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First-Person Fictions: Pindar's Poetic "I"

Mary R. Lefkowitz

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First-Person Fictions: Pindar's Poetic "I" Mary R. Lefkowitz
This collection of essays, written over a period of almost thirty years, deals with one problem: who is the 'I' in the odes of the most celebrated ancient Greek poet, Pindar? Since antiquity, the complex and allusive language of the first-person statements has provoked many different answers. Professor Lefkowitz describes the function and nature of Pindar's 'I'-statements and proposes a controversial solution that would cause some histories of Greek literature to be rewritten. Rather than accept the view that the identity of the speaker could be subject to instant and unannounced change, she proposes that the voice of the victory odes is the poet himself, in his most professional persona. Professor Lefkowitz also refutes the traditional belief that the odes were sung by a chorus. She shows that in most, if not all cases, they were sung as solos and that Pindar was continuing the tradition established by the Homeric bards.

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