The organisation of stage stations in Central Asian colonial provinces of the Tibetan Empire according to Pelliot tibétain 1096r

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Abstract

Based on the first English translation of the Old Tibetan document with the shelf mark Pelliot tibétain 1096 recto, the article analyses the internal organisation of a stage station (slun) in the Central Asian colonial provinces of the Tibetan Empire. It examines officials and offices that constituted a stage station, as well as persons who were using its services. By comparing the information contained in the document with later reports of foreign travellers, the article reconstructs the organisation of a stage station. It also brings to light certain traits that were apparently common to the first historically attested relay system of the Tibetan Empire and the succeeding system introduced by the Mongols during the thirteenth century CE.

Keywords: Tibetan Empire, Silk Road, relay system, stage station, transportation, Pt 1096r

The Old Tibetan (OT) document examined in the following article provides us with an exclusive insight into the organisation of a stage station in Central Asian colonial provinces of the Tibetan Empire. Tibetan post services and the transportation system as such have thus far drawn little attention of Western scholars, of whom only Uebach has devoted a study to the relay system of the imperial period.2 To the best of my knowledge, there exists only one

1 I would like to acknowledge financial support provided by grant BI 1953/1-1 of Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft in years 2017–2020. I wish to thank Diana Lange for helping me with the identification of stage stations on the maps of the Wise collection.

2 H. Uebach, ‘Notes on the Postal System (shungs) in the Tibetan Empire in the 7th–9th Centuries’, in Unearthing Himalayan Treasures: Festschrift for Franz-Karl Ehrhardt, (eds.) V. Caumanns, M. Sernesi and N. Solmsdorf (Marburg, 2019), pp. 449–455.
detailed study on later developments of and foreign influences on the Tibetan relay system, namely P. Maurer, ‘The Tibetan Governmental Transport and Postal System: Horse Services and Other Taxes from the 13th to the 20th Centuries’, *Buddhism, Law & Society* 5 (2019), pp. 1–58. Owing to the scarcity of sources, however, Maurer concentrated on the organisation of the relay system as such, leaving aside the functioning of its most basic units—the stage stations. The present study attempts to fill this gap by analysing the only thus far known OT document that sheds light on the internal organisation of a single stage station.

Peliot tibétain 1096 recto (hereafter: Pt 1096r) is an original OT document, to be specific a summons concerning a dispute over two lost or stolen horses. Like all texts from the Pelliot tibétain collection, Pt 1096r was discovered at the beginning of the twentieth century in Cave 17 of the Mogao Caves, southeast of Dunhuang, and brought to Paris by Paul Pelliot. The document is composed in Old Literary Tibetan (OLT). Unfortunately, despite numerous attempts we still lack clear criteria on which to date single documents of the period. Accordingly, the date and the place of the composition of Pt 1096r, as well as its ‘authorship’, remain unknown. Since the text is an original judicial document, it was most probably written in a law court by an authorised person. Two arguments speak in favour of the hypothesis that Pt 1096r originated in Central Asian colonies of the imperial Tibet: (1)
some of the proper names of persons involved in the case are of non-Tibetan origin (see section entitled Persons below); and (2) the text explicitly mentions Ša-ču (i.e. Dunhuang) as the place of residence of two horse owners. The document is complete, bearing eight seals of persons involved in the case: six seals of guarantors (Qan-hwa-hwa, Den-bun-γde, Čaŋ-stag-bzér, Yo-gaṅ Re’yu-skies, Gñi-ba Lha-mthoṅ, and Šig-sin-śiṅ), a seal of the defendant Yo-gaṅ G.yu-la-skies, and a seal of a witness who was an anonymous judge from aristocracy (žan lon žal che pa). The legal aspects pertinent to the document have already been comprehensively discussed by Brandon Dotson and so do not need to be restated here.7

The present article concentrates on the organisation of stage stations (sluṅs) in the period of the Tibetan Empire. Namely, Pt 1096r provides some details on a sluṅs, people related to it, as well as services offered by a sluṅs. Therefore, its primary objective is to present the first annotated translation of the document in a Western language, accompanied by a diplomatic transliteration, and a glossary (see Appendix). In the discussion section, the contents will be scrutinised in order to enhance our understanding of the sluṅs-institution.

Historical context

At the turn of the sixth and seventh century CE, by conquering its immediate neighbours, a small polity centred in the Yar-valley (OLT yar lung), sometimes referred to as the Yar-lung Kingdom, arose to become an important military and political actor on the Tibetan Plateau. In the 630s this polity started its expansion beyond the valleys of Central Tibet, subduing Sum-pa, Zaṅ-žun and Ya-ga (Ch. 吐谷渾 Tūyūhún) over the following thirty years. These conquests mark the emergence of the Tibetan Empire. With varying luck, the Tibetan Empire then continued its expansion through the seventh and eighth centuries, temporarily controlling territories beyond the Tibetan Plateau, including the Central Asian Silk Roads. Its demise started in the 840s, triggered by an unstable internal political situation and the declining economy that mirrored the worsening international economic situation from the 830s onward.8

The expanding Tibetan Empire required an efficient administrative system to control—politically and economically—the newly subdued territories and peoples. To this end an extensive relay system had to be established that could support communication between the socio-political centre of the Empire (now located in the valley of the Skyi-chu river) and its dependent territories and colonies. Our knowledge of this system is still in its infancy, and is largely based on sporadic mentions of sluṅs ‘stage station’—the nodes of the communication network—and messengers, as in the following passages:

*ydzun ma mkhar phrag du / bloṅ khrī sum rjes gsus nas / mīan (222) daṅ / sluṅs stod smad gyi thāi khram chen po lbab / (ITJ 750)*

7B. Dotson, ‘Introducing Early Tibetan Law: Codes and Cases’, in Secular Law and Order in the Tibetan Highland, (ed.) D. Schuh (Andiast, 2015), pp. 285ff.; see also, K. Iwao, ‘Preliminary Study of the Legal Court Proceedings in the Old Tibetan Empire’, in Secular Law and Order in the Tibetan Highland, (ed.) D. Schuh (Andiast, 2015), pp. 315–322. Unfortunately, I did not have access to Wang Yao 王堯, and Chen Jian 陳健, Dunhuang Tufan wenwu lunwenji 敦煌吐蕃文書論文集 (= Selection of the Old Tibetan documents), (Chengdu, 1988) who likewise studied the document under consideration.

8C. I. Beckwith, Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present (Princeton, 2009), pp. 158ff.
The council, convened at castle Phrag by councillor Khri-sum-rje-[rcan-bzer], issued great tallies of jurisdiction for mian and the upper and lower stage stations (slunis).

The Tibetan principles—the great law—successions of councillors, prerogatives for (lit. of) both, great and small ones, rewards for good ones that adhere [to us], punishments for culprits, standardisation of thul ka and dor ka of fields and pastures, and of distances between (lit. of) stage stations (slunis), [weight units] bre, phul, and sna, among others, all the good foundations of the Tibetan customs appeared from the reign of bcan po Khri Sron-brcan.

(36) da ḡab snid gšig rnyi // mjal (37) duñ žhen po ydi lar ngad pas (38) bdon žaṅ dgyes pañi bkay phrin (39) sǐan pas kejān ydnul dgos te // (40) phan chun gyi pho na ydoñ ba yai // lam (41) mĩi par byuñi nas // sīa lugs bžin (42) // bod ngya gniis kyā bhar // can kun (43) yog du rta bเฟs la // (ST Treaty W)

Now, the politics being one, because a great agreement was reached in this way, it being necessary to travel with good messages from [lit. of] the pleased nephew and uncle, travelling messengers of both sides appeared on old roads as well. Hence, according to earlier customs, let horses be changed at Caṅ-kun-yog between Tibet and China!

In this context, Pt 1960r represents an invaluable source of information on the internal organisation of slunis that constituted the basic units of the relay system of the Tibetan Empire. Even though due to its concise and highly technical language the text may occasionally be difficult to comprehend and therefore to translate, it delivers unique details on the functioning of a stage station under the Tibetan rule. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that the document is a legal one and so the organisation of the stage station is not its main concern.

Translation

In the first half of the last autumn month of the dragon year, the messenger Gžams-khoṅ-khri came to the encampment of Par-kog, asking for one horse of Qan-bcan-zigs-chan. Upon it was necessary to send [the horse] back,

The name Par-kog does not seem to be attested in other OT documents, but Thomas quotes several other place names that begin with the syllable par (F. W. Thomas, *Tibetan literary texts and documents concerning Chinese Turkestan* [London, 1935–55], vol. 4, p. 608).

The meaning of zlogs is uncertain for rgo required nominalised v1 in genitive (cf. H. A. Jäschke, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary* [New York, 2003], p. 528a, s.v. rgo). I tentatively identify it with zlog ‘to cause to return’.
“Summon Qab-sab-ñaṅ, as well as Žan-γdo, and, having spoken11 [to them], swear a sincere oath: ‘Upon putting this horse in the encampment, the lost one was indeed there. We have not taken [it] away. [We] have not stolen [it]!’ If [you] can make the vow, give a replacement! If [you] cannot make the vow, being decided according to the law, [one] will have examined the sincerity (dkar) regarding the very Qab-sab-ñaṅ, among others.”

Upon having said [so] on the eighth day of the first winter month of this year, up to the fourteenth day [of the month] Qab-sab-ñaṅ as well as the worker Žan-γdo did not come. Then, having summoned Yo-găn12 G.yu-la-skyes, the head of the encampment, to the court, [one] inquired [him].

“The messenger Gžams-khoṅ-khrī, having asked for one horse of a man from Ša-ču13, came to the encampment of Par-kog. Thereupon, as for this horse, both the messenger and the groom Qab-sab-ñaṅ prepared to mount the stallion. There were not many messengers. After some messenger-horsemen had come and the horse of the man from Ša-ču was bound,14 I said to the messenger(s) and the groom: ‘[The horses shall] not come across [each other].’ I ordered to the groom ‘Catch the horses whomever [they] belong to, bring [them], [and] bind [them] again’! Later, the day after the next day, Je’yu-hiṅ-yir,15 having come again to the encampment, asked ‘Where is my horse?’ Qab-sab-ñaṅ said: ‘Both horses of the man from Ša-ču were in the courtyard16 [of]17 the head of the stage station. Thereupon, Je’yu-hiṅ-yir, riding a one [and] leading a one, fled away.’ [I] listened to Qab-sab-ñaṅ. Concerning the horse, it was not let free by myself.” [Thus Yo-găn G.yu-la-skyes] said.

As for the pleadings [of] the horse owner Hiṅ-ce, [he] was saying: “Once,18 my horse was three nights long in the pen; there was no other horse of the stage station. If the head of the encampment must have seen this horse, [I] request [you] to ask: ‘If [he] is despondent about [the horse] being stolen,19 where is he?””

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11I identify mas with CT smo, vs < smo ‘to say, to speak’; cf. Nangchen n/t’y “with me to clarify one’s kinship relations (e.g. before getting married)” (R. Bielmeier et al., Comparative Dictionary of Tibetan Dialects (CDTD). Volume 2: Verbs [Berlin, 2018], p. 98).
12Takeuchi interpreted Yo-găn as a name of a people that remains unidentified thus far. See T. Takeuchi, Old Tibetan Contracts from Central Asia (Tokyo 1995), p. 112.
13Modern Dunhuang: Tib. Ša-ču < Ch. Shǎzhīhù [bury].
14OTDO has bya bsdaṅ but the reading of the last two syllables of l. 13 is uncertain. The first one looks more like ęa, whereas the second one begins with a sign that can hardly be identified with any letter of the Tibetan alphabet. Its last letter could be either s or m. Since no such a word as ’bsdas seems to be attested in written sources, I read the syllable as bdām. The meaning and function of bya remain unexplained.
15A certain Je’yu-hiṅ is mentioned in Pt 1208/Pt 1221: Bī as surety (see Takeuchi, Old Tibetan Contracts, pp. 232ff.). It is not certain whether this is the same person as Je’yu-hiṅ-yir of Pt 1096r.
16Compare Yolmo [jido] ‘courtyard’ (CDTD: 7854, s.v. g.yul ydag ‘threshing floor’).
17For this reconstruction compare shûis phon gyi g.yul thugs in l. 124.
18The translation of man tig la as ‘once’ is purely contextual.
19The phrase glo ba thun is known from only a few OT documents:

dyus par glo ba thun (IT) 737.1: 396) ‘to fear the blame’ (J. W. de Jong, The story of Rāma in Tibet: text and translation of the Tun-huang manuscripts [Stuttgart, 1989], p. 43)
zhab ychal du / glo ba thun (Or.15000/495: 4) ‘[with] little hope of obtaining water’ (TLTD, vol. 2, p. 169)

10y[l] tsa glo ba thun (Or.15000/91: 4; Thomas’ reading: ny[y][l] kun tu glo ba thun; Takeuchi’s reading: [nyan tsa] du glo ba thun, (T. Takeuchi, Old Tibetan Manuscripts from East Turkestan in the Stein Collection of the British Library [London, 1998], vol. 2, p. 51) ‘is very stupid’ (TLTD, vol. 2, p. 241)
mthi ba glo ba thun (Or.15000/542: 6) ‘glo ba thun to go/say’ (the text is badly damaged)
mi slois su glo ba thun (Līyi yul lün btsan pa, D. 4202, spīn yig, ie 1777) ‘I will be dejected about not having erected them’ (R. E. Emmerick, Tibetan texts concerning Khoton [Oxford, 1967], p. 25)
At that time a minion of the stage station appeared. *thun *thu *ma, having appeared afterwards, said “[I] am coming from Ju-čan to Lug-lun to help.”

Having clarified [the circumstances],

[one] decided: “Concerning the lost horses of Hün-che, among others, the head of the encampment, among others, truly feared [its] stealing.”

[Thus] it was said.

The head of the encampment, upon being inquired, said, “Upon this horse had come to the encampment, I ordered the groom Qab-sab-ñaañ that [he] must (ṣig = IMP) bind the horse again. [Qab-sab-ñaañ said:] ‘Once, both horses were in the courtyard of the head of the stage station. Thereupon, Je yü-hün-yir, riding a one [and] leading a one, fled away.’ [I] listened to Qab-sab-ñaañ”.

After [one] had previously set a time for Qab-sab-ñaañ to [secure] guarantors, [he] did not arrive on time. Neither did żan-γydo arrive.

[Decision:] While initiating (lit. fixing) the dispute [over] the lost horses, it was not feasible to settle (lit. defend) [it]. Therefore, [one] decided that the head of the encampment must provide (lit. give) guarantors, summon Qab-sab-ñaañ and żan-γydo, and plead on the full moon day of the first winter month.

Sealed for the guarantors of [Yo-gan] G.yu-la-skyes with the guarantor seals of Qan-hwa-hwa, Den-bun-yde, Čañ-stag-bžer, Yo-gan Reyü-skýes, Gñi-ba Lha-mthoñ, and Šig-śiñ-śiñ, among others, with the personal seal of the person concerned (i.e. Yo-gan G.yu-la-skýes), and with the witness seal of an aristocrat-judge.

**Tibetan Text**

The text has been transliterated by the author on the basis of scans made available on Gallica.

*The document consists of 31 lines of text immediately followed by eight seals in red in addition, Or. 15000/146: 16 preserves the phrase *glo ba ḥuñi, which might be a mere abbreviation of *glo ba ḥuñi. We observe that, with one exception (Or. 15000/91: 4), *glo ba ḥuñi requires terminative of either a verb stem or a nominalised v1. In the former case the verb stem appears to be v4: *sλvs su and *rku su (< *rka su; in Pt 1096). It seems that de Jong treated *glo ba ḥuñi as a near-synonym of CT *sems ḥuñi ‘a timid mind’ (J: 576b). The latter is attested in modern dialects in the meaning ‘caution’ (CDTD: 8812). de Jong’s interpretation is supported by another passage from Pt 1096r: *rku su yan *glo ba ḥuñi na (l. 20) vs *bρkusu yan *dθiyan (l. 22). Both clauses concern Yo-gañ G.yu-la-skýes, the head of the encampment. In the second passage *glo ba ḥuñi has been replaced by *dθiyan ‘to fear’. On these grounds I propose translating *glo ba ḥuñi as ‘to be desponded, disheartened’. For *glo ba ‘breast’ and its metaphorical meanings in OLT, see J. Bialek, ‘Stretching the body, stretching the mind. The OT noun *glo revisited’, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 168, 2 (2018), p. 408, fn. 34.

Due to the unknown meaning and function of *thun *thu *ma the interpretation of the whole passage remains tentative. Ju-čan and Lug-luñ, presumably toponyms, are otherwise not attested.

*bhyans seems to have been a technical term frequently used in judicial texts in conjunction with *bḥad ‘decided’ or *ṣaḷ le ‘sentence’. On the other hand, in Pt 1283 it co-occurs with the verb *bolas/ *bolas (v1 sblk ‘to learn; to teach’) in two forms: *bhyan and *sbwan(s). On this rather meagre evidence I relate *bhyan to CT *sbyon ‘to exercise, to practise; to study’ and *ybyon ‘to be skilled’; all derived from *vḥaṅ.

DSM glosses *dγs na as ‘son na’ (Beas-lha-ṇag-dhaṅ-chul-krñiṃs, *Bθa dθiṅl gθi mg ni bθi (Bejing, 1997), p. 333, but the argument structure does not fit well with a verb of going. Therefore, I read *doγs for the attested *rku su yan *glo ba ḥuñi (l. 20).

The decision was apparently made on the fourteenth day (l. 9).

https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8306378p.r=pelliot%20tibetain%201906?rk=21459;2 (accessed 2 October 2020).
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ink. The seals evince that Pt 1096r is an original document and therefore of greatest historical value. Its orthography uses neither reversed gi gis ⟨⟩ nor double chugs ⟨⟩ characteristic of many OT texts. The text was edited, most probably by the scribe himself, for in ll. 20 and 25 some syllables are added below the main line. The first eleven lines are written with approximately the double of the line spacing of the rest of the document. Likewise, the letters of the first part are considerably bigger than in the second part. The letters of the second part are less carefully written, which fact might have resulted from a faster writing. The change occurs in the middle of l. 11. We observe that the hand changes exactly where the statement of the head of the encampment (ll. 11–8) begins. It is therefore conceivable that the statement was written down simultaneously in the court. A thorough paleographical analysis could perhaps reveal more details on the issue.

Critical apparatus

* deleted by JB
* deleted by the scribe
[ ] reconstructed
{ } amended
ru text added by the scribe below the line

(r1) § // ybrug gi lo yi ston sla ba chuṅs gyi ŋo la // qan bcan zigs chan gyi rta gṅig // pho ŋa gznams
(r2) khoṅi khrī ycal čiṅi / par kog gi chugsu mūs nas // slar zogs payi rigs pa las // slunis gyi dphon
(r3) sna chugs phon la scogs pa // rta phrogste // chugsu bzhag pa las // stor ches mūste // rta slar ma
(r4) scal nas // slunis gyi rta yi li qab sab ŋān / bzuniste rmas pa las //
slunis chugsu rta bdag chag (r5) gis bzhag pa yaṅ mad // li źen ydo la gthad pa las // rta snar mo stor
ches mūste /

(r6) qab sab ŋān / źan ydo yaṅ khug la // mmo te / rta ydi chugsu bzhag pa las / stor pa ma lags
(r7) re // bdag chag gis sbyaṅs re brkuṣ re šes bro dkar gis / thob šig / bro phod na skyin ba phob
(r8) šig / bro ma phod na // khrims bzin gěnd par bgyis te // kho na qab sab ŋān la (r9) scogs pa // dkar dnu

lan ydiṅ ydu dguṅ sla ra ba ches bṛgyad la bgyis pa las / ches bū bźiṅy (r10) bar du qab sab ŋān daṅ /
chuṅs po źan ydo yaṅ ma mūhs nas // chugs phon / yo gaṅ (r11) g.yu la skyes grar bkgugste rmas pa
las //

pho ŋa gznams khoṅi khrī / ša ču pa yi rta gṅig (r12) ycal te // par kog gi chugsu mūhs pa las // rta ydi
pho ŋa daṅ / rta yi qab sab ŋān giṅs gyis rta / pho (r13) skyon ba bgyis pa las // pho ŋa maṅ po ni
ma mūhs // pho ŋa rkle ygya mūhs pa la // ša ču payi rta bya-bsdam (r14) pa la ma thug šes // pho
ŋa daṅ rta yi la bdag gis bgyis // rta ga la mūhs pa / lont la sky{e}l (r15) slar skris šig par rta gi la yaṅ
bdag gis bsgos pa las // phyi de naṅ par jeu yin yir slar chugsu (r16) mūhs te / ŋāyī rta ga re ŋes mmas
pa las // qab sab ŋān gi mūhind nas / ša ču payi rta gni ga slunis phon (r17) g.yul thog na mūhs pa las /
jeyu hiṅ yir gis gṅig ņon gṅig khrīd de bros šes / qab [śab] ŋān (r18) la thos // rta ni bdagis ma thoṅ ŋes
mūhiy //

rta bdag hiṅ ce mūhind sṅs ram čhung la / bdag gi rta chugs (r19) khor na dguṅ gsum mūhs pa / slunis
gyi rta gzan gṅig kyiṅ ma mūhs la / rta ydi chugs phon gyis myi mthoṅ (r20) du yaṅ myi ruṅ na / rku
[s] su yal gbo ba jhun na // khoṅi ta gar mūhs ŋes rmar gsoṅ ŋes mūhi //
Discussion

The term sluhs occurs seven times in the document, sometimes as a simple lexeme, sometimes forming part of a compound (e.g., sluhs chugs, sluhs phon). However, its explanation requires examination of at least one more technical term: chugs. To elucidate their meanings, I will first examine persons mentioned in the document who were closely related to the sluhs and then look at the organisation and services of the latter.

Persons

The document mentions several persons related to the sluhs. The exact nature of the offices they held is not completely clear, but we learn that the institution was hierarchically organised with a sluhs phon ‘head of the sluhs’ at its head. The following discussion particularises the functions of the persons involved in the events reported in Pt 1096r.

In ll. 2–3 ‘deputies (sna) of the head (dphon) of the sluhs’ are mentioned, one of whom is chugs phon, ‘head of the chugs’. The phrase sluhs gyi dphon can be identified with sluhs phon recurring in ll. 16 & 24.° The compound dphon sna suggests that a sluhs had a superior called dphon (specifically, *sluhs dpon), who had at least a few deputies (sna), one of whom was called chugs phon (< *chugs dpon, lit. ‘head of the chugs’). From this a hierarchy emerges: a sluhs phon supervised a chugs phon. The sluhs phon remains anonymous in Pt 1096r and, we may assume, was not conceived of as in any way involved in the case.°

°Compare hereto the CT term na zam gyi sphyi dpon ‘Oberpostmeister’ (I. J. Schmidt, Tibetisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch [St. Petersburg, 1841], p. 210a). The same function was apparently also referred to as na zam ngo pa ‘Stationsvorstehcr’ (O. Corff [ed.], Auf kaiserlichen Befehl erstelltes Wörterbuch des Manjuriischen in fünf Sprachen: ‘Fünf- sprachenspiegel’: systematisch angeordneter Wortschatz auf Manjuriisch, Tibetisch, Mongolisch, Türkisch und Chinesisch [Wiesbaden, 2013], vol. 1, p. 96, 6365). ‘Postmeister’ (ibid., p. 99, 6379.2). On na zam, see below.

°However, it is possible that the sluhs phon would have been brought to justice in case the chugs phon would not have appeared in the court. In Uebach’s words, “[t]he most important task of the chief of the post-station (sluhs phon), apart from checking the insignia of emissaries, was to check whether the seals of the missives the emissaries carried were intact or had been tampered with. If the missive showed signs of having been opened, the emissary was sent back to the previous station for an investigation. There was a potential death penalty if the emissary was found guilty” (Uebach, ‘Notes on the Postal System’, p. 450f). This information is based on a passage from Pt 1290 (ll. 110–2; for its discussion see A. Macdonald, Ariane, ‘Une lecture des Pelliot Tibétain 1286, 1287, 1038, 1047 et 1290’. in
The head of the *chugs* in the *slun*is concerned was Yo-gaṅ G.yu-la-skyes (ll. 10–1). The head of the *chugs* was subject to the head of the *slun*is. He was summoned to the court after the groom Qab-sab-ñañ and the worker Li Žan-ydo had not arrived. Hence, we can infer that the head of the *chugs* was directly responsible for the groom; he was in the capacity of giving orders to the groom (ll. 23–4). He also had to take responsibility for groom’s misdeeds. In his accusation the horse owner Hiṅ-ce was asking whether looking after horses was not the duty of the head of the *chugs* (ll. 19–20).

Pt 1096r documents three distinct offices or positions that seem to have been directly involved in taking care of horses: *ra tji*, *khunis po*, and *bu gñer*. Because *ra tji* apparently had some kind of superiority over *khunis po*, I think it more proper to translate the former as ‘groom’ and the latter as ‘worker’ (see below). I understand groom as denoting a person responsible for the management of horses in all aspects, whereas worker would have been responsible for feeding, cleaning, etc. To judge from the etymology of *bu gñer* (< *bu gñer ba*), the term denoted a minion helping in the *slun*is.

A *slun*is had a groom—*slun*is *gyi ra tji*. In the *slun*is under discussion it was Li Qab-sab-ñañ (ll. 4 & 12). 27 The latter was responsible for horses kept in the *slun*is; he had to bind (*skri*) them and look that they did not run away (l. 24). Therefore, when the horses got lost he was the first suspect (l. 4). His immediate superior was the head of the *chugs* (*chugs* phon), to whose orders the groom had to obey (ll. 23–24).

Li Žen/Žan-ydo is once called *khunis po* (l. 10)28 but his role in the events is enigmatic. In l. 5 we read that the groom Qab-sab-ñañ handed a light brown horse over (*gthad*) to Žan-ydo and the horse got lost. From then on Žan-ydo, together with Qab-sab-ñañ, was accused of losing the horse. They were summoned to the court but did not appear (l. 10). Consequently, the head of the *chugs*, Yo-gaṅ G.yu-la-skyes, was summoned and

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27 Dotson considered the syllable *li* in Li Qab-sab-ñañ and Li Žen-ydo (see below) to be a family name (Dotson, ‘Introducing Early Tibetan Law’, p. 285). The latter is a typical transcription of a Chinese name, and so here Li can be identified with the Chinese family name 李. The given name Žen-ydo is also attested in Pt 1104: 23 (cf. Takeuchi, *Old Tibetan Contracts*, p. 227). The name Qab-sab-ñañ is more problematic. The given name consists of three syllables. Neither Qab nor Sab-ñañ are found separately, but the name Sam-ñañ recurs in documents analysed by Takeuchi and was reconstructed by the latter as a Chinese given name (*ibid.*, p. 192). Sam-ñañ could have resulted from the assimilation of the original -b to the following nasal: -b > -n / _n-. However, in all cases Sam-ñañ follows a Chinese family name, but in Pt 1096r it comes after the syllables Li Qab. The problem remains unsolved.

28 Dotson explained the phrase *chugs pa**y** khunis po as ‘borrower’ (Dotson, ‘Divination and law in the Tibetan Empire: the role of dice in the legislation of loans, interest, marital law and troop conscription’, in *Contributions to the cultural history of early Tibet*, (eds.) M. T. Kapstein and B. Dotson [Leiden, 2007], p. 69) but this meaning does not seem to fit the context of Pt 1096r. It is questionable whether *khunis po* was related to *khunis* ‘origin’, for the latter was an abstract term and the former apparently denoted an official. I think one should rather turn in this context to the modern compound *las khunis* ‘office, department, bureau’ (M. Goldstein, *The new Tibetan-English dictionary of modern Tibetan* [New Delhi, 2004], p. 1070f; cf. also R. Bielmeier et al., *Comparative Dictionary of Tibetan Dialects* [2013 draft], 8296). The *Pentaglot Dictionary* lists the following equivalents of *khunis* ‘(Man.) fägarí, (Mon.) bálpay, (Tu.) fā āyín, (Ch.) shū 卯’, translating it as ‘Dienststelle’ (Corff, *Auf kaiserlichen Befehl*, vol. 2, p. 596a, 2758.2). Accordingly, etymologically the most plausible explanation of *khunis* po would be ‘a male person (-po) affiliated to an office (khunis)’. Since the office in question was a *slun*is and the *khunis* po’s duties included taking care of horses, I propose translating the term simply as ‘worker’, understood as denoting an employee who does manual or non-executive work.
obligated to bring the groom and Žan-ýdo to the court. It follows that Žan-ýdo was likewise employed at the slunís and subject to Yo-gaŋ G.yu-la-skyes. Moreover, because he received the horse from the groom Qab-sab-ňaŋ, he must have also been subject to the latter. If khunís po denoted an official, he was ranked below rta yi yi.

A third person, apparently helping with horses, was slunís gyi bu giŋer (l. 20) ‘minion of the slunís’. Nothing is known of this official apart from his relation to the slunís and the fact that he occurred to help (l. 21). It is also not clear why he is mentioned in the case; the passage (ll. 20–21) seems out of context.

These were the officials working in the slunís. Apart from them the document mentions other persons as well. On several occasions an owner of a horse is spoken of:

qan bcan zigs chan gyi rta gêŋ (l. 1) ‘one horse of Qan-bcan-zigs-chan’
śa ˇcu pa yì rta gêŋ (ll. 11 and 13) ‘one horse of the man from Ša-ˇcu’
śa ˇcu payi rta giŋ ga (l. 16) ‘both horses of the man/man from Ša-ˇcu’
rla bkag hiin ce (l. 18) ‘horse owner Hiin-ce’
hiin che la sogs payi rta (l. 22) ‘the horses of Hiin-che, among others’

We have two proper names: Qan-bcan-zigs-chan and Hiin-ce. In addition, from l. 16 we infer that one horse was claimed by a certain Jeˇyu-hiin-yir. In the next line the same person is said to have fled away with two horses. The circumstances are not completely clear, but it seems that Qan-bcan-zigs-chan and Hiin-ce kept their horses in the slunís and Jeˇyu-hiin-yir used the opportunity to steal the horses. Once the text speaks of ‘one horse of the man from Ša-ˇcu’, once of ‘both horses of the man/man from Ša-ˇcu’. The most plausible explanation is that both Qan-bcan-zigs-chan and Hiin-ce were from Ša-ˇcu and each kept one horse in the slunís. However, contrary to Hiin-ce, Qan-bcan-zigs-chan does not seem to have been involved in the case.

Jeˇyu-hiin-yir seems to be the thief; he came to the chugs claiming that his horses were there (l. 16) but he fled riding on one horse and leading the second one along (l. 17).

Pt 1096r mentions yet another person: messenger (pho ˇna) Gˇams-khoŋ-khri (ll. 1–2 and 11), who came to the chugs, asking for the horse of Qan-bcan-zigs-chan. He was apparently sent by Qan-bcan-zigs-chan to bring the latter’s horse back. In this context we may remark that persons who attended the slunís and changed their horses there were referred to as pho ˇna (see l. 13).²⁹

The document ends with the (poorly preserved) seals of eight persons involved in the case whose names and positions are given as:

Guarantors: Qan-hwa-hwa
Den-bun-yde
Caŋ-stag-bzer
Yo-gaŋ Reˇyu-skyes³⁰

²⁹Pt 1096r only mentions messengers in connection with the slunís. This however does not mean that nobody else was entitled to use the services of the slunís, as asserted by Uebach (Uebach, ‘Notes on the Postal System’, p. 452). Merchants or Buddhist pilgrims are two other groups that must have visited slunís on their long journeys. We know from later sources that many of the stage stations were located close to market places as shown on the maps of the Wise collection (Lange, Au Atlas of the Himalayas, p. 273) and, for example, Skra-bdun (Tradiin) stage station was even located within Skra-bdun monastery (ibid., pp. 281–283).

³⁰Possibly a relative of Yo-gaŋ G.yu-la-skyes. In this case, Yo-gaŋ would have been a family name (but compare fn. 12 above).
Defendant: Yo-gan G.yu-la-skyes (*chugs phon*)
Witness: an anonymous aristocrat-judge

Internal organisation of the sluṅs

The internal organisation of the institution as depicted in Pt 1096r can be partly reconstructed on the basis of the offices that formed it. In the preceding section I discussed the following officials:

- *slun* phon ‘head of the sluṅs’
- *slun* gyi dphon sna ‘deputies of the head of the sluṅs’
- *chugs* phon ‘head of the chugs’
- *rta* gi ‘groom’
- *khun* po ‘worker’
- *bu* gñer ‘minion’
- *pho* nña ‘messenger’

The institution itself consisted of several distinct compartments. Its most general name was *slun*. It was managed by the head of the *slun* within the *slun* there was a *slun* chugs (l. 4), lit. ‘chugs of *slun*’, also simply referred to as *chugs*, in which horses of messengers were put (*bzag*). The *chugs* concerned in Pt 1096r is called ‘chugs of Par-kog’ (l. 2). This suggests that a *slun* could have several *chugs* and each of them bore its own name. A *chugs* was overlooked by the head of the *chugs*. A *chugs* had a *chugs* khor (< *chugs ykhor*), lit. ‘chugs-pen’, where horses stayed overnight (ll. 18–19). Grooms and workers took care of horses that were staying in the *chugs*. The field of responsibility of minions is difficult to establish. The head of the *slun* had his private courtyard (*g.yul thog*) in the *slun*, which was used to separate horses of special guests from plain horses.

The picture of the *slun* that emerges from Pt 1096r reveals its complex and hierarchical organisation. Regarding the meanings of particular terms that recur in the text, the above analysis allows for the following interpretations:

- *slun* ‘stage station’, managed by a *slun* phon ‘head of the stage station’; it included one or more ‘encampments’ (*chugs*);
- *chugs* ‘encampment, camp site, base’ denoted a site within or in the direct proximity of a stage station where horses were held; it was managed by a *chugs* phon ‘head of the encampment’. *Chugs* most probably also encompassed accommodation sites for humans, like a special building (*chugs khañ* or tents); 31

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31 The word *chugs* was derived from conversion from v4 of the verb *yug* (for analogous derivatives in OLT, see J. Bialek, ‘Old Tibetan verb morphology and semantics: An attempt at a reconstruction’, *Himalayan Linguistics* 19, 1 (2020), pp. 302f.). Its etymological meaning can be reconstructed as ‘sth. that is settled, established’. In the meaning ‘encampment, camp site’ *chugs* entered into CT lexicon in compounds like *chugs khañ* or *chugs sa* ‘caravansary, or merely a level, open place near a village, where traveller’s (sic) may encamp, or where public business is transacted’ (J: 449a). *Chugs sa* is also attested in modern Balti with the meaning ‘place where one can stay, especially for the raja and his
• chugs khor ‘pen’ (lit. ‘encampment–pen’) denoted an enclosure in which horses were kept overnight.

Conclusions

Information on the internal organisation of a sluís provided by Pt 1096r is scanty. Nevertheless, in this respect, the document discussed in this article is our best source for the period of the Tibetan Empire. Even though travel literature, native as well as foreign, is exceptionally abundant for the post-imperial period, thus far no detailed descriptions of the internal organisation of stage stations have surfaced.32 We find occasional pieces of information strewn

residence’ (CDTD: 680s). Moreover, Schmidt glossed rta zan gyi chugs pa as ‘ein Posthaus, Posteinrichtung’ (Sch: 210a), whereas Das called stage stations on the way from Lhasa to Beijing gyi-tung (S. C. Das, Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet [London, 1902], p. 186), doubtlessly for LT *ryga chugs. Takeuchi, following Thomas (TLTD 2: 172), understood chugs as denoting a group of watchmen that consisted of four men (T. Takeuchi, ‘The Tibetan military system and its activities from Khotan to Lob-nor’, in The Silk Road. Trade, Travel, War and Faith, (ed.) Susan Whitfield [Chicago, 2004], p. 518). I think that this interpretation is based on a misunderstanding. Neither Thomas nor Takeuchi have quoted any passage that would unanimously show chugs as referring to a group of humans. Thomas also presented an alternative interpretation: ‘camping arrangements’ (ibid). I think that in military contexts chugs denoted a base or a camp site too, whereas members of a group stationed there were called chugs pa (Or.15000/112: r2). Uebach followed Takeuchi in interpreting chugs as ‘a small military unit of four watchmen’ (Uebach, ‘Notes on the Postal System’, p. 451) and was therefore compelled to conclude that the sluís of Pt 1096r had a military watch. That this interpretation is flawed is most clearly seen in ll. 1–2 where a messenger comes to a chugs looking for a horse or in ll. 4 and 6 where a horse is put in a chugs. Apart from that, Uebach does not seem to be aware of the semantic shift she had to make in order to reconcile the textual data with Takeuchi’s interpretation; a group of people, ‘watchmen’, is taken in her analysis to be identical with the location at which this group served, ‘watch’. Uebach’s discussion of watches within stage stations is based on this erroneous reading of Pt 1096r. The passage from Dbya bzed likewise quoted by Uebach, gsas snai […] sluís chugs pho brui du mištse (64r–5, apud P. Wangdu and H. Diemberger, Dba’ bzhed: the royal narrative concerning the bringing of the Buddha’s doctrine to Tibet [Wien, 2000]), should be read ‘[Dbya] Gsas-snaï went to the residence [in an] encampment of a stage station.’ As is known from later sources (see below), stage stations provided accommodation to travellers and messengers in either houses or tents. The more important and spacious a postal station, the more ‘luxurious’ its lodgings could have been. For instance, Sa-dga (Saga) fort (LT 490) housed a stage station and is depicted as consisting of several buildings (Lange, An Atlas of the Himalayas, p. 278, no. 286 on Fig. 10.13, Add.Or.3015 f1) whereas the station in Shigatse is characterised as ‘a large building in the city’ (T. G. Montegomere and Pundit, ‘Report of a Route-Survey Made by Pundit, from Nepal to Lhasa, and Thence Through the Upper Valley of the Brahmaputra to Its Source’, The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London 38 (1868), p. 208). On Skra-bdun (Tradün) Kawaguchi even wrote: ‘It is in fact not a temple but a town (Tazam), one of the most populous and wealthy in northern Tibet (E. Kawaguchi, Three Years in Tibet [Madras, 1909], p. 217). The stage station mentioned in Dbya bzed might have been located on the border, for earlier the text states that Dbya Gsas-snaï was a so bhem ‘councillor of the frontier’ in Mañ-yul (for Mar-yul? 52v, apud Wangdu and Diemberger, Dba’ bzhed). 32Following the restitution of the relay system by the Mongols in the thirteenth century (L. Petech, ‘Tibetan relations with Sung China and with the Mongols’, in China among Equals, (ed.) M. Rossabi [Berkeley, 1983], p. 186; Maurer, ‘The Tibetan Governmental Transport’, pp. 15f), the term most commonly used for stage station was rta zan ‘Poststation’ (Sch: 210a), sometimes spelled tajyun in English literature (Montegomere and Pundit, ‘Report of a Route-Survey’, p. 147) and tazum on a map from the Wise Collection (e.g., nos. 294 & 299 in Add.Or.3015 f1; see also Lange, An Atlas of the Himalayas, p. 274). The compound rta zan was coined partly as a borrowing, partly as a loan-translation, mirroring Mon. morin jam ‘Pferdepost’ (P. Olbricht, Das Postwesen in China unter der Mongolenherrschaft im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert [Wiesbaden, 1954], p. 43, fn. 101; for this etymology, see also B. Laufer, ‘Loan-words in Tibetan’, Toung Pat 17, 4/5 (1916), p. 494, No. 176). Mon. morin = na, whereas the second syllable, jam (‘road, route, way or pass’), F. D. Lessing, Mongolian-English Dictionary [Berkeley, 1966], p. 103; concerning its etymology, Kotwicz wrote: ‘Aussi dans la phase initiale جمال ~ جمان pouvait désigner les distances entre les points fixes où l’on relayait les chevaux, plus tard, ces points même, et, finalement, la ligne de communication tout entière, y compris les points de relais et les intervalles intermédiaires’, W. Kotwicz, ‘Contribution aux études altaiques’, Rocznik Orientalistyczny 16 (1950), p. 336), was independently borrowed into Tibetan as Ǧam from which Ǧam nu (also spelled Ǧam mo, Laufer, ‘Loan-words’, p. 494) ‘Poststation’ (Sch: 175b) was derived. Laufer remarked that ‘under the Mongols, Tibet was divided into twenty-seven jaman (‘departments’), a chief officer (jam dpon) being appointed in each’ (ibid.; Petech likewise mentioned 27 (Petech, ‘Tibetan relations’, p. 187), but Maurer spoke of 28 stage stations, Maurer, ‘The Tibetan Governmental Transport’, p. 16). I assume that the form rta zan resulted from folk etymology in which the original -Ǧam was replaced by a better-connoted
throughout the literature, as, for instance, the following remarks in the journey report of Montgomerie:

These Tarjums are from 20 to 70 miles apart; at each, shelter is to be had, and efficient arrangements are organised for forwarding officials and messengers. The Tarjums generally consist of a house, or houses, made with sun-dried bricks. The larger Tarjums are capable of holding 150 to 200 men at a time, but some of the smaller can only hold a dozen people; in the latter case, further accommodation is provided by tents. [...] Each Tarjum is in [the] charge of an official, called Tarjumpá, who is obliged to have horses, yaks, and coolies in attendance whenever notice is received of the approach of a Lhasa official. From ten to fifteen horses, and as many men, are always in attendance night and day. Horses and beasts of burden (yaks in the higher ground, donkeys in the lower) [...] are supplied by the nomadic tribes, whose camps are pitched near the halting houses.33

Montgomerie’s observations thus concur with the information retrieved from Pt 1096r. A stage station (slunis) was a complex institution consisting of several compartments that were called encampments (chugs). Each of these provided accommodation for a distinct group of travellers or messengers (either in houses or in tents).34 In addition, each encampment possessed its own pen (chugs khor) where horses (or other pack-animals) were kept separately, most probably so that they did not get mixed up and could be returned to their owners after the tax service has been fulfilled. It is conceivable that the messenger Gžams-khoṅ-khiṅ, who came to the encampment looking for the horse of Qan-bcan-zigs-chan (Pt 1096r: 1–2), was to bring back the horse to its owner.35 We can speculate that each chugs was dependent on tax services of one particular community of tax-payers, either a group of households, a village, or a nomadic camp: rta zams of later times were supplied with horses and cattle by the nearby living nomads as part of their tax obligations.36 Montgomerie reports that, depending on the topography of the area, either yaks or donkeys were kept. This agrees with the information from the Old Tibetan Annals that one distinguished between stage stations located in the upper and in the lower parts of the country: mian

zam ‘bridge’: *ra ṣam > *ra jam > rta zam. Das noted two pronunciations: tazam and tajam (S. C. Das, A Tibetan-English dictionary with Sanskrit synonyms [Delhi, 1902], p. 532b); the latter still reflecting the original *ra ṣam and suggesting that the folk etymology rta zam was a local development and had not spread over the whole Tibetan speaking area (n.b., Das’ etymology reading rta zam as ‘horse bridge’ (ibid. and S. C. Journey, p. 183) is obviously mistaken, as already noticed by Laufer, ‘Loan-words’, p. 494). It is feasible that the change *ra ṣam > rta zam first occurred around stage stations located in a vicinity of a bridge or a river ferry. Three such stage stations can be identified on the basis of the maps from the Wise collections: Chū-ṣul (Chushul; no. 129) near Lcags-zam (Chakzam) ferry station (no. 132; Add. Or. 3016 f1 and Lange, An Atlas of the Himalayas, pp. 251–252, Fig. 10.2 on p. 249); Pa-mam-ṭoi (Panam Dzong; no. 195) near Pa-mam bridge (no. 197; Add. Or. 3016 f2 and Lange, An Atlas of the Himalayas, pp. 262–265, Fig. 10.11 on p. 261); and Lha-rcé-ṭoi (Lhatse Dzong; no. 246) near Lha-rcé ferry station (no. 248; Add. Or. 3016 f1 and Lange, An Atlas of the Himalayas, p. 265, Fig. 10.17 on p. 269). The vowel -u- in tarjum and tazum is an English transcription of the Tibetan short vowel -a- in a closed syllable (cf. Eng. sum [sʌm]). Likewise, the word internal -u- presumably mirrors the English pronunciation of the compound *ra ṣam. Apart from the simple compound rta zam, one also encounters formations like rta zan yno “Relasiepost, Poststation” (Corf, Auf kaiserlichen Befehl, vol. 1, p. 214, 4880.3). The latter was most probably coined to disambiguate the meaning of rta zam after the origin of zam (< ṣam) had already fallen into oblivion.

33 Montgomerie and Pundit, ‘Report of a Route-Survey’, pp. 147f.
34 The list of rta zams provided in ibid., pp. 207f. also contains a short description of each place, indicating what kind of accommodation was available there.
35 This again suggests that the stage station of which the encampment Par-kog formed part was located not far away from Sa-cu.
36 Maurer, ‘The Tibetan Governmental Transport’, pp. 13f.
‘[The council] issued great tallies of jurisdiction for miams and the upper and lower stage stations’.

We find common traces in the organisation of the imperial sluns system and the post-imperial rta zam system re-established by the Mongols in the thirteenth century. Our knowledge remains very limited, but it is conceivable that the Mongols did not create the system, but rather reformed the existing one that must have survived the disintegration of the Empire, if not for the sake of information circulating then at least to support regional trade.

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Abbreviations

√ reconstructed verb root
Ch. Chinese
CT Classical Tibetan
CDTD R. Bielmeier et al., Comparative Dictionary (2013 draft)
D S. C. Das, A Tibetan-English dictionary
Eng. English
IMP imperative
ITJ IOL Tib J
J H. A. Jäschke, A Tibetan-English Dictionary
LT literary Tibetan
Man. Manchu
Mon. Mongolian
Or. Oriental Collections of the British Library
OLT Old Literary Tibetan
OT Old Tibetan
OTDO Old Tibetan Documents Online
Pt Pelliot tibétain
Sch I. J. Schmidt, Tibetisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch
TLTD F. W. Thomas, Tibetan literary texts
Tu. Turkic
v1, v2, v3, v4 verb stems
V verb

37 Uebach’s translation ‘western and eastern’ (Uebach, ‘Notes on the Postal System’, p. 450) for stod smad is untenable in this context; cf. also B. Dotson, The Old Tibetan Annals. An Annotated Translation of Tibet’s First History. With an Annotated Cartographical Documentation by Guntram Hazod (Wien, 2009), p. 112.
Appendix: Glossary to Pt 1096r

dkar sincerity
bkug (v2), khug (v4) to summon
rkus see brkus
rky a horseman
skyol (v4) to bring
skyin ba replacement
skyon (v1) to mount
skris (v4) to bind
brkus (v2) rkus (v4) to steal
bskya n (v3) to defend
khug see bkug
khun po worker
kho na the very
khon ta he, person concerned
khrid (v1) to lead
khrims law
ga who
ga re where is?
gar where?
gua court
glo ba churi to be despondent
dgun night
dgun winter
bhgis (v2) to prepare; to say; AUX
gyay some
bnyad eighth
bgos (v2) to order
na I
no first half of a month
star previously
Čaň-stag-bzer guarantor
šans last
gēg one
bčad (v2) gčad (v3) to examine
bšu bši fourteenth
mēi see ʼmēhi
mēis see ʼmēhi
mēs see ʼmēhis
bha g (v2) to appear
bhu ma ?
gčad see bčad
gēg see gēg
bľad see bľad
ʼmēhi (v1) mēhis (v2) to come
ʼmēhi (v2) to say
mēhid speech
mēhid šags pleadings
mēhiy see ʼmēhi
ʼmēhis see ʼmēhi/ʼmēhi
ʼmēhis (v2) to be there; to belong to
Ju-čaň place name (?)
na the full moon day
gnay guarantor
gnay ngya guarantor seal
gñi ga  both
Gñi-ba Lha-mthon  guarantor
gñis  both
gñer (v1)  to help
btab (v2) thob (v4)  to throw; ṇyas btab to seal; dus btab to set a time; bro thob to swear
na  horse
na bdag  horse owner
na pho  stallion
na gi  groom
ston  autumn
stor (v2)  to get lost
tha sñad  dispute
thug (v1)  to come across
thum  ?
thei (v4)  to let free
thob  see btab
thos (v2)  to listen
gthad (v2)  to hand over
bthab  see btab
mthon  to see
dus  time
de  that
Den-bun-γde  guarantor
dogs  to fear
dru (v2)  to examine
bdag  I
bdag ḍhap  we
ydi  this
ydogs (v1)  to fix
bsdam (v3)  to bind
naṇ par  the day after the next day
maṇ ḍhig la  once
snar mo  light brown
Par-kog  name of an encampment
dpar ṣhya  witness seal
pho ṣna  messenger
phod  to be able
phob (v4)  to put; skyin ba phob to give a replacement
phongs (v2)  to take away
phyi  later, afterwards
dphon sna  deputy of the head
bar dū  up to
bu gñer  minion
bya  ?
bro  oath
bro ḍkar  sincere oath
bros (v2)  to flee away
dḥyanis (v2)  to clarify
yḥng  dragon
sḥyanis (v2)  to take away
mai po  many
mad  to be true
maṇ ḍad  to
maṇ (1) mnas (v2)  to inquire; to ask
mas  see mna
mas (v2)  to speak
The organisation of stage stations in Central Asian colonial provinces

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