

## THE AMAZONS: DEVELOPMENT AND FUNCTIONS<sup>1)</sup>

### *The Un-society of Amazons*

Amazons are a familiar sight in the Greek mythological landscape. Physiologically, they are female, but they have encroached on the social role of men: 'They were considered men because of their spirit (εὐψυχία) rather than women because of their physiology (φύσις)' (Lysias 2.4). According to the popular story – rarely reflected in art – they 'pinched out' or cut off the right breast so as not to impede their javelin-throwing. But as Tzetzes observed, that would have killed them: the more rational – or rationalised – alternative, going back to Hippokrates and his sources, is that they cauterised it before it grew, with a special iron tool<sup>2)</sup>. This then explains their name: the Breastless – unless it is because they do not eat barley-bread (μάζα), but tortoises, lizards and snakes<sup>3)</sup>, in which case they have wasted their time tampering with their breasts. In fact these are all popular etymologies and their name, of unknown origin, has determined their anatomy. Ἀμαζόνες invoke a story just as Ἀφροδίτη demands to be 'born from foam' (Hes. Theog. 195–8).

Defying the normal roles assigned to females by Greeks, Amazons go so far as to exclude males from their society. They are 'man-hating' (στρυγόνορες 'Aesch.' Prom. 724) and 'man-less' (ἄνανδρου Aesch. Suppl. 287). Yet without men at all, they are an un-society, an impossible society, which it is the job of ethno-

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1) Earlier versions of this paper ("Uses of a Dead Amazon") were given to the Annual General Meeting of the Classical Association in Oxford (April 1992) and to the Institut für Alte Geschichte at the University of Munich (June 1993). I am grateful for the advice of those present, particularly of H. Foley.

2) Hellanikos 4 F 107 (= 323a F 16b; incl. Tzetzes); Hippokrates, Airs 17; Diodoros 2.45.3; Apollodoros 2.5.8; Strabo 11.5.1.

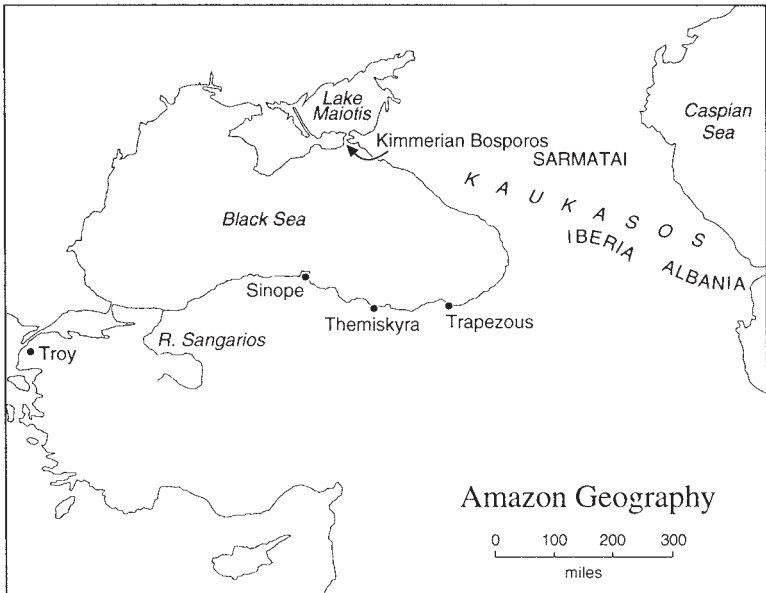
3) Σ Iliad 3.189, Etym. Magnum s.v. Ἀμαζόνες 75.45, Steph. Byz. 81.17. The first α in μάζα was in fact long in Athenian Greek (short in Ἀμαζόνες) but short in the koine, cf. Herodian περὶ διχρόνων, in: J. A. Cramer, Anecdota Graeca e codd. mss. bibl. Oxoniensium III (Oxford 1836) 293.9–11 (μάζα is surely the exception, but Ἀμαζών and ἀλαζών are not, pace Klügmann [see note 9, below] 271). They eat lizards in order to explain their link with the Σαυρομάται = (supposedly) Σαυροβάται ('lizard-treaders'); snakes and tortoises are mere decoration.

graphers to convert into viable (but unattested)<sup>4</sup>) matriarchies. From the perspective of actual societies, Amazons are only part of a society masquerading as a whole. We might ask, with Strabo (11.5.3), 'who could believe that an army, city or nation of women could ever be set up without men?'

How, then, did Greek mythology come to include this paradoxical 'nation'? By what steps were its characteristics developed? Are there ritual connections which might cast some light on this mythic construct?

### *Epic Amazons*

Amazons are not part of the local, genealogical traditions: how could they be? They are sexually unavailable to conventional city states (whatever their arrangements for self-perpetuation in



4) K. Dowden, *The Uses of Greek Mythology* (London 1992) 152–4; W. B. Tyrrell, *Amazons: A study in Athenian mythmaking* (Baltimore & London 1984) ch. 2.

historicising mythology). Hippolytos is more than a rare exception: he is paradoxical precisely because he is ‘son of the Amazon’ – we are perhaps insufficiently shocked by this description. Genealogically, Amazons should be a ‘dead end’. They cannot and do not figure in the Hesiodic *Catalogue* (nor in any other work of Hesiod – nor, for that matter, in the Homeric Hymns).

Amazons appear, rather, to belong to the tradition of heroic battle-epic, in which they are already firmly entrenched by the time of Homer’s *Iliad*. It was Bellerophon’s third task to kill them (a story set in Lycia, *Iliad* 6.186, Apollodoros 2.3.2). The largest army Priam can remember is the one that defeated the Amazons at the River Sangarios (*Iliad* 3.189). This river rises near Pessinus – scene of another sexual disturbance – and flows into the Black Sea around 500 km west of ‘Themiskyra’ (their supposed capital, see below). And on the steep hillock Batieia outside Troy, is sited the tomb (σῆμα) of Myrhine ‘much-bounding’ (πολύσκαρθμος *Iliad* 2.814) – consistently represented by later tradition as an Amazon (specifically, Strabo 12.8.6, 13.3.6). Aptly, this is where Hektor marshals his Trojans, where they assume the character of an army.

Amongst the Cyclic Epics, Arktinos’ *Aithiopsis* picks up where the *Iliad* leaves off, with the arrival of the Amazon<sup>5</sup>:

Ὀς οἱ γ’ ἀμφίεπον τάφον Ἑκτορος ἦλθε δ’ Ἀμαζῶν

Ἄσθης θυγάτηρ μεγάλητορος ἀνδροφόνουιο.

*So they managed the funeral of Hektor; but there came an  
Amazon,*

*Daughter of Ares the huge-spirited man-slayer.*

This Amazon is Penthesileia, a female counterpart for Achilles as even her name shows: her ‘grief’ (πένθος) reflects Achilles’ woe (ἄχος) and is, alike, inflicted upon an army (λαός). Thus the conflict between Greeks and Trojans now takes on the character of a different battle, that between Greeks and Amazons. Penthesileia is the ‘daughter of Ares and a Thracian by race’, mythemes which visibly underline the Amazon’s marginality and wild credentials in the world of the male warrior. But in the midst of her ἀρσιτεία Achilles kills her – and the Trojans bury her<sup>6</sup>), thereby, we note, creating another tomb for the landscape.

5) ‘Some write’ these lines, ΣΤ *Iliad* 24.804, cf. Allen, *Homeri Opera* V p. 126. Not first lines of the *Aithiopsis* according to M. Davies, *The Epic Cycle* (Bristol 1989) 61.

6) Proclus, *Chrestom. ap. Allen, Homeri Opera* V p. 105. Elaborated ver-

Herakles, too, whose deeds were evidently exploited in the epic tradition, must confront the Amazons. His ninth Labour is to fetch the belt of the Amazon queen, Hippolyte – a belt of Ares, symbolising her supremacy over the others<sup>7</sup>). A possible depiction of this scene is found on a Corinthian alabastron dating from the end of the 7th century, but for a depiction of the belt the earliest seems to be on a Laconian cup of around 570<sup>8</sup>). Generally in writers, it seems to be a man's belt (ζωστήρ) that is at issue, rather than a woman's girdle (ζώνη). Does this matter? Does it debar us from claiming that the belt is more than a trophy registering the killing of Hippolyte by Herakles, that its removal returns the Amazon to the world of women, completing her sexual submission, and indeed de-Amazonising her by rape?<sup>9</sup>) Perhaps the view that Leto undid her ζωστήρ for childbirth (Pausanias 1.31.1) should encourage us not to be too pedantic about any differences between ζωστήρ and ζώνη.

This story plays at the Amazon's city, 'Themiskyra', situated on a river Thermodon. This is not the Thermodon in Boiotia between Tanagra and Glisas, but one in a distant part of Pontic Asia Minor. The name of the epic Themiskyra is claimed by, in the words of D. R. Wilson, "a minor city in Amisene territory", around 60 km east of Amisos itself<sup>10</sup>). It is on the southern shore of the Black Sea, around half-way between Sinope and Trapezous in an important area for Milesian colonisation. Sinope was the earliest Black Sea colony of Miletos, founded from Miletos around 630. Trapezous was founded in turn from Sinope perhaps not long afterwards and the historical Themiskyra is clearly of around this time. Themiskyra and Sinope were sacked by Lucullus in 71/70 BC. It is hard not to associate this particular siting of the Amazon metropolis with Milesian interest in what was then (in the seventh

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sion at Apollodoros, *Epitome* 5.1 (she has accidentally killed Hippolyte and been purified by Priam, cf. Pausanias 1.2.1 on Antiope).

7) E.g., Apollodoros 2.5.9, Diodoros 4.16.

8) Devambez, 'Amazones', LIMC 1, 1981, 586–653, *ills.* Amazones 1 and 2. Later at Olympia, as described, e.g., by Pausanias 5.10.9.

9) ζωστήρ and ζώνη: Klügmann, 'Amazone', *Ausf. Lex. Gr. Myth.* I (1890) 271, who cites for ζώνη Dio Chrys. 8.136, Nonnos Dionys. 25.250, Claudian 11.37. Rape: e.g. Tyrrell (see note 4, above) 91; death: Apollodoros 2.5.9.

10) D. R. Wilson, 'Themiskyra', in: R. Stillwell (ed.), *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* (Princeton, NJ 1976) 907; other information from E. Akurgal, 'Sinope' and D. R. Wilson, 'Trapezous' *ibid.*

century) a remote area<sup>11</sup>). It is consistent with Priam's Amazons<sup>12</sup>) and, though it is inconsistent with Arktinos' (more ideological) Thracian origin for Penthesileia, the introduction of an Amazon at all is perhaps revealing in this Milesian poet. The introduction of the Amazon, after all, has played remarkably little part in neoanalytist exploration of the *Aithiopsis* and may therefore be more innovative, and less representative of tradition, than the story of Memnon which he also tells. It is clearly possible that the siting of Herakles' Amazonomachy at Themiskyra is the work of Peisandros of Rhodes, whose definitive Herakles-epic of around 600 BC may have established the cycle of twelve Labours<sup>13</sup>). The walls of epic Themiskyra are already visible on an amphora of 575–550 BC<sup>14</sup>).

The original ownership of the story of Herakles and the Amazon's belt is hard to discern. Euripides speaks of the Amazon's belt as still being at Mycenae (HF 418), but a length of material taken from Amazons is on show at Delphi (Ion 1144–5). The existence of a real river Thermodon in Boiotia (an area, as we shall see, not unaffected by Amazon tombs) might point us there instead (or as well). But the fact is that this myth has become "an expedition of many heroes", as Tyrrell puts it<sup>15</sup>), reflecting how it has become internationalised and how it has lost its local roots<sup>16</sup>). To put a hero in charge of an army has been seen as a sign of a late development of myth, because "Ein echter Heros ist im Grunde Einzelgänger" (Radermacher), but on the other hand group rituals and armies were not in themselves innovations<sup>17</sup>).

It is this expedition of Herakles which Theseus joins in, to bask in his glory and even outdo him, according to the 'ancient' epic poet Hegias, or Hagias, of Troizen<sup>18</sup>). Themiskyra, which

11) "Die Coloniegründungen der Milesier und Megarer am Pontos liefern uns einen Zeitpunkt für die Entstehung der Sage von den Amazonenkämpfen des Herakles am Thermodon", Toepffer 'Amazones, I Mythologisch', RE 1 (1894) 1759.

12) Toepffer, RE 1 (1894) 1754.

13) W. Burkert, *Greek Religion Archaic and Classical* (Oxford 1985) 209 n. 11; G. L. Huxley, *Greek Epic Poetry from Eumelos to Panyassis* (London 1969) 101.

14) LIMC 1.1 'Amazones' no. 12, p. 640.

15) Tyrrell (see note 4, above) 2.

16) For this way of viewing the development of myth, cf. my 'Death and the Maiden' (London 1992) 5.

17) L. Radermacher, *Mythos und Sage bei den Griechen* (Brünn-München-Wien 1938) 284.

18) Hegias ap. Pausanias 1.2.1; Lykophron 1322–40; Diodoros 4.16 fin.

Herakles could not take by force, is surrendered to Theseus by love-smitten Antiope (message: Theseus is so magnetic he can even attract an Amazon<sup>19</sup>). The ascription to Hegias should perhaps be taken seriously, as the traditions of his native town would explain why Theseus has been made to intrude in a story of Herakles<sup>20</sup>). However, the only reason for Theseus to go at all is in order to motivate an invasion of Amazons. This is where the Theseus story has quite different implications from the Herakles story. A tale of an Amazon invasion of Attica was evidently told in the later 6th century *Theseid* that sparked off the popularity of Theseus in Athenian art<sup>21</sup>). Like the Trojan War, this expedition is initiated by the snatching of a woman, but it proceeds in inverse motion. The Trojan War requires brothers Agamemnon and Menelaos to recover Helen from Paris; and another story requires the twin Dioskuroi to recover Helen from Theseus. But this story requires the Amazons themselves to recover Antiope from the friends Theseus and Peirithoos<sup>22</sup>). In any event, the Amazons ‘came’ and were killed. As a result there is a *μνήμα*, a marked tomb, of Antiope – and elsewhere there is a *μνήμα* of Molpadia, another Amazon, who, in a strange twist to the story, had killed Antiope<sup>23</sup>).

The impression is given that this glorious battle, celebrated in Athenian art<sup>24</sup>), resulted in a massacre of the Amazons, an obliteration, a deletion. The few that get away are needed in order to account for the *μνήμα* of Hippolyte at Megara. She is Antiope’s sister – and ruler of the Amazons after her death (Pausanias 1.41.7). But hadn’t Hippolyte been Queen of the Amazons all along? I think she probably was, in a Megarian story. Local versions look as though they were choosing from a short list of names: you can call the Queen of the Amazons ‘Hippolyte’, or

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Some mythographers made Theseus go solo later: Plut. *Thes.* 26 = Pherekydes *FGrHist* 3 F 151, *Hellanikos* 4 F 166, Herodotos 31 F 25a.

19) Pausanias 1.2.1, cf. 5.11.4. At the roots of this story, and the girdle-story, however may lie an Indo-European custom of *Raubebe* according to E. Thomas, *Mythos und Geschichte* (diss. Köln 1976) 36.

20) The authenticity of a text by ‘Hegias’ in the time of Pausanias is obviously an issue, but this ascription presents no problems to encourage scepticism.

21) H. Herter, *Theseus der Athener*, *RhM* 88 (1939) 283f. See also Tyrrell (see note 4, above) 4f.

22) Pindar fr. 173, ap. Paus. 1.2.1.

23) Pausanias 1.2.1, cf. Herodotos 31 F 25b.

24) Pausanias 1.15.2 (Poikile Stoa), 1.17.2 (Theseion, also on Shield of Athene and pedestal of Olympian Zeus), 1.25.2 (South wall of the Acropolis – dedicated by Attalos), 5.11.7 (footstool of Zeus Olympios – the first *ἀνδογαθήματα* of the Athenians against foreigners).

you can call her 'Antiope' (if you must, you can call her 'Myrhine'). A death and a succession are the narrative devices of a later mythologist, reconciling the differences between these local versions.

It is difficult to see how Akousilaos, early in the 5th century, could have avoided telling the story of Herakles and the Amazon<sup>25</sup>). Certainly, towards the middle of the century Pherekydes (FGrHist 3 F 15, 151, 152) presented a prose version of the Amazons of Themiskyra, which was used later by Apollonios of Rhodes (2.369–74, 985–1000). In Pherekydes the Amazons were born to Ares and a nymph Harmonia in the grove of Akmon. Akmon and Doias were brothers and the latter named the Doiantian plain where the Amazons live. Theseus had come separately to take his Amazon prisoner, assisted by his chariot-driver Phorbas<sup>26</sup>).

### *Ethnographic Amazons*

At some time before the second half of the fifth century a second site is additionally associated with the Amazons. This *ethnographic site* is almost a thousand kilometres further away, safely across the Kaukasos, and is based on the observation of the customs of a Skythian tribe, the Sarmatai, who assigned a more conspicuous role to women than Greeks were accustomed to accept. It should however be emphasised that the location of the Amazons does not, on the whole, drift further and further away in classical authors, as is sometimes thought. These are the principal two sites and all others (e.g. North Africa) are idiosyncratic, or specially motivated, variants<sup>27</sup>). Having alerted the reader to this new site, I

25) Herakles: 2 F 29–32.

26) It is an oddity that Harmonia is normally the *daughter* of Ares (married to Kadmos); yet I presume Pherekydes did not intend the Amazons to result from an incestuous union. Phorbas is known also to Euripides (Suppl. 680), presumably on the basis of Pherekydes, as Theseus' charioteer. There was a Phorbanteion at Athens – though this Phorbas was supposedly a king of the Kouretes killed by Erechtheus (Andron 10 F 1) and a son of Poseidon (Hellanikos 4 F 40).

27) Contrary to the impression given by Dowden (see note 4, above) 153 and M. Lefkowitz, *Women in Greek Myth* (London 1986) 22. Someone like Ktesias (cf. Strabo 11.6.3, partly in 688 T 11) appears to have muddled the distinction between the Aristean north and the Indian north, perhaps assisted by the presence of gold-guarding ants/griffins in both *Mabābhārata* and *Arimaspeia* (FGrHist 688 F 45h = §26); J.D.P. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus* (Oxford 1962) 80–81;



now review the role of the Amazons in ethnographic writers, attempting to give some sense of chronological development and interrelation between writers. The principal difficulties are, naturally, the fragmentary preservation at best of so many authors and quite serious uncertainty on chronology in some instances.

*Skythika* had been a recognised department of ethnography since the apparently febrile epic poem of Aristeas of Prokonnesos, the *Arimaspeian Epic* (surely not far from c. 550 BC)<sup>28</sup>, in which he told of Hyperboreans, Rhipaian mountains<sup>29</sup> and Arimaspians (one-eyed folk who fight griffins for the gold they guard), Issedones, Skythians and Kimmerians. Aristeas also surely knew the Sauromatai: (a) Σαυρομάται appears to be the (epic) hexameter form of Σαρμάται<sup>30</sup>, and (b) Strabo (11.6.2, Hellanikos 4 F 185) sweeps up Sauromatai (in that form – elsewhere he uses Σαρμάται) with Hyperboreans and Arimaspians. Aristeas had at least manoeuvred the Sauromatai into the right semi-mythic context; at most, he himself was responsible for the identification of their women with the Amazons<sup>31</sup>.

Amazons begin to be depicted on Athenian vases as ‘archers in Scythian dress’ at the end of the black-figure period, around 525 BC<sup>32</sup>). This depiction must depend on their siting amongst, and association with, the Scythian Sauromatai. It is no surprise that this depiction arises as the corpus of epic poetry is being established at Athens (in the so-called ‘Peisistratean recension’) and it must be Aristeas who is the source for this twist to the Amazon tale<sup>33</sup>). We cannot know how much detail he went into, but his

K. Dowden, REG 92 (1979) 311–2; for the transfer of the Kaukasos to India, see Strabo 11.5.5.

28) On the general grounds of the development of epic poetry, of ethnography (like Anaximandros’ map), and of the separable soul, if nothing else; ‘time of Kroisos and Kyros’ according to the Suda (FGrHist T 1a). Bolton ch. 1 thinks of a 7th century date, mainly on the basis of use by Alkman and Herodotos 4.15.1.

29) Bolton (see note 27, above) 39–41.

30) In the same way, Ἀμαζονίδες is a hexameter form of Ἀμαζόνες (cf. e.g. Ap. Rhod. 2.386).

31) So, Bolton (see note 27) 179–80. Aristeas’ father was named after the R. Kaystros, at whose mouth lay the temple of Artemis of Ephesos, founded by Amazons. ‘Ephesos’ herself was, according to the Etym. Magnum (402.8) a Lydian Amazon who first honoured Artemis and named her ‘Ephesia’.

32) T. H. Carpenter, Art and Myth in Ancient Greece (London 1991) 125. B. Gräf (RE 1 [1894] 1773 and cf. LIMC 1.1 [1981] 637) places Skythian dress too early at the mid-6th century. There are only a few Phrygian bonnets, not necessitating a Skythian explanation, before c. 530. Early Skythian examples: LIMC 1.1 (1981) Amazones nos. 62 (c. 530 BC), 64, 65 (c. 510 BC).

33) Cf. Bolton (see note 27) 51–52.



siting of Amazons amongst Scythians to establish the strange ways of Sauromatic women looks likely<sup>34</sup>).

Hekataios had also dealt with various ἔθνη Σκυθικά (1 F 184–90), the Kaukasos (F 191–2), the Issedones (F 193), possibly also the ‘city of the Kimmerians’ and the Rhipaian mountains<sup>35</sup>), evidently in the wake of Aristetas. But we do not hear of him mentioning the Sarmatai-Sauromatai or placing Amazons or their descendants at the ethnographic site<sup>36</sup>). Indeed, he was concerned to add some precision to the epic site of the Amazons. In *Genealogies* 2 he denied that Themiskyra was a city at all – ‘Themiskyra is a plain stretching from the city of Chadisia to the Thermodon’ (F 7a). Consequently, he calls the Amazons Χαθήσσαι (F 7b)<sup>37</sup>). This is later developed, possibly by Pherekydes, into the doctrine of the three cities Chadisia, Themiskyra, and Lykastia – the Amazons had not therefore advanced to synoikism<sup>38</sup>). Hekataios appears also to have attributed the foundation of Sinope (F 34)<sup>39</sup>) and Kyme to the Amazons (F 226). Hekataios is bound, however, to have been a fairly limited source for Amazon culture: his bare lists in the *Periegesis* or the mythologies of the *Genealogiai* do not allow the same richness of discussion that would have been possible in Hellanikos.

Hellanikos wrote both a systematic ethnography of Skythia and an account of Amazons. He knows the Aristean (and maybe Hekataian) Hyperboreioi and Rhipaian mountains (4 F 187), writing *Skythika* (64–65) and (if that is different) *Barbarika Nomima* (72–3). His name is one of those which Strabo cites when dealing

34) Fourth-century vases of Amazons fighting griffins seem to me entirely decorative, a popular exotic combination, pace Bolton (see note 27) 37; see LIMC 1.1. (1981) Amazones nos. 811–818.

35) F 194 and Jacoby ad loc. It does not, however, help that his namesake Hekataios of Abdera (c. 300 BC) wrote a work *On Hyperboreans*, adding for instance a ‘city of the Kimmerians’ (264 F 8, 12) to a now Celticizing northern landscape, whilst recycling the Aristean geography.

36) It is just possible that his Ἰάμαι and Ἰετίβάται (I F 215–6) may conceal the Ἰαζαμάται called Σαυρομάται by Ephoros (70 F 160).

37) Themiskyra is a plain for Strabo 12.3.15 too, but it is 60 stades from ‘the city’, presumably of the same name; see also Pliny HN 6.9–10. Compromise account in Mela 1.105 (= Sallust, Hist. 3.72–3 Maurenbrecher): ... *ad Thermodonta campus. in eo fuit Themiscurum oppidum, fuere et Amazonum castra; ideo Amazonium vocant.*

38) ‘The Doiantian plain and nearby the triple cities of the Amazonids’, Apollonios 2.373–4. Toepffer, RE 1 (1894) 1755 attributes the three cities to Pherekydes, cf. Pherekydes 3 F 15c ‘Pherekydes whom Apollonios is following’.

39) Toepffer, RE 1 (1894) 1758.

with the heady mixture of Sauromatai, Arimaspians, Massagetai, and Hyperboreans (185). Hellanikos told of the expedition of Herakles (i. e. against Themiskyra), accompanied by the Argonauts – but not Theseus, who went separately (106, 166). Their revenge expedition against Theseus, however, takes an interesting route: because, presumably, they are ignorant of seamanship as in Herodotos, they cross the Kimmerian Bosporos when it is frozen (167). According to Jacoby this demonstrates that the Amazons are still in Themiskyra, because they must cross the Kimmerian Bosporos to reach Europe. Yet a look at the map will show that this is not necessary. In fact, it is the ideal route west for Amazons located just north of the Kaukasos and the very mention of the Kimmerian Bosporos is there to awaken associations with the ethnographic site, not just as an *Autobahnkreuz*. In any case, Hellanikos recounted the Amazon invasion of Attica, a 4-month war and a return (paving the way for Kleidemos in the middle of the fourth century to provide a detailed account of the lines of battle in front of the Areopagos, 323 F 18). Hellanikos' Amazons are memorably described as 'a numerous army, gold-shielded, silver-axed, female, man-loving (?), male-child-killing' (167c). Of their customs, he may have known the story of their cauterising the breast, though the evidence is not very reliable (107 and Jacoby ad loc.). In the wake of Hellanikos, we should also perhaps mention the probably rather bare *Catalogue of Peoples* of Damastes of Sigeion, 'contemporary of Herodotos' and 'pupil of Hellanikos' according to the *Suda* (FGrHist. 5 T 1)<sup>40</sup> – another expert on Skythians, Issedones, Arimaspians, Rhipaian mountains and Hyperboreans (F 1), though there is no evidence he mentioned Amazons.

The *Prometheus Bound* presents an imaginative version of the travels of Io (719–28). She must cross the Kaukasos, in a southward direction. This Kaukasos is 'highest of mountains', its peaks are 'star-neighbours'. In fact it looks more like the Rhipaian mountains<sup>41</sup>, and consequently Io must find the 'man-hating army of the Amazons' on the *southern* side of the mountain. In this over-ambitious script for a mythic journey, mountains must

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40) According to Porphyry (Hellanikos 4 F 72), Hellanikos' *Barbarika Nomima* was compiled from Herodotos and Damastes, but that probably has evidential value only as a statement of their similarities.

41) Cf. Bolton (see note 27) 52–3. The *Prometheus Lyomenos* (fr. 197 Radt) had the R. Istros descend from the Hyperboreans and the Rhipaian mountains.

be shifted and tribes moved (the Chalybes who Hekataios knew were the Amazons' neighbours by the Thermodon, not by the Kaukasos)<sup>42</sup>). The consequence is that the author, having for his immediate convenience adopted the Sauromatic setting for the times of myth, is led into the Amazons, contrary to our expectation, moving on to Themiskyra 'at some time'<sup>43</sup>). Prometheus' prophetic tone ensures that this is a future event, not past history and origins. This author has nonetheless, like his probable contemporary Herodotos, been reading a copy of Aristeas.

Herodotos deals with overtly Aristean material early in Book 4 (4.16–36). He finds a place for the Amazons rather later (4.110–6): the Amazons leave their epic site at the Thermodon (from which they attacked Attica, 9.27.4), conveyed on ship by their Greek captors (is Herakles' expedition made more historical by omitting his name?). They kill their captors, but ignorant of seamanship, drift – to Lake Maiotis (the Sea of Azov). Here they encounter Skythian youths and, though agreeing to marry, draw their Skythian husbands away from their conventional societies where women follow a traditionally Greek submissive life. This fiction provides an aetiology for the remarkable independence of 'Sauromatai' women, who, we are told, continue the line of the Amazons (4.116):

'And from then on the women of the Sauromatai have followed the ancient lifestyle: they habitually go out to the hunt on horseback – together with their husbands and without them; they go out to war, and wear the same dress as the men.'

In fact these are only Skythian women who are more mannish than usual (a proper Amazon would never hunt *with her husband*). Nonetheless they establish the Amazons in the ethnography of the real world, in the Skythian fringes. This explains the implausible account of Euripides, who sends Herakles across the Black Sea to meet the 'mounted army of Amazons around Lake Maiotis with its many rivers' (HF 408–10) – plainly in the Scythian setting, oozing ethnographic intertextuality.

It is not easy to discern the literary and chronological relationship between these writers (I shall deal with *Airs, Waters,*

42) 1 F 203; Bolton (see note 27) 49.

43) This is different, of course, from tracing the origins of Themiskyran Amazons to Skythian women (not Skythian Amazons), as I accept below for Ephoros.

*Places* presently). The *Prometheus*, if genuinely by Aeschylus, must date before 457; if not, then it possibly belongs to the 440s<sup>44</sup>). In either case, this puts it after Hekataios, probably after Pherekydes, and before Herodotos. Hellanikos obviously wrote before Thucydides (1.97.2), but *could* have written before Herodotos and maybe before a *Prometheus* in the 440s.

Nonetheless, as the improvisations of the author of the *Prometheus* are based on the same siting of the Amazons as emerges in Herodotos (and later ‘Hippokrates’) and Herodotos is clearly not drawing on the *Prometheus*, they must ultimately have a common, influential source who wrote before 457/440 (the date of the *Prometheus*) and probably made these statements:

1. After the capture by the Greeks of Themiskyra, the Amazons drifted to Lake Maiotis (Herodotos 4.110).
2. The marriages of the Amazons with the Sauromatai are responsible for the current manners of the Sauromatai women (Herodotos 4.116).
3. Sauromatai maidens are trained in hunting and weapons (Herodotos 4.116; Hippokrates, *Airs* 17; Diodoros 2.46).
4. Girl babies are cauterised (possibly Hellanikos; *Airs* 17, Diodoros 2.45).

None of the statements of customs are officially about the Amazons – they are all corroborative statements about the supposed customs of the Sauromatai – but they are nonetheless based on a mythic picture of Amazons. Unless Aristeeas went into some considerable detail on Amazon history and customs, there must be a prose author, surely known to us if he has such influence. We do not know enough about Hellanikos’ *Skythika*, which I have argued above included the necessary site, but it is hard to make him predate the *Prometheus*. Pherekydes made the requisite distinction between the expeditions of Herakles and Theseus (3 F 151), but was surely insufficiently ethnographic<sup>45</sup>). Hekataios would seem a likely answer if only his *Periegesis* was less skeletal.

If a common source lies behind Herodotos and Hippokrates, *Airs*, it obviously has an interest in φύσις (the human constitution)

44) M. L. West, *The Prometheus Trilogy*, JHS 99 (1979) 130–148.

45) 3 F 174, if relating Pherekydean material, touches on Anacharsis, who is wrapped up in Skythian ethnography by Herodotos 4.46 and 76, and especially Ephoros 70 F 42 and 158. Pherekydes did talk (3 F 143) about Achaians who settled in the Black Sea immediately after the Trojan War (cf. Strabo 9.2.42), next to the Sauromatai as Dionysios the Periegete 685 informs us (see 3 F 143).

and ethnography. It then would discuss the Sauromatic women functioning as men as well as the matching 'female disease' that afflicted the Skythian Anarieis/Enarees (Hippokrates, *Airs* 22, Herodotos 4.67). Here, obscured by Herodotos' re-ordering of his material, we have an examination of Skythian distortions of gender roles, both notably given historical rather than climatic explanations – one from an influx of Amazons, the other from an expedition of men which incurred the wrath of Aphrodite Ourania by sacking her shrine at Askalon (Herodotos 1.105)<sup>46</sup>).

'Hippokrates', writing a condensed medical ethnography in *Airs, Waters, Places*, comes (ch. 17) to a Skythian people 'called the Sauromatai' who live around Lake Maiotis and 'differ from other (Skythian) peoples'. Their maidens hunt and train for war; they must kill three of the enemy, too, before commencing sexual relations. Hippokrates is quite detailed on cauterisation (they use a particular bronze tool). In addition, he knows about the extreme cold of Skythia and the Rhipaian mountains (19). In this account the Sauromatides are less descendants of Amazons (as in Herodotos) than Amazons themselves. The *Airs, Waters, Places*, according to Littré, was a genuine work of Hippokrates (460–c.370), but even so could only with difficulty antedate Herodotos<sup>47</sup>). In fact there seems to be no way of showing that it is a genuine work and only a general feeling that it is a fourth-century work rather than later.

It is not at all impossible that *Airs* drew on Ephoros. The requirement to kill three of the enemy before sexual relations (*Airs* 17) is found in the basically Ephorean account of Nikolaos (90 F 103 f). And as we have seen, statements on the hunting and fighting culture, and on cauterisation, are paralleled in Diodoros (2.45–6) which might again suggest origin in Ephoros. It is therefore to Ephoros that we should now turn.

Ephoros (who must have died in the 330s) had a particular interest in Amazons and their movements, even though the detail of his picture is hard to reconstruct. He alleged, presumably in the context of his ethnic analysis of western Asia Minor (70 F 162), a presence of Amazons between Mysia, Karia, and Lydia, doctoring a verse of Homer (*Iliad* 2.856) to deliver the evidence (F 114). Strabo (*ibid.*) concludes, and Ephoros might well have, that they

46) Another affiliated passage is Herodotos 9.122.3, cf. *Airs* 16.

47) On the history of the Hippokratic problem, see Wesley D. Smith, *The Hippocratic Tradition* (Ithaca–London 1979) ch. 1.

were the original inhabitants before the Aeolic and Ionic Greeks arrived and he accounts for the foundation of such cities as Ephesos, Smyrna, Kyme (Ephoros' home city) and Myrhine in this way. If so, it would seem reasonable to suppose that Ephoros was motivated to place the Amazons in this part of the world precisely in order to accommodate local traditions of Amazon foundation, perhaps already incorporated by Hekataios. But when, in Amazon history, did this happen?

One might suppose their presence at these sites antedated their arrival at the Thermodon. But a different solution is suggested by Pompeius Trogus, who seems likely, as we shall see, to reflect Ephoros' sequence of events. In any case Trogus offers the only incorporation of this stage of Amazon activity into their total history. Trogus was writing under Augustus (he owes the name Pompeius to Pompey's enfranchisement of his grandfather) and his *Historiae Philippicae* (as precised by Justin 2.4) contained the following account<sup>48</sup>). Two exiled Skythians take a large force with them and settle next to the Thermodon on the 'Themiskyrean plains' (Hekataian accuracy, this). They are killed in an ambush and their widows take up arms, first for defence, then more aggressively. 'They also had no inclination to marry their neighbours, calling this slavery not matrimony' and presently kill all the men who had remained at home (cf. Ephoros F 60a, below). Finally they enter into a sexual arrangement with their neighbours but kill any male offspring and train girls in hunting and war, cauterising their right breasts (Diodoros-Hippokrates-?Ephoros). Two collegiate queens, Marpessa and Lamedo, now claim descent from Ares, overrun Europe and Asia, in the process founding 'Ephesos and many other cities' (cf. Ephoros F 114). Their successors Antiope and Oreithyia, however, run into difficulty when Oreithyia is on campaign and Antiope, short-staffed, is overwhelmed by the expedition of Herakles to obtain 'the arms of the queen of the Amazons'. This is when Theseus gains Hippolyte. Oreithyia then invades Attica, but after the desertion of Scythian (male) allies, is defeated. Now Penthesileia succeeds to the throne and is ready to be killed by Achilles. The few survivors ensure continuity to the times of Minithya or Thalestris, who lies with Alexander on 13 successive days, but shortly after her return is killed, together with the entire Amazon race.

This account, then, would suggest the presence and founding

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48) Very similar account in Diodoros 2.44-6.

activity is a result of expeditions from a Themiskyran base. It also offers a point in their history for Ephoros' story of their origins (they can, after all, only be 'explained' by derivation from a more normal society):

'Ephoros in Bk. 9 says that the Amazons were treated demeaningly (*ὕβριζομένως*) by their husbands and, when they went out to some war, the Amazons killed the ones that were left behind and refused to admit those approaching from abroad.'  
(Ephoros 70 F 60a [Σ Ap. Rhod. 2.965])

'Those approaching from abroad' would appear to be the same whom Trogus' Amazons reject for marriage and they may reject marriage as demeaning ('slavery not marriage' in Justin's words) because of the *ὑβρις* their husbands displayed in Ephoros. If this is accepted it may mean that the Amazon history which consists of a sequence of queens (present, if differently articulated, in Diodoros) ending with Penthesilea should also be traced back to Ephoros.

What remains unclear, given the Scythian origin of these Amazons in Justin, Diodoros, and therefore (I suppose) Ephoros, is how the Sauromatai fit into this account. Ephoros certainly identified the Sauromatai, beside Lake Maiotis (70 F 160, cf. Airs 17): for him they were adjacent to (and different from) the Sarmatai and later Demetrios of Kallatis (85 F 1) distinguished them further by re-labelling them *Ἰαζαμάται* or *Ἰαζαβάται* rather than *Σαυρομάται*<sup>49</sup>). It was these Sauromatai with whom the Amazons had mixed after the battle at the Thermodon (70 F 160) – though this is not necessarily Ephoros, as it transparently sums up Herodotos 4.110–6 (or his source). If, however, Ephoros did incorporate this story and as a result assign the epithet *Γυναικοκρατούμενοι* (ruled by women) to the Sauromatai (F 160), his story has lost some logical force: Amazons are of Skythian origin and rise to prominence through the historical accident of the loss of their husbands, but also through their (Skythian) war-skills. But then, as refugees from the Thermodon, they return to Skythia to explain the hunting- and war-skills of Skythian women. Is Skythian culture the cause, or the result, of the Amazons?

It is at this point that a passage of Stephen of Byzantium should be taken into account. Does it represent Ephoros, or is it inconsistent with F 60a above and therefore only an "anonymes Zitat" (Jacoby on 60b)?

49) The Sauromatae are a *division* of the Sarmatae in Pliny HN 6.19.



‘Amazons] A race of women by the Thermodon, according to Ephoros, whom they now call Sauromatides. “And they say about them that by nature [or, ‘in constitution’ – the word is φύσις] they differ from men, attributing this to the climate (κράσις) of the place – which habitually produces female bodies that are stronger and bigger than the male. But I consider ‘natural’ (φυσικόν) experiences which are common to all, so that the explanation makes no sense. More plausible is what is said by the people round about: it started with the military incursions of the Sauromatai against Europe in which they were all destroyed; the women, who were left on their own ... [a gap in the text here] ... and that when the males grew up they rebelled against the women, but the women came out on top and the males fled into some wooded area and were killed. But fearing that revenge would somehow be taken by the young, they made a policy decision (δόγμα) to cripple them and make them all lame.” And they were called Sauropatides because they trod (πατεῖν) on lizards (σαύρας) and ate them or (Sauromatides) because they lived in Sauromatic Skythia.’

(Stephen of Byzantion s. v. Ἀμαζόνες; cf. FGrHist 70 F 60b)

Jacoby objected that this account left out the ὕβρις in Ephoros (70 F 60a) and failed to trace the matriarchy to the men leaving. Certainly this cannot be a complete extract from Ephoros. Yet a reference to the ὕβρις might fit into the gap in the text (in Trogus they had had to threaten re-marriage to recall their husbands from an earlier campaign) and the men leave for a war in Trogus, Ephoros F 60a and in this passage. We should stress the common agenda between this fragment and Ephoros. Both are addressing the question: how did the Amazon race come into existence? ‘Anonymous’ examines the φύσις-account (a question of climate), i. e. addresses himself to a thesis in the style of Hippokrates (was it the source of *Airs*?)<sup>50</sup>, and rejects it. Rather, a historical event, of loss of menfolk in war, created a nation of women unconcerned to replace

50) Cf. *Airs* 16 init., φύσις of the inhabitants of Asia and Europe; 15.10, the physical size of the inhabitants around the Phasis results from the climate. Note also the interest in whether an area is δασεῖα, 15 init.; interest in milk and cheese (cf. Ephoros F 42), 18 fin.; comparison of Skythians and Egyptians, 19 init., cf. Justin (Trogus) 2.1.5–21 on Skythian and Egyptian climates, 2.3.8–14 and Diodoros 2.43.4 on Skythians campaigning as far as Egypt. The type of theory which Anonymous dismisses may be seen explicitly in Ptolemy, *Tetrabibl.* 2.3.

those men<sup>51</sup>) and self-perpetuating (F 60a, Trogus, 'Anonymous'). F 60a in truth tells us very little and is not in itself inconsistent with 'Anonymous'. The real question is whether 'Anonymous' and Trogus agree sufficiently to reconstruct 'Ephoros'. The key areas of difficulty lie in the Sauromatian ending, which in 'Anonymous' looks more like a Sauromatian beginning, and in the brevity, inadequate coverage, in what is apparently a verbatim quotation of 'Anonymous'. In fact, 'Anonymous', like 'Hippokrates', looks as though he is discussing a single nation of Sauromatic women who give no trace of having a different, Themiskyran, location to live in. But, also like 'Hippokrates', he is in some close way affiliated to Ephoros.

Ephoros touched on Amazons and Skythians twice. In Book 9 he dealt with the story of their origins and, maybe, history. But at the end of Book 4, having given an account of Europe as far as Skythia, he then proceeded to discuss the features which distinguish the Sauromatai from other Scythians (F 42, cf. 158), a theme stressed in *Airs* too (*Airs* 17 on the Sauromatai, 18 on the other Skythians). The Sauromatai are man-eaters (F 42), presumably the same as the Man-Eating Skythians in mid-desert in F 158, accounted for by Diodoros when he has the ferocious Sauromatai in later times reduce the country around them to desert (2.43.7). But, when discussing the other Skythians, he stresses milk-drinking and cheese-eating (*Airs* 18 *fin.*), their 'justice', based on some lines of Homer (*Iliad* 13.5–6), and discusses Anacharsis; he may also have referred to Skythian settlement of Asia. A parallel, and clearly derivative passage, of Nikolaos of Damaskos (90 F 104) ends by referring to the warlike nature of both their men and women, seemingly oblivious of the fact that this was intended by Ephoros and Hippokrates as a contrast with the peaceful category of Skythians, and states 'that on this account the Amazons were especially brave, with the result that they invaded as far as Athens and Kilikia, (namely) because they lived alongside them near Lake Maiotis'. Nikolaos may have missed the point, but perhaps we can still attribute to Ephoros the idea that the Amazons invaded Athens from the ethnological, Skythian, site.

Herodotos had the Amazons invade Attica from the Thermopon (9.27.4), therefore before the Skythian move (4.110). Yet his

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51) Contrasting with those who on an earlier occasion, abandoned for 15 years of campaigning, threatened to have children by their neighbours (Justin 2.3.16).

account does not stand up: if refugees from the sack by ‘the Greeks’, i. e. Herakles, move, then there is no Themiskyra from which to invade Attica to punish Theseus. The invasion could only be from the Skythian site – as appears to have been the case in Hellanikos, with his frozen Kimmerian Bosporos – and could well be the case in Ephoros. Further details in Nikolaos (90 F 103 f) may go back to Ephoros too: the Sauromatai obey their wives as mistresses in all respects (also, then, the epithet, *Γυναικοκρατούμενοι*); they eat only every two days (as also at Pliny HN 7.12)<sup>52</sup>), and their maidens cannot be married until they kill an enemy (three in *Airs*, as we have seen).

Two further contexts aroused interest in Amazon mythology. The Athidographers, writers of the local history of Attica, needed to incorporate something on them when dealing with Theseus’ expedition against them and, more important, their invasion of Attica. We have seen how Kleidemos, the first Athidographer (apart from Hellanikos’ section on the subject, 4 F 38–49), laid out a detailed (i. e. fictional)<sup>53</sup> battle-plan beneath the Areopagos (323 F 18). The other context is the geographically far-flung, and momentous, campaigning of Alexander the Great recorded and developed by the Alexander-historians. Here we find the astounding lie that Alexander, somewhat emulating Herakles (or Theseus), had met the Amazon queen<sup>54</sup>). According to Kleitarchos (137 F 16), Thalestris came with 300 Amazons from the Caspian Gates (or Caspia?) and the Thermodon (perhaps ineptly blending the two Amazon sites)<sup>55</sup>) so that she might spend 13 nights to ensure she conceived a child by Alexander – though the officer Lysimachos, who was there at the alleged time, wondered

52) Pliny of course knows Ephoros’ *Gynaecocratumenoe* (6.19). Also Gelilius 9.4.7 from Pliny and, rather mysteriously, elsewhere – possibly even Aristeas: cf., however, Bolton (see note 27, above) 27–31.

53) As observed generally by Ephoros 70 F 9.

54) Plutarch, *Alex.* 46 = FGrHist Kleitarchos 137 F 15, Polykleitos 128 F 8, Onesikritos 134 F 1, Antigenes 141 F 1. The lying denounced also by Strabo 11.5.5.

55) I think ‘Caspian Gates’ may be an error in the text of Strabo 11.5.4 – he continues by talking of ‘Kaspia’ instead; I imagine this must be in the region of the Eratosthenic Mt. Kaspios (=Kaukasos; cf. 11.8.9) and that we are somewhere south of the Kaukasos in Albania (cf. the Kaspiane at 11.4.5). This would match with the geography of Curtius (6.5.24–25) which, together with the Thalestris story, is probably drawn from Kleitarchos (who is cited 9.5.21, 9.8.15). In Curtius, the Amazons are immediately SW of the Kaukasos, inhabiting the plains of Themiskyra by the Thermodon (sic!), next to Hyrcania (sic!). Other contaminations: Amazons from Themiskyra driving their ‘Skythian mares’ at Lykophron 1330, 1336; R. Thermodon in the Kaukasos, Theophanes in Plutarch, *Pomp.* 35.5.

how he had missed the event. On another occasion, 100 alleged Amazons were presented to Alexander by Atropates, governor of Media, only for him crudely to threaten to 'get their Queen with child'<sup>56</sup>).

Pseudo-historical detail missing from the Amazon myth was supplied in quantity by Dionysios Skytobrachion (c. 150 BC)<sup>57</sup>). Now the Amazons, and together with them the Gorgons, are a euhemerised nation living in Libya, along the coast from Dionysios' Alexandria. Living on an island, this 'nation ruled by women' kept their maidenhood whilst they were of warrior age, but when their years of military service were complete, they went to their men and had children. So men exist, but these men play the role of normal Greek women: no political rights or duties, no military service. Instead, they tend the home and rear the children, like modern house-husbands. This is a complete society – Greek society in negative.

Back in the Kaukasos, more detail emerges in first century writers. Metrodoros of Skepsis (FGrHist 184 F 7)<sup>58</sup>) and Hypsikrates of Amisos (FGrHist 190 F 3) located the Amazons in the northern foothills of the Kaukasos, north of 'Albania', within range, therefore, of the Sauromatae/Sarmatai (see diagram). On this account they arrived here from Themiskyra together with their menfolk, the Gargareis, but after a local war between the Gargareis and 'some Thracian and Euboean marauders' they lived separately (Ephoros' de-merger) and only met at the mountain between their territory for two spring months for a sort of Rite of Spring – to sacrifice and have sex in the dark so that, not recognising their partners, they might not set up family units. These Amazons attend to male tasks: ploughing, planting, pasturing, horse-rearing, hunting and war – and cauterise the right breast at infancy. Metrodoros was born around 160 and died after 71/70; Hypsikrates lived to the age of 92 and was active under Julius Caesar and Augustus. Between them comes Theophanes of Mytilene, a friend of Pompey's who accompanied him in these regions in 66–64. On his account the Skythian Gelai and Legai live between Albania and the Amazons (FGrHist 188 F 4, Plut. Pomp. 35.6); Pompey (a new

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56) Strabo 11.5.4, Diodoros 17.77.2, Plutarch, Alex. 46, Arrian 7.13.

57) FGrHist 32 F 6 (and Jacoby ad loc.), Diodoros 3.53–54; the transposition might conceivably have been assisted by the confusion between Chalisia, a city in Libya, and Chadisia, a city of the Amazons (cf. Ephoros 70 F 52).

58) All these FGrHist fragments are in fact Strabo 11.5.1.

Herakles or Alexander?) actually defeated the Amazons, but no bodies were found (Plut. Pomp. 35.5)<sup>59</sup> – presumably indicating that they were so brave, mysterious and fictional that they got away. A rationalised version of this story is told by Appian (Mithr. 103): Pompey's defeat of an army in this region surprisingly produced wounded female bodies reckoned to be those of Amazons, whether because of some neighbouring Amazon nation or because 'local barbarians call certain warlike women by the general term of Amazons'. A revealing variant of this tradition is found in the elder Pliny (HN 6.19), who speaks of Ephoros' Sauromatae *Gynaecocratumenoe*. He amplifies this epithet by the phrase *Amazonum conubia*, a rather epic way of expressing 'the partners of the Amazons'. The *Gegari* (presumably our Gargareis), by contrast, arrive a couple of sections and mountain-ranges later – 6.21 in the Kaukasos.

I close this section with a mention of the first/second century AD *Alexander Romance* as a specimen of unrestrained fiction. Here the Amazons conveniently deliver by letter a brief account of themselves (3.25). The 270,000 of them (150,000 in active service) live on an island (cf. Dionysios Skytobrachion) surrounded by a circular river. The menfolk of these Amazons are satisfactorily subordinate – they are the rearguard to the Amazons' vanguard, and live safely across a river (as indeed do all male things), leaving the Amazon virgins themselves quarantined to live in a mythically female society. But when they wish to cease from maidenhood, they join the men (cf. Dionysios Skytobrachion) after the annual month-long festival (cf. Metrodoros' Rite of Spring) to Zeus, Poseidon, Hephaistos and Ares. Otherwise they are competitive warriors.

### *Age-classes*

Such, then, is the accumulating portrait of Amazons in the written tradition. Within mythology, as for instance represented by early epic, Amazons do not need a complete, realistic history and there does not need to be a means for their society to come into existence or to reproduce. They simply exist – that is all – for the stories in which they play a part. The history of the Amazon empire under its various queens, their Skythian location and deal-

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59) This is plainly from Theophanes and the assumption of rationalisation in Appian solves the difficulties of Jacoby on 188 F 4.

ings, and the world of house-husbands, or of men and male animals and male plants living together in ghettos beyond the river, is called into existence by the transposition of these mythic creatures into history.

So, if mythic Amazons do not represent a real or possible society, what exactly do they represent? Greek females should progress through three stages in their life: from girls to matrons (with a fleeting focus on the moment of transition, the moment of eligibility for marriage) and onward to widowhood. This is celebrated in the legendary foundation of three temples to Hera by Temenos in old Stymphalos (Arcadia) – those of Ἥρα παῖς, τελεία, χήρα (Pausanias 8.22.2). Amazons vary from this model, deviating at maidenhood into the development appropriate to male society<sup>60</sup>). Males, who become old but not widowers, distinctively exhibit an intermission between boyhood and marriage. This time out from the demands of the family, is the age of the warrior, lasting, say, 10 years (the length of the Trojan War)<sup>61</sup>). It is this warrior age which is shadowed by the Amazons in their alternative universe<sup>62</sup>). The adjective is ἀντιάνειραι, ‘corresponding to men’ (*Iliad*, twice) – to ἄνδρες, who display ἀνδρεία through battle<sup>63</sup>). The Amazons are the warrior age-class of men, mapped onto women.

### *Commemorating Amazons*

*Denn die ganze Amazonensage in Hellas knüpft eben an die Amazonengräber an, während Gräber namenloser Hellenen, die im Kampf gegen die Amazonen gefallen, unerhört sind.*

C. Wachsmuth, ‘Amazoneion’, RE 1 (1894) 1753

Amazons do a lot of dying. It is in fact an important part of the mythical construct of Amazons in general, and of named Amazons in particular, that they should die. We have seen tombs in Athens (of Antiope and of Molpadia), in Megara, at Troy (of

60) Cf. Tyrrell (see note 4, above) 76.

61) Dowden (see note 4, above) 111–2.

62) ‘The custom was for the women to labour at the arts of war and they had to serve in the army for fixed periods, maintaining their virginity. But when the years of military service had passed, they approached men in order to have children, but the women administered the magistracies and all matters of state’ (Diodoros 3.53.1).

63) Tyrrell (see note 4, above) 76 highlights this adjective.

Myrhine at Bateia – and also implicitly of Penthesileia). Let us add a few<sup>64</sup>).

In Athens there were tombs of Amazons, presumably in the Amazoneion, somewhere north west of the Areopagos, on its slopes. In this approximate area there are some impressive Mycenaean chamber-tombs. In any case this was near the ancient agora of Theseus. Perhaps too the Theseion, whose location is not certain somewhere south of the classical agora, was in this vicinity<sup>65</sup>). The grave of Antiope mentioned by Pausanias (1.2.1) seems to be the same as the Amazon στήλη at the Itonian Gates south of the Olympieion<sup>66</sup>) – and there was another μνήμα somewhere in Athens, of Molpadia (Pausanias 1.2.1).

Wounded Amazons often made it far enough from Athens to cause tombs elsewhere. We have seen Megara (Pausanias 1.41.7). But the Boiotians too had Amazon tombs: Amazons fell in battle at Chaironeia and were buried by the River Haimon. Others got as far as Chalkis, to die at another Amazoneion – as well as in Thessaly at Skoutoussa and Kynoskephalai<sup>67</sup>). This list of refugees from Theseus comes almost entirely from one passage of (the Boiotian) Plutarch, leaving open the possibility that tombs of Amazons were in fact quite common, though, if so, mostly passed over by Pausanias. An alternative version of the Theseus story was evidently sited at Hegias' Troizen, where next to Theseus' 'Birth-place' (Γενέθλιον) at the harbour Kelenderis you might see a temple of Ares commemorating his defeat of the Amazons – turned by Pausanias (2.32.9) into a remnant of the main body defeated in the main story in Athens. Down towards Tainaron at Pyrrichus is

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64) For Amazon tombs, see F. Pfister, *Der Reliquienkult im Altertum II* (Gießen 1912) 127, 281 f.

65) Amazoneion: Pfister n. 452, W. Judeich, *Topographie von Athen* (München 21931) 300, Plutarch, *Thes.* 27.3 ('what is now called the Amazoneion', alarmingly similar to 27.5 – not, one hopes, a textual problem), *Steph. Byz.*, s. v. Ἀμαζόνειον, vouches for one in Attica. Chamber tombs: e.g. W. Zschietzschmann, 'Athenai. B: Topographie', *RE Suppl.* 13 (1973) 56–140, at p. 69. Agora of Theseus: J. Travlos, *PrEnc* (see note 10, above) 108. Theseion (not, of course, the Hephaisteion which has sometimes wrongly been called the 'Theseion'): Pausanias 1.17, Tyrrell (see note 4, above) 10 f., R. E. Wycherley, *Pausanias: Description of Greece*, vol. V (Cambridge Ma. & London 1955) 26. Evidence for the Theseion is collected in R. E. Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora III* (Princeton, NJ 1957) 113–9. But it is now thought to be north of the Acropolis rather than of the Areopagus: J. Travlos, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie des antiken Athen* (Tübingen 1971) 234, 578–9.

66) Plato, *Axiochos* 364d, Judeich 386.

67) Plutarch, *Thes.* 27, Demosth. 19, Pfister (see note 64, above) n. 454.



another place where the Amazons were defeated (Pausanias 3.25.3): the shrine of Ἄρτεμις Ἀσρατεία is where the campaign (σρατεία) was stopped, commemorated also by the ξόανον of Apollo Amazonios, though in fact the cult probably owes its origin to the Phoenician goddess Astarte.

Meanwhile other Amazons are on the run from Dionysos at Ephesos and get away to Samos. But Dionysos builds ships, crosses, fights and kills most of them – accounting for the local place-name, Πάναιμα ('All Blood'). Some elephants died too<sup>68</sup>).

It is notable, however, that in Asia Minor we tend to find commemoration by foundations and eponymy, as we have seen in Hekataios and Ephoros, rather than by tombs as on the mainland<sup>69</sup>). In the north, Amastris (Steph. Byz. s.v.) and Sinope (Hekataios 1 F 34), and minor places such as Elaia near Nikomedeia and Thiba on the Black Sea (Arrian 156 F 84) were founded after Amazons so named. In the west, the tradition of Amazon foundation, mediated by Ephoros (70 F 114), accounts for Kyme, Pitana, Priene – and Mytilene on Lesbos (Diodoros 3.55.6f.) and Ephesos, Smyrna, Kyme and Myrhine (Strabo 11.5.4). It is this batch, then, to which Homer's Myrhine belongs – and she has registered strongly enough for her history to be written by (probably) Dionysios Skytobrachion (Diodoros 3.53.2): Myrhine, Queen of the Amazons and Captor of Atlantis.

### *Uses of a dead Amazon*

Why are dead Amazons so much in demand? There are different ways of approaching this question. We could for instance start from Athenian perspectives on gender roles. The myth is specially current in Athens (hence the subtitle of Tyrrell's book on Amazons: 'A Study in Athenian Mythmaking') and could be usefully co-ordinated with other Athenian data, mythic and historical, notably the tension between:

- (a) the adoption of a female god, Athene, as figurehead (though she is defeminised, Amazonic even), and
- (b) the denial of suffrage to women (because, the myth tells us, the women's vote resulted in the election of Athene, not Poseidon).

68) Plutarch, Quaest. Gr. 56.303d–e.

69) Klügmann (see note 9, above) 274; Toepffer, RE 1 (1894) 1758.

In this context, the death of Amazons in myth becomes the definitive statement of male occupation of the warrior role and male supremacy in general. It takes us from (a) to (b).

In cult, it is perhaps not quite so easy, though we can probably explain the Athenian sacrifices to the Amazons on the day before the Theseia (which appears to have been enhanced as a state festival in 475 BC)<sup>70</sup>). These sacrifices serve to refresh the myth and in so doing confirm male roles exhibited in the male sports and military character of the festival. The recognition of the Amazons is the necessary inversion prior to renewal. Sacrifices to dead non-gods ('heroes') of course belong at tombs; that is presumably why there are Amazon tombs in the vicinity. This view of the Amazons, then, concentrates on their displacement and failure.

The founding Amazons of Asia Minor allow pedestrian treatment, as convenient aetiological formulae. Greeks come across a new, unfamiliar place-name. It is feminine. Given their propensity for eponymy as a mode of explanation, it follows that the town was named after a person, apparently female, who in all probability founded the city<sup>71</sup>). But how could a woman found a city? That is a man's job – a job in historical times for an oikist, in mythical times for a king's son or the king who ruled first. Thus eponymy requires a female with attributes of sovereignty, initiative, military authority and success: it follows that she is an Amazon. But why so many in Asia Minor? Indeed the local place-names would be unfamiliar, but they usually are on arrival in any new land. This may rather be a question of chronology: the Greeks migrated to these areas at a time when they were actively committed to towns and to a system of accounting for them. This is not very deep, as explanations go, but it is perhaps not wholly unrealistic either.

On this view the tomb of the Amazon is assimilated to the tomb of the founder – say of Danaos in Argos. But the view is also paradoxical, because it depicts females in charge: this could only happen in those times of beginnings, the times when Athene rather than Poseidon was chosen to champion Athens, when women still had the vote. So the view conforms, in an inverse way, to the actual

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70) L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin 1932) 224; H. W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (London 1977) 81.

71) Klügmann, *Über die Amazonen in den Sagen der kleinasiatischen Städte*, *Philologus* 30 (1871) 555 tries to deny that an eponym is also a founder, but it is the natural assumption and one which Strabo (11.5.4, above) makes too.

structure of society. However, this acceptance of an Amazon as your founder deviates from the mainstream of Greek mythology by allowing her success. Tombs in this case will commemorate achievement, not failure.

Tombs, however, have an existence of their own. When reading Pausanias, one becomes aware that the Greek landscape was littered with μνήματα – commemorative tombs. Indeed the extensive work of Pfister (1912) on *Reliquienkult* is in effect a gazetteer to this sort of monument. It is worth comment that the Greeks found it necessary to address so many questions through the language of myth, ritual and reminder (μνήμα), a language of which Amazons are just one more example. ‘Commemorate’ is perhaps a weak word, implying no more than ‘to call to mind’: ah yes, Antiope the Amazon, lest we forget her. We should think of something stronger. In the peculiar Greek tripartition of anthropomorphic beings, the levels are: gods, heroes and men. Men must respect, must honour, both superior categories. Gods have temples; heroes have tombs. So it is reasonable to expect that if a mound, or marked place, is recognised and adopted as a tomb of a hero, it receives cult. In this categorisation, Amazons are heroes. So the tombs of Amazons on or near the Areopagos exist in order to receive that sacrifice before the Theseia.

A purposeful view of at least some Amazon tombs is also imposed by the mythology. These mortally wounded Amazons in Megara, Chaironeia and Chalkis must in myth survive long enough to die in those places in order to account for tombs which already belong to them. The tombs are logically prior to the particular myth which we have and are a genuine feature of local culture. The widespread use of the Amazon motif in Asia Minor perhaps suggests at least Bronze Age (pre-migration) antiquity for the concept. On the other hand, the distribution of cult or commemoration of Amazons is not specially panhellenic. Pausanias has only one mention of Amazons in the Peloponnese south of Troizen and Megara (other than the metopes of the temple of Zeus at Olympia), in the deepest south at Pyrrhichos, where as we have seen Amazons are conjured up to explain the probably Phoenician Artemis Astrateia (Pausanias 3.25.3). Ruling this instance out, Amazons may be seen as a genuine local cult phenomenon with a particular distribution on the mainland, covering only east central Greece.

*No future in being an Amazon*

We perhaps come a step closer if we look at Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis*. This takes us to Ephesos. Here Hippo – presumably his shortening of an actual Hippolyte, like Deo (Hymn. Apoll. 110) for Demeter – appears to be the pre-eminent Amazon and her band set up a βροέτας (an antique wooden statue) of Artemis at Ephesos at the foot of an oak tree. This act of foundation at Ephesos is also recorded by Pindar<sup>72</sup>). There, Callimachus imagines, they did a circular weapons-and-shield dance; their feet tapped on the ground and their quivers clattered (239–47). But this is not the last we hear of Hippo. For the dance was yearly and she (on some occasion) refused to join in. This was not 'without tears': so something awful happened to her, presumably involving death and consequent tomb.

For once we have an overt ritual association. We hear of these Ephesian annual dances elsewhere too, in a fragment of an old comedy by Autokrates, the *Tympanistai* (fr. 1 K.-A., Aelian NA 12.9):

'just like the games of the dear maidens, the girls of the Lydians, lightly leaping [..., shaking] their hair, clapping their hands – with Artemis of Ephesos the Most Beautiful – and one hip down, one raised up, she leaps like a dabchick.'

These girls are matched in myth by the founding dance-group – of Amazons led by Hippo. The weapons-and-shield dance which Callimachus describes is evidently modelled on that of male youths, as represented in mythology by the Kouretes. Indeed at Ephesos there was a college of Kouretes with its own leader, the πρωτοκούρη<sup>73</sup>). We are in the world of the girls' dance groups, whose association with initiation has been comprehensively explored by Claude Calame<sup>74</sup>). This is the world of Artemis and of initiation of girls into adulthood.

At this point standard interpretative models can be applied. The passage of girls from maidenhood to matronhood (or at least to eligibility for marriage) requires, as do all passage rites (on Van Genneep's model), separation, transition and incorporation<sup>75</sup>). The

72) Fr. 174 Snell-Maehler. Pausanias 4.31.8, 7.2.7f.

73) Jane Harrison, *Themis* 46, citing Dittenberger, *Syll.*<sup>2</sup> 186 (= 3353), n. 1.

74) C. Calame, *Les chœurs de jeunes filles en Grèce archaïque I* (Rome 1977).

75) For this approach, see e.g. Dowden (see note 4, above) ch. 7.

period of transition, when the age group has been separated from its prior social context (the parental οἶκος) and not yet assigned to its target social context (ultimately the husband's οἶκος), is often characterised by inversions of social rules and behaviour. So in male rites thieving and trickery can be privileged; and youths may even adopt female characteristics. In mythology we see this in Achilles' transvestism on the island of Skyros and in the pederasty of Ganymede (reflecting actual Cretan practices). Conversely, in female initiations, we might expect male characteristics. Perhaps the races we hear of at Brauron and at Elis (organised by the Sixteen Women) are assumptions of the male role: sport, being a question of display and of physical strength, was viewed as a male domain – as the exclusion of women from the Olympic Games, for instance, shows. Hunting in the wilds is likewise an unladylike activity, but it is practised by Artemis and the Nymphs (whose very name is associated with the marriage from which they are in their present condition excluded). The military dances of Hippo and her Amazons at Ephesos (as apparently of girls in ritual), and the military campaigning of Amazons in myth, are another example of this pattern. They are a model for girls in the transitional stage, when they are alone, a society on their own, with their leader (deb of the year) and their goddess. In this period they adopt the characteristics of the opposite sex and aim impossibly at the warrior status that the other sex enters as a matter of course.

Why, then, must they die? Being an Amazon is only an interim status: it has no future. Being a warrior is a role which will be assumed definitively by the men and denied absolutely to the Amazon. At the end of the Amazon period, the Amazon can only pass on to the next stage – marriage – or die; the Amazon in her must die in either case. The myths therefore of Amazon death and the visible signs of those myths, the *μνήματα*, indicate the resumption of normalcy. It is, then, far from inappropriate that there is a sexual element in a number of these stories. Antiope is swayed from successful defence of her city by lust for Theseus – and is presently killed (by Molpadia by mistake, Pausanias 1.2). Theseus has Hippolytos by Antiope or Hippolyte, but she is rejected by Theseus and disappears from the story (Hippolyte is dead at Megara in Pausanias). Herakles wins the belt of his Hippolyte, but in doing so may kill her. And Achilles is stung by the rebuke of Thersites that he loved the Penthesileia that he has just killed, a theme that with sufficient decadence of taste could later be worked up into necrophilia.

It is plain that the mythic construct of Amazons engages in a dialogue with the gender roles of the society in which it is viewed. In our own society they might have quite a different impact. In Greek society they can only act to reinforce the values of those that deploy them. The tombs, however, show that there was something beyond words, ideas, plays and poetry – they are a place to perform and display. And these performances may take place, characteristically, at the point when gender roles are being defined – namely at the point of transition to adulthood and marriage. In Ephesos the ritual context is fairly explicit. It also displays a Brauronian anatomy: tomb of the virgin (Hippo = Iphigeneia), temple of Artemis, dance-group of girls.

Other Amazon tombs may perhaps also be associated with this moment, like those tombs of other young people who failed the transition to adulthood. The clearest is, I think, the tomb of Iphinoë: there are specimens at both Sikyon and Megara, but at Megara we are told her myth and cult. Myth: ‘they say she died whilst still a maiden’; cult: ‘the established custom is for girls to bring libations to Iphinoë’s *μνήμα* before marriage and to make an initial offering of their hair’ (Pausanias 1.43.4). That is the use of a dead virgin, one which a dead Amazon may fill too, though an Amazon has more to say for herself and for women in a world of men.

#### *Defeat of the Amazons: maiden and woman*

If we argue, as I do, that the attempted sacrifice of Iphigeneia by Agamemnon is to be referred to an initiation ritual structured in the manner Van Gennep outlined, we can say at what stage she is to be sacrificed<sup>76</sup>). She is sacrificed as her father loses control of her and as she passes into the control of Artemis, in some myths as her priestess. This is the moment of separation, that begins the transitional stage. But Amazons are already in the transitional stage – that is what it is to be an Amazon. Their death therefore marks their reincorporation into normal society.

Their death typically (perhaps not in Hippo’s case) occurs in battle, in an Amazonomachy, that is to say a battle between Greeks and Amazons, between men and women. Such a conflict is a known phenomenon of ritual and of myth and pseudo-history. I

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76) K. Dowden, *Death and the Maiden: Girls’ initiation rites in Greek mythology* (London 1989) e.g. 4, 14.

cite the following examples by place, divinity where known, and whether male or female wins the contest (m/f):

1. Orchomenos (Boiotia), Dionysos (m): the ritual chase at the Agrionia (imitating the pursuit of the Minyads in myth), where, Plutarch tells us, the chief priest Zoilos once led the men so vigorously against the women that he killed one of them (Plutarch, *Quaest. Gr.* 38.299e–300a, W. Burkert, *Homo necans: Interpretationen altgriechischer Opferriten und Mythen* [Berlin 1972] 195–7; Engl. tr. [Berkeley 1983] 174–5, Dowden [see note 76] 82–4).

2. Thebes (Boiotia), Dionysos (f): the Agrionia there is based on the separation and awesome power of women, involving the death of King Pentheus (Euripides, *Bacchae*; Dowden loc. cit. 82–3).

3. Argos, Dionysos (m, f): the Agrionia there involves the death of Megapenthes and appears to honour a dead Proitid (Burkert loc. cit. 193–4 [172–3], Dowden loc. cit. 84).

4. Argos, Dionysos (m): Perseus' defeat of Mainads who had 'come from the Aegean islands' and their resultant grave (Pausanias 2.22.1, Burkert loc. cit. 197–9 [176–8]).

5. Argos, Aphrodite (f): Telesilla leads the Argive women to victory over the Spartan men, and as a result there is a relief sculpture of Telesilla armed in the Aphrodision at Argos (Plutarch, *Mul. virt.* 245c, F. Graf, *Women, war and warlike divinities*, ZPE 55 [1984], 246–8).

6. Argos (f?): An oracle predicting women in charge is ineptly combined by Herodotos with a story of loss of menfolk in war (cf. Ephoros on Amazons above) which, however, fails to mention women and talks about children growing up, expulsion, and slaves (Herodotos 6.77,83; cf. Graf loc. cit. 247).

7. Argos (f): the Danaids refuse marriage, murder their husbands (of another race, a black one like the Sooties of Orchomenos), but finally are (re-)married (Dowden [see note 76, above] ch. 7).

8. Sikyon (m): Apollodoros' account (2.2.2) of the end of the story of the Proitids (and other Argive women): they are 'cured' by being chased by Melampous and a band of youths all the way to Sikyon. Regrettably one, Iphinoë, dies – hence her tomb (Dowden [see note 76, above] 78–80, 85–7).

9. Sparta, Aphrodite (m, f): Spartan women, whose men are away at war, defeat Messenians; Spartan men do not recognise their own women in arms and almost kill them; promiscuous (i. e.



non-marriage-based, cf. the Amazons and the Gargareis) sexual union follows with husbands who are unrecognisable in armour. A statue and temple of Armed Aphrodite are established (Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* 1.20.29–32, Graf loc. cit. 248).

10. Tegea, Ares (f): the Tegean men make little progress against the Spartan army led by King Charillos; Marpessa (cf. Troglus' Amazon queen) and her women intervene and win, taking the king and others prisoner. The women celebrate an exclusive sacrifice to Ares, and a stele to Ares *Γυναικοθόινας* ('Women-feaster/feasted') is set up in the agora (Pausanias 8.48.4–5, Graf loc. cit. 248).

11. Ephesos/Samos, Dionysos (m): the pursuit by Dionysos of the Amazons from Ephesos to Samos (above).

12. Chios, Dionysos (m): mythic battle of the sexes with the outcome of marriage, perhaps reflecting ritual (Seleukos cf. Graf loc. cit. 78 and n. 29; Dowden [see note 76, above] 83).

13. Chios and Tenedos, Dionysos (f): women in a festival of Dionysos Omadios (Chios), Anthroporrhaites (Tenedos) slaughter a man (Porph. *abst.* 2.55, Aelian NA 12.43, F. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte: Religionsgeschichtliche und epigraphische Untersuchungen zu den Kulturen von Chios, Erythrai, Klazomenai und Phokaia* [Roma 1985] 74–7).

14. Lemnos: The Women of Lemnos slaughter their husbands, smell evilly like garlic-chewing women at the Thesmophoria, then have intercourse with the Argonauts (W. Burkert, Jason, Hypsipyle and New Fire at Lemnos, *CQ* ns 20 [1970] 1–16).

15. Queen Tomyris of the Massagetai (at the other side of the Caspian from the Amazons), living across a river, refuses marriage (the Massagetai in fact do not practise marriage, 1.216), defeats and kills Cyrus (Herodotos 1.204–14; Amazonic character: Klügmann [see note 9, above] 275, Töpffer, *RE* 1 [1894] 1768, and cf. Diodoros 2.44.2).

Though this is a mixed bag, there are common themes and a sense of a common picture to which Amazons also belong. An armed Aphrodite or an Ares worshipped by women invert the distribution of tasks between the genders, which might more naturally lead to the exclusion of women from the grove of Ares at the time of the festival (Geronthrai, Lakonia, Pausanias 3.22.7). This is why the Amazons are so closely associated with Ares: they are his daughters, they had erected him a temple on an (NB) island in the Black Sea (Apollonios 2.387), they sacrifice him white

horses ( $\Sigma$  Aristophanes *Lys.* 191), and their battle-line and tombs were near to the only temple of Ares in north-central Greece<sup>77</sup>), on the Athenian Areopagos. In ritual this occurs at a point where society is dismantled so that it may begin again with new strength. Thus the ritual depicts the reversion to the pre-civilised state when, until the Flood at Athens, there were no marriages and women had the vote<sup>78</sup>). What the conflicts show us is sometimes that men win, sometimes that women do, but it comes in a sequence. Androktony leads to *gynaikokrateia*<sup>79</sup>). This self-evidently entails the non-existence of marriage, but Amazons also conspicuously fail to reintroduce marriage or to recognise it (better to have sex anonymously in the dark). *Gynaikokrateia* then leads to Amazonomachy, in which the Amazons, who may well 'invade' as Theseus or Priam discovered, are defeated and their defeat is the point because it is that that is commemorated. Thus Amazonomachy leads to restoration of normal society, the undivided state (*synoikism*<sup>80</sup>) and amazonomachy are complementary characteristics of Theseus), and its renewal through marriages now that they have been reinstated. This same pattern is exhibited, for instance, by the Athenian Thesmophoria: breaking off of sexual contact; segregation of the sexes; establishment of magistrates by the women as they take up residence on the Pnyx (*γυναικοκρατία*). The Pnyx is not very far, either, from where the Amazons drew up their battle-lines – in front of the Areopagos, which mediates between Pnyx and Akropolis.

### *Conclusion*

Amazons, then, are the female sex at war. They are a preliminary to (in Greek eyes) civilised society whose subjugation is required so that the institution of marriage and, with it, the right of (male) managers to manage may be recognised. This truth may be impressed upon the whole of society through mythology or through the ritual of new year (new beginning, new *synoikism*),

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77) M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion I* (München <sup>3</sup>1967) 517.

78) Dowden (see note 4, above) 86. 124.

79) Toepffer, *RE* 1 (1894), 1768.

80) A related example is at Patrai, where sexual union between two would-be prototypical marriage partners (Melanippos and Komaitho) cannot take place until the *synoikism* has been reenacted, cf. Dowden (see note 76, above) 169–73, esp. 172.

but it is specially appropriate for those entering upon adulthood, whether as male warriors or as wives. The geographical distribution of original interest in Amazons can to an extent be traced: Troizen, Megara, Athens, Boiotia plus an outsurge from Ephesos (and the Kayster) and Miletos to Black Sea colonies. From ritual beginnings, the fictions which supported that ritual were of sufficient power to fascinate epic and art, and analysed society in a way which lent itself to integration with the ideology-driven and fiction-prone ethnography of Greeks early and late. The Amazon herself, however, has no future other than marriage or the tomb. Only goddesses can sublimate the feminine condition: immortal, unchanging, permanently supreme, permanently adult – but not required to be subjugated by marriage and able to remain a παρθένος for ever. Athene is what the Amazons would love to be<sup>81</sup>).

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81) The reader should now consult the detailed and interesting study of Josine H. Blok, *The Early Amazons: modern and ancient perspectives on a persistent myth* (Leiden 1995), e.g. 83–93 on ethnographic sources. I have been concerned to establish a tauter, more evolutionary, stemma of Amazon traditions than she has and to give more weight to ritual connections.