The Amazons in *PostHomerica*:
A Multifaceted Semi-divine γένος

By: Connie Skibinski

SID: 450143364

Supervisors: Professor Julia Kindt; Dr Jelle Stoop

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Abstract

What are the Amazons, and how should we understand their identity and mode of being throughout the Greek mythic corpus? The aim of this thesis is to build upon the work of previous scholars, as there is still much that can be said about the Amazons.

Although most prior scholarship analyses the depiction of Amazons by 5th and 4th century BCE authors – Herodotus, Ephorus and Lysias – as well as iconography on 5th century Athenian public buildings, the Amazon mythic corpus is far greater in scope. I posit that scholars who focus exclusively on Amazon portrayals from this period run the risk of overly historicising the mythic figures by adopting an Othering framework and conflating the Amazons with the Persians.

In contrast, I undertake a close reading of Quintus’ portrayal of the Amazons in PostHomerica, against the background of a wider range of relevant sources from the 6th century BCE to the Second Sophistic. In doing so, I argue that the Amazons are not always portrayed as subversive figures, nor do they solely occupy a mode of being which is explicitly antithetical to Greek societal norms. Rather, this thesis foregrounds numerous ancient accounts which portray the Amazons as heroic semi-divine figures, thus prompting a reinterpretation of Amazon ontology.

Overall, my approach to Amazon ontology is unique in that I emphasise the complexity and multifaceted nature of the Amazonian γένος, analysing them as figures with their own complex mode of being, rather than as mere non-Greeks. In particular, this thesis argues that the Amazons navigate the human-divine binary opposition, and that this opposition is mediated through the animal as a third mode of existence.
Statement of Originality

This work is substantially my own and where any parts of this work are not my own I have acknowledged the source of those parts of the work and enclosed any quoted text in quotation marks.

The editions which I used to source the Greek/Latin text and to access the English translations are listed in the Bibliography at the end of this thesis. However, with all the ancient sources referenced throughout this thesis, the English translations provided are my own translations.
Acknowledgements

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I am also immensely thankful to my family and friends for their support and encouragement throughout this year, and for their unwavering belief in my abilities. Finally, I thank the Classics and Ancient history cohort for their great discussions and company, and their constant willingness to throw around ideas.
Introduction

The Amazons – a mythic society of foreign warrior women – were prolific in the Greek mythical corpus, appearing in art and literature from Homer to the Second Sophistic. Amazon myths have been studied at length by scholars seeking to understand the intricacies of this fascinating mythic creature. In doing so, scholars have attempted to answer two interrelated questions: what are the Amazons, and how should they be interpreted and understood?

Literature Review

In the existing scholarship on Amazon ontology, there are three predominant approaches through which Amazons have been studied. Each approach (and its subsequent conclusions) interprets the Amazons as tangible projections of specific elements that are antithetical to Greek society.

I now consider the three frameworks in turn and the extent to which each aligns with Quintus’ portrayal of the Amazons in PostHomerica Book One, the primary ancient source used throughout this thesis. I argue that, although previous scholars’ observations on Amazon ontology hold true within the particular manifestations which they have examined, they do not do adequate justice to Quintus’ portrayal.

(i) Amazons as the Eastern “Other”

As the Amazons’ homeland is in Asia Minor, several scholars have utilised Edward Said’s critique of orientalism to argue that they articulate Greek perceptions of the Eastern Other.¹

Said outlines his framework in his seminal work Orientalism. He considers the interaction between “Westerners” and “Orientals” and the multiplicity of ways in which the former

¹ For ancient perceptions of the Amazon homeland, see Mayor (2014) 34-7. She highlights that the Greeks’ demarcation of Scythia, Thrace and the Black Sea was extremely fluid. See also Blok (1995) 83-93 for an overview of ancient sources regarding the Amazons’ homeland, and subsequent ethnographic interpretations.
dominates the latter, such as by constructing texts which present Easterners as inferior.\(^2\) He elaborates upon this by outlining dominant tropes used throughout history to articulate perceived Western superiority, such as portraying Orientals as gullible, irrational, non-peaceful and illogical.\(^3\) Thus, he argues, those in power construct the narrative that “the Oriental is irrational, depraved, childlike, different” while “the European is rational, virtuous, mature, normal.”\(^4\)

Said himself uses the Greeks of antiquity to further his point, arguing that the propensity to understand one’s culture vis-à-vis foreign cultures has played out over centuries. He states that the “demarcation between Orient and West was prominent in pre-Homeric times” and was equally as strong in 5\(^{th}\) century Athens.\(^5\) His text-centred case studies focus on Aeschylus’ and Euripides’ portrayal of the Persians as effeminate and militarily inferior.\(^6\)

Although Said does not mention the Amazons, other scholars have since used his concepts to interpret Herodotus’ portrayal of the Amazons. Martin, who views Herodotus as “the prototypical Western Orientalist”, argues that Herodotus’ Persians, Scythians and Amazons “take on the position of the Other in relation to Greeks” in a way that is “consistent with Said’s classic exposition of Orientalism”.\(^7\) Thus, she argues, the Amazons take on a position of inferiority in relation to the Greeks. Yang similarly argues that Herodotus’ Amazons “constitute an entity polarised with the Greeks [which] makes up the ‘Other’ to the Greek world,” also implying Amazon inferiority.\(^8\) Yang also posits that the Amazon society has a dual function: representing Greek cultural inversion while simultaneously allegorising the

\(^2\) Said (1978) 34  
\(^3\) Said (1978) 36-45  
\(^4\) Said (1978) 38  
\(^5\) Said (1978) 49-50  
\(^6\) See Said (1978) 50-52 for his analysis on Aeschylus’ The Persians and Euripides’ Bacchae.  
\(^7\) Martin (1990) 517-8  
\(^8\) Yang (2006) 122
peoples of Persia and Asia. Hartog elaborates upon this first idea by identifying two specific cultural norms which the Amazons invert: namely, marriage and warfare.

This way of understanding the Amazons has also been applied to non-written representations, specifically, to pottery and sculptures from the Classical Period onwards. Scholarly consensus is that Amazonomachy scenes – a popular motif during the 5th century – allegorised the conflict between Greeks and Persians by using the Amazon figure as a stand-in for the Persians.

While reducing the mythic Amazon to a stand-in for the eastern Other generates convincing points for the meaning of the Amazon in Herodotus and 5th century Greek art, it does not do adequate justice to the multifaceted associations of the Amazons in ancient mythology as a whole. As Mayor notes, “Amazons as loathsome ‘Others’ is hard to reconcile with the positive ways they were actually portrayed in antiquity”. This is especially true of Quintus’ portrayal of Penthesilea in PostHomerica.

It is indisputable that Penthesilea and her 12 attendants originate from the East. Her foreignness is foregrounded in her initial description: “She came from Thermoden, from broad-sweeping streams” (Θερμώδοντος ἀπ᾽ ἐυρυπόροὑ ῥεέρων ἠλυθε). Their distance from their homeland is reiterated when the Amazons are slain “upon the plain of the Trojans, far away from their own land” (Τρώων ὡμ πεδίον σφετέρων ἀπὸ νόσσφι καρήνων).

However, Penthesilea is not portrayed as inferior, and her description does not align with Said’s observations of the dominant modes by which the Other is typically portrayed. On the
contrary, she is revered by the Trojan warriors and King Priam, who lavishes her with a feast and expensive gifts.\textsuperscript{15} As well as being willingly absorbed into the recognisably Greek customs of elaborate feasting and gift exchange, she is also buried beside the Trojan King Laomedon, none of which would have happened if she were perceived as culturally inferior.\textsuperscript{16} Furthermore, even Achilles – the quintessential Homeric warrior – admires Penthesilea for her military prowess, clearly highlighting that the Amazon Queen cannot be conceived of as militarily inferior.\textsuperscript{17} Clearly, although Quintus’ Amazons are foreigners, it is insufficient to understand them as hostile, mocking representations of the Eastern Other.

\begin{itemize}
\item[(ii)] **Amazons as a Perverted Patriarchy**
\end{itemize}

I now consider another way in which modern scholars have interpreted Amazons, namely, by viewing the Amazon society as an inversion of the Greek patriarchal society. While there is some overlap between this framework and the one I outlined above – as both explore the Amazons’ inversions of Greek cultural practices – scholars who use a patriarchal frame of reference focus less on cross-cultural differences, and more so on anxieties surrounding the role of women in Greek society.

This theory was pioneered by Tyrrell, who situates Amazon mythology within the wider context of Greek myths which function to validate the patriarchy by showing the “absurdity and horrors of its opposite”, that is, flawed mythic matriarchies.\textsuperscript{18} He draws upon a comprehensive mythic corpus and concludes that Herodotus, Diodorus and Strabo portray the Amazons as reversing patriarchal customs by having men do domestic chores while the

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{15}] For Penthesilea’s beauty and military prowess inspiring awe and wonder among the Trojans, see Quint. Smyrn. 1.35-70. For the feast and gift-giving, see Quint. Smyrn. 1.85-95.
\item[\textsuperscript{16}] For Penthesilea’s funeral and elaborate burial customs, see Quint. Smyrn. 1.782-803.
\item[\textsuperscript{17}] See Quint. Smyrn. 1.716-21 where Achilles marvels at her military “might” (σθένος) and mourns for her as he did for Patroclus.
\item[\textsuperscript{18}] Tyrrell (1984) 28-39
\end{itemize}
women have control over warfare, marriage and reproductivity.\textsuperscript{19} He further argues that the tendency of Amazons to be either killed by male warriors or tamed in marriage represents the ultimate triumph of the patriarchy, thus dissipating anxieties generated by a mythic matriarchy.\textsuperscript{20}

Lefkowitz provides a similar assessment, as she considers Herodotus’ account of Amazon customs and also concludes that “the Greeks treated [the Amazons] as negative illustrations of what might happen if warrior women were in control,”\textsuperscript{21} which in turn legitimised the patriarchal status quo. Furthermore, Roque undertook an extensive analysis of Amazon mythology, drawing on case studies from Herodotus, Ephorus, Strabo, Diodorus, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Philostratus and Cassiodorus, all which show Amazons rejecting their husbands and abandoning their sons. From this she claims that the Amazons represent “the matriarchal system taken to its absolute consequences.”\textsuperscript{22} Thus, these scholars share a common interpretation that the Amazon society represents a highly flawed matriarchy which undermines Greek customs, institutions and values.

While this interpretation of the Amazons is pertinent to the descriptions of Amazon customs given by a handful of ancient authors, it does not adequately capture their portrayal in Quintus’ text. When Schmiel applies Tyrrells’ concepts to PostHomerica, he draws the conclusion that “control of marriage and reproductivity does not figure in Quintus’ presentation directly, but Penthesilea’s devotion to war is an implicit rejection of the normal role of women in the Greek world.”\textsuperscript{23} In this way, understanding the Amazons as a

\textsuperscript{19} Tyrell (1984) 45-55  
\textsuperscript{20} Tyrell (1984) 113  
\textsuperscript{21} Lefkowitz (1986) 19  
\textsuperscript{22} Roque (2017) 39  
\textsuperscript{23} Schmiel (1986) 193
Subversion of the Greek patriarchy can only take us so far, as this interpretation only holds merit when applied to the subset of texts outlined above.

As Schmiel points out, their only outright rejection of patriarchal norms is their military prowess. This thesis argues that this devotion to war is as much (if not more) a statement on their semi-divine nature as the offspring of Ares, as it is an assertion of matriarchy. Thus, the already tangential connection between the Amazons and patriarchy is weakened. To complicate the matter further, Penthesilea is willingly subsumed into the patriarchal Trojan society, she submits to King Priam, and she makes no attempt to challenge Trojan society or customs. Therefore, the interpretation of Amazons as figures antithetical to Greek patriarchy sheds little light on the role of the Amazons in PostHomerica.

(iii) Amazons as the Antithesis of Culture

Finally, other scholars have analysed the Amazons as being representative of the Nature-Culture opposition, by implementing Claude Lévi-Strauss’ work on structural analysis in ancient mythmaking. After briefly outlining Lévi-Strauss’ theory and its scholarly application to the Amazons, I again argue that this framework is not wholly sufficient when analysing Quintus’ Amazons.

Lévi-Strauss asserts that meaning in myths is articulated through a system of parallel and opposing themes, concepts and issues which illuminate poignant concerns for the myth-making community. His seminal work Structural Anthropology outlines his preliminary theory that “mythological thought always progressed from the awareness of oppositions to their resolution.”\(^{24}\) In particular, he argues that myths are structured so that a binary opposition is resolved through a mediator, as “two opposites with no intermediary always

\(^{24}\) Lévi-Strauss (1963) 224
tend to be replaced by two equivalent terms which admit a third one as mediator.” His supplementary example is derived from his observations on Native American trickster mythology, namely, that the binary opposition of life and death can be mediated through carrion-eating animals.

Numerous scholars have since extrapolated on this structural framework and applied it directly to ancient Greek mythology, including Amazon myths. Those who have adopted a Lévi-Strauss approach to the Amazons have done so by interpreting the Amazons as being representative of a Nature-Culture opposition.26

Scholars who study the Nature-Culture opposition within Greek mythology identify three mythic figures as exemplifying this opposition: Cyclopes, Centaurs and Amazons.27 The leading proponent this approach is DuBois, whose makes explicit, consistent comparisons between Amazons and Centaurs. DuBois’ central premise is derived from her study on the importance of endogamy for ensuring citizenship in the Classical Greek polis, from which she argues that “those excluded from marriage are excluded from culture.”28

Thus she – much like the scholars discussed above – highlights elements of Amazon myths which show their rejection of Greek marriage customs. In doing so, she concludes that the Amazons are hostile not only to the institution of marriage,29 but also to the wider cultural relations played out in the polis and oikos.30 Thus she considers both Amazons and Centaurs as creatures “associated with the negation of marriage” and therefore as mythic figures which are antithetical to culture itself.31

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25 Lévi-Strauss (1963) 225
27 Schmiel (1986) 191
29 DuBois (1982) 34
30 DuBois (1982) 32 and Dubois (1979) 44
31 DuBois (1982) 28
Mayor, however, claims that it is not productive to pair Centaurs and Amazons together as creatures that represent cultural subversion. She argues against perceiving the Amazons as “unruly forces of uncivilised nature” because, while Centaurs are characterised by drunkenness and primitive weaponry, Amazons “tame horses, form orderly warrior societies, use weapons, wear tailored clothing, control their own sexuality, manifest historical progress, carry out strategic warfare, and found important cities.”

This complements my own observations of Penthesilea in PostHomerica. As well as participating in Greek νομοί (as outlined above), her eloquent speeches replete with numerous rhetorical devices portray her as highly civilised.

**Gaps in Scholarship and Proposed Methodology**

These conclusions that scholars have reached regarding Amazon ontology – while not incorrect – are reductive as they portray the Amazons as hostile anti-Greeks. More importantly, these interpretations conflict with Quintus’ portrayal of the Amazons, as Quintus’ Amazons are revered in life and mourned in death by the Greeks and Trojans alike.

I seek to address this gap in scholarship in two ways. First, this thesis will not interpret the Amazons as anti-Greek figures, but instead it grants them autonomy. To achieve this, I identify their salient characteristics by exploring the Amazons as a mythic group with their own internal worth, comparing Amazon characters to Achaean characters only when ancient authors explicitly do so.

Second, I analyse Quintus’ epic poem PostHomerica as my primary text. Quintus composed PostHomerica in Smyrna in the late 4th century AD to tell the story of the Trojan War, beginning his narrative from where the Iliad ends. Book One focuses primarily on the

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32 Mayor (2016) 27
33 Penthesilea’s speeches: Quint. Smyrn. 1.326-34; 1.553-62; and 1.600-09.
Amazons, as Penthesilea and her entourage assist the Trojans in fighting the Achaeeans. By focusing on this text, I generate conclusions outside of current scholarship, as it allows me to explore Amazon portrayals beyond the 5th century BCE Athenian setting. Moreover, PostHomerica Book One is the most comprehensive extant written source featuring an Amazon character, yet it is underutilised in academic studies on the Amazons. I will show that Quintus provides great insight into their ontology, as he portrays them as multifaceted characters who possess human, animal and divine attributes.

**Thesis Argument and Structure**

This thesis adopts a Lévi-Strauss inspired structural analysis approach, analysing the Amazons as mythic figures which mediate a binary opposition. However, rather than exploring a Nature-Culture opposition, I posit that it is more useful to consider the Amazons in terms of a human-divine opposition. Thus, this thesis’ unique argument regarding Amazon ontology is as follows: The Amazons are a complex γένος which navigate the binary opposition of human and divine, and this opposition is mediated through the animal as a third mode of existence.

Chapters 1 and 2 outline my theoretical framework on Amazon ontology, with reference to PostHomerica alongside numerous other ancient sources. In doing so, I show that Quintus’ presentation of his Amazon characters closely aligns with other ancient accounts, and thus, Quintus’ Penthesilea can be seen as synecdochic of the wider Amazonian γένος. Chapter 1 examines the Amazons’ semi-divine nature, while Chapter 2 argues that this is navigated

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34 For a summary of extant visual and literary representations of Penthesilea in antiquity, see Blok (1995) 195-239 and Mayor (2016) 298-301. Quintus’ account is consistent with other ancient accounts, and thus, Quintus expands upon the Penthesilea myth rather than rewriting it entirely.

35 Perhaps because academics traditionally viewed PostHomerica as a low-brow rewriting of Homer (See Scheijnen (2018) 11-15), or because most scholars are interested in the Amazons as Persian allegory in 5th century Athens. On the underutilisation of PostHomerica see Literature Review: of the numerous scholars I mention, only Mayor and Schmiel reference Quintus, as the others draw predominantly on 5th century sources.
through their equine nature, as the animal figure mediates between their human and divine aspects.

Chapters 3 and 4 apply this notion specifically to *PostHomerica*, where I explore how the Amazons’ animal nature mediates between their divine and human ontologies. Chapter 3 focuses on the predominance of animal imagery and actions in Penthesilea’s battle scenes, as these scenes are the primary manifestation of her divine status. Chapter 4 examines her death scene (the manifestation of her mortal condition) by analysing the inextricable connection between Penthesilea and her horse.

**Key Ontologies Defined**

As this thesis explores the overlapping states of human, animal and divine, I outline how I demarcate these modes of existence.

(i) **Human and Divine**

This thesis foregrounds the binary opposition between human and divine. I argue that the Amazons’ divinity is foregrounded when they are explicitly or implicitly compared to deities within the Greek Pantheon. In the table below, I list all instances in *PostHomerica* Book One when Quintus explicitly compares Penthesilea and her Amazon attendants to specific Gods or Goddesses. I then consider implicit comparisons between Amazons and Greek deities, encapsulated by focusing nouns and adjectives – θεός/θεά (“God/Goddess”); μάκαρες (“Blessed ones”); and ἀθάνατος (“Immortal”) – as these terms unequivocally evoke a mode of existence reserved for Greek Gods and Godlike figures.

Quintus does not refer to the Amazons through terminology which unequivocally denotes humankind. Instead, I interpret κόρη (“girl/daughter/maiden”) and γυνή (“woman/wife”) as markers of humanity. These terms denote kinship relations, which – although not being
exclusive to human communities – are consistently used for human interrelationships.\(^{36}\)

Moreover, Quintus uses these terms at precise moments when he wishes to highlight the Amazons’ mortality.\(^{37}\)

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<th>DIVINE DESCRIPTORS</th>
<th>HUMAN DESCRIPTORS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>References to Specific Deities</strong>: Dawn (1.49); Ares (1.55), (1.206) (1.461) (1.561) (1.641); Eris (1.180), (1.366); Athena (1.365); Enyo (1.365); Artemis (1.366) (1.664).</td>
<td>κόρη: 1.174; 1.392; 1.402; 1.719; 1.787.</td>
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<tr>
<td>θεός/θεία: 1.19; 1.190; 1.216; 1.235.(^{37})</td>
<td>γυνή: 1.575.</td>
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<td>μάκαρες: 1.56; 1.662.</td>
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<td>οθανάστως: 1.359; 1.674.</td>
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A secondary binary opposition through which I make sense of the human-divine opposition is the mortal-immortal opposition. This serves as a key means through which I differentiate the ontologies, as humans are subjected to death whereas deities are not. Therefore, I use the terms human/mortal and divine/immortal interchangeably throughout this thesis, as a figures’ subjection is inextricably tied to their position on the human-divine spectrum.

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\(^{36}\) It must be noted that, in Greek mythology, the gods (as well as humans) operated within familial units consisting of daughters and wives, among other familial markers.

\(^{37}\) Quint. Smyrn. 1.174 and 1.392 explicitly foreshadow Penthesilea’s fated demise; 1.402 occurs within the heifer simile, which foreshadows her death [See Chapter 3 Section II A iii)]; 1.575 is spoken right before Penthesilea’s death; and 1.719 and 1.787 describe her corpse.
prey”) as being indicative of a predatory manner of being, a mode which characterises the Amazons’ bellicosity. On the other hand, I foreground the horse as a specific animal which has great significance for the Amazon society, arguing that the horse is inextricably connected to the Amazons’ identity. Throughout this thesis, I claim that each of these manifestations of the animal functions to qualify the Amazons’ human-divine tension.
Chapter One: Amazons as an Amalgam of the Human and the Divine

Despite the great scholarly attention devoted to Amazons in mythology, little has been said about the specifics of their ontology. This chapter explores the extent to which they occupy human and divine traits, concluding that they are semi-divine.

Quintus’ portrayal of Penthesilea and her Amazon attendants provides a useful juxtaposition of both their mortal and immortal attributes within the one text, enabling a sustained consideration of the Amazons’ position on the human-divine spectrum. By considering his account alongside the accounts of several other ancient authors, I show that Quintus portrays his characters in a manner which closely aligns with other accounts of the Amazons throughout the entire mythic corpus.

This chapter contains four sections. In Sections I – III, I disentangle the Amazons’ divine and human elements. Sections I and II examine ancient accounts which portray the Amazons as Godlike beings, on account of their divine lineage and exquisite appearance respectively. This is consistent with Quintus’ account, as he portrays the Amazons as divine beings for the majority of Book One. Section III considers Penthesilea’s death, a jarring moment which immediately undercuts their Godlike status. I explore Quintus’ account alongside several sources which present the Amazons’ subjectivity to death, thus highlighting their mortality. Section IV brings together their human and divine modes by foregrounding the complex collocution which occurs in Quintus’ account of Penthesilea’s state after her death. Here we most clearly see an intertwining of the two modes, as Quintus uses both divine and human descriptors. Thus I argue that the Amazons straddle the border between the mortal and the immortal, existing not as a paradox, but as a synthesis of the two modes of existence.

I. Ἀρέως θυγατέρες: The Amazon’s Divinity Manifested Through their Divine Lineage
The Amazons’ divinity arises from their relation to the god Ares. This is not a peripheral aspect of their nature, rather it is central to their very mode of being. Numerous ancient sources reference the Amazons through the formulaic title “daughters of Ares” (Ἄρεως θυγατέρες).¹ This encapsulates their direct descendancy and foregrounds both their military prowess and their gender, two of their fundamental characteristics.

Apollonius’ account of the Amazons’ origins highlights the inextricable connection between their genealogy and war-like nature:

οὐ γάρ Ἀμαζόνιδες μάλ᾽ ἐπῆτιδες, οὐδὲ θέμιστας
tίουσαι πεδίον Δοιάντιον ἀμφενέμοντο:
ἄλλ᾽ ὤβρις στονόεσσα καὶ Ἀρεος ἔργα μεμήλει:
δὴ γὰρ καὶ γενεὴν ἔσαν Ἀρεος Ἀρμονίης τε
νόμφης, ἢ τ᾽ Ἀρη ὕβρις ψυχοτολέμους τέκε κούρας²

“The Amazons dwelling on the Doiantian plain were neither exceedingly gentle nor honouring justice, but they desired groan-causing violence and the works of Ares. For indeed they were the offspring of Ares and the nymph Harmonia, whom bore to Ares war-like maids.”

This is consistent with the Quintus’ portrayal of the Amazons in PostHomerica. Both authors describe the Amazons as “warlike”, using the semantically equivalent compound adjectives φιλοπτολέμους and δαΐφρονι, which denote a yearning for war that is rooted in cunning and logic as much as it is in emotion.³ Furthermore, they both conceive of the Amazons as possessing a deep and innate desire for violence. Appolodorus claims that the Amazon race, from its very origins, “desired groan-causing violence and the works of Ares” ὤβρις στονόεσσα καὶ Ἀρεος ἔργα μεμήλει).

¹ Lys 2.4, Diod. 2.45.2, Isoc. Paneg. 4.68
² Ap. Rhod. 2.987-991
³ Ap. Rhod. 2.991 and Quint. Smyrn. 1.45 and 1.548. Note the compound forms φιλο- (“lover of”) -πόλεμος (“war”) and δάϊς- (“battle”) - φρήν (“heart/mind”), with the former foregrounding emotion and habitual action, the latter denoting intention and cunning purpose.
In *PostHomerica*, Penthesilea comes to Troy not only because she is fleeing the Errinyes after her accidental sororicide, but also because she was “desiring groan-causing war” (στονόσεντος ἐελδόμενη πολέμῳ). Moreover, Quintus portrays the entire Amazonian collective as desiring death and destruction, as evidenced by the emphatic adjective πᾶς in the participle phrase “all desiring war and deadly battle” (πᾶσαι ἐελδόμεναι πόλεμοι καὶ ἀεικέα χάρμην).

Furthermore, the Amazons’ relation to Ares is of paramount importance in Quintus’ account. It is most evident in the predominance of epithets which mention Ares. Penthesilea is described as the “daughter of unresting Ares” (Ἄρεις ἀκαμάτου θόγατρο), the “daughter of mighty Ares” (Ἄρεος κρατεροῦ θόγατρο) and the “daughter of furious Ares” (Ἄρεος ἀμαμακέτοιο θόγατρο), all emphatic variances on the generic formulaic title. Her divine lineage is also encapsulated in the patronymic Ἀρηίδα. This elevates her to a status equal to an epic hero, as it is conventional for heroes with significant lineage to be granted a patronym.

Furthermore, the Amazons’ lineage is heavily implied even when Ares is not directly referenced. In his initial description of the Amazons, Quintus uses the adjective “warlike” (ἀρηίος) to modify the Amazons’ “spirit” (θυμός). As this adjective is cognate with Ares, it indicates that their bellicose nature is divinely inspired. This language occurs again when Penthesilea is referred to as a “warrior queen” (Ἀρηίάδος βασιλείς), further reiterating her divine associations.

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4 Quint. Smyrn. 1.20  
5 Quint. Smyrn. 1.34  
6 Quint. Smyrn. 1.55, 1.461 and 1.640  
7 Quint. Smyrn. 1.205  
8 See Belarde (2011) for the significance of Homeric patronyms, and Donlan (2007) for the primacy of patrilineage within ancient Greek family units.  
9 Quint. Smyrn. 1.26  
10 Quint. Smyrn. 1.187
Penthesilea is also aware of her divinely attributed strength and articulates it in her battle speech to Ajax and Achilles. She boasts:

Ἀμαζόσι κάρτος ἐνι στήθεσσιν ὀρώρεν·
καὶ γάρ μεν γένος ἐστίν Ἀρήιον· οὐδὲ μὲ θυντὸς
γείνατ᾽ ἀνήρ, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸς Ἀρης ἀκόρητος ὀμοκλῆς·
tοῦνεκά μοι μένος ἐστὶ πολὺ προφερέστατον ἀνδρῶν.¹¹

“Strength arises in the breasts of Amazons, for my race is warlike. No mortal man begot me, but unsated Ares [did]. Therefore my might is stronger than any man”

This self-conscious assertion indicates that the significance of the Amazon’s divine lineage is understood – and at times manipulated – by the Amazons themselves. Thus it is integral to their own conceptions of identity.

Clearly, Quintus foregrounds the Amazons’ divine lineage in a manner similar to his predecessors, as he makes constant reference to the inherently warlike (Ἀρήιον) nature of the Amazonian race (γένος). This bellicose temperament is especially characteristic of Penthesilea, as she is synecdochic of the Amazons as a whole.

II. Divine Beauty: The Amazon’s Physical Appearance as a Manifestation of their Godlike Nature

In PostHomerica, the Amazons’ divine lineage is most explicitly manifested in their physical form, as their beauty is compared to that of the immortals. Quintus mentions the beauty of Penthesilea’s attendants, as Clonie’s appearance is “equal to the gods” (ἀντιθέην).¹²

However, greater attention is devoted to Penthesilea’s physical appearance, as her beauty is foregrounded when she arrives in Troy and is recounted from the Trojan perspective.

¹¹ Quint. Smyrn. 1.559-562
¹² Quint. Smyrn. 1.234. Note that, as well as denoting divine beauty, such a description is further evidence of the Amazons’ portrayal in an epic mode, as likeness to the gods is indicative of heroic status.
Most scholars who have examined the Amazons’ appearance focus on their beauty at the exclusion of their other characteristic features. Thus, the general consensus is that the sexualisation of the Amazons speaks to dynamics of power and powerlessness inherent in the Greek patriarchal system.\(^{13}\) This conclusion downplays their other key characteristics, such as their strength and military prowess. Scheijnen’s study of Penthesilea’s portrayal in *PostHomerica* is more productive. She considers the interrelation between the Penthesilea’s “bellicose intentions and beautiful visualisation”, arguing that these two elements together constitute “an important duality key to her Amazon nature.”\(^{14}\) I further argue that Penthesilea’s beauty, much like her fervour for war, ultimately reflects the divine aspects of her nature.\(^{15}\)

The association between Penthesilea’s physical form and her divinity is predominantly conveyed through descriptions portraying her as a typical divine female. In her initial scene, she is “clad in the form of goddesses” (θεῶν ἐπειμένη εἴδος).\(^{16}\) This image is sustained and elaborated when she is described from the perspective of the Trojans, who “eagerly marvelled” (ἐσσόμενοι ἔθαμβοι) when they saw her:

εἰδομένην μακάρεσσιν, ἔπει ῥά οἱ ἀμφὶ προσώπῳ
ἀμφος σμερδαλέον τε καὶ ἀγλαον εἴδος ὑρόρει,
μειδίωσε ἐρατεινόν, ὥπ’ ὀφρύσι δ’ ἰμερόντες
ὀφθαλμοι μάρμαρον ἀλίγκιον ἀκτίνεσσιν,
αἰδός δ’ ἀμφερύθηνε παρῆμα, τὸν δ’ ἑφύπερθε
θεσπεσίη ἐπέκειτο χάρις καταιμένη ἀλκήν.\(^{17}\)

\(^{13}\) See Mayor (2016) 297 on the Achilles’ sexualisation of Penthesilea’s body; Cairns (1993) 120-6 on Penthesilea’s “shameless” (αἰδός) appearance as representative of her virginal nature; and Walcot (1984) 42 on the Amazons as victims of rape and sexual violence.

\(^{14}\) Scheijnen (2018) 49

\(^{15}\) See Vernant (1991) 43-9 on beauty as a marker of divinity, as he outlines that gods – when they assume a human form – surpass mortals on account of their superior beauty.

\(^{16}\) Quint. Smyrn. 1.19

\(^{17}\) Quint. Smyrn. 1.54-61
“Appearing like the blessed gods, since on her face was both a fearful and splendid form. Smiling beautifully, her charming eyes shone like beams. Her cheeks held awe, and above them was laid divinely-sweet grace clad with strength.”

This descriptive language, featuring a simile and an accumulation of evocative adjectives, provides a detailed description of her countenance. The phrase “both fearful and splendid” (σμερδαλέον τε καὶ ἄγαλαὸν) and the contrast between her “divinely-sweet grace” (θεσπεσίη χάρις) and “strength” (ἀλκήν) captures the duality which Scheijnen aptly identifies.

Penthesilea’s divine beauty is articulated not only through her similarity in appearance to the conventional immortal, but also through her dissimilarity to the typical mortal. A Trojan comments that “she is not like a mortal woman to behold” (οὐ γυναῖκα εἰσοράσθαι). When these references are considered together, the terms θεῶν and μακάρεσιν affirm her divinity, while the negation οὐ γυναῖκα suggests a divergence from the status of mortal.

Her divine beauty is explicit in similes which compare her to specific immortals. The Trojan further compares her to a list of goddesses on account of her inhuman performance on the battlefield: “Athena, strong-hearted Enyo, Eris, and the daughter of famous Leto [Artemis]” (Ἀθηναίην ἢ καρτερόθυμον Ἐνυώ ἢ Ἔριδ’ ἢ κλειτήν Λητώιδα). Penthesilea is also compared to the goddess Dawn, as both are distinguished from their attendants by their greater relative beauty:

οἵ δ’ ἀκαμάτοιο κατέρχεται Οὐλόμποι
Ἡὸς μαρμαρέοισιν ἀγαλλομένη φρένας ἵπποις
Ὡράων μετ’ ἐπιπλοκάμων, μετὰ δὲ σφισὶ πάσης
ἐκπρέπει ἄγαλαὸν εἶδος ἁμωμήτως περ ἑούσης·
τοῖς Πενθεσίλεια μόλεν ποτὶ Τρώιων ἄστυ
ἐξοχος ἐν πάσῃς Ἀμαζόσιν·

18 Quint. Smyrn. 1.365
19 Quint. Smyrn. 1.365
20 Quint. Smyrn. 1.48-53
“Just as when Dawn descends from untiring Olympus with the lovely-haired Seasons exalting her gleaming horses, her shining form being remarkable even among all the blameless ones; so also Penthesilea came to the city of Troy standing out among all the Amazons.”

As well as highlighting Penthesilea’s remarkable appearance, this simile shows that the entire Amazonian γένος possesses divine beauty, as indicated by their equivalence to the “lovely-haired” (εὐπλόκαμος) and “blameless” (ἄμωμητος) Seasons.

Overall, both in their warlike nature and exquisite physical form, Quintus represents the Amazons as divine for the majority of Book One. This portrayal is not unique to Quintus, as several sources foreground the Amazons’ divinity. Thus, this divine mode of existence provides some insight into Amazon ontology.

III. Dying Amazons: Literary and Visual Accounts of the Amazon’s Mortality

It is not sufficient to conceive of the Amazons as wholly divine, as they possess human attributes alongside their aforementioned traits. I illustrate this by considering the turning point in PostHomerica when the Amazons die by the hands of the Argives. In these moments, Quintus no longer portrayed in a manner conventional for immortals. Rather, the extent to which they occupy a human mode of existence is called into question.

Several of Penthesilea’s attendants are killed mid-way through the battle: Poderces kills Clonie; Idomenus kills Bremusa; Meriones kills Evandra and Thermodosa; Ajax the Lesser kills Derinoe; and Diomedes kills Alcibie and Derimacheia.21 The remaining Amazons – Antandre, Polemusa, Antibrote, Hippothoe and Harmothoe – are killed by Achilles towards the end of the battle.22 Penthesilea is also killed during a dramatic conflict with Achilles, as I explore further in Chapter 4.23

21 Quint. Smyrn. 1.234-65
22 Quint. Smyrn. 1.529-33
23 Quint. Smyrn. 1.610-20
Quintus slows the narrative pace to emphasise the mortality of the first Amazons who die. This is achieved is through gruesome visceral imagery which highlights the brutal degradation of their now lifeless forms. Immediately after Clonie is stabbed beside the hip, “dark blood quickly poured out from the spear [wound], followed by all her entrails” (ἐκ δὲ οἱ ὁμα δουρὶ χύθη μέλαν ἄμα, συνέσπετο δ᾿ ἔγκατα πάντα). The dual reference to her blood (ἄμα) and organs (ἕγκατα) emphasises the extent of the mutilation, while the adverb ὡκα (“quickly”) encapsulates the speed and force with which the once majestic child of Ares was slain.

Quintus also utilises macabre extended similes to highlight the significance of the Amazons’ deaths. Bremusa’s falling body is compared to a fallen arrow:

ἄφαρ δὲ οἱ ἠτορ ἐλυσεν·
ἡ δ᾿ ἐπεσεν μελῆ ἔναληκιος, ἢν τ᾿ ἐν ὁρεσι
dιουρτόμην τέμνουσιν ὑπείροχον, ἢ δ᾿ ἀλεγεινὸν
рослον ὀμῶς καὶ δοῦπον ἐρεπομένη προῆσιν·
ὡς ἡ ἀνοιμώξασα πέσεν, τῆς δ᾿ ἄψεα πάντα
λοσε μόρος, ψυχὴ δ᾿ ἐμέῃ πολυαέσιν αἰραῖς.25

“Straightaway her heart weakened. She fell down, whizzing painfully, like an ashen spear which woodcutters hewed in the hills, falling down with a preceding thud. In this way she fell, wailing aloud. Fate loosened her every limb, and her soul mingled with the groaning winds.”

Rich language directs the readers’ attention to the skilled warrior’s shocking death in battle. The participle ἀνοιμώξασα (“wailing aloud”) introduces a striking auditory element which signposts the significant attention Quintus accords to the Amazons’ deaths. Bremusa’s death – much like Clonie’s – is specifically framed with language denoting the breakdown of her physical body. In place of a conventional verb of dying, Quintus uses λύω with a body part,
to denote the weakening of the specific limb as a synecdoche for total bodily death, like how Homer pairs λύω with γούνατα (“knees”) to describe fallen warriors. Quintus refers to the breakdown of Bremusa’s heart (ἡτόρ) as well as limbs (ἀψευ), with the emphatic πάντα denoting a complete annihilation. Furthermore, Bremusa’s death is presented not merely in terms of bodily decay but also metaphysically, as her soul (ψυχῆ) is also subject to destruction.

The joint deaths of Alcibie and Derimacheia further reiterate the Amazons’ subjection to the mortal condition. As they die, they are compared to butchered animals: “They both fell like calves which a strong man suddenly robs of life, striking the sinews of their neck with a sturdy axe” (ταὶ δ’ ἑτε ὀρτίες ἅμφω κάππεσον, ἓς τ’ αἰζής ἅφαρ ψυχῆς ἀπαμέρη κόψας αὐχενίοις στιβαρῶ βουπλήγι τένοντας). The precise, anatomical reference to the “sinews belonging to the neck” (αὐχένιος τένοντας) is jarring for its specificity and corporality, further illustrating Quintus’ emphasis on the Amazons’ failing bodies in death.

As Kauffman notes in his study of Homeric death imagery, these similes are unprecedented because the action within the simile so closely parallels the specific manner in which the Amazons die. He observes that “the poet’s primary concern in the simile seems to be to illustrate as precisely as possible the physical circumstances surrounding the given death, whether a fall from a great height or the severing of a head, and in each case the type of wound received in the narrative is maintained in the simile.”

Thus, the Amazons’ deaths in battle are not merely an afterthought or an inconsequential moment in the plot. Rather, the elaborate descriptions of their deaths bring to the fore their

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26 Il. 4.469 and Il. 22.335 specifically combine λύω and γούνατα. Il. 5.176, Il. 16.332 and Il. 17.29 also imply corporality, using λύω as a verb of dying.
27 Quint. Smyrn. 1.262-4. As the Amazons are butchered animals, in part, there is a slippage between simile and overt description.
28 Kauffman (2015) 155
mortal condition in a way that is deliberately shocking because it subverts their previous portrayal as divine beings. Thus, although the Amazons are Godlike, they are not gods, precisely because of their subjection to death.

The focus on the Amazons’ mortality is not unique to Quintus’ account. Instead, their deaths in battle are consistently portrayed throughout mythology. This is evidenced by the sheer number of black-figure and red-figure vases which depict Amazons in the immediate moments of dying.

In particular, several vases depict Penthesilea’s death at the hands of Achilles. Some illustrate the exact moment when Achilles’ spear pierces the Amazon Queen (see Fig. 1 and Fig.2). Others portray the direct aftermath of her death, showing Achilles mournfully holding her dying body (Fig.3). This motif was not only widespread in vase-paintings but was also popular among 5th century painters, as Pausanias describes a painting in the Temple of Zeus at Olympia that shows “Penthesilea releasing her soul and Achilles supporting her” (Πενθεσίλειά τε ἁφιείσα τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ Ἀχιλλεὺς ἀνέχων ἑστὶν αὐτήν).²⁹

²⁹ Paus. 5.11.6
Figure 2: 6th century black-figure amphora depicting Achilles spearing Penthesilea. Located in British Museum. Inv: 18,360,224.13. (Image taken from Mayor 2016 Fig. 18.2).

Figure 3: Achilles carrying Penthesilea’s corpse. 6th century black-figure hydria. Located in British Museum. Inv: B323. (Image taken from Mayor 2016 Fig. 18.5).
Penthesilea is not the only Amazon whose death is represented in art, as a red-figure vase depicts her charging Achilles while a lifeless Amazon lies between them (Fig. 4). The dead Amazon is likely Harmothoe, as she was the last Amazon to die before Penthesilea. This suggests that it is not only Penthesilea’s tragic death which captivated the Greeks, but that the mortality of the Amazonian γένος as a whole was a source of interest.

The prominence of this imagery in vase paintings from the 4th to 6th centuries BC indicates that the death of Penthesilea and her attendants captivated the ancient audience and was clearly considered a significant moment within Amazon mythology.

Moreover, there dying Amazons were a popular subject matter for Greek and Roman sculpture. Pliny records a competition among renowned 5th century Greek sculptors Polyclitus, Pheidias, Cresilias, Cydon and Phradon to create an Amazon statue for the

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30 Mayor (2016) 299
recently completed Artemision in Ephesus.\textsuperscript{31} The most pertinent point for the purposes of this thesis is his mention of Cresilas’ “wounded Amazon” (\textit{Amazonem volneratam}).\textsuperscript{32}

While there are no surviving Greek sculptures of Amazons, Roman-era copies are sufficient for illustrating the widespread depiction of dying Amazons in antiquity. The majority of these are free-standing sculptures which manipulate composition to showcase a clearly visible spear wound on the Amazons’ body. Those composed in the Mattei mode with a significantly arched weight-bearing right leg are most suited to depicting Amazons with a wound on the left thigh, highlighted by the partial raising of the chiton (Fig. 5). Conversely, the Capitoline mode, with its exposure of the right breast, lends itself to wounds near the heart (Fig. 6).\textsuperscript{33}

These sculptures are typically divorced from a wider mythological context and do not feature surrounding mythological figures. Thus they are not inextricably bound to a particular mythic tale, but rather are indicative of a more general interest in the mortality of Amazons.

\textsuperscript{31} Pliny, \textit{NH.} 34.53
\textsuperscript{32} Pliny, \textit{NH.} 34.76
\textsuperscript{33} Ridgway (1974) 4-7
An exception to this convention is the explicitly mythological scene on the Amazonomachy Sarcophagus, portraying Achilles carrying Penthesilea’s lifeless body (Fig. 7). Here the emphasis is not on a specific war wound, but rather, the femininity and frail form of the warrior Queen is emphasised through her costuming, gesture and gaze. This engenders a strong sense of pathos, much more in line with sympathetic representations in vase paintings.

34 Mayor (2016) 300
Together these visual representations of dying Amazons spanning centuries and artistic media undeniably indicate a sustained interest in the mortal aspects of the Amazons’ mode of being. This is so much so that some modern scholars understand the Amazons as occupying a wholly human mode of being.

Mayor is one such scholar who interprets the Amazons in this way. She considers their subjection to death, as well as their possession of traits and attributes conventionally associated with humanity. From this she concludes “Amazons in classical literature were human, with desires, flaws, virtues, ambitions and vulnerabilities similar to those attributed to mortal Greek heroes [Emphasis: hers].”

While it is true that the Amazons possess these characteristics, their expressed desires and ambitions in PostHomerica are exclusively warlike, which I argue speaks more to their divine lineage than it does to a human mode of being. Thus I would argue that the Amazon’s humanity is represented only in those flaws and vulnerabilities which result in their demise by the Achaeans. Moreover, Mayor’s claim downplays the Amazons’ divine attributes. They

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35 Mayor (2016) 29
are clearly set apart from ordinary humans on account of their military prowess and Godlike appearance. Thus, this thesis rejects the premise that Amazons are entirely human. In turn, I posit that the Amazons’ mode of existence is best understood by disregarding a strict mortal-immortal binary, as they possess elements from both ontologies. Thus, I argue it is more useful to conceive of the Amazons as semi-divine figures who exist on a continuum between human and divine.

IV: Mortal Immortals: The Amazon’s as a Synthesis of Divine and Human Modes

The simultaneous coexistence of the Amazons’ mortal and immortal attributes is best exemplified in Quintus’ descriptions of Penthesilea’s mode of being after her death. For the first time, Quintus portrays her in explicitly human terms to emphasise her mortality. However, these references are extremely sparse, far less than the audience may expect given the macabre subject matter. Rather, Quintus continues to describe her in divine terms. This tension between divine and human descriptors reinforces the Amazon’s multifaceted ontology as, at all times, they are an amalgam of the two opposing modes of existence.

IV A): κούρης ἐν κονίησι: Mortal Descriptors after Penthesilea’s Death

Penthesilea is first described in overwhelmingly human terms immediately after her death, when Achilles beholds her lifeless form. This moment signifies Achilles’ immediate regret, as Aphrodite causes Achilles to love Penthesilea only once he has killed her. On the one hand the descriptions of Penthesilea’s corpse function to emphasise Achilles’ “destructive grief” (ὀλοαὶ ἄνιατα) which Quintus compares to the Achilles’ grief for Patroclus’ death. On the other hand, it appeals directly to the readers’ emotion, highlighting the devastating

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36 Quint. Smyrn. 1.666-670  
37 Quint. Smyrn. 1.720-1
manner of Penthesilea’s death. In doing so, Penthesilea’s Godlike portrayal thus far is starkly undercut by Quintus’ blunt language when recounting the aftermath of her death.

Quintus emphasises both Achilles grief and Penthesilea’s futile plight: “the son of Peleus mourned greatly, beholding the lovely might of the girl in the dust” (μέγα δ’ ἀχεύω Πηλέος υἱός κούρης εἰσορόων ἑρατόν σθένος ἐν κονίῃσι).\(^{38}\) In the *Iliad*, the verb ἀχεύω denotes physical suffering, such as Philoctetes’ snake bite and Hades’ arrow wound.\(^{39}\) Homer also uses it to express emotional suffering, such as the mourning experienced by Achilles’ towards Briseis, by Aegyptius’ towards his son Antiphus and by Odysseus towards his mother Anticleia.\(^{40}\) Thus Quintus employs a deeply emotion-laden verb with epic connotations, which he then modifies with the emphatic adjective μέγα to emphasise the extent of Achilles’ regret regarding Penthesilea’s death.

Quintus reiterates Penthesilea’s mortal condition through the succinct yet powerful image of the “girl in the dust” (κούρης ἐν κονίῃσι). By referring to Penthesilea as a κόρη with no epithet or alternate literary embellishment, Quintus describes her in predominantly human terms, and the omission of divine attributes (which have previously characterised her mode of being) is striking. Furthermore, the prepositional phrase ἐν κονίῃσι denotes bodily decomposition, alluding to the complete breakdown of her physical form.

It is not only through Achilles’ perspective that Penthesilea is described in mortal terms. This is also evident when she is granted a funeral fitting for a “Queen killed in battle” (ἐὐκτεύνῳ βασιλείῃ).\(^{41}\) The lack of epithets is significant, as Penthesilea is no longer portrayed as a

\(^{38}\) Quint. Smyrn. 1.718-9
\(^{39}\) *Il.* 2.724 and *Il.* 5.399
\(^{41}\) Quint. Smyrn. 1.791
“warlike Queen” (αρηιαδος βασιλείης), a title which denotes her divine lineage. Thus, her death belies her divine ancestry and necessitates a partial breakdown in her divine state.

Nonetheless, there are an overwhelming number of instances where Penthesilea is portrayed in explicitly divine terms post-death.

**IV B): ἀποκταμένης μακάρεσσιν ἐφ' χαι: Divine Descriptors after Penthesilea’s Death**

When Penthesilea’s death is focalised by characters other than Achilles, her dying form is rendered in wholly divine terms. This generates less pathos than Achilles’ gaze does, and yet, it illustrates the complex intertwining of mortal and immortal states.

In these descriptions, Penthesilea’s beauty functions as a manifestation of the divine:

υπ’ ὄφρυσι καλὰ πρόσωπα
καίπερ ἀποκταμένης. οἱ δ’, ὥς ἵδον, ἀμφιέποντες
Ἀργείοι θάμβησαν, ἐπεὶ μακάρεσσιν ἐφ' ἱκετείες

“Below her eyebrows was a beautiful face, even when dying. Beholding her thus the Argives were astounded, crowding about, since she looked like an immortal”

Quintus makes explicit the connection between her beauty and divinity, as he states “she looked like an immortal” (μακάρεσσιν ἐφ' άκεται). The bizarreness of this statement is emphasised through the concessive participle phrase καίπερ ἀποκταμένης (“even when dying”), which articulates the incongruity of the dying woman resembling an immortal.

This is followed by a simile in which he directly compares Penthesilea to Artemis:

κεῖτο γὰρ ἐν τεύχεσι κατὰ χθονὸς ἥμτ’ ἀτειρής
Ἄρτεμις ὑπνώουσα, Διός τέκος, εὗτε κάμησι

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42 c.f. Quint. Smyrn. 1.187
43 Quint. Smyrn. 1.660-2
“She lay in her armour on the earth like stubborn Artemis, child of Zeus, when her limbs are weary from striking nimble lions in the mountains for a long time.”

The incongruous image of a divine-looking figure lying in death is somewhat relieved through the parallel image of an immortal goddess lying in rest, both lying down after engaging in a lengthy battle/hunt. However, the audience is aware that Penthesilea’s death is conclusive, and she is not – like Artemis – merely indulging in a temporary rest. Thus, Quintus uses this simile to bring to the fore the one thing which ultimately separates the Godlike Penthesilea from the gods themselves, namely, her subjection to death.

Quintus further reiterates the Godlike appearance of the dying Penthesilea: “she was greatness even in form, and blameless like the immortals” (μέγεθός τε καὶ εἴδος ἔπλευτ’ ἀμώμητος τε καὶ ἀθανάτησιν ὁμοίῃ). The phrase ἀθανάτησιν ὁμοίῃ (“like the immortals”) echoes the construction μακρέσσιν ἔῳκε in line 1.662, thus restating her physical beauty as a manifestation of her divine attributes. The adversative use of καὶ in τε καὶ εἴδος (“even in form”) immediately acknowledges the contradiction that her dying mortal form is imbued with a sense of divine beauty. This not only illustrates the remarkable extent of her beauty (as not even death is able to mar her physical perfection), but it also indicates that her divine traits are not subsumed by her mortal condition. Thus, she is at any one moment characterised by an interplay of both divine and human attributes.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined that the Amazons possess both divine and mortal elements, and are thus neither completely one nature. Therefore, when understanding their unique ontology it is most useful (and most in line with ancient evidence) to disregard a strict human-divine

44 Quint. Smyrn. 1.663-5
45 Quint. Smyrn. 1.673-4
polarising binary, as Amazons cannot be placed comfortably into either extreme. Rather, it is more useful to conceive of a continuum between the human and the divine, one which honours the existence of such an opposition, but which acknowledges the ability of mythic creatures to be an amalgam of the two modes of existence. Thus, I argue that the Amazons are a mythic γένος which occupy a mediating position between the opposing states of mortal and immortal. In Chapter 2, I argue that this mediation is manifested through the animal as a third mode of existence.

Throughout *PostHomerica*, the Amazon’s point on the human-divine spectrum is not static but is constantly in flux. There are extended scenes in which they appear more immortal than mortal, such as the battle scenes which I explore in Chapter 3. There are also situations where they appear more mortal than immortal, such as Penthesilea’s death, which I examine in Chapter 4. Thus, there is always a combination of divine and human elements in play. Seeing as several written and visual sources portray both the Amazons’ divine and mortal attributes, it is that this tension does not appear only in Quintus’ account. Rather, this observation pertains to Amazon ontology across the mythic corpus.
Chapter Two: The Equine Nature of the Amazons

Now that I have explored the Amazons’ semi-divine nature, I turn my attention to the animal as a pertinent third ontology, focusing on the interrelation between their semi-divine and animalistic modes of existence. This thesis argues that the animal figure plays a large role in illuminating the Amazons’ divine attributes. While the anthropomorphic portrayal of gods in antiquity has been studied at great length, scholars have only recently investigated the possibility of divine zoomorphism in Greek religion.¹ In doing so, scholars have outlined several ways in which the animal figure can come into play when representing divine beings.²

In this chapter, I speak to this bigger picture by highlighting the Amazons’ physical and symbolic interconnectedness with their horses, arguing that the horse is intrinsic to their identity and that it functions as a qualifying epithet of their divine attributes.

Before exploring the connections between horses and Amazons it is important to consider the ancient Greeks’ interaction with horses, as this shapes the connotations of horses enshrined in mythology. Horses were first introduced to Greece between 2100 – 1900 BC,³ approximately 2000 years after prehistoric humans first began to domesticate them.⁴

This has two points of relevance to this thesis. First, archaeological evidence shows that horses were first domesticated and brought to Greece by nomad societies from the Black-Sea Caspian Steppe, the region regarded in mythology as Amazon territory.⁵ Thus, it is unsurprising that numerous Greek sources associate Amazons with horses, even attributing Amazons with early horse domestication.

¹ See Kindt (2019) 157-9 for an overview of classical scholarship which explores the role of animals in divine representation.
² For instance, scholars have considered mixanthropic human-animal hybrid deities (See Aston (2011; 2014); Kindt (2019) 166-8; Posthumus (2011) 29-31) as well as shape-shifting Gods who reveal themselves as animals. (Kindt (2019) 163-6).
³ Howe (2014) 4
⁴ Mayor (2016) 170
⁵ Howe (2014) 3-4 on early equid domestication in Dereivka and Botai.
Moreover, the ancient Greeks were familiar with fully domesticated horses rather than wild equids, and they continued the process of domestication through cross-breeding and cavalry training. This in turn influences how they conceived of horses, as the symbolic associations are derived within a paradigm of human-animal interaction facilitated by human exploitation and subjugation of the animal.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In Section I, I provide a preliminary overview of literary and visual sources which highlight the importance of horses to the Amazons. This shows that their customs and mode of existence is strongly tied to their proficiency in horse-rearing. In Section II I consider symbolic associations of the horse in Greek thought which parallel key traits and characteristics pertinent to the Amazons. Together these two sections illustrate that the Amazons are consistently portrayed as existing within a distinctly equine mode. Thus, I argue that the mythic society of horse-taming women should be understood as possessing a semi-equine nature which complements their semi-divine nature. Finally, in Section III I analyse the representation of Penthesilea’s horse in PostHomerica, highlighting the multiplicity of ways in which the portrayal of the horse sheds light on Penthesilea herself. This forms my preliminary argument that the horse functions as a qualifying epithet for the Amazons. In Chapters 3 and 4 I build upon this idea, showing how this animal manifestation mediates between their human and divine modes.

I. The Inextricable Amazon-horse Connection: Evidence from Literature and Art

It is clear from literary evidence that the Greeks conceived of Amazons and horses as being inextricably connected. Authors not only stress the presence of horses in the Amazon homeland, but significant focus is placed on the Amazons’ direct interaction with horses. In

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6 See Howe (2014) 4 on cross-breeding and Mayor (2014) 8 on cavalry training.
particular, mythology situates the Amazons as the first people to benefit from and exploit a horse-human symbiosis.

Lysias identifies the Amazons as the first society to domesticate horses:

Ἀμαζόνες γὰρ Ἀρεως μὲν τὸ παλαιὸν ἔσαν θυγατέρες, οἰκοῦσαι δὲ παρὰ τῶν Θερμώδοντα ποταμῶν, μόναι μὲν ὑπλισμέναι σιδήρῳ τῶν περὶ αὐτῶς, πρῶται δὲ τῶν πάντων ἐφ᾽ ἵππους ἄναβασαι).7

“In ancient times there were the Amazons, daughters of Ares, inhabiting the river beside Thermodon. They alone of the people around them were armed with iron, and they were the first of all to ride horses.”

Mayor considers several potential reasons why the Greeks ascribed the Amazons with horse domestication, arguing that “the celebrated equestrian expertise of steppe people, the centrality of horses in their lives, their nomads’ own oral traditions, and perhaps a belief in a special relationship between independent women and wild horses led to ancient Greeks to believe that the Amazons must have been the earliest horse people.”8

As well as attributing the Amazons with the origins of horse-rearing, Greeks conceived of horses as playing a large role in the customs and daily practices of the Amazons. Strabo recounts that the Amazons spend the majority of their time “farming the land beside the field, and cultivating plants, and pasturing cattle and especially horses, but the bravest engage mostly in hunting and training in war” (ἐκαστα τὰ τε πρὸς ἄροτον καὶ φυτουργίαν καὶ τὰ πρὸς τὰς νομὰς καὶ μᾶλιστα τῶν ἵππων, τὰς δέ ἀλκιμωτάτας κυνηγεσίας πλεονάζειν καὶ τὰ πολέμια ἁπτεῖν).9 The emphatic phrase μᾶλιστα τῶν ἵππων (“especially horses”) clearly shows the centrality of horse-rearing to Amazon daily life.

Vase paintings and sculptures also capture the importance of horses to the Amazons. This is apparent through the Amazonomachy trope, popular in the 5th century. Sculptures of battles

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7 Lys 2.4
8 Mayor (2014) 170
9 Strabo 11.5.1
between the Greeks and mounted Amazons adorned public buildings throughout Greece, including the Parthenon in Athens, the Temple of Apollo at Bassae and the Temple of Zeus at Olympia.\textsuperscript{10} The Bassae Frieze depicts Heracles’ battle with the Amazon Queen Hippolyte and her attendants (See Fig.\textsuperscript{8} and Fig.\textsuperscript{9}), while the Parthenon Western metopes likely depict Theseus’ battle with Queen Antiope (Fig.\textsuperscript{10}). In typical Amazonomachy fashion, the Amazons can be identified by their short chitons and their stance in relation to the horse – seated erect with one hand resting on the horses’ mane and the other hand raised in combat.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{10} Tarbell (1920) 227
\textsuperscript{11} Ebersole (1899) 415-16
In both the Parthenon and Temple of Apollo, the Amazonomachy scenes are situated near stylistically similar Centauromachys (Fig. 11 and Fig.12). There is great scholarly debate regarding the meaning of these motifs. Current consensus is that Amazonomachys and Centauromachys function as allegories of either Greek defeat of the Persians or the triumph of order over chaos. However, some scholars disregard these theories and owe the popularity of these scenes to their ancient mythical subject matter, rejecting the idea of a larger ideological subtext. It is outside the scope of my thesis to evaluate these theories in any great depth, but I wish to highlight the deliberate parallel between visual representations of the women on horseback and the horse-man hybrids, highlighting the importance of the horse to both mythic figures.

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12 Tarbell (1920) 227-30 summarises these two dominant theories, as provides other possible (less ideological) reasons for the popularity of Amazonomachys and Centauromachys.
The Amazonomachy motif was also explored in paintings. Pausanias describes an Amazonomachy painting in Athens’ Stoa Poikile, depicting “the Athenians and Theseus fighting the Amazons” (Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ Θησεὺς Ἀμαζόνες μάχονται). He describes it as an elaborate scene of the Amazon’s attempted conquest of both Athens and Troy, as he identifies Theseus and Heracles as well as Ajax and Cassandra. Although he does not provide a specific account of the artworks’ compositional features, it is likely that this painting too would have portrayed Amazons engaged in cavalry combat, given the stylistic and thematic unity of other Amazonomachys.

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13 Paus 1.15.2
It is unsurprising that there is a strong association between Amazon women and their horses in Amazonomachy scenes, given the military overtones. Nonetheless, they are legitimate examples of the wider visual trend of portraying Amazons alongside their equine companions and should not be neglected.

Moreover, numerous red-figure and black-figure vase paintings from the 6th and 5th centuries BC present Amazon-horse interaction. Much like with the written evidence, there are specific portrayals of Amazons training and domesticating horses, predominantly for military purposes. Vases depict Amazons riding horses and engaging in mounted one-on-one combat (Fig.13, Fig. 14. See also Fig.4), using chariots driven by war-horses (Fig.15) and training horses (Fig. 16).

![Image of a vase depicting an Amazon riding a horse.](image)

*Figure 13: Red-figure vase depicting Amazon riding Horse, c. 420BC. Located in Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen. Inv. 2342. (Image taken from Salisbury 2001 Fig. 1).*
Figure 14: Mounted Amazon engaged in one-on-one contact, c. 450 BC. Located in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art Inv. 07.286.84. (Image taken from: <www.metmuseum.org>).

Figure 15: Amazon driving a four-horse chariot, ca. 400 BC. (Image taken from Mayor 2014, Fig. 11.2).

Figure 16: Black-figure skyphos showing Amazon training a horse with a rope, c. 510 BC. Located in Boston, Museum of Fine Arts Inv. 99.324. (Image taken from Mayor 2014, Fig. 11.1).
It is also conventional for Amazons wounded in battle to be dismounted, lying on the ground with their horse nearby (Fig. 17. See also Fig. 1)

This suggests a parallel between an Amazon’s death and the disrupted human-horse connection. It appears that the loss of their equine nature necessitates a fundamental breakdown in their mode of being which then culminates in death, an idea which I revisit in Chapter 4 when I explore Penthesilea’s death in PostHomerica.

Overall, these written and visual accounts show that the importance of horses to the Amazons, as Greeks consistently portray Amazons alongside their equine companions. Also, emphasis is consistently placed on the Amazons’ domestication of the horse and the centrality of horse rearing to their daily customs.

II. Symbolic Associations of the Horse which Parallel Fundamental Amazon Traits

Now that I have explored the physical connection between Amazons and their horses, I turn to the symbolic. Here I consider three aspects which are central to the Amazons’ distinct
mode of being: their military prowess; their matriarchal practices; and their emphasis on maidenhood. As these three features consistently occur in ancient written accounts of the Amazons, they form the crux of Amazon identity. Furthermore, each of these three traits are among the several symbolic associations which the ancient Greeks imbued upon horses. Thus, a dialogical relationship is established whereby the Greeks’ perceptions of the horse illuminate their understanding of the Amazon, and vice versa.

This two-way relationship indicates the importance of the animal as a third ontology which characterises the Amazons’ unique mode of being. Together, sections I and II support my case that the horse is intrinsic to Amazon manifestations throughout mythology, as this is evidenced through both the physical and symbolic Amazon-horse connection.

II. A) Horses and War

The association between horses and warfare is longstanding, as humans have spent millennia training war horses and developing advanced cavalry tactics. Archaeological remains indicate that four-horse war chariots were common in the Northern Steppe region before moving to Greece and Rome, where they were widely utilised. Thus, the Greeks were aware that trained warhorses provide armies with advantages such as height, mobility and agility.\(^{14}\)

Unsurprisingly, a symbolic horse-war connection is articulated in Greek mythology and epic, as horses function as a qualifying epithet for the War-God Ares.\(^{15}\)

Similarly, in Amazon mythology, horses imbue the Ἀρεως θυγατέρες with their characteristic military prowess. While there are numerous sources which encapsulate the link between Amazons, horses and warfare, I will focus on the accounts of Lysias and Herodotus, as they

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\(^{15}\) See Il. 15.110 and 5.325-5 for Homer’s description of Ares’ “gold-bridled horses” (Δηϊκόωντα Περγασίδην). Quint. Smyrn. 8. 239-47 identifies these four horses by name and portrays a symbolic parallel between their fire-breathing nature and Ares’ fury. In [Hes.] Sc. 59-65 the horses’ ability to engender destruction is foregrounded, as they function as an epithet which clarifies Ares’ battle-lust.
foreground the importance of war-horses to Amazons’ military prowess and identity respectively.

After identifying the Amazons as πρῶται δὲ τῶν πάντων ἔφ’ ὑπους ἀναβάσαι, Lysias adds the relative clause “with which, because of their opposition’s inexperience, they seized those who fled and outstripped those who pursued” (οἵς ἀνελπίστως δὴ ἀπειρίαν τῶν ἐναντίων ἤρουν μὲν τοὺς φεύγοντας, ἀπέλειπον δὲ διώκοντας).16 This modifying clause indicates that not only are the horses of paramount importance to the Amazons, but that the Amazons deliberately domesticate horses for the primary purpose of warfare. Lysias portrays war horses as the means through which Amazons triumph over their enemies who flee (τοὺς φεύγοντας) as well as those who pursue them (διώκοντας), thus facilitating both offense and defence. Moreover, the animal figure features implicitly, as there is a symbolic connection between horse and rider whereby the bellicose nature of the one reinforces that of the other. The verb ἤρουν (“they seized”) denotes animalistic ferocity and bloodlust, as well as a predatory approach to conquest. Quintus also uses the verb αἱρέω (among others) to denote the Amazons’ animalistic mode of combat in battle, as I explore in Chapter 3.17

In Herodotus’ account, the Amazons themselves articulate the importance of horse rearing and warfare to their daily life. When the Amazon women encounter the Scythians, they explain that they cannot live with Scythian women on account of their radically different customs: “we shoot with the bow and hurl a javelin and ride horses, we did not learn the works of women” (ἡμεῖς μὲν τοξεύομεν τε καὶ ἀκοντίζομεν καὶ ἰππαζόμεθα, ἔργα δὲ γυναικήια οὐκ ἐμάθομεν).18 The personal pronoun ἡμεῖς indicates the centrality of these three interconnected practices to the entire Amazonian tribe, as they identify that their extensive

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16 Lys. 2.4
17 For instance, Quint. Smyrn 1.227 and 1.230
18 Hdt. 4.114.3
utilisation of war horses distinguishes them from other societies. It also allows Herodotus to move beyond a simple recount of daily customs to explore the more complex notion of identity. In this way, he uses the Amazon as a mouthpiece to express the idea that the Amazons’ mode of existence cannot be separated from the horse, as it both literally and symbolically bestows the warrior race with its warlike fervour.

Quintus portrays the relationship between Amazons, horses and war in a similar way, as his Amazons utilise cavalry manoeuvres to display their superior military prowess. On the one hand, Penthesilea’s horse is the literal means by which she is able to fight so proficiently. On the other hand, Quintus alludes to a deep symbolic link between horse and rider, as the two share similar epithets. This dual function is encapsulated in the following quote, describing Penthesilea’s horse speeding through war while she successfully kills several Achaeans:

φέρεν δὲ οἱ αἰόλος ὑπος
ιοδόκην καὶ τόξων ἀμειλίχων, εἰ που ἄρ᾽ αὐτὴ
χρείω ἃν’ αἰματόεντα μόθον βελέων ἀλεγεινῶν
καὶ τόξῳο πέλοτον

“Her quick-moving horse bore her relentless quiver and bow, close to her hand if she would require her bow during the blood-red battle.”

By expressing an inextricable connection between her horse and weaponry, Quintus highlights Penthesilea’s reliance on her war-horse, as her ability to fight would be greatly compromised without her horse bearing weapons. Moreover, the adjective αἰόλος mirrors the epithets of speed which characterise Penthesilea’s swift actions in battle, which I explore further at the end of this chapter (Section III).

Furthermore, Quintus describes Penthesilea’s use of the horse for both offense and defence:

οὐδὲ ποτ’ αἰχμὴν μαχητήν ἴθυνεν, ἀεὶ δ’ ἥ νῖτα δάιζε.

19 Quint. Smyrn. 1.338-41
“Not in vain she guided her spearpoint, always either spearing the backs of those who fled, or shooting the chests of those who advanced. The whole [spear] was drenched with warm blood. Her limbs became light-weight.”

In this way, Quintus illustrates the importance of cavalry manoeuvres to the Amazons, as the horse enables them to simultaneously defend themselves and pursue their enemies. The quick moving nature of the horse and ride is evoked yet again, as Fratantuono notes that the reference to Penthesilea’s “light-weight limbs” (γυῖα ἔπλετ’) functions as a “reminder of her speed and ability to skim over the slaughter.”

II. B) Horses and Virginity

As it is outside the scope of this thesis to provide a sustained account of the significance of female virginity in ancient Greek social thought and mythology, I focus here on just one notion of virginity: the association between virginity, adolescence and wild sexual potency. Fletcher argues that “childhood in general, both for males and females, was considered to be a state of wildness, although we hear much more about the bestial nature of young females (emphasis mine).” I adopt this premise to explore the intersection between horses, Amazons and virginity.

Given the association between virgin girls and wild beasts, it is unsurprising that the Greeks often used the language of animal subjugation when describing defloration. Fletcher identifies that the verb δαμάζω can describe both the taming of horses and the sexual

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20 Quint. Smyrn. 1.384-8
21 Fratantuono (2016) 14
22 Fletcher (2007) 25
subjection of a woman to her husband, expressing the idea that the act of intercourse tames the previously untamed παρθένος. A similar idea is conveyed in Xenophon’s Economics when Socrates asks Ischomachus “did you yourself train your wife to be of such a useful sort?” (αὐτὸς σὺ ἐπαιδεύσας τὴν γυναῖκα ὀστὲ ἐναὶ οἶναν δεῖ), as the verb παιδεύω conventionally refers to the training of animals. Socrates uses the same verb of taming in his reply:

ἡ ἐτή μὲν οὐποκεντεκαίδεκα γεγονυῖα ἦλθε πρὸς ἐμέ, τὸν δ’ ἐμπροσθεν χρόνον ἔζη ὑπὸ πολλῆς ἐπιμελείας ὡς ἔλαχιστα μὲν ὄψις, ἔλαχιστα δ’ ἀκούσις, ἔλαχιστα δ’ ἔρις; οὐ γὰρ ἀγαπήτων σοὶ δοκεῖ εἶναι, εἰ μόνον ἢλθεν ἐπισταμένη ἔρια παραλαβούσα ἰμάτιον ἀποδείξω, καὶ ἑωρακυία ὡς ἔργα ταλάσια τεραπαίναις δίδοται; ἐπεὶ τά γε ἀμφὶ γαστέρα, ἥπη, πάνω καλδὸς, ὥ Σώκρατες, ἦλθε πεπαιδευμένη

“She was fifteen years old when she came to me, becoming my wife. Before this time she was living under much care, in order that she might see, hear and ask as little as possible. Does that seem sufficient for you, if she came knowing only how to make a cloak when given wool? And concerning her appetite I say, Socrates, that when she came she was trained very well”. Xenophon uses repetition of the verb παιδεύω, reference to the maiden’s youth, and accumulation of the phrase ὡς ἔλαχιστα (“as little as possible”) to highlight the necessity of training the young girl into becoming a suitable wife. Mayor also notes that Herodotus uses the language of taming when recounting the Amazons’ interaction with Scythian men, arguing that this language “seems to allude to Greek assumptions about wild and domesticated women and horses.” I support this claim but wish to push it slightly further, arguing that Herodotus evokes not only assumptions about horse-human activity but also conceptions of virginity. Thus, we see here one instance in which the overlapping associations pertinent to both horses and virgins are ascribed to Amazons.

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23 LSJ s.v δαμάζω
24 Fletcher (2007) 25
25 Xen. Oec. 7.4
26 Xen. Oec. 7.5-6
27 Mayor (2014) 171
Another way in which Greeks expressed the perceived bestial nature of unwed girls is by directly comparing maidens to specific animals. Anacreon’s poem, where he mocks a young girl by comparing her to an untrained Thracian horse, explicitly highlights the symbolic connection between virgins and horses:

πῶλε θηκή, τί δή με
λοξών ὀμμασί βλέπουσα
νηλέως φεύγεις; δοκεῖς δέ
μ’ οὐδέν εἰδέναι σοφόν;
ἰσθι τοι, καλῶς μὲν ἀν τοι
τὸν χαλινὸν ἐμβάλομι,
ήνιας δ’ ἔχων στρέφοιμί
σ’ ἄμφι τέρματα ὀρόμου.

νῦν δὲ λειμῶνας τε βόσκεις
κοῦφα τε σκιρτόσα παίζεις,
δεξιὸν γὰρ ἵπποπείρην
οὐκ ἔχεις ἐπεμβάτην.

“Thracian filly, why do you flee ruthlessly after looking at me from the corner of your eye? Do you expect that I do not know anything skilful? Know this, I could easily put a bridle on you, and holding your reins I could wheel you around the edges of the racecourse. But now you graze the meadows and you play lightly, leaping, for you do not have a skilful charioteer to mount you.”

Heraclitus states that Anacreon’s poem “uses the horse as an allegory” (ὡς ἱππον ἡλληγόρησεν) to denote “the arrogance of a haughty woman” (σοβαρὰς γυναικὸς ὑπερηφανῶν). Through reference to the χαλινὸν (“bride”) and ήνιας (“reins”), emphasis is placed on the horse – and by extension the woman – as a figure in need of domestication.

This is exemplified at the poem’s conclusion, as the verb ἐπεμβάτην (“mount”) refers not
only to a horse’s wildness in lieu of a rider, but also to a woman’s reckless state in lieu of intercourse.

Evidently, the Greeks conceived of both virgins and horses in a similar manner: as creatures which are wild and unruly in their natural state and thus require training and domestication. I will now explore this concept in relation to the Amazons, as several ancient authors emphasise the importance of virginity to the Amazons. In particular, the moment of defloration functions as a turning point from which point onwards the Amazons’ daily activities become radically different.

In their in-depth account of Amazonian customs, both Herodotus and Hippocrates explain that Amazon women must remain virgins until they have killed a man in battle, when they are then permitted to marry. Herodotus outlines this custom, and its implication on Amazon women:

τὰ περὶ γάμων δὲ ὅδε σφι διακέεται. οὐ γαμέται παρθένος οὐδεμία πρὶν ἀν τῶν πολεμίων ἄνδρα ἀποκτείνῃ· αἱ δὲ τινὲς αὐτέων κατελευτῶσι γηραιά πρὶν γῆμασθαι, οὐ δυνάμεναι τὸν νόμον ἐκπλῆσαι.

“Concerning marriages, they are settled as followed: no virgin will marry until she has killed a man among the enemies. And some of them die in old age before they marry, being unable to satisfy the requirements of the law”

Accordingly, an Amazon woman who is unable to kill an enemy man will remain a παρθένος for the entire duration of her life, as is the case for some Amazons. Thus, in Herodotus’ account, virginity functions as a status marker to differentiate Amazons with superior military abilities from those without.

Hippocrates elaborates on the role of virginity in the Amazons’ social system. He states that an Amazon woman can only “set aside her virginity” (ἀποπαρθένευονταί) once she has

31 See Meeder (2008) 6-10 on the Amazons’ status as παρθένοι.
32 Hdt 4.117.1
displayed military proficiency. Moreover, he directly compares the customs and daily life between a virgin and married Amazon. His account is similar to that of Herodotus, with the exception that Hippocrates claims an Amazon must kill three men in battle before she can marry:

tούτων αἱ γυναῖκες ἱππάζονται τε καὶ τοξεύουσι καὶ ἀκοντίζουσιν ἀπὸ τῶν ἵππων καὶ μάχονται τοῖς πολεμίοις, ἐώς ἐὰν παρθένοι ἔωσιν. οὐκ ἀποπαρθενεύονται δὲ, μέχρι ἔν τῶν πολεμίων τρεῖς ἀποκτείνωσι, καὶ οὐ πρῶτον συνοικέουσιν ἢτερ τὰ ἱερὰ θύσεως τὰ ἐννομα. ἤ δὲ ἄν ἄνδρα ἐνωτῇ ἄρητα, παύεται ἱππαζομένη, ἐώς ἐὰν μὴ ἄναγκη καταλάβῃ παγκοίνου στρατείης. 33

“Their women ride horses and shoot with the bow and hurl javelins from horses and fight their enemies, if they are virgins. They do not set aside their virginity until they have killed three of their enemies, and they do not get married until they perform the sacred rites. And if she kills a man she ceases horse riding, unless she is seized by necessity of a compulsory military campaign.”

This description deliberately mirrors the Amazons’ identification of their own customs in Hdt. 4.114.3, yet is distinguished by Hippocrates’ striking addition of the conditional protasis “as long as they are virgins” (ἐὼς ἐὰν παρθένοι ἔωσιν). In this way, the characteristics which Herodotus ascribes to the Amazons – and which so strictly characterise their mode of being – are applicable only to the virgins.

Furthermore, the conditional clause “if she kills a man, she ceases horse-riding” (ἡ δ’ ἄν ἄνδρα ἐνωτῇ ἄρητα, παύεται ἱππαζομένη) is noteworthy as it contrasts the Amazons’ way of life pre- and post-defloration. In his study of the Amazons, Stewart notes that “until they marry and lay aside their weapons, Amazons are unruly teenagers; unripe, undeveloped, undomesticated and unrestrained [emphasis mine].” 34 I wish to push this observation further, by fleshing out the difference in an Amazons’ customs once she is deflowered, whereby she abandons war in favour of domestic chores. Here we can see an overlap in horse and Amazon

33 Hippoc. Aer. XVII
34 Stewart (1995) 579
symbolism. Both are conceived of as undomesticated and unrestrained in their original state, yet they are both capable of being tamed by a man. Once they are tamed, both Amazons’ and horses’ primary purpose is to complement the man in his day-to-day activities.

Crucially, the conventional Amazon as portrayed in mythology – namely, the fierce warrior woman – is a virgin, as marriage necessitates the abandonment of war. Thus, it is unsurprising that ancient authors employ epithets which signal their maidenhood, such as “virgins fearless in battle” (παρθένοι μάχας ἀτρεστοί). Similarly, Quintus consistently refers to his Penthesilea as a κόρη, denoting the interrelated terms “girl/virgin/maiden/daughter”, all referring to the state of a young woman pre-marriage.

There are also implicit references to Penthesilea’s virginity in Quintus’ account of her death. Much scholarship considers ancient Greek and Roman texts which compare the death of a female warrior in battle to a virgins’ defloration, both of which can be feasibly conceived of as instances where an act of male violence results in penetration and the subsequent spillage of blood. I will now apply this concept to the Amazons by referencing Don Fowler’s study of Camilla’s death in the Aeneid.

He observes that Camilla’s death has a strong sexual dimension, owing to the phallic imagery when Arruns pierces Camilla with the spear. Fowler concludes that Camilla’s death is meant to evoke the idea of a “perverted defloration.” This engenders pathos by highlighting the tragedy of her premature death, as “the perversity of her becoming a wife (defloration) only at the moment of death constitutes a reproach to her way of life. She should have stayed at home to become a wife and mother in the normal way.”

35 Aesch. PV. 416
36 Quint. Smyrn. 1.685, 1.716 and 1.789. See LSJ s.v. κόρη
38 Fowler (1987) 196
Fowler’s observations on Camilla’s death are a useful frame of reference for interpreting Penthesilea’s death, as the two scenes are highly analogous. For one, Virgil deliberately equates the Volscian maiden queen Camilla with an Amazonian warrior, through his description of the “quiver-wearing Camilla” (pharetrata Camilla) who “strides through the midst of slaughter like an Amazon” (at medias inter caedes exsultat Amazon.) Furthermore, both women are fatally speared on the battlefield in one-on-one combat with a male warrior, causing them to dismount their horse and experience a slow and brutal death. Thus, Fowler’s observations on defloration imagery during the death of the virgin Camilla is pertinent here, as a mechanism through which I consider the analogous references to Penthesilea’s status as a virgin.

In PostHomerica, Achilles’ spearing of Penthesilea is recounted with strong sexual overtones, as is his gaze when observing the beautiful form of her dying figure. Achilles regrets that he killed Penthesilea, rather than taking her as wife and deflowering her in the usual manner: “Achilles had unabating sadness in his heart because she was killed and he did not take carry her away as his heavenly wife to horse-abounding Phthia” (Ἀχιλλεύς ἀλίαστον ἐδὲ ἐνετείρετο θυμῷ, οὖνεκα μιν κατέπεφνε καὶ οὐκ ἂγε δῖαν ἄκοιτιν Φθίην εἰς εὔπωλον). The adjective δῖαν (“heavenly”) both reiterates her divine beauty and denotes nobility and modesty, hence being further indicative of her maidenhood.

Thus, in PostHomerica Penthesilea is portrayed as a virgin in accordance with the focus on Amazons and virginity throughout Greek mythology. As the Greeks conceived of female virgins as operating within a bestial and equine mode of behaviour, we see yet another

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39 Aen. 11.648-9
40 See (Basson) 1986 on the analogous relationship between Volsci and Amazons. See also Fratantuono (2016) 226 on parallels between Camilla and Penthesilea’s deaths.
41 Quint. Smyrn. 1.671-3
instance where there is a striking overlap of symbolic associations pertinent to both the horse and the Amazon.

II. C) Horses and Matriarchy

While sections II A) and II B) explored horse-Amaon symbolism through the lens of human domestication of the animal, this section considers ways in which the actions of mares in the wild mirror key Amazon traits and practices. The crux of my analysis here relies on Mayor’s observation that “the power of mares in herds was obvious to the earliest horse people. Mares can be as strong and fast as stallions, and they can fight ferociously. […] Other equine-nomad parallels include seasonal migrations, seasonal mating, sexual activity and reproduction regulated by female acquiescence [and] styles of fighting and escaping danger.”42 Although Mayor is considering the horse-human interaction in real steppe cultures such as the Scythians, Saka, Thracians, Sarmatians and Massagetae, I aim to show that these elements also apply to the mythic Amazons.

I have already shown that the Amazons are characterised by strength and speed, and that they are adept at fighting. It is noteworthy that the Amazons are not only portrayed as strong and fast, but – like with mares – their skills are comparable to those of their male counterparts. Homer grants the Amazons the epithet “equal to men” (Ἀντίανειραι),43 and several scholars illustrate that Amazons are consistently portrayed as worthy adversaries for even the greatest Greek male warriors.44

42 Mayor (2016) 172
43 Il. 3.189 and 6.186
I will now focus on Mayor’s latter observation – that mares undergo seasonal mating and are responsible for regulating reproduction – as this strongly parallels Strabo’s account of the Amazons’ mating practices.

Strabo, who was particularly interested in de mythologising and critiquing Amazon mythology, investigated how a society run without the organisation of men could function, as well as how a predominantly female race could reproduce. In his account, the Amazons spend ten months of every year hunting on horseback, practicing using weapons, and making clothing and armour.45 Then, for two months, they go up to the neighbouring mountains in order to mate with the Gargarians. His description of the Amazons’ manner of reproduction is as follows:

"They have a chosen two months of spring in which they go up to a nearby mountain separating them from the Gargareans. And they [the Gargareans] also go up, according to some ancient custom, offering sacrifices and joining together with the women for the purpose of begetting, unseen and in darkness, with whoever happens to be there. The women, having become pregnant, are dismissed. The females that are begotten are kept by them [the Amazons], but the males are taken to the latter [the Gargareans] to be brought up."

Here, the Amazons engage in a process which is analogous to seasonal mating, as the all-woman tribe have intercourse within a specific timeframe on an annual basis, purely for the purpose of procreation. Strabo also illustrates that the Amazons play an active rather than passive role in regulating reproduction, as well as in raising future generations of warrior women. The verb ἀναβαίνουσιν ("they go up") indicates their active role in initiating contact

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45 Hardwick (1990) 22
46 Strabo 11.5.1
with the Gargarean tribe, as does the order of the clauses, where Strabo first mentions the Amazons’ actions before he notes the Gargareans’ reciprocation. They also have great control over child-rearing, as they nurture only the female children while delegating care of the male children to the Gargareans.

While some scholars interpret the Amazons’ reproductive practices as evidence of a flawed matriarchy, I believe it is more conducive to understand these practices as deliberately paralleling those of both nomadic tribes and horses. Thus, we once again see the Amazons functioning within a distinctly equine mode of behaviour, and the actions and symbolic associations of the horse illuminates aspects of the Amazons’ mode of being.

Clearly, there is much evidence to sustain a symbolic horse-Amazon link which speaks to the very core of what it is to be an Amazon. As Sections II A), B) and C) explore fundamental Amazon characteristics which intersect with horse symbolism, it is feasible to conceive of the Amazons as possessing a symbolic semi-equine nature.

III. The horse in PostHomerica: Penthesilea’s steed as a qualifying epithet

Now that I have explored the inextricable connection between animal and horse, I will analyse Quintus’ description of Penthesilea’s horse in PostHomerica. Quintus creates an intricate dialogic relationship between Penthesilea and her horse, as they share fundamental attributes. The description of the horse spans multiple lines, and sheds light on Penthesilea in several ways:

ἡ δ’ ἄρα κυδιάσκεν ἁσχετον: ἔξετο δ’ ἵππω
καλῶ, ὧκυτάτω, τὸν οί ἄλοχος Βορέαο ἁπασεν Ωρείθνια πάρος Θρήκινδε κιοήσῃ
ἐξίνιον, δς τε θοῇσι μετέπρεπεν Αρπύησι.

47 See Literature Review re. Amazons as a Perverted Patriarchy.
"Resistless in might she rode. She was seated on a beautiful, swift horse which hospitable Oreithyia the wife of the North Wind previously gifted to her in Thrace, which was distinguished among the Harpies by its speed. Seating herself thus, faithful Penthesilea left behind the lofty palaces of the city [Troy]."

For one, her horse is imbued with strong military associations. This is evident from the situational context of the passage, as it occurs immediately after Penthesilea’s arming typescene in the midst of her preparation for battle.\(^49\) Thus, it portrays her as a mighty adversary for Achilles and the other Achaeans. Military associations are also engendered through diction. Penthesilea is described as “resistless in might” (ἀάσχετον), an adjective used by Homer to describe the military capabilities and wrath of the Achaeans and Hera, as well as to modify the grief faced by the Trojans after Sarpedon’s death.\(^50\) Moreover, the balance between the adjective ἀάσχετον and the verb κυδιάασκεν (“she rode”) indicate that Penthesilea’s ungovernable strength is a function of her relationship with her war horse.

The horse also reinforces and parallels the manifestations of Penthesilea’s divinity. Like Penthesilea, the horse has divine associations, as it was gifted by the nymph Oreithyia, wife of the God Boreas. This parallels the status of Ares’ horses who were begotten by Boreas, as Quintus states in Book 8.\(^51\) By referring to the previous owner of Penthesilea’s horse as “Oreithyia the wife of Boreas” (ἄλοχος Βορέαο Ωρείθνια), a mutual association is established between her horse and Ares’ horses, thus juxtaposing her military capabilities with those of her quintessentially warlike father. As well as this, her horse is described in overwhelmingly positive terms, as it is modified by the adjective καλός (“beautiful/noble”).

\(^{48}\) Quint. Smyrn. 1.166-71
\(^{49}\) Quint. Smyrn. 1.140-51
\(^{50}\) Od. 3.104; Il. 5.892 and 16.549
\(^{51}\) Quint. Smyrn. 8.239-47.
This adjective primarily denotes physical exceptionalism which arises from strong moral character.\textsuperscript{52} Thus, by reflecting on Penthesilea’s exquisite physical form and divine beauty, her horse functions as an extension of herself.

Furthermore, Quintus’ repeated reference to the horse’s speed illustrates that the horse functions as a qualifying epithet for Penthesilea. He uses the adjective \textit{ὦκυτάτῳ} (“swift”) and employs the simile “swift like the Harpies” (\textit{θο}"\textit{μησι μετέπρεπεν Ἀρπυήσι}). These references echo the famous epithet attributed to Achilles in the \textit{Iliad} – “swift-footed Achilles” (πόδας \textit{ὧκυς Ἀχιλλεύς}) – as both use the adjective \textit{ὦκυς} to denote speed and adeptness in battle.\textsuperscript{53} It also mirrors Penthesilea’s epithet of swiftness provided in the extended simile:

\[ \text{ἡ δ’ ὡτὴ Τριτωνίς, ὡτ’ ἥλυθεν ἄντα Γιγάντων,} \\
\text{ἡ Ἐρις ἕγρευσιν ὅνα στρατὸν ἰσχυνσα,} \\
\text{τοὴ ἐν Τρώεσσι θοὴ πέλε Πενθεσίλεια}^{54}\]

“Like Tritonis when she set out against the Giants, or like strife-stirring Eris darting through the army, in such a way swift-footed Penthesilea was amongst the Trojans.”

In this simile, Penthesilea possesses a divine strength which is on par with two warlike mythic women, and this is made possible through her cavalry manoeuvres. Thus, like we saw with her resistless might, her characteristic speed and fervour are inextricably connected to that of her horse.

Clearly, Quintus engenders a strong parallel between attributes shared by Penthesilea and her horse. In this way, the animal is a mechanism through which her distinct traits and abilities are manifested and her martial prowess is made possible. Her horse is also portrayed as an

\textsuperscript{52} LSJ s.v \textit{καλός}
\textsuperscript{53} For instance, \textit{Il.} 1.58. See (Dunkle) 1997 on πόδας \textit{ὧκυς Ἀχιλλεύς}, denoting Achilles’ “essential quality as a warrior.”
\textsuperscript{54} Quint. Smyrn. 1.179-81
extension of herself, an idea I return to in Chapter 4 when considering the interrelation between Penthesilea’s death and the death of her horse.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has extended my exploration of Amazon ontology by examining the animal as a third ontology which characterises the Amazons’ distinct mode of being. I have done so by examining the longstanding artistic tradition of equating the Amazon to the equid, concluding that ancient authors conceive of horses and Amazons as almost one and the same. By outlining the importance of the horse itself to vital Amazonian customs (Section I), as well as three thematic overlaps between horse symbolism and fundamental Amazonian characteristics (Section II), I argue that the horse cannot be separated from the Amazons’ mode of being. Thus, whereas Chapter 1 outlines the Amazons’ transitory status between gods and humans, this chapter highlights the strong equid element that is also central to their manifestation throughout mythology. I bridge these two elements – the semi-divine and the semi-animal – by couching this relationship within the wider trend of zoomorphic representations of divinity within Greek religious thought.

This chapter also lays the groundwork for Chapters 3 and 4. In Section III I considered the symbiotic relationship between Penthesilea and her horse in *PostHomerica*, as the two exist in tandem with the latter being a source of the former’s strength. In doing so, I highlighted ways in which the horses’ traits parallel various manifestations of Penthesilea’s divinity. I build upon this idea in subsequent chapters when I explore specific instances where the Amazons’ partially theriomorphic mode enables them to navigate between the opposing states of human and god.
Chapter Three: The Animal as Mediator in PostHomerica Battle Scenes

Now that I’ve outlined my theoretical framework in Chapters 1 and 2, I can turn my attention to the particular ways in which the animal mediates between the Amazons’ divine and mortal states in PostHomerica. This chapter focuses exclusively on the battle scenes, where the Amazons fight with the Trojans against the Achaeans. These scenes are noteworthy for two reasons. First, Quintus utilises ample animal imagery, both explicitly and implicitly, in his account of the combat. Thus, I devote adequate attention to both the ways in which the figure of the animal is manifested, and how it speaks to the Amazons’ unique ontology.

Second, the tension between the Amazons’ mortal and immortal attributes is brought to the fore when they are represented on the battlefield. Quintus predominantly represents the Amazons as Godlike on account of their unsurpassed military capabilities. At the same time, he also directs the readers’ attention to their mortal status. This is achieved through the accounts of Amazons’ dying in battle, as well as through the foreshadowing of Penthesilea’s death, both of which utilise animal imagery.

Throughout this chapter, I delve into the interrelationship between the predominance of animal imagery and the human-divine opposition by considering Quintus’ use of animal imagery and language to navigate these two opposing states of being. Hence, this chapter considers how individual animal manifestations reinforce the descriptions of the Amazons’ mode of combat, as their actions in war at any given moment effectively shift their position on the mortal-immortal spectrum.

In this chapter I argue that, in the Book 1 battle scenes, Quintus evokes the animal figure by presenting the animal as a mode of existence. He achieves this by exploring abstract notions of animalistic behaviour in general, rather than focusing on specific animal characters. In

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1 See Chapter 1 Section III
particular, I analyse how Quintus imbues the Amazons with general animalistic actions, attributes and tendencies, and how these traits reflect the Amazons’ characteristic mode of existence.

This chapter is divided into two sections. In Section I, I provide a systematic overview of verbs which portray the Amazons as acting akin to beasts. This foregrounds my argument that the Amazons’ animalistic mode of combat imbues them with their characteristic bellicosity. In Section II, I analyse animal imagery and actions in the Amazons’ battlefield similes. From here, I directly link their ferocious bellicosity with their Godlike presence on the battlefield. Hence, I argue that their animalistic mode of combat allows the mortal Amazons to fight in a way that makes them appear more like gods than like conventional mortals.

I. The Amazons’ Manner of Combat: Verbs Denoting Animalistic Action

Here I outline the Amazons’ predominant mode of combat, by considering all the instances in the PostHomerica Book 1 battlescenes where Penthesilea and the other Amazons are the subject of a verb of fighting. In doing so, I distinguish between verbs which evoke animalistic action, and verbs which specify exclusively human modes of combat.

In some instances, the distinction between human and animal methods of fighting is straightforward. For example, the ancient Greeks conceived of φονός (“murder”) as an act only performed by humans. As Parada states, φονός “is a notion denoting the premeditated killing of a human being by another (or several). It is generally assumed that such an act demands a human mind, i.e., its peculiar kind of intention and the ability to discern and

2 This is not a comprehensive study of all combat verbs in PostHomerica Book 1, as I exclusively examine active verbs where the Amazons are the subject, in order to closely examine the particularities of their mode of fighting. Furthermore, I only include verbs between lines 1.205 (where the Amazons enter the battlefield to fight and 1.590 (the end of Penthesilea’s one-on-one combat with Achilles), as these lines most accurately delineate the beginning and end of the battle proper.
choose; if these faculties are absent, then it becomes difficult or impossible to talk of murder when a killing occurs.” She examines an extensive range of Greek accounts of killing, demonstrating that animals, monsters and lethal devices are, on the whole, “never charged with murder”.\(^3\) Thus, whenever Quintus uses verbs in conjunction with the noun φονός, I categorise these instances as indicative of a distinctly human method of killing. Moreover, whenever Quintus describes a character as killing with the aid of manmade weapons, I categorise this as a solely human manner of combat.

At other times, I differentiated between the opposing modes of fighting by considering the dominant usage of the verb in extant literature. For this reason I categorise the verb δαίζω as a verb denoting human action, as it is used in the Iliad when Achilles, Ajax and Hector kill men in battle.\(^4\) Similarly, the verb δαμάζω is used in the writings of Homer and Xenophon to denote both the taming of domesticated animals and conquering in battle, both of which are unequivocally human acts.\(^5\)

There are also verbs whose categorisation is less immediately obvious. These are verbs which have a plethora of meanings and associations, some of which obfuscate the distinction between human and animal. I implemented a two-fold approach in interpreting and categorising these verbs. First, I considered the verbs purely on the basis of their use in Quintus’ specific sentences, rather than taking into account the entire range of possible semantic associations, as I am mostly concerned with the verbs as indicators of the Amazons’ actions in specific moments of the plot. Second, I considered the context in which these verbs consistently appear, such as the predominance of certain verbs within animal similes. For

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\(^3\) See Parada (1997) s.v. ‘Murders’

\(^4\) Il. 21.145, 4.97 and 24.393.

\(^5\) For δαμάζω as overpowering an animal, see Xen. Mem. 4.3.10 (re. man’s tendency to train all useful animals); and Il. 23.655 and Od. 4.637 (describing untrained mules). For δαμάζω as battlefield combat, see Od. 9.59 (when the Cicones attack the Achaeans) and Il. 5.646 (when Tlepolemon threatens Sarpedon).
these reasons, I believe that Quintus had animalistic action in mind when employing the verbs αἱρέω, ἐνθρώπωσκω, άίσσω, ἔπομαι, καταδάπτω, ἀφανίζω and ἔπειμι.

Finally, I examined a small subset of verbs which I felt could not be comfortably placed in either of the two categories, due to their syntactic and pragmatic ambiguity – κτείνω, κατέπεφνον and φοβέω. For these verbs I created a column dubbed ‘Ambiguous Verbs’, as they can equally denote the actions of either animals or humans, and Quintus does not provide substantial information to suggest one mode of fighting over the other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs denoting Animal Action</th>
<th>Verbs denoting Human Action</th>
<th>Ambiguous Verbs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the Amazons:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>αἱρέω (“seize/entrap”):</td>
<td>Verbs with ὀξων (“javelin”)/βουσλῆς (“axe”): πᾶλλους ἄκουνα 1.338; βουσλῆς βαριστόμοι 1.337</td>
<td>κτείνω (“kill”): 1.402</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.227; 1.230</td>
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<tr>
<td>ἐνθρώπωσκω (“leap upon”):</td>
<td>Verbs with φονός (“murder”): φόνον φέρουσι 1.207; φόνον βαλέσθαι 1.367</td>
<td>φοβέω (“terrify”): 1.402</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.316; 1.318; 1.335</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>άίσσω (“rush/dart”):</td>
<td>δαίζω (“cleave”): 1.324</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.214; 1.316; 1.354; 1.386</td>
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<td>ἔπομαι (“follow”):</td>
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<td>1.320; 1.324</td>
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<td>καταδάπτω (“devour”):</td>
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<td>1.400</td>
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<td>ἀφανίζω (“destroy”):</td>
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<td>1.401</td>
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<td>ἐπειμι (“threatening”):</td>
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<td>1.325; 1.540</td>
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<td>TOTAL: 15</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs denoting Animal Action</th>
<th>Verbs denoting Human Action</th>
<th>Ambiguous Verbs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the Achaeans:</td>
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<tr>
<td>αἱρέω (“seize/entrap”):</td>
<td>Verbs with τεῦχος (“weapon”)/ἐντὸς (“armour”)/δόρυ (“spear”): τεῦχα θέντες 1.220; ἔχον ἐντεα 1.223; ἐνίριστο δόραι 1.247 ἐλάσσας δόρι 1.256</td>
<td>κατέπεφνον (“kill”): 1.287; 1.526</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.255; 1.529; 1.531</td>
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<tr>
<td>ἐνθρώπωσκω (“leap upon”):</td>
<td>ἀποκάπτω (“cut off”): 1.261</td>
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<td>1.278</td>
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<tr>
<td>τύπτω to and βάλλω (“strike/smite”): 1.222; 1.235; 1.226</td>
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<td>ὀμοκράτω (“subdue”): 1.258; 1.291; 1.523</td>
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<td>TOTAL: 4</td>
<td>11</td>
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This animalistic manner of combat is not unique to Penthesilea, but rather is shared among the Amazons as a whole. In line 1.214 when the Amazons first enter the battlefield, as the plural verb ἀίσσουσι denotes the actions of Penthesilea and her entourage. Moreover, in line 1.230 the Amazon Derinoe is the subject of the verb ἐλε. Nonetheless, the majority of Quintus’ focus lies on Penthesilea, who herself is synecdochic of the Amazons as a whole.

As shown in the table above, the Amazons’ mode of fighting is predominantly animalistic, as the majority of their combat verbs in the Book 1 battle scenes evoke actions akin to that of predatory animals. Furthermore, even when the Amazons fight in the mode of mortal warriors, they do so with the aid of their horses. Thus, as Quintus constructs an inextricable connection between the Amazons’ weapons and horses, the animal figure comes into play even when they fight in an unequivocally human manner. On a similar note, the Amazons utilise the horse (through cavalry warfare) as a means to satiate their desire for murder, illustrating the interrelation between the horse and their distinctly human capacity for murder.

I then considered combat verbs where the Achaeans are the subject, in order to compare their dominant method of fighting with that of the Amazons. Unlike the Amazons, the Achaeans fight in a predominantly human mode, and verbs denoting animal action are used to a far lesser degree. This shows that the predominance of animalistic verbs is distinct to the Amazons’ manifestation in battle and speaks to their intrinsic evocation of the animal as a mode of existence.

Now that I have identified a trend which denotes the Amazons’ manner of combat – namely, that their fighting style is akin to the hunting practices of predatory animals – I can consider the implications of this on the Amazons’ mode of being. I do this by analysing a range of

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6 See Chapter 2 Section II A).
similes which use animalistic verbs to modify the Amazons’ actions in battle, each of which should be understood as occurring within this wider framework.

II. The Animal as a Mode of Being, as Manifested in Similes

While much scholarship has focused on similes in Homer and Quintus, few scholars have considered the role of animal similes in engendering characterisation in PostHomerica. I fill this gap by considering similes pertaining solely to the Amazons.

The predominance of similes in Homeric battle scenes has been observed by several scholars. In his commentary on the Iliad, Edwards observes that Iliadic similes “often occur during descriptions of general battle movement and when a hero enters a battle or has a success or a disaster.”\(^7\) Similarly, Quintus uses animal similes to modify the Amazons’ heroic entrance (1.207-8) and actions in battle (1.314-18, 1.335-6, 1.476-9, 1.540-3), as well as one which foreshadows disaster (1.396-402).

Furthermore, the vast majority of overt animal similes in the Iliad occur within battle scenes, as over five-sixths of Homeric similes featuring animals are situated within the battle narrative.\(^8\) A similar pattern is observable in PostHomerica Book 1, as the majority of the animal similes in this book occur during the battle scenes. For the purposes of this thesis, I focus exclusively on the similes which modify the actions of Penthesilea and the other Amazons.

II. A) Direct Animal Similes

(i): ὀήρ Similes

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\(^7\) Edwards (1991) 39  
\(^8\) Korhonen (2017) 109
I first consider the θήρ (“beast”) similes, as the first simile during the battle scenes is one which compares Penthesilea and all her Amazon attendants to beasts of prey. When the Amazons first enter the battlefield, they are viewed by the Achaeans as: “seeming like beasts of prey, which bring groan-causing slaughter to the flocks in the hills” (τοὺς μὲν δὴ θήρεσιν ἐοικότας, οἱ τ’ ἐν δρέσσι ποίμνης εἰροπόκοσι φόνων στονόεντα φέρουσι)⁹ Thus, their bestial ferocity is foregrounded from the very outset, and the relative clause οἱ τ´ ἐν δρέσσι ποίμνης εἰροπόκοσι φόνων στονόεντα φέρουσι indicates their propensity for violence and characteristic desire for bloodshed.

Furthermore, Quintus employs another θήρ simile to describe the violent actions of Penthesilea in the midst of battle:

ʿΗ ῥα καὶ Αργείοισι μέγα φρονέουσ’ ἐνόρουσε
θηρί βήγν εἰκοῖα, πολλῶν δ’ ὑπεδάμνατο λαὸν¹⁰
(“Being mindful of her great strength she leapt on the Argives like a beast of prey, forcing her way through many men.”)

Here, the use of the animalistic verb ἐνόρουσε (“she leapt”) denotes her predatory mode of assault. It is also noteworthy that Quintus explicitly states Penthesilea’s awareness of her own strength, which she clearly uses to her advantage on the battlefield, indicating her self-conscious adoption of animal traits in order to conquer her enemies.

It is significant that these similes compare the Amazons to the abstract notion of the beast, rather a specific animal. In her in-depth study on θήρ imagery in Homer and later Greek authors, Spinoula explores the strong connotations of the noun. She considers Iliadic θήρ similes which explore the beastlike inner states of Menelaus, the Achaeans and Ajax,¹¹ as well as Apollonius’ θήρ simile which describes Menelaus’ “immoderate, excessive agitation,
which is alien to human reason.”¹² Thus, she observes a literary tradition of using such similes to call attention to warriors’ moments of inhuman bellicosity, a trend which Quintus follows when describing Penthesilea.

Spinoula’s interpretation of θηρ imagery provides insight into the Amazons’ characterisation in PostHomerica. She observes that “the θηρ particularly depicts the crossing of the limits […] between human and animal. It is the master representative of the animal realm; the reflection of crude and unrefined wilderness.”¹³ This is consistent with Penthesilea’s portrayal in PostHomerica, as she blurs both the human-animal and human-God boundary through her untameable wildness.

Furthermore, by employing a θηρ simile at the very beginning of the battle scene, Quintus immediately evokes the idea of the animal, manifested not as a particular creature, but rather as a mode of existence which incorporates animal instincts, traits, actions and capabilities. This animalistic mode of being characterises Penthesilea’s actions and inner state throughout the entirety of the battle. It is this general mode of existence which Quintus reinforces and articulates through the other Amazon similes in Book 1 – both those which feature specified animals and those which do not. Thus, even when Quintus compares Penthesilea to specific, identifiable animals, the focus lies more on the animalistic traits which the Amazon possesses than on the qualities of the specific animals themselves. In this way, consistent emphasis is placed on Penthesilea’s wildness, irrationality and bloodlust, as I will now explore for the remainder of Section II.

(ii): Female Predatory Animal Similes

Quintus provides several similes which compare Penthesilea to wild, female animals. By doing so, he directs audience attention to Penthesilea’s status as a woman warrior, with military capabilities surpassing those of the Achaean men, with the sole exception of Achilles and Ajax.

This is most explicitly seen in the lioness simile, as Quintus uses the feminine noun λέαινα in place of the masculine noun λεῶν. This is striking, as the masculine form is more commonplace for lion similes, both in Homeric similes and in PostHomerica.14 This simile simultaneously evokes Penthesilea’s divine and mortal attributes, both of which are articulated through the figure of the lioness:

οὐ γὰρ πως ἀπέληγε μένος μέγα Πενθεσειλείς,
ἀλλὰ ὡς τίς τε βόεσσι κατ’ οὖρεα μακρὰ λέαινα ἑνθορή ἀξίασα βαθυσκοπέλου διὰ βήσης αἵματος ἰμείρουσα, τὸ οὐ μάλα θομόν ἵαινει ὡς τῆμος Δαναόσιν Ἀρηάς ἑνθορε κούρη15

“Penthesilea’s great might did not cease. But like some lioness stalks the long hills for bulls – darting through the rocky ravine, longing for blood which delights its heart very much – so too the warlike maid leapt on the Danaans.”

Here we see the use of animalistic verbal forms ἀξίασα (“darting”) and ἑνθορε (“she leapt”), which portray both the tenor (Penthesilea) and vehicle (the lioness) as operating within a predatory mode. With respect to Penthesilea’s mode of being, this simile functions in two ways. On the one hand, it serves to amplify her unceasing “great might” (μένος μέγα). In the Iliad, μένος is a distinguishing attribute of heroic warriors, as it “is regarded as a primary component of the warrior’s military talent” and typically “pertains to male behaviour.”16

Thus, through this simile, Quintus presents Penthesilea in the mode of a conventional

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14 Spinoula (2008) 228: Appendix
15 Quint. Smyrn. 1.314-18
16 Tsagalis (2008) Part 1 Chapter 1
Homeric warrior. At the same time, the simile is indicative of Penthesilea’s Godlike manifestation, as her extreme bloodlust – comparable to that of the animal figure – reinforces her Ἀρηιάς (“warlike”) nature, which signals her paternal relation to Ares.\(^\text{17}\)

A similar pattern is evoked in Quintus’ two leopard similes. In ancient Greek literature, leopards were strongly associated with femininity.\(^\text{18}\) Thus, Quintus’ leopard similes operate in a way consistent with the general connotations ascribed to leopards in Greek literature.

Both the comedian Aristophanes and Aristophanes Byzantinus compare leopards to uncontrollable women. This is seen explicitly in *Lysistrata*, in the quote:

οὐδὲν ἐστι θηρίον γυναικὸς ἀμαχώτερον,
οὐδὲ πῦρ, οὐδὲ δῶδ᾽ ἀναιδῆς οὐδεμία πόρδαλις.\(^\text{19}\)

“Neither a beast nor a fire is more unconquerable than a woman, and no leopard is as reckless.”

The adjective ἀναιδῆς (“reckless/shameless”) modifies both women and leopards, and the comparative adjective ἀμαχώτερον (“more unconquerable/irresistible”) denotes both incontestability in battle and irresistible beauty.\(^\text{20}\) The connection between leopards and reckless, unconquerable, irresistible women can also be seen in colloquial vernacular, as πόρδαλις (“leopard”) was one of many terms used to refer to a prostitute.\(^\text{21}\)

Similarly, when describing the necessity of subduing women for domestic purposes, Aristophanes Byzantinus compares leopards to women, as both require taming (ἡμερόσας) in order to be attainable ((GPIOτής): “a man is able to tame an unattainable leopard from infancy, just as he receives friendly love or erotic love, handling both with strength.” (πάρδαλιν ἐκ

\(^{17}\) See Chapter I Section I.
\(^{18}\) See Spinoula (2000) 170-1
\(^{19}\) Ar. Lys. 1014-5
\(^{20}\) See LSJ s.v. ἀμαχὸς
\(^{21}\) Kapparis (2011) 240
Furthermore, as Spinoula points out, all Quintus’ leopard similes throughout *PostHomerica* modify the actions of female characters – Penthesilea (1.540-4), the Trojan Women (3.201-3) and Cassandra (12.530-3). Thus, Quintus clearly plays into the larger literary trend of portraying strong female characters as imbuing leopardine traits.

With these connotations of the leopard in mind, I now outline how Penthesilea’s leopard similes not only portray her as unconquerable and irresistible, but they also exemplify her bellicosity on the battlefield. Thus, I argue that the animal manifestation reinforces her divine attributes.

Quintus evokes leopard imagery when describing the destruction Penthesilea brings upon the Achaeans in the midst of battle:

"Still Penthesilea forced her way through the people, and the Achaeans trembled. There was not a refuge for them from her groan-causing feet of death. But like bleating goats are torn by the jaws of a leopard, in such a way they were killed."

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22 Ar. Byz. 2.258
23 Spinoula (2000) 170. She acknowledges the leopard simile in lines 1.476-80 only in a footnote, as she considers it “an indirect reference to Penthesilea”, presumably because the leopard simile modifies the death of the Achaeans rather than the actions of a character. Nonetheless, I have chosen to include the simile in my discussion, as it is a battle simile which deliberately evokes animal imagery to illustrate Penthesilea’s mode of combat.
24 Quint. Smyrn. 1.476-9
By comparing the Achaeans to “bleating goats” (μηκάδες αἶγες) that are brutally killed by a leopard, Quintus’ image of animal-on-animal violence represents the Amazon’s unparalleled ferocity.

As well as evoking animal-like action, leopard imagery alludes to Penthesilea’s animalistic intentions. This is apparent when she approaches Achilles and Ajax “like a mischievous leopard leaping in the thicket, having a destructive heart” (ἡμεῖς λυγρῆ πόρδαλις ἐν ξυλόχοισιν ὄλεθριον ἦτορ ἔχουσα). Here, the simile provides insight into her all-pervasive desire for war, encapsulated by the striking reference to her ὀλέθριον ἦτορ (“destructive heart”).

Overall, these three similes – by evoking both the actions and intentions of predatory feminine animals – present Penthesilea as occupying an animalistic mode of being which parallels her status as an Amazonian woman warrior. It is clear that she uses this to her advantage in battle, allowing her to fight in a way that makes her appear divine and invincible.

(iii): Non-predatory Animal Simile

There is a striking exception to the predatory animal imagery, namely, the simile in which Penthesilea is compared to a young heifer:

ώς δ´ ὀπόθεν ἐρσήντος ἕσω κήποιο θοροῦσα
ποίης ἐλδομένη θυμηδέος εἰαρι πόρτις
ἀνέρος οὐ παρεόντος ἐπέσσυται ἄλλοθεν ἄλλη
σινομένη φυτά πάντα νέον μάλα τηλεθόντα,
καὶ τὰ μὲν ὃρ κατέδαιπνε, τὰ δ´ ἐν ποσίν
ἡμάλδυνεν: ὃς ὅρ Ἀχαιῶν νίας ἐπεσσυμένη καθ´ ὀμίλον

Quint. Smyrn. 1.543
κούρη Ἐνυαλίη τούς μὲν κτάνε, τούς δ᾽ ἐφόβησε.  

“Like a young heifer – when leaping towards a dewy garden, longing for well-pleasing grass when no man is nearby – is excited, treading its youthful, flourishing plants, devouring and destroying with her feet. In this way the warrior maiden rushed through the crowd of Achaeans, killing some and putting others to flight.”

This image is jarring because it compares Penthesilea to a sacrificial animal, foreshadowing her death at the hands of Achilles. As Scheijnen points out, the non-predatory animal simile is indicative of the radical change in her mode of being which takes place towards the conclusion of Book 1, as the heifer simile provides “a clear view of the future, in which she will mainly serve as prey for Achilles.”

This foreshadowing is achieved in two ways, both of which rely on Quintus’ utilisation of animal imagery. On the one hand, it evokes the Iliadic simile where Patroclus’ dead body is compared to that of a calf, as Menelaus “was pacing around him like a wailing mother bearing her first-born paces, standing around her calf” (ἂμφι δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ αὐτῷ βαῦν᾽ ὥς τις περὶ πόρτακι μήτηρ πρωτότοκος κινυρή). This intratextual comparison also foreshadows Achilles’ extreme grief immediately after Penthesilea’s death, as Quintus compares his mourning for Penthesilea and for Patroclus, both of whom are equated with vulnerable calves in battle.

On the other hand, the intertextual detail within Quintus’ simile points towards the manner of Penthesilea’s death. The young heifer is portrayed as acting within a destructive mode which is indicative of Penthesilea’s actions in battle, expressed through the accumulation of verbal forms σινυμένη (“treading”), κατέδαψε (“she devoured”), ἠμάλδυνε (“she destroyed”), ἐπεςομένη (“rushing”) and κτάνε (“she killed”). However, as Scheijnen outlines, the heifer

26 Quint. Smyrn. 1.396-402  
27 Fratantuono (2016) 15  
28 Scheijnen (2018) 57  
29 II. 17.4-5
is only able to enact such rampant destruction in the absence of the gardener, indicated by the temporal participle clause ἀνέρος οὐ παρεόντος (“when no man is nearby”). If we take the gardener to represent Achilles and Ajax, as Scheijnen does, then the simile indicates that Penthesilea’s demise will take place once the two skilled male warriors join the battle.\(^{30}\) Furthermore, the impulsive and yet innocent actions of the heifer may allude to Penthesilea’s youth, while the trodden flower imagery likely foreshadows the “perverted defloration” that occurs in the moment of her death.\(^{31}\)

In this way, the heifer simile functions as a striking subversion of all other similes denoting Penthesilea’s actions during battle. As the simile is indicative of her death in battle, we see here that the figure of the sacrificial animal is evoked in order to represent her mortal nature. It is fitting that Quintus provides only one simile where the animal highlights Penthesilea’s mortality, compared to the numerous animal similes emphasising her Godlike traits. This is in line with his portrayal of Penthesilea throughout the entirety of Book 1, as she is portrayed as predominantly divine right up until her death scene, where her mortality is fully expressed for the first time.

**II. B) Non-animal Similes**

I will now consider the similes which do not compare Penthesilea to specific animals, but which nonetheless portray her as acting within a distinctly animalistic mode. This is predominantly expressed through the use of verbs which denote animal-like action. I explore the flame simile, wave simile and storm simile in turn, highlighting how each one imbues Penthesilea with animal traits and qualities in unique ways. I also outline how this animal-

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\(^{30}\) Scheijnen (2018) 59

\(^{31}\) See Chapter 2 Section II B)
like mode of behaviour speaks to her Godlike presence on the battlefield, a connection which Quintus makes explicit through the observations of both the Trojans and Achaeans.

Immediately after Quintus compares Penthesilea and her attendants to beasts of prey, he focuses on the unsurpassed strength of Queen Penthesilea herself. In doing so, he employs a simile comparing her to a ravenous fire: “she was raging, like a rush of fire which scorches bushes, being urged on by the wind” (τὴν δὲ πυρὸς ῥυπῆ ἐναλίγκιον, ἥ τ’ ἐπὶ θάμνοις μαίνεται ἄζαλέοσιν ἐπειγομένου ἀνέμου).³²

Although the image of the animal is not explicitly evoked here, the reference to her rage (μαίνεται) denotes inhuman ferocity. The proximity of this simile to the beast simile is also significant, as it indicates that this intense rage is a vestige of her bestial nature. At the same time, the verb μαίνεσθαι portrays Penthesilea as acting in the mode of a Homeric warrior. Tsagalis observes that, in the Iliad, the verb is used almost exclusively in military contexts, signifying “the fighting frenzy warriors display during the havoc of battle.”³³ Homer also uses the verb to modify the rage felt by Achilles, the quintessential Iliadic warrior.³⁴ Thus, by embracing a bestial mode of being, Penthesilea is able to challenge her fury in order to fight in a manner befitting a Homeric warrior, making her a worthy adversary for Achilles in PostHomerica.

Furthermore, the Argives –having just observed the Amazons appearing like beasts (Θήρεσιν ἔοικότας) and rushing fire (πυρὸς ῥυπῆ ἐναλίγκιον) – comment on their divinely inspired bellicosity. An Achaean states:

νῦν δ’ ἄφαρ ἁδύσομενοι λιλαιόμενοι μέγα χάρμης.
καὶ νῦ τις ἐν μέσοσιν ἐποτρύνει πονέεσθαι'

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³² Quint. Smyrn. 1.209-10  
³⁴ Il. 6.101
φαίψ κεν θεόν ἔμμεν, ἐπεὶ μέγα μηδέται ἔργον

“Now straightaway they are darting, earnestly desiring great battle lust. And now someone in the middle is urging them to toil. You could say she is a God, since she contrives great deeds.”

The verb ἄξισσοισι (“darting”) further reinforces the idea of animalistic fervour encapsulated in the two preceding similes. The potential optative clause φαίψ κεν θεόν ἔμμεν (“you could say she is a God”) clearly indicates Penthesilea’s godlike manifestation, while the protasis ἐπεὶ μέγα μηδέται ἔργον (“since she contrives great deeds”) links this divine representation to her martial proficiency.  

Thus, by harnessing animal-like rage, Penthesilea is able to act in a Godlike mode.

As well as possessing animal-like rage, Penthesilea is endowed with animalistic aggression. This is apparent in the wave simile:

ἡ δ’ ἐπετ’ ἧτε κύμα βαρυγδούποιο θαλάσσης
νῆσειν ὥκείσιν, δό’ ἱστία λευκὰ πετάσσῃ
οὖρος ἐπειγόμενος, βοώσι δὲ πάντοθεν ἁκραί
πόντου ἐρευγομένου ποτὶ χθονὸς ἥνα μακρήν.

δὸς ἥ γ’ ἐσπομένη Δαναόν ἐδάξει φάλαγγας

“She followed [the fleeing Argives] like a loud-thundering wave of the sea [follows] a swift ship, whose white sails are weighed down by the wind, when the earth roars from every side in the direction of the long shore. Following the Danaans in this way, she cleaved the battle-line.”

Once again, although the animal does not literally feature in this simile, Penthesilea is nonetheless depicted as adopting an animalistic mode of behaviour. This can be seen through the repetition of the verb ἐπομαί (“to follow”), appearing both as a finite verb (ἐπετ’) and in

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35 Quint. Smyrn. 1.214-16
36 For ἔργον denoting deeds of war, see ll. 2.238; 6.552; and 4.539 and Od. 12.116.
37 Quint. Smyrn. 1.320-4
participle form (ἐσπομένη). This verbal repetition occurs in both the first and last lines of the simile, thus, it functions as a framing device.

In this way, Penthesilea’s fervour for war, speed, strength and agility are brought to the fore. As these attributes are compared to the actions of a thundering wave, Quintus once again articulates that her adeptness and military precision exceed that of ordinary mortals. An implicit animal image is also evoked, as her actions mimic those of a predator stalking their prey.

It is also noteworthy that Penthesilea alternates between animalistic and human modes of combat, as she both stalks and cleaves (ἐδάω) her way through the Argive ranks. Nonetheless, all her actions – whether conventionally animalistic or human – are imbued with a rage and aggression so great that it taps into a bestial mode of existence, making the warrior Queen such a formidable threat.

Quintus’ final non-animal simile makes it explicitly clear that Penthesilea’s battle prowess not only presents her as a skilled and worthy warrior, but rather her bellicosity is so pronounced that it makes her seem Godlike. This is evident through the storm simile and the subsequent comment made by a Trojan onlooker:

ὡς ἴδε Πενθεσίλειαν ἀνὰ στρατὸν ἄσσουσαν
λαίλαπι κυανῇ ἐναλίγκιον [...] ἔσπευν·
ὁ φίλοι, ὡς ἀναφανδόν ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ εἰλήλουθε
σήμερον ἄθανάτων τις, ἰν’ Ἀργείοισι μάχηται38

“Beholding Penthesilea darting through the army like a furious storm [...] he said ‘Friends, before all our eyes one of the immortals came down from heaven today, in order to fight the Argives.”

38 Quint. Smyrn. 1.354-9
Here again Quintus employs a participle implying animal-like action: ἀῖσσουσαν (“darting”), as well as an adjective denoting ferocity: λαίλαπι (“furious’’). The concessive participle ἰδε (“beholding”) forges an inextricable link between Penthesilea’s actions in battle and her divine nature, as it is directly because of her military prowess that she is perceived as ἀθανάτων τις (“one of the immortals”).

Thus, this simile – in conjunction with the other animal and non-animal similes – present Penthesilea as a mortal woman who has harnessed animal instincts, traits and qualities in a way that makes her Godlike. This Godlike mode of behaviour in battle cannot be separated from her divine lineage as the daughter of Ares, as I considered in Chapter 1 Section I. Hence, similes are a pertinent way in which the animal figure is manifested as a mediator between Penthesilea’s human and divine attributes, since the animal as a third mode of existence imbues the mortal warrior woman with Godlike bellicosity.

**Conclusion**

By considering his grammatical constructions of battle scenes, I have further examined Quintus’ delineation of Amazonian mortality, bestiality and immortality. From my analysis of Quintus’ use of verbs and similes, I conclude that he portrays the Amazons’ military prowess as a facet of their unique characterisation, and that this proficiency in battle is articulated through their evocation of an animalistic mode of being when they engage in combat. This stands as contrast to the constructed position of the Argives, who fight in a predominantly human manner, and whom Quintus portrays as warrior men existing within a purely mortal realm. Thus, it is precisely this bestial, unrefined and uncivilised behaviour which makes the Amazons stand out from the mortals around them. Furthermore, Quintus repeatedly links this animalistic action to the Amazons’ divine traits, as it closely interrelates
with the divinely inspired strength and military fervour which they possess as Ἄρεως θυγατέρες.

Moreover, as long as the Amazons tap into the mode of the predatory animal they are perceived by mortals (Trojans and Achaeans) as occupying a divine mode of existence. However, as soon as the connection between the Amazon and the predatory beast is severed, their divine traits are no longer foregrounded and their mortal condition is brought to the fore. This is apparent when Penthesilea is compared to a sacrificial animal, which foreshadows her ultimate demise at the hands of Achilles. I explore a similar idea throughout Chapter 4, where I argue that Penthesilea’s separation from her horse also foregrounds her mortality.

Finally, this chapter has at times adopted an inverse methodology from Chapter 1, as here I examine instances where the Amazons are subjects rather than objects of bellicose verbs. In Chapter 1 Section III I examined descriptions of the Amazons’ deaths in PostHomerica with the Achaeans as the subject of the verb of killing and the Amazons as the object, from which I concluded that the Amazons’ deaths in battle (and their comparisons to slaughtered animals) foregrounds their mortality. In this chapter, I have argued that when the Amazons are the subjects of such verbs, they take on the role of predatory animal and they bring death upon the Achaeans. These two observations complement each other, as it is evident that although the Amazons die like mortals, they fight like gods. The use of animal similes in both instances reinforces my overall argument that the animal figure speaks to both their mortal and divine attributes, as they are portrayed as butchered animals when they die (foregrounding their mortality) and as beasts of prey when they fight (foregrounding their divinity).
Chapter Four: The Animal as Mediator in Penthesilea’s Death Scene

There are two fundamental ways in which the manifestation of the animal figure in Penthesilea’s death scene differs from the animal manifestations in the battle scenes. For one, I have outlined that the battle scenes predominantly feature the animal by evoking the θήρ as a mode of existence. By contrast, in the death scene Quintus focuses less on the animal as an abstract mode of being. Rather, he directly features the animal through the character of Penthesilea’s horse, which functions as a concrete manifestation of the animal figure.

Furthermore, in the battle scenes Quintus portrays the interconnectedness of Amazons and their animal counterparts, with the Amazons’ proficiency in battle being inseparable from their animalistic nature. This is radically different to the passages I now consider where Penthesilea is denied propinquity to any form of animal, through her forced separation from the horse. This chapter thus explores the ontological implications of the separation between horse and rider on the Amazon’s state of being.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the tension between Penthesilea’s mortal and immortal attributes is brought to the fore during her death scene and the subsequent descriptions of her corpse both immediately after death and during her funeral. In this chapter, I seek to further this discussion by highlighting the vital role that the horse plays as a key character in these scenes, both during her death and its immediate aftermath, as well as in Penthesilea’s funeral. Moreover, through this chapter explores the ways in which the horse figure appeals to her divine traits at times and her mortal state at others, hence mediating between Penthesilea’s opposing modes of existence.

Accordingly, this chapter is structured as follows. Section I explores the conditions leading up to Penthesilea’s death. I show that the Amazons’ death does not occur until after the Amazon-animal connection breaks down, thus arguing that the separation from horse foregrounds the Amazons’ mortality. I continue this analysis in Section II by further
exploring the precise manner of Penthesilea’s death and its aftermath, focusing predominantly on the symbiotic relationship between horse and rider. Here I argue that the horses’ death parallels Penthesilea’s human-divine tension, as both beings are imbued with predominantly divine traits up until their death. I also highlight that the interrelation between animal imagery and death imagery reinforces Penthesilea’s mortality. Finally, in Section III I explore the role of the horse in her funeral. Here I elaborate upon the horses’ dual function, as it both reiterates her Godlike attributes while simultaneously reiterating her mortal condition.

Although this chapter focuses exclusively on the character of Penthesilea, I have shown in Chapter 1 Section III that artistic representations of Amazon deaths conventionally portray the wounded or dying Amazon as being separate from her horse. Thus, I posit that Quintus is writing his text in accordance with wider representations of dying Amazons, treating Penthesilea’s manner of death in a manner consistent with dominant mythological trends. In this way, I argue that Penthesilea’s death scene is capable of illuminating pertinent points relating to wider Amazon ontology, as Quintus’ portrayal of her death speaks to the mortal-immortal tension shared by the entire mythic γένος.

I. Penthesilea’s Mortality Resulting from Separation from Horse

In this section, I compare the manner and aftermath of Achilles’ two strikes towards Penthesilea, concluding that Penthesilea’s mortality is a direct result of her separation from her horse.

A) The (first) near-fatal blow

Penthesilea suffers her first near-fatal strike when – with the aid of his “long sword crafted by Cheiron” (δόρυ μακρὸν ὑπὲρ Ἀχιλλῆαν πονηθεῖν)¹ – Achilles “suddenly wounded the warlike

¹ Quint. Smyrn. 1.593
Penthesilea above her right breast” (αἰσα ὀ̄ ὑπὲρ μαζῷον δαίφρονα Πενθεσίλειαν ὀ̄τασε̄ δεξιτεροίο). The subsequent descriptors are strongly suggestive of death:

μέλαν δὲ οἱ ἔρρεεν αἷμα
ἐσσυμένως ἢ δ’ εἴθαρ ὑπεκλάσθη μελέσσιν
ἐκ δ’ ἐβάλεν χειρός πέλεκουν μέγαν ἀμφὶ δὲ οἱ νῦς
ὁφθαλμοὺς ἤχλυσε καὶ ἐς φρένα δῦσαν ἀνίαι.

“Dark blood was gushing furiously. All at once the strength of her limbs was broken. She threw the great axe from her hand. Around her night [i.e darkness] darkened her eyes, and distress sunk onto her spirit.”

The images of bodily decay strongly mirror Quintus’ prior descriptions of Amazons in the moment of dying. In particular, the references to her αἷμα (“blood”), μελέσσιν (“limbs”), χειρός (“hand”), ὁφθαλμοὺς (“eyes”) and φρένα (“spirit/heart/mind”) at first appear to allude to physical and metaphysical decomposition, and the emotive verbs encourage the reader to envision Penthesilea’s demise.

However, Penthesilea’s resilience despite her war wound is emphasised by the emphatic adversative ἀλλὰ καὶ in the following line: “yet even so she was breathing and she saw the hostile man [Achilles] now being about to drag her from her swift horse” (ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁς ἄμπνυε καὶ εἰσίδε δήμον ἀνδρά ἡδη μιν μέλλοντα καθελκέμεν ὡκέος ὢπου). The reference to her ὡκέος ὢπου (“swift horse”) creates a parallel between the horse’s speed and Penthesilea’s ability to skim through battle, highlighting the rider’s dependence on the horse.

Crucially, as long as Penthesilea is physically and symbolically connected to the animal, she remains alive despite being pierced near the heart. When she sees Achilles attempting to forcibly separate her from her horse, she contemplates supplication in the hopes that he will

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2 Quint. Smyrn. 1.594-5
3 Quint. Smyrn. 1.595-8
4 See Chapter 1 Section III
5 Quint. Smyrn. 1.599-600
6 Chapter 1 Section II A)
spare her. Her thought process indicates her awareness of her impending mortality, encapsulated by the participle phrase “desiring to escape” (ἐλεδομένη περ ὠλοξαί) which starkly contrasts her previous bellicose desires, emphasising her more pressing desire to escape a fatal situation. In this way, the grammatical construction which previously ascribed the Amazons with their divinely inspired warlike nature is now subverted to illustrate Penthesilea’s opposing mode of being, namely, her mortality.

Overall, when Achilles is yet to sever the connection between Penthesilea and her horse, she remains alive despite sustaining severe wounds. Furthermore, when Achilles is about to dismount her, her fear of dying is most palpable.

**B) The (second) fatal blow**

Penthesilea’s ultimate demise only occurs when Achilles strikes her a second time. Crucially, in this second strike, Achilles’ spear passes through the horse before then impaling Penthesilea.

Quintus creates a sense of immediacy when describing the death of Penthesilea’s horse, as is evident by the adverb ἄφαρ in the line “straightaway he [Achilles] pierced the body of her storm-footed horse.” (οἱ ἄφαρ συνέπειρεν ἄλλοποδος δέμας ἵππου). Again, the horse is granted an epithet relating to speed - ἄλλοποδος (“storm-footed”) – which encapsulates its proficiency in war and propensity for violence.

The horses’ fatal spearing is followed by an extended simile modifying the spears’ movement -comparing it to both a “spit” (ὀβελός) used to pierce and roast animal flesh, and to a “javelin” (ἀκόντα) piercing a “deer” (ἔλαφος). In both cases animal imagery is used, as

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7 Quint. Smyrn. 1.609
8 See Chapter 1 Section I, where I argue that the Amazons “desiring groan-causing war” (στονόσντος ἐλεδομένη πολέμου) is a vestige of their divine lineage as Ares’ daughters.
9 Quint. Smyrn. 1.612
10 Quint. Smyrn. 1.613-18
Quintus conflates the death of the horse (and, by extension, the death of Penthesilea) with other instances of spear-like objects bringing destruction upon animals. In this way, the mortality of hunted animals is brought to the fore, a crucial idea which Quintus then transfers onto the figures of Penthesilea and her horse. As Lovatt observes, the two vehicles in this simile “make [Penthesilea] the prey pursued and slaughtered” so that we see the “huntress become hunted.”

Thus, this simile inverts Quintus’ previous similes where Penthesilea’s comparisons to predatory animals functioned as a reflection of her divine lineage. Consequently, when Penthesilea is portrayed not as predator but as prey, her mortal state is brought to the fore.

Furthermore, when describing Penthesilea’s fatal blow, Quintus explicitly states that the spear passes first through the horse before then killing Penthesilea: “his spear went straight through the very beautiful horse and pierced Penthesilea” (Πενθεσίλειαν ὁ μῶς περικαλλέτι ἵππῳ ἀντικρύ διώμησεν ὑπ’ ἔγχεϊ). Here, the animal manifestation alludes simultaneously to Penthesilea’s mortal and immortal aspects, achieved through the inextricable link that Quintus portrays between horse and rider. On the one hand, the reference to the “very beautiful horse” (περικαλλέτι ἵππῳ) mirrors the numerous descriptions of Penthesilea’s divine beauty. On the other hand, as the horse is an unequivocally mortal creature, its susceptibility to death is subsumed by Penthesilea. In this way, the death of the animal echoes Penthesilea’s plight, as both figures are portrayed as occupying Godlike beauty and bellicosity, and yet, neither character is wholly divine.

Finally, Quintus emphasises the immediacy with which Penthesilea dies, once her horse is first killed: “straightaway she was made acquainted with dust and death” (ὅκα μίγη κονίῃ καὶ
Hence – in contrast to the more elaborate death imagery after her first non-fatal blow – it is clear that Penthesilea’s mortality is fully realised the instant that her deep symbolic link to her horse is severed.

II. ἄμφω δ᾽ ἁσπαίρεσκον ὑφ᾽ ἐν δόρυ δημωθέντες: the Simultaneous Death of Horse and Rider

As well as describing their joint death, Quintus reiterates the symbiotic relationship between horse and rider when Penthesilea falls from her horse; once she has fallen; and again when Achilles removes the spear from their dying bodies.

In Section A) I consider both the description of Penthesilea falling from the horse (her death simile) and the scene where Achilles removes the weapon from their bodies. Here, I wish to situate the reference to her περικαλλέι ἱππῳ alongside Quintus’ extended reference to Penthesilea’s beauty during her death simile. I will also examine the pathos generated towards the two dying figures when Achilles interacts with them. These two observations together lead me to argue that the death of the horse functions as a microcosm not only of Penthesilea’s plight, but also of the distinct mode of existence embodied by the Amazons throughout PostHomerica Book One.

In Section B) I analyse Quintus’ description of the intertwined dying bodies of the Amazon and horse, considering how the interrelationship between animal imagery and death imagery speaks to the coexistence of Penthesilea’s mortal and divine attributes.

A) The joint death as microcosm for Amazons’ mortal-immortal tension

The simultaneous death of Penthesilea and her horse is framed in a way which engenders great pathos. The tragedy of Penthesilea’s demise is brought to the fore during her death

15 Quint. Smyrn. 1.621
simile, where Quintus once again makes explicit reference to her separation from the horse. Here, the tenor is Penthesilea as she falls from her horse, and the vehicle is a falling tree:

ἐλάτη κλασθέσα βίη κρυερών Βορέαω, ἤν τέ ποι αἰτιοτάτην ἀνά τ’ ἄγκεα μακρὰ καὶ ὑλὴν, οἰ αὐτῇ μέγ’ ἄγαλμα, τρέφει παρὰ πιθακι γαία: τοῦ Ἑνθεσίλεια κατ᾽ ὡκέος ἤρπεν ἵππον

“Like a pine tree having been broken by the force of icy Boreas, which doubtless is the tallest throughout a wood and mountain glen, a great delight to the earth itself, which nourished it beside a spring. In such a way Penthesilea fell down from her swift horse.”

Quintus provides considerable detail when describing both the manner of her death, as well as her Godlike mode of existence even in her moment of dying. Her horse features explicitly in this simile, as Quintus reinforces the notion that her death occurs in conjunction with her forced dismounting.

Much like how Quintus mentions the great beauty of her horse just as it dies, this simile contains several images which allude to Penthesilea’s exquisite physical form. Kauffman identifies that Penthesilea’s beauty is suggested through the tree as an ἄγαλμα as well as its placement in a pastoral setting, thus arguing that the simile depicts Penthesilea as “beautiful, heroic and tragic.” Moreover, I posit that the comparative adjective alludes to Penthesilea’s physical appearance, as – just like the pine tree is taller than those around it – her beauty exceeds that of regular mortals, even that of her Amazon attendants. In this way, the emphasis on Penthesilea’s appearance not only strengthens the pathos engendered by her death, but also creates a further parallel between horse and rider in their shared moments of dying.

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16 Quint. Smyrn. 1.624-8
17 ἄγαλμα denotes a “pleasing gift for the gods”, such as a statue or sacrifice (LSJ s.v. ἄγαλμα)
18 Kauffman (2015) 159
Pathos is further generated when Achilles beholds their dying bodies with great regret: 

μελίην ἐξείρυσε Πηλέος υἱὸς ὀκέος ἐξ ἵππου καὶ αἴνης Πενθεσειλῆς: ἄμφω δ᾽ ἀσπαίρεσκον ὑφ᾽ ἐν δόρυ δημοθέντες

“The son of Peleus drew his ashen spear out of the horse and grim Penthesilea, and both [Penthesilea and her horse] were gasping, having been slain by one spear.”

The adjective ἄμφω (“both”) emphasises the simultaneity of their death, as does the participle phrase ὑφ᾽ ἐν δόρυ δημοθέντες (“having been slain by one spear”), where the numeral further encapsulates the destruction of two beings by one weapon. Furthermore, the plural verb ἀσπαίρεσκον, which denotes the two characters jointly gasping their final breaths, is used in the Iliad when Trojan warriors are speared in battle. Hence, Quintus presents the death of both Penthesilea and her horse in heroic terms.

Overall, the horse’s remarkable beauty and its tragic death, reinforced through the simultaneous nature of the characters’ shared death, illustrates that the horse both functions as a marker of Penthesilea’s mortality and also parallels her divine attributes. In this way, I argue that the death of Penthesilea’s horse functions as a microcosm of the Amazons’ mode of existence throughout PostHomerica Book One. This is apparent through the parallel between Penthesilea and her horse, as well as the synecdochic relationship between Penthesilea and the other Amazons. As I have explored here, both Penthesilea and the horse are portrayed as beautiful, strong and bellicose beings whose subjection to death is jarring and evokes great pathos. In this way, the tension between the Amazons’ mortal and divine modes of existence is articulated through the plights of both Penthesilea and her horse.

B) Animal imagery and death imagery reinforcing Penthesilea’s mode of being

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19 Quint. Smyrn. 1.654-6
20 I. 13.573 (where Meriones spears Adamas) and II. 13.443 (where Idomeneus spears Alcathous).
In Chapter I subsection IV B), I argued that the incongruity of divine descriptors after Penthesilea’s death points towards the interplay of divine and human attributes, a mode of being which characterises the Amazons. Here I consider a similar instance, whereby an implicit reference allusion to her divinity is directly juxtaposed with an explicit image of her death.

When describing her corpse, Quintus notes with overtones of awe that “shame did not disfigure her noble form” (οὐδὲ οἱ αἰδῶς ἔσχονεν δέμας ἡ). This is followed by a macabre description of Penthesilea’s fallen body, where the interrelationship of death imagery and animal imagery is especially pertinent: “she was stretched upon her stomach, quivering on the spear, lying against her swift horse” (τάθη δ᾽ ἐπὶ νηδύα μακρῷ διωρὶ περισπαίρουσα, θοῦ δ᾽ ἐπεκέκλιτο ἵππῳ). Here, the grotesque manner of her death is alluded to through the participle περισπαίρουσα (“quivering”), denoting her bodily contortions. The brutality of their simultaneous death is conveyed through the joint image of the intertwined, dying forms of Penthesilea and her “swift horse” (θοῦ ἵππῳ).

In this way, the graphic and emotive description of her death appears to immediately undercut Quintus’ description of her “noble form” (δέμας ἡ), which suggests that the tension between Penthesilea’s mortal and divine modes of being is not always easily resolved in the mind of the reader. Nonetheless, it is apparent that the character of the horse plays a role in affecting this opposition, as Quintus uses the interconnectedness of Penthesilea and her horse to speak to her position on the human-divine spectrum.

21 Quint. Smyrn. 1.622-3
22 Quint. Smyrn. 1.623-4
This physical interconnectedness of the two beings is exemplified through the verbal form ἐπεκέκλιτο (“lying against”), illustrating that just as the two characters were united in life, so too are they now in death.

Thus, we now see a dramatic reversal in what Penthesilea stands to gain from her symbiotic relationship with her horse. When the two are interpersonally connected in life, Penthesilea’s martial prowess and proficiency is strengthened, ultimately benefitting her. In stark contrast, when the horse is killed, so too is Penthesilea, and the two share in the grim aftermath of death together.

III. The Role of the Horse in Amazonian Funerary Practices

Penthesilea’s funeral is a fitting conclusion for *PostHomerica* Book One as it reinforces her heroic status, portraying Penthesilea as both a “queen” (βασιλείη) and “beloved daughter” (θύγατρα φίλην). Most pertinent to my analysis here is the ways in which the horse features in her funeral scene, and how it reinforces both her divine and mortal attributes. The dual function of the horse as both a marker of Penthesilea’s mortality and a symbol of her divine bellicosity is evident. On the one hand, the cremated horse stands in as a symbolic reminder of Penthesilea’s military prowess, thus reminding the reader of Quintus’ previous allusions to her divine lineage. On the other hand, the inextricable connection between Penthesilea and her horse – reiterated through the specific ritual funerary acts – furthers the interrelation between horse and death imagery.

In striving for a reverential way to bury the fallen Amazon warrior, Priam opts to conduct a joint burial whereby Penthesilea and her horse are inhumed together:

ο̣ γάρ φρεσίν ἦσι μενοῖνα
κούρην ὄβριμόθυμον ὁμῶς τεύχεσσι καὶ Ἡπεω

23 Quint. Smyrn. 1.792 and 1.800
ἐς μέγα σήμα βαλέσθαι ἀφνειοῦ Λαομέδοντος

“For he [Priam] was desiring eagerly in his heart to place the strong-of-spirit maid jointly with her weapons and her horse into the great tomb of wealthy Laomedon.”

The adverb ὅμοις (“jointly/ equally with”) succinctly conlates the horse (Ἂπωρ) and weaponry (τεύχεσσι) as interconnected symbols of martial prowess. It also conflates Penthesilea herself with this aforementioned bellicosity, indicating that the Amazon is inseparable from her horse and weapons. In this way, the choice of grave goods, among which is the horse itself, highlights the Trojans’ awareness of the horse as a symbolic marker of Penthesilea’s proficiency in battle.

Given the evocation of Penthesilea’s war-like nature, it is unsurprising that Quintus makes a direct reference to Ares, as he recounts the Trojans “bringing gifts for Ares and for Penthesilea herself” (ἦρα φέροντες Ἄρη καὶ αὐτῇ Πενθεσιλείη). In this way, we see an explicit reiteration of Penthesilea’s divine lineage, which is represented through the joint burial of horse and rider and the dedication of weaponry.

With that being said, I now consider how the presence of the horse in Penthesilea’s funerary scene reinforces Quintus’ depiction of her mortality. There are two ritual actions during her funeral which mirror the nature of her simultaneous death with her horse.

First, as the two figures are placed together on the pyre, they are both consumed by “Hephaistos’ swift might, the deadly flame” (θοὸν μένος Ἦφαιστοι, φλοξ ὀλοῖ). Thus, the

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24 Quint. Smyrn. 1.786-9
25 Archaeological evidence from the Black Sea region shows that various groups of steppe nomads engaged in similar funerary practices. See Mayor (2016) 63-82 for the burial of warriors alongside horses and weaponry in Scythian tombs.
26 Quint. Smyrn. 1.803
27 Quint. Smyrn. 1.793-4
two partake in a second (symbolic) joint death, as their joint cremation is portrayed as a final symbolic act of bodily destruction.

After this, the Trojans “gathered their bones […] placed them in a casket, and threw around them from above the fat of a cow” (ὅστέα δ’ ἄλλεξαντες […] καὶ ἐς κούλην χηλὸν θέσαν· ἁμφὶ δ’ ἄρ’ αὐτὸῖς πίονα δημὸν ὑπερθε βάλον βοῦς).28 This mirrors the funerary rites in Homer’s description of Hectors’ and Patroclus’ burials, as in both instances the mourners gather their bones before placing them in a casket with perfumed oil and the fat of a heifer.29 In Penthesilea’s case, her bones are intertwined with those of her horse. In this way, just as the two experienced death together, they are also united in death’s aftermath, sharing the same casket for eternity.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 concluded that, as long as the Amazons are connected to an animalistic mode of existence, they predominantly act within a divine mode. By contrast, this chapter concludes the inverse: when Amazons are physically separated from the horse their mortal attributes are brought to the fore.

While the manifestation of the horse during Penthesilea’s death and funeral primarily speaks to her mortality, it also reinforces her divine attributes. On the one hand, the horses’ death parallels (and results in) Penthesilea’s death, the ultimate expression of her mortal nature. On the other hand, the consistent descriptions of the horses’ beauty parallel Quintus’ descriptions of Penthesilea’s exquisite Godlike beauty. Through parallelism, the descriptions of the horse

28 Quint. Smyrn. 1.796-798
29 See Lang (1906) Ch. 6. See also II. 23.285 and 24.795 for these rites during Patroclus’ and Hectors’ funerals respectively.
strengthen the divine descriptors used for Penthesilea after her death, thus highlighting the complex interrelation between her mortal and immortal attributes.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{30} See Ch. 1 Subsection \textit{IV}.
Conclusion

This thesis examined Amazon ontology by exploring their overlapping human, divine and animal ontologies. By drawing upon an extensive range of visual and written sources, I identified pertinent ways in which the Amazons are characterised by each of these three modes of existence. I then applied my observations specifically to PostHomerica, as Quintus’ comprehensive account of Penthesilea and her Amazon attendants enabled me to analyse the interrelationship between these three ontologies.

I adopted a Lévi-Strauss inspired structural analysis approach, arguing that the mythic figures exemplify a human-divine binary opposition. I then argued that this opposition is mediated through the animal figure, as I analysed animal manifestations in PostHomerica which speak simultaneously to the Amazons’ mortal and immortal attributes.

Chapter 1 outlined the Amazons’ salient divine attributes (divine lineage, exquisite physical form and Godlike bellicosity) and human attributes (mortality). I then illustrated that Quintus’ portrayal of Penthesilea is characterised by her co-existence of mortal and divine traits, exemplified by her Godlike mode even in death. From this, I concluded that the Amazons are neither completely one nature, but rather, their mode of being encompasses a combination of divine and human elements. Thus, I conceived of the Amazons as occupying an ever-changing position on the human-divine spectrum, as the foregrounding of their Godlike and mortal attributes is constantly in flux, but there is always a combination of ontologies at play.

Chapter 2 focused on the third ontology at state: the animal. I explored the interrelationship between Amazons and horses throughout mythology, arguing that the horse is crucial to the Amazons’ identity. This is evident in both the centrality of the horse to Amazon customs and also the overwhelming overlap between horse symbolism and fundamental Amazon traits.
Crucially, I concluded that the Amazons’ equid nature complements their semi-divine nature. I did so by situating my thesis within the emerging field of study which explores theriomorphic representations of divinity within Greek religion, as I argued that the horse functions as their qualifying epithet, in turn reinforcing their divine manifestations. Overall, Chapters 1 and 2 highlighted that—although the Amazons are characterised by divine, human and animal modes of existence—they occupy an intermediary state that does not fit solely within one mode.

Chapters 3 and 4 further considered specific ways in which the animal figure navigates the human-divine opposition in PostHomerica. Chapter 3 examined the Amazons’ battle scenes, as their presence on the battlefield is the ultimate manifestation of their divinity. I showed that the Amazons fight in a predominantly animalistic manner, and that this method of combat makes them appear divinely bellicose. I concluded that, as long as the Amazons are acting in a predatory manner akin to the θήρ, they appear more like gods than humans. However, I nuanced this observation by highlighting that Quintus also uses animal imagery in his battle scenes to foreshadow the Amazons’ deaths, hence foregrounding their mortality. In this way, both the Amazons’ human and divine attributes are evoked through animal manifestations in the PostHomerica battle scenes.

Chapter 4 focused on Quintus’ account of Penthesilea’s death and funeral, as these scenes clearly articulate Amazon mortality. I showed that Penthesilea’s death is a function of her forced removal from her horse, arguing that her separation from the animal severs her link to the divine which ultimately results in her death. Nonetheless, the horse manifestation in her death scene also alludes to her Godlike attributes. Descriptions of her horses’ exquisite beauty and strength post-death mirror Penthesilea’s divine descriptors post-death, reinforcing the complex interrelation between her mortal and immortal attributes.
This thesis argued that the animal mediates between the Amazons’ human and divine elements in the following ways:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal Manifestation:</th>
<th>How it speaks to both sides of the Human-Divine opposition:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cavalry combat: Whether Amazons fight while mounted or dismounted (Ch. 2 II).</td>
<td>When Amazons fight the Greek infantry, their military proficiency surpasses that of ordinary mortals. As soon as they are torn from their horses, they suffer an ontological breakdown culminating in their death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal similes: Amazons as either subjects or objects of bellicose verbs (Ch. 1 III and Ch. 3 I and II).</td>
<td>When the Amazons are the subjects of bellicose verbs, they fight like predatory animals, and this extreme bellicosisty makes them appear Godlike. When they are the objects of such verbs, they die like slaughtered animals, emphasising their mortality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal similes: Amazons as either predatory animals or sacrificial animals (Ch. 3 II).</td>
<td>When the Amazons are compared to predatory animals (θηρία, lioness, leopard) their divinely inspired bellicosisty is foregrounded. When they are compared to a sacrificial animal (heifer) their death is foreshadowed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbiotic Amazon-horse relationship (Ch. 4 II and III).</td>
<td>Penthesilea’s symbolic and physical connection to her horse reinforces her divinity when the two figures are alive, as the horse is the tangible source of her bellicosisty. However, when the two figures share a joint death and funeral, their mortal states are foregrounded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horses’ plight as microcosm for Penthesilea’s plight (Ch. 1 IV and Ch. 4 II).</td>
<td>Penthesilea’s horse and the Amazons share a common plight: they are both initially portrayed in a divine mode, until their jarring death subverts this portrayal.</td>
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This thesis’ examination of Amazon ontology speaks to the wider existence of ontologically complex figures throughout Greek mythology. I have argued that the Amazons’ semi-divine mode of being is similar to that of epic heroes, as they are Godlike figures whose deaths subvert their portrayal as divine beings. Furthermore, the Amazons’ mortality exists as a heroic marker alongside a matrix of other characteristics, such as their divine lineage and beauty. In this way, my work on Amazon ontology speaks to a larger discourse on mythic figures which call into question these ontological categories, as the Amazons are one of many mythic figures who question what it is to be human.
Additionally, this thesis is situated within the emerging body of scholarship which seeks to understand the interrelations between animals and divinity in Greek religion and myth, as I claim the animal functions as an epithet which qualifies the Amazons’ semi-divine nature.

Overall, I argue that the Amazons are a complex and multifaceted γένος, and that the Greeks understood them as such. Thus, I prompt a reinterpretation of the dominant scholarly view that Amazons exist merely as anti-Greek figures.
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