

Aurel Stein and Bahman Karimi on Old Routes of Western Iran



Plate 5 Sir Aurel Stein and Bahman Karimi, c. 1936.

In the person of Bahman Karimi, Inspector of Antiquities, the Ministry of Public Instruction kindly provided me with a very helpful travel companion, ever anxious to smooth my way with local officials and much interested in my labours. For the selection of this very capable and willing companion... I am greatly indebted to Monsieur A. Godard, Directeur des Antiquités en Iran.

In his introduction to *Old Routes in Western Iran* Sir Aurel Stein introduces Bahman Karimi to the reader.¹ Together they travelled fifteen months in south-western and western Iran. This left such a great impression on the Iranian inspector that he produced two publications based on Stein's 1940 book, one in Persian *Rāhhā-ye bāstanīva pāytakhthā-ye qadīmī-ye gharb-e Irān (Ancient Routes and Old Capitals of Western Iran)* (Tehran, 1329/1950),² and the other in French, *Rapport résumé de quinze mois de voyage de Dr Bahmen Karimi. Les anciennes routes de l'Iran* (n.d.).

Preparations for Stein's fourth and final expedition to Iran

Stein's third expedition in 1933–34 had taken him to the eastern and central parts of the province of Fars in search of 'ancient Persis'.³ Soon after his return to England he began arrangements for yet another trip, this time to the area west of Shiraz. For several months a series of letters was exchanged with the Iranian authorities, some about the division of finds from earlier expeditions, others in connection with permission and preparations for the forthcoming trip. Having obtained the necessary permission granted by the Iranian Government, Stein embarked on his last expedition to Iran in the autumn of 1935.

A series of unpublished documents in the archives of the National Museum of Iran, which are housed at The Cultural Heritage Organisation of Tehran Province, consist of correspondence at high governmental level and reveal interesting information about discussions in connection with the storage of finds from Stein's previous expeditions to Iran and the preparations for his fourth journey.⁴ These letters reflect also the favourable attitude of the Pahlavi regime

under Reza Shah and members of his government towards research into the history and archaeology of ancient Iran. Stein received support from senior government officials as his expeditions were seen as an important tool in the discovery of the culture and civilization of Iran and in making it known to the western world. The new nationalistic feeling sought to express itself with a revival of past glory. So popular was the ancient past, particularly the Achaemenid period and Persepolitan architecture, that a series of government buildings, including banks and police headquarters in Tehran and the provinces were built in the Persepolitan style.⁵ The educated Iranian *élite* and middle classes took great pride in the pre-Islamic cultural heritage of their country.⁶ In 1928 André Godard, a French architect with archaeological experience in Mesopotamia and Afghanistan, was invited by the Iranian government to become the Director of the Archaeological Service.⁷ In 1309/1930 a law in 52 articles, drafted by Godard and relating to the discovery and preservation of antiquities was passed by the *Majles* (Iranian Parliament) allowing Iranian and foreign missions to apply for survey and excavation licenses under the supervision of the Director of Antiquities.⁸ It is therefore not surprising that Stein's four requests for journeys through Iran between 1931–35 were met favourably by the Iranian authorities and that the necessary actions were taken to smooth the path for his expeditions in remote areas of the country. Stein's third journey had ended in the spring of 1934; his fourth and final expedition began in November 1935.⁹

On 22 January 1935, Stein wrote the following letter in preparation for his fourth journey to Mirza Hoseyn Khan 'Ala, the Iranian Minister in London:

The kind and personal interest shown by you in my archaeological efforts on Persian soil encourages me to request the favour of your support at Tehran for the planned resumption of my labour in that cherished and ever attractive field of research. In accordance with the procedure followed on previous occasions when seeking the Imperial Persian Government's permission for my antiquarian explorations, I am submitting my application through the British Legation at Tehran for the proposed fresh journey. The enclosed copy of my application will show all essential details of the plan.

At the same time, Stein was negotiating with the Iranian authorities about the division of finds from his earlier expeditions. On 27 April 1935 Hoseyn Khan 'Ala wrote to Stein:

In confirmation of our conversation of this morning, I hasten to inform you that I have received a reply from the Minister of Education to the letter I had written him concerning the disposal of the ancient pottery, etc. brought back by you from Iran.

His Excellency says that, in accordance with the usual practice, the objects found should be partitioned in two equal parts, and the respective shares of the Government and the

Excavator determined by lot.

In view, however, of your eminent position, your learning, and the confidence the Government have in you, the Ministry agrees to your dividing the pottery, etc., and fixing the share of the Imperial Government yourself.

It would, the Ministry says, be preferable to begin by eliminating the objects that have no historical importance and no artistic value, so as to avoid expending money uselessly for their transport to Iran. Only such pieces as have importance and are worthy of being forwarded to Iran should be included in respective share.

Looking forward to seeing you at the British Museum on Wednesday morning at 11 o'clock,

I remain, My dear Sir Aurel,

Yours very sincerely,

(signed) Hussein Ala

Stein replied the same day:

Your Excellency,

Let me offer with these brief lines my very warm thanks for the trouble you have taken by your letter No. 459 of the 27th inst. to inform me in writing of the arrangements approved by the Imperial Government as regards the division of the objects brought back from my first journeys in southern Iran (1932–33). I shall carefully comply with the instructions conveyed and feel sincerely grateful for the confidence which the Imperial Government have been pleased to show in me. This must be considered by me as a very valuable encouragement towards my exploration.

As I had occasion to explain in the interview kindly granted by you yesterday the actual separation of the two shares will have to await the arrival in London of Professor Sachs of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, which is expected next June or July. The preceding arrangements will be carefully attended to by my assistant Mr F.H. Andrews at the British Museum in accordance with the full instructions I am leaving with him.

It will be a very great pleasure and honour to receive your Excellency's visit to the collection at the British Museum on Wednesday, May 1st at 11 am. For this fresh mark of your friendly interest I wish to thank you once more very warmly.

Yours very sincerely

(signed) A. Stein

The correspondence shows that objects from earlier expeditions were kept temporarily at the British Museum before they were divided between Iran and Britain. This arrangement continued until after the final expedition. Stein wrote in his introduction to *Old Routes in Western Iran*:

Under the arrangement very kindly agreed to by the Ministry of Public Instruction I was permitted temporarily to deposit at the British Museum all antiquities collected for expert examination and study, subject to their subsequent division into half shares in accordance with the law concerning antiquities.¹⁰

On 2 May 1935, a letter (no. 268) was sent from the British Legation in Tehran to the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mirza Baqer Khan Kazemi:

Monsieur le Ministre,

I have the honour to approach your Excellency with the request that permission may be granted to Sir Aurel Stein, K.C.I.E., to resume his archaeological explorations begun in 1932 from the side of Iranian Baluchistan and since continued as far as the province of Fars.

2. It would be Sir Aurel's intention to start from Shiraz about next October, visiting first the Mamasani area and thence proceeding through the villages of Fahlian and Basht into the Behbahan tract. From there he would endeavour to pursue his antiquarian reconnaissances past Malamir and through neighbouring parts of the Bakhtiari country towards Khurramabad and Kermanshah.

3. The following spring and summer would be devoted to archaeological investigations in the neighbourhood of Sinneh, Sakiz... and Sir Aurel would continue his work in areas less elevated and climatically more suitable in the autumn and winter of 1315 (1936–7).

4. Your Excellency is already acquainted with the general character and scope of the work carried out by Sir Aurel Stein from the previous journeys which he has made in Iranian territory and will therefore understand the special reasons which make it important that his work should be accompanied, as it has been hitherto, by route surveys, permitting of all ancient sites to be exactly located and of such physical features as affected early occupation in different areas to be duly recorded.

5. I shall not fail to acquaint Your Excellency as soon as possible with the exact date in October on which Sir Aurel would wish to set out from Shiraz and also with more precise details of the route which he desires to follow. In the meanwhile I should be grateful if Your Excellency could arrange for permission to be accorded to the preliminary programme as outlined above.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to Your Excellency the assurance of my highest consideration.

(Signed) H.M. Knatchbull-Hugessen

Stein and his Iranian inspector

Stein was finally granted permission by the Imperial Government of Iran to embark on this last Iranian expedition. He set off with a grant of £300 from the Trustees of the British Museum for 'the half share in the collection', but '...all expenses...including the cost of excavations, had to be met from my own pocket'.¹¹

For the latest and longest of my Persian journeys Shiraz, the capital of the province of Fars since medieval times, provided a very suitable starting point... On November 6th, 1935, I had landed at Bushire from Karachi, with Surveyor Muhammad Ayub Khan and my two Kashmiri servants. M. Karimi, of the Department of Antiquities, Iran, had awaited us there.¹²

At the port of Bushire on the Persian Gulf, Stein met for the first time his inspector, Bahman Karimi, an employee of the Iranian Archaeological Service. Karimi's task was to accompany Stein on this trip, liaise with the provincial authorities and make sure that all went smoothly. When Karimi introduced himself with a letter from André Godard, Stein felt reassured that all arrangements had been made by the various ministries in Tehran and instructions had been sent to all the relevant provincial offices.¹³ In fact, a letter from the Iranian Ministry of the Interior, Tourist Department shows that the utmost assistance was provided throughout this expedition.¹⁴

In a letter to his friend, Mrs Helen Mary Allen, dated 13 November 1935, Stein described Karimi as 'a very alert and obliging young man',¹⁵ but a day later, on 14 November, his view had changed and he poked fun at him:

My jovial fat Persian 'Inspector' beams with joy at the prospect of soon being relieved from further hardships of travel. I do not blame him for this... Anyhow he will be admired in elegant Tehran circles to have stood camp life so long. I myself find it hard to take leave from it.¹⁶

Judging from Stein's account, Bahman Karimi was not keen to spend time with the mission when living conditions were harsh and did not hesitate to seek a comfortable resting place whenever possible. This is particularly noticeable in the accounts of their travels in the mountainous Bakhtiari region of western Iran:

M. Karimi, our cheery Inspector of Antiquities, anxious as always to get to some inhabited place, had attached himself to the Khan's party. We were not to see them again until late next day, when they turned up on our way down the pass after a night spent without proper food and mainly under some rock shelter.¹⁷

Karimi's accounts of his fifteen months in western Fars provide some valuable observations about the person of Stein. His descriptions of him in the concise French report are brief and factual. He refers to Sir Aurel Stein respectfully as 'célèbre savant et archéologue anglais'.¹⁸

En attendant Sir Aurel Stein est toujours occupé à relever les plans et à faire les dessins des routes, des ruines, des Tappehs et des collines... Il prend aussi beaucoup d'informations et de renseignements sur la manière de vivre, les coutumes et les habitudes de chaque province et de chaque region.¹⁹

The Persian book is much more detailed and therefore contains more personal information about Stein. It is clear that Karimi felt great admiration for Stein. There is no doubt that, in retrospect, Karimi found the experience exhilarating and admired himself for having endured such hardship while travelling through inhospitable territories and living in primitive conditions. But a middle class Iranian from the capital Tehran must have found the experience of living in tents and riding on mules through the tribal areas in the heat of the summer and the cold of the winter almost unbearable. His discomfort is expressed throughout the book. His Introduction begins with an amusing description:

This is the only book in the Persian language, a scientific and archaeological travelogue, which is written in this manner. Not everybody has had the opportunity to make a long and far-away journey by caravan [?] during 15 months of summer and winter

through the desert, especially at a time when everything was available to mankind ['son of Adam' in Persian] and trains, automobiles and planes were seen in every corner of the world. There is no longer any need for animals, especially when combined with much hardship, and ever increasing inconvenience during a period of 15 months, to walk every day 20 to 40 km and to sleep under a tent at night. The same thing was repeated the next day through mountains and difficult valleys.

Karimi must have complained at the time of the expedition when writing to the Department of Antiquities. An official letter from the Director of Antiquities dated 19.9.1314/10.12.1935 refers to Karimi's detailed and satisfactory report about the progress of Stein's expedition, but at the same time reminds the inspector that such difficult journeys are imperative in order to obtain scientific results (Pl. 6). André Godard's handwritten note in red ink appears in the right hand margin:

... que pour être bon archéologue il faudrait en voyages dures et pénibles de profiter des connaissances de Sir Aurel Stein.

Bahman Karimi

Who was Bahman Karimi and what was his background? In a letter of complaint concerning a fine for unauthorized leave, issued by the Department of Antiquities, dated 11.12.1318/2.3.1939, Karimi mentioned that he had been working for the Department for seven to eight years.²⁰ This means that by the time of Stein's fourth expedition in 1314/1935, Karimi had already been an employee of the Department of Antiquities for three or four years. There are no references to earlier travels, so this must have been his first assignment.

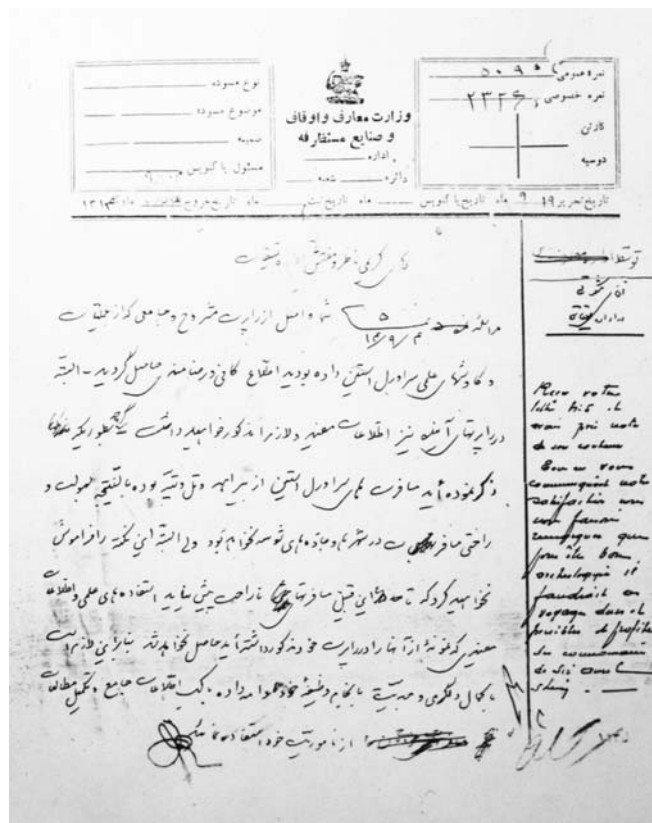


Plate 6 Letter from André Godard, Director of Antiquities in Iran, dated 19.9.1314/ 10.12.1935 (Courtesy of the Archives of the Cultural Heritage Organisation of the Province of Tehran)

Bahman Karimi was a graduate in geography and history,²¹ and ‘the only travelling companion of Stein’s who left an account of his travels and discoveries’.²² He seems to have been fluent in French already during his early days with the Iranian Archaeological Service, as some of his handwritten reports, probably to Godard, were written in French. In 1319/1940 and 1321/1942 he was appointed Inspector of Excavations at Persepolis, where he spent three months with the American expedition under the directorship of Erich F. Schmidt of the Oriental Institute, Chicago.²³ By 27.8.1328/19.10.1949 Karimi was headmaster at the secondary school ‘Khaqani’ in Tehran. It was at this time that his Persian version of *Old Routes* was published. In a letter from the Ministry of Culture/Archaeological Service he is referred to as Dr Bahman Karimi and it is mentioned that he had received a scholarship from the Iranian government to do a PhD at the Sorbonne in Paris.²⁴ Both the Persian and French versions of Karimi’s books refer to the author as ‘Dr Karimi’, thus emphasising that he had a PhD degree.²⁵ Karimi also uses the title Mirza and calls himself Bahman Mirza, not Mirza Bahman Khan Karimi as Mirsky suggested.²⁶ The latter appellation indicates a clerical background, while the former indicates a royal title. Karimi clearly intended to draw attention to an aristocratic background and the fact that he was probably a descendant of the Qajar kings and princes who ruled Iran from the late nineteenth century until 1921.²⁷

Karimi’s Persian book was described by the Ministry of Culture as a thesis (*resāleh*): ‘...a result of very precise studies made during travels with Sir Aurel Stein, the late British scholar and archaeologist...’. ‘This very useful book containing unique information’ was highly recommended by the archaeological department and dispatched to the National Bank (*chāp-khāneh-ye bānk-e mellī*) to be printed.²⁸ In his Introduction, Karimi expresses his gratitude to his dear friend Mohammad Taqi Mostafavi, the Director of the Archaeological Museum (*Muzeh Iran Bastan*), who had organised the publication of his book *Ancient Routes and Old Capitals of Western Iran* (*Rāhā-ye bastānī va pāytakhtā-ye qadīmī-ye qarab-e Irān*).²⁹ It was published in Tehran in 1329/1950, fourteen years after the actual expedition, ten years after the publication of Stein’s *Old Routes of Western Iran*, and seven years after Stein’s death. The undated French report must have followed soon after the original Persian book. Both are based on Stein’s *Old Routes of Western Iran*, using the same plans, drawings, photographs and maps. The maps were ‘from surveys made in 1935–36 under the direction and with the assistance of Sir Aurel Stein, K.C.I.E. by Surveyor Muhammad Ayub Khan, with additions from the maps of the Survey of India’.³⁰ All the sites appear in the same sequence as in Stein’s book. If we compare Karimi’s Persian book with Stein’s *Old Routes of Western Iran*, we see that the Karimi based his work on Stein’s book. Indeed, he copied details of most of the archaeological reports and bibliographical references from *Old Routes*. However, there are additional references in Karimi’s book: he included in his book many Persian and Arabic sources about Sasanian and early Islamic history, as well as long and detailed descriptions of the prehistory and early history of Iran. This is particularly noticeable in relation to their journey through

Khuzistan and information about the Elamite sites of the third to first millennia BC. He also writes about the French archaeological missions to Susa, and refers to nineteenth century Europeans and their reports, for example, W.K. Loftus’ excavations at Susa, Henry Rawlinson’s work on inscriptions of Darius at Bisitun, and the visits of Claudius James Rich and Sir Robert Ker Porter to Kurdistan, which again he must have taken from Stein. All the western bibliographical references certainly come from Stein’s *Old Routes*.³¹ Karimi added many interesting new photographs which may have been his own, or may have been selected from the photographs which were given to him by Stein in London (see below). He described the various tribes and their habits in detail, gave distances between sites and towns, and, above all, provided the Iranian reader with a good bibliography of both eastern and western sources. In true Iranian fashion he even produced Persian poetry whenever it was appropriate to do so, including poems by Omar Khayyam, Hafez and Ferdowsi.³² Karimi’s main task was to facilitate Stein’s travels, liaise with provincial officials and, at the same time, send regular reports to the Department of Antiquities in Tehran about the progress of the journey and the discovery of finds. In a telegram dated 29.10.1314/20.12.1935 Karimi informs the authorities,³³ both in Persian and in French, of the sensational find of the Parthian bronze statue from Shami;³⁴ two marble heads, one Parthian, one Greek, two bronze arms and a smaller bronze statue.³⁵ These were immediately sent to the Department of Antiquities in Tehran, and are now on display in the Archaeological Museum.

Descriptions of Stein by Karimi

There are numerous references to Stein throughout Karimi’s Persian book, but it is in the Introduction, which consists of 29 pages including a bibliography and photographs of Stein and Karimi, that we find the most detailed personal observations:

This man who had aspirations and had reached the age of 80, was still full of enthusiasm and still in pursuit of the truth. At the beginning of the World War [II] and towards the end of his life he started to work in Afghanistan until he died far away from his relatives in November 1934.³⁶

According to Karimi, Stein was a good looking old man, always cheerful and smiling, short with thin white hair. He was extremely polite and correct, and never angry during the fifteen months of travelling. Not a single rude word left his mouth. Occasionally, when guards and those in charge of the mules quarrelled with each other, Stein would say in sweet but broken Persian ‘do not quarrel’ (*jang nakonīd*).

Karimi also commented on Stein’s Persian, which he remarked was good, but spoken in the Indian/Hindustani fashion. Sometimes Stein studied Persian grammar with Karimi, who found his student’s grasp of languages and speed of comprehension astonishing.³⁷ According to Karimi, Stein spoke ‘several Hindustani and Afghan languages’, for example, Pashtu, Punjabi, Kashmiri and Urdu, and he spoke to each servant in his own language.³⁸ He also knew Sanskrit and Old Persian and was familiar with most living languages and could speak these – French, English, German and Arabic. Karimi went on to say that Stein ‘was a true

human being', 'a very, very enduring person', and that even at the age of eighty he did not once complain about the hardships and conditions of travelling 40 kilometres a day by mule. Every evening they would set up their tents, rest during the night, and continue their journey the next day.³⁹ A difficult and memorable event was the crossing of the Saymarreh, a tributary of the Karkheh River, in Luristan.⁴⁰ Karimi was terrified,⁴¹ and even Stein found the crossing difficult:

Before finishing this report I must inform you of the following: one cannot call this tour a promenade. It should be called a journey of difficulty, of pain, of bitterness, of danger and illness. One must accept the rigours of winter on snowy mountain passes and the hazards of kaleks [inflated skins] on the rivers.⁴²

Karimi wrote that he would sometimes complain, whereupon Stein would calm him with the words: 'You are young, I'm the one who has the right to complain'.⁴³ Karimi described a typical working day: Stein worked very hard, waking at six in the morning, and going to bed at midnight. On days when work was disrupted by rain, or small excavations were conducted, he would write letters from morning until dinner time, as many as 150 letters. When Karimi suggested this was too much for him, Stein replied that he had not come to Iran to have a rest; he wanted to see the country and his time was short. He never ran away from work.

Other mentions of Stein concern their arrival in Kermanshah in June, whereupon Stein and his servants went to the British Consulate and Karimi stayed at the local inn. In early August, Stein and Karimi were in Kurdistan. One morning they set out at seven o'clock, made a brief break of one hour for lunch, then continued on their way until, after twelve hours, they reached their destination. Everyone, including Muhammad Ayub Khan, Stein's tough cartographer, had fallen asleep at eight that evening, but Stein had stayed up until midnight to write papers and prepare the post. He was up again at five the next morning. Much to Karimi's annoyance, Stein did not bother about rain and continued his research no matter how adverse the weather conditions, even if it meant catching a cold and being unable to work for a few days afterwards.⁴⁴

When describing scenes of excavation and surveying, Karimi compared Stein with a mother in search of her child. Stein would squat on mounds for hours removing sherds from under the earth. Sometimes he would sit for long periods inside a grave and clean the pots with a special knife. He would then wash them and number them 'like a lover who had found his long-lost love. He never allowed anybody else to touch these pots'.

Karimi expressed his disappointment that Stein's research was not known in Iran, and produced a Persian translation of Stein's article about his journey in south-western Iran, which had been published in *The Times*, 6–7 July 1936.

During the latter part of the journey Stein had fallen ill, but had continued his journey northwards to Bisitun and Kangavar. His condition deteriorated in Hamadan and he was forced to stay with the British Vice-Consul before abandoning his tour and returning to Khuzistan in the south. Before leaving Iran, Stein found a home for his favourite

dog, Dash VI, who is not mentioned at all in Karimi's account.⁴⁵ Finally, Stein and Karimi parted at the port of Khorramshahr on the Persian Gulf in the third week of December 1936. Stein and his two Punjabi servants sailed to Basra,⁴⁶ and Karimi returned via Ahvaz to arrive in Tehran on 27.12.1315/19.3.1936.⁴⁷ Stein would recall the journey:

The happy memories of the years spent since 1931 on its [Iran's] ancient soil will accompany me wherever chances of fresh work may yet take me.⁴⁸

Karimi and Stein met up once again in 1937, when Karimi went to Paris and from there on to London.⁴⁹ Karimi described his last meeting with Stein (translated literally from the original Persian into English):

When I travelled to Paris the following year, Sir Aurel Stein found out about my trip, and contacted me and invited me to go to London. After several months in Paris I went to London during the Easter holidays and spent two to three weeks working there.

Although Sir Aurel Stein was not very generous (*zīyād sekhāvat nadāsh*t) and was even a bit careful with his money (*moghtased*), we dined together most evenings during my visit and I was his guest. We talked about the trip to Fars and Khuzistan, Luristan and Rumeshgan and Tarhan and Helalan and we enjoyed it very very much. I also revived the old memories and did not regret the past, as during the entire fifteen months from the beginning of Aban (end of October) to the end of Esfand (end of March) I was busy working day and night. I knew that Sir Aurel Stein's intention was to introduce our dear Iran to the European nations and to make the past civilizations of Iran visible to the eyes of the Europeans. I therefore also did my best to make a contribution to this and to facilitate everything for him.

He never begrudged me, as I never put any obstacles in his path and his work. As far as possible, I made sure that my honest duties towards Iran met his approval, as he undertook these difficult paths for the sake of the Iranian culture and civilization.

On the day of my departure I cried, as he told me: 'My life has come to an end, and perhaps I will never see you again, but I ask God for your success.'

He also gave me an album of photographs of his journey and a photograph of himself and me, which is printed in this book. May his soul be happy.⁵⁰

Karimi admired Stein's stamina and respected his efforts to make Iran and its ancient civilization known to the world. He referred to him always as Sir Aurel Stein and every mention of this older man and scholar is presented in the highest regard. Only occasionally does the reader sense a feeling of tension and frustration in Karimi's sometimes embellished prose, particularly in passages concerning poor weather conditions and the hardships of travelling through hostile regions and following difficult routes. Towards the end of Karimi's account is an amusing personal description of Stein as a strong-minded leader who would not heed the advice of his local guides:

Sir Aurel Stein was an old man and occasionally he was obstinate. He chose the worst and most difficult roads during his travels. While travelling to Kuhgiluyeh twice we encountered such obstinacy and we chose such a difficult road in winter, that only through God's guidance did we reach our goal. The road was so difficult that even the Lurs called it a 'belt road' (*rāh-e kamar*) and the shepherds used it only as pasture for their sheep and goats. Several mules and donkeys fell off the passes and died. We only covered one parasang (*farsang*) in ten hours. We had to take the luggage off the mules, take the animals to the top of the mountain and then send somebody to fetch the luggage. This had to be repeated at least ten times until the evening, when we had to set up our tents at night in the mountains. We had no food or water. This happened twice, once between Behbahan

and Deh-Dasht and the other time at Tang-e Sarvak. We found out later that the difficult journey, which had taken us two days, could have been made in three hours.⁵¹

Stein may have been obstinate, but perhaps he had particular reasons for choosing the difficult routes. Perhaps he specifically wanted to examine those isolated and remote parts of the country, where the locals preferred not to go. But it must have been a very difficult journey. If Stein, a very experienced traveller, readily admitted that this journey had been 'no promenade', imagine how nerve-racking it must have been for Karimi, a scholar from a middle class Iranian background, whose work had probably never taken him beyond the Department of Antiquities in Tehran! By writing up his own account of the journey, he not only presented a wealth of information about ancient Iran to the Persian reader, he also presented his account of Stein's journeys in Iran from a first-hand Iranian point of view, and in doing so presented to us a unique contribution to our knowledge of Stein as a travelling companion.

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to colleagues in Tehran for their support, advice and co-operation: Mr Nasser Pazooki, Director of the Cultural Heritage Organisation of Tehran Province for permission to study and publish these documents; and to Mr Mohammad Jazayeri in the Archives Department for his help. My sincere thanks also go to Mr Mohammad-Reza Kargar, Director of the National Museum of Iran, Tehran, for his continuous support, and to Mrs Zahra Jafar-Mohammadi for her help and guidance, especially with the history of the Archaeological Service and the National Museum. I am also grateful to Dr Chahryar Adle of CNRS, Paris, for discussions and factual information about André Godard and the Iranian Antiquities Department, to Ali Mousavi for drawing my attention to the very recent publication of Stein documents by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to Dr Paul Luft for reading my manuscript, for his corrections and valuable suggestions. I am indebted to my colleagues at the British Museum: Dr Helen Wang, of the Department of Coins and Medals, who first drew my attention to Bahman Karimi and invited me to write this paper, and to Dr Dominique Collon of the Department of the Ancient Near East for helping me with the reading of André Godard's handwriting.

Notes

1. Aurel Stein, *Old Routes in Western Iran*, London, 1940, p. xiv.
2. The dates in the Persian documents and Karimi's book are Hijra Solar dates. On the basis of the law from 31 March 1925, the Islamic Lunar Calendar was officially abandoned in favour of the Iranian Solar Calendar. The year 1300 corresponds to 1921/22 in the Christian calendar.
3. Aurel Stein, 'An Archaeological Tour in Ancient Persis', *Iraq* III (1937) pp. 111–225, pls. XIX–XXX; see also Aurel Stein, *Old Routes*, p. 1.
4. See also the recent publication of Stein's correspondence in the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Davud Karimlu (ed.), *Heyyat-e ingilīsī-ye Aurel Stein, AH 1317-SH 1318 barābar bā 1899–1939* [The English Mission of Aurel Stein], in *Tarīkh-e mīrās-e mellī* vol. III, Tehran, 1382/2003. Karimi is only mentioned here a few times as Stein's representative.
5. Much to the disappointment of the French Archaeological Mission in Iran, Reza Shah visited Persepolis and Susa in 1928 in the company of the German archaeologist, Ernst Herzfeld of the Oriental Institute in Chicago; see N. Chevalier, *La recherche archéologique française au Moyen-Orient 1842–1947*, Paris, 2002,

- p. 341.
6. R. Mathee, 'Transforming dangerous nomads into useful artisans, technicians, agriculturalists. Education in the Reza Shah period', in S. Cronin (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran. State and Society under Riza Shah, 1921–1941*, London and New York, 2003, pp. 123–45, especially p.134.
 7. Chevalier, *La recherche archéologique*, p. 340.
 8. Chevalier, *La recherche archéologique*, pp. 344–66; M.G. Majd, *The Great American Plunder of Persia's Antiquities 1925–1941*, Lanham, New York and Oxford, 2003, pp. 16–17, 71–82.
 9. Stein, *Old Routes*, pp. viii, 1–2.
 10. Stein, *Old Routes*, p. xix.
 11. Stein, *Old Routes*, p. xiv.
 12. Stein, *Old Routes*, pp. 1–2.
 13. J. Mirsky, *Sir Aurel Stein. Archaeological Explorer*, Chicago and London, 1977, especially p. 495.
 14. Document no. jīm 4303/56557, dated 23.9.1314/14.12.1935.
 15. Mirsky, *Sir Aurel Stein*, p. 495.
 16. Mirsky, *Sir Aurel Stein*, p. 504.
 17. Stein, *Old Routes*, p. 101.
 18. B. Karimi, *Rapport résumé de quinze mois de voyage de Dr Bahmen Karimi. Les anciennes routes de L'Iran*, n.d., p. 8.
 19. Karimi, *Rapport résumé*, p. 6.
 20. Letter no. 24792 of 29.12.1318/20.3.1939. According to Majd, *The Great American Plunder*, p. 118, he was 'a representative of the Ministry of Education'.
 21. It is not clear whether he graduated from Tehran University or the *Darō'l-fonun*, the Teacher Training College in Tehran.
 22. Mirsky, *Sir Aurel Stein*, p. 495.
 23. Documents nos. 49780/82497 and 1564/31883.
 24. Document no. 2323/2363.
 25. To this day it is common practice in Iran to use an academic title, particularly a PhD, and put the title before the author's name in publications.
 26. Mirsky, *Sir Aurel Stein*, p. 495.
 27. Considering that Qajar rulers and princes had numerous wives and offspring it is not too difficult for many modern Iranians to be related to them in some way or another.
 28. Document no. 2323/2363, Ministry of Culture, Department of Archaeology.
 29. B. Karimi, *Rāhhā-ye bāstānī va pāytakhtā-ye qadīmī-ye gharb-e Irān* [Ancient routes and old capitals of Western Iran], Tehran, 1329/1950, especially nūn. In this connection Karimi mentioned another Persian publication of his, *A Guide to the Historical Remains of Shiraz*.
 30. See *Old Routes*, caption for the map.
 31. Karimi, *ibid*, pp. 60–68, 209–10.
 32. Karimi, *ibid*, pp. 7, 12, 119.
 33. Document no. 2802.
 34. Stein, *Old Routes*, figs. 46–47.
 35. Stein, *Old Routes*, pls. 48–49; Karimi, *ibid*, pp. 53–57 using Stein's photographs.
 36. Karimi, *ibid*, p. yab. There is an error here: Stein died in 1943, not 1934.
 37. Karimi, *ibid*, p. yab.
 38. Karimi, *ibid*, p. yab.
 39. Karimi, *ibid*, p. yab.
 40. Stein, *Old Routes*, pp. 171–78.
 41. Karimi, *ibid*, pp. 131–34.
 42. Mirsky, *Sir Aurel Stein*, p. 499.
 43. Karimi, *ibid*, p. yab.
 44. Karimi, *ibid*, p. 208.
 45. Stein, *Old Routes*, p. 421; Mirsky, *Sir Aurel Stein*, p. 504.
 46. Stein, *Old Routes*, p. 421.
 47. Karimi, *ibid*, p. 240.
 48. Stein, *Old Routes*, p. 422.
 49. Karimi, *ibid*, p. 224.
 50. Karimi, *ibid*, p. 240.
 51. Karimi, *ibid*, p. 205.