

# SAIL IN PEACE TO THE BEAUTIFUL WEST

## Iconography of the solar barges depicted on *qrs* coffins from the “Priests of Montu” group.

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### Introduction

In this poster I discuss central element of so called “Lid variant B” containing depictions of two solar barges, possibly the day barge and the night barge, being towed by various gods. Such scenes made its appearance on *qrs* coffins during late XXVth Dynasty and are the most popular feature adorning lids of the coffins coming from “Priest of Montu” group. I am basing on coffins described by A. Moret in *Catalogue general des antiquites egyptiennes* titled: *Sarcophages de l’époque bubastite a l’époque saïte*. Photographs are not available for big number of coffins and those available are blurry. During my research I decided to overdraw most of the photographs to achieve some details, which can be observed only in enlargement.

During analysis, three independent features were distinguished:

- ▶ Deities towing the barge
- ▶ Solar god and his attendants
- ▶ Barge and its equipment – religious, nautical, decorative

Deities who tow the boat are not depicted in the same combinations even on the same lid. Numbers vary, with maximum number of 12, containing male anthropomorphic deities supplemented in variable proportions by animal headed gods. Alternating skin color is blue or red, but details of the garments differ. In case of CGC41018, these deities are signed as “Circumpolar Stars” and “Imperishable Stars”. In one example, two jackals and jackal-headed deity replaced the standard crew.

There were no obligatory combination of characters forming the crew. It consist of mostly anthropomorphic deities accompanying the solar god standing in naos. Numbers vary, with maximum number of 13. While passive figures are standing idle, active deities are performing gestures like adoration or protection. The most dynamic character is Horus who serves as a steersman, rudder or protector spearing the Apopis snake. Only constant feature is figure of sun god in naos represented in most of the cases as hawk-headed or ram-headed deity. However, some exceptions occur.

### Types of barges

Depictions of barges are very diverse, showing us standard solar boats and types known from funeral context, serving as a mode of transport for solar god. Every type of boat found on coffins is also to be found among the Middle Kingdom boat-models. Basing on descriptions and photographs we can distinguish 3 types of boats.

#### Solar barge of standard form



Figure 1: Solar barge from the coffin CGC41018

#### Barge with papyrus terminals

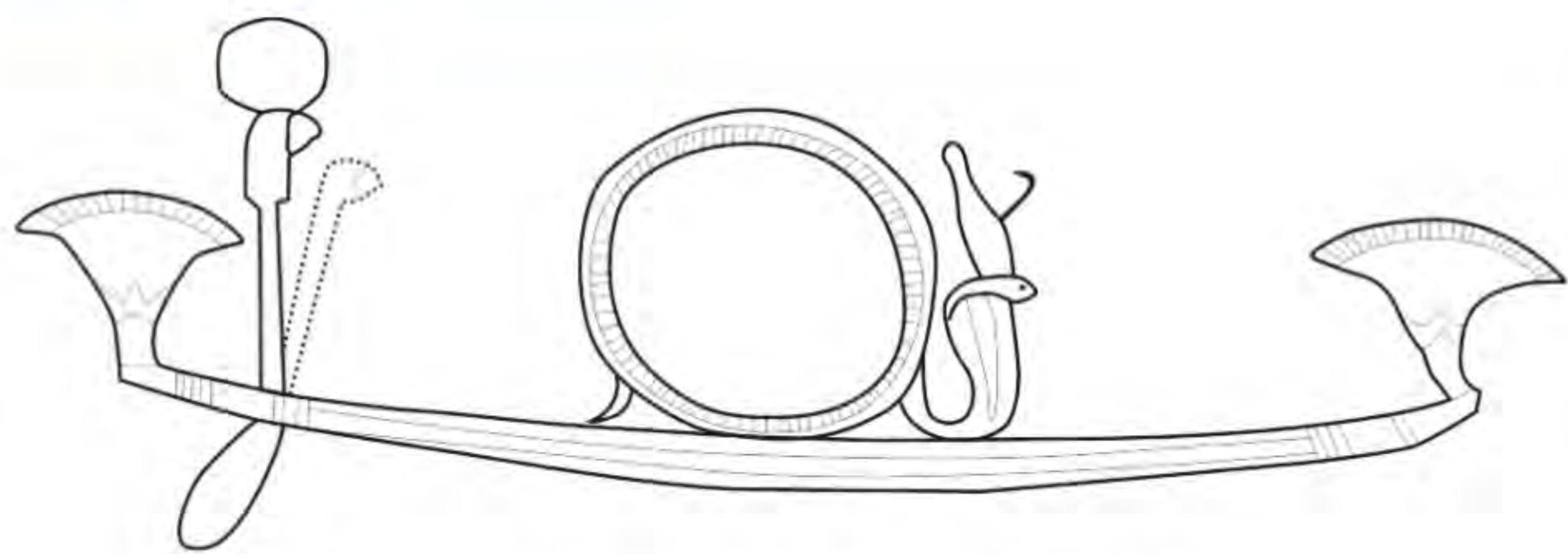


Figure 2: Solar barge from the coffin CGC41031

#### Barge with animal headed terminals

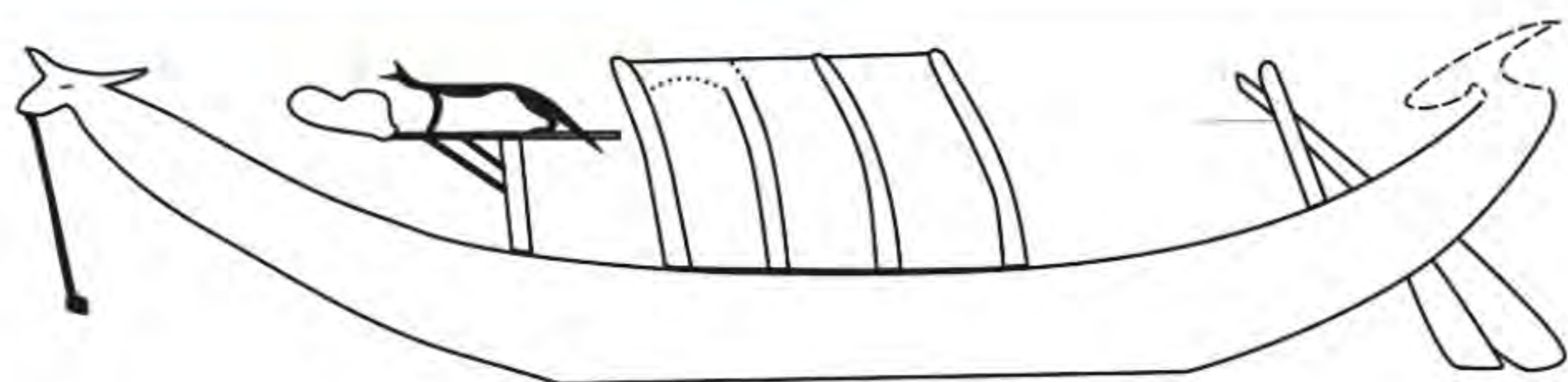


Figure 3: Barge from the coffin CGC41038

### Religious equipment

#### Solar Mat / Prow Curtain / Treibtafel

In case of these coffins, mat covering the prow is present on every example of solar barge without broad papyrus terminals.

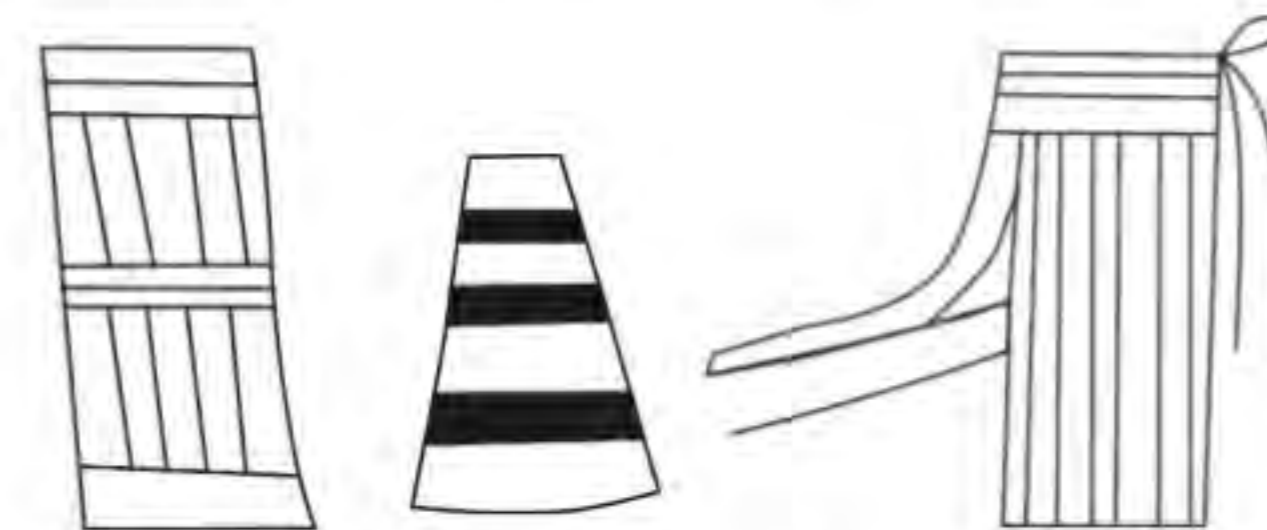


Figure 4: Solar mat from the coffins CGC41018, CGC41031, CGC41018

### Enigmatic objects

Standard choice of equipment consist of:

- ▶ solar mar
- ▶ cylindrical object
- ▶ *Shms* sign
- ▶ rectangular object

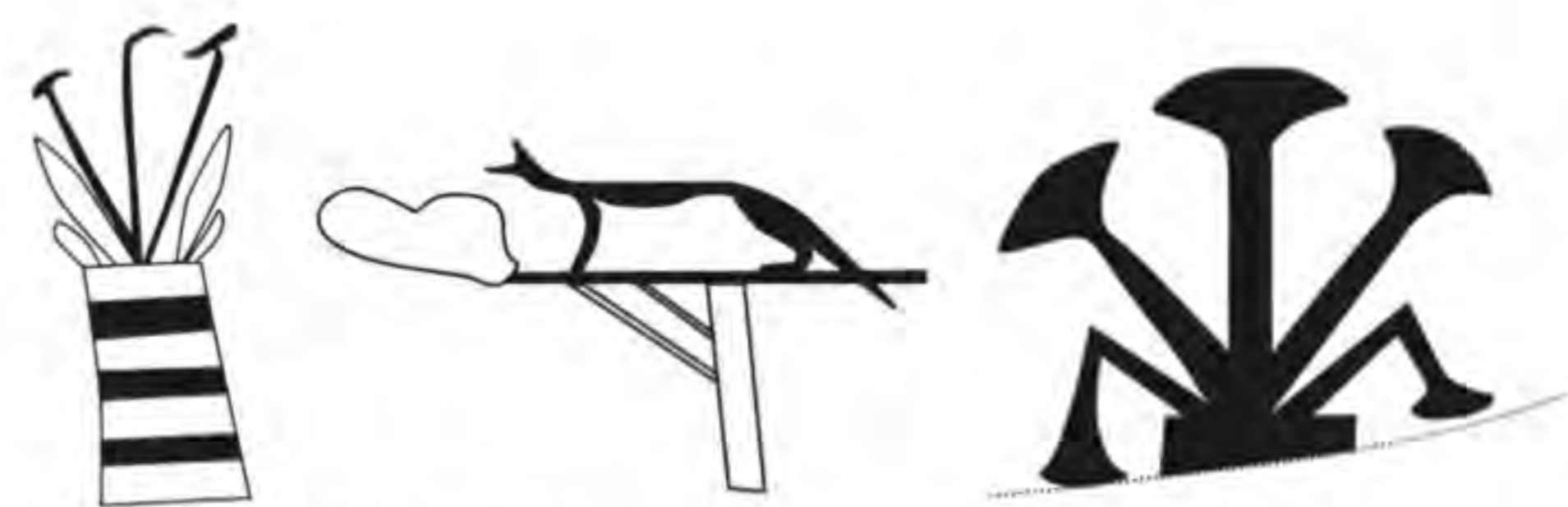


Figure 5: Cylindrical object - CGC41018, emblem - CG41038, Merit flower - CG41040

### Snakes or ropes?

Examples of snakes are much more popular than those of a prow-rope. Deities towing a barge using a rope can be found on only 1 coffin, compared to 8 coffins where images of cobras are clearly recognizable.

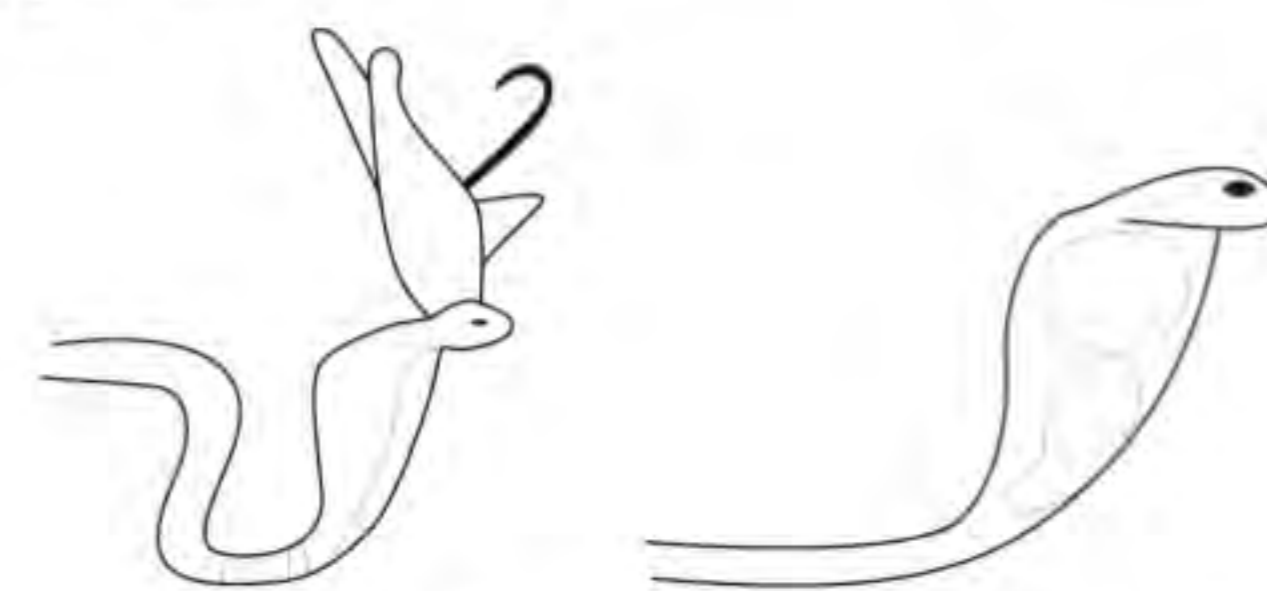


Figure 6: Snakes from the coffins CGC41031 and CGC41040

### Conclusion

Variety of combinations presented on such small amount of coffins is thought-provoking. I suggest that artists adorning coffins had quite a big room for manoeuvre while composing such scenes. Undoubtedly presence of features such as deities towing the boat and sun god in his barge surrounded by his attendants was essential for understanding of this composition.

Details just as shape of the barge, its nautical equipment and additional decorations could depend only on artist and quality of the workshop.

### Literature

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