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AN EARLY MONGOLIAN TOPONYM

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The well-known early Sung gazetteer *T'ai-p'ing huan-yü chi* [*The Record of the Domed Precinct Space of the Era of Grand Complanation*], a work compiled in the period 976-983 A.D., contains, in its description of the northern marches of the Chinese empire, numerous local non-Chinese toponyms, several of which can be identified as transcriptions of Turco-Mongolian words.

Among them, we have *K'u-li* 庫利 (35.13a), the name of a river, also called in Chinese the " 'Slave' River," thus permitting us to equate *k'u-li* with Turkish *qul*, "slave"; and the city of *Mo-le* 磨勒 (38.10a; Anc. Ch. *muá-lək*) so named by the T'u-chüeh (according to the text) because of the excellent fish in the river nearby. The transcription undoubtedly represents Turk. *balıq*, "fish," with Ch. *m-* serving to render, as it frequently does, Turk. *b-*. *Chüan* 36.4b mentions also a *Ku-hu* 骨胡 (Anc. Ch. *kuəδ-γuo*) river, also called " 'Dry' River." *Kuəδ-γuo* could well stand for **qurγu*, a dialectal form of standard Turkish *kuruy*, "dry."

Of greater interest is the name of a river in I-ch'uan hsien 宜川縣 (modern Northern Shensi): *K'u-t'ó* 庫碕 (Anc. Ch. *k'uo-d'á*). *K'uo-d'á* is a perfect transcription of Mongol *quda*, "affine," "relative by marriage," "go-between," "gossip," "trader," "monger," a term of great sociological import for the interpretation of early Mongolian tribal organization. According to the text (35.12a) which quotes an earlier atlas, this river derived its name from the fact that it formed a line of demarcation between the Chinese and the Barbarians and that the two peoples were in the habit of solemnizing contracts of marriage or alliance (with the burning of incense 香火) in the middle of the watercourse. The *t'u-ching* 圖經 (atlas) from which the *T'ai-p'ing huan-yü chi*

derived its information cannot be identified with certainty, but is doubtlessly a T'ang or Sui work of the type mentioned in the bibliographies of the two dynasties. The I-ch'uan territory had never been under the control of the Sung, and their gazetteer must have utilized here sources a century or two older.

Quda is typical for the Mongolian branch of the Altaic family, since the root is practically unknown in Turkish environment. Mongolists will, I am sure, welcome this evidence of the important term attested possibly as early as the seventh century.