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Daughters of Ares: Iconography of the Amazons

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*DAUGHTERS OF
ARES:
ICONOGRAPHY OF
AMAZONS*

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Introduction

Amazon or Amazonian is a word heard in the contexts of warrior women, strong women, opinionated women and tough women. The linguistic history of the word is shrouded in mystery, but its use is known within specific cultural, historical and societal contexts. Amazon in Greek means 'one breasted', but there is no evidence to this being a Greek word.¹ Through studies, it has been found that Amazon is not a Greek word. The Greeks adopted the word to the closest word they had in their language, which is how Amazon became tied to the Greek culture.² The origin of the word is unknown as there are many theories of what the origin could be from Sanskrit to a Semitic based language³, but the myths that are associated with the name Amazon can be seen clearly.

Before moving to who the Amazons were and their history, I must make a distinction between the two uses of myth in the English language. The first use is myth as the illusion, a tale that is not true. In colloquial conversations, this is the use of the word myth. The Amazonian ideal that I am tracing through history is in the myths depicted in art, but also, written in multiple genres with a specific connotation. In the iconography of Amazons is the Ancient Greek definition of myth. The Greek word for myth is *mythos* meaning a story or tale. Something that has been spoken, an utterance. It does not mean it is a true story or a logical one, but it's a story that explains the world around them.⁴ This is the meaning of myth that I will use within this interpretive survey. The connotation of Amazons moves through time, but with the word and linguistic history comes the myths structured through the cultural lens of the creator. The

¹ Josine H Blok, *The Early Amazons: Modern and Ancient Perspectives on a Persistent Myth* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995.) and Adrienne Mayor, *The Amazons: Lives and Legends of Warrior Women Across the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

² Mayor, 23.

³ Mayor, 22-24 and Walter Duvall Penrose Jr, *Postcolonial Amazons: Female Masculinity and Courage in Ancient Greek and Sanskrit Literature* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), vii.

⁴ Professor Chiu's lecture of what the study of mythology is.

linguistic journey of the word lends to the iconography and stems from specific cultural backgrounds which give them context and meaning.

Amazons are warrior women that Greek heroes face on their journeys. Most known for living without men and being fearless in battle, Amazons, who threatened the patriarchal structure of the ancient Greeks, needed to be defeated to cement the dominance of male power. Part of the allure of the Amazons is that they are women with the traits of men. Gender is a large part of the narrative of the Amazons. Their gender identity sparks controversy as they are the opposite of Greek culture and their gender norms as they embody masculine traits which are not deemed good traits for Greek women. When I use the word gender, I mean the socially constructed identity tied to specific acts and traits.⁵ Gender is the reason for the Amazon's defeat. Their defeat at the hands of Greek heroes is a type of propaganda to reaffirm the Greek way of life by solidifying the power of men.

The beginnings of the Amazonian ideal can be traced in physical materials like literature and art. The first depictions of Amazons in art were around the 8th century BCE in the style of Attic black figure.⁶ At the same time, the first mention of the Amazons in literature was in the composition of Homer with the word *antianeirai*, or equal to men.⁷ The Archaic period of Ancient Greece spawned the Greek idea of the Amazon. The popularity of the myth continued through Ancient Greece, which can be seen in the art, but also, the literature. Through the art created around the Amazonian ideal, the iconography reflects the cultural atmosphere and current discourse on the idea portrayed. As the cultural atmosphere fluctuates and political bonds

⁵ Anne Fausto-Sterling, "Dueling Dualisms," in *Sexing the Body* (New York: Basic Books, 2000) 1-29.

⁶ Harvey Alan Shapiro, "Amazons, Thracians and Scythians," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 24(2)(2004): 105-114. And Mayor, 18 and John Boardman, *Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Archaic Period* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975).

⁷ Mayor, 16 and Homer, *The Iliad*, Trans. by Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin Group, 1990). And Blok, 32.

break and reform, the iconography changes. The visual depictions of Amazons are shaped and constructed through the lens of the creators and the cultural atmosphere.⁸ With art came the documentation of the oral stories that moved throughout the classical world.

Through the words of many ancient authors, like Herodotus, Strabo, Lysias, and Diodorus, it has been claimed that the Greek mythical Amazons were based on the Scythian women. The Scythians were a tribe of people located in on the coast of the black seas with a territory that spanned from the caucus mountains to steppes of Asia.⁹ Where this conclusion comes from is the foundational aspects of the Amazons: their ability to fight alongside men and sometimes even better than men. Scythian women were raised alongside men and taught to fight and ride.¹⁰ Herodotus details the customs of the Scythians but focuses on the big difference between the women of Scythia and Athens. Scythian tribes are known for gender equality along with their neighbors, the Thracian and Sarmatians.¹¹ This is something that created a difference between the Greeks and the “barbarians” that they encountered. Herodotus, raised in Halicarnassus, a Greek colony on the coast of Asia Minor, had the lens of the Greeks when he encountered these cultures, but had been exposed to the stories of these barbarians, people who did not hold the identity of a Greek city state.¹² Ancient writers were known to highlight the differences of cultures they engaged with.¹³ Herodotus was no different. He focused on the gender equality of the Scythians, a people that the mainland Greeks had limited contact with. Diodorus of Sicily continued this tradition of highlighting specific attributes of other cultures. He

⁸ Ian H Angus and Sut Jhally, introduction to *Cultural Politics in Contemporary America*, Eds. by Ian H. Angus and Sut Jhally (New York: Routledge, 1989).

⁹ Mayor, 35 and Herodotus, *The Histories*, Trans. by Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). And Strabo, *Geography*, https://www.loebclassics.com/view/strabo-geography/1917/pb_LCL049.3.xml?rkey=E6W15K&result=1.

¹⁰ Mayor, 37 and Herodotus 4.110-14.

¹¹ Mayor, 40.

¹² Penrose, 2.

¹³ Mayor, 24 and Penrose, vii.

also brings the myths through to another culture and another time. The core myths are presented in both works, but each has their own twist. This is also recorded in the art found.

The iconography of the art reflects the cultural atmosphere in which it was created. In Greek art, the iconography was constructed and reformed based on the cultural and political atmosphere. The multiple iconographies are transmitted to the Early Modern through literature and the advent of archaeology. Through the revival of classical ideals, the myths of the Amazons continued to be told and depicted for various reasons. Through paintings, frescoes and manuscripts, the classical myths became a part of the foundation of America, but also a breeding ground for the future of comic books and the women's suffrage movement. With each turn of the century, the iconography changed and fluctuated to fit within the cultural sphere and the creator's vision. This fluctuating iconography continues into American popular entertainment. The Amazonian ideal is embedded within the popular entertainment of warrior women, an idea that has been used for centuries. Wonder Woman, Xena, Atalanta, Gabrielle and many more come from the long line of warrior women who have ties to the Ancient Greek idea of Amazons. This long history of the transmission of the Amazonian idea through Amazon iconography culminates within American popular culture. Through this thesis, I will investigate the transmission of the Amazonian ideal, though the changing iconography of the Amazonian myths within their cultural settings.

Greek Art

The Greeks had limited contact with the people of what the Greeks considered and called the East during the eighth century BCE. But this was not the case with Eastern art. Through their contact with the Levant, the eastern Mediterranean, they revitalized their artistic culture by

adding Eastern motifs and ideals.¹⁴ The Greeks borrowed and interpreted these motifs and ideals into their own art, but also their cosmogonies, literature, and oral stories. The Amazons were a Greek creation through cultural hybridity and Greek interpretation.¹⁵

In the eighth century BCE, the oral stories of the Amazons entered into black figure vase painting, which documented them.¹⁶ Around this time, Homer (750? BCE) was composing his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.¹⁷ Within his *Iliad* is the first mention of Amazons in Greek literature. Homer depicts the warrior women in a positive light with the phrase *antianeirai* meaning equal to men, while his contemporaries and those after him depict them as man hating women, Hesiod being an example in his work the *Catalogue of Women*.¹⁸ Homer and Hesiod's works are usually dated to the beginning of the Archaic Period (750-500 BCE). Homer blends the culture customs of the early Archaic and the Late Bronze Age (1600-1000 BCE), which is present in the political structure of the basileus and kings. This was also the time of the Orientalizing period in art which began in the eighth century and continued into the seventh century. As mentioned, Eastern ideals and motifs embed themselves in literature and cosmogonies.¹⁹ In Hesiod's *Theogony*, the structure is similar to many creation stories of the East.²⁰ During this period, Athens began to colonize the coast of Asia Minor. The colonies came into contact with the ethnic groups like the Scythians and Thracians that many of the Amazonian traits can be tied too. These stories from the margins of the Greek speaking world enter into art and literature and begin to circulate around Greece for Greek audiences.²¹

¹⁴ Glenn Markoe, "The Emergence of Orientalizing in Greek Art: Some Observations on the Interchange between Greeks and Phoenicians in the eight and seventh centuries B. C.," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 301(1996): 47-67. www.jstor.org/stable/1357295.

¹⁵ Penrose, 6, 8-9.

¹⁶ Mayor 14 and Shapiro, 105.

¹⁷ There is a debate about if homer was one person or many.

¹⁸ Mayor, 63 and Penrose, 10.

¹⁹ Markoe, 50.

²⁰ Markoe, 51.

²¹ Markoe, 56.

The artists of black and red figure vases of the Archaic and Classical periods (500-323 BCE) reflect and respond to the different social climates and cultural shifts. With a combination of Eastern ideas and Greek cultural structure, the Amazon iconography changes and fluctuates to respond to the political climate but also the agenda of the creator. The Amazons, within their stories and traits, present an idea of women and gendered customs, but also the fears men held within society. The fears of Greek society are found within its patriarchal structure. This structure functions in a binary of women and men, both could participate but one held power. Women were a part of society, but they could not hold any positions of power or change any political or cultural structures. The needs and desires of the society were male dominated and male centered.²² Being a citizen in Greek society meant that the foundations of the political and social hierarchies were based on privileges men held from birth.

Women participated in this society, but they are bound by the social convention under the tutelage of men. Athenian women weaved, married in the words of Hesiod at “four years past puberty and be married to [men] in the fifth” (Hes. *WD*. 695-96) and bore their husbands children. The honor of family rests on the legacy of the family continuing. This continues through the birth of sons, not daughters. As paternity tests had not yet been invented, women needed to be virgins when they marry.²³ When a child is presented to society and brought into the brotherhood, if someone can insert any doubt into the lineage of the boy, a family could lose everything meaning status within the society which was a large aspect of male identity. Women needed to be virgins for absolute certainty on the lineage of the child. If a woman had been sexually active, the child’s lineage could be called into question. This damages the honor of the family but also the man’s ability to control his wife in the eyes of his peers. This fear of an

²² Fausto-Sterling, 1-29.

²³ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, https://www.loebclassics.com/view/hesiod-works_days/2018/pb_LCL057.87.xml?rskey=bJx5b&result=1.

untamed sexuality drove them to control the women in their society. Amazons are untamed, sexually unconstrained and wield weapons rather than a loom. Athenian women are muted by the structure of their society, but Amazons govern themselves giving the illusion they spoke for themselves.²⁴

Before the Persian War

The first images of Amazons in art center around the Greek idea of war. War was a constant in the classical world. Men fought but women were not immune to the consequences that war brought to their families.²⁵ Female masculinity was not a new thought within Greek society. There are stories of women who fought beside their men and for their men, but these were moment of temporary masculinity. The Amazons would fall into the category of permanent masculinity as they hold traits of what a Greek would give to a man.²⁶

The Greek military were known in the Archaic period as hoplites which came from the circular shape of the shield that they carried.²⁷ The Amazons in their earliest artistic iconography were dressed like the Greek hoplites (1.1).²⁸ With the hoplite shield and dressed in a short chiton, cuirass, greaves, crested helmet, a round shield, and a spear, the Amazons resembled the prestigious Greek army.²⁹ Within the art, these vases have small details that distinguished the Amazons from the Greeks, but it was not their dress. With the Amazons in early Greek art were male archers with oriental clothing.³⁰ This was a detail that set the Amazons apart from the Greeks. The archers were based on the encounters with the Scythian people. Scythian men, like

²⁴ Penrose, 15.

²⁵ Penrose, 15.

²⁶ Penrose, 11-14.

²⁷ Peter Krentz, "Warfare and Hoplites," in *The Cambridge Companion to Archaic Greece*, eds. by H. A. Shapiro, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 61-81.

²⁸ Mayor, 78 and Boardman, 218.

²⁹ Shapiro, 105

³⁰ Mayor, 76 and Boardman, 233.

the women, were raised from a young age to ride bare back but also wield the bow. Scythians became known for their ability to shoot multiple arrows in quick succession, but also the poison they dipped the tips of their arrows in.³¹ Another detail that identified the Amazons as different from the Greek army is the technique in black figure of coloring of the skin. In black figure vase painting, men were drawn in black, while women were drawn in white.³² The Amazons in the vases are detailed in white meaning that they are women.

Herodotus in his *Histories* details the upbringing of the Scythians and how from an early age they learned to fight. Their women were different from the Athenian women. Herodotus details multiple aspects of the Scythian culture. There is no written history for the Scythians, so most of the information that we have about them comes from the Greek perspective, which has to be taken with a grain of salt, they only wrote down what they thought was important for distinguishing those in the East from the Greeks. Within this narrative is the Scythian custom of gender equality. The girls and boys were taught the same things from riding to battle tactics.³³ This is what Herodotus wanted to highlight in his histories. He did receive criticisms from Greek audiences for including cultures from the East.³⁴ The beginning of the *Histories*, Herodotus explains that he is going to look at multiple cultures, but also kingdoms.

I will cover minor and major human settlements equally, because most of those which were important in the past have diminished in significance by now, and those which were great in my own time were small in times past. (Hdt. *His.* 1.5.2)

³¹ Mayor, 76.

³² Shapiro, 107

³³ Herodotus 4.13

³⁴ Mayor, 83.

This thought structured his collection of narratives, as the narrative of the Scythian is part of the history of the Persian Empire, an empire that had a tenuous relationship with the Greeks, but had once been a small settlement and turned into a large one. There is still a basis in his writings, but there is some information that can be inferred from his narratives. In book four of his *Histories*, Herodotus details the story of the beginning of the Sarmatians, a tribe that has connections to the Scythians and Thracians. A tribe that shared the same trait of gender equality. The Amazons are fleeing after a defeat at the hands of the Greeks and landed on the coast of the Black Sea. They are happened upon by Scythian men who are looking to introduce new blood to their society. They wanted to create a new generation with the Amazons as they were strong and would create strong offspring. The Scythian men fostered a relationship with the Amazons and wanted to bring them back to their villages. The Amazons responded with these words.

We find it impossible to live with your women, because our practices are completely different from theirs. We haven't learnt women's work. We shoot arrows, wield javelins, ride horses-things which your women never have anything to do with. They just stay in their wagons and do women's work; they never go out hunting or anywhere else either. We would find it impossible to get along with them. No, if you want us to be your wives, and to appear really fair, you should go to your parents and get your share of your property, and then when you come back, we can form our own community. (Hdt. *His.* 4.144.2)

In this passage from Herodotus, the women explain why they cannot be a part of the world the men live in. It explains the differences of Amazons to the Scythian women, but it is also a commentary of the differences between Amazons and Athenian women, but also the discourse around the East. The Amazons are everything that Athenian women are not. They

hunt, shoot arrows, ride horses and do not stay within the confines their husbands' homes.

Herodotus may have looked at the stories with more of an open mind than main land Greeks, but he still was a Greek at heart who recognized the power of men.

Greeks, through documenting their stories, detailed the specific myths that resonated with Greek audiences. These themes became popular within art and are replicated for multiple centuries. The most popular theme was Herakles³⁵ and his twelve labors and right behind him were the Amazons.³⁶ His tenth labor was to steal the girdle of Hippolyta. This is detailed in black figure vases as well as red figure. This theme depicts Herakles fighting Hippolyta, but also a small army of Amazons. As with creative interpretation and vision, the oral stories of the twelve labors have multiple versions, which are reflected in the art made. Herakles is under the service of Eurystheus who sent him to retrieve the girdle. He is met with an opposition of the Amazons. In some versions he is given the girdle by Hippolyta and in others he kills her. This particular vase is a scene of Herakles fighting Hippolyta and two other Amazons. One Amazon is behind him and two other Amazons are in front of him. There are not inscriptions on the vase, so there is no way to know if one of the Amazons is Hippolyta. What is interesting about this vase is that it from 520 BCE, meaning that the Amazons were moving from black figure to red figure, but also hoplite armor to oriental style of clothing (1.2). The two Amazons in the front of Herakles are dressed in hoplite armor with spears and helmets while the Amazons behind him is an archer wearing oriental style clothing later associated with Amazons after the Persian Wars. this change comes with the rise of the Persian Wars, which changed the relationship that the Greeks had to the East. The clothing was a way to other the Amazons as it was a visual reminder that they were not Greek and came from the barbarian land where women acted like men and men acted like

³⁵ I used Herakles as this is the Greek spelling in this section in Hercules in others as this is the more common name that people know.

³⁶ Mayor, 31.

women through their luxuries. This is also an example of a group scene which was more associated with black figure vases than red figure.



1.1&2 Terra-cotta neck-amphora [jar], ca, 520 BCE, accession number 61.11.16, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

As there are variations of the twelve labors, there are variations of the story of Queen Penthesilea and Achilles. Penthesilea and her Amazons came to the aid of the Trojans during the Trojan War of the Late Bronze Age.³⁷ She is an individual Amazon whose name is recognized, and her story recounted. The background of Penthesilea fluctuates, but some say that she was Thracian born³⁸, which adds to the historical background of the Amazons. The Scythians and Thracians were connected through cultural norms and practices, like gender equality.³⁹ There is little information about Penthesilea's background, but her death has been detailed on pottery since the eighth century BCE. Penthesilea is dressed in tight fitting clothing to accentuate her movement, but also her form. A helmet and a shield rest beside her as she lays on the ground. Standing above her is Achilles, son of Peleus and Thetis, known for his strength and invincibility. He holds a spear which is embedded in the image of Penthesilea. She and Achilles can be identified through the inscription in Greek above the figures written in black. (1.3)

³⁷ Quintus of Smyrna, *The Trojan Epic: Posthomerica*, Trans. and Eds. by Alan James (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004).

³⁸ Shapiro, 110.

³⁹ Penrose, 18-20.



1.3 Achilles killing Penthesilea. Black-figure amphora, signed by Exekias, sixth century BC, from Vulci, Italy, Inv. 18,360,224.13, British Museum.

Quintus of Smyrna and many other ancient authors recount the death of Penthesilea.⁴⁰ This story was first composed in a now lost epic called the *Aethiops*⁴¹, which has been attributed to

⁴⁰ Mayor, 32.

⁴¹ Mayor, 18 and Lyn Webster Wilde, *On the Trail of the Women Warriors: The Amazons in Myth and History* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 1999), 56. And Shapiro, 108.

Arctinos of Miletos. The *Aethiops* continues where the *Iliad* ends with the death of Hector.⁴² With Troy's hero and only salvation buried, their allies arrived to fight, the Amazons being one of them. Penthesilea leads the charge that ends in her death. The narrative is lost but fragments are found within works of other ancient authors who recite the story.⁴³ The *Aethiops* was a shift in the depiction of Amazons. Homer painted them in a positive light in the *Iliad* but, Arctinos changed this by sexualizing them in his work, which there are fragments in the works of other authors like Quintus of Smyrna. This shows greatly in the art as Amazons are also depicted as fit, muscular, and attractive.⁴⁴

Black figure dominated Greek culture from the 8th century to about 6th century when a painter, the Andokides Painter (working c. 530-515), invented the technique of red figure⁴⁵, the complete opposite of black figure. This technique began in Athens around 530 BCE.⁴⁶ Around this moment, Athens was in the midst of tyranny along with many other Greek city states. Under the rule of the Peisistratus, Athens was undergoing political strife and unrest. The aristocracy were not happy under tyrant rule. This caused clan disputes, but also elite men trying to overthrow those in power. As encounters with the East become more frequent, the Athenian idea of the barbarian moved from those who were not Greek, like if you were from Corinth and moved to Athens, to the idea of the effeminate East where civilization is backwards based on gender norms. This idea of the effeminate East is represented within the art and literature to correspond to the changes in Athenian society.

⁴² Diodorus, *Life of History*, https://www-loebclassics-com.ezproxy.uvm.edu/view/diodorus_siculus-library_history/1933/pb_LCL279.3.xml?rskey=CUEFWM&result=1 and Quintus of Smyrna, *The Trojan Epic: Posthomerica*, Trans. and Eds. by Alan James (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004).

⁴³ Quintus of Smyrna, and Diodorus 2.34-35.

⁴⁴ Mayor 98 and Penrose, 31.

⁴⁵ Boardman, 7.

⁴⁶ Boardman, 7, and Sharon Herbert, "Red Figure Pottery," *Corinth* 7, no. 4 (1977): x-132, www.jstor.org/stable/4390665.

Heading towards the end of the Archaic period, the Persian Empire emerges in the East, under the power of Cyrus the Great, another man who encountered the Amazons.⁴⁷ The Persian Wars ended the Archaic period. Xeres, king of the Persians and grandson to Cyrus, waged war on the Greeks. The Persian Empire started to encounter the Greek settlements on the coast of Asia Minor. The Greeks were encroaching on Persian territory which angered the Persians and caused conflict between the nations. After multiple battles, the Greeks, after banding together, proved victorious against the Persians.

Due to the most recent war with the Persians, the Scythian archers that were prominent in black figure disappears from the art and the female archer becomes prominent in describing the East and the difference between the East and Greek culture. Red figure vases slowly replaced black figure, not completely but it took over as the most popular style.⁴⁸ Red figure became popular in Athens and with this a change in the scenes Amazons were depicted in. Amazons moved from large battle scenes like on a mausoleum frieze in Halicarnassus⁴⁹ to single combat like Achilles and Penthesilea.

After the Persian Wars

After the end of the Persian Wars , Athens moved from tyrannical structure to a direct democracy. This was brought about by Cleisthenes around 508/509 BCE.⁵⁰ With the birth of democracy comes the beginning of the Classical Period.

⁴⁷ Mayor, 23 and Paul Cartledge, "Timeline," in *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xix-xxii.

⁴⁸ Boardman, 8.

⁴⁹ Boardman, 233.

⁵⁰ Cartledge,xx.

The art continued to change and respond to the political sphere. With the end of the Persian wars, came the division of power between city-states and Athens' rise to power. With this continual contact with the East, the art continued to reflect the contact between the East and the Greeks. Through the relationship to the effeminate East, an idea came to be that the men were like women and the women were like men.⁵¹ Aeschylus wrote a play called the *Persians* which depicts the Persians as effeminate men, due to their customs around gender norms. This became a prevalent theme in pottery, but also theater. Herodotus also shares this idea in the telling of the narrative of the Sarmatians. In the passage mentioned earlier, the Scythian men in the structure of Greek society, were the women in this exchange.⁵² They are the ones that leave their homes to start a new tribe with the Amazons. In this frame, the Amazons are the men in this transaction, which solidifies the Greek idea of women being men and men being women. The Amazons took on the role of "other" within Greek society, having come from the East. They were like the men that Greek citizens were supposed to be and everything that Athenian women were not. This relationship was reflected in the Orientalizing change in dress of the Amazons.

The clothing of the Amazons came to resemble an oriental style of dress, which had started to happen before the start of the Persian Wars. In red figure pottery, the dress Amazons are depicted wearing borrows from the neighboring tribes of the Scythians.⁵³ Amazons came to be dressed in a mixture of Thracian and Scythian clothing and weapons.⁵⁴ Depictions of the Amazons in battle or in a rare case bathing⁵⁵ they were shown in tight leggings with patterns (1.4). The patterns tend to be variations of zig zags. The leggings would end at the ankles of the Amazons, but there is a debate within scholarship on whether the leggings actually ended at the

⁵¹ Penrose, 31.

⁵² Fried S. Brown, and William Blake Tyrrell, "A Reading of Herodotus's Amazons," *The Classical Journal*, 80(4) (1985): 297-302.

⁵³ Shapiro, 110.

⁵⁴ Shapiro, 109-112.

⁵⁵ Mayor, 103 and Shapiro, 112.

ankles or if they were the artists rendition of tattoos.⁵⁶ The patterns on the leggings are similar to the tattoos that Thracians were known to etch on to their skin.⁵⁷ As the Amazon's depiction borrowed from Thracian clothing, there is a possibility that artist borrowed the Thracian tattooing custom as well. Thracian women are shown with intricate tattoos to indicate their status in the culture.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Mayor, Chapter 8.

⁵⁷ Mayor, 130.

⁵⁸ Mayor, 131.



1.4 Attic red figure loutrophoros (pitcher), Louvre painter sixth century, BCE, inv G443 Musée de Louvre, Paris.

Another article of clothing that is borrowed from the Scythians is the hat that the Amazons are wearing in multiple depictions.⁵⁹ It has two large flaps on the side. This is a hat

⁵⁹ Shapiro, 112.

from the Scythian culture along with a fitted jacket.⁶⁰ As there are multiple depictions of Amazons, the hats can be found in the iconography. The hats visually connects the Greek Amazons to Scythian customs and clothing and a visual connection to the Thracians is the pelta. Amazons have ties to the Thracians as there have been arguments that Amazons were based not just on Scythian women but Thracian women as well.⁶¹ Both cultures operated with gender equality and both cultures are incorporated within the iconography. This connection is seen within the stories told of the Amazons as Penthesilea is told to be of Thracian descent. These are two cultures within the territory attributed to the Amazons by ancient authors, but there are other cultures that lived within this territory.⁶²

Ancient authors give vast territory to the Amazons when discussing their origins, which included the Scythians, Thracians and the Sarmatians.⁶³ They give this wide range of territory because no ancient author gave the same place for the Amazons other than a particular island off the coast of Asia Minor, near the Black sea. Strabo gives his native land Pontus as the origin of the Amazons and part of their territory, while other give them territory in the mountains.⁶⁴

The clothing moves greatly towards this oriental style, which coincides with the attitude towards the East after the Persian Wars. Amazons were propaganda in Greek society that in the East women were like men and men were like women. A shift in the weapons they hold also change with the attitudes of the Persian War. Amazons in earlier conceptions are carrying hoplite shields but by the 5th century they are carrying half-moon shaped wicker shields called pelta.⁶⁵ The change of clothing and weapons signaled a shift in the depictions of the Amazons away from the Greek hoplite image.

⁶⁰ Shapiro, 111.

⁶¹ Shapiro, 109.

⁶² Mayor Chapter 2.

⁶³ Mayor Chapter 2.

⁶⁴ Strabo 11.5.1.

⁶⁵ Shapiro, 106.

The shift in the clothing was not the only thing that changed for the Amazons in their depictions after the Persian Wars. Herakles had been the most popular narrative in black figure vase painting, but this changed based on a change in the status of Athens.⁶⁶ Athens had risen to power after the Persian Wars and they were proud of their heritage so, Theseus became popular and Herakles declined in popularity. Theseus, in his journey to become a Greek hero, offers himself as tribute for his people, as he was the son of Aegeus, king of Athens. Depictions of Theseus rose in popularity, especially the narrative of the Amazonomachy. Theseus, either with or without Herakles, kidnapped an Amazon, either Hippolyta or Antiope. This is detailed in the art like the frieze at Halicarnassus. A particular vase details Theseus with the help of a Greek soldier kidnapping Antiope. Plutarch in the Roman era details this story in his life of Theseus, where he tries to make sense of the more mythical elements of the story (1.5). The narrative followed Theseus through his encounters with the Amazons when he kidnaps Antiope and when

⁶⁶ Mayor, 32 And Boardman, 229.

the Amazons band together to fight the Greeks to have her returned.⁶⁷



1.5 Red figure attic amphora by mason, Athens, ca. 500-490 BCE invn G197 Musee de louvre, Paris

⁶⁷ Plutarch, *Life of Theseus*, https://www-loebclassics.com.ezproxy.uvm.edu/view/plutarch-lives_theseus/1914/pb_LCL046.3.xml?rskey=kZdqvu&result=1.

Early Modern Period

Iconography spans media of art and continues from the classical Mediterranean world to its revival in the Renaissance period or known in academia as the Early Modern. Art in this period changed based on country, time, and atmosphere. The artistic style right before the explosion of learning, curiosity and a return to natural things was the icon tradition. The icon tradition focused on the Christian ideals, and the Virgin Mary. An icon is defined as a portrait or images; especially in churches, a panel with a painting of sacred personages that are objects of veneration. With the tradition, the paintings would depict the Virgin Mary with baby Christ with a golden halo and a gold and blue background. There was a switch within the artistic community and the icon tradition moved to an individual narrative of the natural world. The images became more realistic and had multiple variations by a singular artist rather than the icon tradition of a group of painters. It was a move from board to canvas, many to one and margin to frame. This switch from a group of painting working on one piece to the individual artistic identities, used the techniques and images of the icon tradition to move away from the icon tradition. The early images of the Renaissance depicted the Virgin Mary and her son, but the background changed, and the halos slowly disappeared. The artist as an individual came to be with the revival of classical ideals. As the artists choose their topics and how to depict them, art became more varied and less uniform. The individual was known for their topics and their technique. The Renaissance period was marked by a revival of ideas which stepped into culture, art, and theater.⁶⁸ As ideals were revived so were the narratives and images of the Amazons.

Classical ideals flourished and circulated through the Renaissance in Holland, Italy, England, and others like Spanish conquered Latin America. With each of the countries, new iconographies were created from the old. The individual artists were drawing on these

⁶⁸ Art history lecture (art history 006 with Isabel Gazz).

iconographies within their own works and transforming old narratives into their own. The Renaissance is a time of art, revival and curiosity, but it was also a time of Christian ideals, not pagan. The revival of the Amazonian ideal in the Renaissance comes with the rise of strong Queens in England and Spain, women who shared traits with those given the name Daughters of Ares.

Holland:

Known as the part of the Northern Renaissance, Holland housed great artists, Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) being one of them. Rubens worked as a court painter in Northern Netherlands for Archduke Albert and Archduchess Isabella Clara Eugenia after many years of study in multiple countries, such as Italy.⁶⁹ It was in this service that Rubens met Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568-1625) who was also employed as a court painter for the Archduke and Archduchess⁷⁰. It was through this meeting that the work “Battle of the Amazons” came to be. It shows the style of the two painters, but also the naturalism which was highly valued in the Renaissance period.

As the piece is titled the “Battle of the Amazons” (2.1), or could also be known at the Amazonomachy, it ties to a specific knowledge on the narratives of the ancient Greeks. This is a particular story that has been plucked from its original context and placed in a new one. When talking about the “Battle of the Amazons”, one may think of the siege on Athens when Theseus is said to have kidnapped Antiope and in another versions Hippolyta.⁷¹ In either version, the

⁶⁹ Anne T Woollett, “Two Celebrated Painters: The Collaborative Ventures of Rubens and Brueghel, ca. 1598-1625,” in *Rubens and Brueghel: A Working Friendship*, (Hague: Getty Publication, 2006), 2-41(b).

⁷⁰ Anne T Woollett, “Battle of the Amazons,” in *Rubens and Brueghel: A Working Friendship*, (Hague: Getty publication, 2006), 44-99(a).

⁷¹ Plutarch, Life of Theseus.

same events happen. An Amazon is taken by Theseus and the Amazons wage war on the Greeks to get her back.⁷² Something interesting about the multiple versions of the myth is that they encountered all have a similar relationship for Antiope and Hippolyta. They always have some kind of kinship, like sisters or cousins.⁷³ The idea of Amazons as a matriarchy constructs a bond between women that can be similar to familial bonds. By expressing this idea in terms of a real familial bond the authors are making a case of the matriarchy that these warrior women have. This bond and the nature of the matriarchy that surrounds the Amazons cause friction between the Greeks and the Amazons, due to the structures being opposite.⁷⁴ And as with all Amazon stories, the Amazons are defeated. The story has an end, but the painting seems to be *in medias res*. No end can yet be seen but those who knew the story knew the ending. Those from the elite class that had the knowledge and education to read the classical myths already knew the outcome: the patriarchy is victorious. Balance is restored and the Amazons know their place in the world of men and especially Greek men.

⁷² Plutarch, *Life of Theseus*.

⁷³ Kathym Schawarz, *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 29.

⁷⁴ Penrose, 65.



2.1 Peter Paul Rubens and Jan Brueghel the Elder , c. 1598, Battle of the Amazons.

Private Collection

This piece is known as the earliest collaboration between Rubens and Brueghel. As this was a period that focused on naturalism, the Amazons are depicted clothed and nude fighting Greek soldiers on a plain by a forest. Each of the women are in different positions. Some are being handled by soldiers, others riding on horseback clothed in dresses of bright royal colors, and some dead under the feet of their comrades. Each one of these women tie to an iconography established in classical art. The women being handled by men are often in the nude, with scraps of fabric wrapped around them. It harks back to an idea rather than a particular image even though there were some.

Amazons symbolize the other in their attributes, their customs and their clothing. In the situations the Amazons are depicted without clothing, they connect more to the idea of a Greek hero.⁷⁵ Men in classical art are often depicted nude to represent their discipline of the body, but also it shows what we call the heroic nude. In the earlier vase image of Hercules fighting the Amazons, he is depicted in the nude. The heroic nude is only attributed to male Greek heroes, except in the case of the Amazons.⁷⁶ The Amazons on occasion are depicted in the heroic nude. This is an idea that forms the basis for the women in the painting to be depicted in this way. In the painting, the women in the foreground are being handled by Hercules.⁷⁷ Rubens and Brueghel's pulled on multiple sources for the painting.⁷⁸ There are no inscriptions to confirm the players in the battle, but some have been interpreted as famous Amazons.

The second category of Amazons in the painting are the women in armor dressed on horseback. Amazons with their tie to the Scythians but also the Thracians are known for their horses.⁷⁹ Lysias in his funeral oration, talks about the belief of the Amazons being the first to ride horses.⁸⁰ This becomes part of the iconography in later images. Horses get tied to Amazons, through this belief, and it seems to continue into Renaissance art. The women are also dressed in brightly colored dresses. The Amazons in long flowing dresses is something that comes from the cultural context of the Renaissance. Women did not wear trousers or leggings, like the Amazons in Greek art, as they were a visual clue of masculinity. The proper woman would wear a dress that conveyed the standards of the time. This is something that changes the old iconography and creates something new. This detail in the painting ties more to the cultural context surrounding the clothing of women rather than the Amazons themselves.

⁷⁵ Mayor, 23.

⁷⁶ Mayor, 25.

⁷⁷ Woollett (a), 45.

⁷⁸ Woollett (a), 45.

⁷⁹ Herodotus 4. 13.

⁸⁰ Lysias, *Funeral Oration*, https://www.loebclassics.com/view/lysias-2_funeral_oration/1930/pb_LCL244.33.xml?result=1&rskey=CBu8T0.

These women are also wearing helmets or have swords and spears in their hands. Amazons have been depicted and written in Greek art and literature with multiple kinds of weapons, but the most common being a bow. There are some depictions of them with swords and spears, but they are most known for their use of the bow. In the case of the helmets, this is something that would have been seen in the earlier iconography of the Amazons when they were dressed like the Greek hoplites. In the Greek depictions of Amazons, they are wearing helmets but in the later depictions, images that are more common in the case of the Amazons, they are wearing Scythian or Thracian hats rather than helmets. This change is something that comes from limited access to visual resources of classical art but access to classical literature. The literature of the Amazons and the visual evidence do not also mirror the other.⁸¹ At times they can be helpful in understanding the images but sometimes they can be harmful as well. If the images are interpreted based on the literary evidence, generalizations can be made about the culture that it came from. Also, each depictions is the interpretation of the creator, which is the same in the case of literature. In this case of Amazons, the visual and literary did not mirror each other causing Rubens and Brueghel's to add their own elements to the iconography. They mixed multiple stories, but also their own iconography of the Early Modern with that of the Ancient Greeks and Romans.

The last category within the painting are those dead on the ground under the feet of their comrades. This is an image that is seen in the original visuals of the Amazons. As they battle which ever Greek hero crosses their path, there are always dead Amazons lining the margin of the image. In this case, they frame the end of the painting. They are being trampled, but also, they are not painted clothed. This ties to heroic nude but also hark back to earlier imagery that

⁸¹ Mirelle M Lee, "Dress and Adornment in Archaic and Classical Greece," in *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, eds. by Sharon L. James and Sheila Dillon, (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 179-190.

may have been found and circulated through the Renaissance. Rubens and Brueghel's seem to have chosen not one of the iconographies of the Amazons, but many. Those depicted in the heroic nude, with armor, and those fallen comrades. Each is an image that harks back to original images but also the beginning, middle and end of most Amazon stories.

Italy:

Italy is most known for its Renaissance with the names of Michaelangelo, Raphael and Leonardo. They are the superstars of the Renaissance. The art is from none of these men, but men who created art based on literary stories that have direct ties to classical literature or come from the classical literature itself. The works that the art compliments are Giovanni Boccaccio's *De Claris Mulieribus* and *Tresida* and Publius Ovidius Naso's (Ovid) *Metamorphoses*.

Giovanni Boccaccio was a Latin scholar who is most known in the Renaissance for his revival of Tacitus.⁸² He could read Latin and a bit of Greek when he read Homer in the original Greek. His engagement with the classical authors puts him at odds with his contemporaries. He thought that they should look to the classics for enlightenment, but many could not get past a particular trait as the age was a flourish of Christian ideals. Many people could not get past the pagan identity of classical authors, so Boccaccio faced criticism for his works.⁸³ Boccaccio's works inspired artists to create works of art to represent the morals embedded in the works.⁸⁴ Boccaccio was a product of his time. His fascination with the ancients inspired him to mesh the classical stories and his moralist perspective of vices and virtues.⁸⁵ Each of the stories in *De Claris Mulieribus* portray vice and virtues within a narrative. *De Claris Mulieribus* has been translated as "concerning famous women" and "famous women". This is a work focused on the

⁸² Giovanni Boccaccio, *De Claris Mulieribus*, Trans. by Guido A. Guarino (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963).

⁸³ Boccaccio, ix.

⁸⁴ Boccaccio, xx.

⁸⁵ Boccaccio, xx and xxix.

stories of famous classical women. There are no Christian women in the book as Boccaccio explains so that the Christian women do not have to share a page with a pagan one.⁸⁶ Within this book, Boccaccio writes about a lineage of Amazons. From Lampedo to Penthesilea, and the generation in between. The stories are short, but they hold the morals of vice and virtue that Boccaccio wants to convey.

Boccaccio's literature was adapted by artists who used it to represent the place of women within early modern society. Within Italy, the artists adapted the stories onto *cassoni* or wedding chests.⁸⁷ These chests would have been given as gifts to a couple that were about to be married or just married. On the chests were painted images of Boccaccio's *Tresida*. Within this work, Boccaccio details the life of Theseus. In the first book of the *Tresida*, Theseus is preparing to attack an island of women who have killed their husbands and established a matriarchy.⁸⁸ He sails to this island and encounters the Amazons on the battlefield. He wins through a change of heart. Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, relinquishes her throne and returns to the definition of a good Greek woman. Two *cassoni* (2.2 & 3) paintings represent a body of work that is lost that depict the confrontation between Theseus and Hippolyta.⁸⁹ This work has been interpreted as guidance for married couples. By picking this particular narrative, the artists are contributing to the dominant control over women's behavior, by making their narratives subordinate to men. This narrative displays Amazons as inept and incapable of undermining the patriarchy. Warrior women never posed a threat to male dominance is the moral of the story on the *cassoni*. In Greek art, Amazons have an air of otherness, which can be seen in the clothing that they are depicted

⁸⁶ Boccaccio, xxxviii.

⁸⁷ Margaret Franklin, "Boccaccio's Amazons and Their Legacy in Renaissance Art: Confronting the Threat of Powerful Women," *Woman's Art Journal* 31, no. 1 (2010): 13, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40605235>.

⁸⁸ Franklin, 13.

⁸⁹ Franklin, 13-14.

in. This can also be seen in Boccaccio's work, as the Amazons change into long dresses after surrendering that are depicted on the *cassoni* as the dress of an early modern women.⁹⁰



2.2 Cassoni paintings Paolo Uccello, Tresida: Battle of Theseus and Amazons (c. 1460).

Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of the association in fine arts, photo courtesy of the Yale University art gallery. Artist unknown.



2.3 Tresida: Battle of Theseus and Amazons (c. 1450) tempera on wood. Indianapolis:

Indianapolis Art Museum, photo courtesy of the Indianapolis art museum.

⁹⁰ Franklin, 13.

Boccaccio wrote the *Tresida* and the *De Claris Mulieribus* for moral reasons but also as a warning.⁹¹ The *cassoni* paintings did not support this warning as they depicted the story as male dominance.⁹² This is not true of the woodcutting from the earliest printed edition of the *De Claris Mulieribus*. What is depicted in the woodcutting is different from that of *cassoni* paintings based on the origin of the object. The woodcutting was not made by an Italian artist, but it based on a Boccaccio's work. Created by a German artist, the Amazons are depicted in German early modern clothing. Long dresses, holding farming implements and head coverings (2.4). The woodcutting supports Boccaccio's warning that women are capable of undermining men and claiming independence from within the structure or outside of it.⁹³ The woodcutting differs from the *cassoni* paintings because they do not visually compromise the Amazon's masculinity.

⁹¹ Franklin, 14.

⁹² Franklin, 13-14.

⁹³ Franklin, 16-18.



2.4 Anonymous Artist, Amazons, REYSEN UND WANDERSCHAFFTEN DURCH DAS GELOBTE LAND: Travels and Wanderings Through the Holy Land, 1498

Another piece of literature that was adapted in the early modern art was Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The *Metamorphoses* were a collection of myths detailing transformations and one of them is the tale of Atalanta. The etching is from a series of 150 etchings depicting the *Metamorphoses*. The particular etching (2.5) by Antonio Tempesta depicts the story of Atalanta. The etching shows the foot race between Atalanta and Hippomenes. Atalanta was coveted by

many men and she told them that she would marry them if they could beat her in a footrace. If they lost, they would lose their heads. Hippomenes knew the consequences of losing and received help from Aphrodite. She gave him three golden apples to drop while he raced Atlanta.⁹⁴ The etching is *in medias res*. Hippomenes is in front of Atlanta and she has stopped to pick up one of the apples he dropped. The title of the etching is “*Atlantam veneris ope vincit Hippomenes*” which translates to “Hippomenes conquers Atlanta with the help of Venus”. Atlanta in the etching is twisting to pick up the apple on the ground. Around her, the fabric of her dress flows in the wind behind her. Not many details can be made out from the dress as only part of it is detailed with her bending down. This story is another of Amazons being defeated. Even though many of the princes before Hippomenes failed and lost their heads, he with the help of Venus does what no other man had done in the footrace. He defeats Atlanta which means that she becomes his wife, re-establishing male dominance over women.

⁹⁴ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Trans. by Staley Lombardo with an introduction by WR Johnson (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2010).



2.5 Antonio Tempesta, 1606, *Atalantam Veneris ope vincit Hippomenes*, the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, pl. 97. Image from LACMA.

England:

Italy had Michelangelo, Raphael and Leonardo, but England had the playwright William Shakespeare. His plays were shown at the Globe Theater in London. It is known within Shakespearean studies that Shakespeare had foundational material for his plays. Meaning, his plays had source material. This can be seen in his comedic play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Many know the premise and can place the playwright to the work, but many forget those that

begin the play. Shakespeare draws on the story of Theseus and Hippolyta, a popular story in the early modern. The play is set in Athens which tends to be overshadowed by the love stories being situated in the forest. There is a backstory to this as the reader would need to know the story of Theseus. Theseus is king of Athens and has recently wed Hippolyta, who was queen of the Amazons (2.6). Depending on the version of the myth, how Hippolyta came to be in the hands of Theseus changes, but also the woman changes as well. The Amazon taken from her homeland is either Hippolyta or Antiope. She is either: beaten by Theseus on the field of battle or kidnapped by Hercules and given to Theseus.⁹⁵ Whichever way that she is brought to Athens, Hippolyta has found her new home to be the democratic city state of Greece.

The character of Hippolyta has the fewest lines in the entire play.⁹⁶ Her longest speech is her describing a hunting expedition that she went on before being married to Theseus.

I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta; never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry; I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder. (4.1.III-17)

⁹⁵ Schwarz, 209.

⁹⁶ Schwarz, 206.

Before marrying Theseus, Hippolyta engaged in activities that would have been deemed masculine.⁹⁷ This shifts when she becomes married to Theseus. She is to become the ideal Greek woman who listens to her husband. Theseus speaks the lines earlier in the play.

Be advis'd, fair maid.

To you your father should be as a god:

One that compos'd your beauties; yea, and one

To whom you are but as a form in wax

By him imprinted, and within his power

To leave the figure, or disfigure it. (1.1.46-51)

Theseus establishes the patriarchy at the beginning, as Hippolyta's past is a threat to the masculine future.⁹⁸ By marrying an Amazon, it has been said by ancient authors that Amazons laid down their weapons.⁹⁹ The marriage as the frame narrative for the play does not establish the natural balance but the "contested performances of gender".¹⁰⁰ Hippolyta still thinks fondly on her past as an Amazon, rather than her future as Theseus' wife. The Amazon may have been defeated in battle, but her identity still undermines male power.¹⁰¹ Hippolyta does this through in Shakespeare rather than in Ancient Greece because of the context that the play is created in. Shakespeare lived in a time where women were ruling empires and gaining power. Having a woman in power changes the culture in which the play was created. Amazons in Ancient Greece

⁹⁷ Schwarz, 210-14.

⁹⁸ Schwarz, 214.

⁹⁹ Herodotus 4.123.

¹⁰⁰ Schwarz, 218.

¹⁰¹ Schwarz, 218-19.

only had women who had moments of temporary masculinity rather than the queens present in the early modern who present more examples of permanent masculinity.¹⁰²



2.6 Hippolyta and Theseus. Act 1 Scene. Midsummer Night's Dream

¹⁰² Penrose, 11-14.

Early America:

The New World became known to the Old World through the Age of Exploration. There are multiple narratives that the Amazons after their defeat at the hands of the Greeks at Troy wandered the seas and landed in the Americas.¹⁰³ This particular narrative became a kernel of truth when explorers were paid to locate the Amazons within this New World, one of the patrons of the expeditions being Isabella of Castile.¹⁰⁴ Columbus in his first letter to the Queen and King of Spain, Isabelle and Ferdinand, wrote of an island of women.¹⁰⁵ He did not see them as they all went inland when the Spaniards arrived in the island. This fueled literature like *Sergas de Esplandiam* by Garcia Rodriguez de Montalvo, which took the explorer reports and legends of the Amazons and made the narrative end in the Americas which fueled the desire to find them even more.¹⁰⁶ This desire to find the Amazons came from the deep seated drive to conquer and colonize new lands in the minds of explorers, but also prove their masculinity to their patrons.

It is during this time that maps were being made and circulated and the continents were represented by mythological women. The woman who represents America is called Columbia¹⁰⁷. Columbia was the representation of America based on “clones of Athena,” but also the Native American women present in the New World.¹⁰⁸ European’s imagination of the Americas was “an amazon, wild, alluring and dangerous figure who needed to be conquered.”¹⁰⁹

Columbia was depicted on maps in the early 16th and 17th centuries.¹¹⁰ A German artist created a statue of Columbia out of ivory (2.7) in the 17th century.¹¹¹

¹⁰³ Batya Weinbaum, *Islands of Women and Amazons: Representations and Realities* (Austin: University of Texas press,1999), 131.

¹⁰⁴Weinbaum, 131 and Staley(b), 209.

¹⁰⁵ Christopher Columbus, “Columbus Reports on his first Voyage,” Gilder Lehrman, Accessed March 20, 2019, https://www.gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/inline-pdfs/01427_fps.pdf .

¹⁰⁶ Weinbaum, 132.

¹⁰⁷ Gregory A Staley, introduction to *American Women and Classical Myths*, Eds. by Gregory A. Staley (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009). And Fleming Museum of Art, Burlington Vermont.

¹⁰⁸ Staley(b), 1.

¹⁰⁹ Staley(b), 1.

¹¹⁰ Fleming Museum.

¹¹¹ Fleming Museum.



Ivory Columbia Statuette, 17th Century. Accession Number 1973.41. In Fleming Museum of Art.

The statute was carved with precision and detail. The statue is a representation of the imagination of the Europeans of the New World. The details on the statue can be tied to some of the iconography of the early Amazons. Columbia's clothing is patterned at the edge of her shirt and the stripes. Patterns are something that was foreign in the minds of Greeks and Columbia is a combination of the early modern, but also ancient ideas. America was something that was new and fascination but also dangerous, feelings that were connected to the Amazons. The patterns on the Amazons clothing signaled otherness and the details of the fringe and patterns on the clothing of Columbia serve a similar function. Columbia may not look like she can be tied to the Amazons, but she is part of long line of adaptations of the Amazonian ideal. She is the transition from the narrative being a tool against women to a tool for them, as Columbia is one of the depictions of Amazons adopted by women in the colonies.

With a growing new country two centuries later, women turned to myths to establish their place in the world. The study of classical literature and classical languages was something that was forbidden for women.¹¹² Without the knowledge of the myths that informed many of the decisions of America, women were at a disadvantage as myth was used to construct the women that they are supposed to be, like the loyal Penelope, wife of Odysseus. Women wanted to know their place in this new landscape, and they find it through classical myths.

Comic Books:

The Renaissance period of history revived the classical ideals, and this carries into the graphic literary medium of comic books. Comic books in their first foray into the public scene were known as inferior to other literary mediums. They took social situations and criticize the political and cultural atmosphere in the beginning and continue to do so.¹¹³ The stories of

¹¹² Staley (b), 7.

¹¹³ Jill Lepore, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 203.

superheroes defeating villains and saving the world had appeal to readers of all ages and backgrounds. Even with this reputation, comics began to grow and build a fan base in adults but also children, something that would cause controversy. It is within comics that the next adaptation of Amazons is introduced in the form of Wonder Woman, the first female superhero. Wonder Woman's iconography stems back to the Amazonian ideal and myth. The iconography connects her to the visual depictions of the Amazonian ideal as well as their narrative, having grown up on the island of Themyscira. But what ties her to the Greek idea of the Amazon comes from her creator, the political atmosphere, and his relationships.

Wonder Woman was created by William Moulton Marston, a psychologist, lawyer, film critic and comic book writer.¹¹⁴ Marston studied at Harvard in 1911, a time where women were not allowed to study alongside men.¹¹⁵ He studied psychology under Hugo Munster, who believed that women should only be educated to make them better wives.¹¹⁶ Marston invented Wonder Woman through his multiple connections with people in his life and his belief in the strength of women. One of his connection was his first-year history professor, George Herbert Palmer, who Marston says saved his life as a first year at Harvard. His professor was also the head of Harvard Men's League for Woman's Suffrage.¹¹⁷ It was through this relationship that Marston became more involved with women's rights. Another of his connections was a long-time friend, who became his wife, Sadie Elizabeth Hallway. Sadie Hallway, known by the nickname Betty¹¹⁸, had a love for Greek lyric poetry, especially the poet Sappho.¹¹⁹ Betty was given a John Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* by her mother when she a child, which stated "a girl's

Sherrie A. Innes, *Tough Girls: Women Warriors and Wonder Women in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1999), 140-41.

¹¹⁴ Les Daniels, *Wonder Woman: The Complete History* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000), 12-19.

¹¹⁵ Lepore, 5 and Daniels, 12.

¹¹⁶ Lepore, 29.

¹¹⁷ Lepore, 8.

¹¹⁸ Lepore, 14-16.

¹¹⁹ Lepore, 14.

education should be nearly, in its course and material of study, the same as a boy's".¹²⁰ This influenced the way that she interacted with the world and Marston. A connection that many would not know without having gone through a deep dive of Wonder Woman's history is Margaret Sanger. Sanger played a large part in the backstory of Wonder Woman, with her work in the birth control movement fighting for women's rights to control their own bodies. Marston had a polygamous relationship with Sanger's niece Olive Byrne who had been a student of Marston's when he taught at Tufts.¹²¹ Margaret Sanger's book *Women are the New Race* was a text that Marston had read and incorporated into what he called "psychological propaganda for the new type of woman, who I believe should rule the world"¹²², Aka Wonder Woman.

Throughout his life, Marston moved through multiple occupations: teacher, psychologist, writer, and lawyer. Marston taught at multiple institutions, invented the lie detector, worked for Universal Studios and lastly, wrote for Detective Comics.¹²³ Comics was the last occupation that Marston had before his death in 1949 from polio and what he is most known for.¹²⁴ Wonder Woman came to be from the human connections Marston created, his education, and the history of the women's suffrage movement. Marston made connections to magazines and newspaper where he met Harry George Peter, a cartoonist who had experience drawing suffragette cartoons.¹²⁵ Wonder Woman's iconography comes from the political atmosphere of the 1940s as well as 1910-20s as well. Wonder Woman may have come to being in the 1940s, but the idea and revival of the Amazon ideal came from the start of the women's suffrage movement in the 1910s.

¹²⁰ Lepore, 16 .

¹²¹ Lepore, 76.

¹²² Lepore, 190, 103.

¹²³ Lepore 78, 55 and Daniels, 32.

¹²⁴ Lepore 234.

¹²⁵ Lepore, 85 and Daniels 24.

*Golden Age of Wonder Woman: 1941-1955*¹²⁶

Wonder Woman was released in December 1941 from *All American Comics in Sensation Comics* under the name Charles Moulton. Marston had convinced the Maxwell Charles Gaines to run a comic on a female superhero as young girls were also reading comics. Gaines gave the comic a probationary period and at the end there would be a vote if the comic continued. The vote gave the results needed for Wonder Woman to continue and become its own comic book.¹²⁷ The first issue was in *All-Star Comics # 8*.¹²⁸ She was introduced with her backstory of who she was and why she came to the United States during World War Two. Her story begins with Steve Trevor, the American pilot who lands on Themyscira, who recounts the current situation of the world. Aphrodite, goddess of love, declares that the strongest Amazon must go with him to save women and protect their freedom. Diana, daughter of queen Hippolyta, wins the honor and leaves to fight for democracy.¹²⁹

Marston was a psychologist, a lawyer, and had worked a bit in film but he was not an artist. Marston entered the graphic arts sector late in the game. Those who were working in comic books were young, but Marston was in his forties when he joined DC and well into his polygamous relationship.¹³⁰ To draw his creation, Marston looked to his connections and called on H. G. Peter, an accomplished cartoonist who understood the core idea of Wonder Woman as the embodiment of what the world could be.¹³¹ Marston believed that women were going to rule the world someday and this was an underlying theme in Wonder Woman as women were subjected to the whims of men but the bonds they needed to share to live a happy life had to be

¹²⁶ Signee Bergstrom, *Wonder Woman: Ambassador of Truth*, Foreword by Lynda Carter, and interviews conducted by Tara Bennet (New York: Harper Design, 2017), 17. (Also structured this around Hesiod's time division of gold, silver and bronze)

¹²⁷ Lepore, 188 and Daniels ,22, 25, 74.

¹²⁸ Lepore 90 and Daniels 20.

¹²⁹ Sensation Comic Issue #8.

¹³⁰ Lepore, 140.

¹³¹ Lepore, 106 .

equal and mutual.¹³² Peter understood this from his own background, but also his interactions with Marston. Marston was the writer and Peter was the artist.

Peter's style was based on that of Charles Dana Gibson.¹³³ Wonder Woman was a product of the women's movement as well as the view of women during the time. During the era of World War Two, the idea of femininity was centered around the societal conventions of clothing, not occupation. Women worked in factories while the men were gone but were still constrained in the sense of their looks and clothing. But with this change with the removal of men from daily life, women had to take on this role within society and within their own households. Women had been fighting for decades for control of their own bodies and had own twenty-year earlier been given the right to vote, but their lives were still controlled by the patriarchal structure of society through their clothing. Wonder Woman follows this pattern as she is drawn first with a red bodice with an eagle spanning the neckline and a knee length blue skirt detailed with stars and ballerina slippers. This was the first drawing of Wonder Woman, but Marston changed some of the aspects to fit his vision as she came to wear blue shorts with white stars, the same corset top and knee-high red boots also detailed with stars (3.1).¹³⁴ This became her signature look with her lasso of truth and protective bracelets. Her lasso was used and added to her iconography as a way to apprehend criminals, but also expose their true intentions. This helped her with her pursuit of freedom and truth for the human race. Wonder Woman's bracelets came to be through a connection of Marston's. Olive Byrne, the niece of Margaret Sanger and Marston's companion, wore bracelets that resemble those on Wonder Woman.¹³⁵ Wonder Woman gained the bracelets as she was against the use of guns, a hot topic in the time of her conception.¹³⁶ Superman and Batman also did not work with guns and this put Wonder Woman

¹³² Lepore, 106.

¹³³ Lepore, 193 and Daniels, 24.

¹³⁴ Lepore, 196.

¹³⁵ Lepore, 143 and Daniels, 28.

¹³⁶ Lepore, 143 and Daniels, 28.

in league with the comic book big shots. The color choices of Wonder Woman's wardrobe were not random but specifically chosen from its connection to another superhero in the comic book world. During this time, Captain America was a hit and conveyed a sense of patriotism and democracy. He fought for freedom against the Nazis and this was something that Marston wanted to pass on to Wonder Woman. Red, White and Blue became the choice colors of Wonder Woman to tie her to the country in which she came to help.¹³⁷ With this color scheme, she became part of the American people. She fought for the ideals and beliefs that the American people were fighting for overseas.

¹³⁷ Lepore, 196.

NO.1 JANUARY

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SENSATION COMICS



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Featuring
THE SENSATIONAL
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STRIP CHARACTER-

Wonder Woman!



3.1 Sensation Comics Issue #8, December 1941- January 1942

Wonder Woman continued to gain popularity until the early fifties when the Comics Magazine Association of America of America¹³⁸ was formed to censor comic books. Many parents, a Jesuit priest, along with the committee had issues with Wonder Woman.¹³⁹ Marston has a particular history when it comes to the interactions between women and men. Wonder Woman spends a great deal of time bound. Something that Marston did not have a problem with the bondage as to him it symbolized Wonder Woman breaking the bonds of men and exposing them for the negative construction that they were. To Marston, he was showing the world that to interact with women correctly they need to be love bonds rather than controlling ones.¹⁴⁰ Parents, the Jesuit priest and the committee did not appreciate the time Wonder Woman spent in bonds, but this was not the only thing that they had issue with. There were many complaints about the revealing nature of Wonder Woman's clothing. She was not dressed as a woman should be. The Association had a problem with her dress and the messages being sent to the young readers of comic books. Wonder Woman was not the only comic book that was facing this censor.¹⁴¹ However, she was the only hero who was facing censoring due to her clothing. With a change of authorship, Wonder Woman was given a new look. She loses her red boots and is given yellow ballerina slippers. She is being carried across the stream by Steve Trevor. This was a moment of change in the identity of Wonder Woman.

¹³⁸ Lepore, 270 and Innes, 140.

¹³⁹ Lepore, 255.

¹⁴⁰ Lepore, 243 and Daniels 63.

¹⁴¹ Lepore, 203, 243, 255.

*Silver Age of Wonder Woman: 1956-1970*¹⁴²

The mid and late fifties became known as the Silver age of Comics through the attempt to revive characters that had blinked out of existence due to decreasing sales.¹⁴³ *Sensation Comics* was bought by DC and characters began to disappear. In this age, Wonder Woman changes and represents something new and bold. This is due to the fact that Wonder Woman went from the hands of Marston to Sheldon Mayer to Robert Knaigher, most known for his comic the Black Canary¹⁴⁴. Knaigher changed the face of Wonder Woman. He did not try to replicate Marston's Wonder Woman, but created his own. She was in the Justice League of America alongside some old comic friends, but she took part in their adventures. She sported her signature outfit, but Peter was no longer drawing.¹⁴⁵

Changes for Wonder Woman came about because of her writer and editor being a bold man. Knaigher introduced Wonder Girl to the mix. It was Wonder Woman, but as a teenager, with her own set of relationship problems. Kanigher brought this about because he gave Wonder Woman a whole new backstory. She was no longer made from clay. She was born to two human parents and given her powers by the old gods.¹⁴⁶ To remind people of this change, Knaigher introduced Wonder Woman as her teenage self and her toddler self as Wonder Tot. Around this time many articles and books were coming out about the dangers of comic books. Fredric Wethram wrote one called *Seducing the Innocent*, which condemned comic books as inferior literary genre and a danger to the minds of children as they were exposing them to violence but also sexual depravity.¹⁴⁷ One of the things Wethram focuses on in his composition is the

¹⁴² Bergstrom, 20.

¹⁴³ Daniels, 93 95, 105.

¹⁴⁴ Daniels, 91, 93, 95.

¹⁴⁵ Daniels, 102.

¹⁴⁶ Daniels, 108.

¹⁴⁷ Lepore, 204 and Daniels 103.

undertones of homosexuality.¹⁴⁸ With this hanging over her head and the new trend of romance in comics¹⁴⁹, Wonder Woman was facing an uphill battle.

The sixties were a time of trial and error. There was a half shot tv show pilot (Who is Afraid of Diana Prince?) and Wonder Woman focused on relationships and solving matters with diplomacy rather than her lasso. She had lost her signature outfit and was replaced with shiny black pants, black boots and a dark purple minidress with a grey T on the front. In Wonder Woman #178 (3.2), Mike Sekowsky and Dick Giordano have the new Wonder Woman of purple and black cross out in paint the old costumes of Wonder Woman. Sekowsky thought that the old Wonder Woman was too far removed from what girls and boys of the late sixties could relate to.¹⁵⁰ He created a new character that was a hero in the real world. This change in Wonder Woman was criticized by feminists. They complained that DC had weakened an important icon by taking her away her powers and her signature costume.¹⁵¹ After turning in her powers for her beloved Steve, he dies in the next issue. Denny O'Neil was behind these changes to the iconic character. During his stint with DC he made another change to the costume of Wonder Woman right after her revival by *Ms. Magazine*.

¹⁴⁸ Lepore 203 and Daniels 103.

¹⁴⁹ Daniels, 105.

¹⁵⁰ Daniels, 125.

¹⁵¹ Daniels, 126.



3.2 Wonder Woman #178, July 1972

*Bronze Age: 1971-1985*¹⁵²

Wonder Woman in the spring of 1972 was revived by *Ms. Magazine* (3.3).¹⁵³ They put her on the front cover that showed her running for president in her signature outfit. This was the time of another feminist wave in America, and they had chosen Wonder Woman to represent them. This was their way of bridging the gap between the feminism of the 1910s and feminism of the 1970s with the Wonder Woman of the 1940s.¹⁵⁴ This would have been the feminism of their childhood. *Ms.* was run by Gloria Steinem, one of the leaders of the feminist movement in the 1960s and fan of Marston's Wonder Woman.¹⁵⁵ Within the issue, there was an article denouncing the current Wonder Woman in Comic called "Wonder Woman Revisited" by Joanne Edgar. The current persona of Wonder Woman was being criticized for becoming more and more submissive instead of showing her superiority over men.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Bergstrom, 22.

¹⁵³ Lepore, 283.

¹⁵⁴ Lepore, 285 and Daniels 131-32.

¹⁵⁵ Lepore, 253 and Daniels, 131.

¹⁵⁶ Daniels, 131.



3.3 Ms. Magazine, Spring 1972, Issue One

At the same time that the issue of *Ms.* came out, DC released Wonder Woman #201(3.4) with Denis O’Neill as editor who had just taken over for Dorothy Woolfolk. Dorothy had experience with Wonder Woman as she had been a young assistant thirty years earlier at *All*

American Comics.¹⁵⁷ This cover sported Diana Prince in a complete white outfit, katana in hand battling Cat woman in a field of flames. This creation was influenced by the British show the *Avengers*, which had captured the attention of America, specially the character Diana Riggs.¹⁵⁸ Through this contact, Wonder Woman became a “globe-trotting, karate kicking spy.”¹⁵⁹ This became a darling series for some, but after two dozen issues Carmine Infantino, art director, felt the pressure to put Wonder Woman back in uniform.¹⁶⁰ A campaign had begun to return Wonder Woman to her red-white and blue image. It continued with the publishing of a book called *Wonder Woman* in 1972 through Warner publishing which featured 13 comic short stories all written by Marston with an introduction by Gloria Steinem.¹⁶¹ This book brought a new fame to Wonder Woman and hinted to a return to the Wonder Woman of old.

¹⁵⁷ Daniels,129.

¹⁵⁸ Daniels,129.

¹⁵⁹ Daniels, 129.

¹⁶⁰ Daniels, 132.

¹⁶¹ Lepore,289 and Daniels,132.



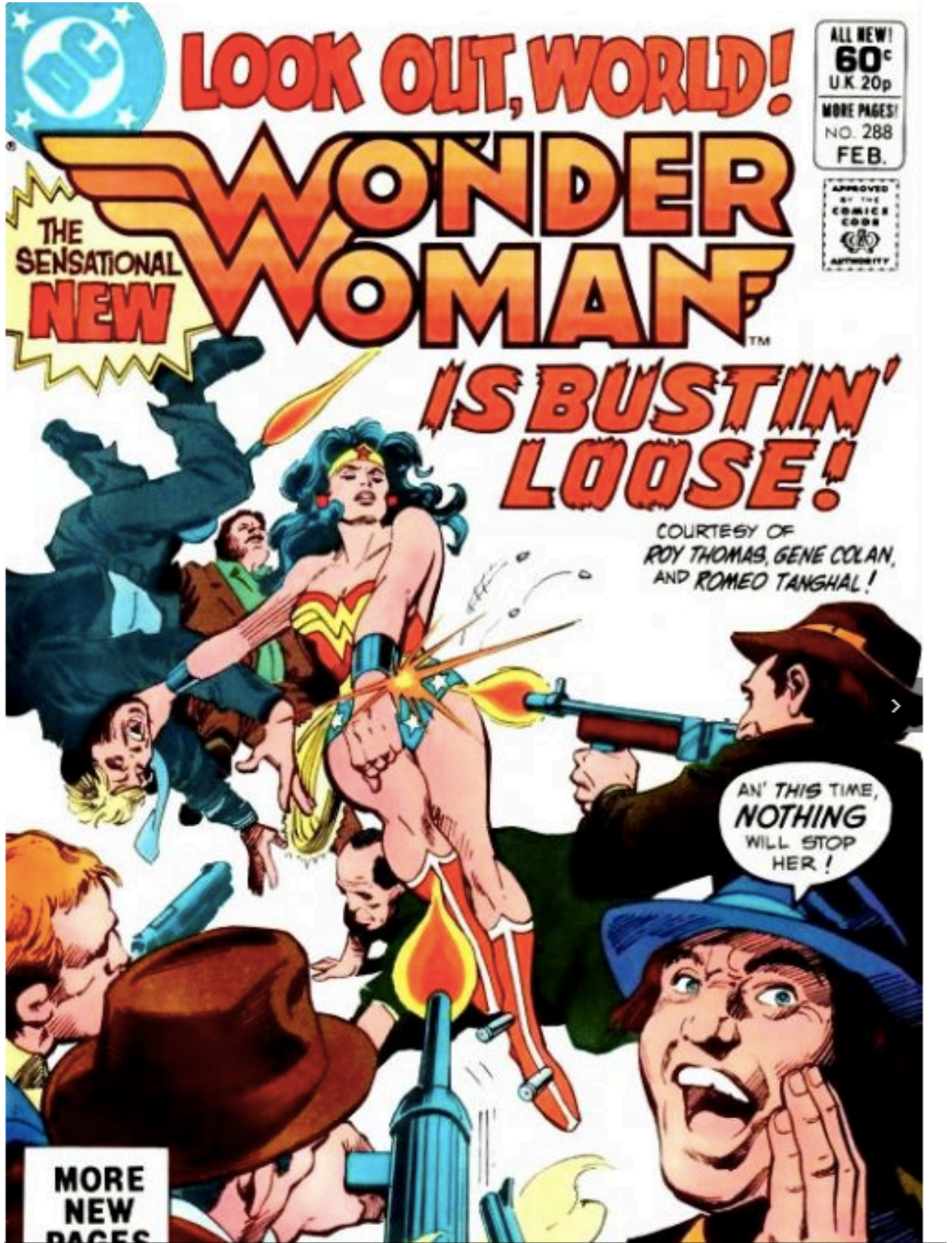
3.4 Wonder Woman # 201, May 1972

Wonder Woman had returned to her red-white and blue self, but got a makeover in another sense. In the early eighties, George Perez took over editing for Wonder Woman, while drawing for *Crisis on Infinite Earths*.¹⁶² By this point in Wonder Woman's career, she had not been fully immersed in her mythical roots. George Perez changed this. Her stories contained more myths and legends tied to the classical world. Wonder Woman lost her sense of American identity and was given a fully mythical one.

She with her long wavy dark hair held back by her circlet detailed with a star. Her star-spangled shorts are raised just a hair from the Wonder Woman of the 70s. The most striking difference in her outfit was the change of the detailing on the bustier.¹⁶³ In the earlier drawings of Wonder Woman, her bustier was drawn with an eagle spanning the sweetheart neckline. In this drawing of Wonder Woman, the eagle has been replaced by the W that many would now associate with her (3.5).

¹⁶² Daniels, 166-168.

¹⁶³ Daniels, 151.



3.5 Wonder Woman #288, February 1982

This connects with the move from the patriotic Wonder Woman to this mythical Wonder Woman.¹⁶⁴ Still wearing the American colors, she moves from the very blatant American iconography to a more muted liberty and protector of the innocent. DC wanted to wipe the slate clean when it came to their fan favorite characters and the way they did this was to create a mini-series called, *Crisis on Infinite Earths*.¹⁶⁵ Through this, the characters backstories are wiped clean and they can be started again. Out of all of the characters that would be revived, Wonder Woman was the only one who died. She turns back into a young girl then to clay.

*Modern Age: 1986-Present*¹⁶⁶

In the late eighties, Wonder Woman once again is given a new backstory and look. George Perez only worked on a couple more issues before Mike Dedanto Jr. became the penciler for Wonder Woman.¹⁶⁷ This was another shift in the costume of Wonder Woman. Dedanto leaned more towards a risqué costume for our feminine hero. Her shorts of blue stars became a thong of blue stars and her costume moved to highlight the curves of her body. Once Dedanto took over for Perez completely in the early nineties, Wonder Woman received a costume of all black (3.6).¹⁶⁸ She drawn with black shorts with stars on either hip. Around her waist is the W that was normally on the neckline of her bodice. There is some type of corset detail right above the belt. The outfit is topped by a halter style bando. Comics were moving to a darker time in the 90s and Wonder Woman followed the trend. William Messner-Loebs was the editor and Wonder Woman became a more violent, aggressive hero. Under his tutelage is one of the most violent deaths in comics.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ Daniels, 168, 151.

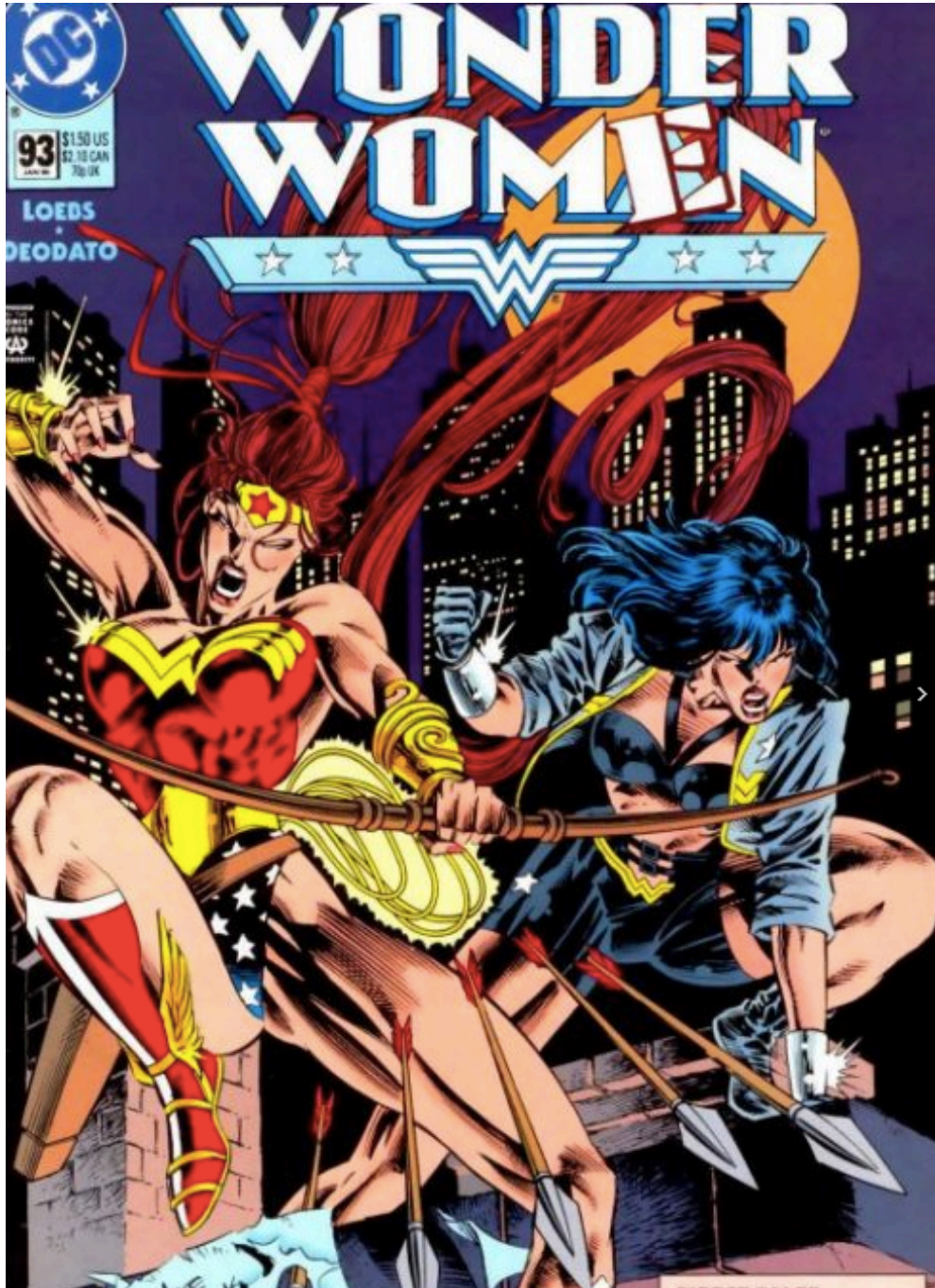
¹⁶⁵ Daniels, 155, 165.

¹⁶⁶ Bergstrom, 25.

¹⁶⁷ Daniels, 184.

¹⁶⁸ Daniels, 186.

¹⁶⁹ Daniels, 189.



3.6 Wonder Woman #93, January 1995

The early two-thousands received a shift in the costume of the Amazon Princess. The costume was drawn to look like armor. Reaching the beginning of the two-thousands, Wonder Woman has a top that shines like metal. The lines and shadows drawn showed the construction.

But only the top was changed to resemble armor. Her thong was still drawn the same as they had been in previous years. There is also a change in the colors of the costume. In the earlier drawings of Wonder Woman, the red-white and blue color scheme was more of a primary red and blue. It was bright and was a true primary color which represents the colors used in the American flag. As comics were moving to darker themes and situations, the color scheme changed along with it.¹⁷⁰ The red and blue of her iconic suit were darkened to a deep maroon and navy blue.

The early 2010s brought about the new comic the *New 52* (2011-2016). It is within this run that her thong given to her in the mid 90s changed back to shorts.¹⁷¹ The shorts resemble the black shorts from the late 90s with the two stars on the hips. There are more costume changes within the series, but it also goes back to the armored top and dark blue shorts. With the end of *New 52*, the comic *Rebirth* was released. The first issue of *Rebirth* (3.7) shows Wonder Woman with her armored top but her shorts have been exchanged for an armored skirt. The skirt resembles the costume of women warriors of the of the mid and late 90s in film and television. The skirt is the same color as the shorts were, but it is lined in gold. For each pleat of the skirt, there is a star at the end. As more issues of *Rebirth* were released, the stars are removed.¹⁷² With each revival and change of the costume, Wonder Woman retains her position as an American symbol, but her costume no longer projects the traditional American iconography.

¹⁷⁰ Daniels, 188.

¹⁷¹ Bergstrom, 31.

¹⁷² Bergstrom, 31.



3.7 Rebirth, Issue One, 2016

Film and Television

Mythological stories and narratives have been a topic in cinema since its beginning with silent films. The fascination and interest in these universal stories fulfill a search for an answer to the complexities of the everyday life. Amazons are only one of the many classical narratives that have made their way to the big screen.

Tough women on screen has become a trope in Hollywood archetypes. With this emergence of tough women on screen, due to the changing of women's the positions in society, there were a greater number of gender roles are open to women.¹⁷³ But this surge can also cause strife and controversy with the societal idea of the woman's gender role. These new role models can bind women even more tightly to the traditional feminine role within society.¹⁷⁴ As women moved outside of the traditional gender category of the feminine, the more tightly some held to the same old traditions. The tough women being portrayed on screen had things in common, being their beauty and in the earlier conceptions of tough women they held jobs that were traditional the role of women.

Due to this back and forth of what a woman can be, portraying tough woman on screen became a challenge. A balance had to be achieved through the masculine and feminine traits that she held. In American culture, the traditional sense is male/masculine and female/feminine if something breaks from this mold it is a "travesty, something that fails to conform to cultural notions about what is normal."¹⁷⁵ The more masculine that a woman become to more she "disturbs mainstream society."¹⁷⁶

Wonder Woman made her debut in television in the early 60s only twenty years after her creation. This had been a long time coming as she had been preceded by the British show the

¹⁷³ Innes, 5.

¹⁷⁴ Innes, 5.

¹⁷⁵ Innes, 21.

¹⁷⁶ Innes, 21.

Avengers with Diana Riggs and other strong women moving to screen. As there are multiple visions for these myths, they are constructed around the ideas of their creators, who are changing the roles of women in society by giving them new role models. Wonder Woman may have had her own show but her Amazonian sisters faced a different journey in television and film. The films and televisions featuring tough women range from the mid 70s to the most recent adaptation of Wonder Woman and Captain Marvel. Each of the shows present in the survey connect to the original narratives and myths of Amazons and have adapted the iconography.

Television

Wonder Woman

Wonder Woman first got her shot on television in an incomplete pilot called *Who is Afraid of Diana Prince* in the late 60s.¹⁷⁷ This four minute and forty-five second pilot never saw the light of day, but she persevered and appeared in the animated series *Super Friends (1973-86.)*¹⁷⁸ With the success of the show, a live action show was created and shot starring Lynda Carter as Wonder Woman. The show would originally air on ABC then be moved to CBS.¹⁷⁹ Lynda Carter was just getting her start in film having been Miss America, but she fit the bill for the dark haired, blue eyed beauty that Wonder Woman had been drawn to look like(4.1).¹⁸⁰

Wonder Woman (1975-79) would air for three seasons with a switch from the background of World War Two as detailed in the original comic to the early 70s.¹⁸¹ The first episode is where the audience is introduced to the live action version of our beloved hero. The first episode of season one brings the background and story given to her in the original comics to the big screen. The audience first meets Diana (Lynda Carter) as she runs through the wilderness of

¹⁷⁷ Daniels, 120.

¹⁷⁸ Daniels, 136.

¹⁷⁹ Daniels, 145.

¹⁸⁰ Daniels, 140 and Bergstrom, 51-56.

¹⁸¹ Daniels, 134, 140, 145.

Paradise Island with her friend. They are both dressed in short flowing dresses and ribbons in their hair. Diana finds Steve Trevor (Lyle Waggoner), an American pilot, when he crashed on the island on a secret mission for the American Air Force. She carries him unconscious back to the palace and wished to wait on him to her mother's dismay. As he explains the atrocities happening in the world, while in the medical area of Paradise Island, Diana hears them and reports them to her mother who want nothing to do with the world of man, but wants to help those affected by the war. It is decided that an Amazon will journey with him back to America to fight for truth and justice. Against her mother's wishes, Diana disguises herself to take part of the competition to see who would accompany Steve back to America. Still under the guise, Diana competes in the competition and wins the honor. It is only when she faces her mother that she removes the disguise. Diana receives her iconic suit from her mother Hippolyta as a symbol of what she was fighting for.¹⁸²

The storyline follows those of the early scripts of the 1940s comic, but this is not the only connection. The iconic outfit of Wonder Woman in the show is the same outfit given to Wonder Women in the 40s comics drawn by H. G. Peter. The show follows the original drawings for the first release of the comic in 1941. Wonder Woman is dressed in the red bodice with a blue skirt. In the show, when Diana is first given the suit, the suit has a skirt that is detachable. Diana takes the skirt off and her and her mother concur that it looks better without the skirt, something that happened in the original designs of Wonder Woman. As the show was aired in the 70s, there was a campaign to bring back the iconic costume in the comics and the show follows this campaign. Wonder Woman was once again in her red-white and blue patriotic costume, which was a win for feminist in the 70s as they once again had their feminist symbol back to her oldself.

¹⁸² *Wonder Woman*. Season One, episode one, "The New Original Wonder Woman," written by Stanley Ralph Ross, Aired Nov. 7, 1975, ABC, DVD.

Lynda Carter was dressed in the signature outfit: red bodice with an eagle spanning the neckline, blue shorts covered in white stars, a circlet holding her hair back, and lasso secured to her hip. She was the living breathing version of Wonder Woman. She even had the red boots to match.



4.1 Lynda Carter As Wonder Woman, 1975

Xena: Warrior Princess:

Xena (Lucy Lawless) is first introduced as a character in *Hercules: The Legendary Journey* with Kevin Sorba¹⁸³, in the episode called “Warrior Princess” in season one, but it was in 1995 that she was given her own show. With her appearances in the *Legendary Journey*, the audience is exposed to her tyrannical reign as a warlord and her past misdeeds.

Xena aired from 1995-2001 for six seasons gaining a following with each one. When the show was originally pitched to stations, many did not want to air a female warrior as they feared that a female hero would not be able to stand on her own without a man taking the lead as the main character, but one station took a leap of faith.¹⁸⁴ Xena aired on this station and gained a following very quickly, through her search for redemption and being a strong woman with no need for a man.¹⁸⁵ As a female warrior serving justice to evil men, she was on par with Wonder Woman, a woman who did not need the help of men to defeat evil. Xena is different than the Amazonian Princess as she does not come from a place of truth and justice. Many know Xena for her reign of terror as a warlord. She did not follow the traditional role that Wonder Women sometimes does in how she looks and behaves.¹⁸⁶ She does not come to be a hero for her belief in all that is good, but to redeem herself in the eyes of those she has wronged. “Depicting Xena as a heroic woman who does not rely on a man to save her when trouble occurs makes her tougher than virtually all women in similar action-adventure show.”¹⁸⁷ Xena is one for the first women warrior portrayed on film without a connection to a man. Many of the warrior women before her

¹⁸³ Innes, 163.

¹⁸⁴ Innes, 163.

¹⁸⁵ Alison Futrell, “The Baby, the Mother, and the Empire: Xena as Ancient Hero,” in *Athena’s Daughters: Television’s New Women Warriors*, eds. by Frances Early and Kathleen Kennedy, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 14-15. And Helen Caudill, “Tall, Dark and Dangerous: Xena, the Quest, and the Wielding of Sexual Violence in Xena On-Line Fan Fiction,” in *Athena’s Daughters: Television’s New Women Warriors*, eds. by Frances Early and Kathleen Kennedy, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003) 27.

¹⁸⁶ Innes, 144.

¹⁸⁷ Innes, 161.

like Wonder Woman had love interests or were part of a team featuring women. By herself, Xena is a warrior who fights for redemption on her own terms rather than with the help of men. Xena, in her depiction as a tough woman on film, breaks the traditional role of the woman through her ability to balance the masculine and feminine traits, by being a tough warrior but also a caring mother. In the first episode, Xena has returned to her village and is met with fear and wariness. The people do not believe she has changed her ways. It is with her new companion Gabrielle that she changes the people's minds.¹⁸⁸

Her background is something that gives her another tie to the Amazon Princess. Wonder Woman is the daughter of the Amazon queen, while Xena was trained by one.¹⁸⁹ In the episode "Hooves and Harlots", Xena and Gabrielle travel through Amazon territory to reach their next destination. Xena, having been trained by an Amazon, knows the symbol of peace when a patrol of Amazons reaches them and restrains them. It is revealed when the patrol is attacked that the Amazons are at war with the Centaurs. The Amazon princess, sister to Queen Melosa, is killed in the exchange of fire. It is assumed that the princess was killed by the Centaurs. The Prince of the Centaurs is captured brought to the camp to be executed. Xena knows that something is not right with the current situation and seeks out the true killer. Through her investigation, she finds that a third party killed the princess, someone who wanted the Amazons and the Centaurs to kill each other. To stop the execution, Xena challenges Queen Melosa for the right to be queen.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ *Xena: Warrior Princess*, Season One, episode ten, "Sins of the Past," written by Sam Raimi et al, Aired Sep. 4, 1995, SYFY, NBC App.

¹⁸⁹ Innes, 163.

¹⁹⁰ *Xena: Warrior Princess*. Season One, episode ten, "Hooves and Harlots," written by Sam Raimi Aired Nov. 20, 1995, SYFY, NBC App. And Caudill, 28.

Xena does not wear the colors of the American people, but the leathers of a hardened warrior. Xena wears an outfit similar to that of the Amazon Princess in her later costume changes in *New 52* and *Rebirth*. Xena wears dark brown leather armor. Her breast plate is fitted close to her skin, showing the curves of her body, similar to how the tunic and leggings of the Amazons is situated to show their movements. It is detailed by bronze swirls the reach to the middle of her middle of her stomach. This bronze detail is on multiple places on her outfit. It can be seen on her arm band, gauntlets, and shoulder pads. Her skirt is strips of dark brown leather detailed with gold studs hitting mid-thigh. Her boots complete the outfit with dark brown leather knee high boots. To complete her overall presence, Xena is never far from her sword but also her circular boomerang (4.2).



4.2 Lucy Lawless as Xena Warrior Princess, 1995

Beast Master:

Beast Master has no ties to the Amazons, but encounters them on his journey. The premise of *Beast Master* is a young orphaned prince by the name of Dar with his animal companions and human companion Tao set out to restore the kingdom. Dar has the ability to

communicate with animals and uses the ability in every situation that he finds himself in¹⁹¹.

Through his travels, he encounters sorcerers, witches, warrior women and men, etc. *Beast Master* ran for three seasons for the years of 1999-2002. The show was originally a book written by Andre Norton and the screen play for the television show was written by Dawn Richie¹⁹². It is within the first season that Dar encounters the Amazons.

In “Amazons” which aired November 9, 1999¹⁹³, Melena, an Amazon warrior is kidnapped by Castrone, the leader of a rival tribe. Within Castrone’s tribe, Castrone chooses who can be married in the tribe and had chosen Melena for one of his men. When Melena refuses to marry, Castrone has her bitten by a poisonous snake and left in the embers of the encampment. Dar and Tao find Melena and attempt to nurse her back to health. Back in the Amazon encampment, the oracle, who runs the encampment, has tasked Hippolyta with mission of bringing Melena back to them and killing Dar. The oracle does not trust the actions of men, but after learning what Dar and Tao have done for Melena, Hippolyta does not feel the same. Dar and Tao bring Melena back to the camp as the antidote for the poison is within the Amazons Valley. The oracle is convinced through Melena’s narrative of how they saved her life to spare them when they bring Melena back to the encampment.¹⁹⁴

The Amazons in the episode wore similar outfits but they were all individualized. Melena wears light brown leather dress. The skirt of the dress resembles that of Xena. It is strips of leathers that are detailed with studs of light brown. It allows for movement but also protection. She wears sandals and has arm guards. Her weapon of choice is a whip (4.3).

¹⁹¹ “Beast Master,” IMDB, Accessed March 15, 2019. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0215392/?ref =nv_sr_2?ref =nv_sr_2.

¹⁹² IMDB, *Beast Master*.

¹⁹³ IMDB, *Beast Master*.

¹⁹⁴ *Beast Master*, Season One, Episode five, “Amazons,” Sylvio Tabet, Aired Nov. 9, 1999, SYFY, DVD.



4.3 Melena, Beast Master, 1999

Film

Hercules

Hercules has ties with the Amazons through his encounter with them in his Labors. As there have been multiple versions of the Hercules myth, there are multiple versions of Hercules in film as well. This version of Hercules gives the background for the blood guilt that leads to the twelve labors. *Hercules* was released in 2014 with Dwayne Johnson as Hercules and directed by Brett Ratner.¹⁹⁵

In this movie, Hercules has become a mercenary after completing eleven of his twelve labors. He with comrades are hired by the Princess of Thrace Ergenia (Rebecca Ferguson) and her father Lord Cotys (John Hurt) to help them defeat a warlord, who is plaguing their lands.

¹⁹⁵ "Hercules," IMDB, Accessed March 15, 2019. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1267297/?ref=nm_sr_2?ref=nm_sr_2.

Hercules and his comrades fight along the Thracian warriors, who do not believe the legend of Hercules told by Hercules' nephew Iolaus.¹⁹⁶

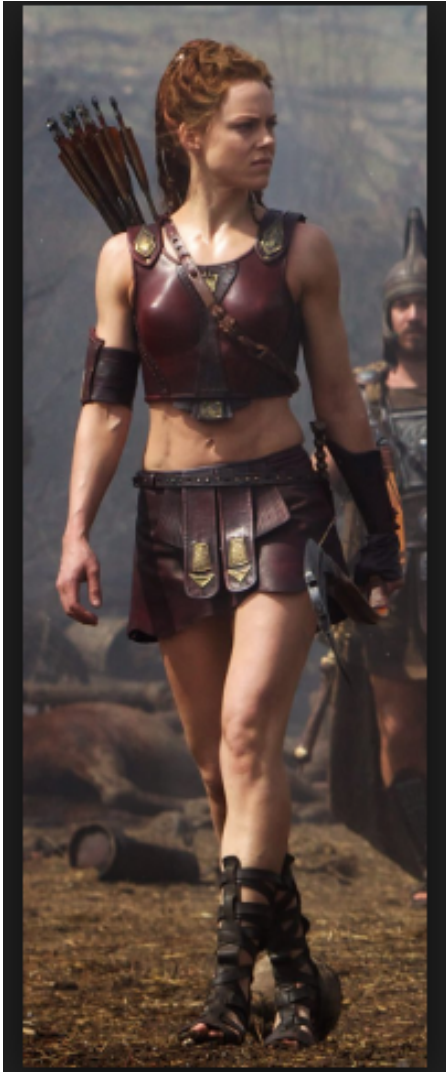
Hercules' band of warriors consist of Autolycus of Sparta (Rufus Sewell), Tydeus (Aksel Hennie), Iolaus of Athens (Reece Ritchie), Amphiaraus of Argos (Ian McShane), and Atalanta of Scythia (Ingrid Bolso Berdal). Atalanta has become part of this band through an encounter with Hercules where he helped her. Over the course of the film, the audience becomes privy to how Hercules met all of his comrades. It is here that Atalanta explains how she came to be loyal to Hercules. Atalanta is a survivor of a tragedy. Her family had been killed and Hercules helped her avenge them. Atalanta has her own stories in Greek myth, but her background in this movie ties more to history than myth. She is introduced as being of Scythia, the home of the Amazons. This makes sense as she is given the title of Amazon when they reach Thrace and shows her fighting abilities. Throughout the film, Atalanta shows her prowess in battle scene after battle scene. An ability that she shares with the Scythians and Thracians is the talent of shooting multiple arrows at once. Her identity as an Amazon is questioned when they arrive in Thrace. Atalanta in a show of martial ability shots the helmets out of the hands of two soldiers behind her. Lord Cotys retracts his statement of worrying over ability due to her sex.¹⁹⁷

In this film, Atalanta is depicted very much as an Amazon, but a modern one. Similar to warrior women of the 90s and early 00s, Atlanta is dressed in leathers. The color of the leather is slightly darkened red. Her armor is in two pieces. A breast plate with two straps over her shoulders is detailed with diamond shaped decorations on each one. Her skirt is different from the warrior women before her. Her skirt is of a single strip of fabric. On the front are two strands

¹⁹⁶ IMDB, Hercules.

¹⁹⁷ *Hercules*, directed by Brett Ratner (2014; Los Angeles ,CA: Paramount, 2014), DVD.

of leather that are detailed with the same diamond shaped emblem as on her shoulder. Her name, and her background are not the only tie to the Amazonian ideal. Atlanta's weapon of choice is the bow (4.4).



4.4 Ingrid Bolso Berdal as Atalanta in Hercules, 2014

Batman V. Superman: Dawn of Justice

Batman V. Superman: Dawn of Justice, directed by Zack Snyder, was released in 2016.¹⁹⁸

The film focuses on the tension and differences between the contemporaries of Wonder Woman. Batman (Ben Affleck) and Superman (Henry Cavill) are pitted against each other by Lex Luther (Jesse Eisenberg) in the attempt to make Superman look like a false god in the eyes of those who adore him. Bruce Wayne had lost people close to him like his friend Jack, when Superman fought General Zod in Metropolis, causing a burning desire to create a weapon that could weaken the Man of Steel. Clark Kent is put on the tail of the Bat by reports of the questionable acts committed by him sent by an anonymous source. It is during a benefit for the Metropolis Library that Clark Kent and Bruce Wayne are placed in the same space as Diana Prince (Gal Gadot). Diana was looking for an image that Lex had uncovered in his search for metahumans. The image is of her from 1918 standing with Steve Trevor and his comrades. Diana is seen throughout the movie, but the audience is not introduced to Wonder Woman until the large battle scene at the end of the movie.¹⁹⁹

During the battle against Doomsday, Wonder Woman joins her contemporaries in her most recent version. Wonder Woman drops from the sky in her new iconic outfit, saving Batman from the lasers of Doomsday. Confusing both Superman and Batman, she fights by their side to defeat the threat to the city. It was in that moment of impact with the earth that the outfit Wonder Woman would wear in her own movie was revealed.

¹⁹⁸ "Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice," IMDB, Accessed March 15, 2019.
https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2975590/?ref=nm_sr_1?ref=nm_sr_1.

¹⁹⁹ Zach Snyder, *Batman V. Superman: Dawn of Justice*, Performed by Ben Affleck, Henry Cavill, and Gal Gadot (2016; Detroit, Warner Brothers, 2016), Amazon Prime.

As she stands, the audience would recognize the bracelets on her arms, a signature of the character. Diana wears her armor of dark blue and deep maroon. Similar to what is detailed in *Rebirth*, the armor's neckline is spanned by a W, with a slight detail of an eagle's head. Around her waist the W is present again in an emblem in the middle of the belt and the skirt of dark blue is lined in gold. Her boots are detailed to match the colors of the armor and are outlined in gold, befitting a princess. She has her sword and shield strapped to her back and her lasso secured to her hip. Michael Wilkinson was the costume designers of the movie. He wanted the character to “have a perfect balance between power and intimidation, but also balance that with a grace and a majesty...”.²⁰⁰ *Batman V. Superman: Dawn of Justice* released the iconic outfit of the New Wonder Woman and was the preview of the heroine's own movie (4.5).



4.5 Gal Gadot as Wonder Woman in *Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice*, 2016

²⁰⁰ Bergstrom, 94.

Wonder Woman

Wonder Woman was released June 2nd, 2017²⁰¹ and the world was reintroduced to the most famous female superhero. Wonder Woman has been a symbol of female power and achievement and continues to be. It would only make sense that a powerful, strong independent woman would need another one to express her story. Patty Jenkins directed the movie, the first woman to direct a superhero film.²⁰² Marston may have created the iconic character, but the world and positions of women have changed. The Wonder Woman of the 40s had been adapted and reinterpreted for a new generation, meaning that she does not mean the same thing as she did in her conception. To express what she means now to a new generation of strong, outspoken

²⁰¹ "Wonder Woman," IMDB, Accessed March 15, 2019. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0451279/?ref=nm_sr_1?ref=nm_sr_1.

²⁰² Bergstrom, 2.

women, Wonder Woman needed to be expressed through the vision of a woman (4.6).



4.6 Poster for Wonder Woman. 2017

The film follows along the theme of the mythological Wonder Woman that was created in the 80s by George Perez. The scenery and costumes hark back to a more mythical, fantastical

place. One of the posters that was released for the movie is Wonder Woman breaking free from a black figure vase. This can mean that she is shattering the expectations of the Greeks to construct her own ideal or the changes in the Amazonian ideal since the time of attic black figure, the beginning of the visual evidence for Amazons.

The audience is introduced to Diana as a young child running around Themyscira. The costume designer, Lindy Hemming, wanted to make the costume fit for a princess but still tie her to the Amazons leathers of the older Amazons.²⁰³ The leather on her dress is of a lighter color and streaked with gold. It designated her as an Amazon and her status of princess. As she grows older, the outfit becomes more of the training leathers that the older Amazons wear.

It is when Diana asks as a young child to see the God Killer, the sword that can kill a god, that the suit is once again revealed. The suit had first been revealed in *Batman V. Superman: Dawn of Justice*. Many of the design elements stayed the same in the film, but they did make some changes to allow for a larger range of movement. They also changed the boots and the arm guards. They changed the boots as Wonder Woman tracks through mud and water rather than just dry land, like in *Dawn of Justice*.²⁰⁴

As a young woman, Diana is dressed in a training outfit in a slightly darker color to that the outfit she wore as a young girl. The bodice of the outfit has a single strap over her left shoulder. The skirt is in the same style as earlier depicted warrior women. The skirt is composed of strips of leather. The audience sees Diana being put through training exercises to train her better than any Amazon before her. It is after an incident that reveals her powers, Diana finds Steve Trevor who had crashed on the beach after being pursued by German soldiers.

The Germans find the island and attack, leading to a battle of Amazons against Germans. It is in these sequences of scenes that the Amazon prowess in battle is seen. The ability to shoot

²⁰³ Gosling, 48 and Bergstrom 95.

²⁰⁴ Gosling, 75.

multiple arrows at once is shown by General Antiope after the shield maneuver, but also once again ties the Amazons to horses through their ability to maneuver with them in battle. The death of Antiope at the hands of the Germans make the Amazons wary of Steve Trevor as he wears their colors. Trevor, under the compulsion of the lasso of Hestia, reveals to the Amazons his status as British spy: he was on a mission to gain intel on the Dr. Poison. It is under this compulsion that he explains the events going on in the world of men. Diana is shocked by the atrocities happening and quotes the sacred duty of the Amazons to her mother. Her mother does not want her Amazons embroiled in a war that was not their doing.

Diana is confident that the atrocities of the Great War are the doings of Ares, that she disobeys her mother and leaves with Trevor after taking the God Killer and the suit. Trevor promises to take her to the front after returning the notebook to his superiors. At every turn in the outside world, she is underestimated purely because she is a woman. She believes that everyone is worth saving and everyone deserves their freedom. This is made brilliantly apparent in what is now the fan favorite scene of the movie.²⁰⁵

Hippolyta had told Diana as a young child to not wish for a war and Diana experiences it first hand at the front lines. Soldiers wounded, horses stuck in mud, children crying, and sounds of gunfire are the things that Diana experiences and changes the image of an perfect divide of good and evil in war in her mind. This scene shows her belief in righting wrongs but also shows her standing up for what she believes in. After repeatedly being told to keep walking, Diana is stopped by a woman with baby. The woman tells her about the city of Veld, on the other side of No Man's Land, that is being occupied by the German and forcing women and children into

²⁰⁵ Alex Abad Santos, "Wonder Woman's "No Man's Land" was the best superhero moment of 2017," Vox, 2017, <https://www.vox.com/2017-in-review/2017/12/15/16767902/wonder-womans-no-mans-land-scene>.

slavery. Steve looks at Diana and tells her “We ca not save everyone in this war. This is not what we came to do.” She places the circlet from Antiope, given to her by her mother when she left Themyscira, and shakes her hair out and responds, “No. But it is what I’m going to do.” She turns to the ladder behind her and begins to climb in slow motion. Her cloak falls to reveal her shield, and her boots and the shot switches to the front of the Trench. She emerges and her armor is revealed. It was the moment that she became Wonder Woman (4.7).²⁰⁶



4.7 Gal Gadot as Wonder Woman in *Wonder Woman*, 2017

There was a possibility that this scene would not make it into the film. In an interview with Patty Jenkins, she explains how much the scene meant to her but many people in the organization thought that the scene did not make sense.²⁰⁷ Patty Jenkins fought for the scene and won. She explained that the scene was about Diana becoming Wonder Woman, the protector of those who cannot fight for themselves. This is what Wonder Woman means to people. She is a

²⁰⁶ Alex Welch, “Wonder Woman’s No Man’s Land Scene was Almost Cut,” *Screenrant*, 2017, <https://screenrant.com/wonder-woman-movie-no-mans-land-scene/> and Gosling, 153.

²⁰⁷ Welch, “Wonder Woman’s No Man’s Land Scene was Almost Cut”.

symbol of freedom, determination, love and strength. This scene connects the belief and meaning behind Wonder Woman to the armor that she wears. If it had been up to the producers of the studio, this scene would have been cut and this moment of transformation would be lost. Patty Jenkins knew what this scene would mean to those that saw the movie, as this scene invokes the same feeling as when Wonder Woman returned to her iconic suit in the 70s. The Wonder Woman of today is not the same as she was in the forties. The position of women have evolved and with that Wonder Woman has evolved with it meaning that the best person to express this change would be a woman who understands the changes of women but also the struggles that they still face.

Conclusion

The visual depictions of Amazons changed with each shift in social and cultural climate. Even within time periods modifications occur that shape them to be a product of their time. Spanning thousands of years, the Amazonian ideal fluctuated and adjusted to fit the desires, but also the fears of their creators. The Greeks created the Amazons to reinforce the gendered structure of their own society. Amazons were a threat to male power and dominance. With each defeat, the Amazons fulfilled the role of a threat, but one that was never a real threat. The iconography designated them as other, something outside Greek society. They take on the characteristics of Greek enemies with a shift to the East who were barbarians in the minds of Greeks. This meaning of other, and a threat to society is what carries over to later adaptations of the myth. Amazons are warrior women living in a society without men, something that was not comprehended in Greek society. Women who can defeat a man in battle is something to be feared, but also something fascinating.

Amazons take on a new meaning in the Early Modern. We move from printed leggings and magnificent abilities with a bow and arrow, to women in long flowing dresses wielding swords and spears. The Early Modern's position on women in society was different than that of the Ancient Greeks, but women were still under the tutelage of men. The Amazons depicted in the art of the Early Modern stemmed directly from the ancient sources that were circulating around Europe. These are the sources of the art, but only pieces of them are depicted. The name Amazon connects the piece to a sea of myths and narratives. When noted the defeat of Amazons at the hands of Greek heroes or in later adaptations of the myth men. Women put in their place by men. Boccaccio in his work, warns society of the threat of women from the outside and inside of society. This was not something that was supported but they continued to use the myths for their own propaganda. The placement of the myth on the *cassoni* reflects the discourse in the Early Modern of the nonexistent threat that warrior women or strong women are which confines women to their place. If these powerful women cannot defeat men, then how were normal women suppose to? The patriarchy was firmly in place and the narratives and the ways they were used in literary and visual works supported the structure.

With each turn of the century, the word Amazon changes with the visual depictions. European countries wanted to expand their territories and explorers were contracted to find these missing warrior women. Women may have been put in their place through the use of the narratives, but women were coming to power in Europe with Isabella and Elizabeth ruling countries. Isabella, specifically, wanted the women found to establish her rightful rule as Queen of Spain. Explorers took these myths with them into new territories. America became the place of Amazons, a myth that many wanted to prove true, similar to the desire to prove the myth of El Dorado true. America in her human persona was created on this basis on otherness. Whether it be

the Amazons or the native women of the Americas, the art depicts them as one and the same, different but fascinating as something that was other and different what the world they knew.

Women had been left out of the narrative for so long that they wanted to use the myths the same way that men did. Classical studies were something forbidden for women, but they learned the myths in English to establish their place in society. Amazons went from being propaganda against women to propaganda for women.

Marston, growing up during a time of female revolution, internalized the fight. He believed that women would one day rule the world. He decided to create psychological propaganda in the form of Wonder Woman. The 1940s were a time of conflict and war. Wonder Woman was a combination of human connection, the cultural atmosphere of the 1940s, and the feminist movement of earlier decades. Wonder Woman became a beacon of patriotism and social norms. In this adaptation of the Amazon ideal, she was no longer other but part of society. She may have lost the sense of other through her patriotic outfit, but she was still a threat. She became a symbol for the feminist movement, a movement that was sure to undermine the patriarchy. Wonder Woman may have been drawn as a vivacious beauty, but she became so much more than her looks. Wonder Woman, like the Amazon ideal, changed throughout her run. From the 40s to the present, Wonder Woman has changed costumes at least twice each decade in the 75 years she has run. Each modification was surrounded by a shift in management, developments in the industry of comics and cultural and societal changes.

These social changes contributed to the way that the Amazon Princess was depicted on screen. The depictions of Amazons in film and television span countries, decades, and purposes. Each one being a product of its time. Wonder Woman was one of the ways that Amazons continued into popular entertainment, but Amazons were depicted in a more traditional way as well. They are warrior women living without men with magnificent martial prowess, like the

Amazons in *Beast Master*. American entertainment thrives on narratives, stories that draw emotion and send a message to the audience. Greek myths can give these emotions and messages. Amazons are a symbol of strong women in classical narratives but have been adapted to resonate with people of today. The word Amazon has changed with every century and with each shift, and the visual depictions highlight the nuances between stories.

Each story has a purpose and meaning. This is something that is present in the visual works. Each one has a purpose and meaning that we can infer and interpret, but only those who knew the cultural atmosphere of the time can interpret these works correctly. Amazons were created in a specific context and have been adapted and interpreted in period for their own benefit. Each adaptation holds some of the old but incorporates the new.

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