HOMOSEXUALS OR PROSTITUTES?
THE MEANING OF ΑΡΣΕΝΟΚΟΙΤΑΙ (1 COR. 6:9, 1 TIM. 1:10)

BY

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That translators of the New Testament into English have had not a little difficulty with both μαλακοί (1 Cor. 6:9) and ἀρσενοκοίται (1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Tim. 1:10) is evident enough from a perusal of a selection of modern translations. The point has been made to good effect by the author of a recent substantial study of attitudes to 'Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginnings of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century'. Professor John Boswell of Yale University devotes a lengthy appendix to 'Lexicography and Saint Paul' in the course of which he provides the fullest investigation to date of the meaning of ἀρσενοκοίται. He concludes that it denotes 'male sexual agents, i.e., active male prostitutes, who were common throughout the Hellenistic world in the time of Paul ... "'Ἀρσενοκοίται" is the Greek equivalent of "drauci".' At the time he grants that Paul may not have understood the difference between active and passive male prostitutes. 'It would not be surprising if he considered active prostitution more reprehensible than passive, but it is not necessary to assume that he understood the precise nuance of "ἀρσενοκοίται" in terms of sexual roles. Since it was unambiguous in its reference to male prostitution (as opposed to male recourse to female prostitution), he may well have intended it generically' (pp. 344-345).

The 'unambiguous reference' of the term to male prostitution Boswell claims to establish on grounds that vary considerably in weight.

- The context, particular and general, in Paul

The juxtaposition of ἀρσενοκοίται and πόρνοι in 1 Tim. 1:10 'suggests very strongly that prostitution is what is at issue ... Moreover, prostitution was manifestly of greater concern to Saint Paul than any sort of homosexual behaviour: excluding the words in question, there is only a single reference to homosexual acts in the Pauline writings, whereas the
word "πόρνος" and its derivatives are mentioned almost thirty times' (p. 341). Whatever inference might be drawn from the collocation of words in 1 Tim. 1:10, this is clearly a grossly inadequate account of the meaning of πόρνος and its cognates in the New Testament and contemporary literature. 1

- The linguistic structure and semantic import of ἀρσενοκοίτας

- The absence of the term from most Greek literature on homosexuality

Boswell speaks of 'the vast amount of writing extant on the subject of homoerotic sexuality in Greek in which this term does not occur. It is extremely difficult to believe that if the word actually meant "homosexual" or "sodomite," no previous or contemporary author would have used it in a way which clearly indicated this connection' (p. 345). This argument makes two claims, first, that the word was thus neglected, and secondly, that its non-use in literary references to homosexuality warrants the inference Boswell draws from it.

- Uses of the term in literature roughly contemporary with Paul

Occurrences of ἀρσενοκοίτας and its cognates in works written 'within two or three centuries' of the Pauline letters 'offer further evidence that the word did not connote homosexuality to Paul or his early readers' (p. 350). Aristides and Eusebius are cited to this purpose, together with less clearcut supporting testimony from Origen and Chrysostom. Boswell accepts that after the fourth century ἀρσενοκοίτας 'was often equated with homosexuality' (p. 107; cf. pp. 352-353).

Each of these last three grounds alleged by Boswell merits extended examination. The last two obviously overlap and must to some extent be taken together. But first attention must be drawn to the evidence of the Septuagint:

Lev. 18:22 — μετὰ ἀρσενὸς οὐ κοιμηθῆσῃ κοίτην γυναικός
Lev. 20:13 — δε δὲν κοιμηθῇ μετὰ ἀρσενὸς κοίτην γυναικός

Boswell quotes these LXX verses elsewhere in his study (p. 100 n. 28) but never considers their possible significance for the meaning of ἀρσενοκοίτας in the New Testament. 'The reason is no doubt to be found in his claim that these Levitical prohibitions had little or no influence on early Christian attitudes. 'It would simply not have occurred to most
early Christians to invoke the authority of the old law to justify the
morality of the new: the Levitical regulations had no hold on Christians
and are manifestly irrelevant in explaining Christian hostility to gay
sexuality' (p. 105).

It is certainly the case that Lev. 18:22 and 20:13 are rarely cited
explicitly in Christian literature of the early centuries, although not as
rarely as Boswell makes out. He first asserts that 'many [Greek-
speaking theologians] considered that [the behaviour condemned in
these verses] had been forbidden the Jews as part of their distinctive
ethical heritage or because it was associated with idolatry, not as part of
the law regarding sexuality and marriage, which was thought to be of
wider application' (p. 102). As witnesses he cites only one passage from
Eusebius of Caesarea and the Apostolic Constitutions, neither of which
substantiates his claim. In his Demonstration of the Gospel Eusebius
relates the Mosaic ban on γυναικῶν τι πρὸς γυναικας καὶ ἀρρένων πρὸς
ἀρρένας μίξεις, preceding it with Lev. 18:2-4 and following it with Lev.
18:24-25, but he does not imply for a moment that, although
distinguishing Israel from its neighbours, the ban was intended solely
for Israel. If that had been his meaning, the context shows clearly that
the same would have to be said about child-sacrifice! Eusebius’s
meaning is put beyond doubt elsewhere in the same work when he
paraphrases Matt. 5:18 as follows:

ο μὲν Μωυσῆς μοιχείς και ἀκολάστους διατάττει τό μη μοιχεύεις, μηδέ ἀρασοκοιτεῖς, μηδὲ τάς
παρὰ φύσιν ἡμῶν διακόιν ...., εἰ γάρ μὴν ἐμβλητικά γυναῖκα μετ’ ἐπιθύμιος ἀκολάστου τοὺς
ἐμοὺς βούλομαι."

It is surely a safe presumption here that ἀρασοκοιτεῖν refers to the
Levitical proscription of male homosexual activity. Further confirma-
tion that Eusebius did regard it as still binding upon the people of God is
found in The Preparation for the Gospel, in which he contrasts Plato’s
recommendation of pederasty with the words of Moses δὲ διαρρήθην
tούτως ἑνοτία νομοθετεῖ, μεγάλη τῇ φωνῇ τὴν κατὰ παιδεραστῶν προσήκουσαν
προφητείας δίκην, and proceeds to cite both Lev. 20:13 and Lev. 18:22.7

In the Apostolic Constitutions, which were probably compiled in the
late fourth century in Syria or possibly Constantinople, the argument
proceeds as follows:

*If the difference of the sexes was made by the will of God for the generation of
multitudes, then must the conjunction of male and female be also agreeable to his
mind. But we do not say so of that abominable mixture which is contrary to nature,
or of any unlawful practice; for such are enmity to God. For the sin of Sodom is παρὰ φύσιν, as is also that with brute beasts. But adultery and fornication are παρὰδομένοις ... [Sodomists] endeavour to make the natural course of things to change for one that is unnatural."

Then follow the two texts from Leviticus among others. Although a clear distinction is drawn between heterosexual offences and homosexual, as Boswell points out (p. 103 n. 42), its purpose is not to suggest that the prohibition of the latter in Leviticus was valid only for Jews. The implication is rather that offences παρὰ φύσιν are more heinous than offences παρὰ νόμον.

Boswell argues that 'Almost no early Christian writers appealed to Leviticus as authority against homosexual acts' (p. 104). He mentions two exceptions—Clement of Alexandria ('an exception to this as to most generalizations', p. 104 n. 47) and the Apostolic Constitutions, which only two pages previously he has cited as attesting the restricted reference of the Levitical enactments against homosexual behaviour—'ceremonially unclean rather than intrinsically evil' (p. 102). As we have seen, his second citation of the work is the more accurate. There are at least two other leading exceptions to be adduced. In his refutation of Marcion Tertullian distinguishes between the institutio of marriage and the exorbitatio of adultery and other sins, and declares that God punishes with death inestam, sacrilegam atque monstrosam in masculos et in pecudes libidinum insaniam, with identifiable allusions to Lev. 20:10, 13, 15. Origen's eleventh homily on Leviticus takes 'Be ye holy ...' (Lev. 20:7) as its text. Lev. 20:13 is not among the verses explicitly cited or alluded to, but the general thrust of the homily does not allow an interpretation that such prohibitions are no longer binding on Origen's Christian congregation. But in his Commentary on Romans, now extant only in Rufinus's Latin, Origen quoted first 1 Tim. 1:9-10 and then Lev. 18:22 in the course of a discussion sparked off by Rom. 4:15, Et statuamus ante oculos, si videtur, duos aliquos, verbi gratia, qui cum masculis non concubuerunt concubitu muliebri; unum ex his praecepto legis prohibitum ...

A broader range of evidence than Boswell collates can therefore be adduced for the continuing validity of the proscription in Lev. 18:22 and 20:13 in the eyes of early Christian writers. Certainly he is unable to cite any evidence of any degree of explicitness declaring that it had been abrogated, like much else in the Levitical legislation. A more differentiating approach was adopted than Boswell allows. As one of his
reviewers commented, 'Sexual prohibitions tend to have a longer life than dietary or dress restrictions. Even if they show no distinctive gravity in early legislation, they are notoriously capable of surviving the dissolution of taboo structures like the heavily ritual Holiness Code of Leviticus and reappearing with increased weight in later patterns of moral offense.'

The argument of the preceding paragraphs may not be strictly relevant to the question whether the LXX of Lev. 18:22 and 20:13 provides a clue to the meaning ἀφασνονοκύται had for Paul. It has rather been directed to the reason, so it appears, why Boswell did not investigate this possibility. The parallel between the LXX's ἀφανοις ὑ κομηθήσῃ κατά and even more κομηθῇ μετὰ ἀφανος κατήν and Paul's ἄφασνονοκύται is surely inescapable. If, as seems likely, the ἀφασνονοκύταν group of words is a coinage of Hellenistic Judaism or Hellenistic Jewish Christianity, the probability that the LXX provides the key to their meaning is strengthened.

If the argument of the last paragraphs is valid, it undermines ab initio the force of Boswell's linguistic approach to the meaning of ἀφασνονοκύται. In short he claims that the first half of the compound (ἀφανο-) denotes not the object but the gender of the second half (-κύτας). This is patently not the case if the LXX of the verses in Leviticus lies behind ἄφασνονοκύται, whether in encouraging the formation of the word itself or in informing its meaning.

But before looking more closely at the evidence of linguistic structure, we should note that Boswell stresses the coarseness and active licentiousness of the 'sleeping' denoted by -κύτας. 'In this and other compounds [it] corresponds to the vulgar English word "fucker," a person who, by insertion, takes the "active" role in intercourse' (p. 342). This is not a point of great moment, but is worth a brief examination. Unfortunately no parallels are adduced in support of Boswell's assertion, and it is uncertain which other compounds he had in mind. Of two standard listings, comprising twentytwo compounds of -κύτας, most of them of very rare occurrence, there is scarcely a single example to corroborate Boswell's claim.14 Only four designate those who engage in nonmarital intercourse—κλασονοκύτας (seeking illicit sex), δουλονοκύτας (sleeping with slaves), ημηρονοκύτας (engaging in incest), and ἀνδρονοκύτας (having intercourse with a man). In none of these compounds, except possibly the last, does the second component -κύτας appear to carry the weight Boswell seeks to assign to it in ἀφασνονοκύτας. To set against these four are
many others in which -χοτης denotes the literal activity of sleeping or lying (e.g., ἠμεροκοτης, sleeping by day; χαμακοτης, sleeping on the ground; ἱνυκοσκυτης, with ears large enough to sleep in; βομβονοκοτης, the mudcoucher—a kind of frog), as well as ἄχοτης and παραχοτης which both mean ‘bedfellow’ or spouse. Nor does the picture change much if the enquiry is extended to include compounds of -κοτος, -κοτια and -κοττεω." (Both ἄρανοκοτης and ἄρανοκοτέω are not infrequently attested). Here one encounters forms which quite patently exclude Boswell’s interpretation, e.g., συγκοτος and ὑμοκοτος (both meaning ‘bedfellow, sleeping together with, having intercourse,’ like the verb δυνυκοτέω), as well as others, e.g., πολυκοτος (sleeping with many women or men) and ἄδελφοκοτης (incest of brother and sister), which may bear a nuance of coarseness but hardly of thrusting activeness."

Boswell’s chief linguistic contention is that ‘in general ... those compounds in which the form “ἀρρενο-” occurs employ it objectively; those in which “ἀρρενο-” is found use it as an adjective.... In no words coined and generally written with the form “ἀρρενο-” is the prefix demonstrably objective; overlap occurs on a small scale in words containing “ἀρρενο-”’ (pp. 343, 344)." Several comments are in order.

It is in the first place surprising that, having established the particular force of -χοτης in the compound, Boswell did not go on to enquire whether in other compounds of -χοτης the first half ever denoted who did the ‘sleeping’. In all, it seems, of the comparable compounds the first element in fact specifies the object of the ‘sleeping’ or its scene or sphere—what one might call its indirect object (e.g., χαμακοτης, sleeping on the ground; δυνυκοσκυτης, luller of winds; ἠμεροκοτης, sleeping by day). Thus we have δουλοκοτης (sleeping with slaves, not slaves sleeping with others), μυτροκοτης (not mother who sleeps around), and πολυκοτης (sleeping with many others). Invariably -χοτης has, as one might expect, a verbal force on which is dependent the object or adverb specified in the first half of the word.

Secondly, Boswell does not take sufficient account of the fact that both ἀρανοκοτης- and ἀρανοκοτεις forms are found. He does discuss one late occurrence of the latter, in an inscription at Thessalonica in honour of Basil I of Macedon, the ninth-century Byzantine emperor (A.D. 867-886), who had defeated the Arabs in Asia in 871 and 880:

βάρμαρον οὐ στρομέτης, οὐκ ἀρανος ἀρανοκοτας.18

This is addressed to the city of Thessalonica, assuring its citizens that, thanks to Basil, they need no longer fear the barbarians, a race of men
who indulge in sex with other men. To Boswell the phrase makes sense only if ἀρεστός is the object of ἀρεστωκότας (p. 344 n. 22). Otherwise ἀρεστός would be wholly pleonastic or, if the gender of ἀρεστωκότας needed clarification, one would expect an adjective, ἀρεστωκόης, rather than a noun. Such an argument ends up positing a most improbable grammatical construction for the phrase, and also prejudices a plausible meaning of it. In characterizing an alien people there is no little difference between tarring the whole of it with its toleration of male homosexuality and alluding to the obviously more limited prevalence of active male prostitution. Boswell comments on only one other occurrence of ἀρεστωκότας, the noun ἀρεστωκοτία in a homily ascribed to Macarius the Egyptian. He suggests that the writer had conflated the biblical ἀρεστωκοτία with ‘the more common’ ἀρεστομοιχία (p. 353 n. 51).

It is presumably true that the variation between the two spellings ἀρεστό- and ἀρεστο- in compounds is no more than a transcript of the variation between ἀρεστόν and ἀρεστήν and their respective derivatives. On this subject there has been considerable discussion, but, so far as I can discover, no writer has yet suggested the difference is other than one of dialectal diversity. Not once in the considerable literature on the question is it claimed that there might be some semantic significance in the variation. In summary terms, something of a shift took place from -πο- to -ρη-, affecting especially Attic but not mainstream Ionian. Although -πο- spellings predominate in the LXX, the papyri of the Ptolemaic period and the New Testament, they are less common in the Roman and Byzantine eras in which the dominant Attic influence is apparent. Nevertheless fluctuation persists between the two forms, reflecting the diverse dialectal heritage of Koine Greek. Both spellings are found in modern Greek. But if no semantic import attaches to the difference between ἀρεστόν and ἀρεστήν, a fortiori it can scarcely be pertinent in the case of their compounds.

It is, however, Boswell’s contention that ‘In no words coined and generally written with the form “ἀρεστό-” is the prefix demonstrably objective’ (p. 344). In due course I will argue that this is indeed the case with ἀρεστωκοτίς itself, but first the wider evidence needs to be reviewed. Only some twelve compounds of ἀρεστό- are attested: ἀρεστωβάτης (and -βαλός), -παῖς, -φρον-, -θηλής, -κοίτης (and -κοίτως, -κοίτης), -μός, -γενής, -θύμος, -μορφός, -πληθής, and ἀρεστόκακαθοῦν. (Compounds of ἀρεστό- number twenty). Of these only the last five occur solely with ἀρεστό-; the rest are found also with ἀρεστο- as the first half. So the range of parallels
against which Boswell's claim is to be tested is not very wide, nor can one be sure how much flexibility 'generally written' allows. Within these narrow limits (and excepting ἄρσινοξατής for the time being) Boswell is correct, but draws from the material untenable conclusions. It is in any case surely extremely hazardous to base the alleged difference of semantic significance of the two forms on so restricted a sample.

In so far as a distinction can be drawn between those compounds of the group in which the first element is the object of the second and those in which it supplies the qualifying gender of the second, we must start at the other end, with the second element, as was hinted above with reference to the compounds of -κοίτης. In most if not all of the compounds in which the second half is a verb or has verbal force, the first half denotes its object, irrespective of whether it is ἄρσινο- or ἄρσινο (e.g., ἄρσινομετία, ἄρσινομετίτης, ἄρσινομάτης, ἄρσινομασία, etc.). When the second part is substantive, the first half denotes its gender, as in all the five solely ἄρσινο- compounds isolated above, but again irrespective of the spelling (e.g., ἄρσινόρρων and ἄρσινόρρων, ἄρσινοφάνης, ἄρσινόπαις and ἄρσινόπαις, ἄρσινόθυμος, ἄρσινότατα). Such a conclusion does not exactly take one by surprise, but it does suggest how ἄρσινοξατής should be interpreted.

To ascertain whether the direction in which all the evidence has so far pointed is the right one, we must now survey the occurrences of the term (and ἄρσινοξαττέω and ἄρσινοξατή) in the literature of the patristic era. Since Boswell's account of the use of the term is far from complete and no lexicon provides a full listing, an attempt will be made to give an exhaustive catalogue of its occurrences.

Of little help in clarifying its meaning are its first certain uses in 1 Cor. 6:9 and 1 Tim. 1:10, although this is not to deny that historical investigation of their sources or backgrounds may provide some evidence. To this we shall return. Likewise straightforward quotations of one or other of these verses are in themselves of no value. Some other isolated uses of the term throw no additional light on its meaning. But there are more occurrences than Boswell allows that do disclose the meaning it bore for the writer in question.

Aristides' Apology was addressed to the emperor Hadrian and hence composed by A.D. 138 at the latest. Its polemic against the gods of the Greeks concentrates especially on their immoral behaviour. If human beings were to imitate them, they would become μοιχούς καὶ ἄρσινομαντίς ... Πώς οὖν ἐνθέχεται θεόν εἶναι μοιχόν ἢ ἄνδροβάτην ἢ πατροκτόνον; A little
later Aristides argues that if the laws are just, the gods are wholly unjust, having done contrary to the laws ἀλληλοκτονίας καὶ φαρμακείας καὶ μοιχείας καὶ κλοπάς καὶ ἄρσενοκοιτίας.22 The coupling with μοιχεία on each of these occasions (albeit separated once by κλοπάς) strongly suggests that ἀρσενοκοιτίας, ἀνδροβάτης and ἄρσενοκοιτίας all carry the same basic meaning. Boswell endeavours to distinguish between them, however, in the following terms:

a) ἀρσενοκοιτία designates female addiction to adultery or fornication.14 The context gives no support to this. The preceding paragraph deals solely with the doings of Zeus, the one before that of Kronos. Immediately before the sentence containing ἀρσενοκοιτίας Zeus’s passion for Ganymede is mentioned. ‘Hence it happened, Emperor, to mankind to imitate all these things and to become μοιχοὺς καὶ ἀρσενοκοιτίας and to engage in other dreadful practices in imitation of their god.’ The fuller Syriac text likewise refers only to male sexual malpractice and includes a mention of ‘sleeping with men’.

b) ἀνδροβάτης denotes a stuperator, one guilty of the rape of a free citizen. There may well be a hint of homosexual assault in the Greek word, but the context in Aristides is precisely the same as for ἀρσενοκοιτίας, the Syriac uses the same term for both (= ‘sleeping with men’), and other uses of ἀνδροβάτης and its cognates do not appear to specify rape as the homosexual abuse in question.23

c) ἄρσενοκοιτία still denotes prostitution, but Boswell fails completely in his attempt to show that Zeus could meaningfully be charged with prostitution.

It seems clear that Aristides employed three different words, each with its own nuance, to incriminate male homosexuality as unworthy of gods and men. The parallelism not only suggests the meaning of ἄρσενοκοιτία but also confirms that the ἓρσενο- element is the object.

Perhaps the most revealing occurrence of ἄρσενοκοιτία is not noted by Boswell at all. It comes in Hippolytus’s account of the founder of the Naassene Gnostics:24

ο δὲ Νάας παρανομίζει ἤχει· προσήλθε γὰρ τῇ Ἑῳ ἡπατήτισις αὐτῶν καὶ ἐμοιχεύουσα αὐτὴν, ὅπερ ἄτιν παράνομον· προσήλθε δὲ καὶ τῷ Ἄδαι καὶ ἤχειν αὐτὸν ὡς παῖδα, διότι ἄτι καὶ αὐτὸ παράνομον· ἐνθεὶ τένον μοιχεία καὶ ἄρσενοκοιτία.

This could scarcely be clearer, and cannot sustain Boswell’s version of the word-structure and meaning of ἄρσενοκοιτία.
In reviewing citations and echoes of Lev. 18:22 and 20:13 in early Christian literature we have noted Eusebius’s assertion that Moses forbade μοιχείαν and ἀρσενοκοιτίαν, μηδὲ τὰς παρὰ φύσιν ἡθονές διωκῆς. Boswell contends that the word cannot here refer to homosexual activities because it is distinguished from ‘pleasures against nature’, and because Eusebius is here presenting a paraphrase of Matt. 5:28 which has in mind the attitude of men towards women. He concludes that Eusebius understood ἀρσενοκοιτίαν to mean male prostitution servicing women (p. 351). Whether it is a sound inference from μηδὲ x.t.l. that what precedes it cannot be ‘contrary to nature’ is very dubious, nor does it make bad sense of Eusebius’s sequence of thought if ἀρσενοκοιτίαν means male homosexuality. For if one explains this word in heterosexual terms, one is still left with ‘the pursuit of pleasures contrary to nature’. If this phrase denotes non-heterosexual acts between human beings, then why should not ἀρσενοκοιτίαν denote (non-heterosexual) homosexuality? If it denotes something like (heterosexual?) bestiality, it is still hard to see how this could be appropriate in the context if male homosexuality is not. We could paraphrase Eusebius’s paraphrase thus: ‘Moses forbade adultery and male homosexuality, but I do not allow my disciples even to look lustfully on a woman [let alone a man]’. In any case, the evidence adduced earlier from Eusebius shows him asserting unambiguously that Moses forbade female and male homosexuality (ἀρρένων πρὸς ἀρρενας μῖξεις).

The Syriac writer Bardeanes who flourished at the turn of the second and third centuries records different ethnic attitudes to male homosexual intercourse. Eusebius gives an extract in Greek. Beyond the Euphrates a person accused of murder or of theft will not be angered, διὰ τῶν ἀρσενοκοιτῶν λοιποίμινας ταύτην ἐκδίκησε μηχρὶ ταῖς φόνους. The Syriac here denotes ‘lying with men’, using the same vocabulary as in 1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Tim. 1:10. Male prostitution is definitely excluded. We thus have corroboration that ἀρσενοκοιτία for Eusebius specified male homosexuality activity, whether with youths or adults. (We will return to this aspect of the question.)

We must next note some occurrences of the term in question in which it is paralleled to παῦδροφορία, i.e., male homosexuality with teenagers which was of course the dominant form of male homosexuality among the Greeks. The term was a critical way of referring to παῦδραστία and can certainly not be restricted to child-molesting.

Theophilus of Antioch twice lists the trio of vices, μοιχεία, πορνεία and
Nothing in the context casts further light on the meaning of the latter. Origen groups the three together in a free citation of 1 Cor. 6:9 as exemplifying types of flagrant sinfulness—πόρνη, μοιχή, ἁρσωκοῦται, μαλακῶ, εἰδωλολατρεῖ, φονεῖς. In an extract of another work preserved only in Latin he instances ‘fornicators, adulterers and masculorum concubitores’ as those who have committed grandia peccata. The juxtaposition of these three, which embodies a particular selection from the categories of sinfulness catalogued in 1 Cor. 6:9-10, is paralleled in some later writings. A further occurrence of the triple formula is found in the Church History of Theodoret of Cyrrhus completed in A.D. 450. He cites at length a letter by Peter, bishop of Alexandria after Athanasius, which describes the desecration of one of the churches in the city by a pagan mob under the prefect Palladius in league with the Arian party. An abandoned scoundrel was set up to preach, and his message advocated ἀνὰ ἐγκαττέλεις πορνίαν, μοιχίαν, ἁρσουκοῦταν, πλοτήν.22

A homily dubiously ascribed to Cyril of Alexandria indicts those who do not weep for their sins of πορνεία and μοιχία, μὴ θρηνοῦντες διὰ τὸ πέταυρον τῆς ἁρσουκοῦτας, καὶ μὴ δολολύουντες διὰ τὴν μαλακίαν.23 A letter by Nilus, bishop of Ancyra in the first quarter of the fifth century, declares that every kind of uncleanness, such as πορνεία, μοιχία, ἀσελγεία καὶ ἁρσουκοῦτα and the like, are called ‘winter’ by Solomon.24 The traditional association of the three vices is preserved in the Sacra Parallela, a large collection of moral and ascetic teaching attached, not all of it with full certainty, to John of Damascus. One of the divisions of the collection is entitled Περὶ πορνείας, καὶ μοιχίας, καὶ ἁρσουκοῦτας. Lev. 20:13 is among the biblical texts assembled under this heading.25

Comparison is obviously invited with a similar grouping of μοιχία, πορνεία and παύδορφορία. The Epistle of Barnabas gives the threefold instruction οὐ πορνεύσῃς, οὐ μοιχῆς, οὐ παύδορφορής.26 The same triple command, but in a different sequence, is found in the middle of a longer list in the Didache, οὐ μοιχῆς, οὐ παύδορφορής, οὐ πορνεύς.27 There is little doubt that both works are using a common pattern of originally Jewish moral instruction set in a ‘two ways’ framework. Clement of Alexandria ascribes to Moses the three prohibitions exactly as found in Barnabas,28 and Origen catalogues the same three offences in the same order when he wishes to adduce gross violations of the law.29 The Apostolic Constitutions, at this point almost certainly heir to the ‘two ways’ pattern of paraenetical instruction, arranges the same three
prohibitions in the Didache's order in its more expansive review of the law of life—οὐ μοιχείας..., οὐ παιδοφοβίας..., οὐ πορνεύσεις.⁴¹

The elevation of the ban on παιδοφοβία and πορνεία to a rank alongside the Decalogue's prohibition of μοιχεία almost certainly took place in Jewish circles exposed to the immoralties of the Greek world.⁴⁴ Within the Mosaic corpus, Lev. 18:22 and 20:13 provided all the authority that was needed to justify the ban on pederasty. What seems clear is that Christian writers associated this prohibition which they took over as part of the ethical legacy of Hellenistic Judaism with the ἀφανοκοίτα forbidden in 1 Cor. 6:9 and 1 Tim. 1:10. Not only do we find the trio of μοιχεία, πορνεία and παιδοφοβία paralleled by that of μοιχεία, πορνεία and ἀφανοκοίτα, but in Origen both threefold listings occur. While the meaning assigned to παιδοφοβία in early Christian writings remains to be considered, the parallelism clearly excludes Boswell's interpretation of ἀφανοκοίτα. Christian writers and teachers identified ἀφανοκοίτα with by far the commonest form of active homosexuality current in the Hellenistic world, that is, the relationship between an adult male and a youth of teenage years.⁴⁷

We have yet to consider the occurrence of ἀφανοκοίτεν in the Sibylline Oracles, which may be one of the earliest appearances of the word after the Pauline writings and may indeed derive from a period roughly contemporary with them. In book 2 are found the following three lines:

71 σπέρματα μη χλέπτειν· ἑκαράσμος δότις θηταί
eis γένεας γενέων, eis σκορπισμὸν βιοτοίο.
mη ἀφανοκοίτεν, μη συκοφαντεῖν, μητε φονεύειν.⁴¹

They belong to a section of the book (2:56-148) which most scholars hold to be derived from the collection of Jewish-Hellenistic gnomic wisdom attached to the pseudonym of Phocylides (lines 5-79). Since, however, this block of material is present in only one branch of the manuscript tradition, it was presumably interpolated into book 2 after the composition of this book, which is normally placed around the middle of the second century A.D.⁴⁸ Furthermore, lines 72-73 above are among the twenty or so lines inserted into this material from Ps-Phocylides (in which Or.Sib. 2:71 is line 18). The latest editor of Ps-Phocylides' Sentences is inclined to assign their origin to Alexandria within the period 30 B.C. - 40 A.D.⁴⁹ A wide variety of scholarly hypotheses has been advanced about the poem's character and purpose. Difficulty in placing it with assurance arises largely because so much of
it has parallels in both Jewish ethical teaching, especially the Pentateuch and Wisdom literature of the LXX, and Greek gnomological traditions. Van der Horst draws attention to its heavy use (in lines 9-41) of Lev. 19 as a kind of summary of the Torah, suggesting that at the beginning of the Christian era this chapter was held to be a central one in the Pentateuch. Although the line containing μη ἄφθωγοντειν is not part of Ps-Phocylides, this writer's disapprobation of homosexual conduct, often joined with adultery, is unmistakable:

μη γαμοκλοπειν μη ἄφθωγα Κύριν ἰδίνειν...
μη παραβης εύνας φύσεως ἵνα Κύριν ἱδίνειν,
οὐδὲ αὐτοῖς θέρεται συνειδαθον ἄφθωγες εύνα...
παιδὸς δ'ευμόρφου φρονεῖν νεοτίσιον ἱδίν.
πολλοί γάρ λυσσωσί πρὸς ἄφθωγα μετίν ἔρωτος."11

The sentiment of the interpolated line 73 therefore accords closely with the source of the block into which it has been inserted, and the inspiration of Leviticus may suggest a more localized connection with the part of the block in which it is found, if the language of Lev. 18 and 20 LXX lies behind ἄφθωγοντειν, as has been argued above. Considerations of this kind have led some scholars to the conclusion that the Sibyllines' text of this material preserves an earlier form of Ps-Phocylides' lines 5-79. The sequence of Or. Sib. 2:71-73 has been specifically appealed to in support of this case.12

If, however, we adhere to the consensus which regards Or. Sib. 2:56-148 as an interpolated interpolation from Ps-Phocylides, it remains true that the insertion of lines 72-73 fits in remarkably well with the spirit and language of Ps-Phocylides no less than of the Sibylline collection—which is elsewhere repeatedly and emphatically hostile to male homosexual activity.13 Although the restriction of book 2:56-148 to only one family of the manuscripts would naturally lead one to suppose that the additional insertions not derived from Ps-Phocylides were made at the same time as the main interpolation, and therefore later than c. 150 A.D. and by a Christian hand (for it is agreed that books 1-2 of the Sibyllines represent a Christianized revision of a Jewish original), the block may have come to the Christian interpolator with the further insertions, in particular lines 72-73, already present. We have suggested the common influence of Leviticus 19 and environs on the context of lines 72-73 and on line 73 itself. Line 72 is notably Jewish in character.
It has further been argued that lines 3-4 of Ps-Phocylides, which immediately precede the block incorporated into the Sibyllines, inspired some of the additions inserted in this block. Thus γαμοκλοσίων (line 3 cited above) is echoed in Or. Sib. 2:53 (ος δ' ἀγαπῶι γάμον τε, γαμοκλοσίων τε ἀπέχονται), and μῆτ' ἄρεσαν Κύπριν ὁρίζειν ενοκέε μὴ ἄρεσονοικότετιν in 2:73. This is entirely plausible and prompts a speculative suggestion about the choice, and perhaps even the very formation, of the word ἄρεσονοικότετιν. A Christian editor, when transferring a block of material from Ps-Phocylides replete with Levitical associations, transposed the patently, even offensively, secular Greek reference to ἄρεσαν Κύπριν (i.e., originally Aphrodite) into a compound term suggested by the proscription of Lev. 18:22, 20:13 LXX. It perhaps remains more likely that this occurrence of ἄρεσονοικότετιν is to be ascribed to the interpolator of the material from Ps-Phocylides, working at some date after c. 150 A.D., but the use of ἄρεσονοικότετιν strengthens rather than weakens the case for the existence of this section of the poem already in its expanded form before it found its way into one branch of the Sibyllines' manuscript tradition. That is to say, the enlargement of the section by some or all of the insertions but including at least lines 72-73 may well have been carried out by a Jewish writer like Ps-Phocylides himself. Whether this expansion belonged to the textual history of the Ps-Phocylidean collection or to the Jewish, pre-Christian history of book 2 of the Sibyllines can only be a matter of further speculation. The suggestiveness of this possibility for the purpose of the present enquiry consists in its identifying a very plausible milieu for the origination of the word ἄρεσονοικότετιν, viz., a Hellenistic Jewish setting under marked Levitical inspiration seeking a decently Jewish way of speaking about ἄρεσαν Κύπριν.

The appearance of ἄρεσονοικότης in a work by Rhetorius, an Egyptian astrologer of the sixth century A.D., provides no precise guidance on the meaning of the term. It occurs twice in lists of vices generated by Aphrodite in those born under the signs of the Ram and the Twins. Rhetorius' use of the word merits a mention only because one of his sources, not least in respect of this chapter, was probably Teucer of Babylon in Egypt. Teucer, who wrote around the beginning of the Christian era, exerted a wide influence, but only fragments of his work are extant. They contain nothing similar to the catalogues of vices including ἄρεσονοικότης.
It remains to take account of some other occurrences of ἀφενοκοιτα, especially some that Boswell has noted. One of the collection of homilies that bears the name of Macarius of Egypt declares that the men of Sodom did not repent ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν ἁγγέλων κακῇ βουλῇ ἀφενοκοιταν εἰς αὐτοὺς ἐργάσασθαι θελήσαντες.” Boswell accepts this as ‘probably the earliest instance of the use of the word in a context other than prostitution... It implies [sic!] a connection between sodomy and ἀφενοκοιτα’ (p. 353 n. 51). However, he blunts the force of this concession by groundless philological speculation and by invoking the uncertain authorship and date of the collection. In reality, the author can now be placed and dated within half a century with a fair degree of assurance.” The use of ἀφενοκοιτα by this writer clearly carries the implication of forcible homosexual activity, almost homosexual rape.

In one of the earliest Greek penitentials, traditionally attributed to John the Faster (Joannes Jejunator) of Constantinople (d. 595), is encountered a use of ἀφενοκοιτα which in Boswell’s view ‘would seem to preclude absolutely interpreting this word as referring to homosexual intercourse’.” In order to determine appropriate penance the priest must enquire about the penitent’s sexual activity. Amongst other things he must ask about ἀφενοκοιτα, of which there are three kinds, of escalating gravity—passive, active, and both passive and active. At this point ἀφενοκοιτα is not defined. Boswell suggests it denotes ‘anal intercourse’, but acknowledges that semantically this is an impossible construction, and leaves it untranslated (p. 364 n. 25). The reader is given no clue to the grounds on which Boswell finds it to mean ‘anal intercourse’. He holds, however, that it cannot refer to homosexual activity generically, partly because of the further occurrence shortly to be discussed, and partly because elsewhere the priest is instructed to enquire about other types of homosexual activity, viz., mutual masturbation (if this is what μαλακία means here) and παθοφοβία. The latter argument in itself is not conclusive in excluding ‘homosexuality between (adult) males’ as the meaning of ἀφενοκοιτα. Much rests on a sentence that comes at the end of a paragraph on incest: τὸ μὲν τῷ ἀφενοκοιτάς μῦστος πολὺ καὶ μετὰ τῶν γυναικῶν αὐτῶν ἐκτελοῦν. Boswell again does not translate ἀφενοκοιτάς, but he clearly implies that ‘their wives’ are the sexual partners of many in ἀφενοκοιτα. It certainly cannot be accommodated within Boswell’s standard interpretation of male prostitution; husbands can scarcely be said to serve their own wives as male prostitutes.
Improbable though it may seem at first sight, the proper meaning of ἀσεφοκοτία should probably be maintained here. The preceding paragraph deals solely with the range of possible female partners in male incest; there is no suggestion of mode or position of incestuous intercourse. The writer’s formula for incest is περιπετείας ἐς with the accusative of the female relative involved. Having mentioned sister, cousin, mother-in-law and others, he comes to the peak of perversity: φθάνουσι δὲ τινὲς καὶ μέχρι τῶν ἵδιων μητέρων. “Ἀλλὰ πάλιν τὸ ἐς τὴν ἴδιαν σύντεκαν, καὶ ἐλλο τὸ ἐς ἐὰν ἴδιατα θυγατέρα.” To μέντοι τῆς ἀσεφοκοτίας κ.τ.λ. Boswell’s translation fails to bring out the difference in grammatical structure between the last sentence and the rest of the paragraph, rendering both περιπετείας ἐς and ἔκτελοσιν μετά as ‘commit...with’. May there not be a distinction here between ἐς + accusative of the sex object and μετά + genitive of the companion in sexual licence? This is how the end of the paragraph may be paraphrased: ‘Incredibly enough, some men even go as far as having incestuous intercourse with their own mothers, or some again inflict it on their own daughters or goddaughters. Indeed, (would you believe it that) many men even engage in homosexual activity in the company of their own wives’ i.e. three to a bed, or while the wives likewise indulge each other homosexually? According to this reading of the sentence it does not speak of another relationship of incest (how could it, if husbands and their wives are the sexual partners?), but of another form of sexual deviancy of the same order of gross perversity as incest with one’s mother or daughter. The advantage of this interpretation is that one does not have to unearth a special meaning for ἀσεφοκοτία, as Boswell seeks to do without any real evidence. The sequence is clear enough in the section of the text as given in Boswell’s translation: questioning first centres on heterosexual intercourse, then on ἀσεφοκοτία, next bestiality, then masturbation (? μαλακία), and finally incest. A whole paragraph devoted to ‘anal intercourse’, with regard for variations of passive and active roles and of frequency, duration and period of life, carries no conviction in this context. Such a notion has something of the air of irrepressible resourcefulness exemplified by Boswell’s earlier comment: ‘If it could be shown that “ἀσεφο-” were the object rather than the gender of ‘-κοτία’ it would certainly refer to this sort of gender inversion [i.e., women taking the active role in ‘lying with men’] rather than to homosexuality in general” (p. 345 n. 27). This is desperate reasoning.

Boswell contends that ἀσεφοκοτί- would not have been absent from so
much literature about homosexuality if that is what it denoted. This argument calls for a number of comments.

i) It is pointless to appeal to its absence from Herodotus, Plato and Aristotle (p. 345) since it is patent that the word did not come into use until about the first century A.D., nor from Philo unless he should have been expected to originate it.

ii) It is clear from the evidence cited by Boswell in support of his contention (pp. 345-349) that the Greeks had no lack of terms to designate homosexuality. Chrysostom used ‘dozens of words and phrases’, and Clement of Alexandria employed ‘at least thirteen different expressions’.

iii) Some of the writers whose silence Boswell invokes should be excluded from his catalogue of supporting witnesses. For example, he asserts that the Didache ‘quotes much of the list of sinners in 1 Corinthians 6:9; conspicuous by their absence are the words ‘μαλακότ’ and ‘ἀρασινοκοιτά’’ (p. 346), whereas by the common consent of scholarship the work betrays no sign of a knowledge of Paul’s letters. It may indeed, at least for the chapter in question, have been written earlier than 1 Corinthians. For a different reason Minucius Felix should be ignored. It is clear that he deliberately avoids citing Scripture.41 The same probably holds for another African apologist cited by Boswell, Arnobius, although his knowledge of the Bible is altogether more uncertain than Minucius’s. For a similar reason Ausonius’s failure to cite 1 Cor. 6:9 or 1 Tim. 1:10 is scarcely pertinent. The Christian content of his writings is at best so elusive that it has long been debated whether he was a Christian or a pagan.

iv) Boswell underestimates the use of ἀρασινοκοιτ- in Christian writers. ‘One would certainly expect to find such a word among other Christian writers in Greek, yet one looks for it in vain among all the discussions of homosexual relations’ (p. 346). To some extent the argument is circular. By refusing to allow that the term denotes homosexuality, except in the sense of male prostitution with males, he has disqualified it from taking part in such discussions. But he also omits its use by Hippolytus in one of the clearest texts of all, he fails to notice or mention citations of 1 Cor. 6:9 or uses of the term by Irenaeus, Methodius, Theodoret and the Acts of John,42 and he underplays its use by Eusebius and Chrysostom. The latter merits separate treatment. Most of the evidence for Eusebius has already been given,43 but criticism must be made of Boswell’s statement that ‘Eusebius quotes Romans 1:26-27 almost verbatim, ex-
coriating homosexual relations in all their manifestations, yet nowhere does he employ the word which supposedly means "homosexual" in Paul’s writings' (p. 346). This turns out to refer solely to Dem. Evang. 4:10, a passage which at most alludes to Rom. 1:26-27, if that.** Indeed, a citation of any New Testament text would have been quite out of place, for Eusebius is summarising the instructions given to Israel through Moses.

v) Chrysostom is Boswell’s star witness. The prosecutor deserves to be heard at length before some rejoinder is entered:

Saint John Chrysostom probably wrote more about the subject of same-sex sexuality than any other pre-Freudian writer except Peter Damian. In dozens of works he discusses or mentions it. Greek was his native language, the patristic Greek of the later Empire, thoroughly imbued with the Koine of the New Testament. His writings abound with New Testament references, and he quotes from all the Pauline epistles with accuracy and facility. Yet among the dozens of words and phrases used by Chrysostom to name, describe, or characterize homosexual relations, neither "αρεσκόμενοι" nor any derivative of it occurs in any of these writings. This absence is particularly notable in several instances where the use of the word would seem almost inevitable if it were indeed related to homosexuality: in his commentary on Romans 1:26, for instance where he quotes 1 Corinthians 6:18 in a discussion of Roman homosexual behavior but does not refer to the place in the text only nine verses before where homosexuality is allegedly mentioned by name (see text in app. 2). It is even more striking that in discussing the supposedly homosexual activities of the people of Sodom, he quotes directly from the list of sins in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10, yet he does not mention the one word which translators would have us believe refers specifically to homosexuality.

All this is convincing enough, but the final proof lies in the fact that after writing so copiously on the subject of homosexual relations in every exegetical work where the text could possibly suggest a connection—e.g., Genesis 19, Romans 1—and even some which do not—Titus, for instance—Chrysostom does not mention so much as one word about homosexuality when expounding on the very places where "αρεσκόμενοι" occurs; in his commentaries on 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 there is not a hint about sexual activity between persons of the same sex. In fact on several occasions Chrysostom copied out the list of sins from Corinthians and actually omitted the one word which is claimed to mean homosexual;** considering his feelings on the subject, abundantly evidenced in many works, it is virtually inconceivable that he would have done so had he understood the term to refer to what he had elsewhere called "the worst of all sins."

*De perfecta caritate* 8 (Po, 56:290). It is unlikely that it could be coincidence rather than quotation for such unusual words as "αλευρίδας" and "δραπατες" to occur together with "μονολ." Note that in his commentary on Titus he quotes the whole list of sins from 1 Cor. 6:9 verbatim in the same paragraph in which he discusses the homosexual excesses of the Sodomites: but he does not use the word "αρεσκόμενοι" or any form of it to name these excesses, contenting himself instead with the circumlocution "περὶ ἕκκομανοντο," and establishing no connection be-
There are several inaccuracies in these paragraphs, which provide a revealing example of Boswell’s type of exposition:

a) His statement that ‘neither “άρσενοκοίται” nor any derivative of it occurs in any of these writings’ is corrected by his own n. 34 on the same page. Not only does Chrysostom cite 1 Cor. 6:9 in full in his fifth homily on Titus, but in his homily on the passage itself he comments that many were critical that Paul placed the drunkard and the curser alongside the μοιχός, ἡταιρίας and ἀρσενοκοίτας.

b) According to Boswell, in De perfecta caritate 7-8 (PG 56, 288-290) Chrysostom discusses the homosexuality of the Sodomites, ‘quotes directly from’ the list of sins in 1 Cor. 6:9 and 1 Tim. 1:10 but does not use ἀρσενοκοίτας. This last point is true. After stressing that the one offence of the Sodomites was that they παιῶν ἔπιμαλλοντο, some thirty lines later he comes to talk further about divine punishment, in this life and the next. He mentions Pharaoh and the Egyptians and the captivity of Israel. Why are some punished here and not others? οi μὲν τῶν μοιχῶν τιμωροῦνται, οἱ δὲ τελευτῶσιν ἀτιμώρητοι; πόσοι τυμβωρύχοι διέφυγον; πόσοι λησταί; πόσοι πλεονέκται; πόσοι ἀρχαῖς; Does the use of μοιχῶν, πλεονέκται and ἀρταῖς constitute direct quotation from 1 Cor. 6:9-10? (None of Chrysostom’s language here is found in 1 Tim. 1:10). The whole construction of the passage is quite different from Boswell’s summary.

c) It is difficult to see why in his Homil. on Titus 5:4 (PG 62, 693-694) Chrysostom should quote 1 Cor. 6:9 between a reference to the punishment of the Sodomites solely because they παιῶν ἔπιμαλλοντο and a rebuke to those of his hearers οi τοῖς μὲν ἀρπαγών ὡς θηλαῖας μηγνύμενοι if the connexion did not hinge on ἀρσενοκοίτας. He may not say in so many words ‘the Sodomites were ἀρσενοκοίτας’ but the implication is clear enough and alone makes sense of the citation.

d) ‘On several occasions’, asserts Boswell, Chrysostom copied out the list of sins from 1 Cor. 6:9-10 but omitted ἀρσενοκοίτας. Only two examples are given in the footnote, one of which is the homily on 1 Cor. 6, on which, as we have seen, Boswell is mistaken. The other occasion offers a partial citation (‘Do not be mistaken: neither πόρνοι nor μαλακοί will inherit the kingdom of God’) in the context of a discussion about Paul’s authority as a teacher. I have come across no other instance that bears out Boswell’s contention.
Yet there is no doubt that Chrysostom rarely used ἀφανοξοῖς. But is one justified in supposing that his use of it in commenting on Rom. 1:26 ‘would seem almost inevitable’ if it denoted homosexuality? The homily itself gives an uncompromising, unambiguous and extended indictment of the vice. Is it surprising that in his homily on 1 Tim. 1 he makes no allusion to homosexual activity? He does not explain or discuss any of the sins listed in 1 Tim. 1:10, but would it not be foolish to detect in this exercise of homiletic liberty anything whatsoever about Chrysostom’s attitude to any of its catalogue of sins?

What is the force of this argument from linguistic silence of which Boswell makes so much (and which he has considerably exaggerated)? Romans 1:26-27 provided a much more explicit biblical condemnation, and παραδοκόρακα a term which more closely specified the prevalent form of male homosexual activity in the Greco-Roman world. Failure to use a particular word may indicate any number of things, e.g., greater familiarity with other words or phrases, and reluctance to use a word which, in this instance, clearly never became part of everyday speech and retained a certain technical character. Of itself non-use reveals nothing about a word’s meaning; only use clarifies meaning. And Boswell has signally failed to demonstrate any use of ἀφανοξοῖς etc. in which it patently does not denote male homosexual activity. The only possibility is the occurrence in John the Faster, where even Boswell has to resort to a wholly unprecedented meaning. This appearance of the term can therefore scarcely be regarded as determinative for its other occurrences, which are sufficiently revealing to put its meaning beyond doubt.

Professor Boswell devotes only very limited attention to the evidence of the early versions for the meaning of ἀφανοξοῖς. The three most significant versions are the Latin, Syriac and Coptic. For the pre-Vulgate Latin translations of the term a critical presentation of the evidence is available only for 1 Tim. 1:10. The main preference is for masculorum concubitores, with concubitores alone and stupratores (or puerorum stupratores) also indicated. Citations of 1 Cor. 6:9 show a similar preference in the early Latin version of Irenaeus’ Adversus Haereses, in Tertullian, Gregory of Elvira, Ambrosiaster and Pelagius, but Cyprian’s two quotations have masculorum appetitores (adpetitores). The latter clearly reflects an understanding of ἀφανοξοῖς in which ἀφανο- is the object of the second half of the word, and the same is implied by masculorum concubitores. The latter word
seems to be a coinage of early Christian Latin, and the phrase was scarcely used at all in the early centuries outside of a biblical sphere of reference. In its usage there is nothing to support Boswell's assertion that 'to a Latin speaker the phrase would clearly imply acts of prostitution rather than sexual inclination' (p. 348).

For the Old Syriac version of the New Testament other than the Gospels only quotations provide evidence. The Peshitta text of 1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Tim. 1:10 breaks ἀφερεξοσιτεια into three words, literally 'those who lie with men'. This appears to be a direct translation of the Greek word. Confirmation that Syriac speakers read the word in this way is provided by the evidence advanced earlier from Bardesanes and Eusebius's Greek version of part of his text, and from the Syriac translation of Aristides' Apology which may be dated c. 350 A.D. and therefore antedates the Peshitta.¹¹

Like the Syriac, the Coptic versions in both the Sahidic and Bohairic dialects render the Greek word by two Coptic words 'lying (or sleeping) with-males'.⁵⁴ There is no ambiguity about the interpretation of ἀφερεξοσιτεια in the Coptic Churches of the third and fourth centuries. The result is that none of the three primary versions of the New Testament affords any support for Boswell's thesis.⁶⁹

This enquiry has concentrated on the use of ἀφερεξοσιτεις etc., and on its supposed linguistic form. An alternative approach to its meaning in the New Testament would examine the background to the lists of vices in which it appears in 1 Cor. 6:9 and 1 Tim. 1:10. There is no lack of literature on this subject and no point in retracing well-trodden paths.⁶⁸ Most previous studies conclude that the kinds of lists encountered in our two verses developed in late Judaism exposed to strong Hellenistic influences, but they have failed to produce a comparable list in which ἀφερεξοσιτεις or its equivalent appeared prior to 1 Corinthians.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, that Hellenistic Jewish writings unambiguously condemned the homosexuality encountered among the Greek world is not in doubt.⁶⁹ At the same time the moral philosophers of the Hellenistic era were increasingly coming to question homosexual indulgence. The presumption is thus created that ἀφερεξοσιτεια came into use, under the influence of the LXX of Leviticus, to denote that homoerotic vice which Jewish writers like Philo, Josephus, Paul and Ps-Phocylides regarded as a signal token of pagan Greek depravity. It is not apparent that investigation of the sources of the New Testament's Lasterkataloge serves to establish further than this the meaning of the term. But it is probably significant that
the word itself and comparable phrases used by Philo, Josephus and Ps-Phocylides\(^1\) spoke generically of male activity with males rather than specifically categorized male sexual engagement with παιδείς. It is difficult to believe that ἀρσενοκοίτα was intended to indict only the commonest Greek relationship involving an adult and a teenager. The interchangeability demonstrated above between ἀρσενοκοίτα and παιδοφοβία argues that the latter was encompassed within the former. A broader study of early Christian attitudes to homosexuality would confirm this.

**Notes**

1. This is the subtitle of John Boswell's *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago and London 1980). The fruits of the research that lie beyond the book had some influence on the literature on the subject before it was published. A mention in V.P. Furnish's *The Moral Teaching of Paul* (Nashville 1979) 83, indicates that it was earlier scheduled for publication by Professor Boswell's own university's press at New Haven under the title *Ganymede in Exile: Medieval Christianity, Homosexuality and Intolerance*. Boswell's reinterpretations were extensively adopted by J. J. McNellis, *The Church and the Homosexual* (London 1977). See n. 59 below. Furnish's rendering of the two words is worth quoting (p. 70)—'men who assume the female role in sex, men who have sex with them'.


3. Despite the fact that E. A. Sophocles' *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods (from B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100)* (Memorial edition, New York 1887), p. 253, s.v. ἀρσενοκοίτες made the connection with Lev. 18:22 LXX.


p. Const. 7:2 (PG 1, 1000; ed. Funk, p. 390) indirectly confirms the continuing validity of the Levitical ban. The commands that spell out 'the way of life' include "'You shall not corrupt boys' (παιδοφθαρματ),' for this wickedness is contrary to nature, and its scale is not less corruption."


Homil. in Levit. 11 (SC 287, 142ff.). Origen did not deal with Lev. 18 at all.


P. Kretschmer and E. Locker, Rückläufiges Wörterbuch der griechischen Sprache, 2nd suppl. by G. Kissner (Göttingen 1963) 272; C. D. Buck and W. Petersen, A Reverse Index of Greek Nouns and Adjectives (Chicago 1944) 556. These comments on the compounds of -κατάς, etc., ignore chronological and geographical variations of usage. They merely seek to find out whether prima facie evidence can be found to support Boswell's contention. Boswell's comment (p. 344 and n. 24) about παρακάτως does not alter this conclusion. The occurrences he records do not clearly support his contention. Cf. Peter Zasas, '1 Corinthians 6:9ff; Was Homosexuality Condoned in the Corinthian Church?,' Society of Biblical Literature 1979 Seminar Papers, vol. 2, ed. P. J. Ashmeter (SBL Seminar Papers Series, 17; Missoula 1979) 205-212, at p. 208: 'Of the two [malakas and α], arsenokoiētēs is the easiest to define, at least by its etymology, "one who lies with a man."

But Zasas is wrong when he goes on to claim that most examples of the word are found in the moral literature of Hellenistic Judaism and from the syncretistic astrological literature (p. 209), and in his attempt to associate it with idolatry.

Kretschmer and Locker, pp. 40 (-κατάς), 495, 711 (-κατός), 591, 715 (-κατάς); Buck and Petersen, pp. 163 (-κατάς), 491 (-κατός). Together they list 26 compounds of -κατάς, 12 of -κατάς, and 18 (Kretschmer and Locker alone) of -κατάς.

Boswell suggests (p. 343 n. 20) that διάφοροντα yields the same meaning whether διάφορον is the object or the subject of -κατάς. It is attested solely in Theophrastus of Antioch, Ad Autolycum 1:9, 3:6 (PG 6, 1037 (not 1023, as Boswell), 1129; SC 20, 76, 214). On the first occasion it is charged against Jupiter together with μορχία and παιδοφθορία. On the second Epicurus and the Stoics are accused of inculcating it and ἀφροπόθασι. Since a few lines previously Epicurus is credited with counselling men καὶ μηρίδα καὶ διάφορον ἀμμύνομεθα, the objective force of διάφορον in διάφοροντα is clearly implied. This would agree with the semantics of most other compounds with διάφορον. At one point Boswell claims (p. 343 n. 19) that, had Paul used διάφοροντα instead of δρασακοῖατι, it would not have been ambiguous. This seems to rest on the assumption that whereas δρασακοῖα is clearly a noun stem, δρασακοῖα may be either a noun or an adjective. This is not the case. If compounds of δρασακοῖα are of uncertain meaning, the uncertainty is not rooted here. The δρασακοῖα-prefix is a noun stem. In any case, there are compounds of δρασακοῖα, such as δρασκέως and δρασκεῖαν, in which it is not the object of the second part but qualifies it like an adjective.

Compounds of δρασακοῖα and δρασακοῖα are rarely discussed in the specialist literature. P. Chantraine, Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Grecque. Histoire des Mots, vol. I (Paris 1968) 116, translates δρασακοῖα as 'pédéraste', and merely comments that most of the δρασακοῖα-composites are of a technical character and often late.

Anthologia Palatina 9:586 line 5; Anthologie Grecque, pt. 1: Anthologie Palatine.

10 Homil. 4:22 (PG 34, 489; ed. H. Dörries et al., Die 50 gealtlichen Homilien des Makarios, Patristische Texte und Studien, 4 (Berlin 1964) 42. Since the sin of the Sodomites is here described as attempted ἄρπαξαντες, Boswell’s interpretation of the word cannot stand on this occasion.

In addition to these two occurrences, the ἄρπαξαντες form also appears in a homily ascribed to Cyril of Alexandria (n. 38 below) and in the astrologer Rhetorius (n. 55 below). A total of four occurrences is not insignificant for a word of such limited currency overall.


13 Polycarp, Philipp. 5:3 quotes 1 Cor. 6:9, likewise Clement of Alexandria, Paidag. 3:81 (SC 158, 156). On another occasion Clement quotes 1 Cor. 6:9f. at Strom. 3:18:109 (GCS 52, 246) with the introduction ἵνα δὲ τῆς παρὰ τοῦ κανόνα ἰδιαφόρης μὴ πλανώθη ἡ γῆ... Irenaeus quotes 1 Cor. 6:9 in Adv. Haer. 4:27:4 (SC 1001, 748ff.) and 5:11:1 (SC 153, 136ff.), but his original Greek is not extant (Latin masculorum concubitores). Methodius, De Resurr. 1:60, 2:4 (GCS 27, 324, 336) twice quotes 1 Cor. 6:9, but without further clarifying the meaning of our term. Origen quotes the text in whole or part on a number of occasions: Comm. on Matt. 13:28 (Latin only—masculorum concubitoribus), 14:10 (GCS 40, 256, 299); Fragm. e Catenis in I Cor. 13:27 (ed. C. Jenkins, JTS 9, 1908, 369); Ep. ad amicos Alexandriæ, apud Jerome Apol. con. Ruffinum 2:18 (PL 23, 462—Latin only—masculorum concubitores); Homil. on Jerem. 20:3 (SC 238, 262ff.); Dialog. with Heracl. 10 (SC 67, 76); Homil. on Levit. 4:4 (SC 286, 172—Latin only—masculorum concubitores). 1 Tim. 1:9-10 is quoted in Comm. on Rom. 4:4 (PG 14, 973—Latin only—masculorum concubitoribus).

Hildesheim, New York 1972) 169). *Biblia Patriarcha*, vol. 3 p. 24, indicates that the occurrence of ἀφρονοματίμην printed among Origen's *Fragmenta e Catena in Proverbia* on Prov. 7:12 in PG 17, 181, does not belong to those sections of the catena to be ascribed, not without some uncertainty, to Origen. Boswell, p. 350 n. 43, inclines to find in the passage 'an equation of "ἀφρονοματίμην" with "γυναικείς ἡμετοί", i.e., female prostitutes'. At most it implies that they share condemnation with the ἀνθίμον γυναικὸς. The operative sentence reads: Οἱ μὲν ἐν ταῖς κλατισίαις μεμβόλησον μεταχειάς καὶ πορνείας καὶ κλοπῆς λαμβάνον ἱλατίμους: οἱ δὲ περὶ τῶν μεμβολην, τὰς παρὰ φύσιν ἡμοιὰς μεταχείονται, ἀφρονοματίμην ἐπιζητοῦντες, καὶ ἄλλοι τινῶν ἀπεγορευμένων πραγμάτων φαντασίας λαμβάνοντες.


P. 351 n. 43. Boswell claims here that ἀφρονοματίμη α in classical Greek applies mainly to males but in patristic Greek almost exclusively to females. Again evidence is hard to come by. The lexicons of Sophocles and Lampe list only one occurrence, in a late work (seventh century at the earliest) falsely ascribed to Caesarius the brother of Gregory of Nazianzus (*Dialog.* 139, PG 38, 1044—ἀφρονοματίμων γυναικῶν). Liddell-Scott-Jones give only one secular usage, in an epiphony of the fourth-century astrological work of Hephæstion of Thebes, in which ἀφρονοματίμη is the equivalent of ἀθετημεν αναρχήματος, *Apostellogocon* 1:1:18 (ed. D. Pingree, vol. 1, *Bibliotheca Teubneriana*, Leipzig, 1973, p. 16) and *Epit. IV*, 1.107 (ed. Pingree, vol. 2, 1974, p. 147). Boswell also implies in the same note that the LXX usage of the term applies it to females, whereas it does not occur in the LXX. (No compound of ἀφρονοματίμη occurs in the LXX, solely the derivative ἀφρονοματίσως, 2 Macc. 10:35; see H. E. T. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint*, vol. 1, Oxford, 1897, p. 160). Boswell later acknowledges that in Chrysostom ἀκατὰ τῶν ἀφρονοματίμη α stands for male homosexual passion (p. 360 n. 18). Cognates of μανδα are used to similar purpose in Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius and Chrysostom.


See n. 6 above.

Boswell is left with the task of showing where Moses forbade male prostitution serving women. He suggests (in another incomplete reference, p. 351 n. 46) that Eusebius's ἀφρονοματίσω may be an allusion to Deut. 23:18 LXX, but the word there is πορνείους, not ἀφρονοματίσω.

See n. 5 above.


*Praep. Evang*. 6:10:25 (GCS 43:1:339); parallel Syriac text, ed. Drijvers, p. 46. Male prostitution is obviously excluded. Elsewhere Bardesanuses uses two other expressions, literally ‘marry the men as wives’ (Drijvers, pp. 48-49), and ‘take males’ as partners in marriage *ibid.*, pp. 52-53, 60-61.

Ad Autolyc. 1:2 (SC 20, 60)—Show me yourself, εἰ οὖν εἶ μοιχᾶς, εἰ οὖν εἶ Πόρον, εἰ οὖν εἶ θρασυκολαθῆς; 1:14 (SC 20, 91)—for those who are full of μοιχίας καὶ πορνείας καὶ δραστορχίας there awaits wrath.


Homil. Div. 14 (PG 77, 1087-1088)—yet another wrong reference in Boswell, p. 353 n. 51). The homily may be by Cyril’s uncle and predecessor as bishop, Theophilus, who died in A.D. 412.

Ep. II. 282 (PG 79, 341).


Did. 2:2 (SC 248, 148).


Fragm. e Catenis in Exodum, on Exod. 12:15 (PG 12, 284): οἱ τῶν βλαχῶν Θεός ὁ χρηματικῶν τοῦ νόμου, οἱ ἀδελφεῖς μοιχὴν, ωἱ ἀδελφεῖς πόρων, οἱ ἀδελφεῖς παιδοφόρων…


Cf. K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (London 1978) esp. pp. 16, 85-87; L. P. Wilkinson, *Classical Attitudes to Modern Issues* (London 1978) 116-117, 121. Relationships were generally entered into between young men and teenagers of 12-18 years. Reciprocal desire of partners of the same age group was almost unknown in Greek homosexuality. The relationship was essentially that of the ruler and the ruled, which helps to explain why παῖς was used of the younger partner even when reaching adult height.


"E.g., A. Kurfess, 'Das Mahngedicht des sogenannten Phokylides im zweiten Buch der Oracula Sibyllina', ZNW 38 (1939), pp. 171-181, at pp. 172-174: 'Das Verständnis von Or. Sib. II 71 (= Phok. 18) ist also durch V. 73 μὴ ἔρισσωμαι vermittelt, während der Vers bei Ps.-Phokylides eigentlich in der Luft hängt und kaum verständlich ist.' But Kurfess bases his case at this point too heavily on a strained reading of στρεμάτα μὴ ἔλεγήν. This phrase has given rise to varied interpretations and emendations; cf. van der Horst, pp. 124-125.


"See n. 19 above.

"See W. Jaeger, Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius (Leiden 1954) 208-230. Jaeger established Macarius's indebtedness to Gregory of Nyssa, which further questions the earlier thesis of Macarius's affinities with Messalianism. The homilies are ascribed to one Symeon in part of the tradition. Jaeger concludes that the unknown writer flourished around the mid-fifth century in the Near East, probably in the Syrian region. The edition by Hermann Dörries et al., op. cit., pp. ix-x., has nothing to add on this question. It continues to ascribe the collection to the Messalian Symeon, and takes no account of Jaeger. Heinz Berthold's edition of other works of Macarius (Makarios/Symeon Reden und Briefe, vol. I; GCS, 1973, ii ff.) places the author in Syrian monastic circles towards the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century, and maintains the Messalian connexion.
" P. 364 n. 26. Cf. p. 353 n. 51, and pp. 363-365, where Boswell gives an English translation of the section from PG 88, 1893, 1896. McNeill, op. cit. (n. 1 above), p. 53, follows Boswell here and describes this use as of the utmost importance for understanding ἀπεννοσκοτία. The sixth-century Byzantine writer, Joannes Malalas, in his Chronographia 18:167-168 (PG 97, 644) uses ἀπεννοσκοτία of homosexual relations interchangeable with παιδραστία and ἀδερφοκτία, as Boswell recognizes (p. 172 n. 10). Later, however, Boswell assimilates ἀπεννοσκοτία here to παιδραστία as ‘illicit relations with boys’ (p. 353 n. 51). Nothing explicit in Malalas indicates that this was the precise nature of the offence.

" Apparently ‘goddaughter’.

" ‘Minucius does not even cite the evidence of the Scriptures except once or twice in a very obscure manner... Where he might easily have gone nearer to the words of the Bible, he is content to allude rather obscurely’, H. J. Baylis, Minucius Felix and His Place among the Early Fathers of the Latin Church (London 1928) 145, 153. It is nowhere near the mark to say (Boswell, p. 349) of either Ausonius or Cyprian or Minucius Felix that they ‘discuss homosexual relations in considerable detail and with large vocabularies’.

" See nn. 22, 23, 37 above.

" See above nn. 6, 34. The latter occurrence is not mentioned by Boswell.

" πάντα ἀγαπητάς ἄθιμου γάμον καὶ πᾶσαν ἀσχημονία πράξεν, γυναικῶν τι πρὸς γυναῖκας, καὶ ἄρρηταν πρὸς ἀρρήτους μίησεν... The last phrase is a common way of describing homosexuality, being found in Plutarch, Josephus and other writers.

" Homil. on Tit. 5:4 (PG 62, 693-4).

" Homil. on 1 Cor. 16:4 (PG 61, 134-135). Boswell discusses this passage later, on p. 351.

" If Boswell were right, one would then need to ask why, in connection with discussion of the Sodomites’ homosexuality, Chrysostom should think of 1 Cor. 6:9 if ἀπεννοσκοτία did not provide the link. Boswell’s reference (p. 348 n. 34) to Homil. on Matth. 42(41):3 (PG 57, 449) seems mistaken. The passage contains nothing of relevance.

" Boswell gives a translation (pp. 359-362) of much of Chrysostom’s homily.

" Homil. on 1 Tim. 2:2 (PG 62, 511-512).

" Although strictly irrelevant to this investigation of the meaning and use of ἀπεννοσκοτία, it is worth noting, if only to put the record straight, the inadequacy of Boswell’s implication (pp. 348-349) that no Latin father cites 1 Cor. 6:9 in connexion with homosexuality. Gregory of Elvira (Tractatus Originis 10:23, 34; CCL 69, 81, 83) and Salvian (De gubern. Dei 7:18:82; CSEL 8, 182) both do so. Tertullian (De pudic. 16:4; CCL 2, 1312—masculorum concubitores) and Cyprian (Testim. 3:65; CCL 3, 155; De Domin. Orat. 12; CCL 3A, 96-97—masculorum adpetitores/appetitores) both cite 1 Cor. 6:9 but in contexts that do not further clarify its meaning. According to Boswell (p. 349) Lactantius (Div. Inst. 5:9; CSEL 19, 425) ‘quotus at length from the list of sins’ in 1 Cor. 6:9 without using any word for homosexual. In fact, of his enumeration of seven types of sinners, only two (adulteri and fraudulentis) appear in the African Latin New Testament text reconstructed by H. von Soden, Das Lateinische Neue Testament in Afrika zur Zeit Cyprians. Texte und Untersuchungen, 33 (Leipzig 1909), 594.

" It could be pertinently asked, if one were to take a leaf out of Boswell’s book, why neither Philo nor Josephus use παιδοφιλία, nor Josephus παιδραστία, and why (according to his lists, p. 347 nn. 31, 33) Clement did not use the latter and Chrysostom the former.

" P. 348 with n. 36. He regards masculorum concubitores as a somewhat misleading translation of ἀπεννοσκοτία.
"Vetus Latina 25 (Epistulae ad Thessalonicens etc.) fasc. 6, ed. H. J. Frede (Freiburg 1978) 411.


See nn. 24, 33, 34 above.


Ephraem's Pauline commentary is extant only in an Armenian version, to which I have access solely in a modern Latin translation, S. Ephraem Syri Commentarii in Epistolam D. Pauli nunc primum ex Armenio in Latinum Sermonem a Patribus Mekitaris translati (Venice 1893). Ephraem conflates the vice catalogue in 1 Cor. 6:9 (p. 58), but cites the word in question at 1 Tim. 1:10 (p. 245—masculorum concubitoribus here). Cf. J. Molitor, Der Paulustext des hl. Ephratam aus seinem Armenisch erhaltenen Paulinenkommamentar untersucht und rekonstruiert. Mon. Bibl. et Ecl. 4; (Rome 1938) 148.


The text cited by Wibbing, op. cit., p. 90, containing παθοφόρον, following παροφόνοι and μητεροφόνοι, is not relevant. It is no earlier than the fourth century A.D., and parallel texts reveal that παθοφόρον is a synonym of παθοκόλον, παθοφόνοι (Scriptores Physiognomonicci Graeci et Latini, ed. R. Foerster, vol. 1, Leipzig, 1893, 327).


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