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The Former Names of Lagos (Nigeria) in Historical Perspective

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This article traces Lagos's toponymy through the ages, from the original indigenous settlement to Nigeria's post-independence days. From Oko to Eko, from Curamo to Onim, and from Onim to Lagos, until its replacement by Abuja as the present federal capital — each name represents a layer in the city's rich and cosmopolitan past. Moving from the historical events to the related toponymic meanings and *vice versa*, the complexity of the simultaneous usages of Lagos's place names represents a fertile terrain of co-existent memories. From pre-colonial, colonial, or post-colonial times and the long intermediate phases in between, these memories sometimes contest or challenge each other, but their attached toponyms are also used as complementary alternatives.

KEYWORDS Lagos's toponymy, West African colonial history, urban history, indigenous place names, Portuguese and British toponyms, Nigeria, Eko

Introduction

Although Abuja, a planned inland city, officially became the capital of Nigeria in 1991, Lagos, the previous coastal capital, is still one of Africa's most vibrant centers. A stranger might be surprised that in this thriving cosmopolitan, somewhat chaotic, mega-city of more than ten million residents, the European name *Lagos* is in everyday use by only a few. The indigenous name *Eko*, on the contrary, is much more popular, especially among Lagos's urban majority, the Yoruba people.[1] The name *Eko* refers particularly to Lagos Island, the original settlement and the present-day center of the city.

The aim of this article is to trace the toponymic genealogy of Nigeria's former capital through the ages, its connotations and meanings. Between the original name *Eko*, given to the initial settlement, and the current name *Lagos*, as used more formally and designated on maps, there is more than just a four hundred-year history, as, indeed, during most of this period the two names were used simultaneously. They also indicate competing narratives. The first place name, *Eko*, represents an indigenous toponymy, while the second, Lagos, represents a more political, colonial

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toponymy, the outsiders' account. Moreover, during the last four hundred years, Lagos was known by several additional place names, such as *Oko*, *Curemo*, and *Onim*. Although some names were used concurrently, we would like to demonstrate in this paper that each of them refers to a certain historical period along with the culture, ethnicity, and economic and political power involved.

Hence, we shall embrace for our toponymic genealogy an approach put forward by Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch in her periodization of African cities. In the light of the historical depth of these cities, argues Coquery-Vidrovitch, it is not convincing to propose a typology that classifies them in accordance with a dominant feature at a given historical point. Instead of typology, she suggests a chronological approach to African urbanization which accepts a variety of developmental models through all relevant eras and implies the long intermediary phases of interpenetration between them (2005: 26). Showing that each place name constitutes another layer in the conception of the site, and the fact that both names, Eko and Lagos, have persisted to this day, acknowledges the relevancy of the chronological approach. Their simultaneous persistence reveals corresponding, complementary or even competing narratives and memories, an understanding that is well in accordance with trends in toponymic research over the last twenty years.

The bulk of research published during that time situates the study of place naming within the broader disciplines of semiotics, linguistics, and human geography. Toponymy, the research concludes, beyond its primary aim as an administrative act facilitating a geographical orientation in space, reflects political control over both landscape and history. This conclusion is exemplified in case studies worldwide, from the Soviet Union to Israel's administered territories, from Bucharest to Zanzibar, and from Paris to New York (see for instance, respectively: Murray, 2000; Cohen and Kliot, 1992; Light et al., 2002; Myers, 1996; Milo, 1997; Rose-Redwood, 2008).

Research trends since the 1990s differ in this from past, more "traditional" scholarship on place names, featuring a more antiquarian, encyclopedic, and taxonomical approach that situates it in the margins of the discipline of geography (Rose-Redwood et al., 2010). In fact, under the influence of broader socio-philosophical theories, *inter alia*, those of Henri Lefebvre (1974) and Michel Foucault (1977), post-1990s toponymic research has shifted from the study of place names to a critical study of place naming systems.

Based for the most part on secondary literature, the major contribution of this paper lies in the renewed context of the reorganization of previous literature around the leitmotif of Lagos's toponymic genealogy. From a historiographic point of view, this subject is usually treated in passing, never by itself, within a broader literature. This literature consisted predominantly of monographs on Lagos's history (Aderibigbe, 1975; Mann, 2007), its socio-political and urban history (Baker, 1974; Peil, 1991), and its architectural and town planning history (Krapf-Askari, 1969; Akinsemoyin and Vaughan-Richards, 1976; Bigon, 2009) — to mention some suggestive articles rather than comprehensive book-length references. Exceptional among these is Pierre Verger's 1959 article, which deals exclusively with one of Lagos's former names, though its somewhat parochial attitude shares much with contemporary research trends (e.g. Flutre, 1957, regarding French West Africa); Robin Law's 1983 article, which, in an effort to understand the extent of the West African "slave coast" trade

and its geo-political implications, conducts an excellent though seemingly inadvertent regional toponymic analysis; likewise Nkiru Nzegwu's 1996 article, which provokes a lively discussion on Lagos's spatiality through the understanding of a few Yoruba key notions regarding the urban sphere.

The subject of Lagos's toponyms is also covered in passing in the accounts of Yoruba missionary-educated intellectual elites in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, who attempt to document their mythological or historical past (Payne, 1893; Johnson, 1901; 1921; Losi [1914] 1967 — to mention a prominent few). Prior to that, the subject could only be studied and reflected on indirectly, mainly through the different names used in primary sources written by European traders, missionaries and diplomats from an extraordinary variety of nationalities. These, particularly in the period between 1500 and 1800, are well represented in Law's 1983 study.

From Oko to Eko

"The first man that built Isheri and settled there, in or about the year 1699, was a hunter, named Ogunfunminire, meaning 'the god of iron has given me success.' He was of the royal family of Ile-Ifẹ." This is what we are told by John B. Losi, an indigenous headmaster of one of the Roman Catholic schools in Lagos, and an early historian who collected and reassessed Yoruba oral traditions (1967 [1914]). It was in Isheri, about twelve miles north of Lagos Island, that the Aworis, a Yoruba sub-group, established their first of several settlements, trying to escape contemporary political instability in the interior of Yorubaland. Indeed, Losi's dating is inaccurate, for any date before the fifth Oba of Lagos Ologun Kutere, who was on the throne in the 1780s and 1790s, as documented by European traders, is arbitrary (Law, 1983: 344). The subsequent developments, however, are attributed by recent historians to the fifteenth century: the move southwards to the fertile land of Ebute Metta, still part of the mainland, proceeded beyond Iddo Island, as Ebute Metta seemed too vulnerable in case of attack by neighboring groups. Though ideal from a defensive point of view, Iddo Island — one square mile of sandy land in all — could hardly provide for the agricultural needs of the occupants. Consequently, additional agricultural land on a southerly island beyond the lagoon was sought, from which the first appellation of Lagos — *Oko*, meaning "a farm" in Yoruba — was derived (Aderibigbe, 1975: 3–4) (Figure 1).

In the thriving Yoruba urban tradition of settlement organization, there had been, since medieval times, a clear division between the central space, designated for residence (*Ile*, i.e., "a home") and its outskirts, beyond the city's encircling mud walls, which were normally used as farmland (*Oko*, i.e., "a farm"). Yet in Lagos, from the very start, this *Ile* vs. *Oko* differentiation was not apparent. *Oko*, the initial settlement, was considered as *ile*, and its morphological particularities included farms that were gradually turned into residential land or incorporated side by side. Mud walls were not essential on this island settlement.

Considering what was then the physical structure of the four-square-mile Lagos Island and the vagueness of traditional spatial terminology clarifies these morphological particularities. Until the mid-nineteenth century, for example, the town occupied no

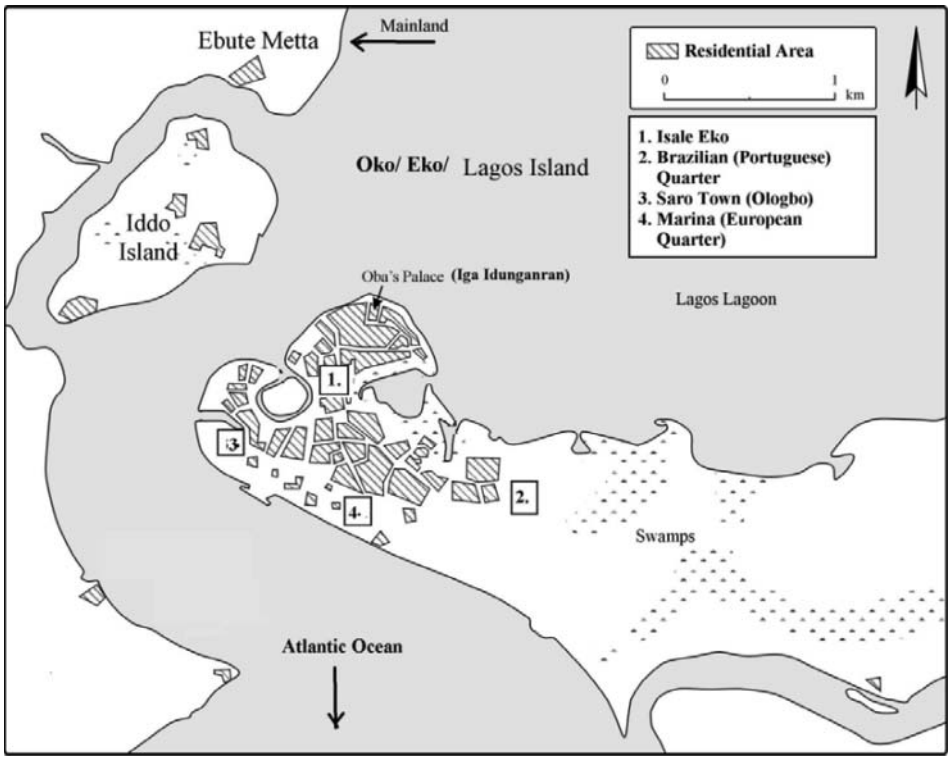

FIGURE 1 Map showing the four main quarters in Lagos in the 1880s. Notice the extent of Isale Eko, the first northwestern residential quarter (number 1) of Oko/Eko (map drawn by the author, based on PRO (the British Archives), CO 700/Lagos 5, plan of the town of Lagos in 1883).

more than one-third of the overall surface of the island. A thick belt of mangrove forest encircled its shores, acting as a barrier against rip tide silt as well as human penetration, and the interior was mostly swamps, creeks, and dry land. Passage between the mainland and the island was therefore chiefly by canoe. The highest point of Oko was at its extreme northwest, where one of the first founding fathers chose to erect his red pepper farm. This site, now occupied by the palace of the *Oba* (king) of Lagos, soon became the centerpiece of a new prosperous village inhabited by fishermen and farmers. Ever since its establishment on the site of the previous red pepper farm, the palace has been known as *Iga Idunganran*, that is, "the pepper palace" (Irvine, 1966, n.p.; Akinsemoyin and Vaughan-Richards, 1976: 6).

The change of Lagos's name from Yoruba *Oko*, "a farm," to Bini *Eko*, "a military camp," is related to the presence of the eastern Benin kingdom in the area, especially from the middle of the seventeenth century. There were various reasons — political, economic, and mythological — for contacts between Lagos and Benin, which took the form of submissiveness: Lagos became a vassal of Benin, paid tribute, and introduced Bini's advisors and rites to its court. Remarkably, Lagos's dynastic *Oba*-s remained Yoruba, while Benin was the source of their royal legitimacy. This legitimacy explains

why, as noted by Robin Law, the Bini connection lasted until the establishment of British influence in Lagos in the 1850s, despite the fact that Benin power had gradually diminished in the course of the eighteenth century, while Lagos had become commercially and militarily independent (1983: 327–333). The resemblance, however, in the pronunciation between the Yoruba word *Oko* and its Bini counterpart *Eko* probably facilitated the adoption, the common usage, and the eventual replacement of one toponym by the other. The northwestern part of the island, on the slope of the Oba palace, was further established as the prominent residential quarter, and became known as *Isale Eko*, that is, "Lower Lagos." Today Isale Eko is considered as central, or downtown, Lagos; and, as mentioned previously, the name Eko has been preserved as the main local appellation for Lagos.

From Curamo to Onim

A further introduction of cultural influence in Lagos, which had an impact over the island's spatial organization as well, took place due to the growing economic and political involvement of another, foreign, agency. During the reign of Oba Akinsemoyin, in the second half of the eighteenth century, Portuguese slave dealers were reportedly invited to Eko. Akinsemoyin met them in Whydah — today's Ouidah in Benin (country), rather than the above-mentioned Benin (city) in Nigeria — during his earlier exile there, in the midst of succession conflicts in Eko (Aderibigbe, 1975: 11). Whydah, along with other coastal towns such as Porto Novo and Badagry, had traded for a long time with Portuguese and other European merchants and slavers. At that time, indigenous towns were competing fiercely with each other for foreign attention, entangling other hinterland political entities in a complicated network of changing alliances and rivalries. Indeed, Eko integrated quite late into this network. It seems that direct European trade did not take place there before the 1760s, and only started as part of a transition of general European interest eastwards from Whydah, due to rigid Dahomian trade policies.

Around this period, further names were added to the indigenous names of Lagos, though the local name *Eko* is not usually mentioned in European sources of the time. On a map drawn by the Dutch cartographer Willem Blaeu, however, and published in 1635, the name *Ichoo* was given to an imaginarily extended island along the Bight of Benin. As remarked by Robin Law, there is no doubt that this represented the indigenous name *Eko*, and that the cartographic mistake was due to a dependence on fragmentary verbal reports for the contemporary construction of maps. It is also very likely that one of the main Portuguese names for Lagos and its environs during the seventeenth century, Curamo, originated in the Bini word *Eko*. Oral traditions of African groups of this region, especially in the Benin area, like the Ijebu, Itsekiri, and Ijo, refer to Lagos as *Korame*, *Ikurame*, or *Ukuroama*. Historically, these groups had been in direct or indirect contact with Portuguese and other European traders who may have preserved one version or another of the Bini phrase *Eko ne ame*, that is, "Eko [military camp] on the river" (Law, 1983: 330).[2]

During the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, Lagos and sometimes its neighboring environment were referred to as *Curamo* in Portuguese sources and in those of other European trading powers like the Dutch, French, and

British who were active along the West African coast. Similar variations were apparent for Lagos and its environs, particularly on maps, such as *Lago do Curamo* (i.e., "Lake of Curamo"), *Caran*, or *Karam* and *Kuramo*, while the Lagosians were sometimes referred to as *Couranas* (Law, 1983: 330–331, 342). The toponym *Curamo* was used in parallel to another Portuguese name that became more dominant towards the end of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth, that is, "Onim." Among the other variations of *Onim* in contemporary sources, especially Portuguese and French, were *Aunis*, *Ahoni*, or *Onis*. These names, as explained by Law, were probably derived from *Awori*, the Yoruba sub-group to which the first residents of *Oko* belonged (1983: 343).

The toponym *Onim* became gradually more prevalent beginning in the 1760s, when direct trade was initiated between Lagos and the Europeans with the invitation to the Portuguese by Oba Akinsemoyin. The Portuguese traders were given land around Campos Square, an area to the southwest of the indigenous neighborhood of Isale Eko. This became known first as the Portuguese Town, and, within a few decades, as the Brazilian Quarter (Figure 1). The whitewashed houses of the Portuguese, reminiscent of their metropolitan provincial cities, were aligned along streets with trees, and were simple, one-storied buildings. The "Brazilians," however, were self-emancipated slaves who settled down at the site of the Portuguese Town in the 1880s. The Portuguese traders who were involved in the slave trade were later deported by the British in favor of "legitimate trade."

It seems that Lagos could already be characterized as a polyglot or hybrid town on the eve of the British intervention in 1851 and their establishment of the Consular regime during the following ten years. Lagos's markets, owing much of their prosperity to the slave trade but also to products such as cloth, food, and palm oil, attracted many immigrants from various parts of Nigeria-to-be and beyond. In its rich ethnic composition, Lagos was thus distinct from other pre-colonial Yoruba settlements, and should consequently not be dismissed as a monolithic native town. The hub of the area was still the *Iga Idunganran* of Isale Eko, the first and most important quarter in Lagos. The aristocracy of Awori Yoruba and Bini was gradually joined by other Yoruba groups, each of which settled down in an area of its own, followed by the chiefs (Aderibigbe, 1975: 20).

From Onim to Lagos

In 1901 the Yoruba historian Obadiah Johnson concluded that two main events and their consequential changes had affected contemporary Lagos. The first was the Fulani invasion from the north and the internal Yoruba wars; the second was the advent of the British missionary, trader, and administrator; and the connection between the two was, according to him, "the foreign slave trade" (1901: 27). Pressures by Fulani Islamic groups from Hausaland southwards brought about the collapse of the Old Oyo Empire of the Yoruba around 1835. The alliances between various Yoruba powers that comprised this empire had already weakened, and were now finally broken. These powers invaded each other's territories and demolished each other's towns — a process that brought forth an inflow of refugees with their own guerrillas, as well as rival, newly created Yoruba settlements. In addition, arms and

ammunition originally from the coast were brought to the hinterland by missionaries. There, several groups were apparently happy to embrace Christianity in order to save their bodies, rather than their souls. The only stable factor in this unstable situation was the influx of slaves to the coast (Herskovits, 1960: 38–46).

On the western coast, Lagos became a chief slave trade center, at the expense of Porto-Novo, where French slavers were held back by the Anglo-French war in 1793 and the abolition of the slave trade in France a year later. Yet British slavers were still operating in Lagos, and more than 7000 slaves were exported from there annually until 1800 (Law, 1983: 347) — a sufficient supply during the Oyo wars. Moreover, even the subsequent British abolition of slavery had little effect on Lagos's position as the single place along the western coast where the slave trade was still in operation, chiefly due to its physical environment, which increased the operation there of vessels of the British Royal Naval Squadron. Lagos Lagoon was unapproachable for large vessels not only because its mouth was too shallow, and blocked by dangerous swampy mud, but on account of a network of coastal lagoons, parallel to the Atlantic but unreachable and hidden from the ocean, which nonetheless allowed human access by means of canoes (PRO, MR 1/145, "Lagos and southern Nigeria," 1893). This network, facing the Bight of Benin, yet unseen from it, interconnected several coastal towns stretching from Porto Novo towards Benin, not skipping over Lagos in the middle.

The persistence of the slave trade in Lagos Island was the formal explanation of the bombardment in 1851. The latter initiated the British "Consular Period" that lasted for ten years, during which time the British Consul, initially based offshore at Fernando Po, was transferred to Lagos. The former Oba was restored, following his consent to sign a treaty that prohibited slave trade and human sacrifice and which secured protection for missionaries and free trade. Contemporary British missionaries and colonial historical accounts tend to regard moral disapproval of slavery as the main reason for the future occupation and colonial rule of the area (Wilson, 1852: 1–23; Straith, 1853: 12–16; Geary, 1924: n.p.; Perham, 1937: 13); whereas other European scholars prefer to emphasize the economic factor in the British seizure (especially Hopkins, 1980: 777–798). Nigerian historians, however, have pointed to various political rivalries in Lagos and its neighboring territories, each trying to take advantage of the circumstances and acting in self-interest, with the British getting increasingly involved (Ade-Ajayi, 1976: 200–222; Ikime, 1977: 93–101).

The name *Lagos* itself — from the Portuguese *lago* or *lagõa* ("Lake" or "lagoon") — permanently replaced all the other names only when Portuguese influence started to fade and gave way to the British. Existing before in various versions such as *Rio de Lagos*, *Rio de Lagua*, or *Rade de Lagos* (which means "Lagos River" or "Anchorage"), these versions also imply that West African Lagos might have been named after the old maritime town "Lagos" in southern Portugal. From the mid-fifteenth century the latter was the main center of the Portuguese expeditions down the African coast, and through its slave markets the first African slaves were introduced into post-medieval Europe (Newitt, 2004: 24–28). However, it was especially between 1854 and 1856 — with the consolidation of the British suzerainty — that the name *Lagos* finally replaced *Onim* and the latter disappeared from European sources. This distinction was made in Pierre Verger's pioneering toponymic study of Lagos

and its former name Onim (1959: 350). Considering the remarkable and colorful career of this self-taught ethnographer, it might not be surprising that Verger's study is outstanding and so far without precedent in terms of subject choice and the variety of the consulted archives from both sides of the Atlantic, that is, Brazil and Nigeria. Parisian-born and based in the city of Salvador, Verger devoted most of his life (1902–1996) to the study of the African diaspora and Yoruba culture (Souty, 2007).

Lagos

The Consular Period marked the establishment of a *pax Britannica* both among the opposing regional factors and between them and the British, a peace further consolidated by the formal annexation of Lagos in 1861. News about the 1851 bombardment of Lagos and the Oba's restoration attracted to Lagos new groups of immigrants, repatriates, and expatriates. These heterogeneous inflowing groups reflected Lagos's physical and strategic situation as a crossroad, "a point where highways from the interior, by rivers, lagoons and through the forest, meet the highways of the ocean" (Smith, 1978: 128). In the course of this process, Lagos was practically organized in the form of quarters, and two distinct quarters gradually adjoined the existing Isale Eko and the Brazilian Quarter. Yet, until the late nineteenth century, the British sought to keep colonial intervention to a minimum, including their involvement in the building and amelioration of the island's physical infrastructure.

There were two other quarters in Lagos, however, aside from Isale Eko, whose residents were estimated at 30,000 in 1859 (Baker, 1974: 24), and the Brazilian Quarter which had 3000 residents in 1881, about nine per cent of the total population (Dioka, 2001: 181). These were the "Saro Town" and the European neighborhood. The Saro Town was inhabited by immigrants from Sierra Leone, duly called *Saro*-s, many of whom were lucky to be emancipated, while still in the Atlantic on their way back from the Americas, by the British Royal Naval Squadron. After the British seizure of Lagos, their immigration grew quickly, reaching 2500 by the 1860s, about ten percent of the total population (Baker, 1974: 21). They lived in the southwestern part of town, inhabiting an area granted by Oba Akitoye in 1852 to the head of their community.

Indeed, it might be an overstatement to refer to the few grouped warehouses of the European traders who came to Lagos after 1851 as the fourth or "European Quarter." Yet that thin strip along the southern shore of Lagos Island would consolidate within the next decades and create the Marina — a desirable and prestigious part of Lagos from the colonizer's point of view. Indeed, at this stage, the few European traders were not British, but French, Austrian, German, and Italian; and it was only during the next several decades that the British element became dominant. In all, the number of Europeans in Lagos was never great, reaching 250 by the end of the nineteenth century (Mabogunje, 1968: 242) (Figure 1).

The Lagos Treaty of Cession of August 6 1861 marked the formal initiation of the British rule in Lagos Island, and also the Eurocentrization of cartography and the history of colonial Nigeria. From this point, the Portuguese name *Lagos* became the only official name for *Eko*, though the indigenous population and the African repatriate resident groups have continued to refer to Lagos Island as *Eko*. Thus,

beginning in the early 1860s, the name *Lagos* acquired official prominence: it was internationally accepted by other European agencies who were active in contemporary Lagos — as is testified, for instance, in the account of the Italian Consul Giambattista Scala (Smith, 2000); and it was the only name used by the British colonizers and by European cartographers in identifying the area on world maps.

"It is important to stress that Dosunmu was *forced* to sign the [August 1861] treaty," wrote the Nigerian Historian Obaro Ikime (1977: 100); and British correspondence of several months earlier did indeed repeatedly refer to the permanent presence of "Her Majesty's Gun Boats" in Lagos Lagoon. These were intended to protect Lagos's contemporary Oba "King Docemo" — the British had difficulty pronouncing his original name — against the possible return of the previous Oba of Lagos, who supported the slave trade. Under the then political turmoil it is very unlikely that Lagos's local population took any military action or any other kind of overt opposition against the name "Lagos." As to Lagos's intellectual elite, it seems that, in the decades that followed the British colonization, they embraced the name "Lagos" in order to combat, by legal means, the British colonial presence itself and the urgent problem of land ownership (Macaulay, 1912: 1–3; Payne, 1893).

During colonial times, the boundaries of Lagos receded behind the core island, along with the number of residents. This was true well before the emergence of Nigeria as a unified state in 1914 with Lagos as its capital, or the declaration of its most privileged status as a First Class Township in 1917.[3] The extended area of Lagos included, by the late nineteenth century, the adjunct Ikoyi and Victoria Islands, the offshore Iddo Island and another part of Ebute-Metta on the mainland (Adejuyigbe, 1969: 481). In the following years, further mainland areas were constantly annexed to the Lagos administrative jurisdiction. In fact, the immense urban sprawl in the ever expanding fringe areas of Lagos has been another characteristic development problem, especially since the 1950s. During the de-colonization period and the establishment of the federal government (1950s–1960s), there were about 400,000 residents in Lagos Island and immediate environs. Yet, if we consider the total metropolitan area in this decade, Lagos constitutes the first West African city to pass the million mark (Sada and Adefolalu, 1975: 81). With about ten million residents today, it is the fastest growing city in Africa, competing only with Cairo.

The retention of the name Lagos, however, after the 1960 independence of Nigeria, for the then federal capital city might testify to a collective desire on the part of the Nigerians to remember and commemorate a vital part of their historical experience, despite the move to Africanize many colonial place names by newly independent African states since the 1960s, *Kinshasa* for *Leopoldville* (in Congo, then Zaire, and now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), or *Harare* for *Salisbury* (in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe) — to give only two, almost arbitrary, examples.

Conclusion

This article traces the historical genealogy of Lagos's former names. It uses a chronological approach, in which long intermediary phases between historical periods and their attached toponyms is acknowledged, showing that each toponym constitutes another layer in the conception and interpenetration of the site. Lagos's city text thus

represents a dynamic sphere of simultaneous discourses, of histories, memories and their associate imageries on the part of the urban actors — a heterogeneous group made up of local, regional, and foreign populations. From Oko or Eko to Lagos, the persistence of some of the names reflects the existence of corresponding, complementary or even competing narratives, and Lagos's site constitutes, *inter alia*, a sphere that is inherently rich in cultural and textual inscriptions.

Notes

[1] Numbering about fifty million, the Yoruba are one of the largest ethnic groups in West Africa. Concentrated in the southwestern part of Nigeria, they make up more than twenty percent of this country's total population. They are divided into numerous sub-ethnic groups — such as the Oyo, Ife, Egba, Awori, and Ijebu — each with its own Yoruba dialect and its own towns and villages (see for more Falola, 1999).

[2] For Blaeu's map of Guinea and for the identification of the Bini phrase and other regional traditions we are in debted to Robin Law. See especially his very detailed notes, numbers 44 and 46, in the aforementioned 1983 article.

[3] In 1914, the Northern and Southern Protectorates of the British colony were unified and became what is now recognized as "Nigeria" by Frederick J. D. Lugard, the Governor-General (1912–1919). Lagos was proclaimed Nigeria's capital city, and retained this status until well after its independence in 1960 when, in the early 1990s, the city of Abuja officially took its place as Nigeria's federal capital. In 1917, Lagos was ranked as the only First-Class Township in colonial Nigeria by Lugard — a privileged status that was directly related to the number of European residents and the allocation of facilities and amenities by the colonial government (Abumere, 1994: 265).

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