

Paris, 1393, (How to hold a husband)

Cherish your husband's person and make sure you keep him in clean linen, this being your office. For men have to look after things outside the house and husbands have to go abroad in all sorts of weather, at times getting soaked in rain, at times dry, and sometimes bathed in sweat... But he puts up with it all and takes consolation from thinking about the good care he will have from his wife when he gets home, as she warms him by a good fire, washes his feet, fetches fresh shoes and stockings for him, good food and drink, gives him plenty of attentions, a comfortable bed, white sheets, a nightcap, fur covers, and the cheer of delights, privy frolics, lovings, and secret matters which I shan't mention.

Indeed, fair sister, these are the services that make a man wish for home and long to return to it... Remember the rustic saying that there are three things which chase a good man from home: a roofless house, smoking chimney, and a quarrelsome wife... and don't be quarrelsome but sweet, gentle, and amiable.

In the summertime make sure that there are no fleas in your bed or bedroom.

.... And if you do all this, he will keep his heart for you and for your loving service you render him and he will care nothing for other houses or other women.

Handbook of Good Customs, cca 1360, Paolo da Certaldo

The female is an empty thing and easily swayed: she runs great risks when she is away from her husband. Therefore, keep females in the house, keep them as close to yourself as you can, and come home often to keep an eye on your affairs and to keep them in fear and trembling. Make sure they always have work to do in the house and never allow them to be idle, for idleness is a great danger to both man and woman, but more to the woman...

If you have a female child, set her for sewing and not to reading, for it is not suitable for a female to know how to read unless she is going to be a nun... Teach her to do everything about the house, to make bread, clean capons, sift, cook, launder, make beds, put new feet onto socks, and so forth, so when you marry her off she

won't seem a fool freshly arrived from the wilds.