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K. BHARATHA IYER



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A PERENNIAL PUZZLE:

THE MOTIVE OF THREE FISH WITH A COMMON HEAD

By Dr. Carl Schuster (U.S.A.)

AMONG the motives which have appealed to the popular imagination in many lands that of three fish with a single head is one of the most curious. This motive may be classed as a puzzle-picture, of the kind which is passed on by those who know it to the mystification and amusement of those who do not. Once seen, it is not easily forgotten; and this memorable quality no doubt accounts for the fact that, like many tricks and games, it has an enormous distribution in time and space.

The purpose of the present article is to call attention to the occurrence of this motive in modern China, and to bring hitherto unpublished Chinese examples of it into relation with better known examples from Asia, Africa and Europe. Whatever other use these comparisons may serve, they will at least help to call attention to some of the many threads connecting the little known folk art of China with a corresponding phase of artistic expression in the cultures of the West.

Fig. 1 represents part of the decoration of a one-page almanac from a village in Szech'uan province, Western China.[1] Of the three compartments into which the rectangular area is divided, that on the left is occupied by our motive of three fish with a common head, each fish supported by a boy, that on the right by another puzzle-picture made up of a group of babies with three heads and six bodies, and that in the centre by an inscription referring to the representations in the two lateral compartments. The inscription may be read "nine sons, all pass the examinations," or "nine sons fully pass the examinations." The reference is to the triennial state examinations, from which candidates were selected for high official positions under the old imperial system. "Passing the examinations" is a stereotype for worldly success. Having "nine sons" is similarly a common figure for domestic bliss. The idea of having nine sons, all of whom achieve official honour, thus represents, in concrete terms, the greatest possible joy compounded with the highest possible honour.

Beyond this, the inscription seems to have a second meaning, referring cryptically to the number of children to be found in the two accompanying puzzle-pictures. This second sense turns upon a certain ambiguity in the third character, which is that for the numeral ten. Though this word seems, on the one hand, to represent a contraction of the phrase *shih ch'üan*, meaning "all," or "fully," in the sense of "100 per cent," the numeral may also be taken in its literal sense, in which case the inscription reads "nine sons, ten pass the examinations." This interpretation suggests the idea of "surpassing perfection," while at the same time it seems to enjoin the reader to seek a tenth child in the accompanying pictures. Now a tenth child is not to be found in the pictures themselves;

[1] The original (23 x 42 cm.) from which our illustration is made was acquired by the writer in 1936 in the village of Kuei Min Kuan in the county of Nan Chiang near the Shensi border. Such one-sheet almanacs, with instructions for the sowing and reaping of crops and care of domestic animals, interspersed with bits of folklore and popular illustrations, were printed from wood blocks and distributed for a pittance. The original sheet, of which the rectangle reproduced in fig. 1 formed the bottom, had the same width as this rectangle and was several times as high. It was found posted on a wall in the main street of the village.

but every Chinese is familiar with a rebus in which the image of a fish stands for the idea of " superfluity " or " excess," evidently by virtue of the identical sounds of the Chinese words for " fish," and for " more."[2] The picture of three boys holding a (triple) fish would be normally designated by the Chinese phrase, *san tzu yu yü*, which to the ear means either " three boys holding a fish," or " more than three boys." The latter reading of this implicit phrase opens the way to the mysterious total of ten boys alluded to in the inscription, a total of which the picture on the right provides six. The deficiency of one boy from the total of ten may be regarded as covered by the " excess " implied by the fish at the left—or it might even be made up by the second character of the inscription itself, which is the pictogram for " son " or " boy."

This somewhat childish play on words is not really of fundamental concern to us ; for it is evident that the inscription has been added as a kind of rational cement between the two puzzle-pictures. While the interest of the Chinese reader is focused by the inscription upon a numerary problem, our interest lies rather in the designs themselves. That these pictures have an existence of their own, quite apart from the inscription which attempts to explain them, appears from the fact that both types occur widely outside China, and that, except in this Chinese example, we never find human figures associated with the three-fish motive. This can only mean that the three boys at the left of Fig. 1 did not originally form part of the three-fish motive, but were added in China in order to make up the favourite number of nine boys and thus justify the inscription. It may be said, indeed, that these designs are united not so much by the inscription as by an inner bond of structural logic, in so far as each design (the fishes at the left taken without the boys) consists of several bodies united in a single head. The force of this affinity becomes clear in the light of the fact that a similar combination of motives occurs in another culture.

Fig. 2 represents two motives appearing in close proximity to each other on a single leaf of a well-known mediaeval manuscript, the sketchbook of the XIIIth-century French architect, Villard de Honnecourt.[3] Here again, obviously, the designer was familiar with two different but related types of puzzle-picture, in which the bodies of fishes and of men, respectively, are merged. Prompted, no doubt, by recognition of their common structural logic, the artist reproduced these two types side by side, as equivalents. It appears from this juxtaposition that both types of motive, that of the three fish with a single head and that of a group of human figures with coalescent bodies, were not only current in the popular traditions of mediaeval Europe, but were there associated with each other, just as we find them associated in modern China.[4] Though it may not be possible

[2] The idea of " excess " nowadays associated with the motive of the fish in China, ostensibly because of a mechanical similarity of sounds, might very well go back to the symbolism of fertility universally associated with the fish, rather than to a mere accident of Chinese phonetics. On the doubtful nature of such Chinese puns, see another example : Schuster : " A Comparative Study of Motives in Western Chinese Folk Embroideries," *Monumenta Serica*, 2, Peking, 1936, p. 46, note 47.

[3] Our drawing is from the German edition of Hans R. Hahnloser, *Villard de Honnecourt, Kritische Gesamtausgabe des Bauhüttenbuches ms. fr* 19093 *der Pariser Nationalbibliothek*, Vienna, 1935, pl. 38, reproducing the verso of the nineteenth leaf of the original manuscript. See *op. cit.*, text, pp. 98–100. The fishes occur on the same page with the swastika and actually touch it. This suggests that it was the conceptual relationship of the two motives that prompted the artist to put them together. In fig. 2 we have taken the liberty of rearranging the relative position and scale of the two motives, without, however, modifying their forms.

[4] See, for example, J. van den Gheyn, *Le psautier de Peterborough*, Haarlem [1906], pl. xxi, where the lower border of the page is interrupted by two cartouches, containing, respectively, the motive of three fish with a common head, and a device made up of two horses tied back to back and facing in opposite directions, in such a way that their legs, if animated, would set the device in rotation. The analogy of these two cartouches with the two motives of fig. 2 is obvious. Though the bodies of the horses do not coalesce, there can be no doubt that the artist was rationalizing an enigmatic design, in which, as in the human wheel at the right of fig. 1, there were twice as many bodies as heads (in this case equine instead of human). Compare the motive of four deer with one head in ancient Greece and modern India : Coomaraswamy, " Some Ancient Elements in Indian Decorative Art," *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, 2, 1913–14, figs. 1 and 2.

to provide intermediate documentation between the occurrences of this pair of motives in gothic Europe and in modern China, still it seems reasonable to conclude that both occurrences represent branches of a single tradition which has much older roots.

Leaving the motive of the group of human figures for separate consideration later, we shall review here certain other examples of the motive of three fish with a common head which occur in the Far East. Fig. 3 shows a roundel of embroidery, again from Western China,[5] in which the motive of three fish with a single head is used as a means of suggesting aquatic life and thus designating the water which supports a festive barge. The fact that the three-fish motive occurs in women's handiwork, as well as in the work of the woodblock-cutter in Western China, confirms our impression that it is widespread and well known among the general population of this region. Undoubtedly it is known also in other parts of China.[6]

Fig. 4 provides us with another Chinese example of what seems to be the same motive, carved on a wooden belt-toggle.[7] The tails of the three fishes are here twisted to suggest rotary motion, like that of a triskele. Although the eye has been omitted from the common head, and the three tails are forked in such a way that, it must be said, they hardly look piscine, still it is difficult to imagine by what the design could have been inspired if not by the image of three fish with a common head.[8]

If the question be asked how far back the motive of three fish with a single head can be traced in China, it cannot be answered, to the writer's present knowledge, with any documentation from earlier epochs than that of the present day. Still it seems likely that the motive has a venerable prehistory in the Far East, just as it has in the West. If no early Chinese examples of it have thus far come to light, this deficiency is no doubt to be explained by the circumstance that the motive is one of a sort which has always appealed more to the popular imagination than to the highly skilled professional artist, who generally strives for a certain refinement of naturalism. Experience proves that it is chiefly the refined products of such professional art which, in tombs and palaces, are preserved for the archaeologist's spade, while the humbler creations of popular taste were always left to perish, as they are still largely left to perish wherever they happen to survive in the living traditions of our day.[9] Despite these adverse circumstances, it is possible to point to an early example of what seems to be a three-fish motive of the type that interests us in the art of an ancient culture peripheral to that of China. Fig. 5 shows the incised decoration on a terra cotta platter excavated about a decade ago from a tomb in Northern Annam. It represents a late, bronze-age, phase of the so-called Dongson culture, which reached its culmination at about the beginning of the Christian era. The art of this culture combined certain elements which seem to be of local native origin

[5] This roundel is one of five, all dissimilar, adorning a bed-valance from the town of T'ung Ch'uan in Szech'uan province, in the writer's collection. For further information about cotton embroideries from Western China see Schuster, " A Comparative Study of Motives in Western Chinese Folk Embroideries," *Monumenta Serica*, 2, Peking, 1936, and also Schuster, *Peasant Embroideries of China*, Asia, 37, January, 1937, pp. 26–31. Diameter of roundel, 19.5 cm.

[6] A Chinese acquaintance from Shantung has assured me that the motive is current there as an embroidery pattern. It occurs again in the drawings of a woman from the environs of Peking.

[7] The original was kindly lent for reproduction by Mr. Lawrence Sickman of the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City (1939). For further information about such toggles see Wolfram Eberhard, " Chinese Toggles," *El Palacio* (Santa Fe, New Mexico), 49, 1942, pp. 91–104. Diameter, *ca.* 6 cm.

[8] It is possible that the carver deliberately blended the motive of the three fish with another, more familiar, motive of Chinese popular tradition, that of the mythical three-legged toad called *ch'an*, in order to make his design the more puzzling. On the other hand, it is possible that his intention was simply to render the streamers on the tails of Chinese goldfish.

[9] For an elaboration of this idea see my article, " Some Peasant Embroideries from Western China," *Embroidery (Journal of the Embroiderers' Guild*, London), September, 1935, pp. 87–96.



FIG. 1—DESIGN FROM A CHINESE ALMANAC, 20TH CENTURY

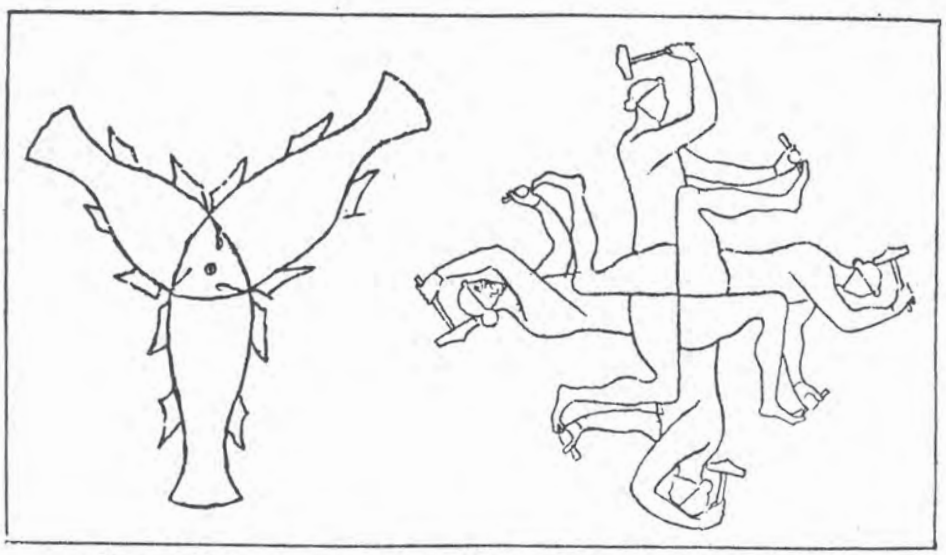


FIG. 2—MOTIVES FROM A 13TH-CENTURY FRENCH MANUSCRIPT

with elements which are clearly inspired by the art of neighbouring China in the contemporary Han dynasty. While the concentric bands of little circles connected by oblique tangents are a specifically local or " Indonesian " element in the design of this platter, it has been suggested that the fishes, on the other hand, owe their inspiration to Chinese models.[10] This seems plausible, inasmuch as fishes are sometimes represented in the bottoms of Chinese bronze vessels of the Han dynasty, as if they were swimming in the liquid which the vessels were meant to contain. Regardless of the source of their inspiration, the arrangement of the fishes in a group of three with their heads touching suggests relation to our prototype, and this impression is confirmed by the fact that the mouths of the fishes are made to overlap. Though it is true that the three heads are not actually merged in one, it is quite conceivable that the designer of the platter was familiar with the triune design in the popular art of his day, but that in response to the tendency toward rationalism always characteristic of the trained and accomplished draughtsman, he interpreted his model in such a way as to show the three fishes in osculation rather than actually united in a single head. We have, thus, at least a strong hint that the motive of three fish with one head was current in the popular traditions of the Han dynasty either in China or in the closely allied culture of Northern Annam of that time.

If the motive of the three fish with a common head was known in ancient China or Indochina, one might expect to find it also in ancient India. In this expectation we are not disappointed, if we may judge from the drawing of a Buddha's footprint (*Buddhapāda, Pāduka*) said to be found before the *vajrāsan* throne of the *Mahābodhi* at Bodhgaya in Bihar, Fig. 6.[11] Here the motive of the three fish with a common head occupies a position on the ball of the foot which is sometimes occupied by the motive of a pair of fish represented belly-to-belly.[12] It seems as if a motive from a popular strain of tradition, that of three fish with a common head, had here been substituted for a two-fish motive prescribed by ancient religious canon. This substitution, at whatever historical period it may have taken place, is of interest to us because it provides an unmistakable indication that our three-fish motive has been current, for at least some time, in Indian popular tradition. It would not be surprising to find that the motive survives in popular usage in India to-day. Perhaps the present writing will come to the notice of others who may bring such Indian examples to light.

If the evidence for the antiquity of our motive in the Far East and India remains doubtful, there is no such doubt about its antiquity in the occident. Figs. 7 and 8 represent two bowls of a well-known type of blue pottery dating from the eighteenth dynasty of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt, hence about 1900 to 1600 B.C.[13] It is not necessary to

[10] See Olov Jansé, " Rapport préliminaire d'une mission archéologique en Indochine," *Revue des arts asiatiques*, 9, 1935, p. 149. The platter is reproduced photographically in pl. liv of that article. Our drawing was made from an enlarged photograph of the original in the Musée Louis Finot in Hanoi, kindly supplied by the direction of the Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, in Hanoi.

[11] Our drawing is from Tōichirō Naitō, " Yakushiji Kondo Sanzon to Horiuji Hekiga (Bhaisajyavidurya-tathagata de Yakushiji et les peintures muraux de Hōryūji)," *Tōyō Bijutsu*, vol. 12 (=vol. 10 ?), May, 1931 (in Japanese), p. 13. I am indebted to Dr. B. Rowland for kindly calling my attention to this article. The author does not give the source of illustration or date of the carving.

[12] The motive of two fish occurs on the ball of a footprint in Yakushiji, Japan: Naitō, *op. cit.* Presumably this arrangement is derived from Indian prototypes. The pair of fish is, in any case, an ancient Buddhist symbol. See Coomaraswamy, *A History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, New York, 1927, index, s.v. " symbols."

[13] Figs. 7 and 8 were made after the photographic reproductions in Wolfgang Krönig, " Ägyptische Fayence-Schalen des Neuen Reiches," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Instituts für ägyptische Altertumskunde in Kairo*, 5, 1934, pl. xxiii, *a* and *b* respectively. The design of fig. 7, the original of which is in the Berlin Museum, has been often reproduced. The original of fig. 8, together with two other fragmentary bowls showing similar designs, is in the British Museum.



FIG. 3.—CHINA, 19TH CENTURY



FIG. 4.—CHINA, 19TH CENTURY

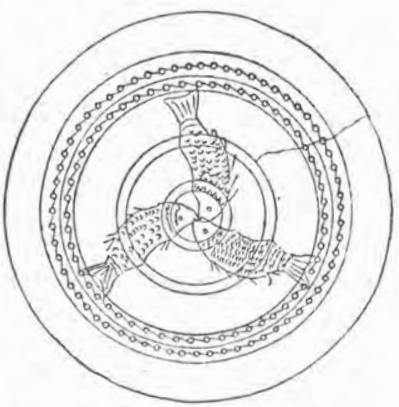


FIG. 5—ANNAM, TIME OF CHRIST



FIG. 6.—INDIA



FIG. 7.—EGYPT
2ND MILLENNIUM B.C.



FIG. 8.—EGYPT
2ND MILLENNIUM B.C.



FIG. 9.—EGYPT
(COPTIC?)



FIG. 10.—EGYPT
14TH-15TH CENTURY



FIG. 11.—SPAIN
15TH CENTURY

assume that these early Egyptian designs must be the actual ancestors of all later examples, wherever they may occur. Though they are, and may remain, the only examples known to us from such an early epoch, still it is hardly likely that these bowls were the only objects embellished with such designs in their day. Probably the motive of three fish with a common head was already current in the popular traditions not only of Egypt, but of other regions in the Near East in the second millennium before Christ. The value of this ancient occurrence of the motive is not that it establishes the place of its origin, but simply that it helps us to understand the enormous geographical breadth of its distribution in the modern world ; for this occurrence means that wherever the motive originated, it has had a long time in which to spread.

In at least two subsequent epochs our motive comes to light again in Egypt. The cliff-carving from Southern Upper Egypt reproduced in Fig. 9, according to the author who first published it, " may be of Coptic origin, or . . . may be much earlier."[14] Though it is true that the three fishes are here united, not in a common head, but only by the crossing of their bodies, it obviously requires but a slight accommodation one way or the other to effect this difference, and there can hardly be any doubt that the two types of design are related. Thus the three fishes of the bronze-age platter from Annam, Fig. 5, and the three fishes of the Egyptian cliff-carving, Fig. 9, may be regarded as the products of two diametrically opposed tendencies. Assuming that both designs are based upon the motive of three fish united in a common head, it appears that in the former the fishes were pulled apart until they almost lost contact with each other, while in the latter they were pushed inward until they overlapped, not with their heads, but in the median parts of their bodies. The latter type of motive has enjoyed considerable popularity in recent centuries in Europe.[15]

The motive of three united fishes has its third Egyptian incarnation in the painted decoration of Muhammadan pottery of the Mamluk period in the XIVth and XVth centuries after Christ. Fig. 10 shows one of a number of sherds from this epoch in which three fishes are joined in a single head.[16]

Though in Europe in the last three or four centuries the overlapping of the bodies of the fishes seems to have been more generally favoured than the union by their heads, the latter arrangement continued popular at least until the XVth century, as we see from a Spanish moresque pottery bowl from Paterna, near Valencia, illustrated in Fig. 11.[17] No doubt further research would bring to light additional examples of this mode of union of the fishes in the art of gothic, renaissance, or modern times in Europe.[18]

It may be said that the puzzle of the three fish with a common head lies not only in their peculiar union, but in their persistence. Has this motive, which at intervals throughout several millennia appears at various points between the Mediterranean and

[14] See Hans A. Winkler, *Rock-Drawings of Southern Upper Egypt*, London, 1939, vol. ii, p. 15. Our drawing is after the photographic reproduction, *op. cit.*, ii, pl. vii, fig. 2.

[15] See especially examples cited or illustrated by Deonna, " Êtres monstrueux à organes communs," *Revue archéologique*, 31, 1930, fig. 4, nos. 3-7. The list could be extended.

[16] Our illustration is after *La Céramique égyptienne de l'époque musulmane*, published by the Musée de l'art arabe du Caire, Basel, 1922, pl. 119. For additional examples see Cleves Stead, *Fantastic Fauna, Decorative Animals in Moslem Ceramics*, Cairo, R. Schindler (1935), pl. 15, fig. 1, and pl. 29, fig. 11.

[17] Our drawing is after the photographic reproduction in *Institut d'Estudis Catalans*, Secció històrico-arqueològica, vol. 7, 1921–26, p. 194, fig. 338. Compare a similar three-fish design in a XIIIth-century bowl from Orvieto, Italy : Krönig, *op. cit.*, pl. xxiii, *e* ; and see the remarks about this similarity by Ernst Kühnel, *Berichte aus den preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 46, 1925, p. 38.

[18] The motive of three fish occurs in European heraldry. See Deonna, *op. cit.*, p. 37, citing Thomas Moule, *Heraldry of Fish*, London, 1842. Johann Siebmacher's *Wappenbuch* shows the three fish united in one head in the arms of at least one German family, the Kreckwitz' of Silesia.

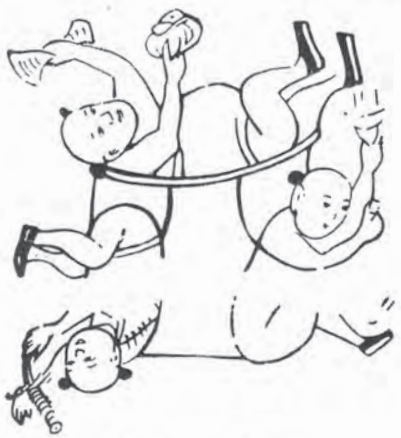


FIG. 12.—CHINA



FIG. 13.—FRANCE



FIG. 14.—CEYLON



FIG. 15.—MESOPOTAMIA

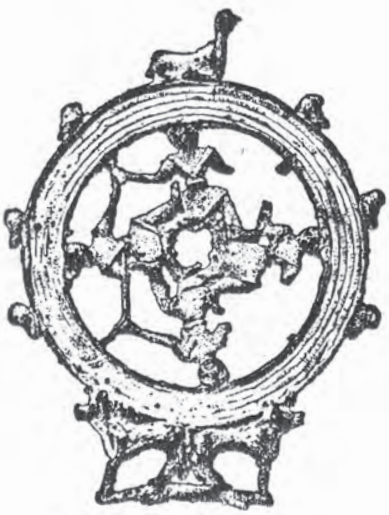


FIG. 16.—PERSIA



FIG. 17.—IRELAND

the Yellow Sea, been simply " fished up " again and again out of the unconscious depths of the human mind—each representation conceived anew without the suggestion of a pre-existing example ? Or must we conclude that, regardless how great the intervals of time and space between occurrences of the motive, all these representations are related to each other in terms of cultural contact ? At least two authors who have, to some extent, concerned themselves with the problem of this motive, seem to incline to the former view.[19] We must align ourselves, rather, with the latter. It seems to us that every occurrence of the motive, whether ancient or modern, whether in Egypt, Europe, India or China, was suggested to the designer by his familiarity with the motive as it passed about in the common currency of popular tradition in his time and place. We may conceive of popular tradition as a kind of undercurrent which flows deeply beneath the reflecting surface of history, a movement of long duration and great force which, though generally hidden from the academic view, comes to the surface occasionally in unexpected places, bringing with it mementos of distant times and places. In terms of another figure, each particular tradition may be regarded as connected by a kind of endless, if invisible, chain with all the others. The task of the student is simply to bring to light the missing links of this chain.

In conclusion we return for a moment to the puzzle-picture made up of human figures, as we found it associated with the three-fish motive in our Chinese almanac, Fig. 1, and in the sketchbook of Villard de Honnecourt, Fig. 2. As might be expected, this type of motive also, like that of the three fishes, has a wide distribution in time and space. We cannot attempt to explore this distribution fully, for the " human swastika " or " human wheel " seems to occur much more widely than the motive of the three fish, and unlike the latter, it is subject to infinite variations of arrangement, posing problems of classification. Still, it seems advisable to call attention to at least a few examples of this type as it occurs in other traditions, even though not in association with the motive of the three coalescent fish as in Figs. 1 and 2. The examples of the " human wheel," reproduced in Figs. 12 to 17 are identified, with a few comparative remarks, in the accompanying data.[20] As for the meaning of such motives, we prefer to leave this, as we leave the meaning of the three fish with a common head, an open question, regarding the medley of human figures simply as another puzzle-picture, which likewise has made its perennial appeal to the popular imagination.

[19] Thus Hahnloser, *op. cit.*, p. 100, and Krönig, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

[20] See the list of figures, page 125. As want of space prevents the reproduction of all the examples originally intended for illustration, the following references to additional examples of the " human wheel " may be of use to the interested student.

1. George Groslier, " Soixante-seize dessins cambodgiens," *Arts et archéologie khmers*, 1, 1921–23, p. 351, fig. 81, no. 23 (two wrestlers).
2. Leon Legrain, *Archaic Seal Impressions* (*Ur Excavations*, vol. iii), pl. 30, and pl. 57, no. 518 ; also C. L. Woolley, *The Royal Cemetery* (*Ur Excavations*, vol. ii), pl. 207, no. 214 ; p. 352, no. 214 ; p. 588, U 13607.
3. Henri Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, London, 1939, pl. xiv, *h*, and p. 56.
4. Walter Andrae, in *Berichte aus den preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 58, 1937, p. 34, fig. 4 ; and Anna Roes, " Tierwirbel," *Ipek*, 11, 1936–37, p. 89, fig. 8.
5. R. F. S. Starr, *Nuzi*, Harvard University Press, 1937–39, pl. 140, G.
6. André Parrot, " Les fouilles de Mari, troisième campagne," *Syria*, 18, 1937, pl. xii, fig. 2.
7. Wm. H. Ward, *Seal Cylinders of Western Asia*, Washington, 1910, no. 706.
8. F. Henry (as cited under fig. 17), p. 83 f. (several Irish variants).
9. John Romilly Allen, *Early Christian Symbolism*, London, 1887, fig. 147 (Scotland).
10. Friedrich Behn, *Altgermanische Kunst*, Munich, 1926, pl. 33 (two wrestlers).

FIGURES

FIG. 1.—Design from a Chinese Almanac. XXth Century.

FIG. 2.—Motives from a XIIIth-Century French Manuscript.

FIG. 3.—China, XIXth Century. FIG. 4.—China, XIXth Century. FIG. 5.—Annam, time of Christ.

FIG. 6.—India. FIG. 7.—Egypt, 2nd millennium B.C. FIG. 8.—Egypt, 2nd millennium B.C.

FIG. 9.—Egypt (Coptic ?). FIG. 10.—Egypt, XIVth–XVth Century. FIG. 11.—Spain, XVth Century.

Fig. 12.—" Human swastika " from modern Chinese almanac, fig. 1. This design, namely that of a medley of boys with six bodies and four heads in rotary arrangement, occurs in China also in a three-dimensional version : thus in two toggles, one of ivory, seen in dealer's stock in New York, 1947, and one of jet, in the collection of Miss C. F. Bieber (cf. note 7).

FIG. 13.—" Human swastika " from the XIIIth-century sketchbook of Villard de Honnecourt, fig. 2.

FIG. 14.—" Human swastika " on Kandyan brass tobacco box (XVIIIth century ?). After A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, Broad Campden, 1908, fig. 28. The original shows a compendium of six puzzle-pictures, evidently brought together by the same principle of association which we observe in figs. 1 and 2. Omitted from our drawing is a pair of rampant lions supporting the roundel : these are reminiscent of a pair of lions flanking the human swastika on a Sumerian seal (note 20, no. 2) ; and they may have a conceptual counterpart in the pair of bulls supporting the Persian roundel, fig. 16. Cf. also note 20, no. 9.

FIG. 15.—Sumerian seal impression. Diameter, *ca.* 4 cm. After Legrain, *Archaic Seal Impressions* (*Ur Excavations*, vol. iii), pl. 21, no. 393. Legrain points out that this device provides a pictographic parallel to the historical inscription reading " kings of the four corners of the world " ; and, in general, that the various forms of human swastika occurring on Sumerian seals evidently indicate the four points of the compass and imply the idea of " universality," especially with reference to the reigns of the kings on whose seals they appear. (*Op. cit.*, p. 37.) For a " swastika " made up of two figures in rotation (wrestlers ?) see *op. cit.*, pl. no. 274, and compare our note 20, nos. 1 and 10, as well as motive " C " in the original illustration from which our fig. 14 is taken. Legrain observes that their four feet point at the four corners of the horizon. The type of bodily interlace represented in fig. 15 has its analogue in the interlaced bodies of three lions in a well known seal from Mohenjo-Daro. See Sir John Marshall, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilisation*, pl. cxii, no. 386.

FIG. 16.—Bronze emblem for the top of a standard of Persian origin but uncertain date (pre-Achaemenid or Parthian ?). From Anna Roes, *Greek Geometric Art*, Oxford, 1933, fig. 31. See further reference given there, and cf. N. C. Debevoise, " A Parthian Standard," *Revue d'assyriologie*, 27, 1930, pp. 137–39. René Dussaud in Pope's *Survey of Persian Art*, i, p. 262 f, ascribes this object, and a companion piece, *op cit.*, pl. 42, to Luristan in about the VIIth century B.C. The animals found on the outer rim of this wheel have their counterparts in the Sumerian seal, note 20, no. 2, and in Ceylon : see the remarks under fig. 14.

FIG. 17.—Roundel from the Book of Kells. Irish illumination of the VIIIth century. From Françoise Henry, *La sculpture irlandaise*, Paris, 1933, fig. 46, *c*. Note similarity with fig. 14.