THE DE AVE PHOENICE OF LACTANTIUS:

A COMMENTARY AND INTRODUCTION

by

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B.A., University of British Columbia, 1976

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of Classics)

We accept this thesis as conforming

to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 1978

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this thesis is to provide a commentary on the De Ave Phoenice of Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius that takes into consideration all recent scholarship on the development of the "myth" of the Phoenix. The thesis consists of four chapters.

The first chapter contains a biography and summary of the works of Lactantius together with a discussion of the poem's authorship. The second chapter consists of a discussion of the genesis of the myth of the phoenix, listing examples in chronological order, to A.D. 300, of the literature pertaining to the phoenix that may have been sources for Lactantius.

Chapter Three consists of a text and translation of the poem. Chapter Four, the major portion of the thesis, is devoted to a commentary, which concentrates on historical, political and artistic implications in the poem, rather than on textual and lexical matters. A general conclusion concerning the character and date of the poem is added.

The texts of the more important sources used in Chapter Two are appended to the main body of the thesis and are followed by a bibliography.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. A.A. Barrett for the many hours devoted to helping me write this thesis. I would also like to thank the members of the Department of Classics, in particular Mrs. E.A. Bongie and Mr. G.N. Sandy. In addition, thanks are also due to the staff of the Department of Inter-Library Loan, whose industry on my behalf and cheerfulness ought not pass without mention.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Certain difficulties were encountered during the writing of Chapter Three. Since I have no command of either Hebrew or Syriac, translations of two works have been used, namely of the Midrash Rabah and the Syriac Didascalia. Also, no critical text of the Apocolypse of Baruch was available to me, and, accordingly, that of J.Hubaux and M. Leroy, Le Myth du Phenix,(Liege 1939) has been reprinted. The text of Clement used is that of Migne, which similarly lacks an apparatus criticus.

On the whole, the text of the De Ave Phoenice followed has been that of Riese, included in the Anthologia Latina,(Leipzig 1906). Close attention has been paid to Brandt-Laubmann's very useful edition of 1893, which contains the text and, in addition, all ancient testimonia and fragments, as well as an index verborum et rerum.

Amongst the secondary sources, extensive use has been made of R. Van Den Broek's The Myth of the Phoenix,(Leiden 1972), which will henceforth simply be referred to as "Broek".

CHAPTER ONE

LACTANTIUS: LIFE AND WORKS

The De Ave Phoenice is generally ascribed to Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius, a rather shadowy figure. Both the period in which he lived, with its intermittent persecution of Christians and political unrest, and the very nature of the literature of the Christian Apologist conspire to give a very incomplete biographical portrait.

Our primary source of information is St. Jerome, De Viris Illustribus 80, who says: "Firmianus, who was also known as Lactantius, was a pupil of Arnobius. Under the principate of Diocletian (sub Diocletiano principe) he was summoned, along with the grammarian Flavius, whose books in verse about medicine are still extant, and taught rhetoric at Nicomedia. Because of the fact that it was a Greek-speaking state there was a paucity of students and he turned to writing. We have his Symposium, which he wrote as a young man in Africa, and a travelogue, composed in hexameters, of his journey from Africa to Nicomedia, another book entitled Grammaticus, a magnificent work called the Anger of God, seven books of the Divine Institutions Against the Pagans as well as an Epitome of the same work in one volume untitled, two books addressed to Asclepias, one book about persecution, four books of letters to Probus, two to Severus, two books of letters to his own pupil Demetrianus and to the same one book about the craftsmanship of God or rather the Fashioning of Man. In extreme old age he was tutor of Constantine's son Crispus in Gaul who was afterwards killed by his father."

Some scholars have assumed from the above that Lactantius was born in Africa.[1] They have been unable to prove this conclusively. An inscription

published in 1883 mentions the death of a certain "Seius Clebonia also known as Lactantius"...Seius Clebonianus qui et Lactantius V an vicsit anis XXXV (sic).[2] The cognomen Lactantius, unattested elsewhere, may well be that of the same family which produced this unfortunate Clebonia and the rhetorician who concerns us. The inscription was found at Cirta some 170 kms. from the site of Sicca in eastern Numidia,where Arnobius taught,a not unreasonable distance for a bright young student to be sent, if indeed he was born in the same area as the aforementioned Clebonia. We must accept Jerome's word for the notion that he was a student of Arnobius of Sicca, for at no place does Lactantius mention either Arnobius or Sicca. It does however seem likely that, in the travelogue, mentioned by Jerome but unfortunately no longer extant, Lactantius made some mention of the place from which he was departing. Augustine, De Doct. Christ.2., informs us in addition that Lactantius was educated in Africa. We can detect the influence of other African Apologists: Tertullian, Minucius Felix, and especially Cyprian.[3]

His date of birth also presents a problem. We know from Jerome Chron.ad a.Abr. 2333 that Lactantius, "in extreme old age", was tutor to Crispus, Constantine's son, and Licinius, the son of Licinius Augustus". We also know that these two were made Caesars in the year 317 along with the other son of Constantine, who bore the same name as his father.[4] In 321 the father nominated these same two sons as consuls. It is safe to assume that Crispus' education was over by 321 at the latest and Lactantius "in extreme old age" must have accordingly been born between 230 and 250. We know nothing about the date of his death except for a reference in the

Chronicon of Lucius Dexter, a completely unreliable source, to Lactantius' death (in abject poverty) at Nicaea in 317. Jülicher, however, calls this chronicle "die grosse Fälschung eines spanischen Jesuiten vor 1620";[5] consequently we cannot take this evidence seriously.

Despite the lack of biographical information about Lactantius, we can, nevertheless, deduce certain things about him from his extant works. He tells us, Div. Inst. 5.2, De Mort. Pers. 13, that he was teaching oratory in Nicomedia at the time of the destruction of the temple there. He had pursued the profession of a rhetorician for a long time but had some reservations about it. It is safe to assume that Lactantius was not an ordained priest.[6] He was consequently compelled to make his livelihood in the established school system which was structured in a way conducive to the glorifying of the ideals of a pagan education not a christian one, for the christians did not develop their own system of education in Graeco-Roman times,[7] at least not until Constantine's time.

A cursory glance at his writings informs us that he was an extremely well-educated man, both in pagan literature and in Christian literature, who fully warranted his later appellation of the "the Christian Cicero"[8] and Jerome's praise (Ep.70.5) as "vir omnium suo tempore eloquentissimus". His knowledge of Greek literature was significantly shallow,[9] a characteristic balanced by the enormous volume of his letters, which caused a certain Damasus Epist.Ad Hier.70.5 to complain in a letter to Jerome that most of Lactantius' letters stretched to a thousand lines of verse, rarely touching on doctrine, and that any that chanced to be short were of more interest to scholars than to himself because they pertained to metre and the geographical location of places. Monceaux suggests that Lactantius had also studied the Law, although

Lactantius informs us, Div. Inst.3.13, that he never in fact engaged in public speaking.

Lactantius established such a reputation for himself as a teacher of rhetoric, probably in Sicca, that, circa 290, he was summoned, according to De Mort Pers.7.8-11, to Nicomedia to help in Diocletian's plan to make another Rome there. In Nicomedia, when the persecution was started by Galerius, or by Galerius acting under Diocletian's orders, Lactantius' position must have become rather tenuous. We learn from the opening chapter of the De Opificio Dei, which is generally assigned to this period, that he was in dire straits (in summis necessariis) very probably through a dearth of students. Diocletian had fixed the wages of grammarians and rhetoricians in his edict of 301 De Maximis Pretiis, 7.70-71: grammarians could draw only 200 denarii per pupil per month, rhetors 250; in addition to this, Galerius was waging a war on the litterati and schools.

Most scholars agree that it was at this time that Lactantius turned his hand to composing his magnum opus, the Divine Institutes. Also, Constantine was kept, first by Diocletian and then by Galerius after the abdication of Dio in 305, as a virtual hostage; his place of detainment was almost certainly Nicomedia where he may have met Lactantius. Constantine must have left Nicomedia shortly after Galerius' accession since he is on hand to be proclaimed emperor by his troops in York in July of 306.

Lactantius' whereabouts for the next few years are very vague and uncertain. He certainly must have left Nicomedia for he was not in that city when he published the fifth book of the Divine Institutes for he says... vidi ego in Bithynia as though the latter were a very distant place.[11] Later, De Mort Pers.35.1, 48.1, he gives a detailed description of when and where

in Nicomedia the edicts of Galerius and Milan were published in 311 and 313 respectively which seems to indicate his presence in Nicomedia. Between 305 and 311 his whereabouts are unknown. It is tempting to assume that he was in Gaul with Constantine enjoying the religious freedom accorded by Constantine in 307, but unfortunately there is no evidence for this. Lactantius may simply have been adopting a low profile during the difficult times of persecution.

He seems to have returned to Nicomedia for a few years before going to Gaul to become the Latin teacher of Crispus. The latter had been made Caesar in March of 317 and was a father by 322.[12] His education, then, must have taken place at some time anterior to 320, the year that Constantine appointed a separate praetorian prefect as an advisor to Crispus on active duty on the Rhine.[13] It is probable that Lactantius died shortly after this date for we hear nothing further about him.

The extant Lactantian corpus resembles the list given by Jerome except that none of his letters have survived, the Symposium is lost, as is the travelogue and the Grammaticus. A manuscript in Milan contains fragments of an otherwise unknown work entitled De Motibus Animi, which attempts to explain the affections of the soul.[14] Jerome unfortunately makes no mention of the very poem which concerns us, the De Ave Phoenice, an omission which has caused many scholars to doubt its authenticity in the Lactantian corpus. Similarly, however, Jerome fails to mention the De Motibus Animi, which omission indicates that he did not have the complete works of Lactantius.

The question arises as to whether Lactantius was born a Christian or was converted at some time in his career. Most modern theologians subscribe to the view that he was born a pagan and turned to Christianity later in life,

perhaps in Nicomedia.[15] On investigation, however, the evidence seems to be, at best, ambiguous. Rose states that he may have been a pagan.[16] There is doubt, not that the author of the Divine Institutes was a Christian but rather about the precise nature of his Christian faith. The Council of Nicaea had yet to be held and not only was the Imperial government mystified about the new religion but so were the Christians themselves, many of whom identified the physical sun with Christ, much to the chagrin of St. Augustine, Civ. Dei.19.23.

Lactantius, however, was a good Christian according to Jerome, Epist. 60, and is compared by him to Tertullian, Cyprian, Hilarius, Minucius Felix, Victorinus and Arnobius. It is less easy to decide whether he was a good Roman. His absolute faith in the scriptures and the Sybilline Oracles forces him to believe (Div.Inst.7.15.11) that one day the Roman hegemony will be broken and rule will return to the East... Romanum nomen....horret animus dicere....tolletur e terra et imperium in Asia revertetur. His overall view of the empire is, at least at this stage in his career, very hostile..quae sunt enim patriae commoda nisi alterius civitatis aut gentis incommoda, id est fines propagare aliis violenter ereptos, augere imperium, vectigalia facere maiora? He states quite openly that killing is wrong, even under the guise of bringing a charge against someone which may incur the death penalty.. ..ita neque militare iusto licebit, cuius militia est ipsa iustitia, neque vero accusare quemquam crimine capitali, quia nihil distat utrumne ferro an verbo potius occidas, quoniam occisio ipsa prohibetur. He must, however, have revised his position on this, for in the De Mort. Pers.20, whose authorship has also

been questioned, the presence of Christians in Galerius' army draws not a single note of surprise or even rebuke. Similarly no judgement is passed on Constantine when he sentences Maximian to death. Clearly if we accept Lactantian authorship for this we must also accept that his beliefs were a little more flexible now that imperial rule favoured the Christians.

Pichon had difficulty in attributing the authorship of the Phoenix to a Christian Lactantius;[17] the abundance of essentially pagan symbols led him to believe that it must have been written before Lactantius became a Christian. We have already seen that Lactantius was a very versatile man and there seems no reason to prevent us from assuming that he worked comfortably with this material too, at any stage of his career, whether converted or not. The poem does fall more happily into the later part of his career, however, for reasons that will be explored more fully later.

In conclusion, a brief summary will be given of the arguments and counterpoints against Lactantian authorship.[18] It has been argued by Baehrens, Ribbeck, Birt and others that firstly no ancient author mentions the phoenix poem amongst his works, secondly that the allusions to pagan mythology in different parts of the poem militate against its Christian authorship and, thirdly, that the elements of sun worship cannot be reconciled with the beliefs of a Christian Apologist. Baehrens offers a fourth possibility, or rather hypothesis, that the oldest mention of Lactantian authorship of a phoenix poem in Gregory of Tours De Cursu Stellarum 12 is in fact a reference to the lost travelogue poem because they cannot be reconciled completely with the poem as we have it. All the above statements are intended to weaken the argument for Lactantian authorship.

There are four main arguments that support the traditional authorship,

examples of which are cited in the commentary. Firstly, of the three major manuscripts, Parisinus 13048 (P) (by far the best), Veronensis 163 (V) and Leidensis Vossianus (L), both (P) and (V) mention Lactantius by name. This in itself does not prove Lactantian authorship since both these manuscripts may well date after the grammatical work De Dubiis Nominibus, which could have been the source for the manuscript tradition. This text on the gender of nouns is used as the second argument for the status quo on authorship. It is in a ninth-century hand but may be older. It cites Isidore of Seville and thus is probably not earlier than 600. It is interesting from our point of view, for it cites nouns used by Lactantius and their gender no fewer than eight times and quotes much of the lines from the phoenix poem where the words occur.[19]

Thirdly, as was mentioned before, Gregory of Tours is familiar with a work on the phoenix by Lactantius. The differences between the two accounts are usually explained on the ground that Gregory is quoting from a defective memory.

The last, and in many ways the most convincing, argument for attributing the poem to Lactantius is the fact that there are striking similarities between the acknowledged works of the church father and the De Ave Phoenice, not only in ideas but also grammatical usages, fondness for the same figures of speech, and admiration for the same wide selection of classical writers.

There is nothing in the poem which we might consider inconsistent with the erudition of a rhetorician and an apologist; indeed if one criticizes the poem, it is on the very grounds of over-usage of others' ideas and a superfluity of panegyrical repetition, characteristics of many of the poets of the early fourth century.

Notes to Chapter One

1 P. Monceaux, Histoire Littéraire de l'Afrique Chrétienne (Paris 1905) vol. 3 pages 287-297 and A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, J. Morris, The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire (Cambridge 1971) vol. 3 page 338.

2 CIL 8.7241 & 17667.

3 Monceaux, loc. cit.

4 Cambridge Ancient History (Cambridge 1939) vol. 12 page 694.

5 RE 5.1.297.

6 T. Haarhoff, The Schools of Gaul (Oxford 1920) 167.

7 H.-I. Marrou, Histoire de l'Education dans l'Antiquité (Paris 1948) 422.

8 Pic de la Mirandole, Opera Omnia (Leiden 1573) 21.

9 J. Stevenson, The Life and Literary Activity of Lactantius, Studia Patristica 63 (1957) 663.

10 Monceaux, op. cit, 289. De Mort. Pers. 7,8-11.

11 Stevenson, op. cit., 664.

12 A.H.M. Jones, op. cit. page 233.

13 E.G. Wilson, Studies in the Lives of the Sons of Constantine (diss. University of British Columbia 1977) page 14.

14 S. Brandt & G. Laubman, C. Firmiani Lactanti opera Omnia (Leipzig 1899) vol. 2 page 157.

15 Stevenson, op. cit. page 661. E.J. Goodspeed, A History of Early Christian Literature (Chicago 1942) p. 284.

16 H.J. Rose, A Handbook of Latin Literature (New York 1960) page 481.

17 R. Pichon, Lactance (Paris 1901) page 465.

18 M.C. Fitzpatrick, Lactanti De Ave Phoenice (Diss. Philadelphia 1933) pages 31-37, discussed this more fully.

19 Grammatici Latini, Ed. H. Keil (Hildesheim 1961) vol. 5 pages 567-594.

CHAPTER TWO

PRE-LACTANTIAN ACCOUNTS

The precise origins of all myths are, by the nature of myth, cloaked in obscurity. That of the phoenix is no exception. The earliest undisputed allusion to the phoenix in classical literature is in the De Defectu Oraculorum 11 of Plutarch, where Hesiod is reported to have said "the cawing crow lives for nine generations of men who are in their prime; the deer outlives four crows, the crow three stags, the phoenix outlives nine crows, but we the fair-haired daughters of Aegis-bearing Zeus, the nymphs, outlive ten phoenixes. "Depending on what we consider to be a generation of man, we find that the phoenix has a lifespan of anything from 972, 29,169 or 1,049,760 years from this calculation.[1] It is, however, important to note that already by Hesiod's time the phoenix had a reputation for longevity.

This may not in fact be the first mention of the phoenix in ancient Greece, for on tablets inscribed with Linear B we find the words po-ni-ke with the plural form po-ni-ki-pi from which the word φοῖνιξ later developed. Unfortunately, we cannot be absolutely certain whether the word should be translated as phoenix, griffin or palm tree.[2] The text describes footstools inlaid with ivory depicting a man, a horse, an octopus and a po-ni-ke, the first three of which are living creatures and the fourth of which may well have been the mythological bird.

The account with which most of us are familiar is of course that of Herodotus, who probably depends on Hecataeus. We are told at 2.73 that "another bird is sacred; it is called the phoenix. I myself have never seen it, but only pictures of it, for the bird comes but seldom into Egypt, once in five hundred years, as the people of Heliopolis say. It is said that the phoenix comes when its father dies. If the picture truly shows

his size and appearance his plumage is partly golden but mostly red. He is most like an eagle in shape and bigness. The Egyptians tell a tale of this bird's devices which I do not believe. He comes, they say, from Arabia bringing his father to the Sun's temple enclosed in myrrh, and there buries him. His manner of bringing is this: first he moulds an egg of myrrh as heavy as he can carry, and when he has proved its weight by lifting it he hollows out the egg and puts his father in it, covering over with more myrrh the hollow in which the body lies; so the egg, being with its father in it of the same weight as before, the phoenix, after enclosing him, carries him to the temple of the Sun in Egypt. Such is the tale of what is done by this bird."

We can see from these two authors that we already have different versions of the myth as far back as the fifth century. Herodotus says that the bird only comes to Egypt once in every five hundred years , but he makes no mention of its death, although some would argue that the presence of the father implies that Herodotus knew of the extraordinary birth of the phoenix. Hesiod, on the other hand, gives a figure for its lifespan not remotely connected with Herodotus and similarly makes no mention of the remarkable genesis of the bird.

Before we document further accounts of the bird in the classical sources, something should be said about what in the business world is known as "the General Systems Theory" of mythological birds. Egypt has its benu, which will be discussed shortly, India its garuda, Persia its simurgh, China its feng-huang, and so on.[3] All of these exhibit more or less similar characteristics although, as yet, no-one has attempted to compare these in detail. Nevertheless, scholars have tried very hard to

establish a firm link between the benu of Egypt and the phoenix of Hecataeus/Herodotus.[4] Broek (page 26) more cautiously attempts to demonstrate that the classical myth of the phoenix is related to that of the Egyptian benu but does not develop directly from it. He also points out (Plate 1-2) that by Roman-Egyptian times the two legends had become largely fused, the benu, or more properly, the bnw, represented for centuries as a heron, has, by now, taken on the characteristics of the Greek phoenix; it is seated on a pyre and bears no direct resemblance to any known living bird. The divergent readings of the various texts, at present, inhibit a conclusive discussion of this argument; many of the readings that Sbordone relied upon have since been questioned on a fundamental basis. Broek concludes that the myth of the phoenix that was familiar to many of the classical authors seems to have developed on the basis of the widespread oriental conception of the bird of the sun, but the "classical myth" was the result of considerable reworking of this "sun-bird" myth found in various cultures of the Near, Middle and Far East. For our immediate purpose, however, which is to discover how much of the myth was established in pre-Christian times, a brief synopsis will be given of the works of the five remaining classical authors who are known to have written independently on the subject of the phoenix. Firstly Antiphanes, the fourth-century comic poet, according to a fragment of his Half-Brothers preserved in Athenaeus, Deip.14.655b, claims that there are phoenixes in Heliopolis, a very strange statement since nowhere else do we find more than one phoenix living at any one given moment although Pliny (Hist. Nat. 12.8.5) does imply that there is more than one. In the second century the Hellenistic Jew Ezechial the Dramatist[5] gives a highly detailed

description of a bird which so closely follows the later descriptions of the phoenix that all concede that the phoenix is intended. The bird's external appearance is described, its beautiful song and the fact that it has the bearing of the King of the Birds. Also an oasis of great fertility is mentioned closely in connection with phoenix.

The remaining three references during the pre-Christian era all date from around the beginning of the first century B.C. In the Ars Grammatica 4.6 of Charisius is preserved a fragment of the poem Pterygion Phoenicis by the poet Laevius who had edited a collection of poetry called Erotopaegnia in the form of Technopaegnia or "shaped" poetry (pioneered by Simias of Rhodes at the beginning of the Hellenistic period). The length of the lines creates the outline of its subject. The reader was supposed to peruse the poem as though he were reading an inscription on Eros' wings. The phoenix communicates through writing on the underside of its wings, a device that will be encountered again in the Apocolypse of Pseudo-Baruch. The fragment of Laevius runs as follows:-

> (O) Venus, amoris altrix,
> genetrix cupiditatis,
> mihi quae diem serenum
> hilarula praepandere cresti,
> opseculae tuae ac ministrae;

The inscription on the wings of the phoenix reads "O Venus, who nourishes love and rouses desire, you joyfully make the clear day stretch out for me your follower (?) and your maid servant. "Several things should be noted here: firstly, that the phoenix is described as feminine, a characteristic followed only by Ovid, Pomponius Mela, and Lactantius; secondly, that there is clearly a special relationship between the bird and a god or goddess; and, thirdly, that this relationship is that of servant and

master. This fragment has caused much discussion,[6] but general agreement has been reached on the view that the phoenix represents, in this case, a tradition very different from that of Herodotus, more closely associated with, either the eagle as an escort of the sun god, or the oriental conception of a huge bird which escorted the sun each day. This point is discussed further in the commentary.

The second of the references to the phoenix in the first century B.C. is in the Pyrrhonea of the sceptic Aenesidemus, cited by Diogenes Laertius 9.79. Aenesidemus mentions the phoenix, together with fire animals and maggots, as examples of animals that reproduce themselves asexually. It seems probable that Aeneidemus knew of the story of the remarkable genesis of the bird since it is mentioned in between two other animals that exhibit strange asexual characteristics. This is probably our earliest reference to the rebirth of the phoenix.

The last version from the first century B.C. is that of the Roman senator Manilius, writing around 97 B.C. according to Pliny Hist. Nat. 10.5 who preserves the account. This Manilius described the phoenix most fully amongst the early writers: "the bird having lived 540 years...dies on a fragrant nest...after which a small worm emerges from its bones and develops into a new phoenix, which the brings the remains of the old one to the city of the sun near Panchaia." Manilius equates the lifespan of the phoenix with the Great Year, which was supposed to have begun in 312 B.C. about noon of the day on which the sun entered the sign of the Ram, the first day of spring according to the Julian Calendar.[7] The idea of the phoenix and chiliasm is taken up by Lactantius and will be discussed later.

Broek points out, very reasonably, that, although we find no explicit mention, at this time, of either the bird decomposing or being ignited by the sun on its death, the two principal versions of the myth, we ought not to conclude that these were not known before the first century A.D., simply because no extant literature, from this period, contains such references. Nevertheless we can see from the previously mentioned authors that the main threads of the myth had been established in pre-Christian times, a fact that must be born in mind when we come to consider the poem of Lactantius, who, while staying within the general bounds of the established myth, still produced one of the fullest verions of the tale in antiquity.

During the first century A.D. references to the phoenix become much more numerous, partly because the fledgling church adopted the idea for its own purposes, partly because, after Egypt became an Imperial province, there was much more cultural interplay between Rome and Egypt where the phoenix myth had flourished in the form of the myth of the benu and partly because Rome became subject to a wave of new ideas from the many peoples arriving in the mother city.

In order to make the material more manageable the accounts have been arranged into three artificial classifications, sometimes arbitrary, sometimes misleading but neverless necessary. These divisions belie the probable inter-dependence of all these sources. They are, firstly, the Scientific and Documentary accounts, secondly, the Poetic and Fabled accounts and, lastly, the Theological and Mystical Accounts.

I - Scientific and Documentary Accounts

Since Pliny has already been mentioned as the preserver of the

records of the senator Manilius, it is appropriate to document Pliny's own views. Of all the ancient sources, he alone (Hist. Nat. 10.3) voices any reservations about whether the bird really exists even though he includes it in his catalogue of real birds, next to the ostrich, rather than amongst the imaginary and mythical birds. Even the analytical Tacitus (Ann. 6.27) while conceding that the details are disputed and embellished by myths, nevertheless states categorically that there was no question about whether the bird did appear in Egypt. Pliny, also recounts some of these tales and blames Herodotus for them (Hist. Nat. 12.85) although others have related the same stories. In addition Pliny (Hist. Nat. 29.29) mocks those who consider one of the most important medicines to be one made from the ashes and nest of the phoenix, not however on the ground that the bird does not exist but rather that it is a joke to point out remedies which only return every thousand years! The figure of a thousand years cited here is of course different from the figure of 540 years given by Manilius. Even in antiquity no-one knew the precise age of the phoenix. The association of the phoenix and medicine may also be reflected in the Materia Medica 3.24 of Dioscurides Pedanius who wrote under Claudius and Nero and recorded that the magicians call the habrotonon plant νεῦρα φοίνικος which is probably to be translated as "sinews of the phoenix". That the phoenix was of great interest to magicians we know from the Papyri Graecae Magicae (ed. K. Preisendanz [Leipzig 1931] 2.73) and from S. Eitrem, Papyri Osloensis, (Oslo 1925) 1.9. In both of which there is mention of the phoenix.

Tacitus (Ann. 6.28) reports that "in the consulate of Paulus Fabius and Lucius Vitellius - A.D.34 (Pliny and Cassius Dio give A.D. 36), after

a long period of time, the bird known as the phoenix visited Egypt, and supplied the learned of that country and of Greece with the material for long disquisitions on the miracle. I propose to state the points on which they coincide, together with the larger number that are dubious, yet not too absurd for notice. That the creature is sacred to the Sun and distinguished from other birds by its head and the variegation of its plumage is agreed by those who have depicted its form: as to its term years, the tradition varies. The generally received number is five hundred; but there are some who assert that its visits fall at intervals of 1461 years, and that it was in the reigns first of Sesosis, then of Plolemy (third of the Macedonian dynasty), that the three earlier phoenixes flew to the city called Heliopolis with a great escort of common birds amazed at the novelty of its appearance. But while antiquity is obscure, between Ptolemy and Tiberius there were less than 250 years: whence the belief has been held that this was a spurious phoenix, not originating on the soil of Arabia, and following none of the practices affirmed by ancient tradition. For, so the tale is told, when its sum of years is complete and death is drawing near, it builds for itself a nest, in its own country, and sheds on it a procreating force (vim genitalem) from which springs a young one, whose first care on reaching maturity is to bury his sire. Nor is that task performed at random, but, after raising a weight of myrrh and testing it by a long flight, as soon as he is a match for his burden and the course before him, he lifts up his father's corpse, conveys him to the altar of the Sun, and consigns him to the flames."

From the above account, it is clear that Tacitus, for the genesis

of the bird, used very different sources from those used by Herodotus, Pomponius Mela, or even Pliny the Elder. There were other traditions about the age of the phoenix at its death: Chaeremon, the teacher of Nero, as reported by Tzetzes, in his work Hieroglyphica frg.3 gave 7,006 years.[8] Only in Tacitus do we find mention of the trial flight, though in Herodotus, the bird does test out the ball of myrrh before flying with it.

Pomponius Mela, in his Chronographia 3.83 may be drawing on the same lost work of Herodotus suggested by Pliny when Pomponius says in his description of Arabia:"Concerning birds, the phoenix ought particularly to be mentioned, a bird of which there is only one; she is not conceived by intercourse or by pregnancy but when she has lived for five hundred years she takes up her position on a pyre bestrewn with various spices and dies (solvitur) taking form from the putrification of her body, she then conceives herself and from herself becomes born again. When she has grown a bit, she carries off the bones of her former self, which are enclosed in myrrh, to Egypt. In the town of the Sun, having placed them on the burning pyres of the altar, she dedicates the remains in this celebrated funeral". Mela clearly follows the Herodotean version, although he does seem to be familiar with at least some of the sources mentioned by Pliny. He does for example mention Panchaia 3.81, but not in connection with the phoenix, as Manilius had done.

In the late second century, the whole field of "phoenix study" becomes more systematic, firstly with Celsus whose account is preserved in Origen's Contra Celsum c.98 and secondly with the inclusion of the phoenix by Aelian in his De Natura Animalium 6.58. Both Celsus, writing in the late 170's, and Aelian, a short while after that, draw on a tradition

similar to the one first represented by Herodotus. Celsus was the author of the first comprehensive philosophical attack on Christianity and seems to have used the phoenix as an example of something that recreated itself; and in this way he proves that God did not create everything. "But further, Celsus, still arguing for the piety of the irrational creation, quotes the instance of the Arabian bird, the phoenix, which after many years repairs to Egypt, and bears thither its parent, when dead and buried, in a ball of myrrh, and deposits its body in the temple of the Sun."

Aelian also seems to reflect a tradition of dispute about whether the phoenix furnishes proof of the existence of God or the non-existence of God, when he states specifically that it knows what it knows by instinct. "The phoenix knows how to reckon five hundred years without the aid of Arithmetic, for it is a pupil of all-wise Nature, so that it has no need of fingers or anything else to aid in the understanding of numbers. The purpose of this knowledge and the need for it are matters of common report. But hardly a soul amongst the Egyptians knows when the five-hundred year period is completed; only a very few know and they belong to the priestly order. But in fact the priests have difficulty in agreeing on these points, and banter one another and maintain that it is not now but at some date later than when it was due that the divine bird will arrive. Meantime while they are vainly squabbling, the bird miraculously guesses the period by signs and appears. And the priests are obliged to give way and confess that they devote their time 'to putting the sun to rest with their talk'; but they do not know as much as the bird. But, by the Gods, is it not wise to know where Egypt is situated, where is Heliopolis whither the bird is destined to come, and where it must bury its father and in what

kind of coffin?" Lactantius, line 34, some hundred years (?) later, was to view the phoenix in much the same way when he was explaining the duties of the phoenix towards Phoebus, Hoc Natura parens munus habere dedit.

Achilles Tatius ought best be considered in the Poetic and Fabled Accounts but his description is so detailed and seemingly dependent on the Herodotean version that for the sake of completeness it is included here. In his novel Leucippe and Clitophon 3.24-25, now known to date from the second century, Achilles Tatius tells of an army detained near Heliopolis because its sacred bird had arrived "bearing with him the sepulchre of his father, and they had therefore been compelled to delay their march for that space of time (five days). 'what bird is that,' said I, 'which is so greatly honoured? And what is this sepulchre that he carries?' 'The bird is called the phoenix;' was the answer, 'he comes from Ethiopia, and is of about a peacock's size, but the peacock is inferior to him in beauty of colour. His wings are a mixture of gold and scarlet; he is proud to acknowledge the Sun as his lord, and his head is witness of his allegiance, which is crowned with a magnificent halo -- a circular halo is the symbol of the Sun. It is of a deep magenta colour, like that of the rose, of great beauty, with spreading rays where the feathers spring. The Ethiopians enjoy his presence during his life-time, the Egyptians at his death; when he dies - and he is subject to death after a long period of years -- his son makes a sepulchre for him and carries him to the Nile. He digs out with his beak a ball of myrrh of the sweetest savour and hollows it out in the middle sufficiently to take the body of a bird; the hollow that he has dug out is employed as a coffin for the corpse. He puts the

bird in and fits it into the receptacle, and then, after sealing up the cavity with clay, flies to the Nile, carrying with him the result of his labours. An escort of other birds accompanies him as a bodyguard attends a migrating king, and he never fails to make straight for Heliopolis, the dead bird's last destination. Then he perches upon a high spot and awaits the coming of the attendants of the God; an Egyptian priest goes out, carrying with him a book from the sacred shrine, and assures himself that he is the genuine bird from his likeness to the picture which he possesses. The bird knows that he may be doubted, and displays every part, even the private, of his body. Afterwards he exhibits the corpse and delivers, as it were, a funeral panegyric on his departed father; then the attendant-priests of the Sun take the dead bird and bury him. It is thus true that during his life the phoenix is an Ethiopian by right of nurture, but at his death he becomes an Egyptian by right of burial.'"

We need not dismiss Achilles Tatius totally on the ground that he is writing fiction and consequently should be regarded as completely unreliable. Clearly he has retained elements of the traditions known to the earlier writers. He seems to echo fairly closely the physical description given by Pliny (Hist. Nat. 10.3) and the tale of the ball of myrrh strongly suggests Herodotus. The escort of birds, too, was encountered before in both Ezechial the Dramatist and Tacitus; in addition the welcome by priests is mentioned by Clement and Aelian. The role of the phoenix as funeral panegyricist appears first here as does the belief in the Ethiopian origin. The displaying of the bird's private parts appears in no other version of the myth. Achilles Tatius did not need to have restricted

himself to any "official" version of the story since he was writing fiction, but, nevertheless, generally speaking, he seems to have done so. Perhaps the phoenix story was inserted into his novel to add both colour and authenticity.

Some time during the second century, India became associated with the phoenix; both by Lucian, who is discussed with the Poetic and Fabled Accounts since he clearly does not treat the subject as a serious one, and by Aristides Aelius (Orat.45)[9] who describes the frequency of a good orator being born as about as often as the "Indian bird is born at the Egyptian cycles of the Sun". The idea of the appearance of the phoenix and its coincidence with certain cycles was not new, of course, for Pliny had connected the bird with the "Great Year". India was also visited by Apollonius of Tyana who, according to Philostratus in his controversial Vita Apollonii, 3.49, discussed the phoenix with the Indians: 'and the phoenix,' he said 'is the bird which visits Egypt every five hundred years, but the rest of that time it flies around in India; and it is unique in that it is an emanation of the sunlight and shines with gold, in size and appearance like an eagle; and it sits upon the nest which is made by it at the springs of the Nile out of spices. The story of the Egyptians about it, that it comes to Egypt, is testified to by the Indians also, but the latter add this touch to the story, that the phoenix which is being consumed in its nest sings funeral songs for itself.' It can be seen that except for the mention of India, the above account differs little from the account given by Achilles Tatius who may depend ultimately upon Herodotus. Philostatus' account is more like a careless summary of the established tradition. Are we justified in considering Apollonius as a possible source for the Indian version? Certainly both Lucian and Aristides imply

an earlier tradition and this is just the sort of exaggerated nonsense which Apollonius would be likely to propagate in order to emphasize the authority of the Indians.

There is, however, a more sober version which connects the phoenix with India. Dionysius of Philadelphia (?) in his De Aucupio, 1.32 an early third-century (?) manual on catching birds, records the following tale: " I have heard that there is a bird amongst the Indians which has no parents nor does it participate in sexual relations; its name is the phoenix. For the most part, so they say, it lives without fear because no-one can do it any harm either with bows, stones, lime-twigs or with nets. Its death is also a beginning for it, for when it grows old and knows that it is more sluggish in flight and its eyesight is dimmer, having gathered together some twigs on the top of a lofty rock, it makes a sort of pyre of death which is at the same time a nest of life, which, after the phoenix settles down on the middle of it, is set on fire by the heat of the rays of the Sun. When it has died, another young phoenix is born, displaying its ancestors' disposition. So, they say, the bird comes into existence without a father or mother, solely from a ray of the sun." Dionysius makes no mention of Egypt at all, although it seems difficult to assume that he had never heard of the Heliopolis story or the Panchaia version. He definitely echoes the same tradition as that mentioned by Pliny Hist. Nat. 42.85 where the phoenix is described nesting on inaccessible rocks and trees and having its nest assailed by lead-loaded arrows. Parts of Dionysius' version are very different, however, and he does record hitherto unknown aspects of the bird. The charming description of the aging bird and how it knows of its impending death is known in no earlier

variant. Similarly unknown is the ignition of the bird by the ray of the sun. Although Broek, 203, would have this occur earlier in Philostratus, suffice it to say that the interpretation of the text is very subjective at this point.

One further important documentary account needs to be mentioned, that of Artemidorus Daldianus, the "Jung" of the ancient world. This late second-century writer who wrote a remarkable book entitled Onirocritica or The Interpretation of Dreams, perhaps in the late second century, comments upon a certain man who had a dream about the phoenix, On. 4.47: "A certain man thought that he was painting a phoenix bird. An Egyptian said that the man who had the dream, fell into such dire straits of poverty that he was forced to lift up his dead father upon his own shoulders and bury him himself. For the phoenix also buries its dead father. Whether the dream actually took place in that way, I don't know; that was how he related the tale and it is likely to have turned out according to this detail of the story. But there are some who say that the phoenix does not in fact bury its father and furthermore neither its father nor any of its ancestors survive it, but whenever the appointed day comes, it journeys to Egypt, whence nobody knows, and makes for itself a pyre from casia and myrrh and dies on it. Sometime after the pyre has been fired, so they say, a worm is generated from the ashes, which changes shape, grows bigger, becomes again a phoenix and flies away from Egypt to wherever the previous phoenix came from. So that if someone should say that the man who had the dream is bereft of parents, according to this version of the tale, he will not be wrong."

Artemidorus illustrates a number of interesting developments in the myth. Firstly that people had become so confused about the bird's origins that they were prepared simply to ignore the problem. Secondly he described two versions of the myth that he implies are irreconcilable. Broek, following Hubert and Leroy, agrees with Artemidorus. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that Artemidorus demonstrates his ignorance of the accounts of Tacitus, Pomponius Mela, Aelian, Achilles Tatius and possibly Clement of Rome, all of whom attempted to reconcile, more or less, these two versions of the story, rather than to state that he recorded the archetypes of the myth. More detailed dating of these sources might help us know more about the interdependence of the aforementioned accounts.

In addition, it is very interesting to note that the myth was well enough known by an ordinary painter to be the subject of his dreams, and that the account of Hecataeus reported by Herodotus in the fifth century accords well with that of this unnamed Egyptian of the second century A.D.

Brief mention needs be made of only three other documentary accounts. The third century historian Dexippus (frg.II), cited in the Chronographia of the Byzantine Syncellus, gives us additional ages for the phoenix of 654 or 650 years.

Solinus, writing early in the third century, recorded in his Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium, 33.11-15 a geographical summary of the world, a long description of the phoenix and its origins in Arabia, which is almost a complete plagiarism from the account of Manilius recorded by Pliny the Elder.

Finally, the eloquent Bishop of Alexandria (248 A.D.-265 A.D.), Dionysius, student of Origen, strangely ignored by Lactantius whose interests

in Greek Philosophy largely coincided with his, makes mention of both the phoenix and the palm tree as long-lived, in his work De Natura frg. 3 (preserved in the Praep. Evang. of Eusebius) but offers no suggestions on their possible common etymology in Greek. He clearly believes in the existence of the phoenix, for he gives examples of long-lived birds such as eagles, ravens and phoenixes, the first two of which are clearly not fictional.

II - Poetic and Fabled Accounts

Because of its remarkable regenerative ability, the phoenix fascinated both poets and prose writers with a proclivity for the exotic. It held more interest, however, for the Latin than the Greek poets, for amongst the latter, only Ezechial the Dramatist thought the phoenix worthy of more than two lines and those on a topic of purely Jewish interest. It is, however, likely that Laevius used an Alexandrian model for his poem, although none is extant.

We are faced with a similar problem when we come to consider Ovid, who is the first person explicitly to mention the remarkable genesis of the bird though he makes no mention of fire or decomposition. Did he use an Alexandrian source for this? Nobody would deny that Ovid was imaginative enough to create the idea himself, but the problem remains insoluble. There remains no doubt, however, that Lactantius used Ovid fairly extensively, for in the works of both, the bird is feminine and closely connected with trees and even the language is echoed at times, as is pointed out in the commentary.

Compare Met. 392-407: "There is one living thing, a bird, which

reproduces and regenerates itself, without any outside aid. The Assyrians call it the phoenix. It lives, not on corn or grasses, but on the gum of incense and the sap of balsam. When it has completed five centuries of life, it straightaway builds a nest for itself, working with unsullied beak and claw, in the topmost branches of some swaying palm. Then, when it has laid a foundation of casia, and smooth spikes of hard, chips of cinnamon bark and yellow myrrh, it places itself on top, and ends its life amid the perfumes. Then, they say, a little phoenix is born anew from the father's body, fated to live a like number of years. When the nestling is old enough and strong enough to carry the weight, it lifts the heavy nest from the high branches and, like a dutiful son, carries its father's tomb, its own cradle, through the yielding air, till it reaches the city of the Sun, where it lays its burden before the sacred doors, within Hyperion's temple."

Ovid resembles Manilius solely in the construction of the nest; otherwise the only other earlier writer with whom he has anything in common is Herodotus, who, of course, makes no mention at all of the re-birth of the phoenix but gives a physical description of the bird, a subject completely ignored by Ovid. Ezechial too mentions palm trees only just before he mentions the phoenix. It remains a moot point whether Ovid himself believed in the phoenix, for, although he professes no cynicism in the above-cited passage, nevertheless earlier in his career he had located the phoenix, Am. 6.49-54, in Elysium but conceded that there was some doubt about this si qua fides dubiis.

After Ovid, no poet devotes much attention to the phoenix until we reach the De Ave Phoenice of Lactantius. Lucan, Bellum Civile 6.680,

mentions the ashes of phoenix in a catalogue of magic ingredients used by the witch Erictho to revive a corpse so that Pompey might know his destiny. The phoenix is described at the same time as Eoa positi phoenicis in ara "the bird which lays its body on the Eastern Altar". Unfortunately Lucan gives us insufficient information to enable us to identify his source; however, his uncle, Seneca (Ep.42.1), uses the well established tale of the phoenix as a metaphor to describe the frequency of the appearance of the truly good man. Statius mentions the phoenix three times, but in a different sense; for him (Silv.2.4.33-37) the bird epitomizes something felix, "blessed", because it is free from the weary languor of old age. When Statius implies that the phoenix is the guardian of cinnamon (Silv.2.6.87), he surely echoes the tradition recorded by Pliny (Hist. Nat.42.85). Elsewhere Statius demonstrates his familiarity with the story about the burning (Silv.3.2.114). He simply uses whatever of the many aspects of the bird is poetically convenient without restricting himself to one version of the tale. Martial uses the phoenix as a metaphor for something extremely rare (Epigrammata 5.37.13) which is associated with rich perfumes (6.55.1-2), and in addition he shows that he is aware of the chiliastic traditions associated with the phoenix by both Pliny and Tacitus in order to flatter Domitian. Martial (5.7.1-4) is probably referring to the extensive building programmes carried out by that emperor in Rome in the following passage, "As when the fire renews the Assyrian nest, whenever one bird has lived its ten cycles (decem saecula), so has new Rome shed her bygone age and put on herself the visage of her Governor."

Lucian also uses the phoenix as a metaphor, (Herm.53, De Morte Per.

27, Nav.44), but only for something of extreme age. Perhaps uncharacteristically, he declines the opportunity of lampooning the mythical bird but simply says (Nav.44) that the bird is ἀθέατος, that is, it has never been seen by anyone.

The poets on the whole are more cynical than the prose writers, and not until Lactantius do we have an amount of space devoted to the bird in verse equal to that of the prose writers.

To conclude the Poetic and Fabled Accounts something ought to be said about Heliodorus, whose dates (unfortunately) are notoriously conjectural; they range from the third to the fifth century. He, like Lucian, used the phoenix as a metaphor for something extremely rare, 6.3.3, and showed his erudition by declining to commit himself to the whereabouts of the origins of the phoenix, but simply offered both Egypt and India as alternatives.

It is important to note that nowhere among the preceding accounts have we discovered the phoenix being used allegorically, indeed nowhere do we find the phoenix used in this way except in the De Ave Phoenice. An allegory entails the conscious disguise of a literary idea; in all our sources, in particular the christian ones, we are told precisely what the bird symbolises.

III - Theological and Mystical Accounts

The idea of the phoenix held a fascination for a wide assortment of classical writers; it is not otherwise for the theological writers. As early as the turn of the first century A.D., we find Clement of Rome confidently citing the immortality of the phoenix as an example of the

magnitude of the promise that the creator offers to those who choose the path of "righteousness". Whether Clement, (Ep.ad Cor. 79-83), discovered this comparison himself, we do not know. It was a brilliant comparison, which was to furnish theological writers of the next 1600 years with copious material to work with, in fact a masterstroke of pamphleteering: "Let us look at a remarkable phenomen which appears in the East, namely in the lands near Arabia. It is the bird which is called the phoenix. It is begotten singly and lives for five hundred years and when it approaches the release of death it makes for itself a nest from frankincense and myrrh and other aromatic plants to which it makes its way when its time has been completed and it dies. When the flesh has become putrid a certain worm appears which nourishes itself from the humours of the dead animal and grows wings. Then, on becoming its proper self, it takes hold of the nest where lie the remains of its progenitor and carries them off. It wings its way from Arabia as far as Egypt to the city of Heliopolis. It flies over during the day, with all watching, and places the bones on the altar of Helios. So it departs. The priests discover that it is the five hundredth year since it last came. Do we not consider it marvellous if the maker of the world accomplisnes the resurrection of those who piously serve him trusting in the soundness of their faith where even through a bird he shows us the magnitude of the promise in store for us?"

There are a number of things which should be pointed out with reference to this letter. Firstly, it is the earliest extant Christian reference to the phoenix. Clement assumes that the phoenix is a real bird and describes its remarkable regenerative properties, which demonstrate the powers of God. At the same time he hints that there is some connection

between the continuity of the phoenix and the life of the Christian soul He states openly that the bird dies and another is born, however, and points out the differences between the old and the new birds. The account of the bird itself has both familiar and unfamiliar aspects. The cycle of five hundred years is of course known from as far back as Hecataeus, as is the relationship with spices; indeed the account is very reminiscent of that of Pomponius Mela, but rather more detailed. The story of the worm we have previously encountered only in Manilius, whose account in all other respects is quite different. Clement also says that everyone watches the bird on its incoming flight, something not mentioned by any previous writer, although Herodotus does inform us that it is the people of Heliopolis who report the tale. Finally it should be observed that Clement establishes a convention for the treatment of the myth which is followed in nearly all the extant Christian accounts, in particular that of Lactantius, namely that the tale is first of all recounted, with absolutely no Christian embellishments added to the story proper, then a message, transparently Christian in nature, is added as if there were some danger of the myth contradicting the biblical story of God, creator of life. It is so in the Didascalia, De Ave Phoinice, Commodianus' Carmen Apologeticum, Tertullian's De Res. Carnis, Origen's Contra Celsum (the Constitutiones Apostolorum is not included in this list since it dates almost certainly after Lactantius; it is in any case an exact translation of the Syriac Didascalia mentioned above).

Before proceeding to document all the occurrences of the phoenix in early Christian literature, something should be said about two documents that demonstrate that the phoenix continued to exercise fascination for

Jewish scholars many centuries after Ezechial the Dramatist. Although neither the Greek Apocolypse of Pseudo-Baruch (second century A.D.?) or the Midrash Rabbah (third A.D.) antedate Clement of Rome, nevertheless they are thought to represent a much earlier tradition associated with a Near-Eastern Sun God. They are included here because characteristics of their respective phoenixes, of which Lactantius seems to have been aware, are found in no other extant sources. The Apocolypse of Pseud-Baruch 6-8 is a document of divine revelation that illustrates yet further the use of the phoenix myth; "And (the angel) took me and led me to the place where the Sun begins his journey and showed me a quadriga all aflame on which was seated a Man wearing a crown of fire. The chariot was set in motion by forty angels. But look: There is a bird running in front of the chariot as big as nine mountains: I said to the angel, 'What is this bird?' He said to me 'It is the guardian of the inhabited earth.' I replied, 'tell me, Master, how it is the guardian of the earth.' He answered, 'He runs alongside of the sun and by using his wings he receives the fiery rays. Should he not intercept them, the race of man would not able to live, nor any other living thing, the bird was thus bidden by God.' It unfolded its wings and I saw under the right wing some gigantic writing as big as two hundred times four thousand fathoms. These letters were in gold and the angel said to me. 'Read these letters.' I read them and here is what they said, 'Neither the earth nor heaven begot me, these wings of fire did.' I said, 'Master, what is this bird and what is its name?' The angel replied, 'It is known by the name of the phoenix.' 'What does it eat?' He replied, 'The manna of heaven and the dew of the earth.' I said, 'Does it produce excrement?' He said, 'It produces a worm and the excrement of the worm becomes cinnamon which kings and heads of state use...but stay and you will

see the wonder of God. ' In the middle of this discussion something happened like the sound of thunder and the place upon which we stood shook. I asked the angel, 'What was that noise?' He replied, 'Just then the angels were opening the three hundred and sixty five doors of heaven and the light separated itself from the gloom.' A voice was heard saying 'Giver of Light, give light to the world.' Having heard the noise of bird I said, 'Master, what is this noise?' He replied, 'This is the call to rouse up all the cocks on earth. [It is just as though there are two languages, in this way the cock gives a sign to those on earth with its song.] For the sun is got ready by the angels, and the cock speaks out.' And I said, 'And where does the Sun busy himself from the moment when the cock crows?' The angel replied to me, 'Listen Baruch, all the things that I have showed to you are in the first and second heaven, in the third the bird passes through and gives light to the world. But wait and you will see the wonder of God.' And while I was talking to him, I saw the bird, it appeared in front of me, little by little it grew larger and it showed itself. Behind it the Sun shone and there were accompanying angels and it wore on its head a crown whose sight we could not endure to look at and behold, just as the Sun grew in intensity, so the phoenix extended its wings. But I, looking at such a great wonder, was brought low by a great fear, I fled and hid myself in the wings of the angel and he said to me, 'Don't be afraid but wait and you will see them to to rest.'

He took me to where they come to rest and when their hour to go to rest came, I again saw the bird face to face and the angels as they came and raised his crown from his head. But the bird stood cowed and put down its wings and seeing these things I asked the angel, 'Why do they

remove the crown from the head of the Sun and for what reason is the bird so cowed?' The angel replied, 'Whenever the Sun's crown has been on busy all day, four angels pick it up and take it up to heaven and renew it because it has become dull as well as the rays which fall to earth. Moreover it is renewed each day in the same way.' And I, Baruch, said, 'Master, for what reason do his rays become dulled on the earth?' The angel replied to me, 'Beholding the transgressions and the injustices of men, that is to say the shamelessness, adultery, theft, rape, idolatry, drinking, murder, quarrels, jealousy, slandering, murmurings, calumnies, prophesies and other such things disagreeable to God. For these reasons the rays become tarnished and are renewed.' 'As for the bird, what is the cause of it being cowed in such a fashion?' 'It is cowed because of the fire and the burning heat. If the bird's wings did not form a screen for the rays of the Sun, the breath of every living being would not survive."

This account at first seems to bear no resemblance to those previously encountered. But on closer examination, certain familiar elements can be detected. Firstly we have already encountered the phoenix as a companion or servant to a God in the Pterygion Phoenicis of Laevius, and in Achilles Tatius, secondly the idea of the worm being produced by the bird is found not only in Clement but also in Manilius. Similarly the crown on its head faintly echoes Achilles Tatius and the connection of the phoenix with cinnamon is almost as old as our records of the bird. But it is so different from our earlier stories that Broek, p.268, feels it is "virtually certain that the author of the Greek Apocolypse of Baruch made use of an oriental tradition, also known to the Jews, concerning a huge bird capable of covering the sky with its wings and thus robbing the Sun of its worst intensity."

Broek adds that the origin of this conception must be sought mainly in Persia, since, for example, the idea of the 365 gates of heaven is typically Persian. It appears then that this work evolved outside the tradition documented so far; nevertheless it may itself be a source for Lactantius since the description of the phoenix feeding on the manna of heaven and the dew of the earth is very reminiscent of De Ave Phoenice 111-112, Ambrosios libat caelesti nectare rores, stellifero tenues qui cecidere polo, although there is no proof that Lactantius ever read the work.

Brief mention should be made of the Midrash Rabbah since it is quite clear that the hôl (usually translated from the Hebrew as phoenix) bird mentioned in the Midrash, was known in the second and third centuries A.D.[10] This work was a monumental commentary on Genesis and at 3.6 the commentary reads: "The school of R. Jannai maintained that the bird lives a thousand years, at the end of which a fire issues from its nest and burns it up; yet as much as an egg is left, and it grows new limbs and lives. R. Judan b.R. Simeon said: It lives a thousand years at the end of which its body is consumed and its wings drop off; yet as much as an egg is left, and then it grows new limbs." Jannai can be dated to ca.225A.D., Judan less certainly to 320 or 240 A.D. This passage illustrates how the Jewish scholars knew the two principal versions of the story as told by the classical authorities. Jannai represents the version of the "decomposing body known from Manilius and Pomponius and Clement, Judan echoes that of the burning of the body familiar from Dionysius of Philadelphia, Artemidorus, Statius and Martial.

From the above it is clear that it was the classical sources that

influenced the Jewish story of the hôl rather than vice versa since the only unknown portion of the Midrash Rabbah just mentioned, is the information that the bird's wings fall off, a minor detail. We must consider the Apocolypse of Baruch as an enigma and outside the general development of the myth of the phoenix. Too much importance has been attached to the feeding on dew; desert birds are known to drink in this way and we ought not to draw too many conclusions from the inclusion or exclusion of this characteristic in any one version of the myth.[11]

Another Christian work, unquestionably dependent on the classical tradition, unfortunately cannot be dated very accurately. The Greek Physiologus, now thought to date to the second century,[12] is extant in an almost bewildering number of manuscripts whose mutual dependence on a no longer existing first redaction has been established.[13] Hubert and Leroy, rather misleadingly, print only one text which resembles none in the five groups of the earliest manuscripts G,M, as (Oy), WO, AI πεΔφγ. A translation of the collated text of the last group is provided here. "Our Lord Jesus Christ said, 'I have the power to put aside my spirit and to take it up again,' and the Jews were indignant at this. There exists a bird called the phoenix in India. Every five hundred years it flies to the woods of Lebanon and loads its wings with aromatics. It gives a sign to the priest of Heliopolis in the new month of Nisan or Adar, that is to say Phamenoth or Pharmouthi. As soon as he has been signalled he comes and the bird loaded down with aromatics goes up to the altar on which it places its burden and is consumed by the flames. On the following day, the priest on inspecting the altar, discovers a worm in the ashes, on the second day it grows wings and is recognizable as a young bird, on the third day it has become what it was to begin with. It salutes the priest,

flies up in the air and heads off to its own home.

Explanation:

If the bird has this ability to die and be reborn, how is it that stupid men are indignant at the word of our Lord Jesus Christ when he says that he has the power to put aside my spirit and to take it up again? For the phoenix is the image of our Saviour.

The Mss. W and O have an additional passage, "[The phoenix] flies to Helio polis across Egypt, it comes into being self-generated, not in deserted places, so that the event escapes notice, but rather in full view in the city so that all distrust be dispelled. Next it makes for itself a nest of frankincense myrrh and other aromatics and having placed itself on this it is burned up, dies and becomes putrid. Then, from out of the burnt ashes of the flesh, emerges a worm which takes on its earlier form. But should you not believe this, in just such a way the offspring of bees are born, taking shape from maggots, and from the yolks of eggs you have seen wings and bones and sinews forming. Then, growing wings, the aforesaid worm finally becomes just as it was before, a bird flies up just the same as the one that died, giving the clearest proof of resurrection from this death.

Indeed the phoenix is a marvel but it is dumb. Does a dumb animal which does not know the maker of all things gain resurrection from the dead but we who praise God and watch over his commands not gain it? Assuredly there is such a thing as resurrection of the dead."

The first text is a clear attempt to ally both the Egyptian and Indian stories about the phoenix, as well as to combine the different versions about its death, namely the burning and the putrification. It

may have provided some ideas for Lactantius but unfortunately no proof can be offered that it antedates the De Ave Phoenice. The Physiologus states quite blatantly that Christian symbolism is implied by the phoenix, the bird is Christ. When we come to consider Lactantius' poem we will see that no such symbolism is possible.

The physiologus has elements, too numerous to elucidate in detail, in common with many of the previous accounts and is best summed up as a combination of Herodotus, Achilles Tatius, Aelian and Clement of Rome. The diversity, disparity and great number of the Mss. of the Physiologus tell us of its widespread popularity in antiquity and it should be noticed that nowhere does the authenticity of the phoenix come into question; such a discussion had to wait until the seventeenth century.[14] In a sense the nomenclature, "myth of the phoenix", used by both Hubert and Leroy and Broek is misleading, for no author in the ancient corpus (if we exclude the author of Apocolypse of Pseudo-Baruch from our discussion since this is really outside our tradition) is prepared to declare brazenly that the bird does not exist. The above-named scholars call this material "The Myth of the Phoenix" because they themselves do not believe in the existence of the bird. But for the ancients themselves the phoenix was a biological phenomenon.

A final major religious source will be considered in detail. The Didascalia, 40.19-34 a work written early in the third century for a community of Christian converts by someone probably of Jewish descent, was originally written in Greek, fragments of which survive, but the oldest and most complete version is preserved in Syriac.[15]

"For also through a mute animal, that is, through the phoenix, a unique

bird, God gives an open manifestation of the resurrection, for if the bird had a twin or there were even more of them, those many would simply seem to be unimportant to men, but it is noticed when it approaches for the very reason that it is alone. After five hundred years it comes to that place known as the Altar of the Sun bringing with it cinnamon and prays facing east. It is set on fire by itself, burns and becomes ashes. However a worm appears from the ashes which increases in size, takes shape and becomes once more a fully-formed phoenix. Then it goes back hastening whence it came."

The above account looks deceptively familiar, and on first glance we are tempted to dismiss it as a casual copy of a version of the Physiologus (or closely related to a parent of that text).

There is, however, an important addition, at least we are led to believe there is an addition in the Latin translation of the Syriac, namely that the bird...orat contra orientem..."it prays facing the East". This is the earliest example of the phoenix performing such a ritual, an idea which was explored later by Lactantius in the De Ave Phoenice line 41.

Mention should also be made of Tertullian (165 A.D.-220) De Res. Mort.13 who, like Clement of Rome, used the phoenix as an example to support the certainty of resurrection. In addition, there is a tantalising reference to the phoenix in the Oracula Sibyllina 8.139, a curious work compiled by all and sundry after the loss of the original Sibylline Books. Book 8 is generally thought to have been written about 180 A.D. and we know that Lactantius read the relevant passage because he cites lines from the surrounding verses, Div. Inst. 7.15. Lactantius seems to have believed implicitly in the Oracula Sibylla and this passage may have had a deep

influence on him, for, although the text is very corrupt, it is nevertheless possible to be fairly certain that the meaning is that the appearance of the phoenix will herald the destruction of the Gentiles, the Hebrews and the Roman Empire, which will be the end of time. Lactantius informs us of the chiliastic nature of re-birth of the phoenix in line 61, and it may well be that the germ of the idea came from this passage in the Sibylline Oracles.

Finally, something should be said about the phoenix and the after-life. We have just surveyed several examples of how the Christian thinkers exploited the idea of the phoenix for their own theosophical purposes and this has led us to think that the phoenix was interpreted in such a fashion only by them. This is not the case, however, for we find the phoenix representing the life after death on the epitaph, clearly not Christian, of a certain C. Domitius Primus CIL 14.914, found in 1783 by the Via Ostia, Foenix me serbat in ara qui mecum properat se reparare sibi. It is of course possible that this idea was a borrowing from the Christians; one cannot be sure until the inscription is dated satisfactorily.

All the major sources for the phoenix myth that are antecedent to Lactantius have been documented and dated wherever that is possible. Sources which are hesitatingly dated or which are of an unknown date such as the scholia (see Broek page 478) and the Hieroglyphica of Horapollo, have been left out and not used for the basis of any argument. It has become quite apparent by now that Lactantius' poem is a very creative one, even though his treatment of language at times seldom rises above that of a plagiarist.

Notes to Cahpter Two

1 Broek, op. cit. page 85.

2 L. R. Palmer and J. Chadwick, Proceedings of the Cambridge Colloquium on Mycenaean Studies (Cambridge 1966) 230.

3 J. C. Ferguson, The Mythology of All Races (Boston 1928) vol. 8 page 99.

4. See particularly J. Hubaux et M. Leroy Le Mythe du Phenix (Liège 1939) 14-20, R. T. Rundle-Clark, The Origins of the Phoenix Parts 1 & 2, Birmingham University Historical Society 2 (1949-50) 1-30 & 105-140.

5. Preserved in the work of Alexander Polyhistor (cited by Eusebius in his Praeparatio Evangelica 9.29.16).

6. See Broek pages 268-272 for a full discussion of this topic.

7. See Broek page 103.

8. See Broek page 72 for all the different figures.

9. Unfortunately only one of these references could be checked since Keil's edition was unavailable to me. All the other secondary sources considered the other references unimportant.

10. For a more detailed discussion and bibliography of the Jewish sources see M.F. McDonald, "Phoenix Redivivus" Phoenix 14 (1960) 187-206.

11. J. Swift, The Sahara (Amsterdam) 1975 110.

12. See B. E. Perry's review of Sbordone's edition of the Physiologus in the AJP 58 (1937) 388.

13. D. Kaimakis, Der Physiologus nach der Ersten Redaktion (Meisenheim am Glan 1974) 4a.

14. See Broek page 4 for a history of the scholarship on this problem.

15 J. Quasten, Patrology (Utrecht 1953) Vol. 2 pages 147-51.

CHAPTER THREE

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

TEXT

Est locus in primo felix oriente remotus,
Qua patet aeterni maxima porta poli,
Nec tamen aestivos hiemisve propinquus ad ortus,
Sed qua Sol verno fundit ab axe diem.
Illic planities tractus diffundit apertos,
Nec tumulus crescit nec cavavvallis hiat;
Sed nostros montes, quorum iuga celsa putantur,
Per bis sex ulnas imminet ille locus.
Hic Solis nemus est et consitus arbore multa
lucus, perpetuae frondis honore virens.
Cum Phaethonteis flagrasset ab ignibus axis,
Ille locus flammis inviolatus erat,
Et cum diluvium mersisset fluctibus orbem,
Deucalioneas exsuperavit aquas.
Non huc exsangues Morbi, non aegra Senectus,
Nec Mors crudelis nec Metus asper adest;
Nec Scelus infandum nec opum vesana cupido
Cernitur aut ardens caedis amore Furor;
Luctus acerbus abest et Egestas obsita pannis
Et Curae insomnes et violenta Fames.
Non ibi tempestas nec vis furit horrida venti
Nec gelido terram rore pruina tegit,
Nulla super campos tendit sua vellera nubes,
Nec cadit ex alto turbidus umor aquae.
Sed fons in medio (est), quem vivum nomine dicunt,
Perspicuus, lenis, dulcibus uber aquis,
Qui semel erumpens per singula tempora mensum
Duodecies undis inrigat omne nemus.
Hic genus arboreum procero stipite surgens
Non lapsura solo mitia poma gerit.
Hoc nemus, hos lucos avis incolit unica Phoenix:
Unica sed vivit morte refecta sua.
Paret et obsequitur Phoebo memoranda satelles:
Hoc natura parens munus habere dedit.
Lutea cum primum surgens Aurora rubescit,
Cum primum rosea sidera luce fugat,
Ter quater illa pias inmergit corpus in undas,
Ter quater e vivo gurgite libat aquam.
Tollitur ac summo considit in arboris altae
Vertice, quae totum despicit una nemus,
Et conversa novos Phoebi nascentis ad ortus
Expectat radios et iubar exoriens.
Atque ubi Sol pepulit fulgentis limina portae
Et primi emicuit luminis aura levis,
Incipit illa sacri modulamina fundere cantus
Et mira lucem voce ciere novam,
Quam nec aedoniae voces nec tibia possit
Musica Cirrhaeis adsimulare modis,
Sed neque olor moriens imitari posse putetur
Nec Cylleneae fila canora lyrae.
Postquam Phoebus equos in aperta effudit Olympi
Atque orbem totum protulit usque means,

Illa ter alarum repetito verbere plaudit
Igniferum caput ter venerata silet.
Atque eadem celeres etiam discrimat horas
Innarrabilibus nocte dieque sonis,
Antistes luci nemorumque verenda sacerdos
Et sola arcanis conscia, Phoebe, tuis.
Quae postquam vitae iam mille peregit annos
Ac si redderint tempora longa gravem,
Ut reparet lapsum spatiis vergentibus aevum,
Adsuetum nemoris dulce cubile fugit.
Cumque renascendi studio loca sancta reliquit,
Tunc petit hunc orbem, Mors ubi regna tenet.
Dirigit in Syriam celeres longaevavolatus
Phoenices nomen cui dedit ipsa vetus,
Secretosque petit deserta per avia lucos,
Sicubi per saltus silva remota latet.
Tum legit aerio sublimen vertice palmam,
Quae Graium phoenix ex ave nomen habet,
In quam nulla nocens animans prorepere possit,
Lubricus aut serpens aut avis ulla rapax.
Tum ventos claudit pendentibus Aeolus antris,
Ne violent flabris aera purpureum
Neu concreta noto nubes per inania caeli
Submoveat radios solis et obsitaavi.
Construit inde sibi seu nidum sive sepulchrum;
Nam perit, ut vivat: se tamen ipsa creat.
Colligit hinc sucos et odores divite silva,
Quos legit Assyrius, quos opulentus Araps,
Quos aut Pygmaeae gentes aut India carpit
Aut molli generat terra Sabaea sinu.
Cinnamon hic auramque procul spirantis amomi
Congerit et mixto balsama cum folio:
Non casiae mitis nec olentis vimen acanthi
Nec turis lacrimae guttaque pinguis abest.
His addit teneras nardi pubentis aristas
Et sociat myrrae vim, panacea, tuam.
Protinus instructo corpus mutabile nido
Vitalique toro membra vieta locat.
Ore dehinc sucos membris circumque supraque
Inicit, exequiis inmoritura suis.
Tunc inter varios animam commendat odores,
Depositi tanti nec timet illa fidem.
Interea corpus genitali morte peremptum
Aestuat, et flammam parturit ipse calor,
Aetherioque procul de lumine concipit ignem:
Flagrat, et ambustum solvitur in cineres.
Quos velut in massam, generans in morte, coactos
Conflat, et effectum seminis instar habet.
Hinc animal primum sine membris fertur oriri,
Sed fertur vermi lacteus esse color.
Crescit, et emenso sopitur tempore certo,
Seque ovi teretis colligit in speciem.
Ac velut agrestes, cum filo ad saxa tenentur,

Mutari tineae papilione solent,
Inde reformatur qualis fuit ante figura
Et phoenix ruptis pullulat exuviis.
Non illi cibus est nostro concessus in orbe,
Nec cuiquam inplumen pascere cura subest.
Ambrosios libat caelesti nectare rores,
Stellifero tenues qui cecidere polo.
Hos legit, his alitur mediis in odoribus ales,
Donec maturam proferat effigiem.
Ast ubi primaeva coepit florere iuventa,
Evolat, ad patrias iam reditura domus.
Ante tamen, proprio quidquid de corpore restat,
Ossaque vel cineres exuviasque suas
Unguine balsameo myrraque et ture Sabaeo
Condit et in formam conglobat ore pio.
Quam pedibus gestans contendit Solis ad ortus
Inque ara residens ponit in aede sacra.
Mirandam sese praestat praebetque verendam:
Tantus avi decor est, tantus abundat honor.
Primo qui color est malis sub sidere Cancri,
Cortice quae croceo Punica grana tegunt;
Qualis inest foliis, quae fert agreste papaver,
Cum pandit vestes Flora rubente solo:
Hoc humeri pectusque decens velamine fulget;
Hoc caput, hoc cervix summaque terga nitent.
Caudaque porrigitur fulvo distincta metallo,
In cuius maculis purpura mixta rubet.
Alarum pennas insignit desuper Iris,
Pingere ceu nubem desuper aura solet.
Albicat insignis mixto viridante zmaragdo
Et puro cornu gemmea cuspis hiat.
Ingentes oculi: credas geminos hyacinthos,
Quorum de medio lucida flamma micat.
Aptata est noto capiti radiata corona,
Phoebei referens verticis alta decus.
Crura tegunt squamae fulvo distincta metallo;
Ast ungues roseo tinguit honore color.
Effigies inter pavonis mixta figuram
Cernitur et pictam Phasidis inter avem.
Magnitiem terris Arabum quae gignitur ales
Vix aequare potest, seu fera seu sit avis.
Non tamen est tarda ut volucres, quae corpore magno
Incessus pigros per grave pondus habent,
Sed levis ac velox, regali plena decore:
Talis in aspectu se tenet usque hominum.
Huc venit Aegyptus tanti ad miracula visus
Et raram volucrem turba salutat ovans.
Protinus exculpunt sacrato in marmore formam
Et titulo signant remque diemque novo.
Contrahit in coetum sese genus omne volantum,
Nec praedae memor est ulla nec ulla metus.
Alituum stipata choro volat illa per altum
Turbaque prosequitur munere laeta pio.

Sed postquam puri perventi ad aetheris auras,
 Mox redit: illa suis conditur inde locis.
O fortunatae sortis felixque volucrum,
 Cui de se nasci praestitit ipse Deus!
Femina seu (sexu seu) masculus est seu neutrum:
 Felix, quae Veneris foedera nulla colit!
Mors illi Venus est, sola est in morte voluptas:
 Ut possit nasci, appetit ante mori.
Ipsa sibi proles, suus est pater et suus heres,
 Nutrix ipsa sui, semper alumna sibi.
Ipsa quidem, sed non (eadem est), eademque nec ipsa est,
 Aeternam vitam mortis adepta bono.

TRANSLATION

There is a blessed place, sequestered in the East, where the massive door of the Eternal Heavens lies open; it lies not near the summer or winter risings, but there, where Sol spreads out the day from his axis in the spring. There, a plain scatters its wide tracts. No hump or hollow there. This place, by twice six ells, looms over our mountains whose yokes are thought lofty.

Here is the grove of the Sun, a sacred copse planted with many a tree, green with the glory of never failing foliage. When the sky had blazed with the fires of Phaethon, this place was safe from the flames, just as it overcame Deucalion's flood when the deluge submerged the world. Pale Illness, harsh Old Age, cruel Death and troubling Fear are not here, nor unspeakable Crime, mad Lust for money, Anger or Rage, burning insatiate for slaughter. Where is bitter Grief, Need, clothed in rags, sleepless Cares and impetuous Hunger?. No tempest there or savage blast of wind. Nor does hoar-frost cloak the ground with chilling dew. Above the plains, no cloud offers its fleeces, nor falls from high the turbulent drop of water.Rather, in the open, there is a spring which they call "living", mild and clear with abundant sweet waters, which, at individual times of the months, burst out and irrigate the whole grove. Here, rising with lofty trunk, there is a type of tree which bears fruit that will not fall to the ground when ripe.

This copse, this sacred grove, a unique bird inhabits; she is without parallel but lives reborn from her own death. A remarkable companion for Phoebus, to whom she submits and obeys. Nature the procreator assigned her this gift.

When rising saffron Dawn first blushes and chases the stars away with her rosy light, then, thrice, four times she bathes her body in the sacred waters; thrice, four times she drinks water from the living stream. She flies off and alights on the very top of a high tree that looks down upon the whole of the grove, then she turns to the new risings of the nascent Phoebus and awaits the rays and the forthcoming glare. When the Sun has forced the threshold of the gleaming door and a faint aura of first light has sprung forth, she begins to pour out the strains of a sacred song and to invoke the new light with a remarkable call, which neither the song of

nightingales or the musical flute could vie in Cirrhaean srains; but neither could the dying swan be considered a rival or even the melodious strings of the Cyllenaean lyre.

After Phoebus has driven his horses out on the clear spaces of Olympus and has shown his complete orb advancing all the while, then, she, with thrice-repeated lashings of her wings, applauds with thrice-repeated adoration the fire-bearing head, and then falls silent. Even the swift hours she marks off with indescribable sounds, she, the overseer of the grove, reverend priestess of the forest, sole confident of your secrets, Phoebus.

After she has passed a thousand years of life and the long years have made her sluggish, so that she can renew her generation, now fading through the passage of time, she flees the delightful home of the grove. When she has left the sacred place in her eagerness for rebirth, she then seeks this world where death has its kingdoms. The aged bird wings a straight to Syria, whose ancient name Phoenicia she gave, and seeks out through the pathless desert, sequestered groves, where lies a copse hidden away amongst the thickets.

then, high up, she chooses the airy top of a palm, which has the the Greek name "phoenix", named from the bird, into which no harmful creature can creep, neither slippery serpent or rapacious bird. Then Aeolus checks the winds in overhanging caves, lest they violate the bright-coloured air with their blasts and, lest a cloud,built up by the south wind through the empty sky, should should drive off the rays of the Sun and hinder the bird. Then she builds for herself a nest, or, if you will, a tomb, for she dies in order to live. But she herself creates herself.

Here, from the sumptuous woods, she collects juices and perfumes that the Assyrian picks, that the wealthy Arab, or the tribes of Pygmies, or India plucks, or the Sabaean land grows in its soft bosom. Here she piles up cinnamon, the fragrance of far-smelling amomum and balsam with mixed leaf (?). Nor does she omit the osier of supple casia or of fragrant acanthus nor the tears of incense and its rich drop; to these she adds the tender ears of growing nard and to the myrrh she allies your strength, panacea.

Forthwith she puts her mutable body in the finished nest and lays to rest on the vital couch her shrunken limbs. Then, with her mouth, she throws the juices around and on top of her limbs, about to die at her own funeral. Then, midst the various scents, she commends her life, nor does she doubt her

confidence in such a great pledge.

Meanwhile her body, consumed by this life-giving death, grows hot, and the heat generates a flame and catches fire far off from the aethereal light. It blazes and is completely reduced to ashes,+ and which by bringing forth from death it causes the ashes to be made into a sort of mass,+ and the effect has the appearance of a seed.

After this, it is reported that first a body without limbs appears; but the colour of the worm is reputed to be milky white. It grows, but when a certain fixed time has elapsed, it sleeps and gathers itself into the appearance of a rounded egg. And, just as chrysalids in the country, suspended to rocks by a thread, are wont to be changed to a butterfly, its shape then takes the form it had before and a phoenix bursts forth once the cocoon is broken.

In our world, no food is allowed to the phoenix, nor does anyone have the task of feeding the wingless creature. She sips the dews, ambrosial with heaven's nectars that tumble light from the starry sky. These she gathers, and is nourished by them, amidst the sweet scents, until she attains a mature appearance.

But when her first youth has flourished, she flies off to return to her ancestral home. First of all, however, whatever remains of her own body, bones, ashes or her own cocoon, she covers with ointments of balsam, myrrh and frankincense solution and rounds it into shape with her dutiful beak. Bearing this to the the City of the Sun and alights on the altar and places it in the holy sanctuary. She exhibits and shows herself to be marvelled at and worshipped, so great is the bird's beauty, so great the honour that attends her.

First, the colour that pomegranates have under the sign of the Crab when they cover their seeds with a saffron coloured rind, the sort of colour wild poppies have when Flora spreads her gowns with the reddening Sun, with this her shoulders and chest gleam becomingly, with this her head, neck and upper back also gleam. She spreads a tail adorned with deep golden metal in which mixed flecks of purple glow. Iris marks out her wing feathers from above, just as bright sunlight paints a cloud from above. Her beak gleams astonishingly white mingled with zmaragdonic green; pure horn it gapes be-gemmed. Her eyes are huge, you would think them twin hyacinths,

from the midst of which glares bright flame. A radiating crown has been fitted to her famous head, tall, echoing the honour of the crown of Phoebus. Scales cover her legs, pocked with deep golden metal. Her claws are tinted with decorous pink. Her appearance is midway between that of the peacock and that of the painted bird of Phasis.

Scarce can the bird born in the lands of the Arabs, whether beast or bird, equal its magnitude. Yet she is not sluggish, as are large birds which have an indolent gait because of their great weight, but is nimble and swift and full of queenly beauty; such then is her appearance at all times in the eyes of men.

Egypt comes to the wonders of such a magnificent sight, and an exultant crowd greets the extraordinary bird. Immediately they carve its outline on holy marble and mark the event and the day with a new inscription. Every type of winged creature gathers together in a crowd, nor does any bird stay mindful of prey or fear, thronged by a chorus of birds she flies through the air and a host follows, rejoicing in this dutiful service, but, after she has reached the airs of the pure aether, the host turns back. Then the phoenix is hidden in her own domain.

Oh bird of happy lot! Blessed of the winged creatures, to whom God himself has presented the boon of self-generation! Whether the bird is male, female or neuter, happy is is the bird that cultivates no ties with Venus. Death is her Venus. Her sole pleasure is in death. She seeks to die beforehand so that she can be born again. She is her own offspring, father and heir, her own nurse and foster-child. She is herself in fact, but is not the same, and neither is the same herself, for she has obtained eternal life by the boon of death.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMMENTARY

1 Est locus in primo felix oriente remotus; the subject of the first thirty lines of the poem, the "locus amoenus", is described by two epithets, namely felix and remotus, both of which conspire to create the exotic atmosphere of the poem.

1 Est locus: a common classical usage; Ovid for example starts eight lines with the same two words (Met.2.195; 8.788; 14.489; 15.332; Fasti 2.491; 4.337; Ars Am.15.53; Ep.Pont.3.2.5).

1 In primo oriente: according to Lactantius' cosmogony, "the creator first of all divided the world into two halves, the East and the West. The former was reckoned to be that of the God, since he himself is the fountain of light, the illuminator of things and makes us rise to eternal life... just as the light belongs to the East, in light rests the reason of life, so the shadows (tenebras) belong to the West, but death and destruction are contained in the shadows" (Div.Inst.2.9.5). It appears from the above that Lactantius meant more by in primo oriente than "as far east as the world spans".

1 Felix: means more than just "blessed"; it seems to have retained some of its primary meaning of "fertile", as will be hinted at in line 10 and made clear in lines 29-30.

2 Maxima porta poli: this line is found elsewhere in Lactantius - Div. Inst.1.8.11 - where it is quoted verbatim from Ennius. See also Verg. Georg.3.261: mi soli caeli maxima porta patet. Seneca Ep.108.34 cites a grammarian who flatly asserts that Vergil stole the line from Ennius, who in turn took it from Homer Il.5.749, 8.393, where the hours are represented as warders of the gates.

3 Nec tamen aestivos hiemisve propinquus ad ortus: Lactantius now tells us the latitude of the "locus". It is not situated near either of the Tropics. The more prosaic term for the Tropic of Capricorn is circulus hiemalis according to Hyginus Poetica Astronomica 26.3.

3 Aestivos ortus: for the same phrase see Propertius 1.1.27: sed Canis aestivos ortus vitare. The hiemis ortus or winter birth of the Sun was celebrated by the adherents of Mithra according to F.Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra (New York, 1956) 167; it is possible however that Lactantius is making it quite clear that he is not associated with this cult, since the spring is the only time of the year that is mentioned in connection with the phoenix; compare Manilius, and the Physiologos.

4 Sed qua Sol verno fundit ab axe diem: the locus is in fact situated near the equator see E. J. Bickerman, Chronology of the Ancient World, (London 1968) 53.

4 Sol: Riese does not in fact capitalize here although he does at line 9. Wight Duff, Minor Latin Poets, LCL, (London and Cambridge 1961), and Fitzpatrick (see note to line 12) both give Sol. The first twelve lines of the poem are devoted to developing a special relationship between the Sun and the grove and there seems to be no valid reason why the personified sun should not be introduced here. From the time of Elagabalus onwards, sun worship became increasingly prevalent at Rome. In 274/5 Aurelian had established an official cult of the Sun at Rome, including a temple and even a college of senators who were pontifices dei Solis. As Jupiter Optimus Maximus became less and less important to the citizens of the empire, a substitute was needed and Sol Dominus Imperii Romani temporarily satisfied that need. Later on, under Constantine, after the demise of

Maxentius, whose patron deity had been Hercules, the cult of the Sun was revived and the new emperor called himself "companion of the unconquered sun". Compare line 58 where the phoenix is described as "sole confident" of Apollo's secrets (Apollo and the sun had long been identified with each other).

The classical poets, when talking of the Sun and Apollo, had the double-edged task of making the language both believable and at the same time mythologically cogent. If in fact Lactantius did write this poem when he was a Christian, he had the additional task of not appearing to be a pagan.

2&4 Qua...qua: note the anaphora, a fairly common device in this poem and elsewhere in Lactantius' works. Compare lines 3&6, 11&13, 16&17 and passim.

4 Verno....ab axe: "axis" bears the double sense of "chariot" and "axis". Verno will be reinforced by virens in line 10 to convey the idea of perpetual spring.

6 Nec tumulus crescit nec cava vallis hiat: the abrupt transfer of image exactly coincides with the caesura of the pentameter. The poet in fact throughout the poem scrupulously observes the conventions of the elegaic couplet.

7 Sed nostros montes: the tone rapidly changes here with the word sed. We are reminded by the poet that all this is not only far from the world of mortals but also very different. How different, he will explain in lines 10-30. By nostros montes he means all those mountains that are known to man.

7 Quorum iuga celsa putantur: Lactantius builds up to a great emphasis: "whose tops are thought lofty".

8 Per bis sex ulnas imminet ille locus: the place overtops these mountains by a distance of twice six ells (a distance variously described as an elbow, an arm's length or the total length of the clasped arms), a remarkably precise and small distance for a mountain to be dwarfed by a plateau. Was it for this reason that it escaped Phaethon's flood?

8 Bis sex: quite a common expression in Vergil (four times in the Aeneid alone) and in Ovid (six times in the Metamorphoses and once each in the Fasti, the Epistles and the Med. Fac.). A special number, whose significance is greater than its usefulness as a spondaic opening; compare the number of Olympians, the sons of Nereus, the labours of Hercules, the signs of the Zodiac and the number of the Apostles.

8 Imminet: this is the reading of two of the best manuscripts, Parisinus 13048 and Veronensis 163. Leidensis Vossianus Q.33 gives eminet. Another possible instance, before the fourth century, of immineo used as a transitive verb is in Tertullian's Adversus Gnosticos Scorpiace 8. Migne, (PL 2.137), however, emends the offending accusative to a dative and thinks it unworthy of mention. Immineo, with the meaning of "threaten", regularly takes either the dative case or a preposition, plus the accusative; compare Livy 30.28.9 and Cic. Ph.5.20. There does not seem to be a strong enough argument to emend the readings of the best mss. if we allow poetic licence to Lactantius. The meaning is quite clear in this case.

9 Nemus Solis: groves were often reserved for various deities, compare Verg.Aen.7.759: Angitiae nemus and Cic. Att.15.4.5: Dianae nemus where Caesar had a villa. Amongst the panegyrical writers who flourished during the reign of Constantine epithets about springs of Apollo were thinly disguised compliments to Constantine; compare for example Porph. Opt. Carm. 26.6 and Pan.Lat.7.22.1.

9 Nemus: Lactantius uses nemus, Lucus, which plays on locus, and silva interchangably throughout the poem. The grove adds an interesting new feature to the story of the phoenix bird. Only Claudian mentions the grove and he is almost certainly drawing on Lactantius. Ovid in fact specifically mentions that Phaethon will find no groves up there.

10 Lucus, perpetuae frondis honore virens: once again the exclusiveness of the place is emphasized, felix and verno are echoed with virens, characteristics of the "Golden Age" of Hesiod, Vergil and Ovid, when agriculture was unnecessary and man simply picked his food from the nearest bush; compare Ovid Met.I.102. Lactantius talks elsewhere of the Golden Age. [see L. J. Swift, Lactantius and the Golden Age, AJP, 89 (1968) 144-156 for a more detailed discussion of this.]

11 Cum Phaethonteis flagrasset ab ignibus axis: Phaethon, son of the sea-nymph Clymen, daughter of Tethys and Helios/Apollo, had begged his mother for confirmation of his illustrious ancestry. She swore that his father was the Sun and advised him to go and visit the Sun to obtain confirmation of this from him. The boy did as he was bidden and was duly recognized by his father who offered him one boon. The boy immediately asked to be allowed to drive his father's chariot for one day. The father, having given his oath, reluctantly agreed and the inexperienced youth charged off in the chariot of the Sun and got so completely out of control that Zeus had to shoot him down with a thunderbolt lest even the heavens become a blazing inferno.

Lactantius seems to be suggesting that because the "grove" belongs to the Sun it is not scorched in the inferno, but in no other version of the myth do we hear of any locale that is inviolate at the time of Phaethon's fire.

11 Axis: this must mean a sphere which revolves on an axis, for it was the sky that caught fire first when Phaethon lost control of his chariot.

12-30 Many scholars have the thought with M. C. Fitzpatrick, op.cit. page 62, that this passage upon close thought adds force to the slowly increasing evidence for the Christian character of the poem; so P. Monceaux, Histoire Littéraire de L'Afrique Chrétienne (Paris 1905) vol.3 page 506. Others, however, have been equally convinced that it was permeated with the Stoical spirit, as for example C. Pascal, Sul Carme "De Ave Phoenice" attributito a Lattanzio (Napoli 1904). Yet others have concluded that the influence was Neo-Platonic, as for example C. Landi, IlCarme "De Ave Phoenice" e il suoautore (Padova, 1914). All of the above views belittle the poet's imagination and imply a certain simplicity of concept which has hampered a full discussion of the poem in the full light of the political, religious and social climate of the day. The intermittent yet serious persecutions of Decius and Valerian and even Domitian in Feb. 23rd. 303 had serious and divisive effects on all concerned. Rome seemed to be able to accommodate any number of oriental religions, except for Christianity, at least until Constantine's time. However, one must not forget that there were long periods of toleration although these were of varying legality. For example Constantine's father Constantius declined to persecute even though directed to do so. We only have to consider Constantine's religious views to realize the magnitude of syncretism (not all scholars agree on the degree see H. M. D. Parker, A History of the Roman World from A.D. 138-337 [Northampton 1963] 303 for a further discussion). During the third century the Roman world was slowly moving towards a monotheistic way of thinking and Lactantius was not aloof

from this trend. We know how he strives to accommodate the classical poets into his cosmology as portrayed in the Divine Institutions. The poem becomes clearer if we consider Lactantius as a syncretic. If the poem was published for a Christian audience there would have been no need to disguise its Christian nature unless the author were afraid of some form of censorship, but he tells us specifically that the cause of his admitted taciturnity was not human but divine: quia nos defendere hanc (sapientiam) publice atque adserere non solemus, deo iubente. Div.Inst.7.27. As we have shown, Lactantius' connections with Constantine are well documented as is Constantine's syncretism as Sol Invictus (see A. Alfoldi, The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome [Oxford 1948]; so we can imagine that if the poem were published during the time of Lactantius' association with the imperial family, the poem would certainly not contradict and might very well be expected to reflect the views of Constantine. The phoenix poem was clearly written for a wider audience than the Divine Institutes and thus for that reason was a more restrained work.

13 Et cum diluvium mersisset fluctibus orbem:

Deucalioneas exsuperavit aquas: We can surmise that this "locus" escaped the flood because of the fact that it was situated higher geographically than the highest mountains of "our world" but the poet tells us nothing definite about this. It is probable that Lactantius has not only Ovid's version in mind here, but also the older Greek versions which allow certain havens to be left dry. The Parian Marble, lines 4-7, tells us that Deucalion sought refuge with the King of Athens, Craneus, implying that Athens survived the flood, a notion that is surely nationalistic gloss. It is clear, however, that this part of the myth was not too rigid to be changed. According to Apollodorus it was Parnassus that received the

shipwrecked Deucalion, although in this version he was not the sole survivor.

Lactantius had an almost morbid interest in the flood. He was convinced that, when the race of men had become corrupt, then they would be punished by a great flood:

> Deus autem postea videret orbem terrae malitia et sceleribus obpletum, statuit humanum genus diluvium perdere....

Lactantius is extremely careful to explain why the above account (Div.Inst.2.13) differs from those of the poets. They were not actually wrong; they merely got the name of the creator wrong "because they had never come into direct contact with him" (Div.Inst.2.10). Earlier versions of the flood had either completely ignored the question of why a flood took place (compare Hesiod, Aristotle or Justin) or were like Apollodorus, who was partly followed by Ovid, in blaming Lycaon primarily but also mentioning that Zeus wanted to destroy the Bronze Age of man. According to G. Grote, Greece (New York 1899) 98, the chronologers, such as Tatian who was followed by Clemens and Eusebius, assigned the same time to both the flood and the conflagration. This may help us to explain why the two events are juxtaposed in the poem of Lactantius. Compare line 13 to Div.Inst.2.13.

13 Diluvium: not a very common word. It was used only twice by Virgil and once by Ovid. Lactantius uses it a total of five times. It grew in significance of course for the Christian writer who assumed that the flood was the same one as Noah experienced, as Lactantius does in the Div.Inst.2.10. There were many traditions about the flood; perhaps the

most non-committal was that of Aristotle who said(Met.I.325a-b) "whenever there is an excess of rains. This does not always happen in the same region of the earth: for instance, the so-called flood of Deucalion took place largely in the Hellenic lands and particularly in old Hellas, that is, the country round Dodona and the Achelous, a river which has frequently changed its course". There are of course other versions of the flood such as the one on the Parian Marble, mentioned in the note to line 12.

15-24: The next ten lines, almost to a word, occur elsewhere in the corpus of ancient literature. The themes of Elysium and the Christian paradise occur so often with almost identical characteristics that we ought not to categorize them as either classical or Christian, as Fitzpatrick does, unless it is possible to distinguish between the two. This particular passage echoes descriptions of Hades, Olympus, Elysium or the Christian paradise. Elsewhere Lactantius gives us his description of the Christian paradise:

> Post haec deus hominem qua exposui ratione generatum posuit in Paradiso id est in horto fecundissimo et amoenissimo: quem in partibus orientis omni genere ligni arborumque consevit, ut ex earum variis fructibus aleretur expersque omnium laborum deo patri summa devotione serviret (Div.Inst.2.12).
>
> "after these things, God having made man in the manner in which I have pointed out, placed him in paradise, that is in the most fruitful and pleasant garden, which he planted in the regions of the East with every kind of wood and tree, that he might be nourished by their various fruits; and, being free from all labours, he might devote himself entirely to the service of God his father."

We must not, however, jump to conclusions about this kind of language. Such tirades were the stock-in-trade of the panegyricists of Constantine (compare that of Nazarius Pan.Lat.10.31 given in March of 321), and Lactantius was of course a rhetorician first of all.

15-20: As Fitzpatrick says, op.cit. page 63, lines 15-20 are reminiscent of Vergil's description of the forecourt of Or us Aen.6.274-281 (compare also Stat.Theb.7.47-55; Sil.14.579-587; Cic.Nat.Deor.317.44). This passage with its enumeration of the troublesome things that are not found in the home of the phoenix recalls the scriptural paradise, from which all that troubles or worries are banished (Gen.2; Apoc.21.1-4). Somewhat the same idea of the phoenix's home is expressed in Claudian's poem, Ph.9-10. Even earlier, in the days of Ovid, Am.2.6.54, the phoenix was thought of as living in Elysium, the ancient counterpart of paradise. It is a pleasing fancy to imagine that it is from this passage in Ovid that Lactantius conceived the idea of a grove in the sun where the phoenix was to live.

15 Exsangues morbi: compare Ovid Met.15.627: pallidaque exsangui squalebant corpora morbo.

16 Mors crudelis: compare Vergil Aen.10.386: dum furit, incautum crudeli morte sodalis.

17 Opum vesana cupido: Lactanius seems particularly contemptuous of those who covet money; elsewhere he says: "there are then three affections which drive men headlong to all crimes: anger, desire and lust. On which account the poets have said that there are three furies which harass the minds of men: anger longs for revenge, lust for pleasures and desire (cupiditas) for riches (ops)". (Div.Inst.6.19). In the De Mort. Pers.6. Aurelian is described by the same adjective; he is vesanus et praeceps "mad and reckless".

18 Huc meat: the best emendation of aut metus, which is given by the mss. and which would be harsh if repeated so soon after line 16.

19 Egestas obsita pannis: compare Ter.Eun.236...pannis annisque obsitum.

20 Curae insomnes: compare Lucan De Bell.Civ.2.239: insomni..cura.

20 Violenta fames: it is the hunger that causes the violence. Lactantius uses the adjective violentus in a very similar sense in the De.Op.Dei where he describes the conluctor et adversarius noster, namely the devil, as being saepe violentus he is both violent and the cause of violence.

21-24: The description of the locus felix is continued but with a greater emphasis placed on the geographical characteristics. Compare the next four lines to Hom. Od.4.566-7, a description of Elysium, to Od.6.43-5 a description of Olympus; also Lucretius De Re.Nat.3.18-23;5.215-17.

25 Sed fons in medio est, quem vivum nomine dicunt: this line has caused many scholars to interpret the poem in a Christian context or else to consider it as an exposition of some philosophical doctrine. Broek, pages 324-326, points out that the various elements of Lactantius' description of the abode of the phoenix can be shown to have classical parallels; however, he concludes that the description of the home of the mythological bird cannot be explained as a whole from the classical models but only from the Judaeo-Christian conceptions concerning Paradise. It is true that the phrase ἐν ὕδατι ζῶντι (Didache 7.1) was used in conjunction with the baptismal service but it is also true that the phrase vivis fontibus Ovid F.2.250 is known in a pre-Christian sense (Book One of the Fasti was certainly revised towards the end of the poet's life for we find references to both the death of Augustus and the assumption of Tiberius; the rest of the work seems, however, to have been written considerably earlier and was dedicated to Augustus himself). The key to a full understanding of this line probably lies in the word dicunt upon which no-one

has seen fit to comment. Who are the subjects of the verb? And why are they suddenly mentioned so pointedly? We may criticize Lactantius for his plagiarism and his common places but nowhere can we accuse him of redundancy. Dicunt was surely put there for some reason. It is possible that dicunt nomine is almost a formula? Compare Verg. Aen.6.441; Georg.3.280. Nevertheless Fitzpatrick overinterprets the Latin when she translates vivum (fontem) as "fountain of life".

There seem to be two serious possibilities. Firstly that Lactantius had some earlier, but now lost tradition about the "lucus" and here shows his debt to these earlier writers. No proof however can be offered to support this hypothesis and indeed it seems improbable in the light of the later writers who seemed to have only Lactantius in mind when the home of the phoenix is described. Lactantius may of course simply have added dicunt to make his account more believable, even though the subjects of dicunt were imaginary or unstated.

There exists however a second possibility. Firstly we know that Apollo was traditionally associated with the Muses. Secondly, in the Carmina of Porphyrius Optatianus who also had associations with Constantine, and was a near contemporary of Lactantius, we find overwhelming evidence that the Muses and Mt. Helicon were closely associated with the cult of Apollo, or rather the Sol/Apollo/Phoebus figure, who is a thinly disguised Constantine. If we allow this, then a very convenient explanation comes to mind for the spring and the special use made of it by the phoenix. The bird is simply being inspired by the sacred spring of Apollo which enables it, like the Muses, to sing beautifully (lines 45-50). The poem itself is replete with rhetorical language reminiscent of the panegyricists of Constantine and

the phoenix can be viewed almost as a flatterer of Apollo at whose spring it drinks to retain its voice. The words pius, felix and veneratus were epithets very frequently associated with the emperor worship of the early fourth century. It is curious that Constantine, after his final consolidation of power (Eusebius Vita Const.3.54.2)removed all the statues of the Muses from Helicon and had them set up in the imperial palace in Constantinople, apparently to destroy idolatry. But if Constantine's contempt for paganism had been as Eusebius suggests, the former certainly would not have brought those statues into his own palace.

26 Uber: the idea of the fertility of the place is continued.

27-28: Although the "lucus" experiences perpetual spring, nevertheless it must still function on solar time, for the phoenix does have its timetable to reappear. We assume that the spring irrigates the grove at a certain time each month twelve times a year, but the Latin is not absolutely clear. We must take semel closely with mensum and supply per singulos menses or something similar to balance out duodecies.

28 Duodecies: synezesis of the first two vowels makes the word quadrisyllabic. Only one other sure example, CIL 24,747, is known of duodecies being used in this way (on a third-century tombstone uncovered near Carthage). Once again we are reminded of the magic number twelve which occurs again in another form in lines 37-38. This number is very common in the closing chapters of the Apocolypse 21.12,14,16,21;22.2. Compare also Sibyl.Orac. 8.247: respergens sanctos duodeno fonte.

29 Surgens: the participle reinforces the earlier participial description of the grove as virens (line 10) and erumpens (line 27).

30 Non lapsura solo mitia poma gerit: all aspects of the flora are depicted as moving or somehow burgeoning, except for the fruit which simply stays on

the trees; there is after all no-one to eat it; for a strikingly similar description of a fertile land compare Curtius' account of Bactria (7.4.26):

> Bactrianae terrae multiplex et varia natura est. Alibi multa arbor et vitis largos mitesque fructus alit, solum pingue crebri fontes rigant.
>
> The land of the Bactriani is of manifold and varied nature. In one part many trees and vines produce plentiful and mellow fruits, frequent brooks irrigate the rich soil.

It is possible that Lactantius is thinking of this description of Bactria. Strabo also notes (Geog.2.1.16) its prodigious fertility.

According to Justin 1.1.9 the King of Bactria in ancient times was none other than Zoroaster, about whom Dio Chrysostom (36.41) relates the following tale: "Because of a passion for wisdom, he (Zoroaster) deserted his fellows and dwelt by himself on a certain mountain; and they say that thereupon the mountain caught fire, a great flame descended from the sky above, and that it burned unceasingly. So then the King and the most distinguished of his Persians drew near for the purposes of praying to the God; and Zoroaster came forth from the fire unscathed." We do however have no proof that Lactantius ever read either Justin or Dio Chrysostom or even Curtius; these similarities may just be coincidence.

31 Hoc nemus, hos lucos avis incolit unica Phoenix: finally the subject of the poem is introduced. For the bird living in a grove in Elysium see Ovid:

> Colle sub Elysio nigra nemus ilice frondet,
> udaque perpetuo gramine terra viret.
> si qua fides dubiis, volucrum locus ille piarum
> dicitur, obscenae quo prohibentur aves;
> illic innocui late pascuntur olores
> et vivax phoenix, unica semper avis.

> "At the foot of a hill in Elysium is a leafy grove of dark ilex, and the moist earth is green with never fading grass. If we may have faith in doubtful things, that place, we are told, is of the winged pious kind, and from it impure fowl are kept away. There far and wide feed the harmless swans and the long-lived phoenix, bird ever alone of its kind." (Ov.Am.2.6.49-54).

It is informative that Ovid calls the bird pius which clearly has no Christian intent but compliments the bird on its piety to its "father".

31 Avis...unica: the same description of the bird as in the passage cited above. Ovid was the second writer to give the bird a feminine gender. Laevius was the first if we understand his text properly and Pomponius Mela was the only other one before Lactantius to treat the bird as female. Lactantius was greatly influenced by Ovid whom he quotes at least forty-two times elsewhere in his work. Ovid elsewhere attaches the epithet unica avis to Caeneus Met. 12.531 after he had been metamorphosed into a bird.

32 Unica sed vivit morte refecta sua: the idea of the phoenix recreating itself from its own death was hardly new but was known as far back as the first century B.C. by the Roman senator Manilius, as has been pointed out in chapter two.

33 Paret et obsequitur Phoebo memoranda satelles: the phoenix is first mentioned as an attendant of a deity in the fragment of Laevius, which, however, bears little resemblance to the passage that we are now considering. It seems at first difficult to accept that Lactantius borrowed this idea from the Apocolypse of Pseudo-Baruch a work which, we have agreed, is outside the tradition of the phoenix as we have come to know it. Nevertheless this is the only example antecedent to Lactantius that we possess of the phoenix acting out the role of attendant to the sun.

Interpretations based on myth tend to be very vague, but if we turn to more historical matters and consider the possibility of the phoenix "as a symbol of the imperial renewal ideology of the Constantinian age", as G. B. Ladner, The Idea of Reform (Cambridge Mass., 1959) 140, does, then a different picture emerges. This is not a surprising comparison since Eusebius himself (Vita Const. 4.72) says "we cannot compare him (Constantine) with that bird of Egypt, the only one, as they say, which dies self-sacrificing, in the midst of aromatic perfumes, and rising from its own ashes with new life, soars aloft in the same form which it had before." It is tempting to think that Eusebius took this account from Lactantius, but the report is couched in such general terms that it could have come from any number of the versions listed in chapter two. Nevertheless it does seem from the above passage of Eusebius that someone had compared Constantine to the phoenix, for it does seem on the part of Eusebius a most unusual suggestion for people not to compare Constantine to the phoenix. Suffice it to say for the moment that the phoenix at this time had political overtones.

Curiously, Eusebius in the Vita Const. makes no mention of Crispus, Constantine's son by an early connection with Minervina, circa 290, nor of Lactantius, Crispus' tutor (see H. A. Drake, In Praise of Constantine [Berkeley, 1976] 48, for a discussion of this), whose work De Mort. Pers. covered much the same material as Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History in the chapters dealing with Constantine's rise to power. The two accounts, however, differ on such important points as the vision of the cross in the sky before the walls of Rome and the second plot purported to have been hatched by Maximinian before his death. This may be explained by the fact

that Crispus' name became unmentionable after his death at his father's hands in 326. Perhaps Lactantius suffered the same fate simply by association with Crispus, for it is quite remarkable that he is mentioned by absolutely no author in the first three quarters of fourth century.

However we do know that Constantine was compared to Apollo; for instance in the panegyric composed in 311 Pan.Lat.5.14.4 Apollo is described as ille quasi maiestatis tuae comes et socius. Compare also the very frequent legend of the contemporary coins Sol Invictus Comes (Trésors Monétaires de la Gaûle Romaine, G. Fabre et M. Mainjonet, [Paris, 1958] 206-222). The coins also describe him as princeps iuventis and memoria felix. From the forementioned panegyricist it is quite clear that his only object is flattery at the expense of all that is truthful. Lactantius, on the other hand, says explicitly in his dedication to the emperor at the end of the Divine Institutions 7.27. nemo divitiis, nemo fascibus, nemo etiam regia potestate confidat: "let no-one trust in riches, in badges of office, or even in royal power". If Lactantius did in fact write this dedication, and there are some that doubt that he did in fact write it, it shows him to be far more sparing in his praise than the aforementioned panegyricist or the unbridled sycophant Porphyrius Optatianus. Almost all the above-mentioned epithets of flattery attached to Constantine were also attached to Crispus.

So in Line 33 the phoenix is the satelles that obeys Apollo and we must bear in mind the possibility that the bird may be an allegorical figure for a member of the imperial family or at least for someone politically important. We have further evidence of the special relationship that existed between Constantine and the phoenix. On a medallion struck in

Italy towards the end of Constantine's life, the emperor is seen handing over the globe to one of his sons (?) and upon the globe is perched a bird, unmistakably a phoenix, for it is replete with a seven-rayed nimbus (see A. Alfoldi, On the Foundation of Constantinople JRS 37[1947] 15). Broek, page 434, dates this medallion to 326 and J. Maurice, Numismatique Constantinienne (Paris 1908) Vol. I, page 104 even goes as far as to suggest that the smaller of the two figures is Crispus who was put to death in 326. It can be seen from the above that it would be of great interest to date the poem, for this would give us some clue to the identification of the symbolism of the phoenix, if indeed any exists.

33 Memoranda: Baehrens wished to emend this to veneranda even though he was going against the Mss. tradition; it is, nevertheless, quite appealing. Note also the legend on a coin commemorating the death of Constantine where the Emperor is pictured on a chariot being beckoned upwards by the hand of (one assumes) God. It reads VN.MR i.e. Veneranda Memoria (H. Mattingly, Roman Coins [London, 1927] 249).

33 Satelles: one argument against the identification of the Emperor Constantine with the phoenix is the usage of the word satelles elsewhere in the Lactantian corpus. In three out of four examples (Div.Inst.2.13, Ep.Div.Inst.22, De Mort.Pers.16) it is used in very close association with the devil and in the only other example of its use (Div.Inst.5.11), a satelles is clearly an agent of persecution. Lactantius would not have been likely to have slighted an emperor whom he genuinely admired, however, he may not have intended the word to carry such connotations.

34 Natura parens: we need not follow Fitzpatrick and deduce a Christian meaning here. Even if Lactantius says (Div.Inst.2.8) that all things

derive their existence from God, he also says (Div.Inst.2.8) that Seneca, the most intelligent of the Stoics, saw that nature was nothing else but God, and Seneca was certainly not a Christian:

35 Aurora rubescit: for the same expression see Verg.Aen.3.521 and Ovid Met.3.600.

36 Cum primum rosea sidera luce fugat: see Horace Carmina 3.21.24 for a similar expression.

37 Ter quater: as worded it is a unique phrase in Latin. The two words always occur with a coordinating conjunction such as aut, et or que; compare Verg. Aen.12.155, Georg.2.399 or Hor.Carm.I.31.13. Translate as "three times four times". The coupling of these two numerical adverbs goes back as far as Homer Od.5.306, thrice blessed those Danaans, aye, four times blessed.

37 Pias...undas: no parallel usage is evident in Latin although the transference of an epithet from one noun to another is of course very common. It is the phoenix not the waters that is pius, because of the fact that all the due funeral rites are observed upon the death of its "father". Many ancient religions posited that their adherents would be purified by immersing themselves in water, as in the cult of Mithra, F. Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra (1956) 157 and in the cult of Isis, R. E. Witt, Isis in the Graeco-Roman World (London, 1971) 160.

38 Ter quater: note the anaphora.

38 Vivo: the fons vivus of line 25 is echoed.

38 Libat: Once again the phoenix is given human characteristics. The translation however is difficult, I prefer "sipped" with Duff and Fitzpatrick; the limited eating habits of the phoenix are discussed later on.

39 Tollitur ac summo considit in arboris altae: the phoenix was frequently portrayed in the visual arts perched on the top of a palm.

The homonymity of the bird and the palm tree could well be the reason for this. Ovid probably reflected this play on words in Met.15.898 where he describes how the phoenix customarily nests in the topmost branches of some swaying palm.

In some versions of the Romance of Alexander by Pseudo-Callisthenes, the all conquering general encounters the phoenix at the ends of the earth perched on a tree that has neither fruit nor foliage. Since, however, none of the versions that mention the phoenix can be dated earlier than the fourth century they do not concern us here. The Egyptian benu was also frequently portrayed perched on the top of a tree (Broek plate 1.2) which can be clearly identified as a willow, however, not a palm tree. It was not until the late republic and early empire that the myths of the phoenix and the benu can be seen from contemporary paintings to have drawn extensively from each other.

Tollitur: the passive appears in a middle sense here, to suggest "raises itself up", as in lines 98 solvitur; 105 reformatur; 113 alitur; 131 porrigitur.

40 Conversa Phoebi ad Ortus: Not only did the East hold special significance for the early Christians (they built all their churches facing in this direction as had been the practice of temple-builders in classical Greece) but also for the Zoroastrians (for whom this was the direction of the birthplace of their founder) and for the worshippers of Mithra and for other religions strongly associated with the worship of the Sun. According to Lactantius Div.Inst.6.3, the East was the direction of "the Good", the

west that of "the Wicked". Broek, (page 276), feels sure that Lactantius retains some elements of the Oriental myth about the cosmic cock known from Armenian, Hindu, Classical and later Byzantine sources.

41 Lubar exoriens: compare Verg.Aen.4.130 iubare exorto where the phrase has the same meaning "dawn".

43 Sol: Apollo, Sol and Phoebus are used synonymously in the poem, but, by convention, each must have a different literary treatment. The transfer from Phoebus, a complex God of many facets, to Sol (the Romans did not use the appellation Helios), the mere boatswain of the solar chariot, is accomplished smoothly.

43 Fulgentis limina portae: the examples of descriptions of the doors of the Sun are too numerous to mention. Ovid (Met.2.4-19) gives a particularly full description.

44 Et primi emicuit luminis aura levis: Fitzpatrick criticizes this line on the ground that the metaphor is badly mixed in lines 43 and 44. There is no metaphor in line 44, however, and it is difficult to see the purpose behind her statement. The metaphor has finished at line 43 which is followed by the neutral meteorological line 44; thus the change of subject from Sol to the phoenix is accomplished smoothly.

44 Luminis: Limina of the preceding line is neatly echoed.

45 Incipit illa sacri modulamina fundere cantus: a Gallic panegyricist (Pan.Lat.7.21) reminds us a little of this passage when he likens Constantine to Apollo: vidisti (Apollinem) teque in illius specie recognovisti, cui totius mundi regna deberi vatum carmina divina cecinerunt: "you have seen (Apollo) and you saw yourself in his appearance to whom the poems of the poets have sung that the kingdoms of the world are owed". But it was Ezechial

the Dramatist Ex.264 who was the first to mention the sweet tones of the phoenix. The phoenix has, he says, "the most beautiful of voices".

45 Modulamina: a rare word in the classical period. In the early imperial period, only Aulus Gellius uses it. The only recorded use of modulamina in poetry before Lactantius' time is in the Anthologia Latina 88.6 where a poem of Florus, who flourished around the time of Hadrian, is cited. In the same work, an undated poem, entitled De Cantibus Avium 733.8-9, also has the word in the singular...merulae dulci modulamine cantus zinzilat. Compare also the usage in Anthologia Latina 762.5-6 in reference to the nightingale, a bird normally considered quite matchless in song.

However modulamina also occurs in a slightly different context. In the manuscripts of Porphyrius Optatianus, a near contemporary of Lactantius, and, has been mentioned before, a panegyricist of Constantine, the word occurs once in the Carmina 27.4 and once also in a letter written by Constantine, Epistula Constantini 4, to Porphyrius allowing him back from exile and means "poem" rather than "song/poem".

45-50: These lines bear some remarkable similarities to the De Sirenis of Euphorbius (?):-

> Sirenes varios cantus, Acheloia proles,
> Et solitae miros ore ciere modos
> (Illarum voces, illarum Musa movebat
> Omnia quae thymele carmina dulcis habet:
> Quod tuba, quod litui, quod cornua rauca queruntur,
> Quodque foraminibus tibia mille sonat,
> Quod leves calami, quod suavis cantat aëdon,
> Quod lyra, quod cytharae, quod moribundus olor)
> Inlectos nautas dulci modulamine vocum
> Mergebant avidae fluctibus Ioniis.
>
> Anth.Lat.637.1-10

47 Aëdoniae: the adjective is found only here and in the work known as the Laus Pisonis (of unknown authorship but generally assigned to the first century A.D.) a rare word used very effectively here if Heinsius' conjecture from inconsistent manuscript readings be correct.

48 Cirrhaeis: Cirrha was a very ancient town in Phocis devoted to Apollo. The adjective means "pertaining to Apollo."

49 Olor moriens: the swan was sacred to Apollo according to Plato, Phaedo 84e, and Cicero, Tusc.Disp. I.30.73,. It had the reputation of sending forth the most beautiful song on its deathbed, a tale which was disbelieved by Pliny Hist.Nat.10.63, wrongly, for the whooping swan does in fact give out a particularly memorable song during its last minutes. Swans, Cicero continues, were given the boon of prophecy from Apollo, and thus have a foretaste of the blessing that death brings. The singing of the phoenix is thus compared favourably to that of the two most famous song-birds; indeed it seems to be able to outdo Apollo himself!

50 Cylleneae Lyrae: Cyllene was a high mountain on the north-east corner of Arcadia on which Mercury was born (Verg.Aen.8.138-9).

The syncretism of Apollo and Helios, which had started as early as the fifth century B.C. (Eur.Fragment 781) is well established by now. The literary references have become so stylized that it passes almost without notice that the phoenix seems to be guilty of hubris for having dared to sing better than Apollo. The original cause for the syncretism of Apollo and Helios is however more complex, even if at just glance the only skill that they seem to have in common is facility with the bow.

48&50: The harmony of concepts is nicely balanced in these two lines. Notice also the completely spondaic hemiepes in line 50 which contrasts

sharply with the dactylic second part of the line. The fila canora or "melodious strings" seem almost to dart off the page, as though vibrating.

51 Atque orbem totum protulit usque means: either "and in ever onward course brought forward his full round orb" (compare Sil.5.56...iamque, orbe renato diluerat nebulas Titan: "soon the Sun, with disc renewed, dispelled the vapours") or "and has revealed the whole circle (of the world) moving all the time". The former seems preferable.

52 Illa ter alarum repetito verbere plaudit: there may be echoes here of Christian liturgy, for the number three had well known mystic significance, in connection with baptism for example. Three times was the number of times for the immersion of the convert in the holy waters. In the religion of Mithra,too, the priest was required to pray three times a day facing towards the Sun, accompanied by music and long chants (F. Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra [New York 1956] 166-7). The flapping of the wings is reminiscent of a cock which was first mentioned in classical Literature by Cratinus, the fifth century comic playwright (according to Athenaeus 9.374d), who says that the Persian cock crowed each hour in a loud voice.

Broek, page 284, in reference to the problem of ter, notes an inscription associated with the double phoenix on the tomb of the Valerii under the Vatican, apparently concerning the song of the phoenix. The inscription, published by M. Guarducci, Cristo e San Pietro in un documento preconstantiniano della Necropoli Vaticana (Rome 1953) 38-40, but not verified elsewhere, purports to address the phoenix with the words "thou singest thrice in the early morning". The sarcophagus has been dated by Guarducci (31&70) to circa 300 A.D. Broek

feels that there is a possibility of Lactantian influence here, which would enable one to date the poem to some time before 300 A.D. Unfortunately this argument does not hold because it is equally conceivable that Lactantius was himself influenced by the sarcophagus to write the poem at some undetermined later date or, perhaps more likely, there was a common source for both or even that both independently arrived at the same ideas: there is no evidence to support any one of the above hypotheses.

54 Igniferum caput ter venerata silet: once again Fitzpatrick assumes that there are Christian connotations but the contemporary usage of the word venerata will not bear this out (see note on line 33). Venerata is a stock word of the panegyricists used for anything associated with the emperor worship.

54 Igniferum: nowhere else do we come across a description of Phoebus' head in these terms, although his chariot is accorded the same epithet by Ovid Met.2.59. The coinage of the period informs us that Sol Invictus was often portrayed with what J. Maurice, Op.Cit. passim, calls a "couronne radiée". In fact on one coin it is only the crown that enables us to tell Phoebus and Constantine apart, since both are portrayed with the same features (Maurice vol.1, page 100). It is this same radiata corona that the phoenix is wearing at line 139 in honour to Phoebus.

55&56 Atque eadem celeres etiam discrimat horas
Innarrabilibus nocte dieque sonis: no explanation can be offered for these two mysterious lines. The phoenix resembles a cock which crows twenty four hours of the day. Perhaps the sleeplessness of the phoenix is just another way of describing the bird as "larger than life".

57 Antistes luci nemorumque verenda sacerdos: the importance of the phoenix

is further emphasized and more human characteristics are assigned to it. In the contemporary language of Porphyrius Optatianus Ep.Porph.4 Vergil is described as antistes Romanae Musae Mantuanus.

58 Et sola arcanis conscia, Phoebe, tuis: the "secrets" of Apollo may have been the gifts of prophecy which, although not shared with Hermes, however are shared with the phoenix.

59 Mille annos: Lactantius here follows the less common version of the legend. A thousand years is the lifespan of the bird only according to Martial Ep.5.7.2 and Pliny Hist.Nat.29.1.9 (Pliny Hist.Nat. 10.2.1 also gives 540 years as the bird's lifespan) amongst the writers who antedate Lactantius. The most common figure is that of 500 years, the best known examples of which are Herodotus Hist.2.73, Ovid Met.15.402, Tac. Ann. 6.28, Seneca Ep.42.1, Clement Ep. ad Cor. 1.25 and Pomponius Mela 3.83 and Ael. De Nat.An.6.58 (for a more detailed discussion of the lifespan of the phoenix and its connection with the Great Year, see Broek pages 65-75). The later writers Claudian Phoen. 27 and Ausonius Epist. 29 give the same age for the phoenix as Lactantius, namely 1000 years.

60 Gravem: Statius, Silv.2.4.35-37, mentions the phoenix and the weariness of old age in the same context in a poem dedicated to the memory Melior's dead parrot. It is not clear however whether the weariness applies to the parrot or the phoenix. It is possible that Lactantius knew of the tradition about the phoenix "becoming sluggish in the air and dimmer in eyesight" first documented by Dionysius as we have seen in chapter two.

61 Ut reparet aevum: we finally come to familiar details about the renewal of the phoenix. Note that Lactantius implies that the bird is renewing itself and thus is the same bird (to be) born again. Clement

had treated the myth differently; for him another phoenix was born just like its "parent". Knowing that it is the same bird helps us to understand lines 167-8.

63 Loca sancta: Fitzpatrick feels that the myth is given a subtle turn in the direction of the mystical, which becomes stronger towards the end of the poem. Be that as it may, these places are sancta because they belong to Apollo.

64 Orbem: this regularly means "the world" in the poetry of the period; compare Porphyrius Optatianus Carm.passim.

65 In Syriam: Lactantius is the first writer to state that the phoenix makes its nest in Syria although it seems likely that there was little distinction made, in the context of the phoenix, between Assyria, Phoenicia and Syria, homes of the phoenix in other accounts.Ovid.Met.15.393 had already suggested that the Assyrians named the miraculous bird "the Phoenix", an idea that Martial Ep.5.7.1-2 seems to echo. Lactantius clearly uses "Syria" and "Phoenicia" to represent the same geographical area (compare lines 65&66). Indeed the whole story of the bird's long flight particularly to Syria occurs only in Lactantius, perhaps under the influence of the obvious homonomy of the Greek words for "phoenix", palm tree and Phoenicia. (The Physiologus does however mention Lebanon in a somewhat similar context).

When we come to consider the possible symbolism of the poem, a comparison of the De Ave Phoenice with any version of the Physiologus, where the bird is quite clearly the symbol for Christ and the resurrection, reveals that Lactantius intended no such symbolism. For example, in line 167, the bird is described as "its own heir and father", surely a statement that is close to blasphemy in conventional Christian doctrine if Christ were intended

by the phoenix. In the Christian interpretations of the phoenix myth we are always told specifically whether symbolism is intended.

Though the symbolism of the Physiologus and the De Ave Phoenice is quite different, it is possible that Lactantius knew of the former since the bird is described as flying from India to Heliopolis via Lebanon where it collects spices for its own funeral pyre. An account remarkably similar to our poet's.

66 Phoinices nomen cui dedit ipsa vetus: though the texts differ greatly at this point,nevertheless the sense of theline seems to be that it was the phoenix itself that gave the name to Phoenicia rather than vice versa. Lactantius inverts the inferences of the etymologists/poets who imply or state that the phoenix either received its name from the country or from the palm tree. He states that the phoenix gave its name not only to the country but also (line 69) to the palm tree. This is a fitting compliment to be used in a poem which is a panegyric to the phoenix.

66 Vetus: a clever choice of word. It can be taken either with nomen, the most likely suggestion, or with ipsa, to echo longaeva of the previous line.

67 Per avia: for the same phrase see Porphyrius Optatianus Carm.10.4. The terrestial home of the phoenix can be seen to be a microcosm of the celestial one.

69 Tum legit aerio sublimen vertice palmam: compare Ovid's account:

> Una est, quae reparet, seque ipsa reseminet, ales;
> Assyrii Phoenica vocant: non fruge, nec herbis,
> Sed turis lacrimis, et succo vivit amomi.
> Haec ubi quinque suae complevit saecula vitae,
> Ilicet in ramis, tremulae cacumine palmae,
> Unguibus, et pando nidum sibi construit ore.

"There is one living thing, a bird which reproduces and regenerates itself, without any outside help. The Assyrians call it the phoenix. It lives, not on corn or grasses, but on the gum of incense and the sap of balsam. When it has completed five centuries of life it straightaway builds a nest for itself, working with unsullied beak

and claw, in the topmost branches of some swaying palm.

Met.15.392-396

Pliny, Hist.Nat.12.85, tells us about the phoenix nesting in the palm tree, a tale apparently known to Herodotus (according to Pliny) and about the acquisition of cinnamon and casia. He tells us that they are obtained from bird's nests in the region where Father Liber was brought up. The nests are knocked down from inaccessible rocks and trees by the weight of the flesh brought there by the birds themselves, or by means of arrows loaded with lead. There is,however, no evidence that Lactantius read either Herodotus, Pliny or even Solinus, Pliny's plagiarist, and so care must be exercised if we are to assume that these are the sources for Lactantius. Pliny, loc.cit., does say that the story has been related by antiquity, first of all by Herodotus. It seems reasonable to assume that we have lost the precise source used by Lactantius.

70 Quae Graium phoenix ex ave nomen habet: Lactanius contradicts Pliny, Hist.Nat. 13.4.9 where the latter states that the bird is named from the tree. Pliny also contradicts himself when he gives the age of the bird as 540 years (some of the manuscripts give 560 and even 660 years!); elsewhere he mentions 1000 years in connection with the phoenix cycle.

Many learned treatises have been written on the connections between the phoenix bird and the palm tree, some discussing the homonomy of the bird and the palm tree (in Coptic and Syriac too). Lactantius shows us that he is fully aware of this discussion and offers his rather startling version of it, namely that everything with a name related to the word "phoenix" drew its name from the remarkable bird,

rather than vice versa.

71-76 Broek, page 183, considers that this passage clearly betrays the influence of Judaeo-Christian paradise images. We ought not to consider however that such descriptions were reserved for religious and not secular subjects. Compare, for example, the description of Britain which was the "first to see Constantine" in the anonymous panegyric (Pan.Lat.7.7)written at the end of July 310 to the emperor. Britain is a country "where there is no excessive harshness in climate ...nor noxious serpents, there are groves without wild animals". The whole description is reminiscent of the nesting ground of the phoenix. Indeed the unknown author goes on to echo Lactantius' conclusions that those places which are situated nearer to the Sun are more sacred and hence more likely to furnish an emperor! This same passage of the panegyricist seems also to be echoed in the De Mort. Pers.29.7.

73-76: ¡deal meteorological conditions are necessary for the re-birth of the phoenix. Absence of wind ensures the absence of cloud which would prevent the sun's rays, which are seen somehow to be necessary for the ignition of the bird (line 97), from reaching the dying phoenix. The image of Aeolus shutting up the winds in a cave is of course a familiar one from both Ovid Met. 1.102 and from Verg.Aen.1.52-57.

74 Purpureum: a difficult word to translate. Fitzpatrick gives "bright or radiant", Duff "bright-gleaming" and M. F. McDonald, Lactantius the Minor Works (Washington 1965) 216, in turn gives "bright". It is possible that Statius Ach.1.161 thinks that the word is cognate with the Greek word "fire-bearing" rather than with πορφύρεος for he used purpureum to describe a flame. Von Hjalmar Frisk, Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch (Heidelberg 1973) vol. 2

page 582, does not support this etymology. Ovid, Met. 3.184, may support it however when he uses purpureum to describe the dawn, whose usual epithet is of course rosy.

Lactantius is perhaps ingeniously incorporating that part of the phoenix legend that properly belongs to the Jewish bird, with the more familiar version known through Herodotus. Wehave seen in the Apocolypse of Pseudo-Baruch how close was the relationship of this phoenix to the actual rays of the sun, and this story may be faintly echoed.

77-79: There are almost as many versions of the phoenix's preparations for death as there are for its renewal. In some of the earlier versions, as in Lactantius (line 60), the bird is forewarned of its impending death by a sign such as its increasing sluggishness;in others, such as Aelian, the bird knows by some miracle of nature. The details of the death have fascinated scholars; Hubert and Leroy, pages 68-97, argue that there is a special relationship between the phoenix and cinnamon because it is the phoenix that brings cinnamon to the world of men. This role is, however, assigned to another mysterious bird called the cinnamolgus (Broek cites Solinus 33.15 for evidence of this). The details of Lactantius' interpretation of the funeral can be understood well in terms already suggested. Namely, the poem is a panegyric and the phoenix is given every good human attribute but none of the bad ones. The phoenix prepares for its death in exactly the same way as a pious son ought to take care of his deceased parent. The irony is that the bird is, in effect, doing all these things for itself.

77 Seu nidum sive sepulchrum: The ancients were particularly fascinated

by the fact that the bird built both a nest and a tomb. Here Lactantius gives us the fullest version of the preparations for death. Clement of Rome uses the word σηκόν which is usually translated as "nest" but more often means pen or enclosure, often with religious connotations. Statius uses the word altaria for the same idea, while Pliny uses the word nidum alone.

78 Nam perit, ut vivat, se tamen ipsa creat: neither Broek nor Fitzpatrick comment on this line. The powerful hemiepes nam perit, ut vivat seems to those translators who prefer a Christian interpretation of the poem to be an echo of Clement of Rome, who interprets the death of the phoenix as something that shows to man the magnitude of the promise in store for him if God accomplishes such things (for a bird). Lactantius, though, quickly adds se tamen ipsa creat; the concessive force of tamen is completely missed by Fitzpatrick who translates this clause as "yet by her own efforts she begets herself". The force of tamen is "however" or even "but" which thus keeps the interpretation of the phoenix on the secular level, or at least not wholly on the celestial one.

This line is echoed in a curious poem in the Anthologia Latina 389.34, called the In Laudem Solis where the phoenix is the subject of the line nascitur ut pereat, perit ut nascatur ab igni. Unfortunately the poem has not yet been dated conclusively, though according to F. Vollmer RE vol.5.2 page 1640 it is post-Dracontian, that is to say, later than the end of the fifth century. The subject matter of the poem, a panegyric to the Sun, fits in more naturally to our period when such imagery, widespread because of the syncretism of the age, was frequently met in both a religious and political context.

We may also detect the influence of Ovid, Met.15.397, where the phoenix is una est, quae reparet, seque ipsa reseminet, ales.

79-82: Lactantius shows himself as the great synthesizer of the myth. Writers before him had connected the phoenix with many parts of the world. Achilles Tatius 3.25.3 mentions Ethiopia as the home of the phoenix; in the second century Lucian De Morte Pere.27 and Navigium 44 connects the bird with India, as do the slightly later versions of Philostratus Vita Apoll.3.49, Idem.Epist.8, Greek Physiologus 7, Dionysius De Aucup.1.32, Aristides Aelius 180.3 (Dindorf), Heliodorus 6.3.3 (Ethiopia too). The connections with Assyria and Phoenicia have already been mentioned (line 65) and there remains only the well-known story about the bird's origins in Arabia, first reported by Herodotus 2.73, a location followed later by Pliny Hist.Nat.10. 3.1, Clement 25, Ep.ad Cor. Tacitus Ann.6.28, Tert. De Res. 13, Origen Contra Celsum 4.98, Solinus Coll. Rer. Mem. 33.II.

Lactantius hints at all these places without committing himself to any of them as a home for the phoenix, which nests but does not live in Phoenicia (lines 65-66). This combines to give a very exotic image of the bird. All the aforementioned places were, of course, famous for their spices in the ancient world. Lactantius is intentionally silent on details of the exact location of the area over which the phoenix searches out the sucos et odores. He implies, but does not say explicitly, that it visits Assyria, Arabia, India and the land of the Pygmies.

83-88: Lactantius gives us a more comprehensive list of spices from which the bird makes its pyre, than any other ancient source. Cinnamon is almost always mentioned in connection with the phoenix. The whole scene is very

reminiscent of a Roman funeral. Compare Stat.Silv.5.1.210-214 where the poet describes the funeral pyre of Priscilla the wife of Abascantus, one of Domitian's secretaries:-

> ...omne illic stipatum examine longo ver Arabum
> Cilicumque fluit foresque Sabaei Indorumque arsura
> seges praereptaque templis tura Palestinis, simul
> Hebraique liquores Coryciaeque comae Cinyreaque
> germina.

> "...there heaped together in long array is all the liquid wealth of Arabian and Cilician springs, Sabaean blooms and Indian produce destined for the flames, and incense, spoil of Palestinian shrines, Hebrew essences withal and Corycean petals and Cinyrean buds."

86 Turis Lacrimae: compare Ovid Met. 15.399, turis lacrimis, where the nest of the phoenix is also described.

88 Et sociat myrrae vim, panacea, tuam: the text is garbled at this point, but all editors follow the emendations of Riese, except for Duff, Minor Latin Poets (Loeb Classical Library), who does not seem to have used Brandt's text, but suggest tuae for tuam without explanation. The better manuscripts give tue, turis and ture and suggest the idea of incense, which is mentioned two lines earlier. Duff also suggest Panachaea for panacea since this island was famous for its spices. The usual form for this adjective is Panchaïus and, consequently, Duff's emendation has no precedent although it is closer to the readings of the manuscripts panachee-ea. Riese's readings are retained here.

90 Vitalique toro: according to Petronius Satyr. 42 the lectus vitalis was the bed that one was laid out upon while still alive and remained upon after death.

91 Ore: Lactantius is probably here echoing Ovid (Met.15.396) who described

the phoenix building its next, et pando nidum sibi construit ore, (it makes for itself a nest with curved beak). The idea of the bird making a nest, though not mentioned by Herodotus in the works attributed to him, may have been known to him because Pliny says that the tale was well known in antiquity.

92 Suis: Riese feels that there is a hiatus in the text here. The argument is put forward that, because Gregory of Tours, De Cursu Stellarum 12, gives a different order of events from Lactantius and embellishes the tale a little, even though the former claims to be familiar with a work by Lactantius on the phoenix bird, for this reason details must be supplied to make the De Ave Phoenice accord with Gregory's version. This argument has been dismissed recently by Broek, page 185, on the ground that Gregory was simply working from a faulty memory.

93 Animam commendat: Fitzpatrick contents that this line offers testimony for the christian authorship of the poem. Granted that the phrase can have religious connotations, neverthless the expression can also be interpreted in accordance with good classical usage. Commendo certainly does have the sense of "put in trust" in its early usage and it makes good sense to be able to use the verb to mean "entrust to", because the phoenix is confident that its anima, its life, is redeemable, as we are told in the following line.

95-98: Lactantius cleverly avoids the controversy about whether the phoenix is set on fire by the rays of the Sun or sets itself on fire; it must however be granted that the use of procul in line 97 is suggestive of the former.

94 Depositi tanti fidem: In classical usage for such as in Cic. Off. 1.10.31, the phrase is a legal term that which is put in another's charge for safe-keeping until demanded back. Here of course it refers to the life or, more precisely, the anima of the phoenix.

95 Genitali morte: the sense of genitalis here is very typical of Lucretius (compare De Rer.Nat. 2.62 and 5.851), an author with whom Lactantius was particularly familiar; translate as "generative". In a rather different version of the myth, found in Achilles Tatius, Leuc. et Clit. 3.25.7, the bird, doubting that the priest of Heliopolis will recognize it, displays its genitals. Achilles Tatius, whose floruit is now known from papyri to be in the second century, may have been misled by some false etymology with reference to the death of the phoenix, or, more likely, he was dealing with a separate tradition concerning the phoenix, a tradition that was outside the mainstream of the classical one.

95-97: Lactantius gives us a unique version of the myth, namely that the bird dies of natural causes and catches fire from the decomposition of its body, perhaps assisted by a ray of sun aetherio de lumine. In at least one version, the Syriac Didascalia 40.29-30, the phoenix takes fire spontaneously, burns, and becomes ash after having prayed. This work could have been used by Lactantius though it is uncertain whether he knew it.

It may be that Lactantius was forced to make two paradises to incorporate as many versions of the myth as possible. The only other writer antecedent to Lactantius who mentions both the death of the phoenix and a subsequent fire, in that order, is the late second-century Artemidorus, who, Broek feels, intended the two events to coincide. But we have no evidence that Lactantius ever read Artemidorus whose Stoic works on Causality and Dreams were not, one imagines, likely reading material for either a Christian apologist or a rhetorician.

98 Flagrat...solvitur: even in death the phoenix's body is still the subject of these verbs; ambustum is best taken as an adjective agreeing with

corpus. It is not until line 101 that a new subject, animal, is evident. Even in death the bird has presence. The text of line 99 is quite corrupt. Duff emends differently from Riese, preferring, with Baehrens,...cineres umore to generans in morte. Fitzpatrick's text at this point...quos velut in massam, generans in morte, coactos...is completely untenable: she has no antecedent for quos since she has emended cineres to cinerem in the preceding line. Duff sidesteps the problem; he pulls out corpus from line 95 and, having made it the subject of flagrat and solvitur, changes the subject back to "she" again, even though there is no word in the text that indicates any change of subject in lines 99 and 100. On balance Riese's reading requires least compromise and is retained in my text for that reason.

100 Seminis: In the best known tale of the phoenix (Herodotus 2.73), the bird is described as carrying the remains of its father in an "egg" of myrrh to the temple of the Sun in Egypt. It is possible that Lactantius borrowed this idea from the tradition that emanated from Herodotus through Celsus, Achilles Tatius and Pomponius Mela, and reworked it for his own purposes.

101-102. The concept of a worm being generated from the ashes of the phoenix back as far as Manilius, recorded by Pliny Hist.Nat. 10.2.3 "from its bones and marrow is born first a sort of maggot, and this grows onto a chicken". Clement of Rome says that when the flesh has become putrid a certain worm appears. The Syriac Didascalia simply says that a worm is generated from the ashes and becomes. According to M. F. McDonald, Phoenix Redivivus Phoenix 14(1960) 22 and passim, the Midrash Rabban says that the phoenix lives for a thousand years, at the end of which its body is consumed and its wings drop off; as much as an egg is left, and it then grows new

limbs. (See chapter 2 for the versions of the worm in the Greek Physiologus, Artemidorus and the Apocolypse of Pseudo-Baruch.)

102 Vermi: as has just been pointed out, Manilius is the earliest source for this idea. There is however another possible explanation for the worm. Aelian, De Nat.Anim.14.13, when describing the banquets of the Indian kings, notes that the favourite dishes of one of the kings is φοινίκων τῶν χαμαιζήλων σκώληκα "a worm of the date palms". It needs little imagination to see how the idea of a worm of the phoenix might have been generated by some one with an imperfect knowledge of the Greek of this passage.

104 Seque ovi teretis colligit in speciem: compare Lact. De Op. Dei for a very similar idea of generation, in principio cum Deus fingeret animalia, noluit ea in rotundam formae speciem conglobare atque colligere. For Lactantius, the sphere was the perfect shape (op.cit.8.4.2).

105-106: Lactantius is quite clearly echoing Ovid here:-

> Quaeque solent canis frondes intexere filis,
> Agrestes tineae, res observata colonis,
> Ferali mutant cum papilione figuram.
>
> The farmers know full well that the worms which spin a cocoon of white threads on the leaves, in country places, change into butterflies, the symbol of death.
>
> Met.15.372-374

The whole passage from which the above has been excerpted concerns the reproduction of birds and insects, and the phoenix is mentioned only twenty lines after the above citation. In Greek, it should be noted the word for butterfly is ψυχή the same word as for "soul", a homonymity that cannot be ignored in the light of Christian understanding of the phoenix as voiced by, say, Clement of Rome. In this case however

it is Ovid rather than Lactantius who may be suggesting the double meaning of "butterfly".

107 Inde reformatur Qualis fuit ante figura: Riese, following Leyser, rearranges the lines 107, 108, 105, 106, which is also followed by Fitzpatrick. Riese's text is retained here too.

109 Non illi cibus est nostro concessus in orbe: This line has been interpreted by Broek, pages 349-356 as showing that Lactantius assumes the Jewish and Christian conception of dew as a divine boon, since the idea of the food of the gods coming down like dew (in the real world) is quite unknown in the classical world. Cibus should be translated as "solid food" since two lines later we find the phoenix feeding on ambrosial dew. Latin, like English, says "food and drink" when strictly speaking one should say "solids and liquids"; compare Tac. Ann.13.16, cibus potusque. Again we must not assume that, even if Christian imagery is used, therefore the poem should be interpreted in a wholly Christian sense. A man of Lactantius' erudition in both religious and secular literature would be likely draw on both, subconsciously if not consciously. Although Broek's argument that we are dealing here with Jewish and Christian sources is persuasive, nevertheless it should be remembered that Apollo himself was fed with nectar and ambrosia by Themis (Hymn to Apollo 324). In addition, the phoenix, the companion and sole confidant of Apollo, nests in a palm tree, the same tree that Leto was clinging to when she gave birth to Apollo on Delos, according to the Hymn to Apollo 116.

111-113: The unfledged phoenix is here described feeding on dew which falls from the skies/heaven. In the Apocolypse of Pseudo-Baruch, a Jewish book of the second century, the phoenix is described feeding on "the manna

of heaven and the dew of the earth".

But there are other ideas about the food of the phoenix antecedent even to this work, for though Manilius thought fit to say that no man has yet seen the phoenix eat (Pliny Hist.Nat.10.4) nevertheless Ovid described the bird as living on aromatics, "not from fruits or herbs does it live, but from drops of frankincense and juice of amomum" (Met.15.393-394). Lactantius' version seems closest to that of Baruch though in almost all other respects the tales are very different. Perhaps the two were thinking of a common but now lost source. In addition, as was pointed out in chapter 2, desert birds were known to feed on the dew from plants, so the source for this may be no further than Lactantius' observation of birds.

116 Evolat, ad patrias iam reditura domos: Lactantius now returns to the familiar version of the story. Even Artemidorus, On.4.47, and Aelian, De Nat.Anim.6.58, who make no mention of the genesis of the new phoenix, concur on the flight to Egypt. It is probable that just as Lactantius depends on Herodotus for the flight to Egypt, even though the latter makes no mention of the death of the old bird, so do Ovid, Celsus, Achilles Tatius, Pomponius Mela, Clement of Rome, The Didascalia, possibly the Greek Physiologus, Tacitus and Philostratus, to mention only the better documented reports of the phoenix. Pliny, reporting Manilius, states that the bird carries the remains of its predecessor to the temple of the Sun near Panchaia. Solinus, the plagiarist of Pliny, follows a similar account. Panchaia is east of Arabia and thus the bird is seen in these versions to be flying in the very opposite direction to Heliopolis, or at least the Egyptian Heliopolis. This information will help us to understand

line 121, where Lactantius states that the bird flies off to the rising sun (ad ortus solis) and sits down on the altar to place its sacred burden there. Lactantius may have been trying to combine the two versions, but did not consider the logical inconsistencies of having the bird fly east to Egypt, for he tells us at line 151 that the bird does arrive there. All the manuscripts concur on the reading of ortus, though Duff and McDonald emend ortus to urbem on analogy with the above-mentioned authors, who either name Heliopolis explicitly or strongly suggest it.

The tradition of the phoenix and Panchaia demands further consideration. This mythological island is first mentioned by the Greek mythographical historian Euhemerus of Messene, according to Diodorus Siculus 6.1 (Diodorus is probably citing him in this passage). Euhemerus was known to Lactantius (Div.Inst.1.2.33), and to Ennius, who wrote a poem which Cicero states was a translation of the Sacra Historia. Ennius himself was much quoted by Lactantius (some seventeen times). Lactantius thus had three possible avenues of approach to the work of Euhemerus, through Ennius, Diodorus Siculus (with whom Lactantius is familiar [Div.Inst. passim]) and finally through Euhemerus' Sacra Historia, a work no longer extant, from which Lactantius seems to quote (Div.Inst.1.53.8). If Euhemerus was Manilius' source for the existence of Panchaia, could he not also have been his source for the tale about the phoenix bird? Nowhere can this be proved conclusively, but nevertheless Euhemerus' credentials for being an out-and-out liar were far better established than Manilius'. The former may well have been the first to connect the phoenix with Panchaia and it may be Euhemerus' version that Lactantius

is attempting to reconcile with ad ortus.

Elsewhere in the De Ave Phoenice there seem to be echoes of the Euhemerus/Diodorus account. The much discussed line 25 where the spring is described as a fons vivus may well have some connection with the "spring of the Sun" (Diodorus 17.50.4) or the "water of the sun" (op.cit.5.43.2), located in the idyllic groves of the island of Panchaia.

To redress the balance, it can be argued that Lactantius would hardly be likely to make a mistake of such magnitude, since he was a man who had a reputation for a scholarly attitude to the location of places (a certain Damasus complains in a letter to Jerome Epist.35.1 that Lactantius' lengthy discourses on metre, the location of places and philosophy were more suited to scholars than to himself!). It may simply have been an oversight.

117-122: Most of the versions that include the flight to Heliopolis or the City of the Sun also make mention of the story in Herodotus of the phoenix enclosing its father" in myrrh or some type of exotic spice. It is so in Artemidorus, Pliny, Aelian, Pomponius Mela, Clement of Rome, Achilles Tatius, Ovid, Celsus and Tacitus. Some such as the Didascalia and the Greek Physiologus merely mention the spices which the bird brings with it. Heliodorus and Philostratus simply mention the flight to Egypt with no description of any burden.

In no other story are we treated to as rich a selection of spices as we find in Lactantius.

120 Conglobat: a favourite word of Lactantius. He uses it on no fewer than eleven occasions. Compare particularly his use in the De Op. Dei 10

where animals are described as gathering their food together into a ball with their tongues...(lingua) cibos....conglobatos vi sua deprimit. More often he uses the word in connection with some process of atomic creation, when attacking either Lucretius or Epicurus. The rare noun conglobatio also occurs twice in the other works of Lactantius.

120 Ore pio: once again the epithet is transferred to the object described. It is, of course, the bird, not the beak, that is pious, because it takes care of the remains of its father in proper fashion.

122: Lactantius, the mythological syncretic, reaches the point in the myth that concerned itself solely with the decomposition of the bird, where the remains of the older bird are to be burned on the altar at Heliopolis. He senses, however, the clumsiness of having the burning take place a second time, and simply states that the remains are dumped on the altar.

123-124: Mirandam sese praestat praebetque verendam:
tantus avi decor est, tantus abundat honor:

This is the sort of language in which the rhetoricians excelled; it was often applied to emperors "for the panegyric remained the only real exercise of the rhetorician's art", F. J. E. Raby, Christian-Latin Poetry (Oxford 1927) 5. Broek, page 193, after having reflected on the description of the phoenix in Achilles Tatius: " (a chorus of birds follows him, as a bodyguard attends a king) suggests that there are striking parallels to be found in the panegyrics on the assumption of power by a new ruler. We ought not to discard the possibility that a similar use is being made of the same imagery in the De Ave Phoenice.

The tradition that the arrival of the phoenix portended some great event was not new, but can be traced back as far as Ezechial the

Dramatist 265-269, who stated that the phoenix (he does not actually name the phoenix but all agree that the phoenix is meant) was the king of the birds because they all followed it with reverential awe. The "phoenix" was encountered, according to Ezechial, during the exodus from Egypt, a very portentous event for the Jews. Likewise in Achilles Tatius, although the phoenix furnishes itself for inspection to the priest of Heliopolis, the bird knows that it will be doubted and shows even its private parts to prove, one supposes, that it has no generative organs. This is no insult to the phoenix though; on the contrary, the priest has a book for identifying the phoenix and he produces the book on this occasion lest a mistake be made at the portentous event. This is one of the few details of the legend that Lactantius does not incorporate. His bird is completely confident of being recognised immediately; its *decor* "beauty" and *honor* "esteem" are so great. We have no evidence that Lactantius was familiar with this other feature of the legend anyway.

125-149: The next twenty-five lines are devoted to a physical description of the phoenix; the language is very rich and sumptuous and would well befit a king or an emperor. However to line 129 the text is extremely corrupt.

126 *Punica grana*: this fruit surely must have been chosen intentionally for the metaphor. The adjective *punicus* or *puniceus* or even *phoenicus*, used particularly to describe a colour, has similarities with that other mysterious colour *purpureum*, which in turn has connections with the Phoenicians. Lactantius may be hinting that the pomegranate also gets its name from the phoenix because its colour resembles that of the fabled bird. Elsewhere, he, *Div.Inst.*4.18.7, uses the same adjective *punicus*

to describe the colour of the cloak that was thrown around Christ when he was mockingly dressed up as the "king of the Jews".

128 Flora: elsewhere Lactantius, Div.Inst.1.73.6, subscribes to the theory that Flora was originally a prostitute who had obtained so much wealth that, upon her death, the senate, embarrassed at her shady past, legitimized her bequest to the people of Rome for public games by pretending that she was the Goddess who presided over flowers, and named her birthday the festival of the Floralia.

128-130 Rubente...fulget...nitent...pingere...micat: these vivid colour/light words, frequently used by both Ovid and Vergil, combine to create a dazzling picture.

133 Iris: Lactantius may have had in mind the passage:-

> ...Iris croceis per caelum roscida pinnis mille
> trahens varios adverso sole colores, devolat
>
> ...Iris, the bringer of moisture, flew off on her saffron wings drawing her thousand varied colours against the sun through the heavens.
>
> Aen.4.700-701

139-140 Aptata est noto capiti radiata corona,

Phoebei referens verticis alta decus: mention has already been made (line 58) about the frequent use on the coins of the period of both a nimbus and a radiating crown to emphasize the imperial power of the emperor, and, before 325, to stress his close connections with Sol Invictus. Here we see the phoenix performing a somewhat similar function. Before, however, any comparisons are made between the cult of emperor and the treatment of the phoenix in the poem, the history of the "crowning" of animals should be taken into consideration.

In the Hieroglyphica 1.10, a work on Egyptian religion written by Horapollo, who is often dated as late as the fifth century A.D. but may be earlier, the phoenix lives in Ethiopia and flies to Egypt only to have its father buried by the priests at Heliopolis. It does not, however, wear a crown; but the dung beetle is described as "rayed"; it also has special connections with Heliopolis where there is a statue of the Sun God. The scarab beetle lays its eggs in a ball of dung which it drags along behind itself and, in antiquity, was much revered by the ancient Egyptians, features that remind us somewhat of the account of the phoenix as recorded by Herodotus. Other animals, too, were also closely connected with the sun or were considered as symbols of the Sun. (Compare the magical papyrus Pap.Graec.Mag.2.105114 where the phoenix, the crocodile and the winged serpent are clearly related to each other, although none is described as crowned). The first literary reference in the classical corpus to the phoenix having a crown or some decoration on its head is in Achilles Tatius 3.25.3; the precise meaning of the text has been disputed but some sort of decoration seems to be inferred. A depiction of a bird which bears a striking similarity to the above description is found on a liturgical garment of the first or second century A.D. from Saqqara, now housed in the Egyptian museum in Cairo (J.E.No.59117) according to Broek, plate 3. The benu was often represented with a simple disc above its head (compare the Book of the Dead 83) but without "spokes", which seem to be implied in Achilles Tatius' description of the phoenix. On coins from the second century onward the phoenix is often portrayed, usually with a seven-rayed nimbus, and sometimes accompanied by the legend Saeculum Aureum, Αἰών, Aeternitas or

Fel. Temp.Reparatio. Representation of the phoenix is found on the aureus of Hadrian A.D.112-122, on Alexandrian coins of Antoninus Pius A.D. 138-143 as well as on his denarii, sestertii and bronze medallions between 141 and 160. Marcus Aurelius, Trebonius Gallus, Aemelianus and of course Constantine the Great use it too. From the above it can be said with some certainty that the decoration of the head of the phoenix with some sort of sun disc develops from the iconography inherited from the Egyptian benu in the first century of the empire.

The origin of the nimbus is, however, less easy to establish. In the poetry of Publilius Optatianus Porphyrius, who flattered Constantine mercilessly until he won his recall from exile in 326(?), we find Crispus likened to the sun, lumine muriceo venerandus dux erit ut Sol ("he will be a leader to be venerated with his spoked light"). Similarly the nimbus is the mark by which the phoenix is notus, "recognized", instantly.

Lactantius is the first to describe the radiata corona in precisely those terms, although a careless reading of the Apocolypse of Pseudo-Baruch would leave one with the impression that it was the phoenix that was wearing the crown rather than the Sun. Pliny describes the head of the phoenix as plumeo apice honestante "with a feathered crest adorning [it]", a description which was plagiarized by Solinus, 33.12, to capite honorato. Solinus' version of Pliny is sufficiently ambiguous to convince Fitzpatrick that the crown is meant, but there is no doubt that only the tufted feathers are intended, for in every other way Solinus copies Pliny's words. It might be argued that Lactantius only intended the words radiata corona to be taken in the sense of the "crown of feathers", which was

known to be associated with the phoenix, but the non-literary evidence is overwhelmingly in favour of the phoenix, at this date, having its own crown.

It should also be born in mind that this crown was not portrayed as gold in colour until the fifth century. On all the frescoes and mosaics of the third and fourth century, both classical and Christian, the nimbus is given a greyish-blue or greenish-blue colour [see A. Krucke, Der Nimbus und verwante Attribute in der fruhchristlichen Kunst (Strassburg 1905) 119-122].

141 Squamae: no other version of the phoenix myth describes the bird in such terms, indeed this epithet is applied nowhere else in classical literature to a bird, except in a passage in Plautus Men.917, considered by all the commentators to be an example of something blatantly absurd. The doctor is saying to the father of Menaechmus that his son is beginning to show the first signs of insanity. Menaechmus retorts indignantly, Quin tu me interrogas, purpureum panem an puniceum soleam ego esse an luteum? Soleamne esse avis aquamosas piscis pennatos? "Why don't you enquire whether the bread I generally eat is blood red, rose-red or saffron yellow? Whether I generally eat birds with scales, fish with feathers?") We cannot be sure that Lactantius actually read these lines, though elsewhere he shows that he is familiar enough with the Curculio, Miles Gloriosus and Trinummus to quote from them. Nonetheless this unique epithet reinforces the strangeness and awe-inspiring appearance of the phoenix.

Later traditions associated the phoenix directly with either a serpent or a crocodile, both of which are described as "scaly" in ancient literature, but there seems to no connection of that nature intended here.

142 Ast ungues roseo tinguit honore color: Ezechial the Dramatist, Exodus 259, describes the phoenix as σκέλη δὲ μιλτόχρωτα having red legs."

143-144: The ancients were often at a loss when a metaphor had to be found to describe the phoenix. Noone before Lactantius had used this comparison with both the peacock and the pheasant, a justifiable comparison since the peacock had been recognized as a sun bird in the Middle and Far East since ancient times. Martial Epigr.5.37 mentions the peacock and the phoenix in the same sentence, though in this case it is clear that the dominant characteristic of the peacock is its beauty and its colours, that of the phoenix its rarity. Ezechial compares its head to that of a cock. Hubert and Leroy, pages 300-337, point out many similarities in appearance between the phoenix and two other birds known to the classical world, namely the catreus and the orion.

145-146: The aves Arabum is the ostrich, which was common in the deserts of North Africa and Arabia. There is doubt about its classification as an avis or a fera, a bird or a beast, since it does not fly. The use of the word magnitiem has no parallel in Latin literature;the mss. are however unanimous in giving the same reading. Lactantius' phoenix is larger than all others in ancient literature except for that of Pseudo-Baruch which is as large as nine mountains! Herodotus, Pliny and Solinus all say that the phoenix is as large as an eagle, Ezechial that it is twice that size. Achilles Tatius claims that it is only the size of a peacock. Lactantius' account, although much more detailed, resembles in several respects that of Ezechial, who is the only other poet to mention

the size of the bird as well as its gait and its pink legs or claws. Both Lactantius and Ezechial describe the wings of the phoenix as multi-coloured and emphasize the redness of the eyes, though the last characteristic is one frequently observed by the ancients in the case of birds. Lactantius may have known the Exodus of Ezechial; Eusebius, Lactantius' near contemporary, certainly did, because it is only through Eusebius that the fragments have been preserved.

147-149: The phoenix, though massive, is nevertheless light-footed and swift, unlike other bulky heavy birds. Compare Ezechial 268-269 who describes the phoenix leading other birds "proud as a bull with rapid light step". Elsewhere, De Op. Dei 5.8, Lactantius shows that he was interested by the speed of animals in respect to their weight, quae tamen non fecit solida, ne in gradiendo pigritia et gravitas retardaret (and these [parts] he did not make solid lest in walking sluggishness and weight should retard).

149 Regali decore: the idea of the phoenix as royalty is quite openly stated, and the bird is given all the trappings of power such as a train of followers, both human and winged, acclamations of sycophants, even official portraits!

151 Aegyptus: Lactantius does not mention Heliopolis by name. It was in ruins even by Strabo's time and was plundered for its obelisks by Constantine, who had the largest one moved to Alexandria. The massive 100 foot high column of Red Porphyry that he had set up at Constantinople is also said to have come from here. Lactantius could not have a huge applauding crowd in a deserted city, so he carefully omits any specific mention of Heliopolis.

152 Et raram volucrem turba salutat ovans: only Lactantius mentions the astonishment of both the general public and the chorus of birds. Tacitus concedes that the details are disputed and embellished by myths, but nevertheless it is unquestioned that the bird sometimes appears in Egypt. Pliny takes a more cynical stance; he voices suspicions on the existence of the bird because, unum in toto orbe nec visum magno opere, (most of all, not one has ever been seen in the whole world).

Herodotus, too, although he has never seen the phoenix, nevertheless reports that he has seen pictures of it and claims that the people of Heliopolis report its visits. Herodotus makes no comment on whether he believes that there is such a bird, only that he does not believe the tale of the flight with the ball of myrrh from Arabia.

Clement too, tells us that the bird's incoming flight, performed in daylight, is "observed by all".

159 Sed postquam puri pervenit ad aetheria auras: Lactantius adds another new element to the story when he suggests that the bird attains the auras aetheris, a special region of the atmosphere which only the phoenix (and Apollo?) can reach.It is possible that Lactantius culled the image from that of the eagle in Vergil:-

> namque volans rubra fulvus Iovis ales in aethra
> litoreas agitabant aves turbamque sonantem agminis aligeri
>
> "the tawny bird of Jove flying in the reddening aether was disturbing the shore birds and the winged cackling throng"
>
> Verg. Aen.12.247-249

160 Illa suis conditur inde locis: The phoenix now returns to the felix locus far away in the East, and the poem is dramatically complete at this point.

161-170: The remaining ten lines have the characteristics of an appended passage. As Fitzpatrick points out, the panegyric on virginity begins here and this passage is strong evidence for the christian character of the poem. This is however pure conjecture. There is no positive proof to suggest that the poem is Christian anywhere before line 161 and even the last ten lines are in accord with late classical usage. For example P. Optatianus Porphyrius, Carm. 7.25 uses the word deus in a manner which is completely classical or at best ambiguous. Indeed Optatianus' work in general leads us to the conclusion that his Christianity was one of convenience, assumed for the benefit of his panegyrics rather than a deeply seated faith. Indeed, Bede suggests that the Carmina ought not to be read on the ground that they are pagan. Thus the word deus ought not convince us immediately that we are dealing with a Christian work. Similarly the phrase aeternam vitam in line 170 is normally associated with Christian ideas of the after-life, but we have firm evidence that the phoenix symbolised exactly the same to Christians as to non-Christians (see CIL 14.914, apparently undated).

It was of course the characteristic of immortality that caught the imagination of those writers who mention the phoenix casually, such as Lucian, Herm. 53, Aristides, Orat.45.107 and Seneca Epist. Mor. 52.1. Of all the lines the one that is most likely to convince us of the Christian nature of the poem is line 164 where the bird is admired because it does not indulge in sexual intercourse. But it can be pointed out that virginity was long admired by the Romans (consider the bees in Verg.Georg.4).

163 Veneris foedera nulla colit: The poet is quick to point out that the phoenix has no connection with the pagan goddess of love who, according to Eusebius, Vita Vonst.3.58.1 (a work the authenticity of which has

been much contested recently) was the patroness of a temple in the Syrian Heliopolis (Baalbek) where men let their daughters commit shameless acts of fornication; the temple, he claims, was closed down by Constantine. Libanius, Orat.30.6, to the contrary, claims that Constantine left the cults unmolested. There is no doubt, however, that the temples were stripped of much precious material, probably in the early thirties. Clearly this Heliopolis was far better known than the Egyptian one, now in ruins and being plundered for its statues and obelisks, and it is possible that Lactantius wants to avoid all reference to the name and thus only mentions Egypt in line 151.

In addition to the geographical confusion of the cities of Heliopolis there may also have been another version of the tale which connected the phoenix with Venus, such a connection appears to be implied in the fragment of Laevius who had a reputation for the erotic and was mentioned in chapter two. In no other occurrence of the idea of the phoenix in Classical literature do we find the Venus and the phoenix connected, except in these two instances. It is more likely that there was some confusion about the cities of Heliopolis. Eusebius was in fact wrong about the cult of Aphrodite, for archaeological evidence tells us about the temples of Bacchus and Zeus but nothing about one dedicated to the Greek Venus.

CONCLUSION

During the course of this thesis, certain problems have been raised, such as the date of the poem, its symbolism and its overall purpose. In a sense, all these questions are dependent upon another, and, if we can solve one, then we have made the first step towards answering the others. For example, it is informative to determine the purpose of the poem, but, one suspects, the purpose that one assigns to the poem will be, to a great extent , influenced by our solution to the chronological problems of the poem. Conversely, if a wrong conclusion is reached of one of the problems mentioned above, it may well be that other solutions tentatively offered willlconsequently be invalid. We should first of all summarize what can be said with some degree of certainty.

First let us consider the date of the poem. As has been mentioned earlier, the spirit of the De Ave Phoenice does not accord with Constantine's official "Christian" stance, taken in A.D. 325, towards those who likened him to Apollo or even towards those who were adherents of the old religion. A person as close to Constantine as Lactantius appears to have been would not have jeopardized his position unnecessarily. The poem was almost certainly written before A.D. 325; on this all agree. Some scholars, Brandt for example, are reluctant to consider that a Christian Lactantius could have written the De Ave Phoenice because the poem is so full of classical imagery, and such scholars are forced to assign the poem to Lactantius' pre-conversion period, in the 270's and 280's. The problems associated with the "pre-conversion" have already been discussed in Chapter Two; moreover, both the known associations of Constantine with Apollo and the phoenix and the language of the poem itself (there are some striking similarities between Lactantius and P. Porphyrius Optatianus, who is known

to have written in the early 320's) conspire to place the poem somewhat later, perhaps even 311, when the phoenix became paricularly prominent on the coins of the period. The problem of whether or not Lactantius was a Christian when he write the poem need not worry us at all, since the apparent ambiguity of the poem admirably suits a period replete with theological uncertainty and syncretism. That the poem has some political content seems likely from lines 61, 123-4, 139-40, 149 and 154-5 where the language is very reminiscent, not only of Porphyrius, but also of the other panegyricists of Constantine.

This naturally leads to the second and third problems, those of the poem's intentions. Does the use of high rhetorical language force us to consider the poem in a political context? If it were about a swan or a nightingale, we would perhaps answer in the negative. However, so renowned was the phoenix as the herald of a new era and as a symbol of the immortality of the soul, that we cannot ignore the coincidence of the change that was taking place in the Roman Empire at this time, namely the official recognition of Christianity as the state religion.

Are we justified in extending this enquiry to its limits to ask the question,"Is the phoenix an allegory for a person or an idea?" For the phoenix does resemble an emperor in respect to the tumultuous reception it receives in Egypt. Certain formulae can be proposed, such as the possibility that the phoenix equals the renascent Christian Roman Empire, or Constantine, or perhaps even Crispus, Lactantius' brilliant young student, the bastard of Constantine, who put Crispus to death in his prime. This, however, is nothing more than conjecture. Suffice it to say that it is difficult to see how someone as close to Constantine as Lactantius was (consider the detailed description of Constantine in the De Mort. Pers.)could write about Apollo/Phoebus/Sol without intending

to signify Constantine. In this way it can be seen that any question posed about the overall purpose of the poem is stillborn unless a commitment is made about its symbolism, which in turn is dependent upon the date of the poem.

There remains the problem about the last ten lines of the De Ave Phoenice. If we consider these ten lines tohhave been appended after the main body of the poem was written, then we rob the poem of most of its religious significance, for, despite remarks at the end of the commentary about the possible non-Christian nature of these lines, it is admittedly difficult to see them in a purely classical light. Nevertheless, suspicions remain about lines 161-170. Lines 163 and 169 require considerable additions for them to scan and they are very different in na nature from the rest of the poem, more suitable to a word gymnast,such as Optatianus, than to Lactantius (line 169 seems to be a clumsy re-working of Tert. De Res. Carnis 13). Whether or not these lines were added at some later date, by Lactantius or some other, need have no bearing on what has just been said about the poem's date.

In addition, to consider the poem solely in terms of Christianity and Classicism is somewhat misleading, there are elements of the poem which remind us immediately of sun worship and related cults such as that of Mithra. There are reminders of sun worship, such as the crown worn in honour of Phoebus, the "titles" of the phoenix and the open reverence towards the sun (see lines 41-42).

The myth of the phoenix is an especially intriguing one, for, while belief in the old gods waned at Rome, belief in the phoenix grew stronger, to judge from the very large number of authors who mention the bird after the second century. Men in the ancient world dreamed

of mortality, no less than those of today, and pondered with wonder, and, perhaps with no small amount of envy over the phoenix which had no fear of death.

APPENDIX

PRE-CHRISTIAN ACCOUNTS:

Hesiod (fragment 304)-

ἐννέα τοι ζώει γενεὰς λακέρυζα κορώνη
ἀνδρῶν ἡβώντων· ἔλαφος δέ τε τετρακόρωνος·
τρεῖς δ' ἐλάφους ὁ κόραξ γηράσκεται· αὐτὰρ ὁ φοῖνιξ
ἐννέα τοὺς κόρακας· δέκα δ' ἡμεῖς τοὺς φοίνικας
νύμφαι ἐυπλόκαμοι, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο.

Herodotus 2.73-

73 Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἄλλος ὄρνις ἱρός, τῷ οὔνομα φοῖνιξ. ἐγὼ
μέν μιν οὐκ εἶδον εἰ μὴ ὅσον γραφῇ· καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ σπάνιος 5
ἐπιφοιτᾷ σφι δι' ἐτέων, ὡς Ἡλιοπολῖται λέγουσι, πεντα-
2 κοσίων. φοιτᾶν δὲ τότε φασὶ ἐπεάν οἱ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ πατήρ.
ἔστι δέ, εἰ τῇ γραφῇ παρόμοιος, τοσόσδε καὶ τοιόσδε· τὰ
μὲν αὐτοῦ χρυσόκομα τῶν πτερῶν, τὰ δὲ ἐρυθρά. ἐς τὰ
3 μάλιστα αἰετῷ περιήγησιν ὁμοιότατος καὶ τὸ μέγαθος. τοῦτον 10
δὲ λέγουσι μηχανᾶσθαι τάδε, ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ πιστὰ λέγοντες,
ἐξ Ἀραβίης ὁρμώμενον ἐς τὸ ἱρὸν τοῦ Ἡλίου κομίζειν τὸν
πατέρα ἐν σμύρνῃ ἐμπλάσσοντα καὶ θάπτειν ἐν τοῦ Ἡλίου
4 τῷ ἱρῷ· κομίζειν δὲ οὕτω· πρῶτον τῆς σμύρνης ᾠὸν πλάσ-
σειν ὅσον [τε] δυνατός ἐστι φέρειν, μετὰ δὲ πειρᾶσθαι αὐτὸ 15
φορέοντα, ἐπεὰν δὲ ἀποπειρηθῇ, οὕτω δὴ κοιλήναντα τὸ ᾠὸν
τὸν πατέρα ἐς αὐτὸ ἐντιθέναι, σμύρνῃ δὲ ἄλλῃ ἐμπλάσσειν
τοῦτο κατ' ὅ τι τοῦ ᾠοῦ ἐκκοιλήνας ἐνέθηκε τὸν πατέρα,
ἐγκειμένου δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς γίνεσθαι τὠυτὸ βάρος, ἐμπλάσαντα
δὲ κομίζειν μιν ἐπ' Αἰγύπτου ἐς τοῦ Ἡλίου τὸ ἱρόν. ταῦτα 20
μὲν τοῦτον τὸν ὄρνιν λέγουσι ποιέειν.

Pliny Hist. Nat. 10.3-6-

enarrabiles ferunt aves et ante omnes nobilem Arabiae phoenicem, haud scio an fabulose, unum in toto orbe nec visum magno opere. aquilae narratur magnitudine, auri fulgore circa colla, cetero purpureus, caeruleam roseis cau-
5 dam pinnis distinguentibus, cristis fauces caputque plumeo apice honestante. primus atque diligentissime togatorum 4
de eo prodidit Manilius, senator ille maximis nobilis doctrinis doctore nullo: neminem extitisse qui viderit vescentem, sacrum in Arabia Soli esse, vivere annis DXL, sene-
10 scentem casiae turisque surculis construere nidum, replere odoribus et superemori. ex ossibus deinde et medullis eius nasci primo ceu vermiculum, inde fieri pullum, principioque iusta funera priori reddere et totum deferre nidum prope Panchaiam in Solis urbem et in ara ibi deponere. cum 5
15 huius alitis vita magni conversionem anni fieri prodit idem Manilius iterumque significationes tempestatum et siderum easdem reverti, hoc autem circa meridiem incipere quo die signum arietis sol intraverit, et fuisse eius conversionis annum prodente se P. Licinio Cn. Cornelio cos. CCXV.
20 Cornelius Valerianus phoenicem devolavisse in Aegyptum tradit Q. Plautio Sex. Papinio cos. allatus est et in urbem Claudii principis censura anno urbis DCCC et in comitio propositus, quod actis testatum est, sed quem falsum esse nemo dubitaret.

Ezechial the Dramatist 245-269-

ἔστιν γὰρ, ὥς που καὶ σὺ τυγχάνεις ὁρῶν,
ἐκεῖ. τόθεν δὲ Φέγγος ἐξέλαμψέ νιν
κατ' εὐΦρόνην σημεῖον ὡς στῦλος πυρός.
ἐνταῦθα λειμῶν' εὕρομεν κατάσκιον
ὑγράς τε λιβάδας· δαψιλὴς χῶρος βαθὺς,
πηγὰς ἀΦύσσων δώδεκ' ἐκ μιᾶς πέτρας·
στελέχη δ' ἐρυμνὰ πολλὰ Φοινίκων πέλει
ἔγκαρπα, δεκάκις ἑπτὰ, καὶ κατάρρυτος
χλόη πέΦυκε θρέμμασιν χορτάσματα.
Εἶτα ὑποβὰς περὶ τοῦ Φανέντος ὀρνέου διεξέρχεται·
Ἕτερον δὲ πρὸς τοῖσδ' εἴδομεν ζῷον ξένον
θαυμαστὸν, οἷον οὐδέπω ὥρακέ τις.
διπλοῦν γὰρ ἦν τὸ μῆκος ἀετοῦ σχεδὸν,
πτεροῖσι ποικίλοισιν ἡδὲ χρώμασι·
στῆθος μὲν αὐτοῦ πορΦυροῦν ἐΦαίνετο,
σκέλη δὲ μιλτόχρωτα, καὶ κατ' αὐχένα
κροκωτίνοις μαλλοῖσιν εὐτρεπίζετο.
κάρα δὲ κοττοῖς ἡμέροις παρεμΦερὲς,
καὶ μηλίνῃ μὲν τῇ κόρῃ προσέβλεπε
κύκλῳ, κόρη δὲ κόκκος ὡς ἐΦαίνετο.
Φώνην δὲ πάντων εἶχεν ἐκπρεπεστάτην.
βασιλεὺς δὲ πάντων ὀρνέων ἐΦαίνετο
ὡς ἦν νοῆσαι· πάντα γὰρ τὰ πτήν' ὁμοῦ
ὄπισθεν αὐτοῦ δειλιῶντ' ἐπέσσυτο,
αὐτὸς δὲ πρόσθεν ταῦρος ὡς γαυρούμενος
ἔβαινε κραιπνὸν βῆμα βαστάζων ποδός.

SCIENTIFIC AND DOCUMENTARY ACCOUNTS:

Tacitus Ann.6.28-

28. PAULO FABIO L. VITELLIO consulibus post longum 1 a.p.Chr.34
saeculorum ambitum avis phoenix in Aegyptum venit
praebuitque materiem doctissimis indigenarum et Graecorum multa super eo miraculo disserendi. de quibus
congruunt et plura ambigua, sed cognitu non absurda
2 promere libet. sacrum Soli id animal, et ore ac distinctu
pinnarum a ceteris avibus diversum consentiunt qui formam eius effin⟨x⟩ere; de numero annorum varia tra-
3 duntur. maxime vulgatum quingentorum spatium; sunt
qui adseverent mille quadringentos sexaginta unum interici, prioresque alites Sesosidc primum, post Amaside
dominantibus, dein Ptolemaeo, qui ex Macedonibus ter-
tius regnavit, in civitatem, cui Heliopolis nomen, advolavisse, multo ceterarum volucrum comitatu novam fa-
4 ciem mirantium. sed antiquitas quidem obscura : inter
Ptolemaeum ac Tiberium minus ducenti quinquaginta
anni fuerunt. unde nonnulli falsum hunc phoenicem neque
Arabum e terris credidere, nihilque usurpavisse ex his,
5 quae vetus memoria firmavit. confecto quippe annorum
numero, ubi mors propinquet, suis in terris struere nidum
eique vim genitalem adfundere, ex qua fetum oriri: et
primam adulto curam sepeliendi patris, neque id temere,
sed sublato murrae pondere temptatoque per longum
iter, ubi par oneri, par meatui sit, subire patrium corpus
6 inque Solis aram perferre atque adolere. haec incerta et
fabulosis aucta: ceterum aspici aliquando in Aegypto
eam volucrem non ambigitur.

Pomponius Mela, De Chorographia 83-84-

83 de volucribus praecipue referenda Phoenix, semper
unica; non enim coitu concipitur partuve generatur,
sed ubi quingentorum annorum aevo perpetua duravit,
super exaggeratam variis odoribus struem sibi ipsa
84 incubat solviturque, dein putrescentium membrorum
tabe concrescens ipsa se concipit atque ex se rursus
renascitur. cum adolevit, ossa pristini corporis inclusa
murra Aegyptum exportat, et in urbe quam Solis adpellant flagrantibus arae bustis inferens memorando
funere consecrat. ipsum promunturium quo id mare
cluditur Aceraunis saltibus invium est.

Aelian, De Natura Animalium 6.58-

58. Ἄνευ δὲ λογιστικῆς οἱ φοίνικες συμβαλεῖν ἐτῶν πεντακοσίων ἴσασιν ἀριθμόν, μαθηταὶ φύσεως τῆς σοφωτάτης ὄντες, καὶ διὰ ταῦτά τοι μηδὲ[4] δακτύλων δεδεημένοι ἢ ἄλλου τινὸς ἐς ἐπιστήμην ἀριθμητικῆς. ὑπὲρ ὅτου δὲ ἴσασι τοῦτο καὶ εἰδέναι ἀνάγκη αὐτούς, δημώδης ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος. τὸν δὲ τῶν πεντακοσίων ἐτῶν χρόνον πληρούμενον ἴσασιν Αἰγυπτίων ἤ τις ἢ οὐδείς, ὀλίγοι δὲ κομιδῇ καὶ οὗτοι τῶν ἱερέων. οὗτοι[5] δ' οὖν[6] πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὑπὲρ τούτων οὐ ῥᾳδίως συμβῆναι ἔχουσιν, ἀλλὰ οἱ μὲν ἐρεσχελοῦσι σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐρίζοντες ὡς[7] οὐ νῦν ἀλλ' ἐς ὕστερον ὅδε ὁ θεῖος ὄρνις ἀφίξεται ἢ ὡς ἐχρῆν ἥκειν· ὁ δὲ ἄλλως ἐκείνων ἐριζόντων ἀποσημαίνεται δαιμονίως τὸν καιρὸν καὶ πάρεστιν. οἱ δέ, θύειν ἀνάγκη αὐτοὺς καὶ ὁμολογεῖν ὅτι τὸν μὲν ἥλιον ἐν ταῖς λέσχαις καταδύειν ἄγουσι σχολήν, οὐκ ἴσασι δὲ ὅσα ὄρνιθες. ἐκεῖνα δέ, ὦ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν, οὐ σοφά; εἰδέναι ποῦ μὲν Αἴγυπτός ἐστι, ποῦ δὲ καὶ Ἡλίου πόλις, ἔνθα αὐτῷ πέπρωται ἥκειν, καὶ ὅπου ποτὲ τὸν πατέρα καταθέσθαι χρὴ καὶ ἐν θήκαις τίσι;

Dionysius, De Aucupio 1.32-

32. Ἀκήκοα δέ, ὡς παρὰ τοῖς Ἰνδοῖς ὄρνις εἴη γονέων ἄτερ καὶ μίξεως χωρὶς ὑφιστάμενος, φοῖνιξ ὄνομα, καὶ βιοῦν φασιν ἐπὶ πλεῖστον καὶ μετὰ πάσης ἀφοβίας αὐτόν, ὡς οὔτε τόξοις, οὔτε λίθοις, οὔτε καλάμοις ἢ πάγαις τῶν ἀνδρῶν τι κατ' αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν πειρωμένων. ὁ δὲ θάνατος αὐτῷ τὴν ἀρχὴν ποιεῖ τῆς ζωῆς· ἦν γάρ ποτε γηράσας πρὸς τὰς πτήσεις ἑαυτὸν ἴδοι νωθέστερον ἢ τὰς αὐγὰς τῶν ὀμμάτων ἐλασσουμένας, ἐφ' ὑψηλῆς πέτρας κάρφη συλλέξας πυράν τινα τῆς τελευτῆς ἢ καλιὰν συντίθησι τῆς ζωῆς, ἣν, ἐν μέσῳ καθημένου τοῦ φοίνικος, ἡ τῶν ἡλιακῶν ἀκτίνων καταφλέγει θερμότης· οὕτω δὲ διαφθαρέντος αὐτοῦ νέος ἐκ τῆς τέφρας αὖθις ἕτερος γίγνεται[115] φοῖνιξ καὶ τοῖς πατρῴοις ἔθεσι χρῆται, ὥστε ὑπὸ τῆς ἡλιακῆς μόνης αὐγῆς, πατρός τε καὶ μητρὸς χωρίς, τὸν ὄρνιν γίγνεσθαι τοῦτον.

Achilles Tatius, Clitophon and Leucippe 3.24.3-3.25.7-

τοὺς γὰρ βαρβάρους τοὺς κατατρέχοντας πεπαῦσθαι, μελλούσης δὲ ἥκειν τῆς δυνάμεως, τὸν ὄρνιν αὐτοῖς ἐπιδημῆσαι τὸν ἱερόν, φέροντα τοῦ πατρὸς τὴν ταφήν· ἀνάγκην δὲ εἶναι[1] τὴν ἔξοδον ἐπισχεῖν τοσούτων ἡμερῶν.

25. "Καὶ τίς ὁ ὄρνις οὗτος, ὅστις," ἔφην, "τοσαύτης τιμῆς ἠξίωται; ποίαν δὲ καὶ κομίζει ταφήν;" "Φοίνιξ μὲν ὁ ὄρνις ὄνομα, τὸ δὲ γένος Αἰθίοψ, μέγεθος κατὰ ταὧν· τῇ χροιᾷ ταὼς ἐν
2 κάλλει δεύτερος. κεκέρασται μὲν τὰ πτερὰ χρυσῷ καὶ πορφύρᾳ· αὐχεῖ δὲ τὸν Ἥλιον δεσπότην καὶ ἡ κεφαλὴ μαρτυρεῖ, ἐστεφάνωσε γὰρ αὐτὴν κύκλος εὐφυής· ἡλίου δέ ἐστιν ὁ τοῦ
3 κύκλου στέφανος εἰκών. κυάνεός ἐστιν, ῥόδοις ἐμφερής, εὐειδὴς τὴν θέαν, ἀκτῖσι κομᾷ, καί εἰσιν αὗται πτερῶν ἀνατολαί. μερίζονται δὲ αὐτοῦ Αἰθίοπες μὲν τὴν ζωήν, Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ τὴν
4 τελευτήν· ἐπειδὰν γὰρ ἀποθάνῃ (συν χρόνῳ δὲ τοῦτο πάσχει μακρῷ), ὁ παῖς αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸν Νεῖλον φέρει, σχεδιάσας αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ταφήν. σμύρνης γὰρ βῶλον τῆς εὐωδεστάτης, ὅσον ἱκανὸν πρὸς ὄρνιθος ταφήν, ὀρύττει τε τῷ στόματι καὶ κοιλαίνει κατὰ μέσον, καὶ τὸ ὄρυγμα
5 θήκη γίνεται τῷ νεκρῷ. ἐνθεὶς δὲ καὶ ἐναρμόσας τὸν ὄρνιν τῇ σορῷ, καὶ κλείσας[1] τὸ χάσμα γηΐνῳ χώματι, ἐπὶ τὸν Νεῖλον οὕτως ἵπταται τὸ ἔργον φέρων. ἕπεται δὲ αὐτῷ χορὸς ἄλλων ὀρνίθων ὥσπερ δορυφόρων καὶ ἔοικεν ὁ ὄρνις ἀποδημοῦντι βασιλεῖ, καὶ τὴν πόλιν οὐ πλανᾶται
6 τὴν Ἡλίου· ὄρνιθος αὕτη μετοικία νεκροῦ. ἕστηκεν οὖν ἐπὶ μετεώρου σκοπῶν καὶ ἐκδέχεται τοὺς προπόλους τοῦ θεοῦ. ἔρχεται δή τις ἱερεὺς Αἰγύπτιος, βιβλίον ἐξ ἀδύτων φέρων, καὶ δοκιμά-
7 ζει τὸν ὄρνιν ἐκ τῆς γραφῆς. ὁ δὲ οἶδεν ἀπιστεύμενος καὶ τὰ ἀπόρρητα φαίνει τοῦ σώματος καὶ τὸν νεκρὸν ἐπιδείκνυται καί ἐστιν ἐπιτάφιος σοφιστής. ἱερέων δὲ παῖδες Ἡλίου τὸν ὄρνιν τὸν νεκρὸν παραλαβόντες θάπτουσι. ζῶν μὲν οὖν Αἰθίοψ ἐστὶ τῇ τροφῇ, ἀποθανὼν δὲ Αἰγύπτιος γίνεται τῇ ταφῇ."

Philostratus, Vita Apollonii 3.49-

καὶ τὸν φοίνικα
26 δὲ τὸν ὄρνιν τὸν διὰ πεντακοσίων ἐτῶν ἐς Αἴγυπτον 135
ἥκοντα πέτεσθαι μὲν ἐν τῇ Ἰνδικῇ τὸν χρόνον τοῦτον, εἶναι δὲ ἕνα ἐκδιδόμενον τῶν ἀκτίνων καὶ χρυσῷ λάμποντα, μέγεθος ἀετοῦ καὶ εἶδος, ἐς καλιάν τε
30 ἰζάνειν τὴν ἐκ τοῦ ἀρώματος ποιουμένην αὐτῷ πρὸς ταῖς τοῦ Νείλου πηγαῖς. ἃ δὲ Αἰγύπτιοι περὶ αὐτοῦ ᾄδουσιν, ὡς ἐς Αἴγυπτον φέρεται, καὶ Ἰνδοὶ ξυμμαρτυροῦσι προσᾴδοντες τῷ λόγῳ τὸ τὸν φοίνικα τὸν ἐν τῇ καλιᾷ τηκόμενον προπεμπτηρίους ὕμνους αὐτῷ ᾄδειν. τουτὶ δὲ καὶ τοὺς κύκνους φασὶ δρᾶν οἱ σοφώτερον αὐτῶν ἀκούοντες.

THEOLOGICAL AND MYSTICAL ACCOUNTS

Clement of Rome, Epist. ad Corinthos 79-83-

(Ἴδω)μεν τὸ παράδοξον σημεῖον τὸ (γι)νόμενον ἐν τοῖσ ἀνατολικοῖσ (τό)ποισ, τουτέστιν τοῖσ περὶ τὴν Ἀραβιάν. Ὄρνεον γὰρ ἐστὶν ὃ προσονομάζεται φοῖνιξ. Τοῦτο μονογενὲσ ὑπάρχον ζῇ ἔτη πεντακόσια, γενόμενόν τε ἤδη πρὸσ ἀπόλυσιν τοῦ ἀποθανεῖν αὐτό, σηκὸν ἑαυτῷ ποιεῖ ἐκ λιβάνου καὶ σμύρνησ, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀρωματῶν, εἰσ ὃν πληρωθέντοσ τοῦ χρόνου εἰσέρχεται, καὶ τελευτᾷ. Ἐηπομένησ δὲ τῆσ σαρκόσ, σκώληξ τισ γεννᾶται, ὃσ ἐκ τῆσ ἰκμάδοσ τοῦ τετελευτηκότοσ ζώου ἀνατρεφόμενοσ, πτεροφυεῖ. Εἶτα γενναῖοσ γενόμενοσ, αἴρει τὸν σηκὸν ἐκεῖνον ὅπου τὰ ὀστᾶ τοῦ προγενότοσ ἐστίν, καὶ ταῦτα βαστάζων, διανεύει ἀπὸ τῆσ Ἀραβικῆσ χώρασ ἕωσ τῆσ Αἰγύπτου, εἰσ τὴν λεγομένην Ἡλιόπολιν. Καὶ ὄυτωσ εἰσ τοὐπισω ἀφορμᾷ. Ὅι οὖν ἱερεῖσ ἐπισκέπτονται τὰσ ἀναγραφὰσ τῶν χρόνων, καὶ ἐυρίσκουσιν αὐτὸν πεντακοσιοστοῦ ἔτουσ πεπληρωμένου ἐληλυθέναι.

Μέγα καὶ θαυμαστὸν οὖν νομίζομεν εἶναι, εἰ ὁ δημιουργὸσ τῶν ἁπάντων ἀνάστασιν ποιήσεται τῶν ὁσίωσ αὐτῷ δουλευσάντων ἐν πεποιθήσει πιστέωσ ἀγαθῆσ, ὅπου καὶ δι'ὀρνέου δείκυσιν ἡμῖν τὸ μεγαλεῖον τῆσ ἐπαγγελίασ αὐτοῦ;

The Apocolypse of Pseudo-Baruch-

6. p. 88 *Καὶ λαβών με ἤγαγέν με ὅπου ὁ ἥλιος ἐκπορεύεται · καὶ ἔδειξέ μοι ἅρμα τετραέλαστον ὃ ἦν ὑπόπυρον, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἅρματος ἄνθρωπος καθήμενος φορῶν στέφανον πυρός · ⟨ καὶ ἦν ⟩ ἐλαυνόμενον τὸ ἅρμα ὑπ' ἀγγέλων τεσσαράκοντα . καὶ ἰδοὺ ὄρνεον περιτρέχον ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ ἡλίου ὡς ὄρη ἐννέα · καὶ εἶπον τὸν ἄγγελον · Τί ἐστιν τὸ ὄρνεον τοῦτο ; καὶ λέγει μοι · Τοῦτό ἐστιν ὁ φύλαξ τῆς οἰκουμένης. καὶ εἶπον · Κύριε, πῶς ἐστιν φύλαξ τῆς οἰκουμένης ; δίδαξόν με. καὶ εἶπέν μοι ὁ ἄγγελος · Τοῦτο τὸ ὄρνεον παρατρέχει τῷ ἡλίῳ καὶ τὰς πτέρυγας ἐφαπλῶν δέχεται τὰς πυριμόρφους ἀκτῖνας αὐτοῦ. εἰ μὴ γὰρ ταύτας ἐδέχετο, οὐκ ἂν τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος ἐσώζετο, οὔτε ἕτερόν τι ζῷον · ἀλλὰ προσέταξεν ὁ θεὸς τοῦτο τὸ ὄρνεον. καὶ ἤπλωσε τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἶδον εἰς τὸ δεξιὸν πτερὸν αὐτοῦ γράμματα παμμεγέθη, ὡς ἄλωνος τόπον ἔχων μέτρον ὡσεὶ μοδίων τετρακισχιλίων · καὶ ἦσαν γράμματα χρυσᾶ · καὶ εἶπέν μοι ὁ ἄγγελος · Ἀνάγνωθι ταῦτα . καὶ ἀνέγνων · καὶ ἔλεγον οὕτως · Οὔτε γῆ με τίκτει οὔτε οὐρανός, ἀλλὰ*|
p. 89 *τίκτουσί με πτέρυγες πυρός . καὶ εἶπον · Κύριε, τί ἐστι τὸ ὄρνεον τοῦτο, καὶ τί τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ; καὶ εἶπέν μοι ὁ ἄγγελος · Φοῖνιξ καλεῖται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ . ⟨καὶ εἶπον ·⟩ Καὶ τί ἐσθίει ; καὶ εἶπέν μοι · Τὸ μάννα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τὴν δρόσον τῆς γῆς . καὶ εἶπον · Ἀφοδεύει τὸ ὄρνεον ; καὶ εἶπέν μοι · Ἀφοδεύει σκώληκα, καὶ τὸ τοῦ σκώληκος ἀφόδευμα γίνεται κινάμωμον, ᾧπερ χρῶνται βασιλεῖς καὶ ἄρχοντες . μεῖνον δέ, καὶ ὄψει δόξαν θεοῦ . καὶ ἐν τῷ ὁμιλεῖν αὐτὸν ἐγένετο [βροντὴ] ὡς ἦχος βροντῆς, καὶ ἐσαλεύθη ὁ τόπος ἐν ᾧ ἱστάμεθα · καὶ ἠρώτησα τὸν ἄγγελον · Κύριέ μου, τί ἐστιν ἡ φωνὴ αὕτη ; καὶ εἶπέν μοι ὁ ἄγγελος · Ἄρτι*

ἀνοίγουσιν οἱ ἄγγελοι τὰς τριακοσίας ἑξήκοντα πέντε πύλας τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ διαχωρίζεται τὸ φῶς ἀπὸ τοῦ σκότους . καὶ ἦλθεν φωνὴ λέγουσα · Φωτόδοτα, δὸς τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ φέγγος . καὶ ἀκούσας τὸν κτύπον τοῦ ὀρνέου εἶπον · Κύριε, τί ἐστιν ὁ κτύπος οὗτος ; καὶ εἶπεν · Τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἐξυπνίζον τοὺς ἐπὶ γῆς ἀλέκτορας · ὡς γὰρ τὰ δίστομα οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἀλέκτωρ μηνύει τοῖς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν λαλιάν . ὁ ἥλιος γὰρ ἑτοιμάζεται ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων· καὶ φωνεῖ ὁ ἀλέκτωρ.

7. Καὶ εἶπον ἐγώ · Καὶ ποῦ ἀποσχολεῖται ὁ ἥλιος ἀφ' οὗ ὁ ἀλέκτωρ φωνεῖ ; καὶ εἶπέν μοι ὁ ἄγγελος · Ἄκουσον, Βαρούχ · πάντα ὅσα ἔδειξά σοι ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ καὶ δευτέρῳ οὐρανῷ ἐστιν · καὶ ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ οὐρανῷ διέρχεται ὁ ἥλιος καὶ διδοῖ τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ φέγγος . ἀλλὰ ἔκδεξαι, καὶ ὄψει δόξαν θεοῦ . καὶ ἐν τῷ ὁμιλεῖν με αὐτῷ, ὁρῶ τὸ ὄρνεον, καὶ ἀνεφάνη ἔμπροσθεν, καὶ πρὸς μικρὸν μικρὸν ηὔξανε, καὶ ἀνεπληροῦτο · καὶ ὄπισθεν τούτου τὸν ἥλιον ἐξαστράπτοντα καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους μετ' αὐτοῦ φέροντας καὶ στέφανον ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ, οὗ τὴν θέαν οὐκ ἠδυνήθημεν ἀντοφθαλμῆσαι καὶ ἰδεῖν · καὶ ἅμα τῷ λάμψαι τὸν ἥλιον ἐξέτεινε καὶ ὁ Φοῖνιξ τὰς αὐτοῦ πτέρυγας · ἐγὼ δὲ ἰδὼν τὴν τοιαύτην δόξαν ἐταπεινώθην φόβῳ μεγάλῳ , καὶ ἐξέφυγον καὶ ὑπεκρύβην ἐν ταῖς πτέρυξι τοῦ ἀγγέλου . καὶ εἶπέν | p. 90 μοι ὁ ἄγγελος · Μὴ φοβοῦ, Βαρούχ, ἀλλὰ ἔκδεξαι, καὶ ὄψει καὶ τὴν δύσιν αὐτῶν.

8. Καὶ λαβών με ἤγαγέν με ἐπὶ δυσμάς · καὶ ὅταν ἦλθεν ὁ καιρὸς τοῦ δῦσαι, ὁρῶ πάλιν ἔμπροσθεν τὸν ὄρνεον ἐρχόμενον · καὶ ἅμα τῷ ἐλθεῖν αὐτόν, ὁρῶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους, καὶ ἦραν τὸν στέφανον ἀπὸ τῆς κορυφῆς αὐτοῦ · τὸ δὲ ὄρνεον ἔστη τεταπεινωμένον καὶ συστέλλον τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ . καὶ ταῦτα ἰδὼν ἐγὼ εἶπον · Κύριε, διὰ τί ἦραν τὸν στέφανον ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς τοῦ ἡλίου, καὶ διὰ τί ἐστι τὸ ὄρνεον τοσοῦτον τεταπεινωμένον ; καὶ εἶπέν μοι ὁ ἄγγελος · Ὁ στέφανος τοῦ ἡλίου, ὅταν τὴν ἡμέραν διαδράμῃ, λαμβάνουσιν τέσσαρες ἄγγελοι τοῦτον καὶ ἀναφέρουσιν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἀνακαινίζουσιν αὐτόν, διὰ τὸ μεμολύνθαι αὐτὸν καὶ τὰς ἀκτῖνας αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς · καὶ λοιπὸν καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν οὕτως ἀνακαινίζεται. καὶ εἶπον ἐγὼ Βαρούχ · Κύριε, καὶ διὰ τί μολύνονται αἱ ἀκτῖνες αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ; καὶ εἶπέν μοι ὁ ἄγγελος · Θεωρῶν τὰς ἀνομίας καὶ τὰς ἀδικίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἥγουν πορνείας, μοιχείας, κλοπάς, ἁρπαγάς, εἰδωλολατρείας, μέθας, φόνους, ἔρεις, ζήλη, καταλαλίας, γογγυσμούς, ψιθυρισμούς, μαντείας, καὶ τὰ τούτων ὅμοια, ἅτινα οὐκ ἐστι τῷ θεῷ ἀρεστά · διὰ ταῦτα μολύνεται καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀνακαινίζεται. περὶ δὲ τοῦ ὀρνέου, τὸ πῶς ἐταπεινώθη· ἐπεὶ διὰ τὸ κατέχειν τὰς τοῦ ἡλίου ἀκτῖνας, διὰ τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ τῆς ὁλοημέρου καύσεως, [ὡς] δι' αὐτῶν ταπεινοῦται · εἰ μὴ γὰρ αἱ τούτου πτέρυγες, ὡς προείπομεν, περιέσκεπον τὰς τοῦ ἡλίου ἀκτῖνας, οὐκ ἂν ἐσώθη πᾶσα πνοή.

The Syriac Didascalia, trans. into Latin by R.H.Connolly (Oxford 1929)-

Nam et per
mutum animal, id est per foenicem, quod
unicum est, manifest[a]e nobis de resur-
rectione ostensionem deus fecit; nam si
esset par aut multi, ipsi multi velut fan-
tasma videri poterant hominibus,
nunc autem videtur, cum ingrediatur,
quia solum est. Post quingentos enim annos
ingreditur in Aegyptum ad eum locum,
qui vocatur Solis Ara, portans cinnamo-
mum et orat contra orientem et succen-
ditur a se ipso et conburitur et fit cinis; de
cinere autem fit vermis, et hic vermis cres-
cens deformatur et fit iterum foenix
perfectus, et tunc redit denuo et per-
git ibidem, unde et venit. Si ergo et deus
per mutum animal ita [in] exemplum
resurrectionis nobis ostendit, multo ma-
ir gis nos credentes resurrectioni et repro-
missioni dei, etiamsi martyrium nobis su-
pervenerit, quasi qui talem digni sumus
adsequi gloriam, ut coronam portemus
incorruptam in vita aeterna,

The Greek Physiologus, Mss. A,I,E,Δ,Π,y-

AΙΠΕΔφr 7. Περὶ φοίνικος πετεινοῦ.

Ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἔλεγεν· "ἐξουσίαν ἔχω θεῖναι τὴν ψυχήν μου, καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχω πάλιν λαβεῖν αὐτήν," καὶ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἠγανάκτησαν ἐπὶ τούτῳ.

Ἔστιν πετεινὸν ἐν τῇ Ἰνδικῇ χώρᾳ φοῖνιξ λεγόμενον· καὶ κατὰ πεντακόσια ἔτη ἔρχεται εἰς τὰ ξύλα τοῦ Λιβάνου καὶ γομοῖ τὰς δύο πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ ἀρωμάτων· καὶ σημαίνει τῷ ἱερεῖ τῆς Ἡλιουπόλεως ἐν τῷ μηνὶ τῷ νέῳ Νήσαφ ἢ Ἀδαρεῖ, τουτέστι Φαμενωθὶ Φαρμουθί· ὁ δὲ ἱερεὺς σημανθεὶς εἰσέρχεται

εἰς τὴν Ἡλιούπολιν γεγομωσμένος τῶν ἀρωμάτων, καὶ ἀναβαίνει εἰς τὸν βωμὸν καὶ αὐτῷ τὸ πῦρ ἀνάπτει καὶ ἑαυτὸν καίει. καὶ τῇ ἐπαύριον ἐρευνῶν ὁ ἱερεὺς τὸν βωμὸν εὑρίσκει σκώληκα ἐν τῇ σποδῷ· καὶ τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἡμέρᾳ πτεροφυεῖ καὶ εὑρίσκεται νεοσσὸς πετεινόν· καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ εὑρίσκεται γενόμενον ὡς τὸ πρώην· καὶ ἀσπάζεται τὸν ἱερέα καὶ ἀνίπταται καὶ ὑπάγει εἰς τὸν παλαιὸν αὐτοῦ τόπον.

Ἑρμηνεία.

Εἰ οὖν τὸ πετεινὸν τοῦτο ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ἑαυτὸ ἀποκτεῖναι καὶ ζωογονῆσαι, πῶς οἱ ἀνόητοι ἄνθρωποι ἀγανακτοῦσιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰπόντος· ἐξουσίαν ἔχω θεῖναι τὴν ψυχήν μου καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχω πάλιν λαβεῖν αὐτήν;

Ὁ γὰρ φοῖνιξ πρόσωπον τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν λαμβάνει· καὶ γὰρ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐλθὼν τὰς δύο πτέρυγας εὐωδίας μεστὰς ἤνεγκεν, τουτέστιν ἐναρέτων οὐρανίων λόγων, ἵνα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' εὐχῶν ἐκτείνωμεν τὰς χεῖρας καὶ ἀναπέμψωμεν εὐωδίαν πνευματικὴν διὰ πολιτειῶν ἀγαθῶν.

Καλῶς οὖν ὁ Φυσιολόγος ἔλεξεν περὶ τοῦ φοίνικος.

Additional passage found only in Mss. W & O-

κατὰ τὴν αἰγυπτίων χώραν, μονογενὲς ὑπάρχον, οὐκ ἐν ἐρήμοις τόποις, [10] ἵνα μὴ ἀγνοηθῇ τὸ γινόμενον· ἀλλ' ἐν φανερᾷ πόλει παραγενόμενον, ἵνα ψηλαφισθῇ τὸ ἀπιστούμενον· [11] σηκὸν οὖν ἑαυτῷ ποιῆσαν ἐκ λιβάνου καὶ σμύρνης [12] καὶ λοιπῶν ἀρωμάτων, εἰς τοῦτον εἰσελθὸν τελευτᾷ πυρπολούμενον καὶ σήπεται. εἶτα ἐκ τῆς καυθείσης σαρκὸς τῆς τέφρας σκώληξ γίνεται, καὶ ἀναμορφοῦται εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον εἶδος. τοῦτο δὲ μὴ ἀπιστήσῃς· καὶ γὰρ καὶ τῶν μελισσῶν τὰ γεννήματα οὕτω γεννῶνται, ἐκ τῶν σκωλήκων ἀναμορφούμενα, καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὑγροτάτων ἐθεάσω ὀρνέων πτερὰ καὶ ὀστᾶ καὶ νεῦρα [13] ἐξερχόμενα. εἶτα πτεροφυήσας ὁ προειρημένος σκώληξ καὶ τέλειος ὥσπερ ἦν πρώην φανείς, ἀνίπταται τοιοῦτος οἷος ἐτελεύτησε, σαφεστάτην ἀνάστασιν διὰ τούτων τῶν νεκρῶν [14] ἐπιδεικνύμενος.

Θαυμαστὸν μὲν ὄρνεον ὁ φοῖνιξ, ἀλλ' ἄλογον. εἶτα τῷ μὲν ἀλόγῳ ζώῳ καὶ μὴ γινώσκοντι τὸν ποιητὴν τῶν ἁπάντων νεκρῶν ἀνάστασις δεδώρηται, ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς δοξολογοῦσιν θεὸν καὶ τὰ προστάγματα αὐτοῦ τηροῦσιν οὐ δίδοται ἀνάστασις; ἔστι τοίνυν ἀληθῶς νεκρῶν ἀνάστασις.

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