

## IMPERIAL DESIGN AND MILITARY SECURITY The changing iconography of Shāhjahānābād-Delhi<sup>1)</sup>

With 4 figures and 1 supplement (VI)

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*Zusammenfassung:* Imperiale Planung und militärische Sicherheit: Zur Veränderung der Ikonographie von Shāhjahānābād-Delhi

Hauptstädte sind ein Spiegelbild der politischen Kultur eines Landes: ihre konkrete Lokalisierung, das zu Grunde liegende Planungskonzept, die architektonische Gestaltung, die Ikonographie – dies alles ist materialisierter Ausdruck vorherrschender Ideologien. Dies gilt besonders für Hauptstädte im Grenzbereich unterschiedlicher Kulturkreise und/oder Gesellschaftssysteme. In diesen Konfliktzonen unterschiedlicher, zum Teil auch konkurrierender Kulturen kommt der Inszenierung und symbolischen Legitimierung der Macht durch die Anlage einer repräsentativen Umgebung für das Staatszeremoniell besondere Bedeutung zu.

Delhi, die historische Hauptstadt zahlreicher (nord-)indischer Reiche und der Regierungssitz des unabhängigen Indiens, ist seit Jahrhunderten geprägt von den unterschiedlichen kulturellen und gesellschaftlichen Einflüssen auf dem Subkontinent. Die Stadtgeschichte reicht zurück bis in das zweite vorchristliche Jahrtausend, für das mit dem indischen Nationalepos Mahabharatha literarische Hinweise auf die legendäre Hauptstadt der Pandawas, Indraprastha, auf dem Gebiet des heutigen Delhis vorliegen. Der späteren Phase als Regierungssitz wechselnder hinduistischer Fürsten folgt eine über Jahrhunderte andauernde Prägung durch islamische Eroberer, die von Delhi aus islamische Reiche auf dem Subkontinent mit sich ständig verändernden Einflußbereichen regieren.

Auf der Grundlage mehrerer historischer Stadtpläne aus dem 19. Jahrhundert zeichnet dieser Aufsatz die Veränderung der Stadtgestaltung der letzten dieser islamischen Stadtgründungen (Shāhjahānābād), die in der Blütephase des Mogulreiches von Shāh Jahān als imperiale Hauptstadt eines islamischen Großreiches erbaut wurde, nach. Das militärische Sicherheitsinteresse der britischen Kolonialmacht, das insbesondere nach der blutigen Niederschlagung des Aufstandes von 1857/58 im Vordergrund aller stadtplanerischen Überlegungen stand, bewirkte eine grundlegende formale wie funktionale Transformation der Stadt, deren symbolische Bedeutung für die Muslime Indiens durch eine Abwertung zu einem kolonialen Militär- und Handelsstützpunkt gebrochen werden sollte.

### 1 Introduction: *The symbolism of cities*

Capitals are – and have always been – mirrors of the political culture of states and governments. They

symbolize values, be they historical, religious or political. Location of capitals, their layout and architectural design, their iconography: all these are expressions of ideologies. Capitals are also, and probably even more so, seat and symbol of power. They exert territorial and spiritual control over a country and its population. In line with TUAN (1977, 173) according to whom cities symbolize “a centre of meaning”, “a symbol” or even represent a paradigm “for an ideal human community”, especially capital cities are much more than a mere conglomerate of buildings or quarters. They are the representation of political or religious power of a state or nation. As such they are centres of both meaning and ideology.

In cross-cultural perspectives cities have also been interpreted as expressions of specific regional cultures or civilizations. In such approaches urban form, urban functions or urban life styles have been considered as unique or at least specific expressions of religious belief systems or political ideologies. For the Indian subcontinent and its Hinduistic culture SINGH (1987) has combined cultural landscape analysis with a “search for identity in India”. More recently the same author (SINGH 1994) has spoken of “sacred landscape in Hinduism” while GUTSCHOW (1994) discussed the importance of Vārāṇasi/Benares as the perceived “centre of Hinduism”. In contrast, according to PIEPER (n. d.) Hyderabad in the Deccan was

<sup>1)</sup> This article is the result of the reconstruction of a hand-drawn map, kept in the map section of the India Office Library in London. Redrawn by the Cartography Section of the Departments of Geography, University of Bonn, this map was subject of a special publication (EHLERS a. KRAFFT, 1993). The authors are greatly indebted to Dr. ANDREW S. COOK, the head of the Map Section of the Oriental and India Office collections of the British Library, who provided help and assistance during all stages of our archive work. Dr. COOK also helped in obtaining the permissions to reproduce this map and provided the photographs for figures 2, 3 and 4.

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designed as “a Qur’anic paradise in architectural metaphors” representing but one example of the subcontinent’s rich Islamic heritage.

In view of these considerations it is understandable that in regions where different cultures meet or compete, conflicts over ideas and ideologies, clashes between different factions of urban or national societies, struggles for power and supremacy occur. In that respect, capital cities serve as a kind of burning-glass for the “clash of civilizations”, in which conflicts of regional or national dimensions are focussed.

Delhi, the traditional and modern capital of India, has always been such a focus of controversies. The very name signals contrast: Delhi – Old Delhi – New Delhi! The juxtaposition of these names is much more than a historical differentiation of urban growth and development. It stands for deep-rooted differences in urban form and structure as well as history. Old Delhi: that is identical with the historically grown centre of the present-day city grown around Shāh Jahān’s creation and enclosed by the urban fabric of the 19th and 20th centuries. New Delhi: that is the modern capital of India, founded on early 20th century’s ideals of European planning under British rule, and grown, almost beyond control, since independence. Thus: Delhi as a whole epitomizes various periods of India’s glorious past, of colonial rule, and independence.

But Delhi stands for more than that: it also symbolizes India’s historical heritage between Hinduism and Islam not only in a religious sense, but even more so in regard to political leadership and cultural diversity. Without going into the details of Delhi’s urban development, the present capital – more than any other city in India – reflects the rise and fall of empires of both Hindu and Islamic rulers. Present-day Delhi embraces HEARN’S (1906) almost legendary “seven cities” as predecessor capitals within its city-limits, though the correct count is more than a dozen cities even before Shāh Jahān founded his new capital at this site. Delhi’s early history goes back and vanishes into the mists of legend. However, popular tradition and some archeological evidence have identified the legendary Indraprastha (1500 B. C.) – capital of the Pandavas as described in the epic Mahabharata – with Delhi.

The creation of Shāh Jahānābād as a magnificent manifestation of Islamic rule on the subcontinent under the Great Moguls has left a lasting imprint on Delhi’s present form and structure. A great number of architectural icons such as palaces, mosques, caravanserais, fountains and gardens characterize the Walled City as the historical core of the Indian capital

– now known as Old Delhi (Shāh Jahānābād). But more than that: Old Delhi has harboured until today a considerable number and percentage of the capital’s Moslem population. One may therefore say that the enclosed urban fabric and social/religious structure of Old Delhi is a mirror and living example of the subcontinent’s centuries old cultural and religious dualisms and diversities that have characterized the history and culture of this region (Fig. 1). Uprisings, clashes, confrontations, riots and unrest among the Moslem residents of Old Delhi and between Hindus and Moslems are more or less regular events in this part of India’s capital city, reflecting historic antagonisms and modern disparities within the Indian society (KRAFFT 1993). It is before this background that the following analysis of 19th century Shāh Jahānābād-Delhi should be seen. The description of historic Delhi and its changes in the aftermath of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 is more than an interpretation of old maps. It is intended to be a documentation of urban planning and urban change in connection with ideology and the representation of power. Planned by its founder as a “veritable heaven on earth” (NAQVI 1986, 143) and interpreted as an “axis mundi – the centre of the earth and the intersect of the celestial and the mundane” (BLAKE 1986, 153), British conquest changed it from an imperial city to a military stronghold, to a commercial and administrative center of an imperialist power.

## 2 Shāh Jahānābād: An Islamic imperial capital

Fatehpur Sikri and Shāh Jahānābād number among the most significant architectural documents of the heyday of the Mogul empire in India. Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar’s grandiose new city, some 40 km west of Agra only served as the capital of the Mogul empire for a few years (1571/72–1585). Through this choice of site, Akbar demonstrated his close ties to the Chishtiyyah, the most important and influential traditional Sufi line at that time. The city was built using a uniform architectural concept based on a new synthesis of Hindu and Indo-Islamic stylistic elements. Thus, Fatehpur Sikri was a manifestation in stone of Akbar’s new administrative organization of the empire and his tolerance towards different cultures (cf. BRAND a. LOWRY 1987; PETRUCCIOLI 1988).

The Mogul empire reached its zenith under Akbar’s grandson, Shāh Jahān (in power 1628–58). His reign constitutes a phase of great political stability, economic prosperity and great artistic freedom.

Not only artists and poets from all corners of his empire were gathered at Shāh Jahān's court, but also from other parts of the world. Persian artists in particular enjoyed the generous patronage of the Mogul ruler. However, with regard to his policies towards religion, Shāh Jahān moved away from the tolerant attitude of his grandfather aimed at integrating all the different religious beliefs on the subcontinent. Possibly as a concession to the increasingly influential orthodox members of the Islamic *'ulamā*, the pilgrimage tax was reintroduced for Hindus and conversion to Hinduism was forbidden. The building of Hindu temples was prohibited and for the first time in more than half a century, there were occasional cases of temples being destroyed on the orders of the Mogul ruler (SCHIMMEL 1980, 95 ff.).

Already as a young man, Shāh Jahān developed a strong personal interest in architecture and town planning (ASHER 1992, 171f.). During the first decade of his reign the palace districts and urban infrastructure of Agra and Lahore were reconstructed and developed at tremendous expense. Under Shāh Jahān, Mogul architecture reached its absolute peak with the Taj Mahal as the epitome of this stylistic epoch. Although the planning and supervision of all building projects were in the hands of a group of court architects, Shāh Jahān still had a direct creative influence (KOCH 1991a, 96). Inayat Khan's Shāh Jahān Nama (BEGLEY a. DESAI 1990) contains numerous indications of the ruler's direct influence on the design of the projects which he initiated. Thus, the ruler set the style for building projects in his empire, imitated and enhanced by the nobles of his court.

Shāh Jahān liked to see himself as the "renewer of Islam in India". According to KOCH (1991a, 117) Shāh Jahān had more mosques erected than any of his predecessors and the nobility followed suit, making his reign the golden age of mosque-building in India. However, it is also an indication of the increasing importance of religion for the legitimation of his sovereignty in the Mogul empire.

In the twelfth year of his reign, Shāh Jahān decided to build a new imperial capital for his empire and directed a planning group at his court to look for the most suitable site for the new capital. The link to the established tradition of the empire and its rulers was of considerable importance in selecting the site for the new capital. Moreover, a minimum existing infrastructure was required to ensure rapid progress in construction. Both Delhi and Lahore fulfilled these criteria and were shortlisted (IMAM 1986, 14). In deciding on Delhi, Shāh Jahān deliberately continued a tradition regarding Delhi as the political and

religious centre of Islamic rule in India. For RICHARDS (1978), the shifting of the capital to Agra under Akbar had been a deliberate break with tradition:

"For two and a half centuries Delhi had been the unassailable redoubt, a refuge for Indian Muslims and the seat of the Sultans of Hindustan. By moving [. . .] to Agra, and later to [. . .] Fatehpur Sikri [. . .] Akbar reduced existing associations of legitimate rulership with Delhi. Neither Akbar nor a possible rebel could henceforth claim the imperial throne by virtue of possession of the citadels, the palaces, or the active support of the volatile population of the old imperial city" (p. 255).

Shāh Jahān reversed this step by also making a geographical return to the roots of Islamic rule in India. He thus documented the inextricable links of his reign in a traditional line of Moslem rulers, who had governed Islamic empires in India for centuries from this site.

BLAKE (1991) characterizes the Mogul empire as an example of a "patrimonial-bureaucratic empire". The ruler's personal authority is the decisive feature of this system. His retainers owed him and not an institution or the state loyalty. Maintaining a firm link between his retinue and the court was accordingly a prerequisite for holding on to power. So Mogul rulers regularly travelled the major parts of their empire thus renewing personal links to their retinue. Members of the nobility and holders of high office were obliged to attend the court regularly and all the courtiers regularly accompanied the ruler on his journeys round the empire. The continuous presence of the closest relatives of different officials or allies at court ensured their continuing loyalty to the ruler. The rotation of offices and functions within the empire also served this purpose.

The hierarchical administrative system of the Mogul empire since Akbar (from the organization of the smallest unit, the village, to the administration of a whole province) as well as the regular exchange of officials and positions ensured a minimum of control of the entire empire over a long period of time. But the cultural influence of Islam declined from the centre to the periphery:

"One may envision the Mughal empire as a hybrid, Islamic - in the broadest sense - at the centre; Indian in the provinces. An Ottoman Sultan would have found the central bureaucracy familiar; a Chola Radjah would have understood the limited imperial role in the provinces. One may also describe the Mughal government as an imperial centre supported by a shifting structure of segments" (STREUSAND 1989, 181).

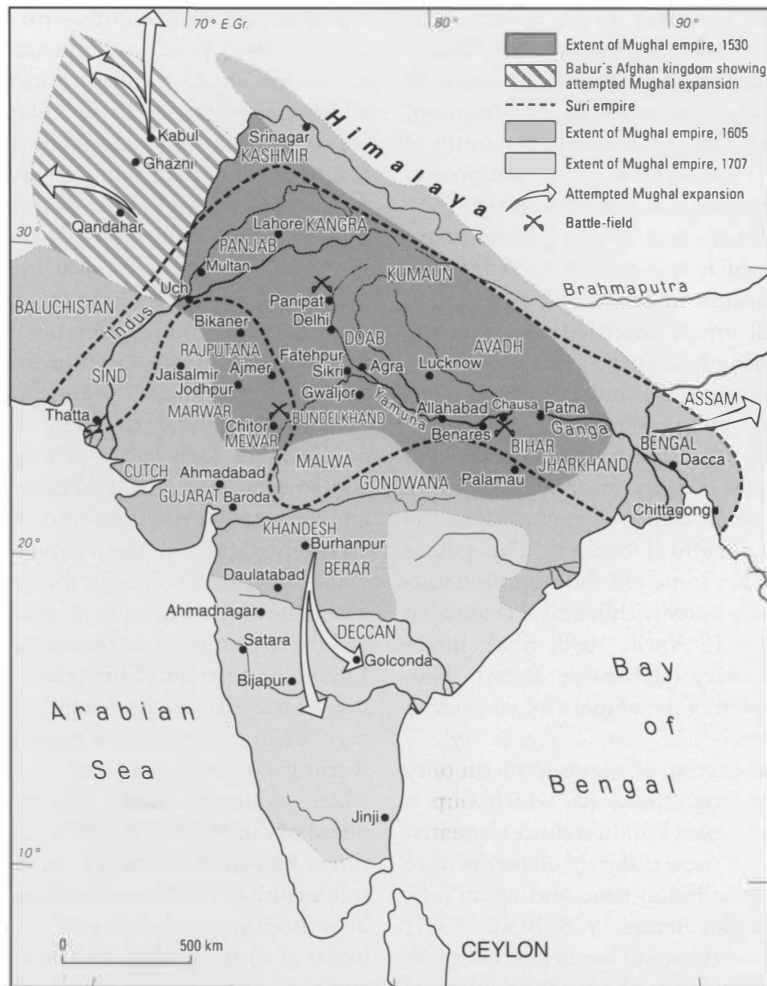


Fig. 1: The Mogul Empire, 1526–1707: Changing spheres of influence

Source: F. ROBINSON: Atlas of the Islamic World Since 1500. Oxford 1982

Das Mogulreich 1526–1707: Wechselnde Einflußbereiche

Thus, the layout and development of the capital cities of the Mogul empire was an important factor in the demonstration of political, economic and especially ritual dominance with the empire.

Delhi offered *Shāh* Jahān ideal conditions for its development into the political and ritual centre of the empire. Apart from its historical significance as the traditional capital of the Moslem empires in northern India, Delhi was also one of the leading religious centres of Islam on the subcontinent. With its numerous shrines, tombs and burial places of Muslim dynasties, Delhi was one of the most important places of pilgrimage in the 17th century for Moslems in northern India (c. f. different articles in TROLL 1989).

*Shāh* Jahān visited several of these holy places between 1643 and 1648. He made pilgrimages to the *dargāh* of Shaikh Nizan al-Din Auliya, one of the most important Chisti sufis, several times, as well as to the tomb of the Mogul ruler Humayun. On his various visits to Delhi *Shāh* Jahān consciously forged a link between his own reign and Delhi's erstwhile greatness (KOCH 1991b).

As a result of his detailed local knowledge, *Shāh* Jahān directly influenced the choice of a suitable site for the establishment of a new capital. The area between the historic settlements (of former imperial capitals) and the Salimgarh fort at the river banks provided sufficient room for the development of

a large city (BEGLEY a. DESAY 1990, 403ff.). The Salimgarh fort – built as a military post in the 1540s – served as a base for the architects and court engineers entrusted with the organization of the construction. The former capital of Sher Shāh Sūr to the south of the huge building site provided accommodation and an infrastructure for the thousands of workers.

Shāhjahānābād was by and large a planned city, the appearance of which was meant to reflect the greatness and significance of the Mogul rule. However, it was not built on an unsettled site, with the result that some existing elements (mosques, graves, streets etc.) were incorporated into the overall concept. During the first construction phase, the palace district was built. By choosing a site on the north eastern edge of the city directly on the banks of the Yamuna river, the river could be included in the defence concept as a natural barrier. The palace district was designed for some ten thousand inhabitants and was practically a city within a city. It took ten years to build and on 19 April, 1648, Shāh Jahān made his triumphal entry (BEGLEY a. DESAI 1990, 408f.). The construction of the actual city was still in full swing at this time.

The planning and layout of sections of the city followed formal geometrical patterns, which were a synthesis of Indo-Islamic and Hindu stylistic elements. The degree and effect of these different elements have given rise to much speculation time and again (cf.: ANSARI a. SHAHEER 1980; BEDGE 1978; BLAKE 1991; NOE 1986). There is substance to the belief that Shāh Jahān was inspired by reports about the building of Isfahan. Since the return of Humayun from exile, there was constantly quite a large group of Persians present at the Mogul's court. Persian was the preferred medium for literature and poetry at the court, and Persian artists had a permanent effect on the development of architecture, music and painting (cf. different articles in DELVOYE 1994). The continuous stream of travellers from all over the world, attracted by tales of the Moguls' fabulous wealth and the empire's far-reaching trading links ensured a constant flow of information. It may therefore be assumed that Shāh Jahān had detailed knowledge of the layout of Isfahan and its architectural concept.

Shāhjahānābād comprised a framework of planned infrastructure and existing elements in between, which make the city a functional entity. The planned infrastructure included apart from the palace district, the Friday mosque and the other mosques endowed by members of the nobility with complementary endowments in the form of *awqāf*. The main thoroughfares, with their bazaars and caravanserais, the

sophisticated water supply with canals and wells, the great gardens inside and outside the city and the all-encompassing city wall with its fortifications formed additional elements of the planned infrastructure, constructed to uniform specifications. However, the layout of these planning elements was influenced by topographical conditions, as well as, in part, existing buildings (especially mosques and graves of saints), so that absolute symmetry was not achieved, and was probably not even thought to be desirable. The open spaces between these different elements of infrastructure were available for future development by the prospective residents. Shāh Jahān awarded building plots to the nobility for them to construct their city palaces. He followed a principle already used by Akbar when building Fatehpur Sikri. The retainers and the servants of the nobility in turn built their own accommodation in the vicinity of the city palaces which were focal points for the development of the different sections of the city (*maḥallas*).

The city enjoyed tremendous growth under Shāh Jahān. At the end of his reign, Shāhjahānābād was the largest city in the Mogul empire with probably several hundred thousand inhabitants. Already under Aurangzeb there followed a phase of stagnation, which continued under his successors to the final phase of the Mogul empire in the 18th and 19th centuries known traditionally as the twilight of Mogul rule in India. The development of the city was marked by a drop in population and stagnation in trade and business in the second half of the 18th century. The city was conquered and plundered over and over again, however without any significant damages to its basic structures.

Between 1803 and 1857 Delhi was actually under the control of the East India Company. After the victory at the Battle of Panipat in 1803 the British took over control in Delhi. The sphere of influence of the Mogul ruler was limited, in spite of the splendid name "King of Delhi", to the immediate palace district. By retaining the nominal sovereignty of the Mogul ruler, who was in reality nothing more than a British pensioner, the British were able to establish themselves very quickly in Delhi without meeting any significant resistance from the local population. During this first phase of British rule in Delhi the city rapidly recovered from the setbacks of the previous phase. The city's population started to grow again, as did trade and business. In 1845/46 the population of Delhi was approx. 140,000 of whom about 48% were Moslems and 52% Hindu. Culturally, Delhi experienced a second heyday, epitomized by the expression "Delhi Renaissance". During this phase, British

interference with the structural fabric and the internal organization of the city was minimal and Delhi retained, apart from British sovereignty, both formally and functionally, the character of a Mogul city (cf. GUPTA, 1981, 3ff.).

### 3 Morphology and morphological elements of 19th century Shāhjahānābād

A historical manuscript map of Delhi located in the map-archives of the India Office Library in London is probably the most comprehensive single source for reconstructing the morphology of the former Mogul capital during the first half of the nineteenth century. This map is, as far as we know, a unique and also extremely conspicuous piece of cartography. The hand drawn and hand coloured map is striking not only by its size of approximately 100 by 100 cm, it also contains a wealth of detailed information in written form or in symbols and colours. No date is given on the original manuscript, but from the urban and architectural fabric which it contains it can be dated to the short period between 1845 and 1855. Origin, author and purpose of the map are so far unknown as well. But it seems possible, that the map was produced under British supervision in context with the census of 1845/46. However, the original inscriptions on the map are in Persian. The following interpretation of the physical layout of Shāhjahānābād-Delhi is based on this map as the main source (Supplement VI).

#### 3.1 Water supply and recreation

The hot and mostly dry climate of Delhi made it necessary to develop an hydraulic strategy in order to ensure a constant, year-round supply of water of its numerous population. Therefore part of the Yamuna had been diverted from a point many miles north of Delhi and coaxed into an interlaced system of channels. The first section of the main canal had been built during the rule of Sultan Firuz Shāh Tughluq (1351–1388). This canal was repaired and improved in 1561 and then again extended to the new capital under the order of Shāh Jahān. The canal ran through the outskirts of the city, watering gardens and fields. It entered the city by the Kabuli Gate in the north-western part of the city and then split into two branches. One branch flowed down the middle of Chāndni Chawk. The other one passed through the gardens north of Chāndni Chawk and then entered

the palace near the Shāh Burj. Water flowed in a marble channel through all the buildings on the eastern wall. Other channels provided water for the gardens, streets and houses inside the fort.

Apart from the canal there were in and around Shāhjahānābād several wells, springs, step-wells and tanks. These wells had to provide the drinking water during periods when the canal ran dry, like in the late eighteenth century when the city lacked a sufficiently organized administration. The Main Canal was reopened in 1821 and again provided potable water to the city dwellers. In 1846 a large tank was constructed between the palace and Khāss Bāzār. Linked to the main canal, the Ellenborough Tank (popularly known as ‘La‘l Diggī’) was to serve as a reservoir for drinking water.

Irrigated gardens as features of climatological control and as recreational areas were an important urban element with a long tradition in India (CROWE a. HAYWOOD 1972). For the pious Moslem, the garden served as a reminder of the Quranic paradise (BROOKES 1987, MOYNIHAN 1982). The Mogul gardens were laid out according to the Persian *chahār bāgh* concept, but were less rigid because of the fusion of various Indo-Islamic traditions and Hindu craftsmanship.

Most of the gardens of Shāhjahānābād lay in the vicinity just outside the city walls. Many large courtyard residences (*hawēlis*) in the city also had enclosed gardens. But the most beautiful and with almost fifty acres by far the largest garden was the Sāhibābād, built by Jahānārā Begum north of Chāndni Chawk in 1650.

#### 3.2 The spatial texture of living and working

Until 1857 the British more or less retained the Mogul system of administering the city. From the *kotwāli*, in Chāndni Chawk the *kotwāl* and his twelve *thānādārs* policed the city, controlled the markets and bazaars and collected taxes and duties, as in the past. The only difference was that the *kotwāl* was now either British or acting under the supervision of a British official. The city was divided into 12 *thānās* (wards) each under the control of a *thānādār*. Each *thānā* was again subdivided into several *maḥallahs* (neighbourhoods). The *thānādārs* maintained up-to-date statistics, including tax lists and information on the population residing in their respective *thānā*.

The spatial system of the city was based on an extensive hierarchical organization which allowed a heterogeneous population to live together. The *shari‘a* values were accommodated by differentiating the

city's territory into public, semi-private and private space. The city was separated from the surrounding land by a wall and moat. Passing through the city gates marked the passage from one dominion to another. The main thoroughfares, the additional through roads and the bazaars were public space. The *maḥallahs* were sealed, homogenous units within the city. They could only be reached by means of several gates. The alleys in the *maḥallah* were therefore semi-private space, while the court yard houses were private space separated once again from the outside world by a gate. *Maḥallas* were often referred to by the name of the individual whose *ḥawēli* dominated them, or of the vocation of the people who lived there. It is this spatial organization based on Islamic law principles which eventually defines the Islamic character of the city (EHLERS a. KRAFFT 1993; HAKIM 1986).

The main axes of the city were two major avenues connecting the fort to the city gates. The larger and more important one was *Chāndni Chawk* running from the Lahori Gate of the fort to the Fataḥpūri Maḥjid. The road was thus laid out between two focal points of the city. *Chāndni Chawk* was forty yards wide and originally contained more than 1500 shops of a uniform design. Each shop occupied one room under one section of a long arcade. One branch of the main canal with trees on either side flowed through the centre of the street. *Chāndni Chawk* was divided into three sections by two squares. The first section from the fort to the rectangular square was the favourite bazaar for the members of the imperial household. To the south of the square was the *kotwāli*, the seat of the city's magistrate and police. The second octagonal square established a cross axis to the north, where a large serai was constructed for privileged merchants. A large *ḥammām* was also added to the complex.

The second avenue was Faiz Bazaar north-south from the Akbarabadi Gate of the fort (or Delhi Gate) to the Delhi Gate of the city. This bazaar had more than 800 shops of a similar design to those on *Chāndni Chawk*. The square (*chawk*) at the northern end of Faiz Bazaar was 160 yards long and about 60 yards wide and had a pool and fountains in the centre. To the west of this square, Nawāb Akbarābadi Begum built an impressive mosque and next to it a large *serai*. On the eastern side, opposite the mosque and the *serai* she constructed a *ḥammām*.

In addition to the two main avenues another important bazaar was laid out between the fort and the Friday mosque. The *Khāss Bāzār* was also divided into two parts by another *chawk*. It was a popular bazaar

crowded with healers, story-tellers, astrologers and dancing girls. Every Friday the royal procession attending Friday prayers had to pass through this bazaar. *Khāss Bāzār* was therefore designed as an extension of the ceremonial space of the Mogul court. The French traveller François Bernier, who spent considerable time in *Shāhjahānābād* during the reign of *Shāh Jahān*'s successor Aurangzeb gave a detailed description of the royal procession:

“The king repairs to this mosque [Jama Maḥjid] every Friday, for the purpose of prayer [. . .]. The streets through which he passes are watered to lay the dust and temper the heat: two or three hundred musketeers form an avenue from the gate of the fortress, and as many more line both sides of a wide street leading directly to the mosque. [. . .] Five or six horsemen, well mounted, are also ready at the fortress gate, and their duty is to clear the way for the king [. . .]. These preparations completed, his Majesty leaves the fortress, sometimes on an elephant, decorated with rich trappings, and a canopy supported by painted and gilt pillars; and sometimes in a throne gleaming with azure and gold, placed on a litter covered with scarlet or brocade, which eight chosen men, in handsome attire, carry on their shoulders. A body of Omrahs follow the king [. . .] and among the Omrahs are seen a great number of Monsebdars, and the bearers of silver maces” (BERNIER 1983, 280).

*Chāndni Chawk* and Faiz Bazaar were also royal procession routes. The Mogul ruler, leading religious processions, had to pass through *Chāndni Chawk* on his way to the *‘idgāh* or to visit the Fataḥpūri Maḥjid. The bazaar was the favourite scene for religious and wedding processions of the nobility. Similarly the royal procession passed on several occasions during every year through Faiz Bazaar on its way to attend the *‘urs*-ceremonies held at the different shrines and *dargāhs* in the southern vicinity of the city. Therefore the three main bazaars of *Shāhjahānābād* were designed not only to serve economical needs but also to stage important ceremonial functions which were part of the Mogul ritual of representing and legitimizing the imperial power.

Besides these three main bazaars several others existed all over the city. Along other through roads specialized bazaars developed in close association with workshops or *kārkhānās*. Most of the *maḥallahs* also had local bazaars or markets serving the needs of the neighbourhood. The *serais* for the long distance trade were also concentrated along the main bazaars or the secondary routes and could easily be accessed through one of the several city-gates. The Hindus'

religious processions were confined to these secondary routes under the Mogul rule.

### 3.3 Imperial space

Just as Shāhjahānābād was divided into imperial (fort/palace) and ordinary space (city) the palace was similarly divided. Its axes were precisely aligned with the cardinal points of the compass. In the centre was the public audience hall (Diwān-i-Ām). West of it was the ordinary space, open to the public. Here were the bazaars, the imperial kārkhānās, the offices and the two gateways to the city, Lahori Gate and Akbarabadi Gate. An architectural innovation in India was the covered bazaar between the Lahori Gate and the square in front of the Naqqār Khānā. The members of the imperial household residing in the palace came here to shop and stroll shaded from the sun.

Special permission was needed to go beyond the west side of the Diwān-i-Ām. North of it were the palace gardens which again were laid out according to the classical Persian chahār-bāgh concept. East of it was the private palace area with the marble apartments along the river front. South of the Diwān-i-Ām was the most private part of the fort, the harem. Throughout the fort, every detail is formal and regular, based on an extensive grid of squares. Within this plan, each building is placed according to its function. The intimate relationship between the delicate buildings in the private area of the palace contrasts strikingly with the great public vista that leads from the Lahori Gate through the covered bazaar and the Naqqār Khānā to the Diwān-i-Ām. In the city this central axis of the fort continued into the wide boulevard of Chāndni Chawk to the Fataḥpūri Masjid and even beyond to the idgāh outside the city wall.

The fort/palace provided the main stage for the Mogul imperial ritual. But the day-to-day routine included also the maidan (open place) between the fort/palace and the city and the river bank at the eastern side of the fort. Every morning – while the Mogul ruler was in residence – a large crowd gathered on the river bank beneath the private quarters of the ruler at sunrise. In a traditional daily ritual the Mogul ruler had to present himself from a jharōka window to the crowd to prove he was alive and well. This practice underlines the overall importance of the emperor's person for legitimizing Mogul rule. According to one of Shāh Jahān's historians the absence of the emperor even for only a few days could create severe disturbances:

[...] the Emperor fell seriously ill from constipation and strangury, and for one week endured great suffering, and was unable to hold public audience. [...] After one week [...] he had sufficiently recovered to appear to the jharoka window of the royal sleeping chamber in the Fort at Shāhjahānābād, in order to reassure the populace who had become greatly disturbed by his absence.” (BEGLEY a. DESAI 1990, 543)

The members of the imperial household who lived outside the fort/palace built large mansions (hawēlis) on the model of the imperial design. The most prominent hawēlis were located close to the centre of authority north and south of the royal palace along the Eastern wall. As a rule these city palaces accommodated not only the owner and his family, but also their numerous followers, servants and craftsmen with their workshops (kārkhānās). The internal organization of the space within the hawēlis was again based on the strict distinction between public, semi-private and private space.

### 3.4 Religious infrastructure

The religious infrastructure of Shāhjahānābād comprises hundreds of mosques and temples, shrines and khānqāhs, religious endowments and ghāts, imāmbārahs and dharamsālāhs (MALIK 1993). Hindus, who from the very beginning made up about half of the city's population had numerous ritual sites in their respective residential quarters where they were able to practise their religion relatively unhindered. However, they were not allowed to erect larger temples neither under Shāh Jahān nor under Aurangzeb. In fact, the Islamic character of the city was emphasized through carefully planned religious infrastructure thus underlining the dominance of the Islamic faith as the ritual basis of Mogul rule.

The city was built around the twin foci of the palace/fort and the Jama Masjid. Erected on the hillock about 500 yards south-west of the fort and well above the surrounding city, it is one of the largest mosques on the subcontinent. The foundations of the Jama Masjid were laid in 1650. The mosque proper stands on top of a massive sandstone terrace placed in a system of radiating axes. The courtyard of the mosque is reached on three sides, east, north and south, by three broad flights of steps. The eastern gate, facing the fort/palace, was the main gate or the “royal entrance”. A madrasa and a hospital were built together with the Jama Masjid and the mosque was richly endowed by Shāh Jahān. Unfortunately no



detailed information on the original *waqf* properties is available. Today the Jama Masjid is part of the "Composite Jama Masjid Wakf". This *waqf* comprises 79 mosques, agricultural land in the vicinity of Delhi, 27 shops, 42 residential units, 4 godowns (warehouses) and 2 garages. In 1987–88 the total income of this *waqf* was about 62,066 Rupies.

Besides the main mosques of the city there were several other important mosques built by prominent members of the royal court. All but one of these "secondary" mosques were located on the two main avenues of the city. Second in rank to the Jama Masjid was the Fatahpūri Masjid built by Nawāb Fatahpūri Begum at the western end of *Chāndni Chawk* in 1650. It is built of the same red sandstone which was used for the fort and the Friday mosque. Fatahpūri Masjid served as the primary mosque of the city until the Jama Masjid was ceremonially inaugurated during the 'id-celebrations in 1656 (*'id al-fitr*). The mosque was also richly endowed with *waqf* properties. Behind the mosque to the west was a large *serai* which was part of this *waqf*. The courtyard of the mosque is surrounded by a series of single and double storeyed buildings. A *madrassa*, shops, workshops and residential apartments occupied these buildings, which were also part of the Fatahpūri Wakf. Today the Fatahpūri Wakf comprises one *madrassa*, a secondary school, a public library, 6 additional mosques, 97 shops, several warehouses, and more than 300 rooms and apartments. The annual income of this *waqf* is about 200,000 Rupies.

The *mahallah* or neighbourhood mosques were the third group of mosques. Of local importance, they were at the bottom of the hierarchy and lay scattered all over the city. They served the people in their immediate vicinity and were built by prominent or wealthy residents of the respective *mahallah* or by professional groups of merchants or artisans. Most of these smaller mosques received their income through religious endowments. The system of smaller mosques also reflected the sectarian, cultural, regional and social heterogeneity of the Moslem population (MALIK 1993). Sunnis and Shiites, the followers of the different Islamic law schools or the disciples of different sufi-traditions had all their individual spiritual centres. The common inter-Islamic discourses, disputes and dogmatic discussions were often staged at these smaller mosques. Only in exceptional cases of overall importance were the disputes held in the major mosques or in the Jama Masjid. Therefore the *mahallah* mosque served as the spiritual centre for the *mahallah* residents, providing the essential group identity.

### 3.5 Formation of colonial influence

With the defeat of the Marathas on the historical battlefield at Panipat in 1803, the first phase of the colonial transformation of *Shāhjahānābād* begins. During this early phase of colonial rule, which extended through the first half of the 19th century, the British confined themselves to the de facto rule of Delhi and the surrounding region without appearing to question the pro forma rule of the Mogul court. The British Resident, who administered the city and the region in the name of the East India Company, took care to maintain the pro forma sovereignty of the "King of Delhi" by fully adhering to court ceremonial procedures. Throughout almost the entire first half of the nineteenth century, the Mogul court lived in a fantasy world, which was only very occasionally confronted with the reality of having absolutely no power. Most of the inhabitants of Delhi maintained their traditional loyalty to the court of the Mogul ruler and thus to their own cultural identity. It was the same with Urdu, the language of the court and the literary medium of the "Delhi Renaissance", as the new cultural heyday of the first half of the 19th century is called.

During this phase, the colonial transformation of the historic building fabric took place only very slowly and was confined to a few parts of the city. During the first years after the British took over Delhi, it was an important military post on the northern frontier of the British sphere of influence. Military security was, in that early phase, the most important criterion for architectural changes made by the British. The fortifications, which had in part become derelict during the 18th century were painstakingly repaired and in part considerably extended. For security reasons, the troops stationed in Delhi initially had their quarters within the city. The military quarters were in the east of the city either to the north or the south of the palace district. This part of the city, traditionally reserved for the nobility of the Mogul empire provided sufficient space for military installations, in contrast to the densely built up other parts of the city. Moreover, the position was strategically advantageous, both for fending off attacks from outside as well as uprisings among the people of the city. By the middle of the century in the eastern part of the city, barracks, hospitals, stables, stores and officers' bungalows had been built for the British troops. The British Resident had taken over the former city palace of a Mogul prince near the Kashmiri gate and, at considerable expense, converted it into a representative official residence. In the

1830s, St. James' Church was built immediately adjacent (Fig. 2).

The consolidation of British rule in northern India during the 1820s and 1830s and the resulting decrease in the military threat to the region was accompanied by a gradual shift of troops and officers' residences from within the Walled City to the newly-developed areas of the cantonment and civil station to the north of the city. The British Resident also moved his official residence to the northern outskirts of the city. Only a small section of the garrison with its officers and part of the European civilian population remained within the Walled City (KING 1976).

#### 4 *Indian rebellion and the military aftermath: British rule and military security*

The year 1857 marked an important turning-point in the development of the British colonial empire in India. Starting with the rebellion ("mutiny") of a group of Indian soldiers in the garrison town of Meerut, who took refuge in the Palace at Delhi and put the completely unprepared Mogul ruler at the head of a general uprising against the foreign rule, the development ended after only a few months with the fall of the Mogul dynasty and loss of power of the East India Company. However, the 1857 uprising was not a one-off event. Throughout the entire first half of the 19th century there were, time and again, uprisings and unrest throughout the British controlled territory, which by and large, were only of local importance and put down again very quickly. There were frequent rebellions caused by famine and religious riots in Delhi as well. The events of the year 1857 differ from the more or less local unrest in two ways. Firstly, the nominal leadership on the part of the Mogul gave a uniting, legitimate authority to the different groups of Indian society. Secondly, the take-over of power by the rebels in Delhi had considerable symbolic significance, as a centuries-old tradition linked this city with an independent northern Indian empire. By and large, the uprising was restricted to a few cities and the odd region and collapsed after only a few months. A decisive factor in this was the fact that the rebels did not manage to take over adjacent areas and that there were religious and social controversies within the rebel factions (BAYLY 1988, 169ff.).

The British troops in Delhi whom the rebellion took by surprise dug themselves in north of the city on the ridge and in the cantonment and successfully warded off the various attacks by the Indian troops. The British laid siege to the city for four months before

starting to attack it with the help of reinforcements from the Punjab in September 1857. In hand-to-hand fighting in the streets with heavy losses, they recaptured the city section by section. In the face of the imminent defeat most of the rebel troops took to their heels and fled in all directions after a few days. The elderly Mogul ruler Bahādur Shāh with the poetic by-name Zafar (Victory) sought refuge with part of his court in the tomb of his great ancestor Humayun, where he was captured by the British without resistance. Further members of the Mogul court, including several princes barricaded themselves in the tombs and *dargāhs* to the south of the city where they were also arrested by the British without putting up any real resistance. Whereas several princes and numerous other members of the court were summarily executed, Bahādur Shāh remained in custody until his elaborately staged show-trial to be then exiled to Burma. The Mogul dynasty, which had been a deciding factor in shaping northern India for centuries since the days of Timur, ended with his death in 1862.

The recapture of Delhi set off a wave of violence and looting, which led to the flight of almost the entire population of the city. The "Illustrated London News" printed an eyewitness account from Delhi which sums up precisely the British attitude:

"The city is completely deserted by all the mutineers, and, in fact there are few natives of any sort to be found excepting those of our army. All the city people found within the walls when our troops entered were bayoneted on the spot, and the number was considerable, as you may suppose when I tell you that in some houses 40 and 50 persons were hiding. These were not mutineers, but residents of the city, who trusted to our well-known mild rule of pardon. I am glad to say they were disappointed" (ILN 31, No. 898. 16 January 1858, 53).

On the orders of the military commander, the gates of the city remained closed to the indigenous population while the British confiscated anything of value left in the city and the palace, re-establishing themselves in the city, debating Delhi's future.

There were three opposing opinions in this debate about the future of Shāhjahānābād-Delhi: "One party advocating its destruction as a measure of national policy; another advising it should be abandoned to gradual decay; and a third insisting on the advantages derivable from its preservation as a city" (BALL n. d. II, 182). For the supporters of the first position (destruction of the city), Delhi's symbolic significance as the spiritual and political centre for the Moslems in

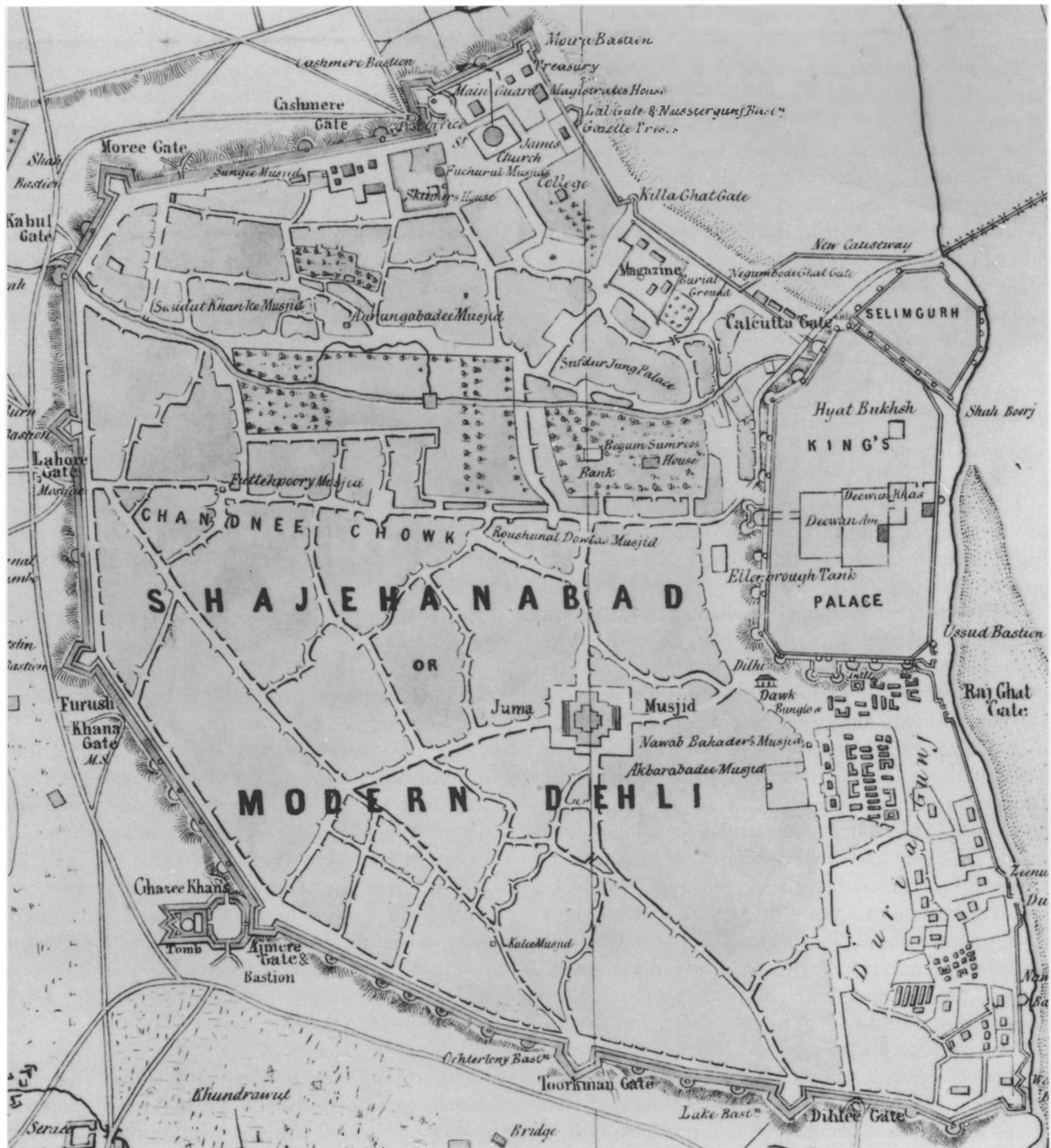


Fig. 2: Shāhjahānābād or Modern Delhi, 1849–50

Source: India Office Library London: The Fort and Cantonment of Delhi. Taken from Lieut. 'Burgess' Survey of 1849–50. With additions from other records. Lith. by H. M. SMITH at the Surveyor General's Office Calcutta, October 1857

Shāhjahānābād oder Modern Delhi 1849–50

northern India was foremost in their minds: “[. . .] The Mohammedans of India would ever think they had a national rallying point, so long as Delhi remained a mark upon the map of India; and that nothing

less than the utter destruction of the city would convince them of the irresistible will and power of the English government.” (Ibid.) The political debate about the appropriate future for Delhi continued



Fig. 3: Shāhjahānābād or Modern Delhi, 1867–68

Source: India Office Library London: Cantonments, City and Environs of Delhi, 1867–68. Calcutta, April 1869  
 Shāhjahānābād oder Modern Delhi 1867–68

throughout the whole of 1858. During this phase some of the former residents, especially Moslems, were prevented from returning to the city.

After it had become clear that the decision would be in favour of developing Delhi into a stronghold of British power in northern India, military security was

first and foremost in all considerations. The declared goal of all changes to the building fabric and city administration was to create a rebellion-proof environment. The Mogul ruler's puppet government for the British was replaced by direct rule on the part of the colonial power, based on visible military dominance.

Accordingly, the cantonment which had been moved out to the northern outskirts of the city in the late 1820s was re-established within the Walled City. It now covered the entire eastern part of the city from the Kashmiri Gate in the north to the Delhi Gate in the south and included the entire palace district. That meant nearly one third of the city was reserved for the army (GUPTA 1971).

Immediately after the recapture of the city, numerous buildings, mosques and part of the palace district were taken over by the incoming British troops and used as billets. With the expansion of the cantonment within the Walled City, there was massive action taken against the existing building fabric. A five-hundred yard security zone was declared round the Mogul palace within which almost all buildings were demolished. The entire quarter between the palace district and Jama Masjid including the *Khāss Bāzār* were sacrificed in this action. In the early 1860s, further parts of the original building fabric were demolished within the palace district, which bore the name of Delhi Fort from this time on. It was replaced by barracks for the British troops stationed there, and the Lahori and Delhi Gates of the Delhi Fort were renamed as Victoria and Alexandra Gates. Fig. 3 shows the massive changes in the building fabric during this first phase of the reconstruction by the colonial power in Delhi.

The maintaining of social and religious differences within Indian society was another part of the British security strategy, especially during the phase of consolidation after 1857 (cf. CHANDRA 1987, 237ff.). This principle of divide and rule meant for Delhi an enforced break with its Islamic cultural past. The punitive tax levied by the British to finance the reconstruction of the city was much higher for Moslems than for Hindus. Many mosques were demolished in clearing the security zone round the fort. In addition, several of the city's main mosques were occupied by the British and used for other purposes. The Jama Masjid was only returned to the Moslem community in 1862. The Fatahpūri Masjid even remained closed to Moslems until well into the 1870s. Also of tremendous significance with reference to the upkeep of the religious infrastructure was the fact that many of the endowments (*awqāf*) erected by the Moslem nobility were confiscated by the British authorities (SPEAR 1988, 218ff.). This resulted in a decisive break with the traditional system of financing the city's religious infrastructure.

Linking Delhi to the railway network in the late 1860s marks a further turning point in the city's development. Even if Delhi's expansion to one of the

major railway junctions in northern India meant an economic upswing during the last two decades of the 19th century and in the early 20th century, in its beginnings the building of the railway was directly connected with the requirements of military security. Railway stations were regarded as strategically significant points which should be immediately adjacent to military installations (OLDENBURG 1984, 44). Accordingly, when the East India Railway from Calcutta to Delhi was completed in 1867/68, a break was made in the wall to bring it directly into the northern part of the city, immediately adjacent to the cantonment. The construction of railway facilities as well as link roads meant sacrificing a further traditional residential quarter. A further break in the wall followed in 1872 with the connection of the Rajputana Railway from Bombay to Delhi, this time in the west of the city near the Kabuli Gate, thus creating a continuous east-west division of the northern part of the city (cf. Fig. 4). The building of these railway lines marks the beginning of a gradual commercial transformation of the historic structures of the traditionally residential sections of *Shāhjahānābād-Delhi* which reach into the present (KRAFFT 1993). The railway facilities were followed by other public buildings and structures so essential to Victorian city planning. In the 1860s a classicistic Town Hall was constructed replacing the Mogul *serai* in the city's centre at *Chāndni Chawk*, "with the totem of a clocktower in front" (GUPTA 1993, 40).

### 5 Concluding remarks

The reconstruction of *Shāhjahānābād's* imperial urban form and structure (Supplement VI) and its comparison with other cartographic documents of 19th century Delhi (Fig. 2-4) reveal dramatically the extent and depth of formal changes resulting from the 1857 events. More important, however, were the changing icons and symbolisms connected with re-establishing British colonial rule in the city. These concern mainly the following aspects:

- the brutal conversion of the seat and symbol of Mogul primacy, the Mogul palace, into barracks for the occupying colonial troops;
- the establishments of a vast cantonment within the old city limits replacing most of the splendid city palaces (*hawēlis*) of the former Mogul nobility;
- the gradual replacement of the walls and parts of the traditional residential quarters by the conspicuous construction of railway facilities and the associated in-





Fig. 4: *Shāhjahānābād/Old Delhi at the Turn of the Century (about 1900)*

Source: India Office Library London: Delhi. Specially prepared from the Delhi and Hissar Revenue Surveys, 1870–1872, revised in 1912 . . . Surveyor General of India 1912

*Shāhjahānābād/Alt Delhi um die Jahrhundertwende (um 1900)*

infrastructure as symbols of technological, cultural and economical dominance;

– the desecration of the city's religious infrastructure through the destruction or the misuse of several of the major mosques for secular purposes symbolizing the

declining importance of the once dominant Islamic faith.

All these developments were accompanied by profound demographic and political changes. Physical destruction coincided with a basic change in Delhi's

role and function. By converting *Shāhjahānābād*-Delhi into a British army camp and a colonial trading post the city was also symbolically deprived of its historic function. Exiling Bahādur Shāh, released the British from their nominal submission to the authority of the Mogul rule. The delegation of the administration of Delhi to the Punjab transformed the former capital of an empire to a divisional and district centre.

It was the introduction of a royal cult and a system of feudal loyalty by the British in India, replacing the Company's rule by direct rule of the British Crown, which gradually brought Delhi back to the fore. The selection of Delhi as the setting for the magnificent im-

perial durbar of 1877, at which Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India, inspired memories of its glorious past. On two further occasions in 1903 and in 1911-12 elaborated durbars were held at Delhi to demonstrate the supremacy of the British Crown in relation to Indian princes and retinues. With the decision to remove the imperial capital of colonial India from Calcutta to Delhi in 1912 the British – as many other rulers before – tried to link their rule to the deep-rooted historic associations in the Indian mind with this place. The creation of New Delhi was not only to assert a sense of historical continuity but was also meant as a symbol for the permanency of British sovereign rule over the Indian subcontinent.

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