



## HUTH, GEORG

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**HUTH, GEORG**, German Indologist, Tibetologist, Tungusologist, Mongolist, and the founder of Tibetology as a field of research at German universities (b. Krotoschin, Province of Posen, 25 February 1867; d. Berlin, 1 June 1906; [Figure 1](#)). His significance for Iranian studies is due to his participation in the first of the four German [Turfan expeditions](#) organized by the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde of Berlin in 1902, his expedition to Afghanistan and the Pamir region, and his collection of Persian manuscripts.

Georg Huth was the son of Aron Huth (d. 1893), the director of a Jewish orphanage, and his wife Dina Zaduck. In 1878 the family moved to Berlin, where he visited the school. He entered the University of Berlin in April 1885, studied Oriental languages, and graduated with a Ph.D. degree from the University of Leipzig in June 1889, with a thesis on the time and the chronology of the works of the Indian poet Kālidāsa (fl. 5th cent. CE). Huth studied Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian and Tibetan languages under the famous Sinologist Georg von der Gabelentz (1840-1893) and the Sinologist and Tungusologist Wilhelm Grube (1855-1908; Walravens and Hopf, p. 26). He also studied Sanskrit, Avestan, Pali, and Hindustani languages with scholars Paul Jakob Deussen (1845-1919), Hermann Oldenberg (1854-1920), Friedrich Rosen (1856-1935), and Albrecht Weber (1825-1901). Huth was the first qualified Tibetologist and Mongolist to teach at a German university (Huber and Niermann). Already during his time as a student, he did some research on the field of comparative literature and folklore studies. For his work “Die Reisen der drei Söhne des Königs von Serendippo” (1888) he was awarded with a



Mendelssohn scholarship (on which, see <http://www.mendelssohn-schol.com/>). In 1891 he received his postdoctoral qualification (habilitation) and started teaching Central Asiatic languages and also [Buddhism](#) at Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Berlin.

In 1897 he was invited by the Russian orientalists Wilhelm Radloff (1837-1918) and [Carl Hermann Salemann](#) to do some linguistic and folklore research among the Ewenki tribes around the Yenissei river in Russia. In the same year he traveled for this purpose on behalf of the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg to Siberia, where he collected linguistic and ethnographic materials (Kotwicz and Walravens, p. 828; Menges, p. 25). Upon his return to Berlin, he was appointed as a scientific collaborator at the Museum for Ethnology (Museum für Völkerkunde) in Berlin. In the museum he worked at the Indian department with [Albert Grünwedel](#), the co-director of the museum, and was assigned to the Tibetan collection.

A significant change in his career and further scientific life took place when Grünwedel was invited by Radloff and Salemann to take part in an archeological expedition to Eastern Turkestan in 1899. Grünwedel decided to organize his own German expedition, and, since it had to be privately financed, Huth used his contacts in Berlin to procure some financial support for this endeavor. Together with the well-known pharmacologist, Louis Lewin (1850-1929), he was able to provide this support, which was granted by the industrialists Friedrich Alfred Krupp (1854-1902) and James Simon (von Le Coq, p. 15; on the latter, see Cohen, p. 5). Once this first Turfan expedition (1902-1903) was organized, Huth himself took part in it, joining Grünwedel, his assistant Hermann Pohrt, and the museum's technician Theodor Bartus (1858-1941).

While the other participants returned to Berlin when the campaign was over, Huth remained in Central Asia until 1904, continuing his Iranistic research besides using the chance to improve his knowledge of several Turkic languages and collect Turkish folklore materials in West Turkistan and Afghanistan. Among the manuscripts he collected in Eastern Turkistan, there were numerous materials in several Iranian languages (e.g., Sogdian, Parthian). Although these had not been identified during the Turfan expedition, Huth assumed their Iranian character; he also supposed that unknown language(s) later identified and designated as Tokharian was/were Iranian. Later the unknown languages of the manuscripts from Qarā Šahr and Quča (Tokharian A and B) turned out to be Indo-European, but not specifically

Iranian. Huth tried to collect materials from modern Iranian languages spoken in the Pamir region to use in a comparative study in order to identify the languages of the manuscripts, and in fact the closest living relative of Sogdian is [Yaghnobi](#), spoken in the Pamir region. In addition to his researches, Huth collected numerous Persian and [Chaghatay](#) manuscripts, which he personally brought to Berlin.

After his return to Berlin, Huth was unable to work further. During his travels in West Turkistan and the Pamir region, he had become infected with tuberculosis, from which he never recovered. To find some financial support he sold the Oriental manuscripts he had collected in West Turkistan and Afghanistan to libraries as well as private collectors. He died on 1 June 1906 in his apartment in Berlin following a hemoptysis and was buried at the Jewish cemetery in Berlin Weissensee.

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