

Γασμοῦλοι, the form Vasmuli being older than Gasmuli. No satisfactory etymology has been suggested. In 1896, ARISTOV, in his *Remarks on the ethnical composition of Turkish tribes* (*Živaya Starina*, VI, 365-366), proposed to see, in Vasmul > Gasmul, the name of the Turkish tribe of the Basmīl, already known in the Orkhon inscriptions. The same explanation is given as a fact by BARTHOLD in *12 Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Türken Mittelasiens*, Berlin, 1935, p. 40. But in spite of the phonetic correspondence, which is perfect, the difference in time and in meaning makes one hesitate to accept that solution (H. H. SCHAEDEER doubts it too in his *Remarks on 12 Vorlesungen*, 277).

As to the «Argon», I must first state definitely what they are not. In spite of CHARIGNON (*Ch*, I, 244-245) and others, there is no relation between their name and that of *ärkä'ün* given to Christians under the Mongols, first because there is no phonetic resemblance between those two words belonging to different «classes», and secondly because the «Argon» were not Christians, but, according to Polo, children of parents of whom one was a Mussulman and the other an idolater. For the question of «class», I must insist on the fact that Mong. *ärkä'ün*, written *ärkägün* and transcribed in Persian as ارکاوون *ärkäwün*, in Armenian as *arkhawun*, and in Chinese as 也里可温 *yeh-li-k'o-wên*, is of the palatalized class, while the name of the Aryun (Polo's «Argon»), in Chinese A-êrh-hun, belongs to the velar class. Polo probably knew the Mongol name *ärkä'ün* of the Christians, but he never mentioned it in his book, probably because he saw no reason to do so; if he had used it, we should expect the word to appear as \**Arcaun* or \**Arcaon*, not as «Argon». I may add that the origin of the word *ärkä'ün* is still unknown; the current explanation which makes it a transcription of the Greek ἄρχων is not convincing (cf. *Mo*, 218), no more than N. MARR's learned attempt to trace it back to Armenian (*Ark'aun, mongol-skoe nazvanie Khristian*, in *Vizantiiskii Vremennik*, XII [1906], 1-68; according to MARR, *ärkä'ün* represents Armen. *arkhaun*, itself transcribing Greek ἄρχων, but used in the sense of «royal», «kingly», and would be the equivalent of «Melchite», so that the term would have been carried to Central Asia, in pre-Mongol times, not by Nestorians, but by Armenian-Melchites). The word occurs in Western transcriptions of proper names as «Archaon» (cf. CHABOT, *Hist. de Mar Jabalaha III*, 208, 237). As to the religion of the «Argon», Z and R agree that the «Argon» were half-breeds of Mussulmans and idolaters; F is corrupt, but without any indication that the «Argon» were Christians, and implying rather the contrary; the text similar to F from which the redaction in Court French (FG) derives was probably corrupt also in more or less the same way as F, and I suppose that the new redaction, peculiar to FG, according to which the «Argon» were Christians, resulted somehow from the fact that the passage was corrupt. PAUTHIER, as usual, only took FG into account, hence his long and still too often quoted note on the Christian «Argon» (*Pa*, 212-217; I think YULE, *Y*, I, 290, is mistaken in supposing that the text in FG does not mean that the «Argon» were Christians); but I consider FB as having no authority in the present case. If Polo says that «Aryon» has the same meaning («vaut a dire») as «Guasmul» in French, it is only to illustrate the case of the «Argon» by another well-known example of half-breed, exactly I conjecture as he says elsewhere that «Mulecte vaut a dire \*Patarain», which does not mean that the Ismailians were Christian heretics (see «Mulecte»).

We can even say with a great deal of probability where Polo found these «Argon»; it was at