



BULAYĪQ

BULAYĪQ, town in eastern Turkestan, modern Chinese Sinkiang, situated about ten km north of Turfan in the foothills of the Tien-shan. The name of the town is also conventionally applied to the nearby ruin of Shūi-pang ([Figure 1](#)), where a library of fragmentary Christian manuscripts was discovered in 1905 by the second German Turfan expedition under A. von Le Coq (see Le Coq, *Auf Hellas Spuren in Ostturkistan*, Leipzig, 1926, p. 88, and *JRAS*, 1909, pp. 319 and 321).

Most of these manuscripts are thought to belong to the ninth and tenth centuries A.D., although criteria for dating them are not well-defined. They include Christian texts in Sogdian, Syriac, and Turkish (all three languages both in Syriac script and in cursive Sogdian or Uygur script), fragments of psalters in Middle Persian (in Pahlavi script) and New Persian (in Syriac script), and even the first line of a psalm in Greek as a superscription to its translation into Sogdian (see [Bible v](#)).

To judge from the contents of the Sogdian manuscripts, which include, in addition to general Christian literature, many texts concerning asceticism and the religious life, the site of Shūi-pang is that of a Nestorian monastery. The employment of Middle Persian beside Syriac in the liturgy, together with other evidence, suggests that the area was evangelized from Iran, perhaps specifically from Marv, which was a major center of Nestorian missionary activity. The mission evidently enjoyed considerable success among the Sogdian-speaking population of the area, as indicated by the preponderance of texts in this language, though the community had become largely Turcophone



by the end of the period of the monastery's use (see [Christian Sogdian Literature](#)).

An older form of the name Bulayīq is attested as Bīlayuq in Uygur Turkish documents (see P. Zieme, *Türk dili araştırma yıllığı belleten*, 1978-79, Ankara, 1981, p. 90) and as *Phalayākā* in Khotanese (see H. W. Bailey, *Asia Major*, N.S., 2, 1951, p. 15).

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