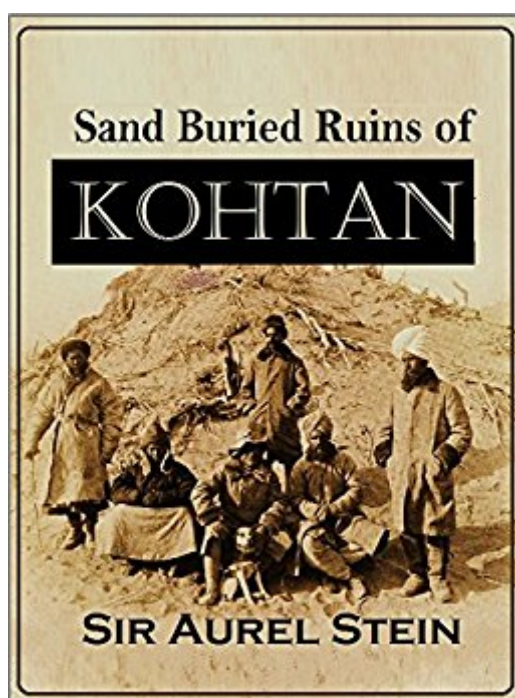


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Sand Buried Ruins Of Khotan: Personal Narrative Of A Journey Of Archaeological & Geographical Exploration In Chinese Turkestan (1904)



Synopsis

Sir Aurel Stein (1862 – 1943) was a Hungarian-British archaeologist, primarily known for his explorations and archaeological discoveries in Central Asia. He was also a professor at Indian universities. Stein was also an ethnographer, geographer, linguist and surveyor. His collection of books and manuscripts taken from Dunhuang caves is important for the study of the history of Central Asia and the art and literature of Buddhism. He wrote several volumes on his expeditions and discoveries which include *Ancient Khotan*, *Serindia* and *Innermost Asia*. Stein's 'Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan,' is a personal narrative of his "Indiana Jones-like" journey of archaeological and geographical exploration in Chinese Turkestan during 1900 and 1901, which resulted in many most important antiquarian discoveries. Dr. Stein has some interesting pages on the Tibetan invasion and occupation of Eastern Turkestan in the eighth century A.D. The idea of archaeological work about Khotan first suggested itself to M. Stein in the spring of 1897, in consequence of some remarkable antiquarian acquisitions from that region and by the discovery among the papers left by the distinguished French traveller, M. Dutreuil de Rhins of fragments of ancient birch-bark leaves, which had been acquired in the vicinity of Khotan. These proved to be a Buddhist text in an early Indian script and language, and were soon recognised as the oldest Indian manuscript then known, going back by the first centuries of our era. Later on fragments of paper manuscripts, ancient pottery and similar relics came into the hands of Russians and English agents in Central Asia and found their way into various museums. While these materials accumulated, no reliable information was ever forthcoming as to the exact origin of the finds. Stein writes: "The ruined sites explored by me have more than justified the hope which led me to Khotan and into its desert. Scattered over an area which in a straight line extends for more than three hundred miles from west and east, and dating back to very different periods these ruins throughout reveal to us a uniform and well-defined civilisation. It is easy to recognise now that this bygone culture rested mainly on Indian foundations. But there has also come to light unmistakable evidence of other powerful influences, both from the West and from China, which helped to shape its growth and to invest it with an individual character and fascination of its own." The origin and history of the culture that once flourished in Buddhist Khotan, are faithfully reflected in the remarkable series of sculptures and paintings which the ancient shrines and dwelling places, after long centuries of burial beneath the dunes, have yielded up." Contents: I. Calcutta to Kashmir II. To Astor and Gilgit III. Through Hunza IV. On the Taghdumbash Pamir V. In Sarikol VI. On Muztagh-Ata VII. Through the Gez Defile to Kashgar VIII. Stay at Kashgar IX. Khanui and Ordam-Padshah X. Yarkand and Karghalik XI. On the Road to Khotan XII. Arrival in Khotan XIII. To the Headwaters of the Yurung-Kash XIV. Over the Kara-Kash

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