically related to each other; and 2. all the other names listed in Table 7, as well as later appellations of Tibet in European languages, go back to OTurk. \*tVpVt.<sup>82</sup> Should the latter have been the original form, the deviations in MC and KS would have to be accounted for taking

<sup>77</sup> Dated to 841–2 by Bazin and Hamilton (1991: 10).

<sup>78</sup> Róna-Tas (1985: 43) dated both Pahlavi and Persian texts to ca. 551–637, which is impossible. The texts were edited in the 9<sup>th</sup> century (Bazin and Hamilton 1991: 10).

<sup>79</sup> Bailey (1940) also quotes other variants: *ttāguttaa-*, *tāgittāna-*, *tāha'tta*, *ttāhatta*.

<sup>80</sup> \*[toyat] or \*[toχat] (Bailey 1940: 904).

<sup>81</sup> \*[togut] or \*[toγut] (Bailey 1940: 604). Róna-Tas (1985: 58) suggested that the form could have represented *taŋut*, although Tanguts are normally called *ttamḡatta* in Khotan-Saka. The transcription of Tib. *bod* as *pātta* (see Róna-Tas 1985: 58) indicates that the written *ā* was pronounced as *o* (see also Bailey 1940: 604) and therefore the first vowel in *tāhatta*/*ttāgatta* should be read as *o*.

<sup>82</sup> See Róna-Tas (1985: 83ff.) and Georg (2018) for reconstructions of the history of the word in European languages.

OTurk. as starting point. However, this brings about the question: why should Türks be the first to name <Tibet>? Did any historical circumstances enable an encounter between the two before the Chinese entered the scene?

When the Yar-luñs dynasty started its expansion beyond the valleys of the Rcañ-po and Skyi rivers, its first conquests were directed towards the north and northeast (see Map 4). These territories are known from OT sources as inhabited by the Sum-pa. Further to the east and southeast there was the area termed Mdo-smad whose inhabitants are not addressed in OT documents. The exact ethnic or linguistic affiliation of the inhabitants of these areas at the time of the conquests are not known but judging from the contemporary Chinese chronicles the areas seem to have been home to Trans-Himalayan (preponderantly (proto-)Qiangic) speaking groups. Further to the north there were various groups speaking Proto-Mongolic or related language(s) who established their own polities after the disintegration of the Xianbei Empire. Thus, at the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century there was no direct contact between Türks and <Tibetans> as societies. What's more, \*tVpVt was a toponym, a name of a land, to be specific.<sup>83</sup> This fact likewise supports the assumption that OTurk. \*tVpVt was not coined in a direct encounter.

**30.** As opposed to OTurk. \*tVpVt, MC \*tVpVn (*tǔ fān* 吐蕃) was a demonym.<sup>84</sup> The latter was certainly a new term coined during the Tang dynasty with no direct predecessors attested in Chinese sources. Scholars who previously analysed the term concurred that \*tVpVn

<sup>83</sup> See OTurk. passages quoted in Aydın (2018: 90f.).

<sup>84</sup> The oldest dated use of *tǔ fān* 吐蕃 with reference to <Tibet> seems to come from 往五天竺國傳 *Memoir of a Pilgrimage to the Five Regions of India* (Mair 1996: 79f.) written by a Korean monk Hyecho after his return to China in 727. Its manuscript has been discovered by Paul Pelliot in Dunhuang in 1908 (Han-Sung et al. 1984: 14). The text refers to <Tibet> as 土蕃國 (3b6) and 吐蕃國 (5a1 twice), and to <Tibetans> as 吐蕃 (4b12, 5a11) and 土蕃 (9a4; see Han-Sung et al. 1984). The variation could be perhaps ascribed to Hyecho's minor skills in Chinese (Han-Sung et al. 1984: 20).

Pulleyblank (1991: 19f.) argued for the reading *tǔ fān* to be older than *tǔ bō*. This was also suggested by Pelliot (1915: 18) who ascribed the introduction of the latter into western Sinology to Abel Rémusat. A plausible explanation for the growing popularity of the reading *tǔ bō* was put forward by Coblin (1994). Pulleyblank's note initiated a discussion in *Sino-Platonic Papers* where Mair (1991: 38f.; later also Mair 1996) argued the contrary but his arguments were convincingly refuted by Pulleyblank (1992). A critique of Mair's arguments from the Tibetological point of view can be found in Appendix B of this paper.

cannot be etymologised in Chinese,<sup>85</sup> therefore it must be a transcription of a foreign word. They were also consensual in their attempts to reconstruct or suggest a reconstruction of the underlying Tibetan word as consisting of two syllables. However, another Chinese practice of transcribing monosyllabic words of OT with two characters is well known; namely, syllables with a complex onset were commonly transcribed with two distinct characters, the first of which transcribed the first consonant, with the second transcribing the second consonant and the rime (Li 1979: 235ff.). This was still practised in the 9<sup>th</sup> century as confirmed by the bilingual ST Treaty inscription (see Preiswerk 2014, esp. 144ff.).<sup>86</sup> Accordingly, *tǔ fān* \*tVpVn might have been a transcription of a syllable with a complex onset, consisting of an alveolar and a bilabial consonant. The consonant cluster !tp- is not attested in OLT, but can be reconstructed for the written *dp-* owing to the fact that in EOT prefixes assimilated to the voice quality of the root consonant, in this case the voiceless *p* (Bialek 2018b).

This being said, I propose tracing MC \*tVpVn to OLT *dpon* “master, lord, leader” < \* “the head of a unit”, ultimately derived from *pho* “man; male” (Bialek 2018a: 1.544). As it seems, in earlier times *dpon* denoted an official position, to which one had to be appointed, cf.:

(22)

*dpon du bčug nay / (295) ybañs so čhog la sñiñ sñoms par myī ychal re // (PT 1287)*  
If [one] has appointed [us] as leaders, [we] shall wish to level [our] hearts with those of [our] subjects.

<sup>85</sup> Beckwith (1977: 122ff.; 2005: 8) followed Chinese sources in assuming that *tǔ fān* 吐蕃 was a corrupted form of *tū fā* 秃發, a name of an ancient Xianbei tribe. However, he proposed no historical context or reason for the ‘confusion’. Early on the second syllable in *tǔ fān* 吐蕃 was identified with OT *bod* (Laufer 1914a: 94–5, fn. 1) but this was already rejected by Pelliot (1915: 18f.) on linguistic grounds.

<sup>86</sup> This practice makes all attempts to identify the first syllable of the MC \*tVpVn futile but it explains the alternation between the standard *tǔ fān* 吐蕃 and the variants *tǔ fān* 土蕃 (in *Memoir of a Pilgrimage to the Five Regions of India*), *dà fān* 大蕃 (ST Treaty; Beckwith 2011: 178), or *tè fān* 特蕃 (in P 2762 dated to ca. 900; Pelliot 1912: 522 & 1915: 20). Alternatively, after *tǔ fān* 吐蕃 became established and the Tibetan Empire proved to be a military and political power to be respected, one might have felt uncomfortable with *tǔ* 吐 “to spit” in its name and sought to replace it with a more suitable word.

This passage comes from an oath that Dbays Phañs-to-re Dbyi-chab, among others, swore to Khri Sroñ-rcañ. The event can be dated to an early period of the latter's reign but it followed the killing of Myañ Mañ-po-rje Žañ-snañ (PT 1287: 258–61)<sup>87</sup> and so also the second conquest of the Sum-pa (see Appendix C). In (22) *dpon* is presented as a counterpart of *ybañs*. In later OT texts the former has been replaced by *rje* so that *rje* is commonly paired with *ybañs* and *dpon* is relegated to be a counterpart of *g.yog* (see OTDO).<sup>88</sup> This terminological shift can be sketched as:

*dpon* “leader” : *ybañs* “subjects”  
 >  
*rje* “lord” : *ybañs* “subjects” ~ *dpon* “master” : *g.yog* “servant”

The shift was apparently related to the growing hierarchisation of the society and social changes that must have occurred following the expansion of the Yar-luñs dominion.

In the ST Treaty inscription *dpon* in *mñan pon* (N 32) is transcribed as *bēn* 奔 (Preiswerk 2014: 145) that can be reconstructed as:

Schuessler (2007)	Baxter and Sagart (2014)
LH <i>pən</i>	MC <i>pwon</i>
OCM *pên	OC *p <sup>r</sup> ur
<i>Shijīng</i> *pûn < *plun	

Table 8. MC reconstruction of 奔 *bēn*

The transcription indicates that the vowel underwent fronting but the final *-n* was still pronounced. The vocalic difference between the transcription of *pon* and that of *dpon* in *tũ fān* \*tVpVn can be therefore explained by sound changes that are documented for OT (see § 28).

31. The international career of *dpon* alias \*tVpVn was only possible after the conquest of the Sum-pa and Mdo-smad and the subjugation of local peoples to the Yar-luñs dynasty. The meaning of OLT *dpon* “leader” was locally generalised from denoting representatives of the new power to naming the ruling class as such and subsequently the

<sup>87</sup> On unknown grounds, Richardson dated the execution of Myañ Mañ-po-rje Žañ-snañ to about 636 (1967: 10).

<sup>88</sup> Compare hereto Dzongkha [pōn] “king, lord” (CDTD: 4856).

ruling people in general. The term can be reconstructed as \*tVpon.<sup>89</sup> It might have been coined in a local language and borrowed into Chinese or was a Chinese innovation.<sup>90</sup>

OTurk. \*tVpVt is an inflected form with the plural suffix *-t*; the final *-n* is regularly elided (Tekin 1968: 122; Erdal 2004: 158). Georg (2018: 20) noted that the suffix is restricted to OTurk. and is frequently used in loanwords, especially titles. This perfectly fits the proposed reconstruction. Apparently the borrowed form \*tVpVn, perceived as singular, was changed to plural \*tVpVt because the word already had collective meaning. In OTurk. both vowels were front and rounded, therefore the transliteration *tǔpǔt* (see Table 7). The vowel *ö* does not occur in non-first syllables in Orkhon Turkic (Tekin 1968: 56; Erdal 2004: 45–6), but this could be attributed to the limited linguistic material provided by the inscriptions (Stefan Georg, p.c. 11.03.2021). Accordingly, one can reconstruct OTurk. \*tVpüt or \*tVpöt (Bazin and Hamilton (1991: 11) reconstructed \*töpüt). Unfortunately, the options for tracing the origins of the vowels are limited for there is no information on either the time of the borrowing or, even more importantly, the Chinese dialect from which OTurk. might have borrowed \*tVpVn. Neither can a transmission via yet another language or even languages be excluded.

Deriving the OTurk. form from the MC one rather than the other way round is preferable for two reasons. First of all, historically the Chinese seem to have come into contact with <Tibetans> as a people earlier than the Türks and we have assumed that the MC, OTurk., and KS forms are related to each other. Secondly the shift MC \*tVpVn > OTurk. \*tVpVt is greatly motivated by OTurk. inflectional morphology, whereas the change OTurk. \*tVpVt > MC \*tVpVn would be difficult to account for because the finals do not match.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Pelliot (1915: 19, fn. 1) remarked that MC vowel *a* preceded by the labiovelar approximant [w] in closed syllables could transcribe foreign *o*. This is exactly the case with the MC form of *fān* 蕃. The reconstruction of the vowel *ä* instead (see Bazin and Hamilton 1991: 11) seems impossible. The authors put forward the reconstruction with the sole aim to support their assumption that Chinese *tǔ fān* 吐蕃 derived from OTurk. *töpä/töpü* “hill” (ibid., pp. 11f.).

<sup>90</sup> Tibetic languages are noted for their complex onsets not documented in this form in other TH languages. Accordingly, whatever language was first to borrow *dpon*, it must have added a vowel to split the cluster *dp-*.

<sup>91</sup> The reversed has been maintained by Bazin and Hamilton (1991: 18f.) who argued that \*tVpVt/\*tVpVn was first coined by the Ya-za from whom it independently reached the Türks and the Chinese (ibid., pp. 19ff. & 27). However, the Ya-

32. As remarked by Róna-Tas (1985: 78), in P 2782 (l. 75), a Tibetan letter written in KS script and orthography (Bailey 1973: 224), *pātta kī skatṭa* transcribes OT *bod kyi skad*. However, the commonly used demonym for <Tibetans> was *tāgutta* reconstructed as \*toyat by Bailey (1940: 604f.). The multitude of its variants (see Table 7) confirms that it was not a native term. Bailey (ibid., p. 605) considered it possible for *y* to have developed from *w* < *b*. On the other hand, two cases of alternation between a bilabial and a velar sound in foreign names are quoted by Hamilton (1977: 519, fn. 61), strengthening the hypothesis that KS \*tVgVt might indeed have come from \*tVpVt. This hypothesis was not pursued by Hamilton who instead suggested that *tāgutta* might be related to *taṅut* (1977: 519f.). In later times the name Tangut was used to refer to Tibetans but the source and the date of the shift remain unknown (Róna-Tas 1985: 78). Considering that in KS: 1. a bilabial consonant could be replaced by a velar one; 2. *ā* could represent Turkic *o*, *u*, *ö*, *ü* (Hamilton 1977: 519f.); and 3. all neighbouring languages of the 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> c. possessed a term for <Tibet> that could be traced to \*tVpVt (see Table 7), I think it possible that \*tVgVt [toyut] was borrowed from a Turkic language.

33. By way of summary, Figs. 1 and 2 illustrate two possible paths of development from OLT *dpon* “leader” to the predecessors of *Tibet*. Needless to say, the transmission from one language to another did not have to be direct but with the present state of knowledge one is unable to reconstruct all the intermediary chain links between OLT *dpon* and OTurk \*tVpVt.

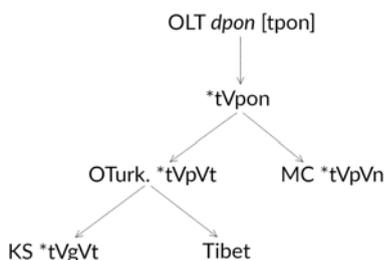


Fig. 1.

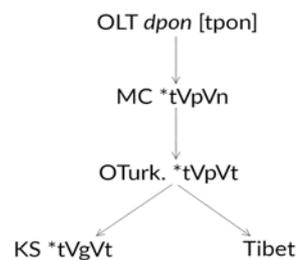


Fig. 2

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ža were conquered later than the Sum-pa and the Yar-luṅs dynasty established diplomatic relations with China before attacking the Ya-ža (Bushell 1880: 443f.; Pelliot 1961: 3f. & 82f.).

### Conclusions

34. To the best of my knowledge the paper is the first attempt to reconstruct the (pre-)history of the proper name *Bod* on the basis of OT records. The study has revealed that it was primarily a local demonym used by a community that in the 6<sup>th</sup> century inhabited the area around the Sñe-mo valley. The word started its career as an interregional demonym with the rise to power of the Mgar family that moved from its homeland in Sñe-mo to Lower Lha and Lower Smri-ti valleys, transplanting its endonym to the new socio-spatial environment. From the perspective of the Yar-valley, these were border regions at that time but even after the conquest of the Sum-pa and Mdo-smad they were still perceived as gates to <Three Horns>. This location apparently triggered the formation of the compound *bod yul* originally used in the restricted context of coming from abroad to the Bod-land and, by extension, in international relations. From the title *bod kyi lha* it can be inferred that not later than by the reign of Khri Ṳdus-sroñ the demonym was adopted or even ‘internalised’ by the Yar-luñs dynasty.

Regarding the origin of the proper name *Tibet*, I have ventured the hypothesis that it reconstructs to OLT *dpon* [tpon] “leader” and was generalised in conquered territories to denote first the ruling class, then the ruling people, i.e. <Tibetans>. As more attentive readers might have noticed, I have abstained from proposing any etymology for *bod*. Apart from the clear reason of not having a one, I may offer two arguments against any attempt to explain its etymology: 1. from its oldest attestations *bod* has been a proper name and as such is unanalysable or at least escapes common methods of historical analysis; and 2. there is little evidence that the community, who in the 6<sup>th</sup> century referred to itself as ‘Bod’, spoke a Tibetic language. The Tibetic-speaking communities in those days did not live in a social vacuum; they were surrounded by other peoples, but it would be simplification to state that their neighbours to the south were India, to the west Iranian-speaking peoples, to the north Türks, and to the east the Chinese. Their immediate neighbours were speakers of other TH languages today identified as Qiangic (east), Bodic (south, southwest, and west), Himalayish (south), but also Proto-Mongolic speakers (north and northeast), and most probably others as well, of which no knowledge has survived to the present times. Moreover, owing to the main trade route India–Central Asia

that led through <Four Horns>, the areas and peoples in the focus of the paper never lived isolated from the outside world, despite the demanding topography of their homeland.<sup>92</sup>

Finally, I have to frankly acknowledge that as with everything related to the prehistory of <Tibet> the hypotheses presented in the paper must also be deemed as tentative. They are based on a scrupulous philological examination of OT written sources but as long as no archaeological excavations have been carried out much of the assumptions and analyses remain uncorroborated by material facts.

### Abbreviations

*	reconstructed form
!	historically/logically impossible form
√	reconstructed verb root
[b]	letter reconstructed by JB
[tpon]	phonetic transcription
Ybis 2	Ybis-khog 2 inscription
Yphyoñ	Yphyoñ-rgyas inscription
Brag A	Brag-lha-mo A inscription
Bsam	Bsam-yas inscription
Bsam B	Bsam-yas Bell inscription
Dgay	Dgay-lدان-byin-čhen inscription
Dun 365	Dunhuang cave no. 365 inscription
E	east-facing inscription
Eng.	English
EOT	Early Old Tibetan
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
ITJ	IOL Tib J
Khra	Khra-ybrug inscription
Khri	Inscription at the tomb of Khri Lde-sroñ-brtsan
Khrom	Khrom-čhen inscription
KS	Khotan-Saka
Lčañ	Lčañ-bu inscription
Ldan 2	Ldan-ma-brag 2 inscription
LH	Later Han Chinese
Lho	Lho-brag inscription
LT	Literary Tibetan

<sup>92</sup> One remarkable example is certain Mañ-po-rje Sum-bu, a person otherwise unregistered in the sources, who fled to Dru-gu (i.e. Western Türks) after the defeat of Nas-po by Khri Slon-mchan (PT 1287: 183).

MC	Middle Chinese
MOT	Middle Old Tibetan
N	north-facing inscription
OC	Old Chinese
OCM	Minimal Old Chinese
OLT	Old Literary Tibetan
ONW	Old Northwest Chinese
OT	Old Tibetan
OTA	<i>Old Tibetan Annals</i>
OTC	<i>Old Tibetan Chronicles</i>
OTurk.	Old Turkic
PT	Pelliot tibétain
Rkoñ	Rkoñ-po inscription
S	south-facing inscription
Skar	Skar-čuñ inscription
ST Treaty	Sino-Tibetan Treaty inscription
TERM	terminative
TH	Trans-Himalayan
W	west-facing inscription
Žol	Žol inscription
Žwa	Žwayi lha-khañ inscription

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### Appendix A: Previous etymologies of *bod*

The first attempt of western scholars to etymologise the endonym *bod* comes probably from Schiefner, who related it to *phod* "to be able", in his view, a synonym of *thub* (1852: 332–3, fn.). He formed a synonymic compound *!thub phod/bod* to explain the European name *Tibet* via Mongolian *tubed* (ibid.). Needless to say, every single element of this 'etymology' is of questionable value.

Among etymologies put forward in later times one can distinguish between two groups: 1. *bod* ~ *bon* hypothesis; and 2. *bod* ~ *bhāṭṭa* hypothesis. I shall present them in this order.

#### 1. *bod* ~ *bon* hypothesis

The hypothesis was introduced to the western scholars most probably by Lalou who construed the two words as another case of the *-d* ~ *-n* alternation (1953) known from such OLT pairs as *čhed* ~ *čhen*, *blod* ~ *blon*, *rkud* ~ *rkun* etc.<sup>93</sup> She suggested that the words are variants of the once uniform final *-nd*, the split of which (arbitrarily) yielded once *-d*, once *-n* forms. Lalou did not comment on the semantics of

<sup>93</sup> Stein reported on the use of the word *bon* instead of the expected *bod* in *Rgyal rabs bon gyi ybyuñ gnas* (1961: 11 & fn. 28; see also Tucci and Heissig (1970: 235, fn. 1)), whereas Uray described it as "a learned etymology on the analogy of the doublets *-n/-d* for purposes of Bon propaganda" (1964: 325, fn. 5). The alternation is also attributed to Bon-po authors by Dge-γdun Čhos-γphel (4r3) who, according to Dan Martin, was probably the first Tibetan scholar to present a coherent argument for the etymology of *bod* (p.c. 17.03.2021). Dge-γdun Čhos-γphel supported the hypothesis that the name Bod replaced the earlier \*Bon by referring to Chinese sources. He transcribed Ch. Tūfān as Tuγu-phan (3v5) and argued that the Chinese called <Tibet> *phon* (sic; 4r5), presumably alluding to *phon* < *bon*. However, in order to determine which arguments provided by Dge-γdun Čhos-γphel come from the Tibetan tradition, which can be attributed to western scholars, and which were his own contribution a detailed study would be necessary. The fact that he quoted *stod bod* as a designation of Tibet (3v6; see Appendix B.1) indicates that he was acquainted with certain western works devoted to the topic. I wish to thank Dan Martin for this valuable reference to Dge-γdun Čhos-γphel's contribution to the discussion (p.c. 17.03.2021).

*bod* ~ *bon*. The hypothesis has found proponents who developed it further. It was Haarh who connected *bon* and *bod* to the verb root  $\sqrt{\text{bo}}$  \*"to call, cry out, swear" (1969: 289f.), adding *bro* and *bos* (v2 of *ɣbod*) to the collection. He interpreted *bod*, *bon*, and *bos* as verbal nouns, whereas *ɣbod*, \**ɣbon*, and *ɣbos* as denoting verbal action, "*bod* stressing the aspect of the action itself, and *bon* stressing the aspect of the subject and aim of the action. *Bos* stresses the aspect of the end, and result of the action" (ibid.). This analysis has led him to the etymological meanings *bod* "those who invoke" (> "invokers") and *bon* "that which is connected with invocation, the invocations" (> "those of the invocations = invokers"); note that the meanings proposed overtly contradict the semantics as described in the quotation above. This hypothesis explains Bod-people as believers of the Bon religion, which itself is apparently perceived as a religion of invocations. Beyer, ascribing to the hypothesis, enlarged the group of 'cognates' by  $\sqrt{\text{po}}$  "to change place",  $\sqrt{\text{spo}}$  "to remove", *dbon/sbon* "descendant",  $\sqrt{\text{ypjo}}$  "to range" (1993: 17, fn. 13). In a 'weak' version of the *bod* ~ *bon* hypothesis, Zeisler speculated that *bod* could have been derived from the verb root  $\sqrt{\text{bo}}$  to designate certain group of people as "speakers" (2021: 325, fn. 149).<sup>94</sup>

The implausibility of the *bod* ~ *bon* hypothesis becomes obvious when one takes into account that *bon* is derived from the verbal stem  $\sqrt{\text{bon}}$  "to give",<sup>95</sup> whereas the root of the verb *ɣbod* was  $\sqrt{\text{bo}}$  "to call", -*d* being an inflectional suffix of v1-stems (Bialek 2020a: 318ff.). The derivation of *bod* from  $\sqrt{\text{bo}}$  by means of the nominal -*d* suffix encounters semantic problems because the latter is known to have derived abstract nouns that expressed themes of an action (see Bialek 2020a: 318f.). Accordingly, the meaning of *bod* could be "call; invocation", but the word could never have denoted a human being or a collective of humans.

<sup>94</sup> Zeisler proposed seven different, albeit sometimes related, hypotheses on the origin of *bod* and its relation to other names from early foreign sources (2021: 352).

<sup>95</sup> See Uray (1964) for a thorough examination of the verb *ɣbon*. Bialek (2021 Forthcoming a) derives *bon* "worship; Bon religion" from *ɣbon* "to give (gifts); to worship". Beckwith's derivation of the obviously native Tibetan word *bon* from Chinese *fān* 蕃 (Beckwith's reconstruction \**buan*; 2011: 181f.) contradicts the basic linguistic facts that *bon* primarily denoted a form of worship and not humans. Moreover, it overlooks that various *bon* traditions have been practised in the Himalayas and are apparently much older than G.yuñ-druñ Bon.

## 2. *bod* ~ *bhātṭa* hypothesis

The hypothesis has been raised following the identification of the Bod-people with some or all the peoples that occur in early sources under various names, like Greek *βαῖται*, Indian *bhauṭṭa/bhātṭa/bhuṭṭa*, Arabic *bhatta*, and Central Asian *bhaṭa* in *bhaṭa hor* etc. (see § 26). Zeisler (2021: 284f.) is right in stating that, in terms of phonetics, Tibetan *bod* could have been borrowed from any of the terms, but not the other way round. However, the *bod* ~ *bhātṭa* hypothesis stands in contradiction to the historical facts that have been established about the prehistory of the Yar-luñs dynasty. ‘Borrowing’ of a name could have happened only in consequence of colonisation or a conquest but Indian names *bhauṭṭa/bhātṭa/bhuṭṭa* are used with reference to a people or peoples inhabiting Pamirs. Quite far away from <Four Horns>. Why should a people, even if an important chain link in the trade between the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia, have borrowed a name from a people with whom they could not have any direct contact at the time of the borrowing? It is, however, conceivable that Tibetan *bod* was later identified with Indian *bhauṭṭa/bhātṭa/bhuṭṭa* of earlier written sources and the new term *bhoṭa* was coined.

## Appendix B: Previous etymologies of *Tibet*

Since Tibet became the object of scholarly interests in the 19<sup>th</sup> century various hypotheses have been put forward to explain the origin of the name. The two most commonly repeated in literature are presented below with critical notes that show their historical and/or linguistic implausibility.

### 1. Tibet < OLT *bod*

It seems most tempting to relate the European *Tibet* and its Asian predecessors to *bod*; its second syllable *-bet* sounds almost like *bod* and if one considers fronting of *o* before the final *-d* in some modern dialects (see CDTD: 5566), the name almost appears to be explained. The first syllable poses more problems and so there was less agreement on its origin; in earlier writings it was identified with either *mtho*, *thub*, or *stod* (see Laufer 1915: 94–5, fn. 1); the latter is the only

one that persists until today. The 'etymology' has been accepted by Rockhill (1891: 5), Hermanns (1949: 9f.), Gruschke (2001: 1.13), Mair (1990, 1992: 21 & 1996), Scharlipp (1995: 48), and Tong (2008: 2, fn. 1). Stein (1972: 19) accepted the derivation of *Tibet* from *bod* but remained silent on the origin of the first syllable. Here I shall list arguments against any relation between *bod* and \*tVpVt.<sup>96</sup> My hope is that this will close the discussion on this unfortunate 'etymology':

- I. Neither !*mtho bod* nor !*stod bod*, not to mention !*thub bod*, are attested in Tibetan sources. There is a good reason for that: they are ungrammatical at least when it comes to toponyms. This argument actually suffices to reject the 'etymon' !*stod bod*.<sup>97</sup> Mair (1992: 21) mentioned the dichotomy *stod/smad* but failed to notice that the two could only be *postposed* to a toponym; cf. Snam-stod, Sbra-stod, Rcañ-stod, Mdo-smad, Rcañ-smad, to quote just a few OLT examples (see OTDO). His assertion that *stod* is found in OLT as "an adjectival prefix before an ethnonym" (Mair 1996: 80) is plainly incorrect. It has never been used with toponyms in this position and is simply out of the question with ethnonyms. *stod phyogs*, lit. "region of the upper part", is an exceptional formation in so far as only the whole compound is a toponym but none of its constituents when considered separately; *stod* does not modify an independent toponym *phyogs* (Bialek 2018a: 1.473, fn. 2).
- II. The reconstruction of !*stod bod* as underlying \*tVpVt projects modern pronunciation back to the times of OT. Chinese transcriptions in the ST Treaty inscription demonstrate that the syllable-final *d* was still pronounced in OT at the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> c. (Preiswerk 2014: 144ff.). Why then should only the final of the second syllable have been preserved in the transcription? For all that is known about compounding in Tibetic languages, compounds tend to preserve final consonants in word-internal rather than final position (Bialek 2018a), so that one would expect !tVtpV rather than !tVpVt and in any case !tVtpVt.

<sup>96</sup> Some of the arguments were already raised in previous studies; cf. Laufer (1915: 94–5, fn. 1) and Bazin and Hamilton (1991: 13 & 26).

<sup>97</sup> Hermanns' reconstruction of the Amdo pronunciation !*tö wöd* (1949: 10) is fictitious as is Rockhill's assumption that "Tibetans from Central Tibet have at all times spoken of that portion of the country as *Teu-Peu (stod bod)* or 'Upper Tibet'" (1891: 5).

III. There is no data suggesting that when the Chinese or Türks coined their terms for <Tibet> *bod* was already used for the whole territory ruled by the Yar-luñs dynasty; rather it was still a local demonym used in the Skyi-region.<sup>98</sup>

Yet another hypothesis was presented by Haarh (1969: 290f.). He interpreted *tǔ fān* 吐蕃 (in his transcription: Tu-bo) as “the Bod of Tu’, i.e. ‘the Bod of Tu-fa,’ indicating *the Tibetans under the rule of the Tu-fa clan*” (ibid., p. 291; emphasis in original). Tu-bo should have given rise to OTurk. *töböt* from which the European *Tibet* stems. Tū-fā 秃发 was a branch of the Xianbei confederation. Haarh tacitly identified *tǔ* 吐 with *tū* 秃 and passed over in silence their completely different pronunciations in MC. Moreover, he ascribed to *fān* 蕃 a MC reconstruction of *fān/bō* 番. It goes without saying that his ‘reconstruction’ violates all rules of historical linguistics and is nothing more than a folk etymology based on modern transcriptions of Chinese characters.

## 2. Tibet < OTurk. *töpü/töpä* “hill”

Róna-Tas (1985: 89f.), followed by Bazin and Hamilton (1991: 13), proposed relating the name *Tibet* to OTurk. *töpü* “hill”, with the plural suffix *-t*: *\*töpüt* “hills”. However, nobody has challenged the question of how “hills” (> “Tibet”) came to denote a people (> “Tibetans”). An additional shortcoming of Bazin and Hamilton’s hypothesis is that it explains OTurk. *\*tVpVt* as plural and MC *\*tVpVn* as collective of *töpü/töpä* or its cognate in the language of the *Ŷa-ža* (1991: 17f. & 26f.) but fails to account for the fact that *tǔpǔwǎ* was a toponym whereas *tǔ fān* 吐蕃 a demonym. The hypothesis is also silent on the matter of the historical circumstances under which the *Ŷa-ža* (Bazin and Hamilton) or the Türks (Róna-Tas) should have given <Tibet> its name; it was <Tibetans> who conquered Central Asia and not the *Ŷa-ža* who conquered <Tibet> and subsequently coined the name “hills” for it. Historical facts speak against the tacit assumption made by these authors that *\*tVpVt* was coined *in situ*.

<sup>98</sup> Mair went so far as to assert that Chinese *tǔ fān* 吐蕃 (his Tu-bo) is a transcription of *!stod bod* which he translated as “Greater Fan (i.e., Bod)” (1992: 21). Neither did he explain why the same OLT rime *-od* should be transcribed with two syllables of distinct rimes in Chinese. Strangely enough, Chinese *fān* has also been traced back to *bod* by Stein (1972: 31).

A position combining the 'bod-hypothesis' and the 'töpe-hypothesis' is represented by Georg (2018) who suggested the etymon !tepe-bod, presumably coined in OTurk. The author put much effort in reconstructing the sound shifts required to arrive at the European *Tibet* but did not remark on the existence of the apparently related MC *tũ fān* 吐蕃 and, most importantly, did not present any reasonable semantic analysis of the 'compound'.<sup>99</sup> Like the other 'töpä'-hypotheses, this hypothesis suffers from the 'historical vacuum'; it lacks an explanation of the historical context under which the compound might have been coined.

### Appendix C: Chronological table

The table presents the most important historical events related to the early territorial expansion of the Yar-luñs dynasty. The dates are based on the analyses presented in the paper. The order of the grand councillors corresponds to that of the *Succession of grand councillors* (PT 1287: 63–117) but their tenures are only approximate.




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<sup>99</sup> In a kind of epilogue to the paper the author described a dream in which the meaning "Berg-Bod" (Eng. "hill-Bod") is mentioned. The author has left that without a comment.

## Naming the empire

Date	Event	Source	Reign	' <i>zai'</i> -family	Grand councillor
	Political alliances with Rñegs, Khu, Lho, Gnubs, Mthon-myi, Sna-nam, Śud-pu, Ybro, Mñhims, Yol-god, Dags-po		Ybro Mñen-ldo-ru	Ybro	Gnubs Mñen-to-re Nan-snañ
	Affinal alliance with Nas-po	PT 1287: 159			
	Political alliance with Myañ, Dbays, Mron, and Ches-poñ	PT 1287: 157–63			
	Plans to conquer Nas-po	PT 1287: 147–64	Stag-bu Sha-gzigs	Mñhims	
	Death of Stag-bu Sha-gzigs	PT 1287: 164			Śud-pu Rgyal-to-re Na-myi
	<b>Conquest of Nas-po</b>	PT 1287: 180–3	Khri Slon-mchan	Yol-god	
	Political alliance with Khyuñ-po Spun-sad Zu-ce				
580s<	<b>Conquest of the Rcan-Bod</b>	PT 1287: 75 & 198–9			Moñ Khri-do-re Snañ-chab
	Affinal alliance with Moñ				
	<b>1st conquest of Sum-pa</b>				
593	Birth of Khri Sroñ-rcan				Mgar Khri-sgra Yi-mmun
600s	Affinal alliance with Zaiñ-zuñ (Sad-mar-kar)	PT 1287: 398–9			
	Revolt of the Zaiñ-zuñ, Dags-po, Sum-pa, Rkoñ, and Myañ-po	PT 1287: 300			Myañ Mañ-po-rje Zaiñ-snañ
	Poisoning of Khri Slon-mchan	PT 1287: 259 & 300–1			

Date	Event	Source	Reign	' <i>žai'</i> -family	Grand councillor
610s	<b>2nd conquest of the Sum-pa</b>	PT 1287: 84-5 & 303-5 PT 1288: 2			
	<b>1st conquest of the Žai-žui/Gur-ge</b>	PT 1287: 398-434			
620s	<b>Conquest of To-yo-ḥas-la in Byañ</b>	ΠJ 1375: r3-4			
	Disloyalty of Myañ and Čog-ro	PT 1287: 250, 254 & 259	Khri Stoiŕ-rean	Ches-poiñ	Mgar Mai-po-ŕje Žaiŕ-snañ
	Killing of Myañ Mai-po-ŕje Žaiŕ-snañ / destruction of Sdur-ba	PT 1287: 312-5 PT 1288: 4-5			
634	Tibetan embassy to Tang China				Mgar Maiŕ-šam Sum-snañ
637/8	<b>1st conquest of the Ya-ža</b>	PT 1288: 6-7 PT 1287: 305-6			Khyuiŕ-po Spuiŕ-sad Zur-ce
638	Birth of Khri Maiŕ-slon Maiŕ-rean				
641/2	Arrival of Mun-ḥañ-kori-čo	PT 1288: 11	Guñ-sroiñ Guñ-rean	Moiñ	Mgar Stoiŕ-rean Yul-zuiñ
644	Death of Guñ-sroiñ Guñ-rean				
644/5	<b>2nd conquest of the Žai-žuiñ</b>	PT 1288: 13-4	Khri Stoiŕ-rean	Ches-poiñ	Yo-ma-lde Lod-bcan
649/50	Death of Khri Stoiŕ-rean				
652/3	<b>Conquest of Glo-bo and Rcañ-ṭhya</b>	PT 1288: 21-2	Khri Maiŕ-slon Maiŕ-rean	Khon-čo	Mgar Stoiŕ-rean Yul-zuiñ
663	<b>2nd conquest of the Ya-ža</b>	PT 1288: 43			