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Sir Aurel Stein's Fourth 'American' Expedition

Let me state at the outset that I was invited to this conference not as a practising archaeologist nor as a sinologist but as a generalist, who has written on Central Asian explorers, among them Sir Aurel Stein. My interest in Stein's little known Fourth Expedition began one evening in Khotan when my husband and I were having dinner with the Chinese archaeologist, Wang Tao. He mentioned that the 'finds' from Stein's Fourth Expedition had never been found and, as the expedition was funded by Harvard University's Fogg Museum and the Yenching Institute for Asian Studies, perhaps they might be in Cambridge, Massachusetts? When I returned to the US, I set off to inquire what might have happened to them. I did not find the artifacts (they have since turned up in China) but I did find extensive correspondence both at the Fogg and in the Harvard archives that supplement the material in the British Library collection. It was thus possible to recreate the events that happened on this Fourth Expedition in 1930 that so upset Stein and his American companion, Milton Bramlette, that neither of them ever wrote about it. Nor was it mentioned in either of their obituaries.

Who sabotaged the joint Harvard-British Museum mission and why? The Harvard archives revealed the rivalry between British and American museums, and between the two Harvard sponsors of the expedition. But the underlying theme is the change imposed by an awakening nationalism on the old rules of archaeology, even in innermost Asia. Spurred by this nationalism, a new generation of indigenous Chinese scholars, many trained in America or Europe, sought an early end to the days when Westerners, as if by writ, could uproot another nation's past.

Stein was a product of the age of imperialism and in planning his expeditions he often sounded more like Disraeli than an archaeologist telling his friend George (later Sir George) Macartney that for archaeological purposes Chinese Turkestan had been 'partitioned' by the Congress of Orientalists into 'spheres of influence'.¹ We often find Stein complaining to British correspondents such as Sir John Keltie, Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, and George Macartney, British Resident in Kashgar, about his German rivals, Albert von le Coq and Albert Grünwedel; and to his American friend, Cornelius Van H. Engert, about Stein's former *protégé*, Alfred Foucher, who had won for France the archaeological monopoly that Stein had coveted in Afghanistan.

Stein's first three expeditions, before his official retirement in 1917, coincided with the scramble for antiquities in the imperial twilight, before the rise of nationalism challenged the old assumption that the right to dig and take was the unlimited franchise of European overlords. Though scarcely the worst offender, Stein would

face ever more suspicion and hostility in China, culminating in his disastrous Fourth Expedition, an ill-fated prelude to his long-deferred dream of excavating at Balkh, Alexander the Great's metropolis in Afghanistan. The problems Stein faced that would wreck his Fourth Expedition were already anticipated in his Second and Third Expeditions: his mapping would be regarded as spying and the 'ruse' by which he had allegedly 'tricked' Abbot Wang to part with the treasures of Cave 17 at Dunhuang would prove to be his undoing.

Archaeology has been entwined with Europe's imperial enterprise ever since Napoleon set sail for Egypt in 1798 with 38,000 troops and a Commission of Arts consisting of some 170 *savants*. Napoleon himself corrected the Preface to the Commission's nineteen volume *Description de l'Égypte*. One of the scholars, Etienne Geoffrey Saint-Hillaire, predicted:

The time will come when the work of the Commission of Arts will excuse in the eyes of posterity the lightness with which our nation has, so to speak, thrown itself into the Orient.

Beginning in the 1870s, when the public marveled at Heinrich Schliemann's discoveries at the site of ancient Troy in Turkish Asia Minor, governments and their spy services saw an ancillary benefit in archaeology. Excavators tarry in remote regions, become fluent in local languages, take pictures, and prepare maps – the ideal 'cover' for espionage. The covert uses of archaeology were readily evident to rulers of Asia and the Middle East, and along with an awakening nationalism, their credible suspicions dogged Sir Aurel Stein, especially as he had training in military cartography and had pioneered the use of aerial photography to locate ancient sites.

Surveying was always uppermost in Stein's accounts, and he realized its importance to his sponsors. He wrote to Keltie:

My scientific work has always been guided by the conviction that geographical and historical researches must combine where the elucidation of ancient Asia is concerned.²

With two pundits, Ram and his successor, Lal Singh seconded from the Trigonometrical Survey of India, Stein succeeded in mapping nearly 30,000 square miles connecting the Pamirs, the Kunlun and the Nan Shan mountains on the northern border of Tibet for the first time. He also traced the Khotan River to its source. At the end of each expedition, Stein returned to India, where he spent time at intelligence headquarters in Dehra Dun, helping the Survey prepare maps that are still in use today. Although Stein's maps contributed to scholarly research, their other unstated purpose was to provide the Government of India with strategic military information. Much of his mapping remained confidential. The Indian Foreign Office, for example, sent a telegraphic message to Stein, concerning his

Nan Shan survey, asking him not 'to publish anything' involving northern Tibet 'without previous submission'.³

Already by 1913, at the beginning of his Third Expedition, although Stein was not ready to acknowledge it, the era of scholarly plundering in Central Asia was coming to an end. In December 1913, Macartney warned Stein that Chinese authorities were disinclined to grant permission for excavations, and were unwilling to provide porters and transport. This was followed by Macartney's translation of an order prohibiting Lal Singh from surveying strategic sites. Stein seemed oblivious of the imperial condescension of his irritable response:

It seems like the irony of Fate that while I am fighting the difficulties of nature in a region of the dead for the sake of researches, which ought to appeal to Chinese historical instinct, I should be burdened with worries about the attitude of modern successors of those, whose tracks on this wind-worn desert I am tracing.⁴

Only through determined British pressure in Peking was Stein allowed to proceed. There followed another warning from Macartney in March 1915 that an official in Urumqi had issued a further directive:

What his letter means is that you have no right to excavate, though you may examine, sites; also that you have no right to take out of China what you have excavated.⁵

Stein, now worried about treasures he had already shipped, learned with relief in April that his 150 cases of antiquities had passed through Aksu *en route* to Kashgar. In July, Stein reported to Keltie 'a fresh Chinese attempt at obstruction' and asked him to delay publication of his report until his convoy had safely crossed the Chinese frontier.⁶

The 1920s witnessed a worldwide procession of spectacular finds. Excited accounts of the discoveries by Sir John Marshall of unknown early civilizations at Mohenjodaro and Harappa in the Indus River Valley were followed by Sir Leonard Woolley's remarkable excavations at Ur in Mesopotamia and Howard Carter's opening of Tutankhamun's tomb in Egypt. But the press attention itself would radically alter the archaeological climate. In 1924, Roy Chapman Andrews, the American palaeontologist, had earned the ire of China's National Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities by publicly auctioning Mongolian dinosaur eggs for \$50,000 to fund an expedition.⁷ His proposed expedition in 1929 was cancelled. In 1927, the Society moved to block an expedition by the Swedish explorer, Sven Hedin. Hedin caved in and 'sold the pass', as Andrews and others would complain, by agreeing to assemble a joint Sino-Swedish expedition.⁸

Stein, himself, was not adverse to publicity and was careful to keep the Royal Geographical Society and *The Times* well informed of his whereabouts and activities. His triumphal account of how, by invoking the name of his 'Indian Pausanias, Hsüan-tsang', he was able to persuade Abbot Wang to part with treasures from Cave 17 at Dunhuang, as told in the pages of *Ruins of Desert Cathay* would return to haunt him in 1930, when the same Chinese National Commission protested his act with dignity and eloquence:

Sir Aurel Stein, taking advantage of the ignorance and cupidity of the priest in charge, persuaded the latter to sell to him at a

pittance what he considered the pick of the collection which, needless to say, did not in any way belong to the seller. It would be the same if some Chinese traveler pretending to be merely a student of religious history went to Canterbury and bought valuable relics from the cathedral caretaker. But Sir Aurel Stein, not knowing a word of Chinese, took away what he considered the most valuable, separating many manuscripts which really belonged together, thus destroying the value of the manuscripts themselves. Soon afterwards French and Japanese travelers followed his trail with the result that the unique collection is now divided up and scattered in London, Paris, and Tokyo. In the first two cities at least, the manuscripts lie unstudied for the last twenty years, and their rightful owners, the Chinese, who are the most competent scholars for their study, are deprived of their opportunity as well as their ownership.⁹

All this was a prelude to the lectures Stein gave in December 1929 to a sell-out crowd gathered at the Lowell Institute, Harvard. These six Cambridge lectures in which Stein recounted his adventures along the Silk Road served both as the basis for his book, *On Ancient Central Asian Tracks*, and as an audition for the archaeologist's prospective sponsors.

Paul Sachs and Langdon Warner of Harvard's Fogg Art Museum had lured Stein from retirement, enticing him to America by dangling the prospect of a Fourth Expedition, one in which Sachs and Warner hoped to match or overtake their European rivals. In two other expeditions a few years earlier, Warner, Curator of Asiatic Art at the Fogg, accompanied by Horace Jayne, Curator of Oriental Art of the Pennsylvania (now the Philadelphia) Museum, had carried out their own 'raids' along the Silk Road. With most of the Dunhuang manuscripts already gone, Warner removed twelve Tang Dynasty fresco fragments from the caves, as well as a seventh century polychrome Bodhisattva. Warner had found the Dunhuang caves in a shocking state. They had recently been vandalized by White Russian soldiers, refugees from the Bolshevik Revolution who had arrived in the region only to be interned by the local Chinese governor.

When the Fogg's second expedition reached the caves in 1925, an angry mob forced the Americans to retreat without photographs or frescoes. Warner complained to his wife of

the priest's cupidity in wanting more money and a certain backwash from Stein and Pelliot, neither of whom could ever come back and live.¹⁰

Warner's funds came from the estate of the aluminum magnate, Charles Martin Hall, which also endowed Harvard's newly founded Yenching Institute for Asian Studies. Hall funds also supported Yenching University, a Christian missionary establishment in Peking. The University's Dean of Arts and Sciences was the American-educated William Hung. Only in 1978, did Hung, aged 85, reveal to his biographer, Susan Chan Egan, that he had been the saboteur of Warner's second expedition. A student of Hung's, who accompanied Warner as a secretary-interpreter on his first trip to Dunhuang, discovered the curator one night removing frescoes with glycerin and cheesecloth. When the second expedition arrived the following year, he notified Hung and a representative of the National University soon joined the expedition. Hung also asked the Chinese Vice-Minister of Education to send telegrams to every governor, district magistrate, and police commissioner along the route asking them to be polite, but firm, in

ensuring that no foreigner was to be allowed near an artifact.¹¹

In the summer of 1929, Warner heard from Stein's friend Carl Keller that the archaeologist might be available for an expedition. Warner knew that 'either [the] Cleveland or Philadelphia would jump at the chance of an association with Aurel Stein' but Warner naturally wanted an 'entirely Harvard enterprise, if possible'.¹² Keller cabled Stein: 'Can you lead Asiatic expedition if Harvard will finance. Answer collect. Post details'.¹³ Soon, Warner wrote, they were 'cautiously sidling up and sniffing at each other'.¹⁴

In his reply, Stein warned Keller about the risks for foreigners in removing antiquities:

Information received by me from friends thoroughly acquainted with current Chinese feeling shows that while the destructive plundering of China's ancient artistic relics from tombs, etc., is carried on unchecked and almost entirely through Chinese agency, yet systematic foreign archaeological enterprise aiming at the elucidation of China's ancient cultural past and the recovery and preservation of its relics is faced with the risk of serious obstruction by 'Young China.' This risk must be taken carefully into account at present.¹⁵

Stein then proposed to appease 'Chinese *amour propre* by refraining from any definite claim to those "archaeological proceeds" i.e. antiquities, which loom so large before the average person...as the apparent main object of archaeological exploration.' Stein preferred to trust in the generosity and 'traditional *laissez faire* of the Chinese when it came to the final disposal of "archaeological proceeds"'.¹⁶

Nonetheless it was precisely these 'proceeds' that Harvard wanted. The university, wrote Warner, had 'diverse interests' in Stein's various fields: ethnology, archaeology, geography and geology. Furthermore, its Sanskritists and sinologists would be proud to be of service when he published his finds. But, the museum was 'devoted to the Fine Arts' and Warner would not disguise the fact that 'my personal ambitions are for information and for objects related to early Buddhism'.¹⁷

Within a month of Stein's visit to Cambridge, Sachs sent him a telegraph with the news that he had raised \$100,000 (the equivalent today of \$1 million) from affluent benefactors and the Harvard Yenching Institute. One item on the budget was \$6,500 for 'presents' to local officials.¹⁸

Stein wanted the support of the British Museum so that the expedition might benefit from British diplomatic expertise. However, the correspondence reveals that the Americans were not at all keen on British involvement. Jayne wrote to Warner:

You are absolutely right about Stein and the British Museum. Everywhere I go (and I'm just back from a hectic western trip) I hear that in the Orient particularly Mesopotamia the Americans have the reputation of being easy marks for money. The expeditions such as the Oxford and Field Museum digging and our own British Museum-University of Pennsylvania affair at Ur, are only known as British expeditions. It's time we undertook things wholly for ourselves.¹⁹

Warner replied:

If Stein is right in thinking that British prestige will be of any use in getting permission from the Nanking gov't to export his finds, I am heartily in favor asking the British Museum to cooperate.

Even if they can't do anything but supply a small part of the funds and absorb all the credit I confess it looks as if we must acquiesce...²⁰

Stein persuaded the British Museum to provide \$5,000, just enough money to qualify as a junior partner. In return, the museum 'naturally hoped to receive a characteristic and representative selection' of his discoveries.²¹

Stein would have preferred to travel with an Indian staff, supplemented by 'a couple of Chinese literati'.²² However, he was almost seventy, had lost the toes on his right foot to frostbite, and suffered from chronic dyspepsia, so the Bostonians urged him to take an American assistant. In 1922, Stein had met a young American diplomat Cornelius van H. Engert, at Mohand Marg, Stein's lofty mountain camp, north of Srinagar in Kashmir. Engert now volunteered to accompany Stein, adding:

As a matter of fact, I would rather be your 'bearer' in Central Asia than Ambassador to the Pope.²³

But, as Stein complained to Keltie, there was the problem of Engert's 'great *lacuna*, the want of all geological training'.²⁴ Instead, Stein selected as his assistant the thirty-four year old Milton Bramlette (1896–1977) from Tulsa, Oklahoma, whose mentor was the distinguished Yale geographer, Professor Ellsworth Huntington.

Before meeting Stein, Bramlette had graduated from the University of Wisconsin and enlisted as a pilot in World War I, although too late in the war to see combat. In 1921 he joined the US Geological Survey as an assistant geologist. During a stint on a mapping project of eastern Montana and the Missouri Breaks, 'Bram', as he was known, proved to be a master of plane table surveying and to have a natural eye for collecting fossils. In the coming years he would earn a reputation as 'the sharpest fossil finder in California'. Bramlette pursued his graduate studies at Yale in 1924–25 and then spent three years with Gulf Oil in Venezuela, Mexico and Ecuador, before finally receiving his doctorate in 1936. He became one of the world's leading experts on sedimentary palaeography, and during World War II he led a strategic mineral project for the US Geological Survey, which identified major sources of bauxite ore essential for aluminum production. His students remembered him as an exceptional teacher – he taught at UCLA between 1940–51, and subsequently at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. During the course of his long career, he authored several books and numerous papers. He received many honours including election to the (U.S.) National Academy of Sciences, receipt of the Academy's Thompson Medal, as well as honorary doctorates. Upon his return from Central Asia, he married Valerie Jourdan of Branford, Connecticut, and had one daughter, Emily, and five grandchildren. In 1977 Bramlette died of emphysema. His obituary states that 'throughout his life he was a modest gentleman'.²⁵ So traumatized was he by his experiences in China that, although his bibliography is quite extensive, he never once wrote about his Central Asian experience. Nor is there any mention of Stein in Bramlette's papers now housed at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego.

Bramlette's brief was to relieve Stein 'of at least a portion

of the work which transport and camp management demands often at the expense of scientific tasks, and to provide that geological knowledge which is found to be required for the proper interpretation of facts bearing on the prehistory of sites'. The latter were skills that Stein admitted to lacking.²⁶

In March 1930, when Stein returned to Cambridge *en route* to China for a preliminary scouting visit, Warner's unsuspected nemesis, William Hung, was lecturing at Harvard. Yen-ching University's President, John Leighton Stuart, was also in town. Hung typified the new breed of scholars determined to modernize China while preserving its past. Educated at Ohio Wesleyan University, he had returned to China in 1923 to find his homeland had become fervently nationalistic. According to Hung's biographer, a meeting was arranged with Stein at a hotel at Stuart's urging. Hung tried to persuade Stein, who was sure to face Chinese opposition, to abandon the expedition. Instead, he would later recall, the 'wizened old man' arrogantly lectured him: 'Mr Hung, you are young [Hung was thirty-seven]; you do not know. I have been in China long before and many times. The Chinese officials – they do not care. I know how to manage them'.²⁷

While Harvard's files do not record this meeting at a hotel, they do contain two memoranda, dated 21 March 1930, about an encounter between Stein, Stuart and Hung at Shady Hill, Paul Sachs' Cambridge home. Stuart informed Stein that the trustees had approved Yen-ching's \$50,000 grant on the 'essential condition' that Sachs and Stein would consult with the National Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities in Peking. Stein said he was prepared to do so only if the US and British legations considered it advisable. Hung proposed to write directly to Sir Frederick Whyte, an unpaid advisor to the Chinese Government, who could prepare the ground for Stein with the Commission. Stein rejected this proposal, viewing the details of his expedition as 'strictly confidential'. As a compromise, Stuart furnished Stein with a letter for Whyte detailing the serious apprehensions and possible damage that Harvard might suffer through its association with Stein's plans unless prior approval for the expedition was obtained from the Commission. Presciently, Stuart wrote that this was the only way 'to avert Young China agitation'.²⁸

Before he left Cambridge, the conservators at the Fogg showed Stein their new technique for removing frescoes. On his first visits to Dunhuang Stein had refrained from removing frescoes from the caves. It was not until midway in his Third Expedition (1913–16), when he found himself in a gorge in the hills outside Turfan, having noted the damage inflicted upon the surviving paintings by the Germans, that he decided he must remove as many as possible. At Cambridge Stein had also met Bramlette, who was to make his way to Kashmir, bring a carefully packed Marconi wireless receiver, and obtain 'some colloquial knowledge of Hindustani'. The geologist was also told to develop a working knowledge of photography, but, more important than that, 'it should be distinctly desirable' for the geologist to gain practical experience at the Fogg in the 'removal of wall paintings'. Stein proposed to take a limited quantity of necessary chemicals, which Bramlette was to obtain from

the Fogg. Langdon Warner was to supply all 'the needed facilities for this purpose'.²⁹

In April, Stein arrived in the Chinese capital at Nanking, where he met with Sir Frederick Whyte, the British Minister Sir Miles Lampson, and Eric Teichman, Secretary at the British Legation. After seeing Stuart's letter to Whyte, Lampson informed the Foreign Office that he advised Stein 'entirely to ignore' Stuart's advice.³⁰ Stein wrote to Sachs saying that his advisers *all* agreed that a visit to Peking to meet with the Commission, as Stuart had advocated, 'would be likely to bring about that publicity and feared "outcry", which he had so far avoided'.³¹ Stein did not go to Peking.

On 1 May 1930, Stein and Lampson met in Nanking with Dr C.T. Wang, the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs. British minutes of the meeting show that Stein repeated to Dr Wang the story that had proved so successful with the unworldly abbot at Dunhuang, namely that his goal was to trace the footsteps of his 'patron saint Hsüan-tsang'. Stein also explained the necessity of mapping in connection with 'historical research'. A discussion of the routes followed and Stein expressed a wish to take a Chinese topographer if possible. The disposition of 'archaeological proceeds' was not mentioned.³²

On 7 May the Chinese handed Stein his visa, which authorized 'the investigation of historical traces including relics of art and writing'. As the conditions were satisfactory, Lampson advised Stein 'to refrain from pressing for more specific facilities', such as excavation permits.³³

On his Third Expedition, Stein had benefited from the unsettled conditions in western China. Far from the capital, he had struck his own deals with local officials and warlords. Now he proposed to enter Sinkiang Province again, through the back door from India. But in 1930 conditions were even more turbulent than in 1916. Warlords still roamed at will in Sinkiang, and Stein's proposal to map the region, with the help of foreign (Indian) surveyors, would meet with suspicion.

In June, as Stein completed final preparations at his camp in Kashmir, Hung's friends on the Commission in Peking prepared to take on Stein. This special Commission, comprising scientists and scholars, some of whom had been educated at Harvard, pushed through a new Law for the Preservation of Antiquities, which permitted joint excavations, providing all proceeds remained in China. Although news of the Law reached Stein in India, he chose to take his chance without the Commission's approval. On 11 August he set out from Kashmir, accompanied by Bramlette and, of course, his dog, Dash V. (Stein named all his dogs 'Dash'. Dash V, the only one that was not a fox-terrier, died in Kashgar, the strain of the Expedition being too much for him.)

On his arrival at the Chinese frontier, Stein heard that the Governor of Sinkiang had received orders from Nanking to bar his entry. Telegrams sped among British diplomats in Nanking, New Delhi and Kashgar. Finally, after the British reminded the Governor that he was 'under distinct obligations' to them for consignments of arms and ammunition, the Chinese allowed Stein to enter, and on 6 October he received a friendly welcome in Kashgar. However, Bramlette, who had proved to be 'a steady and

thoroughly useful helper', was forced to return to India before the passes closed for winter.³⁴ The thirty-four year-old's constitution was not up to the task: he had suffered from poor circulation in the freezing temperatures and a 'succession of intestinal troubles, with the alternation from constipation and resulting piles to attacks of diarrhea'.³⁵ A chastened Bramlette telegraphed Sachs reporting that it was not 'easy to admit that a young man cannot stand up to conditions that one does of Sir Aurel's age'.³⁶ At almost 68 years, Stein was twice Bramlette's age.

At Kashgar, Stein was summoned to Urumqi, the provincial capital, to discuss his plans with the governor. He refused to go, on the grounds that the six-week excursion would delay his work. Only when Stein agreed to take along a Chinese official did the governor allow Stein to proceed. The official was a certain Mr Chang, whose modest salary prompted Stein to think he might be susceptible to 'supplements in kind & coin'.³⁷ However, Chang's loyalties lay clearly with Urumqi, and for five months he reported on Stein. Although the governor had allowed Sir Aurel to work he had expressly forbidden him to dig. Stein had to content himself with surface finds and the remains of what he contemptuously described as local 'treasure-seeking operations'.³⁸

In December, the Commission in Peking stepped up its campaign. Stein was said to be surveying strategic areas and removing antiquities. Rumours appeared in the Chinese press that Stein had budgeted vast sums of money for bribes. There was also a report on the Cambridge meeting between Stein and his sponsors that suggested that 'liberal professors' [President Stuart *et al*] had pointed out that China had changed since the Manchus and had advised Stein to cooperate with Chinese cultural organizations. It went to say that the professors had been silenced by Stein, with the retort: 'I only know Old China and do not pay the least attention to the slogans and catch-words of Young China'.³⁹ With his customary acumen, Owen Lattimore, writing from China to Warner, scented the culprit responsible for Stein's travails: 'my nostrils twitch whenever they pick up the scent of Hung & Co. on the trail of Stein'.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, a statement from the Commission in Peking was sent to Harvard. It contradicted Stein's various claims and deplored the false pretense that he was following in the footsteps of his 'patron saint' Hsüan-tsang, when his intention was to remove antiquities. In its protestation that Stein's previous removal of objects was not 'scientific archaeology' but more akin to 'commercial vandalism', the Commission cited Stein's own published accounts.⁴¹

Testy letters and telegrams flew between Sachs at the Fogg and trustees at the Yenching Institute. Finally, on 17 January Sachs was forced to send a telegram to Stein:

Serious complications for Harvard-Yenching Institute are reported to have resulted from your apparent failure to consult Commission Preservation Antiquities Peking in accordance with their original understanding. All here remain convinced Commission's approval absolutely necessary if work is to continue in China. We have cabled Commission you will communicate with them.⁴²

But when Sach's cable arrived in March, the issue was moot. Stein's travel permit had already been cancelled. In May,

faced with overwhelming opposition from Peking and Harvard, Stein returned to Kashgar, where he turned over to the British Consul the few ancient manuscripts and wooden tablets he had surreptitiously collected at Niya and some other objects, most of which were of very little value, that he had acquired from locals. Lists of these objects were drawn up for the Foreign Minister, Wang, and the objects were handed in to the Chinese authorities. It is only recently that details of these objects have been found, largely due to the investigations of Dr Wang Jiqing of Lanzhou University, and the discovery of the photograph record Stein made of them, now in the British Library.

As if to underscore Stein's failure, a report of Sven Hedin's joint Sino-Swedish excavations in Sinkiang and Manchuria reached Harvard in June 1931. By mutual agreement, all finds were delivered to Peking in the first instance, and some duplicate material was later given to the Swedes. Among the items found were 10,000 inscribed Chinese woodslips, some Han dynasty documents on silk, wall paintings from Turfan, pottery, and bronze implements. As Owen Lattimore observed to Warner, Hedin had not interceded on behalf of Stein, since, as far as the Swede was concerned, there was an old quarrel between him and the British.

Stein published an exculpatory account of the expedition in *The Times*, disputing the 'wholly unwarranted allegations' advanced by the Commission:

The Chinese *savants* and others who had signed that protest were obviously influenced far more by nationalist bias than by any knowledge of my past scholarly labours in this field.

He hoped that future Chinese scholars would recognize the 'unjustified agitation' against

a *confrère* who has done as much as any one to throw light on the great and beneficent part played by ancient China in the history of Central Asia.⁴³

It was with regret that he reported to his sponsors of the 'expenditure incurred without adequate profit and to me personally a loss of time which nothing can replace'.⁴⁴ When Stein suggested that the British Minister might present the Chinese with his version of the events, Lampson was discouraging: 'Times have changed, and in this and other respects the Chinese are nowadays masters in their own house'.⁴⁵

Stein would continue his explorations of Asia and the Middle East, in some cases supported with funds from the Fogg, and would go on to develop the new science of aerial surveying of sites. He did not return to China.

Notes

1. Macartney, Secret report to the Government of India, 19 October 1905 [Bodleian MS Stein 296, quoted in Annabel Walker, *Aurel Stein: Pioneer of the Silk Road*, London, 1995, p. 139.
2. Stein to Keltie, 17 April 1904 [Royal Geographical Society archives].
3. Stein to Keltie, 15 December 1907 [Royal Geographical Society archives].
4. Stein to Macartney, 18 February 1914 [Bodleian].
5. Macartney to Stein, 3 March 1915 [Bodleian].
6. Stein to Keltie, 11 July 1915 [Royal Geographical Society archives].

7. Charles Gallenkamp, *Dragon Hunter: Roy Chapman Andrews and the Central Asiatic Expedition*, New York, 2001, p. 182ff.
8. Miles Lampson, Memo, 22 May 1930 [British Library: OIOC, L/PS/10/1218].
9. Statement from the National Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities, Peking, China, regarding Sir Aurel Stein's Archaeological Expedition in Chinese Turkestan [Fogg Art Museum archives: Confidential File on Sir Aurel Stein].
10. Langdon Warner, quoted in Theodore Bowie, *Langdon Warner Through His Letters*, Bloomington, 1966, p. 118.
11. Susan Chan Egan, *A Latterday Confucian: Reminiscences of William Hung (1893–1980)*, Cambridge, 1987, pp. 112ff.
12. Sachs, Memo for the file, 16 July 1929 [Harvard archives].
13. Keller to Stein, 16 July 1929 [Harvard archives].
14. Warner to Cabot, 25 July 1929 [Harvard archives].
15. Stein to Keller, 18 July 1929 [Harvard archives].
16. *Ibid.*
17. Warner to Stein, 22 July 1929 [Harvard archives].
18. Stein's proposal to the Under Secretary of the Foreign Office, 1925 [Harvard archives].
19. Jayne to Warner, n.d. [1929] [Harvard archives].
20. Warner to Sachs, 30 August 1929 [Harvard archives].
21. Sir Frederick Kenyon to Stein, 11 February 1930 [Harvard archives].
22. Stein to Edward Forbes, 11 January 1930 [Fogg Art Museum archives].
23. Engert to Stein [Georgetown University: Cornelius van H. Engert papers: Box 7, Folder 27].
24. Stein to Keltie, 18 June 1907 [Royal Geographical Society archives].
25. National Academy of Sciences, *Biographical Memoirs*, vol. 52, pp. 80–92.
26. Stein to Teichman, 27 April 1930 [British Library: OIOC].
27. Egan, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
28. Stein, Memo of conversation with Dr Stuart and Mr Hung at Shady Hill, 21 May 1930; also Stuart to Stein, 21 March 1930 [Harvard archives].
29. Stein to Bramlette, 22 March 1930 [Harvard archives].
30. Lampson, Memo, 9 May 1930 [British Library: OIOC].
31. Stein to Sachs, 4 May 1930 [Harvard archives].
32. Official Minutes of Interview, Nanking, 1 May 1930 with the following persons present: The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Hsu Mo, H.M. Minister, Mr Teichman and Stein [British Library: OIOC].
33. Lampson, Memo, 9 May 1930 [British Library: OIOC].
34. Stein to Sachs, 1 August 1930 [Harvard archives].
35. Bramlette to Stein, 6 November 1930 [Harvard archives].
36. Bramlette to Sachs, 10 November 1930 [Harvard archives].
37. Stein to Sachs, 20 November 1930 [Harvard archives].
38. Stein to Sachs, 26 January 1931 [Harvard archives].
39. *Peking and Tientsin Times*, 29 December 1930.
40. Lattimore to Warner, 25 June 1934 [Harvard archives: Langdon Warner Papers].
41. Statement from the National Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities, Peking, China regarding Sir Aurel Stein's Archaeological Expedition in Chinese Turkestan [Fogg Art Museum archives].
42. Sachs to Stein, 17 January 1931 [Harvard archives].
43. *The Times*, 16 July 1931.
44. Stein to Sachs, 14 March 1931 [Harvard archives].
45. Lampson to Stein, 19 July 1931 [British Library: OIOC].