

interests of copy, and begins with a long disquisition, "De exemplo fabuloso."

Quaquam autem non vbique perinde obuia est allegoriae ratio, tamen illud extra controuersi[a]m est apud antiquitatis peritos, in omnibus veterum poetarum figmentis subesse allegoriam: vel historicam, velut in pugna Herculis cum Acheloo bicorni: vel theologiam, vt in Proteo se vertente in omnes formas . . . vel physicam, vt in fabula Phaetontis: vel moralem . . . In quibusdam haud magni negotii est allegoriae sensum deprehendere. Quis enim non intelligit (nam de his quae ad mores attinent, magis libet exempla ponere) Icarum in mare dilapsi figmentum admonere, ne quis altius efferatur, quam pro sorte sua? Sic nimirum fabula Phaetontis monet, ne quis munus administrandum suscipiat maius quam pro viribus.<sup>79</sup>

Whether aided by Erasmus or not, Shakspeare knew from some source how to interpret the fable of Phaeton in this way. As the Duke exposes the plot of Valentine to elope with his daughter, he says,

Why, Phaethon,—for thou art Merops' son,—  
Wilt thou aspire to guide the heavenly car  
And with thy daring folly burn the world?  
Wilt thou reach stars, because they shine on thee?  
Go, base intruder! overweening slave!<sup>80</sup>

Like Phaeton, Valentine is reaching too high, though the specific applications of baseness, etc. come directly from the story as told by Ovid, not from Erasmus or other moralist. So also is Proteus characterized as Shakspeare has done in the same play.<sup>81</sup> These items in this play of Shakspeare's may owe their connections and mode of interpretation to Erasmus, though they were also to be found separately in many another place.

Again, under the fifth mode of varying matter, "Descriptio rei," Erasmus gives as an exercise, "Veluti si quis Scytharum, Anthropophagorum, Indorum, Troglodytarum, aut similibus gentium imaginem oculis exponat."<sup>82</sup> Indeed, Erasmus frequently refers to the wonders of Pliny as suitable for puerile exercises of various kinds. Shakspeare might by this direction have been sent to Pliny for materials which he used in later years from an edition of Pliny which was not available in his grammar school days.<sup>83</sup> And so we might go on locating a great number of bits of knowledge in *Copia* and other

<sup>79</sup> *Copia* (London, 1573), pp. 153v-154r; (1566), pp. 343-344.

<sup>80</sup> *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, III, 1, 153-157.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. *Copia* (London, 1573), pp. 52r, 65v, 178v; (1566), pp. 110, 147, 397.

<sup>82</sup> *Copia* (London, 1573), p. 123r; (1566), p. 287.

<sup>83</sup> Baldwin, "Pliny," *Parrott Presentation Volume*, pp. 157 ff.