

CHAPTER 14 THE SWAN/GOOSE/DUCK *REGARDANT* IMAGE

IN EGYPT

The image of a waterfowl with its neck twisted around so that the head rests on its back, often called '*regardant*,' has long been associated with the art of ancient Egypt. These birds usually are identified as ducks or sometimes geese in the literature. Their different varieties can be distinguished only by comparison with modern birds when the image is sufficiently detailed or has particular characteristics,⁹⁵³ or by the specific words for different varieties of waterfowl using the same determinative. Some also are identified as a pigeon or dove, when the neck is shorter or a specific characteristic is depicted, but this does not affect the *regardant* image that, by its very character, precludes representation of a short-necked bird. In some, chiefly three-dimensional, representations the neck is excessively elongated and the bird consequently called a swan in the literature. Multiple varieties of all these birds were known and (except the swan) consumed in ancient Egypt, and in most cases the particular bird represented seems to have been unimportant. However, in some cases it is possible to distinguish the general bird type represented, for different reasons more fully discussed below. There is no indication, for example, that the ancient Egyptians consumed swan, so this bird likely is not represented as the trussed or plucked bird. On the other hand, the swan is the only one of the three birds that carries its young on its back, so certain representations of this group must represent the swan.⁹⁵⁴ This distinction is employed in the present chapter, when a specific bird is likely to be represented; otherwise the general term 'bird' is used.⁹⁵⁵

The *regardant* image as represented has been variously interpreted as 'sleeping' or 'trussed' and can

represent either a living bird or one already plucked and prepared for consumption. The latter state is made obvious by the trussed position of the limbs and lack of indicated wing or other feathers,⁹⁵⁶ and the former by an alertness of the figure itself, the standing position of the legs, and the indication of wing and body feathers. These two aspects have different connotations.

The trussed goose or duck, a representation of prepared food, is known as a hieroglyph sign (G 54) as early as the Old Kingdom *Pyramid Texts*, and it continues throughout the entire dynastic period. It is the ideogram for 'fear' (*snḏ*) (G 54) for unknown reasons, and is used as the determinative for 'offering' and 'wringing neck (of bird)' (*wsn*) for more obvious ones. Two bird varieties, both usually translated as 'goose,' employ the trussed goose hieroglyph as determinative, *srw* and *trw*. The birds were considered a delicacy, and as such implied the owner's wealth in his display of them as food. Both ducks and geese have been found trussed and wrapped as actual food offerings in tombs.

The living bird also is represented as a hieroglyph (G 38), but not with its head *regardant*. The *regardant* posture often is best regarded as 'sleeping,' as this is characteristic when the bird is asleep. As such, it is symbolic of rebirth and regeneration – as the bird will awaken, so too will the corpse.⁹⁵⁷ It also has some connotation as an erotic symbol, especially when it is depicted on certain types of objects.⁹⁵⁸ These two *regardant* representations are generally distinguished in their use, but some overlap is known.⁹⁵⁹

Hieroglyphic texts and tomb scenes excepted, the earliest images of the goose or duck *regardant* as food offering are found in early Dynasty VI tombs

⁹⁵³ See HOULIHAN 1986:50–74.

⁹⁵⁴ "The downy young of the Mute Swan often ride on the back of the adult birds, and...it would not be unusual for the adult to look back at them, but not in the exaggerated posture shown in [fig. 23]. The young of geese and ducks do not ride on the adult's back. The other group of birds where this habit is frequent are the grebes. However, these are fish-eating birds with rather long pointed beaks, whereas the beaks in [Egyptian] illustrations are certainly consistent only with the family *Anatidae* (ducks, geese and swans)." I thank Ian Graham, Librarian, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, for this personal communication, 20 June 2001, on this point, quoted here. Nonetheless, com-

parison of their head and beak profiles clearly indicates that different birds are represented, although those with young all have elongated necks of the swan; see ADLER 1996:figs. 4, 19.

⁹⁵⁵ See discussions in DARBY, GHALIOUNGUI and GRIVETTI 1977:I:282–291; ADLER 1996:64–69.

⁹⁵⁶ FAY 1998:45 n. 5 notes "there is no sign of trussing" on the anhydrite vessels in this form, and prefers the term 'plucked.'

⁹⁵⁷ HORNUNG and STAEHELIN 1976:137.

⁹⁵⁸ MANNICHE 1987:40; ANDREWS 1994:92.

⁹⁵⁹ This also is the case for the squatting 'ape' figure; see Chapter 13.

as low covered dishes or 'provision boxes,' carved either in wood or various kinds of stone in the form of the hieroglyph to represent or identify for the tomb owner the food contained within.⁹⁶⁰ Both the container and its lid are carved, and the two halves complete the whole. The type continued through the New Kingdom in both materials, but by then may have been used as a cosmetic as well as food container.⁹⁶¹ Some examples have feathers indicated, which usually are described as 'sleeping.' Smaller solid model food offerings of wood and stone in hieroglyphic form are also found from the same time.⁹⁶² Such models substituted for the 'real thing,' being placed in tombs for the nourishment of the dead.

A second variety of stone vessels in this general position was introduced in the Second Intermediate Period, also representing the 'trussed' food offering. They apparently were intended as unguent containers (a 'flask' or other closed vessel type with a constricted neck) and were carved in a single piece.⁹⁶³ Almost all are made of anhydrite, with eyes inlaid, and represent either one or two 'trussed' featherless geese or ducks. They seem limited in date to Dynasty XVII⁹⁶⁴ (but some may be earlier), and appear to be an Upper Egyptian phenomenon. Although wear marks indicate both that they were laid on their side and were employed as cosmetic containers for fats and oils,⁹⁶⁵ all those excavated were recovered in

tombs where, it seems, they served the dual purpose of food offering and cosmetic container.

A new form was introduced and became extremely popular sometime in the New Kingdom, in most cases representing the 'trussed' food offering type. These are shallow flat open dishes in ivory, wood, faience and various stones such as travertine and shist.⁹⁶⁶ The neck turned to loop and attach the head at one side of the dish whilst the tail functioned as a second handle. Body details were carved on all sides and underside, including the limbs. Both single and occasionally double examples are known.⁹⁶⁷ Deeper dishes also are found,⁹⁶⁸ but these more often represent the living bird.

Miniature representations of the 'trussed' plucked and featherless goose or duck are not common, perhaps as their association with the hieroglyph and implications of 'fear' were not conducive to their use for seals or amulets. Nonetheless, the occasional seal, amulet and bead has the neck curved around lying on the back, head fallen on its side as if it had already been wrung, plucked limbs sometimes indicated and drilled through the length.⁹⁶⁹ These do not appear before Dynasty XVIII; earlier amulets representing food offerings may have been represented by a different bird hieroglyph, the young chick (G 47).⁹⁷⁰

A zoomorphic vessel in bird form with head facing forward and a large aperture on the back, clearly representing the living bird, was produced in Late Naqa-

⁹⁶⁰ E.g., HAYES 1953-1959:I:119 fig. 73; D'AURIA, LACOVARA and ROEHRIG 1988:93-94 #26:a-b; MMA 19.3.213, .247, .275-276, .280-281, .289. Other foods also were represented as zoomorphic containers. BROVARSKI (in D'AURIA, LACOVARA and ROEHRIG 1988:94) suggests that different sizes of similar Old Kingdom containers from the same tomb represent different birds: the goose or large duck (large size), duck (medium) and pigeon or dove (small).

A non-*regardant* goose is shown on a similar ivory container, probably for some form of cosmetics, from an early Dynasty I grave at Abydos; see PETRIE 1900a:27, pl. XXXVII:1.

⁹⁶¹ HERMANN 1932:91-94, pl. VIII:b-c; HAYES 1953-1959:II:48, 54, fig. 25:lower right; FREED 1987:90; D'AURIA, LACOVARA and ROEHRIG 1988:141-142 #81. Note that HERMANN 1932:pl. VIII:b is more a covered bowl than low covered dish. Ivory cosmetic boxes in this shape are exemplified by HAYES 1953-1959:II:315, 317 fig. 199:right, left.

⁹⁶² E.g., BOURRIAU 1988:102 #87:a; D'AURIA, LACOVARA and ROEHRIG 1988:93 #25; MMA 12.182.78; TBM 11.666. Other foods also are represented as models.

⁹⁶³ In some cases the head and neck may have been carved separately and attached, but the body itself was of a single piece.

⁹⁶⁴ FAY 1998:32-33 argues persuasively for this limited date

range. Previously dated chiefly to Dynasty XII-XIII; see HERMANN 1932:pl. VIII:a; HAYES 1953-1959:I:244, fig. 157, TERRACE 1966:60-61 Type B:I, pls. XIX:16, XXI-XXIV, see also p. 58; KEMP and MERRILLEES 1980:165 #vii, pl. 25:upper; BOURRIAU 1988:141 #143; MMA 10.176.50; BG ASTON 1994:141-142 #144. One example seems to have been a hybrid of jar and dish; see PETRIE, WAINWRIGHT and MACKAY 1912:45, pl. XLIII:upper left. A similar late Third Intermediate Period vessel in faience also is known; see FRIEDMAN 1997:215 #89.

⁹⁶⁵ NEWMAN 1998.

⁹⁶⁶ VON BISSING 1904-1907:I:pl. VIII:18561-18562, 18564; HERMANN 1932:94-95, fig. 5-7, pl. VII:c; VANDIER D'ABBADIE 1972:31-33 #74-77; BROVARSKI *et al.* 1982:313-214 #258; MMA 41.160.122; TBM 37.610E.

⁹⁶⁷ Exceptions are VON BISSING 1904-1907:I:pl. VIII:18561; TBM 11.665.

⁹⁶⁸ E.g., HAYES 1953-1959:II:190, fig. 106:upper left; TBM 37.390E.

⁹⁶⁹ PETRIE 1914:20 #66(?); HORNUNG and STAEHELIN 1976:pl. 67 #601; HERRMANN 1985:81 #317-318 (see fig. 26:B) (beads). Two unpublished gold beads are in the MMA (30.8.380-381), unfortunately without provenance.

⁹⁷⁰ ANDREWS 1994:92.

da II–III/Dynasty I times, one of several zoomorphic types in stone and handmade in clay but which have no relationship to the later vessel types.⁹⁷¹ A few later examples of this type indicate probable continuation of the tradition, although intermediary vessels are not forthcoming. Some Second Intermediate Period examples of this handmade clay bird type, now with a longer neck, looped coil handle on the back and more narrow aperture, are known; they are incised and infilled with white paste in the same particular tradition as the Tell el-Yehudiya vases.⁹⁷² They have little relationship with the *regardant* bird's head vessels that appear in Dynasty XVIII.⁹⁷³

A new zoomorphic vessel type, clearly representing the living bird, first appears in the New Kingdom. These are deep open oval covered container vessels (also called 'dishes') chiefly in ivory but also in wood (both often with inlaid decoration), limestone and travertine, and sometimes mixed materials.⁹⁷⁴ The head as handle was positioned either facing forward or shown *regardant*. Both varieties are well known, and suggest two aspects of a living, active bird.

On forward-facing birds, separately attached 'wings' constitute the lid of the large aperture, the lid thus being split down the middle and swiveling out open in both directions and meeting to close the container (see Fig. 22).⁹⁷⁵ The *regardant* type, on the other hand, has only a single oval swivel-lid swinging to either side, sometimes with the playful addition of a chick in the centre as handle (see Fig. 23).⁹⁷⁶ The distinction reflects observed living birds, with wings covering its back when swimming, and the single lid apparently as its stomach when seeming to 'float' on its back.⁹⁷⁷ The former may represent all or any of the three birds, but the latter type should represent only the swan, for two reasons: The swan is the only bird whose neck is sufficiently flexible to leave a gap when *regardant*.⁹⁷⁸ Several examples in this pose have one or

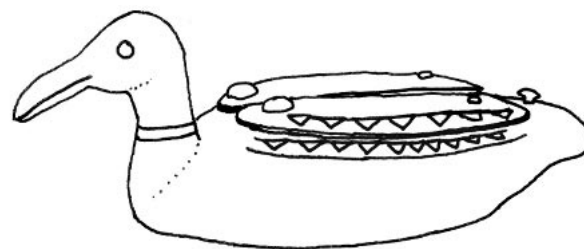


Fig. 22 Cosmetic container in the form of a swimming duck, with swivel-lid wings, ebony wood with ivory inlays, L: 16.5 cm, Egyptian, New Kingdom (VANDIER D'ABBADIE 1972:44–45 #118)

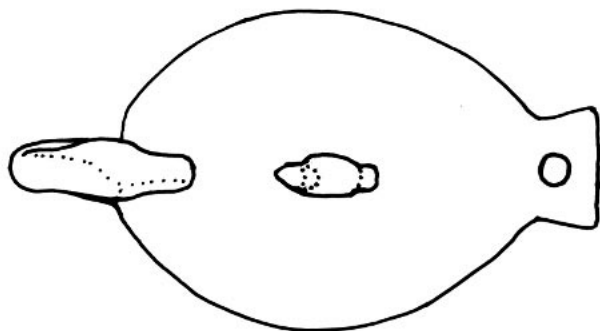
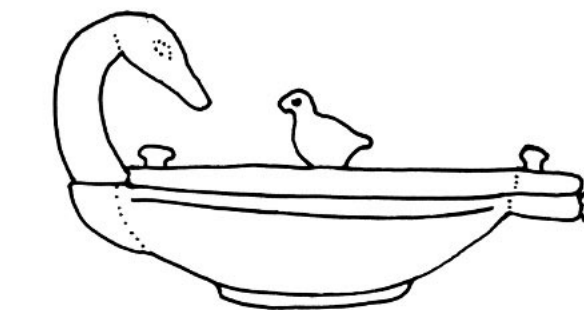


Fig. 23 Cosmetic container in the form of a swan swimming on its back with head *regardant*, having single swivel-lid with handle in the form of a chick, limestone, L: 16 cm, from Abydos, Egyptian, Dynasty XVIII (HERMANN 1932:pl. IX:b)

⁹⁷¹ EL-KHOULI 1978:II:738–739, III:pl. 61.bottom; B.G. ASTON 1994:98 #23. For clay examples, see BOURRIAU 1981:30–31 #37–38, with further references.

⁹⁷² HAYES 1953–1959:II:57, 58 fig. 28.left; BOURRIAU 1987:85, pl. XXIV.1.

⁹⁷³ See now ADLER 1996 for a detailed discussion and typology of these vessels.

⁹⁷⁴ HERMANN 1932:95–97, fig. 8, pl. IX; BROVARSKI *et al.* 1982:214–215 #260. That found at Gurob (PETRIE 1891:18, pl. XVIII:27) is of 'alabaster' with painted wooden wings.

⁹⁷⁵ E.g., VANDIER D'ABBADIE 1972:44–45 #117–119; see also Fitzwilliam Museum E47.1937. A variant form in wood and ivory pulls a 'swimming girl' who acts as the handle; see VANDIER D'ABBADIE 1972:11–13 #1–3; Barnett 1982:20 fig.

8, 21; BROVARSKI *et al.* 1982:246–247 #241 (there identified as a 'spoon' but note the winged lid). This arrangement does not appear before late Dynasty XVIII.

⁹⁷⁶ E.g., HERMANN 1932:pl. IX:b; Berlin 20595. A similar vessel is illustrated in a painting in the tomb of Kenamun (TT 93); see *Ibid.*:fig. 8; BROVARSKI *et al.* 1982:214–215, fig. 56. BM 5946 includes two small fish as well as the chick.

⁹⁷⁷ No living birds actually 'float' on their back, with head resting on their stomach, but they do 'roll' to one side in grooming; the single lid therefore may represent the one wing.

⁹⁷⁸ It should be pointed out, however, that the 'trussed' form with the majority of its neck separated from the body cannot represent the swan, as it was not consumed, and must therefore represent the goose or duck.

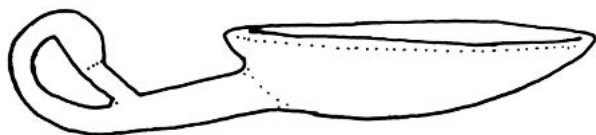


Fig. 24 Open bowl with long handle in the form of a bird's head *regardant*, alabaster, L: 17.2 cm, Egyptian, Dynasty XVIII (VANDIER D'ABBADIE 1972:34–35 #82)

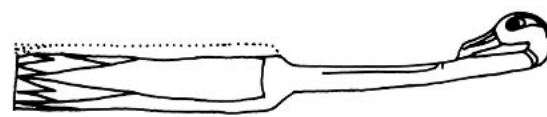


Fig. 25 'Cosmetic spoon' with handle termination in the form of a bird's head *regardant*, acacia wood, L: 20 cm, Egyptian, Dynasty XVIII, reign of Thutmose IV (VANDIER D'ABBADIE 1972:32–33 #78)

more chicks on their back, and again the swan is the only bird that acts in this manner. The head and neck, either as a single piece or two joined parts, usually are attached to the main body by one or two tenon(s) at head end, although sometimes the neck is an extension of the main body with just the head separately attached.⁹⁷⁹

A less common variety of the latter type has no evidence for a lid but instead is an open, oval bowl or dish with elongated neck and *regardant* head as handle (see Fig. 24), that also must represent the swan and not a duck or goose, whose necks are insufficient in length for the pose.⁹⁸⁰ Others, like the container with lid, have the (separately attached) head facing forward, as the 'swimming' variety discussed above, which again might represent any of the three birds. The earliest known, in stone, is from a tomb at Gurob dating to the reign of Amenhotep I, facing forward. These too are made of ivory, wood or a variety of stones, chiefly travertine, and again portray a living bird. Some have an excessively elongated neck, and the bird then sometimes again is called a 'swan'.⁹⁸¹ A later development of this type, more abstracted in presentation and recognisable only by its similarity to the earlier bird-bowls with articulated head, appears in Dynasty XIX.⁹⁸²

The elongated swan neck also lent itself for use as a handle for much smaller open 'dishes,' resulting in long-handled spoons of probably cosmetic application

(see Fig. 25) ending with a *regardant* head.⁹⁸³ Again, the media normally are wood, ivory and travertine, and they date chiefly to the New Kingdom although some Middle Kingdom examples are known.⁹⁸⁴ These spoons no longer have any pretence of reality or association with either living or dead bird; the head has become little more than a finial or terminus, reduced to a decorative motif presumably symbolic either of regeneration or erotic connotations depending on the use for which the spoon was intended. Either (or both) may be associated with their appearance on cosmetic spoons, bowls and jewellery, although their regenerative connotations more likely are associated with seals.

Use of bird head handles on open bowls and lidded dishes seems to have inspired the addition of this decorative element on amphorae, amphoriskoi and wide-neck amphoriskoi with two upright handles, found with either integral or separate potstand or a rounded bottom. So-called 'duck-head' handles are found both in Egypt and the Levant⁹⁸⁵ on stone, generally travertine but also serpentinite, vessels ranging in date in LB IB/IIA–IIB in the Levant and approximately the same period (much of Dynasty XVIII) in Egypt. The bird's beak faces downwards and, when represented, the eye is indicated by a vertical drilled depression on the handle. Some handles are quite abstracted, not actually recognisable as 'duck-heads' but instead with 'pads' at the handle/body junction; Christine Lilyquist had limited this 'pad' feature to

⁹⁷⁹ Nonetheless, sometimes the detailing will indicate that another bird is represented, e.g., VANDIER D'ABBADIE 1972:44 #117–118; BROVARSKI *et al.* 1982:214–215 #260, where the markings behind the eye or around the neck would likely indicate the pintail or ruddy shelduck.

⁹⁸⁰ PETRIE 1937:pl. XXXV:888–889; B.G. ASTON 1994:155 #189–190. Whilst both can twist their heads around, neither can leave a loop between head/neck and body.

⁹⁸¹ VON BISSING 1904–1907:I:pl. VIII:18566; HERMANN 1932:98–99, fig. 9; VANDIER D'ABBADIE 1972:34–35 #82. The particular type with elongated neck is rare.

⁹⁸² B.G. ASTON 1994:159 #206; SPARKS 1998:I:39–40, III:19–20 #142–146. One was recovered on Cyprus; JACOBSSON 1994:9–10 #12, pl. 40.12.

⁹⁸³ E.g., HERMANN 1932:99–102, fig. 10–11, pl. X, XI:a; HAYES 1953–1959:II:64–65; VANDIER D'ABBADIE 1972:32–33 #78–81; TBM 37.616E; unnumbered example in Dresden.

⁹⁸⁴ E.g., BOURRIAU 1988:145 #153. One example from Ugarit (Ras Shamra) is of faience; WEISS 1985:294 #145, 315 pl. 145.

⁹⁸⁵ SPARKS 1998:II:179–181 #1378–1384. They can also be found in unrelated alabastra in the Third Intermediate Period–Dynasty XXV (PETRIE 1937:pl. XXXVII:959; ASTON 1994:163 #219 variant). A wide-necked jar/amphora form with flat base and 'duck-head' handles is known in the Levant (SPARKS 1998:II:179–180 #1378–1379) and was imported onto Cyprus (JACOBSSON 1994:15–16 #49–51, pls. 4.49, 25.50). An unusual handled lentoid form, *Ibid.*:18 #62, pls. 27.62, 76–77.62, also was imported to Cyprus.

the reigns of Amenhotep II through Akhenaten (and possibly later) in Egypt, but recently an earlier one has been published, a four-handled pithoid jar dated to the joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III.⁹⁸⁶ An unusual Dynasty XVIII vase is carved on one side, probably as a goose or duck in this case, with wings spread over the body and the neck and head employed as the handle.⁹⁸⁷

The preferred media for all these vessel types should be emphasised, for the ivory and travertine that are the usual materials for these vessels are both white in colour, and thus probably chosen to represent the swan's colouration. Whilst some may represent the goose or duck, and wood too is a popular medium for some vessel types, the swan seems to have been the initial and usual bird represented. Thus these vessels are seen to be distinct from the 'trussed' bird vessels and containers, not only as a different kind of bird that is *not* consumed and *not* used to contain food, but also as a living bird and a vessel employed for entirely different purposes in the New Kingdom.

The head also appeared in like manner as decorative finials on folding stool legs of Dynasty XVIII and later date,⁹⁸⁸ certain musical instruments including the lute and asymmetrical lyre,⁹⁸⁹ and even on bronze scribal knives (papyrus cutters).⁹⁹⁰ These too appear as living birds, for the drilled eyes usually indicate the alertness of life.

Bird *regardant* terminals are found on necklaces⁹⁹¹ and combs, in much the same manner as the cosmetic spoon and other finials. A very few objects are dated to the later Second Intermediate Period, such as a comb now in the Metropolitan Museum of

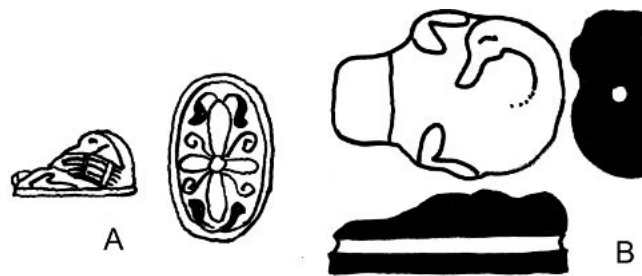


Fig. 26 A) Scaraboid in the form of a 'sleeping' duck or goose with head *regardant*, glazed stone, L: 12 mm, Egyptian, Dynasty XVIII (REISNER 1907–1958:II:pl. I:12547), B) Scaraboid in the form of a 'trussed' duck or goose with head *regardant* and twisted on back, faience, L: 13.5 mm, Egyptian, probably Dynasty XVIII (HERRMANN 1985:81 #317)

Art, but virtually all miniature representations of the bird with head *regardant* are limited in date to the New Kingdom.⁹⁹² The complete bird is seen as earrings,⁹⁹³ weights⁹⁹⁴ and amuletic beads or pendants in gold, semi-precious stones and glass, without inscribed face design.⁹⁹⁵ Other than the glass double-birds (with heads facing forward), the string-hole inevitably is through the length. Insofar as one can infer from the objects themselves, these also represent living birds. The neck is quite short, with both head and neck 'resting' on their back that may be for practical reasons having much to do with breakage problems on these small objects. Feathers and wings are indicated or the bird clearly is alert and aware, that is, alive.

The same is true of zoomorphic seals in the form of a bird with head *regardant*.⁹⁹⁶ Most include a base

⁹⁸⁶ LILYQUIST 1996:154; see now LILYQUIST 2002. She does not comment on the handle 'pads,' but does suggest that some features of this vessel derive from Aegean prototypes.

⁹⁸⁷ PETRIE 1937:pl. XXXIV:864, now in University College London. An anhydrite 'bowl' with two birds and an ape, the birds' bodies and wings similarly incised and their necks and heads and the monkey in high relief, is in the Cairo Museum; see VON BISSING 1904–1907:II:pl. VIII:18506; FAY 1998:32 fig. 24.

⁹⁸⁸ E.g., HAYES 1953–1959:II:202, fig. 116. On the majority of folding stools with bird's head terminal legs, the heads are not shown *regardant*, e.g., BROVARSKI *et al.* 1982:70–71 #41, 75 #47. The last is a headrest in the form of a folding stool.

⁹⁸⁹ *Lute*: HAYES 1953–1959:II:268–269. *Lyre*: HICKMANN 1949:154 #69404, 156 #69406, pl. XCIII, XCVI:A; ZIEGLER 1979:121 #128. See also MANNICHE 1975:107 ('Animal, heads as decoration, duck or goose').

⁹⁹⁰ BROVARSKI *et al.* 1982:286 #394, with further references. A fragmentary silver head of unknown function is also known; see LILYQUIST 2003:244 fig. 193. See also BROVARSKI *et al.* 1982:49–50 #20 for a butcher's knife blade terminal.

⁹⁹¹ ALDRED 1978:pl. 45; ANDREWS 1990:99 fig. 78. Dated to the reign of Ahmose at the beginning of Dynasty XVIII.

⁹⁹² HAYES 1953–1959:II:21, 137, fig. 74:top, of Dynasty XV ('Hyksos') date.

⁹⁹³ RIEFSTAHL 1968:42 #40, 101 #40.

⁹⁹⁴ PETRIE 1926:6, pl. IX:4815, 5120, 5233; BROVARSKI *et al.* 1982:61 #33.d, all with the head forward. Their use is indicated by their lack of drill-hole.

⁹⁹⁵ E.g., HERMANN 1932:87–89, pl. VI:a–b, d, f; COONEY 1976:20 #200, 163 #1881; ANDREWS 1981:79 #567, pl. 43:567. Glass examples have been dated as either 'New Kingdom' or 'Islamic,' for further discussion, see Goldstein 1979:83–84; BROVARSKI *et al.* 1982:170.

⁹⁹⁶ REISNER 1907–1958:II:2–3 #12537–12551, pl. I:12537–12551; PETRIE 1925b:16, pls. IX:314, 316, XXX:1326; HERMANN 1932:89–91, figs. 1–3, pl. VII:e, HORNUNG and STAEHELIN 1976:432 ('Enten-Skaraboiden'); JAEGER 1982:180–181, Ill. 512, figs. 129, 247–248, 250; ANDREWS 1994:61 fig. 60.b; MARTIN forthcoming:ms. 262 #496; MMA 26.7.642, .687. An unusual example in relief is illustrated by PETRIE 1925b:pl. IX:315.

on which is carved a face design, and again are drilled through the length (see Fig. 26A). The tail end almost inevitably is blunted, and they tend not to exceed 15 mm. in length although exceptions are known. Detail varies considerably, some being moulded and others merely incised with surface detail to identify the bird. Heads can be either completely *regardant* or (occasionally) merely at right angle to the body. The often quite detailed depiction of wings and feathers identifies them as living birds. They are but one of many seal forms, and the theme may have been an aesthetic choice. Weights in this form are much less detailed, often only with cursorily indicated head and flat bottom, without face design.⁹⁹⁷

Keel notes that seals do not appear before early Dynasty XVIII,⁹⁹⁸ and Hermann defines the chronological limits of both amuletic beads and seals in bird form as Dynasty XVIII only up to the reign of Thutmose IV,⁹⁹⁹ roughly the first two-thirds of the Dynasty, but gold amulets in bird form were presented at the jubilee of Amenhotep III and bird amulets have been recovered on late Dynastic mummies, so the date range is wider than this restricted dating implies. Containers in swan form continue on into Dynasty XIX, but by this time are quite abstracted.

On Crete

Faunal remains of doves and pigeons have been identified in Bronze Age contexts at Kommos and, both these and geese in Pleistocene contexts on Crete.¹⁰⁰⁰ No faunal remains of ducks or swans have been reported as yet, but conventional pictographs of a variety of birds including unspecified longer-necked waterfowl are known on a variety of early sealstones.¹⁰⁰¹ They are found in and on other media in later periods, and

waterbirds are seen in a marshy setting.¹⁰⁰² Some at least physically most resemble swans. The vast majority of ‘waterbirds’ are shown in active poses and with head facing forward, but the head sometimes is found *regardant* on active and upright standing birds, as one pose of many employed by the artisan;¹⁰⁰³ these are not considered in the present study.

Nonetheless, both seals and larger objects depicting the ‘bird with head *regardant*’ figure, similar enough to Egyptian types for comment, also have been found on the island.¹⁰⁰⁴ Some at least are imports, whilst others must be indigenous products. These images again may represent any of swans, geese, ducks or other types of waterfowl, and the terminology used above also is retained for this part of the present study, with the same proviso.

Pre-Palatial (and transitional Pre/Proto-Palatial)

Only two seal in the form of a bird with head *regardant* are dated to the Pre-Palatial period on the basis of its material and face design. Said to be from Kaloi Limenes {80} but without context, the first has a badly preserved ‘meander’ pattern as its face design. The other {570} has a combination of filled spaces and a ‘Zweipass’ face design in an awkward arrangement.¹⁰⁰⁵ One other seal face design {571} crosses over into the Proto-Palatial period, being dated to late MM IA–MM IB on the basis of its material and asymmetrical face design incorporating a four-petalled flower, although without context.

Although all three are immediately recognisable as birds with heads *regardant*, they are otherwise entirely distinct from each other. The Kaloi Limenes figure {80}, carved in ivory, is large, tall and thin, on a raised base with string-hole drilled through the

⁹⁹⁷ PETRIE 1926:6:pl. IX:2415, 2848. Both are haematite, and of Dynasty XVIII date.

⁹⁹⁸ KEEL 1995b:68 §148. The SIP context date for the example he quotes from Esna is highly dubious.

⁹⁹⁹ HERMANN 1932:88, 89.

¹⁰⁰⁰ LAX 1996:188 table 15.2; SHAW and SHAW 1996:195–198.

¹⁰⁰¹ See EVANS 1909:432–433 fig. 103/table XIV:78–83. OLIVIER and GODART 1996:*passim* do not consider them hieroglyphs. The two-dimensional figures are not included in the present study.

¹⁰⁰² See MORGAN 1988:63–67, VANSCHOONWINKEL 1996:378–381 #23–78. Some have been identified by species, including ‘duck,’ ‘pigeon’ and ‘dove,’ but these may not always be accurate. No equivalent to HOULIHAN 1986 has been attempted for Aegean bird illustrations, as they are not sufficiently detailed or accurate enough for species identification, but note Morgan’s discussion of individual char-

acteristics and identification of geese, ducks, swans and doves in certain illustrations.

¹⁰⁰³ E.g., CMS II.2:#101, 222, 298, 334, II.5:#309, IV:#11; IX:#2, 11; XII:#62, XIII:#85. MORGAN 1988:65 considers some to be preening their feathers. See also some waterbirds associated with cats {530; 572}, discussed in Chapter 15.

¹⁰⁰⁴ See Distribution Map 32. Note that all periods are represented on this map.

¹⁰⁰⁵ An EM II(A?) seal from Tholos E at Archanes was described as possibly representing a bird turning its head backwards (i.e., *regardant*) (HM Σ-K 2586, by SAKELLARAKIS and SAPOUNA-SAKELLARAKI 1997:II:672 fig. 742:bottom left, 686 fig. 779:right). This apparently was meant only to suggest the basic shape and not to identify the seal as a bird *regardant* form as such (Diamantis Panagiotopoulos, personal communication, 26 January 2000), and is not included in the present catalogue.

neck.¹⁰⁰⁶ The ‘white-piece’ figure {570} is wide and squat, baseless and with string-hole through the lower body. The last {571}, of glazed bone, is similar to the Kaloi Limiones figure but for its flatter shape and square base, but with similar string-hole position. All have string-holes through the width, and indicate a minimum of detail. Only their eyes give the impression at least of a living bird, although no surface details are marked. All fit entirely within the Minoan repertoire of zoomorphic seal forms of this period, and an indigenous origin for the type, and for these seals, should be accepted. Noticeably, the later pieces are flatter in relation to their width, a characteristic development in seal shapes. Similar seal forms are not known in Egypt at this time.

Proto-Palatial

Only one example {528} clearly is dated to the Proto-Palatial period, by its hard stone material and face design of a standing bull.¹⁰⁰⁷ Similar in physical appearance to {570}, the bird is further accentuated by a series of engraved lines to indicate the eyes and wing feathers, and thus indicates its live but ‘sleeping’ state; thus, it might represent any of the three bird types. Like the earlier seals, its string-hole is through the width.

Neo-Palatial

One seal, quite different in appearance from the other examples, was dated to the Neo-Palatial by Yule on the basis of its face design.¹⁰⁰⁸ Recovered without context at Palaikastro {436}, it is in the form of the Egyptian ‘trussed goose’ hieroglyph sign (G 54) with clearly indicated bare limbs and lack of feathers. Its face design is Minoan, an irregular series of lines and one drilled circle that might be considered ‘tectonic ornament.’ However, its origin is debatable for, although the image and presentation clearly relate to the Egyptian hieroglyph, the trussed goose as seal or amulet as quite rare in Egypt itself, and the combination of plucked limbs and head directly aligned with the length of the body is unknown.¹⁰⁰⁹ If Egyptian, the face design must have been a Minoan addi-

tion and another example of such objects to be converted by a Minoan artisan. The string-hole is through the length, a feature characteristic of Egyptian seals and beads, but there is no indication of any face design being removed or covered over by the Minoan design now present; likely the ‘stomach’ was shaved flat to provide a surface for the design. Zoomorphic seal forms are rare by MM III.

A bead/weight rather crudely representing the trussed goose or duck *regardant* {437}, also described by Evans as found at Palaikastro, is rather elongated and drilled through the width. It may be a Minoan product, possibly a crude attempt to reproduce the Egyptian type exemplified by {436}. Another, unillustrated, example is {529}, but little can be said of it. Evans dated it to LM, but the face design as described seems more Proto-Palatial.

The rock-crystal ‘duck-bowl’ from Grave O at Mycenae {591} is a (probably late) LM IA version of the Egyptian type,¹⁰¹⁰ exported to the Mainland and interred in LH IB (\approx late LM IA). It strongly resembles the less common Dynasty XVIII deep lidless bowl, but the Mycenae bowl predates the type in Egypt itself. It seems difficult to believe that its inspiration was Egyptian, as the most prolific type contemporary with this vessel is the anhydrite ‘trussed’ duck flask, an Upper (not Lower) Egyptian form. It may have been a Minoan artisan’s version of the handled dish, and its inspiration instead may have been Levantine.¹⁰¹¹ Despite its generally quoted description as a ‘duck,’ the evidence of living birds actually limits identification of the bird depicted here to a swan.

In view of the large number of imported and indigenous objects during the Neo-Palatial period discussed in other chapters of the present work, it is surprising that so few examples of the *regardant* bird image are known in this period. Nonetheless, the few examples in this period are the earliest evidence of possible importation and derivation of this Egyptian theme.

One other object should be mentioned here. The large ‘handle’ fragment incorporating the bird’s head {310 (A)} may derive from a large container vessel of

¹⁰⁰⁶ Of interest for the study of ivory artefacts on the island, ancestral species of the elephant and the hippopotamus both are known on Crete; see MOLL *et al.* 1996 and SPAAN 1996. No mention is made of surviving ivory fragments amongst the skeletal material found.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Dated by YULE 1981:95 to MM IB–III.

¹⁰⁰⁸ YULE 1980:95.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Egyptian trussed goose or duck amulets and seals depict

the head turned on its side and long curved neck, indicating a wrung neck; see n. 969, above.

¹⁰¹⁰ Rock-crystal (‘quartz-crystal’) was not employed in the manufacture of large vessels in Egypt after Dynasty II, nor for miniature vessels after Dynasty VI; see B.G. ASTON 1994:64.

¹⁰¹¹ Interestingly, it is not included in ADLER’s (1996) catalogue.

some form, or perhaps it and its apparently related piece **{310 (B)}** are from two separate vessels. Whatever their original use(s) had been, they clearly cannot be from a musical instrument. Their dating is uncertain, but most likely they are Neo-Palatial.

Final Palatial

A bead from an LM II–IIIA1 chamber tomb at Nea Halikarnassos **{417}**¹⁰¹² is more recognisable as an Egyptian type, a ‘sleeping’ bird with long uneven engraved lines on both sides to indicate wing and tail feathers, and string-hole through the length. Although numerous Egyptian characteristics are present, it is excessively large for an Egyptian bead, and instead originally may have been a weight.¹⁰¹³ Egyptian seals tend to be much smaller and made of glazed faience, although hard stones are not unknown.¹⁰¹⁴

The ivory bird head fragment from an LM IIIA1 context in Tholos B at Archanes **{59}** most probably is an import but just might be Minoan work as the proportions of the head are unlike Egyptian examples. The ‘kink’ in its neck strongly suggests it was part of a ‘spoon’ terminal or other finial in swan *regardant* form, like Fig. 25.¹⁰¹⁵

The incompletely-preserved Minoan ivory pyxis from an LM IIIA2 (early) grave at Zapher Papoura **{263}** is unique in its configuration of the ‘split’ neck, but its integral neck and body argue for a pos-

sibly Levantine rather than Egyptian origin since others with similar integral neck and body are found in the Levant.¹⁰¹⁶ Its interior cavity originally was covered by a single swinging lid familiar to Dynasty XVIII ‘swan’ *regardant* containers. It probably was employed as a cosmetic container, to judge from both the Egyptian comparanda and the common use of other forms of ivory boxes in the Aegean.¹⁰¹⁷

All objects are found in wealthy tombs, on Crete limited to Knossos and its immediate vicinity at Archanes and Nea Halikarnassos and must again be considered imported luxury goods for a restricted (and wealthy) clientele only in the Knossos region.

End Palatial and Post-Palatial

No example of this image can be placed in this period, although active waterfowl with heads *regardant* are found. The image clearly did not continue beyond the Knossos region and the Final Palatial period.

Commentary

There are only a small number of seals on Crete in the form of the bird with head *regardant*, a total of six certain and one other possible examples. Unfortunately, all but one **{417}** are private purchases without context, five of them even without site context on the island. The possibility of forgery cannot be excluded in all but the one excavated case.¹⁰¹⁸ If orig-

¹⁰¹² The tomb context extends to LM IIIC, but the seal – as the vast majority of its contents – is an early interment. Its face design, if any, is not stated in publication.

¹⁰¹³ Two bird *regardant* beads of similar large scale are known from the Mainland, from LH IIIA tombs at Dendra and Mycenae (SAKELLARAKIS 1971:224–225, pl. 50:γ–δ). Both also are of hard, semi-precious stones, and have surprisingly small heads. One also has engraved lines to indicate the wings. Both, however, have the string-hole through the width, not the length more characteristic of Minoan bird *regardant* examples. Neither has a face design.

¹⁰¹⁴ E.g., ANDREWS 1994:61 fig. 60.b.

¹⁰¹⁵ No other ivory ‘spoons’ or other objects with a *regardant* bird’s head terminal are known from the Aegean area, but a bronze knife handle from Perati (NMA 8152) is in that form; see SAKELLARAKIS 1971:pl. 51:β; IAKOVIDES 1980:90–93, fig. 11:upper.

¹⁰¹⁶ The Mycenae vessel (NMA 9506) seems to be a parallel example; see SAKELLARAKIS 1971. Sakellarakis’s reconstruction of this vessel is heavily based on **{263}**. However, the carved – not broken – rounded top edges of the upper terminus of **{263}** and the deliberately open ‘split’ along its inner outline are unknown on *regardant* goose cosmetic containers from Egypt or elsewhere in the Mediterranean. The NMA piece, however, should be reconstructed with a *regardant* bird’s head handle, but more likely with a

solid, not ‘split,’ neck. The neck fragment found in 1915 at Mycenae, like all others recovered, is solid (Olga Krzyszkowska, personal communication, 03 June 2001). See below, n. 1017. SAKELLARAKIS’s (1971:211–212) comparison with images of boats with zoomorphic prows illustrated on a ring from Mochlos and a sealing from Aghia Triadha (*Ibid.*:figs.10–12) is illusory. Whatever the animal depicted on these seals, both the presence of ears and a mane on the former and plume on the latter are inconsistent with their identification as a bird’s head.

¹⁰¹⁷ An almost complete container was found in LH IIIA Tomb 31 at Ialysos on Rhodes, and another at Mycenae (NMA 9506). A head fragment, probably from a similar container, was recovered in LH IIIA Chamber Tomb I.2 at Asine, and a neck fragment was found at Mycenae (NM 1090; KRZYSZKOWSKA 1988:234 n. 4; 2005:198 #A2). FRÖDIN and PERSSON (1938:388 #3) proposed that the Asine head was attached to a wooden body; see SAKELLARAKIS 1971:222–223, pl. 34–35, 48–49, 50:α.

¹⁰¹⁸ Seal **{417}** was recovered from a controlled excavation. However, the three early (Pre- and Proto-Palatial period) seals were also early purchases, and at the time the bird *regardant* would have been an unusual shape for a potential forger to choose. Some at least may indeed have been genuine antiquities.

inal, *almost* all are Minoan products rather than imported objects, for their face designs are Minoan in style and iconography. The seals all are dated by face design, from Proto-Palatial to Neo-Palatial, virtually all earlier than the appearance of seals in the form of birds with head *regardant* in Egypt itself. No two are alike, either in form or face design.¹⁰¹⁹ Forms range from rudimentary to detailed representations, again suggesting the occasional inspired choice of individual artisans within a period when zoomorphic seal forms were the norm.

Egyptian amulets and seals in this form are not found before the New Kingdom and, if indeed not forgeries, the Pre- and Proto-Palatial examples can only be an indigenous type, uninfluenced by Egyptian sources. The Neo-Palatial pieces are unusual for the period, as the vast majority of seals at that time are lentoids, amygdaloids and other simple shapes; they may be imports, with strong but problematic parallels in Egypt. One {436} in particular resembles the Egyptian ‘trussed goose/duck’ hieroglyph quite closely, an image very rarely found as an Egyptian scaraboid or amulet, and of different appearance than this particular piece.¹⁰²⁰ The other {417} clearly is derived from – and may be – an Egyptian original. Evans argues that three pieces {436–437; 529} are in fact weights, but few good parallels are known in Egypt itself.

As we possess no clue as yet to any possible specific Minoan use of the bird with head *regardant* as seal, any relationship to Egyptian iconography must remain unknown. Waterfowl also were native to the island, to judge from the quantity of Neo-Palatial representations of the bird and its observed characteristics, habitat and activities depicted, as well as faunal remains.¹⁰²¹ Seals in the form of a bird with head *regardant* may have possessed some amuletic value on Crete, quite independent of any Egyptian

implications. Only seals {417} and {436}, if they are Minoan, may have been derived from an Egyptian model.¹⁰²² Waterfowl with their heads *regardant*, many in action scenes and some at least preening their feathers, also are known on seal face designs, especially in the Neo-Palatial period;¹⁰²³ only one depicts a possible but unlikely ‘sleeping’ bird with head apparently resting on its back.¹⁰²⁴ Waterfowl also appear on the Neo-Palatial to End Palatial ‘cat and bird’ seal face designs, some with the head turned back.¹⁰²⁵

The larger examples of the bird *regardant* image initially appear to have been a feature more of Mycenaean rather than Minoan taste. The rock-crystal bowl {591}, although of Minoan manufacture, was recovered in an élite Mycenaean grave. The ivory pyxis {263} is from a wealthy tomb at Knossos dated to Final Palatial, a period of overwhelmingly ‘mycenaeanising’ taste on the island and especially in this region. There are, additionally, a sizable number of similar ivory containers from Mycenaean sites.¹⁰²⁶ The image was employed in the Aegean in the same – although more limited – manner as in Egypt, on vessels and containers, contemporary with Egyptian usage and popularity.¹⁰²⁷

A number of Egyptian cosmetic containers in the form of a swan with head *regardant* are found at numerous sites in the Near East,¹⁰²⁸ and serve to indicate these vessels were popular throughout the eastern Mediterranean region. Their period of greatest popularity in the Aegean (and elsewhere), Final Palatial/LH II–IIIA, lies well within the period of their Dynasty XVIII popularity in Egypt. Almost all the Aegean examples almost certainly are either Egyptian or Levantine imports. If any containers in the form of a swan with head *regardant* found in the Aegean are indigenous products, they are direct copies without Aegean characteristics to betray their origin.

¹⁰¹⁹ The difficulties encountered in dating by seal shape may be emphasised by their visual similarity to other seals elsewhere. Compare, for example, the profiles of these Pre-Palatial seals with 7th–6th c. BC Mesopotamian seals, KEEL 1991:131–132 #163–165, pl.163–165, with {417; 528; 570}. Apart from the face designs, their main differences are the lack of incised detail and the different position of the string-hole.

¹⁰²⁰ See also {437}, described as of similar form.

¹⁰²¹ See MORGAN 1988:63–66.

¹⁰²² The rarity of Egyptian models for the Palaikastro piece leaves its origin there in doubt.

¹⁰²³ See YULE 1981:132 Motif 11:A, pl. 8–9; Motif 11:A; YOUNGER 1988a:196–201.

¹⁰²⁴ KENNA 1960:131 #297. It is not included in the present catalogue.

¹⁰²⁵ {530; 572}; see Chapter 15.

¹⁰²⁶ Virtually all are noted by SAKELLARAKIS 1971:*passim*.

¹⁰²⁷ MORGAN 1988:63, 66–67, pls. 94, 96 also has drawn attention to the use of doves as ships’ emblems on the West House fresco. The waterbird has no such association.

¹⁰²⁸ See SAKELLARAKIS 1971:*passim*, figs. 7, 21, 24, pls. 44–45; WEISS 1985:300–310 #153; SPARKS 1998:II:18–20 #138–147. ADLER 1996:99–109 catalogues those from Greece, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Cyprus.

In terms of cross-cultural chronology, little is gained from study of the seals and beads/amulets in the form of a bird with head *regardant*, although the image clearly was an indigenous Minoan development long before its appearance in Egypt. However, the possibility of an Egyptian adoption of the type from Crete seems unlikely and is not suggested. So few exist in both cultures, that most likely the two are entirely separate phenomena. The few instances

of the form as, or on, container vessels all fit well within the period of their use in Egypt as well as the Levant, and show a contemporary taste for the type.

Thus, they merely indicate general similarity of a fashion, with the exception of the Mycenae bowl. This vessel seems to be an inspired 'one-off' product, of questionable inspiration, and the type seems not very much in the Minoan taste.