



The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen: Heroic Past in India, c. 1500-1900

Ramya Sreenivasan

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Winner of the 2009 Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy Book Prize, sponsored by the Association for Asian Studies

The medieval Rajput queen Padmini - believed to have been pursued by Alauddin Khalji, the Sultan of Delhi - has been the focus of numerous South Asian narratives, ranging from a Sufi mystical romance in the sixteenth century to nationalist histories in the late nineteenth century. *The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen* explores how early modern regional elites, caste groups, and mystical and monastic communities shaped their distinctive versions of the past through the repeated refashioning of the legend of Padmini.

Ramya Sreenivasan investigates these legends and traces their subsequent appropriation by colonial administrators and nationalist intellectuals, for varying different political ends. Using Padmini as a means of illustrating the power of gender norms in constructing heroic memory, she shows how such narratives about virtuous women changed as they circulated across particular communities in South Asia between the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This book will interest historians of memory, gender, community, culture, and historywriting in South Asia. Illustrating how enduring legends emerged out of particular precolonial repositories of "tradition," the book also addresses the nature of colonial transitions and precolonial historical consciousness.

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