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**Ἀντιόνειροι:**  
**Applying a Model of Homeric Warriorship to Female Warriors in**  
**Ancient Greek Literature**

by

RUBY M. LAUFER

**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE**  
**DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN CLASSICS**

**PROFESSOR KEIM**  
**PROFESSOR ROSELLI**

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I would like to formally dedicate this thesis to two warriors—my parents. To my father—my Odysseus—you have been my rock for my entire life. Thank you for teaching me to plant myself and stand firm. You are my definition of courage. To my mother—you were the first woman warrior I ever knew. Thank you for teaching me to be undeterred by fear. You are my definition of dauntlessness.

Finally, to Penthesileia, Antiope, Hippolyta, and Atalanta. Men may have buried your stories, but I remembered. Thank you for all you have taught me.

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## *Introduction*

### The Search for Warrior Women

Since I was a little girl, I have wanted to be a warrior. I have not always known exactly what that meant. I felt closer to the abstract idea of warriorship when I rode horses, and shot my bow, but I still did not have a way to describe the warriorship I was searching for. Then, when I was seventeen, I read the *Iliad* for the first time. In the *Iliad*, I found warriors. I fell in love with Achilles, Odysseus, Diomedes, and the men of the *Iliad*. Their world of warriorship enamored me, and I wrote countless high school essays trying to figure out what it was that made them warriors, in the hopes that I, too, could follow their model. Here, I should mention that I use the word “warriorship” intentionally. I had no desire to be a hero. To me, a warrior felt like a different sort of person from a hero. Heracles, Theseus, Jason, and Meleager were heroes. Achilles, Odysseus, Diomedes, and Agamemnon were warriors. I am quite aware that this is a controversial claim. The men of the *Iliad* are often referred to as heroes, and their era was called the “age of heroes.”<sup>1</sup> But for me, they were markedly different from the heroes of Greek mythology like Heracles. Those older heroes were always demigods, faced with enormous supernatural tasks. Heracles, a son of Zeus, fought Hydras and gigantic lions, and became a god after his death. Theseus fought the monstrous Minotaur and founded Athens. By contrast, the men of the *Iliad* are often completely human, or their divine lineage is quite distant, excluding Achilles. They perform mighty deeds, but not semi-divine ones. They are not fighting monsters in the *Iliad*, but other men.<sup>2</sup> Their foes

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<sup>1</sup>Ainian (2017) 110.

<sup>2</sup>It could be argued that Odysseus is an exception of this, because of the monsters he encounters and has to fight on his journeys (the Cyclops, Scylla and Charybdis, the Lotus-Eaters, etc.). I think those encounters are unique to the narrative of a journey home—after all, what is a long journey without some drama and trials on the way?

Achilles is also another exception, which is not surprising. Achilles does perform supernatural deeds, like fighting the Scamander River in Book 21 of the *Iliad*, something which no human could do. But Achilles is not

exist in the human realm, not the supernatural one. Their mighty deeds are of a human scale; they kill an enemy, or storm a city. They are not slaying magical monsters.<sup>3</sup> To me, warriorship seems attainable for ordinary humans, an ideal they can work to achieve, while heroes remain in the domain of the supernatural.

But is warriorship truly attainable for everyone? When I began my study of the *Iliad*, the most famous story of ancient Greek warriors, I quickly hit a roadblock: every warrior in the *Iliad* was a man. My idea of attainability, that anyone could follow the model and be a warrior, was being challenged. So was I to take no for an answer? Were there simply no female warriors in Ancient Greece?

This thesis was born from my desire to understand Homeric warriorship, and to prove that there are female warriors who fit the Homeric model. To do this, I spend my first chapter establishing what I believe to be the attributes and traits of a Homeric warrior, using the text and warriors of the *Iliad*. My model is divided into two categories. First are the attributes—royalty, attractiveness and skill in battle. Second are the values, further divided into individualistic and cooperative values. The individualistic values are courage, dauntlessness, and love of glory. The cooperative values are ability to yield and empathy. The values and attributes are intertwined

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human. In many ways, Achilles is similar to the heroes—he is a demigod who performs mighty deeds. Perhaps the tension of the *Iliad* is that he is a hero stuck in the age of men, after the age of heroes has ended.

Either way, my overall point is that excluding Odysseus and Achilles, all the warriors of the *Iliad* are involved in the realm of the human foe more than the supernatural. Odysseus and Achilles are the main characters of the two Homeric epics; perhaps this was precisely because they were heroic when all other men were warriors.

<sup>3</sup>When chastising Agamemnon and Achilles in the *Iliad*, Nestor brings up the men he used to fight with, men like Theseus, the likes of which he says he will never see again. For those men “were the strongest mortals ever bred on earth, the strongest, and the fought the strongest, too...And none of the men who walk the earth these days could battle with those fighters” (I.304-318). I think Nestor is drawing a distinction here between the heroes, men like Theseus who fight the strongest, and the warriors here at Troy, who Nestor claims are not in the same realm as the heroes. Thus, in this passage Nestor is acknowledging a difference between heroes and warriors, which is why I believe the scholars like Nagy (2013: 10, 11) and Finley (2002: 115), who argue “warrior” and “hero” are synonyms, are mistaken in their interpretation.

together and depend on each other, so although not every warrior shows off every part of the model, each attribute and value can be seen in the warriorship of the men in the *Iliad*.

With this model in mind, I then examine three warrior women—the Amazons Penthesileia, Antiope, and Hippolyta—to explore how and where they fit into the Homeric model. I conclude that these three women do in fact embody the same standards of warriorship as the male warriors in *the Iliad*. However, despite their adherence to the Homeric model, the Amazons' gender and foreign status overpowers any potential acceptance by the Greek men they encounter, and so in these Greek literary tales they end up killed and conquered by the Greek male warriors that they mirror.

Therefore, in my final case study I turn to Atalanta, a Greek female warrior, who represents a bridge between the Greek male warriors and the foreign Amazon warriors. She, too, adheres to the Homeric model, and yet she is also conquered, though in a less violent way than the Amazons. Their inevitable conquering, however, does not negate their warrior status. Through the exploration of each of these women, I hope to show that there are female warriors in Greek literature who embody the exact same model of warriorship as the male warriors in the *Iliad*, and should be studied alongside the warriors of the *Iliad*, as an crucial intersection of gender and warriorship. These women have been forgotten and ignored throughout the study of warriorship in Classics, and by recognizing them for the warriors they are, we can expand our ideas of what it means to be a warrior, and who can be one.

## Chapter One

### The Makings of a Homeric Warrior

To determine what makes a Homeric warrior, a logical and reasoned model is the best place to start. A model of a Homeric warrior offers a deliberate and clear determination of what criteria is needed to be considered a Homeric warrior. It was the closest way I felt I could get to the “truth” of Homeric warriorship. Of course, there is no such thing as objective truth with any text, and models will always have biases and blindspots, but that does not mean a model cannot be meaningful and useful. I believe a model of the Homeric warrior should be based on attributes the warriors commonly manifest and the values which they embody or encourage in each other. This type of methodology ensures that the model is not based on the personalities of one or two warriors alone, but instead creates a representative rubric of all the men in Homer considered to be warriors.<sup>4</sup> So, in order to draw out a model of the Homeric warrior from the text of the *Iliad*, I read through the epic multiple times and marked any actions or speeches in which I felt the warriors were demonstrating something they valued. I then organized those moments into categories, and ended up with a model of three attributes and five values.

Before presenting my own model, I examine three of the most influential academic models in order to better understand the predominant arguments concerning the definition of a Homeric warrior. These three models come from the heavyweights of Homeric warrior scholarship: Gregory Nagy, M.I. Finley, and A.W.H. Adkins. I have chosen to present their models in that corresponding order because that is the order in which the models become more organized, specific, and nuanced in terms of each one’s understanding of what defines a Homeric warrior. Here, it is important to

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<sup>4</sup>For more on model making in historical research, see Ober (1996).

mention that Nagy, Finley, and Adkins all refer to the Homeric men as heroes. As I have mentioned, I do not see the Homeric warriors as heroes. However, no matter what we call these men, our models are all based on the same characters, and offer valuable interpretations of what defines them as a group, whether that group is heroes or warriors.

First, we can examine the heroic model of the famous Homeric scholar Gregory Nagy as laid out in *The Ancient Greek Hero in 24 Hours*. In the first chapter, he sets out what he argues are the three principles of the Homeric hero, based solely on the examples of Achilles and Heracles.

1. The hero is unseasonal<sup>5</sup>
2. The hero is extreme—positively...or negatively
3. The hero is antagonistic toward the god who seems to be most like the hero.<sup>6</sup>

Though Nagy's model is quite famous, I find it concerning that he only uses Heracles and Achilles as its pillars. Yet, in his index, he calls characters like Diomedes, Agamemnon, and Odysseus all as "heroes." Nagy may very well be correct in considered those men heroes, but he does not explain how they fit the model he has created. Which god is antagonistic to Agamemnon? In what ways in Odysseus extreme?

Though Nagy believes all warriors share a common goal; κλέος (glory), they also follow a code of behavior, which Nagy does not fully examine.<sup>7</sup> His model is not grounded in any attributes of the warriors or values that they try to adhere to. Instead, he presents a model based on individual personalities (unseasonal, extreme, antagonistic), and not on their values. Nagy's model leaves us unsatisfied, given its small scope. A model based on only two heroes is narrow in scope.

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<sup>5</sup>"Unseasonality," according to Nagy, is the trait of the hero that leads to their eventual fulfillment, or achievement of immortality after their death, either through becoming a god (Heracles), or through the maintenance of their reputation and legacy throughout time by songs, epic poems, and hero cult worship (Achilles).

<sup>6</sup>Nagy (2013) 37.

<sup>7</sup>Nagy (2013) 29.

By studying Nagy's model, we can see that an effective model of a Homeric warrior should clearly explain the warriors' values and their goals, and how the two intertwine, so it can be applied successfully to a number of different warriors, with different personalities, and still hold true.<sup>8</sup>

To evaluate a slightly more detailed model, we can turn to M.I. Finley in his *World of Odysseus*. Finley's central argument is that "...the main theme of a warrior culture is constructed on two notes—prowess and honor. The one is the hero's essential attribute, the other his essential aim."<sup>9</sup> Finley makes explicit a common view of the Homeric warrior: that "every value, every judgement, every action, all skills and talents have the function of either defining honor [τιμή] or realizing it"<sup>10</sup> Here, Nagy and Finley seem to be defining the same ideal with two different Greek words, κλέος (Nagy), and τιμή (Finley). Both authors are making the point that the warriors will fight and die to be remembered. Whether they are dying for κλέος or τιμή depends on the model, and therefore we are reminded that models, though helpful guides, do not describe unchangeable truths, as there is no objective truth to what makes a warrior in the *Iliad*.

Models still require evidence, though, and in Finley's model τιμή may be the goal of the warrior's life, but he does not explain the route they take to get there. What are the values of the warriors that he references? If to be a warrior is to strive for honor, how does a warrior actually gain that honor? Through what actions and behaviors? The only hint that Finley gives us is that the warriors are passionate and emotional, not rational and measured, which fits with Nagy's

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<sup>8</sup>I am well aware of Gregory Nagy's vast expertise on the definition of Homeric warriorship, and though I am choosing to focus on the model presented in *The Ancient Greek Hero in 24 Hours*, as that book arose from the Harvard class he taught for many years on the Ancient Greek Hero, I acknowledge that he does expand on his model in other works.

<sup>9</sup>Finley (2002) 115.

<sup>10</sup>Finley (2002) 115.

“extremism,” and that they were aristocratic.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, Finley falls short in defining what code a warrior follows to win himself the honor he craves.

Our final model, that of A.W.H. Adkins, takes a more social view of the Homeric warrior, and is the most organized and specific in its definition of a Homeric warrior. To Adkins, the values (which he calls “excellences”) that the Homeric warrior must exemplify are the ones “which society holds itself to be most in need...[as a way to] effectively defend the group.”<sup>12</sup> He believes these values are courage, strength, wealth, and high birth. By naming these values explicitly, Adkins is successful where Finley is not. Adkins even goes so far as to split the values of the warrior into two categories—competitive and cooperative. Competitive excellences, such as courage, strength, wealth, and high birth, are more highly valued in Adkins’ eyes, and he argues these lead directly into the *arete* or social standing of the warriors, since these values are highly prized by society. Cooperative values are shown by the Homeric warriors, but are less valuable according to Adkins because they are less necessary for the survival of society.<sup>13</sup> Though Adkins does not explicitly define what he means by cooperative excellences, the name suggests values shown through interactions between the men—principles like empathy, compassion, and treating other warriors with respect.

Besides *arete* (ἀρετή), Adkins argues that there are two other Greek terms that symbolize the values of the Homeric warrior. These are *time* (τιμή) and *philotes* (φιλότης). Like Finley before him, Adkins believes τιμή, defending one’s honor and obtaining more, if possible, is the “principal motivation of the Homeric man.”<sup>14</sup> In Adkins’ model, the way the Homeric man obtains τιμή is through demonstration of ἀρετή, by exemplifying the competitive excellences.

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<sup>11</sup>Finley (2002) 116, 118, 125.

<sup>12</sup>Adkins (1972) 13.

<sup>13</sup>Adkins (1972) 14.

<sup>14</sup>Adkins (1972) 15.

Given Adkins' inclinations towards a society-based model, there is one more value: *philotes*. Though Adkins believes φιλότης is untranslatable, he loosely defines it as a person with whom the warrior has a bond of friendship, one not due to any actual feelings of friendship, but due to having shared house and home with the recipient of the bond. Φιλότης-bonds grant the warrior people to rely on, a form of stability in a warlike time.

Adkins argues that, taken together, “Homeric *arete*, *time*, and *philotes* suit the *oikos*-based society...[and though there are] other values, co-operative ones...these are less highly valued by the society.”<sup>15</sup> While Adkins admits that at first glance, it may seem that *philotes* is a cooperative value, this value attains its prominence in his model due to the fact it is “co-operation to meet the harsh demands of Homeric life,” and thus it is elevated above the other “quieter” cooperative values to the level of the competitive ones.<sup>16</sup>

Adkins' model is by far the most organized in defining what it means to be a warrior. For him, a warrior is one who strives for τιμή, who demonstrates his ἀρετή through competitive excellences, and maintains relationships through φιλότης. While I do agree with Adkins' model of competitive versus cooperative excellences, like Zanker, I do not think there is evidence of the cooperative excellences being less valued in the *Iliad*.<sup>17</sup> To the contrary, in the *Iliad*, the cooperative values—ability to yield and empathy—emerge as vitally important to the warrior model, as we will see.

As we have seen in these three models, there is room for improvement. Thus, I present a fourth model: my own. With it, I hope to create a clear and organized outline of the aspects and values of the Homeric warrior, in order to explain what made a man a Homeric warrior. I believe

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<sup>15</sup>Adkins (1972) 18.

<sup>16</sup>Adkins (1972) 17.

<sup>17</sup>Zanker (1992) 20.

that to fully understand the warrior, we should divide the model into two categories—attributes—royal lineage, attractiveness, skill in battle—and values. The category of values itself can be broken into two parts, as Adkins does, with some values being individualistic values, those which are manifest in a desire to pursue and showcase their own excellence in battle, such as courage, dauntlessness, and love of glory. Then there are also the cooperative values—ability to yield and empathy—showcasing the way the warriors acted with and towards others. To be sure, the two categories of individualistic and cooperative values overlap in actions and motives, but I will use those two categories for overall clarity of the model, and point out where they coincide when necessary.<sup>18</sup>

The warriors who I will focus on in this chapter are the “main characters” of the *Iliad*, the men we see often enough to get a sense of who they are. For the Trojans, that is Hector, and for the Greeks, they are Odysseus, Diomedes, Agamemnon, Menelaus, Nestor, Patroclus, Idomeneus and Achilles. I also use certain men as counterexamples to the warriors, men who do not show the characteristics of the warrior model, and are shamed for it. In the Trojan army this is Paris, and in the Greek army, the main examples are Thersites, and, paradoxically, Achilles. Achilles both exemplifies parts of the model, particularly the individualistic virtues, and transgresses it, failing to demonstrate elements such as the cooperative virtues. This brings up an important point: no one warrior embodies every part of the model but instead each one exemplifies one or two specific values or attributes, and can fall short in other areas. Achilles is known for his skill in battle, but is unable to yield throughout much of the *Iliad*. The Greek commander Agamemnon has nowhere

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<sup>18</sup>Again, this is another difficulty with models: creating a strict definition of a Homeric warrior restricts opportunities to discuss the complications and complexities within the definitions. I believe the value of having a model outweighs the issue of rigidity, especially given I will be applying this model to female warriors later in the thesis. However, I will still attempt to point out these complexities and interactions within the model when they arise.

near Achilles' level of skill, but is able to yield when Achilles is not. I do not contend that every warrior fits my model completely, but I seek to develop a more comprehensive model that all warriors attempt to embody, and to examine the different components of the model through the warriors that best exemplify each trait.

### Attributes

The attributes of a Homeric warrior are the qualities that he is either born with or he can train to achieve. Though Nagy, Finley and Adkins mention the attributes of a warrior in passing—“extreme,” from Nagy, “passionate” and “aristocratic” from Finley, and “wealthy” and “royal” from Adkins—the prior three models have been mainly focused on a warrior's personality, his goals, or his values. While I believe those ideas are an integral part of the warrior code, all warriors in the *Iliad* arrive at Troy with certain shared attributes. These attributes set them apart from the rank-and-file of the common foot soldiers they lead, and also allow the warriors to be placed on an equal level with each other. Finley argues that the warriors need to be equal in status so justice specifically could be doled out between them fairly,<sup>19</sup> but I believe the equality of the warriors, explicitly through the attributes of royal lineage, attractiveness, and skill in battle, go beyond justice among each other, and serve more generally as a way to distinctly elevate the warriors above the soldiers they lead, and create factors that distinguish one as a Homeric “warrior.”

### **Royalty**

Both Adkins and Finley identify royal bloodline, or high birth and wealth, as an identifying feature of the Homeric warrior.<sup>20</sup> Lineage is incredibly important to Homeric warriors, and they

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<sup>19</sup>Finley (2002) 112.

<sup>20</sup>Two of the major Greek words associated with royalty are βασιλεύς (king) and ἄναξ (lord). Much has been written on the differences between a βασιλεύς like Achilles and an ἄναξ like Agamemnon, which I will not get into here.

often state their familial lines before fighting with an enemy (VI.170-252, XX.278-279), or speaking up during assemblies.<sup>21</sup> One of the reasons to state one's lineage is to grant the speaker legitimacy due to their high status, so that their advice and right to speak will not be spurned on account of low birth. Diomedes uses this reasoning to back up his advice when he speaks out against Agamemnon in a council (XIV.135-155).

However, the more important reason that all Homeric warriors have to be royal is because the Homeric warrior-king has a "degree of nobility" conferred upon him by his royal lineage, which was thought by the Ancient Greeks to be traced back to popular heroes or divine ancestors.<sup>22</sup> As a consequence of their claims to the bloodlines of older heroes or divinities, these warrior-kings are automatically placed as leaders among their peers and commanders of the men from their home kingdoms.

Odysseus invokes this "divine right to rule" when defending a controversial choice of Agamemnon's: to test the resolve of the men by commanding them to retreat. Odysseus advises the men to stand firm, and to not anger Agamemnon by retreating because "the rage of kings is strong, they're nursed by the gods, their honor comes from Zeus" (II.226-227). Odysseus is pointing out that the honor, reputation, and therefore the right of Homeric kings to rule, is god-granted. Even Agamemnon's scepter, his symbol of kingship, has been passed to him from the gods (II.119-125).<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, all warriors in Homeric society must be kings, because being a king gave a warrior legitimate claims to leadership and a "sanction for aristocratic privilege, for

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<sup>21</sup>Here and throughout this thesis I cite the line-numbers from Fagles' translation of the *Iliad*.

<sup>22</sup>Palaima (1995) 121. Heroes always have a divine parent, but for warriors it is not a requirement. Agamemnon, Odysseus, and most of the men in the *Iliad* do not have a direct divine parent, so their royal status is a way to grant them divine favor without requiring a godly parent. Of course, some warriors also do have a divine parent, like Achilles and the Amazons.

<sup>23</sup>The scepter is mentioned in two different instances as being given directly to Agamemnon by Zeus. Diomedes points out that, by possessing the scepter, Agamemnon has more honor than any other man alive (IX.43-44), and Nestor advises Agamemnon on the responsibilities the possession of the scepter forces upon him (IX.105-108).

rule...”<sup>24</sup> backed up by the authority of the gods.<sup>25</sup> This is also reflected in four of the epithets of the rulers in the *Iliad*. Διοτρεφές literally translates to “fostered/cherished by Zeus,” δυφίλος means “dear to Zeus,” διογενές means “born from Zeus,” and δῖος means “godlike.”<sup>26</sup> All of these terms are used over and over to describe the lords and kings of the Greeks and Trojans, cementing the link between authority and divine favor.<sup>27</sup>

However, royalty was not the be-all-end-all attribute. When departing for a stealth mission, Diomedes is advised to choose a companion based on that man’s abilities, not his rank and status (X.278-280). Menelaus also echoes this view when he asks the judges to choose between himself and Antilochus during a chariot race, requesting that they judge impartially, so none of the troops could claim Menelaus won due to his rank and power (XXIII.638-642). Clearly, though royalty was a requirement for all Homeric warriors, their skill in battle could outweigh their royal nature in certain contexts, like being chosen or judged for a specific tasks. The idea of no one trait being enough to make a model, and the hierarchy of the traits themselves, is one that we will return to in the conclusion of this chapter.

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<sup>24</sup>Finley (2002) 126.

<sup>25</sup>Some scholars like Andrei Zavaily have also argued that being royal is the *only* important attribute of warriors, because it motivates them to fight to prove they are worthy of their titles. While I do think aristocratic status can be a motivating factor for individualistic values like courage and love of glory, there is no aristocratic motivation to be more empathetic or yielding, so when taking all the elements of the model into account, Zavaily’s argument falls a little short.

<sup>26</sup>Διοτρεφές can be seen in *Iliad* II.98, II.196, II.445, VII.109, IX.229, IX.607, etc.

Δυφίλος can be seen in *Iliad* VI.318, VIII.517, IX.168, X.527, XI.419, XI.473, etc.

Διογενές can be seen in *Iliad* VIII.93, IX.106, IX.308, IX.624, X.144, X.340, etc.

Δῖος can be seen in *Iliad* IX.84, IX.169, IX.192, IX.199, IX.209, IX.223, etc.

<sup>27</sup>At the end of the *Iliad*, Priam is described as being “king by will of Zeus,” (XIV.943) also linking royalty to a sign of divine favor. The Greek royalty are also described in similar terms by Menelaus, who acknowledges their rank, or leadership position, is given to them by Zeus, and as a consequence, their fames comes from him, as well (XVII.285-287).

## Attractiveness

The second attribute in my model of Homeric warriors is attractiveness.<sup>28</sup> Almost all of the men of the Trojan war, both Greek and Trojan alike, are handsome—some exceptionally so, like Achilles. However, even less prominent characters are handsome, such as Nireus, a Greek king from Syeme whom Homer claims is “the handsomest man who ever came to Troy, of all the Achaeans after [Achilles]” (II.769-770). Nireus barely shows up again throughout the *Iliad*, but his beauty is important enough to Homer that he feels the need to draw attention to it early in the poem, despite Nireus not having any other elements of the warrior model.

Accordingly, to be *unattractive* in the *Iliad* serves as a sign of one’s status as a coward and non-warrior. When Odysseus is rallying the troops early in the poem, he comes across a man named Thersites insulting Agamemnon. Thersites is a troublesome Greek with a club foot and a hunchback, known for being “the ugliest man who ever came to Troy” (II.250-256). In fact, the sole example of the Greek word for “ugly” in the *Iliad* (the superlative αἴσχιστος) is in this moment to describe Thersites, highlighting his uniqueness in being ugly, given no one else is described this way.

Because of Thersites’ insolence, Odysseus beats him with Agamemnon’s kingly scepter, telling him he has no right to insult kings (given he is in no way close to being equal in status to them) and proclaiming “no one, I say—no one alive [is] less soldierly than you” (II.287-288). Homer seems to agree with Odysseus’ characterization of Thersites, choosing not to use any word for warrior, hero, or soldier to describe Thersites, but simply the word “man” (άνήρ).<sup>29</sup> Thersites’

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<sup>28</sup>The words associated with attractiveness are often κάλος (an adjective that means “beautiful”), ἄριστος (an adjective that meaning “best.” It is more general than καλά, but can be used in certain contexts to mean best in regards to face, i.e. handsome) and εἶδος (a noun which more specifically refers to a beautiful build, shape, or form).

<sup>29</sup>*Iliad* II.216 in the original Greek text.

disgusting appearance, coupled with Odysseus' chastisement of his "non-warrioriness," adds further evidence that true warriors are handsome kings, and cowardly common men show their true colors in their physical appearance.<sup>30</sup>

However, beauty alone is no replacement for the other factors of the warrior model, as Paris can attest. Hector points this out when he berates Paris for not fighting: "No use to you then, the fine lyre and these, these gifts from Aphrodite, your long flowing locks and your striking looks, not when you roll and couple with dust" (III.62-65). Attractiveness may be a part of the warrior model, but it alone is not enough to make a man a warrior. Paris may be beautiful, but his beauty is no use to him on the field of battle, and is not an indication of Paris having any other warrior skills. He still fights dust only, not men.<sup>31</sup>

Still, Homer does choose to emphasize physical beauty in the *Iliad*. His choice to do so could be because in a warfare context, physical attractiveness would be an indicator of one's skill in battle. A strong, muscular, body is the result of years of training for war and combat,<sup>32</sup> and so it is possible to say that in war, attractiveness of the body could be seen as a measure of military competence.<sup>33</sup> Despite that argument, a more accurate and truer measure of a warrior's military competency would be his skill in battle, our last attribute.

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<sup>30</sup>Idomeneus, the Cretan king, also makes a connection between physical appearance and bravery in a speech to his charioteer, Meriones. He claims that the "skin of a coward changes color all the time," that he cannot sit still, and his teeth chatter (XIII.329-333). Thus, he argues, you can always tell who is brave and who is coward just by looking at them.

<sup>31</sup>Diomedes also insults Paris by mocking his beauty (XI.453-455), and later in the *Iliad*, the Trojan Glaucus lashes out at Hector by calling him "our prince of beauty," (XVII.162), revealing the duality of beauty. It can be both a compliment to be beautiful, but also an insult. For more complications of beauty in the warrior model, see pp. 46-47.

<sup>32</sup>These warriors are also handsome in their facial appearances, not just their bodies, which is not something one can create with a rigorous training program. The facial beauty of the warriors is probably a reflection of the desire of the audience to have idols who they want to be like—and who would want to be like the hunch-back coward Thersites?

<sup>33</sup>Xenophon, in section 3.12 of his *Memorabilia*, has a conversation about the benefits of having a healthy body for war, among other purposes. Attractiveness also came to be associated with morality by later Greek writers. Centuries after Homer, during the Classical period, Greek writers used the term *καλὸς κάγαθος*, which literally translates to "good and beautiful," to describe someone's moral qualities. For example, the protagonist of

## Skill in Battle

Both Adkins and Finley mention a warrior's ability. Adkins names strength as a competitive excellence, and Finley argues the only essential attribute of the warrior *is* his prowess. These scholars are right to emphasize a warrior's skill as an essential trait because in the *Iliad* every great warrior is just that—a great warrior, one who partakes in an *aristeia*.

The term *aristeia* comes from the Greek word ἄριστος, meaning “best.”<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, an *aristeia* (pl. *aristeiai*) is a moment of lone excellence on the battlefield, where one warrior shows himself to be in a league of his own. Athena, the goddess of war herself, instigates Diomedes' *aristeia* by granting him strength and daring so that he shines forth and towers over the other warriors to win himself great glory (V.2-3). That event is an *aristeia*.

Given how accomplished all the warriors in the *Iliad* are, it requires incredible skill in order for one warrior to distinguish himself as better than all the rest (even if just for a moment). *Aristeiai* are only performed by the greatest warriors of the *Iliad*: Diomedes, Ajax, Odysseus, Agamemnon, Menelaus, Achilles, Patroclus, and Hector. *Aristeiai* are critical to the warrior code of conduct because through an *aristeia*, a warrior upholds his reputation as a great fighter, and demonstrates why he is worthy to receive honors from the other warriors. An *aristeia* is, at its core, a way to uphold one's warrior reputation through the continual display of merit in action.<sup>35</sup> It justifies the ranking of the warriors as above the soldiers, and consequently, all great warriors must be able to perform them to keep their reputations intact.

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Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, Ischomachus, is chosen because he is said to be a *kaloskagathos* and thus a good role model. Though the term was not used in Homer, it does imply there was a connection in the minds of later Greek writers between being attractive and being morally sound, or good.

<sup>34</sup>To note here and for all future vocabulary references, definitions of Greek terminology follow the LSJ s.vv.

<sup>35</sup>Lendon (2005) 24.

The theme of competition and ranking can be seen in the Greek words associated with skill in battle. They often have to do with preeminence, or standing out above other warriors, the sense of which is reflected in words like ἐκπρεπής, ἔξοχος, and μεταπρέω. There is also a theme of being in the front lines of the battle, where the fighting is guaranteed to occur, and men are risking their lives the most. This is the place where the kings of the *Iliad* fight, given they are described as προμάχοισι, or πρόμον, “foremost fighters.”<sup>36</sup> Translators have picked up on the connections between having a warrior nature and fighting in the front ranks, and often translate these words as “to be a hero,” or “to be a champion.”<sup>37</sup>

Principal to the *aristeia* and preeminence of a warrior is the fact that they are able to kill their enemies, which is highlighted by the repetition of the phrase “each captain killed his man,” throughout the *Iliad*.<sup>38</sup> It is true that the Greek warriors do not kill the Trojans every time they caught them—in fact, Achilles mentions that he has sold a number of Priam’s sons into slavery during the course of the battle (XXI.113-118)—but warriors must be able to kill to demonstrate their competency on the battlefield. Paris, again, is a counter-example to this attribute. Throughout the course of the *Iliad*, Paris is only able to kill three men (VII.9, XIII.775, XV.402)<sup>39</sup> and repeatedly fails to mortally wound those he aims at (XI.441-443, XI.597-600, XI.687-690). He

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<sup>36</sup>Instances of characters in the *Iliad* fighting in the frontlines can be seen in XV.533-534, XV.645-646, XVII.433-436, XVIII.224, XIX.428-429, and XIX.467-468.

<sup>37</sup>“To be a hero,” is A.T. Murray’s translation of the verb προμάχεσθαι, and “to stand out as a champion,” is Fagles translation of προμαχίζω.

<sup>38</sup>This phrase can be found at V.42, VII.8, XIII.204, and XVI.414.

<sup>39</sup>Paris also kills the last of these three men with a spear to his back, while the man was retreating, a fairly dishonorable way to kill someone. Ironically, Paris kills Achilles himself after the events of *Iliad*, which is an interesting ending—the greatest warrior of all time, killed by the cowardly Paris. However, Paris’ arrow is driven forward by the god Apollo, so Paris did not kill Achilles without divine help.

almost dies during his first and only duel (III.428-440),<sup>40</sup> surviving solely through the intervention of Aphrodite, a so-called “coward goddess” (V.371).<sup>41</sup>

It may seem that because of the importance of a warrior’s skill in battle it is the “supreme civic virtue” of the Homeric hero,<sup>42</sup> a view shared by some Homeric scholars. However, skill in battle should not be seen as the most prominent attribute of the warrior since Agamemnon rebukes this very view, held by Achilles, during their fight in the very first pages of the *Iliad*. One of Achilles’ main points in their argument is that he believes he should not have to listen to Agamemnon, on the basis of his excellence as a warrior, to which Agamemnon replies: “What if you are a great soldier? That’s just a gift of god” (I.211). Clearly, though it is incredibly important in the Homeric world to be a skilled warrior, it is not the sole vital skill of the warrior. Agamemnon, the king of kings himself, is arguing that skill in battle is not enough to make a warrior deserving of honor or respect. He is undoubtedly suggesting that there are other factors at play to make a man a great warrior, factors which he does not believe Achilles has. We will turn to those factors in our study of the values the Homeric warriors upheld, but before we do so, we can see that despite Finley’s argument that there is only one essential attribute, there are actually three essential attributes a warrior must have before even entering the battlefield: a royal lineage, attractiveness,

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<sup>40</sup>During their duel, Paris was not even able to pierce Menelaus’ shield with his spear, though he hit him straight-on, which only serves to emphasize Paris’ inferior status compared to the other warriors of the *Iliad*.

<sup>41</sup>It is also worth mentioning that Paris fights with a bow and arrow, which later Greeks considered to be a more cowardly way of fighting. The cowardice associated with the use of the bow and arrow is usually seen as due to Greek thought around the Persians, who used light melee weapons like bows and arrows. The Greeks were threatened by Persian invasion twice, and as a result strove to portray them as feminine, cowardly, and foreign to Greek ideals of masculinity. However, the *Iliad* was written hundreds of years before the Greco-Persian Wars, so the cowardice of Paris and his use of a bow may not be directly related. Also, Odysseus famously strings his bow in the *Odyssey*, and Heracles gives his to Philoctetes, and neither of these warriors were considered cowardly.

<sup>42</sup>Zavaily (2020) 47.

and extraordinary skill in battle.<sup>43</sup> Now we can turn to the values they strive to uphold as part of their warrior nature when the fighting begins.

## Values

Due to the influence of Adkins on *Iliad* scholarship, as well as the abundance of these traits in Homer, many academics have focused on the traits that we stereotypically associate with the warrior—courage, strength, high birth. These values have to do with the individual and their abilities, which has led many scholars to believe the warriors are completely defined by “duty towards themselves” rather than duty towards others.<sup>44</sup>

Indeed, we saw in Adkins’ model that he believes competitive excellences were more valued by the warriors and Homeric society than cooperative ones. I do agree with Adkins that the values of the warrior are better understood as two categories, but I prefer to divide them as individualistic and cooperative instead of competitive and cooperative. I have chosen to use “individualistic” to convey the sense that these are the values (courage, dauntlessness, and love of glory) that the warrior can display on their own. These values all center around the warrior as an individual: what he does himself, alone on the battlefield (courage), his emotional state on the battlefield (dauntlessness), and the reasons why he fights (love of glory). Adkins claims these values are entirely competitive, but through a close reading of the text, I will argue there are threads

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<sup>43</sup>I do not see Nagy’s “extremism” and Finley’s “passionate nature” (see above pp. 8-9) as attributes of the warriors. First, I do not believe all warriors have an intensely passionate nature. Achilles may, but Odysseus and Nestor and Menelaus do not. They all have moments of outrage, anger, fear, or grief, but I see those as natural reactions of warriors to the horrors of the battlefield, not as an attribute all warriors shared. Those moments of passion are driven by the context of the story, not by the characters’ natures. More importantly, I do not believe there is credible evidence of a passionate nature being valued as a necessary part of the warrior code in the *Iliad*.

<sup>44</sup>Smith (2016) 22.

of cooperative thinking within them, making it more accurate to call these values individualistic rather than competitive.

There are two other values of a warrior which are not individualistic, and these are the cooperative values. These values are either expressed through interactions with others, ability to yield, or arise from interactions with others, empathy. These virtues have also been called the “quieter” virtues by Zanker, due since he believes they are oftentimes overlooked by scholars in the rush to focus on the individualistic virtues.<sup>45</sup> For my part, I do not believe the warriors in the *Iliad* make a hierarchy of their values, or place the individualistic values above the cooperative ones. Courage is not more important than the ability to yield. As we will see in the conclusion to this chapter, some values rely on others, but no value is intrinsically better than any other. All values must be adhered by a warrior to achieve his goal of τιμή. With the distinction between individualistic and cooperative values in mind, we can begin our study.

## Individualistic Values

### **Courage**

*“the man who wants to make his mark in war must stand his ground and brace for all he’s worth.”(XI.483-486)*

Courage and its opposite, cowardice, rule many of the conversations between the men in the *Iliad*. Though courage has many meanings, whenever the warriors in the *Iliad* are being courageous, they are standing their ground in some way. The two verbs used most in moments of courage reflect this: μένω, meaning to stay, wait, or remain in place, and ἵστημι, meaning to make yourself stand. Μίμνω is also often used, and has similar connotations of staying, or standing

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<sup>45</sup>Zanker (1992) 20.

fast.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, in this specific wartime context, I believe courage is best defined as the ability to stand one's ground in battle and not flee.<sup>47</sup> As Hector puts it, his courage is his ability "to stand up bravely, always to fight in the front ranks of Trojan soldiers, winning my father great glory, glory for myself" (VI.527-529).<sup>48</sup> Accordingly, one of the incentives of the Homeric warrior for courageous actions is glory and honor.<sup>49</sup>

In the *Iliad*, Athena's two favorite warriors, Odysseus and Diomedes, often exemplify courage. When Diomedes is rampaging during his *aristeia* early in the poem, his charioteer Sthenelus urges him to leave the front lines in order to spare his life:

But powerful Diomedes froze him with a glance: 'Not a word of retreat. You'll never persuade me. It's not my nature to shrink from battle, cringe in fear with the fighting strength still steady in my chest.' (V.278-281)

In this instance, Diomedes is *literally* standing his ground, refusing to leave the front lines of the battlefield on the grounds of his fighting spirit and nature—his courage. He even refuses to get back into his chariot, believing that action would be seen as giving ground to the Trojans, and instead chooses to meet them "on foot...man-to-man" (V.283). Diomedes' courage is rewarded immediately when he kills one man and nearly kills another, and two books later his *aristeia* ends with him the Trojans comparing him to a god (V.205), and the gods themselves naming him best of the Achaeans (V.475). Diomedes' courage and conquests has elevated him to a semi-divine status.

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<sup>46</sup>Uses of μένω: V.522, V.571, XI.317, XIII.151, XIII.476, etc.

Uses of ἵστημι: VI.8, XI.314, XI.348, XI.410, XI.571, etc.

Uses of μίμνω: V.94, XII.136, XV.539, XV.585, XV.727, etc.

<sup>47</sup>In Plato's *Laches*, the Athenian general Laches, when asked by Socrates about the nature of courage, defines a man of courage as one who does not run away, but remains at his post and fights. Though Plato was writing around 380 B.C., his definition of courage as standing your ground is the same one found in the *Iliad*.

<sup>48</sup>The word meaning front ranks (πρότοισι) calls to mind the foremost fighter discussion in the Skill in Battle section. For more, see p. 19.

<sup>49</sup>For more on use of κλέος and τιμή in other models, see pp. 8-9. For a discussion on the glory as incentive for action glory, see the Love of Glory section (pp. 33-36).

Odysseus, when in a similar situation—alone in the frontlines (and heavily wounded)—focuses on the metaphorical meaning of courage: “Cowards, I know, would quit the fighting now but the man who wants to make his mark in war must stand his ground (ἑστάμεναι, a form of ἵστημι) and brace for all he is worth—suffer his wounds or wound his man to death” (XI.483-486).<sup>50</sup> Odysseus may not mean physically standing his ground in one spot, but more symbolically refusing to give up just because the going gets hard (or the warrior gets wounded). Odysseus attributes a warrior’s ability “to make [their] mark in war” to their courage, and by choosing to stand his ground, Odysseus makes his own mark, putting himself in a position to kill six men in quick succession, and win great glory for himself.<sup>51</sup>

Courage could also mean standing one’s ground against those higher in rank or status. Diomedes again provides an excellent example when he stands up against Agamemnon, who, due to the losses of the Greek army, has ordered the men to turn tail and sail for home:

My courage—mine was the first you mocked among the Argives, branding me a coward...[Zeus] gave you honor beyond all other men alive but he never gave you courage, the greatest power of all...*Desert*—if your spirit drives you to sail home, then sail away my King!...But the rest of the long-haired Achaeans will hold out, right here, until we’ve plundered Troy. And they, if they go running home to the land they love, then the two of us, I and Sthenelus here will fight our way to the fixed doom of Troy. (IX.38-56)

Diomedes not only rejects the title of coward bestowed upon him by Agamemnon, but he turns the insult around by directly calling Agamemnon a coward for refusing to stand his ground and continue to fight the war.<sup>52</sup> Then Diomedes demonstrates his own courage, showing his will to stay

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<sup>50</sup>Tyrtaeus, a Spartan poet writing in the Archaic period, argues that the way a man becomes good in war is to by standing in the forefront and remaining there unceasingly, echoing our definition of courage as standing one’s ground and remaining. Tyrtaeus even uses the same vocabulary—μένω (to remain). The second factor that he believes makes a man good in war is dauntlessness: see fn. 62 below.

<sup>51</sup>Courage is also not the absence of fear, as evidenced by Odysseus’ monologue on whether he should flee. He clearly feels fear, but decides to stand his ground despite it. The idea of pushing on *despite* fear, not without it, will be echoed again in the Dauntlessness section (see pp. 27-32).

<sup>52</sup>Diomedes is especially upset by Agamemnon’s cowardice because as king (ἄναξ), Agamemnon should be an exemplary warrior, which means being courageous.

on the frontlines and fight until the end of the Trojan war, either with all the other Greeks or simply only with his trusted friend Sthenelus.<sup>53</sup> For the Homeric warriors, it is a simple equation: to be courageous is to stand one's ground and fight, while to be a coward is to give up, refuse to fight, or flee the battlefield entirely.<sup>54</sup>

Cowardice is considered the worst insult among the Greeks and Trojans, and is invoked in these moments when men refused to stand their ground. Agamemnon, early in the poem, denounces all those he sees "retreating from hateful battle," (IV.275) with taunts of cowardice, calling them craven (IV.285). Paris, the famed coward, earns his title by backing away into his ranks and "cringing" from death (III.36). His cowardice results in Hector taunting him about his lack of courage: "They thought *you* the bravest champion we could field, and just because of the handsome luster on your limbs, but you have no pith, no fighting strength inside you" (III.50-52). Later, he tells Paris it is impossible for anyone to underrate his performance in battle, given he "hang[s] back of [his] own accord, refus[ing] to fight" (VI.621-623). The insult is clear: because he refuses to stand his ground and fight on the battlefield, Paris is a coward.<sup>55</sup> Hector's taunt does end up motivating Paris back into the fighting (VII.2), as such taunts do time and time again throughout the *Iliad* with different men (IV.285-286, V.567, XVII.490).<sup>56</sup>

The motivating fear of being thought a coward is why Adkins considered courage to be a competitive value; he seems to think courage was something measured between the warriors, and those being cowardly were "losing" the competition. However, on a deeper reading, cowardice

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<sup>53</sup>In the similar event earlier in the *Iliad*, when Agamemnon tests the men's resolve by telling them to flee, Odysseus opens a speech to the men by asking them to have courage, and then ends it by asking them to stand their ground (II.350-393), showing the clear connection in the mind of the Homeric warriors between the two concepts.

<sup>54</sup>For more examples of warriors in the *Iliad* equating courage to standing their ground, see XIII.60-70, XIII.317-320, XXII.298-299, and XIV.255-257. For general examples of warriors standing their group, see XI.365-368, XI.408, XI.702, XII.155-160, XIII.550-551, XIII.819, XV.368, XV.625, and XVII.46-47.

<sup>55</sup>For more examples of cowardice being equated with *not* standing ground, see XVI.767 and XVII.608,

<sup>56</sup>For more examples of cowardice used as an insult, see I.267, I.343-346, II.220-221, II.232, XII.283-285, and XIII.143-148.

was not just a wounding insult because it meant the coward was less impressive or worthy of honors than the other warriors. Part of the insult is that cowardice indicates a warrior is unable to think about others, because courage in the *Iliad* is also about the warrior's belief that his life was not worth any more than the life of the men around him. As Agamemnon puts it when he finds one of the Greek kings cringing on the edges of the battle, "Why are you cowering here, skulking out of range? Waiting for others to do your fighting for you? You—it's your duty to stand in the front ranks and take your share of the scorching blaze of battle" (IV.394-397).

If being a coward ("cowering") is refusing to "take your share," in the front ranks of battle, then being courageous is taking your turn there, defended by the knowledge that your life is not worth any more than another man's. Everyone has to take a turn risking their life, because no one's life mattered more than anyone else's.<sup>57</sup> When Paris cringes at the back of a battle and refuses to fight, he is willing to let other men fight and die so he can live. Paris' inability to show empathy through taking his turn standing his ground on the battlefield is exactly what Hector criticizes in him. He even tries to goad Paris back into battle by telling him to "look [at] your people dying around the city, the steep walls, dying in arms—and all for you" (VI.385-387). Hector insults Paris' cowardice, and then tries to motivate him to be courageous by invoking his empathy for the Trojan men, though it is not clear that this taunt is what ultimately brings Paris back into battle. Helen even claims Paris is fully unaffected by shame, telling him "I wish I had been the wife of a

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<sup>57</sup>Interestingly, Agamemnon identifies this trait—standing in front and taking one's share of battle—as a duty only kings needed to concern themselves with, once again highlighting the importance of royalty as an attribute of the warrior.

It is also worth pointing out here that this idea of equality of lives does not mean that there is an equality of status within the community. Every member of the warrior society had to be committed to that society and play their part. If you were a king, your part was greater, which is why Agamemnon berates the kings especially for being cowardly—they were not playing their part. Thus, though courage does still have empathy embedded in it because everyone has to risk their lives equally, that empathy stems from the importance of community to the warriors. For a discussion on how fear of community judgement can motivate a warrior to emulate parts of the model, see pp. 34-35.

better man, someone alive to outrage, the withering scorn of men” (VI.415-417). Ultimately, Paris has no empathy towards the men around him. He does not care if they die for him, and, as Helen points out, he does not care what they think of him when he cringes from battle. And because he does not care about them, he does not feel compelled to take his turn fighting at the front ranks, an attitude which earns himself the title of coward.

Consequently, although I have defined courage as an individualistic value because it has to do with a warrior’s individual ability to stand his ground, we can see it does have elements of the cooperative virtues of empathy. Even within these individualistic virtues, the warriors do not solely focus on themselves, as Adkins and others claim.<sup>58</sup>

### **Dauntlessness**

*“But the skin of the brave soldier never blanches. He’s all control. Tense but no great fear.”* (XIII.334-335)

In these lines, the Cretan captain Idomeneus is defining what makes a warrior brave. Idomeneus admits he is afraid; his fear (due to his awareness of the danger of battle) is what makes him “tense,” but his fear is not “great.” It does not overwhelm him and cause him to “blanche,” or freeze. He stays steady despite it; he is unshaken. This attitude is the definition of dauntlessness.

Throughout the *Iliad*, various Greek warriors have moments of what I call dauntlessness, which Homer notes by the use of epithets such as “never-shaken” (ού ταρβήσας), “never flinching” (ἄτρομος), “staunch” (κραιπερός, τλήμων), or “steadfast” (ἔμπεδόν, μενεχάρμην, μενεδήτιος).<sup>59</sup> These epithets are invoked when the warriors remain calm and continue to fight,

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<sup>58</sup>Adkins (1972) 18; Smith (2016) 22.

<sup>59</sup>Some examples can be found at V.316, XI.452, XI.549, XII.49, XIII.293, XVI.176 and XVII.327, amongst other places. These moments of dauntlessness are also often accompanied by references to the warrior

despite being afraid.<sup>60</sup> In these moments, they are not overruled by the fear they feel, but acknowledge it and stay steady despite it; they are undaunted by their fear or their challenges.

It would be possible here to see dauntlessness and courage as the same virtue; they both seem to be invoked in moments of bravery. In fact, the *μενε-* root of some of the dauntless vocabulary is related to the verb *μένω*, discussed above within the courage section, and speaks to the relationship between dauntlessness and courage.<sup>61</sup> However, though they may be related, there is a discernible difference between the two values. Where courage is about deciding to stand one's ground, dauntlessness is more of a test. It asks whether a warrior can *continue* to stand his ground under great pain or fear, or even in the face of his own death, and ultimately, even if afraid, be unmoved by those challenges.<sup>62</sup> In the *Iliad*, courage is almost an initiatory action, getting the warrior out onto the battlefield and into the action, standing his ground against the enemy. The virtue of dauntlessness is invoked when a warrior continues to stay steady in the face of an onslaught of challenges.

Once again, Diomedes and Odysseus serve as the best examples.<sup>63</sup> During Diomedes' *aristeia*, the goddess Athena lifts the veil over his eyes, allowing him to see, and fight, the gods on the battlefield.<sup>64</sup> At one point he charges Aeneas, "though what he saw was lord Apollo himself,

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being like iron (ἀτειρής, ἴφθιμος). For a discussion of iron imagery in relation to Penthesileia's dauntlessness, see p. 64.

<sup>60</sup>Here again, Paris falls short. Whereas true warriors are described in the *Iliad* with epithets speaking to a level of steadiness and unshaken resolve, Helen criticizes Paris by claiming he "has no steadiness in his spirit" (VI.415-417).

<sup>61</sup>See p. 22 for a discussion of the courage vocabulary.

<sup>62</sup>The second factor that Tyrtaeus (Fragment 9, ln. 19, Campbell) names as necessary to make a man good in war is the moment when a man "makes his heart and soul steadfast" (my own translation of ψυχὴν καὶ θυμὸν τλήμονα παρθέμενος). The use of "steadfast" resonates closely with the value of dauntlessness.

<sup>63</sup>I recognize that I took issue with Nagy creating a model based on two warriors (Achilles and Heracles). Odysseus and Diomedes are invoked within my model often, as I found they displayed more of the warrior model than any other warriors in the *Iliad*, but they are not the only warriors I will be using as case studies. Agamemnon and Idomeneus have already been mentioned, and in future sections, warriors such as Menelaus, Nestor, Achilles, and Eurypylus will be studied, as well.

<sup>64</sup>Here it is worth mentioning that both Odysseus and Diomedes display dauntlessness during their *aristeiai*. For a more in-depth discussion, see pp. 46-49.

guarding, spearing his arms above the fighter, but even before the mighty god he would not flinch” (V.497-499). Diomedes has shown his courage by making his stand on the front lines of the battlefield, and he has now come up against a god. In this moment, he is faced with a challenge of dauntlessness, not courage. Will he flinch and be shaken by the god? When he is not, and he continues to fight, he displays dauntlessness.

Odysseus, too, has an exemplary moment of dauntlessness during his own *aristeia* later in the *Iliad*, this time in the face of great pain—caught alone on the front lines, he has been speared by his ribs by a Trojan warrior, but still he “kept on lunging, spearing, keeping death at bay” (XI.569-570). Odysseus’ ability to continue fighting, to be undaunted by his wound, to stay steady and unshaken, keeps him alive and his death at bay until Menelaus and the other warriors can come to his aid.<sup>65</sup> If he had let his pain from his wound and fear of death overwhelm him, he would have been killed.<sup>66</sup>

Because a warrior’s dauntlessness is his ability to remain unshaken when confronted with challenges such as death, great pain, or fear, dauntlessness is therefore intricately tied to fear. Every single warrior in the *Iliad* has moments of fear, even Achilles (XX.302), and sometimes when the warriors are outnumbered, they choose to leave the battlefield and live another day, without feeling ashamed for doing so (V.656-657, XIII.528-530). Many Homeric scholars choose to see these moments of fear as a transgression of the warrior code. They believe that the strict warrior code does not allow for fear and retreat, so when the warriors do feel fear and choose to retreat, they are

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<sup>65</sup>Pain is a common challenge that the warriors of the *Iliad* face, and an area where dauntlessness is often displayed. Hector, injured with a spear to the neck, refuses to quit the battle (VII.304) and Agamemnon, speared under the elbow, also refuses to leave the fight (XI.296). Even outside of battle one can show dauntlessness, as Eurypylus does when he limps into the Greek camp, sweat streaming down his face and blood flowing from his wound, but with a firm will and an unbroken stride (XI.970-972).

<sup>66</sup>The Greek warriors are not the only ones to display dauntlessness. Hector shows it when the tide of the battle turns against the Trojans, and he knows that the odds are not in his favor, yet he chooses to remain on the battlefield, unintimidated by the fact that fate is now against the Trojans (XVI.427-428).

acting against the code. In the words of one such scholar, “Hektor, Diomedes, and Odysseus set themselves up an admirable but exceptionally high standard—and ultimately fail to live up to it”<sup>67</sup> because they feel fear. A deeper reading of those moments, however, reveal that the Homeric warrior is not asked by the warrior model to be unafraid, but he is asked to be dauntless; to see the very truth of his situation—that he is fighting a god, or that he is in great pain, or even that his own death is near—and despite his fear, choose to remain and face the challenge head on.<sup>68</sup>

Accordingly, perhaps dauntlessness is best seen in the moments where the warriors confront their own mortality.<sup>69</sup> Van Wees believes that the Homeric warriors “cope with fear when escape [of death] is or seems impossible...[by displaying] a quiet resignation to death.”<sup>70</sup> Alternatively, Finley believes that Achilles and Hector “railed openly against their doom.”<sup>71</sup> The confusion here is due to the fact both Hector and Achilles display dauntlessness when confronted with thoughts of their deaths, and Van Wees and Finley are confusing dauntlessness for either resignation or anger.

Achilles and Hector have the two most famous deaths of the Trojan War, and when confronted with their mortality, both warriors are dauntless. During the course of the *Iliad* we see each warrior acknowledge his coming end, and refuse to let the fear of it overrule him. Both of these men know their fates: Achilles has made the choice to fight at Troy, knowing his death is prophesied there, in order to have a chance at eternal glory (IX.499-505). Hector, though his death is not prophesied, seems to be aware of the grim chances of the Trojans during the war. Speaking

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<sup>67</sup>Van Wees (2009) 10.

<sup>68</sup>Had I more time, I would argue that the moment the warrior sees the truth of his situation is related to Aristotle’s idea of *anagnorisis*, or recognition, a key feature in Greek tragedy.

<sup>69</sup>For a historical example of dauntlessness in the face of mortality, see Herodotus’ description of the Battle of Thermopylae (*The Histories*, Book 7). The 300 Spartan men knew they were going to die, but chose to face the Persians anyway.

<sup>70</sup>Van Wees (2009) 10.

<sup>71</sup>Finley (2002) 115.

to his wife Andromache when he briefly returns to Troy, he says, “for in my heart and soul I also know this well: the day will come when sacred Troy must die, Priam must die and all his people with him” (VI.530-532). Since Hector is both Priam’s son, and the main defender of the city, this speech reveals that he believes it likely that he himself will die.

Hector feels fear. He is afraid that Troy will be overtaken, and he is afraid to see his wife dragged away as a slave, and his own son and people killed. But he does not let this fear stop him from returning to the battlefield. The one time Hector is overruled by his fear is when he faces Achilles one-on-one. His fear overtakes him, and he flees until he is tricked by the goddess Athena to stand his ground against Achilles. Yet when Hector realizes that Athena has fooled him and that he is alone against Achilles, he does not despair or cry out for help. Instead, he says “So now I meet my doom. Well let me die—but not without struggle, not without glory, no, in some great clash of arms that even men to come will hear of down the years!” (XXII.359-362).

In the exact moment of his death, Hector shows off the quality of dauntlessness that the Homeric warriors valued so greatly. When he is unable to stand his ground against Achilles, his fear overrules his courage. But when he is able to turn around and face Achilles, fully knowing he is about to meet his death—“so now I meet my doom”—yet being unshaken by this realization and meeting his challenge head on—“well let me die,” that is dauntlessness. It is not Hector railing against his death, as Finley would argue, or Hector quietly resigning himself to it, as Van Wees would argue. It is Hector making a choice about how he wants to face his death, and that is with dauntlessness. It is because of his dauntlessness that he meets his death striving for and ultimately achieving the honor, glory, and fame for which a true Homeric warrior yearns.

Achilles, too, invokes the same quality as he prepares to meet Hector in battle to avenge the death of Patroclus:

For my own death, I'll meet it freely—whenever Zeus and the other deathless gods would like to bring it on! Not even Heracles fled his death, for all his power...And I too, if the same fate waits for me...I'll lie in peace, once I've gone down to death. But now, for the moment, let me seize great glory!" (XVIII.137-144)

Achilles sees the truth of his life: that he is fated to meet his death soon, and he will not get to live out a life of tranquility and happiness, and he is at peace with that. His attitude is not one of resignation, but of acceptance. Achilles still has moments of fear while fighting, as when he fears Aeneas will pierce his shield with a spear (XX.302), but he does not allow dread for his future death to overshadow his actions on the battlefield. He knows he cannot control when he dies, and when it comes, he will meet it freely. But until then, he will seize great glory, undaunted by his mortality.

By studying Achilles and Hector, we can see Van Wees and Finley are mistaken in their interpretations of these men. They are not raging to their end about the unfairness of their deaths, like Finley believes, nor are they resigned to die. When confronted with their mortality, they are dauntless. They have accepted their deaths will come, and though Hector is afraid when he knows he is about to die, and Achilles is afraid when he thinks he might die, both warriors continue fighting without letting that fear overcome them.<sup>72</sup>

Given that the warriors had to face death every time they entered the battlefield, dauntlessness is not the only warrior trait associated with death. The warrior obsession with glory also offers a motivation for why they would be so willing to die “freely,” as long as they win great glory for themselves.

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<sup>72</sup>For more examples of the dauntlessness of Hector and Achilles in the face of their deaths, see XXII.359-362 (Hector) and both XIX.498-501 and XXI.119-124 (Achilles).

### Reputation: The Love of Glory

*“two fates bear me on to the day of death. If I hold out here and I lay siege to Troy, my journey home is gone, but my glory never dies. If I voyage back to the fatherland I love, my pride, my glory dies...true, but the life that’s left in me will be long, the stroke of death will not come on me quickly.” (IX.499-505)*

When an embassy of Greek soldiers come to visit Achilles while he sits out from the Trojan War, he utters the lines above, revealing that at the very core of his being, he believes that glory is a worthy motivation to die for. He knew the two fates set before him, and he chose to come to Troy, to die in battle, but live forever in the memory of his glory. The Homeric battlefield is the place “where men win glory” (I.583-584, IV.259), so glory can be defined as fame, or renown, won through courage, dauntlessness, and skill in battle, and the achievement of glory immortalizes the warriors by boosting their reputations.<sup>73</sup>

The importance of glory is echoed throughout the entirety of the *Iliad*, as the ability to win fame and glory is used as motivation for the warriors over and over again.<sup>74</sup> The most common understanding of this obsession is because glory in life wins a warrior a legacy and fame after their death; without being remembered and exalted by the next generations, a warrior dies for nothing. Glory (κλέος) is the closest thing to immortality that a man is allowed in the Homeric universe,<sup>75</sup> and so it becomes somewhat of a coping mechanism for the warriors of the *Iliad*, as a way to come to terms with their impending deaths. Since κλέος can only be won through war, then there is a

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<sup>73</sup>For mentions of κλέος and the idea of immortality in other models, see p. 9.

<sup>74</sup>Examples can be found at V.303-304, VII.105, IX.367, X.250-254, XVI.96-106, XII.374-377, XVII.481-486, etc.

<sup>75</sup>Smith (2016) 17.

deeper purpose to the Trojan War than winning Helen back—it allows the warriors who fight in it to become immortalized.<sup>76</sup>

So, then, we have two reasons why the warriors would strive to win glory: for their own personal desire to be remembered and have a life after death, and also to give reason to the system of warfare that they based their lives around. Given those two reasons, it makes sense why the warriors would be so motivated to fight based on their desire for κλέος.

The motivation works in two ways—besides the positive drive for glory, the warriors could also be motivated by the negative opposite of glory: humiliation and shame. During a moment of intense fighting between the Trojans and Greeks, Diomedes and Nestor have been forced to retreat after charging at Hector, and Diomedes pauses, worried that “one day this Hector will vaunt among his Trojans, ‘Diomedes ran for his ships—I drove him back!’ So he’ll boast, I know—let the great earth gape and take me down that day!” (VIII.168-171). Diomedes, knowing in his heart that the strategic move is to turn back, is almost driven to despair by the idea of what Hector will say about him to the Trojans—how Hector will shame and ruin Diomedes’ reputation. However, Nestor sets him straight immediately: “Nonsense, steady Tydeus’ son—such loose talk! Let Hector call you a coward, scorn your courage—the Trojan and Dardan troops will never believe him,” (VIII.173-175). Nestor knows Diomedes’ reputation as a skilled warrior will not be ruined by one moment of retreat and Diomedes is convinced and they return to the Greek camp.<sup>77</sup> But the fact that he

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<sup>76</sup>By the later Archaic and Classical periods of Ancient Greece, heroes were physically worshipped as semi-divine spirits in hero-cults, but the evidence is not conclusive on whether this practice happened during the Mycenaean Age, when the Trojan War would have taken place. Thus, we cannot say the warriors of the Trojan War knew they could be literally worshipped as gods if they attained enough κλέος, but in the later centuries, many of them were. For more, see Farnell (1921).

<sup>77</sup>In fact, retreat was not necessarily a shameful thing for either side. Sometimes it was the only logical choice, and throughout the *Iliad*, both the Greeks (V.685-686, V.720, V.806, V.949 VI.126) and the Trojans (IV.620, IV.583, IV.574, V.21) retreat or give ground to the opposite side.

Athena even urges Diomedes to leave his war prizes behind when he and Odysseus raid the camp of the Thracians (X.588-590). In the cases of life or death, it seems, reputation and glory was not as important as survival.

stalled, willing to risk both of their lives, just out of fear of Hector besmirching his reputation, reveals the power of reputation and humiliation in the Homeric world.

Diomedes is not the only warrior willing to risk his life to avoid shame and humiliation. During the fighting over Patroclus' body, Menelaus motivates the Greek warriors to fight harder by exploiting this fear. Menelaus warns the Greek warriors that they will die of shame if they lose Patroclus' body to the Trojans (XVII.290-291), which ultimately works as a motivation tool, as the Greeks recover Patroclus' body and bring him back to Achilles. In fact, the fight for Patroclus' body is what instigates Menelaus' *aristeia*. He physically stands astride Patroclus' corpse to protect it and battle off all Trojans that would take it. When he kills a Trojan warrior, he debates leaving Patroclus' body to strip the man he killed of his armor—a γέρας (war prize) that he is entitled to, and that he is owed as a physical symbol of his excellence in battle. Menelaus agonizes over the decision: "If I leave this splendid gear and desert Patroclus—who fell here fighting, all to redeem my honor—won't any comrade curse me, seeing me break away?" (XVII.102-104) His ultimate choice, to leave the armor of the man he killed and instead to fight Hector for Patroclus' body, shows the power of the fear of humiliation. Menelaus is willing to let go of a symbol of his own honor and value—the armor of a Trojan he killed—in order to not be shamed for making the wrong choice in the eyes of the community. Though the men of the *Iliad* pursue glory and war prizes throughout the epic to cement their status and reputation as warriors, the thought of humiliation and shame in the eyes of their fellow warriors is just as motivating as individualistic glory.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>E.R. Dodds argued in *The Greeks and the Irrational* that this is because Homeric society was a shame culture, where "the strongest moral force which Homeric man knows is not the gear of god, but respect for public opinion" (18). For further reading on the Homeric shame culture, see Dodds (1966). For more instances of motivation through shame, see V.567, V.610-612, VI.523-525, VIII.260-262, XI.364-366, XII.480 and XXII.125-126.

Glory only matters when there is an audience. These warriors depend on other people to hear their stories and see their γέρας. Thus, the love of glory, though an individualistic value, has communal or cooperative elements of thinking. Even within the individualistic virtues, there are subtler emotions going on besides competition and glorification of the self.<sup>79</sup> Courage has strands of empathy, a willingness to see the life of the warrior next to oneself as just as valuable as one's own, and dauntlessness can best be showcased when one is challenged with fear or pain. Even within these individualistic values, we find the cooperative or quiet virtues. Understanding that subtlety, we can now turn to the fully cooperative values of the warriors of the *Iliad*.

## Cooperative Values

### **The Ability to Yield**

*"Yielding is far better."* (I.320)

Yielding is the first piece of advice that Nestor gives during the long course of the *Iliad*, as he beseeches Agamemnon and Achilles to end their anger towards one another. The fact that Achilles refuses to listen to this advice is the reason why he "cost the Achaeans countless losses" (I.2). In light of this, I believe Adkins is mistaken in arguing that cooperative excellences are less important than competitive ones in the *Iliad*; it is Achilles' inability to yield (a cooperative virtue) that motivates the entire action of the *Iliad*.

Throughout much of the *Iliad*, Achilles does not act like the other warriors. He refuses to fight, and going beyond that, he asks his goddess mother to plead with Zeus to make the Greeks lose the war, so that Agamemnon will regret disgracing him (I.489-490). Achilles initially may be

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<sup>79</sup>Through arguing that competitive values are more important than cooperative values, Adkins misses these moments where the competitive values are intertwined *with* the cooperative values.

somewhat “right” according to the warrior code, by refusing to take less than he was owed and refusing to continue fighting for Agamemnon after being insulted by him. However, “Agamemnon is now prepared to restore everything the code demands, and the true hero ought therefore to abandon his anger, accept the gifts and return to battle.”<sup>80</sup> Though at first, Agamemnon should not have taken Achilles’ γέρας, the woman Briseis, he made up for his transgression and not only offered Achilles Briseis back, but offered many other treasures and honors, as well, in the hopes of bringing him back into the war. Agamemnon admitted he was wrong, apologized, and yielded, at least apparently.<sup>81</sup> The problem is that Achilles will not, and his refusal to yield is condemned by the other Greek warriors. His old mentor Phoenix tells him “It’s wrong to have such an iron, ruthless heart” (IX.602), and his best friend Patroclus very nearly curses him out for refusing to fight:

But *you* are intractable, Achilles! Pray god such anger never seizes *me*, such rage you nurse. Cursed in your own courage!...You heart of iron! He was not your father, the horseman Peleus—Thetis was not your mother. Never. The salt gray sunless ocean gave you birth and the towering blank rocks—your temper’s so relentless. (XVI.32-40)

When Achilles refuses to yield, he strays from the warrior code, and the other warriors are furious with him for doing so. Patroclus knows Achilles exemplifies parts of the warrior model, like courage, but his speech to Achilles reveals that his courage and individualistic values are nothing (“cursed”) without the cooperative values, echoing Agamemnon’s quote from the beginning of their argument: “What if you are a great soldier? That’s just a gift of god” (I.211). Achilles is no longer glorified by the Greek army and his friends and companions, because even though he still has all the individualistic virtues of a warrior, even though he is still a great soldier, he does not

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<sup>80</sup>Sale (1963) 94.

<sup>81</sup>Agamemnon does blame his wrongness on the Goddess Ate, the personification of ruin, or errors in judgement, so he is not fully taking responsibility (XIX.100-174). However, he has still admitted his mistake and is intent on setting things right with Achilles, regardless of his reasoning why he made that mistake.

have the cooperative virtues, and without them, he becomes almost inhuman, which is why Patroclus names the gray sunless ocean and towering blank rocks as his true parents. In fact, the words most often associated with inability to yield have to do with iron—ἀτειρής can mean both unyielding, and made of iron, and νηλεές can mean both iron, and pitiless—highlighting, like in Patroclus’ accusation of Achilles, the fact that an inability to yield almost turns a warrior into an inanimate object.<sup>82</sup> Odysseus even begs Achilles to show “human kindness” (XIX.212), paralleling the idea that Achilles is beyond the realm of humanity and being human. Achilles himself mentions that he knows the men must think he was nursed on gall instead of milk (XVI.239), revealing that he understands how in his refusal to yield, he has come across as something inhuman, that nurses on bitter bile instead of milk like a human child.

Therefore, by yielding, a warrior shows his humanity.<sup>83</sup> We can see this in a speech delivered by Menelaus, after Nestor’s son, Antilochus, wins a chariot race against him through a reckless and dangerous move. Menelaus becomes furious and chastises him in front of the entire Greek camp. Chagrined, Antilochus immediately apologizes, and Menelaus responds by saying:

Antilochus, now it is my turn to yield to you for all my mounting anger...you who were never wild or reckless in the past. It’s only youth that got the better of your discretion...I’ll yield to your appeal, I’ll even give you the mare, though she is mine, so our people here will know that the heart inside me is never rigid, unrelenting. (XXIII.668-679)

Menelaus’ words, coupled with those of Phoenix and Patroclus, reveal that the warriors believe an unrelenting heart to be a bad thing. A warrior should exemplify the individualistic values of courage, dauntlessness, and love of glory, yet he also needs to remain compassionate, empathetic,

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<sup>82</sup>ἀτειρής can be seen at III.60, and νηλεές can be seen at IX.497, IX.632, XIII.554, XVI.33, and XVI.204.

<sup>83</sup>I would argue the importance of showing humanity is connected to the importance of community within Homeric society. Community is created by a group of people relying on each other, so the ability to yield and empathy would be critical. Also, the idea that warriors must have humanity relates to my earlier theory that warriors are more human, literally and metaphorically, than heroes. For more, see page p. 4-5.

and willing to admit his mistakes. This complexity is why the Homeric society should never be considered completely competitive. Nestor, Patroclus, and Menelaus all believe that it is important to yield, to relent, to apologize, and to be flexible. If their culture was completely competitive, one would never be exalted for apologizing, as Antilochus is by Menelaus, and a warrior would never give away his own prize in order to be seen as yielding, as Menelaus does. But the fact that these “quieter” actions *are* exalted tells us that in Homeric society, cooperative values were just as important as individualistic values. A warrior must be able to admit his wrongs, move past them, and have empathy for others when he is wrong—or men will die, like they do when Achilles refuses to yield and fight. Therefore, the ability to yield is tied to empathy, our next and final value.

### **Empathy**

*“Splendid—you are my friend, my guest from the days of our grandfathers long ago!...Come, let us keep clear of each other’s spears, even there in the thick of battle. Look, plenty of Trojans there for me to kill.. And plenty of Argives too—kill them if you can. But let’s trade armor. The men must know our claim: we are sworn friends from our fathers’ days till now!” (VI.257-277)*

Given the violence and bloodshed that dominates the *Iliad*, empathy is not the first emotion that comes to mind about the Homeric warriors, but it shows up time and time again. The ability to have or show pity (οἰκτεῖρω), mercy (ἐλεέω), and respect (αἰδέομαι) for others, as well as be gentle (μεῖλιχος) and kind (ἐνηεῖης), come up prominently during discussions throughout the *Iliad*, particularly around the behavior of Achilles, who seems to be have none of these traits—that is, until his meeting with Priam at the end of the *Iliad*. Yet, the other warriors show compassion towards both the men on their own side, and admire and respect the warriors on the opposing side. Those feelings of compassion, admiration, and respect all stem from an ability to see the opposing side as fellow warriors. In the Trojan War, the Greeks and Trojans do not seek to dehumanize each other, but actively admire, compliment, and respect each other. This ability to see each other as

more than enemies, but as human beings, stems from the value of empathy, and so I have chosen to highlight those moments of compassion, admiration, and respect as moments of empathy.

It makes sense for the warriors to feel empathy and compassion for the men on their own side—they have been living and fighting together for ten long years, and even when a fellow warrior is not being particularly courageous or dauntless, the other warriors do not shun them, but either motivate them to feel courageous (albeit often through taunts), or demonstrate an understanding about their feelings. We can see this in Odysseus' actions when Agamemnon tests the resolve of the men by telling them to sail for home. When many of the men are tempted, Odysseus sympathizes with them: “who could blame the Achaeans for chafing, bridling beside the beaked ships? Ah but still—what humiliation it would be to hold out so long, then sail home empty-handed. Courage, my friends, hold out a little longer” (II.346-350). Instead of berating them and insulting their courage, Odysseus sympathizes with the actions of the men and speaks to them with compassion instead of judgement, because he can understand their actions from their point of view, which is the trait of empathy.<sup>84</sup>

Even Agamemnon, the hardened glory-hungry leader of the Achaeans, has moments of compassion and empathy throughout the *Iliad*. When the tide has turned against the Greeks, he prays to Zeus to spare the lives of his men: “So, Father, at least fulfill this prayer for me: let the men escape with their lives if nothing else—” (VIII.277-278). As leader of the Greek side, Agamemnon will be seen as most responsible if they were to lose, which Diomedes points out when his charioteer Sthenelus bristles at Agamemnon's choice to taunt the men to excite them for war (VI.478-483). Agamemnon has sacrificed his own daughter to make it to Troy, and he has a

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<sup>84</sup>Throughout the *Iliad*, the Greek warriors beg Achilles to have empathy for them and show kindness by ultimately deciding to fight, since so many of them are dying. Nestor accuses Achilles of having no pity for the Greeks (XI.787-788), Poseidon claims Achilles has no heart in his chest (XIV.170-173), and Odysseus begs Achilles to show some human kindness (XIX.212-213). Ultimately, none of their accusations or appeals sway him.

lot at stake in the war. Yet in this moment of fear and crisis, he does not pray to win the war, or to sack Troy, but he instead begs Zeus to preserve the life of his men. He does not want his men to die because he sees them as fellow human beings, and he chooses to pray for them instead of his own glory due to his own empathy for them.<sup>85</sup>

Empathy can be easy to understand between warriors that fight and live together. The real test is whether the warrior can have empathy towards those he fights against. And indeed, in the *Iliad* the battlefield is full of moments of respect and compassion between the two sides. Some of this mutual respect was due to adherence to divine law, like the multiple instances of both sides calling a temporary truce to allow the other side to collect their dead and afford them proper burials. At one point, Agamemnon even agrees to a short truce with the Trojans to allow for these rites, telling the Trojans, “I’d never grudge...[the] burning [of the dead]” (VII.471). This sentiment of respect for the rites of the gods and the dead is shared by all warriors and both sides, as Hector demonstrates while bragging about killing whatever Greek man decides to take him up in a duel: “But if I kill *him* and Apollo grants me glory, I’ll strip his gear and haul it back to sacred Troy... But not his body: I’ll hand it back to the decked ships, so the long-haired Achaeans can give him full rites” (VII.95-99). Clearly, the respect for fallen warriors and the rites of the dead is so important that not even war could transgress it, which is why Achilles’ treatment of Hector’s body in the later part of the *Iliad* is so shocking.

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<sup>85</sup>Even in the beginning of the *Iliad*, when it becomes apparent that the plague on the Greeks is due to Agamemnon not relinquishing his war prize, he says “But I am willing to give her back, even so, if that is best for all. What I really want is to keep my people safe, not see them dying” (I.135-139). The fact he then takes Achilles’ war prize as a replacement for his own, instead of waiting for another war prize later, is what sets off Achilles’ anger. Though Agamemnon should not have taken Briseis later, my point here is that in his first moments after learning he is the cause of the troubles of the Greeks, his thought is to help the men, not continue keeping his prize for the sake of his own glory.

One could argue that this respect could be dismissed simply as a respect for the gods and the dead and not an actual respect for the other side, but that does not hold true when we take into account all the other moments of empathy between the two sides. The much-cited interaction of Diomedes and the Trojan Glaucus, which provides the quote heading this section, is one such powerful moment. In the middle of the battlefield, Diomedes learns their families are friends of old, and refuses to fight him on grounds of that friendship, trading armor with him so “the men...[can] know our claim [of friendship]” (VI.277). Diomedes feels no shame for not killing a Trojan, but instead a pride in having a friend. In fact, his pride is so great that he wants to show off to both sides that he and Glaucus respect each other. This is the bond of φιλότης that Adkins mentions.<sup>86</sup> However, contrary to Adkins, I believe this episode is not specific to the φιλότης guest-friend bond, but rather speaks to a larger theme of empathy throughout the *Iliad*. Even though when they first met, Diomedes and Glaucus were preparing to battle to the death, through one conversation they have gone from enemies to friends, because both of them can see past the boundaries of Greek vs. Trojan, and that is due to their empathy. Thus, φιλότης is a symptom of the value of empathy, rather than its own value, as Adkins puts it.

Empathy and respect continue between the commanders in the *Iliad*, as when Agamemnon shows respect for Hector in the midst of battle. At one point early in the day’s fighting, Paris has decided to fight Menelaus one-on-one for the fate of Helen, and Hector tries to get Agamemnon’s attention to discuss the proposition. Agamemnon, seeing him, halts his troops, going so far as to command them to stop throwing stones and shooting arrows at Hector: “Hold back, Argives! Sons of Achaea, stop your salvos! Look, Hector with that flashing helmet of his—the man is trying to tell us something now” (III.99-101), and after ending the fighting so Hector and Paris may come

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<sup>86</sup>For more on φιλότης in Adkins’ model, see p. 11.

near, Agamemnon “rose at once to greet them both” (III.318), as a gesture of respect. In the middle of battle, Agamemnon stops his warriors to hear what Hector has to say, and then greets him and Paris without any hint of malice or hatred, despite their armies being at war. Though these men are enemies, and opposite commanders on the field of war, Agamemnon respects and admires Hector enough to call off his own troops to speak to him.

Hector also shows the same respect towards the Greek warriors, specifically towards Ajax when they duel one-on-one. The duel ends up as a draw, but Hector chooses to part with Ajax by complimenting his “power, build, and sense,” (VII.331) and calling him “the strongest spearman of Achaea” (VII.332). They end the duel by exchanging gifts “unforgettable gifts, so any man may say, Trojan soldier or Argive, ‘First they fought with heart-devouring hatred, then they parted, bound by pacts of friendship’” (VII.345-348). These compliments and gifts serve as both gesture of respect and admiration for Ajax from Hector, and also a public acknowledgement that their relationship has changed from enemies to friends through one interaction.

The value of empathy is also not restricted just to royalty and the commanders, but was shared by all the soldiers. Before Ajax and Hector duel, the Greek army cries out in prayer: “Now let Ajax take this victory, shining triumph! But if you love Hector, if you hold him dear, at least give both men equal strength and glory” (VII.234-236). Though the prayer is in the hopes of Ajax’s victory, the prayer also shows a great respect for Hector, and asks for him to receive equal strength and glory as Ajax, if he is worthy of it.<sup>87</sup> Hector respects Ajax and the Greek army and is respected in turn by Agamemnon and the Greek army. The value of empathy in the warrior code dictates that

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<sup>87</sup>Similarly, before the duel of Menelaus and Paris earlier in the *Iliad*, warriors on both sides ask that “whoever brought this war on both our countries let him rot and sink to the House of Death—but let our pacts of friendship all hold fast!” (III.377-379), pacts of friendship that were made between the two sides before the duel. In the same event, Agamemnon asks for Priam to be brought to supervise the oath, because he trusts and respects him (III.127-128).

no matter what side a warrior fights on, if they are worthy and impressive, they should be treated with respect and empathy. Given this value, to treat the enemy as less than human becomes a transgression of the warrior code. We can see that exact transgression when Achilles chooses to drag Hector's body around Troy instead of turning it back over the Trojans for proper burial rites.<sup>88</sup> Though the Greek warriors' attitude towards his actions is not explicitly mentioned, Homer himself seems to want us to understand Achilles' actions as savage, deeming him "bent on outrage" (XXII.466) when he begins to pierce Hector's feet in order to drag him behind his chariot, and reusing that phrase when Achilles triumphs over the dead body of Hector (XXIII.28) back at the Greek camp.

Even the gods themselves are incensed by Achilles' treatment of Hector. Apollo and Aphrodite show Hector the respect Achilles withholds by anointing his body with oils so that his body does not begin to decay (XXIII.211-220), and after twelve days of Achilles dragging around his corpse, Apollo brings the issue up to the gods in Olympus:

[Achilles is] without a shred of decency in his heart...this Achilles—first he slaughters Hector, he rips away the noble prince's life then lashes him to his chariot, drags him round his beloved comrade's tomb. But why, I ask you? What good will it do him? What honor will he gain? (XXIV.47-62)

Apollo is outraged by Achilles' treatment of Hector, because Achilles refuses to see him with any empathy, and treats his body without any decency, and he has no valid reason for it. Every value in the warrior code is adhered to in order to gain the warrior honor, and when a warrior transgresses the code, he loses his honor. Apollo points out that Achilles cannot gain any honor for his actions,

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<sup>88</sup>Achilles also refuses to treat Hector with any empathy while Hector is still alive. Hector asks Achilles to make a binding oath with him, swearing that they will treat each other's bodies with respect. Achilles responds by refusing the oath and telling Hector there can be no love between them (XXII.301-313). Achilles has no respect or empathy for Hector, which Hector only realizes after Achilles has fatally wounded him: "I know you well...Never a chance that I could win you over...Iron inside your chest, that heart of yours" (XXII.419-421). Before fighting Achilles, Hector proposed an oath because he believed Achilles to have the value of empathy like all of the other warriors. Tragically, it took a fatal wound for Hector to realize Achilles does not have empathy.

because he is acting against the values of the Homeric warriors, and specifically against the value of empathy, which is why Apollo accuses Achilles of not having “a shred of decency in his heart.”

It is worth noting that Apollo is allied with the Trojan side, and wants them to win, but his argument also is persuasive to the gods because by the end of the meeting, despite disagreement from Hera, Zeus decrees that in return for a ransom from Priam, “Achilles must give Hector’s body back” (XXIV.95). The gods do not approve of Achilles’ actions.

Guided by Hermes, Priam is led into the Greek army camp and makes it to Achilles’ tent, where he beseeches him to give Hector’s body back. Achilles is overwhelmed by the emotionality of Priam’s plea, along with his own grief for Patroclus, and longing for his father Peleus, and he breaks down, crying with Priam, and then agreeing to give Hector’s body back. Here, for the very first time in the *Iliad*, we see Achilles yield. His confrontation with Priam has taught him how to, because though Priam may be an old man past his prime, he still models warrior code behaviors. He has courage in coming to Achilles’ tent, dauntlessness in continuing to stand before him, and empathy in kissing Achilles’ hand. Whereas Achilles is a warrior focused on the battlefield aspects of the warrior code, Priam shows him that a man can be a warrior off the battlefield, too, by focusing on using those values to interact with others, and to show humanity. With this lesson, Achilles starts to act like a warrior again. Not only does he afford respect to Hector by giving his body back to his family, but he goes further and asks Priam “how many days do you need to bury Prince Hector? I will hold back myself and keep the Argive armies back that long” (XXIV.772-774), which is a promise he keeps. For the first time in the *Iliad*, Achilles exhibits the warrior values of yielding, and seeing the enemy as human. Though he was naturally born with all the individualistic values of a warrior, through this moment with Priam, and his recognition of Priam

as a human being (and one much like his own father), Achilles has finally begun to have the cooperative virtues of a warrior. He becomes human again.<sup>89</sup>

## Conclusion

Thus, we have a new model of the Homeric warrior. My aim has been to explicitly define the attributes all warriors shared, the values the warriors strived to adhere to, and how they did so. I have attempted to be less narrow in scope than Nagy and more discerning of subtle differences than Adkins.

As we can see, no one value was particularly valued above all the others: Achilles' skill in battle does not exempt him from the contempt of the other Greek warriors when he refuses to yield. Similarly, Paris' beauty and royalty may gain him a place of leadership among the Trojans, but they still disdain his lack of skill in battle. However, that is not to say that values and attributes do not interact with each other. Though there may not be a hierarchy of traits in the warrior model, some attributes and values still depend on others. For the attributes, royalty is a necessary trait to signify divine approval of leadership, but it can be overruled when someone less royal but more skilled is needed for a specific task or contest, which we saw with both Diomedes (X.278-280) and Menelaus (XXIII.638-642). Beauty is a double-edged sword in the attributes: it, too, is necessary for all heroes, but it can be used as an insult if the warrior does not demonstrate any other values or attributes, as in the case of Paris. However, though a royal lineage could be ignored in favor of skill in battle in certain cases, there is no instance in the *Iliad* of an ugly but skilled

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<sup>89</sup>William Race elegantly argues that the honor Zeus promises to grant Achilles will be the honor he receives from having empathy and compassion for Priam and not the physical honors of the ransom that Priam brings, lending credence to the idea that empathy was a value worthy of honoring. For more, see Race (2014).

warrior being exalted. Skill in battle, it seems, could not overrule an ugly face, perhaps because beauty was intended to be seen as an indication of great prowess in battle.<sup>90</sup>

On the battlefield, skill in battle is also required for courage and dauntlessness to be shown. Odysseus and Diomedes exhibit dauntlessness and courage during their *aristeiai*, and *aristeiai* are a result of skill in battle. Thus, given the importance of skill in battle, it could be tempting to claim, like Zavaily, that skill in battle is the only part of the model that matters.<sup>91</sup> However, both courage and dauntlessness are not solely shown on the battlefield. Diomedes stands his ground against Agamemnon during an argument in the Greek camp (IX.38-56), demonstrating his courage. The Greek warrior Eurypylus limps into camp heavily wounded, with “the sweat... streaming down his face and back, and the dark blood still flow[ing] from his ugly wound, but the man’s will was firm, he never broke his stride” (XI.970-972). Eurypylus might be outside of the battlefield, but he is still being dauntless by meeting his challenge of pain with an unbroken stride and a firm will. In both of these instances with Diomedes and Eurypylus, their courage and dauntlessness is independent on their skill in battle. Courage can happen anytime a warrior stands his ground in any way, whether on the battlefield or in an argument, and dauntlessness is invoked whenever a challenge is met without flinching, whether that challenge is a physical task in war or a more emotional challenge of withstanding fear and pain. Courage and dauntlessness are also the means by which a warrior can win glory. The Homeric warriors want public recognition of their courage and dauntlessness as a way to win a noble and impressive reputation.<sup>92</sup> Thus, love of glory does

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<sup>90</sup>For more on beauty as a reflection of skill in battle, see p. 17 and fn 33.

<sup>91</sup>Zavaily (2020) 47.

<sup>92</sup>This is best illustrated by the interaction between Glaucus and Sarpedon in Book 12 of the *Iliad*, where Sarpedon claims that if he was immortal, he would have no need for battle, because he would not need to be immortalized by the fame battle brings men (XII.374-377). However, since the warriors are not immortal, they are motivated to fight by the idea of winning fame and glory on the battlefield, and attaining a sort of immortality through that fame.

depend on courage and dauntlessness. Yet, again, reputation was not the sole important motivation of the warrior. At one point in the *Iliad*, Diomedes debates whether he should risk his life by staying behind in the enemy camp to grab armor—war prizes—from the men he had slaughtered. Athena herself descends from Olympus to tell him to leave the armor and think only of getting back to the Greek army camp (X.588-590). In life or death instances, it seems, reputation is not worth losing your life.<sup>93</sup> Of course, Achilles famously goes to his death willingly, believing the glory he will win from it is a fair trade-off, which either places Achilles outside of the warrior code in that thinking, or, more likely, signifies that reputation is worth dying for in some instances, and to gain a small amount of armor from an enemy camp is not one of them.<sup>94</sup>

Courage is not solely motivated by the warrior's desire for glory, though. As mentioned above, courage has threads of empathy in it, through the recognition that warriors stand their ground and fight because their life was not worth more than any other warrior's. Thus, our cooperative values are intertwined with and depend on some of our individualistic ones, as well. The cooperative values, ability to yield and empathy, humanize the warrior. The ability to yield is tied to anger, and is often associated in Greek with words that mean "iron," "rigid," and "inflexible." When a warrior (often Achilles) is too angry to yield, he becomes so rigid he is more like iron than a human. In Achilles, that rigidity, the refusal to change his mind due to his anger, leads to a lack of empathy, and according to Nestor, not even his great bravery and courage can fix that inhumanness: "But Achilles, brave as he is, he has no care, no pity for our Achaeans... he'll reap the rewards of that great courage of his *alone*, I tell you—weep his heart out far too late

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<sup>93</sup>Nestor tries to teach Diomedes this lesson earlier in the *Iliad* as well, when he urges Diomedes to leave the frontlines despite Diomedes' worrying it will damage his reputation. Nestor does eventually convince Diomedes. For more, see pp. 34-35.

<sup>94</sup>For more discussion on the "proper" way a hero should die, see Nagy (2013) 30.

when our troops are dead and gone” (XI.787-911). In short, individualistic virtues are nothing without the humanism that the cooperative ones bring.

So as we can see, though one value or attribute is the most important one in the model, they do each lean on each other. They also depend on the context of the situation. In contests and specific trials, skill in battle can overrule a royal rank. Beauty is necessary for all warriors, but without the other warrior traits, it can be leveraged as an insult. When courage and dauntlessness are demonstrated on the battlefield, it is often through an *aristeia*, and therefore skill in battle is required, but both virtues can also be shown off the battlefield. Courage relies on empathy, as well, which humanizes the warrior, along with the ability to yield. Thus we can see that the values and attributes are so greatly intertwined that each one is necessary for the entire model.

Since we have reached the conclusion of what makes a Homeric warrior, we can turn to the goals of the Homeric warrior. I do agree with Finley that *τιμή* is the ultimate goal of every warrior.<sup>95</sup> I have endeavored to create a model that explains how they earn that *τιμή*, which Finley neglected to do. I see *τιμή* not as part of the warrior model itself, but as something earned when a warrior demonstrates the values of the warrior model. When they have been courageous, or dauntless, or displayed great *ἀρετή* in battle, they are recognized by the *γέγρα*, gifts of honor. Honor was the ultimate prize of a warrior, both a public acknowledgement of their superiority, and a form of immortality, ensuring that even if a warrior dies, both his story and his *γέγρα* may be passed down from generation to generation.<sup>96</sup> As Finley says, each of these values and actions—

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<sup>95</sup>It is important with *τιμή* to separate our modern view of honor with the Homeric view of honor. In modern usage, we think of being honorable as a positive moral judgement of someone’s character. They act in accordance with social values that we believe are indications of good character (being gracious, considerate, compassionate, etc.), and so we see them as honorable. The Homeric usage of *τιμή* also demonstrates an accordance, this time to the values and of the warrior code. However, in Homer *τιμή* is not a moral judgment, but rather a materialistic prize. A warrior *wins* honor when he has acted in accordance with the warrior code. Homeric warriors cannot be honorable in a *moral* sense, but they can be honorable by *winning* honors.

<sup>96</sup>Reyes (2002) 23.

skill in battle, courage, dauntlessness, the ability to yield—all of them serve to create honor for the warrior when they demonstrate the value. Thus, with our attributes-values model of the Homeric warrior, we can see what attributes and values a warrior must uphold in order to gain his ultimate goal of honor and remembrance.

Now that we have an understanding of an organized and clear model of the Homeric warrior, we can apply this model to those who have generally been a neglected a part of this male-dominated world of warriorship—women. First, we turn to the few women in Ancient Greek literature who fought and killed as warriors within their own rights—the Amazons Hippolyta, Antiope, and Penthesileia.

## Chapter Two

### Ἀμαζόνες ἀντιάνειραι: Amazons, Women Equal to Men

In the *Iliad*, all of the warriors are men. But mentioned sporadically throughout the *Iliad* are a famous tribe of female warriors, warriors whom Achilles, Theseus, and Heracles all face in battle. These women are the Amazons, a band of women so powerful in war that their Homeric epithet is ἀντιάνειραι: equals of men.<sup>97</sup>

The Amazons are found throughout Greek myth—Achilles fights Queen Penthesileia, Heracles' ninth labor involves securing the girdle of Queen Hippolyta, and Theseus' abduction of Antiope creates a war between the Amazons and the Athenians so great and so memorable that a frieze of this Amazonomachy can be found on the Parthenon. Undoubtedly, the Amazons were an important part of Greek mythology and literature. Though (and maybe even because) the ancient Greeks were dominated by male warriors in both society and literature, they were fascinated with the idea of female warriors.

And warriors these women were. Using evidence from ancient Greek epics and art, scholars have expanded on the Homeric epithet of these women; not only were they equal to men, but they demonstrated the same traits as the Homeric warriors. They argue that the Amazons are connected to “warrior codes of honor,”<sup>98</sup> and are “heroic on the Greek model,”<sup>99</sup> displaying the same traits as Homeric warriors.<sup>100</sup> In a way, this makes sense. Every great warrior—Heracles, Theseus, Achilles—proved his prowess by defeating these women. Therefore, in order to boost the

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<sup>97</sup>Ἀντιάνειραι can be found at III.189 and VI.186 in the original Greek text of the *Iliad*.

<sup>98</sup>Langdon (2001).

<sup>99</sup>Fantham (1995) 134. Fantham neglects to elaborate on what that model is and how the Amazons fit into it.

<sup>100</sup>Mayor (2014) 27.

reputations of those men, these women had to be worthy adversaries.<sup>101</sup> If they were not, then there would be little heroic reputation to be gained in defeating the feminine and the feeble.<sup>102</sup> And because the Amazons had to be powerful opponents for the Greek warriors, they had to demonstrate the same admirable warrior traits that the Greek warriors did. Yet although there has been a recognition that the Amazons adhere to the same model as the Greek warriors, there has not been an extended effort to explore the specific examples in which this is true. To remedy that, the ensuing analysis will apply my Homeric model to three Amazons of myth—Penthesileia, Antiope, and Hippolyta—to show exactly where they do and do not meet the criteria of a Homeric warrior.

Before I examine the narratives of the Amazons, I must emphasize that while they show Greek warrior traits, they are not accepted as Greek warriors. In ancient Greece, the Amazons were thought of as Others—separate entities from the Greek male that at times threatened their authority.<sup>103</sup> As unmarried, sexually free women who fought in battle, the Amazons both challenged and defied the Greek ideal of the woman as wife and mother.<sup>104</sup> And because these women were not subject to the control of Greek men, they threatened the Greek patriarchal system.<sup>105</sup> As such, they could not be tolerated; they had to be conquered.

There were two ways to conquer an Amazon: marriage or death. In either scenario, the Amazon may also be raped by the Greek male warrior, as a way to fully establish supremacy of the Greek male and take away the threatening sexual freedom of the Amazon.<sup>106</sup> Marriage, which only Antiope submits to, returned these wild women to their “natural state,” and represented a

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<sup>101</sup>Mayor (2014) 10-11, 28.

<sup>102</sup>Hardwick (1990) 32.

<sup>103</sup>Penrose, Jr., (2016) 68.

<sup>104</sup>Walcot (1982) 42.

<sup>105</sup>Roque (2017) 39.

<sup>106</sup>Walcot (1982) 42.

“renewal of the proper order of patriarchal civilization.”<sup>107</sup> In her marriage to Theseus, Antiope is unique to the Amazons, for most Amazons would not allow themselves to be ruled by men, and preferred to die, like Penthesileia, in battle against Greek warriors. Some scholars, like Adrienne Mayor, choose to see their valiant deaths in battle as another way in which the Amazons partake in Greek warrior ideals—by dying a beautiful, heroic death on the battlefield.<sup>108</sup> Others, like Ken Dowden, disagree, and believe the death of Amazons in myth is an overarching statement that only Greek males should be allowed to be warriors, and indeed that males are supreme in general.<sup>109</sup> Though the aim of this chapter is not to decide what Amazon death means in Greek mythology, I believe the best interpretation would draw on both Mayor and Dowden’s perspectives. The Amazon myth is conveyed through a Greek lens, so it is difficult to imagine the myth not being used to reinforce their values. Dowden even says it is “impossible” to do so—“in Greek society [the Amazons] can only reinforce the values of those who deploy them.”<sup>110</sup> Therefore, the Amazons must die in order to reinforce Greek male warrior supremacy. However, both the Amazons Penthesileia and Antiope are mentioned as dying in a “heroic” way,<sup>111</sup> which shows a level of admiration and respect for them and their skills in battle, and an understanding of the Amazons as similar to the Greek male heroes, as both are “heroic.” That is paradox of the Amazons; they are both admired and conquered, feared and desired.

In our three Amazonian case studies, Penthesileia is killed, Antiope is married (maybe raped), Hippolyta raped, and killed. While each Amazon is conquered by a Greek male warrior, albeit in different ways, their eventual conquering does not take away from their status as warriors,

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<sup>107</sup>Fantham (1995) 132.

<sup>108</sup>Mayor (2014) 28. For the importance of a beautiful death for a hero, see Nagy (2013) 30.

<sup>109</sup>Dowden (1997) 120.

<sup>110</sup>Dowden (1997) 124.

<sup>111</sup>Diod. Sic., 2.46.5-6.

much like how Hector's death did not negate his warrior nature when he was alive.<sup>112</sup> By examining each woman's narrative in the coming chapter, we will identify the areas of the Homeric warrior model that she exemplifies, and will then discuss her inevitable conquering by the Greek male warrior.

One significant problem with these case studies is the fragmentary sources for the myths of the women. I have had to move across genres and time periods to compile enough information about each woman to be able to study them. There is an inherent problem in this fragmentary research: I have created a model based on the epic poetry of Homer in the Archaic period of Greece, and then applied it to sources from Greek historical accounts (Apollodorus and Diodorus), Greek epic poetry written in the Roman period (Quintus Symrnaeus), Roman tragedy (Seneca), and Roman poetry (Ovid), among others. There are a lot of variables changing throughout the sources: time period, views of the author, geographic location, and genre. As each of those variables change, the author of the fragments is influenced with new biases that color his retelling, and thus, many different versions of the myths arise. However, I still believe examination of all these fragments as a group is a worthwhile endeavor. These writers were not trying to create a new myth, but rather were part of a tradition of retelling and rerecording myths that had been known for centuries. Each of these women and their myths existed close to Homeric times. Penthesileia is from the *Aethiopsis*, a Greek epic poem written around the time of Homer, but lost. Vases depicting her and her story exist from the Greek Archaic period, indicating her story was already widely known by then.<sup>113</sup> The myth of Antiope is referenced in art dating back to 500 B.C., just as the myth of Hippolyta is referenced in art from the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.<sup>114</sup> Though the fragments are from many different time

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<sup>112</sup>Again, it is worth mentioning Nagy here and his idea that a proper death is *essential* for a hero. See Nagy (2013) 30.

<sup>113</sup>Mayor (2014) 298.

<sup>114</sup>Mayor (2014) 252, 266.

periods and genres, they are all retellings of known myths that existed during Archaic and Classical Greece, which is why I believe it is still fair to apply the model to the fragments. While applying the model, I do acknowledge the different versions of these myths, and explore some ways the background of the authors could influence them to present each woman in the way they did.<sup>115</sup>

By drawing on these fragmentary accounts, we can piece together narratives of these women. Throughout each woman's narrative, I will point out the moments where she embodies my Homeric model, and then end by discussing her conquering by a Greek male warrior. With this chapter I hope to shed some light on these fierce, untamed women, and ultimately to argue that they deserve to be considered Homeric warriors.

### **Penthesileia**

We begin with Penthesileia, because, like Achilles and Diomedes and Odysseus, she herself is a warrior in the Trojan War. Penthesileia's story was recounted in the *Aethiopis*, the lost epic that came after the *Iliad* in the epic cycle. Her story was re-recorded by the Roman writer Quintus Smyrnaeus in his *Posthomerica*, which aimed to recount the events from the end of the *Iliad* to the sack of Troy. The surviving summary of the lost *Aethiopis* matches closely with the story told by Quintus: Penthesileia was an Amazon queen who came to Troy as an ally, fought and killed many Greeks, and was slain by Achilles. Yet when he took off her helmet and saw her face, Achilles fell in love with her, and gave her corpse back to the Trojans so they could bury her with honors. With her death, the last great threat to the Greeks was eliminated.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> For a discussion of Quintus Smyrnaeus' biases in concern to the myth of Penthesileia, see fn. 134

For a discussion of Plutarch's biases in concern to the myth of Antiope, see fn. 146.

For a discussion of Seneca's biases in concern to the myth of Hippolyta, see fn. 159.

For a discussion of Ovid's biases in concern to the myth of Atalanta, see fn. 177.

<sup>116</sup>The summary of Penthesileia's story is based on readings of Apollorodorus' *Library* (Epitome 5.5), Quintus Smyrnaeus' *Posthomerica* (Book 1), Diodorus Siculus' *Library* (2.46.5-6), Proclus' summary of the

Like the Homeric warriors before her, Penthesileia was royalty. She was the daughter of the Amazon Queen Otrere and the god Ares, making her both a queen herself and a demigod (Apollod. *Epit.* 5.5). Given her divine lineage, Penthesileia's royal status (and that of her sisters, Antiope and Hippolyta, as we shall see below) functions similarly to that of the Homeric warriors, by granting legitimacy to her leadership of the Amazons through the favor of the gods. Her demigod nature also places her parallel to Achilles, the only demigod who serves as a main character in the *Iliad*.

She is also remarkably beautiful, and Quintus repeatedly describes her beauty as “godlike” or compares her directly to a goddess.<sup>117</sup> He portrays her beauty as both “fierce” and “radiant” simultaneously, which will be mirrored in Aelian's description of the beauty of Atalanta, a beauty which is both terrifying and alluring to men (Quint. Smyrn., I.57; Ael., *VH*, 13.1). There are two reasons why Quintus may focus on her beauty so intensely. First, her attractiveness is central to her myth, because when Achilles finally vanquishes her, he pulls off her helmet and falls in love with her, so magnificent is she, even in death (Quint. Smyrn. I.659-662, Procl. *Aeth.*). Second, her beauty lends a type of pre-eminence to Penthesileia. It separates her from the other Amazons, and from all others who had come to fight the Greeks before her. It elevates her status. For the Homeric warriors, the attribute that functioned as a status-enhancer was skill in battle. Yet, it is worth noting that the term ὑπέροχος, which is used in the *Iliad* to describe the preeminence of skills of the male warriors, is used in the *Posthomerica* to describe the preeminence of Penthesileia's *beauty*, not her prowess.

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*Aethiopsis*, and *Trojan Women* by Seneca (lines 241-243). These texts will be continually referenced throughout the section, and will be abbreviated accordingly.

<sup>117</sup>Mentions of Penthesileia's beauty in relation to the gods can be found at I.25, I.53, I.190, I.463, and I.661.

That is not to say that Penthesileia was not preeminent in battle. Quintus cites her as the “foremost in the fray,” Diodorus remarks that she “gains distinction in the struggle,” and Dares says she “proved her prowess again and again” through several days of battle (Quint. Smyrn., I.487, Diod. Sic. 2.46.5-6, Dares 36). All writers agree that Penthesileia was skilled in battle, enough to distinguish herself from others. But the Greek terms that Quintus uses to connote “foremost in the fray” are *στόμα χάρις*, a phrase which is *not* used in the *Iliad*, potentially suggesting that while Penthesileia is preeminent in beauty in the same way the Homeric warriors are preeminent in battle, the way she stands out in battle is *not* the exact same way they do. In other words, her beauty is the defining characteristic that makes her special, while the Greek warriors are elevated by their skill in battle. It is telling that Penthesileia’s beauty is ultimately what renders Achilles and the Greek army regretful for her death, not her abilities on the battlefield, which we will explore more when we reach her death.

Now, having established Penthesileia’s character as royal, beautiful, and skilled in battle, we can turn to the beginning of her myth. In every retelling of Penthesileia’s myth, she comes to Troy for Priam’s help before then deciding to join his war. She has committed some sort of pollution, often cited as accidentally killing her sister, and asks for Priam to purify her (Quint. Smyrn., I.20). Once she is free from the stain of pollution, she chooses to fight on Priam’s behalf against the Greeks, who have been practically invincible since the death of Hector. Penthesileia’s polluted action was a cause of shame to her, and Quintus claims that she was driven to Troy by a desire “to flee a hateful slur on her reputation...” (Quint. Smyrn., I.19-21). Penthesileia is by no means the first warrior to choose to serve a foreign king to atone for pollution. Heracles,

Bellerophon, and Achilles himself invoke pollution in their various myths and must be cleansed, which places Penthesileia directly in a known mythic tradition of Greek warriors.<sup>118</sup>

Penthesileia's preoccupation with her reputation also invokes the Homeric obsession with reputation and glory. The Homeric warriors lived within a shame culture and made decisions based on a desire to escape a reputation as a coward. In a similar way, Penthesileia chose to flee her people once they began to reproach her for the death of her sister. Though cowardice is not the same as murder, Penthesileia is still shamed by her actions, and ashamed of her reputation, and so she, too, is bound by a shame culture. This connection between Penthesileia's reputation and her shame brings us to the second reason Quintus claims why she has come to Troy: "she longed for grievous battle" (Quint. Smyrn., I.19-20). Homeric warriors escaped threats of public shaming by demonstrating why they were worthy of their reputations as great warriors. They went out to the battlefield, they stood their ground and demonstrated courage, they were undaunted by challenges, and they slew many men. With all these factors on display, no one could rightfully call them cowards.

Though it is never explicitly stated why she has come to fight the war, the fact that she is longing for battle while also wishing to flee a hateful reputation suggests that they may be connected in her mind, that one may be the answer to the other. Penthesileia may be operating on the same assumptions as the Homeric warriors: if she wins the Trojan War and defeats the Greeks, the hateful slur on her reputation may be lifted, and the chains of the shame culture may release her. And indeed, when she arrives and decides to fight, Priam honors her as a warrior without a shameful reputation. He showers Penthesileia with "every kind of honor and attention," providing her with banquets, "the sort great kings enjoy when they feast to celebrate victory..." and "fine

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<sup>118</sup>Mayor (2014) 291.

presents too, of great value, with the promise of many more if she would help resist the slaughter of the Trojans” (Quint. Smyrn., I.85-92). Priam is presenting her with an “un-shamed” version of herself, by treating her as he would a Homeric warrior—appealing to her sense of reputation and her love of glory. He respects her and acknowledges her status as a powerful warrior by paying her honors and throwing her feasts that could have been thrown for a victorious king. From the very first meeting, he places her as an equal to a conquering king. He gives her gifts because he knows how important gifts are in warrior culture, as a symbol and public acknowledgement of her reputation as a great warrior, and then promises more to her. The fact that he has these gifts ready for her on the day of her arrival leaves no doubt that she, like all of the opposing Greek warriors, came to Troy “seeking renown and recompense.”<sup>119</sup>

The fact that she then accepts these gifts and chooses to fight for Priam means that she is just as swayed by reputation and the promise of glory through public recognition as the Homeric warriors are.<sup>120</sup> It is clear that she is out to win glory for herself on the battlefield, which is a view she herself explicitly expresses during her *aristeia*. Unsatisfied by the common foot soldiers she has been slaughtering, she asks: “where is the great son of Tydeus? Where is the grandson of Aeacus? Where is Ajax? They are reputed the best warriors...” (Quint. Smyrn., I.331-332). Penthesileia’s “scornful words” are inspired by the same warrior model that she and her Achaean opponents follow.<sup>121</sup> Penthesileia does not want to slaughter random soldiers, because there is no glory there. She wants to fight the best the Greek army has to offer, to win herself an impressive reputation as a warrior.

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<sup>119</sup>Mayor (2014) 290-291.

<sup>120</sup>The writer Dictys Cretensis even cites the gifts she is given as the first reason why she may have come to Priam’s aid—“for money,” though the second reason he gives is simply because she had a love of war (Dict. Creten., 3.15). Either way, for money or honor, for material or non-material goods, Penthesileia has come to win a reputation in war, not just receive gifts. She’s here to fight.

<sup>121</sup>Scheijnen (2018) 55.

Achilles even acknowledges that she fights for the same reason he does—love of glory—during their duel, asking her if she really believed she would “return from battle and be given countless gifts by old Priam as a reward for killing the Argives?” (Quint. Smyrn., I.646-648). Though his tone is mocking—at this point it is clear Penthesileia will not survive the duel and return to collect her war prizes—it is still an acknowledgement by Achilles that Penthesileia is motivated by the same things he and the other Homeric warriors are: public gifts as rewards for battle prowess. Thus, we have one overarching motivation driving our beautiful Amazon to Troy: her reputation, both fleeing the hateful one she was given, and proving herself worthy of a new, untarnished one through war with the Greeks.

However, her choice to then stay and fight the Greeks on the behalf of the Trojans has a second motive. Because Penthesileia was purified and saved from pollution by Priam, her decision to then stay and fight his enemies seems to also come from a place of respect for him. It would seem that she feels indebted to Priam for purifying her, and she wishes to return the favor in whatever way she can. Being an Amazon and daughter of Ares, the best way she can help him is through battle. Though this loyalty to Priam is not empathy in its strictest sense, there are still strands of empathy in this loyalty. Penthesileia respects Priam. She is not required by any means to fight the Greeks, but she does so because his enemies have become her enemies; because she feels protective over him. The very first lines she speaks to the Greeks in battle are “Dogs! Today you will pay for the outrage you have done Priam!” (Quint. Smyrn., I.326-327). Although Penthesileia does desire to win herself glory and an untarnished reputation through battle, the fact that she enters the battle specifically as a defender of Priam attests her respect for him and her desire to support him.

When it does come time for her to fight, she has the spirit of the warrior. Quintus describes her as both “keen for battle” and “full of confidence” to fight (Quint. Smyrn., I.170, I.138-141). The night before, she dreams of facing Achilles in a duel, and “her heart was filled with joy at the thought of performing such a feat that very day in the fearsome fray” (Quint. Smyrn., I.131-133). Penthesileia did not desire to be given gifts by Priam for her reputation in words alone, but she wished to go out on the battlefield and earn that reputation and earn those gifts. She longed to show off her prowess in battle, as any Homeric warrior would.

She is also a natural leader of the Trojans, a replacement for Hector.<sup>122</sup> When she goes to meet the Trojan troops, she urges the Trojans to go into “glorious” battle, and they respond to her leadership strongly, with the “the best warriors [quickly mustering] obediently, even though before now they had refused to face all-conquering Achilles” (Quint. Smyrn., I.161-165). Though Trojan morale had been shattered by the death of Hector, Penthesileia appears to them as such a natural leader and replacement for Hector that they are filled with hope again. Quintus describes the Trojans following her like sheep following a ram, and mentions that she was particularly followed by the friends and brothers of Hector, again setting her up as a direct successor to Hector as the leader of the Trojan army (Quint. Smyrn., I.173-176, I.342). The Greeks believed the Trojan morale to be so shattered that they cannot quite believe their eyes when they see the Trojans gathering on the battlefield. They describe the Trojans as now being “keen” and “eager for the fight,” similar terms to those used to describe Penthesileia’s own attitude towards war (Quint. Smyrn., I.212-216). She has filled the Trojan side with her personal confidence and enthusiasm

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<sup>122</sup>A scholiast’s note on the *Iliad* even says that the last line of the *Iliad* after Hector’s death was “and an Amazon came, a daughter of Ares the great-hearted, the slayer of men” (Greek Epic Fragments: The Trojan Cycle. Aethiopsis. Fragment 1). Bringing Penthesileia into the story immediately after Hector dies also parallels her to him, and offers her as a replacement for him, which elevates her status greatly given how much of a threat (and how important) Hector was in the *Iliad*.

for the fight, a task that seemed so daunting the Greeks ascribe this rallying of the Trojans to some divinity (Quint. Smyrn., I.212-216).

And she has fair reason to be eager to fight. Penthesileia's extraordinary battle prowess is mentioned in every surviving ancient account of her myth.<sup>123</sup> By some accounts it takes several days of fighting for her to be killed by Achilles, and in *Posthomerica* she is described as "performing far better at close quarters than the men she fights" (Dares, 36 & Quint. Smyrn., I.420-421). In fact, there was even a lost poem by Stesichorus in which Penthesileia is the one to kill Hector.<sup>124</sup> Though this story makes little sense within the Trojan War cycle as we know it, it does suggest she was seen as an incredible warrior. Since the only Greek warrior who was able to kill Hector was Achilles, simply the suggestion that she could kill Hector places her on par with him.<sup>125</sup>

In Quintus Smyrnaeus' version of her myth, she launches straight into an *aristeia* upon entering the battlefield.<sup>126</sup> She kills eight Argives right away, and many more as time goes on (Quint. Smyrn., I.227-229, I.486-487). Tryphiodorus in his *Taking of Ilios* claims only Achilles could withstand her onslaught, and the Trojans even believe that she will burn the ships of the Greeks, so great is both her lust for battle, and her skill on the field (Tryph., 35 & Quint. Smyrn., I.358-369). In one version of her myth, she does attempt to burn the Achaean ships, a feat only previously attempted by Hector, and Diomedes can "hardly prevent" her from doing so; this turn

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<sup>123</sup>Mentions of her battle prowess can be found in Apollodorus (Epitome 5.5), her fighting scene in Book 1 of *Posthomerica*, Dictys Cretensis' Journal of the Trojan War (4.2), the summary of the *Aethiopsis* by Proclus, Diodorus Siculus (2.46.5-6), the *Aeneid* by Virgil (1.690), *The Taking of Ilios* by Tryphiodorus (35), and many more.

<sup>124</sup>Mayor (2014) 302.

<sup>125</sup>Though she does not kill Hector in most versions of her myth, she does usually kill Machaon, the Greek healer, whom the Greeks tried incredibly hard to protect through Book 11 of the *Iliad*, as they know that without a healer, the entire army suffers. Given Machaon's status as a relatively prominent character in the *Iliad*, and his status as the healer, it is an incredibly high-status kill for Penthesileia, and cements her as a true warrior and a true threat to the Greeks. Penthesileia is also paralleled with Achilles throughout the *Posthomerica*. Both of their names are combinations of the words "pain" or "grief" and "people," and Quintus occasionally gives Penthesileia the epithet "swift."

<sup>126</sup>Penthesileia also has an "arming scene" before her *aristeia*, which was typical of the Greek male warriors in the *Iliad*.

of events scares Agamemnon so much that he keeps the Greek forces in their camp and refuses to allow them to fight (Dares, 30). The gifts Priam honored her with were obviously well-deserved; she has the skill in battle to flatten the Greek forces until Achilles gets involved.

When Penthesileia does fight, however, it is not exactly in the same way the Homeric warriors fight. She does not show her courage by standing her ground, because she does not need to do so: she is the predator lioness leaping on the Greek forces, pursuing them and driving them back. She does not have a need to stand her ground when the Greek forces flee before her. But she still shows courage and bravery. Quintus tells us so: as she charges the Greek lines, her “strength and courage alike increase[ed] all the time” (Quint. Smyrn., I.384-385). The words he uses to describe her strength (ἀλκή) and courage (θάρσος) are the same words used in the *Iliad* to describe the bravery and courage of a number of warriors.<sup>127</sup> While not technically “holding” her ground, an essentially defensive posture, she is aggressively going forth into battle, so she does exemplify the initiative that is part of courage.<sup>128</sup> As we may recall from the *Iliad*, men were called cowards when they hung back by the ships, away from the front lines, which therefore led us to understand courageous warriors as those who eagerly head to battle. As readers, we do not get to see Penthesileia enter battle, but instead we meet her when she is already knee-deep in the action, “charging” forward to face her opponents, evoking that same eagerness to fight in the front lines that defined courageous men in the *Iliad*.<sup>129</sup> In fact, she was so frightening when she charged the Greeks that they were terrified of her, and longed to flee her, not fight her (Quint. Smyrn., I.477-481). In one retelling, the Greeks even hide in their camp while she comes forward every day to

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<sup>127</sup> Ἀλκή is used in III.45, IX.34, IX.39, XIII.48, XII.269, XIII.786, XIII.836, XVI.753, while θάρσος is used V.2, VIII.128, VIII.312, XIV.416.

<sup>128</sup> For the discussion on how the rigidity of definitions can be a drawback to models, see fn. 18.

<sup>129</sup> Instances of Penthesileia charging can be found in I.384, I.401, and I.540 of *Posthomerica*.

slaughter them, pinpointing Penthesileia as the courageous warrior who continually comes onto the battlefield, and marking the Greeks as her cowardly enemies (Dares, 36).

Penthesileia is so formidable in battle because of her dauntlessness. Though in the middle of her *aristeia* she has become “drenched all over in warm blood, her limbs [are still] active and vigorous, her fearless heart unwearied, strong as steel” (Quint. Smyrn., I.387-389). She is undaunted by the physical exertion of the killings—her limbs are still as strong as ever—and by the psychological exhaustions of war—her heart is as strong as ever. The Greek term that has been translated as “unwearied” is ἄτρομος, the same term used in the *Iliad* to describe Diomedes during his *aristeia* and the state of the Myrmidons when Patroclus leads them into battle.<sup>130</sup> It is also the same term that will be used to describe Atalanta by Aelian. Ἄτρομος may be translated literally as “fearlessness,” or “dauntlessness,” making its use particularly relevant to a discussion of Penthesileia’s dauntlessness. The imagery of her as “strong as steel” echoes also the use of terms like ἀτειρής (“to be of iron”), and ἰφθιμος (“man of iron”), which are employed by Homer throughout the *Iliad* when warriors like Hector and Diomedes refuse to give up or get intimidated by the battle.<sup>131</sup> Penthesileia is displaying that same dauntlessness here, conveyed through the story itself—her remaining unwearied during her *aristeia*—and through the emphasis of the same Greek words and imagery used in the *Iliad* during key moments of dauntlessness.

Yet for all her skill in battle, her courage, and her dauntlessness, Penthesileia falls at Achilles hand in their first and only duel. It is important to note that there are more complex reasons why Penthesileia has to die at Achilles’ hand than simply being a matter of her having less battle prowess. The first reason is fate, both her fate and that of Achilles. Achilles cannot fall to her hand,

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<sup>130</sup> Ἄτρομος is used in the *Iliad* at V.126, XVI.163, and XVII.157.

<sup>131</sup> Ἀτειρής is used in III.60 to describe the state of Hector’s heart, and ἰφθιμος is used in VIII.144 and XI.55 to describe first Diomedes and then the Greeks in general.

because as he dies, Hector prophesies that Achilles is fated to die at the hands of Paris and Apollo. The second reason is that, according to Quintus, Penthesileia *is* fated to die at Achilles' hand, because Fate is what inspires her to keep fighting, "intending that the girl would soon be vanquished at the hands of Achilles" (Quint. Smyrn., I.390-393). She must die at Achilles' hand because Fate has decreed it. Why? Because, incredible warrior though she is, Penthesileia is still an Other in Greek thought.<sup>132</sup> She is a woman, and a foreigner, and Achilles is the greatest Greek warrior that has ever lived.<sup>133</sup> She has to fall so the Greek male can triumph over the foreign woman, and Greek society can "punish" the woman who has challenged the Greek views of how women should act.<sup>134</sup>

Her death even seems to be a turning point in the narration of Penthesileia, relegating her back into a role of proper Greek woman from untamable bloodthirsty Amazon. When she dies, Quintus mentions that she falls off her horse in a "modest way," ensuring "nothing shameful" (αἰδώς) was showing (Quint. Smyrn., I.646-648). "The importance of this emotion (αἰδώς) in the *Iliad* is explained by the central place of honor...[but] when applied to women, however, αἰδώς is mostly related to their beauty and sexuality...In [Penthesileia's] death scene... αἰδώς seems to clearly refer to the female concern of being appropriately covered."<sup>135</sup> In her death,

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<sup>132</sup>It is true that thousands of men have died at Achilles' hands, but only a select few are mentioned as specifically fated to do so, which must mean their deaths have a greater symbolism to them than the deaths of the typical soldiers. Of those warriors fated to die, Penthesileia is the only woman, and therefore I have linked her gender to the reason why she is fated to die.

<sup>133</sup>According to Seneca in his *Trojan Women* her death was also a necessary lesson to Achilles: "His conqueror shuddered at the lesson of his own deed, and Achilles learned that even a goddess' son can die" (In 241-243, trans. Fitch).

<sup>134</sup>Quintus Smyrnaeus was writing during a period marked by the revival of interest in Greek literature, called the Second Sophistic period. Literature from this period often alluded to events of historical Greek military success, like the Greco-Persian Wars. Quintus could be playing on this theme by recounting a mythological Greek military success (the Trojan War), but one that still fit into the pattern of 'victory of Greeks over barbarians.' Thus, to fit into this Second Sophistic theme, it is imperative that Penthesileia (the barbarian) fall to Achilles (the Greek). For more on Quintus and the Second Sophistic period, see Baumbach & Bär (2007).

<sup>135</sup>Scheijnen (2018) 65.

Penthesileia reverts back to a woman apparently concerned about propriety and modesty. It is the culmination of her being conquered by the Greek male.

Yet her death is not only a violent enforcement of male supremacy. As Achilles strips off her helmet, he is stunned by her beauty and full of regret that he has killed her (Quint. Smyrn., I.659-662). Quintus goes so far as to claim Achilles is as affected by Penthesileia's death as he was by Patroclus', and when Thersites abuses Achilles for his "beguilement" over the dead Amazon, Achilles kills him (Quint. Smyrn., I.723-755). Clearly, Achilles (and by Quintus' account, the other Argives, as well) are full of admiration for this warrior woman. Yet though Achilles regrets Penthesileia's death, it is not because she was such a worthy opponent to him, but rather because he "had killed her instead of taking her back to Phthia...as his wife, so perfectly beautiful was she" (Quint. Smyrn., I.671-673). His regret is the fact he will never conquer her in the only other way besides death an Amazon could be conquered: sexually and through marriage. In her death, "Penthesilea's posthumous beauty has accomplished what she could not do alive: to hurt Achilles and gain the respect of her foes. She turns out to be stronger in her female beauty than in the warrior ambitions she cherished."<sup>136</sup> In other words, despite Penthesileia's best efforts to make a mark as a warrior, to the Greek men, her real strength was in her beauty, an association we had a hint of earlier, when her preeminence was attributed to her beauty instead of her strength.

Though the Achaeans may have mourned her as a lost wife and not as a warrior, by all accounts she still fits into the Homeric warrior model, and her legacy does not end with her death. Multiple sources of Penthesileia's myth cite her death as the turning point where Troy was truly lost, and the Greeks had truly won; all that was left was for Achilles to die and the city to be

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<sup>136</sup>Scheijnen (2018) 68.

sacked.<sup>137</sup> She is so powerful that only by ending her life could the Greeks have truly won, and she does receive public acknowledgement of that power and prowess after she has died. Priam has a pyre built for her, and surrounds her with “many funerary gifts of a kind fitting for a wealthy queen,” fulfilling his promise to her to give her many gifts (though they are now funerary gifts, not gifts for killing Achilles) and honoring her publicly (Quint. Smyrn., I.789-792). The people of Troy treat her body with respect, as if she were their own daughter, and collect her bones to be buried next to the bones of Laomedon “at a prominent part of the...walls, paying due service to Ares and to Penthesileia herself” (Quint. Smyrn., I.796-803). Penthesileia received the same funeral rituals that Patroclus and Hector received in the *Iliad*, again placing her in the same realm as the great warriors of the *Iliad*.<sup>138</sup> Though she is no longer alive to receive it, Penthesileia does receive the honors she desired from Priam. The Trojan people are paying respect to her—to her power, her skill, her prowess in battle. She lived like a Homeric warrior, she died like one, and she receives all the honors that befit her warrior status. Though, as I have argued, she had to die at the hands of Achilles to cement the status of the Greek male, the writer Diodorus still admits “she ended her life heroically” (Diod. Sic., 2.46.5-6). Because the warriors of Greek culture were the Homeric heroes, Diodorus means that she ended her life in accordance with the Homeric warrior model. In this chapter, we have seen she lived her life in accordance with that model as well.

But, like any of the Homeric warriors, she did not embody every aspect of the model. Again, we are perhaps bound by our fragmentary knowledge of Penthesileia, for because most of

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<sup>137</sup>Dares Phrygius in his *History of the Fall of Troy* claims her death “caused all the Trojans to turn and flee in defeat for the city,” and Seneca in his play *Trojan Women* cites her as the last threat for the Greeks. Diodorus Siculus in his *Library* offers an opposite version, mentioning Penthesileia as the last Amazon to “win distinction for bravery” and that after her death, her own race lost its strength without her, but whether we believe Dares or Diodorus, either way her death is the end of a great civilization and race, and her strength and prowess were what had stood in the way of that decay before.

<sup>138</sup>Mayor (2014) 290-291.

her myth takes place on the battlefield, she trends heavily towards only showing off her skill in battle and the individualistic virtues. We rarely see her in quieter moments, off the battlefield, where she could exhibit the cooperative values. We do have a hint of her empathy when she chooses to stay in Troy and help Priam after he has purified her, but that reason is also slightly complicated by her own desire to prove her prowess and redeem her reputation. She also does not show an ability to yield. She is not someone who it seems can be persuaded. She is like Achilles when we first meet him in the *Iliad*: sure of her own prowess, and eager to prove her mettle in battle. She has no need for yielding. Achilles has the time to learn how to yield by the end of the *Iliad*; she does not.

Penthesileia is the closest of all the women warriors to the Homeric warriors. She walks in their world and fights in their wars. She even fights and kills them. Accordingly, she exhibits almost all of the warrior model. She is royal, attractive, and a natural leader to the Trojans. She charges into battle with courage, and she remains undaunted by the Greek army, aided by her fierce skill in battle. Most importantly to Penthesileia, she ferociously fights for glory and renown to boost her reputation. In all respects except for the ability to yield and empathy, she is a Homeric warrior. Perhaps one of the reasons Achilles was so attracted to her was she reflected all the values he himself admired and followed. But despite all of her warrior characteristics, she still had to die to reinforce the superiority of the Greek male warriors. Her sister, Antiope, on the other hand, can be seen as an example of what happens when a Greek warrior “tamed” an Amazon instead of killing her.

## Antiope

Antiope is initially set up very similarly to her sister, Penthesileia. Antiope is also the daughter of Queen Otrere, and royalty herself, ruling the Amazons as queen.<sup>139</sup> But there is a key difference between Antiope and Penthesileia (and indeed Antiope and any other Amazon): she is the only Amazon who marries a Greek warrior: Theseus, the founder of Athens.

Like other Greek heroes before him, Theseus sailed for foreign soil in the search for honor and glory.<sup>140</sup> On one of his adventures he came to visit the Amazons, either alone or with Heracles. There Antiope, one of the Amazonian queens, and current leader of the Amazons, encountered Theseus. At this point the myth diverges into two separate versions. In one version, Theseus abducts Antiope against her will after raping her, and in the other, she falls in love with him and leaves with him voluntarily.<sup>141</sup> Both versions of the myth are worth studying, as they lead to different claims about her prowess as a warrior.

If she were abducted, or made a slave, as Diodorus claims in the “unwilling version,” are we to believe that she simply was not a very skilled fighter (4.28.1-4)? As an Amazonian queen, and daughter of the god of war, that seems unlikely. Ovid even names her as “first in courage” among the Amazons, so it is doubtful that she was easy for Theseus to overpower (*Ov. Her.*, 4.117-122). Already she has shown elements of the Homeric model—royalty, and courage. She is not

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<sup>139</sup>Though Penthesileia was referred to as a queen, she was exiled from the Amazons and ruled over a group of only 12 warriors. Antiope and Hippolyta are both queens of all the Amazons in Scythia, and Antiope appears to take up the mantle of queen after Hippolyta is murdered by Heracles.

<sup>140</sup>Perseus, Bellerophon, Jason and the Argonauts, and Heracles are a few examples of other Greek heroes that left Greece to go on dangerous quests and win themselves eternal glory. Jason will be discussed in reference to Atalanta on page 89, and Heracles will be discussed throughout the Hippolyta section (pp. 75-79).

<sup>141</sup>“Unwilling versions” cited in Apollodorus (Epitome 1.16), Diodorus (4.28.1-4). “Willing versions” cited in Plutarch (Life of Theseus), and Pausanias.

An interesting comparison could be made between the abduction of Antiope and that of Helen: the ambiguities of whether it was an abduction or a willing escape, how each woman handled her new life, and the differences in the narratives—how Antiope was a foreigner marrying a Greek, and Helen was a Greek marrying a foreigner. However, I leave this study for another scholar.

presented by any author as weak or timid—she is a warrior. Therefore, if she were abducted, it seems to be more of a commentary on the power of Theseus himself—a man so mighty he could subdue and kidnap a courageous and powerful Amazonian queen.

The more romantic version of the myth raises other questions and complications, as well. The fact Antiope fell in love could still be a commentary on the power of Theseus' influence. As one scholar puts it, "Theseus is so magnetic he can even attract an Amazon."<sup>142</sup> This version also implies that Antiope left in secret, because in both versions the Amazons believe her to have been kidnapped, and subsequently decided to wage a great war on the city of Athens, known in Greek myth as the Amazonomachy. Thus, if Antiope did go willingly, she chose not to tell the Amazons she was leaving, and instead fled with Theseus in secret. That decision then begs the question—why? Why would she choose to leave in secret?

As leader of the Amazons, it would seem unlikely that if she told her people she wanted to leave, they could prevent her from doing so. She was their queen—what right would any of them have to stop her? Why else would she choose to leave in secret, if fear of being stopped is not a factor? I propose the idea of shame. By marrying Theseus, she is giving up her life as an Amazon: a life of riding horses across the Scythian plains, waging war on neighboring tribes, and killing men as a rite of passage, if Herodotus is to be believed (Hdt., 4.110-4.117). Yet although she is leaving that life, she is still afraid of the judgement of the Amazonian community. She fears what will be thought of her, and feels shame for taking actions that are not socially acceptable to the Amazons. Because of those two factors, she chooses to leave in secret. Therefore, because she has made decisions based on fear of communal disapproval, she is operating under the similar cultural

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<sup>142</sup>Dowden (1997) 102.

pressures as the Homeric warriors and Penthesileia. Her fighting days may seem to be behind her, but she is still under the influence of the warrior code of her sisters and the men they fight.

Plutarch, a Greek writer and historian who wrote a *Life of Theseus*, adheres to the view of mutual love between Theseus and Antiope. Following Plutarch's narrative, when Theseus and Antiope leave Scythia and travel towards Athens, one of Theseus' men falls in love with Antiope. When Antiope finds out, she is "positively repulsed the attempt upon her, but treated the matter with discretion and gentleness, and made no denunciation to Theseus" (Plut. *Vit. Thes.* XXVI.3-4). There are multiple ways to interpret this crucial scene between Antiope and Theseus' attendant. The first way would be assuming Antiope is naturally empathetic.<sup>143</sup> Though Antiope is repulsed by the affection of this man, she acts with compassion and gentleness towards him. This would then be one of the few moments that indicates the Amazonian women were capable of demonstrating the cooperative virtues. However, scholars have pointed out that there are other ways to interpret this passage, particularly once the Greek is taken into account. The term used to mean "discretion" is σωφρόνως, while the term used for "gentleness" is πρᾶος, which can mean mild, tame, and meek. Σωφρόνως means something like "sound-mindedness," or "the self-knowledge that leads to a measured self-control."<sup>144</sup> It is the opposite of the wild, unrestrained Amazonian ways. In Ancient Greece, "a woman's sophrosyne consists in knowing that she must submit herself to male governance. When Antiope fell in love with Theseus and married him, she showed that she had come to recognize this."<sup>145</sup> Combined with the πρᾶος, with its connotations

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<sup>143</sup>It could also be argued that she is being diplomatic here; not wanting Theseus to kill this man over her and incur any ire from the rest of his travel companions. Either way, she is showing empathy for this man by worrying for his life, and she is demonstrating a levelheadedness that is unusual among the Amazons, and brings up ideas of sound-mindedness, or *sophrosyne*, which we will see below.

<sup>144</sup>Steward (1995) 584. In sections 7-9 of Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, the main character Ischomachus "tames" a young wife and trains her to run his household, so the idea of taming women was somewhat of a theme in Greek literature.

<sup>145</sup>Steward (1995) 584.

of taming, or making meek a wild creature, another interpretation of this incident would be less that Antiope was showing empathy, and more than she had been “tamed” by Theseus to show the proper σωφροσύνη that a Greek wife should show. Thus, it is difficult to say whether Antiope already had a natural empathy about her, which would be celebrated by the Homeric warrior code, or whether Theseus tamed her wild nature and replaced it with a meek one.<sup>146</sup>

In either version, Antiope does come to Athens, marry Theseus, and have a child.<sup>147</sup> Antiope’s marriage to Theseus is the point where, some believe, she loses all her freedom. As Mayor claims, “the roles of warrior and proper wife are mutually exclusive. Antiope...falls in love and Theseus, her ‘love conquest’ becomes the former warrior’s dominant husband.”<sup>148</sup> I would argue that there is not enough evidence in the myth to claim Theseus dominates Antiope completely. She *is* relegated to the role of wife and mother. By all accounts she becomes like an Athenian citizen—she is “Hellenized, partly to glorify Theseus, partly to reflect the supremacy of the values of Hellenic culture.”<sup>149</sup> She has given up her life as an Amazon to become the Greek ideal of wife and mother, and therefore has been conquered in a certain way. However, when her former Amazon followers come to wage war in Athens, Antiope takes up arms again, so we cannot reasonably claim she has been completely dominated by her husband and has lost her Amazonian spirit.

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<sup>146</sup>Plutarch was setting out to write a biography of Theseus and thus glorify him and all that he had accomplished during his life. One of the ways to glorify Theseus would be to focus on his conquering of a powerful woman. Theseus is made mightier by the fact that he tames an untamable Amazon and makes her fall in love with him, which is perhaps why Plutarch chooses to focus on the “willing” version of Theseus’ myth.

<sup>147</sup>Antiope names her child Hippolytus, after her sister Hippolyta, who was slain by Heracles, Theseus’ friend. In naming her child after an Amazon, Antiope may also be demonstrating that she has not been fully tamed by Theseus, and that she still remembers her life as an Amazon, which we see again when she fights in the Amazonomachy.

<sup>148</sup>Mayor (2014) 268.

<sup>149</sup>Hardwick (1990) 21.

While in all surviving mythological accounts of Antiope reveal her choosing to fight again, whom she fights against differs. One version of the myth have Antiope siding with Theseus, fighting against her own sisters and ultimately dying at their hands (Diod. Sic., 4.28.14). This is the ultimate transformation for Antiope: she has become so Hellenized that she fights her own sisters and dies as Theseus' wife, not as queen of Amazons. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that it is in this Hellenized version that Antiope's skill in battle is most highlighted. Diodorus describes her death in the same way he describes Penthesileia's; "[she] distinguished herself in the battle and died fighting heroically" (Diod. Sic., 4.28.1-4). Diodorus is here pointing out both her skill in battle, and her preeminence—the word he uses to mean “to distinguish oneself” is ἀριστεύω (literally “to be the best”). That verb is invoked in the *Iliad* when the warriors are making a mark or being preeminent over other warriors.<sup>150</sup> According to Diordorus, Antiope has the skill in battle to make herself preeminent. This is the same type of preeminence through skill in battle seen in the *Iliad*, and interestingly, is a different type of preeminence than Penthesileia had, who was preeminent in her beauty, not her skill, as we have already discussed. Perhaps, in an ironic way, it was because Antiope was fighting as a Greek citizen and wife that she could be admired by Greek writers, and noted for having the same traits of the Homeric warriors, and exhibiting them in the same way the male warriors exhibited them.

In the other version of Antiope's myth, she joins together with her Amazon sisters and rises up against Theseus, who ultimately kills her for that betrayal.<sup>151</sup> In Apollodorus' retelling, when Antiope joins the Amazons in battle against Athens, she does so out of jealousy, not because she wishes to rise against the man who abducted her. Instead, Antiope becomes enraged that Theseus

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<sup>150</sup>Some examples of the use of ἀριστεύω can be found in *Iliad* XI.409, XI.746, XI.784. The word *aristeia* has its roots in the same word (ἄριστος) as ἀριστεύω.

<sup>151</sup>This version can be found in Ovid's *Heroides* (4.117-122) and Hyginus' *Fabulae* (241), and is passingly mentioned by Apollodorus (Epitome 1.16).

has remarried after she bore him a son, and she interrupts his wedding celebration with her band of Amazons (Apollod. *Epit.*, 1.16).<sup>152</sup> Theseus and his guests promptly kill her, and so her myth is reduced from a story of revenge against her captor to a jealous woman getting put in her place, which is evidently the ground.

This narrative may have been less appealing, however, than the narrative of Antiope fighting on Theseus' side. Plutarch's version of the myth shows an uncivilized woman becoming civilized through marriage to a great Greek hero. Though she still has great skill in battle, enough to distinguish herself, she is softer than she once was, and she is gentle and empathetic to the men who may love her. Pausanias, like Plutarch, also claims that Antiope fell in love with Theseus, to the extent that she surrendered a stronghold to Heracles (who was besieging the Amazons) solely because Theseus was his companion (Paus., 1.2.1). It does not make much sense that a queen of a people who "excelled in war" and were filled with "warlike spirit" would throw away the battle in order to please a man she liked (Apollod. *Bibl.*, 2.5.9 & Quint. Smyrn., I.456). That contradiction, however, may be exactly what the Greeks wanted to hear. Again, it goes to show the power of Theseus, and how even the greatest, strongest, and most warlike of women will still bow before the Greek male—either through death at their hands (Penthesileia), or through falling in love with them and becoming their wife (Antiope).

It is also worth pointing out that Antiope's story is completely relayed through the story of Theseus. She is only mentioned when she comes up in Theseus's story. Apollodorus, Diodorus, and Plutarch are all recounting the life of Theseus when Antiope comes up. Because they focus on Theseus, we do not get a true sense of who Antiope is because she is only ever seen as a sidenote in Theseus' story. As we have seen, it does not mean that there no mentions of her own courage,

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<sup>152</sup>This version of Antiope's myth calls to mind Medea, who slaughtered her children with Jason after he left her to marry another woman. For more discussion on Medea in relation to the model of warriorship, see fn. 190.

and skill in battle, or her empathy, but it does mean those mentions are few and far between, as she is never the focus of the stories where she is mentioned. This difficulty is mirrored in the next section about Antiope's sister, Hippolyta, who is only ever mentioned in reference to the great Greek hero Heracles.

Through this study of Antiope, we can see that she, like Penthesileia, does show elements of the Homeric model: her status as the first in courage, her royalty, her skill in battle—strong enough to distinguish her above others. Even after Antiope marries Theseus—either because he has tamed her to her proper role as wife, or because of her genuine compassion and love for him—she still exemplifies these traits during the Amazonomachy, and dies a warrior.

### **Hippolyta**

Hippolyta is the third daughter of Queen Otrere and Ares, and the sister of Penthesileia and Antiope. On first glance her myth seems to be relatively similar to Antiope's, and indeed their stories are often confused by ancient authors. Hippolyta was another queen of the Amazons who met with a Greek hero, in her case the greatest Greek hero, Heracles. But unlike Theseus and Antiope, Heracles and Hippolyta did not marry. Instead, Heracles raped her, killed her, and stole her war girdle.

At this moment in his life, Heracles was serving a foreign king Eurystheus as atonement for the murder of his family—a narrative that itself closely resembles Penthesileia's. The theft of Hippolyta's girdle was his ninth labor in service of Eurystheus, which highlights Hippolyta's own skill in battle and her reputation as a warrior. She was a challenge worthy of Heracles, and her myth emphasizes that in a few different ways.

One way is through the repetition of her royal status throughout all the retellings of her myth.<sup>153</sup> Her place as queen of the Amazons served to highlight her status and importance, and made her a greater challenge for Heracles. His labor was not just to steal something from any old Amazon, but from the queen of the Amazons. The second element adding to Hippolyta's status is the fact that she is in possession of the war girdle. The girdle was a heavy, richly decorated piece of armor worn over her lower stomach and groin.<sup>154</sup> Apollodorus claims that it was actually the "belt of Ares," the war god himself, and Hippolyta had it "as a symbol of her supremacy over the others" (Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.9). Thus, the girdle represents both Hippolyta's skill in battle—to have received a piece of armor from the god of war—and also a public acknowledgement of her reputation—a "symbol of supremacy." Already she is presented in a similar way to Homeric warriors—with great skill in battle, reputation of supremacy, and a trophy symbolizing public recognition of both those features.

The girdle does not merely symbolize Hippolyta's reputation and skill in battle, though. The loosening of the girdle was a euphemism for loss of virginity. Marriage, in Greek thought, was the proper way to lose virginity. When Heracles takes Hippolyta's girdle (without the marriage, like Theseus and Antiope) he is, in effect, raping her.<sup>155</sup> One scholar even goes so far as to claim that this rape is performed to complete her sexual submission to the Greek male, and returns her to patriarchal control through loss of her sexual freedom. She is "de-Amazonised" by her rape.<sup>156</sup> While Hippolyta certainly represents a defeated Amazon, the idea that she would lose

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<sup>153</sup>Apollonius says Hippolyta "reigned" in his *Argonautica*. Hippolyta was also named as a queen by Seneca in *Hercules Furens*, who "commands" those she rules. Apollodorus calls her "queen of the Amazons" (*Bibl.*, 2.5.9), and Pausanias names her the "leader of the women" (1.41.7).

For more on a potential chronology for the Amazon queens, see fn. 139.

<sup>154</sup>Mayor (2014) 254.

<sup>155</sup>duBois (1982) 40.

<sup>156</sup>Dowden (1997) 100.

her identity as an Amazon solely because of her rape brings up questions about what it means to be an Amazon, and whether rape can strip one of her identity. I would argue that rape does not completely strip Hippolyta of her identity, because sexual freedom was just one part of the Amazonian lifestyle. Other scholars argue that the girdle is *not* a symbol of virginity, but a sign of her “capacities as a warrior,” and that by losing it, Hippolyta “loses her mark of royal status and her connection to her father.”<sup>157</sup> The connection of the girdle to the loss of virginity in Greek tradition cannot be a coincidence, but as we saw above Apollodorus does explicitly state the girdle is a symbol of Hippolyta’s supremacy. Thus, both interpretations are likely correct to some extent. Heracles is simultaneously stripping her of her sexual freedom and choice, and her status as royalty, leader, and skilled fighter. In short, he strips her of everything that makes her a member of the warrior class.

Hippolyta’s girdle creates many complications. It serves to enhance her warrior status, and is worn as a symbol of her reputation, royal lineage, and preeminence above others. The girdle and all that it represents situate Hippolyta squarely within the Homeric warrior model. Yet for all its warrior symbolism, it is *Heracles’* image that is bolstered by the theft of the girdle and the murder of Hippolyta, because in the end, he steals it, and rapes and murders her without trouble. Hippolyta is built up so greatly as a warrior worthy of this girdle that through her defeat, Heracles elevates his own status. Again, like Penthesileia and Antiope, Hippolyta’s myth is used to bolster the Greek warrior’s status and prowess through his conquering of her.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup>Blok (1994) 425.

<sup>158</sup>The stripping of armor off a fallen enemy is also a common scene in the *Iliad*, and is connected to the reasons why warriors wanted their opponents to be impressive fighters, as well. The warriors wanted to fight those who, like themselves, were great warriors, so when they won and stripped their enemy of their armor, it was all the more impressive. Thus, Heracles stripping Hippolyta of her armor after overpowering her in a fight resonates closely with the actions of the Homeric warriors.

We can see this explicitly in other versions of the myth beyond Apollodorus' account. Seneca mentions how Hippolyta "commands" her race, thereby reminding us of her royal status, yet he then immediately mentions Heracles "stripp[ing] the glorious trophy from her body, and her shield and the bonds of her snow-white breast, [forcing her to look up] at her victor on bended knee" (Sen. *Herc.*, 533-544). Seneca elevates her status by mentioning her leadership position, then uses that status to emphasize *Heracles'* power. She was a commander and queen, and *even she* ended up on her knees before Heracles. Later in this same play, Seneca elaborates on the encounter between Heracles and Hippolyta: "from her very breast the fierce Hippolyte watched him wrench the spoil." Though "fierce," is another Senecan compliment for Hippolyta, she is still no match for Heracles and can only watch passively as he steals the symbol of her prowess as a warrior.<sup>159</sup>

Quintus Smyrnaeus does not depict Hippolyta as strong in any sense. She only comes across as meek and feeble when he describes a scene on a shield of Heracles "dragging [Hippolyta] by the hair from her swift steed as he tried to strip her of her patterned girdle [while] the other Amazons were fearfully keeping their distance" (Quint. Smyrn., 6.242-245). The image he depicts brings up a visual representation of Heracles as conqueror of Hippolyta, overpowering her and physically dragging her off of her horse by the hair, while the warlike band of Amazons we have seen before are reduced to mere girls, frightened of the man with the "mighty arms," and unable to help their queen. Quintus does have one admiring thing to say about Hippolyta—that she is "godlike in beauty," the same phrase he used in *Posthomerica* to describe her sister Penthesileia (Quint. Smyrn, 6.242). As discussed earlier, Quintus ultimately focused on Penthesileia's beauty

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<sup>159</sup>Perhaps Seneca portrayed Hippolyta as passive due to his Stoic sensibilities. Stoic philosophy was concerned with rational thought and reason over emotion, and the Amazons, in their wild, unrestrained nature, were the opposite of the Stoic ideal of rationality. When Hippolyta becomes passive in Seneca's retelling, it is almost as if her conquering by Heracles has molded her into a more Stoically acceptable woman.

as the factor that made her preeminent among others, and the attribute that made Achilles regret killing her.<sup>160</sup> Here, again, he focuses on Hippolyta's beauty instead of her skill in battle, and presents her as completely at the mercy of Heracles, not as a worthy opponent of him.<sup>161</sup> However, Quintus' version is the outlier compared to other retellings. In all other versions, Hippolyta is not meek and feeble, but a true warrior queen, fitting the attributes of the Homeric model (royalty, beauty, and skill in battle), and wearing the girdle as a symbol of her reputation. Given her adherence to the model, Hippolyta seems to be following the same narrative as Antiope and Penthesileia: she is built up as a great warrior in her own right, one who seems to adhere to the same warrior model the Homeric warriors do, yet is ultimately conquered by a Greek warrior.

Hippolyta's myth also suffers from the same structural weakness as Antiope's, as she is relegated to a footnote in the story of a Greek warrior, and not given the same attention or agency as the Greek warrior. It is difficult to know anything about Hippolyta as a person because she does not really have her own story; it is challenging to analyze her and Antiope with the same level of depth as Penthesileia, Atalanta, or the Homeric warriors. Yet, from the scant evidence we do have, it is clear that Hippolyta was worthy of her war girdle: she was a warrior queen, supreme in battle over the other Amazons. She was a true warrior queen.

## Conclusion

Penthesileia, Antiope, and Hippolyta are the most famous Amazons in Greek literature, mostly due to their interactions with the Greek heroes Achilles, Theseus, and Heracles. Though

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<sup>160</sup>See p. 66

<sup>161</sup>Diodorus claims that when Heracles faced the Amazons, he "completely crushed the nation" and that this moment was the real end of the Amazons: Heracles did not just defeat Hippolyta, but he ended their entire race (Diod. Sic., 2.46.3-4). Given that Penthesileia went to Troy after the murder of Hippolyta, it seems he did not truly crush the nation.

each Amazon ended up conquered—killed, married then killed, or raped then killed—they were still true warriors according to the Homeric warrior code. All three Amazons were royal and beautiful. They were each queen of the Amazons at some point, rulers backed by the authority of their father, Ares. Penthesileia was the last great threat to the Greek army after the death of Hector, and fought with such a fury that she was believed to be a goddess descended down from Olympus. Hippolyta was so skilled in battle that she was given a girdle from her father, the god of war, as a symbol of her supremacy over all the other Amazons. Antiope, though not distinguished for her battle prowess by our sources, was deemed the “first in courage” among women. Penthesileia also showed great courage on the battlefield, charging forward to meet Greek soldier after Greek soldier, undaunted by their attacks. All three women are governed by reputation and fear of shame. Penthesileia fought at Troy to restore her damaged reputation, Antiope fled with Theseus in secret to avoid shame for marrying him, and Hippolyta wielded her girdle as a public symbol of her reputation and preeminence over the other Amazons.

Yet for all their warlike qualities, Penthesileia and Antiope do show cooperative virtues. They both have moments of empathy with men, though in different contexts. Penthesileia feels compassion for Priam and chooses to fight for him to make the Greeks pay for the way they have treated him. Antiope is compassionate towards Theseus’ friend who falls in love with her, despite being repulsed by his advances.

None of these women, however, show an ability to yield. I think there are two reasons for this. One reason is that the sources are too fragmentary. If we had the same amount of evidence on these women as we did on the male warriors that interact with them, we would have a better sense of their characters, and maybe there would be instances in which they yielded. I would also argue that these women do not demonstrate an ability to yield because Amazons in Greek literature were

always presented as wild and unrestrained. Amazons, crucially, “do not know when to stop, nor can they learn from their mistakes.”<sup>162</sup> They had to be wild, so that the Greek men could tame, domesticate, and dominate them until they learned their proper place. Thus, it is unlikely that an Amazon could be presented with the ability to yield. Why, then, are the Amazons empathetic? It is important to note that the Amazons are only ever been presented as empathetic with men, not women. Therefore, I propose they are “allowed” to be empathetic because their empathy shows they are properly deferential to the men in their lives. Penthesileia respects Priam because she should defer to an old, wise king. Antiope is compassionate because she has been “tamed.”

Their wildness, on the other hand, does not conflict with any of the individualistic virtues, which is why they were still able to be seen as courageous, dauntless, and obsessed with reputation. There is no need for measured thinking in any of those virtues, and thus the Amazons can be replete with them. Yet just because the Amazons did not meet every aspect of the Homeric model does not mean they should not be considered warriors. Even in the *Iliad*, not every warrior met every element of the model. The Amazons are in the company of Diomedes, Odysseus, and Achilles, who are all unanimously considered warriors. Because the Amazons fit the Homeric model as well as those famous warriors do, I believe it is in fact *crucial* that they be used in the study of Greek warriors. The fact they adhered to the model and were still conquered by the Greek male, provides an interesting and relevant intersection between gender and ideas of the warrior in ancient Greek literature. These women are literally equals of men, so it is past time they receive some of the attention the men have had.

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<sup>162</sup>Steward (1995) 584.

## *Chapter Three*

### Atalanta: The Bridge Between Greek Warriors and Amazons

As we have seen, the Amazons were still “Others” to the Greeks, and were portrayed as threatening to their ideas about male and female social roles. Thus, each of the Amazons was ultimately conquered by a Greek warrior, despite their adherence to the same model the Greek male warriors adhered to. Therefore a question arises: do all warrior women, even non-foreign ones, end up conquered? To answer this question, we may turn to a warrior who has bonds with both the Greek male warriors and the Amazons, in order to see if she could be accepted by Greek society, or ends up ultimately conquered as well. That warrior is Atalanta. Atalanta, the daughter of King Schoeneus, was one of the greatest heroes of mythology (Apollod. *Bibl.*, 1.9.2). She took part in some of the most famous Greek heroic expeditions, like the Calydonian Boar Hunt, and the Argonautica, and rubbed shoulders with the likes of Meleager, Peleus, Theseus, and Jason.<sup>163</sup>

Atalanta is a bridge between the Greek male warriors and the Amazons. Unlike the Amazons, she is not a foreigner, but a Greek. In her myth, Atalanta fulfills the same roles that Theseus and Heracles were fulfilling when they met with the Amazons—she is a Greek warrior, venturing off into the unknown to win glory and defeat foreign enemies. Atalanta’s Hellenicity creates an invaluable concluding case study because she is accepted by the Greek men in her myths to an extent that the Amazons could never be due to their foreign status. Whereas the Amazons were just outsiders, Atalanta is both an insider and an outsider. She is Greek, and thus accepted,

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<sup>163</sup>It is worth mentioning here that Theseus would have met Atalanta before he went to Scythia and met Antiope. Maybe Atalanta was appealing to him, and he wanted a woman warrior of his own, which is why he kidnapped Antiope. Or perhaps he fell in love with the idea of women warriors after meeting Atalanta, and thus fully appreciated Antiope when they met, and they fell in love.

but she is a woman, and thus rejected. She is female, but she has traits that only male warriors (or Amazons) “should” have.<sup>164</sup> She is a threat to the male warriors around her, yet some of them desire her.<sup>165</sup> In all her twists and ambiguities Atalanta provides the perfect conclusion to our study of the reflection of Homeric warrior values in woman warriors of Greek literature.

Though the daughter of a king, and thus a royal princess, Atalanta was abandoned as a child. Her father Schoeneus wanted a male heir, and when Atalanta was born he left her to die on a mountain—though eventually, when she proves herself to be a warrior, they do reunite. As a stroke of luck (or divine favor), a she-bear came along and suckled her, and so she grew up wild, spending her days hunting alone in the wilderness, and swearing to remain a virgin (Apollod. *Bibl.*, 3.9.2).<sup>166</sup> Aelian, one of Atalanta’s biographers, credits this upbringing as the reason why Atalanta was so “fiery” and “full of spirit” – in essence, why she was a warrior (Ael. *VH*, 13.1).<sup>167</sup>

Atalanta’s unusual childhood seems to have had an effect on her beauty, though writers disagree if that effect was positive or negative. Ovid describes her as “boyish for a girl,” and remarks that she was not particularly beautiful, though men still fell in love with her (*Ov. Met.*, 8.458-459). On the other hand, Aelian spends an inordinate amount of time focusing on Atalanta’s beauty: “she had two astonishing qualities: unrivalled beauty and with it a capacity to inspire fear. No indolent man would have fallen in love on looking at her, nor would he have had the courage

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<sup>164</sup>Atalanta is sometimes depicted in art as an Amazon, showing the Greeks understood her connection to them. In other pieces of art, she is not fully dressed as an Amazon, but carries a Greek spear with her instead of a bow, suggesting she is somewhere between the realm of Greek warrior and Amazonian warrior. For more, see Mayor (2014) 3-4; Barringer (1996) 59, 64.

<sup>165</sup>Barringer (1996) 49-50.

<sup>166</sup>The Greek term translated as virgin is παρθένος can also solely mean an unmarried girl, or even simply a young maiden. These latter two translations are probably more accurate than virgin because as we will see, Atalanta’s reputation “wins her lovers” and in some myths she is involved with Meleager romantically before her eventual marriage (Ael., 13.1).

<sup>167</sup>Atalanta’s unusual childhood does make her into an outsider to Greek society, at least for the beginning of her life.. Thus, her childhood makes both her an outsider, and a warrior. Unlike the Amazons, however, she does enter into Greek society with the Calydonian Boar hunt. Either way, it seems that for women to be a warrior meant to be an outsider, no matter whether one was foreign or Greek.

to meet her gaze in the first place; such radiance with beauty shone over those who saw her” (Ael. *VH*, 13.1). Powerful though her beauty may be, Aelian credits its might solely to its lack of female qualities. He describes her as having “a fiery, masculine gaze,” and goes on to say that “there was nothing girlish or delicate about her; she was not the product of the women’s apartments, not one of those brought up by mothers and nurses... Her hair was golden, not due to feminine sophistication, dyes, or applications, but the colour was natural” (Ael. *VH*, 13.1). Though Aelian may be celebrating Atalanta’s beauty and her power and strength, he is also making it clear that that power and strength come from a shunning of typical female life. She is beautiful enough to make men cower, and that is strictly *because* she is not “girlish” or “delicate” (the words κορικὸς and ὀαδινός, which are apparently synonyms to Aelian), and because her hair is golden naturally, not due to any “feminine” uses of dyes or applications. For Aelian, Atalanta’s power and strength, which is reflected in her beauty, come from her rejection of any feminine features, traits, or ways of being.

This description of the dual nature of a woman warrior’s beauty—beauty and the use of that beauty to inspire fear in men—calls to mind Penthesileia’s beauty, which was at once both “fierce” and “radiant” (Quint. Smyrn., 1.57). However, Atalanta’s beauty seems to be much more intimidating than Penthesileia’s: while Penthesileia’s beauty made Achilles ache to make her his wife, Atalanta’s beauty is almost dangerous. Men cannot even meet her eyes because it is such a powerful force. Her beauty can literally dull the courage of men. Despite the different male responses to their beauty—Penthesileia’s beauty attracted men to her and Atalanta’s beauty repelled or frightened them—both Quintus and Aelian use their appearance as a way to establish their power. The key difference between the two writers is that Quintus depicts Penthesileia’s true strength *as* her beauty: as we have seen, Penthesileia was respected by Achilles and the Greek

army *only* because of her beauty. On the other hand, Aelian believes Atalanta's beauty to be simply one of her many mighty and admirable traits. Atalanta's beauty may be powerful, but it does not replace her skill in battle or courage as her foremost respected trait. Aelian makes it clear that Atalanta's warrior prowess, her courage, and her dauntlessness were praiseworthy traits in her.

She shows these individualistic values from the beginning of her myth. When Atalanta is out hunting on her mountain one day, two centaurs see her, alone and beautiful, and attempt to rape her. She notices them coming towards her and, "not flinching or cowed by what she saw, she bent her bow, shot her weapon, and hit the first of them directly" (Ael. *VH*, 13.1). The word Aelian uses to mean "not flinching" is ἄτρομος, the same word used earlier to describe Penthesileia and Diomedes, and, as we have seen, is invoked in moments of dauntlessness.<sup>168</sup> And Atalanta surely does meet her challenge head on, slaying both the centaurs and continuing on in the virgin lifestyle that she chose. This moment with the centaurs also distinguishes Atalanta as a warrior and a different type of woman than the other mythical virgins in Greek literature. While they resist marriage and are raped, she defends herself.<sup>169</sup> However, like those mythic virgins, she will eventually be turned into an animal, suggesting that she cannot outrun the fate of virgins in Greek mythology, even though she is a warrior. Either way, the episode with the centaurs shows that even before Atalanta joins the world of male warriors, she is already showing off aspects of the warrior model; she is royal, she is beautiful, and she is dauntless.

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<sup>168</sup>For a more robust discussion of dauntlessness in the *Iliad*, see p. 27-32. For a discussion of the dauntlessness of Penthesileia and the use of ἄτρομος, see p. 64.

In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid describes Atalanta as *immitis*, which means unsoftened. The same word is used in Virgil's *Aeneid* as Achilles' epithet. *Immitis* has similar connotations as the Greek words νηλεές, σκέτλιος, ἰφθίμος, and ἀτειγής, which are all used to describe Achilles in the *Iliad*. Each of these words has an implication of hardness, or an ability to be like iron. Thus, Atalanta is not only described with the same language as Achilles, but also with the same language that Penthesileia is described with, who is called "strong as steel." For more, see Ziogas (2011) 261. Ziogas also uses the *immitis* epithet, coupled with Atalanta's traditional speed (swift-footedness) to argue that she is literally the female equivalent of Achilles, bridging her with the greatest Greek warrior of all time.

<sup>169</sup>Mayor (2014) 441n.18.

Eventually, Atalanta does get tired of being alone on the mountains and wanders down into the realm of society. Not content to watch from the sidelines, she immediately joins the Calydonian Boar hunt, a task that drew the most famous heroes of the time—Meleager, Castor, Polydeuces, Jason, Peleus, Theseus, and Telamon, among others (Apollod. *Bibl.*, 1.8.2). The Calydonian Boar hunt marks the first time that Atalanta enters the realm of male Greek warriors. At first, some of these heroes objected to Atalanta being allowed on the hunt on account of her sex, believing it to be “beneath their dignity to take part in a hunt with a woman” even one as skilled in warfare as Atalanta (Apollod. *Bibl.*, 1.8.2-3). Meleager, the leader of the hunt, ends up standing up for Atalanta, and convinces the others to allow her on the hunt. Meleager’s intentions, however, are not as noble as they may seem: Apollodorus notes his desire to have a child by Atalanta, even though he was already married to Cleopatra (Apollod. *Bibl.*, 1.8.2-3). Earlier we saw that Aelian believed Atalanta’s desirability was due to her rejection of female norms. Apollodorus’ Meleager, however, desires to relegate Atalanta back *into* the female norms—her appeal to him arises from the idea of an Atalanta who adheres to female norms and becomes a mother to his children. Meleager’s desire for that version of Atalanta is the reason why he defends her right to be on the hunt.

Interestingly, in no ancient account is Atalanta shown defending herself against the misogynistic heroes who do not want her there. She does not speak, and instead, in every version of the myth, Meleager speaks for her and she is silent. Just as we saw with Theseus and Antiope, and Heracles and Hippolyta, the male Greek warrior within the female warrior’s myth often takes center stage, while she is consigned to be a silent background figure.

Atalanta’s actions speak for her, though. Her skill as a warrior is on display from the first moments of the hunt. Atalanta is the first to strike the boar during the Calydonian Boar hunt,

displaying her own prowess and skill in battle (Apollod. *Bibl.*, 1.8.2-3).<sup>170</sup> Meleager finishes the boar off after Atalanta wounds it, and presents her with the skin of the boar in honor of her skill in battle and her courage, praising her to all the men as having greater bravery than all of them (Diod. Sic., 4.36.4-6 & Hyg. *Fab.*, 174). When Meleager's uncles disagree with his decision, he kills them, which parallels Achilles' killing of Thersites when he taunted Achilles over his love for Penthesileia (Quint. Smyrn., I.723-747). To kill for someone is an intense response, especially given Meleager had only just met Atalanta on this hunt, and it could be interpreted as sign that he did not solely want to see Atalanta submissive to him—he truly admired her courage and skill and did not want anyone besmirching or doubting her reputation. Meleager may want Atalanta as the mother to his children, and thus does desire to see her in a typical female role, but he does still admire her courage, and seeks to honor it, even placing her above the rest of them in courage. The boar skin itself is described as a prize of valor (Diod. Sic., 4.36.4-6), a gift in recognition of her talents (Paus., 8.45.2), and Ovid quotes Meleager as saying Atalanta “deserve[s] the honor and acclaim [she] will receive” (Ov. *Met.*, 8.545-546). The presentation of a prize of valor and the acknowledgment of the praises Atalanta will receive as a result of her battle prowess are two indications that Meleager recognizes the love of glory and reputation that male Greek warriors have as also belonging to Atalanta. He knows that she is out for glory, just as the rest of the warriors in the hunt are, and the fact that she is a woman warrior instead of a male warrior has not changed her desire for recognition and an impressive reputation.<sup>171</sup> This recognition of Atalanta by Meleager is part of a theme: throughout the Calydonian Boar hunt, Meleager has treated Atalanta

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<sup>170</sup>I recognize that hunting is not necessarily a battle, but I do believe the skills required in battle are the same skills required on a hunt. In fact, throughout the *Iliad*, similes comparing warriors to hunters or wild beasts are commonplace. III.26-29, X.420-424, and XVI.880-882 are a few examples.

<sup>171</sup>Callimachus describes the tusks of the boar as a “token of victory” which Atalanta sends to her hometown of Arcadia, where people can visit them and learn of her reputation and impressive feats. According to Callimachus, they were still there at the time of his writing (Callim. *Hymn* 3, 215-221).

as his equal in every way; in fact, he even promoted her as braver than the male warriors. Unlike the Amazons, Atalanta has been accepted in the realm of male warriors.

Indeed, her reputation as a warrior only grows from the Calydonian Boar hunt on. She joins the Argonauts, and is named one of the most famous members of that company by Diodorus, on the same level as heroes like Castor and Polydeuces, Heracles, Telamon, and Orpheus (Diod. Sic., 4.36.4-6). Her fame, won through her reputation, has placed her on the same level as some of Greece's mightiest heroes.<sup>172</sup> Before she joined the Calydonian Boar hunt, she naturally had elements of the Homeric model—her royalty, her beauty, and her dauntlessness. During the boar hunt, she had a chance to demonstrate her courage and skill in battle. After *the* hunt, her choice to then participate on other heroic adventures like the quest for the Golden Fleece imply that she was motivated by the same things the male warriors were—the desire for fame and glory—because only on these adventures could she demonstrate more prowess as a warrior, and boost her reputation to win more fame and glory.

Yet although she has met almost all of the Homeric model thus far, she still had boundaries and difficulties due to her gender that her fellow warriors did not. In Apollonius' *Argonautica*, Jason bars Atalanta from coming on the voyage, because he feared the men would fight over her love, and bitter rivalries and discord would grow amongst the Argonauts (Ap. Rhod., *Argon*, 1.768). Though this account is an outlier—most other myths cite Atalanta as a true member of the Argonauts, as shown above—it still raises an interesting point: in Apollonius' version, Jason is not worried about having a woman on his crew because of *her* abilities, but because of what the men will do. He fears the men will not be able to control themselves. He does not fear Atalanta will not be up to the task. As one paper concisely put it: "Atalanta was rejected because of her femininity,

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<sup>172</sup>Xenophon describes her as "the greatest Lady of all time," and Aelian even says that her reputation "won her lovers" (Xen. *Cyn.*, 1.7.1-3 & *Ael.*, 13.1).

and not on account of her lack of skills or bravery.”<sup>173</sup> Unfortunately, her skills are not considered great enough to Jason to risk the discord of the men, so in this version Atalanta must suffer the punishment of staying behind because the men cannot control themselves.

After the Argonautica, Atalanta continues on her hunt for glory by joining a series of games held in honor of King Pelias, and her glory grows so great as to overshadow her gender in moments. At the games she wrestles Peleus, Achilles’ father, and defeats him, simultaneously showing off her strength, winning herself more glory, and so earning herself an even more impressive reputation. At this point in her life, her reputation has grown so great that it leads to something new: a reunion with her estranged father, King Schoenus, who claims her as his daughter and welcomes her back into his life. He seems to choose this moment to reunite with his daughter because she “had accomplished what a father would have wanted a son to accomplish, demonstrating superiority in the midst of acknowledged heroes.”<sup>174</sup> Atalanta’s reputation as a warrior is so powerful that it overcomes his earlier reservations about her sex, suggesting that her identity as a warrior transcended her identity as a woman, which is not unusual in the Atalanta myth. Though she is subject to sexism, like Meleager’s uncles not wanting her to come on the hunt, or Apollonius’ Jason not allowing her on the Argonautica, she usually overcomes or ignores those men. She still partakes in the boar hunt, and Meleager’s uncles end up dead. In most myths, she goes on the Argonautica without any men objecting. Her femininity does not typically hold her back from doing what she wants. Though it is always brought up, it does not generally overshadow her warrior identity, unlike with Penthesileia’s whose beauty completely overshadowed her warrior identity. We can see this with Aelian’s admiration for Atalanta’s beauty (femininity), but his decision to also focus on her skill in battle and defeat of the Centaurs. The

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<sup>173</sup>Howell (1989) 129.

<sup>174</sup>Howell (1989) 132.

reunion with Schoeneus is simply another example of Atalanta's warrior identity ultimately triumphing over her feminine nature. But it is not a complete triumph.

Once reunited with his daughter, King Schoeneus wants Atalanta confined to the duties he would expect of a typical Greek woman, notably marriage. Atalanta, however, does not intend to bend her to her father's wishes without making her own stipulations. She agrees to marry, but requires that all suitors race her. Those that lose, she kills. And she does indeed kill many of them, given her almost superhuman speed (*Hyg. Fab.*, 185). However, her race requirement should not be seen as bloodthirstiness on her part, but more as an acknowledgement of her own prowess: she desires to marry a man worthy of her. No man could have her unless they could outrun her, so Atalanta was looking for the most skilled of men to marry her. She has already become a legend herself, and now desires to find someone who is worthy of her reputation.

She also may have had a second motive in the creation of the races: the acquisition of more fame and glory. Centuries after she was reported to live, the writer Pausanias could still point out on a map where Atalanta's race-courses were (*Paus.*, 8.35.10). The races of Atalanta were so famous as to be ingrained into the very topography of Greece and thus, Atalanta herself also grew in fame through them. Every time she crossed the finish line she was given a crown and glory (*Ov. Met.*, 10.707). The races therefore became another way for her to win glory and prizes in recognition of that glory. Her races were additional competitions where her skill could be honored—this time her skill as a runner instead of a warrior. Thus, as we saw earlier with her decision to partake in the Argonautica and Pelias' games, like any other Homeric warrior Atalanta is still being driven by a desire for prizes and glory to gain fame.

Atalanta defeated and killed many suitors, winning herself prize after prize, until a suitor named Hippomenes came along. He admired Atalanta for her swiftness, but even more so for her

beauty, thereby the first instance where Atalanta's beauty *overshadows* her abilities as a warrior (Ov. *Met.*, 10.698).<sup>175</sup> Before Hippomenes' arrival, Atalanta was admired for her strength as much as her beauty as in Aelian's writing.<sup>176</sup> In the episodes with the Calydonian Boar, the Argonautica, and Pelias' games, her beauty is either barely mentioned or completely left out, and her skills as a warrior are the focus of the men's admiration. Hippomenes is the first man to admire Atalanta's beauty more than anything else about her, potentially signaling that this is the moment in Atalanta's myth where she is about to be conquered.

Hippomenes prays to Aphrodite, the goddess of love, for help, and she gives him three apples to throw to distract Atalanta during their race. The play is successful: Atalanta loses the race and she marries Hippomenes (Ov. *Met.*, 10.794 & Hyg. *Fab.*, 185). In Ovid's version of the myth, Atalanta is not truthfully distracted by Hippomenes' apples. Instead, she falls in love with him, enamored by his warrior traits—his valor and his fearless mind—but is too proud to call off the race. Sure of her victory, she tries to warn him not to race her: "Oh, flee from a bed that still reeks with the gore of past victims while you are able to, stranger; marrying *me* is certain destruction! No one would wish to reject you and you may be chosen by a much wiser young lady!" (Ov. *Met.*, 10.725-732).<sup>177</sup>

In this moment, Atalanta displays empathy. She tries to persuade Hippomenes not to race her for his own sake; she is worried about him and what will happen to him if he does race her. She wants future happiness for him, and worries that by racing her, he will be dooming himself to

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<sup>175</sup>Ovid even portrays Hippomenes as believing Atalanta to resemble a Scythian arrow, connecting her with the Amazons of Scythia, but then moves on focus on Hippomenes' admiration of her beauty as greater than his admiration of her Amazon-like nature (Ov. *Met.*, 10.697-698).

<sup>176</sup>For Aelian's admiration of Atalanta's beauty, see pp. 83-84. For his admiration of her strength, see p. 85.

<sup>177</sup>It is not so surprising that Ovid would choose to portray Atalanta as in love with Hippomenes. Ovid often wrote about love, and the relationship between famous mythological women and the objects of their affection, as in his *Heroides*. Thus, his Atalanta is the most empathetic and in love Atalanta we see.

death. This concern about him, his life, and his future, all show that Ovid's Atalanta is capable of emotionally connecting with someone. Ovid portrays Atalanta as holding herself back in the race, and letting herself be distracted by the apples so Hippomenes wins, which would suggest that she has placed love above her own reputation and glory (*Ov. Met.*, 10.785-787). Instead of winning more prizes and crowns, she allows herself to lose so that she might marry Hippomenes. This could be because she does really love Hippomenes. The apple in Greek mythology is associated with wedding rites and marriage, so even in retrieving the apples, Atalanta can be seen as accepting the idea of marriage to Hippomenes wholeheartedly and freely.<sup>178</sup> Some scholars even argue that the moment Hippomenes threw the apples, Atalanta was conquered.<sup>179</sup> However, given that marriage has been used as a way to conquer warrior women, as we have seen with Antiope, Atalanta's choice to pursue love over glory could also be seen as a morality tale for the Greek audience: it is all well and good for a woman to pursue a warrior path for a while, but eventually she needs to be married and relegated back into the proper female role.

However, Atalanta's myth does not completely end with her marriage. After she and Hippomenes marry, he forgets to thank Aphrodite for her help in winning Atalanta's hand, and so the goddess curses them. Driven into lust, they decide to have sex in a temple and for this transgression, Zeus turns them both into lions (*Apollod. Bibl.*, 3.9.2 & *Hyg. Fab.*, 185). Atalanta's transformation into a lion is her final conquering, especially because it was a punishment for her excessive sexual desire. It sends the message that "there was no place in ordinary Greek society for a woman like Atalanta who loved to chase game, fight men, and wander at will. She would be an outsider, bereft of community, for rejecting the life of Greek wives who were confined to a

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<sup>178</sup>Barringer (1996) 74.

<sup>179</sup>Howell (1989) 134.

domestic sphere of children and kinfolk.”<sup>180</sup> Perhaps it also represents the expected transformation of the virgin who rejects rape, which is seen elsewhere in Greek myths.<sup>181</sup> Either way, Atalanta, unlike the Amazons, is not actually killed by any man, and again, unlike Antiope and Hippolyta, she is never raped. Perhaps it was precisely because she was Greek and not a foreign Amazon that she was conquered in a different way—through a transformation, instead of rape and murder.

### Conclusion

Atalanta is a warrior. She meets as much of the warrior model as the Amazons and the Homeric men did. She is royal, beautiful, and skilled in battle. Like Antiope, she is the first in courage among a group of men, and like Antiope, she shows empathy towards men that fall in love with her, and ends up married. She is dauntless like Penthesileia, and obsessed with her reputation and being honored publicly, like Hippolyta and her belt. Unlike Penthesileia, her beauty does not often overshadow her warrior identity, but in fact runs parallel with it.

Some scholars have argued that Atalanta’s “unnatural” femininity have led her to be rejected as a heroine, but I disagree.<sup>182</sup> Not only is she celebrated as a Greek hero in myth, and partakes in famous heroic expeditions, but she is ingrained into the history of Greece itself. Thucydides, Pausanias, and Strabo all note that there are two islands named in recognition of her (Strabo, *Geog.*, 9.1.14, 9.4.2; Thucy. 3.39.3; Paus., 10.24.4). There was also a lost play called *Atalanta* by Aeschylus, and as noted before, Callimachus mentioned that her hard-won boar tusks

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<sup>180</sup>Mayor (2014) 7.

<sup>181</sup>Callisto and Daphne are notable examples. For an overview of the Callisto myth, see Apollod. *Bibl.*, 3.8. For a poetic retelling of the Daphne myth, see Ov. *Met.*, I.628-783.

<sup>182</sup>Howell (1989) 138.

were visited for generations after her death (Callim. *Hymn* 3, 215-221).<sup>183</sup> While the Amazons were only ever presented as a foreign threat, Atalanta is part of the Greek mythos as a warrior.

So what does Atalanta's inclusion as a Greek warrior mean for the Greek male warriors and for the Amazons? Atalanta's identity as a Greek opens doors for her that the Amazons were not able to pass through. She participated in quests, hunts, and games with the male Greek warriors. Her identity as a warrior was not overshadowed by her gender—until she falls in love with Hippomenes. Before she meets him, she is accepted as a warrior by almost all the men that she meets. After she meets him, she becomes conquered, like the Amazons. However, her conquering is a little more peaceful than theirs; whereas Penthesileia, Antiope, and Hippolyta are all murdered, and two of them raped, Atalanta is simply turned into a lion. Her transformation is still a conquering by the Greek male, a punishment for her transgression of gender roles, but it is less violent than the conquering of the Amazons. Perhaps that is because she was Greek, and less of an Other than the foreign Amazon women. Either way, Atalanta's story suggests that *all* warrior women must be conquered, not just foreign warrior women. But despite their conquering, these women are still warriors. We have seen all the ways that each of them fit into the Homeric model—why then, have they been excluded from it?

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<sup>183</sup>Aeschylus, *Fragments* (2009) 16.

## *Conclusion*

### Claiming a Place for Warrior Women

In the first chapter of this thesis, I explored the definitions of Greek warriors as put forth by the influential models of Nagy, Adkins, and Finley. Now we return to them, to see what they make of our four warrior women.

In the opening section of *The Ancient Greek Hero in 24 Hours*, Nagy defines a hero as any human—male or female—who had superhuman abilities and was descended from the gods, and so, in his index Nagy names a number of women as heroines.<sup>184</sup> Interestingly, all of the women he names, except for Penthesileia, are not women who fight. In his quick study of Penthesileia, Nagy focuses particularly on the connections between her name and Achilles', and concludes with the argument that Penthesileia is the female reflection of Achilles himself: when he kills her, he adds to his reputation as a man of constant sorrow.<sup>185</sup> Penthesileia herself is not truly explored in this short section, for Nagy is interested with how she affects Achilles, the true main character of Nagy's study. Though Nagy decision to focus on Achilles is understandable, the treatment of Penthesileia cannot help but recall Apollodorus, Plutarch, and all the other ancient authors who relegated warrior women to footnotes in the stories of male Greek warriors.

While Nagy is being inclusive by exploring these women in certain chapters of his book, he fails to explore the role their gender plays in his model.<sup>186</sup> Do these women fit the three

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<sup>184</sup>Nagy (2013) 9. Nagy names Andromache, Ariadne, Briseis, Cassandra, Clytemnestra, Deianeria, Electra, Hecuba, Helen, Iphigenia, and Penelope as heroines, among others.

<sup>185</sup>Nagy (2013) 65. This also presents Penthesileia as a means to further support Achilles name and story, not as a character herself.

<sup>186</sup>Nagy particularly explores Clytemnestra in the sections on the Greek tragedy *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus. See Nagy (2013) 390-410.

characteristics for a hero that he laid out early in the book? Without Nagy's guidance, it is difficult to see how. Furthermore, why not mention Antiope, Hippolyta, or Atalanta? Since Nagy is not applying his model only to Homeric characters, but drawing on earlier Greek myth with Heracles and into Greek tragedy with Electra, Orestes, Clytemnestra, Phaedra, and Hippolytus, why not explore other warrior women? Nagy agrees early in his book that heroes could be either male or female, but neglects to explain how all the women in his index have earned their title of "heroine."<sup>187</sup> His treatment of women is not exactly erasure, because they are acknowledged, yet Nagy remains in the company of the other ancient and modern authors who relegate the warrior women to footnotes in the index.

Finley's model does not mention warrior women, because Finley sits squarely where he has claimed to be: in the world of Odysseus. He is not attempting to show how his model can be expanded out to other warriors, but how it fits only to the men of the Homeric world. Therefore, there is no mention of women at all, let alone warrior women.

In our final model, that of Adkins, we find a hybrid of Nagy's and Finley's approaches to gender. Like Nagy, Adkins expands his model outwards beyond the Homeric world, and explores these moral values in a variety of larger contexts, which allows him to mention female tragic figures like Clytemnestra, Antigone, and Electra. Like Finley he does not mention a single one of our warrior women. The argument could be made that in his Homeric world chapter Adkins, like Finley, is solely focusing on characters in the two poems of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Nevertheless, he later mentions Neoptolemus, Achilles' son, who is not part of the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, but does feature prominently in *Posthomerica*, the same poem that Penthesileia is

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<sup>187</sup> Nagy (2013) 9.

recorded in.<sup>188</sup> Though Adkins assessment of Neoptolemus is brief, he is still included. Penthesileia is not.

Thus, none of these influential Homeric models give warrior women the same amount of attention and respect as the male warriors.<sup>189</sup> In the two models of Finley and Adkins, not a single warrior woman is even mentioned. Yet Nagy and Adkins both discuss the women of Greek tragedy. Clytemnestra, Antigone, Iphigenia, and Electra are repeatedly referenced. I believe that is because each of those women have traits that we associate with Homeric warriors—they have courage, dauntlessness, and love of reputation.<sup>190</sup> This is even recognized in the tragic plays themselves, as many of these women are called “manly.”<sup>191</sup> Though I agree that these women fit closely into the Homeric models and are crucially important for the study of ideas of these “manly” traits and whether only men can exhibit them, why are the women who physically fight and partake in warrior *and* exhibit these traits not an area of interest in scholarship?

In Homeric warrior scholarship, there is a tendency to erase or sideline female warriors.<sup>192</sup> It is as if these Homeric warriorship traits can be understood in women as long as the women are

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<sup>188</sup>Adkins (1972) 114.

<sup>189</sup>Sarah B. Pomeroy’s 1975 book *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves* is often cited as the first attempt to bring feminism to Classics. Though Adkins was writing a few years before Pomeroy, both Finley and Nagy were writing many years after her book (2002 and 2013, respectively), and thus we would expect them to be aware of the emerging arguments about feminism in Classics.

<sup>190</sup>Examples such as Antigone’s claim that she “will suffer nothing as great as death without glory,” the point that she “didn’t flinch” when confronted, and her willingness to meet her death (ll. 112-113, 482, 512-520, trans. Fagles) all call to mind Homeric traits such as the love of glory and dauntlessness.

Medea’s pitilessness, passionate angry temper, and tireless pursuit of revenge are all traits we see in Achilles. Her repeated concerns throughout the play about being mocked by her enemies also echoes the fear of being called a coward that we saw over and over in the *Iliad*, as a byproduct of concern over reputation. Medea herself also expressed her own desire to live a life of “glorious renown” (ln. 810, trans. Blondell).

Iphigenia chooses to die in Euripides’ *Iphigenia at Aulis*, knowing her death will bring her “glorious fame” and she repeats her desire for fame as she goes to her death (ll. 1384, 1398, 1439, trans. Gamel).

<sup>191</sup>Antigone is called a man (ln. 541, trans. Fagles), and Iphigenia is referred to as having “manliness,” (ln. 1562, trans. Gamel). Clytemnestra is described as man-like many times, but to give two examples: she is complimented for having a “man-like will” in her woman’s heart, and for speaking like a man, which is seen as “both wise and kind” (ll. 10-11, 351, trans. Vellacott).

<sup>192</sup>This erasure can have real-life consequences. Male warrior graves have been given a fair amount of attention by Classicists and archaeologists, and only recently has it come to light that some of these male warriors were actually women. Because the skeletons were identifiable as warriors, they were assumed to be male, and decades

not co-opting the male space by fighting. Women can be brave and dauntless and strong as long as they are still at home—and as long as they still end up conquered by death, as most of the Greek tragedy women are.<sup>193</sup> The study of warriorship has been typically understood as a study of men only. Perhaps the female warriors are felt to be too much of a threat to that study because they are women with the traits of male warriors *and* the physical role of a warrior, as well.

The aim of this study was to address this erasure of female warriors in Homeric warrior scholarship by expanding the definition of what makes a warrior in Ancient Greek literature. Warriors have almost exclusively been understood as men, and that clearly is too simple of an understanding. Though I have only examined four women in this thesis, by setting a standard of applying the Homeric model to women warriors, I believe that future arguments can be made for a whole host of women fitting into this model, as well. These traits of courage, dauntlessness, love of glory, ability to yield, and empathy clearly do not belong solely to the male gender. Perhaps with that new understanding, future scholarship will be able to open doors for other women in Ancient Greek literature to be seen as the warriors they are. It is past time for these warrior women to claim their place in study of warriorship.

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went by before someone thought to challenge that assumption. We now know that in some of the mass warrior graves discovered across the Eurasian Steppes, female warriors can account for up to thirty-seven percent of those burials. For more on Amazon archaeology, see Mayor (2013) 63-83.

<sup>193</sup>Antigone dies by suicide, Clytemnestra is killed by her own son (and her daughter as well, in Euripides' play), and her other daughter Iphigenia is sacrificed by her father Agamemnon. Electra and Medea both survive, but they have both committed murders of family, and thus leave their plays polluted.

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