



9.3

Figure 9.3 The topography of Nigeria

Figure 9.4 The Hausa city states

the Sahara, into West Africa, including Hausaland. At the southern terminus of the Saharan trade routes, between the fourth and nineteenth centuries, there rose and fell a number of mighty and extensive empires (Figure 9.2). These empires were located in the grasslands of the Sudan and Sahel Savannas. They were centred in the west on the northern bend of the Niger and in the east at Lake Chad. Midway between these powerful political centres the Hausa city states developed (Fage, 1969).

Figure 9.3 shows the topography of Nigeria. The main areas of population concentration are associated with the high lands in the north, the south-east and in the south-west of the country. These highland areas supported the advanced cultures of the Hausa, Yoruba, Bini and Igbo. These areas are separated by the sparsely populated low lying areas of the Niger-Benue river basins, which are noted for the prevalence of the tsetse fly and a hard crust of infertile laterite (Mobogunje, 1971).



9.4

Figure 9.4 shows in detail the location of the *Hausa Bakwai*, the Hausa seven. According to one Hausa legend the *Hausa Bakwai*, the original seven founding states, were Daura, Biram, Katsina, Kano, Rano, Zaria and Gobir. They were probably founded in about the fourteenth century AD and were located to the west of Lake Chad, between the confluence of the Rivers Niger and Benue. The most important cities today are Kano, Zaria and also Sokoto, which is a more recent foundation. Sokoto is the spiritual capital of the Caliphate, founded during the *Jihad*, or Holy War, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, which established a rejuvenated Islam as the religion of the majority of the population of Hausaland.

Figures 9.22 to 9.26 give an impression of the elegance with which the Hausa have used mud construction in a highly decorative manner. The focus of this chapter is an analysis of the relationship of this decorative work with both building structure and city structure. The foundation of such an analysis is an understanding of the constructional process which, in part, is responsible for that form.

HAUSA CITY FORM

Figure 9.5 is a view of Kano from the minaret of the Friday Mosque. It shows a small part of this extensive city of a million people. Figure 9.6 is an analysis of the structure of the old city of Zaria. The



Figure 9.5 Kano from the Minaret

main routes of the traditional Hausa city pass through once heavily fortified gates, across a broad belt of agricultural land, then on through the main residential areas to one of the twin centres of the city. The main centres of the city are the *dendal* which is the civic, religious and ceremonial focus; and the market, the commercial heart of the city. At the edges of the *dendal*, but not enclosing it, are the Emir's Palace, the Friday Mosque, and administrative buildings.

The residential area surrounding the *dendal* and market place divides into wards or city quarters, *ungugoyi*. These city quarters are normally associated with a specific gateway and are usually occupied by a group engaged in the same trade. The focal point of the quarter is the home of the ward head, a small mosque and a street market. The wards further subdivide into groups of family

compounds whose members share a common ancestor. The homes of the families which comprise the group face onto a common open space, onto which the entrance doors open (Moughtin, 1985).

CONSTRUCTION

Hausa architecture has developed using products from the local environment. Laterite is the most important material used in the building of mud cities: it is the red soil which covers most of Hausaland. Laterite is the residue from eroded mineral rich rocks and is used for walls, roofs, floors, finishes and decorative treatments. Various additives may be used with laterite to improve the material's lifespan or to render it waterproof. The other main building material is *azara*. *Azara* is the timber taken from the *deleb*, *dumi* or *kurma* palms. None of this timber is attacked and