

*Spiegel einer Christlichen und friedsamten Haushaltung: Die Ehe in der populären Druckgraphik des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts.* Kristina Bake.

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This book offers the results of a meticulously conducted PhD study on 170 illustrated early modern German broadsheets from the early modern period (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries). The selection of this material is thematically defined: the broadsheets present the theme of marriage, including the implied prevailing images of masculinity and femininity. The title of the book, *Spiegel einer Christlichen und friedsamten Haushaltung* (Mirror of a Christian and peaceful household), is also the title of one of the explored broadsheets, preserved in the Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel. This famous European research institute supported the project's performance in more ways than one, as well as the publication of its results in the prestigious and valuable book series *Wolfenbütteler Arbeiten zur Barockforschung*. Almost the entire research material is reproduced in this volume; it covers a substantial part of its appendix.

The introduction offers a discursive outline of marriage as an early modern, Christian institution. As the author contends, the related division of roles between the sexes was the outcome of, on the one hand, the reformatory domestic revolution that propagated the housewife as the leading role model for married women and, on the other hand, the continued effect of traditional medieval misogyny. This contextual starting point is followed by a retrospective of earlier research on the medium of early modern illustrated broadsheets in which the theme of marriage and its implications are visualized and verbalized. The author's purpose is to analyze the selected broadsheets in order to discover their interactions with the reconstructed contemporary discourse on marriage, in terms of confirming or destabilizing the dominant norms. The final section of the introduction elaborates on the production and circulation of early modern broadsheets in general and the investigated selection in particular.

The next four chapters form the central part of the book; they present the results of the analysis. Chapter 2 is focused on representations of the preliminary phase of marriage in the broadsheets: the choice of the right partner and the failures that could be part of this process of “angling, fishing and hunting.” Chapter 3 investigates the represented norm of “the right marriage,” the consensus between husband and wife that is based on a patriarchal hierarchy and demonstrated by scenes of devout peacefulness, prosperity, and productivity (i.e., many children). Such scenes are often visualized by the motive of the family members praying around the dinner table: the mirror of a Christian and peaceful household. Chapter 4 considers the opposite norm: it shows how “the wrong marriage” was depicted. Mutual physical violence, neglect of domestic duties by the housewife, and, finally, adultery represent the warning consequences that the broadsheets bring to the fore. These bad relations are mainly ascribed to the choice of a partner that is emotionally prompted by sexual desire and/or greed instead of being rationally determined by equality in age, birth, and social circumstances. Inequality of the partners is usually represented with binary oppositions that were well known at the time: an old (and wealthy) man as opposed to a young (and unwealthy) girl, a young (unwealthy) husband in contrast with an old (and wealthy) wife. Chapter 5 demonstrates that wrong marriages were considered to have the much wider implication of disturbing the social order as a whole. This generalizing implication frames the motives of the *mundus inversus* (turning around role patterns, e.g., men wearing dresses and women, trousers; men behind the spinning wheel; and women wearing weapons), of cunning and seductive women from the past (myth, history, and the Bible), of housewives forming regiments in order to claim privileges and rights, and, finally, of monsters and miraculous animals that devour both husbands and wives.

In her conclusion, the author primarily emphasizes the *utile* (the normative and correcting tendencies) of the investigated broadsheets, while the aspects of *dulce* or *delectatio* — the scenes that exhort to joking and laughing at the follies of wrong marriages — perhaps deserved equal attention. All in all, the book is an important contribution to the thematic study of early modern illustrated broadsheets.

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