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CITYSCAPE OF AN IMPERIAL CAPITAL

Shahjahanabad in 1739

STEPHEN P. BLAKE

Shahjahan: "Exalted sultans always had it in mind to cause the world to remember (their reigns) by a permanent monument."

The second was less exalted. Agra, the capital Shahjahan had inherited from his father, had become increasingly unsuitable. A long thin strip of a city sprawled along the banks of the river Yamuna, Agra had long suffered from erosion. The action of the river had cut deep ravines into both banks (some extended nearly to the heart of the city) and had caused many structures along the water's edge to collapse. The city, furthermore, was no longer able to contain the crowds and congestion attendant on the emperor and his court. The main gate of the palace-fortress had become too small for the press of people on court days and during festivals, and many people had been bruised or crushed as they tried to squeeze inside. Overbuilding had also occurred: mansions, shops, and other structures encroached on lanes and thoroughfares, rendering safe and orderly transit difficult or impossible.

Shifting the capital to Lahore, a city that had served as the seat of government under both Akbar and Jahangir, was briefly considered and rejected. Like Agra, Lahore could no longer comfortably house the Emperor and his entourage. Moreover, the plan and style of the city—jumbled, haphazard, without any uniformity or coordination—was unattractive to a man of Shahjahan's sensitivity.

It was in 1639 that Shahjahan instructed the architects, engineers, and astrologers of the imperial household to select for the new capital a beautiful site in a mild climate, a place somewhere in north India between Agra and Lahore. For Shahjahan, as for other pre-modern rulers, choosing the site for a new capital was a serious undertaking. A capital stood as a symbol of the ruler's power and wealth, an example of his ability to order the world about him into regular, harmonious, even beautiful shapes and patterns. In civilizations such as those of the Mughals, where the capital was the axis mundi—the centre of the earth and the intersect of the celestial and the mundane—the need to choose an appropriate site was even more acute.

The Emperor's men soon settled on a spot in the Delhi area. As the choice for an axis mundi, this site (on a bluff overlooking the river Yamuna) was hard to fault. The Delhi area had contained the capitals of most north Indian states for six hundred years and had held the capital of every Muslim dynasty from the time of Qutb al-Din Abak (1206–10) until 1506, when the Afghan ruler Sikander Lodi...
India; and, as the traditional centre of Islamic rule in India, it held the
tombs of many important nobles and rulers. The author of an early
eighteenth century geographical work reveals his understanding of
the two-fold significance of Shahjahanabad as the axis mundi:
[It] was always the dar al-mulk [seat of the empire] of the great sultans
and the center of the circle of Islam [markaz-i din]..." Muhammad Salih, an official historian of Shahjahan's reign, wrote
"Its four walls... enclosed the center of the earth" [markaz-i khak].

Having settled finally on a site, Shahjahan was eager to begin
work. On 29 April 1639, at a time determined by the imperial
astrologers, Ghairat Khan, subadar of Delhi, ordered the two
expert builders of his establishment, Ustad Ahmad and Ustad Hamid,
to begin excavating. At this point, in order to ensure the success of
the project, Shahjahan is said to have placed the bodies of several
freshly beheaded criminals in the trenches as a sacrifice. In two
weeks (12 May 1639) initial spade-work on the foundations was
completed, and a large number of stone-carvers, builders, and
decorators began work on the buildings in the palace-fortress. Princes and high-ranking amirs, having received plots of land about
the site, ordered plans to be drawn up and work begun on their own
mansions. For the next nine years construction proceeded apace.

When Makramat Khan, subadar of Delhi Province, declared the
palace ready for habitation Shahjahan was notified. Astrologers were
consulted and, on 19 April 1648, Shahjahan entered the Daulat
Khanah-i Khas (Hall of Special Audience) by the gate fronting the
river. To commemorate the completion of his residence and to
inaugurate the new capital, Shahjahan ordered a great celebration.
The palace-fortress was splendidly turned out. As pishtak (ceremonial
offering) on this great occasion, Saadullah Khan, the wazir,
furnished and decorated the Hall of Special Audience, and Ali Mardan
Khan, the arangab or khwabgah (place of rest or sleep). The roof,
walls, and columns of the Hall of Ordinary Audience (Daulat
Khanah-i Khos-o-Am) were hung with brocaded velvet from Turkey
and silk from China. A great canopy of embroidered velvet, 219 by
135 feet, prepared by artisans in an imperial workshop in Ahmadabad,
was raised on four silver pillars in the courtyard of the hall of
ordinary audience. It stood nearly seventy feet high, held over one
thousand people, and was surrounded by a silver railing. The Emperor
sat on a special throne enclosed by a golden railing; before him the
princes and great nobles sat on smaller thrones. Shahjahan held a
general audience (bar-i am) and distributed gifts and honours to the great men of state. Dara Shikoh received a special khatam (robe of honour), an elephant, two hundred thousand rupees in cash, and an increase in rank of two thousand zat; Saadullah Khan received a special khatam and an increase in rank to seven thousand zat and seven thousand saraar; and, for his work on the palace, Makramat Khan was given a special khatam and was elevated to the rank of five thousand zat and five thousand saraar.30

Plan and Build

Historians have too often ignored the plan and build of cities for social, economic, institutional, and political modes of analysis. This is unfortunate for, as a number of scholars have shown, the shape of architectural space is often suggestive of the structure of political, social, and economic relationships.31 For a city like Shahjahanabad that suffered long years of pillage and anarchy, years in which records, histories, memoirs, and other written materials were destroyed, remains of the urban fabric constitute a major form of evidence.

A massive stone wall twenty-seven feet high, twelve feet thick, and 3.8 miles long encircled Shahjahanabad. Erected during the years 1651–8, this great enclosure was not the first attempt to protect the city. A wall of stone and mud had been thrown up in four months during the latter part of 1650 and had promptly collapsed in the monsoon rains of the following year.32 The wall was topped by twenty-seven towers and was broken in numerous places by gates and entryways, both large and small. Although it is impossible now to distinguish all the original gates, it is fairly easy to determine the major points of entry constructed by Shahjahan and his immediate successors. Set at regular intervals around the rough semi-circle that joined the northern and southern extremities of the city were seven large gates. These were found, by and large, at the ends of the principal urban arteries and handled the bulk of mounted, vehicular, and pedestrian traffic. They included (Map II), the Kashmiri, Mori, Kabuli, Lahori, Ajmeri, Turkomani, and Akbabadri gates. The wall fronting the river was also interrupted by several large gates—the Raj Ghat, Qila Ghat, and Nigambodh gates. A function of these three was to provide Hindus of the city access to the riverside platforms (ghats) upon which they burned their dead. Interspersed among the large entryways, a number of smaller gates allowed pedestrians quick and easy passage to and from the city. Many of these represented the work of important nobles and were located near large mansions. Others stood near places of public importance. Examples include the Zinat al-Masajid gate on the Yamuna, the farrashkhanah (wardrobe) gate, and the gates of Gazi al-Din Khan and Ahmad Baksh Khan.33

The most prominent topographical features within the area enclosed by the great walls were two hillocks. Jhujhala (Hujjala Hill), near the north-west wall of the city, held nothing of significance. Hujjala (Hujjala Hill), however, occupied a spot near the centre of the enclosure and became the site for the great Friday mosque, the Jama Masjid. An extensive piece of low ground separated Hujjala from the bluff along the Yamuna.34

The plan of Shahjahanabad appears to have been based on a design from the ancient Hindu texts on architecture. These texts, the vastu sastras (rules for architecture), were part of a larger body of Sanskrit texts called the silpa sastras (rules for the manual arts) that established rules for the practice of many mechanical and fine arts. A typical vastu sastra contained detailed directions on constructing buildings (both religious and secular), on laying out settlements of different sizes and kinds in different terrains, and on dividing population centres into quarters or neighbourhoods.35 The Manasara, a vastu sastra dating to c. A.D. 400–600 listed a semi-elliptical design called karmuka (bow) as one of the shapes a settlement might take. Such a plan was especially appropriate for a site fronting a river or sea shore.36

As a comparison with Map II (back end-papers) shows, the karmuka design seems to have guided, at least in part, the thinking of Shahjahan’s architects. The north–south road that connected the Akbarabadi and Kashmiri Gates of the city and which included Faiz Bazar represented the bow string. Streets connecting city gates—those running from south to east and connecting the Turkomani and Ajmeri gates with the Lahori Gate, and that running north–east and connecting the Mori and Lahori gates—represented, along with the outer wall of the city, the curved shaft of the bow. Chandni Chowk, which ran from the Lahori Gate of the fort to the Lahori Gate of the city, was the arm of the archer. In a city laid out according to the karmuka plan, the most auspicious spot was the juncture of the two cross streets. In the Hindu village, town, or city this spot was occupied by the temple of Vishnu or Shiva. In Shahjahanabad the
palace-fortress of the Emperor stood at this location, the meeting place of Chandni Chawk and Faiz Bazaar.

The two major thoroughfares in Shahjahanabad are described in the sources as bazaars, streets lined on both sides with shops of merchants, artisans, and others. The largest and richest of these commercial avenues stretched from the Lahori Gate of the fort to the Fathpuri Mosque. Built in 1650 by Jahanara Begum, favorite daughter of Shahjahan, this street was about forty yards wide, 1520 yards long, and contained 1560 shops and porticos. A lovely canal, the Nahr-i Bihisht (Canal of Paradise), flowed through the centre of the bazaar. On each side of the canal a row of trees provided shade and a place to rest. In the earliest sources, there was no special name for the entire street; it was simply the bazaar in the direction of Lahore. However, the bazaar was divided into several sections and each of these had its own name. The 480-yard section from the Lahori Gate of the fort to the chawk (square) of the Kotwali Chabutra (City Magistrate’s Platform) was called Urdu Bazaar (Camp Market). This bazaar served the members of the imperial household—soldiers, servants, clerks, artisans, and others—who lived in and around the palace-fortress and who accompanied the emperor when he toured the countryside and resided, for the most part, in a great camp. To the south of the square was the City Magistrate’s Platform where criminals were tried and punished in public.

The section from the Kotwali Chabutra to the chawk built by Jahanara Begum was about 480 yards long. It was called Asbrafi Bazaar (Moneychangers’ Market) or Jami Bazaar (Jewellers’ Bazaar) and seems to have been the financial section of the street. The chawk was an octagon with sides one hundred yards long; a large pool occupied its centre. To the north Jahanara built a sarai (inn) and a garden, and to the south a hammam. On certain nights the moonlight reflected pale and silvery from the central pool and gave to the area the name Chandni Chawk (Silver or Moonlight Square). Over time this name slowly displaced all others until finally the entire bazaar, from the Lahori Gate to the Fathpuri Masjid, became known as Chandni Chawk. The final section of the street ran about 560 yards from Chandni Chawk to the Fathpuri Mosque and was called Fathpuri Bazaar. In front of the mosque (built by a wife of Shahjahan named Nawab Fathpuri Begum) was a platform and below that a pool. A sarai for scholars and travellers stood nearby.\(^\text{37}\)

The 1650 shops that lined the sides of the bazaar were of a single design. Each occupied a small room under one section of a long arcade. A thin partition separated one shop from another. At the back of the shop a door led to a small warehouse where surplus goods were stored. Above the warehouse at the back of the arcade lived the merchant, his family, and servants.\(^\text{38}\) In these shops an extraordinary variety of goods and services were available: spicy kababs, beautifully scented flowers, and astrologers who foretold the future.\(^\text{39}\) An early eighteenth-century visitor marvelled at the rubies, emeralds, and pearls; lingered over glass buqgas (waterpipes) and eyeglasses from China; and gazed longingly at the variety of sweets in the confectioners’ shops.\(^\text{40}\) Scattered among the shops were several coffee houses. An innovation from Persia, these were places where amirs gathered to listen to poetry, engage in conversation, and watch the passing scene.\(^\text{41}\)

The other major bazaar in Shahjahanabad stretched from the Akbarabadi Gate of the fort to the Akbarabadi Gate of the city. With 888 compartments and porticos along a street about 1050 yards long and thirty yards wide, this bazaar was smaller and less impressive than Chandni Chawk. Built in 1650 by Nawab Akbarabadi Begum, it had in its middle a branch of the Nahr-i Bihisht. The most imposing complex of structures stood at the head of the bazaar, just south of the palace gate. Here Nawab Akbarabadi Begum built a magnificent mosque of black, red, and creamy white called Asbat Panahi (great protection). Near the mosque she erected a sarai. Before the sarai in the middle of the street she constructed a chawk 160 yards long and sixty yards wide, and on the other side of the street, opposite the mosque and sarai, she erected a hammam.\(^\text{42}\) In the early eighteenth century Raushan al-Daulah, an important noble under Muhammad Shah, put up strings of lights on both sides of the canal.\(^\text{43}\) The name of this bazaar also changed over time. Originally known as the bazaar in the direction of Akbarabad, it later came to be called Faiz Bazaar (bazaar of plenty).\(^\text{44}\)

One other market deserves mention. Just outside the Akbarabadi Gate of the fort, Sa’adullah Khan constructed a large chawk in the middle of Khas Bazaar (Special Bazaar), the street which connected the Jam‘i Masjid and the palace-fortress. In this area dancing girls, physicians (who, according to Dargah Quli Khan, passed off bags of dirt as medicine), story-tellers, and astrologers pioled their trades; here also were shops that dispensed cloth, medicine, cooked food,
In the Muslim countries of west Asia the garden came to occupy an extremely important place in the plan and build of cities. In the first place, the hot, dry desert climate of much of the area put a premium on places of relief, shaded areas with running water, trees, and flowers where urban inhabitants could find rest and refreshment. Secondly, a long tradition of royal pleasure gardens existed in west Asia. Rulers and nobles in Iran and the Fertile Crescent had constructed elaborately landscaped garden retreats long before the advent of Islam. Finally, the garden had a special significance for Muslims. The Quran promised each Muslim, as a reward for faithful and steadfast worship of Allah, a place in the heavenly paradise. And paradise, in the Quran and Islamic tradition, was conceived of as a garden. Thus, for the pious Muslim the earthly garden served as a reminder of his eventual destination, and no matter how large, lush, or richly appointed it might be, it paled beside his own vision of the heavenly garden—paradise he was to inhabit after death.

Thus, many of the elements in the design of the west Asian garden had a religious source. The paradise garden of the Quran was enclosed, cut by four swiftly-flowing rivers, and included a central basin, fountains, lush green grass, and trees heavy with fruit. In the earthly gardens of Mughal India, architects started with these basic elements, refined and reworked them, and elaborated a variety of designs and types.

Whether inside the city or out, the typical urban garden was rectangular in shape and enclosed by high walls. Gardens were spacious, dimensions of four hundred yards by six hundred were common, and many of them had gateways in the middle of each wall and towers at each of the four corners. The principal design, from which the most intricate and elaborate variations developed, featured a central pool containing a small open structure called a barahdari (summer house). Four wide canals led from the central pool to the surrounding walls. Other smaller canals branched off from the major waterways and subdivided the four large rectangles one or more

Flora was also as important in the garden as it is in the wild. Flowers of various colors and shapes, trees of all sorts (fruit-bearing, leafy, tall, squat), birds of spectacular plumage and beautiful voice, and fish of different sizes and colors filled the fully appointed garden in Shahjahanabad. Many gardens made use of cypress and fruit trees. The cypress symbolized death and eternity and the fruit tree (almond or plum or mango) life and hope. Interwoven they represented the union of life and death, the joining of the ephemeral and the eternal in the garden of everlasting joy and happiness.

Members of imperial and noble families located most of their gardens beyond the city walls. The banks of the Yamuna upriver and down from the palace-fortress, tree-shaded groves on major highways near city gates—these were the choice locations. During construction of the city Shahjahan had a garden called khizrabad built for him on the west bank of the Yamuna about five miles south of the Akbarabadi Gate of the city. Here in 1658 Aurangzeb imprisoned his brother and defeated rival, Dara Shikoh. Outside the Kabulri Gate of the city Shahjahan laid out a garden filled with neem trees called Tir Hassari Bagh (Garden of Three Thousand). Zeb al-Nisah Begum, daughter of Aurangzeb, and Maltka Zamani, wife of Muhammad Shah, were buried there.

In 1650 Raulash Ara Begum, daughter of Shahjahan, constructed a large garden near the Lahori Gate of the city in the suburb now called Sabzi Mandi (Vegetable Market). On her death in 1671 she was buried there within a tomb. Nawab Sirhindhi Begum, wife of Shahjahan, built a garden in the same area that also served as her final resting place. In 1653-4 Nawab Akbarabadi Begum built a fine garden about six miles beyond the Lahori Gate of the city. Named Shalimar and modelled after the earlier gardens of that name in Lahore and Kashmir, this was the place where Aurangzeb was crowned Emperor.

In later years, after the initial burst of construction in the 1650s, members of imperial and noble families continued to lay out gardens. In 1710–11 Mahbaldar Khan built a spacious and well decorated garden beyond Sabzi Mandi. In 1748 Nawab Qudsia Begum, wife of Muhammad Shah and mother of Ahmad Shah, erected a magnificent garden on the bank of the Yamuna north of Kashmiri Gate. Called Qudsia Bagh (Qudsia's Garden), the structure was one thousand feet long and two hundred feet wide. Towers guarded the walls and a lovely mosque and barahdari graced the interior.
The supreme example in Shahjahanabad of the garden-builder's art, however, and the only garden of size within the city and outside the palace-fortress was the one erected by Jahanara Begum north of Chandni Chawk. Called Sabihabad (Abode of the Master) and constructed in 1650, this garden enclosed an enormous rectangular area of about fifty acres. The Nahr-i Bibisht provided water for an elaborate garden-paradise arrangement of canals, waterfalls, fountains, and pools. Flowers and trees surrounded the barabdaris. Set in the middle of pools, these delicate structures were barely visible behind the drifting spray of the fountains. In the apartments and pavilions of the garden, women of the imperial household played with their children and rested from the heat of summer.

Desire for a refuge against the midsummer heat, wind, and dust of north India was probably the strongest reason for laying out gardens. These pleasure areas were given over entirely to combating the elements; the canals, trees, flowers, fountains, and pavilions designed for the sole purpose of pushing out of mind the uncomfortable reality of the hot, dusty world outside. For many builders the garden also served as a place of burial. The central barabdar, place of relaxation and merriment during the builder's life, became on his death a mausoleum, his final resting place.

To ensure a stable, year-round supply of water, cities in Mughal India were located on or near rivers. Canals of all sizes—built by emperors and great amirs—channeled water for drinking, washing, and irrigating to houses, gardens, shops, pools, and baths. In 1615–16, for example, the great amir Abd al-Rahim, Khan-i Khuran, constructed in Burhanpur a canal which carried water from the Tapti River to Lal Bagh (Red Garden). In 1639–40 Ali Mardan Khan proposed the construction of a canal that would bring water from the river Ravi to Lahore. Shahjahan agreed and authorized an expenditure of one hundred thousand rupees. In little more than a year the skilled canal-builders of Ali Mardan's establishment completed a channel called Shab Nahr (King's Canal) that carried water over one hundred miles from the source of the Ravi in the mountains to Lahore.

The longest and largest canal, however, and one of the most impressive engineering feats of the entire Mughal period was the Nahr-i Bibisht. This canal carried water from a point on the Yamuna seventy-five miles upstream to the city, by a circuitous route. The first section of the canal is said to have been built by Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq during the years 1355–8. It brought water from the Yamuna to Firuz Shah's hunting preserve at Safidun, a distance of about seventy miles. This section was a primitive affair, laid out along a drainage bed, and only flowed during monsoons. Soon after Firuz Shah's death the channel silted up, caved in, and ran dry. During Akbar's reign the governor of Delhi, Shihab al-Din Khan, ordered the original canal cleared and extended to his own estate near Hansi and Hissar. As a result the canal became known as Nahr-i Shihab (Shihab's Canal). As before, however, the builder's death brought the decline of the waterway, and the Nahr-i Shihab ceased to flow in the late sixteenth century.

In 1639, as part of his plans for the new capital, Shahjahan ordered the excavation and repair of the waterway up to the point reached by Shihab al-Din. Construction of the remaining segment was entrusted to the men of his household. A channel that directed water from Hansi and Hissar by way of Panipat and Sonipat to the north-western suburbs of Shahjahanabad was excavated—a distance of about seventy-eight miles. The construction in these suburbs of a great aqueduct of five arches (162 feet long and twenty-four feet wide) to bridge the drain carrying overflow water from the Najatgarh jhil (reservoir) was one of the most impressive aspects of the entire project. The canal flowed through the outskirts of the city—watering gardens, mansions, and houses as it passed. Twenty-five feet wide and twenty-five feet deep, the Nahr-i Bibisht was spanned at regular intervals by small bridges and entered Shahjahanabad by the Kabuli Gate.

With but few interruptions (in 1707 and 1740) water moved regularly from the Yamuna to the city. The canal proved a boon for cultivators along its route. The taxes they paid the superintending amir (Safdar Jang is said to have got two million five hundred thousand rupees one year) were ample incentive to keep the channel clear. In the late eighteenth century, however, with the collapse of order and government in the city, the canal again ran dry. The British re-opened it in 1820 and it was still providing water to the urban populace in the mid-century.

Once inside the city the canal split into two main branches. One branch met Chandni Chawk near Fathpuri Masjid and flowed down the middle of the avenue to Faiz Bazar. The other branch entered Sahibabad, Jahanara Begum's garden, at its north-western end and
provided an ample supply of water for the intricate arrangement of pools and water-courses. The branch reached the palace-fortress at the north-eastern corner near the Shab Badar (King's Tower). According to one tradition, an ingenious device called a shat anguish (camel's neck) lifted the stream from ground level to the floor of the fort.  

A lovely marble canal channelled water through all the buildings and apartments along the eastern wall. Smaller canals diverted water from this main artery to gardens and waterways throughout the residential half of the enclosed area. According to a mid-eighteenth century observer:

[The canal] brought greenness to Delhi. It ran in all of the city from lane to lane, and the wells became full from it ... it flowed into the imperial fort and around the moat... having flowed to the mansions of the princes and amirs it flowed into the city—to Chandni Chowk, to the Chowk of Saadullah Khan, to Paharganj, to Ajmiri Gate, to the grazing places, to the other mahallahs, and to all the lanes and bazaars of the city.  

The Nahr-i Bihisht was responsible for much that was fresh, green, and beautiful in Shahjahanabad and was one of the most important factors for the reputation of the capital. The estimate of Sujan Rai was typical:

[It] confers freshness on the gardens in the suburbs of the capital, lends happiness to the streets and bazaars, and enhances the splendor of the imperial palaces.

In Mughal India members of imperial and noble families erected caravanserais (inns for travellers and merchants) at regular intervals along major highways and in cities. As walled rectangular enclosures, these structures presented to the ordinary passer-by a façade quite similar to that of the garden or mansion. Travellers entered the enclosure through one of several large gateways; the walls were serratred with battlements; and at each of the four corners were bastions. Rows of identical arched compartments, separated by thin partitions, lined the sides of the building. A pool of water, a well, a mosque, stables, trees and flowers, and a katra (walled enclosure) for storing travellers' goods were found in most sarais. Constructed by the great for reasons of charity, religious duty, or fame, these were open to merchants, scholars, religious specialists, and other travellers but not to soldiers.

An average-sized sarai had room for eight hundred to one thousand travellers. Each sarai held a large number of permanent residents who ministered to the needs of travellers. These included barbers, tailors, washermen, blacksmiths, sellers of grass and straw, physicians, dancing girls, and musicians. To keep order among such an assembly the Mughals posted to each sarai an official with a contingent of soldiers. The primary responsibility of this man, and he took elaborate precautions to fulfill it, was to guarantee travellers' goods against theft.

In Shahjahanabad a number of these structures stood ready to receive merchants and travellers. Nawab Fathpur Begum erected an inn for pilgrims near her mosque in Chandni Chowk, 69 Nawab Akbarabadi Begum provided the same structure as part of her mosque in Faiz Bazar, 70 and Bakhtawar Khan, a noble under Aurangzeb, built in 1671–2 a large sarai outside the city called Bakhtawar Nagar (Bakhtawar's Place). 71 The outstanding example, however, of a caravansari in Shahjahanabad was the one constructed by Jahanara Begum near the entrance to her garden in Chandni Chowk. Bernier considered it, next to the Jami' Masjid, the most imposing structure in the entire city. It was square and had ninety rooms divided between upper and lower stories. Each room was beautifully painted and appointed. In the middle of the courtyard a garden filled with water-courses, trees, flowers, and pools had been laid out. On each of the four corners was a tower. Only the richest and most eminent of Persian and Uzbek merchants were allowed to put up there. 72 Jahanara wrote of the building: I will build a sarai, large and fine like no other in Hindustan. The wanderer who enters its courts will be restored in body and soul and my name will never be forgotten.

The palace-fortress of Shahjahan, called the Qila Mubarak (Auspicious Fortress) in court documents and official histories, was an awesome structure (Figure 1). Constructed of red sandstone quarried near Fathpur Sikri and shipped upriver to the site, it occupied a bluff above the Yamuna along the eastern wall of the city. The walls of the structure traced an irregular octagon nearly two miles in extent; its dimensions were 3,100 feet by 1650. An area of about 124 acres was enclosed; a piece of ground, the sources are careful to point out, twice the area of Akbar's fort in Agra. The walls were formidable: they ranged in height from sixty feet along the river to seventy-five
feet on the landward side and in width from forty-five feet at the base to thirty feet at the top of the battlements.  

Four large gateways, two small entrances, and twenty-one towers (seven round and fourteen octagonal) broke the monotony of the expanse. The great gates toward the west and south, the Lahori and Akbarabadi (numbers one and fifteen on Figure 1), were the chief entryways. In front of both gates Shahjahan constructed a pair of elephants—life-size, on guard, keeping watch. The Emperor Aurangzeb, however, regarded such images as sacrilegious and had them pulled down in the early part of his reign. To strengthen the outworks of the structure Aurangzeb put up barbicans in front of the two principal entryways and made the Lahori Gate the headquarters of the Qiladar (Fort Commander). The gateway toward the north, in the direction of Salimgarh, was the third large gateway and the gate on the riverfront beneath the Jharokah-i Darshan (Balcony of Audience, number eight on the map), the fourth. This last was the principal entryway to the Daulat Khanab-i Khas (number nine on the map) for the emperor and great men of state. One of the small gates was on the north-eastern slant of the octagon, between the Salimgarh Gate (number sixteen) and the Shah Burj (king's tower, number twelve). The other small opening was at the base of the fort a few yards south of Jahanara Begum's mansion (number six). From it a large underground drain emptied into the river.  

A moat, seventy-five feet wide and thirty feet deep, surrounded the fort on the landward side. Faced with rough stone, filled with water, and stocked with fish, it served to further isolate and protect the imperial household. Immediately beyond the moat, separating the palace-fortress from the city proper, was a wide band of garden greenery. Comprising the Buland (High), Gulabi (Rose), and Anguri (Grape) Gardens, this lovely verdant swath of flowers and trees was a stark contrast to the great red expanse of the walls. A large square between the Lahori Gate of the fort and the intersection of the two great thoroughfares interrupted the encircling sweep of the gardens. Here Razput amirs camped with their troops while standing guard duty in the palace, grooms from the imperial household exercised horses from the emperor's stables, and officials from the bakhsish's office inspected the contingents of newly admitted munsabads. Before the eastern wall of the fort was a wide sandy beach. People gathered there early each morning to catch a glimpse of the emperor at his daily darshan (showing). Later in the day elephant fights were staged for the amusement of the emperor and his family, and contingents of amirs and rajahs passed in review.  

The arrangement of buildings and the distribution of persons in the palace-fortress illustrated the mixed domestic-official character of patrimonial-bureaucratic rule. For Shahjahan and his successors the structure was neither home nor office. It was both. The north-south road from the Akbarabadi Gate to the Salimgarh Gate divided the interior into two rectangles. The larger, to which access was limited, fronted the river and contained quarters for both domestic and governmental activities.  

The southern half of this area contained the harim. No men other than the emperor, his sons, and the household servants might enter this area. Within stood the mansions of the wives, sisters, widows, and concubines of the Mughal house. Because of the secrecy respecting matters of the harim and because many of its buildings were destroyed during the Mutiny and earlier, information is available on only a few individual structures. The largest building in the area and the chief centre of communal activity was the Imtiiaz or Mumtaz Mahal (Distinguished Palace) or, as it was later called, the Rang Mahal (Coloured Palace). The ceiling of this mansion was brightly coloured and inlaid with gold. At the four corners were small enclosures called khas khanabs (reed houses). Lined with swatches of wet sweet-smelling reeds, these provided the women of the household a cool retreat from the midday sun. Small domes with golden top-knobs sat on each of the four corners of the roof. In front of the building, between it and the Hall of Ordinary Audience, was a large garden. In the middle was a pool containing a lovely marble basin. A stairway led from the back of Shahjahan's elevated throne in the Hall of Ordinary Audience to the western edge of this garden. Following his daily stint in the public hall, Shahjahan made his way through the garden to the comfort of the Imtiiaz Mahal. There, at various times of the day and night, the emperor enjoyed music, played with his children, attended to the performances of dancing girls, and listened to the offerings of poets and storytellers.  

Immediately north of the Imtiiaz Mahal was a room set aside for rest and sleep. Called both the Aramghah and the Khwabgah (Place of Sleep), it was a small, beautifully carved building constructed entirely of marble. Protruding from the eastern wall of the aramghah and hanging out over the beach was an octagonal tower called the Jharokah-i Darshan (Balcony of Audience) and later the Musamman Burj.
erected in the courtyard outside the pavilion, separated fledgling amirs and minor officials from ordinary onlookers. All three sides of the courtyard surrounding the pavilion were lined with rooms under an arcade. These apartments, linked by connecting doors, were quarters for the amirs of the standing guard and were beautifully decorated. At the western end of this courtyard stood a great gate called the Naqgar Khanah (Drum Room, number three on Figure 1). The major entryway to the Hall of Ordinary Audience, this structure housed musicians who played loud martial music during audiences. A small passageway led through the north wall of the courtyard to the Hall of Special Audience.

During the ordinary, everyday audiences Shahjahan granted promotions to mansabdars, received reports from administrative officers in the field, and examined papers relating to mansabs, jagirs, and cash salaries. In the Ordinary Hall of Audience the emperor handled the routine military, administrative, and financial matters.

Along the riverfront to the east of the Hall of Ordinary Audience stood the most splendid structure in the palace-fortress. The Hall of Special Audience, also called the Shah Mahal (King’s Palace) and Ghul Khanah (Bath House), cost one million four hundred thousand rupees to erect and was the most elegant building in the palace-fortress. Built of pure white marble, the hall was richly decorated: the lower walls were studded with agates, pearls, and other precious stones, and on the upper walls painters had joined flowers and fruit trees in colourful intricate designs. Sheets of gold in trefoil pattern decorated the ceiling. Hundreds of tiny pieces of glass, embedded in the walls and ceiling, bounced sparks of light back and forth across the hall. A gold-encrusted dome shielded each corner of the roof. In the middle of the room on a wide platform stood the famous peacock throne. Covered with rubies, diamonds, pearls, and emeralds, the throne was surmounted by a canopy on which perched two elaborately jewelled peacocks.

In front of the hall was a large courtyard, and around the courtyard an arcade divided into small rooms. At the western end a door, hung with a red curtain, led to a passageway and the Hall of Ordinary Audience.Anyone who desired to enter the Hall of Special Audience had to do special obeisance on the far side of the curtain. The location of this hall, deep within the living quarters of the imperial family, indicated its special, private character. With the help of a few trusted advisors the emperor dealt with the sensitive, secret, and most important affairs of state in the Hall of Special Audience.
North of the Hall of Special Audience lay the hammam (bath). Baths had been an integral part of Islamic life from the very beginning. A settlement, it was said, needed a congregational mosque, a market, and a bath house to qualify as a full-fledged urban community. Like the other buildings in the fortress, the hammam was built of marble, decorated with mosaics and pieces of glass, and brightly painted. The structure had three stories: one given over to a dressing room and the other two dispensing hot and cold water respectively.

At the north-eastern corner of the palace-fortress, marking the termination of the structures along the river wall, stood the Shab Burj (King’s Tower, number twelve on Figure 1). Constructed of specially polished marble from Gujarat, this octagonal tower had three stories. The lower walls were decorated with mosaics and the upper walls and ceiling displayed golden inlay work. A tank occupied the middle of the lower storey. Sheaves of khas, wetted and placed in the windows, cooled this level in summer.

North of the Daulat Khana-i-Khas was a small, delicate, beautifully wrought mosque of marble. Called the Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque, number eleven on Figure 1), it was the only building in the palace constructed by Aurangzeb. Although Shahjahan had been content to use the great congregational mosque in the middle of the city, his pious brother wanted a more convenient sanctuary for his devotions. It took five years and one hundred and sixty thousand rupees to complete the structure.

Apart from the garden of Jahanara Begam, the chief examples of garden architecture in Shahjahanabad are found in the palace-fortress. The Hayat Baksh (Life-Giving) and Mahtab gardens took up a substantial part of the northern sector of the imperial quarters. Hayat Baksh, the larger of the two, displayed a typical paradise-garden design. A large rectangular pool occupied the middle of the garden area. In the centre of the pool stood an open summer house (barahdari) surrounded and partly hidden by the spray from forty-nine silver fountains. Around the pool another one hundred and twelve fountains sent spouts of glistening water into the air. Avenues led from the four sides of the central pool to the surrounding wall. A small canal containing thirty silver fountains flowed down the middle of each avenue. At the far ends of the north-south avenues were two identical pavilions called after the monsoon months of the Hindu year Bhadawn (fifth month) and Sawan (fourth month). Built entirely of marble, these summer houses had offshoots of the Nahr-i-Bihisht cascading water to and from open pools. Flowers of all kinds, shapes, and colours bordered the avenues and pools. Fruit trees grew in such variety and profusion that, according to Muhammad Salih, the tangled branches of their upper limbs nearly shut out the sky.

Less is known about the smaller garden to the west of Hayat Baksh. Called Mahtab Bagh in later accounts, it seems not to have been laid out with the care and extravagance of the other. The major structure in this garden was a barahdari of red stone called Balal Mahal (water palace). The Nahr-i-Bihisht flowed through the centre of this building.

North of the two gardens, abutting the north-western side of the octagon, was a large triangular area. Here were the mansions and households of the younger, less-established sons of the imperial family. Princes of the position and wealth of Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb had mansions outside the palace-fortress.

West of the rectangle containing the quarters of the imperial household lay another roughly rectangular area. Although smaller than the area set aside for the emperor and his family, this section of the palace-fortress held the bulk of the population. Immediately in front of the Naqqar Khanah was a large open square called the jilau Kahan (Forecourt). This was the place where those interested in attending the daily audience—amirs, ministers, bureaucrats, members of the imperial establishment, petitioners, and others—gathered and waited. Only royal princes could pass through the Naqqar Khanah on horseback; all others had to dismount and walk. The sides of this square, lined with small rooms under an arcade, housed the amirs of the daily guard and their men. In the south-western corner of the courtyard stood several buildings where the wazir (superintendent) of the imperial household transacted business. A large rectangular pool lay in the middle of the courtyard.

A covered bazaar (bazar-i-musaqaf, number two, Figure 2) led from the Lahori Gate of the fort to the western edge of the jilau Kahan. Two hundred and seventy feet long, twenty-seven feet wide, and two stories high, this bazaar had arcaded shops on both levels and both sides of the street. Near the middle of the bazaar a section had been cut from the roof, letting air and light in on an octagonal court. Although establishing bazaars in roofed, permanent constructions was the ordinary practice in Iran and West Asia, it was unusual in India.

A building like the covered bazaar, which the people of Hindustan had never before seen, was a new idea produced by the ruler of the seven lands with effortless attention and unique building talent.
Traders and merchants displayed a rich and varied selection of goods, and buyers thronged the street, examining articles and arguing with shopkeepers. In coffee houses amirs of the guard traded information and gossip.\textsuperscript{100}

Running through the pool of the Jilau Khanah and down the middle of the wide avenue linking the Salingarh and Akbarabadi gates was a branch of the Nahr-i Bibisht. After watering the houses and shops in this part of the fort, the canal emptied into the moat. A ledge four feet wide and five or six feet high bordered this avenue. At the back of each ledge was a row of arcaded rooms. Collectors of taxes and other minor bureaucrats transacted business toward the southern end of the avenue. Here were offices for the clerks and bureaucrats who maintained the financial and military records of the government. At the north-western end of the road were stables for the horses, elephants, camels, and cows of the imperial establishment. Other rooms along both sides of the avenue held workshops where weapons, carpets, fine cloth, gold work, and jewellery were manufactured; storerooms where clothing, food, books, and candlesticks were kept; and buildings for the treasuries and the mint. The remainder of this area was given over to houses for soldiers, clerks, merchants, artisans, physicians, poets, scholars, religious specialists, astrologers, and their families; members all of the imperial household.\textsuperscript{101}

To the men of Shahjahan\'s day the palace-fortress was a wondrous structure. Muhammad Waris confessed that his pen was lame and helpless, inadequate to the task of description. Only the words of the poet Amir Khusrav, inscribed on the north and south arches of the Daulat Khanah-i Khas, would suffice:

\begin{quote}
If there is a paradise on the face of the earth.
It is here, it is here, it is here.\textsuperscript{102}
\end{quote}

The people of Shahjahanabad inhabited a variety of dwellings. The large walled mansions of princes and great amirs contained gardens, watercourses, and beautiful apartments. Lower ranking amirs and rich merchants had smaller houses with walls of stone, brick, or clay and roofs of straw. Some well-to-do Hindu merchants lived in houses which were six or seven stories high.\textsuperscript{103} Ordinary merchants often lived in quarters behind their shops. Soldiers, servants, craftsmen, small traders, and others lived in straw-thatched mud huts.\textsuperscript{104} As the population increased these small dwellings multiplied; they gobbled up much of the open space in the city and encroached on lanes and thoroughfares. A resident of early eighteenth-century Shahjahanabad, for example, reported great difficulty negotiating the clogged passageways near his home.\textsuperscript{105} The inhabitants of these huts suffered periodic disaster. In the hot season fires regularly swept through the city, jumping from one tinder-dry roof to the next. In 1662 sixty thousand people were killed in three separate fires.\textsuperscript{106} During the monsoon rains the mud walls tended to weaken and collapse. On 4 July 1716 twenty-three hundred people were killed when their houses caved in.\textsuperscript{107}

Although the older princes and the important nobles did not live in the palace-fortress, they too were considered members of the emperor\'s household. They participated in the ceremonial of the imperial court, they held office in the departments of the imperial household, and they performed a number of tasks more filial than official. The imprint of this relationship can be seen in the style of domestic architecture: in Shahjahanabad princes and important nobles constructed mansions after the model of the palace-fortress.

To design and erect palaces or mansions great men had to look no further than their own households. Most establishments included architects and builders, and Bayaz-i Khashbui, the late seventeenth-century household manual, contained an entire section on buildings and gardens.\textsuperscript{108} The mansions of these men were often quite large. That of Qamar al-Din Khan (number sixteen, Map II), covered almost an entire block and that of Safdar Jang (number one) contained room for five thousand soldiers and five hundred horses.\textsuperscript{109} Muhammad Salih wrote of the mansions in Shahjahanabad: \textit{\text\"In the courtyard of each one the area of a city is empty.\"}\textsuperscript{110}

A great man\'s haveli (mansion) or nasheman (seat or mansion) was encircled by a high thick wall of stone (see Figure 2) that sheltered his women from the eyes of strangers and protected his household during times of disorder. A lofty gateway called the Naqdar Khanah housed the soldiers of the daily guard and the drummers, trumpeters, and other musicians of the entourage. The Naqdar Khanah opened on to a large forecourt (Jilau Khanah) surrounded by a row of rooms under an arcade. Here were placed for the soldiers and servants of the household and for the horses, elephants, and attendants of visitors.\textsuperscript{111}

To the right and left of the Jilau Khanah, laid out along the wall fronting the street, were several courtyards. These held the bulk of the men and goods of the great man\'s establishment. Here were
stables for horses, elephants, and camels. Here also stood apartments for servants, clerks, artisans, poets, physicians, labourers, religious specialists, astrologers, and soldiers. Nearby clustered the karkhanabs (workshops) of the great man’s sarkar: storerooms for grain, perfume, medicine, furniture, candles, palanquins, tents, swords, bowls, and guns; record offices, treasuries, bakeries, and kitchens; and workshops for clothing, carpets, goldwork, and fine embroidery—goods enough to sustain the community inside for months.  

Opposite the forecourt of the Naqar Khanah stood another gate. This guarded entry to the living quarters of the prince or great amir and his family. Like the quarters of the emperor in the palace-fortress, the area here was divided into two parts: public-official and private-familial. In Figure 2 the area set aside for the great man’s family occupied the north-western sector. Called the mahal sarai (women’s apartments), this area was forbidden to all but the prince or great amir, his women, and children. Apartments and pavilions, set amidst trees, flowers, pools, and canals, constituted the living quarters. The main structure in the mahal sarai, the place where the great man relaxed with his family, was the Shish Mahal (Glass Mansion), a room beautifully painted and decorated with tiny pieces of polished glass. In the mansion of Safdar Jang the octagonal columns of this room also glittered with bits of shining glass.  

The teh khanah (underground chamber) or sard khanah (cool chamber) was usually found in the mahal sarai. A set of rooms thirty to forty feet below ground and arranged around a central pool, this was the place where the nobleman and his family escaped the searing heat of late afternoon Shahjahanabad. Great care was taken in the building and decorating of this retreat. The chamber in Safdar Jang’s mansion, seventy-eight feet long and twenty-seven feet wide, was divided by marble pillars into three galleries. The domed ceiling, painted blue and silver, suggested a midnight sky. Light and air came in through shadowed lattices, positioned so as to avoid the direct glare of the sun. Fountains gushed and gurgled in the central pool.  

The public area, the other part of the living quarters, comprised a group of courtyards separated from the mahal sarai by a high wall. Here, in a structure called the diwan khanah (audience hall) the nobleman held court and received guests. The audience hall of Mir Abd al-Razaq, an amir of the early eighteenth century, had brightly coloured carpets on the floor, curtains and vases of flowers on the
wall, and a large mirror at one side. Guests were served coffee and offered specially prepared glass huqqa.

Near the divan khanah stood the library. Here the prince or great amir drafted state papers and composed the poems and brief pieces that every skilled courtier was expected to produce. The library contained a large selection of books. The household manual lists a core holding of fifty-two Arabic and Persian works. A close acquaintance with these and others, with the ability to slip apt quotations into conversation and writing, was a sine qua non for a successful noble and officerholder.

Apartments and halls were richly furnished. Cotton mattresses four inches thick covered the floors. In summer a fine white cloth masked the mattresses and in winter a carpet of silk. In the divan khanah, elegantly carved seats of wood, inlaid with gold and silver and cushioned with pillows, served the amir and his important guests. In most rooms, however, people sat on mattresses leaning against cushions covered in brocade, velvet, or flowered satin. The amir’s cushions were embroidered in silk and cross-crossed with threads of gold and silver. Painters decorated walls and ceilings with designs in which flowers, fruits, and other garden motifs predominated. Gilding shone from the ceiling and pieces of glass sparkled from walls and pillars. Niches in the wall held vases of flowers. In the mansion of Raushan al-Daulah (number seven on Map II) bedsteads of gold, covered with gold-embroidered carpets, stood in every room.

Other structures graced the private and public sectors of the great man’s quarters. For the amir’s mansion as for the palace-fortress a hammam was indispensable. Built primarily of marble, the typical bath contained at least three rooms: a dressing area, and separate rooms for hot and cold water. Saadat Khan’s bath, for example, had five rooms and a dome of glazed glass. The household manual provides the dimensions of bathhouses in Sirhind and in the garden of Nur Sarai. Mansions contained religious structures as well. Mosques were meant for the devotions of the great man, his family, and members of his establishment. The dimensions of an idgah (place for Id prayers and feasts)—the size of its gate, the area of its courtyard, and the height of its turret—are given in the household manual.

The pièce de résistance, however, of every élite mansion was its khanah bagh (house garden). Gardens were divided into rectangles by elaborate multi-level watercourses that tumbled down several levels before reaching a central pool. In the middle of the pool on a pedestal stood a barabādāri. Screens of wetted khas placed in the windows of this house caught the blistering wind of summer and cooled the inhabitants within. Trees, set around the outskirts of the rectangle, shaded a multitude of colourful flowers and contributed fruit to the kitchen in season. For the ambitious builder the household manual contained plans—dimensions, materials, drawings, and costs—of famous gardens. These included Sahibabad, Dahur Garden outside Akbarabad, and the Garden of Nur Sarai. The manual also included instructions on the care and nurture of trees.

In Shahjahanabad the establishment of most great men included boatmen. Boats—many shaped like animals—were launched from private docks along the river. These brought the great man to the riverfront gateway of the Hall of Special Audience and carried him and his family upriver or down to gardens and festivals.

Since the entourage of a prince or great noble often swelled to overflowing, a collection of small straw-thatched mud huts surrounded most mansions. Here resided the soldiers, artisans, servants, and lesser hangers-on who had been unable to acquire accommodation within. Outside also stood shops and stalls catering to the needs of the household. These mansions, by virtue of their size and population, dominated their sections of the city just as the palace-fortress dominated the urban area as a whole. Contemporary descriptions of them as forts (gasy), the statement of an English traveller that they were considerably larger than the palaces of the European nobility, and the account of the Frenchman who visited Shahjahanabad in the mid-eighteenth century attest to the size and complexity of these places.

The Frenchman wrote: 'There are many mansions of the nobles, which one can compare to small towns and in which reside the women, equipment, and bazars (or public markets) of the nobles.'

In the cities of Mughal India the mosque (masjid) held pride of place among the varieties of religious architecture—mosques were more numerous and significant than dargahs (tombs), khangahs (monasteries), imambara (places for the celebration of the Muharram festival), or idgahs. Most cities contained two kinds of mosque. The great central congregational mosque of the settlement,
the masjid-i jami (Friday mosque), was the place where the major service of the week was held. The other mosques, of varying size and magnificence, stood here and there about the city and served persons in their vicinity. Because of the public character of Islamic worship, a large open four-sided courtyard was the central element of every mosque. A roofed area at the western end of the courtyard served as the prayer hall. In the centre of the western wall was a recess or alcove (mibrab) which indicated the direction of prayer. To the right of the mibrab was a pulpit where the imam (leader) read the Quran and conducted prayers, and the khatib (reader) delivered the sermon. One or more minars (towers), from which the mu'azzin (crier) gave the call to prayer, occupied the corners of the courtyard. A portion of the prayer hall was screened off to provide a place for women. The main entrance to the mosque was on the east, and the sides of the courtyard held apartments for travellers and scholars. In the middle of the open space was a large pool where worshippers washed their hands and face. Affiliated with most mosques were several other structures: a musafir khanaq (hostel) for the comfort of travellers and a madrasa (religious school) for the teaching of young Muslims.

To build a mosque was a highly virtuous act. A verse from the Quran, seen in India though not in other parts of the Islamic world, adorned the outside of many mosques:

Who so buildeth for God a place of worship, \[ \text{be it like the nest of a Qata-bird} \]

God buildeth for him a house in paradise.\(^{123}\)

In addition to the expense of construction, the builder often provided a source of income for the upkeep, repairs, and salaries of mosque personnel. Such a source, called a waqf (dedication), was managed by a muhtasib (superintendent of financial affairs), and came in several forms. In mosques that were two-storied (and there were many of these in Mughal India), rents from rooms in the lower half often comprised the waqf income. For other mosques, a builder might donate the income from a piece of land, a bath, well, graveyard, or shop. In any case, a regular source of income was established to defray the mosque’s expenses.

Early in his reign Shahjahan had, according to law and tradition, ordered the building of mosques in every city that contained Muslims.\(^{124}\) The command was followed in the construction of

Shahjahanabad: ‘In every lane, bazar, square, and street they have erected mosques.’\(^{127}\) In the early 1740s the Jesuit Tieffenthaler observed:

Delhi contains a great number of mosques built at great expense; there are two constructed of red stone transported here from Fatepur, two others whose domes are gilded with gold. The number of small ones is unknowable.\(^{128}\)

The archaeological survey of the city, conducted in the early part of this century, listed 410 structures in the walled city.\(^{129}\) Of the 378 structures outside the palace-fortress, 202 (fifty-three per cent) were mosques. Two hundred of these were built between 1639 and 1857. Table 1 divides these two hundred into three groups, based on their date of construction. Extrapolating from the distribution of dated mosques, one hundred are estimated to have been erected during the period 1639–1739. These one hundred can be divided into three groups and arranged in a hierarchy according to location, builder, and size.

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Source: List of Mahammadan and Hindu Monuments in Delhi Zail, vols. 1–2.

At the top of the hierarchy, set on a small hill about one thousand yards west of the palace-fortress, was the Jam` Masjid (number thirty-seven on Map II). The largest mosque in all India, this was the only structure in the city with the mass and presence to challenge the pre-eminence of the palace-fortress. The foundations of this great structure were laid on 6 October 1650. Under the supervision of Saadullah Khan, wazir, and Fazil Khan, khan saman (head of
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Delhi through the Ages

Shahjahan's household establishment), five thousand workers—stone-cutters, carvers, engravers, painters, jewellers, and diggers—laboured daily for six years. Its cost was one million rupees.

The mosque proper was on the second storey, raised well above the surrounding city. The courtyard was a great square approximately one hundred yards on a side. Over the prayer hall at the western end stood three large domes. Seven mihrabs had been carved in the western wall, and minarets marked the four corners of the courtyard. In the middle was a tank with fountains, fifteen yards long and twelve yards wide. Like the palace-forces, the Jam'i Masjid was built primarily of red sandstone, ferried upriver from Pathpur Sikri. The lower part of the inside walls and the minarets were of marble. Stairways led to great doors in the eastern, southern, and northern sides of the courtyard. At the foot of each stairway was a chawki. In the early nineteenth century, according to Sayyid Ahmad Khan, a man could buy kababs, sweet drinks, and chickens at the southern gate and be entertained by magicians, jugglers, and story-tellers at the northern. The eastern gate, connected to Khaz Bazar by a stairway of thirty-five steps, was the emperor's entrance. Cloth and pigeons were sold in this chawki. There was no gate or stairway on the western side of the mosque, but in the chawki below two structures had been erected. To the north-west was a hospital, a place where sick people were treated and medicine dispensed at the emperor's expense. At the south-western corner stood a madrasa (religious school). The Jam'i Masjid dwarfed the other mosques in the area and, from its central location, attracted Muslims from all over the city on Fridays and holidays. This first rank or stratum, consisting of a single mosque, is called the Padshahi (Sovereign) rank.139

Below the Padshahi stratum was a small group of eight mosques built by begums and great amirs and called the Begumi-Amiri or Elite rank. Although not as large as the Jam'i Masjid, these mosques were nevertheless imposing. Outstanding in the group were the Fathpuri and Akbarabadi mosques (see Table 2). Built of red sandstone in the early days of the city and occupying prominent locations in the two main bazaars, these structures were worthy of their builders, wives of Shahjahan. Of the remaining six mosques, four were built by begums—three of whom were members of the imperial family. A third wife of Shahjahan, Nawab Sirhindie Begum, erected (also in 1650) a mosque outside the Lahori Gate of the city. During Aurangzeb's reign his wife (Nawab Aurangabadi Begum) and daughter

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### TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mosque</th>
<th>Builder</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fathpuri Masjid</td>
<td>Nawab Fathpuri Begum (wife of Shahjahan)</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>Chandni Chawk (no. 29 on Map II)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Akbarabadi Masjid</td>
<td>Nawab Akbarabadi Begum (wife of Shahjahan)</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>Faiz Bazar (no. 30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sirhindie Masjid</td>
<td>Nawab Sirhindie Begum (wife of Shahjahan)</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>Lahori Gate of city (no. 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Aurangabadi Masjid</td>
<td>Nawab Aurangabadi Begum (wife of Aurangzeb)</td>
<td>1703</td>
<td>Lahori Gate of city (no. 32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Zinat al-Masjid</td>
<td>Zinat al-Nisa Begum (daughter of Aurangzeb)</td>
<td>1707</td>
<td>Riverbank south of fortress (no. 33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sonari Masjid</td>
<td>Raushan al-Daulah (great amir under Muhammad Shah)</td>
<td>1721</td>
<td>Chandni Chawk (no. 34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Masjid Sharif al-Daulah</td>
<td>Sharif al-Daulah (great amir under Muhammad Shah)</td>
<td>1722</td>
<td>Dariba bazar (no. 35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Fakr al-Masjid</td>
<td>Fakr al-Nisa Khanum (wife of Nawab Shujaat Khan)</td>
<td>1728</td>
<td>Kashmiri Gate (no. 36)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Zinat al-Nisa Begum) put up handsome structures in prominent places. The final begum and the only female outside the imperial family, Fakr al-Nisa Khanum, built a lovely mosque near Kashmiri Gate. The final two mosques in the group were the work of great amirs under Muhammad Shah: Raushan al-Daulah and Sharif al-Daulah.

The status of these mosques can be gauged from their location. With one exception (no. 33, Map II), the structures were found on the two major thoroughfares of the city. Either on the road running from the Akbarabadi Gate of the city through Faiz Bazar past the palace-forces to the Kashmiri Gate of the city, or in the great bazar leading from the Lahori Gate of the fort through Chandni Chawk to the Lahori Gate of the city. The elite rank of mosques, constructed by rich and powerful patrons, attracted a cross-section of persons from all over the city. As with the Jam'i Masjid, worshippers came from no special group or class.

At the bottom of the hierarchy was the third group of ninety-one mosques. Called the Moballa (neighbourhood or quarter) rank,
Shahjahan's household establishment), five thousand workers—stone-cutters, carvers, engravers, painters, jewelers, and diggers—laboured daily for six years. Its cost was one million rupees.

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misrabs had been carved in the western wall, and minarets marked the four corners of the courtyard. In the middle was a tank with fountains, fifteen yards long and twelve yards wide. Like the palace-fortress, the Jami' Masjid was built primarily of red sandstone, ferried upriver from Fatehpur Sikri. The lower part of the inside walls and the minarets were of marble. Stairways led to great doors in the eastern, southern, and northern sides of the courtyard. At the foot of each stairway was a 

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At the bottom of the hierarchy was the third group of ninety-one mosques. Called the Moballa (neighbourhood or quarter) rank,
these were small sanctuaries found in or near mohallahs all over the city. These mosques were erected by amirs, mansabdars, merchants, and caste/craft groups and a good many were situated inside or near the mansions of the Mughal nobility. The Islamic law codes discuss the requirements for such structures. A building within a mansion must be available to a public wider than that of the owner’s family for it to qualify as a proper place of worship. Regular attendance by the great man’s entourage guaranteed the legitimacy of these household mosques.

The materials on mosques suggest, as did the materials on the palace-fortress and the mansion, the centrality and dominance of the emperor, imperial princes, and great amirs in the life of Shahjahanabad. In the top strata of mosques—the Padshahi and Begum-Amiri—these noblemen and their families were responsible for all nine erected during the period 1639–1739. These were by far the largest and the most beautifully appointed, and probably held a substantial proportion of the Muslim populace on Fridays and holidays. Although they comprised only nine per cent of the mosques erected between 1639 and 1739, these structures were responsible for a much larger percentage of the money expended. The Jami’ Masjid alone cost one million rupees.

A similar pattern seems to have characterized the mohallah rank. We know that at least thirty of the ninety-one mosques in this stratum were the work of great amirs. It is likely, furthermore, that a good many of the remaining sixty-one stood in mansions that cannot be identified or were erected by amirs in lanes and mohallas for the benefit of caste/craft groups.

When finally completed, the city was magnificent. Travellers spoke of Shahjahanabad as one of the largest and most populous cities in the world; a place of peace and beauty, a place that lacked none of the amenities of urban life. Neither Constantinople nor Baghdad could compare with it. Sujan Rai wrote:

Its heart-ravishing houses have perfect beauty and charm; its streets look like flower beds; the squares of every mohallah of this city are beautiful and heart-ravishing like the squares of a garden; in every lane and street are canals filled to the brim with water of a sweet taste; the roads of its bazaars are bright and attractive like the veins of jewels; its shops are full of happiness and beauty.

The plan of Shahjahanabad followed that of the palace-fortress. Like the residence, the city was divided into two parts: special and ordinary. In the city the palace-fortress was the inner secluded area where the crucial decisions were made: it was the seat of power accessible only to those with important business. Within the remainder of the urban area outside the palace-fortress, public, ordinary, and less weighty affairs were conducted. As the inner rectangle, home of the imperial household, organized and directed activities in the palace-fortress, so the palace-fortress commanded affairs in the city at large. Mansions of princes and amirs (modelled after the palace-fortress) organized and directed their sectors of the city as did the homes of soldiers, administrators, and others in the outer area of the palace-fortress. As these last were members of the extended family of the imperial household so amirs and princes were members of and participants in the household government of the patrimonial-bureaucratic empire. In both fortress and city, furthermore, the major east-west street was the principal bazaar. In both also the north-south thoroughfare intersected this street in front of the chief entrance to the dominant area: before the Naqgar Khanah in the palace-fortress and before the Lahori Gate of the fortress in the city. Thus, the name of the patrimonial-bureaucratic ruler seems best to capture the nature and character of the Mughal capital. Shahjahanabad: Mansion of Shahjahan.

NOTES
1. Chander Bhan Brahman, ‘Chahar Charan Brahman’, Persian Manuscript Collection, Or. 1892, British Museum, pp. 141–2. This was written c. 1648–9, soon after the completion of Shahjahanabad.
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11. Ibid., p. 27.
12. Ibid., p. 156.
13. For a discussion of this concept see Paul Wheatley, "What the Greatness of a City is Said to be", Pacific Viewpoint 4 (1963):179.
18. Jadunath Sarkar trans., The India of Aurangzeb, with Extracts from The Khusalat-i-Tawarikh and The Chahar Gulshan (Calcutta, 1907), p. 10.
19. There are descriptions of such celebrations in Shahjahanabad during 1740–1. For Bakhshiar Kazi see Nawab Dargah Kuli Khan Salar Jung, "Risalah-i Salar Jung", Persian Manuscript Collection, Add. 26, 237, British Museum, fol. 82a–81b; for Dargah al-Din Auliya see Dargah Kuli Khan, "Risalah-i Salar Jung", fol. 81a–81b; for Chiragh-i-Dihli see Shahabuddin, "Risalah-i Salar Jung", fol. 81b–82b; and for Baqi Billah see Dargah Kuli Khan, "Risalah-i Salar Jung", fol. 80b.
22. Chatumrani Rai, Chahar Gulshan, Persian Manuscript Collection, Or. 1791, British Museum, fol. 33b.
23. Ghulam Muhammad Khan, 'Navad al-Qissat', Persian Manuscript Collection, Or. 1866, British Museum, fol. 15b.
26. Judged, Ahmad seems to have been a favourite of Shahjahan's. According to a poem of his son Lutfullah Muhandis, Ahmad had been put in charge of the work on Taji Mahal. See M. Abdullah Chaghaiz, 'A Great Family of Moghal Architects', Islamic Culture 9 (April 1937), pp. 200–9. It seems likely then that Ahmad was a member of Shahjahan’s court. Shahjahan probably sent him to Delhi to oversee the construction under Ghairat Khan’s supervision. In all likelihood, this is the reason both court historians placed Ahmad in the establishment of the subedar.
33. For a discussion of these gates see Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Astar, p. 133, and Bashir al-Din Ahmad, Waqiat, vol. 2, pp. 93–4.
41. Ibid., fol. 89a–89b; Anand Ram Mulchis, 'Mirat al-Islah', Persian Manuscript Collection, Or. 1813, British Museum, fol. 218a–18b.
Shahjahanabad in 1739

11. Ibid., p. 27.
12. Ibid., p. 164.
13. For a discussion of this concept see Paul Wheatley, What the Greatness of a City is Said to be", Pacific Viewpoint 4 (1963):179.
17. For Bakhshyar Kali see Y. D. Sharma, Delhi and Its Neighbourhood, 2nd ed. (New Delhi, 1974), pp. 62-3. For Nizam al-Din Auliya see Archaeological Survey of India, List of Muhammadan and Hindu Monuments in Delhi Zail, 4 vols. (Calcutta, 1915-22), vol. 2, pp. 146-51; Sharma, Delhi, pp. 15-16; and J. Burton-Page, Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., s.v. 'Dhikh', p. 263. For Chirag-i-Dili see Sharma, Delhi, pp. 77 and Burton-Page, 'Dhikh', p. 263. For Hazrat Baqi Billah see List of Monuments, vol. 2, pp. 227-9; and Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Asr al-Sanadid (Delhi, 1854; reprint, Delhi, 1665), p. 235.
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23. Ghulam Muhammad Khan, 'Naved al-Qasaa', Persian Manuscript Collection, Or. 1866, British Museum, fol. 15b.
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29. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 126.
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41. Ibid., fol. 89a-89b; Anand Ram Mukhi, Mirat al-Istilah, Persian Manuscript Collection, Or. 1812, British Museum, fol. 218a-18b.
42. Muhammad Salih, Amal-i-Salih, vol. 3, pp. 48-9; Bashir al-Din Ahmad, Waqiat, vol. 2, pp. 96-7; and Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Asar, p. 134.
Delhi through the Ages


49. Ibid., pp. 86–8.


64. Chaturmav Rai, *Chisht-i Goshmish*, Persian Manuscript Collection, Or. 1791, British Museum, fol. 37a-b.


69. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 49.


76. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Asar*, p. 100.


81. Ibid.


76. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Asar, p. 100.


81. Ibid.


83. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 41; Muhammad Waris, 'Padshah Namah', fol. 405–8a; Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Asar, pp. 108–10.


For the mansion of Abd al-Razaq see Dargah Kuli Khan, 'Risalah: i Salar Jang', fol. 108a-b. The divan khanab in the mansion of Raushan al-Daulah (number seven on Map II) is described briefly in Ashob, 'Tarikh-i Shahjat-i Farrukhsiyar'.


M. Gentile, Memoires sur l'Indostan ou Empire Mogol (Paris, 1822), p. 188.

J. Horovitz, 'A List of the Published Mohammedan Inscriptions of India', Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica (1929-10), p. 32.

For the mosque in Qamar al-Din's mansion see Figure 3. Other examples can be found in Monuments, vol. 1, pp. 44, 89-90.


There were mosques in all twenty-eight mansions. The Moti Masjid and the mosque in Ghazi al-Din Khan's tomb bring the total to thirty.


Sarkar, India of Aurangzeb, p. 6.

For the mosque in Qamar al-Din's mansion see Figure 3. Other examples can be found in Monuments, vol. 1, pp. 44, 89-90.


For Saifdar Jang's siba khana see Franklin, 'Account of Delhi', p. 422 and Forbes, Oriental Memoirs, vol. 4, p. 64-5. For the chamber in Sa adat Khan's mansion (number ten on Map II) see Franklin, 'Account of Delhi', p. 422.
115. For the mansion of Abd al-Razaq see Dargah Kuli Khan, 'Risalah-i Salar Jang', fol. 108a-b. The *durrat khanah* in the mansion of Raushan al-Daulah (number seven on Map II) is described briefly in Ashob, 'Tarikh-i Shahadat-i Faraah- siyars'.


125. J. Horowitz, 'A List of the Published Mohammedan Inscriptions of India', *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica* (1907-10), p. 32.


131. Aurangzeb’s mosque in the palace-fortress, Moti Masjid, is the prime example. For the mosque in Qamar al-Din’s mansion see Figure 3. Other examples can be found in *Monuments*, vol. 1, pp. 44, 89-92.


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136. See Blake, ‘Petrimonial-Bureaucratic Empire of the Mughals’, pp. 77-94.