

McGrath

The Sanskrit Hero

Karna in Epic Mahābhārata

The Mahabharata, a vital Indic epic and a flourishing influence on Indian culture past and present, has surprisingly enough hardly got much attention from scholars in the West. This latest volume in Brill's Indological Library convincingly fills this hiatus. At that, at the hand of the hero Karna, Kevin McGrath develops a view on the nature and function of the hero in epic Indic poetry. Making use of models taken from Indo-European and preliterate studies, a model emerges for 'heroic religion', having to a large extent shaped not only the Indic epics, but also cognate Indo-European epics, such as Homer's Iliad. As a result this work goes beyond Indology, but is of importance to classicists and comparative religionists as well.

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