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The Ship of the Dead in Textile Art

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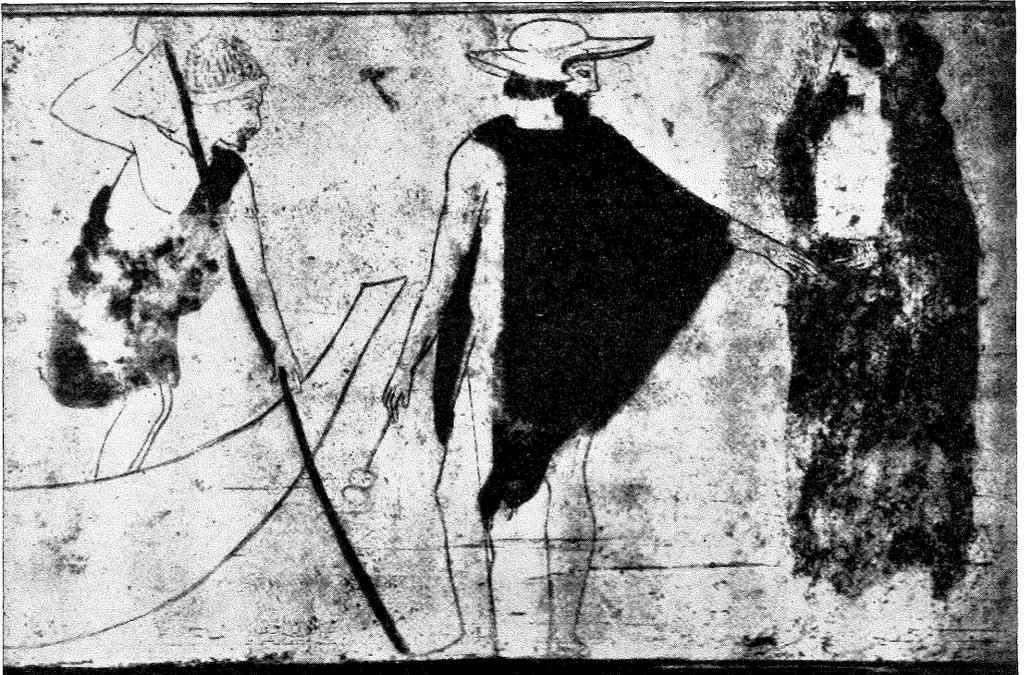
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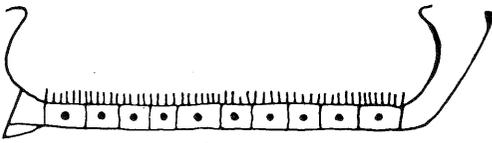
In the imagination of sea-faring peoples the ship has at all times had a preponderant place. Its prominence in the funeral customs of prehistoric Europe, as well as in Ancient Egypt and South East Asia, shows that it was often related to mythical and religious notions. But apart from these associations the ship constituted a vital element of the art of prehistoric and primitive peoples. This is proved, for instance, by the numerous representations of ships in the rock-drawings of northern Europe, by the Egyptian ships of death, and by the boat-shaped sarcophagi and pictures of ships of the dead in South East Asia.

The European representations of ships of a primitive type, as found in the west of the continent and on rock-faces in South Scandinavia, date from the Neolithic and the early Bronze Age. They occur from Brittany to Denmark, where they are to be found carved on boulders, and along the coast of Sweden as far as beyond Bergen in Norway. But nowhere are they met with in such numbers and such

variety as in the drawings scratched on the rocks of the South Scandinavian provinces of Bohuslän and Östergötland. In these rock-designs the ships are mostly sketched in outline from the broadside. A most striking characteristic is the typical elaboration of hull and prow. The upturned stems and stern-posts are usually duplicated, so that we get the impression of seeing two boats one inside the other. This impression is accentuated when the intermediate space between the two contours consists of a prop-work of parallel upright, or in exceptional cases zigzag, lines (see illustration on page 1871). Those ships are believed to be representations of ritual boats because of the absence of sails and oars, and especially because of the fact that in these Scandinavian rock-drawings they are almost always found in conjunction with unmistakable ritualistic objects and symbols such as double axes, trees resembling firs (see illustration on page 1872), orbicular or wheel-shaped forms (sun symbols), human figures with raised hands, or

The god Hermes leads the spirit of a deceased woman to Charon, the Ferryman of the Dead, who brings her over the river Acheron into Hades (the Underworld). The conception of the ship, in which the dead pass into the hereafter, is traceable, too, in the case of the prehistoric peoples, and amongst others the Indonesian peoples. Painting on an Athenian oil-jar (Lekythos). About 445 B.C. After E. Pfabl: Tausend Jahre griechischer Malerei, Munich 1940.





Representation of a ship. The body of the boat is divided up by vertical lines. Prehistoric rock-drawing at Himmelstadelund (Sweden). After A. Nordén.

trumpeters. Opinions differ as to how the details of the construction of these craft should be interpreted. Some consider the vertical lines on the broadside to be ribs. Others think that they represent boat-sledges on runners. This latter view is based on certain rock-drawings, which clearly show sledges drawn by horses or men, on which ritual boats are fastened. While the ends of the ship proper are mostly turned upwards like powerful protective prows and sterns, the under-carriage often shows a kind of spur or ram like those of the archaic ramming ships of the Mediterranean, or the "djukung"-boats with double stem and spur which are still occasionally met with in Bali and Lombok.

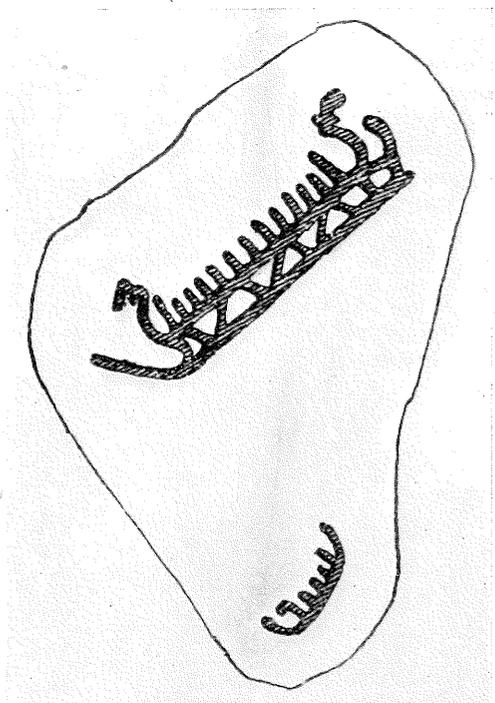
Neither the early view of the rock-drawings as nothing but the expression of primitive artistic impulse, nor the interpretation of them as primitive records of important ideas or events, are supported today. The constant occurrence of ritual objects and symbols (mostly cosmic) in the South Scandinavian rock-drawings does not allow of any further doubt as to their being illustrations of cult scenes. The majority of present day investigators are at one as to the ritual or religious character of these rock-designs as well as of the ships represented. Opinions differ as to how far these ships are connected with the cult of the dead. Where the ship designs are found on the stone slabs of cists, a connection with the cult of the dead is very likely. Drawings of ships not found on tomb-stones but on other rocks are more difficult to explain. Usually they are taken as symbols of fertility and sun ritual, whereas the drawings on the cists are often considered to be merely special cases of the drawings connected with the life-producing fertility ritual.

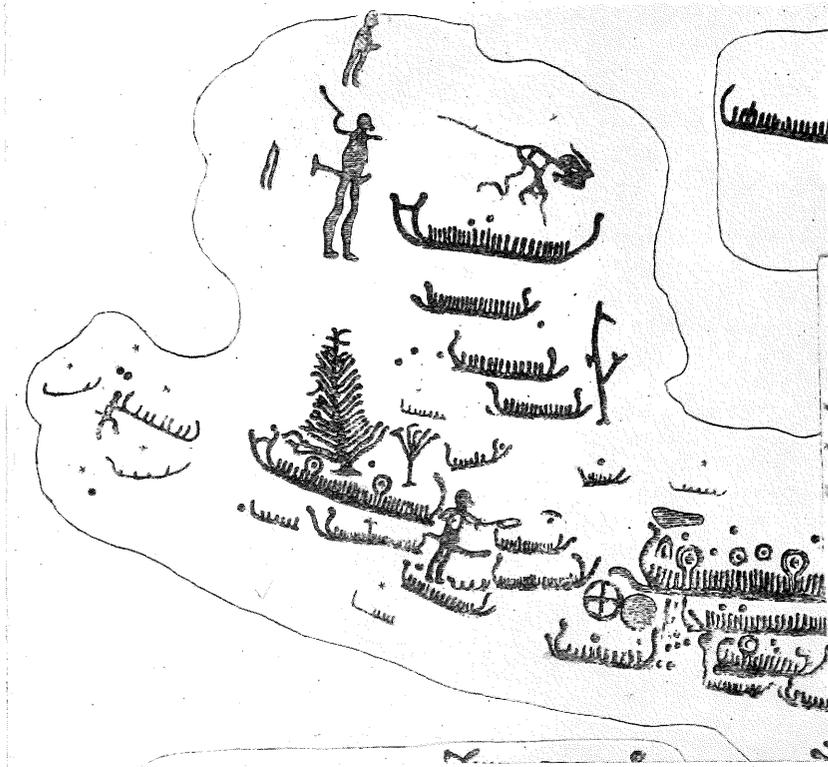
Stones in the shape of ships are found on numerous graves. They belong to a later period, i. e. the later Bronze and the early Iron Age. These stone ships are known in Livonia and Courland, and especially in Sweden. The Gotland ships belong to the first ship-tombs known in the north of Europe. All are based

on the same fundamental idea as the custom wide-spread in the north of Europe during the later Iron Age of burying the dead in ships, viz., to allow the deceased to sail into the hereafter. Typical examples of such burials in ships are the well known boat-graves in Uppland (Sweden), and the wooden ships found in the peat bogs and sepulchral mounds of Schleswig, the South and North of Norway and other countries of the North. These last date from the Christian era, and contain, besides the dead bodies of the interred, their weapons, horses and other domestic animals.

As a pictorial subject the ritual ship is not confined to the drawings on rock slabs and gravestones of prehistoric Europe. It also appears on the peculiar short-handled shaving knives or razors of the late European Bronze Age. The bronze knives found in Holland, North Germany (Hanover, Holstein), Denmark, South Sweden (Schonen) and even in the Baltic countries of Russia show, if they belong to the fourth and fifth of the periods (1050-750 B. C.) named after the Swede Oscar Montelius, the ornaments so much in favour

Above: Ship with zigzag props. The turned-up double prow and stern, giving the impression of two boats one inside the other, are characteristic. Below: A ship of simpler design. Rock-drawing at Ryland, Tanum (Sweden). After L. Baltzer.





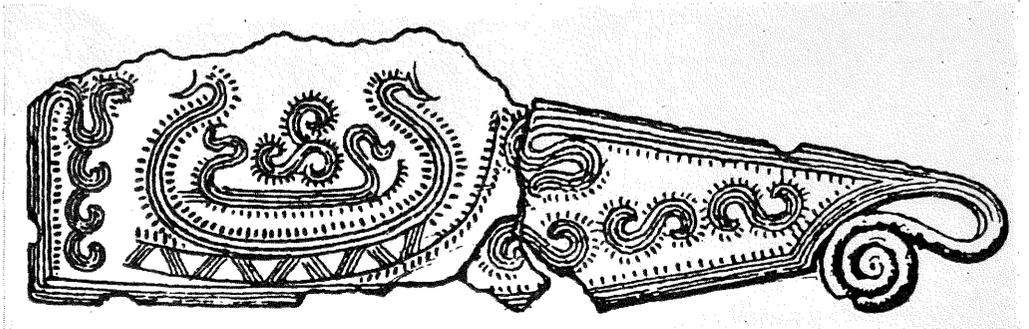
Representation of ships and human figures. A kind of fir tree and several wheel-shaped or disk-shaped forms, explained as sun symbols, are clearly distinguishable. Rock-drawing from Lökeberget, Bobuslän (Sweden). After L. Baltzer.

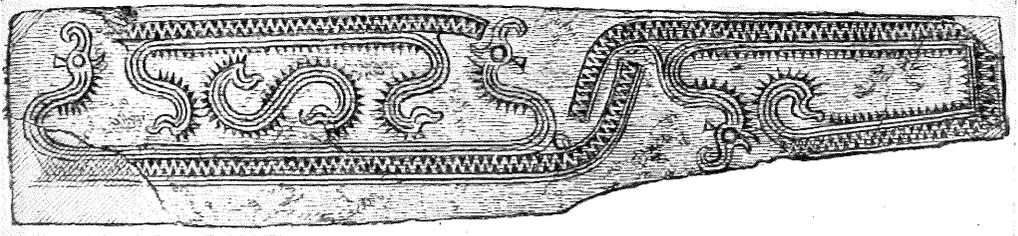
at that time, viz. the striking curved lines and rounded forms we find in drawings and sculptures. This curvilinear style with its preference for spirals and undulating lines is clearly noticeable in the ornamentation of the ships. The strongly curved ends of prow and stern, usually bearing dragons' heads, and the reappearance of the representation of two ships one inside the other, with the intermediate space decorated by the braid, or in rare cases by the zigzag, ornament, are typical of these so-called "dragon ships" (see illustrations on this

page, below and on page 1873). As these bronze barber's knives apparently belonged to the outfit of graves, and probably served some sacred purpose, it is believed that the ships represented thereon are also ships of the dead.

Representations of ritual boats are also to be found in the Mediterranean countries. A gold signet ring for instance was found on the small island of Mochlos near Crete, dating from the Minoan Bronze Age. It bears the illustration of a ship carrying a female figure (probably a goddess) and a little tree. Its prow

Bronze Age shaving knife from Lower Saxony with so-called "dragon ship" ornament. As razors like the ones represented on this and the next page belonged to the outfit of graves, it may be concluded that the peculiar craft represented on them are meant to be ships of the dead. After H. Kühn.





Late Bronze Age razor from Denmark with "dragon ship" ornament. After S. Müller.

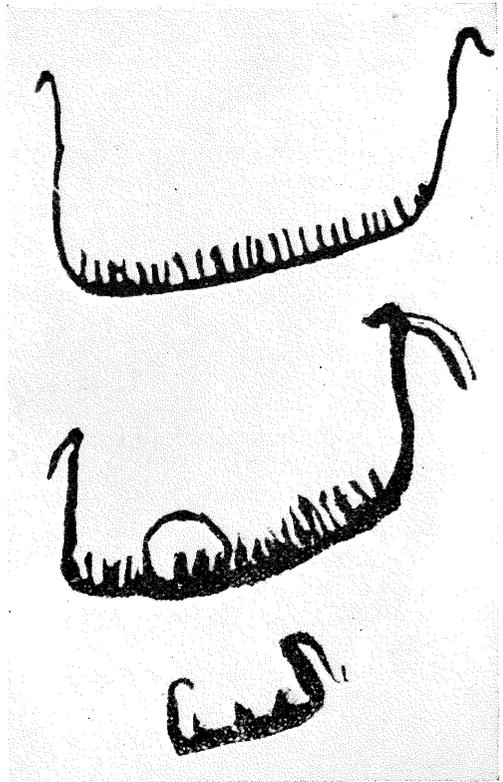
and stern end in carved animal figureheads. From similar ritual scenes of Mycenaean art it is clear that the little tree must be a sacred vine. The bronze relief of a ship from the Grotto of Zeus in Crete on the other hand has a rowing crew and a plainly discernible ram. Ritual boats with stylised trees of life and figureheads in the shape of birds' heads, found on Palestine stone seals, show a striking analogy to the boat on the Mochlos ring. Other "votive barges" of bronze of primitive workmanship from the excavated deposits of the native population of Sardinia and the west coast of central Italy, excel in their portrayal of numerous animal figures. Moulded clay ships found on old vessels in Cyprus may have been influenced by Egypt.

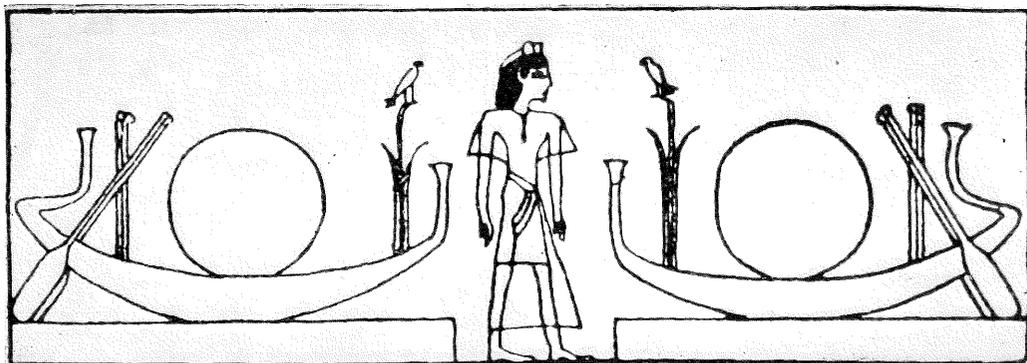
Pictures and inscriptions prove that the ritual boat was a well known subject in Babylonia. The oldest mention of a ritual boat in Babylonia so far known occurs in an inscription of King Gudea of Lagash, who reigned about 2600 B. C. Graphic and plastic illustrations of ships from Ancient Egypt are frequent. Even in the prehistoric period in Egypt, which corresponds to the Stone-Copper Age of the years 5000-3000 B. C., representations of ships with their rowers, pavilion-like cabins, flag-staffs and ornaments at their bows—often in the shape of animals—, were an ever-recurring subject on the painted earthen vessels, made as yet without the potter's wheel by the population of the Nile valley. Illustrations on such earthen vessels found in pre-dynastic graves show a small tree, which can still be easily recognized, at the bow of these boats. Representations of ships found in the Nubian desert (Chor es Salaam) show similar cabins, a tree-shaped mast with a sort of triangular sail, as well as highly curved stems and stern-posts. The same characteristics are also met with on rock-drawings in the desert between the Red Sea and Upper Egypt, dating from a time before the Egyptian

dynasties began. The type of boat in these drawings is not at all Egyptian, but reminiscent rather of Mesopotamian models—a proof no doubt of early migrations (see illustration on this page).

Very varied in form are the prehistoric pottery boats, being either fitted with parallel sides and up-turned, highly curved ends, or with a broad hull and only one sweeping end. As opposed to the variety of the pre-dynastic types of boats, the drawings of the ritual boats in the historic times of Ancient Egypt appear uniform in their main lines (see illustration

Pre-dynastic boats with high prow and stern of a type resembling Mesopotamian (rather than Egyptian) craft. Upper Egypt. After H. A. Winkler.





Egyptian "Sunboats" with sun disk and plant symbolizing the regeneration of vegetation. From an Egyptian Book of the Dead.

above). The Egyptian belief that the dead sail into the hereafter in boats of the Sun God or other gods has found pictorial expression in many illustrations of such craft and the scenes connected therewith. The boats depicted in the Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, in which there is a sun disk and a plant (it is often a tree) symbolizing the rebirth of vegetation, are the boats of the Sun God. The plastic images of ships in Egyptian graves must also be looked upon as boats of the Sun God. They sail from east to west, and take the souls of the departed along with them. There exist widely different makes of such "votive barges", ranging from primitive pottery work to exquisite ship models in silver and gold.

All representations of ritual boats on the inscriptions of the pyramids belonging to the later Pharaohs of the Older Kingdom have the same construction and the same formation of prow and stern. The pictures of the ritual boats in late Ptolemaic times and the boats of the gods Horus and Osiris on the temple walls of Denderah in southern Egypt show the same forms and have therefore the same origin.

The boats in which in Greek mythology Charon the ferryman ferries the ghosts of the dead across the Styx into Hades (see illustration on page 1870) is comparable in some respects

to the ship of the dead in Egypt: but there are important differences. There is no lack of pictorial representations, e. g. on Greek vases, of scenes in the underworld and of the crossing in Charon's boat. But in the Greek mind, in contradistinction to the Egyptian, the boat of the dead is of secondary importance. It is only occasionally that we find references to its existence, as for instance in the saying that a dying man has one foot already in the boat of Charon.

A comparison of the illustrations on pages 1872 and 1873 clearly shows the striking resemblance in construction and appearance between the representations of ships in pre-dynastic Egypt and the rock-drawings in the north. It might be supposed, in the light of the extensive navigation which is known to have prevailed in the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age, that this resemblance is a proof of direct relations between the two regions. But in the present position of our knowledge such a deduction is more than problematic. In spite of the resemblance and of certain common features such as the curved high prows and sterns, the animal figureheads at the ends, the tree ornament in the boat, the double cabins and so on, we must not forget that these things are symbols, ideas or fittings which may have been known to all sea-faring peoples independently of one another.

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The Ship as Represented in the Art of South East Asia

By A. Steinmann

Representations of ships, more or less artistic, in stone, wood or metal are wide-spread among the native population of the islands of South East Asia. They resemble the boat-like drawings and paintings which are also found, often in fantastic shape, in that they are based in two fundamentally different magic-religious ideas. On the one hand, as in prehistoric Europe, the idea of the ship is connected with the cult of the dead and the belief in the hereafter. On the other hand it is based on the belief that epidemics and other misfortunes can be avoided or exorcized by means of a magic boat.

This custom of using small models of ships for averting or exorcizing sickness or evil influences is known in one form or another to nearly all sea-faring peoples who profess Shamanistic beliefs. They think that evil takes the shape of personified spirits, which they seek by prescribed ceremonies to entice into one of these craft, and then to deliver them up together with the craft to the river or sea. This

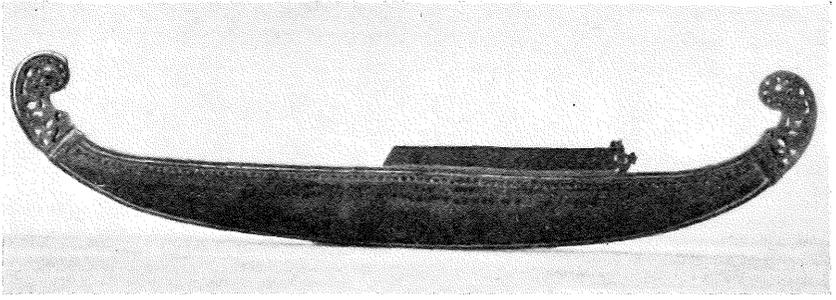
custom is found from the east part of Indonesia, and extends from the Moluccas via Borneo, Sumatra and the Batam Archipelago as far west as Malacca and the Nicobar Islands, and even to Indo-China, where to this day in times of epidemics a sacrificial boat is constructed for the purpose of getting rid of them. In China too they tried some years ago to transfer a cholera epidemic to a ship and drive it out in this way.

These models of ships are made of wood or metal. The little metal ships of the Battak in Sumatra, which come under the category of "panghulubalangs" or "things of power", are often real little works of art of native bronze or brass casting (see illustration on page 1877, above). In Amboina, one of the Molucca islands, boats made of cloves take the place of these wood or metal boats (see illustration on page 1877, below). The apotropæic effect attributed to the clove is not unknown in India. In exorcizing ceremonies of a Shamanistic character in Indonesia the clove is said "by provo-

Scene of a Dyak funeral rite. In the foreground a panel with painted ship of the dead, the prow and stern of which represent the head and tail of a rhinoceros bird. After H. Witschi.



*"Pangbulu-balang."
Metal boat model
of the Battak
in Sumatra,
used for
exorcizing.
Owner: Volbeda,
Sumatra.*



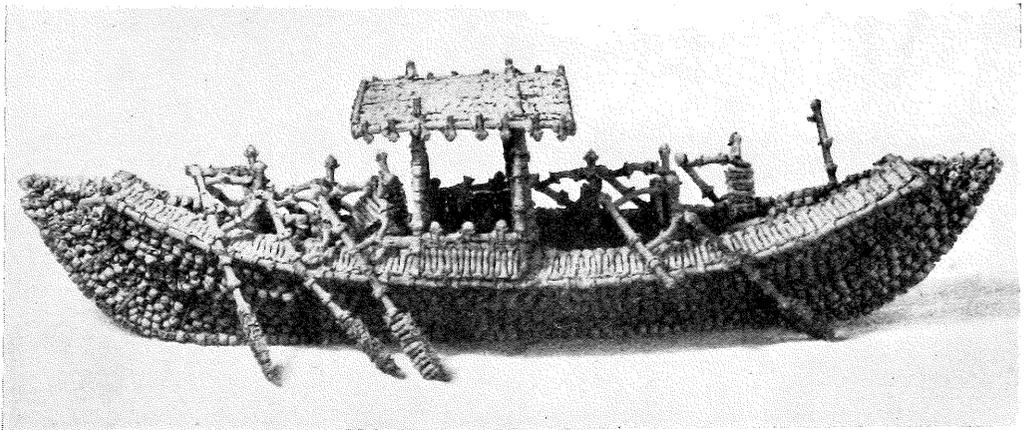
cation and affront to induce evil spirits to quit". In all these cases plastic models of ships are used; and there is, therefore, an almost complete lack of pictorial representations. It is only in the magic books of palm leaves of the Battak Shamans (which are becoming very rare nowadays) that we find illustrations of "craft bringing destruction" used for Shamanist magic, together with directions of how to construct them. The ship in these cases is a model of a wooden boat, manned with armed puppet figures. Laden with all sorts of noxious insects, it is meant to bring epidemics to enemy villages on the shores of Lake Toba (see illustration on page 1881, above). Similar conceptions may be the motive of the "Hentakoi", pictures on wooden panels, which are made on the Nicobar Islands from boards and leaf-ribs of the betel tree according to indications given by the Shamans, although the ships in this case are naturalistic representations of merchant ships and sailing boats.

Of much wider consequence and deeper influence, so far as the artistic activity of the peoples of South East Asia is concerned, was undoubtedly their conception of the ship that

brings the dead into the hereafter. Representations of these boats of the dead can be traced with assurance as far back as the Bronze Age, where the boat of the dead appears as an ornament on metal drums, which are found from the mainland of Farther India as far as the Malay Archipelago. Moreover, some years ago rock-drawings of ships were discovered in Cerram island, one of the Moluccas, and in Dutch West New Guinea, which appear to be among the oldest, or at least the most primitive, representations of ships in South East Asia (see illustration on page 1878, above). They strongly remind one of the North European prototypes in their construction (highly curved stern and prow) as well as in respect of their attributes (compare the illustration on page 1872, above), and have therefore been designated by those who discovered them as ships of the dead. Yet complete darkness unfortunately reigns as to their origin, their significance, and even their date, which last perhaps lies not so very far back.

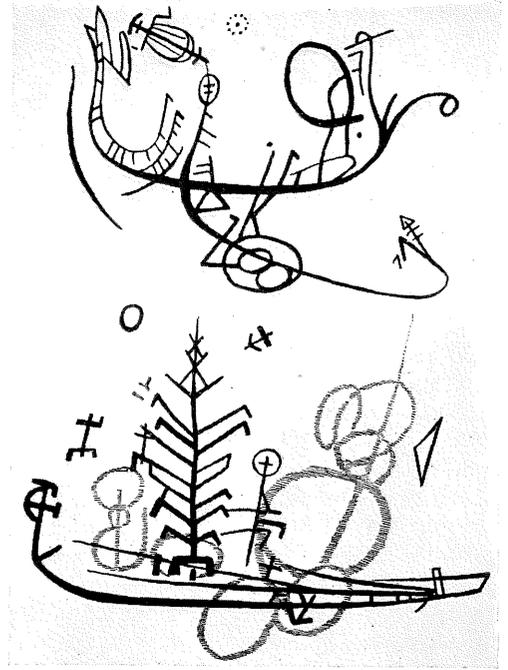
The origin of the oldest metal drums of Farther India, however, was definitely proved to be in the Bronze Age, on the ground of

Boat made of clove, which is said "by provocation and affront to induce evil spirits to quit". Amboina, Molucca Islands. Ethnological Collection of the University of Zurich.



excavations made in the burial place of Dongson in the province of Thanh-hoa (North Annam). The ancestors of the present-day Annamites and the Muong are said to have been products of this Bronze Age civilisation in the north eastern part of Indo-China at the beginning of the Christian era. At that time they formed a branch of the Yue tribe and are supposed to have spread over Annam and Cambodia as far as the Malay Archipelago. These bronze drums shaped rather like an hour glass are called kettle drums or kettle gongs (see illustration on page 188o). A voluminous literature has already accumulated on the subject. They consist of a round top and a frame which is open at the bottom. Both the top and the frame are divided into spaces of varying width. Old specimens are made of a bronze-like material, the alloy of which is characterized by its high percentage of lead (instead of tin). The lid and the upper part of the frame are decorated by reliefs consisting chiefly of animal friezes, scenes abounding in human figures, and boats with or without crews. In the case of those with crews, special interest attaches the processions of boats, sailing one

A house with a keel-shaped roof placed in the middle of a coconut plantation. Native house in Padang-Pandjang, Sumatra. Photo: A. Steinmann.



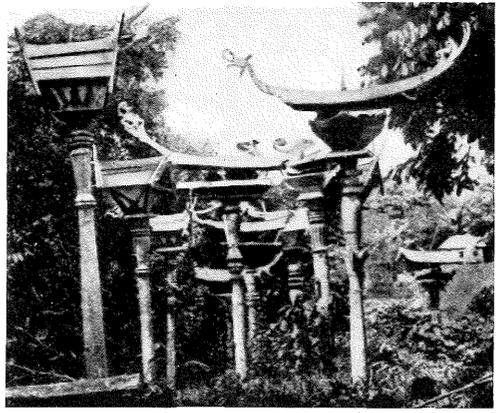
Primitive representation of a ship of death with tree, moon, and sun symbols, strongly resembling North European rock-drawings. Scratch drawing, West New Guinea. After J. Röder.

behind the other, the inmates of which are adorned with feathers and often stylised to such a degree as to be no longer recognizable as human figures (see illustration on page 188o, below). The strange appearance of these boats, with the hull in the form of a crescent, the figureheads shaped like the head and the tail of the rhinoceros bird, and the ornamented masts etc. are all indications that there was not the least intention of representing ordinary boats. Most experts (e. g. V. Goloubew, R. Heine-Geldern, B. A. G. Vroklage) concur in the view that the almost complete conformity of these ships with certain paintings, which are still used among some Dyak tribes in Borneo in connection with their ceremonial rites at funerals, go to prove that the ships represented on the kettle drums are meant to illustrate or symbolize the voyage of the spirits of the departed into the land of the dead. The most easterly finds of such drums were made in the island of Salayar situated to the southwest of Celebes, and in the island of Kur, which is one of the Kei Islands to the east of the Banda Sea. In the fragment here shown (see illustration on page 188o, below) from the upper part of the frame of the Kur drum, the inmates of the sickle-formed craft are adorned

with feathers, but stylised as pure decoration. Only the drum of Salayar shows ships of a different form, their flat bottoms recalling rather the Malay rafts which are believed to be the precursors of the boat.

Apart from these Bronze Age reliefs of ships of the dead, the ship in South East Asia does not appear in drawings and paintings as often as in plastic art. Borneo, where the ship of the dead has an importance unknown in any other part of the Indian Archipelago in connection with funeral rites and customs, is a unique exception.

These Borneo paintings are done on elongated wooden panels, which are usually hung up in front of the house of the deceased until the day of the big funeral feast (Tiwah), when the spirits of the departed are treated to a final festive meal before being dismissed by means of various rites, dances and mimic shows to the realm of the dead (see illustration on page 1876). The paintings used in these funeral rites and occasionally also for Shamanistic ceremonies, represent the phantom ship of the dead, which is to lead the ghosts or spirits of the deceased into the town of the spirits beyond. The boats richly laden with treasure of every kind, as seen in the illustration on page 1881, below, occur in a number of different varieties, each marked by special characteristics, which differ from tribe to tribe. Common to all of them is the figure of the Ferryman of the Dead (Tempon Telon) who always stands at the bow, and the tree of life represented as a lance-shaped mast flanked by



Wooden boat-coffins on elaborately carved piles. West Borneo. After W. C. Ten Cate.

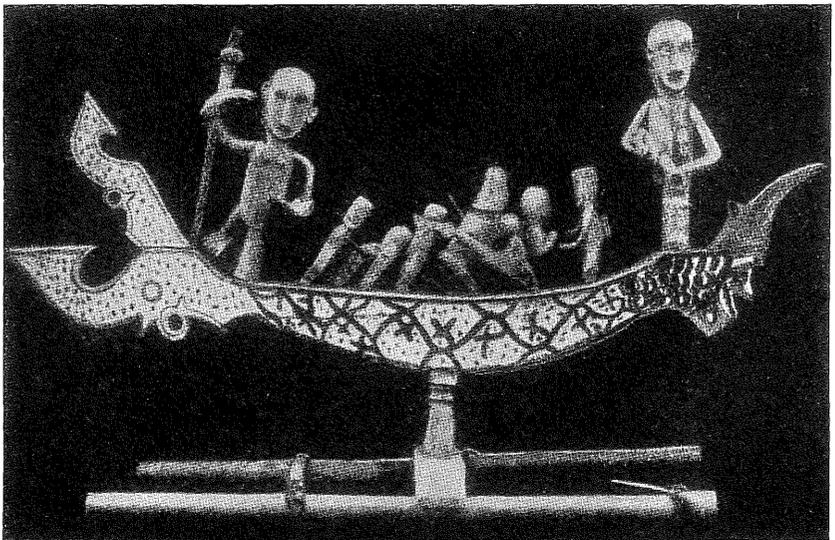
the sun and moon (see illustration on page 1881, below). Some boats exhibit a striking series of rectangular sections in the hull (see illustration on page 1890, below). In their steeply curved ends and their formation as head and tail of the rhinoceros bird (the bow being the head and the stern the tail), and in many other details these Dyak ships show unmistakable parallels to the above-mentioned representations of ships of the ancient bronze drums of South East Asia. Similar boats of the dead, shaped like Rhinoceros birds, with urn of the dead and crew also form a component part of scenes represented on bamboo quivers in South Borneo.

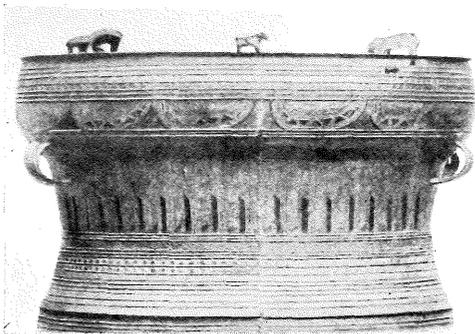
This same predilection for pictures abounding with human figures, the arms and legs of which "recall rather the legs and antennae of

Ship of death of the Sembiring tribe with small wooden dolls symbolizing the dead.

The two bigger figures represent the Ferryman of the Dead and his Mate. Karo-Battak, Sumatra.

After H. Liniger.





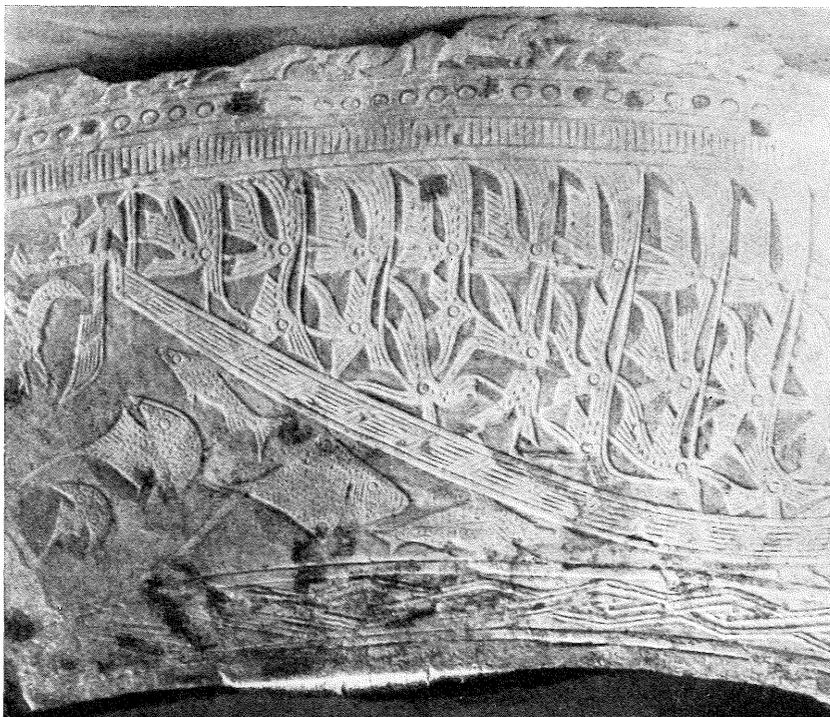
Side-view of a South East Asian bronze drum (or gong) with frieze of boats of the dead. Collection Count Hans Wilczek. After Franz Heger.

insects than human limbs”—to quote the admirable description of Heine-Geldern—is also met with in rare cases in the paintings which adorn the walls of certain chieftains’ houses of the Toba-Batak in Sumatra. They represent rowing boats with crews sailing through an entanglement of stars and vines, which are no doubt stylised trees of life with three branches (see illustration on page 1882, below). The same kind of stylisation is also to be traced in drawings illustrating mythical tales in the old manuscript of the Lampung in South Sumatra.

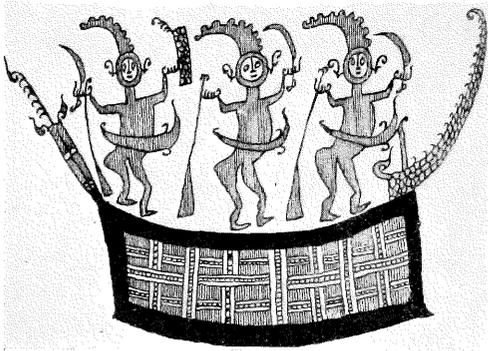
The combination of the ship and the cosmic

tree of life is very common. The Batak paintings are not the only ones where the boat of the dead appears in connection with the three-branched cosmic tree. The association of the two has spread as far as the Djarai tribes in Farther India, where a boatful of men and animals, with a branched tree rising from the middle, tops the brightly coloured and elaborately carved roof of their tomb structures (see illustration on page 1883, above). On the ships of the dead in Borneo, on the other hand, this tree has taken the shape of a lance-shaped mast in conformity with the Dyak beliefs.

The conception of a voyage of the ghosts in the ship of the dead, which in South Eastern Asia is expressed in numerous myths, religious chants and invocations, has been represented, not only in pictorial illustrations, but also in the special form of coffins, tombs and tomb accessories, which are found all over the Archipelago. It is proved that in Indonesia, Melanesia, Polynesia and Australia the dead bodies were originally allowed to float away in a boat. Later, the dead were buried in earth: but the coffin or the whole tomb were given the shape of a boat. These boat-coffins, which were often painted or abundantly carved, are free plastic creations of wood, more rarely of stone. The cylindrical log, or



Representation of ship of the dead on a fragment of the bronze drum or gong of Kur, Indonesia. The sickle-shaped craft has almost ceased to be recognisable as such. Ethnological Collection in the University of Zurich.

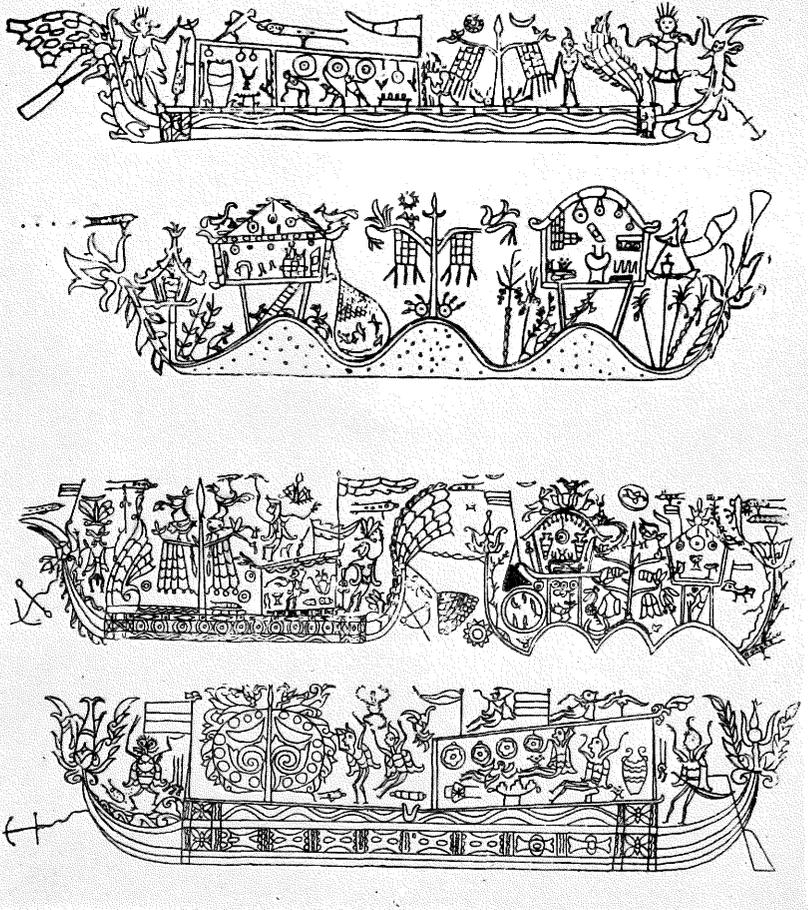


"Doom-ship." Drawing of a magic craft of the Toba-Battak, Sumatra, used to cause harm. After J. C. Lamster.

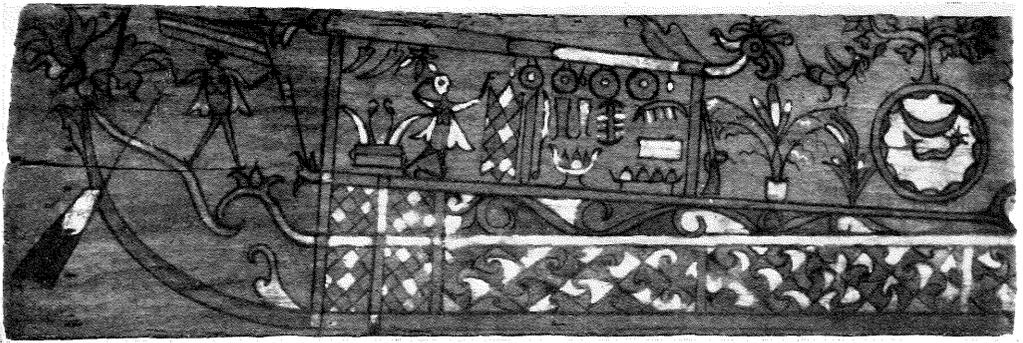
tree-trunk, provides the fundamental form for these boat-coffins, just as it did for the images of ancestors.

These so-called ship-funerals have spread from the coasts of Farther India until well into

the Asiatic Continent. Some mountain tribes of the Province of Assam, the Lhota-Naga for instance, bury their dead in boat-shaped wooden coffins, the ends of which are adorned with carved heads of the rhinoceros bird. But the true home of the ship burials in South East Asia are the islands of Indonesia. The custom of burying the dead in boat-shaped coffins is based on the belief that the ghosts of the ancestors live in the hereafter in a country which all returning ghosts try to reach across the sea. The islands of Indonesia, where burial in boat-coffins is the established practice, are Sumatra, the Batu Islands, Borneo, Celebes, the Moluccas (esp. Timorlaut), New Caledonia in Melanesia, among others, the Sandwich Islands in Polynesia, and New Zealand. The wooden coffins resting on piles in West Borneo (see illustration on page 1879, above) and the boat models fixed on elaborately carved wooden piles found in Buton, a



Barges from paradise and boats of the dead of the Dyak with three-branched trees of life, moon, and sun symbols. Tempon Telon, the Ferryman of the Dead, stands at the stern of the boats of the dead, and his Mate at the bow, working the anchor. After P. Te Wechel and F. Grabowsky. International Archive for Ethnography.



Part of a wooden panel with the representation of a Dyak boat of the dead. Historical Museum, Berne.

small island to the south east of Celebes, are conspicuous in Indonesia for their fine carving.

This custom took a very curious form among the Sembiring tribe of the Karo Battak people in Sumatra. They celebrated the funeral ceremony at fairly long intervals. At the close of it wooden models of ships containing, not only the bones and other remains of the dead, but also small wooden figures symbolizing the dead, were launched on the Wampu river, which flowed into the Strait of Malacca. These ships painted in red and black, had figureheads at the prow and the stern in the shape of the head and tail of the Rhinoceros bird. They also contained wooden dolls of a

larger size representing the Ferryman of the Dead and his Mate who had to work the anchor (see illustration on page 1879, below).

This same custom took yet another form in Sawu, an East Indonesian island. Instead of wooden models of boats, small craft were made from the leaves of the Lontar palm tree (*Borassus flabelliformis*) and, provided with an image of the deceased, were given up to the waves at the end of the funeral ceremony.

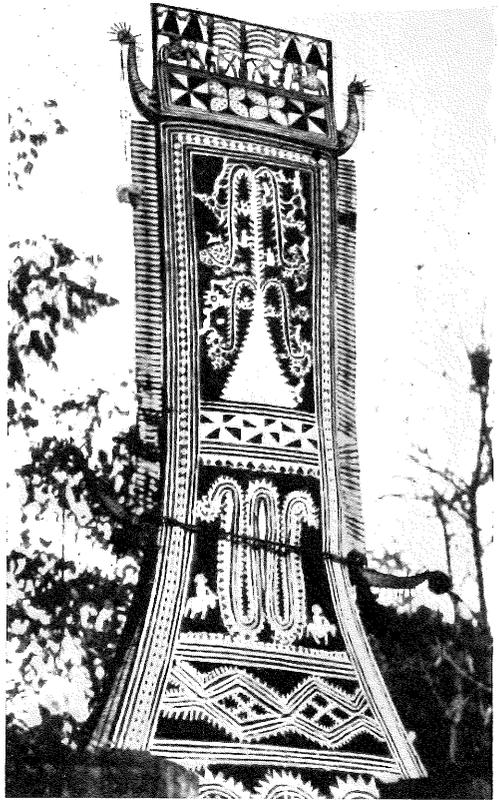
The profound influence which the idea of the voyage into the hereafter exercised on the fine art of South East Asia is most clearly revealed in the shape of the tombs. In the Buton Island it is responsible for the construction of

Representation of a ship on the wall of a house belonging to a chieftain of the Toba-Battak, Uluhan, Sumatra. After F. M. Schmitzger. The vines are no doubt stylised three-branched trees of life.



the above-mentioned elaborately carved miniature wooden boats, and in Borneo for the building of magnificent tombs for important persons. These tombs are in the shape of craft with cabins resembling a catafalque, in which the dead are kept. Based on the same idea, though they do not date further back than the 19th century, are the boat-shaped stone sarcophagi, some of which are of monster size. They are used among the Batak as the receptacle for hundreds of skulls, and may be counted among the most impressive works of art in Sumatra (see illustration below). The three boat-shaped stone terraces of the 15th century found on the eastern side of the Willis Mountains in East Java and carved with figures of ancestors, are also, according to Schnitger, meant to represent ships of the dead. Their prows and sterns originally bore a snake's head and a winged demon as ornament.

Recent researches point to the belief that ghosts of the dead return in their ships to the country of their ancestors, which lies to the west. This belief is to be traced to a late Megalithic civilization, familiar with both bronze and iron. The representatives of this culture believed the land of the dead to be the actual



Boat-shaped stone sarcophagus with demon's head. In such elaborate giant coffins hundreds of skulls used to be kept. Toba-Battak, Sumatra. After F. M. Schnitger.

Elaborately carved gable of a tomb of the Djarai (Farther India). It is crowned by a ship of the dead in fine craftsmanship, laden with men and animals, from the middle of which a branched tree rises. After A. Bernatzik.



home of their ancestors. It was not customary in that age to bury the dead in the earth. They were entombed in stone urns and cist graves, characteristically called "ships", or in boat-shaped wooden coffins. The memory of their ancestors' original arrival from across the sea in a large communal canoe has remained alive to this day. This is indicated by their occasionally naming a village community "the people of the same feast and war boat", by the boat-shape of the village compound still usual in Tanimbar, and by the peculiar shape of domestic buildings throughout South East Asia with their keel-shaped roofs (see illustration on page 1878, below). The boat-shaped rice mortars of the Toba-Battak in Sumatra, the boat-shaped, gold betel bowls in Java, the ship-like head-dress worn in Sumba, Nias and South Sumatra, and the well-known musical instruments of Celebes, the boat-shaped "Katjapi", may all be exemplifications of this ideology.

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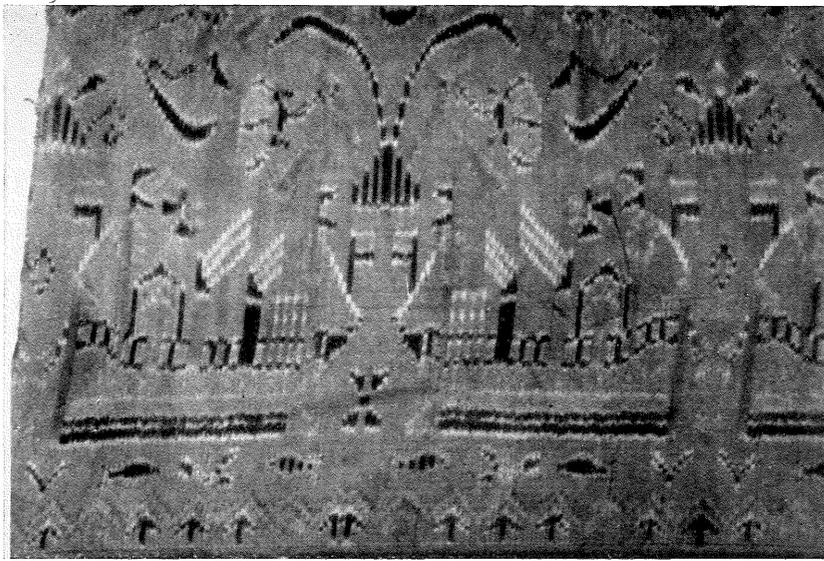
are good level dyeing and therefore can be used in combination with other Coprantes. Both colours are suitable for application on all types of dyeing machines.

In the textile fabrics of India, China and Japan the motive of the ship of death is conspicuous by its absence. But in South East Asia this theme, which (as we have seen) is so popular in the plastic and pictorial arts, is also one of the many typical subjects in the patterning of plaited and woven fabrics in the Malay Archipelago, and especially in the more easterly of its islands. At first these fabrics were worked in a primitive way by stitching on glass beads and shells. Later this ornament had its place in the two processes of patterning which are still common in Indonesian fabrics, viz. the ikat (compare Ciba Review No. 44) and the batik technique. The ship-of-the-dead pattern, however, attained its highest perfection in the embroidered borders on the ceremonial robes of South Sumatra, worked in colours with a variety of figures. These embroideries represent a highly stylised form of art. The peculiar artistic style of Indonesia with its tendency to graphic ornament and grotesque fantasies undoubtedly gained from

the adoption of the boat of the dead motive of design. The boat of the dead motive, as far as can be judged today, is almost exclusively confined to ancient ritual and ceremonial vestments of the district of southern Sumatra (see map drawing on page 1888). It is true that small boats with upright human figures in them are sometimes found there as ornaments on plaited palm leaf mats and woven jackets, especially in the neighbourhood of Krui; and in other parts of the Archipelago the ship motive may be met with occasionally. But it is not in these cases a representation of the ship of death. E. Vatter for instance interprets the peculiar boat-like objects on ikat textures of Lomblen, one of the islands of the Solor Archipelago, as stylised clinker-built boats with outriggers and harpooner-stands: and he is probably right. These ship-like structures, resting on three posts and furnished at each end with a bird-like head, show an unmistakable resemblance to the boat shapes with an animal head and a full-face human

Palm leaf fabric embroidered with small shells and beads. In addition to the bird-shaped ship and the big tree of life there is an upright figure with head of a bird to the right of the picture. Krui, Sumatra. After G. Tillmann.





Silk-ikat with representation of steamships. Bali. Collection A. Steinmann, Zurich.

figure with raised hands, (of which we have an example in the illustration of Ciba Review No. 44, on page 1616) representing a cotton ikat from Timor. Similar fabrics are found in East Indonesian islands, worked in ikat technique. The sailing ships and steamers

(see illustrations on page 1886) appearing as ornaments on silk ikat fabrics of Bali, as well as on the modern cotton batiks of Java, belong to the same category.

As opposed to such profane motives of ships, the above-mentioned representations of

Girls from Lampung (South Sumatra) in ceremonial attire. The loin-cloths (sarongs) of their ceremonial clothes consist of chain-ikat fabrics with many coloured ornamental stripes. Collection of photographs A. Steinmann, Zurich.



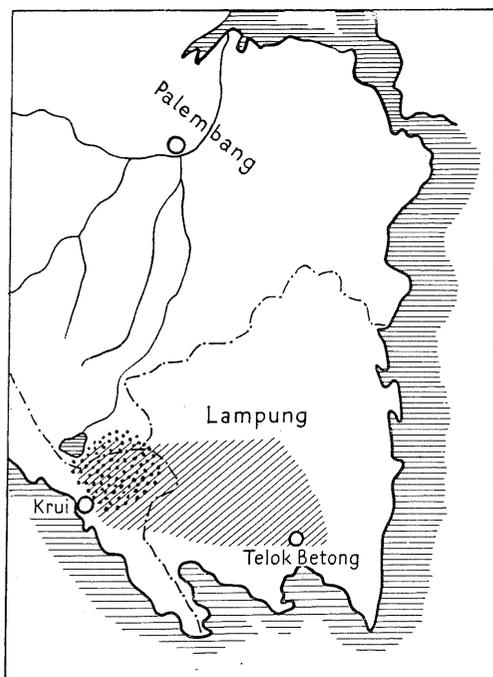
ships of the dead on Indonesian fabrics have a ritualistic-religious character. This is often apparent from the mere fact of the use to which these cloths are put. Their relation to belief in the hereafter and to the cult of the dead is also indicated as a rule by the more or less fantastic way of design, by the fittings in the boats and by their connection with all sorts of symbolic attributes. In South Sumatra plaited mats of all sizes, large and small, made of bamboo fibre or slit rotang, show boats manned and beflagged with cabins and crew, all as a black pattern on a yellowish-white undyed ground (see illustration on page 1887). Nothing definite is known as to the use of these mats. According to J. F. Snelleman they are said to have once served as wall ornaments in Krui. Similar palm leaf textures adorned the wedding bed of royal personages in former times. The pattern consists of stitched-on small white shells and coloured glass beads often of spiral form, which were cast and strung on to plant fibres by the natives themselves. In these braided mats the animal-shaped ship of the dead, fitted out with every sort of fantastic accessory, with the tree of life with its three branches standing erect in the middle of the boat, covers nearly the whole surface (see illustration on page 1885). The background is filled in with birds and fish, and to the right by the helm an upright figure with a bird's head is clearly recognisable.

In the same region the ship of the dead appears in all possible varieties on time-worn,

yellowed cotton fabrics, which once served for ritual purposes, but today are simply handed down from generation to generation as venerable family heirlooms. The long but narrow "tampan djung galuh" (big "ship-cloths") are said to have been used formerly at weddings, funerals, circumcision festivals and other ceremonies of rich and distinguished people. Such "ship-cloths" were hung on the walls of the places of meeting in public judicial proceedings: and the Head of the district, the notables of the village and persons of established noble birth had the privilege of hanging up these long cloths behind their seats (see illustration on page 1888, below). Other cloths, rather more square and of smaller size were used as covers for bowls at "wakes" (funeral feasts). The designs of both kinds of "ship-cloths" are made by the use of so-called additional or floating weft, i.e. by means of thickish, mostly brown or blue (more rarely yellow or white) weft yarns of cotton or occasionally of silk. The creative imagination of the women weavers has known how to vary the main pattern, i.e. the ship of the dead, with astonishing versatility. In the representation, common to all these cloths, of vessels, from the interior of which one or more cabins with human figures detach themselves, the first thing that strikes one is the strongly curved, often very high, prow and stern with turned-in ends. A symbolic motive nearly always connected with the ship of death on these cloths is the tree of life with its (as a rule)



Mat of braided rotang with ships dressed and manned. Krui, South Sumatra. After J. F. Snelleman.



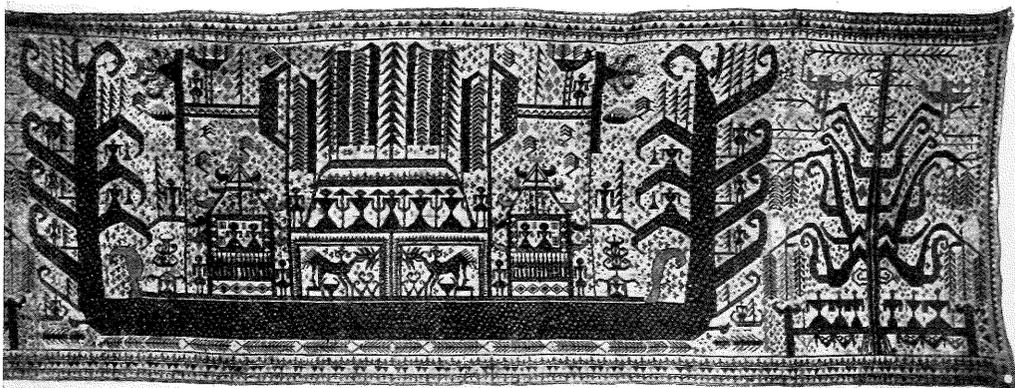
Region in South Sumatra where the motive of the ship of the dead is known. The dotted space shows the regions where it occurs on actual ritual "ship cloths". The shaded space shows the regions where it occurs on ceremonial robes. After a sketch by A. Steinmann.

three branches. On the longer textures it stands on one or both sides of the ship. On the smaller square cloths it usually appears as a tall mast rather like a tree rising from the middle of the boat of the dead, with the ends of its branches almost always curved.

Besides the stylised human figures inside the cabins, the designs on most "ship-cloths", the "tampandjung galuh", are remarkable

for the animal shapes seen in profile on both sides of the ship's centre, representing sometimes stags, sometimes horses or elephants, and recalling vividly the animal-shaped coffins so frequent in Indonesia (see illustration on this page). Sarcophagi in animal shape are wide-spread in Sumatra and Borneo as well as in Bali, and occur (in horse shape) on Flores, whereas stags are closely connected with the cult of the dead in Mentawai and Sumba. It is possible that they represent the seats of honour with the carved heads of animals, which were formerly used in South Sumatra and in Nias. In Nias we find the so-called "pepadons" with the head of a bird, a horse or an elephant; in South Sumatra the so-called "osa-osa" with the head of a stag. Such animal figures are often found on each side of the tree of life beside the boat: or in the case of the small "ship-cloths" they flank the tree-mast rising from the centre of the ship. The cabin-like part of the boat of death also takes many different forms. In its most primitive form it appears as an alcove, in which there are one or more human figures. Often however they remind of the small houses or structures erected on posts or pillars and abundantly carved, which are to be seen everywhere in the Malay Archipelago, from the simplest form of miniature "spirit-home" to the most magnificent tomb. Some boat-shaped cabins rest on a complicated pillar rising from the centre of the boat (see illustration on title-page). Others have a number of decks one above the other, each with the characteristic boat shape with turned-in ends (see illustration on p. 1889.) Another peculiarity is the portrayal of a reflection of the original boat of the dead at the

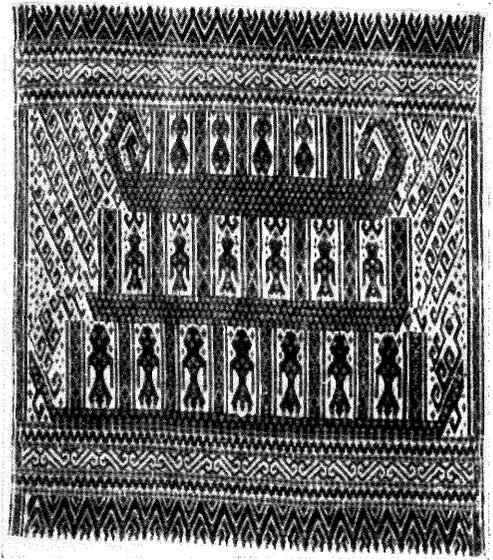
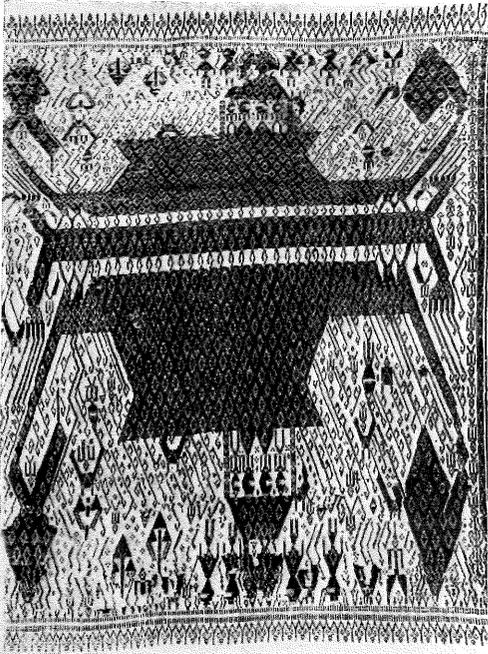
Part of a "big ship cloth" (*Tampandjung galuh*). To the right of the boat of the dead a big tree of life is to be seen. South Sumatra. Ethnological Collection in the University of Zurich.



top end of the cloth (see illustration on the title-page). The boat and its reflection are then connected with each other in one way or another, either by the mast rising in the middle, or by zigzag lines or stripes on both sides.

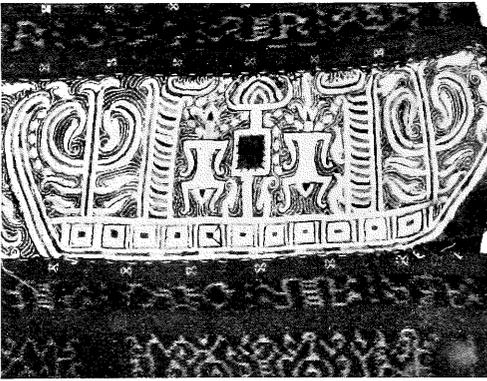
One is probably not far wrong in connecting this form of illustration with the belief common among the primitive tribes of South East Asia that all the things of this world appear in the hereafter upside down. This is especially noticeable in the drawings and maps which the Dyak priests make of the lakes, hills, villages, trees etc. of the realm of the ghosts to aid the imagination in their Shamanistic rites. In Borneo and Nias there are even actual «languages of the hereafter», which are used by the priests during the ceremonies connected with the cult of the dead: in these languages all words mean the opposite of what they mean in everyday life. The ritual cloth depicted on this page gives a striking idea of the country of the dead where everything is upside down «like the reflection in the water». It shows two ships of death lying inside each other with inward-turned sterns (prow and stern ends), a cabin resembling a catafalque and, floating above it, slender-limbed human beings.

Cult cloth used for covering offering-bowls. The ship of the dead is represented also in its reflection. South Sumatra. Ethnological Collection of the University of Zurich.



Small "ship cloth" from Krui in South Sumatra with cabins towering one above the other like stories. Collection G. Schoeller-Meyer, Zurich-Erlenbach.

There is probably no part of Indonesia where the boat of the dead has been so highly developed as a decorative textile motive as Lampung in South Sumatra. The cloths in this case are ceremonial robes worked and worn on festal occasions by women only. They are cotton loin-cloths (sarongs) with a width of 1 to 1.5 yards, and are usually in tones ranging from yellow to dark brown. Their ornamentation consists of a varying number of broad cross-stripes, two of which generally have a series of brightly embroidered ships of the dead one after another in a row. The patterns of the other stripes are done in the ikat technique. It is interesting from the point of view of the history of art and civilization to note that style and subject resemble some paintings of Borneo. In spite of the variety of form the processions of boats of death represented on the embroidered ornamental stripes of the South Sumatran ceremonial robes (see illustration above) show a striking conformity, in their construction, in their attributes and in their crews, to the ghost ships or ships of the dead painted on wooden panels, which are mentioned on pages 1879 et seq. and represented on page 1881. To this day these symbols form the most important part of the equipment of the Dyak men and women Shamans (the Basir an Balian). Numerous details in the represen-



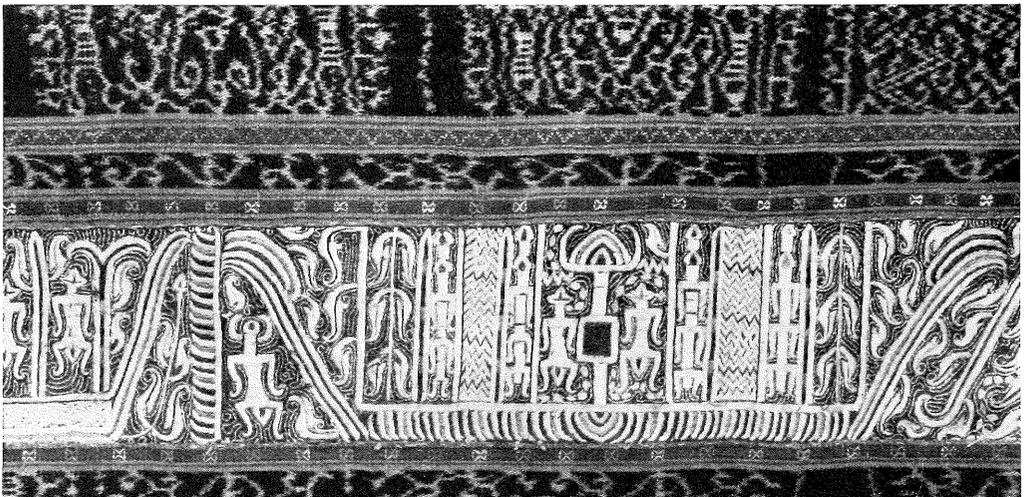
Part of a sarong from Krui. Here, as in the prehistoric rock-drawings of northern Europe, the hull of the ship is divided in square sections. Collection A. Steinmann, Zurich.

tations of the “ship-cloths” of South Sumatra find their ultimate explanation in the worship of the dead of the Dyaks in Borneo. They often represent verbally faithful illustrations of chants and invocations recited at the feast of the dead by the priests.

The same high prow and stern mostly with inward-curved ends, in which not even the indication of a bird’s beak is missing, occur both in Borneo and in Sumatra (illustration on this page below). The same inmates or crew with thin insect like limbs and masts adorned with feathers and streamers and the peculiar sail-like tree of life (see illustration on this page above) – all are there. The division of the hull indicated by vertical lines, just as it appears on the embroidered loin-

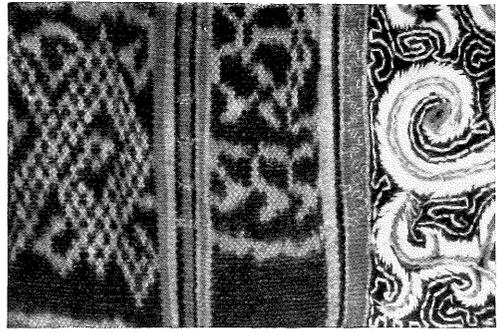
cloths of Krui (see illustration on page 1890), is to be seen also on certain Dyak pictures of the ship of the dead, where the square divisions thus produced are explained as a representation of the three-part flooring of agate slabs. The same design can be traced in ships on bamboo ornaments in New Guinea, and is found even as far afield as the South Scandinavian rock-drawings of prehistoric Europe (compare the illustration on page 1871). In the stake rising from the centre of the ship with a boat-shaped object on the top we recognise at once the boat-coffins on wooden posts of the Clementan tribes of West Borneo. The protuberances resembling horns on the heads of many of the figures (see illustrations on pages 1890 and 1894) point to the custom of South East Asian scalp-hunting tribes of fastening the horns of sacrificed oxen on the skulls of captives. The bright points scattered between the figures in the boat and floating above them, indicate the sacred rice-grains mentioned again and again in the invocations of the priests in the Dyak funeral feasts: the grains of rice are supposed to change into grains of gold in the hereafter. Where the inmates of the boats on the embroidered “ship-cloths” are depicted, as they often are, with birds’ heads, we have a reflection of the belief generally held in South East Asia that the spirits of the departed take the shape of birds (see illustration on page 1891, below). The rows of boats on the embroidered parts of the ceremonial dresses are often arranged in such

Part of a loin cloth (sarong) for women. The motive of the ship of the dead is worked in coloured embroidery. The human figures have protuberances on their heads in the form of horns. Krui. Collection A. Steinmann, Zurich.



a way as to show one boat in its normal position, the next with its keel upward, and so on.

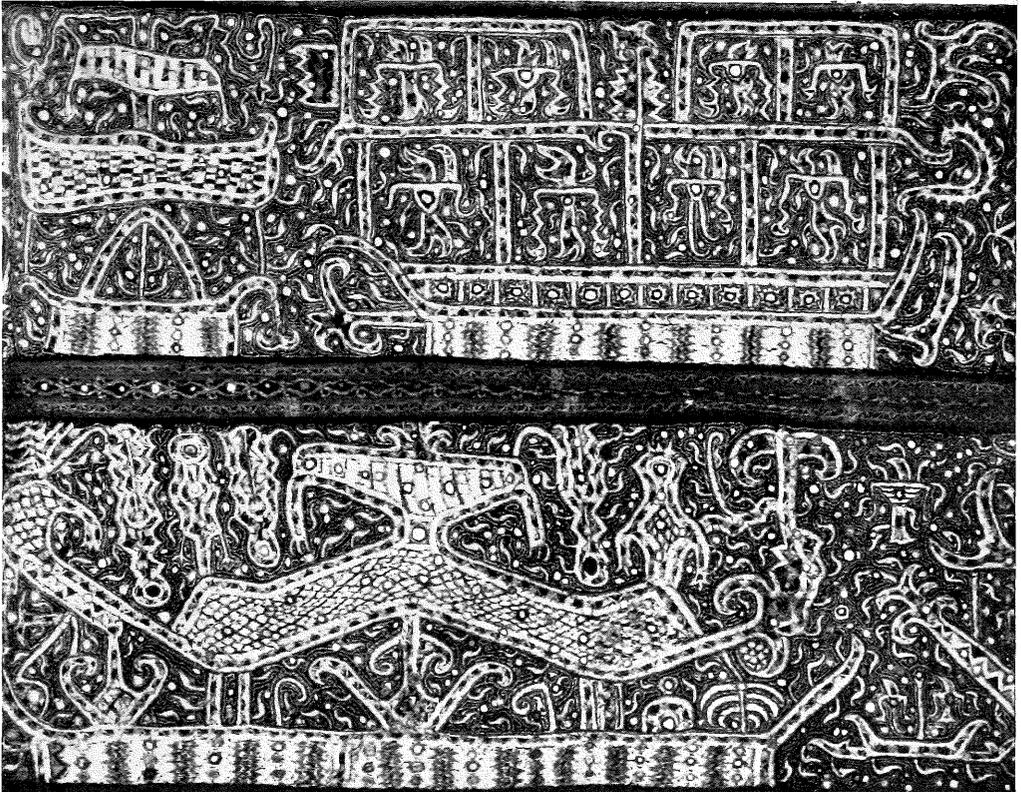
The brightly coloured embroidery relieved by small pieces of tinfoil, mica or reflecting paillettes, sewn into the design and introduced between the sombre ikat patterns of the robes, give them a special charm. Unfortunately we have no indication whatsoever as to the age of this kind of Indonesian patterning. The oldest specimen which can be dated with any accuracy is in the Leyden Museum. It is thought to have been made in the middle of the nineteenth century. The illustration on this page, above, gives a fragment of such a fabric, in which the stripes worked in different techniques are distinctly visible. To the left there are two stripes of different widths in ikat pattern with narrow border trimmings. To the right the decorated part of the embroidered stripe contains the main design worked in flat stitch, while the background is filled in with plain stitch, which gives the effect of stepping. The reverse side is in plain stitch broken at short intervals. As on the ritual

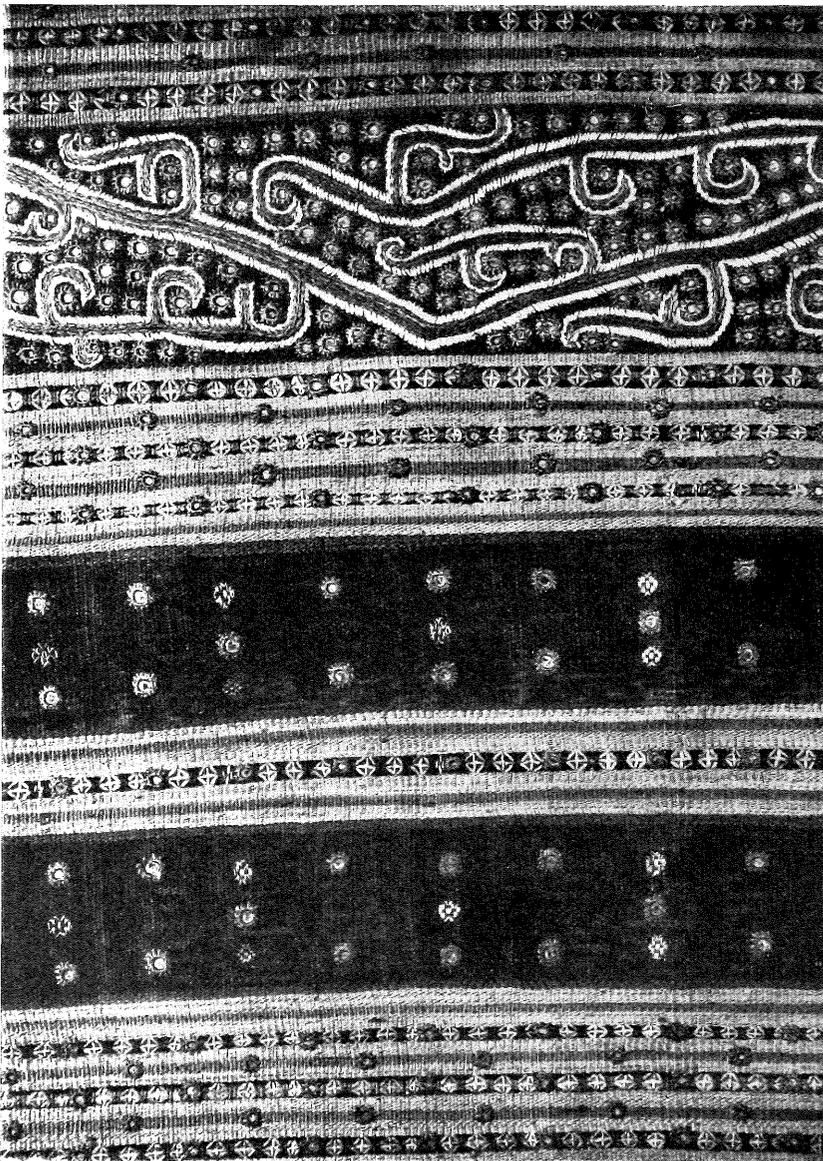


Front part of an embroidered ceremonial dress. Detail. To the left, two stripes in ikat patterns: to the right, coloured embroidery. Collection A. Steinmann, Zurich.

cloths mentioned above, so here a pronounced horror vacui has led to the complete covering of the background with an unfigured pattern. These embroidered stripes, differing as they do from the textile ornaments usual in Indonesia, constitute a foreign element in the ikat decoration. They give the impression of a painting on wood, bamboo or metal. This impression becomes even stronger when we

Ships of the dead seen from the front and the side, with inmates with bird heads on the embroidered stripes of women's ceremonial robes. Lampung, South Sumatra. Collection A. Steinmann, Zurich.





*Part of a sarong.
The brightly
embroidered stripe
shows degenerated
forms of the ship
of the dead motive.
South Sumatra.
Collection
A. Steinmann,
Zurich.*

compare this work with the very similar arrangement of ships on the friezes of the old bronze gongs of South East Asia, which have been found on the continent of Asia as well as in certain islands of the Archipelago. These picture friezes of ships of the dead, recalling equally the Dyak wood paintings and the embroidered pictures of South Sumatra, have their precursors undoubtedly in the relief friezes of the Bronze Age metal gongs mentioned on pages 1877 et seq. In more than one case V. Goloubew, R. Heine-Geldern, B. A. G. Vroklage and A. Steinmann and others have drawn attention to the connection. They

refer especially to the peculiar formation of the inmates of the boats with their thin limbs and occasional feather attire, to the high sweeping stern and prow, the ends of which are often curved or even forked, as may be seen in rare instances at the present day in East Indonesia (Bali, Lombok).

The double prow and stern created by this forking can be carried so far as to give the impression of two ships one inside the other (see illustration below). Where the space between the bottoms of the two ships is filled by a ribbon pattern, the whole presents a striking likeness to Bronze Age models the so-called

«dragon ships» of the European West (see illustrations on pages 1872 et seq.). Whether this is only a chance resemblance, or whether on the other hand these designs with their peculiarly characteristic patterns date back to age-old influences from the West – such as Oluf Janse, V. Goloubew, J. G. Anderson and others have so often observed in the case of the Bronze Age weapons and utensils of Farther India – cannot be decided with certainty at present.

The ornamental effect of the ceremonial robes of South Sumatra, obtained through the variety of stitches setting off the main motive, i. e. the ship of the dead, in a uniform yellow satin-stich embroidery against the more delicate filling of the background, is strongly reminiscent of the Chinese Chow style. One feels as if the typical characteristics and peculiarities of the Chow style must have found their way into the embroidery technique of South Sumatra. One may compare for instance the design of the Old Chinese bronze represented in *Ciba Review* No. 43 on page 1567 with the illustration on this page below.

The original ship of the dead motive on Indonesian fabrics has undergone many changes and transformations before becoming a conventional pattern. The pattern is indeed still used as an ornament on South Sumatra's ceremonial robes, though the original meaning has long since been forgotten. Far-reaching stylisation has frequently changed the form of the ship to such an extent that it is hardly recognisable any more.

On the embroidered stripes illustrated on page 1892 a number of ships sailing one behind the other, but in alternatively upright and reversed position, are connected with one another by a line running zigzag across the stripe in such a way that the cabins and other accessories of the vessels are indicated by more



Motive of the ship of the dead stylised as pure decoration on a cotton batik shoulder cloth (slen-dang). Central Java. Collection A. Steinmann, Zurich.

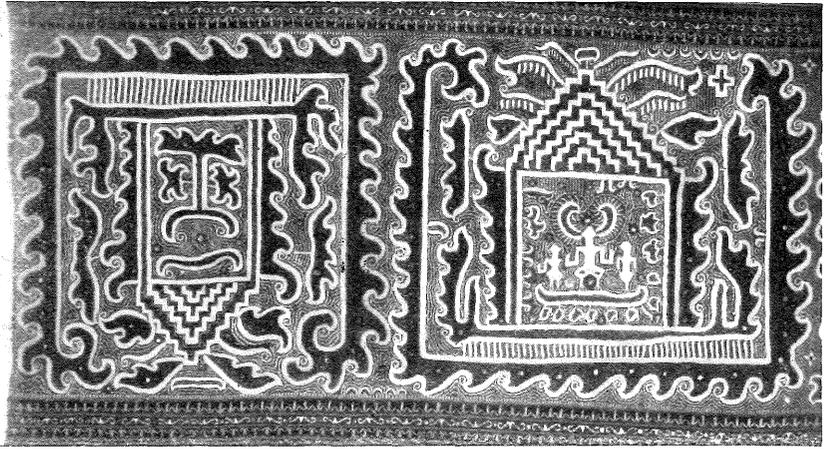
angular spirals. In other cases the stylising process has evolved patterns in which the vessels, floating on wavy lines that indicate the water, have not their customary ship form, but a rectangular shape instead like some kind of receptacle. The cabins in the middle in these squares look like catafalques containing men: some of them have horns (see illustration on page 1894). The tree of life surrounded by an ornament of complicated foliage may take the place of the cabin. The last stage of stylization is seen in the next illustration, where hardly anything reminds one of the original form of a boat. But the ikat pattern in itself, on the dark brown surfaces between the many coloured stripes, still suggest a ship of the dead, albeit simplified almost beyond recognition. There is no question here of a symbolic significance any more. The ship of the dead has been degraded into a mere ornament.

A similar development may be observed in

Sarong for women. Chain ikat fabric with ships of the dead in coloured embroidery. The forking of the double prow and stern is so big as to suggest two ships one inside the other. Krui, South Sumatra. Collection A. Steinmann, Zurich.



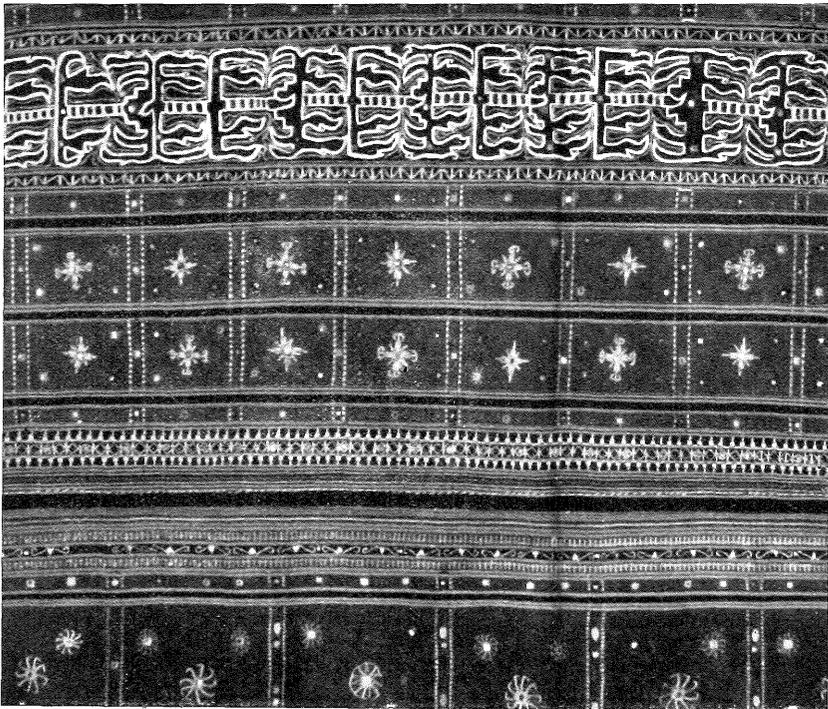
Stylised transformation of the motive of the ship of the dead on the embroidered stripe of a loin cloth (sarong). Lampung, South Sumatra. Collection A. Steinmann, Zurich.



Java, where the ship element often appears on batiks side by side with all kinds of other motives, mostly more recent ones, reflecting Hindoo or Chinese influence. That these ships, seen from the front and from the side, are not of modern design but are genuine reproductions of ships of the dead, is indicated by the way in which they are presented and in their typical ornaments and attributes, such as the three-branched tree of life, rising from the middle of the boat, the upward-curved prows and sterns (which, as in the Dyak ship-paintings, are provided with leafy bundles and

similar ornaments), and the dagger-like objects protruding from the keel (which are also a feature of the Dyak paintings): see illustration on page 1893, above. The motive of the ship of the dead occurring among other kinds of motives has so far been met with only now and then in the two-colour soya-brown (*Peltophorum ferrugineum*) and indigo-blue batiks of Central Java.

Even though we do not know anything definite as to the origin and age of the South Sumatra ship cloths and the Java batiks, the ships of the dead as a principal motive of



Ultimate forms of transformation of the motive of the ship of the dead on embroidered stripes of the ceremonial rope of a Lampung woman in South Sumatra. Collection A. Steinmann, Zurich.

South East Asian art can in any case be traced back to the Bronze Age of those regions. On the textiles this ancient motive has kept its deep symbolic significance to this day. On these fabrics many Bronze Age features of form and style are to be noted, among which the spiral pattern, the ribbons, curves and

rounded forms predominate. The culmination of this Bronze Age or Late Megalithic Age, when the one passes into the other, can be fixed with certainty from the numerous bronze objects and other finds dug up from the earth, though its beginnings may be well several centuries earlier.

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Neolan dyestuffs

are of special importance for the dyeing of

gloving leather

They level excellently on leathers of all tannages, giving dyeings fast to light and washing.

Half-Tones in Printing

In multicolour printing, in order to give the design a greater degree of plasticity, frequent use is made of so-called "tone-in-tone" effects. In machine printing, in order to avoid increasing the number of rollers used in accordance with the number of tones added to the colouring, use was previously made of rollers which, in addition to the normal ("full") engraving, also carried areas of shallow or stipple engraving. By means of such rollers, the colour was applied locally in a thin layer or in the form of an area of dots, and a two-colour tone-in-tone effect was obtained. In direct printing this method frequently yields satisfactory results, but it fails completely in discharge printing, since the quantity of discharging agent applied by the shallow engraving is, in general, too small to discharge the dyed ground shade, and so it then becomes necessary to make a special application of white discharge printing colour to these portions of the pattern.

A different method was adopted in screen printing. It was found that, by superposition of pigment white (matt white) and coloured printing colours, half-tone effects yielding plastic results could be obtained. As a result, use has been made of this method in machine printing for the production of half-tones, so-called half-tone resists, which reduce all superimposed printing colours to a fraction of their strengths, being first printed on the material by means of a single screen or printing roller. This process can be used both in direct and in discharge printing.

Whether a white pigment exerting a plasticizing influence on the result – titanium white or zinc white – is to be incorporated in the resist or not depends on the material being printed and on the results desired.

In most cases, albumen is used as fixer for the pigment. Pigment printing colours containing albumen leave the material hard in those places where they are applied, though, and, in addition, have a tendency to dust. An addition of 20–30 grms. Sapamine KW per kilo of printing colour has proved very effective in avoiding these undesirable results.

Various substances can exert a reserving action in pigment-free half-tone resists:

1. The thickening, gum arabic, British gum, crystal gum – i.e., chiefly those thickenings containing a high content of dry substance – exert the strongest reserving action but possess the disadvantage of mixing badly with the printing colour which falls on them; this causes irregularity in the half-tones obtained.

2. Filling agents, which themselves are not actually fixed, e.g., china clay.

3. Agents which reduce the hydrophilic qualities of the material, such as Migasol PC.

4. Agents which delay fixation. In the case of vat colours, Albatex PO in quantities ranging from 50 to 150 grms. per kilo.

5. Agents exerting a destructive action on dyestuffs, e.g., Discharge Salt Ciba W, in the case of indigoid vat colours.

6. Agents exerting a destructive action on hydrosulphite, e.g., Albatex BD.

According to the resisting agent used, various types of half-tone are obtainable, but the most valuable from the colourist's standpoint are those which most nearly approach the full shade in tone, i.e., which appear to be

merely a reduction from the full shade. In this connection, half-tones obtained by means of white pigment alone often possess a chalky appearance, whereas an addition of Albatex PO or use of a pigment-free Albatex PO resist yields more brilliant effects of a greater trueness of shade. In the case of vat colours, dyestuff- or hydrosulphite-destroying agents, whilst giving satisfactory results in many cases, cannot be used generally, since the half-tone obtained thereby from certain dyestuffs differs considerably in shade from the full tone.

Since the demands made of a half-tone reserve change according to circumstances, its composition must be left to the colourist himself, according to his needs. In this connection, the data given below may prove of service.

No matter what composition be selected for the resists, one factor must always be borne in mind: the reservability of the dyestuff. In the case of vat colours, this factor is independent, to a great extent, of the resist used and depends solely on the depth of shade. Vat dyestuffs may be classified as easily resistable, moderately difficult to resist or resistable only with great difficulty; regularly graded half-tones in all shades can therefore only be expected provided dyestuffs showing a similar behaviour towards the resisting products are chosen. The following classification may simplify selection for the colourist:

Easily reservable colours:

Ciba Brown G Dble. Paste, Micro Paste and Micro Powder in pale shades.

Ciba Brown BB Micro Powder and Micro Paste in pale shades.

Ciba Brilliant Pink 2B Micro Paste and Micro Powder in pale, medium and full shades.

Ciba Red 2B Dble. Paste, Paste conc., Micro Paste and Micro Powder in pale, medium and full shades.

Cibanone Navy Blue RA Dble. Paste, Micro Paste and Micro Powder in pale, medium and full shades.

Ciba Blue BR Dble. Paste, Paste conc., Powder in pale shades.

Cibanone Blue 3 GF Dble. Paste and Micro Paste in pale, medium and full shades.

Colours which are moderately difficult to resist:

Ciba Brown G Dble. Paste, Micro Paste and Micro Powder in medium shades.

Ciba Brown BB Micro Powder and Micro Paste in medium to full shades.

Ciba Dark Brown B Dble. Paste in pale to medium shades.

Ciba Scarlet BG Dble. Paste and Micro Paste in pale to medium shades.

Ciba Blue 2B Dble. Paste, Paste conc., in pale to medium shades.

Ciba Blue BR Dble. Paste, Paste conc., Powder in pale to medium shades.

Vat Printing Black BL Paste conc., Micro Powder as grey. Ciba Printing Black BDN Micro Paste as grey.

Colours which are very difficult to resist:

Ciba Brown G Dble. Paste, Micro Paste and Micro Powder in full shades.

Ciba Brown CH Dble. Paste in full shades.

Ciba Scarlet BG Dble. Paste and Micro Paste in full shades.

Ciba Blue BR Dble. Paste, Paste conc. and Powder in medium and full shades.

Vat Printing Black BL Paste conc., and Micro Powder as black.

Ciba Printing Black BDN Micro Paste as black.

Dr. E. K.

Notes

Ships of the Dead on Anatolian Graveyard Prayer Rugs

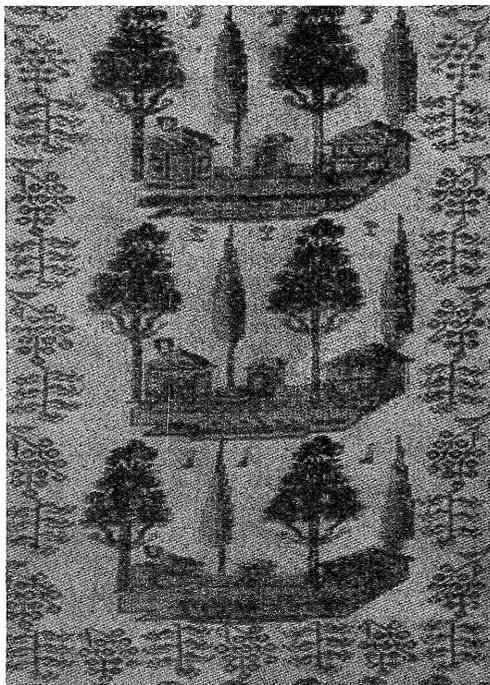
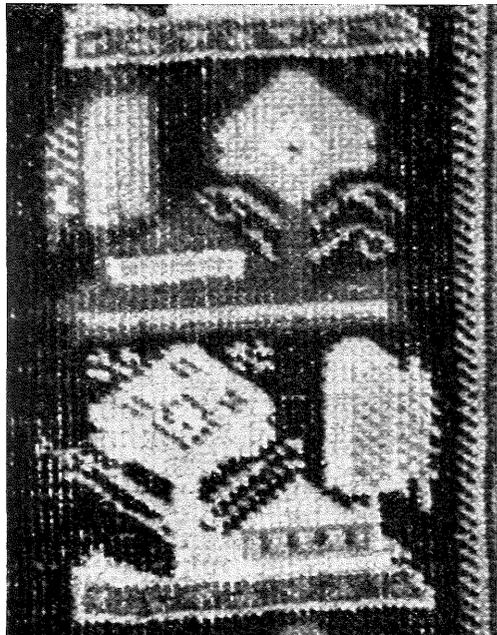
Among the numerous prayer carpets of the Orient, and especially among those of Anatolia, the graveyard prayer rugs are of unusual interest. They are used for covering dead bodies and adorning graves and are therefore often simply called "grave-rugs".

All other prayer carpets have cheerful colours—delicate green, bright red, deep yellow, turquoise blue, and so on. Graveyard prayer rugs on the other hand prefer subdued shades of brown, dull ochre colours, faded yellows, or indigos—all of them colours which involuntarily call to mind the impermanence of human life.

The essential difference from ordinary prayer carpets resides in the design. Like all other prayer carpets, the grave rugs show the Mihrab, the prayer niche. But the Mihrab in the grave rugs does not rest on columns. Instead there are ship-like forms one below the other, in which houses of the dead or tombstones and cypresses, or a sort of stone-pine, are to be seen. These unconnected patterns always stand isolated in the centre part of the carpet. They are connected neither with one another not with the border, but swim or float, so to say, in space.

The hypothesis suggests itself that these representations are "ships of the dead". Asia Minor has been in all ages at the cross roads of the important routes from

Detail of the ship-like form on an Anatolian graveyard prayer carpet. Collection Carpet stores Meyer-Müller & Co. Zurich.



Middle part of a graveyard prayer carpet (Kula) from Anatolia with forms resembling ships. First half of the 18th century. Collection Carpet stores Meyer-Müller & Co., Zurich.

East to West. Nowhere in the Orient have outside civilizations so readily obtained a footing as in Anatolia and Armenia. Thus the cult of the ship of the dead may well have been introduced from foreign sources. On the other hand, as the motive of the ship of the dead is always found in the first instance near the sea, and makes its way from there into the interior hinterland, an autochthonal origin in the Mediterranean is not by any means excluded. It is natural therefore to take the boat-shaped forms on the graveyard prayer carpets for ships of the dead (see illustrations on this page). The fact that these carpets served exclusively for the cult of the dead points to the same direction. The original meaning of the ship-design was, however, gradually lost. The hulls of the ships towards the end of the eighteenth century were overladen with representations of landscapes: and to-day such grave rugs are no longer made at all. A. Z.

The Kris, the National Weapon of the Javanese

has a markedly magic character, as it is supposed to protect its owner, and to make him invulnerable and even invisible. The natives believe the Kris to be a living being, which forms a unit together with the sheath in which it is kept and which is supposed to be



Javanese Kris with boat-shaped sheath-top and wooden handle representing a figure half man half bird in crouching position. Collection A. Steinmann, Zurich.

its body. Besides the simple wooden sheath, there are others with a coating of metal or tortoise shell; and their hilts often take very strange shapes. Among these widely varying forms of hilt or "house", as it is called—of which, according to Groneman, the Javanese distinguish three main kind—the so-called gala shape "branggah" (which means forked) is remarkable for its peculiar, unmotivated form. In appearance it resembles a boat with a high heck post, and is often actually designated as "ship-form" or, where the resemblance to a ship is less prominent, as "tanggap" (moon crescent). The handle consisting of wood, ivory or metal, is often carved, in which case it either shows a human figure of the type of the Raksasa in crouching position, or else a birdlike form meant to represent the snake demon "Naga". The workmanship in both cases is Wayang and highly stylised.

In 1938, H. W. Rassers for the first time pointed to the close relation between Kris and sheath as belonging together like soul and body and reflecting the unity of God and man, creator and creation, as well as to the

symbolism of the figured Kris-handle and hilt of the sheath. He is of opinion that the bird-like and human forms both represent aspects of one and the same being with definitely demonic character. According to Rassers this demon is none other than Banaspati, the divine and demonic lord of the Initiation Wood, who can appear as Kala, as Garuda, or as a lion, and who also plays the leading rôle in the Javanese Wayang shadow plays. In Javanese mythology he is also the hero Panji, who wrought and wore the first Kris and who is always represented as descending from heaven in the Moon Barge. In view of the decided boat-shape of the sheath-top, we are forced to conclude that it is not pure chance that the upper part of this Kris-sheath in which the mythical hero lies hidden, is called "boat" or "barge" and "moon crescent". We have here the deeper symbolic meaning lying at the base of the separate component parts of the national weapon of the natives of Java. A. St.

Models of Boats as Presents in Java

It is clear from Chinese and Indo-Chinese sources that in the fourteenth and fifteenth century in Java models of ships played an important rôle as presents and offerings on certain occasions. Groenevelt cites a Chinese account of the early fifteenth century, from which it appears that Javanese chieftains' children at their weddings were given by their friends and acquaintances, among other things, small ships filled with flowers as wedding presents. "Nagarakrtagama", a panegyric composed by Mpu Prapanca in 1365, records that at the capital of the contemporary East Javanese empire Modjopait, on the occasion of a ceremony of offering for a deceased princess, two high officials presented life-size boats as an offering to the accompaniment of the music of gongs and other instruments of repercussion. These boats evidently had a significance similar to that of the ships of the dead represented on the ritual and ceremonial robes of South Sumatra (see pages 1886 et seq.). A. St.

The Soul-Ship in Coptic Grave Monuments

Excavations in lower Egypt, made in 1935 by the University of Michigan, have revealed some grave-stelæ of the 4th and 5th century A. D. showing sculptured designs of sailing-boats, in which there is a reclining figure or an upright figure praying. According to Campbell Bonner the praying figure represents a departed soul and the reclining figure Christ, "the kindly pilot of the soul in life and death" as taught by the Church Fathers. The Christians of Egypt have therefore accepted the ancient symbol of the boat in a new application (cf. Campbell Bonner, *The Ship of the Soul* on a Group of Grave-Stelæ from Terenuthis. University of Michigan, 1941). M. R.