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# Some Early Inner Asian Terms Related to the Imperial Family and the Comitatus

## **Disciplines**

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## **Comments**

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# Some Early Inner Asian Terms Related to the Imperial Family and the Comitatus

By

Christopher P. Atwood

(Indiana University)

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Chinese histories preserve a vast number of terms, names, and titles dating from the Türk era (roughly 550–750) and before. Scholars have succeeded in identifying a number of them with Turkic-language terms, but many terms have hitherto remained insoluble.<sup>2</sup> As a rule, scholars have pursued this work by matching forms attested in Old or Middle Turkic texts with the reconstructed Tang-era pronunciation of the Chinese characters. In face of a large number of terms found in Chinese transcription that remain either completely resistant to analysis or involve seeming exceptions to the transcription values usually attached to the characters in Chinese philology, a conviction appears to have settled in on the field that Chinese transcriptions are so inexact as to render much further progress in this line impossible.<sup>3</sup>

In this article, I suggest philological explanations for a number of terms that have so far wholly or partly resisted analysis. These examples have been chosen to highlight the fact that one reason for the limited progress in the identification of terms has not been that Chinese transcriptions are inexact, but rather that much of the terminology is neither Turkic, nor Iranian, nor Tokharian, nor attested in Old or

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- 1 For most purposes in this paper, I use a simplified transcription system based on common Mongolian historical practice in which ch indicates [ʃ], gh indicates [g] or [ɣ], j indicates [dʒ], ng' indicates [ŋ], sh indicates [ʃ], and y indicates [j]. Subscribed dots indicate retroflex or cacuminate consonants. Where more specific transcription is necessary, I use IPA or other forms as found in the relevant literatures and indicated by a [].
  - 2 Volker Rybatzki's article "Titles of Türk and Uigur Rulers in the Old Turkic Inscriptions", *Central Asiatic Journal* (2000), 44.2, pp. 205–292, gives a good summary of the state of the field so far. Peter B. Golden, *Introduction to the Turkic Peoples* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), pp. 69–187, gives a less systematic but more broad-ranging picture of the field. The paper is very much built upon their foundation, and that of the works of Edwin Pulleyblank.
  - 3 My point here builds on that of Denis Sinor, "Some Components of the Civilization of the Türks", in *Altaistic Studies*, eds Gunnar Jarring and Staffan Rosén (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1985), pp. 149–50.

Middle Turkic inscriptions. Recent work on Kitan and other eastern Inner Asian languages have, however, attested witnesses of these terms allowing them to at last be properly read, understood, and in some cases offering clues to their origins. In two cases, the evidence points to surprisingly early Sanskrit or Prakrit loanwords used widely in Türk and pre-Türk Inner Asia. In other cases, it points to terms which simply have no cognate in any later medieval or modern language.

The terms I have selected for analysis share a semantic field of being connected with the imperial family and the *comitatus* of the early medieval Inner Asian states. In his recent synthesis of Eurasian history and its Central Eurasian heartland, Christopher Beckwith has emphasized the importance of both the ruling lineage, with its reputed divine ancestry, and the comitatus or war band in Central Eurasian history.<sup>4</sup> The concentration of non-Turkic words in the terminology of the Türk imperial family and its comitatus or imperial bodyguard adds more material to the growing body of evidence that the ruling core of the Türk empire was linguistically entirely non-Turkic.<sup>5</sup> The Turkic language adopted as the language of the Second Türk Empire was the language not of the imperial lineage or the court, but of their numerous Oghuz subjects to the north and west. It also highlights that the Türk dynasts were inheritors of a long-standing state and imperial tradition, which like all such traditions carried with it a vocabulary composed of “wanderwords” that easily jumped from language to language. Other inheritors of this vocabulary include the Kitans and other peoples to the east who preserved Tang and Türk imperial institutions and terms into a later period. The gradual decipherment of Kitan thus offers a great field for further progress in the philology of the Türk empire and early medieval Inner Asia.

## Iri

A term *yili* appears repeatedly in the titlature of the Türk qaghans as transcribed from Chinese, viz. *yili kehán* 伊利可汗 or *yili jùlú shè mòhèshībōluó kehán* 伊利俱盧設莫何始波羅可汗, etc.<sup>6</sup> This same element is attested elsewhere in Chinese as *yili* 乙利, where it is the name of a qaghan and a title coordinate with *darqan*.<sup>7</sup> This title is probably also found listed as one of the 28 ranks of the Türk empire, but in a corrupted form as *yijīn* 乙斤.<sup>8</sup> This has been assumed to be attached to the title *kül-*

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4 Beckwith, Christopher I. 2009. *Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 1–23.

5 See Sinor, “Some Components of the Civilization of the Türks”, pp. 145–159 and the more cautious summary of Golden, *Introduction*, pp. 120–22.

6 See *Zhou shu* 周書 50.909; *Sui shu* 隋書 84.1864 and 1865, 1868–89; *Tong dian* 通典 197.5402, 5404, 5405.

7 *Yili* 乙利 as name of a qaghan: *Tong dian* 通典 199.5456 and *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 194B.5183 (= *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 215B.6058); *yili darqan* 乙利達官 as official rank: *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 60.2344 = *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 78.3534.

8 *Tong dian* 通典 199.5453.

*chor* 屈利啜 which immediately follows, but no other case of this combined title is attested. Rather than posit a completely unknown title, I think it much more likely that *jīn* 斤 here was an early corruption of 利, and that the title listed is *yīli* 乙利 and then *kūl-chor* 屈利啜 as a separate title.

Pelliot identified this title *yīli* as a Chinese transcription of *el-il* “state, realm”, which would be phonologically unproblematic (if indeed *el-il* was the relevant pronunciation, which as I will show it was not).<sup>9</sup> Omeljan Pritsak agreed with the identification of the Turkic stem *il-el* “state, realm” but analyzed the whole term as Old Turkic *illig*, “having a realm”.<sup>10</sup> As Volker Rybatzki already pointed out, however, both versions, *il-el* or *il-ellig* have problems phonologically and semantically.<sup>11</sup> In Pulleyblank’s reconstruction, Chinese *yī* 伊 and *lì* 利 have the pronunciation of [ʔji] and [li<sup>h</sup>] respectively,<sup>12</sup> while in attested Tibetan transcriptions they have the reading of <sup>ʔ</sup>*i* and *li*.<sup>13</sup> An identification with *el(l)ig* would have to assume that the Chinese transcription both did not represent the geminate *-ll-* and also did not represent the final *-g*. Merger of geminate consonants is common in Old Turkic, but the omission of the final *-g* is quite unlikely, since Chinese did have a common transcription character *lì* 力 which had the requisite Early Middle Chinese pronunciation of [lik] or *lig*.<sup>14</sup> Pritsak attempted to explain the absence of a final *-g* by *yīli*’s context within the qaghan Ñevar’s title. That is *yīli jùlú* 伊利俱盧 represented *ellig külüg* and the *g (>k)+k* gemination was eliminated, hence *elikülüg*. But elimination of gemination across word boundaries is highly unusual in Chinese transcriptions, to say the least, and such an explanation would not explain other instances of *yīli kēhán* 伊利可汗.

Moreover *el* and *ellig* are both attested elsewhere in Chinese transcription but in a different form. As Pelliot already pointed out, the Chinese transcription of the

9 Paul Pelliot, “Neuf notes sur des questions d’Asie centrale”, *T’oung pao* 29 (1929), pp. 209, 210.

10 Omeljan Pritsak, “Old Turkic Regnal Names in the Chinese Sources”, in Niguča Bičig/Pi Wēn Shu, ed. Joseph Fletcher, et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1985), pp. 205, 206. V. M. Nadeliaev, *Drevnetiurkskii slovar’* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1969) has *ellig* and *elig* (pp. 170, 171). Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 141–42, treats *elig* as primarily orthographical form, and only “perhaps” reflecting pronunciation.

11 Rybatzki, “Titles”, p. 207.

12 Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991), pp. 188, 365, taking the Early Middle Chinese pronunciation.

13 See §§0322 and 0324 in Takata Tokio, *Tonkō shiryō ni yoru Chūgokugo shi no kenkyū: kyu, jisseiki no Kasei hōgen* 敦煌史料による中國語史の研究 —九・十世紀の河西方言 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1988), p. 332, and W. South Coblin, *A Compendium of Phonetics in Northwest Chinese (Berkeley: Project on Linguistic Analysis, University of California, 1994)*, pp. 224–226.

14 See Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, p. 189 and §1012 in Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, p. 398; Coblin, *Compendium*, p. 420.

name of the last qaghan of the First Eastern Türk empire, *Xiéli* 頡利, represents the same word, *el*.<sup>15</sup> *Ellig* is found attested as a name as well, as *Xiánli* 賢力.<sup>16</sup> In the first case the *li* 利 is simply a geminate transcription of the final *-l*, merging with the final liquid of *xié* 頡, whose Middle Chinese pronunciation ended in a consonant that varied dialectally between a liquid [r] and a dental [t].<sup>17</sup> Only in the second case, with a *li* 力 that read in Middle Chinese as *lik*, does the *li* character actually represent a separate syllable. In both cases the root *el* has an initial consonant which Pulleyblank views as [ɣ] in Early Middle Chinese and [xŋ] in Late Middle Chinese. That this initial consonant is real and corresponds to the initial *h-* lost in all Turkic languages except Khalach is demonstrated by the Bactrian transcription of the Turkic *Eltebir* (Chinese *xiélifā* 頡利發) as *hilit-ber*.<sup>18</sup> Thus it is clear that the dialect at the base of the Chinese transcriptions had not *el* (or *il*) and *ellig*, but *hel* and *hellig*.

So where does this leave the *yīli* 伊利 element in the Türk titles? Rybatzki wrote that “I have a strong feeling that *yili* transcribes a different word than *el* or *elig*, although I cannot give any suggestion yet”. Fortunately, however, progress in both Sogdian and Kitan studies now enables this different word to be identified. A title *Iri* (Sogdian *ʿy-ry*), found in association with *my*’ (*magha*, see below) has been identified in the Bugut inscription.<sup>19</sup> Quite independently, *iri* has now also been

15 Pelliot, “Neuf notes”, p. 210.

16 Edouard Chavannes, “Épithètes de deux princesses Turques de l’époque des T’ang”, in *Festschrift Vilhelm Thomsen zur Vollendung des siebzigsten Lebensjahres am 25. Januar 1912*, ed. Vilhelm Thomsen (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1912), p. 83.

17 See Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, p. 341. The question of the final non-nasal consonants in Middle Chinese, both dialectally and as transcription characters is complex; suffice it to say here that cases where the final coronal alone represents [t] and [r] can both be found, and that medieval Chinese transcribers preferred to make the value of such consonants clearer by adding after them another character with the desired value in the initial. A classic example is *gūduòlù* 骨咄祿, which is universally recognized as transcribing *qutluḡ*. A simplified Tang era transcription would be *kut-tut-lok* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, pp. 111, 201; unfortunately his lexicon does not include *duò* 咄, but its *fanqie* reading is initial 當 and final 沒, hence *tut*). The characters *gū/kut* 骨 and *duò/tut* 咄 both end in this final dental, but in the first case it is assimilated to the following *-t* and in the second to the following *-l*, hence producing an actual transcription value of *kuttulloḡ*. On the peculiar use of Middle Chinese *rù-shēng* 入聲 (i.e. non-nasal finals) in transcriptions, see the remarks of E. G. Pulleyblank, “The Chinese Name for the Turks”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 85. 2 (1965), pp. 121–125.

18 Nicholas Sims-Williams, “Ancient Afghanistan and Its Invaders: Linguistic Evidence from the Bactrian Documents and Inscriptions”, in *Indo-Iranian Languages and Peoples*, ed. Nicholas Sims-Williams (Proceedings of the British Academy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 235.

19 Yutaka Yoshida and Takao Moriyasu, “Bugutu himon”, in *Mongoru koku genzon iseki: himon chōsa kenkyū hōkoku/Provisional Report on Researches on Historical Sites and Inscriptions in Mongolia from 1996 to 1998*, eds Takao Moriyasu and Ayudai Ochir (Osaka: Society for Central Eurasian Studies, 1999), pp. 122–125; cf. Rybatzki, “Titles”, p. 217.

identified in Kitan inscriptions with the meaning of “name” or as an official title.<sup>20</sup> While the precise semantic value in the Turkic empire is still uncertain, it might indicate “famous” or “bearing the title”, etc. In any case, further effort to shoe-horn *hel(lig)* into *yili*, can cease since it is now clear that *iri* is a title or term of unknown origin and original language but used in titlature of both Türk and Kitan rulers.

## War

The word *war* is not, to my knowledge, attested in Chinese and other transcriptions relating directly to the Türk empire but it is found in a number of examples from the polities before or around the Türk empire, against which the Türk empire ruled. Edwin Pulleyblank<sup>21</sup> noted that the name of the Hephthalite kingdom in the records of the Liang dynasty (502–557), *Huáguó* 滑國,<sup>22</sup> and the updated form as *Huóguó* 活國, given by the Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang, who passed through the area in 630,<sup>23</sup> both correspond to War, a term found in Greek transcription as *Ouar*, i.e. War. Thus *Huáguó*~*Huóguó* both mean the War Kingdom. The immediate source of this alternate name for the Hephthalite kingdom appears to be the name of the Hephthalite capital which was the *wālīz*~*wālij* or “city” (cf. Turkic *balīq*) of “War”. Early Arabic geographers attest “War” as part of the city name Warwālīz, later corrupted as Walwālij in the area.<sup>24</sup> Both War and a derived form Warlu, which corresponds to the attested Chinese *Huólù chéng* 活路城,<sup>25</sup> are now attested as the name of the Hephthalite capital in Bactrian. Warlu should be derived from War by addition of a suffix *-lu* that would seem to be related to the Turco-Mongolian derivational suffix *-lig/-ligh* and/or the Mongolia case-ending *-lüge/-lughā*, that forms denominal nouns

20 Daniel Kane, *Kitan Language and Script* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 108 (§3.137); Andrew E. Shimunek, “Towards a Reconstruction of the Kitan Language, with Notes on Northern Late Middle Chinese Phonology”, (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 2007), p. 75. For citations in context, see Langjun inscription, in Kane, *Kitan Language and Script*, p. 189 (§6.3.12) and the Epitaph of Yelü Dilie in Kane, *Kitan Language and Script*, p. 196 (§6.6.9, 11), p. 197 (§6.6.12, in plural accusative).

21 Edwin G. Pulleyblank, “The Consonantal System of Old Chinese”. *Asia Major* 9 (1962), pp. 258–59.

22 *Liang shu* 梁書 54.814 ff.; *Nan shi* 南史 79.1984 ff.

23 Xuanzang 玄奘 and Bianji 辯機, ed. Ji Xianlin 季羨林, *Datang xiyuji jiaozhu* 大唐西域記校註 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 12.963–4.

24 Warwālīz: W. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 3rd ed. (London: Luzac, 1968), p. 67, based on Ibn Khurdādhbih; Walwālij: Minorsky, *Hudūd al-‘Ālam*, pp. 72 (§6.12) and 109 (§23.73). This is identified as “two days from Khulm” in Barthold and as modern Qunduz in Minorsky, *Hudūd al-‘Ālam*, pp. 209, 340.

25 *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 40.1649; see Yu Taishan, “History of the Yeda Tribe (Hephthalites): Further Issues”. In *Eurasian Studies*, ed. Yu Taishan and Li Jinxiu, vol. 1. (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2011), pp. 103–04. *Lù* 路 is [luəʼ] in Pulleyblank’s reconstruction (*Lexicon*, p. 200) and *lo* in Tang-era Tibetan transcriptions; see §0108 in Coblin, *Compendium*, p. 155, and Takata, p. 312.

(derivational suffix), or else with a comitative meaning (case-ending).<sup>26</sup> The term *war*, transcribed with Chinese *huó* 活, also appears as a prefix to the title *Hilit-ber* as the title of an early Uyghur commander: *Huó Xiélifā* 活頡利發 or *War-Hilitber*.<sup>27</sup>

In the Greek sources, *War* appears twice, both times as part of a dual name Ouar-Khoun or Ouar-Khōn used for the ethnic core of the Avars. *Ouar* is easily matched with Arabic *War* and with the Middle Chinese pronunciations of *huá* 滑 and *huó* 活, i.e. [ɣwɛ:r] and [xɸuar] respectively.<sup>28</sup> On this basis, Czeglédy linked the European Avars to a union of Avars (identified with War) and Huns (identified with Khoun or Khōn). Moreover, he also sees a link between these *War* and the *War* of the Hefthalites.<sup>29</sup> I have elsewhere expressed my reasons for rejecting any identification of Khoun or Khōn in Greek transcriptions or Qon in Turkic transcriptions with the Huns.<sup>30</sup> Here, while acknowledging the identity of the War in the War-Khōn with the War or Warlu of the Hefthalite capital, I am again not convinced that an *ethnic* linkage is necessary or even implied. This is because I identify *war* with a term that appears among the Kitans not as an ethnic term, but as an institutional one.

The vocabulary attached to the *Liao shi*, *wǎlǐ* 瓦里, which is a phonologically completely unexceptionable Early Mandarin transcription of *war*, defines the term's meaning as follows: "Name of an institution: Every palace tent and every tribe set up one. Whenever any member of the imperial family, imperial consort families, or high officials committed a crime, their family and dependents were seized and assigned to it."<sup>31</sup> Each *war* was headed by an official with the title *mōhú* 抹鹵.<sup>32</sup> An example of how a *war* was set up can be found early in Kitan history:

26 War and Warlu appear as the Bactrian names of the Hefthalite capital in the compound forms Warlugān or Wargan "People of War/Warlu"; see Nicholas Sims-Williams, "Palaeography, Chronology, and Geography of the Bactrian Documents (4th–8th Centuries CE)", lecture at Peking University, November 4, 2013. In both Turco-Mongolian suffix and Mongolian case-ending versions the -g-/-gh- is frequently elided.

27 *Tong dian* 通典 200.5491; *hilit-ber* is the attested Bactrian form of the title usually Turkicized as *el-teber*.

28 Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, p. 128 (EMC reading) and p. 135 (LMC reading).

29 K. Czeglédy, "From East to West: The Age of Nomadic Migrations in Eurasia", trans. P.B. Golden, *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 3 (1983), pp. 92–95.

30 Christopher P. Atwood, "Huns and Xiōngnú: New Thoughts on an Old Problem", in *Dubitando: Studies in History and Culture in Honor of Donald Ostrowski*, ed. Brian J. Boeck, Russell E. Martin and Daniel Rowland (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2012), pp. 42–44.

31 *Liao shi* 遼史, 31.362ff., 106.1544; Karl A. Wittfogel, and Chia-sheng Feng, *History of Chinese Society: Liao, 907–1125* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1949), p. 541ff.

32 *Liao shi* 遼史, 106.1544, cf. 45.718; cf. Wittfogel and Feng, *History*, p. 430. The word *mōhú* 抹鹵 here appears to share a root with *mōlǐ* 抹里, likewise a term for a probationary military unit, except for commoners, not high status criminals and their families; see *Liao shi* 遼史 45.178–79. The *mōlǐ* was headed by a *zhāsāxuè* 闡撒猓. The pronunciation of both terms are unclear, particularly because their antiquity, and hence the Chinese dialect being used for transcription, is not clear.



Previously, because three lineages – that of Puguzhi 蒲古只 and two others – had murdered the *yiyuè* 于越 named Shilu 室魯, Hendejin Qaghan 痕德堇可汗 of the Yaolian 遙輦 seized their families and put them into a *war* 瓦里. When the Empress Dowager Yingtian 應天 became regent, she sorted them out and made them gentlemen and ladies of the *ordos* (*zhūzhāng lángjūn niángzǐ* 著帳郎君娘子), and showed mercy to each. Shizong released all of them. Thereafter members of the imperial clan, the relatives of the empress, and the hereditary officials (*shìguān zhī jiā* 世官之家) who committed crimes were seized and placed [in a *war*].<sup>33</sup>

Their role was thus exactly like the *ba'atud* of the Mongol emperors, who were persons assigned to vanguard forces in expiation of a crime, except that in this case it was not the criminals themselves, but their families. Peng Daya describes this institution this way:

Those who commit transgressions are put to death, which is called *aldashi*. If he is not killed, then he is punished with service in the *baatur* army (similar to the suicide warriors of the Chinese people), and only after he has survived three or four times is he absolved.<sup>34</sup>

The institution is also described in very similar terms by the Persian historian Juwaynī.<sup>35</sup> Wittfogel and Feng proposed *wali* to be cognate with Mongolian *ayil* (given wrongly as *hayil*) “village” and Manchu *falga* “clan, tribe; street”.<sup>36</sup> In fact neither of these cognates is at all plausible on phonetic or semantic grounds. But *war* as an institution of the imperial entourage, in which high-ranked captives work off their punishment by reckless bravery fits well its use both for the capital city of the Hephthalites and also as the core of the Avars, famous for prowess in battle. But the presence of a *war* among the Avars and among the Hephthalites does not indicate that one is specially linked to the other. It is likely that *all* the early Inner Asian medieval polities had this institution and name and it is only coincidence that preserved it in these two cases. At the same time, it is quite common in Inner Asia for such institutional names associated with the gathering of people together in the imperial court to become the nuclei of ethnonyms.

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33 *Liao shi* 遼史, 45.702; cf. Wittfogel and Feng, *History*, 226.

34 Peng Daya, *Heida shilüe* 黑韃事略 in *Menggu shiliao sizhong*, ed. Wang Guowei (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1962), 497; cf. Ch'i-ch'ing Hsiao, *Military Establishment of the Yuan Dynasty* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1978), p. 36 and Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Qan Möngke in China, Russia, and the Islamic lands, 1251–1259* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1987), p. 21.

35 'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata-Malik Juvaini, trans. John Andrew Boyle, *The History of the World Conqueror* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 53.

36 Wittfogel and Feng, *History*, pp. 430, 514.

Another such ethnonym likely derived from *war* is the *Yuèqín* 越勤, described as a “tribe” or division within the Tegreg~Chigreg (High Carts), that is, the early Oghuz.<sup>37</sup> *Yuè* 越 is reconstructed as [wuat] by Pulleyblank<sup>38</sup> and attested as *’war~’gwar~ywar* in Tang Tibetan transcriptions.<sup>39</sup> *Qín* 勤 is Middle Chinese [gin] (EMC) or *kʰin* (LMC) and is a perfect transcription of the Mongolian gentile suffix *-qin~kin*.<sup>40</sup> The whole should thus be *Warkin~Warqin* “the War people”, that is, an ethnonym derived from *war* just as the Oirat ethnonym Baatud was derived from the plural of *ba’atur* “heroes, prisoners working out their sentence with bravery”.

Finally, this term *war* seems to be the origin of the ethnonym Avar~Awar (first attested as Wuhuan 烏桓 or Wuwan 烏丸 in southeastern Inner Mongolia in the Latter Han).<sup>41</sup> This can be seen from the variant forms of the name of the Hephthalite capital, War. As Kuwayama Shoshin and Yu Taishan have documented, this city was also called *Āhuán* 阿緩 and *Èhuàn* 遏換.<sup>42</sup> In both cases, the prefix has the verb *a-* (with or without a final *rùshēng*) and the second syllable is *hwan*, in which the *-n* commonly represents a final *-r*.<sup>43</sup> Given that *Awar* here is a mere variant of *War*, it seems plausible that *Awar* as an ethnonym is also derived from *War*. And the early descriptions of the Avars as being peculiarly warlike and brave compared to the otherwise similar Serbi 鮮卑 indicates that this ethnonym had its origin in the institution of *war*, or a vanguard unit of noble-born transgressors working off their crimes with reckless bravery.

The origin of the alternation of *war~awar* is unclear. *A-* might be a kind of honorific or kinship prefix, of the sort found in Japanese (*o-* as honorific) and Chinese (*a-* for senior kin). More likely, however, is a phonotactic explanation: if we

37 On the Chigreg 敕勒~Tegreg 鐵勒 as being the proto-Turkic “High Carts” *Gaoche* 高車, see Edwin G. Pulleyblank, “The ‘High Cars’: A Turkish-Speaking People before the Turks”, *Asia Major* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser., 3.1 (1990): 21–26.

38 Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, p. 388.

39 §0735 in Coblin, *Compendium*, p. 339 and Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, pp. 372–73.

40 Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, p. 254. Indeed it is actually used to transcribe this suffix in Yuan-era sources.

41 Pulleyblank, “Chinese and Their Neighbors in Prehistoric and Early Historic Times”, In *The Origins of Chinese Civilization*, ed. David N. Keightley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 452–54.

42 *Āhuán* 阿緩: *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 43B.1135, 221B.6252; *Tang Huiyao* 唐會要 99.1773. *Èhuàn* 遏換: *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 40.1649; *Tang Huiyao* 唐會要 73.1323. On these names see Kuwayama Shoshin, “The Hephthalites in Tokharistan and Northwest India”, *Zinbun, Annals of the Institute for Research in the Humanities, Kyoto University* vol. 24 (1989), pp. 124–26, and Yu Taishan, “History of the Yeda Tribe (Hephthalites): Further Issues”, in *Eurasian Studies*, eds Yu Taishan and Li Jinxiu, vol. 1. (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2011), pp. 103–04.

43 [ʔa-xhuan] or [ʔat-xhuan] in Pulleyblank’s reconstruction (*Lexicon*, pp. 131–130) and “a-hwan in Tang-era Tibetan transcription (see §§0016 and 0639a in Coblin, *Compendium*, 125–26, 312–13, and Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, pp. 304, 364). The final *rùshēng* of *è* 遏 and in some cases *ā* 阿 would presumably merge with the following consonant to give an intended transcription value of *Awwar*.

assume that the Serbi language spoken by the Awar and Hefthalites did not allow an initial *w-*, but that the word *war* was of origin in a foreign language widely spoken, one could easily imagine a situation in which both *war* and *awar* would be found, the latter among the elite, bilingual in the foreign language and their own, and the latter among the less socially mobile. Very similar variants are common in modern Mongolian between Mongolized and un-Mongolized versions of Russian words. To confirm this hypothesis, one would need more information about the phonotactics of the proto-Mongolic Serbi family, as well the potential outside origin of the word *war*.

### Shar

The name Shar (Chinese *Shèlì* 舍利) appears as one of the twelve divisions or “tribes” of the Eastern Türk empire. Together with the Tüli (or Duli 吐利, on which see below), they formed an indirectly administered prefecture in Inner Mongolia after the Eastern Türk empire submitted to the Tang dynasty. As such, they also had their own horse brand used for horses to be presented to court.<sup>44</sup> Fortunately, the Shar-Tüli are also mentioned in the Tibetan travelogue of the Tang period, where the name appears in Tibetan transcription as *Shar Du-li*, thus making the reading certain.<sup>45</sup> The only narrative source touching on the history of this Shar “tribe” known to me is the epitaph of Shar Shitie 舍利石鐵 found in Shanxi. In this source, the Shar are simply described as “northerners” who for two generations before the surrender to the Tang had held minor office among the Türks.<sup>46</sup>

But the importance of the Shar seems to be considerably greater than this single source indicates. The name reappears in a Turkic ancestor-legend reported in a Chinese miscellany. There we find the *Shémó*/Zhama 射摩 as the ancestor of the Türks, living by the *Shèlì* /Shar 舍利 Lake and *Āshidé*/Ashiteg 阿史德 cavern and ruling a subordinate tribe.<sup>47</sup> In this tale, a deer with golden horns is clumsily killed by one of these subordinates and as a result, Zhama decrees that a man of that tribe

44 *Tang Huiyao* 唐會要 73.1315 (prefectures), 72.1307–08 (horse brands).

45 Federica Venturi, “An Old Tibetan Document on the Uighurs: A New Translation and Interpretation”, *Journal of Asian History* 42 (2008), p. 21; cf. *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 43B.1120.

46 *Sheli Shitie muzhi* 舍利石鐵墓誌 in *Sui Tang Wudai muzhi huibian* 隋唐五代墓誌匯編, vol. 27, *Shanxi juan* 山西卷, ed. Zhang Xishun 張希舜 (Tianjin: Tianjin Old Binding Press, 1991), p. 143.

47 Most unfortunately, there is an unresolved textual variant at this point, giving the subject people’s name as *He’er* 呵爾 or else *A’er* 阿爾. In the *Taiping guangji* *Hē’ěr* 呵爾 alternates with *A’ěr* 阿爾, but the *Youyang zazu* has only *Hē’er*, which in any case would qualify as the *lectio difficilior*. Although the character *hē* also has an alternative reading as *ā*, it is used in the transcription of Kitan with the *hē* reading; see Shimunek, “Towards a Reconstruction”, p. 99. I thus prefer the reading *hē*. The Tang reading was [xa-ri’] (see Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, s.v. *hē* and *ēr* 爾, pp. 88, 122), which presumably transcribed something like *harī-halī-har-hal*. (An initial *q-* would be transcribed with a Chinese stop, not a [x], so one should assume that the initial is the *h-* which was preserved only in Khalach.)

must be annually sacrificed to the imperial banner.<sup>48</sup> More will be said below about Zhama as a name closely linked to the Türk imperial lineage Ashina, but it is notable that here the Shar appears as a name alongside the imperial lineage and the Ashiteg, the imperial consort lineage (also discussed below). Thus while the Shar may not have had a high historical profile, they were in some sense connected to the very origin of the imperial lineage.

Kitan sources enable us to identify *shar* as a crucial term for the comitatus of the Türk imperial lineage. The term was usually transcribed with the same characters as in the Türk era, thus demonstrating institutional continuity, but was occasionally given an updated transcription.<sup>49</sup> The same vocabulary that defines *war*, also defines *shar* as follows:

Brave men of the Kitan who want to wrap their heads with a turban and pay ten head of camels and livestock and one hundred horses; they are given the official title as *shar*. Later it became an office among the *ordos*, and attendant gentlemen (*lángjūn*) were attached to the title.<sup>50</sup>

There were also special *Shar* Troops (*shèlì jūn* 舍利軍) and offices. *Shar* Troops of a given subdivision of the Liao empire consisted of soldiers drawn from that subdivision's ruling family. Thus for the Kitan imperial family itself, the *Shar* Troop was formed of men from the various divisions of the imperial family, while the *Shar* Troop of the Qai, the junior allied ethnic group of the Kitan, was attached to the Qai Administration. Shar Offices (*Shèlì Sī* 舍利司) administered the *Shar* Troops both at the level of the Imperial Clan and at the level of the separate tribes (units of administration for the non-Han of the Kitan empire).<sup>51</sup> *Shar* Troops were one of the major components of the Kitan military forces and played an important role in the

48 Duan Chengshi, *Youyang zazu* (Taipei: Yüan-liu Publishing House, 1982), pp. 4.44–45; also cited in Li Fang, ed., *Taiping guangji in Biji xiaoshuo daguan xubian* (rpt. Taipei: Hsin-hsing shu-chü, 1962), vol. 1, pp. 480.56a (1299); cf. Sinor, “Legendary Origin of the Türks”, pp. 230–31. Takashi Osawa has studied this legend with reference to the significance of the deer image to the Türk imperial cult; see “The Cultural Relationship Between Old Turkic Kingship and Deer Image”, in *Current Archaeological Research in Mongolia*, ed. Jan Bemann (Bonn: Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, 2009), pp. 401–16.

49 This term as transcribed in the *Liao shi* is obviously inherited from the Turk era, as can be seen both by the older reading of 舍 as *sha-* and by the use of 利. *Shālì* 沙里 is an updated Kitan-era transcription used retrospectively in accounts of the rise of the Kitan founder (*LS* 1.1). In *Liao shi* 遼史 106.1534, the updated term it is defined as “gentleman” (*langjun* 郎君), which is a derivative of its original meaning of noble-born soldiers in the comitatus of their kinsman. In *Liao shi* 遼史 1.1, Yelü Abaoji is given the title successively as *tāmāxuè shar* 撻馬狻沙里, with *tāmā* 撻馬 defined as “attendants” (*rěncóng* 人從) and as *aju-shar* 阿主沙里, literally “grandfather *shar*” or “senior gentleman”. The institution of *shar* continued into the Qara-Khitay era; see *Liao shi* 遼史 30.358; cf. Wittfogel and Feng, *History*, p. 646.

50 *Liao shi* 遼史 106.1536; cf. Wittfogel and Feng, *History*, p. 290.

51 *Liao shi* 遼史 46.738–39, 46.749 and 45.709; cf. Wittfogel and Feng, *History*, pp. 521–22, 550.

dynasty's administration and political history.<sup>52</sup> The term has been identified in Kitan-language inscriptions in singular and plural forms, and in various case endings, in which it was translated into Chinese by *lángjūn* 郎君 “court attendant”.<sup>53</sup> The plural is probably *shad*.<sup>54</sup>

The title *shar* also survived into the Yuan era among the Uyghurs of Qocho as well. In Ouyang Xuan's 歐陽玄 biography, the Uyghur Xie 偃 family claim a descent from the famous Ashiteg noble Toñuquq of the Second Türk empire, and as a result inherited the title *shar* 沙爾, which they glossed in Chinese as meaning “quarter where affines of the imperial family dwelt” or more generally “the emperor's affines”.<sup>55</sup> Thus the title preserved its close association with the intimate entourage of the ruler.

The Kitan and Uyghur data thus adds to our understanding of the role of the Shar in Türk ancestor legend. In the legend, the Zhama was the imperial lineage, the Shar were the noble-born braves of the comitatus, and the Ashiteg were the consort lineage of the Zhama. Read in the light of attested social units, the ancestor legend thus shows the Zhama along with the Shar and the Ashiteg as three component parts of the ruling class, sharing rule over a mass of subjects (the Harī~Hal), members of whom were chosen for human sacrifice at Zhama rituals. Just as *keshigten* or “shift

52 *Liao shi* 遼史 87.1332, 17.203, and 46.738; cf. Wittfogel and Feng, *History*, pp. 372, 419–20, 519.

53 For citations in context, see Kane, §6.3.1 (p. 186), §6.6.2 (plural, p. 191), 6.6.10 (plural and singular, p. 196), 6.6.28 (plural, p. 205), 6.6.30 (in genitive, p. 206), 6.6.31 (in locative, p. 207), 6.6.35 (in locative, p. 209). The word is written with the Kitan characters, nos. 028, 189, and 069. For comments on the pronunciation, see §2.028 and 2.069 (pp. 38, 42–43). For comments on the pronunciation, see §2.028 and 2.069 (38, 42–43). Kane suggests the third character is read *-ri*, but on the evidence presented the reading could easily be just *-r*.

54 The plural is formed by adding to the word the Kitan character no. 254 (Kane, §2.254, p. 65), pronounced as *d-t*. Literally, this would imply a plural as *shard*. On analogy with Chinese transcription practices, however, and Altaic plurals, I suggest that the plural is much more likely to be *shad*. In other words, while the full word is written to enable it to be recognized, the plural marker is not added to, but actually replaces, the closing consonant of the syllable. It would thus function like the diacritical characters used in Yuan-era transcriptions, such as *ti* 惕, *dīng* 丁, or *lè* 勒, which could sometimes be used with characters ending in *-n* to replace that final consonant with *-t*, *-l*, or *-l*, respectively. Thus what is written as *qatund* is actually meant to be read *qatud*, i.e. “empresses”, the plural of *qatun* “empress”.

55 See Ouyang Xuan, “Gaochang Xieshi jiazhuan 高昌偃氏家傳”. In *Guizhai ji* 圭齋集 11.5b (Chenghua era [1470–1473] blockprint); *Yuan wenlei* 元文類 70.1016 (this text is not found in all editions of *Yuan wenlei* 元文類). The Chinese gloss is *qīwǎn* 戚畹, which is a late imperial synonym of ancient Chinese *qīlǐ* 戚里. This appears for example in *Shi ji* 史記 103.2763, where it designates “the quarter [in the capital Chang’an] set aside for the palace ladies”. See Sima Qian. Burton Watson, trans., *Records of the Grand Historian*. Rev. ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), *Han* II, p. 477). But the palace ladies' relatives also lived in these quarters. Ouyang Xiu goes on to identify this title with the well-known Turkic title *shad* 設. As is evident from the transcriptions, 沙爾 was the living Yuan-era transcription of the title, and *shad* 設 was a transcription which Ouyang Xiu derived from his research into Tang history.

men” went from being a term of the Mongol imperial comitatus to being that of a banner (a Qing-era local appanage-community) of the Mongols, so Shar also came in some cases to be the name of a division of the Türks, while still retaining its occupational meaning in other contexts.

### Tüli~Duli

Associated with Shar as an ethnonym was the name given in Tibetan transcription as *Du-li* 吐利 which may also be a title. The Tibetan version corresponds fairly closely to a transcription of the Chinese. The character *tū* 吐 appears from its homonym *tū* 土 to have two different readings in Tang-era Chinese, *tho* or *do~du*<sup>56</sup> and the second would give the reading given in P.T. 1283. This term is not attested elsewhere, but there is a somewhat similar one attested for the Qai king in Liao-era transcription as *tūli* 吐里~*tūli* 秃里.<sup>57</sup> These two terms are treated as synonymous in both the *Liao shi* and the *Jin shi*. In the *Liao shi* the title appears as one of the “northern officials” specifically designating the *tūli tàiwèi* 吐利太尉 of the “six tribes” of the Qai.<sup>58</sup> All the known examples of the holders of this position were members of the Yelü family.<sup>59</sup> This title continued in use into the Jin as 秃里 where it is defined as “Tuli 秃里: official, rank 7b, handles law cases among the tribes; investigates violators and other issues”.<sup>60</sup>

But the pronunciation of this title is rather less certain than for *shar*. The problem is that while the Liao and Jin versions necessitate a reading as *tu-*, the Tang-era Tibetan transcription gives one in *du-*. While not enough is known of the principles of Tibetan transcription of Türk words to be sure, it may be significant that in cases like *Dur-gyis* for Türkish and *Dru-gu* for Türk(ü), Tibetan uses voiced consonants to render syllables with front vowels. If we apply the same principle, we could posit *tūli* as the form intended, which would fit the Kitan and Jurchen-based transcriptions as well.

### Early Indic loan words

Although scholars have been very willing to find loanwords from non-Turkic languages even in the Old Turkic language, they have generally sought them in Iranian and Tokharian languages. The context suggested by these loans is one of the close interaction of Iranian- and Tokharian-speaking Central Asian nomads and oasis-dwellers with the early Turkic peoples. But I believe that one can find important terms in Old Turkic derived not from nomadic or farming vernaculars of

56 See the homonym *tū* 土 (§0082) in Coblin, *Compendium*, p. 148, and Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, pp. 310–11. Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, lists only the first reading, cf. s.v. *tū* 吐 (p. 312). The pronunciation of *lì* 利 is not controversial; see Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, p. 188 and §0324 (Coblin, *Compendium*, pp. 225–26; Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, pp. 332–33).

57 *Liao shi* 遼史 116.1549; Wittfogel and Feng, *History*, pp. 432, 439

58 *Liao shi* 遼史 46.726.

59 See *Liao shi* 遼史 69.1113, 74.1229, 95.1392, 106.1549.

60 See *Jin shi* 金史 57.1330 and Jin vocabulary, *Jin shi* 金史 2892.

Central Asia, but from Indic literary languages, specifically Prakrit and Sanskrit. That scholars have been less willing to posit early Sanskrit loan words may be from a sense that such loanwords must be related to Buddhism, for whose early influence on the Turkic peoples evidence is lacking. But Sanskrit (or more broadly Indic, including Prakrits in the Kharosthi script) influence on early Inner Asia is by no means limited to Buddhism.<sup>61</sup> As I have argued in a recent paper, Greek *Ounnoi* “Huns” and Bactrian Greek *Onna-Shah* “King of the Huns” are best explained as deriving from Sanskrit *Huṇa*.<sup>62</sup> This shows that already in the mid- to late-fourth century, there was significant Indian influence on Central Asia, influence that was likely secular and mercantile-mediated, not religious. Likewise, I will show that Sanskrit words appear in imperial vocabulary of Inner Asian peoples already beginning in the second half of the fourth century.

### Magha

Chinese transcriptions preserve many cases of the transcribed *mòhè* 莫賀~ *mòhé* 莫何, usually in combination with other titles. These characters would be pronounced as *mak-gha* in Early Middle Chinese (i.e. fourth and fifth centuries) and are transcribed into Tibetan as *'bag-ha* in Late Middle Chinese (i.e. Tang-era). This Tang-era shift from initial *m-* to initial *b-* will be significant in this discussion, although it is obscured in Pulleyblank’s reconstructions.<sup>63</sup>

The earliest appearance of the term is in a story told of the Tuyuhun kingdom in the Kōkenuur area. In it, a ruling crown prince receives the title *mòhè-láng* 莫賀郎, which is glossed as “father”. The story is found originally in the *Song shu* (compiled 492–93)<sup>64</sup> and is told with reference to the Tuyuhun around year 375.<sup>65</sup> Pelliot discussed this term in 1921, and the question has been recently reexamined and clarified by Sanping Chen.<sup>66</sup> Chen points out that *láng* at this time served as a

61 An important exception to this pattern is Beckwith’s recent article on the Chinese transcriptions of “Tibet”, “Tabghach”, and “Turk”, in all of which he finds the Sanskrit *pati* “lord”.

62 Atwood, “Huns and Xiōngnú”.

63 See Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, pp. 218, 122–3. For Tibetan transcriptions, see §§0890, *sub* 0020 and 0018 in Coblin, *Compendium*, and Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*.

64 Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual*. Rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 503.

65 *Song shu* 宋書 96.2371. Later the story also appears in *Bei shi* 北史 96.3179, compiled around 630–50. It is assumed that the *Bei shi* version was cited from one of the lost chapters of the *Wei shu* 魏書, compiled from 551–54. The passage is translated in the *Bei shi* version in Gabriella Molè, *The T’u-yü-hun from the Northern Wei to the Time of the Five Dynasties* (Rome: Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970), p. 4, and summarized from the *Song shu* version, p. 23, with discussion on pp. 77–78, n. 38.

66 Paul Pelliot, “Notes sur les T’ou-yu-houen et les Sou-p’i”, *T’oung Pao* 20 (1921), p. 329; Sanping Chen, “Son of Heaven and Son of God: Interactions among Ancient Asiatic Cultures regarding Sacral Kingship and Theophoric Names”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, 12.3 (2002), pp. 289–325, esp. pp. 304–306.

common Chinese title for “noble-born son; prince”. Moreover he points out the likelihood that “father” (*fù* 父), given as the meaning of the title, is actually a corruption of *jūnfū* 君父 “lord”. Together then the compound is “*mòhè* (or *mak-gha*) prince”, to be glossed as “lord”.

Not too long after, *mòhè* 莫賀 also begins to appear together with other titles meaning “son” or “prince”. Chen has assembled a large number of examples in which petty rulers in Mongolia and Manchuria are given the titles *mòfú* 莫弗 ~ *mòhèfú* 莫賀弗 ~ *mòhèfū* 莫何弗, and derived terms.<sup>67</sup> This term was first attested around A.D. 403 as a title for the leader of the *Yueqin* 越勤 tribe (a name to be read, as I suggested above, as Warkin) found among the proto-Turkic Chigreg<sup>68</sup> peoples both in Mongolia and those resettled in North China.<sup>69</sup> Like many other titles of the later Türk empire it also appears among the Rou-Ran, but it is explicitly called a “High Cart [=Chigreg] official title”, and appears as a hereditary family title for a Chigreg chief in the Rou-Ran empire.<sup>70</sup> Later it was applied to Manchurian peoples: Kitans, Qai, Shirvi 室韋, and Mukri (~ Murki 勿吉).<sup>71</sup> Among them, it is said the term is defined as being “like a chieftain” (*qiúzhǎng* 酋長) and those who consult about war among the Kitans are called “chiefs” *qiúshuài* 酋帥.<sup>72</sup> Twice (à propos the *Wūluòhóu*/\*Olakkô 烏洛侯,<sup>73</sup> a branch of the Shirvi, and concerning the Shirvi in general), this title is said to be hereditary, and this is likely to be true for all of

67 Chen, “Son of Heaven and Son of God”, 295–98. That *maghapur/mòhèfú* 莫賀弗 is a fuller Sui-Tang era transcription of the Wei-era *magh(a)pur/mòfú* 莫弗 can be seen from comparing *Wei shu* 魏書 100.2223 with *Bei shi* 北史 94.3127.

68 As was mentioned above, I follow Pulleyblank in seeing the Chigreg~Tegreg or “High Carts” as being the earliest known proto-Turkic speakers; see Pulleyblank, “The ‘High Carts.’”

69 *Wei shu* 魏書 3.40, 4.79, 24.635, 40.902; *Bei shi* 北史 1.22; cf. Chen, “Son of Heaven and Son of God”, p. 296.

70 See *Bei shi* 北史 98.3255, 28.1007, and 49.1785.

71 Kitans: *Wei shu* 魏書 100.2223; cf. Wittfogel and Feng *History*, p. 430, *Sui shu* 隋書 84.1881; *Wūluòhóu*/\*Olakkô Shirvi: *Wei shu* 魏書 100.2224; South Shirvi: *Sui shu* 隋書 84.1882 (in the compound *maghapur-mantur* 莫弗瞞咄; cf. Paul Ratchnevsky, “Les Che-wei étaient-ils des Mongols?” in *Mélanges de Sinologie offerts à Monsieur Paul Demiéville*, vol. 1. (Paris: Bibliothèque de l’Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises (vol. 20), Presses universitaires de France, 1966), p. 234; Mukri: *Wei shu* 魏書 100.3124, *Sui shu* 隋書 81.1821 (also in the compound *maghapur-mantur*). Cf. Chen, “Son of Heaven and Son of God”, p. 296.

72 *Wei shu* 魏書 100.2224; cf. *Liao shi* 遼史 106.1547, where the later editors have mistakenly switched the order of the characters to *mòfúhè* 莫弗賀, but likewise define it as “chieftain”.

73 Also found as 烏洛護 or as 烏洛渾. See Juha Janhunen, *Manchuria: An Ethnic History* (Helsinki: Finno-Ugrian Society, 1996), pp. 184, 193. Yao Weiyuan, *Beichao Hu xing kao* 北朝胡姓考. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), pp. 279–80, under *wū* 烏 discusses branches of the *Wūluòhóu*/\*Olakkô 烏洛侯 as a surname in North China.



them.<sup>74</sup> Among the Kitans and Qai the title survives up through the Tang into the beginning of the Liao dynasty.<sup>75</sup>

As Sanping Chen first noticed, the second part of the compound, *fú* 弗, is Sogdian *p'wr* (to be read as *pūr*) for “son”, found in compounds in Sogdian and related Iranian languages, such as *shābuhr* “son of the shah”, *bagapūr* (later *faghfūr*) “son of a god”, or “son of Heaven”, etc.<sup>76</sup> Thus *Mòhè-Láng* 莫賀郎 and *Mòhè-Fú* 莫賀弗 both have the same meaning, one having the word for “noble son” in Chinese and one in Sogdian (or perhaps some other allied Iranian language; the word is pronounced similarly in many branches of the family). That *pūr* here means “son” is confirmed by the calque-translated Rou-Ran version *Mòhè-Qūfēn*/\**Makgha-k'obun* 莫賀去汾<sup>77</sup> in which the *pur* element has been translated as *k'obun*, an obvious cognate of Middle Mongolian *kō'ün* “son, prince”.<sup>78</sup> Thus we have three different cases where *mòhè* 莫賀 is used with the word “son” or “prince”, showing a single title being used from the c. 375 on in a wide variety of linguistic contexts.

How was *mòhè* 莫賀~ *mòhé* 莫何 pronounced and what was its origin? On this question, scholars have hitherto turned to the Old Turkic inscriptions in which the title *bagha* is found, in contexts which correspond exactly to Chinese *mòhè* 莫賀.<sup>79</sup> Thus it has been assumed that the initial consonant for this word must be *b-*. As a result, Chen

74 *Sui shu* 隋書 84.1882; *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 199B.5356; cf. Chen, “Son of Heaven and Son of God”, p. 296.

75 In the *Liao shi*, the term appears with the order of the characters reversed to *mòfúhé* 莫弗賀. On this *Liao shi* reading, see Chen, “Son of Heaven and Son of God”, 297–98. Following the *Liao shi* and Wittfogel and Feng, *History*, 428, 471, Jennifer Holmgren, “Yeh-lü, Yao-lien and Ta-ho: Views of the Hereditary Prerogative in Early Khitan Leadership”, *Papers on Far Eastern History* 34 (1986) uses the erroneous *mòfúhé* throughout. (Wittfogel and Feng, *History*, p. 430, treat the two terms as different, when they are obviously the same.) I wonder if the so-called Dahe 大賀 family of early Kitan history, which as Holmgren, “Yeh-lü, Yao-lien and Ta-ho”, pp. 46–47, points out is found only in the retrospective *Liao shi* account of the Kitan rise and not in contemporary sources, is not an abbreviation of *dà mòhè* 大莫賀 “great *mòhè* 莫賀”, combining translation and transcription of the term.

76 Chen, “Son of Heaven and Son of God”, pp. 289–325, esp. 295–99. See Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo* (Paris: Imperimerie Nationale Librairie Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1959), vol. 2, pp. 652–661 on *faghfūr* as the Persian word for the Chinese emperor.

77 On the Early Middle Chinese reading of *qù* 去 and *fēn* 汾 see Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, pp. 261, 94. Coblin and Takata have only *qù* 去 (see §0132).

78 See *Bei shi* 北史 98.3256, 3258, 3261, 3265, etc. Classical Mongolian orthography has *köbegün*, but this is likely one of those areas where the Mongolian intervocalic silent consonant has been mis-analyzed by the medieval orthographers. See for example *qughur* “fiddle” and its Turkic cognate *qobuz*; the oldest attested Mongolian form is *qu'ur*, a rhotacist version of *qobuz*, in which the intervocalic *-b-* has already been replaced by some form of glide. The creators of the Mongolian script used *-gh-* or *-g-* conventionally to represent all such intervocalic glides, even where originally they were created by the disappearance of a *-b-*.

79 Pelliot, “Notes sur les T'ou-yu-houen et les Sou-p'i”, p. 329; Chen, “Son of Heaven and Son of God”, p. 298, who notes that the equivalence of Chinese *mòhè* 莫賀~ *mòhé* 莫何 and Old Turkic *bagha* is “universally agreed among scholars”.

connects this term to Sogdian *bagha* “divinity, god”.<sup>80</sup> I believe, however, that the original pronunciation of this word was not *bagha* but *magha*. First of all, as I noted at the beginning of this section, the character *mò* 莫 was pronounced *mak* in Early Middle Chinese (i.e. fourth and fifth centuries). Only around the time of the Tang dynasty, over two hundred years after the term was first transcribed into Chinese, did the character *mò* 莫 begin to acquire the de-nasalized pronunciation as *ˈbak* that would be reflected in Tibetan transcriptions of Chinese.<sup>81</sup> This was part of a wider process of “Tang de-nasalization” in Northwest Chinese, which W. South Coblin dates to 600–700.<sup>82</sup> Thus there is really no way to explain why *bagha* in 375 would not be transcribed with a character such as *pò* 泊 with an Early Middle Chinese pronunciation as *bak*, or *fū* 縛, with an Early Middle Chinese pronunciation as *buak*.<sup>83</sup>

Moreover, *maga*–*magha* also appears in alphabetic scripts as part of titlature. In Tibetan, the Tuyuhun ruler bears the title *ma-ga Tho-gon kha-gan*.<sup>84</sup> In Sogdian as well, the title *magha* appears as a regular part of the titlature of the early Türk qaghans.<sup>85</sup> Finally, Bactrian documents give us, albeit in a slightly indirect form, an undeniable reading of the Chinese *mòhè* 莫賀 as not *bagha*, but *magha*. The term *magha* does not appear in those documents, but the term *baghatur* does appear, but as *magator*. This term is attested in Old Turkic as *baghatur*, and is found in Chinese transcription as *mòhèduò*/\**makghatur* 莫賀咄. The initial element *mòhè* 莫賀 is thus identical to the title we are discussing, and indeed the two have often been linked by philologists. But as Sims-Williams notes, this term is found in Bactrian, not as *bagatur*, but as *magator*.<sup>86</sup> This is decisive confirmation that the intended reading of *mòhè* 莫賀 is not the Late Middle Chinese *baga* but the Early Middle Chinese *maga*. But reading *mòhè* 莫賀 as *maga* does not mean it is not the same as the title *bagha*. Insufficiently appreciated in this context is that the dialect of Old Turkic used in the Orkhon inscriptions had a systematic initial denasalization just like that of Tang Chinese, one that applied to all loan words. Since both Old Turkic and the

80 Chen, “Son of Heaven and Son of God”, p. 298ff.

81 Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, p. 218 (§0890) in Coblin, *Compendium*, pp. 385–86, and Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, pp. 388–89. Examples from the Tang of what was Chinese *m*- in EMC having been denasalized and used to transcribe Turkic *b*- include: Bögü, transcribed in Chinese as Mouyu 牟羽, and Bayan transcribed in Chinese as Moyan 磨延; see Golden, *Introduction*, pp. 158–59.

82 W. South Coblin, *Studies in Old Northwest Chinese*. Journal of Chinese Linguistics Monograph Series 4. (Berkeley: Project on Linguistic Analysis, University of California, 1991), p. 13.

83 Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, pp. 98, 241; *fū* 縛 is §0952 in Coblin and in Takata.

84 *Ma-ga Tho-yo-gon* (or *Tho-gon*) *kha-gan* “*Maga* Qaghan of the Tuyuhun”; see Gabriella Molè, *The T’u-yü-hun from the Northern Wei to the Time of the Five Dynasties* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970), pp. 74–75 citing Giuseppe Tucci; see also Géza Uray, “Annals of the ’A-ža Principality: The Problem of Chronology and Genre of the Stein Document, Tun-huang, vol. 69, fol. 84”, in *Proceeding of the Csoma de Kőrös Memorial Symposium*, ed. Louis Ligeti (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1978), pp. 543–44, 553, 554, 575.

85 See Rybatzki, “Titles”, pp. 214–17, discussion, p. 220.

86 Sims-Williams, “Ancient Afghanistan and Its Invaders”, p. 235.

Northwest Chinese had a consistent *m-* > *b-* sound change, one could predict that an earlier or non-Turkic *magha* would become *bagha* in the language of the Old Turkic inscriptions. And indeed the Bactrian *magator* is confirmation that the attested Old Turkic *baghatur* is actually a denasalized version of an older *magator*. Thus *bagha* and *baghatur* are not the original forms of these words, but relatively late (i.e. Tang-era) denasalized versions.

Once *magha* is seen as the original form, its connection to *baga* becomes quite questionable. Operating on the idea that the Inner Asian form is always *bagha*, Sanping Chen confidently related this to Iranian (specifically Sogdian) *baga* “god, heaven, divine”. Thus the complex of *magha-lang*, *magha-pur* (and presumably *magha-kobun*, although Chen was not aware of this title), he interpreted as “Son of God”. *Magha-bagha* when found in Turkic titles according to this etymology had the meaning of “divine”.<sup>87</sup> But once *magha* is determined to be the original form, as said above, this interpretation becomes more than questionable. By contrast, I do not see any reason to resist the idea, suggested by Rybatzki only to dismiss it,<sup>88</sup> that *magha* is a version Sanskrit *mahā* “great”. As such, *magha* is already found as a compound element in Turkic Buddhist texts as the transcription of Sanskrit *mahā* “great”. *Magha-* alternating with *makha-*; *magha* seems to be the older, Sogdianized, transcription.<sup>89</sup> But entirely outside such Buddhist contexts, I believe there are many reasons why an etymology of *mahā* is preferable to that of *baga* for the secular title *magha-bagha*. The first and most conclusive is that *magha* actually appears in Turkic titles alongside *bagi* (βγγ) “god-like” as a title, thus in the Bugut inscription, we read: “You God(-like) [or Lord]<sup>90</sup> Magha Tatpar Qaghan” (βγγ my’ t’tp’r x’γ’n).<sup>91</sup> Thus it is hardly likely for it to be also the source of *magha*. If as many Turcologists believe,<sup>92</sup> the title *beg* “commander, nobleman” is derived from Iranian

87 Chen, “Son of Heaven and Son of God”, *passim* and esp. p. 295ff.

88 Rybatzki, “Titles”, p. 220.

89 Nadeliaev, *Drevnetiurkskii slovar’*, pp. 335a and 338a-b; Rybatzki, “Titles”, p. 220.

90 The Sogdian word βγγ is translated by Kljaštornyj and Livšic, pp. 79–80, as “lord”, but by Yoshida and Moriyasu as “God-like”, pp. 123–24. See Gharib, βγ (S2543, 100), βγ read as *baga* “God, lord, king, sir, excellency”; βγ’n’yk’ (S2552, 101), read as *βayānik* (cf. Parthian *bagānīg*) “divine”; βγγ γšywny (S2611, 103), read as *βaye/i axšēwanē* “His Majesty”.

91 See B–1, l. 3, B–2, ll. 4, 6, and 11 in Yutaka Yoshida and Takao Moriyasu, “Buguto himon ブグト碑文”, in *Mongoru koku genzon iseki: himon chōsa kenkyū hōkoku* モンゴル国現存遺跡・碑文調査研究報告/*Provisional Report on Researches on Historical Sites and Inscriptions in Mongolia from 1996 to 1998*, ed. Takao Moriyasu and Ayudai Ochir (Osaka: Society for Central Eurasian Studies, 1999), pp. 123–24, and Kljaštornyj and Livšic, “The Sogdian Inscription of Bugut Revisited”, *AOH* 26 (1972), pp. 85–87; cf. Rybatzki, “Titles”, pp. 215–16. Note that although Yoshida and Moriyasu radically revised Kljaštornyj and Livšic’s readings, βγγ my’ is agreed upon by both. The same repeated phrase is read by Kljaštornyj and Livšic as βγγ my’n tykyn “lord Mahan-tegin”.

92 Kljaštornyj and Livšic, “The Sogdian”, p. 80; cf. Chen, “Son of Heaven and Son of God”, pp. 300, 303, for citations and discussion.

*baga*, “divinity, god”, then front -g- of the Iranian word must have determined the vowel harmony as front, which would hardly allow therefore a concurrent derivation of a back *magha~bagha* from the same word. A transcription like *beg* shows that *baga* when loaned into Turkic is treated as a word of front vowel harmony, while *magha~bagha* is always of back vowel harmony. Absent an explanation, this would disallow any connection between the two.

*Magha* 莫何~莫賀 is found in contexts, such as ordinary place names, where *mahā* “great”, not *baga* “god”, is the only possible meaning. One such toponym is 莫何川 “Magha River” in the Tuyuhun realm of modern Kōkenur.<sup>93</sup> Another is the name of a desert area, called *Mòhè-yán-qìwěi*/\*Magha-yin-tsiaikmui 莫賀延磧尾<sup>94</sup> – whatever the exact meaning of *yán-qìwěi*/\*yin-tsiaikmui, “great” seems to fit an ordinary place name better than “divine”.<sup>95</sup> *Magha* 莫何~莫賀 is used specifically in clearly Sanskrit-based titles, where it is undoubtedly transcribing *mahā*. In the frequently analyzed title of the Türk qaghan Shapto 攝圖, a.k.a. Shabara 沙鉢略 < *Īśvara*, one of his titles is 莫何始波羅 which is evidently *maheśvara* “great lord”, which is an epithet of the god Brahma.<sup>96</sup> This can also be seen in the compound titles of a king from Shughnān (Ch. *Shīnī*/\*Sheknik 識匿) in the high Pamirs: 羅旅伊陀骨咄祿莫賀達摩薩 \**Lal idā qutlugh mahā dharmasattva*.<sup>97</sup> Whatever *Luólǔ* 羅旅 (likely LNC transcription value: \**Lal*) means, what follows is Turkic *idā* “lord” and *qutlugh* “fortunate” and following it “Great Dharma Being” in Sanskrit,<sup>98</sup> with *mahā* “great” being transcribed by 莫賀.

93 *Jinn shu* 97.2541; Thomas D. Carroll, *Account of the T'ü-yü-hün in the History of the Chin Dynasty* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953), p. 13, n. 105.

94 *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 216B.6104

95 In the Tuyuhun materials, one also finds terms for armies such as *Da Momen* 大莫門 and 墨離 for the capital. Again such geographical terms make better sense with “great” than “divine”. I would like to thank Bo Huang for bringing these names to my attention (personal communication, Dec. 6, 2012).

96 *Sui shu* 隋書 84.1865, 1868; *Bei shi* 北史 99.3291, 3293. See Christopher I. Beckwith “The Chinese Names of the Tibetans, Tabghatch, and Turks”, *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 14 (2005), p. 17, n. 53.

97 *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 221B.6255. On Shughnān, see C.E. Bosworth, “Shughnān”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition (Brill Online, 2013, reference), accessed via Indiana University Bloomington, 13 November 2013 <[http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/shughnan-SIM\\_6980](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/shughnan-SIM_6980)>.

98 On this unusual title, Richard Nance remarked (email message dated 29 June 2011): “Regarding the form *dharmasattva*, there are actually two issues to address. The first is: does the compound make grammatical sense? The second is: is this the sort of compound that one could imagine being used by Buddhists? Oddly enough, the answer to the first question is ‘no’, while the answer to the second is ‘yes’. Consider the arguably parallel case of the term *bodhisattva*. In his *Pali Grammar for Students*, Steven Collins has nicely summarized the difficulties that attend this term: ‘This word has traditionally been analysed as *bodhi* + *sattva*, “enlightenment-being”, which makes no grammatical sense. What seems to have happened is that the Pali (or related MIA) word *satta* has been re-Sanskritized as *sattva*. This is a possible

Finally, with regard specifically to the *magha-lang-magha-pur-magha-kobun* complex, Chen is indeed correct when he notes that title frequently inflates. Over time, “sons of God” can indeed become mere petty chieftains. But it should be noticed that this alleged “Son of God” title is *never* attributed in early Inner Asia to any supreme ruler, but from its very first appearance refers only to rulers specifically stated to be below kingly or imperial dignity.

*Magha* appears to be quite productive of new forms which would seem to indicate that it was still understood as having a specific meaning, one that would much more plausibly be seen as “great” than as “divine”. The same living usage seems indicated by the attestation of 莫賀~莫何 in combination with titles at virtually every level in the Türk empire: 莫賀可汗 “*magha qaghan*”<sup>99</sup>; 莫何單于 “*magha chanyu*”,<sup>100</sup> 莫賀達干 “*magha darqan*”,<sup>101</sup> 莫賀設 “*magha shad*”,<sup>102</sup> and 莫賀俟利發 “*magha hilit-ber*”.<sup>103</sup> Thus *magha* appears as a productive intensifier added to a wide variety of other titles, in ways that fit the meaning of “great” perfectly. Given that *magha* is such a common modifier of titles, it raises that possibility that, as Chen already suggested,<sup>104</sup> the title *maghator* (*baghatur* > *ba’atur* > *baatar*) may be analyzed as *magha+tor*, with *tor* being another title, perhaps again related to the comitatus. But positing a title of *tor* solely on that basis would be very speculative.

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correspondence, but *satta* in Pali can be equivalent to two other words in Sanskrit, both of which make better sense than *sattva*. From √*sañj*, “to adhere to”, “to be intent on”, the past participle is *sakta*, *satta* in Pali. From √*śak*, “to be able to”, “to be capable of”, the past participle is *sakta*, which also *satta* in Pali. “Intent on enlightenment” or “capable of enlightenment” are both more à propos than “enlightenment-being”, so it is likely one of these two senses of *bodhisatta* was the original.’ It would be nice if one could find an instance of the Pali compound *dhammasatta* being used as a name – but a quick check of Malalasekara’s *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names* turns up nothing. I’ve done an e-check of the Pali canon, and discovered that *dhammasatta* does not occur at all. Nor is the term *dharmasattva* listed in Edgerton’s *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*, and a check of the Heidelberg DCS [Digital Corpus of Sanskrit, *editor*] database likewise turns up nothing. These facts, taken together, suggest that the compound wasn’t bandied around much if at all by Indian Buddhists. But the case of *bodhisattva* argues in favor of hesitation before one rules things out on the basis of grammatical illegitimacy in Sanskrit.”

99 *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 199.5343.

100 *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書, 71B.2403.

101 *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 9.213, etc. This common combination is also attested in the Old Turkic inscriptions; see Nadeliaev, et. al. *Drevnetiurkskii slovar*, p. 77.

102 *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 198.5301.

103 *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 198.5303; *hilit-ber* is the attested Bactrian form; it is usually Turkicized as *el-teber*.

104 See Chen, “Son of Heaven and Son of God”, pp. 320–23. As might be expected, given my rejection of his *magha-bagha* = *baga* “god” equivalence, my semantic evaluation of this possibility would be very different.

I would like to suggest one final link in the Inner Asian career of *magha* “great”, likewise highly speculative. One of the result of the partial Kitan decipherment is the discovery of a word with no known Altaic cognates, *mo* “big, great”.<sup>105</sup> The word is also attested as part of a pre-Chinggisid-era place name in Mongolia, the Mo-Ündür or “Great Heights”.<sup>106</sup> The meaning of *mo* is identical to the much earlier *magha*; could *mo* be derived from the Sanskrit loanword? Two steps would be needed and both are common in the Inner Asian area. The first is the disappearance of the intervocalic *-gh-* and the merger of the two vowels. Such a sound change is well-known in the Mongolic languages and is documented in a fairly advanced stage already for some Kitan words, such as *pulu* (from Old Mongolic *\*pülegü*) and *shawa* (from Old Mongolic *sibaghu*).<sup>107</sup> The second sound change necessary to make this connection is a rounding of the vowel from *a* > *o*. This is common in Chinese dialects and is one of the sound changes marking the shift from Middle Chinese to Early Mandarin. It may even be attested in an early stage with the Tuyuhun name for the 莫何川 or Magha “Big” River. As Molé has noted, this river name is also found under the form of Mùhè River 慕賀川.<sup>108</sup> But *Mùhè* 慕賀 is not Magha, but Mogha in Early Middle Chinese. The date of this transcription appears to be from the time of the Liu Song dynasty itself, or 420–479. This *might* indicate that already in the fifth century, the sound change from *magha* to *mogha* was occurring in the colloquial Tuyuhun pronunciation of this Inner Asian wanderword. If indeed that was the case, then that might strengthen a connection with later Kitan *mo*.

### Ashina and related names

One of the most important, yet still obscure, terms in the history of the Türk empires is that of the imperial lineage, known in Chinese transcription as *Āshīnà* 阿史那. The characters here seem to be quite clear in their Middle Chinese pronunciation: [ʔa-ʃi'-na<sup>h</sup>] in Pulleyblank’s reconstructed Early Middle Chinese, <sup>ʔ</sup>*a-ʃə-na* in Coblin’s reconstructed Old Northwest Chinese (dated to c. 400), and <sup>ʔ</sup>*a-shi-'da* in

105 Kane, *Kitan Language and Script*, 3.008, 2.133; Shimunek, “Towards a Reconstruction”, p. 82.

106 *Shengwu qinzheng lu* 聖武親征錄; see Wang, *Menggu shiliao sizhong*, 96; Jia ed., II, 81 In the *SHM* §170, this is Mau Heights. But as I argue in my forthcoming critical edition of the *SWQZL*, the *mo* found in both the Chinese and in Rashīd al-Dīn is much more likely to be the original, since it is not a common Mongolian word and *mau* “bad” is very common. Misreadings move *toward* common words, not away from them.

107 Shimunek, “Towards a Reconstruction”, pp. 89, 92. *-Gh-* in endings seems more conservatively retained in Kitan words; cf. *\*ituGan* in Shimunek, “Towards a Reconstruction”, p. 75.

108 *Song shu* 宋書 96.2373; *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書 59.1026; Molé, *T’u-yü-hun*, pp. 77–78. The actual form in the texts is 慕駕州, but this is universally recognized as a corruption and corrected in the modern editions of the histories.

Late Tang Tibetan transcriptions.<sup>109</sup> The only significant variation in reading is that *ā* 阿 is attested in Tang-era Tibetan or Khotanese transcriptions as *ʾa* (24 occurrences), *ʾan-am* (20 occurrences), or as *ar* (once).<sup>110</sup> Given that this name definitely was transcribed into Chinese before the Tang denasalization, the expected transcription value would be Ashina (fortuitously just like the modern Pinyin) or perhaps Anshina or even less likely Arshina.

There are few variant transcriptions of this name in Chinese. The epitaph of Princess Hellig Bilge 賢力毗伽 has *Ānuó* 阿那, which is presumably an error for *Āshīnuó* 阿史那.<sup>111</sup> The Middle Chinese pronunciation of *nuó* 那 is, apart from the tone, identical to *nà* 那 and so adds nothing to our understanding. A more significant variant is the form Ashinash 阿史那施.<sup>112</sup> Here, the final *-sh*, represented by Chinese *shī* 施, is a denominal noun suffix; examples of its use include *aghish* “wealth” from *aghi* ‘wealth’ and *ōdūsh* ‘time, unit of time’ from *ōd* ‘time.’<sup>113</sup> Phonetically, there is a variation between *-s* (the dialectal form characteristic of spoken language used in the Orkhon inscription) and *-sh* (the more literary form).<sup>114</sup>

Finally, one other variant is *Āsēnà* 阿瑟那, which Beckwith rightly identifies with *Āshīnà* 阿史那.<sup>115</sup> Here in place of *shī* 史 is the final consonant in *sè* 瑟, reconstructed by Pulleyblank as [ʃit] in Early Middle Chinese or [ʃət] in Late Middle Chinese and by Coblin as *ʃir* in Sui-Tang Chang’an dialect.<sup>116</sup> Given that Ashina is the usual transcription, one would assume that this character has been chosen to

109 Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, pp. 23 (cf. p. 86), 221, 283; §§0016, 0382, and 0005 in Coblin, *Compendium*, pp. 124–25, 240–41, 121, and Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, pp. 304–05, 338–89.

110 Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, pp. 304–05.

111 See E. Chavannes, “Épigraphes de deux princesses Turques de l’époque des T’ang”, in *Festschrift Vilhelm Thomsen zur Vollendung des siebzigsten Lebensjahres am 25. Januar 1912*, ed. Vilhelm Thomsen (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1912), p. 82, n. 5.

112 See *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 217B.6143.

113 Talât Tekin, *Grammar of Orkhon Turkish* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1968), p. 107. This suffix seems particularly common in Old Turkish as a gentilic ending, forming demonyms (names of lineages, military-political divisions, or ethnic groups) from personal names, place names, or titles. Thus we find the pair *Türki* (a lake name) (see Tekin, *Grammar of Orkhon Turkish*, pp. 269, 387) > *Türkish* 突騎施 (demonym), *Yūshè*/\*Ukzha 郁射 (title used with *shad* 設) > *Yūshèshī*/\*Ukzhash 郁射施 (demonym), *sūng’i* 蘇尼 (military title) > *shūng’ish* 鼠泥施/*sūng’ish* 蘇尼失 (demonym), *Chabī* (title and name) 車鼻 > *Chabish* 車鼻施 (demonym), etc. It is used for other derivations as well; in the *Zhou shu*’s Türk ancestor legend (ZS 50.908), we find the river name *Chūshè*/\*Chodziat 處折 linked to the mountain name [Jiansi-] *Chūshèshī*/\*Dziansi-Chodziatshi 踐斯處折施山.

114 Tekin, *Grammar of Orkhon Turkish*, pp. 93–98.

115 See *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 221B.6250, where the name appears in material of the Zhanguan 貞觀 era (626–49). In the reference Asena/Ashilna 阿瑟那 appears as the surname of a Türk king who conquered Ferghana. His personal name *Shūnī*/\*Shūnrik 鼠匿 may be linked to *Shūng’ish* 鼠泥施 and *Sūng’i* (\*Soni 蘇尼), all derivatives from *sūng’ü* and derivatives *sūng’ūsh*–*sūng’ish* “soldier, war” presumably with a variant of the root as *shūng’i*.

116 Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, p. 273; Coblin, *Compendium*, p. 368, s.v. §0829.

mark some different dialectal pronunciation or else to render the original better. The main difference is the final consonant, which was a liquid at this time. Since final consonants are commonly merged with the following initial consonant in transcriptions, this would most likely be used to indicate that *nā* 那 is to be read *-la*. In other words, this transcription might be indicating that *Ashina* was sometimes, or correctly, pronounced *Ashila*. On the other hand, the transcriptions assembled by Coblin indicate that *sè* 瑟 was used particularly to render sequences of retroflex consonants in Sanskrit: i.e., *ṣṇ-ṣṭ-ṣṭh*. In this case *sè* 瑟 would be being used to indicate more exactly a cluster of retroflex consonants in this name. As *Arsila* (see below) has two adjacent consonants, it is this feature which could be being represented here.

Although the name *Ashina* is extremely common in Chinese sources on the Türk period, no identification of this name in alphabetic scripts has yet won general recognition. Three different proposals have been made, however, to which I can add a partial identification as a fourth. The most recent and most direct identification is that of Yoshida and Moriyasu whose reading of the Sogdian-language Bugut Inscription finds the word *Ashinas* mentioned in Sogdian transcription, in the form '(')šy-n's.<sup>117</sup> This form has the final *-s--sh* also attested in the Chinese name *Ashinash* 阿史那施. This reading of the highly degraded Sogdian text is different from that of Kljaštornyj and Livšic, and has subsequently been challenged by Christopher Beckwith.<sup>118</sup> *Ashinash~Ashinas* can also be connected to two names found in later Arabic and Persian sources. The first is the name *Ashinās~Ashnās*, held by a Turkic *ghulam* in the service of the Abbassid caliph, who eventually became the governor of Egypt. His name is given a Persian explanation, that once in the forefront of battle he cried "Recognize me!" (*ashinās mā-rā*).<sup>119</sup> To me such an explanation has the patent feel of a folk etymology, explaining a non-Persian, non-Arabic name in a way that persons in his new environment would understand. Similarly, along the Syr Darya River there was also a city named *Ashnās*, whose current pronunciation is *Asanas*,<sup>120</sup> another name which is phonologically exactly like that of *Yutaka* and *Takao's* reconstruction of the *Ashina* name, except with *-s* instead of *-sh*. Such names could be directly related to the Türk imperial surname, or to whatever the original term from which that name was derived. Just as the War of

117 See Yutaka Yoshida and Takao Moriyasu "Bugutu himon", in *Mongoru koku genzon iseki: himon chōsa kenkyū hōkoku*, ed. Takao Moriyasu and Ayudai Ochir (Osaka: Society for Central Eurasian Studies, 1999), pp. 122–125.

118 Kljaštornyj and Livšic, "The Sogdian", p. 85, read it as *c(yn)st'n* or *Chinastan* "China"; Beckwith "The Chinese", pp. 14–15, did not find the new reading convincing, but offered no alternative reading, concentrating rather on the overall context in which it was found.

119 Peter Golden, "Khazar Turkic *Ghulāms* in Caliphal Service", *Journal asiatique* 192 (2004): p. 298n88, cf. pp. 295–96, 299.

120 W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, pp. 179, 414; Juvaini, John Andrew Boyle, trans., *History of the World Conqueror*, pp. 87–88.



the Hefthalites gave its name to the city War, or Warwālīz, so the name of the royal Türk lineage presumably gave its name to a city along the Syr Darya where they presumably dwelt.<sup>121</sup>

Kljaštornyj originally proposed to identify Ashina with either *āšāna* “worthy, noble” in Khotanese Saka.<sup>122</sup> Later on, however, he changed his opinion and identified the name with Khotanese Saka *āššaina-āššena* “blue” (also found in Tokharian A as *āšna*).<sup>123</sup> This identification enabled him to identify the *Kök* “Blue” in the phrase *Kök TÜRük* “Blue Türks” commonly found in the Turkic inscriptions with the name Ashina. This would give an explanation of why Ashina never appears in the Turkic inscriptions: in fact it is there, but in translation, not transcription.<sup>124</sup> If however Ashinas is found transcribed in the Sogdian Bugut inscription, this explanation becomes less compelling.

Later Chris Beckwith proposed to link the name *Āshīnà* 阿史那 to an East Roman report of Menander the Guardsman that Arsilas was the name of the ancestor (actually “senior”, previously taken to mean the contemporary top leader) of the Türk dynasty.<sup>125</sup> The passage in question reads: “The ruler of the Turkish people had divided up all the land there into eight parts. The senior ruler of the Turks was named Arsilas.”<sup>126</sup> The great strength of this identification is that it is based on identification of *Ashina* with a specific name found in a source on the Türk empire.<sup>127</sup> Since Arsilas appears to be important, but never appears elsewhere, it is quite plausible to see it not as a name of an otherwise unknown historical person, but as the eponymous ancestor of the dynasty. As with Yoshida and Moriyasu’s reading, this would involve a reading with a final *-sh* or *-s* as seen in the Chinese Ashinash 阿史那施.

These four identifications all involve different readings of the Chinese characters in *Āshīnà* 阿史那.<sup>128</sup> Beckwith’s identification of Arsilas with *Āshīnà* 阿史那

121 See Czeglédy, “From East to West”, p. 93.

122 This is evidently cognate to Tokharian *ašam* “worthy”; see Douglas Q. Adams, *Dictionary of Tocharian B* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), pp. 32–33; Gerd Carling, with Georges-Jean Pinault and Werner Winter, *Dictionary and Thesaurus of Tocharian A* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009 on), p. 55.

123 S.G. Kljaštornyj, “The Royal Clan of the Turks and the Problem of Early Turkic Iranian Contacts”, *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 47.3 (1994), pp. 445–47; cf. Golden, *Introduction*, p. 121.

124 Kljaštornyj, “Royal Clan”, p. 447.

125 Christopher I. Beckwith, *Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: A History of the Struggle for Great Power among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs, and Chinese during the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 206–08.

126 R.C. Blockley, *The History of Menander the Guardsman* (Liverpool: F. Cairns, 1985), p. 276.

127 Kljaštornyj is typical in finding this position “strong from the historiographical point of view” but vulnerable phonetically. See Kljaštornyj, “Royal Clan”, p. 446.

128 This difficulty was already noted by Peter Golden in “Turks and Iranians: An Historical Sketch” in *Turkic-Iranian Contact Areas: Historical and Linguistic Aspects*, ed. Lars Johanson and Christiane Bulut (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), p. 20.

involves certain readings of the Chinese characters that, while not impossible, would be somewhat unusual. Kljaštornyj's Khotanese *āṣāna* “worthy, noble” and Khotanese *āṣṣeina~āṣṣena* “blue” require inexact values for *shī* 史. By contrast, Yoshida and Moriyasu's Sogdian reading has the benefit of matching the most common transcription values of the Chinese. Beckwith's first required reading is to read *ā* 阿 with a final consonant, such as *an*. The second would be reading *nà* 那 as *-la*. Readings of *ā* 阿 with a transcription value as *an* are fairly common in the Tibetan transliterations of the Diamond Sutra and the Heart Sutra and in Khotanese Brahmi script transcriptions as well.<sup>129</sup> With regard to 那, while the *transcription value* was certainly *na*,<sup>130</sup> there is an attested confusion of dental nasals and dental liquids in Tang transcriptions, particularly of names from the Tibetan plateau. Thus *Sūnóng*/\*Sonong 蘇農~*Sinóng*/\*Sznong 思農 transcribes Tibetan Srong, while *Núlà* 奴刺 transcribes Lolad, as is demonstrated by the P.T. 1283 manuscript.<sup>131</sup> Thus it is plausible to suggest that what was *-la* in the original language would be transcribed into Chinese by *na*. Although I have not no clear evidence for such a

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129 Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, pp. 304–05, s.v. §0016. *A* 阿 as *an* occurs mostly in the transcription of *anuttara samyak-sam-bodhi* 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提, immediately followed by *nōu* 耨. Beckwith makes a claim here in defense of his reading which I find hard to follow: “the normal T'ang reading of the first character as *ar* (at least in foreign names) is clear from many examples, including the name Arsilan/Arslan” (p. 207, n. 5). In fact reference to standard studies, such as Takata and Coblin show nothing of the sort; *a-* and *an-* are by far the most common readings attested for 阿, and *ar* is found only once. See §0016 in Coblin, *Compendium*, pp. 124–25, and Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, pp. 304–05, 256, l. B2, for the sole instance of *ar* as part of the transcription of *Āchūbī Fó* 阿闍鞞佛, i.e. Akṣobhya Buddha. Cf. William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, and Tubner, 1937), p. 293, s.v. 阿闍. The only specific example of a transcription value of *ar* for 阿 that Beckwith cites is Arslan which is transcribed in Tang sources as *Āxīlàn* 阿悉爛. This would clearly seem to give a value of *ar* for 阿. But Arslan is a special case in Chinese transcriptions of foreign words. The sequence of three consonants seems to have been unusually difficult, and led to frequent omission of the *-r*. Thus in Yuan times, where the transcription value of 阿 is indisputably *a* (or occasionally *o-*), the name *arslan* was frequently transcribed with nothing corresponding to the *-r*, thus as 阿昔蘭, 阿思蘭, 阿思藍; see Yao Jing'an 姚景安, comp. *Yuanshi renming suoyin* 元史人名索引 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), pp. 415, 422. In any case, the rarity of a reading as *ar* is not necessarily fatal to Beckwith's case, since if Ashina had the same sequence of three consonants such as Arshla~Arshna, or some such, it still might be transcribed in Chinese as Ash(i)na, just as Arslan is transcribed as As(i)lan. The other possibility for a reading as Arshila, rather more likely in my opinion, is that *a* 阿 is to be read *an* and the *-n*, as it commonly does, represents final *-r*. In short although Beckwith's specific arguments are not entirely cogent, he is correct that Arshi- would be a *permissible* reading for Ashina 阿史那. But it is certainly not the *only* permissible reading.

130 See §0005 in Coblin, *Compendium*, p. 121, and Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, pp. 304–05.

131 Venturi, “An Old Tibetan”, p. 21; see also, for example, the transcription of *Qi Sunong* 棄蘇農 (Tang pronunciation Khi-so-'nong, cf. Coblin, *Compendium*, §§321c, 0101a, 1151) for Khri Srong in Paul Pelliot, *Histoire ancienne du Tibet* (Paris: Librairie d'Amerique et d'Orient, 1961), p. 82 (from *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書).

value in an Old Turkic transcription, since Ashina is certainly not Turkic, that objection is not dispositive. A possible confirmation is suggested by the alternative transcription of the name as *Āsēnà*/\*Ashilna 阿瑟那. As I mentioned, one might think this variant was adopted to indicate that Ashina was to be read Ashila (whether generally or in a particular dialect). But as I pointed earlier, another interpretation of the reason for *sè* 瑟 is possible in which it relates to a sequence of retroflex consonants. In conclusion one can say that while it is possible to see *Āshīnà* 阿史那 as a transcription of Arsilas, it does not in fact appear to be the actual reading.<sup>132</sup> Thus, as it stands now, we have a reading Ashinas(h) in Sogdian and a plausible Greek version Arsilas. Chinese transcriptions go better with the first but might be stretched to cover the second. Can these two terms be connected in some way? I believe they can in fact be linked as two versions of the same word, but making that connection demands further analysis of the name's meaning and origin.

A first step in solution to this puzzle is to reject any link to Turkic *arslan* "lion", such as was suggested in Beckwith's exposition of his Arsilas proposal. The most obvious reason to do so is that if the name really was connected to *arslan* "lion", it is hard to see why it too would not be transcribed as 阿悉爛, or something similar, like the other undoubted *arslans* found in Tang sources. Moreover, *arslan* always has a final *-n*. The replacement of final *-an* by either *-a* or *-as~ash* is inexplicable on that hypothesis. In addition, a link to *arslan*, while possibly compatible with the Chinese *Āshīnà* 阿史那 makes no sense either of the *ashi* reading which is indicated both by Yoshida and Moriyasu's reading of the Bugut inscription and by the P.T. 1283 ms. Finally, as I shall show, Ashina is only one of a several related forms, each with the *āshī* 阿史 root and a different ending or attached name. Such an internal structure of the name *Ashina* as *Ashi+na* is clearly incompatible with any derivation from the word *arslan*.

As I have mentioned, it is necessary to do further internal analysis of the term itself. Fortunately, the characters *āshī* 阿史 appear in the transcription of not just one term, but in several which can plausibly be seen as related titles.<sup>133</sup> The most important of these terms is *Āshī-dé* 阿史德, the consort lineage that supplied empresses to the imperial *Āshī-nà* 阿史那 lineage. Given their link as intermarrying families, the similarity in their names rather obviously suggests that *Āshī* 阿史 is the root and *na* 那 and *de* 德 represent two different suffixes added to *arshi-*. Another such combination, albeit with a different middle character, is *Āshībī*/Ashipit 阿失畢

132 There is another case of *ā* 阿 and *nà* 那 being used in Inner Asian transcriptions, and that is *Ānāgūi* 阿那鬼, which Beckwith, like most other scholars, identifies with the personal name attested in Greek as Anagai (see Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*, pp. 9, 114).

133 There is also an *Āshībūlāi* 阿史不來 city, around modern Kainda, west of Bishkek. See E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les T'ou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux* (Paris: Adrien-maisonneuve, 1900), pp. 10, 304. Chavannes identifies this with the Ashpara~Asbara of Ibn Khurdādhbih; see, Minorsky, *Hudūd al-'Ālam*, p. 289. Apart from confirming that the likely reading of *ashi* 阿史 by itself is *ash(i)* this case offers little further illumination.

in which *āshī* 阿失 is combined with *bì* 畢 (Middle Chinese *pīt*), to form the name of the king of Tashkent.<sup>134</sup> In the case of *bī/pīt*, the term occurs elsewhere with a known meaning. It is generally acknowledged to represent *pīt* in the Chinese transcription *shībī/shiūpīt* 失畢 for Turkic *šadapīt*, probably via a Tokharian reflex of the Prakrit form *śadavida*. The term *pīt* stems from Indo-Iranian *pati* > *vida* “lord”.<sup>135</sup> The *shī* 失 is different from *shi* 史 in having a coda with *rùshēng*, i.e. [ʃit] in Pulleyblank’s reconstruction (*Lexicon*, p. 282) and *shir* in Tang-era Tibetan transcription (Coblin, *Compendium* §0826a, p. 367). In other words, here we have the root in a form that matches the first two characters of *Āsēnà*/Ashilna 阿瑟那, but with *pīt* or *vida* “lord” in place of the *-na*. This example is significant because here the final *-t~r* cannot be intended to govern the pronunciation of the following consonant, since here it is certainly not *-l* or *-r*. This indicates that in *Āshībī* 阿失畢 and *Āsēnà* 阿瑟那 the middle character was chosen for a different reason, that is, to render a cluster of retroflex consonants. Thus if Asena might be rendering something like Arsila with retroflex *rʃ* in sequence, Ashibi might be representing something like Arsipīt with the same cluster.

Analysis of the range of uses, then, suggests that *ashi* should be a common noun or adjective that could be combined with a number of different terms, including *pati~vida~pīt* “lord”. This analysis may be confirmed by the fact that Yoshida and Moriyasu record a space break between ‘(’)šy, i.e. *Āshī* and *n’s*, i.e. *nās* in the reference in the Bugut inscription.<sup>136</sup> Thus *Ashi-na* by itself may be confidently analyzed not as a single word, but a stem *Ashi~Arshi*, used productively to form a variety of names and titles, with an ending *-na*. Fortunately there exists an alphabetic transcription of one of these other titles, that is, the lineage name *Āshī-dé* 阿史德. This name’s Early Middle Chinese reading would be [ʔa-ʃi’-tək] in Pulleyblank’s reconstructed Early Middle Chinese, <sup>2</sup>*a-ʃə-tək* in Coblin’s reconstructed Old Northwest Chinese (dated to c. 400), and <sup>2</sup>*a-shi-tig* in Late Tang Tibetan transcriptions.<sup>137</sup> A Tibetan transcription of *Āshīdé* 阿史德 is found in the manuscript P.T. 1283, which records the names of various polities and their constituent divisions around c. 750. This manuscript has already been encountered as the source of the reading of *Shéli* 舍利 as Shar. Among the names listed are the twelve “tribes” of the Eastern Türks, a list which can be mapped against similar lists

134 *Tong dian* 通典 198.5438.

135 Alessio Bombaci, “On the Ancient Turkish Title *šadapīt*”, *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 48 (1976), pp. 32–41. On *pati* in Buddhist Sanskrit, see Soothill and Hodous, *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 266, s.v. 波帝. Beckwith 2005 has argued that *pati* is also attested in the Chinese transcriptions for Tibet, Tabghachi, and Türk.

136 See Yoshida and Moriyasu, “Buguto himon”, p. 123. However, the spacing is quite inconsistent so I would not feel placing much emphasis on this point.

137 On the readings *ā* 阿 and *shi* 史, see above. For *dé* 德, see Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, p. 74 and §0979 in Coblin, *Compendium*, pp. 411–12, and Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, pp. 396–97.

in Chinese sources.<sup>138</sup> In it, there is one item: *a-sha-sde'i sde-chig* “One tribe of the *A-sha-sde*”. As Gerard Clauson already recognized, this *A-sha-sde* or *A-sha-sde'i* (in the genitive case) is identifiable with the Ashide 阿史德 of the Chinese lists.<sup>139</sup>

As it stands, this reading must be somewhat corrupt, but the direction of corruption is fortunately fairly clear, and involves primarily the third syllable. First of all, *sde* is an actual Tibetan word, meaning “part, division”, etc.; applied to groups of people it is usually translated as “tribe” and in fact it appears immediately after every name found in this list. Since *sde-sde'i* is not a plausible reconstruction of any Middle Chinese pronunciation of *dé* 德, evidently the original form, which one would expect to be *teg* or *tig*, was corrupted by influence of the immediately following *sde*, into the genitive form of *sde*, i.e. *sde'i*. Since most items in the list do not have the genitive ending, but simply place the name in apposition with the word *sde chig* “one tribe”, I would guess that all the instances of genitives in this list are later corruptions, either of some part of the original name (as with *teg* to *sde'i*), or else by paradigmaticization. The two earlier syllables, though, preserve a transcription of Ashi 阿史 as *a-sha*. But it should be noted that corruption in the second syllable vowel is possible. In Indic scripts like Tibetan, the *a* in *sha* is marked simply by the absence of a vowel mark, and there are two vowel marks on the third syllable where one would expect only one (assuming, as I have suggested, that the genitive is corrupt). Moving the vowel marks over, one could reconstruct the original as *A-she-tig*, or perhaps with a metathesis (again generated by the scribal instinct to conform the third syllable to *sde*) as *A-shi-teg*. To sum up, the first syllable is reliable, the second syllable is reliable except for the vowel, which is likely *e* or *i*, and the third syllable can only be restored by reference to external data.

The *teg* or *tig* reading for the third syllable in *Āshī-dé* 阿史德 links *Āshī-nà* and *Āshī-dé* with a pair of honorific terms common in the titulature of Türk and Uyghur rulers. One finds in this titulature paired terms *teng'ride* “from Heaven” and *teng'riteg* “Heaven-like”. These terms appear to be roughly synonymous, but with *teng'ride* being slightly more elevated.<sup>140</sup> What is striking and hitherto unexplained is that the Turkic ablative *-de* in the phrase *teng'ride* is never transcribed in the Uyghur era by a syllable with the sound of *-de*, but rather always by one with the Tang pronunciation of *la*: *luō* 囉, *luò* 邏, or *luó* 羅. Taking this transcription as *teng'ri-la* and *teng'ri-teg*, the pair is strikingly reminiscent of the Ashi-na~Ashi-teg particularly if we give *-na* the possible *-la* reading.<sup>141</sup>

138 *Tang Huiyao* 唐會要 72.1307, 73.1315, *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 43B.1120.

139 See P.T. 1283, text line 9, in Venturi, “An Old Tibetan”, p. 21.

140 Cf. Pritsak, “Old Turkic Regnal Names”, p. 208; Rybatzki, “Titles”, pp. 224–26, and the table on pp. 248–49.

141 See the examples assembled in Rybatzki, “Titles”, pp. 234–43, the table on pp. 249–51, and the examples in nos. 43–112 in the Chinese glossary.

So what is the root *Ashi*–*Arshi*? As it turns out, there is a widely attested and semantically appropriate word found in Turkic that fits the bill for such a stem: *arshi* “sacred, wise”, a word of Sanskrit origin (*ṛṣi* “Vedic poet, sage”), but which was early borrowed into Turkic as *arshi*, *irshi*, *rsi*, *rshi*.<sup>142</sup> *Arshi* is certainly the most common form in Uyghur-era manuscripts and in that form it was also borrowed into Mongolian as *arshi*. I argue, however, that in addition to these later forms, more strongly influenced by Sanskrit, there ought to have been an older form *ashi*, which would be the root from which terms like *Ashi-la*/*Ashi-na*, *Ashi-teg*, and *Ashi-pit* developed.

If Uyghur *arshi* derives from Sanskrit *ṛṣi*, where did the *a*- come from? While Uyghur has forms with *a*-, *i*-, and *Ø*- as initial vowels, only forms without *a*- are attested in extant non-Sanskrit, non-Uyghur versions of this word. Thus Gandhari Prakrit has *iṣi*, while Pali has *isi*.<sup>143</sup> In the Tokharian languages, the word is found in various forms derived from Sanskrit: *rṣāke* “seer” and *rṣākañca* “female sage; seeress” in Tokharian B and *riṣak* (plural *riṣaki*) “sage” in Tokharian A.<sup>144</sup> Chinese forms are not helpful, since the term in that language is always translated, and not transcribed.<sup>145</sup>

Evidently, the “correct” learned derivation from the Sanskrit, as paralleled in the Tokharian forms, into Uyghur produced the forms *irshi*, *rsi*, and *rshi*. This fact indicates that the *arshi* form in Uyghur must be in some sense a more vulgar non-Sanskrit form. But by the same token, the earlier Prakrit forms lack any reflex of the *r*. If we combine these two vulgar features, one could posit an earlier, irregularly Prakrit-based form *ashi*, which would later be Sanskritized by Uyghur Buddhists as *arshi*, or more completely as *irshi*, *rsi*, and *rshi*. A similar alternation of *a*- ~ *i*- in a Turkic title of Indian origin is attested in the name of the Bulghar king whose name is written in Greek as Asparoukh, Armenian as Asparhruk, and in Bulgarian as Ispirikh.<sup>146</sup> Like Sinor, I see this word as being certainly cognate to the Īshbara of the Old Turkic inscriptions and the *Shābōlüè* 沙鉢略 of the Chinese transcriptions, both being derived from Sanskrit Īśvara “lord”.<sup>147</sup> The alternation between the initial *a*-, which seems to represent the more usual pronunciation and perhaps more “correct” *i*- (attested in written form from the Bulgarian list of kings) would exactly

142 Nadeliaev, *Drevnetiurkskii slovar*’, pp. 55, 212, 477.

143 John Brough, *The Gāndhārī Dharmapada* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), §§236 (*iṣayu*, *iṣina*), p. 196 (in the compound *rayerṣayu*); Pali Text Society, *Pali-English Dictionary* (1921–25: rpt. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 123, s.v. *isi*.

144 Adams, *A Dictionary of Tocharian B*, p. 541; Ji Xianlin, with Werner Winter and Georges-Jean Pinault, *Fragments of the Tocharian A Maitreyasamiti-Nāṭaka of the Xingjiang Museum, China* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998), p. 294.

145 See Soothill and Hodous, *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, pp. 166, 334, s.v. 仙 and 神 仙.

146 Golden, *Introduction*, p. 246.

147 Sinor, “Some Components”, p. 157, n. 10. See also Beckwith, “Chinese Names”, p. 17, n. 53.

parallel the relation between the *ashi-* root of Ashina(sh) and the attested *iṣi* of Gandhari Prakrit.

It is this contrast between the earlier Prakrit-influenced version and later Sanskritized versions which would account for the variation between Ashina and Arshila(s). Arshila would be the more etymologically correct Sanskritized form, used in the west among the Central Asian oasis dwellers, while Ashina would be the vulgar form, preserved particularly in the east in Mongolia and China. The name Arsilas, as found in Greek sources, is obviously derived from the Türk empire's Sogdian interpreters.<sup>148</sup> The versions *Āsèṇà* 阿瑟那, used for the name of a king in the Ferghana valley, and Ashibi 阿失畢, used for a king in Tashkent, would thus both make sense as a Chinese effort to render this more Sanskritized version, particularly with the retroflex consonants, i.e. Aṣila and Aṣipit. As I have already noted, replacing *shī* 史 with *sē* 瑟 or *shī* 失, was probably intended to represent a cluster of retroflexes, in this case *ṣṣ*. This would bring the roots very close to *aṣi*. Ashibi 阿失畢, the name or title of the Tashkent king, would then be transcribing Arshi-Pit or Sanskrit *Rṣipati* "Holy Lord".<sup>149</sup>

If *Ashi*~*Arshi*- are the two forms of the root, what are the suffixes? As I have already noted, *-la* and *-teg* both appear in Chinese transcriptions of Uyghur titles in conjunction with the root *teng'ri* "heaven", and something similar appears here. *Teg* is common in Old Turkic as "like", and at least some analysts see an adverbial suffix in *-la*.<sup>150</sup> But others do not speak of such an adverb<sup>151</sup> and as noted, the *-la* suffix actually corresponds in Uyghur titles to a Turkic locative-ablative *-de*. It seems most likely then that *-la* and *-teg* are a non-Turkic pair of suffixes. *-La* in Sanskrit might be a secondary adjectival ending, in which case Arshila would be an unattested Sanskrit word *Rṣila* with the whole meaning simply "holy, sacred".<sup>152</sup> But that might

148 One might wonder then, why was eastern form used in the actual Sogdian inscription of Bugut? The situation is, I believe similar to that found with the title *shadapit*. As Bombaci notes, this title is of Indo-Iranian origin, but is found in the Bugut inscription in a purely Turkic form, uninfluenced by the Iranian orthography; see Bombaci, "On the Ancient Turkish Title Šadapit", p. 37. Here again, an Indo-Iranian form is found in this Mongolian inscription in the form derived from the Turkic rulers, not the Sogdian interpreters.

149 Note how *pīt* here still preserves its vulgar Inner Asianized form based on a Prakrit original *vida*.

150 Marcel Erdal, "Old Turkic", in *The Turkic Languages*, ed. Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 148; Tekin, *Grammar of Orkhon Turkish*, pp. 164–65, 377–78.

151 Tekin, *Grammar of Orkhon Turkish*, p. 163, does not list it and interprets the *birle* given as an example by Erdal very differently. Indeed I wonder if *-la* here is not the *-ra* directive/adverb, of which many examples are given by Tekin, *Grammar of Orkhon Turkish*, pp. 154–55, but with a dissimulated liquid following the *-r* of *bir*.

152 I am grateful to Richard Nance who in an email of August 13, 2011, noted that "... The '-la' in '*rṣila*' could be a simple secondary suffix. ... So, for example, whereas the word *a.msa* means shoulder; *a.msala* means strong or powerful, i.e., "well-shouldered"; whereas the word *kapi* means monkey, *kapila* means tawny or brown, i.e., "monkey-colored". If that's what's afoot here, *rṣila* could very well carry the meaning of something like "holy".

not be the only possibility; the Turkic equivalent would rather suggest a comparative sense of the ablative-locative as denoting origin: “of Heavenly/Holy origin”.<sup>153</sup>

Either way, the change from *-la* to *-na* is one that is quite plausibly associated with west to east movement of a vocabulary item. It is well-known that in a variety of cases, Turkic forms in *l-* alternate with Mongolian forms in *n-*; the best known of which is the Turkic plural *lar* and the Mongolian plural *nar*.<sup>154</sup> The ending *teg* in Ashiteg appears to be a native Inner Asian form, which was adopted into Old Turkic as a postposition not following vowel harmony. Ashi-teg would thus be the older Prakritized form *ashi* plus the Turkic ending *-teg* “like”.<sup>155</sup> Ashina~Arshila would thus be “the holy ones” or “of holy origin” while Ashiteg would be “saint-like”.

My conclusion is then, that Ashina(sh) is indeed the same as the Greek Arsilas. Neither is related to Turkic *arslan*, instead both are cognate to Sanskrit *ṛṣi* meaning “holy man”. In western Central Asia, the root was often pronounced as Arshi-, while the usual Chinese version is based on an older, eastern version, pronounced as Ashi-. This root *arshi-ashi* was also understood as an adjective “holy” and was used to create new terms. It was probably also in this eastern Inner Asian context where the suffix *-teg* “like” was added to the term to make a companion lineage name, Ashiteg. The pair of suffixes *-la~-na* and *-teg* were used in a similar way to derive titles from *teng'ri* as well. In the west, Sanskrit influence generated the form Arshila (with or without the Turkic *-sh* gentile suffix) and it was this form under which the Ashina family was known to the Sogdian interpreters. Other terms like Arshi-Pit “Holy Lord” were also used as titles.

### Zhama

That Ashina is not a native Inner Asian clan-name, but an Indic epithet should not be too surprising, especially as this ruling lineage has a completely different name, also of non-Turkic origin, as Zhama. This form is much less common than Ashina, but appears in several important cases. The name appears three times in the Tibetan geographical text in the P.T. 1283. The name is attached throughout to the transcription of the word Qaghan, thus being *Zha-ma Kha-gan*.<sup>156</sup> Read literally the name in Tibetan would seem to be a sort of personal epithet or title.

However, the status of the name as that of the ruling lineage is established by its use in the ancestor-legend of the Türk empire already discussed. In it, to recall, the ancestor of the Türk peoples is called *Shèmó* 射摩, which in its Early Middle

153 This is one of the senses *-de* as ablative given in Tekin, *Grammar of Orkhon Turkish*, p. 134, and Erdal, “Old Turkic”, p. 150.

154 Others include *lacin-nachin*, etc. See Doerfer, *TMEN*, §1728 (Vol. IV, pp. 11–14).

155 Tekin, *Grammar of Orkhon Turkish*, pp. 377–78.

156 On Zha-ma Qaghan see P.T. 1283, ll. 9, pp. 49–50, 69–70 (cf. Venturi, “An Old Tibetan”, pp. 20–21, 27, 29; Takao Moriyasu, “Chibetto-go shiryō chū ni arawareru Hoppō minzoku-Dru-gu to Hor チベット語史料中に現れる北方民族—Dru-gu と Hor”, *Ajia Afurika gengo bunka kenkyū* アジアアフリカ言語文化研究 14: (1977), pp. 3, 5, 6–7).



Chinese form is a perfect match for Tibetan Zhama.<sup>157</sup> It is striking that Zhama, the name of the Türk imperial lineage, here appears as that of a man, the ancestor of the lineage. This is exactly the identification of lineage name with eponymous ancestor name which Beckwith noted in the case of Ashina~Arshilas. Confirmation that Zhama was the name of the ruling lineage and identical to Ashina is found in the regulations for imperial receptions under the Tang. According to them, the Türk princes in attendance were separated into two ranks: 1) the Ten-Surname “*mó/ma*” *Āshīnà* 摩阿史那, which included the Qaghan; and 2) the Thirty Surnames.<sup>158</sup> In the word *mó/ma* attached to Ashina, one must see the second character of Zhama 射摩, the preceding *shè* 射 having been accidentally omitted in transmission. One may also presume that these distinctions of standing within the imperial lineage were also acted out during the yearly sacrifices, restricted to the aristocracy, in the fifth moon toward the cave whence the Ashina and its fraternal lineages were said to have originated.<sup>159</sup> Osawa Takashi has identified Zhama with *Yama*, as he reads on the Ongi Inscription in place of what previous scholars have read as *Yamī*. This inscription begins: “Our ancestor Yama (for Yamī) Qaghan suppressed, frightened, routed, and subdued the four quarters of the world.”<sup>160</sup> This he further links with the Indo-Iranian first man Yima~Yama.<sup>161</sup> Osawa’s argument seems to be correct, and the fact that the early Chinese and Tibetan version of this name had initial *zh-* indicates that this ruling lineage’s language, which was not Turkic, had this form.

This is another illustration of the *y~j~zh* (i.e. [j]~[dʒ]~[ʒ]) alternation we find in other Türk-era titles, notably *yabghu* for which there is an excellent two-part summary of the evidence in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.<sup>162</sup> Chinese evidence

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157 射 has many readings, but the relevant one is as *shè*, for which Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, p. 279, has the Early Middle Chinese pronunciation as [zia<sup>h</sup>]. The Tang era pronunciation would become devoiced, for which Pulleyblank gives [ʃhia<sup>ʰ</sup>], and which would be read *sha* in Tibetan. Cf. Coblin, *Compendium*, §0072, which has [\*jia-] corresponds to modern *yè* which is not in question here (cf. Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, p. 364). *Mó* 摩 is given in Early Middle Chinese as *ma* (Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, p. 217) and in Coblin’s Old Northwest Chinese as \**ma*, and Tang Chinese as <sup>m</sup>*ba*, with Tibetan transcription as *’ba* or *ma* (§0031, *Compendium*, pp. 130–31 and Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, pp. 306–07). Tibetan *Zha-ma* thus corresponds perfectly to the Early Middle Chinese (Wei-era) pronunciation of 射摩, but not to the Tang pronunciation, which in Tibetan would have been *sha-’ba*.

158 *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 23.900.

159 *Zhou shu* 周書 50.910; *Tong dian* 通典 199.5453.

160 Tekin, *Grammar of Orkhon Turkish*, p. 291.

161 Osawa, Takashi, “The Cultural Relationship”, p. 401, n. 2. See Ongi inscription line F1; cf. Tekin *Grammar of Orkhon Turkish*, pp. 255, 291. On Yima~Yama in Indo-Iranian religion, see Samra Azarnouche and Céline Redard, ed., *Yama/Yima: Variations indo-iraniennes sur la geste mythique* (Paris: Édition-Diffusion De Boccard, 2012).

162 See the article “Jabghuya”, with part i written by Nicholas Sims-Williams and Étienne de la Vaissière, and part ii by C. Edmund Bosworth, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol 14/3, ed. Yarshater, Ehsan (New York: Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation Inc., 2007).

demonstrates that the oldest attestation of the title as *xīhóu* 翕侯 or \**hip-go*.<sup>163</sup> Thus for this title, the initial *y-* should be primary. But although the usual spelling in Turkic sources is *yabghu*, the usual Arabic form is *jabghūya*.<sup>164</sup> One also finds Sogdian versions as *çpγw* (to be read *jabghu*) and Manichaean Uyghur as *jβγw* (to be read *zhavghu*).<sup>165</sup> C. Edmund Bosworth made the plausible assumption that this is an example already in the early Middle Ages of the Turkic dialectal difference between Oghuz-type vs. Qipchaq-type contrast of initial *y-* with initial *j-* or *zh-* (this sound change can be seen today in the correspondence of Turkish *yıl* and Uyghur *yil* “year” with Tatar *jil* and Kazakh, *zhil*). I also believe, on the basis of Chinese transcriptions, that a particular demonym might be a version of Turkic *yüz* “hundred”, except in its affricate form *jüz*.<sup>166</sup> But the evidence adduced by Nicholas Sims-Williams and Étienne de la Vaissière in their article on the term *yabghu* show that the alternation of forms in *y-* and *j-* is ancient and occurs in contexts where Turkic dialects are completely out of the question. Indeed comparative linguistic evidence documents that *y- > j-* is quite common.<sup>167</sup> Thus, for example, the Greek coins of the first century Kushan monarch Kujula Kadphises have Prakrit *yavuga-* or *yaiia-* but Greek *zaoou* (genitive for \**zaoos* or \**zaoēs*, to be read *zawo-*). Comparative linguistic evidence would suggest that this *z-* is already derived from *j-* or *zh-*.<sup>168</sup> Thus alterations of Zhama for Yama or *zhabghu* for *yabghu* might not have not have their roots in Turkic language dialectal change, but in some other language or languages entirely.

One might also note that the same alteration of *y-* and *j-* (or various other derivatives) is found in a major class of Chinese characters, in which *y-* and (in the archaic pronunciations) *j-* initials alternate, such as *yè~shè* 射, *yè~shè* 葉, *yé~xié* 邪,

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163 See Axel Schuessler, *Minimal Old Chinese and Later Han Chinese: A Companion to Grammata Serica Recensa*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2009), entries pp. 37–1 (354) and 10–6 (146–47).

164 See Bosworth, “Jabğuya, ii. Islamic Sources”, 316, and Minorsky, *Ḥudūd al-‘Ālam*, 97, p. 288 (§15).

165 Sims-Williams and de la Vaissière, “Jabğuya, i. Origin and Early History”, p. 314.

166 The basis of this is the name of the *Zhūst* 朱斯 of *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 215A.6048 and *Chisi* 熾侯 of *ibid.* 217B.6143, etc. which are certainly the same, and which I also link to the *Zhūxié* 朱邪 of the Shatuo ancestor legend. See Christopher P. Atwood, “The Notion of Tribe in Medieval China: Ouyang Xiu and the Shatuo Dynastic Myth”, in *Miscellanea Asiatica: Festschrift in Honour of Françoise Aubin*, ed. Denise Aigle, Isabelle Charleux, Vincent Gossaert, and Roberte Hamayon (Sankt Augustin: Insitute Mounumenta Serica, 2010), p. 600, n. 21.

167 Examples of this *y > j* sound change include the Romance languages, as well as the Iranian languages themselves where Avestan *Yima* (Khshaēta) becomes *Jam*(shed); see Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London ; Boston : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 88.

168 Another example occurs with the proposed linkage of Old Iranian *yātu* “magic; magician” with Old Turkic *yād* and Mongolian *jada*, both meaning “weather stone”. See Ádám Molnár, *Weather Magic in Inner Asia* (Bloomington: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1994), pp. 113–16.

*yí-shé* 蛇, and *yè-zhuāi* 拽. In these pairs the second member of the pair derives from what in Middle or Old Chinese was *zi-*, *si-*, *zi-*, and the like, all of which may be plausibly derived from *j-* (i.e. *dz-*).<sup>169</sup> While this alternation in Middle Chinese is the result of very different developments in Old Chinese, it is perhaps not accidental that both *Shèmó* 射摩 (the Chinese for Zhama) and *Yèhú* 葉護 (the Chinese for Yabghu) have alternative readings, that is, as *Yemó* 射摩 indicating *Yama* and *Shèhú* 葉護 indicating *zhabghu*. Indeed Bichurin and Chavannes chose to read *shèhú* not *yèhú* 葉護.<sup>170</sup> The Chinese characters thus show the same kind of variation found in the Türk-era pronunciations. Probably the Chinese transcribers were aware of the variant pronunciations of the Türkic languages, whether Oghuz-type Turkic dialect found in the Old Turkic inscription, or the non-Türkic language spoken by the Ashinash royal family, and fastened upon precisely those characters in Chinese which had something like that same ambiguity.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the examples presented here demonstrate, I believe, that considerable further progress is possible in identifying previously unknown Inner Asian vocabulary from Chinese and other sources of the Türk and Uyghur eras. As Denis Sinor recognized, this further light, however, is likely to come from non-Türkic sources, especially Kitan and Tuyuhun vocabulary, Tibetan transcriptions, and Indic etymologies. Holding these together is a renewed appreciation for the general consistency and accuracy of Chinese transcriptions, which when properly read can provide considerable information about a now completely defunct Inner Asian political vocabulary.

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169 See Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, under those words. Coblin's discussion (*Compendium*, 46–47, cf. 142–43 [§0064], and Takata, *Tonkō shiryō*, pp. 308–09) of the divergent readings of *shé* 蛇 “snake” would apply to *shè* 射 as well, and indeed all these pairs.

170 I do not know the basis on which Bichurin and Chavannes adopted this reading. But generally *y-* seems more common (see for example, the Tibetan transcription as *yabgo* in Beckwith, *Tibetan Empire in Central Asia*, p. 68, n. 80), so I guess that *yèhú* 葉護, EMC [jiap-γ<sup>h</sup>] in Pulleyblank or [iap-γo] in Coblin's reconstructed Old Northwest Chinese (§0566, §0107), would be the more usual reading. But since the pronunciation as *zhabghu* existed, a reading as *shèhú* could also be correct.

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