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The public representation of homosexual men in seventeenth-century England – a corpus based view

Abstract: In this article we explore public discourse around one marginalized group in early-modern English society, men who engaged in sexual relations with other males. To do this we use a large corpus of seventeenth century texts, the Early English Books Online corpus. Our exploration leads us to consider a number of methodological issues, notably low frequency data and the classical framing of some words. We consider the historical context which brings this about, the impact of such data on our study and the importance of close reading in understanding words in discourse. In addition, we show that, even where frequency does not seem to be an issue, close reading, guided by corpus analysis, is vital in allowing the analyst to move past a superficial analysis of the data towards an understanding of the conventions attached to the use of words which appear to reference men who have sex with men in this period. Through such analyses, this paper sheds light on the typically negative meanings associated with this group in early modern England, and provides both challenge and refinement to existing lexicography, both modern and early modern, relating to the group in this period.

Keywords: homosexuality, lexicography, corpus linguistics, discourse, Early Modern England

1 Introduction

This paper focuses upon the public representation of men who engaged in sexual relations with other males in the seventeenth century. We wish to explore

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how such men were written about in public discourse during a time when male same-sex intercourse was a capital offense.

While we could approach this question through the lens of conceptual history,[1] in this paper we feel that the body of work on the study of homosexuality is substantial enough for us to use that as a point of reference. Scholars researching sexuality are sometimes divided into essentialist and social constructionist camps. Essentialists perceive homosexuality as being biologically determined and historically constant. Social constructionism arose in the 1980s and continues to be influential. Its adherents believe that sexual behaviour is conditioned by cultural factors and that participation in same-sex activity holds differing significance depending on the participant's society. For instance, they might argue that men who engaged in sexual relations with adolescent boys in Ancient Greece were acting in accordance with the cultural norms of their society and were not conceived of as being homosexual. This approach was highly influenced by the work of the French philosopher, Michel Foucault, who claimed that the homosexual, as a personage, was only conceived of in the nineteenth century. Foucault argued that, prior to this time, 'sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them.'[2] A similar note of caution is raised by Bray (1982: 10, 17).

In this paper we take a neutral stance to the essentialist/social constructionist debate by adopting Bray's solution of using the phrase *homosexual* only when referring to physical acts.[3]

2 The corpus used in this study

The corpus used in this study, the Early English Books Online Corpus version 3 (EEBO v3), is constructed from texts keyed in by the Text Creation Partnership (TCP). The TCP has been releasing tranches of keyed in texts from libraries worldwide for the period 1475–1715. The great bulk of the texts are in English, though the corpus also contains some texts in other languages including French,

1 For an explanation of conceptual history and an example of research related to it using corpus linguistics see Pumpfrey et al. (2012).

2 Foucault (1998: 43).

3 We will also not attempt to include an analysis of perceptions of lesbianism in this study. Other than ambiguous references to female same-sex love in plays and neoclassical poetry, lesbianism remained hidden. The notion of a woman having sex with another woman simply did not permeate early modern society. This meant that accusations of lesbianism were rare and female relationships were rarely regarded as a threat to the established social order.

Latin and Welsh. EEBO v3 was compiled at Lancaster University using 44,422 texts amounting to 1,202,214,511 words. The corpus itself is composed of a wide variety of genres, including religious tracts, proceedings of meetings, plays and reportage.

EEBO has some limitations as a corpus.[4] As it stands, it is an unstructured collection of texts. Any findings related, for example, to genre must be made on the basis of the skills of the analyst and close reading. Also, because of the nature of publishing at the time, EEBO is very heavily populated with religious writings. While that is understandable, it also leads, as this paper will show, to strong skews in the data at times towards religious interpretations of the world and religious allegory.

Yet the corpus is invaluable as it allows us to study English of the Early Modern period on a scale that smaller, though admittedly better structured, corpora such as the Helsinki Corpus,[5] Lampeter Corpus[6] and the Archer corpus[7] cannot.

3 Approaching the marginalized in early modern England – low frequency data

One of the challenges in exploring marginalized identities with corpus data is that the marginal nature of the identities brings with it the strong likelihood that the frequency of the lexis referring to such behaviours and groups will be suppressed. This leads to a relative lack of sources, and corpus evidence, describing same-sex relationships by both the participants themselves as well as those around them. Johansson and Percy (1996: 171, 175–176) have described how homosexuality was suppressed during the Middle Ages in accordance with the Judeo-Christian taboo on same-sex activity: the very subject was banished from polite conversation and literature surrounding it was subject to censorship and destruction. Indeed, trial records were often burnt along with offenders (ibid: 176). The overall impression left is that men who practised same-sex were unlikely to regard themselves as homosexuals and rarely alluded to their

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4 Readers are encouraged to consult Kichuk (2007) for a further exploration of the limitations of the EEBO corpus.
5 See http://clu.uni.no/icame/hc/index.htm.
6 https://www.tu-chemnitz.de/phil/english/sections/linguist/real/independent/lampeter/lam phome.htm.
7 See http://www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/linguistics-and-english-language/research/projects/ archer/.

experiences first hand, though here we must accept the confounding hand of self-censorship and censorship by others may be at play.

Though, as noted, some court records relating to homosexual offences were destroyed, some relevant court records do exist and scholars investigating homosexuality in early modern England have analysed legal documents. Yet doing so poses a different set of challenges. Bray (1982: 41) has written of the difficulties of accepting legal records, where they exist, as a reliable guide to the study of a marginalised and stigmatized group as the court records view that group through the optic of the prejudices, myths and common symbolism of the dominant social groups in their society. There is also a paucity of such evidence – before the end of the seventeenth century, legal proceedings against homosexuals were rare. Moreover, the voices of these men rarely emerge in court transcripts and reports. It is possible that many of these cases were dealt with by informal measures of justice, such as mediation between two parties, which entailed no formal record keeping.[8] One can also imagine that, for many men, homosexual activity was something that, for reasons of self-preservation, they were adept at keeping hidden from the rest of society.

4 Approaching the marginalized in early modern England – identifying search terms

We now need to address one of the methodological issues that this paper must confront. We cannot use our knowledge of Present Day English as a basis for the compilation of a list of terms which may have been used to describe homosexual men in early modern England. Terms such as *homosexual, gay*, and *queer* were not used in relation to homosexual men during this period; it is claimed that the label *homosexual*, for example, was invented by Károly Mária Kertbeny who used it for the first time in 1869.[9] Our approach to confronting this problem was thus to employ three guides in selecting the words we would go on to explore in the corpus: i) our prior knowledge of seventeenth-century texts, gained from reading the texts first-hand and reading scholarship which detailed the lives of social outsiders in the period; ii) early modern English lexicography, principally

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8 Shoemaker (1991: 284–285) has argued that rural inhabitants may have been reluctant to pursue prosecutions against members of their own communities as this would have entailed a journey to the nearest courthouse. Instead, they may have preferred to settle disputes by means of mediation.

9 See Johansson and Percy (1996: 156).

accessed through Lexicons of Early Modern English (LEME);[10] and iii) the Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary.[11] We were mainly interested in nouns specifically used to describe homosexual males but we also decided to explore some terms that may have been used to refer to male prostitutes who took male clients. Table 1 shows the initial list of terms we compiled using these three guides.

Table 1: Possible terms used to describe homosexual males in early modern England.

badling; bardash; boy buggerer; boy-harlot; boy-lover; buggerer; catamite; cynedian; ganymede; he-strumpet; he-whore; ingle; love-boy; male varlet; masculine whore; mollis; nimfadoro; ningle; pathic; pederast; prostitute boy; sellary; sodomite; sodomitical boy; spintry

When searching our corpus we looked for all of these terms in their singular and plural form and their variants.[12] As we explored the corpus, however, two further sources of evidence became apparent. Firstly, within the corpus itself were lexicographical works of the period, some of which were not present in Lexicons of Early Modern English (LEME), and these yielded further examples. Secondly, as we explored the examples in the corpus we became aware of other terms, used in close proximity to the terms we were looking for, which had similar meanings. Table 2 below shows the outcome of that process of searching – the final set of words and phrases we explored in our study. Note that the initial list in Table 1 included some items for which we found no corpus evidence.

Table 2 confirms that, even with a billion words of data, there is scant evidence to explore many of the words that we may wish to. Accordingly, in the rest of this paper we will explore the most frequent terms in Table 2. We will then consider what value can be gleaned from the moderately frequent items before concluding the paper.

10 LEME is a searchable database of historical dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and glossaries.
11 http://www.oed.com/thesaurus
12 Given the extensive literature on dealing with variant spellings in early modern English corpora, we will not treat this methodological issue at length here. Briefly, however, our approach to the issue was to use a corpus that had been annotated with normalised spellings by VARD (see Archer et al. 2015) and to search for variant spellings which, in the course of our reading of the concordance lines arising from our study, we became aware that VARD had not provided a normalised form for. Note that when lifting text from the Early English Books Online corpus, we have reproduced all quotations verbatim. This includes the retention of original spellings and punctuation.

Table 2: Frequencies of terms in EEBO v3.

Word	Frequency in EEBO-v3	Word	Frequency in EEBO-v3
abuse against/of nature	7 (7 texts)	*love boy*	18 (7 texts)
badling	4 (4 texts)	*masculine whore*	3 (3 texts)
bardash	35 (27 texts)	*mollis*[13]	648 (310 texts)
boy buggerer[14]	1 (1 text)	*nimfadoro*	1 (1 text)
boy lover	0 (0 texts)	*obscaenus*[15]	7 (6 texts)
buggerer	201 (145 texts)	*pathic*	68 (42 texts)
catamite	203 (119 texts)	*pederast*	7 (4 texts)
cinaedus	31 (28 texts)	*prostitute boy*	4 (4 texts)
darling[16]	6427 (3554 texts)	*sellary*	8 (8 texts)
fricatrice	8 (7 texts)	*sodomite*	98 (57 texts)
ganymede	1088 (460 texts)	*softling*	5 (4 texts)
he strumpet	0 (0 texts)	*spintry*	9 (8 texts)
he-whore[17]	17 (17 texts)	*trug*	50 (39 texts)
huffler	2 (2 texts)	*unspeakable/*	3 (3 texts)
ingle	267 (137 texts)	*unmentionable vice/sin*	

5 The most frequent terms – *sodomite*

We will begin our analysis by focusing upon the four most frequent items in Table 2 – *sodomite, buggerer, catamite* and *ganymede* – which are frequent enough to permit a corpus analysis based upon collocation. The following graph illustrates how the usage of these words fluctuated throughout the seventeenth century in the EEBO corpus. The graph conflates the singular and plural

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13 *Mollis*, Latin for soft and pliant, appears only in a handful of English texts and these provide no obvious connection to homosexuality.

14 Note that this term occurs in neither in the OED or LEME. It is included here as it was found during the exploration of the collocates of *buggerer*.

15 No matches of *obscaenus* relate specifically to same-sex activity.

16 *Darling* is a high frequency word in the EEBO corpus, appearing 5.7 times per million words. Its collocates include *minion, minions, favourite* and *favourites* which perhaps does suggest some connection with same-sex male relationships. Miege (1677), in a bilingual Anglo-French dictionary, defines *mignon* as a minion, darling or favourite. However, there is no other indication that *darling* was used to refer to homosexual males.

17 Note that the terms *he-whore* and *prostitute-boy* occur neither in the OED or LEME. We included them in our analysis as we had encountered them previously in the study of *whore* reported in McEnery and Baker (2016).
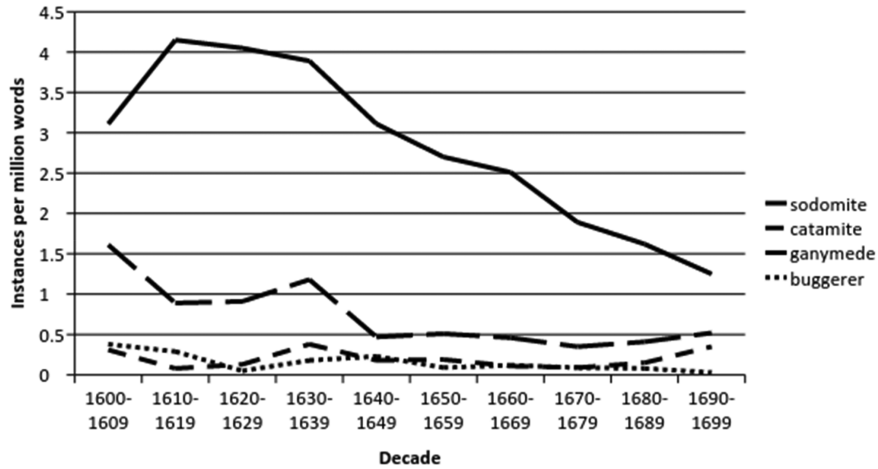
Figure 1: Frequency per million words of *sodomite, catamite, buggerer* and *ganymede* throughout the seventeenth century.

forms of the words, as well as spelling variants, and shows frequencies per million words rather than the raw frequencies of terms (Figure 1).

Sodomite is mentioned over 2,500 times in the seventeenth-century EEBO corpus, though it does reduce in frequency as the century progresses. It occurs frequently enough that we were able to proceed to analyse the word using collocation[18] as the high frequency of *sodomite* allowed collocates to be calculated per decade throughout the seventeenth century. However, the analysis encountered a significant issue– figurative usage.

6 Approaching the marginalized in early modern England – the issue of figurative usage

Collocation shows, very clearly, that the word *sodomite* is not as useful for this study as its frequency would indicate. Of the fifty-nine lexical collocates of *sodomite*, fifty-five relate to the biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah –the overwhelming presence of the Biblical frame of reference in the early modern period is an issue here. These collocates included *unclean*: "Lot had his

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[18] In this study collocates were generated using a span of five words, on both the left and right of the node. We used the Log Ratio 'effect-size' statistic created by Dr Andrew Hardie which not only identifies collocates but indicates how strong the bond is between the two words.

righteous soul vexed with the unclean conversation of the Sodomites;"[19] *wicked*: "Lot was righteous among the wicked Sodomites;"[20] and *sin*: "The sin of Sodomites overthrew them, their houses, their cities, their children, yea, their plain, and all that grew upon the earth."[21] If we look at consistent collocates, following the practice of McEnery and Baker (2016) who consider collocates which occur in at least seven decades of a century to be consistent, i. e. in a stable relationship with a word, we find three: *Lot, Gen.* and *filthy*. Lot is a character from the Biblical story and Genesis (abbreviated as Gen.) is the section of the Bible in which the story occurs. The third collocate, *filthy*, is present as the city of Sodom is consistently called "filthy Sodom" or the "filthy city of Sodom". So the dominant pattern these consistent collocates reveal is of a reference to the city of Sodom and its inhabitants in the Biblical story.

Why was the term *sodomite* used less frequently as the seventeenth century progressed? The historical context provides no firm evidence that homosexual activity had decreased or was more likely to be ignored in the second half of the century; indeed, Pepys noted in his diary entry of 1 July 1663 that 'buggery is now almost grown as common among our gallantry as in Italy'.[22] Moreover, there is no indication that another term was used in preference to *sodomite*. The word *molly*, for instance, does not appear as a nickname for homosexual men in the EEBO data before the end of the seventeenth century. *Sodomite's* close association with the biblical story of Lot may account for its decline. Frequencies per million words of the terms *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* in the EEBO corpus also exhibit a general decline through the century suggesting that the Biblical story was referenced to a lesser extent in public discourse, perhaps as a result of changing religious and cultural concerns. This finding is congruent with the findings of Hamlin (2014: 21) who investigates how frequencies of certain terms belonging to a 'god-lexicon' fluctuated in the early modern period. He finds that terms such as *heaven, hell, devil, antichrist, heathen* and *blasphemy* all decline during the latter half of the century whereas the 'doubt-terms' *reason, sceptism, uncertain*, and *perhaps* all gradually increase.

Collocation might also provide a clue why *sodomite* was in decline in the century. Unlike the collocates connected with Lot, a number of co-occurring words, *beastly, murderers*, and *harlots*, do relate to real-life sexual practice. They are only present in the first half of the century and tend to appear in texts saturated with anti-Catholic sentiment. The first two of these collocates occur in controversial

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19 Preston (1658).

20 Ross (1655).

21 Jenkyn (1652).

22 See Burg (1995: 22).

religious works by Matthew Sutcliffe of the 1620s: "... the filthy masse-priests, monks and Iebusites, that abjuring lawful marriage, burn in unlawful lusts, and are known to be adulterers, fornicators, sodomites, and most beastly and swinish fellows"[23] and "For Ball a Massepriest was a principal ring-leader of the rebels: and the friars were murderers, sodomites and traitors, as the rebels said of them."[24] It is thus possible that the use of *sodomite* was reducing because, first, the story of Lot was becoming less prominent in public discourse and, secondly, the number of anti-Catholic texts which featured the term *sodomite* was becoming smaller. A clear link to homosexuality and *sodomite* is not clear in the corpus. What can be said, however, is that the Biblical allusion certainly imbues *sodomite* with a strong negative discourse prosody when the word is used of a non-biblical referent.

Sodomite is, however, associated with female prostitution. Indeed, if we consider the collocates of *sodomite* for the seventeenth century as a whole, rather than as part of a by-decade analysis, we find a striking pairing of sodomites and female prostitutes in early modern discourse. Bly (2000: 17) has written that both groups of erotic minorities were knit together in public perceptions "by a combination of unmarriageability and lust". *Sodomite* collocates with *harlots*: "this wretched rout of Infamous Cattle, Pimps, Bawds, Harlots, Sodomites, encompass't his Majesty in his Passage through the Forum"[25] and *whore*: "He must needs be some Masculine Whore, or Sodomite, or perchance a Jew."[26] Another revealing collocate of *sodomy* is *vice* – the two terms often co-occur in texts which claim that male same-sex is commonly practised in countries inhabited by non-Christians. For instance, consider Purchas' (1625) description of the people of China: "The greatest fault we do find in them is Sodomy, a vice very common in the meaner sort, and nothing strange amongst the best."

A small number of examples of the phrase *sodomitical boy* do provide a clearer allusion to homosexuality in three seventeenth-century texts in the EEBO corpus[27] – yet again the religious frame of reference dominates as all are anti-Catholic in nature. A translation of a dialogue by the Italian historian, Gregori Leti (1670), who was well-known for his anti-papal histories, draws a parallel between whores and sodomitical boys, thus contaminating the latter with the stigmatisation of commercial sex implied by the former.

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23 Sutcliffe (1625).

24 Sutcliffe (1629). John Ball, mentioned in this quotation, was a Lollard priest involved in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

25 Parker (1684).

26 Quevedo (1657).

27 Note that this term was attested neither in LEME nor in the OED. It was explored as a result of noticing the phrase in the exploration of *sodomite*.

An exploration of the word *sodomitical* alone shows that four collocates attach themselves to it in the seventeenth century: *filthiness, abominable, lusts, sins*. These words suggest that *sodomitical* relates more directly to sexual impropriety than the term *sodomite*. Yet, *sodomitical* could still act as a representative term for an array of sexual sins. For example, the preacher Samuel Danforth (1674) wrote a sermon on the execution of seventeen year old Benjamin Gourd for bestiality in Massachusetts which condemned the boy for giving himself "…to Self-pollution, and oher Sodomitical wickedness. He often attempted Buggery with several Beasts, before God-left him to commit it."[28] However, a very small minority of concordances do employ *sodomitical* to describe a vice not necessarily connected with sodomy. Morton (1684) tells us that, "The Sodomitical sins, are pride, Idleness, and fullness of bread."[29] So while the word may be used in relation to homosexuality, it clearly has a broader meaning than this.

Historical context can help to explain this broad meaning of *sodomite* – Saslow (1991: 97) notes that canon law included all manner of non-procreative sexual activity under the umbrella of sodomy. Burg (1995: xi) writes that sodomy was used in law to mean homosexual acts, homosexual child molestation, bestiality, heterosexual anal-genital contact, and homosexual masturbation. However, in practice, he argues that a simple reference to sodomy, without further qualification, meant sexual acts between adult men. Bly (2000: 17) has observed that historians who have failed to locate a self-identifying sodomite tend to "extend the singular into the plural". Hence we undertook a search for the singular of *sodomite* only and found that, to some extent, the results supported the views of Bly. An immediate consequence of excluding the plural instances of *sodomite* was the reduction of many references to the biblical story of Lot. For the singular form, the top ranking collocate is *buggerer*.[30] This leads to a precise definition of *sodomite* by Poole (1683): "a Sodomite Or, buggerer, who defiles or suffers himself to be defiled with mankind." It also leads us back to the historical and social context in which the word was being used, which helps explain the relative rarity of this use of what is an otherwise common word – Sheppard (1662), in a collection of libel cases, tells us that certain slanders such as traitor, murderer, thief, robber, buggerer and sodomite are actionable words because, when used in insults, they endanger the life of the

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28 See Warner (1994: 334).

29 This association between sodomy and gluttony was also made by other writers. A leading legal scholar, Edward Coke, believed that sodomy originated in excess of diet, pride, idleness and contempt for the poor. See Burg (1995: 5).

30 These collocates were calculated for the seventeenth century as a whole as frequencies proved insufficient for a by-decade analysis.

insulted. This is because, in early modern England, being found guilty of sodomy could result in the forfeiture of life and property.

7 Other frequent terms – *buggerer, catamite* and *ganymede*

Our focus of investigation now naturally shifts from *sodomite* to *buggerer*, which appears in the seventeenth-century EEBO corpus 135 times. Texts in EEBO concerned with lexicography again offer information concerning how contemporaries defined *buggerer*: Blount (1661) tells us that a sodomite is "an Ingler or Buggerer". Other writers also offer definitions. Like Poole (1683), Smith (1664) describes buggerers as "abusers of themselves with mankind". *Buggerer* is another term which is presented pejoratively: it is frequently included in lists of people who are perceived as being offensive. For example, a religious treatise by Twisse (1646) states that fornicators, idolators, adulterers, wantons, thieves and buggerers are all forbade entry to the kingdom of God. Buggerers, as well as sodomites, were also sometimes thought to be foreign.[31] A translation of a travelogue by Jean de Thévenot (1687) concerning Egyptians explains that "both Musulmans and Chrisantians are all swarthy, they are exceeding wicked, great Rogues, Cowardly, lazy, Hypocrites, Buggerers, Robbers, treacherous, very greedy of Money, and will kill a man for a Maidin". There is also a more muted discourse which links *buggerers* with sorcery; *sorcery* collocates with *buggery* in six texts, some of which present certain religious groups as being an unfair target of sorcery and buggery accusations: "the lying Papists do accuse the Albigenses and Waldenses (our first reformers) to be witches, Buggerers, Sorcerers, and to deny infant-baptisme."[32]

Let us now turn to examine the two other frequently-occurring terms: *ganymede* and *catamite*. These terms are strongly linked to one another. *Catamite* is derived from the name Catamitus, the Latinised form of Ganymede. These terms show another lens through which homosexuality may be referred to in the period, classical allusion. Ganymede was a beautiful boy who was abducted by Zeus in Greek mythology. If we examine the collocates of *ganymede*, we see that just as religious texts overwhelmed references to *sodomite*, classical references dominate

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31 The etymology of *buggerer* has foreign roots. The OED states that the term was derived from the Latin Bulgarus, a name given to a sect of heretics from Bulgaria in the eleventh century. Thanks to Matteo Di Cristofaro for his help with this definition.

32 Tombes (1652).

with the mentions of *ganymede*. Almost all of the collocates, considered for the seventeenth century as a whole, refer to the mythical Ganymede. These include *Tros* and *Ilus*, Ganymede's father and brother respectively, and *Hebe* whom Ganymede supplanted in the role of cup-bearer to the Gods. Many of these collocates, such as *beautiful, lovely* and *pretty*, present Ganymede as attractive and worthy of adoration, but he is also described as *wanton*. The collocates do, however, strongly suggest a link to homosexual attraction. A male character in a comedy by Otway (1681) exclaims: "My Hero! my darling! my Ganimede! how do thou? Strong! wanton! lusty! rampant!" Moreover, *sodomy* collocates with *ganymede*. Blount (1661) writes of "Ganymede (Ganymedes) the name of a Trojan Boy, whom Jupiter so loved (say the Poets) as he took him up to Heaven, and made him his Cup-bearer. Hence any Boy, loved for carnal abuse, or hired to be used contrary to Nature, to commit the detestable sin of Sodomy, is called a Ganymede, or Ingle." The verb *hired* does suggest that the Ganymede's company must be paid for. Hence in *ganymede* we have clear lexicographic evidence of a term which is linked both to homosexual activity and prostitution.

These links become clearer when we look at the collocates of *catamite: stale, concubine, whores, wanton, boy, kept* and *young*. They provide a very frank representation of a catamite. The collocate *boy* leads us to a dictionary definition by Blount (1661): "Catamite (catamitus) a boy hired to be abused contrary to nature, a Ganymede." Hence both catamites and Ganymedes were thought to have been young boys but, unlike a Ganymede, a catamite is not presented as being physically desirable. Rather he appears to be paralleled with female prostitutes[33] and described as *stale*. However, closer inspection reveals that the collocate *stale* appears only in Roman texts, such as in Suetonius's (1606) description of the emperor Tiberius's activities on the island of Capri: "there were sought out and gathered from all parts, a number of youngs drabbes and stale Catamites, sorted together such also as invented monstrous kinds of libidinous filthiness, whom he termed Spintriae." The collocate *kept* emphasises that the services of a catamite can be bought and suggests, moreover, that a catamite tended to stay with one man for a substantial period of time.

8 A focus on moderately frequent terms

So let us move on to see what may be achieved by looking at what we may call moderately frequent terms, words which are too infrequent to permit

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[33] Bly (2000: 69) asserts that the term *catamite* is used almost exclusively to refer to boy prostitutes who are hired for men.

collocational analysis, for example, but where we have enough examples that we may start to sketch the outline of the word's meaning with some confidence by close reading of the extant examples. Let us consider the term *pathic*. While the term is moderately frequent, it still does not provide clear evidence of relevance to this study, for many of its 66 appearances in the seventeenth-century EEBO material relate to homosexual practices in Ancient Greece or Rome – 24 of the examples appear in translations of classical writers such as Juvenal, Ovid, Suetonius and Virgil.[34] John Dryden (1687) refers to Julius Caeasar during his time as ambassador to the court of Nicomedes IV in Bithynia as "Pathic Caesar".[35] Taylor (1660) informs us that, under Roman law, "if a boy after seven years old killed a man, he was liable to the lex Cornelia de Sicariis … but not so if he were a pathic and a correspondent in unnatural lusts." In both these examples there is a suggestion that the pathic is a younger or passive homosexual.

While interesting, these classical references represent another problem for a study such as this – while the word generally refers to homosexuality in these examples, unlike in the case of *catamite* and *Ganymede*, they do not tell us much about Early Modern sexuality at all. But they are once again indicative of the importance of a classical framing for mentions of homosexuality in the early modern period. This finding is in line with Savvidis (2011: 77, 81) who observes that a rich vocabulary from the ancient world concerning homosexuality, including such terms as *darling, mollis, pathicus, obscaenus*, was inherited by early modern English writers viewing the classic cultures as "exemplary instances of civilization". That is evident in Table 2. It is less certain whether the influence of the classical world permeated to the English lower orders, many of whom were illiterate. However, given that the lower orders were typically not involved in the production of the texts in EEBO, it remains the case that a fusion between references to homosexuality in antiquity and the use of terms from the classical world to refer to contemporary homosexuality exists in the written record to the extent that it represents a challenge for a corpus-based study of homosexuality in the early modern period.

These classical allusions can, however, on occasion give rise to a direct comment on attitudes to homosexuality in early modern texts, as can be seen when we look at a variant of *pathic, pathicus*. While this appears only once in the EEBO corpus, in a discussion of the Ten Commandments by John Turner

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34 See, for instance, Juvenal (1693), Suetonius (1606) and Virgil (1634).
35 Caesar spent so much time with Nicomedes that rumours began to circulate that the two were lovers. Indeed, Caesar gained the nickname 'the Queen of Bithynia' during this period. See Cantarella (2002: 156).

(1685), the text is both unusual and valuable, to say the least, as it raises the question of consent in male sexual relationships in unambiguous language:

> So also when the Law forbad Sodomy, or the use of Carnality contrary to nature ... yet the Decalogue does not at all concern it self about them, the reason is, because though in this case there be a mutual offence, committed between both of the contracting parties ... and between the Pathicus and the Cinaedus ... yet it was not an offence violently committed by one of the parties upon the other, for then it could not be mutual in them both, but it was by mutual, reciprocal and interchangeable consent.

Indeed, this phrase "mutual, reciprocal and interchangeable consent" would not be considered out of place in present-day society. So, while our response to the issue of disentangling antiquity and the use of classical terms to discuss homosexuality was close reading, the effort invested in close reading was worthwhile, as a very relevant example for our study was thus revealed.

This extract also offers another term we had not yet considered: *cinaedus*, which is mentioned by Bray (1982: 13) but is not listed in the Historical Thesaurus of the OED. This is probably the source of the term *cynedian* which we included in our original list but that had no matches in the seventeenth-century EEBO corpus.[36] *Cinaedus* appears in nineteen texts in the corpus but the vast majority of these are in Latin. Yet a small number of English texts do offer some clues to the meaning of *cinaedus*. Heywood (1657) tells us that: "Sotdes Marionites Cinedus, that is, one abused against nature, or addicted to preposterous Venery, was a Poet, and writ most bawdy and beastly Iambics in the Ionian tongue, which he entitled Cinaedi; in which were described the forms and figures of several new devised Lusts (and before that time) unheard of prostitutions." Hoole (1649) defines a *semivir* or a *cinaedus* to be a womanish-man. This example is interesting as it introduces an element of effeminacy into contemporary definitions of homosexuality. This is consistent with the observation of Allen (2006: 84) who claims that the term *cinaedus* was the Latin version of the Greek term *kinaidos*, which means a man who is effeminate or given to cross dressing. So single examples, carefully selected through close reading, again provide useful clues to a word's meaning.

While classical references give rise to Greek and Latin borrowings to frame and label the behaviour, a number of contemporary early modern European words have also been put forward as terms used to describe homosexuals in

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36 We were aware of the term *cynedian* as a few examples of the term exist in the corpus beyond the seventeenth century – the word appears three times in a sixteenth-century satire by Marston (1598). The references are pejorative and suggest that cynedians are pretty young boys who sell their bodies.

early modern English. The Historical Thesaurus, for instance, suggests the Italian term *nimfadoro* in its category of "an effeminate or homosexual man". Yet there is scant corpus evidence for this: *nimfadoro* appears just once in the EEBO v3 corpus. Jonson (1616) mentions a "brisk nimfadoro" in his satirical comedy, *Every Man out of his Humour*, but the reference is ambiguous. If we turn to LEME for evidence, the definition from the Historical Thesaurus is shown to need finessing – the English-Italian dictionary compiled by Florio (1598) defines *nimfadoro* as "an effeminate, wanton, milke-sop. perfumed ladies-courting courtier" which rather suggests a man who is effeminate, but is interested in sex with women.[37] So it may be that the 'or' in the definition from the OED should be exclusive - that a nimfadoro is either effeminate or homosexual, but not both. Then again, the single example we have from the corpus and the LEME entry does not allow us to say anything other than this is one of a range of possibilities. We see once again the benefit of having slightly more data when we consider *bardash*, another potentially relevant term with foreign roots. It is a slightly more common term, appearing in nine texts. This additional evidence is sufficient to show that it does appear to refer to a man who practises same-sex. Its various cognates – the French *bardache* and Italian *bardascia* – also appear in a handful of texts with similar meaning. The link between homosexuality and effeminacy is also much clearer in this case, as the following example, from a translation of Garzoni (1600), shows: "But yet that folly of Nero surpasses them all, for he had a desire to bring forth like women; he made a stallion and bardasso boy of himself at one instant; and touching Sporus his Ganymede, he entered into this notable folly, that he would needs see him of a male as he was, turned into a woman." So while effeminacy and homosexuality do seem linked in the early modern period, at least in translation, as *bardash* shows, it is not axiomatic that a reference to an effeminate man implied homosexuality, as the example of *nimfadoro* shows.

Saslow (1991: 99) has argued that terms for passive homosexual men such as *cinaedus* "conflate effeminacy, youthful androgyny, transvestism, and homosexuality into one constellation of gender transgressions". However, in the late seventeenth century, effeminacy was a charge also thrown at men who were thought to be overly interested in sexual conquests involving women.[38]

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37 The character Nymphadoro who appears in Marston (1606) was presented as a serial seducer of women at court.

38 See Goldberg (1992: 111) and Panek (2010: 358). Significantly, the term *sodomy* collocates with *effeminate*. However, *gallants* collocates even more strongly with *effeminate*, often in the L1 position, and the gallants of the texts are often presented as heterosexual youths who pursue women. See, for example, Caussin (1650).

Trumbach (1991: 133–135) has written about the character of the fop in Restoration plays who was portrayed effeminately but who was attentive to women. He notes that in the early eighteenth century, the association between effeminacy and homosexuality was reasserted and men who wished to avoid the association simplified the style of their clothing and stopped greeting one another with kisses in public.

Although a higher volume of evidence would permit a more comprehensive analysis of relatively rare terms such as bardash, for example, by allowing an exploration of collocates, extant examples do shed light on word meaning and the construction of the group in public discourse. There are some terms, however, that initially appear to be neither clouded by a classical frame of reference nor by references to a meaning in another European language. For example, the noun *ingle*, and its variant *ningle*, are promising both in terms of frequency and in terms of their apparent meaning; *ingle* appears 112 times in the seventeenth-century material of the EEBO v.3 corpus though *ningle* is less common, appearing only 19 times.[39] However, most of the examples of *ingle* do not appear to directly reference homosexuality. Some refer to surnames, some are variant spellings of *mingle* and *single*, and others are ambiguous. Appearing as a verb, *ingle* is also very occasionally used to mean flatter or caress: for example, "these are they, who by their wantonizing Stage-gestures, can ingle and seduce men to heave up their hearts and affections" and "we must ingle with our husbands a bed, and we must swear they are our cousins."[40]

If we discard the examples of the word form *ingle* which are not relevant or which are ambiguous, we do identify a moderately frequent way of referencing homosexuals. We have identified 27 examples of *ingle* which unambiguously reference men who engage in same-sex. For example, a handful of dictionary entries, present in EEBO, define *ingles* as *catamites* or *ganymedes*; Blount's glossary (1661) tells us that *ingle* derives from the Latin *inguen* (groin) and means a boy kept for sodomy. He then directs us to the entry for *Ganymede*. Coles (1677) writes that an *ingle* is a catamite but that the term can also mean a blaze or fire.[41] Like the term *sodomite*, ingles are linked with female prostitutes – "Ingles and Whores"[42] and "thine Ingles, and thy Jades"[43] – suggesting parallel

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39 *Ningle* mostly appears in early modern plays. Over fifty mentions of *ningle* appear in the same four seventeenth-century plays by Rowley et al. (1658); Jordan (1668); Jonson (1609); and Dekker (1602).

40 I.H. (1615) and Middleton and Dekker (1611).

41 Note that Coles is in LEME also, whereas Blount is not. However, in LEME the Coles dictionary is dated as 1676.

42 Howell (1659).

43 Cotton (1675).

occupations and thus a potentially transactional element to the meaning of *ingle*. The *ingle* is almost invariably presented as being male and in the service of men.[44] *Ingle* is often presented very pejoratively. For instance, Varchi (1615) refers to a "loathsome Ingle" and Dekker (1603) tells us that usurers and brokers are the "devils Ingles, and dwell in the long-lane of hell".

9 Conclusion

The words used to describe homosexual men in early modern England were overwhelmingly laden with a negative meaning and were almost always mentioned in the writing of people who viewed homosexual men as deviant and other. None of the texts we came across during our analysis were self-referential. Yet despite scholarly warnings that early modern people did not conceive of sexualities such as heterosexual and homosexual, we found that terms such as *ingle, catamite* and, to a lesser extent, *ganymede*, were used to convey sexual orientation; indeed, when referenced by the most hostile observers, these terms often reduced their recipients to the whole sum of their sexual activity.[45] Some terms carried a greater sense of disapproval than others. Labels such as *ganymede* and *catamite*, despite being frequently pejoratively applied, carried a lesser threat than a term such as *sodomite* which was associated with heresy and could ultimately lead to execution.[46]

A major challenge in this study has been the low corpus frequencies of a number of terms we wished to investigate. However, this did not mean that the appearances of low or moderately frequent terms in the corpus were entirely without value. We were still able to shed light on word meaning in a number of cases, including those of the terms *pathic* and *ingle*. In some instances, we uncovered helpful lexicographic information in the corpus itself which was not present in LEME.

With the more frequently occurring terms, however, we faced a different challenge which involved disentangling the figurative usage of a term from its literal referent. This was particularly the case in our analysis of the term

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44 The exception is this extract from Braitwait (1658): "I was her Ingle, Gue, her Sparrow bill, And in a word, my Ladies what you will How many Ev'nings Coached she and I With Curtains drawn, that none might us espy?"

45 Interestingly, the terms we initially included in our list as candidate terms for homosexual prostitutes, namely *he-whore* and *trug*, seemed to refer only to heterosexual male prostitutes or female prostitutes in the EEBO corpus.

46 See Bray (1982: 65).

sodomite which, in its plural form, was almost wholly connected to Biblical references. We overcame this by redefining our search term – we explored the singular only of *sodomite* and also looked at the adjective *sodomitical*. The singular form of *sodomite* led us to the collocate *buggerer* and direct references to male same-sex activity whilst we found that *sodomitical* was often used as a general term for sexual misbehaviour. It is likely that early moderners were aware that terms such as *sodomite* encompassed an array of meanings and that the ambiguity of the lexis surrounding male homosexuality and prostitution was deliberate and useful.[47] Early modern writers used a variety of terms to explain or describe sexual acts many of them found distasteful. Foreign language terms, classical mythology and historical figures, particularly from Ancient Greece and Rome, were all evoked to allude to homosexuality and male prostitution. Alongside a strong anti-Catholic discourse, we found that many authors placed occurrences of homosexuality outside of England. It was presented as a conse-quence of the excessive lechery of non-Christian men and described as belong-ing to another culture or even another period in time.

One final note of conclusion – a study such as this shows the value of close reading in corpus linguistics. While corpus linguistics does lend itself to large scale quantitative study, it also leads the analyst back to the text, especially through concordancing. As this study has shown, close reading remains a valuable tool in the corpus linguist's toolbox.

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47 See Savvidis (2011: 43).
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