



Review: [untitled]

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Reviewed work(s):

Pope's "Iliad"; Homer in the Age of Passion by Steven Shankman

Source: *The Classical World*, Vol. 77, No. 5 (May - Jun., 1984), p. 315

Published by: Classical Association of the Atlantic States

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4349604>

Accessed: 11/02/2010 16:53

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Steven Shankman. *Pope's Iliad; Homer in the Age of Passion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983. Pp. xviii, 195. \$21.50.

Shankman argues that, in matters of interpretation (-by-translation), style, and versification, "Pope (the allegedly restrained neoclassicist) rather than Chapman (the allegedly exuberant Elizabethan). . . is scrupulously faithful to the original text" (xvii-xviii). "Faithful" not absolutely, but within the proclivities of neoclassical theories derived from certain passages in Aristotle and "Longinus".

Part I ("Design") compares Chapman's with Pope's treatment of Achilles in Books 1, 9, and 24. The Elizabethan translator, influenced by Stoic doctrines concerning *perturbationes* of the soul, minimizes or eliminates the morally reprehensible subordination of reason to irrationality in his depiction of the wrath of Achilles. On the other hand, Pope's sharing in contemporary interest in "passion", an ethically neutral term, "enabled him to represent, with less distortion and with greater ethical immunity than had Chapman, the rise and abatement of Achilles' wrath" (29).

Part II ("Language") seeks to dispel mistaken notions about stylistic divergences between Pope's *Iliad* and Homer's. Pope's desire to achieve the elevation of thought essential to epic is conditioned by neoclassical opinions of, among other things, decorum and liveliness, the circumstantial and the universal. So, for example, Pope's muting of Homeric mundanities is due not to an over-refined aesthetic fastidiousness, but to the attempt "to maintain that tone of dignity which both he and Boileau believe had never been violated in the original text as it was experienced by Homer's audience" (112). Thus, in accord with Longinian criteria adopted by critics of his era, Pope improved on Chapman by disburdening the epic of superfluous particulars in favor of a universality of appeal. Shankman's concrete textual illustrations of these (and other) theoretical discriminations are always apposite and compelling.

Part III ("Versification") is less persuasive. *Pace* Milton, a case is made for the usefulness of the heroic couplet to Pope's pursuit of sublimity, but secondary points regarding simulation of Homer's "poetic fire" and similarities in the placement of *caesurae* are weak. (The author seems unaware that *caesura* does not refer to the same phenomenon in Latin and in modern prosody.)

All in all, this is a convincing, concise, and interesting book that goes further toward rehabilitation of Pope's translation than do the provocative but sometimes crabbed arguments in H. A. Mason's *To Homer through Pope*.

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CW 77.5 (1984)

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William Mullen. *Choreia: Pindar and Dance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982. Pp. xiv, 275. \$25.00.

Epiničan odes were danced, but information about the nature of the dance is slight. By combining meager commentaries with what he can extract from analysis of Pindar's odes, Mr. Mullen hopes to recover the epiničan dance. Much in this book is speculative or even fanciful, and skepticism is in order for many of its specific reconstructions; but it reveals acuteness of observation as well as originality and ingenuity, and deserves the attention of all students of Greek poetry.