JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS

by

ALBERT BUELL LEWIS

Assistant Curator of Melanesian Ethnology

24 Plates



ANTHROPOLOGY DESIGN SERIES NO. 2

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

CHICAGO

1924

ANTHROPOLOGY DESIGN SERIES

This is the second number in a series dealing with primitive and oriental designs. The first issue "Block Prints from India for Textiles," is devoted to reproductions of the ink impressions obtained from wooden blocks, used for printing designs on cotton and silk textiles. The majority of the reproductions used are actual size and consist chiefly of border and all-over designs.

A brief introduction explains the meaning and use of the designs.

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D. C. DAVIES
DIRECTOR

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
CHICAGO
U.S.A.



PORTION OF A JAVANESE SARONG, SHOWING BATIK DESIGNS. NEARLY ½ ACTUAL SIZE.

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Javanese Batik Designs from Metal Stamps

The process of drawing or painting a design in wax on cloth so that when dyed only that part not covered by the wax takes the color, has been known and practised in Java for many generations. Cloth which has been treated and dyed in this way is known as batik. The wax is put on the cloth by means of a small copper container with a long slender spout. This is called a *tjanting*. The waxing of the cloth is a slow and tedious process, and is done only by the women.

Formerly such work was carried on chiefly by the women of the leisure class, much as fancy embroidery is done in some other countries. About 1860, however, a new method was introduced, in which metal stamps were used to apply the wax. By this means ten to twenty or even more sarongs could be stamped or waxed in a day, while by the batik process it would take a woman twelve to fifteen days to wax a single sarong. This process was so much more rapid that it soon became extensively used on a commercial scale, often under Chinese management. The stamping was done by men, and the finished cloth was known as *chop* work (often spelled *tjap*) from an Indian word meaning a stamp. This *chop* cloth proved so much cheaper than true batik, that a large proportion of the cloth dyed in Java is now waxed by this method, or by a combination of stamped and batik work. For example, the cloth may be stamped on one side, and batiked on the other; or the borders may be stamped, while the central design is batiked. Some handwork, usually with a brush, is often done over the stamped design to broaden the effect (Plate XXIV).

The stamps used are made of thin strips of copper about half an inch wide, set on edge, with short pieces of wire for the dots, all soldered to an open metal base of the same material, but of heavier strips. To this is fastened a curved iron handle (Figs. 1 and 2). The work requires great skill, and there are not many men who can make such stamps. The design wanted is carefully drawn on paper, and this the workman keeps before him, using a pair of compasses to get the lines and spaces exactly right. Frequently it is desired to stamp both sides of the cloth, in which case a second stamp must be made accurately repeating the design, but reversed, and corresponding to it as a negative corresponds to a positive. In the cheaper cloths the wax is stamped only on one side, but penetrates sufficiently to allow the design to show fairly well on the opposite side when dyed. The melted wax is kept in a metal pan near-by, in which floats a thick cloth pad, on which the stamp is pressed before placing it on the cloth. Aside from the use of the metal stamp instead of the *tjanting* for waxing the finer lines of the design, the manipulation is the same as in true batik work.

Practically all the batik and chop work is now done on factory-made cotton, European or Japanese, as there is very little native cloth made at present. Not

only is this true, but the designs used have been carefully copied by the manufacturers of Europe and Japan, and a large proportion of the so-called batiks on the market in Java itself are merely machine-made prints. The old batik designs, however, are usually very accurately reproduced, just as they are in the metal stamps. Only the common repeating designs were made in stamps, however, and many foreign elements were introduced, especially from Chinese sources.

The designs here reproduced are made from ink impressions of metal stamps obtained in Java by Dr. George A. Dorsey and preserved in Field Museum. The designs, including that on the title-page, are all actual size, except the one on Plate II, which had to be somewhat reduced. Many of the designs are imperfect, especially at the edges, owing to injury to the thin metal strips and wires.

The best books on batik work and designs are Rouffaer and Juynboll, "Die indische Batikkunst und ihre Geschichte," and Jasper and Pirngadie, "De Batikkunst" (in Dutch). Illustrations of batik cloth are given in a recent French portfolio of plates, "Les Batiks de Java." Specimens of batik are displayed in Hall 32 of the Museum.

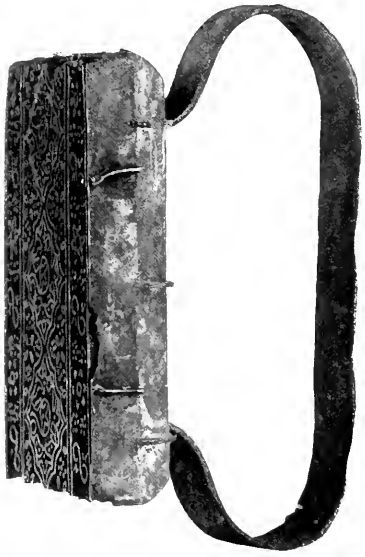


FIG. 1. JAVANESE METAL STAMP.

The impression of this stamp is shown in Fig. 2, Plate XX.

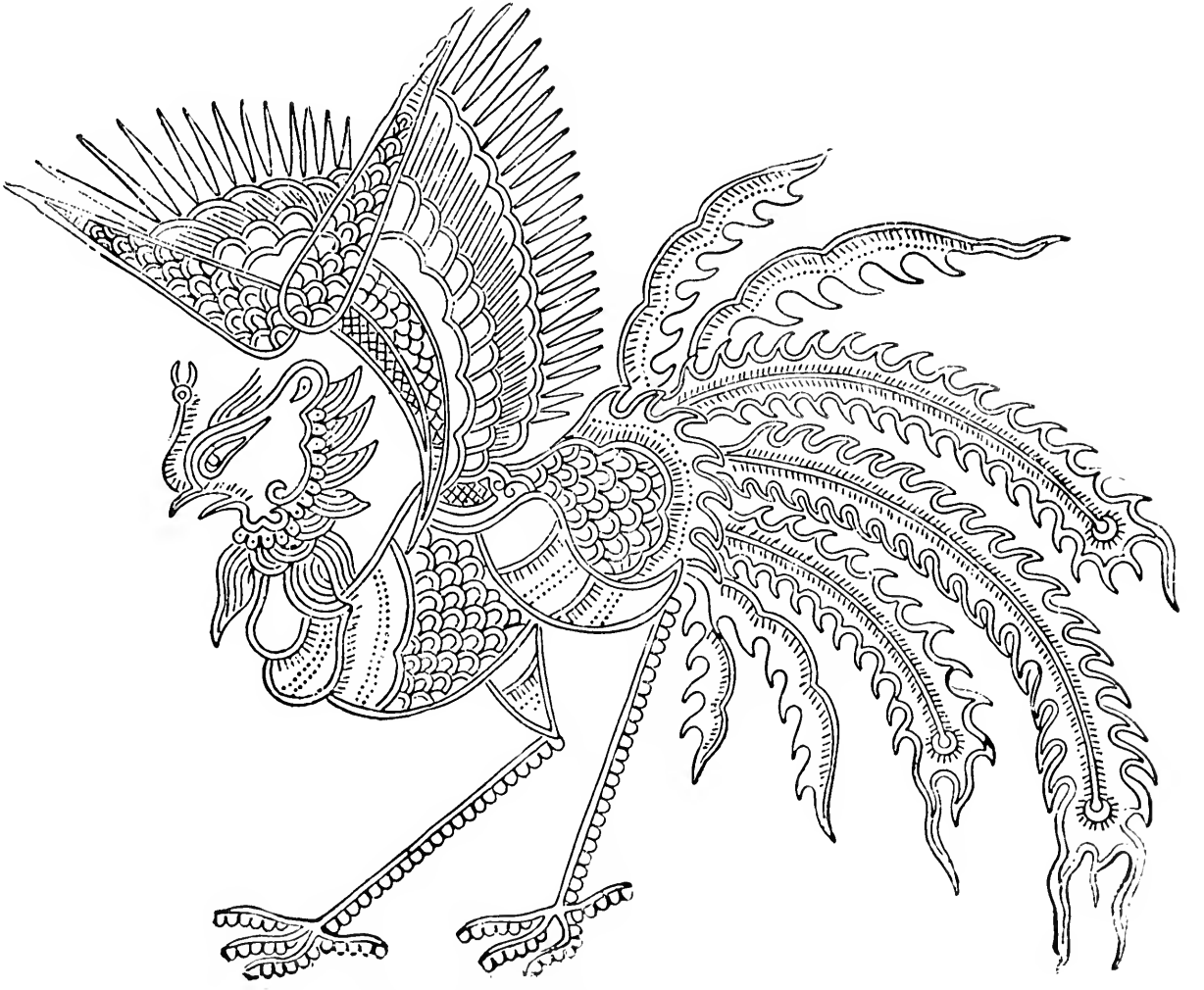
Slightly reduced.



FIG. 2. JAVANESE METAL STAMP.

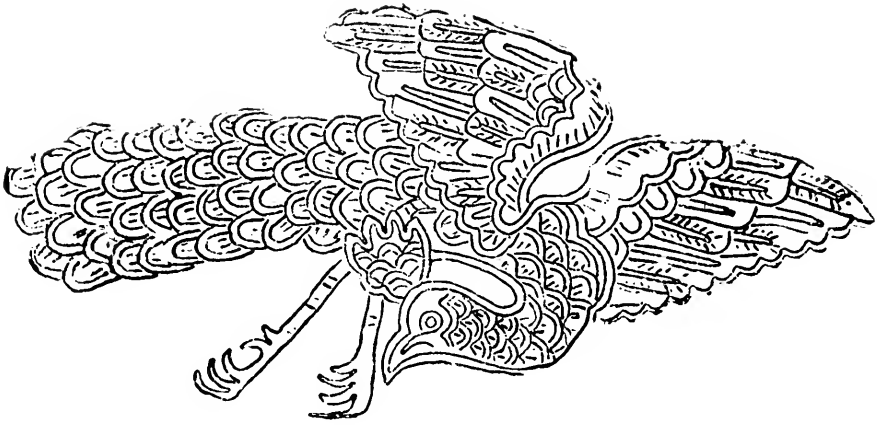
The impression of this stamp is shown in Fig. 2, Plate VIII.

Slightly reduced.



JAVANESE BATIK DESIGN FROM METAL STAMP. ¾ ACTUAL SIZE.

Design of Chinese Phoenix.



1



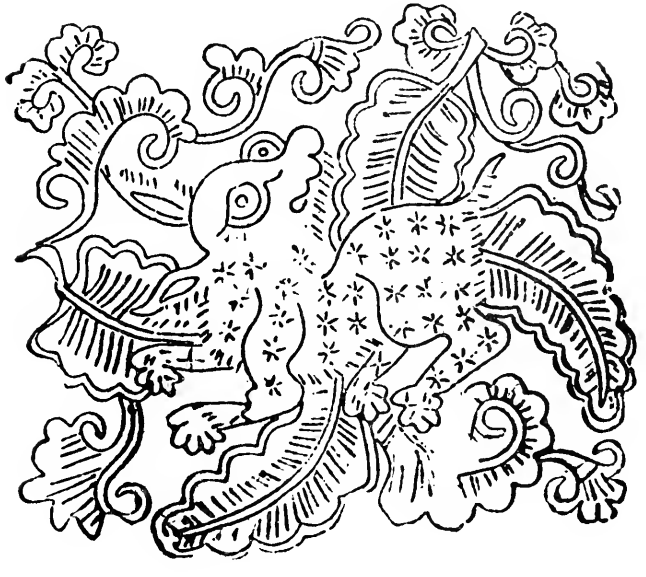
2

JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

Adapted from Chinese Designs.



1



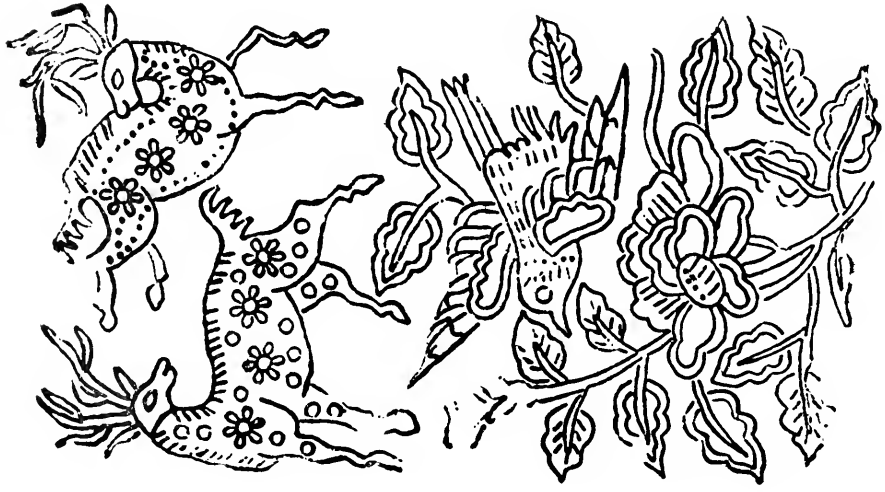
2

JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

Adapted from Chinese Designs. Fig. 1. Tiger.



1



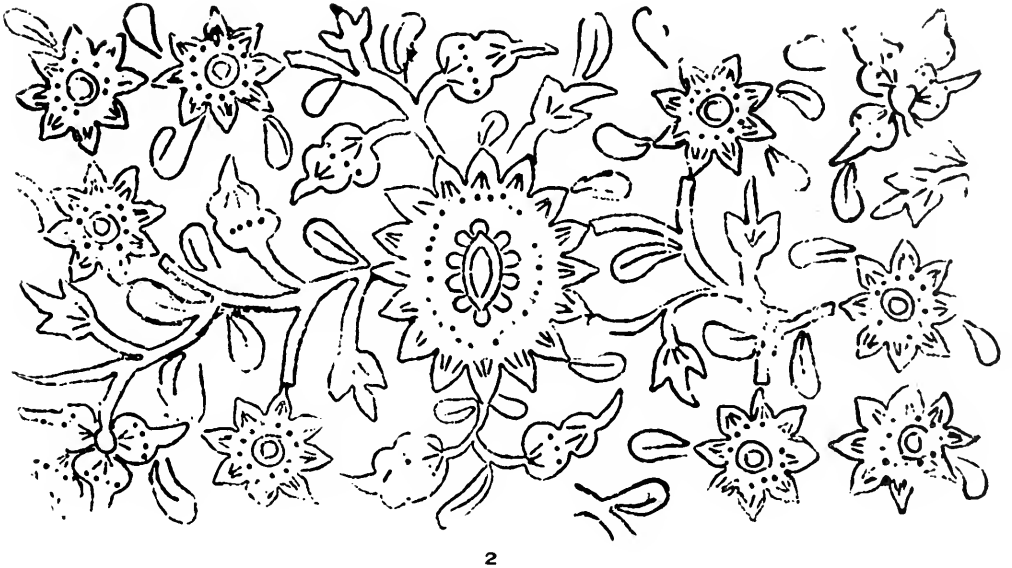
2

JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

Adapted from Chinese Designs: Spotted Deer.



1



2

JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

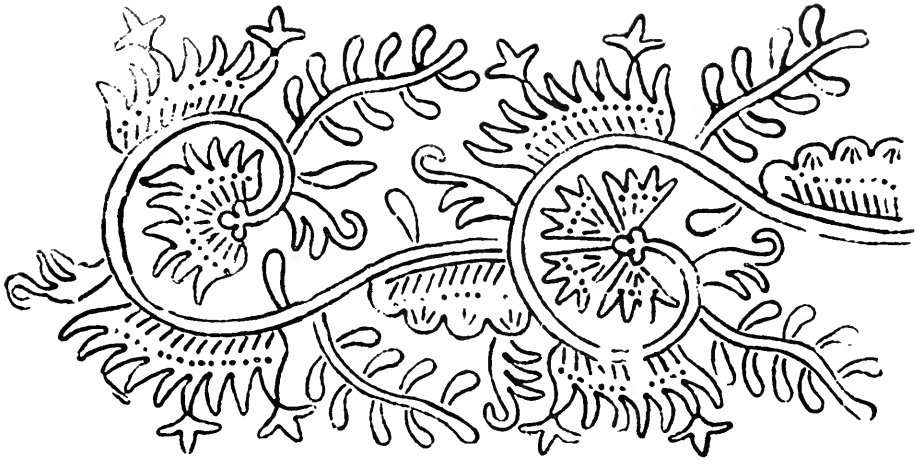


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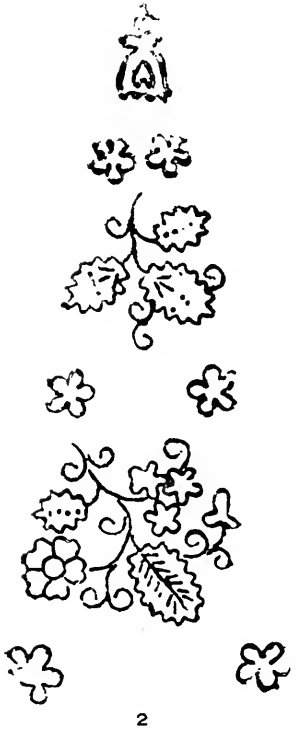


2

JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.



1



2



3

JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

The design shown in Fig. 2 is used in the triangular or toothed design shown on Plate XXIV. The stamp from which this impression was made is illustrated in Fig. 2, Page 2.



1



2



3

JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

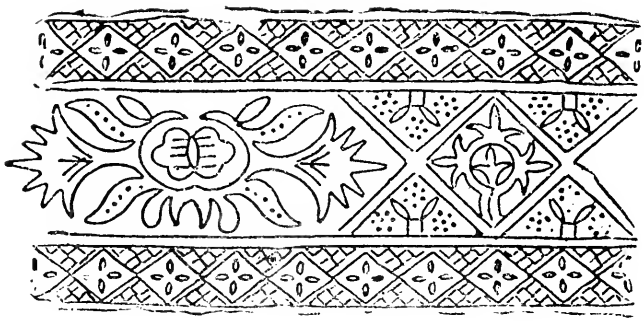


1



2

JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.



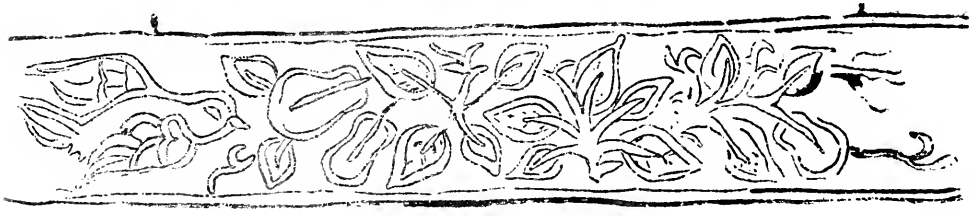
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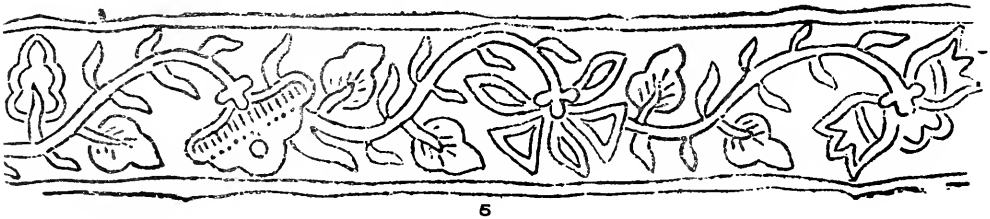
2



3



4

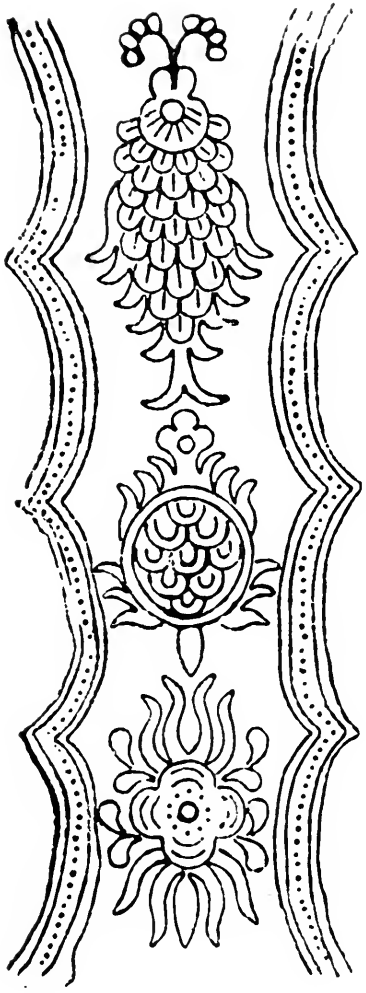


5

JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.



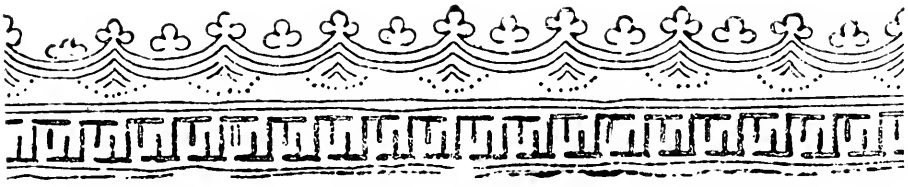
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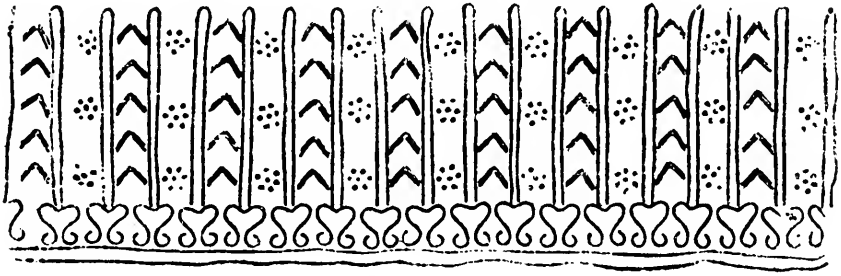
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JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

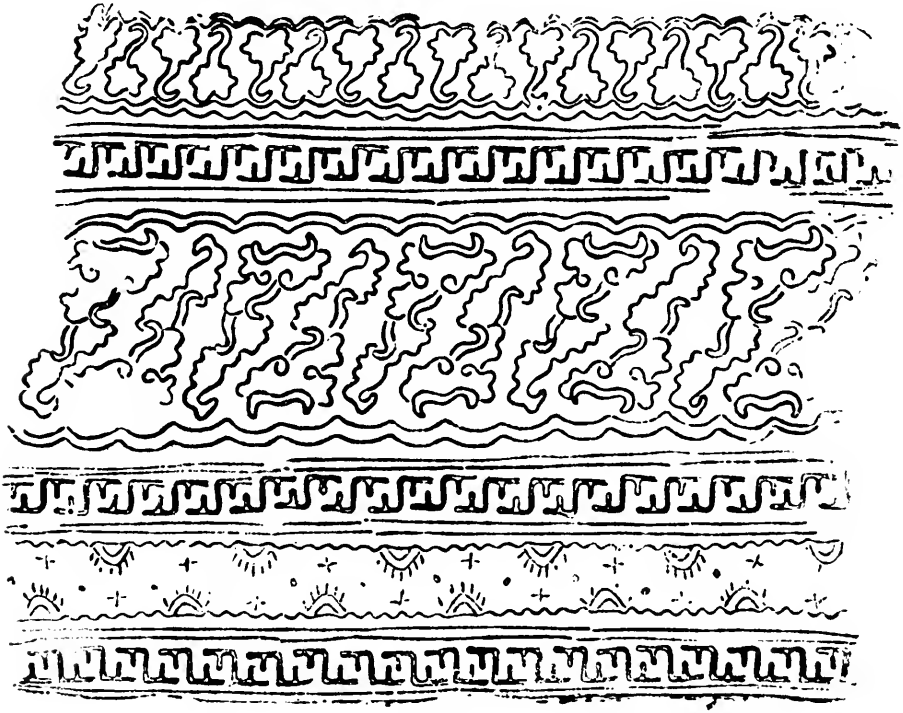
Fig. 1. Adaptation of Chinese Double Dragon.



1

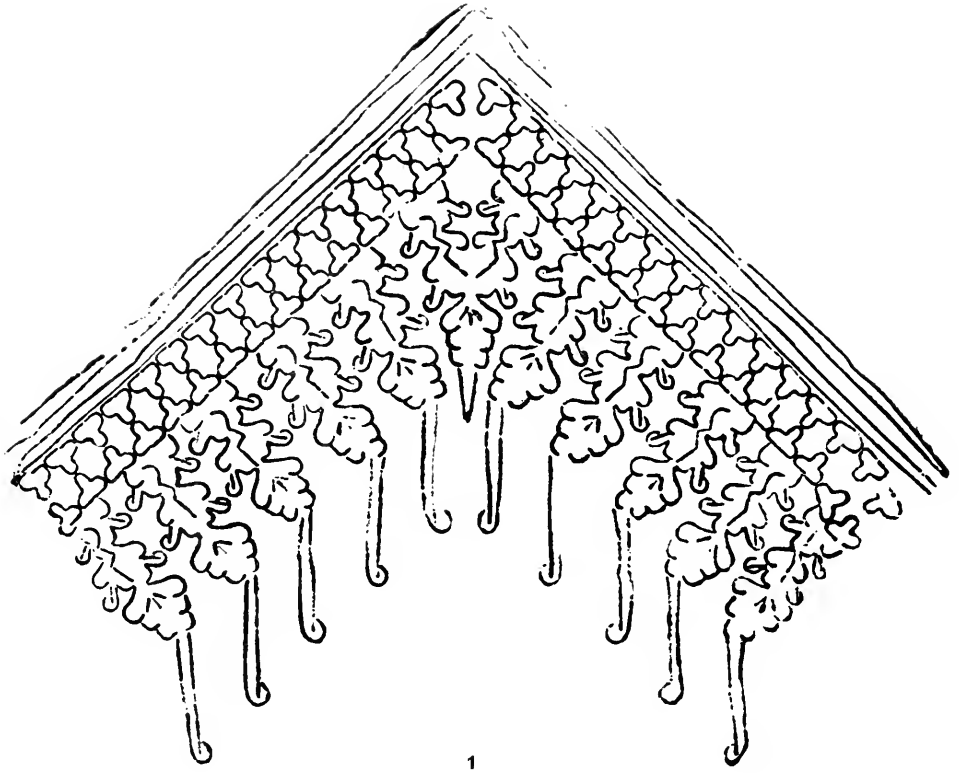


2



3

JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

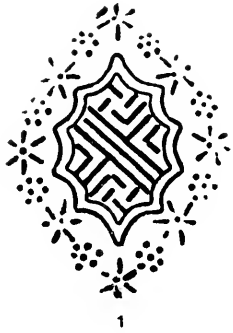


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2

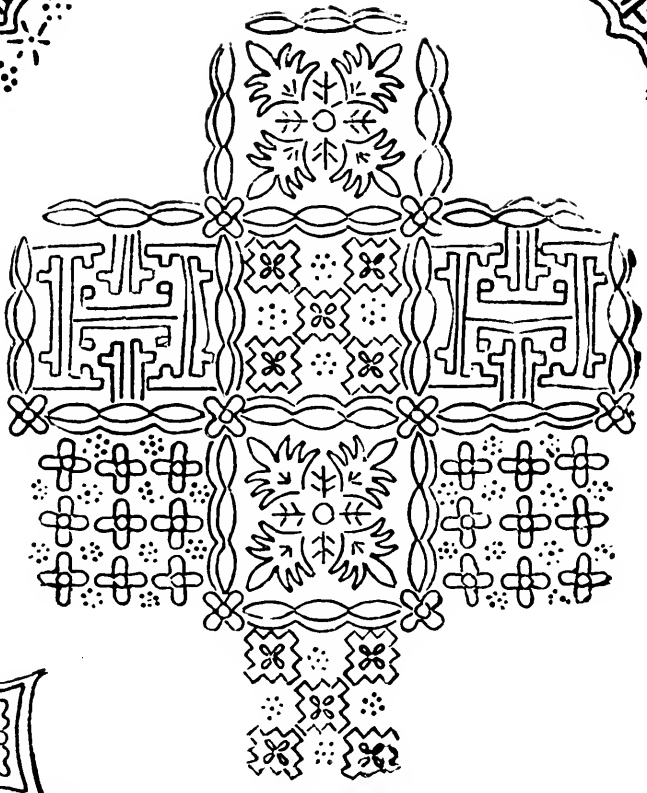
JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.



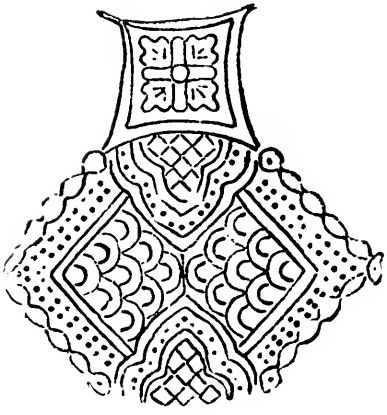
1



2



3



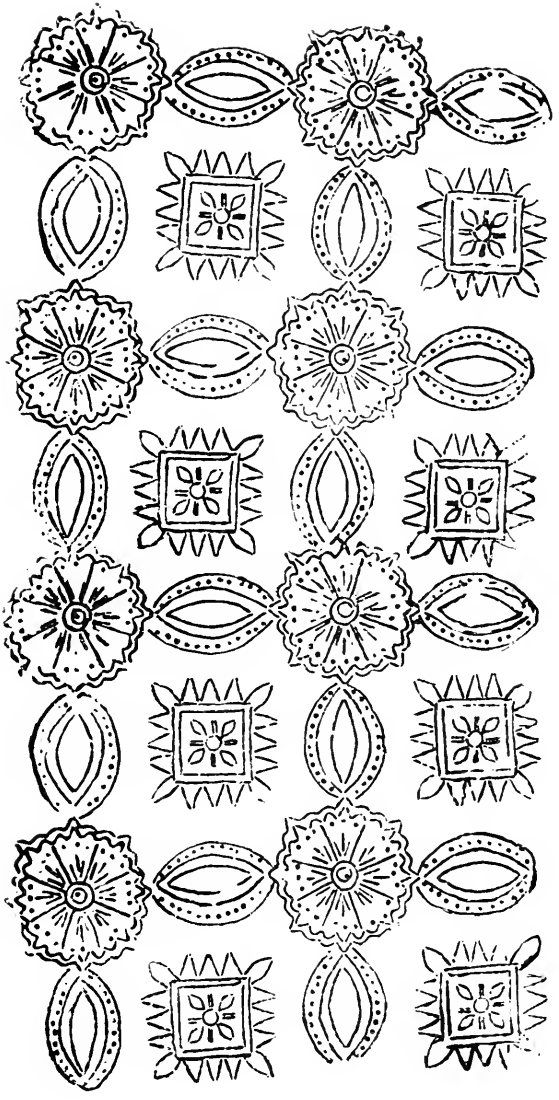
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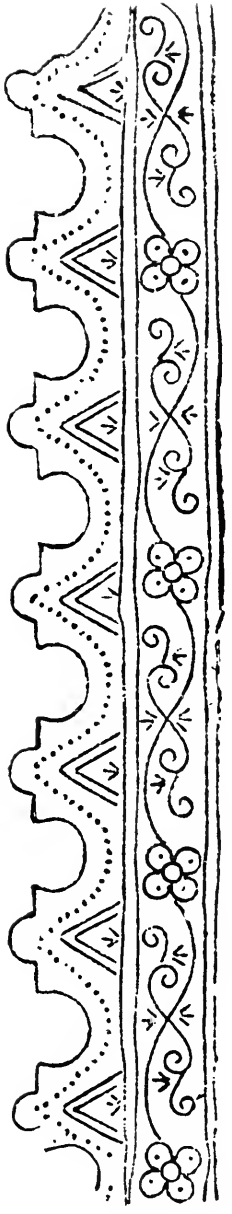
5

JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

Figs. 3, 4 and 5 are single impressions of stamps used for all-over designs.



1



2

JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

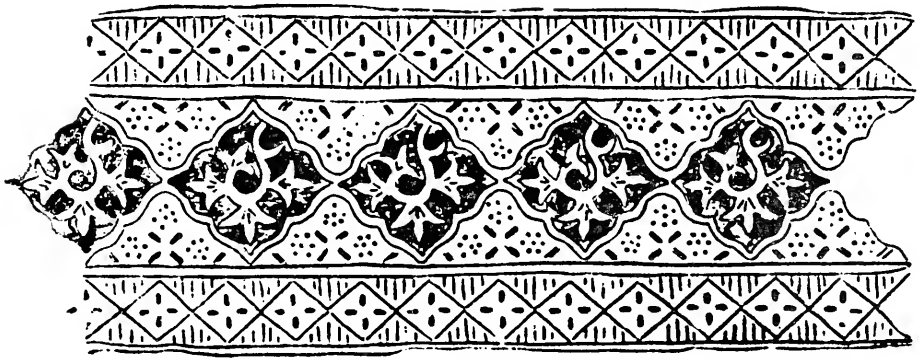
Fig. 1 shows two impressions of the stamp.



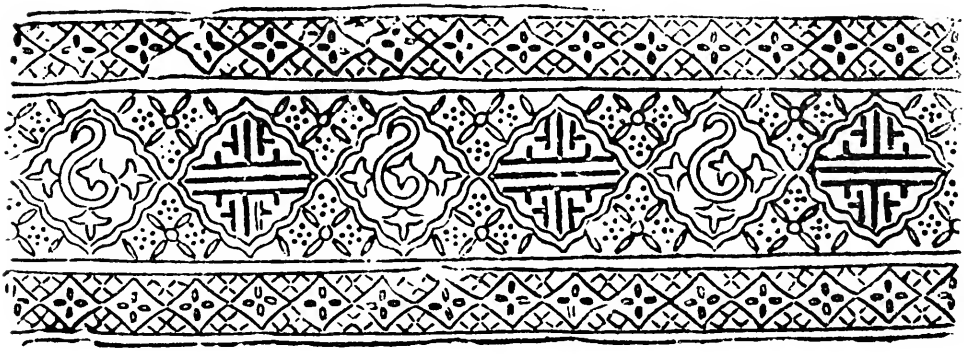
1



2



3



4

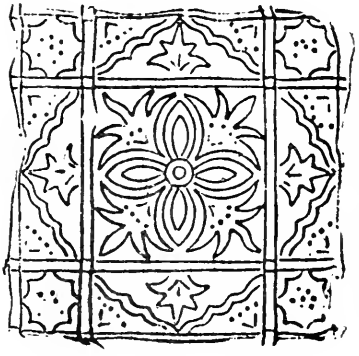
JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.



1



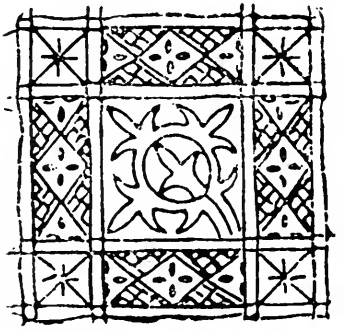
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3



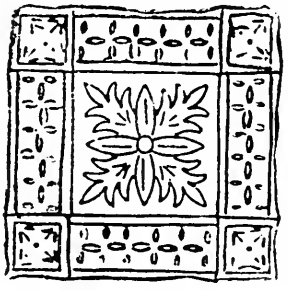
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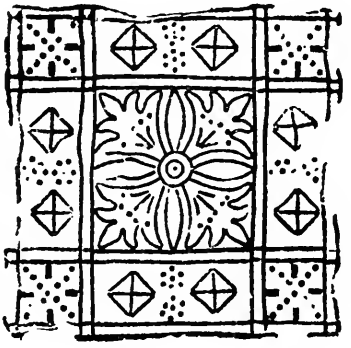
5



6



7



8

JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

Single impressions of stamps used for all-over designs.



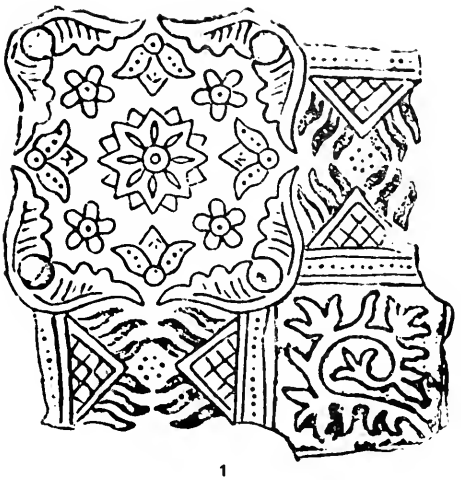
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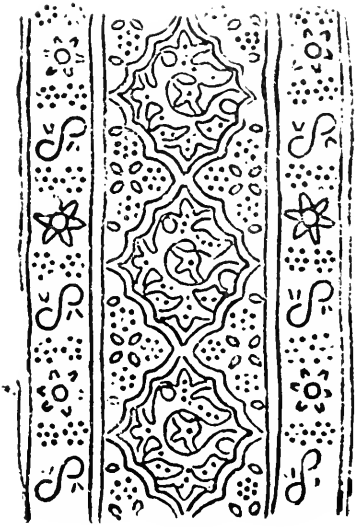
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JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

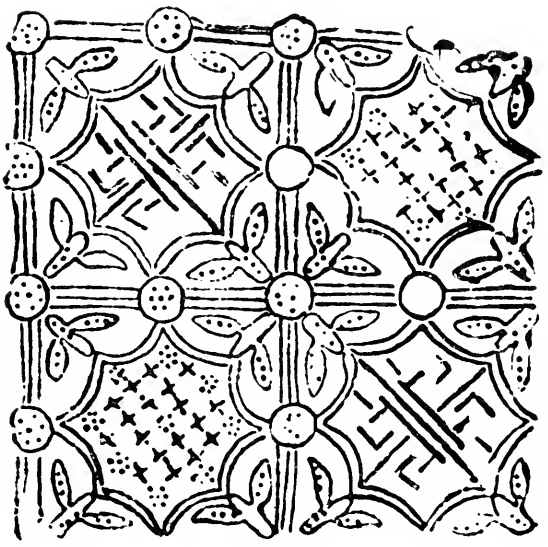
Fig. 1 shows four impressions of the stamp, a single impression of which is given in Fig. 1, Plate XX.



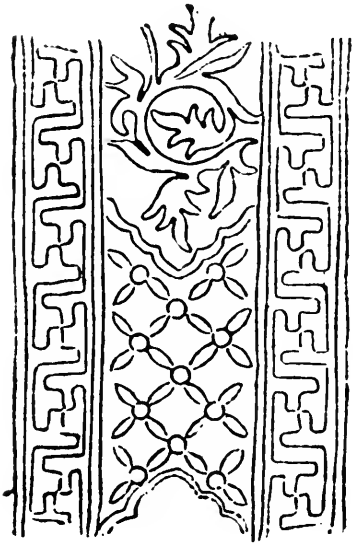
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2



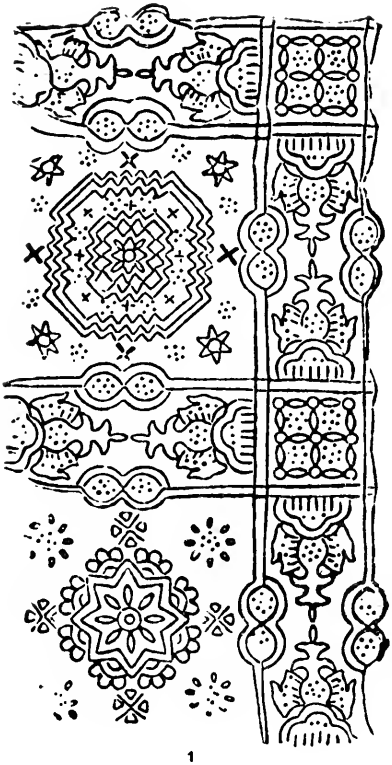
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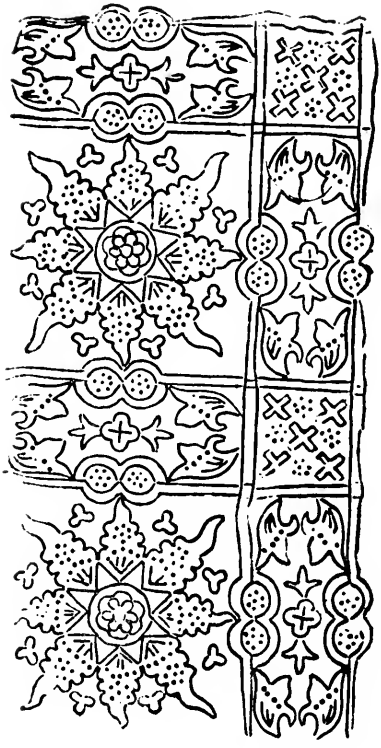
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JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

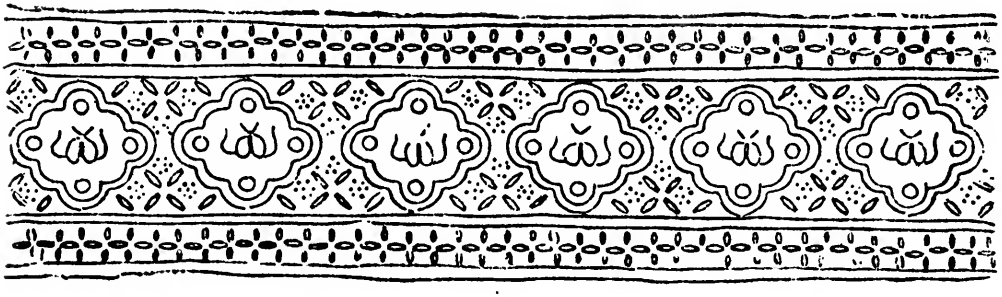
Fig. 1, Plate XIX shows four impressions the same as Fig. 1 above, illustrating how they fit together for an all-over design.



1



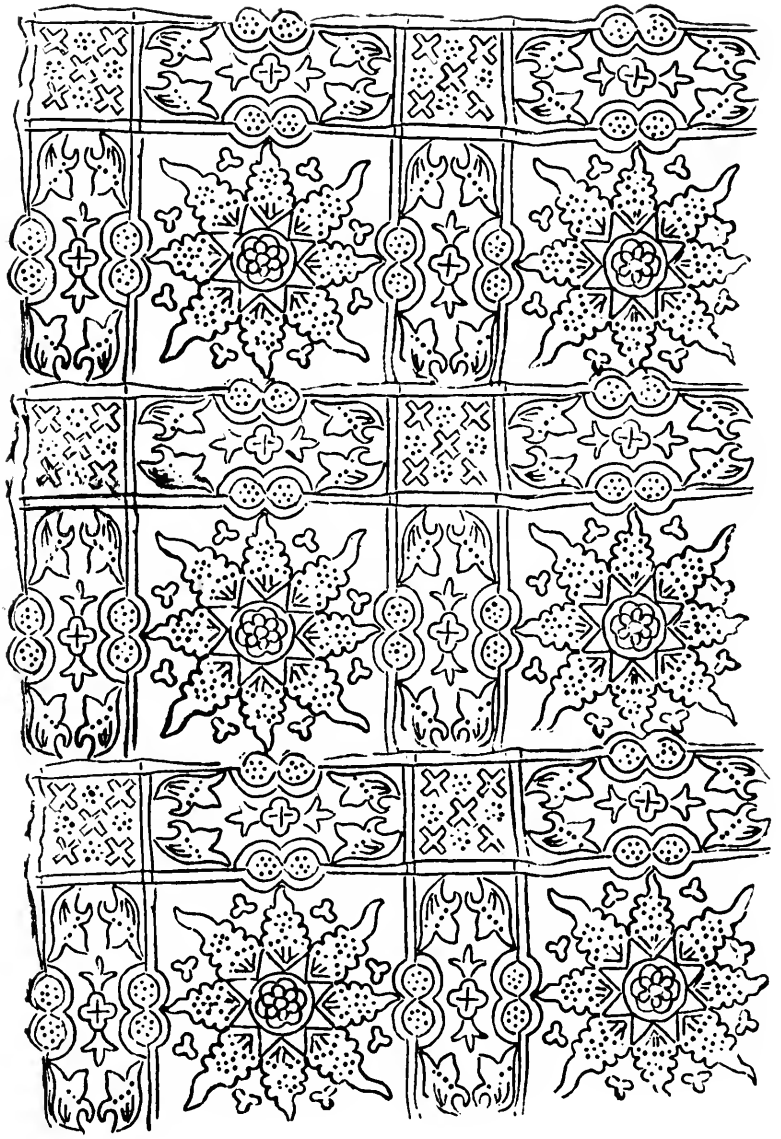
2



3

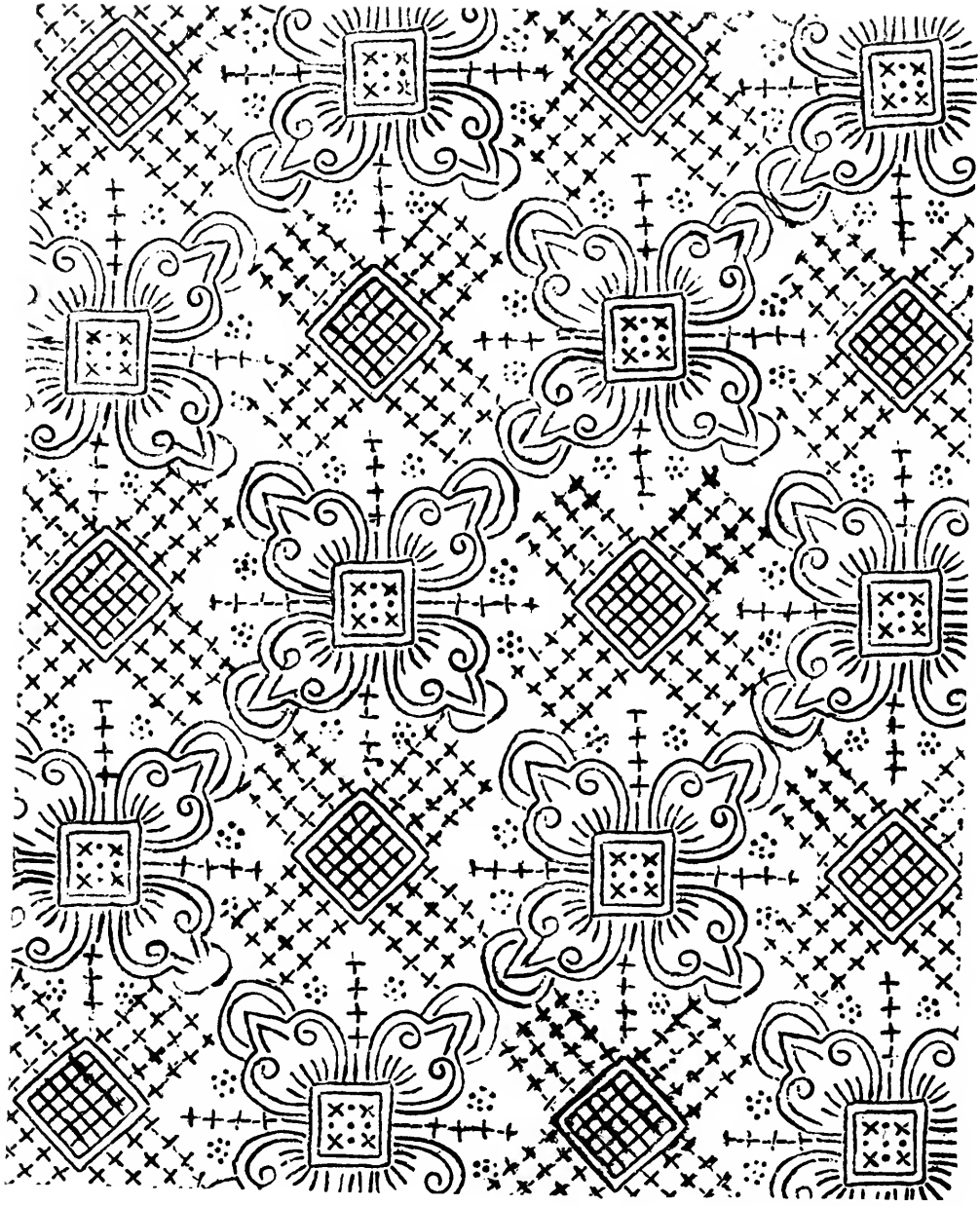
JAVANESE BATIK DESIGNS FROM METAL STAMPS.

Three impressions of Fig. 2 are shown in Plate XXII, illustrating how they fit together.



JAVANESE BATIK DESIGN FROM METAL STAMP.

Three impressions of the stamp are here shown, giving something of the effect as an all-over design.



JAVANESE BATIK DESIGN FROM METAL STAMP.

Twelve impressions, either whole or in part, are here shown.



PORTION OF A JAVANESE SARONG, SLIGHTLY LESS THAN ½ ACTUAL SIZE.

This shows ordinary stamp and brush work. The thin lines of the triangular designs and borders have been made with stamps, while over the broad lines and light areas the wax has been put on with the brush.

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