
Christoph Werner
Naming it an essay in psychoanalytic fantasy, Cole takes an album of paintings ordered by the Mughal ruler Jahāṅgīr that depict him together with Šāh Šāh ʿAbbās I to discuss Irano-Indian identities and gender reversals. Playing with the hidden imagery of homoerotic symbolism, Jahāṅgīr, the “effeminate dandy castrated by a domineering Nur Jahan”, is seen embracing the small, dark skinned ʿAbbās who is “reaching out for Jahangir’s crotch” in one of the pictures. This is a highly stimulating contribution, where the difficulty to differentiate between the fantasies of the author and those ascribed to Jahāṅgīr adds considerably to the pleasure of reading.
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