

CLASSICA  
ET MEDIAEVALIA

*Revue danoise de philologie et d'histoire*

PUBLIÉE AVEC LE CONCOURS DE

*Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen · Jesper Carlsen  
Karsten Friis-Jensen · Vincent Gabrielsen  
Minna Skafte Jensen · Birger Munk Olsen*

PAR

*Ole Thomsen  
Université d'Aarhus*

VOL. 50

MUSEUM TUSCULANUM PRESS  
UNIVERSITÉ DE COPENHAGUE  
1999



# 'SHOULD ONE MARRY?'

On the Use of a Classical Rhetorical Theme  
in Early Lutheran Wedding Poetry

by Pernille Harsting\*

The 16th century Neo-Latin wedding poetry written after the Lutheran Reformation in Denmark and in Northern Germany was obviously composed in praise of the institution and the blessings of marriage. In many of the poems this praise is expressed through quotations from *Genesis* and from the other biblical texts that served as a basis for the Lutheran view of marriage. This group of poems thus often took on the character of a versified sermon or of biblical exegesis. In other wedding poems, however, we find the Lutheran teaching on marriage expounded in a literary framework that has little to do with the pulpit and preaching. Praise of marriage can for instance be wrapped up in an imitation of the classical bucolic and put forward by shepherds with Greek names, who from their peaceful *locus amoenus* comment on the wedding in the nearby busy city. Or it can be Apollo leading the nine Muses, who appear in a vision to the poet and in various classical meters give their opinions about the excellence of marriage and their praise to the newly-weds, who through their wedding have confirmed the God-given order and stand out as an example to be followed.

Marriage was definitely not something to be questioned in 16th century Denmark and Northern Germany. On the contrary, clerics did their utmost to prevent people from living together without being formally wed. Marriage was established by God, not as a grace-giving sacrament, but as a secular institution for the maintenance of temporal society. As a secular institution marriage had four ends. These *causae finales* or *bona conjugii* were: To celebrate God (*sanctitas*), to secure the continuation of mankind (*necessitas*), to protect against loose living (*castitas*), and to ensure the mutual help and comfort between husband and wife (*societas*).

\* I am grateful to Russell L. Friedman for his comments on the original Danish version of this paper and for his help with the English version.

The Danish and North German wedding poetry of the 16th century thus served as a mouthpiece for Lutheran teaching on the institution of marriage. The greatest part of the wedding poets were university students, and it is no coincidence that some of the earliest Danish wedding poems of the 16th century were written by three Danish students in 1551 while they were studying in Wittenberg with Luther's right-hand man, the theologian and educator Philip Melanchthon.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the distinctive combination of Lutheran doctrine and erudite references to the classical Greco-Roman literature and culture that we find in the 16th century wedding poems, characterises precisely the 'Lutheran humanism' that resulted from Philip Melanchthon's understanding of Renaissance Humanism in a Lutheran conceptual framework. This North European version of Italian Renaissance humanism was disseminated through the many schools and universities restructured after the reformation according to Melanchthon's educational ideas, among these the Danish grammar schools and the University of Copenhagen, which reopened in 1537. Indeed, both as theologian, as educational theorist, and as Latin poet, Melanchthon exerted a direct influence on post-Reformation literature, not least on wedding poetry.<sup>2</sup>

The discussion *an uxor ducenda*, 'whether one should marry', may at first appear strange and inappropriate in this distinctly pro-marriage context. Nonetheless, it was a popular theme in early Lutheran wedding poetry, especially in the poems of the last decade of the 16th century. To illustrate this – and to underline the interconnection between the literatures of the two Lutheran areas<sup>3</sup> – I have chosen as examples a North German and a Danish wedding poem, both from the 1590's.

- 1 On Melanchthon's teaching and Hans Frandsen's first wedding poem from 1551, see Pernille Harsting 'From Melanchthonism to Mannerism: The Development of the Neo-Latin Wedding Poem in 16th Century Denmark', forthcoming in the special 1999 issue of *Chloe. Beihefte zum Daphnis* = Acts from the symposium 'Humanismus in Norddeutschland' (ed. Thomas Hays).
- 2 Cf. also Pernille Harsting 'Epitalami latini della riforma in Danimarca (1536-1590): imitazione classica e rappresentazione luterana' *Res publica litterarum* 15 (1992) 97-106.
- 3 In fact, Danish literature of the 16th and 17th centuries, whether written in Neo-Latin or in the vernacular, can only be fully understood in the context of the contemporary literature of Northern Germany.

The first example is Peter Lindeberg's wedding poem to the theologian Lucas Bacmeister (1530-1608) and his second wife, Katharina (1536-1593).<sup>4</sup> Peter Lindeberg was born in Rostock in 1562, and during the period 1587-1591 he was the secretary and what we would call a 'ghost-writer' for the Danish King's vice-regent in Holstein, Heinrich Rantzau.<sup>5</sup> The wedding poem to Lucas Bacmeister is to be found both in Lindeberg's three books of *Ἠθύσματα* (printed in Hamburg in 1592), and in his collection of *Juvenilia*, which was printed in Frankfurt in 1595, the year before Lindeberg died, just 34 years old.<sup>6</sup>

Peter Lindeberg's wedding poem is written in dactylic hexameters and consists of 59 verses. (See the appendix below for the Latin text.)

In Lindeberg's poem the two goddesses Juno and Minerva are discussing whether it is preferable to remain single and free or rather to submit to the yoke of marriage. In virtue of her position as Jupiter's wife and patron goddess for the homely virtues, Juno advises everybody to marry and thereby ensure the survival of mankind. Minerva, or rather Pallas, as she is called in Lindeberg's poem, is herself chaste and celibate. Therefore, in opposition to Juno, she advises against marriage: It only leads to great troubles; just see how many kings and kingdoms have fallen on account of marriage. There is nothing worse than marriage: It is a torment and a nuisance, and none of its joys comes unaccompanied by pain. Most of the time the wife is contrary,

4 Katharina's name appears in only one of the two preserved editions of the poem, cf. note 6 below. – On Bacmeister, see Gottfried Holtz *s.v.* 'Bacmeister (3)' in *Neue Deutsche Biografie* 1 (1953) 508-509. The wedding took place on August 25, 1585. Both Bacmeister and Katharina were widowed. Bacmeister's first wife, Johanna (1543-1584), was the daughter of the Copenhagen professor and royal *medicus* Jacob Bording. From 1548 until at the latest 1555, Bacmeister also served at the court of the Danish King Christian III, as the teacher of the Crown Prince Frederik II.

5 On Lindeberg's function as a 'ghost-writer' for Rantzau, see Dieter Lohmeier 'Heinrich Rantzau und die Anfänge der neulateinischen Literatur in Schleswig-Holstein', forthcoming in the special 1999 issue of *Chloe*, cf. note 1 above.

6 We have no information on an original version that might have been printed in connection with the actual wedding in 1585. In Lindeberg's *Ἠθύσματα* of 1592, the poem is printed on pp. 111-113 and entitled: 'Nuptiis Lucae Bacmeisteri SS. Theo: D. et Catharinae Beseliniae'. The title is abbreviated in the reprinted version in the *Juvenilia* of 1595, pp. 93-95: 'Nuptiis Lucae Bacmeisteri SS. Theol. D.' – I have only had access to the two copies of the *Juvenilia* in the Royal Library, Copenhagen. Prof. Dieter Lohmeier has kindly provided me with information on the copy of the *Ἠθύσματα* to be found in the Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesbibliothek, Kiel.

the daughter naughty, and the son impudent. No! Virginité is the gods' gift to humanity.

Juno argues just the opposite: There is nothing better than marriage; it ensures one a partner for life, a continuation of mankind, and it is the will of the gods. Married couples stand together in good times and bad. Everybody should live in marriage: It is dear to the gods and their gift to humanity.

The narrator of the poem selects the actual bridegroom, Lucas Bacmeister, to be the judge in this divine quarrel and encourages him to side with Juno. This Bacmeister does without hesitation: He knows from experience – this is his second marriage – that wedlock brings along with it many conveniences and far more good things than bad.

Peter Lindeberg ends his poem with the obligatory *vota*, the wish that the newly-weds have children and live long and happy lives.

A quarrel, or in Latin: *lis*, like this one between the two goddesses has many literary models. The most famous of these, and one that Lindeberg undoubtedly alludes to in his poem, is naturally the endeavours of Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite to win the apple of Discord and be judged the fairest of them all by Paris. Another classical model known to Lindeberg is the singing match between the group of young men and the group of young women in Catullus' *Carmen* 62, where the women's protests against the violence of marriage are silenced by the young men's stronger arguments in favour of marriage and the man's right over the woman's innocence. Peter Lindeberg's wedding poem in which the goddesses of marriage and of chastity respectively serve to humorously personify the opposing standpoints, is clearly formulated within this literary tradition of the *lis*.

Yet, the argumentation pro and contra the question of 'whether one should marry', which forms both the thematic kernel and the structural framework of Lindeberg's poem, builds on another tradition as well, a tradition that also goes back to antiquity, but became especially prominent in the first centuries AD. In fact, the question of 'whether one should marry' was a popular theme to be employed in one of the preliminary exercises, the *προγυμνάσματα* (in Latin *praeexercitamenta*) that was an important part of elementary teaching in the ancient rhetorical schools.

The *progymnasmata* consisted of a series of increasingly difficult exercises in the various rhetorical elements to be used later on in the practice of de-

clamation.<sup>7</sup> One of the most advanced of these exercises was the so-called *thesis* which aimed at setting out arguments for and against a general question. And one of the most common general questions recommended for the *thesis* in the ancient rhetorical literature is 'whether one should marry'. It was a theme that the pupils easily understood, and one that could easily be used in practice outside of the classroom. Thus, in his *Institutio Oratoria* the Roman rhetorician Quintilian of the first century AD refers to the question 'whether one should marry' as a typical and useful example of the *thesis*, or *quaestio* as this rhetorical exercise was called in Latin.<sup>8</sup>

We find a detailed description of the *thesis* in the *Progymnasmata* of the Greek rhetorician Aphthonius, who lived around 400 AD. In this work, the introductory description of the rhetorical exercise is followed by an exemplification of the theory, namely a *thesis* on the general question 'whether one should marry'.<sup>9</sup> A *thesis* like this one, writes Aphthonius, is composed of (1) an introduction of the general question; (2) a section with arguments for and against the point at issue; and (3) a concluding epilogue. As an introduction the speaker should give an account of what is lawful, what is right, what is useful, and what is possible in marriage, namely that marriage is given by God; that it makes those who get married strong and righteous, because they will defend their family; and that it makes people live peacefully and sensibly, because marriage holds their passions in check. Then follows the argumentation which is divided into objections and solutions:

First objection: Marriage is the root of much evil.

First solution: No, it is fate that can be evil, not marriage. And just as it would be absurd for a farmer to give up his calling because of bad weather, so it is absurd to turn away from marriage just because fate goes against you.

Second objection: It is on account of marriage that women become widows and children fatherless.

Second solution: It is a part of human nature that people die; this has no-

7 On the genre and the authors of *progymnasmata*, see Sean Patrick O'Rourke *s.v.* 'Progymnasmata' in *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition* ed. Theresa Enos (New York 1996) 562-563 (with useful bibliography).

8 *I.O.* 3.5.8 and 3.5.12-16.

9 I have used Hugo Rabe's edition of Aphthonius' Greek text in the Teubner series (Leipzig 1926). The chapter 13 on the *thesis* is found on pp. 41-46. A modern translation, which I have not had access to, is Ray Nadeau 'The *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius in Translation' *Speech monographs* 19 (1952) 265-285, cf. O'Rourke, note 7 above.

thing to do with marriage. On the contrary, marriage can secure a new husband for the widow and a new father for the children.

Third objection: Marriage is toilsome.

Third solution: Indeed; but it is also a remedy for toil and drudgery. The married couple have children, and when they grow up, they can help their father with his work. Moreover, they will care for him when he is old.

After this series of objections and solutions, Aphthonius concludes his model speech by summing up the benefits of marriage.

The Greek text of Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata* was rediscovered in Italy in the 15th century and soon translated into Latin. The best known translation of the work was made by the Dutch humanist Rudolf Agricola (1444-1485) during his stay at the court of Ferrara 1474-1479. The translation appeared in numerous editions in the 16th and 17th centuries and became one of the most widely used rhetorical textbooks of the period.<sup>10</sup>

Already in the third century AD, in an anonymous Greek rhetorical treatise on wedding and birthday speeches, the rhetor is reminded that he can find material for his wedding speeches by resorting to the well-known school *thesis* that dealt with the theme 'whether one should marry'.<sup>11</sup> There is no doubt that the popularity of works like Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata* both in Late Antiquity and in the Renaissance period is due to the fact that they answered a need for handbooks with prescriptions for rhetorical practice. Occasional literature flourished in the Renaissance as it had flourished in the period of the Second Sophistic, and a model speech like the *thesis* on the general theme 'whether one should marry' could be imitated and used as material for the *inventio* and the composition of actual wedding speeches – and wedding poems.

For, in Northern Europe, in the 16th century, the wedding poem had largely assumed the role that the wedding speech had had in Late Antiquity. A part of the explanation for this preference of poetry as opposed to prose

<sup>10</sup> I have used the Paris edition of 1549: *Aphthonii Sophistae Progymnasmata Rhetorica, Rodolpho Agricola Phrisio interprete. Parisiis excudebat Christianus Wechelus (...), Anno salutis M.D.XLIX.* – On Agricola's translation, see also Peter Mack *Renaissance Argument. Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic* (Leiden 1993) 128-129.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the chapter 'Μέθοδος γαμηλίων' (§ 234) of the Pseudo-Dionysian *Ars rhetorica*, published by Ludwig Radermacher as 'Dionysii Halicarnasei quae vulgo ferebatur Ars rhetorica' I, cap. II, in *Dionysii Halicarnasei Opuscula 2* (Leipzig 1905) 261.



lies in the period's method of teaching language – and in the fact that most wedding poets were university students who were taught according to this method. Thus, students in the schools and at the university read and wrote Latin verse as a means of learning Latin grammar, and as a preparation for writing Latin prose: Generally, verses were easier to memorise than prose lines, and the composition of poems in the classical meters helped the students to acquire the necessary mastery of vowel quantity and length of syllables.

Moreover, the teaching of rhetoric which also included the reading of classical poetry, furnished the students with the genre models that they imitated in their own writings. The many extant valedictory poems, written at the university in Wittenberg, is a witness to the fact that the students made practical use of their school work.<sup>12</sup> No doubt a considerable part of the extant poetry from 16th century Denmark and Northern Germany were direct offshoots from school and university teaching.

Peter Lindeberg's wedding poem exemplifies how the school *thesis* on 'whether one should marry' could be applied in practice. This can most easily be illustrated by a comparison of the structure of Lindeberg's poem with that of Aphthonius' model *thesis*.

The following Table 1 sums up the structure and the content of Aphthonius' *thesis*. The Latin terminology is that of Rudolph Agricola's translation, which would have been known to the 16th century student:

TABLE 1

<i>Aggressus</i> (i.e. introduction):	On the lawful, right, useful and possible in marriage
<i>Contradictio</i> (ἀντίθεσις) 1:	Marriage is the root of evil
<i>Solutio</i> (λύσις) 1:	This is due to fate, not to marriage
<i>Contradictio</i> 2:	Marriage results in widows and fatherless children
<i>Solutio</i> 2:	This is due to human nature, not to marriage
<i>Contradictio</i> 3:	Marriage as toil and drudgery
<i>Solutio</i> 3:	Marriage as help and support
<i>Epilogus</i> :	Summary of the benefits of marriage

Table 2 below sums up the structure of Lindeberg's wedding poem:

<sup>12</sup> On the Neo-Latin προπεμπτικά written by Danish students, see Pernille Harsting 'Latin valedictory poems of the 16th century. Tradition and topicality of a classical genre' in *A History of Nordic Neo-Latin Literature* ed. Minna Skafte Jensen (Odense 1995) 203-218.

TABLE 2

Introductory problem	(vv. 1-3):	Should one marry?
<i>Solutio</i> 1 (Juno)	(vv. 4-8):	Pro: Survival of mankind
<i>Contradictio</i> 1 (Pallas)	(vv. 9-13):	Contra: Fallen kings and kingdoms
<i>Contradictio</i> 2 (Pallas)	(vv. 14-28):	Contra: Nothing worse
<i>Solutio</i> 2 (Juno)	(vv. 29-47):	Pro: The dearest gift
Concluding epilogue	(vv. 48-54):	Far more good things than bad
<i>Vota</i>	(vv. 55-59):	Live long and happy lives

Table 3 gives a further analysis of the objections and solutions that form the goddesses' quarrel pro and contra marriage in Lindeberg's wedding poem:

TABLE 3

<i>Solutio</i> 1 (Juno), vv. 4 and 8: Juno refert, <i>felix ille est qui compare vita,</i> (...) <i>Quisquis es, hoc moneo, hoc totum tibi</i> <i>vivere sume.</i>	<i>Contradictio</i> 1 (Pallas), vv. 9 and 13: Rursum Pallas ait, <i>felix qui coelibe taeda,</i> (...) <i>Quisquis es, haec moneo, et majora incom-</i> <i>moda vitae.</i>
<i>Contradictio</i> 2 (Pallas), vv. 14-15 and 27: <i>Copula conjugii certe afflictissima res est,</i> Et labor et dolor, et curis admista voluptas. (...) Innuba virginitas Divorum nobile <i>donum est.</i>	<i>Solutio</i> 2 (Juno), vv. 29-30 and 46: <i>Copula conjugii expertis gratissima res est,</i> Et comes et genitrix hominum, et divina voluntas. (...) Officium superis gratum, et laudabile <i>donum est.</i> <sup>13</sup>

Table 2 and 3 reveal Lindeberg's ability to use the school model in a sophisticated way. Note for instance the chiasmic presentation of Juno's and Pallas' arguments for and against marriage: First speaks Juno, then Pallas, then Pallas again, and finally Juno (= A,B,B,A). An extra refinement is the respectively parallel (in italics in Table 3, e.g. *felix qui*, verses 4 and 9) and contrast-

13 *Solutio* 1: 'Juno says: "Happy is he who has a companion in life (...). Whoever you are, I encourage you to live like this."' *Objection* 1: 'Pallas in return says: "Happy is he who lives unmarried (...). Whoever you are, I warn you against this great misfortune of life."' *Objection* 2: 'The marriage bond is certainly a most miserable thing, both a pest and a pain, and a pleasure mixed with worry. (...) Unmarried virginity is the gods' splendid gift.' *Solutio* 2: 'The marriage bond is a most pleasing thing, it gives man a companion, it is the mother of man, and the gods will it. (...) Marriage is dear to the gods, and a praiseworthy gift.'

ing wording (e.g. *compare vita vs coelibae taeda*, *ibid.*) in the symmetrically constructed *contradictiones* and *solutiones*.

I have selected yet another example in order to illustrate the variety in the use of the theme ‘whether one should marry’ in post-Reformation wedding poetry, namely Bo Lauridsen’s *Ecloga γαμική* which was written in celebration of a wedding that took place in May 1597, and printed in Copenhagen in the following year.<sup>14</sup> At that time the author, Bo Lauridsen from Malmø (1574-1622) was a student at the University of Copenhagen.<sup>15</sup> The poem is written in dactylic hexameters and contains 186 verses.<sup>16</sup>

As appears from its title, Bo Lauridsen’s wedding poem is styled in imitation of the classical pastoral poetry. Accordingly, the discussion in the poem for and against marriage takes place between two shepherds with the telling names Philogynes, i.e. ‘Woman-lover’ (or rather ‘He who is in favour of women’), and Misogamus, i.e. ‘Marriage-hater’. Both are already married, Philogynes to a delightful young girl and Misogamus to an old, but rich widow, and so, when discussing marriage, they both speak from experience. This does not prevent them, however, from having widely differing views on the matter: Philogynes, who is newly wed, praises marriage and thinks back on the wedding celebrations with joy, while Misogamus laments the mistake he made when he tied the knot – which he only did for money in any case. As the poem progresses and the two shepherds put their cases for and against marriage, and for and against women, the discussion becomes more and more heated, until Philogynes finally becomes so provoked by Misogamus that he is ready to resort to far more forceful arguments. A third shepherd, Palaemon (i.e. ‘the Wrestler!’), comes between them only just in the nick of time.<sup>17</sup> Palaemon appeals to Philogynes’ amicable disposition, and the wed-

<sup>14</sup> *Ecloga ΓΑΜΙΚΗ in honorem (...) Dn. magistri Nicolai Alesii, Ecclesiarum Bunchestodii ac Hylliae pastoris (...) sponsi, et castissimae virginis (...) Helenae, Dn. Laurentii Iohannis, Antecessoris sui carissimi pie defuncti relictæ filiae, sponsae (...), scripta a Boetio Laurentio Malmogiensi. Hafniae impressa typis Iohannis Stockelmanni. M.D.XCVIII.* – The book is described as no. 1051 in Lauritz Nielsen *Dansk Bibliografi 1551-1600* (Copenhagen 1931-33).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. H. Ehrencron-Müller *Forfatterlexikon omfattende Danmark, Norge og Island indtil 1814* 5 (Copenhagen 1927) 101-102. Bo Lauridsen later taught in Malmø and Lund, and was the headmaster of the cathedral school of Roskilde from 1617 until his death.

<sup>16</sup> I am currently preparing an edition of the extant Neo-Latin wedding poems from 16th century Denmark, including Bo Lauridsen’s poem.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Ni discas pravam compescere homuncio linguam, / Efficiam, mihi crede, pedo hoc ne

ding poem ends on a peaceful note with praise of marriage and the wish that Philogynes and his bride live long and happy lives and have many children.

Here again we have a dispute set in dialogue form, built up around *contradictiones* and *solutiones*. But Bo Lauridsen deftly combines the framework of the *thesis* on 'whether one should marry' with the framework of the classical pastoral poem. A common feature of the bucolic is the introduction of a third shepherd as a mediator or judge between the two others: Palaemon in Virgil's third *Ecloga* is an example of this.

The third shepherd of Bo Lauridsen's wedding poem is certainly meant to mirror his namesake and counterpart in Virgil's poem, yet Lauridsen's Palaemon at the same time fills out a function in the rhetorical *thesis*. Thus, when Philogynes hits a dead-end with the positive arguments that he presents for his case and instead resorts to the force of his shepherd's staff, the third shepherd, Palaemon, is introduced as no less than a '*pastor ex machina*', necessary in order to reach a *solutio*, a satisfactory way of warding off Misogamus' objections.

It is, in fact, no wonder that Philogynes runs out of arguments to use against Misogamus, for Misogamus cheats by turning the discussion away from marriage itself: It quickly becomes apparent that Misogamus' misogamy, his hate of marriage, is above all based on misogyny, his hate of women: 'Women are hot-tempered, hateful, lying, contentious, and given to drink' is one of the milder pronouncements that the wedding poet, Bo Lauridsen, sets in Misogamus' mouth.<sup>18</sup>

I can say for certain that in all the Danish wedding poetry of the 16th

---

voce laccessas / Audaci quemquam posthac. Discede Palaemon.' / (You wretch! If you don't learn to hold your vicious tongue, I swear that this shepherd's staff will make sure that you don't harm anybody hereafter with your shameless words! – Just you stay away, Palaemon!) The use of potential subjunctive in both the protasis and the apodosis of the conditional sentence: *Ni discas ... efficiam*, indicates that Philogynes threatens Misogamus, but has not actually hit him, when Palaemon shows up and averts the execution of the threat (contrary to Karsten Friis-Jensen and Minna Skafte Jensen's interpretation in their short description of the poem in *Dansk litteraturhistorie* 2 (1984) 426-427). – Plautus' comedies is clearly a source of inspiration for this scene.

<sup>18</sup> Verses 113-115: 'Foemina rara bona est, alboque simillima corvo, / *Irae, odii, fictique tenax, et nuncia veri / Nunquam, litigiosa, bibax, et foedera spernens.*' (My italics.)

century there is no other poem that quite resembles Bo Lauridsen's. Yet, the change of focus in the shepherd's discussion as found in Bo Lauridsen's wedding poem, namely from marriage to wives and women in general, is not an uncommon feature in 16th century wedding poetry. Thus, along with the wedding poems discussing '*an uxor ducenda*', we find several that deal with the subject of '*qualis uxor ducenda*', i.e. 'what kind of woman should one marry'.<sup>19</sup>

This change of subject is certainly a metonymical one: Marriage in itself could not be seriously discussed nor turned into a laughing stock in the Lutheran context. But woman as a traditional *pars pro toto* and representative of the goods and the evils of marriage could. In this way Bo Lauridsen's depiction of the quarrelling 'Woman-lover' and 'Marriage-hater' is only one among many North European contributions to the continued 'querelle des femmes' of the 16th century.

Because, when it came to women, everyone could easily agree that some were virtuous, others not. In post-Reformation wedding poems, the two sorts of women were often compared on the basis of examples from the Bible as well as from classical Greek mythology: Sarah and Penelope among the good, Eve and Pandora among the evil. Such comparisons could be used to accentuate and sing the praises of virtue on vice's sombre background. Both serious and facetious castigation of women, formulated with literary allusions to the Bible and to ancient Greco-Roman poetry, was acceptable to 'Lutheran humanism'; criticism of marriage was not.

To conclude: When the question 'whether one should marry' is raised in a post-Reformation wedding poem, the affirmative answer is clearly given in advance. As is the case with the rhetorical *thesis* there can never be any doubt about which way the discussion will go: As a rhetorical exercise the purpose

<sup>19</sup> An example is the poem by M.S.C. (whom I identify with Mathias Schøtthe Cimbrus), '*Qualis uxor ducenda, ad fratrem suum Christiernum Mathiæ*', printed together with his *Epithalamion scriptum (...) D. Magistro Johanni Bloch scholae Viburgensis rectori (...) et Annae, natae patre honestissimo Johanne Hogh Senatore Viburgensi* (s.l. [Wittenberg] s.a. [c. 1570]). The poem is registered as no. 572a in Erik Dal's supplement of 1996 to Lauritz Nielsen *Dansk Bibliografi* (see note 14 above). In Mathias Schøtthe's poem, the narrator deliberates whether he should marry a young girl or a widow, a rich or a poor woman, one who is beautiful or an ugly one – or maybe not marry at all? Finally he reaches the conclusion that: 'It is better to marry than to burn with shameless fire; however, a good wife is a gift from the highest God.'

of the *thesis* was to argue convincingly in favour of a general question – the objections were by definition weak and untenable, and served only to make the arguments in favour appear stronger. The dispute about marriage that we meet in many of the post-Reformation wedding poems and that was inspired by the rhetorical *thesis*, was in other words thought of as innocuous – and could therefore be sanctioned in the religious context.

## APPENDIX

Peter Lindeberg's wedding poem to Lucas Bacmeister and Katharina<sup>20</sup>

**Nuptiis Lucae Bacmeisteri SS. Theol. D.**

Ardua succrevit geminis discordia Divis,  
Utrum commodius resoluto vivere collo,  
Vel sua conjugii submittere membra lupato.

JUNO refert, 'Felix ille est qui compare vita,  
5 Coelica legitimae non spernit vincula taedae,  
Unanimemque thorum, sine quo mortalia cuncta,  
Nec totus poterit recte<sup>21</sup> subsistere mundus.  
Quisquis es, hoc moneo, hoc totum tibi vivere sume.'

Rursum PALLAS ait, 'Felix qui coelibe taeda,  
10 Fellea sollicitae contemnit gaudia vitae,  
Lectique illectum, per quem praestantia quaeque  
Oppida, cum magnis passim cecidere tyrannis.  
Quisquis es, haec moneo, et majora incommoda vitae.

Copula conjugii certe afflictissima res est,  
15 Et labor et dolor, et curis admista voluptas.  
Saepe proterva uxor, nata improba, filius effrons,  
Nunc tristi squallet morbo, nunc tabe peresus  
Praepropere nimium moritur, nunc victus, amictus,

<sup>20</sup> The poem is edited on the basis of the printed version in *Petri Lindebergii Rostochiensis secundae partis Juvenilium, liber primus continens epithalamia* (Frankfurt: Zacharias Palthen, 1595) 93-95. I have normalised the orthography (except the 'oe' / 'ae' variations, e.g. *coelibe*) as well as the punctuation.

<sup>21</sup> The original has *rectae*.

Nunc panis, penus, et perversa pecunia defit,  
 20 Queis sine spreta jacens rerum gemit indiga virtus,  
 Nec potis est placide placidam traducere vitam.  
 Quicumque es, fugita simile exoptarier aevum.  
 Tale onus est. Nam qui tacto decumbere fulcro  
 Gliscit, et amplecti viduam, is fere herilia vendit,  
 25 Doteque emit litem, dum dotis pondera spectat,  
 Cumque labore graves mordentes pectora curas.  
 Innuba virginitas Divorum nobile donum est.  
 Dixerat haec PALLAS; mox JUNO farier insit:  
 'Copula conjugii expertis gratissima res est,  
 30 Et comes et genitrix hominum, et divina voluntas.  
 Obsequiosa tori consors matremque patremque  
 Linqvit, et ad teneras dominum canit abdita cunas.  
 Si moestus moesta est, laetatur conjuge laeto.  
 Ambobus commune bonum est, unumque periculum,  
 35 Ambobus commune malum est, unumque lucellum.  
 Mista utriusque caro, formaeque aequalis imago,  
 Exhilarat senio coctos, et prole beata  
 Nomen in aeternum curat juvenescere seclum.  
 Quicumque es, semper vivae te credito famae,  
 40 Non onus est sed honos, nec Marte vel Arte jugalis  
 Firmatur lectus; fato nectuntur Amores,  
 Fato solvuntur, veluti mortalia cuncta.  
 Gnava domus reatrix vidua est, fulcrumque mariti;  
 Nupta viri decus est pulcra, et vere altera vita.  
 45 Vivite conjugio, qui vultis vivere idipsum,  
 Officium superis gratum et laudabile donum est.'  
 Dixerat, et tacito pausam facit ore loquelis.  
 Nunc petitur iudex, iudex aptissimus adstas  
 Clare vir ingenio, sacrato codice clare,  
 50 BACMESTERE, prius qui taedae commoda nosti,  
 Macte age, praesentem facilis composito litem,  
 Veraque Junonis mecum consulta probato.  
 Annuis extemplo. Nam commoda plura, jugali,  
 Et majora malis bona sunt, quam tristia, lecto.  
 55 Et mala juncta bonis, quocumque in munere vivas.

O igitur felix iteres Duce et auspice Christo  
Connubium, vivant chari tibi pignora fulcri,  
Vivat sudorum consors, vivasque superstes,  
Donec avus possis triplicem numerare nepotem.