

There are some curious analogies between these Argons of whom Marco speaks and those Mahomedans of Northern China and Chinese Turkestan lately revolted against Chinese authority, who are called *Tungāni*, or as the Russians write it *Dungen*, a word signifying, according to Professor Vámbéry, in Turki, "a convert." * These Tungani are said by one account to trace their origin to a large body of Uighúrs, who were transferred to the vicinity of the Great Wall during the rule of the Thang Dynasty (7th to 10th century). Another tradition derives their origin from Samarkand. And it is remarkable that Rashiduddin speaks of a town to the west or north-west of Peking, "most of the inhabitants of which are natives of Samarkand, and have planted a number of gardens in the Samarkand style." † The former tradition goes on to say that marriages were encouraged between the Western settlers and the Chinese women. In after days these people followed the example of their kindred in becoming Mahomedans, but they still retained the practice of marrying Chinese wives, though bringing up their children in Islam. The Tungani are stated to be known in Central Asia for their commercial integrity; and they were generally selected by the Chinese for police functionaries. They are passionate and ready to use the knife; but are distinguished from both Manchus and Chinese by their strength of body and intelligent countenances. Their special feature is their predilection for mercantile speculations.

Looking to the many common features of the two accounts—the origin as a half-breed between Mahomedans of Western extraction and Northern Chinese, the position in the vicinity of the Great Wall, the superior physique, intelligence, and special capacity for trade, it seems highly probable that the Tungani of our day are the descendants of Marco's Argons. Otherwise we may at least point to these analogies as a notable instance of like results produced by like circumstances on the same scene; in fact, of history repeating itself. (See *The Dungen*, by Mr. H. K. Heins, in the *Russian Military Journal* for August, 1866, and *Western China*, in the *Ed. Review* for April, 1868; ‡ *Cathay*, p. 261.)

[Palladius (pp. 23-24) says that "it is impossible to admit that Polo had meant to designate by this name the Christians, who were called by the Mongols *Erkeun* [*Ye li ke un*]. He was well acquainted with the Christians in China, and of course could not ignore the name under which they were generally known to such a degree as to see in it a designation of a cross-race of Mahometans and heathens." From the *Yuen ch'ao pi shi* and the *Yuen shi*, Palladius gives some examples which refer to Mahomedans.

Professor Devéria (*Notes d'Épig.* 49) says that the word "Ἀρχων" was used by the Mongol Government as a designation for the members of the Christian clergy at large; the word is used between 1252 and 1315 to speak of *Christian* priests by the historians of the Yuen Dynasty; it is not used before nor is it to be found in the Singan-fu inscription (*l.c.* 82). Mr. E. H. Parker (*China Review*, xxiv. p. 157) supplies a few omissions in Devéria's paper; we note among others: "Ninth moon of 1329. Buddhist services ordered to be held by the Uighúr priests, and by the Christians [*Ye li ke un*]."

Captain Wellby writes (*Unknown Tibet*, p. 32): "We impressed into our service six other muleteers, four of them being Argoons, who are really half-castes, arising

* Mr. Shaw writes *Toongānee*. The first mention of this name that I know of is in Izzat Ullah's Journal. (Vide *J. R. A. S.* VII. 310.) The people are there said to have got the name from having first settled in *Tungan*. Tung-gan is in the same page the name given to the strong city of T'ung Kwan on the Hwang-ho. (See Bk. II. ch. xli. note 1.) A variety of etymologies have been given, but Vámbéry's seems the most probable.

† Probably no man could now say what this means. But the following note from Mr. Ney Elias is very interesting in its suggestion of analogy: "In my report to the Geographical Society I have noticed the peculiar Western appearance of Kwei-hwa-ch'eng, and the little gardens of creepers and flowers in pots which are displayed round the porches in the court-yards of the better class of houses, and which I have seen in no other part of China. My attention was especially drawn to these by your quotation from Rashiduddin."

‡ A translation of *Heins'* was kindly lent me by the author of this article, the lamented Mr. J. W. S. Wyllie.