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The Changing Toponymy : The Place Names and their Vitality

Summary Cities names are given for many grounds. The ancient name generally dates from an historical event, or it is coined for a natural characteristics, for the name of an explorer, for a cultural or legendary matter, for the name of a founder, for the name of a prince, for a word in local language, for the name of a saint. In Antarctic the Queen Maud Land was named after the Norwegian queen Maud of Wales, wife of the king Haakon VII of Norway. The place name can be unchanged for centuries, if they have a great identity force or if their meaning is forgotten. Names which have a political meaning, both of a personage or a battle, can be changed, if the political situation strongly changes. But the old place name can be used by the inhabitants of the city. The same occurs for the names of the streets and squares of a city. But these last names frequently change.

Résumé

Les changements de noms de lieux : Les noms des lieux et leur vitalité.

Les noms des villes sont donnés pour de nombreuses raisons. L'ancien nom jusqu'ici généralement à partir d'un événement historique, ou il est inventé pour une des caractéristiques naturelles, le nom d'un explorateur, pour une question culturelle ou légendaire, le nom d'un fondateur, par le nom d'un prince, un mot dans la langue locale, le nom d'un saint. En Antarctique le Land de la Reine Maud est le nom de l'épouse du Roi Haakon VII de Norvège. Le nom de lieu peut être inchangé depuis des siècles, si elles ont une grande force d'identité ou si leur signification est oubliée. Les noms qui ont une signification politique, à la fois d'un personnage ou une bataille peuvent être modifiés, si la situation politique fortement changements. Mais l'ancien nom de lieu peut être utilisé par les habitants de la ville. La même chose se produit pour les noms des rues et places de la ville. Mais ces noms changent fréquemment.

Riassunto

I cambiamenti della toponimia. I nomi di luogo e la loro vitalità

Le città assumono un nome per diverse ragioni. Il nome antico si riferisce generalmente ad un avvenimento storico, o è coniato per caratteristiche naturali, per il nome di un esploratore, per un motivo culturale o leggendario, per il nome di un fondatore, per il nome di un principe, per una parola in lingua locale, per il nome di un santo. In Antartide il nome della Terra della Regina Maud si riferisce al nome della moglie di un ammiraglio. Il nome di luogo può rimanere inalterato per secoli, se ha una forza di identità o se il suo significato è dimenticato. I nomi che hanno un significato politico, sia per un personaggio o per una battaglia, possono cambiare, se la situazione politica cambia radicalmente. Ma il nome antico può essere utilizzato dagli abitanti della città. Lo stesso si verifica per i nomi delle strade e delle piazze della città. Ma questi nomi cambiano frequentemente.

1. Introduction

Cities names are given for many grounds. The ancient name generally dates from an historical event, or it is coined for a natural characteristics, for the name of an explorer, for a cultural or
legendary matter, for the name of a founder, for the name of a prince, for a word in local language, for the name of a saint. In Antarctic the Queen Maud Land was named after the Norwegian queen Maud of Wales, wife of the king Haakon VII of Norway.

The aim of this research is both historical and geographical. But I can take in consideration only a few names, giving only same examples, in both historical events and geographical distribution. Slight changes due to little linguistic and transcription differences are not considered.

My research begins from the Greek history, omitting the most ancient events because of the doubt about the news’ accuracy. The cities foundations began in the Mediterranean basin during the first and second Greek colonisation in 9th and 5th century BC. respectively. Many cities of Europa and Asia were founded by Alexander the Great during its military campaigns.

2. The cities of the Asia Minor and Magna Graecia and Sicily

The cities of the Minor Asia and Magna Graecia and Sicily changed their names only for little linguistic adaptations, except Byzantium, Alexandretta and Trebisonda.

**Byzantium** (Greek: Βυζάντιον) was founded by Greek colonists from Megara in 657 BC. The city was rebuilt as the new capital of the Roman Empire by Emperor Constantine I in 330 AD and renamed Constantinople. The city was conquered and became the capital of the Ottoman Empire in 1453. In 1923, under the Turkish rule, the city was named Istanbul. Perhaps the name of Byzantium has a Thracian or Illyrian origin from a Thracian or Illyrian personal name, Byzas.

The city was damaged in 196 AD and rebuilt by Septimius Severus, The Roman Emperor Constantine I, in 330 AD, refounded it as an imperial residence inspired by Rome itself (The secunda Roma) After his death the city was called Constantinople (Greek Κωνσταντινούπολις or Konstantinoupolis). On May 29, 1453, the city became the capital of the Ottoman Empire, with the name of Istanbul.

**Alexandretta** (Greek: Αλεξανδρέττα) was named İskenderun, or Scanderoon or Scandaroon after its conquest by the Arabs.

**Alexandretta** (Ἀλεξανδρέττα) was named in honour of Alexander the Great. The city was later renamed al-’Iskandarīn (Arabic إسكندرية) during the Islamic Caliphate and then İskenderun after the Ottoman conquest. The English name Scanderoon or Scandaroon is a corruption of yhe Turkish name.

The other city founded by Greeks on the coasts of Black Sea is **Trebisonda**, which was founded as Τραπεζοῦς (Trapezous) by Milesian traders (in 756 BC). This city changed the name only for linguistic adjustment, perhaps thanks to its permanent commercial function. In fact the name in Greek recalls the trade.

3. The cities founded by Greeks

The cities founded by Greeks, which changed their names are:

**Halicarnassus**, that was famous for the Mausoleum of Mausolus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The city was called Halicarnassus of Caria in ancient times and. Bodrum Castle, built by the Crusaders in the 15th century. The name Bodrum derives from Petronium, named from the Hospitaller Castle of St. Peter. The site was formerly known as Halicarnassus (Ancient Greek: Ἀλικαρνασσός, Turkish: Halikarnas).

**Constantia**. This city was known as Tomis (Greek: Κωνστάντια or Κωνστάντια, Konstantia, Bulgarian: Костенджка or Констанци, Turkish: Köstence). **Tomis** (also called Tomi) was a Greek colony in the province of Scythia Minor on the Black Sea shore, founded around 600 BC. The name can be derived from Greek Τομή meaning cutpiece, section. In 29 BC the Romans called the
region *Limes Scythicus*. Tomis was later called Constantiana in honour of Constantine the Great (274-337). The earliest name was "Konstantina" ("Constantia") in 950.

4. The cities founded by Alexander the Great

An enormous contribution to city foundations in Asia Minor and Asia is due to Alexander the Great, who during his military campaigns founded (or seems to having founded) many cities, which were named from his name. We can list them in the following three groups:
(i) Some cities maintained the name of Alexander with little linguistic variations;
(ii) Many cities changed its name;
(iii) Some cities cannot be certainly findable.

Under those of the first group we have to consider:

**Alexandria** (Ἀλεξάνδρεια) was founded around a small pharaonic town c. 331 BC by Alexander the Great. It became an important centre of the Hellenistic civilization and remained the capital of Hellenistic and Roman & Byzantine Egypt for almost one thousand years until the Muslim conquest of Egypt in AD 641.

Hellenistic Alexandria was best known for the Lighthouse of Alexandria (Pharos), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World; its Great Library (the largest in the ancient world; now replaced by a modern one with international contribution); and the Necropolis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Middle Ages. Ongoing maritime archaeology in the harbor of Alexandria, which began in 1994, is revealing details of Alexandria both before the arrival of Alexander, when a city named *Rhacotis* existed there, and during the Ptolemaic dynasty.

**Alessandretta.** At its founding, the city was named *Alexandretta* (Ἀλεξάνδρεια) in honour of Alexander the Great. The city was later renamed *al-Iskandarūn* (Arabic إسكندر) during the Islamic Caliphate and then to */rfcenderun* after the Ottoman conquest. In English, the city was often known as Scanderoon or Scandaroon.

Among the cities of the second group, I can mention:

**Kandahar** or **Qandahar** (Pashto: کاندی Worm Qandar, Persian: کُنَدَر Qandar), known in older literature as **Candahar**. Alexander the Great founded the city now known as **Old Kandahar** in the 4th century BC and called it *Aλεξάνδρεια Αραχωσίας* (Alexandria of Arachosia).1

**Jhelum** (Urdu, Punjabi: جہلم, Greek: Αλεξάνδρεια Βουκεφάλα). Jhelum is a few miles upstream from the site of the Battle of the Hydaspes between the armies of Alexander the Great and Raja Porus. A city called Bucephala was founded nearby to commemorate the death of Alexander's horse, Sarosh. The name of the city is derived from the words Jal (pure water) and Ham (snow), as

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1 Some scholars believe that the name "Kandahar" may be a transliteration of "Is[kandar]", the local version of the name Alexander, after Alexander the Great who founded the city in 330 BC and named it Alexandria

the river that flows through the river originates in the Himalayas. Jhelum's earliest name was Vitasta. 

Uch or Uch Sharif Urdu: (Greek: Ἀλξάνδρεια ἐν Ἠνδού ποταμῷ ) It is believed that in 325 BCE Alexander the Great founded a city called Alexandria on the Indus at the site of the last confluence of Punjab rivers with the Indus.[1] Nevertheless, some historians believe that Uch predates the advent of Bikramjit when Jains and Buddhists ruled over the area, and that Mithankot or Chacharan Sharif was the true settlement of Alexandria.

Herāt (Pashto / Persian: هرات) Herat dates back to ancient times, but its exact age remains unknown. During the period of the Achaemenid Empire (ca. 550-330 BC), the surrounding district was known as Haraiva.

At the time of Alexander the Great in 330 BC, Aria was obviously an important district. Historian Strabo writes that the Seleucids later gave the area south of the Hindu Kush to the Mauryas after a treaty was made.

Bagram (Bagrán, مرگمب Bagrám), founded as Alexandria on the Caucasus and known in medieval times as Kapisa, is a small town and seat in Bagram District in Parwan Province of Afghanistan, about 60 kilometers north of the capital Kabul. It is the site of an ancient city located at the junction of the Ghorband and Panjshir Valley, near today's city of Charikar, Afghanistan.

The location of this historical town made it a key passage from Ancient India along the Silk Road, leading westwards through the mountains towards Bamiyan.

It is unknown when the site was originally settled. In the mid 500s BC, Cyrus the Great of the Persian Achaemenid Dynasty destroyed the city as part of his campaign against the Saka nomads in the region. The town, however, was soon rebuilt by his successor Darius I.

In the 320s BC, Alexander the Great captured the city and established a fortified colony named Alexandria of the Caucasus. The new town, laid out in the "hippodamian plan" or iron-grid pattern—a hallmark of Greek city planning, had brick walls reinforced with towers at the angles. The central street was bordered with shops and workshops.

After his death in 323 BC, the city passed to his general Seleucus, who traded it with the Mauryans of India in 305 BC. After the Mauryans were overthrown by the Sunga Dynasty in 185 BC, the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom invaded and conquered northwestern India (present-day Pakistan) with an army led by Demetrius I of Bactria. Alexandria became a capital of the Eucratidian Indo-Greek Kingdom after they were driven out of Bactria by the Yuezhi in 140 BC.

Ai-Khanoum or Ay Khanum (lit. “Lady Moon” in Uzbek, possibly the historical Alexandria on the Oxus, also possibly later named دیپرکورس or Eucratidia), was founded in the 4th century BC, following the conquests of Alexander the Great and was one of the primary cities of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom. The city is located in Kunduz Province, northern Afghanistan, at the confluence of the Oxus river (today's Amu Darya) and the Kokcha river, and at the doorstep of the Indian subcontinent. Ai-Khanoum was one of the focal points of Hellenism in the East for nearly two

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centuries, until its annihilation by nomadic invaders around 145 BC about the time of the death of Eucratides 3.

**Alinda** was one of the richest cities of Caria. Alexander the Great was here in 334 BC for throwing Persians from Caria.

**Spasinu Charax** or **Charax Spasinu, Charax Pasinu, Charax Spasinou** (Ancient Greek: Σπασίνου Χάραξ, Alexandria (Greek: Αλεξάνδρεια), and **Antiochia in Susiana** (Greek: Ἀντιόχεια τῆς Σουσιανῆς) was an ancient port at the head of the Persian Gulf, and the capital of the ancient kingdom of Characene.

The name Charax, probably from Greek Χάραξ, literally means "palisaded fort", and was applied to several fortified Seleucid towns. Charax was originally named Alexandria, after Alexander the Great, and was perhaps even personally founded by him. After destruction by floods, it was rebuilt by Antiochus IV (175-164 BC) and renamed Antiochia. It was at this time provided with a massive antiflood embankment almost 4½ km long by Antiochus's governor, Hyspaosines, and renamed "Charax of Hyspaosines."

There is a theory that Charax derives from the Aramaic word Karkâ meaning 'castle', but Charax often attested at several other Seleucid towns with the meaning palisade.

The exact location of Charax is unknown, According to Pliny the Elder:

"The town of Charax is situated in the innermost recess of the Persian Gulf, from which projects the country called Arabia Felix. It stands on an artificial elevation between the Tigris on the right and the Karûn on the left, at the point where these two rivers unite, and the site measures two [Roman] miles [3 km] in breadth. It was founded by Alexander the Great with colonists from city Durîne... he ordered to call it Alexandria ... It was originally at a distance of 1½ miles (2.0 km) from the coast, and had a harbour of its own, but when Juba [Juba II, c. 50 BCE—c. CE 24] published his work it was 50 miles (80 km) inland; its present distance from the coast is stated by Arab envoys and our own traders who have come from the place to be 120 miles (190 km). There is no part of the world where earth carried down by rivers has encroached on the sea further or more rapidly..." 4

Two locations for Charax have been postulated.

- One possible site is a large mound known as Jabal Khuyabir or Naysan near the confluence of the Eulaicos/Karkheh and the Tigris Rivers as recorded by Pliny 5 Naysân could be a colloquial Arabic corruption of Maysân, the name of the Characene region during the early Islamic era.
- Hayabir hill near Al-Qurna Iraq, located near the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates, is less likely as Pliny would have mentioned the confluence. Surface finds here only date back to the Sasanian and early Islamic era but excavations have not yet taken place.
- Another possibility is that the town was obliterated from the archeological record when its dike collapsed and/or one of the rivers in the delta changed course.

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A history of the Charax can be distilled primarily from ancient text and numismatic sources, as the city has never been excavated.

The city was established by Alexander the great in 324 replacing a small Persian settlement Durine. Here he established a quarter (dēmē) of the port called Pella named after Alexander’s own town of birth where he settled Macedonian veterans. The city passed to the Seleucid empire and Alexander's death until it was destroyed at some point by flooding.

The city was rebuilt about 166 BC by order of Antiochus VI who appointed Hyspaosines as satrap to oversee the work. The political instability that followed the Parthian conquest of most of the Seleucid Empire allowed Hyspaosines to establish an independent state, Characene, 127 BC. He renamed the city after himself.

Charax remained the capital of the small state for 282 years, with the numismatic evidence suggesting it was a multi-ethnic Hellenised city with extensive trading links. The Romans under Trajan annexed the city in 116 AD. Characene independence was re-established 15 years latter under the rule of Mithridates, a son of the Parthian King Pacoros, during his a civil war for the Parthian throne. From this time the coinage from Charax indicates a more Parthian culture.

In 221-22 AD an ethnic Persian, Ardašēr who was satrap of Fars lead a revolt against the Parthians, establishing the Sassanid Empire. According to later Arab histories he defeated Characene forces, killed its last ruler, rebuilt the town and renamed it Astarābād-Ardašēr. The area around Charax that had been the Characene state was thereon known by the Aramaic/Syriac name, Maysān, which was later adapted by the Arab conquerors.

Charax continued, under the name Maysan, with Persian texts making various mention of governors through the fifth century and there is mention of a Nestorian Church here in the sixth century. The Charax mint appears to have continued through the Sassanid empire and into the Umayyad empire, minting coin as late as 715AD.

Charax was finally abandoned during the 9th century because of persistent flooding and a dramatic decrease in trade with the west.

The following third group of cities named Alexandria have an unknown location:

Alexandria Asiana, in Iran
Alexandria Nicea, in India
Alexandria Troade, in Turchia

5. *The cities founded by Celts and Romans*

The cities founded by Celts and Romans changed a little during the time. We have many examples of cities founded by Celts. The major of these are:

**Beograd.** the first Celtic name of Beograd, Singidūn, was named the first time in 279 BC. Roman changed the name in Singidunum. Since 824 and for some decades, under the Bulgarian rule of the Serbian territories Belograd was known as Alba Bulgarica.

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5 Pliny, 6.31.138
6 Characene and Charax,Characene and Charax , in Encyclopaedia Iranica.
The name Beograd (Београд = white city) was given by the Pope John 8th but it was used for a short time. Bulgarians who ruled the city called it Alba Greca.

Hungarians named Beograd Fehérvár, Nádorbal, Nándorfehérvár e Lándorfhehérvár, whilst Germans called it with the popular name of Weissenburg. I Bizantini, che dominaron la città per diversi secoli, la denominarono Veligradion (Βελιγράδιον), mentre gli italiani, anticamente, usavano Castelbianco. Durante l'occupazione ottomana, la città era detta Darülcihad. Prinz-Eugenstadt fu il nome di Belgrado durante l'occupazione tedesca nella seconda guerra mondiale.

Lyons was founded according to a legend by the king Atepomaro and by druido Momoro. The Roman city was founded in BC, by the lieutenant of Julius Cesar, Lucius Munatius Plancus, on the hill of Fourvière (Forum Vetus). He named the city Lugdunum, i.e. "fortress of the God Lúg", the greatest deity of the Gauls.

Bologna was named by the Etruscans Velzna or Felzna in 534 BC, when the city was founded. With a latinisation the Romans called the city Felsina. The Romans renamed the city Bononia, perhaps on the basis of the celtic name with the Galli Boi gave to the city when conquered it in 358-54 BC. In Italian we use still the adjective “Felsineo” as a synonym of “Bolognese”.

Today the adjective “felsineo” is stil used.

Senigallia was founded in the 4th century B.C. by the Gallic tribe of the Senones and became the first Roman colony on the Adriatic shore. The Romans founded there a colony after their victory over the Senones (280 BC?): the attribute Gallica distinguishes it from Saena (Siena) in Tuscany.

Vibo Valentia. During its millenarian history, Vibo Valentia changed from time to time the name, according to different historic events:

(i) Veip or Veipone, pre-hellenic settlement;
(ii) Hipponion (in literary texts, but inhabitants used the name Veiponion then Eipionion): name of the Greek colony;
(iii) Vibo Valentia during the Roman rule;
(iv) Monteleone from the Suevian period to the Fascismus.

6. Other cities in Europa

Wien. Perhaps the name comes from Vedunia, meaning “forest stream”. Then the name changed in Venia, Wienne and Wien. An other opinion is that the name comes from the Roman settlement of Celtic name Vinдобона, which means “white base/bottom [land]”. The name became Vindovina, Videň and Wien. The English name Vienna is borrowed from the Italian name Vienna. In other languages the name of the city is: Bécs in Hungarian, Beč in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian and Beç in Ottoman Turkish. Perhaps the name has a different Slavonic origin, and originally referred to an Avar fort in the area. In Slovene, the city is called Dunaj, which in other Slavic languages means the Danube River, on which it is located.

7 The name Felsina is recorded by Plinius, in Nat. Hist. III, 15 «intus coloniae Bononia, Felsina vocitata tum cum princeps Etruria esset». The place name Felsina is still in province of Siena (commune of Castelnuovo Berardenga), in an area where the Etruscan names are widespread (like Orvieto, Bolsena etc.)

8 Cicero quotes the inhabitants of Vibo Valentia: « Ipsis autem Valentinis ex tam Illustri Nobilique Municipio [...]» (in Verrem actio secunda)
Chemnitz; Upper Sorbian: Kamjenica, Czech: Saská Kamenice. The city was named from 1953 to 1990 Karl-Marx-Stadt.

Chemnitz is named after the river Chemnitz, a small tributary of the Zwickauer Mulde. The word "Chemnitz" is from the Sorbian language and means "stony brook". It is named in Czech Saská Kamenice.

Wrocław, in German is called Breslau, in Italian Breslavia; is known also by several alternative names.

Gdansk. The city's name is thought to originate from the Gdania River the original name of the Motława branch on which the city is situated. Gdański has had many different names throughout its history. The name of a settlement was recorded after St. Adalbert's death in AD 997 as urbs Gyddanyzc and later was written as Kdanzk in 1148, Gdanze in 1188, Danceke in 1228, Gdansk in 1236, Danze in 1263, Dancz in 1311, Danczik in 1399, Danzig in 1414, and Gdańsk in 1636. In English the usual pronunciation is /ɡəˈdɑːnsk/. The German name of the city is "Danzig", Danzica in Italian. The city's Latin name may be given as either Gedania, Gedanum or Dantiscum; the variety of Latin names reflects the mixed influence of the city's Polish, German and Kashubian heritage. Other former spellings of the name include Dantzig, Dantsic and Dantzic.

The Romans founded many cities, but their names are generally inchanged.

The name Paris derives from the Gaulish of the Parisii. The city was called Lutetia Parisiorum, "Lutetia of the Parisii"), during the Roman era of the 1st to the 4th century AD, but during the reign of Julian the Apostate (360–363), the city was renamed Paris. It is believed that the name of the Parisii tribe comes from the Celtic Gallic word parisio, meaning "the working people" or "the craftsmen".

Cologne. In 39 BC. The tribe of the Ubi came to an agreement with the Roman authorities to settle on the left bank of the Rhine; the Roman settlement was named Ara Ubiorum or Oppidum Ubiorum. In 49 BC Agrippina minor, the wife of the emperor Claudius and daughter of Germanicus, asked that her native village became colonia. Then the village was called Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium ("Claudius’s colonia and Agrippina’s altar") or simply, Colonia Agrippina.

7. The cities of the Russian Empire, to Soviet state and to Russian Republic

The major changes of the city names are due to the Russian Empire, to Soviet state and to Russian Republic.

Saint Petersburg (Russian: Санкт-Петербург). In 1914 the name of the city was changed to Petrograd (Russian: Петроград), in 1924 to Leningrad (Russian: Ленинград), and in 1991, back to Saint Petersburg. In many Russian documents, the "Saint" (Санкт-) is usually omitted, leaving Petersburg (Петербург, Peterburg). Saint Petersburg was founded by the Tsar Peter the Great on May 27.

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Volgograd (in Russian: Волгоград). From 1598 to 1925 its name was Caricyn o Tsaritsyn (in Russian: Царицын) and then Stalingrad (in Russian: Сталинград) from 1925 to 1961. In 1961 the city was named again Volgograd ("City of the Volga"), by order of Nikita Kruscoiv who provided for the de-Stalinization of the the Sovietic Union. There were many proposal to rename the city Stalingrad during the short administration in 1985 of the President Konstantin Chernenko. In this time the name the city is again Stalingrad, in honour of the heroic battle of the Second World War.

In Russia was founded Togliatti according the name of the known Italian communist political figure, because an Italian car factory was constructed there, but the name has been not changed. Togliatti o Tol'jatti (in Russian : Тольятти), known in Italy also with the name anche with the name Togliattigrad. Founded in 1737 with the name of Stavropol'-na-Volge (Ставрополь-На-Волге), in 1964 took the present name in honour of, Palmiro Togliatti, at that moment secretary of the Italian Communist Party During the '50s the filling of the dam of Kujbyšev completely destroyed the city, that was rebuilt elsewhere.

Ashgabat (Turkmen: Aşgabat, Persian: اشک‌آباد, also Ashkhabad in transliteration from Russian, formerly Poltoratsk between 1919–1927) is the capital and largest city of Turkmenistan, a country in Central Asia. Ashgabat is Aşgabat in Turkmen, Aşxâbât (Ashkhabad) in Russian, and داشک‌آباد (UniPers: Esq-âbâd) in Persian. From 1919 until 1927, the city was renamed Poltoratsk after a local revolutionary. Before 1991, the city was usually spelled Ashkabad in English, a transliteration of the Russian form, which was itself from the original Persian form. It has also been variously spelled Ashkhabat and Ashgabat.Root of the name of the city goes back to Arshacid Empire era, and derived from the name of the founder of the Parthian Empire, Arsaces I of Parthia. So it seems the original form of the name was Ashk-Abad (which means the city built by Ashk), and because of Turkish pronunciation of the name it became like it is today. Ashgabat is a relatively young city, growing out of a village of the same name established by Russian officers in 1881 after the Battle of Geok Tepe. It is not far from the site of Nisa, the ancient capital of the Parthian Empire, and it grew on the ruins of the Silk Road city of Konjikala, which was first mentioned as a wine-producing village in the 2nd century BC and was leveled by an earthquake in the 1st century BC (a precursor of the 1948 Ashgabat earthquake). Konjikala was rebuilt because of its advantageous location on the Silk Road and it flourished until its destruction by Mongols in the 13th century. After that it survived as a small village until Russians took over in the 19th century.10

Nizhny Novgorod (Russian: Нижний Новгород; colloquially shortened to Nizhny. From 1932 to 1990, it was known as Gorky (Горький) after the writer Maxim Gorky who was born there. The city is an important economic, transportation and cultural center of Russia and the vast Volga-Vyatka economic region.

Dushanbe is the capital of Tajikistan. Although archaeological remnants dating to the 5th century BC have been discovered in the area, there is little to suggest that Dushanbe was more than a small village until the early 20th century. Dushanbe, which means "Monday" in Tajik, developed on the site of a Monday marketplace village, Dyushambe-Bozor, and its former name Dyushambe was a Russified version of the word meaning "Monday" in Tajik (du-shanbe from du two + shanbe

Saturday, lit. "second day after Saturday"). The city was renamed as **Stalinabad** between 1931 and 1961.

**Doneck** (ukr. Донецьк, rus. Донецк, also *Donetsk*) was founded in 1869 by the Welsh businessman John Hughes, who constructed a steel industry and some coal mines close to Oleksandrivka, a cosak village. The name of the city was *Juzovka (Юзовка)*, a Russian version of Hughesovka. In 1924, during the changes of the names decided by the Soviet Union the city changed the name in *Stalino*, not in honour of Josif Stalin as many think, but for the big steel production (in Russian, *стал*). After the Second World War, the city was rebuilt. During the destalinisation due to Nikita Khruščëv in November 1961, all Soviet cities were again renamed. The city changed the name of Stalino into that of **Doneck**, in honour of the river Donec.

**Astana** (Russian/Kazakh: *Астана*, formerly known as *Akmola* (Kazakh: *Ақмола / Ақмола*) until 1998, *Tselinograd* (Russian: *Целиноград*) until 1992 and *Akmolinsk* (Russian: *Акмолинск*) until 1961), has been the capital of Kazakhstan since 1997, and is the country's second largest city (after Almaty, the former capital). The word **Astana** in Kazakh literally means *Capital* but the word itself originates from Persian *Astane* (Persian: *آستانه*) means "sublime threshold", "royal porte" implying a royal capital city or a holy shrine town, (from the Persian verb *Istadan* (زِدَّاتَن) 'to stand' (in respect)), and literally means "threshold" (royal or sacred, where people stand in respect or awe), implying where the court is seated (the capital city) or the body of a sacred person is interred (a shrine town). The city of Turkestan in Kazakhstan that hosts the body of the saint Ahmad Yasavi is also called the "astana" as is the city of Mashhad in Iran that is the burial place of the 8th Shiite Imam Reza. In fact, long before becoming the new capital of Kazakhstan, the city was "an astana", a burial ground of a saint, hence the old name of the city, *Ak Mola* (Акмола), "white mausoleum". In June 2008, a parliamentary proposal was put forward to change the city's name to "Nursultan", in honor of President Nursultan Nazarbayev. The idea was rejected by Nazarbayev himself, who said the decision of renaming the city will be for future generations. Despite this, some commentators think that the generic name Astana was deliberately chosen so that it would be renamed in honour of Nazarbayev after his death.

**Tashkent** (also *Taškent*; in Uzbek *Тошкент о Тоукент*; in Russian *Ташкент о Тауке́м*) The city name changed many times: under the Chinese dynasty Han the city was named *Beitan*. Later it changed the name in *Chachkand*, *Tashkand* and than *Tashkent*. Tashkent's origins are old, because it was founded by Arabs in 750. In 1219 the city was destroyed by Gengis Khan, but it was rebuilt some years after. From 1809 to 1865 the city belonged to the Khanate of Kokand, and then ro the Russian Empire. **Tashkent** means literally "Stone City.

During its long history, Tashkent had various changes in names and political and religious affiliations.

In pre-Islamic and early Islamic times, the town and the province were known as *Chach*. The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi also refers to the city as Chach. Later the town came to be known as Chachkand/Chashkand, meaning "Chach City".

In the early 8th century, the region was influenced by Islamic immigrants.

Under the Samanid dynasty (819–999), whose founder Saman Khuda of an Zoroastrian Sassanian Persian had converted to Islam, the city came to be known as *Binkath*. However, the Arabs retained the old name of *Chach* for the surrounding region, pronouncing it *al-Shash* instead.
The modern Turkic name of Tashkent (City of Stone) comes from Kara-Khanid rule in the 10th century. (Tash in Turkic languages means stone. Kand, qand, kent, kad, kath, kud—all meaning a city—are derived from the Persian/Sogdian کند kanda, meaning a town or a city. They are found in city names such as Samarkand, Yarkand, Penjikent, Khujand etc.). After the 16th century, the name evolved from Chachkand/Chashkand to Tashkand. The modern spelling of "Tashkent" reflects Russian orthography and 20th-century Soviet influence.

The city was destroyed by Genghis Khan in 1219, although the great conqueror had found that the Khorezmshah had already sacked the city in 1214. Under the Timurids and subsequent Shaybanid dynasties the city revived, despite occasional attacks by the Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Persians, Mongols, Oirats.

Königsberg was the capital of Prussia from the Late Middle Ages until 1701 when the capital was moved to Berlin. During the period from 1701 until 1945 it was the regional capital of the Prussian (and from 1871, German) province of East Prussia. It was the easternmost large German city until it was captured by the Soviet Union and Allies near the end of World War II. In 1946 the rebuilt city was renamed Kaliningrad (Калининград).

The literal meaning of the town's name is 'King's Mountain'. In the local Low German dialect, spoken by many of its German inhabitants, the name was Königsberg. Further names include Old Prussian: Kunnegsgarbs, Knigsberg, Lithuanian: Karaliaučius, Polish: Królewiec, and the modern Russian and current official name, Kaliningrad.

Königsberg was founded in 1255 on the site of the ancient Old Prussian settlement Twangste by the Teutonic Knights during the Northern Crusades, and was named in honour of King Ottokar II of Bohemia.

While between the thirteenth and the nineteenth century the inhabitants spoke predominantly German, the multicultural city also had a profound influence on the Lithuanian and Polish cultures. The city was a publishing centre of Polish language literature and of Polish Lutheranism. The first Polish translation of the New Testament was printed in the city in 1551. The first book in Lithuanian language and the first Lutheran catechism was printed in Königsberg in 1547.

During World War II Königsberg was heavily damaged by Allied bombing in 1944 and during its siege in 1945. The city was captured and annexed by the Soviet Union, its German population completely expelled, and it was repopulated with Russians and other people from the Soviet Union. Briefly Russified as Kyonigsberg (Кенингсберг), it was renamed "Kaliningrad" in 1946 in honour of the Soviet leader Mikhail Kalinin. The city is now the capital of Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast.

8. The cities of North America

The Dutch were the first European settlers to settle in the area and founded the cities of Fort Nassau, Fort Oranje and Nieuw Amsterdam. In 1660 the territory passed to England who renamed it from New Amsterdam to New York, in honor of the Duke of York, who would later become King James II. The territory was organized in a method that is still followed, dividing the state into 12 counties, each of which is divided into the city.

9. The cities of India
Varanasi also Benares, Banaras (Banāras or Kashi) is a city on the banks of the Ganges (Ganga) in Uttar Pradesh. It is holiest of the seven sacred cities (Sapta Puri) in Hinduism and Jainism. Hindus believe that death at Varanasi brings salvation. It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and the oldest in India.

The name Vārāṇasi possibly originates from the names of the two rivers: Varuna, still flowing in Varanasi, and Asi, a small stream near Assi Ghat. Another speculation is that the city derives its name from the river Varuna, which was called Varanasi in olden times. Through the ages, Varanasi has been known by many names including Kāśi or Kashi (used by pilgrims dating from Buddha's days), Kāśikā (the shining one), Avimukta ("never forsaken" by Shiva), Ānandavana (the forest of bliss), and Rudravāsa (the place where Rudra/Siva resides).

In the Rigveda, the city is referred to as Kāśī or Kashi, the luminous city as an eminent seat of learning. The name Kāśī is also mentioned in the Skanda Purana. In one verse, Shiva says, "The three worlds form one city of mine, and Kāśī is my royal palace therein."

According to legend, Varanasi was founded by the god Shiva. Varanasi was ceded to the Union of India on 15 October 1948. After the death of Dr. Vibhuti Narayan Singh in 2000, his son Anant Narayan Singh became the figurehead king, responsible for upholding the traditional duties of a Kashi Naresh.

Chennai (formerly, Madras) is the capital city of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Located on the Coromandel Coast off the Bay of Bengal, it is a major commercial, cultural, economic and educational center in South India. The area around Chennai had been part of successive South Indian kingdoms through centuries. The recorded history of the city began in the colonial times, specifically with the arrival of British East India Company and the establishment of Fort St. George in 1644. The British defended several attacks from the French colonial forces, and from the kingdom of Mysore, on Chennai's way to becoming a major naval port and presidency city by the late eighteenth century. Following the independence of India, Chennai became the capital of Tamil Nadu and an important centre of regional politics that tended to bank on the Dravidian identity of the populace.

The name Chennai is a shortened form of Chennapattanam, the name of the town that grew around Fort St. George, which was built by the English in 1639. There are two versions about the origin of the name Chennapattanam: according to one version, Chennapattanam was named after the Telugu ruler Damarla Chennappa Nayakudu, Nayaka of Kalahasthi and Vandavasi, father of Damarla Venkatadri Nayakudu, from whom the English acquired the town in 1639. The first official use of the name Chennai is said to be in a sale deed, dated 8 August 1639, to Francis Day of the East India Company. According to the second account, Chennapattanam was named after the Chenna Kesava Perumal Temple; the word chenni in Tamil means face, and the temple was regarded as the face of the city.

The city's colonial name, Madras, is believed to have been derived from Madraspattinam, a fishing village north of Fort St. George. However, it is uncertain whether the name 'Madraspattinam' was in use before European influence. The military mapmakers believed Madras was originally Mundiraj, or abbreviatedly, Mundiraj. Other arguments suggest that the Portuguese, who arrived in the area in the 16th century, had named the village Madre de Deus, meaning the Mother of God. Another possibility is that the village's name came from the prominent Madeiros family of

Portuguese origin, which consecrated the Madre de Deus Church in the Santhome locality of Chennai in 1575. Another theory concludes that the name Madras was given to Chennapattanam after it was taken from a similarly named Christian priest, while other parties are of the opinion that it might have been taken from a fisherman by the name of Madrasan, or from religious Muslim schools which were referred to as Madrasahs, or the word Madhu-ras, which means honey in Sanskrit.

After the British gained possession of the area in the 17th century, the two towns, Madraspattinam and Chennapattinam, were merged, and the British referred to the united town as Madrasapattinam. The state government officially changed the name to Chennai in 1996, at a time when many Indian cities were being renamed. However, the name Madras continues to be occasionally used for the city, as well as for places named after the city, such as the University of Madras and The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras. The Portuguese first arrived in 1522 and built a port called São Tomé after the Christian apostle, St. Thomas, who is believed to have preached in the area between 52 and 70 AD. In 1612, the Dutch established themselves near Pulicat, north of Chennai. On 22 August 1639, which is referred to as Madras Day, the British East India Company under Francis Day bought a small strip of land stretching 3 miles on the Coromandel Coast. They got a license to build a fort and a castle in the contracted region. The ruler Damara Chennappa Nayakudu, the Nayaka of Vandavasi, granted the British permission to build a factory and warehouse for their trading enterprises. The region was then primarily a fishing village known as "Madraspatnam". A year later, the British built Fort St. George, the first major British settlement in India, which became the nucleus of the growing colonial city (Fort St. George housed the Tamil Nadu Assembly until the new Secretariat building was opened in 2010).

**Bombay.** The name "Mumbai" comes from Mumba o Maha-Amba, the name of the goddess Mumbadevi, and from Aai, that means mother in the marathi language. The traditional name "Bombay" derives from the 16th century, when the Portugueses called the city "Bombaim". The British in the 17th century, used the name "Bombay". During the British rule on India, the pronunciation “Mumbai” or “Mambai” was used in marathi and gujarati, whilst the form “Bambai” was used in Hindostan and Persian. On 4th May 1995, the government of Maharashtra approved the name "Mumbai", after many years of discussions.

**Ahmedabad** (or Ahmadabad; sometimes collled with the old name of Karnavati, or Amdavad in a colloquial form of the language gujarati) is the chief town of the district of Ahmedabad.

The city was founded in the 15th by the sultan Ahmed Shah, on the river Sabarmati.

10. *The cities of China*

**Guangzhou** (known historically as Canton or Kwangchow) — is the capital and largest city of the Guangdong province, People's Republic of China. In 2008 Guangzhou was identified as a Beta World City by the global city index produced by the GaWC, the Globalization and World Cities Research Network.

**Shenyang** (pinyin: Shényǎng), or Mukden (in Manchu), is the capital and largest city of Liaoning Province, as well as the largest city in Northeast China. Currently holding sub-provincial administrative status, the city was once known as Shengjing or Fengtian Prefecture. The city's name, Shenyang, literally meaning "to the Yang side of the Shen River" (in Chinese tradition, a river's north bank and a mountain's south slope are considered to be the "sunny"—or "Yang"—side), referring to the Hun River—used to be called "Shen River"—on the city's south side. In 1625, the Manchu leader Nurhaci captured Shenyang and moved his capital to the city, or Simiyan
hoton as it is called in Manchu language. The official name was changed to Shengjing in Chinese, or Mukden in Manchu, in 1634. The name derives from the Manchu word, mukdembi meaning "to rise", and this is reflected by its Chinese name, which means "rising capital".

Guangzhou's earliest recorded name is Panyu, derived from two nearby mountains known as Pan and Yu in ancient times. Its recorded history begins with China's conquest of the area during the Qin Dynasty. Panyu expanded when it became capital of the Nanyue Kingdom in 206 BC; the territory of the Nanyue Kingdom included what is now Vietnam.

The Han Dynasty annexed the Nanyue Kingdom in 111 BC, and Panyu became a provincial capital and remains so today. In 226 AD, Panyu became the seat of Guang Prefecture (广州; Guangzhou / 廣府; Guangfu). While originally referring to the prefecture alone, local citizens gradually adopted the custom of using the same name for their city. [citation needed]

Although Guangzhou replaced Panyu as the name of the walled city, Panyu was still the name of the surrounding area until the end of Qing Dynasty. Today, Panyu is a district of Guangzhou south of Haizhu District separated from the rest of the city by the Pearl River.

The Old Book of Tang described Guangzhou as important port in the south of China. Arab and Persian merchants raided and looted warehouses in Guangzhou (known to them as Khanfu or Sin-Kalan) in AD 758. In that period, direct routes connected the Middle East and China. A Chinese prisoner, who was captured in the Battle of Talas and stayed in Iraq for twelve years, returned to China by ship on a direct route from Iraq to Guangzhou. Guangzhou was mentioned by various Muslim geographers in the ninth and tenth centuries, such as Al-Masudi and Ibn Khordadbeh, according to a local Guangzhou government report on October 30, 758, corresponding to the day of Guisi of the ninth lunar month in the first year of the Qianyuan era of Emperor Suzong of the Tang Dynasty. The Arab historian Abu Zayd as-Sirafi mentioned Guangzhou several times in his book *The Journey of as-Sirafi* (Arabic: كتاب سيرافى‎), providing a description of daily life, food, business dealings, and the justice system of the city. As-Sirafi also reports that in 878 followers of the Chinese rebel leader Huang Chao besieged Guangzhou and massacred a large number of foreign merchants residing there. The foreign merchants were Arab Muslims, Persians, Jews and Christians.

The Muslim Moroccan Traveler Ibn Battuta visited Guangzhou in the 14th century in his journey around the World. He described the manufacturing process of large ships in the city.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in Guangzhou by sea in 1514, establishing a monopoly on the external trade out of its harbour by 1517. They were later expelled from their settlements in Guangzhou (Cantão in Portuguese), but instead granted use of Macau as a trade base with the city in 1557. They would keep a near monopoly on foreign trade in the region until the arrival of the Dutch in the early 17th century.

It is believed that the romanisation "Canton" originated from the Portuguese Cantão, which was transcribed from Guangdong. Nevertheless, because at the time of the Portuguese arrival, the capital city had no specific appellation other than Shaang2 Sheng4(省城, lit. the provincial capital) by its people, the province name was adopted for the walled city by the Europeans. The etymology of Canton, as well as the similar pronunciation with the province name Guangdong might have partly contributed to the recent confusion of Canton and Guangdong by certain English speakers. However, definitive English lexica, such as Merriam–Webster's Dictionary, American Heritage Dictionary and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English do not list 'Guangdong' as a synonym (or variant) under 'Canton'.

After China gained control of Taiwan in 1683, the Qing government became more open to foreign trade. Guangzhou quickly emerged as one of the most suitable ports for international trade and before long ships arrived from all over the world.

The Portuguese in Macau, the Spanish in Manila, Arabs from the Middle East and Muslims from India were already actively trading in the port by the 1690s, when the French and English began frequenting the port through the Canton System.

Other companies were soon to follow: the Ostend General India company in 1717; Dutch East India Company in 1729; the first Danish ship in 1731, which was followed by a Danish Asiatic Company ship in 1734; the Swedish East India Company in 1732; followed by an occasional Prussian and Trieste Company ship; the Americans in 1784; and the first ships from Australia in 1788.

By the middle of the 18th century, Guangzhou had emerged as one of the world's great trading ports under the Thirteen Factories, which was a distinction it maintained until the outbreak of the First Opium War in 1839 and the opening of other ports in China in 1842. The privilege during this period made Guangzhou one of the top 3 cities in the world. During the war, the British captured Canton on March 18, 1841. The Second Battle of Canton was fought in May 1841.

The plague epidemic – part of the Third Pandemic – reached Guangzhou in 1894, causing the death of 60,000 people in a few weeks. In 1918, the city's urban council was established and "Guangzhou" became the official name of the city. Panyu became a county's name to the southern side of Guangzhou.

In both 1930 and 1953, Guangzhou was promoted to the status of a municipality, but each time promotion was rescinded within a year. During the war, the British captured Guangzhou on October 12, 1938, to September 16, 1945, after violent bombings. In the city, the Imperial Japanese Army conducted bacteriological research unit 8604, a section of unit 731, where Japanese doctors experimented on human prisoners.

After the fall of the capital Nanjing in April 1949, the Nationalist government under the acting president Li Zongren relocated to Guangzhou.

Communist forces entered the city on October 14, 1949. This led the nationalists to blow up the Haizhu Bridge as the major link across the Pearl River and to the acting president's leaving for New York, whereas Chiang Kai-shek set up the capital for the Nationalist government in Chongqing again. The urban renewal projects of the new communist government improved the lives of some residents. New housing on the shores of the Pearl River provided homes for the poor boat people. Reforms by Deng Xiaoping, who came to power in the late 1970s, led to rapid economic growth due to the city's close proximity to Hong Kong and access to the Pearl River.

11. The cities of Indochina

Ho Chi Minh City (Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh), formerly named Saigon, is the largest city in Vietnam.

Under the name Saigon, it was the capital of the French colony of Cochin-china and later of the independent republic of South Vietnam from 1955–75. South Vietnam, as an anti-communist,
capitalist republic, fought against the communist North Vietnamese and Viet Cong during the Vietnam War, with aid from the United States and countries including Australia, New Zealand and South Korea. Saigon fell when it was captured by the communists on 30 April 1975, ending the war with a Communist victory. Vietnam was then turned into a communist state with the South overtaken. On 2 July 1976, Saigon merged with the surrounding Gia Định Province and was officially renamed Ho Chi Minh City after Hồ Chí Minh (although the name Sài Gòn is still commonly used).

Sài Gòn may refer to the kapok (bông gòn) trees that are common around the city.

An etymology of Sài Gòn is that Sai is a Sino-Vietnamese word meaning "firewood, lops, twigs; palisade", while Gôn is another Sino-Vietnamese word meaning "stick, pole, bole", and whose meaning evolved into "cotton" in Vietnamese (bông gòn, literally "cotton stick", i.e., "cotton plant", then shortened to gòn). This name may refer to the many kapok plants that the Khmer people had planted around Prey Nokor, and which can still be seen at Cây Mai temple and surrounding areas. It may also refer to the dense and tall forest that once existed around the city, a forest to which the Khmer name, Prey Nokor, already referred.[11]

Other proposed etymologies draw parallels from Tai-Ngon, the Cantonese name of Cholon, which means "embankment" (French: quais), and Vietnamese Sai Cön, a translation of the Khmer Prey Nokor. Prey means forest or jungle, and nокor is a Khmer word of Sanskrit origin meaning city or kingdom, and related to the English word 'Nation' — thus, "forest city" or "forest kingdom".

Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh

The current official name, Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, abbreviated Tp. HCM, is translated as Ho Chi Minh City, abbreviated HCMC, and in French as Hô Chi Minh Ville (abbreviated HCMV. The name commemorates Hồ Chí Minh, the pre-eminent North Vietnamese leader. This name, though not his given name, was one he favored throughout his later years. It combines a common Vietnamese surname (Hồ, hör) with a given name meaning "enlightened will" (from Sino-Vietnamese; Chí meaning 'will' (or spirit), and Minh meaning 'light'), in essence, meaning "bringer of light".

Ho Chi Minh City began as a small fishing village known as Prey Nokor. The area that the city now occupies was originally swampland, and was inhabited by Khmer people for centuries before the arrival of the Vietnamese. In Khmer folklore southern Vietnam was given to the Vietnamese government as a dowry for the marriage of a Vietnamese princess to a Khmer prince in order to stop constant invasions and pillaging of Khmer villages.[13]

Beginning in the early 17th century, colonization of the area by Vietnamese settlers gradually isolated the Khmer of the Mekong Delta from their brethren in Cambodia proper and resulted in their becoming a minority in the delta. In 1623, King Chey Chettha II of Cambodia (1618–1628) allowed Vietnamese refugees fleeing the Trịnh–Nguyễn civil war in Vietnam to settle in the area of Prey Nokor and to set up a custom house there.[14] Increasing waves of Vietnamese settlers, which the Cambodian kingdom could not impede because it was weakened by war with Thailand, slowly Vietnamized the area. In time, Prey Nokor became known as Saigon. Prey Nokor was the most important commercial seaport to the Khmers. The loss of the city prevented the Cambodians access to the Indochine. Subsequently, the Khmers' access to the sea was now limited to the Gulf of Thailand.[citation needed]

In 1698, Nguyễn Hữu Cánd, a Vietnamese noble, was sent by the Nguyễn rulers of Huế by sea[15] to establish Vietnamese administrative structures in the area, thus detaching the area from Cambodia,
which was not strong enough to intervene. He is often credited with the expansion of Saigon into a significant settlement. A large Vauban citadel called Gia Định was built, which was later destroyed by the French following the Battle of Kỳ Hòa (see Citadel of Saigon). [citation needed]

Conquered by France in 1859, the city was influenced by the French during their colonial occupation of Vietnam, and a number of classical Western-style buildings and French villas in the city reflect this. Saigon had, in 1929, a population of 123,890, including 12,100 French.

The Vietnamese people had proclaimed their own independence in 1945 after a combined French and Japanese occupation, and before the Communist revolution in China. They were led by Ho Chi Minh. The US decided to support France in its reconquest of her former colony. [17][18]

Former Emperor Bảo Đại made Saigon the capital of the State of Vietnam in 1949 with himself as head of state. After the Việt Minh gained control of North Vietnam in 1954, it became common to refer to the Saigon government as "South Vietnam." The government was renamed the Republic of Vietnam when Bảo Đại was deposed by his Prime Minister Ngô Đình Diệm in 1955 in a fraudulent referendum. Saigon and Cholon, an adjacent city with many Sino-Vietnamese residents, were combined into an administrative unit known as the Đô Thành Sài Gòn (Capital City Saigon). At the conclusion of the Vietnam War on 30 April 1975, the city came under the control of the Vietnamese People's Army. Among Vietnamese diaspora communities and particularly the U.S. (which had fought the communists), this event is commonly called the "fall of Saigon," while the communist Socialist Republic of Vietnam refers to it as the "Liberation of Saigon." In 1976, upon the establishment of the unified communist Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the city of Saigon (including Cholon), the province of Gia Định and two suburban districts of two other nearby provinces were combined to create Ho Chi Minh City in honor of the late Communist leader Hồ Chí Minh. The former name Saigon is still widely used by many Vietnamese, especially in informal contexts.[19] Generally, the term Saigon refers only to the urban districts of Ho Chi Minh City.

12. The cities of Africa

Maputo, known as Lourenço Marques before independence, is the capital and largest city of Mozambique. It is known as the City of Acacias in reference to acacia trees commonly found along its avenues and the Pearl of the Indian Ocean. It was famous for the inscription "This is Portugal" on the walkway of its municipal building.

On the northern bank of Espírito Santo Estuary of Delagoa Bay, an inlet of the Indian Ocean, Lourenço Marques was named after the Portuguese navigator who, with António Caldeira, was sent in 1544 by the governor of Mozambique on a voyage of exploration. They explored the lower courses of the rivers emptying their waters into Delagoa Bay, notably the Espírito Santo. The forts and trading stations that the Portuguese established, abandoned and reoccupied on the north bank of the river, were all called Lourenço Marques. The existing town dates from about 1850, the previous settlement having been entirely destroyed by the natives. The town developed around a Portuguese fortress completed in 1787.

The People's Republic of Mozambique was proclaimed on 25 June 1975 in accordance with the Lusaka Accord signed in September 1974. A parade and a state banquet completed the independence festivities in the capital, which was expected to be renamed Can Phumo, or "Place of
Phumo," after a Shangaan chief who lived in the area before the Portuguese navigator Lourenço Marques first visited the site in 1545 and gave his name to it.[4] However, after independence, the city's name was changed (in February 1976) to Maputo. Maputo's name reputedly has its origin in the Maputo River. The statues to Portuguese heroes were removed and most were stored at the fortress, and black soldiers carrying Russian rifles replaced Portuguese Army soldiers (both black and white) with western arms in city barracks and on the streets. Most of the city's streets, originally named for Portuguese heroes or important dates in Portuguese history, had their names changed to African languages, revolutionary figures, or pre-colonial historical names.

Since the peace agreement was signed in 1992, the country has returned to its pre-independence levels of political stability. This stability is an encouraging sign that makes Mozambique a promising country for foreign investment

**Polokwane**, meaning "Place of Safety", is a city in the Polokwane Local Municipality and the capital of the Limpopo province, South Africa. It is also often referred to by its former name, **Pietersburg**. Polokwane is a major urban centre, the biggest and most important north of Gauteng.

In the 1840s, Voortrekkers under the leadership of Andries Potgieter established Zoutpansbergdorp, a town 100 km to the north west. This settlement had to be abandoned because of clashes with the local tribes. They founded a new town in 1886 and named it Pietersburg in honour of Voortrekker leader Petrus Jacobus Joubert. The British built a concentration camp at Pietersburg during the Boer War to house almost 4,000 Boer women and children. The town officially became a city on April 23, 1992; on February 25, 2005, the government declared the official name of the city as Polokwane, a name that was generally in use by the speakers of Northern Sotho. The city was the site of the ANC national conference which saw Jacob Zuma take over as head of the party.

**Kinshasa** (formerly French Léopoldville, and Dutch Leopoldstad) is the capital and the largest city of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The city is located on the Congo River.

Kinshasa is the second largest city in Africa after Cairo. It is also the second largest "francophone" urban area in the world after Paris, French being the language of government, schools, newspapers, public services and high-end commerce in the city, while Lingala is used as a lingua franca in the street. If current demographic trends continue, Kinshasa should surpass Paris in population around 2020. Kinshasa hosted the 14th Francophonie Summit in October 2012.[5]

Residents of Kinshasa are known as Kinois (in French and sometimes in English) or Kinshasans (English).

The city was founded as a trading post by Henry Morton Stanley in 1881 and named Léopoldville in honor of King Leopold II of Belgium, who controlled the vast territory that is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, not as a colony but as a private property. The post flourished as the first navigable port on the Congo River above Livingstone Falls, a series of rapids over 300 kilometres (190 mi) below Leopoldville. At first, all goods arriving by sea or being sent by sea had to be carried by porters between Léopoldville and Matadi, the port below the rapids and 150 km (93 mi) from the coast. The completion of the Matadi-Kinshasa portage railway in 1898 provided a faster and more efficient alternative route around the rapids and sparked the rapid development of Léopoldville. By 1920, the city was elevated to capital of the Belgian Congo, replacing the town of Boma in the Congo estuary.
In 1965, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu seized power in the Congo in his second coup and initiated a policy of "Africanizing" the names of people and places in the country. In 1966, Léopoldville was renamed Kinshasa for a village named Kinchassa that once stood near the site. The city grew rapidly under Mobutu, drawing people from across the country who came in search of their fortunes or to escape ethnic strife elsewhere. This inevitably brought about a change to the city's ethnic and linguistic composition as well. Although it is situated in territory that traditionally belongs to the Bateke and Bahumbu people, the lingua franca among African languages in Kinshasa today is Lingala while the administrative and main written language is French, see further Languages of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Lubumbashi (formerly French Élisabethville, or Dutch Elisabethstad in the southeastern part of Democratic Republic of the Congo, is the second largest city in the country, second only to the nation's capital Kinshasa. Lubumbashi is the mining capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Belgians founded the city of Élisabethville (sometimes Elizabethville, both in French, or Elisabethstad in Dutch) in 1910, named in honour of their queen Elisabeth, wife to king Albert I. The location of the city was chosen by Vice-Governor-General Emile Wangermée because of the proximity to the copper mine of Etoile du Congo and the copper ore smelting oven installed by Union Minière du Haut Katanga on the nearby Lubumbashi river.

13. The cities of Italy

The fascistic regime, in the reclaimed lands of the former Pontine Marshes, founded many towns and called almost all these cities with the names of the battles of the first world war. These cities did not change their names. The name of Sabaudia could be changed, because it refers to family of last Italian kings, who were compromised with the fascistic regime. The name Littoria has been changed in Latina for its evident reference to the Fashismus.

Latina was founded in 1932, on 18th December with the name of Littoria and assumed its actual name in 1946, after the Second World War.

The Terracina’s ancient name was Anxur when it was under the Volscians rule, as Pliny the Elder writes12. Under the Etruscan rule (700-600 BC) the name of the city was Tarrakina, then Tarracinae, Tarricina an finally Terracina. But Romans called it still Anxur.

The fascistic regime founded other cities in Italy, as Carbonia and Fertilia in Sardinia, but most of them did not change their names, because of their economic and not politic meanings. Of course the Villaggio Mussolini, inaugurated on 1928, 29th October, in 1930 called Mussolinia di Sardegna and since 1944 its name is Arborea, from the historical name of a Sardinian region, which derives from Latin arboreta (scrub, wood).

The reference above are only some examples for a more thorough search, that I propose to carry out in the next future.

12 Plinius, Naturalis Historia. III, 59: «lingua Volscorum Anxur dictum»