

Eva Cantarella on Homosexuality

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Cantarella is an Italian classicist. She is professor of Roman law and ancient Greek law at the University of Milan. She is the author of *Bisexuality in the Ancient World*, Yale University Press, 1992. Her investigation into ancient culture provides us with a massive collection of resources about sexuality of that time. Cantarella is respected by her peers as an authoritative voice in her field of study, ancient law, cultures, languages, and common perceptions of those times. Notice of particular interest that what she has written was first published in 1992, two decades before the modern controversy of reinterpreting homosexuality began among Christians.

“Paul then condemns each and every form of homosexuality. But despite the clarity of his language, the text is sometimes interpreted in a much more restricted sense than a simple reading reveals. So that malakos to whom Paul alludes are not boys, they are passive homosexuals whom Paul defines by using a term which in Greek alludes only to adults, but which he obviously uses to indicate all those who take on an effeminate, a female role without distinction of age. And along with those he also condemns the arsenokoitēs, a term which literally means a man who shares his bed with another man. But which Paul is clearly associating with malakos to include active homosexuals also in his condemnation.

“And there is nothing in the text to limit his condemnation to adults who took advantage of boys. If Paul’s aim had been to protect little children from exploitation and abuse among other things, he would presumably have leveled his condemnation only at the abusers and not at their victims as well. In short, as can clearly be seen, Paul condemned homosexuality on a global basis, whatever its manifestations. This is not an inconsiderable innovation. It immediately shows the Christians attempt to introduce a different sexual ethic which replaced the old contrast between activity and passivity with a new fundamental dichotomy between heterosexuality and homosexuality.”

Her analysis of Paul’s usage of language and the conclusions derived from his commentary is very persuasive. Cantarella is in full agreement with Paul from a genuinely academic point of view. It must be emphasized that her statements come purely from knowing ancient cultures, their laws, and their orientations.

Modernists claim that Paul invented the word *arsenokoitēs* because it is thought to appear nowhere else in all of ancient Greek literature. Actually, this word does appear in the Septuagint two centuries before Paul, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, about 200-180 BC. Of the more than 290 Old Testament quotes in the New Testament, about two thirds come from the Septuagint, rather than the Masoretic Hebrew. Paul may have combined both words found in Leviticus 20:13 of the Septuagint to form *arsenokoitēs*.

Septuagint 20:13 { και ὃς ἂν **κοιμηθῆ** (lie) μετὰ (with) **ἄρσενος** (man) κοίτην γυναικός (woman), βδέλυγμα ἐποίησαν ἀμφότεροι· θανάτῳ (death) θανατούσθωσαν (put to death), ἔνοχοί (guilty) εἰσιν (they are). }

*“If a man (**ἄρσενον**) also lie (**κοιμηθῆ**, go to bed) with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them,”*

Fornication is a word found twenty-six times in the New Testament, and each occurrence translates the Greek manuscript word: πορνεία (*porneia*, *por-ni'-ah*, G4202) referring to all sexual activity except that of one man and one woman in a covenanted marriage. Porneia is comprehensive, regardless of the sexual label that might have been created, such as adultery, incest, homosexuality, prostitution, sodomy, pedophilia, bestiality, or pornography, to name just a few. Jesus addressed all sexual misbehaviors and condemned them all.

*“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, **fornications**, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man,”* Matthew 15:19-20 (NKJV)

Paul mentions fornication in 1 Corinthians 6:9.

“*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate* (μαλακός, *malakós*, G3120, soft to the touch).

Greek “μαλακός” usually refers to clothing (Matthew 11:8; Luke 7:25). Figuratively or metaphorically, it refers to an adult man who yields himself to be sexually abused in unnatural ways. This is the homosexual male who plays the submissive role in the relationship. Further, the word appears between the word’s *adulterers* and *abusers* in the Greek New Testament, so it cannot mean soft in this context.

... *nor abusers* (ἀρσενοκοίτης, *arsenokoitēs*, *sodomite*, G733) *of themselves with mankind*... A man who lays in bed with another man. This is the homosexual male playing the dominate role who abuses his partner at his imaginative discretion. ... *shall inherit the kingdom of God.*”

To paraphrase these words in a modern sense: “*Be under no illusion, fornicators will not be included in the eternal kingdom of God.*” Modern advocates of same-sex relations are forced to disregard the entire Bible.

BIBLICAL SOURCE CITATIONS

(I) *Porneia* refers to any sexual sin; coupled with *moicheía* (G3430), adultery (Mar 7:21), and other sins (Rom 1:29). Used generally to refer to any sexual sin (1Co 6:13, 1Co 6:18; 1Co 7:2; 2Co 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5; 1Th 4:3; Rev 9:21). In Joh 8:41, “We be not born of fornication” means, “We are not spurious children, born of a concubine, but are the true descendants of Abraham” (a.t. [Sept.: Gen 38:24; Hos 1:2]). Specifically of adultery (Mat 5:32; Mat 19:9); of incest (1Co 5:1). *Porneía* (G4202) may also refer to marriages within the degrees prohibited by the Law of Moses and generally to all such intercourse as prohibited in that Law (cf. Lev. 18; Lev 20:10 ff.).

(II) Symbolically it stands for idolatry, the forsaking of the true God in order to worship idols. Since God is said to be married to His Church through Christ, then any idolatry is unfaithfulness toward God equal to sexual unfaithfulness to one’s marriage partner (Rev 2:21; Rev 14:8; Rev 17:2, Rev 17:4; Rev 18:3; Rev 19:2; Sept.: Jer 3:9; Eze 16:15, Eze 16:22; Eze 23:27; Hos 2:2; Hos 4:12).

(III) Fornication as a sexual vice was common before the time of Moses and was grossly prevalent in Egypt (Gen 39:7). Prostitution was not tolerated by the Sinaiticus code, being an abomination in the sight of God (Lev 19:29; Deu 23:17-18). Its price could not be accepted in the sanctuary (Mic 1:7), and death by stoning was the penalty for an unmarried woman who had concealed her crime (Deu 22:20-21). The term “strange woman” in Pro 2:16 probably referred to a harlot procured from foreigners. See also Pro 2:16-19; Pro 5:3-6; Pro 7:5-27. God’s displeasure was thus incited (Jer 5:7; Amo 2:7; Amo 7:17). Such excesses were very common among the heathen in the times of the Apostles (1Co 5:1, 1Co 5:9-10; 1Co 6:9). Israel is symbolically presented as a harlot (Isa 1:21; Jer 2:20; Ezek. 16; Hos 1:2; Hos 3:1).

Syn.: *akrasía* (G192), lack of self-restraint; *asōtía* (G810), profligacy; *hēdoné* (G2237), pleasure, hedonism; *asélgeia* (G766), intemperance, insatiable with regard to pleasure.

Ant.: *hagnótēs* (G54), purity; *hagneía* (G27), chastity; *katharótēs* (G2514), the state of being cleansed, clean; *egkráteia* (G1466), continence; *hagiótēs* (G41), holiness; *hagiōsunē* (G42), sanctity.

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NEW TESTAMENT CITATIONS OF FORNICATION

The word fornication is found 26 times in the New Testament, and 39 times if you count variations such as fornications, fornicator, fornicators or fornicated.

(Matthew 5:32) “But I say to you that whoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever shall marry her who is put away commits adultery.”

(Matthew 15:19) “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”

(Matthew 19:9) “And I say to you, Whoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is put away commits adultery.”

(Mark 7:21) “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders.”

(John 8:41) “You do the deeds of your father. Then they said to Him, We are not born of fornication; we have one father, even God.”

(Acts 15:20) “But that we write to them that they should abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.”

(Acts 15:29) “That you abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which, if you keep yourselves, you shall do well. Be prospered.”

(Acts 21:25) “And as to the nations who believe, we joined in writing, judging them to observe no such things, except only that they keep themselves from both idol sacrifice, and blood, and a thing strangled, and from fornication.”

(Romans 1:29) “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; being full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, evil habits, becoming whisperers.”

(1 Corinthians 5:1) “On the whole it is reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even named among the nations, so as one to have his father's wife.”

(1 Corinthians 5:9) “I wrote to you in the letter not to associate intimately with fornicators.”

(1 Corinthians 5:10) “Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then you must go out of the world.”

(1 Corinthians 5:11) “But now I have written to you not to associate intimately, if any man called a brother and is either a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one not to eat.”

(1 Corinthians 6:9) “Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor abusers, nor homosexuals.”

(1 Corinthians 6:13) “Meats for the belly and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them. But the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body.”

(1 Corinthians 6:18) “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits fornication sins against his own body.”

(1 Corinthians 7:2) “Because of fornications, let each have his own wife, and let each have her own husband.”

(1 Corinthians 10:8) “Nor let us commit fornication, as some of them fornicated, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day.”

(2 Corinthians 12:21) “Lest in my coming again my God will humble me with you; and I shall mourn many who have already sinned, and not repenting over the uncleanness, and fornication, and lustfulness which they have practiced.”

(Galatians 5:19) “Now the works of the flesh are clearly revealed, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lustfulness.”

(Ephesians 5:3) “For let fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness not be once named among you, as becomes saints.”

(Ephesians 5:5) “For you know this, that no fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous one (who is an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”

(Colossians 3:5) “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness (which is idolatry).”

(1 Thessalonians 4:3) “For this is the will of God, your sanctification, for you to abstain from fornication.”

(1 Timothy 1:10) “For fornicators, for homosexuals, for slave-traders, for liars, for perjurers, and anything else that is contrary to sound doctrine.”

(Hebrews 12:16) “Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.”

(Hebrews 13:4) “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

(Jude 1:7) “Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them, in like manner to these, committing fornication, and going away after other flesh, laid down an example before-times, undergoing vengeance of everlasting fire.”

(Revelation 2:14) “But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the teachings of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.”

(Revelation 2:20) “But I have a few things against you because you allow that woman Jezebel to teach, she saying herself to be a prophetess, and to cause My servants to go astray, and to commit fornication, and to eat idol-sacrifices.”

(Revelation 2:21) “And I gave her time that she might repent of her fornication, and she did not repent.”

(Revelation 9:21) “And they did not repent of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”

(Revelation 14:8) “And another angel followed, saying, The great city, Babylon, has fallen, has fallen; because of the wine of the anger of her fornication; she has made all nations to drink.”

(Revelation 17:2) “With whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and became drunk with the wine of her fornication, those inhabiting the earth.”

(Revelation 17:4) “And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet. And she was gilded with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.”

(Revelation 18:3) “Because of the wine of the anger of her fornication which all the nations have drunk. And the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her. And the merchants of the earth became rich from the power of her luxury.”

(Revelation 18:9) “And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived in luxury with her will weep for her, and will wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning.”

(Revelation 19:2) “For true and righteous are His judgments. For He has judged the great harlot who defiled the earth with her fornication, and He has avenged the blood of His servants out of her hand.”

(Revelation 22:15) “But outside are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and makes a lie.”