



## GRAY, LOUIS HERBERT

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**GRAY, LOUIS HERBERT**, orientalist and philologist (b. Newark, New Jersey, 10 April, 1875; d. New York, New York, 18 August, 1955; ; [Figure 1](#)), who was associated with Columbia University throughout most of his academic life. Gray received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Classics from Princeton University in 1896 and then went on to Columbia University to study Indo-Iranian philology with A. V. Williams Jackson, graduating with the Ph.D. in 1900. He taught briefly at Princeton (1901-2), then continued informal study at Columbia, which included Hebrew and Old Irish, while working in various editorial capacities for the *New International Encyclopædia* (etymology and the modern history of India), the *Jewish Encyclopædia* (reviser of translations), *Hastings' Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* (assistant editor and contributor), and *Mythology of All Races* (editor). After World War I, he went to Paris as a member of the American Peace Commission and remained on the staff of the American Embassy there until 1920. In 1921 Gray was appointed associate professor of philology at the University of Nebraska, where he remained until his appointment at Columbia University as professor of Oriental Languages in 1926. In 1935, he became Professor of Comparative Linguistics, a position he held until his retirement in 1944.

Gray was the author of books and articles on Iranian subjects. They include *Indo-Iranian Phonology* (New York, 1902), *Hundred Love Songs of Kamal-ad-Din of Isfahan* (New York, 1904), and *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions* (Journal of the Cama Oriental Institute 15, 1929). The *Foundations* delivered in the Ratanbai Katrak Lectures series is, perhaps, Gray's most enduring and



important contribution to Iranian studies. Not a highly original work, it reflects more its author's encyclopedic skills and therein lies its great utility to researchers even today. It is essentially a comprehensive descriptive index to all the deities and demons of the Iranian pantheon and pandemonium, with extensive, in most cases complete for his time, references to primary sources, both Iranian and non-Iranian, where the names appear. In Avestan scholarship, he remained a follower of the Andreas method of textual reconstruction on the basis of the hypothetical *Vortex* as seen in his article "A Suggested Restoration of the Hadoxt Nask," (*JAOS* 67, 1947, pp. 14-23), where he presents the *Vortex* in Hebrew script beside the Vulgate.

Gray also contributed to the field of Indology, for example, "The Bhartrharinirveda of Harihara" (*JAOS*, 25, 1904, pp. 197-230) and *The Narrative of Bhoja* (New Haven, 1950). In Semitics, he published *Introduction to Semitic Comparative Linguistics* (New York, 1934; see p. 126 for references to his articles in Semitics) and in general linguistics, *The Foundations of Language* (New York, 1939). In connection with his government service, he authored *Spitsbergen and Bear Island* (Washington, D.C., 1919).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Obituary, *The New York Times*, 20 August, 1955.