

The Phoenix according to Ovid

" Now all these things get their life's beginning from some other creature ; but there is one bird which itself renews and reproduces its own being. The Assyrians call it the phoenix. It does not live on seeds and green things, but on the gum of frankincense and the juices of amomum. This bird, you may know, when it has completed five centuries of its life, builds for itself a nest in the topmost branches of a waving palm-tree, using his talons and his clean beak; and when he has covered this over with cassia bark and spikes of smooth nard, broken cinnamon and yellow myrrh, he takes his place upon it and so ends his life amidst the odours. And from his father's body, so they say, a little phoenix springs up which is destined to attain the same length of years. When age has given him strength, and he is able to carry burdens, he relieves the tall palm's branches of the heavy nest, piously bears his own cradle and his father's tomb through the thin air, until, having reached the city of the Sun, he lays the nest down before the sacred doors of the Sun's temple.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XV, 390 – 410 translation by Frank Justus Miller, courtesy of the Internet Archive.