

CITIES IN AFRICA - ANCIENT EXAMPLES



Ancient Egyptian Cities

Emergence
Around 3000 BC with the construction of pyramids and temple districts.

Peak
Memphis and Thebes consisted of two-storey buildings and had large temple districts which could make up as much as one third of the city.
Cities covered big areas, with Thebes for example being 15km long.

Decline
Power and center of settlement shifting to the Nile delta.

The ruling class consisted of priests. Thebes was rather a large village comprising of small farms than a city. Economical emphasis on agriculture.

Alexandria

Foundation
Capital

Peak
Alexandria reached its peak around 200BC, when it had developed a distinct urban culture and a population of 200'000 people.

Decline
Due to the rise of Cairo.

After Egypt was conquered by the Arabs Alexandria filled the gap of power. It was orientated towards the Mediterranean Sea.



Gondar / Aksum

Foundation
In the 18th century by the Portuguese

Peak
Slave trade, Christianization. Settlements were built only during the rainy season, there was a moving court of the ruling class.

Decline
Invasions by Muslim invaders from Sudan.



Muslim-Trade-Cities

Emergence
Early settlements since the first century. Later immigration of Muslims, trading network with Asia.

Peak
Power was distributed over a net of smaller villages and city-states that remained independent.

Decline
Ransacked by the Portuguese.

The Romans had contact to the early villages, which largely consisted of groups of tents. With the arrival of the Arabs in the 8th century the cities began to prosper and grow, establishing trade relations with India and Central Africa. The cities were never able to control much of their hinterland.

Early West African Cities
Savanna

Emergence
During the 1st century AC

Peak
Around the 8th century AC with a population of 20'000. Cities were organized in networks and traded goods across the Sahara. There were no shrines, no stone buildings and no ruling class, but clear economical distinctions were present.
In Gao, the centre of Songway state, stone buildings were constructed around the 11th century. Political power was linked to sacral power, trade was dominated by women. Cities were centralized by power and wealth, there was a segregation by tribes.

Decline
Due to French imperialism. Timbuktu survives as one of the most important cities in West Africa.

Forrest

Emergence
Trade

Peak
In the early 19th century AC, at the time of the British conquest, Ibadan had a population of 200'000 people. The city was organized like a Greek polis and structured by compounds of 40-400 inhabitants. The compounds were owned by one person. Within the city a geography of power was to be found. There were strong agricultural activities, only limited urbanization and no long range trade.

Coast

Emergence
Trade

Peak
In the 18th and 19th century with 15'000 - 20'000 inhabitants. Benin, Kumase, sacred places Asante, Ivor Wilks, economical growth



Mbanza Kongo

Foundation
1450 - 1550, through Portuguese colonization

Peak
Around 1650: Flourishing slave trade, Christianization of the upper class, social segregation within the city. Stone buildings built by European architects.

Today, Mbanza-Kongo is the capital of Angola's Northern Province.

The ruling class adapted Christianity and was supported by the Portuguese. These two groups resided in walled compounds. The city and the countryside merged and overlapped, but there is an old indication and differentiation between city and village in the language.

Zimbabwe

Emergence
Sacral ground

Peak
In the 13th and 14th century with a maximum of 15'000 people, spread in loose relation over 700 hectares. The powerful state had many smaller settlements under control and entertained trade relations to India based on gold.

Decline
During the 15th century due to a shift in the gold trade route.

The civilization showed a specialization of work and had a ruling cast and priests. Only sacred buildings were built of stone. None of the cities were fortified.

Agrar-Towns

Emergence
During the 16th century

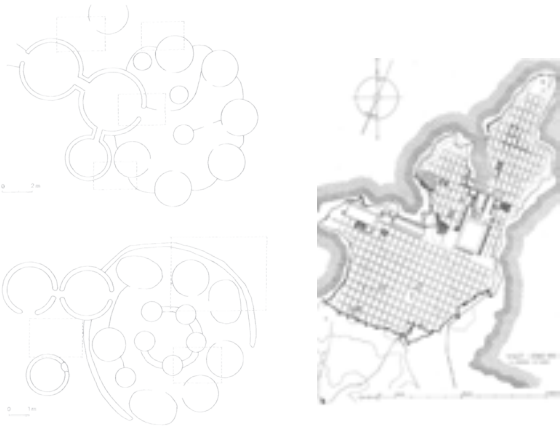
Peak
Although there was a max. population of 60'000 people, there never was an urbanized social structure and no superior ruler. People were often living outside of the cities.

Decline
During the 18th century, as the inhabitants followed fertile land. Only one city at the time. Cities never had a superior ruler and the people were mostly farmers who lived with their cattle most of the year.

CITIES IN AFRICA - EMERGENCE

Ancient Cities and Villages

- Southern Africa**
 - Separation of space
 - No privately owned land
- Northern Africa**
 - Top-down built cities

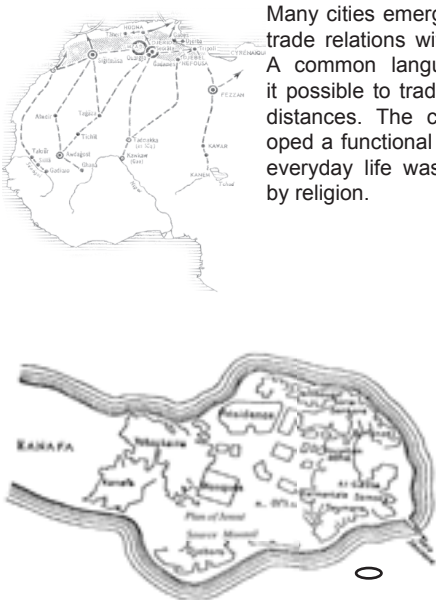


Muslim Invasion

800 - 1100

- Articulation of Work**
- Clear vocabulary of urban functions
 - Ruling / ruler located within the city
 - *Dahiras* (congregations) produce social structure

Many cities emerged through trade relations with muslims. A common language made it possible to trade over long distances. The cities developed a functional vocabulary, everyday life was structured by religion.



Medieval Cities

1450 - 1650

- Separation by Power**
- Ruling quarter separated from the villages by walls
 - Monumental buildings expressing power

The Spanish and the Dutch traded goods with locals in different areas. This brought wealth to them and empowered their kings to build cities.



Colonial Cities

1750 - 1950

- Segregation of Race**
- Cities with local workers and immigrated specialists
 - Fast growth results in problems with hygiene and health

The French and the British tried to conquer land by building railroads and cities. These ventures asked for local workers, which lead to bigger cities and bigger problems with epidemics. Colonial cities were linked to an international trade network.



Post colonial cities

1960 - today

- Separation by Wealth**
- Security needs draw new borders
 - Competition with existing cities
 - Top-down planning

After the decolonialization many African nations founded new cities to express their newly-gained independence.

In contemporary urban Africa, crime has become a substantial problem. The result are private security firms and well-protected gated communities.



The founding of cities in Africa came in bursts.

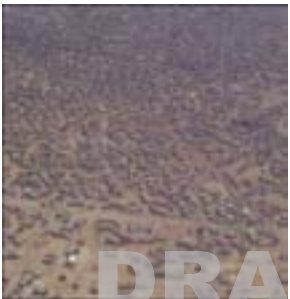
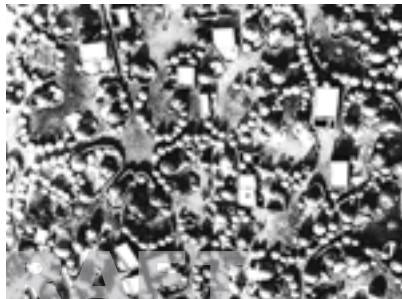
Foundation of cities with over one million inhabitants

600

1100

1600

2000



CITIES IN AFRICA - CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES

Natural Resources

Luanda 2°500'000 1575

Luanda was founded in the 16th century as a base for slave-trade by the Portuguese. After being heavily destroyed during a 27-year long civil war which ended in 2002, it is currently experiencing a period of strong growth due to oil exploitation. While real estate prizes are amongst the highest in the world, sanitary conditions are inadequate and unhealthy. The water of the Bengo River is dark with grit, its banks strewn with garbage. Two dozen roaring pumping stations suck in 1.3 million gallons of water from the river each day, filling 450 tanker trucks that in turn supply 10,000 vendors across Luanda's endless slums. Luanda's slums are the center of one of the worst cholera epidemics to strike Africa in nearly a decade.



Competing Cities

Brazzaville / Kinshasa 9°000'000 1883 / 1881

Founded by the French and the Belgians respectively, the two cities started as rivals. This fact articulates itself even today, with the biggest tower of Central Africa standing in Brazzaville as close as possible to Kinshasa. Zaire (today the Democratic Republic of Congo) gained independence in 1960 and experienced rapid growth under Mobutu Sese Seko. Kinshasa grew rapidly, drawing people from across the country who came in search of a better future or to escape ethnic strife elsewhere.



Foreign Occupation

Laâyoune 188°000

Laâyoune is the capital of Western Sahara, which is occupied by Morocco. The former Spanish colony was invaded by Moroccan troupes after Franco's death. The native population, Sahrawis, were forced into exile and are currently living in refugee camps in Algeria.



City Foreign to their Inhabitants

Dakar 15 Cent.

Africans were not allowed to live within the city and had to live in villages on the outskirts. This character still exists in the heads of many people, who talk about their villages and see them connected rather to the villages in the Sahara and beyond than to the 'city' of Dakar.

Shrinking Core / Growing Region

Johannesburg 7°000'000 19.Cent.

Johannesburg was founded as a base for gold exploration. The area of Pretoria / Johannesburg and Soweto (SOuth-WEstern-TOWnships) is one of the biggest metropolitan regions in Africa. Due to it's high crime rate the centre of Johannesburg is emptying. Businesses have moved up north, away from the city center, and are now located between Pretoria and Johannesburg.



Megapolis

Cairo 15700000 956

Residential density: 36,500 people per km2 (London: 4,500 people per km2)

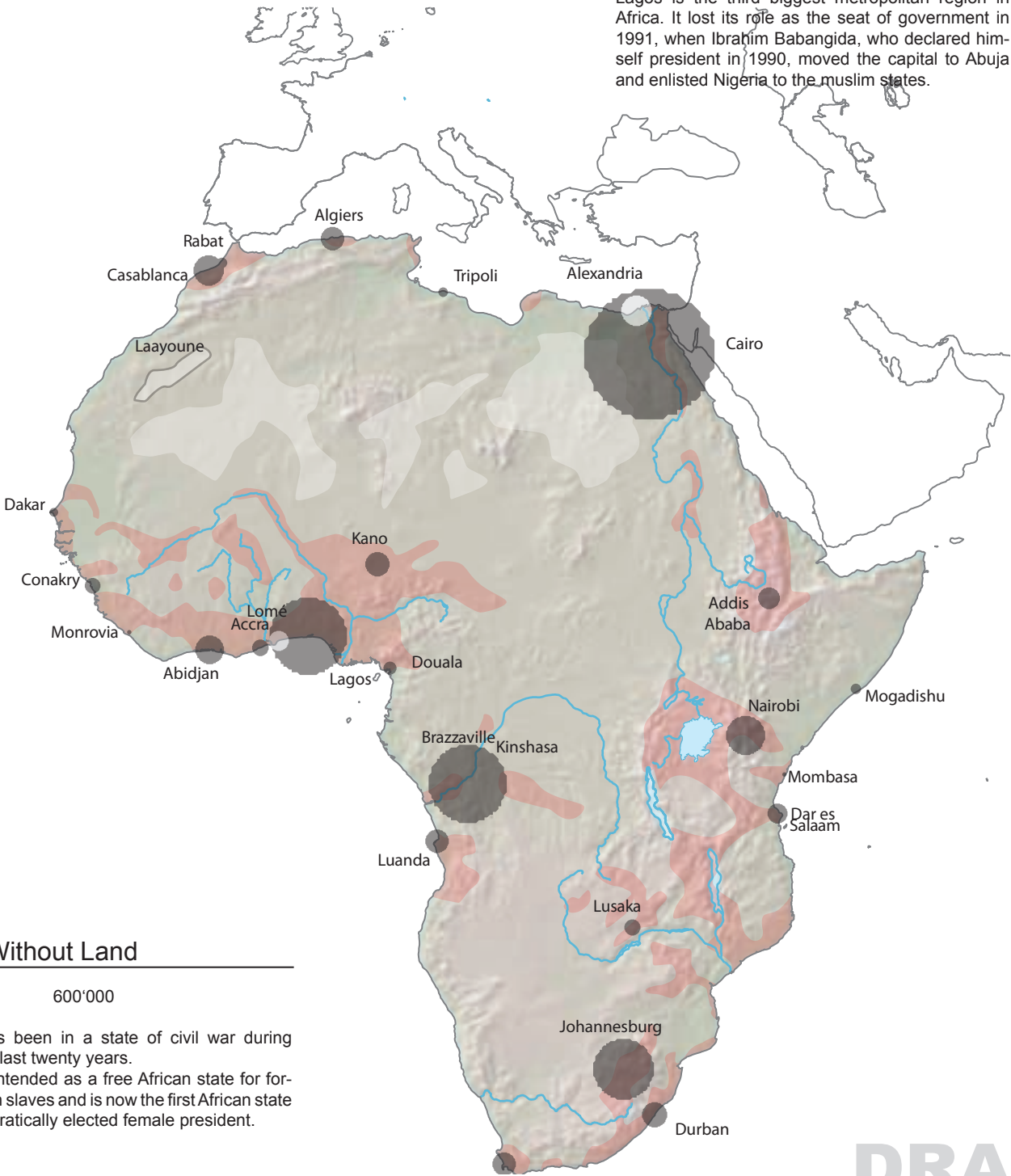
Cairo has a high residential density, approximately nine times that of London. Climatic conditions limit the amount of inhabitable land in Egypt, so half its inhabitants live within a 100 kilometre radius of Cairo. As a result, the population has difficulties finding affordable housing.

Lacking Political Power

Lagos 7°900'000 14 Cent.

Lagos is the third biggest metropolitan region in Africa. It lost its rôle as the seat of government in 1991, when Ibrahim Babangida, who declared himself president in 1990, moved the capital to Abuja and enlisted Nigeria to the muslim states.

Cities with over one million inhabitants



Capital Without Land

Monrovia 600'000

Monrovia has been in a state of civil war during twelve of the last twenty years. Liberia was intended as a free African state for former American slaves and is now the first African state with a democratically elected female president.