“The Kingdom of God cannot be inherited by ἀρσενοκοῖται! (1 Cor 6:9)”
Who are they, and why is Paul condemning them?
Abstract

This paper will look at the interpretation and translation of ἀρσενοκοίται (1 Cor 6:9) in the list of people who will not inherit the kingdom of God. The word is mentioned in 1 Cor 6:9-10, and it has been translated in ways going from “homosexual”, “men who lay with men” and “sodomite” to “a man who lets others use himself or who uses others for debauchery” and “pedophile”. By looking at the views on sexuality, and male same-sex sexuality in particular, pertaining the Greco-Roman society and the Jewish culture contemporary to Paul, and also paying attention to the textual context as well as the context of the congregation in Corinth, the study has its aim set on finding what the word might have denoted to the first readers in the congregation in Corinth, and to Paul. The goal, then, is not to find a translation of the word ἀρσενοκοίται that is literal, but to find one that is as close to a dynamic equivalent as is possible. This goal will, hopefully, be attained by giving the translation to the modern reader that is the one most likely to connote the same ideas and emotional connotations as the Greek word did in its original context. As the meaning of words change with time and context, there is a need for a translation that can bridge the gap created by that shift of meaning. Building that bridge in the case of ἀρσενοκοίται is the goal of this paper.

When the meaning, or meanings, that is found most likely to have been attained by the ancient readers is found, there will be a critical evaluation of some of the modern translations (and some a bit older) of the word in 1 Cor 6:9 to see if there already exists a translation that can be said to reach the goal of dynamic equivalence, given the meaning that is found most plausible in this paper. The study will argue that that is not the case, and therefore also propose a new translation, one that is argued to be closer to dynamic equivalence than those that has been evaluated. This translation is ”Men who sexually exploit men to gain social powers”.
Sammanfattning


Vad ett ord betyder är inte alltid statiskt över tid och rum utan förändras ofta, om än gradvis. Det riskerar därför att uppstå en klyfta mellan det som ordet från början innebar samt uppfattades som att det innebar, och hur det uppfattas idag. Den här uppsatsens mål är att överbrygga den klyftan för ἀρσενοκοῖται genom att ta reda på vad det grekiska ordet innebar i sin ursprungliga kontext och sedan ge en översättning som på bästa möjliga sätt ger en modern läsare konnotationer som i högsta möjliga grad stämmer överens med de konnotationer som de antika läsarna fick när de mötte ordet. Detta innebär alltså att målet inte är att ge en bokstavlig översättning av ἀρσενοκοῖται, utan en dynamisk ekvivalent översättning, där läsaren så långt det är möjligt får möjligheten att uppfatta det de första läsarna uppfattade.

När den, eller de, meningar det är mest troligt att ordet bar med sig i sin ursprungliga kontext är konstaterade, kommer en kritisk utvärdering utifrån den slutsatsen göras av ett antal moderna översättningar (och några lite äldre), för att se om det finns en existerande översättning som uppnår dynamisk ekvivalent. Det kommer visa sig att så inte är fallet, och en ny översättning kommer därför att föreslås: ”Män som sexuellt utnyttjar män för att vinna social makt”.
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1. Introduction

On a plane to the Philippines, a friend of mine once sat next to a Swedish pastor from one of Sweden's smaller Protestant denominations. They discussed matters of the Bible for a while, a common interest between them, and eventually it became clear that their views on things differed. After some time the pastor bluntly said “the Bible does not need to be interpreted, it is all clear as it is!” This comment illustrates a fundamental basis of disagreement between the two, and because of it, they had a hard time agreeing on how to read passages from the Bible. Some time later, after my friend got back to Sweden, he told me about this experience, and to me it gave rise to an intensified reflection about meaning, especially in the biblical texts. What does it mean, for example, to “love” or to “forgive”? These are not necessarily understood in the same way everywhere in the world today, so why would they be the same to us as they were to the authors of the Bible? The terms appear to be open to some interpretation, and maybe not just open, but unavoidably exposed to it. So where is the meaning found? The discussion on that airplane also touched upon the subject of homosexuality in the Bible and the interpretation of verses connected to it and, as one might expect given their different perspectives, the two men did not agree on the matter.

Later the same year I was yet again introduced to the subject of homosexuality and the interpretation of especially one relevant verse, 1 Cor 6:9, through a course at my university. I was faced with some of the problems surrounding translations, problems that became clear given the problem of how words attain meaning and the possibility that the meaning might change over time— in essence, how words are understood. In a lecture on this subject, Joel Hoffman gives some examples from the King James Bible, one of which is “let”. Today this means something like “allow”, 400 years ago it rather meant “prevent”. I could finally not help to ask myself: Might this kind of shift in meaning also be a relevant perspective on First Corinthians 6:9? The study will show that it might very well be so, and that Paul seems to be condemning the use of male same-sex intercourse in order to gain social powers, and to do this he invents a new word.

1.1 The aim and problem of the study

This study will focus on 1 Cor 6:9 and the word ἀρσενοκοῖται (arsenokoitai), its ancient connotations and the modern translations of the word. The word is found in a list of vices belonging to people who, according to Paul, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Today, the word is rendered in

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2 The 21 minute long Tedx talk from East Hampton can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ek_qbqyBnE (viewed 7/4-2015). Joel Hoffman is a translator, author and teacher and has worked with using modern linguistics in order to increase the understanding of the Bible.
many different ways in Bibles around the world, with variations stemming from "sodomites" (NRSV), "homosexuals" (RVR1995), and "män som ligger med män" (men who lay with men – Bibel 2000) to "de som synder mot naturen" (those who sin against nature – Det Norsk Bibelselskap 1930), “Knabenschänder” (Schlachter 2000) and “karlmaður sem lætur sig eða notar aðra til ólífnadur” (a man who lets others use himself or who uses others for debauchery) – Biblía 21 aldar). In the present globalized culture, it is not hard to realize that even if these translations are taken from different languages, they do not necessarily connote the same thing. The Spanish "homosexuales" and the Portuguese "sodomitas" are not the same as each other or the Icelandic (Biblía 21 alda) "enginn karlmaður sem... notar aðra til ólífnadur" or the Swedish (Bibel 2000) "män som ligger med män”. The problem is even present within translation into the same language; English translations range from “abusers of themselves with men” (ASV) to “sodomites” (NRSV) and “they that do lechery with men” (Wycliffe Bible) and in Swedish it ranges from ”de som utövar homosexualitet eller de som låter sig utnyttjas för sådant” (they who perform homosexuality or let themselves be used for such – Svenska Folkbibeln) to ”män som ligger med män” (Bibel 2000).

This problem becomes even more intriguing when one takes into account the way that Paul's condemnation of ἀρσενοκοῖται has been used, and still is used, in some Christian circles. It is my opinion that if one ever is to even think about using an ancient text, seen by some people as sacred but not by others, to condemn another human being or the behavior of that person, as is done today using 1 Cor 6:9, it is highly problematic if this verse is not even translated in a way that shows what the text might have originally connoted. The study will indeed raise some serious doubts surrounding the modern translations, and I will also suggest an alternate interpretation and translation of the word: ”Men who sexually exploit men to gain social powers”. This is a suggestion that I will argue is equally, or more, plausible than the ones mentioned above. No translation is perfect, but there are degrees between splendid and completely useless. I hope to place my translation closer to “splendid” than the translators before me have, while realizing that there is most likely still room for improvement.

Since the word sometimes has been translated together with the word preceding it, μαλακοί, it will be relevant to include that word in the discussion as well.

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3 I owe this translation to Professor Veturliði Óskarsson, at the University of Uppsala.
4 For example, in the Cathechism of the Roman-Catholic Church, 1 Cor 6:9/10 (depending on translation, 9 in most) is invoked to show the Scriptural support for labeling homosexuality a “grave depravity”. See part three, section two, chapter two article six, under “Chastity and Homosexuality” – can be found online here: [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM)
5 Of course this does not mean that what the text condemns when translated correctly needs to be or should be condemned today, but when even the very foundation of the argument of the condemnation is unstable, I find it even more important to take a closer look. What should be done with the result is a hermeneutic question, and not in the scope of this paper to argue – although some implications will be noted in the last pages.
1.2 Structure of the paper
The paper will be divided into two main parts; the first one will deal with *then*, and the second one with *now* in relation to *then* – that is, the first part will investigate relevant ancient views on sexuality, the Sitz im Leben of the first letter to the Corinthians, Paul himself, the first recipients in Corinth and the word ἀρσενοκοῖται. This investigation will be conducted by first looking at views on (male) homosexual acts in the time and context of Paul, and then at the context of the recipients of the letter and the word itself in the text. From this investigation, conclusions will be drawn as to what the word probably meant in its original context. The second part will investigate the meaning of the modern translations mentioned above in comparison to the result of the first part. If none of the modern translations seem to fit, there will be a suggestion as to what a better translation might look like. Finally, I will end the paper with a short reflection on some implications of the study and suggestions on how to proceed with the subject.

1.3 Formulating the problem
When we read "homosexual", "sodomite", "men who lay with men" and other such translations (e.g the ones given above), the words naturally tell us something based on our understanding of the words. In the same way, when I say "homosexual" or "sodomite", I am referring to some idea that I have, and if I want to make an important statement about something that I want others to understand, I will try to use the word in the same way as I believe the addressees to understand it. The problem that will be the focal point of this paper is related to this exact thing – when Paul stated that ἀρσενοκοῖται could not inherit the kingdom of God, is he saying what we think he is saying when we read "homosexual", "sodomite", "men who lay with men" or one of the other above given translations? By these translations, is the reader likely to create the same, or at least similar, understanding in his or her mind as the first recipients, the people that Paul intended the letter to? Consequently, the paper will deal with Paul and what he might have wanted to say, the first recipients and what they understood, and the modern recipients and what meaning should be the most obvious to attain when reading the text.6

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6 One can never decide or limit the interpretations, but one can affect them and steer them in a direction. The mental image that a reader will create when reading the word "homosexual" is probably not the same as if he or she reads the word "sodomite", and if he or she commits some time to interpret it, the reader will find that dictionaries give different definitions to the words, and hence the interpretation will be affected even more in one direction or the other.
1.4 Questions

What are the likely connotations intended by Paul, and what connotations are the most plausible to have been found by the first readers of the first letter to Corinth when they encountered the word ἀρσενοκοῖται in the list of vices in 1 Cor 6:9 (continued in 6:10)?

Do the word/the words chosen by modern translations to translate this word reproduce these connotations?

If the second question is answered negatively, what would a translation that is closer to giving the same connotations to a modern reader look like?

1.5 Theoretical framework and method

The study is concerned with the meaning(s) of the text and the translation of it – especially one word. The question of where the meaning can be found then has to be addressed. It is my opinion that the intended meaning of Paul might be at least partially recoverable, especially in cases where there is a lot of information about the plausible background and the recipients, as in this case. The likely sources of inspiration for Paul will be discussed when looking at the things that might inform us about the meaning of the word itself: the historical context of Paul, the recipients, and the literary context of the word. This means that I will place a great deal of trust in historical criticism to guide the interpretation of the word and thereby to stop the text from falling into unimportance, in agreement with the role ascribed to methods of historical criticism by John J. Collins, and intrinsic in a clarifying statement on the matter, given by Wayne Meeks: “Even so simple a task as translating a sentence from an ancient language into our own requires some sense of the social matrices of both the original utterance and ourselves.”. However, I want to make it clear that this trust in the use of historical criticism does not mean that I will claim to have the meaning of the text or know the one intention of Paul in using the word – there might be several both meanings and intentions. The meaning of a text is further only partially due to the author's intention since it is never entirely free from the reader and the interpretive principles the reader carries. As Stanley

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7 I want to clarify that when I, from this point on, discuss “meaning”, I do not restrict it to being one or being many at all times. There might be one or more intended meanings, there might be one or more received meanings in the understanding of the reader. To make the reading easier, however, I will not add a (s) to the word “meaning” every time I use it.


10 Fish, Stanley Eugene (1980). Is there a text in this class? the authority of interpretive communities. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press p. 14 Dale B. Martin argues in a similar way in his study of ideologies of the body in ancient Corinth when he states that the intentions of Paul are not irrelevant but they do not constitute the meaning of what he wrote, since what he thought he was doing does not have to be the same as what he did. See Martin, Dale B.
Fish does, I hold that the meaning of a text is created when it meets the reader and a reaction is created, and thereby that a text can, and most likely do, have multiple meanings. This perspective however does not exclude the need for knowledge concerning the original milieu of the text, the Sitz im Leben if you will, especially not in scholarly research or when working with Bible translations. That knowledge can provide a guideline as to which meaning is more relevant and closer to the meaning both intended by Paul and created by the first readers, since it might give a hint as to what the interpretive principles looked like. To not have that knowledge on the other hand would leave the text open to being altered in more distinct ways, which in turn could alter the meanings that readers are likely to find in the text. There is, as an example, a big difference between reading the word ”homosexual” and the word ”sodomite”, since the latter includes all forms of anal intercourse while the former includes all forms of sexual acts between people of the same gender, not only anal, but instead says nothing about anal intercourse between man and woman (both definitions according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary). The difference is even greater between “homosexual” and “pedophile”. The interpreter will, then, be deeply affected by the word that is chosen. This framework means that the study will not claim to have the only interpretation of the meaning of the entire text, but it will claim to inform the interpreter about the context of the word in focus and about the sort of translation that could be given to the interpreter as a plausible alternative to the already existing translations. The use of a method that tries to find the reaction between the first reader and the text, and then give the modern reader a basis to experience a similar reaction, also presupposes that the goal of the translation is to create the ultimate conditions for the same reaction to appear in a reader today when facing a text as in the first readers of the text almost 2000 years ago. Consequently, I am open to supporting a dynamic equivalent translation in the case of this word, to use the language of Eugene A. Nida. Further, I am in agreement with, and influenced by, his opinion that ”words only have meaning in terms of the corresponding culture” which means, as Nida also holds, that the culture (both the modern and the ancient) must govern the translation if dynamic equivalence is to be achieved, as well as the literary context of the word since the rest of the text also can influence the meaning.

In studying First Corinthians, I will place focus on the author, the text itself and also the recipients. This wide focus is partly because of the close connection between the three parts in creating meaning, but it is also because of the specific text that is in focus. When Paul wrote the
epistle, he seems to have had information about the addressees (already in 1:11 he gives away some of his sources, and a letter also seems to be underlying First Corinthians, see 7:1, and also a visit from Paul – 2:1). This means that he probably took this knowledge into account when writing, and thereby it was part of the knowledge that informed the content of the letter. This background makes knowledge about the congregation in Corinth valuable to include, as well as the context of Paul and his knowledge about Jewish Scripture and Greco-Roman civil society, since they all influenced what he wrote.

Since I place such a big emphasis on the context of the recipients in this study, it could be misleading to use the history of reception to interpret ἀρσενοκοῖται – the later recipients were not part of the environment surrounding the first recipients. This problem does not, however, make the study of reception history useless, but it motivates the need for a more thorough study of it than is possible here. The focus on the power-structures surrounding sexuality in ancient Rome also makes it clear that a study of the history of reception of the word, especially the early recipients, must also take these structures into account (and the changes that they underwent), something that is not always the case. To understand the interpretation made by the recipients, one must look at their respective interpretive principles and contexts, since these change over time and geographical distance, as well as within a community. It is not possible to undertake such a study within the framework of this paper.

In this study, I assume a view on a person's sexuality as in its core being a result of biology and not culture or choice. It will however assume that how society understands sexuality is highly cultural and a construction that can change over time. The division between views on sexuality, that are culturally based, and the source of that sexuality, that is not bound by culture, is fundamental to the paper since the study concerns the ancient views on sexuality and the shift that has occurred to the contemporary views on it, and not the sexuality itself. I do not wish to investigate how many men there were who wanted to have sex with men or why they wanted it, I want to investigate the views held on these men and the motivations to those views, and how they affected Paul.

1.6 Definitions
When using modern concepts in writing about the ancient world, there is always a risk of altering the perspectives and ideas that are presented. This risk is indeed present when it comes to the concept of ”homosexuality”. The concept was invented in the 19th century to talk about a sexual inclination, rather than about sexual acts. As D. F. Wright says, however, in an article where he is defending his use of the word “homosexuals” in relation to First Corinthians in a previous article,
the difference in original meaning does not mean that it cannot be used in a different way than was first intended since "linguistic usage does not stand still", and this inference is probably correct. However, he then goes on to say that "homosexual" in the English language now refers to sexual acts sometimes regardless of inclination. He does this without supplying any sources, arguing against a modern dictionary like the Oxford Dictionary of both “British and World English” and “US English”, who in the explanation of the noun include “attraction” to the same sex, not just actions. He also completely overlooks the connotations that the word carries from the modern history of being considered a decease or part of sexual psychopathy. By using the word “homosexual”, he also risks making the enormous difference in status given, in the ancient world, to the “active” and “passive” partner in the relation invisible, since “homosexual” today might refer to both of the partners.

Wright goes on to defend the fact that he uses homosexual in his earlier article even though it includes females and the word ἀρσενοκοῖται does not, and he does it quite successfully by stating that in his article it is clear that he is only talking about men, so one can use it in that way as long as it is specified and clear in the article that it is used to only talk about male homosexual activity. I agree with that but will, in this paper, use “male homosexuals” for men who undertakes male same sex activity (inclination not included in the term). I also want to emphasize that female homosexuality is not included in the discussion, unless that is clearly stated, since it is not part of the Greek term investigated here. It should also be noted that in a Bible translation, the use of “homosexual”, even with “male” in front of it, might be problematic since it needs some explaining. As I understand Wright, he is however not arguing for such a usage at all.

I will later in this paper try to give a clear picture of the male homosexual acts that were being practiced during the time of Paul, and it should be noted that that is what the words “male homosexuality” will be referring to – the ancient male homosexual practice. What can be said already is that “homosexual acts” (or terms like that), of any sort, will not be used to talk about an identity, or inclination, but a behavior, since (as Craig A. Williams holds) homosexual behavior is universal in that that it has always existed, but the identity that is connected to that behavior is contextual, which is evident from the changes it has experienced in different contexts throughout

15 Wright, DF 1987, 'Translating arsenokoitai (1 Cor 6:9, 1 Tim 1:10)', Vigiliae Christianae, 41, 4, pp. 396-398, here p. 396
17 This difference between the active and passive partner will be discussed in “2.3 Sexuality in the Greco-Roman context”.
18 Wright 1987 p. 397, criticized by Petersen, WL 1986, 'Can arsenokoitai be translated by "homosexuals" (1 Cor 6:9, 1 Tim 1:10)', Vigiliae Christianae, 40, 2, pp. 187-191. It seems as if they are talking past each other, where Petersen is arguing about Bible translation, while Wright sees it as clear from the context of his article what he means by “homosexual” - he does however not say that it should be translated like that in the Bible.
Further, as William Petersen notes when criticizing Wright – all sorts of sexual labels that could be applied to a person referred to the kind of sexual acts performed, not any sort of inclination.

A term that also needs to be defined is “effeminate”, since it will be used in this paper and often is used to translate μαλακοί, and has experienced a shift in meaning over time. Effeminate today connotes a man who in some way displays characteristics that are seen as womanish, like wanting to have sex with a man. Even though the characteristics that are attributed to an effeminate today differs even within a relatively small country like Sweden, there are a few characteristics in the ancient notion that I think are unlikely to put a man at risk of being called effeminate today, such as chasing women in a way that is too unrestrained, performing oral sex on a woman, wanting sexual relations with married women, being lazy, having a weak eye or pale skin, or having too much love of excess and luxury. Josephus even thought that people who were “reluctant to commit suicide” were effeminate. These notions of effeminacy stems from the idea that ”effeminacy was... a disorder that was embodied in various symptoms, only one of which, and not a necessary one at that, was a predilection for being anally penetrated”. Μαλακός, then, referred to all aspects of being less than a man, and those notions were not necessarily the same as they are today. When “effeminacy” is used here it will refer to the ancient notion and if necessary the point will be specified.

In this paper I will place a lot of emphasis on the social stratification of the congregation in Corinth, a stratification based on big differences in social status among the members of the city. There is, therefore, a need for some clarification concerning what I mean when I refer to "higher" and "lower" social stratas. There are two larger social groups defined in 1 Cor 1:26: These are the wise, powerful and of noble birth (these three categories constituting one group), and then there are the rest, who seem to be outnumbering the first group by far (the first group is said to be οὐ πολλοὶ


20 Petersen 1987 p. 188
21 Bremmer 1989 p. 11
23 Josephus *War* 7.338
24 Williams 1999 p. 126
25 Martin 1996 p. 125
26 1 Cor 1:26 “Βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλῆσιν ύμῶν, ἄδελφοι, ὅτι οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα, οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοὶ, οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς”

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I will later in this paper argue that, even though the former group is small, it constitutes the primary recipients of the critique in the letter. To do this, however, I will first have to define who was part of the group that I will call "members of the higher stratas" (the plural "stratas" implying that more than one strata that could be called "high" was available"). Wayne Meeks discusses the issue of what markers of social status there were in the ancient world, and I find that the categories he mentions are quite useful. These are "power (defined as "the capacity for achieving goals in social systems"), occupational prestige, income or wealth, education and knowledge, religious and ritual purity, family and ethnic-group position, and local-community status". A person was probably not part of the same high or low group in society across all of these indicators, and the indicators were not necessarily equally important, but the higher "average" social status one had, the higher was the cumulative "social ranking", or place in the social stratification, enjoyed by this person. Further, it seems that there was not one single "high strata" or "low strata", there were higher and lower also amongst, for example, the powerful, rich, and educated – one could, as an example, be well educated compared to most people, but still less educated than the elite. One could also be very rich but stem from a family of lesser "average" status.

By looking at 1:26, we find that power, education and knowledge, and family, were indicators of social stratification mentioned by Paul. To make the study comprehensible, I will primarily, but not necessarily exclusively, use the concepts "high social strata" and "low social strata" in regards to these indicators. It is however necessary to also add wealth. Wealth might be a valuable indicator of social ranking in this case since Paul is refusing to accept any monetary compensation from the congregation in Corinth (chapter 9, see also 2 Cor ch. 11) and to give money was a way to assert social influence and power for those who had the money to do so. Further, wealth is important because it seems to have been one of the ingredients in the struggles within the congregation (see for example 11:17-34, which Meeks holds to be the clearest example showing that there was a conflict between the "relatively rich" and the "relatively poor"). Paul puts wealth on the table, so to speak, he just does not mention it with the other categories in 1:26. Since the categorization of high and low strata might differ from person to person, it is important to highlight

28 Meeks 1983 p. 58
29 Meeks 1983 p. 54
30 Witherington 1995 p. 22
31 Meeks 1983 pp. 67-68
the categories mentioned by Paul in his letter.

It is impossible to draw an absolute line where one ceased to be part of a "higher" or "lower" strata, as it is impossible to draw an absolute line between rich and poor, upper class and lower class, well educated and poorly educated, in the modern society. Still, these concepts mean something to us, and in the same way, the concepts of powerful, educated, rich and of noble birth probably meant something to Paul as well since he used them. Some people seem, to him, to have belonged to these categories while some did not, just as some people to (most of) us, today, belong to a higher or lower class in society. Therefore we must use these categories, lucid as they may be, and allow ourselves to not know who exactly constituted these groups but still view their existence as important to, and affecting, Paul. Admittedly, Paul probably did not use these categories or view his contemporary society according to them. They are rather tools for us to talk about the people that Paul are siding with or against. Even though categories that are applied to the ancient world are at risk of being anachronistic and carry modern connotations that were not part of the ancient world, it is impossible to not use some sort of categorization since Paul also seem to be doing that. However, to use "the rich" and "the poor", or "the educated" and "the uneducated", as Paul did, would carry even more modern luggage than "higher stratas" and "lower stratas". So, in lack of better terms, I will talk about higher and lower stratas in Corinth, focusing on the categories mentioned by Paul to classify where one ends up. We must also remember that, in the same way as today, people were not necessarily fixed in one place, and the will to rise from lower to higher social stratas (that is, to gain wealth, education and other means of power) was, as we will see, part of society.

Last but not least I want to make a small note on general terms like "people". These will, in this paper, mostly refer to male persons, since Paul is (probably) writing to primarily men. He is not discussing issues from a female perspective (see for example 7:36-37) and thus it is important to note that the general terms I use are influenced by this. John Boswell, when commenting on this, mentions the impossibility of offsetting the disproportion between men and women in the ancient sources without "deliberate distortion". However, it is still important to note.

32 Categories like family and possessions were known and important already to the writers of Ex. 22:21-26, and in Amos 2:6b. In the latter, the word ἡγύον (êvyôn) is translated "needy" or "poor". In the LXX, the word used in Amos 2:6 is πένητα, which also occurs in 2 Cor 9:9 (πένησιν). The categories, then, might carry modern connotations, but they were is some way relevant and used in ancient times as well.

1.7 A note on the author and the overarching goal

As I was writing this paper, the debate about whether or not male and female homosexuality is a sin according to the Bible and if it should be treated as such today was raging in some Swedish Christian circles, fueled by recently published articles giving different perspectives. Since the subject in this way can be considered both a controversial and a current one, I want to make it clear where I stand in the debate and also make a note on what kind of intention I have in writing this paper. This seems to be the most honest way to give the reader a chance to evaluate my point of departure.

I am a member of the largest church denomination in Sweden, the Church of Sweden, which a few years ago opened up for all homosexual couples to get married. I support this decision, and I also agree more with the side of the debate claiming that homosexuality as we see it today should not be condemned by the church than the other side. However, this opinion is not what made me choose the subject of this paper. I chose it because I stumbled upon the discrepancy between the view on sexuality in the ancient world and the view today (and also upon different translations made during the 20th century), and it gave rise to a tantalizing feeling that something was not right in the translation and interpretation of this verse, and that feeling caused me not to let the issue go but to research it more thoroughly. This paper is the result of those investigations. I also want to make clear that I, in this paper, am not trying to prove that Paul was pro male, or female, homosexuality as we see it today. I am not trying to prove anything about Paul's overarching view on any sort of sexuality. The goal is, rather, to discern what he wanted to say in 1 Cor 6:9. It seems this verse is often used to support the view that Paul found all forms of modern homosexuality to be a sin, something also noted by Victor Paul Furnish. I hope to call this assumption into questioning on exegetical grounds, not in an attempt to make Paul seem sympathetic to my opinion on the question of homosexuality as a sin or not but to give the verse a chance to speak on its own, from its ancient context, without being hijacked by one or the other camp.

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34 The debate mainly has been taking place in the magazine "Dagen", a Swedish, Christian magazine founded by the charismatic pastor Lewi Pethrus in 1945 (http://www.dagen.se/dagens-historia 4/6-2015). The article that so far has gotten most attention also in regular newspaper is the one stating that the Bible is clear concerning homosexuality – it is a sin. This is said while indirectly referring to 1 Cor 6:9, and the article was signed by 22 pastors. See http://www.dagen.se/debatt/bibeln-tydlig-om-homosexualitet-1.349464 (19/5-2015). See also my answer to that article, where I give a very brief summary of some of the arguments from this paper: http://www.dagen.se/debatt/%C3%A4r-bibeln-verkligen-tydlig-om-homosexualitet-1.350998 (19/5-2015). One should however be aware that I also go beyond the scope of this paper in the article by also arguing from a standpoint of faith, and not a strictly academic one.

2. Scholarly, literary, and contextual background

2.1 Earlier research

In this section, I will present the studies about ἀρσενοκοῖται that either are often referred to by other scholars, and thereby have shaped the scholarly debate for some time, or studies that represent opinions that are commonly held on the meaning of the word in focus here. I will also present criticism that has been leveled against them, and add some critique of my own when called for.

The attention that has been given to, and the problems stemming from, the word ἀρσενοκοῖται (as well as the preceding word μαλακοί) is clearly visible in the Bible translations that has been produced over the years. In the case of ἀρσενοκοῖται, the change of translations has gone from ”thei that don leccherie with men” (Wycliffe 1380) to a translation more colored by psychology and the contemporary ideas of normal; RSV 1942 and REB 1992 has ”sexual perverts” and NEB 1970 ”homosexual perversion” (perversion being something that is ”abnormal or deceased”). It might be quite interesting, also, to see the rather fast transformation in the Spanish RVR-translations. In 1960 it had ”los que se echan con varones”, seventeen years later this had become ”homosexuales”, which was preserved in the 1995 translation. Μαλακοί has gone down a similar path; Tyndale (1534) had ”weaklings”, ASV (1901) ”effeminate”, REB (1992) ”persion” and NRSV (1989) ”male prostitute”. This transformation alone causes some questions about the rationale for such change.

The following summary of scholarship on the subject will take as its starting point the study conducted by John Boswell in 1980, a study that stirred up a debate on the subject and which is still quoted by commentaries writing on the verse. Boswell has two main points. First, that in the Pauline corpus, there is hardly anything said about homosexuality of any sort, and the juxtaposition of ἀρσενοκοῖται and πόρνος in 1 Tim 1:10 suggests that ἀρσενοκοῖται refers to male (possibly homosexual) prostitutes. πορνεία is, after all, something that Paul says a lot more about in his letters than homosexuality. The next point is to prove how impossible it is that ἀρσενοκοῖται would denote ”homosexuals” by showing that no one during the following three centuries used the word in that way – not even John Chrysostom who more than once spoke harshly against homosexuality, but when talking about 1 Cor 6:9 he did not even mention the subject. Boswell also has a witness from the twelfth century to invoke:

As late as the twelfth century... Peter Cantor ransacked the Scriptures for all possible references to homosexuality; he

36 Martin 1996 p. 118
37 Martin 1996 pp. 117-118
39 Boswell 2005 pp. 341, 344, 346-348
came up with everyone accepted as such today—Genesis 19, Leviticus 18 and 20, Romans 1, Jude plus many rather fanciful inferences (e.g., from Ezekiel, Isaiah, Joshua, Titus, Colossians), but he did not cite I Corinthians 6:9 or I Timothy 1:10.\(^\text{40}\)

Boswell then states that the meaning of the word was gradually forgotten during the time from the fourth to the sixth century, so that it later came to be used about different things like child molestation and a man having anal intercourse with his wife.\(^\text{41}\) There is also a discussion in his book, on the structure of the word, that deserves mentioning. Boswell differentiates between words with the Attic root "ἀρρην" and the Hellenistic "ἀρσην" and claims that "in no words coined and generally written with the form "ἀρσενο-" is the prefix demonstrably objective". This means that the man in the constructed word is the one acting, a male sexual agent—an active male prostitute.\(^\text{42}\) Note also that he does not think that μαλακός denotes the passive partner in a male homosexual relation (an interpretation that often has been made\(^\text{43}\)), but holds that it refers to "moral weakness" in general.\(^\text{44}\)

Boswell has been harshly criticized and not many of his conclusions are left standing today. The study has become more of a starting point for critique that shows the view held by the scholar criticizing. One of the more powerful critics has been D. F. Wright,\(^\text{45}\) who in an article from 1984 set out to show that the study of Boswell was important but filled with flaws.\(^\text{46}\) I think Wright has a solid case in claiming this. One of the first points of critique is that Boswell fails to bring Lev. 18:22 and 20:13 into account, where the words "ἀρσενος" and "κοίτην" are used (in LXX) to translate the bans on male homosexual activity. Since Paul, as far as we know, created the word "ἀρσενοκοίτης" and was very familiar with the LXX, this connection seems to be a big thing to leave out. Wright believes that this flaw is due to Boswell's faulty understanding of the influence of the "Old Law", which Boswell thinks was "irrelevant in explaining Christian hostility to gay sexuality".\(^\text{47}\) He goes on to show that the structure of the word does not support the conclusions drawn from it by Boswell; when κοίτης is used in a compound, contrary to the inference of Boswell, the first part almost always denotes the object. Further, the difference between ἰδρεν- and ἰδρεν- has not been supported by other scholars, and Wright considers it quite unlikely to have any support at all. He also claims that "in most if not all of the compounds in which the second half is a verb or has verbal

\(^{40}\) Boswell 2005 p. 349

\(^{41}\) Boswell 2005 pp. 353

\(^{42}\) Boswell 2005 pp. 343-344

\(^{43}\) See for example Barrett 1968 p. 140, NIV and Biblia 21 Aldar

\(^{44}\) Boswell 2005 p. 340

\(^{45}\) See also Hays, RB 1986, 'Relations natural and unnatural : a response to J Boswell's exegesis of Rom 1', *Journal Of Religious Ethics*, 14, 1, pp. 184-215 who finds Boswell's arguments "unconvincing".

\(^{46}\) Wright, DF 1984, 'Homosexuals or prostitutes : the meaning of arsenokoitai (1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10)', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 38, 2, pp. 125-153

\(^{47}\) Wright 1984 pp. 126-127
force, the first half denotes its object, irrespective of whether it is ἀρρενο- or ἀρσενο-". He invokes, as an example, δουλοκοίτης. This does not mean "slaves sleeping with others" but "one who sleeps with slaves".48 Last but not least, he shows that Boswell has underestimated the use of ἀρσενοκοίτης in the early Church fathers and even in his "star witness" Chrysostom. Wright then concludes that ἀρσενοκοίτης encompassed all sorts of homosexual acts between males.49 The critique is harsh and often justified, but Wright also makes a few unfounded assumptions. The most important one to this study is that he seems to assume that the literary context of the word has no bearing on its meaning and simply does not use it in informing his interpretation of the word. The same line of thinking is clearly championed by Furnish, who states that the list is a random collection of gentile vices “all decent people” would have agreed with.50

Arguing for the complete opposite are C. K. Barrett and Anthony C. Thiselton, who claim that the list of vices in 1 Cor 6:9 are very contextual and based on what Paul knows about the congregation in Corinth.51 I find this view more convincing since the vices seem to have a thematic connection to the rest of the letter (see 3:3; 4:6, 18-19; 5:1-5; 6:12; 11:17-34),52 and it seems to be an unlikely coincidence if the list was just taken at random. Further, it is not convincing that just because everyone would have agreed on the vices being bad, it was collected at random. It could just as well be a way of putting the behavior of the congregation in perspective by pointing it out to them and also pointing out the consequences of that behavior. Of course the list might have existed before (it is impossible to rule out), but to Paul it must have made sense to use it in this letter. If, as with the evidence available today seems likely, Paul invented the word ἀρσενοκοίται, that would further strengthen the idea that the list is composed to fit the specific situation. It is most likely that, as Barrett claims, Paul used the common rhetorical grip of making a list of vices, and filled it with the content he found suitable given the context of the congregation in Corinth.53 By following the lead of Barrett and Thiselton, I find that it is plausible that the list of vices is not a general note on sins, but that Paul is addressing specific issues that he either had seen in the congregation or found the congregation at risk of doing since the surroundings of the congregation where doing them and some people in Corinth did not separate themselves enough from the behavior of those surroundings.54

48 Wright 1984 pp. 130-132
49 Wright 1984 pp. 135, 141, 143, 144, 146
50 Furnish 2009 pp. 82-83
52 Connections like these are also pointed out by Gordon Fee, who seems to presuppose that the vices in the list are not there at random but instead closely connected to the rest of the letter – see Fee, Gordon D., The first epistle to the Corinthians, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1987 p. 242
53 Barrett 1968 p. 140
54 See 1 Cor 3:3; 4:17; 5:6 (and 5:10-11 where Paul shows the important difference between the ones in the
A perspective where the context of the Corinthian congregation is relevant in understanding ἀρσενοκοῖται also undermines the whole discussion between Boswell and Wright when they emphasize the history of reception. Boswell further does not seem to use all of the available material, and both he and Wright draw some, in my view, faulty conclusions from it based on a lack of understanding of (or attention to) the changes that might occur in the meaning of a word when the context of the recipients change.

One common suggestion to the meaning of ἀρσενοκοῖται is that it means "pederasty" or "the active male partner in a pederastic relationship", and then μαλακοί is the passive partner. This interpretation is supported by, among others, Ben Witherington III and Herman C. Waetjen. Waetjen comes to this conclusion based on his view on the sexuality in the Greco-Roman society, where he claims that the only homoerotic sexual intercourse that existed was that between a boy and a man. Witherington seems to be on the same track, but he pairs it closer together with μαλακοί and thereby gets this meaning. He goes on to say that if the word does not stand next to μαλακοί, it can mean "male homosexual activity" of any sort. There are however flaws in their shared hypothesis, shown by Larry W. Hurtado. He who points out that there were a lot of words available in the Greek language to describe pederasty, so if that was what Paul primarily wanted to discuss, he would probably have used one of them instead of creating a new one. Hurtado also calls attention to an anachronism: It is not likely that ancient people viewed the pederastic relationship as a victimization in the way that we do, so to attribute a protest against such victimization to Paul could be dangerous. Lastly, girls were given in marriage at the same age as boys were taken as lovers, or even younger – if Paul wanted to protest all pederastic relationships, it would be completely misguided to use a word denoting only men. I agree with this critique and find that to simply claim "pederasty" as the intended meaning of the word does not work. Later in this paper I will also call the pairing of μαλακοί with ἀρσενοκοῖται into questioning.

When discussing ἀρσενοκοῖται, scholars sometimes include 1 Tim 1:10, since that is the only other place in the NT where the word is used. As was shown above, Boswell used the positioning of the word in that verse to inform the meaning of the word also in 1 Cor 6:9, and

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55 Wright 1984 p. 141
57 Witherington 1995 p. 166
58 Hurtado, LW 1996, 'The Bible and Same-Sex Erotic Relations', Crux, 32, 2, pp. 13-19 here pp. 16-17 His critique is guided primarily against interpretations of Rom 1:26-27, but he also raises the issue of 1 Cor 6:9 and the critique is also valid there. See also CIL 1.2.1221 where a girl is said to have been married to an older man at age 7.
Hurtado uses it to confirm his belief concerning 1 Cor 6:9. I think it is a mistake to do so, a mistake that has not, to my knowledge, been given attention. First Timothy was probably not written by Paul but after his death, and the author is unknown. To me, the fact that First Timothy rather is part of reception than a source of First Corinthians, suggests that 1 Cor 6:9 alone should be informing the meaning of 1 Cor 6:9 and perhaps also of 1 Tim 1:10, and not the other way around. Even though reception history might inform us about how the word was perceived I believe, as stated above, that the list in First Corinthians is linked to the situation in Corinth and should primarily be understood as part of that specific letter. The use of it in First Timothy calls for a different and thorough investigation of that letter and the context of the word and addressees if it is to yield any valuable information about the reception, and there is not enough room to do that here.

There is one more place in the Pauline corpus that might be seen as interesting in the discussion on male, and female, homosexuality, namely Rom 1:26-27. There are however a few reasons to leave this out of the present discussion as well. First of all, once again, the letters are contextual and specifically written for a certain group of addressees and a certain purpose in mind. To use Rom 1:26-27 in order to shine light on 1 Cor 6:9 might just as well cast a shadow on one's ability to see the verse clearly. Secondly, the term that is in focus in this paper is not used in Romans 1, so to use the verse in interpreting 1 Cor 6:9 is a gateway to speculations like "he did not use it because it denotes something else" or "he did not use it because it did not rhetorically fit" - the word needs to be seen in its own context. There is no reason to presume that Paul wanted to say the same thing in the two letters as they were aimed at specific recipients and not part of a theological tract. Lastly, one has to take a serious look at the word φυσική (fysikê) that is used in both of the verses in Romans 1. It is translated "nature", but what did it mean to do something in accordance with, or against, nature? It seems that it did not have the same meaning as it does for many people today, and according to John Winkler, one can often exchange "nature" for "culture". Some quite interesting views on "nature” can be found in the Epistle of Barnabas, where it becomes abundantly clear (see for example 10:7) that his views on nature is influenced by popular, and very contextual, wisdom which he applies to the Hebrew Bible. Consequently, I find that Rom 1:26-27

59 Hurtado 1996 p. 17
61 Amongst others, Furnish chooses to include these verse in the discussion on Paul's view on homosexuality. See Furnish 2009 pp. 87-89 R. B. Hays lists it with 1 Tim 1:10 and 1 Cor 6:9 as the three passages that constitute the only New Testament support for condemning homosexuality. See Hays 1986 p. 186. Fee (1987 p. 243) claims that one has to use Rom 1:26-27 to understand what Paul thought about same-sex sexual activity, something that could inform the interpretation of 1 Cor 6:9.
63 See also Pendergraft, M 1992, "Thou Shalt not Eat the Hyena": A Note on "Barnabas" Epistle 10.7, Vigiliae Christianae, 46, 1, pp. 75-79 where she discusses the popular belief informing the author of the epistle of Barnabas.
is not helpful to the interpretation of ἀρσενοκοίται in 1 Cor 6:9.

There has been some substantial research concerning the social setting in Corinth, the background of Paul and the sexual ethics of Greco-Roman culture. However, that research has not, in my view, been used to inform each other in a proper way in the research. The power-relations in ancient views on sex is well known to scholars who write about ancient views on sex, and the social setting of Corinth, while debated, is well known to scholars writing about that. The knowledges has however not been combined in a satisfactory way. The motivation to the view on male homosexual sex found in the Torah is somewhat a mystery and seems to have been so even to Philo, who when he tries to create arguments as to why the passive partner in a male homosexual relation should be killed seems to be heavily influenced by the contemporary Greco-Roman culture. There are however hypotheses, but these try to find the original intention of the Levitical ban, not to show what they might have meant to Paul. This problem of anachronism is also evident in the article from 1984 by Wright, mentioned earlier. He states that ἀρσενοκοίτειν "refers to the Levitical proscription of male homosexual activity". What he does not do is to analyze the understanding that Paul had of this proscription, as Paul was part of the reception of these verses and situated in a specific context, a context that held a specific view on male homosexual behavior. Instead, Wright bluntly assumes that the verse means the same to him as it did to Paul, and thereby there is, in his mind, no question as to what the proscription told Paul. Hurtado does the same and refers to Wright as his source. This calls for questioning, since we can see that Philo's understanding of the very same passage was affected by the cultural context he lived in, which influenced his motivation to why the passive male should die, while with the active (called παιδεραστής – lover of boys) there was no question. Wright, and Hurtado with him, thereby does something that Dale B Martin explicitly warns about doing; ”Any firm distinction between "Greco-Roman and Jewish” in this period is therefore historically misleading”, and I believe this perspective to be a true and sometimes overlooked one.

66 Crompton 2003 p. 46 referring to Philo Spec. Laws 3.39. See also p. 28 in this paper.
68 Wright 1984 p. 127
69 Hurtado 1996 p. 17
70 Philo Spec. Laws 3.39
71 Martin 1995 p. xiii
scholarship concerning the case of pederasty. As we have seen, quite a few scholars raises the issue of pederasty. Herman C. Waetjen bluntly concludes that “1 Cor. 6:9-10 denominates the two types of individuals who engage in pederasty”. He then goes on to claim that the addressees of the letter lived in a context where homoeroticism exclusively was expressed through pederasty (and ”perhaps lesbianism”) and that the concept of erotic desire from one man to an other was unknown, in agreement with David Halperin.\footnote{Waetjen 1996 p. 107, see also his referens (note 13) to Halperin, David M. (1990). One hundred years of homosexuality: and other essays on Greek love. New York: Routledge p. 21}

First of all, one has to define ”pederasty”, since the concept was not used in the same way in ancient Rome as it is today. Παιδεραστία was by the Romans seen as a form of stuprum, that is, an ”offense consisting in the violation of the sexual integrity of freeborn Romans of either sex.”\footnote{Williams 1999 p. 96 see also Cicero Catiline 2.8 and Quintilian Institutio Oratoria 10.1.100} and could also be seen as a Greek custom.\footnote{Williams 1999 p. 96} This view stems from the fact that in Greek culture it was not only allowed but even encouraged for a grown man to have sex with a freeborn boy. The qualification is important, since this is the big difference between the sexual attitudes of the cultures – in Roman culture freeborn boys were off limits, while slave boys were completely within the boundaries.\footnote{Williams 1999 pp. 30-31 and Cantarella, 1996 p. 99} The difference stems from a wholly different way of viewing the sexual act itself. In Greek culture, the man helped teach the boy and passed on virtues not only by his knowledge but also by his semen. Therefore it was necessary for the boy to have a lover and to be penetrated.\footnote{Cantarella, 1996 pp. 6, 8} In Roman culture on the other hand, all sexual acts were for the penetrator a display of power and imposition of the own will upon someone else. To display power was something that freeborn Romans were to learn, they were to learn to rule all others. To penetrate a Roman boy would then be to make him learn to be submissive, the complete opposite of what was aimed for.\footnote{Cantarella 1996 p. 100} For a man to have sex with a freeborn Roman boy would thereby be seen as a violation of the pudicitia – the ”province of the free” –, it would be an offense against the “sacrosanct” body of a citizen and also violate the ”propriety claims of the paterfamilias” and blur the distinction between free and slave.\footnote{Williams 1999 pp. 97, 99, Winkler 1990 p. 48} One should further notice that there is the problem of age when using the word “pederast”. In the ancient world the boys that were primarily being chased were between the ages of 13 and 20 years old.\footnote{Williams 1999 p. 19} In modern day Sweden, one is legal to have consenting sexual intercourse at the age of 15, so the term “pederast” might give the modern reader misleading connotations.

There is further a blind spot in regard to women (shortly mentioned earlier), since they were
seen as ready to be married to a man at the age of 12, according to Roman law, while boys were seen as ready for marriage at the age of 14.\textsuperscript{80} Yet the focus is strictly on male-male activity in this term, so “pederasty”, including women in the modern sense, is problematic in many ways. It might also be dangerous to do as Waetjen does when he, in agreement with Halperin, states that there was no such thing as reciprocal homoerotic desire known to the ancient world. This argument finds support with K. J. Dover as he states that ”the reciprocal desire of partners belonging to the same age-category is virtually unknown in Greek homosexuality...”,\textsuperscript{81} but the emphasis here, if this is correct, should be on Greek. The evidence from Roman culture speaks about men who wanted to be penetrated as seemingly a part of the everyday life. There were even a few words for them – \textit{cinaedi, impudicus, pathicus} (although not all men called this wanted to be penetrated, but all men who wanted to be penetrated were). They were ridiculed for this desire and had disadvantages in the eyes of the law, but at the same time they were considered ”handy, even pleasurable, outlets for men’s sexual pleasures, but also convenient butts for ridicule”.\textsuperscript{82} There are also stories about men getting married to men, one of these men being the emperor Nero. What is interesting with stories like these, whether true or not, are two things: It was conceivable for a man to want to be penetrated (although he should not), to have a desire for it just as there was a desire to penetrate. Secondly, the objections against a sexual relationship between men was that someone had to “be” the woman, not that they were in what we would call a male homosexual relationship. Further, Aristotle asks “why is it that some men enjoy being acted upon sexually, whether or not they also enjoy being active?” and thus he shows an awareness that it occurs, the problem is to understand \textit{why}.\textsuperscript{83} All this shows something that Waetjen might have missed in his conclusion, and perhaps also Dover (since Aristotle was Greek); the \textit{desire} was known but there was no ”egalitarian model for sexual relations” so \textit{someone had to lose} if two men had sex, and that someone was willing, and even wanted, to lose was the hard part to grasp.\textsuperscript{84} The sex of a person was not exclusively based on what was found between the legs, but on the person's place on a hierarchical spectrum, with one pole being ”masculinity” (good) and the other ”femininity” (bad) – so for a man to play the role of a woman would be to lose.\textsuperscript{85} This understanding of Roman culture is very relevant in understanding \textit{ἀρσενοκοῖται} because, as Gerd Theissen and Ben Witherington III argues, Roman culture was

\textsuperscript{80} Horn, Cornelia B. & Martens, John W. (2009). ”Let the little children come to me”: childhood and children in early Christianity. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press p. 15 As we have seen, these laws were not necessarily followed at all times since some girls were married before the age of 12. Men were often much older than the girl, see Shelton, Jo-Ann (1998). \textit{As the Romans did: a sourcebook in Roman social history}. 2. ed. New York: Oxford Univ. Press p. 37
\textsuperscript{81} Dover 1978 p. 16
\textsuperscript{82} Williams 1999 pp. 172, 175, 182
\textsuperscript{83} Aristotle 4\textsuperscript{th} book \textit{Problems}, the 26\textsuperscript{th} problem. Noted by Winkler 1990 p. 67
\textsuperscript{84} Williams 1999 pp. 7-8, 183, 186, 250-251
\textsuperscript{85} Martin 1995 p. 32
arguably the dominant culture in Corinth, a Greek city that was destroyed and then rebuilt by Julius Caesar in 44 B.C.E as a Roman colony.  

Something closely related to not understanding the zero-sum game of Roman sexuality described above, and never mentioned in the research I have come across but clearly relevant in translation, are the emotional connotations to a word. As stated earlier, Wright holds that “homosexual” does not mean today what it meant when it was coined. However he fails to draw the conclusion that it probably does not carry the same emotional impact either. In Sweden, as an example, male and female homosexuality was seen as a disease until the 1970s. Now the country has over 30 pride parades a year and even if homophobia still is an issue, the emotional connotations are hardly the same as just 40 years ago. These changes are never taken into account when talking about ἀρσενοκοίτης and the emotional connotations in ancient times – what kind of emotional connotations did it carry to Paul and the readers (if that is possible to know anything about)? I will try to take this into account in evaluating and suggesting a reasonable translation.

Now we have seen one side of the relevant scholarship, the side that most scholars are on: the one where you make solid suggestions as to the meaning of the word. Another way to go about it is the way Martin chooses. He states that he does not know what the word means, and that no one else does either. He has a suggestion that relates to exploitation by sex, but he bluntly says that he does not know if it is right. For him this has the consequence that it should not be possible to claim that the word connotes "men who have sex with other men" or anything else since we cannot know. If Martin is right in that we cannot know, then of course one should not make solid statements about the meaning either. However, I do not agree with him. As stated earlier, I think the text can have more than one meaning, but that they can be placed in a hierarchical order and that there is a possibility to find the most plausible one and place it on top, closer to “splendid” than “useless”. As a scholar, it is my responsibility to motivate why I put that interpretation and translation there, and by doing so hopefully shed light on the translation of the word. On the other hand, to say that it is impossible to know is, I think, to underestimate the present evidence and over-emphasize the postmodern pluralistic view because the evidence, to me, does not in this case grant that anything goes.

2.2 The literal meaning of ἀρσενοκοίτης, and the verses from Leviticus

Paul is the first known user of the word ἀρσενοκοίτης, so there is no earlier usage to help guide the

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86 Theissen 1982 (C) p. 99, Witherington 1995 pp. 6-7  
87 Nida & Taber 1969 p. 95  
88 Martin 1996 p. 123
interpretation. There are however a few things that might inform us of the meaning of the word. First there are the two parts that it is made up of, ἂρσην (male) and κοίτη (bed, sleepingmat).

Scholars seem to agree that the latter word in the construction has a verbal force and thus relates to "lying", so that the literal translation is "male layers/bedders". There are however differing opinions as to how the relation between them should be seen when it comes to if ἂρσην is the objective or the gender of the κοίτης, that is, if the word denotes active male sexual agents (as Boswell claims and equals to male prostitutes) or men having sex with men (as Wright thinks). I have mentioned these opinions above and that Wright seems to have the stronger case, not least because he shows how in other words ending with κοίτης, the object of it is found positioned in front of it. We must however go further to discover the plausible background from where Paul got the parts to create the word. We then go to the Septuagint (LXX) and Lev. 18:22 (καὶ μετὰ ἂρσενος οὐ κοιμηθήσῃ κοίτην γυναικός, βδέλυγμα γάρ ἐστιν) and 20:13 (καὶ ὃς ἂν κοιμηθῇ μετὰ ἂρσενος κοίτην γυναικός, βδέλυγμα ἐποίησαν ἀμφότεροι· θανατούσθωσαν, ἔνοχοι εἰσιν.). I find it likely that these texts are relevant to the meaning of ἀρσενοκοίται since they deal with what seems to be the same subject using the exact words constituting ἀρσενοκοίται in the context of keeping the community clean, and it is likely that Paul read and used the LXX, and not a Hebrew version. Thiselton argues that all of the words in the list of vices in 1 Cor 6:9-10 have their interpretive foundation in the LXX and that the Hebrew legacy has been too downplayed in scholarship while the Hellenistic part has been emphasized too heavily, and although not all scholars are guilty of this, it is a point worth considering. That the material for the word ἀρσενοκοίτης can be found in the LXX does however not prove that the meaning of the word comes from there, but in light of the circumstances that come together it seems to me that proving that ἀρσενοκοίτης is not at all influenced by Lev. 18:22 and 20:13 is harder and less plausible than that it is. This strengthens the idea that when using the word, Paul is in some way discussing males who has sexual intercourse with other males, leaving females outside of the question as well as prostitution, something not mentioned in the Levitical text (and mentioned separately in the list of vices in 1 Cor 6:9). It might also mean suggest that Paul, when using the word and writing the list, has the aim to keep the congregation free from pollution, as the Levitical ban had. That possibility will be examined later.

What it does not do is to lend itself to the interpretation that that is all of the meaning that

90 Wright 1984 p. 126 mentions these, on p. 129 he states that it might or might not be relevant in informing the meaning, but if it is it further undermines Boswell's interpretation of ἂρσην as the gender and not the object.
92 Thiselton 2000 pp. 440, 447

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can be found in the Levitical texts or that all of the meaning that informs the usage of ἀρσενοκοῖται can be found there at all; we have no way of knowing if the readers were familiar with the texts and would have made the connection. It is also important to explore in what way Paul interpreted the verses. Later I will ask the question I find that other scholars have missed: In what way did the verses inform him?

When translating the two phrases from Leviticus, the common way is to interpret the genitive γυναικός as describing the quality, rendering the translation "you shall not lay with a man as with a woman". This is the translation of Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton in 1851, but recently this interpretation has been questioned. There is a project that, when this paper is written, is active in translating old Greek Jewish Scriptures and the LXX is of course one of these, and it has been completed and is available both online and as a book. The project is called NETS (New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under that Title) and in due time there will also be commentaries to follow the translation, but these are still pending.93 They are working with the Oxford University Press and responsible for the translation of Leviticus is Dirk L Büchner (2009). In his translation the phrases read:

18:22 “And you shall not sleep with a male as in a bed of a woman, for it is an abomination.”

20:13 “And he who lies with a male in a bed for a woman, both have committed an abomination; by death let them be put to death; they are liable.”

Here the location of the sleeping/laying is made central and the genitive is seen as denoting the one possessing the κοιτή, “the bed of/for a woman”, and that seems to be a more natural reading of the Greek text. Still, it is probably a circumlocution for having intercourse and seen as such by Paul (as will be shown later, the history of reception of those verses, up until Paul, viewed the verses as such a circumlocution too), just like how the Swedish “samlag” only means “laying together” or the English ”getting laid” only means that someone is being laid down, but they are never used alone for anything but intercourse. Now, what we should not forget in this discussion is the question of how the text informed Paul as he read it, that is, what information did he attain from reading it, information that supplied the word ἀρσενοκοῖται with meaning? Here I want to call into attention an eloquent point, made by Martin, that ”the etymology of a word is its history, not its meaning” - an assumption that I am working with here.95 Paul was the recipient of these texts, something not to be forgotten, and so we must not think that the original intention of the Levitical writer(s), whatever

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93 Read more at [http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/](http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/)
94 For the 2009 version, completed with corrections and emendations from as late as 2014, see [http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/03-leu-nets.pdf](http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/03-leu-nets.pdf). These verses are found in the chapter “Leuiticon”, pp. 98, 100
95 Martin 1996 p. 119
that was, or our reading of it is the reading that Paul made. Once again it is relevant to mention Philo and Spec. Laws 3:37-42 as a telling example of the relation between reception and context, and a small excursion might be appropriate.

What is Philo actually condemning in this passage? At first he talks about τὸ παιδεραστεῖν and the fact that when boys have to suffer (πάσχειν) they might turn into more female than male and this is a threat to reproduction and should be punished by death. However, he is condemning those who willingly chooses to continue to be like a woman, or an ἀνδρογύνος (manwoman) (40), and those who are playing the insertive role. In verse 41 he calls being effeminate "τὴν καλὴν νεανίαν" - "the good of the youth" or, as Charles D. Yonge translates it, "delicate pleasures of youth". The problem with the παιδεραστία, then, is that it turns men into women and halts population growth, and this fear is a good match with the Roman fear and perspective on the Greek custom, the only difference is that Philo condemns the active male partner while seemingly indifferent to the social status of the boy, and this seems to be inspired by the ban in Leviticus. The fact that the boy is not clearly condemned for his actions while a youth, and that the problem is not the suffering of the boy but the "fact" that he will become effeminate, points to a contextuality of interpretation. There is also an uncertainty to the word παιδεραστεῖν, since this seems to sometimes have been used by Romans especially about the Greek custom of men having intercourse with free boys. This subject will not be further investigated here, the point has been made: Philo was deeply affected by his surrounding context, and in the same way, Paul is influenced by his context and that has to be taken seriously. In conclusion, my argument is that indifferent of what the Levitical bans meant to the first readers or to us, to Paul they were proof that the kind of male homosexual activity that was prevalent in his time in Corinth should be condemned. This argument also makes the literal meaning of ἀρσενοκοῖται less important than the euphemistic meaning and how Paul received it, while highlighting the need to see Paul as a part of the history of reception and as part of his own context, using the interpretive principles of his own milleu. Since I have stated that it is improbable that it was a simple case of condemning pederasty, something that he did not have to create a new word to describe, there is a need for a closer look on sexuality in the Greco-Roman context, and then a discussion on ancient Jewish notions on male homosexuality.

96 Jacob Milgrom thinks the ban is due to a will of increasing birth rates (see Milgrom, Jacob (2000). Leviticus 17-22: a new translation with introduction and commentary. New York: Doubleday p. 1750), in the Anchor Bible Dictionary the argument is made that it stems from the fear of two men uniting in a way that went against creation and thereby was a return to the chaos that existed before God ordered everything in the universe (see Frymer-Kensky 1992 p. 1145) and Louis Crompton argues that it originates in "rivalries with Near Eastern cults that honored transvestite shamans" (Crompton 2003 p. 537).
98 Crompton 2003 p. 44
2.3 Sexuality in the ancient Greco-Roman context

In this section, I will give a brief overview of the, for this paper, most relevant views on sexuality, and primarily male homosexuality, in the Greco-Roman society. A lot of attention will be given to the aspect of power, so tightly intertwined with sexuality in the ancient world.

Two people having intercourse can be described in different ways. In many modern societies there is probably an emphasis on the reciprocal character of the act – someone is doing something with someone. In the Greco-Roman context it was more likely to be described as someone doing something to someone. There was the active, penetrating, masculine partner and the feminine, passive, penetrated partner. To play the passive part was considered inferior and not physically enjoyable to men, and Dover states that "homosexual anal penetration is treated... as an aggressive act demonstrating the superiority of the active to the passive partner". Thiselton, following suit, holds that there was a close connection between the homosexuality prevalent in the time of Paul and slavery, social dominance and idolatry. Considering the perspective held on oral sex, which will be commented below, the perspective of "aggressive act" was probably true also with that. However, as Williams holds, what is said about relations between male-male can often also be said about relations between male-female. For a woman to be anally or orally penetrated also showed the superiority of the man (as did vaginal penetration), but in that case it was expected and in order, since the woman was expected to be inferior to the man. This expected subordination was also to different degrees true in regard to slaves, prostitutes, non-citizens and freed slaves. The only ones who were supposed to be definitely off limits for a freeborn Roman man were other freeborn Roman men and women (his wife excepted), and freeborn men were never supposed to seek to play the passive part. The consequence of this perspective, that emphasized the social status of participants and roles played in the intercourse and not the gender of the partner, shows that the gender of the partner was not considered in the way that modern people might be used to, but what you did with the partner, and that person's social status, was of great importance. A man who wanted to be penetrated was classified as effeminate (μαλακός) and the will to be penetrated was seen as a symptom of a deep disorder that gave rise to this will. The effeminate male did not live according to “the central imperative of masculinity: control and dominion”. Instead, he went down the hierarchical

100Martin 1995 p. 177
101Dover 1978 p. 67
102Dover 1978 p. 104
103Williams 1999 p. 4-5
104Williams 1999 pp. 19, 100, 226
105Williams 1999 pp. 126-127
spectrum of sexuality, away from the positive end of "male", towards the weak end of "female". When it came to sex, there were many ways for a man to slip down from masculinity. As mentioned earlier, things like giving oral sex to a woman or wanting too much sex with people no matter their gender could render a person as effeminate – wanting to have sex with another man was not necessarily one of these ways, unless you wanted to be the receptive part. Surely it was known that some men had a preference for men or women, but the preference was, as Williams argues convincingly, comparable to saying in the modern world that one has a preference for women with either blonde or brown hair – it is not "pigeonholed", and no one will find it strange if a man with one preference has a sexual relation with someone from the other group.

As one example of such value judgements in regard to sexual activities stands Ovid (in *The Art of Love* 2.683-686), more or less contemporary to Paul, who criticizes pederasty since it does not give the boy pleasure, but at the same time he concludes that he is “less enthralled” with boys than women because of this – he does not say that he is not into pederasty at all or, as Thomas K. Hubbard wrongfully interprets the passage, that he is critical of pederasty as such. Instead, he goes on to discusses the pains of having sexual intercourse with a woman who is not enjoying the act, clearly showing that he want to have sex with one that can receive pleasure from it, the sex of the person is in itself not important.

The terms "passive" and "active" in sexual intercourse call for some attention. Who is considered what is probably not universal, and the importance of penetration is highlighted when considering how people in the ancient Greco-Roman world viewed this division. When we say "to perform oral sex", it implies that the active partner is the one who uses his or her mouth. This perspective was not necessarily the one held in the ancient world, where the person performing oral sex on a man was seen as the penetrated, and thereby passive, partner. Oral sex was also seen as befouling the mouth so it was a double stigma for the "passive". The focus seems to have been on the penetration and that being penetrated was feminine, as well as passivity, and so they were combined no matter the rate of physical activity undertaken. When one narrows the scope even more it is possible to see that it was not always the act of being penetrated *in itself* that necessarily was the problem, but a man's *will* to experience it, that a man could have the *intention* to be
penetrated. A man who had "submitted to womanly things with his body" could not come before a magistrate to "make an application on behalf of someone else", just as women could not do that. However, if someone had been raped during a war, being a soldier, or by pirates, he was not included in this.\footnote{111}{Williams 1999 p. 194 referring to Digest of Justinian 3.1.1.2-4; 3.1.1.6}

Reputation was of great import in the ancient world, (and very much so in Corinth\footnote{112}{Thiselton 2000 p. 13, Witherington 1995 p. 8}) and people would do what they could to avoid that their reputation would be damaged.\footnote{113}{Witherington 1995 p. 8} To be seen as masculine was good for the reputation, so to a man, accusations of being the penetrated partner could be devastating if they were believed. It could even be preferable to be accused of raping a man than admitting to having been raped, since the rape could be seen as an excess of manliness surfacing, while being raped was to be feminized (wartime rape and rape by pirates excepted).\footnote{114}{Williams 1999 p. 110 see also Quintillian 11.1.84} A telling example of this can be found in Julius Caesar, who mostly does not seem to have minded being laughed at from time to time by his soldiers. There was only one joke that we know he did not tolerate, and that was being called "the Queen of Bithynia", a joke that played on the rumor of Caesar having an affair with king Nicomedes and being the passive partner.\footnote{115}{Williams 1999 p. 165 see Suetonius The Deified Julius 2, 49} This anecdote, together with the information we have of the ancient views on sexuality, suggests that there was a lot of shame involved in being the passive partner.

Still, it would be wrong to see the above mentioned evidence as condemning what we today might call a “homosexual inclination”, since “homosexuality” includes also the active partner and all of the potential passive partners, not just the freeborn, and an inclination is something else than an intention.\footnote{116}{"Inclination" is by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/inclination seen 6/5 2015) defined as "a feeling of wanting to do something : a tendency to do something“ while “intention“ is defined as “the thing that you plan to do or achieve : an aim or purpose”. The tendency to do something is, as I use it here, not a conscious choice, while an aim is.} What was condemned was free men subjecting themselves and thereby becoming more feminine, something that weakened them.

To the ancient Greco-Romans, masculinity was a zero-sum game. The losers in this game were of course women, but also the men who were seen to be less than masculine.\footnote{117}{Williams 1999 p. 183} Sex was one of the manifestations of the game,\footnote{118}{Winkler 1990 p. 54} where the penetrated partner lost and the active partner won, because by penetrating another man, he had reached the ideal of Roman masculine virility – he had put another man down.\footnote{119}{Cantarella 1992 p. 98} This perspective is in some ways also applicable to Greek culture. As stated, a Greek man was not just allowed but even encouraged to have a sexual relation with a...
young boy. To have sex with another grown man was however a different matter, and being penetrated was seen as being feminized by the active, superior male.\textsuperscript{120} This feminization, prevalent in both cultures, was not something everyone could choose to either experience or avoid. Slaves for example did not have control over their sexuality but the father of the household, the \textit{paterfamilia}, had the right to use it as he wished – as long as he was the one penetrating no one would find it strange.\textsuperscript{121} He could also order his slaves to anally rape a man who had committed adultery with his wife, if he did not want to perform the rape himself.\textsuperscript{122} Given that as much as 40\% of the population might have been slaves in the Roman empire the century before Jesus was born, and on top of that freed men, prostitutes and non-citizens of different sorts were available, free men had a lot of sexual opportunities when it came to men (and women).\textsuperscript{123} There were some restrictions to this freedom, for instance, a man was supposed to be able to keep his pleasures at a moderate level,\textsuperscript{124} and it was frowned upon to have sex with another man's slave since the slave was part of that man's household and thereby his property.\textsuperscript{125} The one big differentiation that mattered when it came to sexual partners was however the one between slave and freeborn because the freeborn had the right to his or her inviolable sexuality, while the slave did not but could sometimes be more or less manhandled as the master wished.\textsuperscript{126} On the whole though, the freeborn man could enforce his sexual will on a lot of people in his surroundings without anyone finding it strange or wrong, and by doing so asserting his power over people socially weaker than himself.\textsuperscript{127}

Furnish argues that the two most common expressions of male homosexual acts during the time of Paul was “sexual exploitation of youthful male slaves by their masters, and... the sale of sexual favors by teenage boys to older male clients”.\textsuperscript{128} Three categories quite similar to these are also in focus when authors during the late Augustan era denounces male homosexual intercourse – the problem is free men who abandon their roles as dominant men, effeminization, and male prostitution.\textsuperscript{129} The elements of domination and humiliation, greed and sexual exploitation, as well

\begin{footnotes}
\item[120] Dover 1978 pp. 103-104 See also Plutarch \textit{Dialogue} 768 and Polybios xii 15.1f, both mentioned by Dover on said pages.
\item[121] Cantarella 1992 p. 99, Williams 1999 p. 31
\item[122] Cantarella 1992 p. 104 There is a short dialogue in Martial 2.49 about this: "- I don't want to marry Telesina. - Why not? - She is an adulteress. - But Telesina puts out for boys. - I want her.” The man wants her because he will be able to punish the boy who has sex with Telesina by raping him (quoted from Williams 1999 p. 27)
\item[123] Cantarella 1992 p. 80
\item[124] Williams 1999 p. 38
\item[125] Cantarella 1992 p. 103, Williams 1999 p. 30
\item[127] Thiselton 2000 p. 451
\item[128] Furnish 2009 p. 70 This thought gains some credit from Witherington's argumentation, where he holds that "many in Corinth were already suffering from a self-made-person-escapes-humble-origins-syndrome", since in a milieu like that, it is more likely that people would go to any length to become self-made escapers of their humble origins.
\item[129] Fee 1987 p. 244
\end{footnotes}
as the will for excess and lack of moderation, are probably the most prominent ingredients behind
the opinions of the philosophers who were against male homosexual acts, like Dio Chrysostom,
Seneca the younger, Plutarch, and Musonius Rufus.\textsuperscript{130} Musonius also argued against male same-sex
acts because it was not within marriage with the purpose of producing children – he condemned all
forms of sex that did not have the production of children as a goal.\textsuperscript{131} One should note, however,
that the views of at least Seneca and Musonius Rufus stood in a clear minority within the Roman
society as they were questioning even the sexual relations a man could have with his slaves.\textsuperscript{132}

As we now have seen, sexuality was a game of winners and losers, where women were
supposed to lose, as well as slaves and freed men. The ones who chose away their victory, the free
men who wanted to be penetrated, were seen as anomalies because of the choice not to win by
becoming feminine, but still they were also a good sexual outlet. I will suggest that this perspective
of becoming feminine and losing to someone else, which is the perspective of a zero-sum game,
informs Paul when he condemns ἀρσενοκοῖται in First Corinthians. If my inference is correct, it
should be clear that ἀρσενοκοῖται cannot simply refer to “homosexuality” as we see it today, unless
we were to affirm the same values about honor and sexual dominance as those pervading in the time
of Paul. The question is much more complicated given the power-relations that pervaded the sexual
arena. The Greco-Roman male homosexual activities were a game of someone showing their
superiority up against someone else by making the other man less than a man and thereby someone
to be ridiculed and discriminated even in the eyes of the law – more discriminated than he might
already have been before, depending on his place in the social stratification. It could be seen as a
way of satisfying a greed aimed at gaining some form of status and a good reputation as a real man.
Of course there were men who did not care about being seen as effeminate,\textsuperscript{133} as well as men who
enjoyed being penetrated. However, to conclude that the sex was always consensual would be
naive. If the \textit{paterfamilia} wanted to have sexual intercourse of some sort with his slave/former
slave, the will of that man (or woman) did not matter; this scenario is a textbook example of what
we would call rape motivated by a will to dominate, to humiliate someone else, and to increase
one's own manhood. Further, where there are people with influence of different sorts and a will to
penetrate, there is also a chance of finding people who agree to being penetrated in exchange for

\textsuperscript{130} Furnish 2009 pp. 72-74. See also Dio Chrysostom \textit{Discourse} 77/78, 36; \textit{Discourse} 7 151-152, Musonius Rufus
Epistles} 47.7

\textsuperscript{131} Musonius Rufus 12, see Hubbard 2003 p. 395 In the Augustan era, there seem to have been an increased worry
about dropping birth-rates within higher social strata-families (since men could have sex outside of marriage, but the
children resulting from that were not seen as legit or even necessarily kept alive) so Augustus created laws to
promote marriage, halt adultery and encourage the rearing of children within the marriage – see \textit{lex Julia de
maritandis ordinibus} and \textit{lex Julia de adulteriis}.

\textsuperscript{132} Hubbard 2003 p. 185
\textsuperscript{133} Williams 1999 p. 157
receiving some benefications of that influence.

It is important to remember that the picture painted above of Greco-Roman views on male homosexual acts is by no means exhaustive. The views were changing over time and as we look at the time of Paul, in the shift between the Augustan and the Imperial era, views earlier held on sexuality were changing. There had been an increasing polarization that can be seen in the sources, between authors approving of male homosexual sex, and those arguing strongly against it. As Hubbard holds, the texts (mostly either satirical or moral texts) that comments negatively on male homosexual acts during the period directly before the Augustan era, as well as the texts during it, does it with focus on the "morally debilitating effects of wealth, power, and appetitive excess”. On one end, there were writers like Seneca the Younger who, on the basis of the mistreatment of slaves, held that male homosexual acts were wrong. On the other, we have texts like Tibullus 1.4 and Propertius 2.4.17-22, who showed a type of romanticizing pederasty that had earlier been more uncommon.134 With the changing views and the increased polarization, it could be dangerous to invoke all too many earlier texts as evidence of the views on male same-sex sexuality that pertained in the time of Paul. There might also be a danger in seeing the texts as normative for the common people since they were written more or less by an elite. They might however still give us a hint as to the pertaining views in society. The picture painted above, then, is an attempt to capture the most central views that are important in this paper, without claiming that the views were static or always the same.

2.4 A note on male homosexual acts in ancient Judaism

This section will be a brief and selective one and, of course, much more could be said about views on male same-sex intercourse in Judaism during the time of Paul than will be done here. There is however a need for selection, and I will here present what I find most relevant for this paper. We will see that the evidence is not conclusive, but it is clearly suggestive.

As we have seen, the Torah (Lev. 20:13) calls for a punishment by death for male homosexual acts (although, we do not know whether it was implemented or not), and there seem to have been a clear negativity in Judaism towards male same-sex acts in the time of Paul.135 However, this knowledge does not tell us why men who had sex with men were seen as deserving of the death penalty by Jews contemporary to Paul – what motivation for the punishment, or for opposing male homosexual sex, they might have assumed. Was it just accepted at face value?136 Clearly, we cannot

134 Hubbard 2003 pp. 345, 383
135 Crompton 2003 p. 47
136 This seems to be the case, for instance, in the Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Sanhedrin 54a.
know the opinions held by everyone, but there are a few important interpretations to be noted. First of all we have Philo who, as we have seen, wanted to inflict the death penalty on men who had sex with men because of the risk when it came to population growth. However, if one reads On Abraham (133-136), we find yet another motivation held by Philo. In that passage, like in Spec. Laws., he states that men who has sex with men become like women (which of course to him is a bad thing) and that in turn endangers the population growth. However, just before saying that, he makes a few remarks that are not found in Spec. Laws. These remarks make a clear connection between male homosexual acts, excess and the sin of Sodom (Philo might be the first to make the connection between the sin of Sodom and male homosexual activities137), and the connection goes from excess through a layer of indulgence and behaviors that can follow from it – with examples like gluttony, adultery and male same-sex intercourse – to the wrath of God. The fundamental connection, then, is that excess, and perhaps the will to keep it, was the foundational sin of Sodom, which in turn gave birth to (amongst other things) male same-sex acts. The excess, then, was the rationale for God's wrath against the city, and male on male sex was to Philo wrong because it stemmed from that excess.

Further, in Josephus we also find what might be a similar connection to that found in Philo. In Jewish Antiquities Book I, there is a statement that the people of Sodom were haters of strangers (μισόξενοι), greedy, proud because of their wealth, that they had forgotten what God had given to them, and also that they τὰς πρὸς ἄλλους ὁμιλίας ἐκτρέπεσθαι (distort to eachother (masc.) thecompanionships/intercourses).138 It is not certain what the last sentence means, the word ὁμιλία can mean both “intercourse” and “companionship” – Paul uses it in 1 Cor 15:33 to denote the latter. In Josephus, it is used in both ways.139 There are however a few reasons to interpret it sexually in the verse in focus: Earlier in the same sentence, the word ὑβρίς (hubris) is used to express what the people of Sodom did, as well as ἀσεβεῖς towards God (asebeîs – to be impious), and then ἄλλους ὁμιλίας ἐκτρέπεσθαι is one of the examples of that. To do ὑβρίς is often, both in Philo and in Josephus, connected to sexual or conjugal matters, and added by the two authors to the text of the

137 Crompton 2003 p. 39 There is one text, earlier than Philo, that might be understood as connecting male homosexual acts to the sin of Sodom; The Testament of Naphtali, v. 3:4 “In the firmament, in the earth, and in the sea, in all the products of his workmanship discern the Lord who made all things, so that you do not become like Sodom, which departed from the order of nature” (I owe this translation to Victor Paul Furnish, see Furnish 2009 p. 67). The problem with assuming that this passage makes that connection is that it presupposes that the connection is correct. The “order of nature” is nowhere in the text defined to be meant sexually, so to find it sexually one has to presume that it is sexual. If one presumed it was against nature to be left-handed, greedy or to divorce from one’s partner, that would also fit in by the same way of presumption.
138 Josephus Jewish Antiquitates 1.11.1
139 See for example Jewish Antiquities 1.1.4, where it is used to denote the company of God, which Adam tries to avoid since he has eaten from the fruit of the forbidden tree, and 2.4.2 where it is used to denote what the wife of Potipher wants Joseph and her to do.
Septuagint when those questions are either implicit or explicit. There are, then, two words in the sentence that both have clear connections to sexual matters. Further, as Louis H. Feldman puts it, to Josephus, Philo was a "model for rewriting the Bible", and as we have seen, he connected the excess of Sodom to male homosexual acts. Also, both of them have clear connections to the contemporary stoicism, in which (as we have seen with Seneca, Dio Chrysostom and Musonius Rufus) male same-sex sex, excess and greed were plausible to be connected. Of course, there is no way to be completely sure about the translation, but I argue that it is more likely that Josephus sees a sexual connection here than that he does not, given his context and the use of the word ὑβρις in the same sentence.

By reading the word ὁμιλίας as meaning "intercourse" in the text from Josephus, we find it clear that to him, the sin of Sodom is a moral collapse that seems to have its origin in misplaced pride, excess, and greed, something that then is expressed through impiousness towards God, unjustness towards men, hate against strangers and distortion of the sexual intercourse – an interpretation close to the one given by Philo, but without the part about decreasing population.

There were of course others who did not connect the Sodom-story to male homosexual practices. When we read in Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer, originating in the first or second century C. E (with later redactions) it says that the sin of Sodom was that they did not share the riches of the city with "the wayfarer or the stranger", and that they put fences around their fruits – the text does however not mention male homosexual activities. Also in the gospels, the perspective seems to be completely focused on greed as the sin of Sodom, with no trace of male homosexual acts – see for example Luke 10:10-12 (with parallel in Matt 10:14-15);17:28-29. This view probably stems from a tradition started in the Hebrew Bible itself, where the only prophet to specify the sin of Sodom is Ezekiel, and he specifies it as different sins against charity (Ezek 16:49). The interpretive tradition that focused on greed continued in the time after Paul as well. In the Babylonian Talmud, as an example, (compiled between c. 370 and 500 C. E) there is a tradition that says that Sodom did their very best to avoid helping the poor, and in the Midrash on Genesis from the 7th century C. E there is a tradition stating that the sodomites used male homosexual rape against strangers to keep them from visiting the city. In the late Midrash, then, we can see that the thoughts of Philo and

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140 For a discussion on this, see Levine, DB 1993, 'Hubris in Josephus' Jewish Antiquities 1-4', Hebrew Union College Annual, 64, pp. 51-87, here pp. 52, 58-59
143 Levine 1998 places his discussion on Josephus's treatment of the story of Sodom under "Sex, Marriage and Hubris" (p.58), and shows that he, too, find the passage to be connected to sex.
144 Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer (PRE) XXV:4
Josephus, with a clear connection to male homosexual acts, is back. However, it is hard to know the exact development from the early years of Philo, and how the connection between Sodom and male homosexual practices spread. For this essay, though, that is not in focus. The important question to raise is whether Paul was influenced by the view held by Philo, and probably Josephus. In light of that question, it is essential to remember two things: (1) The view held by Philo and (probably) Josephus might not have been the view of the majority in their time, and therefore (2) to argue that Paul held a view similar to theirs, and also made the connection between male homosexual acts and excess/greed based on the Sodom story, one has to show that there is a likely connection between Paul and the ideas of Philo (and possibly Josephus). I will here argue that such a connection is most plausible.

First of all, one should note that Philo, Josephus and Paul all seem to have been quite heavily influenced by the contemporary stoicism. The ideas of excess and greed leading to unwanted behavior was, then, probably not a foreign thought to any of them but rather a quite familiar one. Further, scholars have sometimes found a connection between Paul and Philo, though indirect, in a common intellectual tradition. Stefan Nordgaard, however, goes further than that and by investigating 1 Cor 15:45-49 in light of Philo argues that it is quite possible that there even was a direct link between the two, and that the people of Corinth used Philo in a way that Paul did not agree with.146 G. E. Sterling sees a clear link in exegetical tradition between Paul, Philo, and the congregation in Corinth, but then also goes on to say that there is a clear possibility of a direct link between Paul and Philo, through Apollos, although that we cannot know for sure.147 Even if the direct link is not a view held by all scholars, Nordgaard, and Sterling, make a convincing case that there clearly is a shared foundation between the two. Also Arkady B. Kovelman finds at least an intellectual connection, in the use of Jeremiah 9:22-23 and their interpretations of it – interpretations that have a lot in common.148 To state a connection between Paul and Philo, then, does not seem far fetched.

When we look to Josephus, born too late to be an inspiration to Paul, there is an interesting connection between Rom 1:26 and Against Apion book II (273) where Josephus, as Paul, calls the will of males to mix sexually with males “παρὰ φύσιν” (against nature). That they use the same two words does of course not prove a direct connection, but it might suggest that they had part in the

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146 Nordgaard 2011 pp. 349, 352, 364
same intellectual tradition when it came to male same-sex acts. The strongest link, however, is the one between Paul and Philo, as well as the common intellectual traditions that seem to be shared between all three of them, through the mutual connection of Paul and Josephus to Philo, and to stoicism. With this perspective in mind, it seems quite plausible that Paul saw a connection between male homosexual acts and some form of excess and greed through the Sodom story, where the male homosexual act was a form of outlet for the underlying, faulty mindset. It will be important to keep that connection in mind when interpreting ἀρσενοκοῖται.

2.5 The context of Paul and the First Letter to Corinth
In this passage, I will show how Paul was influenced by his surroundings and by what he had seen in, and heard about, the congregation in Corinth, and also describe the situation in Corinth. I will further discuss Paul's will to minimize the negative effect of the social stratification in Corinth that he had seen in the congregation, while not overturning it.

To the first recipients of the first letter to the Corinthians, often dated to sometime during the early 50s, the will to not win was strange. Paul was an example of this strange will – not in regard to sexual domination, but in regard to the gaining of forms of social status. He willingly undertook the self-humiliation of physical labor, something that made him appear to be from the lower social strata of society. His rhetorical training however suggests that he was well educated, and the fact that he as a Jew had full citizenship in the Roman empire suggests that he came from a well-off family – both potential markers of high social stratification. To have a citizenship, as a Jew, was not that common, while negative and harsh views being held against the Jews in the Roman Empire were common, in the time of Paul. There also seem to have lived Jews in Corinth, but it is not clear how many, while the culture was predominantly Roman.

In the congregation in Corinth there seem to have been a clear social stratification, with the few from the higher social stratas being very influential (examples of this division will be given below). There also seem to have been a prevalent culture of self-boasting and a will to rise through the social hierarchies. According to the categories for classifying high and low strata,
given in the beginning of this paper, Paul was predominantly part of the higher social stratas of society, with an education, and a family prominent enough to become Roman citizens. However, by making tents and turning down at least some of the financial support he was offered (1 Cor 9:15-18), he seem to intentionally have grouped himself with people from the lower social stratas, thereby going against the common goal of increasing one's social statuses and thereby improving one's social stratification. He also, by his work, made himself independent of the rich in Corinth, something that might have irritated them (see 2 Cor 11) since they connected the status of the missionary to the status of his followers. If you were to follow Paul, you did not want to lose any form of social status because of it, and manual labor was looked down upon by those who did not have to perform it.\textsuperscript{156} To not accept gifts might also have been seen as a rejection of the friendship offered through the gifts, since gifts was a way to mark relationships. In short, Paul refused to be seen as a "household philosopher" and instead intentionally, in some aspects, lowered himself to the level of being viewed as part of the lower social stratas, something that might have caused some irritation among the members of the higher social stratas.\textsuperscript{157}

Paul, instead of trying to increase his social ranking by means familiar to the congregation in Corinth, seems to have called for a different kind of measurement for social stratification – where his role as an independent apostle, that gave him the right to demand compensation for his work (9:1, 11-12), should be seen as a socially potent one (in 9:1, he puts it directly after "free" - ἐλεύθερος), something to be imitated (4:16), and to be the best apostle he can be, Paul lowers himself and becomes "everyone's slave" (9:19). Paul, then, is advocating a different way of measuring social stratification (already in 1:30-31 this shift in focus is made clear, and also in 2:14-15), and thereby disagrees with those who want to keep the "old" way of doing it – and the ones who had the most to gain from preserving the "old" way would be those who were perceived as having a high social stratification by that measurement.

Already in 1:26, Paul mentions the few powerful, wise (according to the flesh) and those of noble birth (δυνατοί, σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα, εὐγενεῖς) in the congregation, something often seen as a way to show the social mix of the recipients.\textsuperscript{158} It seems that the bulk of the issues that Paul needed to address, and the majority of the problems in the congregation, were caused by members of that small but influential group of people,\textsuperscript{159} and throughout the letter there are examples of Paul challenging the people of high social stratification. One of the more obvious examples is 11:17-34,

\textsuperscript{157} Martin 1995 pp. 83-84. Gifts in the form of money was also a common way for people with money to assert their influence and status, something Paul might have had objections to - see Witherington 1995 p. 22
\textsuperscript{158} Barrett 1968 p. 23, Theissen 1982 (A) p. 55, Theissen 1982 (C) p. 70. On page 72 (in C), Theissen mentions that Origen used 1 Cor 1:26 to argue that not just poor people were part of the Christian faith, see Contra Celsum III 48.
\textsuperscript{159} Witherington 1995 p. 20, stating that “the rich” and the “social climbers” were the big issues for Paul.
where the apostle is upset with the wealthy in the congregation who eats and drinks what they have brought along to the communal meal, while people of lesser means (and probably of lower social stratification) were hungry.\footnote{Theissen 1982 (C) pp. 96 and Theissen, Gerd 1982 "Social Integration and Sacramental Activity: An Analysis of 1 Cor 11:17-34" in Theissen, Gerd (1982). The social setting of Pauline Christianity: essays on Corinth. Philadelphia: Fortress Press pp. 145-163, here p.163} Less obvious, but still a good example, is 12:12-31, where Paul compares the congregation to a body. This was not an unusual analogy to use in the ancient world when describing the society, but Paul used it with a different goal than was common. Usually it was used to motivate a suppressive status hierarchy where some parts are superior to the others, but Paul used it in almost the opposite way to show that all parts are important and deserving of respect.\footnote{Martin 1995 p. 94 Also interesting is to note 10:15, which in no way proves that Paul was primarily addressing the higher social stratas, but when he says that he is talking ὡς φρονίμοις (as to reasonable/wise people), this might resonate with the few σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα (wise according to the flesh) in 1:26.}

Paul is in his letter surely not fighting for egalitarianism (7:20-21), but he does want the people from the higher social stratas to treat the people from the lower stratas with respect –\footnote{Theissen 1982 (C) p. 109} the complete opposite of eating all you can while people more or less eating at the same table are starving, or considering the foot (often seen as a slave) of the social body as worth less than the head (often seen as the father of the house).\footnote{Martin 1995 p. 31 See also page 75 where he says that Paul sided with the people of lower social stratas, and on page 199 he states that Paul often undermined the ideological basis of the hierarchy. It is however important to note here that, as he also says on p. 199, those people of low social stratas are men, not women.} Theissen describes the solution Paul creates as one that "acknowledges class-specific differences within the community while minimizing their manifestations".\footnote{Theissen 1982 (A) p. 55, Theissen 1982 (B) p. 163} In his article, Theissen emphasizes the economical aspect of stratification and utilizes "class" to discuss the division, and I find that he might be taking his perspective too far, as Meeks also points out.\footnote{Meeks 1983 p. 70} I would therefore replace "class-specific differences” with "differences stemming from a difference in where you belonged on a scale of social stratification” since class is a modern term with a lot of baggage and, as we have seen, wealth was not the only, or necessarily an always important, mark of where on the social scale one belonged. Paul is, then, trying to create a solution that, while keeping the stratification, minimizes the effects of where on the social scale a person belonged on the way one was treated by, and treated, others.

It becomes critically important to remember this focus on social stratification and the will to minimize the effects of it when reading chapter six, where Paul amongst other things addresses the issue of Christians going to court to settle disputes. Courts were always controlled by the higher stratas.\footnote{Shelton, 1998 p. 10} Trials that dealt with disputes, and not criminal acts, were in the Roman Empire not subjected to a jury but handled by a judge who himself came from the higher social stratas of
This primary disadvantage for the ones from lower social stratas was increased by the fact that the law instructed the court to take appearance and social stratification into account when judging, and the lower down on the social scale you were, the less chance you had of even being able to afford an attorney so that you could sue someone in the first place. If you actually managed to sue someone, you were also responsible to get the other party to appear in front of the court, and if you by some miracle won the case, you were yourself responsible for making sure that the sentence was carried out. Further, as mentioned before, if one had been penetrated by another man, or just was a woman, there were restrictions on the possibility to appear in front of a court. This structural bias tells us that socially weak people in most cases probably did not have the chance to use the court, while the powerful could use it as they pleased, and if they sued someone of a significantly lower social stratification they could be quite certain to win the case – unless the opponent had a patron from the higher social stratas, something that could even the odds out. Paul knew about this structural bias and wanted to take it away by changing the venue where disputes were settled – from the court to the congregation. By doing so, the structural bias of the courts would not help the members of the higher social stratas – on the contrary, the fact that the lower social stratas outnumbered the higher social stratas, and that Paul seem to have sided with the first group more than the latter, could have shifted the power-relations completely. Again, in the light of minimizing the effects of social differences within the Christian community, this was the solution Paul seems to have deemed fitting for the congregation. Consequently, this conclusion also means that the "you" (ὑμεῖς) in chapter six would primarily be the people from the higher social stratas in Corinth. That they were the ones primarily addressed seems not to have meant, however, that only they were meant to hear it – or the only ones affected by the critique. It was probably meant for the entire congregation to hear, but it primarily debunked the behavior of the powerful and influential. As we will see later, the fact that Paul in this passage, that makes up the immediate textual context of the word in focus for this paper, is primarily addressing the higher social stratas in Corinth is of importance to understanding the list of vices in 6:9-10.

The difference in perspective between Paul and some of the members of the higher social

167 Witherington 1995 p. 162
168 See Digest of Justinian 22.5.3
169 Martin 1995 p. 76
170 Witherington 1995 pp. 162-163 On the bias of the courts, see further also Seneca Controversiae 10.1.2 and 7, and Petronius Satyricon 14, both mentioned in Martin 1995 p. 265 notes 24 and 25. For the bias in punishment of crimes that were serious enough for a jury, see Paulus Opinions 5.19; 22.1-2
171 Witherington 1995 p. 163
172 Martin 1995 p. 78
173 Theissen 1982 (B) p. 56
174 Witherington 1995 p. 36
175 Since everyone were to hear the letter, people of all social stratas would be criticized if they matched the behavior being criticized by Paul. However, the primary aim seem to have been on the higher social stratas.
strata in the congregation might also be visible in the different ways to view the body and, more specifically, the pollution of it. For Paul the danger lies in intrusion, that the evil might come from the outside and pollute the body (for example 1 Cor 5:6-8, 11; 6:12, 18). This view was common among some Christian writers (Mark 9:17-27; Matt. 10:1; Luke 5:12-14; 6:18; 10:13-17) but in the higher social strata invasion was mostly not the issue, but the balance of the body – doing things with moderation. This way to think of the body was, as mentioned before, a pervading Roman view where a man could do more or less as he wished, as long as he did it with moderation. Paul, then, promotes a different perspective on the body, one that was more commonly held by people of the lower social strata, and one that resonates with the verses from Leviticus in the shared will to keep the community from becoming impure.

Paul came from a background colored by both Judaism and Hellenism. Siding with the socially weak is promoted more than once in the Hebrew Bible and this might well have been the source (or one of them) of Paul's perspective and ethical thinking. The rhetoric of the letter is however more Hellenistic, and First Corinthians can be classified as a deliberative letter with the main goal of keeping the congregation free of pollution and disorder, and one way of doing this is by creating a respectful relationship between the members of different social strata. The conclusion that Paul's main source for the ethics of the letter probably is the LXX also makes it even more probable that Lev 18:22 and 20:13 are relevant in discussing the meaning of ἀρσενοκοῖται.

2.6 Immediate textual context of 1 Cor 6:9-10

In this section, I will combine a literary analysis, that focuses on the sins listed in 1 Cor 6:9-10 and their possible meanings, with the socio-historical observations presented so far – these observations have an impact on how all of the words were understood since, obviously, none of them were read out of the Sitz im Leben of the readers.

Chapter six starts with the discussion about not taking each other to court. This discussion

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176 Martin 1995 p. 163
177 Martin 1995 p. 163
178 If a man, for example, had too much sex he would become weaker as he lost semen, and semen was seen as destilled manlihood full of strength. See Martin 1995 p. 200, mentioning Hippocrates On Generation 1.1 and Soranus Gynecology 3.12
179 Martin 1995 p. xvi
181 See for example Ex. 22:25; Lev. 19:10; Deu. 24:17; Isa 58:7 and, to this paper quite interesting, Amos 2:7 where the sin of not helping the poor is followed by the sin of a son sharing woman with his father – the sin that Paul is upset about in 1 Cor 5, and Thiselton 2000 who claims that the ethics taught in First Corinthians in some ways were completely different than the ones common in the Greek society (p. 442).
182 Martin 1995 pp. 38-39
would likely have taken most power and privilege from the higher social stratas in Corinth, as previously mentioned. The passage ends with verse 6:11, which states that some people in Corinth had been sinners not worthy of inheriting God's kingdom, but now they now had been cleansed. The next part of the chapter, verses 12-20, discusses the problem of πόρνευς, fornication, which is also the first word in the list in verses 9-10. This sin is, according to Paul, a serious one that affects the the body of the one committing it (6:18).

The list of vices occurs in the transition from one subject (taking each other to court and thereby using one's social position over against someone weaker) to the next (fornication). My understanding is that they also work in a transitional way by mentioning both of the subjects, but at the same time staying within the same overarching theme, which is the sins of primarily the higher social stratas in Corinth (and the ones aiming at becoming part of those social stratas). Πόρνος, as stated, I take to mean fornicator, but there is probably a thematic connection to the following εἰδωλολάτρης too, since idolatry is part of the semantic field of πόρνος, and πόρνος is frequently used in the LXX when discussing the unfaithfulness of the people of Israel with other gods than YHWH. I argue that these sins should be understood as primarily concerning the higher social stratas, because (for example) to be a prostitute was something that was looked down upon, it was something that mostly slaves did and even the brothel-keepers were discarded as being part of the real low end of society, even if they were free born. It was thereby nothing someone who was part of the higher social stratas was likely to do, but they would certainly take advantage of the fact that the prostitutes existed through the freedom that the free man had to use them – as long as it was done with moderation. This was one of the opportunities for fornication.

Another connection to the higher social stratas is found in the fact that in order to be able to attract women, one might have to care for one's appearance and have both the time and means to meet and attract women, things that there was a bigger chance of having if one was part of higher social stratas. In this part of fornication, there is also a close link to both μοιχός and μαλακός, as we will see later in this section. There is yet another interesting link to note, one that I have not encountered in the surveyed research. In 4:18, Paul declares that some people in the congregation has ἐφυσιώθησαν (“boasted themselves”). In 4:19, he goes on to say that when he comes to visit the congregation he will find out about οὐ τὸν λόγον τῶν πεφυσιομένων ἀλλὰ τὴν δύναμιν (“not the speech of the boasters but the power”). The term used in both of these verses for the people

183 Witherington 1995 p. 164, Barclay 2001 p. 1110
185 See for example Lev. 17:7; 20:5; Judg. 2:17; 8:33
186 Williams 1999 pp. 30, 38, 194
boasting themselves is φυσίω (fysioô), a term that is once again used in 5:2 when Paul says that they who did not cast out the man who lived with his fathers wife, and thereby is guilty of πορνεία (as stated in 5:1), are boasters. What is the most interesting part to us in this passage is the connection between these boasters and the power – τὴν δύναμιν – that Paul ascribes to them in 4:19. This term resonates with the few δυνατοί in 1:26, and here there seems to be a connection between the boasters, who continue to boast even in light of πορνεία, and the ability to cast someone out of the congregation – that is what they should have done but in their self-pride they did not, and Paul is upset about that decision. The few powerful (with ἡ δύναμις), who by being able to lend resources to the congregation has a lot of influence, also seem to be the ones who could have cast the fornicator out but chose not to – they looked to easily, in the eyes of Paul, upon that kind of behavior.

Idolatry was of course a possibility for both rich and poor, but in First Corinthians, Paul later raises this issue in light of what food one can eat, in chapter eight. As Theissen argues (supported by Shelton), meat was an exclusive foodstuff in the Roman Empire, and the people from low social stratas (in this case focusing more on the variable of income in the makeup of social stratification, that is, the poor) almost never had it, except for during open celebrations where the state might provide some meat for everyone. The meat was then cultic meat and therefore, to the members of lower social stratas, meat was probably more firmly attached to idolatry than it was to the members of higher social stratas. The behavior of these high-strata people when eating the meat might thereby have been seen as idolatry by the lower social stratas. The risk of committing idolatry, or acts that might be perceived as such by other members of the congregation, was also greater if one was part of the rich community or wanted to become part of it since there was a need to have good relations to pagans. Wayne Meeks adds another argument to why the discussion of meat is an indicator of conflicting views of higher and lower social ends of society. In 1:26, as stated, Paul mentions the few σοφοί (wise), δυνατοί (powerful), and εὐγενεῖς (of noble birth). In 8:1, Paul mentions γνῶσις, knowledge, and clearly shows that the ones having this knowledge (that is, the wise) are insisting on being free to eat what they want, including cultic meat – they know there are no idols so it is safe to eat the meat. These stand opposed to ὁ ἀσθενὼν, the weak, in 8:11, whose

187 The common food for a poor person was wheat either made into porridge or bread, if one could afford an oven. See Shelton p. 79-80 and Ovid Metamorphoses 8.664-668 where what little meat the poor couple have has been long preserved for special occasions.

188 One could also attain it from a patron of higher social stratification and economic wealth, but at events such as private dinners it was common for the patron to situate people of lower social standing farther away from himself and giving them cheaper food and wine. See Pliny the Younger Letters 2.6.1-2 and Shelton 1998 p. 15 For a description of the food one might attain (lousy wine and mouldy bread) see Juvenal Satires 5.12-22, 24, 25, 67-71

conscience is weak and thereby does not eat the cultic meat, and might be led astray by seeing the ones with knowledge eat this meat. In the context of this letter, then, idolatry is presented primarily as a problem of the members of higher social stratas and, in some ways, people aiming at climbing the social scale, and so is fornication. Note also the care that Paul is promoting in chapter eight, where he claims that by eating cultic meat in a way that might lead one's brother astray, one is sinning against Christ (8:12) – even though he does not say that idols do exist. The problem is that the brother in Christ is led astray. It is obviously more important to Paul to create respect between the members of the congregation than to allow some members to enjoy their freedom.

Μοιχός is the third word of the list and translates into “adulterer” or “paramour”. As with εἰδωλολάτρης, one could think that this sin should be taken as applying to everyone. There are however two reasons for supposing otherwise. First of all, the literary context. Both of the pericopes before and after the list are primarily aimed at the members of the higher social strata. Secondly, it is a mistake to limit the meaning of the word to just adultery (as many translators have) and thereby abandon the option to emphasize ”paramour”, since the word can have a broader meaning that includes the seduction of an unmarried daughter, a widowed mother or sister of a citizen – no matter the marital status of the seducer. If you were going to seduce free women, as also in the case of πόρνος, of any sort you had to have both the time to find them and the opportunity to care for your appearance, and you were more probable to have these if you were free and did not have the duty to perform manual labor, open to the whim of a potentially violent master (or mistress) with the bruises (or worse) that could follow.

This broader meaning of μοιχός, as well as that of πόρνος, leads me to see a close link to the word following μοιχός, namely μαλακός, the word that so often has been translated together with ἀρσενοκοίτης. The reasons that other scholars have given for interpreting μαλακός and ἀρσενοκοίτης together seem to be twofold: They have been put next to each other so there have to be a reason for that, and both of them has been seen as sexual vices. Since μαλακός can denote a man who wanted to be the passive partner in a male homosexual relationship, it then became natural to see ἀρσενοκοίτης as the active. There are however points to be made against these arguments. The restriction of μαλακός to the male homosexual aspects of the word is only based on the rather

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190 Meeks 1983 p. 69 see also 1 Cor 8:1, 4, 7, 9; 9:4, 5, 6, 12, 18, 10:23, 24, 29
191 Lidell & Scott 1968 p. 1141
192 Boswell 2005 p. 337
193 For the cruelty that a slave could experience, and also an image on the lack of worth ascribed to the life of a slave, see Quintilian The Elements of Oratory 1.3.13-14, Martial Epigrams 3.94, Juvenal Satires 6.475-476, 480-484, 490-493, Tacitus Annals 14.42-45, Shelton 1998 p. 173-175
194 I want to direct the attention of the reader to a previously mentioned comment by Ben Witherington III, who holds that if ἀρσενοκοίτης does not stand next to μαλακός, this changes the meaning of ἀρσενοκοίτης. See Witherington 1995 p. 166
unfounded pairing of it together with the following word instead of the previous – it is a pairing that proves itself only if one first assumes it to be correct. Martin argues that an ancient person would not have seen any more of homosexual than heterosexual acts in the word μαλακός itself, so the foundation for the pairing begins to crack.  

It cracks even more when one considers that, even when arguing for the pairing of μαλακός and ἀρσενοκοίτης as “probably intentional”, Witherington says that the latter, if not paired with the former, denotes both the passive and the active in a male homosexual relation. Paul is, according to that argument, using two words to denote what the latter says, but the meaning is somehow slightly changed to only connote male pederastic homosexual acts. I find the reasoning behind that assumption strained, and there is no real argument given as to why one should see the words as intentionally paired. Wright, instead, claims that ἀρσενοκοίτης simply denotes both the active and passive partner in all sorts of male homosexual acts, both with boys and with men, regardless of μαλακός. I will later in this paper agree with some of that conclusion, but not on the same grounds as Wright.

If instead of μαλακός being paired with ἀρσενοκοίτης, the former is understood in closer connection to μοιχός (which also is a sexual vice), an understanding that based on the range of meaning of the word μαλακός should be equally (or as we shall see, perhaps more) plausible, the term "womanizer" or "metrosexual" would be a fair interpretation of both of them together, since men who notoriously chased women could be called effeminate. The connection between the words stem from the fact that to attract women (and thereby be able to do what a paramour/adulterer would do), men could do things as remove the hair from their legs and chest and be, in the eyes of their peers, overall too meticulous about their appearance – one was a μαλακός in order to be a successful μοιχός, and perhaps also a successful πόρνος. No matter if this focus on appearance was to attract women or men (because it was seen as attractive to both), the behavior was considered effeminate. These men might also make sure to give the woman pleasure in order to get the chance to come back, something that also was seen as effeminate. As Williams states, "men who sought to be sexually penetrated by other men were subjected to teasing and ridicule, but were also thought quite capable of being adulterers.” By abandoning the misconception that men

195 Martin 1996 p. 127
196 Witherington 1995 p. 166
197 Wright 1984 p. 146
198 Metrosexual is a term proposed by Holly E. Hearon, I add "womanizer” because if the translation is affected by the previous word, the active search for women seems to have been in focus. “Metrosexual” is not defined by Hearon, but I use it with the meaning that it is ascribed in the Merriam.Webster dictionary: “a usually urban heterosexual male given to enhancing his personal appearance by fastidious grooming, beauty treatments, and fashionable clothes”. See Hearon, Holly E. “1 and 2 Corinthians ” in Guest, Deryn (red.) (2006). The queer Bible commentary. London: SCM Press pp. 606-623, here p. 613 and http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metrosexual (seen 14/4-2015) 
199 Williams 1999 pp. 129, 132
200 Williams 1999 p. 3
who perform homosexual acts only have sex with men and do these acts because of a certain inclination, we infer that a man was quite capable of being attractive to both sexes and use that to be both passive and active. The μαλακός was then seen as a real threat by married men, since he was beautiful and attractive to women too, not just men. This shift in interpretation, from a pairing of μαλακός with ἄρσενοκοίται to a pairing of μαλακός with μοιχός, is based on emphasizing a different part of the sphere of meaning that the word μαλακός contained by pairing it with the word before it instead of after it. In light of the emphasis on “paramour”, and the idea that the person guilty of this vice had to have a certain amount of wealth and high social ranking, it is also important to remember that the term μαλακός could denote a person living in luxury and excess while being lazy and chasing women. Further, there is a third possibility that should be noted. One could interpret μαλακός free from both the word before it and after it. The wide range of meaning could instead be limited by the theme of the whole list. I will not investigate that suggestion further here, the important point is that the pairing with ἄρσενοκοίται is highly questionable.

An important point to be made is that by looking at the Levitical verses seen to inform Paul's use of ἄρσενοκοίτης, where in one of them both the active and passive partner is condemned to death, the need for another word to condemn the passive does not necessarily exist. Surely, there is a risk in making that point, since we do not know if all of the readers were able to see the connection to Leviticus or if Paul thought that they all were. It also presupposes that Paul in this verse wanted to condemn both the passive and active partner, a presupposition that probably has informed the pairing of μαλακός with ἄρσενοκοίται. Still, I believe that all these meanings are found in ἄρσενοκοίται, and this assertion will be discussed and clarified later.

We do know that Paul is condemning something that he found it necessary, or at least favorable, to create a new word in order to condemn. As stated before, this fact suggests that the problem is not pederasty. Rather, it seems to be a condemnation related to the specific situation in Corinth that called for a specific word. To understand the role of this condemnation it is important to note the overarching theme that seems to exist in the list of vices. All of the sins have a resonance with a behavior of economic excess and/or exploitation, with a thematic thread going between excess, exploitation, and the results thereof. The themes of excess and exploitation is obvious in πόρνος, and in εἰδωλολάτρης the connection to excess becomes clear when the context is taken into account – to keep the economic excess, or gain it, one was far more likely to commit idolatry. If μοιχός is taken as “paramour”, it probably referred to the men who had the chance of chasing women and caring for their appearance in a way that hard physical labor did not allow – it was the fruit of having a lot of money and exploiting the possibilities rising thereof. Μαλακός can, as we also have seen, denote a person who is too lazy to do hard work, someone who lives a life in luxury.
and excess and are considered more than capable of seducing free women, both married and not. When we get past ἀρσενοκοῖται the sins are connected to taking something that does not belong to oneself (κλέπτης, πλεονέκτης, ἁρπαγεύς, the theme of exploitation to either gain or keep economic wealth comes more into focus), drinking to much (μέθυσος – that is, using one's excess in the wrong way) and what can be the result of drinking too much, to abuse or rail (λοίδορος). This focus further suggests that Paul was writing his letter primarily to criticize behaviors of those he viewed as constituting the higher social stratas, and those aspiring to become part of them, among the Christians in Corinth, and I argue that given this pattern, ἀρσενοκοῖται has to relate to this theme as well.

3. Analysis

3.1 Philological observations

There are a few unanswered questions in the last paragraph that I will follow up on here. These questions relate to the issue of whether it is plausible that the passive partner in a male homosexual sexual relationship is encompassed in the word ἀρσενοκοῖται, based on the fact that both of them are mentioned in one of the the Levitical texts. First, there is the question about whether the listeners in Corinth would have understood this connection. We know that there were Jews in Corinth, and that it is probable that there were some in the congregation (see 1 Cor 7:18; 9:8-10, 20-22; 10:1-13). This fact does of course not mean that even all of the Jews understood the connection, but we cannot exclude the possibility that some got the allusion. If they shared their knowledge with the rest is anyone's guess. Paul also seems to have been familiar with his audience, so it is likely that he understood this difference in knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures.

By taking a step back from the scholars who have translated ἀρσενοκοῖται and μαλακοί together, and by questioning the assumptions behind the interpretations informing that sort of translation, it however becomes clear that there seem to be no substantial reasons as to why the recipients would not have interpreted ἀρσενοκοῖται as encapsulating both of the men in a homoerotic relationship. The notion of separating the active and passive, and then removing the passive from the translation of ἀρσενοκοῖται, seems to be an interpretation based solely on the pairing of μαλακοί and ἀρσενοκοῖται, two words that have been interpreted together because the

201 Liddell & Scott 1968 pp. 958 (κλέπτης = thief), 1416 (πλεονέκτης = one who has or claims more than his due, greedy, grasping), 256 (ἁρπαγεύς = refers to ἃρπαξ = robbing, rapacious, robber, peculator)
202 Liddell & Scott 1968 pp. 1060, 1091 Although wine might have been available to people of lower financial status (see Ovid Metamorphoses 8.664-668 where wine is used to preserve cornel-berries) but wine better wine, with nicer flavor, was more expensive (see Pliny the Younger Letters 1.15 where the wine is mixed with honey for a sweeter taste).
meaning of ἀρσενοκοῖται was unclear and help was sought with μαλακοί. This kind of interpretation forces ἀρσενοκοῖται to denote the active partner and only that, since μαλακοί informs the interpretation and a μαλακός would never be used to denote the active partner in male homosexual activity. If the words instead, as I argue, are not read together, there is no clear basis for removing the passive participants from the term ἀρσενοκοῖται and placing them in μαλακοί, and thereby nothing that says that even the people not familiar with the Septuagint would have understood the word to not include both of the partners in the male homosexual intercourse. This answer seems to me to be the most plausible one, in agreement with Wright. It also avoids getting caught in the even more complicated situation facing Witherington as he claims that since ἀρσενοκοῖται and μαλακοί were intentionally paired together, the meaning of ἀρσενοκοῖται changed, from denoting all male homosexual activity to denoting the active partner in a pederastic relationship. The situation becomes difficult when one asks how people were to understand this shift if they had never heard the word before. It is also problematic to understand, yet again, why Paul would invent a word to discuss something to which there already were terms.

The next question is: Did Paul wish to condemn both the active and the passive partner? Obviously, my short answer would be yes. However, the question is more complex than that. It is a question that calls for a nuanced answer seen in connection to the kind of same-sex sexuality Paul is condemning in this passage. To describe this sexuality, I will summarize the findings made so far, draw some important conclusions and then answer the question of who is being condemned.

Paul was rooted in his Jewish legacy, as well as in the Greco-Roman surroundings he lived in. Both of these influences are important to understand ἀρσενοκοῖται since they affected Paul, and both Jews and Gentiles were present in the congregation that the letter was addressed to. There are interesting themes to be noted in these traditions in regards to male same-sex intercourse. There were contemporary Jewish interpretations that connected it to greed and excess, and I have argued that Paul was influenced by that perspective. In the Greco-Roman context there was a strong connection between male homosexual acts and domination, exploitation and humiliation of the weak, and also an increasing focus on wealth, power and excess in the discussion of it in the time just before Paul. I will argue that elements from both of these cultures were present in the understanding of the word.

The biggest difference between the two cultures seem to lie in whether it was considered approvable to partake in that kind of activity with, for instance, a slave as the passive partner. Jews

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203 Wright 1984 p. 146 He, however, reaches this conclusion on a different basis – by looking at the history of reception. Still, it is useful to see this conclusion and his convincing refutation of the theory that Boswell promotes where there is a clear emphasis on the active part (see Boswell 2005 p. 342) on p. 129-130
204 Witherington 1995 p. 166
seem to have, at least "officially", answered the question unanimously negatively. Some Gentile philosophers did so too, but these were probably not representative of any kind of majority view.\footnote{205} Instead, they were part of an ongoing, heated discussion on the matter involving primarily philosophers of different sorts.

The presence of some element of exploitation is a shared trait between most of the vices in 1 Cor 6:9-10, and I hold that it is the key to understanding ἀρσενοκοῖται. That trait of exploitation in the other vices correlates with my inference that Paul viewed the homoerotic activities of the “active” partner as an expression of exploitation, of the people from higher stratas taking advantage of their position, as they had the right to do according to society but not according to Paul. To Paul, this exploitation caused them to pollute the bodies of members from the lower stratas, the slaves and freedmen who did not have the right to say no, and probably also their own bodies. By polluting both themselves and their brothers in Christ they also polluted the body of Christ. When Paul, then, tells the members of the congregation to remain what they were when they were called, even if that meant remaining a slave (7:21), he is at the same time trying to create a community where everyone treats each other with the amount of respect that is needed to keep the boundaries intact, free of pollution (but he is not trying to create an egalitarian society), since it was common knowledge that a slave was not in a position from where he could always control his own body. To create a community where pollution is minimized is a goal that goes against the notion of balance, belonging primarily to the higher stratas, and promotes the notion of primarily the lower stratas of keeping away from intrusions.

The aforementioned observations support the inference why the active, penetrating, partner should be condemned. It remains to ask why the passive partner, too, was condemned. I will show that a will to climb the social ladder, a mindset that to Paul was a mindset of greed (not just in the economical sense of the word), a will to gain social powers,\footnote{206} and a cause of pollution to the body of Christ, motivates the condemnation.

It would certainly have been pointless for Paul to condemn the slave for being passive since he, if the paterfamilia so wished, could do nothing else than be passive and Paul, like everyone else, knew that. The intention was probably something else. Paul, I believe, wanted to do two things by using a word that to him clearly, both through its Scriptural and linguistical connotations, included the passive partner: He wanted to condemn the use of sex 	extit{to climb the social ladder}, something that was possible for a man if he gave himself as the passive partner to another man who could repay

\footnote{205} Martin 1995 p. 6 
\footnote{206} Note the plural “powers”, suggesting that more than one form of social power is relevant – economical and educational power, as well as an influential patron and a good reputation as a real man, were powers that could be attained.
him by being an influential patron.\textsuperscript{207} Note however that the man who gave himself would probably not be a slave, because the slave would not gain anything from doing so – he was the property of the paterfamilia, so the one selling his body would not be the slave himself. He would instead have been a young, free man wanting to rise to power – much like Caesar was said to have done with the king of Bithynia. It was also a quite common type of male homosexual activity in the time of Paul. This form of male homosexual activity was a way of trying to become something that you were not, to gain some form of social status that you yet did not have, something that was certainly not necessary or wanted if the Lord himself was going to appear in the near future – hence the advices in chapter seven on the matter of staying what you are.\textsuperscript{208} In the end, this form of passivity was to Paul an expression of social greed – it was aimed at gaining social powers of different sorts. He probably also viewed the passive partner, willingly giving himself in order to gain some form of social status, as a pollution of the body of Christ.

Further, as Paul does in chapter 8, he might here be trying to invoke the responsibility of a Christian for the salvation of the others – he is pointing attention towards the “weak” (who are made passive by the “strong”) and by that tries to, once again, minimize the effects of the power structures. By saying that also the passive partner will not inherit the kingdom of God, just like the brother who is lead astray by someone eating meat in what can be seen as an idolatrous way, Paul makes the point that if a man uses his social stratification to impose himself sexually on someone else (or for that matter seduces an influential man in order to gain some form of social status) he will cause both himself and the other to lose their piece of the heavenly inheritance. The responsibility for the one's brother in Christ is more important than the freedom one might want to enjoy.

From this I will answer the question of whether Paul is condemning the active as well as the passive partner with a modified yes – a man who has sex with another man to gain social powers of some sort or assert his power at the expense of someone else is condemned, no matter the role he plays in the intercourse. They are condemned to not inherit the kingdom of God because of their greed and exploitation of others, leading to the pollution of the whole body of Christ and causing their brothers to lose their heavenly inheritance. One should note here that it is not fruitful to view this as a case of the Jewish inheritance of Paul applying to one of the two partners (the active), and the Greco-Roman culture to the other (the passive). These elements were probably inseparably intermingled in Paul, they were facts that he had been molded into and by during his whole life as a

\textsuperscript{207} Although much earlier and not informing us on Paul, it might be of interest to see that Aristophanes (5th century B.C.E) seem to have made a difference between boys who had to sell themselves for money and those who did not, going easier on boys who had to sell themselves, see Hubbard 2003 pp. 8, 92 (quoting Aristophanes Knights 1241-42), 112 (quoting Aristophanes Frogs 145-151)

\textsuperscript{208} Ziesler, J.A. (1983). \textit{Pauline Christianity}. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press p. 113
Greco-Roman Jew. The reasons for Philo, Josephus and Paul to be negative towards male homosexual acts seem also to have been inspired, as I have argued, by stoicism. I will therefore repeat the quote given earlier, from Dale Martin: "Any firm distinction between "Greco-Roman and Jewish" in this period is... historically misleading". 209

It is important to note here that all men, even those from lower social stratas, who had sex with men in order to gain some sort of social and/or economical capital are condemned. However, since the letter is primarily addressing problems stemming from the higher social stratas, I do not think that the primary intention of Paul was to tell, as an example, a poor boy in desperate need of food that he was going to lose his place in the kingdom of God if he prostituted himself for money or food, but the consequence of the word is precisely that. That conclusion might seem harsh to a modern reader, but in light of the view held by Paul on eschatology as an imminent occurrence and the will to save as many as possible, it was probably not strange for Paul to use a word that could have that consequence. In the same way, it was not strange to use a word condemning those who stole, even if it were to be used against the poorest, since it was more important to keep one's place in the kingdom of God than to keep one's place on earth. 210 This means that even though the list of vices primarily addressed problems stemming from the higher social stratas, it had an effect on everyone in the congregation in Corinth. The mentality and actions of exploitation and greed was to be avoided by everyone – the members of higher social stratas may have been the primary target of the critique (as the rest of the chapter, and letter, suggests) but that did not exclude the effect it had on the lower social stratas.

One could ask why, if it is correct that Paul wanted to create a community where sex was not used to gain powers of some sort, Paul limits his direct address to men, excluding women – why does he not forbid all kinds of sexual intercourse if sex was always a zero-sum game? 211 To start with, it should be remembered that in the letter, Paul is first and foremost addressing men. To these men it was obvious that free women were not supposed to have any sex partner but her husband. 212 Second, in the list of vices in 6:9-10, Paul uses words that forbids men to have sex with prostitutes, women married to other men, and he condemns men who chase women (even unmarried), so Paul is excluding the forms of sex that are not part of marriage, and to have sex within marriage is sanctioned by the Hebrew Bible 213 as well as the Greco-Roman culture, so it is unlikely that Paul

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209 Martin 1995 p. xiii
210 Paul himself has no choice but to proclaim the Gospel (1 Cor 9:16), even though he might have to risk his life in doing so (15:30-31), and thereby sees even his own life as not worth keeping if it means to sacrifice his place in the kingdom of God.
211 Note, however, that he wished that everyone would live like him, that is, in celibacy – see 1 Cor 7:7.
212 Shelton 1998 p. 55
213 Gen 1:28; 2:24
would want to forbid that. To be the passive partner in a sexual relationship with her husband might have been seen as humiliating by some, but it was the accepted place for a woman and nothing that, to Paul, needed to be changed in order to keep the congregation at peace or free from pollution.

As stated earlier, Paul seems to have found the need to invent a new word. I argue that this is because no other word available to him adequately encompassed all male homosexual behaviors, exploitation, greed and excess. Ἀρσενο and κοῖτη, however, carried the connotations to both active and passive partner as well as excess and greed from Lev. 18:22 and 20:13 and the contemporary interpretation on those verses, and the connection to exploitation came natural to Paul since the contemporary form of male same-sex sex was, by many who seem to have been influencing Paul, seen as more or less based on it. Therefore it made sense to use the new word in a letter to address the problems Paul had seen in the congregation in Corinth concerning how the higher social stratas treated the lower social stratas (or were at risk of treating them), and how people tried to use their bodies to gain social influence of different sorts. This conclusion is reached by considering Paul part of the reception of those Levitical verses and seeing what he might have understood from reading them. Given the contemporary Jewish line of interpretation that I argue Paul to be a part of, excess and greed seems to have been common themes, and given the Greco-Roman context, the thought of exploitation was probably all but far fetched to someone who lived in the time and place of Paul.214

Even if the connection to the verses from Leviticus was not apparent to all of the first readers (maybe not at all to most of them), the literary context of the word, both the immediate and the wider (considering the whole letter) and the context of the readers themselves, living in a time and place where the will to climb the social ladder or stay on top of it was a well-known theme in motivating male homosexual acts as well as the theme of asserting power, would probably have proposed this interpretation to the readers. Also, the knowledge of the higher social stratas was supposed to include contemporary philosophy of different sorts, so at least to them the discussion on male homosexual acts as a way of exploitation was probably not unknown.215 Also, the ideas of Philo might, even to members of the congregation in Corinth who were not Jews, have been familiar (as noted earlier). Further, as the idea of young men selling sexual favors for money or some other form of help to older men was not unknown but rather quite common, the leap between passive male homosexual behavior and a form of social greed was probably not so far either. This conclusion is in some ways close to the conclusion reached by Dale Martin in the article where he states that it is impossible to know what ἀρσενοκοῖται really means, but the strongest valid

214 See my discussion on page 20-24, where the theme of exploitation is emphasized especially on page 24. 215 Martin 1995 p. 72
suggestion is, he says, one that sees the word as referring to “a particular role of exploiting others by means of sex, perhaps but not necessarily homosexual sex”.\textsuperscript{216} I agree with him in that exploitation is the overarching theme. However, I do not agree with his conclusion that other forms of sex than male same-sex relations were intended to be included, or seen as included by the first recipients. The conclusion reached by Wright seem the more convincing one, where he includes all male same-sex relationships in the interpretation of the word (as also Witherington does when considering it detached from μαλακοί, as I argue should be done here). However, he does so by studying the history of reception of the word and not the background. It should also be noted that ἀρσενοκοῖται does not necessarily include what we might call pederasts, but there is still the clear possibility of them being included, if we assume that Paul did not consider sex between adult males and sex between an adult male and a boy any different. To talk about pederasty might lead to anachronism, as stated earlier, and a clear differentiation between sex including only adults or including also boys might not be relevant. What can be said is that pederasty was not the primary target of the condemnation, there were already existing words to be used for that, but they might still be part of it and considered just another way of males having sex with males. As “ἀρσενο-“ primarily seems to denote adults, I will not emphasize the aspect of boys being included.

In the list of vices, it is relevant to consider the themes of the words standing just next to ἀρσενοκοῖται. The word appears as the list is going from the rich who lives a life in excess, womanizing and luxury (μαλακός) to the exploiting thief (κλέπτης). In ἀρσενοκοῖται, both of these themes are present and the word can be seen as supplying a clear thematic connection, just as there is a clear connection between the first four words of the list, including μαλακοί. In the case of ἀρσενοκοῖται, the people with an economic excess were the ones taking advantage of their social ranking and their possibilities to sexually affirm that ranking – it was a form of luxury (and seen as such by some contemporary philosophers). The word also includes those who tried to rise to power through male homosexual sex and thereby exploit their own bodies as well as the desire of the people of more wealth and/or higher social stratification, from a motivation of social greed and personal gain.

3.2 Conclusion: The meaning of Paul's neologism ἀρσενοκοῖται in 1 Cor 6:9
I will now give a short summary of the conclusions reached so far, and clearly state what I have found to be the meaning of ἀρσενοκοῖται in 1 Cor 6:9. This meaning will later in the paper be used to evaluate modern translations of the word.

\textsuperscript{216} Martin 1996 p. 123
I have argued that ἀρσενοκοῖται denotes the male active and passive parts in a same-sex intercourse who try to exploit the partner through sex in order to gain social powers (“social powers” including wealth, education, and other forms of power relevant in the ancient world). These participants in male same-sex intercourse are included in the list because they pollute themselves, each other and the body of Christ by this behavior, and thereby loses their own heavenly inheritance and causes others to do the same. Paul wants to put an end to these behaviors in order to create a community that, while maintaining a hierarchy, minimizes the negative effects of that hierarchy.

These observations support my view of what Paul meant, based on both the Jewish and the Greco-Roman cultural influence, elements intrinsically combined within him. It is also what I believe that the first readers most likely would have attained (more or less, there is always uncertainties and other interpretations, but this would probably have been the basic understanding of the word) when reading the word ἀρσενοκοῖται. It is an interpretation that pays attention to the textual context, both immediate and wider, and it includes the aspects of power and exploitation so intrinsically tied to the ancient views on sexuality, as well as the complex role of social stratification. To separate the notion of power from ancient Greco-Roman views on sex is anachronistic and, in light of the context (of Paul, the recipients and the textual context of the word itself), to ignore a lot of information. That separation is not acceptable if one is to respect the text in a way that, by means of historical criticism, make the text itself more relevant than the changes of time that lie in between the text and the modern reader. Thus, since Paul in condemning both the active and passive males in a same-sex relation sees the aspect of power-relations as an intrinsic part of sex, it would be wrong not to clarify the power-aspect in the translation because it is not inherently present in the modern view on sexuality. I want to make this point clear to the reader – one might not agree with all the aspects of this paper, but the amount of evidence connecting ancient views of sex to the elements of power is devastating for one who wishes to separate them.

It is also probable that it is anachronistic to separate the intention of the sexual act from the act itself – as we have seen, the (presupposed) intention was important in the ancient world, as well as the act itself and who played what role in the intercourse. The intentions are however completely ignored in many of the modern translations, and thereby the meaning that is likely to be created by a modern reader is further shifted away from the meaning possibly created in ancient Corinth by not clarifying the role of intentions (and sometimes instead using words suggesting inclination, which is often.

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217 The sort of separation that I would argue is impossible to avoid if you translate ἀρσενοκοῖται with, for example, “homosexuals” or other modern terms not including any sort of power-relation that resembles the kind found in ancient Greece and Rome.

218 There is even an example of the connection between intent and action to be found in the New Testament, in the Gospel of Matthew 5:28.
not the same as intention). To acknowledge the importance ascribed to intentions and power-relations in relation to ancient views on male homosexuality are in my opinion two of the most important contributions of this paper, and so I want to emphasize them. Further, to recognize some contextual value judgements, and the fact that they carry meanings and connotations that might be different from modern ones, is also of great import in a scholarly field where these things have not been sufficiently noted.

The reader should further remember that this paper in no way is suggesting that Paul was trying to get rid of all the social hierarchies – on the contrary, he seems to have promoted the status quo and turned against those willing to do anything it takes in order to gain social influence and power, but with the emendation of the respect needed to keep pollution away from the bodies partaking in the body of Christ. Neither is it suggesting that Paul was pro modern male, or female, homosexuality or homosexual acts. It says, rather, that Paul did not in 1 Cor 6:9 express an opinion on modern homosexuality of any sort. I would also, from the presented evidence, argue that Paul did not have a chance at all to comment on homosexuality as we know it today since the modern form of egalitarian homosexuality did not exist in his time (neither did any egalitarian form of heterosexuality exist). What did exist, however, was the widespread and pertaining notion of using (male homosexual) sex to humiliate, and to gain or assert power.

These points leads us on to the next part of this paper: comparing the modern translations to the conclusion reached here.

4. The problem of how to translate ἀρσενοκοῖται: Communicating to modern audiences what, specifically, Paul condemned

4.1 Modern translations and new conclusions – when "then" meets "now"

In the beginning of this paper, I mentioned a series of translations. I will now give a comprehensive list of the translations that will be discussed here, complete with the Bibles where they can be found. I give them in the original language, except when Bibles of different languages support the same translation. In that case, I give only one of the languages but note all the Bibles supporting it.

There is of course the problem of what the word means in the specific culture and what kind of emotional connotations it carries, and this is hard to discern when it comes to, for example, Spain or France as I live only in my own country (Sweden) and can do no else. I am aware of this problem and want to make the reader aware of it too. The following examination will be conducted with the
perspective of a person living in Sweden consulting dictionaries, so if the reader does not find the
description familiar, the Swedish perspective that I cannot leave behind might be the reason.
However, the paragraph is still relevant to the reader since it shows how the process of examination
is undertaken and what criteria that are being used.

These are the translations that has been considered in this work.219

¬ ”men who have sex with men” - New International Version, Bibel 2000, En Levende Bok
(Norwegian)
¬ “the effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind” - 21st Century King James
Version.
¬ ”effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men” - American Standard Version
¬ ”male prostitutes, sodomites” - New Revised Standard Version, Bibliann 1981 (Icelandic)
¬ ”neither lechers against kind, neither they that do lechery with men” - Wycliffe Bible
¬ ”los afeminados, ni los que se echan con varones” - Reina-Valera 1960 (Spanish)
¬ ”los afeminados, ni los homosexuales” - La Biblia de las Américas, Jubilee Bible 2000, La
Palabra, Reina-Valera 1977, Reina-Valera 1995, Nouvelle Edition de Genève (Spanish,
English, and French)
¬ ”les travestis, ni les homosexuels” - Segond 21 (French)
¬ ”les pervers ou les homosexuels” - La Bible du Semeur (French)
¬ ”enginn karlmaður sem lætur nota sig eða notar aðra til ólífnaðar”220 - Biblía 21 aldar
(Icelandic)
¬ ”eigi heldur þeir sem skömm drýgja með karlmönnum”221 - Guðbrandsbiblía (1584)
(Icelandic)
¬ ”effeminati, né sodomiti” - Nuova Riveduta 2006, Almeida Revista e Corrigida 2009
(Italian, Portuguese)
¬ “de som låta bruka sig till synd mot naturen eller de som själva öva sådan synd” Svenska
Bibeln 1917
¬ “de som lade sig bruge til unaturlig Utugt, eller de, som øve den” - Dette er Biblen på Dansk
1933
¬ ”bløtaktige eller de som synder mot naturen” - Det Norsk Bibelselskap 1930
¬ ”homossexuais” - Nova tradução na linguagem de hoje (Portuguese)
¬ ”de som utövar homosexualitet eller de som låter sig utnyttjas för sådant” - Svenska

219 I will include the translation of both μαλακοί and ἀρσενοκόιται, since it sometimes is quite hard to separate them in
the translations.
220 “a man who lets others use himself or who uses others for debauchery”
221 “neither they (masc) that do shame with men”
There are a few things that will be in focus when deciding if a translation is good or not. First of all, if it includes all the people included in the Greek word, and only them. Secondly, if it gives attention to the power-relations and themes of exploitation present in the Greek word. The third criterion will be to look at if the translation, when the first two criteria are weighed together, gives the reader a reasonable chance to discern the same meaning from the word as the first readers did – that is, does the translation qualify as a dynamic equivalent translation (this third criterion is something of a summary for the translation that is being analyzed)? If the translation in focus combines μαλακός and ἀρσενοκοίτης, I will comment on this but it will not immediately disqualify the translation as bad, since the meaning that has often been found in μαλακός – that it is the passive partner – is present in ἀρσενοκοίτης. If the translation is able to clearly show the power-relations, it might still be a good translation of the word ἀρσενοκοίται in that it gives the reader a chance to discern the meaning of the condemnation, although it does not translate μαλακοί in its own right and that is of course worth noting. The reader might also have noted that some of the translations above, given separately, translate ἀρσενοκοίται in the same way. They are then given separately because they translate μαλακοί differently. In the following passage, these might be lumped together, but it was relevant to show the alternate ways of interpretation and include both of the words since they are often interpreted together and since both of them has received a substantial amount of attention in this paper.

I will in the next paragraph not focus on the emotional impact of the translations, since that impact is so closely bound to its use in, and the history of, the language in which the word is found, and I am not informed enough about those perspectives to make the kind of judgment that is needed to discern this. However, the criterion will be relevant later.

4.2 Comparisons

4.2.1 "men who have sex with men"

The first alternative on the list has a few strengths. It only includes males having sexual intercourse with males and it does not suggest pederasty to be the (primary) problem. Note that it interprets and translates μαλακοί and ἀρσενοκοίται together and in the New International Version there is a note that clarifies the inclusion of both the active and passive partner. However, it does not raise the issue

222 New International Version, Bibel 2000, En Levende Bok
of power-relations or exploitation, and it does not give the reader a chance to connect the condemnation to that but instead to whatever the reader connects male homosexual behavior to in his or her own culture. This essentially changes the meaning of the word in the eyes of many modern readers and does not support a dynamic equivalence.

4.2.2 “the effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind” and "effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men”

These are quite similar and will be dealt with together. I did not pair them together earlier since I find that there might be a slight difference between "mankind" and "men", at least in the modern language. If "mankind" is understood as all of the human race, that is a weakness since ἀρσενοκοίται only includes men and would probably not have been understood otherwise by the first readers. Both of the translations separates μαλακοὶ and ἀρσενοκοίται, so the definition given after "effeminate" only relates to the latter of the two. There is a weakness in both of them in that they, by using "abusers of themselves" does not exclude women from being the abusers. Given the power-relations in the ancient world, it would be far fetched to see the women as the abusers, especially as the word only includes men. They do however raise the issue of exploitation by the word "abusers” and the fact that one polluted one's own body. The focus is however too oriented towards the self, "abusers of themselves” - the abuse did not stop there. These flaws calls for the conclusion that this translation does not give good grounds for the modern reader to encounter the same textual image that the first readers encountered.

4.2.3 "male prostitutes, sodomites"

This is another translation that separates the Greek terms μαλακοὶ and ἀρσενοκοίται, and it seems to give good grounds for the reader to interpret them separated from each other, even if they are still united by the sexual aspect of the words as they now are translated – this is not necessarily a correct interpretation, as I have argued. Ἀρσενοκοῖται is here seen as referring to "sodomites”. The word "sodomite” is explained ”a person who has anal sex with another person : someone who practices sodomy” by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary and that is the interpretation of the word I use when discussing its use in the English translations. The term includes women, something not included in the Greek term. Further, it says nothing about the power-relations or the exploiting nature of the

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223 21st Century King James Version and American Standard Version
224 “Mankind” is defined as ”all people thought of as one group” by the Merriam-Webster dictionary (see http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mankind, seen 22/4-2015)
225 The Icelandic version, Biblíann 1981, has "kynvillingar” which, according to Islex (http://islex.is/se#Ilit seen 22/4-2015) and the professor of Nordic Languages at the University of Uppsala, Veturliði Óskarsson (private email correspondence), translates into "Sodomite”.
226 Found in New Revised Standard Version and Biblíann 1981
intercourse in mind. Because of these reasons, this translation is not a valid one if one is to reach a dynamic equivalence.

4.2.4 "neither lechers against kind, neither they that do lechery with men"228
This is an old translation, so the word "lechery" might have another meaning today than it did in the 14th century when it was first used. The modern definition given by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary is "inordinate indulgence in sexual activity".229 However much that word might have changed, there are two things to be noted here, according to the criteria mentioned above. First, "they" include, in modern English at least, both men and women alike. Second, the translation does not seem to raise the issues of power or exploitation, and thereby it does not give the modern reader a reason to consider that relevant in interpreting the verse. It thereby fails to meet the criteria of dynamic equivalence.

4.2.5 "los afeminados, ni los que se echan con varones"230
This translation also bears the burden of including women, "los" is masculine but in a general sense, unless it is specified that the ones being addressed are men – which it is not in this case. The addressee is instead found in the implicit "you" found in the verb "erréis" (2nd pers. pl.). That men alone constituted the “you” was probably the case when Paul wrote the letter, and definitely in the word in focus, but it is far from clear in the Spanish translation. Further, there is no mentioning of the element of power or exploitation. The word "varones" has the potential of including both men and boys,231 something that might open up to an interpretation closer to the age span between 13 and 19, the normal age of the passive partner. It also separates μαλακοί and ἀρσενοκοῖται, but still it does not manage to communicate the message that I argue that Paul wants his readers to understand and does thereby not qualify as a valid translation.

4.2.6 Ἀρσενοκοῖται = homosexuals232
In the list given above, there are a few translations that give different translations to μαλακοί, but "homosexual" is in common for ἀρσενοκοῖται. I will discuss them together, since ἀρσενοκοῖται is the word in focus. To translate it with “homosexual” is problematic, because even if some people might take it as referring only to men, it is defined as "sexually attracted to people of the same sex" by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary,233 and thereby includes both men and women. It is also

228 Wycliffe Bible
230 Reina-Valera 1960

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problematic because it places the focus on inclination and not on action, the opposite of the Greek text and the Greco-Roman context as a whole.\textsuperscript{234} It does not give the reader any reason to interpret the text as anything but condemning the inclination and perhaps the action because the action in itself is wrong. I argue, against this, that (at least in the context of this letter) it is not the action in itself that is the wrong in focus, but the motivation for undertaking it. Because of these flaws, "homosexuals" is far from being the right translation of the word.

4.2.7 "enginn karlmaður sem lætur nota sig eða notar aðra til ólífnadæðar"\textsuperscript{235} 
This is the most recent Icelandic translation of the words in focus and it interprets μαλακοί and ἀρσενοκοῖται together, resulting in “a man who lets others use himself or who uses others for debauchery”. This translation separates itself from many others in that it specifies the men (karlmaður) as the subjects doing something wrong, but there is nothing saying that the ones they allow themselves to be taken advantage of by or the ones they take advantage of are men. In that way, an interpretation involving women is still completely valid.\textsuperscript{236} There is a notion of exploitation in this translation, ”nota” (to use) could imply that someone takes advantage of someone else. The power-relations are not spelled out, but implicit in ”nota” there is someone stronger and someone weaker. That is a strength in this translation. However, the nature of that power is unclear and the aspect of power-relations needs more highlighting if an interpretation that shows the social and economical powers that are being exploited and/or chased is to become a plausible one after 2000 years of different views on sexuality. There is also the problem of mixing μαλακοί and ἀρσενοκοῖται. With this said however, it should be noted that this translation is a quite strong one compared to some of the others, since it at least gives the interpreter a possibility to see the theme of exploitation. However, ólífnadæðar seem to be quite a vague term, and I do not find that vagueness in the original term. The exploitation also suggests some sort of power-structure, and that might open an interpretive gate that other translations often has kept closed. It is, then, one of the better translations but still not good enough for dynamic equivalence.

4.2.8 Other translations that mention the theme of exploitation\textsuperscript{237} 
There are a few more translations where the translation opens up to the theme of exploitation: “de som lade sig bruge til unaturlig Utugt, eller de, som øve den”, ”de som utövar homosexualitet eller

\textsuperscript{234} It is worth noting that the first sentence of the introduction in Hubbard 2003 is “The term “homosexuality” is itself problematic when applied to ancient cultures, inasmuch as neither Greek nor Latin possesses any one word covering the same semantic range as the modern concept.” (p.1)
\textsuperscript{235} Biblia 21 aldar
\textsuperscript{236} This subject was also discussed with the professor Veturlíði Óskarsson in an e-mail conversation.
\textsuperscript{237} Dette er Biblen på Dansk, Det Norsk Bibelselskap, Svenska Folkbibeln
de som låter sig utnyttjas för sådant”, 238 ”de som låta bruka sig till synd mot naturen eller de som själva öva sådan synd”. All of these also combines μαλακοί and ἀρσενοκοῖται, but there is a very important difference from the Icelandic version just analyzed: the specification of the debauchery as ”unaturligt” - ”unnatural”, ”homosexualitet” - ”homosexuality” or ”synd mot naturen” - ”sin against nature”, affects the interpreter to find meaning that was probably not found by the first readers or even intended by Paul. It makes the modern reader connect what is said to the modern concepts of what is natural or not (something that differs greatly over time239) and the problematic use of ”homosexuality” has already been pointed out. There is also another problem with these translations, and that is the fact that they all include women. These problems of including women and using the ambiguous term ”nature” is also prevalent in ”bløtaktige eller de som synder mot naturen”, 240 but here μαλακοί has been separated from ἀρσενοκοῖται.

4.2.9 ”þeir sem skömm drýgja með karlmönnum”241

This is the oldest Icelandic translation mentioned here, from 1584. The two Greek words are translated separately and the translation into English of the quote would be ”they (masc) that do shame with men”. Since it is an old translation, it is hard to know what ”shame” meant to the readers and translators. What we can say, however, is that the masculine form of ”they” used here (þeir) is important since Icelandic can, and could, use ”þau”, a neuter, if the genders are mixed. Women are then excluded. For the modern reader, ”shame” is a very subjective term and thus the sexual aspect is far from clear. It is also not at all suggested that it has anything to do with power – to do shameful things is open for anyone no matter how powerful you are. In that way, this is not an acceptable interpretation today. What it meant 500 years ago is beyond the scope of this paper to find out.

4.2.10 Knabenschänder242

Finally, we have the German translations that seem to agree that ”noch Weichlinge, noch Knabenschänder” is a good translation. The ”Knabenschänder” (a molester of boys) is a translation that I have cast doubts upon earlier and I hold that it is not an interpretation that gives the modern interpreter the same connections as the Greek word did to its first readers. It does also not exclude women unless one is familiar with the pederasty of ancient Greece and Rome.

238 I did not include this translation with the other translation using ”homosexual” because this translation focuses on the action, and not the inclination, which separates it from the others.
240 Det Norsk Bibelselskap 1930
241 Guðbrandsbiblía - ”neither they (masc) that do shame with men”
242 Schlachter 1951, Schlachter 2000, Luther Bibel
4.3 A new translation

Now, as all of the translations have been found wanting, I will proceed to give a suggestion of my own: "Men who sexually exploit men to gain social powers". It will surely not be the last one, but it will be one that I argue grants attention to the surrounding context of Paul and the Corinthian congregation in a way that earlier translations do not do. I will also try to pay attention to the emotional aspect of the translation. In doing so, I will argue from the emotional standpoint of a person from Sweden, but it is my aspiration to do it with such transparency that the reader can follow the discussion no matter his or her place of origin.

First of all, it is relevant to repeat my central argument, which states that ἀρσενοκοῖται denotes the male active and passive parts in a same-sex intercourse who try to exploit the partner through sex in order to gain social powers of different sorts. When creating a translation, it is also relevant to remember the increased polarization current in the time of Paul in regard to views held on male homosexual acts. One can thereby assume that there were mixed emotional connotations to acts of that sort. However, it seems to be a safe assumption that Paul did not have a positive view of the male same-sex activities he had seen, or knew about, in Corinth, or in the rest of his contemporary world, so the interpretation should reflect this negative view. Some of the recipients probably agreed with it, while others might have reacted with less conviction. From Paul's point of view however, ἀρσενοκοῖται was probably a word he wanted to be noted and reacted to. The word “exploit” is a harsh word and might convey the negative connotations of Paul, while also giving rise to hard responses – the reader who does what is deemed as “exploitation” will be likely to strongly disagree, while others will enthusiastically agree. To “sexually exploit” is, in my understanding, even worse and could thereby be seen as too strong, with connotations going to rape – something that could have been the case but not necessarily. On the other hand, “sexually abuse” would perhaps be the preferred term if rape was the main issue, and so I still hold that “sexually exploit” is the best option to suggest the kind of activity being condemned, while also suggesting that what is happening is part of a zero-sum game where someone definitely is seen as losing.

However, I also want to keep the interpreter open to the possibility of the passive partner being the exploiter, since he could use sex as a means to his own goals as well as the active partner could, and thereby the role of winning and losing is quite complex.

When deciding the subject and object of the phrase, “male” and “male” seems to be a good way to translate the Greek term to show that women are not included and boys are not in focus, but

243 In Swedish: “Män som sexuellt unyttjar män för att vinna social makt”
244 See rubrics 3.1 and 3.2 above, with focus on p. 47
245 Fee 1987 p. 244 agrees with this, arguing that “-κοῖται” is a vulgar term that would have been noticed. I am not convinced by his arguments, but rather find that since Paul used a term with connections to a death penalty, he seem to have wanted the word to be noted.
still not excluded. However, “Males who sexually exploit males” has, to me, a scientific ring to it and seems more clinical than “ἄρσενο-”. Since the Greek term seem to denote first and foremost adult men, I find that “men” is a better word in this instance. “Men who sexually exploit men” does however not give the clues that the modern reader needs to get away from modern sexual exploitation to seeing the exploitation in the ancient world of Paul, where the goal was some sort of social power. It is hard to, in just one term, convey social influence of different sorts, including economical gain, so the translation will never be perfectly at ease with the Greek term. Were I to translate it in too many words, it would place all too much focus on the term, something not suggested by the use of a single word in the Greek text. However, it is necessary to modify ”men who sexually exploit men” in some way to show what gain there was in the exploitation, that it was not (just) sexual pleasure at stake. Given the interpretations of the word found in the history of reception, I also hold that it is more important for a translation to be more precise even if it becomes a bit long, than to be more imprecise and short – although that does not validate a translation that completely breaks the flow of the text. Lacking a better alternative, I think that ”social powers” is a possible way to translate it. The translation opens up to an interpretation that does not only connote money, nor does it exclude it since even today, wealth can be a big part of social power. ”Powers” is to me a wide term, denoting that which can enable a person to do what he or she wishes to do without others being able to stop it. By having it in the plural, I want to suggest that different sorts of power is relevant in the condemnation. It is also a term that is emotionally potent, ”power” is, so to speak, a powerful term. I think this is the best way to go since no other term that I can think of carries the range of meaning that ”power” does, and it answers well to ”exploit”, which also is a powerful term. They also have the potential to pass on the argumentative nature of the original text – if there was a polarization in the view on the sort of male homosexual acts found in the time of Paul, and Paul was found on the side arguing against it, it is not unlikely that the term he used was harsh, and also recognized as such by the first readers (one should keep in mind that he was inspired by a verse demanding the death penalty for male homosexual acts).

"Social powers", then, modifies the power and places it in the social arena and opens up to interpretations including everything that enables people to act freely on that arena. These things are, obviously, not always the same in antiquity as they are now, but it would be impossible to list all the social powers intended here without completely breaking the flow of the text. ”Men who sexually exploit men to gain social powers” would be my translation of the term ἀρσενοκοῖται. The emotional impact is, as stated, hard to discern, but I have here shown what I believe to have been the emotional impact on the first readers, and also the main plausible connections made by the addressees as they met and interpreted the word. These, I argue, are better conveyed in my
5. Conclusion, summary and outlook to the future

5.1 Conclusion and summary

I hold that the best conclusions are as easy to grasp as possible and clearly connected to the questions of the paper, article or book at hand. I will, therefore, structure my summary of the conclusions made by listing the initial questions and then shortly summarize their answers.

Question 1: "What are the likely connotations intended by Paul, and what connotations are the most plausible to have been found by the first readers of the first letter to Corinth when they encountered the word ἀρσενοκοῖται in the list of vices in 1 Cor 6:9 (continued in 6:10)?" I have argued that it is likely that Paul intended to condemn both the active and passive partner in a male homosexual relationship when he used the word ἀρσενοκοῖται in the list of vices in 1 Cor 6:9-10. I have further argued that the reasons behind this are the exploiting nature and clear connection to excess and greed of same-sex sexuality present in the contemporary time of Paul, as well as the pollution to the body that because of these (perceived) faulty mindsets was the result of male same-sex liaisons. Paul lived in a time when male homosexual actions were often connected to either excess, greed, exploitation, humiliation of the weak or all four of them. The intention behind the condemnation on male homosexual acts, then, was to create a respectful environment within the congregation, where the effects of social stratification were minimized and pollution of the body of Christ was avoided. There is no way of telling if the recipients got all of this when reading/hearing the letter, but it is probable that they got at least two things: The condemnation was aimed at both the active and the passive partner, and the condemnation was based on the intentions behind the sexual act. That the intentions were obviously in focus is unavoidable since there was no egalitarian or "win-win" sex – a man deciding to have sex with a man always made a decision that could affect his social stratification by either heightening or diminishing it. The context of the letter, as well as the surrounding sociological environment, suggests that the critique is first and foremost aimed at the higher social stratas in the congregation in Corinth, as well as those who tried to climb the social ladder, but that does not mean that the critique did not have an impact on others as well – to limit the impact of a statement is impossible, especially when the author is not present to explain it to everyone who might have questions.
Question 2: "Do the word/the words chosen by modern translations to translate this word reproduce these connotations?" I have answered this question negatively, and the argumentation can be seen under "4.2 Comparison" above.

Question 3: "If the second question is answered negatively, what would a translation that is closer to giving the same connotations to a modern reader look like?" I have proposed the translation "Men who sexually exploit men to gain social powers". In doing so, I have tried to keep the translation short so as to not place too much focus on it, but still give the modern interpreter a way to see the theme of exploitation and will to gain power, that is, the intent that would have been intrinsically part of the understanding that the ancient interpreter brought with him or her when encountering the word. Since these aspects are not intrinsically a part of modern sexuality, they have to be added to the translation. I have also used strong terms, like "exploit" and "power", to convey the polarization that was present in the time of Paul between those who were pro and those who were against the contemporary forms of male homosexual acts, where Paul was found on the against-side, probably arguing against some who were on the pro-side, or by Paul seen as at risk of becoming that.

To end this section, I want to return to the introduction and the pastor who did not say that the Bible needed interpretation. Obviously, I am of a different opinion. Without saying that Paul would definitely agree with my conclusions (although, naturally, I hope he would), or with the friend of mine also mentioned in the introduction, I believe that it is plausible to state that he would not have agreed with the pastor. Not because of Paul's opinion on homosexuality of any form – I have argued that noone can know what Paul thought about modern homosexuality since he did not have a chance to comment on it, and the view on sex has drastically changed during the last 2000 years. No, I would think that Paul, if he spoke to the pastor, would rather quickly realize that the pastor had indeed interpreted what Paul wrote, but from a context quite unfamiliar to Paul himself, and thereby the message would unavoidably have been changed. Paul, himself a keen interpreter of Scripture, might have a few points of disagreement with the pastor, especially if the pastor did not realize he was talking to Paul and therefore refused to take the explanation concerning the apostles own context into consideration.

The fundamental problem with the point of view held by the pastor is, I believe, the unwillingness or inability to see that the meanings of words are not necessarily stable over time. This paper has tried to show the importance of this factor and take it into account in translating quite a controversial term in First Corinthians.
5.2 Implications

The conclusions of this paper suggest that to use 1 Cor 6:9 when condemning modern homosexuality might be problematic. The arguments made call such an interpretation that supports a condemnation into questioning and show that the word ἀρσενοκοῖται comes with a baggage of exploitation of different sorts. Of course, if one has a view on modern homosexuality as implicitly male, exploitative, and aimed at gaining social powers, then it would be fair to condemn homosexuality on the basis of 1 Cor 6:9. On the other hand, if that understanding does not ring true within the interpreter, I argue that ἀρσενοκοῖται does not form a basis for such a condemnation. To once again go back to the pastor on the plain; if he holds that homosexuality is in itself exploitative and aimed at gaining social powers, he would be right in using 1 Cor 6:9 to support his argument that homosexuality should be condemned. I cannot, of course, know whether he thought this to be the case or not – but the baggage that comes with the word suggests that the condemnation is intrinsically intertwined with these themes, and it is important that one who uses ἀρσενοκοῖται in condemning homosexuality knows what kind of baggage he or she is adopting. He or she should also be aware that there might be a need to also take a closer look on whether men who, for example, remove the hair from their chests should be equally condemned as men who have sex with men.

The pastor could of course claim that the text was written without influence from the surrounding Greco-Roman culture, and thereby giving the interpreter a completely Jewish or Judaeo-Christian context to consider – something that could alter an interpretation a great deal depending on the definition of Jewish or Judaeo-Christian. However, I hold such a standpoint, where Paul is isolated from his contextual world, to be arbitrary and unfounded. Noone lives in a bubble without any input from the outside world.

Finally, one should remember the implications of what Paul says in 5:9-13. He is not talking to the people outside of the congregation. He is talking to the people in Corinth constituting the body of Christ, who either (according to Paul) are behaving as if they were not part of Christ's body, or are at risk of emulating such a behavior. Whether or not members of the congregation in Corinth were actually having male homosexual sex is impossible to know – however, it is plausible that the kind of male homosexual sex that I have described in this paper occurred in Corinth, and that the congregation was, from Paul's point of view, at least at risk of being influenced by such a behavior – especially since some members of the congregation might not have viewed that sort of “intrusion” as a problem (as Paul did), as long as it was done with moderation. That would suggest the implication that the baggage that comes along with the word extends also to include a view of male homosexual sex as an intrusion on both the person and on the Body of Christ, because of its
exploitative nature. It would also suggest that one can not, from 1 Cor 6:9, say anything about male
same-sex intercourse outside of the Body of Christ - "For what have I to do with judging those
outside? Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge? God will judge those outside. “Drive
out the wicked person from among you.”” (1 Cor 5:12-13 NRSV).

5.3 Looking forward
There are, of course, a lot of things that can be done within the subject of this paper. However, I
want to specifically point to three perspectives that has not been developed fully here, due to a lack
of both space and time. First of all, an examination of the early history of reception of the word. An
examination of that sort might enlighten us as to how the word was received, and it might also cast
some light upon the changing views on sexuality within Christian circles. I have found that
sometimes, scholars forget to see the context of the interpreters as relevant. The question of for how
long sexuality was intrinsically bound to power-structures is then very important in studying the
reception. My conclusion in this paper is, at least in parts, supported by the study of the history of
reception conducted by Wright, but that study is in no way exhaustive.

Second, the social categories of social stratification can be widened and explored much
deepen, thereby giving a better understanding as to who Paul is arguing with and how he identifies
them. One of the most under-studied groups in this paper is the group of non-citizens. Their status
and possibilities to control their own sexuality in the time of Paul needs a better examination.

Third and last, a closer look at the sources and the development of the view on sexuality is
needed. How far back in the time before Paul are the texts relevant in affecting the views held by
Paul? What texts are not relevant at all? Closely related to these issues are the issues pertaining to
the understanding of the contemporary Jewish perspectives in the time of Paul. What perspectives
are relevant? How big of an influence was Philo on Paul, and were there others? If Paul was taught
by Gamaliel, what views might this Jewish teacher have held on the condemnation of male
homosexual acts? These are just three of many areas, but they are areas that to me seem to be the
most urgent ones to better understand what Paul is saying both with the word ἀρσενοκοίται, and
also to understand the history of reception of the word, and perhaps the whole letter.
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