

# Shifting Memories and Changing Allegiances: Tracing the Descendants of the Tibetan Minister mGar through Chinese Funerary Inscriptions\*

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## *Introduction*

**T**he mGar was probably the most influential clan in the history of the Tibetan Empire (7th-9th centuries CE). Despite the fact that its origins have not been clearly confirmed, the rise and decline of this clan have been relatively well established by Tibetan and Western historiography; what has not been deeply investigated is its legacy. Many works have been dedicated to the most celebrated minister in the whole of Tibetan history, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung (?-667), in particular to his career at the Tibetan court and his exploits as ambassador in the Chinese capital during the reign of Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (r. 626-649). Among these studies, those of Hugh Richardson (1998) and Thomas Kerihuel (2011) are the most complete: the former is an introduction to the mGar clan according to Tibetan and Chinese sources, while the latter is a complete investigation on the clan and its evolution through the 7th century, according to ancient and classical Tibetan sources. Concerning the descendants

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\* A first version of this article was presented in October 2014 at the doctoral day of the Centre de recherche sur les civilisations de l'Asie orientale (CRCAO), in Paris. I would like to thank the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation which, through the "Kingship and Religion in Tibet" research group, has supported my fieldworks in China in 2013 and 2014 in order to, among other things, survey and transcribe the funerary inscriptions here presented. I would like to thank my supervisors, Prof. Pierre Marsonne (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris) and PD Dr. Brandon Dotson (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich) for their encouragement and suggestions. I would also like to express my gratitude to Françoise Wang (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris) and to Prof. Tshe ring (Cairang 才讓) (Xibei Minzu Daxue, Lanzhou) for their valuable comments. I would also like to thank Nathan McGovern and Ruth Gamble who kindly helped to revise my English. All mistakes that might remain are of course my own. The transliterations employ the *pinyin* system for the Chinese words and names and the Wylie for Tibetan.

of the mGar, researchers have mainly concentrated their studies on the claims by the royal family of Sde dge to be the offspring of the minister mGar; van der Kuijp (1988), for example, examined this issue in detail. What remains obscure is the destiny of the mGar clan members who escaped to the Chinese court in 699. What happened to the descendants of the most influential Tibetan minister mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung? It could be assumed that this branch of the clan disappeared from history. This article provides some insights into the further history of this branch of the clan; with the help of Chinese documents, and especially funerary inscriptions of some members of the mGar clan who went to Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690-705) to seek shelter, it details the clans' history in China. These kinds of documents, recently reevaluated by Sinologists, are of inestimable value in understanding what happened to the later generations of mGar in China because they provide useful information on their activities during the Tang dynasty, right up to the second half of the 9th century. In particular, these epigraphic documents tell us that the mGar descendants continued to play an important role in Chinese history: they contracted marriages with members of the Chinese aristocracy and obtained posts as well as official titles from rulers. This preliminary prosopographic study not only shows how this family continued to play an important role during this period but also constitutes a further example of how foreigners were integrated into the Chinese military and political system during the Tang dynasty.

*mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung and his Family in the 7th Century*

The origins of the mGar clan are difficult to establish.<sup>1</sup> In the Dunhuang documents, the first mention of their name is in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, in the section "Royal Genealogy", Pelliot Tibétain (here after PT) 1286. This document includes a catalogue of principalities in which a mGar is mentioned as minister (*blon po*), along with a person named mNyan, of dGug gri'i Zing po rje, in Ngas po.<sup>2</sup> Addi-

<sup>1</sup> On the significance of this family name and its variants see Stein 1963: 330-333 and Richardson 1998: 121-122. On the history of the clan mGar, his origins and evolution in Tibet, see also the PhD dissertation in Tibetan of Zhaxi Dangzhi 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. PT 1286, l. 11 *yul ngas po 'i khra sum na / rje dgug gr'i'i zing po rje / blon po mgar dang mnyan gnyis*. "In Khra sum, in the land of Ngas po, the lord [is] dGug gri 'i Zing po rje and the ministers [are] mGar and mNyan the two [of them]." All translations are mine unless otherwise stated. Transliterations of the Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts are taken from the internet database of the Old Tibetan Documents Online (OTDO), available at [www.otdo.aa-ken.jp](http://www.otdo.aa-ken.jp) and from the original Dunhuang documents.

tional mentions of the mGar name can be found in other early passages of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* beginning with the reign of Srong brtsan sGam po (c. 617-649) and his minister, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung.<sup>3</sup>

mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung's date and place of birth are not mentioned in the Old Tibetan documents.<sup>4</sup> What we do know is that he and his family probably came from Central Tibet, most probably from Ngas po where PT 1286 mentions a member of the mGar clan as minister. According to later accounts (written and oral) the mGar may have come from the area corresponding to the modern 'Phan po region, which roughly corresponds to the northern bank of the gTsang po River in Central Tibet.<sup>5</sup> The first reference to mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung is found in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*; in this text, after having denounced a *coup d'état* plot by Khyung po sPung sad Zu tse, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung was appointed chief minister by Srong brtsan sGam po. In accordance with this promotion, his name is also given in the lines 95-96 of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* in the list of the chief ministers of the Empire, after Khyung po sPung sad Zu tse.<sup>6</sup> From this point onwards, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung seems to have played a major role at the Tibetan court; in particular, he was dispatched to Chang'an 長安 in order to bring the Princess of Wencheng 文成公主 to Tibet.<sup>7</sup> According to the Tibetan sources and later studies, including Kerihuel's work, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung would have been appointed chief minister only around 644, meaning that he was not yet a minister when the Tibetan emperor sent him to the Chinese

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the succession of the family lineage up to the time of mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung, see Kerihuel 2011: 106-107.

<sup>4</sup> Richardson states that mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung was probably born around the end of the 6th century. Cf. Richardson 1998: 117.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Kerihuel 2011: 112. Guntram Hazod elaborated a series of detailed maps of ancient principalities of the central Tibetan region during the Empire. Cf. Dotson 2009: 170-174.

<sup>6</sup> The facts related to the betrayal of Khyung po sPung sad Zu tse are described by Bacot, Thomas and Toussaint 1949, pp. 143-149 which is the translation of PT 1287, ll. 299-327.

<sup>7</sup> In Chinese sources his name is Lu Dongzan 祿東贊. He is not mentioned in the previous deputations to the Chinese court but he was charged of bringing a bride from Chang'an to Tibet. Cf. CFYG: 11325. In another passage, the CFYG states that the Chinese emperor offered mGar one of the granddaughters of the Princess of Langya 瑯邪公主 as a wife but that mGar declined this proposition. The Chinese sources are not clear if the Chinese emperor accepted the refusal of the Tibetan minister or not. Cf. CFYG: 11153. Sam van Schaik affirms that mGar came back to Tibet with two women, one wife for Srong brtsan sGam po and one for himself, cf. van Schaik 2011: 9; however, the author does not mention any sources for this assertion. For more information on the journey back to Tibet of minister mGar and the Princess of Wencheng as well as the legends arising from this episode, see Warner 2011.

court.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, it was only after the death of Srong brtsan sGam po, in 649, that mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung assumed a truly powerful role. The Chinese sources confirm that when they say: "[...] Nongzan [Srong brtsan sGam po]'s son died at a very young age and his grandson took the throne, officially adopting the title of *zanpu* (*btsan po*). Since he was very young, the kingdom's affairs were delegated to his minister Lu Dongzan. [...]"<sup>9</sup> mGar Stong rtsan Yul zung's regency is also described in PT 1288, the *Old Tibetan Annals*, which as Kerihuel has pointed out, states that in 653/654 mGar led the hunt (he did it again in 656/657); in 654/655 he was in charge of the separation between *rgod* and *g.yung*;<sup>10</sup> the next year, 655/656, he compiled a code of law. Both the *Old Tibetan Annals* and the Chinese sources also confirm that between 659 and 666 mGar journeyed to the 'A zha territory,<sup>11</sup> and that in 662/663, he travelled to Zhang zhung to "perform the administration".<sup>12</sup>

According to the *Old Tibetan Annals*, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung died in 667/668, in Ris pu.<sup>13</sup> These events were not, however, the end of the mGar family; his descendants went on to play a fundamental role in the Empire's administrative and military affairs for years to come.

### *The descendants of mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung*

The Old Tibetan sources, in particular the *Old Tibetan Annals* and the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, describe various descendants of the mGar clan. It seems that mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung had several children, but the texts do not give a precise list of their names. The texts do mention two people that are most likely to be the sons of mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung: mGar bTsan snya lDom bu and mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Kerihuel 2011: 108, n. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. CFYG: 11190.

<sup>10</sup> For more information about the separation of civilians and soldiers, see Uray 1971.

<sup>11</sup> Kerihuel 2011: 107 and CFYG: 11531.

<sup>12</sup> PT 1288, ll. 41-42. Translated by Dotson 2009: 87.

<sup>13</sup> PT 1288, l. 48. Guntram Hazod localizes this toponym in the Upper dBu ru, in the North from Lhasa. Cf. Hazod's map in Dotson 2009: 222. Some local stories in Dulan 都蘭 area say that *blon po* mGar died in Qinghai while he was in the 'A zha lands and that he would be the occupant of the big tumulus called M1 in Reshui 熱水 funerary site.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Kerihuel 2011: 108. We should also add mGar Mang nyen sTag tsab who, according to the *Old Tibetan Annals*, committed fratricide. See the list of the mGar clan members at page 161 and the family tree in this article.

The members of the mGar clan that are listed in different passages in the *Old Tibetan Annals* as performing major duties at court and being employed as military chiefs are:<sup>15</sup>

- In 673/674 mGar bTsan snya lDom bu became a minister after a political struggle. The *Old Tibetan Chronicle* confirms this promotion.<sup>16</sup> In the same year he convened the council. In 675/676 he took care of Zhang zhung's administration. The following year he led an army in Western Turkestan and between 680 and 685, having become chief minister, he convened the council every year in a different place. He eventually died in 685/686, probably a victim of his own brother mGar Mang nyen sTag tsab.
- mGar Mang nyen sTag tsab convened the council in 681/682 and killed his own brother in 685/686.<sup>17</sup>
- mGar bTsan nyen Gung rton acted as the governor of Khotan until 695, when he was judged disloyal, and after a trial in the same year, executed.
- mGar sTag gu Ri zung was a minister and convened a council in 687/688. He apparently held his position until 694, when he was captured by the Sog dag and lost Khotan.
- mGar 'Bring rtsan rTsang stong was in charge of levying taxes in 690/691.
- mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod was in charge of the council in 673/674, along with mGar bTsan snya lDom bu. He is not mentioned again until 680, when he again convened the council, twice. He was appointed *blon chen* in 685/686 after his brother mGar bTsan snya lDom bu; in the same year he convened the council. Between 687 and 689 he was in Western Turkestan for a military campaign. He was in the 'A zha lands in 689 and again in 693/694; in 695 he was in the Tsong ka area.<sup>18</sup>

mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod was by far the most famous son of mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung. He is also remembered, in the Chinese

<sup>15</sup> Those persons seem to be of the same generation, so they could all be brothers or cousins.

<sup>16</sup> PT 1287, ll. 102-107. Translated by Dotson 2013: 273.

<sup>17</sup> On the question of the fratricide, cf. Dotson 2009: 95. The *Old Tibetan Annals* l. 29 states also that mGar Mang zham sTag tsab convened a council. We do not have any other information about this person and we can therefore assume that his name is a misspelling/miswriting of mGar Mang nyen sTag tsab.

<sup>18</sup> All the events concerning these people are included in the *Old Tibetan Annals* ll. 4-75. They are translated and commented on by Dotson 2009: 90-100.

sources, along with his brothers where they are described as being particularly gifted in administrative and military affairs.<sup>19</sup>

According to the Tibetan sources, during the whole second part of the 7th century, the mGar clan continued to occupy the most important political, military and administrative positions at court. They eventually left the scene in 698/699 when, as attested by the *Old Tibetan Annals*, the *btsan po* decided to put an end to their hegemony. Their problems started in 695 when mGar bTsan nyen Gung rton was executed and, according to Kerihuel, the issues between the mGar and the royal Tibetan power worsened during the negotiations with the Chinese over the control of the Four Garrisons on the Silk Road, the 'A zha lands and the whole Kokonor area. These negotiations also included a request for a matrimonial alliance with the Chinese court, and they failed; this fiasco put mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod in a difficult position.<sup>20</sup> The *Old Tibetan Annals*, line 78, describes what happened the mGar: "That winter the punishment descended on the mGar. [...] Thus one year" (*de'i dgun mgar la bkyon phab ste [...] [\*lo] chig*). These events are explained in more detail in the *JTS*: the text reports how, in 699, the Tibetan emperor, taking advantage of the fact that Qinling 欽陵 (the Chinese name of mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod) was not in Central Tibet, invited the whole clan for a hunt and put them all to death, killing more than 2000 people. He then sent an envoy in order to summon Qinling, Zanpo 贊婆 and other members of the family, but they did not reply. In the ensuing battle, during which the loyalist forces were led by the Tibetan ruler, Qinling and many other killed themselves, while Zanpo, along with Mangbuzhi 莽布支 and others, fled to China.<sup>21</sup>

Khri 'Dus srong celebrated his victory over the mGar clan with a song which became famous and was preserved in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, the surviving members of the mGar family reached the Chinese capital.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Cf. CFYG: 11151.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Kerihuel 2011: 110 and Beckwith 1987: 59-60.

<sup>21</sup> *JTS juan* 196, translated by Pelliot 1961: 11.

<sup>22</sup> PT 1287, ll. 456-481. For the translation of the whole song, see Dotson 2013: 298-300.

<sup>23</sup> The Chinese sources report Zanpo's arrival at Wu Zetian's court. The CFYG, p. 11275, states: "During the 10th month of the 2nd year of the Shengli era of Zetian [699], the chief of the Tufan, Zanpo arrived at [court]. We sent the cavalry [...] to welcome him outside the city. On the day gengxu [27/9/699], we offered, with great joy, a big banquet in honour of Zanpo in the Wuwei palace."

*mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung's Sons According to the Chinese Sources*

Several different Chinese sources state that mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung had four or five sons:

<i>JTS juan 196 上</i> <i>CFYG juan 962</i>	<i>XTS juan 216 上</i> <i>ZZTJ juan 201</i>
贊悉若 Zanxiruo 欽陵 Qinling 贊婆 Zampo 悉多于 Xiduoyu 勃論 Bolun	/ 欽陵 Qinling 贊婆 Zampo 悉多于 Xiduoyu 勃論 Bolun

The lists include the same names, except for Zanxiruo, who the *JTS* states died very young.<sup>24</sup> Tshe ring gives the following correspondences between the Chinese names and the original Tibetan names:<sup>25</sup>

贊悉若	Zanxiruo	mGar bTsan snya lDom bu
欽陵	Qinling	mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod
贊婆	Zampo	mGar 'Bring rtsan rTsang stong
悉多于	Xiduoyu	mGar sTag gu Ri zung
勃論	Bolun	mGar bTsan nyen Gung ston

The person identified with Zanxiruo, the brother who is said to have died quite early, corresponds to mGar Btsan snya lDom bu, who was in fact killed by his brother in 685. For the others, there are no further details given in the Chinese sources.<sup>26</sup> The name Qinling corresponds, from a phonetic point of view, with the Tibetan name mGar Khri 'bring (bTsan brod).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *JTS juan 196*: "[...] the older was called Zanxiruo, he died early [...]" [...] 贊悉若早死 [...]. Later historical texts lost trace of Zanxiruo, probably because of his premature death. It is interesting to underline, however, that, on the contrary, the *JTS* and the *CFYG*, which was also compiled using a previous version of the *JTS*, both mention Zanxiruo.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Tshe ring 2010: 94.

<sup>26</sup> mGar bTsan nyen Gung rton is absent from the Chinese documents. He was executed in 695 for having been disloyal; what "disloyal" means in this context is unclear. Dotson hypothesizes that mGar bTsan nyen Gung rton could have surrendered to the Chinese. Cf. Dotson 2009 : 98, n. 199.

According to the Chinese sources, Zanpo is then one of the persons who escaped to China in 699.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the identity of the second person who went to China with him needs further clarifications.<sup>28</sup> According to the Chinese sources, two persons escaped to Chang'an: Zanpo and Mangbuzhi, son of Qinling.<sup>29</sup> Zanpo is described in the Chinese sources as having died soon after his arrival in Chinese territory, after having been rewarded for his submission.<sup>30</sup> However, in other sources, there is almost no mention of Mangbuzhi, a name that corresponds, in Tibetan, with mGar Mang po rje sTag rtsan.<sup>31</sup> The only other reference to his name occurs in the *XTS*, where he is said to have received the title of Duke of Anguo 安國公 and to have been appointed General-in-Chief of the Forest of Plumes Army 羽林大將軍.<sup>32</sup> The name as well as the posts and titles of Mangbuzhi can be identified with the person of Lun Gongren 論弓仁.<sup>33</sup> Lun Gongren is the recipient of the first funerary inscription that will be examined in this article. The other two persons are: Lun Weixian 論惟賢 and Lun Boyan 論博言, also members of the mGar family.<sup>34</sup>

The identification of the Chinese name *Lun* with the Tibetan term *blon* and, by extension with the mGar clan, has been confirmed, besides by the funerary inscriptions presented here, by Pelliot who, in his article of 1915, established that the Chinese character Lun is a transcription of the Tibetan *blon*.<sup>35</sup> Another source for this identification is the Chinese dictionary *Zhonghua xingshi yuanliu dacidian* 中華姓

<sup>27</sup> The *JTS* and the *XTS* mention Zanpo in several passages. In 695, when he is described attacking the Chinese at Lintao 臨洮. He is also said to have been in charge of the eastern part of the Tibetan Empire for many years and to have caused many problems for the Tang. *XTS*, *juan* 216, translated by Pelliot 1961: 92-94. In the *CFYG* Zanpo is called Xue Zanpo 薛贊婆. Stein discusses the issue of Xue as family name in his article, cf. Stein 1963: 331.

<sup>28</sup> Kerihuel described the arrival of three persons in China: Gongren, Zanpo and Mangbuzhi. Cf. Kerihuel 2011: 111.

<sup>29</sup> The genealogy of the family will be clarified below.

<sup>30</sup> The *XTS* says that Zanpo was welcomed and gifted with rich presents and titles such as the Prince of the Guide 歸德 commandery, in modern northern Henan. In this reference, the *JTS* and the *XTS* are similar. Cf. Pelliot 1961: 11.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Richardson 1998: 32 and Beckwith 1987: 61.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Pelliot 1961: 94. The present article uses the dictionary of Charles Hucker for the translation of Chinese titles and official posts.

<sup>33</sup> This is confirmed by Tshering 2010: 106 and by Beckwith 1987: 61.

<sup>34</sup> There is another funerary inscription of a Tibetan arrived at the Tang court. His name is Luzan Saluo 祿贊薩羅. This inscription is not examined here because it presents some difficult points: even if there is clear mention of the fact that Luzan Saluo is a member of the mGar clan, the dates and circumstances of his arrival at the Chinese court are not clear. This inscription will be discussed in another article.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Pelliot 1915. See also Laufer 1914 and Demiéville 1952: 240.

氏源流大辭典, which, under the name Lun, gives the example of the mGar clan and its Tibetan origins.<sup>36</sup> Finally, Han Rulin, in his article, clearly states that Lun is the Tibetan word *blon*.<sup>37</sup>

### *Chinese Funerary Inscriptions as Historical Sources*

Funerary inscriptions are currently being rediscovered by Sinologists; they represent, when examined together with their context, complete historical and archaeological documents that can provide a different perspective on prosopographic studies and on a certain historical period, since they can contain important information on events and personalities.<sup>38</sup> Under the term "funerary inscriptions" we can include a series of epigraphic documents such as tomb steles (*mubei* 墓碑), entombed epitaphs (*muzhiming* 墓誌銘), inscribed steles for the tomb alley (*shendao beiming* 神道碑銘) and so forth.<sup>39</sup> The tombs of the Chinese elite were not composed of a simple pit where the coffin was placed, but rather they "consisted of an underground chamber, often built of bricks and sealed with a stone door on top of which was erected a large dirt mound".<sup>40</sup> If the steles were put outside the tomb, as standing documents attesting the identity of the deceased to the outside world and paying homage to his life, the entombed epitaphs, usually made in slabs or limestone, were buried in a flat position in the grave near the head or the foot of the coffin itself, or in another pit close to the main chamber.<sup>41</sup> The entombed epitaphs were composed of two parts: one stone, usually square in shape, carved with the inscription itself and another one used as a cover, presenting the name of the recipient and decorated with figures and geometrical or floral patterns, as in the entombed inscription of Lun Boyan which presents a cover adorned with floral ornaments and with twelve male

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Zhonghua xingshi yuanliu dacidian* 2014: 345.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Han Rulin 1940: 106.

<sup>38</sup> Tackett speaks even of a re-examination of the Tang aristocracy thanks to this genre of documents. Cf. Tackett 2014: 13. There can be a debate on the reliability of funerary inscriptions. According to some researchers, the version carved on stone and the one on paper often present big differences due mainly to the desire of the author to praise the deceased and exaggerate his exploits on the stone version of the text. Cf. Schottenhammer 2009: 5, n. 5. On the other hand, other researchers affirm that the differences between the several versions of inscriptions present only minor discrepancies in the content and can thus be considered as reliable documents. Cf. McMullen 2013: 110.

<sup>39</sup> This article considers the funerary inscriptions from the Tang period. For a comprehensive study of this kind of document and their evolution, see Davis 2008.

<sup>40</sup> Tackett 2014: 18.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Schottenhammer 2009: 15, n. 5.

figures carrying the Chinese zodiac animals. Both those stones had the same dimensions and were sealed and buried together. The inscriptions, as we will see in the three examples given below, contain a lot of information: they normally begin with a list of titles and positions held by the deceased himself, followed by the names and titles of his predecessors, as well as the origin of his clan. In some cases, these two parts are inverted, but they are both related to the origins of the recipient; a paragraph is then centred on the figure of the deceased and his military and political exploits. This pattern is followed in the three funerary inscriptions presented here. Since the text is meant to draw a positive portrait, in this section the author describes the capabilities of the deceased: loyalty, military and political capacities are often emphasized. In this paragraph the author may also recall events from the past in order to underline the merits of the deceased.<sup>42</sup>

The purposes of the inscriptions were several: a first practical function, sometimes clearly expressed by the author in the inscription, was to mark the identity of the deceased in perpetuity in case of an exhumation or in case of changes in the landscape.<sup>43</sup> Also, the inscriptions served as a permanent record in order to preserve the memory of the deceased. Nevertheless, there was also another kind of purpose, mainly related to the entombed epitaphs: the *muzhiming*, placed close to the coffin itself, would preside over the after-life of the deceased.<sup>44</sup>

Chinese funerary inscriptions were composed of two parts: the first called 誌文 *zhiwen* "to record, to remember, to describe" and the second 銘 *ming* "to inscribe, to engrave, to make it unforgettable". The first portion of the text gives all the information concerning the deceased and it is written in prose; the second one is in verse and, during the late Tang, was heavily influenced by poetry.<sup>45</sup> The two parts of the text are complementary in the sense that the second part summarizes the first one, even if in verse, and contributes to the praise for the deceased: in this sense, the *ming* part is a eulogy.<sup>46</sup>

In order to create such complex documents, the family of the deceased needed to appoint a writer capable of composing prose and

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Schottenhammer 2009: 23.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Ditter 2014: 32, n. 46.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Schottenhammer 2009: 26. There is also another kind of "non-conventional objective" mainly related to the author of the inscription who could, through his text, convey personal opinions on the contemporary political situation or other topics. Cf. Ditter 2014: 31, n. 41.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Meng Guodong 2012: 54.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Nivison 1962: 459. Because of their complexities and since they do not provide more information on the deceased, as well as the fact that they are more examples of poetry than of historical prose documents, the *ming* parts of the three funerary inscriptions are not translated in this article.

poetry. The author would then write, with the information provided him by the family of the deceased, the inscription on paper, and this version, before being carved in the stone by an artisan, would then circulate among the friends of the deceased;<sup>47</sup> a copy of it would also be given to the Board of History at the capital.<sup>48</sup> According to social convention, it was the son of the deceased person who solicited an inscription for his father, and the author was then usually a renowned literatus or literatus-official.<sup>49</sup> Sometimes the author of the inscription was close to the family and would then compose the text in memory of his late friend. Two of the funerary inscriptions examined here were composed by high officials, probably on commission, while the last one was composed by a friend – also a highly renowned poet – of the deceased as explicitly stated in the text of the inscription. The commission of a funerary inscription was the most expensive part of the funeral rituals, and only families who were part of the elite could afford it;<sup>50</sup> among them, there was the Lun family.

### *The Funerary Stele of Lun Gongren*

As seen from Chinese sources, the two Tibetans who arrived at the Chinese court were Zanpo, mGar 'Bring rtsan rTsang stong, and his nephew, Mangbuzhi, who is to be identified with Lun Gongren 論弓仁.<sup>51</sup> As said, if mGar 'Bring rtsan rTsang stong passed away soon after his arrival in Chang'an, Lun Gongren had a quite successful career under the Tang and his descendants continued to be close to the Tang court and had tight links with the aristocracy. The information we have on Lun Gongren comes from his funerary inscription, a stele, *bei* 碑, which was erected outside his mound. In the text, the tomb of Lun Gongren is said to be situated in the southern part of the capital, South of the city of Xi'an 西安 and it can be identified with a

<sup>47</sup> The five steps in producing a funerary inscription are described in detail by Liu Ru 2013: 247.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Nivison 1962: 460.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Schottenhammer 2009: 16. During the Tang period there were some entombed epitaphs that were self-authored. See Huang Zhen 2006.

<sup>50</sup> The costs of funerary inscriptions, in particular *muzhiming*, have been studied by Ditter 2014 and Tackett 2014. It seems that the authors of funerary inscriptions were rewarded with money but also with silk bolts and, according to Tackett, the cost of an inscription was determined by the number of its characters. Cf. Tackett 2006: 14.

<sup>51</sup> This question of two different names could be explained by the fact that this person probably had a common name and a personal name. Mangbuzhi could have been his personal name, of clear Tibetan connotation, and Lun Gongren could be then his common name that became Chinese.

mound still located nowadays behind the ancestral temple of Dufu 杜甫祠. The *Zhongguo wenwu dituji Shaanxi fence* (*The Chinese Atlas of Cultural relics, Shanxi volume*), gives a quite accurate description of it: "Tomb of Lun Gongren [...]: dome-shaped mound; 15 meters bottom diameter, 7 meters high, 15 centimeters thickness [of the walls] [...]." <sup>52</sup> Even if it is not possible to locate the tomb with accuracy, the inscription on the stele, which is supposed to have been located outside the tomb, is available through the *QTW*. <sup>53</sup>

The inscription was composed by Zhang Yue 張說 (667-730), an official from Luoyang 洛陽 in post under the reign of Wu Zetian and the successive emperors. <sup>54</sup> From the title, "Composition written upon emperor's request for the stele of the Commandery Prince of Bochuan" *Bochuan junwang bei fengchi zhuan* 撥川郡王碑奉敕撰, <sup>55</sup> it is clear that the inscription has been made in order to show Lun Gongren's merits and exploits and that he was supported by the imperial power. It is probable that the court paid for Lun Gongren's funeral as well as for this inscription, something that was not exceptional at that time. <sup>56</sup> The text follows a quite standard pattern of funerary inscriptions; it begins with identifying the deceased: "The Prince of Bochuan is Lun Gongren, native from Piweicheng (?), and coming from the royal family of the *zanpu* of Tufan. [His] great-grandfather was Zan, <sup>57</sup> [his] grandfather was Zun, [his] father was Ling; generation after generation [they] administered the kingdom of [Tu]fan. [Was] called Dongzan. <sup>58</sup> [Since] in the barbaric language Zai is named Lun, there-

<sup>52</sup> *Zhongguo wenwu dituji Shanxi fence, xia*: 108. The *Atlas* also gives a map of the surrounding area with all the cultural relics and shows the location of the tomb. In the area behind the Dufu temple, a mound, that has been visibly looted and restored, is still present. Nevertheless, this mound is not mentioned in any excavation reports conducted by the Shanxi Archaeological Research Institute based in Xi'an. It is therefore not possible to conclusively identify it with the tomb of Lun Gongren.

<sup>53</sup> The complete text of the inscription is given in the *QTW*, *juan* 227. This article uses this version of the inscription.

<sup>54</sup> His biography can be found in the *XTS juan* 125.

<sup>55</sup> The title "Commandery Prince" was a high title of nobility, prefixed with a place-name designating the noble's real or nominal fief.

<sup>56</sup> This happened when the deceased had particular merits or had distinguished himself for his political or military exploits. The court would then offer an official funeral in order to show that the authority was able to recognize loyalty but was also able to appropriately reward it. Alternatively, the court could bestow financial support to the family for the burial rituals. Cf. Davis 2008: 157.

<sup>57</sup> According to the inscription Qinling/mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod was the grandson of Lu Dongzan/mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung and not his own child.

<sup>58</sup> This last part of the passage is difficult to understand: it is not clear from the text to whom this name Dongzan is referring to. Normally it identifies Lu Dongzan, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung, which is said to be the great-grandfather of Lun

fore, it became [their] clan name."<sup>59</sup> There is then no doubt that Lun Gongren is coming from the Tibetan kingdom and that he was a descendant of Lun Dongzan, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung, and was a son of Qinling, mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod. Tackett states that this tradition of giving details about the previous generations, in particular the famous officeholders of the deceased's forebears, was widespread and he defines it as "distant genealogy". It is followed by the immediate ancestors of the deceased and begins with the account of when and how the clan name was acquired.<sup>60</sup> In the case of Lun Gongren, this would serve two purposes: first, to show that even the Tibetans, enemies of the Tang Empire, were willing to come and submit to the court and, second, that the Lun family was composed of brilliant people who were in charge of high posts at the Tibetan court but who became loyal and talented officials of the Tang dynasty as well.

Another detail that can suggest the identification of Lun Gongren with the mGar who escaped in 699 is the following sentence: "Since [he was] very perspicacious, [he] has foreseen the dark days; [he] despised the [clothes made] of leather and fur and aspired to the garments of our country. During the 2nd year of the Shengli era [699], he gathered 7000 Tuyuhun tents and surrendered to us."<sup>61</sup> The inscription confirms the *Tangshu* in giving the details about what was going on in Tibet at the end of the 7th century with the purge carried on by Khri 'Dus srong and, with a metaphor, affirms that Lun Gongren, intelligently, left his own land for a better one. For this courageous act, he was "rewarded with the post of General of the Guard of the Jade strategy of the Left and received the title of Principality-founding Duke of Jiuquan [in modern Gansu 甘肅 province] with benefit of 2000 homes."<sup>62</sup> The General of the Guard of the Jade strategy was a military charge in a unit included in the guards of the capital, which allows us, once again, to identify Lun Gongren with the Mangbuzhi of the *XTS* who was rewarded with the charge of General-in-Chief of the Forest of Plumes Army; this was also a unit guard of the capital. Lun Gongren, according to the funerary inscription, had a brilliant military career: during the 3rd year of the Shenlong 神龍 era (707/708), he was commissioned to patrol the vanguard troops of the North, and the following year, in the 2nd year of the Jinglong

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Gongren. Demiéville gives the following translation: "Their true name [...] was Dongzan", cf. Demiéville 1952: 380.

<sup>59</sup> 撥川王論弓仁者。源出於疋末城。吐蕃讚普之王族也。曾祖讚，祖尊，父陵。代相蕃國，號為東讚，戎言謂宰曰論，因而氏焉。

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Tackett 2014: 62-63.

<sup>61</sup> 公有由余之深識，日碑之先見，陋偏荒之韋毳，慕上國之衣冠。聖曆二年，以所統吐渾七千帳歸於我。

<sup>62</sup> 授左玉鈐衛將軍，封酒泉郡開國公，食邑二千戶。

景龍 era (708/709) he was appointed as Cavalry General of the Courageous Guard of the Right. After ten years, in the 5th year of the Kaiyuan 開元 era (718) he was also made Commander-in-chief of the Guide prefecture 歸德州. In 721, during the 8th year of the Kaiyuan era, he was transferred from the post of General-in-chief of the Guard to the post of Vice Commissioner of the Military Commissioner in the Fujun region 斧餒方. He is described as being very gifted in dealing with the soldiers and as being a righteous leader: he believed in rewards and punishments and could discern gentleness and bitterness.<sup>63</sup>

Late in his life, having fought many battles and accumulated several injuries, he fell ill. The director of the imperial pharmacy was sent to examine him but could not heal his disease. On the 5th day during the 4th month of the 11th year (13/05/723), he passed away; he was sixty years old. The court granted him the title of Prince of Bochuan and the Chamberlain for Ceremonials conferred on him the posthumous name Zhong 忠 (loyal).<sup>64</sup> His eldest son, named Lu 盧, inherited the official posts and continued the functions of his father. His second son, Jiujiu 舊久, was appointed Vice Commandant.<sup>65</sup>

During the 4th month of the 22nd year, in May 723, the emperor ordered to bury him in the southern part of the capital.<sup>66</sup> The Chamberlain for Ceremonials played some instruments and the officials hung the dragon banners. The funerals were organized by the court: "several military tents made with animal furs were set up and yak and horses were sacrificed. The good and the bad fortune were evoked and Chinese and barbarian objects were prepared."<sup>67</sup> This paragraph is probably the most interesting part of the inscription. It shows the will of the court to underline the foreign origins of Lun Gongren and to honour him in offering a funeral at the capital. In the ceremony, the origins of Lun Gongren are represented by the choice of animals for the sacrifices: yak and horses. The yak is a typical ani-

<sup>63</sup> 神龍三年以為朔方軍前鋒遊奕使，景龍二年換右驍騎將軍，開元五年兼歸德州都，使皆如故。八年遷本衛大將軍，改朔方節度副大使。公之理兵也，堅三革，利五刃，偶拳勇，齊足力，信賞罰，分甘苦，六轡如手，千夫一心。

<sup>64</sup> 積戰多瘡，纍勞生疹，恩命尚藥，馳往診之，晉豎已深，秦醫無及。十一年四月五日，薨於位，享年六十。制贈為撥川王 [...] 太常議諡曰忠。

<sup>65</sup> 長子盧，襲官封，繼事業。次子舊久，特拜郎將。Tshe ring affirms that Lu was also known under the name of Lun Chengjie 論誠節 and Jiujiu was also named Lun Chengxin 論誠信. Cf. Tshe ring 2010: 107. The charges and titles of Lun Chengxin are given in the *QTW juan* 413. This is not his funerary inscription but a decree bestowing him the title of Commander Unequaled in Honour 授論誠信等開府儀同三司制. This was a prestige title for civilians as well as for military officers.

<sup>66</sup> [...] 十二年四月，詔葬於京城之南。

<sup>67</sup> [...] 太常鼓吹，介士龍旆。[...] 虎帳貔裘，封犛殉馬，吉凶之儀舉，夷夏之物備。

mal of Tibetan culture, and horses were also used as sacrificial animals in Tibetan funerals; moreover, the Chinese were used to sacrificing horses during peace agreements with foreigners.<sup>68</sup> The use of tents of leather and fur also signifies the desire to underline the foreign origins of Lun Gongren: Chinese sources often speak about the big Tibetan tents made of yak fur where the population lived but also where the Tibetan *btsan po* resided.<sup>69</sup>

The inscription goes on by relating that the magistrate of Chang'an took over the case and the Chief Minister of the Court of State ceremonial wrote the list of the guests who could take part in the ceremony, making this burial an even more official event. According to the text of the inscription, Lun Gongren had two sons: Jiujiu/Lun Chengxin and Lu/Lun Chengjie, this last person, according to the following inscriptions, had three descendants: Weiming 惟明, Weizhen 惟真 and Weixian 惟賢.

### *The Funerary Stele of Lun Weixian*

The text of the funerary inscription for Lun Weixian has been written on a stele located in the alley going to his tomb, as its Chinese designation, *shendao beiming* 神道碑銘, attests. The title is "Inscription for the tombstone in the tomb alley of the Honorable Lun, Cavalry General-in-chief".<sup>70</sup> It was composed by Lü Yuanying 呂元膺 (749-820), a minister of Xianzong 憲宗 (r.805-820).<sup>71</sup> The inscription starts with a presentation of the deceased's origins and his ancestors: "His personal name was Weixian; his public name was Weixian. His predecessors were people from the western lands, his great-great-grandfather was called Dongzan, and he was administrator of the barbarians of the West. Since this was their public name, the family has the clan name Lun."<sup>72</sup> As in the inscription of Lun Gongren, it is clearly stated that Lun Weixian was part of the mGar clan. His origins are even more contextualized with the details relating to the contacts between the Tibetans and the Tang court: "During the Zhenguan era [626-649], [...] the barbarians Fan [the Tibetans] submitted and presented treasures [...] They admired the Chinese customs and desired a matrimonial alliance; they ardently hoped [for it] and came to the imperial palace. Emperor Taizong accepted their sincerity and promised a

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Stein 1988: 120, n. 5.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. CFYG: 11136 and 11232.

<sup>70</sup> In Chinese, the title is 驃騎大將軍論公神道碑銘. The text is included in the *QTW*, *juan* 479. This article uses this version of the inscription.

<sup>71</sup> His biography can be found in the *XTS* *juan* 162.

<sup>72</sup> 公諱惟賢，字惟賢，其先西土人也。高祖諱東贊，作相於西戎，因官立姓，遂為論氏。

princess. When the ruler of the barbarians sent Dongzan as ambassador, he was welcomed at our court. Without disconcert and without delay, he was summoned by the emperor in order to be questioned [...] The emperor decreed that the granddaughter of the Princess of Langya had to be given as [his] wife. Dongzan personally explained that he already had a wife in his country and, also, that the *zanpu* did not obtain his own princess yet. The minister did not dare to accept this special favour. Taizong congratulated him and, being surprised by this reply, fulfilled his request."<sup>73</sup> Chinese funerary inscriptions often begin with a paragraph full of allusions to historical events in order to enhance the truthfulness of the content and to place the inscription's recipient in a specific historical context.<sup>74</sup> These references to events of the past and historical figures are meant to focus the reader's attention on a particular background in order to underline a point like, in this specific case, the fact that Lun Weixian came from a foreign family who submitted to the Chinese court. This is confirmed by the list of Lun Weixian's predecessors, who have charges and titles granted by the court: "His great-grandfather was Ling that, with [his] father Gongren, came together in the East. [...] They brought back in the kingdom more than 7000 [Tuyuhun] tents."<sup>75</sup> The text mentions the titles and charges of Lun Gongren, as we have seen in the previous inscription, and his posthumous name, Zhong. The family is then praised for its merits and capabilities: "From the ancestors to the grandfather, they acquired all merits from great service; they were outstanding men of their times."<sup>76</sup>

From the text it is also possible to complete the genealogical tree of the family, since the inscription gives the name of Lun Weixian's father: Lun Chengjie 論誠節. Lun Chengjie also obtained several honorific titles, such as: "Vice Commissioner-in-chief of the Military Commissioner of the northern regions, Commander Unequaled in Honour, General-in-chief of the Imperial Insignia Guard of the Right,"<sup>77</sup>

<sup>73</sup> 貞觀中，威懷四夷，翦滅北虜，蕃戎款附，萬里獻琛，慕嚮華風，欲為和親，延頸企踵，心馳闕下。太宗皇帝覽其誠至，遂許之公主，時戎王遣相東贊為使來迎，不忒其儀，不愆於素，召見顧問，進退合旨，詔以琅琊公主外孫女妻之。東贊自陳以本國有妻，又以贊普未謁公主，陪臣不敢先受殊寵，太宗嘉之，又奇其對，撫以厚恩，遂有歸化之心。

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Schottenhammer 2009: 17.

<sup>75</sup> [...] 曾祖陵，與祖躬仁同總眾於東，至高宗朝，拔部落七千餘帳歸國。There are three inaccuracies in this passage of the inscription: the author says that Ling (Qinling) arrived at the Chinese court with Gongren; the name of Gongren presents a character *gong* 躬 which is not the one, *gong* 弓, used in other texts; the fact that it is said that Gongren (and the others) arrived at the court during the reign of Gaozong 高宗 (r. 650-683). His reign ended in 683 and was not on the throne on 699/700 when the Tibetans arrived at court.

<sup>76</sup> [...] 自高曾至大父，皆有勳烈，著於當時。

<sup>77</sup> This is a distinguished unit of the imperial bodyguard.

Commandery Prince of Wuwei with functions in Jiezhou [ancient name for the modern Gansu province]. He was conferred the title of Grand Mentor of the Heir Apparent."<sup>78</sup> The court granted him these titles in order to reward him for his participation in the repression of the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion from 756 onwards. Lun Chengjie is said to have fought with Geshu Han 哥舒翰, the famous general of Turkic origins who is celebrated for having defended from the rebels the strategic Tongguan 潼關, in modern Shanxi 陝西 province; it is probable that Lun Chengjie was fighting in that area with him. Afterwards, with his late father and younger brother, they "accomplished many feats that cannot be described in detail here".<sup>79</sup> Thus the whole Lun family was involved in the war against the rebels in the mid-8th century and gained the favour of the court. Lun Weixian was "granted the title of Escort Brigade Commander."<sup>80</sup> Then, he received the title of Commandant of Guard of the Left and was granted the golden-fish bag.<sup>81</sup> He was then promoted to Gate Guard Command of the Left and also changed to General of the Metropolitan Guard of the Left. Moreover, he was especially promoted to General-in-chief of the Metropolitan Guard of the Right and Commandery-founding Duke of Xiping [in modern Sichuan 四川], with a benefice of 3000 houses."<sup>82</sup> Besides obtaining titles of charges related to the capital, it seems that Lun Weixian, like his grandfather Lun Gongren, was given the benefice of exacting taxes from a certain number of households. The name of his younger brother, Lun Weizhen 論惟真, is also mentioned.

On the 2nd year of the Shangyuan 上元 era, in 761, Lun Weixian was specially appointed as General-in-chief of the Metropolitan

<sup>78</sup> 父誠節，朔方節度副大使開府儀同三司右金吾衛大將軍知階州事武威郡王，賜太子太傅。The title of Grand Mentor of the Heir Apparent indicated one of the three preceptors of the heir apparent, in charge of his education.

<sup>79</sup> [...] 與先父泊乎昆弟，立勲成效，不可備述。

<sup>80</sup> This was also a charge in post at the capital.

<sup>81</sup> The golden-fish bag *jinyu dai* 金魚袋 was a special object normally granted by the Chinese court to ambassadors coming to the court from abroad but was also granted to Chinese officials. It was composed of a token with the shape of a fish in a small purse made in leather or brocade and its function was to identify the people coming to court through the following system: the fish-token was composed of two parts, one given in the purse to the official and the other kept at court; the two would perfectly match once presented at the court gates. The token could be made of different precious stones or metals and the purse itself would present the name of the official and his rank. For more information on this kind of object see Schafer 1963: 26 and Des Rotours 1952. Richardson wrote an article on the fish-bag and the Tibetan ambassador, Mingxilie. Cf. Richardson 1998.

<sup>82</sup> [...] 府典軍，次授左衛郎將，賜紫金魚袋，俄轉左監門率，又遷左領軍衛將軍，又特進右領軍衛大將軍西平郡開國公，食邑三千戶。

Guard of the Right and as Vice Military Commissioner in Fengxiang 鳳翔 (in modern Gansu province) as well as Commander of the Cavalry.<sup>83</sup> A few years later, during the Dali 大曆 era (766-780) he "received the title of Commander Unequaled in Honour, appointed in the Court of Imperial Sacrifices, and appointed Supreme Pillar of State."<sup>84</sup> [...] He received the benefice of 3000 houses. Moreover, he received the title of Military Commander-in-chief of Weichuan [southern Gansu] and Commander [of the cavalry]. For a long time, he pursued an administrative and a military career."<sup>85</sup> However, even if "his teeth and hair were not in decline yet", he was several times struck by illnesses.<sup>86</sup> Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 726-779) allowed him to retire and come back to the capital, where he was appointed with the title of "General-in-Chief along with the leisure that this title granted."<sup>87</sup> This happened at the end of the Jianzhong 建中 era, in 783/784. Lun Weixian managed to recover and went back to his career, as the text states: "He recovered day by day. In the 15th year of the Zhenyuan era [800], he was appointed Cavalry General-in-Chief, General of the Militant Guard of the Right, Supreme Pillar of the State. He could then fulfil his functions at court and was rewarded for his acts."<sup>88</sup>

Lun Weixian suddenly decided to resign from his duties, probably because he was ill, as the text says: "On the 10th day of the 7th month in the 4th year of the Yuanhe era [24/8/809] he remained in his private residence having a peaceful rest until [he passed away on] the 1st day of the 10th month of the year [11/11/809]."<sup>89</sup> While there is no reference to his date of birth in order to attest his age, there is mention of what could be his birthplace. According to the tradition in imperial China, people were buried in the place of their family origins.<sup>90</sup> Exceptions could be made for capital elites: because of their high mobility, the death of such persons often occurred while they were serving in other provinces; therefore they were often buried far from their home. However, in order to respect the tradition of burying a member of the family in the family cemetery, people could be entombed in "temporary" burials before being inhumed in their

<sup>83</sup> [...] 授特進行大光祿兼右領軍衛大將軍，充鳳翔節度副使馬軍兵馬使。

<sup>84</sup> This was the highest merit title awarded to officials.

<sup>85</sup> 大曆中受開府儀同三司，太常卿，上柱國，進封成國，食邑三千戶，旋受渭川節度，都知兵馬使。

<sup>86</sup> [...] 雖齒髮未衰，而疾疢屢作。

<sup>87</sup> [...] 同大將軍，俾其優閑。

<sup>88</sup> [...] 累日而瘳。貞元十五年授驃騎大將軍，行左武威衛將軍，上柱國公，斯實朝廷獎舊勛矣。

<sup>89</sup> 元和四年七月十日，寢疾終於靜恭里之私第，以某年十月一日。

<sup>90</sup> Tackett speaks about a "primary geographic attachment", cf. Tackett 2014: 77. This place was where the family lived most of the time.

homeland.<sup>91</sup> Lun Weixian is said to be buried in Guyuan 古原, in the village of Hongu 洪固鄉, in Wannian county 萬年縣,<sup>92</sup> which seems to be not far from modern Chang'an; thus this could be the place where his family resided. Lun Weixian was married to a woman of the clan Wang 王 from Taiyuan 太原, but her name is not given.<sup>93</sup> Just like his own ancestor Lun Gongren, Lun Weixian was granted imperial honours; a decree was issued to "give the imperial retinue and play instruments [for his funeral]."<sup>94</sup> This meant that the imperial authorities held him in great esteem and that they probably covered the expenses of the funeral as well for the writing and the carving of the stele.

The funerary inscription also gives a list of Lun Weixian's sons: the older one, called Fuding 輔鼎, was appointed in Baishui county in Tongzhou 同州白水縣 (in modern Shanxi province); another son, called Ti 倜, was Commandant in Jiangyin county 江陰縣, in Changzhou 常州 (in modern Jiangsu 江蘇 province); another son was named Chu 俶 and was Administrator in the section of the Cavalry of the Metropolitan Guard of the Left. Lun Weixian's youngest brother was called Weiming 惟明.<sup>95</sup> Weiming and Weixian were great-granduncles of Lun Boyan, son of their nephew Can 慘.

### *Lun Boyan's Entombed Epitaph*

The third and last inscription is the entombed epitaph, *muzhiming* 墓誌銘, of Lun Boyan 論博言. This inscription is found in the *QTBWBY* but is also available in its original form.<sup>96</sup> The entombed epitaph was excavated in 1995 in Shijingshan 石景山 in the western suburbs of Beijing 北京 and has been stored with other archaeological findings in the Tianyimu 田義墓, in the same area.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>91</sup> "Temporary" burials were explicitly stated as such in the funerary inscription. Cf. Tackett 2014: 81.

<sup>92</sup> [...] 葬於萬年縣洪固鄉之古原.

<sup>93</sup> [...] 故夫人太原王氏祔焉.

<sup>94</sup> 詔給鹵簿鼓吹, 所以褒寵也.

<sup>95</sup> 嗣子輔鼎, 同州白水縣丞。次曰倜, 常州江陰縣尉。次曰俶, 右領軍衛騎曹參軍。[...] 公之季弟惟明。

<sup>96</sup> Cf. *QTBWBY*: 141. In the *QTBWBY*, the text of the inscription is in the section dedicated to the writings of Zhang Jianzhang 張見章. Nevertheless, this version on the inscription lacks some characters. This article uses the stone version of the text which is complete.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Chen Kang 1999: 62. The Tianyimu is the tomb of the eunuch Tian yi 田義, official of the Ming dynasty 明朝 (1368-1644).



fig. 1. Lun Boyan's entombed epitaph (original photograph, copyright Emanuela Garatti)



fig. 2. Lun Boyan's entombed epitaph - Detail of the stone cover (original photograph, copyright Emanuela Garatti)

The text of the entombed epitaph opens with a reference to the foreign origins of the recipient: "Very far in the extreme West, the steep lands, the spacious territory of mountains [...]"<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, there is no mention of the events of the Tibetan Empire or of the relationships between the Tang and the Tibetan court. It is also interesting to note that the author evokes the western lands in very general terms

<sup>98</sup> 西極金方地勢峻山域廣面統萬里肘加百蠻. The term *zhoujia* 肘加 is not clear in this phrase. The lack of punctuation in this inscription is due to the stone version of the text.

and does not use the names Tufan or Xirong 西戎, which usually are reserved for the barbarians of the West and already seen in the other two inscriptions for defining the Tibetans. Instead, he employs the term Baiman 百蠻, which normally refers to the barbarians of the South. This somewhat poetic and certainly short evocation of Lun Boyan's origins is followed by his "distant genealogy": "[...] he was the descendant of Lun Qinling, he was the great-grandson of Wang Buzhi, General-in-Chief of the Guard of the Left of Dangzhou and Commander-in-Chief in Lintao [in modern Gansu province] for the Tang. [Lun Boyan] was the grandnephew of Weiming, Military Commissioner of Weibei, Commander Unequaled in Honour, with functions of Imperial Secretary in the Minister of Justice; [...], Prince of Jiaochuan and posthumously nominated at the Minister of Works."<sup>99</sup> Once again, the genealogy allows the identification of the recipient: Lun Boyan was a descendant of the mGar clan, in particular of the members arrived in China. In this inscription, even Qinling, mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod has the name Lun. It is interesting to note that there are no more references to the great figure of mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung, who has always been identified as the ancestor of the clan. It seems that the origins of the family have shifted from mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung to mGar to mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod, a more recent forebear. His predecessors are then listed: "[Boyán] was the granchild of Weizhen, valorous Military Commander, [...], Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon,<sup>100</sup> with functions of Policy Adviser of the Right,<sup>101</sup> Regional Inspector of Yingzhou, as well as Censor in Chief,<sup>102</sup> Prince of Yuxi [in modern Shanxi province] and he was offered to be Grand Preceptor of the Heir Apparent.<sup>103</sup> [Boyán] was the distinguished son of Can, Defense Commissioner of Ningzhou,<sup>104</sup> Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon with functions of

<sup>99</sup> [...] 論欽陵之裔孫唐左衛大將軍宕州都督臨洮王布支之曾孫渭北節度使開府儀同三司檢校刑部尚書奉天定難功臣交川王贈司空惟明之姓孫。Weiming's title 奉天定難功臣 is not clear. This part of the text is preceded by the posts and charges of Qinling at the Tibetan court. Since there is no evidence that these correspond to the actual posts of mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod at the Tibetan court, and since they use a terminology that is strictly Chinese, they are not translated here.

<sup>100</sup> Prestige title for high civil officials.

<sup>101</sup> Post in the Secretariat. The Policy Adviser was in charge of attending and counseling the Emperor daily.

<sup>102</sup> The Censor-in-chief was the head of the Censorate. It was one of the most eminent officials of the central government. During the Tang it was borne by regional dignitaries such as Military Commissioners.

<sup>103</sup> One of the three preceptors of the heir apparent.

<sup>104</sup> This toponym could refer either to a prefecture in modern Gansu province or to another one in modern Yunnan 雲南 province.

Chancellor of the Directorate of Education,<sup>105</sup> Regional Inspector of Ningzhou, as well as Vice President of the Censorship Court and nominated Supreme Pillar of the State."<sup>106</sup> These details allow us to fill the gaps in the family tree of the Lun family: Lun Boyan was great-grandchild of Lun Gongren, grandchild of Lun Weizhen, child of Lun Can and also grandnephew of Lun Weiming. The text goes on saying that "his personal name was Boyan, his public name was Zhi Huai."<sup>107</sup> His titles and official charges are then given: "At the beginning of the Dahe era [827], [...] appointed [Boyan] as detached Commander of the Military Commissioner of Youzhou,<sup>108</sup> as Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon with functions of Adviser of the Heir Apparent and Investigating Censor."<sup>109</sup> Other functions were later added to his duties: "He [...] was promoted to the post of Military Commissioner and also to the post of Attendant Censor in charge of the Palace Administration. [...] [Boyan] was then promoted from the post of Guard of the Military Commissioner of Lulong to the post of Guard of the Military Commissioner of Youzhou. He also obtained the post of Attendant Censor and he was appointed with functions of Chancellor of the National University [...]."<sup>110</sup> His paternal cousin, Elian 鏢連, Prefect of Youzhou 宥州, is then mentioned.<sup>111</sup> In this inscription there are few references to historical events: in a quite difficult passage, the author speaks about a rebellion of the Man barbarians in the modern Assam region, at the beginning of the Xiantong 咸通 era (860-873); it is possible that Lun Boyan distinguished himself in the repression of this rebellion.<sup>112</sup> It seems that he was then rewarded with the title of Prefect of Tan-

<sup>105</sup> This person was the head of the Directorate of Education, a central government agency that was in charge of the schools at the capital as well as the National University and other education institutions.

<sup>106</sup> [...] 英武軍使奉天定難功臣銀青光祿大夫檢校右散騎常侍潁州刺史兼禦史大夫榆溪王贈太子太師惟貞之孫寧州防禦使銀青光祿大夫檢校國子祭酒守寧州刺史兼禦史中丞上柱國諱儻之令子。The name of Boyan's grandfather, Weizhen is written in this text with a different character: 貞 *zhen*, instead of 眞 *zhen* given in Weixian's inscription.

<sup>107</sup> 公諱博言字知遠。

<sup>108</sup> This term indicates a prefecture in the south-western part of modern Beijing.

<sup>109</sup> [...] 大和初 [...] 署幽州節度散兵馬使奏銀青光祿大夫檢校太子賓客兼監察禦史。The title of Adviser of the Heir Apparent indicates a post held by high court dignitaries. This person was in charge of the guidance in government affairs for the heir apparent. The Investigating Censor, in post in the Censorate, was in charge, among others things, of gathering complaints from the people and of impeaching officials for misconduct.

<sup>110</sup> [...] 兵馬使奏兼殿中侍禦史 [...] 自盧龍節度押衙遷幽州節度押衙以兼侍御史加檢校國子祭酒。

<sup>111</sup> [...] 堂弟宥州刺史鏢連。

<sup>112</sup> This is confirmed by Tackett 2014: 152, n. 21.

zhou (in northern Hebei 河北, not far from Youzhou 幽州) and that he excelled in his duties.<sup>113</sup>

In June 865, Lun Boyan suffered a heatstroke on his way back from a visit to the Imperial Chancellery and passed away in September 865 in the southern part of Sucheng 蘇城. He was 61 years old.<sup>114</sup> Lun Boyan was tied, according to the inscription, to an important family: his wife was the daughter of Liu Xi 劉驥 (785-829), Defense Commissioner with functions of Chief Minister of the Court of the Imperial Treasury and Vice Censor-in-chief.<sup>115</sup> Lun Boyan, according to the text, had at least one son, Congli 從禮, who probably commissioned the inscription and organized the funeral of his father. Congli was in a post at the headquarters of the Military Commissioner of Youzhou and, on the 25th day of the 1st month of winter that year (17/11/865), decided that Boyan and his wife would be buried together in the family tomb.<sup>116</sup> The tomb of Boyan is said in the text to be situated 30 *li* West of Youdou 幽都, in a place called Xin'anyuan 新安原.<sup>117</sup> This corresponds to the modern western periphery of Beijing, where the entombed epitaph of Lun Boyan has been found.

The Lun family relations with the aristocracy of the late Tang are also attested by the fact that the author, Zhang Jianzhang 張見章, was a close friend of the deceased. Before offering his eulogy, Zhang Jianzhang says in the inscription: "Boyan and I were old family friends and old good brothers at the Imperial Offices. I feel deep sorrow [because of his departure] and I am concerned and affectionate for his orphan."<sup>118</sup>

### *The Descendants of mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung - the Family Tree*

According to the names and dates given in the inscriptions and in the Tibetan sources, the following family tree can be drawn:

<sup>113</sup> [...] 檀州刺史優其俸也.

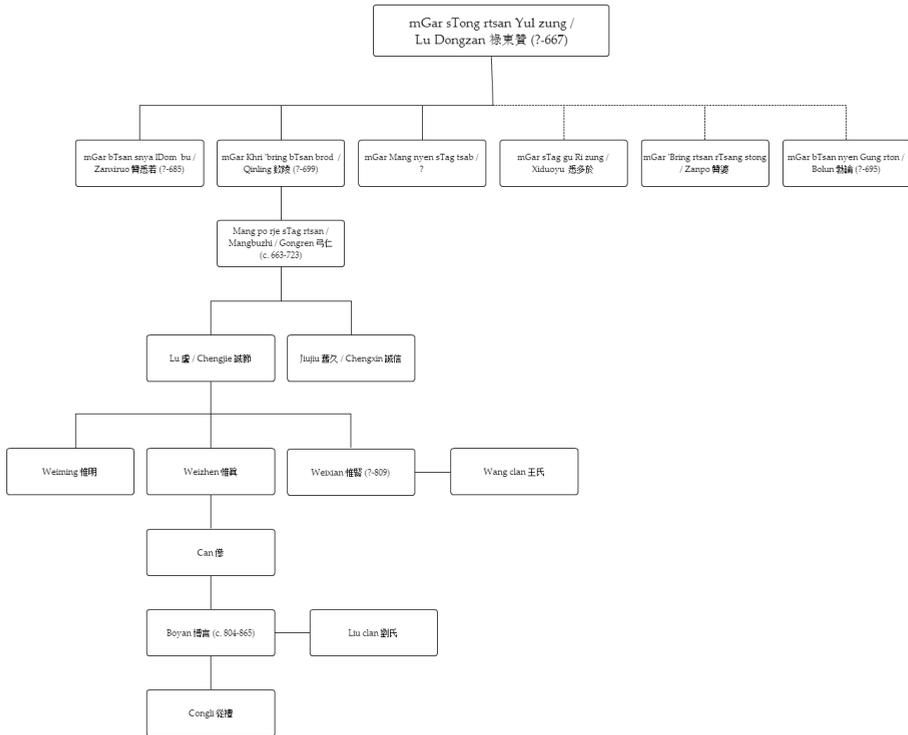
<sup>114</sup> [...] 咸通乙酉重五聘東垣回喝疾於路迄秋分永逝於蘇城南郭析津坊壽六十一.

<sup>115</sup> [...] 夫人防禦軍使檢校太府卿兼禦史中丞中山劉驥長女.

<sup>116</sup> [...] 至是嗣子幽州節度牙門將從禮卜以其年孟冬廿五日合祔故室塋陬.

<sup>117</sup> [...] 墓於幽都之西三十里新安原.

<sup>118</sup> 鯁以世舊通家衙幕兄弟痛深嘆逝念極恤孤.



### Conclusion

The above analysis of the funerary inscriptions had allowed us to draw a preliminary image of the legacy of the Tibetan Minister mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung's descendants in China. Khri 'Dus srong's purge of 699 did not spell the end of the famous mGar clan: these funerary inscriptions prove that the branch of the clan, including Zanpo and Lun Gongren, that escaped to Wu Zetian's court in 699 prospered during the whole Tang dynasty period. From the point of view of the style and the support of the funerary inscriptions we can see that the Lun clan was part of the elite of the Tang Empire: from an economical point of view their importance is underlined by the fact that the Lun could afford to organize funerals and to hire writers to compose eulogies for their deceased relatives, as in the case of Lun Boyan's entombed epitaph. Likewise, their political importance is highlighted by the fact that the court offered funerals to Lun Gongren and Lun Weixian, a privilege only granted to distinguished officials. The political and military role of the Lun clan is also clear from the inscriptions' content: since their arrival at the Tang court, the mem-

bers of the mGar clan were recognized for the role they played in the Tibetan Empire, and they were entrusted with important posts and titles; both at court and in different provinces of the Empire, the Lun held highly renowned charges. From charges in the imperial guards at the capital to the military responsibility over prefectures in different parts of the Chinese Empire, the Chinese rulers appreciated and rewarded the military skills of the Lun. This esteem seems to get bigger one generation after the other; the last generation of the Lun clan we have seen held very prestigious posts at the Chinese court like the charge of Supreme Pillar of the State but also posts at the head of the Censorate as well as in different ministries. This trend toward increase in rank was accompanied by a tendency to have more and more administrative charges rather than military ones. Lun Gongren had essentially military responsibilities, while his successors received important titles, beginning with his own son Lun Chengjie who, after having taken part in the repression of the An Lushan rebellion, was named Commandery Prince but also Grand Mentor of the Heir Apparent. Lun Chengjie's descendant, Lun Weixian, was made Supreme Pillar of the State and was appointed to the Court of Imperial Sacrifices while he had the military charge of the Fengxiang prefecture. Lun Boyan, the recipient of the last inscription, was Prefect of Tanzhou and was Military Commissioner of the same area.

This increase in the quality of titles and posts coincided also with a geographical shift. Lun Gongren's responsibilities were strictly connected with the western part of the Chinese Empire or the control of the frontiers and it seems that his foreign origins were exploited in military confrontations with the barbarians. His son, Lun Chengjie, was still in charge of the northern regions and was appointed Commandery Prince in Wuwei, in modern Gansu. In the same province was also the charge of Lun Weixian, who was Military Commissioner of Fengxiang prefecture. Things seem to have changed with Lun Weixian's son, Ti, who had a military charge in Jiangsu province and with Lun Boyan who was Prefect and Military Commissioner of the north-eastern area, around Beijing. The Chinese court was probably using the Lun family's experience and knowledge of the Gansu and Qinghai lands and people in order to deal with the northern foreigners. However, this is no longer the case with the last generations of the family. The barbarian origins of the family are also gradually forgotten. This is highlighted by the way in which their origins and their clan are described in the funerary inscriptions, as well as the way their funerals were organized. While Lun Gongren had a ceremony that included strong references to his Tibetan origins, Lun Weixian and Lun Boyan's inscriptions do not mention this kind of ritual at all.

Along with the improvement in the importance of charges and a

movement towards the eastern part of the Tang Empire, there is another kind of shift that could be observed in these inscriptions: it concerns the origins of the Lun clan. From the first inscription to the last one, we can observe that the memory of the clan is gradually replaced. In the first text we can still observe how the origins of Lun Gongren were strictly connected to his birthplace and the ancestor of his clan: mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung. In Lun Boyan's inscription, the figure of *blon po* mGar is no longer mentioned. The memory of the mGar origins is also only vaguely evoked and the Tibetan lands were just mentioned as the western lands, inhabited by the barbarians.

As the political and military posts got more and more important and the family relocated far in the East, the memory of the mGar clan shifted. The implication based on these inscriptions, the genre of which must be taken into account, is that in the second half of the 9th century, the Lun clan was entirely Sinicized.

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