

An Amazon Song

"The Iron Ring" is a popular English Madriian song. It is said to be an English version of a song sung by the Amazons in early patriarchal times. The Iron Ring was a defensive formation employed by hand-picked groups of Amazon infantry. They would form into a circle, their outward-facing swords and peltae (the light Amazon shield) forming a "ring of iron". Sometimes archers were stationed inside the Ring to fire out over their heads. The formation of a Ring to protect the wounded and the sisters attending to them is briefly described in Projection 6 of The Maira Handbook. Such was the strength of the formation and the prowess of the maids who formed it that it is said that throughout the whole of Amazon history (which covers several hundred years) the Ring was never once broken. In difficult times, the Iron Ring was often the key factor in preserving the safety of the Amazons' mountain fastnesses.

The verses are sung by a single singer, the chorus by the whole group of singers, and it has a faster and more robust rhythm than that of the verses. In the last four lines of the chorus everybody joins, and they are usually repeated.

The Iron Ring

O, the Temples are in ruins,
There is treason in the town;
The statues in the market-place
Have all been broken down.
Our dear Lady is forgotten
Through the whole of Her fair land,
For it languishes in darkness 'neath
The tyrant's bloody hand.

Chorus: But we love Her in the mountains
Where the air is fresh and clear,
For the bloody hand of tyranny
Can gain no entrance here;

And we raid them and we mock them
And we feast and we dance and we sing,
And if they want to stop us
Let them break the Iron Ring

Let them break the Iron Ring,
Let them break the Iron Ring,
All the men from here to Hades
Cannot break the Iron Ring.

O the tyrant has made idols
With his own unseemly face
And has tortured our dear kinsfolk
From our Lady's loving grace;
And there's many a saintly priestess
That has died by sword or flame
For she would not call on any but
Our Lady's precious Name.

Chorus: But we love Her in the Mountains...

Let us praise our noble warriors
That protect us from our foes,
Let us praise their shining armour
And their swiftly-arching bows;
For their eyes are ever laughing
And their lips forever sing:
Let us praise the noble soldier-maid
That make the Iron King.

Chorus: For we love Her in the mountains...