

Tibetans in Brusha: New Data, New Information

John Mock* 

P.O. Box 809, Yosemite, National Park, California - 95389, USA.

Abstract: The kingdom of *Po-lü*, known from the Chinese Tang Dynasty Annals, is now identified with the Palola Shahi kings of Gilgit. In the early 8th century CE, the Chinese Annals record a distinction between Greater and Lesser Po-lü, which current scholarship now identifies as the Gilgit and Chilas region (Greater Po-lü) and the Yasin and Punyal region (Lesser Po-lü). However, to the Tibetans, Lesser Po-lü was known as Brusha, a toponym which is assumed to refer to the Burusho people. The Darkot Pass inscription and the seven inscription stones found near Gahkuch in Punyal attest to Tibetan presence in Brusha. This article presents a new Tibetan inscription and several accompanying *chorten* (stupa) rock carvings from the Yasin Valley, which is the first archaeological evidence of Tibetan presence in the settled area of Yasin. These new discoveries add to our understanding of Tibetan authority in Yasin and Punyal and of Tibetan presence and activity in the greater Gilgit region.

Keywords: Brusha, Bruzha, Buddhism, Gilgit, Khotan, Ladakh, Palola Shahi, Qarakhanid, Tibet, Tibetan, Wakhan, Yasin

Historical Background

Historical Tibetan presence in the Gilgit region¹ and the adjacent Wakhan Corridor² is known primarily from the Imperial records of the Central Tibetan Dynasty³ and the Chinese Tang Dynasty⁴, which competed for control of the region from the late 7th century until the mid-8th century CE⁵. These annalistic entries are concerned mostly with the political and military activities of the two empires. Additional secondary records are found in Arab, Turkish and Persian histories and geographies⁶.

The Chinese Tang Annals broadly termed the Gilgit region Po-lü⁷. Beckwith (1987: 30, fn. 97) regards *Balûr* as the correct reading of the name given in the Tang Annals for the kingdom centred around Gilgit. However, Hinüber's subsequent translations of inscriptions and manuscripts show that the ruling dynasty called itself Palola, whose kings are known as Palola Shahi, and he notes that Palola is also a geographic name (Hinüber 2004: 7). The spelling Bolor is found in 16th century Persian narratives (Haidar 1973) and frequently used in current scholarship. In this article I follow Dotson (2009), who uses the term Palur.

The differentiation of Lesser (Little) Palur and Greater Palur was recorded *c.* 726 CE by the Korean Buddhist pilgrim Hye Ch'o (Hye Ch'o 1984: 47-8) and in the Tang Annals for the year 727 CE (Chavannes 1903b/2006b: 35), prior to which the sole name was Palur⁸. Denwood (2008: 13-15) proposed⁹ and Schuh (2011: 198-223) has argued convincingly that Lesser Palur is the Yasin-Punyal¹⁰ area and Greater Palur is the Gilgit-Chilas area. Brusha (also spelled Bruzha) is the name used in *The Old Tibetan Annals*¹¹ for Lesser Palur and is generally assumed to refer to Yasin and all areas inhabited by Burushaski-speaking Burusho people¹², which apparently included Gilgit (Hinüber 2012: 56, 59).

Epigraphic evidence of Tibetan presence in Brusha is provided by a Tibetan inscription near the Darkot Pass in Yasin¹³ and seven Tibetan inscriptions found near Gahkuch (Jettmar and Sagaster 1993) in the Punyal *tehsil* of Ghizer District of Gilgit-Baltistan. These inscriptions have generally been attributed to the mid-8th to mid-9th century CE, when the Tibetan Empire was the dominant power in Gilgit and Wakhan (Denwood 2007: 46; Takeuchi 2013: 55).

*✉ jmock@ucsc.edu

Imperial rivalry reached a height in 747 CE, when the Chinese responded to increasing Tibetan influence in Palur and Wakhan with a massive attack on a Tibetan fort in Wakhan, named *Lien-yiin* in the Tang Annals (Chavannes 2006a: 185 - 9)¹⁴. I have proposed elsewhere (Mock 2016, 2018) that the extant remains of a large fort named Kansir, north of the Broghil Pass in Wakhan, is likely the same fort¹⁵. The fort was evidently garrisoned by Tibetan troops and supplied from Lesser Palur, whose king had married a Tibetan princess in 740 CE¹⁶.

The Chinese army departed from Kashgar and traveled through the Lesser Pamir¹⁷, reaching the Tibetan fort on August 11, 747 CE (Beckwith 1987: 132; Chavannes 2006a: 186). After decisively defeating the Tibetans, most of the Chinese army remained near *Lien-yiin* while a smaller contingent, including mounted cavalry, proceeded south across the Broghil and Darkot

passes into Yasin. They pacified Lesser Palur and took the Brusha king and queen prisoner (Chavannes 2006a: 188-9), after which they returned to their comrades at *Lien-yiin* via the Red Buddha Hall Road¹⁸.

New Evidence

In 1984, I photographed a boulder in Yasin above the true left (north) bank of the Thui (Thoi) River¹⁹, across from the village of Ishkaibar. The boulder had a large rock art panel on its south face, depicting ibex, several markhor, and a human figure. In 2022, the boulder had additional graffiti.

Also on the panel are outlines of five *chorten* figures and a brief Tibetan inscription that appears to be associated with them. Beneath the central *chorten* (labelled C 2 in figure 3) are letters that read དགེ་བོ་, ‘*dge blo*’²⁰, which translates as ‘virtuous thought’. *Chorten* carvings on rocks in Yasin,

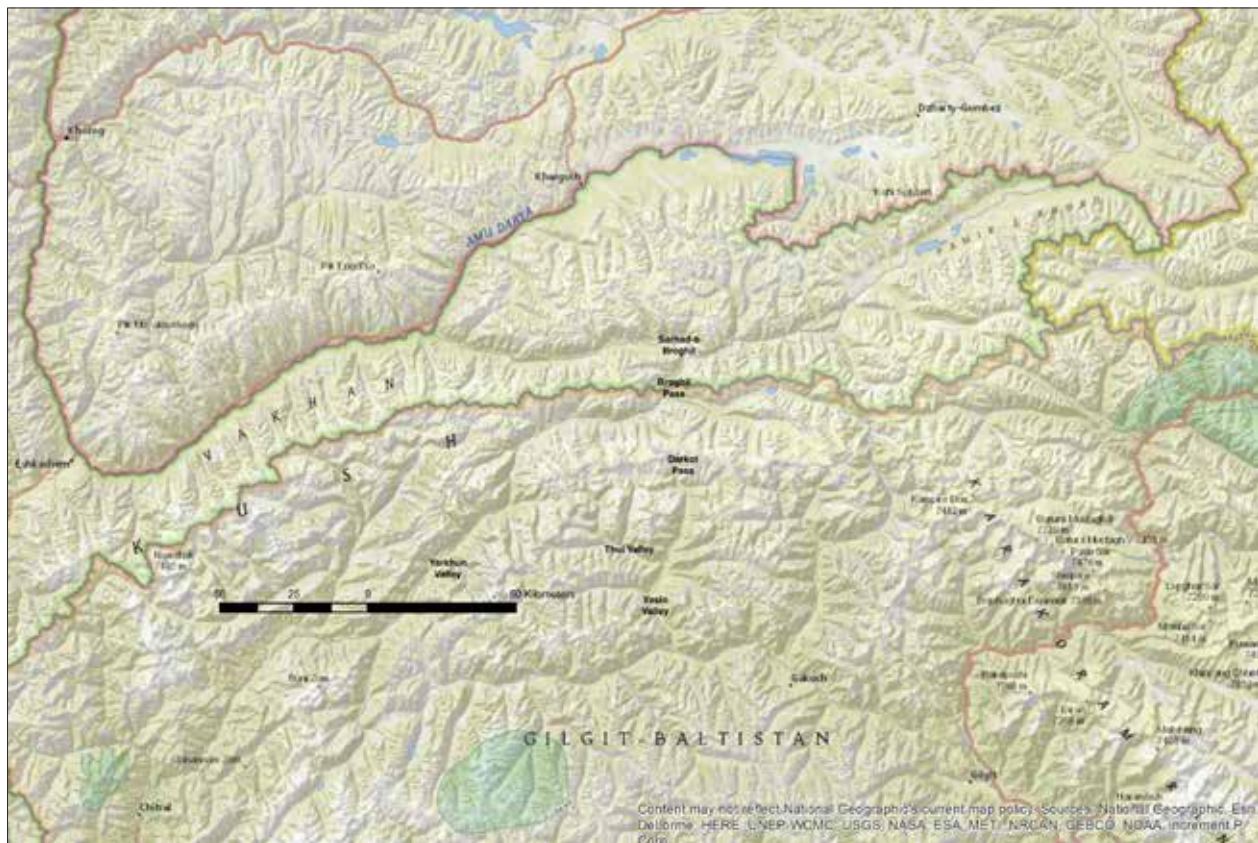


Figure 1. Locator Map



Figure 2. Boulder 1 in Thui Valley, 1984

Gahkuch and Wakhan²¹ are typically accompanied by an inscription naming the individual responsible for the carving, along with the individual's title and/or clan name and often the year the carving was made²². This inscription in Thui Valley lacks any such accompanying detail that would assure it is a name²³. If 'dge blo' is a name, it is possible that it could be an abbreviated form²⁴. However, to read it as 'virtuous thought', which could perhaps be an inducement or enjoinder, along with the *chorten* figures, to refrain from hunting the animals depicted on the boulder, would be anomalous and not conform with other *chorten* inscriptions in Brusha, Wakhan or Ladakh. At this point, a definitive determination cannot be made as to whether it is a name, perhaps abbreviated, or an exhortation accompanying the *chorten* figures

that form an assemblage meant to protect the animals.

To the right of the central *chorten* is an ibex with its head turned to look back. Above the ibex are two Tibetan letters that appear to read དབ་ 'dba', (these are most readily visible in Figure 2, the 1984 photograph) which is an incomplete word and has no specific meaning. It may be that the person making this second inscription started to write 'dge', but ran out of space due to the visible irregularity in the rock surface.

I was able to revisit the site in October 2022 with a Yasin scholar, Amjad Ali, M.Phil., a resident of Naz Bar. On a nearby boulder (Fig. 4), which I had not seen in 1984, we identified four similar *chorten* figures and on another boulder (Fig.



Figure 3. Boulder 1 in Thui Valley, 2022

5), we identified one similar *chorten* finial. The portion of the boulder containing the body of the *chorten* itself had evidently been destroyed when constructing a link road. We found no additional inscriptions. The *chorten* figures on these two previously unnoticed boulders appeared similar to those on the first boulder. Many of them share a distinctive trident-like finial that has slightly curved diagonal (45 degree) side arms flanking the vertical (90 degree) centre arm. The *chorten* figures lack any pennant or banner between the finial and the dome beneath.

These finials are markedly different from the Darkot Pass *chorten* figure and from the *chorten* figures depicted at Gahkuch²⁵. However, three of the five *chorten* figures on Boulder 1 (Fig. 3) at the Thui site, numbered C1, C4 and C5, share the general ‘cross-shaped’ structure that is frequently found in northern Pakistan and Wakhan, including the Darkot Pass *chorten* and Stone 5 at Gahkuch²⁶. I offer these general iconographic observations to suggest that the Yasin-Thui *chorten* figures appear to be part of a stylistic sub-group of Tibetan *chorten* figures within the region. It is beyond

the scope of this brief article to further discuss the stylistic development of *stupa* and *chorten* design in the region. Those interested in the topic are advised to consult the detailed catalogs of the 11-volume *Materials for the archaeology of the northern regions of Pakistan*, 1994-2013. Those interested in the development of epigraphy of Tibetan inscriptions of the region are advised to consult Bellezza 2020: 110-15, which offers a comprehensive comparative analysis.

Discussion

These Tibetan inscriptions and associated *chortens* figures are, to my knowledge, the only known archaeological evidence of Tibetan presence within the settled area of Yasin. The Darkot inscription is located well above the area of human habitation in Yasin, at a site that was evidently a ‘hill station’ (Tibetan *ri-zug*), which served as both a watchpost and signaling location (Mock 2013b: 16; 2017: 7). It demonstrates that a person literate in Tibetan was posted at the site, although the ethnicity of that person is undetermined (Mock 2013b: 14-15). Assuming that the Darkot

inscription site was indeed a signaling location, signals would be sent to people below. Because the Darkot inscription is in Tibetan, it is reasonable to assume that the people below would also be Tibetan speakers and some would be literate in Tibetan. The inscriptions and *chorten* figures presented in this article are the first evidence of the presence of a person literate in Tibetan in the main Yasin Valley. The location of the boulders and the multiple *chorten* figures outlined on them may suggest that one or more individuals, one of whom was able to write in Tibetan, stopped at this spot, perhaps waiting for the Thui River's level to recede before crossing from the north bank to the south and continuing down the Yasin Valley. Today a small bridge spans the river at Ishkaibar, close to the inscribed boulders. It appears to be the first feasible place to cross the Thui River if traveling along the true right (west) bank of the larger Yasin River. It would seem not unlikely that it was a crossing place in the past²⁷.

Scholars (Jettmar and Sagaster 1993: 133-5; Denwood 2007: 45-46; Takeuchi 2013: 55) have assigned Tibetan rock inscriptions accompanying *chorten* figures in Yasin and Gahkuch to the era of Tibetan Imperial activity in Yasin, based on the recorded occupation of Yasin by Tibetans in the 8th and 9th centuries CE²⁸. Uray (1980: 314) identifies Bruzha as an administrative unit of Tibet 'from the end of the 8th century down to the disintegration of the Tibetan Empire [842 CE] and, sporadically, even down to subsequent centuries'. Dotson (2009: 41-42) further identifies these Tibetan Imperial administrative units as 'colonial military governments' or '*khrom*', of which there were eight or nine. The northwestern-most of them were the *khrom* that administered Khotan and 'the military government of Little Palur (*Bru-zha'i yul gyi khrom*)'²⁹.

In addition to the administrative linkages between Gilgit and Khotan under the Tibetan Empire, there were long-standing cultural linkages

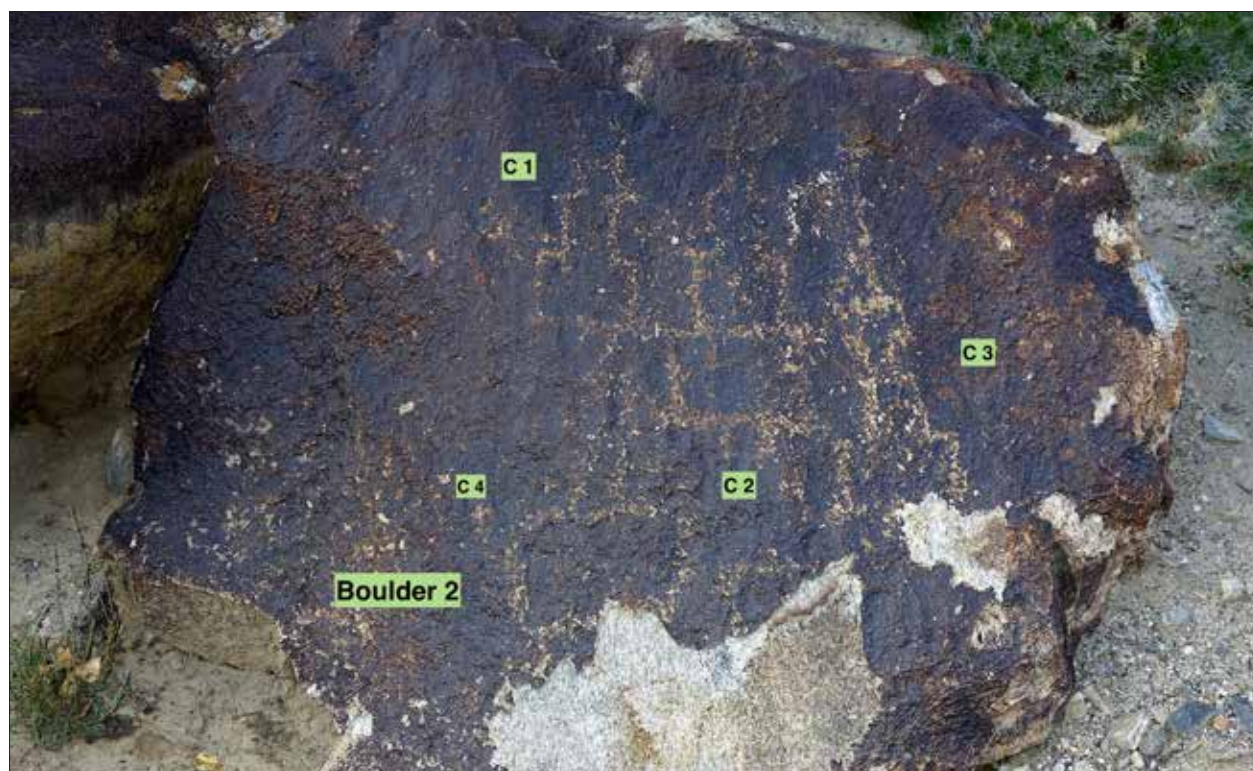


Figure 4. Boulder 2



Figure 5. Boulder 3

that pre-date Tibetan administration. These are demonstrated by texts found at Naupur, in what is commonly termed ‘the Gilgit Library’. Hinüber (2012: 59) remarks on the ‘immense popularity’ of one particular text, the *Samghātasūtra*, which was ‘shared by Buddhists in Gilgit and Khotan’ during the reign of the Palola Shahis (Hinüber (2012: 63), as were other texts, such as the *Lotus Sutra (Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra)* and the *Medicine Buddha Sutra (Bhaiṣajyaguru Sūtra)*³⁰. The links between Gilgit and Khotan continued into the 10th century (Neelis 2011: 295), when Buddhist monasteries in Brusha had links with Buddhist monasteries in Khotan (Bailey 1936: 257; Neelis 2011: 177).

Although Takeuchi (2013: 55) observed that the 8th and 9th centuries were ‘the only time when Tibetan power ever reached as northwest as Gilgit’, in the same article he also examined Tibetan inscriptions and *chorten* figures near

Alchi in Ladakh and proposed that the Alchi inscriptions were made by troops of the West Tibetan Kingdom, which post-dates the Central Tibetan Empire.

The West Tibetan Kingdom of Ngari was a successor state to the Central Tibetan Empire. It was founded by Nyimagon, a great-grandson of Langdarma, the last emperor of Central Tibet who died in 842 CE. Nyimagon migrated to Purang in West Tibet c. 912 CE, from where he extended his control to Ladakh, Spiti and Zaskar (Jahoda and Kalantari 2015: 78, 80).

The broad cross-cultural circulation of Buddhist texts and travel by merchants and monks evidently continued during the West Tibetan Kingdom³¹. Nyimagon’s eldest son ruled Ladakh ‘as far as Bruzha’ (Vitali 1996: 286, fn. 434). As Laurent (2013: 206) remarks, ‘cultural ties between West Tibet and north-western India during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries involved the comings and goings of Tibetan translators, Indian paṇḍitas, master craftsmen, artisans and merchants’. Öde, a grandson of a grandson of Nyimagon, ruled Ngari c. 1007-1037 CE and married a queen of Brusha named Gyané (Vitali 1996: 284; Laurent 2013: 206; Francke 1926, II: 156).

The textual sources linking the West Tibetan Kingdom with Brusha find confirmation in a recently translated major Tibetan inscription at the village of Kharool, located at the confluence of the Shingo and Suru rivers c. five kilometres north of Kargil and immediately south of the current Line of Control between Pakistan and India.

The inscription names Öde and his minister of ‘Brusha khri ris’ (Martin 2017: 217). The inscription was made in a dragon year and has been tentatively dated to 1028 CE during the reign of Öde (Devers 2018:107; Martin 2017: 218, fn. 80, 223, fn. 108). Martin notes that the inscription at Kharool has significant similarities with Tibetan inscriptions at Gahkuch, which he interprets as indicating a common history for the inscription at Kharool and at least some of the inscriptions found at Gahkuch and links them to the 11th century West Tibetan rule of Brusha, including Gilgit and Punyal.

The 11th century appears to mark the end of

Tibetan control over Brusha, which was attacked by the army of the *yabgu*³² of the Qarakhan Turks³³ c. 1037 CE (Vitali 1996: 286, fn. 437; Laurent 2013: 206).

Conclusion

The textual and archaeological evidence presented clearly demonstrates Tibetan presence in Yasin. Whether this was during the initial 8th and 9th century Imperial Tibetan rule over Brusha, or during the subsequent West Tibetan control over Brusha, or both, cannot be determined at this point. It is evident that Tibetans seeking Buddhist (and Bon-po³⁴) teachings were travelling between monastic centres in Gilgit, Khotan and Kashmir throughout the centuries from the initial Imperial Tibetan occupation of Gilgit until the Qarakhanid conquest of the region in the 11th century. This evidence supports a modification of the general scholarly opinion (as exemplified above in Takeuchi 2013: 55) to reflect that the 8th and 9th centuries were the only time when **Imperial Central Tibetan** power reached as northwest as Gilgit. This re-statement would better characterise the post-Imperial Tibetan influence and subsequent West Tibetan authority in Gilgit up to the 11th century. Indeed, the evidence cited in this article supports a picture of on-going Tibetan influence, of varying degrees ranging from cultural exchange to administrative control, in the Palur region from the early 8th century CE up to the 11th century CE Qarakhanid conquest. Archaeological excavation of the sites mentioned in this article could help refine the time frame and the extent of activity. Additional questions, such as the location of the seat of the Brusha ruler of Yasin during the initial Imperial Tibetan incursion, remain to be studied. Yasin has several interesting old forts that provide evidence of outside presence in the valley. These forts have not yet received any thorough examination. The fort of Maduri appears to be appropriately located in Yasin to control communication throughout the valley³⁵ and is situated on a high ridge that confers strategic and defensive advantage. Although it was perhaps last used by Raja Gohar Aman in the 19th century CE, it has remains of mud-block walls that are similar to Tibetan-style forts, such

as the fort of Kansir in Wakhan, and deserves investigation.

Notes

1. Today it is part of Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan.
2. Today it is a District within Badakhshan Province of Afghanistan.
3. The Emperors of the Central Tibetan Dynasty ruled Tibet from c. 618 to 842 CE. Dotson (2009) has provided a new and annotated translation of *The Old Tibetan Annals*. I use the terms Tibetan Empire and Central Tibetan Empire, which is distinguished from the later West Tibetan Kingdom.
4. The Emperors of the Tang Dynasty ruled China from 618 to 907 CE. Their primary historical annals are the *Chiu T'ang shu* (in Hanyu Pinyin transcription *Jiù Tángshū*; in English, *Old Book of Tang*) and the *Hsin T'ang shu* (in Hanyu Pinyin transcription *Xīn Tángshū*; in English *New Book of Tang*). Chavannes prepared extensive translations of Tang Empire records of activity in the Pamir and Gilgit regions (Chavannes 1903a/2006a, 1903b/2006b). In this article, I use the terms Tang Empire and Tang Annals.
5. Both empires sought to expand their realms and came inevitably into conflict, notably in the mountainous western regions of Wakhan and Gilgit, where they vied for control of the caravan trade, known today as the Silk Roads, and for tribute from the city-states on the Silk Roads (Dotson 2009: 18). The Tang Empire's power in the region effectively ended in the mid-8th century due to internal dissent led by General An Lushan (Beckwith 1987: 142-3).
6. The most comprehensive study in English is by Beckwith (1987), which includes an informative Bibliographical Essay and a useful glossary with Chinese characters. See also recent scholarship by Denwood (2007, 2008, 2009), which proposes new

- interpretations, and Zeisler (2010), which reviews and discusses the scholarship and sources. See Mock (2016, 2018) for field-based specific discussions on Wakhan and adjacent areas in Pakistan. Khacham (Tibet University, Lhasa) provides a useful review of Tibetan inscriptions in Pakistan and Wakhan that discusses the published research, including recent Chinese language studies (Khacham 2020).
7. Beckwith's Glossary of Chinese names (1987: 231-40) provides the Chinese characters 勃律, which are transcribed as Bo-lü or Po-lü. The Chinese characters transcribed as Hu-k'an (Wakhan) are 鑾侃.
 8. *The Hye Ch'o Diary* records his visit to both Greater Palur and Lesser Palur on his return journey from India to China, where he arrived in 727 CE (Hye Ch'o 1984: 15). The Diary records that Greater Palur was under Tibetan rule, whereas Lesser Palur was under Chinese rule, and includes the oft-quoted comment that 'Greater Palur was originally the place where the king of Lesser Palur resided. It was because the Tibetans have come that he fled and shifted his residence to Lesser Palur' (Hye Ch'o 1984: 48).
 9. Zeisler, in a useful review of sources, 'interprets the data in a similar manner as Denwood' (Zeisler 2010: 386), with the addition of upper Chitral above Mastuj, i.e., the Yarkhun Valley, to Lesser Palur.
 10. Today, Yasin-Gupis is the westernmost district of the Gilgit Division of Gilgit-Baltistan. The Yasin River flows south through the Yasin Valley and joins the Ghizer River at the town of Gupis. The combined rivers are termed the Gilgit River and flow east through Punyal, also spelled Punial, which is an administrative subdivision or *tehsil* of present-day Ghizer District. Gahkuch (also spelled Gakuch) is the capital of Ghizer District of the Gilgit Division (Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilgit-Baltistan>).
 11. The Tibetan name Brusha (also spelled Bruzha) is written in Tibetan as བྲ་ཤ (བྲ་ཤ). The Tibetan name for Wakhan is Gog (also spelled Kog), written as ཀོག (ཀོག). When referring to Brusha or Gog as a country, the word *yul* (ཡུལ) is often added. Dotson (2009) provides photographic reproductions of the actual Old Tibetan Annals, in which Bruzha is first mentioned in the record for the year 737-738 CE on page 313, Pl. 1.xi, line 277 and Gog, as Kog, is first mentioned in the record for the year 745-746 CE on page 315, Plate II.i, line 4. See Mock 2013a for more details on the onomastics of Gog and for a photograph of a Tibetan inscription in Wakhan which gives the name Gog.
 12. The phrase 'Burusho people', according to Willson (2002: 213), is redundant, as '*Burusho*' means 'the Buru people' in Burushaski, which is the language of the Burusho. Because it is more familiar to most readers, I use the phrase 'Burusho people'.
 13. See Stein 1928: 44-47, for a photograph and discussion of the Tibetan inscription and associated *chorten* (Wylie transcription *mchod-rten*), which is located a short distance below the Darkot Glacier in the upper Yasin Valley. Stein visited the site in 1913. The inscription was translated by A. Francke (Stein 1928, appendix L. pp. 1050-51), based on a rough sketch made in 1913 by Khan Sahib Afraz Gul, a surveyor who worked with Stein (Francke, hand-written notes, Francke Archives, Leipzig). See Mock 2013b for a discussion of the Darkot rock carving and Tibetan inscription, which offers a revised reading of the inscription.
 14. This is described in detail in chapter 104 of the *Chiu T'ang shu*, the 'Biography of Kao Hsien-chi', the General who led the Chinese troops, and in chapter 135 of the *Hsin T'ang shu*. A French translation of the biography was prepared by Chavannes (Chavannes 1903/2006a: 185-189). The battle is mentioned briefly in *The Old Tibetan Annals* (Dotson 2009: 127).

15. Stein, who made a one-day reconnaissance of Kansir in 1906, initially proposed ‘that the construction of the Kansir walls was due to the Tibetan invaders of Wakhan’ (Stein 1922: 123).
16. In 737 CE, the Tibetan army captured the king of Brusha, who paid homage to the *Btsan-po* (Tibetan Emperor). The entire Pamir region came under the control of Tibet and all tribute to the Tang court ceased (Beckwith 1987: 116, 123; Dotson 2009: 120-23).
17. The Pamirs are a Central Asian mountain range that extends from present-day Tajikistan into Afghanistan and China. A Pamir is a unique U-shaped high-elevation mountain valley distinctive to Central Asia, where there are more than half a dozen named *pamir*. They are historically renowned as summer grazing grounds, but are snow-covered for half the year. Afghanistan has two such areas, the Greater (Big) Pamir and the Lesser (Little) Pamir.
18. See Mock 2018 for more detail on this route.
19. The Thui River forms the homonymous Thui Valley and is a tributary of the Yasin River.
20. I am grateful to Karma Ngodup (University of Chicago) for confirming this reading.
21. See Mock 2013b for the Yasin Darkot inscription, Khacham 2020 for the Gahkuch inscriptions, and Mock 2016 and 2018 for the Wakhan inscriptions.
22. Takeuchi (2013: 29-30) describes 100 similar *chorten* carvings and inscriptions near Alchi in Ladakh, which typically include a year and a name followed by either the phrase, ‘erected [this]’ or ‘inscribed [this]’. Nearly all of the Alchi inscriptions are sentences. In the few examples which have only a name, the name is preceded by a title.
23. The colophon to the 8th century CE Tibetan translation of the *Bhagavatī-prajñā-pāramitā-hṛdaya*, ‘*The Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom, the Blessed Mother*’, popularly known as *The Heart Sutra*, identifies one of the translators as *lo tsa ba dge blo* (ལོ་ཙ་བ་དགེ་བློ་), ‘Translator dGe bLo’, giving both a title and a name. The colophon text is in the *Degé Kangyur*, vol. 34, folio 146a, (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh21.html#UT22084-034-009-colophon>). I am grateful to Dr. Nils Martin (CRCAO, Paris) for alerting me to this reference. Although it is interesting to find the same name in a rock inscription and in a sutra colophon, it is in no way determinative of a shared identity, nor does it confirm that the Thui inscription is indeed a name.
24. Some examples of Tibetan names that could possibly be abbreviated as *dge blo* are *dge ba'i blo gros* (དགེ་བའི་བློ་གྲོས་), which is attested as the name of an 11th century translator who was a disciple of Rinchen Zangpo, worked in Kashmir and with the great translator Atisha, (see <https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-2608.html>), and *dge slong blo ldan shes rab* (དགེ་སློང་བློ་ལྷན་ཤེས་རབ་) which is attested as the name of a translator active in Kashmir in the 11th century. (see [https://read.84000.co/search.html?search=dge slong blo ldan](https://read.84000.co/search.html?search=dge%20slong%20blo%20ldan) and <https://east.ikga.oeaw.ac.at/bib/5363/>). These are examples only and not a suggestion that either of these individuals are responsible for the inscription. I am grateful to Karma Ngodup for discussing the question of abbreviated forms of names with me. *dge slong* (དགེ་སློང་) is the title for an ordained monk that precedes the monk’s name, which is lacking in this inscription. One such inscription has been found in Baltistan (Schuh 2011: 494-558, figure 34).
25. Stone 7 at Gahkuch, which lacks an inscription, has a *chorten* with a trident-shaped finial with diagonal side arms, similar to the Thui *chorten* figures. However, below the finial on Stone 7 at Gahkuch is a downward-curving line on both sides of the mast, which is not found on the Thui *chorten* figures. Jettmar

- viewed this downward curving line as a stylistic pennant or banner (Jettmar and Sagaster 1993: 131, 145). Digital images of the twelve Gahkuch stones, seven of which have Tibetan inscriptions, can be viewed at <https://digi.hadw-bw.de/view/anp2/0181/image.info>.
26. See Mock 2013b: 16, Mock 2015: 13-15 and Mock 2018: 95-96 for discussion of the so-called ‘cross-shaped’ design, first described by Francke in Appendix L of Stein 1928: 1028.
 27. It is possible that whoever made the inscriptions and *chorten* outlines may have been traveling through the Thui Valley, which has a pass that connects to the Yarkhun Valley in upper Chitral. However, the area across from Ishkaibar village, which was barren in 1984, would not be a likely place to stop. Rather, travelers would likely stop at the largest village. The itinerary described in the *Sair al-Bilad* of Mughul Beg (M.M. Beg n.d., folio 409) identifies no village at the Ishkaibar location, nor does H.G. Raverty’s rough translation (Raverty 1880: 189) of Mughal Beg’s manuscript, which was written around 1790. Both Mughal Beg and Raverty name the ‘large village’ (كلان قريه) first reached after crossing the pass from Yarkhun as ‘To-e’ (طوي). Today it is named Nialthi.
 28. According to Beckwith (1987: 30) ‘by 663, the Tibetan Empire controlled the kingdom of Balûr, the Kingdom of Wakhan ... and an area around Kashgar’. Buddhist Khotan came under Tibetan control ‘between 665 and 670’ (Beckwith 1987: 34). Hinüber (2004: 98) places the Palola Shahi’s ‘period of incipient war with Tibet’ at the end of the reign of Surenrāditya, whose last inscription on a bronze corresponds to 723/4 CE (Hinüber 2007: 40). These dates from Beckwith and Hinüber form an approximate *terminus post quem* for the beginning of Tibetan influence in Palur.
 29. *Bru-zha’i yul gyi khrom* (The *Khrom* of the Bruzha country) is only known from the colophon of *The Sutra which Gathers all Intentions* (Uray 1980: 314), as the place where the sutra was translated from the Brusha script (*bru sha’i yi ge*) into Tibetan (see https://buddhanexus.net/tib/text/K12D0829_H0793 for the full text of the sutra). Whether it was translated from the Brusha language and whether that Brusha language was in fact Burushaski is an open question (Dalton 2016: 4; Kogan 2022: 181-182).
 30. Victor Mair (1993: 15-16) comments that sutras and other Buddhist texts ‘were available in Khotanese, Sogdian, Uighur, Tocharian and Indian languages in Central Asia’ prior to the era of the Tibetan Empire. For an example of an oral version of one such text that survives in Gilgit folklore today, see Mock 2023.
 31. Vitali (1996: 188-9) observes that ‘Buddhism was prospering in the Indo-Iranic borderlands’ in the late 10th century CE, and that ‘Journeys to the various territories of the Indo-Iranic borderlands to obtain religious teachings was also an enduring tradition...[of Tibetan-speaking] Bon-po masters ... who saw lands such as Kha.che [Kashmir], O.rgyan [Swat], Bru.zha [Gilgit], as well as Tho.gar [Tocharia] and Li.yul [Khotan], as sources of literature, ideas and instructions’.
 32. *Yabgu* is a well-known Old Turkish title meaning ‘a noble ranking immediately after the *qagān*’ and more generally, ‘tribal chief’ (Sims-Williams and la Vaissière 2012). Vitali (1996: 296-287, fn. 436) notes that the transcription of Tibetan *Yab.sgod.ba* (ཡབ་སྐོར་བ) is a Tibetanised spelling of *yabgu*.
 33. Kotchnev (2001: 45-6) shows, on the basis of coinage excavated at Bazar Dara in the eastern Pamir, that the Qarakhanid border of the 11th century followed the Panj River and that the Qarakhanids had relations with Wakhan and Shughnan. Horlemann (2007: 100, fn. 70) remarks

‘... eleventh-century Khotan might have had some kind of vassal status with regard to the Qarakhanids instead of having already been fully incorporated into their realm. However, the conquest and incorporation of Kashgar, approximately 400 km northwest of Khotan, by the Qarakhanids in the second half of the tenth century is undisputed’.

34. See Hoffman 1969 for an interesting early study of the Bon religion in Brusha and a possible Tibetan etymology for the toponym *Bru-sha*.
35. See Mock 2017 for a discussion of signaling towers in Chitral, Gilgit and Wakhan.

References

- Bailey, H.W.
1936. An itinerary in Khotanese Saka. *Acta Orientalia* 14(4): 258-267.
- Beckwith, C.
1987. *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Beg, M.M.
(n.d.). *Sair al-Bilad*. Persian manuscript held at The British Library as IO ISLAMIC 3746.
- Bellezza, J.
2020. *Drawn and Written in Stone: An inventory of stepped structures and inscriptions on rock surfaces in Upper Tibet (ca. 100 BCE to 1400 CE)*. Oxford: BAR Publishing.
- Chavannes, É.
1903a/2006a. *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux*. Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien Maisonneuve.
1903b/2006b. *Notes Additionnelles sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux*. Paris/Quebec: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien Maisonneuve.
- Dalton, J.
2016. *The Gathering of Intentions: a History of a Tibetan Tantra*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Denwood, P.
2007. The Tibetans in the Western Himalayas and Karakoram, Seventh-Eleventh Centuries: Rock Art and Inscriptions. *Journal of Inner Asian art and archaeology* 2(2): 49-57.
2008. The Tibetans in the West, Part I. *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology* 3(3): 149-160.
2009. The Tibetans in the West, Part II. *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology* 4(4): 7-21.
- Devers, Q.
2018. Archaeological Ladakh: Contribution of Recent Discoveries to Redefining the History of a Key Region between the Pamirs and the Himalayas. *Central Asiatic Journal* 61(1): 103-32.
- Dotson, B.
2009. *The Old Tibetan Annals: an annotated translation of Tibet's first history*. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences.
- Francke, A.H.
1926. *Antiquities of Indian Tibet: The Chronicles of Ladakh and Minor Chronicles*, Vol. II. Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing.
- Haidar, M.
1973. *The Tarikh-i-Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haidar, Dughlat: A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia*. Patna: Academica Asiatica.
- Hinüber, O. von
2004. *Die Palola Sāhis: ihre Steininschriften, Inschriften auf Bronzen, Handschriftenkolophone und Schutzzauber: materialen zur Geschichte von Gilgit und Chilas*. Mainz: P. von Zabern.
2007. Three New Bronzes from Gilgit. *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhism at Soka University for the Academic Year 2006*, 10: 37-43.
2012. The Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra at Gilgit: Manuscripts, Worshippers, and Artists. In *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtram. Gilgit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from the National Archives of India*, Facsimile Edition [Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series 12], pp. 52-67. Hachioji

- (Japan): National Archives of India and Soka Gakkai Institute for Oriental Philosophy. Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Forschungsstelle Felsbilder und Inschriften am Karakorum Highway.
- 1994-2013. *Materials for the archaeology of the northern regions of Pakistan*, H. Hauptmann (ed.) vol. 1-11. Mainz: P. von Zabern. On-line resource, <https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.36943>, accessed September 21, 2023.
- Hoffman, H.
1969. An Account of the Bon Religion in Gilgit. *Central Asiatic Journal* 13(2): 137-145.
- Horlemann, B.
2007. The Relations of the Eleventh-Century Tsong Kha Tribal Confederation to its Neighbour States on the Silk Road. In M. Kapstein, B. Dotson (eds.) *Contributions to the Cultural History of Early Tibet*, pp. 79-102. Leiden: Brill.
- Hye Ch'o.
1984. *The Hye Ch'o Diary: Memoir of the Pilgrimage to the Five Regions of India*. Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press.
- Jahoda, C. and Kalantari C.
2015. Kingship in Western Tibet in the 10th and 11th centuries. *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 24: 77-103.
- Jettmar, K. and Sagaster, K.
1993. Ein Tibetisches Heiligtum in Punyal. In K. Jettmar (ed.) *Antiquities of Northern Pakistan: Reports and Studies*. Vol. 2. Mainz: P. von Zabern.
- Khacham, S. (Sha bo mkha' byams)
2020. Bajisitan Beibu Ji Qi Linjin Quyu Suo Jian Tubo Yicun de Zhengli Yanjiu [The remains of Tibetan kingdom in northern Pakistan and the adjacent areas]. *Bod Ljongs Zhib 'jug* 2, pp. 182-94. China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House <www.cnki.net>
- Kogan, A.
2022. On the etymological attribution of certain non-Tibetan lexical elements in medieval Tibetan texts. *Journal of Language Relationships* 20(3): 181-190.
- Kotchnev, B.
2001. Les frontières du royaume des Karakhanides. *Cahiers d'Asie centrale* 9: 41-48.
- Laurent, L.N.
2013. lHa bla ma Zhi ba 'od's Eighth Century Bronze from Gilgit. *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 26: 195-214.
- Mair, V.
1993 The Linguistic and Textual Antecedents of The Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish. *Sino-Platonic Papers* 63: 1-95.
- Martin, N.
2017. A Solemn Praise to an 11th century West-Tibetan Councillor at Kharul, Purik. *Zentralasiatische Studien* 46: 189-232.
- Mock, J.
2013a. A Tibetan Toponym from Afghanistan. *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 27: 5-9.
2013b. Darkot Revisited: New Information on a Tibetan Inscription and *mchod-rten*. *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 27: 11-19.
2013c. New Discoveries of Rock Art from Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor and Pamir: A Preliminary Study. *The Silk Road* 11: 36-53, Plates III-IV.
2016. Tibetans in Wakhan: New Information on Inscriptions and Rock Art. *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 36: 121-141.
2017. Raising the Alarm: Defensive Communication Networks and the Silk Roads through Wakhan and Chitral. *The Silk Road* 15: 1-12.
2018. The Red Buddha Hall Road Revisited: New Information about the Tibetan and Tang Empires in Afghanistan Wakhan. *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 45: 89-109.
2023. On the Onomastics of Shri Badat, the Cannibal King of Gilgit. In A.M. Cacopardo and A.S. Cacopardo (eds.) *Roots of Peristan: The Pre-Islamic Cultures of the Hindukush-Karakorum*, pp. 687-702. Rome: ISMEO.
- Neelis, J.
2011. *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia*. Leiden: Brill.

Raverty, H.G.

1880. *Notes on Afghánistán and part of Baluchistán, geographical, ethnographical, and historical extracted from the writings of little known Afghán and Tájzik historians, geographers, and genealogists; the histories of the Gháris, the Turk sovereigns of the Dihli kingdom, the Mughal sovereigns of the house of Timur, and other Muhammadan chronicles; and from personal observations.* London: Eyre and Spottiswoode.

Schuh, D.

2011. *Reise in die Geschichte Baltistans* (Journey into the History of Baltistan). Vol. 4 'Expedition in ein immer noch unbekanntes Land' (Expedition to a still unknown Land). Andiast: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies. On-line text available at: <http://www.tibet-encyclopaedia.de/index.html>

Sims-Williams, N. and la Vaissière, É. de

2012. jabguya. *Encyclopedia Iranica*, part i. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jabguya>.

Stein, M.A.

1922. A Chinese Expedition Across the Pamirs and Hindukush, A.D. 747. *The Geographical Journal* 59(2): 112-131.
1928. *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-su and Eastern Iran, Carried out and Described under the Orders of H.M. Indian Government.* Oxford: Clarendon.

Takeuchi, T.

2013. Old Tibetan Rock Inscriptions Near Alchi. *Journal of the Research Institute, Kobe City University of Foreign Studies* 49: 29-69.
- n.a. *The Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom, the Blessed Mother*; Tohoku 21. On-line resource, <https://read.84000.co/translation/toh21.html>, accessed September 19, 2023.
- n.a. *The Sūtra that Gathers All Intentions*; Tohoku 829. On-line resource, https://buddhanexus.net/tib/text/K12D0829_H0793, accessed September 30, 2023.

Uray, G.

1980. Khrom: Administrative Units of the Tibetan Empire in the 7th-9th Centuries. In M. Aris

and Aung San Suu kyi, *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*, pp. 310-318. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.

Vitali, R.

1996. *The kingdoms of Gu-ge Pu-hrang: according to Mgna-ris rgyal rabs by Gu-ge Mkhan-chen Ngag-dbang-grags pa.* Dharamsala: Tho-lin dpal dpe med lhun gyis grub pai gtsug lag khan lo 1000 khor bai rjes dran mdzad sgoi go sgrig tshogs chun gis dpar skrun zus.

Willson, S.

2002. *A Look at Hunza Culture.* Islamabad: National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-e Azam University and Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Zeisler, B.

2010. East of the Moon and West of the Sun? Approaches to a Land with Many Names, North of Ancient India and South of Khotan. *The Tibet Journal* 34(3-4) & 35(1-2): 371-463.