

THE SOURCE AND NT MEANING  
OF ARSENOKOITAI, WITH IMPLICATIONS  
FOR CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND MINISTRY

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*Traditional interpretation of rsenokotai (arsenokoitai, "homosexuals") in 1 Cor 6:9 and 1 Tim 1:10 refers to sexual vice between people of the same sex, specifically homosexuality. Some restrict the term's meaning to "active male prostitute," but stronger evidence supports a more general translation, namely "homosexuals." More recently the definition "homosexual" has been opposed on cultural and linguistic grounds, the claim being that the term "homosexuals" is anachronistic. In addition, criticism of the traditional rendering says the term today includes celibate homophiles, excludes heterosexuals who engage in homosexual acts, and includes female homosexuals. A concern for acts instead of the modern attention to desires was the only factor in the ancient world. The foregoing opposition to the translation of arsenokoitai by "homosexuals" has a number of debilitating weaknesses. Finally, this study argues that Paul coined the term arsenokoitai, deriving it from the LXX of Lev 20:13 (cf. 18:22) and using it for homosexual orientation and behavior, the latter of which should be an occasion for church discipline (1 Corinthians 5-6) and legislation in society (1 Tim 1:8-11).*

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## INTRODUCTION

Coincident with the rise of the gay rights movement in recent years has been an increasing focus on the biblical statements regarding homosexuality or sodomy.<sup>2</sup> As part of this focus, the meaning of the term *rsenokotai* (*arsenokoitai*, "homosexuals"), used twice by the apostle Paul (1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10), has received vigorous scrutiny.<sup>3</sup> This issue is particularly crucial to contemporary society since so much of modern ethics is shaped by biblical statements. More particularly, the concern over gay rights and the place of gays or homosexuals in the church and in society require the resolution of biblical interpretation.

This study of historical, linguistic, and literary matters will survey and evaluate recent proposals for the meaning of *arsenokoitai* and present evidence to point to a resolution. Several writers and their positions represent the modern debate on this word. Three authors, Bailey, Boswell, and Scroggs, have provoked considerable discussion and significantly encouraged the wider acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle in society, in the church, and in the ministry.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>For convenience sake, the term "homosexual" is used to encompass both same-sex orientation and same-sex behavior. The meaning of this term is one of the main considerations of this study.

<sup>3</sup>These times are different from just over a century ago. Then P. Fairbairn (*Pastoral Epistles* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1874] 891) could write of *rsenokotai* that it is a "term for which fortunately our language has no proper equivalent." Unknowingly he thereby touched upon the basis for the contemporary debate and study. The present writer endorses the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles on the basis of internal and external evidence (see Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, [4th ed.; Downer's Grove: Intervarsity, 1990] 621-649, for an extensive discussion and citation of supporters of the Pauline authorship).

<sup>4</sup>For example, see Scroggs' (see n. 14 below) influence on M. Olson, "Untangling the Web," *The Other Side* (April 1984):24-29. For a study suggesting a further prohibition of homosexuality in the OT, see A. Phillips, "Uncovering the Father's Skirt," *VT* 30/1 (January 1980) 38-43. For a bibliography of other sources dealing with *rsenokotai*, see the *Wilsondisc Religion Indexes* (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1987).

## SURVEY OF NEW INTERPRETATIONS OF ARSENOKOITAI

*D. S. Bailey*

D. S. Bailey was perhaps the trailblazer of new assessments of the meaning of *arsenokoitai*. He takes the term in 1 Cor 6:9 as denoting males who actively engage in homosexual acts, in contrast to *malako* (*malakoi*, "effeminate"), those who engage passively in such acts.<sup>5</sup> However, he insists that Paul knew nothing of "inversion as an inherited trait, or an inherent condition due to psychological or glandular causes, and consequently regards all homosexual practice as evidence of perversion" (38). Hence Bailey limits the term's reference in Paul's works to acts alone and laments modern translations of the term as "homosexuals." Bailey wants to distinguish between "the homosexual *condition* (which is morally neutral) and homosexual *practices*" [italics in source]. Paul is precise in his terminology and Moffatt's translation "sodomites" best represents Paul's meaning in Bailey's judgment (39). Bailey clearly denies that the homosexual condition was known by biblical writers.

*J. Boswell*

The most influential study of *arsenokoitai* among contemporary authors is that of John Boswell.<sup>6</sup> Whereas the usual translation<sup>7</sup> of this

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<sup>5</sup>D. S. Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* (London: Longmans, Green, 1975) 38.

<sup>6</sup>J. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University Press, 1980).

<sup>7</sup>Several translations of 1 Tim 1:10 are: KJV, "them that defile themselves with mankind"; ASV, "abusers of themselves with men"; NASB, "homosexuals"; RSV, NKJV, NRSV, "sodomites"; NEB, NIV, "perverts"; GNB, "sexual perverts." In 1 Cor 6:9 these occur: KJV, "abusers of themselves with mankind"; ASV, "abusers of themselves with men"; NASB, RSV, "homosexuals"; NKJV, "sodomites"; NEB, "homosexual perversion." The RSV and NEB derive their translation from two Greek words, *malako* and *rsenokotai* which GNB has as "homosexual perverts." NRSV has the two words as "male prostitutes" in the text, and "sodomites" in the footnote. The active idea predominates among the commentators as well; it is the primary

term gives it either explicitly or implicitly an active sense, Boswell gives it a passive sense.

In an extended discussion of the term (341-53), he cites "linguistic evidence and common sense" to support his conclusion that the word means "male sexual agents, i.e. active male prostitutes." His argument is that the *arseno-* part of the word is adjectival, not the object of the *koitai* which refers to base sexual activity. Hence the term, according to Boswell, designates a male sexual person or male prostitute. He acknowledges, however, that most interpret the composite term as active, meaning "those who sleep with, make their bed with, men." Boswell bases his interpretation on linguistics and the historical setting. He argues that in some compounds, such as *paidomauw* (*paidomaths*, "child learner"), the *paido-* is the subject of *manthan*, and in others, such as *paidoprow* (*paidoporos*, "through which a child passes"), the *paido-* is neither subject nor object but simply a modifier without verbal significance. His point is that each compound must be individually analyzed for its meaning. More directly, he maintains that compounds with the Attic form *arreno-* employ it objectively while those with the Hellenistic *arseno-* use it as an adjective (343). Yet he admits exceptions to this distinction regarding *arreno-*.

Boswell next appeals to the Latin of the time, namely *drauci* or *exoleti*. These were male prostitutes having men or women as their objects. The Greek *arsenokoitai* is the equivalent of the Latin *drauci*; the corresponding passive would be *parakotai* (*parakoitai*, "one who lies beside"), Boswell affirms. He claims that *arsenokoitai* was the "most explicit word available to Paul for a male prostitute," since by Paul's time the Attic words *pnaw* (*pornos*, "fornicator") and *pornevn* (*porneun*, "one committing fornication"), found also in the LXX, had been adopted "to refer to men who resorted to female prostitutes or simply committed fornication."<sup>8</sup>

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assumption.

<sup>8</sup>Boswell, *Christianity* 344. Yet this was not a word "available to Paul for a male prostitute," for it does not occur at all in any literature prior to Paul (as a search in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* using IBYCUS confirms). If Paul coined the term, it would

In the absence of the term from pagan writers such as Herodotus, Plato, Aristotle, and Plutarch, and from the Jewish writers Philo and Josephus, Boswell finds even more convincing evidence for his affirmation that *arsenokoitai* "did not connote 'homosexual' or even 'sodomite' in the time of Paul" (346).<sup>9</sup> He also demonstrates its absence in Pseudo-Lucian, Sextus Empiricus, and Libanius. He subsequently finds it lacking in "all discussions of homosexual relations" (346)<sup>10</sup> among Christian sources in Greek, including the *Didache*, Tatian, Justin Martyr, Eusebius,<sup>11</sup> Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom. Chrysostom is singled out for his omission as "final proof" that the word could not mean homosexuality.<sup>12</sup>

Boswell next appeals to the omission of the texts of 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy from discussions of homosexuality among Latin church fathers (348).<sup>13</sup> Cited are Tertullian, Arnobius, Lactan-

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have no prior history, and all such discussion about its lack of usage in contemporary non-Christian and Christian literature is meaningless.

<sup>9</sup>Again this would be expected if Paul coined the word.

<sup>10</sup>The key phrase here apparently is "discussions," for Boswell admits later (350 n. 42) that it occurs in quotes of Paul but there is no discussion in the context. Hence the implication is that we cannot tell what these writers (Polycarp *To the Philippians* 5:3; Theophilus *Ad Autolyicum* 1.2, 2.14; Nilus *Epistularum libri quattuor* 2.282; Cyril of Alexandria *Homiliae diversae* 14; *Sybilline Oracle* 2.13) meant. Yet Polycarp, who was a disciple of John the Apostle and died about A.D. 155, argues in the context that young men should be pure. He uses only the three terms *ῥνοι*, *μαλακο*, and *ῥσενοκοται* from Paul's list. This at least makes Boswell's use of "all" subjective. Apparently Clement of Alexandria *Paedagogus* 3.11; *Stromata* 3.18 also belong here.

<sup>11</sup>Yet Eusebius uses it in *Demonstratiois evangelicae* 1.

<sup>12</sup>Either Boswell is misrepresenting the facts about Chrysostom's use of *ῥσενοκοται* and its forms (about twenty) in the vice lists of 1 Corinthians 6 or 1 Timothy 1, or he is begging the question by denying that the word can mean homosexual when Chrysostom uses it. Yet the meaning of *ῥσενοκοται* is the goal of his and our study, whether in the lists or other discussions. Boswell later admits (351) that Chrysostom uses the almost identical form *ῥσενοκοτω* in his commentary on 1 Corinthians. Although Boswell suggests that the passage is strange, it may be that Paul is seeking to make a refinement in *ῥσενοκοται*.

<sup>13</sup>Apparently Jerome is a significant omission here, since he renders *ῥσενοκοται* as

tius, and Augustine. The last named uses "circumlocutions." Other Latin writers include Ausonius, Cyprian, and Minucius Felix. The term is also lacking in state and in church legislation. By the sixth century the term became confused and was applied to a variety of sexual activities from child molesting to anal intercourse between a husband and wife (353).

Having surveyed the sources, Boswell concludes,

There is no reason to believe that either *rsenokotai* (*arsenokoitai*) or *malako* (*malakoi*) connoted homosexuality in the time of Paul or for centuries thereafter, and every reason to suppose that, whatever they came to mean, they were not determinative of Christian opinion on the morality of homosexual acts (353, transliteration added).

It is clear throughout that Boswell defines *arsenokoitai* to refer to male prostitutes. He even goes so far as to conclude that Paul would probably not disapprove of "gay inclination," "gay relationships," "enduring love between persons of the same gender," or "same-sex eroticism" (112, 116-17).

#### *R. Scroggs*

Robin Scroggs has built upon the discussion of his predecessors and suggested a new twist to the word. Scroggs believes that *rsenokotai* is a "Hellenistic Jewish coinage, perhaps influenced by awareness of rabbinic terminology." The term is derived from Lev 18:22 and 20:13 where the LXX juxtaposes the two words *rsenow* (*arsenos*, "male") and *kothn* (*koitn*, "bed"), and represents the Hebrew *ר ב* (*mikab zkr*, "lying with a male").<sup>14</sup> Yet he believes that Paul did not originate the term, but borrowed it from "circles of Hellenistic Jews acquainted with

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*masculorum concubitores*, corresponding "almost exactly to the Greek" (348 n. 36).

<sup>14</sup>R. Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 86, 107-8. Independently we came to the same conclusion. Apparently the connection is made in E. A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (from 146 BC to AD 1100) (Memorial edition; New York: 1887) 253.

rabbinic discussions" (108 n. 14). It was invented to avoid "contact with the usual Greek terminology" (108). If this is true, Scroggs observes, it explains why the word does not appear in Greco-Roman discussions of pederasty and why later patristic writers avoided it. It was meaningless to native-speaking Greeks (108).

Scroggs takes the second part as the active word and the first word as the object of the second part, thus differing from Boswell's "learned discussion" (107). Yet Scroggs understands the general meaning of "one who lies with a male" to have a very narrow reference. With the preceding *malakoi* (1 Cor 6:9), which Scroggs interprets as "the effeminate call-boy," *arsenokotai* is the active partner "who keeps the *malakos* as a 'mistress' or who hires him on occasion to satisfy his sexual desires" (108). Hence *arsenokotai* does not refer to homosexuality in general, to female homosexuality, or to the generic model of pederasty. It certainly cannot refer to the modern gay model, he affirms (109).

This is Scroggs's interpretation of the term in 1 Tim 1:10 also. The combination of *prnoi* (*pornoi*, "fornicators"), *arsenokotai*, and *ndrapodista* (*andrapodistai*, "slave-dealers") refers to "male prostitutes, males who lie [with them], and slave dealers [who procure them]" (120). It again refers to that specific form of pederasty "which consisted of the enslaving of boys as youths for sexual purposes, and the use of these boys by adult males" (121). Even "serious minded pagan authors" condemned this form of pederasty. He then uses these instances of *arsenokotai* in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy to interpret the apparently general condemnation of both female and male homosexuality in Romans 1. Consequently Paul "must have had, *could only have had* pederasty in mind" (122, italics in source). We cannot know what Paul would have said about the "contemporary model of adult/adult mutuality in same sex relationships" (122).

In relating these terms to the context and to contemporary ethical concerns, Scroggs emphasizes the point that the specific items in the list of vices in 1 Corinthians 6 have no deliberate, intended meaning in Paul. The form and function of the catalogue of vices are traditional

and stereotyped. Any relationship between an individual item in the list and the context was usually nonexistent. He concludes that Paul "does not care about any specific item in the lists" (104).<sup>15</sup>

Both on the basis of the meaning of the terms and of the literary phenomenon of a "catalogue of vices," Scroggs argues that the Scriptures are "irrelevant and provide no help in the heated debate today" (129). The "model in today's Christian homosexual community is so different from the model attacked by the New Testament" that "*Biblical judgments against homosexuality are not relevant to today's debate.* They should no longer be used in denominational discussions about homosexuality, should in no way be a weapon to justify refusal of ordination . . ." (127, italics in source).

#### REACTIONS TO THE NEW INTERPRETATIONS OF ARSENOKOITAI

##### *D. Wright*

In more recent years the positions of Bailey, Boswell, and Scroggs have come under closer scrutiny.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps the most critical evaluation of Boswell's view is that by David Wright. In his thorough article, Wright points out several shortcomings of Boswell's treatment of *arsenokoitai*.<sup>17</sup> He faults Boswell for failing to cite, or citing

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<sup>15</sup>See discussion, 101-4. He says the same thing about Paul's language in Rom 1:26-27 (128). But this is doubtful. See the more cautious words of P. Zaas, "1 Corinthians 6.9ff: Was Homosexuality Condoned in the Corinthian Church?" *SBLASP* 17 (1979):205-12. He observes that the words *moixa*, *malako*, and *rsenokotai* were part of Jewish anti-Gentile polemic. Yet Paul's words at the end of the vice list, "and such were some of you," indicate that "Paul is addressing real or potential abuses of his ethical message, not citing primitive tradition by rote" (210). Wright (see below) disputes Zaas' attempt to associate the term with idolatry (147).

<sup>16</sup>On Boswell's treatment of Rom 1:26-27, the article by R. B. Hays, "Relations Natural and Unnatural: A Response to John Boswell's Exegesis of Romans 1," *JRE* 14/1 (Spring 1986):184-215, is an excellent critique.

<sup>17</sup>D. F. Wright, "Homosexuals or Prostitutes? The Meaning of ARSENOKOITAI (1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Tim. 1:10)," *VC* 38 (1984):125-53.



inaccurately, all the references to Lev 18:22 and 20:13 in the church fathers, such as Eusebius, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen (127-28). Boswell has not considered seriously enough the possibility that the term derives either its form or its meaning from the Leviticus passages (129). This is significant, for if the term is so derived, it clearly refutes Boswell's claim that the first half of the word (*arseno-*) denotes not the object but the gender of the second half (*-koitai*). The LXX must mean "a male who sleeps with a male," making *arseno-* the object.

Wright also faults Boswell's claims regarding linguistic features of the term, including suggested parallels (129). Though Boswell claims that compounds with *arseno-* employ it objectively and those with *arreno-* employ it as an adjective, Wright believes that the difference between the two is merely one of dialectical diversity: "No semantic import attaches to the difference between the two forms" (131). Wright believes that in most compounds in which the second half is a verb or has a verbal force, the first half denotes its object and where "the second part is substantival, the first half denotes its gender" (132).<sup>18</sup>

It is with Boswell's treatment of the early church fathers that Wright takes special issue, because the former has failed to cite all the sources. For example, Aristides' *Apology* (c. A.D. 138) probably uses *arrenomanew* (*arrenomaneis*), *ndrobthn* (*androbotn*), and *rsenokoitaw* (*arsenokoitias*) all with the same basic meaning of male homosexuality (133), contrary to Boswell's discussion. Boswell fails to cite Hippolytus (*Refut. Omn. Haer.* 5:26:22-23) and improperly cites Eusebius and the Syriac writer Bardesanes. The latter uses Syriac terms that are identical to the Syriac of 1 Cor 6:9 and 1 Tim 1:10 (133-34).<sup>19</sup>

Next Wright shows how the early church fathers use *arsenokoitai*

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<sup>18</sup>In an unpublished paper, Henry Mendell, "ARSENOKOITAI: Boswell on Paul," effectively refutes Boswell's claims regarding the philology of *rsenokotai*. He finds the meaning to be general, "a male who has sex with a male" (4-11). The paper is available from the writer of this essay.

<sup>19</sup>Wright's end notes (148-49) list additional sources in the church fathers.

in parallel with paidofuora (*paidophthoria*) referring to male homosexuality with teenagers, the dominant form of male homosexuality among the Greeks (134). Sometimes this parallelism occurs in the threefold listings of moixea (*moicheia*, "adultery"), pornea (*porneia*, "fornication"), and *paidophthoria*, with *arsenokoitai* replacing *paidophthoria* (136). Clement of Alexandria in *Protr.* 10:108:5 cites the second table of the Ten Commandments as "You shall not kill, 0 moixeseiw (*ou moicheuseis*, "you shall not commit adultery"), 0 paidofurseiw (*ou paidophthorseis*, "you shall not practice homosexuality with boys"), you shall not steal . . ." (150 n. 43, transliteration and translation added).

Another occurrence of *rsenokoiten* (*arsenokoitein*, "commit homosexuality") exists in the *Sibylline Oracles* 2:71-73. It may be, Wright observes, that the word was coined by a Jewish pre-Christian writer in a Hellenistic setting represented by *Or.Sib.*, book 2 (137-38).

Wright also discusses uses of *arsenokoitai* in Rhetorius (6th century) who drew upon the first century A.D. writer Teucer, in Macarius (4th-5th cent.), and in John the Faster (d. 595) (139-40). The last in particular bears the idea of homosexual intercourse, contrary to Boswell.

Wright next replies to Boswell's contention that the term would not be absent "from so much literature about homosexuality if that is what it denoted" (140-41). Wright points out that it should not be expected in writers prior to the first century A.D. since it did not exist before then, that the Greeks used dozens of words and phrases to refer to homosexuality, that some sources (e.g., *Didache*) show no acquaintance with Paul's letters or deliberately avoid citing Scripture, and that Boswell neglects citing several church fathers (140-41).<sup>20</sup> long uncompromising and clear indictment of homosexuality in his homily on Rom 1:26. Boswell has exaggerated Chrysostom's

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<sup>20</sup>We also have noticed the same tendency by Boswell to fail to cite all the references to Sodom and sodomy in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. See J. B. De Young, "A Critique of Prohomosexual Interpretations of the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," *BSac* 147/588 (1990):437-53.

infrequent use of the term. Wright observes that Boswell has "signally failed to demonstrate any use of *rsenokothw* (*arsenokoits*) etc. in which it patently does not denote male homosexual activity" (144, transliteration added). It is infrequent because of its relatively technical nature and the availability of such a term as *paidophthoria* that more clearly specified the prevailing form of male homosexuality in the Greco-Roman world.<sup>21</sup>

Wright also surveys the Latin, Syriac, and Coptic translations of 1 Tim 1:10 and 1 Cor 6:9. All three render *arsenokotai* with words that reflect the meaning "homosexual," i.e., they understand *arseno-* as the object of the second half of the word (144-45). None of these primary versions supports Boswell's limited conclusion based on them.

Wright concludes his discussion with a few observations about the catalogues of vices as a literary form. He believes that such lists developed in late Judaism as Hellenistic Jews wrote in clear condemnation of homosexuality in the Greek world. This paralleled the increased concern on the part of moral philosophers over homosexual indulgence. The term came into being under the influence of the LXX (145) so that writers spoke "generally of male activity with males rather than specifically categorized male sexual engagement with *padew* (*paides*)" (146, transliteration added). If *arsenokoitia* and *paidophthoria* were interchangeable, it is because the former encompassed the latter (146).

In summary, Wright seeks to show that *arsenokotai* is a broad term meaning homosexuality and arises within Judaism. The views of Boswell, Scroggs and others who limit the term to "active male

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<sup>21</sup>In light of the claim made by Boswell that the infrequency of *rsenokotai* points to a meaning lacking homosexual significance, Wright asks pertinently "why neither Philo nor Josephus use *paidofuora*, nor Josephus *paiderasta*, and why . . . Clement did not use the latter and Chrysostom the former?" (152 n. 71). In a more recent article, "Homosexuality: The Relevance of the Bible," *EvQ* 61 (1989):291-300, Wright reiterates these same points. He believes the term is general and was "adopted or fashioned" from Leviticus (298). Paul shows a "remarkable originality" in extending the OT ethic to the church (300).

prostitutes" or pederasty are without significant support from linguistic and historical studies.

*W. Petersen*

More recently Wright's understanding has itself been questioned from a different direction. In a brief 1986 study William Petersen found linguistic confusion in using the English word "homosexuals" as the meaning of *arsenokoitai*.<sup>22</sup> He faulted Wright and English Bible translations for rendering it by "homosexuals" in 1 Cor 6:9 and 1 Tim 1:10.

In a sense Petersen has coalesced Bailey, Boswell, and Scroggs into a single assertion that reiterates, in effect, the position of Bailey. He finds "homosexuals" unacceptable as a translation because it is anachronistic. "A major disjunction" exists between contemporary thought and terminology and the thought and terminology in Paul's time (187-88).

What is this "disjunction"? He bases it on historical and linguistic facts. Accordingly, ancient Greek and Roman society treated male sexuality as polyvalent and characterized a person sexually only by his sexual acts. Virtually all forms of behavior, except transvestism, were acceptable. Christianity simply added the categories of "natural" and "unnatural" in describing these actions. Ancient society knew nothing of the categories of "homosexuals" and "heterosexuals," and assumed that, in the words of Dover quoted approvingly by Petersen, "everyone responds at different times to both homosexual and to heterosexual stimuli . . ." (188).<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to this, modern usage virtually limits the term "homosexual" to desire and propensity. K. M. Benkert, who in 1869 coined the German term equivalent to "homosexual," used it as referring to orientation, impulse, or affectional preference and having "nothing to do with sexual acts" (189).

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<sup>22</sup>W. L. Petersen, "Can ARSENOKOITAI Be Translated By 'Homosexuals'? (1 Cor 6.9; 1 Tim 1.10)" *VC* 40 (1986):187-91.

<sup>23</sup>K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1978) 1 n. 1.

Petersen then proceeds to cite the *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary*, which defines "homosexual" only as a propensity or desire with no mention of acts. Petersen's point is that by using "homosexuals" for *arsenokotai*, one wrongfully reads a modern concept back into early history "where no equivalent concept existed" (189). Consequently the translation is inaccurate because it "includes celibate homophiles, . . . incorrectly excludes *heterosexuals* who engage in homosexual acts . . . [and] incorrectly includes female homosexuals" (189, italics in source). Prior to 1869 there was no "cognitive structure, either in our society or in antiquity, within which the modern bifurcation of humanity into 'homosexuals' and 'heterosexuals' made sense" (189).

The foregoing clarifies why Petersen feels that the translation "homosexuals" is mistaken. Yet is it possible that Petersen is the one mistaken, on both historical and linguistic or philological grounds? The next phases of this paper will critically examine Petersen's position.

#### THE JUSTIFICATION FOR TRANSLATING *ARSENOKOITAI* BY "HOMOSEXUALS"

##### *Historical Grounds*

A refutation of the foregoing opposition to the translation of *arsenokotai* by "homosexuals" begins with the historical and cultural evidence. Since virtually everyone acknowledges that the word does not appear before Paul's usage, no historical settings earlier than his are available. Yet much writing reveals the ancient understanding of homosexuality prior to and contemporary with Paul. The goal is to discover whether the ancients conceived of homosexuality, particularly homosexual orientation, in a way similar to present-day concepts.

Petersen, Bailey, Boswell, and Scroggs claim that the homosexual condition, desire, propensity, or inversion`whatever it is called`cannot be part of the definition of the term. They assert this

either because the term is limited to acts of a particular kind (Boswell, active male prostitutes; Scroggs, pederasty) or because the homosexual condition was unknown in ancient times (Bailey; Petersen). The following discussion will show why neither of these positions is legitimate. Attention will be devoted to the latter position first with the former one being addressed below under "Linguistic Grounds."

In regard to the latter position, one may rightfully ask, did not the homosexual condition exist before 1869? Is it only a modern phenomenon? Yet if it is universal, as alleged today, it must have existed always including ancient times, even though there is a lack of sophistication in discussing it. Indeed, evidence shows that the ancients, pre-Christian and Christian, not only knew about the total spectrum of sexual behavior, including all forms of same-sex activity (transvestism included), but also knew about same-sex orientation or condition. Petersen admits (190 n. 10) that Plato in *Symposium* (189d-192d) may be a "sole possible exception" to ancient ignorance of this condition. He discounts this, however, believing that even here "acts appear to be the deciding factor." However, this is a very significant exception, hardly worthy of being called "an exception," because of the following additional evidence for a homosexual condition.

The *Symposium* of Plato gives some of the strongest evidence for knowledge about the homosexual condition.<sup>24</sup> Plato posits a third sex comprised of a male-female or man-woman (andrognon [*andro-gynon*, "man-woman"]). Hence "original nature" (palai fsiw [*palai physis*], 189d) consisted of three kinds of human beings. Zeus sliced these human beings in half, to weaken them so that they would not be a threat to the gods. Consequently each person seeks his or her other half, either one of the opposite sex or one of the same sex. Plato then quotes Aristophanes:

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<sup>24</sup>We are conscious of the fact that Plato's writings may not reflect Athenian society, or that the speakers in *Symposium* may not reflect Plato's views. However, it is assumed that they do, and with this agrees Dover (*Homosexuality* 12) and other evidence cited below (n. 26; yet cf. Plato's different view, n. 28).

Each of us, then, is but a tally of a man, since every one shows like a flatfish the traces of having been sliced in two; and each is ever searching for the tally that will fit him. All the men who are sections of that composite sex that at first was called man-woman are woman-courtiers; our adulterers are mostly descended from that sex, whence likewise are derived our mancourting women and adulteresses. All the women who are sections of the woman have no great fancy for men: they are inclined rather to women, and of this stock are the she-minions. Men who are sections of the male pursue the masculine, and so long as their boyhood lasts they show themselves to be slices of the male by making friends with men and delighting to lie with them and to be clasped in men's embraces; these are the finest boys and striplings, for they have the most manly nature. Some say they are shameless creatures, but falsely: for their behavior is due not to shamelessness but to daring, manliness, and virility, since they are quick to welcome their like. Sure evidence of this is the fact that on reaching maturity these alone prove in a public career to be men. So when they come to man's estate they are boy-lovers, and have no natural interest in wiving and getting children but only do these things under stress of custom; they are quite contented to live together unwedded all their days. A man of this sort is at any rate born to be a lover of boys or the willing mate of a man, eagerly greeting his own kind. Well, when one of them`whether he be a boy-lover or a lover of any other sort`happens on his own particular half, the two of them are wondrously thrilled with affection and intimacy and love, and are hardly to be induced to leave each other's side for a single moment. These are they who continue together throughout life, though they could not even say what they would have of one another (191d-192c).<sup>25</sup>

Should these two persons be offered the opportunity to be fused together for as long as they live, or even in Hades, Aristophanes says that each "would unreservedly deem that he had been offered just what he was yearning for all the time" (192e).

Several observations about this text are in order. Lesbianism is

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<sup>25</sup>The translation is that of W. R. M. Lamb, *Plato: Symposium* LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1967) 141-143. Note the reference to "adul-teress." If there is a homosexual condition derived from birth or the genes, logically there must also be an adulterous condition derived from birth.

contemplated, as well as male homosexuality (191e). "Natural interest" (tn non fsei [*ton noun physei*], 192b) reflects modern concepts of propensity or inclination. The words, "born to be a lover of boys or the willing mate of a man" (paiderastw te ka filerastw ggnetai [*paiderastes te kai philerasts gignetai*], 192b) reflect the modern claims "to be born this way," i.e., as a homosexual. The idea of mutuality ("the two of them are wondrously thrilled with affection and intimacy and love," 192b) is present. Aristophanes even speaks of "mutual love ingrained in mankind reassembling our early estate" (rwv mfytow lllyn tow nurpoiw ka tw rxaaw fsevw synagvew [*ho ers emphytos alln tois anthrpois kai ts archaias physes synaggeus*], 191d). The concept of permanency ("These are they who continue together throughout life," 192c) is also present. Further mention of and/or allusion to permanency, mutuality, "gay pride," pederasty, homophobia, motive, desire, passion, and the nature of love and its works is recognizable.

Clearly the ancients thought of love (homosexual or other) apart from actions. The speakers in the *Symposium* argue that motive in homosexuality is crucial: money, office, influence, etc. . . . bring reproach (182e-183a, 184b). They mention the need to love the soul not the body (183e). There are two kinds of love in the body (186b) and each has its "desire" and "passion" (186b-d). The speakers discuss the principles or "matters" of love (187c), the desires of love (192c), and being "males by nature" (193c). Noteworthy is the speech of Socrates who devotes much attention to explaining how desire is related to love and its objects (200a-201c). Desire is felt for "what is not provided or present; for something they have not or are not or lack." This is the object of desire and love. Socrates clearly distinguishes between "what sort of being is love" and the "works" of love (201e). This ancient philosopher could think of both realms`sexual acts as well as disposition of being or nature. His words have significance for more than pederasty.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Elsewhere in the *Symposium* we are told that it is the heavenly love to love the male and young men (181c), but this must not be love for boys too young; the latter should be outlawed (181d-e). Such love of youths is to be permanent (181d), lifelong



In summary, virtually every element in the modern discussion of love and homosexuality is anticipated in the *Symposium* of Plato. Petersen is in error when he claims that the ancients could only think of homosexual acts, not inclination or orientation. Widespread evidence to the contrary supports the latter.<sup>27</sup>

Biblical support for homosexual inclination in the contexts where homosexual acts are described adds to the case for the ancient distinction. In Rom 1:21-28 such phrases as "reasonings," "heart," "become foolish," "desires of the heart," "lie," "passions of dishonor,"

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and abiding (184a). Where homosexual love is considered a disgrace, such an attitude is due to encroachments of the rulers and to the cowardice of the ruled (182d`an early charge of "homophobia"?). In Athens it was "more honorable to love openly than in secret" (182d`an ancient expression of "coming out of the closet"). Mutuality was present ("this compels lover and beloved alike to feel a zealous concern for their own virtue," 184b).

For Petersen to label the *Symposium* a "possible" exception to his position is inadequate and misrepresentative. It is a significant witness to Greek society hundreds of years before the time of Christ.

<sup>27</sup>Dover (*Homosexuality* 12, 60-68) finds homosexual desire and orientation in Plato's works (*Symposium and Phaedrus*) and elsewhere. Philo writes of those who "habituate themselves" to the practice of homosexual acts (*The Special Laws* 3.37-42; cf. *De Vita Contemplativa* 59-63). Josephus says that homosexuality had become a fixed habit for some (*Against Apion* 2.273-75). Clement of Alexandria on Matt 19:12 writes that "some men, from birth, have a natural aversion to a woman; and indeed those who are naturally so constituted do well not to marry" (*Miscellanies* 3.1). It is addressed in Novella 141 of Justinian's Codex of laws (it refers to those "who have been consumed by this disease" as in need of renouncing "their plague," as well as acts). Pseudo Lucian (*Erotes* 48) and Achilles Tatius (*Leucippe and Clitophon* II.38) speak of it. Finally Thucydides 2.45.2 has: "Great is your glory if you fall not below the standard which nature has set for your sex."

Boswell (*Christianity* 81-87) cites poets (Juvenal, Ovid), writers (Martial), statesmen (Cicero), and others who describe permanent, mutual homosexual relationships, even marriages. Even emperors could be either gay-married (Nero) or exclusively gay (Hadrian), Boswell says. Scroggs (*Homosexuality* 28, 32-34) admits that both inversion and perversion must have existed in the past. He discusses possible references to adult mutual homosexual and lesbian relationships, but dismisses them (130-44).

"burned in the desire," "knowledge," and "reprobate mind" prove Paul's concern for disposition and inclination along with the "doing" or "working" of evil (see also vv. 29-32). Even the catalogues of vices are introduced (1 Tim 1:8-10) or concluded (1 Cor 6:9-11) by words describing what people "are" or "were," not what they "do." Habits betray what people are within, as also the Lord Jesus taught (cf. Matt 23:28). The inner condition is as important as the outer act; one gives rise to the other (cf. Matt 5:27).

Petersen errs regarding other particulars too. Transvestism apparently was accepted by the ancients. It was practiced among Canaanites, Syrians, people of Asia Minor, as well as Greeks, according to S. R. Driver.<sup>28</sup> Only a few moralists and Jewish writers are on record as condemning it. For example, Seneca (*Moral Epistles* 47.7-8) condemns homosexual exploitation that forces an adult slave to dress, be beardless, and behave as a woman. Philo also goes to some length to describe the homosexuals of his day and their dressing as women (*The Special Laws* III, 37-41; see also his *On the Virtues*, 20-21, where he justifies prohibition of cross-dressing). Even the OT forbade the interchange of clothing between the sexes (Deut 22:5).

Petersen is also wrong in attributing to Christianity the creating of the "new labels" of "natural" and "unnatural" for sexual behavior. These did not begin with Paul (Rom 1:26-27) but go as far back as ancient Greece, and even non-Christian contemporaries used them. Plato, the *Test. Naph.*, Philo, Josephus, Plutarch, and others used these words or related concepts.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>See specifics in S. R. Driver *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895) 250. He observes that the prohibition of cross-dressing in Deut 22:5 is not a "mere rule of conventional propriety." See also Dover, *Homosexuality* 73-76, 144.

<sup>29</sup>Plato in his last work, in which he seeks to show how to have a virtuous citizen, condemned pederasty and marriage between men as "against nature" (παρ φύσιν) (*Laws* 636a-b; 636c; 836a-c; 838; 841d-e). According to *Test. Naph.* 3:4-5 the sodomites changed the "order of nature." The Jewish writers Philo (*On Abraham* 135-137) and Josephus (*Ant.* 1.322; 3.261, 275; *Ag. Ap.* 2.199; 2.273, 275) label sexual deviation as "against nature." Finally, first century moralists such as Plutarch (*Dialogue on Love*

*Linguistic Grounds*

The research of Wright and Mendell cited, as well as ancient writers documented above, shows that *arsenokotai* is a broad term.<sup>30</sup> It cannot be limited to pederasty or "active male prostitutes"; nor can it be limited to acts. It must also include same-sex orientation or condition.

The main difficulty, however, with Petersen's study and that of others before him, lies in the area of linguistics or philology pertaining to the modern term "homosexuals." Petersen has an erroneous concept of dictionaries and meaning when citing the incompatibility of the English and Greek terms.

The preceding historical evidence demonstrates that ancient concepts of homosexuality, though primarily understood as sexual acts, cannot be limited to acts alone. It is plausible, then, that the term *arsenokotai* may include both acts and orientation or desire` at least in the contexts of Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6, and 1 Timothy 1. Paul knew

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751c-e; 752b-c) spoke of homosexuality as "against nature." Christians clearly did not invent the labels "natural" and "unnatural." See J. B. De Young, "The Meaning of 'Nature' in Romans 1 and Its Implications for Biblical Proscriptions of Homosexual Behavior" *JETS* 31/4 (Dec. 1988):429-41.

<sup>30</sup>The philological research by Mendell, in particular, is comprehensive and convincing. He finds Boswell wrong on many points including his observations about the Latin *exoleti* (5); the prevalence of active male prostitution (6); the meaning of *kotai* as a coarse and active word (7); the meanings of compounds of *kot\** (7-10); the prevalence of *rsenokotai* in the church fathers (11-18); the law in Roman society (13); the statements of Sextus about Greek law (13); and secular uses (18-19). In appendices Mendell devotes detailed examination to how compounds are formed, including those with *kothw* (25-28), and such compounds in astrological settings (28-29).

Our own philological study confirms Mendell's observations. Mr. Tim Teebken assisted this writer in searching *Thesaurus Lingua Graecae*. The search revealed thousands of occurrences of forms of *koit\**, *mij\**, and *fuor\**. *Paiderast\** occurs about 200 times, and *ndrobaten* ("practice unnatural vice"), *ndromana* ("mad after men"), and *rrhoyrga* ("filthy lewdness") and *rrh topoiv* ("do unmentionable vice") occur only rarely. LSJ cites these and other words referring to "unnatural vice."

about the immorality of Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus (note the similarity of Eph 4:17-24 and 5:3-12 with 1 Timothy 1 and 1 Corinthians 6).

A subsequent question arises: is the modern term "homosexual" limited to orientation or inclination, excluding acts or behavior? Petersen answers in the affirmative and cites as support both the creator of the word and the meaning he assigned to it, as well as the standard dictionary, *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary*. In n. 9 (190), however, Petersen acknowledges that *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (1971) does include a reference to one who "practices homosexuality" and "same-sex sexual activity" after the definitions referring to inclination and preference. He dismisses this as a "popularized, perhaps Americanized usage," as "slang," and as a "corruption of the original meaning." He characterizes Webster's lexicographers as "ignorant of the psychological facts of the case, even though they may be correctly recording the use of the word in popular speech" (190).<sup>31</sup>

Yet Petersen has overlooked several important points or principles.<sup>32</sup> The first one concerns lexicography. Once a word has entered the stream of society it is defined by its entire context—what the users mean by it, regardless of its original definition. Dictionaries reflect usage, including the changes in a word's meaning.

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<sup>31</sup>Petersen's reference to the "psychological facts of the case" begs the question. If he is referring to Kinsey and other studies, the "facts" have been disputed. Many psychologists use "homosexual" to cover both orientation and behavior, and have seen many people change from homosexuality to heterosexuality. These include such psychologists (who have published) as Bergler, Anna Freud, Haddon, Hatterer, Janov, Socarides, Kronmeyer, van den Aardweg, and Keefe. Various groups, such as Homosexuals Anonymous of Reading, Pennsylvania, assist homosexuals in changing their orientation and behavior.

<sup>32</sup>These principles come from J. D. Grassmick, *Principles and Practice of Greek Exegesis* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1974) 143-49, who derives them from such sources as E. Nida, C. S. Lewis, and F. Fisher. See also C. Thiselton, "Semantics of New Testament Interpretation," in *New Testament Interpretation* (I. H. Marshall, ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 75-104.

It is apparent that popular and scholarly usage of "homosexuals" today has come to include "same-sex behavior"; indeed this may now be the more prominent definition. If this be so, in light of the breadth of meaning of *arsenokoitai*, "homosexuals" is a closer approximation of its meaning than believed by Bailey, Boswell, Petersen, and others.

A second principle is that words are constantly changing in meaning. *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language* (unabridged second ed., 1965) does not include "practice" under the definition of "homosexual" and uses only the words "sexual relations between individuals of the same sex" as the second definition of "homosexuality." Webster's definitions have changed in the span of just six years (compare the third edition cited above). For Petersen to restrict the meaning to an earlier one and to call the later definition a "corruption" is unfortunate.

The meaning of a word may change by being deepened, by being given new value, by taking on a new meaning, or by being given a new concrete application.<sup>33</sup> In the case of "homosexuals," it appears that several of these kinds of changes are occurring because of the increasingly frequent use of the word in different contexts ranging from popular speech to scholarly circles.

A third principle is that words usually mark out a field of meaning. That is, words usually do not have a point of meaning, i.e., a very small area of meaning. The historical-cultural study above shows that homosexuality or whatever word describes it existed in various forms including prostitution, pederasty, lesbianism, orientation, and mutuality. The Greeks and Romans employed scores of terms to describe such orientation and behavior. Therefore, it is plausible that such a term as *arsenokoitai* has a broad meaning when its etymology is simply "male-bed" or "lying with a male," assuming that the context does not restrict it to a narrower meaning.

A fourth principle stems from the preceding. Since no two

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<sup>33</sup>Grassmick, *Principles* 147-148. See also G. Yule, *The Study of Language* (Cambridge: University Press, 1985) 176-77.

words have exactly the same area of meaning, no true synonyms exist within a language and no exact equivalents occur between languages.<sup>34</sup> This allows *arsenokoitai* to be translated "homosexuals" even though it is somewhat imprecise to do so. Terms in two languages can never be exactly equivalent because their contexts can never be identical (given, at least, the time span). They do not share the same area of meaning. It may well be that "sodomists" better represents the idea of *arsenokoitai*, since both terms in their moral and biblical settings represent contexts closer to one another.

It may be that Benkert in 1869 misread or was unacquainted with the history of homosexuality in ancient times. He may have unwittingly altered the whole discussion of the subject by limiting his new term to the homosexual condition.

Petersen asserts that translating *arsenokoitai* by "homosexuals" is anachronistic (the ancients had no concept equivalent to homosexual desire; the English term is limited to homosexual desire), but he is conclusively in error as the above historical-cultural evidence and linguistic principles show. Certain terms such as *arrenomanw* (*arrenomans*, "mad after males"), 4th century A.D., show that there was a "cognitive structure" for the homosexual condition before 1869 (cf. 1 Cor 6:11, "and such were some of you").

The most that can be said for Petersen's position is that the ancients may not have had a term for exclusive sexual categories (whether a person is "homosexual" or "heterosexual"), whereas moderns do have one or at least may refer to one's *primary* attraction. Hence the contemporary concept of a homosexual may be slightly different from the ancients, who spoke only of what they considered to be a number of *equal* options.<sup>35</sup> Yet some evidence indicates that "exclusively homosexual" persons were identifiable to the ancients (see n. 27 above). Both the Greek and English terms appear broad enough to cover such cases and cannot be limited to acts. Petersen has decidedly overstated the case for both the ancients and the modern

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 144.

<sup>35</sup>An observation of Mr. Teebken who assisted in this project.

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*Summary of Reactions to the New Interpretations*

It is improper to be prescriptive as to the meaning of *arsenokoitai*. It is better to be descriptive. In surveying those who have written on the meaning of the term, Bailey, Boswell, and Scroggs have erred or have been incomplete when they, respectively, define the term as "perverts," "male sexual agents" or "active male prostitutes," and "pederasts." It is more credible that historical and cultural evidence supports the conclusion that the term is broad enough to include both the various forms of homosexual acts and the homosexual condition, inversion or orientation. The studies by Wright and others supply the linguistic evidence for the more general sense of "homosexuals."

As to the assertion by Petersen that the English "homosexuals" should not be used to render *arsenokoitai*, it is evident that the English and the Greek words are sufficiently broad to make them fair and suitable equivalents. Because of usage in various historical and modern contexts, each must include both homosexual behavior and orientation or condition.<sup>36</sup>

#### SUPPORT FOR THE PAULINE ORIGIN OF *ARSENOKOITAI*

Some final questions remain to be answered regarding the source of Paul's term. As Mendell points out, anyone wishing to explain Paul's meaning must answer three questions.<sup>37</sup> Where does he get the word? Why does he use such an arcane word in speaking to his audience? If the word is ambiguous, as Boswell affirms, how can

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<sup>36</sup>Although the existence of a homosexual orientation or condition has been assumed, we are not thereby stipulating what is its cause or duration. Neither does Paul. He merely uses a word that covers both what a homosexual is and what he does, and at least for the latter he assigns culpability. Investigations of the cause and duration are beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>37</sup>Mendell, "*ARSENOKOITAI*" 20.

he expect to be understood?

It is a reasonable position that Paul coined the term based on the juxtaposition of the two words *arsenos* and *koitn* in the LXX of Lev 20:13 (cf. 18:22), though absolute proof of this is impossible. It may be suggested that the criteria of style, practice, familiarity with the LXX, and context make this a highly plausible conclusion, however.

Paul has the practice of coining terms, it appears. For example, in 1 Tim 1:3 and 6:3, Paul used a term he had probably originated. The word *terodidaskalv* (*heterodidaskale*, "to teach a different doctrine") does not occur before Paul and only afterward in *Ignatius to Polycarp* 3:1.<sup>38</sup> Hence in the scope of eight verses Paul has possibly coined two terms, though one of them he had used earlier in 1 Cor 6:9.

In general, statistics show that Paul probably coined many terms. There are 179 words found in Paul and nowhere else in pre-Christian Greek literature. Of these, 89 occur only one time. Other statistics support the theory that Paul had a creativity in choosing vocabulary.<sup>39</sup>

In addition, Paul displayed considerable dependence upon the LXX. He usually quoted from the LXX rather than the Hebrew of the OT when he quoted the OT. Out of 93 quotations of the OT classified

<sup>38</sup>Paul also uses rare terms found elsewhere outside the NT only. One such term is *ndrapodistaw* which occurs in 1 Tim 1:10 and is important to the meaning of *rsenokotai*. Scroggs defines the former term as "those who steal boys for sexual purposes" and uses it to define the preceding *rsenokotai* as "pederasts." The word occurs in many pagan writers (e.g., Aristophanes, Plato, Xenophon, Demosthenes, Polybius, Dio Chrysostom). In Philo (*Special Laws* 4.13) it is used generally of a kidnapper who steals people to reduce them to slavery. It appears that Scroggs is again too narrow in his definition and fails to appreciate the structure and OT background of the list of vices of 1 Tim 1:9-10.

<sup>39</sup>For example, there are 433 words used only in both secular Greek and Paul. Of these 203 occur but once in Paul. More interestingly, 175 words occur only in both the LXX and Paul. Of these 31 occur but once in Paul. Of this last group 5 of the 31 are combinations of two words similar in pattern to that of *rsenokotai*. See R. Morgenthaler, *Statistik Des Neutestamentlichen Wort-schatzes* (1973 rpt.; Zurich: Gotthelf-Verlag, n.d.) 175-80. The numbers are our calculations.



by Ellis, Paul used the LXX 14 times, but only 4 times did he quote the Hebrew.<sup>40</sup> Obviously Paul was familiar with and used the LXX.

More particularly, the NT frequently uses the portion of Leviticus 18`20. The structure and content of these chapters mark them as special. Often identified as the "code of holiness," these chapters (unlike the remainder of Leviticus) are universal in their scope, much the same as the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 and Deutero-nomy 5. The Jews held Leviticus 19 to be a kind of summary of the Torah, a central chapter in the Pentateuch. This respect carried over to the writers of the NT where chapters 18`20 are widely used. They are cited by Christ, Paul, Peter, and James.<sup>41</sup> "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" is from Lev 19:18. When Paul alludes to 19:19 in 2 Cor 6:14 to illustrate the ban on unequal yoking, he coins a word *terozygontew* (*heterozygountes*, "being unequally yoked") that is found nowhere before him. Yet the adjective form *terozg* (*heterozyg*, "unequally yoked") occurs in 19:19. The LXX probably suggested the coinage to Paul.

Most importantly, both of the contexts where *arsenokoitai* appears suggest that Paul was thinking of the Levitical "code of holiness."<sup>42</sup> First Corinthians 5 has many allusions to Leviticus 18`20. The theme is moral separation, as it is in Leviticus. Topics include distinction from the Gentiles (5:1; cf. 6:1-6; Lev 18:3, 24-30; 20:23) and future inheritance (*klhronomv* [*klronome*, "I inherit"], 6:9, 10; Lev 20:23-24). The law of loving your neighbor (Lev 19:18) is reflected in 6:8. Of the ten vices in 1 Cor 6:9-10, only one (drunkards) is not found in Leviticus 18`20. It is feasible, then, that both *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*

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<sup>40</sup>E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the OT* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957) 150-52. Some of the remainder of Paul's quotations are in agreement with both the LXX and Hebrew (19 times), and in others he agrees with neither.

<sup>41</sup>Specific citations are available in J. B. De Young, "The Old Testament Witness to Homosexuality: A Critical Assessment of the Prohomosexual Interpretation of the OT" (an unpublished paper read at the NW section, Evangelical Theological Society, Portland, Oregon, May 4, 1985) 22-23.

<sup>42</sup>Mendell, "ARSENOKOITAI" 21-24.

come from Lev 20:13 and point to the passive and the active same-sex roles. Leviticus 20:13 said that both persons were to be put to death (the penalty is not found in 18:22). The Corinthian list of vices may be a summation of Lev 20:23-24 (cf. 18:29-30).

The same observations apply to 1 Tim 1:10. In the context Paul begins with perversions of teaching regarding the Mosaic Law (vv. 3-8), moves to legislation in general (vv. 9-10), and ends with the gospel (v. 11). With the Law of Moses so dominant, it is not surprising that the list of specific vices corresponds in order to the fifth through the ninth of the Ten Commandments. Since the list uses both single terms and doublets to refer to the Ten Commandments, it is more probable that *ndrapodistaw* (*andrapodistais*, "slave-dealers") goes with the following "thieves" rather than with the preceding *arsenokoitai*. This militates against Scrogg's narrow sexual definition ("slave-dealers who procure boys as prostitutes," 120) of the term. Hence *pornois* and *arsenokoitai* represent the sixth commandment.

The preceding discussion justifies the claim that Paul coined the word in question. No one else in Hellenistic Judaism used the term before Paul.

Two questions still remain. Why did Paul coin such a term? It may be suggested that he sought to demonstrate the relation of believers to the Law of Moses, in particular to show that the universal standards of the Law (derived from Exodus 20 and Leviticus 18`20) were still valid. Paul assumed his readers' acquaintance with Judaism: note references to "Satan" (1 Cor 5:5), the "day of the Lord" (1 Cor 5:5), "leaven" and "unleaven" (5:6-8), "Passover" (5:7), and judging angels (6:3). He quoted Deut 17:7 in 5:13. Since Leviticus 18`20 became central to the Day of Atonement, it was natural for Paul to refer to this section of Leviticus (cf. chaps. 16 and 23). The topic of the believer's relationship to the Law or law is the main point in 1 Timothy 1.

Finally, how could Paul expect his Greek readers to understand the term? Compounds involving *arseno-* and *arreno-* and *koitai* abounded. The Greeks were adept at forming compounded Greek

words.<sup>43</sup> Therefore Paul coined a word that brought quick recognition.

The word is general, reflecting the passage in Lev 20:13. Paul did not use ἀνδροκοῖται (*androkoits*, "male having sex with a male"), which would not have suggested a reference to pederasty. His term expressed gender but not gender and maturity; he condemned "males who lie with males of any age."<sup>44</sup> It agrees with the threefold use of ῥσην (*arsn*, "male") in Rom 1:27 where Paul condemns same-sex activity.

This theory also explains why the word did not catch on with the secular world after Paul. The Gentiles did not appreciate the biblical context of OT moral legislation. Paul was ahead of and contrary to his time. Perhaps for the same reason "sodomists" and "sodomy" are fading from general secular usage today.

## CONCLUSION

It seems quite likely that Paul himself coined a new term which he virtually derived from the LXX of Lev 20:13. No other current explanation is as practical as this. If this be true, there are significant consequences, assuming that Paul wrote prescriptively. Obviously he viewed the moral law (derived from Leviticus 18:20; Exodus 20) as authoritative for his Christian audience. Since he and his readers in Corinth and Ephesus knew also about same-sex orientation or condition, sufficient reason exists to apply his term to those today who are inverts or homosexuals in orientation.<sup>45</sup> English translations are justified in their use of words such as "homosexuals" or "sodomists."

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 21, 25-28.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 6 n. 14. Ἄνδροκοῖται and its cognate verb are much less frequent (c. 13 occurrences in secular papyri ranging from 30 B.C. to A.D. 140 [most before Paul] and apparently a few others [3?] in the church fathers). There are c. 50 occurrences of ῥσηνοκοῖται, apparently all post-Pauline.

<sup>45</sup>One may cite additional reasons for including "adult-adult mutuality" as well as orientation or condition in Paul's term, as the context and wording of Rom 1:26-27 make clear. See De Young, "Nature" 439-40.

Besides, these terms should not be limited to acts or behavior. Just as an adulterous orientation or condition is wrong, so is a homosexual one.<sup>46</sup>

In addition, it appears that lexicons and dictionaries (e.g., BAGD, *TWNT*, *NIDNTT*, *EDNT*) are too narrow in limiting, explicitly or implicitly, the term to male sexual activity with men or boys.

However, since he referred to behavior in his lists in 1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 1, he excluded from the kingdom of God all those who engage in same-sex behavior, including forms of pederasty, prostitution, or "permanent mutuality." The term *malakoi* used with *arsenokoitai* probably refers to the passive agent in same-sex activity and comes under similar condemnation.

Other applications follow from the contexts involved. First, homosexual behavior is cause for church discipline in light of the context of 1 Corinthians 5-6. Certain religious bodies that approve a homosexual lifestyle have rejected scriptural authority. In addition, homosexual orientation should be a concern for church counsel and exhortation with a view toward molding a heterosexual orientation.

Second, homosexual behavior is a proper focus and concern of legislation in society and of the sanction of law, according to the context of 1 Tim 1:8-11. This suggests that "gay rights" is a misnomer. The movement has no legitimate claim to protection by the law.

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<sup>46</sup>It may be that one should distinguish between sexual feelings (amoral) and sexual lust or desire (immoral).