



# **Soliciting Darkness: Pindar, Obscurity, and the Classical Tradition (Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature)**

*John T. Hamilton*

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Hailed by Horace and Quintilian as the greatest of Greek lyric poets, Pindar has always enjoyed a privileged position in the so-called classical tradition of the West. Given the intense difficulty of the poetry, however, Pindaric interpretation has forever grappled with the perplexing dilemma that one of the most influential poets of antiquity should prove to be so dark.

In discussing both poets and scholars from a broad historical span, with special emphasis on the German legacy of genius, *Soliciting Darkness* investigates how Pindar's obscurity has been perceived and confronted, extorted and exploited. As such, this study addresses a variety of pressing issues, including the recovery and appropriation of classical texts, problems of translation, representations of lyric authenticity, and the possibility or impossibility of a continuous literary tradition. The poetics of obscurity that emerges here suggests that taking Pindar to be an incomprehensible poet may not simply be the result of an insufficient or false reading, but rather may serve as a wholly adequate judgment.

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