

THE AMAZON QUEEN: QUINTUS OF SMYRNA, BOOK 1

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T. R. GLOVER GIVES QUINTUS A CHAPTER in his *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*. It begins with a sort of perverse priamel:

Not the least remarkable figure in the history of Greek literature is Quintus of Smyrna. Not that he is in any great sense of the word a poet; not that he has any special gifts of insight and interpretation, of narrative or style; but that such a work as his should be produced at such a time must ever remain a marvel.¹

It ends: "Our study has been long and tiresome, and what is the conclusion?" (100). Glover concludes that "Quintus tells us of the weariness and exhaustion of his age which could admire but not create." Homer he isn't, but there is more of interest in Quintus than Glover recognized. I shall first show that Quintus has organized his material in Book 1 with some care.

I STRUCTURE

The first book of Quintus' continuation of the *Iliad* is dominated by the two long battle narratives separated by an interlude. The first narrates the *aristeia* of Penthesileia, the second her defeat and death at the hands of Achilles. This reversal informs the book as a whole.

Fig. 1. The Structure of Book 1:

- A 1–17 Trojan sorrow at the death of Hector
- B 18–137 Arrival and reception of Penthesileia (Trojans marvel)
- C 138–395 Battle: Penthesileia's *aristeia* (4 speeches)
- D 396–493 War-lust seizes the Trojan women/they are dissuaded from joining battle
- c 494–653 Battle: Penthesileia's defeat and death (4 speeches)
- b 654–781 (Greeks marvel) Achilles falls in love with Penthesileia; Thersites reviles Achilles
- a 782–830 Funerals

The parallel sections of the book are related thematically, formally, and by verbal repetitions. The "A" sections are thematically related by the reference to funerals, the "B" sections by the descriptions first of Penthesileia's

¹T. R. Glover, *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge 1901) 77.

beauty and then of its effect on Achilles, the “C” sections by contrast: at first Penthesileia is victorious, but then she is defeated. Formally, both “C” sections contain four speeches which are related by verbal repetition. The paired speeches are of approximately equal length.

Fig. 2. Parallel speeches in Sections C and c:

1. 186–197 (12) Priam prays to Zeus for help.
1. 497–507 (11) Ajax urges Achilles to battle.
2. 212–219 (8) A Greek wonders who has roused the Trojans.
2. 553–562 (10) Penthesileia threatens Achilles and Ajax.
3. 326–334 (9) Penthesileia threatens the Greeks, asks where Achilles and Ajax are.
3. 575–591 (17) Achilles insults Penthesileia.
4. 358–372 (15) A Trojan thinks Penthesileia must be a goddess.
4. 644–653 (10) Achilles vaunts over Penthesileia.

Fig. 3. Verbal repetitions between speeches in Section C and c (asterisks mark those which do not occur in parallel sequence):

1. 186–197 (12)		1. 497–507 (11)	
ὕπὸ χερσίν	187	ὕφ' . . . χερσίν	506 f.*
ἔοικεν	190	ἔοικε	502
σεῖο θεοῦ γένος ἔσσι γεινέθλης	191	Διὸς μεγάλοιο γεγῶτας	
		. . . ἱερὸν γένος	502 f.
Δαρδάνου	196	Λαομέδοντος	504
2. 212–219 (8)		2. 553–562 (10)	
νῦν	214	νῦν	553
φαίης κεν θεὸν ἔμμεν	216	οὔ τ' ἄλκιμοι εὐχετάσθε / ἔμμεναι	555 f.
Ἄλλ' ἄγε, θάρσος . . .		Ἄλλα μοι ἄσπον ἵκεσθε . . . /	
ἐνὶ στέρνοισι	217	. . . κάρτος ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν	558 f.
οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡμείς / νόσφι θεῶν	218 f.	οὐδέ με θνητὸς / γείνατ' ἀνὴρ	560 f.
3. 326–334 (9)		4. 644–653 (10)	
Πριάμοιο	326	Πριάμοιο	647*
οἰωνοὶς δέ βόσις καὶ		κεῖσὸ νυν ἐν κούρησι κυνῶν βόσις	
θηρσι θανόντες / κείσεσθ'	329 f.	ἡδ' οἰωνῶν	644
τοὺς γὰρ φάτις ἔμμεν ἀρίστους	332	ἐπεὶ μέγα φέρτατοί εἰμεν / ἥρῳων	649
4. 358–372 (15)		3. 575–591 (17)	
ᾧ φίλοι, ὥς	358	ᾧ γῦναι, ὥς	575
εἰλήλουθε	358	ἤλυθε	576
εὐχεται εἶναι ἀφ' αἵματος		Ἐκ γὰρ δὴ Κρονίωνος ἐριγδούποιο	
ἀθανάτοιο	362	γενέθλης / εὐχόμεθ' ἐκγεγάμεν	578 f.
σήμερον . . . φόνον στονόειντα	367	σήμερον, ὀλεθρον, στονόεσσαν	584, 583, 581
Ἄρεϊ	370	Ἄρης	585
ἐπεὶ θεὸς ἄμμιν ἀρήγει	372	σευ . . . μάκαρες φρένας ἐξείλοντο	590

The overall structure of the book and of Interlude D is chiasitic (abcba), but the verbal repetitions in the related sections occur, with few exceptions, in parallel linear sequences (abc, abc). The symmetrical structure becomes most apparent in the central Interlude (D.)

Fig. 4 Structure of Interlude (D):

- | | | |
|----|--------------|---|
| 1 | 396–402 (7) | heifer <i>simile</i> (destruction) |
| 2 | 403–408 (6) | The Trojan women long for war |
| 3 | 409–435 (27) | Tisiphone urges the women to fight (speech) |
| | (a) | 436–439 (4) war-lust seizes the women |
| 4 | 436–450 | (b) 440–446 (7) bee <i>simile</i> |
| | (c) | 447–450 (4) the women urge one another to battle |
| 3' | 451–474 (24) | Theano dissuades the women from fighting (speech) |
| 2' | 475–487 (13) | The Greek warriors are put to flight |
| 1' | 488–493 (6) | storm <i>simile</i> (destruction) |

Fig. 5. Verbal repetitions in the central Interlude (see also Fig. 6.):

1	396–402 (7)		1'	488–493 (6)	
	ὥς δ' ὀπόθ'	396		ὥς δ' ὅτ'	488
	σινομένη φυτὰ πάντα . . . τηλεθώοντα	399		χαμάδις βάλε δένδρεα μακρὰ / τηλεθώοντα	489 f.
	ὥς . . . Ἀχαιῶν	401		ὥς Δαναῶν	492
2	403–408 (6)		2'	475–487 (13)	
	ἀπάνευθεν ἀρήϊα ἔργα	403		ὑσμίνην δ' ἀπάνευθεν	476
	πολέμοιο δ' ἔρωσ λάβειν	404		ποθὲ δ' ἔχειν οὐκέτι χάρμης	480
	ὀμήλικας	407		παλαιότερῃ	475*
	στονόεσσαν . . . ἀλκὴν	408		στόνος . . . ἀλκή	485
3	409–435 (27)		3'	451–474 (24)	
	ἴσης	413		ἴσον	454
	γούνατα	416		γούνατ'	460
	τῷ μὴ τι φεβώμεθα δημοτῆτα	419		τοῦνεκα δημοτῆτος ἀποσχόμεναι	467*
	πέλει (415, 430)	421		πέλει	465
	οὐκ ἐμπαύεται ἀνδρῶν	423		οὐδ' ἀνδρῶν δεύονται	459*
	ἄλλοθεν ἄλλα	425		ἄλλος ἐπ' ἄλλα	465
	ἐλπωρῇ	430		Ἐλπωρῇ	470
	πολέμοιο	431		πτολέμοιο	469*
	ἀνιερῇ . . . ἀνάγκη	434		ἀλεγεινῇ / . . . ἀναγκαίη	473 f.
	ἄστεος	435		ἄστν	472*

(*Asterisks mark those repetitions which do not occur in sequence.)

But for this consistent arrangement, the repetitions of single words would have to be dismissed as insignificant. When the verbal repetitions are of two or more words Quintus always varies the wording—these are not formulae

in the Homeric manner. Finally, the verbal repetitions begin to show contrast rather than similarity at the center of the book.

The central Interlude begins and ends with similes which express the destructiveness of war. The third and the third-last sections consist of comparatively long speeches in which Tisiphone urges the Trojan women to fight and Theano dissuades them from fighting. The section before Tisiphone's speech describes the war-lust which prompts her speech; in the section after Theano's speech the Greeks have lost their desire to fight. The parallel sections of the Interlude are of nearly equal length to heighten the symmetry.

The Interlude repeats the structure of the book as a whole: both are divided into seven sections chiastically arranged; the third and the third-last sections of both are the longest portions of their respective structures, both are characterized by the speech mode, and both show strong contrast—between Penthesileia's *aristeia* and her defeat, and between “feminist” and traditional views of woman; both central sections have a more detailed symmetrical structure and a higher density and more precise symmetry in verbal repetitions than their side sections. At the center of the Interlude the verbal repetitions change from predominantly parallel sequence to the chiasmic arrangement commonly known as ring composition.

Fig. 6. Center section (4) of the central Interlude (the verbal repetitions [or contrasts] are in strictly chiasmic order and are here indicated by underlining):

- “Ὡς ἄρ' ἔφη, πάσῃσι δ' ἔρως στυγεροῖο μόθοιο
 ἔμπεσεν· ἔσσυμένως δὲ πρό τεύχεος ὀρμαίνεσκον
 βήμεναι ἐν τεύχεσιν, ἀρηγέμεναι μεμαυῖαι
ἄστυ καὶ λαοῖσιν· ὀρίνετο δὲ σφισι θυμός.
 440 Ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἔσω σίμβλοιο μέγ' ὕζωσι μέλισσαι
 χεῖματος οὐκέτ' εὐόντος, ὅτ' ἐς νομόν ἐντύνονται
 ἐλθέμεν οὐδ' ἄρα τῇσι φίλον πέλει ἐνδοθι μίμνειν,
 ἄλλη δ' αὖθ' ἐτέρην προκαλίζεται ἐκτός ἄγεσθαι
 ὥς ἄρα Τρωάδες ποτὶ φύλοπιν ἐγκονέουσai
 445 ἀλλήλας ὥτρυνον· ἀπόπροθι δ' εἴρια θέντο
 καὶ ταλάρους, ἀλεγεινὰ δ' ἐπ' ἔντεα χεῖρας ἱαλλον.
 Καὶ νῦ κεν ἄστυ ἐκτός ἅμα σφετέρουσιν ὄλοντο
 ἀνδράσι καὶ σθηναρήσιν Ἀμαζόσιν ἐν δαί κείνῃ,
 εἰ μὴ σφεας κατέρυξε πύκα φρονέουσα Θεανώ
 450 ἔσσυμένας πινυτοῖσι παραυδήσας' ἐπέεσσιν·

The Interlude is more than a means of demarcation, more than a structural microcosm of the book: it foreshadows the reversal from Penthesileia's *aristeia* to her defeat, in the Trojan women.² There is, of course, a natural

²In his analysis of the structure of Books 6 to 9 (*La Suite d'Homère 2* [Paris 1963] 48) Vian observes that the central one of five battle narratives “placed at the center, marks the moment

relationship between the Trojan women and Penthesileia which Quintus develops and exploits. The special character of this episode, at first charm but later pathos, arises from the fact that a beautiful woman has come to do battle, battle ultimately with the greatest of Achaian warriors. For all her beauty and prowess, Penthesileia is doubly marred from the beginning. She is an involuntary sororicide (22–25), and she desires cruel war (20, 71, 127)—not an obvious flaw in a warrior, but evidently a flaw in Quintus' view as the denouement will make clear. As well, the outcome is frequently foreshadowed in the first half of the book.³

In the Interlude love of war takes possession of Tisiphone (404), evidently as a consequence of her observing Penthesileia's feats. She urges the Trojan women to join battle, arguing that women and men are, after all, essentially similar, and that it is better to die fighting than to become a slave. In the bee-simile at the center of the Interlude (436–450) the women make ready for war. "They would have died . . . with the mighty Amazons," says Quintus (447 f.), again linking them to Penthesileia, but Theano restrains them by arguing that, unlike the Amazons, they are inexperienced in war,

when fortune changes sides." He terms it "the axis of the composition." The Interlude has a similar function in Book 1. For Vian's analysis of the composition of Book 1 see vol. 1.3–5. Apart from various "correspondences and contrasts" Vian did not explicitly notice the symmetrical structure of Book 1.

Not only symmetry and verbal echoes, but also emphasis on the center (axial symmetry) and the function of the central sections of the poems in keying a change (variously identified as fulcrum, pivot, *peripeteia*, contrast, antithesis) have been observed by an increasing number of scholars.

On the Roman side: D. Traill, "Ring Composition in Catullus 64," *CJ* 76 (1981) 232–241, "Catullus 63: Rings Around the Sun," *CP* 76 (1981) 211–214; L. A. Moritz, "Some 'Central' Thoughts on Horace's *Odes*," *CQ* ns 18 (1968) 116–131; B. Otis, *Virgil, A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1963) 215–219; V. Pöschl, *Die Hirtendichtung Virgils* (Heidelberg 1964) 67–73; K.-H. Pridik, "Vergils 'Georgica': Darstellung und Interpretation des Aufbaus," *ANRW* 31.1 (1980) 500–548, at 520; E. A. Fredricksmeyer, "Structural Perspectives in *Aeneid* VII," *CJ* 80 (1985) 228–237. R. J. Ball, "The Structure of Tibullus 1.7," *Latomus* 34 (1975) 729–744; F. Cairns, *Tibullus: A Hellenistic Poet at Rome* (Cambridge 1979) ch. 8; W. Hering, "Form und Inhalt der Höhaugusteischen Poesie," *ANRW* 30.1 (1982) 181–253, at 244;

On the Greek side: H. Schwabl, "Der homerische Hymnus auf Pan," *WS* 82 (1969) 5–14, at 13; R. A. McNeal, "Structure and Metaphor in Pindar's Fourth *Isthmian*," *QUCC* 28 (1978) 135–156; E. Scholz, "Zum Aufbau eines pindarischen Epinikion," *WS* 82 (1969) 18–27, at 23–25; H. Maehler, *Die Lieder des Bakchylides*, Erster Teil, *Die Siegeslieder 2 Kommentar* (Leiden 1982) 38–40, 82–84, 202–205, 254–258; W. Thalmann, *Dramatic Art in Aeschylus's Seven Against Thebes* (New Haven, Conn. 1978) 26–29; E. B. Holtsmark, "Ring Composition and the *Persae* of Aeschylus," *SymbOslo* 45 (1970) 5–23; W. Ludwig, *Sapheneia: Ein Beitrag zur Formkunst im Spätwerk des Euripides* (diss., Tübingen 1954) esp. 116–122 and 137; R. Schmiel, "Moschus' *Europa*," *CP* 76 (1981) 261–272, at 262–265. These lists are only samples.

³It is implicit in the reference to the funeral of Hector (1–2), in Andromache's pessimistic soliloquy (100–114), which anticipates the combat with Achilles (note especially 644–653), in the false dream that comes to Penthesileia (124–137), and in the portent of the hawk and the dove (198–200), and it is explicit at 388–393 and 96 f.

and that, even though men and women are of the same race, different persons practise different jobs.

Since the Trojan women are closely associated with Penthesileia, the abrupt change from war-lust to recognition of their inability to wage war with men signals the reversal in store for Penthesileia. The central Interlude has, in fact, something of the nature of a tragic *anagnorisis* and *peripeteia*.⁴ Penthesileia is a renowned and essentially admirable character. The recognition is not of another person but of the nature of woman, and it is displaced from Penthesileia to her Trojan doubles. The reversal is closely associated with the recognition, as Aristotle recommended (*Poetics* 11), and takes immediate effect. Prior to the Interlude Penthesileia's every spear-thrust found its target as her strength and courage grew (383–386), but thereafter her first spear breaks on Achilles' shield (548 f.) and her second spear fails to penetrate Ajax' silver greave (563–565).

Finally, Quintus has marked the reversal clearly by means of verbal contrast at the very center of the central Interlude (see Fig. 6). In lines 442–443 the same idea is repeated in different words ("don't want to stay inside," "urge one another to go out"), but in the context of the contrasting speeches of Tisiphone and Theano, ἐνδοθι μίμνειν and ἐκτὸς ἀγεσθαι neatly sum up the contrast between women's proper place and the opposite. From a formal point of view, then, the pivot on which the reversal in this episode turns can be located precisely at lines 442 and 443.

II STRUCTURALISM

The theories of Claude Lévi-Strauss on myth are by now common currency, even though, as Percy Cohen notes, "he has never fully stated [his theory] himself."⁵ The essential points are (1) that "the mind works through a process of binary discrimination" (347), and (2) that the function of myth is to "mediate oppositions or contradictions." But Cohen concludes that Lévi-Strauss's method requires only two weaker assumptions (1') "that there is unease in reconciling different ideas," and (2') "that this is expressed dramatically in terms of opposition" (349).

So far, at least, classicists will not feel estranged. G. E. R. Lloyd has argued that it is characteristic of early Greek argumentation to take opposites as mutually exclusive; and G. Kirk has pointed out that Lévi-Strauss's

⁴There is little doubt that Quintus knew and was influenced by Greek tragedy; cf. Vian 1.XXX; R. Keydell, "Quintus von Smyrna," RE 47 (1963) 1271–1296, at 1273; G. W. Paschal, *A Study of Quintus of Smyrna* (diss., Chicago 1904) 74–76.

⁵P. Cohen, "Theories of Myth," *Man* ns 4 (1969) 337–353, at 345. On the application of structuralism to classical studies see J. Peradotto, *Classical Mythology: An annotated Bibliographical Survey* (Urbana, Ill. 1973) 40–47; R. L. Gordon, ed., *Myth, Religion and Society* (Cambridge 1981), and also the items in the bibliography under the names Detienne, Lévi-Strauss, Vernant, and Vidal-Naquet; and *Arethusa* 15 (1982).

fondness for the Nature-Culture opposition is similar to the thoroughly Greek concern with *nomos* and *physis*.⁶ It is no surprise to find figures in mythology which exemplify such opposition: Cyclopes, Centaurs, and Amazons, for example, “creatures at the boundaries of difference.”⁷ And that brings us back to Quintus and to Penthesileia.

It is in the central Interlude that the opposition between male and female receives the most pointed emphasis. The youthful Tisiphone, inspired by Penthesileia’s feats, urges the Trojan women to war (409–435); the older, and more sensible, Theano dissuades them (451–474).⁸ Tisiphone emphasizes similarity and equality between the sexes (ὁμοίον [410], ὕσῃς [413], οὐ . . . ἀπόπροθέν [414], οἶον [415], ἴσοι . . . ὁμοῖα [416], ξυνὸν [417], οὐχ ἑτέρῃ [418]). In response Theano emphasizes differences based on (lack of) knowledge and personal preference (νῆιδες [453], ἐπιστάμενοισι [455], εὐαδεν [457], στρωφῶντ’ [465], φρεσὶν . . . ἐπιστάμενος [466]).

The two arguments meet specifically at three points. (1) Tisiphone says, “We have the same sort of strength/courage (μένος) as they” (415): Theano replies, “you do not have strength (σθένος) equal to that of the Danaans” (454 f.) The women seem to choose the terms most congenial to their arguments, Tisiphone the more abstract μένος, Theano the more physical σθένος. (2) Tisiphone says that Penthesileia “cares nothing for (ἐμπάζεται) men (423):” Theano replies that Amazons “don’t need (δεύονται) men (459).” The context is clearly military, but Theano’s correction (again) of Tisiphone’s

⁶G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy* (Cambridge 1966); G. S. Kirk, *The Nature of Greek Myths* (Baltimore 1974) 85.

⁷Page DuBois, *Centaurs and Amazons: Women in the Pre-History of the Great Chain of Being* (Ann Arbor, Mich. 1982) 27.

⁸Theano is the wife of Antenor who, in *Iliad* 7.348–353, urges the Trojans to give Helen and her possessions back. Tisiphone does not appear in Homer, but she recalls the fury Allecto who rouses the peaceful Latin women in *Aeneid* 7, and the fury who stirs up war in Statius’ *Thebaid* 7.467 is also called Tisiphone. But before adducing this as evidence that Quintus knew and used Latin poetry, one must consider that the text (and therefore the occurrence of the name, Tisiphone) is in dispute. In Koehly’s text of 1850, used by Way in his Loeb edition, she is indeed Tisiphone:

. . . πολέμοιο δ’ ἔρωσ λάβεν ἱπποδάμοιο
405 Ἀντιμάχοιο θύγατρα Μενεπολέμοιο δ’ ἀκούειν
Τισιφόνην·

but in Vian’s 1963 edition she becomes Hippodameia:

. . . πολέμοιο δ’ ἔρωσ λάβεν Ἴπποδάμειαν
405 Ἀντιμάχοιο θύγατρα, μενεπολέμοιο δ’ ἀκούειν
Τισιφόνου.

I have arbitrarily called her “Tisiphone;” my reading of the book is not affected by the name. On the hotly disputed question of Quintus’ possible use of Latin poetry see F. Vian, *Recherches sur les Posthomérica de Quintus de Smyrne* (Paris 1959) 95–101 with extensive bibliography.

statement has more general application to Amazon society. (3) Tisiphone claims that they are losing their men by death (426 f.): Theano claims that their men are getting stronger and the Greeks are dying (470 ff.)

Moreover, while Tisiphone exhorts (hortatory subjunctive 413, 419) and expresses opinions, Theano uses rational argument. After pointing out that the Trojan women are deficient in the knowledge and experience of war, and that the Amazons delight in horsemanship and battle from birth, she continues: "for this reason they always show a warlike spirit . . . *because* effort has strengthened their courage and made their knees fearless (458 ff.)" Penthesileia is reputed to be Ares' daughter, "*therefore* it is not reasonable for woman to compete with her" (462). That job is best of which one has knowledge, "*therefore* we must refrain from battle and work at weaving *within our homes*" (467 f.).

Finally, Tisiphone bases her argument on *physis*, Theano on *nomos*. "Our eyes and legs are the same . . . Light and the flowing air are common to all. Our food is not different" (416 ff., Combellack's tr.). Eyes, knees (as seat of strength), light, and air are self-evidently the gifts of nature. Food is, of course, Lévi-Strauss's favorite means of differentiating between nature and culture.⁹ The word used by Tisiphone, *φορβή*, refers to food as a product of nature, not of the kitchen. In Homer it is used only of the food of horses and asses (LSJ). Theano, as already stated, emphasizes training and knowledge, i.e., *nomos*.

The Amazon myth seems to have been prompted by "tensions over women and marriage" or by "man's fear of woman's sexuality."¹⁰ It can be read as an illustration of the "appalling consequence of woman usurping . . . man's role," which emphasizes that (in the Greek view) the "female warrior is a contradiction in terms."¹¹

As Tyrrell points out, Amazon customs reverse the Athenian norm primarily in the areas he terms inside/outside, weaponry (warfare), and the control of marriage and reproductivity.¹² Warfare is an important theme in most versions of the Amazon myth (Heracles, Theseus, Herodotus' story) and it is central here. Inside/outside is one of the means by which the dichotomy between male and female is expressed, by Xenophon, for example.¹³ The Amazons reverse the polarity and inhabit the outdoors in

⁹Information on the role of food and cooking in Lévi-Strauss's analysis of myth is conveniently available in G. S. Kirk, *Myth, Its Meaning and Function* (Berkeley 1970) ch. 2 and especially 46 and 61–68.

¹⁰W. Blake Tyrrell, *Amazons, A Study in Athenian Mythmaking* (Baltimore 1984) 113; P. Walcot, "Greek Attitudes Towards Women: The Mythological Evidence," *G&R* 31 (1984) 46.

¹¹Walcot 42; Tyrrell 128.

¹²Tyrrell 45–54.

¹³See also J.-P. Vernant, "Hestia-Hermes: The Religious Expression of Space and Movement in Ancient Greece," in J.-P. Vernant, *Myth and Thought among the Greeks* (London 1983) esp. 130–133.

myth generally. Tisiphone remarks that Penthesileia is far from her own people and city (421 f.). The women are ready to go outside the walls (437), laying aside the wool (445 f.) which Xenophon associated with the indoors (*Oec.* 7.19–22) and which is contrasted with man's work (warfare) by Theano (467–469). The contrast appears again at the very center of the book (442–443), and when Achilles mocks the dead Penthesileia for leaving women's work (652).

Control of marriage and reproductivity does not figure in Quintus' presentation directly, but Penthesileia's devotion to war is an implicit rejection of the normal role of women in the Greek world. Perhaps this aspect of the myth can help to explain a curious incident. When Achilles sees the beautiful face of the dead Amazon, he falls in love with her and wishes he might have carried her home to Phthia as his bride (669–674).¹⁴ Later Thersites reviles Achilles for being woman-crazy. As Walcot observes;

But to defeat an Amazon by itself was insufficient to re-establish the supremacy of the male, for such a creature must also be sexually humiliated, which is why the ninth labour of Heracles was to secure the girdle of queen Hippolyte, the loss of this garment symbolizing her sexual submission, and why Theseus carried off an Amazon variously named as Antiope and Hippolyte—rape is yet another violent response on the part of the sexually insecure. Such an idea is probably in the background of the story recorded in the lost epic *Aethiopis* that Achilles killed Thersites when abused by that scoundrel because of his reputed love for Penthesileia.¹⁵

In Quintus' version it is, admittedly, Achilles whose status as a warrior is in question. But for Penthesileia to be defeated *and* to be seen as a desirable marriage partner is contrary to the most basic characteristics of Amazons.¹⁶ Whether Quintus' source showed Penthesileia being sexually humiliated by Achilles or not, her reversion to a more traditional female role is significant. For a time Penthesileia seemed about to embody the possibility of mediation between the sexes, seemed about to become a role model for liberated women. But the wiser (πύκα φρονέουσα 449) and older (475) Theano intervened, and, by her reversion to sex object (or suitable mate), Penthesileia shows that mediation is not possible. One might doubt that Quintus had this specific intention. The polarity might be inherent in the myth or the literary

¹⁴Quintus is apparently following Arctinus' *Aethiopis*. Proclus summarizes as follows (Homer, OCT 105): "The Amazon Penthesileia is present fighting on the Trojan side, the daughter of Ares and a Thracian by race. Achilles kills her while she is showing her prowess; the Trojans bury her. Achilles does away with Thersites when he reviles him and reproaches him for his alleged passion for Penthesileia (ὄνειδισθεὶς τὸν ἐπὶ τῇ Πενθεσιλείᾳ λεγόμενον ἔρωτα). Then the Achaeans quarrel over the murder of Thersites." For the motif of Achilles' feeling for the dead Penthesileia see F. Schwenn, "Penthesileia," *RE Suppl.* 7, 868–875.

¹⁵Walcot [above, n. 10] 42.

¹⁶According to Hellanicus, (*FGrHist* 1 F 149) Amazons earned the right to marry by displaying valour in battle (Schwenn [above, n. 14] 870).

sources. But the reversal from the first half of the episode to the second, a reversal which turns on the central Interlude with its emphatic polarities and which is so emphasized by the symmetrical structure of the book, cannot be dismissed as happy accident or fathered on Arctinus unless one is prepared to argue that Quintus' Book 1 closely preserves the organization of a substantial episode from Artinus' epic. Why labor so hard to deprive Quintus of a little credit?¹⁷

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¹⁷I am grateful to several teams of *Phoenix* referees for their comments and helpful suggestions.