

**Othering Amazons in Greek Mythology: Myth as a Mirror of Historical Dynamics and
Cultural Hegemony**

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Introduction: The Power of Athenian Mythmaking in a Historical Context

Most of us are familiar with well-known Greek myths such as the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, stories that ancient Greeks absorbed into their consciousness, such as their origin stories, their identity, and their history. Myths were the product of Greek imagination seeking to explain the world around them. The foundations of ancient Greek literature, arts, theater, and much more were all based on myth, weaving aspects of reality into fictionalized stories. Myths were more than lavish tales; ancient Greeks considered myths part of their past, present, and future. Each story they told came with the promise that the Greeks might conquer the lesser, the non-Greek, and reassert the Greek military, political, cultural, and social prowess. The myth of the Amazons and the resulting tale of the Amazonomachy was no exception to these positions, especially in 5th century Athens when culture and arts were beginning to blossom.

The Amazons have been a part of Greek myth from the beginning, dating back to their earliest reference in Book 3 of the *Iliad* around the 12th-13th century BCE. Homer has Priam, King of Troy, reminisce about his youth when he battles against the *Amazones antianeirai* in Ancient Greek, translated as “the Amazons” and “peers of men.”¹ Here, there is an awareness of female warriors from faraway lands who serve as worthy opponents to any skilled male fighter. However, most Greeks, especially in 5th century Athens, did not know how to categorize those who did not adhere to their societal norms. Aeschylus, a prominent Greek author during the fifth century BC, describes “those famous Amazons, who live without men and feed on flesh” and are “virgins fearless in battle.”² This description emphasizes the differences in the Amazons’ behaviors, stretching the truth to paint the Amazons in a harsher, more frightening light. These varying descriptions by Homer and Aeschylus showcase the changes in the use of *Amazones*

¹ Homer, “The Iliad,” trans. A.T. Murray (Harvard UP, 1924) 3.189, 6.185-186.

² Aeschylus, “Suppliant Women,” trans. Herbert Weir Smyth (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1926) 285-290.

antianeirai throughout Greek history and how even translators to this day debate the etymology of *Amazones* as a way of interpreting how the Greeks saw these figures.³ *Amazones* indicates an entire ethnic group, followed by *antianeirai*, a descriptive tag some believe is best translated as “equals of men.” Scholars suggest that the word in its original form calls out the most notable feature of this group: gender equality.⁴ Other scholars point to how the phrase *Amazones antianeirai* transforms, noting there is a shift in the use of the prefix *anti-* from “equals of” to “opponents of” in writings.⁵ Acknowledging the various interpretations of the actual words used to describe the Amazons helps to problematize the controversial standings among scholars on the primary purpose of the Amazons in Greek history. As the Greeks used myth to explain their past, becoming part of their history, it is necessary to recognize the Amazon’s real-world counterparts that inspired their myths.

The earliest name for Amazons preserved in literature is strong evidence that it first entered Greek culture as a term for hazily understood "Scythian" peoples. Over time, Amazons became a mythic construct while retaining and accumulating parts of their actual past.⁶ Scythia was a term that described a cultural zone of loosely connected nomadic tribes in the territories of Thrace, the Black Sea, and northern Anatolia across the Caucasus Mountains to the Caspian Sea and eastward for Central and Inner Asia.⁷ The rumors of warlike nomad societies from travelers fascinated the Greeks, piquing their curiosity, but some uncertainty was also attached. The Greeks had a firm grasp on their world, the society that ruled it, and the laws that protected them. Beyond their borders lay a world where their jurisdiction meant nothing, operating by different natural orders than their own. An aspect of this uncertainty manifested in the Greeks’

³ Josine H. Blok, *The Early Amazons Modern and Ancient Perspectives on a Persistent Myth* (Brill, 1995) ch. 1.

⁴ Adrienne Mayor, *The Amazons: Lives and Legends of Warrior Women across the Ancient World* (Princeton UP, 2016) 24.

⁵ Mayor 24.

⁶ Mayor 25.

⁷ Mayor 35.

understanding of gender norms. Greeks expected a strict division of gender roles, especially in Athens, yet the status of women in Scythian cultures was far from the Greek ideal. In the nomadic lifestyle, every individual needed to contribute equal work for the survival of their tribe. For example, boys and girls alike wore the same clothes and learned to ride horses and shoot together.⁸ With the knowledge of these societal differences, this far-spanning region inspired the Greeks, a world beyond their own, where there was a complete reversal of their social order, an “anti-” way of life—where the Amazons flourished and ruled. Greek authors created various “what if” scenarios of what would happen if their world converged with this other world. Great battles to demonstrate the might of both parties were familiar tales, embellished details to add to the heroic conquests of the likes of Hercules and Achilles. These Amamazonomachies, battles between the Greeks and the Amazons, were powerful tales in the Greek mind. The Athenian manipulation of the battles is a window into Greek thought facing the allure of the Amazons.

The tale of Amazonomachy begins far before the rise of Athenian democracy and power. The common consensus of the myth begins with Heracles and his quest for Hippolyte’s girdle as part of his Labors. Heracles travels to Themyscira, the mythical island where the heroic race of the Amazons lives, takes the girdle, and kills most Amazons and the queen herself. Theseus, the prince of Athens, accompanied Heracles on his mission. He seizes Antiope, the sister of Hippolyte, through seduction or trickery and sets sail for his homeland. The Battle of Athens, an Amazonomachy, begins after. The surviving Amazons plan an attack on Athens to retrieve the girdle and Antiope, who marries Theseus, and in some versions, she has a son with him. What’s critical in this discussion of the importance of the Amazonomachy in developing and supporting Athenian identity is the understanding of what ideals Theseus and Antiope represent, as well as the inevitable Amazon defeat in myth.

⁸ Herodotus, *Histories*, trans A. D. Godley (Harvard UP, 1920) 4.110-117.

Unyielding Status Quo in Classical Athens

At the height of its cultural significance and success, Athens remained steadfast in its conceptions of citizenship and Greek maleness, which brought along the success of the *polis*. The boundaries of civic identity, categorizing all who lived in Athens under specific labels, were as follows: Greek/barbarian, male/female, rich/poor, citizen/metic.⁹ Classical Greece was more than a single society; it was a single culture. It demanded active citizen engagement and adherence to specific norms in their private and public lives. Maintaining these divisions became the social framework that influenced political discourse and the sentiment on what qualities the Greeks idealized in the individual. Thus, there became a division between all of humankind into two mutually exclusive and antithetical categories only best described in terms of “Us” versus “Them,”¹⁰ with the latter term becoming synonymous with the terms “Barbarian” or “Other.”

Laws that laid out rules for Athenian citizenship during the 4th century explained and supported the defining characteristics of “Us” and “Them.” Following the laws frames the belief that the rejection or nonacceptance of another person or group of people was based on a specific conception of Athenian identity.¹¹ Their identity rested on their foundation myth of the *polis* by their patron goddess Athena. Athenians sprung from the land mixed with Athena’s blood, so only those born from two Athenian parents were considered true Athenian citizens. With their exclusivity, Athenians could preserve their strong and flourishing *polis*, free of the taint of foreigners who came to Greece with their barbarian blood. Only select Greek elite men were the model Athenian citizens and what was considered the norm.

⁹ Roberta Dainotto, “The Concept of Self and Others in Ancient Greek Courts,” *Harvard Center of Hellenic Studies Research Bulletin* 10 (2022): 1.

¹⁰ Paul Cartledge, *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others* (Oxford UP, 2022) 11.

¹¹ Dainotto 12.

Another polarization appeared with the division of male and female characteristics and behaviors that placed male citizens at the center of society and politics and most women in the home, secluded and separate from the public sphere. Respectable women were expected to maintain the house and were never allowed to enjoy the pleasures of life in public buildings, theaters, the market, and more. Their mobility through the social scale was severely restricted, limited to their birthright as the daughter of their father, the wife of their husband, and the mother of their son. Classical Athens was the most gender conservative out of all the well-established Greek cities, but it will continue to be the model example as its thriving arts and culture are centered around Greek patriotism. Faith in the *polis* and the established social order was secured with the representation of those who did not adhere to the strict patriarchal society. This representation of the Other was necessary for developing the distinction from the self,¹² as the Other signaled the qualities in the individual that Athenians believed led to the degradation of their known world and everything they worked so hard to achieve.

¹² W. B. Tyrrell, *Amazons: A Study in Athenian Mythmaking* (John Hopkins UP, 1986) 17.

Otherness: In Every Way the Opposite of the Ideal Greek Man

Understanding of the “Self,” referred to here as the representation of the Athenian civic body, primarily considers the “Other” as those who deviate from the norm laid out by the dominating identity. The mythical Amazons embody the notion of the Other as they operate outside the boundaries of the Greek known world, where little is known about the geography and the actual civilizations that thrive in these regions. Amazons themselves are the epitome of the Greek understanding of the Other because they are warriors with different fighting styles than the Greeks, and they are women. Historians and mythographers, especially at the height of Athenian democracy and nationalism, took the Amazon myth as a reversal of the Athenian ideal or model—not the reality—according to which citizen men and women were supposed to conduct their lives.¹³ Amazons piqued the interest of Greeks alike because the acknowledgment of their existence emphasized an alternative scenario where barbarians ruled, and women took the role of the Greek male in their patriarchal society. How they would face this alternate reality was left to creative interpretation in the mythical landscape.

Greek authorship sought to exemplify the differences in the Amazon way of fighting compared to the Athenian way in the context of iron weapons and no iron weapons, horses, and no horses. Athenian historian Lysias was known to invent details about the Amazon fighting styles. He saw horses as an easy way to flee battles and their use of bows and arrows to take out their opponents from a distance as examples of their cowardice. In contrast, Athenians stand in strict formation and have superior weapons, leading to face-to-face combat, all of which result in the dependence on each other and the cohesiveness of their unit to succeed. Lysias creates polar opposition to the concept of manliness to the Greeks in battle.¹⁴ Though the Amazons are fierce

¹³ Tyrrell 116.

¹⁴ Tyrrell 17-18.

and skilled warriors in the Greeks' minds, the slight differences widen the division between "Us" and "Them." It points out their inferiority in battle because their fighting style is considered less manly. No sources point to an Amazon victory, perhaps because of this idea. The Amazon fighting style is their primary characteristic, used as a reason for disdain and proof of their "barbaric" qualities among the Greeks. It is also an admirable quality that defines their existence and lends them respect and fear from historians and artists alike. Their existence is uncontrollable, going against what the Greeks see as the natural order of things, especially as the Amazons are composed of female-led groups.

How the Amazons were categorized in myth and history rests on the fact that they are women living in a female-dominated society. Descriptions of the Amazons were quite tame in the Archaic Period, such as Herodotus' (6th century BC) accounts of the Amazons to explain the origins of the Sarmatians and their unusual customs.¹⁵ There were some Amazon bands where the males stayed home while the females roamed freely outside—a direct inverse of the Greek patriarchal society championed in Athens. Other accounts state that the Amazons lived in a female-only society, where they would mate with neighboring male-only groups, giving any male offspring to the fathers, and they would keep and raise the females to become one of their own warriors. Hippocrates's Amazons begin a shift and reflect the changes in the perception of the Amazons with his introduction of cauterization of the right breast in literary and ideological tradition.¹⁶ The opposition to the Amazon way of life then gains another reason against their existence. Hippocrates writes that until the Amazons marry and lay aside their weapons, they are unruly teenagers: unripe, underdeveloped, undomesticated, and unrestrained.¹⁷ The idea of

¹⁵ Maria-Àngels Roque, "The Amazons, the Contribution of a Greek Myth to the Patriarchal Imaginary," *European Institute of the Mediterranean* (2017): 41.

¹⁶ Roque 41.

¹⁷ Hippocrates, *The Genuine Works of Hippocrates*, trans. Francis Adams (Wilkins & Wilkins, 1939) 53.

matriarchy was merely used as a tool for conceptualizing, explaining, and validating Athenian customs, institutions, and values by presenting their opposites and revealing them as absurd, barbaric, and inferior.¹⁸ Historians could postulate how their mighty Greek hero would interact with the Amazons beyond their known world. The Amazon united their threats into one, eternally challenging the sacred principle of male supremacy. When these threats materialized onto the borders of Athenian lands, it was every Athenian's patriotic duty to protect their livelihood and ultimately reign supreme.¹⁹

¹⁸ Tyrrell 28.

¹⁹ Andrew Stewart, "Imag(in)ing the Other: Amazons and Ethnicity in Fifth-Century Athens," *Poetics Today* 16.4 (1995): 594.

The Amazons vs. the Hero: The Amazonomachy, the Great Athenian Myth

A crucial aspect of the rise of Athens as a complete powerhouse of a *polis* during the 4th and 5th centuries was the creation of a specific Athenian identity and a clear-cut mold of the Greek citizen by Greek authors and artists alike. There was no better way to demonstrate the might of Athenians than through myth, especially those relating to epic battles between Greek heroes and their enemies. Amazonomachies—battles between Greeks and Amazons—were well known during the Archaic period before the rise of Athens. During and after the Persian Wars, the purpose of Amazonomachies shifted to encompass a new political and cultural agenda that embraced Athenian identity as the dominating force against the Barbarian, the Other. The Battle for Athens, the mythical Amazon attack on Athens, blended real-world fears and realities of foreigners challenging the prosperity of Athens with the assurance of an eventual Greek victory because, in their minds, no one was better educated, trained, and prepared than themselves living in Athens.

The contradicting claims and varying source material on the reasoning for the start of the Battle of Athens, the pinnacle of all Amazonomachies, points to the development of such Athenian propaganda. With the Battle of Athens in particular, the myth of the rape of Antiope by Theseus was invented to explain the Amazon invasion. There was no precedent needed to explain the rape of Antiope, as Theseus was notorious for doing so, such as that of Helen of Troy and Ariadne, in his older myths.²⁰ As the Amazonomachy reflects the idea of the Other being suppressed by the heroic, masculine, and courageous, Theseus reflects a gray area as the embodiment of Athenian identity. He was destined for greatness as he had no other rival hero in Athens to center mythic storytelling around. He became the “other Heracles,” especially with the development of his own Theseis myth, because Athens needed their own hero, one they could

²⁰ Tyrrell 5.

champion as their leader and role model. Theseus was not without flaws. He was notorious for being highly cunning, a quality that was frowned upon among the Greeks. Any cracks in their precious Theseus had to be fixed, as Athenians had the power to shape the narrative of their identity. Archeological evidence shows that myth of the rape appeared on all vases dating before the Persian Wars (490, 480/79) and the temple of Apollo Daphnephoros in Eretria about 510 BC. It disappeared through the years after the Persian Wars as the Amazons were frequently stand-ins for the Persians, reflecting a mythic counterpart that is both Barbarian, feminized, and Other. The myth of the rape attributed the responsibility of the invasion in Athens to the Athenians themselves, undermining Athenian support and their justification for righteous violence against the Amazons in battle.²¹ But there had to be another reason for the invasion: the Amazons had their own frightening motivations. Gone was any notion of the Amazon's desire to reclaim Hippolyte's girdle or to rescue Antiope. These reasons were overshadowed by their new desire, according to Greek historians. They invaded Attica to spread their empire over the Greeks.²² An invasion of Athens by those considered Barbarians and any notion of a victory threatened the establishment and livelihood of the Greeks. It made sense in the Greek mind because they were constantly at odds with other *polis* or groups outside their known world. The only way to alleviate their fears was to develop a strong rhetoric that upheld their values in the Athenian social structure. In this way, a typical Greek Athenian would feel protected from outside invaders in his city and do everything he could to maintain the norm. Adrienne Mayor describes the linkage between past and present perspectives on the shaping of the Battle of Athens:

"A fear of Barbarian (Scythian) invaders in the past combined with *historical* Greek skirmishes with Thracians and nationalistic pride in Athen's most *recent* triumph over Persian invaders

²¹ Tyrrell 15.

²² Tyrrell 15.

contributed to the mythic scenario of the Battle for Athens. The myth imagined how, at the height of their power, bent on revenge and conquest, the seemingly invincible Amazon army penetrated the very heart of Athenian territory in the golden era of heroes and heroines. Here, in an epic battle, the future of Greece would be decided" (Mayor 277).

To the Greeks, an epic battle with the Other will test their character, military tactics, and reality to those they consider inferior. The Amazons, as the complete inversion of the Greek male ideal, demonstrated the influence of myth-making that suited the needs of Athenians in creating their identity. With the ultimate defeat of the Amazons, the Athenians reinforce their strength in all aspects of their lives, from on the battlefield to in the home. Thus, the Other has no place within Athens, forever inhabiting a space within the Greek mind in a phase between worlds, just as the Amazons, as representations of a cultural mindset in 5th century Athens, occupied myth rather than historical fact.

Beyond the Amazon's identity as a female warrior, it was essential for the Amazon to perish at the hands of the Greeks in myth and art. The Amazonomachy ended in Amazon's defeat because the Greeks believed that the Barbarians were weaker, less sophisticated, and less skilled. In place of the lesser, the opposition to the Other, is the Athenians, and through Theseus and the Amazonomachy in Athens, the Athenian identity surpasses all. In the mythic literary canon, the Amazons were understood not as Persians—as they are so often depicted as—but as a first wave of aggressive barbarians from the East.²³ This idea was instilled in the minds of Athenians, becoming intertwined with the apparent historical fact of hostile cultures beyond mainland Greece, and understood to be a defining moment in Athenian identity.

Simultaneously, one must remember that the Amazon defeat served two purposes in Athens with strict male and female roles. The death of the Amazons symbolized the oppression

²³ Mayor 283.

of a different identity for women in Athens as the role of warrior was taken by the men and denied to the Amazon with her eventual death. According to Greek standards, the Amazon is inherently female and thus must abide by specific rules to enter the next stage in her womanhood. The female within the Amazon must choose to marry or die, and the Amazon in her must die in either case,²⁴ marking the reality that any form of the Amazon has no future in normal Athenian society. Neither Othered group—women or Barbarians, Persians and Scythians by extension—could break beyond the labels presented to them by Athenians as both “feminine” and “uncivilized.” The meaning of the Amazons as a combination of these entities was met with new heights with the rise in artistic renditions.

²⁴ Ken Dowden, “The Amazons: Development and Functions,” *Rheinisches Museum Für Philologie* 140.2 (1997): 121.

Visual Representations of the Amazons in 5th c. Athens

Artistic renditions of popular myths and figures go hand-in-hand in Greek to evoke specific messages in private and public spaces. The Amazons remain prominent enemies on vases, friezes, and sculptures. Many are depicted as fallen, bleeding, and dying (Fig. 3 and 4). Numerous works of art present the Amazons in battle as well-matched antagonists against Greek heroes, threatening, wounding, and even slaying Greek warriors.²⁵ Amazons were typically depicted wearing hoplite armor like Greek men dressed for combat, with the only difference being their hair, on amphoras dated from the Archaic period. After the Persian Wars, around 450 BC, records show that the number of Amazons depicted on vases more than doubled, a testament to the evolving use of the Amazons as symbols of the Other.²⁶ Images of Amazons and Persians were intertwined and interchangeable, from their similar battle stance to the appearance of their clothes, as seen in Figures 1 and 2. The Persian on the amphora dated from c. 480 BC can easily be substituted for the Amazon on the amphora dated from c. 440 BC, wearing exotic clothing that also is not historically accurate.²⁷ Both figures carry a bow and iron weapons, while the Greek is adorned with garments of a typical male warrior, symbolizing his masculinity and strength. Just as the Greeks can face and defeat the Persians, they can do so with the Amazons, simultaneously destroying their historical counterpart and mythic symbol. They were a stylish metaphor that helped support the anti-Persian narrative. Indeed, Amazons on amphoras were commonly placed in a defeated position, and even if there was an active battle between the Greeks and Amazons, it was alluded to that the Greeks would eventually be victorious as it was part of their nature, way of life, that the masculine will conquer the Barbarian.

²⁵ Mayor 228.

²⁶ Mayor 280.

²⁷ It was common for Greek artists to mix up the clothing styles of various regions on Amazons to heighten their foreignness.

Amazonomachies were commonly seen on vases and friezes in temples for the gods, specifically on the metopes in the Parthenon (Fig. 5), to reinforce Athenian power. As the center of Athenian success and a prominent display of power, the Acropolis boasted its greatest tribute to the Athenian patron goddess Athena with the Parthenon. Placing an Amazonomachy with the other great battles of a Gigantomachy, Centauromachy, and war with the Trojans on the metopes fully defined the Greek perspective of forces of justice and order, conquering chaos and the unruly. In Greek minds, Amazons are comparable to centaurs, animals, barbarians, and above all, they are women. All of these categories threaten boundaries between the ideal, the Greek man, and his subordinates.²⁸ Their placement on the Parthenon reveals their everlasting legacy, telling more about Greek perception of the Other than Giants, Centaurs, and Trojans could not. The Amazons are not the obvious choice to show monstrosity and the embodiment of evil, as demonstrated by Giants, Centaurs, and other prominent Greek monsters. Instead, there is a display of a mere likeness where the Amazons are the mirror image of the Greek polis. They are *parthenoi*, “unwed girls,”²⁹ questioning and problematizing the very grounds of what makes up Greek valor beyond what a stereotypical barbaric cliché could not. The Athenians focus on the Amazon defeat on the Parthenon to complete the position of the elite Greek man and the patriarchy, over all that came before. It became the overarching legacy of the Greek mindset, which prevails in Western culture but takes new forms with a greater understanding of the past.

²⁸ Page duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons: Women and the Pre-history of the Great Chain of Being* (University of Michigan Press, 1982) 25-48.

²⁹ Herodotus (*Histories* 4.114; 117), Aeschylus (PV 416), Hippocrates (*Airs, Waters, Places* 17) all call Amazons *parthenoi* in descriptions.

Othering in Modern Times: The Changes in Perspective on the Symbol of the Amazons

The development of the meaning of Amazons evolves far after the rise and fall of Athens to encompass more than a symbol of the Other. There is the common phrase and connotation of calling a woman “an Amazon” in modern times, with its meaning sometimes neither good nor bad, but simply a descriptive word to denote a female that some “wouldn’t use for the first time meeting someone.”³⁰ Amazons have reached a compelling place in modern societal thought of being of two worlds, past and present, once more. The term suggests the power of representation the Amazons have on different identities in cultural history while emerging as its defining term. It is this flexibility and influence that, ironically, Athenians could not dare imagine for themselves or the very creatures they suppressed.

The embodiment of the Amazons in the modern day centers less on Amazons being the Other because they are foreign—though this attitude towards those from other countries should not be disregarded entirely—but because they are women in a male-dominated world. The analysis of the Amazons in this new light would not be possible without the feminism wave in the 1960s, and as history is constantly evolving with the present, only in retrospect can there be a critical evaluation of the significance and implications of the Amazon image. With this in mind, the meaning of the Amazons has come to present an alternative model of fictitious and real strong-willed individuals going against the societal norm. In the 1920s, the idea of the Amazons as untamed female warriors reached modern viewers with the play *The Warrior’s Husband* and an eventual Hollywood movie based on the same name. Katherine Hepburn starred as Antiope. The story plays male and female role reversal in Athens and ends with Antiope realizing the “value” of masculine leadership and conceding control to the “real” men.³¹ Of its time, the play

³⁰ “What does it mean to call a woman an Amazon,” Quora (2017), online, Internet, 8 Jul, 2024.

³¹ Mayor 268.

did launch Hepburn into stardom and reignite common interest in the Amazons and the Greek world. Another popular direct connection to the Amazons is a 1995 television series, *Xena the Warrior Princess*, which follows Xena as she looks to redeem herself from her past sins by using her fighting skills to aid the defenseless.³² The show gained widespread success, running for six seasons, delving into Xena's character as she forms close bonds with a farm girl turned Amazon warrior and learns to recognize her ability to help others. Loosely based on Greek myth and prominent historical sites, *Xena*, became a pivotal narrative in the Amazon's cultural canon.

Furthermore, there appears to be a pattern of recurring themes throughout history on how the image of the Amazon is used to reveal or promote specific implications about societal roles, especially those that are female-centered. There is one of the most popular representations of the Amazons in recent years with Wonder Woman, a superhero born in Themyscira whose background is elaborated on extensively in comics and film franchises. Other female figures embodying the modern concept of Amazon characteristics are Katniss Everdeen from *The Hunger Games*, Merida from the Pixar film *Brave*, and Disney's Mulan. These female characters, Xena and Wonder Woman especially, embody the heightened realities of the Amazons. The creators accentuate these characteristics of having extraordinary fighting skills and caring for the greater good. These characters are outsiders to the normative society when their stories are introduced. Still, they appear to stay true to their identity while they take action when needed and find camaraderie in found families. These characteristics resemble the Amazons in the Archaic period more closely than the stereotypical Amazons from Athens.

Personal anecdotes surveyed from various anonymous survey responses suggest the endless possibilities of the connections of the Amazons to the modern day beyond contemporary media. The majority of the responses consider any female soldier, or more broadly, "any woman

³² "Xena: Warrior Princess," Wikipedia (2004), online, Internet, 8 Jul, 2024.

fighting against the patriarchy,” as a solid connection to the Amazons in the modern day. Interestingly, those who chose to provide descriptive tags regarding any female in the military picked soldiers such as those in the Colombian army, Middle East, and Africa fighting for their rights. In today’s era, the idea of female warriors fighting for their autonomy and way of life appears to be the most critical aspect of the Amazons compared to what they represented in the past. The duality of these Amazons being both women and warriors, taking on the typical responsibilities that come with these titles, such as being a mother while having the time to fight, exemplify an encouraging shift in the portrayal of a capable woman against dominating forces of outdated customs and beliefs from ancient civilizations long past their prime.

Conclusions

A final examination of the Amazon's legacy in the modern day continues to evolve. We can only look back retrospectively, rethinking and reevaluating the complex Greek society and the Amazons' place within it. As strict as the Athenian patriarchy was, so were the mechanisms that sought to push the divide between "Us" and "Them." While this essay sought to explain the reasoning and examples of Othering the Amazons, more questions arise regarding how actual Greek women perceived the Amazons and whether these findings could reveal more about the embodiment of Greek culture beyond the acceptable Greek normative society and into the modern era. Further discussions would lead to the overall analysis of the role of history and historians in shaping the past and present and the inverse relationship. Despite these considerations, it is clear that the Amazons remain a symbol of strength and defiance. They remain women warriors who break beyond the bounds of the known world and step into ours, forcing us to grapple with the mechanisms that uplift and shield the prevailing narrative of what it means to be accepted into society and what is not.

Image References

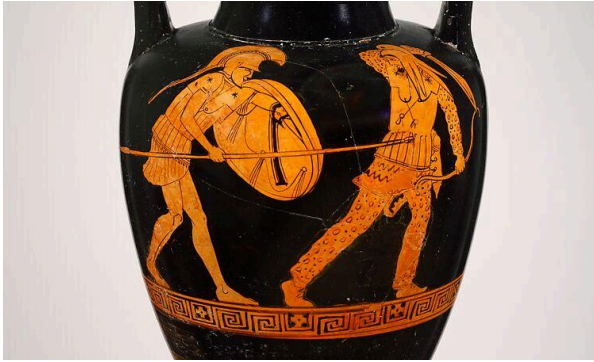


Figure 1. A warrior fighting a Persian Archer. ca. 480–470 BCE. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (06.1021.117).
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/247283>.



Figure 2. Greek fighting an Amazon. ca. 440–430 BCE. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, (56.171.42).
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/254900>.



Figure 3. Frieze of the Combat between Greeks and Amazons from Mausoleum of Halikarnassos. ca. 350 BCE. The British Museum, London. (1865,0723.1).
https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1865-0723-1.



Figure 4. Frieze of Battle of Amazons from Temple of Apollo, Bassae. ca. 420–400 BCE. *World History Encyclopedia*.
<https://www.worldhistory.org/image/5292/greek--amazons-frieze-from-bassae/>.

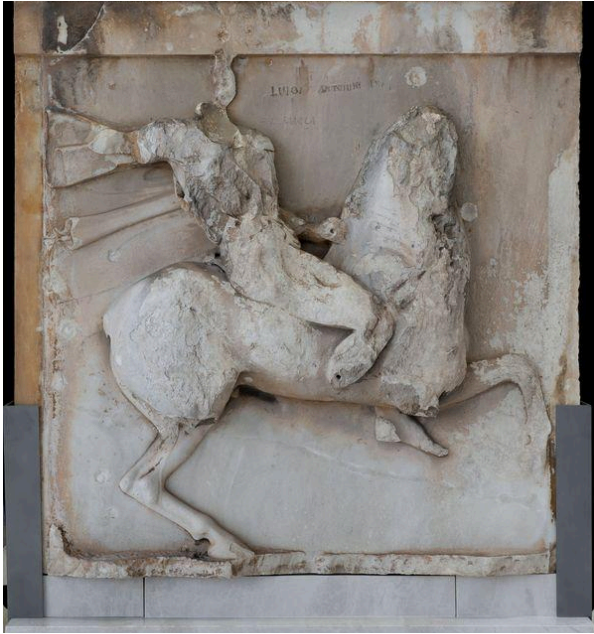


Figure 5. Parthenon West metope 1. ca. 445-440 BCE. The Acropolis Museum, Athens. (20708). <https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/parthenon-west-metope-1>.

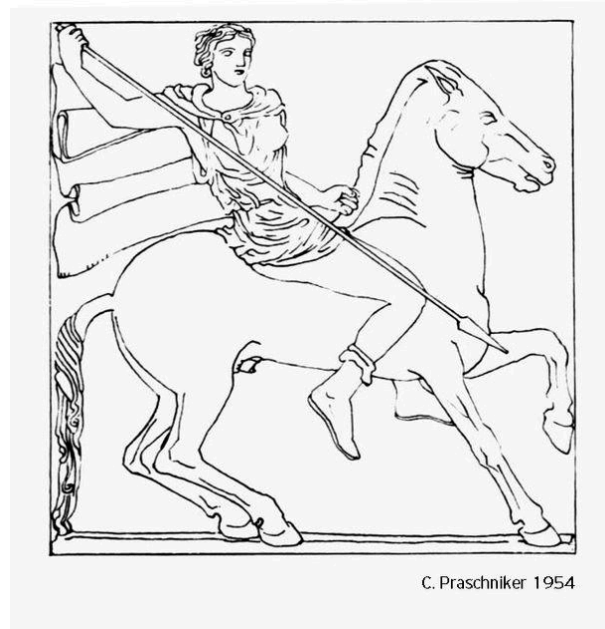


Figure 6. Parthenon West metope 1. ca. 445-440 BCE. The Acropolis Museum, Athens. (20708). <https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/parthenon-west-metope-1>.

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