

APROPOS A RECENT COLLECTION OF TIBETAN XYLOGRAPHS FROM THE 15th TO THE 17th CENTURIES

FRANZ-KARL EHRHARD (LMU, Munich) and
MARTA SERNESI (SOAS, London)

A collection of fifty xylographs has been made available in the publications series of the Paltsek Research Institute (Lhasa) under the general title *A Brief Introduction to the Evolution of Tibetan Xylographic Printing Technology (Bod kyi shing par lag rtsal gyi byung rim mdor bsdus)*. This publication is chiefly the result of the joint efforts of Porong Dawa, a well-known member of the Paltsek Research Institute, and Hildegard Diemberger of the University of Cambridge, who devoted her recent research to the documentation and study of early printing in Tibet. Porong Dawa discusses his findings also in an article, where he pays particular attention to the most important works included in the compilation and how they can contribute to our understanding of the history of printing in Tibet.¹ In the following survey we aim at further discussing the individual xylographs and, in particular, we shall detail the sites where the blocks were produced, identifying the secular and religious figures responsible for the individual printing projects. This is offered in appreciation of the work by Professor Elena de Rossi Filibeck devoted to the description, cataloguing, and study of Tibetan manuscripts and blockprints.²

Early Prints of Doctrinal Works

The publication is organized chronologically according to the date of carving of the blocks for the prints. The first eleven xylographs reproduced in the collection have

1 The publication consists of a printed book and two attached DVDs, and was published in 2013. The former presents images of the initial and final pages of each text and brief comments in Tibetan on the persons involved in the individual printing projects; the full texts can be consulted in the digital format. We will refer to the individual texts with the numbers assigned in the publication, provided in square brackets, e.g. [=1]. A brief review of this collection has appeared: see Diemberger & Clemente 2014. Some of the prints in the collection are also included in the following database: <http://booksdb.socanth.cam.ac.uk:8080/exist/apps/TTBBC/index.html>. For the discussion of the compilation by Porong Dawa, see Porong Dawa 2016. For the Paltsek Research Institute and its publication activities, see Diemberger 2012a: 26-27.

2 For the catalogue of the Tucci Tibetan Collection in the library of the ex-IsIAO Institute, see De Rossi Filibeck 1994; De Rossi Filibeck 2003. When referring to books preserved within this collection, we will refer to their catalogue number preceded by the siglum TTC.

been assigned to the period from 1407 to 1507 and may be generally classified as Buddhist doctrinal literature. This could be interpreted as evidence supporting the hypothesis that the widespread adoption of the technology of printing in Tibet in the 15th century may be seen in the context of the flourishing monasticism of the time, marked by the foundation of many new monasteries and the development of study curricula.³ Half of these early xylographs are works written by Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376-1451) or produced under his supervision; this points to the fact that the Bo dong pa school and its patrons played an important role in the initial phase of distributing Buddhist literature in the medium of printed texts.

The xylograph opening the collection is the Tibetan translation of Haribhadra's *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* [=1], which was printed in 1407 at Shel dkar chos sde in La stod lHo in south-western Tibet. The project was achieved under the supervision of the monastery's abbot Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal, and with the patronage of the ruler Ta'i Si tu lHa btsan skyabs. A general exposition of the Tantra classes by Bo dong Paṅ chen, known as the *rGyud sde spyi rnam* [=3], was also printed at Shel dkar chos sde shortly afterwards, in 1411, with the sponsorship of the same ruler.⁴

Xylographs of individual works by Phyogs las rnam rgyal were executed in later years in the Yar 'brog region, the "myriarchy" (*khri skor*) at the border between dBus and gTsang. The patrons responsible for the projects were two rulers of Yar 'brog, namely Khri dpon Nam mkha' bzang po and his nephew Khri dpon Kun dga' rgyal mtshan; the works bear the titles *Kun rig gi cho ga'i de nyid rnam nges* [=6] and *rGyud sde rnam par bzhang pa* [=8] and were achieved in the years 1446 and 1468 respectively. These printing activities might be seen within a wider effort to produce a complete set of the master's writings, known as the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa*.⁵ Another individual work of Bo dong Paṅ chen was printed in gTam shul in lHo brag (south-eastern Tibet), in the year 1477; it is a praise to the deities of the four tantra classes and it has the title *rGyud sde bzhi'i lha tshogs la bstod pa* [=9]. The last work of the Bo dong pa school from the second half of the 15th century that is included in the collection is the liturgic manual for the shortest text of the *dPal de kho na nyid*

3 This hypothesis has been formulated by Sernesi in the paper "Towards a History of Early Tibetan Printing: New Evidence and Uncharted Territories", presented at Virginia University in November 2014, and at the Lumbini International Research Institute in March 2015; see Sernesi 2017.

4 For the importance of these doctrinal works as sources for the historiography of printing in La stod lHo, see Diemberger & Clemente 2013: 133; Sernesi 2017: 201-04. Compare Porong Dawa 2016: 199 for the physical description of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, which shows two rings drawn in the middle of the pages, reminiscent of the rings for leaves-holding strings common in the Indian manuscript culture. See Diemberger 2012b for a discussion of the context of production of the text.

5 These prints of the Yar 'brog rulers, and the efforts of this royal family in producing the collected writings of Phyogs las rnam rgyal, are studied in Tsering Dawa Sharshon 2016; it should be noted that at present only the shortest of these prints belonging to the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa* cycle is available, preserved within the collection of the British Library (pressmark: Tib I.156).

'*dus pa* cycle called *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa'i snying po chos spyod* [=10]; it was printed in Zur tsho in south-western Tibet and the main patron was a female member of the ruling family of that region.⁶

A special place in the collection is given to a work from the Sa skya pa school dealing with instructions for mountain anchorites. It has the title *sGom chen gyi mngon rtogs ri khrod kyi lung gtam* [=2] and its author is Chos rje Seng ge rgyal mtshan (14th/15th cent.), founder of the Nub ris lHa mdun monastery in Mang yul Gung thang. According to the colophon, the work was printed by one Seng ge bzang po. A person of that name is known as one of the royal preceptors of the Gung thang king Khri rgyal bSod rnam lde (1371-1404), and thus the printing project has been assigned to the early 15th century.⁷ However, a more likely candidate to be the project leader would be dGe slong Seng ge bzang po from the monastery of Nub ris lHa mdun, who took part in a renovation of the 'Phags pa lha khang in Mang yul sKyid grong in the year 1523. This would place the print in the early 16th century instead. In fact, the page setting and the style of the illustrations seem rather to point to this later date. The text is marked KA, so perhaps it was the first volume of a series of works of the local monastic community of lHa mdun.⁸

Two further prints which can be classified as doctrinal works are a xylograph of Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and one text by rJe Tsong kha pa (1357-1419), the founder of the dGe lugs pa school. The *Byang chub sems dpa' spyod la 'jug pa* [=4] and the commentary by rJe Tsong kha pa on the *Cakrasaṃvaratantra* [=5] were executed as xylographs in the years 1422 and 1428 respectively, and it is mentioned in their printing colophons that both these projects were undertaken for the long life of the Phag mo gru pa ruler Gong ma Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1374-1432). These belong to the so called "Old dGa' ldan and Gong dkar ba prints," together with the first edition of other works by Tsong kha pa, such as the *sNgags rim chen mo*.⁹ The

6 The printing colophon of the *rGyud sde bzhi'i lha tshogs la bstod pa* states that the xylograph was produced as a memorial for the Second 'Brug chen rGyal ba'i dbang po (1428-1476), who had recently passed away. The liturgic manual of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa* cycle and the person bDag mo Nam mkha' bzang mo, responsible for the print, are discussed in Diemberger 2016: 272-77, which includes a translation of the printing colophon of the text.

7 Arguments for placing the print of the instructions for mountain anchorites in the 15th century and the identification of Seng ge bzang po as one of the Sa skya pa teachers of Khri rgyal bSod rnam lde are given in Porong Dawa 2016: 200-02.

8 For dGe slong Seng ge bzang po, see Ehrhard 2004: 370, n. 96; refer also to Ehrhard 2016b: 139 for the final correcting and editing by the same master of a printed edition of a biography of Thang stong rgyal po prepared in the year 1532. On the illustrations of 16th century prints from Mang yul Gung thang, see Jackson 1996: 122-26 and Sernesi 2016a. During the late 15th and early 16th century, the monastic communities from important centres in Mang yul Gung thang, such as mNgon dga', were producing printed editions of the Collected Writings of their most prominent masters; see Ehrhard 2016a: 216-25.

9 A copy of the latter work in the private collection of the Dalai Lama is described in Jackson 1989: 2-5. The colophon states that it was printed in 1426 by order of I nag bZhi 'dzom of Gong

work by Śāntideva was printed in mChing ru gNam mdun, and was sponsored by an individual named gZhon nu dpal, and one named Nam mkha'.¹⁰ The work by Tsong kha pa was realised in 'Ol ka sTag rtse: the *rdzong dpon* of this fortress at the time of the 5th Phag mo gru Gong ma was Brag dkar ba Rin chen dpal, one of the master's greater supporters, and the main donor of the foundation of dGa' ldan monastery (1409). The donor mentioned in the colophon of the work from 1428 is named Tshul khriims rin chen. Although he is otherwise unknown, he evidently continued to honour the memory of Tsong kha pa and support his pupils at the 'Ol ka fortress.¹¹

From the Brag dkar ba family came also the noble lady Chos kyi dpal 'dzoms (or Bu khrid dpal 'dzoms), the wife of sNe'u pa dPal 'byor rgyal po.¹² The couple is well known for lavishly sponsoring monasteries in the lHa sa area and the production of copies of various scriptures during the second half of the 15th century. The college of Se ra Byes was established with their support and eventually entrusted to dPal 'byor lhun grub (1427-1514), who went on to become the 8th great abbot of Se ra monastery. The commentary on rJe Tsong kha pa's *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*, titled *Legs bshad snying po'i dka' 'grel bstan pa'i sgron me* [=11], was composed by the latter master at the request of Chos kyi dpal 'dzoms, and it was printed at her main estate dPal 'byor lhun po in the year 1493.¹³

The final work in this first section of the collection is a print of Asaṅga's *Abhidharmasamuccaya* [=7] that was realized with the support of the noble house of Rin spungs, especially as a memorial for Nor bu bzang po (1403-1466) and his

dkar for the sake of the long life of the ruler Grags pa rgyal mtshan. See also Sernesi 2010: 150-53 for an illustrated print from the IsIAO collection produced under the reign of the Phag mo gru pa clan during the first half of the 15th century (TTC 1359).

10 '[/m]Ching ru or 'Phying ru appears to be located between outer Gr[v]a and 'Phyongs rgyas; see Sørensen & Hazod 2007: 168-69, n. 421 and Map 1, no. 22.

11 A portrait of Tsong kha pa (labelled Thams cad mkhyen pa Blo bzang grags pa la na mo) is found on the left side of f. 2a of the text. It may be compared with a portrait of the master illustrating a copy of the *Lam rim 'bring po* from blocks probably also carved in the 1420s, under the sponsorship of the noble family of bKra shis sben tsa; see Jackson 1996: 128, fig. 63; Jackson 1989: 6-7.

12 He was related to Nam mkha' bzang po, who is best-known as the main sponsor of the first sMon lam chen mo festival (1409) and for sponsoring the foundation of 'Bras spungs monastery (1416). See Wylie 1980, and Sørensen & Hazod 2007: 761-62. Nam mkha' bzang po sponsored a printed edition of the *Khyab bdag rdo rje sems dpa' bsnyen bsgrub bzhi'i sbyor bas mnyes par byed pa'i sgrub thabs rnal 'byor dag pa'i rim pa*; see Jackson 1990: 109.

13 For this estate and the couple's support of dGe lugs pa institutions in the lHa sa area, see Sørensen & Hazod 2007: 501, 762. The patronage of xylographic editions of rJe Tsong kha pa's works by Chos kyi dpal 'dzoms is mentioned in the *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma*; see Tucci 1971: 241. See Jackson 1989: 7-10 for the description of a copy of the *Lam rim 'bring po* realized in 1465 with the noble lady's sponsorship. Sørensen & Hazod (2007: 762, n. 8) mention that, in 1478, dPal 'byor rgyal po sponsored a printed edition of the *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* by Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1312-1375). For the establishment of Se ra Byes and the tenure of dPal 'byor lhun grub, see Ary 2015: 67-9.

brother dPal bzang rin chen (1405-1493). It can be dated to the year 1507, since the colophon also mentions that the work was executed as a xylograph to fulfil the final wishes of 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' chos bzang (1433-1503), a Sa skya pa scholar associated with the monastery of 'Bras yul sKyed mo tshal in gTsang.¹⁴

Prints of Biographies and Collected Writings

The greatest number of xylographs in the collection can be attributed to the literary genre of “biography” or “hagiography” (*rnam thar*), sometimes enlarged by “spiritual songs” (*mgur*) and then called *rnam mgur*. One may also find a “succession of teachers” (*bla rabs*), i.e. a work dealing with the lives of the lineage holders of a specific tradition, and a “succession of previous lives” (*skyes rabs*) of Buddha Śākyamuni. For the period of the 16th century, only one doctrinal work is included in the collection (a text from the Jo nang pa school), while for the 17th century three such works have been reproduced. A total of thirty-five printed biographies attests to the increasing interest in making this kind of works available in print in Tibet, at a time when the new technology developed and became employed by individual Buddhist masters and their disciples.

The earliest printed biography in the collection is devoted to gTsang smyon Heruka Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan (1452-1507), and it was produced at the monastery of rGyal gyi Śrī ri in Tsib ri (south-western Tibet) in 1508. The work was written by dNgos grub dpal 'bar (1456-1527), a student of gTsang smyon Heruka from the Sa skya pa school, and bears the title *gTsang pa he ru ka'i thun mong gi rnam thar* [=12].¹⁵ In fact, the printing of the Madman's main narrative works, *The Life and The Collected Songs of Mi la ras pa* (printed ca. 1488–90), shortly followed by *The Life*

14 The year 1447 as the date of print of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* from Rin spungs provided by Porong Dawa in Paltsek (2013: 22) is thus one sixty-year-cycle too early. A Vinaya work of 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' chos bzang was carved on wooden blocks in the 1560s by gNas Rab 'byams pa Byams pa phun tshogs (1503-1581). A copy of this xylograph is available in the ISIAO collection, TTC no. 587; see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 314; Ehrhard 2012: 163; Sernesi (forthcoming: handlist BP 3).

15 The *Life of gTsang smyon Heruka* was accompanied by a volume of the master's *Collected Songs*, by the latter's separate table of contents, and by a short treatise on the genre of *mgur* composed by gTsang smyon. The circumstances of production of these prints have been thoroughly investigated; see Ehrhard 2010: 154-58; Sernesi 2011: 186-87; Larsson 2012: 44-47; Larsson & Quintman 2015: 91-94. The printed editions of the “School of gTsang smyon” are studied in detail in Sernesi (forthcoming). The final section of this book is a handlist, providing for each edition a bibliographical description, references to the known copies, and the colophon transcription. The entries are listed with a siglum and a number: these references will be given below as e.g. Sernesi (forthcoming: EP 1) etc. For the *gTsang pa he ru ka'i thun mong gi rnam thar* and accompanying texts, see Sernesi (forthcoming: EP 2, EP 3, EP 4/1, EP 4/2). A xylograph of dNgos grub dpal 'bar's biography is available in Paltsek 2010: vol. 55 (Ri), pp. 381-509; cf. Sernesi (forthcoming: Ch. 3, M 8).

of *Mar pa* (printed in 1505), provided gTsang smyon's students with a first-hand experience in bookprinting, which they cultivated after the master's demise.¹⁶ While the print of gTsang smyon's biography and song collection in 1508 was a collective enterprise, the master's pupils would then engage in printing activities individually, producing an extensive output generally ascribed to the "School of gTsang smyon."

The School of gTsang smyon

Sixteen texts included in the collection may be identified as stemming from the "School of gTsang smyon." While many of these printed books are well known to scholarship, few are rare or unique copies.

The *rGyal ba yang dgon chos rje'i rnam thar* [=14], is a biography of rGyal ba Yang dgon pa (1213-1258) that was printed by 'Jam dpal chos lha (b. 1478), the cotton-clad (*ras pa*) of the monastery of Lo paṅ in Tsib ri; this individual had already assisted the Madman of gTsang in printing the *Life and Songs of Mar pa* in 1505, and he was among the master's pupils involved in the printing projects executed in 1508 at Tsib ri rGyal gyi Śrī. The work was printed at the monastery of Lo paṅ at an unknown date, thanks to the offering of the wooden blocks by 'Jam dpal chos lha's pupil Sangs rgyas dar po (15th/16th cent.). The carvers are not the same that were responsible for the printing projects of 1505 and 1508, and who came from sMan khabs, but they came instead from Gung thang. Their names are mGon po rgyal mtshan, mGon po rdo rje, and mGon po dbang phyug, and they are well known from printing projects realized in Mang yul Gung thang during the 1540s-50s. In particular, they all worked together at the printed edition of the *rNal 'byor dbang phyug lha btsum chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam thar gyi smad cha*, which was realized after the passing of lHa btsum Rin chen rnam rgyal (1473-1557). For this reason, the dating 1520 proposed by Porong Dawa for the former printing project is probably too early.¹⁷

If one continues to look for further xylographs produced by the "school of gTsang smyon" the next print is the biography of the great yogin Mi la ras pa carved on

16 A copy of the original blockprint of the *Mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur* is still missing. The only existing copy of the first edition of *The Life of Mar pa* that has been located so far is Wellcome Tibetan 44; see Sernesi 2011: 185-86; Sernesi (forthcoming: EP 1). This print was completed with the collaboration of two pupils of gTsang smyon, namely Lo paṅ 'Jam dpal Chos lha and bSod nams bsam grub. The former also edited *The Life of gTsang smyon Heruka* by dNgos grub dpal 'bar. The same artisans worked at both *The Life of Mar pa* and *The Life of gTsang smyon Heruka*, i.e. the scribe sMan khab stod pa Nam 'phel and the carvers Sangs rgyas and rDor dpal.

17 For 'Jam dpal chos lha and his skills in editing the writings of gTsang smyon Heruka, see Ehrhard 2010: 157. Regarding this master, his pupil Sangs rgyas dar po, and their printing projects, see Sernesi (forthcoming: Ch. 4, and handlist under siglum LP). For the *rGyal ba yang dgon chos rje'i rnam thar*, see Sernesi (forthcoming b: LP 1). A study of this and related sources on Yang dgon pa is in progress in Munich. For the *rNal 'byor dbang phyug lha btsum chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam thar gyi smad cha*, see Clemente 2007: 133-34; Sernesi (forthcoming: M 4).

wooden blocks in 'Od gsal phug in Ron (a village in Gung thang) in the year 1538. This *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i rnam thar* [=19] is a new edition based on the original xylograph prepared under the supervision of gTsang smyon Heruka and it was achieved by his disciple rTogs ldan Chos kyi rgya mtsho (15th/16th century).¹⁸

The disciple of gTsang smyon Heruka who is probably most famous for his printing activities is lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal (1473-1557). He issued more than twenty different hagiographical and doctrinal works, printed at his workshop located at Brag dkar rta so, the renowned site of Mi la ras pa in Mang yul Gung thang. The works printed by Rin chen rnam rgyal were first listed by Gene Smith (1969: 25-28) on the basis of a passage of the master's biography. Now copies of most of these editions have surfaced, and they have been supplemented by more titles printed by the same master.¹⁹ The Paltsek collection contains five texts from Brag dkar rta so, dating from the years 1540 to 1555, as well as the *rnam mgur* of the royal monk. The first print bears the title *rGyal ba rdo rje 'chang yab yum gyi rnam thar rin chen gter mdzod dang mkhas grub kun gyi gtsug rgyan pañ chen nā ro pa'i rnam thar ngo mtshar rmad byung* [=22] and formed obviously the initial part of a "golden rosary" (*gser phreng*) series of texts.²⁰ In 1543 the biography of gTsang smyon Heruka written by lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal was carved on wooden blocks in Brag dkar rta so and it bears the title *Grub thob gtsang pa smyon pa'i rnam thar dad pa'i spu long g.yo ba* [= 23].²¹ Also the collected spiritual songs of Ko brag pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1182-1261), and the *rnam mgur* of Gling ras pa Padma'i rdo rje (1128-1188) were printed at the initiative of lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; these works have the titles *Khams gsum 'dran* (= 'gran) *bral grub thob ko rag pa'i* (= brag pa'i) *mgur 'bum* [=28] and *Grub thob gling ras kyi rnam mgur* [=33] respectively.²² In the

18 This reprint of the *Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar* had been prepared by rTogs ldan Chos kyi rgya mtsho together with a reprint of the *Mi la ras pa'i mgur 'bum*, which was completed in 1540. For further details on these prints realized with the support of many nobles, officers, patrons, monks and yogins from Mang yul Gung thang and the valley of Lan 'de, see Sernesi 2011: 191-97. For the description of the editions, see Sernesi (forthcoming: P 3 and P 4).

19 For the Brag dkar rta so editions, see Clemente 2007; Clemente 2015; Clemente 2016: 406-09; Schaeffer 2011; Sernesi 2011; Sernesi (forthcoming): Ch. 4 and handlist under siglum LT. The two volumes of the master's hagiography and six copies of Brag dkar rta so xylographs can be found in the IsIAO Tibetan Tucci Collection: TTC 657/3, TTC 657/5, TTC 657/6, TTC 706, TTC 707, TTC 1089/2, TTC 1102, TTC 1356; see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: s.v.

20 This edition is undated in the colophon. For the description of the edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: LT 3). An English translation of the biography of Nāropa can be found in Guenther 1963.

21 Another copy of this edition is TTC 706. For its description, and for the edition and English translation of the printing colophon, see Clemente 2007: 135-37. For the description of the edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: LT 1).

22 Both these editions are undated in the colophon. The Tibetan text and the English translation of the collection of spiritual songs of Ko brag pa are available in Stearns 2000. For the description of the edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: LT 22). The copy of the *Grub thob gling ras pa'i rnam mgur* as contained in the Paltsek collection is not an original xylograph, but a calligraphed version

year 1550 the *Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi rnam 'phrul rje btsun ti lo pa'i rnam mgur* [=32] followed, which can be regarded as another section of the set of golden rosary texts.²³ Finally, the collection includes the first volume of the life story of lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal himself, known as *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa mkhas grub lha btsun chos kyi rgyal po'i blo 'das chos sku'i rang gdangs* [=31].²⁴

A highlight of the Paltsek collection are the rare biographies of two disciples of gTsang smyon Heruka, namely bSod nams blo gros (c. 1460?-1541) and dBang phyug rgyal mtshan (b. 1474). The life story of the former has the title *mKhas grub rdo rje 'chang bsod nams blo gros kyi rnam par thar pa yon tan gyi sbrang rtsi la dad pa'i bung ba rnam par rol pa* [=24], and was composed in the year 1544 by the youngest among the master's pupils, named Bya bral ba Tshul khriims dpal ldan, compiling different materials including an earlier *rnam thar* by the heart-sons mKhyen rab dbang phyug and sKya'o rtogs ldan. All three disciples are portrayed in the illustrations of the text. The biography was printed in a place called mGar phug located in Mang yul Gung thang at an unspecified date, possibly not long after the completion of the text.²⁵ The life story of dBang phyug rgyal mtshan is called *Phyogs bcu dus gsum rgyal ba sras bcas kyi sku gsung thugs dang yon tan 'phrin las nams gcig tu bsdus pa dbang gi rgyal po yi dri med rnam thar skal bzang yid 'phrog* [=25], and was printed in rDza ri bSam gtan gling, a hermitage in the rTsis ri region. This is so far the only known copy of this text. Unfortunately the penultimate folio (fol. 245) is missing, and the final folio (fol. 246) is very damaged, so the colophon is for the most part lacking or

of the text instead. Four copies of this edition have been filmed by the NGMPP: Reel no. L 194/11 (complete), Reel no. E 2518/6 (complete), Reel no. L 12/1 (f. 4 missing. Damaged by worms, breaking, water), Reel no. L 581/5 (f. 56 ripped, f. 57 missing); a copy has been scanned by the TBRC: W4CZ1043. For this edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: LT 12).

23 The copy of the *Ti lo pa'i rnam mgur* included in the collection is a manuscript copied from a xylograph, as it includes the printing colophon from Brag dkar rta so. It was reproduced from Khams sprul Don brgyud nyi ma 1972-76, Vol. 1: ff. 1-75. Another manuscript copy of the xylograph has been published in Uryyan Dorje 1976: 37-83. Three incomplete xylographic copies from the blocks have been filmed by the NGMPP: Reel no. E 2517/6 (ff. 13-19 missing), Reel no. L 1107/4 (f. 23 missing), Reel no. L 969/4 (section 2, f. 21 missing); see Sernesi (forthcoming: LT 4).

24 For an edition and translation of the printing colophon of the biography of lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal see Clemente 2007: 130-32; a study of this work together with its sequel, the so-called *rNam thar kyi smad cha*, can be found in Clemente 2014: 435-84. For the description of these editions, see Sernesi (forthcoming: M 3 and M 4).

25 This is a black and white reproduction of the exemplar of the text filmed by the NGMPP in 1996 in Phole (collection of ICags phug sprul sku); see NGMPP Reel no. 833/3. For the description of the edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: M 7). For a sketch of the life of bSod nams blo gros and his printing activities, see Schaeffer 2007: 223-24 and Schaeffer 2011: 465-66; for his edition of the *Life of Mi la ras pa*, see also Sernesi 2011: 188-89, 215-16. mKhyen rab dbang phyug is also known as the compiler of the biography of gTsang smyon Heruka's consort Kun tu bzang mo (1464-1549); see Diemberger 2016: 286.

illegible.²⁶ Both masters were also engaged in producing xylographic editions of bKa' brgyud pa works, and the Paltsek collection contains a manuscript copy of the biography of Nāropa compiled by dBang phyug rgyal mtshan at the exhortation of Kun tu bzang mo (1464-1549), the spiritual partner of gTsang smyon Heruka. This *mKhas grub mnyam med dpal nā ro pa'i rnam thar dri med legs bshad bde chen 'brug sgra* [=39] (marg. *kha*) was printed in the region of gNya' nang, together with the hagiography of Tilopa, titled *rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug chen po rje btsun ti lo shes rab bzang po'i rnam thar zab gsal rin gter mdzod mthong bas yid smon*, and compiled by dBang phyug rgyal mtshan in 1523 (marg. *ka*). This printing project was achieved with the support of disciples of Kun tu bzang mo, including the donor and yoginī (*sbyin pa'i bdag mo rang grol gyi rnal 'byor ma*) dBon mo g.yang 'dzom.²⁷

Further Prints from the 16th Century

Six xylographs in the collection are from the workshops of the Bo dong pa monk mNyam med Chos dbang rgyal mtshan (1484-1549) and the 'Ba ra ba bKa' brgyud pa yogin Nam mkha' rdo rje (1486-1553). Their activities in printing Buddhist texts in the region of Mang yul Gung thang have already been documented for the period from 1514 to 1554 with particular attention to the printing colophons of the relevant xylographs. The four works produced under the supervision of mNyam med Chos dbang rgyal mtshan start with the *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa chos legs mtshan can gyi rnam thar yon tan 'brug sgra* [=15], the biography of the eclectic Bo dong pa teacher bTsun pa Chos legs (1437-1521), printed in Chab rom phug in Mang yul Gung thang in the year 1525. This is followed by the biography and the spiritual songs of the rNying ma pa teacher Rig 'dzin mChog ldan mgon po (1497-1531); this work is called *sPrul sku rig 'dzin mchog ldan mgon po'i rnam thar mgur 'bum dad ldan spro ba bskyed byed* [=16] and was executed as a xylograph by mNyam med Chos dbang rgyal mtshan at the royal palace of rDzong dkar in Gung thang in the year 1527.²⁸

26 For information on this text, see Porong Dawa 2016: 204-05. For the description of the edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: M 9).

27 This printing project was already mentioned by Gene Smith 1969: 28-29. The manuscript in the Paltsek collection is reproduced from Khams sprul Don brgyud nyi ma 1972-76, Vol. 1: ff. 83-214. The life story of Nāropa is the work tentatively translated into German with the title *Die Legenden des Nā ro pa* by Grünwedel in 1933. Only a manuscript version of the original xylograph was available at the time; see Grönbold 1974: 251-55. Unique copies of both texts from the original blocks have been filmed by the NGMPP. For the description of these printed editions, see Sernesi (forthcoming: P 1 and P 2).

28 For the printing colophon of the biography of bTsun pa Chos legs, see Ehrhard 2000: 95-100. The work was printed as the first volume of the collected writings of the Bo dong pa master; see Ehrhard 2106a: 223-25 for a description of the process of production of this set of xylographs. The edition of the printing colophon of the *rnam mgur* of Rig 'dzin mChog ldan mgon po can be found in Ehrhard 2000: 101-03. It should be noted that the reproduction of the latter work in the Paltsek collection is not the original xylograph; it is a calligraphed version of the text published as *Rin chen*

The Bo dong master also printed the two-volume textual collection making up the famous “Book of the bKa’ gdams pas” (*bKa’ gdams glegs bam*), a project that was realized in the year 1539 at the hermitage of Kun gsal sGang po che. Finally, the *sKyes bu gsum gyi lam rim rgyas pa khrid du sbyar ba* [=27], a manual on the “stages of the path” (*lam rim*) from the Bo dong pa school written by Phyogs las rnam rgyal, was carved on wooden blocks in the Himalayan valley of bTsum, to the south of Mang yul Gung thang, in the year 1546.²⁹

Among the prints of the ’Ba’ ra ba bKa’ brgyud pa school realized in the 16th century in Mang yul Gung thang, is the *rnam mgur* of ’Ba’ ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1310-1391) and the spiritual songs of the latter’s reincarnation ’Ba’ ra ba Nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan (1475-1539). The *rJe btsun ’ba’ ra ba rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’i rnam thar mgur ’bum dang bcas pa* [=21] was printed in rDzos lha in the Gung thang region in the year 1540 and the *Śākya’i dge slong nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’i mgur ’bum* [=26] was printed in Lan ’de, a Himalayan valley to the south of Mang yul Gung thang, in the year 1546.³⁰

A text dealing with the succession of teachers of the Shangs pa bKa’ brgyud pa school can also be found in the Paltsek collection. It was printed once again in Mang yul Gung thang, namely in the royal palace of rDzong dkar in the 1540s. This *Shangs pa bka’ brgyud kyi bla rabs* [=29] was produced by a teacher called Byin rlabs rdo rje as a memorial for one Nam mkha’ rab gsal.³¹

The second earliest printed biography in the collection after the one of gTsang smyon Heruka is a work describing the life of the Sa skya pa scholar Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal (1399-1458). It bears the title *Kun mkhyen bkra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar gyi rgya mtsho* [=13] and it was written by the latter’s nephew, the First Karma ’Phrin las pa (1456-1539). The place of printing was the region of Dwags po and the xylograph was produced under the patronage of the

gter mdzod rgyab chos, vol. 16, Paro 1979. A print from the original blocks was filmed by the NGMPP, Reel no. L 9/3 = L 189/4.

29 For the printing colophon of the *bKa’ gdams glegs bam*, see Ehrhard 2000: 118-29; see Sernesi 2015b for the formation, reception, and editorial history of the text. The Paltsek collection includes images of black and white photocopies of vol. *ka*, ff. 20-94, then digital photos of vol. *ka*, ff. 247-365 (ff. 1-19, 95-246 missing) and of vol. *kha* (complete). The printing colophon of the *lam rim* manual of Bo dong Paṅ chen can be found in Ehrhard 2000: 148-61; this was the last one of the large-scale printing projects of mNyam med Chos dbang rgyal mtshan.

30 The printing colophons of these two works produced by Nam mkha’ rdo rje, a disciple of ’Ba ra ba Nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan, can be found in Ehrhard 2000: 130-41, 142-47. The spiritual songs (marg. *kha*) of ’Ba ra ba Nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan were printed together with his biography (marg. *ka*). For an earlier xylograph of this *rnam mgur*, printed by mNyam med Chos dbang rgyal mtshan at Kun gsal sGang po che in the year 1534, see Ehrhard 2016b: 129-33.

31 Like in the printing projects of lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal, mNyam med Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, and Nam mkha’ rdo rje also in this case the Gung thang king bDud ’dul mgon po lde a.k.a. Kun bzang Nyi zla grags pa (1514-1560) takes a prominent position as a patron for the xylograph. No further information on Byin rlabs rdo rje and Nam mkha’ rab gsal are presently available.

provincial regent called sKu rab Chos rgyal in the year 1515. A biography of the First Karma 'Phrin las pa is also contained in the collection: this work with the title *Mig gis mthong bas sprul sku mngon du byed rna bar thos pas dad pa 'i spu long g.yo legs par bsam na dgos 'dod kun byung ba 'i dpal ldan bla ma 'i rnam thar* [=18] was executed as a xylograph in Yar gsum lhun po rtse in the year 1536 by one Kun dga' rnam rgyal.³²

The collected writings of rJe sGam po pa bSod nams rin chen (1079-1159) were produced in the year 1520 in the Dwags po region as well. A complete copy of the set, beginning with the master's biography, titled *rNam par thar pa yid bzhin nor bu rin po che kun khyab snyan pa 'i ba dan*, is included in the Paltsek Collection [=46]. This edition was realized at Dwags la sgam po monastery under the aegis of the abbot bSod nams lhun grub (1488-1532), and was extremely influential in shaping all the later printed editions of the collection.³³

The *sTon pa thams cad mkhyen pa 'i skyes rabs phreng ba* [=38] is a copy of the extra-canonical edition of Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā* with the additional stories compiled by the Third Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje (1284-1339). This edition was prepared in 1542 at the palace of Gong dkar under the aegis of a scion of the Phag mo gru family, namely 'Gro ba'i mgon po (1508-1548). This work was printed again in Mang yul Gung thang in 1574, closely following the model from Gong dkar. The person responsible for this further printed edition is gNas Rab 'byams pa Byams pa phun tshogs (1503-1581), a disciple of lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal, and thus also a member of the "School of gTsang smyon Heruka."³⁴

32 The sKu rab chos rgyal referred to in the printing colophon of the biography of Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal could be bSod nams rnam par rgyal ba (15th/16th cent.), also known as rTse le[gs] Rig 'dzin chen po; for his person and prints supported by the family of the sKu rab Gong ma, see Ehrhard 2013: 65, 72-73. The *Kun mkhyen bkra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar gyi rgya mtsho* has also been published in Paltsek 2010: vol. 83 ('U), pp. 385-486. The author of the biography of the First Karma 'Phrin las pa is one Nam mkha' lha dbang Kun dga' legs pa'i blo gros.

33 For this collection, its arrangement and first printed edition, see Kragh 2013: 372-76; Sernesi 2013: 194-96; Sernesi 2015a: 482-89. The collection was reprinted in Mang yul Gung thang in 1574/5 by Byams pa phun tshogs; for details on the latter edition and its relationship with the previous one, see Sernesi 2016b: 294-99. Although correctly dated, these collected writings have been situated towards the end of the Paltsek collection, among prints belonging to the 17th century. This is probably to present them together with the printed copy of another biography of rJe sGam po pa realized in Dwags la sgam po in the 1630s; for the latter xylograph [=47] see below, and note 46.

34 For details on the Gong dkar edition, and its colophon, see Sernesi 2016b: 287-94, 311-14, where also its reprint by Byams pa phun tshogs is treated. For the illustrations of these two, closely related, editions, see also Sernesi 2016a: 353-58. For the printing projects of gNas Rab 'byams pa Byams pa phun tshogs, see Ehrhard 2012: 160-67; Sernesi (forthcoming: Ch. 6, and handlist under siglum BP). Trained in the Sa skya pa tradition in 'Bras yul sKyed mo tshal in gTsang, he was a disciple of both lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal and rGod tshang ras pa sNa tshogs ming can (1482-1552) from Ras chung phug in dBu.

It is known that this master realized around fifteen individual printing projects in the period from 1555 to 1580. Among these, the Paltsek collection contains the *rJe btsun ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i rnam thar rnam mkhyen thar lam gsal ba'i me long ye shes snang ba* [=34], the hagiography of Mi la ras pa's disciple Ras chung rdo rje grags pa (ca. 1084-1161), and the *Sha ra rab 'byams pa sangs rgyas seng ge'i rnam thar mthong ba don ldan ngo mtshar nor bu'i phreng ba thar 'dod yid 'phrog blo gsal mgul rgyan* [=36], the account of the life of Sha ra Rab 'byams pa Sangs rgyas seng ge, the teacher of gTsang smyon Heruka.³⁵ Both prints were realized in the village of gNas in Mang yul in the year 1559, and they were obviously produced as memorial offerings after the passing away of Byams pa phun tshogs's teacher lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal in 1557. The edition of Ras chung pa's biography was based on the printed edition realized in the hermitage of Ras chung phug in Yar lungs by rGod tshang ras chen (1482-1552), another of gTsang smyon's pupils who was active in book printing. Indeed, Byams pa phun tshogs travelled three times to meet this master, and during the last visit at Ras chung phug, in 1551, he received the transmission of the *Life of Ras chung pa* on the basis of a printed copy.³⁶ He obviously obtained on that occasion a personal copy of the edition executed by rGod tshang ras chen at his hermitage in 1531.³⁷ When Byams pa phun tshogs reprinted this work in his birth-village of gNas in 1559, he closely followed the original from Central Tibet, so that the length of the volume and the choice of illustrations are the same; however, the text distribution is slightly altered, so that the beginning and the end of each folio do not match in the two editions.³⁸ rGod tshang ras chen had printed other texts

35 A manuscript copy of the *Sha ra rab 'byams pa sangs rgyas seng ge'i rnam thar* text is included in Urgan Dorje 1976: 451-501. The original on which the manuscript is based is probably TBRC W2CZ7692. A complete printed copy of the Byams pa phun tshogs edition has been filmed by the NGMPP, Reel no. L 109/11. For the description of this edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: BP 1).

36 The travels to central Tibet are recounted in the master's biography, the *mKhas grub chen po byams pa phun tshogs kyi rnam thar ngo mtshar snang ba'i nyin byed yid bzhin nor bu dgos 'dod kun byung dad pa'i gsal 'debs* [=30], ff. 70a-78b; see Ehrhard 2012: 158-59.

37 See *Ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i rnam thar rnam mkhyen thar lam gsal ba'i me long ye shes snang ba*, ff. 1a-248a, vol. no. *OM*. A unique copy of this print is kept at the British Library, no. 19999 d89 (ff. 43, 241 missing); we thank Burkhard Quessel for his assistance in accessing the volume. A handwritten *dbu can* copy retaining the original printing colophon by rGod tshang ras chen has been published in Khams sprul Don brgyud nyi ma 1972-76, vol. 3; a typeset version has been published in Paltsek 2011, vol. 1. An overview of the printing projects of rGod tshang ras chen, including a discussion of the dating of this printed edition and a list of the accompanying texts printed together with it, was presented by Marta Sernesi in an unpublished paper presented at the 12th IATS Seminar (Vancouver, 2010); a thorough treatment may now be found in Sernesi (forthcoming: Ch. 5, handlist under siglum GT). On the early life and printed editions of rGod tshang ras chen, see also Ehrhard 2010. A copy of the edition prepared in gNas by Byams pa phun tshogs is TTC no. 657/4; see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: s.v.

38 The two editions are very close, so that certainly the printing sheets for carving the blocks in gNas were prepared copying the Ras chung phug edition. For example, the scribe kept the double numbering of fol. 232/233 (*nyi brgya so gnyis so gsum*), which is found in the Ras chung phug

together with the *Life of Ras chung pa*, and notably two short compositions, numbered *Ā* and *Hum*, accompanying the hagiography. The first is titled *gSang bdag sprul sku rje btsun ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i rnam thar las gsung ngag rdo rje'i tshig rin chen dpungs pa*, and constitutes a session of responsa (*dri lan*) exchanged between Ras chung pa and his disciple Sum pa chos dar.³⁹ The second is a versified eulogy summarizing the life of Ras chung pa, titled *rJe btsun ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i rnam thar gsol 'debs rnam mkhyen thar lam gsal ba'i me long ye shes snang ba*. Both texts were also reprinted by Byams pa phun tshogs, and are reproduced in the Paltsek collection [=34-35]. The printing colophon of the responsa (vol. *Ā*) is copied from rGod tshang ras chen's, and only the proper names are substituted. The Western Tibetan edition is said to have been produced in Brag dkar rta so by one Nam mkha'i rnal 'byor rGod phrug blo sde, obviously an epithet of Byams pa phun tshogs.⁴⁰

Another print in the Paltsek collection from the workshop of gNas dates from the years 1574/5. It deals with the lives of the three Buddhist teachers invited to Tibet by Khro phu Lo tsā ba Byams pa'i dpal (1173-1250) and bears the title *Paṅ grub gsum gyi rnam thar dpag bsam 'khri shing* [= 37]. Finally, also the life story of Byams pa phun tshogs himself, called *mKhas grub chen po byams pa phun tshogs kyi rnam thar ngo mtshar snang ba'i nyin byed yid bzhin nor bu dgos 'dod kun byung dad pa'i gsal 'debs* [= 30], may be found in the selection.⁴¹

edition, although the text in the Byams pa phun tshogs edition begins there at an earlier point (equivalent to the middle of the last line of the preceding folio 231b in the Ras chung phug edition). In the original edition, the narrative is followed by a first colophon by rGod tshang ras chen in ff. 240b-241a, where also the final illustrations are found; to this is appended a long poetic composition recounting the Buddhist “conversion” of Tibet and describing the hermitage of Ras chung phug, and finally the printing colophon with the register of the offerings received, running until f. 248a (not illustrated). For the translation of this colophon, see Sernesì (forthcoming b). The Western Tibetan edition also retains the peculiar feature of presenting the final images at ff. 240b-241a (corresponding to the end of the narrative text), while its own printing colophon, recording the list of donors, ends at f. 243a (not illustrated). Actually, f. 241 is missing in the unique copy of the Ras chung phug edition kept at the British library. While the contents of the missing text may be gleaned from the manuscript copies, we assume that f. 241a would carry illustrations similar to those found on f. 241a of the Western Tibetan edition, that is, (left) Phyag bzhi pa surrounded by Bya rog gdong ma and Seng ge gdong ma, and (right) Remati surrounded by Tshe ring ma and rNam thos sras: indeed, all the other illustrations exactly correspond in the two editions.

39 Sum pa chos dar is credited with the compilation of the earliest hagiographical composition devoted to Ras chung pa, called the *Ngo mtshar nor bu'i snying po*. This was one of the main sources of rGod tshang ras chen's composition, but no copy of it is known to date; see Roberts 2007: 7-9. In the colophon of the printed edition of the *dri lan*, rGod tshang ras chen states to have reproduced it faithfully following a text by Sum pa chos dar, so this might represent a fragment belonging to an ancient strata of the hagiographical lore.

40 For these prints, see Sernesì (forthcoming: BP 2/1–3).

41 Among the prints achieved by Byams pa phun tshogs in the later phase of his life one finds next to the *Paṅ grub gsum gyi rnam thar dpag bsam 'khri shing* also the extra-canonical version of the *Jātakamālā* and the collected writings of rJe sGam po pa; the latter project was prepared closely

Later Prints of Doctrinal Works and Biographies

Porong Dawa attributes to the period of the 16th century only one doctrinal work of the collection, that is the xylograph of the famous treatise on the “mountain doctrine” (*ri chos*) by Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292-1361). The *Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho* [=17] was printed together with its topical outline at a hermitage near Sa skya in the year 1528 by one Shes rab dpal bzang, supported by a ruler called Mi dbang 'Phags rgod khyung rgyal.⁴²

Further prints from the Jo nang pa school are four individual texts from the biographical tradition of rJe btsun Kun dga' grol mchog (1507-1566). These works bear the titles *rJe btsun kun dga' grol mchog gi rnam thar skal bzang dad pa'i shing rta 'dren byed*, *rNam thar skal bzang dad pa'i shing rta 'dren byed kyi 'phros zur 'debs mdzes rgyan*, *rNam thar yang rgyan nor bu'i phra bkod* and *rNam thar spel rgyan nor bu'i do shal* [=40]. They were carved on wooden blocks at the palace of Shel dkar rgyal rtse under the patronage of the ruler Chos rgyal bSod nams lhun grub in the year 1563. Among the writings of rJe btsun Kun dga' snying po a.k.a Tārānātha (1575-1635), two biographies are included in the collection. These are the autobiography with the title *rGyal khams pa tārānāthas bdag nyid kyi rnam thar nges par brjod pa'i deb ther shin tu zhib mo ma bcos lhug lhug pa'i rtogs brjod* [=43] and the work *rJe btsun bla ma dam pa rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam thar dge legs kun gyi 'byung gnas dad pa'i rgya mtsho* [=44], describing the life of a Sa skya pa master from the tradition of Śākya mchog ldan (1428-1507). The first work was printed in the years 1618 to 1621 in rTag brtan Dam chos gling, the monastery of Tārānātha later known as dGa' ldan phun tshogs gling, and the second one was printed soon after its composition in 1599 at gTing skyes in southern gTsang with the support of the local ruler Ngag gi dbang po Phyogs las rnam rgyal.⁴³

following the 1520 Dwags la sgam po edition. For these printing projects, see Ehrhard 2012: 166; Sernesi 2016b: 287-94; Sernesi (forthcoming: BP 6, BP 7, BP 8). The dating of the print of the biography of Byams pa phun tshogs in the collection—marked “1540?” (see Paltsek 2013: 83)—should be shifted to the year 1581. For another copy of this edition, see TBRC W25576. This text was accompanied by the collection of spiritual songs of the master with the title *mKhas grub rab 'byams chos rje'i gsung mgur*; see Sernesi (forthcoming b: M 5, M 6).

42 The hermitage is called rGya ri khrod and the person responsible for the print describes himself as a “yogin of the Kālacakra” (*dus 'khor rnal 'byor pa*). The date is provided as *sa pho byi*, which in the printed book of the collection is equated with 1468, but according to the chronological order of the texts within the collection, should correspond to 1528. In fact, the date of this edition is still uncertain. The work was translated in full in Hopkins 2006; this rendition includes an edition of the *sa bcad*; see *ibid.*: 733-69. For the translation Hopkins employed four copies of the text, including two later printed editions, but the Sa skya edition was not available to him; see *ibid.*: 40.

43 The four works of the biographical tradition of rJe btsun Kun dga' grol mchog have the margins *nga to ca* and are part of a xylographic edition including also the hagiographical accounts of the master's previous lives. This set of texts has been published under the title “The Autobiographies of Jo-nang Kun-dga' grol-mchog and His Previous Embodiments”, 2 vols., New Delhi: Tibet

A doctrinal work of Tārānātha can also be found in the collection and it is one of his commentaries on the *Kālacakratantra*. This work is called *Dus 'khor sgrub thabs dpag bsam ljon shing* [=45] and was executed as a xylograph at the royal palace of rDzong dkar under Khri bSod nams dbang phyug lde (1577-1621) in the year 1616. That the last king of Mang yul Gung thang supported further printing projects is also testified by the *bDud rtsi snying po yan lag brgyad pa gsang ma man ngag gi rgyud* [=41], one of the “four Tantras” (*rgyud bzhi*) of the Tibetan medical tradition; this work was printed, once again at rDzong dkar, in the year 1611.⁴⁴

The last king of gTsang, Karma Phun tshogs rnam rgyal (1586-1621), had also acted as a patron for printing projects, and the Paltsek collection contains a voluminous commentary on the *Zab mo nang don* of the Third Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje; the title of the work is *dPal rdo rje 'i tshig zab mo nang gi don 'grel bshad sems kyi rnam par thar pa gsal ba byed pa 'i rgyan* [=48] and it was printed in lHo brag in south-eastern Tibet in the year 1615.⁴⁵

Another print realized in the Dwags po region in the 1630s is a biography of rJe sGam po pa, written by 'Dzam gling nor bu rgyan pa (1589-1633) and called *Chos kyi rgyal po mnyam med sgam po pa chen po 'i rnam thar yid bzhin gyi nor bu thar pa rin po che 'i rgyan mchog* [=47]; the author is known as the Second Dwags lha sgam po sPrul sku and has written further works, including a text on the monastery's abbatial succession together with a pilgrimage guide to Dwags lha sgam po.⁴⁶

House, 1982. For the printed edition of the writings of rJe btsun Kun dga' snying po, see Zongtse 1977: 91-104; the collected writings start with the autobiography bearing the margin *ka*. The blocks for this edition were originally kept at bSam grub rtse, the seat of the kings of gTsang, before being moved to Tārānātha's monastery. Kun dga' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po was the grandson of rDo ring Kun spangs Kun bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1449-1524), and a pupil of Kun dga' grol mchog. He studied in gSer mdog can and was later an important figure of the tradition, sponsored by the gTing skyes rulers. We thank V. Caumanns for these details.

44 The commentary on the *Kālacakratantra* is contained in the second volume of the xylograph edition of Tārānātha's writings; see Zongtse 1977: 92. The xylograph of the *Man ngag gi rgyud* was in later times no more available in Mang yul Gung thang as noted by Brag dkar rta so sPrul sku Chos kyi dbang phyug (1775-1837); see his *dPal ldan gso ba rig pa 'i mang ngag gi khog 'bubs bsdus don nyung ngu 'i ngag gi gtam du bya ba drang srong kun tu dgyes pa 'i rol mo*, Dharamsala 2012, p. 92.2-4 (*de rjes mang yul gung thang rdzong dkar por chos rgyal gdung gi mtha' ma khri bsod nams dbang phyug gis bzhengs pa 'i par zhig byung 'dug kyang deng sang ni mi snang*). The dating of this latter print to the time of the Gung thang king Khri rgyal bSod nams lde (1371-1404) has thus to be corrected; see Ehrhard 2000: 14-15.

45 The author of this work, Chos rgyal bsTan pa 'i rgyal mtshan of the Karma bka' brgyud pa school, was a disciple of both the Seventh Karma pa Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454-1506) and the First Karma 'Phrin las pa. It was written in Yer pa lHa ri snying po in dBus and the place of printing is called lHo brag lHa lung klu sdings.

46 For further details on the Second Dwags lha sgam po sPrul sku and his writings, see Sørensen 2007: 51-52. As 21st throne-holder he was on the abbot's seat from 1592 until 1632 and it seems that his other writings were made available only in manuscript form. The biography of rJe sGam po pa, written in 1632, was composed upon the request of O rgyan Las 'phro gling pa a.k.a. Rig 'dzin

A xylograph that cannot be dated at the moment is the biography of Gling ras pa Padma'i rdo rje; the colophon of this *rJe grub thob chen po gling ras pa'i rnam thar* [=42] provides only the information that the work was printed in the southern region of Tibet at a site called lHa ldings.⁴⁷

The last two prints in the collection are biographies of two members of the 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud pa school. The first one is called *Oḍiyana pa ngag dbang rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* [=49] and describes the life of the teacher known as sTag tshang ras pa (1574-1651). This book bears the volume number *Oḡ* and was printed as the first of three volumes, followed by the *O rgyan mkha' 'gro gling gi lam yig thar lam brgod pa'i them skas* (vol. *Ā*), and the *O rgyan ngag dbang rgya mtsho'i mgur 'bum zhal gdams zab don ut pa la'i 'phreng ba* (vol. *Huḡ*).⁴⁸ The last book in the Paltsek collection bears the title *rDo rje 'chang dngos mi pham ngag dbang snyan grags dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar rgya mtsho'i zlos gar* [=50] and is an account of the life of Ngag dbang sNyan grags dpal bzang (1617-1680), the Second sDing che dgon sPrul sku; it was printed in the Mustang region in the Nepalese Himalayas. These two xylographs date from the 1660s and the 1680s respectively and it is possible to compare certain stylistic features of these works with further 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud prints from the 17th century.⁴⁹

'Ja' tshon snying po (1598-1639); the throne-holder of Dwags lha sgam po is known as the 'master of the teachings' (*chos bdag*) of the latter's treasure works.

47 This print was produced by one Blo gros Grags pa dpal bzang and the location given in the colophon is Gangs ri'i khrod kyi lho phyogs lha ldings. For a temple in Bhutan known as lHa ldings and founded by members of the Sa skya pa school, see Phuntsho 2013: 184. For the print of the *rnam mgur* of Gling ras pa produced in the 16th century [=33], compare note 22.

48 The collection is sealed, in turn, by a short *Grub thob chen po'i rnam thar gsol 'debs dngos grub char 'bebs* (vol. *Ho*). For a black and white copy of the four texts together, see TBRC W2CZ5991. In this scan they are followed by two more texts (no volume number). The print was achieved with the support of the king of Ladakh named bDe ldan rnam rgyal (r. 1642-94). For this king, see Petech 1977: 57-70. He also figures as a donor in the reprint of the *Life of Mi la ras pa* by gTsang smyon Heruka supervised in the Nepalese Himalayas by a master named Ratna; see Sernesi 2011: 202. The biography of sTag tshang ras pa was composed in 1663 at bDe chen chos 'khor dgon in Central Tibet by Ngag dbang Kun dga' lhun grub (1617-1676), the Second bDe chen chos 'khor sprul sku; it was printed in Ladakh and the blocks were kept at Hemis monastery; see Schwieger 1996: 83.

49 The author of the biography of the Second sDing che dgon sprul sku is known as sTag rtse sku skye Mi pham phun tshogs shes rab (1654-1715), and he composed the work in Tsā ri. The biography was published as *The Biography of the Second sDing po che Cog gra Mi pham ngag dbang snyan grags dpal bzang by Stag rtse sku skye Mi pham phun tshogs shes rab and other biographical material connected with the 'Brug pa Dkar brgyud pa tradition. Reproduced from rare blockprints and manuscripts from Hemis Monastery*. Darjeeling, Kargyud Sungrab Nyamso Khang, 1984, ff. 273-523; see also TBRC W1CZ888. The works of sTag rtse sku skye were also later printed in the Mustang region, and they were filmed in 1986 by the NGMPP, Reel no. 100/1-100/27; see also TBRC W18167. It should be noted that these collected writings were carved on wooden blocks with the support of female sponsorship; see Schaeffer 2004: 43. One can note similarities of page layout, margins etc. between these xylographic editions.

Final Remarks

The textual collection prepared by the Paltsek Research Institute, with a leading role by Porong Dawa, is titled *A Brief Introduction to the Evolution of Tibetan Xylographic Printing Technology*. Indeed, the items included in the compilation provide an overview of Tibetan printed books during the first three centuries of the adoption of the xylographic technology in Central Tibet. The prints stem from a wide geographical area, including Mang yul Gung thang, La stod lHo, gTsang, and dBus, and testify to the ubiquitous spread of woodblock printing. Alongside some witnesses already known to scholarship, we find in the collection a number of supplementary copies of known editions, or unique copies of previously unknown editions. The two DVDs make these prints now available to the scholarly community as precious data for the study of the history of the book in pre-modern Tibet. As mentioned above, the earliest printed books included in the collection are doctrinal texts sponsored by leading noble houses. In the 16th century we witness an increased production of life stories and spiritual songs of Buddhist masters, sometimes sponsored by collecting individual donations. In the section of the collection devoted to the later books we observe a wide variety in genre and length of the works printed, and see that local rulers in the Himalayan regions like Ladakh and Mustang continued to sponsor the printing of the life and works of prominent Buddhist masters into the 17th century. These precious documents are indispensable sources not only for the history of the printing technology, but also for the study of the religious and intellectual history of Tibet.

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