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- 1 Inspired by a number of recent studies on history and gender in the early modern context, Anooshahr is dedicated to exploring to what degree the Mughal emperor Humayun and his lack of success was influenced by issues of confused sexuality and “manliness”. The author profiles a description by the historian Bayazid Bayat (*Taḍkire-ye Homāyūn va Akbar*) of the battle of Qipchaq (1550) between Homāyūn and his brother, Mīrzā Kāmrān. In this particular episode, Anooshahr is struck by the unflattering description of Humayun as showing weakness (*zabūnī*) while in turn Mīrzā Kāmrān is lauded for his bravery and manliness (*javānmardī*). This particular characterization serves as a further launching point to investigate a number of textual contexts where sexually ambiguous language is used to depict the hapless Mughal monarch. The author buttresses these discussions with analyses of the relationship between language and gender in the early modern setting, reassuring us that he realizes that modern notions of bisexuality and homosexuality are difficult, if not impossible to apply in the Mughal, Ottoman, and Safavid contexts. With little in the way of explicit descriptions of Homāyūn as effeminate to rely on, Anooshahr decodes a number of descriptions where he feels chroniclers and historians were keen on indirectly casting aspersions on the Mughal ruler. Anooshahr brings up a number of interesting points in his analysis, but the issue of gender and sexuality in literature is an extremely complex one; on this point, he would have been well served to explore the secondary literature on the use of metaphors, similes and other literary devices in medieval Islamic poetry and prose, especially with respect to panegyrics dedicated to Perso-Islamic rulers.

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Thèmes : 4.2.3. Inde musulmane

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