



SINI MIKKOLA*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0810-2744>

MIIA KUHA**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1838-8272>

REFORMATION, MARRIAGE, AND FAMILY LIFE IN FINLAND

Abstract

This article discusses norms and ideals of marriage and family life in Finland, the eastern part of the Swedish realm, in the period following the Reformation. We use theological and ecclesiastical texts to examine how and to what extent German Lutheran ideas on marriage and family life were maintained, modified, or resisted, and how these regional adaptations are visible in Finnish sources. We analyse whether there are differences between texts that were intended for a wide catechetical and normative use, such as catechisms, hymnals and books of homilies, and funeral sermons as an example of texts that discussed actual individuals and were composed as part of the everyday life of the parish. Our findings indicate a strong impact of the writings of Luther and other reformers on the Finnish material, with emphases that are broadly in line with key Lutheran ideas on marriage. The sources create a rather consistent picture of the meaning of marriage, family life, and the ideal roles of spouses. Authors emphasised harmony, affection, and the happiness and comfort of married life. Marriage was consistently represented as a divine order but also a secular union, reflecting the importance of regional laws and tradition. While the material echoes the norm of the husband's authority, descriptions of everyday life place greater emphasis on companionship between spouses and grant wives agency and authority within the family.

Keywords: Reformation, Finland, Sweden, Lutheranism, marriage, family

* School of Theology, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu/Kuopio

 sini.mikkola@uef.fi

** School of Theology, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu/Kuopio

 mia.kuha@uef.fi

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INTRODUCTION

The evangelical¹ movement spread to Finland, the eastern part of the Swedish realm, already in the 1520s. Despite the early introduction of the ideas of the Reformation, their practical application was a slow process that lasted well into the next century². In many ways, marriage, family life and gendered ways of being were both theologically and practically at the centre of contemporary discussions, especially in Germany. The question of clerical marriage, in particular, was central to the Lutheran Reformation, and marriage became, rather than celibacy, emphasised as the best way of human life for all³. In recent Nordic research, it has been argued that the meaning of marital status became crucial for the agency and authority of both sexes during the centuries after the Reformation. The order of the household described in the Table of Duties was widely known at least from the late seventeenth century onwards, even if it was not always applied in practice⁴. However, ideas regarding marriage during the first century after the Reformation have gained less attention.

In this article, we examine the Reformation in Finland, with a particular focus on its impact on marriage and family life. We ask how and to what extent German Lutheran ideas on marriage and family life were maintained, modified, or resisted, and how these regional adaptations are visible in Finnish sources. Our particular interest lies in detecting whether there are differences between texts that were intended for a wide catechetical and normative use,

¹ The term 'evangelical' was used especially in the 1520s, but its use was common throughout the first half of the sixteenth century. However, in this article, we most often use the term 'Lutheran', as the reforms were largely influenced by Lutheran theology and thus took on a distinctly Lutheran character. For a similar approach in previous scholarship, see, e.g., Jason LIVERY, *Reforming Finland: The Diocese of Turku in the Age of Gustav Vasa 1523–1560* (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, vol. 210), Leiden–Boston 2017, p. 13.

² See, e.g., *Lived Religion and the Long Reformation in Northern Europe c. 1300–1700*, ed. Raisa M. TOIVO, Sari KATAJALA-PELTOMAA (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, vol. 206), Leiden–Boston 2017.

³ For a concise overview of marriage in Protestant theology and custom, see, e.g., Merry WIESNER-HANKS, *Marriage in Protestant Europe*, [in:] *Women Reformers of Early Modern Europe: Profiles, Texts, and Contexts*, ed. Kirsi I. STJERNA, Minneapolis 2022, pp. 281–290.

⁴ Karin H. JANSSON, *Hushållskultur, patriarkalism och sociala föreställningar. Begrepp och praktik i Hustavlans värld*, [in:] *Den nordiska hushållsstaten – variationer på ett tema av Luther. Auktoritet och ansvar i de tidigmoderna danska och svenska rikena*, red. Urban CLAESSEN, Nina J. KOEFOED (Skrifter utgivna av Svenska kyrkohistoriska föreningen. II Ny följd, vol. 81), Göteborg 2024, pp. 43–76; Sofia LING, Karin H. JANSSON, Marie LENNERSAND, Christopher PIHL, Maria ÅGREN, *Marriage and Work: Intertwined Sources of Agency and Authority*, [in:] *Making a Living, Making a Difference: Gender and Work in Early Modern European Society*, ed. Maria ÅGREN, New York 2017, pp. 80–102; Kekke STADIN, *Stånd och genus i stormaktstidens Sverige*, Lund 2004.

such as catechisms, hymnals and books of homilies, and funeral sermons, as an example of texts that were composed as part of the everyday life of the parish and which discussed actual individuals. Due to the long process by which the ideas of the Reformation spread in Finland, we will examine not only the sixteenth century but also the first half of the following century. The earliest funeral sermons that are used as source material survive from the beginning of the seventeenth century.

The first part of the article explores the regulation of marriage and family life in the texts of key theological figures, one Swedish but mostly Finnish. The connections between Swedish and Finnish theology and legislation with their German equivalents (for example, Martin Luther's treatises on marriage) are briefly discussed in the analysis. There are no treatises or other such extensive works, particularly on marriage, from the Finnish context in the sixteenth century. Thereby, norms of marriage in Finland must be searched from marriage texts produced, on the one hand, on the west coast of the Gulf of Bothnia and, on the other hand, from those Finnish sources from the (late) sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that touch on the topic. Utilised sources include Olaus Petri's rather early treatise on marriage (1528), the Church Ordinance of the Swedish realm from 1571⁵, Michael Agricola's church manual (1549), the earliest Finnish hymnals by Jacobus Finno (1583) and Hemmingius Henrici Maschoensis (1607), the catechism by Jacobus Finno (1588), and the book of homilies (1621) and small catechism (1629) by Bishop Ericus Erii Sorolainen. Although the material is somewhat fragmented, the sources complement each other, making it possible to sketch an overall picture of the norms and ideals related to marriage, offered by leading theological authorities in Finland.

The second part of the article addresses practical implications and possible differences compared to those texts intended for wider catechetical and normative use by examining norms and ideals of marriage and practices of family life in women's funeral sermons and the biographies included in them. The emphasis is on the earliest funeral sermons on women that survive from Finland from the first half of the seventeenth century (1615–1648). These sermons were written mainly for noblewomen and some for burghers' wives. As complementary and comparative material, we have used funeral sermons on clergymen's wives from the western half of the Swedish realm from the same period and from Finland from the latter half of the seventeenth century to be able to detect developments over time and to include the clergy as a social group.

⁵ The Church Ordinance was prepared by Laurentius Petri and presented to the Diet of Stockholm as early as 1562. However, it was not confirmed until 1571 by King John III. For the historical background of the Church Ordinance, see, e.g., Sven KJÖLLERSTRÖM, *Den svenska kyrkoordningen 1571. Jämte studier kring tillkomst, innehåll och användning*, Lund 1971, pp. 209–223.

There are altogether about 30 sermons in the material, examples of which will be taken up in the analysis⁶.

It is somewhat arbitrary to separate between 'Finnish' and 'Swedish' material, since Finland formed an integral part of the realm and members of the higher clergy were often active on both sides of the Gulf of Bothnia during their careers. For example, funeral sermons formed a part of the common learned culture among the higher social groups in the Swedish realm, and thus, Swedish sermons can be used as complementary material also in a study with a main focus on Finland.

Funeral sermons were delivered by the pastor at the church as a part of the funeral service, and some of them were later printed at the expense of the family and disseminated to a wider audience. Printed sermons survive both in Sweden and Finland from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Funeral sermons were not only read by relatives and friends of the deceased, but they were also popular devotional literature at the time⁷. Most funeral sermons include a biography at the end. In the biography, the author described the life course of the deceased in a conventional order of events from birth to death. Some biographies include detailed descriptions of events in the person's life or interactions within the family. To their audience, funeral biographies offered examples and models of a Christian life in a certain social position. Authors often elaborated on the events that led to the person's death, and it was a central function of the biography to give evidence that the person had lived in faith and gained a peaceful death, leading to salvation⁸. We have selected women's funeral sermons for the analysis because there, the focus is on marriage and the family, whereas men's sermons usually mention these areas of life briefly and instead concentrate on career, studies, and travel.

⁶ All funeral sermons with a connection to Finland have been read at the Digital Service of the National Library of Finland, <https://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi/etusivu> [accessed online 27 August 2025]. Funeral sermons from the early seventeenth century in Sweden are stored at the Lund University Library.

⁷ Barbro BERGNER, *Dygden som levnadskonst. Kvinnliga dygdeideal under stormaktstiden*, [in:] *Jämmerdal och fröjdesal. Kvinnor i stormaktstidens Sverige*, red. Eva ÖSTERBERG, Stockholm 1997, p. 76; Otfried CZAİKA, *The Experience of Female Readers in Sweden around 1600 – Evidence Collected from Funeral Sermons*, Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte / Archive for Reformation History, vol. 107: 2016, pp. 242–265; Olavi RIMPILÄINEN, *Suomalainen hautauspuhe puhdasoppisuuden aikana* (Suomalaisen teologisen kirjallisuusseuran julkaisu, vol. 88), Helsinki 1973, p. 39; Göran STENBERG, *Döden dikterar. En studie av likpredikningar och gravtal från 1600- och 1700-talen*, Stockholm 1998, p. 50.

⁸ Cornelia N. MOORE, *Patterned Lives: The Lutheran Funeral Biography in Early Modern Germany* (Wolfenbütteler Forschungen, Bd. 111), Wiesbaden 2006.

THE SPREAD
OF THE EVANGELICAL MOVEMENT IN FINLAND

Jason Lavery has remarked in his study *Reforming Finland* that ‘the Reformation does not represent a divisive moment in Finland’s past. The Reformation in Finland and throughout Scandinavia did not create large religious minorities or protracted confessional strife. Historians have never celebrated the break with Catholic Europe as a liberating moment’⁹. Indeed, the Reformation in the Swedish realm was not a popular movement in the same way as in Germany, for example. An evangelical people’s movement emerged only in Stockholm. Otherwise, the towns were small and distant from each other, which meant that there were hardly any conditions for a movement to emerge. Local reformers trained in Wittenberg, such as Olaus Petri (1493–1552) and Laurentius Petri (1499–1573) in Stockholm, and Pietari Särkilahti (d. 1529) in Åbo (Fin. Turku), played an important role in bringing the evangelical ideas to Sweden and Finland¹⁰.

Finland’s location under Swedish rule meant that the implementation of the reforms was decided in Sweden. As Kaarlo Arffman has stated, ‘although the Reformation did take place in Finland in some respects differently from Sweden, mainly because of the difference in language, such deviations can best be characterised as local features of the Swedish Reformation’¹¹. The Reformation in Sweden, and hence in Finland, is most often described as a royal reform. Previous scholarship has noted that in practice, the Reformation was a change in ecclesiastical conditions, which was given substance by the domestic reformers and brought about by the king¹². King Gustav Vasa’s (r. 1523–1560) motives for advancing church reforms have most often been connected to his desire to strengthen the Swedish Kingdom and his own position as ruler, rather

⁹ J. LAVERY, *Reforming Finland*, p. 1.

¹⁰ Kaarlo ARFFMAN, *Reformaatio – milloin ja miksi?*, [in:] *Kristinusko Suomessa*, toim. Aapo LAITINEN (Suomalaisen teologisen kirjallisuusseuran julkaisu, vol. 249), Helsinki 2006, pp. 103–105; Jason LAVERY, *The Swedish Kingdom and Europe’s Age of Reform 1523–1611*, [in:] *Luther, the Reformation, and the Book*, ed. Tuija LAINE (Suomalaisen teologisen kirjallisuusseuran julkaisu, vol. 272; Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran toimituksia, vol. 220), Helsinki 2012, p. 10.

¹¹ ‘Reformaatio tosin tapahtui Suomessa lähinnä kielen erilaisuuden vuoksi joiltain osin eri tavalla kuin Ruotsissa, mutta tällaisia poikkeamia voi parhaiten luonnehtia Ruotsin reformaation paikalliseksi erityispiirteiksi’, K. ARFFMAN, *Reformaatio*, p. 103.

¹² Jyrki KNUUTILA, *Mikael Agricolan vaikutus uskonnon elämään Suomessa*, [in:] *Reformaatio. Henkilökuvia ja tutkimussuuntia*, toim. JOONA SALMINEN (Suomalaisen teologisen kirjallisuusseuran julkaisu, vol. 257; Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran toimituksia, vol. 208), Helsinki 2008, p. 88.

than to religious concerns *per se*¹³. As such, Gustav's policy of state-building was common among the rulers of early modern Europe¹⁴.

It took almost the entire 1500s to establish the Church as Lutheran¹⁵. Lutheranism became the state religion of Sweden, and thus also of Finland, at the end of the sixteenth century, with the Uppsala Synod confirming the Lutheran confession in 1593 in accordance with the *Confessio Augustana Invariata*. However, Catholic faith and popular religion lived alongside Lutheranism not only in the sixteenth century but throughout the seventeenth century, even though Catholicism was officially banned in 1617. The new spread of the Rosary devotion in the late 1500s, for example, suggests that the Catholic Reformation also gained ground in Finland. The seventeenth century is generally known in Finland as the era of Lutheran orthodoxy, but everyday beliefs and practices reveal a multifaceted reality. However, it is apparent that closer cooperation between church and state authorities was established in the seventeenth century as they sought to achieve ecclesiastical unity throughout the Swedish realm through increased control and discipline¹⁶.

THE REGULATION OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE IN EARLY LUTHERAN NORMATIVE SOURCES

In his *Een liten vnderuisning om Echteskapet* (*A Small Lesson on Marriage*, 1528), Swedish reformer Olaus Petri noted that marriage was 'a very noble thing' ('jtt ganska ädhle ting'), 'a holy rule and order' ('en helig regla och orden') ordained by God, in which human beings should live in the fear

¹³ For a review of Finnish scholarship on royal reform, see J. LAVERY, *Reforming Finland*, pp. 6–10; Pirjo MARKKOLA, *The Long History of Lutheranism in Scandinavia: From State Religion to the People's Church*, *Perichoresis*, vol. 13: 2015, no. 2, pp. 4, 6.

¹⁴ See Meri HEINONEN, Anu LAHTINEN, Marika RÄSÄNEN, *Reformeista reformaatioon*, [in:] *Pohjoisen reformaatio*, toim. Meri HEINONEN, Marika RÄSÄNEN (Turun historiallinen arkisto, vol. 68), Turku 2017, p. 18.

¹⁵ Mia KORPIOLO, *Between Betrothal and Bedding: Marriage Formation in Sweden 1200–1600* (The Northern World, vol. 43), Boston 2009, pp. 266–267.

¹⁶ P. MARKKOLA, op.cit., p. 6; Kaarlo ARFFMAN, *Resistance to the Reformation in 16th-Century Finland*, [in:] *Lived Religion and the Long Reformation in Northern Europe c. 1300–1700*, ed. Raisa M. TOIVO, Sari KATAJALA-PELTOMAA (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, vol. 206), Leiden–Boston 2017, pp. 255–273; Raisa M. Toivo, *Protestantism, Modernity and the Power of Penetration: Saints and Sacrifice in 17th Century Lutheran Finland*, [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 75–103; eadem, *Faith and Magic in Early Modern Finland* (Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic), New York 2016; Sini MIKKOLA, Ilkka HUHTA, *Lutheranism in Finnish Society – From State Church to Social Resource*, [in:] *Global Lutheranism in the Contemporary World: Luther's Realm*, ed. Richard CIMINO (Routledge Studies in Religion), London 2025, pp. 79–80; Miia KUHA, *Religious participation in the local communities of 17th-century Eastern Finland*, *Scandia. Tidskrift för historisk forskning*, Bd. 88: 2022, H. 2, pp. 199–220.

of Him¹⁷. Marriage in itself was a way of life meant for all, as the Scripture made clear – thereby also priests, monks, and nuns should be wed¹⁸. Also, the view of the Church Ordinance (1571) was based on marriage as ‘God’s good work and creation’ (‘Gudz godha werck och skickelse’), and by referring to 1 Corinthians 7:2, it was noted that those who could not live purely alone should be wed¹⁹. Ericus Eriki Sorolainen (c. 1546–1625), Bishop of Åbo, specified in his sermon on John 2:1–12 that since God had ordered marriage before the Fall, everyone could live in matrimony ‘honourably and with good conscience’²⁰. In a similar vein, Finnish reformer Michael Agricola (c. 1510–1557) highlighted in his *Käsikiria Castesta ia muista Christikunnan Menoista* (*Handbook on Baptism and Other Christian Services*, 1549) that marriage was based on God’s word and promise (‘Jumulan Sanalla ia Lupauxella kijnitetty’), which distinguished it from human inventions such as monastic life²¹. Agricola, at times, even sharpened Martin Luther’s criticism of the cloister, adding statements to his translation of Luther, for example, about the filthiness of living alone²².

Staying faithful to Luther’s wordings, Agricola referred to marriage as a secular order, determined by the customs of each region²³. This notion was consistent with both law and custom in the medieval Swedish realm: matrimony was regulated through secular laws, and the process of marrying involved the families and kin rather than the Church²⁴. However, in the handbook, he offered 16 regulations on engagement, marriage impediments, and living in matrimony. Similar instructions and regulations can be found in treatises by Luther and Olaus Petri, for instance, as well as in the subsequent Church Ordinance. Indeed, as Simo Heininen has remarked, Agricola’s regulations were

¹⁷ Olaus PETRI, *Een liten vnderuisning om Echteskapet*, [in:] *Samlade skrifter af Olavus Petri*, Bd. 1, red. Bengt HESSELMAN, Uppsala 1914 (hereinafter cited as *Een liten vnderuisning om Echteskapet*), p. 446.

¹⁸ *Een liten vnderuisning om Echteskapet*, pp. 453–454; M. KORPIOLA, *Between Betrothal and Bedding*, p. 269.

¹⁹ *Then Swenska Kyrkeordningen*, Stockholm 1571 (hereinafter cited as *Then Swenska Kyrkeordningen*), LI Ordning om Echteskapet.

²⁰ ERICUS ERICI SOROLAINEN, *Postilla eli Ulgoitoimitus / nijnen Ewangeliuitten päälle kuin ymbäri aiastaian / saarnatan Jumalan Seuracunnasa*, I Osa, Stockholm 1621 (hereinafter cited as *Postilla eli Ulgoitoimitus I*), p. 301. See also *ibid.*, p. 303, for marriage as God’s order.

²¹ MICHAEL AGRICOLA, *Käsikiria Castesta ia muista Christikunnan Menoista*, Stockholm 1549 (hereinafter cited as *Käsikiria Castesta*), III Auioskeskon menosta. For the views of Swedish and Finnish reformers on the proper age for marriage, see M. KORPIOLA, *Between Betrothal and Bedding*, pp. 271–272.

²² SIMO HEININEN, *Mikael Agricola. Elämä ja teokset*, Helsinki 2007, p. 284.

²³ *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta; S. HEININEN, *Mikael Agricola*, pp. 283–284.

²⁴ See, e.g., Jyrki KNUUTILA, *Avoliitto oikeudellisena ja kirkollisena instituutiona Suomessa vuoteen 1629*, Helsinki 1990, pp. 28–44.

based on the texts of Swedish reformers and Luther, the Bible, and canon law. The importance of Agricola's regulations is evident, however, from the fact that they were also translated into Swedish, and many copies of them were still in use in the seventeenth century²⁵.

In the regulations, Agricola judged secret engagements²⁶. According to him, couples who lived together without marrying and had children out of wedlock were 'mad fools' ('hullut tompelit'). The inevitable fate of such couples, in Agricola's view, was separation²⁷. Heininen has estimated that Agricola's own experiences and observations led him to harshly judge those living in clandestine engagements²⁸. According to Mia Korpiola, in practice, consummated clandestine engagements were traditionally regarded as 'binding and indissoluble'. In the sixteenth century, these secret marriages were, however, widely opposed among reformers and reformed authorities. From the early seventeenth century onward, attitudes toward illicit marriages became increasingly strict²⁹.

According to Agricola, public engagement was to lead to marriage, and marrying a person who had already promised himself to another was in effect adultery. He also stressed the pastor's role as the sole authority who could officiate at the wedding ceremony³⁰. Indeed, the emphasis on the ecclesiastical ceremony became predominant in the Swedish realm, even though the marriage process as a whole was regarded as secular in the Law of the Realm³¹. Of impediments, Agricola approved the practice of prohibiting marriage until the fourth degree of consanguinity³². In the Church Ordinance, the same stance was taken a few decades later³³. In this question, Luther's advice was loosely applied. Still in 1522, Luther had rejected this prohibition, but in the 1530 marital treatise *Von Ehesachen*, he outlined that the matter should be decided

²⁵ S. HEININEN, *Mikael Agricola*, pp. 284–285.

²⁶ *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta. Cf. *Then Swenska Kyrkeordningen*, LIV.

²⁷ *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta.

²⁸ S. HEININEN, *Mikael Agricola*, p. 284.

²⁹ MIA KORPIOLA, *Marrying off Sons and Daughters: Attitudes towards the Consent of Parents and Guardians in Early Modern Sweden*, [in:] *Less Favored – More Favored: Proceedings from a Conference on Gender in European Legal History, 12–19th Centuries*, ed. Grethe JACOBSEN, Helle VOGT, Inger DÜBECK, Heide WUNDER, Copenhagen 2005, pp. 5, 12–13, 27; eadem, *Between Betrothal and Bedding*, pp. 285–286.

³⁰ *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta, regulations II and V.

³¹ M. KORPIOLA, *Between Betrothal and Bedding*, p. 275; ANU LAHTINEN, *The Marriage Process in the Light of Family Correspondence: A Comparative Perspective on the Swedish Evidence*, [in:] *Regional Variations in Matrimonial Law and Custom in Europe, 1150–1600*, ed. Mia KORPIOLA (Medieval Law and Its Practice, vol. 12), Leiden 2011, p. 254. For parental consent, see M. KORPIOLA, *Between Betrothal and Bedding*, pp. 283–296.

³² *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta, regulation IX.

³³ *Then Swenska Kyrkeordningen*, LII.

by secular law³⁴, that is, regionally. The policy on this issue was specifically regional, and ecclesial agents – for instance, Laurentius Petri through the Church Ordinance, and Michael Agricola – aimed at having a stronger influence on it.

Agricola formulated: ‘Although Moses is not now our lawgiver, yet God spoke through him [...]. According to Swedish law and the old Christian custom, for the honour of God and the honour of the family, we do not interfere below four generations.’ According to Agricola, the pagans also avoided this incest, and God punished people for it³⁵. It thus seems that in the Swedish realm, traditional regional law and Christian tradition were regarded as more authoritative than Luther in this question³⁶. To the question of whether godparenthood formed a marriage impediment as in the ecclesiastical tradition, Agricola’s answer was negative, however. So was that of the Church Ordinance³⁷. Agricola branded this impediment as momentary: ‘for a short time it has been the custom in the congregations [...]’³⁸. In this way, he participated in the common argumentation of the Protestants that they represented Christianity more authentically and originally than the Catholics³⁹.

Many of the Swedish and Finnish reformers’ views on the premises of marital life drew very straightforwardly from a traditional way of interpreting the Bible. One of those was the insight that in marriage, two people became one flesh (cf. Mt 19:5; Mk 10:7–8). The central task in marriage was the production

³⁴ See Martin LUTHER, *Vom ehelichen Leben*, [in:] *D. Martin Luther’s Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 10, Abt. 2, Weimar 1907, p. 280; idem, *Von Ehesachen*, [in:] *D. Martin Luther’s Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 30, Abt. 3, Weimar 1910, p. 244; M. KORPIOLA, *Between Betrothal and Bedding*, pp. 265–266.

³⁵ ‘Waikka Moses ei ole nyt meidän Lain andaia / quitengi / ette itze Jumala henen cautans puhui / [...]. Ja liatiki Rotzin Lain ia wanhan Christilisen tauan ielkin / Jumalan ia Sugun cunnialisen menon polesta / Nin ettei alama nelie polue secaunne’; *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta, regulation IX.

³⁶ Cf. Joel Harrington’s remark: ‘Protestant reformers of marital doctrine made several initial attempts to return to a purely biblical standard, yet they eventually ended up with a model based overwhelmingly on medieval canonical principles’; Joel HARRINGTON, *Reordering Marriage and Society in Reformation Germany*, Cambridge 2005, p. 47. For the use of canon law in the Swedish realm, see M. KORPIOLA, *Between Betrothal and Bedding*, p. 274.

³⁷ *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta, regulation X; *Then Swenska Kyrkeordningen*, LII. This view was in accordance with Luther’s views, see M. LUTHER, *Vom ehelichen Leben*, pp. 281–282.

³⁸ ‘quin hetken aica ombi tapana ollut Seurakunnasa’; *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta, regulation X.

³⁹ See, e.g., David M. LUEBKE, *Introduction: The Politics of Conversion in Early Modern Germany*, [in:] *Conversion and the Politics of Religion in Early Modern Germany*, ed. idem, Jared POLEY, Daniel C. RYAN, David W. SABEAN, New York 2012, pp. 1–2; Ralph KEEN, *Intra-Confessional Polemics in the Reformation*, Church History, vol. 88: 2019, no. 3, pp. 635, 644. For depicting oneself as the true Christian, see, e.g., Sini MIKKOLA, *The conditio humana in 16th century society*, Lutherjahrbuch, Jg. 90: 2023, pp. 173–177.

of offspring – God himself had ordered human beings to multiply when creating them (Gn 1:22)⁴⁰. Thus, as Olaus Petri noted, it was as impossible for a man not to be a man and for a woman not to be a woman as it was for them not to come together and multiply. This expression was straightforwardly adopted from Luther⁴¹. In explaining the relationship between the man and woman, the authors referred to the creation of the first human beings in Genesis: Adam was created first and, so that he would not have to be alone, the woman was created from his rib to be his helper ('hielp')⁴². The text of Genesis proved that the woman was the man's own flesh and blood, and as such, as Olaus Petri remarked, she was not made from something strange to the man. Accordingly, their union could not be broken by others⁴³.

Interestingly, in Jacobus Finno's (c. 1540–1588) wedding hymn, the reason for the woman's creation was explicated to be to protect the man ('Ja [Jumala loi] waimon hänen turuaxens')⁴⁴. The idea of the woman as a safeguard may have to do with a view, repeated by a host of reformers in the sixteenth century, that the human being's sexual desire was to be channelled correctly, in marriage⁴⁵. Thereby, the spouse offered a legitimate outlet for lust and thus secured

⁴⁰ *Een liten vnderuisning om Ehteskapet*, pp. 446–447; *Then Swenska Kyrkeordningen*, LIV; *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta; *Jaakko Finnon virsikirja*, toim. Pentti LEMPIÄINEN (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran toimituksia, vol. 463), Helsinki 1988 (hereinafter cited as *Jaakko Finnon virsikirja*), fol. LXXXVv; Hemmingius HENRICI MASCHOENSIS, *Yxi Wähä Suomenkielinen wirsikiria*, Rostock 1607 (hereinafter cited as *Yxi Wähä Suomenkielinen wirsikiria*), VII Häävirdhed, fol. 174v, 177r.

⁴¹ *Een liten vnderuisning om Ehteskapet*, pp. 447–448; M. LUTHER, *Vom ehelichen Leben*, p. 276. In fact, in his writing, Olaus Petri closely followed Luther's German treatise *Vom ehelichen Leben* (1522). The similarities can be detected in the overall content, structure, and word choice, see Kajsa BRILKMAN, *Boundaries Transcended: Student Mobility, Clerical Marriage and Translations in the Life of the Swedish Reformer Olaus Petri*, [in:] *Transregional Reformations: Crossing Borders in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Violet SOEN, Alexander SOETAERT, Johan VERBERCKMOES, Wim FRANÇOIS (Refo500 Academic Studies, vol. 61), Göttingen 2019, pp. 257–259; Kajsa WEBER, *Translating Luther into Swedish in the Sixteenth Century*, *Lutheran Quarterly*, vol. 35: 2021, no. 3, pp. 308–310. However, as Kajsa Weber (*née* Brilkman) has remarked, some of Olaus Petri's emphases – such as the view that clerical marriages were a common practice in the early Church – were original to him, see K. BRILKMAN, *Boundaries Transcended*, p. 258.

⁴² *Een liten vnderuisning om Ehteskapet*, pp. 446–447; *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta; *Yxi Wähä Suomenkielinen wirsikiria*, VII Häävirdhed, fol. 175r.

⁴³ *Een liten vnderuisning om Ehteskapet*, p. 447. In the Finnish sources, it was formulated that others should not break the union, see *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta, regulation XI; *Jaakko Finnon virsikirja*, fol. LXXXVIr; *Yxi Wähä Suomenkielinen wirsikiria*, VII Häävirdhed, fol. 174v.

⁴⁴ *Jaakko Finnon virsikirja*, fol. LXXXVv. The same hymn is printed in *Yxi Wähä Suomenkielinen wirsikiria*, VII Häävirdhed, fol. 174v.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., David M. WHITFORD, *Martin Luther's Gendered Reflections on Eve*, [in:] *Embodiment, Identity, and Gender in the Early Modern Age*, ed. Amy LEONARD, David M. WHIT-

the other from committing sin. The threat of extramarital sins, such as adultery (whoredom), illicit intercourse and incest, was indeed mentioned in many of the examined texts⁴⁶. All these threats were common in Protestant polemics, which defended marital life and pictured the horrible consequences of staying unmarried, though, in Germany, for instance, this polemic was most often part of the justification of clerical marriage in particular⁴⁷, unlike in the Finnish sources. On the other hand, according to the prevailing views and customs of the time, it was also the wife's duty to protect her husband's honour, especially in delicate situations, and to defend him⁴⁸, which could also be mirrored in Jacobus Finno's hymn.

The hierarchical relationship between the man and woman was underlined as well in all examined texts. Olaus Petri remarked that 'the woman is the image of man, as the man is the image of God'⁴⁹. In the western Christian tradition, it was commonplace to regard that men represented *imago Dei* more fully than women, and this emphasis was repeated rather commonly among the reformers⁵⁰. Michael Agricola and Jacobus Finno both used the widely exploited Pauline concept of the man as the head of the woman (the *kephalē* structure, cf. 1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:23)⁵¹. This was a common reference concerning gender relations in the Reformation era, describing the proper 'chain of command', as Joel Harrington has put it⁵². It was also a central part of the Table of Duties – often a part of the catechism, as in the case of Finno – which was based on biblical passages and described the proper hierarchical relations between the household members⁵³.

FORD, London 2020, p. 39; Sini MIKKOLA, *Body and Gender in Martin Luther's Anthropology (1520–1530)* (Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation, Bd. 138), Tübingen 2024, pp. 49–50.

⁴⁶ *Een liten vnderuisning om Ehteskapet*, pp. 452–454; *Then Swenska Kyrkeordningen*, LI; *Yxi Wähä Suomenkielinen wirsikiria*, VII Häävirdhed, fol. 175v; *Postilla eli Ulgoitoimitus* I, p. 304.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., J. HARRINGTON, op.cit., pp. 70, 82; S. MIKKOLA, *Body and Gender*, pp. 51–52; Marjorie E. PLUMMER, *From Priest's Whore to Pastor's Wife: Clerical Marriage and the Process of Reform in the Early German Reformation* (St Andrews Studies in Reformation History), Farnham 2012, pp. 109–112. For the prevention of sexual abuses threatening marriage and prosecution of sexual misconduct, see J. HARRINGTON, op.cit., pp. 215–259.

⁴⁸ Anu LAHTINEN, *Perheen, kuninkaan ja valtakunnan kunniaksi. 1500-luvun aatelismiesihanne*, [in:] *Näkymätön sukupuoli. Mieheyden pitkä historia*, toim. Pirjo MARKKOLA, Ann-Catrin ÖSTMAN, Marko LAMBERG, Vastapaino 2014, p. 64.

⁴⁹ '[...] qwinnan är manssens beläte, såsom mannans är gudz beläte'; *Een liten vnderuisning om Ehteskapet*, p. 447.

⁵⁰ See, e.g., D. M. WHITFORD, op.cit., p. 38; S. MIKKOLA, *Body and Gender*, pp. 77–78.

⁵¹ *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta; Jacobus FINNO, *Catechism*, Stockholm 1588, Huonelinen sääty, Auiouaimoin opetus.

⁵² J. HARRINGTON, op.cit., p. 40. See also *ibid.*, pp. 41, 72, for the man's position of authority.

⁵³ K. STADIN, op.cit., pp. 17–19, 48; Austra REINIS, *Christianizing Church, State, and Household: The Sermons of Aegidius Hunnius (1550–1603) on the Household Table of Duties*, [in:] *The*

The nuptial imagery of Christ and the Church – which includes the aforementioned *kephalē* structure – was explicated in many of the texts as well. According to the Church Ordinance, the contract and commitment between the spouses mirrored that between Christ and the Church⁵⁴. However, in the hymns and other writings, the comparison was made particularly in regard to love: as Christ had loved his congregation, so should the husband love the wife⁵⁵. The Christ and the Church analogy was used in the texts, specifically in the context of describing a man's right way of being and instructing a husband. Thus, in addition to the choice of words and biblical references, the textual context itself reveals the gendered premise of these marital views: the husband was to love the wife as her head and authority, while the wife, above all, was to humbly submit to the husband, as the use of the Pauline *kephalē* structure implies.

In the early modern period, love as an emotion was specifically intertwined with hierarchies. The expression of love was highly regulated, and it both reinforced and constructed hierarchies in the minds of contemporaries. The way emotions are expressed and perceived indeed depends on the prevailing ways of thought and behaviour, which are socially defined. Emotions are therefore not expressed in a vacuum, but always within the cultural and social framework of their own time, in accordance with its rules and norms. Within the hierarchical view of love, the wife was expected to show her love through humility, while the husband was expected to manage his wife and household wisely. Concrete signs of loving family relationships included mutual care and acts of kindness toward other family members⁵⁶.

Indeed, as Olaus Petri put it, the man should bear the work and trouble in taking care of his wife and children, as necessitated by his position as the head of the household. Likewise, the woman should live in obedience under her husband's rule and bear the troubles of childbirth⁵⁷. Agricola wrote that

Reformation as Christianization, ed. Anna M. JOHNSON, John MAXFIELD (Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation, Bd. 66), Tübingen 2012, pp. 258–259.

⁵⁴ *Then Swenska Kyrkeordningen*, LI.

⁵⁵ *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta; J. FINNO, *Catechism*, Huonelinen sääty, Auiomiesten wirghasta; *Yxi Wähä Suomenkielinen wirsikiria*, VII Häävirdhed, fol. 175r, 176r–176v.

⁵⁶ Anu KORHONEN, *Constructing Emotion in a Culture of Hierarchies: A Love Story*, [in:] *Time Frames: Negotiating Cultural History*, ed. eadem, Kirsi TUOHELA, Turku 2002, pp. 58–60, 65–66, 70; Anu LAHTINEN, *Rakkaus 1500-luvun aatelisperheissä*, [in:] *Perheen jäljillä. Perhesuhteiden moninaisuus Pohjolassa 1400–2020*, toim. Johanna ILMAKUNNAS, Anu LAHTINEN, Tampere 2021, pp. 79–94. For one classic study on the history of emotions, see Monique SCHEER, *Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion, History and Theory*, vol. 51: 2012, pp. 193–220.

⁵⁷ *Een liten vnderuising om Echteskapet*, pp. 448–449.

'he must be her superior / [and] rule her'⁵⁸. Jacobus Finno referred to Sarah and Abraham when describing the preferred relationship between the spouses: he exhorted wives to subordinate themselves to their husbands, 'as Sarah was obedient to Abraham / and called him her Lord'⁵⁹. This passage is quoted word-for-word from 1 Peter 3:6, and the same biblical passage was also used by other contemporaries discussing marital relations, including Luther⁶⁰. Submission was a *sine qua non* for wives as well as for the couple's children. In the wives' case, the reason was the Fall, and children's submission was based especially on the Fourth Commandment⁶¹.

Even though the hierarchy between the spouses was taken for granted among the authors, the ruling position of the man did not imply oppression or abuse of the wife. Rather, the ideal was companionship within the hierarchical relationship. John Thompson has put it well: 'Many soften what is otherwise a strongly hierarchical account of the relationship of men and women, underscoring the companionable aspect of marriage'⁶². The idea of companionship within the hierarchical relationship becomes evident in the discussions of, for instance, love. Referring to Ephesians 5:28–29, Jacobus Finno, for example, exhorted husbands to love their wives as their own body and flesh⁶³. In the hymnal of Hemmingius Henrici (d. 1619), love, peace, mutual help, and avoidance of dispute were among those factors mentioned as desirable in a happy and prosperous marriage⁶⁴. In the third marriage hymn, he described these *vis-à-vis* proper ways of being for the wife and husband, including the aspect of hierarchy: '[The wife] makes her husband's soul cheerful / Turns his sorrow into delight / The security of the house / A strong possession / A great favour-

⁵⁸ 'se pite oleman henen Esimiehense / hallitzeman hende'; *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta.

⁵⁹ 'Ninquin mös Sara oli Abrahamin cuuliainen / ia cudzui hänen HERraxens'; J. FINNO, *Catechism*, Huonelinen sääty, Auiouaimoin opetus. Michael Agricola's handbook contains the same reference, see *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta.

⁶⁰ For Luther, see S. MIKKOLA, *Body and Gender*, pp. 49, 164.

⁶¹ See, e.g., *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta, regulation VIII; J. FINNO, *Catechism*, Huonelinen sääty, Lasten opetus vanhembians watan; ERICUS ERICI SOROLAINEN, *Postilla eli Ulgostoimitus / nijnen Ewangeliumitten päälle cuin ymbäri aiastaian / saarnatan Jumalan Seuracunnasa*, II Osa, Stockholm 1625, pp. 819–820; idem, *Wähä Catechismus Erinomaisten kysymysten ia wastausten cansa / ulgoswedetty Suomen kielen Catechismuxesta / ensistä oppi-waisten tähden*, Stockholm 1629, IV Käsky; J. HARRINGTON, op.cit., pp. 40–42.

⁶² John THOMPSON, *Rule Proved by Exceptions: The Exegesis of Paul and Women in the Sixteenth Century*, [in:] *A Companion to Paul in the Reformation*, ed. R. Ward HOLDER (Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, vol. 15), Leiden 2009, p. 512.

⁶³ J. FINNO, *Catechism*, Huonelinen sääty, Auiomiesten wirghasta. For a similar reference to this biblical passage, see Martin LUTHER, *Ein Traubüchlein für die einfältigen Pfarrherrn*, [in:] *D. Martin Luther's Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 30, Abt. 3, Weimar 1910, p. 79.

⁶⁴ *Yxi Wähä Suomenkielinen wirsikiria*, VII Häävirdhed, fol. 174v–175r, 176r–178r.

able gift from the Lord. Blessed is the happiness of that wife [...] beloved [...] godly / honourable / diligent. [The] man is a strong shelter for the wife / The joy of love / Joy altogether / The favourable shelter of guardianship / The merciful gift given by grace⁶⁵.

He also depicted marriage as companionship: 'Asking each other to cover their weakness through honour / Bearing a shared burden. Suffering together in agony / Together in true faith / Standing in the holy fear of the Lord [...]'⁶⁶. Similar ideals regarding the marital relationship were presented in Michael Agricola's handbook, wherein he noted, for example: '[...] As God gave Eve to Adam to be his wife / So He gives to every man his wife / And to every wife her husband. Therefore, it is very necessary that they both pray to God for a partner like him / With whom they may live in agreement, love and fear of God. [...] Then their marriage will prosper happily and blessedly'⁶⁷.

In Bishop Ericus Erii's sermon on marriage, a similar view can be found, even though he concentrated solely on the male point of view; that of Adam's as well as his contemporary men, noting, for instance, that God gave 'each and every man his rib' ('hänen kylkiluuns') and ignoring the woman's perspective⁶⁸. In Christian tradition, informed heavily by Augustine's views, fidelity, children, and sacrament were regarded as the three goods of marriage (*triplex bonum*). In the Reformation era, the sacramental position of marriage was rejected, and mutual love was thus emphasised, becoming one of the three goods⁶⁹. The importance of love, mutual help and care is indeed well reflected in the previous quotations.

The authors also paid attention to the troubles and inconveniences that marital life entailed. As many noted, in the human world after the Fall, people

⁶⁵ 'Se miehens mielen ilahutta / Ilox ihanaxi murhen muutta / Taloin turva / tavara vahva / Herrald suotu suur suotuis lahja. Autuan onni on sill vaimolla [...] Rackall / lakjall / jumalisell / Cunnjald cuuluval / toimelisell. Se mies on turva vaimoll vahva / Rackaun riemu / ilo aeva / Holhouxen suotuis suoja / Armost annettu laupjas lahja [...]'; *ibid.*, VII Häävirdhed, fol. 176r.

⁶⁶ 'Cunnjas toinen toisens pitäin. Toinen toisens Heickoutta pyytäin peittä cunnjan cautta / Ynnä yhtä iest candain. Kärsiväised käskenäns tuscas / Ynnä yhdhes oikjas uscos / Pysyn Heran pyhä pelghos [...]'; *ibid.*, VII Häävirdhed, fol. 176v–177r.

⁶⁷ '[...] ninquin Jumala Hevan andoi Adamille emenexi / nin mös hen andapi iocaitzelle miehelle henen emenden / ia iocaitzelle waimolle henen miehense. Senteden ombi sangen tarpellinen ette he molemat rukoluat Jumalalta sencaltaista cumpanita / cuin he saisit ele souinosa / rackaudes ia Jumalan pelgosa. [...] Sitten heidhen auioskesküsa onnelisesta ia autuasta menestypäi'; *Käsikirja Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta.

⁶⁸ *Postilla eli Ulgoitoimitus* I, p. 302. As a whole, the man, as a representative of universal humanity, is presented in many of Sorolainen's sermons, see also E. ERIC SOROLAINEN, *Wähä Catechismus*, IV Rucous, for an ideal family life that entailed 'a good spouse, obedient children, faithful family'.

⁶⁹ J. HARRINGTON, *op.cit.*, pp. 50, 71; M. KORPIOLA, *Between Betrothal and Bedding*, p. 265.

faced all sorts of crosses in their marriages. Agricola utilised Luther's *Traubüchlein* when discussing the dangers that the devil caused for married couples. Whereas Luther regarded adultery, unfaithfulness, and other evils as dangers for marital life, Agricola, for his part, added dispute, rebellion, uproar, quarrel, discord and suspicion to the list⁷⁰. Ericus Eriici named crosses such as diseases and pain, hunger, and disobedient children. In his view, the history of marital life that was described in the Bible demonstrated that every married person faced similar troubles, and to prove his point, he listed a multiplicity of examples from the Old Testament⁷¹. However, as Ericus Eriici reminded his audience, each should bear one's cross in marriage with patience, and not grumble against God but ask God's help amidst it⁷². The idea of bearing the cross was a very typical way for Protestants to express and give meaning to everyday suffering, be it in marriage or in other walks of life⁷³. Hence, in this advice, Ericus Eriici was well in line with Protestant theology of the cross, as well as with contemporary thinking on the significance of the cross in marriage and how to bear it properly.

Mia Korpiola has noted that the reformers in the Swedish realm did not present particularly original ideas⁷⁴. This also holds true for their views on marriage and the relationship between the spouses, as has become evident from the investigation of Swedish and Finnish sources conducted thus far. The views that emerge in the source material by leading theologians were not only complementary to each other but also largely mirrored contemporary thinking and reiterated perspectives presented by other reformers, for instance in Germany⁷⁵.

REPRESENTATIONS OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE IN EARLY FINNISH AND SWEDISH FUNERAL SERMONS

In funeral biographies, a happy, Christian marriage was portrayed as a central part of the life course of both men and women⁷⁶. The idea of marriage as

⁷⁰ *Käsikiria Castesta*, III Auioskeskon menosta.

⁷¹ *Postilla eli Ulgoitoimitus* I, pp. 306–308.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 307.

⁷³ See, e.g., Ronald K. RITTGERS, *The Reformation of Suffering: Pastoral Theology and Lay Piety in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology), New York 2012, pp. 111–124; Timothy WENGERT, "Peace, Peace ... Cross, Cross": Reflections on How Martin Luther Relates the Theology of the Cross to Suffering, *Lutheran Quarterly*, vol. 33: 2019, no. 3, pp. 304–323.

⁷⁴ M. KORPIOLA, *Between Betrothal and Bedding*, p. 267.

⁷⁵ For the latter notion, see *ibid.*, p. 268.

⁷⁶ G. STENBERG, *op.cit.*, p. 124. For Germany, see Heike TALKENBERGER, *Konstruktion von Männerrollen in württembergischen Leichenpredigten des 16.–18. Jahrhunderts*, [in:] *Hausväter, Priester, Kastraten. Zur Konstruktion von Männlichkeit in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, hrsg. v. Martin DINGES, Göttingen 1998, pp. 29–74.

ordained by God is reflected in sections describing the instigation of marriage, where authors usually refer to God's providence or even direct agency. The influence of parents and relatives behind the union was also often mentioned in women's biographies, which can be seen as related to the issue of clandestine engagements, making it important to highlight the role of the parents in contracting the marriage. Thus, funeral biographies reflect the notion of marriage as both a Christian as well as a secular union between families. Isaacus Rothovius (1572–1652), pastor of Nyköping, who would soon be appointed bishop of Åbo, wrote that in 1580 the noblewoman Barbro Axelsdotter Bielke was 'given in marriage to the high-born master Gustaf Gabrielsson Oxenstierna through God's providence and the advice and will of her guardian and relatives'. The guardian was mentioned because she had lost her father in early childhood. According to Rothovius, Bielke lived with her husband in a 'loving and truthful marriage' until she was widowed in 1597⁷⁷.

In the biography of a burgomaster's wife, Elin Pedersdotter, written a year earlier, Rothovius formulated the same section differently. When Elin was at the age of sixteen, Rothovius writes, 'God gave her an honest and sensible man, Peder Larsson, to marry [...] with whom she lived in all piety, affection and virtue for almost eighteen years'⁷⁸. Here, God is portrayed as the main agent, but there are examples where only the family is mentioned. The Finnish-born pastor of Stockholm, Olaus Elimaeus (c. 1570–1629), who would soon be appointed bishop of Vyborg in Finland, wrote in the funeral biography of a burgher's wife, Margareta Morttensdotter, that she was 'given to her beloved husband by her beloved father, with the agreement and acceptance of kin and friends'⁷⁹. Thus, the biographies reflect the common practice that the maiden

⁷⁷ 'genom Gudz försyn och medh sina målzmäns och förwanters rådth och wilie / wardt til ehta giffuen then welborne Herre / Her Gustaff Gabrielson Oxenstierna [...]'; 'itt kärligit och sandrechtigt echtenskap [...]'; Isaacus ROTHOVIVS, *Een christeligh lijkpredikan [...] vthi [...] frw Barbro Axels dotters Bielkes begraiffningh [...] vppå sin gård Ringstada then 12. januarij årh 1624 [...]*, Stockholm 1624; Simo HEININEN, *Rothovius, Isaacus*, [in:] *Kansallisbiografia*, <http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi:sks-kbg-000451> [accessed online 2 April 2025]; Martti PARVIO, *Isaacus Rothovius, Turun piispa* (Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran toimituksia, vol. 60), Helsinki 1959, pp. 225–229.

⁷⁸ 'tå gaff Gudh henne til ehta en åhrligh och förståndigh man / Peder Larsson / Borge-mästaren här i stadhen / medh hwilken hon i all fromheet / kärligheet och dygd leffuat haffuer / in vppå adertonde åhret'; Isaacus ROTHOVIVS, *Een christeligh lijkpredikan / öffuer [...] s.h. Elin Pedersdotters [...] Peder Larssons borgemästares här i Nyköping / elskelighe käre hustrws lijkh [...]*, Strängnäs 1623.

⁷⁹ Olaus ELIMAEUS, *Een kort predikan [...] öffuer [...] Peter Grönebergz / förnämlich köp-handlares och borgares ther sammastädz salige hustrues / [...] h. Margaretae, Morttensdotters / lijkh [...]*, Stockholm 1618; Pentti LAASONEN, *Elimaeus, Olaus*, [in:] *Kansallisbiografia*, <http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi:sks-kbg-000475> [accessed online 2 April 2025].

was given away by her marriage guardian⁸⁰. A wider group of relatives and friends was also often mentioned.

In his funeral sermon on Sophia de la Gardie, Bishop Rothovius reused the biography written a year earlier by Olaus Laurelius, Bishop of Västerås, without mentioning the source, which was a common practice in the early modern period and gives a good example of how texts and influences travelled within the realm⁸¹. Sophia de la Gardie had apparently died in Stockholm, where her funeral procession was organised in 1647, after which the body was transferred to Finland and buried at the church of Ulvila in 1648. Laurelius wrote the funeral sermon for the first occasion and Rothovius for the latter. In the biography republished by Rothovius, Laurelius wrote how God had, through his providence, joined Sophia in a prestigious marriage with Jöns Kurck, the president of the court of appeal in Finland. According to Laurelius, the couple had lived in 'a happy, peaceful and pleasant marriage', and to her husband, his wife had been 'the true comfort of his heart and delight to the eye'⁸². Thus, Laurelius' text also highlighted God's providence, similarly to the authors mentioned above. God's agency could be described as very personal, as in the biography of Margareta Knutsdotter, where Laurentius Preutz, pastor of Pedersöre in Finland, wrote that after Margareta had spent some years as a widow following the death of her first husband, 'God thought about her, presenting her with a pious and notable man again'⁸³.

While biographies mention the agency of parents and kin or God's providence, any mention of choice made by the spouses, even the husband, often remains absent. The same pattern can be seen in the early Swedish biographies, where the initiative of the husband is rarely mentioned. In the biography of Karin Timansdotter, wife of Laurentius Olai Wallius, Professor of Divinity and Dean of the churches in Uppsala, the author recounts that her husband-to-be,

⁸⁰ See M. KORPIOLA, *Between Betrothal and Bedding*, p. 288.

⁸¹ Even in translations, it was not necessary to cite the source, see K. WEBER, *Translating Luther*, p. 305.

⁸² 'ett liuflighit / fredsamt och rooligit echenskap [...]'; 'een sanskyldigh hiertans tröst och ögnefågnat [...]'; Isaacus ROTHOVIVS, *Een christeligh lijkpredican [...] öfwer [...] frw Sophia de la Gardie. [...] hwilken i Herranom affsomnade then 1. octob. 1647. Och bleff [...] begrafwen i Vlfzby kyrkia then 23. januar. an. 1648 [...]*, Turku 1648; Olaus LAURELIUS, *Vthferdz predikan, öfwer [...] frw Sophia de la Gardie [...] Hwars salige lekamen [...] bleff ledsagat och vthförd ifrån S. Jacobs kyrckia i Stockholm, then 21. Octobris, år 1647 [...]*, Stockholm 1647; Sven GÖRANSSON, *Olavus Laurentii Laurelius, [in:] Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/11062> [accessed online 9 April 2025].

⁸³ 'HERRen Gudh tänckte på henne / beskärandes henne åter en from och förnem Man igen [...]'; Laurentius PREUTZ, *Loetitia justorum perpetua. Eller the rättferdigas stadiga och ewiga glädie [...] öfwer [...] h. Margareta Knutzdotter, [...] herr Jacobi Brenneri, wälmeriterade pastoris i Croneby [...] huuss-ähra [...]*, Stockholm 1668.

‘after praying to God for a good spouse, got a great and very Christian liking towards this virtuous Karin, to live with her in a godly and loving marriage’⁸⁴. It was clearly important to highlight the godly and virtuous nature of the union and avoid any suspicion of a more physical desire behind it. This is reminiscent of an early Protestant manner of describing clerical marriages – for example, Luther’s own marriage – as an act of God, so that adversaries would have no reason to accuse them of marrying out of lust⁸⁵. The texts discussed here are from a later period, and most do not concern clerical families, but the authors were themselves clergymen and were probably familiar with the earlier narratives in which entering marriage was represented as an act of God.

Mentioning the husband’s agency becomes somewhat more frequent in the late seventeenth century. This might be because the institution of clerical marriage had become firmly established, and there was no longer the same need to emphasise the divine action. Even so, virtue, especially that of the bride, was still emphasised. In the funeral biography of Anna Christina Bank, Johannes Gezelius the Younger (1647–1718), Bishop of Åbo, recounts that her virtue awakened the love of her future husband, who asked to marry her, and the request became fulfilled with God’s providence and the acceptance of ‘those concerned’⁸⁶. One sermon grants agency even to the bride. Laurentius Preutz wrote in the biography of Anna Persdotter that in August 1600, when Anna was about twenty years old, she entered an honourable marriage with pastor Knut Henrici through ‘God’s wonderful and merciful providence, after preceding prayer, careful consideration, with advice and acceptance of parents and kin’⁸⁷. The wording indicates that it was Anna who did the praying and consideration before choosing to marry. Mentioning the contemplation of the

⁸⁴ ‘effter innerliga til Gudh böner om en godh ächta maka fått til thenna dygdesamma Karin ett stort och rätt christeligt ächtenskaps behagh / at leffua medh henne vthi itt Gudeligt och kärligt echtenskap’; Olaus ERICI MORETUS, *Thens fordom ähreborne, hedersamme och dygderijke matrones och docterinnes, hustru Karin Timans dotters [...] her Lars Wallii, thens helge skrifts doctarens och här i Vpsala höghe schole öfverste läsemestarens [...] älskelige käre hustrus, lijkpredikning [...]*, Uppsala 1628. See also Annika STRÖM, *Lachrymae Catharinae: Five Collections of Funeral Poetry from 1628* (Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Studia Latina Stockholmiensia, vol. 38), Stockholm 1994.

⁸⁵ See S. MIKKOLA, *Body and Gender*, p. 166.

⁸⁶ Johannes GEZELIUS, *The christtrognas, besynnerligen / gudfruchtige barnaföderskors, saligheetz bewijs [...] hållen öfwer [...] Anna Christina Bank, [...] mag. Joachim Festings, trogne siälesör-iares och capellans wid Åbo doomkyrckias swänske församling: kärälskelige maka [...]*, Åbo 1695.

⁸⁷ ‘Gudz underliga och nådige skickelse / effter föregående böön / mogna betenckiande / sampt föräldrars och slächtz inrådande / och samtyckie [...]’; Laurentius PREUTZ, *Laurea senectutis, eller åldersdoms ährekrantz [...] vthi Croneby kyrckia i Österbotn, åhr 1664 [...] den 6. dagen i martij månadt. [...] Öfwer [...] matrona hust. Anna Perssdotter, [...] herr Canuti Henrici, fordom kyrckioheerdes vthi Pedersöre sochn [...] hustru [...]*, Stockholm 1665.

bride highlights the idea that marriage was to be based on free will for both spouses⁸⁸. Even so, it would probably have been difficult for a maiden to choose a spouse against the will of her parents and relatives, as children's obedience towards their parents was an important norm⁸⁹.

In accordance with the catechism, Abraham's wife, Sarah, was presented as a model of female virtue also in funeral sermons. Rothovius elaborated on the example set by Sarah for married women in the funeral sermon of the noblewoman Märtha Oxenstierna from 1634. According to Rothovius, Sarah had served, comforted and supported her husband, giving an example all wives should follow. She had respected her husband, raised her son in godliness and piety, taken good care of her house, and lived in chastity and self-discipline⁹⁰. Chastity is mentioned in the context of married life and thus is in line with the idea of channelling sexual desire correctly through marriage. Similar female virtues are repeated in funeral biographies. Olaus Elimaeus wrote about Margareta Morttensdotter that she lived with her husband in such 'harmony and affection, obedience and willingness to serve, that he said that he could not praise nor mourn her enough even if he shed tears of blood'⁹¹. Referring to what the husband had said is related to the conversation he had with the author of the funeral sermon, which was an important source of information for the author.

It is interesting to compare the section to a man's biography by the same author. Elimaeus wrote about a German merchant, Marten Trautzich, that he had lived with his wife in 'the greatest reason, harmony and affection'⁹². Thus, for both men and women, Elimaeus mentioned harmony and affection in marriage, but the husband was to rationally guide his household, while the wife was to obey and serve. This was consistent with the idea of the man as the head of the woman, as expressed by, among others, Agricola and Jacobus Finno. It is also illustrative of the idea of love as an emotion that upheld hierarchies and

⁸⁸ Mari VÄLIMÄKI, *Rikotut lupaukset. Esiaviolliset suhteet ja toimijuus Ruotsin yliopistokaupungeissa 1600-luvun lopulla* (Turun yliopiston julkaisuja. Sarja B: Humaniora, vol. 533), Turku 2021, p. 35.

⁸⁹ M. KORPIOLA, *Marrying off Sons and Daughters*, pp. 4, 27.

⁹⁰ Isaacus ROTHOVIVS, *Christeligh lijkpredikning / vthöffuer [...] her Jöns Kurkz til Lauko / Anola och Klackeborgh / [...] elskelighe käre hwsßfrws / then wälborne och dygderijke frw / f. Mertha Oxenstierna Gustaffz dotter [...] frw til Luko / Anola och Klackeborgh [...]*, Stockholm 1634.

⁹¹ 'vthi sådana semio och kärligheet / lydno och tienstachtigheet / at han sägher sigh icke kunna henne therföre tilfyllest loffua / eller begråta / om han än blodighe tårar fälte [...]' O. ELIMAEUS, *Een kort predikan [...] öffuer [...] h. Margareta, Morttensdotters / lijk [...]*.

⁹² 'medh alsomstörsta förnufftigheet / semio och kärligheet [...]' Olaus ELIMAEUS, *Lijk predikan [...] vthi [...] Marten Trautzichs / förnemligh borgares och then tyske församlingenes ther sammastädz äldste föreständares begraffning [...] Then 25. mart. anno Domini 1617 [...]*, Stockholm 1617.

social order: while the wife expressed her love through obedience and respect, the husband expressed his through patience, fairness, and responsibility for her well-being⁹³.

In funeral biographies, conjugal relationships were always described as affectionate and harmonious. The view of marriage as a blessed state for an individual was described through a variety of attributes: it could be portrayed as loving, affectionate, friendly, peaceful, harmonious, godly, pious, happy or delightful. The emotional significance of wives to their husbands was also highlighted. It was often mentioned that wives brought their husbands joy and alleviated their worries and troubles. Thus, the views presented in the funeral sermons are quite consistent with those that emerged from the normative writings regarding the ideal relationship between spouses, albeit described in greater detail. Aeschillus Petraeus (1593–1657), first Professor of Divinity at the Royal Academy of Åbo and later bishop of Åbo, wrote about Maria Mörner, wife of Colonel Gustaf Horn, that she had been the ‘joy to [her husband’s] heart and eyes, pious, quiet and docile’. To ‘her dear master [i.e. husband – S.M. and M.K.], she had made every effort to be, in every respect, of loving service and pleasure, to alleviate, where she could, the worries of his profession, to lengthen her master’s lifetime with her pleasant company’⁹⁴. Isaacus Rothovius similarly wrote about Elin Pedersdotter, describing how ‘she had never caused [her husband] worry or trouble, but cheered him up and brought him joy with her godly and honest company’⁹⁵. Similar ideas – that husbands burdened by their professional duties needed emotional support from their wives – were expressed by Protestant preachers in sixteenth-century Germany⁹⁶.

⁹³ A. KORHONEN, op.cit., pp. 57–74; Hanna KIETÄVÄINEN-SIRÉN, *Erityinen ystävyys. Miehen ja naisen välinen rakkaus uuden ajan alun Suomessa (n. 1650–1700)*, Jyväskylä 2015, p. 149.

⁹⁴ ‘hon hans hiertans och ögnelust hafwer warit / from / stilla och sachtmodigh / beflijtat sigh på thet aldrhögsta i alla motto wara sijn käre Herre til all kärlich tjänst och behagh / at lindra om hon kunde göra hans bekymber i sitt embete / at förlengia medh sitt liuflika umgänge sin Herres Lijffztijdh [...]’; Aeschillus PETRAEUS, *Gvdz Barnas bedröfwelige tåare: sädh och frögdefulle skörde and, förklarar vthi een predikan när [...] frw f. Maria Mörner til Kankas och Bergsund, hwilken [...] affsomnade på Kankas [...]*, Turku 1643; Matti KLINGE, *Petraeus, Aeschillus*, [in:] *Kansallisbiografia*, <http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi:sks-kbg-000452> [accessed online 2 April 2025]. See also B. BERGNER, op.cit., p. 80. Similar ‘love work’ performed by wives in the post-Reformation period, involving ‘services for husband and children’ and thus ‘enhancing the quality of family life for all’, is also described by Steven OZMENT, *Ancestors: The Loving Family in Old Europe*, Cambridge, MA 2001, pp. 29–30.

⁹⁵ ‘Hon haffuer honom aldrigh bekymbrat eller beswärat: Vthan frögdat och glädt medh sitt Gudeligha och ährligha vmgenge’; I. ROTHOVIVS, *Een christeligh lijkpredikan*.

⁹⁶ Scott H. HENDRIX, *Masculinity and Patriarchy in Reformation Germany*, [in:] *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, ed. idem, Susan C. KARANT-NUNN (Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, vol. 83), Kirksville 2008, pp. 81–83.

Emotional support, like comforting or bringing joy, was only described as something wives gave their husbands and not *vice versa*, but husbands could be depicted as taking care of their wives, usually in their illness or at their death-bed. Aeschillus Petraeus wrote that when Maria Mörner fell ill, she ‘praised her master highly that he had been like a good and gentle father towards her, and their marriage had been a life of angels, she could not think of any time when there would have been any disagreement with him’⁹⁷. The fatherly role, even in relation to the wife, can be understood in terms of the idea of paternal rule and the Fourth Commandment as the foundation of authority within the doctrine of the three estates. Those in positions of authority, whether in the state or the household, were responsible for the well-being of their subordinates⁹⁸.

In the biography of a lecturer’s wife, Brita Joensdotter, her husband was described as having tended to all her needs and taken care of her on her death-bed and, together with their friends, read her prayers and comforting verses from the Bible⁹⁹. Olaus Moretus (1592–1628), Professor at Uppsala University, wrote that when his colleague’s wife, Karin Timansdotter, fell ill, her husband repeatedly asked her whether she would like him to call the curate to administer communion at home. When she asked him to wait so that they could go to church together once she felt better, he is depicted as complying with her wishes and asking whether she thought he should go and take communion alone¹⁰⁰. This is especially interesting as her husband was a member of the higher clergy who could have well made these decisions himself. Through this narrative, Moretus gave his listeners an example of interaction between spouses where even decisions concerning spiritual life were made together. Individual anecdotes of everyday life in funeral biographies offer glimpses of wives’ agency that are not necessarily evident in the more general sections of these biographies, let alone in broader catechetical or normative material, but that were probably closer to the lived reality of married couples.

In funeral biographies, marital love was also represented through depictions of the widower’s sorrow after losing his wife. Abraham and Jacob were presented as biblical models of husbands who had grieved their wives, thus

⁹⁷ ‘Haffuer och i sijn siukdom högelighen berömdt sin Herre at han haffuer warit såsom en godh och mild fadher emoot henne / och deras echtenskap haffuer warit ett englalefwerne / wiste sigh ingen oenigheet nogon tijdh medh honom haffua hafft’; Ae. PETRAEUS, *Gvdz Barnas bedröfwelige tååre*.

⁹⁸ Nina J. KOEFOED, *Authorities who care: The Lutheran Doctrine of the Three Estates in Danish Legal Development from the Reformation to Absolutism*, *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 44: 2019, no. 4, pp. 430–453.

⁹⁹ Magnus HARALDSSON, *Lijk predikan, öffuer [...] m. Birgeri Olai Becandri [...] elskelighe kiäre hustrus salighe lijk [...] Brijta Joens dotter, hällen i Linkiöpingz domkyrkia [...]*, Uppsala 1629.

¹⁰⁰ O. MORETUS, *Thens fordome ähreborne*.

legitimising the husband's sorrow¹⁰¹. The description of a loving marriage gained more intensity with time, and the deep sorrow of the widower became regularly depicted in funeral sermons and biographies¹⁰². Elaborate descriptions of a loving farewell at the deathbed also became more common in the late seventeenth century, especially in women's funeral biographies. One early example is the biography of Karin (Catharina) Stiernefelt, wife of Anders Prytz, superintendent and pastor in Gothenburg. When it became clear during Karin's seventh labour that it would not proceed normally and nothing more could be done, the family took a loving farewell of one another. The author recounts that Karin 'let everyone see and feel the heartfelt love she had for her dear husband and dear children'. To her husband, she said that if she had ever done anything against him, she wished for it to be forgiven. When her husband asked her to do the same, 'she blessed him, thanking him for every day, hour and moment that she had lived with him, and asked him to take good care of the children'¹⁰³. Along with several later examples, this biography highlights how companionship and mutual love could be portrayed as an integral part of a conjugal relationship, also in funeral biographies. Spouses were obliged to love one another, but a loving marriage and having a good spouse could also be interpreted as gifts from God for leading a life of virtue, especially in the case of women¹⁰⁴. One of the central functions of the Lutheran funeral biography was to give evidence of a good Christian life that would lead to salvation, which also explains why it was important to emphasise love and harmony between spouses in this context¹⁰⁵.

Having children was presented right after the description of marriage in a conventional manner. It was first mentioned that God had blessed the marriage with a certain number of children, after which the author recounted how many were girls and boys, how many had already passed, and how many remained, either as infants mourning their deceased mother or having taken on their adult social roles. Often, authors described the mother's love for her

¹⁰¹ Olaus ELIMAEUS, *En kort predikan, haffd vthi stoore kyrkian i Stockholm, öffuer then ädle, wälbördige, höglärde, och högärade, Nicolai Chesnecopheri [...] salighe hwszfrwes, ädle, gudhfruchtige och dygderijke frw Agnetae Lonicerinnes lijk [...]*, Stockholm 1615; I. ROTHUVIUS, *Christeligh lijkpredikning*.

¹⁰² G. STENBERG, op.cit., p. 124.

¹⁰³ 'Hon låt och här hoos see och förnimma sin hierteliga kärleek till sin k. Man och k. Barn [...]; 'wälsignade hon honom / och tackade honom för hwar then dagh / timma och stund som hon hade lefwat medh henne / och bad honom achta Barnen wäll [...]; Henricus SOTERUS, *En lijkpredikan öfwer then ädle, gudhfruchtige, och mykit dygderijke matrona, h. Catharina Peders Dotter Stiernefeldt: thens ehrewyrdige herres, m. Andreae Prytz superintendentens i Göteborgh, firdom elskelige k. hustru [...]*, Linköping 1644.

¹⁰⁴ H. KIETÄVÄINEN-SIRÉN, op.cit., pp. 134, 149.

¹⁰⁵ C. N. MOORE, op.cit., pp. 27, 30.

children, praising the way she brought them up and thus emphasising motherhood as central to a woman's life. Isaacus Rothovius wrote that Barbro Bielke – mother of Axel Oxenstierna, Lord High Chancellor and one of the most influential statesmen in early modern Sweden – lived as a widow for 27 years. According to Rothovius, she took good care of her children with a 'maternal heart', and strived to raise them in 'godliness, virtue and honesty, wisdom and reason'. She did not spare costs sending her sons to study abroad and raised her daughters in 'godliness, discipline and honesty'¹⁰⁶. Thus, her ability to raise both her sons and daughters into adulthood without a husband was not questioned. A widow was the head of her household and guardian of her underage children, and this is the role in which she was portrayed in the biography¹⁰⁷.

Funeral biographies indicate that mothers played a central role in the early education of children, teaching them to read and learn the basics of the catechism. Their role in guiding household devotion is also often mentioned¹⁰⁸. The mother's determination in teaching her young children was a quality to be praised. Olaus Moretus wrote in the biography of Karin Timansdotter that she taught her children to read at such a young age that it was sometimes questioned by others. People would find her in her chores, with her little ones, aged three and four, with their 'ABC-books' in their hands. Karin would ask them to read to her from the book or by heart, sometimes tempting them with sugar or a snack, and sometimes, 'though seldom', with the rod. Karin would also 'maternally urge' her servants to say their prayers and listen to sermons diligently, and punish them if they would not obey¹⁰⁹. As mistresses of the house, women held a position of authority over their children and servants, and the male authors clearly appreciated an assertive demeanour in this position. It was not dependent on age and experience, since Karin died at the age of only twenty-five. In her biography, Karin is not portrayed as implementing her husband's commands, but as independently making decisions regarding her children's education.

The issue of marital troubles and inconveniences mentioned in the normative texts does not come up in funeral biographies. This is quite understandable,

¹⁰⁶ 'haffuandes ett moderligt hierta til them / beflitandes sigh ther om at the måtte wexa til i all gudeligheet / dygd och ährligheet / wijsheet och förstånd'; 'Sina döttrar haffuer hon i all gudeligheet / tucht och erligheet vpfoßt [...]'; I. ROTHOVIVS, *Een christeligh lijkpredikan*.

¹⁰⁷ See also Anu LAHTINEN, *Sopeutuvat, neuvottelevat, kapinalliset. Naiset toimijoina Flemingin sukupiirissä 1470–1620* (Bibliotheca Historica, vol. 108), Helsinki 2007, pp. 89–93.

¹⁰⁸ B. BERGNER, op.cit., p. 88; Miia KUHA, *Papinrouvien arjen hengellisyys ruumissaarnejien elämäkerroissa 1600-luvun jälkipuolen Suomessa*, [in:] *Eletty reformaatio. Protestanttisen uskonnollisuuden muotoja uuden ajan alun Euroopassa*, toim. Sini MIKKOLA, Päivi RÄISÄNEN-SCHRÖDER (Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran toimituksia, vol. 243), Helsinki 2023, pp. 170–196.

¹⁰⁹ O. MORETUS, *Thens freedom ähreborne*.

since they aimed to portray the life of the person in question as ideal. However, the troubles of marital life could be treated in the section of the actual sermon. Olaus Elimaeus touched on the topic with a didactic tone in his funeral sermon for the noblewoman Agneta Lonicera, which lacks the biographical part. Agneta had died in childbirth, which was also the topic of the sermon, where the physical pain and discomfort of labour were depicted as a consequence of the Fall. However, Elimaeus also wrote about more practical issues related to having children. He addressed the sermon primarily to husbands, who he urged not to be harsh, like many were, according to him, but gentle and caring towards their pregnant or lying-in wives. He reminded them not to let their pregnant wives wander around or embark on journeys that could place them or their unborn children in danger. The instruction was targeted at husbands who would not fulfil their role as the head of the household properly, neglecting their responsibilities towards their subordinates. On the troubles of family life, Elimaeus also pondered that even after a safe delivery, parents faced all kinds of inconvenience, like not being able to sleep, which 'those who themselves have dealt with it know'¹¹⁰. Based on surviving biographical information, it seems likely that Elimaeus and his wife had small children at the time of writing the sermon. Perhaps the pride he took in his new role prompted the reference to the group of parents with whom he now identified, sharing an important sphere of life from which others were excluded.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, we have examined how marriage and family life were described and defined in Finland as part of the Swedish realm. We have investigated theological and ecclesiastical texts, such as the Church Ordinance, catechisms, hymns and funeral sermons. Although the source material is diverse, it shows numerous similarities in its emphases. The sources used present a rather consistent picture of the meaning of marriage and family life, as well as the ideal roles of spouses. The theological emphases are also broadly in line with general Reformation-era perceptions of marriage and family life, with the exception that clerical marriage – which was the subject of heated debate in sixteenth-century Germany – is not a very prominent theme in the Finnish sources. Otherwise, the rather direct influence of Luther's and other reformers' writings on the Finnish material is evident.

Throughout the sources used, marriage was represented not only as a Christian but also as a secular union. This was in accordance with German reformers' views but also reflected the importance of regional laws and traditions. In funeral

¹¹⁰ 'såsom the weta som thet sielffue haffua förfarit'; O. ELIMAEUS, *En kort predikan [...]* öfuer [...] frw Agnetae Lonicerinnes lijk [...].

biographies, references to the role of the father, family, kin and friends in initiating marriage highlight the continuing importance of families and social networks in arranging marriages. Mentioning the acceptance of the family and kin also erased suspicions of a clandestine union viewed as a threat to societal order during the period. On the other hand, the notions of marriage as becoming one flesh, offspring as the central purpose of marriage, and the repeated use of the Pauline *kephalē* structure all tied the authors not only to Protestant interpretations but also to a longer historical continuum of Christian theology on marriage.

Kekke Stadin has observed that, even though normative texts placed men in a superior position, the subordinate role of women was not emphasised in texts concerning actual individuals; instead, marriage was rather described in terms of mutual love and fidelity¹¹¹. This also holds true for the different sources analysed here. In texts such as catechisms and other theological and ecclesiastical works, as well as in more standardised sections of funeral biographies, authors emphasised harmony and affection in marriage, husbands' authority, wives' obedience and willingness to serve their husbands, and the happiness and comfort of married life. However, in descriptions of everyday life, the role of the wife was depicted as more versatile. Both wives and widows were granted authority in their roles as mothers and mistresses of the household. The authority of the husband was mainly depicted as responsibility for the well-being of family members, and biographies indicate that wives were involved in making important decisions or made them independently. The authors recognised women's agency in everyday family life, granting them a position in which their support of their husbands was crucial to their husbands' success in life.

Individual scenes from married life, especially farewells at the deathbed, emphasise the mutual love and companionship between spouses. Various hardships in marital life were also discussed in different sources, which indicates that the authors were either well aware of – and perhaps personally experienced – the everyday life of married couples, or at least reproduced and adapted, for example, German texts in which descriptions of marital difficulties formed an integral part of the treatment of the subject.

Overall, based on the sources used, it seems that marriage and family life were discussed not only in line with key ideas of the Lutheran Reformation but also, more broadly, with contemporary conceptions of marriage. Furthermore, these ideas were disseminated through a variety of texts, and anecdotes from the everyday lives of married couples were employed to illustrate ideal conjugal relationships.

¹¹¹ K. STADIN, *op.cit.*, p. 298.

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