

ABSTRACTS

Studies on Sexuality in Ancient Mesopotamia

JULIO CÉSAR PANGAS

THIS ESSAY SEEKS TO FILL THE VACUUM left by the many years of Assyriological research in which the theme of sexuality has not been seriously discussed. The essay analyzes a series of attitudes toward sexual life that appear in diverse texts including Tablet 104 of the "Divination Collection", from which various omens are extracted relating to specific circumstances of the person's sexual activity; the many texts dedicated to the "sacred marriage" performed at the beginning of the year, in which the king and a priestess carry out a sexual relation in order to renovate the earth's fertility; and various texts that allude to sexual life in passing such as tablets that deal with medicine, law, and oneiromancy.

Ascetics and Prostitutes. The Seduction of the Saint in Indian Mythology

BENJAMÍN PRECIADO

A VERY COMMON MOTIF IN INDIAN MYTHOLOGY is that of the seduction of a hermit by a beautiful nymph or by a courtesan full of charm and tricks. Both the hermit and the nymph or courtesan are stock figures in Indian literature. There are a series of characteristic traits that identify the figures: the hermit is a great penitent that through his *tapas* or mortification has accumulated great power. Chastity or *brahmacharya* is one of the central elements of *tapas* and is the key to the extraordinary force obtained by the hermit. The nymph or courtesan is a young damsel of narrow waist and

ample hips, of firm breasts and charming face, an expert in the arts of love and ready to serve her master.

The motif presents several variants: the seduction; the defeat of the seductress; the curse on the seductress and one variant that we examine here more closely: the spilt semen. One series of examples of the motif deals with the beginning of various lineages. These examples present the seduction motif as a pretext for the spilling of the semen of the hermit and the birth of a child without a mother. In the final part of the article we advance a possible interpretation of this variant of the motif.

Prostitution in Ancient Societies

YOLOTL GONZÁLEZ TORRES

THE PRESENCE OF THE FEMALE *AUIANIME* OR "HAPPY ONES" of the Mexica culture is difficult to trace and to study given the contradictory information that exists about them. Little is known in fact about the role of women and sexual life in general in the apparently repressive society of the Mexica. This theme serves as the point of departure of this essay, which compares aspects of prostitution in Mexica society, in ancient Mesopotamia (where prostitutes seems to have played a civilizing role), and in ancient India.

Sexuality and Social Strata in Premodern Japan

GUILLERMO QUARTUCCI

A DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTIC OF PREMODERN JAPAN, namely of the Edo or Tokugawa period (1603-1686), is the rigid division of the society in strata: samurais, peasants, artisans and merchants. Another important characteristic is the consolidation of three different belief systems: Shintoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. The behavioral manifestations of sexual life varied according to the social stratum at the same time that the ideological framework was more or less the same for all strata. The vast majority of the

population were peasants whose sexual practices partook of a magical character and were always related with the community and with customs typical of rural societies. For the samurais, the rigid neoconfucian norms imposed a sort of sexual life similar to that of classical Greece, in which homosexuality acquired the aura of virtue and knowledge, whereas heterosexual sexual relations were considered to be merely a way to perpetuate a family lineage. The merchants and artisans, called *chonin* (men of the city), enjoyed greater liberty, above all thanks to the accessibility of the "red light" districts. These districts were unavailable to the other two groups. In these areas they developed a specific culture that was eventually transmitted to modern Japan. In this essay the author discusses the sexual life of rural Japan as well as some of the sexual practices of Buddhist priests.

Sexuality in China

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THIS ESSAY REPRESENTS A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF SEXUALITY in contemporary China. It will form part of a larger study of the urban family in China based on extensive interviews and questionnaires that the authors conducted in six Chinese cities in 1987. The authors treat sexuality as a historical product conditioned by specific social, economic, ideological and political contexts. The essay prefaces its discussion of the present situation with a short introduction to the conceptions of sexuality in traditional China. The authors then discuss the problem of sexuality in contemporary China in terms of the confrontation between the official government literature, with its emphasis on moralizing discourse, and an empirical reality subject to diverse changes and influences.