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SHIPS DEPICTED ON POSTAGE STAMPS

Extracts from a paper read by

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- before -

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MY subject covers a period of over 4,000 years. Almost every type of craft and ship in universal use is depicted on postage stamps, from the dug-out canoe and boat made of reeds to the liner *Normandie*.

Dug-Out Canoe. Probably the earliest type of boat on stamps. Hollowed out of a tree trunk by primitive stone or bronze axes, or some other tool made on the spot, and later burnt out by fire, they are found all over the world. They have sometimes reached a length of 40ft. Stamps from French Guiana, Sierra Leone, Italian Colonies, Liberia, Solomon Islands, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Brunei and the Congo are some of the issues depicting the dug-out canoe.

Birch Bark Canoe, made from a skin of bark, and cut to form, before being fastened to a wooden frame, is shown on American and Canadian stamp issues. It is the craft of the North American Indian, the "Redskin" of our boyhood days.

Eskimo Kayak is a one-man-canoe consisting of a covering of skins over a framework of wood or whalebone. It is depicted on a 20 kopecks stamp of Russia issued in 1933, and is the smallest of sea-going craft, being only 17ft. long and 2ft. wide.

Polynesian Canoes attained a speed, size and beauty unsurpassed by any other native craft. We have several of these shown on Solomon Islands' stamps. The current 5s stamp depicts a decorated canoe, inlaid with shell, belonging to a San Cristobal tribe. *Roviana War Canoes* are shown on other values of the Islands' stamps.

The Balsa must be one of the oldest craft in the world. It is a reed boat, made by weaving specially treated reeds, and is only found on Lake Titicaca, among the treeless highlands of the Andes. Some Balsas are fitted with a reed sail. This primitive craft is shown on Bolivian stamps.

Guffa of the Tigris is another primitive craft whose origin dates back to ancient history. They are represented in Assyrian carvings of about 700 B.C., and are also mentioned by Herodotus. Modern guffas, shown on one-anna Iraq stamps, are circular in shape and woven from wickerwork, interlaced with native rope made from palm fibre. The outside of the boat is then coated, very thickly, with the native bitumen found in the neighbourhood.

Catamaran is a native of the East and West Indies, and was originally made of three pieces of wood lashed together in the form of a raft, which could be sailed or paddled. Its use is now almost universal wherever native tribes are found.

Sampan of China, found on all the rivers of that country, was originally a catamaran, with the fore-end upturned, but it developed into a boat in almost prehistoric times.

One type of sampan is seen on local postage stamps of Foochow.

Egyptian Galley. The earliest known vessel to appear on a postage stamp is one of the ships used in the famous expedition to the "Land of Punt," sent by Queen Hatshepsut in 1500 B.C. An account of the voyage, and replicas of the five vessels used, are engraved on the Temple of Deir el Bahari, Thebes. One of these engravings is shown on the Egyptian stamps of 1926 commemorating the International Navigation Congress. The Egyptians were one of the first peoples to give names to their boats. Some of the names of these galleys still surviving are *Glorious in Memphis*, *Battle Animal*, *Ship of Pharaoh*, and *Beloved of Amon*. Can you imagine some of our present-day skippers calling their ship "Beloved!"

Phoenician Bireme. As Egyptian supremacy declined the Phoenicians became the leading maritime nation and held sway from 1200 to 700 B.C. They were enterprising navigators, and are reputed to have circumnavigated the African continent. They guarded their shipbuilding secrets with their lives. A captain would sink his galley rather than let it fall into Greek or Roman hands. Scuttling ships is an old Jewish custom. Hitler ought to be told. The Phoenicians came from Tyre and Sidon, Palestine. They are credited with the invention of the Bireme, or galley carrying two banks of oars on each side of the ship. A Bireme is shown on a Lebanon stamp issue of 1937.

Greek Galley. Following the Phoenicians, the Greeks are thought to have built their own warships about 700 B.C. Two naval battles, in which galleys were employed, are shown on Greek stamps. The Battle of Salamis, 480 B.C., in which the Greeks defeated Xerxes I of Persia, and the fleet of Leo III of Greece defeating the Saracens at Constantinople 718 A.D.

Carthaginian Galley. The Carthaginians, a colony of the Phoenicians, who settled in Tunis, were contemporaries of the Greeks and Romans. They were the first nation to have treasury notes, which were pieces of leather stamped with values. Their capital, Carthage, was burnt down by the Romans in 146 B.C. On a French colonial stamp of Tunis, 1906, is shown a Carthaginian galley. This has two sails on its mast. Can anyone tell me whether this is correct? If so, they seem to have been in advance of their time.

Roman Galley. The Roman Empire was at its greatest period from 31 B.C. until 476 A.D. The fleet of Augustus the Great is shown on an Italian stamp issued to celebrate his bimillenary. Six typical galleys of the period are shown. The galley's chief weapon of attack, the ram, is shown on the Italian colonial stamp of Libya, of 1921. The ram projected forward from the bow, partly

above and partly below the water level.

Roman Corbita or Merchantman. The sailing ships which carried merchandise were totally different from the war galleys, those being used for the corn trade between Egypt and Rome in the 2nd century A.D. being some 90ft. long with a carrying capacity of about 250 tons. The stamp issued by Lebanon in 1931 shows us a typical corn ship. The Roman "artemon," half mast and half bowsprit, can be seen projecting over the bow. This spar, with its square sail set below, made it possible for a ship to make some progress against adverse winds for the first time in history.

Viking Galley. The Viking longship appears on more stamp designs than any other type of galley, being commemorated on issues of U.S.A., Esthonia, Iceland and Austria. Quisling, of Norway, has also issued a Viking set. The Viking longship differs conspicuously from Mediterranean galleys by the absence of the ram. Obviously the Vikings had no naval opposition.

Arab Dhow. The dhow is supposed to have originated on the Nile about 350 B.C. To most Europeans a dhow is simply the name given to any Arab sailing ship. In Arabic there exist a multitude of terms which each describe some particular type such as baghlas, sambuks, ghanjas, ballams, bums, badens, dhows, jalbas, zaimas, saiyahs, kutias, ibris, &c. Which particular vessels appear on stamps of Zanzibar, Mozambique, Tanganyika, and Aden I do not know; they are all dhows to me I'm afraid. The introduction of the lateen sail is ascribed to the Arabs in the 9th century A.D.

Chinese Junk. The junk is another vessel of very ancient design. It is considered over 2,000 years old, and is certainly the first type of vessel to be found with water-tight compartments. It was probably the first vessel to be steered by a rudder instead of a steering oar. Junks appear on stamps of China, Chungking, Chefoo, Hong Kong, Indo-China and North Borneo.

13th Century Round Ship—The Nef. As trade and commerce flourished ships had to be made larger. A 13th century trader, a ship of the period between the Roman round ship and the galleas, appears on a stamp of Rhodes. She is the first Mediterranean ship appearing on stamps with a rudder instead of a steering oar, though the Roman artemon is missing. The nef lasted until the carrack superseded her.

Maori Double Canoe. The Maoris discovered and colonised the islands of New Zealand in 1350. The Maori canoe is typically Polynesian, being two canoes lashed together and mounted with a central staging. The use of two keels gave stability to a large sail. They are shown on stamps of New Zealand.

Lakatoi. Similar to the Maori canoe, the lakatoi of New Guinea is a huge staging built over canoes that are lashed together. It has a peculiar sail, made of calico and matting, fixed to a bamboo frame. It is probably a development of the Maori canoe, and appears on several Papuan stamps.

Galleas. The introduction of guns made it necessary to build stronger galleys and to alter their deck space to avoid straining the sides and beams. The galleas resulted. At first a large edition of the galley, her oars were gradually dispensed with and she became purely a sailing ship. A Venetian galleas is shown on a Fiume stamp. She was a warship and had a low projecting beak. She eventually developed into a four-masted vessel.

The Carrack has been called the "first full-rigged ship." She had three masts and was square-rigged on fore and main and lateen rigged on the mizzen. She was the trading ship of the Mediterranean, during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, and was the forerunner of the galleon. She was slower and less ornamental than the galleas, but was a steadier ship in bad weather. Appears on stamps of Spain, all countries showing the ships of Columbus, the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria, being carracks. South-West Africa, Portugal and Colonies, United States, &c. Later carracks had four masts.

Caravel. A Mediterranean trader of Portuguese origin. Similar to the carrack in build, but lateen rigged originally on three masts, and later square-rigged on foremast and lateen on main and mizzen. A contemporary of the carrack. Shown on Portugal and Colonies, Peru and Venezuela.

Kogge or Cog. This type of vessel was the trader of Northern waters, the equivalent of the caravel and carrack. She was usually clinker built, the Mediterranean vessels being carvel built. Had square sails on main, fore and mizzen. Kogges of the Hanseatic League are shown on Danzig Free State stamps. An English cog is shown on a Bermuda stamp. The lateen sail appeared on some of these vessels in the middle of the 15th century. One is shown on a Danish kogge on stamps of that country. The kogge, carrack and caravel were the first three-masted ships, with, perhaps, the exception of the junk. Later the Mediterranean vessels added a bonaventure mizzen mast, lateen rigged.

Galleon. The outstanding difference between galleon and carrack was that the former followed the style of the galleas with a low projecting beak, the carrack always having a high overhanging fore-castle. The galleon was usually four-masted and elaborately carved and gilded. Undoubtedly the most picturesque ship ever built. It appears on stamps of Spain, Holland, Curacao, U.S.A., Sweden, France, Barbados, St. Kitts, &c

East Indiaman. In 1600 Queen Elizabeth granted for 15 years a Charter to "The Governor and Company of the Merchants of London trading into the East Indies." Thus began the Honourable East India Company, which, for nearly two-and-a-half centuries, monopolised the Far East trade. An East Indiaman is shown on stamps of St. Helena and Ascension, taken from the Seal of the Colony. The name of this vessel is unknown. East Indiamen were armed merchantmen and co-operated with the Navy when required. At the capture of Aden, in 1839, shown on an Aden stamp, two H.E.I ships took part. The St. Helena stamp shows a ship of the frigate type

Ship of the Line. Warships became classified or rated according to their size and efficiency during the Stuart period. They were known as first rate, second rate, &c. ships of the line, according to the number of guns carried. Two examples on stamps are the vessels on Bahamas and St. Kitts Nevis issues.

17th Century Maltese Galley, used by knights in their age-long struggle against the Turks, is shown on Maltese stamps. The galley finally disappeared from the Mediterranean in 1805.

The Barque, 18th Century. Two famous barque-rigged vessels of the 18th century were Captain Cook's Endeavour and Bligh's Bounty. Both are shown on stamps. The barque of this period had a square topsail on the mizzen. This was later altered to the fore and aft sail of later barques.

Victory. I don't think any description of the British Navy's proudest ship is necessary. It is shown on stamps of Antigua commemorating Nelson's last visit to the island in 1805.

U.S.S. Hartford. This vessel is shown on an American stamp. She was one of the United States first steam and sail warships of the transition period. Stamp shows her with all sails set and smoke belching from her funnel. She was a wood ship of 2,900 tons built in Boston in 1858.

19th Century Sailing Ships. Several well-known vessels appear on stamps, among them being the Cuba, Sandbach, Dunedin, Sacramento, Elbe, Erne, Aurora, Tory, Britannia, and Presidente Sarmiento. Many unknown ships, barques, brigs, schooners, brigantines, barquentines and topsail schooners are also represented.

Fulton's S.S. Clermont. Early in 1807, the Clermont was ready for trial on the Hudson. She is generally acknowledged to be the world's first regular passenger steamer. Her length was 133ft., speed 5 knots. A U.S.A. stamp of 1909 shows her on the Hudson, with the "half moon" and an Indian birch bark canoe; the first canoe, first sailing ship and first steamer to sail on the Hudson River.

Early Steamers. The Royal William, appearing on a Canadian stamp of 1933, was the first steamer to cross the Atlantic without using sails. Built at Cap Blanc, Quebec, she left that port on August 4, 1833, and arrived at Gravesend on September 11. She was then chartered by the Portuguese Government, and was later sold to Spain, who converted her into the first steam warship, under the name of Ysabel Segunda.

Another Atlantic pioneer is shown on a New Brunswick stamp of 1860, a Cunarder of the Britannia type of 1840.

The Pacific Steam Navigation Co. have their two first steamships of 1840, Peru and Chile, on the first stamps of Peru, while a steamer unknown to me appears on their mystery stamps, found in the company's factory at Chucuito, Peru.

The Lady McLeod, 1845; Collins Line Adriatic, 1857; Robert Todd, 1863; Honfleur, 1868; Sverige, 1871; Oregon, 1883, and Arawa, 1884, are all steamships with auxiliary sails shown on stamps.

Modern Liners. St Paul.—A ship well known to Liverpool is the old St. Paul of the American Line. I think we can call her the first of the modern liners on stamps. She was built by Cramp, at Philadelphia, in 1895.

Mauretania (?) A Belgian stamp shows a four-funnelled Cunarder. It has the Mauretania's rounded forward end and the Aquitania's decks. A composite Cunarder?

Bergensfjord. The first Norwegian passenger liner, built at Birkenhead in 1913 is shown on a Norwegian stamp. Owned by the Norwegian-Amerika Line.

Blue Riband Winners. Among the present-day Blue Riband winners on stamps are the Normandie, Rex, and Bremen. Many other present-day ships are also illustrated. The last-built liner to appear on stamps is the S.S. Pasteur, built in 1938.

Modern Warships on Stamps. The first of the Modern Warships I suppose is the old Dreadnought of 1873, which revolutionised warship building. Her type appears on a Maltese stamp design. Other famous warships depicted are the Maine, sunk in Havana Harbour; U.S.S. Olympus, of Manila Bay fame; Yawuz, ex German Goeben; U.S.S. Houston, sunk in the Java Sea battle, and the French Clemenceau, still building.

The Polish submarine Orzel deserves a place of fame all to herself. She is fittingly commemorated on a Polish stamp.

There are numbers of other ships on stamps I have not mentioned, native craft, fishing boats, ferry and river boats, train ferries, &c.

I have said enough to prove that the man who collects stamps depicting ships has a spare time occupation that will give him ample scope for nautical research.