



**The Humorous Treatment of Prostitutes by an Early Modern German
Franciscan Preacher Poet: Johannes Pauli (1522)**

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Abstract

Irrespective of our comfort level, the topic of prostitution assumes an important role also within late medieval and early modern history, literature, law, and art history. While many scholars have already engaged with this issue drawing from legal or social-economic sources, the literary evidence also deserves to be considered in this context. The German-Swabian Franciscan preacher and poet, Johannes Pauli, is famous for his extensive discussion of everyday-life situations in his close to 700 prose narratives. There is hardly any aspect in human existence left out, whether we think of truth, fools, gender, peasants, judges, clerics, women, or the many different vices and virtues. Practically overlooked by scholarship, however, in one section, Pauli also turns his attention to prostitutes and entertains his audience with humorous narratives about various situations in the lives of those women, certainly an important sliver of human society during the pre-modern world.

Keywords: Prostitution in the pre-modern world; Johannes Pauli; humorous treatment of prostitutes; go-betweens.