

he rather criticizes the debased form to which (in his view) it had sunk in his day. It is as satire of the lower and ignobler manifestations of boy-love that the humorous and sarcastic passages in his plays are to be interpreted, not as condemnation in the vein that Christianity was to adopt in later centuries.

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Warren Johansson

ARISTOTLE (384–322 B.C.)

Major ancient Greek philosopher.

Aristotle's thinking was formed at the Academy in Athens, where in 366–347 he studied under Plato. Aristotle tutored the bisexual Alexander the Great in Macedonia (343–336), and then returned to Athens, where he opened a school. His habit of lecturing in the covered walking place (*peripatos*) of the Lyceum gave his school the name of Peripatetic. As a thinker Aristotle is outstanding for the breadth of his interests, which encompassed the entire panorama of the ancient sciences, and for his efforts to make sense of the world through applying an organic and developmental approach. In this way he departed from the essentialist, deductive emphasis of Plato. Unfortunately, Aristotle's polished essays, which were noted for their style, are lost, and the massive corpus of surviving works derives largely from lecture notes. In these the wording of the Greek presents many uncertainties: hence the differences in the various translations, which in sexual matters are often marred by euphemistic evasion or anachronistic modernization. Dubious points can only be settled by wrestling with the Greek.

Although Aristotle is known to have had several male lovers, in his writings he tended to follow Plato's lead in favoring restraints on overt expression of homoerotic feelings. He differs, however, from Plato's ethical and idealizing approach

to male same-sex love by his stress on biological factors. In a brief, but important treatment in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (7:5) he was the first to distinguish clearly between innate and acquired homosexuality. This dichotomy corresponds to a standard Greek distinction between processes which are determined by nature (*physis*) and those which are conditioned by culture or custom (*nomos*). The approach set forth in this text was to be echoed a millennium and a half later in the Christian Scholastic treatments of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae*, Ia IIa, 31:7). In *The History of Animals* (9:8), Aristotle anticipates modern ethology by showing that homosexual behavior among birds is linked to patterns of domination and submission. In various passages he speaks of homosexual relations among noted Athenian men and boys as a matter of course. His treatment of friendship (*Nicomachean Ethics*, books 8 and 9) emphasizes its mutual character, based on the equality of the parties, which requires time for full consolidation. He takes it as given that true friendship can occur only between two free males of equal status, excluding slaves and women. Aristotle's ideas on friendship were to be echoed by Cicero, Erasmus, Michel de Montaigne, and Sir Francis Bacon.

The *Problems* (4:26), a work attributed to Aristotle but probably compiled by a follower, attributes desire for anal intercourse in men to the accumulation of semen in the fundament. This notion derives from the common Greek medical view that semen is produced in the region of the brain and then transferred by a series of conduits to the lower body.

In England and America a spurious compilation of sexual and generative knowledge, *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, enjoyed a long run of popularity. Compiled from a variety of sources, including the Hippocratic and Galenic medical traditions, the medieval writings of Albertus Magnus, and folklore of all kinds, this farrago was apparently first published in