

ISAS Public Lecture Series



AURANGZEB

A Gujarati Badshah?

a talk by

SAMIRA SHEIKH

Associate Professor of Asian Studies; Affiliated Faculty,
Islamic Studies Program; Director of Graduate Studies,
Department of History, Vanderbilt University

Ever since an early stint as governor of Gujarat and throughout his long career, Aurangzeb kept a close watch on Gujarat's politics. Its Muslim minority groups, especially those who demonstrated Shi'i tendencies, were scrutinized with particular attention. Did his anti-Shi'a position arise out of primordial Sunni antipathy or were there "political reasons" for his initiatives? Some clues may lie in the histories of his closest advisers as well as in the hagiographies and devotional literatures of religious groups from seventeenth century. This paper will revisit the revisionist take on Aurangzeb by viewing the Mughal empire from its edges.

About the Speaker

Samira Sheikh is a historian of South Asia. Her research interests include politics and religion in South Asia from 1200-1950, early modern trade, and early Indian maps. She is the author of *Forging a Region: Sultans, Traders and Pilgrims in Gujarat, 1200-1500* (Oxford India, 2010), and co-editor of *After Timur Left* (Oxford University Press, 2014), and *An Anthology of Ismaili Literature: A Shi'i Vision of Islam* (I.B. Tauris and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2008).

Dr. Sheikh has an undergraduate degree in history from Maharaja Sayajirao University, in Baroda, India, and MA and MPhil degrees from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. After doctoral research at Oxford, she held a Junior Research Fellowship at Wolfson College, Oxford, until 2006. She came to Vanderbilt from London where she was a research associate at the Institute of Ismaili Studies. She was awarded the Ryskamp Fellowship by the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) for the 2012-13 academic year. She is currently working on a book on an eighteenth century Gujarati entrepreneur-politician.

Thursday, September 28, 2017

5 - 7 pm

10 Stephens Hall (ISAS Conf. Room)

Event Cosponsor: Berkeley Pakistan Initiative, Department of History

Event is free & open to public. Information at 510-642-3608 or southasia.berkeley.edu