

A great asset of the work is its juxtaposition of the social teaching of the Church Fathers (e.g., Clement of Alexandria and John Chrysostom) and the views of the pagan Romans on morality. It is not surprising, therefore, that they went to great lengths to prevent young people from reading the works of Catullus or Ovid. An interesting development of this is a passage (in Chapter XII), devoted to the discovery of the ruins of Pompeii in the mid-eighteenth century. For the next two centuries, many of those finds shocked the public by their boldness, just to mention the images of the god Priapus. They were even not available to all visitors to the Royal Museum of Naples. This shows that, until relatively recently, the public living in the former Western Empire expressed similar objections to Rome's pagan heritage as did the early Christians.

In conclusion, Catherine Nixey's book is a worthwhile document, even if the reader disagrees with the author's point of view. Indeed, she is not entirely impartial. Practically always her sympathies are firmly on the side of the "pagans," which does not mean that the whole book is a pamphlet on the Christians of the first centuries AD. Most quotations from the source texts are accompanied by an appropriate footnote. Unfortunately, there are also isolated instances where there is no information as to where the quoted passage came from. The book fills a gap, and it is hoped that similar works will encourage researchers to undertake an even more thorough study of this difficult but important topic. Indeed, the author touches on a broad spectrum of issues (both those mentioned above and many others); but this makes individual chapters relatively short, as if there was not enough space for a more in-depth analysis of some issues. However, this is a matter of the author's conception and can hardly be seen as a drawback.

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Francesco Barbaro, *De re uxoria*, ed. C. Griggio, Ch. Kravina, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 2021, pp. 425.

In 2022, the Leo S. Olschki publishing house brought a critical edition of *De re uxoria* by the Italian humanist and politician Francesco Barbaro (1390-1454) compiled by Claudio Griggio and Chiara Kravina. This work can be considered a „guidebook” addressed to men at the time, in which its author advised what exactly to follow when choosing a wife and what to expect from her in the marriage. This treatise belonged to one of the most widely read works due to the issues it raised, and for a long time enjoyed great popularity, despite the fact that its author spoke about issues he did not yet know from his own experience. When writing *De re uxoria*, Barbaro was about 25 years old and unmarried. As Chiara Kravina notes, it is difficult to determine when exactly this treatise – Francesco Barbaro's “first and only book” (p.3) – was written. It is only known that the work was a wedding gift for Lorenzo di Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici who married Ginevra Cavalcanti in 1415. In the introduction, Barbaro writes that while considering a suitable gift for Lorenzo, he concluded that the latter would be more pleased with a gift that would come from Francis himself rather than from his estate (p. 177-179), which indicates their friendship.

The editors of the work, Claudio Griggio and Chiara Kravina, divided the publication into two parts, to which they added an appendix with illustrations, an extensive bibliography, and indexes. The first part, by Chiara Kravina, includes a substantial introduction (pp. 1-145), which discusses, a.o., the circumstances of the treatise's creation, historical background, structure of the work and the position of women in society at the time (their roles and responsibilities). Also, the scientist shows how Francesco Barbaro was influenced by the works of such ancient writers as Xenophon, Homer, Aesop and Plato (pp. 45-55). The discussion of all these issues is a huge advantage of the publication, as it introduces the reader to its author's world, so different from ours. We can better understand Francesco Barbaro's thoughts and beliefs, even if it is now difficult to agree with some of them. At the end of this section of the book, an appendix has been added, listing 129 manuscripts of *De re uxoria* that have survived to the present day and are kept in various European and American libraries. Such a significant number of surviving manuscripts confirms the great popularity of the treatise.

The second part of this publication contains the original text along with the necessary critical apparatus and an Italian translation by Claudio Griggio. Before reading the treatise, the reader has the opportunity to familiarize oneself with information on, among others, language and translations (pp. 153-175), which allow a better understanding of certain issues.

Barbaro begins his treatise by explaining what marriage is. Thus, he states that it is "an indissoluble union between a man and woman established according to law, for the purpose of begetting offspring or avoiding adultery" (p.181). After this clear explanation, he advises what should be taken into account when choosing a wife so that she will not bring shame to her new family in the future (pp.188-195). He also specifies that a wife is expected to have affection for her husband, live modestly, and take care of the home (pp. 234-241). Moreover, Barbaro writes, a.o., about conjugal love (p. 240-249), temperance (pp. 248-257), dress and care of the body (pp. 256-262), moderation in eating and drinking (pp. 263-267), marital relations (pp. 267-271), household management (pp.271-281), and raising offspring (pp. 281-291). The treatise notes the classical education of its author, who, as mentioned earlier, was well acquainted with the works of ancient authors such as Homer, Xenophon and Plutarch, to whom he repeatedly referred.

Undoubtedly, the amount of work put into the preparation of this publication should be appreciated. It is a good thing that finally, after a long wait, a new edition of *De re uxoria* has been published with such a comprehensive introduction, the original text and its translation into Italian making the treatise accessible to both researchers and history lovers. The information contained in the book allows a better understanding of the world of the time, and the text of the publication itself takes the reader into a reality so different from ours.

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