Baghdad, Samarra and the Topography of Royal Authority
Baghdad

Al-Shammasiyah, originally an area for military reliefs and encampments (developed by the Buyid Amirs as a palace area in the 10th century).

Bab al-Taq, commercial district serving the al-Rusafah and part of the al-Mukharrim districts from 766/9 (great expansion after 775/6).

Al-Mukharrim, residential district, probably founded in 768/9 (significantly developed after 775/6).

Al-Kharkh, main market-suburb developed from a pre-Islamic and early Islamic settlement (redeveloped in 773/4).

The “Round City” of Baghdad

1. palace
2. mosque
3. police
4. guards
5. inner ring
6. outer ring
7. Syrian Gate
8. Khurasan Gate
9. Basra Gate
10. Kufa Gate
11. Al-Khulaf, Mansur’s second residential palace, built in 773/4
12. Dar al-Khiliqah, third palace complex, built after 892/3
13. Al-Rusafah, palace complex of Caliph al-Mahdi, built 768/9–775/6
14. Qataybil, district
15. Sayyada district
16. Kalwakur district
17. floating bridges across the Tigris.
ar-Raqqa/ar-Rafiqa
Fig. 2. Topography of the main site area of Samarra.
Abu Dulaf Mosque
Area C (al-Mahuza)
Samarra
Looking south
Why Palaces?

Buckingham Palace - London

Construction of the Château de Versailles
1669
Oil on canvas, 103 x 138.5 cm
Royal Collection, London
Dar al-Khalifa
Urban Sprawl

Central Samarra
Tokyo Skyline
Examples of Samarra Military Cantonments