

permutations allowed the dramatist to explore for comic effect the confused emotions induced in other characters who are attracted to them. In less complete form the device spread into Spanish and Elizabethan drama, including Shakespeare's familiar *As You Like It*. At the end of these plays the sexual ambiguities are resolved, to the relief of the audience—or at least of the censor. Thus the effect of such dramas contrasts with that of the later novelistic Albertine complex where the device is not meant to be detected. In both cases, however, preservation—or apparent preservation—of normality is the aim.

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ALCIBIADE FANCIULLO A SCOLA, L'

According to the notation on the title page, this spirited dialogue in defense of pederasty ("Alcibiades the Schoolboy") was published anonymously at "Ginevra [Geneva], 1652"—though it was probably actually printed in Venice. In 1862 a new limited edition of 250 copies appeared in Paris; it is almost as rare as the original. However, an Italian critical edition appeared in 1988 (Rome: Salerno).

The identity of the author long remained mysterious. The title page of the first edition bears the initials "D.P.A," which has been interpreted as "Divini Petri Aretini"—an unlikely attribution to Aretino. In 1850 Antonio Basseggio gave it, on stylistic grounds, to Ferrante Palavicino (1616-1644), a freethinker who was a member of the Accademia degli Incogniti in Venice. Finally, an article of 1888 by Achille Neri solved the puzzle. Neri included the text of a letter by Giovan Battista Loredan, founder of the Accademia degli Incogniti, which revealed that the author was Antonio Rocco (1586-1652), a "libertine" priest, Aristotelian philoso-

pher, and a member of the Academy. The initials on the title page could be resolved as "Di Padre Antonio." It is likely that Loredan, a noble Venetian, had a hand in the printing of the little volume.

While the obscenity of the story is quite explicit, it must be understood in the context of similar texts of the trend of **libertinism**, using the term in its original sense of a sceptical philosophical tendency. The colloquy is conventionally set in ancient Athens and the teacher is modeled on Socrates, as suggested also by the derivation of the literary form from the Platonic dialogue. Having conceived a unquenchable passion for his pupil, the instructor resolves to overcome his charge's every objection to consummation of the relationship. Through astute marshalling of argument, as well as rhetorical skill, the preceptor is successful, thus demonstrating also the value of education. The persuader uses examples from Greek mythology and culture, which had become familiar to many Italians through the Renaissance revival of classical antiquity. He rebuts counterarguments of later provenance, such as the Sodom and Gomorrah story. Anticipating the eighteenth century, he appropriates the argument from naturalness for his own ends, saying that Nature gave us our sexual organs for our pleasure; it is an insult to her to refuse to employ them for this evident purpose.

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Giovanni Dall'Orto

ALCIBIADES (CA. 450-404 B.C.)

Athenian general and statesman. Reared in the household of his guardian and uncle Pericles, he became the *erom-*