

***Arsenokoitēs* and *Malakos*: Meanings and Consequences**

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The New Testament provides little ammunition to those wishing to condemn modern homosexuality. Compared to the much more certain condemnations of anger, wealth (sometimes anything but poverty), adultery, or disobedience of wives and children, the few passages that *might* be taken as condemning homosexuality are meager. It is not surprising, therefore, that the interpretation of two mere words has commanded a disproportionate amount of attention. Both words, *arsenokoitēs* and *malakos*, occur in a vice list in 1 Cor. 6:9, and *arsenokoitēs* recurs in 1 Tim. 1:10. Although the translation of these two words has varied through the years, in the twentieth century they have often been taken to refer to people who engage in homosexual, or at least male homosexual, sex, and the conclusion sometimes then follows that the New Testament or Paul, condemns homosexual "activity."

Usually the statement is accompanied by a shrugged-shoulder expression, as if to say, I'm not condemning homosexuality! I'm just reading the Bible. It's there in the text. Such protestations of objectivity, however, become untenable when examined closely. By analyzing ancient meanings of the terms, on the one hand, and historical changes in the translation of the terms on the other, we discover that interpretations of *arsenokoitēs* and *malakos* as condemning modern homosexuality have been driven more by ideological interests in marginalizing gay and lesbian people than by the general strictures of historical criticism.

In the end, the goal of this chapter is not mere historical or philological accuracy. By emphasizing the ideological contexts in which interpretation has taken place and will always take place, I intend to challenge the objectivist notion that the Bible or historical criticism can provide contemporary Christians with a reliable foundation for ethical reflection. Neither a simple reading of "what the Bible says" nor a professional historical-critical reconstruction of the ancient meaning of the texts will provide a prescription for contemporary Christian ethics. Indeed, the naive attempts by conservative Christians, well-meaning though they may be, to derive their ethics from a "simple" reading of the Bible have meant merely that they impute to the Bible their own destructive ideologies.¹ The destruction is today nowhere more evident than in the church's mistreatment of lesbian and gay Christians.

Arsenokoitēs

From the earliest English translations of the Bible, *arsenokoitēs* has suffered confusing treatment. Wyclif (in 1380) translated it as "thei that don lecherie with men" and until the twentieth century similar translations prevailed, primarily "abusars of them selves with the mankynde" (Tyndale 1534; see also Coverdale 1535, Cranmer 1539, Geneva Bible 1557, KJV 1611, ASV 1901; the Douai-Rheims version of 1582 was a bit clearer: "the liers vvith mankinde"). A curious shift in translation occurred in the mid-twentieth century. Suddenly, the language of psychology and "normalcy" creeps into English versions. Although some still use archaic terms, like "sodomite" (OB 1966, NAB 1970, NRSV 1989), several influential versions substitute more modern concepts like "sexual perverts" (RSV 1946, REB 1992) or terms that reflect the nineteenth century's invention of the category of the "homosexual," such as the NIV's (1973) "homosexual offenders." Some translations even go so far as to collapse *arsenokoitēs* and *malakos* together into one term: "homosexual perverts" or "homosexual perversion" (TEV 1966, NEB 1970). Modern commentators also offer a variety of interpretations. Some explain that *malakos* refers to the "passive" partner in male-male anal intercourse and *arsenokoitēs* the "active" partner, thus the two disputable terms being taken care of mutually.² Some simply import wholesale the modern category and translate *arsenokoitēs* as "male homosexual."³ Others, in an attempt, I suppose, to separate the "sin" from the "sinner," have suggested "practicing homosexuals."⁴

Between the end of the nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth century, therefore, the translation of *arsenokoitēs* shifted from being the reference to an action that any man might well perform, regardless of orientation or disorientation, to refer to a "perversion," either an action or a propensity taken to be self-evidently abnormal and diseased. The shift in translation, that is, reflected the invention of the category of "homosexuality" as an abnormal orientation, an invention that occurred in the nineteenth century but gained popular currency only gradually in the twentieth.⁵ Furthermore, whereas earlier translations had all taken the term (correctly) to refer to men, the newer translations broadened the reference to include people of either sex who could be diagnosed as suffering from the new modern neurosis of homosexuality. Thorough

historical or philological evidence was never adduced to support this shift in translation. The interpretations were prompted not by criteria of historical criticism but by shifts in modern sexual ideology.

As the debate over homosexuality and the Bible has become more explicit, various attempts have been made to defend the interpretation of *arsenokoitēs* as a reference to male-male or homosexual sex in general. A common error made in such attempts is to point to its two parts, *arsēn* and *koitēs*, and say that "obviously" the word refers to men who have sex with men.⁶ Scholars sometimes support this reading by pointing out that the two words occur together, though not joined, in Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible and in Philo in a context in which he condemns male homosexual sex.⁷ Either Paul, it is suggested, or someone before him simply combined the two words together to form a new term for men who have sex with men.

This approach is linguistically invalid. It is highly precarious to try to ascertain the meaning of a word by taking it apart, getting the meanings of its component parts, and then assuming, with no supporting evidence, that the meaning of the longer word is a simple combination of its component parts. To "understand" does not mean to "stand under." In fact, nothing about the basic meanings of either "stand" or "under" has any direct bearing on the meaning of "understand." This phenomenon of language is sometimes even more obvious with terms that designate social roles, since the nature of the roles themselves often changes over time and becomes separated from any original reference. None of us, for example, takes the word "chairman" to have any necessary reference to a chair, even if it originally did. Thus, all definitions of *arsenokoitēs* that derive its meaning from its components are naive and indefensible. Furthermore, the claim that *arsenokoitēs* came from a combination of these two words and therefore means "men who have sex with men" makes the additional error of defining a word by its (assumed) etymology. The etymology of a word is its history, not its meaning.⁸

The only reliable way to define a word is to analyze its use in as many different contexts as possible. The word "means" according to its function, according to how particular people use the word in different situations. Unfortunately, we have very few uses of *arsenokoitēs* and most of those occur in simple lists of sins, mostly in quotations of the biblical lists, thus providing no explanation of the term, no independent usage, and few clues from the context about the term's meaning. But having analyzed these different occurrences of *arsenokoitēs*, especially cases where it occurs in vice lists that do not merely quote 1 Cor. 6:9 or 1 Tim. 1:10, I am convinced that we can make some guarded statements.

As others have noted, vice lists are sometimes organized into groups of "sins," with sins put together that have something to do with one another.⁹ First are listed, say, vices of sex, then those of violence, then others related to economics or injustice. Analyzing the occurrence of *arsenokoitēs* in different vice lists, I noticed that it often occurs not where we would expect to find reference to homosexual intercourse — that is, along with adultery (*moicheia*) and prostitution or illicit sex (*porneia*) — but among vices related to economic injustice or exploitation. Though this provides little to go on, I suggest that a careful analysis of the actual context of the use of *arsenokoitēs*, free from linguistically specious arguments from etymology or the word's separate parts, indicates that *arsenokoitēs* had a more specific meaning in Greco-Roman culture than homosexual penetration in general, a meaning that is now lost to us. It seems to have referred to some kind of economic exploitation by means of sex, perhaps but not necessarily homosexual sex.

One of the earliest appearances of the word (here the verb) occurs in Sibylline Oracle 2.70-77.¹⁰ Although the date of this section of the oracle — indeed, of the finished oracle itself — is uncertain, there is no reason to take the text as dependent on Paul or the New Testament. The oracle probably provides an independent use of the word. It occurs in a section listing acts of economic injustice and exploitation; in fact, the editors of the English translation here quoted (J. J. Collins) label the section "On Justice":

(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 *arsenokoitein*, 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.

The term occurs in a list of what we might call "economic sins," actions related to economic injustice or exploitation: accepting gifts from unjust sources, extortion, withholding wages, oppressing the poor.

"Stealing seeds" probably refers to the hoarding of grain; in the ancient world, the poor often accused the rich of withholding grain from the market as a price-fixing strategy.¹¹ I would argue that other sins here mentioned that have no necessary economic connotation probably do here. Thus the references to speech

and keeping secrets may connote the use of information for unjust gain, like fraud, extortion, or blackmail; and "murder" here may hint at motivations of economic gain, recalling, for example, the murder of Naboth by Jezebel (1 Kings 21). In any case, no other term in the section refers to sex. Indeed, nothing in the context (including what precedes and follows this quotation) suggests that a sexual action in general is being referred to at all. 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 the sort.

This suggestion is supported by the fact that a list of sexual sins does occur elsewhere in the same oracle, which is where we might expect to find a reference to male-male sex (2.279-82). The author condemns "defiling the flesh by licentiousness," "undoing the girdle of virginity by secret intercourse," abortion, and exposure of infants (the last two often taken to be means of birth control used by people enslaved to sex; such people proved by these deeds that they had sex purely out of lust rather than from the "noble" motive of procreation). If the prohibition against *arsenokoitein* was taken to condemn homosexual intercourse in general, one would expect the term to occur here, rather than among the terms condemning unjust exploitation.¹²

A similar case exists in the second-century Acts of John. "John" is condemning the rich men of Ephesus:

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 *arsenokoités*, the thief and all of this band. ...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).

Here also, *arsenokoités* occurs in a list of sins related to economics and injustice: delighting in wealth, robbery, swindling, thievery. Note also the list of those who prosper by their power over others: kings, rulers, tyrants, boasters, warmongers. The emphasis throughout the section is on power, money, and unjust exploitation, not sex.

As was the case in the Sybilline Oracle, "John" does denounce sexual sins elsewhere in the text, and the word *arsenokoités* is absent (section 35). If this author took *arsenokoités* to refer generally to homosexual sex or penetration, we would expect him to mention it among the other sexual sins, rather than in the section condemning the rich for economic exploitation. Thus, here also *arsenokoités* probably refers to some kind of economic exploitation, again perhaps by sexual means.

Another second-century Christian document offers corroborative, though a bit less obvious, evidence. Theophilus of Antioch, in his treatise addressed To Autolychnus, provides a vice list.¹³ First come the two sexual sins of adultery and fornication or prostitution.¹⁴ Next come three economic sinners: thief, plunderer, and defrauder (or robber). Sixth is *arsenokoités*. The next group includes savagery, abusive behavior, wrath, and jealousy or envy, all of which the ancients would recognize as sins of "passion": that is, uncontrolled emotion. Next come instances of pride: boastfulness and conceit or haughtiness. I take the next term, *pléktés* ("striker") to denote someone who thinks he can go around hitting people as if they were his slaves. Then occurs the term "avaricious," or "greedy." Finally are two phrases related to the family: disobedience to parents and selling one's children. These last three may all have been taken as belonging to the category of greed, surely in the case of selling one's children and also perhaps in the reference to parents, if the particular action is understood as a refusal to support one's parents in their old age.

arsenokoités is separated from the sexual sins by three terms that refer to economic injustice. Would this be the case if it was understood as a condemnation of simple male homosexual intercourse? Furthermore, as Robert Grant notes, Theophilus takes these terms, with the exceptions of *phthoneros* and *hyperoptēs*, from vice lists in the Pauline corpus. Therefore, it is notable that Theophilus places *arsenokoités* in a different position. Grouping it with economic sins, I suggest, reflects his understanding of the social role to which it referred and his rhetorical goal of grouping the vices by category.

Later in the same work, *arsenokoitia* occurs in another list: again adultery and *porneia* come first, then *arsenokoitia*, followed by greed (*pleonexia*) and *athemitoi eidololatreia*, referring to idolatry. This list is not very helpful, since the term could here be taken as a sexual vice, grouped with the two preceding terms, or as an economic vice, grouped with the following. One possible explanation is that it is both: it is economic exploitation by some sexual means.¹⁵

There are two texts in which one might reasonably take *arsenokoitia* as referring to homosexual sex. In each case, however, I believe a careful reading encourages more cautious conclusions. The first occurs in Hippolytus's Refutation of All Heresies 5.26.22-23. Hippolytus claims to be passing along a Gnostic myth about the seduction of Eve and Adam by the evil being Naas. Naas came to Eve, deceived her, and committed adultery with her. He then came to Adam and "possessed him like a boy (slave)." This is how, according to the myth, *moicheia* (adultery) and *arsenokoitia* came into the world. Since *arsenokoitia* is in parallel construction with *moicheia*, it would be reasonable for the reader to take its reference as simply homosexual penetration. We should note, nonetheless, the element of deception and fraud here. The language about Naas's treatment of Adam, indeed, which could be read "taking or possessing him like a slave," could connote exploitation and even rape. Certainly the context allows a reading of *arsenokoitia* to imply the unjust and coercive use of another person sexually.

The second debatable use of the term occurs in a quotation of the second — to third-century writer Bardesanes found in Eusebius's Preparation for the Gospel.¹⁶ Bardesanes is remarking that the peoples who live east of the Euphrates River take the charge of *arsenokoitia* very seriously: "From the Euphrates River all the way to the ocean in the East, a man who is derided as a murderer or thief will not be the least bit angry; but if he is derided as an *arsenokoitēs*, he will defend himself to the point of murder. [Among the Greeks, wise men who have lovers (er?menous echontes, males whom they love; "favorites") are not condemned]" (my trans.).

On the surface, this passage appears to equate "being an *arsenokoitēs*" and "having a favorite." But there are complicating factors. In the first place, the text seems to have gone through some corruption in transmission. The sentence I have given in brackets does not occur in the Syriac fragments of Bardesanes's text or in the other ancient authors who seem to know Bardesanes's account, leading Jacoby, the editor of the Greek fragments, to suggest that Eusebius himself supplied the comment.¹⁷ Thus Eusebius's text would provide evidence only that he or other late-Christian scribes wanted to equate *arsenokoitēs* with "having a favorite." This fourth-century usage would therefore be less important for ascertaining an earlier, perhaps more specific, meaning of the term. Furthermore, we should note that the phrases occur in Eusebius in a parallel construction, but this does not necessarily mean that the second phrase is a defining gloss on the first. The point could be that "wise men" among the Greeks are not condemned for an action that is similar to one found offensive to Easterners. The equation of the terms is not absolutely clear. I offer these thoughts only as speculations meant to urge caution, but caution is justified. Especially since this text from Eusebius is the only one that might reasonably be taken to equate *arsenokoitia* with simple homosexual penetration, we should be wary of saying that it always does.¹⁸

I should be clear about my claims here. I am not claiming to know what *arsenokoitēs* meant, I am claiming that no one knows what it meant. I freely admit that it could have been taken as a reference to homosexual sex.¹⁹ But given the scarcity of evidence and the several contexts just analyzed, in which *arsenokoitēs* appears to refer to some particular kind of economic exploitation, no one should be allowed to get away with claiming that "of course" the term refers to "men who have sex with other men." It is certainly possible, I think probable, that *arsenokoitēs* referred to a particular role of exploiting others by means of sex, perhaps but not necessarily by homosexual sex. The more important question, I think, is why some scholars are certain it refers to simple male-male sex in the face of evidence to the contrary. Perhaps ideology has been more important than philology.

Malakos

The translations and interpretations of *malakos* provide an even clearer case of ideological scholarship. For one thing, in contrast to the case with *arsenokoitēs*, in which we have too few occurrences of the term to make confident claims, we possess many occurrences of *malakos* and can be fairly confident about its meaning. Moreover, the changes in translation of *malakos* provide an even clearer record of how interpretive decisions have changed due to historical shifts in the ideology of sexuality.

Early English translations render *malakos* by terms that denote a general weakness of character or degeneracy, usually "weaklinges" (Tyndale 1534, Coverdale 1535, Cranmer 1539; see also Wyclif 1380, "lechouris ayens kynde," and Geneva Bible 1557, "wantons"). From the end of the sixteenth century to the twentieth, the preferred translation was "effeminate" (Douai-Rheims 1582, KJV 1611, ASV 1901). As was the case with *arsenokoites*, however, a curious shift takes place in the mid-twentieth century. The translation of *malakos* as "effeminate" is universally rejected and some term that denotes a particular sexual action or orientation is substituted. The JB (1966) chooses "catamite," the NAB (1970) renders *arsenokoitēs* and *malakos* together as "sodomite," others translate *malakos* as "male prostitute" (NIV 1973, NRSV 1989), and again some combine both terms and offer the modern medicalized categories of sexual, or particularly homosexual, "perversion" (RSV 1946, TEV 1966, NEB 1970, REB 1992). As was the case with

arsenokoitēs, no real historical or philological evidence has been marshaled to support these shifts in translation, especially not that from the "effeminacy" of earlier versions to the "homosexual perversion" of the last fifty years. In fact, all the historical and philological evidence is on the side of the earlier versions. The shift in translation resulted not from the findings of historical scholarship but from shifts in sexual ideology.

This hypothesis is easy to support because *malakos* is easy to define. Evidence from the ancient sources is abundant and easily accessible. *malakos* can refer to many things: the softness of expensive clothes, the richness and delicacy of gourmet food, the gentleness of light winds and breezes. When used as a term of moral condemnation, the word still refers to something perceived as "soft": laziness, degeneracy, decadence, lack of courage, or, to sum up all these vices in one ancient category, the feminine. For the ancients, or at least for the men who produced almost all our ancient literature, the connection was commonsensical and natural. Women are weak, fearful, vulnerable, tender. They stay indoors and protect their soft skin and nature: their flesh is moister, more flaccid, and more porous than male flesh, which is why their bodies retain all that excess fluid that must be expelled every month. The female is quintessentially penetrable; their pores are looser than men's. One might even say that in the ancient male ideology women exist to be penetrated. It is their purpose (*telos*). And their "soft-ness" or "porousness" is nature's way of inscribing on and within their bodies this reason for their existence.²⁰

And so it was that a man who allowed himself to be penetrated — by either a man or a woman — could be labeled a *malakos*. But to say that *malakos* meant a man who was penetrated is simply wrong. In fact, a perfectly good word existed that seems to have had that narrower meaning: *kinaedos*. *malakos*, rather, referred to this entire complex of femininity.²¹ This can be recognized by looking at the range of ways men condemned other men by calling them *malakoi*.

As I mentioned, a man could, by submitting to penetration, leave himself open to charges of *malakia*.²² but in those cases, the term refers to the effeminacy of which the penetration is only a sign or proof; it does not refer to the sexual act itself. The category of effeminate men was much broader than that. In philosophical texts, for example, *malakoi* are those people who cannot put up with hard work. Xenophon uses the term for lazy men.²³ For Epictetus and the Cynic Epistles, the term refers to men who take life easy rather than enduring the hardships of philosophy.²⁴ In Dio Cassius, Plutarch, and Josephus, cowards are *malakoi*.²⁵ Throughout ancient literature, *malakoi* are men who live lives of decadence and luxury.²⁶ They drink too much wine, have too much sex, love gourmet food, and hire professional cooks. According to Josephus, a man may be accused of *malakia* if he is weak in battle, enjoys luxury, or is reluctant to commit suicide (War 7.338; Antiquities 5.246; 10.194). Dio Chrysostom says that the common crowd might stupidly call a man *malakos* just because he studies a lot —that is, a bookworm might be called a sissy (66.25).

The term *malakos* occurs repeatedly in the Pseudo-Aristotelian Physiognomy, a book that tells how to recognize someone's character by body type and body language, including whether a man is really effeminate even if he outwardly appears virile. The word never refers specifically to penetration in homosexual sex (although men who endure it are discussed in the book). Rather, it denotes the feminine, whether the reference is to feet, ankles, thighs, bones, flesh, or whatever (see esp. chap. 6 passim). It always represents the negative female characteristic to which the positive masculine characteristic is contrasted. For example, if a man has weak eyes, it means one of two things: either he is *malakos* and *thlū* or he is a depressive and lacks spirit (808a10). Each option contains a pair of synonyms: just as "depressive" and "lacking spirit" (*katlphls*, *athymos*) are synonyms, so are *malakos* and *thlū*, both referring to effeminacy. *Malakia*, therefore, was a rather broad social category. It included, of course, penetrated men, but many others besides. To put it simply, all penetrated men were *malakoi*, but not all *malakoi* were penetrated men.²⁷

In fact, *malakos* more often referred to men who prettied themselves up to further their heterosexual exploits. In Greco-Roman culture, it seems generally to have been assumed that both men and women would be attracted to a pretty-boy. And boys who worked to make themselves more attractive, whether they were crying to attract men or women, were called effeminate. An old hag in a play by Aristophanes drags off a young man, saying, "Come along, my little softie" (*malakion*), although she has perfectly heterosexual things in mind (Ecclesiastusae 1058). The Roman playwright Plautus uses the Latin transliteration *malacus* to indicate effeminate men. But whereas in one comedy the term is *cinaedus malacus*, referring to a penetrated man, in another it is *moechus malacus*, referring to a man who seduces other men's wives (Miles Gloriosus 3.1 [1.668]; Truculentus 2.7.49 [1.610]).

In the ancient world, effeminacy was implicated in heterosexual sex as much as homosexual — or more so.²⁸ When Diogenes the Cynic sees a young man prettied up, he cannot tell whether the boy is crying to attract a man or a woman; in either case the boy is equally effeminate (Diogenes Laertius 6.54; the term

malakos does not occur here, but effeminacy is the subject).²⁹ Chariton in his novel *Chaereas and Callirhoe* provides a typical portrait of an effeminate man (1.4.9): he has a fresh hairdo, scented with perfume; he wears eye makeup, a soft (*malakon*) mantle, and light, swishy slippers; his fingers glisten with rings. Only a modern audience would find it strange that he is off to seduce not a man but a maiden.³⁰ When the author of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomy* wants to portray the "Charitable Type" of man, he makes him typically effeminate and very hetero-sexual. Such men, he says, are delicate, pale, with shining eyes and wrinkled noses; they cry a lot, are "reminiscent," warmhearted, and with nice dispositions. They are particularly fond of women, with whom they have lots of sex, and they tend to produce female children (808a34).

Ancient sexist ideology was quite different from modern sexist and heterosexist ideology. The ancients operated with an axis that represented masculinity at one end and femininity at the other. All people theoretically could be assigned a particular place on the axis. The ancients could also assume, rather less often or obviously, an axis on which men-who-love-boys occupied one end and men-who-love-women the other, with most men assumed to fall somewhere in the middle as naturally omni-sexual. To some extent, therefore, we can recognize analogies to the modern axes of masculine-feminine and heterosexual-homosexual. But where as in modern ideology the two axes are usually collapsed together, with queer men of all sexual positions considered feminine and straight guys masculine (and even more masculine the lustier they are), the two axes had no relation to one another in the ancient ideology. 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.³¹

This can be demonstrated by analyzing those famous texts in which men argue about whether the love of women is inferior or superior to the love of boys. Each side accuses the other of effeminacy and can claim some logical grounds for doing so. In Plato's *Symposium*, where Aristophanes is made to relate his fanciful myth about the origins of the different kinds of loves, man for man, man for woman, and woman for woman, it is taken as natural that male-male love is the most "manly" (*andreiotatoi*) of all three (192A). In the *Symposium* no one attempts to argue the opposite, more difficult case. In Plutarch's *Dialogue on Love* (*Moralia* 748E-771 E), the man defending the love of women does accuse the penetrated man of *malakia* and *thlutos*, but the speaker advocating the love of boys is given the stronger case. He says that the love of females is, of course, more effeminate (750F); the love of women is "moist" (*hygron*), "housebound," "unmanly" (*anandros*), and implicated in *ta malaka*, "softness" (751A-B). Men who fall in love with women demonstrate their effeminacy (*malakia*) and weakness (*astheneia*, 753F; 7600) by the fact that they are controlled by women.

Similar mutual insults are exchanged in the Pseudo-Lucianic *Affairs of the Heart*. The man advocating the love of women is portrayed by the author as the more effeminate. He is said to be skilled in the use of makeup, presumably, the narrator comments, in order to attract women, who like that kind of thing (9). True, in his own turn, the "woman lover" complains that the penetrated man in homosexual sex is feminized; it is masculine to ejaculate seed and feminine to receive it (28, 19; note *malakizesthai*). But the man advocating the love of boys counters that heterosexual sex taints a man with femininity, which is why men are so eager to take a bath after copulating with women (43). Male love, on the other hand, is manly, he says, associated with athletics, learning, books, and sports equipment, rather than with cosmetics and combs (9, 44).³²

I cite these texts not to celebrate homosexual love. What strikes me about them is rather their rank misogyny.³³ But that is just the point. The real problem with being penetrated was that it implicated the man in the feminine, and *malakos* referred not to the penetration per se but to the perceived aspects of femaleness associated with it. The word *malakos* refers to the entire ancient complex of the devaluation of the feminine. Thus people could use *malakos* as an insult directed against men who love women too much.³⁴

At issue here is the ancient horror of the feminine, which can be gruesomely illustrated by an example from Epictetus. In one of his especially "manly" moments, Epictetus praises an athlete who died rather than submit to an operation that would have saved his life by amputating his diseased genitals (1.2.25-26). Whereas we might think the paramount issue would be the man's wish to avoid an excruciatingly painful operation, the issue for Epictetus is the man's manly refusal to go on living if he must do so without his masculine equipment—the things that set him apart from despised femininity. It is better to die than be less than a man. Or, perhaps more to the point, any sensible person would rather be dead than be a woman.

There is no question, then, about what *malakos* referred to in the ancient world. In moral contexts it always referred either obviously or obliquely to the feminine. There is no historical reason to take *malakos* as a

specific reference to the penetrated man in homosexual intercourse.³⁵ It is even less defensible to narrow that reference down further to mean "male prostitute."³⁶ The meaning of the word is clear, even if too broad to be taken to refer to a single act or role. *malakos* means "effeminate."

Why has this obvious translation been universally rejected in recent English versions? Doubtless because contemporary scholars have been loath to consider effeminacy a moral category but have been less hesitant in condemning gay and lesbian people. Today, effeminacy may be perceived as a quaint or distasteful personal mannerism, but the prissy church musician or stereotyped interior designer is not, merely on the basis of a limp wrist, to be considered fuel for hell. For most English-speaking Christians in the twentieth century, effeminacy may be unattractive, but it is not a sin. Their Bibles could not be allowed to condemn so vociferously something that was a mere embarrassment. So the obvious translation of *malakos* as "effeminate" was jettisoned.

Consequences

Being faced with a Pauline condemnation of effeminacy hardly solves the more important hermeneutical issues. Suppose that we wanted to be historically and philologically rigorous and restore the translation "effeminate" to our Bibles. What do we then tell our congregations "effeminacy" means? As I have already illustrated in part, in the ancient world a man could be condemned as effeminate for, among many other things, eating or drinking too much, enjoying gourmet cooking, wearing nice underwear or shoes, wearing much of anything on his head, having long hair, shaving, caring for his skin, wearing cologne or aftershave, dancing too much, laughing too much, or gesticulating too much. Keeping one's knees together is effeminate, as well as swaying when walking, or bowing the head. And of course there were the sexual acts and positions: being penetrated (by a man or a woman), enjoying sex with women too much, or masturbating³⁷ the list could go on-and that contributed to the usefulness of the word as a weapon. It was a malleable condemnation.

Naturally, many of these things do not make a man effeminate today. If in trying to be "biblical," then, we attempt to "take seriously" Paul's condemnation, do we condemn what Paul and his readers are likely to have considered effeminate-that is, take the historical route? Or do we condemn only those things that our culture considers effeminate? And what might that be? Taking piano lessons? ballet dancing? singing falsetto in the men and boys' choir? shaving one's body hair for anything but a swim meet or a bicycle race? being a drag queen? having a transsexual operation? camping it up? or wearing any article of "women's clothes" (unless you are a TV talk show host trying to make a point)? refusing to own a gun? driving an automatic transmission instead of a stick shift? drinking tea? actually requesting sherry? Or do we just narrow the category to include only those people most heterosexist Christians would really like to condemn: "gays" and "manly men" who are careless enough to get caught? Condemning penetrated men for being effeminate would also implicate us in a more elusive and pervasive problem: the misogyny of degrading the penetrated. The ancient condemnation of the penetrated man was possible only because sexist ideology had already inscribed the inferiority of women into heterosexual sex. To be penetrated was to be inferior because women were inferior. Let us also be clear that our modern culture has in no way liberated itself from this sexism. This should be obvious every time a frat boy says "This sucks!" or "Fuck you!"-thus implicating both his girlfriend and possibly his roommate in the despised role of the penetrated. The particular form taken by modern heterosexism is derived largely from sexism. People who retain Paul's condemnation of effeminacy as ethical grounding for a condemnation of contemporary gay sex must face the fact that they thereby participate in the hatred of women inherent in the ancient use of the term. In the face of such confusion and uncertainty, no wonder modern heterosexist scholars and Christians have shrunk from translating *malakos* as "effeminate." I myself would not advocate reading a condemnation of effeminacy out loud in church as the "word of the Lord." But to mask such problems and tell our fellow Christians that the word "really" refers just to boy prostitutes or, worse, "passive homosexuals" is by this time just willful ignorance or dishonesty. Some scholars and Christians have wanted to make *arsenokoitēs* and *malakos* mean both more and less than the words actually mean, according to the heterosexist goals of the moment. Rather than noting that *arsenokoites* may refer to a specific role of exploitation, they say it refers to all "active homosexuals" or "sodomites" or some such catch-all term, often broadening its reference even more to include all homosexual eroticism. And rather than admitting the obvious, that *malakos* is a blanket condemnation of all effeminacy; they explain that it refers quite particularly to the penetrated man in homosexual sex. Modern scholars have conveniently narrowed down the wide range of meanings of *malakia* so that it now condemns one group: gay men-in particular, "bottoms." In order to use 1 Cor. 6:9 to condemn contemporary homosexual relationships, they must insist that the two words mean no more but also no less than what they say they mean. It should be clear that this exercise is driven more by heterosexist ideology than historical criticism.

My goal is not to deny that Paul condemned homosexual acts but to highlight the ideological contexts in which such discussions have taken place. My goal is to dispute appeals to "what the Bible says" as a foundation for Christian ethical arguments. It really is time to cut the Gordian knot of fundamentalism. And do not be fooled: any argument that tries to defend its ethical position by an appeal to "what the Bible says" without explicitly acknowledging the agency and contingency of the interpreter is fundamentalism, whether it comes from a right-wing Southern Baptist or a moderate Presbyterian. We must simply stop giving that kind of argument any credibility. Furthermore, we will not find the answers merely by becoming better historians or exegetes. The test for whether an interpretation is Christian or not does not hang on whether it is historically accurate or exegetically nuanced. The touchstone is not the historically reconstructed meaning in the past, nor is it the fancifully imagined, modernly constructed intentions of the biblical writers.³⁸ Nor can any responsible Christian—after the revolutionary changes in Christian thought in the past twenty years, much less in the past three hundred—maintain that Christian interpretations are those conforming to Christian tradition. The traditions, all of them, have changed too much and are far too open to cynical manipulation to be taken as foundations for gauging the ethical value of a reading of scripture.

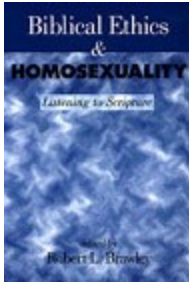
The only recourse in our radical contingency is to accept our contingency and look for guidance within the discourse that we occupy and that forms our very selves. The best place to find criteria for talking about ethics and interpretation will be in Christian discourse itself, which includes scripture and tradition but not in a "foundational" sense. Nor do I mean that Christian discourse can itself furnish a stable base on which to secure ethical positions; it is merely the context in which those positions are formed and discussed. Conscious of this precarious contingency, and looking for guiding lights within the discourse, I take my stand with a quotation from an impeccably traditional witness, Augustine, who wrote: "Whoever, therefore, thinks that he understands the divine Scriptures or any part of them so that it does not build the double love of God and of our neighbor does not understand it at all" (Christian Doctrine 1.35.40).

By this light, any interpretation of scripture that hurts people, oppresses people, or destroys people cannot be the right interpretation, no matter how traditional, historical, or exegetically respectable. There can be no debate about the fact that the church's stand on homosexuality has caused oppression, loneliness, self-hatred, violence, sickness, and suicide for millions of people. If the church wishes to continue with its traditional interpretation it must demonstrate, not just claim, that it is more loving to condemn homosexuality than to affirm homosexuals. Can the church show that same-sex loving relationships damage those involved in them? Can the church give compelling reasons to believe that it really would be better for all lesbian and gay Christians to live alone, without the joy of intimate touch, without hearing a lover's voice when they go to sleep or awake? Is it really better for lesbian and gay teenagers to despise themselves and endlessly pray that their very personalities be reconstructed so that they may experience romance like their straight friends? Is it really more loving for the church to continue its worship of "heterosexual fulfillment" (a "nonbiblical" concept, by the way) while consigning thousands of its members to a life of either celibacy or endless psychological manipulations that masquerade as "healing"?

The burden of proof in the last twenty years has shifted. There are too many of us who are not sick, or inverted, or perverted, or even "effeminate," but who just have a knack for falling in love with people of our own sex. When we have been damaged, it has not been due to our homosexuality but to your and our denial of it. The burden of proof now is not on us, to show that we are not sick, but rather on those who insist that we would be better off going back into the closet. What will "build the double love of God and of our neighbor?"

I have tried to illustrate how all appeals to "what the Bible says" are ideological and problematic. But in the end, all appeals, whether to the Bible or anything else, must submit to the test of love. To people who say this is simplistic, I say, far from it. There are no easy answers. "Love" will not work as a foundation for ethics in a prescriptive or predictable fashion either—as can be seen by all the injustices, imperialisms, and violence committed in the name of love. But rather than expecting the answer to come from a particular method of reading the Bible, we at least push the discussion to where it ought to be: into the realm of debates about Christian love, rather than into either fundamentalism or modernist historicism.

We ask the question that must be asked: "What is the loving thing to do?"



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NOTES

I wish to thank Elizabeth A. Clark and Anthony Neil Whitley for assistance in the research for this chapter.

1. For a similar ideological analysis of modern interpretations of Romans 1 and homosexuality, see my "Heterosexism and the Interpretation of Romans 1:18- 32," *Biblical Interpretation* 3 (1995), forthcoming.
2. So most of the commentaries. See also Else Kähler, "Exegese zweier neutestamentlicher Stellen (Römer 1.18-32; 1 Korinther 6.9-11). Problem der Homophilie in medizinischer, theologischer, und juristischer Sicht, ed. Th. Bovet (Bern and Tübingen: Paul Haupt, 1965), 33; Jiirgen Becker, "Zum Problem der Homosexualität in der Bibel," *ZEE* 31 (1987):51.
3. William F. Orr and James Arthur Walker, *I Corinthians* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 199. While not tying *arsenokoitēs* to *malakos* directly, Wolfgang Schrage says that the former should not be taken to refer to pederasty alone but to all homosexual relations, this on the basis of Romans 1 (Der erste Briefandie Korinther [Zurich: Benziger, 1991], 1.432). Of course, unless we can be certain that *arsenokoitēs* refers simply to homosexual relations in general, an appeal to Romans 1 is irrelevant.
4. "Practicing homosexuals" was suggested several years ago for a Catholic lectionary translation. I do not know if the suggestion was finally adopted or published. The arguments by John Boswell (*Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* [Chicago: University Press, 1980]), while useful as a corrective to many overly confident claims that *arsenokoitēs* "of course" means a "male homosexual," are I believe flawed by overstatement and occasional interpretive errors. On the other hand, some of those arguing against Boswell seem not completely to understand his arguments, make textual mistakes of their own, and operate from uncritical linguistic assumptions (e.g., David F. Wright, "Homosexuals or Prostitutes? The Meaning of ARSENOKOITAI [1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Tim. 1:10]," *VC* 38 [1984]:125-53; see my comments on Wright in following notes). To enter into a detailed tit-for-tat with Boswell, Wright, or other individual treatments of the issue would result in a quagmire. I will, instead, offer my reading with an occasional note on those of others.
5. The history of the invention of "homosexuality" as a psychological, indeed medical, category is now well known. See e.g., Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality I: An Introduction* (New York: Random, 1978); and David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* (New York: Routledge, 1990); for a comparison with ancient concepts see Martha Nussbaum, "Therapeutic Arguments and Structures of Desire," *Differences* 2 (1990):46-66, esp. 49.
6. See note 2 and William. L Petersen "Can ARSENOKOITAI Be Translated by 'Homosexuals'?" *VC*40 (1986):187-91.
7. David Wright, "Homosexuals or Prostitutes?" *VC* 38 (1984):129; Robin Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 85-86.
8. See James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford, 1961), 107-10.
9. Anton Vögtle, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament* (Münster: Aschendorffschen Buckdruckerei, 1936), 13-18; for comparative texts, see Ehrhard Kamlah, *Die Form der katalogischen Parades imp Neon Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1964).
10. The dates for the document and its different sections are uncertain. This section of the oracle quotes Pseudo-Phocylides (excepting those verses in parentheses). See comments by John J. Collins in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (~rden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 1.330.
11. Dio Chrysostom 46.8; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1.15.
12. Wright argues (136-38) that since Pseudo-Phocylides elsewhere shows his disapprobation of homosexual conduct, the term must here be a reference to homosexual conduct. Of course the second point does not proceed from the first.
13. I use the edition by Robert M. Grant: *Ad Autolycum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970). Wright's quotation of this passage (134-35) has a different order for the vices because he is relying on the Greek text

- of Gustave Bardy, Théophile d' Antioche, *Trois Livres a Autolycus*; Sources chrétiennes 20 (Paris: du Cerf, 1948). There seems to be no textual evidence for Bardy's version—at least he gives none in the apparatus, and no edition I have examined suggests any textual variation here among the manuscripts. Bardy admits he is mainly following the edition by J. C. T. Otto: *Theophili Episcopi Antiocheni, Ad Autolycum, libri tres. Co7pus Apologetarum Christianorum Saeculi Secundi 8* (Wiesbaden: Martin Sändig, 1969; reprint of 1861). It is not clear, therefore, why he gives a different order for the vice list than do Otto and the other modern editions. Perhaps Bardy altered the order to conform more nearly to that of 1 Cor. 6:9, or he carelessly placed *arsenokoités* after pornos because he assumed it belonged with the "sexual sins." If the latter is the case, it provides interesting evidence that the order of vices in the lists is important.
14. The term pornos would have been understood most often to refer to a male prostitute. See Jeffrey Henderson, *The Maculate Muse: Obscene Language in Attic Comedy* (New Haven: Yale, 1975); Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 40. Eva Cantarella takes it as such even in its occurrence in 1 Tim. 1: 10 (Bisexuality in the Ancient World [New Haven: Yale, 1992], 192-94). Pornos also seems to have become, at least in Jewish and Christian circles, a more general term for all sorts of persons considered "sexually immoral."
 15. This reading may find support even from the position of the term in 1 Tim. 1:10, if pornoi there is taken to be a reference to male prostitutes rather than "fornicators" or sexually immoral persons in general (see Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 118-21). Since Cantarella does read pornoi in 1 Tim. 1:10 as referring to male prostitutes and the term following *arsenokoités* as a reference to people who enslave other people in order to prostitute them (*andrapodistai*), I am puzzled by her insistence that *arsenokoités* in the same passage cannot refer to prostitutes but must instead be a reference to male-male sex in general (see *Bisexuality*, 192-94). If, on the other hand, we read pornoi as referring to prostitutes, the list supports my reading of *arsenokoités*, occurring as it does between two other terms that refer to sex and economic injustice. :
 16. *Preparation for the Gospel 6.1 0.2 5*; *Die Fragmenta der griechischen Historiker*, ed. .I Felix Jacoby (Leiden: Brill, 1969), vol. 3C fr. 719.
 17. *Ibid.*; see also *Die Pseudoklementinen II Rekognitionen in Rufius Übersetzung*, rev. 1 ed. Bernard Rehm, earlier ed. Georg Strecker (Berlin: Akademie, 1994), , 284-87.
 18. I do not discuss other occurrences of the term mentioned by Boswell and Wright because I see no possibility that they shed light on the first-century meaning of *arsenokoités*. Its meaning in a ninth-century inscription, for example, is unclear, in spite of Wright's overconfident interpretation; besides, the usage is very late (Greek Anthology 9.686; see Boswell, 344, n. 22; Wright, 130). The meaning in the sixth-century "Penitential" of (perhaps) John the Faster (see Boswell, 363-65) is equally unclear. Though Wright accuses Boswell of j "irrepressible resourcefulness" and "desperate reasoning" in this case (139-40), I find Wright's exegesis no less fanciful or strained. Such late and opaque 1 uses of the term should be set aside until we have clearer evidence about their j meaning and relation to first-century usage. '
 19. This is certainly true of the later translations of the Greek into other languages. But later translations provide little reliable evidence for the meaning of the term in a first-century Greek context.
 20. See my *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale, 1995), 32-34,222,230-31, 241-42.
 21. Some scholars define *malakos* as simply a synonym for kinaedos, citing texts where the two terms occur together. See, for example, Gaston Vorberg, *Glossarium Eroticum* (Rome: "L'Erma," 1965), s. v. Vorberg's citations do not support his definition; in every such case, kinaedos is better interpreted as constituting a subcategory within the larger category of malakoi (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.173) or simply another vice in a list of vices (Plutarch, *Moralia* 88C; Vettius Valens, *Anthologiae* 2.37.54 [ed. David Pingree, p. 108, 1. 3]; Appendix 1.173 [p. 384, 1. 11]). I take *arrLtopoios* in Vettius Valens to be a reference not to homosexual sex but to oral sex—which could, of course, be performed on a man or a woman (see Artemidorus, *Dream Handbook* 1.79). No text I have found equates *malakos* with kinaedos or defines one term by the other. Note the list of terms for "fucked men" from Attic comedy: Henderson, *Maculate Muse* 209-15,222; *malakos* is not among them.
 22. Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus* 4.4; Cicero 7.5; Athenaeus 565E. Scroggs (*The New Testament and Homosexuality*, 42, n. 45) misuses such references to argue that dressing like a *malakos* would signal that someone was a kinaedos, and therefore *malakos* meant an "effeminate call boy." This ignores the fact that *malakos* more often occurs where neither homosexual sex nor prostitution per se is involved.
 23. *Hellenica* 3.4.19; 6. 1.6; *Apology* 19; *Memorabilia* 1.2.2. Note that in this last case, the reference to *malakos* relates to work, and it follows a reference to sex (aphrodisiac *akrateis*); *malakos* here has nothing to do with sex.

24. Epictetus 3.6.9; 4.1.25; "Epistle of Crates" 19 (Malherbe, p. 68); "Epistle of Diogenes" 29 (Malherbe, p. 126): in both cases, sleeping and eating too much are important.
25. Dio Cassius 58.4.6; Plutarch, Pericles 27.4; Josephus, War 6.211, Antiquities 19.197.
26. Xenophon, Hiero 1.23; Plutarch, Moralia 831B; 136B; Pericles 27.4; Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae 12.536C; 543B. In one of Philo's condemnations of decadence, he includes remarks about penetrated men as being thus made effeminate (On Abraham, 133-36). The term *malakos*, however, is used of this entire process of degenerating decadence and effeminacy due to luxurious living-including the effeminacy of heterosexual sex; the aspects of homosexual sex play only one part.
27. In Dionysius Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities 7.2.4, people cannot tell whether a ruler earned the sobriquet "*malakos*" because he had allowed himself to be penetrated as a young man or because he possessed an exceptionally mild nature.
28. The "softness of the Lydians" (ta Lydon malaka) is reflected in their luxurious living, gourmet food, use of too many female prostitutes, and lots of indiscriminate sex with men and women (Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae 12.540F). Plutarch relates the "Lydian mode" in music to softness and general decadence: Moralia 83F.
29. Note a similar assumption mentioned by Athenaeus; the Syracusans are reported as forbidding women to wear gold or colorful clothing unless they confess to being prostitutes; similarly, men were not allowed to "dress up" unless they admitted to being either adulterers or kinaedoi (Deipnosophistae 12.521b). Dressing up was considered effeminate, but that could mean an attempt to attract either men or women.
30. The suitors of a young girl arrive at her door adorned with long hair styled prettily (Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae 528d, citing Agathon, Thyestes). This entire section of Athenaeus is instructive for the ancient concept of effeminacy; it usually is related to luxurious and decadent living in general and is expressed far more often here by heterosexual activities than homosexual. For example, the Lydians, according to Clearchus, expressed their effeminacy by laying out parks with lots of shade, gathering the wives and virgins of other men and raping them, and then finally adopting "the manner of life of women," whatever that means (Deipnosophistae 12.515e-516a). There is no mention here of homosexual sex.
31. This point was made by John Boswell (Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality, 340) but generally ignored by biblical scholars, who continue naively to assume that any concern about effeminacy would involve at least an unconscious anxiety about homosexuality. Thus, Paul's concerns about long hair on men in 1 Corinthians 11 must harbor a concern about homosexuality. See Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," The Text and the Times (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 88, n. 38; originally in JAAR 40 (1972): 283-303; The New Testament and Homosexuality (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 53-55, 62-65; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in I Corinthians 11:2-16," CBQ 42 (1980): 482-500.
32. For a character in Achilles Tatius's novel Clitophon and Leucippe, male love is natural, frank, real, and lacking in any softness or effeminacy (2.38; ou malthassei). Even Dio Chrysostom, no advocate of male-male love, knows that love of a woman is liable to be thought excessively feminine (7.151-52).
33. Noted also by Scroggs, The New Testament and Homosexuality, 46-48.
34. The degradation of the female comes to be linked with asceticism in general, especially but not exclusively in Jewish and Christian writers. Philo praises women who give up sex entirely, thereby becoming "manly," and Thecla, through celibacy, becomes masculinized and saved (On the Contemplative Life, 40-64; see Richard A. Baer, Jr., Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female [Leiden: Brill, 1970], 99-100; Acts of Paul and Thecla).
35. A common practice among New Testament scholars has been to define *malakos* as the "passive partner" due to its proximity to *arsenokoitēs*, which is taken to be the "active partner" (see, e.g., Gordon Fee, First Epistle to the Corinthians [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 243-44). But this is circular reasoning. The meaning of *arsenokoitēs* is famously problematic, and there is no evidence that it was a special term for the "active" partner in homosexual sex (even if one concedes, which I do not, that it is a reference to "men who sleep with men"). Furthermore, while there is no evidence that *malakos* was considered a special ("technical") term for the "passive" partner (as Fee admits), its general meaning as "effeminate" independent of sexual position or object is easily demonstrated. To define *malakos* by *arsenokoitēs* is to define something already clear by something that is obscure.
36. Every text cited by Scroggs in support of this reading, in his terminology "effeminate call boy" (The New Testament and Homosexuality), is better read as I have-by being penetrated, a boy shows his effeminacy, but *malakos* refers to the effeminacy, not the penetration; there were many other signs, many heterosexual, that could also reveal "effeminacy."

37. The list, of course, could be expanded. This is taken mainly from H. Herter, "Effeminatus," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1959), 4.620-650; for the associations of hair with effeminacy and decadence, see also Pseudo-Phocylides, *Sentences* 210-12, and the commentary by P. W. van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 250; Hubert Cancel, *Untersuchungen zur lyrischen Kunst des P. Papianus Staius, Spudasmota* 13 (Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), 58. For masturbation as evidence of malakia, see Vorberg, *Glossarium Eroticum* s.v.
38. I say this to forestall one possible objection to my method. One might argue that although *malakos* and *arsenokoités* did not mean, in the common linguistic currency, the "passive" and "active" partners in homosexual sex, that was surely what Paul intended by his use of the terms. The goal of translation, however, is to translate the text, not some guessed-at authorial intention. See Ferdinand Deist, "Presuppositions and Contextual Bible Translation," *JNSL* 19 (1993): 13-23, esp. 19-20. Furthermore, contrary to some assumptions of modernist historiography, the scripture for the church is traditionally the text, not a historically reconstructed authorial intention. Thus we translate and interpret not what Paul meant to say but what he said.

Homosexual behavior is a prominent part of these consequences. Romans 1:29-31 is a list of further sinful acts and behaviors associated with this giving over. And in Romans 1:32, Paul condemns not just those who practice these things, but also those who approve of them. Once again, the clearest interpretation of this passage is one that takes hold of the plain meaning of the words: homosexual behavior is sinful in the eyes of God. Arsenokoitēs and Malakos. In the New Testament, two Greek words appear in reference to homosexual behavior: arsenokoitēs and malakos. Paul uses these words together in 1 Corinthians, and arsenokoitēs appears alone in 1 Timothy: Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?