

A SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT FOR THE 2019–2020 AKPIA LECTURE SERIES: A FORUM FOR ISLAMIC ART & ARCHITECTURE

Hosted by the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University

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Tomb of Tughluq Shah, Tughlaqabad, Delhi, ca. 1836. ©Victoria and Albert Museum

The Creation and Representation of Order: Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq's Tughluqabad. Tuesday March 31, 2020, at 6:00 pm

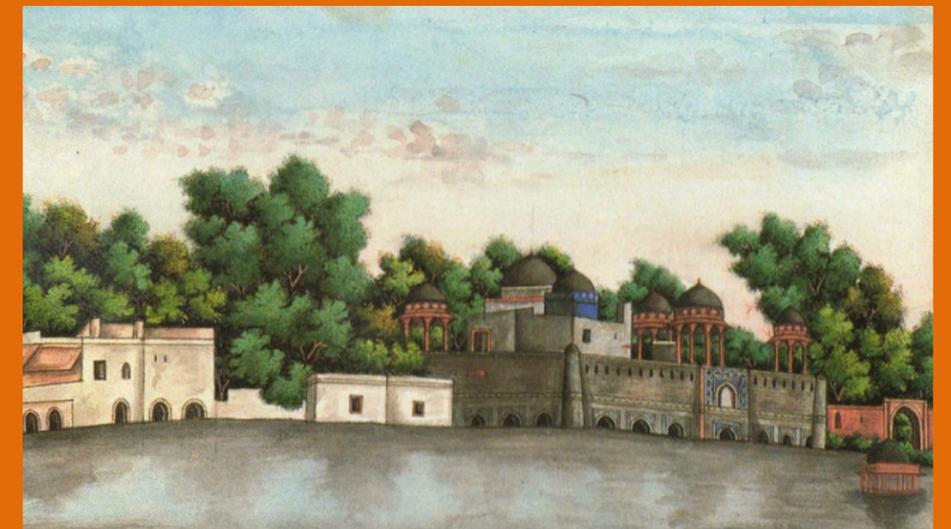
This lecture concerns the Sultanate stronghold of Tughluqabad, constructed by Sultan Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq (1320-24), one of the well known, if miscounted, seven cities of Delhi that survives perilously in the southern plain of Delhi. Professor Kumar reads the construction of the city as an 'event' that communicated the political transitions in Ghiyas al-Din's brief reign. But the manner of the city's functional organization, its usage of space and monumentality, was also embedded in the larger social and political ordering of the early fourteenth-century Sultanate society. What pasts can one resurrect of

the Neguderid Turk whose roots belonged in the nomadic histories of Afghanistan and the trans-Caucasian world of the *dasht-i Qipchaq*? How do these pasts touch upon the history of the Tughluq dynasty in Delhi (1320-1418), on Tughluqabad, and the deeper social and political structuring of the Sultanate with its capital in Delhi? Kumar's lecture questions how the nature of the newly constructed citadel of Tughluqabad, its geography and its readings can provide a conflicted, and therefore, a more accurate understanding of the dynamic and fluid fourteenth century Sultanate world.

Reconstituting the Archive of *Hazrat-i Dehli*: the Sultans, the Sufis and the riverine plain of Delhi. Thursday April 2, 2020, at 6:00 pm

The study of Sultanate Delhi has been robustly framed by the evidence surrounding some of its primary power brokers – the Sultans, their amirs, and the Sufis. Depending upon the narrator, the epithet for the city, *Hazrat-i Dehli*, the auspicious, magnificent city of Delhi, is attributed to the contributions of its powerful monarchs or the benign grace of its mystics. Professor Kumar's lecture complicates this archive by focusing on some of the Sultanate city's water bodies – its seasonal streams, tanks and stepped wells (*baolis*) – to underline the careful investment made by different regimes into their planning and

management. And yet, although rendering the region populated and prosperous (*abād*), the Persian chronicles of the time were unusually silent on this subject. This void was filled by the mystics of the city whose records mentioned their interaction with these water bodies. The lecture draws out the complicated politics of associations, forgetting and remembering that became a part of the history of Sultanate Delhi. Kumar draws attention to the range of epistemologies that sustained this amnesia and the possibilities if we were more self-reflexive in recognizing the politics that sustain our research.



The reservoir called Hauz-i-Shamshi near Qutb Minar, 1843. M.M. Kaye, ed., *The Golden Calm: An English Lady's Life in Moghul Delhi: Reminiscences by Emily, Lady Clive Bayley, and by her father, Sir Thomas Metcalfe* (Exeter, UK, Webb & Bower, 1980), p. 189.



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Lectures are free and open to the public. Held from 6:00-7:30 pm, in the Sackler Building Basement Auditorium, 485 Broadway, Cambridge, MA. For further information, call 617-495-2355 or email agakhan@fas.harvard.edu