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THE AMAZONS: REPRESENTATIVES OF MALE OR FEMALE VIOLENCE?*

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The women most frequently depicted as acting violently against male antagonists in Attic vase-paintings are without doubt the Amazons. But how should the Amazons be considered, as regards the way in which their violent behaviour is expressed? Are their violent actions really representative of female aggression? Or should they rather be understood as reflecting the same kind of violence as shown by male warriors? An attempt to answer these questions will here be made by an analysis of how the Amazons are depicted in Attic black- and red-figure vase-paintings.

Beginning as early as the second quarter of the sixth century B.C., Amazons appear in large numbers on Attic, black-figure vases and their popularity continues also during the following, red-figure period.¹ In order

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¹ Representations of Amazons in Archaic and Classical Greek art are collected in D. von Bothmer, *Amazons in Greek Art*, Oxford 1957, and in P. Devambez & A. Kauffmann-Samaras, *LIMC* 1, s.v. "Amazones", 586–653, Zürich 1981. For a résumé of recent research concerning the Amazons, see A. Stewart, "Imag(in)ing the Other. Amazons and Ethnicity in Fifth Century Athens", *Poetics Today* 16:4, 1995, 571–597, esp. 572–576. Other works important for this study, but not included in Stewart are: J. Blok, *The Early Amazons*, Leiden 1995, esp. 349–430; H.A. Shapiro, "Amazons, Thracians, and Scythians", *GRBS* 24:1, 1983, 105–114; H. Blinkenberg-Hastrup, "Amazoner eller barbar?", *Klassisk arkaeologiske studier* 2, 1995, 101–116; U. Stahre, "Penthesileia – A Deadly Different Amazon and Achilles' Lost Honour", in L. Larsson Lovén & A. Strömberg, *Aspects of Women in Antiquity*, Jonsered 1998, 154–168.

to discern any iconographic differences between male and female violence, this examination will focus on the arms used by the assailants.² The study is based on the hypothesis that Attic vase-painters emphasized various types of violence, including violence used by women, through the sort of weapon with which they were depicted.³

An account will be given of the offensive and defensive weapons which Amazons are represented with in Attic black- and red-figure vase-paintings. Four categories of weapons are used. The first consists of weapons characteristic of the heavily armed Greek warrior. The second comprises weapons normally shown in connection with barbarian warriors. A third group is represented by one weapon only, the particular sword called the *machaira*. Finally, the fourth category embraces other objects used for violent purposes.

The iconographical significance of the weapons will then be established by an analysis of what other figures use them in Attic vase-paintings. Lastly, a comparison will be made with the weapons which the vase-painters seem to have considered as characteristic of women. The result will show that the Amazons are always shown with the same arms as the male warrior, and they are therefore more related to the violent actions of males than of females.

I shall now begin the interpretation by looking at Amazons armed with the same weapons as the heavily armed Greek warrior.

The weapons of the heavily armed Greek warrior

Amazons depicted with the same weapons as the heavily armed Greek warrior occur on all types of Attic black- and red-figure vases. The arms

² This investigation is part of my forthcoming dissertation, *Walking on the Wild Side: The Iconography of Female Violence in Attic-Vase Painting*. The aim is to widen the scope of our understanding of the attitude towards women in ancient Athenian society. The iconographical part of the examination will present the elements characterizing female violence in comparison with male violence. Moreover, it will explain the circumstances which caused the female violence which the vase-painters preferred to represent, and in what way it differed from the underlying motives of male assailants.

³ See F. Lissarrague, "Orphée mis à mort", *Musica e storia* 2, 1994, 269–307, esp. 286.

utilized by these Greek warriors, when shown on vase-paintings, consist of both offensive and defensive weapons.⁴ The offensive are the spear and the sword. The defensive include two different types of shields.⁵ The most common in connection with Amazons is the Argive round shield. Less frequent is the second type, the Boeotian shield, which clearly differs from the round one, by the incisions on two sides.

The Amazon fights exclusively with weapons characteristic of the heavily armed Greek soldier up to the middle of the sixth century. This is in accordance with their remaining costume during this period, which more or less corresponds to how heavily armed warriors are represented.⁶ In conformity with these, the Amazons are also depicted dressed in helmets, cuirasses and greaves. Sometimes the white skin of the Amazons is the only sign in the picture that tells us that the figure is to be differentiated from an ordinary heavily armed male warrior. There should therefore be no doubt that the Amazon's acts of violence in this early stage, at least on the iconographical level, associated these female with the Greek male warrior.⁷

The Amazon depicted as a heavily armed warrior lives on until the end of the production of black- and red-figure, Attic vases, but it soon encounters competition from an Amazon of a different appearance.

⁴ F. Lissarrague, *L'autre guerrier*, Paris 1990, 14; J.K. Anderson, "Hoplite Weapons and Offensive Arms" in V.D. Hanson (ed.), *Hoplites*, London 1993, 15–37, esp. 22.

⁵ No iconographic difference seems to have existed between these different types of shields. On vase-paintings, warriors otherwise dressed and armed as hoplites use the Boeotian incised shield and are shown fighting side by side with identically dressed warriors armed with the round shield. The same condition is observable in connection with Amazons.

⁶ Devambez (n. 1), 637; Blinkenberg Hastrup (n. 1), 102; Blok (n. 1), 407–408, who nevertheless has found some details in the clothing of these early Amazons that distinguish it from the costume of the Greek warrior, a phenomenon which, according to Blok is the beginning of the process that resulted in the barbarization of the Amazon.

⁷ Blok (n. 1), 404.

Barbarian weapons

The second category of Amazon arms consists of weapons usually depicted only in connection with barbarians of different origins in Attic vase-paintings. They include both offensive and defensive arms. The barbarian weapons begin to show up in connection with Amazons from about 550 B.C. Their non-Greek arms seem to be due to the introduction of a new type of Amazon, who differs from her forerunners, not just by the new kinds of weapons, but also by her costume, which is of a barbarian kind.⁸ After her introduction, the barbarian Amazon exists side by side with the earlier one dressed as a warrior of Greek origin.

The new types of weapons are the Scythian bow and battle-axe, the sickle-spear of uncertain origin and the Thracian shield. The Scythian bow and the Thracian shield are the foreign weapons first introduced in the hands of Amazons in Attic vase-paintings. This takes place soon after the middle of the sixth century, whereas Amazons armed with battle-axes are brought in at a slightly later date, at the end of the same century. The Scythian bow, the axe and the Thracian shield henceforth become, during the red-figure period, very common elements in depictions of Amazons, in contrast to the rare sickle-spear, which is represented on only one Classical vase-painting.

The Scythian bow. The bow carried by Amazons is, with few exceptions, the composite bow characteristic of Scythian archers.⁹ This type of

⁸ The most detailed account of the alterations of the costume of the Amazon is given by Blok (n. 1), 407–418.

⁹ A small number of Attic, red-figure vases from the Classical period shows Amazons armed with a segment-bow, shaped like a letter D, von Bothmer (n. 1), Pl. 76:1, 77:2, 81:2, 4. The origin of this bow has not yet been demonstrated, though it is sometimes said to be of Greek derivation, M.F. Vos, *Scythian Archers in Archaic Attic Vase Painting*, Groningen 1963, 48. Besides the Amazons, also Persian warriors are now and then depicted with the straight bow, A. Bovon, "La représentation des guerriers Perses et la notion de barbare dans la I^{re} moitié du V^e siècle", BCH 87, 1963, 579–602, esp. figs. 3 and 4. However, Persians, just like Amazons, also readily carry the Scythian bow, Bovon, op. cit., Fig. 6 *bis*; : K. Schauenburg, "EYPYMEΔΩΝ EIMI", *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung* 90, 1975, 97–121, esp. Taf. 38,1. For that reason, it seems as if the vase-painters did not make an important distinction between these different types of bows in the hands of Amazons and Persians.

bow is in Attic vase-paintings distinguished by its shape, which consists of two curves bowed inwards and meeting each other at the middle of the length of the weapon, in such a manner that it looks like a letter W.

With the composite bow goes a quiver, *gorytos*, which like the bow, is a distinctive Scythian element.¹⁰ It was used both as a quiver and as a sheath for the bow. On vase-paintings, it is recognizable by its broad, rectangular shape with a rounded ending, frequently decorated, with a flap hanging from its open side.¹¹ The quiver is usually attached to its carrier fastened at the waist by a belt, with a strap carried on the shoulder running diagonally over the body down to the waist, where the quiver is placed.¹²

About the same time as the Amazon is supplied with the composite bow and the *gorytos*, her dress also changes.¹³ The basic elements in her new costume consist of a long-sleeved coat, trousers and a pointed cap. It has recently been pointed out that this new dress of the Amazon is more or less identical with how Scythian archers are depicted in vase-paintings.¹⁴

There are, as is well known, a good many other figures depicted carrying the Scythian bow in Attic vase-paintings, both barbarians and non-

E. Bulanda, *Bogen und Pfeil bei den Völkern des Altertums*, Leipzig 1913, esp. 84–89, discerns several shapes of bows depicted in ancient Greek art. Many of the details that Bulanda uses to distinguish between his types of bows are, in my opinion, insignificant and seem to have more to do with artistic variations. I hold that Bulanda's diverse types do not represent more than the two shapes of bows here discussed.

¹⁰ For a detailed description of the *gorytos*, see Vos (n. 9), 49, and A.M. Snodgrass, *Arms and armour of the Greeks*, London 1967, 82.

¹¹ See Vos (n. 9), Pl. 9 (a–b), for illustrations in which the double function of the *gorytos* is clearly perceivable. The use of the flap has not yet been established. Vos, *op. cit.*, 50 and note 1, presents different proposals, at the same time as she states that it should probably be understood just as a kind of decoration. However, one picture, Bulanda (n. 9), 111, fig. 77, shows clearly how the flap is placed over the opening of the quiver, as a cover.

¹² Another type of quiver has also been noted in Attic vase-paintings, the one shaped like a cylinder and placed on the back of its carrier, which seems to belong together with the D-shaped bow, Bulanda (n. 9), 111–112; Vos (n. 9), 50. However, no Amazons are depicted with it.

¹³ Blok (n. 1), 408–409.

¹⁴ Shapiro (n. 1), 110–111; Blok (n. 1), 409–411; Blinkenberg Hastrup (n. 1), 101–115. Earlier this costume was traditionally described by scholars as "Oriental" or "Asiatic".

barbarians. A few dozen pictures even show heavily armed Greek warriors with the weapon.¹⁵ But, if we exclude the goddess Artemis, who, is always shown with some sort of bow as her attribute, this weapon is very unusual in the hands of women acting violent against a man. The only certain example is a painting by the Sotades Painter showing an unidentified woman defending herself with a Scythian bow and a stone against an intrusive Satyr, which, after all, does not effect the overall impression of the Scythian bow as a weapon used chiefly by male barbarian warriors, beside the Amazons.¹⁶

Moreover, since the bow appears in connection with the Amazon at the same time as she is shown in her new Scythian dress, it is obvious that they should be understood as elements belonging together, and both are used to emphasize the non-Greek identity of the Amazon.¹⁷

The battle-axe. Another weapon of barbarian origin wielded by Amazons is the battle-axe, *sagaris*. The axe appears only casually on black-figure vases at the end of the sixth century B.C., but becomes a very common weapon in connection with these female warriors in red-figure

¹⁵ Lissarrague 1990 (n. 4), 290–291, nos. A640–A646.

¹⁶ Giessen KIII-46; ARV² 768,35. The woman is wearing a *sakkos*, a short chiton covered by an animal skin and Thracian boots. Beazley, *ibid.*, interpreted the woman as Amymone. The problem with this reading is that Amymone in the other paintings is always shown as a respectable woman, without any allusions to a wild character, and with a hydria as her distinctive attribute. More plausible proposals are that the woman represents either Artemis or Atalanta (H. Hinkel, "Die giessener Satyrspiel-schale", AA, 1968, 652–663, esp. 655–658, fig. 5) or an Amazon (H. Hoffmann, Sotades, Oxford 1997, 92–93, fig. 51). It is true that both the dress and the Scythian bow on occasions are carried by both Artemis and Atalanta, as well as by the Amazons, though there is no other vase-painting showing either of these women pursued by a Sartyr, which makes all interpretations uncertain. There is also one other painting (San Simeon, State Hist. Mon. 5546) which according to L.D. Caskey and J.D. Beazley, *Attic vase-paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston II*, Boston 1954, 75 n. 34, shows a Thracian woman attacking Orpheus with a bow. Since I have not been able to find a picture of it, I am not able to tell whether she is using a Schytian bow or not.

¹⁷ The Scythian connection of the composite bow is further marked by the circumstance that early Amazons armed with it wear also the Scythian cap. Not until the late sixth century are there isolated paintings showing the heavily armed Amazon with the composite bow, LIMC 1, "Amazones" nos. 57 and 83.

motifs from the first few decades of the fifth century B.C. The Scythian origin of the battle-axe has long been known and before the axe is introduced in connection with Amazons, it is shown in the hands of Scythian archers.¹⁸ In spite of this fact, it is still sometimes referred to as a typical Persian or Oriental weapon.

The battle-axe has already been pointed out by scholars as the barbarian weapon *par excellence*, since it is always shown in the hands of figures of barbarian derivation.¹⁹ Besides Amazons and Scythian archers, the axe is used only by Persians²⁰ and Negroes²¹ in Attic vase-paintings.

The sickle-spear. A third type of weapon with a probably foreign origin carried by an Amazon is very rare in vase-paintings on the whole. This peculiar weapon is a spear with a hooked projection, like a sickle, fastened at the change-over from the shaft to the blade. Only one fragmentary, red-figure picture has been preserved showing an Amazon handling it (Fig. 1).²² This unparalleled painting represents a battle scene including two Amazons and one Greek warrior. The Amazon to the left is fighting face to face with the warrior. Behind her, the second Amazon is seen carrying the unusual weapon and simultaneously blowing a trumpet.

Only five, other, red-figure vase-paintings in which the weapon appears have been identified and they all show it in the hands of either Phrygians or Persians.²³ It has been noticed that the picture with the

¹⁸ H. Schoppa, *Die Darstellung der Perser in der griechischen Kunst bis zum Beginn des Hellenismus*,

Munich 1933 (diss.), 54; Vos (n. 9), 50–51.

¹⁹ Vos (n. 9), 51; Lissarrague 1990 (n. 4), 180. One exception is the red-figure dinos by the Agrigento Painter, Athens MN 1489 (CC 1597), in which the battle-axe is used by a hunter striking at a boar; see A. Schnapp, *Le chasseur et la cité*, Paris 1997, n. 420.

²⁰ Schoppa (n. 19), 54.

²¹ Lissarrague 1990 (n. 4), 179, states that the battle-axe is the weapon most commonly depicted in connection with Negroes.

²² Florence 21 B 268, Leipsic T 591, Chicago Univ. and Naples, Astarita, 263 (ARV² 1274, i). All fragments published in von Bothmer (n. 1), Pl. 79:1, who was the first to notice the weapon in vase-paintings, op. cit., 181.

²³ M.C. Miller, "Midas as the Great King in Attic Fifth Century Vase-Painting", *AK* 31:2, 1988, 79–89, esp. 81–82 with footnotes 12 and 17. To this list should be added the

Amazon carrying it is the only one displaying it in a battle-scene.²⁴ In the majority of the other paintings, it is represented as a ceremonial weapon, carried at the courts of the Phrygian king Midas or by Persian satraps.

It has been suggested that this kind of weapon was called *dorydrepanon* by the Greeks, who, according to literary sources, used it both in seafights and in sieges, as well as in land battle.²⁵ Still, on the basis of the vase-paintings, it seems unquestionable that the artists gave it an Oriental connection.²⁶

The Thracian shield. The Thracian crescent shield named *pelta* is the last in the row of barbarian arms carried by Amazons.²⁷ This type of shield, with its easily recognizable shape, has given its name to the mercenaries of Thracian origin, *peltasts*, who probably introduced the weapon into Athens. Contrary to the conventional types of Greek shields made of metal, the *pelta* was produced from willow or some other light kind of wood.

unattributed Midas cup, Vatican 16585, on which the weapon has been observed by von Bothmer (n. 1), 181. N. Sekunda, "The *Rhomphaia*, a Thracian Weapon of the Hellenistic Period", in A.G. Poulter (ed.), *Ancient Bulgaria I*, Nottingham 1983, 275–288, esp. 276, alleges that the hero Perseus sometimes appears with the spear-sickle in ancient art. This is not true of Attic vase-paintings, in which Perseus normally uses an ordinary sickle, *drepanon*, in beheading Medusa, U. Kron, "Sickles in Greek Sanctuaries: Votives and Cultic Instruments", in R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Archaeological Evidence*, 187–215, esp. 190–193. However, in Southern-Italian vase-paintings, Perseus is often shown with a similar weapon, but with a short handle, which makes it look more like a sickle-sword than a sickle-spear, LIMC 7, "Perseus", nos. 68, 94, 95, 147, 189 and 190.

²⁴ Miller (n. 24), 82, footnote 17.

²⁵ Sekunda (n. 24), 278–279, followed by Miller (n. 24), 82, identifies the sickle-spear with the *dorydrepanon* on the basis of descriptions of it in ancient literature. See also LSJ, s.v. "δору-δρέπανον", 445–446.

²⁶ Miller (n. 24), 82, footnote 18, informs us that, even if it is shown in vase-paintings in Oriental contexts, there is no description of it in either Persian art or literature.

²⁷ A close study of the *pelta* in Attic vase-painting and ancient literature has been made by Lissarrague 1990 (n. 4), 151–153 with notes 3–4, who points out that the *pelta* is always depicted with a crescent shape on vase-paintings, while ancient literary references describe the shield as being of different shapes. See also J.G.P. Best, *Thracian peltasts and their influence on Greek warfare*, Groningen 1969, 3; Shapiro (n. 1), 107.

The two earliest Amazons armed with *peltai* are depicted on one and the same black-figure cup in Munich, dated to about 525 B.C.²⁸ The picture shows an Amazon carrying her injured colleague on her back. Both are armed with the Thracian shield. This scene is later in time than the first, occasional vase-paintings showing male warriors armed with the shield, of which the earliest has been dated to the decades around 550 B.C.²⁹

The *pelta* is, besides the Amazons, also depicted in the hands of the Thracian women. However, the *pelta*, as the Scythian bow, is not one of the common weapons used by these barbarian women. Only one red-figure painting by Polygnotos, illustrating their killing of Orpheus, shows two of them armed with *peltai*, besides their more usual weapons.³⁰

There is, however, no question that the *pelta* was primarily associated with male warriors. It has been established that the *pelta* occur in relation to warriors of different kinds.³¹ It is depicted in connection, not only with Amazons, but also with male warriors dressed in various articles of clothing characteristic of barbarians of different origins, as well as in connection with a large number of warriors depicted as ordinary, heavily armed, Greek soldiers.

Amazons as barbarian warriors

As regards the case of the Scythian arms, it seems obvious that the artists used them to denote the distant identity of the Amazon. How the *pelta* should be understood in this context is not so evident, since it is generally believed that there was a Thracian fashion in Athens between 540 and 430 B.C., a fashion which inspired Athenian artists to depict all types of warriors with Thracian attributes, among them, the *pelta*, irrespective of the

²⁸ Munich, Ant.Slg. 2030; Shapiro (n. 1), 107 and pl. 3(A); von Bothmer (n. 1), pl. 61:3.

²⁹ Copenhagen 13966 (Para. 48); Lissarrague 1990 (n. 4), 294, no. P15, dates the vase to about 560 B.C., while Shapiro (n. 1), 107 and note 11, dates the same vase to about 540 B.C. However, both mention it as the earliest example of a warrior armed with a *pelta*.

³⁰ Princeton 1986–59, LIMC 7, "Orpheus", no. 57.

³¹ Lissarrague 1990 (n. 4), 233 and 294–299.

derivation of the carriers.³² It is therefore not obvious that the Thracian shield was really meant to lay stress on the alien status of the Amazon. It may well be that the appearance of the *pelta* in combination with Amazons is only to be understood as a reflection of the iconographical development of the male warrior in general, an assumption further supported by the fact that other attributes typical of Thracians are quite sparse in connection with Amazons.³³

The emphasis on the Amazon as a barbarian, initiated in the middle of the sixth century, takes place not only by her being depicted in a Scythian costume, but also by her being supplied with two types of weapon typical of warriors of Scythian origin, the composite bow and the battle-axe. The same seems also to be true of the rare sickle-spear. Whether the Thracian *pelta* should also be interpreted as a sign emphasizing the alien derivation of the Amazon or whether it should be understood only as a new detail among the already existing weapons of the heavily armed warrior is still not clear.

The weapons with a barbarian connection used by Amazons are also, as we have observed, very common in association with male warriors of all

³² Raeck (n. 14), 69; M.-A. Desbals, *La Thrace et les thraces dans l'imaginaire Grec aux époques archaïque et classique I-II*, Paris 1997 (diss.), 257–268. The reason for Thracian elements starting to turn up in Attic vase-paintings is usually credited to the fact that Peisistratos at this time is said to have hired Thracian mercenaries, whose arms and costumes, when they arrived at Athens, are believed to have inspired artistic depictions, Best (n. 28), 5–6; Shapiro (n. 1), 107–108.

³³ On red-figure paintings from the fifth century, there are Amazons shown with other Thracian attributes than the *pelta*. Most common are the Thracian boots, less frequent the cap made of fox-skin, *alopekis*, and the decorated cloak, *zeira*.

The animal skin sporadically worn by Amazons has, by some scholars, Shapiro (n. 1), 108–109; Blok (n. 1), 417, been maintained as a Thracian attribute, mainly on the basis that also Dionysus and his Maenads carry it. However, there is to my knowledge only one vase-painting showing a Thracian figure wearing an animal-skin (Once Rome, Coll. Braun; ARV² 1050,1). Instead, giants and hunters without any Thracian connection are often shown equipped with animal skins. My opinion is that the animal skin in the first place alludes to the wild sphere in the Greek imagination to which both the Amazons and the Dionysian circle belonged, as well as giants and hunters.

It is interesting to note that in early, black-figure pictures only Amazons represented as heavily armed warriors are depicted with the animal skin, LIMC 1, "Amazones" nos. 14, 24, 50 and 53, as if the artists wanted to remind their public of the wild and untamed side of the Amazon, even though she fought as a real warrior.

possible ethnic origins. It has also been demonstrated that these weapons are very rare in the hands of other women acting violent against male opponents. The male dominance concerning the use of the weapons of a barbarian origin makes it believable that these were, for one thing, connected with Amazons in order to emphasize, together with the costume, their non-Greek descent and not in order to give their violent actions a female aspect.

I now pass on to interpret the less well-known weapons used by Amazons with violent intentions.

The *machaira*

Besides the more conventional weapons of Greek and barbarian warriors, Amazons are sometimes shown fighting with a single-edged, slashing sword, generally named the *machaira* or, on occasions, the *kopis*.³⁴ The *machaira* is clearly distinguished in paintings from the ordinary straight sword, the *xiphos*, whose blade is sharpened on both edges and which is usually depicted with a cruciform hilt. The difference can clearly be seen on the detailed example of a *machaira* shown in a painting by the Niobid

³⁴ The following authors equate the *machaira* with the *kopis*: Snodgrass (n. 10), 97; M. Daumas, "L'amphore de Panaguristé et les sept contre Thèbes", *AK* 21:1, 1978, 23–39, esp. 24, note 14; Anderson (n. 4), 26; T.H. Carpenter, "Harmodios and Apollo in Fifth-Century Athens: What's in a Pose?", in J.H. Oakley et al. (eds.), *Athenian Potters and Painters*, Oxford 1997, 171–179, esp. 172.

No clear description of the appearance of either the *machaira* or the *kopis* is to be found in ancient Greek literature. The only detailed commentary concerns the *machaira*, which in Hesychius' lexicon is described as a sword used for cultic purposes with a blade made out of iron only in the front, M. Schmidt, *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon III*, 77, no. 423, see also *RE* 14:1 (1928), s.v. "Machaireus", cols. 135–136. Besides that, there is an accepted view that says that the denomination of *machaira* was used for all sorts of knives adapted for various purposes during classical times, *LSJ*, s.v. "μάχαιρα", 1085. The modern meaning of the term is obviously imprecise, when one observes that some scholars use it to denote sacrificial knives of entirely different shapes than the sword here in question, U. Kron, "Frauenfeste in Demeterheiligtümern: Das Thesmophorion von Bitalemi", *AA* 1992, 634–650, esp. 640–643 and Abb. 11.

Painter, in his famous scene of the confrontation between Theseus and Penthesilea (Fig. 2).³⁵

The *machaira* is normally illustrated with one of the following characteristics. Firstly, the blade, the cutting edge of which has a markedly convex form, widening gradually from around the centre of its length and then contracting again heavily towards its tip. The back of the blade, not sharpened, is rectilinear or just slightly curved.

A second characteristic is the design of its hilt. In general, it has a hand-guard and a coiled pommel, which project only on the cutting side of the weapon. The hilt is often designed as a sitting bird with the curled shape of the pommel serving as the head.

This type of slashing sword was not only depicted in art, but existed in real life during ancient times in Greece, as is shown by a preserved example with a shape corresponding to this type found on vase-paintings.³⁶

It has earlier been argued that, at the same time as the earliest examples of the *machaira* appeared in Attic vase-paintings, a new pose for combatants was introduced.³⁷ The figure takes a step forward with his right leg, turning his body away from the viewer. His right hand, holding the sword, is either lifted back over his head or brought to the left side of his head, as he gets ready to slash. However, in the six earliest Attic paintings which I have found, dated between 550 and 500 B.C., showing the *machaira* when used in battle, the figure handling it is never represented completely in this pose.³⁸ Later on, the pose is often given to combatants wielding the weapon, if they are shown in a superior position. Moreover, this pose is, as already noted, not only limited to the *machaira*, but is also given to figures

³⁵ Palermo, NM G 1238, ARV² 599,2; 1661.

³⁶ Snodgrass (n. 10), fig. 50.

³⁷ The new pose is often called the Harmodios blow, since it was used for Harmodios in the Tyrannicide group placed in the Agora in 477 B.C., cf. B.B. Shefton, "Some Iconographic Remarks on the Tyrannicides", AJA 64, 1960, 173–179, esp. 173; Carpenter (n. 35), 171.

³⁸ Basel, Antikenmus., Slg. Ludwig BS 408.1963, CVA Switzerland 4, Taf. 26:2, 27:2 (= 172–173); Joslyn Art Mus. 1953.255, ABV 247,93; Kiel, Kunsthalle Antikenslg. B 517, CVA Deutschland 55, Taf. 26:1 (= 2691); Athens, Acr. 211, ARV² 29,20; Philadelphia 3499, ARV² 134,10; Geneva Market (Koutoulakis), ARV² 1630, 1 *bis* and 1621,40 *bis*.

using the ordinary sword, the *xiphos*.³⁹ The pose is thus not a guarantee for the *machaira*, as the *machaira* is not a necessity for the pose.

It is clear that the *machaira* was connected in a relatively early phase with the Amazons, since they are depicted using it already on a black-figure hydria from about 530 B.C.⁴⁰ Thereafter, Amazons armed with the *machaira* appear now and then on red-figure vases during the rest of the sixth and fifth centuries.⁴¹ The *machaira* is never shown in connection with other violent women than the Amazons.

Two different opinions prevail among scholars concerning the utilisation of the *machaira* as a weapon. The first states that the weapon belonged to the usual armament of Greek hoplites.⁴² Meanwhile, the second lays stress on its widely accepted application as a sacrificial knife, even when used as a weapon, and as such mainly appearing in descriptions of exceptionally ruthless violence in ancient Greek art and literature.⁴³

³⁹ Carpenter (n. 35), 176.

⁴⁰ Joslyn Art Mus. 1953.255 (n. 39).

⁴¹ Rome, Cons. 185 (23), ARV² 274,41; Naples, MN 2421, ARV² 600,13; New York, MM 07.286.84, ARV² 613,1; Bryn Mawr P 218, ARV² 830,2; London, BME 167, ARV² 571,77; Ferrara, T 1052, ARV² 991,53; Louvre, Cp 10729, ARV² 1160,2; Louvre, G 443, ARV² 1159,1; Ferrara T 18c, 20 410, ARV² 1213,1; Basel, Antikenmus. und Slg. Ludwig BS 486, ARV² 612,2; New York, MM 44.11.12., ARV² 1344,3; New York, MM 06.1021.195, ARV² 1478,5.

⁴² H. Trümper, *Kriegerische Fachausdrücke in Griechischen Epos: Untersuchungen zum Wortschatze Homers*, Basel 1950, 61, 65–66, 74 and 126–128; Andersson (n. 4), 26; Snodgrass (n. 10), 58 and 97–98.

⁴³ This belief was first stated by G. Roux, "Meurtre dans un sanctuaire sur l'amphore de Panaguriste", *AK* 7, 1964, 30–41, esp. 33–36. The *machaira* is shown in Attic vase-paintings illustrating animal sacrifice see, F.T. van Straten, *Hiera kalá*, Leiden 1995, figs. 6, 7, 116, 123, 155, 156 and 157, and nos. V 222, V223, V230, V232 and V379. It also occurs on two scenes depicting Heracles' fight against Bousiris and his men, van Straten, *op. cit.*, V341, fig. 49 and V352.

The *machaira* depicted as a weapon with a possible reference to its use as a sacrificial knife occurs in only two vase-paintings. Both scenes depicts the episode of Priam's death included in paintings showing the Iliupersis (Malibu, Getty Mus. 83.AE.362; 84.AE.80; 85.AE.385.1–2 and Naples, Mus.Naz. 81669, LIMC 8 "Iliupersis", nos. 7 and 11). The artist's allusion to the use of the *machaira* as a sacrificial knife may in these pictures be accentuated by its combination with the bloodstained altar on which Priam is placed.

In accordance with the latter opinion the *machaira* has previously been observed, not just in connection with Amazons, but also together with a lot of other creatures of wild and barbarian disposition in Attic vase-paintings.⁴⁴ Moreover, scholars has noted the sword in the hands of hunters, and the circumstance that Apollo from time to time uses it against giants has recently been discussed.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the circumstance that the *machaira* is also used by ordinary warriors of apparently Greek origin, appearing in the same medium without being parts of especially brutal contexts, has until now not been satisfactorily discussed.

In Attic vase-painting, there are three different types of stock warriors who display the *machaira*.⁴⁶ Firstly, the type dressed in *petasos* and *chlamys*.⁴⁷ The second presents the combatant wearing the cone-shaped cap, the *pilos*.⁴⁸ Thirdly, there is the heavily armed soldier, who is the most common type.⁴⁹

However, in the rest of the paintings in which the *machaira* is used as a weapon, there is no such possible reference.

⁴⁴ Roux (n. 44); Lissarrague 1990 (n. 4), 31 with note 63; Carpenter (n. 35), 172–174; Best (n. 28), 7–8; J.-P. Descoedres, CVA, Switzerland 4, 82.

⁴⁵ A hunter armed with the *machaira* has been observed by Lissarrague 1990 (n. 4), 31 note 63. Another example is to be found in Schnapp (n. 20), n. 418. Both pictures show a boar hunt. Apollo fighting with the *machaira* is discussed by Carpenter (n. 35), 172 and 174, who thinks that the god had lost his own weapons in the fight and therefore had to use a *machaira* dropped by one of the giants. See also Roux (n. 44), 35, explaining the same circumstance by reminding us of Apollo's role as supervisor of sacrifices in Delphi.

⁴⁶ Since the *machaira* is also used as a weapon in hunting scenes by persons in similar costumes to those of warriors, the following examples include only scenes that clearly show that the person wielding the *machaira* is engaged in battle. Consequently, fragments in which the context of the action is not obvious are excluded.

⁴⁷ Louvre G 216, ARV² 637,39.

⁴⁸ Ferrara T. 19 C VP, ARV² 628,1. The *pilos* is said to have been made of felt and had a wide field of applications, W.H. Gross, s.v. "Pilos", *Der Kleine Pauly* 4 (1972), col. 852. It is generally believed to have been used by warriors to protect their skulls from their hard and uncomfortable helmets, *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Kiel, Kunsthalle Antikenslg. B 517 (n. 39); Berlin, Antiquarium F 2287, ARV² 433, 68; 1653; Providence 23.323, ARV² 653, 1; Geneva Market (n. 39); Philadelphia 3499 (n. 39); Berlin, Antiquarium F 2288, ARV² 438,130 and 1701; Leipzig T. 626, ARV² 433,66; Malibu, Getty Mus. 83AE 362; 84.AE.80; 85.AE.385.1–2 (n. 44); Louvre G 117,

These three kinds of warriors can be seen on vase-paintings fighting side by side.⁵⁰ It is consequently likely that they all represent different iconographical variants of Greek soldiers.⁵¹ All the same, it does not seem as if the warriors' different looks had any influence on the painters' decision to depict them with the *machaira*, since all three types of warriors can be seen brandishing the weapon.

After this survey, it should be clear that the *machaira* is also to be included among the weapons which the artists thought were suitable for heavily armed Greek soldiers and other male combatants, even though they did not overstep the limit of what was thought of as permissible violence. And so, the arms of the Amazon are still, until now, completely of the same sort as those of the male warrior in general. We shall now see whether this circumstance is also valid for the last weapons utilized by the Amazons.

Stones and slings

There are only two Attic paintings in which a stone-throwing Amazon can be certainly identified.⁵² The first picture is shown on a red-figure

ARV² 433,62; Leningrad 657 (St. 848), ARV² 413,19; Edinburgh, NM 1887.213, ARV² 364,46; Ferrara T 579, ARV² 612,1; Madrid, Mus. Arch. Nat. 111 08, ARV² 1083(a); Naples, Mus.Naz. 81669 (n. 44); Paris, Louvre G 152, ARV 369,1.

⁵⁰ Ferrara T. 19 C VP (n. 49); Basel, Antikenmus. und Slg. Ludvig BS 486 (n. 42); Rome, Vat. O18, von Bothmer, n. 64, pl. 80,2; Capua, Mus. Camp. 7527, CVA Italia 23, Tav. 8:1 (= 1083); New York, MM 31.11.13, ARV² 1248,9; Syracuse 371 75, ARV² 1104,2; Naples, MN RC 161, ARV² 1055,74; Oxford, Ashm. Mus. G290 (V522), LIMC 1, "Amazones", n. 238; Naples, MN 2421, ARV² 600,13; Boston, Mus. of Fine Arts 95.48, LIMC 1, "Amazones", n. 240.

⁵¹ According to Lissarrague 1990 (n. 4), 20, ancient texts mention that there was a hierarchy as between different categories of soldiers, based on their financial prerequisite. At the very top of the scale were, of course, the heavily armed soldiers. On a lower level were the lightly armed warriors, made up of those who could not afford to arm themselves in the same way. Furthermore, it is suggested by Lissarrague op. cit., 52, that warriors depicted with *piloi* may represent some sort of lightly armed auxiliaries. If so, the question must be whether the warrior dressed in *petasos* and *chlamys* should also be interpreted in a similar way. The differences in costume between Greek warriors might then, if this conclusion is correct, have been used by painters to distinguish their various positions in a military hierarchy.

⁵² Amazons brandishing stones have to some extent been observed by E. Serbeteri,

painting by the Eretria Painter and is dated about the middle of the fifth century (Fig. 3).⁵³ The picture represents 18 combatant figures organized in five groups. The Amazon Eurymache, furthest to the left in the picture, is busy throwing a stone at her enemy. The second picture on a volute-krater by the Bologna Painter, is also a scene including a lot of combatant figures.⁵⁴ Just below one of its handles, an Amazon wearing a cap with ear-flaps and armed with a stone is assisting one of her heavily armed sisters against a Greek warrior.

The ancient texts relate that stones could also be discharged with the help of a sling, *sphendone*, and indeed, on a white-ground vase-painting attributed to the Klügmann Painter, an Amazon is shown handling a sling (Fig. 4).⁵⁵ The unique picture depicts her placing the object she is going to use as a missile in the sling. What sort of missile she is dealing with cannot be seen, but probably it is a very small stone or maybe a very small, lead ball, such as were also employed with this sort of weapon.⁵⁶

”Attic Pottery from a Deposit in Eretria”, in J.H. Oakley, W.D.E. Coulson & O. Palagia, *Athenian Potters and Painters*, Oxford 1997, 491–499, esp. 495–496 and fig. 5, who argues that an Amazon armed with a stone is shown in a red-figure fragment from Eretria (inv. no. 18118a). The fragment shows the heads of two figures wearing Attic helmets. The figure to the left is holding a stone in the left hand, appearing behind the heads. Serbeteri’s interpretation rests on her belief that only Amazons are shown armed with stones of a smaller size. However, also male figures are represented wielding tiny stones, so that circumstance is in my opinion not enough to decide the identity of the stone-throwing figure.

The woman armed with a stone and a bow depicted in a painting by the Sotades Painter (Giessen KIII-46) has, among other suggestions, been interpreted as an Amazon. However, the identity of the woman is not secured (n. 16). One more fragment which today has disappeared, may have showed an Amazon with a stone. The motif is only preserved as an engraving in S. Reinach, *Répertoire des vases peints Grecs et Etrusques II*, Paris 1900, 347, n. 52.

⁵³ New York 31.11.13 (ARV² 1248,9), von Bothmer (n. 1), 162, n. 15, Pl. 77:1.

⁵⁴ Basle Antikenmus. und Slg. Ludwig BS 486 (n. 42).

⁵⁵ New York 10.210.11 (ARV² 1200,38), von Bothmer (n. 1), 202, n. 153, Pl. 84,1.

⁵⁶ The basic work of slings and sling bullets are G. Fougeres articles ”Fundas” and ”Glans” in M. Daremberg & E. Saglio (eds.), *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines* 2, Paris 1896, 1363–1366 and 1608–1611. More recent studies concerning these subjects are quoted in H.P. Isler, ”Glandes: Schleudergeschosse aus den Grabungen

The sling does not often appear in Attic vase-paintings. Occasionally athletes are shown handling it.⁵⁷ But most of the few known examples show the sling in different contexts of bird-hunting.⁵⁸ Additionally, there is also at least one vase-painting representing a sling in the hands of a Greek warrior.⁵⁹

Unlike slings, stones are far from unusual objects shown as weapons in Attic vase-paintings and can be found in the hands of a good many different figures. The greatest number of figures armed with stones are monstrous and bestial creatures from the world of the ancient Greek imagination. Among the most typical stone-throwers are the Centaur, the Giant and the Minotaur.⁶⁰ Other wild beings more sporadically shown with stones are the river god Acheloos and Theseus' famous antagonists Sinis and Procrustes.⁶¹

Among the wild and unrestrained could also be counted other women who, besides the Amazons, are depicted as armed with stones. These include the already mentioned, Thracian women when they put Orpheus to death,

auf dem Monte Iato, AA 1994, 239–254, esp. 239 footnote 2. Add H.G. Buchholz, "Die Schleuder als Waffe im Ägäischen Kulturkreis", *Anadolu* 4, 1965, 133–159.

⁵⁷ *Kunstwerke der Antike* (Auktion, 34), Basle 1967, 67, n. 134.

⁵⁸ According to S. Bleecker Luce, Jr., "The origin of the 'Nolan' amphora", *AJA* 20, 1916, 439–474, esp. 473, there are four vases showing Heracles striking at the Stymphalian birds with a sling. The famous François vase (Florence, Mus. Arch. 4209, ABV 76,1; 682) shows dwarfs or pygmies carrying slings when chasing cranes. Yet another hunter, but with another type of sling and quarry, is discussed by Y. Garlan, "Une représentation archaïque de la fronde à bâton?", *BCH* 94:2, 1970, 625–630.

⁵⁹ A red-figure amphora (Once Rouen, Coll. Bellon 609; ARV² 648,35) shows a man in a *pilos* equipped with a sling attacking a heavily armed warrior depicted on the other side of the same vase, see F. Inghirami, *Pittura di vasi fittili* 2, Fiesole 1835, Tav. 169. Since warriors and hunters are sometimes depicted with the same attributes, it is often hard to distinguish their identity if there is no other clue in the picture. This is the case with two red-figure paintings showing men with slings, without revealing whether they are aiming their slings at a warrior or an animal. For pictures, see P. Hartwig, *Die griechischen Meisterschalen der Blüthezeit des Strengen Rothfigurigen Stiles*, Stuttgart 1893, Taf. 18:1 and N. Kunisch, *Makron*, Mainz/Rhein 1997, 161, n. 5.

⁶⁰ LIMC 8, "Kentaroi et Kentaurides", nos. 105, 167, 170a and 183; LIMC 4, "Gigantes", nos. 111, 120, 153 and 318; LIMC 6, "Minotauros", nos. 18, 19, 20 and 23.

⁶¹ LIMC 1, "Acheloos", nos. 248, 252 and 256; LIMC 7, "Theseus", nos. 53, 64, 136 and 151.

two vase-paintings representing Maenads defending themselves against Satyrs, and the nymph Amymone in a similar scene.⁶²

The stone used as a weapon is consequently relatively frequent in connection with a mixed company of creatures to whom the Greeks ascribed a wild and uncontrolled nature, also including certain types of women. Nonetheless, the stone is not a weapon shown only in contexts of these marginal kinds of violence. In addition, it is employed by mythological heroes in various situations, even though they are occasional.⁶³ It is considerably more frequent in hunting scenes, in which hunters are seen brandishing the stone while chasing their quarry.⁶⁴ Still, it is most important for my case that stones were used as weapons in ordinary battle-scenes as well, and then in the hands of ordinary Greek warriors.

The three different groups of Greek warriors, distinguished by their diverse costumes, noticed above when armed with the *machaira*, are all depicted brandishing stones.⁶⁵ And again, it seems as if their different clothing did not matter when the vase-painters decided to illustrate them fighting with stones.

It is also mentioned in the written sources that stones and slings were used in battle by Greek warriors.⁶⁶ It seems chiefly to have been the lightly armed troops who equipped themselves with these implements, among other, equally accessible weapons. However, not only lightly armed soldiers are reported as being armed with stones. In the *Iliad* also, fighters of such

⁶² Thracian women: LIMC 7, "Orpheus", nos. 34, 35, 39, 44, 45 and 57. Maenads: LIMC 4, "Gigantes", no. 316; Amymone (n. 53).

⁶³ LIMC 5, "Kadmos", nos. 13 and 15–19; LIMC 7, "Orpheus", n. 59.

⁶⁴ Schnapp (n. 20), nos. 87, 95, 198, 275, 279, 303, 304, 402 and 408.

⁶⁵ Since stones are also used by hunters, only battle scenes are included. *Petastos* and *chlamys*: Capua, Mus. Campano 7527 (n. 51); Berlin, Ant. F 2295, ARV² 364, 45. *Pilos*: Basle, Antikenmus. und Slg. Ludvig BS 486 (n. 42); Madrid, Mus.Arch.Nat. 111 26, ARV² 1564; Sarajevo MN 28, CVA, Yugoslavia 4, Pl. 44:1–2, 45:1–2; Rome, Vat. O18 (n. 51). Heavily armed warrior: Athens, NM 2674 (C.C.823), ABV 200, 11; Malibu, Getty Mus. 84.AE.38, for picture see, W.A.P. Childs, "A New Representation of a City on an Attic Red-figured Kylix", *Greek Vases in the J. Paul Getty Museum* 5, Malibu 1991, 27–40, esp. fig. 1a; Pontecagnano, Mus. Arch. T1240, picture in F. Lissarrague, "Autour du guerrier", in *La cité des images*, Lausanne 1984, 35–48, esp. fig. 56.

⁶⁶ References in Lissarrague 1990 (n. 4), 20; Anderson (n. 4), 15 and 17.

good repute as Achilles and Hector are described as combating against each other, using stones.⁶⁷

The stone and the sling should consequently be counted among the arms used by male warriors. The utilization of these weapons by the Amazons does not seem to differ from the way in which ordinary Greek soldiers of different appearances and in similar violent situations are shown using the stone, as described in Attic vase-paintings and in the ancient texts.

Amazons and other female violence

The Amazons are consequently practising their violence with the same types of weapons as the male warriors. But the range of the different types of weapons used by the Amazons becomes in time greater than the total arsenal used by any group of male warriors. The large mixture of both Greek and barbarian weapons used by the Amazons gives them an exceptional image, which places them in an iconographical sphere between the representations of the Greek and those of the barbarian warrior. Their unfeminine behaviour is thereby stressed by the vase-painters' consistent depiction of them as in the first place comparable with the male warriors.

Still, the Amazons are not the only women who commit physical violence on men in Attic vase-paintings.⁶⁸ These other brutal women are displayed with many different weapons. I shall here concentrate on the females shown with two categories of weapons most commonly used only by women. These weapons are the pestle, *hyperon*, and the spit, *obelos*. Both implements were normally used for cooking purposes and only occasionally as weapons. In this connection they can be said to be more or less specific to violence committed by women.

The weapons here attributed to female violence have by scholars been noted in the hands of Thracian women, Trojan women and the Nereid Doris.⁶⁹ The Thracian women are seen wielding both spits and pestles in the

⁶⁷ *Iliad*, 7: 263–273.

⁶⁸ The other violent women depicted in vase-paintings will be discussed in my forthcoming dissertation (n. 2).

⁶⁹ F. Brommer, "Herakles und Nereus", in F. Lissarrague & F. Thelamon (eds.), *Image et céramique Grecque*, Roven 1983, 103–110, esp. 107; D. Williams, "Onesimos and the

pictures illustrating the death of Orpheus.⁷⁰ On a *stamnos* in Basle, four of them are seen busy murdering Orpheus (Fig. 5).⁷¹ He has already been hit by a spit with a decorated end, which in vase-paintings normally distinguishes it from the spear of much the same shape but is usually shown with a plain finish. In the same picture, two of the women are attacking with pestles, depicted as long poles, narrowing in the middle.⁷² A third Thracian woman is throwing a boulder at Orpheus, meanwhile another is stabbing him in the throat with a sword. These barbarian females are the only women using the spit as a weapon in Attic vase-paintings, but, as noted above, pestles are to be found in connection with other women as well. Both spits and pestles can also, in very exceptional cases, be used by male figures acting violently but are never shown in the hands of Greek warriors.⁷³

Getty Iliupersis”, *Greek Vases in the J. Paul Getty Museum* 5, 1991, 41–64, esp. 52; Lissarrague 1994 (n. 3), 281.

⁷⁰ Spits: LIMC 7, ”Orpheus”, nos. 27, 28, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 45, 49 and 55. Pestles: LIMC 7, ”Orpheus”, nos. 25, 27, 34, 35, 43, 45 and 49.

⁷¹ Basle, Antikenmus. BS 1411, ARV² 414, 34^{ter}, LIMC 7, ”Orpheus”, no. 35.

⁷² A pestle of a smaller size, *doidux* or *aletribanon*, was also utilized by the Greeks, but it is never shown as a weapon in vase-paintings, Lissarrague 1994 (n. 3), 280–281.

⁷³ Two paintings show the pestle in connection with violent male figures. Firstly, the controversial scene on the lekythos Athens NM 1129, in which a woman, traditionally interpreted as Lamia, is seen bound to a palm, being tortured by a group of Satyrs (LIMC 6, ”Lamia”, n. 2). One of her tormentors is brandishing a big pestle towards her skull. It is widely accepted that the motif depicts an episode from a satyr play. On the other hand, the content of the play is not known and this is therefore a debated subject. Most scholars presume, in spite of their interpretation of the scene, that the sight of a Satyr handling a pestle, an object normally associated with the world of women, would have aroused laughter in the ancient spectators. For references and an account of the various interpretations of the content of the scene, see M. Halm-Tisserant, ”Folklore et superstition en Grèce Classique”, *Kernos* 2, 1989, 67–82.

The second man with a pestle appears on a red-figure cup in Munich, Antikenslg. 8762 (LIMC 6, ”Nereus”, n. 54), where Heracles is seen destroying Nereus’ house. Nereus himself rushes in from the right, towards Heracles, with his right arm extended in front of him and his left arm hidden under his dress. The pestle is shown beside Nereus, on a level with his thigh, by which it is partly hidden. The problem is whether Nereus is holding the pestle or not. F. Brommer, *Herakles II: Die unkanonischen Taten des Helden*, Darmstadt 1984, 113, has proposed that Nereus is using it as a weapon against Heracles. The difficulty with Brommer’s interpretation is the way in which Nereus is holding the

The Trojan women threaten their Greek counterparts with pestles when fighting side by side with their husbands in four red-figure paintings displaying the Iliupersis.⁷⁴ A third female figure represented wielding a pestle is Doris, the mother of the Nereids. A *pelike* in Munich shows the unique scene in which Doris with a pestle is trying to frighten away the intruder Heracles, depicted on the reverse side of the vase, from her and the sea god Nereus' joint home.⁷⁵

The violence practised by these various types of females has one thing in common which distinguishes them from the Amazons, namely the reason for their violent actions, which is expressed by the choice of weapon. Whereas all the women armed with pestles make use of them for the purpose of preserving and protecting their own private domains, the Amazon in the first place fights to secure her reputation as a successful warrior, just like her male prototypes.

It is true that the impetus behind the frenzy of the Thracian women is not known to us, since the written sources give us different explanations. Nevertheless, the generally accepted view among scholars is that the outrage of the women was brought about by Orpheus' attempt to induce the Thracian men to abandon their wives. The violence of the Trojan women was also caused by an external enemy, in this case the Greek heroes, who threatened the town and the homes of these women. Likewise, the Nereid's defence of her house was called for by an unauthorized intrusion.

Even though the women armed with pestles and spits are shown behaving in a hostile manner towards Greek heroes of various sorts, it is hard to say whether the ancient Greeks regarded them as acting incorrectly

pestle. Since his right arm is extended in front of him, the only possibility is that he is clutching the utensil with his hidden left arm. His arm must then be placed over his back in a manner that makes his left hand reach the pestle on his right side, which seems rather odd. This may be possible if he is trying to hide the pestle from Heracles. A second and more probable explanation is that the pestle belongs to the stores messed about by Heracles and is thus not at all handled by Nereus. Spits are used in scenes showing the centauromachy at the wedding-feast of Perithoos, L.D. Caskey & J.D. Beazley, *Attic Vase-Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston III*, Boston 1963, 85.

⁷⁴ Malibu, Getty Mus. 83.AE.362, 84.AE.80, 85.AE.385 (n. 44); Napels, Mus. Naz. 81669 (n. 44); Paris, Louvre G 152, LIMC 8, "Iliupersis", no. 8; Rome, Villa Giulia 3578, LIMC 1, "Andromache I", n. 48.

⁷⁵ Munich, Staatl. Ant.slg. 8762, LIMC 6, "Nereus", no. 56.

or not. It may well be that the same audience conceived the women's defence of home and husband as excusable or even preferable, since after all they were trying to preserve the normal order. The Amazon, as opposed to the woman defending her home, is the invading party, disturbing the present state of things instead of protecting them. Thus, the outrage committed by the Amazon is based on quite different preconditions than the violence which seems to characterize the violent deeds typical of these other females.

Iconographically, this difference between the motivations behind the aggressive undertakings of the Amazons and these other types of violent women seems to be marked by, among other things, variety in the weapons which they are brandishing. Women practising violence for womanly reasons of defence are depicted with weapons which never occur in the hands of a male warrior. Amazons fighting for the same reasons as men are presented in the vase-paintings with the same weapons as their male colleagues. The representation of the Amazon all the same differs from those of male warriors by the great number of different types of arms of various origins that she is handling, which place her in a category of her own. At the same time, it is obvious that the vase-painters cultivated the Amazons' position as worthy opponents of the Greek hero. The arms given to the Amazon are, for that reason, of the same kind as the weapons used by skilled male warriors, no matter whether Greek or barbarian. In that sense, the violence of the Amazons cannot be interpreted as representative of female aggression.

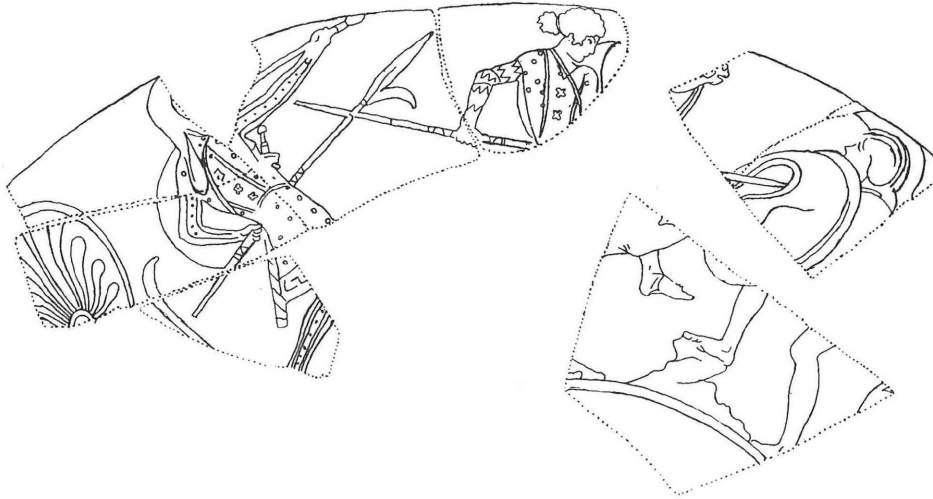


Fig. 1. Amazon carrying a sickle-spear.

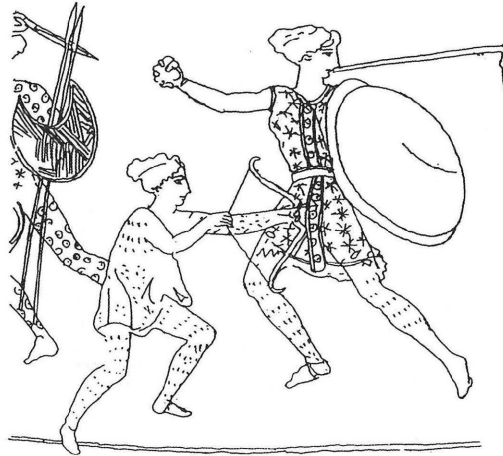
Detail of Florence 21 B 268; Leipsic T 591; Chicago, Univ.; Naples, Astarita, 263.

(D. von Bothmer, *Amazons in Greek Art*, Oxford 1957, pl. 79:1)

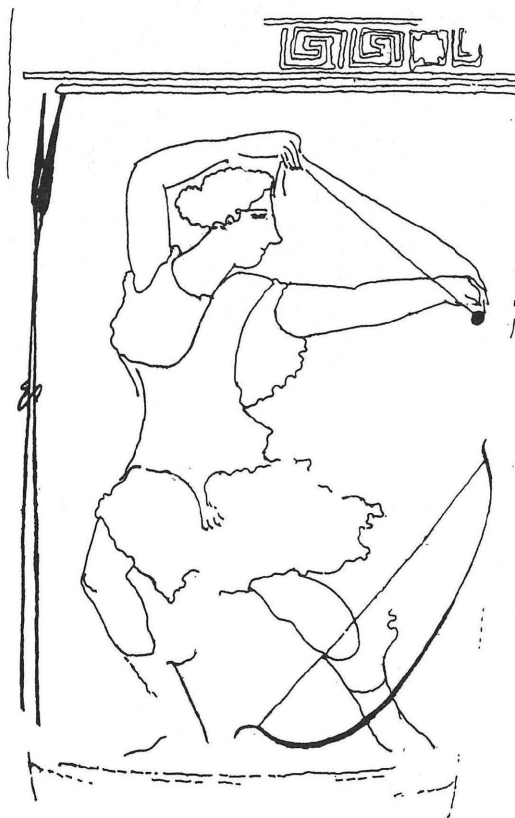


Fig. 2. Defeated Amazon dropping her *machaira*.

Palermo, NM G 1238. Courtesy Museo Archeologico Regionale Agrigento.



**Fig. 3. Amazon wielding a stone. New York, MM 31.11.13.
(A. Lezzi-Hafter, *Der Eretria-Maler*, Mainz/Rhein 1988, pl. 154a).**



**Fig. 4. Amazon armed with a sling. New York, MM 39.11.11.
(D. von Bothmer, *Amazons in Greek Art*, Oxford 1957, pl. 84:1)**



**Fig. 5. Thracian women attacking Orpheus with pestles, spit, boulder and sword.
Basle, Antikenmus. BS 1411. Courtesy Antikenmuseum Basel
und Sammlung Ludwig.**