

**AESOP.**

***Aesop's Fables with His Life: in English, French and Latin. Newly Translated. Illustrated with One hundred and twelve Sculptures. To this Edition are likewise added, Thirty one New Figures representing his Life. By Francis Barlow.***

London: Printed by H. Hills jun. for Francis Barlow, and are to be sold by Chr. Wilkinson, Tho. Fox, and Henry Faithorne, 1687.

Second edition (first published in 1666). Virtually all copies of the first edition were destroyed in the Great Fire of London of 1666. This is the first edition to contain the additional thirty-one full-page engraved plates.

Folio. [2, blank, verso engraved pictorial title], [2, title, verso blank], [2, dedication], [1, To the Reader], [1, full-page engraving of Aesop surrounded by animals and birds], 40, 40, 17, 2-221, [2], [1, blank] pp. Full page engraved plate of the arms of the Earl of Devonshire and thirty (without the suppressed plate No. 17, which is often missing) full page engraved plates by Thomas Dudley after Francis Barlow illustrating the life of Aesop, and 110 half page engravings in the text. The thirty additional plates are bound after the forty pages of English text. These plates were engraved in 1678 - this second edition is the first to contain these superb engravings. One or two small inoffensive tears. Some very minor stains or browning to some leaves, overall a good copy of this beautiful edition. Bound in 18<sup>th</sup> Century calf, red morocco spine label, some wear to joints and headcaps.



For this second edition of his magnificent production, Barlow commissioned Aphra Behn, then at the height of her popularity as a playwright, poet and translator, to write a quatrain summarizing the fable and to be engraved on the 110 plates illustrating the fables. In order to substitute Behn's verses for those of Thomas Philipot (d. 1682), the lower area of the plate needed to be burnished down and the new verses engraved

onto the plate in place of the earlier ones. "The workman doing the burnishing feared damaging the bottom border of the design above the verse: in many places traces of the tops of the letters in Philipot's top lines remain. In a few instances a small new plate for the new verse had to be inserted." (Hodnett).

"I Conceive it necessary to say concerning the Present Edition of this Work; That it exceeds the Former by a careful Correction of the Latin Copy, and by a more Exact Translation from the Latest and Best French Edition. The Life of Aesop likewise is illustrated with Thirty one new Copper Plates.

The Ingenious Mrs. A. Behn has been so obliging as to perform the English Poetry, which in short comprehends the Sense of the Fable and Moral: Whereof to say much were needless, since it may sufficiently recommend it self to all Persons of Understanding." (To the Reader leaf).

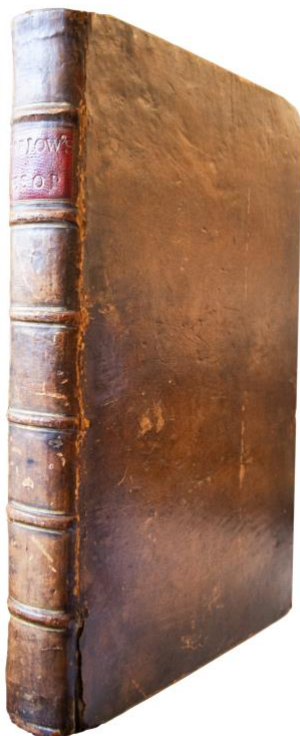
"The fables and plates are printed here in the same manner as in the first edition, the French version on the verso of each leaf, facing the plate, and Latin version on the recto of the following leaf... The thirty-one additional plates illustrating the life of Aesop are placed at the end of the volume. They are preceded by the plate representing Aesop surrounded by animals and birds, which formed the first plate to the first edition. Plate No. 17 is usually wanting, being generally removed as too free a character. Nearly all of them are signed "Tho: Dudley fecit". (Grolier, Wither to Prior).

Francis Barlow (1626?-1704) was the first English-born book illustrator. He was also the first English etcher, modern animal and bird artist, recorder of sporting scenes, political cartoonist, and, possibly, modern landscape artist. The lifelikeness of his animal and bird drawings, prints, and paintings attracted the admiration of the founders of the Royal Society and allied him with the scientific spirit of the seventeenth century. Barlow was, moreover, an interesting illustrator of great freshness and vigor..." (Edward Hodnett. *Five Centuries of English Book Illustration*, p. 54).

"This seventeenth-century polyglot (English-French-Latin) Aesop is handsomely illustrated with engravings after designs by Francis Barlow (?1626-1702), an English painter renowned for his pictures of country life and field sports. (He was perhaps the finest English draughtsman of animal scenes in the seventeenth century.) Barlow, who published the book at his own expense, explains in his preface that he intends the work to contribute to the education of young people. This is the first edition; the relatively few copies known are all survivors of the Great Fire of London, which swept over the printer's premises in 1666" (Morgan Library, *Early Children's Books* - citing the 1666 first edition).

Grolier, Wither to Prior, 666. Hodnett, *Aesop in England*, pp. 56-59 and 72. Morgan Library, *Early Children's Books*, 9 (describing the 1666 first edition). Wing A703.

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