SUZANNE PRESTON BLIER

THE AFRICAN URBAN PAST: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE METROPOLIS

Cities, as sites of human aggregation, are different from rural settlements, and size and scale have little to do with this. I grew up near Vergennes, in Vermont, the smallest city in the US, with a population of 2,741 in the 2000 census. Some of my seminal urban experiences, however, were in three West African cities: Savé in Benin, and Ile-Ife and Lagos in Nigeria, all centres of the long-established Yoruba people. There are many definitions of what constitutes a city, but normally the label refers to a well-populated centre inhabited by a relatively heterogeneous population, marked by complex sociopolitical institutions and distinctive forms of planning and architecture.[1] In the West, urbanism has historically been viewed as a mark of civilization, an attribute that, falsely, precolonial Africa was once seen to lack. In Africa, urbanism has long figured prominently. Most early African cities, like historic urban centres elsewhere, developed in relationship to local conditions (soils, water sources, minerals, trade potential) and various sociopolitical factors.[2] Agriculture and the neolithic revolution are assumed to have been vital to early urban development, allowing not only for greater population density, but also requisite surpluses, trade goods, new forms of specialization, and attendant administrative and organizational developments.

PATTERNS OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Three historic patterns of urban settlement are found in Africa. Monumental urbanism is characterized by substantial permanent structures in stone, and was especially prominent in north, eastern and southern Africa, from Egypt and Eritrea to Zimbabwe. Satellite urbanism is characterized, in both early and later contexts, by collaboration between interlinked community clusters that together create an urban settlement structure. This type of settlement, which is normally identified with earthen structures, is found especially in West Africa, from Mali to northern and southern areas of Nigeria. Migratory or peripatetic urban settlements characteristically prevailed in central Africa, these cities sharing a relatively nomadic identity. Related cities were often reestablished on a new site following the death of a ruler or a sequence of traumatic events. Many peripatetic cities were built of more ephemeral materials, such as raffia and bamboo, but were also associated with more permanent ritual sites, such as cemeteries. In some African urban contexts, several of these design attributes were at play, with local building materials providing unique possibilities for creativity.

MONUMENTAL URBANISM: NORTH, EASTERN, AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Metropolitan centres in Egypt were among the largest and most durable in urban global history. These cities featured an array of monumental building forms serving multiple functions, some dating back to the predynastic and early dynastic period.[3] Abydos in southern Egypt (4000 BCE to CE 641) long served as a royal burial ground, Osiris cult site and pilgrimage destination. Memphis, near modern Cairo, which became the administrative, religious and trade centre of lower Egypt, was founded around 3100 BCE, purportedly after King Menes conquered the Nile Delta. Estimates of the size of Memphis' diverse population range from 6,000 to 30,000 occupants, making it possibly the largest world metropolis around 2250 BCE and again from 1557 to 1400 BCE.[4] Luxor, Egypt's New Kingdom capital from 2134 to 1191 BCE, served at once as a political, religious, learning and art centre, its diverse population coming from as far away as Syria, Phoenicia, Canaan and Kush (the latter in modern Sudan). Abydos, the Kushite capital of Meroë from 800 BCE to CE 350, was a royal burial site and a manufacturing hub for prestige goods.

Aksum (400 BCE to CE 619), situated in modern Eritrea, was also an important early urban centre, known for its grouping of seven large-scale stone menhirs, a broken one now weighing 500 tons.[5] Similar in style, these monuments include images of windows and portals, as if to suggest the portals found in this area. Aksum is thought to have been a compact city inhabited by political and trade elites, with producers at the centre's outskirts. Its rulers also controlled several Red Sea ports, as well as nearby lands in Yemen, and its population was diverse, in keeping with its role in a trading empire that circulated goods from India to the Mediterranean. Aksum's conversion to Christianity was among the earliest in Africa, and it was eventually taken over by Ethiopian rulers.

To the south, the stone remains of the elaborate Shona capital of Great Zimbabwe, which flourished in the 11th–14th centuries CE, covered some 722 hectares and as many as 18,000 people may have lived here. Similar stone walls are found at distances several hundred kilometres away. An oracle site and trading depot were among this centre's possible draws, the latter dealing with goods from as far away as China. Other cities rose along the East African coast from the 8th to the 19th centuries CE, some with richly decorated, stone-like, coral edifices. These Swahili coastal sites, such as Kilwa and Mombasa, also benefited from the Indian Ocean

trade in gold, ivory, slaves and other goods. Like the new trade language, ki-Swahili, that became the lingua franca along this 1,500 km coastal region, Swahili cities are noted for their ethnic diversity – local African, Arabic, and Persian attributes being among those found.

SATELLITE URBANISM: WEST AFRICA

Numerous metropolitan centres emerged in West Africa in regions south of the Sahara. One of the most important of these was Jenne-Jeno, a grouping of urban settlements established along the inner Niger River floodplain of Mali, within a few kilometres of Jenne (Djenne). Roderick McIntosh describes Jenne-Jeno as a composite or clustered city marked by the aggregation of semi-specialized settlements with coordinated activities.[6] The excellent rice-farming conditions, good pasturage and adjacent Niger River communication were central to Jenne-Jeno's development in the 3rd century BCE, after herding populations moved there during the Sahara desiccation that began around 1000 BCE. In 450 BCE Jenne-Jeno covered some 25 hectares; by CE 450, 33 hectares; by CE 850, 41 hectares. Between CE 450 and 850 Jenne-Jeno functioned as a single urban complex. The city had walls that were 3.7 m wide at the base and employed cylindrical brick building forms. There were common urn burials, and Roman or Greek beads, as well as those made of iron, were found at the earliest levels, evidence of regional and trans-Sahara trade.

Jenne, I have argued, may also have been the site of the Empire of Mali's famous 14th-century royal capital.[7] Al-'Umari (born 1349) notes that Mali's capital was called Bny or Bani, suggesting its early identity with the Bani River. This tributary merges with Niger River at Jenne. Al-'Umari's description of Mali's capital as having an island-like setting is also consistent with modern Jenne, its watery surround serving as a natural protective moat for this wealthy trading city.[8]

The Tellem (11th–16th century CE), and the Dogon populations that merged with and replaced them (14th century onwards) in Mali's Bandiagara Escarpment, created a number of urban settlements as well. These densely populated centres were ethnically diverse: the Dogon arrived in waves as they escaped from the reach of Islam, dynastic expansion and slavery. They created a new culture here based on agricultural innovation (irrigated onion farming), technological and ritual specialization (iron working and so on), and various forms of external trade. Related architecture suggests not only Mande architectural sources, but forms of symbolic organization consistent with utopian idioms, defined by flexible anthropomorphic design referents, which is a feature of other populations in the West African savanna area.[9]

Clustered or satellite cities also appear to have distinguished the densely populated Igbo communities in southeast Nigeria. By the end of the first millennium CE the Igbo area was in trade contact with regions as far away as southwest Asia, creating works of extraordinary complexity in bronze and elaborate burial forms at Igbo Ukwu sites. While little is known about early settlement plans or domestic architecture at Igbo Ukwu, more recent Igbo plans suggest a system of clustering defined by relative egalitarianism, and an economy based on agriculture and trade.

In Yoruba oral traditions, a complementary satellite-style urbanism is said to have characterized the city-state of Ife (Ile-Ife), a polity rising to power in southwest Nigeria by the end of the first millennium.[10] Strategically located near the headwaters of the Oni River, which flows into the Atlantic, and at the juncture of forest and savanna, Ife sits on high ground that is surrounded by wetlands, a fertile savanna plain and hills. The settlements in the hills collaborated in trade and other areas, and they eventually came together to form a single urban centre.[11] Economic activities, such as the hunting of elephants for their ivory, may have been part of this satellite urbanism, as the larger Ife area functioned as a natural elephant-trapping area where local groups could block escape routes from the Ife valley wetlands. This communal hunting appears to have been a key factor in West African state development.[12]

During Ife's florescence in the 12th–15th centuries this metropolitan area may have covered 30 square kilometres, with a population of about ●30,000. Iron that had been mined, smelted and smithed locally and various agricultural goods (yam, sorghum, palm oil, kola nuts) formed part of a local exchange system, along with ivory, slaves and locally manufactured glass beads and cloth. Ife's proximity to the Niger–Benue River confluence provided access to distant trade centres in all directions. Oral traditions suggest that by the early 15th century, under the patronage of King Obalufon II, the city of Ile-Ife was reconfigured around a central plan defined by a circumscribing moat-wall, broad avenues leading to a central palace and adjacent market, as well as wards extending radially from the centre. Ife ward chiefs fulfilled key political and juridical functions. Obalufon also appears to have had diplomatic and trade treaties with several other Yoruba cities, along with military and tribute agreements with affiliated crown cities, to provide certain goods based on their location and history. These affiliated polities were legitimated by oral tradition that identified their founders as offspring of the mythic founder, Odudua. Other, later-established, Yoruba cities, such as Ibadan and Lagos, began as military camps. Whatever the origins, Yoruba metropolitan centres grew to enormous scale and featured unique craft specialization (from metal- and glassworking to weaving and dyeing), marked population diversity (though trade and war) and major population shifts throughout the year (many inhabitants moving to distant agricultural fields for part of the rainy season).

In Ife, as in most other Yoruba cities, roads, tracks and paths led ultimately to the palace and nearby market, widening into large squares at the centre, where festivals and political events took place. The earthen fabric of residences and walls provided urban planning flexibility through time, allowing even densely populated communities to grow easily and change. Frequently sited on hills, where the palaces are the most prominent architectural feature, Yoruba cities incorporated striking axes and sightlines, along with a grid-style radial form, in keeping with urban planning in the grand manner. Characteristically, the palace was the largest, tallest, most ornate structure in city, with surrounding walls that were exceptionally high. Core Yoruba urban structures share key formal features, such as a courtyards with impluvium and similarly orientated potsherd pavements. Geographic information system (GIS) analysis of Ife reveals the strategic ways in which religious and other structures were sited to underscore broader calendrical, political and historic themes.[13] In both mythic and spatial terms the city of Ile-Ife complements at once the mounded pregnant body of the mother goddess Yemoja, the watery surround where the culture hero Odudua is said to have first sprinkled sand to create earth, and the image of a tortoise in reference to Obatala, the head of the opposing deity's pantheon. The city is also divided ritually into quadrants, which are traversed yearly by ceremonial paths that crisscross the city (and the year), dividing the centre between competing families and deities.

In the Edo royal capital, Benin City, southwest of Ife, European travellers who began reaching this area in the middle of the 15th century describe an impressive urban centre distinguished by broad avenues and well-constructed residences. The massive palace, located in the middle of this walled metropolis, was graced in later centuries by several large portico structures with massive turrets decorated with cast bronze birds and serpents, visible from many parts of the city. As at Ife, Benin was notable for its historic potsherd mosaic pavements and a new palace and plan that date to the early 14th century. A complex system of earthworks honeycombed the larger urban area to mark the lands of court-affiliated families.

To the west, in the Fon Kingdom of Benin Republic, early urban centres were planned with a centralized palace, market, temple complex, and circumscribing moat-wall system, similar to Yoruba examples. The plan for Abomey, the Fon capital, is said in local oral traditions to have been established by King Agaja (1708–40), the son of Abomey's first king, Hwegbaja. The city was also defined, in important ways, by the strategic positioning of palaces for the crown princes. Placed in a spiral pattern that extended outwards from the central palace, they provided a basis for urban growth and renewal over time. Each crown prince built his own palace in an area of the city along the outward spiral, appropriating adjacent lands from earlier residents to create structures for family members and retainers. In this way, early planners seem to have anticipated new building needs as part of both spatial planning and political strategy. The spiralling design of this urban renewal idiom is said to reference the powerful local rainbow python god, identified with life, wealth and well-being.[14] The first mosque also is said to have been built in the city during Agaja's reign. The square, rather than circular, shape of Abomey's circumscribing wall suggests complements with early Hausa cities to the northwest, centres that were Islamicized in the 16th century.

Hausa cities, in northern Nigeria and adjacent regions of Niger and Cameroon, have their precursors in the pre-Islamic, Kanem (Bornu) urban centres of the late 8th to 10th centuries that developed in the Lake Chad area around the time of Jenne-Jeno and Igbo Ukwu. Like these other polities, Kanem figured prominently in short- and long-distance trade. In the 11th or 12th century, Kanem's ruler converted to Islam and, in the 14th century, the capital was moved westward into Bornu. At this time, Kanuri agriculturalists in the new Kanem-Bornu state were creating centres featuring baked earth bricks for central edifices and unbaked *tubali* for the city walls. These changes, along with an array of Coptic pottery sherds, suggest possible ties with Christian monasteries in areas west of the Nile valley.[15] Kanuri city planning, as in later Hausa and Yoruba examples, positioned the palace at the middle of the city, within a larger walled area. This centralized plan reinforced the primacy of ruler within the capital, and the latter within the state.

Hausa cities emerged in locations close to the intersections of major trade routes, valued resources, especially iron, and powerful spirit locales. Many developed, in part, around the need for protected cattle corrals of Fulani pastoralists who were seeking more settled lives, a feature that Hausa cities share with Timbuktu, which also had a well at its centre. The Kano chronicle dates the first permanent market in Kano to the 15th century, crediting Bornu refugees with this institution. Later that century, the Hausa ruler Muhammad Rumfa constructed, or extended, the Kano city walls and built a centralized palace and a new market, and introduced new forms of pomp and a state council. The Hausa walled city, like other walled cities in this area, also served the protective needs of refugees from neighbouring communities. As with Yoruba, Fon and other African city wall systems, it also played a role in the control of merchants and goods for purposes of taxes, tolls and the reduction of smuggling.

Hausa cities were also linked to a system of satellite urban settlements, the six main Hausa cities furnishing key goods or services within the larger network: textiles from Kano, markets in Katsina and Daura, militias from Gobir, and slaves from Zaria, the most southern Hausa city. While certain technical developments, such as the use of domes, distinguished Hausa

urban architecture, decorative features varied from one urban locale to another, with palaces, merchant residences and mosques being particularly ornamental. In symbolic terms, Hausa urban settings carried varied cosmological significance, based in part on orientation toward the cardinal directions and the positioning of special gates.

CENTRAL AFRICAN MIGRATORY CITIES

Congo, Angola, Cameroon, Rwanda and other countries in Central Africa also saw the development of urban settlements. These were often characterized by historic patterns of migratory or peripatetic identity. Characteristically, moving capitals of this sort were created at the beginning of each king's reign, or after difficult circumstance. Some migratory cities reached populations of 15,000–20,000 inhabitants and were identified, like early West African cities, by cluster-like relationships with nearby communities. Rather than emphasizing attributes of permanence and monumentality, as in north-eastern and southern Africa, significant manpower was committed to the creation and maintenance of large-scale, richly decorated architecture, employing ephemeral materials, such as bamboo and raffia, very little of which would remain for archaeologists to discover. Such centres suggest an emphasis on idioms of dynastic innovation, conveying the unique power of kings to impress through their control of resources and labour, for both the initial construction and upkeep over time.

In the Angola–Congo border area near the Luezi River, M'banza Kongo, the capital of the Kingdom of Kongo (1400–1914), was established prior to the Portuguese arrival in 1483. Sited on high ground, it was already a sizable city, comparable in scale to Evora, the then thriving Avis dynastic seat in Portugal. The Kongo practice of assimilating the conquered inhabitants of other regions meant that this urban centre had a diverse population, and it was an important location for royal rituals that continued here over the centuries. While Kongo rulers rebuilt their capital cities on coming to the throne, taking up a previously inhabited site in many cases, the existence of the royal cemeteries gave spiritual vitality when a site was reoccupied. In the thickly forested areas where related raffia fibre buildings and walled compounds were constructed, many of these heavily populated centres were difficult to discern for travellers.[16]

In the nearby Kuba Kingdom (1625–1900), in the Zaire River basin forests northeast of Kongo, a grouping of ethnically diverse principalities coalesced, following migrations in the 16th century. A local leader, Shyaam a-bul a Ngoong-Shyaam, is credited with creating a new Kuba capital city and administrative centre, drawing on Kongo and Pende models. Here a rich court life developed based on the use of local and new-world crops, craft manufacturing, wealth from trade, and tribute revenue from satellite communities. Shyaam is said to have greatly increased the size of the capital city by encouraging artists, traders, and warriors to take up residence here; the Kuba monarchs provided residents with relative ease, since food and other needs derived largely from surrounding peasant communities. Joseph Cornet documented the extensive work that went into the creation of new Kuba capital cities, and the unique roles of supervising architects and designers within this process.[17] A caravan system linked Bushong, the Kuba royal capital, to centres of Kongo trade activity on the coast, such as Luanda and Luango, and other places. Located, like Ife, near the juncture of forest and savanna, and in proximity to important rivers, the Kuba capital offered an array of resources and trade opportunities that, when coupled with taxes, tribute, craft specialization and status competition focused on the arts, encouraged local productivity.

The Luba Kingdom (1585–1889), situated in the marshy grasslands of the Upemba depression, with the source of the Zaire River to the southeast, was one of many Kuba trading allies. Thomas Q. Reefe has suggested that the Luba setting was critical to its political development, encouraging shared communal activities and cooperation in the creation of dams and drainage systems to counter seasonal flooding, which impacted everything from housing to agriculture and fishing.[18] Archaeological evidence identifies human occupation here from at least the 5th century CE, with urban settlements emerging around the 10th century. Their wealth was based on agriculture, specialized metal work, and trade in salt, iron, charcoal and copper (from the Zambian copper belt), as well as cowrie shells and glass beads from the Indian Ocean. Two Luba leaders, Nkongolo and Kalala Ilunga, are identified in local oral traditions with salt and iron, as well as better government. If they were historical figures, it is not clear when they lived but suggestions have been made ranging from the 15th to the early 18th century.[19] Mary Nooter and Allen Roberts have discussed the enduring importance of Luba capital cities that, once abandoned by rulers when new centres were founded, became key ritual sites.[20]

The migratory urban centres of Kongo, Kuba and Luba, as well as those of the Lunda Kingdom (c. 1600–1887) – and of the Cameroon grasslands – take an array of symbolic forms. These are linked to internal positioning in relation to nearby rivers or mountains, central axis plans with bilateral siting of key structures (suggesting in some cases spiders or tortoises), and maze-like spatial confirmation within some palace complexes. Other important urban forms associated with migratory settlements include Ethiopian royal capitals and Buganda dynastic capitals, as well as Zulu war centres, the latter evoking Assyrian and Roman war cities.[21]

Taken together, these diverse African settlements convey the early and enduring importance of ancient cities in Africa as focal points of political and artistic engagement, complex

administrative organization, and trade affiliations with centres near and far. The communal need to address larger issues (floods, the hunt, protection, manufacturing, trade control) seems to have been important to their success. Whatever the reasons for their development, Africa's urban centres show broad appreciation of the benefits of social aggregation. The more ephemeral materials that distinguish many African cities and towns offer unique advantages to growth and change over time, providing ready flexibility in response to changing needs. If architectural durability is less important in many historic African cities than in the West or Asia, this feature is often replaced by a concomitant interest in creativity and innovation on the part of local leaders, as well as a larger interest in more egalitarian political approaches: perspectives that, even within royal contexts, preclude the descendants of a single ruling line from assuming political and resource control through many generations. African cities are also creative, in many different ways, in providing new opportunities for their residents.

NOTES

1. The differences between towns and cities are in truth little defined, with many cultures using the same term for both.

2. For the most part they did not begin as a result of outside Islamic or European intervention. On African historic cities more generally, see David M. Anderson and Richard Rathbone, eds., *Africa's urban past*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000; Peter Garlake, *Early art and architecture of Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002; Bill Freund, *The African city: A history*, London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007; Toyin Falola and Steven J. Salm eds., *Nigerian cities*, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2004; Kolawole Adekola, 'Early urban centres in West Africa', *African Diaspora Archaeology Network* (March 2009), http://www.diaspora.uiuc.edu/news0309/news0309.html, accessed 8 November 2010.

3. This also reflects the frequent association of cities (and societies associated with them) as 'civilizations', and those regions lacking such centres as 'uncivilized'.

4. Mohenjo-daro in Pakistan (2600–1900 BCE) was one of the largest ancient cities (with a population of perhaps more than 40,000) and one of the first to incorporate a grid plan (Jonathan Mark Kenoyer, *Ancient cities of the Indus Valley civilization*, Karachi, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

5. Other early African trading centres include Tripoli in Libya and Carthage in Tunisia, which were both founded by Phoenician traders and became popular merchant destinations and early European rivals for east–west Mediterranean trade. With the fall of Carthage to Rome in 146 BCE, Tripoli became a protectorate of Kush (Nubia).

6. Roderick J. McIntosh, 'Clustered cities of the Middle Niger: Alternative routes to authority in prehistory', in Anderson and Rathbone, eds., *Africa's urban past*, pp. 19–36, and *Ancient Middle Niger: Urbanism and the self-organizing landscape*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005; Roderick J. McIntosh and Susan Keech McIntosh, 'The inland Niger Delta before the Empire of Mali: Evidence from Jenne-Jeno', *Journal of African History*, vol. 22, no. 1 (1981): pp.1–22.

7. James Morris and Suzanne Preston Blier, *Butabu: Adobe architecture of West Africa*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003.

8. As he notes: 'A branch of the Nil [Niger] encircles the city on all four sides. In places this may be crossed by wading when the water is low but in others it may be traversed only by a boat' (in J. F. P. Hopkins and Nehemia Levtzion, eds., *Corpus of early Arabic sources for West African history*, New York: Markus Weiner, 1981, p. 262).

9. On Tellem and Dogon architecture, see also Rita Bolland, *Tellem textiles; Archaeological finds from burial caves in Mali's Bandiagara Cliff*, Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute; Leiden, Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde; Bamako: Institut des Sciences Humaines; Bamako: Musée National, 1991; Jean-Christophe Huet, *Villages perchés des Dogon du Mali: Habitat, espace et société*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994. On architectural anthropomorphism, see among others, Suzanne Preston Blier, *The anatomy of architecture: Ontology and metaphor in Batammaliba architectural expression*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

10. Early Yoruba cities were sometimes discounted by Western theorists because they were assumed to be lineage-based (rather than heterogeneous). In Yoruba urban centres, however, 'lineage' is used to define a wide array of non-kin social relationships as well, among these prisoners of war and strangers who were integrated into lineage like units for socio-political-religious reasons.

11. On Yoruba cities more generally, see Akin L. Mabogunje, *Yoruba towns*, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1962; G. J. Afolabi Ojo, *Yoruba palaces: A study of Afins of Yorubaland*, London: University of London Press, 1966; Robert Smith, *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*, London: Methuen, 1969. On Ife area archaeological traditions, see Akinwumi Ogundiran, 'Chronology, material culture, and pathways to the cultural history of Yoruba-Edo region, 500 BC – AD 1800', in Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings, eds., *Sources and methods in African history: Spoken, written, unearthed*, Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, and Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2003, pp. 33–78.

12. On the elephant hunt and state formation, see Humphrey J. Fisher, 'The Eastern Maghrib and the Central Sudan', in Roland Oliver, ed., *The Cambridge history of Africa*, vol. 3, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp. 232–312.

13. On cosmological dimensions of city planning more generally, see Amos Rapoport, *The meaning of the built environment: A nonverbal communication approach*, rev. edn, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990.

14. On Fon, Savi and Ouidah architecture, see Michael Houseman, Blandine Legonou, Christiane Massy and Xavier Crepin, 'Note sur la structure évolutive d'une ville historique: L'exemple d'Abomey (République populaire du Bénin)', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, vol. 26, no. 104 (1986), pp. 527–46; Robin Law, 'Ouidah: A pre-colonial urban centre in coastal Africa, 1727–1892', in Anderson and Rathbone, eds., *Africa's urban past*, pp. 85–96; Neil L. Norman and Kenneth G. Kelly, 'Landscape politics: The serpent ditch and the rainbow in West Africa', *American Anthropologist*, vol. 106, no.1 (2004), pp. 98–110; Suzanne Preston Blier, 'Razing the roof: The architecture of destruction in Dahomey', in Tony Atkin, ed., *Structure and Meaning in Human Settlements*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2005.

15. A. D. H. Bivar and P. L. Shinnie, 'Old Kanuri capitals', *Journal of African History*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1962), pp. 1–10.

16. Georges Balandier in Suzanne Preston Blier, *Royal arts of Africa: The majesty of form*, New York: Prentice Hall, 1998.

17. Joseph Cornet, *Art Royal Kuba*, Milan: Sipiel, 1992.

18. Thomas Q. Reefe, *The rainbow and the kings: A history of the Luba Empire to 1891*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981.

19. Bassey Andah, 'Genesis and development of settlements in the Guinea and savanna regions', in *The development of urbanism from a global perspective*, Uppsala Universitet, 2002. On urban development in the eastern lakes area more generally, see Andrew Reid, 'The character of urbanism in inter-Lacustrine Eastern Africa', in *The development of urbanism from a global perspective*, Uppsala Universitet, 2002.

20. Mary Nooter and Allen F. Roberts, *Memory: Luba art and the making of history*, New York: Center for African Art, 1996.

21. Beginning in the latter half of the 15th century, Europeans created trading and replenishment centres and, later, forts along the African coast that grew in time into important cities, among them Dakar (Senegal), Accra (Ghana) and Luanda (Angola). By the late 19th century Europeans were also creating inland cities to serve as new colonial capitals, among these Niamey (Niger), Nairobi (Kenya), Harare (Zimbabwe) and Johannesburg (South Africa). Each had its own colonial importance, Nairobi as an East African railway midpoint, Harare as a military protected settler town (organized by Cecil Rhodes) and Johannesburg as a gold-rush town.