



# Deutscher Orientalistentag DOT 2022

*100. Jahrestag | 12. – 17. September 2022 | FU Berlin*

Conquest, Conflict, Compromise and Coexistence:  
Revisiting the 14th century in India

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## ABSTRACT

The conquest of Anatolia, Persia, Afghanistan and north India by Turkic peoples from the 11th century was a pivotal moment in world history, setting in motion a sequence of events with reverberations to the present day.

The establishment and expansion of the Delhi Sultanate, most notably in the 14th century, generated social, religious and political encounters that have been an enduring leitmotif in the history of India and its historiography.

To better understand this period, and move away from reductive explanations, the authors of this paper have formed an interdisciplinary team to develop a methodology that will embrace history, archaeology, religious studies, philology, sociology, epidemiology, climatology, seismology and visual culture in all its forms.

Our paper will present a sample of the evidence collected to date and explain how a qualitative and quantitative analysis of data from across disciplines can initiate a step-change in our understanding of Indian society shaped by the diversity of complex communities and the environment over the *longue durée*.

Interdisciplinary and expanded datasets hold the promise that difficult problems can be tackled from fresh perspectives, notably the collapse of India's ancien régime in the 14th century, a turning point in history and India's modern sense of identity.

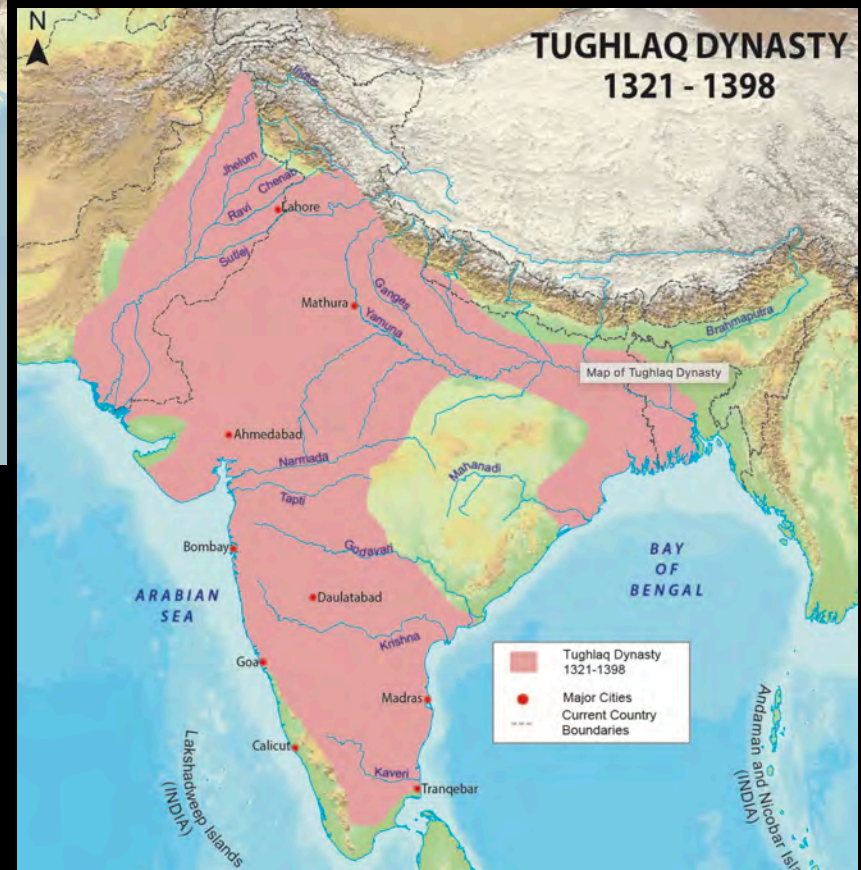
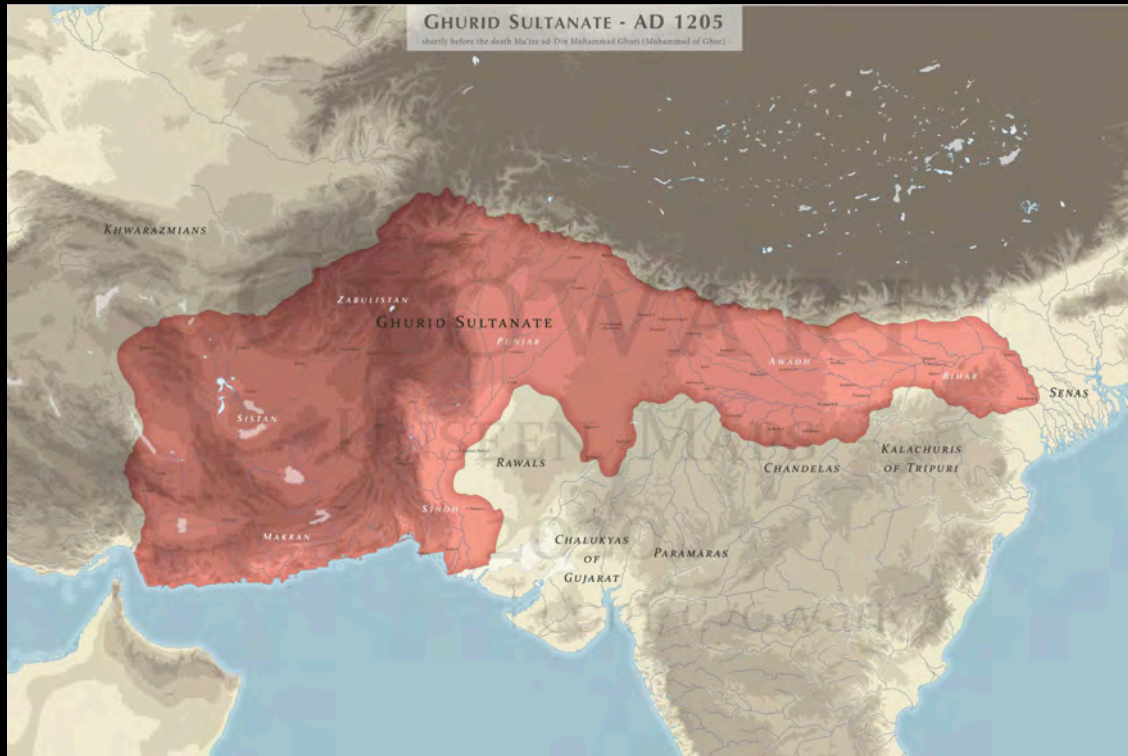
## 1. The general pattern in the South Asian setting



Piprahwa, main stupa and monasteries as excavated and conserved by the Archaeological Survey of India. Established in the third century BCE, abandoned in the twelfth century CE. Excavated from the late 1800s.



## 2. The colonial explanation



### Ghurid and Tughluq dynasties

Colonial historiography from the time of Mill (1817) and his heirs (Henry Maine, Vincent Smith) gives us the 'conquest', the 'indigenous' and the 'foreign'.

Smith (1919). *The Oxford History of India: From the Earliest Times to the End of 1911*. Oxford. Still in print (25<sup>th</sup> impression and available as e-book)

“India’s unique civilisation may be summed up in the term Hinduism. India primarily is a Hindu country (p. x).”

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**Post-colonial directions**

Eaton (1993). *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier*. Berkeley.

Eaton (2000). “Temple Desecration and Indo-Islamic States,” 283-319 in *Journal of Islamic Studies* 11.

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Jha (2017). “Communal Identities in the Historiography of Early India: A Preliminary Note,” read at the International Conference on History Teaching across the Subcontinent. Kolkata.

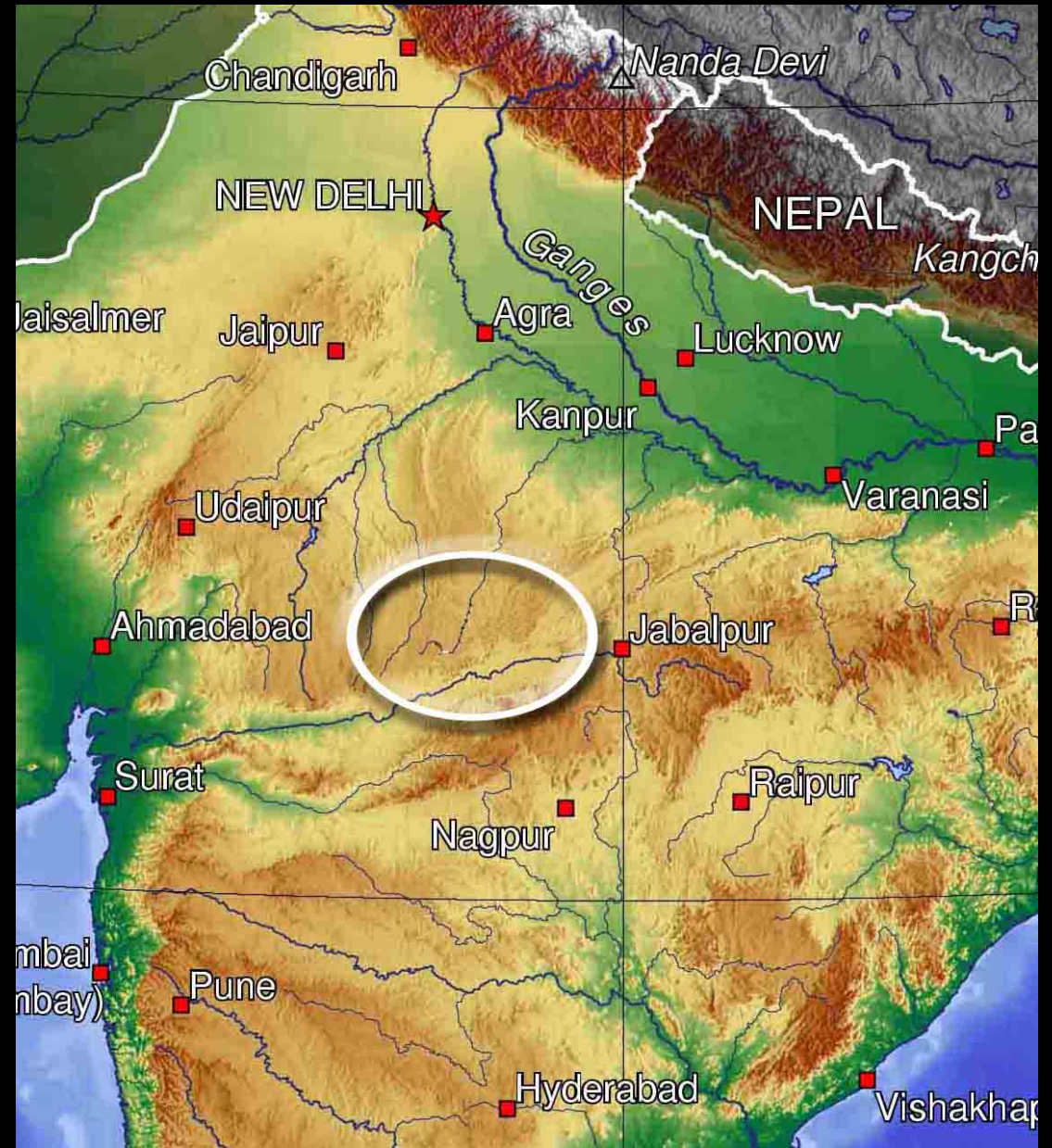
### 3. Expanding the datasets

**MISSING LANGUAGES, MISSING HISTORIES, MISSING PERSONS**

**CLIMATE, FAMINE, EPIDEMICS**

**EATHQUAKES AND TEMPLE DESTRUCTION**





So where to look?

Central India or Malwa



# MISSING LANGUAGES, MISSING HISTORIES, MISSING PERSONS



August 2, 2021 Physical object Open Access

## Mai माई मै (Dist. Jaunpur, UP). Brick inscription dated VS 1273

Anon

Data curator(s)  
Willis, M.

Mai माई मै (Dist. Jaunpur, UP). Brick inscription VS 1273. Found by Markham Kittoe and now in the British Museum.

Transcribed by Hiranand Pandit, translated by James Ballantyne, *JASB* 19 (1850): 454-6. Edited subsequently by V. S. Agarwala in *JUPHS* 18, no. 2 (1945): 196-201. Markham Kittoe, who collected the brick and brought it to the UK, died in 1853 shortly after his return from India. His will is dated 1846 and was proved in 1853. Kittoe's collection went to the India Museum in London and when that institution was dissolved in 1879, the collections were transferred in 1880 to the British Museum, Kew Gardens and the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A). The connection with Kittoe, and thus the identification of the brick, was lost at that time, but was rediscovered by Michael Willis thanks to the listing in Prasad (1990), 78. Willis assigned the number 1880.3724 to the brick, items transferred to the British Museum in 1880 bearing this number prefix.

The brick is reported to have been found about 12 miles north-west of Jaunpur, but the only village Mai located is at Coordinates: 25°28'11"N 82°34'26"E

Preview



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<a href="https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5153331">10.5281/zenodo.5153331</a>	

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Mai माई मै (Dist. Jaunpur, UP). Brick inscription dated VS 1273. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5153331>

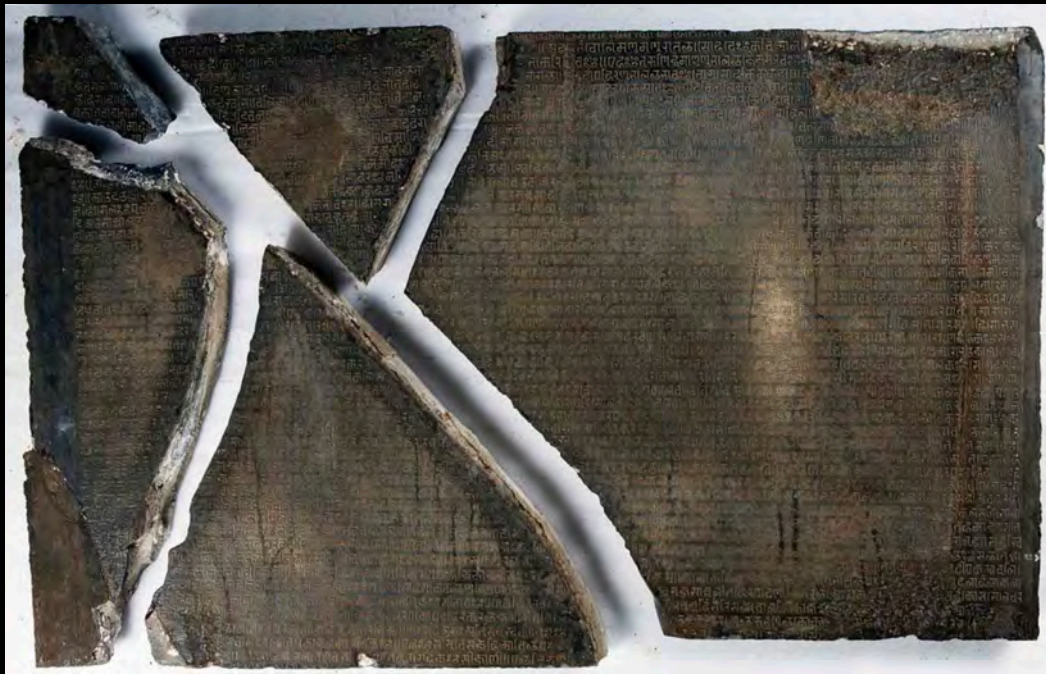
Lalitpur ललितपुर (Uttar Pradesh). Bansa, inscription dated VS 1415. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5139782>





Sugata (near Chanderi)  
Collection of hero-stones  
One dated 1381-82  
and mentioning Fīrūz Shāh  
Tughluq

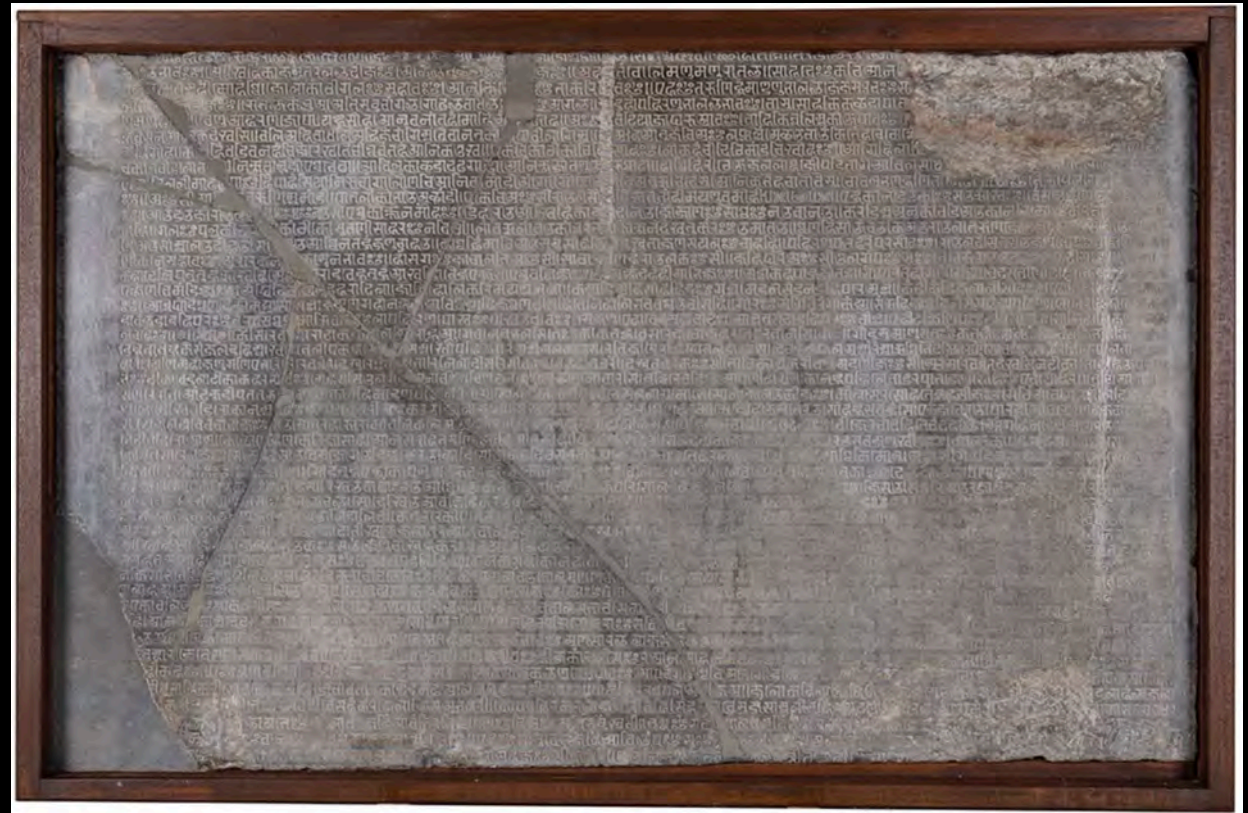




*Rāūlavela* of Roḍa, from Dhār probably early 1200s.

Conserved 2019 in the museum at Mumbai.

The poem imitates the characteristics of various contemporary dialects and is unique as the oldest evidence of the *Nakhaśikha* genre in new Indo-Aryan.



डङ्गाड सक्कअकळ्वं सक्कअकळ्वं अ णिम्मिअं जेण ।  
वंसहरं व पलितं तडअडतट्टत्तणं कुणइ ॥  
[दृश्यतां संस्कृतकाव्यं संस्कृतकाव्यं च निर्मितं येन ।  
वंशगृहमिव प्रदीप्तं तटतटतट्टत्वं करोति ॥]

A pox upon Sanskrit  
And those who write poems in it.  
It sounds like a house of bamboo on fire—  
Crackling, popping and spluttering.

*Vajjālagga* of Jayavallaha

(Sanskrit *chāyā* of Ratnadeva dated 1393 = CE 1336-37)



Chanderi inscription of 1311 CE recording the construction of a mosque in the time of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī



# CLIMATE, FAMINE, EPIDEMICS



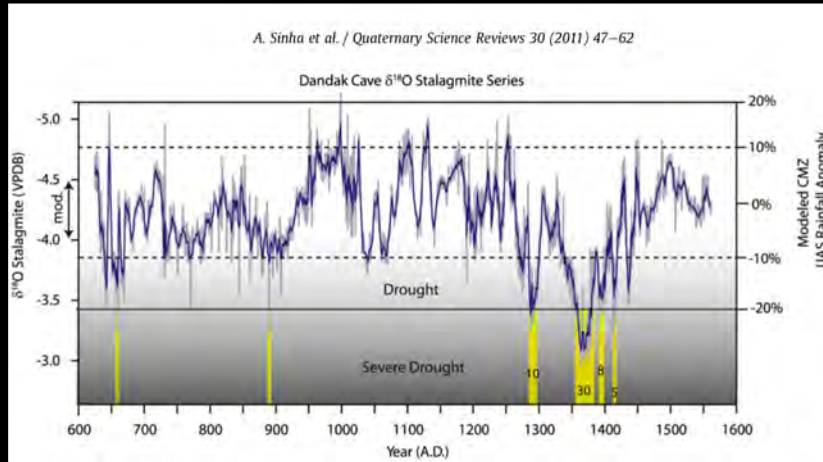
Vindhya highlands at middle of the dry season (February)



Bhojpur (MP). Satellite view of dam built in c. 1025. The exceptional construction of a dam on a perennial river appears to be a response to a period of steadily declining monsoon rain in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century.

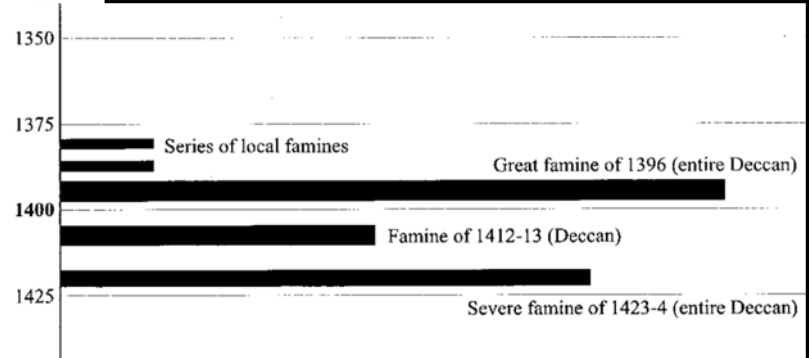
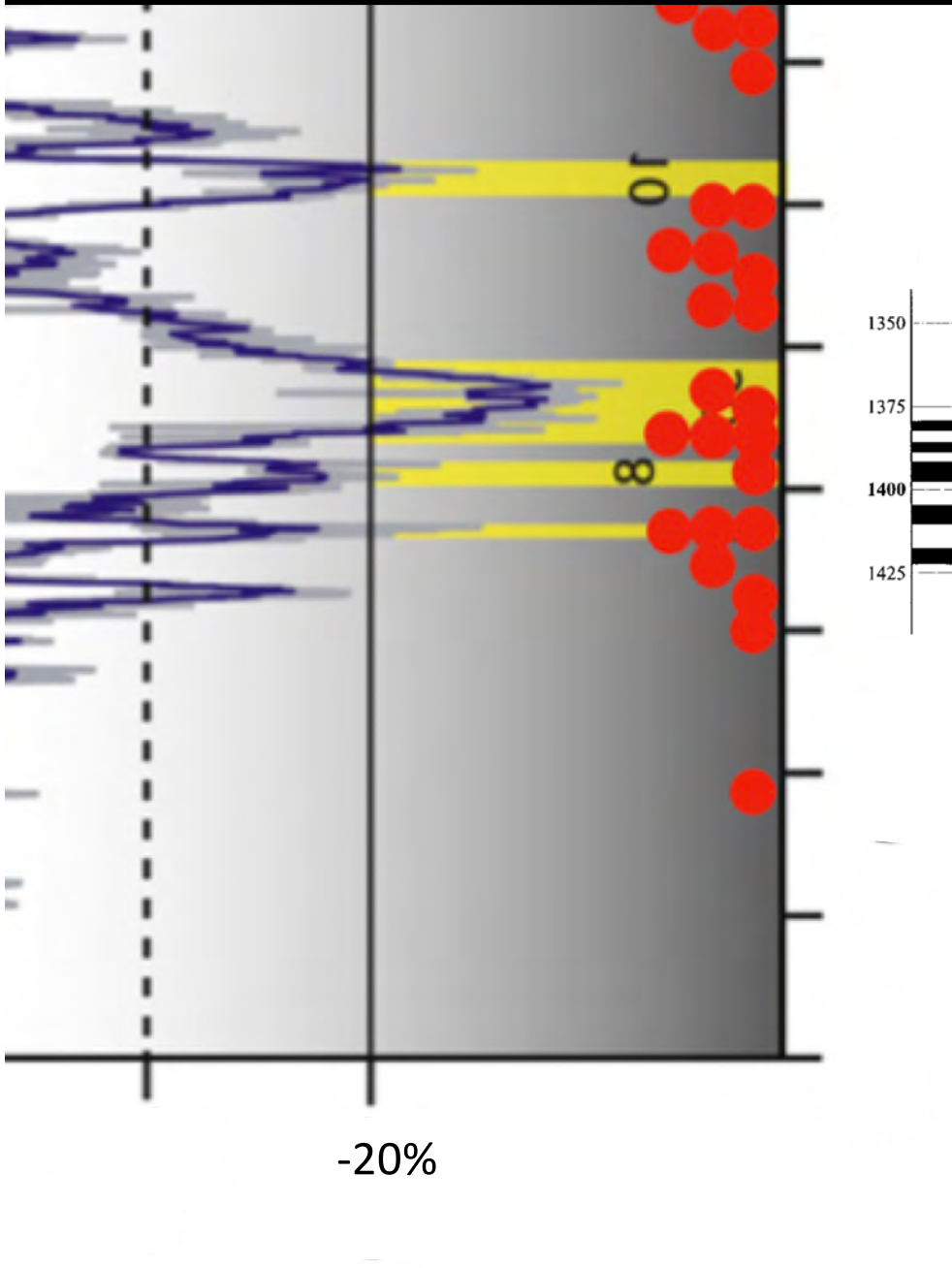


# Dandak cave & the droughts of the 14<sup>th</sup> century



Sinha et al, "A global context for megadroughts in monsoon Asia during the past millennium," Quaternary Science Reviews 30 (2011): 47-62



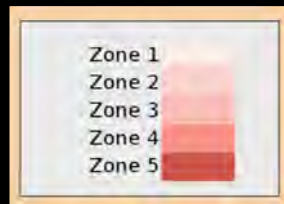
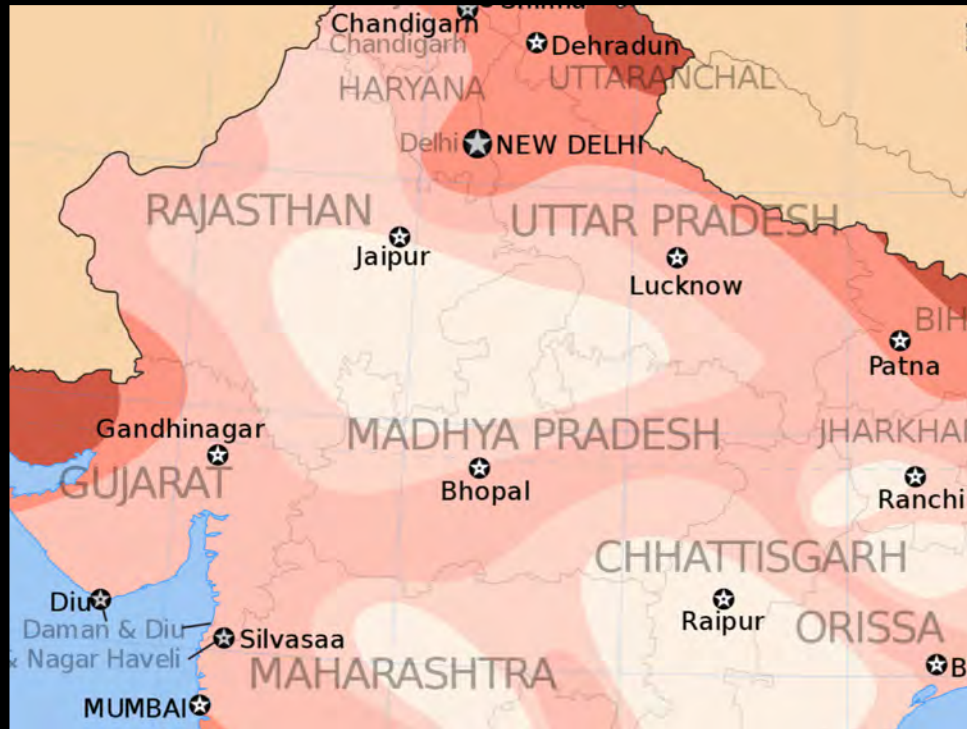


Morrison, Kathleen. (2000). Naturalizing Disaster: from Drought to Famine in South India. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6572588>

Sinha et al, "A global context for megadroughts in monsoon Asia during the past millennium," Quaternary Science Reviews 30 (2011): 47-62

Dandak monsoon data combined with epigraphical & historical evidence for famines in south India between 1375 and 1425.

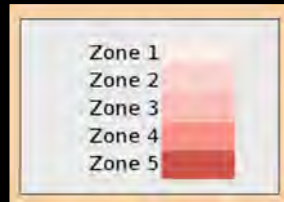
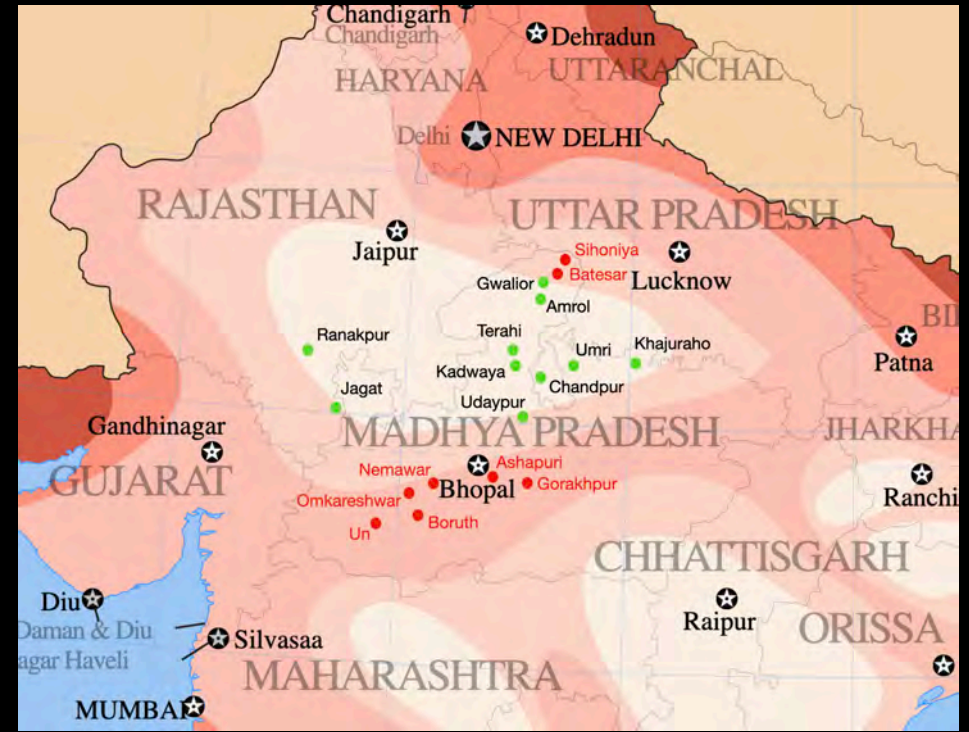
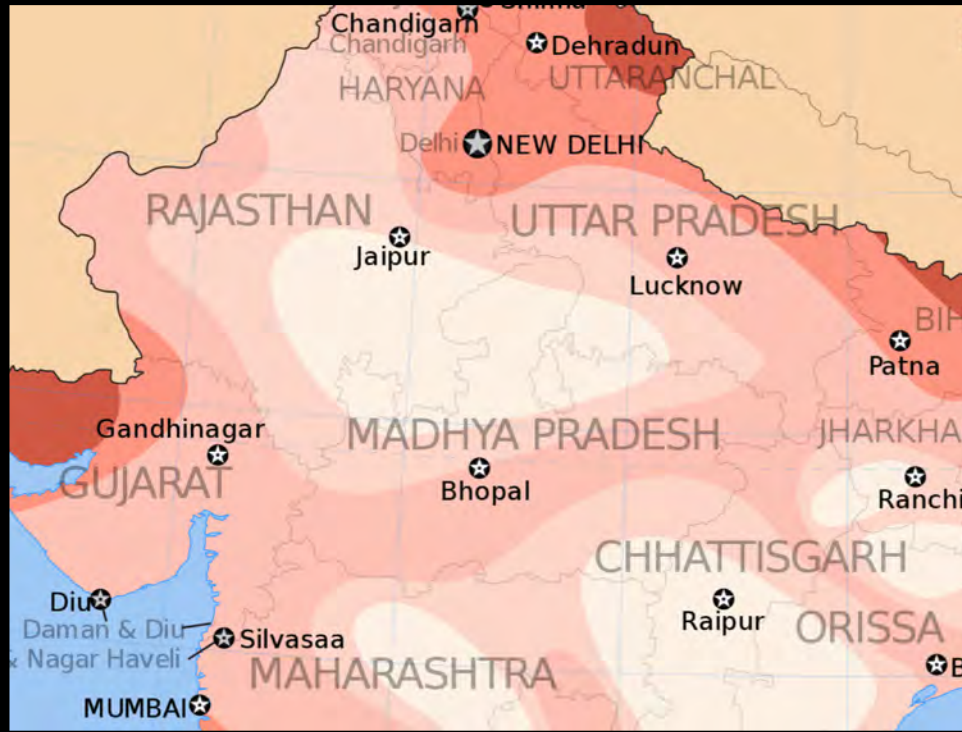
# EATHQUAKES AND TEMPLE DESTRUCTION



Earthquake zones in northern India showing range of vulnerable zones



# EATHQUAKES AND TEMPLE DESTRUCTION



Earthquake zones in northern India showing range of vulnerable zones

Temple site mapped against vulnerable earthquake zones.  
Red = Damaged monuments; Green = Undamaged monuments.





Sanchi. Temple 45 before clearance, showing seismic collapse



Sanchi. Temple 45 as it stands today with fallen fragments cleared away



Sihoniya. Śiva temple, finished by 1035 CE, damaged about 1300, re-consecrated 1393-94 CE





Omkareswar. Temple, about 1100, showing earthquake damage.



Omkareswar. Gatehouse about 1100 showing earthquake damage.





## CONCLUSIONS & FURTHER DIRECTIONS: developing an integrated corpus of evidence across datasets



Udaypur (MP). About 1 km south of the temple. Colossal figure of dancing Śiva, about 1150, left unfinished. The Sultanate army under Iltutmish does not appear in region until 1233-34.



Inscription recording construction of the mosque during the reign of Muḥammad ibn Tughluq in AH 737 and 739 AH (i.e. 1336-37 and 1338-39 CE).



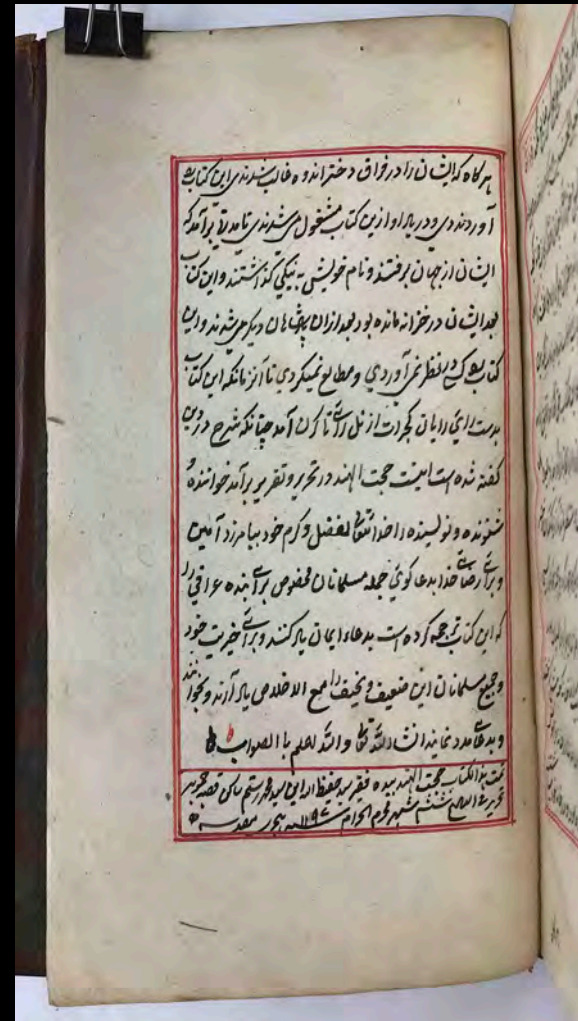
Temple at Udaipur (central India), completed 1080-81 CE, with mosque added next to the building in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.



## CONCLUSIONS & FURTHER DIRECTIONS: developing an integrated corpus of evidence across datasets



Saidpur (District Lalitpur). Hero-stone, dated 1384-85, commemorating the death of a warrior in battle and the self-immolation of his wife on his funeral pyre. Unpublished evidence of the first civil war in the time of Firoz Shāh Zenodo <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3859427>



*Hujjat al-Hind* (colophon). A Persian critique of Hinduism, set in central India, perhaps composed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, manuscript in the Royal Asiatic Society dated 1782, collected in India by Charles Mallet before 1798 and probably transcribed for him.



