

Abstract

Sacred geography as the theoretical discourses engages historical traditions with the geographic legacy of a terrain. Khuldabad as a pilgrimage town in Deccan, has its own unique sacred geographic spaces as one of the earliest Sufi town or Islamic pilgrimage center on the trade routes of Deccan. The town of Khuldabad evolved itself in the vicinity of fort city of Devgiri and heritage town of 'Verul' or Ellora. It evolved and encompassed in it the virtues of political vibes of Devgiri later Daulatabad and syncretic values of coexistence with the Ellora's Hindu and non-Islamic major religious pilgrimage center along with well-known Shaivaites and Jain religious followings in the neighborhood of Ellora. The formation and development of Khuldabad grew with the political patronage and peoples following in the geographic and cultural demography of the region. Therefore, in the planning and settlement patterns of Khuldabad we come across, close knit affiliations to the neighboring rural and urban cultures. The commercial cultural network which evolved within and around Khuldabad brought with itself cross cultural layers of traditions and inter-cultural connections. We come across cultural admixture of mixed value systems among different communities which patronized Sufi traditions of Khuldabad, and eventually transformed the cultural and settlement patterns of the Khuldabad. Carl Ernst and Thosar have argued in their writings the town formation and transition of Khuldabad from a non-Islamic cultural center to a multicultural with predominant Islamic Sufi traditions. In the present paper, argument is developed around the concept of Islamic and medievalist pilgrimage centers and their cultural nexus with the local faith systems.

Key words: *Khuldabad, Pilgrimage centers, Religious, Sacred geographies, Sufism*

Sacred Geography Of 'Khuldabad' On The Historic Trade Routes Of Deccan

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Introduction

Sacred geography discourse elicits about connectedness in the evolution of sacredness in a place. Sanctity of a place is inherently derived from the community cultures, their passages of contacts and socio-economic activities. As we delve into studies in different parts of world, the patterns of emergence of sacred places is directly associated to the human pathways of trade, commerce, and cultural contact. The convergence within cultural contact, trade routes and emergence of sacredness in a space, display continuity in human cultures globally. A sacredness of a site is continuous in nature the way we experience continuity in the passages of human contact for livelihood and trade.

One such sacred living culture which derives its connections with trade and cultural pathways is Khuldabad. The city of Khuldabad is one of the most respected and pious Sufi centers of Deccan. With a heritage of more than thousand years, the town has its own historical trajectory of socio-cultural evolution in its background. In the following research paper attempt is made to understand the formation, and growth of Khuldabad as a sacred space in the sacred geography of the wider region of Devgiri to Kannad territory. The region historically is well connected with trade and cultural activities between the north and the southern parts of India. Khuldabad other than being a Sufi town also nurtures in its configuration traits of preexisting non-Islamic temples and trade heritage centers, flourishing commercial network and as cultural counterparts of religious pilgrimage centres of Ellora, Bhadra Maroti and Suli-Bhanjan. Khuldabad evolved in the territorial region from Devgiri to Ellora and its sub-sectional regions of Ellora, Paatna-Devi and Suli-Bhanjan which are active Shaivite and *shakta* pilgrimage centres and Ghatotkaccha and Pitalkhora caves which are now dormant Buddhist sites. With the coming of Delhi Sultunate came with them the Sufi cultural influences through the trade and military passages of Delhi-Agra-Burhanpur-Ellora *caravan sarai* routes. However, it is interesting to note that prior to 1200 AD not many Sufi pilgrimage centers were there in the Burhanpur-Devgiri region. The first mega Sufi cultural center which evolves in the region remains to be 'Khuldabad'.

1 'Devgiri' town was later renamed by Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq the emperor of Tughluq dynasty as 'Daulatabad'

2 Benjamin J. Fleming, 'Mapping Sacred Geography in Medieval India: The Case of the Twelve- *Jyotirlingas*', *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Apr., 2009, pp. 51-81

3 [Janice Stargardt](#), 'Buddhist Archaeology', *Encyclopedia of Archaeology*, Academic Press, 2008, Pages 670-683

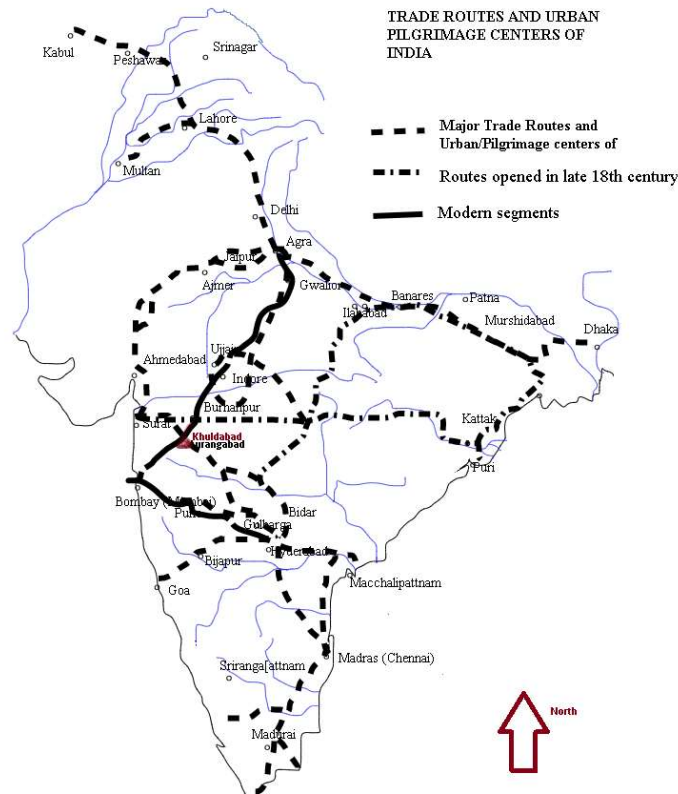
4 Chris Ballard, 'The Centre Cannot Hold. Trade Networks and Sacred Geography in the Papua New Guinea Highlands', *Archaeology in Oceania*, Vol. 29, No. 3, Social Landscapes (Oct., 1994), Pp. 130-148

Thus, further enabling the territory of Ajanta and Satmala hills and valleys of Devgiri region expanding themselves to the Islamic pathways and diversifying the sacred geography of the Deccan plateau. This posits in front of us certain questions; how the Sufism came in Deccan and what remained its trajectories? How the concept of Sufism came, and how they tried to entrench the social fabric of Deccan in the 12th century Deccan. Was it because of the social fabric of the regional culture that flourishing abode for Khuldabad emerged? As we know, the times of 12th century themselves, were of great cultural transition in Deccan, and prior to entry of Islamic and Sufi traditions the movement to counter aristocratic Vedic rituals Vaishnavite and Shaivite cults in the masses were gaining momentum through mass mobilization. In these cultural scenarios, how Sufi and diverse Islamic schools of faiths could enter Deccan and what kind of positionalities they took? Was their patronage from power politics was their major source of mass inclusion? These are some of the answers which are sought through this paper. The research questions are explored and further answered through the methodological work carried both in the field and archives. To substantiate and narrate the findings for this article sources and methodology are based on the primary and secondary sources collected over the years, especially after 2010. Several oral testimonies and field analysis is done based on the archeological and ethnographic surveys. The study is based on the methodological frameworks which cut across disciplines of history, folk studies, ethnography, sociological surveys, and political analysis. The study is not only critically studied through socio-cultural framework, but also through the demographic structures and architectural planning of Aurangabad, Khuldabad and its associated towns and villages in the Aurangabad-Daulatabad-Khuldabad-Burhanpur routes which nurtured this small town of Khuldabad as gateway of Sufism in Deccan.

Sacred Geographies and Trade Routes

As we delve into the historical geography of religious pilgrimage towns of India, and their settlement patterns we do get to see a cultural tandem. The approach of communities of a region, the inclusive cosmopolitanism and location of a regional entity determines its ability to be a religiously thriving destination to further become a pilgrimage center. It is interesting to note that all the pilgrimage centers thrive on the trade routes. While being on trade routes not only they patronize religions, but they also become flourishing grounds for the new ideologies to become potential religions as the time evolves. A short analysis of the pilgrimage towns of India will give us an idea how they work.

5 Author is working as an Assistant Professor in the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University of Aurangabad since 2010, which is close to the vicinity of the site of Khuldabad and engaged in several research projects and writings assignments pertaining to the research area.



Map-1: Map of Trade Routes and Pilgrimage Center of Khuldabad in Medieval India

Source: Base map from Wikicommons further edited by Author

As given in the above map, the major pilgrimage centers, and trading towns of India since early medieval times approximately in 1000 AD till today almost overlap. As per a study under UNESCO, almost all the Buddhist sites in India actually were overlapping to Silk Road trade in Indian subcontinent. As per the study by Neelis (2010).

‘The survey of ancient and early medieval South Asian history in the preceding chapter amply demonstrates that establishing and maintaining control of trade networks and arteries of cross-cultural religious transmission was a significant impetus for political dynamics. Based on this diachronic foundation, our attention now shifts to a synchronic exploration of specific route systems in the Indian subcontinent. This treatment of transregional networks emphasizes religious and cultural geography more than economic patterns, since available literary, epigraphic, numismatic, and archaeological sources do not permit a quantitative assessment of early trade.’

This correlation of trade routes and pilgrimage centers was not limited to Buddhist sites alone, in the later centuries during early Gupta, Gupta and Later Gupta period we find expansion of this trade network from Silk road of Central Asia to *Dakshinapatha* routes upto coastal towns of Tamilnadu or Tulunad, and rise of Jain pilgrimage centers of Southern India. Similarly, with rise of Advaitism of Shankaracharya and emergence of Shaivism in southern India and evolution of Bhagwatism and Vaishnavism centers along the pathways of trade routes is evident. In the same chronological era we come across Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhist sites and different schools of Jainism flourishing along the trade routes. Interestingly, these pathways which earlier patronized Hinyana also became flourishing centers of Vaishnavism and Shaivism in the later Gupta era. With coming of Arab traders and their thriving relations with Indian merchants in Western Indian Ocean, we come across growth of Islamic ideologies in Indian coastal cities first. The first mosque, therefore, is believed to be founded in 7th century in Kerala by the Chera king, which till today is functional in the Kodalungur town of Thrissur district of Kerala.

The link between pilgrims and merchants arises from their shared acts of travel to and occupation of foreign lands. The two groups also share the common denominator of adventure. Religious practice and commerce had been associated with one another in the world systems and Indian sub-continent and in this context Western Asia becomes part of the order since the seventh century AD. Just as pilgrims arrived at holy places having crossed all of Asia to get there, merchants followed the same pilgrimage routes, accompanied by their merchandize, until they reached marketplaces near those same destinations. Points along the routes used by pilgrims ended up being centers of commercial activity where goods and services were provided. Such circumstances did not go unnoticed by kings and lords, who offered protection to this source of wealth for cities and regions. Further, both groups were unarmed, and peaceful, and so measures were taken to severely punish assaults against them. A symbiotic relationship ensued, as the professional mobility of merchants and their knowledge of the routes allowed them to offer services such as horse rentals, shipping, or lodging to pilgrim many markets and fairs on the other hand, thanks to the flow of religious pilgrims, were established throughout Asia and Indian sub-continent. This correlation could be well explained through the following diagram:

6 UNESCO-Silk Road Sites in India, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5492/> (Accessed on 21st December, 2020)

7 Jason Neelis (2010). *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks Book Subtitle: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia Book Author*, New York, Brill, P. 183

8 Bina Sengar, 'The Ganrajya and the Indic Traditions of Jainism during the Gupta Era', Forthcoming article, 2021

9 *Ibid.*

10 Donato Gómez-Díaz, 'Trade and Pilgrimage', *Encyclopedia of Medieval Pilgrimage*. Consulted online on 23 December 2020, First published online: 2012

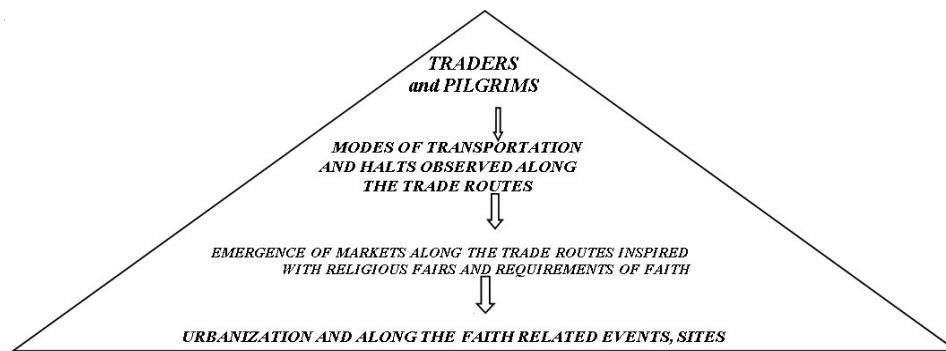


Image-1: The connected Trade-Cultures-Sacred Space in sacred geographies
Source: Diagram developed by author: Bina Sengar

The growth of urbanization along the trade routes, is often related to the faith, ideologies and patronage which flows on the trajectories of pilgrimage and cultural followings. Thus, the pilgrims help merchants progress, just as merchants helped pilgrims. Nevertheless, the two activities were considered incompatible in the Islamic tradition. The Arabic trade connections regarded commerce highly and *Zakat* accrued from it was used with respect and for charity, and this developed the partnership between pilgrimage and commercial activity. The result of which was establishment of first mosque in India, which was result of trade contacts between Malabar coast and Arabian Peninsula through Arabian sea and Indian Ocean trade.



Image-1: Cheraman Mosque, Kerala (7th Century AD)

Source: Cheramanmosque.com

As we try to relate the establishment of first mosque in the Southern peninsular coastal plains of India, along the large networks of Indian Ocean trade. In similar trajectories, do we find patronage in Deccan? Khuldabad got established as first Sufi-Islamic center along the trade routes of *Uttarapatha* and

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11 Donato Gomes Diaz, *Op. cit.*

12 Cynthia Clark Northrup Jerry H. Bentley, Alfred E. Eckes, Jr, Patrick Manning, Kenneth Pomeranz, Steven Topik (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of World Trade: From Ancient Times to the Present: From Ancient Times to the Present, Volumes 1-4*, Routledge, 2015, Pp. 503-505. Read more on: Sebastian R. Prange, *Monsoon Islam: Trade and Faith on the Medieval Malabar Coast*, Cambridge University Press, 2018. K.S. Mathew (Ed.) *Imperial Rome, Indian Ocean Regions and Muziris: New Perspectives on Maritime Trade*, Routledge, 2016.

Dakshinapatha by the end of the thirteenth century. The cross-roads conjunctions where Khuldabad is located is historically one of the significant inland trade routes of Indian sub-continent dating back to the Harrapan civilizational and Vedic cultural narratives. Deccan remains the conjunction of *Uttarapatha* and *Dakshinapatha*, Khuldabad which got established on the trade route junctions of 'Dakshinapatha', which in later narratives, thus, came to be known as 'Dakhan'. The exodus of fourteen hundred Sufi saints from Delhi to Daulatabad is well documented in the historical narratives from the times of Ibn Batuta the Moroccan traveller to those of the contemporary historians of present era. The journeys of Sufis from Delhi to Daulatabad, and further their denial to enter the premises of the newly founded capital in Daulatabad, led them to their stay initially in the neighborhoods of present Ajanta village and later to the Khuldabad town, where followers of plural cultures accepted and patronized the Sufi philosophies .

Sacred Geography of Deccan's pilgrimage center-Khuldabad

'The origins and growth of the cities in the geographies in the historical timeline was primarily a result of the increased complexities of social organization. It represented a new form of settlement, having specialized crafts, industries, markets, administrative apparatus, temples, and educational institutions, and accordingly performed different functions; economic, religious, educational, cultural and administrative. Functional variations among urban centres resulted from these multiple roles since cities neither performed a single function exclusively, nor combined commercial, administrative, educational, or other functional activities in the same proportions. Thus, a simple urban typology which labels an urban centre as, say, administrative, overlooks and so downgrades the complementary cultural or commercial roles which it also discharges Cosmopolitan Medieval Cities of Islamic empire argument about the early medieval Islamic pilgrimage town and their counter narratives with writings of Thosar. As according to Thosar, the town of Khuldabad and the region were laid on the culturally active zones during the Yadava dynasty.

13 Jayant Gadkari, *Society and Religion: From Rurveda to Puranas*, Popular Prakashan, 1996, P. 11

14 Bina Sengar, 'From Deccani to Marathwada: Investigating the Changing Social Identity', Submitted to Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (Teenmurti), New Delhi, as part of Workshop on '*Rethinking Deccan History: Religion and Culture through History in Remaking and Fashioning Regional Identities*', 15th-16thMarch, 2013, Unpublished paper

15 C. Ernst, B. Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Order in South Asia and Beyond*, Springer, 2016 Pp. 170-180

16 There are ethnographic and oral accounts stating that Sufi caravan of Tughlaq era initially stationed themselves in vicinity of the Ajanta and Aurangabad and later settled in the town of Khuldabad.

17 Renu Thakur, 'Urban hierarchies, typologies and classification in early medieval India: c. 750-1200 *Urban History*, April 1994, Vol. 21, No. 1, April 1994, Pp. 61-76

18 Alain Delattre, Marie Legendre, Petra Sijpesteijn, *Authority and Control in the Countryside: From Antiquity to Islam in the Mediterranean and Near East (6th-10th Century)*, NewYork, BRILL, 2018, P. 2

Khultabad (also Kuldabad or Khultabad) is a city and a municipal council in Aurangabad district in the Indian state of Maharashtra. It is known as the 'Valley of Saints', or the Abode of Eternity, which is purported to contain the graves of 1500 Sufi saints. The term 'Khuldabad' which comes from two Persian and also commonly used Urdu words '*khuld*' which means 'heaven' or 'paradise' and '*abad*' which signifies 'infinity' in Urdu and 'a cultivated settlement' in Persian. Thus, together, these two words formulate literal and metaphorical meanings as; 'Infinite heavenly place' or 'Cultivated settlement of Paradise', as a common metaphor among the people of the region 'Khuldabad' is the town which is 'path to heaven' or 'Door to Paradise'. With the establishment of the town of Khuldabad, we don't come across any religious political cultural contradictions or clashes. Inadvertently, the faiths and religious exchange were evident in the entire region, which is evident in the kind of socio-cultural practices performed by the communities of the region, which makes subject matter of another comprehensive study. In the fourteenth century, several Sufi saints of the Chishti order, chose to reside here. The shrine or *dargah* of Burhan al-Din Gharib and the tomb of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb are located in this town. It also has Bhadra Maruti Temple. Khuldabad had a population of 12,794 (As per 2001 census). It is believed that the place is blessed by the Saints in Khuldabad who all came and settled here and established in the fourteenth century a town which literally means, road to heaven. It is believed that the town was established by the disciples of famous Chishtiya Sufi saint 'Nizammuddin Auliya' who lived in Delhi. Among these disciples was the highly respected teacher, Burhan al-Din Gharib, who brought elite Sufi practices to the Deccan, including the same' ritual of listening to *qawwali* music in an attitude of prayer and with the desire to reach the Divine. Revered as a saint, Burhan-al-Din Gharib is buried in the heart of Khuldabad behind large shrine walls that surround a courtyard within a courtyard that holds the saint's tomb, a mosque area, cemetery, and an expansive outer courtyard with a cooking alcove containing the large cauldrons used to prepare food for thousands of pilgrims on festival days.

The ceremonies and the faith patronage practice in Khuldabad resonates with the folk traditions and peoples following in and around the rural and town cultures of the region. The cultures of faiths, belongings, and shared folk practices in the history of Indian society reflects that past of cultural memory where vernacular cultures which got new voices of expressions through religious interaction and communication among dialects and dialectics of pluralistic faiths.

19 Field notes and conversation with Sufi saints of Khuldabad and people of the town, 2018-2020

20 Catherine Benton, 'Behind the Veil in Khuldabad, India: 14th Century Sufi Saints, 21st Century Islamic Reformers, and Muslim Women', *ASIA Network Exchange*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, Fall 2009, Pp. 26-48



*Image-2: Burhan-Al-Din Shrine, Khuldabad
Source: Wikicommons*

It is not only the mass connect through their religious idioms John Assman, defines the concept of cultural memory as; “Through a double delimitation that distinguishes it: from what we call "communicative" or "everyday memory," which in the narrower sense of our usage lacks "cultural".For the sake of brevity and aspects of sacred geography of Khuldabad which is the essential theme of the paper, we will further not delve in to the shared folk practices in the town and its patronizing people of the region as it delves in to the distinction between communicative and cultural memory. The idea of public memory is elaborately discussed by Novetzke and also various scholars working on the Bhakti traditions in the Deccan-Maharashtra, yet the context of its shared culture in formation of religious spaces of Sufism, Christianity and Sikhism in Deccan has vital content to be discussed further. In the narrative as the theme of the paper highlights shared memory in explicit is not discussed. Rather, it’s the outcome of the traditions as patronage which contributed in the emergence of Khuldabad as a sacred space in the region.

Historic dialectics of authority, control, and religious traditions in the sacred space of Devgiri-Khuldabad give us chronological continuity of religious traditions in the region. The formations of the religious sites of Ellora caves, Devgiri’ s forts traditions of mystic cults and by the fourteenth century formation of Khuldabad town are part of this space sanctity of the region. On the tangents of trade routes this space formation determines two-way patronage and assailing support for religious growth: first the authority controlling the trade routes and patronizing the sacred as supporters of the state.

Secondly, the hinterland populations living in the tangents as rural masses patronizing the religious faiths as part of the folk traditions in the region. The historicity in the sacredness of the Khuldabad, resonates with the concept of state and authority in early decades of first and second millennium C.E. where we can relate at the economic, religious, political, and cultural instruments that local and regional powers in the late antique to early medieval Mediterranean and Europe used to manage with their rural hinterlands. As we delve into the rural administrative history of Ellora-Khuldabad region we get historical evidences about life and culture of this region in the Rashtrakuta and Yadava dynasties of Deccan. Manyakheta, (Malkhed in Gulbarga district of Karnataka) was the royal seat of the imperial Rashtrakutas for most of the ruling period of this dynasty. Although, later Rashtrakuta emperors such as Indra III and Krishna III had their own residential or sub-capitals at Bodhan or Bhokardhan (in present Telangana) and Kandhar (in present Nanded district of Maharashtra) respectively, Manyakheta continued to be the imperial capital even during their regime. Manyakheta was selected as the capital by Sarva Amoghavarsha I (C.E. 814-880). His predecessor Govinda III ruled from Mayurakhindi, whereas the latter's predecessors had their royal seat somewhere in the vicinity of Ellora (in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra). While the identification of Manyakheta with Malkhed is certain, the pre-Manyakheta capitals of the Rashtrakutas have not been satisfactorily identified so far. According to Thosar, the earlier capitals incidentally could be in the areas of Ellora. Dantidurga was the founder of this royal house. So, his place of residence would naturally be regarded as the earliest Rashtrakuta capital. But there is still uncertainty about the identification of his capital. On the basis of the findspots of Dantidurga's early inscriptions Dr. Altekar suggested the location of his capital in the neighbourhood of Ellora. This view has been generally accepted. Henry Cousens thinks that Sulibhanjan (in Khuldabad taluka of Aurangabad district) which is just above the plateau near the Ellora caves may have been the actual locality of Dantidurga's capital. Dr. Altekar has expressed his inclination to accept this identification. But this view does not seem to be convincing because there is nothing at this place which would prove it to be an ancient royal seat. Therefore, the actual site of the first Rashtrakuta capital will have to be searched out somewhere else in the same area. The Ellora plates of Dantidurga provide a clue to solve this problem. Dantidurga issued this grant from Badarika

21 Jan Assman, and John Czaplicka, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', *New German Critique*, No. 65, Spring - Summer, 1995, Pp. 125-133

22 Bina Sengar, '[Historiographic Review of Bhakti Movement In Marathwada](#)', *New Vision Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, ISSN: 2394-9996, Aug 2016, Pp. 121-127

23 Christian Lee Novetzke, *History, Bhakti and Public Memory: Namdev in Religious and Secular Traditions*, New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2009

24 Alain Delattre, Marie Legendre, Petra Sijpesteijn (2018). *Authority and Control in the Countryside: From Antiquity to Islam in the Mediterranean and Near East (6th-10th Century)*, Newyork, BRILL, P. 2 (Ibid.)

Yasaka, which has not yet been identified. Shri. S.K. Dikshit, the editor of the grant, suggested the location of Badarika somewhere in southern Gujarat, but no conclusive identification was given by him. On the contrary, he indicated that Badarika could be located elsewhere also. Dantidurga issued this grant on the occasion of his visit to the Guheshvara Tirtha at Elapura. Badarika, therefore, must have been his camping place near Ellora. On the basis of phonetic similarity, Badarika may be identified with Badlabai near Khuldabad situated between that place and Kagzipura, which at present is almost a deserted place; however, temple stones, loose sculptures and carved slabs are still found all over the plateau between Khuldabad and Kagzipura. This was probably the first Rashtrakuta capital in the vicinity of Ellora. According to an old tradition, there was a prosperous city named Bhadravati between Khuldabad and Daulatabad,¹⁰ ruled over by a king named Yavanasha. Another tradition gives Ila as the name of the king of Bhadravati. The tradition about the existence of the old city of Bhadravati is also recorded in the memoirs of John Wilson, the President of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, who visited this area in the middle of the 19th century. The Verul Shivalaya Mahatmya mentions the name of king Elaraja as the king of Elapura who, according to it, caused the excavation of the Kailasa cave temple at Ellora. The descent of this Elaraja is claimed from Ila, the son of Manu Vaivasvata, who had epicene personality. The Puranas call Ila's descendents 'Aila' and not 'Ela' as given in the Verul Shivalaya Mahatmya. The grammatical mistake, which is seen in the Verul Shivalaya Mahatmya, has probably arisen out of an attempt to connect the line of the king with ancient dynasties as well as to show that the city of Elapura derives its name from the name of the king. As mentioned in the tradition referred to above, it was Ua or Yavanasha who would organize the system. Another mention of the place name Mayurakhindi is found in the Kasarsirsi plates of Vijayaditya, the Chalukya king of Badami. It has been identified with Morkhandi in Humnabad taluka of Bidar district of Karnataka. Mayurakhindi the capital of Govinda III, may satisfactorily be identified with this place, because the Kasarsirsi plates show that even during the Chalukya period it was a prominent place. Inscriptions, temple stones and loose sculptures found at the place support its antiquity. It is also very near to Manyakheta where Amoghavarsha I shifted the royal capital. Thus on the basis of inscriptional evidence and other considerations discussed above, Mayurakhindi can be identified with Morkhandi only. Thus, the formation of Ellora and its neighbouring town, later gave a demographic and geographically well placed cradle to formation for '**Khuldabad**'.

²⁵ H. S. Thosar, 'The Early Capitals Of The Imperial Rashtrakutas', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 1979, Vol. 40, 1979, Pp. 68-73 Weblink: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44141941>

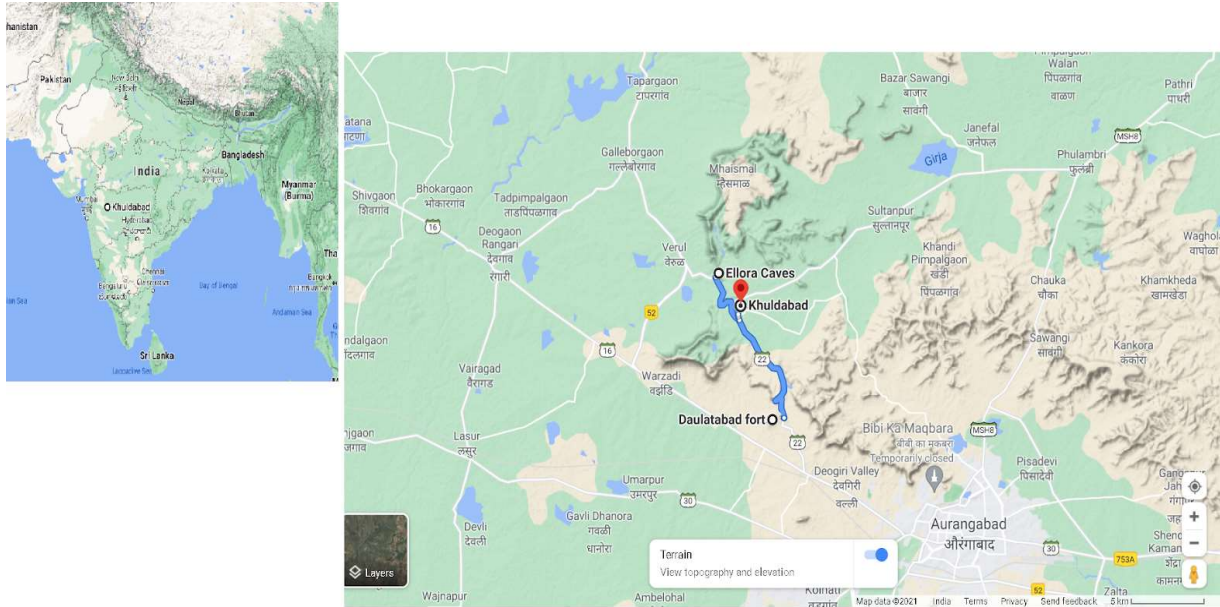
²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Pp. 68-73

²⁸ *Ibid.*

The Geological/Geographical context the Ellora-Khuldabad-Daulatabad region lies on the eastern margin of the Shivna sub-basin of the Godavari. It is characterized by the Mhaismal Plateau that slopes from north to south, which gives rise to the Yelganga and Girija rivers, as well as several seasonal streams (*nalas*) including the Gan, Khadki, Khori, Nagjhari, etc. The southern part of the Mhaismal Plateau is dissected by the basin of the river Purna; thus the area under study is part of the watershed of the two major tributaries of the Upper Godavari, the Shivna and Purna. The terrain is a combination of alluvial plains, undulating plains and extrusive surfaces like scarp faces, plateau surfaces, rugged slope zones, plateau plains, etc. This causes great sinuosity in the drainage profiles of streams, with sharp turns and meanders characterizing the sub-dendritic and trellis-like flow patterns. The district of Aurangabad is covered by a rock formation consisting entirely of lava flows, called the Deccan Trap, owing to the terraced or step-like appearance of the rock outcrops. The lava flows are indicative of great volcanic activity at the close of the Cretaceous period (145–60 million years ago), with layers of lava interspersed with volcanic ash and sedimentary materials called inter-trappeans. The igneous rock of the Deccan Trap possesses the ability to hold and transport large quantities of groundwater owing to the presence of sub-surface air pockets or amygdaloidal vesicles. The annual recharge to the groundwater is provided by infiltration of rainwater, which enters the vesicular zones, joints, and fracture planes of the rock. The rills and gullies that carry water to streams and waterfalls are a manifestation of prehistoric tectonic activity. Therefore, the groundwater reserve is totally dependent upon the occurrence of these weathered zones, joints and fractures coupled with the intensity and distribution of rainfall which is related to percolation. The fabric out of which the Ellora Caves are carved consists of basaltic flows called the Upper Ratangarh Formation. This enables the penetration and transmission of water within the rock surface and explains the presence of rock-cut cisterns for collecting and storing water as part of the cave complex. It would also explain the presence of bore wells and *baolis* as important man-made water storage and groundwater recharge mechanisms. Thus, the essential field survey of the region with the available primary sources, and secondary source debates we could concur that the region of Ellora-Khuldabad-Devgiri (Daulatabad) has a continuity in patronage and formation of town-based material cultures and structures.

29 Yaaminey Mubayi (2016) 'Ellora, Khuldabad-Daulatabad Water and Sacred Spaces', *Sahapedia*, Weblink: <https://www.sahapedia.org/ellora-khuldabad-daulatabad-water-and-sacred-spaces>



Map-2: Khuldabad in the Sacred geographic spaces of Ellora-Khuldabad-Devgiri (Daulatabad)
Source: Google Maps

‘Around the second half of the thirteenth century, before the conquest of the Deccan by Muslims, at least two Sufi orders were established in the Northern India – ‘Chishtiya’ and ‘Suhrawardiya’. It is the very nature of human beings that once they have started them rarely stop to pursue their efforts, though the natural or even supernatural forces might discourage them. Considering the attitude of the Sufis, many of whom passed through wandering/searching stage of their life before they had built their khanqahs and settled, there is no reason to be surprised that in the same way as they entered the northern areas of the subcontinent, they kept continuing to penetrate southwards. The land ruled by Hindu Rajas and inhabited by people of different religions, languages, habits, and customs didn't offer them the stability of a Muslim state and that is what the hermit probably looks for. It a widely prevalent opinion among historians dealing with Maharashtra that Sufis entered Maharashtra much before the conquest of Allauddin Khilji. However, it is difficult to prove such a claim by contemporary sources. Apart from the recent oral sources the information that describes the slow penetration of Sufism into the area is either confusing or mostly deals with the period after the establishment of dominions of Delhi Sultanate in the Deccan.’ Khuldabad as the folk narratives and sources prove definitely emerges after the coming of the Sufi exodus from Delhi. Yet, few of the neighbouring Sufi shrines, purposefully, the Shaikh Jalaluddin Ganj-I-Rawan shrine is narrated to be established in the early decades of thirteenth century.

30 Deak Dusan, Sufism in Maharashtra, *Bulletin of the Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute*, 2002-2003, Vol. 62/63, Professor Ashok R. Kelkar Felicitation Volume (2002-2003), pp. 285- 290, Vice Chancellor, Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute (Deemed University), Pune, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42930624>

31 Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center*, New York, SUNY Press, 1992, P. xxiv

As many of the field accounts suggest, the source on history of many of these shrines are the ethnographic accounts popular as folktales and narratives in the *malfizat* (sacred literatures) of the *muzawar* (caretakers) of these shrines. The medieval (Islamic) phase of urbanization in India from northern plains to the Deccan, which spanned over six centuries beginning with the establishment of Delhi Sultanate in 1206, was an important era of urbanization, growth of cities which eventually led to the emergence of market towns for trade and manufacturing centers during the early Sultanate period from thirteenth century to beginning of the Mughal rule. During the Sultanate era apart from political expansion, commerce ensued on the traditional trade routes and eventually the paths on which the religious traditions were located got patronized by the Islamic-Sufi traditions as well. Urbanization gained momentum during the Mughal period (1526–1739) due to the growth of indigenous industries and external trade, continued migration of artisans to the cities, a strong agrarian base and improvement of the quality of life in urban centres. Delhi was the epicenter during the entire phase of Islamic urbanization in India, where seven cities were built successively. Innately urban, Islam favored the development of cities right from its inception, the growth of this aspect could be well understood as we experience major Mughal cities like Lahore, Srinagar, Delhi, Agra, Surat, Chanderi, Burhanpur, Daulatabad and Aurangabad were established on the traditional trade routes of Uttarapatha and Dakshinapatha. On these pathways patronage to Sufi shrines continued. Khuldabad was a major city which got profuse grants by Deccan sultans as well by the Mughals. The significance of Khuldabad could be assessed in the Mughal royal court, because emperor Aurangzeb's shrine rests in Khuldabad. The influence of Mughal architecture is evident in the pattern in which Khuldabad is build and further elaborated through various Mughal monuments in its neighborhood. The cities comprised exquisitely designed buildings such as mosques, *palaces*, mausoleums, *hammam* (Turkish baths), *bazaars* (markets) and bazaar streets and *sarais* (rest-houses) built at a monumental scale, safeguarded by impressive fortification. This glory in lines of Mughal architecture continues in Khuldabad under the patronage of Nizam's of Hyderabad as well. Its only after the coming of the Britishers in the region after the defeat of Marathas in 1820 C.E. and formation of British cantonment near Devgiri (Daulatabad) and Aurangabad towns, we come across emergence of a Anglo-Indian culture and entrance of the colonial and post-colonial legacy.



Image-3: Khuldabad the legacy continues

Source: Image taken from the hills of Khuldabad

Sacred Spaces-Continuing Legacy of 'Khuldabad'

The eventual growth and continuity in the living culture of sacred systems of Khuldabad are virtuous in several terms. The town of Khuldabad significantly reflects the plurality which is encompassed in the cultural framework of Aurangabad and its neighbouring territories. The town with its living traditions and diverse historicity in religious cultural practices, defines that the sacredness of a place is not established it evolves with continuous flow of community practices, trade and commerce and faith inherent in the static land and its people. What leads to a continuity in the sacredness of a space, could be sacred spaces which in their cultural traits cradled the ideas of religious beliefs and values. Given the history of a space especially in context of Khuldabad we could envisage evidence of that owing to the nature of religious activities related to the worshipping methods and traditions of veneration of sacred in the Devgiri-Khuldabad-Ellora. The region has in its geographic demography evidences of following diverse culture of patronizing and following faiths and their practices. The core of the place in a sacred territory comprising of venerated objects and temples dedicated to the presiding deity or sacred person of respect and often includes landscape elements such as river, mountain and forests that are related to the deity or the sacredness of the space. There also are religious establishments such as ashrams, shrines

and monasteries which provide services and spaces for religious activities and contribute to the religious and cultural imagery necessary for religious practice. Within this territory, routes and patterns of movement are significant and the spatial arrangements are ‘an integral part of the overall pilgrimage experience’ as it created spiritual links to enhance the emotional experience for followers and occasional visitors.

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