



BARTUS, BERNARD AUGUST THEODOR LUDWIG

BARTUS, BERNARD AUGUST THEODOR LUDWIG (b. Lassan, 30 January 1858; d. Berlin, 28 January 1941), technician and a key figure of the [Turfan expeditions](#) because of his autodidactical development of methods of removing inscriptions and works of art from rock walls and ruins without their getting damaged, as well as methods of their conservation and preservation.

Theodor was the third child of Carl Bartus (or Bartos), a master weaver, and Marie Charlotte Friederike Lorenz (for the following biographical details, see Anon., Jordan, Knüppel and van Tongerloo). He grew up with his brother and sister in Lassan (a town in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, in northeastern Germany), where he went to primary school. He started his career as a sailor in the most humble way on his uncle's sailing ship at the age of twelve or fourteen. He first worked in the fishery business, where most of his young mates remained, but afterwards (1872-1880) he was taken on in the German Merchant Navy on long goal sailing-ships. Between 1880 and 1887 he was employed on Australian ships. In Australia he passed the helmsman examination and became a captain. During his long years of seafaring he experienced many adventures, including two shipwrecks. Once he was drifting for two weeks on the Atlantic Ocean, and at another time he roamed around together with fourteen shipmen on the keel of a boat near the Cape of Good Hope. Years of experience in sailing boats eventually turned him into a



master of all seafaring skills. For a while he was a squatter in Australia during which he also turned into an excellent horseman.

After his return from Australia on 6 August 1887, his Melbourne bank went bankrupt; he lost all his savings and was forced to look for a job. On 21 May 1888, he was appointed as a technician in the Berlin-Dahlem Ethnographical Museum (*Völkerkundemuseum*). His skills as an experienced sailor were in great demand then, because ships that were arriving from the German colonies in the Pacific had to be repaired. Twenty years later (on 1 July 1908, antedated 1 January 1904) he was appointed supervisor of the museum's collection (*Sammlungsaufseher*), and a few years later in January 1914, following his Turfan expeditions, he was promoted to assistant conservator (*Hilfsrestaurator*).

Between 1902 and 1914 Bartus participated as a technical assistant in all four German Turfan Expeditions under the direction of Albert Grünwedel and Albert von Le Coq; he was the only person who participated in them all.

Already during the first expedition, Bartus developed methods of safely handling frescoes and inscriptions (described in Klimkeit, p. 36; Knüppel and van Tongerloo, p. 72). His capabilities were described by Albert von Le Coq (Knüppel and van Tongerloo, p. 73, n. 25; cf. n. 26); Bartus was even solely responsible for the Fourth Expedition (1913-14) when Von Le Coq was taken ill with dysentery.

Bartus was active in Mesopotamia and Persia as well; in 1911-12 he traveled to Samarra on the Tigris to save frescoes (see Sarre), and in 1929, he undertook his last trip to India and Persia to collaborate with [Ernst Herzfeld](#) in Kuh-e Ḳāja in Sistān.

Until his death in January 1941, Bartus worked for the *Völkerkundemuseum*, primarily for the conservation of Turfan materials and their preparation for exhibition. He was pensioned on 31 March 1923, but carried on working in the Museum on the basis of renewable contracts. His diary, which contained significant pieces of information, seems to have been lost, most probably destroyed during World War II.



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