

μαλακοὶ

Malakoi = literally “soft.” Idiomatically it was used as “weak,” “unsure,” “unsteady,” and “inferior”

It was drafted into middle Latin as the word *molles*, literally meaning “soft,” and was used idiomatically to mean “feminine” (e.g. “women are the weaker sex.”) Translations from the Greek that render *malakoi* as “effeminate” are rooted in this Latin interpretation of the word.

The German translation of *malakoi* as “weakling” reflects the German idiomatic usage of “soft” for physically inferior, and borrows from the nominal Greek idiomatic usage.

The English translation “male prostitutes” is based upon an interpretation of the frequent role that Greek males would adopt in selling themselves in the sex trade.

ἀρσενοκοῖται

arsenokoitai comes from the words

arsen = “men”

koites = “bed” as a euphemism for intercourse

Paul put them together to coin this word; it didn’t exist in Greek before he made it up. Paul’s intended meaning for *arsenokoitai* is, therefore, difficult to determine, forcing us to lean heavily on the linguistic structure of the stems he used to create it. The problem with doing this is that the result is:

“men engaged in bedding,”

which is ambiguous to say the least. Additionally, the verb formation is in the reflexive case, meaning that the subject and the object of the verb are probably the same.

The KJV, as well as most other pre-20th Century English translations, convey *arsenokoitai* as:

“abusers of themselves with mankind”

which doesn’t help much, though the reflexive character of the rendering makes one think of masturbation, which is how many preachers in the 17th and 18th centuries often referenced it in the few extant sermons that reference the passage.

The term **“homosexual”** didn’t get used for translating *arsenokoitai* in English Bibles until the mid 20th Century. The word “homosexual” was coined in German in 1869 and transposed into English usage in the 1870s.

German (Luther’s translation) renders *arsenokoitai* as: **“Knabenschänder”** which means “pederast,” literally “boy molester.” The Swedish, Norwegian, Frisian, and High Dutch all render it similarly.

Old Church Slavonic and historic Russia translations render it as **“Paderast”** or “child molesters.” Only Russian translations dating the early 21st centuries render it as **“Gomoseksualnui”** or “homosexual”

Translating *arsenokoitai* with the term **“sodomite”** is interpretive, depending upon a particular understanding of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18-19 which traces to St. Jerome’s Biblical Commentary on the Latin Vulgate, (early 5th Century AD). It should be noted that Jerome doesn’t use this term in his translation of the Greek to the Latin, but, rather, follows the Old Latin usage of **“paedico concubitores”** or “one who has sex with little boys.”