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PHOENIX·FELIX·ET·TV*

Remarks on the Representation of the Phoenix in Roman Art

ANTERO TAMMISTO

Introduction

Among the various fantasy birds, the phoenix has throughout history had a unique position as the myth has been widespread in various forms and contexts. Whether or not people believed in its real existence, nobody had, of course, ever seen one. This caused considerable variation in the descriptions and representations of the phoenix. In both literary and visual sources the tradition is far from fixed and, moreover, both the literary descriptions and visual representations seem to have had only a little interrelation. This partly explains the numerous identification problems met within the phoenix representations in ancient art, and is surely a reason for the lack of a comprehensive study on its iconography even after many diligent studies.¹ In the following, we will deal with these problems.

* CIL IV 9850; I wish to express my sincere thanks to Doctors Mariette De Vos and Margareta Steinby for reading the manuscript. I also wish to thank Prof. Rostislav Holthoer for checking the Egyptological content, and Prof. Heikki Solin for discussing problems concerning the inscription cited in the title (see note 18). For the content of this paper I am of course the solely responsible. Because most of the representations which will be mentioned are already published I have restricted the illustration to drawings (from photographs) of particularly relevant and/or unpublished representations only.

¹ In the basic work by R. Van den Broek, *The Myth of the Phoenix according to Classical and Early Christian Traditions* (EPRO 24), Leiden 1972, is given also a brief but the more learned sketch of the earlier research on the phoenix which shows among other things

The present study by no means attempts to review all the problems concerning the iconography of the phoenix and its identification in ancient art, but presents material and observations hitherto absent in the studies which have clarified the main lines of the iconography of the phoenix.² The results of the preceding studies must first be briefly summarized.

The nimbus and/or sun rays around the bird's head are attested as an unambiguous feature of the phoenix and a fairly constant element in the representations of the bird.³ These we meet in a long-legged and long-necked bird looking like a crane or a heron from the coins from Hadrian and Antonine's time onwards.⁴ These characteristics are usually also found in the later representations, most of which are in Palaeo-Christian

how much work was needed to disprove the beliefs that it existed (*ibid.*, 3—13). Van den Broek magnificently analyses the manifold symbolism assigned to the phoenix in antiquity. The work does not aim to be a systematic description of this symbolism, but an attempt to show "that the symbolic interpretation of the phoenix had a strong influence on the development of the myth" (*ibid.*, 422). Also the visual sources are used from this point of view, though not systematically (*ibid.*, 425—464, Pl. 1—40); F. Bisconti, *Lastra incisa inedita della Catacomba di Priscilla (con note di revisione critica sul metodo di individuazione della fenice nell'arte paleocristiana)*, *RACrist* 57 (1981) 43—67 also lists earlier research (especially in notes 8—9 and 23) and makes valuable observations on the identification of the phoenix in Palaeo-Christian art. For the phoenix mainly in Egyptian art, see also L. Kakosy, *LÄ* IV (1984) 1030—1039 *s.v.* 'Phönix'. Most of the studies deal with the myth of the phoenix in literary sources and, moreover, as a Christian symbol. The most extensive collection of visual material is still the one by G. Türk, *Roscher-Lexikon* III 2, 3465—3472 *s.v.* 'Phoenix' and H. Leclercq, *DAFL* XIV 1 (1941) 686—691 *s.v.* 'Phénix'. See also A. Rusch, *RE* XX 1 (1941) 414—423, *s.v.* 'Phoinix' and E. Josi, *Enc. Catt.* V (1950) 1151—1152 *s.v.* 'Fenice'. Of more recent studies concerning the phoenix we mention Marthe de Chambrun Ruspoli, *Le retour du Phénix*, Paris 1982 (which according to R. Tefnin in *AC* 54 [1985] 456—458 is disastrous) and P.G. Christiansen-J.L. Sebesta, *Claudian's Phoenix*, *AC* 54 (1985) 204—224 (which concerning visual sources treats only some coins; *ibid.*, 211—214).

² This article has emerged as an excursus of my dissertation which I am preparing on the bird motifs in Romano-Campanian wall paintings. Many preliminary observations of the material are introduced in this paper without bringing together all the evidence.

³ Van den Broek, 233ff. The sun rays are not obligatory if identification as the phoenix is made clear by other means, e.g. the bird shown with a palm branch or sitting in a palm tree, see Bisconti.

⁴ Van den Broek, 427—433, Pl. 6—7.

mosaics, where the bird often more resembles a porphyryion.⁵ This appearance is considered to go back to the Egyptian sun bird benu (*bnw*). During the Old Kingdom (OK) it was represented as a bird mostly resembling a passerine in general more than any specific species. Sethe's suggestion that it might represent a wagtail is still repeated in all the handbooks, though neither Sethe nor anyone else has been able to present any reasons for this identification.⁶ From the Middle Kingdom (MK) onwards, however, it is clearly a heron, the grey or the purple one (*Ardea cinerea* / *Ardea purpurea*). The long legs and the long neck are indeed common with the later Roman phoenix, which, however, usually has a shorter bill and only in some cases the crest and long breast feathers of the benu. A further difference is that the Egyptian benu bore the sun disc on its head whereas the nimbus is clearly around the head.⁷

According to R. Van den Broek it seems plausible that in the Roman Egypt the benu and the phoenix became associated and acquired the same appearance. The sun disc became associated with the nimbus and it is probably in Roman Egypt around I c. AD that the benu-phoenix got its appearance which the Hadrian coins repeat. These were struck after Hadrian's stay in Syria, which might have influenced the adaptation of the subject.⁸ In fact some magical amulets of clearly Egyptian models showing

⁵ Van den Broek, Pl. 18, 2; 19; 23; 31. On the I—II c. AD liturgical garment from Saqqara the bird's bill and head are somewhat flamingo-like (*ibid.*, 426, Pl. 2—3). Later the phoenix is also represented as looking like a dove and even confused with the cock, see Bisconti.

⁶ K. Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion der Ägypter*, Leipzig 1930, § 31. A representation of the bird is e.g. in K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte II*² (1960) n. 1652. The bird in a relief fragment treated by Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte III*, Leipzig 1923, 122 note 3, Pl. 60 is rightly identified as a plover species, perhaps the Spur-winged Plover (*Vanellus spinosus*), though all distinguishing marks are not represented as Wreszinski notes. Cf. Bonnet, *RÄRG* 514ff. s.v. 'Phönix', Van den Broek, 15ff. and Kakosy, 1030—1031.

⁷ Van den Broek, 15ff., 233ff.; cf. Kakosy.

⁸ Van den Broek, 244ff., Pl. 6. Hadrian's relations to and special interests in Egypt are well-known and attested e.g. in the realization of the Villa Hadriana, see A. Roulet, *The Egyptian and Egyptianizing monuments of Imperial Rome (EPRO 20)*, Leiden 1972, 49—51, cf. also J. Raeder, *Die statuarische Ausstattung der Villa Hadriana bei Tivoli (Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe 37, 4)* Frankfurt-Bern 1983.

this kind of phoenix have been found in Syria and these might be earlier than the Hadrian coins. Also the liturgical garment from Saqqara showing the benu-phoenix might be already from the I c. AD.⁹

The association of the benu and the phoenix myths is understandable as they were put in relation to each other already in the early quotations by Hecataeus apud Herodotus, and, although the classical phoenix myth did not derive directly from the benu myth it was influenced by the latter. This is shown by the many common elements of the myths even if the external appearance of the birds does not yet seem to have had any resemblance.¹⁰ In the classical phoenix myth, which was a Greek conception of the various sun bird traditions of the East, the phoenix was usually described by comparing it to another sun bird, the eagle, and to the exotic and splendid peacock.¹¹ We do not know whether and how the phoenix was represented in Greek art; so far no bird motifs from the archaic or classical time have been identified as a phoenix (cf. later p. 216f.). The question is particularly problematic because the relationship between bird-sun-soul in archaic art is far from clear.¹² Moreover, the phoenix of Mycenaeans — the *po-ni-ke* — is considered to have been the griffin adopted from the Phoenicians. Whether this was so, and how the creatures came to be distinguished remains to be studied.¹³ Another problem so far unanswered, which in the following we will go into, is the representation of the phoenix in Roman art before the II c. AD.

The phoenix in the Euxinus tavern sign and in the Temple of Isis in Pompeii

We start with the only representation where there is no doubt about the identification of the phoenix. This is the, in fact, well-known painting

⁹ Van den Broek, 426—427, Pl. 2—3, 9—11.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 25ff.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 28ff. and 245ff.

¹² J.L. Benson, *Horse, Bird & Man. The Origins of Greek Painting*, Amherst 1970, 20—31, 60—76 with further references.

¹³ Van den Broek, 25ff. and 379ff. The griffin in Greek and Roman art came to have an “independent life”, cf. the literature mentioned in note 100.

which served as a shop sign for the so called *Caupona di Euxinus* in Pompeii (I 11, 11; fig. 1).¹⁴ The picture, found near the entrance (now in the Antiquarium of Pompeii, inv. 2195), shows two hanging garlands with the usual ribbons and below them a large golden bird standing between two bushes, on the top of which small passerines (probably some *Sylvidae* species) are perched — in the middle a third flies above them. Below the strokes representing the ground is a similar, but smaller, scene with two peacocks standing between bushes. Between the two representations there is a dipinto in black: *PHOENIX·FELIX·ET·TV*.¹⁵

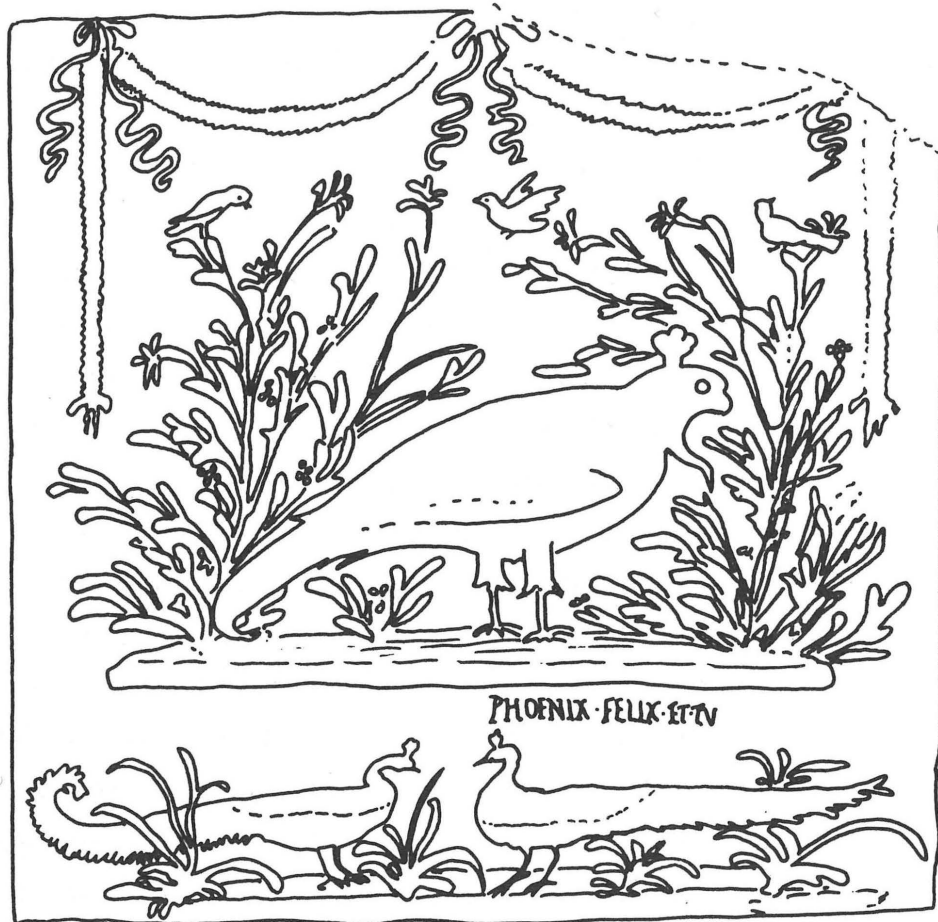
Whether the dipinto belonged to the painting or was added afterwards, and how it should be read cannot be judged with certainty.¹⁶ The dipinto, however, is certainly not completely incidental here, and attests that the bird in the centre made the writer think about a phoenix. As a sign for a tavern the picture — independently from the dipinto — makes sense only as a kind of an advertisement apparently comparing the effects of the tavern's service to the features assigned to the representation. And we can find an even more specific allusion. In fact, the phoenix is here represented in a reduced garden scene, like those met in Pompeian *lararia*, and this combination brings to mind the bird Elysium from Ovid's *Amores* 2, 6 in which the phoenix is one among other birds. Even if our picture is not an exactly corresponding illustration of the view described by Ovid, the similarities are obvious.¹⁷ As the picture refers to happiness

¹⁴ The tavern has been studied by W. Jashemski, *The Caupona of Euxinus at Pompeii*, *Archaeology* 20 (1967) 36—44 and *Id.*, *The Gardens of Pompeii, Herculaneum and the villas destroyed by Vesuvius*, New York 1979, 172—175.

¹⁵ CIL IV 9850. The commentary erroneously tells that the colour of the phoenix was red. The painting is published in colour e.g. by Jashemski, *The Caupona*, 36 and in *Pompeji. Leben und Kunst in den Vesuvstädten*, Essen 1973, 47, cf. *Kat. n. 277* on p. 197 (the former being of deplorable quality as far as the colours are concerned).

¹⁶ For these problems, see the commentary in CIL IV 9850 (cf. however, the following notes 17—18). The dipinto here seems much more an integral part of the sign — and makes much more sense — than as a later addition, which H. Solin, *Pompeiana*, *Epigraphica* 23 (1968) 123f. thinks to be possible. In the picture the dipinto is somewhat asymmetric and squeezed, but this is not unusual in texts in Pompeian wps.

¹⁷ *Ov. am. 2, 6, 49—56: Colle sub Elysio nigra ilice frondet, / udaq̄ue perpetuo gramine terra viret. / Signa fides dubiis, volucrum locus ille piarum / dicitur, obscenae quo prohibentur aves. / Illic innocui late pascuntur olores / et vivax phoenix, unica semper avis; / explicat ipsa*



1. Wall painting from the entrance of the so-called Caupona di Euxinus in Pompeii (I 11, 11; now in the Antiquarium of Pompeii, inv. 2195; drawing from photograph, see note 15).

suas ales Iunonia pinnas, / oscula dat cupido blanda columba mari. Cf. also the repique by Statius (silv. 2, 4) of Ovid's poem where the parakeet's death which is lamented in the poem is compared to the phoenix, which is described as happy. It is possible that the peacocks are presented below the phoenix, not only as a standard element of garden paintings and as another splendid coloured inhabitant of Elysium, but also because both they and the phoenix were assigned similar associations with eternity. Further proof is that the peacock was known (mainly in the East) as a sun bird and later used in Christian art as the symbol of apotheosis. There is, however, no decisive evidence to judge this or to prove any allusions to Christianity here (cf. Jashemski, *The Caupona*, 44; for the peacock in Christian art, H. Lothar, *Der Pfau in der altchristlichen Kunst*, 1929, 12ff.).

representing the phoenix in a little bird Elysium, it is most plausible to interpret the dipinto as underlining the message that a visit to this inn makes one feel like the happy phoenix.¹⁸

This is the background for the curious representation and not the event of seeing the phoenix in the year 34 AD, mentioned e.g. by Tac. ann. 6, 28, as A. Baldi assumed.¹⁹ Baldi's dating proposal — soon after that year — must be rejected because the owners of the tavern, Euxinus and Iustus, were active in the Flavian period, as is attested by the electoral

¹⁸ There is a danger of anachronism in this interpretation, suggested in most of the earlier publications (see literature mentioned here in notes 14—16 and 19) as it is the closest to modern thinking — “feel phoenix” is not too bad a name or advertising slogan for a modern inn either. H. Solin, 123ff. has shown the various possibilities of reading the dipinto. Because of the use of the formula *felix et tu* in other occasions (in a graffito from the Domus Tiberiana in Rome and CIL IV 1736) Solin thinks that this is the case here too, and rejects the reading *Phoenix felix: et tu*. This reading, however, would best underline and correspond with the content of the painting, and therefore the possibility cannot be excluded by the parallels referred to by Solin. As the formula *felix et tu*, on the other hand, seems to have been well known, the most likely explanation to my mind is that the ambiguity is intentional. The happiness assigned to the phoenix is emphasized with a conscious word play with the name phoenix and the formula *felix et tu* (used as a “formula di augurio, una sorta di *acclamatio*” *felix et tu* is found in an inscription from the 3rd century AD, see A. Frascetti in *Epigrafia e ordine senatorio* I [1982] 553—558 [note 30 with references]). At the same time the dipinto may have had the function of explaining the message of the painting to the less educated part of the potential guests. In this light Solin's suggestion that the dipinto would be a greeting to a person called Phoenix is in my mind highly improbable. On the other hand, it is not impossible that the choosing of the phoenix as the emblem of this inn may have been inspired by a person called Phoenix (perhaps an earlier owner?). As Prof. Solin kindly reminds me, e.g. in sepulchral inscriptions of persons with an animal's name, this name may have inspired the eventual (relief) decoration (for examples, see T. Ritti, *Immagini onomastiche sui monumenti sepolcrali di età imperiale*, Roma 1977, 298—306, n. 37—71). However, in this case there is no further evidence, and it would not change the interpretation of the sign as presented above. As a parallel to the phoenix in a tavern's sign we can mention its occurring (though in the benu form) in magical amulets from Roman Egypt, which were to help the digestion, Kakosy, 1036 note 111.

¹⁹ A. Baldi, *Elementi di epigrafia pompeiana*, *Latomus* 23 (1964) 798ff. There was some confusion about the year which e.g. in Plin. nat. 10, 5 is 36 AD.

notice²⁰ below the picture which, in addition, is clearly of the IV style. The birds are naturalistically depicted despite the curving tail of the peacocks and the phoenix's stiff legs with their "socks", its tuft in the throat and, above all, the marked crown (different from those of the peacocks). This phoenix has clearly nothing in common with the Egyptian benu in the form of a heron or its later Roman versions. Its raptor like strong bill and relatively long, but not wader like, socked legs together with the long tail (the top of which is slightly curved) create the impression of a raptor or a parrot. The crown and the tuft together with the colour confirm that the bird is meant to be a fantastic one. Therefore it cannot ornithologically be identified with any specific species, but we must ask whether it shows any significant similarities with any real birds or other bird motifs in wall paintings (hereinafter abbreviated as wp).

As we shall see, similar birds in various forms are in wide ornamental use from the II style wp:s onwards, especially in the III and IV style wp:s. Now we must study whether all these could have been identified as the phoenix or perhaps as some other bird(s), the image of which was used by the painter of the Euxinus sign to illustrate the phoenix. Would perhaps the ancient onlookers already have had similar difficulties in the identification of these birds as the scholars of our times have had, as shown by the confusion in their nomenclature in modern scientific literature (cf. note 97)?

The solution is in the related question of the origins of this phoenix image. The key to this is the bird in another well-known Pompeian painting. One of the landscapes from the Ekklesiasterion in the Temple of Isis (VIII 2, 28; now in the Museo Nazionale of Naples, inv. 8570, hereinafter referred to by this number) showing buildings sacred to various Egyptian gods presents a sacred gate in a rocky landscape with a mummy standing between two sarcophagus shaped columns supporting a simple architrave. A large bird is sitting on the mummy, and in front of the

²⁰ CIL IV 9851, cf. P. Castrén, *Ordo populusque Pompeianus. Polity and society in Roman Pompeii* (AIRF 8), Roma 1975, 152—153, 210—211. A photograph of the sign still *in situ* where also the electoral notice can be seen is published in the catalogue of the exhibition *Pompei 1748—1980. I tempi della documentazione*, Roma 1981, 159 fig. 14 A 1.

sacred gate is an altar on which a hierogrammateus is making libation.²¹ According to O. Elia this is a representation of the cult of Isis-Osiris, which evokes the crucial moment of the Osiris myth when Isis in the form of the sacred Egyptian sparrowhawk came to call to life the dead god and to receive Horus from Osiris. Elia referred to parallels in the Egyptian art without saying exactly what monuments she had in mind. Corresponding representations are not known to the present author, but the subject of Isis as a hawk on or above the mummy of Osiris is well-known in Egyptian art.²² Here reference must be made above all to the reliefs decorating the so called *Osiris-Gemächer* on the Hathor temple of Dendera as they are chronologically and thematically fairly close to MN 8570. Among representations of rites of the so called mysteries of Osiris there is Isis as a hawk flying above the (ithyphallic) mummy of Osiris. Apart from evident differences, the scenes I have referred to can be considered as thematic parallels to MN 8570, which apparently represents the rites of Osiris mysteries (which Apuleius testifies were also known to Romans).²³

²¹ For a more detailed description, see O. Elia, *Le pitture del Tempio di Iside* (Monumenti della pittura antica, Pompei, fasc. III—IV), Roma 1941, 33—34, Pl. C, 2; W. J. T. Peters, *Landscape in Romano-Campanian mural painting*, Assen 1963, 169; V. Tran Tam Tinh, *Le culte d'Isis à Pompeii*, Paris 1964, 142—143, 146, Pl. 10, 2; cf. Van den Broek, 242—243, 247, Pl. 4—5.

²² Hereinafter 'hawk' is used for diurnal raptors in general, not only for the *Accipitres* species. Most of the numerous hawk representations in Egyptian art — which some call (sparrow) hawks others falcons — are in general not clearly identifiable with specific species. Mostly they resemble falcons (often the *Falco peregrinus*), sometimes an *Accipiter* species.

²³ The Hathor temple of Dendera was for the most part completed under Cleopatra VII (47/44—30 BC). For the referred scenes, see E. Otto, *Osiris und Amun, Kult und heilige Stätten*, München 1966, 65, Pl. 20. A similar scene is known from the Sokar room of the temple of Sethos I (1304—1290 BC) in Abydos, where Isis in the form of a hawk flies over the ithyphallic figure of Osiris (*ibid.*, 65, Pl. 17). Contrary to MN 8570, the mummy is lying on the bed and the hawk is flying above it. Even when posed on the mummy it is represented with spread wings as in the so called Osiris bed (in black granite) from Abydos (about 663—525 BC), see Otto, 65, Pl. 18—19. For the Osiris mysteries see E. Chassinat, *Les mystère d'Osiris an mois de Khoyak*, Cairo 1966, cf. A. Giammarusti-A. Roccati, *File*, Novara 1980, 97—101.

This seems to justify us in calling the bird in MN 8570 the “divine Egyptian hawk”, though contrary to the naturalistically depicted hawks in Egyptian art, the bird in MN 8570 is a fantastic one and consequently ornithologically not exactly identifiable. Thus we must be cautious with comparisons to Egyptian art as well as in estimating the content and interpretation of such pieces. Especially here, where the bird is, apart from some minor differences, clearly the one which in Euxinus’ tavern sign is called a phoenix.²⁴ Does this, on the other hand, justify us in calling the bird in the MN 8570 a phoenix, as did V. Tran Tam Tinh followed by M. Malaise and R. Witt (neither of whom presented any evidence)?²⁵ It is improbable that the sign of Euxinus’ tavern should be a singular case where the painter used the “divine Egyptian hawk” to illustrate the phoenix through lack of knowledge of its “real” appearance. But what other evidence is there to show that the phoenix was also elsewhere identified with the “divine Egyptian hawk(s)”?

²⁴ For Dendera reliefs see the literature of the preceding note (23). In the picture from the Isis temple (in Pompeii) the bird’s colour looks more brownish green than golden yellow, the wings and tail are slightly longer and the tuft at the throat is not clearly visible. There is, however, no doubt that the habitus is of one and the same bird (n.b. the bill and legs), which is ultimately confirmed by the crown. The crown, though not exactly identical is so similar to the one in the Euxinus sign, that it most probably represents the same emblems. From Elia, 34 onwards the crown on the head of the bird in the Isis-temple painting is said to consist of an uraeus, a lunar crescent and a sun disc. The last is the only clearly identifiable emblem, and I can see no trace of an uraeus. The lunar crescent is not clearly visible, but the view that it is meant is supported by the crown in the Euxinus sign. Here the sun disc is particularly evident, and probably because of stylization and perhaps some uncertainty — it looks too round at the top. These emblems can in several ways be here mainly emphasizing rebirth. In unclear representations there may have been some confusion with the Isis crowns consisting of a sun disc between the horns (of Apis), though these are usually longer than a half circle, cf. however, the one in the III style paintings of the tablinum of the Villa dei Misteri, M. de Vos, *L’egittomania in pitture e mosaici romano-campani della prima età imperiale* (EPRO 84), Leiden 1980, 9—12, Pl. C and 6.

²⁵ M. Malaise, *Les conditions de pénétration et de diffusion des cultes égyptiens en Italie* (EPRO 22), Leiden 1972, 161; Tran Tam Tinh, 142—143; R. E. Witt, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World*, London-Southampton 1971, 44, Pl. 25.

The question is particularly interesting because the phoenix was identified with the Egyptian benu, which — as already noted — was usually represented as a heron. We only wish to point out the representation where it is called the soul of Osiris and is found in an willow tree near Osiris' tomb (not on the mummy; cf. later p. 191). The answer is to be searched in the syncretism and eclecticism of Roman religion and art, particularly in the use of Egyptian elements, and ultimately in the character of Egyptian beliefs and art where syncretism also plays a prominent role. In Egyptian religion and art one form could express many subjects or features, and vice versa, many forms could express more or less the same thing. Thus we can find the most manifold interrelations and associations between the benu and the gods Atum, Re, Osiris, and Horus, and between these gods and hawks, which were often emblematic of the gods and their soul.²⁶

The phoenix identified with the divine Egyptian hawk

The explanation for representing the phoenix as a fantastic Egyptian(izing) hawk instead of a heron, the usual form of the benu, with which the phoenix was identified, can be summed up in the following arguments:

1) The benu were assigned similar features as hawks, the most prominent birds in Egyptian religion and art, prevalently associated with solar and ruler beliefs as being emblems of the gods Horus, Re(-Atum) and Osiris, to

²⁶ Here the word soul is used of the Egyptian conception 'Ba', though in fact they are not equivalent. This has less importance because already in antiquity Ba was translated as 'psyche', and the Ba represented as a human-headed bird was understood as a soul bird. For Ba, see L. V. Zabkar, *LÄ I* (1975) 588—590 *s.v.* 'Ba' (with further references). For the syncretism in Egyptian religion we refer here only to J. Leclant, *Points de vue récents sur le syncrétisme dans la religion de l'Égypte pharaonique*, and to F. Dunand, *Les syncrétismes dans la religion de l'Égypte romaine*, in F. Dunand & P. Lévêque (eds.), *Les syncrétismes dans les religions de l'antiquité* (EPRO 46), Leiden 1975, 1—18 and 152—185 (of the identification of the king with Horus, 174; for Ba see the intervention of A. Gutbub, 15—18).

which the benu was also connected.

2) Thus both the hawk(s) and the (heron)benu are in many respects parallel and complementary appearances. As such they are in a particularly prominent position in death and resurrection beliefs, both being forms taken after death.

3) As the name benu could be used of Re-Atum and Osiris and of their Ba's, which on the other hand, were known to appear as hawks, the latter could also be regarded as an appearance of the benu.

We shall first of all deal with the hawk(s) in Egyptian religion and art, and then compare the benu to these.

Because of their impressive flying and fierceness hawks — especially falcons — were from the earliest times regarded in Egypt (and not only there) as divine birds. Several gods were represented in the form of hawks, and they became emblematic of the concept of divinity in general.²⁷ As the hawk's flight became a natural image of divine access to heaven, the hawk acquired a prominent role in resurrection beliefs. This is expressed e.g. in Coffin texts where numerous formulae refer to transformation into a hawk. Also Ba is most often represented as a hawk-like bird (though with a human head; cf. below p. 186).

Hawks became best-known as the figure of the sky god Horus, who, identified with the Pharaoh, seems to have become the first overregional god. Thus many local numina (and not only the hawk-shaped) tended to become associated with Horus, further strengthening its importance. Horus became connected with and dominated by the sun god Re, who was both *Götterkönig* and *Königsgott*, and also took the appearance of a hawk. In Heliopolis, the centre of the sun cult, the gods were combined as Re-Harachte.²⁸ The solar and ruler associations, which hawks prevalently

²⁷ The best evidence here is the falcon as a hieroglyph, which is a definition for god (*ntr*) and gods, and from the MK an ideogram of the 1st. person singular for divine being. Cf. the word 'achom', which originally meant the body of a god (as the opposite of Ba) and early on came to mean falcon formed cult-statues, and later falcon in general. The 'divine falcon' or 'big falcon' mentioned in the Coffin texts only seldom refer to any specific god, see B. Altenmüller, *Synkretismus in den Sargtexten* (Göttinger Orientforschungen IV, 7), Wiesbaden 1975, 59—61; cf. H. Altenmüller, *LÄ I* (1975) 55—56 s.v. 'Achom'.

²⁸ Harachte, the 'horizontal Horus' was especially connected with the Re of the morning which could appear also as the benu, because they occurred in the same part of the sky.

emblemized, were respectively emphasized with a sun disc or the double crown (*p3 shmtj*) on the bird's head. In this form Egyptian hawks became known to Romans, most of whom could not be aware of the great variety of significant details in Egyptian iconology. Nor here can we deal with the variety (e.g. the many types of crowns).²⁹

Because of the connection between Re and Atum, and of the syncretism in general, the latter god could also appear in the form of a hawk. From OK onwards Atum was described as the father of Horus, the association being known also in Roman times, and in the syncretistic sun god of the NK Atum is equated with Re-Harachte. This is expressed in the Book of the Dead where Harachte, Atum, Kephri as well as Horus are solar phases of one syncretistic god in the form of hawk. Thus the hawk may appear in the place of the night-sun and, identified with Atum — a process completed in the Graeco-Roman time — enters into the hereafter.³⁰

Osiris was, on the other hand, regarded as the night-sun, and became the leading god of the dead. This lunar aspect of Osiris and the combination of his Ba-form with that of Re explains the Re-Osiris mentioned in the Coffin texts, which is neither equalization nor amalgamation, but duality. From the NK onwards Osiris and Re are in fact regarded as two aspects of the same great divine soul, complementary

See B. Altenmüller, 6—7 for namecoupling, and solar syncretism, 59—61 (for falcon), 101—120 (for Re) and 138—155 (for Horus). Cf. W. Schenkel, LÄ II (1977) 14—25, *s.v.* 'Horus'. Note that Re is originally a cosmic-universal divinity, which only later was worshipped locally (this concerns also Heliopolis), see W. Barta, LÄ V (1984) 156—180, *s.v.* 'Re', and J. Assmann, LÄ II (1977) 956—961, *s.v.* 'Harachte'.

²⁹ Of the great number of hawk representations in Egyptian art we here refer only to the following, showing hawks as both solar and ruler birds: The comb of King Wadji showing a hawk standing in a sun boat on top of spread wings representing the sky, below which stands Horus on a palace, see W. Westendorf, *Altägyptische Darstellungen des Sonnenlaufes auf der abschüssigen Himmelsbahn* (Münchner Ägyptologische Studien 10), Berlin 1966, 22—23 fig. 14 with further references. In later piece Harachte is shown as a hawk with a sun disc between the two horizon lions and in an upper register the hawk is standing on a palace (*ibid.*, 83, fig. 75). For Egyptian Horus sculptures in Rome, see Rouillet, Pl. 179—182 figs. 263—268.

³⁰ K. Myśliwiec, *Studien zum Gott Atum, Band I, Die heiligen Tiere des Atum* (Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge 5), Hildesheim 1978, 69—74.

instead of opposite elements.³¹ Here we refer to a representation in one of the sarcophagi from the shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon. It shows the Ba of Re as a hawk with a sun disc, standing on a base (or a palace) between two Djed (*dd*) pillars together with the Ba of Osiris, a human-headed hawk (with the white crown of lower Egypt on its head).³² Because Osiris was regarded as the ruler of the dead, it was natural to identify the dead Pharaoh with him. As the living Pharaoh was identified with Horus, Horus was later connected with the Osiris myth, as the son of Osiris and Isis. Connected to the Isis myth, and along with her, Osiris was one of the best-known Egyptian gods to the Romans. Associated also with fertility (later with vegetation) he became the central figure in immortality beliefs, a saviour god emblematic of resurrection. Not only the dead Pharaoh, but later also the ordinary mortals identified themselves with Osiris.³³

Being flying creatures, birds among the forms taken after death had a primary position in death and immortality beliefs. We have already referred to the importance of hawks as the solar and ruler associated birds. Besides them, the Books of the Dead mention the swallow, and, what interests us here, the heron, mostly identified as the benu. The Book of the Dead, Chapter 77 is concerned with “performing the transformation into a hawk of gold”. The vignettes in papyri show a golden hawk standing on a *nbw*-sign holding a flail (sometimes without it), emblematic of rule. Chapter 78 is concerned with “making the transformation into a divine hawk”, the vignettes in papyri showing a hawk (usually painted in green), holding a flail, sometimes standing on a pylon-shaped pedestal. Chapter 83 is on the transformation into the benu, the vignettes in papyri showing the heron-form. Chapter 85 is on transformation into a Ba, the vignettes in papyri showing a human-headed bird and Chapter 86 is on transformation into a swallow, the vignettes in papyri showing the bird (the exact species usually not identifiable).³⁴

³¹ Altenmüller, *Synkretismus*, 43—44.

³² A. Piankoff & N. Rambova, *The Shrines of Tut-Ankh-Amon* (Bollingen Series XL 2), New York 1955, 55 fig. 16.

³³ J. G. G. Griffiths, *LÄ IV* (1982) 623—633, *s.v.* ‘Osiris’.

³⁴ The citations are from E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead. The Chapters of Coming forth by Day*, London 1898, 132—133, cf. M. Saleh, *Das Totenbuch in den thebanischen Beamtengräbern des Neuen Reiches. Texte und Vignette* (Arch.

Before treating the benu's relation to hawks and the gods for which the benu and hawks were emblematic, reference must be made to the falcon god Sokar, with whom Osiris was identified and from whom Osiris is thought to have taken his form as a hawk. Though Sokar was originally a god of the Memphite cemeteries, he does not seem to have been predominantly a god of the dead, this aspect being much enhanced by his association with Osiris. This goes back to Pyramid texts where Sokar is a name or aspect of Osiris, Osiris-Sokar occurring from the NK onwards, but common only in the Graeco-Roman period. Also the connection of Sokar with Re-Harachte becomes common in the Graeco-Roman time when Sokar-Re is known as "the little sun". This god has particular interest here, because the so called festival of Sokar was incorporated into the Khoiak festivities of Osiris, which seem to have been well known to Romans also.³⁵

To these festivities belonged also the Sokar boat, which referred to the part of the Osiris myth where Isis carries in a boat the remains of the

Veröffentlichungen 46, DAI Abt. Kairo), Mainz am Rhein 1984, 40 fig. 27 (Chapter 77), 41 fig. 48 (Chapter 78), 46—48 fig. 54 (Chapter 83), 48 fig. 55 (Chapter 85) and 49 (Chapter 86). In this instance, a text accompanying a picture of the heron-benu in a tomb TT 290 (6) in Deir el Medinah is worth citing (translation by Saleh, 47): „Spruch des Rituals (der Spruch, der anzuwenden ist) über (für) Osiris, der sich in seiner Gestalt eines heiligen Benu in der Mitte von Busiris aufhält. Re ist es, der ihn selbst erzeugt hat. Gegrüßt seist du lebender Ba des Re, in seinem Leib von Osiris. Du fährst in der Sonnenbarke. Deine Mannschaft gehört dir, in Jubel und Jauchzen, ihre Herzen sind zufrieden. Du fährst in deiner Erscheinungsform nach Abydos (und) als lebender Ba nach Busiris. Osiris NN ist einer von den Göttern die im Gefolge des Re und Osiris sind.“ For birds accompanying the later funerary portraiture, see K. Parlasca, *Mumienporträts und verwandte Denkmäler*, Wiesbaden 1966, Pl. 46, 3 falcon with *p3 shmty* (to the right, pendant to the left has been destroyed), Pl. 47, 4 a swallow to the left, to the right a passerine or parakeet (falcon?), Pl. 57, 1 to the left on a pillar a falcon with *p3 shmty* and a lotus-flower at the neck, there is also a falcon in a representation of the Sokar boat, Pl. 58, 1 two human-headed soul birds (with hands on breasts), Pl. 58, 2 two soul birds (without hands), a falcon also in a Sokar boat representation, Pl. 59, 1 two human-headed soul birds, Pl. 60, 2 to the left below Osiris under a tree a human-headed soul bird, to the right below an Anubis and palm a falcon (above the Horus eye), Pl. 60, 3 same as the previous but the falcon and the soul bird have changed places.

³⁵ See above note 23, cf. E. Browarski, *LÄ V* (1984) 1055—1074 s.v. 'Sokar', and W. Helck, *LÄ V* (1984) 1074—1075, s.v. 'Sokarfest'.

dead god in a box. Though different from representations of the Sokar boat in Egyptian art, a scene in the painting from the sacrum of the Temple of Isis in Pompeii (now in the Museo Nazionale of Naples) refers, as Elia noted, to the *inventio Osiridis*. Above a lararium scene with two snakes on the sides of a golden chest (decorated with the lunar crescent), there are, between two busts of river gods, two floating boats. In the left one stands a female figure, apparently Isis, who is pulling the boat to the right with a rope. In this boat there is a yellow box and in front of it a naturalistically-depicted hawk.³⁶ The festivities of Khoiak are directly represented in the relief decoration of a silver cup found in Pompeii (near the Palaestra together with another cup which is also decorated with scenes of Egyptian religious ceremonies). On one side an entrance to a sacral building is represented and on the opposite side, i.e. probably alluding to the inside of that building, there is a human-headed hawk-like bird on a pillar decorated with lotus leaves. On its left side an Isis priestess is holding in her left hand a statue of a hawk-like bird with opened wings standing on some kind of a pedestal. To the right of the pillar there is a male figure with a vase. Apparently the priestess is carrying a cult statue of Sokar, in whose representation a hawk standing on a pedestal is prominent, and the human-headed bird on the pillar represents the Ba of Osiris. Noteworthy is the fact that the bird carries a crown with the lunar crescent and a solar disc.³⁷ We shall return to the representation of the Ba of Osiris when treating the benu.

³⁶ In the photograph published by Elia, 22 fig. 26 the bird looks black above and white in the under parts. It might indeed represent an *Accipiter* sp. (probably *Accipiter nisus*). The question remains open why it is not represented as posed on the box (as Elia erroneously states). It might be meant to represent the decoration of the box as suggested by M. Malaise, *Inventaire préliminaire des documents égyptiens découverts en Italie* (EPRO 21), Leiden 1972, 279—280, but it more closely resembles a real bird. Of Sokar in the boat in Egyptian art we refer here only to two interesting tomb paintings, see Saleh, 91—92 fig. 120.

³⁷ AA 56 (1941) 595—599, figs. 110—116. The Sokar falcon is so small that it is ornithologically identifiable only as a raptor. No wonder that the identification suggestions have varied from A. Maiuri's ichneumon, corrected to a vulture in AA 56 (1941) 597 and to Picard-Schmitter's (72—73, fig. 19) Sokar. In AA 56 (1941) 598, fig. 111 the crown of the Ba of Osiris is identified as the sun disc carried on the horns of Apis.

The benu

The parallel use of the benu and the hawk(s) in the cult of the dead is only one expression of their more general relation, which comes from the benu's association to the same gods for which the hawks were predominantly emblematic. Because of this high ranking, the benu also became connected with gods and the divine in general. In the Demotic Book of the Dead (Tb 125) the benu is translated as "god".³⁸ It was called not only divine, but also "the big god".³⁹ When more influenced by the iconography of gods it could be represented as a god in human form,⁴⁰ or as a mixed figure, as in Medinet Habu, where it is represented as the falcon-headed Re.⁴¹ It is precisely with Re and Atum associated to him that the benu is primarily connected. The benu is „eine Erscheinungsform des Re zugleich und zwar in deren urgöttlichen 'Nunform' (*bnw nwj*)"⁴² and further „sein Name der 'Aufgehende' (oder: der sich strahlend Erhebende) beschreibt den Phönix programmatisch als morgendliche Gestalt des solaren Atum".⁴³ The earliest preserved text mentioning the benu tells that Atum appeared in the so called phoenix house (*Hwt bnw*) in Heliopolis⁴⁴ and a Coffin text calls Atum the big benu in Heliopolis. Here the bird is also called Osiris.⁴⁵

The equalization of Atum with the benu, and the latter's role in creation point to the fact that the benu was regarded as the *Urgott*.⁴⁶ As such it was associated with the Nile's flood, regarded as a yearly creation and renewal. The fact that herons as marked waders must have been of all birds the most emblematic of the flood, must certainly have influenced the fact that the heron was regarded as a form of the benu. This is shown by the well known fact that the word flood (*b^ch*) was written with a sign

³⁸ F. Lexa, *Das demotische Totenbuch*, Leipzig 1910, 13, II 2.

³⁹ Medinet Habu VII Pl. 553.

⁴⁰ Edfou X Pl. 91 (II register) and III Pl. 80 (lower register).

⁴¹ Medinet Habu VII Pl. 553.

⁴² CT IV 45 k.

⁴³ CT I 287 e; CT IV 341 a—b; CT V 231f.; see B. Altenmüller; cf. above note 29.

⁴⁴ Pyr 1652.

⁴⁵ CT IV 198—199.

⁴⁶ Kakosy, 1033 notes 58—60 with further references.

showing a heron on a pole (*Urhügel?*), which was known as late as at the time of Horapollon.⁴⁷ On the other hand it was the hawk, thought to come from the *Welt-Ei*, which was in the *Urwasser*, the Nun. Horus as the rising sun was not only rising daily from the Nun, but his birth was associated with the flood (cf. above Atum as the father of Horus, p. 183). The equivalence of the benu and the hawk in this respect is expressed in a papyrus where Atum is addressed as both the “noble falcon” as the “divine benu”.⁴⁸ The benu is further equated with Horus who in the so called Metternichstele is called the benu, and with Harpokrates (the young Horus) who is represented, or even substituted by, the benu-phoenix.⁴⁹

The soul of Re was also called benu (Tb 29B, 1—2) and the benu was used also of the *hprw* or *ssmw* of Re.⁵⁰ When referring to the hawk as the primary figure of Re and his soul and of the latter’s relation to Osiris, we have to emphasize the importance of the cults celebrated in Philae. Of particular interest here is the fact that indeed a living hawk was venerated as the living soul of Re. It was regarded as having come as the “divine hawk” from Punt (the land of the gods) and Strabo (17, 1, 49) tells that a new bird was brought from Aethiopia when the old was dying, which as Strabo noted: “. . . they call (this bird) a hawk, though to me it appeared to be in no respect like the hawks in our country and Egypt, but was both greater in size and far different in the varied colouring of its plumage”

⁴⁷ Horapollo I, 34. Here too, the Greek word for the benu is used confirming the identification of these birds. See also D. Wortmann, *Kosmogonie und Nilflut*, Bonner Jbb. 166 (1966) 62—112, for phoenix 103—104. Also Ach. Tat. 4,12,2 states that the flood was announced by the appearance of the phoenix.

⁴⁸ S. Morenz, *Ägypten und die altorphanische Kosmogonie*, Antike und Orient (Festschr. Wilhelm Schubart), Leipzig 1950, 64—111, 71—82. A. H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum. Third Series*, Chester Beatty Gift, London 1935, 75.

⁴⁹ Wortmann, 103—104 (cf. fig. 10). Harpokrates was often represented on the lotus flower, which also was considered to rise from the *Urwasser* and was equated with the rise of the *Urhügel*. Besides the benu-phoenix, Harpokrates could be represented with a falcon or an eagle (on the back of an eagle or a lotus-flower on a gemma, see Wortmann, 69—72, fig. 6). Cf. here a text in Dendera, which is translated: „Die Sonne, welche von Anbeginn besteht, steigt wie ein Falke empor aus der Mitte ihrer Lotosknospe.“ (Wortmann, 69 with references).

⁵⁰ Kakosy, 1032, notes 38—39 with further references.

(transl. H. L. Jones, Loeb ed., 1932). This bird is considered to have been the Bataleur Eagle (*Terathopius ecaudatus*), which is in fact found in Aethiopia.⁵¹

On the other hand, Philae was known for the Osiris mysteries celebrated there, above all for the famous Abaton, where the tomb of Osiris was considered to be, located now on Philae's neighbouring island, the (modern) Bigge. In Graeco-Roman time this site seems to have overshadowed Busiris, where the tomb of Osiris was originally considered to be, as well as other, at least 14—16, cites where Osiris relics were worshipped.⁵² In the Abaton of Philae were said to be kept the feet of Osiris, considered as the source of the Nile, and consequently the yearly flood started there.⁵³ It must be pointed out that both the (Horus) falcon and the benu (cf. above) were associated with the flood as a yearly creation. The Ba of Osiris worshipped in the Abaton of Philae, however, though connected with the Heliopolitan benu, by which name it was explicitly called, was thought to appear and was represented in the form of a human-headed hawk. It was told that the gods themselves had brought this Ba from the obelisk house in Heliopolis. Kees notes that: „Mit der Baigestalt als Seele des Rê und des Osiris zugleich, fing man in großzügiger Weise alle in Heliopolis entwickelten uniwersalistischen Gottesgedanken ein.“⁵⁴

From the Abaton itself nothing has remained but the cults connected with it are known from the decrees found in the inner walls of the so called Hadrian's Gate. Among its decoration from the time of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus must be mentioned the famous representations of the Ba

⁵¹ See H. Junker, Der Bericht Strabos über den heiligen Falken von Philae im Lichte der ägyptischen Quellen, Wiener Zeitschr. f. die Kunde des Morgenlandes 26 (1912) 42f.; Cf. A. Steinmeyer-Schareika, Das Nilmosaik von Palestrina und eine ptolemäische Tierexpedition nach Äthiopien, Diss. Bonn 1980, 94—95 fig. 50. The bird is represented in the Palestrina mosaic in its place in the first pylon (ornithologically it mainly resembles an eagle).

⁵² E. Winter, LÄ I (1975) 2 s.v. 'Abaton'.

⁵³ H. Junker, Das Götterdekret über das Abaton, Denkschr. Kaiserl. Akad. Wiss. Wien 56 (1913) 40 (fig. 9). Only texts in Philae speak of both feet; e.g. in the list of Dendera only the left foot is mentioned. Cf. Kakosy, 1033, notes 61—63 with further references.

⁵⁴ H. Kees, Götterglaube im alten Ägypten, 1956², 407—410; Junker, Götterdekret, 62.

of Osiris as the human-headed hawk being worshipped in the holy shrine of Abaton.⁵⁵ Though Philae was already before the Ptolemaic period highly esteemed as the original cult centre of Isis, it was only in the Roman period that it — together with the cult of the goddess — reached the high point of its fame. This is also shown, apart from the references known from some classical authors, by the building activities of which many can be attested to date from Augustus onwards.⁵⁶ Though much of the Osiris cult seems to have been a local peculiarity, characteristic mainly of Philae, it seems to have had a particularly important position in the development of the identification of the Ba of Osiris with hawks (and vice versa), and especially in making this known to the Romans. Not without interest is the fact that the benu was said to occur in Philae and also in Punt (from which the hawk god came), which may have influenced the phoenix myth of the bird's origin in an exotic land.⁵⁷

Concerning the relation between the benu and Osiris we have mentioned earlier the Coffin text identifying the benu in Heliopolis with Osiris (CT IV 199). Similarly, the Demotic Book of Respiration calls Osiris-Sepa the benu in Heliopolis.⁵⁸ In a papyrus (Jumilhac VIII 4, 119)

⁵⁵ Junker, Götterdekret, 58 fig. 20. To the right of the picture is conserved the recension of decree I, which Junker, V translates: „a) Anrede: ‚Heil dir, heiliger Ba des Osiris Onnophris, göttlicher Ba, auf sich selbst entstanden. Allereinzigster, der alles was da ist, erschuf. Heiliger Urgott der Seelen des Totenreiches.‘ b) Litanei: ‚Heiliger Ba‘ ist dein Name auf dem Abaton; ‚göttlicher Phönix‘ ist dein Name in Bigge; ‚starker Ba‘ ist dein Name im Hause der Sechmet; ‚*špd irw* (?) Ba‘ ist dein Name in Philae; ‚beweinter Ba‘ ist dein Name in *hp.t*. Du bist der Ba über die Seelen der Götter.‘“. Cf. also Junker, Götterdekret, 1—5 with commentary and further references. In the II decree (above the representation referred to) is written (translated by Junker, VI): „Es kommt der Ba des Osiris zu (auf) dessen Leichnam auf dem Abaton. Er ist ein heiliger Falke mit Menschengestalt und wohnt auf den Bäumen des Menta-haines. Isis und Nephthys stehen dabei vor ihm und Amon, Re und Thot preisen ihn.“ Cf. Junker, Götterdekret, V—VII with reference to papyri and classical authors (Plutarch, Diodorus, Strabo, Servius, Seneca; *ibid.*, 69—88) and translation with commentary (*ibid.*, 25—27).

⁵⁶ In addition to Hadrian's Gate referred to above we mention the Mammisi, begun by Euergetes II and completed under Tiberius, the crypt of which was decorated mainly with scenes of the birth of Horus. See e.g. E. Winter, LÄ IV (1982) 1022—1027 s.v. 'Philae'.

⁵⁷ Kees, Götterglaube, 407—410; S. Sauneron, Inscriptions romaines au temple de Khnoum à Elephantine (Beiträge Bf. 6), Cairo 1960, 44.

⁵⁸ Botti, JEA 54 (1968) 227.

Osiris is said to take the form of the benu, and also in Dendera it is told that Osiris wakes up from sleep and „fliegt empor als Phoenix und nimmt am Himmel Platz als der, der seine Zeit wiederholt (Mond) . . .“⁵⁹ This did not necessarily imply that the benu should have been represented in a form other than the usual heron. If the drawing depicting a now vanished Ptolemaic tomb painting from Hu (Diospolis parva), where an Osiris-benu called *Wn-špsf* was worshipped⁶⁰, is reliable, then the Ba of Osiris was represented as the heron benu in a willow tree near the tomb of Osiris.⁶¹ However, it is not a long way from calling Re(-Atum) and Osiris and/or their Ba's a benu to calling their other appearances, here hawks, by the same name.

The position of the cults and representations from Philae in this development, to which they presumably contributed, was mentioned above. The fact that then also the divine Egyptian hawk was understood as the benu-phoenix, i.e. the bird could appear in this form, is shown not only by the above two Pompeian representations, but further confirmed by a relief in a funerary ara from Roman Spain showing the Ba of Osiris as a (benu-)phoenix. In the funerary altar found in Guadix, dated to the II c. AD, there are, in addition to an interesting inscription to Isis, relief decorations on both sides. On the right side above the bull of Apis there is a scene with a male figure sleeping on a rock in the shade of a tree in which a bird is sitting. On the left side there is Anubis with an ibis near a palm tree. Though a part of the sleeping figure is destroyed, in such a context it can hardly be anyone else than Osiris, which is further confirmed by the *pedum*, known to be emblematic of him. Thus the bird in the tree must be

⁵⁹ Kees, *Götterglaube*, 407.

⁶⁰ S. Sauneron, *Kêmi* 16 (1962) 40g.

⁶¹ Van den Broek, 426, Pl. I, 2 with further reference. Here the bird's similarity to the benu in the Mensa Isiaca from Torino (not in a tree, however) is remarkable. In both birds the bill resembles more that of cormorants than of herons. In the Mensa Isiaca the benu bears a lunar crescent on its head (the winged sun disc with urei flies over its back), see E. Leospo, *La Mensa Isiaca di Torino (EPRO 70)*, Leiden 1978, 80 Pl. 28b, who suggests in the lunar crescent a confusion to Thot. More probably this comes from the connection to Osiris, to the lunar value of which also Leospo refers (mentioning even as a benu-phoenix the bird in MN 8570, cf. above note 25). About the tree at the tomb of Osiris, see Junker, *Götterdekret*, 51ff.

the Ba of Osiris in the form of the benu-phoenix. Noteworthy here is the resemblance of the scene to certain representations of Ganymedes, in which the eagle may be similarly represented. A possible interconnection remains, however, to be studied. Unfortunately, the upper part is destroyed and does not allow us to estimate whether or not the bird had a human head and a crown on it. Judging by the long tail still intact the bird seems, however, to have been a similar fantastic hawk as those in the Pompeian paintings, referred to above. Such a tail is not known of representations of the Ba of Osiris in Egyptian art and any rate the bird does not represent a heron.⁶²

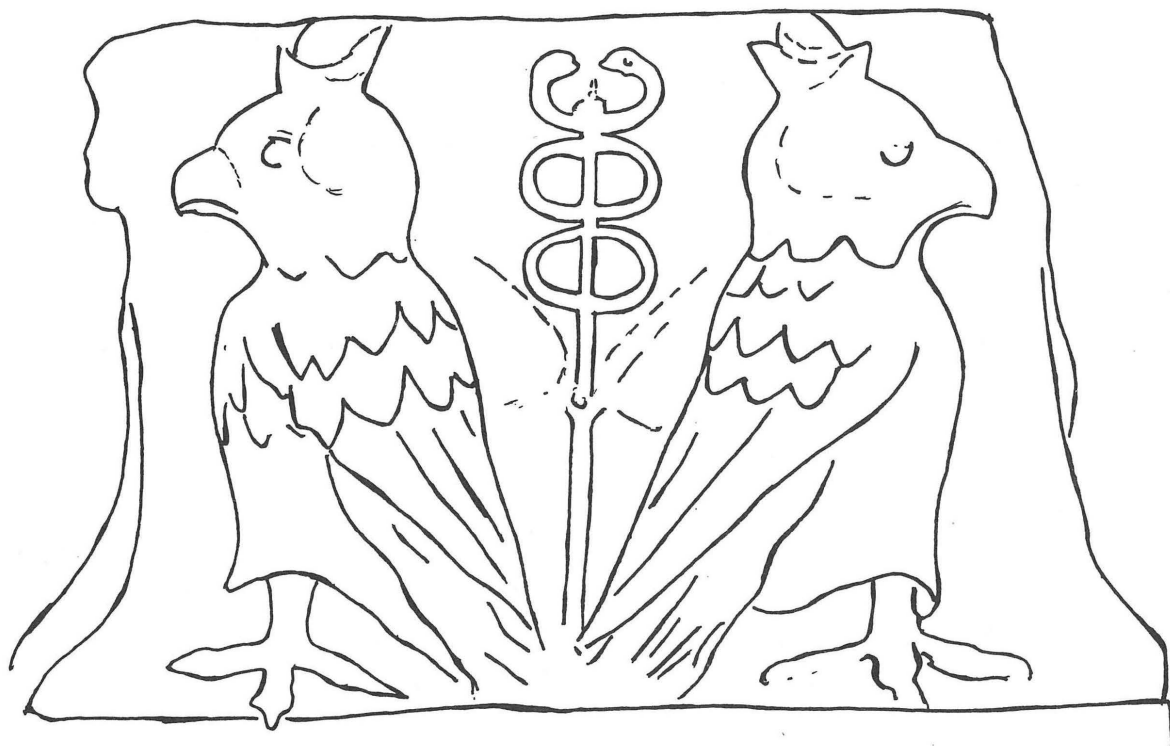
Here we have to refer to some interesting representations which show that the Egyptian hawks were evidently understood as soul birds, but that they are not, on the other hand, necessarily identifiable as the phoenix. Indicative of the content of the representations of the Egyptian hawks is the fact that in the representations where their divinity is strongly emphasized, the relevant gods are the most prominent underworld gods, Osiris and/or Anubis

A marble fragment of a cornice, found reused at the Pantheon and assumed to have come from a temple of Hermanubis, is clear in this respect as it shows two Horus hawks (with the usual *p3 shmty* on their heads) standing on both sides of a *caduceus*, the emblem of Hermes, identified with Anubis (fig. 2).⁶³ Two Egyptian hawk-like birds in the so called *Haterius* relief from the II c. AD also represent gods. The birds standing on both sides of a *baetylus*, are considered to have been emblematic of Osiris. They constitute a part of the decoration of the so called *Arcus ad Isis* above the figure in the right vault. The figure is either Osiris as M.-Th. Picard-Schmitter suggests on the basis of the *baetylus*, or

⁶² G. J. F. Kater-Sibbes - M. J. Vermaseren, *Apis II. Monuments outside Egypt* (EPRO 48, 2), Leiden 1975, 32 n. 327, Pl. 84 (with further reference).

⁶³ C. L. Visconti, *Di un frammento architettonico spettante all'Iseo ed al Serapèo della Regione IX di Augusto*, *BullCom* (1876) 92—101, especially 94—96, Pl. 14—15 figs. 3—4. Roullet, 60 n. 28, Pl. 39 fig. 54 speaks of “some sort of crown”, but instead of a photograph gives the drawings published by Visconti which misleadingly show a clear lunar crescent and a solar disc. For various soul bird representations see O. Waser, *Roscher-Lexikon III*, 3213ff., s.v. ‘Psyche, Seelenvogel’.

Anubis, if the figure was animal-headed.⁶⁴ The surface of the relief is worn, and it cannot be judged with certainty whether the birds resembled traditional Egyptian hawks or the fantastic type treated here. Neither can it be judged whether or not the birds had a lunar crescent on their heads as Picard-Schmitter stated. The present writer has not been able to find any such indication (the bird to the right might have had a crest). Be this how it may, the occurrence of these birds in such an emblematic use further confirms that as such they were well known. It is less important here that the decoration represented in the *Haterius* relief did not exactly depict the decoration of the real buildings. Though there are examples of inaccuracy and artistic freedom in the execution of known monuments, these are not



2. Detail from the relief decoration of a fragment in a marble cornice now in the Pantheon, presumably from the temple of Hermanubis (drawing from photograph, 1985).

⁶⁴ The *Haterius* reliefs represent Roman monuments in whose construction or restoration (under Domitian) the dead probably had participated. The triumphal arch called the Arcus ad Isis shows in the left vault Isis with a mystic chest (and a snake) above her, and in the central vault Minerva with two owls above her. Malaise, *Inventaire*, 190 n. 342 with further reference, specially note 1; M.-Th. Picard-Schmitter, *Bétyles hellénistiques*, *MMAI* 57 (1971) 43—88.

contradictory to the function of each monument, nor are they meaningless decoration.⁶⁵

Also noteworthy is the decoration of the base of an Anubis statue found in Sarsina. On one side there is a hawk (with a *p3 shmty?*), on the opposite side a vulture (allusion to Nekhbet) and on the third side an ibis or a heron. Unfortunately the latter is damaged and it remains open whether it could be connected with the (heron-)benu.⁶⁶ Uncertainty also remains in the case of the puzzling decoration of a vase from the Villa Hadriana. In the so far unsolved series of scenes there are hawks (in pairs) and a heron (ibis?) and another bird resembling these, which might represent the more heron-like appearance of the phoenix, which becomes established probably from Hadrian's time onwards. On the other hand, a sarcophagus from Hierapytna is considered to date from the time of Hadrian. The sarcophagus is decorated with a relief where a raptor-headed male figure, probably Osiris, holds in his left hand a sceptre from which emerges an uraeus snake with a raptor's head.⁶⁷ A further example of interpretation difficulties caused by eclecticism is offered by a little statue from Roman Egypt — now in the Musée du Louvre (inv. 7977). It represents a male figure in a Roman officer's costume but with a hawk's head. Whether this is a statue of the god Horus or of some leading person

⁶⁵ For these, see F. Castagnoli, *Gli edifici rappresentati in un rilievo del sepolcro degli Haterii*, *BullCom* (1941) 59—69 (for the *Arcus ad Isis* 65—66 Pl. 2). There are many other birds represented in the relief decoration of the other buildings and the sculptor of this relief seems to have been particularly fond of them. This is shown by the occurring of several birds in a prominent position in the arch of Titus where they in reality were not found (the upper part is, compared to the lower part of the arch, so freely executed that it is supposed to have been done during the construction when the arch was not yet finished, Castagnoli, 64, Pl. 1). Noteworthy here are the herons, which most probably represent the stork, which was the symbol of *pietas*.

⁶⁶ Malaise, *Inventaire*, 39, Sarsina 2; J.-L. Grenier, *Anubis Alexandrin et romain* (EPRO 57), Leiden 1977, 142 n. 217 with further reference (e.g. RM 73—74 [1966—67] Pl. 59).

⁶⁷ G. J. F. Kater-Sibbes - M. J. Vermaseren, 5—8 n. 270 Pl. 12—13 with further reference (on p. 6) speaks about a vulture head, but F. Dunand, *Le culte d'Isis dans le bassin oriental de la Méditerranée II. Le culte d'Isis en Grèce* (EPRO 26), Leiden 1973, 208—211 Pl. 27 about an uraeus with a sparrowhawk's head. Grenier, 151 n. 235 Pl. 25 calls the figure Osiris.

(most probably the emperor) in the form of Horus, it is noteworthy that in addition to the *p3 shmty* and a laurel crown the head is adorned with sun rays around it, the typical feature of the phoenix.⁶⁸

Concerning the connection between benu and Anubis in Egyptian sources we can notice that a benu of Anubis is mentioned in the Coffin texts (CT V 393a—b). Kakosy suggests that the Benu's relation to hawks has influenced to the belief that Hathor arises to the sky in the form of the benu.⁶⁹ In Edfou the benu as one form of Horus is mentioned as the father of Hathor.⁷⁰

It is true that the benu in Egyptian art was predominantly represented as a heron, but hitherto it has not been sufficiently stressed that the word benu could also be used of other figures, i.e. the benu could appear in other forms besides the heron, as shown above. The benu is rather a conception of an imaginary bird to which certain features were assigned, and the appearance of which, though predominantly the heron's, is not entirely fixed. The following observations can be added to support this view:

We have already noted that no one has been able to present convincing arguments for the identification of the bird which stands for the word benu in the Pyramid texts during the OK (Pyr 1652). This is most probably not due to the possible inaccuracy of the representation, which perhaps did not allow the execution of ornithological details, but to the fact that the bird was meant to represent a bird in general, not any specific species. Further support is found in the Paheri stone where the benu is the first transformation form mentioned after death, followed by the swallow, hawk and heron.⁷¹

Against this background Herodotus' (2, 73) description of the picture of the benu, which he says he saw in the temple of the Sun in Heliopolis might indeed refer to a real picture of the benu as a raptor-like fantasy bird. Herodotus describes the bird in the picture as gold and red feathered, mainly resembling the eagle in size and appearance. These features might

⁶⁸ For the various identifications, see V. Chapot, *L'Horus garde-frontière du nome Sethroïte* (Mel. Masperot 2, Orient et byzantin), Le Caire 1934—37, 225—231, Pl. 67.

⁶⁹ Kakosy, 1032 note 52.

⁷⁰ Edfou VIII 146, 7.

⁷¹ Kakosy, 1035 (Urk IV, 113).

also derive, as Van den Broek believes, from the name and the character of the sun bird without being based on any representation, but the reasons with which Van den Broek doubts the reliability of Herodotus' description are not sufficient to exclude the possibility that there indeed was a picture of the benu, not as the usual heron, but as a bird resembling a raptor⁷² (cf. later p. 217).

The benu in Heliopolis was important, not only to the Egyptian, but also to the Graeco-Roman world. The story about the flight of the phoenix to Heliopolis seems to have been incorporated into the phoenix myth due to the association with the benu, made by Herodotus, who among other learned Greeks visited the city.⁷³

Excursus: Herons in Roman art (and their relation to the benu)

When treating the benu we must briefly concern ourselves with the heron representations and their possible relation to the heron-benu. The only "classical" Egyptian heron-benu known to me in Roman art is in the so called *Mensa Isiaca*, which, though evidently not authentically Egyptian, is based on Egyptian motifs.⁷⁴

⁷² Van den Broek is lead to this view by the observations that 1) Herodotus seems to have taken the description of the bird from the *Periegesis* by Hecataeus of Miletus, who before mentioning the phoenix describes the hippopotamus quite erroneously, and 2) the "description does not correspond in any respect to that of the Egyptian benu, which was worshipped in Heliopolis, for the latter was without exception represented as a bluish-grey heron." Even if the first argument may be right it would not as such override the possibility that there could be a picture of the benu, which Hecataeus may have seen (or heard of?). The second argument is at any rate erroneous, because the heron, in fact, is only one of the forms of the benu.

⁷³ A further example of the identification of the benu with the phoenix offers a translation made by a certain Hermapion of the text of a Heliopolitan obelisk preserved by Ammianus Marcellinus (15, 4, 20) where the *hwt bnw* is translated as the house of the phoenix. Ammianus also tells that this obelisk was erected on the Circus Maximus by Augustus. This now stands in the Piazza del Popolo. The *hwt bnw* is indeed found in its text, but Hermapion's translation cannot concern this obelisk as shown by A. Erman, *Die Obeliskensübersetzung des Hermapion*, Sitz.Ber. Akad. Wiss. Berlin 1914, 245—273 in particular 269—270. Cf. Van den Broek, 24—25 (note 4).

⁷⁴ Leospo.

The herons, usually represented as picking up a snake (or other reptile, sometimes a butterfly) is a widespread subject in Roman art. The subject of *ophiomachia* (heron picking up a snake) is found already in Greek geometric pottery, to which it is considered to come under Mesopotamian influence, having a primitive divine solar character. From Greek glyptics it is then known as an apotropaic subject (the bird was regarded as a positive prodigium). The various solar and eternity beliefs connected to the subject must be the reason for its widespread use, particularly in sepulchral art, where the heron = the soul fighting against a snake is considered to have apotropaic value and, was also generally associated with goodness, peace and justice. This must also be the background in the predominantly decorative use, as in wp:s.

Though the connections with Egypt as regards the belief in the ibis as a destroyer of snakes are considered to have contributed to the growth of the popularity of the subject, it has not yet been clarified to what extent herons in Roman art were connected, or perhaps even identified with the benu. This is probably the case in some heron representations in a strongly Egyptianizing context (see later p.205 f.), where the herons are used together with other bird motifs (hereinafter abbreviated bm) referring to the same sphere, but it is a misleading simplification to generalize this to all heron representations.⁷⁵ In this respect a detail in the decoration of the Ara Pacis Augustae (APA) is indicative.

Taking into account the detailed symbolism of the decoration of the APA, the heron (probably the Little Egrett, *Egretta garzetta*) in the famous Terra Mater relief is particularly interesting. Could this bird representing rivers, and generally fresh water as pendant to the seas

⁷⁵ Note that in the numerous ophiomachia representations the heron represents mostly an egret instead of the *Ardea cinerea*/*A. purpurea* which was the Egyptian heron benu (cf. p. 195—198). In only one ophiomachia representation is the snake really the Egyptian *Naja haje* (this is the often published fragment from the house V 1, 18 in Pompeii, now MN 11086). Here I'd like to thank M. De Angelis d'Ossat for the permission to consult her unpublished thesis on the ophiomachia (*Ricerca sull'iconografia e sul simbolismo nelle rappresentazioni classiche della lotta fra uccello e serpente. Tesi di laurea in Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte greca e romana. Università degli Studi di Roma, Facoltà di Lettere, 1973—74*).

represented with the ketos to the right, apart from its general apotropaic value, also refer to the benu-phoenix? This is suggested by Picard-Schmitter to be the case at least in the variant of the relief which was found in Carthage (now in the Musée du Louvre) where the Terra Mater figure is Isis and the heron stands near a figure interpreted as Osiris.⁷⁶

Whereas Picard-Schmitter suggests the Carthage relief to be from the III c. AD, M. Torelli considers it to be a “local copy of the Roman altar, erected by the Augustan colonists in honor of their powerful patron and founder.”⁷⁷ Further the Carthage relief seems to be a closer derivation of the assumed Hellenistic Alexandrian prototype(s), which “wanted to represent a broad, loose idea of *Oikoumene*, Ghê in the center with all her flourishing attributes of land, animals, rivers, and Okeanos, Helios and Selene as necessary complements to the allegory of the Universe.” The chosen animals — in the Carthage relief a frog and a snake are near the heron (which is not an ibis as Torelli calls it) — may, however, in addition to enriching the river fauna, also emphasize the ideas of eternity to which they also were connected. Thus the heron in the Carthage relief — being probably close(r) to the assumed Hellenistic original(s) — might indeed also refer to the benu, though this cannot be considered as proved.

Doubts arise because in the Terra Mater relief of the APA similar references do not seem to be so dominant. The omission of the frog and the snake points to this, though the heron to my mind cannot be considered as “significantly censored” as too Egyptian a motif as Torelli states.⁷⁸ It seems less probable that the absence of the frog and the snake in the Terra Mater relief would depend on their occurring in the scroll motif decorating the long sides (thus avoiding repetition). In the Terra Mater relief the heron seems to be predominantly an allusion to fresh water(s) as a

⁷⁶ M.-Th. Picard-Schmitter, *L'Allegorie de L'Egypte sur un relief provenant de Carthage*, RA (1971) 29—58 followed by Van den Broek, addenda to p. 242ff.

⁷⁷ M. Torelli, *Typology and Structure of Roman Historical Reliefs*, Ann Arbor 1982, 39—43.

⁷⁸ Torelli, 39—40 does not precisely say what he means by censoring in this occasion. He erroneously identifies the bird as the (sacred) ibis, which indeed was considered as Egyptian bird par excellence, but was not confused with herons (at least in visual sources).

representant of the fauna connected with them (as such it is used in a similar way in the famous III style painting representing Orpheus with animals in the Casa di Orfeo in Pompeii VI 14, 20). The possible additional values associated with the heron in the above relief are thus rather to be found in the already mentioned generally known features connected to the bird as a good omen and as an allusion to *pietas*. These values are also associated with the herons which in the *Haterius* reliefs are represented as decorating the arch of Titus, showing how well-known this association was (cf. above p.192 f.), and that it was not necessarily a background feature only. Precisely because of these fairly well-established associations, the herons in Roman art were not necessarily identified with the Egyptian heron-benu. In fact, until evidence to the contrary is shown, we have to consider most plausible the view that only in markedly Egyptianizing representations could herons be understood to also refer to the Egyptian heron-benu.

Egyptian hawks, parakeets, griffins or phoenixes?

In the foregoing it has been shown that the bird on the mummy of Osiris in MN 8570 is the “divine Egyptian hawk”, though different from those in Egyptian art. It has further been discussed why and how the bird, on the other hand, became to be thought of as the phoenix. The fact that it bears a crown with the lunar crescent and the sun disc, which is found on the same bird in the sign of the tavern of Euxinus, where the bird is explicitly called the phoenix, shows that this name is to be preferred for both birds. As several names would be possible what about the identification of the numerous similar *bm:s* in *wp:s* on which such a crown is in fact not found? These and related birds in II and III style *wp:s* have been listed in table 1 where the changing of major features is also indicated (see table 1). Relevant birds in IV style *wp:s* (in Pompeii) are listed in table 2.

It is precisely in the Pompeian *wp:s* that these *bm:s* are most abundantly preserved. They are used almost exclusively as ornaments, and as such they are among the most numerous of all *bm:s* (in *wp:s*).⁷⁹

⁷⁹ The material collected for my dissertation I am preparing about the *bm:s* in Romano-

Because of the ornamental use, the representations providing additional elements referring to the significance and identification of these birds are rare, the above treated phoenix dipinto remaining the only explicit identification. In widely used ornamental motifs the significance of their content tends to diminish, often being limited to the mere decorative value. In such motifs it is often difficult, if not impossible, to judge to what extent certain features are significant and to what extent they are due only to stylization and/or pure fantasy.⁸⁰ This may cause much confusion, which is not unfrequent in the *bm:s* in *wp:s* even in the case of well-known species. The fact that painters working with various models often had no idea of, or did not pay attention to, the content of their subjects is shown by the occurrence of several variants of a bird in one wall and, on the other hand, by the variation of one and the same model for different birds.⁸¹ A

Campanian *wp:s* contains so far over 4500 *bm:s* from Pompeii of which about 350 are of the spoken type.

⁸⁰ An extreme example is offered by the birds in fragments of IV style resembling *wp:s* from Augsburg. Here their habitus is dove-like were it not that they have a very long crest and tail feathers which at the top are divided into three and two tufts respectively. It cannot be judged whether these are stylization of peacocks or of the type treated here; see K. Parlasca, *Römische Wandmalereien aus Augsburg* (Materialhefte z. bayr. Vorgesch., Heft 7), Kallmünz/Opf. 1956, 8ff., Pl. 2—3, 5.

⁸¹ A good example of the variation of the birds treated here are the birds in the IV style paintings of the Casa del Principe di Napoli (VI 15, 7—8) in Pompeii recently well published by V. M. Strocka, *Casa del principe di Napoli VI 15, 7—8* (Häuser in Pompeji I), 1984. The birds in the middle zone of the S wall of the cubiculum f have an erected short crest feather, a tuft at the throat, long slim curved wings and a long slim forked tail (*ibid.*, 23 figs. 85—86). In triclinium k, decorated with paintings of better quality, there is an otherwise similar bird on the plinth, but the tuft is absent, the wings shorter and broader and not curved at the top, the tail being unforked (*ibid.*, 26 fig. 116); notice that in the drawing reproducing this wall (fig. 105) this bird is erroneously depicted as a swan. In the same wall there are two further birds flying in the architecture of the upper part (on the left and right side, *ibid.*, 28 figs. 142, 150). Unlike the bird on the plinth these hold taeniae in their bills and claws, as do the birds in cubiculum f. The birds in the upper part also have no tuft, and have broader and shorter (not curved) wings. The tail is forked, but less than in the birds in cubiculum f. The head and bill are further more dove-like than the usual raptor- or parakeet-like head and bill (e.g. compared with the other birds we have referred to in the house). A further example of the difficulties in estimating the role of confusion versus stylization is offered by the white birds around the candelabra in the III style *wp:s* in the Casa di M. Lucretius Fronto (V 4, 11; room g). The habitus and the pure white colour make the birds most closely resemble a pigeon (*Columba livia*), but taking

further reservation is caused by the fragmentary and occasional preservation of the material, which concerns the II style *wp:s* in particular.

The earliest examples of these birds preserved in *wp:s* are in the late II style paintings (dated about 35—20 BC) in the Casa di Livia on the Palatine. The birds in the sacral-idyllic landscapes in the middle aediculae of the SE and SW walls of the so called Sala dei Paesaggi are the only ones preserved in landscapes (in addition to the Pompeian phoenixes referred to above) and thus represent the most marked exception to the ornamental use. The landscapes offer certain elements which aid their identification, but also here a residual ambiguity will be observed apart from the uncertainty due to the partial preservation.⁸²

The NE wall is destroyed, and because it seems to have been a pendant to the SW wall, it most probably had a similar landscape in the middle aedicula. Thus it is difficult to judge to what extent the landscapes had been related in content, and what part the destroyed landscape and the possible bird(s) in it played in the whole? Even if the main features of the remaining badly damaged landscapes can be estimated with the help of reproductions made at the time when they were better preserved, these do not reveal the faded colours of the bird in the SE wall, nor anything of the upper right part of the landscape in the NW wall (destroyed already at the time when the drawings were made). Therefore it is difficult to judge whether on the SW wall the bird to the right of the *baetylus* in the sanctuary is sitting on a column as usually stated, or rather on a *pithos* as Picard-Schmitter suggests. The latter interpretation is the more likely one, but it remains open whether there was perhaps something on the other *pithos* to the right. It is further left unanswered whether the bird had a

into account the Egyptianizing context the birds more probably derive from Egyptianizing hawks (because of the white colour resembling a statue close to the birds n. 1 in table 1; as this is uncertain they are, however, not included to the table 1).

⁸² Another example from the same house of the uncertainty caused by fragmentary preservation are the birds standing on the flower ornaments in the frieze of the NE wall of room n. III. Only the strong feet can be now seen and it is not possible to judge whether they indicate a bird as it seems (or perhaps a peacock, though they look too strong), and how this was like; G. E. Rizzo, *Le pitture della 'Casa di Livia'* (*Monumenti della pittura antica*, III, Roma, fasc. III), Roma 1936, PL. B.

crest as did the bird in the SE wall, or some other head decoration. Judging by the remaining part, there seems to have been no *p3 shmty* or other bigger crown, but the possibility of the lunar crescent and sun disc similar to those on the two Pompeian phoenixes is not to be excluded (cf. above p. 174f.; here fig. 3). This is not without significance because the bird with its big size, green colour, and habitus is very similar to the one in MN 8570.



3. Detail from the painting on the SW wall of the so called Sala dei Paesaggi in the Casa di Livia (Palatine; drawing from photograph, 1985).

Thus the bird might also here be the divine Egyptian hawk symbolizing the resurrection of Osiris as suggested by Picard-Schmitter, who, basing her judgement on the Egyptianizing elements in the painting, considers the sanctuary to be sacred to Isis (more than to Artemis-Hecate as suggested so far). The view finds support in the hawks around the baetylus in the relief representing the Arcus ad Isis in the *Haterius* relief.⁸³

Here too, though to a lesser degree, the bird is a fantastic one as shown by the colour, long wings and tail and the unnaturally large size. In comparison to the sanctuary, to the goat between the pithos and the baetylus and the three ducks swimming below, the size is intentionally unnaturally large. Even if size relations in Roman painting are often insignificant or erroneous, this is not likely in such a sophisticated work. Besides the fantastic feature, the big size emphasizes the divine character of the bird. The green colour also has similar double implication. In addition to its exotic value, green was also the colour of growth and, consequently, of virility and power. Thus it was associated with resurrection, especially with Osiris (cf. the so called Korn-Osiris) and with royalty. Thus the bird is clearly not a parakeet which perhaps it ornithologically most resembles, and with which it has from Rizzo onwards usually been identified.⁸⁴

In addition the bird in the landscape on the SE wall sits in a rustic sanctuary which, on the basis of hanging shields decorating the column might be thought to be sacred to Isis. The bird itself is also very similar, though it is not the same fantasy bird. Its fantastic size compared to the goats below is even more clearly emphasized. Common with the former bird is also the general impression of the habitus, especially the long bushy tail. Here, however, the latter is differently executed in detail. Single feathers have been emphasized with stronger strokes creating a more straggly impression. There is a crest which seems to have been absent in the

⁸³ Picard-Schmitter, *Bétyles hellénistiques*; cf. Rizzo, *Casa di Livia*.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* If the doubtlessly very qualified painter had a parrot in mind, he certainly could have done a more accurate representation of this familiar bird — e.g. as a pet —, which was a well-known and widespread subject in mosaics and also in wp:s. In these the species represented — often in a very accurate way — is always the ring-necked parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) with its characteristic strong red bill and green colour with the red collar.

former bird. Also the colours seem to differ, though they can no longer be judged with certainty. The upper part was dark — probably green — and the lower a light colour (yellow ?), and also the wing had some other colour (fig. 4).

Though perhaps it most resembles a parrot, this bird cannot be identified with any particular species or family. As this bird resembles a raptor even less than the bird on the SW wall, it seems less probable that the two birds would represent two Egyptianizing hawks.⁸⁵ Could it then



4. Detail from the painting on the SE wall from the so-called Sala dei Paesaggi in the Casa di Livia (Palatine; drawing from photograph, 1985).

⁸⁵ See above p. 184 (especially note 34) with reference to the Book of the Dead mentioning as following transformation forms the golden falcon and, on the other hand, the divine falcon. Though the latter's plumage is described as splendid and of many colours, which the bird's plumage on the SE wall seems to be, the monochrome bird on the SW wall is green instead of golden yellow (the latter bird is, in fact, not polychrome as Rizzo, *Casa di Livia*, 57 and Picard-Schmitter, *Bétyles hellenistiques* state).

be that the Isiac sacral-idyllic landscapes in this room would show a divine Egyptianizing falcon referring to the resurrection of Osiris on the SW wall, and on the SE wall another famous bird emblematic for resurrection, the phoenix? Then the possible bird in the third landscape might have been the benu in the form of a heron, or perhaps a swallow (or even the human-headed Ba-bird).

At this stage we cannot give a final answer. At any rate, both remaining birds in the Sala dei Paesaggi seem distinctive instead of occasional, and thus different from the majority of the fantasy birds in II style wp:s among the bm:s of which fantasy birds have a prominent position.⁸⁶ Thematically, chronologically and geographically closest to the above are the birds in the sacral-idyllic landscapes in the so-called Casa di Augusto (on the Palatine). These are, however, quite different. They are small passerines, not clearly identifiable, typical of II style wp:s, and used as landscape elements without any emphatic position. They are not in the sanctuary, nor unnaturally large. Neither can the other related representations provide a satisfactory solution, though these also point to a double and/or parallel use of the bm:s as assumed in the case of Casa di Livia. These are treated in the following.

In the vault decoration of the Aula Isiaca stylized fantasy birds grow from floral ornaments. In the reproduction published by E. Rizzo they have a bluish red plumage.⁸⁷ Though they have no crest or tuft, they seem, on the basis of the head, wings and plumage to resemble the treated type. In the frieze decorating the lunette the same birds (though the plumage is more greenish) alternate with a similar bird with a human head (growing out from floral ornaments). The human-headed bird must be the Ba, which supports the view that the other fantasy birds carry similar

⁸⁶ In the fantasy birds in the II style wp:s can, however, be distinguished: 1) naturalistically depicted birds representing exotic birds in general as they were imagined to be and, 2) intentionally bizarre, fantastic creatures which seem to be occasionally created without exact or more established models. Intermediary forms are naturally not absent. Unusual feather decorations like crests, tufts and especially long tails are, often together with marked colour(s), standard features emphasizing the bird's exotic and/or fantastic character.

⁸⁷ G. E. Rizzo, *Le pitture della Aula Isiaca di Caligola* (Monumenti della pittura antica III, Roma fasc. II), Roma 1936, Pl. B.

associations. Evidently the latter birds are meant to refer to the divine Egyptian hawk as a transformation form after death. Though neither the Ba nor the fantasy hawks have any specific Osirian emblems, they can be regarded as alluding to him in general. This interpretation finds support in the birds decorating the frieze of the long wall. Rizzo identified them as ibises, but the crest and the tuft in the breast show them to be herons, though somewhat stylized, which explains the long tail (and the slight curving of the bill which resembles ibises). In this context these can be regarded as representing the heron-benu.⁸⁸

We have already referred to the reasons for the confusion caused by various models in parallel use, which is all the more natural when both the outer appearance and the features assigned to certain subjects are similar. Thus we find in the stuccos in the cubicula B and E of the Villa Farnesina ornamental heron(-benu) and ibis representations with similar use growing out of floral parts of candelabra. The extreme stylization makes it at first difficult to identify them, the tail being extremely long and the feet absent.⁸⁹

In the paintings of the Villa Farnesina we can also find a swallow⁹⁰ and two Horus falcons, but these are not in such close connection to each other and the birds in the stuccos as the birds we have referred to in Aula Isiaca. No such close parallels to the Horus falcons in the Villa Farnesina paintings have been preserved among the numerous *bm:s* in Romano-Campanian *wp:s*, in which the Egyptian character is so evident. The Villa

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ The bill of the birds in cubiculum B is too short for herons, but being slim and direct it is quite different from the raptors. That it belongs to the benu, however, is confirmed by the benu in the so called Mensa Isiaca, where its bill more closely resembles that of cormorants (cf. above note 61; for the stuccos in the Villa Farnesina, see I. Bragantini - M. De Vos, *Le decorazioni della villa della Farnesina*, Roma 1983, figs. 17, 57).

⁹⁰ The swallow is quite separate in a still life sitting on the handle of a chest with fruits among theater masks. It is so far a unique representation, as the completely black bird can be identified as some *Apus* species, though the long forked tail resembles more that of a swallow. The bird's prominent position and distinctive representation exclude an occasional or merely decorative character here, and taking into account the sacral aspect of still lifes, this species is most plausibly one of the transformation forms after death (cf. above note 61).

Farnesina falcons are sitting on floral volutes of the candelabrum on which an Isis figure stands.⁹¹ A further difference is that the execution is not only of better quality, but the birds also resemble the Egyptian representations more than the later ones. The Villa Farnesina falcons are though statue-like — because of the pose and the whitish-grey colour — naturalistically depicted. These are also among the few which also ornithologically can be identified as falcons (*Falco* species).

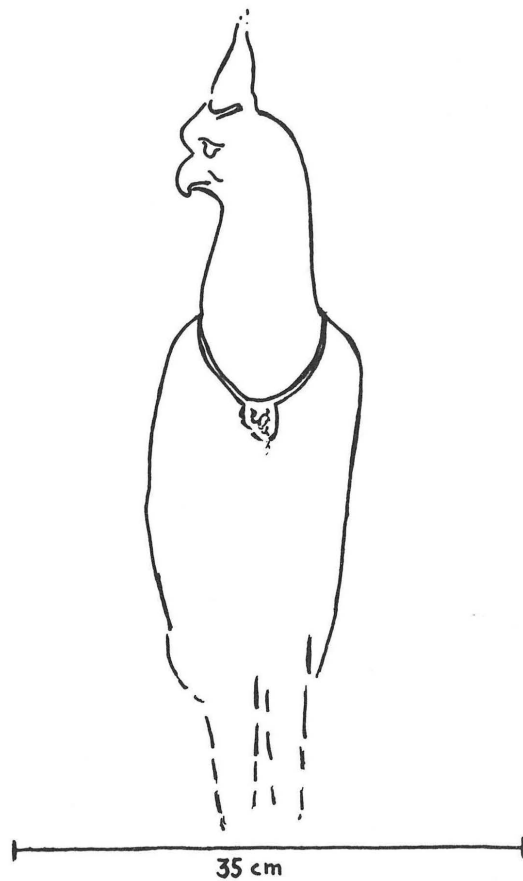
As they represent statues of Horus falcons (or statue-like Horus falcons?), closest to the birds in the Villa Farnesina paintings are the ones serving as caryatids in the garden painting in the apsis of the caldarium of the Casa di Labirinto (n. 10 in table 1; fig. 5). These, too, are greyish white and also here the Egyptian character is specially emphasized. Apart from the *p3 shmty* — which here is so stylized that it rather resembles a crest — there is a bulla around the bird's neck. This is the only case where the birds (in wp:s) clearly refer to Harpokrates.⁹²

The quite differently executed bird n. 30 has no bulla, which, on the other hand, is the only parallel to n. 10 because it also serves as a caryatid, which here too is in a garden painting (fig. 6). Here it is, however, among the other birds and is executed in a similar fashion, and its nature as a statue (or as a statue-like bird) has evidently been obscured.⁹³ Its strange look is probably caused by the bird being confused with herons which are usually found to serve as caryatids. Its curved bill shows it to be a raptor, though otherwise the body is more like that of a heron. The head decoration is clearly not a *p3 shmty*, but something between a kind of a crown and a crest (a similar one has the heron serving as a caryatid in the black cubiculum of the Casa del Frutteto I 9, 5). The fact that the herons as

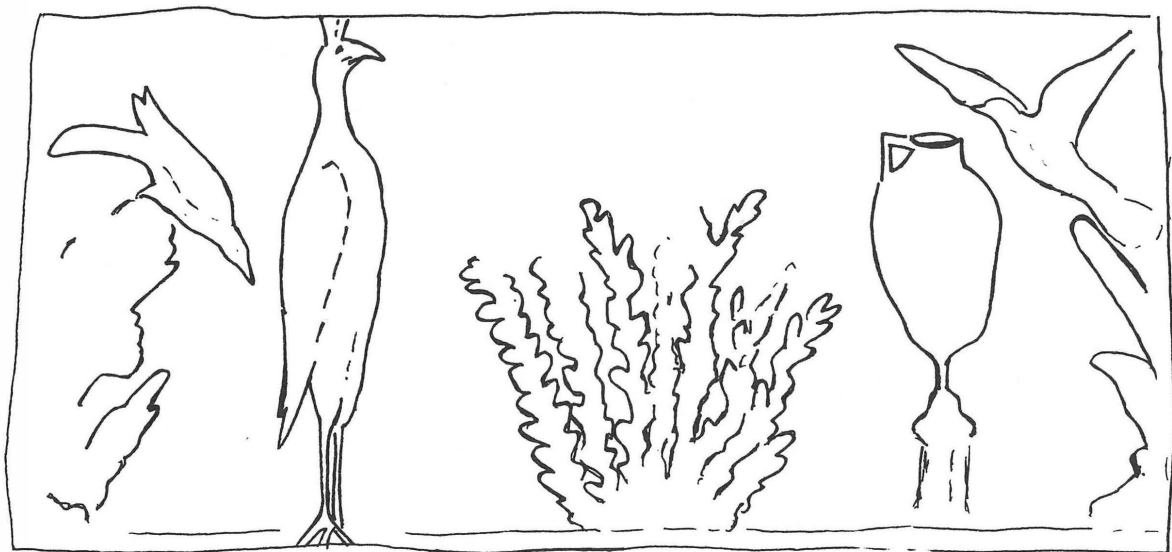
⁹¹ Bragantini - De Vos, 155, Pl. 550 (inv. 1117).

⁹² Harpokrates, the young Horus, was usually represented as a child, being in the Graeco-Roman world associated with Eros. Many of the Harpokrates statues found in Pompeii show at the feet of the child the remains of a bird, most probably a falcon, see Tran Tam Tinh, 162 n. 104 Pl. XXI 2, 163 n. 109—110. For the association and substitution of Harpokrates with the benu-phoenix in Egyptian gemmae from the Roman period, see Wortmann (above notes 47, 49).

⁹³ The plumage in n. 30 is executed differently from n. 1 and 10. The fragments MN 8758 and 8763 are now located in Herculaneum by E. Moormann, Een beeld van een tuin en andere fragmenten, Om de tuin geleid (Festschr. W. J. T. Peters), 57—68.



5. Detail from the painting in the apsis of the caldarium (room n. 22 in the Casa del Labirinto, VI 11, 10; drawing from photograph, 1985).



6. Detail from the painting from the Insula Occidentalis II la in Herculaneum (now MN 8758; drawing from photograph, 1982).

caryatids are eventually substituted precisely with the Horus falcons supports the possibility that the herons are associated with the benu. This is also supported by the fact that those serving as caryatids are indeed to be identified as an *Ardea* sp. (*Ardea cinerea*/*Ardea purpurea*), unlike the other *Ardeidae* species in wp:s which are usually egrets (*Egretta* sp., mostly *Egretta garzetta*).⁹⁴

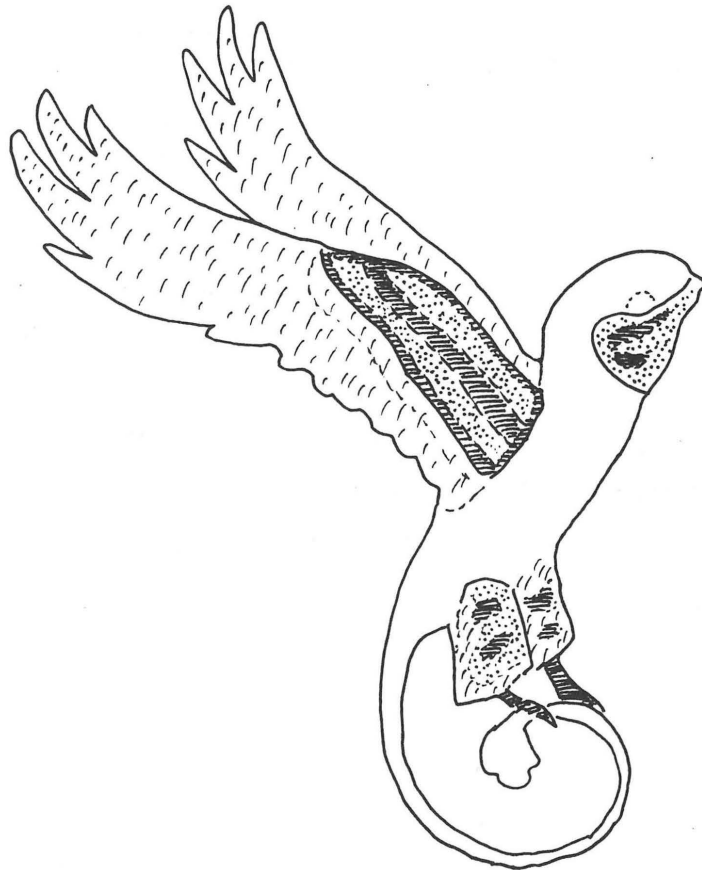
Here it is worth mentioning that in the famous early III style paintings from the so-called Villa di Agrippa Postumus we find egrets alternating with two kinds of Egyptianizing hawks (these are n. 6 and 7 in table 1). The birds in paintings from nearby rooms are in correspondent positions standing on architectural candelabra. Though they are small ornamental details, we may — especially because the paintings are of exceptionally high quality — ask whether they were intentionally chosen to refer to the three transformation forms taken after death mentioned in the Books of the Dead (the heron and the golden and divine hawks, cf. above p. 184). The possibility is tempting, but we must be careful of overinterpretation, especially as so fragmentarily preserved paintings are concerned. Thus at this stage we prefer an easier explanation: the appearance of the observed birds results from a more occasional use of the realm of Egyptian(izing) art. This view is supported by the absence of any special reference in the birds mentioned above. The divine Egyptian hawk was said to have a splendid coloured plumage⁹⁵ and indeed the bird n. 6 has a polychrome ornamental plumage. Otherwise its appearance does not correspond to the divine hawks (mostly falcons), as they are more naturalistically depicted, even if the plumage may be ornamentally coloured. Further, it is difficult to see bird n. 7 as a golden hawk (which in Egyptian art was mostly represented this way) as it is one of the few




⁹⁴ The *Ardea* species serving as caryatids are also found only in III style wp:s. Preserved ones are in the houses I 7, 19; I 9, 5 and VI 14, 20 in Pompeii. These herons have spread wings unlike the birds n. 10 and 30, and unlike birds 1 and 10 their plumage is executed (as in n. 30). Thus they are less statue-like (except that the heron in I 9,5 has a similar crown as the bird n. 30). Cf. later pp. 210—215.

⁹⁵ See Junker's translations of the texts in Philae cited in note 55.

representations in wp:s depicting an *Accipiter* species (most probably the sparrowhawk, *Accipiter nisus*) naturalistically.⁹⁶

In wp:s naturalistically depicted raptors are relatively rarely represented apart from some owls and, naturally, eagles, the great majority of which are stylized ornamental birds, often with fantastic features. As regards hawks, we refer to the birds listed in table 1, which are almost all varyingly ornamental fantasy hawks, mostly resembling falcons (cf. also table 2). These can roughly be divided into two main types: the light coloured one (which may also have ornamental colouring) deriving from the monochrome statue-like representations of which the most outstanding examples are birds n. 1 and 10, and the ornamentally coloured ones, where the dominating colours are green and yellow (fig. 7).



7. Detail from a fragment of a wall painting, now MN 9898 (drawing from photograph); key to colours  = red,  = light bluish green,  = yellow ochre (the rest is dark green, not indicated).

⁹⁶ Besides the painting from the Temple of Isis in Pompeii (above p. 186) the so far unique still life from Herculaneum (now MN 8757) depicts naturalistically a sparrowhawk (with prey and a crow, *Corvus cornix*, also a rarely depicted species).

In addition to the splendid colouring, the fantastic and exotic character is shown by another common feature, the emphatic display of feathers. These, especially the dominating — long, curved and/or forked — tail, together with the green colour have caused the similarity with the *Psittacidae* species, the species with which they have often been identified by modern scholars.⁹⁷ Some representations seem to indicate that such confusion was already evident in antiquity,⁹⁸ but it is difficult to judge to what extent the similarity between parakeets and ornamental fantasy hawks was a result of or the reason for such confusion. The confusion with parakeets seems to have been mainly indirect. The ring-necked parakeet is an exotic bird par excellence, and being one of the best-known species, it was for many “the” exotic bird. Thus it is very likely that precisely the parakeet had much influence on the conception of exotic and fantasy birds in general.

The *bm:s* in table 1 are, however, prevalently derivations of Egyptian(izing) hawks, from which the ornamental colours, strong socked legs and, naturally the *p3 shmty* are taken. As for the identification of these birds, it is to be stressed that the *p3 shmty* is, however, fairly rare. Thus it seems that in only a few cases were they regarded as Horus falcons and usually they were seen as Egyptian(izing) divine hawks, emblematic also of the soul and its immortality.

The changing of features (shown in table 1) allows great variation, and identical representations are practically absent until the occurrence of the fairly well established type in late III style paintings (in stage 2b).⁹⁹

⁹⁷ For varying identifications we give only some examples: I. Bragantini - M. De Vos - F. Parise Badoni, *Pitture e pavimenti di Pompei I, Regioni I—III* (Rep. fot. Gabin. fot. naz. ICCD), Roma 1981, 51 n. 107011608 ‘grifi(?)’, 71 n. 107180C05 ‘uccelli’, the latter by K. Schefold, *Die Wände Pompejis. Topographisches Verzeichnis der Bildmotive*, Berlin 1957, 35 ‘Ägyptische Falken’; ICCD I, 73 n. 107190A05 ‘pappagalli’, 244 n. 30201D08 ‘pappagallo’, the latter by Schefold, 56 ‘Sperber’. The birds in the atrium of the Casa dei Quadretti teatrali I 6, 11 Schefold, 25 calls ‘Ägyptische Sperber’, but the bird in the retrobottega I 6, 10 with an Egyptianizing crown (probably the *p3 shmty*) he calls a griffin.

⁹⁸ E.g. birds n. 27 (in table 1).

⁹⁹ N. 20, 25. Close to these and thus intermediary types are the earlier birds n. 13, 17—19, 21, 23, 28.

This type substitutes others in the IV style wp:s (fig. 8). The number and distribution into houses and single rooms in Pompeii is shown in table 2. The length of the slim body, wings and the tail, mostly forked and often curved at the top, is more strongly emphasized in the IV style type. These birds, in comparison to their forerunners, are less accurately depicted and give an impression of a more hasty execution. They do not show any touch of naturalism, which the III style types preserved, even when stylized. There is, naturally, minor variation in depiction, slightly different birds being found in the same house and wall (cf. note 81).



8. Detail from a wall painting in the Casa degli Efebi (I 7, 10—12) in Pompeii (room C(9) W-wall; drawing from photograph).

An outstanding difference is the absence of the III style type polychrome representations in the IV style. The colour is usually golden yellow, occasionally greyish white (especially on a red background where it is more visible, essentially it is designed to have the same impact as the yellow). There is only one example of the use of green, and apparently it depends on a floral candelabrum close to it executed in green (in house II 1, 5). Also for practical reasons monochromy dominates in such widely used ornamental details, but besides stylistic reasons, the colour here emphasizes the fantastic and, above all, the solar character of these birds. The golden yellow colour may be influenced by the griffin representations (see below).

Standard features are the crest on the head and the tuft in the throat, which are usually slim feathers varying in strength and length (either or both may, however, be absent). Nothing resembling a *p3 shmty* is found, but in some cases there is, instead of the crest, a crown which resembles that of the peacock or the lunar crescent and sun disc combination of the two phoenix representations referred to above. The usually very summary and stylized execution makes it difficult to judge them. In these kinds of small ornamental details some confusion with the peacock's crown is understandable; yet the crowns, even when roughly executed, support the identification as the phoenix.

The view that the birds were considered to have a strong mythological background — the phoenix, indeed, has — is further supported by their abundant ornamental use. Similar, mainly ornamentally used birds are swans, eagles, and also griffins (which too, all have some solar character). Some insignificant confusion between eagles and the phoenix can be found. The possible interrelation of the phoenix and the griffin is far more significant because of their early relation (and the presumed identification), and the common features: the crest, tuft and the golden yellow colour. The nature of this relation is, however, difficult to be precise about, because it may — as it seems — only be connected with the analogous use of these motifs in wp:s. The griffin and the phoenix both have solar character and their shared features have similar, fairly general allusive value. So far nothing more concrete has been shown and, as far as

I know, no evidence has been presented concerning the identification of any of the treated *bm:s* as griffins.¹⁰⁰

Though the crest, tuft and the golden yellow colour might only be solar emblems common to both creatures the fact that it is the griffin that carries them suggests its directer influence. It should be remembered that e.g. Pliny regards the famous sun beast as a bird, even if he doubts its existence. Griffins have a similar function in the *wp:s*, and thus offer a more likely explanation for the origin of the crest and the tuft than the heron-benu, the latter being suggested by Van den Broek.¹⁰¹ The golden Horus which we could assume to have given the golden colour is also less probable. We must emphasize that the observed interrelation between the phoenix and the griffin representations does not imply a confusion between the two. The griffin rather influenced as a well-known fantastic bird.

Though the birds identified here as the phoenix, have in *wp:s* a function similar to that of the eagle, the swan and the griffin, the phoenix is

¹⁰⁰ Plin. nat. 10, 70; a griffin in the bird form is one of the four major types in which it is known to occur, but this form is found nearly exclusively in Corinthian vase painting. The clearly identifiable griffin representations in *wp:s* show it as a winged beast, eventually with a raptor's head or some times as a bird with a human head. About the various forms of griffins and the manifold symbolism of this subject, see recently Chr. Delplace, *Le Griffon. De l'archaïsme à l'époque impériale. Étude iconographique et Essai d'interprétation symbolique* (Ét. phil. arch. hist. anc. Inst. Belg. Rome, XX), 1980 (for Corinthian vase painting p. 31ff., for *wp:s* p. 350—353). Cf. A. Manganaro, *EAA* 3 (1960) 1056—1063, s.v. 'Grifo'. The griffin belonged prevalently to the Apollonian and Dionysiac spheres. In solar beliefs so popular in the first centuries of the Empire, the well-known 'sun beast' connected with Apollo and Helios came to express the apotheosis of the dead. For the griffin in the Minoan-Mycenaean world in particular, see Chr. Delplace, *Le griffon créto-mycénien*, *Ant. Class.* 36 (1967) 49—86 and J. L. Benson, *The Griffin in the Minoan-Mycenaean World*, *AJA* 63 (1959) 186; cf. Nancy B. Reed, *Griffins in Post-Minoan Cretan Art*, *Hesperia* 45 (1976) 365—379. Concerning the relation to the phoenix the studies mentioned do not say anything relevant. For the griffin in Roman Imperial art, see E. Simon, *Zur Bedeutung des Greiffen in der Kunst der Kaiserzeit*, *Latomus* 21 (1962) 749—780. For the crest as an allusion to the sun, see Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds*, 1963², 96ff. and G. K. Gresseth, *The Myth of Alcyone*, *TMAPA* 95 (1964) 88—89. O. Keller, *Die antike Tierwelt II*, Leipzig 1913, 178 suggested the crest to derive from the Egyptian benu-representations erroneously identifying them as a lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*; cf. note 61).

¹⁰¹ Van den Broek, 244.

not like the latter preserved in official pictorial propaganda. Literary sources, however, show the use of the phoenix myth in early imperial propaganda. Plin. nat. 10, 5 tells about the appearance of the phoenix in 36 AD in Egypt. It was presumably interpreted as inaugurating the new Golden Age which was considered to start with Caligula's rule. Claudius then used the bird to show that the Golden Age should be associated with his reign.¹⁰² The phoenix that appeared was supposed to have been caught and at Claudius' order brought to Rome where, shown in the Forum, it celebrated the city's 800th anniversary. According to Pliny, however, everybody thought it was a false one. Some exotic bird was apparently exhibited in the Comitium. It is worth noting that the appearances of the phoenix were located in Egypt and that Caligula's presumed use of the myth was apparently part of his well-known enthusiasm for Egyptian beliefs.¹⁰³ As the occurrence and attesting of these events coincide with the establishment of the phoenix image in the late III and especially in the IV style wp:s, it seems that the presence of the phoenix myth in early imperial propaganda had an effect on the established and abundant use of the motif. The frequent schematization of the IV style wp:s is thus not the only reason.

Pliny's description of the phoenix, as descriptions related to it, are considered to refer to the golden pheasant (*Chrysolophus pictus*),¹⁰⁴ and it

¹⁰² Tacitus, ann. 6, 28 says that the appearance took place in 34 AD, cf. Van den Broek, 113ff.; E. Köberlein, *Caligula und die ägyptischen Kulte* (Beitr. z. klass. philol., Heft 3), Meisenheim am Glan 1962, 41—43 has shown that Caligula's reign was considered as starting the Golden Age.

¹⁰³ According to Suetonius (Cal. 22, 5—12) Caligula offered as a sacrifice a different exotic bird each morning (he lists *phoenicopteri*, *pavones*, *tetraones numidicae*, *meleagrides phasianae*). Köberlein, 46 sees this as part of „dem Isis-kult entstammende Morgenfeier, einer sog. *matutina apertio templi*“. Köberlein's view of the mentioned birds as „Vertreter des mythischen Phönix“ is, however, an overinterpretation as shown e.g. by Chr.W. Hünemörder, „Phasianus“. *Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des Fasans*, Bonn 1970 (Diss.) 144—145.

¹⁰⁴ The Golden pheasant was suggested already by Cuvier and O. Keller, see Keller, 146—148 (cf. *Id.*, *Thiere des classischen Alterthums*, Innsbruck 1887, 254ff., 441f.), and, more recently also by F. Capponi, *Ornithologia latina* (Pubbl. Ist. Filol. class. med. Univ. Genova 58), 413. The description given by Solinus (33, 11) seems to derive directly from Pliny's one, showing, however, certain independence (*ibid.*).

is possible that the bird presumably shown in the Comitium as the phoenix was one. However, the *passus* by Pliny gives the impression that the description in the beginning (Plin. nat. 10, 3) does not concern the bird which was reported to have been shown in the Comitium. There is a report of this bird at the end (*ibid.*, 10, 5). Moreover, Pliny's description even if it gives the impression of being based on observations of real birds, does not correctly correspond to the plumage of the golden pheasant nor to any other known species.

This is true for the visual phoenix representations, too, which do not show any direct relation to the descriptions in literary sources. The literary descriptions, which do not show a very coherent tradition, compare the phoenix to other sun birds and assign the features of these to the phoenix. Van den Broek assumes that the authors "who described these birds, including the phoenix, drew on an Oriental tradition concerning 'the' bird of the sun." Relevant is that the colour descriptions aim to show the bird's nature as a sun bird.¹⁰⁵ Splendid birds in general were considered emblematic of the sky and also of the soul.¹⁰⁶

This leads us to complex problems concerning the character and influence of various fantasy and/or soul birds, and their representations. This is one of the problems concerning the iconography of the phoenix, which we hope will be clarified in further studies. We shall only refer to one representation with special interest in this respect. This is a bird in the paintings decorating the famous late Minoan sarcophagus from Hagia Triada. On one of the short sides there are two female figures driving a biga which is pulled by two griffins. Above them a bird is flying. Its bill is short and the head is adorned with an erect crest, the wings are long and the legs, too, are relatively long. Its plumage is yellow, having some blue in the wing and tail. To Paribeni, the first publisher of the paintings, who rightly noted that there is no existing species corresponding to the features of this "uccello variopinto", the bird's fantasy nature was intentional and

¹⁰⁵ In the later mosaics and paintings the colours change from case to case and none has it been possible to show more direct interrelation between the representations and descriptions. Van den Broek, 259.

¹⁰⁶ Köberlein, 46 cites a quotation of Porphyrios stating that the gods of the air were to be offered splendid coloured birds because the air is full of light and is transparent.

served to emphasize it as the soul bird. This interpretation is the most likely one if the biga pulled by griffins — as is most probable — in some way refers to the journey to the hereafter. It has also been suggested to be an epiphany of some god.

The question is complex because so little is known about Minoan art and beliefs. This allows various interpretations of these paintings, and none of them is convincing in all respects. The evident Egyptian influence in the paintings, noted already by Paribeni, adds to the complexity. He mentioned here the Egyptian soul bird Ba and the benu, but erroneously stated that also the benu should have been represented as a fantasy bird, which so far has not been attested. Therefore he did not notice that the bird has nothing to do with the benu in the usual heron form nor that it instead resembles bird representations in Egyptian art — especially the hawks — and consequently their imitations in Roman *wp:s*, which we have described above. Not forgetting other possibilities this could indeed be a representation of a soul bird in the form of an Egyptianizing hawk-like fantasy bird. A study of its own is needed to clarify this and the question whether the bird could have been understood as the Egyptian Ba or benu, or perhaps even as the phoenix.¹⁰⁷

Another group of problems to be answered is offered by the later development of the iconography of the phoenix in Roman art. Is the appearance from Hadrianic coins onwards of the phoenix which looks more like the heron-benu due to Hadrian's interests in the Egyptian world? On the other hand, is the often occurring shorter bill of this type

¹⁰⁷ R. Paribeni, *Il sarcofago dipinto di Hagia Triada*, *MonAnt* 19 (1908) 1—86, 59—62, Pl. 3. A colourphoto taken after the restoration in 1956 is published by D. Levi, *The Sarcophagus of Hagia Triada restored*, *Archaeology* 9 (1956) 192—199. Reviews of the various interpretations and descriptions with previous literature are offered by M. Nilsson, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its survival in Greek Religion* (Skrifter utgivna av kungl. humanistiska vetenskapssamfundet i Lund 9), Lund 1927, 368—381 and Id., *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (Handb. d. Altertumswiss. V 2, 1), München 1965³, 290—291, 326—329, Pl. 10, 3. For more recent views see J. Porter Nauert, *The Hagia Triada Sarcophagus. An iconographical study*, *Antike Kunst* 8 (1965) 91—98 and J. Pollard, *Birds in Greek Life and Myth*, Plymouth 1977, 150. I hope to be able to treat these problems in another occasion as well as the arbitrary proposals of H. van Effenterre, *Une copie grecque d'une fresque minoenne?*, *CRAI* 1960, 117—127.

influenced by the raptor's bill of the preceding type treated here, or is it perhaps due to a confusion with some existing birds? Apart from the eagle, we must mention the peacock, another bird emblematic of resurrection, which some phoenix representations in Palaeo-Christian art resemble, and the porphyryon, an exotic-looking bird, which other phoenix representations sometimes resemble.¹⁰⁸

Summary

We have shown that the phoenix represented in the sign of the so called tavern of Euxinus in Pompeii is the same bird as the one which is represented as sitting on the mummy of Osiris in a landscape painting from the Temple of Isis in Pompeii (now MN 8570). The latter must, on the other hand, be considered as the divine Egyptian hawk, though its appearance is not one of the hawks represented in Egyptian art, but of a fantasy bird looking like a raptor.

Though only partially preserved, the relief decoration of a II c. AD funerary altar from Roman Spain (Guadix) most probably shows the same (or similar) bird as the benu (but not in the usual Egyptian heron form), representing the soul of Osiris and thus further confirming it being regarded as the phoenix.

This appearance hitherto virtually neglected in studies is most abundantly preserved in wp:s, because it is in wide, and nearly exclusively ornamental use. It derives from the Egyptianizing hawk representations popular in the III style wp:s, substituting these in the IV style wp:s. This appearance seems to have been further influenced by the griffin, the sun beast with similar associations, also considered a fantastic bird, and by the parakeet, "the" exotic bird, which had a strong effect on the conception of fantasy birds. Thus the identification proposals made by modern scholars, which at first seem contradictory — Egyptian hawks, parakeets and griffins — are shown to be understandable.

The fact that the phoenix was represented as a fantastic Egyptianiz-

¹⁰⁸ Van den Broek, 425—464; Bisconti.

ing hawk instead of a heron, the usual form of the benu, with which the phoenix was identified, was shown to be a result of the manifold relations and expressions of Egyptian religion and art. The benu was given similar features as hawks, the most prominent birds in Egyptian religion and art, which thus became in many aspects parallel and complementary appearances on the benu.

The establishing of the bird type we have discussed which occurs in late III style wp:s and substitutes others in the IV style wp:s coincides with the presence of the phoenix myth in early imperial propaganda as attested in literary sources. This further confirms the identification of these bm:s as the phoenix. However, it is more difficult to judge to what extent the varying forerunners of this motif in the III style wp:s were understood as Egyptian hawks and, on the other hand, as the phoenix.

It must be emphasized that not all Egyptian(izing) hawks in Roman art were necessarily understood as phoenixes. They occurred as divine and/or soul birds in parallel and complementary use with other bm:s which had similar content referring in some way to immortality and/or divinity. This kind of parallelism is due not only to the in many cases prevalently decorative use of many motifs, but is also a typical feature of the eclecticism characteristic of Roman art.

TABLE 1

List of Egyptianizing hawks and bird motifs resembling hawks or parrots and their characteristics in II and III style wall paintings in Rome and Campania (the list aims to be complete only as far as the material *in situ* in Pompeii is concerned). Note: birds identifiable as ring-necked parakeets are not listed.

Each type is indicated with a consecutive number, listed according to houses and rooms in chronological order for the II style wp:s following the typology proposed by F. L. Bastet (see reference).

Data and abbreviations in each field (missing or uncertain information is indicated with a question mark):

House (room)

Houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum (abbreviated H) are indicated with the usual number only, for others the modern names are used (in their Italian form). MN = Museo Nazionale di Napoli.

In brackets the type of room and the abbreviation according to the ICCD is given. For various rooms the following abbreviations are used: A = atrium; C = cubiculum; CA = caldarium; FR = fragments; R = (unidentified) room; RB = retrobottega; T = tablinum; TR = triclinium.

Position

The position in the decoration systems is classified as follows: A = bm:s in/on architectural structures; B = bm:s in ornamental bend; C = bm:s in/on candelabra (or their floral parts); CA = bm:s as caryatids; F = bm:s flying freely; LA = bm:s in landscape.

Colour

The dominant colour(s) is indicated with a capital letter, colours of details with small letters, abbreviated as follows: B/b = greenish and/or greyish blue; E/e = grey; G/g = (dark) green; O/o = brown; R/r = red; W/w = (greyish) white; Y/y = golden yellow.

Head decoration

C = crest (stronger than one feather); CR = crown (other than the *p3 shmtj*, usually not exactly identifiable); F = feather (as crest); S = *p3 shmtj*.

Tuft

T = tuft (at the throat), an especially long one is indicated with LT.

Wings

C = closed; E = extended.

Legs

L = unnaturally long; S = socked; — = not represented.

Tail

B = bushy; DF = deeply forked; F = (slightly) forked; L = long; O = growing into ornament (usually floral).

Number of birds & identification

The number in brackets refers to vanished bm:s. In the column the identifications for other birds than those identifiable as *Falconiformes* sp./*Psittacidae* sp. are given; when the latter particularly resemble a certain species, this is quoted, followed by a question mark. Abbreviations: *Acc sp.* *Acc nis* = *Accipiter* species, (probably) *A. nisus*; *Psi kra* = *Psittacula krameri*.

Style (date)

The style of the wp:s is indicated with the usual abbreviation, using, however, arabic numbers for the stage (approximate datations are given in brackets).

Reference

B = F. L. Bastet - M. De Vos, *Il terzo stile pompeiano. Una proposta per la classificazione*, Gravenhage 1979; BJ = M. Bonghi Jovino (ed.), *Ricerche a Pompei. L'insula 5 della Regio VI dalle origini al 79 d.C.*, Roma 1984; M = A. Mau, *Geschichte der decorativen Wandmalerei in Pompeji*, Berlin 1882; MNR = I. Bragantini - M. De Vos, *Le decorazioni della villa della Farnesina*, Roma 1983; R II = G. E. Rizzo, *Le pitture dell'“Aula Isiaca”*, *Monumenti della pittura antica III*, Roma fasc. II, Roma 1936; R III = G. E. Rizzo, *Le pittura della “Casa di Livia”*, *Monumenti della pittura antica III*, Roma, fasc. III, Roma 1936.

No.	House (room)	Position	Colour	Head dec.	Tuft	Wings	Legs	Tail
1.	Cd Livia (R IV)	LA	Gy(?)	CR		C		LB
2.	Cd Livia (R IV)	LA	G	?		C		LB
3.	Villa Farnesina	C	W	S		C		
4.	Aula Isiaca	B	BR			E	—	LO
5.	VII 3, 29 (TR)	A	Gy(?)	S	T	E	S	L
6.	Vd Agrippa (C 15)	A	Gy(?)	F	T	E	S	L
7.	Postumus (C 16)	A	Gy(?)	CR?		C	S	
8.	VII 9, 1(?)	F	?	?	?	E		LDF
9.	VII 9, 1(?)	A	?	C(S?)		E	S	L
10.	VI 11, 10 (CA 22)	CA	W	C/S		C	S	
11.	V 4, a (A b)	F	W			E	S	
12.	V 4, a (T 7)	C	Gy(?)		T(?)	E	S	LO
13.	V 1, 23–26 (T i)	A	W			E	S	LDF
14.	V 1, 23–26 (T i)	C	W	F		E	S	LO
15.	I 12, 3 (R 3)	A	Gry	C(S?)	T	E	S	LF
16.	I 6, 11 (A b)	C	W			E	S	LO
17.	IX 9, c (TR e)	C	W	C(S?)	?	E	S(?)	LDF
18.	III 2, 1 (R d; TR p)	F	W	C/S	LT	E	S	LF
19.	I 7, 18	C	B	F	T	E	LS	LF
20.	I 7, 1 (TR 16)	A	Y			E		LDF
21.	I 7, 19 (C a)	C	B			E	LS	LDF
22.	I 6, 15 (TR e)	A	G	S		C	LS	LB
23.	I 6, 10 (RB)	F	G	CR(S?)	?	E	S	LDF
24.	I 12, 5 (C 3)	A	G			E	L	L
25.	VII 1, 25 (TR 8)	F	Y	F(?)	(?)	E	L	LDF
26.	H III 11 (R 5)	A	W	S		E	LS	LF
27.	VI 5, 9	A	G			C	S	LO
28.	IX 7, 20	A	Wo		T	E	S	LDF
29.	IX 7, 20	A	W			E	LS	
30.	H Ins. Occ. II 1 a (MN 8758, 8763)	CA	E	C		C	LS	
31.	MN 9898	C	G	S	T	E	S	LB
32.	MN 9898	C	Gyr		T	E	S	LO
33.	H? (MN?)	C	Oy?			E	S	LF
34.	H? (MN?)	C	Gyo?	CR(S?)	T	E	S	LO
35.	H? (MN?)	B	O?	C	T	E	S	

No. of birds & ident.	Style (date)	Reference	No.
1	II 2c (35–25 BC)	R III, 58 Fig. 42	1.
1 <i>Falco sp.?</i>	II 2c (35–25 BC)	R III, 51–56 Figs. 37, 38	2.
2 <i>Falco sp.</i>	II 2c (c. 20 BC)	NMR, 133 Pl. 50	3.
11 (6)	II 2c (c. 20 BC)	R II, 15–19 Pl. A, B	4.
(2)	III 1c (1–25 AD)	B, 42–43 n. 18 Pl. i3, 23	5.
8 (3)	III 1c (1–25 AD)	B, 45–47 n. 22	6.
8 (7) <i>Acc sp. Acc nis</i>	III 1c (1–25 AD)	B, 45–47 n. 22	7.
(1)	III 1c (1–25 AD)	B, 50–51 n. 25 Pl. 18, 35	8.
(2) <i>Falconidae sp.</i>	III 1c (1–25 AD)	B, 50–51 n. 25 Pl. 18, 35	9.
2 <i>Falco sp.?</i>	III 2a (25–35 AD)	B, 53–54 n. 27	10.
2	III 2b (35–45 AD)	B, 64–67 n. 35 Pl. 31, 57	11.
4	III 2b (35–45 AD)	B, 64–67 n. 35 Pl. 31, 57	12.
8	III 2b (35–45 AD)	B, 76–79 n. 43	13.
8	III 2b (35–45 AD)	B, 76–79 n. 43	14.
8	III 2b (35–45 AD)	B, 84–85 n. 49	15.
4	III 2b (35–45 AD)	B, 86–87 n. 51	16.
8	III 2b (35–45 AD)	B, 89–90 n. 55	17.
6	III 2b (35–45 AD)	B, 92–93 n. 59	18.
2	III 2b (35–45 AD)	B, 93 n. 60	19.
2 (1)	III 2b (35–45 AD)	B, 95 n. 63	20.
6	III 2b (35–45 AD)	B, 95 n. 64	21.
4 <i>Psi kra?</i>	III 2b (35–45 AD)	B, 96 n. 65	22.
1 <i>Psi kra?</i>	III 2b (35–45 AD)		23.
1	III 2b (35–45 AD)		24.
4 (3)	III 2b (35–45 AD)		25.
2 <i>Falco sp.?</i>	III 2b (35–45 AD)		26.
2 <i>Psi kra?</i>	III 2a?	BJ, Pl. 168, 1	27.
2	III		28.
2	III		29.
2 <i>Falconidae sp.</i>	III		30.
1	III		31.
1 <i>Accipiter sp.?</i>	III		32.
3	III	M, Pl. 20	33.
1	III	M, Pl. 20	34.
9 <i>Accipiter sp.?</i>	III	M, Pl. 20	35.

TABLE 2

Number and distribution into houses and single rooms of the bird motifs identified as the phoenix in IV style wall paintings in Pompeii.

First the number of each house is given followed by relevant room abbreviations (in brackets the abbreviation used in ICCD) and the number of birds (in brackets the vanished ones). The position of the bm:s in the decoration systems is indicated in the last field with the abbreviations used in table 1. Also the room abbreviations follow table 1 except for the unidentified rooms, which are here indicated by U.

I 3, 25	C(i) 4	C
I 5, 2	U(f) 1	F
I 6, 7	U(a) 3 (1)	F
I 7, 10	C(9) 1; C(12) 2; PO(19) 1	F, A
I 8, 17	TR(14) 7	F
I 10, 4	A(b) 4; P(c) 2; F(9) 4; R(19) 1	A, F
I 10, 11	C(4) 2; O(10) 2	F
I 11, 1	C(2) 2	F
I 11, 13	U(5) 1	F
I 11, 17	O(4) 4	F
I 12, 11	VI(8) 1	F
I 13, 1	U(4) 7	F
I 13, 2	T(11) 1	F
I 13, 16	U(1) 1	F
I 16, 3	U(2) 2; TR(6) 4	A, F
I 16, 4	U(10) 4	F
I 17, 4	VI(1) 1	F
II 1, 5	RB 4 (2)	C
II 2, 2	U(f) 10	A, C
II 4, 3	A(24) 1	F
III 4, 4	TR(c) 2	F
V 2, 1	TR(r) 4	F
V 2, 4	TR(r) 1	F
V 3, 9	U(F) 1	F
V 4, a	TR(4) 4 (2)	F
VI 2, 14	TR(11) 4	F
VI 3, 3	C(12) 2	F
VI 5, 3	U(3) 34 (15)	B
VI 7, 23	A(2) 2 (1)	F
VI 8, 3	C(6c) 4; TR(15) 4	B, F

VI 8, 23	C(25) 2	F
VI 9, 2	U(29) 5 (2)	F
VI 9, 6	U(35) 4; P(53) 4 (2); U(58) 2	A, B, F
VI 15, 1	U(k) 4 (1); P(1) 4 (2); O(q) 16; U(x) 3	B, F
VI 15, 7—8	C(f) 2; TR(k) 6 (2)	F
VI 16, 7	P(F) 1	F
VI 16, 15	C(H) 1	F
VI 16, 26	TR(G) 1	F
VII 4, 31	U(1) 2	F
VII 4, 48	C(4) 8 (1); T(10) 8 (1)	F
VII 6, 30	U(136) 2	F
VII 12, 18	U 2	F
VII Ins.Occ. 19	U(11) 6; U(8) 2; C(13) 2; U(38) 2	F, C
VIII 4, 4	U(5) 4 (2); U(27) 4 (2)	F
VIII 5, 37	U(b) 8 (3)	C
VIII 6, 4	C(d) 2 (1)	A
IX 1, 7	U(e) 4 (2)	B
IX 1, 20	AL(13) 6 (1)	F
IX 5, 2	U(e) 16 (5)	F, B
IX 8, 3	U(43) 2 (1); TR(7) 15	C, F
Villa Imperiale	SL(A) 12 (1)	A, B

Total number of houses: 53

Total number of birds: 301 (50)