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Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Jan., 1921), pp. 29-34

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1781202>

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able crags, fissures, and cliffs, through which the Columbia leaps with irresistible impetuosity, forming as it dashes along frightful whirlpools, where every passing object is swallowed up and disappears. By means of two long ropes we dropped down our boat through the Dalles, and encamped for the night at its outlet."

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## AN OUTLINE OF MODERN EXPLORATION IN THE OASIS OF SIWA

W. Seymour Walker

**I**N 1797 an Englishman, John Browne, reached the Oasis of Siwa—the first European of modern times to accomplish such a feat. He was attempting the through journey to Darfur *viâ* Siwa, and after more than the customary share of those hardships which are the lot of the explorer, he succeeded. An account of his journey, written in an entertaining and discursive style, was published on his return to England. From a scientific point of view, his narrative is of little value, particularly as regards Siwa, for during his brief stay in the oasis he was a close prisoner, fortunate to escape with his life. His description of the village might have been written yesterday, except that in his time the old citadel was intact and there were no houses built on the open plain around its base. He was lucky enough to obtain a glimpse of the ruins of the Temple of Jupiter Ammon, and the most interesting pages of his book refer to this decayed relic of one of the most famous Oracles of the ancient world. At the time of his visit the temple was in a fair state of preservation, and a considerable portion of it was still intact, occupying a large ground area. At the moment, owing to the depredations of the Siwani, and, at a later period and on a larger scale, of the ex-Khedive Abbas Hilmi, the temple can hardly be said to be other than a very fragmentary ruin. It consists of nothing but a small piece of one wall and a number of fallen columns lying round about. The surrounding ground bears unmistakable traces of the temple foundations, and indicates the original size and former magnificence of the building.

Before proceeding to outline what has been accomplished by later explorers and the gaps which they have left for their successors to fill, it will be well to give some general description, necessarily brief, of the Oasis itself.

The Oasis of Siwa lies at the southern edge of the great plateau of Cyrenaica, in Lybian North Africa, 200 miles due south of Sollum on the Mediterranean, and nearly 400 miles west-south-west of Alexandria. Territorially, the oasis is in the Western Desert Province of Egypt, although the boundary between Tripoli and Egypt passes within a few miles of its western end. The oasis itself is 80 miles by 5, this area being made up of smaller oases, consisting in their turn of groves of

stunted palms and patches of scrub vegetation, except near the villages, where there is actual cultivation of the soil. Less than a quarter of the total area of the oasis is under cultivation, although there are many evidences that in historic times the cultivated area was much more extensive. Climatic conditions, the advancing sand-dunes from the south, drift sand, and the enormous quantity of salt on the floor of the oasis, are gradually encroaching on the little cultivation that exists.

There are two main villages—Siwa and Aghurmi. Both are built on the same plan, although Aghurmi is constructed on a much smaller scale and built on a high flat-topped rock.

Siwa village, with its population of 3000, originally presented the appearance of a citadel with a front unbroken but for its three entrances. One hundred and twenty feet above ground-level at its highest point, it is built in a succession of storeys or layers of rooms, the average number of such layers being eight. The interior of the town resembles a honeycomb. It is a labyrinth of dark corridors, narrow stairs, tortuous passages, and dim-lit rooms. Open spaces around the wells—there are only two in the interior of the town—provide the only means by which natural light may percolate into the inner and lower recesses of the village.

The actual town is built of salt *sabaka* and mud bricks, reinforced with split palm logs. In accordance with Mohammedan custom, the Siwani never repair. As a result of climatic encroachments and the observance of this custom, the higher portions of the outer walls of Siwa town are crumbling. The appearance of the structure is of crazy instability, while to scale its heights appears, at a first attempt, to be attended with some danger. In spite of its apparent frailty, the structure is in reality both strong and stable. Although of some antiquity, it is difficult to conjecture the age of the present town. From the little traditional evidence which I have succeeded in gathering on the subject, I have placed the present erection at from three to four hundred years old, assuming, of course, that Siwa as it now stands was either built on or over, or is an improvement on some previously existing citadel.

Aghurmi, with a population of 700, stands about three-quarters of a mile to the east of Siwa town. It is a much smaller village and does not contain so many storeys. The chief interest here lies in the remains of Egyptian buildings. Steindorff has concluded that the ruins of Aghurmi are those of the actual temple or chamber which housed the famous Oracle. There are fragments of walls and several well-constructed subterranean chambers, while in the centre of the village is a remarkably fine archway in a splendid state of preservation. It is difficult to make a thorough examination of these ruins, since the village is built over and above them: particularly so in the case of the walls and archway which have been incorporated in the modern dwellings. Another distinction between Siwa and Aghurmi is a difference in religious sect.

The inhabitants of the former are Senussi ; those of the latter Medani. As a consequence the feeling between the two villages is intense.

The Siwani are Libyans, more commonly referred to as Berbers. The question of their descent and their place in the Hamitic scheme I have treated fully elsewhere.\* Now that a comprehensive grammar and vocabulary of the Siwi language has been published, it will be possible, after due comparisons have been made, to classify with accuracy this remote people. There is evidence to prove that the oasis of Siwa was inhabited by the ancient Libyans four thousand years ago. It may also be assumed, with grounds for credence, that the oasis was occupied by the proto-Hamitic ancestors of the Libyans from the time when they first migrated into North Africa. Following this line of thought it is permissible to reason that the present Siwani are the direct descendants of this famous race. The natural isolation of the oasis, the physical barriers which surround it, and the complete isolation of its population, all tend to confirm such an argument. It remains to be seen whether their dialect will now assist in the elucidation of this fascinating problem.

As the seat of the Oracle of Ammon, the oasis was a famous object of pilgrimage during the time of the Egyptians, who have left many interesting remains of their influence. Alexander the Great visited Siwa, and it was the Oracle of Ammon which is said to have conferred on him the divinity which he assumed thereafter. At the time of the conquest of Egypt by Cambyzes, a Persian host was dispatched from the Nile to carry out the destruction of Siwa and its oracle. The Persians never reached Siwa ; nor did they return to the Nile. I do not know whether there are any historical grounds for credence in the Siwani legend that they perished miserably—victims of the desert—in the inhospitable depression of Farafra. The Roman conquest of Carthage and Cyrenaica eventually led to the permanent occupation of Siwa by that nation ; and until the Vandal kingdom of North Africa in the fifth century, one may assume that they exercised a peaceful authority over the indigenous inhabitants of the oasis.

The Siwani of to-day are untrustworthy and treacherous, imbued with hatred of all outsiders, a feeling which is heartily reciprocated. Since the advent of Es Senussi and El Medani in the eighteenth century the Siwani have maintained a little more communication with the outside Bedawi. This intercourse, slight as it is, has opened up a certain amount of trade, and the Siwani now barter their dates and olives in exchange for blankets, tea, and sugar. In all other respects they are self-supporting.

I now return to my outline of the work of exploration commenced by John Browne. In 1827 Minutoli made extensive researches in Libya generally, and included Siwa in his travels. He left behind him valuable matter recording his observations, but his reports on Siwa are incomplete

\* 'The Siwi Language.' By W. Seymour Walker. Published by Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, Broadway House, Carter Lane, E.C.

and in some cases regrettably inaccurate. Considering the special and trying circumstances with which all would-be explorers of Siwa have had to contend—from the time of John Browne until the European War—such a result is only natural. When it is remembered that the Siwani have always been actively hostile, it reflects greatly on those who visited and wrote on Siwa that they were able to place on record as much as they did.

Minutoli was the first of Libyan students to attempt any solution of the linguistic problems of the oasis. He concluded that the current speech was Touareg, or a dialect of Touareg with slight local variations in pronunciation. It is interesting to observe at this point that practically every Libyan student who has come into contact with the Siwani has arrived at the same conclusion, which, as I have stated elsewhere, I consider to be erroneous.

Several visits to the oasis were made between those of Minutoli and the next of the great Libyan pioneers, but produced nothing further than narratives, which although interesting are of little scientific value.

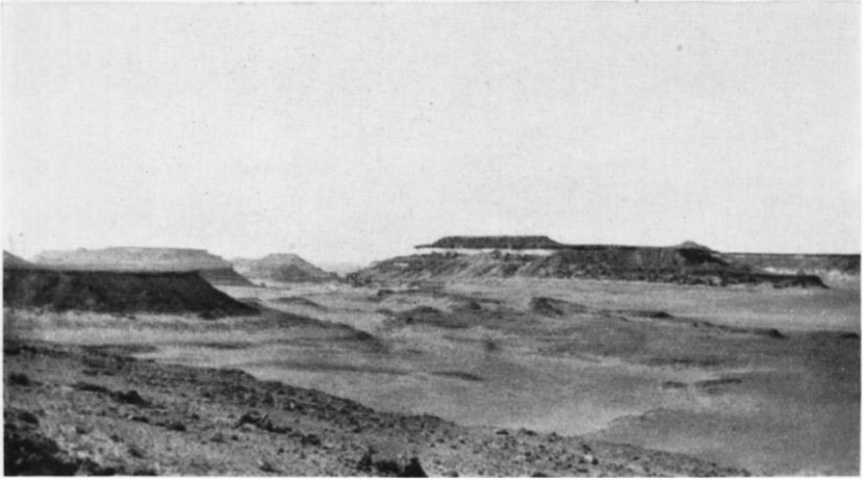
The indefatigable Rohlfs, the greatest of all North African workers, visited Siwa in 1874. He accomplished much valuable work, mostly topographical, but only while labouring under great difficulties. A significant incident came under my personal notice. A Bedawi of the Aulad Suleiman, who resided at Ajedabia, and was on his way through Western Egypt to Mecca, showed me a gold watch which he informed me was looted by his father from a white man. From his description, and the make of the watch, I do not doubt that it was once the property of Rohlfs.

Even with Rohlfs, who has left behind him such a volume of information describing his work in North Africa, there is the same lack of continuity in his work on Siwa, the same gaps which make our whole stock of knowledge regarding the oasis so very patchy and incomplete.

In 1896 Prof. Steindorff, the eminent Egyptologist, made his journey from the Nile to Siwa. It is by far the most scientifically valuable of all existing records depicting the oasis in modern times. Steindorff's interest is mainly archæological, but his paper on the journey contains a mass of assorted matter dealing with all branches of research.

Captain C. V. Stanley, R.A.M.C., made a report on Siwa in 1911, which is both concise and accurate. It was published as a Blue Book by the Egyptian Government. It does not contain a wealth of detail, but taken in conjunction with the papers of Rohlfs and Steindorff, it completes the total of reliable knowledge available until recent developments. Among others who, prior to the Great War, had visited the oasis were Silva White, Jennings-Bramley, and Royle Bey.

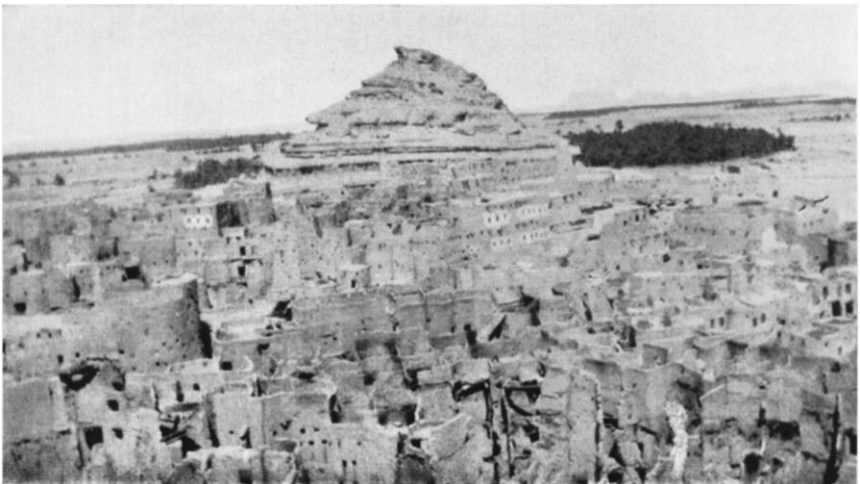
During the Senussi campaign of 1915-16-17, when armoured-car patrols were used for the final suppression of the Sherif es Senussi at Girba near Siwa, a good many opportunities were afforded to military officers of the Service to gather valuable information, particularly ethno-



**ENTRANCE TO THE OASIS BY THE MAQAHHIZ PASS**



**SIWA TOWN FROM THE NORTH**



**GENERAL VIEW OF SIWA VILLAGE**



THE OASIS FROM THE TOP OF SIWA



THE SPRING OF TAMUSI



TYPICAL SIWANI HOUSE OF THE BETTER CLASS

logical. Captain C. H. Williams, M.C., and Captain A. S. Lindsay, M.B.E., M.C., and Dr. John Ball of the Survey of Egypt, made an extensive cartographical survey of the oasis and of the Western Desert Province generally; but I do not know that other advantage was taken of the many opportunities thus presented.

Our present knowledge is thus based on the records of Rohlf's, Steindorff, and Stanley; other accounts may be disregarded, since they cover ground already known and present no original matter. It should be remembered that there are many points on which these three authorities disagree. Having regard to the special conditions which have always attended any research work in Siwa, this is to be expected.

Geographically, the oasis is known; archæologically partially so. On its geology, Dr. John Ball has recorded in a short paper the impression he received during a brief visit in war time. With the exception of some short notes by the late Oric Bates (*Varia Africana*, vol. 2, Peabody Museum, Harvard), and a paper by Mohammed Abdullah Effendi (*Varia Africana*, vol. 1), the oasis is unexplored from an ethnographical point of view. Other branches of scientific research have not yet been dealt with.

The advent of the War affected Siwa in many ways. It brought it under the permanent administration of the British Protectorate and it impressed upon the Siwani the power of the European. It would not be correct to assume that the Siwani welcome us with open arms, but they have certainly subdued their hostility, which, however, is too deeply rooted to be successfully eradicated by a few years of contact with the despised unbeliever. The Senussi campaign was an unparalleled event in the modern history of the oasis, and seriously upset the placid existence of its inhabitants. In the first place, they beheld the sacred and infallible head of their religion routed. Apart from spiritual allegiance, their insular prejudices had always prevented them from incurring any affection for the Sherif, and his downfall caused a serious readjustment of their mental and religious attitude towards him. The most important influence exerted by the campaign was undoubtedly the birth of a new idea regarding the Briton, and that was a feeling of respect, supported by the assured knowledge that in spite of the forces at his disposal, he had no intention or desire to do other than assist them in every way by just and kindly government. As the natural result of these new mental processes, the Siwani will probably, in the future, tolerate the scientist and explorer in a more kindly fashion than hitherto.

I have come to this conclusion after having made a careful study of the people, and I intend returning to the oasis shortly, to carry out an exhaustive scientific survey which shall cover the gaps left by previous workers and provide detailed record. It is an undertaking well within the capacity of one man, since the oasis is small and its population concentrated. In any case, it is time that a definite scientific study

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should be made of the Siwani and the isolated spot in which they dwell, for from constant intermarriage, and the observance of certain peculiar and unnatural practices, they are gradually becoming extinct.

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## TWO EARLY MONUMENTS TO CAPTAIN COOK

Captain Lord Claud N. Hamilton, D.S.O.

ALTHOUGH the monument erected to Captain James Cook at Kealakekua Bay, Hawaii, is well known, little attention has been paid to two earlier memorials erected to the memory of the great circumnavigator, records which unless published and preserved are likely before long to be obliterated and forgotten. Of these, one—the earlier—is still standing, and in probably much the same condition as when originally erected. The other, equally interesting although more recent, has been destroyed by the ravages of time, though two of its original inscriptions have happily been preserved.

Upon a bold lava-strewn headland, some 2 miles distant from the spot where Captain Cook fell, is to be seen a small cairn of lava boulders upon which stands a roughly hewn pole, some 8 feet above the top of the stones, bearing a small board upon which is affixed a copper plate. The inscription reads :

In Memory  
of  
*CAPT<sup>N</sup> JAMES COOK R.N.*  
Who DISCOVERED These ISLANDS  
IN  
The YEAR of Our LORD  
1778  
*This humble Monument is erected  
by his fellow Countrymen  
in the Year of our Lord  
1825*

Fig. 1 is from a rubbing of the above writing.

This, the earliest extant monument to Cook, is also probably the earliest attempt to perpetuate his memory. It is in an excellent state of preservation, due partly to favourable climatic conditions, but more largely to the durable quality of the wood used in its construction—ohia lehua (*Metrosideros polymorpha*).

This lonely cairn (Fig. 2) is situated some little distance from an abandoned road, in the middle of an almost impassable flow of the pahoehoe type of lava. It appears to be known to the older residents of