

## **Fascinated by the Orient - Life and works of Sir Aurel Stein**

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*Jointly organised by the Oriental Collection of the Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts*

The Silk Road, the Eurasian trade route linking China with the Mediterranean seashore was not only used for the purposes of commerce, but it was the meeting point of the large civilizations of the East and West as well. From the 2nd century B. C. for more than a thousand years silk, luxury items and other merchandise were carried and swapped on this road and in the towns and oases along it, but it was also a fertile mediator and receptor of ideas, beliefs, styles of art and technologies. Chinese, Indian, Iranian and classical Western culture mingled here and mutually exercised their influence on each other.

It was the heritage, the written and material relics of this cultural encounter that attracted the Hungarian-British archaeologist and discoverer Marc Aurel Stein (Pest, 1862 - Kabul, 1943) to the heart of Asia. Between 1900 and 1916 he led three extensive expeditions for the excavation of the sand-buried ruins in the Tarim Basin, discovering hitherto unknown languages and writings, and shedding new light on the history and cultural history of the people once living there.

From 1887 Aurel Stein lived in India and stayed in the service of the British-Indian Government. The geographical distance, however, did not mean breaking away from his homeland. He regularly visited Hungary, and stood in close contact with the representatives of Hungarian intellectual life. During his brief sojourns in Budapest he held lectures at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences of which he was a member since 1895. Throughout his life he supported the library of the Academy with donations, and in his testament he willed his printed books, a part of his manuscripts and his photo collection of more than 7000 items to the library of the Academy.

Aurel Stein spent most of his life in India working in the ICS on different posts in the education system and in the Archaeological Survey. His work connected him mainly to the Punjab, the Northwest Frontier Province and Baluchistan, but it was among the mountains of Kashmir where he really felt at home. Many of the artefacts collected by him during his forays in the desert are now among the treasures of the National Museum, New Delhi.

This exhibition from the bequest of Sir Aurel Stein kept in the Oriental Collection of the LHAS, Budapest introduces the life and work of one of the greatest personalities of 20<sup>th</sup> century Asian archaeology, who turned the cultural legacy of the Silk Road to a common heritage of mankind.

## Chronology of Sir Aurel Stein

26 November 1862	Born in Tüköry street, Pest
1871-1873	Studied at the Piarist Elementary School, Pest
1873-1877	Studied at the Lutheran Kreuzschule, Dresden
1877-1879	Studied at the Lutheran high school, Budapest
1879-1880	Studied Sanskrit and comparative philology in Vienna
1880-1881	Studied at the University of Leipzig, attending classes given by Georg Bühler (1837-1898)
1881-1884	Studied Indology and Old Persian at University of Tübingen; granted his doctorate degree in 1883
1884-1885	Studied oriental collections in England
1885-1886	Attended compulsory military service at the Ludovika Academy, Budapest
1886-1887 contribution to <i>Scythian Coins</i>	Further studies in England; his first important Oriental studies <i>Zoroastrian Deities on Indo-</i> published
November 1887	Travelled to India
1888-1899	Appointed as Registrar of Punjab University and Principal of Oriental College, Lahore
1892	<i>Kalhana's Rajatarangini</i> , critical edition of the Sanskrit text published

1895 Sciences	Elected member of the Hungarian Academy of
1889-1900	Principal of Calcutta Madrasah
1900 published	English translation of <i>Kalhana's Rajatarangini</i>
May 1900-May 1901	Carried out his first Central Asian expedition to desert sites in the vicinity of Khotan
November 1901	Appointed Inspector of Schools in the Punjab, he held this post until December 1903
1903	<i>Sand –Buried Ruins of Khotan</i> , popular account of the first expedition published
1903-1910	Served as Inspector-General of Education, and Superintendent of Archaeology, in Northwest Frontier Province and Baluchistan
September 1904	Became a British subject
April 1906-October 1908	Carried out his second Central Asian expedition
1907	<i>Ancient Khotan</i> , detailed report of the first expedition published
January 1909-December 1911	Visited Europe to work on the new collection at the British Museum; lectured in several countries
1910-1917	Became Superintendent of Archaeology in Northwest Frontier Province and Honorary Curator of Peshawar Museum
June 1912	Made Knight Commander of the Indian Empire; Compiled <i>Ruins of Desert Cathay</i>
July 1913-February 1916	Carried out his third Central Asian expedition

1917	Officially retired, but obtained extension of service on 'special duty'
1921 published	<i>Serindia</i> , detailed report of second expedition
1924-1925	Conducted his first visit to the Middle-East, continued visits in Europe
1926	Made a tour of Swat, identification of Aornos of Alexander the Great
1927-1928	Two explorations in Baluchistan in search of the links between the Indus Valley and Sumerian civilizations
1928	Finally retired from service in India, paying second visit to the Middle East; <i>Innermost Asia</i> detailed report of the third expedition published
1929	<i>On Alexander's Track to the Indus</i> published
December 1929-January 1930	Lectured in the United States of America
Augustus 1930-June 1931	Carried out his fourth Central Asian expedition, abandoned because of lack of excavation permit
1932	Carried out his first Iranian expedition, in Iranian Baluchistan
1932-1933	Carried out his second Iranian expedition along the Persian Gulf
1933-1934	Carried out third Iranian expedition in Eastern Fars
1935-1936	Carried out his fourth Iranian expedition, from Western Fars to Iranian Kurdistan

1937	<i>Archaeological Reconnaissances in Northwest India and Southeast Iran</i> published
March-May 1938	Made an aerial survey of Middle Eastern Roman Border-walls in northern Iraq
October 1938-May 1939	Made an aerial survey in Iraq, extended into Trans-Jordan
1940	<i>Old Routes of Western Iran</i> published
December 1940-March 1941	Conducted archaeological tour in Rajasthan
October 1941-February 1942	Visited Indus-Kohistan, explores 'route of the hanging chains'
1942-1943	Made short explorations in Bahawalpur, Chilas and Las Bela
October, 1943	Arrived at Kabul on 19 October, died at the US legation on 26 October

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Logos (we shall send our logo by a big file transfer system)  
Venue, Opening times etc

Conceptualization and Coordinator: Dr Radha Banerjee Sarkar, Head East Asia, Indira Gandhi National Centre For the Arts, Mansingh Road, New Delhi  
Curator: Agnes Kelecsényi, Keeper of the Oriental Collection of the Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.