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## Himalayan Linguistics

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*ḥdug as a testimonial marker in Classical and Old Tibetan*

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### ABSTRACT

DeLancey (1992) and Hongladarom (1994) suppose that *ḥdug* means 'sit' in Old and Classical Tibetan, and that these languages entirely lack the evidential use of this morpheme well known in 'Lhasa' Tibetan. In contrast, Denwood (1999) sees the Classical Tibetan use of *ḥdug* as broadly in keeping with its function in 'Lhasa' Tibetan. An examination of examples from Old and Classical Tibetan suggests that evidential uses of *ḥdug* emerged late in the Old Tibetan period and that the meaning 'sit' is idiosyncratic to the *Mdzañs blun*.

### KEYWORDS

Old Tibetan, Classical Tibetan, evidentiality, mirativity, testimonial, copula

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# *hdug as a testimonial marker in Classical and Old Tibetan*<sup>1</sup>

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## 1 Introduction

The morpheme *hdug* and its role in the inflection of the “Lhasa”<sup>2</sup> Tibetan verbal system has received considerable attention (cf. Hill 2012 and citations therein). Following Tournadre (1996: 224-226, 2008: 295) the term ‘testimonial’ serves here to designate the meanings of *hdug* to indicate sensory evidence as information source. The use of *hdug* in literary sources has received less attention. Noting that the apparent cognate of *hdug* in Balti dialect means ‘sit’, Scott DeLancey writes that the “implied conclusion that *hdug* was a lexical verb ‘sit’ until well after the differentiation of Proto-Tibetan is also supported by philological evidence. Classical Tibetan *hdug* retains in earlier texts the sense of ‘sit, dwell, reside, stay” (1992: 52). DeLancey however neither provides this philological evidence nor cites these early texts. Krisadawan Hongladarom in agreement with DeLancey’s view writes that the “original meaning is ‘sit, stay, remain,” (1994: 673) and concludes that “upon examining documents in OT [Old Tibetan], we see that *hdug* (and other verbs) do not develop evidential meaning until much later” (1994: 682). In contrast to DeLancey and Hongladarom, Philip Denwood remarks that in Classical Tibetan *hdug* “usually has strongly the sense of discovery that it retains in Lhasa Tibetan” (1999: 246). The disagreement between DeLancey and Hongladarom on the one hand, and Denwood on the other hand indicates the inadequacy of the five passages so far discussed to decide whether the testimonial meaning that *hdug* bears in Lhasa dialect is also present in Old and Classical Tibetan.

## 2 The place of *hdug* in the “Lhasa” Tibetan verbal system

Before turning to the function of *hdug* in Classical Tibetan a reprise on the function of *hdug* in the “Lhasa” Tibetan verbal system has its place. The analysis presented follows that proposed by Tournadre in a number of publications (e.g. Tournadre 1996, 2008, Tournadre and Dorje 2009). However, what is here called ‘personal’ Tournadre refers to as ‘egophoric’ and what is treated here as the perfect testimonial Tournadre classifies as a separate information source, namely ‘inferential’ (Tournadre and Dorje 2009: 140-144, 413). DeLancey (1992) inappropriately describes the “Lhasa”

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1 I would like to thank the British Academy for support during the course of this research.

2 Ideally one should draw a distinction among the language of the city of Lhasa itself, other dialects of Central Tibet, and the lingua franca of the Tibetan diaspora (Miller 1955, Róna-Tas 1985: 160-161). However, the literature does not maintain this distinction.

Tibetan verbal system using the concepts ‘mirativity’ and ‘conjunct-disjunct’. See Tournadre (2008) for arguments against ‘conjunct-disjunct’ and Hill (2012) for arguments against ‘mirativity’.

“Lhasa” Tibetan exhibits a three-way paradigmatic evidential contrast within the forms of the verb ‘to be’ (cf. Table 1) and across affixes encoding tense categories;<sup>3</sup> the three evidential categories are ‘personal’, ‘factual’, and ‘testimonial’ (cf. Table 2). In non-finite clauses the difference among these three is often neutralized in favour of the personal (cf. Chang and Chang 1984: 607-608; DeLancey 1990: 298).

	Existential copula	Equational copula
Personal	<i>yod</i>	<i>yin</i>
Factual	<i>yod-pa-red</i>	<i>red</i>
Testimonial	<i>ḥdug</i>	<i>red-bžag</i>

Table 1. The “Lhasa” Tibetan copula system

The three existential copulas can all also function as equational copulas in circumstances that are poorly understood (Garrett 2001: 70, 91; Chonjore 2003: 207; Tournadre and Dorje 2009: 100-102). As an equational copula *ḥdug* is restricted to use with adjectival predicates (Garrett 2001: 68). For the topic at hand, it merits mention that the interrogative form of *red-bžag* is *red-ḥdug*, and it is negated as *red-mi-ḥdug* (cf. Tournadre and Dorje 2009: 411).

	Future	Present	Past	Perfect
Personal	<i>V-gi-yin</i>	<i>V-gi-yod</i>	<i>V-pa-yin / byuñ<sup>4</sup></i>	<i>V-yod</i>
Factual	<i>V-gi-red</i>	<i>V-gi-yod-pa-red</i>	<i>V-pa-red</i>	<i>V-yod-pa-red</i>
Testimonial	-----	<i>V-gi-ḥdug</i>	<i>V-son</i>	<i>V-bžag</i>

Table 1: “Lhasa” Tibetan verbal conjugation

The summary in Table 2 fails to capture the details that *V-ḥdug* is an alternative form of the perfect testimonial, and that *V-bžag* itself is negated as *V-mi-ḥdug* (Tournadre and Dorje 2009: 140). Thus, all told the morpheme *ḥdug* paradigmatically contrasts with *yod* and *yod-pa-red* in four

3 Aikhenvald (2004: 69 following DeLancey 1986) regards these affixes as auxiliary verbs. Since the entire verbal syntagma is treated phonetically as a single word, and these affixes occur in an obligatory and suppletive paradigm, they behave much more like the *-bat* in Latin *portābat* ‘he was carrying’ or the *-bit* in *portābit* ‘he will carry’ than they do like English auxiliaries such as ‘do’, and ‘have’. The origin of these Latin affixes is \*bhuH ‘be, become’ used as an auxiliary (Fortson 2010: 279), but researchers of Latin have had the wisdom to not confuse diachronic origin with synchronic explanation. More recent work of DeLancey’s avoids this pitfall, using the term ‘endings’ (DeLancey 1992: 44).

4 The form *V-pa-yin* is used in volitional sentences whereas the form *V-byuñ* is used in non-volitional sentences (cf. Tournadre 1996: 231-235).

constructions: the equational copula, the existential copula, the present auxiliary, and the perfect (for examples cf. Hill 2012: 391-395). In all of its uses *hdug* is a marker of the testimonial, but it is not the only such marker since *-soñ* and *-bžag* also mark this category in the past and perfect respectively.

The testimonial encodes the fact that the speaker's information source is the experience of his own five senses. Most typically the source of information is visual, but the information source marked with *hdug* may be any of the five senses (Hill 2012: 406-407) or an 'internal sense' ('endopathic', cf. Hill 2012: 404).

#### Personal

- (1) *ñar deb de yod*  
me-OBL book that exist-PER

'I have that book' (DeLancey 2001: 374).

#### Factual

- (2) *btsoñ-khañ hdir deb yag-po yod-pa-red*  
shop this book good exist-FAC

'This shop has good books.' (Speaker A says to speaker B, when neither can see the book before entering). (Yukawa 1966: 78)<sup>5</sup>

#### Testimonial

- (3) a. *hdir deb yag-po hdug*  
here-OBL book good exist-TES

'Here is a good book.' (Speaker A says after they have entered the shop while looking at the book). (Yukawa 1966: 78)<sup>6</sup>

- b. *ñar deb de hdug*  
me-OBL book that exist-TES

'I have that book.' (DeLancey 2001: 374, example 8)

Example (1) may be said "in answer to someone asking me whether I own a particular book" (DeLancey 2001: 374), whereas example (3b) is more appropriate if, believing I did not own the book, "I returned home and found it on my shelf" (DeLancey 2001: 374). The distinction is between whether the knowledge of the information conveyed by the sentence came to the speaker through personal involvement (personal) or through direct visual perception (testimonial).

5 For ease of presentation I have paraphrased Yukawa's translation of this and the following example. In fact he writes "A 氏が B 氏を案内して「この店にはいい本がある」という場合 (その本はまだ見えていない。)"

6 Yukawa writes "その店には行ってその本を見ながら、「ここにいい本がある」という時".

### 3 Testimonial use of *ḥdug* in Classical Tibetan

As a term “Classical Tibetan” is used to refer to any writing in the Tibetan language from canonical Buddhist texts translated into Tibetan during the period of the Tibetan empire (7th -9th centuries) up until the annexation of Tibet to China in 1959. A thousand years of linguistic usage is never homogenous. The current state of research precludes the presentation of a summary of the syntactic constructions that involve *ḥdug* over this entire period. Schwieger (2006: 70-141) provides the most complete available discussion of the Classical Tibetan verbal system. (An appendix to this article classifies the examples cited here into broad syntactic categories.)

Without a full investigation of the copula and auxiliary constructions in Classical Tibetan it is not possible to say whether or in what period Classical Tibetan exhibits evidentiality as a formal category of its verbal system. Instead, here it suffices to provide evidence that (contra Delancey 1992) in Classical Tibetan *ḥdug* frequently indicates that the information source for an utterance is sensory evidence and that *ḥdug* does not always mean ‘sit’, i.e. that DeLancey’s proposal of a sudden transition from a full verb *ḥdug* ‘sit’ in Classical Tibetan to a testimonial marker in “Lhasa” Tibetan is not accurate.

In narratives direct quotation is the only context in which the speaker and the witness of sensory evidence are the same person; direct quotations consequently provide the clearest evidence of *ḥdug* as a marker of information source and the investigation in this section is restricted to examples of *ḥdug* found in direct quotation.

The meaning of *ḥdug* to indicate visual evidence is present in renditions of the Gñañ-khri btsan-po myth spanning the 12th to the 16th century. This nuance I suggest by adding in parentheses a form of the verb ‘behold’. In most versions the Tibetans appoint the foreigner as emperor immediately after meeting him and realizing (or misunderstanding) that he comes from the sky.

- (4) « *ḥdi ni gnam-las byon-paḥi btsan-po ṅo-mtsbar-can žig ḥdug-pas/*  
 this TOP sky-ABL come-N-GEN emperor miracle-have a ḥdug-N-AGN /  
*ḥo- rnams-kyi jo-bo byaḥo » zer-te/*  
 we PLR-GEN lord do-FIN » say-CNV /

‘Because (we behold that) he is a miraculous emperor descended from the heavens we shall make him our lord.’ (*Ñañ-ral chos-ḥbyun*, late 1100s, Ñañ ral 1988: 159)

- (5) « *ḥo-na pbyag-sor-daṅ lce ṅo-mtsbar*  
 oh finger-ASS tongue marvel  
*che-ba gcig ḥdug-pas/*  
 big-N one ḥdug-N-AGN /  
*khyod-la nus-mthu ḥdra-ba ci yod? » byas-pas/*  
 you power like what exist ? » do-N-AGN /  
*kho na-re « nus-mthu-daṅ rdzu-ḥphrul che*  
 he said « power-ASS magic big

*drags-pos bsugs-pa yin » zer/*  
 strong-AGN exile-N be say /  
 « *ho ned-kyi rje bcol-lo » byas-nas/*  
 « Oh we-GEN lord appoint-FIN » do-CNV

‘Oh, (we behold that) you are one with amazingly big fingers and tongue. What sort of power do you have?’ He said, ‘My powers are so strong that I was exiled’, ‘Oh, we will appoint you our lord.’ (*Mkhas-pa Ldeḥu chos-ḥbyuñ*, post 1261, Mkhas-pa-ldeḥu 1987: 226-227)

- (6) « *ḥdi ni namkbaḥ-nas ḥoñs-paḥi lha-sras yin-par ḥdug-pas/*  
 « this TOP sky-ELA go-N-GEN god-son be-N-TRM ḥdug-N-AGN  
*ho-cag rnams-kyi rje ḥchol-lo » zer-te/*  
 we PLR-GEN lord appoint-FIN » say-CNV /

‘Because (we behold that) he is a divine son come from the sky we shall appoint him our lord.’ (*Rgyal-rabs gsal-baḥi me-loñ*, 1368, Kutzenov 1966: 46)

- (7) « *ḥdi lbaḥi yul-nas ḥoñ-pa ḥdug/*  
 this god-GEN place-ELA come-N ḥdug  
*ñe-rañ-gi rje byaḥo » źes/*  
 we lord do-FIN say

‘(We behold that) he comes from the land of the gods; we shall make him our lord.’ (*Bśad-mdzod yid-bźin nor-bu*, 1400s, Haarh 1969: 409)

- (8) « *lha-yul gnam-nas ḥoñs-paḥi btsan-por ḥdug/*  
 god-land sky-ELA come-N-GEN emperor-TRM ḥdug /  
*ḥdi-la bdag-cag rje-bo źu dgos » zer//*  
 this-ALL we lord request need » say

‘Because (we behold that) he is an emperor come from the sky, the land of the gods, we should invite him to be our lord. (*Mkhas-paḥi dgaḥ-ston*, 1545, Haarh 1969: 175).’

The biography of Mi-la-ras-pa (*Mi-la-ras-paḥi rnam-thar*) by Gtsaṅ smyon He-ru-ka Rus-paḥi Rgyan-can (1452-1507) also provides examples of *ḥdug* as a testimonial marker.<sup>7</sup> On his deathbed Mi-la’s father tells those around him that he does not expect to recover.

7 The *Mi-la-ras-paḥi rnam-thar* by Gtsaṅ Smyon He-ru-ka Rus-pa-ḥi Rgyan-can (1452-1507) is probably the best known work of literature in the Tibetan language. One should note (contra Tournadre 2010: 112 note 59), that de Jong’s critical edition (1959) lacks a translation whether into English or another language. To the translations listed in Hill (2007: 227 note 2) one may now add Gtsaṅ Smyon He-ru-ka Rus-paḥi Rgyan-can (2010).

- (9) *don-bsdu-la*            *ñag-tu*  
 meaning-collect-ALL word-TRM  
*ña da lan-gyi nad ðdis mi gtoñ-ba ðdug-ciñ*  
 I now time-GEN illness this-AGN not send-N ðdug-CVB

‘In sum, (I see that) this current disease will not release me.’ (*Mi-la-ras-paḥi rnam-thar* 1488, de Jong 1959: 31, cf. Zadoks 2004)

Because the *Mi-la-ras-paḥi rnam-thar* is written as a first person narrative, for this text possible objection to the inclusion of examples of *ðdug* in the frame narrative are not applicable. The narrator, Mi-la, frequently employs *ðdug* to mark the visual source of his information.

- (10) *a-ma yug-cig brgyal-nas ðgyel ðdug-paḥi tsbe /*  
 mother moment fall-ELA faint ðdug-N-GEN when

‘My mother fainted in an instant, and when (I beheld that) she had fallen ...’ (*Mi-la-ras-paḥi rnam-thar*, 1488, de Jong 1959: 36, cf. Zadoks 2004)

- (11) *nañ-du pbyin-pas dam-chos Dkon-mchog-brtsegs-pa de*  
 inside-TRM went-N-AGN religion *Ratnakūṭa* that  
*thigs-pa-dañ sa pñuñ-gis brduñs /*  
 droplets-ASS earth clump-AGN batter /  
*bya-dañ byi-baḥi brun-dañ tshañ-gdan byas ðdug-ste /*  
 bird-ASS rodent-GEN dung-ASS nest do ðdug-CVB /

‘When I went into [my childhood home, now abandoned], (I beheld that) the *Ratnakūṭa* scripture was battered with water droplets and mud clots, birds and rodents had made their nests and left their droppings [in it].’ (*Mi-la-ras-paḥi rnam-thar*, 1488, de Jong 1959: 111, cf. Zadoks 2004)

- (12) *dañ-po klog slob-paḥi slob-dpon-gyi sar pbyin-pas /*  
 first read study-N-GEN teacher-GEN place-TRM went-N-AGN  
*slob-dpon rañ ni groñs ðdug /*  
 teacher self TOP die ðdug /

‘I went to the house of the teacher who had first taught me to read; (I beheld that) the teacher himself had died.’ (*Mi-la-ras-paḥi rnam-thar* 1488, de Jong 1959: 113, cf. Zadoks 2004)

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Linguistic studies of the text include the rather flawed Saxena (1989), together with Dempsey’s rejoinder (1993), Hill (2007), and Haller (2009).



In the preceding nine examples *ḥdug* appears to exhibit a testimonial meaning, but perhaps this is fortuity. Another selection of examples of *ḥdug* might show the word in contexts incompatible with a testimonial meaning. In order to persuasively suggest that the testimonial is a structural category of Classical Tibetan grammar it is necessary to show contexts where *ḥdug* is used contrastingly with a verb such as *yin* or *yod* and it is clear that *ḥdug* indicates a testimonial value. Abel Zadoks draws attention to just such an example; unfortunately, his citation is not complete enough to allow for easy verification. The text is the *Padma bkah-thaṅ* by O-rgyan gliṅ-pa (1323-??).

- (13) *rkaṅ-gliṅ yin* » *zer mi-yi rkaṅ-du ḥdug* /  
 leg-flute be » say person-GEN leg-TRM ḥdug /  
 « *ziṅ chen g.yaṅ-gzi yin* » *zer mi-lpags bkram* /  
 « field big ground be » say men-skin stretch  
 « *rakta yin* » *zer gtor-mar kbrag blugs ḥdug*  
 « rakta be » say offering-TRM blood pour ḥdug  
 « *dkyil-ḥkbor yin* » *zer kbra-kbra sig-sig ḥdug*  
 « maṅḍala be » say doodle mere ḥdug

‘They say “it is a leg flute” (I behold that) it is a human leg.

They say “it is the ground of a vast field”—a human skin stretched out.

They say “it is *rakta*” (I behold that) it is blood poured as an offering.

They say “it is a maṅḍala” (I behold that) it is doodles.’ (Zadoks 2004)

These ten examples of *ḥdug* in quotation or in first person narrative sufficiently show that *ḥdug* does bear a testimonial meaning in Classical Tibetan from the 12th through 16th centuries.

#### 4 The use of *ḥdug* in the *Mdzaṅs blun*

In addition to the testimonial uses of *ḥdug* discussed in the preceding section, Schwiieger (2006: 73, 110-114) assembles many more examples of *ḥdug* serving as a testimonial, which it would be cumbersome to discuss here; the evidence for a testimonial function of *ḥdug* in Classical Tibetan is overwhelming. Consequently, it is necessary to re-consider the evidence Hongladarom presents to show that *ḥdug* lacks a testimonial meaning in Classical Tibetan.

Hongladarom discusses two examples from the ‘story of the householder Dbyug-pa-can’ (*khyim-bdag Dbyug-pa-can*) in the *Mdzaṅs blun*, the first (14) to show that *ḥdug* does not have a testimonial meaning in Classical Tibetan, and the second (15) to show that *ḥdug* means ‘sit’.

- (14) *yul de-na Bram-ze Dbyug-pa-can zes bya-ba zig ḥdug-ste*  
 region there-LOC Brahmin Dbyug-pa-can quote do-N a ḥdug-CVB

‘In a certain place there was a Brahmin called Dbyug-pa-can.’ (*Mdzaṅs-blun*, Derge Kanjur LXXIV, 271a = Schmidt 1843: 272, ll. 4-5, cf. Hongladarom 1994: 676)

- (15) *de-dag rgyal-pohi rkañ-pa-la mgo-bos phyag-ḥtshal-te*  
 these king-GEN foot-N-ALL head-AGN prostrate-CVB  
*phyogs gcig-tu ḥdug-go*  
 direction one-TRM ḥdug-FIN

‘They prostrated with their head at the king's feet and sat down in one direction.’ (*Mdzañs-blun*, Derge Kanjur LXXIV, 272a = Schmidt 1843: 274, l. 1, cf. Hongladarom 1994: 676)

These two examples are not compatible with a testimonial reading. Although they may suffice to show that the testimonial use of *ḥdug* is lacking in the *Mdzañs blun*, they do not prove the absence of such a use in Classical Tibetan altogether.

As to Hongladarom's claim that *ḥdug* means 'sit', although example (15) does not preclude that the petitioners remained standing, textual parallels such as (16), which employs a different verb for 'sit' in a similar syntactic context, weigh in favor of understanding *ḥdug* as 'sit' in example (15) also.

- (16) *rgyal-po-dañ / btsun-mo-dañ /*  
 king-ASS queen-ASS  
*dmag-pa-dañ / bu-mor bcas-te /*  
 soldier-ASS girl-TRM be.together-CVB  
*bcom-ldan-ḥdas gañ-na-ba der phyin-pa-dañ /*  
 Bhagavan whereabouts there-TRM went-N-ALL  
*sañs-rgyas-la phyag-tshal-te phyogs gcig-tu ḥkhod-do /*  
 Buddha-ALL prostrate-CVB direction one-TRM sat-FIN

‘The king, queen, soldier, and girl, together went to where the Bhagavan was and prostrated to the Buddha, and sat facing one direction’ (*Mdzañs-blun*, Derge Kanjur LXXIV, 149b = Schmidt 1843: 40, ll. 12-13)

Other examples of *ḥdug* in the 'story of the householder Dbyug-pa-can' unambiguous mean 'sit' (cf. 17 and 18).

- (17) *de lus ñal-nas chañ tshoñ-gi*  
 that body tired-CVB beer sell-GEN  
*khyim-du soñ-ste chañ bslañs-nas /*  
 home-TRM go-CVB beer request-CVB  
*chañ-tshoñ-ma de-la bu-pho žig btsas-te /*  
 barmaid that-ALL son a give.birth-CVB  
*bu gos-kyis g.yogs bsñal-pa-las /*  
 child cloth-AGN wrap lay.to.rest-N-ABL  
*Dbyug-pa-can dehi steñ-du ḥdug-pa-dañ*  
 Dbyug-pa-can that-GEN above-TRM ḥdug-N-ASS

*kbyeḥu de srog-dañ bral-bar gyur-to*  
 boy that life-ASS be.bereft-N-TRM become-FIN

‘Then he was tired, went into a public house and ordered beer. The barmaid had born a child and laid it to rest wrapped in cloth. Dbyug-pa-can sat on top of it and that mortal was bereft of life.’ (*Mdzañs-blun*, Derge Kanjur LXXIV, 271a = Schmidt 1843: 273, ll. 5-7)

- (18) *gnas gžan žig-na śiñ Śa-ko-ta-ka-la bya-rog cig hdug-pa*  
 place other a-LOC tree Śa-ko-ta-ka-la bird a hdug-N

‘At another place there was a crow sitting in a Śakotaka tree.’ (*Mdzañs-blun*, Derge Kanjur LXXIV, 272a = Schmidt 1843: 273, l. 9-10)

Equally clear uses of *hdug* used to mean ‘sit’ (such as 19) occur elsewhere in the *Mdzañs-blun*,

- (19) *Bram-ze de stan btiñ-ba-la hdug-nas*  
 Brahmin that cushion spread-ALL hdug-CVB

‘The Brahmin sat on the spread cushion’ (*Mdzañs-blun*, Derge Kanjur LXXIV, 131a = Schmidt 1843: 4, ll. 7-8)

That *hdug* can mean ‘sit’ in the *Mdzañs-blun* is not in doubt, but it is unclear whether this usage also occurs in other documents. In his dictionary Jäschke (1880: 277) gives ‘sit’ as the first of four definitions of *hdug*; all of his examples of this meaning are taken from the *Mdzañs-blun*.<sup>8</sup> Thus, both Jäschke and Hongladarom’s evidence that *hdug* means ‘sit’ hails exclusively from this one text.

The *Mdzañs-blun* is a problematic text as an exemplar of Classical Tibetan; it is a collection of tales found in the Tibetan Buddhist canon (*bkaḥ hgyur*), translated from Chinese into Tibetan by Chos grub 法成 in the ninth century.<sup>9</sup> This text was written during the Old Tibetan period and a copy exists among the Dunhuang texts (Terjék 1969). Either the early date of the text, or its non-native composition could account for idiosyncrasies in its grammar.

## 5 The use of *hdug* in Old Tibetan

Hongladarom cites two examples from the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* (PT 1287, Imaeda 2007: 200-229) to demonstrate that *hdug* did not have a testimonial meaning in the Old Tibetan period.

8 In contrast, his sources for the second, third, and fourth definitions (‘to be’ as an existential, copula, and auxiliary respectively), come from several texts. The second definition uses a Rgyal-rabs (presumably the *Rgyal-rabs gsal-baḥi me-loñ*), the *Mdzañs-blun*, indigenous grammatical literature, and the *Mi la mgur ḥbum*. The third definition also uses the *Mi la mgur ḥbum* and Rgyal rabs, but also cites the Bstan ‘gyur. The fourth definition cites only the *Mi la mgur ḥbum* and the Rgyal-rabs.

9 Studies include Schiefner (1852), Jäschke (1864), Takakusu (1901), Terjék (1969), Mair (1993), and Roesler (2007). More recently than Schiefner and Jäschke’s use of the text in grammatical investigations is Anderson (1987). For more on Chos grub 法成 see Ueyama (1990: 84-246).

The first example is taken from the legend of Dri-gum-bstan-po. The child Nār-la-skyes has sought to recover the body of the deceased emperor from a Nāginī of the name Ho-de-bed-de-riñ-mo, and asks under what conditions she will return it.

- (20) « *gžan j̄ yañ mȳ ħdod* /  
 other what still not want  
*myi-ħi myig bya mȳg ltar ħdug-pa ħog-nas*  
 man-GEN eye bird eye like ħdug-N under-ELA  
*ħgebs-pa gchig ħdod* » *ces zer-nas* //  
 close-N one want quote say-CVB

“I want nothing else; I want one who has the eyes of men like the eyes of birds, closing from below.” She said.’ (PT 1287, ll. 37-38, Imaeda et al. 2007: 201, cf. Hongladarom 1994: 674)

Although example (20) is a direct quotation, neither the female serpent spirit nor the boy Nār-la-skyes to whom she speaks has seen the ornithomorphic child in question, so this occurrence of *ħdug* cannot be understood as testimonial.

In Hongladarom's second example from the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* the founder of Tibet's imperial lineage, Stag-bu sña gžigs, ascends to a conspiracy which two disgruntled vassals of Ziñ-po rje present to him.

- (21) *btsan-po-ħi žal-nas* /  
 emperor-GEN mouth-ELA  
 « *ña-ħi sriñ-mo žig kyañ* /  
 me-GEN sister a even  
*Ziñ-po rje-ħi ga-na ħdug mod-kyi* //  
 Ziñ-po lord-GEN where-LOC ħdug indeed-CVB  
*khayed zer-ba bžin bya-ħo* »  
 you say-N like do-FIN  
*žes bkah stsal-nas* //  
 quote word give-CVB

“The emperor said, “Even though my own sister is with Ziñ-po rje, I shall do as you say.” (PT 1287, ll. 158-159, Imaeda et al. 2007: 206, cf. Hongladarom 1994: 674)

Whether Stag-bu-sña-gžigs knows that his sister is with Ziñ-po rje because he saw her there is impossible to answer. However, the emphatic auxiliary *mod* suggests that Stag-bu sña gžigs uses *ħdug* emphatically, evoking a connotation of *ħdug* that lead Chang and Chang (1984) to see it as a marker of certainty in “Lhasa” Tibetan, what Aikhenvald (2004) would call an 'epistemic extension of an evidential'. Thus, there is no obstacle to understanding example (21) as a testimonial use of *ħdug*, and it is unclear why Hongladarom sees it as evidence *against* the testimonial in Old Tibetan.

The *Old Tibetan Chronicle* offers two further occurrences of *ḥdug*. Neither exhibits a testimonial meaning of *ḥdug*.

- (22) *lho pyogs-kyī smad-na*  
 south direction-GEN lower-LOC  
*Hjañ dum «Mywa dkar-po» źes bya-ba-ḥi*  
 Hjañ branch «Mywa white» quote do-N-GEN  
*rgyal-po sde my cuñ-ba źig ḥdug-pa //*  
 king section not small a ḥdug-N

‘In the lower part of the southern region is a not inconsiderable kingdom of a branch of the Hjañ people called the White Mywa’ (*Old Tibetan Chronicle*, PT 1287, ll. 343-344, Imaeda et al. 2007: 214)

- (23) *mtsho ched-po-ḥi nañ-na /*  
 lake big-GEN inside-LOC  
*chu-srīn-rgyal-baḥ ḥdug-na /*  
 water-demon ḥdug-CVB  
*gnam-las che phab-ste //*  
 sky-ABL meteor fall-CVB  
*chu-srīn-rgyal-ba chu-ḥī nañ-du bsad-do //*  
 water-demon water-GEN inside-TRM kill-FIN

‘When a water demon is within a great lake, a meteor falling from heaven kills the water demon within the waters.’ (*Old Tibetan Chronicle*, PT 1287, ll. 517-518, Imaeda et al. 2007: 228)

In sum, the evidence of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* is ambiguous. Three examples do not appear compatible with a testimonial interpretation of *ḥdug*, but one occurrence is consistent with such an interpretation.

Implicitly disagreeing with DeLancey and Hongladarom, Denwood (1999: 246) cites a sentence from the *Sba bžed* to demonstrate that *ḥdug* has a testimonial meaning in Old Tibetan. Although it is clear that some version of this text does date back to the Old Tibetan period (van Schaik and Iwao 2009), because most of the witnesses are post 14th century and the textual transmission is not understood, it is best to avoid the *Sba bžed* when looking for strong evidence of linguistic phenomena in Old Tibetan.

The earliest records in the Tibetan language are the imperial stone inscriptions. Among these inscriptions the verb *ḥdug* also occurs four times: three in the inscription at the tomb of Khri lde sroñ brtsan and one in the Sino-Tibetan treaty inscription of 821-822. In all four cases the verb is used as an existential copula, with no evidential overtones, to describe the physical location of one of Tibet's neighboring lands.

- (24) *śar pbyogs // rgyal-po chen-por Rgya ḥdug-pa-dañ //*  
east direction king big-TRM China ḥdug-N-ASS

‘As great king [in] the east is China.’ (Inscription at the tomb of Khri lde sroñ brtsan, 815-817, a23-24, Iwao et al. 2009: 28)

- (25) *lho pbyogs-kyi rgyal-por Rgya-gar ḥdug-pa yañ //*  
south direction-GEN king-TRM India ḥdug-N also

‘As king of the south is India.’ (Inscription at the tomb of Khri lde sroñ brtsan, 815-817, a29-30, Iwao et al. 2009: 28)

- (26) ... *pbyogs ... Dru-gu ḥdug*  
direction Turk ḥdug

‘... cardinal direction ... is Türk.’ (Inscription at the tomb of Khri lde sroñ brtsan, 815-817, a39, Iwao et al. 2009: 28)

- (27) *śar pbyogs-na Rgya ḥdug-pa //*  
east direction-LOC China ḥdug-N

‘In the east is China.’ (Sino-Tibetan treaty inscription of 821-822, East side, l. 18, Iwao et al. 2009: 36)

Such examples from the inscriptions are similar to example (22) from the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*. This evidence from the inscriptions supports DeLancey and Hongladarom's view that the testimonial is missing from early written monuments. The evidence of Old Tibetan however does not confirm a lexical meaning of 'sit', but instead shows *ḥdug* as an existential copula.

## 6 Conclusion

The Old Tibetan inscriptions entirely lack a testimonial function for *ḥdug*. The *Old Tibetan Chronicle* presents one example out of four which is consistent with a testimonial reading. In Classical Tibetan (12th-16th centuries) the testimonial use of *ḥdug* is common. This distribution tentatively suggests that the meaning of *ḥdug* as a testimonial emerged during the Old Tibetan period. DeLancey's perspective that “*ḥdug* was a lexical verb 'sit' until well after the differentiation of Proto-Tibetan” (1992: 52) must be refined in two respects. First, although the earliest Tibetan documents and some Tibetan dialects do not exhibit a testimonial use of *ḥdug*, the emergence of the testimonial use of *ḥdug* took place significantly before when DeLancey posits. Second, the use of *ḥdug* to mean 'sit' is as far as the evidence presented here can determine an idiosyncrasy of the *Mdzañs blun*.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ABL	ablative	LOC	locative
AGN	agentive	N	the nominalizer <i>pa</i>
ALL	allative	PER	personal
ASS	associative	PLR	plural
CNV	converb	TES	testimonial
ELA	elative	TOP	the topic marker <i>ni</i>
FIN	clitic <i>-o</i> that marks finite verbs	TRM	terminative
GEN	genitive		

Any noun phrase not specified for case should be construed as absolutive.

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## **Appendix: syntactic classification of examples**

This is not the place for a thorough syntactic analysis of the Classical Tibetan verbal system. Nonetheless, because the divide among main verb, equational copula, and auxiliary verbs is easy to draw, the examples given throughout are here presented according to this division. The absence of *ḥdug* in auxiliary constructions in the inscriptions, the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, and the *Mdzañs blun*, together with the presence of *ḥdug* in auxiliaries in Classical Tibetan, suggests that the grammaticalization of *ḥdug* began after the Old Tibetan period. However, this collection of examples is not representative and is complete only for the inscriptions and the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*; it is of anecdotal value only.

### Classical Tibetan

Equational copula: 4, 5, 8, 13

Auxiliary verb: 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13

### *Mdzañs blun*

Main verb: 14, 15, 17, 18, 19

### *Old Tibetan Chronicle*

Main verb: 20, 21, 22, 23

### Old Tibetan Inscriptions

Main verb: 24, 25, 26, 27