

Aesop up from the air, it would presumably have shown traces of various traditions, especially of what appears to be the tradition of English print. Instead, Shakspeare's Aesop is consistent and comes from a Latin form intended for school use. I believe the inference is clear. William Shakspeare evidently got his Aesop in Stratford grammar school about 1573 or 1574, either in the Latin translation of Camerarius in some edition by or before 1573, or in some form closely akin to it. The fact, as we have seen, that Shakspeare apparently echoes Camerarius verbally, makes it fairly certain, I believe, that his Aesop was of this form. That Shakspeare had his Aesop in Latin translation should be no matter for surprise, since Aesop in Latin is only second or third form knowledge. So elementary was Aesop that the proverb for ignorance was, "Ne Aesopum quidem trivisti, *He hath not learned his crisse-crosse.*"¹¹⁷ Shakspeare had learned his criss-cross, his Aesop, and much besides. Clearly, the fact that Aesop or any other Latin work, had also been translated into English does not oblige Shakspeare to use only the translation, as seems too frequently to have been assumed since the time of Dr. Farmer.

So far, I have defined Aesop only as he was defined in contemporary collections. I have not, therefore, yet considered Phaedrus, since that collection was first printed only in 1596, long after Shakspeare was out of grammar school, but quite in time for the majority of his plays, provided either his Latin or his inclination caused him to take an interest in this collection. Theobald points out some possible borrowings from Phaedrus. In *Julius Caesar*, Antony says of Lepidus:

He shall but bear them as the ass bears gold,
To groan and sweat under the business,
Either led or driven, as we point the way.¹¹⁸

In *Measure for Measure*, the Duke says,

For, like an ass whose back with ingots bows,
Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
And death unloads thee.¹¹⁹

Theobald sees in both these passages allusions to Phaedrus II, 7,

Two mules were treading along with loads, one bore bags full of money, the other sacks full of barley, Suddenly robbers rushed from their ambush, and in the confusion, kill the mule and deprive him of the money, but neglect the worthless grain.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Withals, John, *A Dictionary in English and Latine* (London, 1634, personal), p. 571.

¹¹⁸ *Julius Caesar*, IV, 1, 21-23. ¹¹⁹ *Measure for Measure*, III, 1, 26-28.

¹²⁰ Theobald, W., *Classical Element*, p. 88. Theobald refers these wrongly to Avianus.