

# Amazons, Thracians, and Scythians

*H. A. Shapiro*

THE AMAZONS offer a remarkable example of the lacunose and fragmented state of ancient evidence for many Greek myths. For while we hear virtually nothing about them in extant literature before the mid-fifth century, they are depicted in art starting in the late eighth<sup>1</sup> and are extremely popular, especially in Attica, from the first half of the sixth. Thus all we know about the Greeks' conception of the Amazons in the archaic period comes from visual representations, not from written sources, and it would be hazardous to assume that various 'facts' and details supplied by later writers were familiar to the sixth-century Greek.

The problem of locating the Amazons is a good case in point. Most scholars assume that Herakles' battle with the Amazons, so popular on Attic vases, took place at the Amazon city Themiskyra in Asia Minor, on the river Thermodon near the Black Sea, where most ancient writers place it.<sup>2</sup> But the earliest of these is Apollodoros (2.5.9), and, as I shall argue, alternate traditions locating the Amazons elsewhere may have been known to the archaic vase-painter and viewer.

An encounter with Amazons figures among the exploits of three important Greek heroes, and each story entered the Attic vase-painters' repertoire at a different time in the course of the sixth century. First came Herakles' battle to obtain the girdle of Hippolyte (although the prize itself is never shown), his ninth labor. This scene first appeared in the second quarter of the sixth century, "arriving suddenly and in force, without any apparent antecedents."<sup>3</sup> Achilles' combat with the Amazon queen Penthesilea at Troy is first depicted

<sup>1</sup> Clay shield from Tiryns: K. Schefold, *Myth and Legend in Early Greek Art* (London 1966) pl. 7b.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Dietrich VON BOTHMER, *Amazons in Greek Art* (Oxford 1956 [hereafter 'von Bothmer']) 14, states that on a Tyrrhenian amphora, Florence 3773 (pl. 10), the only Amazonomachy in vase-painting to include architecture, the city gates and crenelated battlements are those of Themiskyra.

<sup>3</sup> Von Bothmer 6. Among the earliest are over a dozen 'Tyrrhenian' amphoras (von Bothmer pls. 4-12), three neck-amphoras by the Camtar Painter (pls. 2-3), and several Siana cups (pl. 17).

by Exekias, twice, about 540.<sup>4</sup> And lastly, Theseus' abduction of Antiope, which precipitated an Amazon attack on the Athenian Akropolis, first occurs in the work of the red-figure painter Oltos, in the penultimate decade of the sixth century.<sup>5</sup> Of the three myths, Herakles' Amazonomachy is by far the most popular, in keeping with the general predominance of Herakles myths in archaic art.<sup>6</sup>

During the heyday of Attic black-figure Amazonomachies, ca 560–520, the Amazons are most often shown as heavily armed hoplite warriors, outfitted with short chiton, cuirass, greaves, crested helmet, round shield, and spear—in short, indistinguishable from their Greek opponents, apart from the white-painted flesh which marks them out as female. Though always thought of as remote foreigners, the Amazons have been Hellenized in the same way that, in the *Iliad* and in archaic art, the Trojans and their allies from various exotic places—Lydia, Thrace, Ethiopia—all fight in the same manner and with the same arms and armor as the Greeks,<sup>7</sup> with rare exceptions.<sup>8</sup>

But not all Amazons on vases are Hellenized. Occasionally, starting about 550, and with greater frequency later in the century, they borrow iconographic features from two foreign warrior races well known to the Greeks—Thracians and Scythians. Representations of both these races also first occur in Attic art around the middle of the sixth century, under the influence of historical circumstances for which our evidence is not always clear. The appearance of 'Thracian Amazons' and 'Scythian Amazons' in vase-painting not only offers some insight into Greek ideas about Amazons at a time when literary sources are silent, but also raises the possibility that the Amazonomachy was seen as a mythical prototype for certain historical events long before the post-Persian decades when it most conspicuously played that rôle.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Neck-amphora, London B210: *ABV* 144.7; W. Technau, *Exekias* (Leipzig 1936) pl. 25; neck-amphora, London B209: *ABV* 144.8; Technau pl. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Cup, London E41: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 58.51, von Bothmer pl. 68.4; cup, Oxford 1927.4065: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 62.77, von Bothmer pl. 68.6.

<sup>6</sup> See the statistics on Herakles in Attic black-figure compiled by John Boardman, *JHS* 95 (1975) 1.

<sup>7</sup> See Wulf Raeck, *Zum Barbarenbild in der Kunst Athens im 6. und 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Bonn 1981) 30 and n.132, 69; P. Devambez, *LIMC* 1 (Munich 1981) 637 s.v. "Amazones."

<sup>8</sup> For one such exception, Troilos depicted as a Thracian in scenes of his ambush by Achilles, see Konrad Zimmermann, "Thraker-Darstellungen auf griechischen Vasen," *Actes du II<sup>e</sup> Congrès internationale de Thracologie* (Bucarest 1976) 441.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. on the Parthenon west metopes and the shield of Athena Parthenos. P. Devambez, "Les Amazones et l'Orient," *RevArch* 1976, 273, argues that the first instance of the Amazonomachy as a mythological analogue for the Greek victories over the Persians is on the metopes of the Athenian Treasury at Delphi. This would seem to

## Thracian Amazons

The most characteristic piece of equipment of the Thracian peltast is the light, half-moon shaped wicker shield, or *pelta*, from which he takes his name.<sup>10</sup> The earliest peltasts in Attic vase-painting are two on a Little-Master cup in Copenhagen signed by the potter Epitimos and closely related in style to the late work of Lydos, about 540.<sup>11</sup> They fight with the long javelin, wear short chiton, chlamys, and low boots, and one wears a pointed cap which is usually associated rather with Phrygians or Scythians. This is an instance of the kind of conflation of two (or more) races which many Amazon vases share.<sup>12</sup>

Amazon peltasts first appear on a black-figure eye-cup in Munich of about 525,<sup>13</sup> in a scene showing one Amazon carrying a dead comrade from the battlefield (PLATE 3A). Both carry the *pelta*. The scene is an excerpt from a Heraklean Amazonomachy, for the hero is seen on the other side of the cup, in single combat with an Amazon. In the last quarter of the sixth century the Amazon with *pelta* is not uncommon, but the assimilation to Thracian styles is only partial. Several vases, such as an amphora in Munich by the Painter of Berlin 1686,<sup>14</sup> show Thracian men, or Athenians dressed in Thracian garb, in such characteristic garments as the *zeira*, or patterned cloak, and *alopekis* (foxskin cap), which are never seen on Amazons.<sup>15</sup>

One source of the Athenian vase-painters' first-hand knowledge of Thracian peltasts is well known: in preparation for his second return from exile, probably in 546,<sup>16</sup> Peisistratos hired Thracian mercenaries,

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imply an acceptance of Pausanias' statement (10.11.5) that the building was a dedication after Marathon. On this controversy see now Werner Gauer, "Das Athenerschatzhaus und die marathonischen Akrothina in Delphi," in *Forschungen und Funde, Festschrift B. Neusch* (Innsbruck 1980) 127-36. Most recently, John Boardman has suggested that the Athenian Treasury commemorates the Athenian expedition in 499 in support of the Ionian Revolt: "Herakles, Theseus and Amazons," in *The Eye of Greece: Studies in the Art of Athens*, ed. D. Kurtz and B. Sparkes (Cambridge 1982) 13.

<sup>10</sup> See J. G. P. Best, *Thracian Peltasts and Their Influence on Greek Warfare* (Groningen 1969), esp. 3-16.

<sup>11</sup> Copenhagen 13966: *Paralipomena* 48, *ActaA* 31 (1960) 132.

<sup>12</sup> On the conflation of Scythians and Thracians on vases see Raeck (*supra* n.7) 33-34.

<sup>13</sup> Munich 2030: von Bothmer pl. 61.3 and 35.5.

<sup>14</sup> Munich 1375: *ABV* 297.15, *CVA* pl. 9.3.

<sup>15</sup> On Thracian dress see Best (*supra* n.10) 6-7, *cf.* Hdt. 7.75.1. Raeck (*supra* n.7) 70 states that the *zeira* first occurs on Attic vases only about 530, on an amphora, Toronto 399-C316: Robinson/Harcum/Illiffe, *Greek Vases at Toronto* (Toronto 1930) pl. 34. H. Cahn, "Dokimasia," *RevArch* 1973, 13 and n.2, had earlier suggested that it appears on several vases of 560-540.

<sup>16</sup> For the date, much disputed, see J. G. F. Hind, "The 'Tyrannis' and the Exiles of Pisistratus," *CQ* n.s. 24 (1974) 1-18.

presumably with the gold he had mined around Mt Pangaion (*Ath. Pol.* 15.2). Indeed, the Munich amphora, painted at most two decades later, may depict Thracians in the tyrants' employ, as Best has suggested.<sup>17</sup>

Are we to suppose, then, that the vase-painters who borrowed the *pelta* for their Amazons intended only to add an exotic touch, while showing that they were *au courant* with the fashions of foreigners newly come to Athens? Or could they have had something more specific in mind? In his summary of the *Aithiopsis*, Proklos says of Penthesilea that the Amazons were a Thracian race, children of Ares.<sup>18</sup> Assuming that Proklos is following his epic source, we have here a trace of a very ancient tradition which, though not recorded elsewhere, could have been widespread in the sixth century. The very fact that at the time Proklos was writing (fifth century A.D.) the *communis opinio* had for centuries placed the Amazons at Themiskyra in Asia Minor suggests that his comment preserves a genuinely old tradition.

One other occasional feature of Amazon dress also supports the association with Thrace. The Amazon carrying her dead companion on the Munich eye-cup wears an animal skin over her chiton, as do Amazons on a contemporary lekythos in New York<sup>19</sup> and on no fewer than three vases by Lydos, rather earlier.<sup>20</sup> In the earliest Lydan Amazonomachy, a fragmentary vase found in the Kerameikos (PLATE 3B), the skin is clearly leopard, with white and purple spots and part of the head preserved. On the other two vases it is a different feline, with the hide articulated by small incised lines. Lydos is also one of the first vase-painters to depict maenads in Dionysos' entourage wearing animal skins, on his great volute-krater in New York (*ca* 560).<sup>21</sup> Both maenads and Amazons wear the skin in the same manner, so that it appears as a kind of elongated lozenge, with one paw over the left shoulder and another hanging down in front. The homeland of the maenads is Thrace:<sup>22</sup> as early as Homer (*Il.*

<sup>17</sup> *Supra* n.10: 6. On the problem of distinguishing genuine Thracians from Athenians in Thracian dress, see Raeck (*supra* n.7) 71ff. By the fifth century Thracian outfits are popular for a variety of Greek figures; see K. Schauenburg, "Achilleus als Barbar; ein antikes Missverständnis," *A&A* 20 (1974) 92-93.

<sup>18</sup> *Chrest.* 2 (p.105 Allen).

<sup>19</sup> New York 07.286.43: *ABV* 454.2, von Bothmer pl. 50.7.

<sup>20</sup> Plate, Bonn 339: *ABV* 111.51, von Bothmer pl. 18; Siana cup, Agora AP1166: *ABV* 112.66, von Bothmer pl. 17.3; Kerameikos 76: *ABV* 107.2, von Bothmer pl. 17.1.

<sup>21</sup> New York 31.11.11: *ABV* 108.5; M. A. Tiberios, "Ο Λύδος και τὸ ἔργον του (Athens 1976) pl. 53.

<sup>22</sup> See E. Simon, *EAA* 4 (1961) 1007 s.v. "Menades." Simon attributes the popularity of maenadism in sixth-century Athens to its association with the mysteries of Orpheus,

6.130–35), Dionysos and his female followers (not yet called maenads) are associated with the Thracian king Lykourgos. Apparently for Lydos and some of his contemporaries these two races of high-spirited women, one in the service of Ares, the other in that of Dionysos, had a common origin in Thrace.

The arrival of Peisistratos' Thracian mercenaries in Athens in the 540's was surely not the first instance of Athenian contact with this people. The wealth of references to Thrace and Thracians in Greek myth attests to a long-standing fascination with this part of the north Aegean, so near to Greece yet so foreign. We have already mentioned Lykourgos, Orpheus, Dionysos and his maenads, all with Thracian connections. The tragic story of the Attic princess Prokne and her marriage to the Thracian king Tereus seems to reflect Athenian attitudes to these northern barbarians. Herakles himself went to Thrace to tame the man-eating horses of Diomedes, a labor represented in art first by Psiax, about 520.<sup>23</sup> The Thracian contingent at Troy was led by Rhesos, whose death is told in *Iliad* 10 (469–525). Rhesos, like Diomedes, is famous for his horses (10.436–37), which are especially fine and swift. Thrace's reputation for breeding horses is perhaps also reflected in the appearance of mounted Amazons, beginning soon after the mid-sixth century.<sup>24</sup> A vase now lost showed five Amazons on horseback, two of them carrying the Thracian *pelta*.<sup>25</sup>

It has been suggested that the Thracian episode in *Iliad* 10, commonly regarded as a late addition to the poem, reflects skirmishes between Greek colonists and native Thracian tribes during the seventh and sixth centuries.<sup>26</sup> Certainly such encounters took place, and one is recorded by Archilochos (fr.8 Tarditi, 6 Diehl), who was one of the original Parian colonists on Thasos, just off the Thracian coast, in the seventh century. The Thasians founded a settlement on that coast, Neapolis (modern Kavala), which flourished despite hostile natives, to judge from the wide assortment of imported pottery found

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another Thracian. For an attempt to connect the prevalence of Dionysos' cult in Athens in this period with Peisistratos' Thracian sojourn, see J. W. Cole, "Peisistratos on the Strymon," *G&R* 22 (1975) 42–44.

<sup>23</sup> Black-figure cup, Leningrad: *ABV* 294.22, *JHS* 95 (1975) pl. 18.

<sup>24</sup> First on a Merrythought cup from Rhodes: *ABV* 198.1, *Clara Rhodos* 8 (1936) 116.

<sup>25</sup> Hydria, once New York, Gould: *ABV* 161, von Bothmer pl. 63.6. Von Bothmer (104–05) refers to the natural association of mounted Amazons and mounted Thracians and points to an amphora in Munich showing on one side two mounted Amazons holding *peltai* and on the other two Thracian riders (Munich 1504: pl. 63.3).

<sup>26</sup> D. P. Dimitrov, *Kunstschatze in bulgarischen Museen und Klöstern* (Sofia 1964) 36.

there.<sup>27</sup> Among these imports are a dozen Attic black-figure pieces of about 580–560, so we may infer some Athenian contact with Thrace through the medium of trade, well before Peisistratos retired there after his second tyranny, in the 550's, or Miltiades settled in the Thracian Chersonese, in the 540's.<sup>28</sup> An Athenian presence not far away, at Sigeion in the Troad, by about 600 or soon after, is assured by Herodotos' account (5.94–95) of Athens' dispute with Mytilene over Sigeion, arbitrated by Periander of Corinth.<sup>29</sup>

A fine recently published Siana cup in Berlin, dated 560–550, has an elaborate battle scene running all the way around the exterior.<sup>30</sup> Elisabeth Rohde, in discussing the vase, observed that most of the hoplites who appear to have the upper hand wear helmets either with horn-like decoration or with tall crests, while the defeated have low crests or none at all. She proposed to identify the former as Thracians, in accordance with Herodotos' description of Thracian helmets (7.75), the latter with Greeks, and suggested that the cup might even have been buried with a man of Thracian origin.<sup>31</sup> Beside one handle is an archer wearing a pointed cap and short chiton, looking very much like the archer fighting together with several Thracian peltasts on the Munich amphora discussed above.<sup>32</sup> It is interesting that the tondo of the Berlin cup shows Herakles battling an Amazon, perhaps Andromache, one of the earliest Attic Amazonomachies outside the Tyrrhenian Group. I would like to think that the choice of this subject was not accidental, but was meant to offer a mythical parallel to the much fuller, quasi-historical battle on the exterior. Only the outcomes are not parallel, for while the Greek hero puts his Amazon enemy to flight, the Greek hoplites seem headed for defeat.

### Scythian Amazons

Not all archers in Greek vase-painting are Scythians, although the converse may be true: all Scythians are depicted as archers, at least wearing a quiver, if not always holding a bow. Since fighting with bow

<sup>27</sup> See D. Lazarides, *Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* (Princeton 1976) 614 s.v. "Neapolis."

<sup>28</sup> For the date see J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (Oxford 1971) 299.

<sup>29</sup> Thus Herodotos' ascription of the victory to Peisistratos is chronologically impossible. The date of ca 600 for the war is confirmed by the participation of the Lesbian poet Alkaios: see Denys Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford 1955) 152–61.

<sup>30</sup> Inv. 3402: Elisabeth Rohde, "Drei Sianaschen der Berliner Antiken-Sammlung," in *Studies in Honour of Arthur Dale Trendall* (Sydney 1979) 135–47 and pls. 37–39.

<sup>31</sup> Rohde (*supra* n.30) 142–43. On battle scenes between Greeks and Thracians as a reflection of contemporary events, see also Raeck (*supra* n.7) 99–100.

<sup>32</sup> *Supra* n.13.

and arrow was not a Greek custom, even the earliest archers in black-figure wear barbarian, if not necessarily Scythian, dress. These include both mounted archers, on a dinos from the Akropolis,<sup>33</sup> and a standing archer beside a Greek hoplite, on a cup fragment in Athens.<sup>34</sup> Both belong about 560, and on both the outfit includes a pointed cap but not the Scythian trousers and jacket. As Vos has shown, the full Scythian costume does not become established in vase-painting until about 530; and when it does, it is very distinctive and cannot be confused with any other barbarian dress, including Thracian or Persian.<sup>35</sup> These Scythians last only about half a century, disappearing from vase-painting after 480.<sup>36</sup>

The portrayal of Amazon archers follows a sequence similar to that of Scythians. The earliest are on two Tyrrhenian amphoras and a dinos of about 550, the latter also including two male archers, one of whom appears to fight on the side of the Amazons.<sup>37</sup> The archers' costume is exotic—an elaborately patterned chiton and soft cloak—but not Scythian.<sup>38</sup> By the 520's Amazon archers are increasingly popular, and some have been assimilated to the full Scythian type, including the stiff leather cap rising to a point, with flaps descending over the cheeks and down the back, patterned trousers, and a close-fitting sleeved jacket.<sup>39</sup> One appears on horseback on an amphora in Philadelphia,<sup>40</sup> together with a hoplite comrade (PLATE 4). On the obverse, Herakles has downed an Amazon, and another comes to her rescue. The latter wears a Scythian cap and trousers with a short chiton over them, but fights with Thracian *pelta* and spear. The conflation may be deliberate, to lend her a doubly exotic aspect. In early red-figure, Amazons in a variety of ornate garb, some Scythian, some perhaps Persian, are especially frequent.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>33</sup> The name vases of the Painter of Acropolis 606: *ABV* 81.1; B. Graef and E. Langlotz, *Die antiken Vasen von der Akropolis zu Athen* (Berlin 1909–33) pl. 30–32.

<sup>34</sup> Acropolis 1613: *ABV* 57.117 (C-Painter), Graef/Langlotz (*supra* n.33) pl. 82.

<sup>35</sup> M. F. Vos, *Scythian Archers in Archaic Attic Vase-Painting* (Groningen 1963) 40–51, 56–60.

<sup>36</sup> See Raeck (*supra* n.7) 10.

<sup>37</sup> The dinos, Louvre E875: *ABV* 104.123; von Bothmer pl. 14; on the scene, which is much restored, see von Bothmer 13. The amphoras, Cambridge 44: *ABV* 84.2, von Bothmer pl. 2.2; Louvre E856: *ABV* 99.54, von Bothmer pl. 4.2.

<sup>38</sup> According to von Bothmer (17), an Amazon archer on the Tyrrhenian amphora in the Louvre wears trousers and sleeved jacket. Unfortunately she is at the extreme right of the scene and does not appear in any published photograph.

<sup>39</sup> In red-figure, where gender is not obvious from the color of flesh, it is sometimes impossible to distinguish Scythians from Amazons; see Raeck (*supra* n.7) 29–31.

<sup>40</sup> Philadelphia 1752: von Bothmer pl. 38.5, 63.4.

<sup>41</sup> See von Bothmer pls. 68–69.

Vos, trying to explain the relatively sudden appearance of Scythian archers on Attic vases about 530 and their equally sudden disappearance not long after 500, suggested that Scythian mercenaries were hired by Peisistratos to form a corps of archers in the Athenian army, perhaps to match the archers employed by his friend and rival Polykrates of Samos (Hdt. 3.39, 3.45).<sup>42</sup> The presence in Athens of Scythians is, however, not explicitly attested, as in the case of Peisistratos' Thracian mercenaries, in the sixth century. We first hear of them in the mid-fifth century, when Scythian 'policemen' were brought in as state slaves, rather than mercenaries.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps the most cogent piece of monumental evidence in support of Vos' theory is the marble statue on the Akropolis of the late sixth century, of a rider in brightly colored trousers, surely a Scythian.<sup>44</sup>

Even without assuming this Scythian presence in Athens, we can explain the vase-painters' familiarity with Scythians and their dress through trading contacts. The Athenian outpost at Sigeion, located just south of the Black Sea, will have been on the trade route with Scythia, and discoveries of Attic black-figure at sites like Berezan and Theodosia in South Russia give evidence of such contact in the first half of the sixth century.<sup>45</sup>

We are again faced with a question which the Thracians also presented: what prompted the adaptation of Scythian iconography for Amazons? Was it simply that one tradition described the Amazons as skilled archers,<sup>46</sup> and this naturally led to an association with the most

<sup>42</sup> Vos (*supra* n.35) 66–67. Raeck (*supra* n.7) 15 stresses that these would not have been part of the tyrant's private army, like the Thracian mercenaries, but members of the state armed forces who could have continued in service after the fall of the Peisistratids.

<sup>43</sup> See O. Jacob, *Les esclaves publics à Athènes* (Paris 1928) 64–73, and Raeck (*supra* n.7) 237 n.39.

<sup>44</sup> Acropolis 606: M. S. Brouskari, *The Acropolis Museum* (Athens 1974) 59–60. On the problem whether he represents an actual Scythian or a Greek in Scythian dress, see Raeck (*supra* n.7) 12–14, and most recently R. A. Stucky, "Überlegungen zum 'Per-serreiter,'" *AntK* 25 (1982) 97–101, who suggests the statue depicts the Scythian attendant of an Athenian cavalryman.

<sup>45</sup> See E. H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks* (Cambridge 1913) 338–39. It is interesting that the earliest Attic fragments are by the two black-figure painters who first depicted foreign archers (*cf. supra* n.9): the Painter of Acropolis 606 (J. D. Beazley, *The Development of Attic Black-Figure* [Berkeley 1951] 40), and the C-Painter (*Paralipomena* 24). See also S. Dimitriu and P. Alexandrescu, "L'importation de la céramique attique dans les colonies du Pont-Euxin avant les guerres médiques," *RevArch* 1973, 23–38; and A. X. Kocybala, *Greek Colonization on the North Shore of the Black Sea* (Diss. Pennsylvania 1978) 210–12 (Berezan) and 290 (Theodosia).

<sup>46</sup> A Chalcidian amphora of 550–540, one of the few non-Attic vases with an Amazon, shows Penthesilea as an archer, mounted and turning back for the 'Parthian shot':



famous archers known to the Greeks? Or could a geographical connection once again have played a part?

In one of the earliest extant passages to treat the Amazons at some length, Herodotos explicitly brings them into relation with the Scythians and has the two races intermarry (4.110–16). Their supposed descendants, the Sauromatae, were one of the tribes who resisted Darius' march through Scythia in about 513. Stirred up by this Persian invasion, the Scythians attacked the Thracian Chersonnese and temporarily displaced the Athenian dynast there, Miltiades (Hdt. 6.40.1). While earlier incidents are not recorded, it is reasonable to suppose that this was not the first instance of hostilities between the nomadic and warlike Scythians and the Greek settlers around the Black Sea and farther afield. May not these incidents be reflected in battle scenes of 'Scythian Amazons' against Herakles or Greek hoplites?

The period of Thracian and Scythian Amazons in vase-painting corresponds roughly to the later years of Peisistratos' tyranny and that of his sons. In the last decade of the sixth century and first decade of the fifth, they persist in black-figure, usually in tired copies of the older convention. The creative reworkings of the Amazonomachy at this time are all in red-figure, and to some extent innovations in Amazon dress have less to do with strict chronology than with the new decorative possibilities offered by the invention of the new technique. Thus, for example, on an amphora by the Andokides Painter, still in the 520's,<sup>47</sup> the Amazon costumes are unique: one short tunic with woven bands of animal and abstract ornament and tasseled fringe; patterned *sakkoi* of two different styles; a cuirass decorated with rosettes; a pointed cap of animal skin; necklaces and earrings. The ethnic derivations are not all clear, but for the most part the outfits look basically Greek, with Ionian or Near Eastern influence in some of the decorative detail.

The next generation of red-figure sees other costumes: on Euphronios' great volute krater in Arezzo,<sup>48</sup> for example, two Amazon archers wear striped trousers and jacket. The patterning is unlike that on any black-figure Scythian archer, and the headgear, instead of rising to a point, curls over, like the so-called Phrygian cap. On other red-figure vases of about 500, Thracian, Scythian, Oriental, and Greek

Leningrad, Inv. 1479: A. Rumpf, *Chalkidische Vasen* (Berlin 1927) pl. 109. The Amazons' acquaintance with the bow and the horse is mentioned by Hdt. 4.114.

<sup>47</sup> Orvieto, Faina 64: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 3.5, von Bothmer pl. 69.1.

<sup>48</sup> Arezzo 1465: *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 15.6, von Bothmer pl. 69.3.

elements are all mixed indiscriminately for decorative effect.<sup>49</sup> Early in the fifth century, yet another costume, the Persian, enters the repertoire, in the wake of Darius' campaigns.<sup>50</sup> Persian Amazons are especially prevalent on white-ground alabastra related to Beazley's Group of the Negro Alabastra.<sup>51</sup>

From here on the popularity of Amazonomachies, not only on vases but in monumental painting and sculpture as well, is owed to this Persian connection, the Amazons symbolizing the barbarian invader.<sup>52</sup> But the connection is strictly symbolic, for on Early Classical vases the Amazons continue to show the same varieties of dress as before,<sup>53</sup> and no one would seriously have suggested that they came from Persia. When speculation on the origins and location of the Amazons resumed in the fourth century, it turned to other areas, for example on coins advertising them as founders of cities in Asia Minor.<sup>54</sup> The stories about Themiskyra, the Amazon capital city, may also originate in this period. Older traditions associating the Amazons with Thrace and Scythia were ignored or forgotten. But they have been preserved for us on vases of an age which probably considered the Amazons no more strange and barbaric than the tribes with whom trade and colonization brought the Greeks in uneasily close proximity.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. for example a cup by Oltos (von Bothmer pl. 72.5): the Amazon wears Thracian *zeira* and carries a *pelta*, but also wears a Scythian cap with high bulging crown (on this cap see Vos [*supra* n.35] 42).

<sup>50</sup> On the differences between Scythian and Persian dress see Vos (*supra* n.35) 44–45.

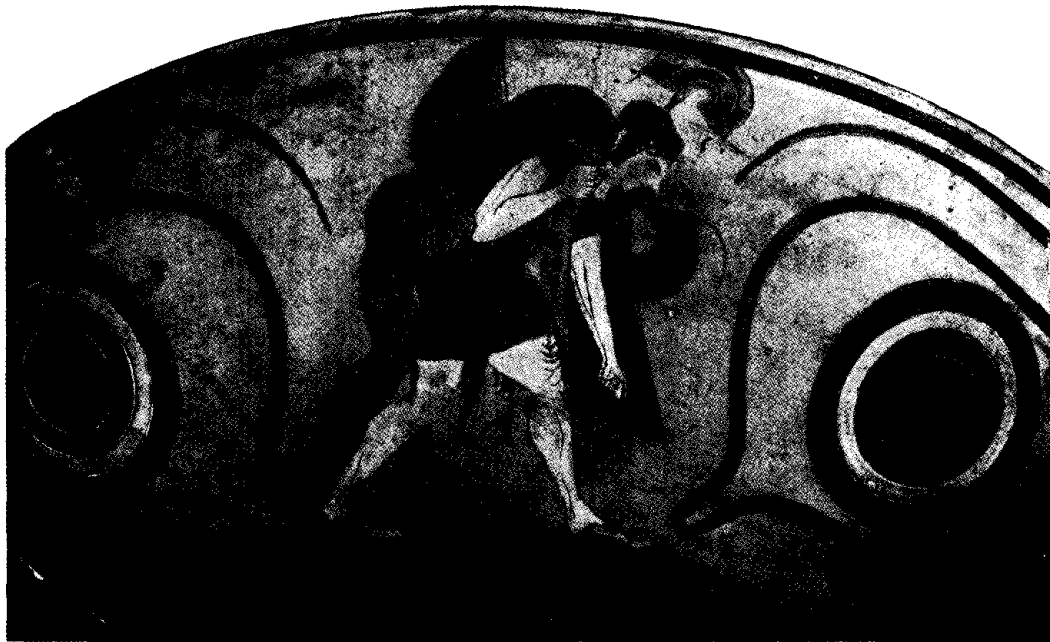
<sup>51</sup> E.g. London B673: von Bothmer pl. 73.3; alabastron in Reggio: *NSc* 1917, 138. On these vases see now Jenifer Neils, "The Group of the Negro Alabastra: a Study in Motif Transferal," *AntK* 23 (1980) 13–23.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *supra* n.9.

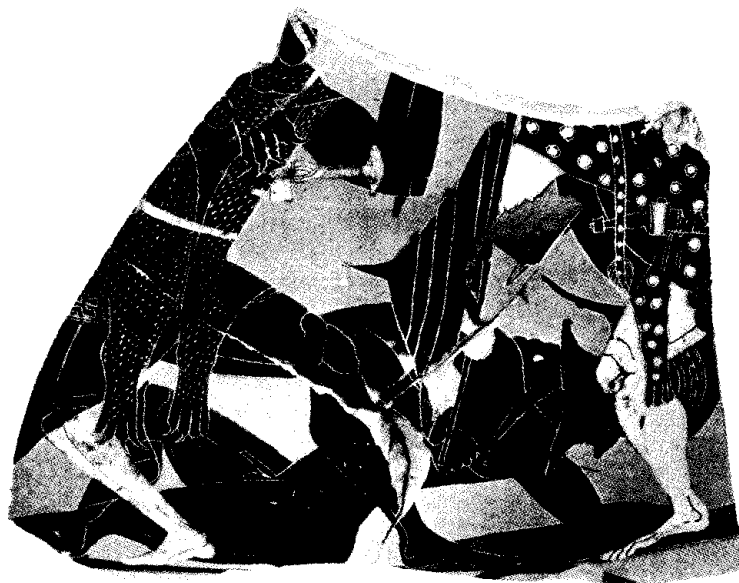
<sup>53</sup> See for example von Bothmer pls. 74–75.

<sup>54</sup> Devambez (*supra* n.9) 267.

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A. AMAZONS WITH PELTAE  
Black-figure eye-cup (Munich 2030) *ca* 525  
Courtesy Antikensammlung, Munich



B. HERAKLES AND AMAZON WEARING LEOPARD SKIN  
Black-figure fragment by Lydos (Kerameikos 76) *ca* 550  
Courtesy German Archaeological Institute, Athens



TWO MOUNTED AMAZONS: HOPLITE AND SCYTHIAN DRESS  
Black-figure neck-amphora (Philadelphia 1752) *ca* 525  
Courtesy University Museum