

*Malakos and Arsenokoitês*  
1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10

by  
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In this paper, we are considering the possible meanings of the words *malakos* (singular)/ *malakoi* (plural) and *arsenokoitês* (singular)/*arsenokoitai* (plural). Additionally, the noun *arsenokoitia* comes into play. A brief overview of Greco-Roman forms of male on male sexual behavior is in order to help place this discussion in its socio-cultural context. For this part of my paper, I am drawing on the work of Robin Scroggs.<sup>1</sup>

Greco-Roman Background: Pederasty

The term most used by the Greeks for male on male sexual behavior is pederasty (*paiderastia*), the “love of boys”. Scroggs notes that in the classical period, “public culture...was male oriented, and the apposite *intellectual and, indeed, affective partner to a male was another male.*”<sup>2</sup> The ideal of the handsome young male informed the preferences of some Greco-Roman men.<sup>3</sup> Basically, pederasty involved a relationship between an older male and a younger male (often an adolescent).

Scroggs helpfully describes variations in the pederastic practices of the ancients. The first type he describes as a sublimated pederasty. “The most famous model, of course for this philosophical ideal is Socrates as portrayed by Plato, hence the term “Platonic” for a sublimated, nonsexualized homosexual relationship”.<sup>4</sup> Of course, this is an ideal, and the reality is that sexual intercourse probably did figure in many of these relationships. However, the ideal held that the relationship was appropriate so long as the older male provided the younger male with the skills (e.g., military skills in the case of Sparta) or wisdom (Plato) necessary for the youth’s development.

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<sup>1</sup> *The New Testament and Homosexuality: Contextual Background for Contemporary Debate* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

<sup>2</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 23; emphasis Scroggs.

<sup>3</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 25-27.

<sup>4</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 29.

A second type of pederasty involved voluntary, romantic relationships between youths or young men with an older male “in which the older partner expected to and did receive sexual gratification”.<sup>5</sup> The older male was the active sexual agent, the *erastês* (the lover) and the younger male was the passive partner, the *erômenos*. Same age male with male sexual relationships are not part of the norm.<sup>6</sup> In these types of relationships the older male received sexual gratification, but not necessarily the younger male. The youth may have received wisdom and affection, and gifts were often involved as well. The difference between the first type and the second type probably was not completely transparent to outsiders.

A third type of relationship is far removed from the voluntary associations described above. Slave prostitution of boys and youths was common. Masters could sexually avail themselves of their slaves (male or female) or provide them to friends. In addition to this, many boys and young males ended up as prostitutes in brothels.<sup>7</sup>

The fourth type Scroggs labels the “effeminate call-boy”. “By ‘call-boy’ I mean they were free (i.e., nonslave) youths, or adults, who sold themselves to individuals for purposes of providing sexual gratification. With ‘effeminate’ I use the most common description of such persons in the texts themselves.”<sup>8</sup> This type of pederastic arrangement is widely excoriated in the ancient texts. Youths who prostituted themselves in this way often resorted to hairstyles, make up, and clothing that were feminine to make themselves attractive. “Thus, in distinction from the ‘noble’ boy or youth who allows sexual favors for his love, and in sharp distinction from the slave under duress, this category consisted of older free youths who accepted the passive role for money.”<sup>9</sup> Among the words used to slander such youths was *malakos* to which we shall return shortly.

We continue this summary of Scroggs’ book by noting some of the objections to pederastic practices.<sup>10</sup> Not all the ancients were convinced that the Platonic ideal was practiced. Another criticism of pederasty was that it was effeminate.<sup>11</sup> Some critics observed that pederasty was not mutually beneficial to both partners. There was an inherent imbalance between the older, active male and the younger, passive male. Related to this, critics regarded the relationship as impermanent. The older male too

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<sup>5</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 32.

<sup>6</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 35.

<sup>7</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 38. Scroggs notes, however, that not all brothel prostitutes were slaves.

<sup>8</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 40.

<sup>9</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 41-42.

<sup>10</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 49-62.

<sup>11</sup> According to Scroggs, Clement of Alexandria was among the severest critics of effeminate males. See Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 54-55.

frequently left one partner for another.<sup>12</sup> And the criticism that is most common, according to Scroggs, is that pederasty is contrary to nature (*para phusin*).<sup>13</sup> One aspect of this is that heterosexual relationships promote procreation, whereas male with male relationships do not.

Defenders of pederasty continued to put forward the educational benefits to the youth. If the purpose of the relationship was the impartation of wisdom, then such a relationship was justified.<sup>14</sup> Other defenders argued that pederasty was more masculine than heterosexuality. Scroggs detects a thinly veiled misogyny in these comments. The love of a male is superior to the love of woman because males share a more robust nature and measure of mind.<sup>15</sup> A strong relationship with another male was more “manly” than one with a woman.<sup>16</sup> Scroggs concludes by observing that slave prostitution and the brothel houses are not defended. The inconstancy of some older males is criticized, but the defenders of pederasty maintain that constancy in a pederastic relationship is possible and desirable. “In sum, the positive arguments pass over entirely the more destructive and dehumanizing aspects of ancient homosexuality.”<sup>17</sup>

In separate chapters, Scroggs surveys the attitudes of Palestinian Judaism and then Hellenistic Judaism. Space does not allow for a major summary of these chapters. Scroggs concludes, however, that the language of the Bible guides the language and discussion of the rabbis. Scroggs thinks that the language of Lev. 20:13 informs the rabbinical term for male on male sexual intercourse: *mishkav zakur* (lying of a male) or *mishkav bzakur* (lying with a male). “The terms are resolutely male with male, never adult with youth, even when the rabbis are discussing age differential.”<sup>18</sup>

Scroggs begins his discussion of Hellenistic Judaism with the Septuagint’s translation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. The translation is as follows:

“With a male [*arsên*] you shall not lie the intercourse [*koitê*: lit. “bed”] of a woman” (18:22). “And whoever lies with a male [*arsên*] the intercourse [*koitê*] of a woman, both have done an abomination; they shall be put to death, they are guilty” (20:13).

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<sup>12</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 57.

<sup>13</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 59.

<sup>14</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 45.

<sup>15</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 46. Scroggs is describing speech of Pausanias in Plato’s *Symposium*, 181.

<sup>16</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 48.

<sup>17</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 49.

<sup>18</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 84. Scroggs’ discussion of rabbinic traditions is limited to the Tannaitic period (first and second centuries CE).

Scroggs points back to his earlier observation that *mishkav zakur* (lying with a male) became a semitechnical term for the rabbis' understanding of these two Levitical passages. "*Arsenokoitês* is an almost exact Greek parallel to the Hebrew and is equally derived from Leviticus. More than ever, the evidence suggests that *arsenokoitês* is a Hellenistic Jewish coinage, perhaps influenced by awareness of rabbinic terminology."<sup>19</sup>

### The Vice Lists in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy

1 Corinthians is an authentic letter of Paul, written somewhere in the 50's of the first century. 1 Timothy was written pseudonymously (along with 2 Timothy and Titus) by an unknown author. It is variously dated toward the end of the first century or in the second century.

There are three vice lists in 1 Corinthians 5 and 6 (I include the relevant terms for 1 Timothy as well):

|                               |                  |                     |                     |
|-------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Cor. 5:10                   | 1 Cor. 5:11      | 1 Cor. 6:9-10       | 1 Timothy 1:10      |
| fornicators ( <i>pornoi</i> ) | fornicators      | fornicators         | fornicators         |
| greedy                        | greedy           | idolaters           | <i>arsenokoitai</i> |
| robbers                       | idolaters        | <i>adulterers</i>   | slave traders       |
| idolaters                     | <i>revilers</i>  | <i>malakoi</i>      |                     |
|                               | <i>drunkards</i> | <i>arsenokoitai</i> |                     |
|                               | robbers          | greedy              |                     |
|                               |                  | drunkards           |                     |
|                               |                  | revilers            |                     |
|                               |                  | robbers             |                     |

The vices in the first list appear in the second and third list. The two vices added in the second list also appear in the third list to which Paul adds three more (*italics*).

Interpreters attempt to determine the meaning of these words from their linguistic usage in the Greco-Roman world and from the context provided by Paul and the Pastoral author. Questions include: are the two terms related to one another, so that they mutually inform the meaning intended? Or are they not related to one another, but should be considered separately? How broadly or narrowly did Paul and the

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<sup>19</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 86.

Pastoral author construe *arsenokoites*? Likewise, did Paul understand *malakos* in a specific sense or in a general sense?

### Malakos

We start with *malakos*, a term very well attested in ancient literature. It is an adjective meaning “soft”. Boswell observes the broad range of meanings this term has. For example, Aristotle uses it to describe men who are lacking in self-control, who excessively desire even worthy things (such as honor, concern for children or parents).<sup>20</sup> “The word is never used in Greek to designate gay people as a group or even in reference to homosexual acts generically, and it often occurs in writings contemporaneous with the Pauline epistles in reference to heterosexual persons or activity”.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, later church tradition consistently applied this word to masturbation.<sup>22</sup>

Scroggs cites a first century BCE text by Dionysius of Halicarnassus where he describes a ruler named Aristodemus whose nickname was *Malakos*. Dionysius speculates that Aristodemus earned this nickname “either because he became effeminate (*thêludria*) as a child and experienced things suitable to a woman [an apparent reference to a pederastic situation]... or because he was gentle by nature and *malakos* toward anger...”<sup>23</sup> The first century CE writer, Dio Chrysostom complains that if a person likes to study he is branded simple-minded and *malakos*.<sup>24</sup>

However, Scroggs notes some examples where the word and pederastic practice are linked. According to Plutarch (late first century-early second century CE) “The Romans...think nothing has contributed more to Greek enslavement and *malakia* than the gymnasium and its activities, which, he says, include the love of boys (*paiderastein*).”<sup>25</sup> In another work, Plutarch describes how Gaius Gracchus accused another man with *malakia* in a context where pederasty is clearly the issue.<sup>26</sup>

To these examples, Scroggs adds two more. In Plato’s *Phaedrus*, Socrates suggests that pederastic love seeks a person who is *malthakon* (a variant of *malakos*).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.4.4; see John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 106-107.

<sup>21</sup> Boswell, *Christianity*, 107.

<sup>22</sup> Boswell, *Christianity*, 107.

<sup>23</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 63; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* VII.2.4.

<sup>24</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 64; Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 66:25.

<sup>25</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 64; Plutarch *Roman Questions* 40.

<sup>26</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 64; Plutarch *Gaius Gracchus* IV.3f.

<sup>27</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 64; Plato, *Phaedrus* 239C.

Plutarch describes the youth who willingly consents to a pederastic relationship as one who acts with *malakia*.<sup>28</sup>

Scroggs concludes his survey of *malakos* and *malakia* by noting that they are not technical terms to describe pederastic persons or practices. There are other terms that more clearly function as such (e.g., the lover: *erastês*; the beloved: *erômenos* and *paidika*; to give the body for the purpose of intercourse: *charidzesthai*, *charis*; and the slang term “lovers of boys:” *paiderasteia*). On the other hand, given the linkage of *malakos* with “effeminacy,” *malakos* was sometimes used to point to people who engage in pederasty. Scroggs argues that the term, if used in a context concerning pederasty, would have suggested an effeminate call-boy.<sup>29</sup>

Dale Martin also points to the broad range of meanings in ancient literature for *malakos*. *Malakos* is an insult aimed at men who engage in behaviors that are considered effeminate. *Malakoi* are men who enjoy soft, luxuriant clothes, fancy food, disdain hard, physical work, have too much sex with females and/or males.<sup>30</sup> He cites as an example the “softness of the Lydians” (*ta Lydôn malaka*). According to Athenaeus (late second century-early third century CE), the Lydians are overly fond of luxurious living, gourmet food, sex with prostitutes, and profligate sex with women and men.<sup>31</sup> Martin adduces other examples where the term *malakos* (or its Latin equivalent *malacus*) designates an effeminate male who pretties himself in order to make himself attractive to women.<sup>32</sup>

It is worth noting with Martin that the ancients’ charge of “effeminacy” is grounded in misogyny. It reflects the ancients’ view of women as social inferiors. In the ancient world “[a] man could be branded as effeminate whether he had sex with men or with women. Effeminacy had no relation to the sex of one’s partner but to a complex system of signals with a much wider reference code. Thus, it would never have occurred to an ancient person to think that *malakos* or any other word indicating the feminine in itself referred to homosexual sex at all. It could just as easily refer to heterosexual sex.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 64; Plutarch, *Erôtikos* 751D. Scroggs notes that Plutarch disparages men who love women more than young boys (*paidikos*) only a few lines earlier. Such men are more interested in *ta malthaka* (“soft things” or “soft pleasures”) than the genuine love of a youth (*erôs ho gnêsios ho paidikos*); see *Erôtikos* 751B.

<sup>29</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 65.

<sup>30</sup> Dale Martin, “*Arsenokoites* and *Malakos*: Meanings and Consequences,” in *Biblical Ethics and Homosexuality: Listening to Scripture*. Edited by Robert Brawley (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press), 124-128.

<sup>31</sup> Martin, “*Arsenokoites* and *Malakos*,” 134, footnote 28; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 12.540F.

<sup>32</sup> Martin, “*Arsenokoites* and *Malakos*,” 126; Diogenes Laertius 6.54 (I found it in 6.65); Chariton, *Chaereas and Callirhoe* 1.4.9.

<sup>33</sup> Martin, “*Arsenokoites* and *Malakos*,” 126-127.

Arsenokoitês

Unlike *malakos*, *arsenokoitês* is a rare word. Paul's usage of it may be the earliest example we have. As noted above, the term joins together "male" (*arsên*) and "bed" (*koitê*). The second term has the force of a verb so that we might translate the plural form *arsenokoitai* as "bedders of males, those [men] who take [other] males to bed," or "men who sleep or lie with males".<sup>34</sup> Gagnon agrees with Scroggs and David Wright that Paul's use of *arsenokoitês* reflects the Septuagint's Greek translation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 where both terms, *arsên* and *koitê*, occur.<sup>35</sup> Dale Martin, however, is more cautious. He notes the problematic nature of deriving the meaning of a word solely from etymology. For example, "to understand" does not mean "to stand under".<sup>36</sup> Rather, the meaning of a word is determined by how it is used. Therefore, we turn next to the early texts cited by Martin where this term occurs.

Sibyllene Oracle 2.70-77.<sup>37</sup> The reader/audience is admonished

Do not steal seeds... Do not *arsenokoitein*, do not betray information, do not murder. Give to one who has labored his wage. Do not oppress a poor man. Take heed of your speech. Keep a secret matter in your heart. (Make provision for orphans and widows and those in need.) Do not be willing to act unjustly, and therefore do not give leave to one who is acting unjustly.

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 312.

<sup>35</sup> Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 315. David Wright, "Homosexuals or Prostitutes? The Meaning of *Arsenokoitai* (1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10), *Vigilae Christianae* 38 (1984), 129.

<sup>36</sup> Dale Martin, "*Arsenokoitês* and *Malakos*: Meanings and Consequences," in *Biblical Ethics and Homosexuality*; ed. Robert Brawley (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 119. Other examples: Is a "lady killer" a person who kills women, or a woman who kills others? It is neither; it is an expression for a man whom women find especially attractive. When a person "sleeps around" they are not falling asleep around some object but are having sex with multiple partners.

<sup>37</sup> The dating of Book 2 is difficult; however, the prevailing consensus is that was composed as a Jewish text originally and has been interpolated at various points by a Christian writer. John J. Collins suggests a date for the Jewish portion before 70 CE with the Christian additions after 70, but before 150 AD. See Collins, "The Sibyllene Oracles," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1. Ed. James H. Charlesworth. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1983.

Martin argues that this prohibition occurs in a context where the dominant concern is with economic injustice and exploitation. There is no mention of prohibited sexual acts. Martin argues, “If we take the *context* as indicating the *meaning*, we should assume that *arsenokoitein* here refers to some kind of economic exploitation, probably by sexual means: rape or sex by economic coercion, prostitution, pimping, or something of that sort.”<sup>38</sup> Martin adds that when the oracle gets around to addressing sexual sins in 2.279-82, we might have expected some reference to male-male sex, but there is none here.<sup>39</sup>

The next example comes from The Acts of John (2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE).<sup>40</sup> The apostle John condemns the men of Ephesus for their luxury, economic injustices, and violence. The text targets murderers first, and follows with this:

“So also the poisoner, sorcerer, robber, swindler, and *arsenokoitês*, the thief and all of this band, guided by your deeds you shall come to unquenchable fire...” (section 36).<sup>41</sup>

No sexual sins are mentioned here. “The emphasis throughout this section is on power, money, and unjust exploitation, not sex”.<sup>42</sup> Again, when John does address sexual sins in section 35, *arsenokoitês* is not mentioned.

Martin’s next example comes from Theophilus’ treatise *To Autolychus* (late 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE). Theophilus provides a lengthy vice list that begins with two sexual sins—adultery (*moichos*) and fornication (or prostitution-- *pornos*). These are followed by three economic sins—thievery, robbery, fraud. *Arsenokoitês* is the next term. It is followed by a list of persons who display sins of uncontrolled passion: violence, abuse, and wrathfulness. The next group refers to sins of pride –boastfulness and haughtiness followed by avaricious, brawler, disobedient to parents, covetous, and selling one’s children (Book 1; chapter 2). Martin observes that *arsenokoitês* is separated from the sexual sins by three sins related to economic injustice. None of the terms that follow *arsenokoitês* relate to sexual sins. Martin argues that if Theophilus understood *arsenokoitai* primarily as a sexual sin, it should be grouped with adultery and

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<sup>38</sup> Martin, “*Arsenokoitês* and *Malakos*,” 120-21.

<sup>39</sup> Martin, “*Arsenokoitês* and *Malakos*,” 121.

<sup>40</sup> “The Acts of John,” Knut Schäferdiek, in *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2; ed. Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992): 166-167.

<sup>41</sup> Schäferdiek, 178.

<sup>42</sup> Martin, “*Arsenokoitês* and *Malakos*,” 121.



fornication. He thinks that Theophilus groups it with the economic sins, although I would add that it could be a transitional term for the sins of violence that follow.<sup>43</sup>

The same work mentions *arsenokoitia* in another list (Book 1, chapter 14). Theophilus warns that divine punishment is coming to those who are “filled with adulteries and fornications, and *arsenokoitia*, and covetousness, and unlawful idolatries”. Is *arsenokoitia* to be taken with the first two sexual sins or the last two economic sins, or both? Martin thinks that here it refers to economic exploitation by some kind of sexual means.<sup>44</sup>

The next text Martin discusses comes from Hippolytus’s *Refutation of All Heresies* 5.21. In one of the “heresies” Hippolytus describes, the story of Adam and Eve involves Naas (the serpent) seducing Eve and possessing Adam “like a boy (slave)”. The long-term consequences of these violent sexual acts are adultery and *arsenokoitia*. “Certainly the context allows a reading of *arsenokoitia* to imply the unjust and coercive use of another person sexually”.<sup>45</sup>

Martin’s final example comes from Bardesanes (a late second to early third century CE figure) as quoted in Eusebius’ *Preparation for the Gospel* 6.10.25 (early 4<sup>th</sup> century CE). The text asserts that men living east of the Euphrates are not bothered if accused of being a murderer or thief, but they will avenge themselves even to the point of manslaughter if accused of being an *arsenokoitês*. The author contrasts this disposition with that of the Greeks whose “wise men are not faulted for having male lovers (*erômenous echontes*)”. Martin admits that one could read the text as equating an *arsenokoitês* with a man who has a male lover. But he notes that the line about male lovers may have been added by Eusebius.<sup>46</sup> If that is correct, it would tell us that a fourth century writer equated having a male lover with an *arsenokoitês*, but not what Bardesanes meant. Nor is it clear that having a male lover is meant to be equivalent to being an *arsenokoitês*. So, Martin urges caution about drawing this conclusion.

Overall, Martin argues that although we do not completely understand what *arsenokoitês* meant, it appears to have been associated with some kind of economic exploitation by means of sex. He is reluctant to include non-exploitative forms of male with male sexual relations. Considering Scroggs’ analysis, pederastic practices ran a high risk of social and/or economic exploitation. It may be the case that the fear of such exploitation inhered in the meaning of *arsenokoitês*.

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<sup>43</sup> Martin, “*Arsenokoitês* and *Malakos*,” 122.

<sup>44</sup> “*Arsenokoitês* and *Malakos*,” 122.

<sup>45</sup> Martin, “*Arsenokoitês* and *Malakos*,” 122. Martin gives 5.16.22-23 as the reference. However, I found the passage in Book 5, chapter 21.

<sup>46</sup> Martin, “*Arsenokoitês* and *Malakos*,” 123.

To these examples, we might consider a somewhat late 6<sup>th</sup> century CE text. It is a *Penitential* attributed to John the Faster (John IV of Constantinople). In the context of addressing instances of incest, the text states that many men commit *arsenokoitia* with their wives. This suggests to Michael Carden a concern with non-procreative (anal) sexual intercourse.<sup>47</sup> For Carden, the earliest examples of *arsenokoitia* occur in contexts where it is associated with violence and dishonest dealings. It also has a sexual connotation. By the sixth century it comes to mean anal sex, whether with a man or a woman.

Robert Gagnon's principle critique of Martin is that Martin construes *arsenokoitês* too narrowly. Where Martin sees the term as primarily some kind of sex act that involves exploitation or coercion, Gagnon argues that the term refers to any kind of male-male sexual act. For example, with reference to the passage from Hippolytus above, Gagnon writes

"The reference is clearly here to homosexual (not heterosexual) behavior which in antiquity usually (though not always) took the form of pederasty. To suggest, as Martin does, that the issue here may be rape and not homosexual penetration is like saying that the only type of adultery being condemned here is adultery involving deception or coercion".<sup>48</sup>

Where Martin is cautious about using the etymology of *arsenokoitês* as an adequate guide for its meaning, Gagnon is not. As mentioned above he translates *arsenokoitai* as "'bedders of males, those [men] who take [other] males to bed,' 'men who sleep or lie with males'".<sup>49</sup> He agrees with David F. Wright<sup>50</sup> who argues that *arsenokoitês* was coined by Hellenistic Jews who conflated two Greek words (*arsên* and *koitê*) that occur in the Septuagint (Greek) version of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (315).<sup>51</sup> This a key point for Gagnon. He regards these two Levitical passages as providing

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<sup>47</sup> I am grateful to Michael Carden for bringing this text to my attention. See his "Homophobia and the Politics of Biblical Translation," January 23, 2012. Accessed February 20, 2020. <http://michaelcardensjottings.blogspot.com/2012/01/homophobia-and-politics-of-biblical.html>. This text is provided in Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 363-365. It is also found in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 88.

<sup>48</sup> Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 318-19.

<sup>49</sup> Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 312.

<sup>50</sup> David F. Wright, "Homosexuals or Prostitutes? The Meaning of *Arsenokoitai* (1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10)," *Vigiliae Christianae* 38 (1984):125-53.

<sup>51</sup> Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 315. Leviticus 18:22: *meta arsenos ou koimêthêsēi koitên gynaikeian*. Leviticus 20:13: *hos an koimêthêi meta arsenos koitên gynaikos*.

unqualified prohibitions of male-male intercourse.<sup>52</sup> For Gagnon, the term *arsenokoitai* can include men who bed other males in an exploitative way, but it ALSO includes non-exploitative or consensual forms where men bed other males. Any attempt to limit the term to exploitative forms of male-male intercourse is rejected by Gagnon as too narrow.<sup>53</sup>

To the examples cited by Martin, Gagnon adds some cited by Wright. In the *Apology of Aristides* (ca. 125-145 CE), the pagan gods are accused of “mutual slaughter (*allêloktonias*) and poisoning/witchcraft (*pharmakeias*) and adultery (*moicheias*) and theft (*klopas*) and *arsenokoitias*” (13:7). Gagnon reads this in the light of a passage in 9:8-9 of the same work. After describing Zeus’ sexual relations with different women and his abduction of the shepherd boy Ganymede, Aristides argues that if one imitated such behavior he would become “an adulterer or a man who has intercourse with men (*androbatên*)...”.<sup>54</sup>

He cites several later Christian authors ranging from the third to fifth centuries CE where *arsenokoitia* is grouped with *porneia* (fornication) and *moicheia* (adultery). He compares this to the grouping of *porneia*, *moicheia*, and *paidophthoria* (corruption or seduction of boys) in several earlier Christian texts.<sup>55</sup> If Gagnon is correct that *arsenokoitia* is to be read as analogous to *paidophthoria*, that suggests to me that pederasty was the intended reference.

Space does not allow for a summary of all the examples Gagnon provides.<sup>56</sup> His conclusion is that *arsenokoitês* was not limited only to exploitative forms of male-male sexual relations but covered *all* forms of male-male sexual relations. Gagnon agrees with Scroggs that the term *malakos* refers to the passive partner and *arsenokoitês* the dominant partner in a male-male relationship. But where Scroggs and others limit this to some kind of exploitative situation, Gagnon does not.

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<sup>52</sup> Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 315. But see the paper by Tamar Kamionkowski submitted for this mini seminar. She argues that these two Levitical passages originally were intended to prohibit a certain type of incest, not male-male sexual activity in general.

<sup>53</sup> Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 314-315.

<sup>54</sup> Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 319-320; the translations are Gagnon’s. The verb *bateô* means “to cover, mount” with respect to animals. So, an *androbatên* would be someone who covers or mounts a man.

<sup>55</sup> Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 320-321; Wright, “Homosexuals or Prostitutes,” 135. The earlier texts are Barnabbas 19:4; Didache 2:2; Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and the Apostolic Constitutions.

<sup>56</sup> Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 321-322: Eusebius’ *Demonstration of the Gospel* 1.6.67 (Moses’ admonition not to *arsenokoitein* is understood by Gagnon as a reference to the Levitical prohibitions); Pseudo-Macarius (4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century CE) *Homo. Spir.* 50 4.345; *Serm.* 64 49.5.6 (the men of Sodom are charged with wanting to commit *arrenokoitia*); the Latin, Syriac, and Coptic translations of *arsenokoitia* construe it generally to mean “men who lie with males”.

It is self-evident, then, that the combination of terms, *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*, are correctly understood in our contemporary context when they are applied to every conceivable type of same-sex intercourse. A first-century Jew or Christian would regard the prohibitions in Lev 18:22 and 20:13 as absolute and affecting any male-to-male sexual intercourse, even if the primary examples of his/her culture were confined to pederastic models.<sup>57</sup>

*Malakoi* and *Arsenokoitai* in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:10

Coming back to our two texts, Scroggs understands the *malakos* as an effeminate call-boy and *arsenokoitês* as the adult male who was the active (penetrating) partner in same gender sexual intercourse. If *malakos* refers to an effeminate call-boy, “then the *arsenokoitês* in this context must be the active partner who keeps the *malakos* as a ‘mistress’ or who hires him on occasion to satisfy his sexual desires.”<sup>58</sup> Scroggs distinguishes this type of pederastic relationship from the type denoted by the terms *erômenos* and *erastês*. The latter type was legitimate and acceptable in Greek culture, but not the former.<sup>59</sup> As described above, Gagnon agrees with Scroggs that *malakos* denotes the passive partner and *arsenokoitês* the active partner in male-male sexual intercourse, but applies this more broadly than Scroggs.

In contrast to Scroggs and Gagnon, Martin argues that *malakos* was applied to a wide variety of behaviors considered by their detractors as effeminate, most of which had nothing to do with male-male sex. Passive partners in a same gender sexual intercourse would be considered effeminate, but so would a male who prettied himself up in order to seduce women.<sup>60</sup> As for *arsenokoitês*, Martin argues that we do not know its precise meaning, but it appears in contexts that suggest economic exploitation by means of sex.

In a recent article, Simon Hedlund points out that 1 Timothy 1:10 uses *arsenokoitai*, but not *malakoi*.<sup>61</sup> This suggests to Hedlund that the author of the Pastoral letter meant to encompass both the dominant and the passive persons by this term.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 330.

<sup>58</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 108.

<sup>59</sup> Scroggs argues that Philo’s criticism of male-male sexual intercourse is of this specific type of pederasty. See *Special Laws* III.37-39; *Contemplative Life* 59-62. Scroggs, 108.

<sup>60</sup> Martin, “*Arsenokoitês* and *Malakos*,” 124-128.

<sup>61</sup> Hedlund, “Who Are the *arsenokoitai*, and Why Does Paul Condemn Them (1 Cor 6:9)?”, *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 82 (2017): 116-153.

<sup>62</sup> Hedlund, “Who Are the *arsenokoitai*,” 142. He notes that Wright, “Homosexuals or Prostitutes,” 146 argues similarly as does Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community: A Socio-*

Hedlund also observes that Leviticus 20:13 condemns both the active and passive partner; no other term for the passive partner is required. Consequently, he does not pair *malakoi* with *arsenokoitai*.

Instead, Hedlund takes *malakoi* with *moichoi* (adulterers). He notes that men who chased women too much could be considered effeminate. Consequently, Hedlund translates *malakoi* as “womanizers”. Such men preoccupied themselves with their appearance in order to seduce woman. These men were considered a serious threat by married men who worried about their wives being seduced. Thus, the *malakos* was a kind of adulterer.<sup>63</sup>

Turning to *arsenokoitai*, Hedlund argues that Paul’s concern with sexual abuses occurs in a context where Paul also is addressing social abuses. He points to the larger social context of Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. Paul is aware of a strong group at Corinth who enjoy higher social status than most of the other members of the Christ community. The most obvious example is the misuse of the Lord’s Supper (11:17-33), but Hedlund argues that some of the other cases are more typical of higher strata persons, such as the man living with his father’s wife (5:1-13), or taking one another to court (6:1-11—note this is the immediate context of our two terms), or the males having sex with prostitutes (6:12-20), or the strong who expose the weak to idolatry by eating food sacrificed to an idol (8:1-10:33). Paul also worries about various instances of sexual immorality (see the repeated concern with *porneia* in 5:1; 6:18; 7:2). Hedlund observes the references to sexual immorality (*porneia*) also occur in the context where Paul perceives instances of social abuse by socially superior members of the Corinthian community.<sup>64</sup> The vice lists in 1 Corinthians contain terms that refer to sexual abuses and social abuses, with some resonating in both directions. As discussed above, Hedlund thinks that a *malakos* was a sexual danger to the community. He adds that such a person was more likely of higher social status because higher status men would have had more time and resources to pursue their sexual and materialistic desires.<sup>65</sup>

Furthermore, Hedlund argues that Paul sees the sexual abuses being committed at Corinth as defilements of the community (the body of Christ; see 6:12-20). Whereas higher status members of society were concerned to maintain a proper balance in the body, Paul worried about the intrusive effects of these offenses against the weaker members of the body. With this larger context in mind, Paul wanted to keep the body of Christ free from disputes and pollution. “...[T]here is an overarching concern with

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*Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Erdmans, 1995) , 110, note 18.

<sup>63</sup> Hedlund, “Who Are the *arsenokoitai*...,” 143.

<sup>64</sup> Hedlund, “Who Are the *arsenokoitai*...,” 136-137.

<sup>65</sup> Hedlund, “Who Are the *arsenokoitai*...,” 143.

things that cause, highlight, or reinforce stratificational differences within the community".<sup>66</sup>

Hedlund uses these contextual clues to argue that Paul worried about men of higher status in the Corinthian Christ community who used their positions to bed men of lower status (such as slaves or freedmen) who could not refuse. Paul viewed this as an intrusive pollution of the bodies of the men and of the Christ community.<sup>67</sup>

Michael Carden's reading of these two terms is somewhat similar. He does not construe *malakos* as the passive partner in a male-male relationship. He prefers to understand it as a self-indulgent person who gives free reign to his appetites for luxury items and food and for a lot of sex (with either females or males). Carden then sees the *arsenokoitês* as a kind of self-indulgent male who imposes his sexual will on socially weaker males (including slaves and prostitutes). "It's a semantic gestalt which involves power, violence, self-indulgence, as well as anal sex, and ranges from the private domestic sphere to the public sphere of commerce and consumption."<sup>68</sup>

In 1 Timothy 1:10, *arsenokoitai* is the middle term between *pornoi* and *andrapodistai*. Scroggs relates *pornoi* to *arsenokoitai* as he does *malakoi* to *arsenokoitai*. An *andrapodistês* was a slave dealer. He translates the trio as follows: "male prostitutes, males who lie [with them], and slave-dealers [who procure them]".<sup>69</sup> However, if Scroggs' interpretation of *malakoi* as "effeminate call-boy" does not hold up, then the correlation between *pornoi* and *arsenokoitai* in 1 Timothy does not either. Here *pornoi* might have the more general sense of "fornicators". The general sense that an *arsenokoitês* is a man who imposes or coerces sex on socially weaker males would then apply here as well.

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<sup>66</sup> Hedlund, "Who Are the *arsenokoitai*...", 144. Hedlund's paper is strongly indebted to Dale Martin's *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). See the beginning of chapter 7. Martin says that Paul subscribed to an invasion etiology of disease (168). "The body, rather than being a balanced ecosystem or microcosm of an equilibrated nature, is a permeable entity susceptible to attack by daimonic agents" (168). Martin think that the Strong at Corinth subscribed to the other etiology of disease which held that the body fell out of balance. This difference between Paul and the Strong exhibits itself in the situations studied in this chapter (1 Cor 5—man with father's wife; 6:1-12—sex with prostitutes; 8-10—food and idols; 11:17-34—abuse of Lord's Supper. "The concern of the higher-status Corinthians for stability, hierarchy, and moderation is countered by Paul's concern for purity and avoidance of pollution. The Strong operate by a logic of balance, with its relative lack of concern about pollution or invasion; Paul operates by a logic of invasion, with its anxieties about purity and firm boundaries" (163).

<sup>67</sup> Hedlund, "Who Are the *arsenokoitai*...", 145-146.

<sup>68</sup> Carden, "Homophobia and the Politics of Biblical Translation."

<sup>69</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 120.

## Conclusions

### Malakoi

- 1) It is possible that Paul used *malakoi* to refer to the passive person in a male-male sexual encounter.
- 2) In addition, it may be that Paul primarily (though not exclusively) had in mind a male who prostituted himself for social and/or economic advantage.
- 3) However, I think it more likely that Paul used *malakoi* in a broader sense for men who were self-indulgent, who had excessive appetites for sex (with either gender) and/or luxury. If *malakoi* is not paired with *arsenokoitai*, this reading becomes more probable.

### Arsenokoitai

As the summary of research above has shown, the context provided by 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:10 is somewhat ambiguous. The argument that the term reflects the Septuagint language of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 seems reasonable, but the contexts of both 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:10 provide little to assist the reader. Martin's warning that the etymology of a word is not a guarantee of its meaning should be noted. Based on the examples discussed in his work and Gagnon's, it seems most likely that the term denoted some kind of pederastic sexual relationship that was exploitative or coercive.

## Conclusions

I think it is fair to say that we cannot determine the meaning and usage of these terms with certainty. Below I have attempted to indicate what is possible and what is probable.

- 1) It is possible that *arsenokoitai* referred to males who bedded other males (inclusive of both the dominant and passive participants).
- 2) The types of male-male sexual intercourse recognizable to Paul (and other Jewish writers of his time) were of the pederastic type.
- 3) It is possible that Paul construed *arsenokoitia* to include all instances of male-male sexual intercourse whether exploitative or not.
- 4) But I think it is more probable that Paul understood *arsenokoitia* as some type of male-male sexual relationship that was exploitative.

- 5) It is possible that the instance of *arsenokoitia* listed in 1 Corinthians 6:9 threatened to exacerbate stratificational divisions with the Corinthian Christ community.

### The Hermeneutical Question

My paper thus far has attempted to determine the meaning of the terms *malakos* and *arsenokoitês* in 1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 1. In simplified terms, *what did the text mean in its historical-cultural context?* But communities engaged with this and the other biblical texts discussed in this seminar want to know *what does the text mean for us in our historical-cultural moment?*

At the outset, it must be recognized that scholars trained to locate texts within their distinctive cultures sometimes draw different implications for the contemporary meaning of these texts.

Robert Gagnon's 2001 treatment of the biblical texts and same gender relationships is meticulously detailed. He also articulates a high view of biblical authority.<sup>70</sup> While acknowledging some "significant internal tensions" within the Bible, Gagnon argues "that the burden of proof is on those who would reject a biblical position on a moral issue with strong support from the Old Testament and subsequent church tradition. I believe this to be the case with respect to homosexuality".<sup>71</sup>

Gagnon elsewhere brings in the biblical model of marriage as providing the only acceptable form of sexual activity: heterosexual intercourse within marriage. He argues that all of the forms of sexual morality listed in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 are rejected by Paul because "they participate in a form of sexual behavior other than that sanctioned in the context of a monogamous, lifelong, non-incestuous, opposite-sex marriage bond".<sup>72</sup> A few lines later, he adds "...a responsible hermeneutic today should understand the combination of *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* in the broadest possible sense, as violators of the model of marriage put forward in Genesis 1-2, specifically, a union between a man and a woman".<sup>73</sup>

Gagnon's treatment illustrates the truism that no reading is without presuppositions. That applies to the papers in this mini seminar as well. My own presupposition is that the social world of the biblical texts is so different from ours that attempts to apply what "the Bible says" to contemporary situations is always fraught

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<sup>70</sup> See *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, chapter 5 "The Hermeneutical Relevance of the Biblical Witness".

<sup>71</sup> *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 346.

<sup>72</sup> *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 327.

<sup>73</sup> *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 328. But see Susan Elliott's paper submitted for this mini seminar on the usage of Genesis 1-2.



with difficulty. As the papers in this mini seminar have pointed out, at issue is not merely what these biblical texts were attempting to say; what these ancient texts said is embedded in social, gender, and class codes that require great effort to unpack. The question that presents itself is “*do we want to make the values of these texts our values?*” I do not think we can give an unqualified yes or no. When those texts advocate for the poor, the weak, the oppressed, it is easier for us to see an alignment with our values. But texts that lend support to the oppression of others are judged not acceptable.

In the case of 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10, it is not absolutely certain what kinds of behavior were being referenced with *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*. As argued above, the type of male-male sexual intercourse most recognizable to Paul (and other Jewish writers of his time) was pederasty. The contemporary versions of same gender relationships are largely unknown in the ancient texts. Most of the examples we have examined suggest that an *arsenokoitês* was a man who engaged in coercive or abusive sexual behavior. The range of behaviors attributed to a *malakos* are so broad that we cannot be certain that Paul had in mind a person involved in some kind of same gender sexual behavior.

I am not arguing that that Paul and other biblical authors would have found same gender sexual relationships appropriate. But those who read 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 as part of a broader biblical ethic that opposes same gender sex are making a choice that privileges the gender and sexual assumptions of antiquity. Given that ancient Mediterranean perceptions of gender and sexuality often were misogynistic, assumed the gender binary, and reflected unequal power relationships, I do not think we can make those values our values.

## Appendix I

## A Sampling of English Translations of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:10

**1 Corinthians 6:9-10**

## King James Version

<sup>9</sup>Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor **effeminate**, nor **abusers of themselves with mankind**,

<sup>10</sup>Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

## Revised Standard Version

<sup>9</sup>Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor **sexual perverts [takes *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* together]**,

<sup>10</sup>nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.

## New Revised Standard Version

<sup>9</sup>Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, **male prostitutes, sodomites**,

<sup>10</sup>thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God.

## New International Version

<sup>9</sup>Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor **men who have sex with men [takes *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* together]**

<sup>10</sup>nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

## Common English Bible

<sup>9</sup>Don't you know that people who are unjust won't inherit God's kingdom? Don't be deceived. Those who are sexually immoral, those who worship false gods, adulterers, **both participants in same-sex intercourse**,

<sup>10</sup>thieves, the greedy, drunks, abusive people, and swindlers won't inherit God's kingdom

## New Living Translation

<sup>9</sup>Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are **male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality,**  
<sup>10</sup>or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God.

#### Scholars Version

<sup>9</sup>Don't you know that wrongdoers are not going to inherit the Empire of God? Don't let anyone mislead you; neither those who consort with prostitutes nor those who follow phony gods, neither adulterers nor **promiscuous people,** nor **pederasts**  
<sup>10</sup>Neither the thieving nor the greedy, neither drunkards nor those who engage in verbal abuse nor swindlers are going to inherit the Empire of God.

### 1 Timothy 1:10

#### King James Version

For whoremongers, for **them that defile themselves with mankind,** for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

#### Revised Standard Version

immoral persons, **sodomites,** kidnapers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,

#### New Revised Standard Version

fornicators, **sodomites,** slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching

#### NIV

for the sexually immoral, for **those practicing homosexuality,** for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine

#### Common English Bible

They are people who are sexually unfaithful, and **people who have intercourse with the same sex.** They are kidnappers, liars, individuals who give false testimonies in court, and those who do anything else that is opposed to sound teaching.

#### New Living Translation

The law is for people who are sexually immoral, or **who practice homosexuality**, or are slave traders, liars, promise breakers, or who do anything else that contradicts the wholesome teaching

## ADDENDIX II

Sybillene Oracle 2.70-77 (translated by J. J. Collins)

(Never accept in your hand a gift which derives from unjust deeds.)

Do not steal seeds. Whoever takes for himself is accursed (to generations of generations, to the scattering of life.

Do not *arsenokeoitein*, do not betray information, do not murder.)

Give one who has labored his wage. Do not oppress a poor man.

Take heed of your speech. Keep a secret matter in your heart.

(Make provision for orphans and widows and those in need.)

Do not be willing to act unjustly, and therefore do not give leave to one who is acting unjustly.)

**70** (ἐξ ἀδίκων ἔργων δῶρον χειρὶ μήποτε δέξῃ.) **71** σπέρματα μὴ κλέπτειν· ἐπαράσιμος ὅστις ἔληται **72** (εἰς γενεὰς γενεῶν { εἰς } σκορπισμὸν βιότιο. **73** μὴ **ἀρσενοκοιτεῖν**, μὴ συκοφαντεῖν, μήτε φονεύειν.) **74** μισθὸν μοχθήσαντι δίδου· μὴ θλίβε πένητα. **75** γλώσση νοῦν ἐχέμεν· κρυπτὸν λόγον ἐν φρεσὶν ἴσχειν. **76** (ὀρφανικοῖς χήραις ἐπιδευομένοις δὲ παράσχου.) **77** μήτ' ἀδικεῖν ἐθέλης μήτ' οὖν ἀδικοῦντα ἐάσης.

Sybillene Oracle 2.279-82

Again, those who defiled the flesh by licentiousness,

Or as many as undid the girdle of virginity

By secret intercourse, as many as aborted

What they carried in the womb, as many as cast forth their offspring unlawfully.

**279** καὶ πάλιν οἱ τὴν σάρκα ἀσελγείῃ ἐμίησαν, **280** ἢ δ' ὅποσοι ζώνην τὴν παρθενικὴν ἀπέλυσαν **281** λάθρῃ μισγόμενοι, ὅσοι δ' ἐνὶ γαστέρι φόρτους **282** ἐκτρώσκουσιν, ὅσοι τε τόκους ῥίπτουσιν ἀθέσμως·

## Acts of John

You who delight in gold and ivory and jewels, do you see your loved (possessions) when night comes on? And you who give way to soft clothing, and then depart from life, will these things be useful in the place where you are going? And let the murderer know that the punishment he has earned awaits him in double measure after he leaves this (world). So also the poisoner, sorcerer, robber, swindler, and *arsenokoitês*, the thief and all of this band, guided by your deeds you shall come to unquenchable fire...So, men of Ephesus, change your ways; for you know this also, that kings, rulers, tyrants, boasters, and warmongers shall go naked from this world and come to eternal misery and torment (section 36; Hennecke-Schneemelcher).

## Theophilus, *To Autolychus*

As a burnished mirror, so ought man to have his soul pure. When there is rust on the mirror, it is not possible that a man's face be seen in the mirror; so also when there is sin in a man, such a man cannot behold God. Do you, therefore, show me yourself, whether you are not an adulterer, or a fornicator, or a thief, or a robber, or a purloiner; whether **you do not corrupt boys**; whether you are not insolent, or a slanderer, or passionate, or envious, or proud, or supercilious; whether you are not a brawler, or covetous, or disobedient to parents; and whether you do not sell your children; for to those who do these things God is not manifest, unless they have first cleansed themselves from all impurity. (Book 1; chapter 2; translation by Marcus Dods)

Ὡσπερ ἔσοπτρον ἐστιλβωμένον, οὕτως δεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἔχειν καθαρὰν ψυχὴν. ἔπαν οὖν ἢ ἰὸς ἐν τῷ ἐσόπτρῳ, οὐ δύναται ὁρᾶσθαι τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῷ ἐσόπτρῳ· οὕτως καὶ ὅταν ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, οὐ δύναται ὁ τοιοῦτος ἄνθρωπος θεωρεῖν τὸν θεόν. δεῖξον οὖν καὶ σὺ σεαυτόν, εἰ οὐκ εἶ μοιχός, εἰ οὐκ εἶ πόρνος, εἰ οὐκ εἶ κλέπτης, εἰ οὐκ εἶ ἄρπαξ, εἰ οὐκ εἶ ἀποστερητής, εἰ οὐκ εἶ ἀρσενοκοίτης, εἰ οὐκ εἶ ὑβριστής, εἰ οὐκ εἶ λοίδορος, εἰ οὐκ ὀργίλος, εἰ οὐ φθονερός, εἰ οὐκ ἀλαζών, εἰ οὐχ ὑπερόπτης, εἰ οὐ πλήκτης, εἰ οὐ φιλάργυρος, εἰ οὐ γονεῦσιν ἀπειθής, εἰ οὐ τὰ τέκνα σου πωλεῖς. τοῖς γὰρ ταῦτα πράσσουσιν ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἐμφανίζεται, ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον <ἑαυτοὺς καθαρῶσιν ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ>.

But to the unbelieving and despisers, who obey not the truth, but are obedient to unrighteousness, when they shall have been filled with adulteries and fornications, and

**filthiness**, and covetousness, and unlawful idolatries, there shall be anger and wrath (Book 1, chapter 14; Dods translation)

τοῖς δὲ ἀπίστοις καὶ καταφρονηταῖς καὶ <ἀπειθοῦσι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ>, ἐπὶ ἐμφύρωνται μοιχείαις καὶ πορνείαις καὶ **ἀρσενοκοιτίαις** καὶ πλεονεξίαις καὶ ταῖς <ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρείαις>, ἔσται <ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός, θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία> καὶ τὸ τέλος τοῦς τοιούτους καθέξει πῦρ αἰώνιον.

Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*

Accordingly, Naas approached Eve, deceived her, and committed adultery with her—a lawless act. He approached Adam too and treated him like a young lover—which is lawless in itself. From these origins came adultery and *arsenokoitia*.

(M. David Litwa, *Refutation of All Heresies*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016: 345).

προσηλθε γὰρ τῇ Εὐᾶ ἐξαπατήσας αὐτήν καὶ ἐμοίχευσεν αὐτήν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ παράνομον· προσηλθε δὲ καὶ τῷ Ἀδὰμ καὶ ἔσχεν αὐτὸν ὡς παιδ<ικ>ά, ὅπερ ἐστὶ καὶ αὐτὸ παράνομον. ἔνθεν γέγονε μοιχεία καὶ **ἀρνεσοκοιτία**.

Eusebius, Preparation for the Gospel 6.10.25 (Eusebius is quoting Bardesanes)

From the Euphrates river and as far as the ocean to the east, the man reviled as a murderer or as a thief is not at all bothered [by the accusation]; but the man accused as an *arsenokoites* will avenge himself even as far as committing bloodshed/murder. But among the Greeks even their wise men are not faulted for having male lovers. (my translation)

ἀπὸ Εὐφράτου ποταμοῦ καὶ μέχρι τοῦ Ὠκεανοῦ ὡς ἐπὶ ἀνατολὰς ὁ λοιδορούμενος ὡς φονεύς, ἢ κλέπτῃς, οὐ πάνυ ἀγανακτεῖ· ὁ δὲ ὡς **ἀρσενοκοίτης** λοιδορούμενος ἑαυτὸν ἐκδικεῖ μέχρι καὶ φόνου· παρ' Ἑλλησι δὲ καὶ οἱ σοφοὶ ἐρωμένους ἔχοντες οὐ ψέγονται.

John the Faster (d. 595)

Penitential

From Migne PG 88, 1983-1896

Likewise one must inquire about *arsenokoitia* of which there are three varieties. For it is one thing to get it from someone, which is the least serious another to do it to someone else, which is more serious than having it done to you; another to do it to someone and have it done to you, which is more serious than either of the other two. For to be passive only, or active only, is not so grave as to be both. One must inquire into which of these [practices] the penitent has fallen, and how often, and for how long, and if it happened before marriage or after, if before the age of thirty or after. It must be ascertained further whether he has penetrated an animal, of which sin there is only grade.

Likewise there are two types of masturbation [*malakia*]: one wherein he is aroused by his own hand and another by someone else's hand, which is unfortunate, since what the parties begin by themselves ends up also harming others to whom they teach the sin.

One must also ask about the perplexing, beguiling, and shadowy sin of incest, of which there are not just one or two varieties but a great many very different ones. One type is committed with two sisters of the same father or mother (or both). Another involves a cousin; another the daughter of a cousin; another the wife of one's son; another the wife of one's brother. It is one thing with a mother-in-law or the sister of a mother-in-law, another with a stepmother or a father's concubine. Some even do it with their own mothers, and others with foster sisters or goddaughters. In fact, many men even commit the sin of *arsenokoitia* with their wives.

τὸ μέντοι τῆς ἀρσενοκοιτίας μῦθος πολλοὶ καὶ μετὰ τῶν γυναικῶν αὐτῶν ἐκτελοῦσιν.