

In the middle of the second day after Clodius had been killed [January 20], the first Interrex, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, was appointed. It was not, however, the custom that the electoral assembly should be summoned by the man who was first selected as interrex. But when the factions of Scipio and Hypsaeus, because of the recently aroused hatred of Milo, began to demand (contrary to the law) that the Interrex should summon the electoral assembly, and he would not do it, besieged his town house the whole term of his interregnum--five days, according to custom. Then they broke down the doors by force; they threw down the images of his ancestors and they broke into pieces the marriage bed, in the presence of his wife Cornelia (whose morality was held up as a model); likewise, they pulled down the loom and its weave, which was being woven in the atrium in accordance with a very old tradition. After these events, the gang of Milo arrived, itself demanding an electoral meeting too. Their arrival saved Lepidus: for these factions turned their hostility on each other, and thus the siege of the house of the interrex was abandoned. (Asconius on Cicero *Pro Milone* 13)

Meanwhile, as the sun dispelled the chill of night, the door sounded to a loud knocking, and in burst Marcia, Cato's former wife, in mourning for her husband Hortensius, arriving now from his pyre. As a girl she had wed this nobler husband, Cato, but being granted the reward and price of marriage in a third child, she was given to another house, to fill it with fruitfulness, and ally two families through her maternal blood. Now, having granted Hortensius' ashes their last resting place, she had hurried there in pitiful state, her hair unkempt and ragged, her breasts bruised by endless blows, covered with ash from the pyre. In that state alone she found Cato's favour. And spoke to him sadly: 'I have obeyed you command, Cato, while hot blood flowed in my veins and I was fertile: Twice wed, I have borne my husbands' children. I return to you, weary, worn from child-bearing, unwilling now to be given to some other man. Let me renew the faithful vows of our marriage; grant me the name of wife; let them write above my tomb: Cato's Marcia; let them not think in after days that you drove me out, handing me to a second husband. I am not here to share in happiness, or prosperous times, I am come to bear my part of anxiety and trouble. Let me follow the army. Why should I remain behind in peace and safety, more distant from civil conflict than Cornelia is, Pompey's wife?' These words moved her husband, and though this day when fate called men to battle ill-suited marriage they resolved to tie the knot and perform the rites simply and without vain display, the gods alone bearing witness to the ceremony. [...]

(Lucan *Civil War* 2.326-354)

"Claudia Severa to her Lepidina greetings. On 11 September, sister, for the day of the celebration of my birthday, I give you a warm invitation to make sure that you come to us, to make the day more enjoyable for me by your arrival, if you are present (?). Give my greetings to your Cerialis. My Aelius and my little son send him (?) their greetings. (2nd hand) I shall expect you, sister. Farewell, sister, my dearest soul, as I hope to prosper, and hail. (Back, 1st hand) To Sulpicia Lepidina, wife of Cerialis, from Severa." (*Vindolanda tablet 291*)

... greetings. Just as I had spoken with you, sister, and promised that I would ask Brocchus and would come to you, I asked him and he gave me the following reply, that it was always readily (?) permitted to me, together with to come to you in whatever way I can. For there are certain essential things which you will receive my letters by which you will know what I am going to do I was ... and will remain at Briga. Greet your Cerialis from me. (Back, 2nd hand) Farewell my sister, my dearest and most longed-for soul. (1st hand) To Sulpicia Lepidina, wife of Cerialis, from Severa, wife of Brocchus (?)." (*Vindolanda tablet 292*)

Thus must a soul be educated which is to be a temple of God. It must learn to hear nothing and to say nothing but what belongs to the fear of God. It must have no understanding of unclean words, and no knowledge of the world's songs. Its tongue must be steeped while still tender in the sweetness of the psalms. Boys with their wanton thoughts must be kept from Paula: even her maids and female attendants must be separated from worldly associates. For if they have learned some mischief they may teach more. Get for her a set of letters made of boxwood or of ivory and called each by its proper name. Let her play with these, so that even her play may teach her something. And not only make her grasp the right order of the letters and see that she forms their names into a rhyme, but constantly disarrange their order and put the last letters in the middle and the middle ones at the beginning that she may know them all by sight as well as by sound. Moreover, so soon as she begins to use the stylus upon the wax, and her hand is still faltering, either guide her soft fingers by laying your hand upon hers, or else have simple copies cut upon a tablet; so that her efforts confined within these limits may keep to the lines traced out for her and not stray outside of these. Offer prizes for good spelling and draw her onwards with little gifts such as children of her age delight in. And let her have companions in her lessons to excite emulation in her, that she may be stimulated when she sees them praised. You must not scold her if she is slow to learn but must employ praise to excite her mind, so that she may be glad when she excels others and sorry when she is excelled by them. Above all you must take care not to make her lessons distasteful to her lest a dislike for them conceived in childhood may continue into her maturer years. The very words which she tries bit by bit to put together and to pronounce ought not to be chance ones, but names specially fixed upon and heaped together for the purpose, those for example of the prophets or the apostles or the list of patriarchs from Adam downwards as it is given by Matthew and Luke. In this way while her tongue will be well-trained, her memory will be likewise developed. Again, you must choose for her a master of approved years, life, and learning. A man of culture will not, I think, blush to do for a kinswoman or a highborn virgin what Aristotle did for Philip's son when, descending to the level of an usher, he consented to teach him his letters. **(Jerome *Letters* 107 to Laeta, the noblewoman, on her daughter Paula)**

When the appointed day came for the marriage feast and for Cleisthenes' declaration of whom he had chosen out of them all, Cleisthenes sacrificed a hundred oxen and gave a feast to the suitors and to the whole of Sicyon. After dinner the suitors vied with each other in music and in anecdotes for all to hear. As they sat late drinking, Hippocleides, now far outdoing the rest, ordered the flute-player to play him a dance-tune; the flute-player obeyed and he began to dance. I suppose he pleased himself with his dancing, but Cleisthenes saw the whole business with much disfavor. Hippocleides then stopped for a while and ordered a table to be brought in; when the table arrived, he danced Laconian figures on it first, and then Attic; last of all he rested his head on the table and made gestures with his legs in the air. Now Cleisthenes at the first and the second bout of dancing could no more bear to think of Hippocleides as his son-in-law, because of his dancing and his shamelessness, but he had held himself in check, not wanting to explode at Hippocleides; but when he saw him making gestures with his legs, he could no longer keep silence and said, "son of Tisandrus, you have danced away your marriage." Hippocleides said in answer, "It does not matter to Hippocleides!" Since then this is proverbial. **(Herodotus, *Histories* 6.129)**

No action taken by women for the common good is more famous than the conflict against Cleomenes by the Argive women, which they fought at the instigation of the poetess Telesilla. They say that she was the daughter of a distinguished family but, because she was sickly in body, inquired about her health at Delphi; the oracle said to cultivate the Muses. In obedience to the god she applied herself to song and harmony and was quickly cured of her suffering and admired by the women for her poetry.

But when Cleomenes king of Sparta had killed many Argives (but not, as some have imagined, 7777) and marched against the city, an impulsive courage, divinely inspired, impelled the younger women to defend their country against the enemy. With Telesilla as general, they took up arms and made their defense by manning the walls around the city, and the enemy was amazed. They drove Cleomenes off after inflicting many losses. They also repulsed the other Spartan king, Demaratus, who (according to Socrates) managed to get inside and seize the Pamphylacium. After the city was saved, they buried the women who had fallen in battle by the Argive road, and as a memorial to the achievements of the women who were spared they dedicated a temple to Ares Enyalios ... Up to the present day they celebrate the Festival of Impudence (Hybristika) on the anniversary [of the battle], putting the women into men's tunics and cloaks and the men in women's dresses and head-coverings.

To restore the balance of the sexes in the city, they did not (despite Herodotus) marry the women to slaves, but to the best men in the surrounding towns, whom they made citizens of Argos. The women appeared not to show respect for their husbands and despise them when they slept with them as if they were inferior, so they made a law that says that women who have beards may spend the night with their husbands. **(Plutarch, *Moralia* 245)**



The Warren Cup, British Museum (BM1999,0426).

It is sufficient to say this much concerning the Nile. But concerning Egypt, I am going to speak at length, because it has the most wonders, and everywhere presents works beyond description; therefore, I shall say the more concerning Egypt. [2]

Just as the Egyptians have a climate peculiar to themselves, and their river is different in its nature from all other rivers, so, too, have they instituted customs and laws contrary for the most part to those of the rest of mankind. Among them, the women buy and sell, the men stay at home and weave; and whereas in weaving all others push the weft upwards, the Egyptians push it downwards. [3] Men carry burdens on their heads, women on their shoulders. Women pass water standing, men sitting. They ease their bowels indoors, and eat out of doors in the streets, explaining that things unseemly but necessary should be done alone in private, things not unseemly should be done openly. [4] No woman is dedicated to the service of any god or goddess; men are dedicated to all deities male or female. Sons are not compelled against their will to support their parents, but daughters must do so though they be unwilling. **(Herodotus *Histories* 2.135)**

If you are excellent, found your household,

love your wife within reckoning.

Fill her belly, clothe her back,

ointment is the remedy for her body.

Gladden her heart as long as you live.

It is a field of benefit for its lord.

Do not impose her in affairs.

Distance her from power, restrain her.

Her eye is her storm when it sees.

This is what keeps her in your house.

Your quelling her, is water.

The womb puts her in her arms.

In her turmoil a canal is made for her. (***Teaching of Ptahhotep 24***)



Articulated doll, Palazzo Massimo Inv. 168191.

The case: A poor man invites a rich man for dinner. A daughter of the poor man serves at table. Asked by the rich man who she is, he answers that she is a serving girl. When leaving the dinner, the rich man rapes the girl. Having been brought before the magistrate, the girl requests marriage in accordance with the laws concerning rape. The rich man accuses the poor man of defrauding him [by not mentioning that she was freeborn].

From the defence: You have hordes of servants, you have silver and gold. With my assets, I could not afford a serving staff. Nor is this unseemly among the poor, for even if you had come at another time of the day, then, too, she would have appeared to you as a slave girl: you would have seen her working her wool. My daughter therefore served at table, as is common in my house. [...] Remove, therefore, the injury that you have done me, it is not fraudulent to answer fearfully when asked, and as we had not entertained you before, I was ashamed to appear not to have a slave girl. This evil is attached to socialising. I admit that I erred; I should have told the truth. **(Pseudo-Quintilian *Minor Declamations* 301)**