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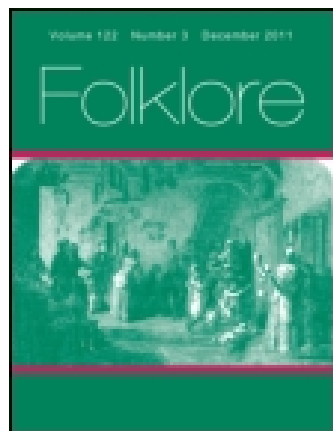
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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE SIWA IN EAST AFRICA.

I am anxious to obtain information about the *siwa* in East Africa. All I know about it comes from Sir John Kirk, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., who is also responsible for the accompanying photographs. These will serve better than any verbal description to afford an adequate idea of the appearance of the *siwa*, and of the manner in which the instrument is used. Such a horn of state, to judge from the examples about to be cited, may be of ivory, metal, or wood; is composed of three pieces, the two upper portions, which are jointed together and to the main portion, being purely decorative, while the main portion forms the horn itself; and is blown by means of a hole at the upper and smaller end, being held so that it curves across the chest, with the left hand grasping a knob underneath the hole, while the right hand takes hold of a chain (absent, however, in the wooden example) that runs downwards on the inside towards the mouth. Such a *siwa* is not a thing of yesterday, but probably goes back at least as far as the days of Persian (Shirazi) influence on the coast. It constitutes the symbol of authority belonging to the headman of a township, and its loss would seem to be equivalent to deprivation of power. Thus the *siwa* of Winde, a village on the mainland opposite the north end of Zanzibar, was confiscated by the Sultan's government in the seventies as a punishment for slave-trading. It is of wood, and is now in the possession of Sir John Kirk. Again, the *siwa* of Patte, an island to the north of Lamu inhabited by the Ba-Juni, a rather peculiar people, found also on the adjacent mainland, whose physique, to judge by the large handles of their weapons, differs sensibly from that of their more

delicate-fisted neighbours, was carried off to Lamu by the Arab Governor, after a rising at Patte had been suppressed by the Sultan's troops. It is a beautiful piece of work in ivory. Lamu likewise possesses a *siwa* of its own, of brass. On the other hand, the Wa-Hadimu, the aborigines of Zanzibar, though serfs to the Arabs, were allowed to retain a considerable amount of self-government, and their chief, the Mwenia Mku, residing at Dunga, in the centre of the island, retained his *siwa*, and attached the greatest importance to its possession. It was carefully guarded, having a special custodian to attend to it, and was kept religiously shielded from the gaze of the profaner by a wrapping of rich silk cloth. Sir John Kirk was never able to obtain a sight of it. It was blown at the installation of the chief, and also figured on solemn occasions connected with his own history and that of his family, such as marriages. Similarly, the Patte and Lamu horns were used on state occasions, and at marriages and other festivities. [See the account, taken from native witnesses, in I. N. Dracopoli, *Through Jubaland to the Lorian Swamp*, 1914, pp. 34-6.] The only definite piece of folk-lore relating to the *siwa* consists of the tradition that the last-mentioned instrument would of its own accord emit a booming sound from within its wrappings when a death in the chief's family was about to occur. In view, however, of the many superstitions to which insignia of office are subject, it would be interesting to institute further enquiries concerning the beliefs attaching to these carefully guarded objects.

R. R. MARETT.

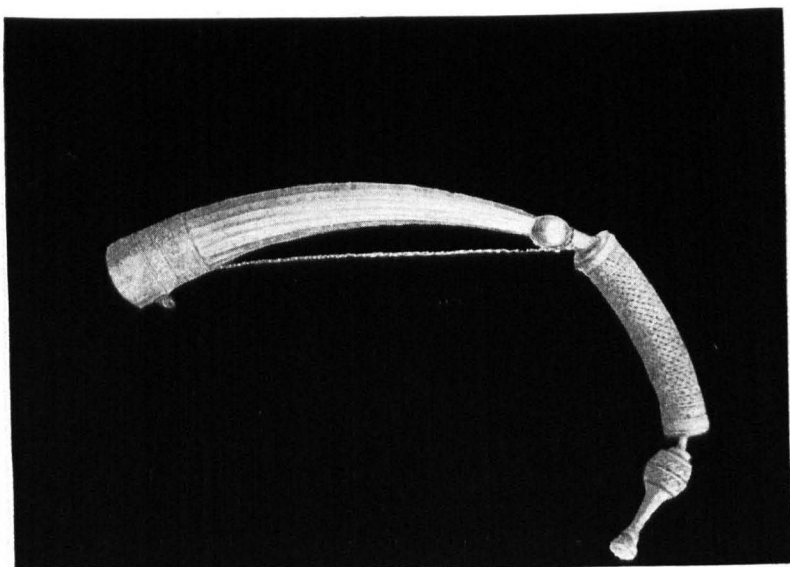
Plate XXI.



THE SIWAS OF PATTE AND LAMU.

To face p. 500.

Plate XXII.



THE SIWA OF PATTE.

