THE GOLDEN STOOL: STUDIES OF THE ASANTE CENTER AND PERIPHERY

EDITED BY
ENID SCHILDKROUT

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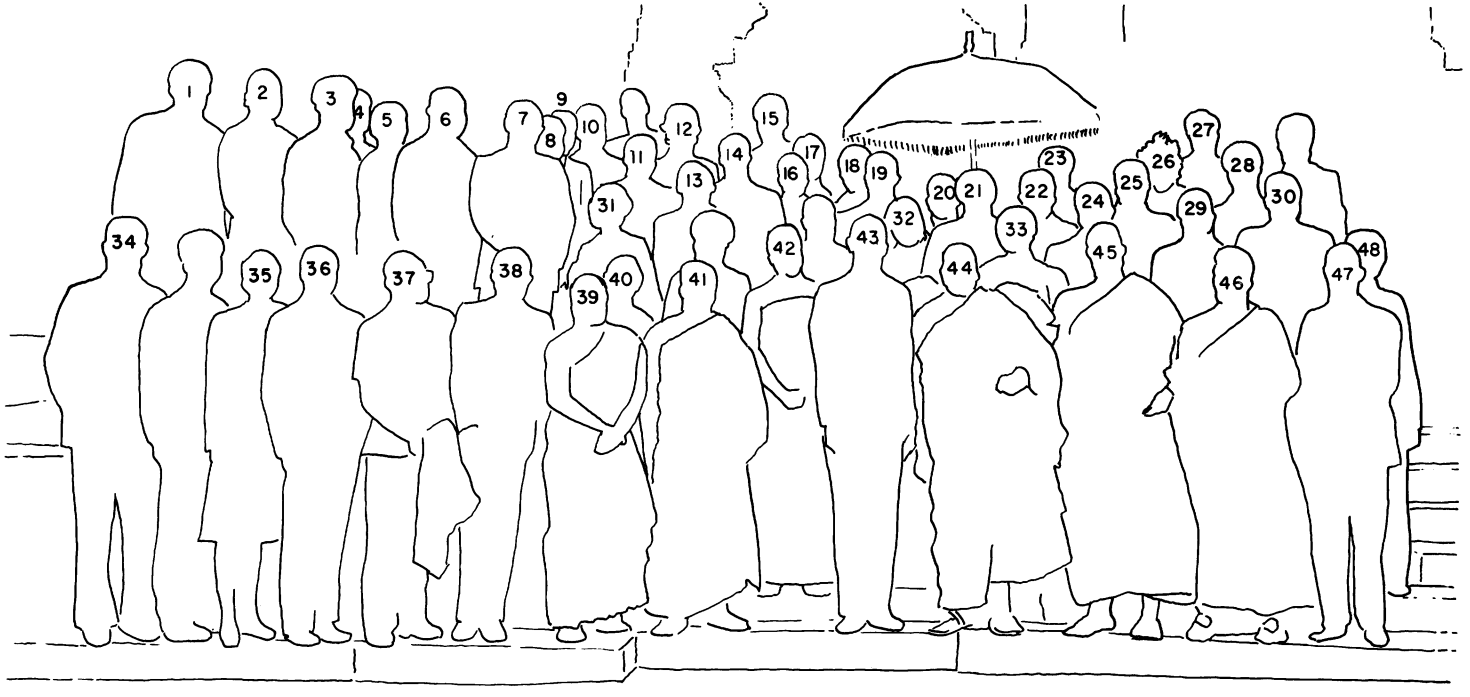

Key to photograph of symposium participants.

1. Raymond E. Dumett, 2. Bruce M. Haight, 3. René A. Bravmann, 4. Ivor Wilks, 5. Sharon Patton, 6. James O. Bellis, 7. Daniel Mato, 8. Evelyn Feld, 9. Raymond A. Silverman, 10. Emmanuel Terray, 11. Merrick Posnansky, 12. Robert Handloff, 13. Peter L. Shinnie, 14. Akwai Agyeman Prempe, 15. Francois J. Kense, 16. Maxwell Owusu, 17. Kwame Arhin, 18. Carol Gelber, 19. Kwaku Mensah, Jr., 20. Yaw Poku, 21. Oheneba Adusei Poku, Akyempemhene, 22. A. Adu Boahen, 23. Nana Adu Adjei, Akwamuhene of Hwidem, 24. Edward Reynolds, 25. Victor Diabate, 26. Jean Polet, 27. Malcolm D. McLeod, 28. Adum Bawiah, 29. Larry W. Yarak, 30. David Owusu-Ansah, 31. Enid Schildkrout, 32. Opanyin Kofi Tuo, 33. Yao Poku, 34. Ray Kea, 35. Donna J. E. Maier, 36. J. H. Kwabena Nketia, 37. Albert Mawere Opoku, 38. A. S. Y. Andoh, 39. Nana Osei Kufuor, Fiyieasehene, 40. Marion Johnson, 41. Nana Osei Amoako Mensa, Kwamohene, 42. Nana Opoku Agyeman, Okyiame, 43. Ambassador Robert E. Fritts, 44. Nana Opoku Ware II, Asantehene, 45. Nana Oduru Numapaw, Paramount Chief of Asumeja, 46. Nana Aansah Adu Baah, Paramount Chief of Yamfo, 47. Timothy F. Garrard, 48. Yaw Antwi. Not pictured: Monica B. Visonà, Timothy C. Weiskel. Unnumbered figures not identified.

Asante and Its Neighbors: Nana Otumfuo Opoku Ware II, the Asantehene, with attendants, participants in the symposium, and guests.

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INTRODUCTION

Enid Schildkrout

The American Museum of Natural History opened a temporary loan exhibition ASANTE: KINGDOM OF GOLD on October 14, 1984. Organized by the Museum of Mankind, the Ethnography Department of the British Museum, the exhibition was the most comprehensive assemblage of Asante material ever to have been on display.[1] Officiating at the elaborate series of ceremonies opening the exhibition was Otumfuo, the Asantehene Nana Opoku Ware II, on his first official visit to the United States. Dressed in full regalia, Otumfuo proceeded up Central Park West to the Museum entrance accompanied by a large retinue of chiefs, functionaries, musicians, dancers, and several thousand people who came from Ghana, Canada, and the United States, not least New York and its vicinity. The Ghanaian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador James Victor Gbeho, and the American Ambassador to Ghana, Ambassador Robert E. Fritts, were present while the Mayor of New York City, the Honorable Edward A. Koch, joined the Asantehene in the procession. In addition, a three-day symposium was organized which brought together, from three continents, students of Asante society and culture. The papers presented in this volume have been selected from those that were read at that symposium.[2]

The theme of "Asante and Its Neighbors: Relations with the Exterior" was chosen for the symposium, partly to complement the focus of the exhibition. Probably the most comprehensive treatment of a single African society to have been mounted in the United States thus far, ASANTE: KINGDOM OF GOLD attempted to immerse the audience in Asante culture and history, exploring economics, politics, history, social organization, art, and religion. Drawing upon the vast collection of the British Museum, the exhibition, curated by Malcolm D. McLeod, offered the viewer insight into essential features of Asante culture. Those who attended the opening ceremonies were also able to see Asante arts splendidly displayed in the music, dance, dress, gestures, and performance of the Asantehene and the many people who accompanied and welcomed him. But while the exhibition and performances presented the core of Asante culture, the symposium was intended to elucidate Asante's cultural resonance: to explore the ways in which Asante affected the regions peripheral to it and the ways in which it dealt with intrusive influences, incorporating, rejecting, and transforming exogenous stimuli.

The symposium papers, however, are by no means only a study in the diffusion of Asante culture. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the contributions and the wealth of information now available on Asante, these papers enable us to examine in unusual detail the mechanisms by which Asante influence penetrated surrounding areas and the ways Asante dealt with exogenous influences at home. If some of Asante's neighbors adopted or rejected Asante political institutions, we can now place these choices in the context of changing patterns of trade and political relations. We can compare and evaluate the different experiences of migrants, refugees, and prisoners of war to and from Asante. With the detailed information now appearing we can relate the fluctuating status of northern Muslims in Kumase, the Asante capital, to the foreign policy of various Asante rulers, which in turn can be seen in the context of international political and economic trends. The papers of this book taken together describe the context, over time, and over a wide geographic area, within which cultural change and political, economic, and social interaction took place. They allow us to look at the mechanisms of this interaction and, because of the interdisciplinary approach of the contributions, to find explanations of Asante cultural change on several different levels of analysis.

The papers in this volume deal with many

different aspects of Asante expansion, exploring it on military, economic, political, social, and cultural levels; yet most of them return again and again to one central concept: that of the Golden Stool. In asking authors for possible titles for this volume, at least two-thirds of the contributors independently insisted that the Golden Stool should be mentioned. And Ivor Wilks has emphasized the crucial point that the Golden Stool is not at all the "throne" of the king, but rather "a timeless ideal representing the kinds of values explored in these papers—whether accepted, rejected, adopted or adapted."[3] The Asante fought for the values embodied in the Golden Stool (the paper by Stephen Andoh demonstrates this vividly), while others fought against the imposition of these values (see the papers by Haight, Maier and Terrey). In other instances, the powerful symbolism of the Golden Stool spread in more subtle ways: through intermarriage, diplomacy, trade, or through the arts themselves (see the papers by McLeod, Opoku, and Visonà).

This symposium at the American Museum was unusual in the extent to which the participants were drawn from a number of academic disciplines: archaeology, history, anthropology, and art history. The strongest concentration is on history, but other disciplines are also well represented. Regardless of discipline, however, the writers of these papers have drawn on a common pool of source material and a common set of problems. The sources include extraordinarily rich archival data as well as personal observation, and in some cases lifelong personal experience. We are fortunate to have several papers in this volume written by scholars who grew up in close daily contact with the Asante court. Their insights and interpretations lend a special type of authority to this collection.

The historical source material on the Asante is abundant and much of it has been analyzed by a group of scholars who are remarkable for the extent to which they have combined historical and anthropological methods. Archival work in Ghana and in several European countries, as well as fieldwork in situ—participant observation and the use of oral histories—have been combined to a greater extent in Asante scholarship than in the study of any other African society. Written sources on Asante have been found in Arabic, Dutch, Portuguese, Danish, German, English, French, Hausa and, not least, in Akan. The Asante have had relationships with all the non-Akan peoples mentioned here, and representatives of these groups have been impelled to put their impressions of this powerful people on paper. Descriptions of Asante go back for 300 years, reflecting the long-standing connection that the Asante have had with the rest of the world.

Because so many of the early descriptions of Asante were by non-Asante, they intrinsically reflect something about the nature of Asante relationships with their neighbors. The missionaries, traders, and government officials who wrote about the Asante, from Bowdich to Rattray, and including many others, have all had their own biases and intentions, some honorable, some not. While none of the accounts can be taken at face value, they are valuable because they are firsthand descriptions of encounters between foreigners and the Asante. Moreover, reading them from this perspective gives us a view of international history that we would miss were we simply to read them as straightforward accounts of Asante society.

Over the past three decades there has been an important change in the nature of the information available on the Asante. First of all, there have been Ghanaian scholars, including Asante, who have written about their own history and customs. We are fortunate to have eight Ghanaian scholars represented in this volume. Others, including the late Dr. K. A. Busia, J. B. Danquah, and Dr. A. A. Y. Kyerematen, have left us a rich legacy of scholarship. Secondly, beginning in the 1930s, certain non-Asante, with primarily an intellectual mission, began to delve into the customs of the Asante. A number of these people did not go to Asante as government functionaries, but rather as scholars, albeit in a colonial context. Jack Goody and Ivor Wilks and the late Meyer Fortes and Thomas Hodgkin, stand out as the inspiration and teachers of many of us (including myself) who later had the opportunity to experience Asante society firsthand.

The historians of Asante whose work is represented here have thus been fortunate to be able to draw upon a series of descriptions

of Asante which goes back for well over two centuries. In addition, they have been able to refer to the anthropological fieldwork of others and also to conduct field research in Ghana themselves. Ghana has always been a hospitable environment for scholars, whether foreign or indigenous. Ghanaians have been proud to unearth the treasures hidden within their own history, and they have been generous in allowing others to learn of this legacy. As Ambassador Robert E. Fritts and the Ghanaian scholars in our midst made clear in their remarks to the participants, despite shortages and logistical difficulties, the research climate remains positive.

In reading these essays one cannot fail to notice how the traditional boundary between anthropological and historical research disappears, and data gathered with the techniques of both disciplines is woven into a complex, if still incomplete, cloth. While the focus of many of the essays here is on the past, many of them have drawn upon the ethnographic present. Asante traditions are living traditions—a fact that was vividly demonstrated during the Asantehene's visit to New York: for example, in addition to performing many of their traditional dances and playing traditional music, the community also brought cases to the Asantehene for settlement and asked him to arbitrate a major dispute over the election of community leadership. The relationship between the Ghanaians in New York and the Asantehene differs from that of a traditional Asante polity most obviously in that the New York community has no indigenous territorial base and no traditional stool. However, like Asante of the 19th century, the New York Asante community incorporates citizens from many parts of Asante. In many ways the New York community functions similarly to any local Asante community; whereas leaders in New York are elected without claiming hereditary eligibility to office, even this practice can be traced to aspects of Asante tradition.[4] Asante lifestyles of today provide data for historians as well as anthropologists, while the historians' findings on Asante of the past, like the poems of the griots, are used as reference works for those involved in preserving traditions.

In the past two decades there has been a changing focus in the humanities which has affected history, anthropology, and art history, the disciplines most strongly represented here. For a long time anthropology, in particular British functionalism, focused on the single ethnic group or culture, with an attempt to describe this as a coherent unit. The concept of culture as used in American anthropology also tended to emphasize the internal coherence of a heuristic unit, the cultural group. Both of these approaches aimed at describing the internal workings of cultural and social systems rather than tracing the spread of single traits. By focusing on single societies or cultures, scholars were removing themselves as far as possible from naive comparisons—from "armchair anthropology," and from a simplistic diffusionism based on the notion of survivals.

Today, however, more secure in our methods and in our ability to evaluate data, the focus has broadened, causing a revision of many assumptions and concepts, and blurring the conventional distinction between disciplines. Anthropologists are now more interested in historic processes and in the data of history, while historians are interested in social practice and social process, as embodied in everyday life. Both are therefore interested in boundaries—spatial, temporal, and conceptual. Scholars of society have increasingly turned to the study of boundaries themselves, their rigidity and permeability, and conversely, to those elements in any particular culture or society that make it unique, enduring, and inspirational to others. With regard to the Asante, this interest is reflected in anthropology, where scholars are interested in exploring the nuances of meaning in Asante culture and ethnicity; in art historical studies, where there is an attempt to define what styles are distinctively Akan; and in political, economic, and diplomatic history where we are interested in placing our understanding of the Asante in a regional and world context. Such a perspective will enable us to better define the unique qualities that define the Asante, as well as to explore their impact, over time, on the rest of the world.

In planning this conference, it was perhaps inevitable that my own research experience in Ghana should have been a factor in charting its direction. In the 1960s, as a doctoral

candidate, I spent two years with residents of the Kumase zongo (the Muslim "stranger" community) and experienced the Asante as hosts both to myself and to the many northerners who have settled in the Asante capital. I vividly remember going to the court of the late Asantehene Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II with the zongo people. Not only did the northerners regularly greet and pay their respects to the Asantehene, they relied upon him as the highest judicial authority in the community. All the most serious political disputes in the zongo at that time were brought to the Asantehene to adjudicate. The strangers were not legally compelled to bring their troubles to the Asante court, but they had a profound respect for the Asantehene's judgment. Moreover, many of their own political institutions were modified as they adopted and adapted Asante customs. The position of "linguist," or *okyeame,* for example, was adopted by virtually every immigrant community and was becoming more important as the years went on. A similar situation is discussed in the paper by Kense, on Asante influence in northern Ghana, and by Weiskel, in reference to the Baule, while Owusu, in his paper on Asante kingship, enlightens us as to why the Asante concepts of statecraft should have such enduring strength and prestige. Without explicitly acknowledging the spiritual primacy of the Golden Stool, the Muslim "strangers" tacitly accepted the political authority it represented.

One of the most interesting aspects of ethnicity in Kumase as I observed it in the 1960s was that while Asante institutions had great prestige and influence with non-Asante, this nevertheless did not lead to assimilation but rather to a complex interchange of ideas, practices, and information. The ethnic and religious boundary between the Asante and northerners persisted, although Islamic influence in Asante remained as strong as the influence of Asante customs on non-Asante. As these papers make abundantly clear, assimilation was just one of several ways in which Asante hegemony was extended over time and space.

The central question explored in these essays is the variety of the mechanisms by which Asante cultural and social institutions have persisted and extended their influence throughout the region, while at the same time exhibiting a tremendous flexibility in selectively incorporating ideas from outsiders. This may, indeed, be one of the keys to the success of the Asante. Exhibiting an intense self-awareness, pride, and confidence in their own cultural heritage, they have been able to selectively adapt ideas from outside. The Asante approach to foreign ideas is, in this respect, somewhat reminiscent of the Japanese approach to industrialization. Both cultures are noteworthy for their willingness to incorporate foreign ideas, undoubtedly a sign of a culture's internal strength and its ability to accept change selectively while preserving its fundamental values.

The papers in this volume deal with military, political, diplomatic, economic, social, and cultural aspects of Asante expansion. What is most interesting is the variety of methods with which the Asante interacted with their neighbors. They were flexible, pragmatic, and innovative in their dealings with outsiders. This approach was only possible given a genuine curiosity and attempt to understand the threat or promise that each transaction with non-Asante offered. In his study of gifts between Asante and strangers, McLeod illustrates this attitude. Some gifts were truly inspirational, and others were dismissed as bizarre curiosities. Based on this pragmatic outlook, a variety of responses to outsiders was possible: a military approach, such as those described by Haight, Maier, Reynolds, and Terray, would be adopted in some regions, while other areas could be controlled through the placement of resident administrators, or simply through resident merchants, as discussed by Arhin. During much of its history, the Asante administration was able to deal flexibly with various categories of subject peoples—migrants, prisoners-of-war, refugees—as it expanded to create a variety of official roles. This is clearly shown in the several papers which treat the career histories of individual Asante: those by Boahen, Wilks, and Yarak.

Another interesting aspect of Asante relations with their neighbors brought out in this collection of papers is how different types of relationships could occur simultaneously. The papers demonstrate how erroneous it is to oversimplify the relations that obtained in

any one region. While hostility characterized relations with Gyaman on a political and military level (Terray), trade (Handloff) and cultural exchange (Weiskel) continued to occur. As Opoku demonstrates in his paper on Asante dance art, military campaigns returned with new dances as part of the spoils of war, dances which are an important part of the repertory of the Asante court to this day. While diplomatic relations between outsiders and the Asante may have been strained at times, cultural and even economic exchange between ordinary citizens occurred simultaneously and continued to exert an influence on everyday life (Arhin, Dumett, Garrard, Silverman and Weiskel).

The papers in this volume span a long time period and show the tenacity and adaptability of Asante culture as it existed in very different political and economic contexts. The papers by Posnansky, Shinnie, Bellis, and Kense, dealing with the early archaeological record, all refer to a proto-Akan culture starting about 2000 B.C. Bellis' paper leads us from this early epoch into the period around A.D. 1600 when a drastic change in pottery style coincided with the entry of the Akan into a world economy. Akan regional hegemony expanded, starting in the 16th century and continuing, ultimately in the form of the Asante state, from the 17th through the 19th centuries. Various aspects of this expansion are discussed in other papers; not only did the methods of the Asante vary from period to period, and from place to place, but the response of the surrounding peoples also differed significantly (see Haight, for example). Throughout this long period there was a continuing strengthening of Asante institutions as embodied in the kingship and the court (see the papers by Bravmann and Silverman, Nketia, Opoku, Owusu, Owusu-Ansah). In regard to their neighbors, the Asante seem to have had a genius for knowing how far to go and when to stop, expanding their influence one way in one direction, another way in another direction, without compromising what they saw as essential in their culture. The papers by Andoh, Boahen, and Owusu are interesting in this regard, as they demonstrate this process with data from the 20th century. Even with the enormous changes facing Asante in recent times, during the colonial period and at the time of independence, they were able to accurately evaluate the extent to which they could challenge the British, the first independent Ghanaian government (the Convention People's Party), and subsequent governments.

The Asante ability both to preserve their own traditions and adapt those of outsiders is demonstrated in those papers which focus on the core of Asante culture through consideration of Asante art and religion. These include Nketia's study of music, Opoku's of dance, McLeod's of the relationship between Asante art and that proffered to the Asante by outsiders, and Bravmann and Silverman's paper on Islamic iconography in Asante regalia. Echoes of these Asante cultural practices are seen in outlying areas, as demonstrated in the papers by Polet, Visonà, and Weiskel on the question of the Akan influence in the Ivory Coast. Opoku even discusses Asante influence in Suriname, a subject worthy of further exploration.

While we have not been able to explore in detail the relationships of Asante with every neighboring area, this volume does touch upon relationships in each geographical direction. Several papers deal with Asante relations with the north, the area that has been most extensively explored in previous writings on the subject, from Wilks' "The Northern Factor in Ashanti History" through Arhin's work on the northeast.[5] In this volume the papers by Arhin, Garrard, Haight, Kense, and Shinnie deal specifically with the north, while those of Bravmann and Silverman, and Owusu-Ansah deal with the northern Islamic influence in Asante itself. The regions to the west and southwest have received much less attention in the literature and we are fortunate to have a number of papers exploring Asante influence in these directions. The picture has certainly not yet been filled in, although the papers by Handloff, Polet, Terray, Visonà, and Weiskel make it clear that while military, economic and cultural exchange were all occurring, the relationship between these various modes of penetration still needs much study. We also are fortunate to have a number of studies of Asante relations to the south (Dumett, Maier, Reynolds) a region where military and economic options were more directly and immediately affected by

outsiders than was the case in the north or west, where Asante moves were determined to a greater extent by developments within metropolitan Asante and by the complex internal politics of these societies themselves (see Haight, Handloff, Terray).

The subject of Asante relations with its neighbors is vast; we certainly cannot claim to cover it fully in space, time, and discipline or approach. We have obviously been limited by the parameters and techniques of our own research, so that while this collection ranges over the entire subject, it necessarily provides details on some aspects and leaves lacunae in others. However, taken together the papers seem to me to demonstrate the wide range of mechanisms by which cultural forms penetrate social relations and the varied ways in which political and economic relationships between states, governments, and leaders eventually affect the daily lives of ordinary people.

A number of papers in this volume deal with areas that at varying times were incorporated into greater Asante and that contributed in major ways to the definition of Asante culture. Silverman's paper on the Tano deity in Asante religion, Dumett's on precolonial gold mining in Wassa, Weiskel's on the interpretation of the origin myths of the Baule, Visonà's on Lagoon (Ivory Coast) art, Polet's on Lagoon statuary, and Garrard's on Frafra (northern Ghana) all deal with areas outside metropolitan Asante (Kumase) that nevertheless interacted with Asante and exchanged many sociopolitical features, leading ultimately to what can now be referred to as an Akan culture area.

As the archaeological contributions here show, a proto-Akan culture obviously preceded the development of the Asante state. An exploration of the larger context of proto-Akan culture and an examination of the growth of metropolitan Asante are both crucial to an understanding of Asante today. But the insights into Asante provided in these papers also contribute in no small measure to our understanding of contemporary Ghana. The widespread rippling effect of Asante influence, the resonance of the Golden Stool, so to speak, though historically not always perceived as an unmitigated benefit, surely helps to explain the tenor of contemporary politics. Despite many postindependence tribulations, Ghana has never erupted with ethnic conflict on the scale that occurred in many other colonially created nation states. As Andoh's paper shows, the brink was often close, but ultimately an ability to compromise and adapt led to peaceful accommodation and an acceptance of a wider Ghanaian identity. Given the size and significance of the Asante presence in Ghana, this can only be explained with reference to the historical fact that Asante interaction with her neighbors was multifaceted and complex, with the sword always tempered by the song (see particularly the papers by Nketia and Opoku).

Seen in this light, there is a logic to combining in one volume studies of art history, military campaigns, trade networks, and political biographies. What is fascinating about these papers is that despite the different aspects of the problem they are dealing with, they all touch on similar themes. The relationships between art and warfare, politics and trade, dance and the centralized state are what emerge vividly from this collection.

Acknowledgments

Since this book was conceived in conjunction with a major exhibition, many people and institutions contributed to the success of the project. The Museum of Mankind (the Ethnography Department of the British Museum) and its Keeper, Malcolm D. McLeod, provided the major impetus for the entire project. The support of the American Museum of Natural History, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the United States Information Agency, and Crossroads Africa all contributed to the symposium, ASANTE AND ITS NEIGHBORS, on which this collection of papers is based.

Many people contributed to the success of the symposium, and ultimately to this volume. Thomas D. Nicholson, Director of the American Museum of Natural History, encouraged us to hold the symposium. Ghana's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, James Victor Gbeho, graciously opened the symposium and generously lent his considerable organizational talents to the events surrounding the exhibition. The American

Ambassador to Ghana, Robert E. Fritts, facilitated the participation of the Asantehene Nana Opoku Ware II and also added a note of encouragement regarding future research prospects in Ghana. Anne Hutchinson was the gracious hostess for Otumfuo's visit. The Asantehene's presence demonstrated the vitality and ongoing splendor of Asante culture.

Many others contributed in various ways to making the symposium and this publication possible. Nicolas Robertson, David Monk, Mary Ellen Connell, and Barbara Scarlett of the United States Information Agency and Thomas Burke of the U.S. Department of State tirelessly assisted in communicating with participants from Ghana. Jerome Vogel and Bart Roussev of Crossroads Africa also helped arrange the participation of scholars from West Africa. Our greatest debt no doubt is to the participants themselves. These include the authors of the papers printed here, as well as Victor Diabate, Marion Johnson, Ray Kea, Daniel Mato, and Sharon Patton. We are also particularly grateful to Paul Beelitz, Evelyn Feld, Samuel O. Gyandoh, Tom McKaskie, Lita Osmundsen, Doran Ross, and Susan M. Vogel for many kinds of assistance, generously offered between 1984 and the present. Florence Brauner painstakingly assisted with editing and Nick Amorosi redrew most of the maps and figures. We can only hope that all of these people, who so generously helped us in many ways, may be proud to be associated with this publication.

Editor's Note: The authors who contributed to this volume have used various spellings for certain African names. In many chapters the authors' spelling has been retained.

NOTES

1. The exhibition originally opened in London in February 1981, and was redesigned for the American Museum tour.

2. The exhibition and symposium were supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, #GM21774, as was the publication of these papers (Grant #GM22214-84). The Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research also assisted the symposium.

3. Ivor Wilks, letter to Enid Schildkrout dated 19 October 1985.

4. Although hereditary status plays a role in determining eligibility to many offices in Asante, in both New York and Ghana a complex selection process operates to determine the most suitable candidate. In New York, elections have been involved more often, but in Ghana not all offices are in fact hereditary.

5. I. Wilks, 1961, K. Arhin, 1970.

THE SEARCH FOR ASANTE ORIGINS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

CHAPTER 1. PRELUDE TO AKAN CIVILIZATION

Merrick Posnansky

ABSTRACT

Archaeological research undertaken in the Akan hinterland of Brong Ahafo from 1966 to 1979 centered around the medieval market town of Begho, which existed from around the first quarter of the second millennium A.D. till ca. A.D. 1800. Continuity is suggested with the Kintampo "neolithic" incipient agricultural communities of the middle of the second millennium B.C. The town was divided into four principal quarters and its population was both ethnically and economically heterogeneous. At its peak its population, of up to 10,000 inhabitants, had well-established trade links with the middle Niger area around Jenne. This is attested from the ceramics as well as from the gold trade, textiles, and brass industries. Reasons for the decline of Begho are discussed and the differences with the Akan world of the forest are stressed.

INTRODUCTION

There has been considerable debate[1] in recent years as to the antecedents of Akan civilization, a debate in which I have participated (1976). The Akan civilization, which reached its apogee under the Asante State in the 18th and 19th centuries, was, like all great civilizations, complex. Much of the discussion has focused on the nature of the populations—Who were the Akan? Where did they come from?—as if a simple answer to those questions would also answer the question about the nature of Akan civilization. Linguistically we can give one answer: the Akan belong to the Kwa group of the Niger-Congo family of languages and there is nothing to suggest other than an in-situ development of the Akan languages in the Ghana area, with the northerly Akan languages like Bron being presumed earlier than the central and southerly languages (Daphyne, 1982). As regards the physical characteristics of the population we can say very little as there is very little skeletal material that can be analyzed predating the rise of the Asante State, and scarcely any biological anthropological research has recently been undertaken. We are, therefore, left with the analysis of Akan culture which we can do in several ways: first, we can study the traditional social, political, and religious structures in a comparative way; secondly, as art historians we can look at the artistic heritage; thirdly, we can analyze the Akan languages looking at and for loan words which betoken cultural contacts, indicate the nature and scale of such contacts, and give us some idea of the time scale for the human intercourse that has always existed between West African peoples and more distant groups; and fourthly, we can try to appreciate the nature of the antecedents of Akan culture by ex-

amining the archaeological evidence, the "small things forgotten"[2] by the ancestors themselves. It is on the archaeological evidence, particularly that coming from my own work at Begho in Brong Ahafo, as well as my reflections based on ethnoarchaeological work in the area, that his paper is based.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD IN BRONG AHAFO

Archaeological research has been conducted in Brong Ahafo since 1966 (Anquandah, 1982). From 1970 to 1979 the University of Ghana, and later the University of California at Los Angeles in collaboration with the University of Ghana, conducted 18 excavations within a 6 km radius of the modern village of Hani where the lineal descendants of one of the last resident groups at the medieval and early modern town of Begho[3] still live. Archaeological research indicates that there was a significant early agricultural society around the middle of the second millennium B.C. which can be ascribed to the well-known Kintampo cultural tradition (Flight, 1976; Dombrowski, 1976). Archaeology has also revealed the presence of iron smelting in the area early in the first millennium A.D., but no occupation or burial sites have as yet been discovered of the people who were either producing or consuming the iron goods. The Begho sequence itself runs from around the 12th to the late 18th century according to the radiocarbon determinations and the associated and dateable artifacts. Though no sites have been found dating either from the first millennium B.C. or, except for the iron smelting site, from the first millennium A.D., there is no reason to suppose, on the basis of soil profiles or presumed vegetational history (Hall, MS) that there was not a continuous settled population in the area from Kintampo times. Continuity is suggested by the nature of the oral traditions, both in the Begho area and in the neighboring states of Bono Manso and Wenchi, in which the myths of origin relate that the original people came from holes in the ground or caves. When investigated, these sacred sites have invariably proven to be valid archaeological sites. Bonkeseso, the holy hole of the Begho people in the Nserekeseso plain, turned out to be man-made, presumably a *bilega,* or waterhole, in an area in which surface water is scarce. Though the association cannot be proven conclusively, Kintampo tradition artifacts have been found within the general area. This suggests a possible connection in time and culture between the early agriculturalists and the later townsfolk. The waterholes were places of great significance. Their significance was remembered from generation to generation, rather than their exact nature. Their importance in terms of group survival should not be underestimated. In the 1982–83 drought, the worst this century, Hani villagers had to make round-trip journeys of over 20 km just to obtain a half-bucket of murky fluid, which has left a third of the village, one year later, still subject to the ravages of Guinea worm.

INTERPRETING THE BEGHO RECORD

Archaeology can tell us something about these ancestral societies: they had some cows, possibly some smaller animals like sheep or goats, and most likely ground a grain such as sorghum or millet on bed rock mortars and portable querns (Posnansky, 1984: 147–151). They lived in small social units, perhaps with large groups of up to about 100 persons, if the evidence of the simple wattle-and-daub house sites can be relied upon. They had a highly distinctive lithic technology with some elements reminiscent of Saharan neolithic societies, and with the most diagnostic tool being a rasplike implement of soft stone whose exact use can still not be ascertained, though some have argued most convincingly that they were potting tools (Dombrowski and Priddy, 1978: 165–167). Recently it has been demonstrated that the Kintampo tradition extends into both the Ivory Coast and Togo. Its distribution, however, is decidedly savannah woodland and forest fringe and it is found on savannah inliers within the forest (Newton and Woodell, 1976: 19–22) which presumably stayed open during the expansion of the forest in the climatic optimum period from around 9000 to 2000 B.C. The distribution area is one in which the indigenous cultivars, yams and oil palm, are still fundamental in terms of both social and religious systems as well as nutritional preferences. The complex

etymology connected with these plants argues for the long ancestry of their cultivation. I have argued elsewhere (Posnansky, 1984) for the importance of other oleaginous plants within this area, for the shea nut tree, canarium, and for half a dozen plants whose use for cooking oils, medicine and soap is currently being revived from the collective memory of the traditional farmer as substitutes are sought for inaccessible factory-produced or imported commodities. Such communities probably relied extensively on hunting and trapping, not only of the larger, but now depleted, antelopes but also the prolific grass cutters (*Thryonomys swinderianus*) and the giant forest snails and oil palm bugs (*akokonu*) within the appropriate season. It was these societies which were responsible for the earliest terracotta art in Ghana (Posnansky, 1979b: 52–53).

Though we can construct a hypothetical society, details of whose lifestyle are provided by archaeology and by inferences from present day societies living within the same area, can we be sure we are dealing with ancestral Akan? Until more work is undertaken on linguistic data, similar to that being carried out by Ehret (1982) on societies in eastern and southern Africa, our answer must be a cautious negative. We do not have ceramic continuities from 1500 B.C. to A.D. 1300; we have insufficient art to prove an artistic link. All we have is an oral tradition suggestive of a link with an earlier population which seems to tie in with the Kintampo tradition. We also have a legacy of plant and animal lore, in terms of both medicinal and food usages, and an accompanying linguistic taxonomy, which implies a society with deep roots in the environment in which its people presently live. The negative evidence is possibly stronger. There are no easily proveable ancient links with areas outside Brong Ahafo. Those that do exist in the Begho sequence are easily explainable in terms of the known later historical contacts. Thus, we are dealing with isolated small communities, largely self-reliant, and probably in the process, from 1000 B.C. to A.D. 1000, of developing local ceramic traditions and dialectal differences. It is unlikely that the Akan were either geographically widely dispersed or fragmented at that time; otherwise the present day differences would be far greater. The rich folklore concerning hunters who were responsible for demarcating group boundaries probably preserves a memory of the greater importance of hunters within the societies. But forest settlement may have been spasmodic until the second millennium A.D.

It is not unlikely that these largely undifferentiated ancestral Akan groups, because of the particular environmental niche they occupied in the southern savannah and forest fringes where they were already exploiting the forest for game, honey and certain forest foods, poisons, gums, and medicines, had already discovered and begun exploiting the very visible alluvial gold resources. All we know for certain, however, is that though some research has been undertaken by Wild, Junner, Davies, Kiyaga-Mulindwa, and Bellis (cf. Anquandah, 1982) in forest areas, and all can point to occasional stone tools which may date to this period, it was not until the first half of the second millennium A.D. that changes took place.

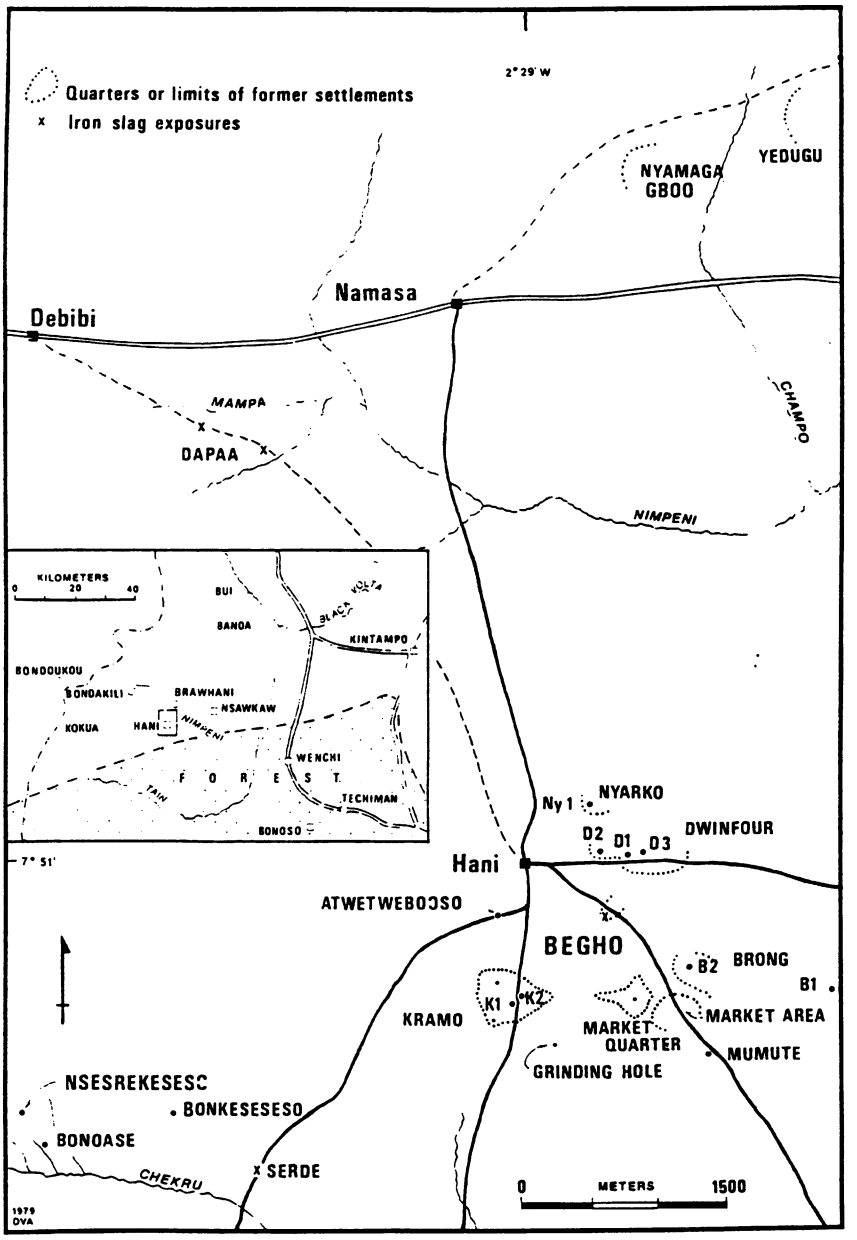
The changes which occurred were fundamental ones. They involved the movements of peoples into the areas they largely occupy today in most of the southern and central parts of Ghana; they involved the beginnings of states for which we have oral historical evidence; they involved the growth of nucleated market centers in contact with the middle Niger towns, particularly in the Jenne area; they involved the gradual spread south, perhaps as a concomitant of trade, of a series of technological processes, particularly brass casting and cotton weaving which became basic Akan technologies; and they ultimately led to the linguistic differentiation into the current Akan groups. Though it is difficult to prove cause-and-effect, three processes took place between the 13th and 15th centuries. The first, which several writers including Ivor Wilks (1961: 25–34; 1982a: 333–349) and myself (Posnansky, 1973: 149–162) have written about extensively, involved the expansion of trade in the late 13th century and the increased world demand for gold. The Akan area provided an expanding supply. The quick expansion implies that traders tapped into a source which had already begun to be locally exploited rather than one which was opened up by the occasional percipient Mande

prospector. The second event was a drought period of great severity which had followed a rather more humid period from around A.D. 800 to 1300 (Nicholson, 1979: 31–49). The effect of a dry period of approximately 200 years, which found its physical expression in the lowest Lake Bosumtwe levels in 10,000 years (Talbot, 1980: 336–344), would have been to cause movement into areas with more surface water and better agricultural potential. There is evidence in the Jenne area of depopulation and abandonment of settlements at this time (McIntosh, 1983: 25–46) which may have been due to climatic change. The third factor possibly inducing movement, in this case abandonment of settlements and movement south, may have been the Black Death which could have led to a chain reaction felt 600–700 km to the south. We have no idea if the plague spread across the Sahara in the 14th century but we should not discount its possibility.[4]

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD IN BEGHO

Moving from the realms of speculation to reality, the Begho data indicate a town with at least four distinct quarters (Map 1-1). It was at its peak from the 15th to the 18th centuries. If the distribution of collapsed house mounds is a fair indication of size it reached a population possibly in the five figure range, though one can never be sure unless the more than 1500 mounds are excavated and one can be sure of dating each one accurately enough to delineate the periods of occupancy. According to the oral traditions preserved in the village of Hani, the principal quarters were the Brong, the Kramo, the Dwinfuor, and the Nyarko. The Nyarko was the oldest quarter and contains the largest percentage of pottery which falls into a design-painted category. Some investigators have discussed the design-painted wares of Ghana at great length assigning formal cultural names such as Silima (York, 1973), Gonja painted ware (Davies, 1964: 4–11), etc., but it is much more likely that pottery was a tradition in which the numerous variations in basic fabric, vessel form, and decorative attributes were as great as some of the similarities. The idea of painting on top of slip is common in the middle Niger and there is no reason to doubt that it has a northern derivation, but to assign a single place and time for the derivation is difficult. The Nyarko quarter is also the smallest and least studied, and on the evidence of surface collections may not have been contemporary with the peak occupation of the three larger quarters. The Brong was the largest quarter and appears to have been the most recently abandoned; it is associated clearly in the traditions with the direct ancestors of the people of Hani and Nsawkaw and may even have been known as "Nsoko" and have been the capital of the Begho "city" state. Finds indicate a ceramic tradition which continues until the present day and it is not unlikely that Mo potters, speaking a Voltaic language, made the pottery for the Brong inhabitants as they do today. The Dwinfuor was the artisans' quarter and a large brass foundry was excavated there in 1975. The Kramo quarter was the area lived in by the Muslims (literally, the people of the book) who though possibly originally Mande merchants, through intermarriage and separation from their homeland may not have been all that different from inhabitants of Brong. The different communities came together in an open space still known today as the market, or *dwabirim*.

Begho vies with Bono Manso for the title of being the earliest town. It was certainly larger in terms of its concentration of house mounds, but it never became the center of an actual state. It supported an ethnically and economically diverse population among whom craft specializations developed. A large, so far the largest found in Ghana, iron smelting complex flourished around the middle of the second millennium A.D. some 3½ km outside the town. There is evidence inside the town of the manufacture of textiles, beads, and ivory ornaments in addition to brassware and, presumably, the crafts in perishable substances such as wood, basketry, and leather. The spindle whorls are particularly illuminating. Found in the Brong and Kramo quarters, they are identical to some of those still in use in the area today, as well as to spindle whorls from the Jenne area. It is of interest that spindle whorls are currently made by Muslim, Mande-speaking men in Kokua, near Hani (Crossland, 1975: 69–73). Painted spin-



Map 1-1. Archaeological sites in the Begho area.

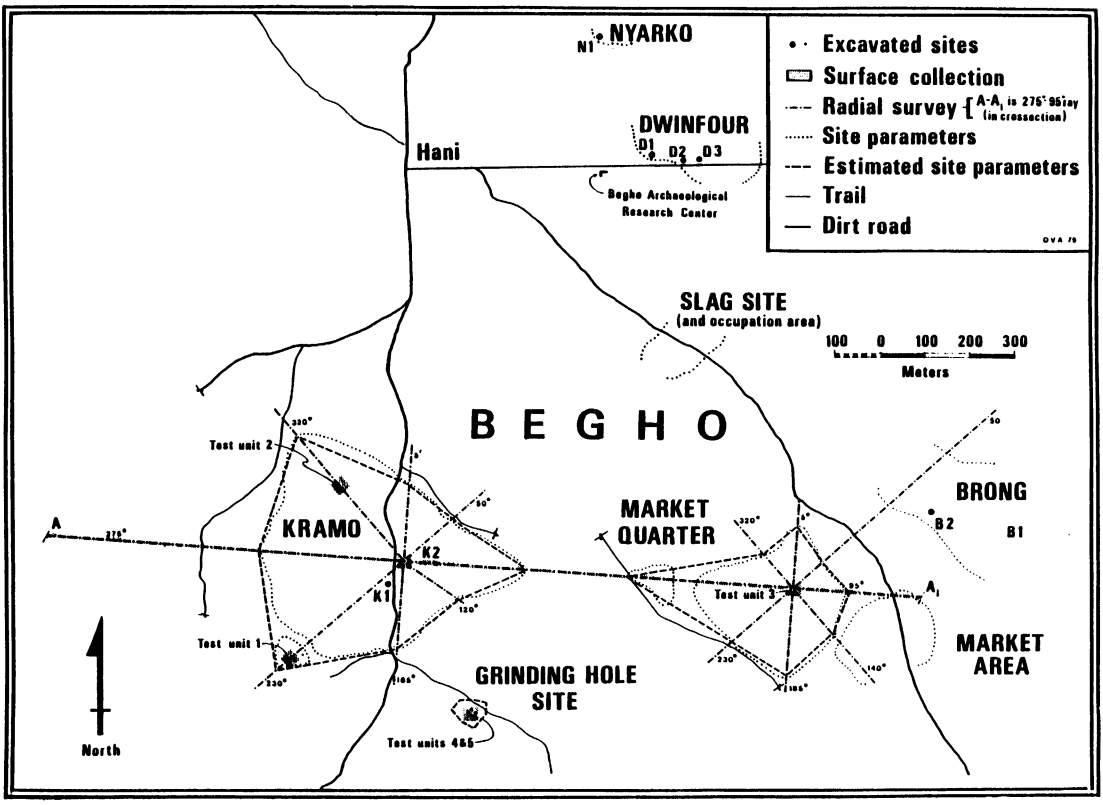
dle whorls of similar form occur in the Jenne area. The local name for a whorl is a Mande word, *dzene*. The spindle whorls below Jenne in the Timbuktu area are quite different, as are those in the Ewe areas to the east of the Akan. The similarity of loom forms reinforces the idea of the transfer of technology south with the traders. The working of copper and its alloys was already well established in the middle Niger before the trade began, and one can still identify stylistic links between the brassware of the Akan world and that of the middle Niger, though the problem as always is to find the archaeological evidence

on which to base the links. Ray Silverman (1983b: 10–29) has already clearly indicated that the brass basins brought down from the Middle Niger, and ultimately coming from Mamluk Egypt, were the models for the later *kuduo*. However, one should like to know what the brass objects made in Mali at the height of its technical development looked like.

It is evident from the Begho sequence that the inhabitants lived in relatively well-built solid mud (swish) houses arranged around courtyards. Each house so far excavated has contained at least one cistern indicating either that water supply was a problem and that the difficulty was surmounted by the energy of its inhabitants, or that we are dealing with a much more prosperous community than any now existing within the area, a community which could afford the labor involved in digging into three meters of solid laterite. On the basis of food remains we know that the inhabitants had access to cows as well as to the hunted antelopes and sheep and goats of the present.[5] The presence of horse remains among the fauna could be explained if the area were more open, which might be due to the larger numbers of people involved and their demand for firewood, which in turn competed with the charcoal needs of the iron workers and brass founders. The drier conditions around A.D. 1400–1500 as well as the iron working may also be an explanation. One wonders if the area was tsetse fly infested. The tsetse fly boundary in the savannah south of the Zaire forest certainly fluctuated and there is no reason to suppose that it may not have done so in the Ghanaian savannah if it was more open and grazed by cattle and small stock. Besides horse remains, parts of a spur were found in 1970. The open aspect, whatever the cause, and the possible lower level of some of the major rivers, may have facilitated easier access to the middle Niger. At Begho, as on the Gonja sites excavated in the 1960s (York, 1973: 115), ceramic drain pipes indicate the presence of some flat houses; this too is more explainable in an area of around 1300 mm rain per year if at the time of their introduction the area was somewhat drier. The presence of horses is also well attested in the oral traditions of Bono-Manso and the presence of well-defined trails, which can still be traced, converging on the capital.

Archaeology, as well as oral tradition, also defines the differences which existed between the quarters. On the Kramo there was a dearth of grass-cutter remains, whereas on the Brong grass-cutter was abundant, perhaps because of Muslim dietary restrictions. The two burials on the Kramo quarter are extended, on their backs, and in the same orientation while those on the Brong and Dwinfuor quarters are flexed or on their sides, follow no consistent orientation, and are closely associated with the houses. Otherwise it is difficult to pick out general differences, though on the Brong quarter (Map 1-1, B2) two side-blown trumpets of ivory were found, as were many offering cups (B1), suggesting that the Brong quarter was the center of the town's ritual life. Both items are still intimately associated with chieftaincy. The find of over 50 small vessels on one site, all turned upside down, could indicate an abandoned shrine room in which offerings were made to the spirits of the deceased chiefs, each in their own individual cups. Such offering cups are still used in Hani and neighboring villages in yam and similar festivals, and if a village is abandoned the cups of the ancestors remain where the ancestors themselves are buried.

The 1979 excavations on the Kramo quarter (Map 1-2) revealed an interesting aspect of acculturation on the Akan frontier. The earliest sites on the Kramo quarter lie on its western edge up to 1½ km from the Brong quarter. The Kramo quarter expanded to the east and the Brong quarter toward the west until, in the late 17th and 18th centuries, a brand new quarter arose adjacent to the market. It could be that initially the newcomers were required or chose to keep their geographical distance (and with it presumably their cultural integrity) from the local inhabitants. Over two to three centuries though, both quarters could have expanded in any direction. Yet they expanded primarily toward each other, toward the market where contact most readily took place. By the 18th century the ceramic differences between the quarters were insignificant. On all the quarters, weights of stone and ceramic have been found, presumably for weighing gold, as they



Map 1-2. Archaeological survey of Begho, 1979.

are in accordance with the Islamic weighting system prevalent in Jenne and Timbuktu (Garrard, 1975: 60–67). One has to assume that a trade developed in perishable substances such as textiles, kola nuts which grow so well to the immediate south of Begho, sheabutter, skins, ivory, and possibly even dried meats, honey, and beeswax. The animal and vegetable products would have been traded primarily to the north while the manufactured goods moved south. The impact of the intercourse of many peoples has left its imprint on the area which is still a contact zone for three main linguistic groups: Kwa, Voltaic, and Mande.

THE DECLINE OF BEGHO

Various reasons are given for the decline of Begho which the research of Garrard on the genealogies and historical sources has indicated should possibly be placed very late in the 18th or even in the beginning of the 19th century, rather than 50–100 years earlier as had previously been suggested (Garrard *in* Posnansky, in prep.). Its decline was certainly due in some measure to the expansion of Asante and the wars waged by Asante on its northwest frontier in which Begho became involved. However, like so many towns, its collapse was not immediate. There is no indication of a sudden evacuation or even of a destruction. Eighteenth century tobacco pipes are quite common in Begho, 19th century ones are not. Important factors in Begho's decline were the loss of markets to Asante and the general shift of economic gravity southward, as well as the attraction, forced and otherwise, of craftsmen to the Kumase area under the patronage of the Asante court. Another factor reflected in the oral traditions was that as the economy contracted, the cooperation between the different ethnic groups distintegrated as each group competed for a

rapidly diminishing share of the trade. The breakdown may have been reflected in actual internal conflict, but certainly resulted in the movement away from the town of the Kramo, known as Dunso, to Bonduku; of the Brong to (new) Nsawkaw; and of the Pantera to Debibi. A further factor which should certainly not be minimized is that once trade and industry were taken away, the area could not support a town of several thousand which had, over the years, over exploited and exhausted many of its raw materials. Ivory ran out in the Hani area in the 19th century, large game became scarce, the iron industry became uncompetitive, and the gold trade was monopolized by Asante. The area could no longer support a major market center.

THE BEGHO LEGACY

Did Begho provide any legacy for the later Akan societies? In that it was the conduit for the trade link from the north, it provided, together with Bono Manso, a major link between the Akan world of the forest and the Mande world of the middle Niger. The textile and brass technologies as well as the weighting systems were first elaborated in Begho. We know nothing of the exact nature of the chieftaincy prevailing, but one can surmise that as one of the first major chieftaincies its influence on later groups should be taken into account. It is certainly possible that key elements such as the form of the state swords, the state umbrellas, and the side-blown trumpets were present and represent to some degree the result of the successful interaction between the Brong and the Mande peoples, who brought with them a knowledge of the more politically and economically complex societies that existed in Mali. Some aspects of technology, such as the flat roofs, were rejected as environmentally unsuitable but nevertheless much was accepted and later diffused to the south (Pasnansky, 1975) through commercial contact and finally through being brought under the political sphere of influence of Asante.

But it is important to stress the differences. The Akan world of the forest developed in the second and third quarters of the second millennium A.D. quite independently from the areas on the northern fringe. The two ceramic traditions are entirely different, in form, fabric, and decorative motif. The house forms are also largely different. The Asante compound consists of separate buildings around a square whereas the Brong compound is continuous around the square. The rich plastic art in mud is missing on the buildings in Brong Ahafo and where present, as in the applied decorations of a building in Nsawkaw, it appears to be a southern influence rather than a local artistic tradition. If one could only date the brass janus figure at Nsawkaw, which it is alleged came out of the holy hole with the first people of Begho, then it might be possible to claim an artistic heritage in brass that predates the southern terra cottas which have stylistic affinities. Garrard (1983: 46) believes the figure to be late, influenced by the southern terra cottas. One artistic link which is, however, indisputable is an applied shield design on a piece of pottery from the K2 site; but as this is the only such piece in a collection of more than 150,000 sherds, and from a late site, it is more likely that the idea of applied decoration on pots spread from the southern Akan, rather than from Begho to the south.

The major problem in looking at Brong antecedents in Asante culture is that we have no Asante baseline sites of the 15th to the 17th centuries. There is of course the Ahinsan (Davies, 1977a) funerary site near Bekwai but that is far from typical. No occupation sites of the period other than Manpongtin (Davies, 1977b) have been found and that is already late, with very definite coastal influence. The dearth of archaeological activity in the Asante hinterland has limited historical reconstruction and has led to a possible overemphasis of the role of both northern and coastal elements in Asante culture. It is easy to concentrate on the brass which survives at the expense of pre-19th century wood, textiles, or clay friezes which did not survive. The scale of work undertaken both on the coast and in Brong Ahafo in recent years indicates that after the Kintampo tradition, of before 1000 B.C., there was no great artistic tradition in either area, which means that the remarkable achievements of the Asante and its immediate neighbors were sui generis. There were elements within the economy, technology, and the paraphernalia of state craft which

they adopted either from the earlier Akan states to the north or from those states that arose in contact with the Europeans on the coast, but it was the rapid fusion of these elements with their own, which we still need to delineate with the help of archaeology, that provides the excitement for the scholar interested in the generation of the Akan civilization.

NOTES

1. Summarized recently in Kiyaga-Mulindwa (1980).
2. J. Deetz, 1977 (book title).
3. Although several other names have been used (Bi^{c}u, Bighu, Bɛo, Beeo, Nsoko, Bew), the term Begho is used here not because it accords closest to the original name, which would be closer to Bɛo or Beeo, but because of its established use in the literature.
4. Private communication from T. F. Garrard who is writing a paper on this topic.
5. The people of Hani claim that there were no sheep at Begho and, in fact, there are a smaller number of caprid remains than those of other bovids, including antelopes and cows.

CHAPTER 2. ARCHAEOLOGY IN GONJA AND ASANTE CONNECTIONS

Peter L. Shinnie

ABSTRACT

In 1977 archaeological work was started in Gonja with the intention of looking for evidence for the arrival of the Gonja people into their present territory and to see if archaeology could add anything to the story of Gonja origins. A secondary aim was to see what evidence there was for Asante influence. The town of Daboya was chosen for excavation, and work there has shown that the site was continuously occupied for over 2000 years.

A considerable range of material was found, mostly pottery, which has been classified and approximately dated. In addition a previously unknown style of terra cotta figurine has been found dating from early in the second millennium A.D. and continuing in use until early in the 19th century.

Archaeology has not provided evidence to support, or deny, the story of the Mande origin of the Gonja nor has the period of Asante domination been reflected in the artifact remains though such influence is quite strong nowadays.

INTRODUCTION

In 1962 Jones could say, "Of all the old states which fall within the present boundaries of Ghana, none perhaps has received less attention from historians than the chiefdoms of Gonja division." This is no longer the case, and writings by Goody, Levtzion, Wilks, and several of Wilks' students have considerably changed and increased our knowledge of Gonja history. That history depends almost entirely on collections of oral traditions and on a few Arabic documents dating at the earliest from the 18th century. One of these, usually known to those who have had access to it as the Kitab Gonja, has been frequently quoted by those fortunate few and an edition has been promised for nearly 20 years. It is understood that a translation and critical edition, which considers several manuscripts, is now almost ready for publication.

The other possible source of information about the Gonja, archaeology, has made little contribution. The major site to have been excavated prior to 1978 was at New Buipe where, as part of the Volta Basin Research Project, York carried out a salvage operation on several mounds which proved to have been occupied both before and after the assumed date for the arrival of the Gonja north of the Black Volta (York, 1973).

My excavation in 1961 (Shinnie and Ozanne, 1962) at Yendi Dabari in Dagomba provided some information peripheral to the Gonja story but did nothing to elucidate the nature of Gonja culture, nor could it have been expected to. Small-scale excavations by Mathewson, who like York was working for the Volta Research Project, were exclusively concerned with sites that were expected to be flooded by the Volta Dam, and since only the briefest preliminary reports have been made available, almost no information can be obtained. To take matters further, in 1977 I planned a survey in western Gonja to examine sites known to be of significance in the history of the Gonja state. I planned to select one site for extensive excavation in the hope that archaeology might provide some information concerning the nature of the Gonja conquest north of the Black Volta, the material culture of the Gonja people (insofar as preservation permitted), and evidence for pre-Gonja occupation of the area.

During the course of several weeks in the summer of 1977, a number of sites were examined, among them Bole; Senyon, of very

special religious importance; Mankuma, the burial place of the Yagbumwuras; Nyanga, at one time the seat of the Yagbumwura and sometimes identified with Yagbum itself; Dakrupe and Larabanga, both of importance for the introduction of Islam; Daboya; and a number of lesser sites. A preliminary account of these sites has been published (Shinnie, 1981) and a full report will be given with the publication now being prepared on the work at Daboya. A small excavation was carried out at a site in the Mole National Park; the report is published (Shinnie and Kense, 1981) but this site appears to be too recent to be of significance for early Gonja history and probably represents the remains of a small settlement of one of the so-called subject peoples.

Daboya was selected as the scene of an excavation which was carried out in 1978, 1979, 1982, and 1983 and the project was concluded with work at several small sites in the neighborhood of Bole, of which one was Wasipe, during the winter of 1984/85. Daboya was selected as the main site for archaeological activity primarily because surface indications suggested that there were more obvious traces of the past to be found there but also because it was known to have been an important political, military, and trading center and because a considerable amount was known of its history through the work of Glenna Case who had spent much time there in 1976 while carrying out research which resulted in her thesis (Case, 1979).

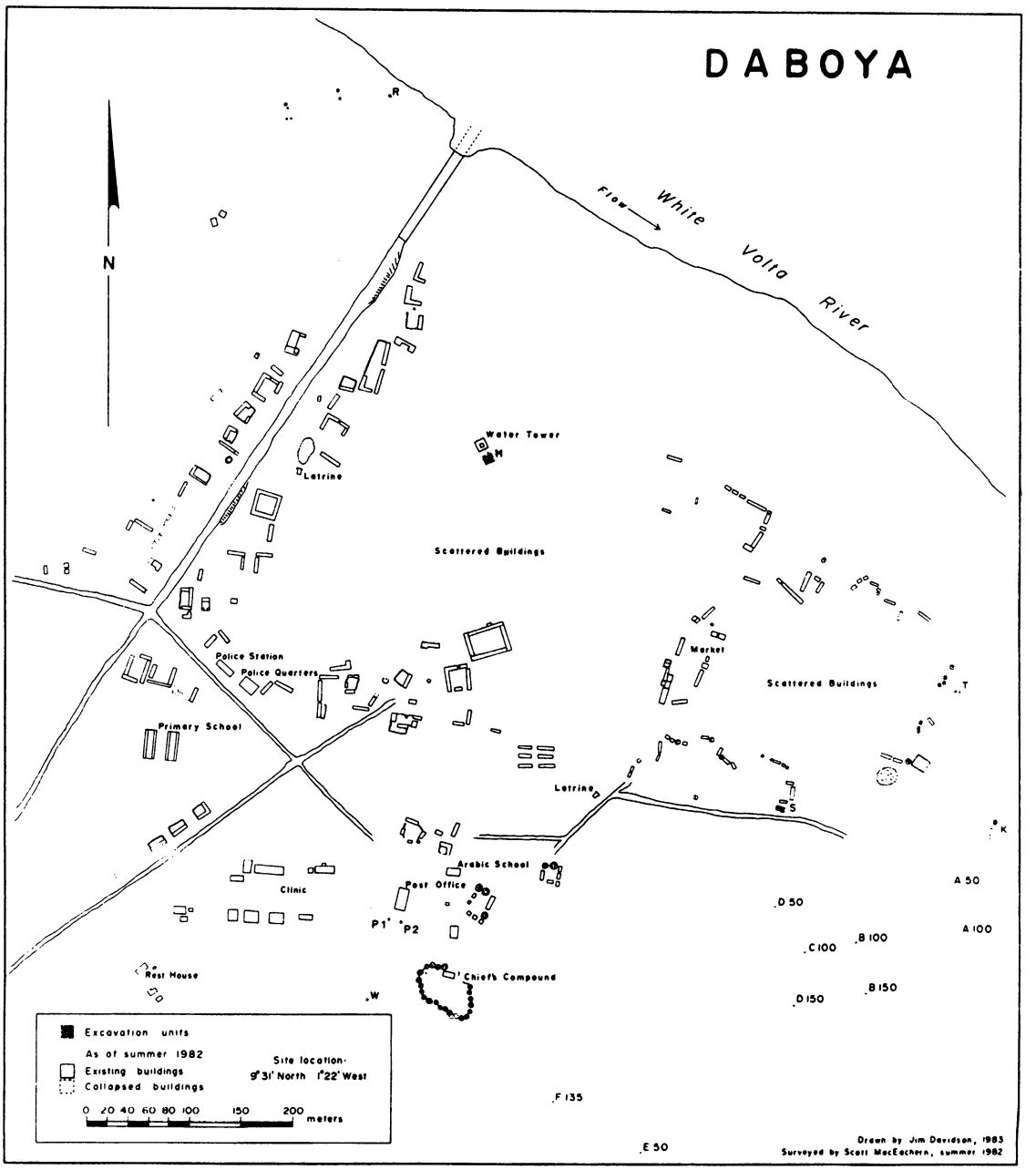
It was hoped that excavation at Daboya would reveal the nature of the material culture of the region both before and after the occupation by the Gonja, perhaps throw light on Gonja origins, and also show something of interaction with Asante for the last few centuries. There were well-attested connections with Asante, clearly described by Case, including the dramatic attempt of the Wasipewura, the chief of Daboya, to blow up an Asante mission in 1845.

The four seasons of excavation have produced a mass of information—in the main in the form of broken pieces of pottery, which is what the archaeologist normally finds in great quantity when working in sub-Saharan Africa, but also a number of other objects, some of them quite unexpected. To the historian the results are often disappointing, as it is seldom that archaeological evidence is unambiguous, and the attempt to provide a culture history from such a small range of materials as local conditions permit to be preserved is fraught with difficulty.

The excavation was carried out in various places (see map 2-1), primarily determined by surface indications, but also in some cases determined by other considerations such as a wish to test whether the town had extended farther southeast in earlier times. Areas available for excavation were to some extent constricted by present occupation. These sometimes widely separated units did not all tell the same story, and the periods of occupation represented by them were not always the same. However, the varying styles of pottery and the occurrence of other material always came in the same stratigraphic order even if not all were present in any one unit.

The exigencies of time, weather, and the labor force meant, on occasion, that less was excavated than had been hoped—particularly in areas H and Z where it had been planned to clear more widely than in the other units. Another frustrating part of excavation at Daboya was the virtual impossibility of observing natural strata. It is an axiom in archaeology that different human activities in the past are marked by variations in the soil, usually observable by changes in color or texture, and that these should be identified and used to define the different deposits, and to separate artifacts found. At Daboya, and widely in West Africa, this is virtually impossible and the persistence of the same phenomena in the past—primarily the continuous building, collapse, and rebuilding of mud houses—causes the soil deposit to appear the same over long periods of time. As a result, the neat division of strata by which, conventionally, archaeologists should dig—retaining as discrete units the different superimposed layers of the layer cake—cannot be distinguished. To overcome this, it has become customary to dig in what I call "spits"—that is, to remove the soil in regular predetermined (commonly 10 cm) layers which do not necessarily bear any relation to the variation in human activity that the soil build-up is always hoped to reveal.

Daboya, though its historical results may appear to be less than hoped for, provided to



Map 2-1. Daboya, showing excavated areas.

the archaeologist results of rather a remarkable nature. The most striking evidence is that which shows that Daboya has an exceptionally long continuous occupation—perhaps the longest yet known from any ancient site in West Africa. The earliest inhabitants were those of the Neolithic period with pottery styles and other objects, notably those strange objects known commonly in Ghana as "cigars," a name which may be used until such time as their real function is known. The name, though apparently foolish, serves as a

code name which is now understood, and it is sufficiently far from any suggestion of a real use as not to prejudice discussion of the actual function, still obscure, of these artifacts.

POTTERY

The great mass of pottery ranging in date from prior to 1000 B.C. to the present day shows, as would be expected, a considerable range of manufacture and style, and could these changes be identified with distinct ethnic and cultural groups, would go far to help in elucidating the culture history of Daboya. Unfortunately, this cannot be done and all archaeologists can do is to separate the different types of pottery by visual observation of stratigraphy and provide a vague framework of dates from Carbon-14 samples.

The pottery from Daboya has been arranged in a hierarchy of Traditions, Families, and Wares and can be schematically arranged as follows, with very approximate dates:

Tradition I (Kintampo) ca. 2000–1000 B.C.
  Family A
  Family B
  Family C
Tradition II (Daboya)
  Family A 800 B.C.–A.D. 200
    Ware 1
    Ware 2
  Family B
    Ware 1 A.D. 200–600
    Ware 2 A.D. 200–600
    Ware 3 A.D. 600–1000
    Ware 4 A.D. 600–1000
Tradition III 200 B.C.–A.D. 200
Tradition IV
  Family A
    Ware 1 A.D. 700–1200
    Ware 2
    Ware 3
Tradition V (Silima/Gonja painted ware)
  Family A A.D. 1300–1800
  Family B A.D. 1400–1850
Tradition VI (Yagha) A.D. 1600–1800
Tradition VII (Yagaba) A.D. 1850–1925

These variations in style all indicate different aspects of human activity but it is virtually impossible to say what aspects. The simplest explanation of changes in pottery is to say that they represent the mysterious whims of fashion, but the long periods for which distinctive pottery styles persisted make it likely that more far-reaching causes were at work. I am inclined to see ethnic changes as being largely responsible.

It is not yet possible to say what the causes of these changes were and the dating remains very approximate. It does seem that there was no marked change at the time the Gonja arrived in the area. This is not surprising if, as the traditions imply, they came in as a military force, perhaps without the women who would have made the pottery. It is probable that the pottery of the time, VA and VB, was being made by the pre-Gonja inhabitants and continued in much the same way until in the mid-19th century some events caused a change.

The most distinctive of the pottery traditions and the one best known in northern Ghana before the Daboya excavation is Tradition V—originally identified by Davies many years ago and called by him "Gonja painted ware" from its main characteristic—the red painted designs. York changed the name of this ware since he wished to show that it should not be associated with the Gonja people. He called it "Silima" ware after a rather tenuous identification of his site at New Buipe with a settlement documented in written sources and oral traditions (Goody, 1968). The Daboya evidence emphasizes that this ware was first made some 200 to 300 years before the coming of the Gonja, though it seems to have continued in use until only some 150 to 200 years ago.

Two things are quite clear from the complicated story of Daboya ceramics—the first being that *no* pottery style or ware can be associated with the Gonja occupation and the second that the well-known black polished wares of the Akan did not extend to Daboya and had no influence on the local ceramics.

Early Akan pottery is now reasonably well known over a wide territory from Bono Manso (Effah-Gyamfi, 1985) to Twifo-Heman (Bellis, 1972) and its shapes and decorative styles cannot be duplicated either from Daboya or New Buipe. During the later centuries of habitation at Daboya, when Gonja was under Asante domination, there is no evidence of distinctive Akan pottery and whatever may have been brought by the Asantes

to Daboya, it was clearly not their pottery. Asante trade through eastern Gonja is well known and it is highly likely that Daboya, also on an important trade route and itself a salt-producing center, was on a route used by the Asantes in trading to the north, but no evidence has been left of any of the trade goods. There is a scattering of imported European pottery, mostly of very late 19th or 20th-century date, but there is no direct evidence as to how this pottery reached the site.

OTHER ARTIFACTS

Of other artifacts from Daboya, the most intriguing and surprising were the fragments of human figures of baked clay—usually known as terra cottas. Fragments were found to range in date from approximately A.D. 1000 to perhaps early in the last century. Present-day inhabitants know nothing of these figurines nor of their use. There is a range of type: some are seated, some are male, some are female. Some show body scarification and some have red paint on them rather similar to that in the so-called Silima pottery. Terra cottas are widely known throughout West Africa and vary greatly in artistic style. The Daboya figurines have no resemblance to those of the Akan. The closest analogies are found with some of the so-called "So" figurines from the area south of Lake Chad. This resemblance may be entirely coincidental.

Apart from these objects made from clay in the earlier levels at the site, the only other artifacts are those of stone. A considerable number of grinding stones, both upper and lower, have been found—these presumably are evidence primarily for the grinding of grain, though this is by no means certain as it is more common today to pound grain in a wooden mortar than to grind it. Grinding stones are certainly used for other purposes in the preparation of foodstuffs such as the grinding of peppers and, today, of tomatoes, though these would not have been present in pre-16th century times. A small number of beads of glass and of stone have been found; cowrie shells are abundant in the later levels though there is some ambiguity about the date of their first occurrence; in the upper levels a considerable number of fragments of metal objects has been found. Metal is not well preserved owing to the soil conditions of the site. The absence of metal objects in early Iron Age levels is probably best attributed to decay rather than to lack of use of, at least, iron. In the levels in which metal is found it is primarily iron; various domestic and possibly warlike objects, such as knives, spears, and arrowheads are found. There is also a considerable number of pieces which look as though they were horse trappings, and since they only appear in levels dating from the last few hundred years it is possible that these are associated with the coming of the Gonja. The presence of a scatter of horse bones in the same levels may also be associated with the use of cavalry usually considered to have been introduced by the Gonja.

ASANTE AND MANDE CONNECTIONS

There is, as already noted for the pottery, nothing in the artifact assemblage at Daboya to suggest connections with or influence from Asante, and in view of the chronology of the site, if there were such objects, they would have been found only in the upper levels. It is clear that the people of Daboya, both Gonja and others, must have had well-established cultural traditions long before their first contact with Asante, and the military and commercial impact of Asante is not reflected in the archaeological remains.

There is also nothing in the material culture to provide support for the standard Gonja story of their origins from Mali. The traditions are in many ways obscure and contradictory. But the main thrust of the story is clear enough. Both written documents and oral traditions imply that a group of armed horsemen coming south from Mali in the late 15th or early 16th centuries to investigate a holdup in the flow of gold northward from the main gold fields did not return to Mali. According to some versions the horsemen, under the leadership of the Gonja folk hero Ndewura Jakpa, or more probably a predecessor by the name of Naba, turned northeast, crossed the Black Volta and settled in the region now known as Gonja. Here they established a small conquest state which has survived to the present day under the paramountcy of the Yagbumwura who, while now

living at Damongo, traditionally resided at Nyanga, slightly to the west. (It is hoped that some archaeological investigations will be carried out at Nyanga during the coming season.)

I have always been somewhat doubtful of the correctness of this version of history and there are a number of aspects which are difficult to explain. The main problem is that of the langugae spoken by the Gonja, and why these rulers of Mandingo origin should now be speaking a Guan language. The usual explanation has been that the original warrior invaders spoke Mandingo but that, arriving in their new territory as military bachelors, they married locally and their children grew up speaking their mother's language. The difficulty in accepting this is that the present "subject peoples," that is to say the original pre-Gonja inhabitants of the area, do not speak Gonja, or other Guan languages, but a variety of Voltaic languages, among which Vagala is one of the most important. I gave the main argument for a skeptical view of what could be called the "Gonja myth of origin" in an earlier paper (Shinnie, 1981: 66–67). In that paper, written before the excavation at Daboya, I suggested that material from Daboya might go some way toward solving these problems. It has not, in fact, done so in any clear way but it does show a distinct culture, neither influenced by Akan nor Mande elements.

There are, however, certain Akan elements in the present-day culture of the Gonja of which the most obvious is the use of Asante *ntumpane* drums. Every Gonja chief has two of these, and at Daboya the drums were beaten every Monday and Friday morning to praise the chief before the many subchiefs came to greet him. The language of the drums is mainly Twi, though on occasion Gonja is used, as can be seen from the pamphlet by the present Yagbumwura (Braimah, n.d.). Since the wood from which the drums are made would not be preserved for long in the soil, there is no way of knowing how long this Asante feature has been a part of Gonja culture. It may reflect a longstanding link with the Akan or may have been introduced during the period of Asante domination in the 18th century.

The best known event in Asante-Daboya relations was when the Wasipewura Kankanfro attempted to blow up an Asante mission in about 1845 by firing a pistol at gun powder concealed under animal skins on the floor of his audience hall. The results were less successful than the Wasipewura had intended, and he himself and a number of his attendants died along with some of the Asante. Details of this event are given by Case (1979: 178 ff.). Unfortunately, archaeology has not been able to find traces of this dramatic event.

CONCLUSION

The work at Daboya has produced rather dramatic results. It has shown a very long occupation at one site, presumably reflecting the superior economic and strategic importance of the White Volta frontier. It has also shown how cultural traditions, as seen in variations in the pottery, have changed during this time. The work has also demonstrated that archaeology has very definite limitations in revealing the influences of foreign conquest when not accompanied by changes in the main, preservable artifacts. Asante influence, though confined to a rather short time in the long Daboya sequence, is still seen to have a considerable importance, but because of the military and commercial nature of Asante influence, the basic artifacts which are subject to change of style—primarily pottery—are too deeply rooted in indigenous culture to have been changed. If there had been large-scale Asante settlement in Gonja, with Asante craftsmen and women making the normal range of Asante domestic objects, then there certainly might have been change caused by the imagined superiority of foreign to indigenous crafts. For lack of this, however powerful Asante rule may have been, the basic life of Daboya was unaffected and only such items as were concerned with politics have been adopted.

CHAPTER 3. THE IMPACT OF ASANTE ON THE TRADE PATTERNS OF NORTHERN GHANA AND IVORY COAST

François J. Kense

ABSTRACT

The role of localized trade systems has often been neglected in assessing regional cultural and economic development. With the expansion of Asante military and economic power in the early 18th century, the autonomy of several existing states in the Black and White Volta basin was threatened. Crucial to the trade routes along the Niger River, this region included the polities of Gyaman, Gonja, Dogomba, Mamprussi, and Kong. Drawing mainly upon archaeological evidence, this paper briefly reviews the origins of these polities and discusses the relationship between local and long-distance trade in the periods before and during Asante domination. The extent to which Asante controlled trade in general, the relationship between the local and long-distance trading systems, and the effect of Asante control on regional economies are discussed. The evidence presented here leads the author to the conclusion that the impact of Asante on the peoples of the Black and White Volta river region was minimal.

INTRODUCTION

The first half of the 18th century witnessed the rapid expansion of Asante power throughout much of what is now modern Ghana. Although this growth is adequately examined in terms of the military and political history of both Asante and its protagonists, it seems that economic factors have been considered largely from the perspective of the imperial power or from those who benefited directly from their participation in the international network. Less attention has been directed toward evaluating the impact made by long-distance trading systems upon the regions through which they operated or to an understanding of how the hinterland areas interacted with the dominant centers. Yet, in assessing the cultural response to such influences from outside, examination of the changes that long-distance trade relations introduced into a particular region is of immediate concern.

I argue here that the impact of long-distance trade and the establishment of political and economic relations between the region of the Comoe, Black and White Volta and Oti rivers, and the more powerful centers represented by the states of the Middle Niger River area, and later by Asante, was constrained. There was, in fact, only a limited influence on the traditions of the indigenous cultures, so that, outside of the main towns and their immediate areas, little change occurred in the lifestyle of the majority of the population. The regional centers, which responded to external inducements, were little more than cosmopolitan enclaves in an otherwise indifferent environment. Since these centers were largely dependent on the changing fortunes of the international network, their development, growth, and decay usually originated from factors far removed from local controls.

In the present paper, I briefly review the growth of several states and towns in the savanna region of northern Ghana and neighboring Ivory Coast in the period preceding the rise of Asante. The history of most of these polities is remarkably similar and reflects several factors important for an understanding of subsequent developments. Particular attention is focused both on the local economic structures of these polities and on the importance of the trade relations with the Middle Niger centers. In the second part of

the paper, I examine the process of expansion followed by Asante in the early 18th century in regard to the "northern hinterland." In particular, I emphasize what the Asante viewed as the most vital considerations of their imperial program and demonstrate that these had little effect on the indigenous cultures. Finally, in the third section, several of the more important ways in which the region did respond to external forces and events are examined.

EVIDENCE OF EARLY POPULATION

It is one of the anomalies of West African prehistory that although considerable evidence exists for the antiquity of human occupation, documented archaeological information remains surprisingly sparse until the last 10 millenniums. Until quite recently, furthermore, the principal source of data came from the northern areas of West Africa, outside of the tropical forest region itself. Although generally considered to reflect an accident of archaeological investigation, it remains true that very little evidence exists of human occupation in the forest for the period preceding the 14th century A.D. This is surprising for an area that nurtured the birth of Asante only some three centuries later.

The earliest evidence from Ghana for a settled population that required construction of semipermanent dwellings comes from several areas across the northern half of the country. This culture, the Kintampo, appears to have preferred the savanna-woodland environment for its subsistence practices, even when that complex was to be found within the tropical rain forest itself (Anquandah, 1982). The Kintampo people were a stone-using population, and although they seem to have relied principally on hunting, fishing, and collecting, there is growing evidence that they may also have been the first peoples in the area to have experimented with food production (Carter and Flight, 1972; Flight, 1976). It also seems clear that some of the Kintampo groups kept some form of cattle and sheep and/or goat livestock.

Although this Terminal Late Stone Age culture appears to have been relatively widespread throughout northern Ghana (and presumably in neighboring Togo and Ivory Coast as well), the succeeding Early Iron period remains poorly documented in the archaeological record. Until recent investigations at Daboya provided a substantial occupation phase associated directly with the Early Iron Age, there had been some suggestion that the region had undergone a period of abandonment for the time between about 1000 B.C. to A.D. 1000 (Posnansky, 1982). Yet even though this view can now be generally discounted, very little other archaeological evidence is available from this region until the early part of the second millennium A.D.

The settlement pattern suggested by archaeological evidence for this region shows the existence of small farming communities of probably less than 200–300 inhabitants raising cattle, sheep, goats, and chickens to provide additional food and perhaps to serve as a rudimentary form of wealth accumulation. Access to water sources was crucial in most areas, especially where water could not be retained on the ground surface for any length of time. Although most villages were largely self-sufficient in most food requirements, a certain level of intervillage exchange would have developed over the centuries to supplement those resources not abundant locally or to obtain finished goods such as iron tools and pottery from localities where these were more commonly available. Little is known about these localized intervillage exchange systems. Yet such systems must have operated for centuries and formed the basis for the pattern of a regional trade network that was to become so important in the later period. The level of political organization needed to maintain such an economic structure would also have remained relatively simple and unspecialized, with little development of regional affinities or polities.

The commencement of economic interaction between the Middle Niger River region and the Black and White Volta river basin is extremely difficult to document. Since its origins are presumably indeterminable, the significant period is that during which a noticeable change occurred in the settlement pattern observed in the region. Such a shift is represented by the growth of the town of Begho in western Brong-Ahafo Region into

a large, multisection (quarters) site that extended over several square km in area (Posnansky, 1977, 1982). Archaeological evidence indicates that Begho was occupied from at least the 12th century onward and that it consisted of numerous walled structures and passages that may have contained a population of some 5000 to 10,000 residents (Posnansky, 1980).

This large population, however, was not the only significant change noted at Begho. Its division into various quarters, documented by oral traditions collected later to be based largely on ethnic identities, demonstrates a cosmopolitan character at the site previously unknown in the region. Although several of the quarters were associated with indigenous groups from the area, others have been identified with foreign elements. These included the Numu, or blacksmiths, and the Dyula. The latter group, a very complex sociocultural entity that has played a crucial role in the history of West African economic, political, and religious development, also remains one of the more ambiguous factors in historical reconstructions. Originating as traders from the Niger region and usually associated with the Mali Empire, the presence of the Dyula has repeatedly been inferred whenever unexpected or complex developments occurred. The movement of the Dyula throughout much of the savanna-woodland regions has been seen as the means whereby political sophistication was disseminated into much of West Africa.

Their involvement with the rise of Begho has been suggested on the basis of collected oral histories and on the presence of several items interpreted as related to trade which were presumably a result of their connections with the Niger region. In spite of the intensive archaeological investigation carried out at Begho, very little information is known concerning the political and social history of the site. Nothing is known, for instance, about the nature of the political organization or to whom, if at all, Begho was subject. It is interesting to know whether Begho reflected only a city-state or formed part of a greater polity that may have included (or been under) the nascent state of Bono situated immediately to the east (Wilks, 1975).

Although Begho may have been a center by the 12th century, it is clear that the real period of expansion was to occur only by the 14th to 15th centuries and that it peaked during the 16th and 17th centuries. Its prominence reflected the expanding network of trade relations established by the Dyula in which Begho formed an integral part. This network, encouraged continuously by the growing need for gold, and later kola nut, by the markets to the north, did not develop uniformly or consistently. At least two main streams can be identified during the early period of expansion. One network extended southward from Jenne through Bobo-Dioulasso, Buna, Bonduku, and terminated at Begho; the other followed a more easterly route to the southeast of Jenne into Mossi country. It appears that this second route did not extend southward toward the forest zone of Ghana until the latter part of the 16th or early 17th centuries (Wilks, 1971).

Although in some instances the Dyula traders themselves acted as the catalyst for the creation of settlements along the main routes (e.g., Nasa and Visi), and in the early period were also responsible for their administration, the usual pattern was for the Dyula to settle among or alongside an existing community (e.g., Launay, 1982). In this way they were absolved of governing and yet maintained influential ties to the secular authorities by virtue of their prestige and wealth. The close association of the Dyula with Islam, both as a vehicle for spiritual satisfaction and of learning, was also to remain an important asset of the Dyula class in their relationships with the traditional elements.

TRADE EXPANSION

Whatever the circumstances of the initial expansion of the Dyula into the savanna-woodland region, it is clear that by the early 16th century some major political developments occurred largely in response to the increasingly lucrative trading network. The common pattern consisted of the arrival of mounted warriors, usually from the north, who were easily successful in overcoming the local agricultural populations and establishing a chieftaincy. These new polities varied in size from a particular town with its hinterland, as with Kong and Wa, to large areas

composed of many districts, as in Gonja and Dagomba. Although these new elites were generally not devoutly Muslim (the Watara in the Ivory Coast perhaps being an exception), they developed close and mutually supportive relations with the Muslim community in most areas. They were clearly cognizant of the important role played by the Muslims in the maintenance and expansion of the trading connections with the northern markets.

The most notable states that arose in this period of political upheaval were Kong, Buna, Gyaman, Gonja, Dagomba, Mamprussi, Wa, and Nanumba. All straddled the major arterial routes between the forest region to the south and the Middle Niger River and Hausaland to the north, and all included at least one important center or depot along those routes. In most cases, these settlements were already in existence prior to the establishment of the new polities so that the latter were clearly not responsible for contributing significantly to the expansion of the trading network. The long-distance trade appears to have been carried out under the auspices of the Dyula merchants, as either settled members in various communities or itinerant traders based in the north, or of the Yarse, former Malinke and Soninke traders now largely absorbed in Mossi society. Very little is known at this point of the role of the Akan traders, although presumably they were increasingly active and influential as Begho and Bono Manso grew in importance.

The trade in gold and later in kola nut was one that moved primarily along a south-to-north axis, and often in the most direct route possible to the big markets along the Niger River or to northern Nigeria. But it is also clear that there was an important secondary trade network in operation that extended laterally to the main north–south routes. These lateral routes were important for several reasons. First, they served as additional routes to which traders traveling from the north could diverge and divest themselves of some of their products (finished leather goods, metal products, textiles, and livestock—particularly horses), purchase goods, or exchange them for additional local commodities before traveling on to the southern markets. Secondly, they enabled the transmission of localized trade items between regions. This involved such items as fish from the river areas, wild game, pottery, basketry and metallurgical goods, some textiles, and specialty items such as salt from Daboya. And thirdly, presumably they represented the local intervillage trade system that had developed prior to the long-distance network and which continued to serve a crucial role in each of the regions.

Each of these three distinct levels of trade within the network contributed differently to the region through which it operated, depending on the traffic it carried. Although the greatest impact would be expected for those areas through which long-distance trade passed, it is clear that those influences were largely restricted to the urban centers. Other than some political reorganization and the availability of some exotic commodities, the rural areas did not experience much change in their lifestyle with the advent of long-distance trade interests. Even Islam appears to have remained largely an urban religion with little appeal to the rural population.

The pattern that developed by the late 16th century in the northern region was one wherein the majority of the population remained rural and engaged largely in subsistence agriculture. In many of the states there was a clear linguistic and ethnic division between the ruling elite and the subject peoples, and also between these groups and the Muslim community. The wealth of the states, as manifested by the ruling elites, was generated through control of tribute, labor pools (often slave labor) and taxation of the trade goods which entered and left their domains. The most important of these goods were both those that followed the long-distance north–south routes and those that were traded along the regional lateral routes. The long-distance trade system was largely under the control of either the Dyula, the Yarse, or the Akan, whereas the regional trade was carried out by both these groups and members of the local elites. The local elites appear to have refrained from participating fully in the trading system until the last century, perhaps reflecting higher returns from other endeavors (e.g., slave raiding) or sensitivity to their status in society.

These northern polities, therefore, functioned generally in the role of exploitative societies that depended upon controlling re-

sources (trade goods, slave labor) that ultimately were outside their domain. These states served some function in that they provided a measure of stability and security in the region so that trade could operate relatively undisturbed. Yet in other respects their repeated internal conflicts and reoccurring confrontations with neighboring polities were generally viewed as disadvantageous by those directly concerned in long-distance trade. The constant threat, therefore, of having severe disruptions along the major trade routes encouraged Asante to bring matters to a more satisfactory state in her hinterland by the early 18th century.

After having established her predominance in the south over direct access to the coast, Asante developed a northern policy which commenced with the incorporation of Bono and the surrounding region into its hegemony by 1721. During the decade in which this campaign was carried out, the town of Begho underwent drastic decline and was finally abandoned. It is not clear whether Asante was directly responsible for the demise of Begho, since traditions record a considerable degree of internal rancor among its constituent residents prior to its collapse (Wilks, 1971; Posnansky, 1980). Nevertheless, it is significant that Asante did not replace Begho with a new trading terminus within its newly expanded territory. In fact, Asante encouraged the location of the major trade exchange centers to lie outside the region that Wilks (1975) has termed "Greater Asante." This was the policy followed for Bonduku and Buna as well as for Buipe and then Salaga. Only after its defeat by Britain in 1874, when the situation in the north became too unstable, did Asante establish a major center south of the Black Volta River at Kintampo.

During the next three decades, after her initial successes in the Bron region, Asante extended her military might to the neighboring polities, including Banda (1730), western Gonja (1732–73), Gyaman (1740), Dagomba and eastern Gonja (1744–45), and then central Gonja (1751–52). All of these regions were organized into what Wilks has described as the "outer provinces" of Asante (1975: 52–53). These were distinguished primarily on the basis of whether they paid taxes or tribute to the central government, with only those of the former status enjoying the benefit of Asante law and rights. The division of Kpembe in Gonja, apparently because it contained the Salaga market, enjoyed a transitional status that effectively resulted in it being the only "inner province" north of the river.

The Asante administration in the north consisted largely of a form of "indirect rule," with the indigenous political and social structures remaining unchanged. In the economic sphere, the major change entailed the superposition of the central government (usually through one of several important Asante chiefs) over the exploitative hierarchy. A certain amount of tribute (generally payable in slaves, animals, or textiles) was now owed annually to the Asante. In matters of trade itself, some changes were introduced, or perhaps merely better enforced. These changes included the monopoly enjoyed by the Asantehene or his appointees to undertake the bulk of the major trade endeavors and the right to commence each trading season before it was opened to others. Foreign traders were barred from entering the "inner provinces" for most of the 18th century, so as to maintain the dominance of Asante traders in the domestic markets. The Asante government also undertook to regulate the importation of some commodities, for example the salt from Daboya, in order to protect its own producers. Finally, resident commissioners in the various centers of the hinterland included among their duties the regulation of equitable trading practices and the adjudication of disputes in the marketplace.

Other than these factors, however, the presence of the Asante in the north appears not to have had great effect upon the majority of the indigenous population. Agriculture continued to occupy the greater proportion of economic activity. The pattern of local and regional trading that had developed during the previous centuries was not affected by the new political arrangements, except that Asante traders may have become more aggressive and expansive in their activities under the protection of Asante power. They certainly appear to have become more numerous in the major centers of the north (Wilks, 1975), a situation which probably exacerbated the hostility shown after 1874. The diminishing fortunes of members within the

ruling elites in the north induced a number of them to engage in trade themselves, particularly in that of the regional network.

European travelers to Asante in the early 19th century reported a very active trade in operation between Kumase and the north along several major routes (Bowdich, 1819; Dupuis, 1824). Four of these routes passed to the north and although neither early informant had themselves traveled the routes, they were in close agreement as to the course they followed. Starting with the most westerly one, these routes passed through Bonduku (Gyaman) and then on through Kong and northward; through Nsoko or Banda and northward to Buna and beyond; through Buipe and then Daboya and either northwesterly through Wa and beyond or directly northward toward Jenne; and through Salaga and Yendi and onward to Hausaland. As was suggested above, all these routes passed through centers that existed prior to the rise of Asante and reflected a pattern of trading behavior that was several centuries old. But that the trade carried on between Asante and her northern neighbors was crucial to both is beyond question. For the Asante, it promised a large and constant market that provided a quick and profitable return on their investments as well as a cheaper source for certain materials for which the coastal traders demanded gold and slaves (Wilks, 1975). And it benefited the northerners through gaining them access to European materials from the coast and enabling them to provide goods and services to those who came from foreign lands to transact their business in the northern centers.

Recent archaeological investigations of several sites in western Gonja of the northern region in Ghana have enabled an extensive and comparative examination of the material culture of that region. One of the sites is Daboya, a large town which is the seat of an important divisional chief within the Gonja political structure. The four other sites are smaller villages, three of which are occupied at present. Mankuma, on the main north–south route in the west of the region, is the home of an important and much revered fertility shrine, while Mandara is the first village east of the Black Volta River on the road from the Ivory Coast to Bole in western Gonja. The few compounds at Nyanga are all that remain of a considerably larger settlement that developed near the palace of the Gonja Paramount Chief. The village deteriorated once the Paramountcy moved to Damongo, some 30 miles farther east, in 1944. Only the site of Wasipe, on the road south to Bamboi from Bole, is completely abandoned. Wasipe is recorded traditionally, however, as the original village from which came the Gbanya who saved Daboya from the rival Dagomba in the 17th century (Case, 1979).

The five sites are located within a 150 sq. mi area that is administered under the same political system. The area is also part of a secondary exchange network that lay on the periphery of two major trade routes. One led from Asante to Bonduku and Jenne and the other connected to Hausaland. Nevertheless, sufficient trade links passed through western Gonja to encourage the creation of the Gonja state. The salt, and later textiles, produced at Daboya were two important commodities that entered the trade network from this region.

But however significant this trade may have been for the maintenance of the Gbanya elite (either as a source of revenue or to accumulate status items), it is clear from the excavations that few exotic items transcended to the general population. Furthermore, material comparison from the five sites indicates that Daboya had the highest proportion and variety of special items than any of the other four. Although a full description of these items will be published elsewhere (Shinnie and Kense, in prep.), they include European pottery, cowry shells, glass beads, cuprous objects, and tobacco pipes that were so well made and standardized that they were probably trade objects. The relative abundance of these materials at Daboya reflects its importance as a political and production center in the region, whereas the lesser quantity of these items from Nyanga indicates its main role as a political site. Since it is uncertain how long Nyanga was the seat of the Paramountcy, the low proportion of exotic artifacts may reflect Nyanga's late entry into prominence. The other three sites yielded the least amount of these objects, with almost no exotic goods excavated from Mankuma.

The archaeological record, therefore, dem-

onstrated little in the way of much tangible evidence for a direct relationship between this region and either the Niger Bend area or Greater Asante. Nor is there much evidence for extensive participation by the communities within the region that was crosscut by peripheral arteries to long-distance trade links. Of the five sites illustrated above, Daboya was by far the largest and most urbanized settlement. If the impact upon a town occupying one of the main trade routes (albeit not the major one) was minimal in terms of the material culture, then it is not surprising that little influence was made upon the outlying smaller communities. And one can anticipate that even less, if any, impact by long-distance trade connections would characterize the very rural areas of northern Ghana.

CONCLUSION

It is not the intent of this paper to negate or belittle the influences that have affected developments in the northern region over the past millennium or so. That would be clearly indefensible and unjustified. Many of the major cultural changes that occurred in the region are best interpreted as adaptations to external factors and innovations such as agriculture, metallurgy, and weaving. Similarly, if it had not been for the desirability of gold by the Niger states, in response to markets even farther north, the nature and certainly the intensity of trade relations with the regions to the south would have been quite different. Yet the increasing importance of the gold trade, and later of kola nut as well as other commodities, brought with it the imposition of several institutions and values required to ensure the continuation of long-distance trade relations. These institutions, especially Islam and political centralization, were to have profound effects upon the political, economic, educational, and social traditions of the region (as they still do today). But what must not be overestimated is the degree to which these factors permeated the cultural behavior of the majority of the societies. The primary participants in the operation of trade were either itinerant or resident foreigners, the latter usually maintaining their own language and culture, or members of the ruling elite of that particular society. The ruling elite themselves were generally representative of a foreign element that had been responsible for the establishment of the polity over a heterogeneous population. And finally, the influence of Islam was restricted largely to the urban centers where its chief adherents were the foreign traders and their descendants and, occasionally, some members of the ruling class. These were also the groups that benefited most from the more formal education opportunities offered by Islam.

The development of long-distance trade and its concomitant association with Islam and political change resulted in the superimposition of a political, economic, and social order that remained distinct from the general population and cultural traditions indigenous to the region. The result of this pattern was to enable its extension to include the Asante state with the minimum of disturbance or dislocation of the existent structure. So although there was certainly some loss of independence and wealth on the part of the traditional authorities, the impact upon the lifestyle of the majority of the inhabitants of the region was minimal. And the effect, therefore, of the ultimate collapse of the Asante hegemony upon the northern societies was also minimized—a situation that has repeated itself in more recent times as well.

CHAPTER 4. A LATE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HORIZON IN GHANA: PROTO-AKAN OR PRE-AKAN?

James O. Bellis

ABSTRACT

Archaeological artifacts of ceramic, metallic, and lithic materials have been recovered from the auriferous gravels in the gold-producing regions of southern Ghana. Most of these objects were recovered as by-products of either gold mining or gold-dredging activity. Beginning in the 1920s some of the technicians working in the gold fields began to contemplate the historical significance of these finds. Early efforts were hampered by a complete absence of archaeological research which might have provided the necessary background and context for the interpretation of these objects. Over the last two decades a number of finds have been made in controlled archaeological research which show distinct parallels to the gold field artifacts. The present paper synthesizes these several sets of data and assesses their importance for the culture history of southern Ghana.

INTRODUCTION

Examination of the archaeological data pertinent to the gold extraction industry operating in Ghana at the time of the arrival of the European provokes many questions. How was the work done technically? What is the likely antiquity of the industry? What is the geographic distribution of the mine sites? It was concluded that the most valuable and exciting contribution the data could make at this time concerned the question, who were these miners? Were they culturally Akan? The archaeological materials associated with the earliest known gold mining activity in Ghana appear to be very different from the material culture of the Akan peoples of the 19th and 20th centuries. For more than a half century archaeologists have, with rare exception, interpreted this pattern in the archaeological data as a significant break in the cultural and/or demographic continuity in the history of the southern forest area of Ghana. In the present paper I depart from this position and propose that despite the observed stylistic differences between earlier and later materials, the older forms do not in fact terminate prior to the modern Akan occupation, but rather these older forms continue to survive in a very specialized set of ritual objects in contemporary Akan culture, thus strongly suggesting an overall continuity in Akan culture history.

My interest in this topic began in 1969 when, with the support of the Foreign Area Fellowship Program, I was conducting archaeological fieldwork in south-central Ghana near the town of Twifo Heman. At a seminar of the Department of Archaeology of the University of Ghana, L. A. K. Quashie, of the Department of Geology, delivered a paper on indigenous gold extraction technology in Ghana. He described a number of archaeological artifacts that had for some years been turning up in the gold dredges of the State Gold Mining Corporation in and around the Dunkwa area in the drainage of the Offin River. He informed us that the members of the archaeological community would be welcome to examine the collection at the corporate office in Dunkwa.

Toward the end of the 1969 dry season, in the company of two members of the Volta Basin Research Program, Duncan Mathewson and Peter Pipim, I was able to visit the State Gold Mining Corporation office in Dunkwa, and to examine and photograph a collection of artifacts that had accumulated over a period of several years. Mr. Penwill, the manager at Dunkwa, had us taken to

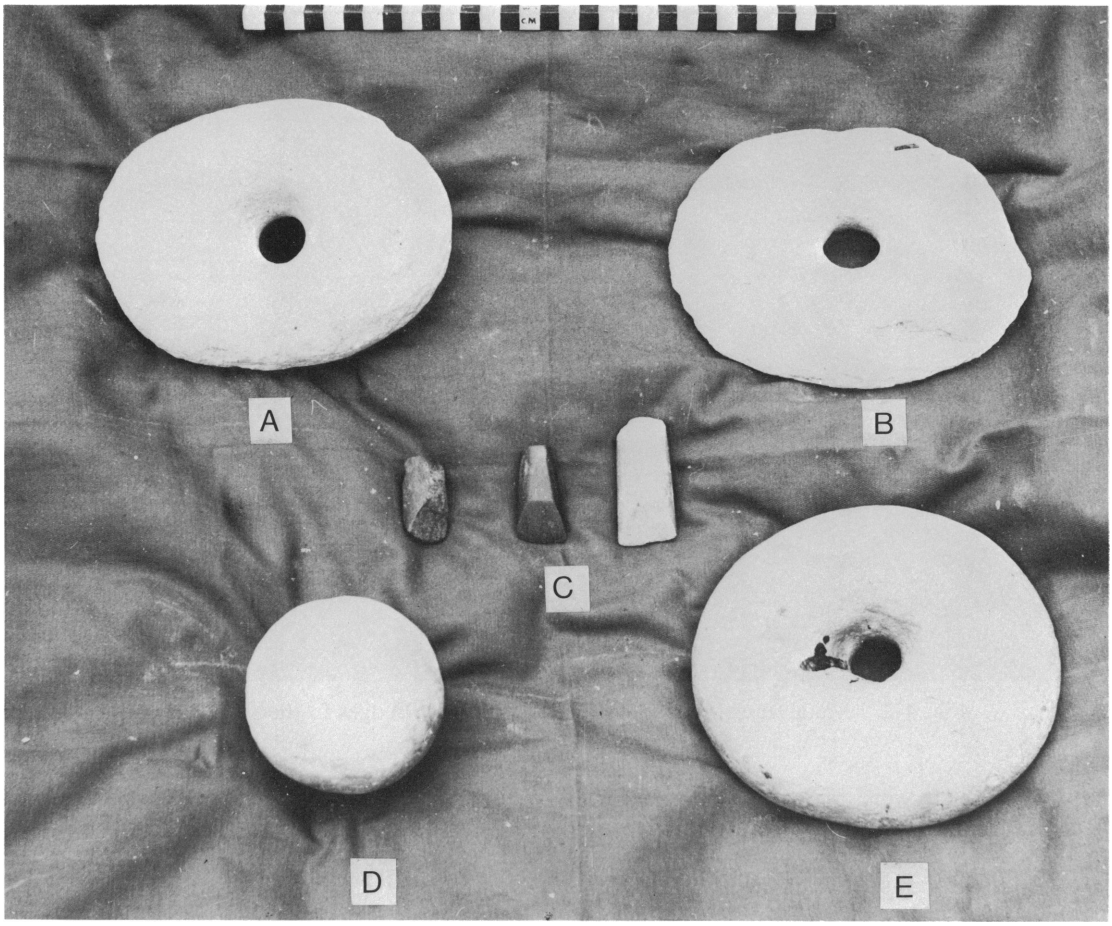


Fig. 4-1. Stone artifacts recovered by modern gold dredges in the Jimi River (tributary of the Offin River).

Dredge No. 4 on the Jimi River, one of the dredge sites where materials were being found.

THE GOLD FIELD ARTIFACTS

The assemblage was varied, and included most of the kinds of objects reported as part of the tool kit of the Ghanaian miner in the published accounts of many observers over the last 300 years.[1] There were tools for the excavation or mining of the ore, such as the cylindrical, narrow-bitted stone "axes" (fig. 4-1, c). These "axes" (known in Twi as *Nyame Akuma,* or "God's axe") were probaby multiple-purpose tools, but many exhibited coarse and heavy edge wear suggesting that they often were used as digging stick bits for picking through the tough banket and placer ores. Large biconically drilled stones (fig. 4-1, a, b, e) likely served as weights for digging sticks so that they would be more effective in the cramped quarters of a 2½ ft mine shaft.

Tools were recovered which must have been used in separating the gold from the ore. Large quartz spheres (fig. 4-1, d), 4–6 in. in diameter, show evidence on their surface of attrition by grinding action, an action which was used to crush the ore so that the gold it contained could be more effectively separated by washing. A variety of metal containers (fig. 4-2) and the fragmented remains of pottery vessels (fig. 4-3) were present, and were most probably the containers used to both haul and wash the crushed ores.

Fig. 4-2. Metal vessel recovered by modern gold dredges in the Jimi River.

Finally, there were pieces of gold jewelry, and a large number of utensils associated with the weighing of gold (fig. 4-4). There were weights, scale pans for the traditional Ghanaian balance scales, and a winnowing pan for separating the particles of dirt, sand, or other impurities from the gold dust.

In short, there is evidence to demonstrate that gold ore had been dug along the floodplain of the Jimi River, and the ore had been processed to separate the gold from its geological matrix. At least some portion of the gold produced there was measured by weighing and perhaps even changed hands for the first time in what may have been the beginning of a long journey to the awaiting gold markets of the world.

It is impossible to date the assemblage of material to a specific point in time. In fact, the evidence suggests that the activity in the Jimi River valley probably spanned several centuries. For example, the most recent activity was well within the 20th century. One of the pieces of gold jewelry is made in the artificial "nugget" form so popular among the customers of 20th century goldsmiths (fig. 4-4, single piece in foreground). On the back of the same piece is an attachment for a modern pin fixture. Some of the gold weights are of the geometric form Garrard (1980: 274) has estimated to be of the period from ca. A.D. 1500–1700. It is, of course, possible for a gold weight to have been lost at any time after its date of manufacture, but the number of these early weights present makes one suspect they cannot all be explained this way. I believe I can confidently assign dates to the period of use of this particular gold field from the present State Gold Mining Corporation use, back in time at least to the first European contact in the late 15th century.

QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE POTTERY

In all of the materials there were few surprises. Most of the types of tools or artifacts present are accounted for in the documented descriptions of early observers. There was, however, one problem with the data. The various shapes represented in the pottery recovered from the dredge (fig. 4-3) did not in

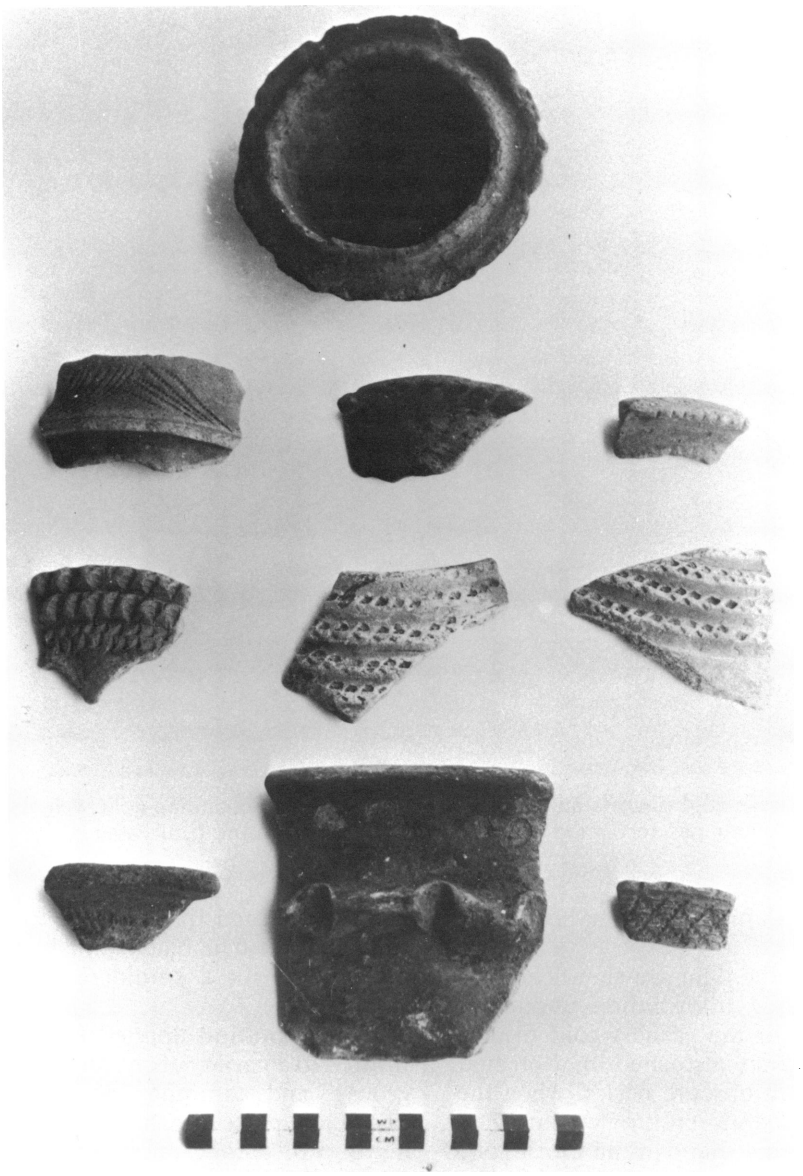


Fig. 4-3. Fragments of ceramic vessels recovered by modern gold dredges in the Jimi River.

any way conform to the basic formal designs that I had come to recognize as "typically Akan" in excavations a mere 60 mi away in the Twifo Heman area across the Pra River to the east and south (Bellis, 1976). As I referred to other bodies of ceramic material, both published and unpublished, this conclusion was consistently strengthened.[2]

Much of this data has been unused to date, in part because not enough was known about the general characteristics of Ghana archaeology by earlier scholars. In this paper I do not bring a new set of data to bear on the cultural and historical problems of the peoples of Ghana; rather, I recognize the patterns in a rather large and old set of data. Though the patterns were recognized earlier, somehow their potential significance for the cul-

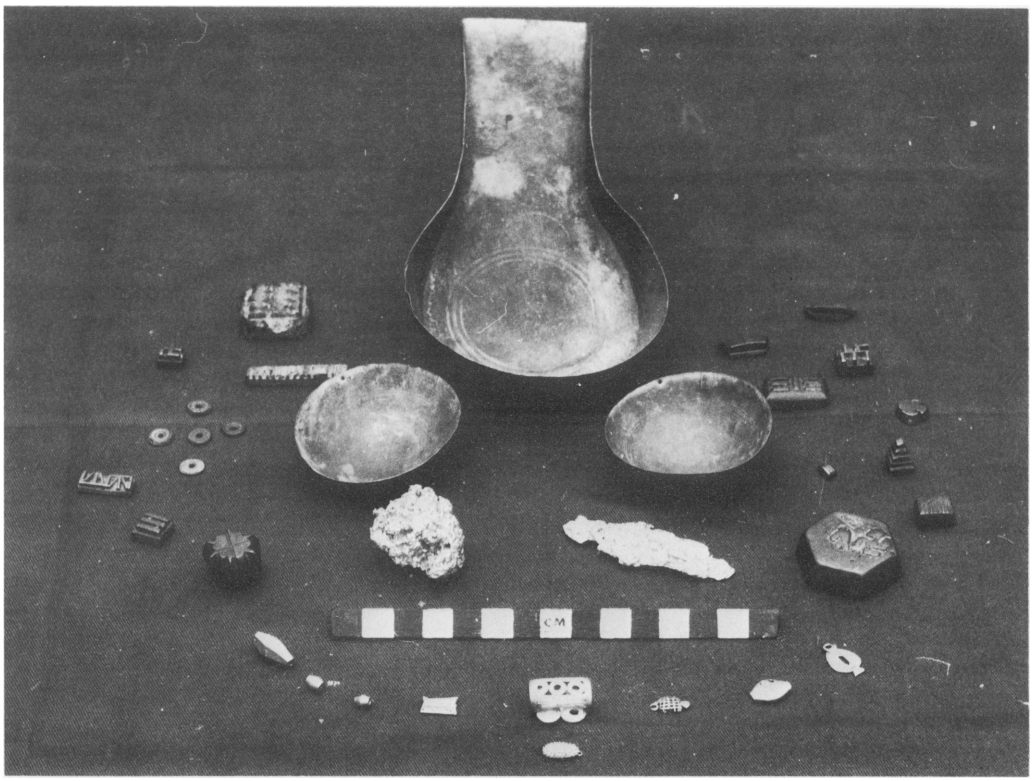


Fig. 4-4. Two large gold nuggets and gold trading implements, including gold weights, scale pans, and gold dust winnowing pan recovered by modern gold dredges in the Jimi River.

ture history of Ghana has never been fully appreciated.

I propose that the data are significant because they provide information about the cultural identity of the earliest gold miners in Ghana. They may also shed light on that important but still obscure period when the powerful and dynamic culture we know as the Akan was taking shape in the forest zone of Ghana.

The basic forms present in any group of Akan pottery tend to be a constellation of relatively straightforward jars and bowls (fig. 4-5). It will be seen from an examination of these drawings that the forms are angular, with simple everted rims, or rims which are only slightly thickened at the lip. The bodies are either a smooth convex curved line, occasionally broken somewhere near the midline with a sharpened keel, or carination. The surfaces are usually pebble burnished, giving a smooth, almost leatherlike fine texture which is treated in one-third to one-half of the cases with a black polish achieved by smudging with a smoldering fire of green vegetation.

The decoration applied to this surface is limited to a variety of combinations of trailed grooves and stamping. The lines may be individually placed or they may be executed as a group of parallel lines by trailing the end of a comb-shaped tool. The end of the comb may also be used as a stamp, either in straight or "walked" zigzag rows of dotted lines.

The pottery from the gold dredges is radically different from the typical Akan wares in overall form, surface texture, and decorative applications. The forms of the gold-dredge pottery are marked by very complicated rim contours. The rims have heavy flanges which jut out suddenly at right angles from the general line of the wall. Another common rim form is a very thick flange which is turned down steeply so as to form an un-

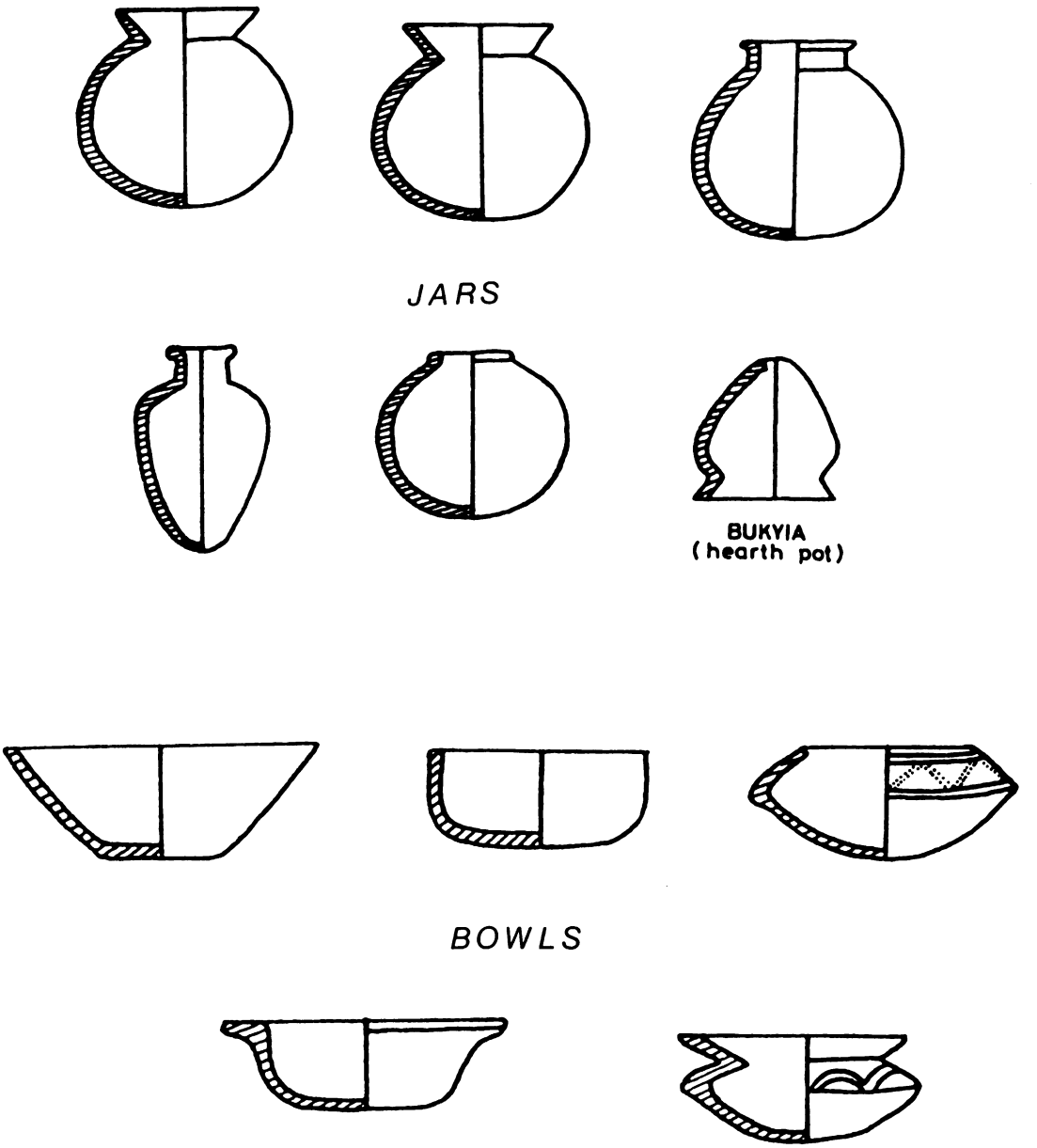


Fig. 4-5. Typical jar forms (top) and bowl forms (bottom) from excavations at Twifo Heman, Bellis (1976).

dercut collared rim. Both the flanges and collars are used as a surface to hold a variety of complex decorative conventions. Among these are the addition of heavy lugs and bosses and a variety of rouletted, stamped, and trailed designs. The surface of this pottery apparently is not stone burnished, and therefore it is considerably more open and porous than stone burnished wares. Probably in part because of this coarse surface, the material does not weather well and commonly has heavily eroded surfaces. The degree to which this earlier pottery exhibits more surface erosion than the later pottery may also be due

to the former having been in the ground and subject to weathering for a considerably longer period of time. As to how much longer cannot now be said because the chronological controls are too uncertain.

Both types of ceramic wares were present at Twifo Heman, where they were found to be stratigraphically related. At every one of the three excavated sites at Heman, the midden deposits held the typical Akan pottery. The ornate and heavily eroded pottery was found in an older occupational level which began at the base of the midden under the original humus, and extended down into the subsoil a vertical distance of 10 to 12 cm. The analysis of the occupation of Twifo Heman was to demonstrate that the earliest "Akan pottery" was not present at the site until approximately A.D. 1600. An important question to ask is whether this apparent abrupt transition in ceramic traditions is universal to the Akan culture area, or is it a localized phenomenon? In approaching this question it was discovered that a considerable amount of data have direct bearing on it.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF AKAN POTTERY

Rattray (1927) dedicated a chapter to a collection of pottery he had recovered during his fieldwork, in Ghana. An examination of the drawings in this volume demonstrates that they represent both the contemporary Akan styles and a fair amount of the older more ornate material. Though at the time he was somewhat handicapped in terms of chronological controls, the potential value of these pieces as products of an extinct culture did not escape him. He made the following observation:

> These examples are sufficient to show that these ancient fragments—some were found along with celts—represent a different style in decorative art from their modern equivalents. Modern Ashanti pottery is on the whole severe and plain. The commonest ornamentation appears to consist of the lines left upon the soft clay before it is dried and fired, by the corncobs which are used to model and smooth the outer and inner surface of the pot during its manufacture. We have here a rather interesting problem. Were the makers of these old pots of different race from the Ashanti, or has Ashanti decorative art in pottery undergone a complete change within the last five or six hundred years? I am inclined, as readers of *Ashanti* will guess, to accept the former hypothesis as being the more correct. (Rattray, 1927, chap. 26: 294–301)

The next person to take up this problem was an engineer employed by the Mines Department, Robert Wild, Inspector of Mines. To judge from the amount of publishing he did on the subject, he had more than a passing interest in the archaeological past. In a 10-year period, from 1927 to 1937, he published 12 articles on the archaeology of the central forest region of southern Ghana.[3] He also had familiarized himself with Rattray's published comments, and agreed with him on the question of the identity of the makers, referring to them variously as a "Pre-Ashanti race" or the "Nyame Akuma people."[4]

It was Wild who first documented an undisturbed site which revealed a stratified deposition, with the modern Akan pottery in the upper level and the more ornate but coarser textured wares consistently below. He reported:

> In some cases the invading Akans drove the *Nyame Akuma* people from the sites which they inhabited—a fact which is deduced from the discovery on individual sites of a layer of fragments of Akan pottery lying on top of a lower layer of fragments of *Nyame Akuma* ware. An example of the two layers of pottery was found at the Bibiani mine in the course of excavations for the foundations of the manager's bungalow. (Wild, 1937a: 98–99)

Another significant observation made by Wild links these early *Nyame Akuma* people to gold mining activity. The artifacts were not only found regularly in the auriferous areas, they were found well below the surface in situations that could only be explained by concluding that the pottery makers must have excavated shafts to that level. On this point, he wrote:

> . . . an old pot containing stone beads was discovered at a depth of 12 feet in the diamondiferous clay at Akwatia. From the character of the pot itself and of the old stone beads and also, from the nature of the surrounding gravel, it was inferred that human beings had sunk a pit after the deposition of the gravel. At Akwatia, generally speaking, the majority of old potsherds are found at depths of between three

> and five feet. . . . At the time of the writing of this article, the greatest recorded depth at which *Nyame Akuma* pottery has been found is 20 feet. (Wild, 1937a)

In general Wild described the old pottery exactly as I have described it above, but he added a significant insight. As a pioneer of ethnoarchaeology, he asked the local people what they thought about the pottery, and whether they recognized it as of their own cultural tradition. He reported, "The patterns on the ancient pottery are not recognized by modern potters: they invariably refer them to the *Atetefu,* the 'old, old, people'" (Wild, 1937a).

In the 1930s H. J. Braunholtz of the British Museum conducted a limited excavation at an earthwork entrenchment in the Birim district, and published enough of a description of the pottery he recovered for it to be considered the same as the earlier wares defined by Wild. He described it as follows:

> Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the pottery as a whole is the occurrence, at all levels, of prominent flanges, either on the rim (forming markedly everted lips), or lower on the body, or in both places evidently for affixing a string carrier to the pot. Some of the lips are very much undercut, forming a kind of "collar." (Braunholtz, 1935: 34)

Braunholtz contributed the observation that these ornate wares are somehow associated with the builders of the entrenchment sites, but he did not pursue the interpretation further.

In 1953 new information was produced by the research of Oliver Davies (1961). In that year he excavated another of the earthworks which formed an entrenched enclosure. A fair number of these entrenchment sites had been reported in various government surveys. Davies chose to excavate the one in the Oda area known as Kokobin.

In this excavation, he too linked the same ornate pottery with the builders of these earthworks. Though Davies was a man unafraid of bold new generalizations, he failed to link these makers of the earthen entrenchments with the proposed pre-Akan *Nyame Akuma* of Wild. The following quote demonstrates a considerable resistance to the suggestion that the broad geographic distribution of this ancient ware might potentially indicate an equally broadly distributed ancient culture.

> . . . the pottery from all the entrenchments belongs to the same cultural stage, fairly competent but archaic, probably with a good deal of impressed decoration in contrast to modern Ghana pottery; so despite differences in detail, the entrenchments are likely to be roughly contemporary. . . . We have, however, little evidence yet to form a sequence of Ghana pottery, nor do we know what developments may have taken place in a territory where communications were difficult and there must have been many independent tribes. (Davies, 1961)[5]

In a later publication, however, Davies was the first scholar to recognize that the general distribution of this ceramic tradition corresponds nicely with the forest area of Ghana, the culture area of the Akan (Davies, 1967: 290). He used this observation to suggest that the makers of this pottery are therefore the "proto-Akan." Thus he was the first (and until now, the only) archaeologist to suggest cultural continuity between makers of the earthworks and the modern Akan.

In his 1961 publication, and again in 1967 (p. 284) Davies described the pottery associated with these entrenchment sites very much as I have described the earlier wares above (see fig. 4-6). He stated, "All the pottery from these sites is fairly heavily ornamented, and overhanging and ledge-rims are common" (Davis, 1967: 296). Even in the 1967 publication he failed to recognize any broader associations for this ceramic tradition than to suggest that the entrenchments are probably contemporary.

A significant contribution was made to our understanding of the problem in the 1970s by a doctoral student, David Kiyaga-Mulindwa, then of Johns Hopkins University.[6] Kiyaga-Mulindwa conducted a site reconnaissance in the Birim valley where a number of the entrenchment sites were known to exist. His findings are similar to the ones detailed above. The more ornate pottery was located stratigraphically below the earliest evidence of pottery which could be recognized as Akan (figs. 4-7, 4-8). He was able to establish firmly that the older pottery was made and used during the building and perhaps by the builders of the entrenchment sites.

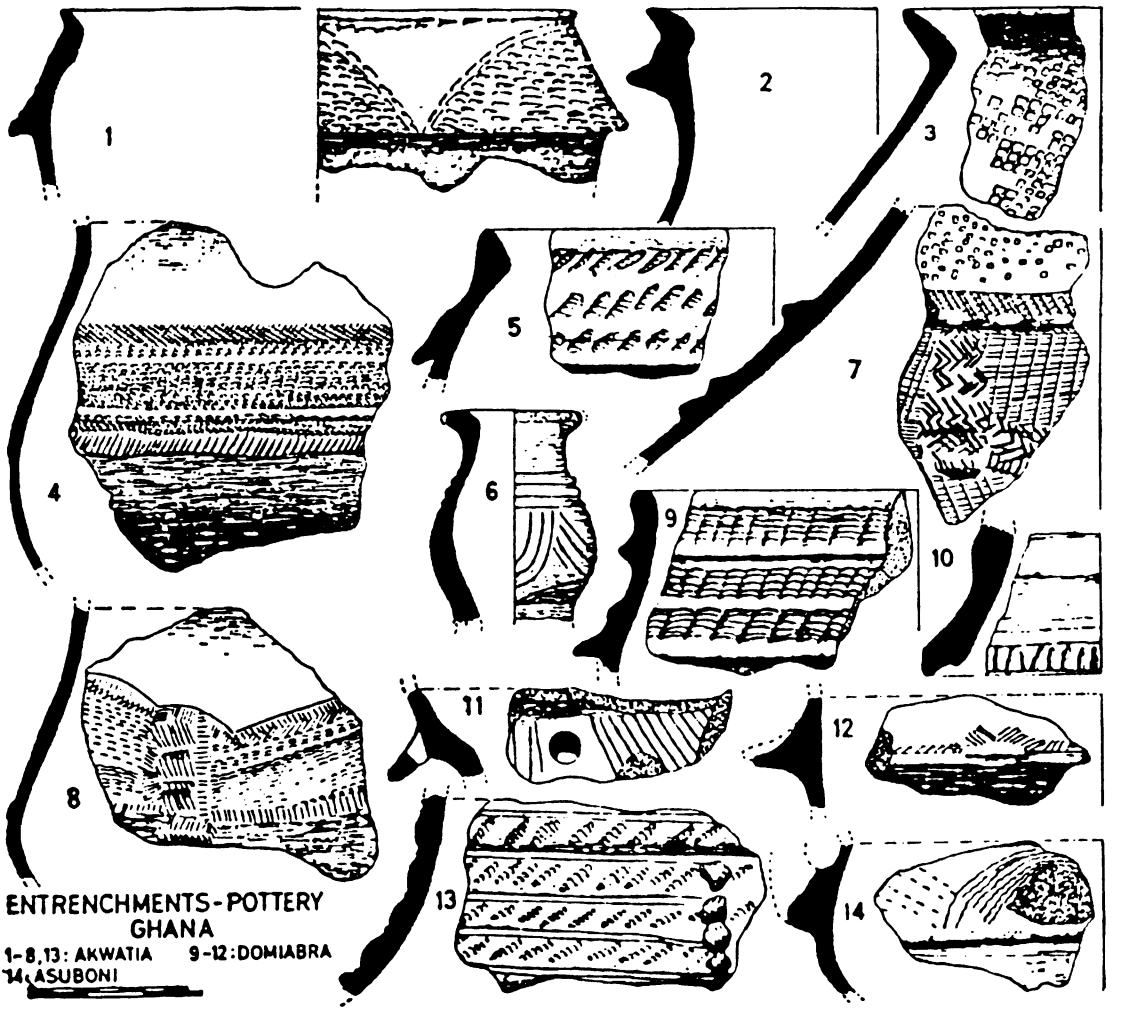


Fig. 4-6. From Davies (1967: 289, fig. 109) illustrating a variety of vessel forms and decorative motifs from several entrenchment sites.

RADIOCARBON DATES ON AKAN POTTERY

Kiyaga-Mulindwa's important new addition to the data for this problem was a set of radiocarbon dates for what he termed "earthworks ware." His overall chronology can be summarized as follows. The makers of the earthworks were settled in the Birim valley from the beginning of the first millennium A.D. He has two dates from the original ground surface on which the earthworks were built. The earliest is A.D. 15 ± 90 (SI-2717), and the later date is A.D. 845 ± (none given) (SI-2718). Before proceeding further with the use of these radiocarbon dates, two precautionary statements are in order. First, all of these dates are an average reading of the radiation emitted by the sample and measured by the laboratory equipment. The standard deviation (with the exception of SI-2718) is given as a plus/minus value. Therefore it would be most accurate to say that in using date number N-2207 (A.D. 1510 ± 80), Kiyaga-Mulindwa has demonstrated that there is a probability of two out of three (or 66%) that the earthwork was built between A.D. 1430 and

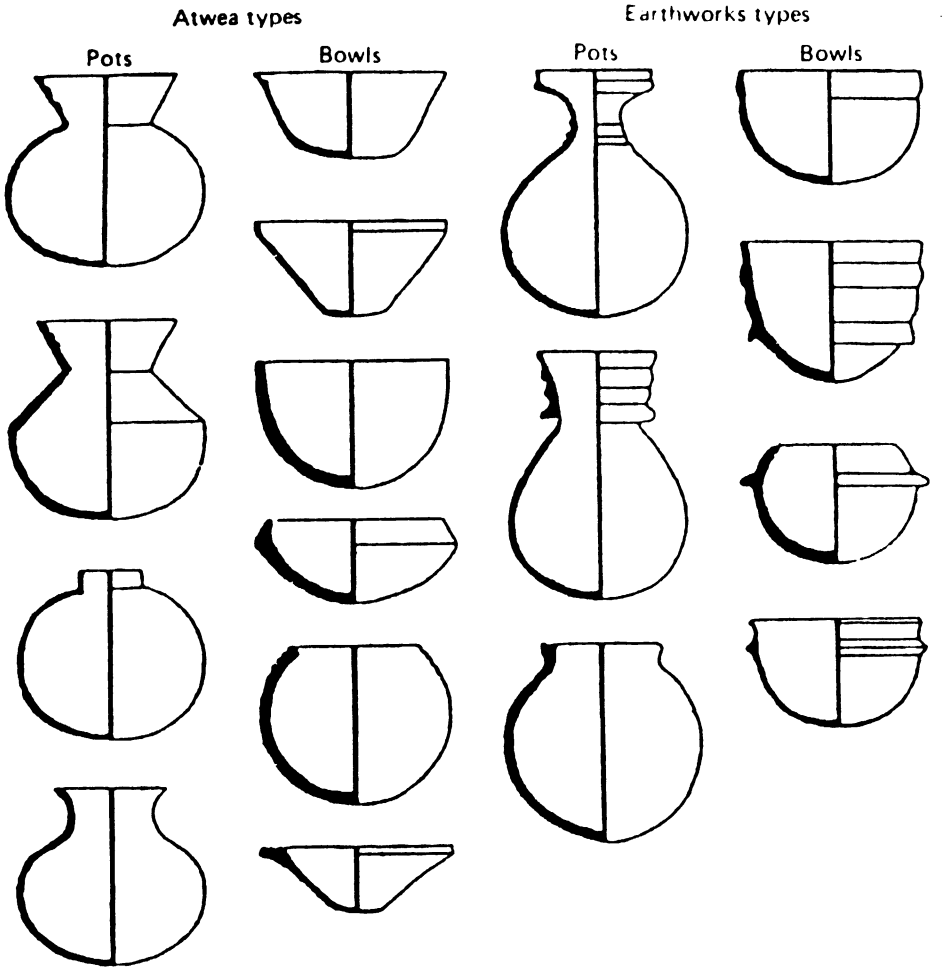


Fig. 4-7. From Kiyaga-Mulindwa (1972: 75, fig. 3) illustrating general vessel forms, contrasting earlier earthworks types with later Atweafo or Akan types.

A.D. 1590. There is also a one in three (33%) probability that it was not.

Second, it should be noted that Kiyaga-Mulindwa has used the date A.D. 15 ± 90 (SI-2717) to suggest that the makers of the earthworks and earthworks pottery were occupants of the site from the earliest centuries of the first millennium A.D. I for one would be delighted if that were so. However, it must be noted that this date was derived from a carbon sample stratigraphically located on an old surface below the earliest construction of the earthwork. It is apparently associated in no specific way with earlier cultural material (e.g., a clearly defined hearth or rubbish pit containing cultural associations). Therefore, to use this date as an occupational date is highly questionable. At this stage one can only say that by A.D. 15, and perhaps even by A.D. 845, the earthwork had not yet been built.

Kiyaga-Mulindwa established the construction of the earthwork at A.D. 1510 ± 80 (N-2207). The *Atweafo* people are the present Akan residents, who claim, incidentally, to have found the valley unpopulated when they arrived. He dates the entry of these *Atweafo* at somewhere between A.D. 1510 ± 80 (N-2207) and A.D. 1740 ± 110 (N-2206). In his 1982 article, Kiyaga-Mulindwa discussed the possibility that the increasing pressure of

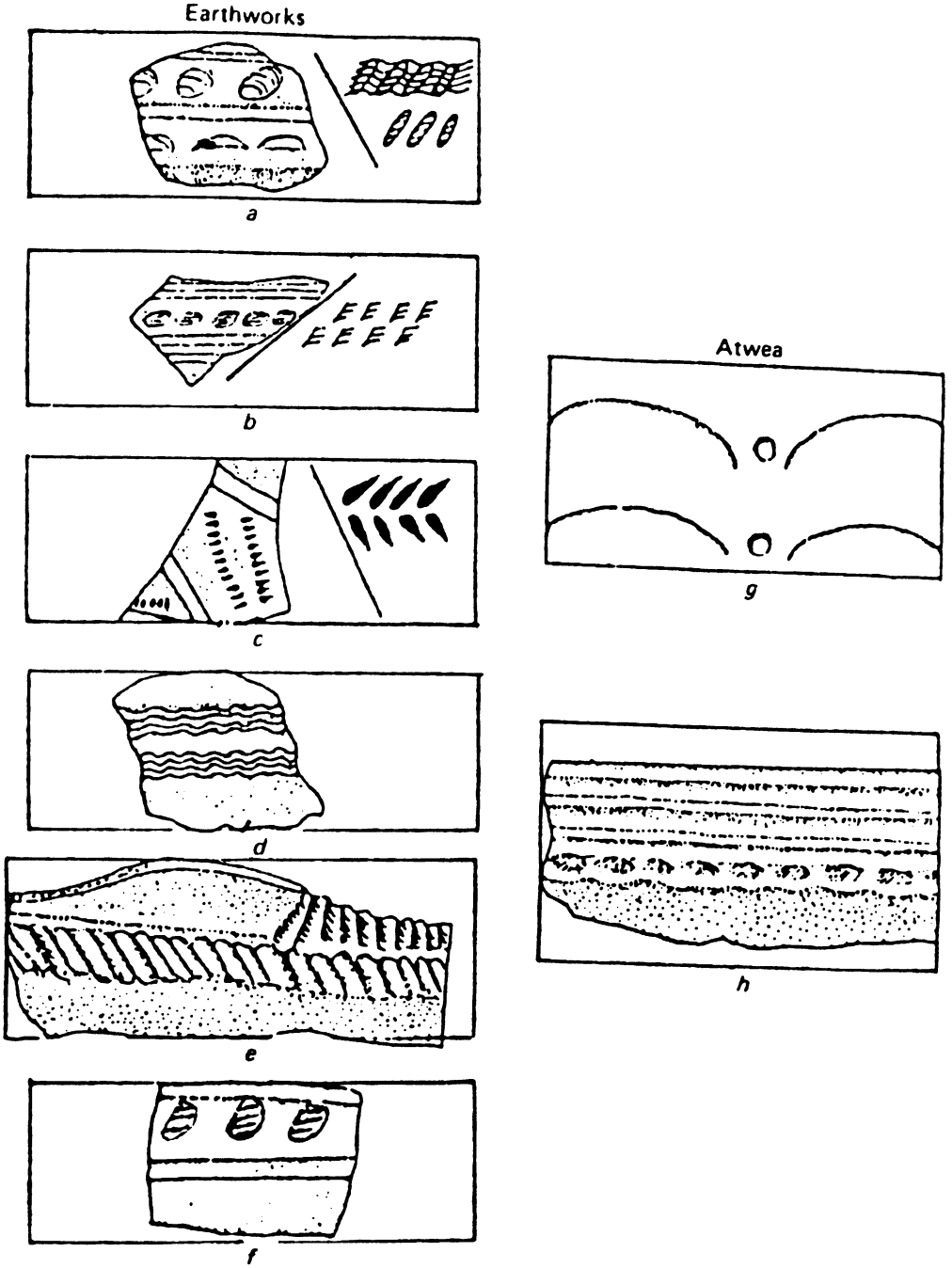


Fig. 4-8. From Kiyaga-Mulindwa (1982: 78, fig. 4) illustrating the contrast of decorative motifs of the earlier earthworks ware with the later Atweafo or Akan ware.

the slave trade had led these people, the original inhabitants, to build the entrenchment sites in what was ultimately to be a futile effort to defend themselves from the slave raids. He further suggested that in a short time the Birim valley was depopulated, and the scene was set for new people to move in.

In summary, Kiyaga-Mulindwa's thesis is

that the slave trade led to a depopulation of the Birim valley and that ultimately this depopulation is indicated in the chronological discontinuity of the ceramic tradition. It would seem that a reasonable test of this thesis would be made by an investigation of the geographic distribution of this stylistic discontinuity. If it can be demonstrated that the hiatus is a localized phenomenon, then perhaps it does in fact reflect a radical depopulation of the Birim valley. However, if this apparent break in the archaeological record is found to be more widespread than one valley, it would weaken the thesis. It is unlikely that an area as vast, say, as the whole southern rain forest of Ghana would have been depopulated. If this is found to be the case then another explanation must be sought.

THE GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF EXTINCT POTTERY

During the winter of 1983–84, with the assistance of a travel grant from the University of Notre Dame, I was able to travel to a number of museums in the United Kingdom. I was not sure what collections existed to shed light on this problem, but I knew that many of the colonial officers had sent home examples of material culture. I was not to be disappointed.

I discovered that Wild, among others, had deposited more than 1500 archaeological pieces from Ghana in the British Museum. Most of these were individually unexciting enough: a few hundred stone tools of various sorts, a fair number of pottery fragments, and the like. The majority of finds had quite understandably been made by the mining engineers in the gold fields of southern Ghana. Of the 1500 pieces, more than 500 were fragments of pottery made by the Nyame Akuma people, or the "earthworks people," or the proto-Akan or whatever we eventually decide to call them, for they are most certainly one and the same. Accompanying the objects there were often sets of fieldnotes providing excellent data on site location. Smaller but equally detailed sets of data were found at both the Pitt Rivers Museum of Oxford and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology of Cambridge.

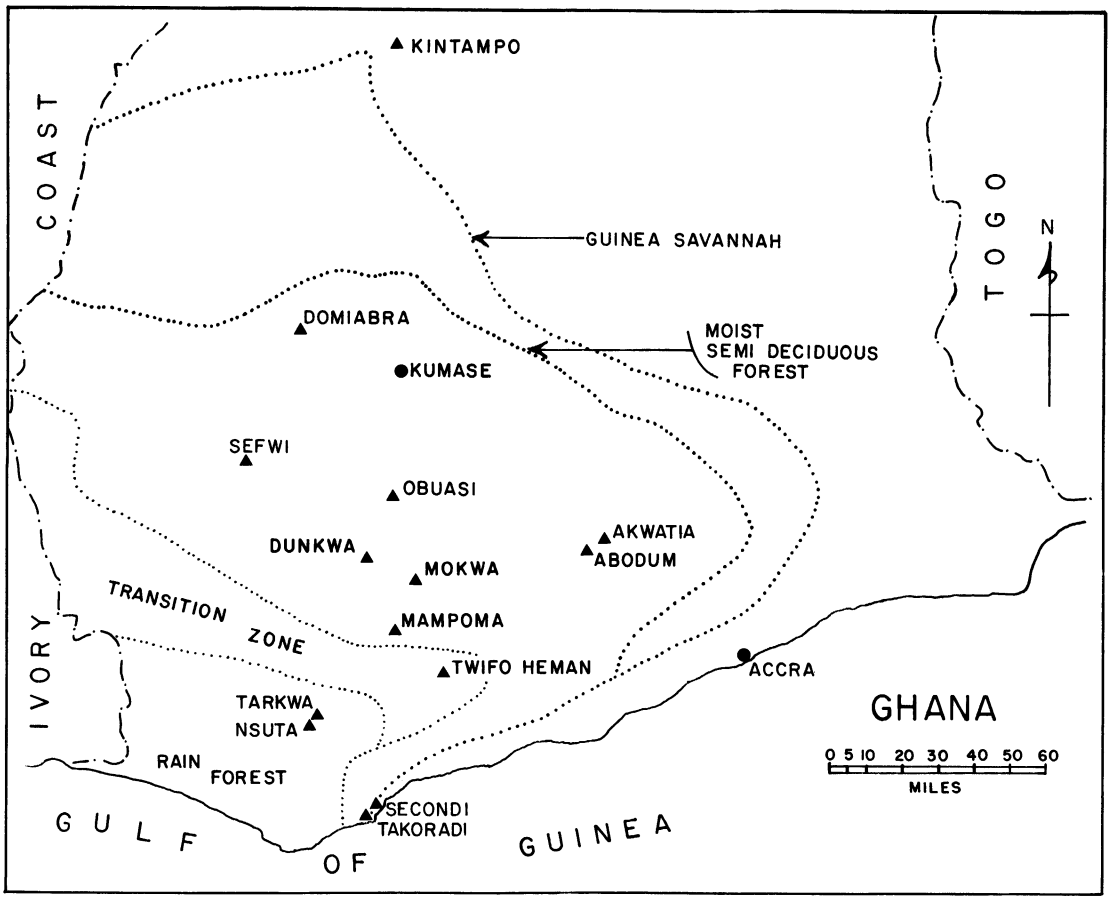
The list of locations where this extinct pottery had been found began to grow rapidly (see map 4-1). To the old list with sites such as Obuasi, Nsuta, Tarkwa, Twifo Heman, and a score or so of entrenchment sites restricted to a few river valleys, were now added Abodum, Akwatia, Secondi, Takoradi, Mankong, Domiabra, Kintampo, Tyripi, Mansa, Mampomina, Mokwa, Ayaso, Sefwi, the Tano River valley, Torofilla, and Bowelli. In short, sites were represented from the entire forest zone of southern Ghana, the heart of the culture area of the Akan.

An examination of these sites will, I am sure, reveal that some of them are villages so small that they cannot be located on any available map of Ghana. Also, they will surely be found to cluster near the areas where the miners and engineers were sent to work. But with these admitted faults, it is most unlikely that there was any intent to mislead the person examining the material in the boxes a half century later. The extreme detail with which the locations were noted suggests that on the whole the accuracy was well above average. These locations extend from Takoradi on the southern coast to Kintampo on the northern edge of the forest, and from Sefwi in the west to the Birim valley in the east.

CONCLUSION

Here is the picture with which we are presented. The entire forest zone of southern Ghana, from the early centuries of the Christian era, exhibits a culture which ceramically is quite homogeneous. The generally homogeneous nature of the ecology of this zone makes it reasonable that such a broad similarity in culture should exist. This would be a situation somewhat like that of the present occupants, the Akan-speaking peoples. It also appears that the people of this earlier culture were the ones who had begun the gold mining industry in Ghana by A.D. 1600, and perhaps even earlier.

At some time before A.D. 1600, a ceramic tradition which had been present throughout the forest zone seemed suddenly to disappear. Though we cannot yet say with confidence how long the tradition had been there, its broad distribution and its great stylistic homogeneity suggests that it may be considerably pre-European in its origins. At some time between A.D. 1500 and 1600, this early tradition was replaced with a wholly new con-



Map 4-1. Distribution of sites yielding early pottery.

stellation of ceramic wares, which also seemed to be just as widespread in the entire forest zone. How do we explain this? What happened in the forest in that brief period of time?

I think there are a number of different hypothetical models one could construct. I will briefly explore the most familiar, and thereby perhaps open a few doors for future discussion.

The most obvious model is some form of population displacement or replacement. One example could be peaceful, with some outside circumstances leading a large number of people, perhaps over a period of time, to slowly and passively overwhelm the locals, perhaps genetically as well as culturally. Another example would be a more sudden and violent armed assault on a peaceful sedentary people by intruders from elsewhere. Presumbly the indigenous population would either be killed off or absorbed genetically by the conquerors, or some combination of the two.

Other familiar theories have to do with the transfer of ideas from outside, rather than a transfer of the people themselves. The best known of these is the notion of diffusion, where ideas flow from one area into another perhaps through many intermediate cultures. The other model for idea transfer usually involves direct contact between two cultures and idea borrowing from one to the other; this process is often termed acculturation.

As a contrast to these models which emphasize outside influence, one might suggest internal mechanisms of change, or evolution. In this model we would have to propose that the early Nyame Akuma culture suddenly

evolved at an almost explosive rate into the later Akan culture. This would require that we somehow explain why a culture which has moved along for perhaps centuries with little apparent change, suddenly hits an evolutionary burst of speed that is totally unprecedented.

Finally, I suggest an alternative hypothesis, a sort of "all of the above" formula. Perhaps one of the real reasons we have had such a difficult time in finding clear archaeological manifestation of the proto-Akan is that we have been trying to make it too simple.

When one considers for a moment the economic circumstances of the era in question, it becomes obvious that one is contemplating a most tumultuous period in world history, and Africa, especially West Africa, was centrally involved. The marked changes in pottery, documented here, must have been matched throughout the entire cultural system with equally radical changes. There were many new pressures present which had the force necessary to wrench loose the cultural fibers of even the best knit cultural system. Kiyaga-Mulindwa (1982) has given us one such pressure, the slave trade. The immediate impact of the population loss might well have depopulated the Birim valley, and a few others as well, leading to substantial internal demographic shifts. What were the secondary effects of such potent forces as new diseases, or the shift in the economic endeavors of groups who either sought to avoid exploitation, or to capitalize on a new economic opportunity? Garrard (1980) has documented how the increased demands for gold currency in North Africa were developing steady pressures on the source areas for gold. Beginning in the 14th century, Wilks (1961, 1976) has shown how the Mande people were coming into the northern forest and attempting to rationalize the flow of gold to the north. In the excavated materials at Begho, Posnansky (1982) has documented increasing northern influences from the 14th century onward. This northern influence prevailed until the European markets opened an entirely new set of cultural pressures on the coast to the south. A situation with more pressures for rapid cultural change would be hard to imagine.

I raise one further question before closing this discussion. It concerns the persistent expectation that we should see some evidence in the pottery for cultural continuity through this period of rapid cultural change. In spite of the fact that I have documented many arguments that there is probably none, I believe there might be.

It is not too difficult to see the influence for the modern Akan pottery, with its sharper and more angular walls as well as its highly polished surfaces, in the straight-angled forms of imported metal vessels. Examples of local styles being transformed by new, imported fashions are common throughout history, especially during periods when the pace of international trade intensifies. But how could a people give up such a marvelously baroque style with all its lugs, bosses, flanges, and collars? Perhaps they didn't!

For future consideration I offer the following: It seems to have been forgotten in the search for the proto-Akan that the Akan are a people who do not have one pottery tradition. They have two; one for everyday utility ware, and a second for funeral rituals (Bellis, 1982). I suggest the possibility that the old-fashioned lugs, bosses and flanges are alive and well on the pottery that is reserved for the "place of the pots," or the *asensie,* and the formal ritual context of the funeral. It would not be the first time in history that the "good old ways" were preserved in the sanctity of a "high church" ceremony.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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colleagues, Duncan Mathewson and Peter Pipim. Not only did we all share the first exciting experience of seeing the archaeological material come off the conveyor belt of Dredge No. 4 on the Jimi River, but many of the ideas presented here began to take shape in our many later discussions. Finally, I thank the many colleagues who helped by offering their comments on an early draft of this paper, especially Tim Garrard, David Calvocoressi, Ray Silverman, and Daniel Mato. While their criticism has been very constructive, the responsibility for the content of this paper is my own.

NOTES

1. For good summaries of some of these accounts, see, for example, Garrard (1980), Junner (1935), and Menzel (1968).

2. As examples of published accounts the reader is directed to Davies (1967), Bellis (1976), and Kiyaga-Mulindwa (1982). The author was able, while in Ghana, to examine some of the unpublished collections of pottery excavated by Davies and by Ozanne.

3. In addition to the 12 articles listed in this paper which generally concern archaeological topics, Wild also published various articles on ethnographic subjects. For the more relevant articles for this paper see the listings dated 1927, 1929, 1931a, 1931b, 1931c, 1931d, 1931e, 1934, 1935a, 1935b, 1937a, 1937b.

4. Wild can be given credit for choosing the earliest name assigned to an archaeological culture in Ghana. Because he frequently found the older "obsolete" pottery in association with small ground stone celts, called *Nyame Akuma* by the Akan, he named the culture responsible for their manufacture the *Nyame Akuma* people.

5. Note that Davies speaks not of the same culture, but of the "same cultural stage."

6. Kiyaga-Mulindwa gave the most detailed account of his findings in his 1978 dissertation, but the essential details are nicely summarized in his 1982 article. Also it should be mentioned here that such a few radiocarbon dates as are represented in this project, make for a very tentative chronological base. However, with the necessary precaution, they can be used, albeit tentatively, as a starting point.

PERSPECTIVES ON ASANTE AND THE NORTH

CHAPTER 5. SAVANNA CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ASANTE POLITICAL ECONOMY

Kwame Arhin

ABSTRACT

The culture of Asante, like its population, is composite and the founders of the state and empire sought to accommodate and assimilate alien peoples and skills. The savanna contribution to the Asante political economy is to be seen in the recruitment of manpower, skills, and natural resources from the area. This paper discusses how these resources were used in fashioning the symbols by which ranks and order were created, maintained, and preserved.

INTRODUCTION

Savanna contributions to the economy of the greater Asante political structure before the colonial period are assessed in this paper. The savanna was the vast expanse of grasslands the Akan people called *Sarem.* The grasslands stretched from the savanna-forest fringes of the Brong districts in the northeast and northwest which divided the forest areas, *kwaem,* from the habitat of the northern non-Akan peoples, collectively known to the Akan as the Ntafo. At least by the early 19th century, the Asante did not consider the grasslands an undifferentiated area. Their wars of the 18th century had resulted in the imposition of their authority on the Gonja and the Dagomba and the extension of their influence in Mamprussi in the northeast; in the northwest, the Kingdom of Kong formed the boundary of Asante authority (Dupuis, 1824: xxix; Wilks, 1975: 71–79). The areas of Asante authority and influence coincided with the areas of peaceful trading by Asante merchants. Beyond these limits lay the unknown Sahelian areas. Forest and savanna were complementary in basic natural products; and the mutual requirements of the forest and savanna dwellers had, long before the rise of Asante in the late 17th century, stimulated long-distance trade exchanges between them. The "contributions" discussed here included the human and natural resources—craft and trade goods, skills and ideas—that, through the mediation of the central Asante state, circulated within the confines of its authority. By "political economy" is meant the interrelationships of the political organization and the economy: in concrete terms, it is the political arrangements through which the production of goods and services contributed to the security and maintenance of the power base of the state, as well as the material well being of the people living under its authority.

"Greater Asante political structure" is used here to indicate the varied sets of relations between the Asantehene, its head, and the peoples of what used to be called the Asante empire (Arhin, 1967; Wilks, 1975: 71–79).

The contributions of the savanna area to the Asante economy began with the complementary trade exchanges between the forest and the savanna peoples that preceded the Asante conquests of the Takyiman, Banda, Gyaman, Gonja, and Dagomba polities in the first half of the 18th century. Asante military action in the savanna area is a clear example of an economically oriented military/political action.

While the mutuality of interests of the forest and savanna peoples promoted their commercial exchanges, the Asante conquests in the Brong/Abron areas in the northeast and the northwest, and in the Gonja and Dagomba districts, facilitated those exchanges. It is therefore necessary to show the extent and nature of the conquests. But Asante influence in the savanna areas was not maintained by force alone. On the contrary, the asymmetrical relations imposed by conquest were softened with diplomatic measures. Finally, the significance of the contribution savanna goods and services made to the power base of the state and the welfare of the Asante people must be shown.

The paper is structured on the basis of these considerations and is divided into the following sections: savanna resources; Asante authority in the savanna areas; trade and tribute; trade, tribute, and political economy; and conclusion. As will be seen, this approach follows a method I earlier suggested (1967) for studying the expansionist activities of Asante and other nonliterate peoples: geographical and, following Cassirer (1962: 177), cultural analyses.

SAVANNA RESOURCES

Bowdich (1819: 334) grasped the essential basis of the forest-savanna commercial relations which antedated the rise of Asante by at least two centuries (Meyerwitz, 1951: 202; 1952: 34–35; Goody, 1954: 14; 1966: 18–19; 1967: 183–184; Wilks, 1961, 1962; Posnansky, 1979a). This was the exchange of *bese,* the nut of kola (*cola nitida*), an uncultivated forest tree, for savanna products. The nut was so much in demand in the savanna and Sudanese countries and beyond that it stimulated not only a continuous caravan trade, but also the establishment of permanent traders' outposts, *zongos,* along the routes from the Brong districts to the Mande, Hausa, and Mossi countries (Bowdich, 1819: 169–182; Dupuis, 1824: iv, xxviii, iviii; Ferguson *in* Arhin, 1974a).[1] Savanna resources and exchange products included natural products: shea butter, which the Akan called *nku* and used for cooking purposes and as skin ointment (see Ferguson's description of shea butter processing in Arhin, 1974a: 68); tobacco; salt from Daboya in Gonja; livestock such as horses, cattle, sheep, and goats; domestic and bush fowls that could not be productively reared in the forest owing to the tsetse fly; and varieties of the yam.[2] Savanna resources also included cotton and silk cloths and threads, leather goods, and iron tools, as well as blankets and slaves conveyed by the "moving markets" of the Dyula, Hausa, and Mossi caravans from the Middle Niger and the areas now known as northern Nigeria and Upper Volta (Bowdich, 1819: 323–334).[3] Also, in the 18th century, gold from the Gyaman and Lobi districts was traded in the Yendi market (Hallet, 1964: 98–99).

The demand for kola was high enough to produce favorable terms of trade for the forest people who gave, in exchange, kola nut, salt, brass, iron implements, and rum from the European trade establishments. But the staple of the forest-savanna exchanges was kola, so that the location of its supplies structured the movement of the trade caravans and the settlement pattern of the *zongos* in Asante and its hinterlands. Begho/Bighu before the 18th century; Bonduku; Gbuipe; Kaffaba; Yendi in the 18th century; and Salaga, Kintampo, Atebubu, and Kete Krachi in the 19th century, were all located as caravanserai, traders' settlements, in the southward movement of the caravan traders toward the forest sources of kola supplies. With the superimposition of British authority over Asante in 1896, the savanna kola traders established depots all over the Ahafo districts, a most prolific kola supply source, and Kumase itself became the biggest kola depot of all. The history of the *zongos* is the story of

the locational changes of the kola markets in response to changes in the political system of the Gold Coast hinterland (Ferguson *in* Arhin, 1974a) and also to changes in the technical conditions of the kola trade (Schildkrout, 1978: 67–69; Arhin, 1979, chaps. 1 and 2).

The *zongos* must be regarded as a major savanna resource. Confined, before the colonial period, for both political considerations and environmental constraints, to the forest-savanna fringes and the savanna areas (Freeman, 1898; Arhin, 1979, chap. 1) they were the land equivalents of seaports and the gateway to the famed cornucopias that apparently lay beyond the savanna areas of Asante commercial travels. They were the locations of novel technical skills, such as those of smiths, potters, and weavers. The goods in the markets presented inspiring models to the Brong (northern Akan) and, through them, to the Asante and other southern Akan craftsmen. The *zongos* were the temporary or permanent lodges of itinerant and sedentary craftsmen from the Mande, Hausa, and Mossi countries whose work certainly contributed to the technological revolution which, Rattray asserted, accompanied the emergence of the new Asante political order (Rattray, 1927: 310; Goody, 1966d: 20–21; Garrard, 1972: 9).

The *zongos* were urban centers in their ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity and, hence, sources of new ideas (Binger, 1892; Freeman, 1898). They were what Freeman called the "outliers" of Sudanese civilizations. They were bases of Islamic proselytization which, in the reign of Asantehene Osei Kwame (1777–98), threatened the established religious basis of the Asante political order (Dupuis, 1824: 245; Wilks, 1975: 253–254). But, in the main, the Asante selected Muslim prayer and the marabout's charms and talismans as additions to the magico-religious armory of expansionist Asante (Bowdich, 1819: 271–272; Dupuis, 1824: ix). What is apparently an interesting carryover from the early Muslim practices is the *sraha* (*sadaqa*), performed on Fridays by the Asantehene, the *Nsumankwahene,*[4] head of the palace physicians, and the *imam* of the Kumase Muslim community. The alms include the distribution of Mande-Dyula doughnuts and *pesewas,* the smallest unit of the Ghanaian cedi currency, to groups of children to the accompaniment of chants of Muslim prayers.

The *zongos* were centers of literacy: the *zongo* of Kumase in the early 19th century provided keepers of the records of the more important palace discussions and official correspondence in Arabic (Bowdich, 1819: 296; Wilks, 1975: 204).

Finally, the *zongos* were the earliest centers of commercial training for Asante and other Akan traders. Resident Asante traders at Yendi, Bonduku, Salaga, and Kintampo were merchants, *dwadifo,* rather than retailers, *akonofo* (Arhin, 1979: 1).

ASANTE AUTHORITY IN THE SAVANNA AREAS

The attraction of the savanna areas to the Asante must have been, first, the natural produce that had long been exchanged for kola in the period before the rise of Asante in the 17th century, and, second, the ideas and skills purveyed by the long-distance traders located in the *zongos.* Tafo, a settlement of the Agona clan which preceded Kumase (of which it is now a suburb), and which the Oyoko rulers captured in the late 17th century, had been trading with the market centers of the forest-savanna fringes and provided an index of the wealth of the foreign trading towns in the northeast and the northwest (Bowdich, 1819: 109, 229; Wilks, 1961, 1962).

The Asante conquests of the Brong districts in the first half of the 18th century were the first steps toward the southward channeling of the wealth of the savanna area. The Brong districts were themselves wealthy in resources: gold in Gyaman (Terray, 1974), and foreign goods and skilled manpower in the *zongos* of Bighu, Ahwene Koko (Wenchi), Bono-Manso and the Guang/Brong districts of Atebubu, Wiase, Basa, Krachi, Yeji, and Prang (Goody, 1954, 1965, 1966; Daaku, 1966, 1968; Ozanne, 1966; Wilks, 1975: 246–256). It is highly significant that Reindorf (1895: 75) emphasized the maltreatment of Asante traders in the Banda area as the major reason for its invasion in 1733 by the Asantehene Opoku Ware (1720–50); and also that an enduring consequence of the defeat of

Bono-Manso/Takyiman in 1722 was the capture of the treasury, *foto,* of the gold and silver weights of Kwakye Ameyaw, the Takyimanhene, who gave the Asante lessons in fiscal management.

The Brong districts contained the *kwantempon,* major highways, routes of respectable antiquity (Dupuis, 1824: xviii) to the grasslands in the east and west, and their subjection opened the way for the imposition of Asante mastery over Gonja and Dagomba in 1744–75. This mastery lasted till 1874, with an unsuccessful Dagomba revolt in 1777, and another by eastern Gonja in the reign of the Asantehene Kwaku Duah (1834–67). The military defeat of Gonja and Dagomba had, as a consequence, the indirect Asante domination of the politically noncentralized Grusi and Mossi-speaking peoples who were within the influence of the Gonja, Mamprussi, and Dagomba political systems. Asante had influence rather than authority in Mamprussi (Rattray, 1932: 547) whence refugees came to Kumase early in the reign of the Asantehene Osei Bonsu (ca. 1799–1823), adding to the population of an established Muslim community drawn from Menye, Yeji, and Prang.[5] Asante relations with the Mossi chiefdoms were those of mutual respect: the Mossi kings realized that Asante presence in the venues of the forest-savanna trade exchanges was a necessary condition for effective trading (Ferguson *in* Arhin, 1974a: 144).

Between 1744 and 1874, Asante militarily dominated the savanna area of what are now known as the northern and upper regions of Ghana through a monopoly of the musket, against which the cavalry, the spears, and the bows and arrows of the northerners could not stand. The Asante were particularly identified with the gun, so that even today an Asante is known among the Dagomba, the Mamprusi, and their neighbors as *kambona,* gunman (pl. *kambonse*) (Rattray, 1932: 547).[6]

Asante historians generally write of conquest. But this did not mean direct administration of either Gonja or Dagomba by the Asante. Both were outside the organized modes of common action of those formally called the Asante, i.e., the subjects of the Golden Stool, the tangible symbol of office of the head of Asanteman or Greater Asante. These institutionalized modes of common action were the following: On his installation, a subordinate ruler must acknowledge the overlordship of the Asantehene by the payment of the necessary testamentary fees. He must, while in office, attend the general assembly of chiefs at the annual *Odwira* festival, which meant the acceptance of the Asantehene's dead ancestors as the ultimate guardians of his people's material welfare. This acceptance was the basis of the use of the Asante Great Oath, *Ntam Kesie,* as the final sanction in judicial settlements, for recruitment of troops for participation in Asante warfare, and for levying war and other taxes. The rites of the *Odwira* festival included a historical pageant which served as a reminder to those present of the deeds of Asante which had humbled the Asantehene's conquered subjects; the praise poems at these gatherings mentioned all the major rulers conquered and forcibly made participants in Asante organization. These were the Akan rulers south of the Prah River and the rulers of the major Brong, northern Akan, states. The Asante regarded all Brong/Abron as the ninth *omansin,* or constituent, of the Asante Union, which was differentiated from the Asante concept of an enlarged coalition of Asante, non-Asante Akan, and the Akanized Guang peoples on the south bank of the Volta River. The Akan south of the Prah River, and the Brong rulers were all regarded as members of the annual Asante *nhyiamu,* general assembly, of power and authority holders subordinate to the Asantehene. The savanna rulers were not. The Asante incorporative institutions or organized modes of common action did not operate among them.[7] This is the meaning of Dupuis' statement that Yendi formed no part of the empire (Dupuis, 1824: xxxix); and much the same may be said of the Gonja territories. However, the relative nearness and the importance of the Gonja markets, particularly of Salaga, compelled a more rigid Asante political supervision of the Gonja territories, to the extent of active Asante intervention in succession disputes (Hutchison's *Diary* in Bowdich, 1819: 401; Braimah and Goody, 1967: 124).

In effect, the Asante regarded the savanna states as tributaries or contributors to the Asante economy. The means for controlling them were related to their predominantly

economic significance for the Asante. Asante residents in Yendi and Salaga, who also traded, ensured Dagomba and Gonja compliance with Asante demands. Security posts at Ahenkro in the southeast (Goody, 1966d)[8] and the northern frontiers ensured minimal accessibility of guns to the savanna states; just enough guns to make certain that they could obtain the annual human tribute demanded by Asante from the politically unorganized peoples under their control. There was indeed the Akanization of their political rituals and military organization which was extended to Mamprussi (Rattray, 1932: 554–555). But as Rattray shows, the function of the Akanizing process was not their incorporation into the Asante Union. Dagbon and Mamprussi adopted the forms of Asante political rituals because they were apparently effective measures for uniting immigrant rulers and autochthones, and the forms of Asante military organization because the military success of Asante had demonstrated their relative efficiency.

Learning Asante court rituals, as well as fulfilling the obligations of a tributary status, provided the reasons for the visits of Dagomba and Gonja envoys to Asante on important occasions[9] such as the annual *Odwira* festivals, Asante military triumphs, or the installation of Asante kings (Huydecoper, 1816–17; Bowdich, 1819; Dupuis, 1824).

The relations between Asante and the savanna states were asymmetrical, the advantage lying on the side of the former. But the Asantehene's distribution of gifts (Dupuis, 1824: 74) suggests that the Asante softened the rigor of their domination with gift exchanges. As Bowdich stated (1819: 235), the Asante attack on Dagomba underpinned relations of recognized mutual interest in commercial and cultural exchanges; Rattray's informants asserted that the attack was invited by a rival in a succession dispute (Rattray, 1932: 556, 564; Ferguson *in* Arhin, 1974a: 126). In sum, conquest reinforced ongoing commercial and cultural linkages.

TRADE AND TRIBUTE

Asante political superordination regularized and augmented the flow of savanna resources to Asante, by the requisition of annual tributes which are well known but must be restated here for evaluative purposes. There have been variations in the figures stated by different authors for the numbers of humans, livestock, and products extracted as annual tribute from the Gonja and Dagomba territories: Bowdich (1819: 321) reported from Gonja and Dagomba 500 slaves, 200 cows, 400 sheep, and 400 cotton and silk strips; Lonsdale[10] 1500 slaves; Ferguson (*in* Arhin, 1974a: 74) 1000 and more slaves; Cardinall (1920: 9) 2000 slaves from Dagomba; and Rattray (1923: 564) also 2000 slaves from Dagomba. Wilks (1975: 64–71) has 500 slaves and 1000 dollars from Dagomba, 1000 slaves, unstated amounts of money and cattle from the Kpembe division, and 1000 slaves from Tuluwe. Ferguson (*in* Arhin, 1974a: 84) also reported 1000 slaves from the Trugu division. As Wilks pointed out, the variations in the figures may have been due to adjustments in Asante demands, not only following the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, but also due to differing demands incidental to punitive expeditions. There was, again, a good deal of exaggeration of alleged Asante exactions for the benefit of British visitors to the north following the sack of Kumase in 1874 (see accounts by Ferguson *in* Arhin, 1974a). Even so, the flow of tributary payments from Gonja and Dagomba over a century and a quarter of domination must have been considerable. There were, in addition, occasional presentations of gifts on the installation of a new Asantehene, or his bereavement, and during important visits such as those by the envoys of the European traders (Huydecoper, 1817: 51; Dupuis, 1824: 244).

In the study of Asante relations with the north, attention has invariably been centered on Asante exactions of tribute, and little said of the recruitment of skilled manpower. Yet the Asante attached enough significance to the enforced recruitment of skilled men for the composers of the Asantehene's praise poems, *apaee,* to record:

> The Tree Mpantapanampa[11] said
> "do not kill me and I shall
> carve grinding bowls for
> your wives." / The priest
> Akomaa said, "do not kill me
> for I know how to mix

medicine." / Obiri Mmireku
said, "do not kill me and
I shall wash the stools of
your wives." / Abaase Menye
said, "do not kill me and I
shall prepare millet for your wives."
(Nketia, 1966)[12]

As stated, the *zongos* of the forest-savanna fringes and the savanna areas were recruitment centers of smiths, potters, weavers, dyers, and leather workers. Kumase residents themselves informed Bowdich and Hutchison (1819: 22, 384) that Dagomba goldsmiths, who might have been Yarse, excelled the Asante in goldsmithery. Leatherworkers were recruited from the *zongos.* Political superordination, symbolized by the presence of Asante residents in Salaga and Yendi, facilitated the recruitment of skilled manpower. If, as Dupuis (1824: 247) reported, Muslim war captives were more leniently treated than non-Muslims, it was because they were more apt than the latter to be specialized in trading and craft skills.

TRADE, TRIBUTE, AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

The impact of the flow of savanna wealth, through trade and tributary payments, on the Asante political economy may be evaluated with reference to the power base of the Asante state and improvements in the material welfare of the Asante peoples. The continuity of Asante military domination of its neighbors depended on both material and nonmaterial conditions. The material conditions were the means by which the Asante could obtain European muskets, powder, and shot, and the constant replacement of Asante's fighting men. The nonmaterial conditions were the symbolic requirements of the ranking system, the preservation of which was essential for the stability of the political order.

The flow of savanna wealth through trade and tributary payments helped in meeting both conditions of the continuance of Asante military power. Human tribute was put to two uses: the purchase of European armament, and the replacement of Asante manpower losses in war. The replacement manpower was used as farm and craft labor and for court duties. The *gyase,* household, division of the state, composed of all the *fekuo,* association of palace functionaries (Rattray, 1929: 91), as well as what Reindorf (1895: 91) called the "bands," *asafo,* or groups of retainers attached to newly appointed officeholders, included captives from the savanna areas.[13] A certain proportion of the human tribute consisted of females who were married to officeholders, to whom they were granted as "benefices" or as commissions on tribute collection. In all these cases their offspring became incorporated and ultimately assimilated as members of the *mmusua,* the lineages of the husbands (Fortes, 1950: 253–254).

The replacement of Asante human losses through tribute and purchase in the savanna markets for farm and craft labor was of great value. All European visitors to Asante in the 19th century commented on the intensity of Asante farming, particularly around Kumase. This is only credible, in a period of continuous warfare, because Asante used human tributes on existing farms to replace their fighting men and to open up new areas for cultivation. The complex sociopolitical constitution of Barekase, this writer's own village, 14 miles northwest of Kumase (Arhin, 1983a) and situated on the northern border of the Atwima district (Reindorf, 1895: 50), exemplifies the opening up of frontiers through the dispersal of war captives and human tributes. These bondsmen, bound by cultural ties to Kumase, located for economic purposes in the immediate neighborhood of Kumase and as far afield as Ahafo in the modern Brong Ahafo Region, have been said to have formed part of the basis for the development of Asante peasantry in the 19th century (Arhin, 1983b).

As with cultivation, so with craft development. Given a common Akan stock of skills (Bosman, 1705), the elaboration of the regalia of the Asantehene to an extent unparalleled among Akan rulers (see description by Huydecoper, 1817; Bowdich, 1819; Freeman, 1844; Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875) must have been due to the infusion of savanna skills which were themselves syntheses of Hausa, Mande, and Mossi workmanship (Ferguson *in* Arhin, 1974a: 26).

Other items of tribute that were obtained through trade or gift exchanges were highly

valuable assets to the Asante political economy: cattle, sheep, goats, and fowls had nutritional, sociopolitical, and ritual (magico-religious) uses. The price of beef and mutton was extremely high in the Kumase markets of the early 19th century, rising sharply on the occasions of public assemblies (Huydecoper, 1817). Cattle and sheep were significant items in gift exchanges between the Asantehene and his more important visitors. They were, as they are today, major victims of *mmusu yie,* supplicatory and pacificatory rites, in connection with the stools and major *abosom,* national deities (Rattray, 1927). The cost of judicial settlements were normally (and are still) computed in terms of heads of sheep. The preliminaries, *dwomtadie,* leading to, and the actual settlement of *Ntam kesie,* Great Oath, cases,[14] involved the slaughter of sheep; and the pacificatory offerings, *mpata,* to power and authority holders were usually heads of sheep.

Cured cattle and sheep skins were used in the making of various items of regalia. The materials for making headgear, arm, waist and ankle bands, sandals, cushions, sword sheaths, covers for *asipim*[15] (chairs), were all savanna derived. The instruments of court musical ensembles, the *ntahera, mmentia, mmenson* and the *odurugya* (Reindorf, 1895: 120–125; Nketia, 1963), were constructed of bullock horns or elephant tusks. The savanna provided the elephant tails and other fly-whisks, which had practical as well as symbolic uses (MacCaskie, 1983a). The Asantehene's *batakarikese,* battle dress, and those of his war leaders were made of cotton and studded with leather talismans encasing Arabic letters, all of savanna origins (Bowdich, 1819, pp. 271–273, 403). Savanna materials were blended with those of the forest, and Asante regalia tell in themselves part of the story of the historic Asante-savanna commercial and political connections.

The ethnography of regalia is a complex subject that deserves a full study in itself. For a start, the museum at the Ghana National Cultural Center in Kumase might yield information on the provenance of some of the regalia (Kyerematen, 1964). My concern here has been to draw attention to savanna contributions to the elaboration of Asante regalia and to the extent that they reflected the multifaceted character of Asante kingship and the territorial extent of its sway.

But regalia were also part of the institutionalized mechanisms for maintaining the political order. They regulated ranking within and between what I have called the *nana* and non-*nana* categories of rulers and the ruled (Arhin, 1983a). Regalia were the counterparts of tracts, statues, and books in literate societies, media for the explanation and justification of the structure of sociopolitical order. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940: 16–22) have rightly emphasized the value of symbols for the continuity of an African political order. But they were certainly mistaken in supposing that Africans generally regarded symbols "not as mere symbols but as final values in themselves." No Asante mistook a stool, *akonnwa,* as other than a physical representation of a political office. The Asante manipulated regalia as representations of the grades within the ruling order; and the Asantehene used the grant of coveted regalia for promotional purposes, as a political instrument (Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875: 208; Ferguson *in* Arhin, 1974a: 36).

Asante presence in the savanna areas advanced the material welfare of the ordinary Asante. It guaranteed peaceful trading journeys and markets for both occasional and professional traders. Trading in the savanna areas was of more economic significance to ordinary Asante than the coastal trade. Kola, the staple of the savanna trade, was available to all able bodied adults, while the gold, ivory and war captives of the coastal trade were a monopoly of the rulers (Arhin, 1981). Through the means of the kola trade ordinary Asante obtained *adonkofo,* slaves, for labor on the farms, in trading enterprises, and in gold mining (Arhin, 1965). Kola trading was the basis of the accumulation of wealth in Asante in the 19th century. Wealth consisted of *nnipa,* dependents, bought humans incorporated into the lineages, livestock, hoards of gold dust, and the more durable purchases from the savanna such as *kyekye,* coarse cloths, and *bommo,* the heavy blankets regarded even today as valuable heirlooms. The savanna markets provided the craftsmen's materials, cotton cloths and strips, the sandal makers' leather and strings, and the blacksmiths' iron slabs. Finally, the infusion of

northern skills resulted in such technical advances as promoted the general spread of farming tools and the weavers' products.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has been concerned with reorganizing and analyzing well-known facts about the Asante-savanna connection. It has stressed that a function of Asante warfare in the savanna areas was the strengthening of ongoing commercial ties through the imposition of Asante rule on the states and, indirectly, over stateless societies in the forest-savanna transitional zone and the savanna areas. Asante political power, authority, and influence were added to trading as the means for Asante acquisition of savanna wealth; savanna manpower, natural products, craft products, skills, and ideas helped to sustain Asante military power and enrich her material culture. Human tribute from the savanna countries not only featured in the external slave trade by which the Asante partly financed their wars, they were also used in various aspects of the domestic economy, as court personnel, and were ultimately absorbed into the Asante fighting forces. They helped to increase Asante's population, and account considerably for the composite nature of Asante lineages. Nearly a century of forest-savanna connection added a savanna dimension to Asante culture. Since the savanna itself was the gateway to and a recipient of influences from the middle Niger and northern Africa, Asante also shared and assimilated those influences. Even today, the brilliance of Asante regalia is an enduring reminder of this synthesis.

In a period of poor communications and unsettled political conditions, the Asante military intervention in the savanna areas was, probably, a more efficient means for ensuring a wider circulation of wealth and distribution of skills than trading, which was often interrupted by political disturbances and the brigandage incidental to it. Warfare in all preindustrial societies must be regarded, from the point of view of the winner, as a means of production. The Greater Asante political system was essentially a unified economic system imposed over otherwise scattered areas with complementary resources. This is why G. E. Ferguson, a Fanti official of the Government of the Gold Coast in the late 19th century, insisted that the Gold Coast Colony and its dependencies must coincide with the limits of Asante authority and influence as Dupuis defined them in 1824.

NOTES

1. Also, R. T. Lonsdale, 1882, "Mission of Kumasi, Salaga and Yendi," Oct. 1881–Feb. 1882. British Parlimentary Papers, C.3386; and 1882, "Mission to Kumasi and Gyaman," April–July, British Colonial Office, CO 870/19.

2. The Asante considered the acquisition of the yam a matter of great moment. The Asante annual *Odwira* festival is centered principally on the eating of new yam by the stools and the major Asante deities, *abosom,* before power and authority holders, *mmusua mpanyim,* lineage heads can eat any (see Bowdich, 1819, "customs"; Rattray, 1923, 1927; Busia, 1951, 1954).

As the *Asem Stool History,* recorded by J. Agyeman Duah for Institute of African Studies, Legon (I.A.S./As 69), has it, in the course of the Asantehene Opoku Ware's (1720–50) war with the Gyamanhene Abo Kofi he captured Muslims skilled as yam growers at Menye, near Banda, whom he settled at Kumase, and put under the head of the Asem quarter of Kumase who was, for that reason, named the *akuafo hene,* "chief farmer," of the Asantehene. It was his responsibility to supervise the cultivation of yams by the Muslim settlers for the Asantehene.

3. See note 1.

4. See I.A.S./AS 22, for Nsumankwa Stool History. It states that it was the role of the Nsumankwahene to provide "protection medicine, soothsayers and diviners" for the Asantehene. He is the link between the Asantehene and the Muslim and non-Muslim communities from the savanna countries.

5. *Asem Stool History,* op. cit., categorizes the Muslims resident in Kumase in the reign of the Asantehene Osei Kwame, 1777–98 as follows:

a. *Bonduku Moslems:* These Moslems are quite distinct from the Menye Moslems (see note 1). The Bonduku Moslems, it is said, were captured during one of the Ashanti invasions of the North in the reign of Asantehene Osei Kwadwo (1764–77). They were made to stay at Dominase, near the main Police Station of Kumasi. Their present village is Kwadaso (3 mi west of Kumasi). Some of these Moslems have mixed with the Moslems at Suame (a Kumasi ward), who are descendants of Kramo Tia. (*Kramo* is the Asante word for Muslim, and *Tia* means short; Kramo Tia is thus the Short Muslim.)

b. *Mampong Moslems:* These Moslems, who were sent to Kumasi in the reign of Asantehene Osei Kwame

through the auspices of the Mamponghene, were said to be Moslems from Yeji. When they came to Kumasi, some stayed at Aburan-Sekyerekosekyi, that is, the area around the old High Court buildings of Kumasi.

c. *Asem Moslems:* These are Moslems captured from Menye.

6. For example, among the Bulsa, the area of my current fieldwork.

7. The late Barima Owusu Ansah, d. 1980, a classificatory but close maternal uncle of the present Asantehene, and regarded in his lifetime as a leading authority on Asante traditions said of the savanna rulers, "*na yene wonom nko nhyiamu,*" (we did not go into council with them). It has always seemed to me that politically and fiscally the Asante maintained a distinction between those culturally related to them and therefore capable of cultural assimilation, that is, the other Akan and their immediate neighbors the Guang, on the one hand, and the culturally unrelated people on the other. I use "Greater Akan" to include the Asante and the former. But for other views see Wilks (1975: 18–25) and Fynn (1974a: 11–13). Of all the organized modes of common action, i.e., the incorporative institutions, the use of the Great Oath was the most decisive.

8. See also note 1.

9. Present-day visits of the Nsumankwahene to the savanna areas on occasions of the bereavement and installation of rulers suggests that these visits were reciprocal.

10. See also note 1.

11. The name of the carver's wood is used here for the master carver.

12. Also Arhin, 1986.

13. A matter of common knowledge to the Asante and students of Asante which, however, cannot be detailed orally or in writing; Arhin, 1983a.

14. See mimeographed volumes of the Asante Court Records, Institute of African Studies, Legon; and Rattray (1929).

15. Also the hunter's and the warrior's *apretwaa,* a bag in which he kept both food rations and ammunition supplies.

CHAPTER 6. *PONTONPORON* AND *KOKO*: ASANTE-GONJA RELATIONS TO 1874

Bruce M. Haight

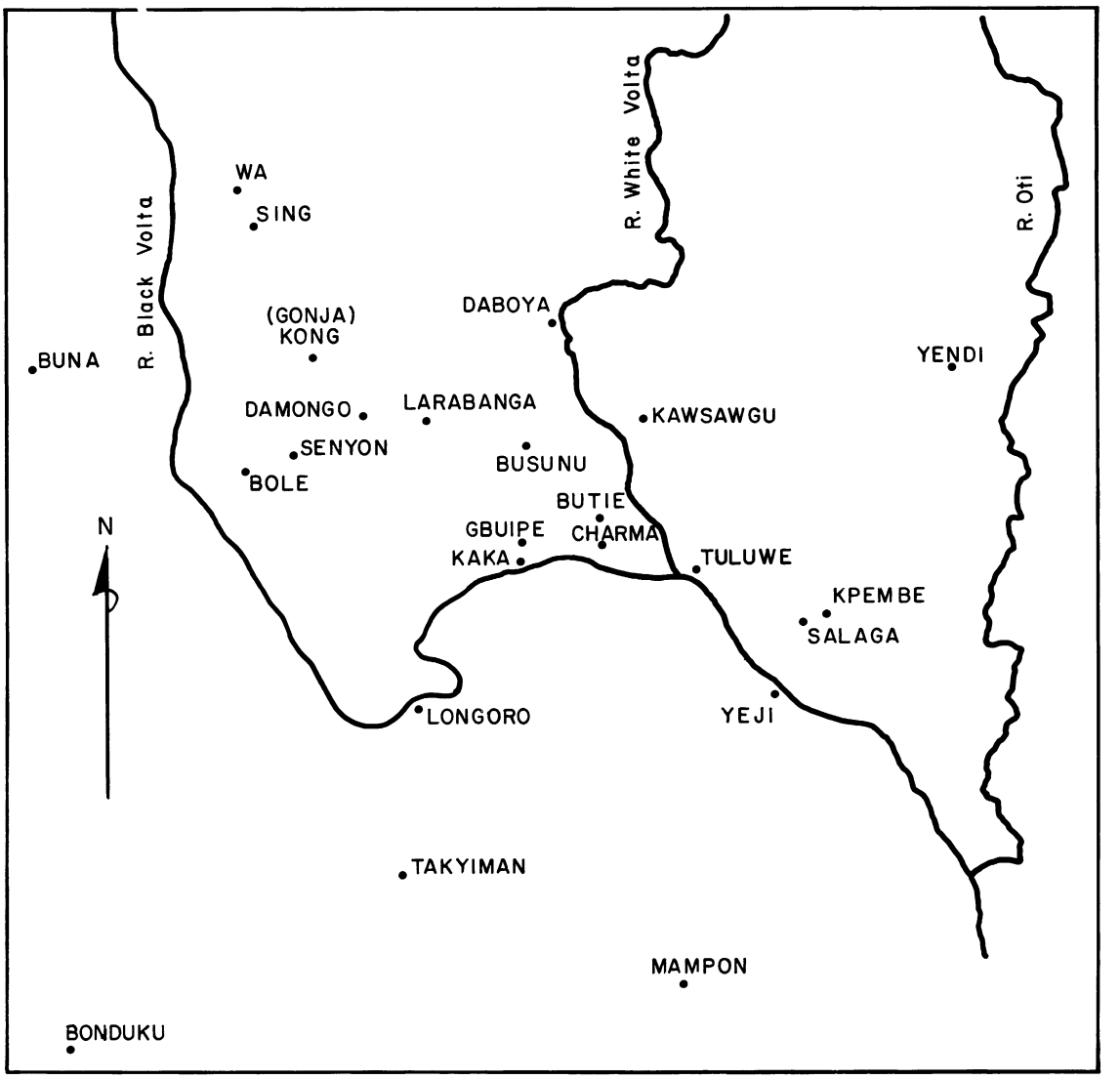
ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the period of greatest Asante influence over Gonja which lasted from 1732–33 to 1874. Gonja political functioning during this period may be understood in part by reference to Goody's idea of circulating succession, which stresses cooperation over competition. However, the alternative position, stressing competition, is particularly useful when examining the period of greatest Asante influence for its helps to explain accessions to office which would often be considered anomalous in a system of circulating succession. This paper suggests that the principal goal of Gonja political leaders was to control divisional skins, and that they were prepared to oppose or ally with Asante (or other external powers) according to whether or not the alliance would help them secure and/or retain the divisional skin. Patterns of alliance and opposition developed over the course of this period continue to influence political functioning in the 20th century.

INTRODUCTION

Gonja (see map 6-1) is a state with a long and varied political tradition. That the use of force has been an integral element within this tradition cannot be in doubt. Military conquest was the hallmark of the formation of the state in the mid-16th century and a common feature of political functioning up to colonial rule, but a military solution to an internal political dispute was resorted to as recently as the present decade in western Gonja when Gonjas from the Bole area united to attack and lay waste a Lobirifor village. An attack of the same nature was under way during Domba in 1970 but was forestalled when the Bole imam intervened and stopped it. The most celebrated incident in Gonja history under colonial rule was the gathering of supporters by Yagbumwura Muhammad III in 1917 at Senyon for the ostensible purpose of attacking the District Commissioner at Bole (Haight, 1981, i: 193–226). The colonial government reacted by sending 800 troops to prevent the suspected offensive against the District Commissioner and allied forces.

Whereas Gonjas did not routinely engage in military action, a periodic willingness to employ force to resolve political differences is an ongoing feature of Gonja politics. This was true even when those Gonjas resorting to military action were clearly weaker than other interested parties. For example, in the incidents of 1970 and only a few years ago, the Gonjas were armed with little more than flintlocks while the government of Ghana had the potential to intervene with armored personnel carriers, machine guns, and the like. Similarly, in 1917, Gonja supporters of Yagbumwura Muhammad III had nothing more powerful than flintlocks while the British colonial troops were equipped with machine guns, carbines, and other weapons. This willingness of Gonjas to engage in a battle even though there was the distinct possibility of intervention by a far larger and better equipped force may also be clearly seen in the 19th century. For example, Bolewura Pontomporon II chose to ignore first-hand evidence of the strength of Samori's army, replied to Samori's threats with contempt, and mustered only a limited force to oppose attacking troops led by Sarankye Mori in 1895. Once defeat was certain, however, he and several of his leading supporters committed suicide by exploding gunpowder (Braimah, 1970: 44–45; Haight, 1981, I: 180–181). Early incidents along these lines were the attacks by Gonjas of the Kpembe division upon resident Asantes in Salaga shortly after



Map 6-1. Principal towns and villages in Gonja and the region.

the entry of the British into Kumase in 1874, and the prolonged opposition of Gonjas led by Yagbumwura Nyantakyi to Asante forces during the years 1841–44. Major battles between Asante and Gonja in 1803, 1805, and 1818–19 are also recorded, and the occupation of the Bole region by Adum Ata on behalf of the Asantehene at the end of the 18th century has been documented as well (Rice and Wilks, 1976).

This willingness to resort to military action by some Gonja political leaders in their pursuit of political dominance in local, regional, and/or national Gonja political systems, regardless of foreseeable consequences, is balanced by what must appear to be a paradoxical willingness of other Gonja leaders to seek and abide by external alliances in order to secure preeminence politically. At times, even the same ruler led a force and then sought outside support during a particular incident, Yagbumwura Muhammad III in 1917, for example. This yields an apparent contradiction, for while the former act seems to pro-

claim his willingness to die if necessary for his independence and supremacy, the latter act appears to acknowledge that he was willing to accept a limited position of authority within Gonja which required explicit obeisance to an external power. Later historians have by-and-large failed to highlight and to explain this paradox (Illiasu, 1975; Thomas, 1975; Killingray, 1978).

Such behavior might be seen as alternative modes of a similar quest for supremacy in the Gonja political system, whether at a local, regional, or national level. Goody has suggested that for Gonja royals, positions of political leadership are prized whether or not they have desired prerequisites associated with them (Goody, 1966a: 163). To illustrate this, he discusses the paramountcy (the Yagbum skin held by the Yagbumwura) which did not guarantee a privileged life for its occupant. J. A. Braimah, a well-known national politician, has recently contested successfully for the Yagbum skin. To take office he has had to move himself and his family from Salaga, a town of some size and stature in eastern Gonja, to Damongo, which is a more isolated village far to the west. Braimah sought the paramountcy from his position as leader of Kpembe, a division which had not provided a paramount from among its own leading families (gate—*kabrunah,* pl. *mbunah*) since 1711–12. Another remarkable feature of his quest is that Braimah's *kabrunah,* the Kanyase, had been denied access to the Kpembe divisional skin for more than two centuries during the period of greatest Asante influence. His family was only able to renew its claim to leadership in Kpembe at the end of the 19th century and then only through force.

Braimah has distinguished himself not only as a politician but also as an historian of Gonja. In his books (1967 and 1970) he has clearly addressed the question of the right of his *kabrunah* to contest for the Kpembe skin, the struggles by 19th-century Gonja leaders to secure the paramountcy, and the efforts by some Gonja leaders to embroil Asante in Gonja affairs, whereas others sought to gain greater independence from Asante. Braimah has himself noted that the Gonja were born to fight, and even in the 20th century they did not forget their martial tradition and did not hesitate to exhibit boldness or to take risks as political leaders (Braimah, 1967: 67, 73–78). His work and career attest to the remarkable vitality and longevity of this people and their political system existing in an inhospitable region of Ghana which was of vital strategic interest to far stronger polities from the mid-18th century.

PONTONPORON AND *KOKO*

In the present paper I focus on the period of Asante influence over Gonja (1732–73 to 1874) with particular reference to the propensity of weaker Gonja political leaders to either secure political power militarily and/or to form external alliances for the same end. It is my contention that the primary goal of such Gonja political leaders was to establish their own *kabrunah* in control over a particular division and that in order to attain this goal they were quite prepared to fight on local, regional, national, and even international levels. They were also prepared to sacrifice the independence of that division to an external power in order to attain supremacy for their own *kabrunah.* External polities, as well as the people of Gonja, both benefited and suffered from outside intervention. Although several external powers were drawn into Gonja struggles, the essential pattern did not vary much, nor did the cycle of events which preceded intervention. These have been described by Goody under the rubric of circulating succession (Goody, 1966a).

Circulating succession is a system in which more than one *kabrunah* shares access to leadership of a particular division, and several divisions share access to the paramountcy. By a judicious rotation, no *kabrunah* secures ongoing dominance and neither is any *kabrunah* permanently excluded from leadership. Thus, a decentralized political system continues to exist over a long period of time. This hypothesis emphasizes cooperation over competition. One might equally stress that a major feature of Gonja political functioning is the attempt by some political leaders to eliminate members of other gates from leadership at the divisional level, thereby effectively excluding them from national leadership as well since eligibility to the latter is through holding a divisional skin. This pro-

cess takes at least one and often two or more generations. The periodic battles between forces led by elders of a weakened *kabrunah* and those led by descendants of the victors in the prior battles involved not only supporters from the immediate division but from other divisions and sometimes external polities as well. Over the centuries affinities of certain *mbunah* for their external allies grew up as did opposition by other Gonjas. I will delineate several of these disputes below and suggest which gates became allied to Asante as an intervening power and which gates were opposed. In this fashion, I hope to draw attention to one factor in Asante-Gonja relations which has not been highlighted to date in the literature.

There can be no doubt that from the mid-18th century onward Asante was by far a stronger economic, political, and military power than Gonja and that Asante controlled significant portions of Gonja until the late-19th century. Asante benefited from this by obtaining tribute and, in the 19th century, by securing a trade route to Hausa via Salaga for exports of kola, etc. Asante also significantly slowed trade from Gyaman and Kong to Hausa by controlling the west–east crossing routes as far north as Gonja, thereby securing higher prices for her own exports. Certain *mbunah,* in particular Gonja divisions, also benefited through their alliance with Asante, a pattern which is documented as early as the mid-18th century in Arabic sources for the Kpembe division. Continuing links for one Kpembe *kabrunah* are recorded in accounts of British visitors to Asante in the 19th century. Asante control did not extend over all Gonja divisions during the 18th century, however, since Asante was often engaged militarily elsewhere and large portions of Gonja appear to have been virtually autonomous then. It was from these areas that opposition habitually spread, particularly in the 19th century. One might liken the two types of Gonja response to Asante to two praise names common in Western Gonja: *pontonporon* and *koko.*[1] *Pontonporon* is the creature (a whale) that "swallowed an elephant and said it would swallow the earth." Several Gonja royals envisioned Asante this way and proffered cooperation in return for support. Those who deferred to Asante's greatness were, however, often opposed by others who were prepared to defy this strong, neighboring state. These Gonja opponents might be likened to the river fish *koko,* a very bony fish with sharp, protruding fins. The exegesis of this praise name is that "A *koko* can either wound you in water, in a bowl, or on land when thrown away." Its very nature ensures that the one capturing, consuming, or casting it aside will suffer. For Gonjas who identified with the *koko,* there was no fear of opposing Asante or any other state regardless of their own apparent weaknesses militarily and politically. It is helpful to keep both images, *pontonporon* and *koko,* in mind when trying to comprehend Asante-Gonja relations until 1874.

EARLY GONJA-ASANTE INTERACTION

Gonja was founded in the mid-16th century and appears to have reached its zenith under the mid-17th century ruler Lanta (1623–24 to 1666–67) who unified the state and divided it among his sons (Wilks et al., 1986, KG 8: 93–94, 113–115; Goody, 1967). By the last decade of the 17th century there was a war among Lanta's sons and some of his grandsons. This is said to have permanently weakened the kingdom (Wilks et al., 1986, KG 14: 95–96, 117–118). Although one of the grandsons, 'Abbas, was to take the paramountcy briefly at the beginning of the 18th century as a powerful king (1709) and was able to establish several of his brothers and descendants as divisional leaders, Gonja ceased to be a unified nation after the death of his successor in 1711–12 (Wilks et al., 1986, KG 16, 18, 21, 22: 96–97, 119–121). The mid-18th century *Kitab Ghanja* records that "Since then they have not agreed upon one king because each of them is called king in his own land. Yet, the brothers of 'Abbas are senior among them; they are like their masters or kings until the present time; the affairs of them all are in their hands until now." (Wilks et al., 1986, KG 22: 97). Wilks has commented, "Many divisions fell away, neither contesting the paramountcy nor recognizing its authority in any politically effective sense." (Wilks et al., 1986: 121). It is significant that it is at precisely this period that the

Asante state expanded its influence northward in the direction of Gonja. By 1722–23, the *Kitab Ghanja* notes the conquest of Takyiman by the army of Asantehene Opoku Ware (Wilks et al., 1986, KG 30: 98). The next reference to Asante appears in an entry for the year 1732–33 when it relates that Opoku Ware "came and ruined Ghanja" (Wilks et al., 1986, KG 46: 99). As Wilks has noted, this entry is "curiously brief" and is not documented in the histories of the Asante stools. Wilks has conjectured that this may have been an attack on Gyaman, though Green is inclined to date that attack later (Wilks et al., 1986: 126–127; Green, personal commun.). I have suggested elsewhere (Haight, 1981, II: 323–324) that this may have been an attack on Old Longoro, a Gonja division south of the Black Volta whose position was likely immediately north and west of Takyiman. Such an attack might well have been part of a campaign against Gyaman, for Old Longoro lay on an important trade route from Bonduku, Gyaman's major trading town. Asantehene Opoku Ware is next mentioned in relation to a campaign against Dagomba in 1745 (Wilks et al., 1986, KG 70: 101, 130). Opoku Ware's death in 1750 was given greater prominence in the *Kitab Ghanja,* for he was said to have "reigned violently as a tyrant, enjoying his authority. Peoples of the horizons feared him much" (Wilks et al., 1986, KG 89: 104).

ASANTE AND KPEMBE

The most complete record of an early Asante intervention is found in the *Kitab Ghanja*'s account of the military invasion and occupation of eastern and central Gonja during 1751–52 under the leadership of Safo Katanka who was later to become Mamponhene (Wilks et al., 1986, KG 99–104: 105–107, 141–143). It seems clear that Safo took advantage of discord among leading candidates for the Kpembe divisional skin to establish his presence there. He sent Kpembewura Nakpo and two of his close relatives to Asante as prisoners in an attempt to gain firmer control over Kpembe. Following a brief campaign against neighboring Gonja divisions, which was itself facilitated by a rift between the Wasipewura and his leading subordinate (see also Case, 1979: 155–158; Haight, 1981, II: 323–326), Safo returned to secure ongoing control over Kpembe. Wilks (1975: 66–67) has described the treaty which was entered into by the Kpembewura and Safo on behalf of Asante, and, following, Reindorf (1895: 140), he suggests that the Kpembewura was forced to accept vassal status and to pay an annual tribute of 1000 slaves. The *Kitab Ghanja* calls attention to immediate opposition to this treaty by a lesser leader of the Kpembe division, "We do not accept this condition. Nobody will accept this condition save those who were your slaves and captives." The chronicler himself dismisses those willing to submit as people who "had no resolution" (Wilks et al., 1986, KG 99: 104). We are fortunate to have this contemporaneous account for it establishes without a doubt that while there were Gonja leaders prepared to cooperate with a stronger external power such as Asante, there were also opponents whose *mbunah* were later to risk much to express their opposition to Asante. This is the first clearly documented instance in which a weak Gonja divisional leader pledged fealty to Asante to retain the top leadership position in his own division. That this occurred early on in Kpembe should not be surprising. Kpembe was then one of the richer divisions whose leaders had been excluded from the paramountcy by the brothers and descendants of 'Abbas who had been either unable or unwilling to rescue the Kpembewura from Safo Katanka in 1751–52.

During the late 18th century, Kpembewuras appear to have remained firmly within the Asante orbit. For example, when Osei Kwame, the son of Mamponhene Safo, was made the Asantehene in 1777, congratulatory embassies arrived at Kumase from "Salgha" (Kpembe) as well as Yendi and Dahomey but none were noted from other Gonja divisions (Dupuis, 1824: 244–245). The Kpembewura apparently did not join with the Gbuipewura, western Gonja divisional leaders, and the Gyamanhene who united in an attempt to return Osei Kwame as Asantehene at the beginning of the 19th century (Dupuis, 1824: 248). This coalition was strengthened by the support of the Wasipewura at the Battle of Kaka in 1805. However, the new Asantehene

emerged victorious. The Kpembewura, who had not joined the Gyaman/Gonja coalition, was among those sending ambassadors to congratulate Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame (Dupuis, 1824: 249; Wilks, 1975: 252–256; Yarak and Wilks, 1978).

The first serious conflict among Kpembe leaders contemporaneously documented by writers occurred in 1817 when the Kpembewura and a rival were summoned to Kumase. Bowdich (1819: 320–321, 332–333) notes that although relations with Kpembe were then smooth, and their tribute in slaves, animals, and goods had arrived, the Asantehene had already decided to begin a campaign against the Gyamanhene. Thus he wanted to settle the dispute in Kpembe (Hutchison *in* Bowdich, 1819: 396–397). I have suggested elsewhere that this was a dispute between leaders of the Sungbung and Lepo gates at Kpembe, which the Asantehene settled in favor of the Sungbung candidate. He was then given the divisional skin held at that time by a member of the Lepo *kabrunah* (Haight, 1981, II: 301–306). This new Kpembewura did not join the Wasipewura, the Kongwura, and other western Gonja divisional leaders in their alliance with Gyaman against Asante in 1818–19, a notable breach in Gonja unity. The Asantehene subsequently rewarded the Kpembewura and other tributary princes with gifts (Dupuis, 1824: CXXX f., 170–171). Another benefit granted for loyalty was Salaga's placement by 1821–22 not only on the major north–south route from Hausa but also on that from the Niger River via Buna (a route which circuitously avoided Western Gonja and Gbuipe; see Wilks, 1967: 187–188).

It appears that during ca. 1823–26, however, Kpembe was again ruled by a member of the Lepo gate who was understandably hostile to Asante since his predecessor had been deskinned in 1817. Wilks (1975: 273), following Lander and Lander (1832, II: 191–192), states that Kpembe did not provide troops for Asante's mobilization in mid-1823. Perhaps in retaliation, or through preoccupation with the war in the south, no kola arrived at Salaga from Asante in 1825 and caravans from Hausa had to wait there an entire year for supplies (Clapperton, 1829: 68). Wilks (1975: 273) has shown that once again a subordinate Sungbung leader appealed for help from Asante, which responded with a force of approximately 10,000 men. Their army approached Salaga but was forced to retreat. However, by 1830 a second, larger army was successful, burned Kpembe itself, and took many captives (Wilks, 1975: 273–274). The Sungbung candidate was presumably enskinned and there was no more rebellion on the part of Kpembe leaders until 1874 when resident Asantes at Salaga were massacred (Goody, 1966b, 1966c; Johnson, 1966; Martin, 1967; Wilks, 1975: 279–282). Asante's response was to shift trade routes away from Salaga and to withdraw from Kpembe altogether. Trade revived somewhat as west–east routes from Gyaman, Buna, and Bole to Salaga were once again open due to the absence of Asante interdiction, but the most striking development during the Asante absence was a civil war in which the Lepo and Kanyase gates fought openly for the divisional skin (El-Wakkad and Wilks, 1961, 1962; Braimah, 1967; Braimah and Goody, 1967). The Sungbung gate, which had been allied to Asante, was excluded by this contest in which the Kanyase *kabrunah* emerged victorious and gained the right to provide Kpembewuras for the first time in two centuries (Haight, 1981, II: 311–313). It is highly unlikely that this could have been achieved had Asante retained a presence in Kpembe.

SAKPARE DYULA MUSLIMS, GONJA ROYALS AT WASIPE, AND ASANTE

Developments in the Wasipe division of Gonja, whose capital was Daboya, alluded to above in the passage on Safo Katanka's attack on eastern and central Gonja, were to prove important to later patterns of Asante-Gonja interaction in central and western Gonja. According to Case, in about 1745 Wasipewura Abu Bakr I died of a gunshot wound. He was succeeded by the Yarizoriwura, Safo I, whose supporters were implicated in Abu Bakr's death (Case, 1979: 149–151; Haight, 1981, II: 319–320). Safo I was the first son of a Tampulima mother to come to power. He dismissed his Sakpare Muslim imams and appointed in their stead an imam with a Bornu background. This move effectively weak-

ened Daboya's ties to Gbuipe and Kpembe, where there were also Sakpare imamates, and undoubtedly reflected a strengthening of Daboya's commitment to the Hausa trade (Levtzion, 1968: 69; Case, 1979: 164). It was the first recorded instance of a Sakpare being denied an imamate in Gonja which they had earlier held. According to descendants of the Sakpare, this exclusion occurred because the Sakpare had supported a rival to Safo I, presumably Bediako the son of Abu Bakr I. Bediako appears to have done whatever he could to embroil Safo I in disputes, perhaps in the hope that Safo would be deposed or killed. By 1749–50 he had drawn the Busunuwura as well into a dispute and in 1751 he split the Wasipe forces, which were already weakened due to a portion having been sent to assist the Mamprussi Na, thus facilitating Safo Katanka's victory over the Wasipewura. Wasipewura Safo I was also apparently abandoned by the army under the sons of 'Abbas once Safo Katanka turned the direction of his march away from Gbuipe and western Gonja. Thus, the Wasipewura bore the full brunt of the Asante attack (Haight, 1981, II: 321–326, Wilks et al., 1986, KG 102 and 103: 106, 142–143). Bediako never became Wasipewura and his line was eliminated from the skin. His Sakpare supporters, who appear to have gone into exile at Charma near Gbuipe, reappear later in Gonja history and may have played an important role in Asante-Gonja relations.

Wasipewura Safo I not only lost much booty to Safo Katanka but also was forced to sign a treaty in which he agreed to send tribute to Asante. He was followed on the skin by two of his younger brothers whose mother was Hanga. They, too, refused to permit the Sakpare to return to the Wasipe imamate, the second selecting as his imam a Larabanga scholar (Case, 1979: 165, 199, 253). Their subordinate relationship to Asante did not change until the next Wasipewura, Tulimin Kasa I, came to power. He was the son of Safo I by a Tampulima mother, and like his father opposed Asante. He fought first as part of the Gyaman/Gonja coalition at the Battle of Kaka in 1805 and then again in 1818–19. In this he was no more successful than his father had been. It seems that it was he who chose for his imam a member of a third Muslim group, the Gbani from Bonduku, thus effectively excluding the Sakpare permanently from the Wasipe imamate (Haight, 1981, II: 332–336). His younger brother, Kankranfu, succeeded him. When a subsequent dispute erupted in western and central Gonja during the years 1839–44, the Asante leaders apparently distrusted this newest member of the Tampulima gate to take the Wasipe skin. Although he protested his neutrality in the conflict between the Yagbumwura and Asante, he was placed under strong pressure by Asante forces which were being advised by Jakpa Sei from the Bole division and assisted by Kankranfu's brother Ibrahim. Rather than capitulate, Kankranfu committed suicide, taking with him in death many of the Asante military leaders. He was succeeded by Saparipa I of the Hanga Gate, which had earlier been associated with a quiescent policy toward Asante (see also Braimah, 1970; Wilks, 1975: 276; Case, 1979: 335–337). Wasipe did not again challenge Asante directly.

ASANTE AND WESTERN GONJA: CA. 1793–1805

Adum Ata led an Asante force to the northwestern lands in the mid-1790s. His goal was to make the Asante presence there known and to secure booty and men to enrich his stool (Rice and Wilks, 1976). He made his headquarters at Bole in western Gonja. From there, at the direction of Asantehene Osei Kwame, he also supported the Gyamanhene in his conflict with Nkoransa. Since Osei Kwame had done much to strengthen the Gyamanhene and western Gonja leaders, when he was deposed by a coup they joined together immediately and attempted to restore him to office. This Gyaman/Gonja coalition, which was assisted by Adum Ata, was defeated in ca. 1803 and the Gyamanhene was replaced. However, upon the death of Asantehene Opoku Fofie, his successor Osei Tutu Kwame declared an amnesty and Adum Ata returned to Kumase (Wilks, 1975: 254–255).

The western Gonja forces had regrouped by 1805 and, together with the Gbuipewura and refugees from Gyaman, launched another attack. They were utterly defeated at the battle of Kaka and their leader, the Gbuipewura,

was executed (Dupuis, 1824: 248). The new Gyamanhene, Adinkra, taking advantage of the concentration of forces at Kaka, attacked residual troops near Bole before engaging Buna forces at Anwiego south of Buna. The Bunamansa was killed there (Wilks, 1967: 160–162; 1975: 254–256, 261). These battles and the loss of three major leaders in two years, the Gbuipewura, the Bunamansa, and the Gyamanhene who preceded Adinkra, must have considerably weakened these polities. The region from Bole to Gbuipe was also hurt during the ensuing decade because the Asantehene deliberately and rapidly shifted trade away from it and through Banda and Salaga instead. This must have had an immediate impact and made a sharp contrast to the prosperity which had derived from the vigorous trade crossing through Bole at the turn of the century (Wilks, 1967; Haight, 1981, II: 306–307). The west–east route through Bole had been dominated by Dyula merchants from Kong, Buna, and Bonduku (Wilks, 1967). The Bolewura had forged close links with the Dyula Muslim communities of Buna and Bonduku through marriages. He had established additional links by engaging as his advisers Dyula Muslims with close ties to those communities (Haight, 1981, I: 160–166).

One result of this diversion of trade by Osei Tutu Kwame, which undercut the economy at Bole and Gbuipe, seems to have been that some leading Muslims of Gonja moved from Gbuipe to Kumase. By the time of Bowdich's arrival in 1817 a few had become advisors of the Asantehene. For example, Muhammad Kamaghatay, the son of the former Gonja Imam at Gbuipe, was one of these emigres. He conducted Osei Tutu Kwame's correspondence with the northern provinces. He also appears to have been given responsibility for the affairs of central and western Gonja by the Asantehene (Levtzion, 1965; Wilks, 1975: 260, 347–348; Wilks et al., 1986: 68, 71, 202–236; Owusu-Ansah, chap. 8, this vol.; and for a contextual study see Adjaye, 1984).

ASANTE AND WESTERN GONJA: 1818–CA. 1820

By 1818, Gyamanhene Adinkra had rallied support from western and central Gonja divisions for an effort to throw off Asante overrule. A major goal was undoubtedly to redevelop the crossing trade. Asante reacted strongly, and the Asantehene personally led a force to the northwest in 1818–19. At about the same time, Buna and Bole were sacked by a military expedition under the leadership of Da Kaba of Segu (Wilks, 1975: 272). They may have been vulnerable because most Gonja forces had already proceeded farther south to join the conflict. It would seem that one of the Bole leaders, Safo, joined with the Asantehene during this campaign. After defeating Adinkra, it appears that the Asantehene rewarded Safo for his support by installing him as the Bolewura in the place of Pontomporon I who died in about 1818. He may also have assumed the paramountcy at the same time.[2]

According to one tradition, Safo was one of two brothers of the same generation who were eligible to become Bolewura (Haight, 1981, I: 167–168). Safo was said to have been the oldest child, but since his mother was the younger sister of the mother of his rival (Jao) he would have been considered junior within Gonja. Safo's support for the Asantehene can then be understood as an attempt to secure external assistance to ensure that he would be able to obtain the Bole skin. Once he was in power, he apparently drove Jao from Bole. Safo was also unwilling to retain Bole Timitay Muslims as leaders of the local Muslim community, for they had been the principal advisers of his predecessor, Pontomporon I, who was Jao's older full-brother. Jabaghatay Muslims withdrew from Bole at this time and returned to Buna.

Jao apparently fled to the Tuluwe division, east of the Volta River, where he took the divisional skin from his maternal relatives. This was very unusual because normally only patrilineal descendants were eligible. He then appears to have driven Sakpare Muslims out of nearby Charma. They fled to Gbuipe, which was then the major center for Gonja Sakpare (Haight, 1981, I: 166–169, 154–157). Bolewurea Safo I then brought these Sakpare Muslims to Bole to serve as his imams. It may well be that Muhammad Kamaghatay, another Sakpare who was the son of a previous Gonja imam from Gbuipe and by then the Asantehene's adviser for central and

western Gonja, facilitated this development for it would have provided him with correspondents in a region from which three major attacks on Asante had originated within the preceding 15 years. The enskinment of Bolewura Safo I and the formation of the Sakpare imamate at Bole effectively undercut the position of Dyula Muslims at Bole who had close ties to Buna and Bonduku. This certainly further hindered any attempt to rebuild the crossing trade and bound western and central Gonja more closely to Asante.

DECLINING MUSLIM INFLUENCE IN KUMASE AND RELATIONS WITH GONJA: 1823–39

It seems that Sakpare Muslims from Gonja were at the height of their influence in Kumase by about 1818. Surviving correspondence between Gonja and Kumase illustrates that there was then regular communication in both directions (Wilks et al., 1986, chap. 8). The Sakpare writers at Gbuipe were no longer critical of Asantehenes as their predecessors had been in the mid-18th century. Instead they had become effusive in their praise, eager to contribute to the Asantehene's well-being, and desirous of patronage (Levtzion, 1965; Haight, 1981, II: 347–355). Their influence and that of other Muslims was threatened when Baba, at the head of 7000 Muslim troops, withdrew from the Asantehene's campaign against Gyaman in 1818 since he would have been forced to fight other Muslims (Wilks, 1966, 355–356). Though Muslims in Kumase regained some of their former stature between 1818 and 1823, Owusu-Ansah (1986; chap. 8, this vol.) notes that Muslim influence waned after the death of Asantehene Osei Tutu in 1823 due to their association with Asante leaders whose political fortunes declined rapidly. By 1829 when their patron Kwadwo Adusei was executed, Muslims were even forbidden to enter the Asantehene's palace. The Sakpare Muslims presumably returned to Gonja, for none were noted by Simons when he visited Kumase in 1831–32. Given that the Asantehene had apparently eliminated from among his entourage his Muslim advisers for central and western Gonja, it is perhaps less surprising that a series of politically explosive events occurred there to which Asante appears to have made no direct response.

During the 1820s, when Asante was preoccupied with southern campaigns, Tuluwewura Jao began to secure support from other Gonja divisions for his attempt to replace Safo as Yagbumwura and then to place a member of his own *kabrunah* on the Bole skin. Jao eventually led his combined forces against Yagbumwura Safo I in a campaign that lasted approximately seven months. Mediators from Buna arrived, but secretly made a pact with Tuluwewura Jao. When unarmed leaders from both sides met to prepare an agreement Safo and his supporters were attacked. It is reported that 140 of Safo's sons and followers were killed.[3] The battle was resumed but Yagbumwura Safo I was hopelessly outnumbered. Rather than surrender or be defeated, he gathered gunpowder and blew up himself and many of his supporters in a defiant act of suicide. Several sons of Safo I fled to Wa where they sought sanctuary. Tuluwewura Jao was then enskinned as Yagbumwura. He in turn enskinned Kwadja Yusuf, who appears to have been his younger full-brother, as Bolewura. This occurred in 1832 shortly after Asante had carried out a major campaign against Kpembe. There is no evidence for Asante intervention in this dispute (Wilks, 1975: 275–276; Haight, 1981, I: 158–159).[4] Yagbumwura Jao died after only seven months in office and was succeeded as Yagbumwura by Kongwura Nyantakyi Sa'id, who appears to have been a close relative of both Jao and Kwadja Yusuf. Yagbumwura Nyantakyi appointed relatives and followers to head villages in the Kong and Bole divisions. He later demanded the return of the sons of Safo I and their supporters from Wa but was refused. He then attacked and seized a village from Wa which, in turn, successfully attacked Nyantakyi's forces at Sing.[5] Yagbumwura Nyantakyi and his allies were forced to retreat to Senyon while the Wa Na and the sons of Yagbumwura Safo I prepared at Kananape. Nyantakyi sent to Gyaman for aid and the Wa Na asked for help from Asante. In about 1839, perhaps during this campaign, Bolewura Kwadja Yusuf died. Jakpa Sei, the son of Safo I, then assumed leadership in Bole. Although the official drum history at Bole states that Jakpa Sei became the Bole-

wura, Braimah calls him the regent, and in an account given by the Gbuipewura Jakpa Sei's exact status is ambiguous (Braimah, 1970: 19).[6] Date, the war-chief for Gyaman, arrived in support of Yagbumwura Nyantakyi. He was ambushed by the Walas and Bole supporters of Jakpa Sei. Date was forced to withdraw, leaving behind his supplies and much gold which had presumably been given to him in payment by Nyantakyi. The Wa Na gave the gold to Jakpa Sei who in turn sent it to the Asantehene (Haight, 1981, I: 159–160).

INTERVENTION AND REGULATION—1841–44

The Asantehene's first response to the conflict was to send a diplomatic mission (Wilks, 1975: 276–277). According to Braimah, who has given the most complete account, at this point Yagbumwura Nyantakyi was principally opposed by the Gbuipewura. The Gonjas learned from their messengers at Kumase that the Asantehene's intent was to bring about a compromise between the Gbuipewura and the Yagbumwura. However, Jakpa Sei of the Bole division and Bundawura Kinting of the Tuluwe division were fearful that if a settlement were reached, the Asantehene would back the Yagbumwura. They were convinced that Nyantakyi would then attack them for their open opposition to him. Braimah suggests that it was Jakpa Sei and Kinting who were primarily responsible for Asante intervention. They went to the Asante envoys before they reached Gbuipe and spoke with them:

> "Yagbonwura Nyantachi is at a war camp. He has sworn an oath that if he met the Ashantis he would not accept any peace offers until he had the head of the King of Ashanti." This annoyed the Ashanti envoys who did not find any reasons to discredit the story of such brave chiefs and true allies.
>
> The Ashanti envoys returned to Kumasi and delivered their message. As would be expected, the whole Ashanti court was furious. (Braimah, 1970: 20)

This part of Braimah's account gains credence from the Nsumankwa Stool History which records that "the main cause of this war was the fact that the Chief of Yabo had spoken some indecent words against the Asantehene."[7]

The Asantehene's next act was to dispatch a small expedition in about 1841 under Nsumankwaahene Domfe Ketewa, who reported back that his force was inadequate (Wilks, 1975: 277–279). By this time, it may have appeared that the combined forces under Yagbumwura Nyantakyi might be powerful enough to threaten not only Gbuipe but perhaps the important trading center of Salaga as well, for a major force under Asamoa Nkwanta, the Anantahene, then took the field. Jakpa Sei from Bole is said to have assisted this army.[8] It was a long and expensive campaign, lasting until mid-1844, which ended with the defeat and beheading of Yagbumwura Nyantakyi. Reference has been made above to Jakpa Sei's provocation of a further incident between Asante commanders and Wasipewura Kankranfu, Yagbumwura Nyantakyi's mother's brother. This ended in the Wasipewura committing suicide by exploding gunpowder in a room full of Asante military leaders. This action, while costly to Asante, was surely welcomed by Jakpa Sei for it ensured that he and the other sons of Yagbumwura Safo I would have no opposition for control over the Bole divisional skin for a generation. Wilks (1975: 279) sums up the costs and rewards for Asante as follows, "One hundred and forty officers had died, either in action or from sickness. Because of the impoverished nature of the country in which the army had been deployed, little booty had been acquired, and many of the captives taken had succumbed to disease." Yagbumwura Nyantakyi was said to have been assisted by a very powerful Muslim during the campaign. This was 'Uthman Kamaghatay, a member of the Gbuipe Sakpare family which had provided not only Gonja imams but also advisers to Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame in the early 19th century. 'Uthman Kamaghatay was residing in Daboya, the Wasipewura's capital, at the end of the war. He was brought back to Kumase and ultimately became Asante Nkramo Imam. He was known in Asante as Kramo Tia (Wilks, 1975: 277–278; Wilks et al., 1986: 205, 234; Owusu-Ansah, chap. 8, this vol.).[9] This ensured the Asantehene contact with Muslims in Gonja.

Braimah (1970: 32) has pointed out that to secure their control over western and central Gonja, Asante stationed resident commissioners in principal towns. An indemnity was also assessed upon the next Yagumwura, 'Abd al-Mu'min from the Kawsawgu division. He was responsible for collecting 1000 men yearly to be sent to Asante. This task was in turn divided up among the principal divisional leaders (Wilks, 1975: 278–279). These commissioners were clearly unable to prevent ongoing military encounters between the sons of Yagumwura Safo I and their supporters and the sons of Yagbumwura Nyantakyi and their followers. However, in each instance timely intervention was secured from Wa and/or Dagomba before a general conflagration could result (Haight, 1981, I: 175–179).[10] Residual bitterness from these mid-19th century encounters came to the fore, however, during the last decade of the 19th century well after Asante commissioners had been withdrawn about 1874. The descendants of Yagbumwura Safo I effectively denied the paramountcy to Kongwura 'Abdallah, the son of Yagbumwura Nyantakyi, in 1890. In this they were supported by the Tuluwewura and the Busunuwura (Braimah, 1970: 37–41). Kongwura 'Abdallah sought assistance from Samori who was then at Bonduku, just as his father had sought support from Date of Gyaman a half-century earlier. This was to lead to the greatest military defeat in Gonja history, for not only did the Samorian forces conquer all Gonjas who opposed them in western and central Gonja but they also denuded the towns and countryside of all portable wealth (Haight, 1981, I: 179–185). Kongwura 'Abdallah remained with the Sofa forces throughout the occupation, gaining only a hollow victory over his opponents in his quest for the paramountcy. Gonja remains a sparsely populated zone to this day. It is ironic that freedom from Asante overrule was followed so shortly by this much harsher external intervention.

CONCLUSION

It should be abundantly clear by now that Gonja is and has been a state in which the use of force is an intrinsic part of the political tradition. This is true whether or not the odds were in favor of the initiator. Numerous examples have been cited above of instances when Gonja leaders took deliberately bold actions to promote the fortunes of members of their own *kabrunah.* On the one hand, we see an extraordinary willingness to take risks. The ultimate expression of this fearlessness was the deliberate suicide of Gonja leaders who were destined for defeat, among them, Yagbumwura Safo I (1832), Wasipewura Kankranfu (1844), and Bolewura Pontomporon II (1895). On the other hand, there was an almost paradoxical willingness of other Gonja leaders under similar circumstances in which they were outmanned to seek external support. These leaders were quite prepared to surrender autonomy to an outside polity in order to gain supremacy within the state or division. The extreme case was Kongwura 'Abdallah who sought help from Samori in 1895. However, Kusawguwura 'Abd al 'Mumin did the same in 1844 in accepting the paramountcy, as did Kpembewura Nakwa and Wasipewura Safo in 1751–52 when they reached an accommodation with Asante, thereby retaining their divisional skins.

These differing responses might be likened to the images found in the praise names, *pontonporon* and *koko.* Those who deferred did so because they recognized the strength and greatness of external polities, their "pontonporonesque" qualities. They relied upon them so that they in turn could be the strongest among Gonjas. Those who were defiant, like the *koko,* continued in their quest as long as necessary until either their entire *kabrunah* disappeared or they succeeded. The long struggle of the members of the Kanyase *kabrunah* to return to leadership in the Kpembe division illustrates that such determination can continue over the course of two centuries if necessary. These qualities constitute one aspect of Gonja political functioning which helps to account for the survival of the people and their state for over four centuries in a region that is physically harsh and which has been subject to external control for extended periods of time. These two outlooks have constituted one of many factors shaping Gonja history, particularly in relation to Asante.

The initial Asante incursions which led to treaties and tribute, namely, Safo's conquest of Kpembe and Wasipe in 1751–52, may be understood in the light of economic and political forces as well as those outlined above.

The immediate effect of these actions was to reinforce a political split which occurred in the early 18th century, namely, the effective withdrawal of the Kpembe and Wasipe divisions under the leadership of the sons of Lanta from the Gonja state. This was in response to the success of Lanta's grandson, 'Abbas, both in taking the paramountcy and in placing members of his father's *kabrunah* over divisions throughout much of the rest of the state. By agreeing to Asante overrule, Kpembewura Nakwa and Wasipewura Safo I were securing an ally which would ensure that their *mbunah* would not be removed from leadership in their own divisions at the hands of members of 'Abbas' *kabrunah.* There were other benefits as well, for over the next 70 years Asante increasingly shifted trade from the forest to and through the Kpembe and Wasipe divisions.

This policy weakened western and central Gonja, which were controlled by members of 'Abbas' *kabrunah.* A series of conflicts originating in this region occurred during the first four decades of the 19th century, each of which was essentially a challenge to the ability of Asante to exclude the region from trade. Those Gonjas who collaborated with Asante were from segments of *mbunah* which commanded weak internal support in their quest for divisional office. The latter were quite prepared to send tribute to Kumase and to act as Asante's outlying garrisons in return for security in their positions as divisional and national leaders and for assistance when attacked. In retrospect, one might suggest that those in western and central Gonja who collaborated were prepared to accept a Gonja which was essentially a "neutral zone" through which trade should not pass, from which labor would flow south, and in which Dyula Muslims would play a minor role as functionaries of the Gonja and Asante states. Those who opposed Asante during the 19th century acted as if Gonja should be a productive region, capable of sypplying the needs of Dyula Muslim traders plying the west–east routes from Gyaman, Kong, and Buna to Hausa, and traveling the north–south routes as well. The role of Dyula Muslims in such a Gonja was a vital one, for they would be traders, hosts, scholars, and advisers. In such a Gonja only the uncooperative captives would be exported, for as many as could be retained usefully were employed in farming, trading, etc. by members of the royal, Nyamasi, and Dyula Muslim estates (Haight, 1984).

The latter sort of Gonja existed only briefly, during the last quarter of the 19th century, and it could not be sustained in the face of the Sofa invasion—itself the fruition of bitterness among Gonja leaders during the first four decades of the 19th century. One might suggest that in a state where extremes of behavior are valued, continuity is impossible to maintain. Asante, thus, might be said to have contributed to a long period of prosperity in Kpembe and Wasipe, to a period of sparseness in western and central Gonja, and ultimately to an exacerbation of existing tensions within Gonja society which facilitated the great disaster at the end of the 19th century. Perhaps it is fitting that within four decades of that low point, Gonja was reconstituted as a unified state for the first time since 1711–12. Significantly, within the following decade a delegation of Gonjas in Kumase petitioned the Asantehene to appoint a headman under his authority since the Yagbumwura and all Gonjas had been his subjects previously (Wilks, 1975: 279). During the 1970s, Bolewura (later Yagbumwura) Safo II spoke fondly of ties to Asante when we met to discuss Gonja history, and well he might, since he was a direct descendant of Bolewura Safo I who was the first western Gonja leader to accept Asante support in return for political office. Even to this day Gonjas continue to relate to Asante as *pontonporon* or to themselves as *koko.*

NOTES

1. Interview with Hawa, 17 Aug. 1969, p. 107, *in* Islam in Bole in the 1890s (mimeo), Program of African Studies, Northwestern Univ.

2. Arabic Manuscript Collection (hereafter AMC), Inst. of African Studies, Univ. of Ghana, IASAR/22.

3. National Archives of Ghana (hereafter NAG), Accra, ADM 56/1/201: statement 25 July 1930.

4. NAG, Accra, ADM 56/1/201.

5. NAG, Accra, ADM 56/1/201.

6. Haight, fieldnotes: interview with Gbuipewura

Takora, New Gbuipe, 3 Feb. 1973; interview with S. K. Mahama, Bole, 25 Mar. 1973.

7. AMC, Inst. of African Studies, Univ. of Ghana, IASAS/22, Nsumankwa Stool History.

8. Haight, fieldnotes: interview with Gbuipewura Takora, New Gbuipe, 3 Feb. 1973.

9. AMC, Inst. of African Studies, Univ. of Ghana, IASAS/22, Nsumankwa Stool History.

10. NAG, Accra, ADM 56/1/201.

CHAPTER 7. AN ASANTE *KUDUO* AMONG THE FRAFRA OF NORTHERN GHANA

Timothy F. Garrard

ABSTRACT

This paper is intended as a small contribution to our knowledge of Asante relations with the savanna peoples. It concerns the Frafra of northern Ghana and, in particular, the recent discovery of an Asante cast brass vessel (*kuduo*) in their territory.

INTRODUCTION

The Frafra live in dispersed settlements in a compact, densely populated area of the savanna. Most live within 20 miles of Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region of Ghana, and a few live across the border in Burkina Faso. They are a predominantly agricultural people who today number more than 300,000. Their language has four distinct dialects (Farfari, Nankam, Talni, and Nabt), and is closely related to that of the Mossi to the north and the Mamprussi to the south. The name Frafra is derived from *fara fara,* a polite form of greeting. Despite reports to the contrary, this term was in use in precolonial times, though strictly speaking it then designated only the central dialect group as distinguished from the three peripheral dialect groups (Nankani, Talense, and Nabdam). In this century the name Frafra has increasingly been used to designate the people as a whole, irrespective of dialect groups. Many Frafra now use it as a convenient term in this wider sense, although at the same time they continue to distinguish each dialect group by its own name.

Historically the Frafra appear to have been both stateless and acephalous until well into the 18th century. The Mamprussi made sporadic raids into their territory, but no closer relationship was established until the reign of Atabea (ca. 1700–40/41), one of the more powerful Mamprussi kings. Following a successful campaign, Atabea came to regard Frafra territory as an outlying province of the Mamprussi state, and toward the end of his reign began to install a few of his sons and retainers as chiefs among the Frafra. This process was continued by his successors, who regarded the northern boundary of the Mamprussi empire as coterminous with the southern boundary of Mossi.

For well over a century the Frafra remained technically within the Mamprussi state. In terms of political control this meant little or nothing, for the Frafra had an independent spirit and were not amenable to being ruled or governed in the conventional sense. However, the Mamprussi king was widely recognized as their distant overlord and the source from which their chiefs derived *nam,* valid spiritual authority. These chiefs were not so much rulers as rich entrepreneurs, who maintained themselves from the proceeds of petty warfare, extortion, cattle theft, the levying of caravan tolls, and even legitimate trade. Their increasing numbers among the Frafra in the late 18th and 19th centuries suggest that this period saw a steady increase in caravan trade.

That caravans should have been attracted to the district is not surprising. Lying midway between Mossi and Mamprussi, it was more fertile than either, and large quantities of crops and livestock were produced. The large Frafra population (outnumbering the Mamprussi by four to one) constituted an important market in which the caravans could buy and sell. One consequence of this trade was a proliferation of craft industries, which doubtless expanded to meet the needs of the caravans. To this day the Frafra area has remarkable numbers of craftsmen—blacksmiths, brass-casters,

leatherworkers, potters, basket weavers, cloth weavers, carvers of flutes, and makers of bows and arrows. These artisans have a well-deserved reputation as the most skillful in northern Ghana.

By virtue of their relatively large and dense population the Frafra were able to preserve a great measure of independence. They suffered little from slave raids, being sufficiently strong to rout most attackers. Islam made no inroads among them before the present century; there were no converts and no mosques. While nominal allegiance was owed to the Mamprussi king, the latter exercised no real political control. Nor were the Frafra ever subject to Asante, for their land lay beyond the northernmost limit of Asante jurisdiction.

In precolonial times the Frafra did not engage in long-distance caravan trade, and rarely traveled more than a few miles. According to traditional accounts, it was hazardous even to visit the nearby markets of Kasena and Mamprussi. Before the present century, it is said, no Frafra ever traveled as far south as Gonja or Dagomba, at least voluntarily, and Kumase would have remained unknown. Such contact as the Frafra had with the outside world was therefore limited almost exclusively to the trade caravans which arrived in their territories.

The Asante, so far as is known, likewise sent no traders, diplomats, or administrators to the Frafra district, and exercised no jurisdiction over it. In these circumstances it would seem, at first sight, that there was no direct contact of any significance between the Asante and Frafra in precolonial times.

Such were my own general thoughts when, five years ago, I began conducting research among the Frafra. Those thoughts were rudely disturbed when, in January 1984, I found among the treasured heirlooms of a Frafra family a well-preserved brass *kuduo,* a sacred ritual vessel of Akan manufacture. The remainder of this chapter considers the circumstances of the find, and its implications for our understanding of Asante-Frafra relations.

THE AKAN BRASS *KUDUO*

The discovery was made in the Frafra district of Yorogo, which lies a few miles north of Bolgatanga and immediately south of Bongo. I was engaged in recording the family histories of all brass-casters in the district, and on one of these visits was directed to a farmstead called Alumam Yiri, the house of Alumam. This person was described to me as one of the more important Yorogo casters of the 19th century, and in his house I met several of his descendants. They readily gave me the family genealogy and some details of their history.

In outline, the family history was not remarkable. Abanga, the first-named ancestor, settled at Yorogo. Neither he nor his son was a caster, but their descendants (who came to be known as Abangabisi or "children of Abanga") later supplied many brass-casters at Yorogo. The first of these was Abanga's grandson Alumam, who to judge from the genealogy was born about 1830. Alumam became a caster as a young man, probably in the 1850s, and continued to work until his death about 1890, shortly before the arrival of the British. He was succeeded as caster by his second son Azangbo (ca. 1860–1930), in whose lifetime Yorogo became a major casting center.

While narrating these facts my informants added a remark that Alumam had also been a "famous carver of statues." This was something of a surprise, for the Frafra are not noted as wood sculptors; only a very few masks are attributed to them, including one from the Nankana settlement of Tungu (Voltz, 1976: fig. 57, p. 238). When I asked the nature of Alumam's statues, however, I was told that they were human figures, and the family offered to show them to me.

Three objects were now brought from the room in which the ancestral heirlooms were kept. Two of these were wooden statuettes, male and female, constituting a pair. They are finely carved in a style reminiscent of Mossi or Gurunsi work from Burkina Faso. Their faces have vertical scarifications, and the female's lip has a small hole for the insertion of a straw (a fashion obsolete among the Frafra for the past 50 years). The female wears an iron neck-ring, while the male is dressed in a small cap and gown of handspun white cotton.

It was said that Alumam carved these statues to represent himself and his wife, and that

Fig. 7-1. Heirlooms of the caster Alumam of Yorogo: a pair of wooden statuettes and an Akan brass casket *kudou.*

they had been kept in the family since his time. This can be believed, for they are old and well worn, and both have lost parts of their limbs due, it is said, to the collapse many years ago of the room in which they were stored.

Fig. 7-2. Details of the carved statuettes and Akan *kuduo.*

But while the carvings were remarkable, I was unprepared for the object that accompanied them. This was a lidded container of cast brass which the family called *nyogom laa,* "brass bowl" (see figs. 7-1, 7-2). The family claimed that it, too, had belonged to Alu-

mam, and one member asserted that Alumam had made it. Despite this, the vessel is evidently not a Frafra work but a typical example of an Akan casket *kuduo.* It lacks the handle and clasp but is otherwise in good condition. One small casting flaw in the side has been carefully filled with lead, a form of repair characteristic of the Akan but not of the Frafra.

This *kuduo* is a plain example of the type, lacking fine decorative details. One suspects that it was made for a client of modest means rather than a wealthy chief. To judge from its style it may be the product of an Asante workshop. While not a modern casting, its condition and appearance suggest that it is of no great age, and one may not be far wrong in regarding it as an Asante casting of the 19th century.

The three objects apparently served no ritual purpose, and they have not been sacrificed on. They are said to be used for display only, and kept as family heirlooms "for memory of Alumam." The *kuduo* is used as a storage container for the clothes of the male figure, and as a receptacle for money.

These relics are unique, for no *kuduo* has been recorded in northern Ghana, and wooden statues were not previously known among the Frafra.[1] They have been in the family a very long time. Alumam Agere (born about 1908, a great-grandson of the caster Alumam) says he has seen them since his earliest childhood, and they have always been known as Alumam's property. Since Alumam was born around 1830, the figures representing himself and his wife were presumably carved not earlier than the 1850s. The *kuduo,* as is suggested in this paper, may have come into his possession about 1850.

SPECULATING ON THE ORIGINS OF THE *KUDUO*

How could Alumam have obtained such a *kuduo* in the precolonial period? He could not have acquired it in the Akan area, for according to the family he never traveled beyond Frafra territory. This is not surprising, for it was unthinkable for any Frafra to travel south before the arrival of the British in 1897; such a person would risk being kidnapped and sold as a slave.

No other member of the family is likely to have acquired the *kuduo* in the south. The first to visit the Akan area was Alumam's grandson Ania, who went to Kumase in the 1920s. By that time, as Alumam Agere confirms, the *kuduo* was already in the family's possession.

With these possibilities eliminated, it is clear that Alumam must have obtained the *kuduo* in the Frafra district. Is it then possible that it was carried by Asante merchants who traded it to the Frafra? It is known that from the early 19th century the Asante had fairly regular contact with Mamprussi, which lies immediately to the south of Frafra. Bowdich heard in 1817 that Asante caravans were passing to Gambaga and even as far as Mossi; he also learned that some Asante had personal knowledge of the Mamprussi kingdom, which was "the boundary of the Ashantee authority" (Bowdich, 1819: 179; 1821: 2, 6). Dupuis was likewise told that the Asante sometimes traveled with Muslim guides to Gambaga, Yendi, and even Wagadugu ("Aughoa") in order to buy shea butter (Dupuis, 1824: XC, CVII–CVIII). The Asantehene dispatched gifts to the Ya Na, the Mogho Naba, and other savanna kings (Dupuis, 1824: 157; Koelle, 1854: 6). Yet despite the reference to Wagadugu, it seems that the Asante usually did not go beyond Gambaga, and the few who proceeded farther north to Mossi need not have crossed Frafra territory, for there were alternative routes. My Frafra informants, who included several near-centenarians, were unanimous that trade between Asante and Frafra had never occurred in precolonial times. The Kambonse, as the Asante were called, had a bad reputation. They were greatly feared as musketeers and slave raiders, and it was said that an Asante who showed his face in Frafra territory would have been set on and killed. It is thus highly improbable that any Asante was able to engage in peaceful trade among the Frafra in the 19th century.

If the Asante did not trade directly, is it possible that the *kuduo* was carried by a Mossi or Hausa caravan traveling from the south? Despite late 19th-century reports which portray the Frafra as a turbulent people hostile to caravans, there is evidence of considerable long-distance trade through the area. As many as nine recognized caravan routes passed from north to south across Frafra land, compared to only three or four in Bulsa and a similar

number in Kusasi. There were good reasons why the Frafra district attracted such trade: it had a large agricultural population who were willing to barter to the passing caravans livestock, poultry, grain, hides, mats, baskets, shea butter, and other produce, as well as an occasional slave.

Among the articles traded by the caravans were brass rods, from which the Frafra casters made bracelets and other ornaments. European brass pans were also widely sold in the savanna. In the 1840s there were only three or four lineages of casters at work among the Frafra, but half a century later the number had risen to almost 30, and there was a considerable demand for brass. In these circumstances is it conceivable that a Mossi or Hausa trader obtained a brass *kuduo,* in Asante or Salaga, for the purpose of barter with a Frafra caster?

The possibility seems remote. Akan *kuduo* were not, so far as we know, mass-produced for sale in the marketplace or for export beyond the Akan area; they were costly prestige items produced on commission for wealthy Akan clients. Certainly they were too costly to have served as scrap metal for the savanna casters. A caravan might conceivably have carried one of these vessels as a gift from the Asantehene to some savanna king, but in such a case it would scarcely have been traded to a Frafra. The *kuduo* from Yorogo is in any event not of sufficiently fine quality to have been a royal gift. On balance, therefore, it seems unlikely that Alumam acquired his *kuduo* through trade.

There remains one other possibility: that the vessel was an item of loot seized by the Frafra in warfare. In considering this we may review briefly the little that is known about military contact between the Frafra and the Asante. So far as is known, the Asante never ventured as far north as Frafra territory in the 18th century, though they conducted military campaigns in Gonja, Dagomba, and Nanumba. Traditions recorded at Gambaga and Walewale, towns only a few miles south of the Frafra area, indicate that in the first decade of the 19th century an Asante army came to Mamprussi to get slaves.[2] There is, however, no evidence that the army entered the Frafra area at this time.

Frafra territory lay little more than 250 miles north of Ejura, the nearest town in metropolitan Asante, and this distance was not an insuperable obstacle to an Asante army. Colonel Northcott observed in 1899 (p. 17) that, "in listening to the native accounts of their tribal traditions, perhaps the most remarkable fact is the constant reference to the far-reaching power possessed by the kings of Ashanti before they suffered their first reverse at our hands [in 1874]. Their slave-catching area extended to Gurunsi, and the intermediate countries were content to buy immunity from indiscriminate raiding by punctual payment of an annual toll of human beings." The reference is to the time of the Asantehene Kwaku Dua I (1834–67), in whose reign the first contact between Asante and Frafra occurred.

Between 1841 and 1844 Kwaku Dua's army conducted a fiercely fought campaign in Gonja. Despite heavy losses the army was victorious, and it returned to Kumase in June 1844.[3] Resident commissioners (doubtless supported by Asante troops) were then stationed in the main Gonja towns, and the Gonja were required to supply a thousand slaves each year (Braimah, 1970: 32). Rattray's informants referred to this episode when they stated that Kwaku Dua "made war against the Northern Territories for the purpose of getting slaves" (Rattray, 1929: 174).

These slaves were mostly obtained among the Sisaala, Bulsa, Kasena, and other peoples living north of the Gonja border. About 1846–47, for instance, two Bulsa men, Atim and Adjumano, were seized and sold into slavery; they told the linguist Koelle that they had been captured by "the Kambon, or in pl. Kambenza . . . musketeers . . . Asantes come to war with the Guresa" (Koelle, 1854: 7). From this it appears that Asante troops were participating in the raids if not directing them.

At this time factions in Gonja made sporadic attempts to rebel, and some memory of this strife persisted into this century. In 1930 five elderly men from Wa deposed that an army of Kwaku Dua had once pursued a rebellious Gonja force into the Navrongo district, i.e., Kasena and Frafra territory. This happened in the childhood of two of the oldest informants, presumably about 1850.[4] Cardinall (1920: 41) was told that the Asante chased the Frafra north and left one of their

own men at Zeko, a Frafra district in Upper Volta, just north of the present Ghana border.

It was apparently on this occasion that the Asante raided Bongo, a Frafra settlement 9 miles north of Bolgatanga.[5] Bongo immediately adjoins Yorogo, and is only three miles from Alumam's farmstead. At this time Alumam would have been about 20 years old, an age at which he would be expected to take up arms against an invading force. Could he have obtained the *kuduo* on this occasion?

It is known that Asante armies traveled with a supply of gold dust, weights, and scales (Boyle, 1874: 93). Their gold was stored in a variety of receptacles—chests, stoneware jars, or brass *kuduo*. Asante troops who entered the Frafra area around 1850 may thus have carried a *kuduo* among their equipment, and one would expect such a vessel to be of a plain and utilitarian kind. In the heavily populated Frafra district the Asante would have met stiff opposition. Baggage may have been lost in the skirmishing, and a *kuduo* could thus have fallen into Frafra hands. The truth cannot be known, for the origin of Alumam's *kuduo* has long been forgotten; but it is tempting to conclude that this vessel is a trophy from the Asante raid on Bongo.

NOTES

1. Neither are the Mamprussi known for wood sculpture, but in July 1984 I found four locally carved twin figures (called *jaa,* pl. *jaase*) in the Mamprussi village of Gbeduuri.

2. See Levtzion, 1965, p. 106—interviews with the Imams of Gambaga and Walewale, 1964.

3. Letter from missionary Chapman, Kumase, 21 June 1844, in Methodist Missionary Society archives, "Gold Coast Correspondence," Box 260, file 1844. I am most grateful to Dr. Larry Yarak for making this material available to me.

4. Statement of Yarona and four others, enclosed in letter from Ag. Commissioner, Northern Province, Navrongo to the Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories, 25 July 1930, in National Archives of Ghana, Accra, ADM 56/1/201, Wa District Native Affairs.

5. Information given by the chief of Bongo, 13 Oct. 1939, in Informal Dialry, Zuarungu, 1938–39, National Archives of Ghana, Tamale, C.312.

CHAPTER 8. POWER OR PRESTIGE? MUSLIMS IN 19TH CENTURY KUMASE

David Owusu-Ansah

ABSTRACT

Europeans visiting Kumase in the 19th century reported that Muslims in the Asante capital had great influence with the administration. Thomas Bowdich, an agent of the British Company of Merchants, for example, wrote about the ubiquitous Muslim leaders who were consulted by the king on matters of war and foreign policy. Despite such reports, it is argued here that Muslims in Asante did not enjoy political power. In fact, their influence with various Asante kings fluctuated throughout the 19th century until their position became traditionalized through incorporation by the middle of the century. To be sure, the Asante political elites were too aware of their interests to allow Muslims to offset that political balance. For this reason, the Asante *ahenfo* (chiefly class) jealously guarded their constitutional rights, thus preventing the Muslims from serving in any of the Kumase legislative councils. Consequently, the spread of Islam was effectively controlled.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the basic pattern of Asante political organization remained relatively unchanged. Each town or village was largely a self-governing entity. It was presided over by a chief, *Ohene* or *Odikro,* and a council of elders, *mpaninfo,* representatives of the various clans,[1] *mmusua,* into which society was vertically divided. However, in Kumase, the capital of Asante, the structure of government was undergoing radical changes which Wilks (1966b: 215–232) has described as "bureaucratization" directed at improving the quality of government. This administrative reorganization was needed as a result of over 50 years of continuous military expansion. Aimed at extending the Asante government apparatus to control areas far from the metropolitan region and to regulate spheres of activity previously untouched by central government, the changes required new managerial resources beyond those hitherto provided by the hereditary aristocracy. This reorganization effected the transition from policies of expansion to those of incorporation. In fact, by the end of the 18th century, administrative agencies had been developed to facilitate the political incorporation of the many dependencies, and civilian officials progressively replaced military commanders as administrators (Wilks, 1975: 129–130).

Arguing that Wilks overextended Max Weber's category of "formal-rational bureaucratic domination" to the case of Asante, Yarak (1983: 173–282) suggested that the administrative innovations initiated in Kumase during the second half of the 18th century were not intended to "transform the executive branch of government [into a] professionalized instrument of national policy." The administrative innovations, Yarak argued, should at best be described as an extension of the king's "patriachal authority," that is, his authority over his household, or *gyaase,* into the imperial domain. Yarak, however, agrees with Wilks that certain administrative innovations were instituted which allowed recruitment into, and upward mobility within, certain areas of government on the basis of merit. An anonymous reporter referring in the 1880s to the system adopted a century earlier wrote: "The Ashantee acknowledge the advantages of merging every virtue, by enlisting among the nobility any person who distinguishes himself in the patriotic display of every virtue."[2] But as Bowdich (the representative of the Company of Merchants) observed in the second decade of the 19th

century, such appointments into the Asante administration were viewed as the gift of the king, aimed at increasing his leverage in the Asante council. Concerning this, Bowdich (1819: 246) recorded: "[The king] cautiously extends his prerogative, and takes every opportunity of increasing the number of secondary captains, by dignifying the young men brought up about his person, and still retaining them in his immediate service."

The establishment of a nonhereditary administrative system in Asante challenged the old constitution which guaranteed to all *amanhene* (rulers of states) and the Kumase *nsafohene* (war chiefs) political influence in both the capital and the provinces. Not surprisingly, Asantehene Opoku Ware I (ca. 1720–50), who first essayed administrative reforms, was fiercely opposed by those who preferred the status quo (Hagan, 1971: 43–62; cf. Wilks, 1966b). But by the end of the 18th century significant reforms had been successfully implemented by Opoku Ware's successors. Some of the agencies created or modified included the *Bata Fekuo* (royal trade company) and the *Nsumankwaa* (court physicians). As late as 1844, the *Manwere* was created to augment the existing administrative units (McCaskie, 1980a: 189–208). While many persons "who distinguished themselves in the patriotic display of virtues" were enlisted into the evolving administration, it was the inclusion of Muslims in the Asante government which caught the eyes of many observers of the political system.

Asante contacts with Muslims date as far back as the 1730s, the result of Asante northward expansions. To be sure, the early phases of Asante expansions were predominantly military. These campaigns, which destroyed the independent powers of Asante's neighbors, occurred for the most part in the half century after 1700. By the time Asantehene Opoku Ware I came to the throne (ca. 1720), Asante forces had already crossed the Tano River, extending the state's hegemony to the immediate northern territories. Takyiman, an important town on the northern trade route about 70 miles from Kumase, was taken in 1722–23. Banda, a pluralistic society comprising a chiefly Nafana class and a Muslim Dyula trading class was first subjugated by Asante forces about 1730. Gyaman, to the west of Asante, with a large Muslim population, was brought under Asante control probably in the decade 1730–40, and in the next decade Gonja and Dogbon in the north were subjugated by Asante forces (Dupuis, 1824: 230). This northern expansion brought Muslims into Asante on a large scale. Wilks (1962: 15–20) mentions that even though those territories conquered by Asante to her immediate north were administered by non-Muslim rulers, they held large Muslim communities. Tradition, as recorded in *Kitab Ghanja* and later referred to by Reindorf (1895: 87–90), has it that both Gyaman and Gonja signed peace arrangements written in Arabic with Asante (Wilks et al., 1986, chap. 4).[4] Even though no such document has yet been discovered, the information suggests that the services of Muslim scribes were available to Asante during at least the latter part of Opoku Ware's reign.

The early thrust of Asante to the northwest was intended to secure control of the southern section of the ancient trade route to the Niger with its important Dyula commercial center of Bighu.[5] Great economic benefits were realized by controlling the flow of trade between Kumase and the northern trading centers through taxation and trade restrictions (Wilks, 1975: 261–271). Other important benefits stemmed from the contact with Muslim populations in itself. From the beginning, as the evidence suggests, Muslims were accorded a special status not shared by other Asante subjects. For example, as early as the late 18th century, Muslims captured in war by Asante were neither put to death nor sold into slavery, one or the other being the fate of non-Muslim prisoners. According to Dupuis (1824: 98–99, 246–247), the British Consul to Kumase in 1819, these Muslims were deployed in the "eastern division of the empire, particularly to Bouromy [i.e., Bron] on the Volta" where perhaps they were used for the defense of Asante frontiers. Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame (reign 1804–23) was quoted as saying of the deployment of these Muslim captives that "if they fell in battle, their blood was upon their own head," an indication that Asante authorities feared that mistreatment of Muslim prisoners might incur the displeasure of Allah, who would punish the nation with misfortunes (Dupuis,

1824: 99n).[6] Some of the Muslim captives were resettled in other parts of Asante as household slaves or freemen (Wilks, 1975: 132).[7] Apart from the process of military expansion which brought large Muslim populations under Asante control, the state saw advantages in encouraging the growth of Muslim communities within Asante proper, and even in the capital itself. The process of natural migration, resettlement, and transplantation led to the emergence of Muslim communities throughout the Asante empire.

The first corps of Muslims known to have been formally incorporated into the Asante political administration were holy men who were brought from Mampon to Kumase when Osei Kwame was enstooled as Asantehene in 1777. Tradition has it that upon the death of Asantehene Osei Kwadwo, the Oyoko-Bremanhene Nana Ntoo Boroko succeeded in organizing strong support for the enstoolment as Asantehene of the reigning Kokofuhene, Kyei Kwame. Mobilizing his forces, the Mamponhene Nana Atakora Kwame marched upon the capital. He brought with him the young Osei Kwame whom he enstooled as Asantehene after putting the Oyoko-Bremanhene Nana Ntoo Boroko to death (Agyeman-Duah, 1977: 43–44).

Osei Kwame was the son of the former Mamponhene Nana Safo Kantanka. Evidence from *Kitab Ghanja* and oral traditions recorded from Asante indicate that Nana Safo Kantanka played a significant role in the pacification of eastern and central Gonja in the mid-18th century.[8] He was also known to have been so influenced by Islam that he created at Mampon a special group of Muslims who were subsequently brought to Kumase to protect Osei Kwame with their knowledge of Islamic magic. These Muslims were incorporated into the king's household or *gyaasewa* and they worked side-by-side with the *nsumankwaafo* (court physicians).[9] Oral and written traditions indicate that a Muslim community was already in place in Kumase by the end of the 18th century. The community maintained links with other Muslim centers by entertaining traders from the north and by exchanging letters on matters of mutual interest.[10]

The value of the local Muslim community's cultural affinity with the northern provinces, as well as the writing skills of its members, did not escape the notice of the Asante administration. Those assets were gradually harnessed by Asante for its own economic and political purposes. The different roles played by the Muslims in the affairs of Asante in the early 19th century can be reconstructed from the letters among Cod. Arab. CCCII and the eyewitness accounts of those Europeans who visited Kumase during this period. The conclusion drawn from these sources is that, to a considerable extent, the Asante government relied upon both Muslim residents and visitors to Kumase to mediate its relations with its northerly dependents. Muhammad al-Ghamba', who arrived in Kumase around 1804 and served as the head of the Muslim community in the Asante capital during the second decade of the 19th century, became an important figure in the Kumase administration (Bowdich, 1819: 240; Wilks et al., 1986, chap. 8).[11] Al-Ghamba', better known to European visitors to Kumase as Baba, described himself to Dupuis in 1820 as "a member of the king's council in the affairs relating to the believers of Serem [the northern grasslands] and Dagomba" (Dupuis, 1824: 97). Other Muslims who migrated to Kumase and achieved prominence in the administration of the state during this period included Abu Bakr Ture (with a *nisba* familiar as Toure). He may have been a Dyula or Hausa Muslim with long residency in Gonja before moving to Kumase (Wilks, 1966a: 320–321). Muhammad Kamaghatay, described in Cod. Arab. CCCII as the son of a former Imam of Gonja, also took residence in the Asante capital.[12] Muhammad Kamaghatay functioned for the Kumase administration as a liason between eastern and western Gonja (Wilks et al., 1986, chap. 8). There was also Abu Bakr Bamba, a young Muslim brought to Kumase in 1773–74 after the Banda war, who was appointed junior counselor in the capital and was later charged with the affairs relating to Banda (Wilks, 1975: 246–247). Other Muslims in Kumase functioned as scribes and were assigned the responsibility of producing annals for the king (Wilks, 1975: 344–353). The king (i.e., Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame, reign 1804–23), it is recorded, consulted these Muslims "on many important issues of interest to the state and never engaged in any

warlike enterprise without their society" (Dupuis, 1824: cxxv). T. B. Freeman, the Wesleyan missionary stationed at Cape Coast, who visited Kumase twice between 1839 and 1844, as well as those Europeans who came to Asante after him, observed a continuous Muslim presence in Kumase (Freeman, 1843: 5–15; Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875, passim). In fact, the amulets they produced were in high demand from all sectors of Asante society since these objects were perceived as efficacious for various ends (Owusu-Ansah, 1983). It will be demonstrated later in this paper that Muslim leaders in Kumase were well situated to influence certain Asante policies. Therefore, the question to be addressed is: Were the Muslims able to translate their influence with the Asante authorities into political power? This question will better be answered when the process of decision making in 19th century Asante is examined.

THE DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE IN ASANTE

With the formation of the *Asanteman* (Asante Nation), the seat of government was located in Kumase (Tordoff, 1962: 399–417). All the *amanhene,* whom Rattray described as *abrempon,* became *ahenfo* of the Asante nation with the Asantehene presiding over the affairs of state.[13] The *ahenfo* in the outlying territories were constitutionally obliged to call on the king in Kumase, at least once a year during the *Odwira* festival, to reaffirm their allegiance to him (Bowdich, 1819: 27; Bowdich, 1821a: passim; Hagan, 1968: 1–33). The same constitution granted the Asantehene supreme judicial and military powers; appeals from the court of the *amanhene* were received by his court in Kumase, and the *amanhene* were required to provide him with troops for the defense of the nation. Under the constitution, the *amanhene* retained most of their preunion autonomy—"palatine privileges," as Bowdich (1819: 256) called them. These heads of the states held absolute title to their lands, which they had acquired themselves; their territories were not bestowed as gifts from the king. They also commanded their own armies. More importantly, their subject villages owed them the same judicial and military obligations as they themselves owed to the Asantehene (Tordoff, 1962). Possession of large tracts of land and control over subject populations endowed the *amanhene* with political power in Asante. Even though the Asantehene was more than *primus inter pares* in his relation to the *amanhene* within the supreme legislative body of the nation, the power of the latter in the affairs of the nation was constitutionally secured (Rattray, 1929: 72–80; Busia, 1951; Aidoo, 1977: 1–36).

The supreme decision-making body in Asante is the *Asantemanhyiamu* (litt., the meeting of the Asante nation). Membership in this council is opened to all *amanhene* and certain Kumase *nsafohene* (war chiefs), all the important *akyeame* or counselors, and the Asantehemaa (Queenmother). The meeting is called into session and presided over by the Asantehene.[14] The *Asantemanhyiamu* was constitutionally mandated to meet once a year at the *Odwira* festival, but it was also called into session in cases of national emergencies. In the early 19th century, Robertson (1819: 198–199), a British merchant, observed of its functions: "A senate of Chiefs regulates the affairs of Government, and decides all disputes as a supreme tribunal . . . redress is given agreeably to the determination of a majority of votes. . . . The king, with the consent of the senate, collects and disposes of the national wealth; hence he raises armies, and prompts all other measures." In other words, the *Asantemanhyiamu* was that body which decided on *amansem* (matters of state). The position of individual members of the council on given issues was important since it ultimately affected the policies adopted at such meetings. There was also the "Kumase council" which was responsible for the affairs of the Kumase traditional area. The Asantehene presided over this body as he did the *Asantemanhyiamu.*[15]

Between 1816 and 1820, the Europeans who visited Kumase wrote about the distribution of power within the Asante administration. Even though there was a counselor system in the nation, the name of "Apoko," or Gyaasweahene Opoku Frefre, stood out prominently in the accounts of Huydecoper, Bowdich, Hutchison, Dupuis, and Hutton. Dupuis (1824: 99), for example, learned from the Muslims in the capital that "Amon Koi-

tea" (Bantamahene Amankwaa Tia) was "a man of rank second only to the king, and governed the country as lieutenant or viceroy," while Gyaasewahene Opoku Frefre was described as the "most ferocious chief in the kingdom." Other *ahenfo* who exerted great political power included Adumhene Adum Ata and Asafohene Kwaakye Kofi. All of them were Kumase chiefs. Bowdich (1819: 92) was right to conclude that a "junta" or an inner circle had developed around the king during the second decade of the 19th century. This was the "aristocracy of four" who affected Asante foreign policy more than most *ahenfo* in the nation.[16]

Unlike reports on the distribution of power in Asante in the second decade of the 19th century, major discrepancies exist in the accounts of three Europeans who spent over four years in captivity in Kumase between 1869 and 1874. Kühne was ambiguous: "It has sometimes appeared to him as if the king was quite absolute. . . . At other times the chiefs seemed to have immense power, and even at times the general feelings of the true Ashantee had influence; and he speaks as if this made the problem very confused" (Maurice, 1874: 167). Ramseyer, a coprisoner of Kühne, presented a different account: "The reins of the Ashantee government are not exclusively in the hands of the king, nor does he possess unlimited power, but shares it with a council" (Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875: 305). In contrast, Bonnat (1875: 621), also a prisoner, maintained that: "Ashantee is under a despotic government. Every inhabitant, from the greatest chief to the lowest slave, belongs body and possession to the king and is at mercy of his whims and caprices. . . ."

There is no doubt that the personalities of Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame (reign 1804–23) and Kwaku Duah Panin (1834–67), to some extent, affected political behavior in Kumase. On the whole, however, Wilks (1975: 388) was right in expressing the view that the contradictions between the various accounts were more apparent than real; that while Bonnat was describing the Asantehene in his capacity as head of the executive agencies of the state, Ramseyer and Kühne were concerned with his performance within the council of state.[17]

The Asantehene, as head of the executive agencies of the nation, held the power to veto certain decisions of the *Asantemanhyiamu.* Notwithstanding the king's power, members of this council were constitutionally permitted to express views on matters of state, which included issues of war and peace. Throughout the 19th century, frequent council sessions were necessary to deal with territorial concerns and matters arising from Asante-European relations. Many *amanhene* in the outlying territories, eschewing the inconvenience of attending all sessions, allowed the king to rely increasingly on his Kumase chiefs in determining matters of national interests. Although a few committed *amanhene* in the outlying territories endeavored to attend the extraordinary sessions of the council, no matter how frequently they were scheduled, it is clear that the sheer volume of legislative work had expanded far beyond the capacities of the body (Bowdich, 1819: 95; Freeman, 1886, no. 8: p. 2; no. 17, p. 8; Triulzi, 1969, 1972: 98–111). The inability of the *Asantemanhyiamu* to deal promptly and effectively with the many pressing issues of state, especially during the second decade of the 19th century, was the reason for the prominent position assumed by the Kumase chiefs.

Even though the constitutional rights of the *amanhene* remained intact, under Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame the power of the Kumase chiefs increased at the expense of the outlying *ahenfo.* Possibly, as Wilks suggested, the institution of the *adamfo*—"patron or friend at court"—dates from this period (Wilks, 1966b: 215–232; 1975: 374–476; cf. Rattray, 1929: 93–98). The arrangement was that the *ahenfo* of the outlying territories would only approach the king through their *nnamfo* in Kumase. The latter was usually one of the Kumase *nsafohene* or *akyeame,* who acted as liaison officer between the *ohene* and the Asantehene. Even though the *adamfo* system had been part of Asante court etiquette, ensuring that a person seeking an audience with a chief would be introduced into his presence with the proper formalities, its application in 19th century Kumase no doubt increased the influence of those chiefs with the king. This is not to suggest, however, that the concerns of the outlying *ahenfo* or their constitutional rights were equally overshad-

owed when it came to preserving that political arrangement that guaranteed the mutual interests of the dominant class (Wilks, 1970, passim). It was during this period of heightened political power of the Kumase *nsafohene* within the king's inner circle that Huydecoper, Bowdich, Hutchison, and Dupuis reported on the growing Muslim influence in the Asante capital. T. B. Freeman, Ramseyer, and Kühne, who spent some time in Kumase between 1839 and 1875, confirmed earlier reports on the role of Muslims in Asante. Thus, the manner in which Muslims related to power in 19th century Kumase should be examined.

MUSLIMS IN THE KUMASE ADMINISTRATION

Muslims wielded great political power in a number of non-Muslim societies in West Africa. By trading and traveling, they developed contacts in different communities, and were naturally sought by local rulers as emissaries and as counselors on foreign relations. Due to their skills as readers and scribes, the Muslims were often entrusted with administrative roles (Skinner, 1976). Muhammad al-Ghamba', Abu Bakr Ture, Muhammad Kamaghatay, and Abu Bakr Bamba, as has been already mentioned, served the Asante government; and it is reported that the king consulted these Muslim leaders on a number of foreign policy matters. In 1820, for example, the Kumase Muslim dignitaries were able to influence Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame to negotiate peace with the British, when many of the Kumase *nsafohene* were pressing for war. Regarding this, Muhammad al-Ghamba' told Dupuis (1824: 147–148): "We [the Muslim leaders] have given our opinion to the king in private, that a war will ruin him in the lands of the whites and perhaps your sultan [the king of England] will send a great army to conquer the country [Asante]." In fact, the Asantehene was not the only person the Muslims tried to convince of the need to negotiate peace with the British. Okyeame Kwadwo Adusei Kyakya, one of the most influential counselors in Kumase, was also contacted by Muhammad al-Ghamba' and his party of Muslims (Dupuis, 1824: 152–153). This move was needed, in the opinion of the Muslims, to create broader support in the king's council for the advice they had given the Asantehene. There is no doubt that the Muslims here demonstrated their political maturity and their understanding of the Asante political system; it is not surprising that they were able to influence aspects of Asante foreign policy.

Despite observations of Muslim influence in Kumase in the 19th century, J. Agyeman-Duah has argued that the Muslims could not have had the political leverage to affect the outcome of deliberations. He questioned how people who served as interpreters and secretaries could influence the course of Asante foreign policy.[18] But not all Muslims in the Asante political system functioned as scribes and interpreters. Abu Bakr al-Bamba, and Muhammad al-Ghamba' and his associates were all known to have been consulted by Asante government officials on matters relating to Banda and Serem (the northern grasslands), respectively (Wilks, 1975: 97, 170–171, 246–247).

The very nature of the Kumase administrative structure within which the Muslims functioned seemed to have placed severe limitations on the Muslims' rise to power. From the close of the 18th century, Muslims served the nation under various Kumase chiefs; among them were the Anantahene, Atipinhene, Asemhene, Bantamahene and Gyaasewahene.[19] From the very beginning, Muslims in the Asante administration—whether as medical practitioners or as advisers—were in most cases placed under the supervision of one of the Kumase *nsafohene.* The majority of the Muslims in the Kumase administration belonged to the *gyaasewa* division of the Asantehene. It can thus be interpreted that the Muslims belonged to the broad category of the Asantehene's *nhenkwaa,* or royal servants, whose activities were closely supervised. In 1817, for example, the Muslims who were part of an Asante delegation which carried out negotiations with the British did so under the leadership of Okyeame Kwadwo Adusei Kyakya (Bowdich, 1819: 110–113; Hutton, 1821: 273). Also, the Muslim medical staff recruited into the *gyaasewa* division at about 1778 worked closely with the *Nsumankwaahene.*[20] Despite such supervision, which must have limited the attainment of political power by the Muslims, both Bow-

dich (1819: 49, 146) and Dupuis (1824: 95–98) agree that the Muslim leaders in Kumase were "invested with administrative powers" which entitled them to "a voice in the senate."

Did these Muslims actually participate in the council deliberations on issues affecting the Asante nation or were they present as scribes and observers? One informant commented on this question thus:

> Only important chiefs are members of Asante councils. In the *Asanteman* council, we have the various *amanhene*; and in the Kumase council there are the Kumase chiefs who would have been members of the king's cabinet had Kumase been an independent state. The king is the President of both councils. When issues come up for discussion in council, the king may absent himself to allow free and uninhibited debates. Only the chiefs who have sworn the oath of allegiance to the king could express views in council.[21]

All the *amanhene* and the *fekuo* chiefs of the Kumase division swore an oath of allegiance directly to the Asantehene and thus qualified as full members of the Asante decision-making bodies. They defended their views freely in the legislative assembly. The Muslims, on the other hand, did not take an oath of allegiance to the Asantehene because of their belief in the Qur'ān, and were thus effectively barred from membership in the council. Neither could they enjoy full privileges of sworn chiefs—such as control of territories and land from which they derived revenue—which were the salient ingredients of political power in Asante.[22]

Despite the lack of access to the basic elements of political power in Asante, the Muslims, especially the holy men, were not subjects of the Kumase *nsafohene* under whom they were placed. In fact, those *nsafohene* interviewed in the Asante capital acknowledged that the Muslims under their supervision belonged to the Asantehene. For example, the Asemhene (in his capacity as chief farmer of Kumase), oversaw those Muslims whose duty it was to produce yams for the *Odwira* festival; the Muslim holy men (both the stranger Muslims like Muhammad al-Ghamba' and his associates, and, later in the century, the Asante *Nkramo*)[23] who worked with the Nsumankwaahene were officially charged with the responsibility of using their knowledge of the Qur'ān to protect the Asantehene and those the king designated for such protection.[24] In essence, the Muslims in 19th century Kumase were denied leadership positions as well as political power.

What the Europeans had perceived as Muslim power in Kumase must, therefore, have been due to the public performance of those Muslims whose opinions were occasionally sought by the king. For example, the Muslims provided their Asante overlords with information to judge European intentions. Commenting on Bowdich's visit to Kumase in 1817, M. Biot (1819: 514–529) of the French Royal Institute, Academy of Sciences, wrote:

> Bowdich said he had come from his country to give benefits and knowledge. "This explanation," rejoined the king, "cannot be true. I well see that you are much superior to the Ashantee in industry and the arts; for in the fort at Cape Coast itself, which is only a small establishment, you have many things which we do not know how to make. There exist here, in the interior, a people, those of Kong [former state in the vicinity of Gonja], who are as little civilized relative to us as we are relative to you. They do not know how to make ornaments of gold, or to build comfortable houses, or to weave garments. However, there is not a single one of my Ashantee, even the poorest, who would leave his home for the sole purpose of going to teach the people of Kong. Now, how do you wish to persuade me that it is only for so flimsy a motive that you have left this fine and happy England, that you have crossed a great expanse of sea, made a hard and dangerous journey by land, given up sleeping in a bed (and) enjoying all the sweet things of life, and that finally you have come, to put yourself prisoners in my hands with the risk of losing the head?" The argument was, as one sees, lively enough. It was repeated the next day before the public assembly of the military chiefs; and before Mr. Bowdich was able to respond to it, one of the Moorish ministers rose, approached the king, said some words to him very quietly, after which this prince added, "If such are today the purpose of your nation, why then have you behaved so differently in India?" The young negotiator, [Mr. Bowdich] taken by surprise argued differences in the ways of government [between Asante and India]. . . . This anecdote . . . show[s] that the king of Ashantee was not so badly informed of things that happened outside his kingdom, and

> that he must at least be in a position to give good information of his closer neighbours.

Biot's commentary on Bowdich's experience in Kumase points to an important function of the Muslims for the Asante authorities. The Asantehene and his *ahenfo* relied on the information provided by the Muslims about the outside world to judge the intentions of strangers visiting the Asante capital. Bowdich was quick to attribute his frustrations to what he perceived as ubiquitous Muslim influence within the Kumase administration.

Despite the usefulness of the Muslims' knowledge to the king and the state, they could not initiate changes in the Asante system—this was the responsibility of the Asantehene and his *amanhene.* In fact, the suggestions made by the Muslims to the king were not even binding; they could be adopted, modified, or rejected. Again, those whose views traditionally carried political weight, both in *agyinatuo* (formal private consultations) and in council were the *amanhene,* the *Ohemaa* (Queenmother), and the *abusua mpaninfo* (elders of the clan) (Rattray, 1929, chaps. xi–xiii).

Besides having no political power in Asante, the favorable position of the Muslims was adversely affected, on occasion, by moments of tension and mistrust. Such was the situation in 1818 when Muhammad al-Ghamba' withdrew support from the expeditionary forces fighting in Gyaman on the grounds that his religious obligations prevented him from participating in any military offensive against his coreligionists—the Muslims in the Gyaman army. The Asantehene, it is recorded, felt scorned by his behavior and declared he would have put al-Ghamba' to death had Muhammad not been a holy man (Wilks, 1975: 268). There seems to have been a period of loss of influence by Muslim leaders with the Asantehene following this incident, and concerning this Hutton wrote (1821: 324):

> Since that period [1818] Baba and his associates have lost much of their influence, and it was a long time before the king would be friends with him. Indeed, during my visit at Coomasie, I could not perceive they had half the influence which I should have supposed they had from reading Mr. Bowdich's work. Doubtless, however, they still possess influence to a certain extent; but I never observed them present at any of our meetings, except on public occasions, when they attended with the rest of the people.

The loss of Muslim influence with the king was temporary if one takes into account the reports in Dupuis' work. In fact, two Muslims were appointed to serve as scribes in the Asante delegation that went to the coast in 1820 to negotiate relations with the British (Hutton, 1821: 128–129, 324; Wilks, 1975: 440; McCaskie, 1979). It was not until after the Katamanso war of 1826, during the reign of Asantehene Osei Yaw Akoto (1824–33), that the position of Muslims in Asante changed significantly for the worse for some time.

Tradition, as recorded by Kyerematen (1966: 352), indicates that Osei Yaw Akoto, fearing that his rival Fredua Agyeman (i.e., Kwaku Duah Panin) might be chosen to succeed the late Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame, "seized the stool."[25] Osei Yaw won the support of the "hawkish" branch of the Asante government to be recognized as Asantehene. The new king gained further stature when Asante forces defeated the British in 1824 at Asamankow. This is no doubt convinced Osei Yaw Akoto that Asante differences with the Europeans could be resolved through armed struggle and not by negotiations, as the "peace party" led by Okyeame Kwadwo Adusei Kyakya had argued.[26]

Following the 1824 success, Asantehene Osei Yaw Akoto planned another expedition against the southeastern provinces on the grounds that they had aided the Fantes in previous wars with Asante (Reindorf, 1895: 200–201). It made no difference to Osei Yaw if the Europeans on the coast were to be drawn into this war, but he had commenced his reign "by an edict against the British" accusing them of "perfidy, infraction of treaties, violations of public faith, treachery, cruelty, etc." (Dupuis, 1824: 215). Despite opposition from certain Asante officials, including Dwabenhene Kwasi Boaten and Okyeame Kwadwo Adusei Kyakya, who were adherents of Osei Tutu Kwame's policy of continual negotiations with the European powers on the coast, and despite the predictions of the Tano and Dente priests as well as the Muslims that a new war would end in Asante defeat, Osei Yaw lobbied and gained sufficient support

from his counselors to launch a campaign in the southeast (Reindorf, 1895: 200; Djang, 1926: 69). In July/August of 1826, Asante found itself opposed by a coalition of coastal people and the joint forces of the Danish and British mercantile establishments (Reindorf, 1895: 196–213).

The 1826 engagement which took place at Katamanso on the Accra plains ended with a severe Asante defeat (Reindorf, 1895: 194, 203; Wilks, 1975: 183).[27] Property losses to Asante were great. There were also high troop casualties. The British, for example, estimated the booty at over 500,000 pounds sterling,[28] while over 5000 Asante soldiers were killed and many captured by the enemy.

The political mood in Kumase after the Katamanso defeat effected changes in the Asante administration, including the relationship between the king and the Muslim leaders. An informant commented on the situation in Kumase following Katamanso in these words:

> Asante lost many people in this battle more than in any prior engagement. And it is said that after the war, the king could not come to Kumase but he stayed at Saawua under the pretext of treating his wounded. It is even said that when he came to Kumase, people were laughing at him so he eliminated many of his opponents who had opposed the war for fear that he might be removed from office. He also thought that the Muslim holy men had worked magic against him for his defeat, so he arrested many of them on various charges of conspiracy and barred them from the palace.[29]

Osei Yaw Akoto acted swiftly to confront those in the Asante council who had objected to the expedition, fearing that they would capitalize on his defeat and force him to abdicate. These included Dwabenhene Kwasi Boaten and Okyeame Kwadwo Adusei Kyakya. In fact, it was Okyeame Kwadwo Adusei Kyakya who initiated proceedings to have Osei Yaw Akoto removed from office; the king reacted by bringing treason charges against him. Okyeame Kwadwo Adusei Kyakya and many of his family were executed in 1829 (Wilks, 1975: 171, 185).

The Muslims in Kumase had developed good working relations with Okyeame Kwadwo Adusei Kyakya, who either headed or was among the leading Asante officials in the delegations in which Muslims served (Dupuis, 1824: 147–148, 152–153; Reindorf, 1895: 189–190). With his death and the banning of the Muslims from entering the palace, their relations with the king reached its lowest point. Many of the Muslim leaders whom Bowdich, Hutchison, Dupuis, and Hutton described as influential in Kumase left the capital. Al-Hajj Abdullah Isaka, Bandahene of Kumase, suggested a different explanation for their departure: "[After Asante lost the war], the Muslims heard that the white man was coming and they did not like the white man to rule over them. So many of them went home [to their countries]."[30] Consequently, many leading Muslim personalities, especially those who served in the *gyaasewa* division and exercised influence on Asante policies in the second decade of the 19th century, left Kumase after the Katamanso fiasco. This certainly affected the political leverage Muslims enjoyed in the Kumase administration in general, and their influence with the king in particular.

Jacob Simons, the Dutch officer from Elmina who was sent to Kumase on a special mission in 1831–32, reported on the "Maraboes," or Muslims, he saw in the Asante capital at the public ceremony held to welcome him.[31] Simons, the son of an Elmina woman and a Dutch official on the Gold Coast, was fluent in the local language and was able to compose a list of the Kumase administrative officials present at the ceremony as they were introduced to him. The location of the "Maraboes" in the crowd at the ceremony, as recorded by Simons, provides a strong argument that even though some Muslims remained in Kumase and probably were associated with the administration, they were not members of the Asantehene's *gyaasewa* unit. This obviously meant a loss of Muslim contact with the king's household—an association which in the past afforded Muslim leaders influence with the palace. It appears that those Muslim leaders who remained in Kumase did not get involved in central government politics until 1839 when Kwaku Dua Panin was Asantehene.

Although Kwaku Dua's election as Asantehene had apparently not been vigorously contested, opposition rapidly developed to his policies. In particular, his conciliatory

overtures toward Dwabenhene Kwasi Boaten, who Asantehene Oseo Yaw Akoto had forced into exile, proved to be a source of discontent (Beecham, 1843: 156–157; Reindorf, 1895: 285–301). Kwaku Dua Panin had entered into a peace arrangement with the Dwabenhene in 1835 to get Kwasi Boaten and his subjects back from exile in Akyem Abuakwa to their home town in Asante. By this arrangement, the Dwabenhene was to receive a grant-in-aid from the Asante treasury for the resettlement of his subjects. Understandably, disapproval was expressed by the Kumase *ahenfo* who, under Asantehene Osei Yaw Akoto, had participated in the military occupation of Dwaben, since Dwabenhene Kwasi Boaten had demanded, as one of the conditions for his return to Asante, the execution of those who led the military expeditions against him in 1831 (Wilks, 1975: 488).

As Wilks has stated, Asantehene Kwaku Dua seriously entertained the Dwabenhene's proposition since it reflected his willingness to "preside over the liquidation of his principal opponents" who constituted, perhaps, the "old guard still basically attached to the imperial values of that period" (Ibid.). These included Gyaasewahene Adu Damte and Bantamahene Apraku. Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin soon brought charges against Bantamahene Apraku for having released, without official authorization, a Wassa chief who had long been under his custody (Beecham, 1841: 92; Wilks, Ibid.). It was during this period that Gyaasewahene Adu Damte organized an abortive palace coup against Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin. John Beecham (1841: 93) of the Wesleyan Missionary Society reported in 1839 that "the chief or bashaw of the Moors" in Kumase was "implicated in this conspiracy" and that he was in chains at the king's palace.[32] It is not certain who "the chief or bashaw of the Moors" was, but it is reasonable to think that he was one of the Muslims Simons observed in Kumase in 1832. Their implication in the abortive palace coup shows that between 1826 and 1839 when the Muslims were barred from the king's court, they managed to maintain relations with those *ahenfo* who were to be purged from the political system by Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin. The ability of the Muslims to sustain relations with such important Kumase *ahenfo* is an indication of their usefulness to the administration. The need to maintain some Muslims in the Kumase government, either as scribes or medicine men, also explains the creation of the Asante *Nkramo Imamate* by Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin in 1844. For the obvious reason of limiting the influence of this Muslim group, Kwaku Dua Panin did not recruit members of the Asante *Nkramofo* from the established Muslim groups in Kumase.

'Uthman Kamaghatay, who was appointed Asante *Nkramo* Imam (Wilks, 1975: 278)[33] was a Gbuipe scholar resident in Daboya when he was taken to Kumase in 1844 in the wake of the Gonja invasion. 'Uthman Kamaghatay belonged to the same family as Muhammad Kamaghatay and Suma who had served Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame earlier in the century. His appointment as Asante *Nkramo* Imam in the second half of the 19th century was a significant development, for it was the first time in the history of Asante that an Asantehene found it necessary to establish a permanent Imamate inside Asante proper. 'Uthman, better known in Asante tradition as Kramo Tia, and his people were settled in Kumase separately from the other Muslim communities (Wilks et al., 1986, chap. 8); this was to set them apart as the king's Muslims.

But unlike the Muslims in Kumase during the second decade of the 19th century, the Asante *Nkramofo* were placed under the *nsumankwaa* division. In fact, the Asante *Nkramo* Imam refers to the nsumankwaahene as an *adamfo* (patron or friend at court), the same term which has been used to define the relationship between the outlying *ahenfo* and their liaisons in Kumase. As head of the court physicians, the nsumankwaahene served as the link between the Muslims and the king. As tradition required of *adamfo* relations, whenever the Muslims wanted an audience with the king they informed the nsumankwaahene who, in turn, informed the king. In the same vein, whenever the king wanted the Muslims for a formal assignment, he summoned them through the nsumankwaahene.[34] This formal hierarchy seems to have regulated the Muslims' access to the king, and denied them intimate contact with the

sovereign—a source of influence for the Muslims in Kumase in the reign of Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame. In other words, the position of Muslims in Kumase became traditionalized through incorporation. The Imam of the Asante *Nkramofo* functioned as host to Muslim dignitaries and traders who visited the Asante capital. In this position, he became the liaison between all the Muslims, both in Kumase and in the provinces, and the Asante administration.[35]

Even though there is no evidence to show how often Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin relied on the Muslims for religious advice, except during the severe earthquake which shook Kumase in 1862,[36] the Muslims were allowed into the compound of the palace every Friday to pray for the king and the nation.[37] Yet, unlike Muslims in Kumase in the reign of Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame, it appears that the Asante *Nkramofo* were at best seldom consulted by Kwaku Dua Panin on matters of political nature. In fact, the influential role of adviser on external affairs, especially that concerning Asante and European relations, was assumed by Owusu Nkwantabisa and Owusu Ansa (two Asante princes) who returned home from their studies in England in 1841.[38]

CONCLUSION

The presentation so far has demonstrated that the Asantehene was the embodiment of power in the nation. As occupant of the Golden Stool, he headed the Asante policy-making bodies in Kumase. The *amanhene* as well as the *nsafohene* of Kumase were also powerful, due to their control of lands and subjects and their membership in the *Asantemanhyiamu.* Power in 19th century Asante was demonstrated by the right of the chiefs to express views in the Asante government.

Even though Muslims neither controlled land nor subjects, their influence with certain Kumase administrative officials, especially during the second decade of the 19th century, cannot be denied. But by the very nature of the political structure in Asante these influential Muslims were effectively barred from gaining political power in Kumase. In fact, Muslim activities were closely monitored or controlled by the Asante *ahenfo* class. Muslim skills were, however, utilized either in the interest of the king or of the state in general. The ability of the Muslims to excel in their functions determined the degree to which they enjoyed an association with the Kumase administration. Muslim influence suffered adversely when moments of tension and mistrust developed between them and the administration. Such was the situation when Muhammad al-Ghamba' withdrew support for Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame in the Gyaman war of 1818; when Asantehene Osei Yaw Akoto became suspicious that the Muslims had worked magic for his defeat in the Katamanso war of 1826; and when the Muslims were implicated in the abortive palace coup against Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin in 1839. Indeed, it can be argued that the moments of tension and mistrust in part prevented the Muslims from attaining political power in Kumase, and ultimately affected the spread of Islam in Asante.[39]

NOTES

1. In recent times the title of *ohene,* which in the past referred only to the Asantehene, has been adopted by the *nsafohene* (military commanders) and even *adikrofo* (village headmen). Thus, the elders of the *nsafohene* and the *adikrofo* are referred to as *ohene mpaninfo* (elders of the king). One of the difficulties in connection with all Asante titles is that the titles seldom convey any definite indication of status. The only distinction that can be made is that a *safohene* serves his head chief directly while an *odikro* serves through a *safohene.* (Interviews with Nsumankwaahene of Kumase, 13 Feb. 1984, and J. Agyeman-Duah, Financial Secretary of the Kumase Traditional Council, Kumase, 9 Feb. 1984.)

2. The African Times, xxiv, no. 266, 1 Nov. 1883, p. 122.

3. J. Agyeman-Duah, 9 Feb. 1984, interview; Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Arabic Collection, IASAR/241 19–23; see also Report on the Gonja and Dagomba Countries, by C. H. Armitage, Kpembe, 1 Jan. 1898.

4. Reindorf identified the states which signed this peace treaty with Asante as Gyaman and Dagomba. Reference to Dagomba in Reindorf was a mistake, possibly resulting from his sources (J. Agyeman-Duah, 9 Feb. 1984, interview).

5. Bighu was a 15th-century trading center, located

in the present Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. The exact date of its foundation is speculative; however, it is clear that Bighu antedates the rise of both Asante and Gonja. Bighu was possibly a Mande colony where Muslim traders from Jenne and the Niger came to trade for gold. By the late 16th century, traders from Bighu began to divert some of their commerce southward to the coast to meet the Europeans. Wilks (1961: 15–20) is convinced that the Asante drive into the north was partly aimed at controlling this trade.

6. Compare with Cod. Arab. CCCII, folio 5.

In 1760 L. F. Rømer, the Danish factor who resided at Christiansborg and other Danish commercial stations on the Gold Coast from 1739 to 1750, reported that the Danes received many Arabic manuscripts following the Asante invasion of Dagomba in 1744–45. (See *Tilforladeliq Efferretning om Kystem Guinea,* Copenhagen, 1760, p. 220.) Working on the assumption that these manuscripts were subsequently removed to Denmark, in 1963 Dr. R. A. Kea unsuccessfully engaged in a search for them at the Danish National Archives in Copenhagen. Kea (1984) did find, however, in the Oriental section of the Royal Library, Copenhagen, a hitherto unknown corpus of Arabic manuscripts, classified as Cod. Arab. CCCII, and labeled "Arabic Manuscripts from the Guinea Coast." Examination of the watermarks on the paper in Cod. Arab. CCCII by Ove K. Nordstrand, Conservator of the Royal Library, and Professor Nehemia Levtzion of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, indicated that the manuscripts were written between 1795 and 1823 (see Levtzion, 1965: 118–119). Cod. Arab. CCCII contains more than 900 folios, over 90 percent of which are magical formulae for the making of amulets and charms. (See: Owusu-Ansah, 1983, 1986). Cod. Arab. CCCIII also contains a number of letters exchanged between the Muslims in Kumase and their brethren in the northern provinces of Gonja, Mamprugu, and Dogbon. This is the correspondence referred to in the present essay. For a detailed study of these letters, see Wilks et al. (1986).

7. J. Agyeman-Duah, 9 Feb. 1984, interview.

8. See Wilks et al., 1986, chap. 4. It is mentioned in this account that Nana Safo Katanka brought to Mampon some Muslims from eastern and central Gonja in ca. 1750.

9. Muslims in the *gyaasewa* were referred to as *ohene Nkramofo* (the king's Muslims) possibly to distinguish them from other Muslim communities in the Asante capital. The *ohene Nkramofo* were not under the control of the *nsumankwaahene* (chief medicine-man of the court), but they worked with him for the mutual object of finding protection for the king. Given the opposition which Osei Kwame faced before his enstoolment as Asantehene, the Muslims were charged with the additional responsibility of praying on medicine prepared by the *nsumankwaafo* to make sure that nobody made bad medicine for the king (J. Agyeman-Duah, 9 Feb. 1984, interview).

10. Mumuni (Asante Nkramo Imam), Suame-Kumase, 22 and 24 Feb. 1984, interviews.

11. Cod. Arab. CCCII, vol. III, f. 5 and vol. 1, f. 107, indicate that al-Ghamba was the son of the Imam of Gambaga, a town in Mamprugu.

12. For further notes on Muhammad Kamaghatay see Hutchison's diary in Bowdich, 1819.

13. An *obrimpon* (pl. *abrempon*) is, literally, a "big man," so designated because of his wealth. However, an *obrimpon* does not necessarily control a population which owes him political allegiance. An *omanhene* is a ruler of an *oman,* or state. He has control over land and population and has both executive and legislative power over a number of *ahenfo* (chiefs) and *adikrofo* (headmen). The *omanhene* is usually referred to by the name of the territory he has political control over, hence there is Dwabenhene (ruler of Dwaben), Kokofuhene (ruler of Kokofu), Mamponhene (ruler of Mampon), etc. These *amanhene* rule territories which in modern times are referred to as "traditional areas." Every *ohene,* even to the village level, administers with the help of a council of elders who are referred to as *ohene mpaninfo.* For an *omanhene* to effectively administer his territory he relies on the *ahenfo* and *adikrofo.* In the same way, the Asantehene must rely on the *amanhene* and the other *ahenfo.* Although there is a difference in the social and political standing of the various *ahenfo* in Asante, the term has been used here to represent the dominant class in the nation. In this paper, the term *ahenfo* has been adopted to refer exclusively to the Asantehene, the *amanhene* and the Kumase *nsafohene* whose power within the Asante political system is the subject here. (Compare with note 1 of this paper; Rattray, 1929, chaps. ix–xiv; Busia, 1951, chaps. 1 and 2.)

14. Fieldnotes: Kumase, 2 Feb. 1984.

15. Baffour Appiah Dankwa, Anantehene, Kumase, 24 Feb. 1984, interview; J. Agyeman-Duah, 2 Feb. 1984, interview.

16. Baffour Appiah Dankwa, 24 Feb. 1984, interview.

17. J. Agyeman-Duah, 2 Feb. 1984, interview.

18. Fieldnotes: Kumase, 9 Feb. 1984.

19. Fieldnotes: Kumase, 2 Feb. 1984; Nana Osei Kwame, Atipinhene of Kumase, 10 Feb. 1984, interview; Baffour Appiah Dankwa, Anantahene, 24 Feb. 1984, interview: al-Hajj Abdullah Isaka, Bandahene of Kumase, 24 Feb. 1984, interview.

20. Domfe Gyeaboo III, Nsumankwaahene of Kumase, 13 Feb. 1984, interview.

21. J. Agyeman-Duah, 2 Feb. 1984, interview.

22. See note 20.

23. *Kramo* (a Muslim) is derived from the Malinke *karamoko* (one who can read). *Kramo* (pl. *Nkramofo*) is used in Asante to refer to all Muslims irrespective of their origins and residence. Asante *Nkramo* are those Muslims in Asante who trace their ancestry to Uthman Kamaghatay, a Gbuipe scholar resident in Daboya, who was brought to Kumase ca. 1844 during the reign of

Asantehene Kwaku Duah Panin. Uthman Kamaghatay is known in Asante tradition as Kramo Tia. He was appointed the first Asante *Adimam* (Imam). The Asante *Nkramofo,* both in Kumase and Nkenkaasu, are considered Asante citizens and are distinguished from the Muslims who live in zongos, or strangers' quarters (al-Hajj Adam, Kumase Zongo Imam, 31 Jan. 1984, interview).

24. Baffour Domfe Gyeaboo III, 13 Feb. 1984, interview.

25. Public Record Office, Colonial Office, London (hereafter PRO. CO.), 261, Royal Gazette. Another tradition recorded by Reindorf indicates that there was a peaceful transition after the death of Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame, and that the late king on his deathbed had exhorted Osei Yaw Akoto to maintain peaceful relations with the European powers on the coast (see Reindorf, 1895, chaps. xiv–xv).

26. For further notes on the position of Okyeame Kwado Adusei on war and peace, especially concerning Dankyira in 1823, see Asante Seminar no. 5, 1976, pp. 5–9.

27. PRO. CO. 264/74, Campbell to Bathurst, 12 Nov. 1826; PRO. CO. 267/74, Lieut. Col. Purdon to Bathurst, 10 Aug. 1826.

28. Royal Gazette and Sierra Leone Advertiser, Extraordinary Issue, 9 Oct. 1826, reporting dispatches on 7 Aug.

29. J. Agyeman-Duah, 6 Feb. 1984, interview.

30. Abdullah Isaka, Bandahene of Kumase, 24 Feb. 1984, interview.

31. See the journal of Jacob Simons, kept during his journey to Kumase, 1831–32. Original deposited at the Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague, Archive of the Ministry of Colonies 1813–50. I am thankful to Dr. Larry Yarak for the translation of the material in this document.

32. Methodist Mission Archives, London: Brooking to General Secretaries, Kumase, 14 Feb. 1842.

33. Interview with Liman al-Hajj Sumaila b. Mumuni, 22 Jan. 1984.

34. See note 32; Baffour Domfe Gyeaboo III, 13 Feb. 1984, interview.

35. al-Hajj Sumaila b. Mumuni, 22 and 24 Jan. 1984, interviews.

36. For information on the Kumase earthquake and Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin's consultations with the Muslims, see PRE Code Sheet 4 (Boakye Tenten), Asante Seminar no. 6, 1976, p. 6.

37. See note 35.

38. As part of the terms of the 1831 Anglo-Asante peace arrangement, Owusu Nkwantabisa and Owusu Ansa were delivered to the care of the British at Cape Coast. Later, these Asante princes were sent to England where they were educated. Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin requested their return in 1841 and upon their arrival in Kumase they served as members of Asante delegations to the coast (see G. E. Metcalfe, 1964).

39. On the issue of the spread of Islam in Asante, see Owusu-Ansah, forthcoming.

CHAPTER 9. PAINTED INCANTATIONS: THE CLOSENESS OF ALLĀH AND KINGS IN 19TH-CENTURY ASANTE

René A. Bravmann and Raymond A. Silverman

ABSTRACT

This paper examines two objects from 19th century Kumase in order to demonstrate the rewards of considering the arts in a historical manner. These two examples—an Arabic studded cloth worn by the Asantehene Osei Bonsu on March 15, 1820, and a pair of sandals reputedly worn by Kofi Kakari and taken by the British punitive expedition when it plundered the place on February 6, 1874—have been selected for what they can tell us about the artistry and character of belief. Too often such objects have been ignored or dismissed by scholars as simply items covered with "pseudo-Arabic script" created by Muslims at the capital for a gullible Asante clientele. However, the cloth and sandals, covered with Arabic script, can be viewed as historical documents graphically depicting the ongoing relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in 19th-century Asante.

INTRODUCTION

Strictly observant Muslims always have regarded Asante as *dār al-harb,* a land of unbelief. Located south of the major centers of West African Islam, and guided by kings sanctioned and sustained by local political and religious principles, Asante appeared to Muslims living beyond its pale as a land most ill-suited to their lives and aspirations. In actuality, however, Asante proved to be particularly fertile soil for Muslims and their faith; during the 19th-century, Kumase, the capital city, included a community of perhaps as many as 1000 believers.[1] Just how important a place its followers occupied in the life of 19th-century Asante has been revealed in the last 25 years by the penetrating research of a small group of historians led by Ivor Wilks. Carefully balancing observations from European and Arabic sources (in a manner rarely achieved for any precolonial African society) these scholars have gradually clarified the vital links that bound Muslims to non-Muslims and resulted in the formation of a dynamic religious and political environment.[2]

A vivid picture of the remarkable impact of a small religious minority upon its host culture, specifically within the cosmopolitan setting of Kumase and upon its kings, the Asantehenes, emerges from these writings. Commercially inclined, literate, and stamped by a breadth of vision fostered by their faith, Muslims became valued counselors and allies, advising various Asantehenes on internal matters and also acting in diplomatic capacities. They served as scribes, as keepers of court records, and were directly responsible for overseeing major portions of the long-distance trade between Asante and her northern neighbors (Wilks, 1966a: 326–330; 1975: 256–261). These believers were loyal and possessed skills which assured them a place in Asante life, but it was their belief in Islam and their knowledge of the Qur'ān and the secret and magical sciences of the faith that, above all else, made them a highly visible and indispensable minority. Nineteenth century visitors to Kumase were invariably impressed by its Muslim inhabitants and commonly noted a pervasive "Moorish" influence in the capital. They also remarked, however, upon far more profound levels of interaction, suggesting that Islam was being absorbed at the very deepest levels of Asante culture.

While historians are to be commended for their ongoing research in this area, very few of those interested in the arts and expressive aspects of African societies have shown sustained interest in this important period of Asante history. The fullness and diversity of

contemporary Asante creativity is finally being recorded, and yet incisive examinations of a more historical nature are not being pursued: this is particularly regrettable since the documentation on precolonial Asante is so rich that it begs to be examined.[3] Recent studies of the arts have begun to take into account 19th-century sources but more often than not the results have been disappointing, for it is clearly not enough to cite historical documents—they must be critically probed to be apprehended in their full import. It is safe to say that no area of Asante art studies has suffered more, either from outright neglect or fast and easy generalizations, than the historical presence of Islam.

As art historians with interests in both Asante and Islam, we will examine two images that emerge from 19th-century Kumase in order to suggest the potential rewards of considering the arts historically. The two examples in this paper have been selected for what they can tell us about the artistry and character of belief in 19th-century Asante. They demonstrate that Islam and Asante interacted in ways that were indeed remarkable.

The first image is not, strictly speaking, an icon but is, rather, a word picture, a "thick" description of the Asantehene Osei Bonsu written by Joseph Dupuis, British Consul for Asante and a visitor to Kumase in February and March 1820. Dupuis (1824: 142) has left us a portrait of the king at his palace on Wednesday, March 15th, dressed in a "white cotton cloth studded all over with Arabic writing in various coloured inks," that is so richly observed and recorded that it creates an indelible monument. This particular passage is familiar to Asante specialists and yet it still needs to be glossed and fully appreciated.

The second image is a pair of Asante royal sandals reputedly worn by Kofi Kakari and taken from the *Aban* (the two-story stone building that formed part of the Palace of the Asantehene) when it was plundered by the Wolseley expedition on February 6, 1874. Now in a private collection in Belgium, these sandals are distinguished by the Arabic writing and painted magical squares on their soles.[4]

OSEI BONSU AND THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

To discover why Osei Bonsu, a political leader supported by all the mystical forces associated with Asante kingship, should have surrounded himself with a cloth covered with Arabic writing, requires an examination of the king's reign and of his perceptions of Islam. Fortunately, as Wilks observed nearly 20 years ago (Wilks, 1966a: 318), we have ample evidence for a four-year period of Osei Bonsu's paramountcy (1800–23): ". . . between May 1816 and March 1820 [the king] received no less than nine agents of the European merchant companies trading on the Gold Coast to the south, and of these, five left lengthy descriptions of his capital. From them a detailed account of the Kumase Muslim community can be pieced together."[5]

In an artful demonstration of the use of historical evidence Wilks considers the writings of Huydecoper, Bowdich, Hutchinson, Hutton, and Dupuis, along with several Muslim sources authored by the Fulani reformers 'Uthman dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello, in order to capture the tenor of Muslim existence at this time. Kumase was, as Wilks (1966a: 320–322) reveals, graced by a remarkably energetic and diverse Muslim population including believers from Gonja and Dagomba north of Asante; Hausa from Katsina and Kano; occasional visitors from Timbuktu and Jenne; and even traders and mendicant Holymen from as far away as the Maghreb, Egypt, and Baghdad. Guided by the venerable Muhammad al-Ghamba, their Imam and Qadi, Muslims in Kumase not only held important positions at the royal palace but apparently enjoyed easy access to the king and had earned his fullest confidence.

A sketch of Osei Bonsu presented by Wilks (1966a: 337) and drawn from the observations of Bowdich, Hutchinson, and Dupuis reveals just how far this "honest king, the saviour of the Muslims," had come to depend upon Islam and the Kumase Muslim community.[6] It seems that he was particularly impressed with the mystical dimensions of Islam as could be seen in:

> . . . his use on occasion of Arabic salutations, in the Islamic talismans hanging in his bed-

chamber, and in his appearance in public from time to time in a cloth "studded all over with Arabic writing in various coloured inks." From Sharīf Ibrāhim al-Barnawī [identified by Wilks as coming from the town of Bussa on the Niger River] the Asantehene obtained a particularly fine copy of the Qur'ān, "that when any trouble came he might hold it up to God and beg his mercy and pardon." The Qur'ān, he was reported as saying, "is strong, and I like it because it is the book of the great God; it does good for me and therefore I love all the people that read it." (Wilks, 1975: 258)

Wilks rightly regards such evidence as an indication of Osei Bonsu's "leanings toward Islam," but the evidence suggests something far deeper than a mere recognition and appreciation of the magicoreligious aspects of the faith or a shrewd political gesture on the part of the paramount toward his Muslim subjects. That Osei Bonsu's involvement with Islam was in fact profound, and his dependence upon "the book of the great God" deep, can be seen most fully in Dupuis' account of his visit to the king on March 15, 1820.

Summoned to the palace, Dupuis (1824: 142) was anxious to resume interrupted negotiations with Osei Bonsu that might lead to a treaty that would secure future trading relations between Asante and British commercial interests on the coast, but he was once again disappointed "upon perceiving the order of the day to be that of ceremony." It had, in fact, been almost a week since Dupuis and his mission had transacted any official business with the king. Throughout this period, beginning on Friday, March 10, the Asantehene had sequestered himself in the palace and except for two brief private exchanges with Dupuis had been otherwise unavailable to the British Consul. Osei Bonsu, according to Dupuis (1824: 140–141), had been busy celebrating "a religious festival called Little Adai," but the Consul had thought that Wednesday, March 15 "was the last day of the custom." Although mistaken, and thus unable to proceed with negotiations on that day, Dupuis nonetheless was fascinated enough by the proceedings and by the appearance of the king to have left us a most memorable picture of the monarch:

> The king himself was clothed in an undergarment of blood stained cotton; his wrists and ankles were adorned with fetische gold weighing many pounds. A small fillet of plaited grass, interwoven with gold wire and little consecrated amulets, encircled his temples. A large white cotton cloth which partly covered his left shoulder, was studded all over with Arabic writing in various coloured inks, and of a most brilliant well formed character. His body in other parts was bare, and his breast, legs, the crown of his head, and the instep of each foot, was streaked with white clay. It was remarkable that this distinction was not general throughout the assembly.
>
> Upon receiving the king's hand, which he presented with the utmost affability, I noticed a streak of blood upon his forehead . . . [denoting his] participation in the late sacrifices. (Dupuis, 1824: 142)

At this public reception the Asantehene presented Dupuis and the members of his mission with gifts, a gesture of friendship and consumate diplomacy. What we now also know (thanks to a splendid recent study by McCaskie in which he establishes "an absolute concordance between the Asante calendar and European chronology" based on the local 42-day calendar round, *adaduanan*), is that on March 15, 1820, Dupuis and his colleagues were witnessing the public portion of the *Awukudae,* or Wednesday *Adae,* the most critical day during the seven day ritual known as the small *Adae* (McCaskie, 1980b: 182–185).

We have quoted at length from Dupuis because of the denseness of his description and for what he tells us, tacitly, about Osei Bonsu's relationship with Islam. It is clear that while the passage is well known to scholars it has never been carefully probed. Thus, in Cole and Ross' comprehensive study (1977), Dupuis' testimony is briefly cited in a discussion of the impact of Islam upon Asante clothing and textiles with the statement that "the Asante also wore garments with writing on the surface of the cloth. Dupuis described one worn by the Asantehene during a festival" (Cole and Ross 1977: 214). But, as Dupuis himself informs us, Osei Bonsu was not wearing such a cloth at just any festival, but during the "Little Adai," one of the most auspicious ritual periods in the Asante calendar cycle. Similarly, Wilks' comment that the king occasionally appeared in public in a cloth covered with Arabic writing failed to

note the context within which it was worn and thus missed the import of Dupuis' original commentary.

INTERPRETING THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

How then should this portrait of Osei Bonsu, recorded on *Awukudae,* on Wednesday March 15, 1820, be approached? A consideration of the actual setting within which it appeared seems to be an appropriate way to begin. *Awukudae,* and its counterpart *Akwasidae* the "big *Adae,*" are pivotal points in the Asante calendar, for they are: ". . . the two crucial days in the *Adaduanan* cycle: *Kurudapaawukuo* (15/Wednesday) and *Kurukwasie* (33/Sunday) were alternatively known as *Awukudae* (the 'small' or Wednesday *Adae*) and *Akwasidae* (the 'big' or Sunday *Adae*)" (McCaskie, 1980b: 182). Recurring every 42 days, *Awukudae* and *Akwasidae* were, and are, central to the very rhythm of Asante existence and to the life of its kings. These two days: "were vital occasions, on which the Asantehene made offerings to his ancestors, thereby linking the world of men with the world of the spirit and ensuring the continued well-being of the *Asanteman* ('the Asante nation')" (McCaskie, 1980b: 190).

Prior to receiving Dupuis and his entourage at the palace, Osei Bonsu would have carried out a set of sacred obligations incumbent upon all Asante kings—the ritual feeding of the blackened stools of his ancestors and royal predecessors. In the morning he would have poured libations and given blood sacrifices to these stools, ensuring the vitality of Asante and, in turn, drawing strength and inspiration from the spiritual essences contained within them.

The public reception at the palace, a customary feature of *Adaes,* occurred sometime after Osei Bonsu's return from the sacred stool room. Dupuis (1824: 142) does not indicate exactly when he was summoned before the king, but it was most likely not long after these rituals were performed for there was "a streak of dried blood upon the king's forehead" which signaled his "participation in the late sacrifices." In marking his body with *hyire* (white clay), the king was following an ancient Asante tradition, a visible sign that the individual upon whom it has been placed is in a heightened state of spiritual grace; in this instance it denoted the Asantehene's closeness to his ancestors. *Hyire* is said to be a potent substance that empowers those portions of the body that receive it, a fact recently recorded among the neighboring Bono of Takyiman state where possessed priests are similarly heightened: ". . . the mark on the ear allows the priest to understand the language of the god; the marks on the neck make it strong enough to carry the shrine; the mark on the chest makes the heart beat fast and [makes] the person brave; the marks on the calves make the legs strong to prevent a fall while possessed" (Warren, 1976: 34). On this particular *Awukudae,* as is the case on all *Adae,* Osei Bonsu prepared himself fully.

What ultimately fascinates the eye and mind in Dupuis' (1824: 142) portrait are the "little consecrated amulets" worn about the king's head and especially the large white cotton cloth covered with Arabic writing "of a most brilliant well formed character." The cloth was worn, as Dupuis (1824: 142) has said, over "an undergarment of blood-stained cotton" and this creates a most stunning image of the juxtaposition of ancestral sacrifice and a Muslim inspired garment. While all we learn about the cloth itself is that it was covered with "Arabic writing in various coloured inks," it was most likely similar to cotton cloths and tunics embellished with Arabic script that have been collected within the area of greater Asante since the turn of the century.[7]

A quick examination of two such garments should help to describe the character of the cloth Osei Bonsu wore on *Awukudae.* The first was collected by Silverman at Takyiman in 1980 and was made by the Imam of the town, Abdullahi Muhammad (fig. 9-1). The Imam chose the colors and words for this cloth from a West African manuscript version of the Dalā'il al'Khayrāt, "The Proofs of Excellence," by the famous 15th century Moroccan Sufi mystic Muhammad b. Sulaymān al-Jazûli (fig. 9-2). The cloth's appearance has already been briefly described: "Brilliant and sparkling squares of colours (magenta, blue, orange and yellow) applied with a brush establish a vibrant grid for the cloth, but what is most remarkable is the name

Fig. 9-1. Takyiman Imam, Abdullahi Muhammad, inscribing a cotton cloth with texts taken from al-Jazūli's *Dalā'il al'Khayrāt*. Takyiman, June 29, 1980.

'Allāh' written in the interstices between the squares and elsewhere. . . . In the Imam's cloth God is encoded, the name Allāh is reduced to two or three vertical strokes written from right to left and followed by a small circle or dot . . ." (Bravmann, 1983: 26–27).[8]

The Arabic letters alif ا, lām ل, and hā ه in the word Allāh have been transformed into their visual essence. The word Fir'awn or Pharoah, who is regarded as the classic unbeliever by Muslims, is written over and over again, but is always restrained and enclosed

Fig. 9-2. Two pages from the copy of al-Jazūli's *Dalā'il al'Khayrāt* used in producing the Takyiman inscribed cloth.

within the squares and surrounded by the name of God (fig. 9-3).

The second example (fig. 9-4) is a stunning cotton tunic, most likely from Asante, that has been in the collection of the British Museum since 1940. A quilted garment, it is filled with Qur'ānic inscriptions, references to Muhammad, and invocations of Allāh on the front and back panels. There are also several rows of leather-enclosed amulets attached to the inside of the gown. The upper left-hand corner of this tunic contains a circle surrounded by a four-pointed star with writing directly above and to either side of it, and two large, drawn medallions, divided internally into small squares with writing, are found just above the hem. The circle contains Sura 9, verses 128–129, of the Qur'ān and, beginning with the top of the star and moving clockwise, invocations of four of God's 99 divine names (al-asma' al-husna): Yā Ḥafīẓ, Oh Guardian; Yā Mālik, Oh King or Sovereign; Yā Laṭīf, Oh Kind One; and Yā Qaddūs, Oh Most Holy. Above and to the left is Sura 94 written seven times and to the right are 18 repetitions of Sura 12, verse 64. In the medallions below, we find once again Yā Mālik and Yā Qaddūs in alternating squares on the left, while on the right His great names Yā Razzāq, Oh Provider and Yā Fattāḥ, Oh Sustainer, are alternated.[9]

The Arabic inscribed cloth worn by Osei Bonsu on the *Awukudae* in March 1820 most likely included a similar selection of prayers and references to God, for such painted incantations seem to lie at the heart of all Muslim inspired textiles from Asante. His cloth, like these two examples, would also have been shaped by an aesthetic based upon repetition: an incessant invocation of Allāh; His 99 great and beautiful names; Suras and verses from the Qur'ān and perhaps even selections of some litanies from a Sufi mystical text. The king's cloth then, as well as these others, may be seen as a tangible visual analog of Muslim prayers and chants. That Osei Bonsu, and the

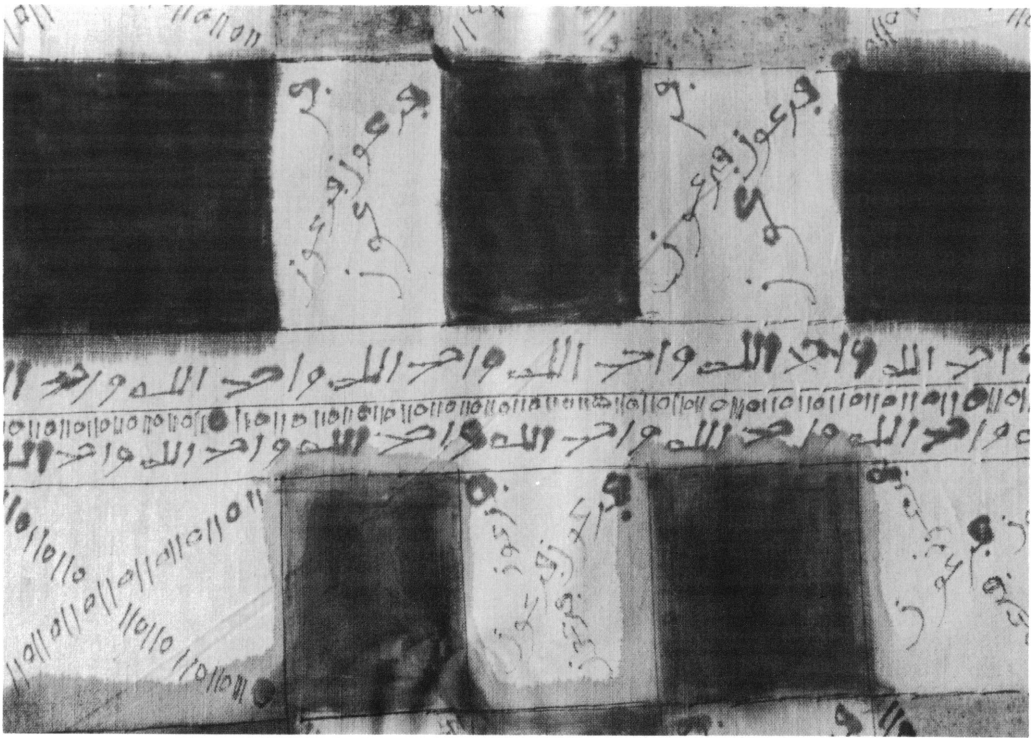


Fig. 9-3. Detail of the Takyiman inscribed cloth. See figure 9-1.

Asante in general, believed in the efficacy of Muslim prayer and felt it to be empowering is undeniable: repetition, especially of God's name, was clearly regarded as the most effective way of calling upon His immanence and of achieving a bond with the "Great God." Covered with his Arabic inscribed cloth suffused with the sanctity of repetition, and with the blood of the *Awukudae* sacrifices upon his skin, the Asantehene succeeded fully in proclaiming his closeness to Allāh and to his own ancestors.

KOFI KARI AND THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

An equally compelling example of the closeness between Allāh and Asante kings may be seen in a pair of royal sandals (*sika mpaboa*), with traces of Arabic writing and Islamic magical squares drawn in sepia ink upon the soles, that come from the period of decline in Asante fortunes—the troubled reign of Kofi Kakari (1867–74). Auctioned at Christie, Manson and Woods Ltd. of London, the sandals were part of a large sale held in 1980 of Asante gold and goldweights. They were sold, along with a crescent-shaped cap, as "a fine and rare Ashanti gold mounted cap and sandals" (Christie et al., 1980: 101). Identified as "the property of a gentleman," in the discreet parlance of art auction attributions, the cap and sandals were housed in a glass case with the label (fig. 9-5):

> Cap and sandals worn by the Ashanti king Coffee Calcalli. Taken from the palace of Coomassie by H. B. Majesty's forces under the command of Major General Sir Garnet Wolseley K.C.B., G.C.N.G., January 1874. (Christie et al., 1980: 101)[10]

Exemplars of chiefly regalia, the cap and sandals are carefully worked and beautifully appointed, radiating the consummate artistry that has always been a hallmark of the Asantehene's court. The royal cap (*krobonkye*) is made of leopard skin lined with yellow velvet. It is skillfully decorated with repoussé gold in the form of miniature rampant leopards, quatrefoil bosses, floral designs, and two

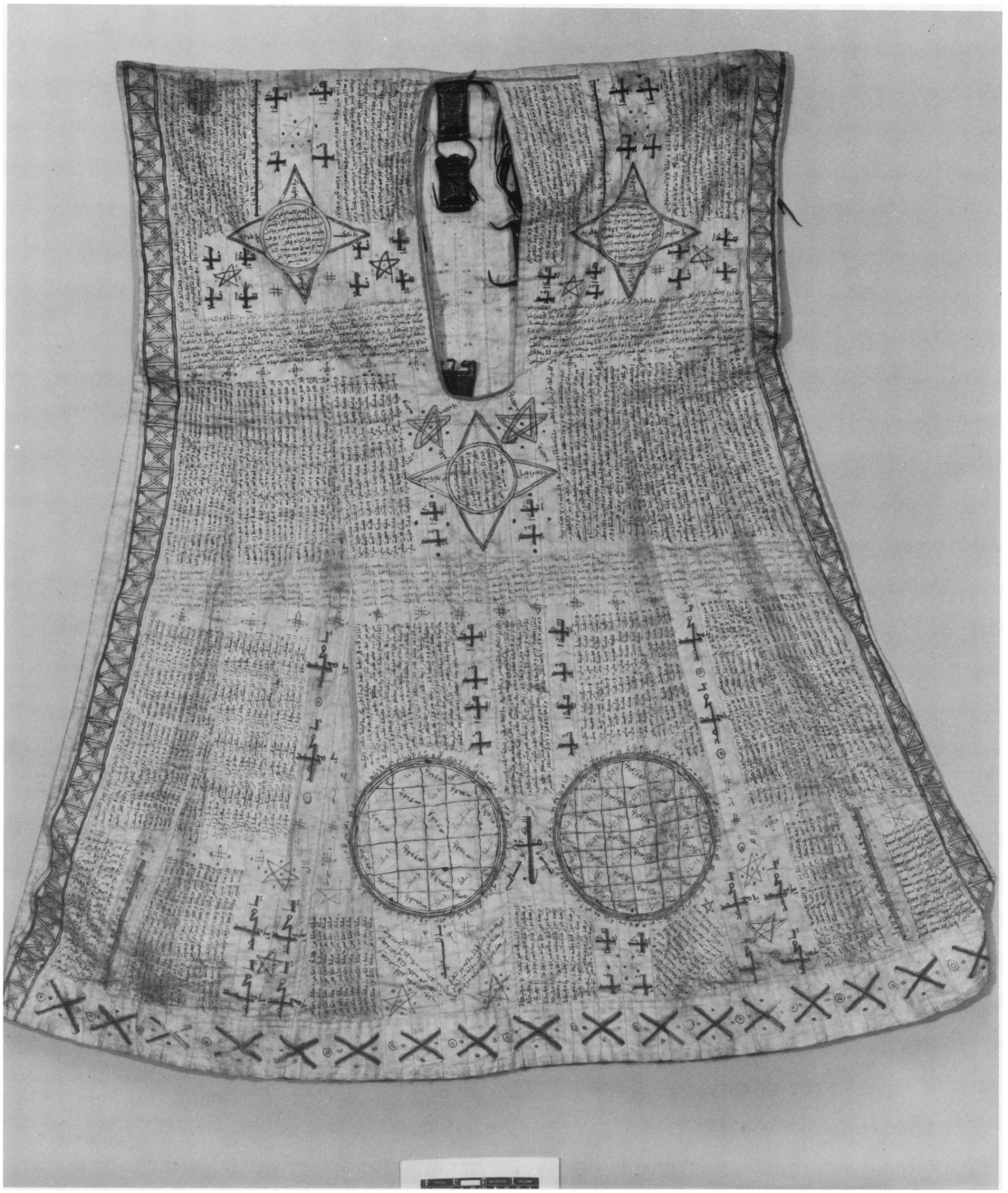


Fig. 9-4. Quilted cotton tunic with Qur'ānic inscription, references to Muhammad, invocations of Allāh, and leather-enclosed amulets. British Museum, 1940, AF 23.1.

bands of gold foil that both reiterate the rhythmic shape of the hat and contain much of the detailing.[11] A similar degree of artistic care was lavished upon the sandals, for they are generously overlaid with strips of red, green, and white leather and the straps are adorned with six alternating gold and silver cast motifs. These motifs include scrollwork

Fig. 9-5. Royal sandals and cap of Asantehene Kofi Kakari. Collection of Madame Nelly van den Abbeele, Brussels.

patterns, lozenges, and beetle shapes; they culminate in a large gold buckle with "deeply scalloped border, shaped double clasps on hinges, and a simulated emerald in cylindrical gold mount" in the very center of the straps (Christie et al., 1980: 101) (fig. 9-6).

While there is ample evidence to confirm that both the cap and sandals formed part of

Fig. 9-6. One of the pair of royal sandals belonging to Asantheene Kofi Kakari. See figure 9-5.

Kofi Kakari's treasury and were removed from the palace by Wolseley's expedition on February 6, 1874, the sandals lie at the heart of our theme. Unlike the cap, these sandals could not have been worn by minor officials or royal attendants, for their use was regarded as a prerogative enjoyed only by the highest-ranking chiefs, especially the Asantehene. That they were actually worn by Kofi Kakari himself is now virtually certain, for testimony given by the missionaries Ramseyer and Kühne (1875: 140), who were held captive in Kumase between late 1869 and 1874, reveals that Kofi Kakari regarded these sandals, enchanced with Arabic writing, as his personal talismans. Such use of the written word may strike the reader as highly unusual, and yet for those of us familiar with the area it is fully in keeping with 19th-century Asante practices and the desire of its kings (especially Kofi Kakari) to appropriate to themselves the powers of Islam. Royal sandals augmented with the "words of God" are but one more example of the intimacy forged between Islam and Asante leadership, and thus they help to enlarge and complete a growing portrait of Asante kings seeking to surround themselves with Allāh's presence.

How Kofi Kakari came to depend so heavily upon the powers of Islam can be easily appreciated by examining his short but turbulent seven-year reign. Elevated to the Gold Stool in May 1867 by a coalition of Kumase chiefs who were committed to recovering control over Asante's former southern provinces (those provinces that had become British Protected Territory as defined in the Anglo-Asante Treaty of 1831), Kakari was never able to divorce himself from their views and overriding influence. Pressured into pursuing a military rather than a diplomatic solution to the southern questions, he called for a massive mobilization of forces in early 1873 and an invasion of the south in June and July of that year. His southern campaigns, waged by three separate armies, met little resistance and by mid-year his troops "had accomplished the government's goal: the Asante forces of reoccupation enjoyed virtual control over the British Protected Territory." Having reasserted Asante authority south of the Pra River, Kofi Kakari recalled his armies and by December "demobilization was well under way" (Lewin, 1978: 45).

There was, however, never a more bittersweet Asante victory, for the southern campaigns exhausted the nation and its resources. Since the early 1870s the Asante economy had "suffered from the government's emphasis on wartime measures," [resulting in] "food shortages, manpower deficits, closure of trade routes and heavy taxation" (Lewin 1978: 45). Massive dissatisfaction, internal dissension, and an ultimate loss of nerve and sense of purpose at the very center of government, resulted in a set of repressive measures rarely seen in the capital—news of the military campaigns was suppressed, internal security tightened, and political surveillance flourished. Embattled and threatened by mounting opposition to his rule, Kofi Kakari ultimately "resorted to methods of political violence" executing "leading commoners who allegedly opposed his policies" and denying

"citizens their rights under due process of law" (Lewin, 1978: 46).

Less than two months after demobilization, on the evening of February 4, 1874, the British expeditionary force under Major General Wolseley entered Kumase unopposed. Two days later his troops sacked and set fire to much of the city and to the Asantehene's palace. "No great spoil came to light," it was ruefully noted, "but many curious things were found in the stone palace [before it was blown up by Wolseley's soldiers] which were afterwards sold at high prices in London" (Ramseyer and Kühne 1875: 295). Exactly six months later, on August 6, 1874, Britain formally annexed the southern provinces into the Gold Coast Colony and on October 21, Kofi Kakari was called before the *Asantemanhyiamu,* the national assembly, and informed that he would be deposed. On the 26th, after agreeing to abdicate and surrendering the Golden Stool, Kofi Kakari was allowed "to go into exile with 60 wives, 500 retainers and a quantity of gold" (Wilks, 1975: 513).

Any assessment of Kofi Kakari's paramountcy plainly reveals that as a leader he was not only indecisive but was seemingly incapable of developing a broad sense of political and popular support. As pressures mounted and events swirled about him, unable to administer and delegate in any effective manner, he turned away, as Wilks (1975: 238–239) has noted, "from both councilors and counselors and [looked] increasingly to the religious authorities—including . . . the powerful Muslim notables of the northern hinterlands." Politically ineffectual, he came to depend almost exclusively upon the spiritual forces associated with Asante leadership—the traditional shrines and priests and, particularly, the Muslim diviners and Holymen who resided in the capital. In the end Kofi Kakari seems to have acted almost completely as a demiurge, isolating himself in the palace and seeking the advice of "Moorish necromancers and fetish priests" to help guide the fortunes of his nation (Wilks, 1975: 239).

The testimony of both Muslims and Europeans who were in Kumase during the early 1870s confirms that this was indeed the state of affairs. Although this evidence has already been presented in Wilks' monumental study of 19th-century Asante, it deserves to be recalled for the special light that it sheds upon the king's relationship with Islam and its adherents. Muslims had, of course, consistently served Asante kings throughout the 19th century but their participation in the life and reign of Kofi Kakari was perhaps exceptional. Thus, while this Asantehene had always depended upon Muslim amulets and prayers to sustain him, his need reached new heights after hearing, in early December 1873, that the British were amassing troops on the coast for a march on Kumase. That month ". . . Kofi Kakari gave to the Muslims in the town the sum of ten peredwans of gold (22½ oz.) 'for using sorcery to hinder the white men from rising', while another sum of 100 oz. of gold was expended in obtaining from the north 'a wonderful mohammedan charm, which with a mere shake of the hand was to have the effect of causing the governor [Wolseley] to go back' " (Wilks, 1975: 239). Between January 9 and 16, when Wolseley's troops advanced beyond the Pra River to the Asante border post of Kwisa in Adanse, they encountered no armies but only Muslim emissaries and a variety of charms meant to deter their advance. Placed at prominent points along the way these amulets, including the "wonderful charm," formed what appears to have been a last and desperate line of mystical defense.

The entire range of Muslim supernatural items and techniques, based upon the powers of Allāh and the secret or esoteric sciences (*bāṭin*) of Islam, appears to have been employed during the paramountcy of Kofi Kakari. A vivid passage from Winwood Reade, special correspondent for "The Times" of London covering the British campaign of 1874, gives a particularly good account of the various services performed by one rather famous Muslim "doctor" in Kumase. The "doctor," according to Reade's informants in Elmina:

> wrote certain words upon paper, sewed them up in leather cases, and sold them as charms against wounds in the war. He fumigated the nostrils of the sick with the smoke of mysterious herbs set on fire: he wrote texts of the Koran on a wooden board, washed off the ink into water, and gave it to patients as a draught: he cupped for fever, inoculated for small-pox, applied the

> hot iron; he also divined future events from a book filled with diagrams, or from figures drawn in the sand. (Reade, 1874: 327–328)

Amulets, or *safis* as they are called in Asante, were especially popular and ranged from simple cloth-covered packets to particularly potent verses selected from the Qur'ān and enclosed in elaborate copper or leather and gold foil cases. An example of the latter was worn by the spokesman of the Asante delegation sent by Kofi Kakari to try to negotiate a truce with Wolseley at the Pra River. A drawing (see Stanley, 1874: 126–127) depicts the Asante ambassador (identified by Stanley as "the town crier of the Ashantee capital" and by Wilks as Sen Kwaku, one of the *nseniefo* or court heralds) "wearing a large square gold-plated badge on his breast" (Stanley, 1874: 126). This "badge," in fact, appears to be an important type of Islamic amulet: a large magic square known as *Khātam* (Ar.) which is composed of 12 small squares inscribed upon the surface of the gold talisman, each of which contains a special symbol.

That Kofi Kakari availed himself of such services is patently clear from the testimony of Ibrahim, a Dyula from Buna in the Ivory Coast who resided in Kumase in 1870. From Ibrahim we learn that many Muslims from the north "fill in general the functions of doctors to the king, who holds them in high regard. They give him, as well as the chiefs, all manner of amulets. Many times a week they wash the king with water prepared for this purpose" (Wilks, 1975: 317). The water employed for the king's bath was surely a very special "Holy water," known among the Dyula and other speakers of Manding languages, as *nassi-ji.* A liquid suspension (like the ink solution cited by Reade but far more powerful), it would have been obtained by washing potent magical and Qur'ānic verses from a tablet that had been prepared by a master of *bāṭin* knowledge. *Nassi-ji,* literally "writing water," is regarded by Muslim Manding as the most effective of deterrents, capable of protecting both the body and spirit of one who ingests it. Normally kept in a vial and used sparingly for bathing or drinking, its constant use by the king suggests a concern for self-preservation that was quite out of the ordinary. More important, it illustrates the attempt to establish intimacy between Allāh and this king.

INTERPRETING THE EVIDENCE

Let us now return to the pair of royal sandals, attributed to Kofi Kakari, for they no longer appear as such an anomaly but seem perfectly in keeping with his character and times. That the sandals belonged to Kofi Kakari and were part of the booty taken from the palace in 1874 now seems quite certain. "Gold plated sandals" were listed by Stanley (1874: 233), the explorer who covered the campaign for the "New York Herald," in his simple inventory of items found at the *Aban,* or stone palace, on the morning of February 6. Fortunately, Winwood Reade (1874: 357) also visited the royal residence that morning and left a fuller description of what he saw. Impressed by the size of the palace, with its 10 to 12 large courtyards surrounded by verandahs and alcoves, he proceeded to the two-story stone building fronting the street which he described as "Moorish in its style, such as those built at Cape Coast, with a flat roof and parapet, and suites of apartments on the first floor." The rooms at the street level receive no further comment and may well have been emptied by the palace staff as the king hastily abandoned Kumase, but the second floor rooms were filled with a most remarkable array of local and exotic items: "Each was a perfect Old Curiosity Shop. Books in many languages, Bohemian glass, clocks, silver plate, old furniture, Persian rugs, Kidderminster carpets, pictures and engravings, number-less chests and coffers. A sword bearing the inscription from Queen Victoria to the King of Asantee. A copy of the Times, 17 October 1843" (Reade, 1874: 357–358). Along with these imports, given as gifts to various Asanthehene by European visitors to Kumase since the early 19th century, Reade observed: "many specimens of Moorish and Ashanti handicraft, gold studded sandals as only the king and a few great chiefs may wear, with, strange to say, Arabic writing on the soles; leopard skin caps lined with yellow velvet and adorned outside with beaten gold like that of Kashmir . . ." (Reade, 1874: 358). Precisely how many pairs of royal sandals

with Arabic inscriptions were seen by Reade is somewhat unclear.[12] There may, in fact, have been several, and all of them could have been removed from the *Aban* before it was mined and blown up late that morning: only the pair sold at the Christie's auction has come to light. One other pair, "an Ashanti King's . . . state sandals . . . mounted in pure gold and silver, the soles with magical squares and charm inscriptions," was collected by Arthur Paget in the 1874 campaign and cited in a Sotheby's catalog on June 5, 1945—but it has not been recovered (Ehrlich, 1981: 500–501).

No uncertainty remains, however, regarding Kofi Kakari's penchant for having his personal sandals elaborated in this manner. Ramseyer and Kühne, for example, relate an incident surrounding the theft of the king's precious footwear: "The keeper of the king's sandals had during the last two years sold several cast off pairs. The king found it out, and demanded the name of the buyer, to whom he said 'I do not like anyone to dishonour my talisman' (referring to the Arabic writing on the sandals). The affair was brought into court, the man was beheaded, and twenty people imprisoned . . ." (Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875: 140). Kofi Kakari relented sometime thereafter, freeing the 20 persons implicated in the theft, but he left little doubt as to the importance of his sandals.

The Asantehene's response may appear excessive, yet it was entirely in keeping with Asante law, for the theft or desecration of any item of royal regalia was, and still is, considered a capital offense. Furthermore, it must be emphasized that sandals are in fact crucial to the very integrity of the royal personna. Thus, as Kyerematen (1964: 85) informs us, "It is a taboo for a chief to walk barefoot; if he does, it is believed that he will precipitate a famine. When the deposition of a chief is declared, one of the first symbolic acts is to remove his sandals and force him to walk away barefoot." If the bare feet of a chief cannot touch the earth (*Asase Yaa*) lest the land become polluted and die, it is no wonder that considerable attention and skill has always been focused, indeed lavished, upon the feet of kings.

The public appearance of the Asantehene underscores this fact, for he is always accompanied by a sandal bearer holding a second pair of sandals in case one worn by the king should break. In formal processions the sandal bearer precedes the king himself. When seated in state upon an elaborate chair or stool (one of the indelible icons of Asante civilization), the Asantehene's feet are elevated upon a footrest (*krokowa*) studded with Qur'ānic charms and medicine-filled horns. If he is seated, but with his sandaled feet directly upon the ground, his feet are further protected by Muslim talismans wrapped about his ankles. In other instances the Asantehene's ankles, sandal straps, and footrest are all elaborated with amulets; this creates an image of concern for the king's feet that is overwhelming.

An Asantehene, in his role as king, embodies two distinct capabilities—he must be a ruler capable of forceful and immediate action and a demiurge who extends his power much more slowly and with a sense of ceremony. For an Asante king sandaled feet are critical in each sphere. The removal of his sandals, we were told by Kyerematen, signifies the end of leadership and forces him from office, a disgraced commoner; the act itself is simple and direct but its humbling effect is irrevocable. As a ruling king, moreover, the Asantehene is also imbued with mystical power, a precious energy that must be shielded and preserved in every way possible. Neither he nor his people can permit such power to escape for it will not only stain the land and its inhabitants, but will diminish his own spiritual existence. Sandals elevate his feet only minimally but this distance is sufficient to protect the earth from his awesome power. Sandals may, therefore, be figuratively seen as part of a pedestal that supports the forces contained within the body of the king.

If the ankles and sandal straps of the Asantehene were normally covered with Qur'ānic charms, then to paint magic squares and invocations upon the soles is a logical and creative extension of a time-honored tradition. Looking at the soles of Kofi Kakari's sandals (fig. 9-7), one sees that the toes and heels are fully covered with Arabic writing. The script includes several references to Allah and the invocation *Bismillah,* i.e., "in the name of God" at the top of the sandal on the left. The center of each sole contains two cryptic dia-

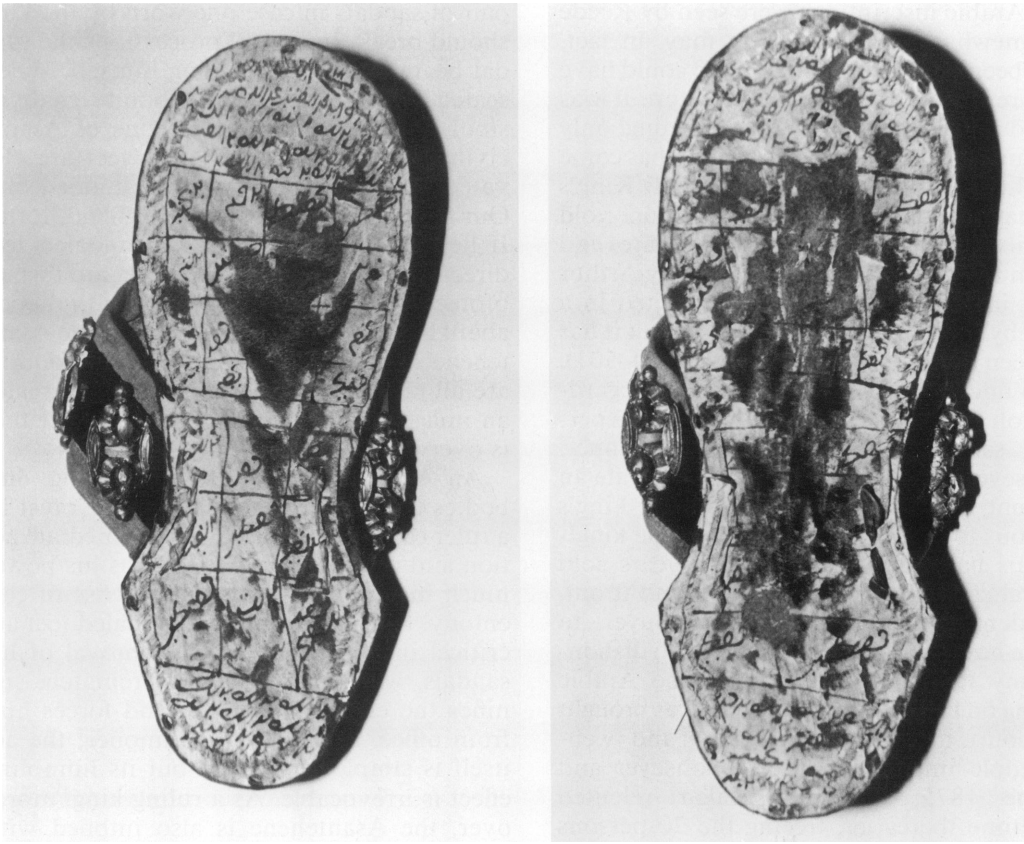


Fig. 9-7. Arabic inscriptions on the soles of Kofi Kakari's sandals.

grams; three of these are limned in the form of true magical squares (*Khātam* sing., *Khawātim* pl.). On the left there is a four-by-four *Khātam* known as *murabba'u* and a three-by-three square or *muthallathu,* the latter incorporating one of the 99 "excellent or beautiful names of God," Al-Khâliq, or The Creator. The other sole includes a *murabba'u* with another of Allāh's great names, Al Ḥaqq, meaning the Truth or Ultimate Reality, and then a highly irregular amulet of two-by-four squares beneath it which cannot be regarded as a true *Khātam.*[13] Each smaller square contains a letter, name, or symbol with a specific numerical value and a precise quantity of magical power, and in the case of the *Khawātim* these are arranged in such a manner that they give an identical total when added vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. This numerical equivalence is important to all *Khawātim* for they are then believed to possess spiritual balance.

While we cannot fathom the meanings of the painted squares or the writing, this should not keep us from trying to apprehend their intent. The few words that can be read are either references to Allāh or to one of his many attributes, and this suggests that the writing and drawings were not only a direct appeal to God but were meant to draw upon His powers. Inscriptions, especially of words and phrases from the Qur'ān (which the Asante deeply respected and believed to have been divinely created) were perfectly suited to this task of invoking the powers of God for they contained the very speech of Allāh Himself. In the hands of a learned Muslim scholar, Allāh's words and signs could be shaped and manipulated in order to persuade Him to influence not only the lives of ordi-

nary men but even those of kings. Such amulets and invocations need not be elaborate: the magical squares on the soles of Kofi Kakari's sandals are among the most common and simplest of *Khātam* forms, but since they enclosed the words of God they not only served as a protective shield but also divined the future.

CONCLUSION

The coexistence of Asante and Muslim beliefs was a fundamental reality of 19th-century Asante life, and its validity was acknowledged administratively in the position of the *Nsumankwahene* of Kumase. The role of the *Nsumankwahene* was created, according to Lewin (1978: 39), "so that priests of foreign shrines could be enlisted to promote the well-being and success of the *Asanteman*" (the Asante nation), and in order to supervise "the practising Asante shrine priests (*akomfo*) and priestesses (*akomfo mma*) of important deities." He has further been described as "the chief of the court physicians" and the titular head of the Kumase community (Wilks, 1975: 81, 671). The *Nsumankwahene* presides, as his title translates, over all those who deal with spiritual forces: traditional healers and priests as well as Muslim religious specialists and diviners. His position is a precise reflection of what had come to pass within Asante and at the king's palace in the 19th century.

Both the cloth worn by Osei Bonsu on *Awukudae* and Kofi Kakari's sandals confirm the ardent desire of 19th-century Asante kings to surround themselves with the words of God. Worn directly upon the body, the cloth and sandals are filled with Allāh's presence in the form of His name, either written clearly or encoded through a series of declensions. What one cannot fail to appreciate in these works is the element of recurrence, that passion for repetition of the divine evoked in Sura 13 verse 28 of the Qur'ān—"the recollection of God makes the heart calm." Both objects are shaped by an aesthetic and religious sensibility that demands repetition, their very redundancy making a visual claim upon the divine. As such, they are tangible reminders of the sanctity of repetition. While neither of these rulers swerved from the ancient deities, shrines, and ancestral forces that had long sustained Asante, they came to regard Islam as a precious resource, a system of belief capable of preserving themselves and their citizenry.

NOTES

1. Lacking firm statistical evidence, we are using Wilks' estimate of the Kumase Muslim community in 1820 as a very general figure for the 19th century. Wilks' (1966a: 318–319) figure is based upon Dupuis who "on two public occasions, his own reception and a subsequent Adae festival . . . estimated that 300 Muslims made their appearance. The adult male resident population was probably in excess of this, and with women and children there may have been more than 1000 Muslims more or less permanently settled in Kumase."

2. Along with the many contributions by Wilks, the writings of Nehemiah Levtzion, Kwame Arhin, T. C. McCaskie, Thomas J. Lewin, Donna Maier, and David Owusu-Ansah should be consulted.

3. Notable exceptions to this bleak assessment are T. Garrard and M. McLeod, a historian and an anthropologist, whose writings demonstrate a keen interest in the history of the arts of Asante.

4. We take this opportunity to thank T. Garrard, who alerted us to the existence of these sandals; Hermoine Waterfield of Christie, Manson and Woods Ltd., for her correspondence regarding their sale; Mrs. N. Van den Abbeele for photographs of the sandals and her permission to reproduce them here.

5. For his assessment of these primary sources see the postscript to this article, Wilks, 1966a: 336–339.

6. This quote is drawn from the Cod. Arab. CCCII manuscripts in the Royal Library, Copenhagen.

7. For a brief discussion of two such garments, both located in the British Museum, see Lamb, 1975: 144–146 and Picton and Mack 1979: 163. A description of the king of Aguna wearing an Arabic-inscribed cloth can be found in Armitage, 1905: 65–66.

8. We deeply appreciate the help of John Hunwick, Professor of African and Islamic History at Northwestern University, and of our colleagues Fahrhat Ziadeh and Nicolas Heer of the Near Eastern Language and Literature Department at the University of Washington, who alerted us to the subtle declensions of God's name found in this cloth.

That the Dalā'il al Khayrāt has been known within Asante since at least the early 19th century is confirmed by two folios from the Cod. Arab. CCCII in Copenhagen. Levtzion found two letters to the "Sultan of Ashanti" (Osei Bonsu), one by Malik the Imam of Gonja (vol. 2, folio 1b) the other from the Imam of Buipe (vol. 1, folio 188) that contain prayers and specific references to the Dalā'il and were written to assure the good health and

long life of the king. For the content of these letters see Levtzion, 1965: 109–110.

9. We want to express our appreciation to Monique Dean, a doctoral candidate in Near Eastern Languages and Literature at the University of Washington interested in the Sufi literature of the Maghreb and Egypt, for her diligent translation of this complex gown.

10. The label on the glass case contains two errors. Wolseley did not enter Kumase in Jan. but on 4 Feb. 1874, and the cap (*krobonkye*) is a type worn by court retainers and not the Asantehene.

11. The importance of the leopard as a metaphor for the Asantehene is readily apparent and is a subject that awaits in-depth exploration. Leopard symbolism, such as the 10 miniature figures affixed to this leopard skin cap, occurs in much of Asante court art while leopard skins are virtually de rigeur for the Asantehene. When seated in state his chair or stool invariably rests upon the skin of the leopard and many items of regalia most closely associated with him are covered with leopard skin. Among the items listed by Stanley (1874: 233), in his inventory of articles found at the Aban, were "leopard skins" and "fetiches and charms covered with leopard skins."

12. Frederick Boyle (1874: 389–390), a member of the 1874 expedition, identified ". . . royal sandals, of which we had ten pair, all more or less embellished with gold or silver or both. Those found in the bed-chamber of the king brought £25 and others less." Boyle, unfortunately, did not indicate if any of these sandals included Arabic inscriptions.

13. Deciphered by Monique Dean, June 1985.

LEADERSHIP IN ASANTE: KINGS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND POLITICIANS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

CHAPTER 10. WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS WERE THESE? SOME REFLECTIONS ON ASANTE OFFICIALDOM

Ivor Wilks

ABSTRACT

In this paper I approach the issue of late 18th and early 19th-century Asante bureaucratization from the perspective of the career histories of a number of Asante officials to determine whether they exhibit the features described by Max Weber as the "waning of charisma" and the development of "rational discipline." For this purpose I have selected principally officials whose careers took them to the peripheries of Asante, whether in ambassadorial or governing roles.

PREAMBLE: ON BIOGRAPHIES

The reader is invited to peruse the following text:

> Praise be to Allāh who made the paper a messenger and the pen a tongue for us. We greet the Sultan Faradu Jayma [Fredua Agyeman, i.e., Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin] and pray that he may ever be a friend to the Muslims in his land. The servant [literally, "slave"] of the Sultan is Buwataqa [i.e., Butuakwa]. He came and asked us to write a book for him as the learned skaykhs had done in the days of Sultan Asy Busu [Asantehene Osei Bonsu], may Allāh rest his soul in peace for he was protector of the Muslims. Buwataqa, though ignorant of the true path of salvation, has done us no harm and we asked for a donation [*ṣadaqa*] of a new white gown and five mithqals of gold.
>
> Buwataqa says, I was born on a Saturday and named Kuwam [Kwame], but I was given the nickname [*laqab*] Buwataqa. My mother was a sister of the king [*mālik,* here used to translate the Asante *ohene,* "chief"] of the town of Hayma [i.e., the Hemanhene] and I spent my childhood there. My father served the great Sultan Asy Kuwam [Asantehene Osei Kwame]. One day when I was still a boy my father sent a messenger to take me to the town of Kumasi. I stayed there with my father and learned to serve the Sultan. Now I am old and I have served five sultans [i.e., Osei Kwame, Opoku Fofie, Osei Tutu Kwame known as Osei Bonsu, Osei Yaw Akoto, and Kwaku Dua Panin].
>
> When I was a young man I travelled much, taking the Sultan's trade to many lands. I saw the white men and their ships. My uncles told me many stories [*akhbār*] about the brave deeds of the kings of Hayma, and about my grandfather the great Sultan Buqu nicknamed Tete [Asantehene Opoku Ware also known as Opoku Tenten] who made the people of all the lands fear him. So when I took the Sultan's trade to the white men I was not afraid. I always knew when the whitemen tried to cheat the Sultan

because my father had taught me to weigh gold at the Great Chest [i.e., the Asantehene's Treasury].

The Sultan Asy Busu [Osei Bonsu] liked me and one day he called me and said that I was to go to the land of Jama [Gyaman] and tell Dinkara [Gyamanhene Kwadwo Adinkra] that there could not be two sultans in the land of Asati. I brought back Dinkara's chair [i.e., stool] to Sultan Asy Busu. The Sultan gave me many presents and I married one of the women. After that the Sultan said I had a good head and he sent me to do many things with the white men. I did not trust them. Those who pray to Allāh know these things. They told the Sultan that the white men say they come to Asati for trade and wish to be friends, but over the great water in another land their soldiers make all the people slaves of the white Sultan [the reference is probably to India]. One day the Sultan sent me to collect some of Fati [Fante] prisoners at Adina [Elmina] and the *amīr* of the Kankan whitemen [Dutch Director General Daendels] put me in prison and had me flogged before all the people.

After that the Sultan said I should take his trade to the other whitemen whose *amīr* lived in Guwa [Ogua or Cape Coast]. His name was Samiti [British Governor John Hope Smith]. The Sultan said I must tell Samiti to pay the books [the rents for the British forts], but he tried to cheat and keep the money. He said that the white Sultan had told him not to buy slaves again, so we could not make good trade. But the ships of the Andalus [i.e., Spanish vessels] came and we sold our slaves to them. The Sultan told me to stay in the land of the Fati [Fante] and be sure that they did what was right for him. The Fati saw that I was a good man. I did not make them pay me money nor punish them when they had done nothing bad. Samiti was a bad man and he tried to make the Sultan angry with me. But the Sultan knew that I was a good servant and spoke the truth, and that all the things I did with my eloquence were [intended] to prosper the land of Asati.

One day I was in Anamab [Anomabo] and a soldier of the white *amīr* [the Governor of Anomabo Fort] made play with the name of the Sultan. I informed the Sultan and he ordered me to seize the soldier. The Sultan wanted to spare his life but his kings said that I must kill him. Samiti had gone across the water by that time and Makata [Sir Charles MacCarthy] was *amīr*. Makata sent hundreds of soldiers to capture me but my friend Birū [Samuel Brew] told me about it and the soldiers walked into my trap. Many of them died. Then Makata said that he was going to make war on the Sultan and I went back to the Sultan's town. People nicknamed me Kutuway Barafo [Kotwebrefo, "one who creates troubles"]. But people knew that I had always done right for Asati. I never filled my boxes with gold and I never acted like a king. A servant of the Sultan must not act like a king.

The great Sultan did not want war with the whitemen but many of his kings did. They said that the Sultan should reward me because I had shown the white men that Asati men were strong. So the Sultan made a new chair [stool] for me as a reward for snatching the chair [stool] of Dinkara. I became one of the *shāmi* [*akyeame* or spokesmen] of the Sultan. Then he died. Then Sultan Asy Yuw [Asantehene Osei Yaw Akoto] fought the whitemen. Many of the big men were killed in the great war [the Battle of Katamanso, 1826]. After that, the Sultan sent me to the water [the Gold Coast] to say that he wanted peace in the land. Now that I am old I stay in the Sultan's town.

[The text lacks any colophon but there is a marginal note which reads: "Buwataqa died the third day of Shawwāl 1255," that is, 10 December 1839.]

No original of the above "translation" has, of course, ever existed, though the form of the putative Arabic original is based on genuine documents of early 19th century date and Asante provenance (Wilks et al., 1986, chap. 8). More to the point, however, this simulated autobiographical text contains no fictitious (in the sense of invented) elements. It is based on some 120 items on Kwame Butuakwa in the files of the Asante Collective Biography Project, about 75 percent of which are carded from early 19th century written sources and the remainder from oral testimony recorded at various times between the late 19th century and the present. The simulation has been presented in order to illustrate the detail in which the career of an Asante functionary born over two centuries ago can be known—and the case of Kwame Butuakwa is far from unique. Having spent many hours in Kwame Butuakwa's company (as it were), I would be mildly though not excessively surprised if as yet unknown sources pertinent to his life necessitated drastic revision of his career as presented in the simulated text. He was an energetic, efficient, strong-willed, and honest administrator, not overly ambitious for wealth and status but prepared to act on his own initiative in what

he judged the best interests of his country, the Asanteman.

In simulating an autobiography of Kwame Butuakwa, I have exercised more license than is usually granted the historian, though there is an area of indeterminacy between the modes of history and of fiction that is troublesome to those stalwarts of the historians' craft who demand virtually Euclidean standards of proof in the discipline and who would thereby severely constrain our explorations of the dark continents of the past. For my own part, I take seriously R. G. Collingwood's emphasis on the importance of "getting into the minds" of people in the past. If history is a science, it is also an art. As historians we do not create the past, but we do attempt to recreate it.

The subject of this paper is the new breed of Asante administrator that was emerging in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, of which Kwame Butuakwa is an instance. I shall explore a number of themes of relevance to Asante administrative practice, and illustrate each by the reconstructed careers of individual functionaries. For reasons of space, the approach will necessarily be anecdotal: therefore, my observations have the status of hypotheses rather than generalizations.

The files of the Asante Collective Biography Project (ACBP) contain a mass of data from which it is possible to draw many more case studies than those presented here.[1] I take this opportunity to express my indebtedness to T. C. McCaskie who codirected the project; to J. Agyeman-Duah who has greatly facilitated its progress; to those many colleagues who have so generously contributed to the growth of the files and to the production of the Career Sheets; and to Michael Culhane who for three years meticulously processed the data. To fully document the sources used in this paper would at least double its length. I have of necessity cited only some of the more readily available works, but the ACBP files on which I draw do, of course, detail the authority for all the case-study material.

PROBLEMATIC: ON THE CLASS OF ADMINISTRATORS AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE CLASS

In earlier studies I have argued that there were developments in Asante government in the late 18th and 19th centuries such that one may validly speak of a process of bureaucratization (Wilks, 1966b; 1975: 414–476). I referred especially to the increasing routinization and specialization of administrative tasks and to the increasing relevance of talent rather than ascribed status in the recruitment of personnel to carry out these tasks. I have, in turn, been taken to task for exaggerating the formal, rational aspects of a system which, my critics argue, was essentially a patrimonial one. No one has expressed these criticisms more forcefully than L. Yarak, whose splendid study of Asante management of its relations with the Dutch in the relevant period merits close attention (Yarak, 1983). I intend this paper as neither a defense nor a retraction of the views I previously expressed, for I believe the problems that have arisen warrant not so much solution as dissolution. Specifically, I suspect that the Weberian concepts we have all used have led us somewhat astray, enmeshing us in an evolutionary model of administrative change in which one (ideal) type of system, the patrimonial, is seen as not only logically but also chronologically prior to another (ideal) type, the formal rational. In this paper I shall be concerned less with a taxonomy of the Asante administrative system than with the emergence of an Asante administrative class. I shall, in other words, though aware of K. Arhin's recent strictures (1983a), prefer a Marxian to a Weberian approach while entering the caveat that Weber himself was never insensitive to the fundamental importance of class formation.

It is notoriously difficult to characterize the class structure of precapitalist societies. Asante is no exception, though R. A. Kea's studies of a number of 17th century Akan polities have provided us with an invaluable lead (Kea, 1982). For present purposes the postulate will be that a class reproduces itself *as a class* and that it does only insofar as it has a determinate and specific, though not necessarily direct, relationship to the means of production. Consider, for example, the Asante class of *adehyee* (singular, *odehyee*), a word commonly but seldom appropriately translated "royals" in English. "The old adage" (and I quote the collective wisdom of the late Asantehene and his councilors in a judgement passed down in 1964 in *Kofi Mensah vs. Kwasi Tiah*), "is that a royal [that is,

odehyee] is one whose ancestor had established or founded a village."[2] This succinct statement defines a class within Asante society according to a set of heritable proprietary rights over land exercised by those who were thereby able to appropriate taxes and services—part of the labor value of others settled on the land.

I have attempted elsewhere to describe the historical formation of the *adehyee* class in the 15th and 16th centuries, and to suggest that its particular relationship to another class, the *gyaasefo,* invites comparison with that between manorial lord and serf in medieval Europe (Wilks, 1977, 1982b). The *asomfo,* or those in administrative service, came to constitute (albeit at a much later date) a class within Asante society in precisely the same sense. The *asomfo* class came to reproduce itself *as a class,* and it did so by virtue of the proprietary control it exercised over particular skills such that those who provided those skills were thereby able to appropriate part of the national wealth (and therefore ultimately of the labor value of the primary producers) in the form of fees, commissions, and other such rewards. Unlike both *adehyee* and *gyaasefo,* however, the *asomfo* class emerged in an urban context and its full development was specific to Asante rather than Akan society in general.

Certain significant changes in Asante administrative practice in the direction of increasing specialization of role and advancement by merit were a feature of the reign of Asantehene Osei Kwadwo (1764–77) (Wilks, 1966b). Such changes were necessary but not sufficient conditions of the formation of an administrative class reproducing itself as a class. What, then, were the sufficient conditions of the development of such a class? These were, I believe, signaled by A. C. Denteh in a paper of 1973. Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame (or Osei Bonsu, reigned 1804–23), Denteh wrote, "was forced by the prevailing circumstances to adopt in a greater measure than ever before, the 'modern' method of carrying out diplomatic practice through emissaries and despatches, and in the signing of treaties. He came to deal directly with the Whiteman at the castles on the coast, and therefore had to adapt himself to the method which would be intelligible to his correspondents, the Whites" (Denteh, 1973, pp. 29–30).

The Congress of Vienna of 1815, which brought to an end the European wars of the previous two decades, had a decisive impact on Asante. An immediate revival of trade occurred. American merchantmen under Spanish flags of convenience began to ply the Gold Coasat in search of cargoes of slaves, and through the Fante middleman Samuel Brew and the Asante factor Kwame Bua obtained entry to the Asante market. General H. W. Daendels arrived at Elmina from the Netherlands early in 1816, immediately established communications with the Asantehene, and proposed, inter alia, a grandiose scheme for the production and export of cotton. It was, however, the British merchants, under the less dynamic leadership of J. H. Smith at Cape Coast, who had the edge on all competitors in the Asante trade, for the major changes in production which had occurred in Britain with the Industrial Revolution enabled many commodities, and especially cloth, to be offered at unprecedentedly low prices.

Two theses may be argued. First, in the circumstances of the post-1815 period it became essential for the Asante government to expand and rationalize its administration. It required the services of functionaries—*afenasoafo, nseniefo,* and *akyeame*—able to negotiate prices and arbitrate disputes with foreign merchants on a regular basis (a Dutch bureau, as it were, and an English bureau). It required others (the *batafo*) to conduct the passages of Asante traders to and from the coast; others (the *nkwansrafo*) to maintain public order along the roads and generally to monitor the flow of commodities; others (the *akwanmofo*) to attend to the physical state of the roads; others (the *togyefo* and *kotokuosoafo*) to collect revenues including the "notes," that is, the monthly payments due from the European establishments along the coast; and so forth.

The second thesis is that Asante benefited greatly from the fall in price of many imported commodities, most easily measured in the gold price of cloth. The profitability of trade increased sharply and large amounts of money were generated in the Asante economy in ways I have outlined (Wilks, 1975:

441–442; 1979: 23–31). Much of this wealth accrued to the treasury by various forms of direct (taxation) and indirect (manipulation of the market) appropriation. The specific appropriations of concern here were those in the form of fees, commissions, and other rewards to which functionaries of the administration were entitled in return for their services; these were, it may be urged, a sine qua non of the development of an administrative class. As such a class evolves, so its members become conscious of collective as opposed to individual interests. If no such collective interests are perceived and indeed articulated, then there may exist within society a class of administrators reducible, in a logical sense, to the totality of individuals comprising it, but there can be no administrative class in the sense of "class" defined above.

It would be overly optimistic to believe that these theses can be developed adequately within the compass of this paper. Accordingly I shall select, somewhat arbitrarily, three particular themes and explore them with reference to material from the career histories, thereby hoping at least to advance the debate a modest stage further.

ON COMING TO THE ASANTEHENE'S ATTENTION

> . . . bring news about us before the Sultan; [my] name is 'Uthmān. (letter in Arabic from 'Uthman in Gbuipe to Suma in Kumase, see Wilks et al., 1986: 220, 233–234).

The writer 'Uthmān Kamaghatay, was a son of the imam of the central Gonja province of Gbuipe. The date was ca. 1820, when 'Uthmān Kamaghatay was a youth unsure of his command of Arabic but nevertheless prepared to use it to bring himself to the attention of Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame. Ghanaians and those familiar with Ghana will readily recognize the genre as a surviving one. Whatever 'Uthmān had hoped to gain from his plea, he could scarcely have foreseen that a little over two decades later he was to be established in Kumase as first Imam of Asante by appointment of Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin (Wilks, 1975: 278, 316). The case of 'Uthmān Kamaghatay is taken as paradigmatic of "coming to the Asantehene's attention" if only because, exceptionally for the 19th century, his letter survives to testify to his initial gambit.

In the period in which the origins of the administrative class are to be sought, that is, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, entry to and advancement within the administration was random in the sense that it was non-routinized. With some of the cases examined below in mind, an observer of the Kumase scene in 1817 remarked that "the barbarian must be original; if he becomes eminent, it is by the force of his own genius" (Bowdich, 1821b: 77). "Coming to the Asantehene's attention" challenged the resources of individuals of genius in a variety of ways, some of them spectacularly idiosyncratic. The cases selected for review are ordered chronologically by reference to the *coup de main* or sometimes, more appropriately, *coup de théâtre.*

The case of Boakye Yam Panin belongs to the former of these categories. Boakye Yam Panin was a son of Anyinasehene Akyampon Kwasi. His mother, however, was from the *asokwafo,* the royal hornblowers, by virtue of which affiliation Boakye Yam Panin grew up as one of the many *ahenkwaa* upon whose services the Asantehene could call. After the Banda campaign of 1773–74, Asantehene Osei Kwadwo imposed a war tax (*apeato*) in order to replenish the treasury. The *asokwafo* were assessed at 30 peredwans, or 67.5 oz. of gold. They were unable to pay it. The Asantehene asked Boakye Yam Panin to persuade his matrikin to find the money. He was unsuccessful in his efforts. In a grand gesture, he therefore paid the whole amount from his own purse. This was in 1777, at about the time of Osei Kwadwo's death. It fell to Osei Kwadwo's successor, Osei Kwame, to show appreciation for Boakye Yam Panin's action. He did so by creating for him a new position as an *okyeame* of state—*Asantehene kyeame.*[3]

Few aspirants to administrative office had sufficient money to adopt Boakye Yam Panin's stratagem. Most capitalized on their eloquence, displaying their command of wisdom rather than wealth. The case of Kwadwo Adusei falls in between. Both maternally and paternally, Kwadwo Adusei was of the *adehyee* class, his mother's brother being Gyakyehene and his father Dwansahene. He was, however, recruited into the *nseniefo,* the roy-

al heralds, whose head had the right to demand the services of any hunchback: for such Kwadwo Adusei was. In or about 1785 a rift occurred between Asantehene Osei Kwame and Dwabenhene Akuamoa Panin. Kwadwo Adusei, who was then seemingly only about 20 years of age, is said to have canvassed the Asantehene and his councilors, maintaining that he could settle the dispute if they agreed that it was better to tell a lie and have peace than tell the truth and have war. Kwadwo Adusei was permitted to proceed to Dwaben and lie in the interests of peace. No one in Kumase ever learned, so it is said, the nature of his prevarication, but the Dwabenhene became immediately reconciled to Osei Kwame.

Kwadwo Adusei had the support of many of the councilors in believing that his deed merited a reward of office. For reasons that are not clear, Asantehene Osei Kwame did not share that view. Kwadwo Adusei had still not achieved the advancement he sought when, in 1803, Osei Kwame was forced to abdicate. In 1805, shortly after the accession of Osei Tutu Kwame to the Golden Stool, Kwadwo Adusei made a second bid for recognition. He was among those who made substantial financial contributions, from their own purses, to the costs of the imminent invasion of coastal Fanteland. This time his strategem was successful. In 1807 he was appointed to the ranks of the state *akyeame.*[4]

The case of Asante Agyei makes an interesting comparison with that of Kwadwo Adusei. Agyei was a youth in the service of Akwamuhene Akoto Panin, ruler of the most powerful of the Asante southeastern provinces. In or about 1806 Akoto Panin was summoned to Kumase to answer certain charges laid against him. Agyei was among his entourage. At the hearing of the case before the Asantehene-in-Council, several Asante envoys gave evidence against the accused. To the surprise of the assembled dignitaries, Agyei rose to protest their misrepresentation of the facts. He spoke—and the story had doubtless become embellished in the telling—for a Castroesque 3 hours and secured Akoto Panin's acquittal. You have *adwerefo* and *sodofo,* those who bathe you and those who cook for you, and all manner of other servants, Agyei is reported to have told the Asantehene, "but you have no people to speak the truth to you . . ." (Bowdich, 1819: 248). Overruling those councilors who called for Agyei's execution for behavior considered presumptuous in one so young, the Asantehene retained him in his service.

Agyei (or Asante Agyei, as he became known) had taken the first step in a career that was to lead him, within a few years, to promotion to a position as state *okyeame* with a particular responsibility for provincial and external affairs.[5] Unlike his older contemporary, Kwadwo Adusei, for whom expediency might from time to time take priority over the truth, Asante Agyei was renowned for his belief that matters were always best resolved by a strict respect for fact (Bowdich, 1819: 249). *Wode nokore ka asem a, awu:* when you hold to the truth, deliberations are resolved.

Anno Panin brought himself to the attention of the Asantehene in rather more bizarre circumstances. He was an *odehyee* of the Mponsie stool in Adanse. In the upheavals of the first decade of the 19th century Mponsiehene Dankwa Ameyaw joined Assin factions in rebellion against the Golden Stool. Anno Panin refused to support his kinsman and presented himself, and his followers, to Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame in Kumase. They were allocated a place to settle and land to farm at Amoaman. Anno Panin's sister, Ago Bame, had chosen to remain with Dankwa Ameyaw. Subjected to abuse vicariously intended for her brother, however, she too finally made her way to Kumase. Anno Panin received her, declared her guilty of disloyalty to the Golden Stool, and beheaded her. He then reported his action to the Asantehene, upon whose powers in matters of life and death he had clearly presumed. Osei Tutu Kwame was angered by Anno Panin's inhumane conduct, but the offender argued with conviction that he had demonstrated that his loyalty to the Asanteman transcended even the closest bonds of kinship. Displaying a singularly appropriate sense of the occasion, the Asantehene appointed Anno Panin to the ranks of the *adumfo,* the royal executioners. Anno Panin had indeed brought himself to attention.

In 1811 Anno Panin was chosen to accompany Kwame Butuakwa on the mission to Gyaman to demand surrender of the golden

stool which Gyamanhene Kwadwo Adinkra had made for himself. The mission was a spectacular success, truly a *coup de théâtre,* and shortly after a new position of state *okyeame* was created for Anno Panin.[6] For reasons that are not clear, Kwame Butuakwa, who headed the mission, received no comparable recognition from the Asantehene at that time although he continued to be employed in a succession of important undertakings. Indeed, it seems that it was not until 1823, and then under pressure from his council, that Osei Tutu Kwame finally created another new position of state *okyeame* for Kwame Butuakwa, in retrospective acknowledgement of his achievement in 1811.[7]

The functionaries discussed above, Boakye Yam Panin, Kwadwo Adusei, Asante Agyei, Anno Panin, and Kwame Butuakwa, all served in the administration of Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame and all achieved the high rank of state *okyeame.* With the exception of Boakye Yam Panin, who died in 1815, all became part of that "team" (see Bowdich, 1819: 257—the Asantehene's *akyeame* "take fetish to be true to each other, and to report faithfully") that handled the many matters arising from the expansion of the external trade in the later part of the reign of Osei Tutu Kwame. All were seemingly men of strong character and high ability, for that nonroutinized method of advancement in the administration, which we have described as "coming to the Asantehene's attention," appears to have resulted in the selection, effectively if not unerringly, of precisely such persons. They were, however, the last cohort of those who owed their careers to such individual and often idiosyncratic ploys.

Although no formal system of examinations was ever developed in Asante to regulate the quality of its functionaries, rational and routinized procedures evolved which served much the same purpose. Briefly, boys were taken into training often at an early age. They served a functionary in one or another of the administrative agencies initially in menial ways, but they were thereby socialized into the specific roles of their masters whom they would from time to time accompany on business; indeed, many early representations of Asante scenes depict such young trainees in attendance on their seniors (e.g., Hutton, 1821, facing p. 214; Lee, 1835, facing p. 164; see fig. 10-1). In this way pools of trained personnel were created, from which promotions to junior positions in the administration were made according to the capabilities of the trainee as perceived by his seniors in service. The trainees were most commonly the sons of functionaries, for by law those holding administrative posts had claims on the services of their sons that took priority over those of their wives' kin; that is, the services of the son of a functionary could not be preemptively demanded by the mother's brother. It must be stressed, however, that in the ranks of the trainees it was not uncommon also to find sisters' sons, sons-in-law, and other kin, and sometimes nonrelatives (Wilks, 1966b: 220–222; 1975: 450–455). The system described above was one of patronage, but I prefer to see it as nepotistic rather than patrimonial. It did, however, produce veritable dynasties of administrators, generation following generation in the service of the Asanteman.

The Boakye Yam Panin Stool is a case in point. On Boakye Yam Panin's death in 1815 his post as *okyeame* was assumed by his son, Oti Panin, whose career was prematurely terminated by his capture at Katamanso in 1826, and subsequent execution.[8] None of Oti Panin's sons was sufficiently advanced in his career immediately to fill the vacant office, but one did attain it later. This was Boakye Tenten, who served the Asanteman with great distinction until his death in 1884, a victim of the internecine struggles that wracked the nation (see fig. 10-2).[9] He in turn was succeeded in office by his son, Kwaku Fokuo, who was one of the architects of reconstruction in the aftermath of the civil war. He was *okyeame* to the embassy to London in 1895, accompanied Asantehene Agyeman Prempe into exile in 1896, and died in Seychelles four years later.[10] The occupants of the Boakye Yam Panin Stool appear to have assumed special responsibilities for the conduct of English affairs. They were in charge of Dutch affairs throughout much of the 19th century, and the succession of patrikin to the office has been documented by Yarak (1983, passim).[11]

The pattern of succession to the Boakye Yam Panin and Boakye Yam Kuma Stools

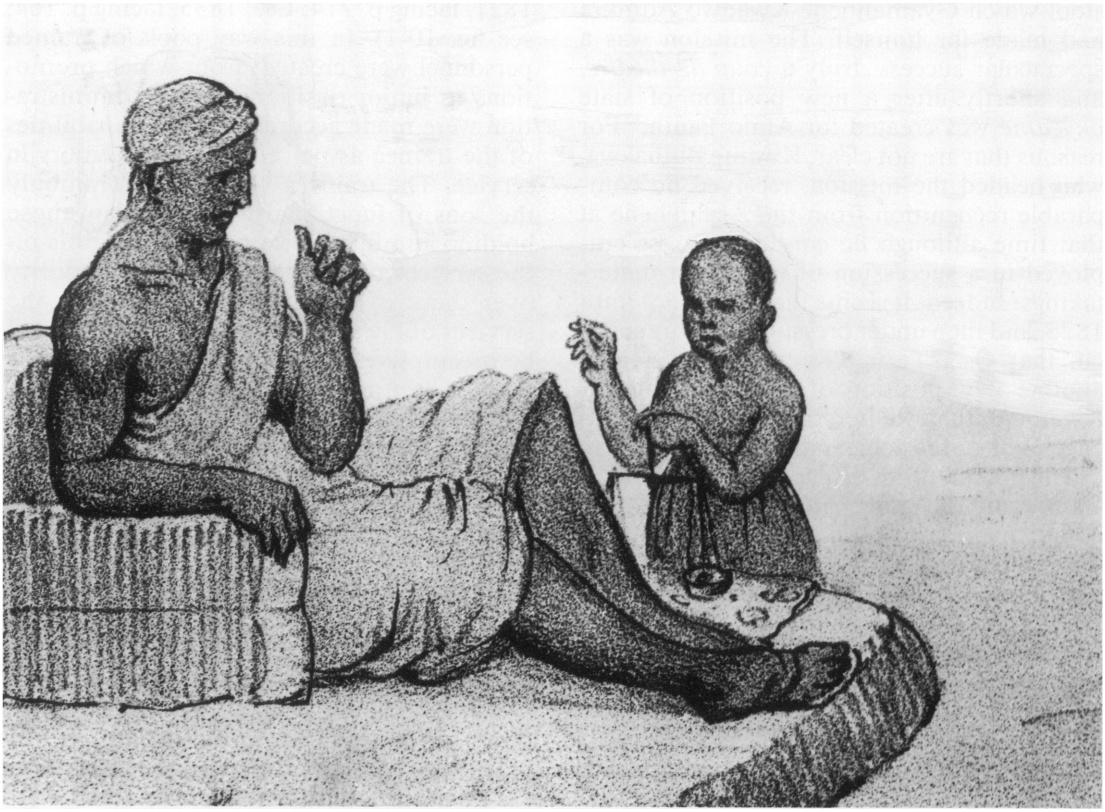


Fig. 10-1. Kumase treasurer training child to weigh gold dust, 1817. (Lee, 1835, Plate IV, probably based on a sketch by T. E. Bowdich)

is characteristic of that to many other administrative offices in the 19th century. In the reign of Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin (1834–67) even in the senior echelons of service there were few, if any, functionaries who had achieved their rank other than through the trainee system. For example, Yaw Poku,[12] destined to become the Asante representative in Bonduku during the last quarter of the century, was nephew and successor of Anno Panin. Kwasi Apea,[13] an influential functionary in the governments of Asantehenes Kwaku Dua Panin and Kofi Kakari, was sister's son, son-in-law, and successor of Kwame Butuakwa. As the trainee system took hold, so a change in the nature of the administration is discernible. The flamboyant and even maverick character of many functionaries in the early 19th century appears to give way to the efficient but low-key character of those in the middle of the century. McCaskie has commented on "the combination of efficiency and self-effacing anonymity" of Kwame Poku Agyeman, most senior of the *akyeame* under Kwaku Dua Panin.[14] Objectively, it may be argued, an administrative class had come into existence, reproducing itself as a class by the exercise of a virtual monopoly over the provision of certain services to the Asanteman and by the appropriation of the prescribed rewards for those services. The *adehyee* class was an hereditary class; the administrative class was not. It cannot be too strongly stressed that the trainees under the new system acquired not hereditary rights to office but rather the skills which peculiarly, if not uniquely, fitted them for office.

ON DOING ONE'S PROPER JOB AND ON DOING IT PROPERLY

"How often have I tried to keep together the power and kingdom of Asante by my eloquence,

but they would not have it"—Okyeame Kwame Butuakwa. (see Reindorf, 1895: 181)

". . . discussing matters of wisdom, I could hold my own. But this is a matter of might"—Okyeame Yaw Boaten. (see Casely Hayford, 1903: 70–71)

Kwame Butuakwa was a man of the early, and Yaw Boaten of the late, 19th century, but their statements testify to the sense that such administrators had of the centrality of their role in sustaining civil society. *Ohene nya ahotrafo paa, na ne bere so dwo:* when a ruler has good counselors, then peace will prevail. In the course of the 18th century Asante was transformed from a union of small *aman* clustered around Kumase to the center of an imperial system that extended over most of the present day Republic of Ghana and embraced parts of what is now the eastern Ivory Coast and western Togo. The transformation was accomplished by the *osahenfo,* the military establishment, and three of the 18th century Asantehenes, Osei Tutu (died 1717), Opoku Ware (ca. 1720–50), and Osei Kwadwo (1764–77) have special places in the Asante remembrance of the past for the vigorous and bellicose leadership they provided. The last war that was truly a war of expansion was fought against the coastal Fante in the early part of the reign of Osei Tutu Kwame. Thereafter an extraordinary change in the dominant ideology of the Asanteman occurred. The concept of the state as a system of coercion began to give way to the concept of the state as civil society. Kwaku Dua Panin (see McCaskie, 1974) is memorialized in Asante tradition as the Asantehene who used the military only in the last resort, and no war of expansion was launched during the three decades of his reign (the few campaigns that were fought were intended to restore order in disturbed and peripheral territories already within the Asante ambit). The contrast with the reigns of the 18th century rulers is sharp.

The replacement of the militaristic values dominant in the 18th century by the civil values dominant in the 19th can be viewed as closely linked with the emergence of an administrative class articulating the new values in both theory and practice. We may wish to follow that admirable commentator on such matters, Antonio Gramsci, in suggesting

Fig. 10-2. Boakye Tenten as head of Mission, 1881: A third-generation administrator from the Boakye Yam Panin stool. (Bodleian Library, Oxford)

that the administrative class, though organically bound to the rulers, was nevertheless a hegemonic class, that is, one extending its own class values to other classes in society. If we do so, we must also follow the spirit of Gramsci in recognizing that we are not indulging in a taxonomic exercise but offering an analysis of a determinate historical process. We must, in other words, be prepared to show that the trajectory of change can be recognized empirically.

In 1817 Bowdich had no hesitation in describing Asante as a "military government" (Bowdich, 1819: 120). "The higher order of captains," he wrote (ibid.: 249), "consider that war alone affords an exertion or display of ability, and they esteem the ambition of their King as his greatest virtue. They have no idea of the aggrandisement of a state by civil policy alone." Four senior military commanders in the capital constituted a sort of junta. They advised the Asantehene on domestic matters but were able to mandate broader issues of imperial and foreign policy, thereby making "the nation more formidable to its enemies, who feel that they cannot pro-

voke with impunity, where there are so many guardians of the military glory . . ." (ibid.: 252).

The outlook of these "guardians" is apparent from Bowdich's graphic description of the meeting which he and the other members of the English mission had with the Asantehene and his council on 24 May. At issue was the matter of the Fante Notes. James, the leader of the mission, confirmed that Governor Smith had fixed the Cape Coast Note at a paltry quarter of an ounce of gold a month. "There was nothing but commotion, wrath, and impatience," Bowdich commented:

> The captains, old and young, rushed before the King, and exclaimed . . . "King, this shames you too much; you must let us go to night and kill all the Fantees, and burn all the towns under the forts." They then presented themselves successively with their bands of music and retinues, and bowing before the King, received his foot upon their heads; each then directed his sword to the King (who held up the two first fingers of his right hand) and swore by the King's head, that they would go with the army that night, and bring him the books [i.e., the Notes], and the heads of all the Fantees. (Bowdich, 1819: 59)

On this occasion Osei Tutu Kwame was able to restrain the generals, who were in point of fact more concerned with the disturbed situation in the northwest than with the Fante country, already devastated by years of fighting. Indeed, the imminence of the campaign against Gyaman appears to have obliged the Asantehene to attempt to resolve the problems in the south by negotiation rather than arms, for it was a cardinal principle of Asante strategy never to campaign on two fronts simultaneously. Accordingly a slew of administrative functionaries made their way to the coast, each assigned specific responsibilities. Among them were Kwame Butuakwa, Asante Agyei, Tanno, Adu Borade, Owusu Dome, Akwa Amankwa, Kwaku Sakyi, Kra Nyame, and Kra Dehyee, some of whose fortunes we shall follow in this section.

In 1817 Bowdich was fully aware of the influence which some individual administrators had with the Asantehene, but he had no sense that the class of administrators was potentially a force of change. Indeed, he commented specifically on "the impotence of the royal messengers in state affairs" (by which he must have meant the *asomfo* in general) and remarked that they were "jealously watched by the other parts of Government" (Bowdich, 1819: 134). We suggest that it was in the later years of Osei Tutu Kwame's reign, and principally in the context of southern affairs, that the administrative class came of age. It took the military disasters of Osei Yaw Akoto's reign (and I include the internecine struggle with the Dwaben equally with the catastrophic defeat at Katamanso in this category) to give the civil administrators a decisive political advantage over the generals. Finally, in 1839–40, Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin carried out a series of political purges that greatly curbed the power of the traditional military establishment (Wilks, 1975: 488–489). Thereafter the growth of royal absolutism and the consolidation of the administrative class proceeded in step, each an aspect of the other.

The case of Tanno Asiakwa, or Taasiakwa, who achieved high administrative rank in the middle part of Osei Tutu Kwame's reign, reveals something of the currents of conflict into which a functionary might find himself drawn.[15] Tanno was, from the Kumase point of view, a provincial. He was an Akyem Abuakwa, and specifically an *odehyee* or "royal" of Asiakwa town. At the beginning of the 19th century he held the position of Asiakwahene. As such, he was also Akyem Abuakwa Nifahene, that is, Commander of the Right Wing under the Okyenhene or ruler of Akyem Abuakwa. In 1810 Okyenhene Ata Wusu Yiakosan failed to attend the annual Odwira in Kumase, a signal of revolt. At the end of the year he carried out the massacre of a party of traders and functionaries returning from the coast of Kumase. Tanno proclaimed his continuing loyalty to the Asantehene and rallied those factions in Akyem Abuakwa unprepared to support the rebellion. Such was his success that Governor Henry Meredith at the British lodge in Winneba regarded him as ruling Akyem Abuakwa jointly with Ata Wusu Yiakosan (Meredith, 1812: 169). We may be sure that Tanno had come not only to the attention of Governor Meredith but also of the Asantehene. Indeed, Osei Tutu Kwame had ordered Anantahene

Apea Dankwa[16] and Gyaasewahene Opoku Frefre[17] to take the field against the rebellious Akyem, but before the two commanders arrived at the front Tanno had assumed the initiative, expelling Ata Wusu Yiakosan from his capital and forcing him to fall back to the southeast.

Tanno joined Opoku Frefre's forces in the subsequent pursuit of the Okyenhene. The details of the campaigns are not of concern here. In mid-1811, however, the army lay in the vicinity of Accra and, pursuant to an order from the Asantehene, Opoku Frefre sent an embassy from his field headquarters to Christiansborg to negotiate an agreement for peace and trade with the Danes. It was headed by Okyeame Kwadwo Adusei (whose career has been touched on above), and Tanno was made a member of it. Tanno thus gained what was presumably his first experience of central administrative procedures under the tutelage of Kwadwo Adusei.

Opoku Frefre was ordered to return to Kumase probably in September 1811. As was customary procedure, a review of the campaign was held by the Asantehene and his council. It is clear that Tanno's role in the events of 1810–11 was subjected to scrutiny, and that his fidelity to the Golden Stool was acknowledged (Meredith, 1812: 169; Bowdich, 1819: 123). The Asantehene, however, apparently took the view that priority must be given to the restoration of tranquillity in Akyem Abuakwa and that Tanno's return to Asiakwa might well provoke renewed dissension. Tanno was required to reside in Kumase, and Anantahene Apea Dankwa was asked to find land on which his followers might settle and farm. A tract at Barakese, some 15 miles northwest of the capital, was placed at their disposal. Tanno spent five years in enforced retirement. It was not until 1816 that, perhaps on the recommendation of Kwadwo Adusei, the decision was taken to employ him in the central administration.

In the upheavals of 1811–16, sections of the Wassa people were believed to have given assistance to Fante dissidents. Following the success of the Asante armies in the south, the Wassa sought to make their peace with the Asantehene rather than risk invasion. They approached the Dutch Director-General in Elmina, H. W. Daendels, and requested him to act as mediator. Daendels was only too pleased to accept the role, for one of his principal policy goals was to build a new road through the Wassa country to open up Dutch trade to Kumase and beyond. Daendels sent Willem Huydecoper as envoy to the Asantehene, inter alia, with instructions to explain the plans for the road to Osei Tutu Kwame.

Huydecoper arrived in Kumase on 22 May 1816, but the Wassa problem was not taken up for almost a month. At a meeting of the Council of Kumase on 19 June the Asantehene observed that his dispute with the Wassa was a comparatively trivial one and that he would be content if Daendels induced the Wassa to apologize, in the presence of Asante envoys, and swear henceforth to keep the peace. The next day, under pressure from representatives of (one assumes) the military interest, the Asantehene took a rather different line, saying that the Wassa affair was rather more serious than had been allowed and that fines would be imposed before it could be considered settled. This decision was confirmed at a third session of the council on 22 June. A messenger was instructed to proceed to Elmina. His commission was carefully delineated. He was to say that the Asantehene agreed that Daendels should hold talks with the Wassa authorities "to make the world good," but it was to be made clear that the initiative was not coming from the Asantehene who could just as easily send an army to drive the Wassa out of their country. There was, however, one specific matter which had to be resolved separately, namely, that of prisoners of war held in Wassa to which the Asantehene laid claim. It was decided that the task of negotiating their surrender should be given to Tanno.

Tanno was already in conference with the Wassa authorities by the third week in July. Daendels, assuming that Tanno was competent to negotiate a broader settlement with the Wassa, drafted 24 articles of peace and despatched them to him by messenger. By the terms of the articles the Wassa were to acknowledge the Asantehene as their sovereign; to pay him an indemity as well as an annual tribute, and to open the roads through Wassa to trade. Tanno was to subscribe to the articles as deputy of the Asantehene, pledging the latter's word. Tanno and the

Wassa representatives were then to meet Daendels in Komenda, where the Dutch Great Seal would be placed on the agreement. A report of these proceedings was carried back to Kumase by a messenger who reached there on 11 August. He also informed the council that Daendels had given letters to Tanno to bring to Kumase, referring presumably to the articles of peace.

Late in August Daendels learned that Tanno had finally persuaded the Wassa to accept the articles of peace. On 4 September 1816, Daendels issued a document under the Dutch Great Seal to the effect that Tanno had informed him of the settlement, and a fine of 50 oz. of gold was set on any infraction of the articles, payable to the Asantehene. Tanno left Elmina with all the relevant documents on 5 September. He also carried a letter of that date from Daendels to the Asantehene.

> I am [Daendels wrote] extremely pleased with Tando. He is a trusty servant of his King and has not made his purse in Wassa, for he has not been able to buy anything and has even left behind the guns that he had already bought for want of gold. We have given him some presents and subsistence, but he is worthy of further reward from the King his Master, and of being in future always employed as the chief confidant of his King in weighty commissions for he has intelligence, judgment and patience, three qualities so necessary in a negotiator.

With such a testimonial to his capabilities, Tanno's new career in the central administration might well have looked secure. He continued about his business with confidence. He appears to have returned to Wassa to exercise his ingenuity and patience in persuading Wassa envoys to return with him to Kumase and there negotiate the amounts of the indemities and tribute. The Asantehene was quite perplexed by the delay, though some reports of Tanno's proceedings began to reach the capital through unofficial channels. On 7 November a messenger was sent from Kumase to inform Tanno, ominously, that he might do as he pleased but that he should forward the communications from Daendels. His actions, he was told, were not pleasing to the court at Kumase and that he would have to account for them sooner or later.

Tanno did not arrive in Kumase until 14 November. The following day he met with the Asantehene. The communications from Daendels were translated by Huydecoper. Late at night on 18 November the Asantehene summoned Huydecoper to the palace. Clearly Tanno had been closely interrogated over the preceding days. Tanno, Huydecoper was told, had acted without orders in making peace with the Wassa; that it was customary to collect damages before and not after a settlement was drawn up; that it was Daendels who had been asked to settle the country but Tanno had taken over this task, persuading the Wassa to negotiate with him and not Daendels in order that he, Tanno, might "fill his own purse." Therefore, the Asantehene announced, he repudiated Tanno's agreement. On 29 November the Asantehene had Huydecoper write to Daendels to this effect. The Asantehene gave Daendels a brief history of his disputes with the Wassa, assured him that he still wished to cooperate on the building of the new road, still wanted Daendels in the name of the Dutch to ensure that the Wassa made no trouble, and intimated that he would regard his disputes with the Wassa as settled after they had paid an indemnity of 190 peredwans. Throughout these proceedings the envoys from Wassa had not been allowed to enter Kumase. They finally did so on 4 December and the next day appeared before the council. Apparently aware of the way the debate was going, they said that Tanno had misled them: that they had understood from him that they were only required to assure the Asantehene of the loyalty of the Wassa chiefs, and that they were not empowered to settle the matter of damages and tributes. There was uproar in the council. Numerous of its members swore the Great Oath to attest their readiness to invade the Wassa country.

Tanno was disgraced and all his property confiscated. "No man must dare to do good out of his own head," the Asantehene is reported to have declared in judgement, "or perhaps he would find he did bad, as Tando had done, in spoiling a palaver which he [the Asantehene] and his great men meant to sleep a long time" (Bowdich, 1819: 123). In 1811 Tanno had also taken an initiative in driving the rebellious Okyenhene from his capital. He was, it is true, removed from his position

as Asiakwahene and required to reside in Kumase, but he continued to enjoy royal favor and after a few years was compensated with a job in central administration. Why, then, did the Asantehene take such draconian measures against Tanno in 1816? In 1811 Tanno had a standing that he lacked in 1816. In 1811 he was Asiakwahene of Akyem Abuakwa; in 1816 he was an agent of the central administration. In 1811 he could not and did not violate the procedures of an administrative class to which he did not belong; in 1816 he did just that. There can be little doubt that Tanno's display of initiative in negotiating the Wassa settlement in 1816, a settlement apparently highly advantageous to the Asanteman, incurred the opposition of members of the military establishment in the capital, who saw the settlement as preempting their future intervention in Wassa affairs—in effect, as transferring it from the domain of the military to that of the civil authorities. This is to locate Tanno's downfall in the realm of conflict between the military establishment and the civil administration. There is, however, a further dimension to the matter.

It will be recollected that Tanno's contemporary, Kwame Butuakwa, had also taken initiatives that had unsought for results, earning him the sobriquet Kotwebrefo, "one who creates troubles," but not, it seems, serious censure. Why were Kwame Butuakwa and Tanno, both at the relevant times agents of the central administration, treated so differently? Part of the answer must lie in the different backgrounds of the two men. Kwame Butuakwa, whose public life from the beginning had been shaped by the mores of the administrative class, seems not to have been unduly interested in the pursuit of power and wealth, and indeed maintained such a low profile that Daendels had seen no impropriety in having him publicly flogged in 1816. Tanno, by contrast, as Asiakwahene had enjoyed all the power, authority, and privilege of chiefly office. This he was not lightly able to discard. In 1817 an Accra gold taker recollected the visit Tanno had paid to the coast, presumably in 1811. He appeared, the Accra man said, "in great pomp, never going the shortest distance, but in his taffeta hammock, covered with a gorgeous umbrella, and surrounded by flatterers, who even wiped the ground before he trod on it." In enforced retirement between 1811 and 1816, Tanno was reported to have enjoyed "the most luxurious life the capital could afford" (Bowdich, 1819: 123). It is difficult to believe that Tanno did not make enemies of those who envied, or deplored, his pretentious style of life, and that the Asantehene did not see it as unbecoming in one who had become, in status, a royal servant: *kyeame dane ohenepa, yekyi.* In short, we suggest first, that Tanno failed to make the necessary transition from the behavior expected of a member of the *adehyee* class to that expected of a member of the administrative class, and second, more generally, that already by the later part of the reign of Osei Tutu Kwame the norms of conduct of administrators were sufficiently rigid to make recruitment from the *adehyee* class if not impermissible, at least inadvisable. In mid-1817 Tanno was pointed out to Bowdich; he was a beggar, the Englishmen remarked, "with scarcely a cloth to cover him." The sad story of Tanno has a happy, or at least an appropriate, ending. He was, as it were, allowed to revert to his true identity. He and his followers fought with distinction in the Gyaman campaign of 1818–19, and shortly after he was reinstated as Asiakwahene of Akyem Abuakwa. He died there in battle in 1823, once again defending the interests of the Golden Stool against those of his Akyem compatriots who sought to transfer their allegiance to the embryonic British administration on the Gold Coast.

Whatever may have been the precise combination of factors that led to Tanno's failure in the central administration, his competency was not at issue. We may accept the testimony of Daendels on this point.

On this matter the case of Kra Nyame presents a telling contrast.[18] Kra Nyame was a subordinate of Kra Dehyee, the Akrafohene who presided over that section of the palace known as the *akrafieso* where the swords of state, Bosompra and Bosommuru, were kept. In mid-1817 Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame chose him to carry messages to Governor John Hope Smith in Cape Coast, inter alia, requesting preferential terms for purchases of guns and gunpowder. The Asantehene also intimated that he intended to appoint Kra Nyame the Collector of the Fante Notes once

all outstanding disputes had been resolved. Kra Nyame, he pointed out, "never was allowed to go from him before. . . . [he] always sleeps near him and hears all his thoughts. . . . because he knows all [his, the Asantehene's] palavers, that he would not trust to a common Ashantee, what this man will say is what he himself would say." Not wishing to leave anything to chance, Osei Tutu Kwame even mandated the way in which he wished the "gentlemen" in Cape Coast Castle to treat Kra Nyame: "that any of the Gentm. who see him must do this man good, and that will be the same as doing good to the King himself. That as all the gentm. cannot see the King, they must look on this man the same as the King; and lend him any Gold if he wants it, and the King will pay them and thank them."[19]

Despite the confidence which the Asantehene reposed in his personal attendant, Kra Nyame was clearly not the man for the job. Nothing in his career in the palace had equipped him to move with ease and confidence in an environment so alien as that of Cape Coast. Not surprisingly, Kra Nyame was received there with little of the respect accorded the more seasoned and professional of the Asantehene's emissaries. We can best obtain a sense of the problem from the writings of Bowdich's wife, who was staying in Cape Coast at the time. She was not a racist, but Kra Nyame greatly offended her bourgeois sensibilities. He invited himself to dinner with the good lady and arrived five hours early with a motley crowd of some 50 retainers. "I was obliged to tell the Okrah that I could not have him all day," Sarah Bowdich complained, "and he left me in no very good humour." He reappeared at the appointed time, when his hostess had to persuade him to leave all but one chosen companion downstairs. She was amused by the attempts Kra Nyame made, at his own request, to eat with a knife and fork; somewhat put out by his suggestion that half the fish course should be sent to his wife who was among those excluded from the table; and embarrassed when she found out that a religious taboo precluded Kra Nyame from partaking of the chicken pie. Finally, to Sara Bowdich's great relief, the quantities of wine and porter quaffed by her guest made him sleepy. He begged to retire. "After this," she lamented, "it was difficult to keep him at a distance, and he thought himself entitled to come at all hours of the day" (Lee, 1835: 176–177).

Kra Nyame was sensitive to the fact that the English gentlemen (and gentlewoman) of Cape Coast had not treated him "the same as the King." On his return to Kumase on or about 9 August 1817, after an absence of some seven weeks, he informed the Asantehene that Governor Smith would seldom see him and that he gave him neither appropriate presents nor compliments. Bowdich, who was still in Kumase and in receipt of personal letters from his wife, remarked that the Asantehene "felt his private feelings hurt," and accused Kra Nyame of lying. When his messenger's box was opened, however, it was found to contain only two engravings, probably gifts from Sarah Bowdich. Accordingly Bowdich wrote to Smith to ascertain exactly what had been given the emissary. The governor's reply showed that Kra Nyame had received four gallons of rum, twenty pounds of pork, one basket of rice, one sheep, biscuits, and on his departure, one piece of silk, ten handkerchiefs, and one umbrella (Bowdich, 1819: 131). Bearing in mind the number of retainers that Kra Nyame had with him, the presents, being for the most part consumables, were indeed paltry and looked all the more so in comparison with the generous gifts which the Asantehene lavished on the British visitors to his capital. The fact remained, however, that Kra Nyame's mission to Cape Coast had not been a success. He was accused by Bowdich of falsehood, ingratitude, and baseness, and by Smith of gross misrepresentation, while Sarah Bowdich described him as a "good-for-nothing" and an "unworthy specimen of Asantee manners" (Bowdich, 1819: 94, 131, 134; Lee, 1835: 177). Bowdich reported that Kra Nyame was disgraced, and Sarah Bowdich added that he was stripped of all he possessed. Certainly the Asantehene did not proceed with his servant's appointment as Collector of the Fante Notes, though it seems that he did subsequently employ him in northern affairs. In mid-1822 or mid-1823 the Imam of Gbuipe, in Gonja, wrote a letter to the Asantehene. There was an addendum to it addressed to Soma, one of the Imam's relatives then resident in Kumase, who was

requested "in the name of Allah and his messenger, [that] the slave [of the] Sultan, Karayami, [should] not reach the place of our women" (Wilks et al., 1986: 220, 233). The sense of the Arabic is obscure but it is clear that Kra Nyame ("Karayami") was once again the subject of complaint. No later references to him have been found, and it was presumably decided that he did not measure up to the increasingly demanding standards expected of senior administrators.

Adu Borade was in the vicinity of Cape Coast at the same time as Kra Nyame, commissioned to resolve the matter of the outstanding fines which had been imposed by the Asantehene on the people of (British) Komenda. His background was in marked contrast to that of Kra Nyame. Adu Borade was born in or about 1796. He was by matrifiliation on *odehyee* of Boaman, but by patrifiliation *oheneba,* specifically a son of Opoku Fofie who reigned as Asantehene for a few weeks in late 1803 and early 1804.[20] Unlike Kra Nyame, Adu Borade was no stranger to English ways. On 25 June 1806, Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame had taken the surrender of Colonel George Torrane, President of the Council of Merchants at Cape Coast. In a characteristic gesture of conciliation to those over whom he had prevailed, Osei Tutu Kwame decided to entrust a wellborn Asante to Torrane's care. His choice fell on Adu Borade, a personable boy of about ten. No one could have anticipated the extent of the affection that Torrane lavished on his ward. He suited him out in English clothes and probably began to have him taught English. The reader must judge the significance of the report that Torrane took Adu Borade "into the fort to make pleasure with him."[21] Torrane died at the end of 1807 but Adu Borade continued to enjoy the patronage of the English officials for some time. When he finally returned to Kumase he had, for an Asante, a unique knowledge of upper middle class English ways. He was probably the first Asante Anglophile.

Under the circumstances, it is scarcely surprising that, on reaching maturity, Adu Borade was employed in negotiations with the Europeans. In mid-1817 he served on a mission to the Dutch in Accra and, on his return, was immediately reassigned to the Komenda case. The Asantehene wrote to Governor Smith to inform him of the commission. Adu Borade, he said, "is the white man's friend, and the King considers him the same to Governor Smith as he was to Col. Torrane, and the same as a Cape Coast boy; and the King sends him to settle this [Komenda] affair and hopes the Governor will take good care of him."[22] Like Kra Nyame, Adu Borade was entertained by Sarah Bowdich. Unlike Kra Nyame, she found him a delightful guest. "A better behaved person," she wrote, "never appeared." She appreciated his fascination for a portrait of her husband (known to him in Kumase), to which he would address lengthy remarks. She allowed him to use her piano, and was much relieved to find that the many friends he brought to hear him make the "vilest din that could be conceived" were never allowed by him to so much as touch the instrument. Governor Smith, too, treated Adu Borade with something approaching camraderie. He presented the Asante with a set of regimentals worn by officers, and had him taken aboard HMS Cherub then at anchor in the Cape Coast road (Lee, 1835: 177–178). The four hundred "flags" hoisted on the rigging happened to be washing, but Adu Borade was not to know that (Bowdich, 1819: 418). The idyll was soon shattered by the harshness of the real world. A member of Ado Borade's staff was thrown into jail by the English supposedly for having insulted the "castle." He died that night. The English said that he had committed suicide, but Adu Borade suspected murder. He reported the matter to Kumase, but the Asantehene decided to take no action. Thereafter Adu Borade's relations with English officialdom declined as he came to realize the ambivalence of Governor Smith's attitude towards the Asanteman.

There is nothing on record to suggest that Adu Borade did not discharge his responsibilities efficiently and in accordance with his commission. Indeed, he negotiated a settlement of the Komenda dispute which was accepted in Kumase, and was then required to remain in Cape Coast and keep a watchful eye on the affairs of the town. There were, however, powerful interests in Kumase suspicious of Adu Borade's success. Their sentiments were voiced by Gyaasewahene Opoku

Frefre who, although the top-ranking administrative official in the government, had also had a long and distinguished fighting career and was associated ideologically more with the old guard of generals than with the rising civil administrators. He had heard, Opoku Frefre remarked, that

> Adoo Bradie had been on board a ship, and that 400 flags were hoisted to receive him, that was the reason, he said, that they did not wish any of the King's people to learn to read and write, they became white men, and saw so many fine things, they never thought of returning to Ashantee. . . . Every one was pleased, he said, to think any Ashantee great man was well used at Cape Coast; but it turned their heads, not being accustomed to it. The King would give Adoo Bradie fetish when he came back, and if he told the King lies, the fetish would catch him, and where would be the good. The English would have all their trouble for nothing. (Hutchison *in* Bowdich, 1819: 418)

Opoku Frefre's was the authentic voice of the 18th century. It was all too much for Adu Borade. Disillusioned by the duplicity of the English, viewed with suspicion by partisans of the old ways in Kumase, he opted out of service. It was probably in the course of the Gyaman campaign of 1818–19 that his maternal uncle, Boamanhene Owusu Tia, died. Adu Borade accepted the vacant stool. He is that comparatively rare case of an Asante who voluntarily relinquished a promising career in administration, to revert (as Tanno had done in different circumstances) to the *adehyee* class from which he had sprung. As Boamanhene he fought at Katamanso in 1826 and in the internecine struggle with the Dwaben in 1832, in which he perished.[23]

The three case histories reviewed in this section are of individuals whose careers in administration were terminated. That of Kra Nyame faltered as a result, it seems, of sheer incompetence; nothing in his background had fitted him for the responsibilities he assumed. Both Tanno and Adu Borade, however, had (in their own respective ways) the experience which enabled them to function efficiently in the discharge of the commissions assigned them. The record suggests that both were men of a quality that the Asanteman greatly needed as it faced the challenges of a rapidly changing external world. Yet Tanno was sacked from the administration, and Adu Borade quit. Both, we have seen, incurred the opposition of the traditional military establishment which remained powerful in the reign of Osei Tutu Kwame, yet we hesitate to accept this as a sufficient explanation of the failure of their administrative careers.

Kra Nyame, Adu Borade, and Tanno all owed their careers to Osei Tutu Kwame. None was what we have called a "trainee." All were first-generation administrators, Kra Nyame recruited from the palace attendants, and Adu Borade and Tanno from the *adehyee* class. None belonged by background to the new administrative class which was, we have argued, slowly emerging. In this context, the most significant aspect of the reign of Osei Tutu Kwame is probably that which is least open to investigation. We can follow the careers of high-level administrators who won their place in the historical record, but we can know virtually nothing of the junior members of the service, of those in training who were only to achieve high office two or three decades later but who were, collectively, nurturing the new administrative class values. In the reign of Osei Tutu Kwame we still encounter the administrator whose career was predicated on having come to the Asantehene's attention in one way or another, but who was obliged to curry favor with the military or risk falling from grace. By the time of Kwaku Dua Panin, however, we meet the administrator trained from childhood into the service, a member of a class that had come to exercise a considerable degree of autonomy and regulate the affairs of its members in accordance with established codes of professional conduct.

ON THE LIMITS OF TOLERABLE CONDUCT

> Adoosey's friends alleged that he ought not to pay anything, because when any palaver comes he settles it at once; but if he is not there, they have to go to council. (Hutchison *in* Bowdich, 1819: 393)

The subject of the comment was Kwadwo Adusei (whose earlier career under Osei Kwame, and promotion to *okyeame* under Osei Tutu Kwame in 1807, has been briefly reviewed above). The time was November

1817. The issue was one of corruption. Kwadwo Adusei was accused of having taken a bribe to misrepresent a case coming before the Asantehene. Although he had more influence with Osei Tutu Kwame than any other of the *akyeame,* he feared for his life and sought the intercession of one of the "junta" of four, Gyaasewahene Opoku Frefre. He escaped with a heavy fine of 20 oz. of gold and several sheep, but retained his office. Clearly there were those who thought the fine unduly harsh in view of Kwadwo Adusei's meritorious service to the Asanteman. The case, then, raises the whole issue of standards of conduct in the administrative service.

Since the details of Kwadwo Adusei's offense are not known, we shall set aside his case for the present and consider that of the Collector of the Danish Note which also became something of a cause célèbre in 1817. The Collector's identity is in some doubt, but he may have been Bekoe, the "Becqua, captain of Danish Accra" to whom Bowdich made reference. If so, he was a second-generation administrator, his father Kwame Adwuma having held the same post until his death in 1811 (Wilks, 1975: 138). However that may be, sometime in mid-1817 the Collector received payment on the Danish note, valued at 3 oz. of gold per month, for 1816 and 1817, paid up to the end of the year. Apparently on his return to Kumase he handed into the treasury only 49 oz., retaining the balance for himself. Subsequently challenged on the matter, he denied that any sum had been paid in advance on the note. A search of his house revealed, much to the surprise of the Asantehene, that he had the actual note in his possession, and that the notation on it showed that it was indeed paid up to the end of 1817. Bekoe, if Bekoe it was, was arrested on 24 November and all of his personal money was ordered seized. The Asantehene was in an extraordinary rage about the matter. It is therefore quite astonishing to find the collector going about his business as usual only a week or so later, preparing to travel to Danish headquarters at Christiansborg once again. He had, in fact, offered large presents to two members of the "junta," Kumase Krontihene Amankwatia and Kumase Akwamuhene Kwakye Kofi, for their intercession with the Asantehene. *Tete ara ne enne:* force of tradition obliged the Asantehene to accept the intervention of his senior generals in the case (Bowdich, 1819: 134, 389, 400–401, 404–405).

On 26 May 1817, two envoys were commissioned to proceed to the Gold Coast to resolve the outstanding matter of the Fante notes. It took an *okyeame* a good two hours to brief them. They left Kumase three days later, having been allowed 18 days of travel and 12 days to transact their business. They returned to the capital on 5 July, having been away 38 days. They apologized for their lateness, explaining that they had had to convene a meeting of Fante representatives at Abora. The Asantehene had information to the contrary. "You tell me a lie," he claimed; "you fined a captain there four ounces of gold for breaking an Ashantee law, and you waited to procure and expend the gold, not intending it should be known." The envoys admitted the truth of the accusation and were immediately placed in irons. One of them was fortunate to be the brother of Yaw Kokuroko, a senior official in the Asantehene's household shortly to be promoted Nkonnwasoafohene.[24] Yaw Kokuroko stepped in and paid 6 oz. of gold to secure his brother's release. We do not know what happened to the other envoy (Bowdich, 1819: 66–67, 76, 294).

In none of the three cases reviewed was the offending functionary dismissed from office. In two of the cases members of the "junta" intervened in the interests of the culprit. Clearly those custodians of (18th century) tradition did not regard peculation with the same aversion they felt towards innovation, as instanced in the cases of Tanno and Adu Borade outlined above. We can, in fact, be confident that this was the case. In a somewhat indiscrete conversation with William Hutchison, Opoku Frefre confided that "their interests obliged them to cheat the King a little," and he went on to explain that it was this that led him to oppose the Asantehene's desire to have functionaries tutored in European ways (Bowdich, 1820). Another member of the "junta," Adumhene Adum Ata, expressed precisely the same sentiments (Bowdich, 1819: 416). Apropos of these remarks, McCaskie has commented on the self interest of the Asantehene's powerful councilors, "men who had nothing to gain and

everything to lose by an upset of the *status quo*" (McCaskie, 1972: 34). The area was one, it seems, of potential conflict between traditional and emergent values in Asante society. It was not so much that corruption was incompatible with efficient administration (for the two still go hand in hand in many a modern political machine), but rather that the toleration of corruption was linked with the suppression of innovation.

That the sources of revenue traditionally guaranteed to the occupants of military office were not available to those in administrative positions is of cardinal importance to an understanding of early 19th century Asante politics. Pay days, as it were, for the holders of senior military titles—the Bantamahene, for example, as Krontihene or Kumase commander-in-chief, the Asafohene as Akwamuhene or second-in-command, and so forth—were the Adaes which occurred twice in every Asante month of 42 days. On these occasions the Asantehene dispensed to each a share of the national revenues, the amount being variable but the proportion fixed in accordance with an elaborate scale laid down in the early days of the kingdom. Administrative functionaries, however, were remunerated on a quite different system, one that was essentially a rate for the job. We do not know when this method of payment was introduced, though we might guess that it was in the reign of Osei Kwadwo whose "honourable patents" granted to revenue collectors were still respected by Osei Tutu Kwame (Bowdich, 1819: 83). However that may be, the system is well attested for the latter part of Osei Tutu Kwame's reign (Wilks, 1975: 441). Bowdich, for example, remarked generally that an envoy collecting a fine or tribute of 100 oz. of gold was entitled to a fee of 15 oz. for his services (Bowdich, 1821a: 27). A particularly well documented case is that of the Komenda fine which, as we have seen, Adu Borade was authorized to collect. The Komenda offered to pay 120 oz. This was found acceptable in Kumase, but only on the understanding that a further 30 oz. would be paid to Adu Borade and his associates who had negotiated the settlement.

It was the case, then, that whereas the military men received from the Asantehene an income determined by traditional schedules, the administrative functionaries were entitled to levy their fees and commissions at source. *Ahenkwaa nim som a, ofa ne tiri ade di:* in effect, a functionary who knows his job is entitled to his commission. It may be that the very possibility of the emergence of an administrative class in Asante was predicated on the introduction of this distinctive form of remuneration for services provided. In one respect the system represented a degree of rationalization of rewards; it was linked to performance rather than royal bounty. In another respect it fell far short of a salary system that would provide functionaries with reliable sources of income. Senior officials such as the *akyeame* might be assured of a reasonably constant income since their services were continuously in demand, but for those of lesser rank employment might be sporadic and still dependent on royal caprice. The temptation to peculation among functionaries, to fill one's purse while the going was good, was therefore considerable. What is surprising is that peculation was apparently regarded as a misdemeanor rather than a crime against the state. Perhaps we should see the readiness of the generals to intercede on behalf of delinquent functionaries as their way of attempting to retain a measure of control over those who were challenging their preeminence in Asante society.

Sika ne ohene: money is king. *Sika sene biribiara nsen bio:* nothing is as important as money. Power in 19th century Asante was inextricably linked with wealth (Wilks, 1979; McCaskie, 1983a). It is likely that a relatively tolerant view of peculation was taken insofar as it was "in house," for the ill-gotten gains of a functionary ultimately accrued to the state through the system of death duties (Arhin, 1974b). A functionary might appropriate a little of the Asantehene's income for his own use in life, knowing that the Asantehene would appropriate the greater part of his accumulated wealth at death. Paradoxically perhaps, the saving grace of the Danish Collector's transgression, or that of Yaw Kokuroko's brother, was precisely that it was the Asantehene they were cheating. Their peculations were not likely to raise protests from the Danes or the Fante, necessitating new rounds of investigation and negotiation. Instructive, by contrast, is the case of Kwame Bua.

Nothing is yet known of the background

and early career of Kwame Bua.[25] He was clearly of some seniority in service by 1815 when, an Asante army having effectively invested Cape Coast, he conducted negotiations with the Africa Committee's governor, E. W. White. Kwame Bua was a man who enjoyed an extravagant style of life and apparently supplemented his legitimate income with money and goods exacted from those over whose affairs he had authority. He was, Bowdich wrote, "universally odious, for his cruel extortions," and it seems that he was severely censured ("disgraced") by the Asantehene in late 1815 or early 1816 (Bowdich, 1819: 116). His career, however, suffered little interruption, for he was assigned a new position in which his insensitivity to suffering may have been something of an advantage. He became principal Asante Factor in the trade with the slavers plying the Gold Coast under Spanish colors.

In April 1817 Kwame Bua was on business on the Gold Coast. Requiring to pay a visit to Kumase, he prevailed upon Kwame Butuaka to recommend him as guide to the James' Mission then about to depart for that city. It was a lucrative journey for Kwame Bua. In addition to whatever payment he received from his charges, he pocketed all the gold he was given to purchase provisions on the road, simply appropriating in the name of the Asantehene all that was required. Soon after his arrival in Kumase, Kwame Bua vanished for six weeks; he was, we may guess, arranging the supply of slaves from more northerly towns. Whatever the case, he returned to the capital seriously ill with a liver complaint. The Asantehene sent him a sheep and a peredwan of gold which paid for the sacrifices and prayers made for his recovery. Despite these, and the ministrations of the physician to the English mission, Kwame Bua died in late August (Bowdich, 1819: 103, 106, 115–116, 155).

The offense of Kwame Bua was extortion. His conduct was such as to create unrest among those of the Asantehene's subjects with whom he had dealings. We do not know whether Kwame Bua would have been subject to further disciplinary action had he lived, but the interesting point is that legislation was introduced to prevent precisely the abuses which he, and doubtless many of his peers, had perpetrated:

> All persons sent on the King's business shall no longer seize provisions in any country, whether tributary or otherwise, in his name; but requiring food, shall offer a fair price for the first they meet with, if this is refused, they shall then demand one meal, and one meal only, in the King's name, and proceed.

The law was extended to apply not only to functionaries of the Asantehene but also to those of his *asafohenfo*. The penalty for violation was set at 110 peredwans, or almost 250 oz. of gold (Bowdich, 1819: 255–256). We happen to know of this particular enactment because Bowdich was present at its promulgation. We do not know whether it was a singular piece of legislation on Osei Tutu Kwame's part or one of a series of decrees by means of which he sought to regulate the conduct of his administrators. We may note in this context, however, the Kwaku Dua Panin, credited with being the most pacific of rulers, is remembered also as a prolific lawmaker.

At this juncture we may return to Kwadwo Adusei. His career history[26] based on more than 100 items carded for the most part from contemporary written sources, testifies to the range of talents which he brought to the service of the Asanteman over a period of half a century or more. Visitors to Kumase wrote of his astuteness, eloquence, and statesmanship. He was at the peak of his career in 1820, when William Hutton made his acquaintance. "He has a very pleasing, handsome and animated countenance," the Englishman noted, "and is one of the most shrewd and sensible men at the Ashantee court" (Hutton, 1821: 268–269). A comparison of the standing of Kwadwo Adusei with that of the members of the "junta" yielded an interesting observation. "Apokoo [Opoku Frefre] and the other three, who form the aristocracy," wrote Hutton, "may have more power than Adoosey, but I incline to think, from the situation he holds as head linguist, as well as from his great abilities, both as an orator and a statesman, that they have not more influence" (Hutton, 1821: 272–273). The situation was soon to change. In 1823 Osei Tutu Kwame was physically ailing; the British under the pathological Asantephobe, Sir Charles MacCarthy, were systematically dismantling the whole edifice of agreements that Asante administrators had patiently negotiated over

the previous six years; and, not surprisingly, the generals in Kumase commanded much popular support in their demand for a military solution to the problems.

Osei Tutu Kwame died late in 1823. In some disregard for normal constitutional procedures, the military establishment proclaimed Osei Yaw Akoto the new Asantehene (Wilks, 1975: 179–1880). In this period of transition the Denkyirahene Kwadwo Tsibu was in Kumase. Kwadwo Adusei and those of like persuasion saw him as a key figure in sustaining Asante interests in the south. The generals regarded him as a threat to those interests and sought to hold him prisoner in the capital. In a move that must have required considerable courage in the circumstances, Kwadwo Adusei organized the Denkyirahene's escape. Thereafter the *okyeame* appears to have temporized with the new regime until the disaster at Katamanso convinced him that Osei Yaw Akoto had to be removed from office. His attempts to muster support for that measure, however, soon came to the Asantehene's attention. Kwadwo Adusei was arrested and put on trial. The charge was that of treason, in having arranged the escape of the Denkyirahene from Kumase. It did not help Kwadwo Adusei's case that Kwadwo Tsibu had fought against the Asanteman at Katamanso, nor that persons were found to testify that the *okyeame* had taken money from him. Kwadwo Adusei was found guilty and he and many of his family were put to death probably in mid to late 1829.

We can be reasonably confident, in the light of the cases reviwed in this section, that Kwadwo Adusei's downfall had nothing to do with corruption and everything to do with politics. He represented a threat to the traditional military establishment in that he epitomized the values of the new civil administration. The threat was all the more real in that Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame, while still capable of providing the Asanteman with military leadership, had himself been much affected by the new ideas that were abroad. Hutton (1821: 315) made the point quite unambiguously: "His Majesty is courteous and dignified in manners, humane and liberal in disposition, and able and eloquent in argument; more so than any of his counsellors, excepting Adoosey, the minister premier." As long as Osei Tutu Kwame was alive, Kwadwo Adusei was secure. Once Osei Yaw Akoto came to office, and the political pendulum had swung in favor of the generals, Kwadwo Adusei had the choice of either compromising with the new regime or risking his career (and, as it turned out, his life). One of the most notable features of 19th century Asante politics was the polarization of the opposition between war and peace interests, or between imperial and mercantilist ideologies (Wilks, 1975: 671–692). Kwadwo Adusei was an early victim in a struggle that was later to claim many men of both persuasions.

REFLECTIONS

This paper has been an excursion into a controversial aspect of Asante history. As such it would be quite inappropriate to offer conclusions, though a few reflections may be in order. The themes touched upon have been explored by recourse to materials drawn from the career histories in the files of the Asante Collective Biography Project. One cannot but be aware of the range of personality variables represented in the sampling. Indeed, it is easy to become involved in the lives of those we have discussed, perhaps excusing Kra Nyame on the basis of his inexperience, regretting Adu Borade's decision to abandon a promising career in the service, deploring Kwame Bua's insensitivity to suffering, and so forth. One might be tempted to bring order to the data by recourse to a typology of personalities in the manner of, for example, Downs (1967), who identified "climbers," "conservers," "zealots," "advocates," and "statesmen," or in that of Carson (1969), who would have us score individuals for "managerial," "responsible," "cooperative," "docile," "self-effacing," "rebellious," "aggressive," and "competitive" traits. Such an exercise would doubtless have a certain heuristic value, but is as likely as not to lead us out of the field of history and into that of clinical psychology.

The problematic of this paper was identified as the development of an Asante administrative class reproducing itself as a class. The central problem of the paper is that of understanding the connection between the administrative class on the one hand, and the

individuals constituting that class on the other, for I take it that only an extreme form of reductionism would permit the equation of the administrative class with the totality of individual administrators. To put the point in a different way, we have to relate microstudies of single subjects, in this context functionaries of the administration, to macrostudies of evolving institutions, in this context the administrative class.

It should be possible, in principle, to move from a knowledge of the careers of single functionaries to an understanding of the administrative system or from a knowledge of the administrative system to an understanding of the careers of single functionaries. In practice the nature of the data base for Asante makes the second procedure a highly risky one. In the first place, much of the source material derives from the writings of European traders, missionaries, and officials who were essentially transients. They were often excellent reporters of the immediate scene but lacked the vantage point from which to describe, other than cursorily and often inaccurately, the deeper structures of Asante society. Witness, for example, the inability of Bowdich, one of the most perspicacious of observers, to do more than offer a brief and anecdotal account of "Constitution and Laws" quite lacking in any reference to institutional change (Bowdich, 1819: 252–260). In the second place, the other major source of material, namely the orally transmitted stories of the past, tend also to treat specifics and to be locked into the short term in which individuals live out their lives rather than the longer term in which institutions take shape.

The Asante material is, then, admirably suited to the reconstruction of individual case histories but not, immediately, to the description of institutional development. We are therefore obliged to look for some form of analysis that will transport us from individual careers to an understanding of the institutional systems that encompassed those careers. The work conducted to date within the framework of the Asante Collective Biography Project has been almost exclusively concerned with the reconstruction of individual career histories and aggregation of the accumulated data has not been seriously attempted. It is only fair to add that the techniques of such analyses remain, in general, much discussed but only haltingly practiced (e.g., Greenstein, 1975: 120–140). The development of administration has long been a neglected aspect of Asante history, though one which has recently engaged the attention of a number of scholars. I believe that in time we shall come to appreciate the extent to which the Asanteman was held together during the upheavals of the 19th century by cohorts of administrators working together to maintain the framework of civil society, articulating an ideology of nationhood that enabled a fundamental consensus to survive not only the bitter internecine struggles of the 1880s but also the traumatic loss of independence at the turn of the century. At the present, this is no more than an intuition, an hypothetical projection from the evidence. I am sure, however, that it is through a continuing concern with detail, the microcosms of individual careers and the like, that we shall ultimately work our way toward a better understanding of the more general characteristics of Asante society and of its place within comparative and indeed "global" studies.

NOTES

1. ACBP: The Asante Collective Biography Project, launched in 1973 with the support of the Program of African Studies, Northwestern University and, from 1976 to 1979, of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The project files will ultimately be placed on public deposit. Progress reports have appeared as Asante Seminar, nos. 1–6, 1974–76, and Asantesem, nos. 7–11, 1977–79.

2. Manhyia Record Office, Kumase, Ghana: Kofi Mensah vs. Kwasi Tiah, 27 November 1964.

3. Asante Collective Biography Project [hereafter ACBP], Career Sheet ACBP/117.

4. Career Sheet ACBP/22; see Asante Seminar, 5: 5–9.

5. Career Sheet ACBP/6; see Asante Seminar, 3: 5–7.

6. Career Sheet ACBP/56.

7. Career Sheet ACBP/3; see Asante Seminar 2: 5–7; and ACBP files, revised sheet.
8. Career Sheet ACBP/602.
9. Career Sheet ACBP/4; see Asante Seminar, 6: 5–13; and ACBP files, revised sheet.
10. Career Sheet ACBP/48.
11. And compare Career Sheets ACBP/36, Kwadwo Akyampon, ACBP/8, Akyampon Yaw, and ACBP/61, Akyampon Tia; see Asantesem no. 7: 5–13; no. 9: 5–14, 33–36.
12. Career Sheet ACBP/95.
13. Career Sheet ACBP/650.
14. Career Sheet ACBP/12.
15. Career Sheet ACBP/69.
16. Career Sheet ACBP/23.
17. Career Sheet ACBP/1.
18. Career Sheet ACBP/1027.
19. T.70/41, Bowdich to Smith dd. 13 June 1817. Treasury Papers, Public Office, London.
20. Career Sheet ACBP/42; see Asantesem, 10: 16–20.
21. T.70/40, Hutchison's Notes, 9 July, 1817. Treasury Papers, Public Record Office, London.
22. T.70/40, Hutchison's Notes, 9 July 1817. Treasury Papers, Public Record Office, London.
23. Career Sheet ACBP/42.
24. Career Sheet ACBP/43.
25. Career Sheet ACBP/1016.
26. Career Sheet ACBP/22; see Asante Seminar, 5: 5–9.

CHAPTER 11. KWASI BOAKYE AND KWAME POKU: DUTCH-EDUCATED ASANTE "PRINCES"

Larry W. Yarak

ABSTRACT

This paper describes aspects of Asante-Dutch relations and the Asante response to European imperialism in the 19th century as revealed by the different consequences of a European education for two young Asante princes. Both princes received an upper-class Dutch education, but ultimately grew alienated from Asante society, leading to suicide in one case and a failure to return to Africa in the other case. Their biographies shed light on the nature of Asante-Dutch relations and also on the processes of alienation as they occurred in the last century.

INTRODUCTION

On 20 March 1837 a high-ranking Dutch embassy, headed by Royal Commissioner Major-General Jan Verveer, slipped out of Kumase, commencing the overland journey back to Dutch headquarters at Elmina.[1] Verveer had just successfully completed a series of negotiations with Asantehene Kwaku Dua Panin (reigned 1834–67) vital to Dutch colonial interests both on the Gold Coast and in the Netherlands East Indies (present-day Indonesia). Among the more than 600 officials, carriers and hangers-on that comprised the returning embassy were two young Asantes, both about 10 years old: Kwasi Boakye, a son of the Asantehene, and Kwame Poku, son of Akyempemhene Adusei Kra and a royal of the Golden Stool. At the request of the Asantehene, the boys were to be sent to Europe to be educated. For both youngsters the departure from Kumase on 20 March was the beginning of a process of almost total cultural alienation from their motherland. In the case of Kwame Poku the end result would be a tragic suicide; in the case of Kwasi Boakye, a remarkable career—though one also marked by its share of misfortune—as a mining engineer and coffee planter in the Netherlands East Indies.

Though the careers of Kwasi Boakye and Kwame Poku have not been entirely unknown to modern historians, little work has been done in the extensive Dutch documentary sources (see, e.g., van Dantzig, 1966; Wilks, 1975: 204, 205, 662). Research by several scholars in the Netherlands National Archives and elsewhere has produced a remarkable amount of data regarding the careers of the two Asante youths (Kwasi Boakye in particular) from the time they left their homeland. This paper reconstructs what is known of the lives of these Asantes, not simply because they are interesting in their own right, as indeed they are, but also because their lives raise basic issues in Asante history concerning the ambivalent attitudes of the Asante political elite toward the desirability of sending young Asantes off to acquire a European-style education. The paper also explores the ambivalent view of life in the homeland on the part of those Asantes who were, in fact, so educated, and to varying degrees acculturated, an ambivalence that may perhaps survive in the modern day diaspora of highly trained Ghanaian citizens.

THE VERVEER EMBASSY

The unusual careers of Kwasi Boakye and Kwame Poku had their origin in the 1831 decision of the Dutch Ministry of Colonies to use its "possessions" on the Gold Coast as stations for the "recruitment" of West Africans into service in the Netherlands East Indies army.[2] This ill-fated move was inspired by Great Britain's successful use of slaves as soldiers in the West India Regi-

ments, which the Dutch held in high regard (see Buckley, 1979). As the several observers of the Dutch recruitment process noted, those recruited were overwhelmingly slaves who were put at the disposal of the Dutch authorities by their masters against the initial payment of a sum of gold, and the promise of additional periodic payments to the slave's master, which were deducted from the soldier's salary.[3] Ironically, since British recruitment in Sierra Leone for service in the West India Regiments had also involved coercion, it was British merchants and officials who denounced the Dutch recruitment effort as a new slave trade on the Gold Coast, and finally forced the Dutch to cease recruitment there in 1842 (Metcalfe, 1962: 223–225).

From 1831 to 1835 the Dutch recruitment effort was limited to Elmina, though from the beginning the governors at Elmina proposed that the Asantehene, a Dutch "ally," be approached for his assistance.[4] Since early results of the recruitment at Elmina had left much to be desired—in the first year of operation only some 44 recruits were signed on—the Ministry of Colonies decided in 1834 to follow this advice and exploit the exceptionally good relations then prevailing between the Dutch and Asante for the benefit of the recruitment effort.[5] Accordingly, in 1836 Major-General Verveer was appointed Royal Commissioner with instructions to proceed to Kumase in order to arrange with the Asantehene two distinct operations: first, the establishment of a permanent "recruitment depot" at Kumase, manned by a Dutch officer; and secondly, the direct provision by the Asantehene of 1000 recruits per year against Dutch deliveries of firearms.[6]

Verveer's entourage arrived at Elmina from the Netherlands on 31 October 1836. On 7 November Jacob Huydecoper (an Afro-European officer in Dutch employ, and the son of Willem Huydecoper, who had been Governor H. W. Daendels's emissary to Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame in 1816–17) departed from Elmina to Kumase in order to advise Kwaku Dua of Verveer's intention to visit his capital on official business.[7] The Asantehene sent one "Caboceer Poku" (possibly Akyeamehene Kwame Poku Agyeman), accompanied by four "captains" and some 400 retainers, to Elmina to serve as escort for the Dutch embassy.[8] Led by Poku and his followers, the Verveer embassy departed for Kumase on 7 January 1837. It bore numerous gifts and was accompanied by a military brass band.[9] The total number in the traveling party is reported to have exceeded 1000, making it among the largest European diplomatic missions ever to visit the Asante capital. In order to allow some of the palenquin-mounted baggage to pass through the forest it was necessary for the entire route to Kumase to be widened to five feet.

The embassy was forced to halt at the town of Eduabin for three weeks, while the Asantehene attended to the burial of the Kokofuhene who had died on 20 January. Finally, on 13 February Verveer entered Kumase where he was greeted by a crowd estimated at 67,860 (the secretary of the embassy counted 117 "large umbrellas," each accompanied by approximately 400 armed men and about 180 slaves and retainers). A month of negotiations followed, culminating in a contract between Verveer and the Asantehene, dated 18 March 1837.[10] It stipulated Dutch delivery of firearms to the Asantehene against his provision of recruits to a newly appointed Dutch agent in Kumase (Huydecoper), at the rate of 1000 per year. As a guarantee for the Asantehene's keeping his side of the bargain—for the Dutch presented him with some 2000 guns in advance, equal in value to 32,500 guilders (abbrev., fl.), or 325 slave-recruits—the king handed over two of his close relatives to Verveer: Kwasi Boakye and Kwame Poku.

It thus seems to have been the Dutch who requested that the king should provide "hostages," though it is interesting to note that the contract made no mention of this part of the arrangement. In any case, it seems to have been the Asantehene's idea that the boys accompany Verveer back to the Netherlands and be given a European-style education.[11] Kwaku Dua's request was in keeping with his grant of permission less than a year earlier for the two Asante "hostages" in the hands of the British, Owusu Ansa and Owusu Nkwantabisa, to proceed to Britain to be educated. In this respect the young Asantehene exhibited an interest in European education that was quite different from that of his predecessors; Asantehene Osei Yaw Akoto

(reigned 1823–34), for example, had simply refused to allow the two Owusus to leave the Gold Coast when the British governor suggested they could be better educated in Britain (Metcalfe, 1962: 204). Verveer willingly acceded to Kwaku Dua's request; indeed, in his later report to the Dutch government on his mission, he reckoned this proof of the special feelings that the Asantehene held for the Dutch. In keeping with Akan practice, it appears to have been the Asantehene's assumption that the Dutch government would pay the expenses involved in the boys' education, which it ultimately did.[12]

EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

Verveer initially placed the boys in the care of an Elmina-born officer in Dutch service, Peter Welzing.[13] On 24 April Verveer, Welzing, the two boys, and the rest of the Dutch embassy departed from Elmina, and arrived in Holland at the end of June.[14] By September Verveer had found an acceptable placement for the youths in a respected boarding school run by S. J. M. van Moock, a man of German descent, which was located in the town of Delft near The Hague.[15] The boys were lodged in a room in the home of van Moock; thus began a long and close relationship between the van Moock family and Kwasi Boakye. The Ministry of Colonies appropriated fl. 1000 per year for each boy's expenses, for a total equivalent in Asante terms of 50 ounces of gold.

During the next six years, Kwasi Boakye and Kwame Poku received what can be described as the fundamentals of a solid bourgeois education, one no doubt superior to that provided more or less simultaneously to the two Asante youths sent to England for study (Owusu-Mensa, 1974). Besides the basics of reading and writing, foreign language study (French and German), history, geography, religion, and mathematics, the youths were given lessons in dancing, music (the piano, trumpet, and clarinet), art, and fencing.[16] In 1841 van Moock reported that he had never seen Dutch children learn so much in so short a space of time.[17] The boys were provided with clothing appropriate to the Dutch upper class into which their education was assimilating them: straw hats, silk umbrellas, monogrammed shirts, fur-trimmed caps, and evening gloves.

The Ministry of Colonies required that the youths' guardian[18] submit annual reports on their progress. The report for 1839 stated that on 24 April 1839, Kwasi Boakye celebrated his birthday, and received a chess set as a present.[19] This is the earliest reference to a date of birth for the youngster and raises the issue of the two youths' precise ages. All available sources agree that Kwasi Boakye was ten years old in 1837; but one later reference (Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch Indië, 1923: 121) gives the exact date of birth as April 29 rather than April 24, as is found consistently in the earlier references. A check of the calendar shows that the 24th was a Tuesday, whereas the 29th was a Sunday; the day-name Kwasi indicates that the 29th would therefore be preferred. What then was the origin of the 24th? It seems no coincidence that Kwasi Boakye left Elmina with Verveer and his cousin on 24 April 1837. It is likely therefore that this date (minus ten years) was selected rather arbitrarily as a birth date for Kwasi Boakye, and that the Verveer embassy had simply been told in Asante that Kwasi Boakye and Kwame Poku were about 10 years old.[20] Only one reference to Kwame Poku's birth date has so far been recovered, indicating 21 June 1827; not uncoincidentally, 21 June 1837, seems to have been about the date (a Saturday) that the two boys first arrived in Europe.[21]

Religious instruction was considered vital to the "civilization" and "moral development" of the two youths. The annual reports to the Ministry of Colonies always made mention of this aspect of their education. By the end of their instruction at van Moock's school both boys were considered sufficiently "developed" for them to be baptized and make statements of the faith in the Dutch Reformed church in September 1843.[22] That such instruction in religious and moral precepts included some exposure to prevailing European notions of racial hierarchy is clear from the exaggerated concern that the boys' teachers appear to have had that they come to appreciate "the privileges that they have enjoyed above so many of their countrymen."[23]

At the same time there is good evidence

that as the boys grew older they were assimilated into upper-class social life in Delft, and at The Hague, the nearby Dutch capital. One specific reference notes that in 1841 they were invited to a "soiree" at the residence of the Baron Westreenen van Tiellandt, a member of the Council of State, and the High Council of Nobility.[24] At other times they were guests at the court of Willem II, king of the Netherlands, and at the home of Duke Bernhard of Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach; the duke's sons, Herman and Gustaaf, became close friends (Weekblad voor Indië, 1904–5: 172; Linse, 1905: 48). At the king's court the boys befriended various members of the royal family, including the crown prince (destined to become Willem III) and his cousin Princess Marianne, and Princess Sophie, the wife of Duke Karel Alexander of Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach, nephew of Duke Bernhard. As one biographer observed, the youths were truly "treated as Princes" (Nieuw Nederlandsch Biographisch Woordenboek [hereafter NNBW], 1927: col. 144).

From relatively early in their studies at van Moock's boarding school the boys displayed divergent talents. In general Kwasi Boakye surpassed his cousin in virtually all academic subjects, and showed particular acumen for the sciences.[25] Kwame Poku, by contrast, showed talent in the areas of music, drawing, and physical exercise. He appears to have acquired particular skill on the piano.[26] Both boys were thus seen as exceptions to the prevailing Dutch cultural prejudice against "children born in the tropics."[27] In regard to health, Kwame Poku was said to have possessed the stronger physical constitution, seldom being struck by the chest disorders that seem regularly to have afflicted Kwasi Boakye.[28] The latter also contracted an eye illness in 1845 which required that he wear glasses.[29] Gradually the boys' guardian and teachers came to be convinced that Kwasi Boakye was destined for a career in which his intellectual talents would be put to use, whereas Kwame Poku should pursue a more practical or physically rigorous career.

While they were in the Netherlands, Asantehene Kwaku Dua made efforts to stay in touch with his son and nephew. Late in 1838 he sent to Elmina for forwarding to the Netherlands 6 oz. of gold dust, and two sets of gold chains and rings.[30] The gold dust was intended for their upkeep, and the jewelry as gifts; with the latter the boys were reportedly especially pleased. In September 1843 Kwaku Dua sent to inquire at Elmina about his "family in Europe"; the query was forwarded to The Hague, and in response Kwasi Boakye wrote a letter to his father.[31] In November 1845 the Asantehene again inquired about the boys with the Dutch governor at Elmina, expressing his desire that the boys return to Asante as soon as possible.[32]

As the youths' studies at van Moock's school approached completion, the Ministry of Colonies began actively to consider plans for their futures. Some thought was given to preparing them as missionaries in Asante for the Dutch Reformed faith, but this was soon abandoned, apparently at the boys' own objections (Linse, 1905: 44; NNBW, 1927: col. 144). In 1843 Minister of Colonies J. Baud wrote a letter to the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London asking for advice on the further education of his charges. It was Baud's intention to send the princes back to their motherland within two years, "as instruments of social civilization."[33] Beecham, secretary of the Society, responded with the suggestions of the Rev. Brooking, who had recently returned from missionary work in Kumase, that the boys receive a *practical* training: medicine, civil engineering, agriculture. Their model, wrote Beecham, ought to be that of Peter the Great of Russia.[34]

These recommendations appear to have been taken to heart. In August 1843 Kwasi Boakye successfully completed his entrance examinations and was registered at the newly founded Royal Academy in Delft to study civil engineering.[35] One year later, apparently because he lagged somewhat behind his cousin in academic achievement, Kwame Poku also was registered as a student at the Academy.[36]

KWAME POKU'S RETURN AND SUICIDE

Kwame Poku spent only one year at the Delft Academy. It was decided that he simply did not have the capacity for the work there.[37] He was then enrolled in a military school at The Hague, but after a short while he left this

institution, again because the quality of his work was unacceptable (NNBW, 1927: col. 144). Nevertheless, he seems to have been attracted to military life, and ultimately he achieved the rank of corporal. Early in 1846 Kwame Poku expressed his willingness to return to the Gold Coast without his cousin, and asked that he be given a position in the Dutch colonial service on the Gold Coast.[38] The Minister of Colonies thus faced the problem of returning Kwame Poku to Asante without having fulfilled the Wesleyan missionaries recommendations regarding practical education. Therefore, it was decided to give the young Asante royal instruction in the use of the lathe.[39] What the intended practical benefits were of such instruction is difficult to decipher. Nevertheless, at considerable expense Kwame Poku not only received lessons in the use of the lathe, but one was purchased for him by the Ministry, along with all appropriate tools, and the whole was transported to the Gold Coast for his use there.[40]

In September 1847, Kwame Poku boarded a Dutch ship for West Africa.[41] He arrived at Elmina toward the end of the next month, and was given an apartment in the main Dutch fort there.[42] On 30 November Dutch Governor van der Eb dispatched a messenger to Kumase to inform the Asantehene of the safe return of his nephew on the coast, and to ask him when he desired to have his nephew return to the Asante capital. The messenger also carried a letter from Kwame Poku to the king written in Dutch.[43] Van der Eb also informed the Asantehene that Kwame Poku could no longer speak "the Asante language." At the end of January messengers from the king arrived at Elmina to inform the Dutch governor that Kwaku Dua was pleased at his nephew's return, but that he wished Kwame Poku to remain at the coast until he had learned to speak Twi again.[44] The king included a letter in reply to that of Kwame Poku and a gift of 2 oz. of gold.

Some two years later, in the evening of 22 February 1850, Kwame Poku placed his hunting rifle, a gift of the Dutch government, to his head and in the solitude of his bedroom committed suicide.[45] Reporting his death to the Ministry of Colonies van der Eb noted that "in the last four or five months" Kwame Poku had exhibited symptoms of "mental illness."[46] The circumstances that produced this tragic situation remain somewhat obscure. In a foreshadowing of Kwasi Boakye's later experience in the Dutch East Indies, there is good evidence that Kwame Poku was frustrated by his poor prospects of advancement in the colonial military service (Linse, 1905: 46). He had arrived at Elmina with the rank of corporal, but, as he later wrote to his cousin, he had been promised promotion to lieutenant within three months. He still did not have his promotion more than two years later; an independent source agreed that it had been "held up" (Linse, 1905). Moreover, shortly before his death Kwame Poku wrote to his brother that he was being treated by the Dutch authorities like a "prisoner," and was not allowed to have regular contact with the people of Elmina. This claim was disputed many years later by another Dutch official who was on the coast at the time (Linse, 1905). Whatever was the case, that Kwame Poku had a legitimate complaint at having been passed over for promotion is easy to accept when account is taken of the subsequent treatment of Kwasi Boakye in the Dutch East Indies: certainly by the mid-19th century, Dutch colonial rule rested on notions of racial superiority and inferiority that made it unacceptable to have an African in a position of commanding European subordinates.

But a blocked promotion alone does not seem sufficient to explain Kwame Poku's suicide. Equally important, it appears, was Kwame Poku's unhappiness with the prospect of returning to Asante where he would assume a position inconsistent with his aspirations (Linse, 1900: 720, 1905: 46). During his years in the Netherlands he had been led to believe that he was "next in line to the throne" of Asante, and during his last years in the Netherlands he expressed to his cousin his desire to return and become a "ruling monarch" (Linse, 1905: 45). Kwasi Boakye reportedly warned him that he would be disappointed; that "the Ashanti people would never submit to a king who had become acquainted with a European culture, and who wanted to rule under its influence" (ibid.: 45–46). However valid Kwame Poku's claims to the kingship may have been at the time of his departure from Asante in 1837, they seem

certainly to have diminished by 1848.[47] He must have realized this not long after his arrival.

This may also explain the ill-treatment he apparently received at the hands of his uncle, the Asantehene. At no point in his more than two years at Elmina is there evidence that word was sent from Kumase that Kwame Poku should even visit his homeland. Kwaku Dua may have had good political reasons for not sending for his European-educated nephew—in particular, the threat the king and others seem to have perceived from the growing community of Christian royals and young men in the Asante capital (McCaskie, 1974: 219–223)—but the precise reasons for his failure to do so are now very difficult to reconstruct. It may also have been that the political tide had turned against those who espoused the cause of Asante acquisition of European training; the celebrated 1842 incident involving British-educated Owusu Nkwantabisa's affair with the wife of a prominent Kumase chief may be relevant here (Owusu-Mensa, 1974: 53–59). In any case, Kwame Poku reportedly felt in his last days that "his compatriots bore ill-will towards him" (Linse 1905: 46).

Finally, there is evidence that Kwame Poku was ambivalent about returning to Asante in any capacity. Governor Van der Eb reported as early as March 1848 that Kwame Poku was intent upon a military career, and that though "he wishes to see his family . . . he will never have the opportunity to establish himself in Kumase where almost daily inhuman sacrifices, and so on, occur."[48] In other words, the process of cultural alienation may have proceeded to the point that Kwame Poku was himself reluctant to return permanently to his homeland. It is probable that all of the above factors—disappointment in career prospects at Elmina, political difficulties concerning his return to the court in Kumase, and a personal ethical crisis regarding life in Asante which may have arisen as a result of his acculturation—contributed to his growing sense of despondency. Many years later a still angry Kwasi Boakye expressed himself bitterly over the death of his cousin:

> In 1837 Poco departed from the fort at St. George d'Elmina for Europe with the full honors of royalty. Ten years later he returned as a corporal in military service to the King of the Netherlands; he had to play soldier in that same fort and was treated as a prisoner of state. Two years passed and Poco remained a corporal in service, until 1850 when he took his own life with the same gun with which he had been enticed and taken in.
>
> That was thus the good faith, the fulfillment of the promises of the Dutch government! That was certainly Christian treatment on the part of those [good] Christians. What was my cousin after all? A black, a negro, to whom an orthodox, pious Christian owed not the least fidelity nor fulfillment of promises. (Linse, 1905: 47 [my translation])

KWASI BOAKYE'S TRAINING AS A MINING ENGINEER

As noted above, Kwasi Boakye entered the Royal Academy at Delft in 1843 and enrolled in courses preparing for a career as a civil engineer. A fellow classmate later described the Asante prince as "a genial, faithful comrade, who had many friends" (Linse, 1905: 47). Most Academy graduates were expected to take positions in government service, and early in their academic careers students were tracked into specialties that fit government needs. Kwasi Boakye thus appears to have been placed with a group of students who were trained as mining engineers in the colonial service, for which the courses in civil engineering were considered preparatory. In 1847, after impressing all of his instructors with his abilities, Kwasi Boakye passed his examinations for civil engineer "with distinction" (NNBW, 1927: col. 145).

While at the Royal Academy Kwasi Boakye made a number of friends who were to remain close to him for the rest of his life. Among these were Hendrik Linse and Jacobus Lebret. Following his training as a civil engineer at the Delft Academy, Linse worked on a number of public projects including the draining of marshland and construction of the national railroad network (NNBW, 1918a: col. 921). After retirement, Linse wrote a brief, laudatory biography of Kwasi Boakye on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his arrival in the Netherlands Indies (Linse, 1900) and a longer, heartfelt obituary at his friend's death (Linse, 1905), both of which are important sources for reconstructing the Asante's career. Lebret was also a student at the Royal Academy in the time of Kwasi Boakye and

Linse; eventually he became a professor there. He likewise remained in touch with Kwasi Boakye during the latter's many years in the Netherlands East Indies (NNBW, 1918b: col. 884–885). Lebret was the source of one of three published portraits of Kwasi Boakye.[49] A third Delft colleague, Cornelius de Groot van Embden, was not, however, so favorably inclined toward Kwasi Boakye as were Linse and Lebret. Unfortunately, de Groot would have a much greater impact on Kwasi Boakye's subsequent career. By report a talented man, de Groot was of humble social origin (NNBW, 1924: col. 643–647). Thus both class and racial tensions were at the root of his conflicts with Kwasi Boakye. Linse, who knew both, described de Groot's feelings about the Asante prince this way: "For him, [Kwasi Boakye] remained "the negro," who he had observed, perhaps justifiably, was accorded more privileges than many Dutch youths; [and] in whom he felt it was nonsense to recognize any particular intelligence. At the same time he considered it a weakness that he [Kwasi Boakye] was permitted to measure himself against a European" (Linse, 1905: 58 [my translation]).

De Groot entered the Royal Academy when it first opened in January 1843, at the comparatively advanced age of 26. He was among those tapped for a career in the colonial service, and in June 1846 he received a diploma in civil engineering. In November 1846 the Ministry of Colonies decided to form a special team of engineer-trainees for service in a projected department of mining in the Netherlands East Indies (NNBW, 1924: col. 644). Four Academy students were selected to travel to England for further study. De Groot was placed at the head of this team, apparently because of his seniority over the other students. Unlike the others he had also received some training in mining engineering prior to the group's departure for England. Though he would later join them in the East Indies, Kwasi Boakye was not among those chosen to follow this course of study. Later accounts of his career tended to ascribe his absence from the group to an early aversion to de Groot, but this does not seem to have been the primary reason (see e.g., ibid., and NNBW, 1927: col. 145; Linse, 1905: 57).

Even before the decision was taken to send the team of students for training in England it is clear that the Ministry of Colonies had different plans for Kwasi Boakye. On 1 October 1846, the Minister wrote to the Dutch king that Kwasi Boakye had decided to follow a career in the Dutch colonial service on the Gold Coast in the recently established gold mining effort.[50] The letter makes clear that the idea was Kwasi Boakye's own. In accordance with his wish then, the Minister, and ultimately the Dutch king, approved a plan that Kwasi Boakye study gold mining engineering under the direction of the renowned Professor B. Cotta of the Royal Saxon Mining Academy at Freiberg in Saxony (Germany).[51] Kwasi Boakye's hope to return to the Gold Coast with gold mining training was what led him to part ways with his fellow Academy graduates, rather than any specific aversion to de Groot. In addition, at Freiberg he would live in close proximity to his old friends in the family of the Duke of Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach (Linse, 1905: 48).

In the summer of 1847, following the successful completion of his coursework at Delft, Kwasi Boakye traveled to Freiberg, and moved into quarters arranged for him by Cotta.[52] For two years, he followed an accelerated course of study under Cotta's supervision. In his spare time he socialized with the local nobility, in particular at the court of the Grand Duke of Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach, which, as noted above, was linked by marriage to the royal family of the Netherlands.[53] Even more so than in Holland, Kwasi Boakye seems to have been attracted by upper-class life in central Europe, perhaps because he was more openly accepted on equal terms in aristocratic circles there. However that may be, he retained a special fondness for Germans and Germany into his later years.[54]

At a party he attended in December 1847 an incident occurred which began a period of strained relations between the Asante prince and the Dutch Ministry of Colonies.[55] Apparently by chance he had an encounter with an early acquaintance from Delft, the Javanese artist Raden Saleh. Saleh had painted a life-sized portrait of General Verveer, Kwasi Boakye, and Kwame Poku in 1836, which was sent to Elmina for shipment as a gift from the Dutch government to the Asantehene in Kumase (Tengbergen, 1839: 109–110). Saleh apparently engaged Kwasi Boakye in conversation about affairs of the Gold Coast, and

mentioned that the Asantehene still owed the Dutch government a large sum of money from the contract that Verveer had signed with Kwaku Dua in 1837. In defense of his father, Kwasi Boakye reportedly argued that Verveer had not properly explained the provisions of the agreement, and thus his father's failure to abide by the contract's terms was really the fault of the Dutch. Saleh wrote a letter to the Ministry of Colonies about the affair, suggesting that it showed that Kwasi Boakye did not appreciate all that the Ministry had done on his behalf. The Ministry wrote to Cotta for an explanation of the incident. Though Cotta vigorously defended his student's actions, the incident seemed to raise the Ministry's suspicions, as well as those of Kwasi Boakye.

While studying in Germany Kwasi Boakye had the opportunity to observe and comment upon the upheavals known in European history as the Revolutions of 1848. In an interesting letter he wrote to the Ministry in January 1849,[56] Kwasi Boakye recorded his reactions to these events. As a young man 22 years old and of royalty by birth, the letter shows that he was deeply impressed by two aspects of the continental uprisings: first, by the "mistakes and maltreatment" of the lower classes by an uncaring and at times arbitrary European aristocracy that contributed to the revolts; and secondly, by the "courageous" actions of "true friends of the people," moved by "patriotism," who dealt swiftly with the disorder brought about by "demagogues." This document, perhaps more than any other, shows the degree of cultural assimilation that Kwasi Boakye had undergone. His views of the 1848 revolutions were quite similar to those held by members of the high European bourgeoisie and progressive aristocracy toward the sharpening struggle over political and social power then taking place in the emerging nation-states of the continent.

In the midst of these upheavals, Kwasi Boakye managed to continue his studies uninterrupted. During the summer of 1849 Professor Cotta accompanied him on a tour of the Austrian Alps where they visited gold mining operations to develop the practical aspects of Kwasi Boakye's training.[57] Here they also were charged by the Dutch Ministry of Colonies with the recruitment of a work foreman for the gold mining operations on the Gold Coast. Thus, as late as mid-1849 both Kwasi Boakye and the Ministry understood that the Asante prince would be returning to the Gold Coast in the capacity of mining engineer in the Dutch colonial service.

KWASI BOAKYE'S DOES NOT RETURN TO THE GOLD COAST

As in the case of Kwame Poku's suicide, the evidence relating to Kwasi Boakye's decision not to return to the Gold Coast allows several interpretations. In the letter of January 1849 cited above in connection with the 1848 revolutions, Kwasi Boakye evidenced (amid mixed metaphors) a missionary commitment to returning to his homeland: "thus I see myself as a tool in the hand of Providence to bring light and civilization to thousands of my countrymen and fellow Africans . . . [and as] a link in the chain through which God makes visible the kingdom of his Son in the land of darkness; thus I see myself as chosen by this Divinity to act as a Doer of Good, a Reformer, and a Founder of the continuing happiness and welfare of my fatherland . . ." [my translation].[58] Yet by October 1849, following his tour of the Tyrolian gold mines, Kwasi Boakye asserted in a petition to the new Dutch king Willem III (his boyhood acquaintance) that his previous desire to return to the Gold Coast had been nothing more than the wish of "a child, [made] without reflection, understanding [or] planning"; and that the prospect of returning now aroused in him only "abomination and horror."[59]

What brought about this dramatic reversal? One tempting line of analysis is to relate Kwasi Boakye's change of heart to the misfortunes of his cousin who, if not "imprisoned" at Elmina, certainly was unhappy there by late 1849. It is clear that the two remained in correspondence with each other after Kwame Poku arrived at Elmina. Kwame Poku was in a position to relay both his personal sentiments about returning to the Gold Coast, as well as any information about the political situation in Asante he may have received, which conceivably could have included news about the persecution of Ku-

mase Christians that appears to have commenced in 1848 (McCaskie, 1974: 220–221). Probably equally important was the information that Kwasi Boakye received about the state of the Dutch gold mining operations on the coast, in which he was to be employed upon completion of his education.[60] As previously mentioned, the Ministry of Colonies had begun to mine gold at Dabokrom in Ahanta in 1845. Thirteen persons had been sent out that year; eleven were dead by the time a second group of thirteen was dispatched in 1847. Of the second group, ten had died by the time Kwasi Boakye faced his decision to return to the Gold Coast. The dead included the director of operations, three engineers, and seventeen laborers. On only two occasions were the work crews able to send samples back to the Ministry of Colonies, the total value of which came to fl. 150, or less than 4 oz. of gold (see Handelingen der Staten Generaal, 1873–74: 5–6).

Not surprisingly, these dismal results led the Ministry to question the viability of the project. In a February 1849 letter to Kwasi Boakye, the Ministry functionary in charge of the prince's affairs, G. de Veer, wrote to him confidentially that if the gold mining operation did not soon produce satisfactory results, it was possible that the Dutch might give up on its Gold Coast "possessions" altogether.[61] The government was under severe budgetary constraints and faced a large deficit. If the Dutch were to leave the coast, de Veer asked Kwasi Boakye rhetorically, what would happen to "all our beautiful dreams . . . to bring the Faith and civilization to your compatriots?" De Veer sought to entice Kwasi Boakye further with the news that the Minister was inclined to appoint Kwasi Boakye as engineer with a salary of fl. 2600 per year; and if he "delivered good results" he could look forward to a promotion to chief engineer with a military rank, a salary of fl. 5000, and a share in the profits. No doubt inadvertently, this letter must have also raised the question in Kwasi Boakye's mind of what would become of him if, in spite of his best efforts, the gold mining operation still failed. As he stated it himself, what he feared most was abandonment "in the midst of people [whose] mores, customs, habits, and religion . . . have not only become alien to me, but for which I have the greatest aversion."[62] Thus at the end of his studies Kwasi Boakye refused not only to return to the Gold Coast, but even to return to Holland from Germany until he had assurances from the Dutch government that some other career possibility was open to him.[63]

The Ministry was caught off guard. The opinions of several people close to Kwasi Boakye were polled. Professor Cotta suggested perceptively that the process of acculturation had proceeded so far that the young Asante's "love for home and family" had been extinguished, that Kwasi Boakye now realized that he could not find happiness in his homeland.[64] The son of Kwasi Boakye's former headmaster and his childhood friend, the Rev. F. van Moock placed the blame for his "loss of courage" on the life that he had led in Germany, where he had enjoyed the "flattery" of the local aristocracy, and where his religious scruples had deteriorated.[65] In the end the Ministry decided to accede to Kwasi Boakye's request not to be sent back against his wishes, but instructed him to return to Holland in order to await the final disposition of the government regarding his future career.[66] At the same time the Dutch efforts at gold mining on the coast were brought to an official close (Handelingen der Staten Generaal, 1873–74: 6).

KWASI BOAKYE IN THE DUTCH COLONIAL SERVICE IN ASIA

In his October 1849 petition to the Dutch king Kwasi Boakye asked for any position that would have allowed him to remain in the Netherlands. But soon after he arrived back at Delft he made the specific request that he be given a position in the colonial service in the Netherlands East Indies.[67] The reasons for this are as yet unclear, but it was probably the result of informal contacts with the personnel of the Ministry, who appear to have told him that there was little call for mining engineers in the overwhelmingly agricultural Netherlands. Thus in a report to King Willem III, the Ministry advised that the young Asante be appointed to the post of "aspirant-engineer" in the newly created department of mines in the Dutch East Indies.[68]

Thus Kwasi Boakye was now slated to re-

join his fellow graduates of the Delft Academy who had gone to England to further their studies under the leadership of Kwasi Boakye's old nemesis, C. de Groot. But to the Ministry's way of thinking there was a significant difference in the training that Kwasi Boakye had received in Germany from that given to the five Delft graduates sent to England. The decision therefore was taken to make Kwasi Boakye's appointment to the position of aspirant-engineer a conditional one, and the modifier "extraordinary" was attached to his official title.[69] This difference in training and title became the stated rationale for the Minister's additional—and secret—specification that Kwasi Boakye would "always" remain under the direct supervision of de Groot (at the recommendation of Simons, director of the Royal Academy); for: "It is . . . self-evident that he [Kwasi Boakye] ought never to be placed at the head of the officers of the department of mines; this shall be avoided by specifying that, as he advances along the career path prescribed in the existing [personnel] regulations, he will continue to carry the distinction of *extraordinary* engineer" [emphasis added].[70]

The "self-evident" justification in this arrangement was made explicit in a letter from the Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies to the Minister of Colonies, which argued against any appointment of Kwasi Boakye, even with the "extraordinary" designation, because "the principle of 'la noblesse de peau' and of the moral and intellectual superiority of the white race above the brown, upon which our domination in the Indies rests, would receive a severe blow by this [appointment]."[71] The objections of the governor were overruled and Kwasi Boakye was given his appointment. Informed of its "extraordinary" nature however, he asked for an explanation. According to his friend Linse (1905: 49) Kwasi Boakye was told a lie: that as a "political child of the Dutch government" he was so designated in order that he be accorded special attention (a "more pleasant place of work, a more advantageous or nicer set of assignments, and even a higher salary") without this creating problems or raising the envy of his colleagues.

Arrangements were made for the departure of Kwasi Boakye to the East Indies. He was given an advance on his salary of fl. 70 per month (considerably less than he would have received as an engineer on the Gold Coast), and departed for Batavia (today's Jakarta) in the summer of 1850, traveling first class aboard the ship *Sarah Lydia,* along with two other aspirant-engineers who had been trained in England.[72] Upon arrival in the East Indies, Kwasi Boakye received a personal note from the commanding military officer there, who coincidentally was Duke Bernhard of Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach, the father of his good friends from his childhood days at Delft. The duke, who was out of town on tour, invited the Asante prince to lodge with him, and gave him advice on the appropriate people to visit once he was settled. But de Groot got wind of the duke's intentions and, meeting Kwasi Boakye at dockside, advised him not to accept the invitation. Wishing not to antagonize his new boss, Kwasi Boakye complied (Linse, 1905: 51). It was also on the day of his arrival in Batavia that Kwasi Boakye was informed of his cousin's suicide on the West African coast (ibid.).

From September 1850 until April 1854 Kwasi Boakye functioned as secretary to de Groot and as administrative head of the department of mines.[73] He traveled with his chief on assignment throughout the East Indies, but unlike his fellow aspirant-engineers was given no independent research responsibilities. Three months into his new position he discovered that the word "extraordinary" in his job title really meant that he could never become head of the colonial Bureau of Mines (Linse, 1905: 51). Naturally, this aroused Kwasi Boakye's increasing dissatisfaction with his position, despite his 1853 promotion to "engineer third class" along with his colleagues, though of course he alone retained the designation "extraordinary" (NNBW, 1927: col. 146).

Further adding to his discontent was a series of racial incidents involving his boss de Groot. In 1852 while on a tour of Madura, de Groot ordered Kwasi Boakye to ride at the back of their vehicle, behind de Groot and a local chieftain. When the Dutch colonial official in charge of Madura district learned of this he ordered that the Asante prince take a seat next to de Groot (ibid.). In 1853 while on tour in southeast Borneo de

Groot ordered Kwasi Boakye to lodge with the low-ranking government warehouse supervisor (probably locally born) while de Groot stayed with the Dutch district officer; furthermore, Kwasi Boakye was instructed to eat with the local inhabitants and Chinese residents and not with his chief (ibid.). Kwasi Boakye's frustration over these racial slights finally led to a physical confrontation with de Groot in 1855 (NNBW, 1924: col. 645). These are the incidents for which there is documentation; no doubt there were others for which no record survives (Linse, 1905: 51).

Kwasi Boakye shared his dissatisfaction directly with the Dutch governor-general. The latter sympathized with his plight; he reprimanded de Groot and ordered that Kwasi Boakye be relieved of his administrative duties for seven months out of each year beginning in April 1854 and be given independent assignments.[74] The results of Kwasi Boakye's work during 1854 and 1855 were published in the journal of the Natural Science Society of the Dutch East Indies, of which Kwasi Boakye was a member (Boachi, 1855a, 1856a). The Asante prince also wrote an article of an ethnographic character on the Chinese in Java, which was published in both German and Dutch (Boachi, 1855b, 1856b). He retained contact with his old friends from the Academy at Delft and in 1854 became a member of the newly founded Society of Civil (later Delft) Engineers (NNBW, 1927: col. 147). But the new independent assignments were insufficient to remove the prospect of continued discriminatory treatment that Kwasi Boakye would experience so long as the designation "extraordinary" remained attached to his job title.[75] Much later he wrote of his years in government service as "the saddest of my entire life."

Consequently, in January 1855 Kwasi Boakye addressed a written request to the governor-general that he be reassigned to a position in the Netherlands.[76] He summarized the events of his life, noting that he had left his homeland at the request of the Dutch, and had received 13 years of education, but in the process "he had, as it were, been alienated from his fatherland, from his parents, relatives, countrymen, and from their mores and customs."[77] He expressed dismay at the discrimination of which he was a victim not only in his career in the colonial service, but also at the hands of the local populace who perceived the discriminatory treatment he was accorded by the Europeans and therefore concluded that Kwasi Boakye was indeed inferior.

The governor-general passed along Kwasi Boakye's letter to the Ministry of Colonies, and expressed his sympathetic support of the Asante's request for reassignment.[78] But the minister took no action, and so upon the subsequent recommendation of the governor-general Kwasi Boakye applied in January 1856 for two years' leave to return to the Netherlands and lay his case personally before the appropriate authorities (NNBW, 1927: col. 146). Arriving in Holland in July 1856, he met with the director of the Royal Academy, G. Simons, who informed him that the idea of making his appointment "extraordinary" and contingent upon his never being placed in a supervisory position over European officials, had originated with his old nemesis de Groot (ibid.). Kwasi Boakye decided that in these circumstances he could not return to work in the department of mines; in a new petition to Willem III he requested to be released entirely from his position in the colonial service, and to be given compensation for the wrongs done to him in the form of a grant of government land suitable for the raising of tea.[79]

After considerable delay, Willem III, on the recommendation of his colonial minister, decreed in September 1857 that Kwasi Boakye be appointed "Titular Mining Engineer" and be accorded a lifelong pension from the government of fl. 400 per month.[80] His request for land in the East Indies was referred to the governor-general and his council in the East Indies. In addition, the king ordered that Kwasi Boakye be regularly informed of any changes of staff in the Royal House of Orange, as was customary with the ruling dynasties of allied states (Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch Indië, 1923: 122). Kwasi Boakye returned to the East Indies in early 1858.[81] Limitations of space and a relative paucity of data preclude a full consideration of the remainder of his career.

Briefly, it took more than six years for Kwasi Boakye to obtain the lands he had

sought from Willem III in 1856. In the end he planted coffee rather than tea on government lands at Madioen on Java beginning in 1862. He named his plantation "Soeka Radja," or "Princely Pleasure," in the local language. His success as a planter was however indifferent; Linse says that he did not handle money well (Weekblad voor Indië, 1904–5: 172; Linse, 1905: 60). He remained in correspondence with friends in Holland and became East Indies correspondent for the Society of Civil Engineers in 1871 (NNBW, 1927: col 147). As the years passed he seems to have gained the respect of the local population that he had been denied in his days as "extraordinary" mining engineer in government service (Linse, 1905: 60–61). In 1900 he was feted by his friends and high-ranking Dutch colonial officials on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his arrival in the East Indies (De Ingenieur, 1900a: 647–648; 1900b: 714–715). On 9 July 1904, he died in the military hospital at Buitenzorg (Bogor, Java), leaving three recognized children by local women (Weekblad voor Indië, 1904–5: 172).[82] As his casket was drawn to the cemetery it was followed by 30 coaches; the governor-general was represented by his adjutant, and at graveside Kwasi Boakye was eulogized by the chairman of the Masonic Lodge at Bogor—he had achieved a high rank in the society (Linse, 1905: 62). Of his personality, Linse wrote:

> All were drawn to him by his education and cultivated, unselfconscious demeanor. For he regarded his birth as the son of a King on the same level as one of European descent; but he did not presume upon this, well realizing that this would be ridiculous. But from this he took it as his responsibility to excel in refinement and knowledge. The more so because he was a negro, because he wished to show that there was no reason that this race should remain less developed than the white race, and for [lack of development] be denigrated as if one were dealing with society's outcasts. (Linse, 1905: 58 [my translation])

CONCLUSION

On at least three occasions after the death of Kwame Poku in 1850 the Asante court attempted to reestablish contact with Kwasi Boakye. In 1853 his father Kwaku Dua sent a letter to the Dutch governor at Elmina asking that "my child Buarchie" be allowed to visit Asante "for about a month and then to return again."[83] The Ministry in Holland instructed the governor to inform the Asantehene that Kwasi Boakye "after having finished his studies, distinctly refused to return to Ashantee" and that he was now in the Dutch East Indies, "both well and prospering."[84] Kwaku Dua wrote in reply to this news:

> I have received your kind letter regarding my son Boache whom I send to England for education & then to return back again, I have heard and understood from your letter that he distinctly refused of his coming back, and you stated that it may not grief me much, indeed it is to my greatest regret that he had rejected; and as I am anxious to see his face, I shall thank you greatly to try your utmost endeavour to write to his master to let him come down to see my face & return back again to his office, I pray you to impart my request only to see his face & nature, then to return again to his occupation.[85]

How Kwasi Boakye responded to these requests is as yet unknown. But it is evident that he was painfully missed first by his father, and then by an Asante state increasingly interested in the unique skills of this wayward son. For in the aftermath of the British invasion of Asante in 1874 a growing number of Asante officials realized that traditional resistance to the acquisition of European-style education would have to be overcome if Asante were to deal with the threat posed by British expansionism (Wilks, 1975: 663). Thus in 1879, more than a decade after the death of Kwaku Dua, another request that Kwasi Boakye resume contact with his motherland was sent out from the Asante court.[86] No response from the Dutch Ministry, through which the request was forwarded, or from Kwasi Boakye has as yet been recovered, but it is probable that his address in Java was sent to Kumase. If another call was issued for his return, obviously he failed to heed it. The process of cultural alienation begun in 1837 had by this time proceeded so far that there was no returning home, and tragically, his many demonstrated talents were forever lost to his compatriots. Kwasi Boakye

died an unfulfilled, if not bitter man, one more victim, though he seems not to have realized it, of European imperialism.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Dr. Charles Berberich and Professor Ivor Wilks for making available the extensive collection of documents in their possession relating to Kwame Poku and Kwasi Boakye. Daniel Britz of Northwestern University's Africana Library provided invaluable assistance in acquiring obscure Dutch publications. Finally, I must thank Brenda Blair for reading and commenting on earlier drafts of this paper.

NOTES

1. "Extract from the Journal of an Officer on a Mission to the King of Asante" (1836–37). I am grateful to Drs. R. Baesjou for providing me with a copy of this document, which I believe has now been deposited in the library of the Afrika Studiecentrum, Leiden, the Netherlands. This is the only surviving record that documents in detail the activities of the Verveer embassy to Kumase. Extreme secrecy surrounded the mission: Verveer carried with him a code book so that encrypted messages could be sent back to Holland.

2. Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague (hereafter ARA), Nederlandsche Bezittingen ter Kuste van Guinea (hereafter NBKG) inventory number 432: Minister to Last dd. 's-Gravenhage, 29 June 1831.

3. Public Record Office, London (hereafter PRO), Colonial Office Papers (hereafter CO) 267/136: Maclean to committee dd. London, 27 Sept. 1836. See also the extensive collection of letters concerning the recruitment sent by the Dutch agent in Kumase in ARA, NBKG 772 and 773.

4. ARA, Ministerie von Koloniën 1814–49 (hereafter MK) 4001: Last to minister dd. Elmina, 12 Jan. 1832.

5. ARA, NBKG 433: Minister to Last dd. 's-Gravenhage 3 Sept. 1834.

6. ARA, NBKG 434: Minister to Lans dd. 's-Gravenhage 20 June 1836.

7. ARA, NBKG 362: Elmina Journal, entries for 31 Oct. and 7 Nov. 1836.

8. Ibid., entry for 11 Dec. 1836.

9. Ibid., entry for 7 Jan. 1837.

10. A signed copy of the contract may be found in an enclosure in ARA, MK 4246: *verbaal* 12 July 1837.

11. Ibid., enclosure: Verveer to Minister dd. 's-Gravenhage 2 July 1837; ARA, NBKG 691: Kwaku Dua to Schomerus dd. Kumase 2 Mar. 1854. According to oral accounts recorded in the middle of this century, the Asantehene sought to acquire European skills in gun manufacture for his kingdom; the Asante defeat at Katamanso (1826) is said to have demonstrated the need for this, since "the powerful armaments used by the Europeans . . . won the battle for them." "Kofi Boakye" [sic] was specifically remembered as having been "well-versed in Black-smithy," and having received an education in engineering in "Denmark." See Manhyia Record Office, Kumase, "The History of Asante," n.d. (but 1940s), chap. 11: 9. I am grateful to Professor Ivor Wilks for having provided me with this reference.

12. When Verveer returned to the Gold Coast in 1838 to lead a military expedition against the Ahanta *ohen* ("king") Bonsu, he sent a messenger to Kumase asking that the Asantehene make some contribution toward the boys' education; curiously, Kwaku Dua acceded. See van Dantzig, 1966: 23.

13. ARA, MK 4007: Verveer to minister dd. Elmina, 4 Aug. 1838. In fact, Welsing was delegated this responsibility by Verveer who officially carried the burden for the boys' welfare. Both were relieved of the charge when they returned to the Gold Coast in Apr. 1838; Verveer died on this second visit. See further note 19 below.

14. ARA, NBKG 362: Elmina Journal, entry for 24 Apr. 1837; PRO, CO 267/144: Reid et al. to Grey dd. London, 21 June 1837.

15. ARA, Kabinet des Konings (Confidential Papers of the King—hereafter KK) *verbaal* 17 Oct. 1837, enclosure: Verveer to minister of colonies dd. 15 Sept. 1837.

16. See Berberich Collection (documents from the ARA pertaining to Kwasi Boakye and Kwame Poku assembled by Dr. Charles Berberich and deposited with the Asante Collective Biography Project—hereafter BC), documents 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8 (yearly reports on the boys' progress submitted to the Minister of Colonies by J. van Drunen 1839–43).

17. BC Document 4 (van Drunen's Report dd. 23 Jan. 1841).

18. From Apr. 1838 to Oct. 1846 the princes' guardian was J. van Drunen, who had served as adjunct-commissioner to the Verveer mission of 1836–37. After Oct. 1846 a functionary in the Ministry of Colonies assumed this role.

19. ARA, MK *verbaal* dd. 14 Jan. 1840).

20. It is significant that when Kwasi Boakye was registered at the Delft Academy in 1843, the notation of his date of birth as 24 Apr. 1837, added that this "by guess;" BC, document 10 (Royal Academy Registry, entry "Aquasi Boachie").

21. PRO, CO 267/144: Reid et al. to Grey dd. London 21 June 1837.

22. ARA, KK *verbaal* 14 Feb. 1844: Baud to King dd. 's-Gravenhage 8 Feb. 1844.

23. BC, document 12 (van Moock to minister dd. Delft 27 Nov. 1843).

24. ARA, MK *verbaal* 20 Jan. 1842.

25. BC, documents 4, 6, and 8 (van Drunen's Reports for 1840 and 1842 dd. 25 Jan. 1840, 15 Jan. 1841, and 13 Jan. 1843, respectively).

26. Ibid.; De Indische Gids, 1904: 1365.

27. BC, document 3 (van Drunen's Report dd. 7 Jan. 1840).

28. See references cited at note 26 above.

29. BC, document 13 (van Drunen's Report dd. 16 Jan. 1846).

30. ARA, NBKG 733: Huydecoper to Bos dd. Kumase 10 Nov. 1838.

31. ARA, NBKG 365: Elmina Journal, entries for 5 Sept. 1843 and Apr. 25, 1844.

32. ARA, MK 3978: Elmina Journal, entry for 16 Nov. 1845.

33. ARA, MK *verbaal* 23 June 1843.

34. BC, document 11: Beecham to Minister dd. London 9 Oct. 1843.

35. BC, document 10 (Delft Royal Academy Registry, entry "Aquasi Boachi"). The Academy was established primarily to train administrative personnel for the colonial service. The Crown Prince William, Boachi's childhood acquaintance, became its patron, and reportedly visited the school every two weeks during 1846 and 1847 (Linse, 1905: 49, 55).

36. BC, document 13 (van Drunen's Report dd. 16 Jan. 1846).

37. Ibid. This was less of disgrace than might appear; in its first two years of operation (1843–45) two-thirds of the entering students failed (Linse, 1905: 54).

38. ARA, MK *verbaal* 1 Oct. 1846, enclosure: van Drunen to Minister dd. 's-Gravenhage 24 Feb. 1846.

39. ARA, NBKG 444: Minister to van der Eb dd. 's-Gravenhage 17 Sept. 1847.

40. Ibid.; BC, document 23 (MK *verbaal* 15 Oct. 1847, enclosure: "Items taken by Quamina Pokoo to the Guinea Coast").

41. ARA, NBKG 444: Minister to van der Eb dd. 's-Gravenhage 13 Sept. 1847.

42. ARA, MK 3980: Elmina Journal, entry for 25 Nov. 1847; NBKG 393: van der Eb to minister dd. Elmina, 13 Jan. 1848.

43. ARA, NBKG 393: van der Eb to minister dd. Elmina 13 Jan. 1848.

44. ARA, MK 3981: Elmina Journal, entry for 28 Jan. 1848.

45. ARA, NBKG 367: Elmina Journal, entry for 22 Feb. 1850.

46. ARA, NBKG 393: van der Eb to minister dd. Elmina, 23 Feb. 1850.

47. McCaskie has argued that upon his accession to the Golden Stool in 1834, Kwaku Dua appointed Osei Kwadwo heir-apparent (occupant of the *abakomdwa,* or heir-apparent's stool), which position he held until he was disgraced in the later 1850s; McCaskie, 1974: 219, 225.

48. ARA, NBKG 393: van der Eb to minister dd. Elmina, 10 Mar. 1848.

49. Two have been located. Lebret's portrait of Kwasi Boakye accompanied Linse's short biography (1900), and was reproduced in De Ingenieur, 1900b. A second portrait appeared with the obituary notice published in Weekblad voor *Indië,* 1904–5: 172. The source of this one is as yet unknown; it shows the elderly Asante with what appear to be two of his children. According to Linse (1905: 48), a third and much earlier portrait was painted by one Professor C. Vogel von Vogelstein of Dresden during the Asante's student years in Germany, which, Linse wrote, was in the possession of the Museum of Antiquities at Freiberg. I have not as yet been able to confirm whether this one still exists.

50. BC, document 15 (minister to king dd. 1 Oct. 1846).

51. The decision seems to have been made at a meeting of Kwasi Boakye, Professor Bleekrode of the Delft Academy, and G. de Veer of the Ministry of Colonies, which occurred in mid-Jan. 1847. See BC, document 17 (Kwasi Boakye to de Veer dd. Delft 13 Jan. 1847.

52. ARA, MK *verbaal* 4 Aug. 1847.

53. ARA, MK *verbaal* 12 Dec. 1849, enclosure: Cotta to minister dd. Freiberg 3 Apr. 1848; De Ingenieur, 1900a: 647–648.

54. In 1870 Kwasi Boakye sent fl. 1000 to the German relief-committee for casualties during the Franco-Prussian war; Die Gartenlaube, 1870: 811.

55. ARA, MK *verbaal* 12 Dec. 1849.

56. BC, document 25 (Kwasi Boakye to Ministry dd. Freiberg 29 Jan. 1849).

57. ARA, MK *verbaal* 29 May 1849.

58. BC, document 25 (Kwasi Boakye to ministry dd. Freiberg 29 Jan. 1849).

59. BC, document 30 (Kwasi Boakye to king dd. Freiberg 17 Oct. 1849).

60. BC, document 26 (de Veer to Kwasi Boakye dd. 's-Gravenhage 24 Feb. 1849).

61. See reference cited at previous note.

62. BC, document 30 (Kwasi Boakye to king dd. Freiberg, 17 Oct. 1849).

63. BC, document 35 (Kwasi Boakye to de Veer dd. Freiberg, 23 Jan. 1850).

64. BC, documents 32 (Cotta to minister dd. Freiberg, 29 Dec. 1849) and 38 (Cotta to minister dd. Freiberg, 10 Feb. 1850).

65. BC, document 33 (van Moock to minister dd. Delft 10 Jan. 1850).

66. BC, document 36 (minister to Cotta dd. 's-Gravenhage 2 Feb. 1850).

67. BC, document 40 (Kwasi Boakye to minister dd. Delft 8 Mar. 1850).

68. BC, document 41 (minister to king dd. 19 Apr. 1950).

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.

71. ARA, Archief van Het Ministerie van Koloniën 1850–1900 (hereafter MKII) 6531 *verbaal* 24 July 1850.

72. ARA, MKII *verbaal* 8 May 1850.

73. BC, document 44 (Duymaer van Twist to minister dd. Batavia 13 Feb. 1855); and document 45 (de Groot to Kwasi Boakye dd. Buitenzorg 6 Mar. 1856).

74. BC, document 44 (Duymaer van Twist to minister dd. Batavia, 13 Feb. 1855).

75. See reference cited at previous note.

76. BC, document 42 (Kwasi Boakye to Governor General dd. Buitenzorg 16 Jan. 1855).

77. Ibid.

78. BC, document 44 (Duymaer van Twist to minister dd. Batavia, 13 Feb. 1855).

79. BC, document 46 (Kwasi Boakye to King dd. Delft, 28 July 1856).

80. BC, document 53 (Royal Decree dd. 27 Sept. 1857).

81. ARA, MKII *verbaal* 30 Sept. 1857.

82. According to Linse (1905: 61), Kwasi Boakye had a total of five children by three different Asian women with whom he lived in succession. The eldest child he named Quamin after his deceased cousin. Born in 1852, Quamin attended the van Moock boarding school in the Netherlands during 1866–70, but he went no further in education and returned to the Dutch Indies where he had an unremarkable career and survived his father. A second son—name and date of birth unknown—showed intellectual promise but died of diphtheria in 1875. A third son, Aquasie, Jr., was born on 13 Feb. 1890 and survived his father, as did a daughter, Quamina Aquasiena, who was born on 5 Nov. 1888. These names are totally out of keeping with Asante naming practices and indicate the degree of Kwasi Boakye's acculturation. Of the fifth child Linse says nothing.

83. ARA, NBKG 544: Kwaku Dua to Schomerus dd. Kumase 2 Sept. 1853.

84. ARA, MKII 6661: Elmina Journal, entry for 25 Jan. 1854; NBKG 704: Schomerus to Kwaku Dua dd. Elmina 25 Jan. 1854.

85. ARA, NBKG 691: Kwaku Dua to Schomerus dd. Kumase 2 Mar. 1854. Language and spelling as an original.

86. BC, document 67 (Owusu Ansah to Minister dd. Cape Coast 25 Oct. 1879). Owusu Ansah enclosed a letter for Kwasi Boakye with his request to the Dutch, and asked that it be forwarded to him. There is no reason to think that the Dutch did not comply.

CHAPTER 12. A NATION IN EXILE: THE ASANTE ON THE SEYCHELLES ISLANDS, 1900–24

A. Adu Boahen

ABSTRACT

When the British invaded Asante in 1896 they arrested the Asantehene, Nana Prempeh, members of his family, and a number of Asante divisional kings and chiefs, exiling them first to Sierra Leone and then to the Seychelles. After the Asante rebellion of 1900, another group of chiefs, including the Queen of Edweso, Nana Yaa Asantewaa, was also sent to the Seychelles. Three decades later, some of the original group and their offspring returned to Ghana. This paper describes the experiences of the Asante in exile and assesses their influence on Asante society upon their return. It also briefly examines their impact on Seychellois society.

INTRODUCTION

The theme of the exile of the Asantehene Prempeh I and a number of Asante kings and chiefs and their relatives, wives, and attendants to the Seychelles Islands in the Indian Ocean, until recently completely ignored by historians, raises a number of intriguing questions. Why were these Asante exiled in 1900 by the British Government to such a remote and lonely group of islands thousands of miles away from their home? How many people were involved? How were they treated on the island? How did they live? Why were they finally repatriated in 1924? How did this group find Kumase in particular and Asante in general on their repatriation and what happened to them on their return? What effects did this long period of exile have on the Asante kingdom during the period of exile? What were the effects of repatriation on the kingdom? Finally, what impact did this exile have on the individuals and societies involved? A few of these questions, which are being treated in a full-length study now in progress, have already been answered. William Tordoff has, for instance, dealt with the question of the exile and repatriation of Prempeh I and with his life on his return home (Tordoff, 1960; 1965); the present writer has discussed what happened to the group on the Seychelles Islands (Boahen, 1972). This paper attempts an answer to the last question posed here, namely, what impact did the exile have on the Asante involved?

In that tragic episode in the history of the African continent that has become known as the scramble for Africa, the British invaded Asante in 1896. The circumstances that then led to the exile of Prempeh I and his group as political prisoners are relatively well known, thanks to the work of Tordoff. To summarize them very briefly they were: to prevent the revival of the Asante Empire by the newly installed Asantehene between 1888 and 1896; to forestall an alliance between Prempeh I and the great Mandingo warrior and nationalist Samori Ture; and to prevent the occupation of the hinterland of the British Colony and Protectorate of the Gold Coast by either France or Germany. Following the advice of their king, the Asante did not, rather uncharacteristically, put up any resistance. The British nevertheless arrested the Asantehene, Prempeh I, his father, his mother, one of his brothers together with a number of Kumase divisional kings, and some Asante *amanhene* and exiled them to Freetown in Sierra Leone. Following the famous Yaa Asantewaa War, treated by Lewin (1978), fearing that the proximity of Freetown would not be conducive to peace and stability in Asante, the British decided to transfer the group to the remote islands of the Seychelles,

to which they arrived in September 1900. After the Yaa Asantewaa rebellion, another group of Asante kings and warleaders, including Yaa Asantewaa, the queen of Edweso, was also exiled to the Seychelles.

As has been shown elsewhere (Boahen, 1972), the Asante were extremely well treated in their camp situated in the La Rocher area of Mahé Island, only two miles from Victoria, the capital of the Seychelles. Later, it became British policy that whenever any king or Asante chief died, his family and followers had to be repatriated; the first group was repatriated in 1907, another in 1918, a third in 1922, a fourth in 1923; the final group, including Prempeh and his family, was repatriated in 1924.

THE DEMOGRAPHY OF THE EXILE GROUP

To analyze the impact of the Seychelles on the prisoners and the subsequent influence of the "returnees" on Asante, a number of demographic factors have to be considered. First, what was the numerical strength of the group as a whole, and second, how can it be categorized for the purposes of assessing its impact? According to a statement issued by Prempeh in April 1925 shortly after his return home,[1] he left Sierra Leone for Seychelles with 14 chiefs, 13 women, 13 children, and 12 servants; a year later another group consisting of 15 chiefs (including Nana Yaa Asantewaa), 2 women, and 4 servants joined them, making in all a total of 74 people. According to the same account, 34 of them were repatriated in 1908 leaving 40 persons; then another 7 were repatriated; and sometime in 1920, 35 persons, the families of the late chief Boaten and Yaa Asantewaa, returned to Kumase. In November 1923, another 7 persons left and returned to Kumase. According to Prempeh, he himself returned, "with 64 persons and 3 still remaining in Seychelles and in Mauritius . . . of which 6 were natives of Seychelles married to my followers and 59 Ashantis." Prempeh concluded, "I have returned to Kumasi the amount of people taken and I have got 64 persons in surplus which I brought with me to Kumasi." He added that 55 persons were buried in foreign countries, "that is, 1 at Elmina, 5 at Sierra Leone and 49 at Seychelles." Among those who died in Seychelles were 24 chiefs. They included Prempeh's father who died on 1 August 1903, his mother, Yaa Akyaa, on 2 September 1917, his brother, Agyeman Badu, on 28 September 1917, and Yaa Asantewaa on 5 October 1921. According to this account, Prempeh landed on Seychelles with a total of 74 persons including himself and returned home in 1924 with a total of 144.

From other sources it seems that not all of Prempeh's statements should be accepted at their face value. For instance, the Boaten and Yaa Asantewaa group, which left in November 1922 and not 1919, consisted of 24 and not 35 people while the Asibe group of 7 left in December and not in November 1923. Again, from the nominal role of the Asante repatriated in 1924,[2] it appears that Prempeh departed from Seychelles with 54 and not 64 people, four of whom were Seychellois married to some of the Asante. Moreover, Prempeh's two wives, Akua Morbi and Amma Kwahan, returned home in 1909 with a total of 10 children.[3] If so, then the actual number of Asante who had returned home by November 1924 was 134 and not 144. Finally, two of Prempeh's children, James and John, who were left behind, the former in the Seychelles and the latter in Mauritius where he was training as an Anglican priest, returned home in 1926 and 1930, respectively, while three of James' children came back between 1948 and 1950.[4] This, then, gives a grand total of 139, representing a surplus, to borrow Nana Prempeh's own term, of 65.

For the purpose of assessing its impact, this group should be further categorized in terms of age. The first category comprises those who were above the age of 40 by the time they reached Seychelles and who could therefore not be expected to adapt to their new surroundings or learn anything new. The second subgroup consists of those between 20 and 40 years of age who were capable of not only adapting but also acquiring new skills and ideas; the third subgroup consists of those under 20 who were either born in Sierra Leone or in the Seychelles. Fortunately, we have unearthed from the Seychelles National Archives (SNA), the 1912 census of the Asante political prisoners.[5] According to this census,

the total population of the Asante camp was 85. Of these, 21 were above 40 years of age, 16 between 20 and 40, and 48 below 20, i.e., 25 percent, 18 percent, and 57 percent, respectively. Fifty-three of them were male and 32 female. It should be pointed out that with the exception of those who were born either in Sierra Leone or in the Seychelles, all the other ages were mere approximations.

THE SOCIOCULTURAL IMPACT OF THE SEYCHELLES ON THE EXILES

What, then, was the impact of the Seychelles on this group? From the available evidence, the impact was predominantly social in general and cultural in particular. In the first place, some of the old men, especially those above 50, were not affected in any way by their stay in the Seychelles. For one thing, as many as 14 of them died within the first 11 years of their arrival.[6] Secondly, some Asante felt too proud of their own culture and too contemptuous of anything foreign to change. Typical examples were Agyeman Badu (Adumhene), Asafo Boakye (Akwamuhene), Kwadwo Appia (Offinsohene), Kwabena Nkwantabisa (Adansihene), and Yaa Asantewaa. All the people born on the island whom I interviewed agreed that these people steadfastly stuck to Asante dress, language, music and even religion. Nkwantabisa, who was described as "the ideal Asanteman," is even reported to have built a house of swish and mud in the traditional Asante style in the camp.[7] According to my informant the house was meant to inspire the Asante children in the camp. Though as a result of the persistent pressure of Prempeh all the Asante in the camp had to go to church, the Christian religion sat very lightly on these old chiefs while some of them simply rejected it. As the present Offinsohene, a grandson of Kwadwo Appia, told me:

> In the case of my grandfather, I learned he did not like the new religion. And that he had to force himself to attend church service. He was said to be complaining that he was likely to die soon because his soul was against it after he had started going to church. Some say he was sometimes seen only twice in a church in a whole year. When he was queried about his inactiveness in church services, he was reported to have said that when one is staying with one's father, and always goes to one's father with requests, one's father soon gets bored with his child. But if the child approaches his father less often, his father eagerly welcomes that child and heeds his request.[8]

That all these chiefs should have been so impervious to change is not surprising for most were quite old by the time of their arrival. According to the 1912 census, Yaa Asantewaa was 80, Kwadwo Appia 61, and Asafo Boakye 64. But Nkwantabisa was said to be only 41 years of age in 1912.

Though a few stuck to their Asante traditions, a majority of them, both chiefs and ordinary people, underwent a process of acculturation. This process was obviously total in the case of those born on the island or in Sierra Leone, while for most of the adults the process was not one of substitution but rather of adaptation. Of no one was this more true than Prempeh himself.

Linguistically, it is clear from all the oral and documentary sources that apart from the diehard conservative Asante, a majority of the others and all those who were born in the island learned to speak either the local language, Creole, or English, or both. Prempeh set the pace by employing a private teacher who taught him and some of the older persons the English language; by the time he returned home, in spite of all the stories circulating in Kumase (even to this day), he could speak English with some fluency. It appears, however, that he never learned to speak the local language. On the other hand, all the children who were born on the island or who grew up there acquired the local language, and those who attended school learned English as well. It was with great amazement not unmixed with pleasure and admiration that I listened to Tom Boatin, Ruth Prempeh, Jeanette Badu, and Josephine Kuffour all speaking fluent Creole. Ruth is now 84 years of age, Jeanette 87, Josephine 76, and Tom 72. All of them left Seychelles at least 60 years ago and none of them has ever been back!

The group, also, with a few exceptions, adopted the Seychellois way of dressing, the men wearing trousers, shirts, and coats while the women wore long dresses with stockings and hats on formal occasions. They returned to Asante wearing these clothes. This distinguished them from their compatriots and

drew a lot of comment, if not derision.[9] Prempeh certainly returned home with suitcases full of immaculately cut European suits. When attending formal functions on the island, such as the governor's garden party, Prempeh, according to Harold Boatin, was always "dressed in the European attire—tailcoat, top-hat, button boots and his walking-stick" and, he adds, many of the chiefs were dressed in a similar way.[10] Even the venerable and uncompromising Yaa Asantewaa occasionally put on the Seychelles dress. But it should be pointed out immediately, as Harold Boatin did, that on traditional and festive occasions such as Adse festivals, funerals, and so on, all the Asante, including Prempeh himself, wore their traditional attire. The young ones, however, never adopted the traditional dress but stuck to the dress of their new home.

Equally profoundly influenced were their eating and cooking habits. Since plantain was available, the Asante continued to eat their traditional staple dish of *fufu.* However, both for the old and the young, rice steadily became the staple food. As has been pointed out elsewhere, "the letters of Prempeh to the Administration are full of complaints about the rising cost of rice, and the need therefore for a salary increase (Boahen, 1972)." The women also adopted some of the dishes of the people of the Seychelles especially *la dobe,* a dish made with breadfruit or potato, coconut, and fish.[11] Salad, vegetables, fruits, and coconuts also became popular items of food. Indeed, the ladies acquired great reputations as cooks on their return to Asante, with consequences to be discussed later. The men also adopted the local method of distilling wine from sugarcane.

In no areas, however, did the acculturation process go deeper than in those of religion and education, and the greatest credit for this should go to Prempeh himself. Throughout his period on the island, not only did Prempeh endeavor to become a good and dedicated Christian, but, as has been pointed out above, he rigidly and uncompromisingly imposed that religion on his fellow political prisoners and their children. Soon after his arrival, he readily welcomed missionaries and began to receive religious instructions from the chaplains of the Church Missionary Society. As one of them reported in his annual letter of November 1900,

> . . . King Prempeh seems to look forward to my visits with pleasure. He certainly listens most attentively and by his questions and remarks I gather that he is trying, and not unsuccessfully, to take in what he hears. I find also that he talks about it afterwards. . . . The next time I went his mother came and seated herself by me. It was clear that he had been telling her what I had said, for when I got up to leave he said, "Explain to me again for Jesus Christ's sake." He was anxious that she should hear. The next week his father, brother, and another old chief came to listen. . . . (Tordoff, 1965: 167–168)

Prempeh continued to receive religious instruction and made so much progress that he was baptized into the Anglican Church by Rev. Johnson on 19 May 1904.[12] He intensified his religious education after this since he wanted to be confirmed, a desire which was not accomplished, for reasons that cannot be discussed here, until December 1920.

It is clear from the available written sources as well as the evidence of all those that I have interviewed that Prempeh not only attended church every Sunday but he insisted that all the inmates of the camp, even including the veterans such as Yaa Asantewaa and the children, did the same. Indeed, according to Ruth Prempeh, Prempeh instituted a prize to be given to the best church attendant among the children in the camp, and he insisted on baptizing all of his own children a week after their birth.[13] As a result of his insistence and encouragement, many of the Asante political prisoners including his own mother, his brother, and even Yaa Asantewaa were baptized. Above all, with the future propagation of Christianity in Asante in mind, Prempeh attempted to convince some of the young men to train for the priesthood and succeeded in persuading his son John Prempeh to proceed to Mauritius for that purpose in January 1921.[14] Even more significant, in his letters to his sisters and other relatives in Kumase, Prempeh urged all of them to embrace the Christian religion.[15] There is absolutely no doubt that Prempeh returned to Asante a devoted and sincere Christian as did the children and many of the adults of the camp. However, Prempeh did not completely renounce his traditional African religion. He did, for instance, continue to observe the monthly Adae festival in the Seychelles. According to Harold Boatin, even though Prem-

peh was a practicing Christian, "he made it plain to the church dignitaries that the jujus and whatnots were part and parcel of Asante culture."[16]

This syncretism became obvious during funeral ceremonies on the island. On these occasions, it would appear that traditional and Christian ceremonies were blended. In other words, there was the usual traditional drumming, dancing, and mourning followed by some Christian or Seychellois ceremonies, though the latter became more and more dominant as the Asante remained longer and longer on the island. Thus, when the old Queen Yaa Asantewaa died on 17 October 1921, the following expenses were incurred for her funeral:

	Rs. (rupees)	Cts.
4 lbs coffee at Rs. 0.60 cts.	2	40
12 lbs sugar @ 30 cts.	3	60
19 pkts candle @ 90 cts.	8	10
Tea		75
Copper pins		10
Cemetery fees	2	00
Hearse	2	50
4 carriers	5	00
Rs.	24	45

Coffin supplied free from PWD (Public Works Department).[17]

It is interesting to note that the local administration felt that these expenses, which had to be defrayed by the Ghana government, were much higher than on previous occasions and therefore demanded an explanation. Prempeh's reply to this query merits quotation:

> . . . The reason why the expense was so high [was] because when she died many people called to her waiting [sic] and thus increased the amount of coffee, sugar and tea. So regards the candles, I entrust that they were used to illuminate the dead room and the majority of it for lighting the yard outside, and some placed on tables to allow people to play dominoes, draughts, etc., according to the Seychelles custom, and thus increased the amount of candles.
>
> On the other hand, if you notice the expense higher than the past funeral expenses I report, it is because the others were man-servants, ex-chiefs whereas this woman was a sub-queen and I submit deserves more respect.[18]

This explanation was accepted and the expenses were paid.

Besides Christianity, most of the Asante, especially the young ones, also embraced western education and culture. Prempeh himself and some of the younger kings such as Asibe of Kokofu and Kofi Afrani of Edweso, learned to read and write. Soon after their arrival, Prempeh employed Timothy F. Korsah, the Fante interpreter who came with them from Sierra Leone as their private tutor. It appears that they made some progress, for Korsah reported on his return to Ghana in 1904 that "Ex-King Prempeh now read and write fair well and sign over his own voucher of payment [sic]. And so do by some of the chiefs also [sic]."[19] Prempeh continued this education with the assistance of G. Mackay, principal of King's College, Victoria. As he wrote to Mackay on 13 June 1913, "As regarding to my study [for] which I received your assistance, I am now anxious to improve in my learning and I should be grateful if you be so kind to aid me as formerly with the necessary books and copy book free of charge."[20] But while he sought to improve his own education, he devoted even greater time to the promotion of education among the children of the camp. As has been shown elsewhere, it was with this in view that he persuaded the British government to establish an infant school in the camp. In June 1909 an amount of 6000 rupees was voted for the running of that school and this was renewed in 1918 (Boahen, 1972). From this school the children proceeded to the Government Free School while those parents who had the means could send their children to King's College, both in Victoria. Prempeh followed the education of the children with keen interest and always sought to find out why any child did not attend school. Thanks to his encouragement and patronage, all the children who were born on the island were given some education. Moreover, he stressed to all the parents in the camp the extreme importance of Western education, a lesson which the inmates never forgot, as we shall see later.

The Asante in Seychelles were also introduced to new ways of life. First of all, as all the chiefs were paid monthly allowances from which they maintained themselves, they became exposed to the money or market econ-

omy instead of the system of barter to which they were accustomed. Secondly, on the completion of their education, the young men and women obtained employment as clerks, surveyors, cooks, warders, typists or copyists, seamstresses, etc. Josephine Kuffour, for instance, worked as a seamstress and embroiderer, continuing these professions on her repatriation.[21] Even the uneducated obtained employment as laborers and they proved such efficient workers that it was proposed by the local administration that more people should be imported from Ghana to work on the island. This was fortunately turned down.[22] Others such as Yaw Dabre and J. K. Fin, "servants to Prempeh," became entrepreneurs, buying and operating their own rickshaws.[23] Thus, in the camp, in addition to the king-subject social stratification, there was now another hierarchy based on education and employment. Thirdly, in the camp, electric lights and pipe-borne water were provided and vaccination was introduced (Boahen, 1972). Above all, free medical care was provided and the inmates were exposed to modern medicine. Finally, the children in the schools were introduced to new games such as football and cricket, while the inmates were shown films for entertainment. Economically, besides earning allowances, wages, and salaries, practically every family (led by Prempeh himself) made a garden or farm. For home consumption they cultivated crops like cassava, potatoes, plantain, breadfruit, sugarcane, vegetables, and fruit such as mangoes, oranges, and bananas. Some of them reared pigs and poultry for sale. Prempeh had a large farm on which he lavished much care and attention. In July 1914, for instance, he asked for 2000 vanilla vines and rubber seeds to be planted "on our property."[24]

Politically, the exile had a profound impact on the Asante. Certainly, the Asante kings and chiefs and their followers arrived on the island highly embittered against the British. Prempeh felt particularly aggrieved since he sincerely believed that the British had not dealt fairly with him.[25] However, as a result of the very kind treatment that the British gave to the political prisoners, including the provision of allowances, free education, free medical care, and freedom of movement, time steadily but slowly healed their wounds. Thus, apart from a few diehards like Asafo Boakye, most of the Asante, including Prempeh himself, returned home, to quote the words of that great governor of Ghana, Sir Gordon Guggisberg, "with a very strong feeling of loyalty towards the king and towards the king's representatives in this country."[26]

In an article published in "Blackwood's Magazine" (May 1935), the author, probably A. C. Harper, wrote this of Prempeh: "At the time of his deposition, Kumasi was a tangled heap of mud buildings and largely in ruins, and Prempeh himself was a barbarous potentate, one who had permitted and witnessed human sacrifice. He returned to a well-planned, well-built Kumasi, the richest town in a thriving colony; himself civilized, educated, and a sincere Christian, 'as much at home' says a report, 'in European dress at a meeting of the Town Council, as an hour before perhaps in crown ornaments and Ashanti robes presiding over a tribunal or at some national pageant.'"

Rattray (1935) also described Prempeh on his return as a "cultured elderly gentleman" while Guggisberg described him as "an educated thinking Christian;" according to C. E. Osei, Prempeh came back "as a Christian and with all modern ideas, humble and respectful," and in the words of I. K. Agyeman, "he was friendly, a Christian and in fact friendly to both blacks and whites, there was no bitterness at all in his way."[27] These assessments were true not only of Prempeh but also of some of the chiefs and most of the young men and women who were repatriated between 1922 and 1923. However, while the adults returned Christian and disciplined but Seychellois-Asante in outlook, the young men and women who received their education there returned home totally Seychellois in speech, temperament, and outlook, an orientation which they have maintained to this day.

THE IMPACT OF THE ASANTE EXILES ON SEYCHELLES

What, then, about the impact of the Asante on Seychelles and the Seychellois? I put this question to several "returnees" and they all denied that the Asante presence had any significant impact on Seychelles and the Seychellois. They denied that the Seychellois

adopted or adapted Asante music, food, dancing, or outlook.[28] There are, however, two ways in which the Asante left some imprint on the Seychelles. The first is the social interaction that occurred and its consequences. Seven of the Asante men married Seychellois women. They were Paul Akroma, Kwame Ghansa, Alfred Prempeh, Frederick Prempeh, James Prempeh, Richard Kuffour, and J. K. Fin. Frederick Nkwantabisa also had a concubine with whom he had four children, while Edu Kofi had one with whom he had two children.[29] The wives of Frederick Prempeh, Akroma, Kuffour, Fin, and Nkwantabisa accompanied them to Ghana with their children but those of James Prempeh and Ghansa stayed behind. Three of the five children of James Prempeh, Francis, Huguette, and Mary, later joined their father in Ghana though the last two subsequently returned to the Seychelles.[30] The present writer met Huguette in the Seychelles in May 1973 and she served as his guide with charm and devotion. Her brother Francis, on the other hand, is still in Ghana. What is particularly significant about this family is that after James Prempeh's repatriation, his wife, Miss Françoise Auguste, remarried and had a number of children who are all still called Prempeh. The name Prempeh, therefore, is destined to last in the Seychelles.

Secondly, the long stay of the Asante in the Seychelles has certainly not been forgotten by the people of Seychelles. When I visited the island I was accorded a very warm reception by the people and government of Seychelles and given an official lunch simply because I was an Asante from Ghana. Moreover, the government of Seychelles has issued a commemorative stamp featuring Prempeh I. At the moment, there are moves to open a Seychelles consulate in Ghana.[31] It appears, then, that the links between the Seychelles and Ghana forged by 24 years of residence of the Asante political prisoners will remain and mature with the times.

THE IMPACT OF THE "RETURNEES" ON ASANTE

What about the impact of the group on Asante when they returned? In his farewell address to Prempeh and his followers, the governor of the Seychelles, Brigadier General Sir Joseph Byrne, said:

> You will find your native country changed beyond recognition and prosperous to a degree that could never have been dreamed of twenty-four years ago. This happy result is in a great measure due to the untiring efforts of those officials whose duty it has been to administer the Government of the Gold Coast. Judging by the knowledge that I have gained of you here I am sure that you and those who are returning with you will do all in your power to assist the administration not only by the example which you are setting but also by actively supporting the Government in the territory in which you reside. By adopting this attitude you will do good to your country and you will gain the affection and respect of the right-minded people in Ashanti.[32]

Three months after Prempeh's repatriation, Guggisberg also wrote, "if the Prempeh's case is properly handled he should develop into a most useful citizen capable of rendering great services to his countryman."[33] Finally on the occasion of the laying of the foundation-stone of Prempeh's house at Manhyia on 4 March 1925, Duncan-Johnstone, the deputy commissioner of the eastern province of Asante who brought Prempeh from the Seychelles, said:

> We look to you, Nana Prempeh, to aid us in our task of helping your countrymen to raise and educate themselves to higher things. To help us in teaching them to make the best use of their great properties and resources. It is for you, Nana Prempeh as a Christian gentleman, and a loyal fellow subject of our great Empire, to set such an example to the children and young men of today in Ashanti, that they and the generations that come after them, may come to have a proper appreciation of their responsibilities towards each other and to their country.[34]

It should be obvious from these quotations that the British colonial officials were expecting great things from Prempeh and his followers on their return home. The question, then, is did they live up to these lofty expectations?

To answer this question effectively, let us first analyze the sort of people who returned home. Of the Asibe group of seven (returned December 1923), one was above 40 years of age, four above 10, and two below 10; five were male and two female.[35] Of the Appia

group (returned November 1922), one was above 50, two above 40, two above 30, one above 20, eight above 10, seven above 1 year, and two below 1 year.[36] Of the Prempeh group of 1924, one was above 80, one above 60, one above 50 (who was Prempeh himself), four above 40, one above 30, eight above 20, twelve above 10, eighteen below 10, and four below 1 year.[37] Of these, 28 were male and 22 female. In other words, of the total of 80 Asante who were repatriated to Kumase between 1922 and 1924; 2 were above 60 years of age, 12 above 30, 33 above 10, and 33 below 10 years; 45 were male and 35 were female. It should be clear from this analysis, then, that three different categories of Asante arrived: the old conservative Asante represented by Asafo Boakye; those above the age of 30, including Prempeh himself, who could be regarded as the modernized and Europeanized Asante; and the third group below 30 years old, numbering about 66, nearly all of whom were born in the Seychelles and who were to all intents and purposes Seychellois. As one would expect, the impact of each of these groups was different.

The impact of the first group was insignificant. The only representative of that group, the veteran Asafo Boakye, who, according to Nana Afodoo, swore in 1896 to remain alive until he returned home, died in April 1925 only five months after his arrival at an estimated age of about 96.[38] With his death passed away that generation of what Paul Boatin (the private secretary of Prempeh II) called "the ideal Asante," the true tradition-bound, conservative, and uncompromising Asante of the precolonial era.

Two typical representatives of the second group, the group that I term the Europeanized Asante, are Asibe, the ex-king of Kokofu, and Prempeh I himself. The former did not make any impact whatsoever. As has been pointed out above, Asibe was repatriated together with his Seychellois wife and their five children in November 1923 and he arrived in Kumase in February 1924. He then proceeded with his family to Bekwai and thence to Kokofu, his hometown.[39] From there he settled in Fomena where his wife died on 1 June 1924 within four months of their return home, leaving him with the five children to care for.[40] From this time onward, Asibe wandered from place to place—to Kokofu, Fomena, Amoafo "in the endeavor to find means of subsistence for himself and family." In 1926, he made his way with his children [then aged 20 (m), 16 (f), 14 (m), 11 (m), and 7 (f)] from Asante "subsisting on the charitable hospitality of various chiefs en route" in Akyem Swadru, Kyebi, Oyoko, Koforidua, and Akropong. He ended up in Accra in European dress in the office of the Secretary for Native Affairs on 13 August 1926, who described him as "a sad looking man, with a certain air of distinction and a slightly French manner."[41] Asibe brought with him a letter of introduction from the Bishop of Accra.[42] After a thorough enquiry, the governor turned down Asibe's request for any assistance and set him and his family back by train at government expense with instructions that he should go to Kokofu where he was to reside and "to endeavor to make a livelihood by working."[43] Not satisfied with this decision, Asibe traveled to Cape Coast in September 1927 where he appealed to E. J. P. Brown "to assist him professionally in placing before his Excellency the Governor a petition for the relief of his destitute conditions."[44] It is not known whether Brown sent the petition, and if so what the outcome was; nor do we know what happened to Asibe and his children after September 1927. Subsequent fieldwork in Kokofu and Kumase will undoubtedly provide the answers. But there is no doubt that three years after his repatriation, Asibe had become a penniless beggar moving from place to place accompanied by his children. Why Asibe, who was said to be about 45 or 46 years of age, proved such a dismal failure is outside the scope of this paper.

In very sharp contrast to the fate of ex-king Asibe of Kokofu was that of ex-king Prempeh of Asante. While Asibe grew steadily more restless and penniless, a disgrace to his group and an embarrassment to his family, within the first three years of his return, Prempeh settled down, was restored to the Kumase stool and became, as many of the colonial officials had predicted, a shining example, an inspiration, and a leader to his society. From the documentary as well as the oral sources, Prempeh set himself four main tasks: the revival, unity, and peace of the Asante nation; the economic and social development of Ku-

mase in particular and Asante in general; the encouragement of education; and the promotion of Christianity.

One of the very first things that Prempeh decided to do on his return home was to build a house with a farm. What is significant is the site that he selected for this project, namely, Manhyia. As Nana H. Owusu-Ansah and Nana Boakye Dankwa, the Akyempemphene of Kumase, told Tordoff, "Manhyia had been chosen by a former Asantehene—Kwaku Dua I—as the site of his country house and its name implied 'all nations should come and meet here,'"and that "libation was regularly poured at the site (Tordoff, 1965: 206)." In other words, Prempeh chose the site to symbolize his aim of uniting and reviving the Asante nation. Could this be the reason why the acting chief commissioner of Asante, Captain Ballantine, strongly objected to the site? Could it be because the lack of appreciation of the historical significance of the site that Governor Guggisberg very seriously reprimanded the acting commissioner?[45] Secondly, after having chosen the site, Prempeh did not build just a single house and a farm but in fact a complex of buildings consisting of "his own two-storied house, a sumptuous guest house built in the old Ashanti style (the new Palace) and a house for his sister" and he also set about developing the surrounding area into a new township for his relatives and chiefs,[46] which, indeed, is what Manhyia is today.

While construction was going on, Prempeh worked on two other aspects of his nation-building program, namely, his reinstatement as Kumasehene and the rehabilitation of the Golden Stool as a preliminary to the restoration of the Asante Confederacy. It should be borne in mind that among the conditions that Prempeh and the Asante chiefs accepted for his repatriation were "that the said ex-king Prempeh remains a private individual holding no official status in Ashanti," and that "he does not call for or accept any of the Ashanti Stool, Properties, Insignia or Treasurers."[47] However, soon on his arrival, not only was he recognized by the Asante as their king but, with the assistance of the Kotoko Society and some of the Kumase chiefs, he launched a subtle campaign for his reinstatement as the Kumasehene. The details of this campaign, which ended successfully exactly two years after his repatriation need not be discussed here. What should be briefly touched upon is why it was so successful. The first reason was undoubtedly the fact that the British colonial administration deemed it an administrative imperative to have a king or head of the Kumase state, the largest state in Asante, especially if the new Native Jurisdiction Ordinance of 1924 which formally established the system of indirect rule in Asante was to be effectively implemented. As Guggisberg confessed to the colonial secretary: "I consider that the reinstatement of Prempeh is a necessity, owing to the serious inadvisability of appointing anyone else to a position that must be filled in order to do away with the inconvenience and absurdity of having no Head Chief on the most important stool in Ashanti."[48] However, the second and probably the more important reason, which is hinted at in this quotation, is undoubtedly the exemplary conduct of Prempeh since his repatriation and its effect on his people. As already indicated, all the British colonial officers had long recognized the need for a head for the Kumase state and in a long memorandum Rattray had strongly recommended it.[49] What had not been agreed upon was whether Prempeh should be reinstated or whether another royal should be appointed, and there is no doubt that it was Prempeh's exemplary behavior that swayed the decision in his favor. Indeed, as early as March 1926, John Maxwell, the C.C.A. had written:

> . . . I consider that Prempeh has conducted himself in a very satisfactory manner since his return to Kumasi. He has had a very difficult and trying position to occupy, and I doubt if any other African in Ashanti today would have conducted himself better. He has taken keen interest in the welfare of the people and the country and there is no doubt that he is considered by large numbers in Ashanti as their King. The people also have behaved extraordinarily well and the amount of self-restraint they have exercised redounds exceedingly to their credit. I am therefore of opinion that the matter [i.e., the reinstatement of Prempeh as Kumasehene] might well be considered.[50]

And in September 1926 Guggisberg, in recommending the reinstatement of Prempeh to the colonial secretary, also contended:

> In spite of great temptations, Prempeh has since his return to Ashanti, shown himself loyal to the crown, and observed the conditions attaching to his return. I consider this remarkable as amongst the Ashanti people generally there was a strong tendency to regard him as their chief, while among what may be called the Ashanti Intelligentsia there was undoubtedly a strong movement towards restoring him to his former position. Prempeh has, in my opinion, shown himself to be a fit and proper person to bear the special responsibilities that will be allocated to the Head Chief of the Kumasi stool.[51]

It should be evident from the above that it was this exemplary behavior coupled with the tact and diplomacy that Prempeh displayed which earned him the Kumase stool, and this behavior must surely be attributed in no small measure to the sobering effect of 24 years of residence and acculturation in the Seychelles.

However, while the British administration saw the reinstatement as an end in itself, Prempeh and his followers definitely saw it as a means to an end, namely, the restoration of the confederacy and the unity of the Asante nation. Indeed, he took the preliminary steps towards this end upon his arrival by rehabilitating the Golden Stool. He did this by first secretly obtaining possession of the Stool which had been in hiding since his exile and next by remaking the regalia of the Stool, most of which had been stolen and sold in 1921.[52]

When reports of "the renewal of the regalia of the Golden Stool" reached the British administration and Prempeh was asked about it, he tactfully admitted this and readily promised to "give instructions that the further making of the regalia must cease."[53] But Prempeh obviously never gave any such instruction and the work was completed. Duncan-Johnstone, who was placed in charge of Prempeh on his return home, reported that he was one day invited to Prempeh's new house and that after "drinking indifferent whiskey until after two o'clock in the morning," Prempeh took him to the new Palace where he showed him the Stool, "the emblem of national unity and container of the *sunsum* or spirit of the Nation." Duncan-Johnstone adds, "We then returned to Prempeh's house and he produced champagne nearly as bad as the whiskey and I had to sit drinking until four in the morning. 'I have the stool,' said Prempeh, 'nothing can stop me now from being restored to my rightful position as head of all Ashanti: Will you, my friend let the Chief Commissioner and the Governor know what has happened and say that all my chiefs are behind me.'"[54]

Unfortunately, Duncan-Johnstone did not indicate when this incident occurred, but it must have been in the late twenties. Its significance, however, is obvious; it shows the determination of Prempeh to achieve the revival and unity of the Asante nation and the restoration of the old Asante confederacy. In this report, Duncan-Johnstone states that two years before his death, the Golden Stool was carried openly in the procession when Prempeh and the queen went to give thanks to St. Cyprian's (Anglican) Church "for his liberation and restoration to his people." By that move, Prempeh was publicly proclaiming to the Asante nation and the colonial administration as well that the Golden Stool had formally been restored to its proper place as the symbol of the soul and unity of the Asante nation and, therefore, that the restoration of the Asante confederacy was only a matter of time. Though this was not achieved in Prempeh's lifetime, primarily because of his sudden and premature death in 1931, it was accomplished by his successor only four years later.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PREMPEH'S RETURN

When I asked Nana Wiafe Akenten in an interview what he considered to be the real significance of the repatriation and activities of Prempeh, he replied:

> . . . People felt the return of the Asantehene was the return of the glory of the Asante nation. Before his arrival, the Fante and others were looking down upon the Asante in their own homes. The Fantes were maltreating the Asantes. For instance, a Fante talking to an Asante could abuse him by saying "Kwasea" (foolish), "aboa" (animal), and so on. And when such a situation occurs and the Asante reported the matter to the Asantehene, he [the Asantehene] will request the Fante to be brought before him. You know, these people dare not enter the palace because of fear.[55]

I could not agree more with the essence of the statement. Prempeh restored not only the Asante nation but confidence and pride in the average Asante.

Another significant impact of Prempeh was on the development of Asante, and Kumase in particular. It should be pointed out that social and economic development had begun in Asante during the period of exile and was very much in progress when Prempeh and his group returned. They found Kumase a fairly modern town with motorable roads, a railway station, multiple-storied buildings, department stores, and motor cars, a far cry from what it was in 1896. However, Kumase was still a very small town, confined essentially to the present Adum, Kumase City Council, Kingsway, post office, prison, and Ghana National Trading Company (G.N.T.C.) areas, all north of Kejetia. Other areas of present-day Kumase—Kejetia, Manhyia, Asante New Town, and Zongo—were all deep forests separated from the former area by the Subin River.[56] It was the building of the Manhyia house and palace by Prempeh that initiated the opening up of all these areas, and by the time of his death they had become new townships. Furthermore, Prempeh readily agreed to become one of the two traditional members of the Kumase Public Health Board when it was established in July 1925 (Tordoff, 1960). It was this board that really accelerated the pace of the modernization of Kumase and introduced drains, proper layouts, electric lights, and, finally, pipe-borne water. It is agreed by all that Prempeh attended the meetings of this board, made important contributions to its deliberations, and showed particularly keen interest in any measures that would improve the welfare of his people. Above all, it was he who persuaded most of his conservative chiefs and subjects to accept some of the new taxes and rates that were being imposed by the board to raise funds for the development of the town. He also refused to back them in their opposition to some of the ordinances of the board.[57]

Prempeh established quite a large farm behind his Manhyia house, probably partly to continue his interests acquired in the Seychelles and partly to set an example for his people. On this farm he reared goats, chicken, sheep, pigs, and even a tortoise, and he grew sugarcane, pineapples, coffee, banana, and breadfruit which he brought from the Seychelles. According to his daughter, Ruth, he never sold the produce of the farm but distributed it freely among his children and followers while he himself manufactured sugar from the sugarcane for home consumption. He also established cocoa farms in the Ahafo area and set up a cocoa-buying business. He certainly showed keen interest in the selling price of cocoa which he often discussed with the colonial officials.

Moreover, as Nana Wiafe Akenten and I. K. Agyeman pointed out, the peace and order that reigned in Kumase after Prempeh's return attracted many people from other parts of Asante who had been enriched by the cocoa-farming activities. They moved to Kumase, acquired plots, and built houses, greatly accelerating the pace of the expansion of Kumase. Furthermore, the beautiful modern palace that he built in Manhyia, out of funds contributed by Asante chiefs as well as the colonial administration, became an example which was emulated by many of the *amanhene*. Certainly, those of Bekwai, Offinso, and Dwaben also built similar large and beautiful palaces.[58]

Even greater still was the impact of Prempeh in the field of religion and education. As has been pointed out, Prempeh returned home a devout Christian of the Anglican faith, and, from all accounts, he and most of his followers regularly attended services at St. Cyprian's Church, and he always urged his people to do so. According to I. K. Agyeman, Prempeh "was always speaking about peace and unity, advising us to serve our God and work hard. He went to church every Sunday."[59] As a result of his patronage, the St. Cyprian's Anglican Church became the most popular church in Kumase. One of the interesting consequences of his attachment to the Anglican church was his preference for the St. Nicholas Grammar School (later Adisadel College), rather than Achimota College, for the secondary education of his sons and relative, much to the annoyance of Guggisberg. As the latter wrote to the chief commissioner of Asante on being informed that Prempeh's nephew, Kwadwo Bonsu, a very promising student, had been entered for St. Nicholas Grammar School at Cape Coast, "It is very

unfortunate that this particular Church Mission has got hold of Kodjo Bonsu. If the boy is desired to enter the medical profession he would get a better education at Achimota. Under the circumstances you should let the matter drop."[60] Throughout the twenties, thirties, and forties more Asante young boys were sent to Adisadel College run by the Anglicans than to Achimota or Mfantsipim, and this development was undoubtedly the direct consequence of Prempeh's patronage of that school which, in turn, was a biproduct of his membership of the Anglican church.

Even greater was his impact on education in general. It should be pointed out that, as in many other fields, revolutionary developments had occurred in Asante in this area during the period of his exile. According to Tordoff, "the result of mission [schools] and government activity was that in 1924, the year of Prempeh's return, there were 28 government assisted and 158 non-assisted primary mission schools and 4 government schools established in towns and villages throughout Ashanti. . . . The total number of pupils enrolled for the year in all schools was 7,209" (Tordoff, 1965: 201). Not only did Prempeh welcome this development but he did all in his power to accelerate its pace. As one of the Kumase colonial officials, Applegate, reported in January 1926, "Prempeh has during the month been entirely taken up with the question relative to the education of his nephews, his son, and his connections generally." Applegate added that Prempeh wanted his nephew Kwadwo Bonsu to go to St. Nicholas College and then go on to study medicine; he wanted his son Henry Prempeh to go to the same school and then proceed to Britain to read law; his second nephew Robert Agyeman was to attend the Government Boys School at Juaso; while he wanted his grandson, a child of about 6 years of age, to enter the kindergarten. Applegate concluded this report: "I should like to draw your attention to the extreme interest that Prempeh has shown with reference to the education and future occupation of these boys. He has discussed the character and ability of each boy with Father Martin and myself and has shown that their futures are of considerable importance to himself and them."[61] But Prempeh did not only promote the education of his children and relatives, but that of the ordinary people as well. In November 1925, for instance, he suggested at the meeting of the Kumase Public Health Board that a night school should be established in Kumase to meet the educational needs of many people and especially motor-car drivers (Tordoff, 1965: 217). In August 1928 he also started putting up a building for a trade school in Kumase. Unfortunately, he did not obtain a building permit and so a demolition notice was served on him in December 1928.[62]

It should be obvious that Prempeh's impact on Asante was profound and that he more than lived up to the expectations of his people and of the British colonial officials. It is not surprising, then, that he was restored as Kumasehene, or that the C.C.A. asked the governor to mention in his message to the Legislative Council the fact that, "Prempeh still continues to take a keen interest in all matters pertaining to the welfare of Ashanti, particularly his work on the Kumasi Health Board and his keen interest in educational and missionary works." Prempeh was awarded the King's Medal for African Chiefs by the British Government in June 1930.[63]

What about the two other groups, namely, those between the ages of 18 and 30 who completed their education and training in the Seychelles, and those below 18 who had yet to complete or to receive education? Of this group, the young women between the ages of 18 and 24 were well educated, cultured, expert in the domestic sciences, and relatively sophisticated in dress and taste. They immediately became the center of attraction for the up-and-coming Asante educated elite—businessmen, scholars, civil servants, teachers, lawyers, and politicians—especially of the Asante Kotoko Society. As one would expect, marriages soon developed between these groups. Thus, Jeanette Badu married O. S. Agyeman, a cocoa magnet and a leading member of the Kotoko Society and later the Asantehene's chief registrar and the father of Joe Appiah; Elizabeth Prempeh married E. O. Asafo-Agyei, the first Asante to qualify as a lawyer; Mary Prempeh married Kwame Twiritwie, an active member of the Kotoko Society, who succeeded Prempeh I as Prempeh II in 1931; Alice Prempeh married Owiredu, a civil servant; Ida Appiah married

Kwarfo, a manager of the United African Company (U.A.F.) while Ruth Prempeh married E. K. Brentuo, a very rich cocoa factor, a cousin of O. S. Agyeman, and later a chief of Kofiase in the state of Agona.[64]

Most of the offspring of these marriages were given an elementary education, usually in the Anglican School in Kumase; they received their secondary education chiefly at Adisadel College; and some of them proceeded to England to qualify as doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, academics, radiographers, and accountants. Among them are people like Peter Owiredu (a retired headmaster of Apam Secondary School), Kofi Agyeman (an accountant), Miss Elizabeth Brentuo (the first Asante radiographer), Eric Boatin (a medical practitioner), and Dr. Prempeh (a lecturer and barrister).

The young men who returned home after the completion of their education and training in the Seychelles also were employed as civil servants, priests, surveyors, and above all as court clerks, bailiffs, registrars, treasurers, and policemen in the new courts, treasuries, and native tribunals established in Asante under the new Native Jurisdiction Ordinance of 1924. Thus, John Prempeh became an Anglican priest on his return home in 1930, and as Rev. Father Prempeh he worked in Kumase and in Mampong (Asante). Paul Boatin joined the civil service and rose to the rank of senior clerk in the District Commissioner's office before resigning to become the Asantehene's private secretary until 1946 when his brother Paul took over from him. Frederick Appia became the registrar of the Offinsohene's court and William Appia registrar of the Asantehene's court, while Samuel Appia and Richard Kuffour also worked in the Asantehene's court.[65] It would appear that the early success of the 1924 Native Jurisdiction Ordinance in Asante in general and in Kumase and Offinso in particular should be attributed to the services rendered by these Asante Seychellois. It should also be pointed out that some of these returnees, the Boatins and Prempehs for example, were among the first to put up modern houses in different parts of Kumase such as Manhyia and Bantama.

The final group to be considered are those young boys and girls who came back either to begin or complete their education in Ghana. The Boatins are a case in point.[66] Paul, George, Henry, Harold, William, Tom, and Regina returned home in 1922 at the ages of 23, 19, 17, 15, 13, 10, and 2 respectively. As already pointed out, the first three completed their education in the Seychelles and were employed as civil servants before two of them became private secretaries to Prempeh I and Prempeh II. The last four completed their elementary education in Ghana and were sent to Achimota where they were trained as teachers. On the completion of his training, Harold Boatin taught for some time, then went to Britain on a scholarship where he received a diploma in education from the University of London, and on his return was appointed an inspector of schools, or an education officer. After his retirement from that post, he joined the diplomatic service and was posted to Guinea from where he returned to Ghana and became head of the French Department of the Ghana Broadcasting Service. After graduating from Achimota as a teacher, William Boatin also taught in different parts of the country—Goaso, Jumase, Sunyani—and then joined the Extra-Mural Studies Department of the University of Ghana until his retirement a few years ago. Tom, the last of the boys, after leaving Achimota Training College in 1931 taught for about two years at Juaso and Mampong, then joined the staff of Achimota School in 1934 until he left for Britain to become a tutor in Twi (Asante) at the School of Oriental and African Studies. He subsequently obtained his B.A. degree in French and English in 1954 at the University of Durham and returned home to teach French in the Tamale Secondary School. In 1957 he was promoted to District Educational Officer in charge of the Sekyere district in the Asante region. In 1959 he joined the West African Examination Council and was posted to Sierra Leone in 1960 to start a branch of the council there. He returned to Ghana in 1964, was appointed Deputy Registrar, then Senior Deputy-Registrar (the first African to attain the post) and he retired in 1978. Their only sister, after leaving the Achimota Training College, taught at the Anglican Primary School in Kumase and she rose to become headteacher in that school till her death in 1959. Similarly, after

the completion of their education in Ghana, the Prempehs became civil servants, court registrars and, above all, lawyers. Like the former group, members of this group placed an emphasis on the education of their children; many of these children have become doctors, lawyers, academicians, and businessmen.

CONCLUSION

It should be obvious that though numerically very small, the Asante "returnees" made quite an impact on Asante society and, to a very limited extent, on Ghana in general. It is true that they did not mix very much with other Asante and that they tended to keep very much together in their club, the Seychellois Club. It is significant that they speak Creole among themselves to this day. The first-generation Prempehs, Appias, Boatins, and Kuffuors are still very much Seychellois in speech, and to some extent in outlook, and they still speak the Asante language with some accent. They have never been really integrated into Asante society. It is equally true that they did not initiate the process of modernization nor the phenomenal economic and social changes that occurred in Asante during the first three decades of this century. But there is no doubt that they greatly accelerated the pace of those changes both by precept and example. Their patronage of St. Cyprian's Church enhanced the prestige of the Anglican church in Asante and made Adisadel College more or less the Asante national secondary school. Their roles as court registrars, bailiffs, private secretaries, and clerks helped to make the 1924 Native Jurisdiction Ordinance a success in Asante. The women added sophistication and cultural refinement to the life of the Asante womenfolk. Above all, they contributed in a very significant way to the spread of education and to the emergence of an Asante educated and professional elite, especially in Kumase. They and their children and descendants are among the best educated professional people in Asante today. Their contribution to the development of Asante has been substantial since they acted as an important catalyst to the process of modernization in Asante.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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5. SNA, Political Exiles, encl. in Gov. to Gov. of the Gold Coast, 10 Jan. 1913.
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7. Interview with Harold Boatin, July 1971.
8. Interview with Nana Wiafe Akenten, July 1971.
9. Interview with Tom Boatin.
10. Interview with Harold Boatin.
11. Interview with Tom Boatin, Francis Prempeh, and Jeanette Budu.
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45. Adm. 12/5/117 file no. 13-11/25 memorandum by the Governor 7/2/24, Gov. to C.C.A., 3/4/25.

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49. Adm. 12/5/117 file no. 13-39/26 (secret) memo by Rattray, 8/5/26, Maxwell to Governor, 16/7/26.

50. File no. S13-42/26, Maxwell to the Governor, 26/3/26.

51. File no. S13-42/26 C.S.O. cont. Bd. 38, Guggisberg to Amery, 10 Sept. 1926.

52. The story of the desecration of the Golden Stool, one of the most sacrilegious and melancholy episodes in the history of Asante, is yet to be told.

53. File no. S13/37/26, minutes of 26 Nov. 1925, Maxwell to Governor, 11/1/26.

54. Duncan-Johnstone Papers, report for month of August. Notes on King Prempeh's return, 1924.

55. Interview with Nana Wiafe Akenten.

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63. Adm. 11/1342, case no. 5/1926, obituary notice; private sec. to Ag. SNA 18 July 1930 and enclosures.

64. Interviews with Ruth Prempeh, Josephine Kuffour, Jeannette Badu, Tom Boatin, Mr. Oppong, etc.

65. Interviews with T. Boatin and Mr. Oppong.

66. This section is based entirely on interviews with Paul, Harold, and Tom Boatin.

CHAPTER 13. KINGSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY ASANTE SOCIETY

Maxwell Owusu

ABSTRACT

Since independence from colonial rule, the legitimacy of traditional rulers—kings and chiefs—in contemporary Africa has been severely challenged. The general question that this paper addresses is why some monarchical systems, and Asante in particular, have managed to persist in one form or another right up to the present time.

This question is examined through a critical historical analysis of Asante relations with the British in the colonial and postwar periods, with the Nkrumah government, before and after independence, and with the present government. Two main reasons are advanced to account for the continued viability of chieftaincy in Ghana. In the first place, the British policy of indirect rule encouraged the adaptation of traditional rule to the changing needs of the time. Second, respect for chiefs and the cultural heritage of which they are accredited custodians has remained strong.

I examine the contributions of Asante kingship to Gold Coast nationalism, modern constitutionalism, and a national culture in Ghana. I conclude that given the nature of kingship and chieftaincy and the changing socioeconomic profile of its leadership, symbolized by the dramatic increase in the number of highly educated chiefs, kings and chiefs as keepers of the past can assist in the building of a future progressive and just society in Ghana.

FROM KINGDOM TO NATION-STATE

> On Chieftaincy . . . we have choice [sic] for two lines of action only, namely to preserve and enhance the institution as the core of all aspects of our corporate life as a people or to destroy it by a gradual process of dismembering its essential parts and so make it atrophy and die . . . if we . . . destroy it what can we put in its place if we are to remain a nation with any cultural heritage? (Nene Azzu Mate Kole)[1]

The years following African independence were extremely critical for kingships and chieftaincies throughout Africa. Commenting on the status of African kingship during this period, Lemarchand noted in somber words that echo the fears expressed by various members of constitutional commissions before and after independence:

> In Africa, as elsewhere, history is fast catching up with historic polities. Between 1960 and 1970 two independent African monarchies (Burundi and Libya) met their doom at the hands of a new generation of republican elites; a third (Rwanda) was abolished on the very threshold of independence in a pool of blood; a fourth (Buganda) [frequently compared with Asante by scholars] managed to maintain itself for a while as a separate entity within the broader national framework of Uganda, until it, too, suffered decapitation; less than a year later in 1967, three surviving kingships (Ankole, Bunyoro and Toro) still enclosed within the national boundaries of Uganda were, likewise, done away with—this time through constitutional surgery. To this rapidly extending list of monarchical casualties were added, in 1970, the name of King Moshoeshoe II of Lesotho. As 1970 drew to a close, King Farouk's quip to Lord Boyd Orr had taken on a prophetic ring: "There will soon be only five kings left: The Kings of England, Diamonds, Hearts, Spades and Clubs!" (Lemarchand 1977: 1).

Lemarchand goes on to observe that what distinguishes the destinies of most contemporary African monarchs from their predecessors' is not that their legitimacy was challenged—not that they were overthrown, but that they were overthrown in the name of "progress and democracy" rooted in the exaltation of republican values—that is, in an inevitable universal development toward popular sovereignty and a secular political order.

Why have some monarchical systems managed to survive in one form or another right up to the present time while others have

not? More specifically, why has Asante kingship, perhaps the only truly monarchical institution in Ghana,[2] along with other chieftaincies that combine secular and sacred attributes and functions, survived Ghana's various republican constitutional governments, socialist governments, and military regimes?[3]

To provide a tentative answer to these questions, this paper examines Asante-British relations in the colonial period, Asante relations with the Colony in the postwar period, and Asante relations with the CPP government just before and after independence.[4] Only those aspects of these relationships that bear directly on the problem of stability and survival of Asante kingship in particular and Ghanaian chieftaincy in general will receive attention. A complete answer would, of course, require a comparative in-depth historical analysis of internal and external factors shaping the development of West African societies and especially the analysis of the impact on Asante kingship of colonial and postcolonial socioeconomic development, a clearly impossible task here.

The balance of the paper consists of three parts. The first begins with a brief examination of the nature and form of kingship in precolonial Africa as they relate to Asante kingship and Akan chieftaincy. I then proceed to identify and discuss critically the general and specific factors affecting the persistence of Asante kingship and Ghanaian chieftaincy as a whole. The second part discusses, in a preliminary fashion, the unique features and critical functions of the Ghanaian stool polity, stressing its essentially democratic, progressive, and popular character, as well as its dominant hegemonic ideological role, against the background of some of the more important criticisms of the institution. It is shown that explanations of the destiny of African kingship and chiefship in contemporary society based solely on notions of administrative convenience or necessity that neglect the role of choice are either inadequate or unsatisfactory. The concluding part looks critically at the still unresolved problem of the place of chieftaincy in Ghana and suggests that contrary to the belief of Baran (1952), at least in Ghana, given the nature of the institution and the changing socioeconomic profile and attitude of its leadership, kings and chiefs as keepers of the past can indeed contribute significantly to the building of a future progressive and just society.

I follow the definition of chieftaincy as provided in the suspended Third Republican Constitution of Ghana which has been retained in the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) Proclamation.[5] The "chief" is defined as a person "who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as chief or queen-mother in accordance with the requisite applicable customary law and usage." Such a person is required by law to have his or her name entered in the National Register of Chiefs and published in the Local Government Bulletin for public notification.[6]

THE ASANTE KINGDOM CHARACTERIZED

The Asante kingdom was one of the few vast and prosperous kingdoms in West Africa (the others were Benin, Bornu, Dahomey, and the Hausa and Yoruba states) which dazzled the Europeans who first visited them. At the height of its power, from about the first quarter of the 18th century to the first quarter of the 19th century, the Asante kingdom or confederacy consisted of two major divisions, namely, metropolitan Asante and provincial Asante and their subdivisions.

The former, a fairly homogeneous cultural and ethnic entity, was made up of Kumase—the capital directly under the *Asantehene*—and the *amanto,* the territorial divisions or states such as Dwaben, Nsuta, Kokofu, and others. Each state or *oman* was (is) under its own *omanhene,* a "paramount chief" or "king" who retained his largely autonomous and hereditary status. All the amanhene, however, recognized the Asantehene (that is, the Omanhene of Kumase) as their political and spiritual leader and regarded the Golden Stool, which is believed to embody the soul of the Asante nation, as the symbol of their unity. In metropolitan Asante, the power of the Asantehene was thus supreme only in the Kumase state, enjoying neither autocratic nor despotic power over the other amanhene of the Asante confederacy.[7]

As the supreme commander of the Asante army, thus controlling physical force (one of the most important sanctions of the confederacy before colonial rule), the Asantehene exercised enormous power. However, he was (and still is) subject to constitutional checks. There is an accepted procedure for his election, installation, and destoolment. A cardinal principle of the Asante constitution is that those who elect a chief can also depose him. This applies to the Asantehene also. Electors insist that the Asantehene rule constitutionally. Indeed, the latter half of the 19th century supplies a number of examples of an Asantehene being deposed for unconstitutional and sacrilegious behavior. The king remained powerful only so long as he held and deserved the affection and respect of the common people.

Thus, the great moral influence of the Asantehene derives in practice from the unique leadership ability, tact, and personal qualities of the individual Asantehene. It also derives, no doubt, from the cumulative effect of the many astounding achievements of the long line of previous occupants of the Golden Stool.

Provincial Asante consisted of an ethnically and culturally heterogeneous group of conquered states such as Dagomba and Gonja to the north, and Akwapin, Akwamu, Ga, Denkyira, and Wassa to the south (Boahen, 1966c: 77). These were linked to metropolitan Asante by various tributary, alliance, and patron-client relationships. It is estimated that at the peak of its power the "kingdom of gold," the Asante Kingdom, extended over an area of about 125,000–150,000 square miles, an area far larger than that of present Ghana (92,000 square miles). Its diverse and far-flung population was also estimated at between 3 and 5 million, made up of people from 47 different ethnic groups (see Beecham, 1841: 130–134; Boahen, 1966c: 76).

Despite the checkered history of the institution, two special characteristics of the evolution of the Asante stool polity need to be particularly noted. The first was the extraordinary ability of Asante kings from Osei Tutu to Kwaku Dua Panyin to control and weld together into one united and prosperous nation a number of highly competitive states jealous of their independence, confederal or provincial, and their jural or constitutional rights (McCaskie 1984: 170–171). As Davidson (1974: 206) correctly observes "it was precisely the closer knit union of these groups which most distinguished them from their neighbours." It is this rare quality of a conscious and rather successful precolonial nation-building which highly impressed and greatly worried British imperialists as well as local groups that came into contact with Asante and made Asante the envy of her neighbors. In fact, the diffusion of the stool polity and the establishment of the system of indirect rule in the Gold Coast by the British seem to have been greatly influenced by the very efficient Asante state bureaucracy. During the colonial period and after, this paradigm of statecraft was, with some local modifications, adopted by or imposed on nearly all other peoples in Ghana.[8]

Behind the Asante political, economic, and cultural achievements stood the great Golden Stool. It provided a powerful myth without which, as Sorel (1950: 182) pointed out, "one may go on talking revolt indefinitely without ever provoking any revolutionary movement." Associated with the Golden Stool was an ingenious set of laws, 77 in all according to tradition, among the most important of which were those of "common citizenship," by which every person of the Asante union, at least in public, was to place loyalty to the Golden stool above all else, the ultimate sanction of the laws being the Golden Stool itself (Kyerematen, 1969: 4–5; Davidson, 1974: 206).

The second remarkable feature of the development of the Asante kingdom was the dramatic growth, in a nonliterate society, of an incipent high culture, as the Asantehene's court in Kumase attracted and made regular use of Islamic scholars and European "technical experts" as private secretaries; civil servants; and political, economic, and military advisors. A great Akan cultural tradition—religion, law, morals, philosophy, constitutionalism, concepts of beauty, music, dance, the arts and crafts, language, folklore, etc.—blossomed and flourished, first in the courts of the Asantehene, and the amanhene, and then in the rest of Akan society, eventually to influence even the cultures of non-Akan areas.

It is important to draw attention to the very close relationship that developed over time between the Asante (Akan) royal courts and the common citizenry. This close identification of state and society was facilitated by the fact that the state—the Akan stool polity—was built upon the firm foundation of kinship, family, lineage, clan, village, and town, each of which had a limited range of authority at increasing levels of inclusiveness. This provided that characteristic and essential decentralization of power and responsibility, guaranteeing personal freedom, at least to every free born Akan, before the imposition of British authority. The pivot of the nation-state was the sacred chiefly stool which sanctioned the legitimate exercise of power and symbolized the common religious, secular, and material values of the people. The destinies of the people and of the stool were thus almost inextricably intertwined.

The state was woven together with the social and political threads of common beliefs and practices, common kinship, and clanship. This cultural underpinning led to the evolution of more or less democratic forms of government along with a powerful military organization—a people's militia—the *asafo,* providing for the internal security, territorial independence, an efficient administrative organization, and above all for the welfare and prosperity of chiefs and people. To summarize, historically the first and, indeed, the most influential nationalism of Ghana has been that of the Asante nation-state which became the prototype of later nationalisms of the region, e.g., Fante, Akyem, etc. The Asante nation-state was among the most successful of West African polities. Asante achieved a unified and effective internal administration and an increased control over the population, which facilitated the collection of taxes and other revenue for warfare, etc. (Wilks, 1975). The state had at the center a large population with a common language, a common sense of identification with the state, and, by the standards of 18th and 19th centuries, a strong and coherent administration.[9]

The above considerations shaped the attitude of the British to the peoples of the Gold Coast and influenced British-Asante relations.

THE PERSISTENCE OF KINGSHIP AND CHIEFTAINCY IN THE COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL PERIODS

The factors that have contributed to the survival of kingship and chieftaincy in Ghana may be grouped into three broad categories, namely: (1) those related to colonial administrative policy and the objectives of British rule; (2) those related to the progress of Gold Coast nationalism and the struggle for independence; and (3) those related to the consolidation of power and socioeconomic development in the postindependence period. Space and time constraints prevent an exhaustive treatment of each of the broad categories. The rather brief and preliminary discussion possible here will simply identify under each category those events or measures that have had the most lasting impact on the institution of Asante kingship in particular and Gold Coast (Ghana) chieftaincy in general.

Asante-British Relations

Asante, it may be recalled, was by the early 19th century a highly organized, imperialistic state often at war with her neighbors to the south and north, most of whom were incorporated into the Asante confederacy. Following successive victories, Asante imperialism set in motion a process of territorial expansion and political integration as various Akan and non-Akan groups, in the face of Asante threats, entered into alliances and made mutual defense treaties. A famous example of this process was the creation of the Fante confederacy made up of coastal Fante states. Significantly, the coastal Fante states were forced to seek protection from the more powerful Asante, under the equally imperialistic British with whom the Fante entered into the Bond of 1844.[10] This trend toward political unification provided some of the crucial ingredients for the rise of Gold Coast nationalism.

The Asante were engaged in eight major battles with the British between 1806 and 1896. In the end, British forces, led by Sir Garnet Wolseley with superior fire power and military organization, were able to subdue

and eventually destroy the old Asante confederacy kingdom. The Asantehene, Nana Prempeh I, was exiled to the Seychelles Islands. From an Asante point of view, perhaps the most famous of these battles was the battle of Nsamankow of 21 June 1824 in which the Asante defeated the British forces and captured and beheaded the governor, Sir Charles MacCarthy, and eight other British officers.[11]

These Anglo-Asante battles and the eventual British victory affected the nature of what Low (1973: 9) calls the "initial imperial situation." In this case, British imperial power at first superseded the old Asante confederacy, entrusting its administration after 1902 to the governor of the Gold Coast who exercised his authority through a chief commissioner, who in turn was assisted by district commissioners and other officers (Bourret, 1960: 72 ff.). In 1905, the British established dominance over a somewhat reconstituted Kumase Council of Chiefs, and in 1935 over a restored, but restructured, Asante confederacy along with the other equally reorganized stool and skin polities within a new integrated territorial unit. Despite their mutual hostilities, the Asante and the British came to realize in time that they needed each other (Wraith, 1956: 18). The British continued to respect Asante (Akan) political institutions and, indeed, wanted a strong Asantehene (and other paramount chiefs with similar traditional authority) who could keep all Asante in order and help promote and achieve British objectives, as long as the king (or any chief) was not strong enough to be a danger to the colonial government (Ward, 1958: 287). This essentially paradoxical and ambivalent attitude of the British authorities toward chieftaincy was perpetuated in Ghana's postindependence regimes, notably during the Nkrumah period.

The Inter-war Period

The institution of kingship or chieftaincy was undisputably the keystone of colonial local government throughout British Africa. Although the aim of indirect rule could not be said to have been the preservation of kingship and chieftaincy as such (Crowder, 1964), it directly contributed to the survival of the concepts of a "natural ruler" if in a greatly modified form. For a vast majority of ordinary Africans in villages and towns, British colonialism meant the enforcement of local administrative policy by particular officers. The attitude of these colonial officers toward local institutions and practices, and particularly their willingness to adapt colonial policy to local needs, no less than the attitudes of African chiefs and people, were crucial for the perpetuation of African kingship.[12]

Nowhere was this pragmatism more evident than in the conscious efforts made by British local officers in Asante, such as Fuller, Guggisberg, and Rattray, in the name of improved British-African relations, to adapt administrative policy to local needs and concerns. Sir Francis Fuller, chief commissioner in Asante from 1902–20, Captain Robert Rattray, former commissioner and director of the unique anthropology department in Kumase from 1921, and Sir Gordon Guggisberg, the governor of the Gold Coast from 1918 to 1927 (considered as the first truly pro-African governor), were rare individuals whose general respect and sympathy for Africans and African institutions and whose common-sense approach to local problems contributed much to the revival and restoration of Asante kingship and chieftaincy in the Gold Coast. Their concern about indigenous interests is borne out by the sensible way in which they handled a number of issues vital to the cultural identity of Africans.

For example, following the unfortunate and abortive British attempt to acquire the Golden Stool (which directly produced the Asante revolt of 1901 led by Yaa Asantewaa, the queen mother of Ejisu [see Busia, 1951: 218]), the Asante authorities had carefully hidden that sacred symbol of Asante unity and identity.[13] Two decades later, a party of African road construction workers accidentally found it. The Golden Stool was robbed of its ornaments by some despicable Asante who sold them for the gold they contained. This sacrilegious and criminal act frightened and aroused the Asante chiefs and people who felt that the British authorities might use this as a pretext to take possession of the Golden Stool. The criminals were arrested. Surpris-

ingly, the British permitted the Kumase Council of Chiefs to try them according to Asante law and custom. The death penalty was imposed but the British, with the agreement of the Council of Chiefs, commuted the sentence to perpetual banishment. The chief commissioner, however, assured the Asante chiefs and people that the government held no claims to the Golden Stool and that it remained the property of the Asante nation, a remarkable reversal of the 1901 British attitude. This British gesture not only restored Asante confidence in the safety of the Golden Stool—that is in their safety, welfare, and prosperity as a people—but brought the Asante chiefs and people closer to the British crown. For not long after the British assurance, the queen mother of Mampong sent a replica of her own silver stool to Princess Mary of England on the occasion of her wedding with very warm greetings:

> It may be that the King's child [Princess Mary] has heard of the Golden Stool of Ashanti. That is the Stool which contains the soul of the Ashanti nation. All we women of Ashanti thank the governor exceedingly because he has declared to us that the English will never again ask us to hand over that Stool. This stool we gladly give. It does not contain our soul, as our Golden Stool does, but it contains all the love of us Queen Mothers and of our women. The spirit of this love we have bound to the stool with silver fetters, just as we are accustomed to bind our spirits to the base of our stools. (Bourret, 1960: 76)

By 1917 when the Asante were for the first time recruited into the Gold Coast Regiment, the chiefs and people of Asante had become amenable to British rule. The Asante had, indeed, demonstrated their loyalty to the British government and indirectly to the new Gold Coast by generous contributions to the War Fund. The paramount chief of Adansi alone gave 1000 pounds sterling toward the third airplane that the Asante contributed as their gift to Britain for the prosecution of World War I (Busia, 1951: 110–111). Significantly, many Asante joined the Gold Coast Regiment during the Second World War.

It is important to record here the role played by the newly established Asante Kotoko Society in Asante and Gold Coast politics of the period. The Kotoko Society was formed in 1916 by a group of educated and enterprising Asante, all employees of private mercantile firms. The five founders of the society were J. E. Bandoh, O. S. Agyeman, E. P. Owusu (later Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II), I. K. Agyeman, and Prince Kofi Nti (Mensah-Bonsu) (see Asante Kotoko Society, 1976: 11). The Kotoko Society was formed to secure the restoration of Asante unity "as the foundation of the material and spiritual progress of Asante" based on the restoration of the Asante kingdom. The first step toward this was clearly the return of Nana Prempeh I from exile, and his restoration as Asantehene. To this end, between 1916 and 1920 the society preoccupied itself with informal meetings, advising and guiding interested Asante chiefs and making contacts on their behalf with the colonial administration and with prominent lawyers, drafting petitions, and offering prayers for the return of Nana Prempeh I. In 1924 the Kotoko Society prevailed on the Asante colonial administration to establish the Kumase Public Health Board to ensure satisfactory sanitary standards in the rapidly growing and modernizing city of Kumase.

Little wonder that having restored the Golden Stool to the chiefs and people of Asante, the pro-African governor, Sir Gordon Guggisberg, proceeded to take steps toward the restoration of its exiled occupant. In 1924, the British authorities decided to permit King Prempeh I to return to Kumase from Seychelles (see Boahen, this volume). The chiefs and British government cooperated in providing a maintenance fund; and in addition to a suitable home, a 150 acre plantation was prepared for him, and he was given a role in the municipal government of Kumase serving on the Kumase Public Health Board.

In 1926, King Prempeh I was again installed as paramount chief of Kumase, but not as Asantehene. However, on his death in 1931 he was succeeded by his nephew, E. P. Owusu, who was installed under the title of Nana Osei Tutu Agyeman Prempeh II. On 1 January 1935, the confederacy was restored with Prempeh II assuming the ancient title of Otumfuo Asantehene. To mark the event, a great durbar was held at Kumase, a truly

colorful event, revealing the remarkable vitality, beauty, and dignity of the pageantry of the Asante (Akan) people. It provided proof of national unity—the historical unity of chiefs and people—and confirmed the ideological hegemony of the chiefly stool among the Akan (see Opoku, this volume).

The Asante Confederacy Council rapidly adapted itself to the demands of Gold Coast nationalism and of modern socioeconomic and political developments. All this was facilitated by the implementation of the first economic development plan in the Gold Coast, and the constitutional changes establishing indirect rule, initiated by Sir Gordon Guggisberg between 1924 and 1927. Indirect rule, as Gower has observed, was to be a school for African self-government achieved through the education of traditional chiefs and the gradual extension of their powers (Gower, 1967: 6).

The research and writings of Captain Rattray on Asante also provided a basis for British imperial policy of indirect rule in the Gold Coast. Between 1920 and 1927, Rattray was able to make a comprehensive study based on extensive fieldwork and intensive participant observation of Asante religion, constitution, law, and folklore. Rattray held the view—shared by a great majority of Africans, including the intelligentsia (e.g., members of the Aboriginal Rights Protection Society [ARPS]), and of the Kotoko Society—that Africans ought to preserve what was best in their culture and adapt it to modern conditions. Based on his studies, Rattray found that the Asante confederacy, though seemingly autocratic, was democratic to a degree, since the kings and chiefs were dependent on their councils, which in turn represented the various divisions and subdivisions of the state (see Owusu, 1979). The confederacy symbolized by the Golden Stool, moreover, welded the Asante people into one nation; and provided in part for the craving of the chiefs and people for cultural freedom and self-determination. The importance of Rattray's publications on Asante was the demonstration that Asante kingship and Akan chieftaincy was representative and fulfilled a dominant hegemonic ideological and symbolic need in the society.[14]

ASANTE AND GOLD COAST NATIONALISM

The ideological character of Asante kingship and chieftaincy thus has continued to sustain the institution even during periods of seemingly radical changes. Crawford Young (1977: 17) has argued that "where they do not traditionally coincide, nation and kingdom appear incompatible in the era of independence." He goes on to say that "the Buganda case suggests that either nation triumphs through dismantlement of kingdom, or kingdom mates nation through conquest of its central institutions, or through secession to render territory and kingdom congruent." However, the Asante seem to have presented a viable alternative solution to the problem of the kingdom versus the nation-state.

The Asante kingdom and Gold Coast chieftaincy were an integral part of Gold Coast nationalist movements in Londsdale's sense of the term. According to Londsdale (1968: 11), a nationalist movement must possess all of three interrelated features, namely, (a) it must aim for the sharing of power at the political center of the colony or future state; (b) its leadership must be conscious of the common people's aspirations and willing to articulate them; and (c) it must have an active popular following. The chiefs and people of Ghana believe that the struggle for independence was begun several generations ago by their ancestors, and chiefs gave their active support to the youth (that is, the common people) to achieve the final goal of full self government. Chiefs, commoners, and educated classes were all nationalists, dedicated to winning independence from British rule, even if they did not always agree on the tactics, the timing, or the constitutional framework. As Bourret correctly notes, "in the long run, the underlying division of forces in the Gold Coast was not between the chiefs and the intelligentsia, but between Africans and Europeans" (1960: 53–55).

Through the activities of the Kotoko Society, Asante continued to support the nationalist activities of the Gold Coast and her demand for political and economic freedom. In 1937, 14 major European firms dealing in

Gold Coast (and Nigerian) cocoa exports, several of which (notably the United Africa Company) also controlled the bulk of imports into the Gold Coast, entered into a secret agreement to control the price of cocoa, in effect lowering the price paid to producers. As a result of the united and timely action of Asante and Gold Coast colony chiefs and people, a very successful campaign for an economic boycott against the European firms was achieved. The famous boycott consisted of the refusal both to sell any cocoa to the European buying companies or to buy from the retail stores of the associated firms. The boycott, which lasted for four months, almost completely paralyzed the economic life of the Gold Coast and fueled the nationalist agitation for self-determination.

In the post World War II period, the nationalist demand for self-government intensified in Asante and the Gold Coast colony (see Andoh, this vol., chap. 14). The Asante Kotoko Society strongly supported the decision of the Asanteman Council to join the Gold Coast Legislative Council under the new Burns Constitution of 1946. Three prominent members of the society, Dr. I. B. Asafu-Adjaye, Mr. E. O. Asafu-Adjaye, and Mr. I. K. Agyeman were elected by the Asante Confederacy Council to the Legislative Council; a fourth member of the society, Mr. B. D. Addai, was elected as the first representative of the Kumase Municipal Council to the Gold Coast Legislative Council (see Busia, 1951: 130–131).

With the rise of party politics in the late 1940s and the general elections of 1951, 1954, and 1956, the allegiance of the members of the Asante Kotoko Society[15] was divided between the emergent major national political parties—namely, the Convention Peoples Party (CPP), the Ghana Congress Party (GCP), the National Liberation Movement (NLM)—later the United Party (UP). Many, however, chose to remain uncommitted to any political party.

The formation of the NLM in Kumase in 1954, with the support of the Asantehene and the Asanteman Council, should be seen, in light of this, not as a secessionist movement, nor even as an Asante movement, but as a movement aimed primarily at the sharing of national political power. While the NLM was violently opposed to the centrist policies of Nkrumah and the CPP, Nkrumah saw the NLM as terrorists leading a "feudal revolt against a democratic way of life" (Nkrumah 1955: 404) and aiming to crown the Asantehene "King of Ghana" (1963: 63–64). However, Nkrumah also assured the nation that he was in favor of "constitutional chieftaincy" (1955: 406). He, in fact, stressed that "if . . . chieftaincy can be used to encourage popular effort there would seem to be little sense in arousing the antagonism which its legal dissolution would stimulate" (1963: 84).

That the Asantehene was both a nationalist and an Asante is well established by the content of his reply to the Joint Provincial Council regarding the Gold Coast constitutional proposal. The address emphasizes the need for future unity between Asante and the Colony. [See also Andoh, this volume.]

> This is not the first time that we have realized or been made to realize the need for co-operation between Asante and the Colony. . . . if we were to trace out what has been the chief obstruction to our coming together we would find out that it is selfishness. . . . There has been lurking in the breasts of some of you in the Colony the fear that if you fall in with Ashanti we shall seek to dominate you. . . . I would like you to dispel any such uncalled for fears for the days of our imperialist aspirations are past and forgotten. What we aim at now is not that sort of federation which in the past we tried to force on you with the aid of the sword; but one into which we, all of us, of our own accord, shall freely enter. It is to be a federation based not on subjection, but on love. . . . Henceforth, let our watchword by UNITY. . . . If in the past we waged war against one another, let us today seek rapprochement. (Bourret, 1960: 63)

As S. K. B. Asante has correctly argued in regard to the Nkrumah period, "a close examination of the motivations of the main opposition groups . . . will reveal that the dominant factors were revulsion at the totalitarian excesses of the [CPP] government, disillusionment over corruption and nepotism, exasperation with erratic policy determination, political frustration, especially among the disappointed adherents of the . . . CPP, and most of all, genuine economic grievances—particularly those provoked by discriminatory taxes on cocoa produce"

(1968: 126; Austin, 1964; Owusu, 1970). S. K. B. Asante goes on to point out that localism and traditionalism were exploited (not only in Asante but throughout Ghana) and pressed into the service of the opposition against the Nkrumah regime. Indeed, the CPP also manipulated chieftaincy and localism for its own hegemonic interests. In Asante, as is well known, the traditional loyalty to the Golden Stool was cleverly manipulated by the NLM as an effective instrument of political opposition. However, as S. K. B. Asante (1968: 26) emphasizes, "this was essentially a matter of strategy, not commitment to traditionalism as a substantive end in itself. Thus, although the NLM loudly proclaimed its preference for a federal constitution before independence, its concern was not so much to set up regional governments as to use the bogey of secession in securing effective guarantees against totalitarian rule." Most responsible and knowledgable Asante who were involved in the NLM would agree wholeheartedly with the above assessment.[16] In fact, the NLM dropped its early demand for federation as soon as the Ghana (Independence) Constitution of 1957 promulgated what it considered adequate checks on autocracy (see Akyeampong, n.d.: 1–7).

It is misleading to account for the somewhat variable political alliances of the Asantehene (or, indeed, of many chiefs and people of Ghana) during the Nkrumah period in terms of antinationalist, if anti-CPP, strategy. At the beginning of Nkrumah's rule, the Asantehene, along with many prominent chiefs in Ghana, adopted a benevolent wait-and-see attitude. However, the Asantehene did not resist the enthusiastic reception of the CPP among the Asante; he watched Kumase elect as its first representative to the National Academy, Mr. Casely Hayford, a member of the CPP and a Fante. The influence of Krobo Edusei, an astute Asante CPP campaign wizard, was no doubt a factor here. Later the Asantehene became a bitter opponent of the CPP and threw his weight behind the NLM. Soon after independence, however, the Asantehene declared his loyalty to the CPP government and fiercely denounced the NLM. His ardent support for Nkrumah (very much appreciated by Nkrumah—see, e.g., Nkrumah, 1963: 84) persisted until the Nkrumah regime was overthrown by a military coup d'etat, at which time, like most of the chiefs and people through Ghana, he enthusiastically welcomed the new military government (the National Liberation Council).

CHIEFTAINCY TODAY

The relative security and viability of Asante kingship and Ghanaian chieftaincy today have resulted from a complex set of factors. Among the most important are the following:

1. The intrinsically familial democratic, and popular character of the institution.

2. The symbolic and ideological role of sacred stools. Through ceremonies and festivals (e.g., the Odwira, Akwasidae, Ngmayem, Homowo, Akwambo, the libations, etc.), the symbolism of the stool has contributed toward the consolidation of the otherwise weakening position of the chief and the enhancement of chieftaincy as a moral force in local communities throughout Ghana (see Cohen, 1976, for a relevant discussion of the role of symbolism in complex society). For instance, the voluntary, unorchestrated warm display of popular enthusiasm which surrounded both the return from exile of Prempeh I in 1924 and the installation of the present Asantehene Opoku Ware II in July 1970, not to mention the public mourning at state funerals given to prominent chiefs, are good examples of the power of symbolism in contemporary Ghanaian society.

3. The view that is widely held in Ghana that chieftaincy might provide an acceptable model of government at local levels, if not at higher levels (see e.g., Boateng, 1975; Owusu, 1979).

4. The fact that there has been a respectable tradition of constitutional development in Ghana which has sought to blend Western institutions and indigenous ones, based on the abiding values of kingship and chieftaincy.

5. As chiefs become increasingly highly educated, the most damaging historical criticism of the institution[17]—that of the illiteracy of chiefs—loses its importance.

In fact, a socioeconomic profile of chiefs in Ghana, culled from the National Register of Chiefs, provides incontrovertible evidence that there is a growing coalescence of the tra-

ditional elite and the so-called modern elite. For example, the present Asantehene is a highly respected lawyer. The newly elected Adansihene, Mr. Samuel Asante-Fosuhene, is a journalist, lawyer, and former parliamentarian. The two other royals—Mr. Dua Kyei and Mr. K. Ababio—who were contestants for the Adansi stool are a former assistant headmaster of a secondary school and a graduate teacher, respectively.[18]

There is no doubt that educated chiefs are in a better position to respond more effectively to the widespread call in Ghana for the modernization of chieftaincy. The educated chiefs can and are reorienting the institution to fit into the complex administration and social structure of modern democratic, republican governments.

The motivation for the recent eager acceptance of chieftaincy positions by well-educated and wealthy individuals, puzzling to many Ghanaians, is indeed complex and varied. To begin with, with the spread of education and the rapid modernization of socioeconomic and administrative institutions, kingmakers, and electors throughout Ghana have come to realize that schooling, especially postprimary education is now indispensable for a chief in contemporary society. This has naturally led to a marked and growing tendency for stool and skin families and local communities to nominate, elect, and install literate chiefs, sometimes after subtle or open pressure on candidates from the kingmakers, members of the community, relatives, and friends.

There is noticeable rivalry among local communities to have the most highly educated and professionally successful individuals as their chiefs. People are willing to accept chiefships in West Africa, especially in Ghana and Nigeria, partly because chieftaincy still commands great respect and offers high prestige. Indeed, some important and rich chieftaincies, such as those in Asante and Akyem, may offer access not only to lucrative personal careers but power and influence in local, if not national, society. Chieftaincy may also offer some politically ambitious individuals the opportunity to serve their community or nation. One of the attractions of chiefships for educated Africans may also be the multiplicity of functions—customary and statutory, secular and spiritual, symbolic and ceremonial, administrative, politico-jural as well as social—that the contemporary African chief is called upon to perform. Justice Nii Amaa Ollennu relates a personal experience which is worth recounting here. In the mid 1940s, a very eminent and highly respected legal practitioner who was, in the words of Justice Ollennu, "cultured in every sense of the word," was elected and installed as a paramount chief. Justice Ollennu had occasion to visit the chief, the late Nana Kwadade, Omanhene of Akwapin (lawyer Ofei Awere), several months after he had been enstooled. To Justice Ollennu's surprise and enlightenment the chief said, "I am kept busy from morning till evening; I thought chiefs were all rogues, idlers spending all their time in drinking schnapps; I never realized that there was so great an opportunity for service to my people waiting for me, what is more my people are so appreciative" (Ollennu, 1977: 20).[19]

Thus Elliott P. Skinner's prediction that "when the modern bureaucratic nation-state can afford to create and effectively use its own local institutions leadership provided by chiefs will be a thing of the past" (1968: 199–201), is unsatisfactory and hasty. It misses the continuing symbolic and ideological significance of chiefship in West Africa. Choice, based on the people's commitment to preserving the fabric of indigenous society and adapting it to changing needs of the time, plays a more crucial role than administrative convenience.

CONCLUSION

It must be admitted that a major problem of modern nationalism in Ghana, and of efforts aimed at radical reconstruction of society along egalitarian lines, remains unresolved: to find a clearly defined, consistent, progressive, and secure role for the chief in contemporary society. This role must command the respect of both the majority of educated, politically conscious members of the younger generation, who often have radical political views and consider chieftaincy as anachronistic in socialist-oriented society, and the older generation, who take traditional rule for granted. As the same time it must satisfy

the aspirations of a heterogenous group of chiefs who are themselves becoming highly educated. After all, no responsible Ghanaian has so far recommended the rejection of their cultural heritage or the outright abolition of the institution of chieftaincy.

In Ghana, chiefs, the custodians of the past, are seen as capable partners in the building of the future. It is significant that in a press statement on the eve of the celebrations of the Golden Jubilee, the Asanteman Council Planning Committee for the Golden Jubilee of the Restoration of the Asante Confederacy proclaimed its "resolve to continue the good work of our forefathers by instituting programmes to promote the social welfare and education of all Asantes, to review existing customs, funeral rites, chieftaincy, and to begin a campaign to work towards harmony and progress."[20]

In the course of the celebrations the national press mounted a massive campaign to remind people that they were celebrations for *all* Ghanaians, symbolizing the unity of Ghanaians in the midst of cultural and linguistic diversity. One correspondent repeated Secretary for Education Joyce Aryee's point that the power of unity exhibited by the Asante 50 years ago was required today to lift Ghana up from her doldrums and restore her economic and political power. The chairman of the PNDC reiterated the same concern, when in a speech, he noted that as the Golden Stool was an object of unity in Asante, so must the national flag and anthem be seen and respected as symbols of unity.[21]

With specific reference to chieftaincy, Flight Lieutenant J. J. Rawlings has indicated that the PNDC administration "value(s) the positive potential of chieftaincy as a means of mobilizing the people for meaningful development." He went on to say that "where the traditional chiefs are respected and manifest patriotic sentiments there is no reason to exclude them from the process of national reconstruction . . . . The chiefs do not hold their position by divine right. If their behavior is opposed by the community the people can obtain their dismissal."[22]

Finally, in an address to the Asanteman Council in Kumase in connection with the 1985 Golden Jubilee celebrations, Otumfuo Opoku Ware II, Asantehene and president of the National House of Chiefs, was clearly speaking for all the chiefs in Ghana when he stressed that chieftaincy would continue to adapt itself to changes in society to satisfy the cultural, social, and developmental needs of the people.[23]

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NOTES

1. Republic of Ghana, Proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, Official Report, Thursday, 6 Feb. 1969, p. 600.

2. Only Asante clearly attained most of the monarchical attributes identified by Murdock. Among these are a territorial bureaucracy; ministers distinguished by specialized functions; duality of ministerial roles; titles; detailed rules of protocol; a major capital (Kumase) in which the king resides; an elaborate court; and human sacrifices associated with the funeral of a king (see Murdock, 1959: 37–39).

3. The Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC), which came to power on 31 December 1981 after a coup d'etat, for example, is committed to "complete and radical change of the existing social, political and economic structures," and to placing power in the hands of the people organized from the grass-roots up through revolutionary people's and workers' defense committees (see Owusu, 1983).

4. The CPP was the ruling party in Ghana, headed by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. In 1964 the CPP was proclaimed the only legal political party in Ghana. The CPP government was overthrown by a military coup d'etat on 24 February 1966.

5. Supplementary and Consequential Provisions Law, 1982. (PNDCL 42, Section 53(2) p. 37), and PNDCL 107, Chieftaincy (Amendment) Law, 1985.

6. See N. A. Ollennu, 1976: 38–56. Five broad categories of chiefs or traditional rulers, in a descending order of power and prestige, are recognized in Ghana, namely: (1) the Asantehene; Paramount Chiefs; Paramount Chiefs not under the Asantehene; Queen Mothers; (2) Divisional Chiefs; (3) Subdivisional Chiefs; (4) Adikrofo, Dufia, Nabili, etc.; (5) other chiefs not be-

longing to categories 1–4 above but who are recognized by the Traditional Council or the Confederacy (Asanteman) Council. This last category may include chiefs and headmen exercising authority over enclaves of "strangers" residing in towns and villages. Well-known examples are the chiefs of the "zongos" found in most Ghanaian towns (on the position of zongo chiefs in Asante, see Enid Schildkrout (1978).

7. Murdock's theory (1959) of the African despotic state as the most typical polity type in "negro Africa" can hardly be supported by Asante historical evidence. As the occupant of the highly revered Golden Stool, the Asantehene wielded (wields) great moral influence. As Busia points out, "the Asantehene is the most venerated living person in Ashanti" (1951:96). The reverence in which Osei Tutu and Okomfo Anokye (the founders of the Asante confederacy) are held is accorded to their successors.

8. Gold Coast chiefs list, 1935: 3–4. It is impossible to understand the growth and development of indigenous constitutional thought in Ghana unless we consider the spread of Asante concepts of statecraft, social stratification, and status symbols. Marion Johnson noted in her presentation in New York that from about 1826, with the defeat of Asante at Akatamansu, the non-Akan peoples of the Accra plains—the Ga, and Ga-Adangme, as well as peoples east of the Volta, especially the Ewe—acquired stools, state umbrellas, and other Asante-type state paraphernalia and political culture.

9. Not unlike the comparable but industrializing and technologically superior European nation-states of the period, as discussed by Orridge (1981), Asante was a state identified with a particular culture, "The name of the state and of the culture were the same . . ." and just like England, France, or Spain which had Ireland, Brittany, or Catalonia respectively, the Asante state also possessed "outlying territories that did not share . . . [common cultural] features" (Orridge, 1981: 42).

10. In 1844 a "Bond" was signed at the Castle of Cape Coast. In this "Bond" several Fante chiefs acknowledged British power and jurisdiction in exchange for "the protection of individuals and property" (Burns, 1949: 181–200). [See also S. O. Gyandoh, Jr., "Liberty and the Courts: a Survey of the Judicial Protection of the Liberty of the Individual in Ghana During the Last Hundred Years" in The Faculty, University of Ghana, *Essays in Ghanaian Law,* Supreme Court Centenary Publication, 1876–1976: 61—Editor]

11. In 1982 "Nsamankow" was adopted as the name of the official newspaper of the revolutionary People's Defense Committees (PDCs)—organizations which were at the outset antichieftaincy.

12. In this respect the French colonial practice of insisting on administrative uniformity proved ultimately detrimental to African chieftaincy.

13. At a recent durbar (31 Jan. 1985) of chiefs and people of Asanteman, marking the Golden Jubilee celebration of the restoration of the Asante Confederacy, Flight Lieutenant J. J. Rawlings, chairman of the PNDC, directed that a highest medal of honor, in memory of Yaa Asantewaa, "that majestic warrior," be instituted to perpetuate heroism in the country (West Africa, 18 Feb. 1985: 333).

14. This point was more systematically developed later by Abraham (1962) (see also Busia, 1951).

15. This is also true of members of several similar regionally based organizations in the Gold Coast.

16. Indeed, the main conclusions of the discussion by A.S.Y. Andoh in this volume are consistent with the foregoing observations.

17. This criticism goes back to the 1880s, when J. Renner Maxwell "the first graduate African lawyer in the Gold Coast" considered himself free from the jurisdiction of "*uneducated* and *savage* chiefs" because the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance of 1883 preferred "Ignorance and barbarism to education and civilization" (see Kimble, 1963).

18. Talking Drums, 10 Sept. 1984: 23.

19. My interviews with chiefs in Asante and elsewhere in Ghana in the course of my recent fieldwork (1982–83) on chieftaincy in Ghana supports Justice Ollennu's account.

20. Quoted by Poku Adaa, "Anatomy of an Asante Pagent" in Talking Drums, Mar. 9, 1985: 9.

21. West Africa, 18 Feb. 1985: 333.

22. AfricaAsia, May 1985: 9.

23. Ghana Today, v. 14, n. 3 (March 1985): 2.

CHAPTER 14. THE ASANTE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT OF THE 1950s IN RETROSPECT

A. S. Y. Andoh

ABSTRACT

The integration of Asante into modern Ghana and the debates as to how Asante should participate in the independence movement is discussed. Given the republican and populist tone of the independence movement as put forth by the Convention People's Party, the traditional leadership of Asante felt that both their political identity and the concept of monarchy was threatened. How the Asante attempted to resolve this dilemma within the context of the National Liberation Movement and independence is examined.

INTRODUCTION

The National Liberation Movement (NLM) emerged in 1954 in the middle of the process of transfer of power from the British colonial government to a locally based government in the Gold Coast, and was an attempt by Asante to safeguard its identity and reverse the recent trend which threatened its traditional institutions with extinction. Events had moved very rapidly from 1946, when Asante for the first time joined and sent representatives to the Gold Coast Legislative Council, to 1954 when the country stood on the threshold of independence. The Colonial Legislative Council and the Governor's Executive Council, both composed largely of ex officio (civil servants) and nominated members, had given way to an elected legislative assembly and a cabinet responsible to it. Although functions relating to defense, including internal security, and external affairs were reserved to the governor, this official had become, to all intents and purposes, a figurehead who would, in accordance with the demands of British tradition, act in all other matters only on the advice of ministers. The British government had accepted and implemented in May 1954 a motion originally adopted in July 1953 by the Legislative Assembly: "to amend as matter of urgency the Gold Coast (Constitution) Order in Council, 1950 in such a way as to provide, *inter alia,* that the Legislative Assembly shall be composed of members directly elected by secret ballot and that all members of the Cabinet shall be members of the Assembly and directly responsible for it."[1]

The prime minister had in the same motion asked the Legislative Assembly to authorize the government to request that "Her Majesty's Government, as soon as the necessary constitutional and administrative arrangements for independence are made, should introduce an Act of Independence into the United Kingdom Parliament, declaring the Gold Coast a sovereign and independent state within the Commonwealth."[2] A new constitution, "The Gold Coast (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954," had subsequently replaced the 1950 (Coussey) Constitution on May 5, 1954. The Convention People's Party (CPP), which had won a resounding victory in the election held in June 1954 under the new constitution, was firmly in the saddle to lead the Gold Coast on its march toward independence.

As many Asante perceived it in 1954, the reality was that the government in Accra, which had ruled from 1901 when Asante was annexed to the British crown, had changed hands from the British to a group of Gold Coast Africans who had succeeded in subverting the traditional base of power and authority in the country, and had, through the ballot box, challenged the legitimacy of the country's traditional institutions. Asante found itself in a position of having minority

representation in the Legislative Assembly and no administration council at the territorial level; moreover, it was being ruled by Gold Coast Africans most of whom did not owe allegiance to the Golden Stool.

The grievances of Asante, for whose redress the NLM was born in Kumase on September 7, 1954, were given by Bafour Osei Akoto in his speech at the All-Asante Mass Meeting as

> the attitude of the present government to dismember and break up Asante as shown by the following acts:
>
> a. Failure to implement the Coussey recommendations for regional administration;
> b. basing representation in the central legislature (a unicameral legislature) solely on population;
> c. passing of such legislations which make the Asanteman Council of no practical value to Asante and the elimination of the Asantehene and other chiefs from the central constitutional set up of the country;
> d. the high handed manner of pegging cocoa prices which affects Asante more than any other group in the country.[3]

The NLM arose therefore as the answer to the question which Bafour Osei Akoto put to the mass rally: "Whether in the face of insults, discrimination and undermining influences against Asante, Asante should continue to subscribe to a strict Unitary government and not press for some form of federal government."

The Local Government Ordinance of 1951 and the State Councils Ordinances of 1952 (Asante and the Colony) brought to a sudden halt the developments in local Asante administration which since 1935 had been based on the Asante Confederacy Council and the State (Traditional) Councils, acting as Native Authorities.

INDIRECT RULE AND THE RESTORATION OF THE CONFEDERACY

In January 1935, the aspiration of Asante to revive its kingdom coincided with the need for the British colonial administration to use traditional rulers to maintain law and order and to carry out the local administration of the rural areas. As Mr. Newlands, the chief commissioner of Asante observed in 1932:

> In spite of . . . a systematic policy of disintegration the Asantes have not been reconciled to a future in which they would appear, like their neighbors in the Colony, as a mosaic of mutually independent head-chiefs, and they still cling to the idea that they form a single entity imbued with common ideals . . . the question is not . . . therefore, merely one of according official recognition to an office (that of Asantehene) which the Asante in spite of all past vicissitudes have never ceased to recognize; it is rather one of restoring nationhood to a people and making Asante once more complete . . . the great mass of the people desire it.[4]

He therefore recommended the reunification of Asante and its institutions "if the policy of Indirect Rule is to be carried out with any hope of cooperation and success in Asante." The restoration of the Asante Confederacy in 1935 was therefore in fulfillment of the aims of indirect rule and it upheld the traditional authority of the native rulers (the Asantehene and his chiefs) by giving them judicial, fiscal, executive, and to some extent legislative powers.

Although Asante was not restored to its precolonial sovereignty in 1935, within the constraints and limitations imposed by the presence of the colonial government the Asantehene and his Confederacy Council quickly recaptured the spirit of precolonial Asante and gave it back its sense of nationhood. Beginning in 1935 the Confederacy Council assumed, and was given authority, to maintain law and order, and to initiate and participate in programs of local development. The council was uniquely placed to operate within the British policy of indirect rule, which, as Governor Slater explained in 1929, was to conduct "the administration of the natives of the country through the proper native authorities." The council exercised its judicial powers through its courts which had both original and appellate jurisdiction in specified matters, while its executive functions were exercised through offices and departments which it established within its secretariat: the Asantehene's lands office; the department of agriculture and forestry; education; building and works; etc.

The Annual Report for 1950 on Revenue and Expenditure of Local Government details capital works undertaken by the Asante Confederacy Council and Native Authorities within Asante to include school buildings, wells, and other water supply facilities, refuse disposal and places of convenience, roads, markets, dispensaries, and clinics. The report continues: "the two largest amounts on the expenditure side are under 'Education' and Extraordinary Expenditure. The recurrent cost of education has been steadily increasing and will continue to do so. However, by far the greatest increase over the last five years has been on 'works' . . . on construction of school buildings, . . . roads and sanitary structures."[5]

TOWARD INDEPENDENCE: THE CHANGING STATUS OF THE ASANTE IN THE 1950S

The Asanteman Council lost its executive and administrative functions in 1951 and was restricted by the State Councils Ordinance in 1952 to the declaration of customary law and the determination of local constitutional issues, namely disputes involving the installation and destoolment of chiefs.

In pursuit of its policy to associate traditional institutions with the new central government, the 1950 (Coussey) Constitution had provided for the retention of the Asanteman Council and the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs as electoral colleges for the election of "territorial" members. The Asanteman Council therefore elected 6 of the 19 members representing Asante in the 1950 Legislative Assembly. This representation ceased when the 1954 Constitution Order in Council established a Legislative Assembly of directly elected members. The Asanteman Council, at this point, lost whatever political influence it had. The electoral regulations also disqualified paramount chiefs from seeking election to either a local government council or the Legislative Assembly. The chief, being "father" of his people, was to be above party politics; he was not to take sides in its hurly-burly. In the prophetic works of the Watson Commission, the chief had "become ornamental rather than useful; a man . . . expressing in his person but never in his voice the will of his people; exercising the office of pouring libation to ancestors; remaining always among his people and never speaking save through a linguist; he must either remain on his stool and take no part in external politics or forgo the office—he must not attempt a dual role."[6]

By the time it lost its local government functions in 1952, and its role as the electoral college for the return of territorial members from Asante to the Legislative Assembly in 1954, the Asanteman Council had become an acknowledged and prized territorial council which spoke with authority on all matters of importance for Asante. Asante, therefore, woke up in 1954 to the effects and implications of the legislative union which it entered with the Gold Coast Colony in 1946. The NLM and the Asanteman Council then insisted that "justice be done to the historical and political facts of this country by a distribution of powers and functions between the respective regions and the central government in such a way that regional autonomy . . . will be protected from interference and encroachment."[7]

The NLM and the Asanteman Council were mindful of the fact that in 1954 the Gold Coast was created by the amalgamation of four distinct British dependencies: The Gold Coast Colony, declared as such by an Order in Council in 1886; the Crown Colony of Asante (annexed by an Order in Council in 1901); the Protectorate of the Northern Territories (incorporated by an Order in Council in 1901); and the United Nations Trust Territory of British Togoland accessed in 1923 on a League of Nations Mandate.

However, whatever the legal position, the four dependencies had been administered as a single unit by the British colonial power. There was a central administration with subordinate administrators working in districts in cooperation with the governor's representatives, the chief commissioners. As His Excellency, Sir John P. Rodger, saw it in 1901, the Gold Coast Colony, Asante, and the Northern Territories formed "one large estate of which Asante and the Northern Territories form the outlying positions."[8] The task of running this estate from one center

was made less difficult by the fact that the territories were geographically contiguous.

A Gold Coast nation, however, was yet to be born. As Sir Allan Burns, governor from 1940–47 observed, "the expression the Gold Coast is mainly a geographical one; there is no Gold Coast nation . . . there is the fact that even in each individual colony, there is as yet little national feeling" (Burns, 1949). In Reverend Baeta's observation, what kept the peoples of the four dependencies together was the Pax Britanica, and he reminded the country of this in 1949 in the Legislative Council during the debate of the Coussey Report:

> in one of the riders to the Coussey Report, the statement is made that the Gold Coast peoples are a homogenous people. Let us hope that this is so. . . . It remains, however, true that whatever our natural ties may be, in the decades immediately past, the bonds which have held us together were not bonds of natural kinship but the Pax Britanica. . . . If some of us think that, without having previously arrived at a new understanding and agreement among ourselves, suddenly governmental orders or ministerial regulations begin to pour forth from Accra, in which orders and regulations the British Government had no hand, and we think that they will receive the same ready obedience as at present, we might find that this may not be the case. Certainly it will not be the case everywhere, and that will create considerable difficulty for all of us.[9]

The "new understanding and agreement" began to be fashioned only in 1946 when Asante and the Colony formed a Legislative Union under the Burns Constitution.

Although the Coussey Committee decided firmly on a unitary structure, it made proposals for regional administrations supported by regional councils and for representation in the Legislative Assembly for territorial members elected by the Asanteman Council and the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs. The point was again emphasized by the Asanteman Council and the NLM when, in a joint statement in January 1955 (in reply to the prime minister's letter of December 19, 1954), they reminded "Gold Coast politicians and students of Gold Coast politics, that although Asante had during the past ten years sought cooperation with the rest of the country and played her full part in the march toward Gold Coast independence, she was not going to forgo her separate identity, forged with the sweat and blood of her ancestors and sealed by the Golden Stool, whose position is now threatened by the political set up of the country."[10]

This stand was consistent with demands made by Asante in the past: in 1943, before it joined (in 1946) the Colony in the Burns Legislative Union; in 1948 during the Legislative Council debate of the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbances in the Gold Coast; in 1949 at the Coussey Committee's consideration of representation in the proposed Legislative Assembly; and in 1953 during the debate on the prime minister's motion on constitutional reform. These events will now be reviewed.

ASANTE DEMANDS IN THE DECADE BEFORE THE NLM

In October 1942, the Asante Confederacy Council adopted a resolution to the effect that it was neither appropriate nor desirable for Asante to be represented in the Legislative Council of the Gold Coast Colony. This was at the beginning of discussions with the new governor, Sir Allan Burns, on constitutional reforms. Asante was happy with its Confederacy Council, which was the only territorial council recognized and operating as a native authority. It was an authority with legislative (even if this was restricted to bylaws and regulations, and subject to the approval of the governor), executive, fiscal, and judicial powers and responsibilities.

However, by a clever maneuver on the part of the governor, Asante was made to change its mind and to demand representation on the Legislative Council in 1943, and therefore to take part in the discussions leading to the Burns Constitution. Sir Allan Burns, writing to the colonial office in 1943, reports that following the restoration to the Golden Stool of its lands in Kumase in 1942, Asante discovered in 1943 that revenues due it from these lands could not be paid from the public treasury (which collected them) without the approval of the Legislative Council. In words which are significant, Sir Allan Burns reported that the need for Legislative Council approval before monies could be paid out of

the public treasury "had always been, although the Asantes had never realized it. They were not seized with the desire to have a share in the disposal of public funds and were ripe for any suggestion that they should have members in the Legislative Council" (Burns, 1949).

Now prepared to join the Legislative Council, Asante was nonetheless cautious enough to state clearly the nature of the cooperation it was seeking with the Colony. Speaking to a delegation of chiefs from the Colony in October 1943, the Asantehene informed his audience, "This is not the first time that we have realized or been made to realize the need for cooperation between Asante and the Colony."

He traced the obstacle to their coming together to

> selfishness—the outcome of a narrow and conservative way of thinking. . . . There has been lurking in the breasts of some of you in the Colony, the fear that if you fall in with Asante we shall seek to dominate you. . . . I would like you to dispel any such uncalled for fears, for the days of our imperialistic aspirations are past and forgotten. What we aim at now is not that sort of federation which in the past we tried to force on you with the aid of the sword; but one into which we all of us, of our own accord, shall freely enter. It is to us a federation based not on subjection, but on love.[11]

Then in 1948, Mr. E. O. Asafu Adjaye, one of the six Asante members in the Legislative Council, demanded during the debate of the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbances in the Gold Coast that "regard should be had to equality of representation of the territorial units in the country, namely the Colony, Asante and the Northern Territories, and that there should be no preponderance of representation of any one territorial unit."[12]

He was here referring to representation on the committee which was soon to be appointed to consider the commission's report and make proposals for constitutional reform. It is true that this plea was ignored, and the (Coussey) Committee when it came to be appointed was composed of 25 members (including the chairman) from the Colony; 9 from Asante; 5 from the Northern Territories; and 4 from southern Togoland. This, however, did not deter the Asante members from repeating their demand for parity representation in the proposed Legislative Assembly. The Coussey Committee was left in no doubt and it acknowledged the feeling of Asante on the issue:

> the proposal in the Watson Report for equal representation of the regions gave rise to much discussion. It was rejected by a majority on the ground that it would impair the unitary character of the structure of the proposed constitution. Moreover such a form of representation seems unnecessary in the light of our recommendations for Regional Administration. . . . It should be added, however, that the Asante members who have signed this report rejected the compromise and were in favor of parity representation between the three main regions.[13]

Finally, the debate of the Electoral Provisions Ordinance in the Legislative Assembly in November 1953 became so acrimonious that the Asante members (irrespective of party distinction or affiliation) pressed to a vote their demand for 30 seats. The CPP stalwarts from Asante, namely, Krobo Edusei, J. E. Jantuah, Bediako Poku, and Atta Mensah, all joined the territorial members in their claim and demanded that "population alone cannot be the basis for determining the size of constituency," for as Mr. C. E. Osei explained "there is no Government that can stand because it has population alone, it must have money backing it."[14]

The stage was being prepared for the NLM to emerge. Sir Allan Burns and Reverend Baeta manifestly were being proved right.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT

Although the CPP was able to close its ranks in the Legislative Assembly and succeeded in gaining 21 out of the 104 newly demarcated seats, the issue of parity remained a source of discontent which was exacerbated a few months later by the decision to peg the price of cocoa at 72s. a load. This was seen as a blatant breach of a promise to pay the farmer 100s. a load, for which, the CPP had claimed, the new 5 pound note had been introduced into the country.

The demand of the NLM for some autonomy for Asante should, therefore, not have taken the country or the CPP by surprise. As the Asanteman Council and NLM reminded students of Gold Coast politics, the demand for autonomy had been on the horizon ever since 1948 when self government for the Gold Coast became a serious issue.

The NLM soon had to shift its emphasis from protecting Asante's heritage to a desire to curtail "the dangerous possibility of the establishment of a dictatorship in the country, through a federal arrangement." It found an early adversary in the Brong Kyempim Federation which had gathered together in opposition to the Golden Stool dissident paramountcies in the Brong area of Asante. On September 18, 1954, barely a fortnight after Bafour Akoto had launched the NLM at the All Asante Mass Rally, the Brong States which were in rebellion against the Golden Stool—namely, Dormaa, Techiman, and Abease—noting that "certain groups of people in Asante have recently taken it upon themselves to agitate against the government's Cocoa Duty Bill, and the price of 72s. per load of 60 lbs; that these same people have deliberately determined to break the united front which the CPP has been able to establish in the country; that these same people have been demanding a federal form of government which we feel will be detrimental to the aspirations of this country and to us Brongs in particular," resolved to register their "unflinching support to the prime minister and the present government; to wholeheartedly support the price of 72s. for a load of cocoa, and to strongly oppose and detest any form of federal government for the Gold Coast."[15] Dormaa, Techiman, and Abease had stayed away from meetings of the Asante Confederacy Council since 1949. They now saw their opportunity to solicit the support of the government and the party in power in their rebellion against the Golden Stool by coming out in opposition to the stand taken by the NLM and the Asanteman Council.

The CPP was able to portray the NLM as an organization which was seeking to restore Asante to the position of dominance which it held over most parts of the country in the precolonial era. For, in addition to the states within the newly organized Brong Kyempim Federation, states in the Colony had memories of their bitter encounters with Asante in the 18th and 19th centuries. They all, therefore, with the exception of Akyem Abuakwa, withheld their support from the NLM, and opposed its call for a federal constitution. Akyem Abuakwa's support was not based on any acceptance of Asante's desire for autonomy but rather on Dr. J. B. Danquah's implacable opposition to Kwame Nkrumah and the CPP.

The CPP was able to portray Asante as selfish; as wanting alone to enjoy the fruits of the cocoa industry which, though largely located in Asante, was the result of the collective effort of people from all parts of the country. The NLM campaign sign, the cocoa pod, became a liability and was looked on with disfavor by most people in the Colony.

The NLM found itself on the defensive and had not only to play down the Asante desire for autonomy but also, on the cocoa issue, to shift its emphasis from the price itself to the high-handed manner in which it was imposed on the farmer. It needed the support of the north, whose people provided nearly all the labor on the cocoa farms. At a meeting with the executive of the NPP in Tamale in January 1955, the NLM delegation, led by Bafour Akoto, took pains to allay the fears of the north. "It is expedient to dispel fears about the NLM," and directed the attention of the meeting to the constitutional status proposed by the Coussey Committee for the Regional Councils: "It was inferred from the Coussey Report that the Regional Councils which were to be set up . . . were to form part of the Constitution. Nkrumah, after rejecting the recommendations for setting up Regional Councils in 1951 now offers to establish them by Legislation. The NLM is convinced that the Regional Councils suggested by Nkrumah will not serve the best interests of the country."[16]

The NLM now assured the country that its campaign slogan, "Yeate Yen No" (we have severed our connections), was not really intended to lead to a breakup of the country: "Federalism is not the same thing as separatism; it is another form of national unity . . . with added advantage that it checks those selected to guide the national or federal affairs of the country of any dictatorial tendencies;

gives the component regions or states the freedom to direct their internal affairs. . . . We in Asante are convinced that a federal constitution is the surest means of closing the avenues for dictatorship."[17]

In seeking support for its demand for a federal constitution the NLM increasingly directed the country's attention to the dictatorial tendencies of the CPP. In his statement announcing his resignation from the CPP on February 3, 1955, Mr. Joe Appiah, who before his return from the United Kingdom was a staunch member of the party lamented:

> I find no just excuse for pegging the price of cocoa so low nor in the method adopted; the refusal of the Government to publish fully and at once the C.W.E. (Cooperative Wholesale Establishment) Commission of Enquiry report was a blow to democracy and justice; the refusal of the government to investigate the Cocoa Purchasing Company's activities constitutes a gross affront to public opinion; the doctrine of "jobs for the boys" irrespective of qualification or integrity is today setting intelligence at a discount and endangering the very foundation of our future; the institution of the Chieftaincy, the very symbol of our culture and tradition is threatened unnecessarily by action and words; the violent attacks in the party papers and on party platforms against anyone who dares to criticize the government or think differently are grim forebodings of what might come.[18]

THE NLM AND ITS ALLIES

The NLM won the support not only of the Northern People's Party (NPP), but also of the Togoland Congress (TC), the Muslim Association Party (MAP), the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS), the Ghana Action Party (GAP), the Ghana Congress Party (GCP), and the Anlo Youth Organization (AYO). The NLM and its allies were, however, untied only by their common opposition to Nkrumah and the CPP. The NLM and its allies were, however, united only by their common opposition to Nkrumah and the CPP. The NLM believed in federation as the only means of checking abuse of power and dictatorship at the center and was prepared to discuss the detailed constitutional arrangements for bringing this about. It justified this in its belief that: "there was not enough consciousness of national identity to make possible easy and at the same time democratic unitary government. In the absence of this consciousness, the safest course is to ensure that not all the powers of government are concentrated at the Center, but that a substantial part of them is retained in the component territories where people have learnt the habits and attitudes of living together for some time.[19]

While the NPP shared this view with the NLM, the TC allied itself with the NLM in its fight against the CPP on the issue of the unification of British and French Togoland. Indeed, the NLM found itself in an embarrassing position, with the NPP in open opposition to the TC, during the plebiscite held in March 1956 to determine the wishes of the people of British Togoland. The TC was motivated by a single purpose—the unification of British Togoland with French Togoland. It held the issue of a unitary or federal constitution for the Gold Coast as interesting but not vital. The political parties allied to the NLM (excepting the NPP) had little following, having fought the 1954 election and lost, and were primarily interested in unseating the CPP government. Even the MAP, which was very loud in its opposition, was so dispersed that it never became a serious electoral force. Its members did not live in sufficient concentrations in any constituency in the country, with the single possible exception of the Kumase North Constituency.

The support of the NLM and the resources it could place at the disposal of its allies were valued; the allied parties, however, did not really share the movement's view that federation was the only means of checking dictatorship. Dr. J. B. Danquah and Mr. Obetsebi Lamptey, for instance, were leading protagonists of the view that a bicameral legislature, with power to check hasty legislation, was a surer and therefore sufficient constitutional instrument against dictatorship. In their rider to the Coussey Committee's proposal on regional administrations backed by regional councils, Dr. Danquah and Mr. Lamptey declared themselves "unable to recommend regional administrations tied to the apron strings of the central government and acting as agents of the so-called 'remote' body, or real regional councils constituted as corporations with a perpetual succession and a

common seal . . . apart from the possible prohibitive cost, a frightening bureaucracy of the kind not yet know to the Gold Coast would be loaded on the shoulders of the people."[20]

So, among the allies of the NLM there was opinion which could not support its demand for federation.

In a joint statement in early 1955, the NLM and the Asanteman Council expressed it as their "view that the difference between federalism and regionalism in respect of the distribution of powers and administrative functions between the federal and central government and the state or regional governments is one of degree and not of kind. Behind both systems is the demand, and a certain degree of recognition, for the claims of the respective states or regions."

What the NLM and the Asanteman Council were seeking was "a new kind of interregional relationships which do not necessarily destroy the country's unity and the effort to build a Gold Coast nation."[21]

The prime minister recognized and indeed appreciated this shift in the stand of the NLM and, in response, assured the protagonists of federalism that "although the government favors a unitary form of government, it has not committed the country to any special pattern and it would consider the different needs of the Regions as to the functions of the Council."[22]

IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES ON THE EVE OF INDEPENDENCE

The stage was set for useful and meaningful dialogue and discussion. However, disagreement on the method of resolving the issue was basic and irreconcilable; whereas the NLM and the Asanteman Council claimed the right to determine the conditions under which Asante should be a part of an independent Gold Coast, the prime minister insisted that the only body capable of speaking for and on behalf of Asante was the Legislative Assembly on which it was represented. The opportunity of dialogue was therefore missed, for after the British government had declined a request for a royal commission of enquiry into their demand for a federal constitution for an independent Gold Coast, the NLM and the Asanteman Council asked for a constitutional assembly to discuss and consider their proposals. They declined three successive invitations from the prime minister (December 1, 1954, December 29, 1954, and February 11, 1955) to bilateral talks which, he hoped, would not only afford him "the opportunity of explaining his intentions regarding further constitutional and administrative developments," but, also, lead to the "removal of present misunderstandings as to what should be the proper relationship between regional interests and the central government."[23]

Arguing that the matters to be discussed were of national interest, the NLM and the Asanteman Council suggested a wider forum at which all shades of opinion would be represented: "We would observe that bilateral discussions between the Government on the one hand and certain sections of the community on the other on specific problems, such as with us on a federal constitution or a bicameral legislature, is not the right approach to the crisis which has overtaken the country."[24]

They therefore asked for a constituent assembly. After all, had not Nkrumah asked in December 1949, when he declared the Coussey Constitution "bogus and fraudulent," for a constituent assembly?

The Asanteman Council and the NLM felt justified in deploring the manner in which the prime minister had conducted his consultations in 1953 which led to the 1954 constitution, and were adamant in their insistence on open discussion. The method of consultation by "post" and of bilateral discussions between the prime minister and individual groups was deplored as totally unsatisfactory. This was especially so on the issue of the bicameral legislature, for it was believed that the prime minister could then inform the Legislative Assembly that individuals and organizations that had supported an upper chamber had changed their minds. The NLM and the Asanteman Council argued further, as Kwame Nkrumah had argued in 1949 in respect to self-government, that the Legislative Assembly elected in 1954 had no mandate to deliberate a matter as important as a constitution for an independent Gold Coast. They therefore declined all three invitations and refused to recognize the

Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly which the government appointed to look at the issue of federation and a bicameral legislature. They repudiated the appointment of the Select Committee of the Assembly as a "move which has never been used to resolve such major constitutional issues. . . . We disagree with him [the prime minister] . . . and as we have repeated 'ad nauseum' it is only a Constitutional Assembly that is competent to handle these matters . . . let the Government, if it is earnest about saving this country from a state of chaos on the eve of independence, invite forthwith the various interests and estates throughout the country to send their representatives."[25]

The official parliamentary opposition (mainly NPP) added that a constitution which would "do justice to the peculiar history, culture heritage, experience and aspirations of the people of our country should not be made in this piecemeal way . . . the government is attempting to convert the present Legislative Assembly into what amounts to a constituent assembly," and reminded the government that "this House, by the very nature of its constitution, is not fully representative of all the national interests and estates, and many of the members have, by events since the last general election, been rendered unrepresentative of their constituencies."

The official opposition then decided "in the highest interest of the country to refrain from participation in the farcical drama about to be enacted."[26]

The NLM and the government were now in a complete deadlock. Success at the by-election in the Asante constituency of Atwima Nwabiagya in June 1955 emboldened the NLM to press for a representative assembly with a mandate to consider the issues that divided them and the government. And they looked for every conceivable excuse to avoid bilateral discussions with the government. Thus the NLM got the Asanteman Council to agree to refuse to meet or cooperate with Sir Frederick Bourne, the constitutional adviser, whom the secretary of state for the colonies had appointed "at the request of the Gold Coast government" to advise it on problems connected with devolution of powers and functions to the regions.

The State Council's (Asante) Amendment Ordinance of 1955, which in the view of the NLM and the Asanteman Council undermined further the traditional authority of paramount chiefs in Asante and especially of the Asantehene, provided them with a convenient excuse to decline to cooperate with the constitutional adviser. They also refused to attend the Achimota Conference which was to consider the recommendations of the constitutional adviser on the excuse that the government would not commit itself to their demands:

1. That the result of the Conference shall be considered by a Legislature to be elected immediately after the conference; and shall form the basis for the new constitution,
2. [That] the Government repeal the State Council (Asante) Amendment Ordinance 1955.[27]

The NLM therefore considered it a great victory when on May 11, 1956 the secretary of state for the colonies announced in the House of Commons that "because of the failure to resolve the constitutional dispute we can only achieve our common aim of early independence . . . in a general election."[28]

Dr. K. A. Busia, then leader of the opposition, quickly informed the governor that he would be willing, and would expect to be called upon to form a government if he secured 53 of the 104 seats in the election. He was also able to receive the backing of the NLM in dissuading the Asanteman Council from issuing a public statement to the effect that it would consider the election in Asante as a plebiscite on the issue of a federal constitution, and as the basis on which Asante would be part of an independent Gold Coast. The Asanteman Council was keenly aware of the hostile reception which its demand for a federal constitution had been given in the traditional states in the colony. Given the Asanteman Council's basic interest in a federal constitution, which the chiefs of the Gold Coast Colony, acting through the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs had voted against, and given further the distribution of the electoral constituencies among the territories comprising the Gold Coast, the Asanteman Council questioned whether it had any chance of resolving the issue in its favor through a general election.

The NLM and its allies were, however, able to convince themselves and the Asanteman Council that the CPP was so discredited and unpopular that the result of the election in their favor could not be in doubt. The Report of the Jibowu Commission of Enquiry into the operations of the Cocoa Purchasing Company had revealed that the CPP had been involved in serious malpractices and that Nkrumah himself was not above corrupt and dishonest deals. The NLM and the opposition hoped the publication of this report would damage the chances of the CPP in the election.

The CPP was able to frighten voters in the Colony with the NLM slogan "Yeate Yen Ho" (we have severed our connection) and its campaign symbol, the cocoa pod. Asante was portrayed as selfish (wanting to keep the cocoa revenue to itself) and domineering, and planning to return the country to the past when it was the single dominant power. This, together with poor organization, lost the NLM and its allies the election. They could not match the resources—propaganda vans, bicycles, gifts, etc.—which the CPP was able to muster. The NLM won only one seat in the Colony; and in Asante, it lost both the Obuasi and Asante Akim seats which were dominated by migrant (mining) labor. It also lost all the seats in the Brong area. It won altogether 13 out of the 21 seats in Asante. The NPP, its principal ally, did not do much better in the north, winning about 15 out of the 26 seats; the Togoland Congress likewise lost 8 of the 13 seats in Trans Volta Togoland.

CONCLUSION

The results of the election were now reinterpreted. The CPP naturally was jubilant and legitimately claimed that the country had rejected the NLM's demand for regional autonomy, giving it the mandate to call on the British government to fulfill its pledge. On August 3, 1956 the Assembly passed a motion to this effect by 72 votes to 0 with the opposition abstaining from voting. The Asanteman Council and NLM, on the other hand, claimed that Asante had voted in favor of regional autonomy and the CPP did not have overwhelming support in the country, having won not more than 54 percent of the popular vote. (The CPP won 387,941 of the total 698,905 votes which were cast in the election.) "Besides," they argued, "the results of the election show that the NLM and its allies won 1 out of 51 seats in the Gold Coast Colony; 13 out of the 21 seats in Asante; 15 out of 26 seats in the Northern Territories and 3 out of 6 seats in the southern part of the Trust Territory. . . . When the results are looked at regionally, as they must be, since the issue of the election was one of Unitary or Federal Constitution, it would be seen that the case for the NLM and its allies has been established."[29]

The Asanteman Council and the NLM then renewed their demand for a constituent assembly or a constitutional convention. The issue was kept alive when on September 18, 1956, the same day that the secretary of state announced in London that the date fixed for independence was March 6, 1957, Bafour Akoto, leader of the NLM sent this resolution to the secretary of state:

> The NLM and allies have never been opposed to Britain granting independence to the territories comprising the Gold Coast. . . . The NLM and allies will never cease in their demand for an agreed constitution before the grant of independence on March 6, 1957. . . . On the question of agreed constitution, there can be no compromise. . . . We state without equivocation that in the absence of an agreed constitution, the NLM and its allies shall as from March 6, 1957 consider the Gold Coast colony, Asante, the Northern Territories and the Trust Territory of Togoland as separate and sovereign states within the British Commonwealth.[30]

The country came dangerously close to civil war. A Gold Coast nation was still far away, even if the British had committed themselves to grant independence on March 6, 1957. The observation of Sir Allan Burns and the warning of the Reverend Baeta were as true in 1956 as when they were made in 1949. The secretary of state for the Colonies had once more to intervene. He visited the Gold Coast in January 1957 and held talks with the government, the leader of the opposition, and the Asantehene and other chiefs and leaders, and finally produced the Gold Coast Constitution Order in Council, 1957, which was designed to provide "reasonable safeguards against abuse" and a "fair and workable foundation on which the people of Ghana

will be able to build their independent nationhood within the commonwealth."[31]

The constitution secured the existing territorial boundaries in agreement with the constitution adviser that there was no justification for creating a separate Brong region.

The NLM did not achieve what it set itself to bring about—a federal constitution or regional autonomy for Asante. Nor did it succeed in checking what it perceived as the dictatorial tendencies of the CPP government. The country has remained firmly united and succeeding governments, including one headed by Busia (in the second republic—September 1969 to January 1972), have shown little interest in decentralization or devolution of powers to the regions. However, whatever its failures, the NLM remained a reminder of the importance of customary and traditional institutions. These institutions give identity to the peoples of Ghana and can play a role in the stable and peaceful development of Ghana as a national state.

NOTES

1. Legislative Assembly debates 10–15 July 1953.
2. Ibid.
3. Unpublished notes of speech by Bafour Osei Akoto at All-Asante Rally, Kumase, 7 Sept. 1954.
4. H. S. Newlands: letter dated 22 March 1932 (quoted in Papers Relating to the Restoration of the Asante Confederacy. Government Printer, 1935).
5. Report on Revenue and Expenditure of Local Governments (no. 6 of 1950).
6. Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948.
7. Joint Reply by Asanteman Council and the NLM dated 18 Dec. 1954.
8. J. P. Rodger, Governor, 1901.
9. Legislative Council debate, Dec. 1949.
10. Joint Statement by Asanteman Council and the NLM, Jan. 1955.
11. Quoted by F. M. Bourret (1960), p. 46.
12. Legislative Council debate, Sept. 1948.
13. Report of the (Coussey) Committee on Constitutional Reform in the Gold Coast, 1949.
14. Legislative Assembly debate, July 1953.
15. Statement issued 18 Sept. 1954 by "Brong Kyempim Federation" and signed by Nana Kumfi Ameyaw III, President and Techimanhene.
16. Minutes of a meeting at Tamale between the executive of the Northern People's Party and a delegation of NLM, 21 Jan. 1955.
17. Statement by the NLM and Asanteman Council, 3 Feb. 1955.
18. Statement by Mr. Joe Appiah, 3 Feb. 1955.
19. Statement by the NLM and the Asanteman Council, 17 Mar. 1955.
20. Report of Committee on Constitutional Reform, 1949.
21. Statement by the NLM and Asanteman Council, 17 Mar. 1955.
22. Letter from the prime minister to the Asanteman Council and NLM, 11 Feb. 1955.
23. Ibid.
24. Joint statement by Asanteman Council and NLM on their proposals for a federal constitution, Jan. 1955.
25. Statement by Asanteman Council and NLM, 17 Mar. 1955.
26. Statement addressed to the Speaker by the Opposition, 5 Apr. 1955.
27. Report of the constitutional adviser, 1955.
28. Statement in House of Commons by Allan Lennox Boyd, the secretary of state for the colonies, 11 May 1956.
29. Dr. K. A. Busia at a press conference in Kumase, 20 July 1956.
30. Bafour Osei Akoto at a press conference, Sept. 1956 in Kumase.
31. The proposed Constitution of Ghana, presented by secretary of state to Parliament, Feb. 1957.

ART AND THE COURT IN ASANTE

CHAPTER 15. GIFTS AND ATTITUDES

Malcolm D. McLeod

ABSTRACT

Virtually all contacts between the Asante and European powers involved the formal giving and receiving of gifts. Europeans often went to considerable lengths to acquire objects which they believed would impress or please the Asante and bind them in alliances. A detailed examination of the things presented at each period throws light on European views of the nature of Asante society and its leaders. Asante counter-presentations, largely consumables or items of local prestige, also illuminate indigenous attitudes and systems of exchange.

This paper also considers the items obtained as booty by Asante armies on the coast, and the status of the items stored in the Stone Palace at Kumase.

INTRODUCTION

It has become a cliché, and a brutally boring one, that much of Asante material culture had its origin outside Asante. Numerous studies of Asante, from Bowdich onward, have argued that key elements in local society were originally imported into the region. Metal vessels, umbrellas, brass casting, weaving, weight-systems, staffs, and many other items have been proposed as deriving from such imports. Despite this widely held assumption of Asante borrowing, little attention has been given to the exact mechanisms by which such cultural adaptations occurred. So far, writers have generally been satisfied if they could identify the probable external source of an item of Asante culture and then suggest how and approximately when the Asante began to accept it. Some authors also outline the stages by which the incoming artifact was transformed and propose a tentative date for each stage. This general approach is particularly attractive to outsiders, that is non-Asante, because a detailed knowledge of the Asante contextual significance of objects is not required. Instead of this, Asante links with a wider world, and a world with a written chronology, can be used as the principle by which data can be ordered.

This approach depends upon a very simplistic view of human perception: it assumes that the people of a particular culture, when confronted with novel goods, judge their utility in a value-free way. This view overlooks completely the fact that cultures have a preexisting system of classification and evaluation,[1] a pervasive cosmology which influences the utility and attractivenes of the new items. In cases where writers implicitly accept the existence of such a cultural apparatus they still assume that the resulting evaluatory system is identical with that of the West. This simple model of the exchange of cultural materials is clearly inadequate.

A useful approach to the Asante evaluatory

system might be to examine a specific and well-documented set of exchanges between the Asante and Europeans (or emissaries and delegates of European powers). By concentrating on the actual gifts which were formally exchanged by the two parties it may be possible to establish something of the exact motivations on both sides as well as to see how each group evaluated, used, or rejected what it was given. I also wish to discuss briefly the significance of the famous Stone Palace at Kumase and the exotic materials which were kept there: a palace and collection which has been described by Ivor Wilks (1975: 200–201) as a "museum" and a "Palace of Culture."

It is clear that gift-giving was an essential element in diplomatic exchanges between Europeans and the Asante and, by means of it, a flood of European objects came into the possession of the Asantehene and major chiefs. These European imports, often offered without any consultation with the Asante, were a potential source of innovation within the Asante society. Many were carefully preserved; some were actually used. All were part of an extensive system of formal exchange which involved vast resources on both sides. Probably the size and extent of the European-Asante gift exchanges far exceeded any similar exchanges elsewhere in Africa in the 19th century.

GIFT-GIVING AND DIPLOMACY

European powers saw gift-giving as a crucial component of diplomatic relations and strenuously protected their right formally to present gifts to the Asantehene. In 1792, for example, the Danish governor claimed "every nation has a right and it is a custom to send messengers and presents etc. to the Ashantee" (Fynn, 1971: 5). This view was restated by later Dutch and British officials. As an element in national diplomacy, gift-giving was an area of rivalry between competing white powers: it measured their relative prosperity and influence. Thus in 1816 the British on the Coast complained that while the rival Dutch were well provided with things to send to Kumase they themselves had none. They therefore requested the Company in London to send out £100 worth of gifts suitable for presentation. However, such gift-giving could backfire. Some whites suggested the Asante would interpret excessive gift-giving as a sign of weakness. Thus Chisholm in 1822, commenting on the apparent threat of Asante expansion, blamed, in part, "The immense presents" the British had recently sent to Kumase. He also claimed the Dutch, having less inclination and ability to send gifts, were less troubled by Asante claims and ambitions (Crooks, 1923: 164–165).

There are records of gifts between white powers and the Asante from the very beginning of diplomatic contact between the two. In 1701 David van Nyendael sent gifts to Kumase which included two large gilt mirrors, a plumed hat, and a red velvet cloth with gold trimmings. In 1707 Sir Dalby Thomas requested from England as gifts for Osei Tutu "a field bed prettily made up or English quilted bed" and two years later asked for "fine horse furniture, holsters and pistols (with a bullet mould) fit for a Colonel to wear . . . a feathered hat, a Colonel's skarfe and General's truncheon." In 1714 the Royal Africa Company sent to Kumase "a silk flagg with the Company's Arms, a laced hat, a skarf and a General's truncheon." In the other direction, Opoku Ware I presented an "Akanny cloth" worth 50 bendas to the Elmina Dutch in 1725. The Dutch later sent, at Opoku Ware's request, a special glass coffin (Fynn, 1971: 19, 51, 54 79).

The most detailed records of the gift exchange date from the early 19th century. The European gifts recorded from that period range from a magic lantern, clocks, candles, and laundry blue, to a packet of sunflower seeds, as well as the usual presents of flags, canes, silverware, and uniforms. Each senior visitor to Kumase was expected to bring special presents. As the Asantehene told Smith in 1817, he knew the Englishman had brought gifts in his baggage, adding "if you wish to be friends with him [me, the king] you must bring these presents to his own house and show them to him and his friends and not give them before all the people" (Bowdich, 1819: 44). White visitors as well expected to be given many presents and, in many cases, these seem to have been essential for their comfortable existence at Kumase.

Although the practice of gift-giving be-

tween whites and Asante was pervasive, it is sometimes overlooked or treated as having no significance. It is worth recalling, therefore, that such exchanges did not occur in many other parts of Africa. Moreover, a detailed examination of the exchange process reveals basic differences between the two groups. While I wish to discuss in particular the formal gifts especially commissioned for the Asantehenes, it is necessary to place these in the context of the other sorts of gift exchange. It is noteworthy that many white writers of the time did not distinguish different categories of "gift." Some were inclined to classify under the term "gift or present" everything from obligatory exchanges of food or drink, regular payments for "notes," and items especially commissioned from Europe for transmission to local political leaders. This unwillingness or inability to discriminate, for example, between a regular tribute payment and a bribe, or an obligatory gift, reflects the way in which white attitudes to such things differed from Asante ones. Many Europeans, it is clear, held ambiguous or self-contradictory ideas about the minor goods they passed to the Asante, viewing them variously—as the occasion demanded—as bribes, tributes, disinterested gifts, or payments, but hardly ever as elements in a two-way system of obligation. Despite this, it is possible to distinguish several different levels of gift giving, from small, everyday personal exchanges to those involving the power of the state itself.

The first and the most pervasive was the everyday exchange of food and drink between local people and European visitors. Such exchanges are fully recorded in the accounts of virtually everyone who made the journey to Kumase. Thus, to take a typical example, an entry in Huydecoper's diary states that on 2 May 1816 he sent General Appiah "two fine fowls" and "in exchange he supplied me with palm wine and food." Sometimes, of course, such exchanges went slightly wrong, as when Huydecoper offered a single drink and the recipient kept the whole bottle: "I watched it go with a heavy heart." Nevertheless, virtually all meetings between European and Asante officials, courtiers, and village or senior chiefs were marked by the exchange of food and drink. Jakob Simon's diary provides examples. In an entry for 6 February 1832, Simons said that after six years, he met an old trading partner who gave him 12 yams, 18 eggs, and a ¾ engel of gold. Simons (MS), in turn, gave to whom he felt he owed an obligation; thus "two handkerchiefs, two cloths, half a pint of eau de cologne and a bag of cloves" were given to the maid where he lodged. As Huydecoper remarks about the exchange of drink: "Drink is, after all, the main solace of this kind of journey." It is clear, however, that even at this level the two groups had different assumptions about such gifts. As far as the Asante were concerned they were obligatory: no important social encounters should take place without them; they expected to give and they expected to receive. In making presentations, what they gave was determined by their own status and resources and the perceived status of the white visitor.

GIFT-GIVING AND HOSPITALITY

Few Europeans were willing to accept the obligatory nature of these exchanges. Drawing on the model of their own society in which far fewer gifts were exchanged—and those on occasions different from those prevailing in Africa—they regarded such giving and counter-giving with disfavor. Asante requests for drink or small-value items were regarded by most Europeans as motivated not by a feeling of social obligation, but by greed or as unwarranted attempts to extract personal benefit from the superior wealth of the Europeans. In addition, white visitors were not always clear about the status of those they encountered and felt they were being tricked into giving away too much. On the other hand, when they were receiving gifts, particularly of food, they accepted that this was only a proper tribute to their superior position. There were only a few among them like Simons (MS, entry for 2 Jan.) who understood the local rules and who returned to the givers part of the sheep or goats that were given. Huydecoper (1816, entry for 14 May) also learned the obligatory nature of the exchanges: "she gave me 2 chickens, and 2 bunches of bananas, and I thanked her, on the advice of my guides, with two bottles of drink."

Despite their varying attitudes to giving to the Asante, all European visitors expected the Asante to give them food, drink (either palm

wine or imported liquor), and gold dust with which they could purchase supplies. To some degree their superiors also expected them to finance their visits by such gifts. Consequently, most of them kept detailed records of what they got and noted how they used or distributed it. Huydecoper's account of his 1816 visit, for example, includes a chart of the number of cows, pigs, sheep, yams, plaintain, and gifts of gold he received and from whom and when. Similarly, Jacob Simons' diary is crammed with careful accounts of what he received. A typical entry, that for 17 February, states: "Received as dashes from the following persons: from the mother of Ayapon who is at Elmina: ⅝ engels of gold and four yams, from the family of Ose Prim who is at Elmina, two bunches of plantain and four yams" and so on. Winniet, among others, records in detail the gifts he received.

Regular gifts of gold dust from the Asantehene, especially on *Adae* festivals, were also an important, even essential, element in the survival of visitors, at least from the time of Huydecoper to that of Ramseyer and Kühn. The king sent Simons (MS, entry for 17 Jan. 1832) gold dust, having heard that he had run out of cash. Similarly, Huydecoper (1816, entry for 14 Aug.) recorded thankfully, on receiving gold, "This is good, for the treasury is nearly empty." The basic philosophy behind such gifts was expressed by Osei Bonsu: "I must give them gold and provisions and send them home happy and rich, that it may be known in other countries that I am a great king, and know what is right" (Dupuis, 1824: 167).

The sums of gold and the quantities of food received in this way by visitors were considerable. Winniet, for example, who took only £300 worth of gifts for the king received from the Asante in a single day: "two bullocks, four sheep, 4 turkeys, six ducks, twenty guinea fowl, six pigs, twenty fowls, twenty pigeons, 400 yams, 303 bunches of plantain, four dishes of native rice, five dishes of ground nuts, six calabashes of honey, oranges, eggs, palm nuts, sundry vegetables, forty logs of wood, ten baskets of corn." He noted: "This magnificent present was brought before me by 550 men every one of whom had some share in the work of conveyance. They were accompanied by several officers of the king's household and their retinue amounting to no less than 300 men."[2] In addition to this munificence, Winniet received many other gifts on other days. The earlier visitor Huydecoper received, in all, one cow, two pigs, 15 sheep, 331 yams, 671 bunches of plantain, and over 20 ounces of gold. Dupuis records a large gift similar to that received by Winniet, which was carried by: "a file of about two-hundred men and boys, laden with provisions . . . the supply consisted of two cows, several sheep and goats, eggs, yams, plantains, bananas, honey, oil, palm nuts and wine, cankay bread, and a large pig" (Dupuis, 1824: 103). Decades later Huppenbauer records a royal gift carried by 72 men. This included 72 dollars of gold dust for the Europeans, 23 for their guides, two sheep, two hens, a wild duck, yams, rice plantain, bananas, etc.[3]

I believe this sort of gift-giving was, at least in the eyes of the Asante, obligatory. Important visitors had to be given essential supplies of food or gold dust by which they could obtain it. The most sensitive or experienced Europeans reciprocated by giving small gifts of imported manufactured goods, imported liquor, or, sometimes, by returning part of the gift or redistributing it to other members of local society. In European eyes, however, there was another distinct area of giving: a system by which they deliberately tried to use specially made and quintessentially European goods to build up alliances with the Asante.

THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SPECIAL GIFTS

There were a small number of such special category gifts which had a clear political and diplomatic significance. The first of these was flags: it was the aim of each white power to get the king of Asante to accept its national flag and then to appear in public with it. The more flags they could get accepted the better. These gifts of flags went back to the earliest days of contact and there are many examples from the 19th century. A flag was in the gifts delivered by Huydecoper and Simons, among others, and such flags were then displayed by the kings at Odwira or flown fixed to staffs (Simons, MS, entry for 18 Feb.). On one recorded occasion some were turned into a roy-

al robe. Staffs or canes were a similar type of gift. By the early 19th century it was a common practice for white powers to give silver-topped staffs or canes to various rulers as well as issuing them as credentials for their own intermediaries. It became a matter of policy, therefore, for a white power to get its staffs into the possession of the Asantehene. At least some of these staffs were specially made in Europe and, in the latter half of the 19th century, making silver-topped canes for export to many parts of West Africa became a profitable sideline for at least one London jeweler. Many accounts exist of this importation of staffs to the Asantehene. "My master ordered me to place this staff in your Majesty's own hands" said Huydecoper (1816, entry for 23 May). These visitors were pleased when their staff was shown when the king appeared on public occasions.

There were two other related gifts which by the 19th century had become almost compulsory for Europeans to present. These were both items which played a part in Asante ceremonial life as ways to mark status differences within the Asante hierarchy. The two items were umbrellas and large, presumably elaborate, chairs.[4] Nearly every European emissary took to Kumase the largest and finest umbrella possible. An umbrella was one of the presents sent to Kumase by Spanish slave-traders through Brew (Bowdich, [1873]: 119), as well as being conveyed by Huydecoper, Bowdich (his cost 100 guineas), and by many others (Bowdich, [1966]: 24). The Dutch sent a chair to Kumase (Huydecoper, 1816, entry for 28 July) and this was presumably added to the holdings of those earlier received by gift or as booty. It was such chairs which eventually gave rise to the *asipim* and other Asante variants.

Another special European gift was the wheeled carriage, a small number of which were in use on the coast, mainly by white officials and traders. As early as 1745 the directors of the Dutch West India Company promised to send a carriage to the Asantehene (Fynn, 1971: 79). In 1816 Daendels (1964: 132, 293) was attempting to persuade the king to make great innovations by introducing literacy, and also improving roads and increasing trade. One of the supposed benefits to the king was to be: "That you and your great men shall drive forth in comfortable coaches drawn by six horses along roads which you, Sire, will have made." Finally, in 1841, the Asantehene received a carriage brought out of England by T. B. Freeman. Freeman (1843: 9) told the king that Queen Victoria had seen this before it was shipped out. The Asantehene replied courteously "The Queen of England is a Queen of Queens of the White people and I am King of Kings of the Black people: and now we have carriages alike. This is very good." Winniet, visiting Kumase in 1848, saw it in use and noted that it was in excellent condition.[5] In the absence of suitable horses this, and the carriages on the coast, were drawn along by men.

Another special, diplomatic, royal gift was clothing. As I note above, uniforms and fancy hats were among the earliest gifts sent to Kumase from Europeans and the practice continued in the 19th century. Some of the suits were, it was claimed, specially made in Europe; others were tailored or altered on the spot. Osei Bonsu's predilection for such clothes, or his courtesy in wearing what he was given, is well known. Bowdich ([1873]: 196) expressed one European motive for giving such clothes: "I did not discourage the King's great anxiety for clothes of the English costume, considering that his example would be more auspicious than anything to the introduction of these manufacturers."

GIFTS ORDERED BY THE ASANTEHENE

Rarely, some of the things sent were actually ordered by the Asantehene. The main item of this sort was silverware, usually large open and lidded vessels. Some of these were carried on public occasions by the royal cooks; the famous *dwete kuduo* seems to have been of European origin. Other vessels were used when the king entertained at his country house. By 1816 such vessels had become essential elements in royal display. It is clear that Osei Bonsu took a keen interest in this silver. Huydecoper was asked to have it cleaned and to order more from Europe, and its origin was discussed with Bowdich. A request for more, similar silver to be sent from Holland was also made to Simons (MS, entry for 25 Feb.) by the king in 1832. Aside from

these gifts a vast miscellany of European-made goods was taken to Kumase for formal diplomatic presentation: lathes, books, musical boxes, and so forth. The ways these were chosen explains the European estimation of African taste and intelligence. Bowdich, in proposing gifts for the King of Dagomba, explained the reasoning behind his choice: "The presents should all be ingenious novelties, rather than costly apparel, for they are not only more acceptable and more imposing but . . . much more portable" (Bowdich, 1819: 455–456). They were to include an inferior gold repeater for the king; boxes of watercolors; panpipes and a turban with a fake jewel and other bizarre, cheap, and flashy items.

We are fortunate in having good reports from Dupuis of how such gifts were received at Kumase. The lathe, that toy of many 17th and early 18th-century European monarchs, clearly did not delight the Asantehene. The portable organ had been damaged on the journey. Silks, small carpets, and a convex mirror were better received, and among other things, an admiral's full uniform, a china service, a bronze lamp, and a repeating watch apparently pleased, although the king politely avoided praising particular items lest he should be considered to disparage the others (Dupuis, 1824: 93–94).

> The Asantehenes, for their part, were deeply concerned to establish where such special gifts originated, whether they came directly from their European comonarchs, or merely from white officials resident on the coast. "He [the Asantehene] desired to know, precisely, whether or not the present was sent him by the King of England" and he stated that although such royal gifts pleased him "I love the great King, even without a present. I like the good things he sends me too; but if he sent me a corn stalk it is enough." Other kings made similar attempts to discover the status of the sender of their gifts.

The broad European reasoning behind such special gifts can be identified. The majority were sent to impress the Asantehene and his people with the power and the resources of the donor country. Thus, it was proposed to send the Asantehene "A bust of her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, a few silk damasks" and "large pictures representing land and sea fights, but chiefly the former, such as 'Waterloo,' or the most striking of the Peninsular battles" (Crooks, 1923: 332).

Many of the objects were supplied to impress by their mechanical ingenuity and so confront the Asante with examples of technology beyond their imagination. In doing this it was hoped the gifts would not only serve to impress local rulers with European superiority but also to increase the profitable trade in such goods. But, at the same time, many of these gifts were intended to increase the status of the recipient over his people or his rivals and, in doing so, to bind him more closely to a system dominated by the donor country.

CONCLUSION

Let me summarize how I see the White rationale behind such gifts. The gifts brought by Europeans who journeyed to Kumase were not given by individuals on behalf of the state they represented. European governments attempted to use manufactured goods to impress the recipients and also to elevate their positions in local society. The items presented were, by and large, durable and intended for display rather than consumption. Such gifts were not convertable into other items. They were to remain themselves, and not be turned into cash or consumables and so would continue to impress those who saw them. Thus, for the Europeans, gifts were very much agents of change, intended to bring about what was seen as an improvement in local society. But, in the majority of cases, such gifts were based on a profound misreading of local society and of the perceptual and intellectual abilities of its rulers. It was assumed that the Asantehene and his people were likely to be impressed by mechanical curiosities or ingenious devices. The Asantehene's reception of the magic lantern as more suitable for women than monarchs is merely one case where the assumption was proved wrong.

Asante gifts were made on a different basis. Virtually all of them were consumables, mainly food. A number of them were made by individuals drawing upon their own resources or those of their office; most were not from one head of state to another. In making their gifts, the Asante were assimilating white

visitors into the system of rank existing in Asante society. The gifts made to visiting Europeans, therefore, depended on a perceived equivalence between their rank and a particular rank in local society. Moreover such gifts were not intended to alter the recipient's status; rather, they were a public confirmation that the Asante recognized and accepted that status. Gifts were intended to create a feeling of obligation in the recipients, to bring the donor public credit by the public display of the magnificence of the gift, and, finally, to open a continuing relationship between giver and receiver. Whereas the Asante looked for a continuing relationship of exchange, the Europeans hoped their gifts would produce an enduring feeling of inferiority and dependence.

Some few gifts, however, were made by the Asantehene at a special level and for a special purpose: these were exceptions to the usual gifts of food, drink, or money and were sent either to particular overseas rulers or given as a special mark of favor to white emissaries or local governors. Such gifts included slaves, ivory tusks, horses, and, in at least one case, leopards, that is, royal beasts. Cloths, war coats (*batakari*) and gold items, pipes, elephant-tail whisks, and breast plates were also presented (Huydecoper, 1816–17, entries for 23 Dec. 1816, 6 April 1817, 24 April 1817). Again these gifts seem to be equivalents of similar gifts which the king would have distributed within Asante society or given to nearby non-Asante rulers. The Asante were thus, in a broad way, including senior European officials or their monarchs within the system of ranking and prestige established locally.

There was thus a steady flow of gifts from European powers to Kumase providing, in theory, a pool of material for innovation in Asante society. In practice, however, these items rarely led to innovations: the majority of the donated objects had virtually no impact on life at the capital. Why was this? The obvious answer is that only a few items could be used in a system of values based on hierarchy and the public designation of hierarchy by display, and it was only these that were taken up by the Asante. But the failure of the majority of these gifts goes deeper. I believe that most were useless to the Asante because they were chosen on the basis of a misreading of Asante needs and taste.

Here it is necessary to distinguish the content or substance of the thing presented from the act of giving. In many cases the importance of these things for the Asante lay in their donation and receipt; their physical form and function was almost irrelevant. That some of them were durable was, in this connection, even a nuisance, a superfluity.

So what happened to the gifts which did not become absorbed into the system of status and display? The best guess is that most ended up in the Stone Palace where they remained to be discovered in 1874. The British who wrote about this accumulation of European items were bitterly hostile to the Asante and they talked of the contents of the palace in the most scathing terms: for the collection of Western goods there was organized, if at all, on principles alien and incomprehensible to them. But, in condemning it, if they had only known it, they were actually condemning the taste and intelligence of their predecessors who had selected these items and sent them to Kumase. Boyle, for example, referred to the contents as "loot," that is loot seized by the Asante, and listed what he saw. This included, besides state umbrellas and other elements in court life, miscellaneous imports:

> A quantity of common pot figures, High-land Mary, two little busts of the Duke of Wellington etc. a number of clocks, various, all stopped with the rust of years. A very ancient coatee belonging to the First West Indian, a shako of incredible shape, probably contemporaneous, calabashes and stools, beautifully banded with silver, a bird-organ, playing, as advertised, "O rest thee babe," "Slow broke the light," "Adeste Fideles," etc. Portrait of a gentleman in oils. Four gold masks, very heavy, quite pure, valued at 150 to 200 pounds sterling each. A great quantity of Dutch engravings in a portfolio. Numbers of big toilette glasses. The King's plate, mostly Dutch metal. Many guns, one double barrel, silver-mounted. A lot of kettles. A gold-bound lantern. Boxes of embossed silver. Two tea tables, one inlaid with gold, one with silver. A magic lantern. A handsome pix. Picture of the new Custom House on River Thames. Iron model of a ship. Chairs beautifully carved. A collection of "stoney marbles." (Boyle, 1874: 348–349)

The subsequent sale of material at Cape Coast included silverware and other goods, probably from the Stone Palace. Among these items were candlesticks, a coffee pot, Sir Charles McCarthy's tankard (perhaps), and colored lithographs of women in national dress (Boyle, 1874: 384–385).

Reade reviewed the contents of the Stone Palace in much the same way:

> The rooms upstairs reminded me of Wardour Street [then an area of second-hand shops]. Each was a perfect Old Curiosity Shop. Books in many tongues, Bohemian glass, clocks, silver plate, old furniture, Persian rugs, Kiddermaster carpets, pictures and engravings, numberless chests and coffers. A sword bearing the inscription "From Queen Victoria to the King of Ashantee." A copy of the "Times," October 17, 1843. With these were many specimens of Moorish and Ashantee handicraft.

Among these were gold-decorated sandals, leopard-skin caps with gold decorations, saddles, umbrellas and palaquins with other "curious and tasteful things" too many for him to mention (Reade, 1874: 357).

I would suggest that much of the exotic material in the Stone Palace in 1874 was there because no role had been found for it in Asante ceremonial life. These items could not be discarded because they were gifts to the king so they were, quite simply, preserved in the Stone Palace and not given to the care of a particular stool.

Of course the question remains whether this accumulation of material should be considered, as Wilks suggests, as constituting a museum, or a "Palace of Culture." As a museum curator myself, I am of two minds about it. On the one hand, the material clearly lacks the essential characteristic of most museum collections: it was not acquired deliberately and according to some predefined plan. The Asantehenes did not set out to acquire this stuff; it mostly came to them by accident and in circumstances over which they had no control. On the other hand, if we accept the Stone Palace as a storehouse for exotic items which had found no place in everyday life we realize that many Western museums have much the same function—they contain things which cannot be absorbed into local society without greatly altering it.

Formal gift-giving was a constant element in diplomatic and trading exchanges between the Asante and Europeans. It was practiced on the Asante side as an extension or development of the gift-giving which prevailed within their own society. Europeans, however, invented a new set of rules in dealing with Africans; what they gave was often based on a gross misconception of Asante tastes, needs, and intelligence. They failed to understand the obligatory nature of much local giving and receiving and they failed in their aim to influence the Asante because they gave the wrong things. The act of giving, rather than the item given, became the most important element for the Asante in such cases: the object was preserved but had no effect on local society.

NOTES

1. See, for example, the Asante nomenclature for such imported plants as the pineapple.
2. W. Winniet, Journal, Accra Archives ADM 1/2/4.
3. See Asantesem 10, 1979, Evanston, Northwestern Univ., p. 61.
4. For a fuller discussion of chairs, see McLeod, 1980.
5. W. Winniet, op. cit. (entry for 21 Oct. 1848).

CHAPTER 16. ASANTE DANCE ART AND THE COURT

Albert Mawere Opoku

ABSTRACT

Like the court dances of 17th century Europe, those of the Asante are important symbolic affirmations of royalty. They include mass spectacles at which the spirit of the Golden Stool is reaffirmed, and also give opportunities to individuals to demonstrate virtuosity and loyalty to king and community. The Asante collected dances as part of military booty and utilized the dance to reiterate important moments of their history.

INTRODUCTION

In the European dance tradition, court dances are described as versions of basic social dances, popular with the ordinary citizens of Europe during Medieval and Renaissance times. The court made these dances more elegant to suit prevailing concepts of good taste, grace, etiquette, and grandeur. Any movement which could not be executed with stateliness within the restrictive confines of formal court dress was transformed into a more elegant movement with a moderate tempo. Thus, the Kermis, a boisterous peasant dance, was adopted by the court and given the slow, stately, graceful form of the minuet. Every courtier was a person of some consequence, but in the presence of a superior nobleman he showed the formal respect and deference according to the prevailing codes and practices of the period.

At the court of Louis XIV and other reigning houses of the period, dances were designed to afford opportunities for kings, noblemen, ambassadors, diplomats, and courtiers to display their bearing, costumes, and ability as dancers. Grace, posture, poise, demeanor, studied gestures, calculated mincing steps, elaborate bowing, and the use of the walking stick or cane were all based on the prevailing concept of aristocracy and majesty. The Asante drum-poet's injunction, "*hene nante bere bere,*" exhorting the king to walk slowly with grace and majesty, also describes the importance of acquiring these graces to invite acknowledgment and recognition appropriate to one's pedigree. The Sun King was the star performer in elaborate masks staged for visiting royalty and diplomats. Nobles and courtiers vied with each other to emulate and please the king with their proficiency as dancers. In time, pageants appeared whose theme centered on the king in the role of one of the gods of mythology. At first these performances were staged in the courtyard, and later in the great palace halls as impressive entertainments at state banquets which had interludes for music and dancing. In effect, they were forms of propaganda aimed at dramatizing the king's popularity, bravery, lineage, and wisdom. When Louis XIV was too old to dance leading roles, he established an academy of dance to train professional dancers to maintain the required court standards. This then became the foundation of a Western dance form, the classical ballet.

In their aim and effect, the Asante court dances demand similar grace, dignity, grandeur, and strength. So great was the value placed by the Asante on these art forms that they collected musical and dance forms as part of war booty and displayed them with the captives of vanquished nations during victory parades. The *mpintin* drum ensemble of large round gourds with skin at the top and straps for tuning, and the *dondo,* or hourglass drum, which provides music for royal processions, show an Asante link with the Gonjas, the Dagombas, and other northern ethnic

groups. Like other African social groups, the Asante use music, drumming, and dancing to call attention to their beliefs and their history. This art form consists of vocal and instrumental sounds, special texts, and dance.

ASANTE DANCE

Asante dance is characterized by a complex of basic walking steps of varying length and strength, with expressive and meaningful changes of direction accompanied by appropriate pelvic shifts or swings and quarter turns of the trunk. Also important are changes of levels in the whole body, and the raising and lowering of the shoulders—a gesture symbolizing affirmation of status bearing a resemblance to a Dagomba Damba royal dance movement. The feet may move to a steady two-beat measure, four half-beats to the measure, or in a sustained dragging motion for the interval. The distinguishing characteristics of Asante dance are the intricate and subtle manipulation of hands, arms and legs, body sways and tilts in polyrhythmic combinations—expressive miming with rich symbolic undertones—and typical Asante hauteur. The impetus coming from the musical ensemble is the propulsive power which initially moves one to dance. It is the rhythmic percussive structure and organization of the tones, pitches, and timbre of the drums which characterize a particular dance. In the case of a suite of dances like the *Adowa,* a funeral/recreational dance suite of seven forms, specific movements are required for each of the seven forms. Thus, the rhythmic structure of *Otwee Bedi Mpirim* in the *Adowa* suite calls for a sustained fluid movement to accompany the flowing rhythmic pattern. In contrast, the articulated drum rhythm of the *Asokore-Mampon* form of the *Adowa* suggests striking poses of self esteem, followed by a proud rolling of the head. Drum rolls of varied lengths may be expressed as runs, turns, or spin-turns leading from one pose to another. In several instances, vocal songs and texts for one form of *Adowa* are not interchangeable with those for other forms of the suite.

The underlying design of Asante dance events shows a degree of sophistication and standard of aesthetic appreciation and development equal to that of the visual arts. The dancer needs to be roused, or, as the Asante say, "shaken-up," or energized emotionally and physically, and creatively stimulated through successive musical stages. Each dance begins with the *Aho,* a freestyle rendition of a cycle of songs to a gong accompaniment, around a theme selected for the occasion, dealing with any one of a number of social situations. It is a call-and-response type of musical prelude to a dance performance. The themes may be historical, either personal or general; or may refer to religious rites and beliefs; or to bereavements, praise, abuse, joy, and sadness; or to work situations like the perils and successes of hunting or fishing. The themes may also awaken reflection on the problems affecting the social unit—*ewie-ase ne namane hunu*—the earth and the troubles we see on it. These songs can be critical of the social order and any conflicts and constraints which it might generate. In the court version of *Kete,* as performed for the Asantehene, reedy flutes, which sound like oboes, alternate with a female chorus in the *Aho* prelude to each dance. This royal suite features texts with appropriate historical and patriotic import.

When the leader of the musical ensemble in the *Adowa* or other dance senses that the initial warm-up has been concluded, drum support is introduced to help generate an appropriate mood for the dance. The thematic music arouses the singers, clappers, and drummers into a state of excitement as they go through the movements of the dance from their sitting posture. At this stage, the lead drum enters, and with the first note several dancers rush to the center of the arena to release pent-up energy and emotion.

The Asante dance experience reflects several aspects of traditional Asante society, and depicts its birth and development along with its distinctive methods of expressing commonly accepted ideas and ideals, such as reverence for the elderly and for status. Asante dance is an almost unconscious expression of the religious and spiritual beliefs of daily life, and of Asante's steadfast faith in the achievements of its forebears. It also expresses the Asante's self-confidence, and love for the elegant and sophisticated. There is room too for individualization, for each performer seeks

to highlight his personal experience in movement; the dance is a dramatization of traditional Asante customs and of the dancer's individual status in the society.

So great is the evaluation placed on dance and performance as an index of traditional feeling and thinking that both formal and informal instruction in dance begins at an early age for all Asante. The ability to express oneself competently and to communicate ideas, emotions, and knowledge through the language of dance is recognized as an important attribute of a cultured, educated citizen in traditional Asante evaluation. The training program lasts throughout one's lifetime. A sense of rhythm and timing are taught through games, voiced simulations of drumming with hand-clapping, miming to work chants, and the recitation of dramatic incidents in folk tales at storytelling sessions. This sustained training program makes it possible for a dancer to meet several dance situations, even the most demanding, with little or no prior preparation or warm-up. Group rehearsals or practice sessions may be held in individual homes or communities as a preparation for specific rites, ceremonies, or festivals. Skills and modes of interpretation and communication as required in the dances for a particular event are tested, polished, and reactivated in these sessions to prepare for the social events which call for individual or group participation.

ASANTE HISTORY AS REFLECTED IN DANCE

The dance phenomenon among the Asante is more than an aesthetic activity. As an index of the thoughts and aspirations of Asante, the study of dance can lead to a better understanding of the other arts. To illustrate this point, consider the connection between the *Adinkra* dance in the *kete* suite, the fabric decorated with stamped abstract designs with symbolic meanings worn by the Asante at funerals, and the same motifs on wooden combs and drums from Surinam with the Asante name of *apentren.* While leading the Ghanaian delegation in planning for an arts festival in Nigeria, I was approached by the leader of the Surinam delegation. He wanted to know whether *Adinkra* was the name of an object, a place, an event, or the name of a person. I told him that *Adinkra* had been the head of the state of Gyaaman (Jaman) who had been defeated by the Asante and taken to the Asante capital of Kumase, wearing a cloth with stamped designs which still bear his name. He produced a wooden hair comb with raised *Adinkra* patterns on the handle. He also showed me a model of a drum with more raised motifs on the space between the skin top and the tensioning pegs; Asante drums have no such adornments. The drum was apparently used in Surinam in ritual dances and bore the name *apentren.*[1]

In the campaign against Gyaaman the Asante army met with unexpected resistance which threatened to sap the morale of the invaders. An astute general created that part of the suite which states in drum verse the phrase, *Yede brebre bekyere Adinkra,* or, "with patience and cunning we will capture Adinkra." The dance consists of miming and posturing and is the favorite *kete* dance of the current Asantehene, Otumfuo Nana Opoku-Ware II. When Adinkra was subsequently defeated and taken prisoner, he appeared in a parade before the Asantehene, wearing a cloth with abstract symbols describing the depth of his sorrow for his defeat, the loss of brave warriors, and his reduced status. As is the Asante practice, the cloth and the symbolic imprints, with several additional motifs, are still remembered as "Adinkra's cloth."[2]

When I met the gentleman from Surinam, I also listened to a taped recording of a libation-pouring ritual which was rendered in a mixture of Twi and Dutch. It called on *Onyankouropon, Onyame,* and *Twieduampon-Kwame,* all special appellations of the deity who created all things. I was reminded of an earlier incident at a special dance concert for a young chief from Surinam. The tears rolled down his cheeks as he watched an Asante dance. We learned from his Dutch interpreters that his grandfather had described such a dance to him and that he was convinced his people had come from Asante originally.

DANCE AND RELATED ART FORMS IN ASANTE

Dance productions and the associated pageantry also provide opportunities for the display of other forms of Asante art. This is

exhibited in the *Adosoa* processions, elaborately mounted by a wife or wives to console a bereaved husband during the funeral rites for his deceased father or mother. The *Adosoa* is also supposed to honor the memory of the departed and express the love of the wife's family in a final opulent gesture. For the procession, girls selected for their beauty, poise, and proficiency as dancers are adorned with precious beads and delicately crafted gold jewelry, and are arranged in two lines. Bearing fine examples of Asante textiles, pottery, jewelry, and leathercraft they precede the *Adosoahemaa* (*Adosoa* queen) who dances to the *kete* drums, played by drummers borrowed from a chief for the occasion. She is surrounded by attendants and has the use of state swords and other court regalia borrowed for the event. In addition to her rich and colorful hand-woven cloth wrapped just above her breasts she wears jewelry at the knees, ankles, wrists, and upper arms, as well as several necklaces, including a special one from which highly decorative, stylized gold breasts are suspended.

Adosoa collectables—memorabilia of sentimental charms, trinkets, precious beads, "medicines," bits of cloth associated with special events—are tied in several layers of cloth into a bundle, a sort of family heirloom. In the *Adosoa keykyere* family heirlooms are brought together as symbols of wealth and class, even though the items may have been borrowed from well-wishers for the occasion.

A spectacular *Adosoa-keykyere* held in conjunction with the funeral rites for a divisional chief, which I witnessed as a young boy, best illustrates the *Adosoa* as an elaborate mask. It reflected the prevailing fashions and manners of the court and was interwoven with social commentary on topical events. As in the more recent version of the *Adosoa* described above, two lines of young girls in silken loincloths flanked a phalanx of carriers of the *Adosoa* heirlooms, an exhibition of wealth, status, and prestige. Behind these girls came the bearers of state swords and other regalia, then the *Adosoa* queen, and an *Adosoa* king who was really a girl dressed as an *ohene,* or chief. The pair sat in a carriage festooned with rare blankets and cushions; last came the bearer of a state umbrella borrowed for the occasion. The carriage was drawn not by horses but by relays of stalwart women; the explanation given by the status-conscious Asante elders was that the horse and rider would have looked taller and therefore symbolically would seem to be of higher rank than the *adosoa* royals. A distinctive art expression, which seems to have died out, was the abstract designs in scrolls and whorls drawn on the cheeks, around the breasts and the stomach as well as the back, thighs, and legs of the girls. Multicolored ostrich feather dusters with long slim handles acquired an unusual usage in the *Adosoa Kete* dance as accessories of the attendant maidens. The dancers held the slim handles very much like the upper-class English hold a tea cup, in the right hand with the arm bent at the elbow and raised to the level of the shoulder; the left hand held a colored silk kerchief for making arm and hand gestures which were enhancements to the intricate and involved measurements of the right arm. The dancer set the duster spinning by rubbing the thumb and a finger together while making circular motions with the whole right arm and raising and lowering the long feathered duster to produce flaps and flounces. To the Asante, this gesture evoked a time when there was a "cocoa boom" and there was an abundance of recently introduced paper currency, contemptuously referred to as "paper money." But like the faithful and rigid observances of the *Adae* and other rites during the period of exile of Nana Prempeh I (1900–24), the objective was to keep tradition alive for a new generation and to preserve the pomp and elegance, the unifying mystique inherent in festivals and celebrations, and the accompanying feeling of pride in the past. These performances continued in anticipation of the return of Nana Prempeh I, and were meant to render a good account of the performer's stewardship of tradition. With song and dance, morale was kept high and the nation held together.

DANCE AND THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE ROYAL IMAGE

Throughout the period of exile of Prempeh I, the art of dance was kept alive through recreational and ceremonial performances. For example, the evening preceding an *Akwasidae* (the Sunday *Adae* when chiefs and court

functionaries share drinks, food, and news as an act of communion with the departed chiefs in the stool room) was observed with the sounds of court drums and musical ensembles; young and old courtiers and attendants were rehearsed for the next day's dances. At dawn on the *Akwasidae* there was ceremonial court drumming and dancing in the palaces of the various traditional rulers whose status entitled them to the use of drums such as the *fontomfrom.* Some of the sounds, like that of the *ntahera,* or elephant tusk trumpets, and the distinctive psalmlike chant of the *kwadwomfo,* reserved normally only for the Asantehene, made the rounds of the palaces so as to create the atmosphere within which to exhibit the gold, the regalia, the elegance and pomp of the Asante court.

The ceremonial dances inform us of past struggles and achievements in battle. A chief's dance may be linked to the colors of a regiment and reminds us of his role as military leader. War or heroic dances like the *bomaa* or *fontomfrom* and *bento* provided opportunities for giving a highly exaggerated account of some of the fiercest military encounters, those which entitled the victors to the use of certain insignia on state swords, or state umbrella tops, or drums. The ruler's subjects identified themselves with their overlords. This enhanced status is what a ruler and his subjects seek to express in the dances. Even though the honor may have been earned by a predecessor, it was felt to be worth a celebration; these dances were thus a reminder of the group's contribution to the kingdom.

In Europe, court dances were performed exclusively by the king, nobles, and courtiers of the highest classes; however, any member of an Asante community may show off his virtuosity as a dancer and revel in the achievements of his clan or military unit, so long as he observes the prescribed courtesies for persons of his rank. Asante etiquette pays great attention to hierarchy: only title holders may dance the court dances with their sandals on and their shoulders covered. Certain gestures are reserved for senior rulers; for instance, placing the right fist atop the left fist indicates one who "sits" on others (that is, belongs to a higher chieftaincy rank) and can only be made by those of that rank. It is not enough, even for a chief, to be an expert dancer; he must also be very conversant with the traditional language of gesture or else he faces censure and, possibly, reprimand and heavy fines. For the ordinary citizen the situation can be more taxing; he must remember to show respect for the royal drums by baring his shoulders and wearing his *ntama,* or toga, between his armpit and his waist. He must be more circumspect in his use of gestures than he would be in freer, informal, recreational dances.

In general, however, the performances of the king, *amanhene, aberempon,* and titular heads aim at showing the pride and grandeur of their individual special offices and lineages. Attendants, state sword-bearers, pages, umbrella bearers, the royal bodyguards, and other court functionaries form a complementary chorus to these stately dances with their own special supporting gestures. As in the case of European court dances, the heavy weight of the costumes, the gold bracelets, bangles, necklaces and breast plates, the bejeweled sandals and gold pieces attached to the knees and ankles, make vigorous movements impossible. Movement is therefore reduced to pantomimic gestures; posture and symbolic dignified steps terminate in one of a number of accepted attitudes or stances.

In the processional form, when a chief who is entitled to a palanquin is borne aloft by the royal carriers, the sides of the palanquin are flanked by the sword-bearers holding the blades encased in their white-coated scabbards, resting the gold-decorated hilts and symbolic emblems against the sides of the palanquin. The chief is preceded by various attendants, with the shield-bearers shaking, spinning, and tossing their (now obsolescent) decorative shields into the air to the rhythm of the drums. In the palanquin, the chief's head moves to the challenging rhythmic throb of the *fontomfrom atopretia* dance. He holds a musket in his left hand and a state sword in the other. He crosses the sword over the gun, swaying from side to side, like a king cobra, searching for an imaginary foe. He leans to his left, then to his right; he leans forward and points his sword forward. With a studied smile on his lips, he flings himself back onto the cushions behind him. He may twirl the gun with his left hand while making

attacking, hacking feints with the sword; all the while, he is being rocked and tossed up and down to the rhythm of the *fontomfrom* sounds, in a re-enactment of a historic routing of a powerful adversary.

This spectacle, for this is what it is intended to be, is enhanced by the billowy movements of the large multicolored state umbrellas, with scarlet fringes, topped with some trophy or insignia conferred upon the original recipient of the title and his successors by the Asantehene and signifying honor in battle or a reward for meritorious services. The elephant tusk trumpet sounds do not form part of the drum ensemble but create the right mood for the procession. In addition, they recall victories in battles and extol the chief's achievements in war and peace: *Ma wo ho mene so*—"Arise, or be thou lifted up." The *ntumpan,* or talking drums, may exhort him with a stanza like this:

> *Yento wo hene kwa!*
> *Yento wo berempon kwa!*
> *Ohene Kwaw!*
> *Ohene ne hwan?*
> *Ohene fata awurade,*
> *Berempon fata awurade.*
> *Yerefie ne Ampasakyi Aniampam;*
> *Atakora bediako-e!*
> *Atakora kronkron!*
> *Atakora Kwaku Firampon!*
> *Damirifa!*
> 'Tis not for naught do we call thee Chief!
> 'Tis not for naught do we hail thee Royal!
> Whom do we hail Chief?
> Kingship befits our Lord.
> Royalty befits our Lord.
> Yerefie and Ampasakyi Anampam!
> Atakora, born to revel in battle!
> Atakora the Pure!
> Atakora Firampon, born on a Wednesday;
> We offer our condolences!
> (From Mamponhene's drum verse)

During the period of confinement prior to his enstoolment, an Asantehene elect is taught to be a competent performer and interpreter of court dances. This is a major requirement of the one who as king will have the unique appellation of *Dwom ne akyeremawura*—Patron Lord of Song and Drummers.

Another factor to consider is the instruments used for court dances. These instruments are prized possessions of social groups, held in trust by the *omanhene, berempom,* or *ohene* who has been invested with the right to their use. They appear only in a chief's palace, and they are played by specially trained musicians who perform as a social and patriotic duty to their leader and who take pride in rendering such service. The court drummer has a highly favored position in the court. For a ceremonial occasion, when the Asantehene takes his place on the dais, the various drum groups retire behind the dais to play for the entertainment of the general public. Only the most accomplished dancers have the courage to perform, because nearly every one there is a master who watches the others with critical interest and with disdain for the slightest mistake in timing, progressions, interpretation, drama, and finesse of execution. Some notable dancers have been known to precede their rendition of a dance with satirical comments on the standard and style of performance of previous dancers, before calling attention to the excellence of their own versions of the dance. Unhampered by jewelry, regalia, or attendants, these dancers demonstrate frenetic leaps, hops, spin-turns, bows, and spritely expressive steps which recall the athletes' dances and postures on Greek vases.

The recreational dances like the *saaboaa* or *sikyi* are performed in a more relaxed atmosphere. Each dance group possesses artifacts symbolic of the aims of the group: wooden clappers with specially carved decorative handles are used with metal rattles with repoussé designs. There were master drums, now rarely seen, with relief carvings depicting proverbs and maxims. The same good taste and selectivity, restraint, and sophistication noticeable in the carvings, jewelry designs, pottery, metal work, and textiles were evident in these expressive creations in visual movement and in the often complex and challenging rhythms of the drums. Here, as in the formal dances behind the dais on state occasions, a dancer has to pay heed to the genealogical reminders and praises in drum language from the master drummer. One needs to understand the language to perform the appropriate symbolic arm, hand, and leg gestures, facial expressions, and changes of body levels and direction.

The main significance of the extemporaneous individual dance at state functions is

the free expression of individual feelings within a specific social context. Such movements as are employed are spontaneous, and although there is a great deal of freedom of expression, the technique is highly developed. With combinations of appropriate gestures, the message is easily understood. So although the dance may be individual in interpretation it tends to invoke group consciousness of social unity and feeling, as in the Greek dance, *Ratta,* where an individual detaches himself from the group to dance alone and then takes his place again in the group. The erroneous but quite widespread belief that most communities in Africa have no place for the individual does not apply to Asante. There is a duality of individual consciousness coupled with a deep sense of involvement in the family, the village, the division, and the state as a whole, and of identification with the Golden Stool as the soul of the Asanteman, and with the Asantehene as the protector and custodian of free *sunsum,* or spirit.

Accounts by early travelers or visiting foreign officials of a typical Asante durbar held as a welcome or reception missed the full impact of the pageant for lack of competent interpreters of the language, music, and court formalities. Where Bowdich and R. A. Freeman may have missed the significance of the *Odwira* (the festival of purification, remembrance, and thanksgiving, misnamed the "yam festival"), R. S. Rattray was more accurate because of his closer association with the language and thinking of the Asante. The description of the procession and durbar to welcome Bowdich's delegation, and the description of the yam festival in Bowdich's *Mission to the Ashantee* (1819: 35–45, 226–230) conveys the pageantry and splendor of a royal Asante ceremonial occasion.

The durbar can be described as follows:

> Teeming masses of courtiers, army wing commanders, shield-bearers, royal trumpeters, royal household guards, pages, and other court functionaries surround the King who is seated on a dais. Above him multicoloured dome-shaped state umbrellas of velvet with fringes of vermilion-colored felt provide a shade and protect him from the rays of the sun. Two chroniclers-chanters recount in verse the King's lineage, battle honors, and valor.
>
> The trumpets proclaim a melodious stanza of acclamation to the Warrior of Warriors. The provocative *fontomfrom* war drums clamor loudly, incessantly inciting the King to demonstrate his renowned leadership and fearlessness as the champion who knows not the meaning of retreat. The *Ntumpan* drums of the *fontomfrom* orchestra invite their Lord in drum poetry. "Valiant One, show us your vaunted might, Tough Warriors' Child, display your might. Majesty befits the great Lord." And from the *fontomfrom* drums: "His Majesty's Sword, It is curved but fells the heads of a thousand men." Suddenly the King is on his feet; his fighting stance and frown replace the image of him as the calm benevolent father and political leader of his people. The double lines of state sword bearers rise quickly to their feet, scabbards held with both hands pointing to their rear and level with the ground, the golden hilts of the swords flanking the lane which leads to the royal dais. The shield-bearers shake, spin, and toss the shields into the air, spring into the air to retrieve them, swing the shields between their legs in a backward throw, and catch the still spinning shields on their left fingers in acrobatic movements to the *fontomfrom* drum rhythms. The *Asafo* songs of war and acclamation grow in dramatic intensity. The state umbrellas come to life with fringes flouncing and belowing to expressions of the umbrella-bearers' jubilation. A line of attendants in caps and livery bearing the symbols of office take their places facing the King. Their clothes are wrapped around their waists, with their trunks bared except for the trailing overhang of the cloth on left, which is loosely thrown over the left shoulder.
>
> The human screen parts. The King's cloth, which is normally like a toga over the arm and shoulder leaving the right arm and chest exposed, has been rearranged. The cloth is now wrapped slightly below his chest. The bare shoulders show manliness and the arms have been freed for movement and gesture. A skullcap has replaced the gold decorated head band, his

symbol of kingship and political power. The transformation is complete. He is offered a sword by an attendant. He grasps the hilt, slowly pulls the sword out of its scabbard, then brings it to the salute with a swift jerk. With an imperious gesture, he receives a gun and tucks the butt under his left armpit. He raises the sword in a salute and prayer, then bends down to touch the Earth Mother with the sword. He extends his prayer and salutations to the elements with his sword and gun, arms outstretched. He moves his arms in an embracing gesture, finishing with the gun and sword crossed on his chest. He runs anticlockwise in a crouched position, in three circles, glancing to his left and right. He pauses. He steps slowly and deliberately to single stressed beats from the drums. His pace increases. He swoops this way and turns that way, catching one imaginary enemy after the other and beheading them. He surveys the field; there is no foe in sight. Hailed by drums, trumpets, and voices he proudly walks to the dais. His clothes are arranged as before. Wine bearers come up the lane of swords to receive instructions to serve the various groups with drinks.

With each such pageant, a period of their history has been recreated and relived; loyalty has been strengthened, and the unity of the society reaffirmed.

CONCLUSIONS

The symbols of Asante unity, power, and political and spiritual continuity are the Golden Stool and the blackened stools with the rulers as spiritual and military custodians. Various rites and festivals periodically rekindle patriotism and national awareness and loyalty. The climax to every gathering is composed of the dances and displays of related arts which bring the people together. Without this, the chiefs would lose the aura and mystique which surround the concept of chieftainship. In the early 19th century, as today, the chiefs and elders continue to promote the art of dancing in all its forms. The formal ceremonial court dances perpetuate chieftainship and stability by providing the visual and audible setting for the enhancement of the office of *Ohene.*

NOTES

1. The younger generation of Asante are more familiar with the *apentren-ba,* the little *apentren,* which appears in several nonritual or nonreligious drum ensembles.

2. This account was given to me by the late Otumfuo, Nana Sir Osei Agyeman Prempe II, Asantehene, who also loved this dance because of the scope it gives for dramatic posturing and miming.

CHAPTER 17. ASANTE COURT MUSIC

J. H. Kwabena Nketia

ABSTRACT

The growth in prestige and power that accompanied Asante political sophistication and territorial expansion was accompanied by the development of models of cultural excellence at the courts of Asante rulers. The relationship between music and the hierarchical principles of social organization in Asante, as well as the relationship between court music and popular music, are explored. Resources, repertoire, traditions, and the processes that led to innovation in Asante music are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Current studies of Asante place a great deal of emphasis on the social, political, and economic processes that shaped Asante traditions and institutions in the precolonial era. Such studies enhance our understanding and appreciation of the traditional structures found in Asante today—structures that have not only continued to give cohesion to Asanteman, but have also enabled it to sustain much of the cultural legacy of the past. This legacy shows itself most palpably in state ceremonials; in the heritage of objects of aesthetic, social, and political interest; and in oral literature, music, and dance.

It is evident from oral traditions as well as from the attitudes of present-day rulers that the kings and chiefs of Asante were concerned not only with sociopolitical development, with the refinement of government and the search for rational solutions to political issues and trade, but also with cultural development. In particular, they were concerned with cultural usages on the state level, including ceremonials, music, and dance, and extensions of the lineage concept of heirloom (*agyapadee*).

The growth in prestige and power that accompanied political sophistication and territorial expansion was accompanied by cultural processes which resulted in the emergence of models of cultural excellence at the courts of powerful and imaginative rulers, models generally recognized and appreciated by the public.

This concern with the creation of models of excellence in consonance with the prestige and power of chieftaincy led to the routinization of cultural expression in many spheres of ceremonial, social, and political life. It also led to the development of a concept of patronage, which encouraged rulers not only to recognize the creators and transmitters of artistic traditions, but to identify with the artistic products themselves in a number of ways. For example, they were expected to ensure that the accumulated treasures of the past were properly kept and exhibited to the public during state ceremonials designed for this purpose; such objects were not only prestige symbols, but also tokens of the creative energy that had sustained chieftaincy from the earliest period (*omantease bere*) to the present. Rulers were expected to add to these objects, and, in the process, to leave a message for posterity through the symbolic objects of their choice. When a paramount chief of Mampong was removed from office some three decades ago, one of the charges against him was that he had not added to the regalia bequeathed by his predecessors, not even a pair of sandals embossed in gold.

Another way in which a ruler identified himself as a patron of the arts was by demonstrating his knowledge and understanding of the music of his court through the subtleties of his movement as he walked in a procession, rode in a palanquin, or danced to music that stirred him, or allowing him to

convey messages through his choice of symbolic gestures. An Asante ruler was expected to be an adept performer of court dances and, even more important, to convey something of the dignity of his office through his movements. When another Mampong paramount chief was being removed from office not so long ago, one of the negative comments that people made about him was that he danced to the music of his court in a clumsy manner, making awkward gestures with his left hand in the heat of the dance—something that did not befit a chief.

Because a ruler had to respond concretely to music—to the messages conveyed to him through the sounds of instruments and the mood they set—he developed a personal relationship to the music of his court. He invariably referred to it as "his music," even though similar music would be heard at the courts of other rulers, for there were always local variations in details of structure and content to justify claiming the local version as his. The musicians themselves acknowledged this. The *kwadwomfoo* minstrels, for example, referred to him in their cantillations as *edwom ne akyerema wura,* literally, patron or "master of song and drummers." Court music was cultivated not only for its aesthetic and artistic value but also to serve as an adjunct to the ceremonial life of chieftaincy; to sustain the sense of tradition that guided the course of political and cultural action—an objective that becomes evident when the content of court music is examined; to stimulate and maintain collective consciousness of the state; and to encourage interaction—in particular expressions of loyalty, enactment of roles, and affirmation of commitment to the heroic ideals of society.

The *Adae* cycles and other ceremonial occasions provided opportunities for assembling the entire range of instruments and ensembles with specific functions and messages. These were occasions for reminding the ruler that he was a *okatakyie,* valiant one; *obarima,* a man of valor; *obanin a banin suro no,* a man feared by other men; *obanin twerebo a ne ho bon atuduro,* the-gun-flint-man who smells of gunpowder and an *oberempon,* nobleman. He was reminded in song and the language of drums that he was the embodiment of the deeds and virtues of his predecessors.

THE RESOURCES AND REPERTOIRE OF COURT MUSIC

The sound sources that were selected, the details of structure, the modes of expression, the repertoire, and the aesthetic values that were emphasized in court music were related to the functions mentioned above as well as to the courtly behavior and pageantry that specific occasions demanded. Speech surrogates—in particular, drums, flutes, and horns—communicated messages and greetings and commented on the movement of the ruler, playing eulogies and proverbs as well as texts that alluded to historical incidents and events.

In addition to speech surrogates, horn and drum fanfares embodied a statement chosen by the ruler or by his predecessors. Played at appropriate moments in the course of an event, these fanfares marked his presence, reinforced a statement, or heightened the level of his awareness of his status and role.

Instruments and ensembles also communicated particular sentiments or moods through their sounds and textures. Thus the *odurugya,* a long vertical flute often described as an instrument with mournful tones, served principally as a mood setter. It could arouse the emotions of the king and spur him to action, or enable him to express the dignity of his office by the way he carried himself. In times of emotional crisis, it was the instrument that could awaken in the king feelings beyond his physical awareness. The dirgelike texts of *odurugya* tunes were heroic and provocative in the references they made to incidents or the proverbs they recalled.

Kwadwom, a vocal genre sung by two male singers who stood closely behind the ruler so that he could hear their message, was another musical form developed at the courts of paramount chiefs. It was dirgelike both in its musical style and verbal allusions, but its primary function was to reinforce a ruler's sense of tradition by reminding him of the heroic ideals of the state and the past exploits of his predecessors, including allusions to or direct mention of the names of those who were vanquished by the Asante. It was largely a com-

mentary on Asante expansion intended to incite the ruler to similar deeds of valor. One section was devoted to the exploits of Opoku Ware.

The heroic ideal was symbolized in musical terms in the sounds, texture, style, and repertoire of the *fontomfrom* ensemble. The small drums, which were expected to play together as loudly as possible, provided what was described as "fire" to the music and thus symbolized the intensity of heroic encounters. The *atumpan* drummer acted as the lead drummer. Assuming the symbolic role of captain of an army, he called to action the two heavy *fontomfrom* drums representing the warriors. He gave them a series of short calls followed by a signal at which they went into prolonged drumming. The *atumpan* played single beats along with them, as though guiding them, until they came to the end of the section and paused. At this point the *atumpan* took over and played a few short texts while the heavy *fontomfrom* drums, in turn, played waiting beats and then resumed action at a signal from the *atumpan.*

The *kete* orchestra, which was combined with flutes and voices when played in the grand style of the Asantehene's court, was concerned with values. It was used as a vehicle for communicating what was sometimes described as *asantesem*—Asante values. Its wide variety of rhythms communicated different moods, as well as texts which emphasized heroic ideals, extolled courtly values, or commemorated particular events. The *kete* orchestra was versatile. In the past it performed on ceremonial occasions for sheer entertainment, or in times of crisis, or at royal funerals.

Another important ensemble with a specific function was the *apirede* which performed in connection with stool house ceremonies. Described as *nsamanfoo agoro,* the music and dance of the departed, it was the ensemble most intimately connected with the ancestors. Its primary purpose was to instill in the listener a sense of the mysterious and the fearful. Accordingly, instead of the usual bell which played the time line, stick clappers, which simulated the dry sounds of the clapping of the dead, were used. The oral traditions of Adanse Ayaase allude to the use of skulls as idiophones. One of the drums played "rhythms of condolences" (*dammirifua*) through the entire piece while the master drum engaged in a call and response formula with another drum, one drum asking the question "*ntoma ben*?" (What cloth was it?), to which the other replied "*Nkusa*" (cloth). After a while they changed to another pattern in which the two drums no longer played in alternation.

One of the important court ensembles that had a wide distribution was the *mpintin* orchestra. It consisted of hourglass drums (*donno*), the calabash drum (*mpintintoa*), and a double-headed cylindrical drum (*gyamadudu*). Unlike other Akan ensembles, it did not include a bell. The time line was played by one of the *donno* drums. Active during state processions, it was described as music for "pushing the chief," that is, for urging him to move forward. Like other Akan drum music, the rhythms of the *mpintin* had a verbal basis.

There were other musical types at the court of the Asantehene, such as *bento* (which resembled the *fontomfrom*), *tonnaa, sankutwene,* and *osekye* which were played largely for their aesthetic interest. Functionally, however, they were not as important as those mentioned earlier.

TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Every court ensemble developed a repertoire that enabled it to provide rhythmic and tonal variety as well as a variety of messages. The occasions on which particular items could be played and sometimes the sequence in which the items in a given repertoire were performed were well defined. Similarly, the position that each ensemble or single instrument should take in a procession or at a durbar was also prescribed by tradition. Accordingly, court music was performed only by those who knew the repertoire as well as the traditions and conventions of music-making on state occasions. Since access to this knowledge was through membership in specific households in specific localities, the number of competent musicians who could assume the role of court musician was very limited.

Since the grandeur of a court was reflected in the range of musical instruments and the variety and size of the ensembles it main-

tained, no individual who was not a chief could own the instruments of the court or cause them to be played for him, for by so doing he would be declaring himself chief. A chief could keep only those instruments that belonged to his rank in the Asante hierarchy. As a village headman did not normally maintain a ceremonial court, he did not have musical instruments or conventional court music of any kind. When a junior chief was elevated he was allowed to augment his instruments and ensembles to the level befitting his rank. As a corollary, a paramount chief or the Asantehene could, at his discretion, allow a junior chief to enlarge his set of instruments, provided such a chief did not try to show them off at state durbars, for by so doing the junior chief would be implying that he was equal to his ruler. This rule applied also to pieces in the repertoire of standard ensembles.

Within the limits prescribed by tradition, a chief had the freedom to create or encourage his musicians to create new pieces, modify old pieces, or invent new texts. A chief could create his own "signature tune" or a commemorative text which could be played as horn or drum fanfare. Any chief who wished to copy the music of another chief had first to seek permission. Oral traditions abound in tales of chiefs who created particular drums, rulers in whose reign particular musical forms or statements incorporated into song and drum pieces came into being, chiefs who sought permission from other rulers to copy their innovations, and rulers who enlarged their resources with instruments and musicians captured in battles (see Nketia, 1963, 1971).

The most important innovations took place at the center of Asante political organization, the court of the Asantehene, where the traditions of earlier Akan states such as Adanse and Dankyira, or the usages of those early rulers in the Asante region such as Tafo were assimilated. There is also evidence of the absorption of a few traditions from Bono and elsewhere, not only at the center, but also at the periphery. *Adawu,* a heroic verse form sung in Kokofu in a dirgelike recitative style, was adopted from the traditions of Nsoko, while the *bento* drums found at the court of the Asantehene (and which are still played on ceremonial occasions) are said to have been captured from Bono country.

There is also evidence that the Asante rulers went even farther afield, and that their interaction with peoples of the savanna (referred to in *kwadwom* as *sefoo*) as well as their diplomatic relations with the kingdom of Abomey contributed to the enrichment of the court.

Asante rulers were, however, very selective, for only instruments of "kingly command" or those which had ceremonial value or the potential for development aroused their imagination. According to Bowdich (1819: 363) "the Moses, Mallowas, Bournnous and natives from the more remote part of the interior" played what he describes as "a rude violin," or the one-string fiddle, in the streets of Kumase, but the instrument was not adopted as a court instrument, unlike the tradition in Dagomba. Similarly, although the *sankuo* or *seperewa,* which has a family likeness to the *kora* of the Mandinka, was enjoyed in Asante society, it remained an instrument in the public domain. It was, however, apparently a favorite of Osei Tutu, a fact commemorated in the replica of the instrument wrapped in gold leaf which forms part of the gold objects accompanying Asikadwa Kofi, the Golden Stool.

On the other hand, the possibilities that savanna types of drums such as the hourglass drum (*donno*), the large calabash drum (*mptintintoa*), and the double-headed cylindrical drum (*gyamadudu*) offered for developing processional music seems to have caught the imagination of Asante court drummers and their patrons. The sonorities of the *donno* allowed it to be adapted to Asante texts, while the other drums could carry messages similar to those developed for Asante signal drums.

Because whatever the Asante adopted was recreated or adapted in style, idiom, and content, Asante court music was greatly differentiated from that of her non-Akan neighbors such as the Dagomba. Dagomba court music was restricted to hourglass drum ensembles and one-string fiddle music, and the occasional use of horn signals. The cantillation style of *kwadwom* took a form different from the highly developed art of praise singing practiced by the Dagomba. Similarly, al-

though instruments like the horns, flutes, bells, and drums found at the courts of Asante rulers have a wide distribution in West Africa (and even make use of similar techniques such as the hocket), those of precolonial Asante were differentiated by their style and context. In some societies horns and trumpets are in the public domain; in Asante they were exclusively court instruments.

A comparison of the design and construction of the principal court drums of Asante which are still in use—particularly in respect to the types of pegs, tensioning system, decoration, and types of drum sticks—also reveals features that are peculiar to Asante and other Akan societies. Even the design and technique of the friction drum, played in Asante to imitate the snarl of the leopard as symbolic of the might and majesty of a king, were different from friction drums elsewhere, which are generally set in motion by a contraption and not by rubbing the drumstick on a powdered vellum.

It is important to note, however, that it was not only Asante that benefitted from interaction with her neighbors. There is evidence that Asante court music and related forms also made an impact on other societies and that distinctly Asante musical forms were adopted elsewhere along with the original Asante texts (Nketia, 1963, 1971).

COURT MUSIC AND MUSIC IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Although the traditions of Asante court music differed in many respects from those in the public or religious domain, there were a few areas in which they overlapped, for the different domains of musical life formed a continuum, with court music at the apex and music performed spontaneously by individuals and groups in connection with celebrations of the life cycle and community events at the base. The music of organized social life—the music of recreational, occupational, and heroic associations—and music in the religious domain (*akonnwom*) lay in the middle.

One of the important areas of overlap was drum language in both the speech and dance modes. There was a common approach in the use of texts as the basis of musical rhythms in different Asante musical traditions, as well as common principles of polyrhythmic organization. The use of proverbs and excerpts from the repertoire of drum language in the course of music making was common practice. However, as a model of excellence, court music made use of a wider range of texts as well as more complex polyrhythms, particularly in the music of *fontomfrom.*

As far as the speech mode of drumming was concerned, all performing groups who had instruments that could play in both the speech and dance modes could play some texts in the speech mode while the performance of music and dance was in progress. However, unlike the practice in some African societies, the drum language of the Asante was chief-centered. Important public announcements on drums could only be made from the palace. Drum language could also be played for individuals bearing the same names as those of rulers, but only in a musical situation and only in a very limited version.

These restrictions applied also to the use of the *atumpan* in musical ensembles, for like savanna-belt drums with designations related to the term *tabl* or *tabal,* the *atumpan* served as "an instrument of kingly command" (Hause, 1948). Its adoption as the lead drum in the *adowa* drum ensemble was, therefore, a concession granted by Asante rulers because of the position of the Adowahemmaa (the female leader and cantor of the group) at the court of the Queenmother and the development of a repertoire of songs in honor of rulers (both chiefs and queenmothers). In the tradition of Mampong, songs were composed in honor of rulers who recognized the *adowa* group by "slaughtering a sheep on the atumpan drum" (*okum adowa so dwane*) (Nketia, 1949).

The *atumpan* was also included in the ensemble that played for the gods, even though the principal instrument that spoke to the dancing priest was the *operenten* (Nketia, 1963: 92–96). Great gods like Tano could also have *bommaa* drums, for in the sacred realm they were like paramount chiefs. Accordingly there were overlaps in the repertoire when similar heroic ideals were espoused, overlaps which suggest not only reciprocal borrowing of musical concepts but also a process of secularization of some of the existing items of repertoire as the political processes shifted the focus from the sacred

to the court, for *akom* music and dance are still held in high esteem in traditional Asante society. Examples of this overlap include the concept of items like *adaban, abofoo, abofotia,* and *samrawa*—the *akom* equivalent of *akantam,* the musical piece based on a cycle of proverbs.

Another area of overlap between court music and music in other domains was in the music of war companies. There were two types of companies: companies of the court whose music was described as *ahengoro,* and companies of commoners, *asafo* (Nketia, 1963: 103–106). Although both of them were political institutions, the former had ceremonial and symbolic functions, while the latter was active only when there was a state of emergency.

Because of the expressive qualities of the ceremonial dirge, its form and style were utilized in all domains of musical activity, including the court. As the repertoire of dirges was organized on the basis of lineages and clans, royal dirges tended to be differentiated from those of other lineages. Although such dirges would be sung for ordinary members of the lineage, they were especially for deceased kings. These were richer in historical allusions, since they could make references to the exploits of rulers as well as the activities and attributes of important lineage heads and lineage history (Nketia, 1955, 1969). Court poetry played by speech surrogates (drums, flutes, and horns) and the songs of *kwadwomfoo, sen kwadwom,* and *kete kwadwom* overlapped in their verbal references and modes of expression with such dirges. It is because of this that *kete kwadwom* was sung by women associated with the royal court when the grand style of *kete* with the full complement of flutes was being performed. This tradition goes back to Denkyira where, we are told, it was the practice for a large choir of slave girls to sing "sweet dirges to the King" (Sakyi-Dzan, 1926: 61).

Because the different domains of musical life formed a continuum, events such as funerals and festivals often brought performers in the different domains together, with each group performing its own type of music. Thus, when a courtier or a member of a royal lineage died, the music of various performing groups (such as *adowa* groups) as well as the appropriate music of the court representing the ruler would be performed. Similarly, if the captain of a warrior company of the court died, one would hear not only the lineage dirges at his funeral celebration, but also the special music of the group to which he belonged, and the appropriate music of the court. When there was a victory, or a new ruler was being enstooled, one would hear not only court music but also songs of exhilaration sung spontaneously by groups of women.

The juxtaposition of different performing groups, each contributing to the enrichment of an important occasion with something from its own repertoire, was one of the social principles that guided music-making in Asante and other Akan societies. This principle was also observed by musicians attached to the court who invariably specialized in a category of song, the music of a single instrument, or the music of an ensemble. Music was performed not only for the fun of it or for the special functions for which it was created, but also as a tribute to an individual or as a symbolic expression of loyalty or group solidarity. A chief could be represented symbolically by his music when custom did not allow him to attend a particular funeral in person.

Asante court music was largely ceremonial and was not designed for the entertainment of a ruler. As a ruler could not go to the public performance of a nonceremonial nature, it was sometimes arranged for a leading group he wanted to hear to perform at the court, or on a formal occasion. Some musical groups in the public domain looked for the opportunity of performing on a formal occasion, especially if they were new groups that needed formal recognition. There were instances where women's groups, consisting mainly of the daughters, grand-daughters, and wives of the king, took upon themselves the task of entertaining him in the evenings with *nnwonkoro* songs. In Mampong, for example, a repertoire of Sekyere *nnwonkoro* was developed in this manner for the entertainment of Mamponghene Owusu Sekyere, the predecessor of Osei Bonsu.

CULTURAL POLICY

It will be evident from the foregoing that the organization of court music was concerned more with ceremonial life than with

the rulers' enjoyment of music on a casual basis, for the latter was left to the inclinations of rulers, while the former seemed to be guided by a cultural policy or a set of operational principles. Administrative and financial provisions were made for the cultivation of specific traditions that reflected the sociopolitical and cultural values of chieftaincy.

The Asante courts generally provided for the continuity of established musical traditions by distributing the responsibility for instruments and types of music to households or villages, an arrangement which made groups of musicians part of the palace organization. These musicians shared in palace duties, such as keeping certain buildings in repair or trading in neighboring territories for the king or the paramount chief. Musicians who needed to attend the court frequently because they played instruments such as the *atumpan* and *nkukuadwo* (talking drums or signal drums for summoning people to the court) were provided with quarters—the *okyeremade.* Recognizing the need for innovation and acquisition of new forms, the policy also allowed for the incorporation of artists from neighboring territories who sought citizenship voluntarily, or those captured in battle.

Since the music of Asante courts represented models of excellence which reflected political achievement, prestige, or rank, Asante cultural policy did not allow such music to be copied without permission or reproduced by musicians in the public domain. Knowledge of court music and its traditions tended, therefore, to be esoteric and generally inaccessible to the public. For the same reason, the cultural policy of Asante courts did not encourage professionalism among court musicians even though they were specialists. They could not perform as itinerant musicians playing court music for the entertainment of audiences in the community in return for gifts of money. Court music could, therefore, be enjoyed by the community only on state occasions or during events at which a ruler was represented by his musicians.

In this respect Asante practice differed from that of some of her neighbors, such as the Dagomba among whom *lunsi* (hourglass drummers) and *gondze* (fiddlers) attached to particular ranked chiefs functioned not only as specialists but also as professional groups in the community. In addition to performing for their royal patrons, they could also perform on their own, especially at funerals, weddings, and festivals where they could earn money and gifts (DjeDje, 1982).

The cultural policy of Asante courts also provided guidelines for performances, which were invariably highly structured in respect to the contexts in which they occurred. The aesthetic value of the music was related not only to sounds and structures, but also to contexts of situation, modes of expression, and presentation. This is because the Akan concept of beauty, expressed by the word *fe,* is not confined to the visual perception of form in objects, but also to forms in time and space, including movement, behavior, and conduct (Nketia, 1984: 10–12). Hence, the aesthetic principles of court music tended to be normative and referential since the selection, organization, and use of sound materials had to be related not only to artistic considerations, but also to a number of social, political, and cultural factors.

Because Asante rulers were involved in the arts and with their realization and presentation on public occasions when rulers were expected to share the bounty of their courts, a strong treasury was as crucial for the arts as for other aspects of court life. When the treasury was strong, Akwasidae could be celebrated every 42 days with the grandeur that has been described by observers. The king could be the symbol of munificence extolled in praise poetry. When the *nkukuadwo* drums sounded at dinner time, anyone in the precinct of the palace knew that there would be something for all. An *atumpan* drummer could afford to spend most of his days at the palace and not divide his time as he now does between his cocoa farm and his palace duties, for as we are told in *ayan,* the language of *atumpan:*

> Ever since the Creator created the world,
> Ever since the manifold Creator created the world,
> A drummer is treated gently and kindly:
> A person becomes a drummer so that he might get something to eat.
> *Odomankoma boo adee,*

Oborebore boo adee,
Okyerema, yeye no brebre,
Okyerema, yeye gye adee di.

Other musicians expected to be recompensed similarly, for as the saying goes, one cannot blow the trumpet on an empty stomach. (*Yede ayaasee na ehyen aben.*) A strong treasury meant that money could be available for commissioning new art objects or items of social and political interest; it meant funds for new sets of musical instruments or for repairing or improving old regalia. No one had illusions about what *afefesem* (matters of beauty) implied in budgetary terms, for as the saying goes, one must not forget that Kwakye's thing of beauty was made of gold. (*Kwakye ade ye fe, yede sika na eyo.*)

THE CHALLENGE OF SOCIAL CHANGE

In this paper I have presented Asante court music as a legacy of the precolonial past and as an example of the processes of cultural development with which Asante rulers concerned themselves, processes which resulted in the development of a set of operational principles for what is now described as cultural policy. Although a great deal of this music has survived and can be heard on ceremonial occasions, it is only because the structures that maintained it in the past have also survived. Much of the content refers to a sociopolitical and cultural reality of the past when, indeed, the ruler was captain of the host and *asafo* war companies were not just social associations or occasional political pressure groups, or a mere part of *ahengoro,* but part and parcel of a way of life which depended on militarism and territorial expansion for the maintenance and enrichment of government and state.

The sources that inspired the creativity and heroic poetic images of the past seem to have dried up, for today there is a lack of innovation in court music. Not only are no new ensembles being created, but no new additions to the repertoire seem to be forthcoming, unlike the precolonial past when significant events stimulated creativity. The defeat of Adinkra gave rise to a *kete* piece, *yede brebre bekum Adinkra,* "Slowly but surely we shall kill Adinkra." The siege of the British forts in Kumase during the Yaa Asantewa war gave rise to *Buroni bewu abansoro do,* "The whiteman trapped in the building will die right there." With the end of Asante militarism and the incorporation of Asanteman into a wider political framework, it seems that the heroism that inspired Asante court poets has not found positive outlets in nation building, and the new political structures do not seem to have become sufficiently integrated into the traditional Asante system to make an impact on creative musicians and provide new sources of imagery. The only contemporary event that seems to have stirred up the musical thinking of the past was the national liberation movement, during which *fontomfrom* texts (such as *banin ko, banin dwane,* "a man fights, a man runs away") assumed a new importance. It is not only the stagnation in creativity that is noticeable but also the changes in certain details of tradition and the loss of items in the musical repertoire. The music of *akantam,* for example, has more than 80 cycles of proverbs, yet most drummers I have heard limit themselves to three or four which they repeat over and over again.

When I discussed this problem with the late Asantehene in 1953 (after reporting what my researches had revealed as far as the traditions in the outlying Asante states were concerned) he said that as far as his court was concerned, everything was "intact." There was no need to panic—or even to start to record and document what seemed to have been going on quite vigorously since the restoration of the Asante Union. As some of the traditional artists began to disappear, however, the assertion that "everything was intact" could not be made with the same assurance. In a conversation almost 12 years later, he told me that for some time he had been wondering why his *fontomfrom* did not sound quite right to him. Watching a televised performance of the drummers of the Institute of African Studies in Legon, it dawned on him that what was missing was the texture provided by the small drums. He noticed that a couple of the small supporting drums were, indeed, missing. He took immediate steps to correct this, for as he told

me, he did not want it said when he was gone that it was during his reign that certain musical traditions disappeared. It was this desire that prompted him to revive the grand tradition of *kete* and present it in a concert at the Cultural Center in Kumase, a step which broke with traditional practice but which suggested a contemporary role that court music could play in nation building.

It seems that a new cultural policy must be evolved by the present rulers of Asante if court musical traditions are to maintain not only their authenticity, but also the creativity that made them a vital part of Asante social, political, and cultural life—a cultural policy that would give them both historical and contemporary relevance as a dynamic aspect of court life in Asante and as a source of models of excellence for the development of music and musical life in contemporary Ghana.

IMPERIAL STRATEGIES: TRADE, WARFARE, AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE HINTERLAND

CHAPTER 18. PRECOLONIAL GOLD MINING IN WASSA: INNOVATION, SPECIALIZATION, LINKAGES TO THE ECONOMY AND TO THE STATE

Raymond E. Dumett

ABSTRACT

The study of precolonial gold mining has continued to stimulate debate among historians and social scientists concerned with technological innovation, labor organization, overland trade, currency systems, and the material foundations of the state in the Akan region. The present paper focuses in depth on gold extraction in Wassa in southwestern Ghana, which in the 19th century embraced two kingdoms tributary to Asante. New data concerning the technology and economics of gold mining in Wassa suggest similar patterns of mineral production in Asante and other states that were part of the greater Asante empire. The essay examines such questions as the interconnections between mining and traditional agriculture, the role of immigrant strangers who were mining specialists, and the political impact of gold mining—not only on state consolidation but also on state fragmentation. Against the view of many earlier chroniclers who argued that peasant gold mining was an arduous, inefficient, and essentially uneconomic activity, this paper argues that digging for gold made great economic sense as a seasonal activity within a narrow range of alternative choices.

INTRODUCTION

The history of precolonial mining and the gold trade continues to arouse interest and controversy among scholars specializing in the history of the greater Akan region and its trading links with the western Sudan (Addo-Fening, 1976: 33–39; Garrard, 1980, 1982: 443–461; McIntosh, 1981: 145–158; Wilks, 1982a: 333–349, 463–472). In precolonial times gold mining was one of the mainstays of the economies of Wassa, Asante, Denkyira, Akyem, and many other Akan states. Although the story of the external gold trades of the Gold Coast and middle Volta region has received prime attention, more work needs to be done on the internal mechanics of traditional gold mining: technology, labor, linkages between traditional mining and agriculture, and the economics of gold production. In a previously published essay (Dumett, 1979: 37–68) I examined traditional gold mining and methods of surplus wealth appropriation with reference to Terray's hypothesis of a fundamental slave-based mode of production organized under state-controlled mining enterprise. In the present paper I devote more attention to technical innovation, division of labor, and the profitability of mining enterprise with only

passing reference to the issue of state control and surplus appropriation. Although the paper focuses primarily on precolonial gold mining in Wassa, the conclusions also have a bearing on Asante and other Akan gold mining regions.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Of the four or five major gold-mining kingdoms of the Akan region—Asante, Denkyira, Akyem, and Gyaman—the political history of Wassa is probably the most complex and elusive. A region known as Wassa or Warsha—"a land rich in gold"—had been well known since Portuguese times, and its location had been specified in the famous Dutch map of the 1620s.[1] But from the 1500s through the 1700s few Europeans visited the country, and we have only meager hearsay information on the places where gold mining was carried on and on the structure (if any) of its political system. Contrary to earlier assumptions by some writers[2] we now know that the two modern states of Wassa Amenfi and Wassa Fiase (see Map 18-1) did not exist during the first three centuries of the gold trade, but were, in fact, the results of late 18th and early 19th-century developments.

The original heartland of Wassa lay north of the River Bonsa, south of the Ofin, east of the Ankobra, and west of the Bosum-Pra; it was situated farther inland and covered a smaller expanse of territory than the two modern Wassa states. Wassa was bounded on the southwest by the state of Gwira, which also contained rich goldfields, and on the south by Ahanta (Anta on early maps) which was described as a "Commonwealth" of small states, or chieftaincies (Bosman, 1705: 164). In the early 18th century, Ahanta still claimed nominal authority over most of the coastal trading towns where the Europeans had built gold and slave-trading castles—Axim, Dixcove, Butri, Sekondi, Taccorary (later Takoradi), and Shama: but most of these towns had established themselves as independent city-states, in some cases under educated African rulers who worked hand-in-glove with the European factors at the Forts (Daaku, 1970a: 132). Some portions of the gold exported from these ports came from territories controlled by Ahanta or its breakaway state, Axim, but the major portion came from Wassa.

Old Wassa never attained the status of a structured kingdom at the level of Akwamu or Denkyira, let alone Asante. It did not develop a large disciplined army, a centralized bureaucracy, or a network of administrators who could settle disputes or collect taxes in tributary areas. Indeed, we read of independent *abirempom* controlling the politics of Wassa in the early 1700s, two centuries after the Portuguese described it as an important mining region. While Wassa possessed rich auriferous land, its kaleidoscopic political history suggests that the desire of kings and chiefs to control gold mining was hardly a sufficient condition for the achievement of central state consolidation. Indeed the force of history pressed in the opposite direction.

Perhaps the most direct reason for the checkered early history of Wassa and its arrested political development was the overshadowing presence of Asante. The mid and late 18th-century history of the southwest reads as a struggle between successive Asantehenes—Opoku Ware (1720–50), Osei Kwado (1764–77), and Osei Kwame (1777–98)—and their antagonist, the strongest of the Wassa kings, Ntsiful I. At the same time a number of previously independent Wassa chiefdoms began to coalesce. There can be little doubt that Ntsiful was a wily leader, but we need more evidence on the framework of the Wassa polity before we can accept the recent hypothesis that he effected a "revolution in government"[3] or that the new Wassa kingdom was created with direct Asante support. Ntsiful was routed in battle after battle by the more powerful Asante armies and was forced to seek refuge at the European coastal forts. His most bizzare act was to move the site of his capital city and part of his population from the Wassa heartland all the way east of the River Pra in 1731 to Abrade, just inland from Elmina, in what is today Lower Denkyira. Fynn explains this move mainly in terms of Ntsiful's desire to gain profit from the flow of trade between the Fanti states and the interior and to prevent guns from reaching Asante (Tenkorang, 1968: 7; Fynn, 1971: 40–44, 66). Yarak in a more complex hypothesis has interpreted it as a joint and mutually beneficial move in which Ntsiful re-

Map 18-1. Southwestern Gold Coast/Ghana, including the political and mining centers of Wassa Fiase and Wassa Amenfi.

ceived Asante support for his kingship, while at the same time serving as a surrogate for the Asantehene in keeping the trade routes open between the coast and Kumase.[4]

The ultimate split of the two separate kingdoms of Wassa Amenfi and Wassa Fiase was traceable to overextension of the kingdom's territorial base and resentment by the chiefs

and caboceers over the tendency of the kings at Abrade to align themselves too closely with Asante. So long as Wassa maintained its military alliances with Twifo, Fante, and other "middle" states it was able to resist Asante invasion (as it did in 1765 and 1776). But in 1785 this alliance system collapsed, and a successful Asante assault on the isolated Wassas led to full-scale conquest and occupation. Wassa was at last forced to pay tribute to the greater Asante empire (Wilks, 1975: 23–24, 29, 154), and it is probable that more of the gold revenues of Wassa were siphoned off as tribute to Kumase than collected previously by the kings of Wassa. On top of this, the ineffectual policies of the Wassa King Enemil II alienated his own subchiefs and hastened the process of political decay and instability during the next 25-year period. Even though King Ntsiful III continued to proclaim himself as the legitimate sovereign over all Wassa, early 19th-century English sources speak of at least three other centers of Wassa political power which grew up around leading mining centers. These were Asemankro (near the heart of the Tarkwa and Aboso gold district); Doboasi near the lower part of the River Pra on the southern gold route to Shama; and Enerebehi, northwest of the present Heman-Prestea gold-mining complex and not far from the River Pra (Bowdich, 1819: 217).

The process of fragmentation was aggravated by a recrudescence of the Anglo-Dutch rivalry on the coast in the 19th century (Metcalfe, 1962: 80, 96–97, 108, 168–169). Although gold-mining revenues alone were an insufficient base for state centralization in Wassa, I would argue that the thrust for control of local gold revenues was, by contrast, a potent factor in the 19th-century fragmentation and polarization of Wassa into separate kingdoms. By the 1850s the power of the former "king" at Abrade had shrunk to a cipher, and it became the practice to speak of the two states of Wassa Fiase (eastern or lower Wassa) with its capital at Amentin (not far from Asemankro) and Wassa Amenfi (western or Upper Wassa) with its capital at Enerebehi (Crowther, 1926: 169). (See map.) There was a tendency for the rulers of Wassa to move their places of residence (and in some cases even their permanent capitals) to newly discovered rich mining areas. Thus we read that the capital of Wassa Fiase was at one time at Banso and later at Tarkwa, and that the capital of Wassa Amenfi was subsequently moved to the town of Akropong.

As with most of the Akan states, the power of governments over mining in Wassa varied greatly with the capacities of individual rulers. By the mid-19th century (the period for which we have the most detailed eye-witness information), we find that a fairly sophisticated method of surplus expropriation along the lines developed earlier in Denkyira and Asante had taken shape (Dumett, 1979: 37–68). While in theory the two major Wassa states had pyramidical structures of subordination and dependence of lesser chiefs, in practice substools, like that of Apinto, which controlled the mines of Tarkwa, asserted their independence from the paramount stool at Fiase as more mining wealth accumulated. When the first British prospectors arrived in Wassa in the late 1870s they found that the richest mineral-bearing properties lay under the control of subchiefs, such as Chief Kofi Kyei of Heman, Enemil Kuma of Aboso, and Kwabina Ango of Apinto, who respectively controlled the most valuable mines at Essaman-Prestea, Aboso, and Tarkwa. Under the prevailing Akan land law (see below) miners in each of these districts were expected to pay regular tribute to Enemil Kuow, the king of Wassa Fiase. With the onset of the first significant European gold rush to the hinterland in the late 1870s, however, the opportunities for cash down payments on leases of mineral properties to French and English concession-hunters strengthened the political as well as the economic independence of local chiefs from the paramount rulers of Wassa.

POPULATION, LAND USE, AND THE ECONOMY OF WASSA

From the earliest centuries of European contact through the 19th century, Wassa was described as a sparsely populated, thickly forested region, a state whose soil was not particularly fertile and where agriculture did not flourish. One of our first direct references to Wassa is also one of the most revealing. Olefert Dapper, the Dutch chronicler, reported in the 1660s that "the inhabitants spend all

their time mining and sow no grain, they are supplied [with food] by their neighbors . . ." (Dapper, 1670: 146; Van Dantzig and Daaku, 1966: 14). There were few towns or large villages. Even in the richer mining areas most of the people lived in small hamlets of three or four cottages. Later European sources conceded that the Wassa people cultivated yams, a little rice, and other basic crops, but they also observed that they were not very good farmers: one observer noted that few Wassa heads of household cultivated land intensively because they disliked the work of felling and clearing the large mahogany and bombax trees.[5] Addo-Fening (1976) makes a similar point about the gold mining people of Akyem-Abuakwa in the early 20th century. Part of this may be explained by the persistence of a hunting mode in conjunction with agricultural production. On the other hand, Wassas also participated in long distance trade. Over the centuries they sold their gold dust on the coast for fish, salt, and for European firearms and other trade goods. They had acted as middlemen between the coast and Asante. By the late 19th century some Wassa people were reported as manufacturing small amounts of palm oil and raising livestock such as chickens and goats for sale in the coastal towns. But Wassa was never a significant palm product exporting region. As late as 1912 a colonial survey stated that the best farmers in Wassa were immigrants; it estimated that no more than about 5 percent of the total land was under cultivation.[6]

MIGRANT GROUPS WHO MINED IN WASSA

It is unfortunate that early European reports on Wassa and Asante tell us so little about ethnic subgroups involved in traditional gold mining. Not all the Wassa miners were indigenous to the area. There was a sizable group of diggers who migrated to Wassa and also to Asante from such states as Ahanta, Aowin, Gwira, and from the Fante region. One of the most interesting features of Akan gold mining history concerns the prominent role of the Nzeman people (or "Apollonians" as they were still called in most 19th-century accounts). Closely related by language and ethnic affinity to the Agni people of the eastern Ivory Coast, they occupied the region between the Ankobra River and the Tano Lagoon. An expansionist people, the Nzemans originally occupied a small patch of fertile farming territory centered around their capital city of Atuabo.[7] For reasons unknown—perhaps the pressure of expanding population—they fanned out from their original homeland and became peripatetic traders and gold miners, settling in small communities as far west as the Comoé and Mezzan river basins in the Ivory Coast hinterland, east into Wassa and Asante, and as far north as Gyaman (Binger, 1892: 282). Under kings such as Kwaku Aka and Kofi Blay, the Nzemans also broadened the base of their direct political control in the mid-19th century so that it included virtually all the land west of Axim and the Ankobra River to the Tano River.[8] More important, the Nzemans expanded their "gold mining frontier" to the interior by opening up new mines in virgin or sparsely populated areas long before the first European gold rush of the late 1870s and early 1880s. Under the supervision of one of their own subchiefs, they would move into an area, obtain permission from the local stool authority to remain for a period of time, and start to dig.[9]

The Nzeman people were known for their physical vigor and for bringing improvements (through tools and working methods) to the miners' art. One of their most innovative techniques was that of fire-setting in difficult-to-penetrate deep reef gold mines. Setting fire to bundles of straw or faggots deep underground, they would let them burn for two or three days and then douse the red-hot rock with buckets of cold water, causing the brittle quartz to crack.[10] In most cases, Nzeman families appear to have migrated to Wassa in small groups only for the duration of the mining season; but, in some instances, they settled permanently and took up farming as well. Some accounts also credit the Nzemans with being the first to mine for gold at certain sites in Asante, such as Obuasi.[11] Later they were instrumental in developing the timber trade of the Ankobra, Huni, and Tano rivers. The Nzemans were able entrepreneurs who transmitted knowledge of new trade goods and useful methods in mining and ag-

riculture to some of the more remote and less populous areas of the western interior.

MINING TECHNIQUES AND SPECIALIZATION

Traditional gold mining can be analyzed according to three main categories. The most common type was washing or "panning" for alluvial gold along the banks of major rivers—the Pra, the Ankobra, the Ofin, the Birim—and along ocean shores, particularly those near river estuaries. Second, and probably the most important form in terms of numbers of workers involved and return of gold, was shallow pit surface mining on sides of hills or in the sedimented valleys of ancient river beds. The third type was deep shaft mining for reef gold. Gold mining was largely a seasonal activity. Some placer mining and shallow pit mining took place year-round; but panning for river gold tended to be best in the early rainy season. Deep shaft mining was mainly a dry season activity—occupying the time of men after harvesting in December and reaching a peak just before planting in April when the water table was low. There were clear-cut divisions of labor in mining, but, I would argue, mainly along lines of sex, rather than of "slave versus free" as the Terray (1974: 315–343) hypothesis tends to suggest.

PLACER MINING: "Panning" for alluvial gold in stream beds (*apoa*) and along coastal shorelines was primarily the work of women and children organized on a family basis. John Barbot (1732) wrote that the streambeds at the base of hills or beneath waterfalls were especially rich sources of alluvial gold. He noted that the young men might plunge into even the most rapid streams and scoop up all they could from the bottom in shallow brass or calabash bowls. The most common and effective method, however, seems to have been for the women and boys to scoop holes in the alluvial earth or gravel on the river banks or in eddying pools on the shallow sides, rather than descend into the center of the rushing torrent itself. In Wassa, in Denkyira, and in Asante any woman could go to the local river at any time and pan for gold. It was not a pursuit fit only for slaves (although some household slaves might participate): any member of the town or surrounding community could engage in it. In some districts gold washing was the daily occupation of women during the rainy season. Among the names which they gave to such streams were Omampah (one of the most common terms in Asante)—"the place where gold nuggets are"; Mudaso—"the forge in the stream"; Yiriama—"choke-full" (that is of gold); and Obuasi—"that which is under the rock" (Daw, 1902: 75; also Daaku, 1970b: 215). On the coast the results were said to be best shortly after the start of the rainy season, or after a violent thunderstorm, when the swollen rivers and streams deposited gold-laden sand on the shores near river estuaries (Bosman, 1705: 80–86; Burton and Cameron, 1883: 115–116).

Separation of the gold dust from the sand and gravel was an extremely time-consuming process. It required repeated washings of a given amount of river-bed sand for even the smallest amount of pure gold to be isolated. Experienced women washed the mixture by a circular motion in a series of stages requiring successively smaller sized bowls or trays known as *akorow, posie, aposna,* and *tokrowa* (Garrard, 1980: 359) until at last all the sand and gravel was washed away, leaving only the fine gold grains at the bottom of the pan (Robertson, 1819: 126). In some instances the final bowl was painted with black vegetable dye to better expose the gold. Henry Meredith observed (1812: 120) that the seashore gold panners of the Cape Coast area exercised "much dexterity and ingenuity" and that this only could be "acquired by much practice." Later, seasoned sourdoughs from Australia and South Africa said that the skill of a West African woman with a brass bowl far exceeded anything they had seen at Ballarat or on the Rand.

TOOLS AND INNOVATION: Over the course of time, indigenous goldminers demonstrated ingenuity in devising a variety of new mining tools and extractive techniques. According to Skertchly (1879: 378) the most commonly used implement in shallow pit mining was a digging hoe or adze (similar to the traditional Akan cultivating tool the *aso*), the metal head being about two inches broad and six inches long. But G. E. Ferguson, the Fanti geologist and surveyor, when passing through the Upper Birim Valley of Akyem in 1890, noted that local diggers had devel-

oped a more specialized digging instrument—a kind of narrow bladed spade with a long handle—known in Twi as the *soso toa.*[12] Pressing the ends of this digging tool against the walls of the shaft, the miner also used it for support in descent and ascent. Dredgers for river gold sometimes used the *soso tupre,* a kind of shovel (Arhin, 1970b: 104–106). Work in the mines was sometimes carried on at night; then, and even in daytime excavation, miners carried palm oil-burning lamps in clay receptacles to light up the underground darkness. While they labored, miners placed the loosened earth and rock in a basket or calabash bowl which was raised to the surface by coworkers using a raffia rope. As a result of long experimentation, some fairly sophisticated mining techniques had evolved in some states closer to the coast, such as Wassa, to the point where miners used iron picks and shovels to open the ground, applied mallets and chisels to hard rock, and substituted ladders for hand footholds in descent and ascent. There is also evidence that by the late 19th century, workers in some districts were using windlasses to haul up roped ore buckets and to lower miners into the shafts on slings, and there are cases where small amounts of gunpowder were used to attack reef gold.[13]

SHALLOW-PIT MINING: Shallow-pit subsurface digs, known as *mmoaboa,* were the most common form of indigenous gold mining and probably the principal source of the gold dust and nuggets produced in the Akan states and exported overland to the north and south to Europe over the centuries. Most of the gold deposits worked in the precolonial period were of the softer and closer to the surface oxide ores, the outcrops of major reefs, rather than the deeper and harder quartz and sulfide ores. As John Beecham (1841: 157) noted, the gold wealth of Asante "appeared more like an impregnation of the soil than a mine." The surface was opened either in small holes dug by individuals, or in large excavations, such as trenches (sometimes 100 to 500 ft long) or broad pits (sometimes 8 ft in diameter), dug by families, or even entire villages, working together. Despite what is commonly said about men being mainly involved in the digging process, there appears to have been no absolute sexual division of labor at this stage: some accounts say that men, women, and children dug side by side. The pits usually were no more than 3 to 10 ft deep. Miners found little difficulty in getting at the sedimentary deposits of fine gold and occasional nuggets which underlay the upper strata of topsoil, laterite, blue clay, and gravel.

The importance of this intermediate type of mining—where work could be carried on by two or three family members—was one of the key points to which I referred in criticism of Terray's contention that a major part of Akan traditional mining was in quartz reefs—so hard that only large numbers of slaves could do the work (see Terray, 1974: 328; critique by Dumett, 1979; Terray, 1983). Ideal excavation sites were the lands bordering existing rivers and on the deposits of dried-out gulches or antediluvian river beds. European prospectors at Wassa and Akyem in the eastern region found the land on either side of well-trod footpaths literally pockmarked with small holes averaging about 3 ft in diameter, into which the unwary might easily fall during the hours of darkness.[14] Accounts recorded by Bowdich in the early 19th century and later by Freeman make it fairly clear that placer mining in rivers and digging in small surface holes were also the most common types of mining in Asante, and in Gyaman, the area of Terray's special research (Bowdich, 1819: 169; Freeman, 1898: 145).

DEEP-LEVEL REEF GOLD MINING: There was some debate among 19th-century European observers as to the technical expertise of African precolonial reef gold miners. In the jaundiced eyes of many Victorian travelers and colonial administrators, African gold mining could be described only as "primitive" and "inefficient." Africans were thought to be incapable of sinking deep shafts, using timbering, cutting adits and tunnels, or of extracting deep-level reef gold. Although it is quite true that most pits were dug in softer subsurface sedimentary deposits, it would, at the same time, be wrong to suppose that no deep-level mining was undertaken or that miners using traditional methods were incapable of cutting into the hardest conglomerate or quartz reefs. Nor is it correct to assume that African workers were totally unfamiliar with tunneling.[15] Deep shafts came

in a variety of shapes and sizes, ranging from the round chimney type, large enough for one man, to a rectangular type, to angled types with steps cut in, and long snakelike tubes which bent to follow the line of the reef. In Wassa and Asante the most typical intermediate-size mine was the bell-shaped or bottle-shaped excavation (known as *nkron* in Twi), narrow at the top but widening at the lower levels into a dome-shaped mining chamber (Ahrin, 1970b: 101–109). Certainly this type of mining had its limitations. It was difficult for miners to move laterally beneath the surface and tunneling was not that common. "After extracting all the quartz they possibly could from one pit, they would sink others close to it, and extract more minerals from them until the patch was practically worked out."[16]

Yet within this context, innovations continued to take place. While it is true that Akan miners lacked the knowledge of heavy timbering required for very long tunneling, or driving adit levels straight into the sides of hills, they occasionally used short tunnels to connect their *nkron.* By the 1860s and 1870s, and perhaps earlier, miners in Wassa and Asante were using long bamboo poles bound together by rope and reinforced with cross-timbers—known as "lagging"—to shore up their vertical shafts.[17] Some gold fields were honeycombed with a complex network of shafts connected by short tunnels from 4 to 20 ft in length. Between the main shafts, a series of small surface apertures were used for ventilation.[18] In addition, miners at Wassa built palm-leaf sheds over their mine apertures to protect against the rains.

But beyond this, there were also numerous instances of deep-level reef gold mines—known in Twi as *amenapeaa.* The French military engineer, E. Wray, who along with M. J. Bonnat was among the first Europeans to observe traditional mining at Wassa in the 1870s, mapped instances where miners, having skimmed off the surface gold, might penetrate 60, 80, or even 100 ft or more down through the various gold-containing sedimentary layers and attack the main reef. Several instances of 100 ft mine shafts were recorded. Since the intrepid diggers appeared willing to follow almost any lead, underground chambers often assumed bizzare shapes and sizes.[19] Centuries earlier Pieter de Marees (1602: 195) the Dutch chronicler noted that "if they find a vein, they follow it down to the end, so that the gold mine is like a tree with roots towards all sides." In one instance sketched by Wray, miners found a huge sphere-shaped mass of gold-laden quartz which had intruded into the surrounding clays and shales. This is corroborated in a report by Louis Wyatt, one of the first Gold Coast government officials to visit the Wassa mining districts: "The natives sink shafts from 40 to 90 feet, then drive under the hill, supporting the roof with timber. I personally descended the richest and deepest of these, and it was a matter of surprise that with the primitive tools and appliances used, and the toughness and hardness of some portions of the rock to be pierced, that such [large] workings should have been successfully prosecuted."[20] It was extremely hard, but the Wassa miners gradually chipped away until they had carved out a mining chamber 50 to 60 ft wide into the heart of the lode. In the late 1870s, four or five years after colonial anti-slavery ordinances had been promulgated in Wassa and elsewhere in the Gold Coast, we read of more than 3000 African miners working independently at both deep-level and open pit mines at Tarkwa and Aboso.[21] These reports do not substantiate the theory of centrally supervised slave mining cadres as the principal mode of production in mining or the view, put forward in some sources, that the suppression of indigenous slavery and the freeing of slaves by the colonial government after 1874 undermined the labor base on which traditional mining depended (see Dumett and Johnson, 1987). Such numbers are perfectly compatible with the general pattern of small clusters of different families and individuals working side by side, with each entitled to the proceeds from their own work.

OBSTACLES AND LIMITATIONS: When we consider these efforts it is scarcely surprising to learn that miners in Wassa and Asante were frequently blocked by the presence of unusually hard rock. Sometimes they would be unable to penetrate a shelf of feldspar, diorite, or granite that stood between them and an ore chute or lense. In such instances they might try to attack the vein from another more vulnerable angle. By the mid-19th cen-

tury and perhaps earlier, miners in Wassa were armed with picks, hammers, and chisels purchased on the coast or fashioned by local blacksmiths from trade bar iron. How far other miners in Wassa and Asante followed the Nzeman method of fire and cold water dousing and cracking is far from certain. To thrust forward through solid reef ore using the fire-setting method was staggeringly difficult and time consuming. To be effective a fire had to be kept burning a day or more—a new fire for every several feet of rock. Not every group was willing to undertake this work. Even so, the major cause of work stoppage at the deeper levels was less the hardness of the rock than the continual flooding from rains or from groundwater seepage, which might intrude into mining chambers at anywhere from 40 to 100 ft—depending on the water table, the month of the year, and the height of the hill on which miners were working. It was primarily to protect against rainstorms that miners constructed the small lean-to's or sheds at the heads of their shafts. Still, there was a technological threshold which could only be bridged by the introduction of modern mining machinery.

Another problem which African miners encountered at the deepest levels was the presence of carbonic acid gas, and they referred to the pockets where such gas collected as "hot rock." But water presented the insurmountable obstacle. Arriving at Tarkwa and Aboso in 1879, English prospectors encountered numerous instances where African miners "were compelled to abandon the workings" at the most valuable point of the lode because they had been flooded out.[22] One group of discouraged yet perceptive African gold seekers said their only hope was to get their hands on just one machine pump.[23] Still, early expatriate miners, such as Holmes, Louis, and Edwin A. Cade, one of the founders of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation, affirmed that deep-level reef gold mining was carried on successfully by many Africans using traditional methods and that deep-level quartz and banket gold played a far larger part in Akan gold exports than most Europeans suspected.

ORE CRUSHING AND GOLD EXTRACTION: After mining came the equally arduous process of pulverization, washing, and separation. Normally this took place away from the mine shafts in three additional steps. During the day diggers and their female carriers would pile chunks of ore at the head of their mine shafts. After a hard day's underground labor the miners and their families would either transport the rough-hewn chunks back to their homes, or, if they had traveled long distances from their villages to mine, they might crush the ore in the makeshift huts or sheds constructed at the site. In the first step, the men would place the chunks of ore on granite slabs, using their hammers to pound the ore into small bits. Beginning after the evening meal, miners might work far into the night to grind down one cubic foot of stone (Skertchly, 1879: 37–39; Louis, 1885: 1437). Boredom was relieved by singing, small talk, and a demijohn of rum, gin, or palm wine. In the second stage, which was entirely women's work, a handful of the pounded ore would be placed on a block of granite about 2 ft square, held on a wooden frame. A woman would then take an oblong-shaped stone like a baker's roller and rub it forward and backward aross the slab (these were the "mullerstone" and a "bedstone") until the ground quartz became powder which would be collected in a calabash bowl at the base of the slab. It is almost certain that this technique was an adaptation of the traditional method of preparing "kenkey," the bread of the Akan made by crushing maize between two stones. As a final step, the pulverized grains were turned over to the women and children of the family for washing and separation in the same manner as river gold. At the Aboso mines in Wassa, which lay an inconvenient distance from the river, the early French prospector, M. J. Bonnat, observed that the women had constructed washing pits adjacent to the hillside shafts.[24]

RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION AND CONNECTIONS BETWEEN MINING AND STATE SURPLUS

In an earlier paper (1979) I discussed in broad outline labor organization in precolonial gold mining, the question of access to mining areas, and the administration of mining revenues for those Akan states on which we have scattered information—Asante,

Denkyira, and Gyaman. The somewhat more detailed information which we have on Wassa-Fiase enables us to reexamine previous generalizations and to determine whether any modifications are necessary. Normally any individual or group could mine for gold anywhere it chose within the limits of their own lineage or stool land. Strangers, however, would have to obtain the permission of the local chief, pay a token fee, and perform a ritual in order to begin mining.

Mobilization of mining labor in Wassa ordinarily took place on a family basis with one or two men and two or three women comprising the work unit. Usually families would set out for the gold fields in the morning and return in the evening. Or, if information reached them about a new mining area many miles aways, a family might induce their entire village to set up camp in the new district for several weeks or for the greater part of the mining season. A single medium-size mine shaft (10 to 20 ft deep) could be worked by two or three men—in other words, by the head of a household and one or two sons, or other male family members. Wives, daughters, and/or household slaves would handle the subsequent extraction and washing. The excavation of a huge open trench on one of the deeper-level reef-piercing shafts would have been suitable for a village group or lineage of, say, 20 or more members. N. R. Junner, probably the leading modern authority on gold mining geology in Ghana, who based his findings on numerous interviews with participants, says that it was common to have communal diggings. He cites instances, as did Bonnat earlier, where as many as several thousand men, women, and children might work side by side on an open trench one-third of a mile long. It may be that some groups journeyed to such areas under leadership of lineage heads or subchiefs. But Junner does not speak of the use of gangs of slave labor or of centralized control or expropriation of surplus by such chiefs. "It was usual to divide the excavated ore between the workers roughly in proportion to the work done by them" (Junner, 1935: 12). If slaves were used in such operations it would appear that they functioned mainly as part of the family unit. As Kwame Arhin, who has investigated mining in Asante has noted (1970b: 107), "It is remarkable that in spite of their naturalized inheritance system, the Ashante basic unit of labour in mining, trading and farming has always been the conjugal family."

CUSTOMARY LAND LAW: The overarching method by which Akan kings and chiefs appropriated economic surplus for state administration was through tribute/taxes based on customary land law and land tenure relationships. As custodians of the communal interests of their people in stool lands, the paramount rulers had the power to grant or deny access to uncultivated land to strangers interested in mining or farming, plus the right to absolute ownership of all nuggets and the right to a one-third *abusa* share on all gold mined in the district. Although the precise distribution might vary considerably in practice, normally the miner retained one-third of his proceeds, turned over one-third to the local subchief or stool authority, and left the remaining third to the king or paramount ruler. While the revenue collecting systems of southwestern Ghana in no way approached the complexity or effectiveness of Asante, the kings and subchiefs of states such as Wassa and Denkyira also added to their treasuries through the exaction of court fines and fees and other special levies, such as those used to defray the costs of enstoolments, funerals, and religious festivals.

In brief, the fundamental conduits for the transmission of surplus from the land to the state came from (1) the traditional obligation of family heads or farmer occupiers to pay a percentage of the usufruct (a kind of royalty) to local stool authorities, and (2) the authority of the paramount ruler to tax the people based on the territorial, kinship, and leadership principles. In addition, I have found references to the fact that paramount rulers in Wassa and Denkyira may on occasion have used groups of their own retainers (servants or slaves) to mine for gold. But this was certainly not the central source for state surplus appropriation in the western regions. The pervasiveness of the royalty system in Akan culture is shown by the fact that when the first European companies came to Tarkwa and Aboso in the late 1870s and found it difficult to recruit and adapt Africans to capitalistic wage labor, they thought it necessary (though expensive) to continue a "tributary" method of payment (one-third to the work-

ers, two-thirds to the company) as a transitional scheme to attract workers.[25]

STATE SLAVERY AND/OR CORVÉE?: In my earlier paper on gold mining and state surplus in the Akan region, I argued that Joseph Dupuis (not a wholly reliable 19th-century authority), on whom Terray depended for several of his assumptions concerning centralized coteries of slave labor, could easily have confused the supposed use of slaves in mining with what was, in reality, the widespread use of corvée.[26] I see corvée as emanating more from a paramount ruler's quasi-feudal rights over the land and communities of people rather than from the ownership of individuals as in slavery.

Thus, in interviews with the chiefs and elders of many Denkyira towns, K. Y. Daaku found that almost invariably special days were set aside for all the citizens to mine solely on behalf of the paramount ruler (Daaku, 1970b: 54). This was true in many other Akan states as well. Speaking of the Nanwa mines on the southwest bank at the Ankobra River, controlled by the King Kofi Blay of eastern Nzema (Apollonia), F. Hart wrote: "The Nanwa mines had been known to the natives, and have indeed been an important source of the local gold supply for the last 75 years, and were worked by a system of corvée or forced labor. The old workings show that the quartz was taken out in quantities from shallow depths, which demonstrates that it must have been of high value, as the natives rarely if ever worked on ore of less than two ounces to the ton" (Hart, 1904: 91). In Wassa Fiase, this special labor tax took the form of the "Saturday Earth," or what Sarbah (1897: 74, 92) labeled *Tikororo* (also Burton and Cameron, 1883, II: 350). According to Enemil Kuma II, Chief of Aboso in the late 1880s, every Saturday (or one day per week) during the mining season all miners were expected to turn over a portion of the gold ore (rock or soil) from their day's labor directly to the agents of the king or paramount ruler.[27] In extraordinary instances when a new and particularly rich gold field was opened up, the king himself might set up a temporary headquarters at the nearest village in order that he might supervise operations more closely.[28] Terray (1983: 99–112) presents new evidence of this in his most recent work on Gyaman. It may be that similar state procedures need to be investigated in any future study of servile and compulsory labor in Asante (Boyle, 1874: 36). Still, I would argue that there is insufficient evidence to support the notion that mining by royal slaves was a major—let alone a central—source of gold production for Wassa or for a majority of Akan states.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN: A great deal of research also remains to be done concerning the role of women in African traditional gold mining. For centuries female winners of gold aroused the curiosity and respect of foreign travelers to the Akan region. We have noted that women virtually monopolized panning operations at seashore washing sites; and, aided by young boys, they also controlled alluvial mining at riverside locations known as *catas* or "women's washings" along the Akobra, Pra, Tano, and the Ofin basins. But this does not end a description of their contribution. A close study of the available documents indicates that, if anything, we have greatly underestimated both the functional tasks and numbers of women and children involved in gold production. Women served as the main transport carriers for the gold trade, transporting large chunks of unmilled earth ore from the mines to the crushing and separation sites—a point that was not ignored when the first European mechanized companies tried to recruit labor in Wassa and Asante.[29] Women participated in prospecting. Both as a regular duty and indirectly in the course of other tasks, they directed their husbands to promising new outcrops or topographic features which suggested the existence of untapped reefs. And they also cooperated with their families at open-cut surface mining sites. As we have suggested, the presumably strict division of labor between men (digging) and women (washing and pulverization) stressed in some early accounts did not always hold. Thus, we have examples of surface mines where as many as 4000 women, men, and children worked side-by-side to open a ditch 10 ft wide, 20 ft deep, and ¼ of a mile in length.

In terms of numbers and hours of labor, it is clear that more women than men participated in mining operations. This was due in part to the tradition that all panning and separation of gold be left exclusively to women and children. Reporting on Aboso in 1879, Bonnat counted 1306 men engaged in un-

derground work, while double that number of women and children were involved in crushing and washing.[30] When we consider that both the pulverization (one day's work per cubic foot of quartz) and the washing and separation (another day or sometimes two) of reef gold were women's work, we may conclude that female labor accounted for at least two-thirds of all the labor input in Akan precolonial gold mining. Their roles in collecting food and firewood and preparing meals for their husbands and families during the mining season, whether at home or at temporary mining encampments, would also have to be factored into any calculation. Another issue on which we would like more information concerns the degree of women's independence from and/or subordination to male supervision in mining projects. One interpretation is that their freedom was considerable, and that wife or mother could take her children and female servants to pan for river gold whenever and wherever she chose.

The distribution of earnings remains an important unanswered question. Informants from Ghana say that given the patriarchal structure of the Akan household, it is unlikely that women of 100 years ago—particularly rural women—would have retained any of their earnings in a personal savings box in the manner of market women today. Rather the earnings from deep-level gold mining and pulverization by the nuclear family probably would have been kept in one account.

DISFUNCTIONAL FEATURES OF THE LINKAGES BETWEEN MINING AND STATE ADMINISTRATION: It is almost invariabily a mistake to force the facts of economic history into exaggerated functional symmetry; and any notion of a smoothly operating government bureaucracy appropriating surplus through a well-ordered state taxation system conveys an idealized conception of reality. In Wassa Fiase the paramount ruler often lacked the means of enforcement to ensure that his imposts on local mining were effectively collected. Stranger-miners from neighboring states such as Nzema, Gwira, or Ahanta who had migrated to towns like Tarkwa and Aboso probably felt no special obligation to honor the Wassa king's decrees. And it is clear that many of the local Wassa miners developed ways of avoiding the king's revenue collectors or concealing their week's earnings. Diggers usually managed to hide or cut up highly prized nuggets (by definition the personal property of the ruler) before the king's or local chief's agents learned about them.

Techniques of avoidance also reduced the effectiveness of the state's "Saturday Earth" collections. Upon testing the king's "Saturday Earth" bowl, royal agents often found that it contained just that—dirt or sand with a low or nonexistent gold content.[31] It offers an interesting comment on the transition (and breakdown) from precapitalist (or quasifeudal) to capitalist forms of land holding, which took place within many of the Akan states during 1880 to 1914, that Chief Ango of Apinto abandoned the "Saturday Earth" and *abusa* share concepts with respect to mining by announcing that he would henceforth charge miners in his area a straight £100 per year rent (Burton and Cameron, 1883, II: 161).

The dividing lines between taxation, extortion, and outright plunder were sometimes thin. Evidence from some of the smaller and decentralized polities of the Akan region shows that petty chiefs and their functionaries could enter a mining district any time they chose and, in total defiance of the *abusa* share and tribute systems, forcibly confiscate all gold dust and gold jewelry held by miners and their families.[32] The evidence shows that a similar deterioration of traditional standards afflicted Wassa Fiase in the 1870s. It was said that King Enemil Kuow abused the *abusa* share tradition in several ways: first, he raised the royal share of mining profits in certain districts from one-third to one-half; second, he sometimes would send his own corps of state miners into the mining properties of a subchief, intimidate and push out the local residents who were mining, and mine for gold directly without paying any share or rent to the local authority. Such practices aggravated old hostilities between kings and chiefs in Wassa and the tendency toward disunity and instability. This was at least partly responsible for the depopulation of certain mining districts owing to the attempt of the people to avoid the king's agents by flight to the coastal towns or to adjacent interior states. As one eye-witness who traveled through Wassa in the 1870s observed, "the villagers

are subjected to incessant plunder, under the name of taxation, by their kings, who descend with their warriors as often as convenient upon these gold-diggers, and carry off every particle of the precious metal that has not been buried."[33] We do not suggest that such excesses were the constant and uniform pattern. What the record shows is a wide variation over time in the capacity of rulers to expropriate revenues from mining.

PROFITS, OPPORTUNITY COSTS, AND LINKS TO THE GENERAL ECONOMY

A perennial question that crops up in the literature on traditional gold mining in West Africa concerns the return per man/day of labor and per ton of earth extracted. How profitable was gold mining to the individual worker? The weight of opinion from both 19th-century chroniclers and some recent historical studies is that traditional African nonmechanized gold mining was not worth the great effort expended. Timothy F. Garrard has worked out the returns for a single woman panning for river gold on the average of about one-sixth of a cubic yard of sand or soil per day valued at 10d. to 1s.2d. per person (Garrard, 1980: 145–148). Skertchly (1879), one of the first Europeans to record in detail how reef gold was extracted, crushed, and separated by traditional miners also reached a pessimistic conclusion on the returns for hard rock gold mining. Observing that it took two men an entire day to cut out the block of one cubic foot of ore, a second day to pound the ore into powder, and two more days for four women to separate the gold from the sand and powdered rock by traditional separation methods, Skertchly calculated that it would take four days to retrieve a mere 3 dwt. of gold (20 dwt. = one oz.). (Skertchly also contended that some gold was lost in the extraction process: p. 278.) This average of 3 dwt. of gold per one cubic foot of rock would then, according to Skertchly, have had to be divided among eight people. It should be noted, however, that his earlier description of two miners and four female washers did not add up to eight people. This works out to 1s.4d. per person for the four days, only 4d. a day. It is easy to see why G. A. Robertson (1819: 126), an early 19th-century observer, concluded that working for gold was not a profitable form of employment.

While Skertchly's calculations appear to be accurate, it is possible to criticize the universal applicability of some of his premises. For example, it is not clear that it invariably required eight people, or even six people, a full four days of effort to break down one cubic foot of ore. Furthermore, we should bear in mind that Skertchly based his estimates on crushing some of the hardest reef gold ore, rather than on the looser surface-level oxides and sedimentary deposits that were the most commonly excavated types. But the fact that other contemporary chronicles came up with higher returns per man/day of labor in indigenous gold mining,[34] is not the main point at issue. What may be at fault is the Eurocentric perspective of measuring the importance of gold mining in the total economic system according to a set yardstick of an average daily return on man-hours of labor.

The whole question of the worth of mining must be analyzed from an archetypal miner's as well as from an African farmer's perspective. What is or is not "profitable" is very much a relative matter that varies with the culture, the locale, and the individual case. This may or may not have been related to the general standard of living and average wages for unskilled labor paid in the coastal exchange economy of the Gold Coast at this time. Most miners probably did not judge the worth of their work from the standard of single day's average returns, but rather from the prospect of a high or an exceptional day's returns. Furthermore, the pessimistic European view of the low profits from traditional mining overlooked the perpetual hope which miners harbored of finding a nugget (two large nuggets worth £39 and £82 were found near Tarkwa in 1891). George Ferguson reported that he had seen nuggets worth £100.[35] This hope of finding nuggets (small nuggets the size of matchheads were, in fact, quite common) was undoubtedly sufficient in most instances to compensate for the monotonous labor and sometimes disappointing returns associated with ordinary retrieval of tiny grains from quartz and sands. In one sense gold mining, whether by modern corporations or by peas-

ant farmers, has always been governed by a different set of economic principles than ordinary business ventures. It is a high-risk enterprise, more akin to gambling, in which the hope of a lucky strike may justify long hours of tedious effort.

Beyond this, previous commentators on gold mining in the Akan region have neglected to point out the subtle economic connections between mining and the seasonal cycle in West African agriculture. Traditional mining was (and in some locales still is) a useful replacement activity in those areas where minerals can be found. First, it offers a supplementary income for entrepreneurial farmers who may earn a reasonable profit from marketing agricultural produce during the year, but who have almost unlimited free time between the harvesting (end of November) and planting (beginning of April) seasons. As Curtin (1975: 205) has noted for the Bambuhu region of the Upper Senegal River, the upswing in gold mining during the months of January through April coincides with the main period of underemployment in agriculture when the opportunity cost of labor is low. Put another way, during the dry season especially, the productivity loss of removing a worker from agriculture tended to zero. Therefore, anything that a farmer could earn from gold mining during the off-season was almost clear profit. Secondly, there was another possible connection between gold mining and the general economic structure of Wassa. Mining seems to have offered an income supplement for marginal farmers. Polly Hill, for example, has cited a complex concatenation of elements which have led to inequality among and between groups in rural northern Nigeria. Poor (or "unlucky") farmers often have to make ends meet by engaging in other types of work—by working as transport carriers, wood gatherers, petty traders, or by hiring themselves out as casual wage laborers on the farms of others (Hill, 1977: 164–179). I suggest that a similar set of circumstances prevailed in a general way in Wassa. Contemporary sources noted that the best farmers in Wassa were often immigrants.[36] Thus, the common observation that the Wassas were indifferent farmers but rather good gold miners can now be placed in sharper focus. There was a direct causal connection between the two phenomena.

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NOTES

1. See 1629 Dutch map of the Gold Coast, endpiece in Ghana Notes and Queries, no. 9, 1966.

2. Meyerowitz (1974: 192–193) stated that Wassa-Amenfi was established shortly after 1730.

3. See Larry Yarak, "Political consolidation and fragmentation in southern Akan polity; Wassa and the origin of Wassa Amenfi and Fiase, 1700–1840," unpubl. MS, 1976, pp. 24–29. I am grateful to the author for lending me a copy of this paper.

4. Ibid., pp. 24–30.

5. Report by Inspector Dudley, "Further Corres. re. the affairs of the Gold Coast," Accts. & Papers (1883), XLVIII [C. 3687], p. 48.

6. V. L. Cameron, "The goldfields of West Africa," Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, (2 June 1882) p. 778. Testimony of Henry Hay in H. C. Belfield, Report on the legislation governing the alienation of native lands in the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti," Accts. & Papers, (1912–13) [Cd. 6278], p. 72, LIX. See also Addo-Fening (1976).

7. For summaries of the geography and early history of Nzema see Henry Meredith, 1812, pp. 54–57. Also Adjae, 1931, pp. 10–15.

8. Many of the people under the control of the King of Nzema were members of other ethnic groups such as Aowins and Gwiras. See H. Meredith, 1812, pp. 52–69; also Sanderson, 1925, pp. 100–107.

9. One of the few detailed references on these patterns of settlement comes from E. H. Hobart to Inspector of Gold Coast Constabulary, 8 Apr. 1901; C.O. Afr. (W) 649, no. 53, p. 113.

10. Fire-setting as a central part of traditional mining can be found in ancient Roman times and in medieval Germany; it continued to be used in Europe right up to the invention of dynamite in the 1860s. Report by E. T. McCarthy (1882) quoted in Sutherland, 1952, p. 7.

11. Junner (1932: 5), the British government geologist, a reputable authority, says that this was according to the local oral tradition.

12. G. E. Ferguson, Report on mission to Atebubu (Oct.–Dec. 1890), encl. in Gov. W. B. Griffith to Knutsford, 9 Mar. 1891; C.O. 96/215.

13. Report by W. B. Griffith on the gold mines of Wassaw, encl. in Gov. Griffith to Knutsford, 25 June 1889; Acts & Papers (1889) [C. 5620–24], LIV, pp. 173.

14. J. Müller, Report on journey to Akyem, no. 152: Kyebi Dist. correspondence. Basel Mission correspondence. Abstract and translation by Paul Jenkins. Also Burton and Cameron, II, 1883, pp. 111, 294–295; Sutherland, 1952, pp. 8–9.

15. There is a difference of opinion in the literature as to whether traditional African miners were familiar with extensive tunneling or the driving of adits. According to one line of argument tunnels of any length—particularly in the subsurface layers (50 ft or less) where most African mining took place—would have required at least some timbering owing to the hazards of loose earth and falling rock. On the other hand, in many deep-level quartz and banket mining areas the walls and standing columns of rock were strong enough to hold up the roofs of tunnels in the absence of timbering. Indeed many of the early European firms got by without extensive timbering. Some recent evidence suggests that by the late 19th century some of the traditional miners of Wassa, and probably also of Asante, were using timbering in certain instances. It hardly detracts from the importance of this innovation to suggest, as Burton and Cameron did, that it was a "loan from foreigners." Most technological improvements are the result of a diffusion of information between individuals, groups, and nations. Eye-witness evidence that the miners of Wassa were using timbering in the late 1870s comes from a report by Louis Wyatt (Encl. in Crown Agents to C.O., 14 June 1879; C.O. 96/129).

16. Thus, Henry Louis (1885: 1437) disagreed with statements like those of Wyatt, above, and said that "the natives were entirely unacquainted with any kind of timbering."

17. This is substantiated in photos of mine pits taken at Obuasi at the time of the first exploratory visits by E. A. Cade, founder of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation. These photos are now in the possession of the London Corporation, London.

18. Diagrams from City Contractors Office, Kumase, 1960. I thank Ivor Wilks for this and other information.

19. Diagram of native mining pits at Tarkwa by Maj. Genl. E. Wray, Tarkwa and Aboso Mining Co. Ltd., 1879. Reproduced by Mining Survey Headquarters, Accra, 1926.

20. Report on the Tarkwa Mining District (1878) by Louis Wyatt, Encl. in letter from Crown Agents to R. Meade, Colonial Office, 14 June 1879; C.O. 96/129, Sutherland, 1952, p. 6. One of the best insights into the evolution of this method of crushing comes from an excellent old photograph of women using rolling stones to make *kenki,* shown by M. D. MacLeod in the Asante exhibit at the Museum of Mankind, London, 1982.

21. Extract of report by M. J. Bonnat, 12 Jan. 1879; reprinted in W. F. Holmes, 1926, p. 81.

22. A case was reported where a headman, Kofi Accra, had obtained permission from King Enemil Kuma of Aboso to dig shafts for gold as early as 1866; but the shafts had become "hopelessly flooded" and Kofi was glad to sell his rights to the first wave of European prospectors in the early 1880s. (A. Bowden Page to C. C. Turton; Asst. Col. Sec. for Native Affairs, 11 Feb. 1883, Political No. 18; ADM 11/845. GNA, Accra.)

23. Extract of report by C. H. Harvey (18 May 1875); ibid., pp. 84, 87.

24. M. J. Bonnat, sketch of a cross-section of a concession at Aboso, 23 Apr. 1879, for Tarkwa and Aboso Consolidated Mining Co., Ltd. (Reproduced by Gold Coast Survey, Accra, 1926.)

25. In Wassa this practice was utilized at some of the mines of the Wassa (G.C.) Mining Company at Aboso. Extract from a report by M. Rumsey, 9 Aug. 1882, Encl. 1 in Moloney to Kimberley, 4 Sept. 1882, no. 19 of Further Corres. on the Gold Coast. Accts. & Papers (1883) [C. 3687], XLVIII, p. 54. See also R. E. Dumett, Gold, Railways and Empire, forthcoming.

26. One can quote from numerous accounts by European travelers and historians (some of whom reported secondhand without visiting the mining areas in question) on the use of "slaves" in traditional gold mining (Terray, 1983: 95–124). But a big question that remains is whether Europeans always knew what they were talking about when they used the loose English term "slaves." The whole problem of Akan indigenous labor and servitude is a difficult topic, involving a complex range of forms and relationships, which we cannot take up here. (For details, see Dumett and Johnson, 1987.) But the question at hand is whether all those mine workers called "slaves" by expatriates *were* necessarily and invariably slaves within the context of Akan culture or within the modern Marxist model of centrally supervised gangs of state slaves. I have argued elsewhere and have brought forward evidence to suggest that they were not. The other issue that continues to separate Dr. Terray and me is what was the main source of the state's surplus in gold revenue.

27. Letter from Kwadwo Enimil Kuma II of Aboso to Governor W. B. Griffith, 30 Apr. 1888, Encl. in Kuma to A. Woodburn-Heron, D.C. at Axim, 30 Apr. 1888; no. 2432/88, ADM 11/11/34. GNA, Accra.

28. Capt. A. Moloney to Gov. Strahan, 17 Mar. 1875, Encl. in Strahan to Carnarvon, 18 Mar. 1875; "Papers rel. to H.M.'s Possessions in West Africa," Accts. & Papers (1875), C. 1342, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 76–77.

29. Letter from E. A. Cade to Directors of the Ashanti Goldfields Corp., Ltd., dated Cape Coast, 25 Dec. 1897;

Cade Papers, Univ. of Birmingham, England. Also Skertchly, 1879, p. 275.

30. Extract from report by M. J. Bonnat, 12 Jan. 1879, Encl. in W. F. Holmes (1926); above, p. 81.

31. High Court Records, Cape Coast, Record Group SCT 44/17. Quoted in Paul Rosenblum, 1971, p. 90.

32. J. Muller, Report on Journey to Akyem, no. 152, Kyebi District Correspondence, 1881. Basel mission records; abstract and translation by Paul Jenkins.

33. Letter to the editor of the Daily Telegraph by Captain Thompson, 18 Nov. 1873, quoted in Boyle, 1874, p. 36.

34. See, for example, R. F. Romer, Tilforladelig Efterretning om Kysten Guunea (Copenhagen, 1760), part IV, p. 178. M. J. Bonnat, Report of 12 Jan. 1879, printed in Holmes, 1926, pp. 80–82. Also Boyle, 1874, p. 35; Burton and Cameron, II, 1883, p. 112.

35. District Commissioner's report, Eastern Wassa, Encl. in Griffith (278) to Ripon, 12 Oct. 1902; C.O. 96/226, plus references to Ferguson's views in Report on the Gold Coast Blue Book for 1892 (London, 1892).

36. Testimony of Henry Hay, Belfield Report (1912–13) above, p. 72.

CHAPTER 19. ASANTE WARS OF THE 19TH CENTURY AND DIRECT ACCESS TO THE COAST

Edward Reynolds

ABSTRACT

The Asante invasion of the Gold Coast in 1807 coincided with Britain's abolition of the slave trade. This trade, which accounted for about 90 percent of the volume of trade on the Gold Coast, relied upon Asante as a major supplier. As a result of abolition, trade on the Gold Coast had to be restructured and new items and trading avenues encouraged. This process was made difficult by the Asante invasions and conflicts with her southern neighbors in 1807, 1811, 1814–16, 1823–24, 1826, 1863, and 1873–74. Some of these wars were waged to maintain the integrity of the Asante empire, or to preserve the trading rights of Asante merchants on the coast. Others were simply punitive expeditions. This paper analyzes the nature and purpose of these wars within the context of internal Asante policies during the 19th century; their impact on the external trade, interior trade, and markets; and the nature of trading relationships between Asante and her southern neighbors between 1807 and 1874.

INTRODUCTION

Trade routes and unobstructed communication with other states were important to the economic and political development of Asante, and at the height of the Asante empire a number of important trade routes converged on its capital, Kumase. By the middle of the 18th century Asante had clearly become the dominant power on the Gold Coast. However, as an inland state the problem of maintaining unobstructed, safe trading access to the coast continued (for the northern trade see Wilks, 1971: 124–141; Arhin, 1970c: 363–373). It was not until 1807 that Asante conquered the Fantes on the coast and secured a good trading route through the central part of the Gold Coast. Asante sought to maintain access to the coast after the conquest for economic and political reasons, but British policy and its support of the southern states of the Gold Coast against Asante made it difficult for Asante traders to have free access to the coast markets and to eliminate the middlemen in the trade. Despite conflicts, invasions, and threatened invasions, which sometimes led to the closing of the trade routes, the matter of trading access remained important to Asante until it was conquered by the British in 1874.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ORIGINS OF THE PROBLEM

The desire of Asante to gain access to the coast dates back to the early part of the 18th century. As an emerging kingdom, Asante had been able to gain access, from 1701 to about 1740, through the conquered but unincorporated regions of Wassa, Denkyira, Twifo, and Assin. However, by 1745 the Fante formed an alliance with Wassa, Twifo, and other states between the coast and Asante to prevent direct access to the coast for Asante traders (Fynn, 1971: 81). This alliance proved to be effective for the 18th century and Asante responded by trying to use military and diplomatic activity to circumvent the blockade. The difficulty of coastal access for Asante traders precipitated what has been called the crisis of 1765. Margaret Priestly, who has investigated the 18th-century origins of the Asante question, writes

> The immediate cause of the crisis of 1765–72 was a particularly active phase of policy on the part of the Asanti's in which an attempt was made to break through the barrier of states checking their movement to the coast. The reason why they desired to have this free and un-

> interrupted access was in part economic. As a powerful inland people they wanted to establish direct contact with the forts and traders, to supply them with slaves and gold and receive their guns and other merchandise without the middleman activities of those states which controlled the trading routes and exacted tolls and brokerage (Priestly, 1961: 38).

Discussing Asante expansion, Priestly (1961: 36) affirms that this process brought Asante into contact with the Fante, "the conquest of whom was necessary if the empire was to extend to the sea." The Cape Coast Council also wrote in 1778 "every judicious master of a ship or other persons experienced in this trade, must well know that all the presents, messages and entreaties in the world will never prevail on the Fantees, to let the Shantees come down thro' their country." Professor Adu Boahen comments that the Asante drive to the coast began during the first two decades of the 18th century, and notes that "the motive for the Asante drive to the coast was not only economic as most historians seem to think, but also political—that of ensuring the survival of the empire by obtaining a regular supply of ammunition" (Boahen, 1966b: 219). Thus, since Asante needed firearms and gun powder it needed access to the coast in order to obtain them. The desirability of Asante access to the sea has also been raised by Daaku (1970a) and Tenkorang (1968).

In spite of the difficulty of securing permanent access to the coast, Asante often had "corridors of access" to trade on the coast. For example, following Asante's defeat of Akyem in 1742, one of the terms of the trade was that Asante traders should be allowed access to Accra. A second corridor to the coast was the access to Elmina. A third corridor went through the southwest to Appolonia and Assini. The routes that these corridors provided were not the best and Asante was anxious to secure the best route which went through Fante territory to Cape Coast and Anomabo. Even with these corridors to trade on the coast, there were periods when interior states, through whose territory Asantes passed, closed the trading routes. When access to the coast was difficult or unavailable, Asante had to trade in the less profitable interior markets.

The independence of the Fante from Asante rule was inimical to the political interest of Asante. In economic terms, Asante wanted to conquer Fante to gain direct access to the coast and eliminate the Fante middlemen who had often engaged in trade malpractices, like diluting liquor with water and adulterating gold dust. In political terms, Asante wanted the incorporation of the Fante into the Asante empire to give it greater territorial integrity and reduce the problem of Asante refugees seeking asylum among the Fante. As Brodie Cruickshank, an English merchant who spent 18 years on the Gold Coast, has pointed out, the Asantehene "looked with ambitious eyes upon the narrow strip which interposed between him and the sea and longed for some opportunity of adding it to his territories" (Cruickshank, vol. 1, 1853: 61). Asante invasion coincided with the abolition of the slave trade which constituted about 90 percent of the trade on the Gold Coast. The period following the conquest and decline of Asante was a time of disruption caused by wars, rebellions, and decline in trade, but Asante still maintained its interest in holding on to the territory that it had conquered because of its political value.

The Fante did not accept subordination to Asante when they were defeated. Between December 1809 and March 1810, the Fante attacked Elmina and Accra for aiding Asante during the invasion. Following the Fante resistance, rebellions against Asante swept across the southern provinces because the southern states were anxious to gain their independence. The Asante in campaigns in 1811, and between 1814 and 1816, quelled the uprising against their rule and consolidated their hold on the Fante and other provinces. By 1817 Asante had restored order in the southern provinces and heavy fines had been imposed upon those states that had supported the Fante. Furthermore, disloyal local chiefs were replaced by ones known to be favorably disposed toward the Asante government. The conquest and integration of Fante into Asante would have secured direct trade route access to the coast but the Fantes resisted such incorporation.

After the conquest of Fante, it was governed in accordance with Asante's system of imperial administration. As conquered provinces of Asante, the Fante were expected to pay tribute and taxes. Some of the taxes were for named purposes, like war taxes (*apeatow*). However, the unwillingness of the Fante to pay the taxes and to acknowledge the authority of the Asante, and British encouragement of Fante resistance increased conflict with Asante. Furthermore, even though Asante claimed Fante by right of conquest, the British allies of the Fante failed to recognize that claim and hand over the notes for the British castles on the Fante coast. Fante resistance with the encouragement of the British meant that despite the Asante conquest, traders to the coast could still be molested and obstructed by the recalcitrant Fantes. In the long term, British policy toward Asante, the growth of British influence and power, as well as conflict with the southern states disrupted Asante's trading access to the coast.

BRITAIN AND ASANTE

The unwillingness of the Fante to accept Asante sovereignty and the refusal of the British to accept Asante suzerainty over the Fante led the British to dispatch missions to the Asantehene in 1816 and 1819. The treaties resulting from the missions were not ratified and the lack of progress between the English and the Asante in settling the Fante question led to further disputes in 1821. When the ratification of the treaties he had concluded with England were not forthcoming, the Asantehene ordered his ambassador to leave Cape Coast and placed it under a blockade. Coincidentally, in 1821, the year of the Asante blockade, the British Parliament transferred the powers of the African company of merchants who had been responsible for the British forts and possessions on the Gold Coast to the British governor of Sierra Leone, Sir Charles MacCarthy.

MacCarthy arrived on Gold Coast in March 1821. He was not totally unaware of the Asante problem. Before his departure for the African coast, Dupuis had impressed upon him the necessity of securing a just peace with Asante (Dupuis, 1824: 209). However, MacCarthy did not show a benevolent disposition toward the Asante. He neglected the customary courtesies of sending gifts to the Asantehene on his arrival and at the time of the change in government in 1821. He also expressed contempt for the Asante, as "true barbarians" and the Asantehene as a "Barbarian Chief "[1] (Wilks, 1975: 169–175). MacCarthy encouraged Asante's southern neighbors to rebel. Given the governor's attitude, war seemed inevitable.

By 1823 MacCarthy's dispatches to Britain showed that he was convinced that only war would resolve the Asante situation. His decision may have been influenced by the attitude of British merchants on the coast who pointed out the trade monopoly Asante enjoyed with the north. Presumably, the conquest of Asante would open the northern markets to British trading. An excuse for war came in February 1823, when a sergeant of the British Royal Colonial Light Infantry was arrested and executed for having abused the Asantehene.

Following the execution of the sergeant, MacCarthy and his officials on the Gold Coast attempted to subvert Asante's policy of pacification. They entered alliances against Asante with many of the tributary states in the south, organized militias, and supplied them with arms. A number of states paid heed to MacCarthy and rebellion against Asante was widespread; in the Accra area a militia formed by MacCarthy attacked two parties of Asante traders, killing 54 of them and taking 24 prisoners together with a booty valued at about £500 (Claridge, 1915: 340–341). Such attacks meant that Asante traders still could not secure free access to the coast. The options open to Asante following the failure of British missions to Asante and in the face of provocation were either retrenchment in the southern provinces or war with Great Britain. The choice was difficult for Asante because factions in Asante councils were divided between those who wished peace and those who desired war. Osei Bonsu had resisted the latter but in view of attacks and rebellions, Asante troops crossed the Pra River into the southern provinces in July 1823 to put down the rebellions. With the belief

that the British had little to fear from the Asante army, Governor MacCarthy moved his troops northward into Wassa in January 1824. On January 21, 1824, Asante forces clashed with MacCarthy's troops and eight European officers were killed in the encounter.

While Osei Bonsu (1800–23) had favored peace, Osei Yaw (1824–34), his successor, led the Asante nation to war after securing the throne over the head of his rival, Kwaku Dua. According to information that reached Dupuis, it was reported that Osei Yaw:

> Commenced his reign by an *edict* against the British, wherein they were accused . . . of perfidy, infractions of treaties, violations of public faith, treachery, cruelty, etc. To revenge which, and to appease the shade of the departed conqueror, in the region of spirits, the new monarch vowed eternal war against the British until he had obtained satisfaction; declaring (in the form of the great oath of his predecessors) that he would not cease from hostility until he had watered the grave of the departed Sai Quamina (Osei Bonsu) with the blood of white men. (Dupuis, 1824: 215)

Osei Yaw did not meet with success in his wars. The Asante suffered serious reverses in May and July of 1824 near Cape Coast and a heavy defeat near Dodowa in 1826 in the battle of Katamanso. The period following Asante's defeat marked a period of decline and disintegration for Asante. But during this period the problem of trade access remained no less important. Following the battle of Katamanso, however, other issues temporarily overshadowed the problem of access: the political conflict in Asante, and the changing trading relationship with the southern states under Governor Maclean.

Among the important changes that affected the structure of the Asante empire was the changing relationship between the confederate states (*aman*) that formed the union and the war chiefs (*nsafohene*) at Kumase. Theoretically, the war chiefs (*nsafohene*) of Kumase were subordinated to the federated chiefs of state (*amanhene*) but the presence of the former at Kumase, the capital and center of Asante government, enabled them to gain political advantage with the Asantehene. The federated chiefs (*amanhene*), however, were unable to enjoy this advantage because responsibilities at home kept them away; except for periods of crisis and the annual Odwira festival, they were unable to visit Kumase.

The importance of the Asante war chiefs was visible during the first two decades of the 19th century following the conquest of Fante and the southern states that had joined the Fante. The southern colonies of Asante were placed in the hands of three of the leading war chiefs of Kumase. General Opoku Frefre, the Gyasehene, was responsible for the province of Akyem and Akwamu; General Kwakye Fofi, the Akwamuhene, controlled the Denkyira, and General Amakwatia III, the Krontihene, controlled Assin, Wassa, Sehwi, and other areas of the southwest. These and other war chiefs of Kumase were able to share in the slaves and property taken in war. When the development of Asante government reached its peak in the early decades of the 19th century, the war lords were in virtual control of Asante imperial policy (Bowdich, 1819: 335).

The power of the war chiefs and the domination of the council of Kumase in place of the state council (Asantemanhyiamu) during the 19th century led to the erosion of the power of the states. Furthermore, not only did Asante experience conflict over the constitutional prerogatives of the federated states, but conflict in respect to the question of authority over conquered provinces in the north affected the relationship between Kumase and Dwaben—which was probably the wealthiest and most powerful of the confederate states outside Kumase (Aidoo, 1975).

After decades of conflict, civil war broke out in 1832 between Kumase and Dwaben. The origins of the conflict were related to the increasing wealth of Dwaben during the first two decades of the 19th century and to personal enmity between the Asantehene, Osei Yaw Akoto, and the Dwabenhene, Kofi Boaten. Kofi Boaten had retrieved the Golden Stool which had been captured in war in 1826, and this caused difficulties. Instead of showing gratitude, the Asantehene accused Boaten of stealing the treasures kept with the Golden Stool. After the king of Nsuta was killed in the war in 1826, the Asantehene put his own candidate on the throne after arranging for the murder of the Dwabenhene's candidate

(Aidoo, 1975). This conflict ended in war in 1832 in which Dwaben was routed. Following their defeat, the Dwaben people migrated to Akyem Abuakwa. Although the Dwabens returned home in 1841, the ill feeling between them and Asante continued, and Dwaben failed to participate in the wars between Asante and Britain (Metcalfe, 1962: 124–144). Following the conflict with Dwaben, the power of the federated states and their decision-making functions in the state council (Asantemanhyiamu) declined. The matter of the rights of the confederated states did not become important again until the 1870s and 1880s when Asante forced a serious political crisis.

The Danes and the British who had both supported the southern states in their fight with Asante concluded separate but similar treaties with Asante. Under the terms of the British treaty of 1830, the Asantehene gave two hostages, his son and nephew, to the British authorities and deposited 600 ounces of gold at Cape Coast castle with the understanding that these securities would remain in the castle for a period of six years. The peace treaty of 1830 which followed the Katamanso War in 1826 seemed to have secured the free passage that Asante sought, but changes in trading practices did not allow the treaty to work in favor of the Asante. For the better regulation of commerce, the 1830 treaty stipulated that "the paths shall be perfectly open and free to all persons engaged in lawful traffic and any person molesting them in any way whatever, or enforcing them to purchase at any particular market, or influencing them by unfair means whatever, shall be declared guilty of infringing this treaty and be liable to the severest punishment." Another important provision was "that 'panyaring,' denouncing, and swearing, on or by any person or thing whatever, are hereby strictly forbidden, and all persons infringing this rule shall be rigorously punished and no master or chief shall be answerable for the crimes of his servants, unless done by his orders or consent, or when under his contract" (Reindorf, 1895: 252–253). By the treaty, the Asantehene also renounced his suzerainty over Denkyira, Assin, and other coastal states, but did not renounce free access to the coast.

The period following the treaty signed in 1830 ushered in an era of peace on the Gold Coast and witnessed the reversal of Asante's policy of the incorporation of the southern territories into greater Asante. The Asantehene Osei Yaw also accommodated his view to those of the new majority in his councils who wanted peace rather than war and abandoned the possibilities of further military ventures in the south. This period after 1830 was a time of peace and prosperity when Asante traders benefited from commerce and Asante military chiefs showed little interest in military adventures.

Since the conflicts in 1807, 1811, 1814–16, 1823–24, and 1826 had been devastating to commercial activities, the principal task of the British was to secure peace between Asante and the coastal states. The prosperity on the Gold Coast for the years following the treaty of 1830 was to a large measure due to the peace and the administration of Maclean (Cruickshank, vol. 2, 1853: 5). Maclean's government provided security for the Gold Coast through its use of an African police force. As many of the African police force as could be spared from garrison duty at the forts were distributed throughout the country to police the main roads and the principal inland towns. The security provided in Maclean's era advantageously affected both external and internal trade. "No sooner was it fully apparent that protection was afforded to everyone, than a new spirit seemed to pervade the general mass of the people," writes Cruickshank. "It was like the awakening from a dream which had dissipated the senses, and left no tangible impressions upon the minds, and required a process of careful reflection to arrive at a proper comprehension of their position" (Cruickshank, vol. 2, 1853: 5).

The apparent success of those who engaged in carrying trade to the interior changed the whole trading system. Merchants on the coast began to realize that the goods transported inland for sale were reducing the profits at their stores and factories on the coast. They were, therefore, forced to participate in this extended trade and employed agents to whom goods were sent (Cruickshank, vol. 2, 1853: 32–42).

As the burgeoning new trade increased, most of the important towns on the route to Asante became extensive depots where all

kinds of European goods were available for purchase. Many trade agents began to reside in Kumase. When the Rev. T. B. Freeman visited Asante in 1839 he found a considerable Fante population just outside Fomena at Kwisa. Freeman reported: "I was delighted to find in Quissah several Fantees, members of our society who had come hither for trading purposes" (Metcalfe, 1962: 132).

The arrival of coastal traders in Asante was viewed with disapproval by the Asantehene, who in 1834 had expressed the hope that the system of free trade to the interior be stopped. Surely such trading arrangements could have political and economic impact on Asante if it relied on the Fante and other nonsubjects. The Asantehene even protested to the British and the Dutch in 1835 that the colony of Fante traders in Asante was contrary to the terms of the treaty of 1831. European merchants on the Gold Coast agreed in 1835 not to carry commerce into the interior but to welcome Asante traders to the coast.

The period from the 1830s through the early 1860s had been a time of economic growth, a time of relative peace between Asante and its neighbors, and a period that saw the growth of British power on the Gold Coast. In 1863 Asante attempted to reestablish its hegemony over the southern states and maintain its trading access to the coast. These efforts contradicted the efforts of Britain to maintain the independence of the southern states. The growth of British influence on the Gold Coast was affected by the resumption of hostilities between Asante and the British in 1863. The peace that had existed between the southern states and their British allies since the 1830s did not last because Britain did not have a consistent policy in the area. Furthermore, the southern states neglected their treaty obligations to Asante, molested Asante traders, and harbored fugitives. The immediate cause of hostilities was the refusal of the British to hand over two Asante fugitives. Asante invaded and ravaged the southern states in March 1863. The British did not mount an effective defense against Asante. Although the disastrous campaign that the British waged against Asante shook the confidence of the people of the southern states in their British allies, it must have strengthened Asante's resolve to regain hegemony of the southern states and the trade routes.

British indecision about the southern colonies and the recommendations of the Select Committee of Inquiry into the West African settlements calling special attention to the Gold Coast Report of 1865 suggested the possibility of withdrawal from the Gold Coast. This was a reversal of British policy of involvement since the 1830s. The response of the southern states to the British discussion of withdrawal and the assumption of more responsibilities by the southern states for their own defense was partially responsible for the establishment of the Fante Confederacy which sought to unify the Fante. The belligerent policy of the Fante confederation against Asante made it all the more urgent for Asante to regain its hegemony over the southern states. The recovery of these provinces was necessary in order to restore order along the trade routes and to provide safe passage for Asante traders to the coast. It was clear at this time that Asante access to the coast had become a serious problem after the 1863 invasion. In 1865 it was reported that:

> there can be no doubt as to the great sufferings the Ashantees have undergone during the last 2½ years consequent on their being blockaded within their own territory, all communication . . . [with the] sea coast have been shut out from them, depriving them therefore of the means of obtaining those supplies such as arms, ammunition, cotton goods and salt [. . .] being articles of trade, to them indispensable, as the little they may have received from the flanks of the protectorate (East and West) can hardly be considered sufficient to be of any advantage to them.

CONCLUSION

The Asante must have been further alarmed and moved to secure access to Elmina when the Dutch and British began discussions about exchanging forts. An exchange that gave each nation a unified area would facilitate governance and the collection of taxes. The Dutch were willing to exchange forts and agreed to such a transfer in 1867. Before signing a final agreement, the British wanted the Dutch to secure the renunciation of Asante's claim to Elmina (Kimble, 1963: 223); however, getting the Asantehene's agreement proved dif-

ficult. When the news of the probable transfer reached Kumase, the Asantehene reasserted his claim to Elmina, where Asante had enjoyed a free access to the coast.

The plan of the Fante Confederacy to take Elmina from the Dutch and establish Fante control along the western coast of the country posed a serious threat to Asante interest in Elmina. When the Fante attacked Elmina toward the end of 1868, Asante had to be ready to respond. Thus, during the war with Elmina, Asante troops remained near Wasaw and Nzima ready for action.

Asante troops also moved into the Krepi in 1869. The Asante need to side with its allies in the Volta region and to keep the trade routes open were important considerations for Asante. As Professor Agbodeka has written: "General concern about trade routes could further be seen in the Asantehene's action of dispatching Adu Boffo to the Lower Volta in 1869 to help Asante allies restore peace on this important trade route" (Agbodeka, 1971: 45). When Asante invaded the coast in 1873 it was not only trying to reassert the victory it had achieved in 1807 but also to keep the trade routes to the coast open and safe for Asante traders. However, the British invasion and conquest of Asante, the declaration of the southern colonies as a British protectorate in 1874, and Asante's agreement to peace terms imposd by the British, ended Asante desire to see direct access and control of the trade routes to the coast.

NOTES

1. Public Record Office (PRO) 1822, Colonial Office 267/56, MacCarthy and Barnhurst, 24 Apr.

2. 1865, Colonial Office 96/68, Conran to Cardwell, 8 Sept.

CHAPTER 20. ASANTE WAR AIMS IN THE 1869 INVASION OF EWE

Donna J. E. Maier

ABSTRACT

In 1869 the Asante general Adu Bofo crossed the Volta River with an army of 15,000 men and launched a military campaign directed against the Ewe and related peoples living in what is today eastern Ghana and western Togo. Through consideration of a great variety of archival and oral sources, this paper reconstructs military tactics and specific military and political objectives. It also examines the relationship between one general, Adu Bofo, and the Asantehene, showing how the personality and private goals of Bofo affected implementation of Asante imperial policy.

The Asante made no effort to establish an administration in the area, but rather aimed at intimidating the population and taking prisoners to help relieve the labor shortage in central Asante. Evidence is presented suggesting that the 1869 campaign was fought because the Asante believed their prestige and future power would be enhanced by making an example of the rebellious Ewe. The significance of the European presence is also considered, particularly how tensions with the British on the coast affected the outcome of the Asante-Ewe war.

INTRODUCTION

The famous Prussian theoretician of war, Karl von Clausewitz, posited that war itself is a political act: an extension of diplomacy by other means and a continuation of politics by violence. Recourse to war might be made either when all other diplomatic means have failed or as deliberate policy (Clausewitz, 1832). Edward Luttwak (1976), a modern theoretician of war, in analyzing ancient Rome's military policies, suggested that part of Rome's success was its avoidance of war as policy. Rome kept legions in key locations in order to display its power and cow the populace. If the military had to resort to real force, then it was already failing in its role. Both authors would have been critical of any state that displayed what Schumpeter (1951) described as an "objectless disposition" to war.

In the mid-19th century, the Asante state in West Africa reached its apex of power. Its influence extended beyond its borders over areas and groups that usually saw acquiescence in Asante hegemony to be in their own best interests. Within Asante itself there emerged at least two political factions which sought the continued dominance of Asante through the pursuit of generally opposed policies or ideologies. Most 19th-century observers referred to these factions as the peace and war parties. Ivor Wilks (1975: 482, 674–679) has described their ideologies respectively as mercantilist—"regarding the state as essentially organized for the promotion of trade"—and imperialist—"regarding the state as essentially organized for the control of territory and exaction of tribute." The term "war party" used by contemporary observers implied that its adherents believed military force to be the necessary and preferred policy instrument rather than trade and diplomacy. Thus when the war party was in ascendancy, war was favored as a first resort, even before all channels of diplomacy had been exhausted. Its policies may have been motivated as much by domestic interests as by the pursuit of goals in foreign affairs. As one observer noted, it was "to the interest of these war leaders, Adoo Boofoo, Amanquotia, Atchampon, etc. to be constantly leading expeditions" (Maurice, 1874: 18–19).[1]

In 1869 the Asante army invaded Ewe territory east of the Volta River with the intention of delivering a short sharp shock to an

Ewe rebellion which had been simmering for several years. This paper argues that the 1869 war was a political act. It was undertaken before all diplomatic means of resolution were tried. The Asante war party was dominant in Kumase at the time and advocated a display of force. The war leaders were determined (a) to secure the strategic route of their arms supply up the Volta; (b) to shore up their client states Akwamu and Anlo which straddled this route; (c) to punish and suppress the Ewe for their insubordination and subversion of Akwamu; and (d) to obtain by force what had been refused by rebellious clients, tribute in the form of labor (slaves). There was nothing in the Asante military actions to indicate that the Asante government had any intention to conquer the territory and bring it under central administration or development, any more than, say, the United States' intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 was undertaken to annex the country. Ewe territory was meant to remain merely a part of the Asante peripheral sphere of influence.

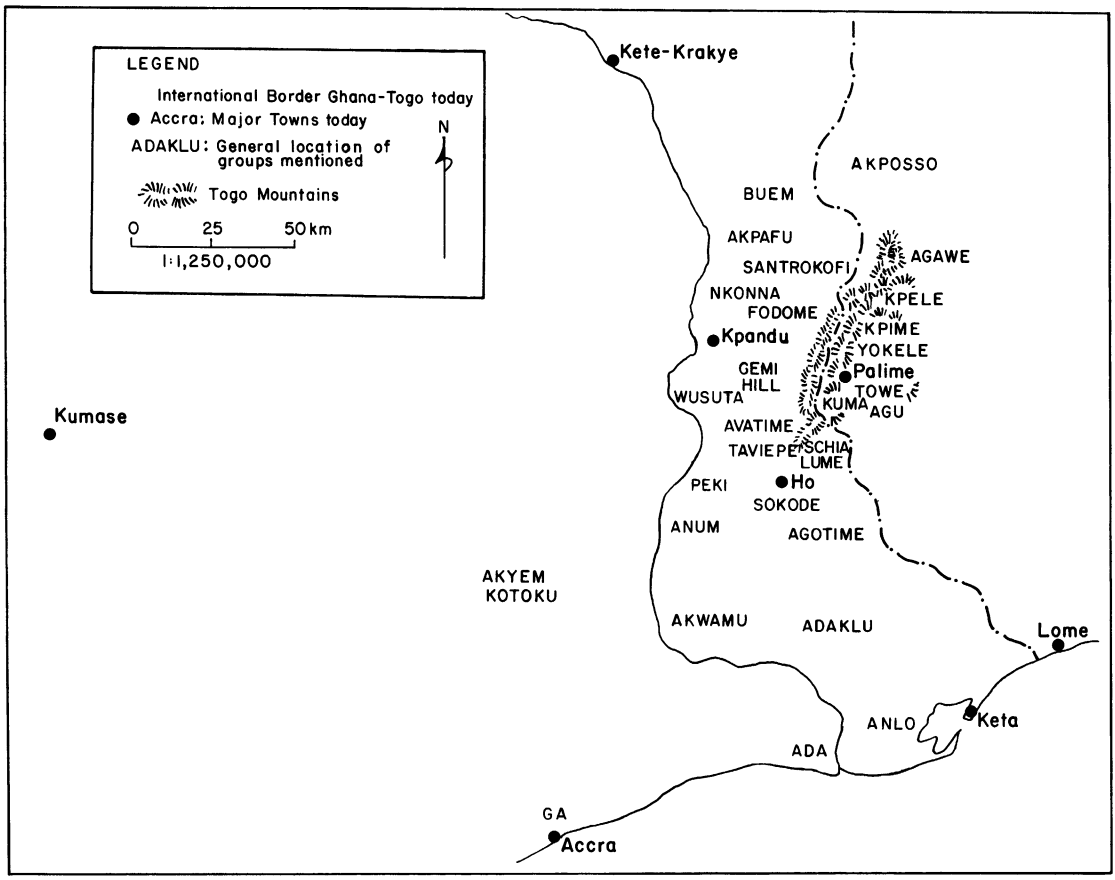
In the following pages evidence is presented suggesting that the violence and revenge with which the 1869 campaign was fought indicate that the Asante believed their prestige and future power would be enhanced by making an example of the rebellious Ewe. More controversially the evidence can be interpreted to indicate that one of the factors which enticed the Asante government to opt for war rather than try to achieve its goals solely through diplomacy was the knowledge that a successful military campaign would produce large numbers of prisoners to alleviate the general labor shortage in Asante. Wilks (1978) has argued fairly convincingly that Asante suffered from a persistent labor shortage. This is supported by the documentation and oral evidence uncovered in the course of research for this paper showing that large numbers of slaves and prisoners were sought out by the military in the 1869 campaign, carefully distributed, and forcibly settled in Asante. Just how much this was a war aim of the Asante state and how much it was a personal goal of the Asante general Adu Bofo, who stood to benefit from the sale of many of these prisoners, is a challenging question. But the campaign was neither a purely punitive expedition nor an exploitative "slave raid." It was intended to augment the power, prestige, and coffers of the central government and the people who were making Asante policy at the time. The conclusion of this paper tenders some judgments regarding the success of the 1869 war as policy.

ORIGINS OF THE WAR

The origins of the 1869 war cannot be separated from Asante, British, and Fante political relations along the Gold Coast. Throughout the 1860s, for reasons well detailed by many other authors and researchers, relations between all three worsened as it became increasingly apparent that there was room for but one arbiter of power on the coast. A variety of reconciliation channels such as extradition requests, negotiations, and diplomatic embassies which had worked for Asante in the past now failed. The British too found that treaties and ambassadors sent to negotiate were increasingly disputed or dismissed.

As the conventions of diplomacy broke down, both the British and the Asante moved to secure their strategic needs. The British first exchanged forts with the Dutch in 1868, and then bought the Dutch forts in 1872, the better to monopolize trade, revenue collection, and communication. The Asante disrupted direct trade with the British and Fante, and consolidated their hold on peripheral coastal regions, to the west and east, in order to outflank British trade. Similarly, the British limited arms trade to Asante and by 1866 the Gold Coast Administrator Conran reported that the only way the Asante could receive supplies from the coast during a war was through Assini (in the west) and via the Volta River (in the east). In both those places, however, the Asante were importing guns from the European firm of Messrs. Swanzy (Reade, 1873: 35).[2] The British administrators meanwhile complained that at this time no trade, especially palm oil, was being allowed down the Volta to Accra because of Asante restrictions, and Accra traders were "unblushingly" claiming they could not pay their London creditors (Claridge, 1915: 548).[3]

East of the Volta two small territories controlled trade to and from the Asante interior:



Map 20-1. Ewe territory, east of the Volta River.

Anlo, on the coast, east of the mouth of the Volta and just opposite the British-allied town of Ada; and Akwamu, a larger state north of the great bend in the Volta and also on the eastern bank (see map 20-1). In the 1860s the British tried to extend their control over peoples east of the Volta including the Anlo. Decades earlier the Danes had had some influence in the region but they had sold their forts to the British in 1850. The British by their own admission had never been able to fill the Danish shoes and in 1860 "all interference with the tribes to the east of the Volta was abandoned."[4] With increasing disruption of trade around the Volta, the British from February to April 1866 armed and led a combined Accra and Ada force against the Anlo. The Anlo armies retreated at first, but the Accra and Ada were unable to consolidate their victory and returned home in disarray. Over the following months, in deliberate reaction to this British aggression, the Asante and the Anlo sought each other out for negotiations. By December 1866 the Anlo had agreed to an alliance of "friendship and protection" with Asante. British efforts to draw the Anlo into a treaty with the Protectorate failed in October 1866, and when such a treaty was signed under duress aboard a gunboat in April 1867 it was immediately repudiated. The trade routes remained closed to the British (Horton, 1870: 75–90, 95; Claridge, 1915: 551–552).[5]

The December 1866 Anlo-Asante treaty had been arranged partly through the intermediary efforts of the Akwamu who were simultaneously cementing their own relations with Asante. The Akwamu had not always been loyal followers of Asante. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries Akwamu had

been a subimperial state of Asante, collecting the slave tribute of the Ewe chiefdoms in the east and sending it on to Kumase (Ellis, 1883: 314–315; Rattray, ca. 1919: 18, 34; Aduamah, 1963a: 3; Kea, 1969: 29–33). But in 1826 Akwamu defected from the central government and fought against Asante at the battle of Katamanso. The Ewe chiefdoms quickly tried to assert their own independence of Akwamu and the latter proved incapable of holding the areas for itself without Asante military and technical assistance. An Ewe rebellion in 1833 sent Akwamu back to Asante to reaffirm allegiance and alliance. The Akwamuhene thence walked a tightrope between assassination by autonomy-seeking Ewe (and Akwamu), whose hopes for independence never died, and destoolment by Kumase for too much independent behavior (Reindorf, 1895: 297–306; Welman, 1925: 10–12).[6] As in the case of the Anlo, by the end of 1866 the Asante had envoys in Akwamu promising them increased military aid both to suppress their recalcitrant Ewe vassals and to reinforce their control of Volta River trade,[7] activities which would of course benefit Kumase as well as Akwamu.

Following the paper success and de facto failure of the British-Anlo Treaty of April 1867, the British sought and obtained in October a "treaty" with the Akwamu which vaguely promised open trade routes. However, by early 1868 the Gold Coast administrators realized they had been deluded, and reported that the situation in the Eastern District had taken "a turn for the worse." The death of Asantehene Kwaku Dua I in April 1867 and the enstoolment of Asantehene Kofi Kakari who swore "my trade shall be war," thus declaring his intention to pursue policies of the war party in Asante, probably accelerated matters.[9]

The Anlo and Akwamu, in fact, never wavered from their alliance with Asante, as evidenced by the alarming dearth of trade on the Volta which the British rightly ascribed to Asante and Akwamu policies.[10] By early 1868 the advance troops of what would become the Asante army that fought the 1869 war arrived in Akwamu. They were led by an Asante commander, Gyaakyi Nantwi, a subordinate of one of the highest ranking generals in Asante at that time, Gyaasewahene Adu Bofo. The decision to send troops and not just war material and advisors to Akwamu can now by seen in the light of Asante trying to secure its trade via the Volta which was coming increasingly under attack by the British and their allies, the Accras and Adas. Yet the Asante troops apparently had orders not to invade the Protectorate of British territory (Claridge, 1915: 577).[11] The first and primary use of the Asante troops east of the Volta was to suppress the northern Ewe groups known in Asante and British sources as the Krepe, especially the Peki, who had rebelled against Akwamu. Documentary references to Adu Bofo's orders state that he was to "destroy Crepee, to seize Domprey [a rebel leader], and to finish the war in forty days." Unless this was accomplished the captains and leaders of the expedition need not return to Kumase.[12] This order was sent out in 1869 but even in 1868 it seems unlikely that the Asante intended actually to conquer new territory and bring it under direct or systematic administration, especially given all the other crises the Asante were having with the British at the time. Certainly last-minute attempts of the Peki to negotiate a settlement were rejected by Asante.[13] The evidence rather suggests, as outlined in the introduction, that the Asante war aims at this stage were as follows:

1. The Asante initially and primarily wanted to ensure trade east of the Volta, particularly of arms, ammunition, and other essential commodities such as salt, through friendly Anlo to Akwamu to Kumase.

2. In order to accomplish this they had to shore up the Akwamu and Anlo by helping these two groups suppress long-simmering rebellions and rivalries of their own. This both made Akwamu and Anlo more eager to enter into alliance with Asante, and strengthened them as watch dogs for Asante.

THE EWE REBELLION AND ITS SUPPRESSION

Ewe rebellions against Akwamu and Asante had been occurring as far back as the 1820s and thus it is inaccurate to portray their dissidence in the 1860s as solely an effort to link up with the British and secure a share of Volta commerce. Indeed, for some time after the

departure of the Danes in 1850 the British had pretty well given up on influencing matters east of the Volta. But increased British activity in the area in the 1860s, British plans for attacks on Akwamu as early as 1863,[14] British led assaults on Anlo in 1866, gunboats on the Volta by 1868, and general British pressure for "open" trade on the Volta, held out new hope to the Ewe for independence from the yoke of Asante imperialism which was generally considered odious by minority ethnic groups on the Asante marches. Certainly the Ho and Agotime peoples, shortly to be drawn deeply into the hostilities, were annoyed about trade restrictions placed upon them by the Asante while the Asante granted privileges to the Anlo (Spieth, 1913: 13). The Peki, closest to the Akwamu and the Volta, with the longest record of rebellion, initiated the 1860s revolt by refusing to send tribute (in the form of slaves) to Akwamu (Rattray, ca. 1919: 34). The residence at Ho and Anum of Basel and Bremen missionaries who were also traders of imported European goods must have made Ewe aspirations for circumventing Asante trade regulations seem more attainable. The presence at Ho of an independent arms dealer, J. Bonnat, who was willing to sell to all sides, must also have fueled Ewe calculations for success (Claridge, 1915: 579–580).[15]

By late 1868, Gyaakyi Nantwi, the principal officer of the general Gyaasewahene Adu Bofo, was in Akwamu with thousands of Asante advance troops whose number would reach their maximum of 30,000 by the following March (Asiedu, 1870: 31; Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875: 203).[16] In February 1869 the Acting Administrator of the Gold Coast, Simpson, went to Akwamu to try to persuade the Akwamu to break their alliance with the Asante and sign up with the British. The Akwamuhene Kwafo Akoto I was outraged at such presumption and was "inaccessible to argument" as the British described it. Simpson was held under house arrest for five days, his life was threatened, his quarters were burned down, and the Akwamuhene thought of sending him to Kumase as hostage. The Asante generals, however, ordered his release and safe conduct back to Accra because he was an official of the Gold Coast and enjoyed diplomatic protection (Horton, 1870: 100–103; see also Claridge, 1915: 578–579).[17] Thus the conventions of diplomatic relations and immunity were still being observed, but only just. While two minor engagements had already occurred, the troops in Akwamu awaited "for some considerable time" the official arrival of General Adu Bofo and his final order to advance.[18]

The formal assault on the Ewe began in May 1869. Almost invariably Asante war tactics involved a two-pronged attack and 1869 was no exception. Gyaakyi Nantwi attacked toward Sokode and Ho while Adu Bofo attacked toward Anum and Peki. Allied troops of the Adaklu and Anlo came up from the south and aided Gyaakyi Nantwi.[19] By the end of June 1869, Adu Bofo's offensive had met with considerable success. Bofo took Anum and Peki with ease, burning and plundering them. The Ewe withdrew north into high hills, their armies retreating so quickly that they caught up with their own civilian evacuees. The Ewe forces were under the leadership of the Peki chief Kwadwo De and an Akyem Kotoku captain called Dompre. Some British sources claimed the latter became in effect the "commander-in-chief" of the Ewe resistance and by his own account he was constantly trying to goad the Ewe into firmer resolve and harder fighting against the Asante. But he also lived in perpetual fear of being betrayed by the Ewe: "I see plainly that the Crepees can't fight and I am afraid [they] will give me up to the enemies," he wrote to the British in mid-1869.[20]

Dompre's reasons for being involved so fervently are not clear but modern images of agents possessing a certain amount of ideological and personal commitment, however wrongly placed, come to mind as an analogy that is more accurate than terms such as mercenary or even adventurer. The Akyem Kotoku were not on good terms with the Asante and were resentful of Asante trade regulations. Some Akyem traders had been assaulted and robbed by the Akwamu who were, perhaps, merely enforcing Asante commercial restrictions. It was to secure compensation for these assaults that Dompre initially went to Akwamu. Confronted with refusal, he threw in his lot with Ewe dissidents. There is, however, clearly more to the story, for the British considered Dompre a "loyal subor-

dinate of his King Take," the Ga Mantse, whom the British had previously expelled but in 1868 repatriated and rehabilitated in Accra.[21] Certainly by March 1869, Acting Administrator Simpson in Accra had sent Dompre arms, money, and instructions to fight the Asante and Akwamu, and these indications of British support at first influenced the Krepe to continue their struggle. The British however were never able to persuade the promised 2000 Accra soldiers whom they had armed to leave town for the front (Horton, 1870: 34–41).[22]

Once having retreated into the high hills, the Ewe became a more difficult but not impossible target for Adu Bofo's force. Three rural battles ensued, culminating in a siege of Gemi Hill (elev. 810 m) near Amedzove in Avatime, July to August 1869. The Asante and Akwamu "have fought with me and the whole Crepees three times and have driven us to Arvarteam on top some hill," bemoaned Dompre in a letter he smuggled out by paying a messenger 50 heads of tobacco (the average fee was less than six), begging the British to send him men and ammunition. Conditions under siege on the hill were so desperate that parents sold their children, presumably as slaves to the Asante, in order to escape. The Asante finally managed to attack up to the top of the hill, though only after they had forced the local Avatime to assist them (Asieudu, 1870: 31–32; Spieth, 1891: 118; Rattray, ca. 1919: 69).[23] The British administrator's response to Dompre's plea was addressed to Dompre's brother, Orbin Darkoo, who was near Ada and thus in better communication. It would not have cheered Dompre had it reached him:

> Your brother Dompre has acted foolishly in the matter and contrary to my instructions sent him six months since, wherein I ordered him to fall back upon his communications and not to risk an engagement if he were considerably outnumbered. . . . Whose fault is it that the Ashantees have cut him off from communication with Accra and myself but his own. . . . The Ashantees say they fight only against Domprey and not against the British Government. Is this as I suspect on account of the old palaver between them and Adjeman? If so how can he expect me to follow him up wherever he chooses to go? I am no friend with Ashanti but neither can I justify or support one who leaves the Protectorate for selfish purposes of his own and seeks to fight over my shoulder his own independent quarrel.[24]

Some Ewe forces escaped from the siege at Gemi Hill, and retreated north to Kpandu territory where the chief, Dadaklu, chose to join the rebellion. He tried to block the Asante approach to his town but withdrew when Dompre advised that, because of the town's abundance of food and the Asante hunger allowing the Asante to move into Kpandu might buy the Ewe time. Initially this ploy worked. The Asante moved into Wusuta nearby, set up a base camp, and rested several months (Asiedu, 1870: 32).

Adu Bofo had orders to destroy Krepe and not return until Dompre had been captured. The former order had been fairly well fulfilled but Dompre had escaped and was still spreading rebellion. Consequently, by October a whole new Asante army was readied and dispatched under a general named Kwame Agyepon to cross the Volta River about 100 miles north at Kete-Krakye.[25] This force was to move south, suppressing the Buem and Nkonya people who had taken up the contagious revolt. They had been initially neutral but had taken to arms because of the general disruption of war and the flood of refugees into their area which tempted them into acts of insubordination against their own Asante client masters, the Kawau. Kwame Agyepon's army crossed at Kete-Krakye in late 1869 and within a year was totally successful. Again the Asante army was precise about its goals and cautious enough to neutralize groups where possible. The Akpafu, for example, a small group of non-Ewe, long indigenous people, recounted that the Asante "sent us a message saying 'We have not come to fight with them that make flat roofed huts,' " meaning the old original inhabitants of the country, and after paying "tribute in human beings" the Akpafu were left alone. Their neighbors and cousins, the Santrokofi, only partly non-Ewe, were not willing to acquiesce to Asante demands however and suffered the consequences of burning and looting (Rattray, ca. 1919: 5, 12; Ansre, 1962).[26]

Adu Bofo himself received troop reinforcements by early 1870 (Asiedu, 1870: 32; Ram-

seyer and Kühne, 1875: 68–69).[27] In the face of these refreshed troops, Dompre and Kwadwo De retreated farther east and were soon engaged in a fierce battle near Fodome. Failing here also, Dompre now left his troops, who scattered to the northeast while he tried to reach Accra by circling east and then south via the Togo mountains and down through sympathetic Agotime. He was intercepted and killed on 25 July 1870 at Abotia near the Volta, ambushed by the Akwamu. Kwadwo De, apparently disheartened by Dompre's death, left his troops shortly thereafter and also tried to circle down to Accra through Agotime. He was captured and executed at Bato (Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875: 90–91; Spieth, 1913; Claridge, 1915: 607, 613; Rattray, ca. 1919: 21, 45; Welman, 1925: 14).[28]

It will be recalled that Gyaakyi Nantwi had undertaken a southern prong of the Asante assault. He worked closely with Asante's southern allies the Anlo, and had defeated the Sokode and burned Ho by late June 1869.[29] He then bought the neutrality of groups on his left flank and had several successful though demanding engagements to the south and east with the Agotime whose towns were all burned. Nevertheless the Agotime and Ho continued to resist and withdrew northeast to the Togo mountains, sometimes pursuing a scorched earth policy by burning their own towns as they retreated. Gyaakyi Nantwi's Anlo allies, on the other hand, suffered greatly from seemingly pyrrhic victories, losing five major chiefs in battle by late 1869. For all practical purposes the Anlo now withdrew from the alliance and returned to their own territory, "leaving only the chiefs and a few men in the field" (Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875: 13, 26; Spieth, 1891: 117; Rattray, ca. 1919: 48).[30]

Gyaakyi Nantwi followed the Agotime and Ho into the Togo mountains. Adu Bofo's and Nantwi's armies joined at Agome Palime and made a great camp in the town of Towe, early 1870. Both the Asante and the resisters now tried to negotiate with the local communities in an effort to obtain allies or at least neutrality.[31] The dynamics of negotiating an individual's or a whole town's protection sheds some light on the existing rules of war and their abrogation. The Asante always tried local diplomacy before launching an attack. Attempts to ensure the cooperation of various small groups all along the line of the Asante advance were made months before Adu Bofo and his army even arrived (Asiedu, 1870: 30; Ansre, 1962).[32] The children of belligerents were sometimes sent by their parents to stay in such neutral towns. As war approached civilians might buy some protection. For example, Ramseyer and Kühne firmly believed they could pay the Asante to leave them alone. Numerous towns record in their traditions that they were able to buy protection from the Asante by giving them slaves (Asiedu, 1870: 30; Rattray, ca. 1919: 11, 19, 24, 29, 38, 50, 78, 80).[33] Even immediately before battle the Asante would offer clemency if the town about to be attacked would surrender. At such a point, however, the town would already be under arms and its leaders could be considered rebels and therefore face execution even as the town was spared. Thus these Asante offers of clemency were often seen as tricks, and wavering Ewe allies were often kept in tow by Dompre and Kwadwo De when such "treachery" was recounted. Nevertheless the Asante regularly offered "deals" to the resisting groups, several times most strikingly to the diehards in the Togo mountains at Yokele and Kpime (Asiedu, 1870: 31; Spieth, 1913: 10).[34] Clearly the Asante did not relish the agonies and casualties of a protracted guerrilla war in the

Groups that unfalteringly allied with the Asante were left alone and even those who initially resisted and then negotiated were not ravaged, at least until later. There was a chance one's town might just be passed by—a strong incentive not to shelter or aid the rebel Ewe. On the other hand there were strong incentives to cooperate with the Ewe dissidents since they were after all neighbors, and since their army usually came through a town first, threatening the inhabitants before the Asante arrived. In the case of Towe, a town near Palime and Yokele, the Ho-Agotime army forced themselves on that town for more than three months. The Towe did not want them there, urged them to move on, advised them to surrender, and threatened to betray them. As the Asante army approached, the Towe chief Agbada finally had a public debate with the Ho general Mote Kofi which ended in mutual threats and abuse. The Ho and Ago-

time, "shaking the dust of the town from their heels," moved on to Yokele, and the Towe welcomed the Asante army into their town with jubilation (Spieth, 1913: 14).[35] The Asante, as mentioned, made a great camp there.

After efforts to persuade the Ho-Agotime forces to surrender failed, the Asante attacked and fought a great three-day battle at the town of Yokele. Here the Ewe suffered their final defeat. Many escaped but the Asante pursued them and repeatedly skirmished with them all the way up to Agawe. A few Ewe survivors escaped north to Akposso or east to Game and Nuatja, well out of the reach of Asante's sphere of influence. Towns which had aided the rebels fared less well, suffered burnings, and had their children and brothers captured as prisoners of war. Towns that attempted to remain neutral were not burned but had to appease the Asante with children and brothers and sisters anyway, given up as hostages to be sold into slavery. Around Palime the wrath of the Asante army knew no bounds. Of the 15 towns visited by this author in the vicinity, all allied and victim towns alike admitted to having at least 2 to 10 citizens taken away forcibly by the Asante. As one Ewe Catholic priest who travels around the villages of Palime commented: "You would not believe how high in the mountains [those Asante] went to find people to take as prisoners. You just would not believe it. So so high, it makes you wonder why."[36]

At this point Adu Bofo ought to have considered himself victorious and returned to Asante. The great battle of Yokele was fought and won about the time of Dompre's death, July 1870, though Dompre did not take part in it. Pursuit of the enemy to Agawe, and collecting loot and prisoners might have gone on for several months. Informants today state that the Asante remained at their Towe base camp for three to eight months, and long enough to plant and harvest a crop of plantain.[37] But the major resistance leaders were dead, the belligerents scattered, and what remained of the local population around Palime at any rate was cowed. The planned objectives of this Asante military action had been achieved. The Asantehene now, in late 1870, ordered Adu Bofo to return to Kumase. Not only did Adu Bofo resist this order, but he managed to persuade the Asantehene to send out more reinforcements in February 1871. By then rumors were rampant in Kumase and on the coast that the Asante army had been defeated and Adu Bofo killed (Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875: 118).[38]

It seems that the Asante army, while returning from Yokele and the mountains, ran into severe resistance again in Agotime and Ho. It was caused in part by die-hard rebels who had returned to their villages while the Asante were in Yokele, and in part by a frustrated and starving population from whom the Asante tried to commandeer more food and captives. The Asante even demanded food from their allies the Adaklu and Anlo, who it will be recalled had lost heart and gone home in late 1869 after several of their generals had been killed in Agotime. The Asante apparently delivered many captive slaves to the Anlo in payment (Spieth, 1913: 13; Rattray, ca. 1919: 48).[39]

By early 1871, however, the system of bought neutrality seems to have broken down on both sides. By all accounts there was hardly any food left, surely because most crops had been eaten or burned in 1869 and not planted in 1870 during the height of the warfare, since much of the population was either captive or refugee in distant places. In fact, of 67 traditions collected by R. S. Rattray from the region during World War I, all in different sized communities, 37 admitted either to have hidden "in the forest" for the duration, or to have fled far away to places in the northeast such as Akposso. These people maintain they did not return to their homes until after the Asante had left. Most of the Ho civilian population moved en masse to Akakofe and did not return for many years because their land was so ruined (Spieth, 1913: 14). The Kuma stated: "[We] were driven to Kpele and Akposo. When we returned we found the Ashantis had spoiled all our 'chop' and we had nothing so we left and returned to Nuatja; some of us remained at Kuma. After about ten years we returned and again settled at Kuma with our people who had remained there" (Rattray, ca. 1919: 28).

The Asante also began to take their revenge upon groups and villages who had initially resisted but who, after a severe defeat, surrendered to the Asante in the hope of saving

their towns and population. These towns then had been left alone as long as there were bigger fish to fry. By this tactic, the Asante rear had been secured. But with organized resistance extinguished the Asante now raided even the neutrals for food and captives. "Displeasure among friend and enemy reached the boiling point," noted one observer (Spieth, 1913: 13). Guerrilla war and civilian resistance followed. Enough groups were operating under the assumption that the war was "over for them" to be outraged when the Asante returned from Yokele and began to raid, loot, and burn again. In Rattray's sample at least seven groups claimed to have bought neutrality (with slaves) and then later were raided for food and captives. The Akate explained: "When the Ashantees came they . . . gave out that any one who would pay them tribute, they would spare and we went and made a treaty with them but, when they returned south again, they seized many more of our people than we had voluntarily handed over and so we fought them (Rattray, ca. 1919: 24; other groups with similar stories were the Gbi: 19; Haingba: 29; Taingbe: 47; Matse: 49; Lume: 50; and Taviepe: 47). The Towe peoples today claim this happened to them also: "When they came they deceived you and said you were their brothers and sisters; and when they left they took your children anyway."[40]

The Asante perhaps felt justified in breaking their promises of clemency as the pockets of resistance multiplied. Like all orthodox military leadership, the Asante began to feel the civilian population must be harboring and abetting the resisters. The allied Klonu for example observe: "The Asante camped just outside Klonu . . . a long time and became friends with the Klonu people. Then one day they said they would fight the Klonu people because they believed the Agotime were among them."[41] Even the forced delivery of grain from the Anlo allies might have been rationalized since they had ceased to participate in battle. On the other hand the civilian population clearly felt aggrieved; those with courage enough to go scraping at subsistence farming in the war zone had had enough. In the town of Lume the men and women took their farm tools to defend their fields and homes and clubbed to death Asante troops as they passed toward the Volta. In Shia the populace actually had some bullets left as well as the nerve to shoot them at straggling Asante troops (Spieth, 1913: 13). In Sokode the leaders agreed to a truce with the Asante in exchange for trying to talk their friends, the Ho, into surrendering. However, the Ho spurned the Sokode attempts and so the Asante avenged themselves on the Sokode; they surprised the town one morning, looted it, bound the men, women, and children for transportation to Kumase, and executed the town's leaders (Spieth, 1913: 12). Even the friendly Taviepe, who would later be attacked by the Ewe for helping the Asante, attacked the withdrawing Asante who raided them (Rattray, ca. 1919: 47). It is not surprising that rumors of a "half-starved army" reached Kumase (Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875: 126).

Although previous Asante armies in Fante had been forced to retreat because of widespread disease, the repeated accounts of hunger, of an antagonistic, and more significantly an audacious local population harassing the withdrawing Asante troops in the Ewe campaign appear to be unique. It may reflect the extent to which the war became, over time, an escalating battle between a popular resistance and Asante retaliation. The Asante met a hostile population and so took food and captives. They thus increased the hostility and the pool of people from whom they felt the right to take food and captives, and created more hostility. This cycle was surely also fueled by the long duration of the war, by the crops not being planted and harvested, and by the intransigence of the resistance. The Ewe intransigence was, in turn, fueled by the persistent hope that the British might come and aid them.

An alternative or collateral thesis for why Adu Bofo remained in Ewe territory after the major Asante military objectives had been met is that he intended to collect as many captives as possible to be sold into slavery upon his return to Kumase. He could thus pay off any expenses he might have advanced or borrowed to finance the campaign, and create wealth for himself as an individual. Asante generals had been known in the past to suffer financial ruin because they advanced costs for campaigns and were unable to re-

coup them through the sale of captives later.[42] The fact that Adu Bofo received troop reinforcements twice during his campaign and once after the Asantehene had ordered him home, suggests that he was willing to pay for some of the campaign out of his own pocket. The documentary and oral evidence is overwhelming that Adu Bofo's actions from mid-1870 to May 1871 were concentrated on taking prisoners from as many villages as possible, from rebel, neutral, and ally alike. How much this was a military tactic to "exterminate" the enemy, how much a political act to cow the enemy, and how much a personal aggrandizement scheme for Adu Bofo is not an answerable question at this point, but all three aims were accomplished.

In May 1871 Adu Bofo was ordered by the Asantehene to return to Kumase immediately or to shoot himself (Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875: 125). The general began his withdrawal from the base camp in Wusuta, taking the Wusutas and their chief with him to swell the numbers of captives headed for Kumase. After two years of playing host to the Asante army, the Wusuta felt horribly betrayed. Although the Wusuta had cooperated from the beginning only under duress, their treatment at the hands of their Asante allies shocked even their neighbors, as well as historians today (Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875: 26–27, 167–169, 183–184; Gros, 1884: 227–228; Rattray, ca. 1919: 80; Aduamah, 1963b: 964; Johnson, 1965: 45–47; Wilks, 1975: 84–85).

THE WAR AS SUCCESSFUL/FAILED POLICY

Despite the Asantehene's stern orders for Adu Bofo to return or shoot himself, and despite the rumors of defeat and starvation, the Asantehene apparently considered Adu Bofo's campaign a success and Adu Bofo still a reliable general, for the King planned to send him off almost immediately to a new trouble spot (Akyem Kotoku).[43] The instability of affairs on Asante's southern border may well have been as much the cause for calling Adu Bofo back to Kumase as any failures or successes in the eastern campaign. Adu Bofo's entry into Kumase on September 2 was a triumphal march worthy of any victorious Roman general. The display of captives and trophies lasted from dawn to dusk and 10,000 soldiers paraded with as many onlookers. Two months earlier another 2000 of Adu Bofo's prisoners, mostly women and children, had been marched in a previctory parade through Kumase. Now Adu Bofo, after presenting to the government his formal report and accounting of the campaign, was publicly honored by the Asantehene with gifts of gold dust, gold bracelets, "two large umbrellas, twenty sheep, twenty loads of salt, twenty kegs of brandy," and much more. The missionary Ramseyer, who had seen Adu Bofo in June 1869, noted that while the latter looked aged and tired, he spoke proudly of the war and his booty and "seemed to have attained the height of his ambition." Still he wanted more wealth, and "hoped to get it" (Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875: 130, 135–139).

In Kumase, Adu Bofo asserted his authority in the councils and quickly became undisputed leader of the war party. He was already in a position to be courted, for the missionaries Ramseyer and Kühne and the merchant Bonnat, who had been taken prisoner in June of 1869 by Adu Bofo at Anum and Ho, were considered his personal prisoners to be ransomed as he saw fit. Thus as relations with the British worsened and the German missionaries became increasingly the sticking point, both the Council of Kumase and the Asantemanhyiamu often deferred to Adu Bofo regarding how much he would demand in ransom for their release. Frequently he used this question as a platform for making speeches in support of war-as-policy, expressing the need to maintain Asante honor and prestige in the south now as he had done in the east. Bonnat, for example, reported on the Council meeting of 22 July 1871: "The session lasted from morning until 3 p.m. There are, it appears, two parties present, that of peace which wishes to set us free, and that of war which opposes our release. This latter, which has at its head the victorious general [Adu Bofo], seems to overrule the other (Gros, 1884: 229). At a meeting of the Asantemanhyiamu in February 1872, the issue of groups formerly subject to Asante but now allied to the British came up and Adu Bofo articulated his party's policy: "At all events the right thing would be to regain our au-

thority over these tribes. I have been to war. I have gained victories, used much powder, and lost more than a thousand men, and now am I to give up all that has been gained? No! never, never will I let these prisoners go free! never, I say!" (Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875: 168). The Ewe campaign had catapulted Adu Bofo to leadership of the war party and that war's outcome had, at least in 1872, served to confirm the credibility and success of war party policies. By late 1872 Adu Bofo was in the field again, leading the Asante right flank in a planned assault on British territory.

We must accept the import of the evidence that the Ewe campaign was considered a success by Adu Bofo, the Asantehene, and many politicians in Kumase. First, it extinguished the Ewe rebellion. The area remained subdued until 1873 and evidence has already been presented that many districts remained underpopulated for up to 10 years because of death, captivity, and self-imposed exile. Some groups flirted with rebellion again in 1873 because the British sent Captain Glover with an armed force through the area to acquire allies for a British assault on Kumase. Yet none of these allies was willing to attack in Asante territory, and all remained in a "constant state of fright" that the Asante would return, though all were eager to have Glover help them take revenge on local groups who had allied with Asante in 1869–70 (Croft, 1874: 191).[44] Thus the Asante tactics of 1869 would clearly have rendered the territory quiescent if the British had not undertaken their invasion of Asante in 1873. The sheer depopulation of the area was a part of the method of subduement: despite the British defeat of Kumase in 1874, some people remained in exile for up to 10 years in the areas crossed by Adu Bofo's troops because the land had been so devastated. To this day people shudder at discussions about the Asante war, and remember, often by name, the captives who were taken from their villages to Asante in the 1869 period.[45]

Secondly, the Asante secured control of their strategic trade route through Anlo and Akwamu. Their plans were disrupted temporarily by the appearance of a British gunboat in 1870 which attacked the Asante control station on Duffo Island in the Volta River (Reade, 1873: 171–174; 1874: 129–131).[46] But the steamer soon returned to Lagos and by 1872 there was a glut of arms and ammunition on the market in Anlo, headed for Asante (Croft, 1874: 191).[47]

Thirdly, the campaign produced large numbers of captives to serve as slave labor in Asante. The captives, of course, brought great wealth to Adu Bofo as an individual, and to the Akwamu and Anlo states for that matter. The Anlo slave market was still glutted in 1873, and they boasted that their victory in the war was verified by the large number of slaves they got out of it.[48] The captives taken to Asante brought power, patronage, and prestige to Adu Bofo. This advanced the careers and policies of Adu Bofo and the other supporters of the war policy. It must also have boosted the economy and productivity of rural Asante since these captives were distributed and settled throughout Asante proper. Economically and politically the war was a success for Kofi Kakari's administration.

That having been said, there remain the disturbing facts that Adu Bofo had to be twice ordered home by the Asantehene and that Adu Bofo needed to request reinforcements from Kumase at least twice. His Anlo allies faltered by late 1869 and were squeezed for food contributions in 1870. While taking captives from groups who had resisted or surrendered might seem acceptable for this type of war, the taking of the Towe and Wusuta who had quartered the army for the duration of the war seems to have been either an act of greed or of desperation on the part of Adu Bofo to swell his captive count in order either to achieve a presentable display or to secure a financial killing on their sale back home. He is said to have lost over 1000 men and 136 officers, of whom six were from Kumase and three were "great chiefs" (Ramseyer and Kühne, 1875: 137–138). Adu Bofo's war seems to have gone wrong in the last year when guerrilla and civilian resistance, combined with scorched earth policies in the countryside by both sides, and Adu Bofo's determination to collect as many slave captives as possible, apparently drove the indigenous population and the Asante army to desperate measures.

Any plans for placing administrators, be they Kumase officials or subimperial clients like Akwamu, over the defeated territories to

continue collecting labor-tribute were never carried through.[49] The fact that the indigenous populations turned to guerrilla resistance and attacked Asante troops, even after these very populations had been defeated and decimated, demonstrated the limits of war as policy. Had Asante been able to pursue its practice of holding Ewe in a sphere of influence, it would have been a fragile and sullen quiescence at best, riven with assassinations and repeated insurrections at worst. For Asante the 1869 war was fought as deliberate martial policy to enhance political careers at home and to skim wealth from abroad. The victory, as so often paralleled before and since, was greater pain than reward and a loss of long-term goals for the sake of short-term gains. At one point during the protracted campaign, Adu Bofo tried to persuade some mountain-entrenched Ewe to surrender, with dire warnings and taunts. The Ewe general Ahoto is said to have responded: "The tortoise in the bush is an experienced animal, and until now no bird with his beak has been able to affect him. He can break a beak to pieces.[50]

NOTES

1. See B. Semel (ed.), Marxism and the Science of War, Oxford University Press (1981), pp. 66–71, showing that Marx and Lenin, like myself, took Clausewitz to mean by politics domestic as well as foreign affairs, but recent authors feel he only inadequately understood the connection of war to domestic politics.

2. Public Record Office, London, Colonial Office [hereafter PRO CO] 96/72: Conran to Blackall, Cape Coast, 6 Sept. 1866.

3. Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers [hereafter GBPP] (1874) C. 891: Kennedy, Treaty, 13 Nov. 1868. PRO CO 96/77: Simpson to Kennedy, 5 Sept. 1868; and PRO CO 96/79: Simpson to Kennedy, 22 Mar. 1869, para. 15.

4. PRO CO 879/2: Elliot, Memorandum, Oct. 1867.

5. The African Times, London, 23 Jan. 1867 and 23 Mar. 1867.

6. In 1864 Akwamuhene Dako Yaw Kuma was killed by his own people for his pro-Asante inclinations. His successor Kwafo Akoto I continued such policies, however. See Wilks, 1975, p. 224 n. 82.

7. The African Times, London, 23 Jan. 1867 and 23 Mar. 1867.

8. PRO CO 879/2: J. Hales, Abstract of Principal Correspondence on Native Affairs on the Gold Coast, Nov. 1868.

9. For a discussion of Asantehene Kofi Kakari's commitment to the war party politicians, see Wilks, 1975, p. 478.

10. GBPP C. 891 (1874) no. 2: Kennedy to Granville, Nov. 1868; PRO CO 96/77: Simpson to Kennedy, Cape Coast, 5 Sept. 1868; PRO CO 96/79: Simpson to Kennedy, Akwamu, 2 Mar. 1869, para. 10, and 22 Mar. 1869, para. 14, and Kennedy to Granville, 14 Apr. 1869.

11. PRO CO 96/81: Simpson to Kennedy, 3 Sept. 1869 and 3 Oct. 1869; and PRO CO 96/80: Simpson to Orbin Darkoo, 15 July 1869.

12. PRO CO 96/81: Simpson to Kennedy, 30 Oct. 1869; see also PRO CO 96/79: Simpson to Kennedy, 22 Mar. 1869, para. 8; and PRO CO 96/80: Zimmerman to Simpson, Odumase, 21 May 1869.

13. PRO CO 96/80: Simpson to Kennedy, 15 May 1869; and PRO CO 96/79: Simpson to Kennedy, 22 Mar. 1869, para. 12.

14. GBPP (1874) C. 890, Encl. in No. 36: Pine to Ruvignes, 4 June 1863.

15. In a footnote Claridge also points out that while Ramseyer was an ordained minister, Kühne was a merchant.

16. See also PRO CO 96/79: Simpson to Kennedy, Akwamu, 2 Mar. 1869; PRO CO 96/80: Simpson to Kennedy, 15 May 1869; PRO CO 96/81: Ghartey to Simpson, 7 Aug. 1869.

17. PRO CO 96/79: Simpson to Kennedy, 22 Mar. 1869, para. 16, and Granville to Kennedy, 17 May 1869.

18. Though Adu Bofo may have been "coming" in early 1869, his official arrival in Akwamu seems to have occurred only after all the troops had arrived and were organized. The exact date is not discernible though I suggest it is May 1869. Offensive operations began immediately on his arrival. In 1871, similarly, Adu Bofo arrived in Kumase two months after most of his prisoners and soldiers had. See PRO CO 96/79: Simpson to Kennedy, 2 Mar. 1869 and 22 Mar. 1869, para. 5; PRO CO 96/80: Zimmerman to Simpson, Odumase, 21 May 1869, and Merchants of Accra to Kennedy, 13 July 1869; PRO CO 96/81: Simpson to Asantehene, 11 Oct. 1869, para. 4. See Ramseyer and Kühne (1875), pp. 130 and 137 for Adu Bofo's gradual return to Kumase.

19. See Spieth (1913) and Asiedu (1870) especially for logistical details of the campaign.

20. PRO CO 96/81: Domprey to Simpson, 21 June 1869.

21. PRO CO 96/70: Simpson to Kennedy, 22 Mar. 1869, para. 10; Asiedu (1870), p. 30; E. Y. Aduamah (1964), Dodi Traditions. Univ. of Ghana: IAS/VBRP/10; PRO CO 96/77: Simpson to Kennedy, 5 Sept. 1868, para. 8.

22. PRO CO 96/80: Simpson to Kennedy, 15 May 1869, and Russell to Simpson, 5 June 1869 and 24 June 1869.

23. PRO CO 96/81: Domprey to Simpson, 27 Aug. 1869.

24. PRO CO 96/80: Simpson to Orbin Darkoo, 15 July 1869.

25. PRO CO 96/81: Asantehene Kakari to Simpson, 1 Nov. 1869.

26. I. Wilks and D. Maier (unpubl.), Career Sheet on Kwame Agyepon. Asante Collective Biography Project/16.

27. Ramseyer to Governor, Evangelische Heidenbote (1870) vol. 10: Kumase, 2 May 1870.

28. I. Wilks and D. Maier (unpubl.), Career Sheet on Adu Bofo. Asante Collective Biography Project/2.

29. PRO CO 96/81: Domprey to Simpson, 21 June 1869 and 27 Aug. 1869; PRO CO 96/80: Russell to Simpson, 26 June 1869.

30. Wichtige Häuptlinge und Kriege der Agotime Leute (no date), geschreiben von Eingeborenen, übersetzt von P. Wiegrabe, 7 Staatsarchiv Bremen 7, 1025-41/1 [hereafter cited as Kriege der Agotime (n.d.)]; PRO CO 96/81: Holm to Simpson, 9 Oct. 1869.

31. D. Maier (1982), Togo Field Notes: Interview with Ghon Bete Hkotiate, Towe, 7 Aug. 1982 (T82/9), and Interview with Kwasi Agbada XI, Towe Ati, 8 Aug. 1982 (T82/10).

32. PRO CO 96/79: Simpson to Kennedy, 2 Mar. 1869.

33. Maier (1982), Togo Field Notes: T82/1, 2, 7, and 17; Kriege der Agotime (n.d.) p. 8.

34. Kriege der Agotime (n.d.) p. 8.

35. Maier (1982), Togo Field Notes: Interview with Elders of Yokele, 7 Aug. 1982, T82/8.

36. Maier (1982), Togo Field Notes: Interview with Father Poku, Nyitoe, 2 Aug. 1982 (T82/1).

37. Maier (1982), Togo Field Notes: T82/2, 9, and 10.

38. Archives of the Dutch Settlements on the Gold Coast of Guinea, KvG (1871), pp. 726 and 728: Ussher to Nagtglas, Accra, 1 Mar. 1871 and Cape Coast, 2 Mar. 1871, in R. Baesjou, 1979, pp. 119–120 and 129.

39. Kriege der Agotime (n.d.), p. 7; Maier (1982), Togo Field Notes: T82/17; GBPP (1873) C. 266-I: Letter from Resident Trader, Quittah, 28 Dec. 1872 in The African Times, discussing the glut of slaves in Anlo.

40. Maier (1982), Togo Field Notes: T82/10.

41. Ibid., T82/16.

42. Wilks (1975), p. 700, citing the case of Nsutahene Yaw Sekyere who in 1822–23 elected to remain in the field in the hope, futile as it turned out, of recouping his losses on loans raised to finance the campaign.

43. GBPP (1872) C. 670: Crawford to Ussher, Kumase, 7 Aug. 1871.

44. GBPP (1874) C. 893: Glover to Wolseley, 28 Dec. 1873, and Widman to Capt. Sartorius, Akropon, 22 Dec. 1873, pp. 4 and 52.

45. See Maier (1982), Togo Field Notes: T82/1, 10, and 14: In the villages statements such as the following were common responses to initial questions about the 1869 war: "Just talking of the Asante makes you shake," and "Speaking of the Asante always makes me shiver."

46. PRO CO 96/85: Ussher to Kennedy, 8 July 1870; The African Times, 23 Aug. 1870: letter from E. Bannerman, Duffo, 1 July 1870.

47. GBPP (1874) C. 891; Kendall to Harley, Quittah, 11 June 1873, pp. 50–54.

48. GBPP (1874) C. 891: Zahn, Committee Report, Bremen, 17 Dec. 1873, p. 14.

49. The only reference to possible civil administration comes from Ramseyer and Kühne (1875), p. 163, who took in a slave who came from "Aja in Krepe." He had escaped from Kwasi Domfe, the Nsumankwaahene, to whom according to R & K, the district had been assigned by the Asantehene. I suggest a more logical interpretation is that the 1869 war captives from that district had been assigned to the chief, not the district itself. The Wusuta, for example, had been assigned to various chiefs. See Aduamah (1964).

50. Kriege der Agotime (n.d.), p. 13.

CHAPTER 21. ASANTE IMPERIALISM AND GYAMAN RESISTANCE: FORMS, MOTIVATIONS, TRENDS

Emmanuel Terray

ABSTRACT

Although economic and political factors were important, Asante imperialism had a dynamic of its own which can only be understood when the response of the non-Asante actors is taken into consideration. The present paper analyzes Gyaman from this perspective and looks at various forms of response to Asante rule on the part of the peoples of Gyaman, and the reciprocal responses of the Asante.

INTRODUCTION

The whole of Gyaman history bears the strong mark of the relationship with its powerful Asante neighbor. From the very beginning this relationship was tainted with hatred, fear, and blood. I attempt to explain these features, which, in my opinion, have been somewhat confused by current historiography. This paper is based on written and oral data, much of which I have discussed in my thesis (1984) to which readers can refer for further information.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN DORMAA AND ASANTE AND THE BIRTH OF GYAMAN

The very birth of the kingdom of Gyaman was the outcome of an acute confrontation between its founders and the Asante. It is indeed now clear that the early historians of Gyaman—Delafosse, Nébout, Tauxier, and even E. L. R. Meyerowitz and E. A. Agyeman—fixed a much too early date for the formation of the kingdom. A careful examination of the relevant oral traditions in the *Asante Stool Histories* and the historical chronicle of Dormaa reveal clearly that the appearance of Gyaman resulted from the victory of Osei Tutu over the first Dormaa state immediately after his enthronement in the 1680s. The oral traditions of Dormaa are a very rich source of information for this event; they were collected during this century on three occasions: by Rattray in 1925,[1] by myself in 1970, and by E. S. K. Owusu in 1976; the three versions are substantially convergent. The story may be summarized as follows:

Immediately after his return to Kumase and his enstoolment, Osei Tutu went to war against Dormaa in order to avenge the death of his uncle Obiri Yeboa. After a few successful skirmishes, he won a crushing victory at Abesem. The leaders of the defeated state had different fates. The Dormaahene Yeboa Afari escaped and fled to the northwest; his son Domaa Kusi—the commander of the Dormaa army and the murderer of Obiri Yeboa—was captured and beheaded; the Dormaahene's nephew and heir, Kyereme Sikafo, who also fell into the hands of the victors, was spared through the intervention of Okomfo Anokye and became the *okra* or "soul-washer" of Osei Tutu.

In his flight toward the northwest, Yeboa Afari was accompanied by the leaders of several lineages who had taken part in the previous Dormaa migration from Akwamu to the Kumase area. Among these leaders were Bofu Bini and Kwasi Konadu, who were to become respectively the founders of the Gyaman and Suma kingdoms. The fugitives settled first at Asuefri, where the Dormaahene subsequently died.

In the meantime, the Asante undertook the decisive war of 1699–1701 against Denkyira, during which Kyereme Sikafo fought bravely in the Asante ranks. When the news of the

Dormaahene's death reached Kumase, Osei Tutu resolved to set Kyereme Sikafo free, and to send him to Asuefri, so that he might succeed his uncle and bring the Dormaa back within the Asante sphere of influence. In fact, Kyereme Sikafo went to Asuefri and found that the Dormaahene had not been replaced; he was enstooled by general consent without any difficulty. However, when he tried to be faithful to the oath he had sworn to Osei Tutu before leaving Kumase and asked his subjects to come back with him to Abanpredease, the former capital of the kingdom, and to accept the Asante's yoke, he met with tacit but stubborn resistance from many, and especially from the people commanded by Bofu Bini and Kwasi Konadu. They did not object directly and openly to the king's plan, but they demanded a delay in order to collect the yams they had grown before Kyereme Sikafo's arrival. "Go first, to Abanpredease," they told Sikafo, "and we'll follow you after collecting the harvest." Of course, according to tradition, this was mere pretext; they were refusing what was the inescapable consequence of Kyereme Sikafo's decision: the acknowledgment of Asante rule.

It is not clear if Kyereme Sikafo was duped by their excuse. Anyway he accepted their suggestion and started to Abanpredease. On the way, he halted at Abesem in order to wait for the coming of his reluctant subjects, of course in vain. But Abesem was rich in kola, and as Abanpredease had been razed to the ground by the Asante, the followers of the king suggested he should abandon the deserted site, and build the new capital of the state at Abesem. Abesem, in fact, was to remain the capital of Dormaa until the Asante-Dormaa war of 1876, and the Dormaahene Pong Yao's migration to Wam and the present Dormaa-Ahenkro. A formal pact of alliance was then sealed between Kyereme Sikafo and Osei Tutu on behalf of their respective states, the terms of which Rattray registered in his 1925 fieldnotes.

In spite of Bofu Bini's personal insistence, the people who had stayed behind in Asuefri still stubbornly refused to come to Abesem. In fact, they decided to move farther north, and when Bofu Bini died, they came to the Bondoukou area under the leadership of his successor Tan Date.

The story related above makes clear the political circumstances and conditions of the formation of Gyaman. On the one hand, Osei Tutu's policy toward Dormaa, as it is described in the story, was consistent with the policy he was to follow regarding Tafo, Kaase, and Amakom in the following years; that is, a deliberate attempt to integrate and assimilate the defeated communities within the young Asante confederation. In the Dormaa case, we can be more specific, and underline a feature we will return to later in the paper: though Osei Tutu crushed the Dormaa at Abesem, he understood that such a victory would be of no real use or profit for his kingdom if the rulers and the majority of the people escaped beyond his authority and fled too far to be overtaken. This was the main reason for his conciliatory attitude to Kyereme Sikafo and the new Dormaa state.

On the other hand, the story sheds light upon several features of the early history of Gyaman. It explains first the very name of the state: *Gy a -oman,* "they have left their nation." In fact, Gyaman had its origins as a secessionist group from Dormaa and from the Dormaahene's power. Second, it accounts for the extremely close links between the two states which were the outcome of the split of the ancient Dormaa state, namely Gyaman and the new Dormaa (Abesem) state. In particular it explains why several early Dormaahene, especially Yeboa Akorie and Yeboa Afari, appear on the Gyaman dynastic list, whereas it is clear that the Dormaa and Gyaman royal lineages form two parallel but separate lines, and cannot in any way be confused.

But the most important point is that the split between Kyereme Sikafo's followers and their fellow citizens who stayed behind can be seen as a split between the "collaborators" and the "resisters," the people who resigned themselves to Asante power and supremacy and those who decidedly refused to accept it. This was to weigh heavily upon the fate of Gyaman.

ASANTE IMPERIALISM: ITS CAUSES AND MOTIVES

I will not go into the long and complicated debate on the nature and causes of Asante

imperialism during the first half of the 18th century here. Economic reasons, such as the desire to control gold mines and trade routes, and also more political impulses, for example the ambition to unite the whole Akan world under the power and hegemony of the Golden Stool, were undoubtedly important factors in the process. But in my opinion, that process was the outcome, perhaps less of conscious design and deliberate planning than of a kind of underlying mechanism which, as soon as the conquest process started, compelled it to go on and forbade it to stop before it reached the boundaries of the Akan world.

This mechanism may be described as follows. When the Asante army invaded a neighboring state, whether to take possession of its wealth or treasures, to ensure Kumase control over gold mines or trade routes, or to impose Asante supremacy over its rulers, the population had two options: either to stay home and accept the victor's rule or to migrate. In the 17th century, the latter option generally led to the foundation of a new state, as we have seen in the case of Gyaman. But by the dawn of the 18th century, the entire Akan area was divided up into states; no vacant territories were left for the would-be founders. From that time on, the vanquished communities which decided to migrate rather than accept Asante rule had to join another more distant state and place themselves under the authority of its ruler. Certainly they preferred that course of action to a humiliating submission; moreover, in an area where the "missing factor" was not land but population, the host-state was very willing to receive the fugitives and give them not only shelter but substantial immunities and privileges in order to ensure their integration into the community and loyalty to the ruler. Many of the peripheral Akan states—and especially Gyaman—were able in this way to substantially increase their population by integrating refugees from the areas which were conquered first by the Asante.

However, this process of migration and hospitality had the effect of depriving the Asante of the most interesting fruits of their successes. What was the point in occupying wastelands or deserted gold mines? We should stress again that the important factor was not land, but people. When confronted with such situations, the Asante had no choice but to present the host-ruler with an ultimatum and order him, under threat of war and invasion, to send back the refugees to their former homeland. In most cases, the ultimatum was rejected; a new war ensued, and resulted in new invasions, new migrations, new grants of hospitality, new ultimatums, and so on. The process could not end before the boundaries of the Akan world were reached; beyond those boundaries, the situation was different, for then the refugees were no longer integrated into the receiving societies: they became slaves.

There are many examples of this process in the Asante conquests of the northwest during the first half of the 18th century. When Osei Tutu invaded Wenchi ca. 1711–12, one of his motives was to bring back under his power the Dormaa who had taken refuge in the town after the Abesem disaster (Wenchi Stool History, in Terray, 1984: 741). The conquest of Aowin had similar origins: some of the soldiers who had conquered Wenchi migrated to Aowin with their booty rather than deliver it to the Asantehene.[2] In the same way, according to Reindorf, Opoku Ware asked the Takyimanhene Ameyaw to send back the Amakom refugees; Ameyaw's refusal was one of the causes of the 1722–23 invasion (Reindorf, 1895: 74). It is interesting to note that, according to Kyerematen, some refugees from Bono found their way into Gyaman; Opoku Ware asked for their return; the Gymanhene Abo Miri refused, which started the 1739–40 war (Kyerematen, 1966: 315–316).

In the case of Gyaman, there was another important factor: according to Rattray, at least one of the royals who at Osei Tutu's death contended with Opoku Ware for the Golden Stool, subsequently found his way to Sabronu, near Nknoranza, and from there tried to secure Gyamanhene Abo Miri's support. The royal was caught and killed, but Opoku Ware remembered Abo's complaisance on that occasion, and took his revenge in 1739.[3]

Generally speaking, it seems that the Asante rulers and government feared that the presence of independent states around Asante might provide Asante political malcontents and dissenters with a shelter and a starting point for further intrigues and conspiracies.

In fact, the mere existence of those states could make the would-be rebels think that they might receive some support from them, and in this way strengthen their hopes and resolution.

To summarize, the Asante conquest of Gyaman in 1739–40 appears to be a particular moment in a global expansion process rather than a separate sequence. The causes which led to the fall of Gyaman were substantially similar to those which had earlier provoked the fall of Aowin, Sefwi, Wenchi, and Bono, and they were ultimately rooted in the very nature of the socioeconomic structure of the area at the time.

ASANTE DOMINATION OVER GYAMAN

What were the main features of Asante domination over Gyaman from the middle of the 18th century onward? First, Gyaman was placed under the supervision of the Bantamahene of Kumase who acted as *adamfo* for the Gyamanhene at the court of the Asantehene. Moreover, several sources mention the installation in Gyaman of Asante officials acting as "resident commissioners," but local tradition categorically denies the presence of such officials, whether in Bondoukou or in the Gyaman towns. With the exception of a few short periods, for instance at the turn of the 19th century, I am inclined to believe that, in this instance, tradition is right. In particular, the case of Kwaku Poku mentioned by Wilks is not at all convincing, because Kwaku Poku was clearly an ambassador and not a resident commissioner (Terray, 1984: 1087 ff.).

The power of Kumase manifested itself in Gyaman through the action of people known as the *ahenkwa* (servants), *bofuu* (hunters), or *batadifo* (traders) of the Asantehene. These different names are found in the local tradition, but clearly they referred not to distinct people but to the different roles played by the same officials. Their main function was to collect a yearly tribute from Gyaman, the payment of which Gyaman had been compelled to accept after its 1740 defeat (Terray, 1984: 1087 ff.).

The bulk of the tribute was paid in gold. According to Bowdich, Gyaman paid an annual tribute of a hundred peredwans of gold, "besides all large pieces of rock gold" (Bowdich, 1819: 321). During the first period of Asante domination, the second half of the 18th century, our informants mentioned lesser quantities: a hundred *asuasa* (52.7 g) of gold dust. Taking into account the richness of Gyaman gold mines, such amounts were relatively small, which seems to indicate that, at least during this first period, the purpose of tribute collecting was more political than economic. Its function was to demonstrate openly the subjection of Gyaman to the Asantehene. It may be added that the weight of the tribute probably varied from year to year according to the Asante *sanna*'s needs, but it was invariably increased by the personal demands and exactions of the Asante collectors and officials.

The payment was collected each year. Shortly before the Odwira festival, the Asante collectors visited the Gyamanhene in his capital, at that time Herebo or Tangamuru, and asked for a certain amount of gold. The Gyamanhene then called the four main divisional chiefs to a meeting and the five men divided the amount between them; they paid the required sums from their own *sanna,* and then sent their agents throughout the country to collect the corresponding quantities from their respective subjects.

In time of war, the Gyaman had to provide their Asante masters with military assistance. By 1742, Gyaman troops were engaged in the campaign launched by Opoku Ware against Akyem (Terray, 1984: 824). At the end of the 18th century, Gyaman auxiliaries fought Banda and Nkoranza under the command of the Asante Adumhene Adum Ata (Bowdich, 1819: 238, 310).

From 1750 onward, the roads which previously led from Gyaman to Aowin and Axim were carefully closed, and Gyaman trade toward the coast was compulsorily channeled through Kumase and subjected to tight control.

The Gyamanhene never went to Kumase and did not take part either in the Kumase Odwira festival or in the funeral ceremonies or enstoolment of the Asantehene. The ignominious death of Abo Miri at the hands of Opoku Ware was the alleged reason for this abstention: it would have been consid-

ered shameful for the Gyamanhene to attend ceremonies initiated by the murderers of his "uncle." Besides, the Gyamanhene had to refrain from offending the Asantehene by displaying too much luxury and wealth. The disastrous 1818 war started precisely because Gyamanhene Adingra refused to comply with such restrictions (Terray, 1984: 1087 ff.). In political terminology, the Gyamanhene was represented as the "wife" of the Asantehene (Rattray, 1929: 201), but like his suzerain he was entitled to the title of *ohene* (Dupuis, 1824: 139, n.).

Such features seem to indicate that the Asante were somewhat perplexed about how to treat Gyaman. Arhin and Wilks have both stressed that Asante domination took different forms according to the regions where it was imposed. Though the two writers disagree on the basis for such a differentiation—Arhin notes the contrast between Akan and non-Akan peoples, whereas Wilks stresses varying geographical distance—they both distinguished between a policy of domination which tended to assimilation (and was inflicted upon Akan or nearby peoples) and a domination whose purpose was, above all, economic exploitation (and was applied to non-Akan or more distant communities). It seems that the Asante were somewhat confused about the exact category in which to place Gyaman: it consisted of a tiny Akan minority ruling an overwhelming non-Akan majority, and was located at 10 to 15 days march from Kumase, which is the critical distance mentioned by Wilks. Hence the fluctuations and waverings of Asante policy regarding Gyaman, and the mixed nature of the Asante domination imposed upon that country.

After the rebellions of the last years of the 18th century and, above all, the great insurrection of 1818, the Asante dilemma regarding Gyaman was at last solved. The Asante government gave up any hope of assimilating Gyaman into "Greater Asante," and, henceforth, treated the kingdom like other non-Akan vassal states such as Gonja and Dagomba. Accordingly, demands for tribute grew heavier and heavier, until, according to Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman,[4] they reached the figure of 18,000 ounces of gold a year in the middle of the 19th century. At the same time, Asante interventions in the internal life of the kingdom became increasingly rare.

GYAMAN RESISTANCE AND ITS DIFFERENT FORMS

Gyaman resistance to Asante domination took many different forms. The most obvious and the best known was open rebellion. Even though, in my opinion, the Gyaman did not rebel against Asante at the beginning of Asante Osei Kwadwo's reign in 1764 (Terray, 1984: 1095) [in my thesis, I have tried to show that Dupuis' version (1824: 240–241) refers in fact to the Asante-Banda war of 1774], insurrections did occur in 1803–4 and in 1818.

But Gyaman resistance also took subtler and more indirect forms which are worth mentioning. First, Gyaman attempted to increase its strength by incorporating new communities, both Akan—for instance, the Aowin migrants of Asikaso, or the neighboring states of Summa and Drobo, until then independent—and non-Akan, such as the Degha (Mo) community of Burumba. These newcomers were all received into the kingdom and granted immunities and privileges. Their rulers were integrated into the Gyaman political hierarchy; in exchange they undertook to fight within the Gyaman army's ranks and help the Gyamanhene against all his enemies, including the Asante (Terray, 1984: 867 ff.).

Second, we note repeated attempts to find allies in the south, for instance in Wassa.[5] The aim of such attempts was clear: the Gyaman tried to ensure free access to the coast and to the firearms brought by the Europeans.

Third, the seat of Gyaman government shifted westward during the second half of the 18th century. Before the 1760s, the capital towns of Gyaman were Yakase and Zanzan which were both southeast of Bondoukou. The seats of the main divisions of Fumasa, Penango, and Kyidom were located respectively at Duakwan, Bohi, and Pinda. These localities were all situated in the area which can be termed "old Gyaman" and which stretches south and southeast of Bondoukou, from Soko to Transua. In the 1760s and 1770s, the royal capitals were transferred, respectively, to Tangamuru and Herebo, while the division capitals were transferred to Sapli, Welekei, and Kwasindawa;

the capital of the newly founded Siengi (Ankobea) division was seated at Tiedio, beyond Tangamuru to the west. The new towns were all about two days' march west of the former, and the explanation given for such a shift is unanimous: "We wanted to put some distance between the Asante and our towns" (Terray, 1894: 961–962).

Fourth, Gyaman displayed an enduring and stubborn aggressiveness against the northern neighboring state of Buna, which maintained very tight relations with Kumase, and was a stronghold of Asante influence in the north. It is worth noting that this aggressiveness took the form of open invasion in 1750, 1805, and 1825: on all these occasions, the Asante were paralyzed either by internal strife or by campaigns already directed to the south, and could not help their Buna allies. The pretext for such invasions was generally the following: since the Gyaman had been defeated by the Asante, they had incurred the disdain and mockery of the Buna people, and wanted to avenge themselves.

Last and most important, Gyaman, under the insistent impulse of Gyamanhene Kofi Sono, developed a deliberate and coherent policy of friendship and alliance with the Dyula. This policy took different forms: numerous *karamoko* were invited to the court of the Gyamanhene where they acted as advisers and spiritual auxiliaries. Formal pacts were concluded with the already established Muslim communities, including the Dyula of Bondoukou and the Ligbi of Sorobango and Bondo; other Dyula communities were invited to settle within the kingdom, and given lands and subjects in Barabo and Kuruza. Finally Kofi Sono entered a very tight alliance with the Watara of Kong. He seemed to understand that, according to a law which might be termed the law of "political gravitation," the only way Gyaman could escape Asante attraction was to turn itself westward and stay as close as possible to an equivalent and opposed "political mass," that is, the Dyula world and especially the Watara empire of Kong (Terray, 1984: 879).

In this respect, it is worth noting that the disintegration of that empire was probably the main reason for the Gyaman's final resignation to Asante authority after the disaster of 1818. Deprived of its western ally, Gyaman was henceforth impotent in the face of the overwhelming strength of Asante.

GYAMAN-ASANTE RELATIONS AFTER 1875

Gyaman recovered its independence in 1875, as a consequence of the British victory of 1873–74, and immediately entered a new era of confrontation with Asante. This confrontation continued, on both sides, through the action of allies: Dormaa, Takyiman, and Seikwa for Gyaman; Berekum, Nkoranza, Badu, and Banda for Asante; a direct confrontation never took place, although it came very close in 1881–82, and was avoided only because of the insistent pressure of the British.

Contrary to current interpretations, which are mainly based upon Smith's account of 1879[6] and afterwards (reiterated) and commented on by Ellis (1883: 195–202), it seems that no "pro-Asante" party ever existed among the Gyaman ruling elite. The reports of travelers such as Lonsdale, Treich-Laplène, Ewart, Lang, and Vroom, as well as oral traditions, show very clearly that, if ever a feeling aroused unanimous consent among the Gyaman during that period, it was bitter hatred against Asante power and domination (Terray, 1984: 1815–16). Moreover, Kofi Kokobu, whose actions were cited as the main proof for the existence of the so-called Asante party, had a very different purpose. In 1878, he failed in his attempt to be elected Ankobeahene (Siengihene). The following year, he was sent to Badu in order to settle a quarrel between Badu and the neighboring town of Seikwa; but the envoy who accompanied him had taken part in his previous failure. Bursting with rage and rancour, Kokobu started a fight with the envoy and killed him. However his own son was also killed in the battle. In despair Kokobu joined the Badu and Banda and fought against his countrymen for some time. But this defection did not last, and at the end of 1879 or the beginning of 1880 an understanding was reached between Kokobu and the Gyamanhene, and Kokobu returned to Gyaman (Terray, 1984: 1731–1742). Nevertheless, undoubtedly due to his behavior in that occasion, he had to wait eight more years before being elected as Siengihene.

I shall not dwell here on the data which reveal the true nature of the conflicts which divided Gyaman during the last quarter of the 19th century: the interested reader will find them in my thesis (Terray, 1984: 1813–38).

1. External policy was only one of the reasons which led Gyaman leaders to quarrel with one another. The main subject of dissension was internal affairs, and concerned the organization of the government. Gyaman leaders had to decide whether the powers of the king should be extended at the expense of those of the divisional chiefs, or the kingdom should preserve its previous structure.

2. As far as foreign policy was concerned, the conflict did not reflect opposing pro-Asante and anti-Asante factions. As has been said before, the Gyaman were unanimous in their hatred of Asante. But some of them, remembering the disaster of 1818, advocated a cautious policy, while many others burned with the passion for revenge and pushed for war at all costs.

3. Among the latter, a further division separated those who favored allying with—and even submitting to—the British in order to fight against Asante, and those who deemed the traditional Dyula alliance sufficient to ensure the kingdom's strength and independence. The former were led by Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman and the latter by Kyidomhene Kwaku Kosonu Pape.

The great complexity of Gyaman politics during the last quarter of the 19th century was due to the fact that the different cleavages—internal and external—did not coincide with each other: A could be an ally of B in one context, and his fiercest enemy in the other; for instance, this is precisely the relation which prevailed between Kwaku Agyeman and Kwaku Kosonu Pape.

The confrontation between Asante and Gyaman came to an end only when the Asante became paralyzed by internal strife in 1884; in 1887–88 Gyaman too was paralyzed for the same reason. But that is another story.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I thank Victoria Ebin for her help in improving my English as much as she could.

NOTES

1. Rattray, Fieldnotes, MS 101, 106. Royal Anthropological Institute Library.

2. Butler to Dutch West Indies Co., Oct. 8, 1715, Furley Coll., no. 38; Daaku 1968, p. 42.

3. Rattray, Fieldnotes, MS 106, p. 751 sq.

4. Report of Lonsdale, Apr. 14/May 12, 1883. Parliamentary Papers, 1883, vol. 48, C. 3678, no. 53.

5. Van Woorst to Dutch West Indies Co., Nov. 17, 1751, WIC 490, Furley Coll., no. 47.

6. Report of Smith, Oct. 25, 1879, PRO CO 96-128.

CHAPTER 22. TRADE AND POLITICS ON THE ASANTE PERIPHERY: GYAMAN, 1818–1900

Robert Handloff

ABSTRACT

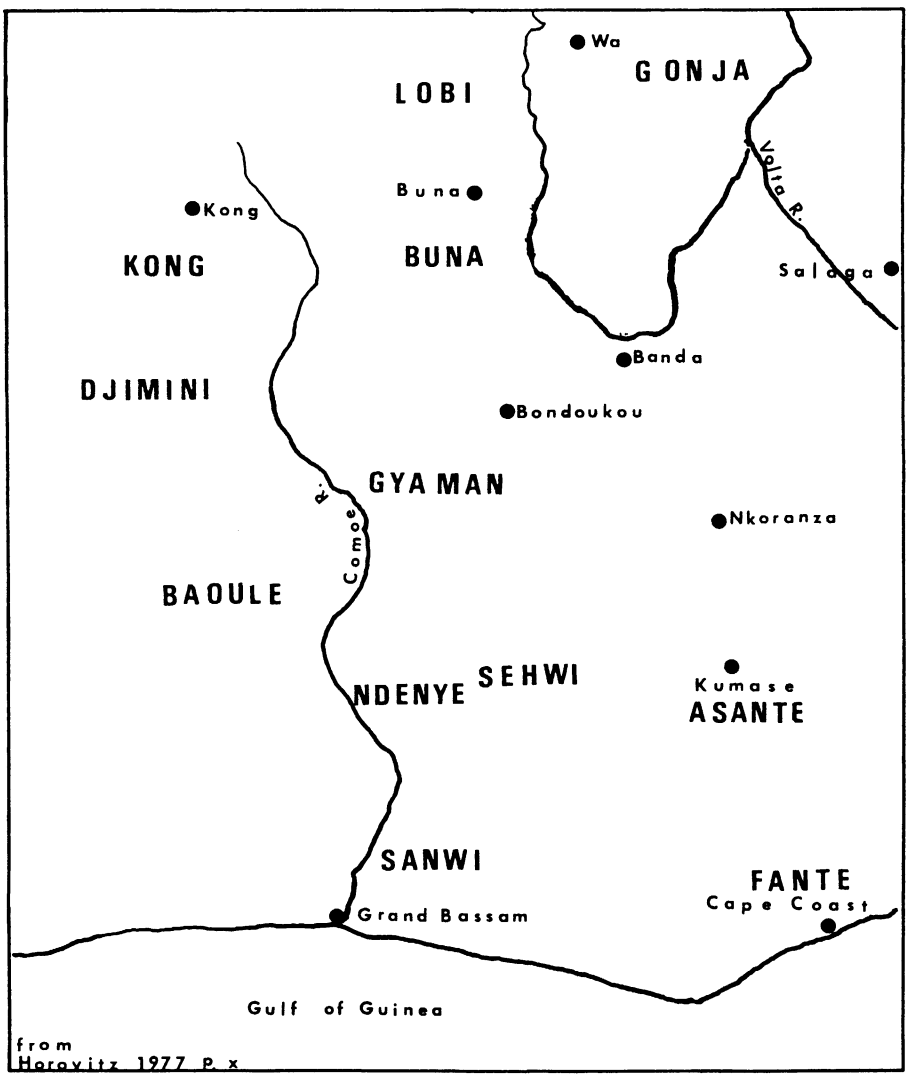
This paper analyzes the relationship between the exigencies of long-distance trade and politics in Gyaman by tracing the movement of such commodities as arms, salt, kola, slaves, and gold during the 19th century. Maintaining ties with Asante, their significant trading partner, was a prime objective of the Juula community. As market conditions changed in Asante the Bondoukou Juula, who were dependent on the economic center that was Kumase, altered their trading strategies in order to exploit new commercial opportunities. The Juula policy of ensuring unencumbered trade with Asante provoked confrontations with the Abron aristocracy, which sought to redefine its ties to its former Asante overlords. Altered trading strategies with attendant political shifts frequently came about in the face of opposition on the part of the nominally sovereign Abron.

INTRODUCTION

Long-distance trade in West Africa evolved concomitantly with specialized trading groups, usually Mande and Muslim. Together they constituted a regional diaspora with links to commercial centers in North Africa, the Middle East, and, eventually, Europe. Although the diaspora transcended national boundaries, local communities within the diaspora were often small, dependent minorities within a larger, non-Muslim host population. Examples of such diaspora communities might include the Marka, the Jahaanke, and the Juula, all of whom were fragments of the larger Mande diaspora in the western Sudan.

Although traders and hosts often enjoyed mutually beneficial ties, the perceived interests of the Muslim traders sometimes clashed with those of the far larger host community. That was the case with the Juula in Gyaman, a precolonial state lying between the Comoe and Volta rivers spanning the present border between Ghana and Ivory Coast. The relationship between the Muslim traders living in Bondoukou, the largest town in Gyaman, and the non-Muslim, Abron aristocracy that governed the state through the 18th and 19th centuries, was one of alternately mounting and subsiding tensions as both groups competed for scarce resources in the shadow of the Asante empire (see map 22-1). The pursuit of their often disparate interests shaped and was reflected in the political decisions that constituted Gyaman statecraft in the 19th century. The Juula were as George Simmel's (1950: 103) paradigmatic stranger who "is by nature no owner of the soil," and therefore is not committed to the local concerns of the host group. For the Juula, free trade, open roads, and peace with Asante were paramount. The Abron, on the other hand, could and at times did interfere with free trade, particularly with Asante, for reasons of state. The present paper, which examines the relationship between long-distance trade, domestic politics, and diplomacy in Gyaman, sheds light on the more general ties between trader and host groups during the 19th century.

Gyaman was founded toward the end of the 18th century by the Abron, who were fleeing the nascent confederation of Asante states. From their settlement some 10 km south of the present city of Bondoukou, the Abron gradually extended their hegemony over the less bellicose Koulango agriculturalists. Within 50 years, however, an expanding Asante empire absorbed the Abron state (ca. 1740). Following its conquest of Gyaman, Asante maintained its hegemony



Map 22-1. Gyaman and neighboring states.

through 1873 notwithstanding Abron uprisings in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Only after the arrival of European colonial powers toward the end of the 19th century did the Asante grip on Gyaman loosen.

Some 100 years after the Abron migration, the first Muslim Juula arrived in Gyaman, having emigrated from the market city of Begho some 40 km to the east. Like Begho, Bondoukou lay at the hub of routes leading to Asante, Salaga, Kong, and the Niger basin, and to the Atlantic coast. With ties to these and other cities in the Juula diaspora, merchants in Bondoukou exchanged gold from the Akan forests for salt, cloth, and slaves from the north (Benquey, 1906: 171). Within a short time, and certainly by the turn of the 19th century, Bondoukou replaced Begho as the largest market in the region. Commerce continued to flourish throughout most of the century. In the course of his first visit to the city in 1888, Binger (1892: 397) called it the warehouse of Europe. Reports of lavish trade continued to tantalize Europeans through the

end of the century by which time the lure of gold had given way to less sanguine appraisals of Bondoukou's wealth.

TRADE AND POLITICS IN THE 18TH CENTURY TO 1818

Information on Gyaman trade and politics prior to the second decade of the 19th century is sparse; however, scattered accounts reveal few differences from the contemporaneous trade at Begho. At Bondoukou merchants from Kong, Bobo Dioulasso, and other cities of the Sahelian diaspora exchanged salt, slaves, and cloth for Akan gold (Wilks, 1968; 1972: 354; 1982a: 344 ff.). While directing the bulk of their trade northward to the cities and towns in the Niger bend via Kong, Buna, and Bole, some Juula, albeit in small numbers, joined the Abron to trade in the forest and venture down to the Atlantic coast (see map 22-2).[1]

The engine for that early trade was slaves. The slave trade between Asante and the Sahel dates from the settlement of Wangara (Juula) traders in the Volta River basin toward the end of the 14th century. During the 15th and 16th centuries, the Juula exchanged gold for slaves whom the Asante exploited in gold production and agriculture.[2] Later the growth of the Atlantic slave trade continued to stimulate demand for slaves from markets north of Asante, and in part led Asante to extend its hegemony over commercial centers at Begho and, subsequently, Bondoukou. An epiphenomenon of the Atlantic trade, which opened Africa to European goods, was the expansion of the slave trade between the coast and the interior. Thus, when the Danes, British, and Dutch abolished the slave trade in 1814, the forest civilizations living near the coast picked up much of the slack.

Juula at Bondoukou and elsewhere in the Volta basin participated in this 18th-century trade as intermediaries between producers in the north and Akan—including Abron—customers. While admittedly sketchy evidence seems to reveal a symbiotic relationship between the Abron and the Muslim traders at that time, the precise nature of the social relationship throughout much of the 18th century remains obscure (Wilks, 1961: 22; 1975: 254). That was not the case for the 19th century, however. With the Gyaman rebellion against Asante in 1817–18, sharp differences between the needs of the Juula and the policies of the Abron emerged.

TRADE AT BONDOUKOU, 1810–74

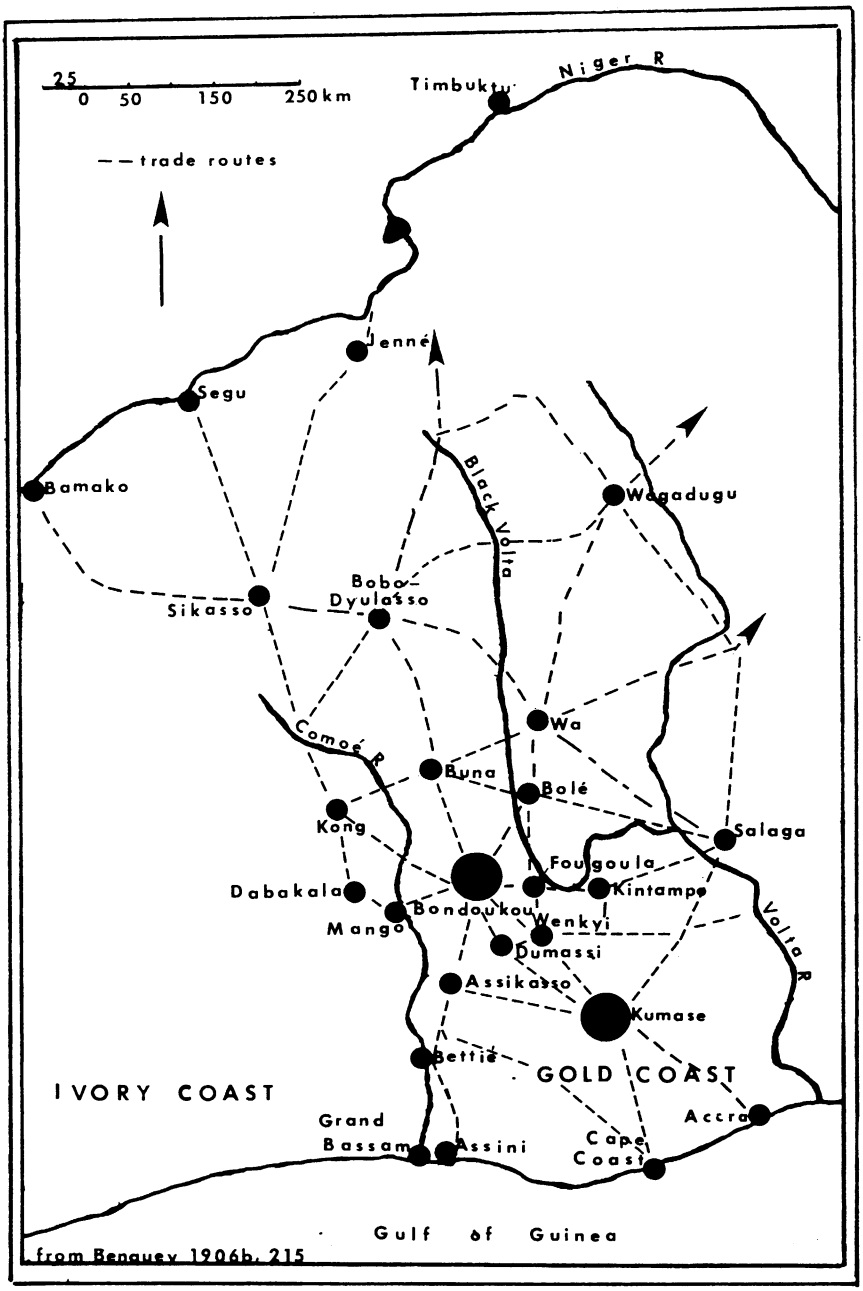
The period from 1810 until the British invasion of Kumase in 1874 encompasses two events of profound importance: the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade, and the Muslim reform movements sweeping across the Sahel early in the 19th century. Both events had a significant impact on Gyaman trade and, by extension, Gyaman politics. The Muslim reformist movements in part led to a sharp increase in kola consumption as a substitute for alcohol;[3] and the elimination of the Atlantic slave trade led to a devaluation of slaves as a commodity and an increase in the value of gold. Coastal merchants, who earlier had sold both gold and slaves from the Akan hinterland to European slave traders in return for arms, powder, and cloth, replaced slaves with raw materials like palm oil, timber, and hides. Only the last came from interior markets like Bondoukou, and their economic importance was minimal. Gold, then, remained the most highly valued export of Gyaman and Asante.

Gold Trade

Until the end of the 19th century, Bondoukou and the surrounding region were reputedly rich in gold (al-Sadi, 1964: 22–23; Pacheco, 1967: 14). Bowdich (1819: 335–336), albeit writing from hearsay, noted that Gyaman was "without comparison being possibly the wealthiest country in gold." Shortly thereafter Dupuis (1824: 1vi) noted that

> Gyaman, and especially its provinces of Ponin, Safoy, and Showy, contains the richest goldmines . . . in this region or in any other region of Africa. By way of comparison they said that in Ashanti, Denkyira, and Wassaw, metallic veins could be found at a depth of twelve cubits below the ground, but that in these provinces of Gyaman this depth is five cubits (nine feet).

The gold trade in Gyaman was largely an Abron monopoly, and although any Abron could pan for gold along aluvial waterways



Map 22-2. Trade routes of the Volta basin, 1874–1900.

and thus accumulate small amounts of capital, gold production for export was dominated by the Abron aristocracy exploiting slave labor (Terray, 1974: passim).[4] Some of the gold the Abron transformed into jewelry and ornaments, or had plated onto state regalia; however, most was exported through Kong to cities on the Niger Bend and through Asante. From there, according to Dupuis' informants, "it moved in small quantities through the maritime provinces of Appolonia, Ahanta, Fanti . . . but the largest part of

the metal [was] taken by traders from the interior or sent to Muslim correspondents in Yendi, Salaga, Banko, Wabea, and other major towns and cities of the North-East" (Dupuis, 1824: 1vii ff.). Thence, continued Dupuis, it circulated throughout the Sudan and the Kingdoms of Bornu, Egypt, and Gharb. In exchange for gold, the Abron elite secured the luxury items, guns, and slaves which, according to Terray, "served as material basis for their superiority . . . [and] . . . assured their social reproduction (Terray, 1974: 335–337; 1975a: 132). The list of trade goods also included cattle, cloth, salt, iron tools, beads, cutlery, scarves, and ornamental jewelry such as coral necklaces from France.

That trade in part reflected the political economy of Gyaman. The production and much of the distribution of gold was the domain of the Abron. While prohibited from mining gold, the Juula could serve as middlemen in much of the Bondoukou gold commerce. In effect, the Abron aristocracy realized the surplus appropriated from their gold-producing captives through trade with the Juula (Terray, 1975a: 132).

Kola Trade

If the Muslim reform movements of the early 19th century stimulated demand for kola, the elimination of the Atlantic slave trade provided impetus for developing kola marketing strategies across West Africa. For example, Asante sought to protect its gold reserves by developing its northern trade. Gold was saved for essential purchases of arms and powder on the coast (Wilks, 1971: passim). Kola, which was cheap, plentiful, and in growing demand in the Muslim north, fueled that transition.

The forest regions just north of Asante and southeast of Gyaman were, prior to the 20th century, some of the easternmost kola-producing zones in West Africa. In that zone kola grew spontaneously and required no labor, and so served as an ideal trade commodity (Bowdich, 1819: 354, 336–337). The region of greatest demand for Asante kola was what is now northern Nigeria. In the early decades of the 19th century, Hausa traders traveled west from the cities of Katsina and Kano, then headed south toward the town of Gbuipe, which served as a kola marketing center (Goody, 1964; Lovejoy, 1973; Wilks, 1982a).

To gain control over the marketing of kola as his predecessors had monopolized the Asante gold trade, Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame nationalized the kola trade in Asante and shifted the market from Gbuipe to the small eastern Gonja village of Salaga. Wilks has shown that the rise of Salaga was a relatively recent phenomenon. Eighteenth century documents on the history of eastern Gonja make no mention of the city that was to become what Bowdich called the "grand emporium" of Gonja, with a population inviting comparisons with Kumase itself (Bowdich, 1819: 341); Dupuis, 1824: XI).

Bondoukou, like Begho, developed in response to the gold and slave trade of the 18th century, and so was less advantageously located for the burgeoning kola trade of a later period. Unlike the Asante, Gyaman had few options for responding to the shift in trading patterns that threatened its economic stability. Lacking control over kola production and marketing, Gyaman could not enforce a trade monopoly by relocating a marketing center. The cities on the Niger bend, the second great kola-consuming area, purchased their kola from producing zones farther west (Person, 1968: 111). The Asante kola-producing zones most accessible to Bondoukou traders were in the Dwumassi and Nkoranza regions, respectively southeast and east of Bondoukou. Bondoukou Juula began exploiting both sources when political disturbances cut trade between Kumase and Salaga during the last quarter of the 19th century; however, during the first quarter of the century Gyaman traders exploiting the Dwumassi kola were required to take a more circumlocutious route that increased the risk of spoilage. To the Abron and Juula of Gyaman, Bondoukou seemed in peril of becoming a commercial backwater.

For their part the Abron elected to challenge the Asante monopoly, established in 1740, that had prevented Abron traders from trading directly with coastal factories (Wilks, 1975: 20, 271–272). In 1818 Gyamanhene Kwame Adingra in effect asserted Gyaman's independence by withholding his annual tribute payment and confecting his own golden stool. The rebellion ended in disaster. After

three days of fighting, Asante troops routed the Gyamans, in part because of alleged defections by the Juula.

The Juula of Gyaman had cause for concern with the turn of events in 1818. Asante was far and away their largest customer, especially for slaves, and also their only source for kola. A successful revolution against Asante would have seriously disrupted commerce between Bondoukou and Kumase until new political alignments emerged (Handloff, 1982: 94). And finally, Asante was now far more dependent on its trade with Salaga than on routes linking Kumase with Gyaman. The Juula, it seemed, had far less to gain by an Asante defeat than did the Abron, and certainly far more to lose (Handloff, 1982: 98–102).

For their part, the Juula pursued a more pragmatic course and began trading directly with Hausa merchants at Salaga, certainly sometime before the Gyaman rebellion against Asante in 1818. The basis for that trade included gold, this time from Lobi (north of Buna), as well as slaves and kola purchased either from Asante or more often at Anno (Mango), an Agni village some 150 km west of Bondoukou. The kola was then either transported to Salaga via Buna and Bole, or exchanged at Buna for gold or slaves (Garrard, personal commun.). Alternatively, traders acquired slaves at Kong, Bole, or Buna, and gold from Lobi north of Buna, whence they headed eastward to Salaga. At Salaga, the Juula purchased local and imported cloth, sea salt, beads, Hausa garments, and livestock. Although the Salaga trade meant new and longer itineraries, the Gyaman Juula adapted.

Unfortunately for the Juula, the Anno-Salaga-Bondoukou trading route ended abruptly, a casualty of faulty Abron diplomacy. In 1821, some two years after having returned from a four-month refuge in Anno, the new Gyamanhene decided to attack his erstwhile hosts in order to replenish the stocks of gold and slaves captured by but not yet ransomed from Asante. The Gyaman Juula argued in vain against the venture which again led to a Gyaman defeat. As anticipated, the trading link between Bondoukou and Anno was cut and, according to informants, not reestablished until the 1890s (Handloff, 1982: 101). To be sure, some Juula still made the trek between Anno and Buna; however, not in the numbers of the prewar period.

Slave Trade

Juula commerce through midcentury was sustained by the domestic slave trade. It is now accepted that with but one exception in the 19th century, Gyaman (like Asante) did not launch predatory slave raids.[5] In explaining his decision, which also informed the Abron policy, Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame said to Dupuis:

> If I fight a king, and kill him when he is insolent, then certainly I must have his gold, and his slaves, and the people are mine too. . . . [T]he great god and the fetish made war for strong men everywhere, because then they can pay plenty of gold and proper sacrifice. When I fought Gyaman, I did not make war for slaves, but because Dinkera [Gyamanhene Adingra] sent me an arrogant message and killed my people, and refused to pay me gold as did his father. (Dupuis, 1824: 163)

Alternatively, the Gyaman aristocracy could have enslaved local peoples under the guise of administering justice; however, the ruling elite, cognizant of its minority status, treated its subjects with moderation "so as to be able to count on their help in military conflicts" (Terray, 1975b: 115–117). More commonly, the Abron, like the Asante, obtained slaves from Juula or Hausa traders. For the Juula of Gyaman, the Asante were far and away the larger purchasers. In exchange for slaves, the Juula obtained kola of which the Asante, and not the Abron, were the principal producers.

Other commodities entered into the exchange: cloth from Kong and Masina, tools and hardware from Kong and Bobo-Juulaso, livestock from Bobo and Segu. But whatever the goods, Asante bought more of them than did the Abron. It was in the interest of the Juula, then, to promote free trade and open roads between the two states. Significantly, the 55-year period between the rebellion of 1818 and the British invasion of Kumase in 1873 was marked by diplomatic stability and free trade, owing perhaps as much to Juula intervention in Abron foreign policy deci-

sions as to the chastening Abron defeat in 1818.

TRADE IN THE EARLY COLONIAL ERA

The third phase in the history of trade at Bondoukou covers the last quarter of the 19th century, from the British invasion of Kumase in 1874 to the establishment of the first French administrative post in Bondoukou in 1897, and might be best described as a period of turbulence as the Asante, British, and French struggled for control of Gyaman trade. Breaches appeared in the Asante trade monopoly and for the first time Gyaman traders, led by the Abron, made their way directly to factories at Cape Coast. Although the coastal trade afforded Abron traders a source of arms, it still proved less important than the interior trade to the north. Of far greater significance was an overall drop in trade, itself a reflection of the ongoing political turmoil in the former provinces of Asante. Following the British invasion and their immediate withdrawal from Kumase in 1874, Asante sought to reconstruct its empire while the British schemed to thwart Asante ambitions (Handloff, 1982: 108, n. 1).

In Gyaman, meanwhile, the sudden change in the balance of power heightened tensions between the Abron and Juula. The Abron wanted to exploit what they perceived to be a weakened if not defeated Asante and restructure ties with their longtime rival. Many Juula, on the other hand, wanted to return to a status quo ante, with Asante resuming its political and commercial dominance. Thus, the Juula—or at least a Juula faction—supported a pro-Kumase group of Abron who attempted a palace coup in the early 1880s (Handloff, 1982: 198 ff.). Its failure and the incumbent threat of renewed conflict between Gyaman and Asante virtually halted all trade between the two, again to the dismay of the Juula.

The coastal trade, which developed following the defeat of Asante in 1873–74, proved to be far less interesting for both the Europeans or the Juula. French traders in the Ivory Coast protectorate, with little understanding of trade routes in the interior, began raising import duties to support the colonial administration. By the early 1890s Gyaman traders—Abron and Juula alike—responded by heading to factories in Cape Coast or Togo.[6] Yet trade between Gyaman and Cape Coast was also erratic as Asante loyalists in Adansi, Sefwhi, and Bewai harrassed Gyaman traders attempting to circumvent Kumase's authority.[7]

Larger economic forces were also adversely affecting trade in Gyaman. During this period, Gyaman traders were experiencing the change in terms of trade that had confronted Asante earlier in the century: apart from gold, few if any locally produced goods were suitable exports. But Gyaman gold reserves, which never rivaled those of Asante (notwithstanding accounts to the contrary), were nearly depleted. Compensating in part for the tepid coastal trade and the declining gold trade was the domestic slave trade, spurred more by supply than demand. The bulk of slaves passing through Gyaman continued to move into Asante, which exchanged them for arms in the French protectorate.

The continuation of the domestic slave trade in Gyaman and Asante highlighted a significant difference between the policies of the two colonial powers that would have a profound impact on Gyaman domestic politics during the final years of the century. Although France and Great Britain opposed slavery and were equally committed to its elimination in their respective colonies, both, in Hopkin's words (1973: 266–267), "sought for practical reasons to control the pace of emancipation." To the Juula of Gyaman, the French were far more flexible than the British, who manumitted slaves brought into Cape Coast Colony (Handloff, 1982: 234 ff.). That distinction was crucial since the Juula, like the Abron, relied on captive labor for both farming and trade. Thus Gyaman traders, and the Juula in particular, shifted the bulk of their trade back to the French protectorate.

The Abron undoubtedly shared the Juula perspective; however, what were seen as French efforts to carve out a huge chunk of Gyaman territory by partitioning the empire into British and French spheres proved more salient than the slavery issue (Handloff, 1982: 233 ff.). In short, the French were interested in conquering territory, in part to monopolize

trade which they perceived to be a Juula enterprise. The Juula, whose trading network transcended the boundaries of Gyaman territory, were not threatened by the French hegemony as long as trading opportunities remained. Indeed, French merchants on the coast sold the Juula trade goods, and especially arms and powder, which remained under a British embargo at Cape Coast; French administrators protected and encouraged Muslim traders both in Bondoukou and elsewhere in the region; and the French equivocated on the slavery issue.

A final break between the Juula and Abron followed a confrontation between a small French garrison and Agni traders at Agni-Belikrou, south of Bondoukou, in 1898. The Juula, under the leadership of the Bondoukou Imam, offered support to the French; the Abron, to their opponents. In the aftermath of the uprising, the French administrators summarily executed three Abron royals and installed the Imam as the nominal authority in Bondoukou as well as several Abron villages.

CONCLUSION

The Juula city of Bondoukou, located in the Abron kingdom of Gyaman, was the southernmost terminus in the trade network linking Asante to the trading cities in the Niger bend. From the perspective of the Juula community, Asante (and not the Gyaman elite) was the significant trading partner. Maintaining ties with Asante became the objective in Juula relations with both the Abron and Kumase until the mid-1890s when it became apparent that the British intended to thwart any attempts by Asante to reassert its economic and political independence. On several occasions during that period the Juula policy of ensuring unencumbered trade with Asante provoked confrontations with the Abron aristocracy which, at the same time, ought to redefine its ties to its former Asante overlords. As provisioners to Asante and, for a brief period at the start of the 20th century, to French factories on the coast, Juula traders sought to guarantee the permanence of those markets.

NOTES

1. Wilks' sources mention visits to the coast in the 16th century, but that was before Asante became an imperial power. See Wilks, 1983: 337.

2. A concise description of the labor processes associated with both tasks is given in Wilks, 1978: 501–508, 520.

3. Wilks (1971) discusses the implications of the new commerce for Asante.

4. See also the counter argument of R. Dumett (1979) who maintains that in Gyaman (as in Asante) gold production, although a monopoly of the ruling Abron lineages, was not a state monopoly. Both studies (Terray, 1974) describe in great detail the technology of gold mining in 19th-century Gyaman.

5. The one documented exception to that was the campaign against Buna in 1825. That campaign followed the costly defeats against Asante in 1818 and Anno (Mango) two years later.

6. Public Records Office, Colonial Office, 879/20 Africa (Gold Coast) p. 268, no. 1: Griffeth to Kimberley, dd. 22 Dec. 1882.

7. Public Records Office, Colonial Office 879/19, Africa (West) p. 249, no. 56: Lonsdale's Report on his Mission to Ashante and Gaman, dd. 14 Apr. 1883.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE IN GREATER ASANTE

CHAPTER 23. ASANTE AND THE AKAN PERIPHERY: THE BAULE ON THE WESTERN AKAN FRONTIER

Timothy C. Weiskel

ABSTRACT

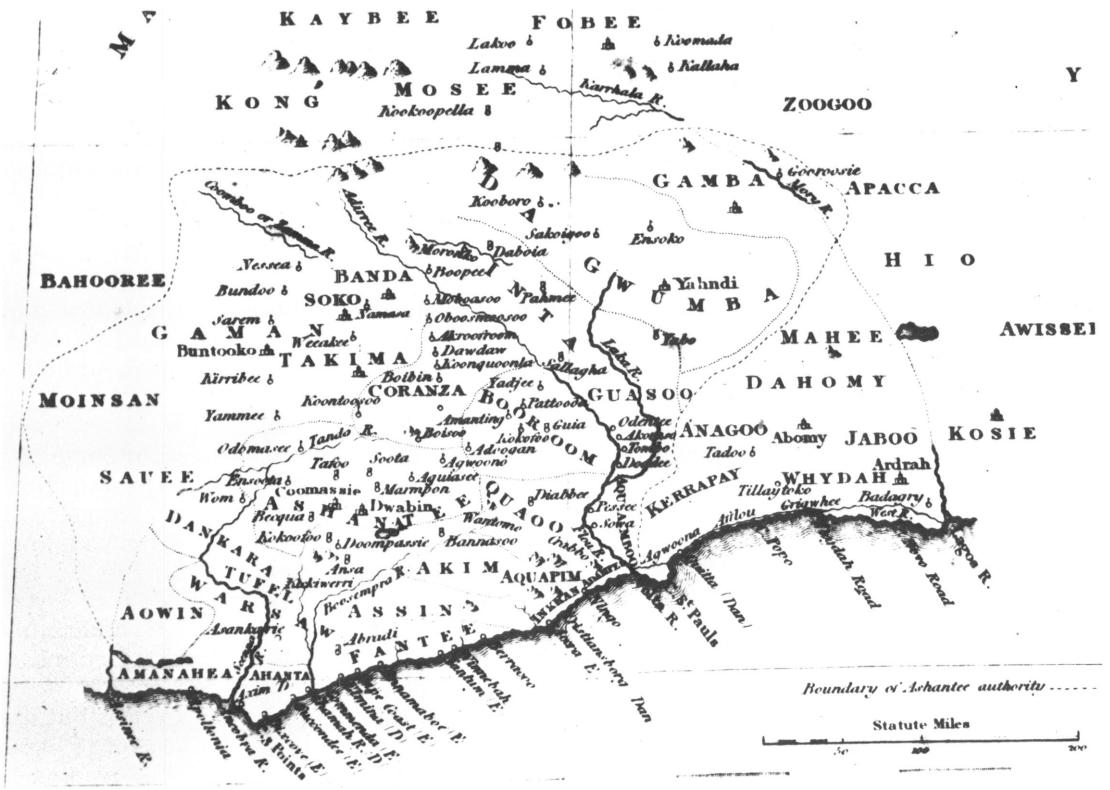
The Baule peoples of the Ivory Coast form the westernmost groups of the Akan-speaking peoples. Linguistically, they are clearly closely related to the Asante, and their myths of origin tie them directly to the Asante court in Kumase. Recent research, however, reveals that the history of the Baule involves more than a straightforward account of massive migration. To a large extent, Baule social, political, and cultural characteristics differ considerably from those in the central Asante regions. In the light of this information it now seems necessary to construct a new model of Baule historical evolution. In this paper I focus on the Baule experience and discuss the kind of influence the Asante kingdom had beyond its borders of control, which exemplifies how societies emerged and developed during the period of economic expansion prior to formal European control in West Africa.

INTRODUCTION

The map established by Thomas Bowdich in 1817, published initially in England in 1819 (map 23-1) and later in the same year in France, draws an interesting line that tries to demarcate a vague and elusive boundary (Bowdich, 1819: frontispiece). The key to the map in the French version (map 23-2) indicates that the line refers to the "Limites des Aschantes." But at best this is a somewhat deformed translation from the English map where the key reads: "Boundary of Ashantee authority." The French map seems to emphasize the presence of the Asante themselves up to the border indicated, whereas the English version more clearly indicates that it is describing the notion of political authority rather than the physical extent of Asante occupation.

On both maps there is an important enumeration of names indicating groups beyond the drawn boundary. The English edition of the map delineates several peoples as far north as "Timbuctoo" and beyond, whereas the French version confines itself to the southern portion of the initial map. On each map, however, there is only one group shown to the west of the boundary. The French map designates these people to be the "Bahourie" and the English version labels them the "Bahooree." There is little doubt that both maps refer to the peoples now known as the Baule of the present-day Ivory Coast. Indeed it seems that some variation of the term had been in use to designate the region since the late 16th century (Weiskel, 1978: 506, n. 6, and accompanying maps).

Just what the existing relations were between the Asante kingdom and the Baule at



Map 23-1. Frontispiece from: T. E. Bowdich, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee, with a statistical account of that kingdom, and geographical notices of other parts of the interior of Africa* (London, J. Murray, 1819). This is a detail of the frontispiece map; the full map is quite a bit larger.

the time is not clear. Bowdich (1819: 169) indicates only that he heard of their existence while in Kumase. "A powerful kingdom called Bahooree, which has hitherto successfully resisted the Ashantees, was described to be westward, and expected to afford refuge to the King of Gaman [Abron] on the approaching invasion [i.e., the Asante invasion of Gyaman]." But Bowdich gives no further details concerning the Baule, and other European sources throughout most of the 19th century are equally mute on the subject. In the absence of detailed historical archaeology, the relations between the Asante kingdom and the Baule must for the moment be reconstructed from a critical reading of oral tradition and an analysis of patterns of homology in their respective social structures and cultural expression.

An examination of this sort reveals that the Asante kingdom's cultural influence was considerable even in regions where it exercised little or no political power and where the majority of the inhabitants were most likely not of Akan origin. Indeed, Asante influence upon its neighbors to the west provides an illuminating case of what might be called Akan "cultural imperialism" or, more accurately, the gradual cultural infusion of a whole region by a powerful and compelling exogenous cultural tradition. In part, we can speak of this as a case of Akan cultural forms migrating beyond areas of Akan control, but more significantly, we can see at work in the emergence of the Baule people a powerful and original cultural form imposing itself upon the vicissitudes of historical conjuncture.

At first glance, this effort might seem like yet another exercise in the time-honored tradition of idealist historical explanation. However, the attempt here is to focus attention on the material and social substrate of

an expanding ideological system. Under particular material and historical conditions, ideas and symbols can migrate, displace, conquer, and dominate every bit as impressively as massive numbers of refugees or armies. In the historical context of the slave trade it is important to examine the emergent metaphors of power and authority among ascendant groups, for the influence of these groups far outdistances the realm of their direct political control. Where royalty is concerned, the power of suggestion can be very powerful indeed, but only if royalty itself is backed by the exercise of real power. Beyond its western borders Akan metaphors of power and authority gradually came to dominate political life amidst largely non-Akan populations from the 17th to the 19th centuries, and the processes involved in this synthesis of Baule cultural forms deserve explicit attention.

THE PROBLEM OF BAULE "ORIGINS"

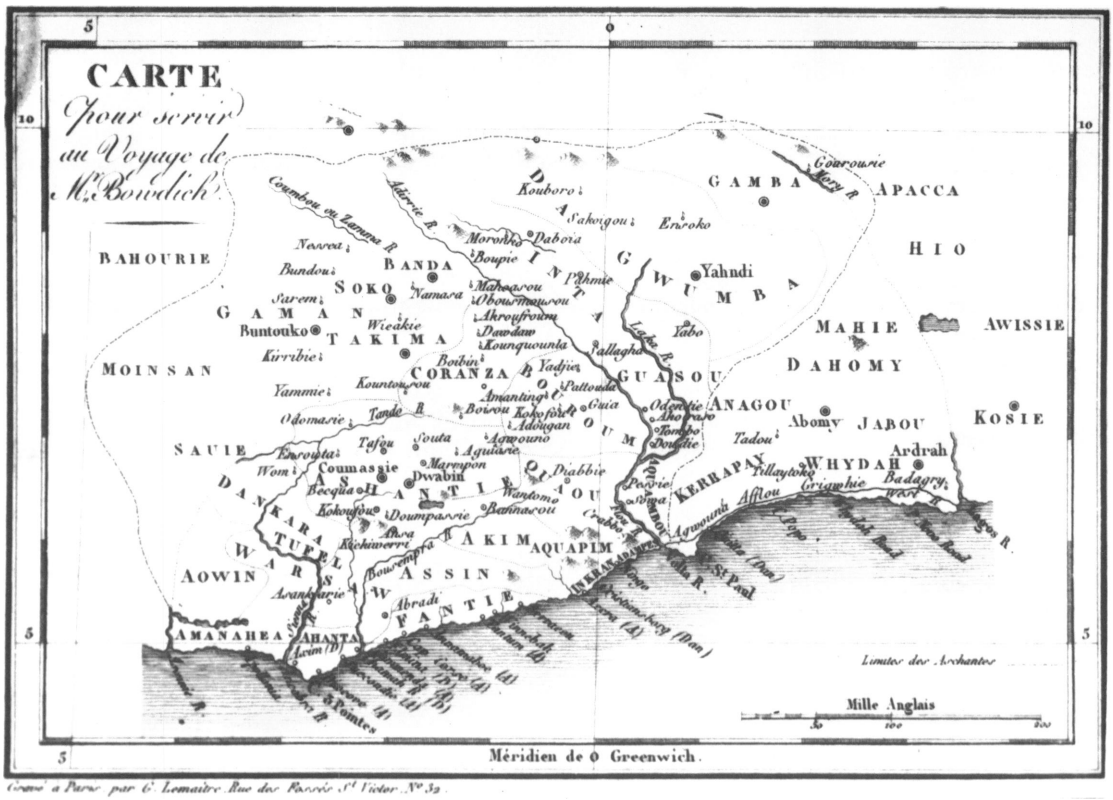
A critical reading of Baule oral traditions helps to make clear the nature of our problem. Virtually all accounts of Baule origins contain passages claiming direct lineal descent from the Asante court. Moreover, this link is presumed to settle the origin question once and for all. According to the earliest published account, genealogical derivation from the Asante court was explicit (Delafosse, 1900: 159–164). Upon the death of Osei Tutu, a succession dispute was said to have arisen between Dakon and Opoku Ware in which Dakon was killed. Auro (or Aura) Pokou, one of Dakon's sisters, is then alleged, according to several accounts, to have led a group of refugees westward. Upon reaching the Comoé River, Queen Pokou is said to have sacrificed her child in a dramatic act that enabled her followers to cross the river unscathed, while their pursuers were stopped. The migrant group under her leadership is reputed to have taken the name "Baule" from a phrase commemorating the extraordinary sacrifice, "ba au-le"—the child is dead. After traveling first south and westward toward the present-day town of Tiassalé, Queen Pokou subsequently moved northward eventually settling in the region known as Gossan between the N'Zi and the Bandama rivers. In the course of these movements Queen Pokou is alleged to have constituted specific subgroups from her following, naming them and settling them in designated territories after having conquered these regions from the preexistent populations.

This account seems straightforward enough and sufficiently anchored in the history of particular events to satisfy some that it is a faithful historical narrative. Indeed, several accounts of the Baule proceed to take this record of oral tradition at face value and "read" it as a record of historical fact rather than as a set of representations about history.[1]

Upon closer examination, however, there are difficulties with this reading of Baule traditions. In the first place, the dates and chronologies attached to the reputed sequence of events do not seem to correlate with one another. Bowdich gives the date of Osei Tutu's death as 1720, whereas Maurice Delafosse assigns his death to 1731, indicating that Aura Pokou probably departed from Kumase around that time. Delafosse knew of Bowdich's dating of the key events, but his own dating of the departure of Aura Pokou seems to have been influenced by reading J. M. Sarbah (1897) when he was compiling his own manuscript on the Baule in the library of the Musée de l'Homme in 1900 (Delafosse, 1900: 163, 189, 200). Recent work by Ivor Wilks indicates, however, that Dakon did not make his unsuccessful bid for power until the death of Opoku Ware in 1749 (Wilks, 1975: 327–328). This suggests that if the ascribed motivation for Aura Pokou's initial departure is correct it must have taken place around or shortly after 1750 rather than at the time of death of Osei Tutu in 1720 or 1731 when the initial published account of the Baule myth places the event.

Future research may clarify these questions of chronology concerning particular events, yet the "problem" of Baule origins cannot be so easily dispatched. We still need to assess the historical status of the myth itself. Simply put, we need to answer the question: are we dealing with propositions of historical fact or with an ideology of history?

The statements made by those who first collected the Baule myths of origin are instructive in this regard. Albert Nebout was the first civilian officer sent by Governor Bin-



Map 23-2. Frontispiece from: T. E. Bowdich, *Voyage dans le pays d'Aschantie* (Paris, Gide Fils, 1819).

ger to administer the post of Kodiokoffikro in central Baule country, after the withdrawal of Monteil's military expedition in 1895. He was joined a few months afterwards by Maurice Delafosse, a young and enthusiastic administrator eager to understand the Baule peoples. Nebout appears to have been the first to collect information on Baule origin myths, but Delafosse was the first to synthesize them and record them in detail. Initially Delafosse's notes in this realm were copied in part from writings of Nebout on the subject. As Delafosse indicated in his own notes, his first observations about the Baule were compiled "d'après un rapport de M. Nebout et des notes."[2] In these notes he explicitly refers to the Akan migrants as "Des Achanti."

> Des Achanti, relativement peu nombreux (quelques centaines tout au plus), vinrent de l'est et chassèrent les Gouro dans les forêts de l'Ouest [. . .] Les différents chefs de famille de l'invasion achanti devaient porter les nomes de tribus actuelles: Zipouri, Eloumoi, Atoutou, Saafoué, etc. Chacun fonda un village, s'entoura de ses parents et d'esclaves et forma ainsi une petite tribu qui porta son nom. Mais les éléments achanti ne furent pas longtemps à rester purs. Les membres de chaque famille durent nécessairement contracter alliance avec des femmes esclaves. Le fils d'un homme libre et d'une femme esclave étant libre, les fruits de ces unions continuèrent à porter le nom de la famille achanti, tout en ayant du sang étranger [. . .] On cite dans chaque tribu quelques individus, très peu nombreux, qui descendent directement des conquérants.[3]

In later formulations Delafosse and others referred not so much to the "Achanti" settlements but rather to the entire group of Akan peoples in the Ivory Coast as the "agni-achanti" and to those within in the Baule region as the "agni du baoulé." A subsequent account by Tauxier of the nature of Baule origins includes an emphasis similar to that of Nebout and Delafosse's early formula-

tions. Once again the focus is upon social process rather than actual events in order to describe a gradual transformation. Referring to the successive waves of migrant groups, Tauxier indicates (1932: 7):

> Une fraction du reste poussa bien au-delà du Comoé et s'établit entre les bassins du Nzi et du Bandama blanc, en plein centre de la Côte d'Ivoire. Ce sont les Agnis du Baoulé appelés souvent Baoulés ou Baourés, quoiqu'il faille distinguer avec soin la vieille population autochtone du pays, des Agnis conquérants qui vinrent se superposer à elle vers le milieu du 18e. Presqu'une moitié de la Côte d'Ivoire se trouva donc *agnifiée,* si l'on veut bien me passer ce néologisme.

Indeed, Tauxier goes on to warn his readers that one should not be fooled by appearances in the Baule region (1935: 2–3):

> . . . il ne faudrait pas prendre pour de vrais Agni beaucoup d'indigènes du Baoulé qui se disent maintenant Agni et qui ne le sont pas plus que les Gallo Romanus du temps de Clovis n'étaient les Francs. Le Baoulé n'est pas un être Agni mais une être "Agnifiée," une être qui a été soumise à la domination Agni. . . .

The essential question about Baule origins is altered in the face of these observations. The context is broadened by the turbulent nature of events on the western Akan frontier, and fundamental questions involving the interplay between culture and history come into view. In studying these circumstances we are no longer confined to nailing down the precise dates of departure or the exact composition of reputed groups of migrants. Instead we are called upon to focus on the more general processes of cultural conversion—what Tauxier has characterized as "agnification," that is the "Akanization"—of an entire region from the limits of Asante control to the Bandama River. In reality it may be more accurate to characterize the process as one of "cultural emergence," for it was from the encounters along the western Akan frontier that the Baule as an identifiable cultural group came into being and defined their cultural forms. Cultures are in some sense artifacts of history just as history itself, as we shall see, is encapsulated in cultural frames of understanding to form tradition.

The mechanisms through which the gradual emergence of Baule culture realized itself are not fully documented. Indeed, even if there had been a long succession of visitors among the Baule who had left published accounts of their trips, their accounts would not have been likely to contain the kind of irrefutable evidence needed to "prove" that the region had experienced a cultural conversion to Akan metaphors of authority and power. The process was probably too gradual and too subtle to be commented upon by any set of contemporary observers.

Despite the lack of incontrovertible evidence for the moment, however, there is some heuristic value in reflecting upon the processes and mechanisms of cultural conversion, for this kind of examination can illuminate fruitful avenues of research in the coming years. The model of cultural emergence presented here, then, is outlined with the hope of stimulating discussion and suggesting several hypotheses that can be tested in further research on the cultural expansion of the Akan and the evolution of the Baule peoples.

SOME CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS IN A MODEL OF CULTURAL EMERGENCE

The Skewed Demographic Composition of Migrant Groups

The process of cultural conversion needs to be grounded in a consideration of the demographic circumstance prevailing at the time of the slave trade era in the Akan hinterland. Unfortunately, while the transatlantic trade has received the attention of historians of Africa, we know little in detail about the demographic composition of most African societies touched by the slave trade. Some historians have provided estimations, but their figures and logic require scrutiny. Paul Lovejoy has suggested, for example, that it is possible to derive figures on the nature of local slave populations from the obverse of export figures: "The percentage of newly enslaved people who were not exported but retained in Africa can be assessed by reversing the age and sex ratios of exported slaves . . ." (Lovejoy, 1983: 63).

It is best to guard against oversimplified reasoning in this regard, for several contradictory processes can be hidden in the same

set of figures. Given the complex dynamic of patterns of fertility and mortality in circumstances where new food sources, new diseases, and new forms of armed conflict were emerging simultaneously, it is difficult to draw simple conclusions about the nature of remaining captive or resident communities from export figures alone. Indeed, it may be a fallacy to assume, as Lovejoy's logic seems to imply, that equal ratios of men and women were enslaved in Africa in the first place. While captives were a main product of warfare, they were not the only product. Waves of fleeing populations were "produced" as well, moving as migrant refugees into less disturbed regions to escape capture. The probable demographic structure of these populations is of importance in assessing the social and cultural impact of the rise of the Asante kingdom on surrounding areas.

Consider, for example, the nature of 18th century westward Akan migrations in the context of warfare. Although precise figures or ratios are lacking, a consideration of customary wartime practices among the Akan suggests that areas peripheral to open conflict and warfare might have been characterized by a significantly asymmetrical demographic structure. Frequently the custom in time of war was to place elders, women, and children, along with valuable transportable wealth, in safe spots at some distance from the expected conflict, along possible lines of retreat (Delafosse, 1913: 266–268). Young men would be engaged in battle, but in case of defeat those who were not directly captured could retreat to the prearranged safe spots to join their women and children. If the victorious party in the conflict pursued the defeated party, something akin to a wave of refugee migration could ensue. The migrant group would be composed of the remaining war-weary young men reunited with elders, women, and children.

Demographically, this wave of migrants would most likely have been characterized by an asymmetrical population pyramid with sex and age ratios skewed in favor of young women, elders, and children. Key young men may have played leadership roles, but after particularly devastating defeats at the hands of rival Akan, the fleeing groups may have had few accompanying young males. These groups could have been inspired and directed by forceful women whose zeal matched their fear of capture at the hands of pursuing adversaries. When fleeing, movement had to be rapid to be effective, and it is quite probable that dependent portions of the population, particularly infants, were highly vulnerable. Their welfare may have been sacrificed for the survival of those who could flee.

Marriage Strategies with Minority Migrants in the Context of Asymmetrical Inter-regional Trade

In moving westward from the heartland of Akan conflict, the refugee migrants did not flee into vacant country. Preexisting populations of Krou and Mandé origin inhabited regions intruded upon by Akan migrant groups during the 18th and 19th centuries. In addition, it is likely that outposts of Akan merchants, engaged as intermediaries in the trade of kola nuts, gold, cloth, and slaves toward Kumase, lived in scattered locations amidst these populations.[4] It is probable that the outcome of particularly extensive wars in the Akan hinterland—like that between Dinkera and Asante in 1702—led to pronounced periods of outmigration westward as waves of refugees sought to join former trading communities or establish themselves on their own among the Krou and Mandé groups. For this reason alone, metaphors of warfare, flight, defeat, and conquest may well have provided a common vocabulary of discourse for the migrant groups; but other forms of movement, assimilation, and integration may have been more important in establishing eventual Akan hegemony west of the Comoé River. In particular, marriage alliances between incoming Akan and local populations in the context of asymmetrical power relations of the slave trade probably did as much to consolidate Akan hegemony in this region as any act of forceful conquest.

To appreciate how this might have worked, it is helpful to remember that although the incoming migrants may have proved weaker in the conflicts of the Akan heartland, they were not necessarily weak or defenseless compared with populations of the central Ivory Coast. On the contrary, they were most likely better armed and munitioned than the

local populations, though they perhaps lacked the full complement of warrior manpower. In addition, although fleeing the east, nonetheless the immigrants retained contacts there—however tenuous at first—through whom they could establish vital trade links for continued sources of arms and powder. In this, the question of language was probably crucial. Those who knew how to conduct commerce in Akan languages and were familiar with Akan trade routes, sources of supply, and families of merchants no doubt enjoyed a measure of respect and power beyond that afforded to them on the basis of the size of their direct following. Indeed, as time passed, the size of that following could increase considerably as the result of successful trade with the Akan communities to the east.

Dignitaries from the preexistent local populations of Krou and Mandé would have been interested in cultivating cordial working relations with incoming migrants who showed promise in this regard. After all, their own position in relation to local rivals depended to some extent upon their access to firearms and trade goods which flowed most abundantly through Akan trade circuits. Although various forms of contractual agreements could no doubt be concluded between the incoming Akan settlers and the resident groups, perhaps none were as binding as those consolidated through marriage alliances. It is likely that the more important of the resident families would have regarded alliances with incoming migrants as beneficial to their interest.

For their part, the incoming migrants stood to gain from such alliances as well. In their case the primary benefits conferred through these alliances could include security from attack and dependable access to land. If the kind of sex ratio imbalance discussed above was characteristic of the migrant groups, an "excess" of Akan women may have been available for existing elders and "brothers" among the migrants to extend in marriage alliance to resident dignitaries. Open armed conflicts may have characterized some of the encounters between incoming waves of migrants and existing populations, but despite their important role in the collective or "constitutional" memory of the group, cases of armed conquest were probably not as important in establishing the permanent residence of incoming groups as a sustained pattern of intergroup marriage alliances mutually beneficial to both groups.

Over time, such advantageous practices appear to have become customary, substantially altering the very notions of approved or discouraged marriage practices among the migrant Akan. Within the heartland Akan, for example, there exists a slight preference for matrilateral cross-cousin marriage (Fortes, 1950: 254–284). When observed, this pattern of marriage would have the effect of cementing enduring and repeated ties of alliance between two extended lineages in the kind of matrilineal societies characteristic of the heartland Akan areas. Among the Baule of the central Ivory Coast, however, this kind of marriage pattern is considered a form of incest. Nonparallel marriage alliances are the only ones allowed—that is, neither males nor females are allowed to marry in a direction that would replicate an existing or remembered marriage alliance (Etienne, 1972). The Baule pattern, involving the maximum dispersion of marriage alliances, would have been a highly adaptive strategy to develop on the part of incoming migrants who wished to link themselves with the greatest number of local families. It may be that the adaptive advantages of this kind of marriage strategy led to its wide-scale acceptance as a marriage norm among the Akan on the western frontier—a norm which clearly replaced the preferential matrilateral cross-cousin marriage of the Asante heartland.

The Preservation and Transmission of Culture on the Interethnic Frontier

It might be argued that these kinds of alliances would have led to the rapid assimilation of Akan elements within the preexistent populations, with little possibility of the migrant Akan retaining much if any of their Akan cultural identity. This would seem to be all the more the case if the incoming migrant groups were not very numerous, as Nebout, Delafosse, Tauxier, and all of the early sources on Baule tradition indicate. As Delafosse recounted it: "Des Achanti, relative-

ment peu nombreux (quelques centaines tout au plus), vinrent de l'est et chassèrent les Gouro dans les forêts de l'Ouest . . ."[5]

Yet something remains incomplete either with the available facts or the logic of cultural assimilation because it is abundantly evident that the incoming Akan did not become culturally absorbed in the resident populations. The Baule in the central Ivory Coast clearly speak an Akan dialect and their material culture shares many of the attributes of Asante culture. How could such a small group have accomplished so much as a bearer of culture? Much larger groups clearly failed to have the same cultural impact. In the Abron region, for instance, the population was several times subjected to large-scale military invasions by the Asante, but these invasions with all the accompanying movement of people and the prestige associated with the Akan language as the language of the socially dominant groups did not succeed in establishing an Akan dialect as the lingua franca of the region. Kulango remains the dialect of most of the subjects of the Abron kingdom. The Baule case is the mirror opposite of the Abron case. No military conquest of the region was ever accomplished by the Asante, yet the Akan cultural influence is pronounced and pervasive. How could a small band of Akan refugees migrating westward to escape captivity have succeeded in implanting Akan culture when among the Abron entire conquering armies failed in the same task?

A threefold answer provides the best explanation to this puzzle. First, and most obvious, although any particular wave of refugee migrants was small, the cumulative number of incoming Akan over the decades, and indeed centuries, of the slave trade era was more substantial than the oral traditions of any one group would suggest.[6] Secondly, the kinds of interethnic marriage alliances mentioned above were contracted in the context of an asymmetrical power relationship, where the cultural distinctness of the incoming migrants could function to the benefit of the resident dignitaries. An incoming migrant who lost all contact with the Akan culture and language and who could no longer function as an effective trade intermediary between resident dignitaries and the Akan trade network was in a sense useless to the resident chief. Becoming thoroughly assimilated with the indigenous population was not in the best interest of either group, and a measure of cultural distinctness may have been encouraged for its potential benefits to both groups.[7]

Finally, and most important, it is necessary to remember that cultures are not genetically inherited—they are socially taught and learned. Hence, not only the demographic structure of the migrant groups and its impact on their circumstance relative to resident populations but also the process of socialization, and particularly the circumstances surrounding the early learning of language are significant. There is some truth to the assertion that those groups which most successfully teach their language to the next generation have the best chance of cultural survival.

Given the peculiar circumstances along the Akan western frontier during the slave trade era there is good reason to believe that the social reproduction of Akan culture proceeded at a disproportionately rapid rate. This led to a situation over several generations where a substantially greater number of people came to identify themsevles as Akan than were in fact descendants of purely Akan ancestors. Under the proper conditions the social reproduction of cultural forms can proceed at a pace that rapidly outpaces biological reproduction or even in-migration. A thorough understanding of this dynamic holds the key to understanding how Akan culture extended itself on its western frontier well beyond the realm of its political control.

Delafosse's early observations give us a partial notion of how this might have occurred. After describing the initial arrival of small groups of "achanti" (i.e., Akan) in the Baule region, Delafosse explains how their population grew: ". . . les éléments achanti ne furent pas longtemps à rester purs. Les membres de chaque famille durent nécessairement contracter alliance avec des femmes esclaves. Le fils d'un homme libre et d'une femme esclave étant libre, les fruits de ces unions continuèrent à porter le nom de la famille achanti, tout en ayant du sang étranger."[8] The emphasis here is on how Akan males, by undertaking marriages with non-

Akan female slaves, managed to swell the ranks of their households and multiply descendants carrying Akan names.

While this dynamic was no doubt an important aspect of Akan social reproduction on the periphery, the cultural "conquest" accomplished by Akan women was probably more significant. There are two reasons for this. First, if the demographic composition of migrants presented above is correct, Akan women, as agents of cultural presence, were simply more numerous than men. More to the point, however, women among the Akan, as in most cultures, played a strategically more important role than men in a crucial aspect of the transmission of culture. Women were preeminently the agents of socialization of very young children. Whomever they married, they tended to teach the Akan dialect they knew to their children as that child's first language or "mother tongue." This meant that even if the Akan women did not remain married within the Akan community—indeed, especially if they married outside that community—they acted as powerful agents of Akan cultural transmission.

The cultural "conquest" in these circumstances was not an abrupt conversion. Children raised along the western Akan frontier, especially those from interethnic marriages, were probably multilingual. The question is not whether they spoke Akan dialects to the exclusion of all else, but whether they spoke them at all. We know little about the sociolinguistics of precolonial multilingual communities, but given the economic advantage and differential power associated with Akan migrant groups, it may be that the Akan dialects became the socially preferred vehicles of communication.

The dynamic of the interior slave trade may have inspired individuals to learn or retain Akan dialects as a measure of self-defense. To some extent the Akan communities on the western frontier served as trading outposts conducting regular seasonal exchange with the Asante heartland. Slaves, as well as gold and cotton cloth, flowed toward Kumase in exchange for guns, powder, and European goods. Those who learned Akan dialects could benefit from this exchange, or at least avoid becoming its victim, for the Akan generally traded non-Akan as slaves. Under these conditions, then, there was a powerful and enduring incentive to learn the Akan dialect along the western Akan frontier. Those who were multilingual may have chosen to identify themselves as Akan in selected circumstances, and no one could accomplish this convincingly without demonstrating thorough competence in an Akan dialect. Sociologically, then, the western Akan frontier contained all the ingredients necessary for the rapid diffusion and thorough assimilation of Akan cultural elements.

Thus, our puzzle can be solved. Unlike the situation among the Abron, where Akan dialects did not penetrate in an enduring fashion, Akan dialects expanded and persisted along the western frontier because the sociological and material context of cultural intrusion differed markedly from the Abron area. Despite the relatively small size and diminished strength of immigrant refugee groups in Baule territory, their arrival, wave upon wave, over decades, combined with their strategic role in an asymmetrical commerce, their ability to establish extensive marriage alliances with local populations, and the key role of their women as socializers of children in interethnic marriages, enabled these groups to function as extraordinarily effective bearers of Akan culture in a region well beyond formal Asante control. This kind of dynamic in the transmission of culture most convincingly explains what Tauxier referred to as the "agnification"—that is, the Akanization—of the entire eastern half of Ivory Coast—a process accomplished from the 17th through the 19th centuries without a single Asante invasion of the region.

Symbols of Authority and Principles of Legitimacy on the Western Akan Frontier

The cultural conversion of an entire region involved more than simply the progressive diffusion of Akan dialects. In addition, symbols of authority and principles of legitimacy characteristic of the court tradition among the Asante became dominant in the entire Baule region. Under the influence of a "literalist" reading of the Queen Pokou myth, it has been customary to think of this process as though it were the inevitable result of the

territorial displacement of previous populations by the mass migration of Akan refugees under Queen Pokou. It now seems, however, that the processes involved were both more gradual and more subtle. Akan hegemony seems to have been established as a result of the local recognition of Queen Pokou's authority and reputed royal origins in Kumase, backed in some cases by the occasional use of armed force.

Some of the early accounts of Baule origins give us a sense of how this aspect of cultural conversion probably occurred. Lieutenant Carpentier, one of the military officers to collect oral traditions and genealogies at the time of the French conquest of the Baule region, recounts the events surrounding Queen Pokou's arrival in the Bouaké area:

> La majeure partie de ces gens sont des autochtones ou plus exactement leur invasion au Baoulé accomplie à une époque antérieur à celle d'Aura Pouku.
>
> Le chef des premiers occupants s'appelait Agpatou Mhenif et résidait à Niamiabo. Aura Pokou venant du sud, vint le trouver et lui demanda de lui indiquer un emplacement où elle put construire son village de préférence à côte d'une lagune! Agpatou lui indiqua le voisinage de la Loka et Pokou s'installa à Badibassendi. *Mais l'origine d'Aura Pokou étant connu, les habitants vinrent bientôt lui suoumettre leurs différents. La reine fugitive ayant acceptée de rendre la justice, Agpatou se jugea offensé et lui déclara la guerre.* Une bataille eut lieu à Baféré près de Soungori à l'est de Yablassou entre les partisans de Pokou et les gens d'Agpatou.
>
> Les premiers, venant de la Côte, pourvus de fusils, en sortirent victorieux, malgré la supériorité numérique de leurs adversaires. Deux chefs furent tués Broukro Batiti de Yablassou et Assouma Korie de Lomo. Agpatou fit amende honorable à Pokou qui désormais commanda tout le pays relevant précédement de son adversaire. [emphasis added][9]

Several details of this account are revealing. First, groups of Akan migrants lived in the region prior to the arrival of Queen Pokou. Second, Queen Pokou arrived in the region from the south peacefully, not at the head of a conquering army. Third, recognizing her royal origins deriving from her association with the court in Kumase, the previous inhabitants turned to her to settle their disputes. Clearly, the new principles of authority operative here are those which the inhabitants recognize as legitimate on the basis of their association with Asante royalty. This recognition of legitimacy takes place on the part of some of the existing residents prior to armed struggle, and indeed the armed engagement itself merely reflects the conflict between two principles of legitimacy—one based on prior occupancy and precedent, the other on an association with the Asante court and renowned leadership abilities.

The outcome is especially interesting. The principles of legitimacy based on association with the Asante court are victorious after an intense but brief struggle in which a few chiefs are killed. Differential supplies of munitions appear to have outweighed sheer manpower in the struggle. Further, the original disputant is not himself killed, nor are his people displaced. Upon the payment of war reparations and the acceptance of Pokou's authority peace is reestablished. As the account concludes, Pokou ". . . désormais commanda tout le pays relevant précédement de son adversaire." Entire regions could have come to subscribe in the essentials to the Queen Pokou version of their origins without having themselves ever having been part of the entourage of migrants that initially accompanied her from Kumase.

What seems to have occurred in the central Ivory Coast, then, was a gradual historical process of incursion, dispute, and resolution between principles of local authority and those based upon derivation from or close association with practices prevailing in the Asante court. Over time in political and juridical realms, Akan cultural metaphors came to dominate the region even though the pure descendants of Akan migrant refugees may never have constituted a majority population.

In other spheres of culture, Akan influence was not as pronounced among the Baule. Certainly systems of kin reckoning and customs of marriage differed considerably from those in the heartland Akan regions. Similarly, in the realm of artistic creation the statuary and carved mask traditions among the Baule seemed to reflect little or no Akan inspiration, but in their metaphors of power and authority the Baule called upon the Asante legacy with full vigor. Ceremonial swords and

linguist staffs, gold weights, and chiefly regalia all sought to replicate symbols of authority familiar in Kumase.

The repetition of the Queen Pokou myth was itself a symbolic gesture. Repetition of the story is perhaps better understood as a symbolic statement of willingness to subscribe to a certain set of emergent power relations rather than as a faithful account of historical events. Its wide-scale diffusion among Baule subgroups with differing dialects and customs suggests that it became a kind of ideological charter myth for a whole series of disparate groups who sought to formulate their conceptions of relatedness in terms of common descent from Asante origins. The power of the Queen Pokou myth as an integrating ideological representation can be seen from the fact that there are instances of groups who adopted and currently repeat the Queen Pokou story as their own myth of origin without themselves speaking any Akan dialects (Bernus and Vianes, 1963: 20–23). In fact, the theme of a woman leader sacrificing her child seems not to be unique to the Baule in West Africa (Bertho, 1946). Here, quite dramatically, the cultural formulation of a historical narrative clearly assumes a life of its own, demonstrating an ability to travel well beyond the communities that recalled the events as incidental history. It is as if Queen Pokou's larger-than-life heroic exploits were too compelling for her to be merely the queen of a bedraggled group of refugees. Events had become history. In Marshall Sahlin's formulation, "happenings" had been "re-cognized" as significant events (Sahlins, 1985: 146).

THE WESTERN AKAN FRONTIER: A CRUCIBLE OF NEW TRADITION

In the light of all these considerations, it is possible to reassess the significance of the Baule on the western Akan frontier. It is tempting to consider the Baule—and most scholars have yielded to this tendency—as a case study in the history of the expansion of Akan populations. The task from this perspective is one of tracing known genealogies back through datable events to verifiable origins among the heartland Akan groups. However, this approach brutally simplifies and thus falsifies a whole series of more subtle processes.

The Baule did not migrate from Kumase. They emerged as a distinct and self-identified culture with their own collective representations as a result of the particular conjunctures of warfare, flight, and resettlement in the 18th and 19th centuries. This was more a process of cultural synthesis than one of simple cultural transmission. The inverted form of their myths reflect their peculiar history. Whereas many charter myths of origin begin in remote and mythic time and move forward to known events, the Baule structure is the reverse. Their charter myth begins with a historical event and subsequently unfolds with heroic deeds of mythic proportions.

Along the western Akan frontier during this period, then, we are in the presence of processes that Roy Wagner (1975) might call "the invention of culture," or what Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have labeled "the invention of tradition." It should not surprise us that Baule traditions emerge from the flux and turmoil of warfare, defeat, and flight. On the contrary, these are precisely the moments most conducive to their development. As Hobsbawm observes, times of rapid change are disproportionately fruitful for the invention of tradition: "There is probably no time and place with which historians are concerned which has not seen the 'invention' of tradition in this sense. However, we should expect it to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable . . ." (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983: 4). Nor should we be surprised that the traditions take the cultural form of what Marshall Sahlins calls "history in the heroic mode," for as he reminds us "the potential for déracinement . . . appears as characteristic of the heroic age . . ." (Sahlins, 1985: 41, 46).

In this respect Queen Pokou was not so much a historic figure as she was (and is) an organizing principle—a contemporary ancestor used by different groups to define themselves and their relations to one another under remarkably turbulent conditions. She offered a new principle of leadership and a new means of belonging—echoing an association with past Asante royalty, but mani-

festing herself in mythic acts of heroic leadership that inspired contemporary group loyalty. Her place as a mythic/historical figure was secured in collective representations precisely because she provided the crucial link with the known Asante past that made experience intelligible for many groups of migrant refugees. For them she became the means of organizing contemporary experience in terms of the structurally significant past.

To speak of the "invention" of Baule tradition does not mean to suggest that the personage of Queen Pokou was fabricated. On the contrary, a historical figure named Aura Pokou did actually lead a band of refugees from Kumase, across the Comoé River to settle in the region between the N'Zi and Bandama rivers. The group itself may have been in comparative terms quite sizable, and it may have used its superiority in arms and munitions to establish its presence in some locations by force. There is no good reason to doubt this much as a basis for what emerged, but the historical elements themselves do not create the tradition.

What is of greater significance than the historical veracity of the account or the particular origins of the migrants themselves is the way in which selected elements of Asante culture came to symbolize authority and legitimacy among highly diverse groups on the western Akan frontier. Reference to Aura Pokou and the Asante of Kumase became the legitimating principle of political and juridical activity, and repetition of the myth of origin became itself a badge of identification for groups in the Baule region.

As Hobsbawm points out, "inventing traditions . . . is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983: 4). It is in this sense that Baule traditions were "invented"—a particular narrative of what Hobsbawm has called the "relevant past" was selected and transformed into a formula that received widespread currency among a range of disparate groups in a relatively short period of time. Asante cultural influence extended itself on the western Akan frontier in the 18th and 19th centuries well beyond the borders of its formal control, but ultimately the Asante metaphors of power and authority were incorporated into new and original patterns of Baule culture.

NOTES

1. Many accounts of the Baule simply repeat the myth as a historical backdrop to explain the beginnings of the Baule. See, for example, Guerry, 1970; Duprey, 1962; Brousse, 1932. Sékou Bamba produced one of the most complete studies of oral traditions of the southern Baule region by an Ivorian scholar (Bamba, 1975). It tends to deal with oral traditions as straightforward historical documents rather than problematic texts. A comparative study of the different versions of the Baule origin myth is being conducted by Dr. Ute Luig.

2. Delafosse Private Papers, Notebook, 1894. Entry for 8 Nov. 1894.

3. Ibid.

4. Virtually all sources on the origins of Akan peoples in the Ivory Coast make reference to several waves of migration. The longest established group of incoming migrants, corresponding to the presumed first wave of migrants, is often referred to as the "Agoua."

5. Delafosse Private Papers, Notebook, 1894. Entry for 8 Nov. 1894.

6. The issue of just how important the wave of migrants under Aura Pokou's leadership was is relevant here. It may be that oral traditions surrounding her royal origins and dramatic exodus from Asante assumed an importance in the collective memories of a variety of disparate groups who arrived in the central Ivory Coast either before or after her group. Thus, while the group that she "led" may have been relatively small, after several generations, the groups that identified her as their leader could have been numerous indeed. See discussion on "Symbols of Authority and Principles of Legitimacy," as well as the section "The Western Akan Frontier."

7. There are certainly circumstances where the cultural distinctness of an alien trading diaspora is maintained and reinforced in a multiethnic context. Ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia and Lebanese in West Africa have never been under much pressure to assimilate themselves to the local population because the functions they perform have favored retaining their links with outside groups and cultures.

8. Delafosse Private Papers, Notebook, 1894. Entry for 8 Nov. 1894.

9. Lieutenant Carpentier, "Rapport . . . sur le régime politique du district de Sakasso," Bouaké, Oct. 1905, Archives Nationales de la Côte d'Ivoire, X-28-9.

CHAPTER 24. HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS OF TANO WORSHIP AMONG THE ASANTE AND BONO

Raymond A. Silverman

ABSTRACT

The veneration of the river deity Tano is one of the key religious institutions of the central and northern Akan. Tano worship appears to have originally developed among the Bono (Bron). Even today, the greatest concentration of Tano shrines is in the Takyiman area. The Asante, impressed by Tano's efficacy, assimilated the traditions associated with its worship. The earliest documentary evidence from Kumase demonstrates that by the beginning of the 19th century Tano worship had assumed a prominent position in the religious and political spheres of Asante society.

This paper surveys the historical evidence for Tano worship among the Akan and attempts to place it in the broader context of Akan religion. An examination of Tano traditions in the northern and central Akan regions suggests that religious authority, especially that associated with the gods and their priests, played a more significant role in Bono society than in Asante.

INTRODUCTION

Religion has played a major role in the cultural history of the Akan peoples of Ghana and Ivory Coast. While anthropologists have examined certain aspects of Akan religious thought we still have little understanding of the evolution of religious beliefs or the effects they have had on the development of Akan society as a whole. Historians, for the most part, have chosen to ignore the analysis of Akan religion.[1] This is not because there is no historical data on the subject. Indeed, there is a good deal of documentary and material evidence that demonstrates the significance of religion in the social history of the Akan.

The discussion that follows presents a survey of historical material relating to a single religious institution found throughout the Akan region—the veneration of the river deity, Tano. It is divided into three parts. The first examines Tano worship in the broader context of Akan religion. The second surveys the historical evidence for Tano worship in Asante. The final section considers the relationship between the traditions of the Bono (the Tano heartland) and the Asante.[2]

THE VENERATION OF RIVER DEITIES

The earliest evidence of Akan religious activity is found in the descriptive accounts of Europeans who visited the Gold Coast beginning in the second half of the 15th century. The Portuguese were the first Europeans on the Gold Coast but their accounts of religion are quite scant. It is not until the beginning of the 17th century, in the writings of De Marees (1602), that we have the first substantial description of Akan religion. His account and those of other visitors like Müller, Barbot, and Bosman give a fairly complete picture of the primary spiritual forces associated with Akan religion; namely, the belief in a Supreme Being called Onyame or Onyankopon; the existence of lesser gods, tutelar spirits associated with natural phenomena (e.g., rivers, rocks, mountains, groves, etc.) called *obosom* (pl. *abosom*); ancestral spirits called *osaman* (pl. *asaman*); spiritual forces conjured by man and manifest in charms and amulets called *suman* (pl. *asuman*); and medicines produced by herbalists referred to as *odudo* (pl. *adudo*).[3]

These religious institutions, first observed among the coastal Akan (i.e., Fante), are similar in many respects to those of the central and northern Akan. Several authors have dealt with the relationship that exists among these spiritual forces—our primary concern in the present context is with the *abosom*.[4] Busia (1954: 193) indicates that "According to Ashanti belief, the gods (*abosom*) derive

their power from the Supreme Being. They come from him and are parts of him. A god is but the mouthpiece of the Supreme Being (*Onyankopon Kyeame*), a servant acting as intermediary between Creator and creature." He also notes (p. 193) that among *abosom* "the most powerful are those that are the spirits of rivers." Both Busia (1954: 198) and Meyerowitz (1951: 119–120) emphasize that the river deities, as the children of Onyame, act as intermediaries between man and God.[5] Undoubtedly, their status is derived from the belief that the rivers flowing through central and southern Ghana are a life-sustaining source of water and food (map 24-1). Rattray (1923: 54) notes that among the Akan water is believed to have a divine origin—it comes from Onyame. All Akan communities maintain a strict set of taboos concerning the stream or river from which they draw their water. For example, one day each week is set aside during which the stream or river cannot be visited; nor are menstruating women allowed to approach these important sources of water.

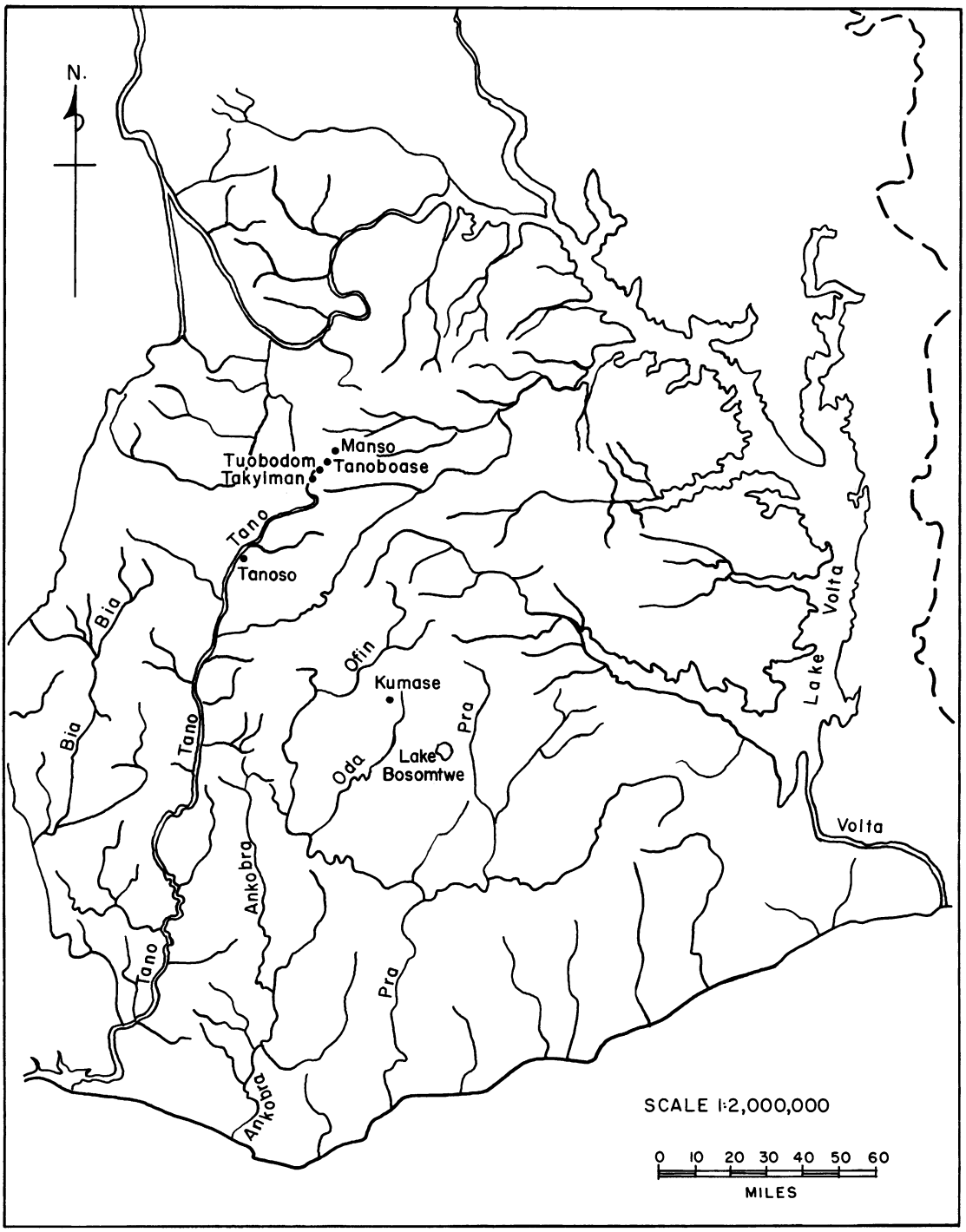
Major bodies of water are afforded special status and are revered as *obosom.* Meyerowitz (1951: 119) asserts that each state worships "a national deity, who is usually a river-god." Thus the Ofin in Denkyira and Asante, the Pra in Akyem, Denkyira, Kwahu, and Asante, and the Tano throughout much of the Akan area are rivers revered as *abosom.* Nineteenth-century accounts of Asante most often mention the Pra which is usually referred to as Bosompra or Bosumpra. Dupuis (1824: xxxii–xxxiii), for instance, indicates that "this river being a tutelar god is dignified with the name Bussem, which may be interpreted sacred, awful, majestic, holy. . ."[6]

One of the major expressions of this veneration of river *abosom* is seen in the institution known as *ntoro* found among many Akan peoples. Rattray (1923: 45–46) has identified *ntoro* as the male counterpart of the *abusua.* It may be equated with the soul or *kra* of an individual and is passed patrilineally, from father to child.[7] There are a limited number of *ntoro* groups, each under the aegis of an *obosom* that is almost always associated with water. These groups normally take the name of their respective tutelar deity. Danquah (1951: 12), the authority most often cited, lists 12 groups of which 6 are rivers, one a lake, and another the sea.[8] The focus of *ntoro* ritual involves purifying the soul with water from the river that is associated with one's *ntoro.* Thus, in inquiring as to a person's *ntoro,* one asks, "what *ntoro* do you wash?"[9]

The association of the *ntoro* system with river deities is significant for it suggests the considerable antiquity of these traditions. Margaret Field (1948: 151) has argued that it is "probable that the *ntoro* is a remnant of the old religiosocial organization on a patrilineal basis which existed over most of the Gold Coast before the [matrilineal] clan system spread from a point somewhere in the North." Field's theory is feasible, especially if viewed in relation to Wilk's recent arguments pertaining to a reorientation of central Akan society based on matrilineal descent that occurred 400 or 500 years ago.[10]

Without doubt, the most popular river *obosom,* especially in the central and northern Akan areas, is Tano (pl. Atano). Rattray (1923: 172) goes so far as to claim that Tano is "the greatest of the Ashanti gods upon earth." A review of the literature dealing with central and southern Ghana and eastern Ivory Coast reveals that Atano are worshiped in varying degrees in almost all the Akan states. Rattray (1923: 199) comments "Their number is indeed legion and there seems no limit set upon them, provided priests be found to interpret and intercept his spirit. We not only find offshoots of Tano in villages remote from that water, but every ford and important crossing of the river seems to possess a local emanation of his spirit." Its prominence has led some authors to set Atano apart from other *abosom.* McLeod (1981: 57), for instance, writing about Asante, distinguishes between Atano and *abosom* stating that "Beneath Onayme were large numbers of lesser powers. The chief of these were usually referred to as *atano,* after the river Tano, and were often associated with major rivers. Of lesser power, but with broadly similar characteristics, were the *abosom.* . . ."[11]

The earliest evidence of Tano worship is found in De Marees's early 17th-century account of the Gold Coast. In it he refers to the special attention afforded the fish of the "Tonnijnen" (De Marees, 1602: 72). To this day, the fish of the Tano are regarded as sa-



Map. 24-1. Major rivers in the Akan region of Ghana.

cred. Further evidence is found in De Marees' (1602: 254) lexicon where he lists the word *acamatano* as the Twi term for a barber's basin (i.e., large brass basin). Brass basins are

commonly used as the receptacles in which Tano *abosom* are enshrined. "*Acamatano*" is, therefore, apparently a compound of *akom,* being a reference to spiritual possession, and Atano, the name given to the deities associated with the Tano River (Silverman, 1983a: 218).[12]

The Fante continue to venerate the Tano River. Fynn (1974b: 7), for instance, makes reference to the worship of Taa Kwabena at Ankaase (Abrem). In addition, Christensen (1954: 81) and Fynn (1975: 84) indicate that the Tano is also regarded as an *agyabosom* by the Fante. Despite its presence on the coast, Tano worship appears to be more popular inland, especially in those areas through which the river flows—Bono, Ahafo, Sefwi, Anyi, Aowin, and Nzima.[13] Its strongest manifestation occurs among the central Bono, the region in which the tradition had its origins. The veneration of Tano is also found in areas, like Fante, that are far removed from the sacred river. Thus one finds Tano being worshipped in places like Asante and the Abron state of Gyaman in Ivory Coast.[14] It is even found among non-Akan people like the Hwela of west central Ghana. Some of the Atano shrines located in these areas may have originally been in communities nearer the Tano River but due to untold circumstances, perhaps war or migration, were relocated. For example, traditions exist relating that at least 16 Atano were taken to Gyaman by Takyiman refugees following the occupation of Takyiman by Asante forces in 1874–75 (Warren 1974: 393).[15] Ellis (1887: 69), writing at the end of the 19th century, was struck by the incongruity of being able to remove an important river *abosom* from its original abode (the river).

> This removal of a local god to another part of the country is a curious illustration of the extent to which an original idea may become perverted . . . all such natural features are believed to possess two individualities, the tangible, and the intangible or spiritual; and it is the latter that is worshipped. Originally these two individualities must have been inseparable. The god of a river could not have been conceived apart from the river. Indeed, they are now regarded as inseparable; but in this case . . . either through the original idea being lost sight of, or through priestcraft, which latter I think the more probable, they appear to be regarded as separable. The spiritualised river, that is the being who acts and wills, is taken away; and the tangible river, the mere stream of water, remains.

In fact, this situation is not incongruous at all. Evidence collected in the central Bono region and Asante indicates that many Atano have migrated far from their original homes. Several shrine priests explained that Atano, like people, can travel and live in different places. The Takyiman deity, Taa Kwasi, for instance, is reputed as having been brought to Takyiman from Akwamu.[16]

TANO IN 19TH AND EARLY 20TH-CENTURY ASANTE

There is a good deal of historical material demonstrating that the worship of Tano was quite important in 18th and 19th-century Asante. Published references to Atano date from as early as the first European visit to Kumase in 1817 and throughout the 19th century.[17] In addition to these, sumptuously decorated shrine houses stand as a poignant testimony to Tano's popularity in Asante.

The first references to the existence of Tano shrines in Asante appear in oral traditions dealing with the formation of the Asante nation under Osei Tutu. It was at this time that the famous priest Okomfo Anokye managed to "capture" a Tano god that had been serving one of Osei Tutu's adversaries and by placing it in a brass basin rendered its powers accessible to the Asantehene (Rattray, 1929: 274).[18]

There is no documentary evidence of Tano worship in Asante until the early 19th century. Bowdich (1819: 262) who provides us with the first European account of the Asante capital, observed that "the present favourite fetish of Ashantee is that of the river Tando." Hutchison, a member of the Bowdich Mission, relates in his diary an encounter he had with "a man white-washed, carrying a vessel covered over with a white cloth. . ." This he was informed was "Tando fetish" (Bowdich, 1819: 387). These are the only explicit references to Tano worship to appear in the published accounts of Asante until the 1880s.

There are, however, a number of indirect allusions to the presence of Atano. For example, several authors observed "fetishes" carried in brass pans. Although these objects may have represented any number of *abosom*

or *suman* it is quite feasible that some of them were Atano shrines. Bowdich (1819: 280), for instance, in his description of the purification ritual performed during an Odwira (yam festival) observed "several pans . . . covered with white cloth, with various fetish under them." Fifty years later Brackenbury (1874: II, 338) noted that during the Kumase Adae Kese "the chief fetish-men come to the palace in the morning, bringing a quantity of brass pans with fetish compounds in them, and offer sacrifices consisting of gin, eggs, sheep's blood, etc." It is quite possible that both observers saw Atano shrines, for several Asante Tano *abosomfoo* interviewed in 1980 indicated that they carried their gods to Kumase during important state festivals.[19] Other references include Cruickshank's (1853: II, 183) description of an Akyem "fetish" that "was brought into court carefully covered over with a white cloth, which, on being removed, gave to view a brass pan containing a lump of clay with parrot's feathers stuck to it." Ramseyer and Kühne (1875: 78) observed during a visit from the Asantehene that some of the King's retinue carried "a brass dish, on which was his [the Asantehene's] fetish, as a protection from evil spirits." In witnessing a military procession in 1872 Ramseyer and Kühne (1875: 207) noted the presence of "three Fetish priests painted white, with their Fetish on their heads."

Other important Tano-related information exists in early accounts. Bowdich (1819: 170) was the first to site the source of the Tano River; located "five days northward of Coomassie, it rises in some rocky hills called Toofeea, near the large town Aenkroo, between the Banda and Inta paths." He also observed that the shrine priest's position was hereditary (Bowdich, 1819: 264). Bowdich (p. 281), in his account of an Adae, notes that the Asantehene visits the shrine house located opposite the palace and there offers several sheep to the *abosom* housed within. Though he does not offer a description or the names of the deities, it is possible that some of them were Atano.

Dupuis (1824: 80), the leader of the second major European mission to Kumase, provides evidence of the Asante perception of Tano as a supernatural ally. He relates an episode in which he and his party were the object of an impassioned harangue delivered by the chief of Banda. The Bandahene, in emphasizing the futility of waging war against the Asantehene, stated that no enemy could "pass the Tando river." It is never stated why one could not ford the river; one may infer, however, that it was the supernatural power of the *obosom* that could keep an enemy from crossing.

An oral tradition dating from 1826 relates how the reigning Asantehene, Osei Yaw, sought the prophecy of a Tano shrine regarding a potential military engagement with British forces. Reindorf ([1966]: 193) recorded the tradition, detailing the outcome of this consultation:

> The king sent to enquire of the oracle of Tanno, the first fetish of Asante, what he should do, as a dispute had broken out between himself and the whitemen and Akras on the coast, and he wished to march down and settle the quarrel.
>
> He was told to wait until Tanno and his warriors had been to the Coast to see whether the king should march down or not. A few days later, Tanno reported his return from the Coast, and requested the king to have 100 pots of palm-oil poured into the river Tanno, after which the fetish would advise him. The oil was poured into the river; and Tanno said he had been defeated on the Coast by the Akra fetishes, and sustained a great loss in killed and wounded; the oil was therefore required to dress the wounds of the warriors. The king should not march against the Akras. Osei Yaw, enraged at this oracle, sent word to the fetish that from the first he had been no fetish of his own, but became so by right of conquest. He would, however, march down to the Coast and bring another fetish to Kumase. Tanno answered that the king might go if he pleased, but he would do well to provide himself with a strong horse from the interior, have him shod with iron shoes, and be sure to reach Kumase from the Coast in six days.

A number of significant points occur in this tradition. First, it provides evidence of the oracular powers of Tano regarding war. Second, it is interesting to note that Tano was perceived as having actually led an expeditionary force to the coast where it engaged the forces of the coastal *abosom*. Third, and perhaps most important, is Osei Yaw's rejection of the prophecy and the comment that the *obosom* was not a local god but one that had been acquired during a previous war.[20]

Despite the Asantehene's decision to ignore the prophecy, this episode demonstrates the potential influence that Atano shrine priests exercised in 19th-century Asante.

More than 50 years separates the reports of Bowdich and Dupuis and those of the next group of observers who recorded information pertaining to Tano worship in Asante. Ramseyer and Kühne during their four-year detention in Kumase apparently observed Atano, and, as noted above, made a few indirect references to what were probably Atano. It is, however, their fellow captive, J. Bonnat, who provided a description of Asante religious practices that surpassed any previous accounts. After having identified what he perceived as the "three great fetishes" of Asante, Bosomuru, Bosompra, and Bosomtwe, Bonnat briefly wrote:

> En dehors des trois grands fétiches, il y en a une quantité innombrable d'autres qui tirent leur origine d'autant de sources différentes. Parmi les plus célèbres, il convient de nommer *Tano,* qui, au dire des indigènes, habite dans les bois et est le plus méchant de tous. C'est pour cela qu'il est le mieux servi et le plus respecté. Chacun, dans sa maison, depuis le roi jusqu'au dernier de ses sujets, a des objets consacrés à Tano.[21] (Gros, 1884: 199)

Later, in a description of sacrifice he indicated that children were often offered to Tano (Gros, 1884: 201). Today, there is no evidence of human sacrifice associated with Tano worship, but it is possible that it occurred in the 19th century. Although he never identified it as such, Bonnat also provided a description of what is surely a Tano shrine:

> Un Coumfo a toujours dans sa demeure une petite maisonnette blanche très-bien ornée où repose son fétiche sur une sorte d'autel. Ce fétiche est presque toujours une bassine en cuivre affectant la forme d'une grande cuvette; cette bassine entourée d'un linge blanc est ornée de plumes d'oiseaux et renferme toute sorte de choses; on l'asperge de sang; on la frotte avec des oeufs battus et on la vénère comme contenant l'esprit du fétiche.[22] (Gros, 1884: 200)

Bonnat's observations are fairly accurate, with one important exception: it is doubtful that Tano has ever been viewed as a malevolent god.

None of the numerous accounts of the 1873–74 Anglo-Asante War make explicit reference to Atano, though again there are ambiguous allusions to brass pan shrines that may have been Atano. Reference has been made to Brackenbury's observation of brass pans with "fetish" in them being taken to the Asantehene's palace during the Adae Kese. The British forces apparently found a number of these shrines in the palace, for an etching of the Asantehene's bedchamber appearing in the *Illustrated London News* (1874: 384) shows several of them set on the floor in front of the king's bed. Brackenbury (1874: II, 235) in his description of the king's bedchamber states that "we saw his Majesty's gorgeous four-post bed covered with silk, and on a stand beside it a large brass bowl filled with a compound of foul-smelling materials—the preparation of the fetish priests." Brackenbury (1874: II, 335) and his cohorts initially thought that the "carefully wrapped" basins might contain "valuable treasure" but were sorely disappointed in finding them filled with "fetish-preparations consist[ing] of rotten eggs."

Several late 19th-century authors who apparently never visited Asante themselves echoed Bonnat's reference to Tano's malevolent nature. A few went so far as to expand upon this erroneous notion. Ellis (1887: 32–33), for instance, gives a rather fanciful description of Atano worship.

> Just as Bobowissi was the chief god of the southern tribes, so is Tando the chief of the Ashantis and northern tribes; and it is by him that the various local deities are believed to have been appointed. The name Tando seems to mean "Hater," being apparently derived from the verb *tan,* "to hate," and Tando is the god of the river of the same name, which, to the north-west of Coomassie, separates Ashanti from Gaman. He is of human shape, and in appearance resembles a mulatto. He wears long flowing robes, carries a sword in his hand, and is malignant. Human beings are sacrificed to him, the ordinary number on each occasion being fourteen, seven men and seven women.
>
> Tando specially protects the Ashantis, whom he keeps informed of the secret machinations of their enemies. Sometimes, to assist them, he will assume the appearance of a male child; and, putting himself in the way of the enemy, will suffer them to take him as a captive to their towns, which he then devastates with a pestilence. The driver ants (*inkran*), which march in

> armies, are sacred to Tando, and must not be molested. As the conception of the borrowed god Nyankupon tribes, Tando is still supreme; and it is he who wields the lightning, and displays his anger by storm, pestilence, and flood. In past times people from the littoral of the Gold Coast used sometimes to send to Tando for tutelary deities for their towns; and on his holy day deputations from all the interior Tshi-speaking tribes, and even from Dahomey, used to proceed to his place of abode. Since the Ashanti War of 1873–4, however, when Tando was found powerless to protect his chosen people, the Ashantis, his reputation has suffered severely in the minds of the northern tribes.

Ellis' basic premise, that the name "Tano" is derived from the verb "*tan,*" is of course inaccurate. As previously noted, most 20th-century studies of Akan religion indicate that Atano are regarded as beneficent tutelar gods. Ellis also anthropomorphizes the spirit of Tano. The ascribing of human characteristics in such a manner was never encountered in the author's interviews at Bono or Asante Atano shrines. It is not clear whether this romantic description was conjured by Ellis himself or by a creative informant. Despite its inaccuracies, it does contain some valid observations; specifically, Ellis' reference to the river as flowing northwest of Kumase, Tano's role as a war oracle, the prevalence of Tano worship throughout the Akan region, and the visits by supplicants to Tano's "place of abode" (i.e., Tanoboase). It is also quite likely, as Ellis suggests, that the popularity of Tano worship declined after the 1874 Anglo-Asante War.[23]

The Swiss missionary, Perregaux (1899, 1906: 266–312), worked in Asante at the turn of the century and published a substantial account of Akan religion that includes a good deal of information on Atano, but most of the description appears to be derived from Bonnat's observations.

Armitage (1905: 63–64), without specifically identifying it as such, presents a fine description of an Atano shrine that he encountered during his sojourn in Asante.

> Every hamlet of any size possesses its fetish house, presided over by the local fetish priest. This person exercises an immense influence over the community. The office is hereditary as a rule, the father initiating his eldest son into its mysteries.
>
> The open trellis-work is skillfully constructed with bunches of pliable creeper called "tie-tie," which are bound together into the required shape and are then coated over with white clay, the result being most effective. . . . The interior of the fetish house itself is, as a rule, decorated with strings of egg-shells, skulls, bones of various animals, and roughly carved emblems. At one side of the hut is a raised platform, on which, in a central position, is placed a stool covered with blood (in the old times too often human). On this stool is the fetish itself—composed of a mass of evil-smelling substances, in which the demon is supposed to reside. Various portions of the human body were considered to be essential to entice the demon into such an abode, and attached to an important fetish is a large amount of property, consisting of native cloths and stools, gold, and aggrey beads, which remain in the keeping of the fetish priest.

This description is basically accurate and full of important observations, namely, the popularity of the shrines, the influence exercised by the shrine priest, the hereditary nature of his profession, the distinctive mural decoration, *asuman* hanging on the shrine house walls, and the presence of black ancestral stools and shrine regalia.

Curiously, there is very little ethnographic information available on Tano worship in Asante. Of the anthropologists who have worked in Asante, few have chosen to study Tano *abosom.*[24] Nevertheless, the richest source of information regarding Atano is found in Rattray's Asante trilogy. Despite the fact that most of his data pertaining to Atano were collected in the Bono area, there are several references to the tradition in Asante.[25] He notes, for example, the instrumental role performed by Atano at the enstoolment of an Asante chief. Rattray witnessed the enstoolments of three chiefs: the Juabenhene, the Kumawuhene, and the Mamponhene. Each time the state's Atano came to the capital where they were informed of the enstoolment and asked for their blessing (Rattray, 1929: 194–195, 252, 254). Rattray's (1923: 203–212) description of the *bayere afahye* held at Ejura in 1921 includes many references to local Atano. In Bekwai, Rattray (1923: 301) learned that Tano *abosom* served as the tutelar deities of artisans. Therefore, the *obosom* Taa Yaw was propitiated as the personal god of a goldsmith. And in Kumawu

and Mampon, Rattray (1929: 232, 250) collected traditions indicating that the local Atano were consulted prior to the death of an *omanhene.* Most of the information he obtained in Asante, in fact, parallels that which he collected among the Bono. Surprisingly, Rattray was the last scholar to document any of the traditions involving Tano worship in Asante.[26]

As noted in the introduction to this section, the old shrine houses serve as the strongest testimony of the prominence of Atano in 19th-century Asante. Although none exist any longer in Kumase, they can be found in several outlying villages.[27] In addition, there are a number of late 19th-century photographs of Kumase and Asante villages that show the distinctive architectural style that is associated with Asante Atano shrines (figs. 24-1 to 24-3). This type of architecture, incorporating a wide range of *alto relievo* mural designs and decorative grillwork, presents a sumptuous aesthetic as well as a powerful symbolic statement. Nineteenth-century accounts of Asante reveal that this type of sculptural elaboration was restricted to shrine structures, the palaces of chiefs, and the houses of court officials—the upper strata of Asante society. In this context, it is apparent that Atano must have been perceived as powerful forces in Asante.

Fig. 24-1. Tano shrine house in the Asante village of "Tufu," 1897. Photo Album, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London.

TANO AMONG THE BONO AND ASANTE

The central Bono region, especially the area comprising the traditional states of Takyiman and Nkoranza, is the heartland of Tano worship.[28] There are a number of factors supporting this assertion: (1) the high density of Atano shrines in the area, (2) the considerable age of many of the shrines, (3) the location of the source of the Tano River, and (4) the prominent status of Atano in Bono society. Indeed, over 60 years ago Rattray (1923: 172) was informed that the Bono region was "the home of the gods—and the factory, so to speak, of their shrines."

Richard Freeman, one of the first Europeans to travel through the Bono region, provides the earliest eyewitness account of Tano worship in the Bono area. In 1889, on his way to Bonduku, Freeman passed through the village of Tanoso, the home of the prominent Tano *obosom,* Atiakosaa. Though he did not encounter the *obosom* itself, he did observe some of the river's "curiosities." Freeman (1898: 144) writes:

> The Tanno is a powerful and much venerated fetish, probably more so even than the Busum-Pra, and there are some very curious observances in connection with it. At this part the river is inhabited by two species of fish, one being a large-scaled species, about a foot long and not unlike a grayling in appearance, which swims about in large shoals; and the other being apparently a species of *Silurus,* a particularly hideous and monstrous-looking creature from three to four feet long, which swims about in shoals of four or five. These latter are the sacred or fetish fish and are regularly fed with hard-boiled eggs by the fetish men, at whose call the fish are said to assemble by the banks. As I approached the river the chief fetish man of the village was sitting close to the water's edge, and a group of these huge and repulsive-looking fishes hovered about a few feet away from him.[29]

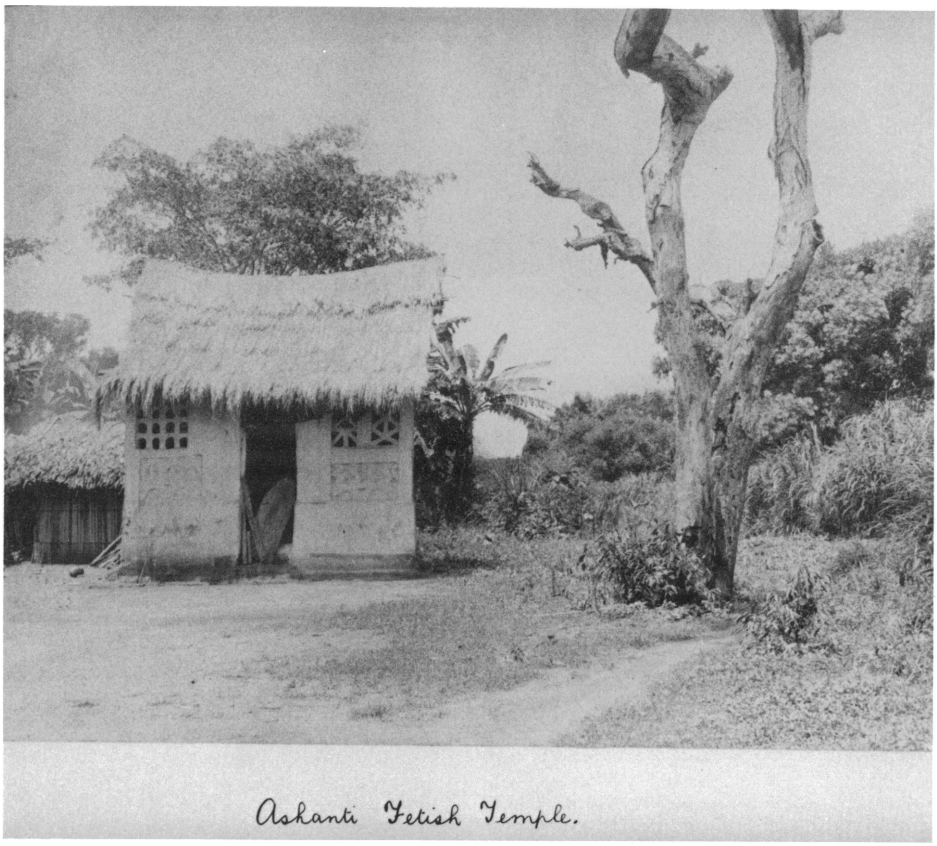


Fig. 24-2. Tano shrine house in Asante, 1897. Photo Album, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London.

Freeman (1898: 144–145) also experienced a few of the customs associated with the Tano when he was asked by the shrine priest to relinquish his walking stick and to drop a small amount of gold dust into the water while crossing the sacred river.[30] Soon after leaving Tanoso, Freeman (1898: 147) encountered a delegation sent from Gyaman "to conduct certain palavers connected with the great Tannosu fetish." On his return journey from Bonduku to Accra, Freeman (1898: 349–350) stopped at Takyiman where he obtained more information. He was told that the source of the river was at a place "called Boasi ('under the rock'), and the head waters issue as a spring from a great rock which has two objects like elephant's tusks projecting from it. This spring falls into a deep pool, the bottom of which—so my informants declared—is thickly covered with gold. This gold is the property of the Tano fetish and no person may, on pain of death, attempt to remove it." Freeman is referring to Tanoboase, which is, indeed, the site of the Tano's source.

Another reference to Tano worship is found in the diary of Laura Boyle. In 1916 she visited the village of Tuobodom and saw the shrine house of the Tano *obosom* Twumpuduo. She wrote "I noticed once particularly tall house for Ashanti, some two-storeys high and on its outside wall a rough raised design of a crocodile made of the same white stuff as the walls . . . we saw another outside wall of the big fetish house with a bas-relief of a leopard, and another of a monkey carrying a sword of state" (Boyle 1968: 62).

Rattray was the first scholar to work in the Bono region. The published results of his research in and around Takyiman during the early 1920s is still the best source of infor-

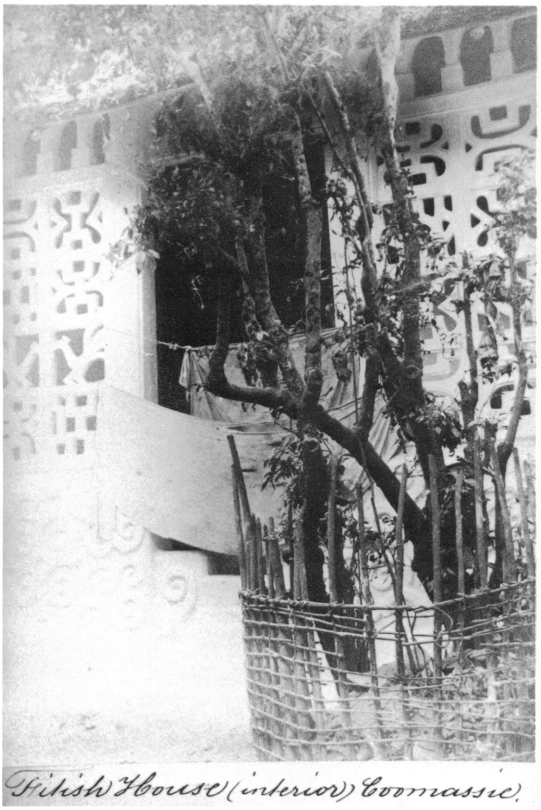


Fig. 24-3. Interior of Tano shrine house in Asante, late 19th century. Photo Album, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London.

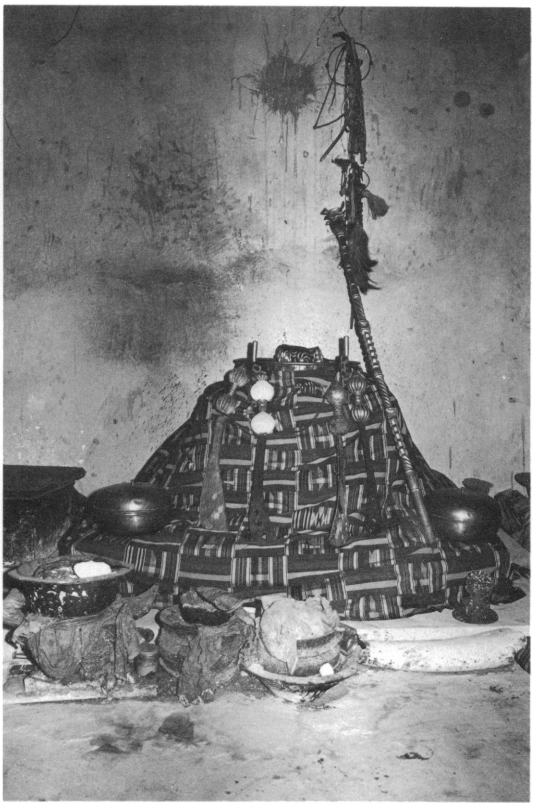


Fig. 24-4. Taa Kora's shrine, Tanoboase, Apr. 23, 1980.

mation on Tano worship.[31] Meyerowitz, who worked in Takyiman during the 1940s and 1950s, published a considerable amount of information on Tano.[32] The most concentrated study is D. M. Warren's 1970–71 survey of 394 shrines (of which 175 were Atano) in the Takyiman Traditional State. Warren managed to collect a tremendous amount of data, most of which has not been published.[33]

It is impossible to know when the worship of Tano was introduced in the Asante region. Meyerowitz (1951: 122) suggests that the Asante acquired the god after having conquered the Bono in 1722–23. The aforementioned 17th-century references to Tano worship on the coast suggest that the tradition spread throughout the Akan region long before the rise of Asante (i.e., late in the 17th century).

The documentary and architectural evidence presented in the previous section indicates that Atano played an important role in Asante society during the 19th century. Oral traditions recorded in the Takyiman area provide further proof of the respect afforded the great Bono Atano. It appears that the Asante, after having defeated the Bono, did not take Taa Kora, Twumpuduo, Taa Mensah, or any of the other powerful Atano. This is significant for it was a fairly common practice to take the gods and priests of defeated enemies back to Kumase to serve the Asantehene.[34] Why then were the Bono *abosom* left in the north? The Asante certainly perceived them as powerful spiritual forces, for they seem to have sought the deities' assistance on numerous occasions. Perhaps they felt that the *abosom* were so powerful that forcefully taking them to Kumase would have been dangerous.[35] In lieu of physically taking the gods to Kumase, the Asante maintained

Fig. 24-5. Taa Mensah's shrine with two of its "offspring" (Atiakosaa and Taa Kwabena), Takyiman, Apr. 23, 1980.

control over the villages in which many of the major Atano resided. After the 1722–23 Bono-Asante War, towns like Tanoboase, Tuobodom, and Tanoso were placed under the jurisdiction of specific Kumase chiefs. The ownership of these villages has, in fact, been the source of a long and often heated dispute between Takyiman and Asante.[36]

There is evidence in oral traditions collected at a number of shrines in the Takyiman area of the instrumental role played by the great Atano, especially in times of war. Informants at Tanoboase related a tradition of Osei Bonsu's visit to the shrine of Taa Kora prior to the 1818–19 Asante-Gyaman War in order to solicit the god's assistance (fig. 24-4).[37] Tuobodom Twumpuduo and Takyiman Taa Mensah were also supposed to have participated.[38]

Formerly, the Asantehene as well as other Akan paramount chiefs regularly sent emissaries to Tanoboase with gifts for the spirit of the Tano River. A tradition that still appears to be thriving involves the visits of Asante *abosomfoo* and *akomfoo* to the major Takyiman Atano shrines. Many priests and priestesses come to these shrines as apprentices to undergo the training necessary to become bona fide *abosomfoo* or *akomfoo.*[39] Many of these priests regularly return to the shrine, usually for the deity's yam festival in order to pay homage to the *obosom* and *obosomfoo* (and *okomfoo*) who served as their teachers. Some Asante Atano, being related to specific Takyiman *abosom,* require that their priests visit the shrines of those gods. Taa Kora receives many Asante visitors who come to Tanoboase to collect water from the source of the Tano River—sacred water that is used to purify shrines and ancestral stools.[40] Most of the documentary and oral evidence suggests that the major Bono Atano have long been held in high esteem by the Asante. But did Atano ever assume the status they enjoyed in the Bono region? Before attempting to answer this question it would be useful to

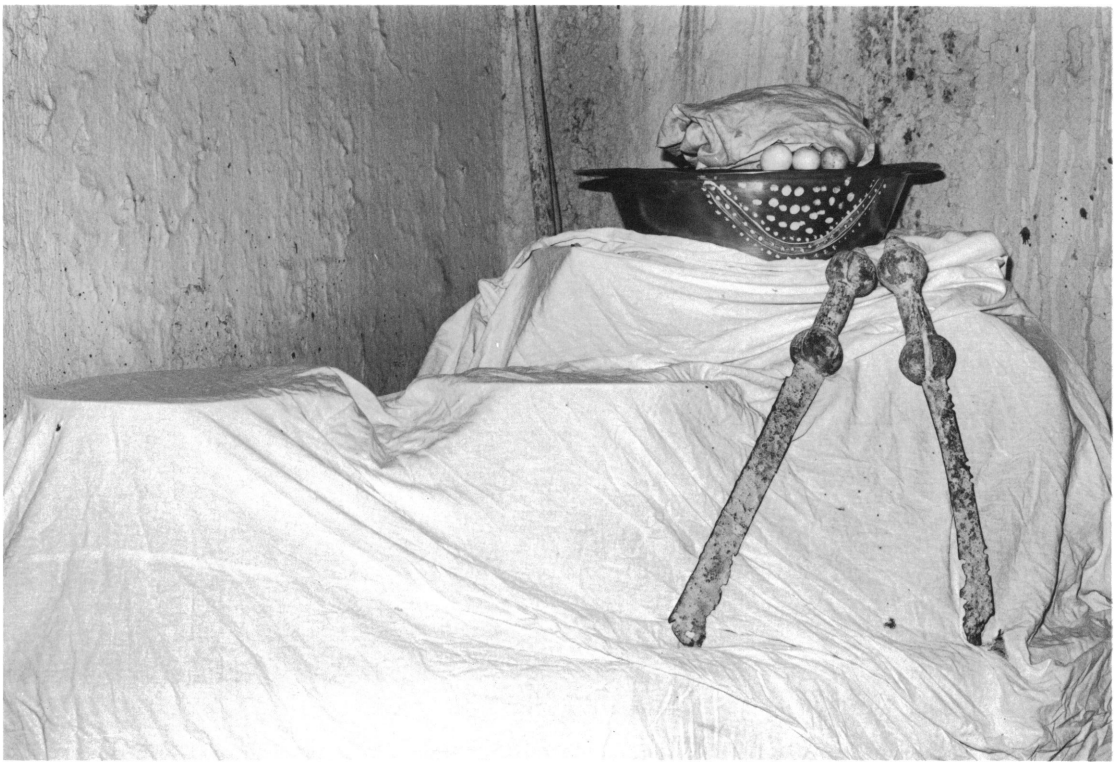


Fig. 24-6. Taa Mensah's shrine "dressed" in white cloth for Monokuo (the Bono Adae), Takyiman, Apr. 23, 1980.

briefly consider the position of Atano in Bono society.

The major Atano, especially Taa Mensah, exercise a good deal of power in Takyiman (figs. 24-5, 24-6). In fact, Taa Mensah is seen as the spiritual counterpart of the secular ruler, the Takyimanhene.[41] The priest for Taa Mensah, often referred to as the Abosomfoohene, is the head of the priests and priestesses in the Takyiman area (fig. 7). He wields a good deal of authority and does not answer to any of the state's Grade I chiefs. There is an ever-present tension between these secular and religious rulers. Now and again the tension builds to a level that threatens the well-being of the State.[42] There are institutions in Bono culture that function as safety valves for the periodic release of this tension—a good example is seen in the Apo festival (Warren, 1974: 129–130; 1975: 55–56).

Despite the inevitable rivalry that exists between secular and religious authority, both the Abosomfoohene and Omanhene realize the necessity for cooperation. The monthly and yearly festivals provide a vehicle for each to demonstrate their appreciation for the other. Thus during these festivals there is a formal exchange of greetings in which Taa Mensah, through its priest, pays its respects to the Takyimanhene and he, in turn, visits and presents offerings to Taa Mensah. This is admittedly a gross oversimplification of the complex relationship existing between spiritual and secular authority in the central Bono region. Nevertheless, it does serve to emphasize the importance of maintaining a state of equilibrium between the two forces. It also demonstrates that Atano occupy a critical position in Bono society—a position that many perceive as being equal to that of the paramount chief.

Opoku (1972: 7) has recently asserted that "next to the Supreme Being in importance, in Akan religion, are the ancestors, for the

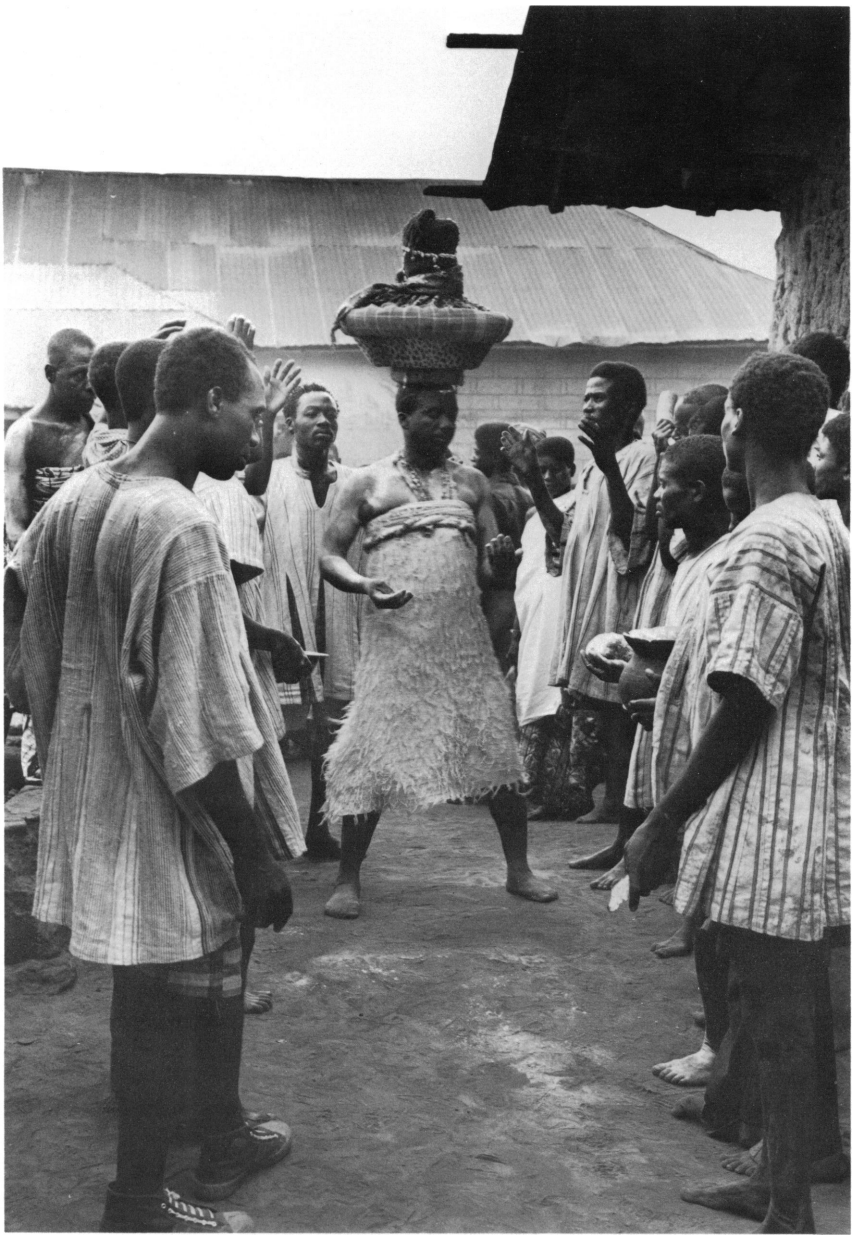


Fig. 24-7. Abosomfoohene, Kwabena Mensah, carrying Taa Mensah's shrine during the final day of the Apoo festival, Takyiman, Mar. 31, 1980.

Akan always holds the Supreme Being and ancestors in deep reverence, while the gods may be ridiculed and treated with contempt if they fail their devotees." This observation is perhaps valid in Asante but not among the Bono, especially with regard to Atano. Indeed, the propitiation of the Tano River is more important to the Bono than Asante. This is not surprising since the institution seems to have had its origins among the Bono. Other factors, however, also contribute to this disparity. The same socioeconomic forces that

led to the evolution of matrilineages in the central Akan region appear to have also caused a shift in religious orientation. As noted above, echoes of earlier descent patterns may be seen in the patronymic *ntoro* cult whose spiritual foundation is based on the veneration of river spirits. In the central Akan area the ancestors became the primary focus of religious activity.

Asante hegemony in the Bono region for over 250 years has resulted in the assimilation of many elements of Asante culture including a preoccupation with ancestor worship. Oral traditions collected in the Takyiman and Nsoko areas reveal that blackened ancestral stools and the maintenance of stool shrines were probably an Asante introduction. But even today, the *abosom* appear to maintain a status that is a least equivalent to that of the ancestors in the spiritual lives of the Bono. Rattray observed this in the early 1920s when comparing the Asante and Bono Adae festivals.[43] The focus of the two Asante Adae, Wukuadae (the Wednesday or small Adae) and Kwasidae (the Sunday or big Adae), is the propitiation of the royal ancestors. In Takyiman there is only a single Adae, Monokuo, held on a Wednesday. The Takyimanhene visits the stool shrine in which the blackened stools of his predecessors are kept and pours libations to the ancestors. But most of the ritual activity associated with the Takyiman Adae takes place in Taa Mensah's shrine room and is directed toward the state Atano. Thus Rattray (1923: 120) was struck by "the mingling of the propitiation of ancestral human spirits with the worship of non-human spirits—the gods."

Since the end of the 19th century it appears that the popularity of the Atano in Asante has diminished. Although many Atano are still worshiped, the material evidence suggests that they, as well as their priests, no longer exercise the influence that they once did. The reasons for this are well known. Religion has undergone considerable changes over the last hundred years. Ellis was undoubtedly correct in suggesting that after the Anglo-Asante War of 1874 the powers of the great Atano were insufficient for dealing with the onslaught of problems that arose from the British presence. During the latter part of the 19th and the first half of the present century the shift away from the *tete abosom* (ancient deities) manifests itself in the increased popularity of the *abosommerafoo* (witch-catching deities). Even in the Bono area, there is substantial evidence that the popularity of some of the most powerful Atano was eclipsed by the new witch-catching cults.[44] Brakune, for instance, was introduced roughly 50 years ago in Kranka, the home of Taa Afua, one of the oldest and most revered Atano. Today, it is the Brakune shrine that has the greater number of supplicants and the Brakune *obosomfoo* who is the dominant spiritual leader in the community. Christianity has also taken its toll in supplanting the older religious institutions. Despite these changes, Tano traditions are still very much alive and thriving in many Akan communities.

NOTES

1. Wilks (1975), for instance, in his monumental study of 19th-century Asante occasionally alludes to the role of religion in Asante society. Wilks is not alone, for other historians like Claridge (1915), Ward (1958), and Lewin (1978) have largely ignored the impact of religion on the evolution of Akan culture. There are, of course, exceptions, such as Kwamena-Poh's (1973) study of 18th- and 19th-century Akuapem in which he argues that shrine priests played a dominant role in the administration of society prior to the period of Akan influence. Recently, a few historical studies have appeared that do begin to explore issues involving religion. Examples are McCaskie's (1981b) essay on Asante witch-catching cults in late 19th, early 20th-century and D. Maier's (1983) examination of the Dente shrine at Krakye.

2. At the outset, in order to avoid any semantic confusion, it is necessary to define a few terms that are used throughout this essay. The deities that are the focus of this discussion are known as Atano; the material objects that represent the abodes for Atano are referred to as shrines (i.e., Atano shrines), and the architectural structures in which these shrines are kept, shrine rooms (or houses).

3. The citing of a few examples of the information contained in these sources demonstrates the richness of these early accounts. De Marees (1602: 75) refers to Onyame or Onyankopon as Juan Goemain, Müller (1673: 89) as Jan Comme or Jan Compo, and Barbot as Jankome (1678/9: 334–35) or Jangoeman (1732: 304). Barbot (1732: 308) and Bosman (1721: 123) both present the word "Bossum" as meaning a god or idol. Müller (1673: 44–56), perhaps the most sensitive of the early

European observers of Gold Coast religion, discusses the characteristics differentiating *obosom* from *suman.* He also provides fine descriptions of *asuman* such as one kept in a "sesja" (i.e., *sesea*), a woven raffia basket (Müller, 1673: 53). Müller (1673: 75) was also able to identify three religious specialists, the *obosomfoo, okomfoo,* and *sumanfoo.*

4. McLeod (1981: 57–71) provides a good description of these spiritual forces. See also Busia, 1954; Opoku, 1972, 1982.

5. Field (1948: 151) has found manifestations of this tradition among the Ewe where the word for deity is *tron,* which she feels is probably a variation of *ntoro.* Field's informants told her that a "big *tron* is nearly always a river."

6. Field's (1948: 153 ff.) description of the rituals performed in veneration of Bosompra may be compared to the present discussion of Tano worship.

7. Several authors have described this institution. See Rattray, 1923: 45–76; Busia, 1954: 197–200; Denteh, 1967; Fortes, 1969: 198–202.

8. Danquah's list includes: Bosompra, Bosomtwi, Bosommuru, Bosom-Nketea or Bosompo, Bosom-Dwerebe, Bosom-Akoom, Bosomafi, Bosomayesu, Bosom-Konsi, Bosomsika, Bosomafram, and Bosomkrete. Other authors have presented lists of Akan *ntoro* groups. A. C. Denteh (1967: 92), for instance, presents the same list, suggesting that the spirits of all but 1 of the 12 *ntoro* are river gods. Rattray (1923: 47–48) lists 9 divisions. Curiously, the Tano River does not appear in any of these lists. A few authors (e.g., Meyerowitz, 1951: 120; Christensen, 1954: 81) have indicated that the Tano does serve as a *ntoro obosom* in some areas but it apparently does not represent one of the major *ntoro* groups.

9. Among the Fante a system of double descent places greater importance on the father's lineage and there exists a form of *ntoro* worship, perhaps diffused from the central Akan region. The Fante refer to the *ntoro abosom* as *agyabosom,* literally, father's god. A tradition collected by Bosman ([1721]: 131) provides evidence that this institution existed at least as early as the late 17th century. He notes that among the people of the Gold Coast (i.e., Fante), it is believed that upon death a person's soul is "conveyed to a famous river, situate [sic] in the Inland Country, called *Bosmanque.*" This undoubtedly is a reference to Lake Bosomtwe, located 33 km southeast of Kumase, the spirit of which is commonly regarded as an *agyabosom* or *ntoro obosom.*

10. Wilks (1982b: 234–235) has suggested that this occurred during the 15th and 16th centuries, a period of great economic and social change.

11. Alland (1976: 103) suggests the same for the Abron of eastern Ivory Coast. Among the Bono, Atano are regarded as one of several types of *abosom.*

12. It is important to note that this term, *acamatano,* does not occur in any other Twi lexicon. A brass basin is most often referred to as *yawa* or *ayawa.* See Müller, 1673: chap. 12 vocabulary; Barbot, 1732: 416. De Marees' informant(s) may have been referring to the context in which the vessel functioned rather than to the bowl itself.

13. Evidence of Tano worship in these areas is found in a number of sources. Cardinall (1927: 86), for instance, mentions a Tano *obosom* dwelling in a rock at Mim (Ahafo). Daaku's (1974) collection of Sefwi traditions is full of references to Atano. Tauxier (1932: 73–74) refers to Tano worship among the Anyi. Paton (1948) provides a lengthy description of Tano worship in Aowin.

14. The Asante tradition is examined in the next section. For evidence of Tano worship in Gyaman see Tauxier (1921: 353) and Alland (1976: passim).

15. Alland (1976: 88–89) provides a marvelous account of a Tano shrine ritual at Diassenpa (Gyaman) during which the *obosom*'s priest offered two Ghanaian pennies to the deity. When Alland asked the priest why he had used Ghanaian money the priest replied, "because Tano lives in Ghana."

16. Inverview, Takyiman, Apr. 18, 1980.

17. The author has had the opportunity of reading only the published and a few unpublished accounts of Asante; no doubt archival research will reveal more information. In this regard, the diaries, journals, and correspondence of missionaries will probably prove particularly useful. A single example of the potential value of these sources is seen in a Basel missionary's late 19th-century report of his journey through Kumawu in which he indicates that shrine priests are held in higher esteem in Asante than in Akuapem, Akyem, or Kwahu. He notes that "even in the smallest village the fetish Tano, imported from Gyaman, is honored, with a small well-built fetish house." Archiv der Basler Mission. Dilger to Basel dd. Oct. 26, 1883 (no. II, 94). I thank Ronald Atkinson for sharing a copy of the manuscript of Paul Jenkins' translations of Basler Mission documents relating to Ghana.

18. At Agona Akyempim, Rattray (1929: 280) observed the Tano *obosom,* Taa Agyeboafoo, maintained in the same shrine room as Okomfoo Anokye's *obosom,* Boboduru. While visiting the village, Rattray (1929: 282) witnessed a rite propitiating the spirit of Okomfoo Anokye in which the priestess for Taa Agyeboafoo participated.

19. For instance, the priest for Duase Taa Kwabena stated that the deity was taken to Kumase when the Asantehene last celebrated the Adae Kese. Interview, Duase, Oct. 5, 1980.

20. Reindorf ([1966]: 193–194) mentions that Krakye Dente was also consulted and advised against war. Wilks (1975: 181) discusses the conflict existing between Osei Yaw and a group of elders headed by Juabenhene Kwasi Boaten (adherents of the previous Asantehene's policy) who were opposed to going to war with the British. The priests of the Tano and Dente shrines appear to have been aligned with Kwasi Boaten's contingent.

21. Translation: Aside from the three great fetishes, there are an innumerable quantity of others which derive their origins from different sources. Among the most celebrated is *Tano* which, according to the people, lives in the forest and is the most malevolent of all. It is thus the best served and the most respected. Everyone from the king to the last of his subjects has some objects in his house consecrated to Tano.

22. Translation: An *okomfoo* always has in his home a small nicely decorated house in which his fetish is maintained on a sort of altar. This fetish is almost always a brass pan in the form of a large wash basin; this pan, encircled by a white line, is decorated with bird feathers and contains all sorts of things; it is sprinkled with blood; rubbed with beaten eggs and is venerated as if it contained the spirit of the fetish.

23. Mary Kingsley's (1897: 521; 1901: 98) descriptions of Tano beliefs apparently were derived from Ellis' account.

24. There are brief references to Atano in the general overviews of Asante religion that have been published by Danquah, Busia, Opoku, and others, but no in-depth analyses of the tradition.

25. Rattray, feeling that Asante culture had already been "contaminated" through contact with Europeans, looked to the northern Akan, the Bono, for what he perceived as pure, unadulterated "Ashanti" culture. Rattray acquired most of his data on Tano worship in the Takyiman area. He also collected a good deal of material in the northern Asante paramountcies of Ejura and Mampon. For an informative discussion of Rattray's biases in this regard see McCaskie, 1983b, especially pp. 192–193.

26. Over the last 50 years, anthropologists who have worked in Asante have chosen to study other cultural phenomena. There have been several minor contributions but most of these draw heavily upon Rattray's earlier work.

27. A number of these late 19th-century buildings have been either fully or partially renovated by the Ghana Museum and Monuments Board. Swithenbank's (1969: 9–12) study of shrine architecture includes a description of Tano worship but offers little new information on the subject.

28. Takyiman is regarded as the successor to the ancient state of Bono Maaso, conquered by the Asante in 1722–23. After the Bono-Asante War, most of the land, including that on which the capital stood (the present-day site of Manso), was given to the Nkoranzahene who had served as an Asante ally during the war. The surviving elders of the defeated Bono state created a new but much smaller state in the western part of Bono Maaso. Many Bono communities were placed under the control of the Nkoranzahene. However, most of the prominent Atano shrines are found in the Takyiman State. The only notable exception is Taa Afua, located at Kranka.

29. Freeman's information is accurate, for even today, at specific locations along the river, these catfish, expecting to be fed, will come when called. The author observed this on several occasions in 1979–80.

30. It is interesting to note that even though Freeman (1898: 145) talked the priest into waiving these rules, the entourage of Africans who accompanied him, "even the Mahommedan Hausas, all left their sticks on the pile, and several of them opened little packets of gold dust and shook the contents into the river as they crossed."

31. Rattray discusses Tano *abosom* in each of the three texts that comprise his well-known Ashanti trilogy. It is, however, in *Ashanti* (1923) that he deals with the subject in greatest detail. See especially chaps. 14–19.

32. There are references to Tano in all of Meyerowitz's books; however, her most important contribution is found in *The Sacred State of the Akan* (1951). Much of the information she relates is of considerable value, especially her descriptive data. It should be noted, however, that there are problems with many of her conclusions. It is beyond the scope of this essay to deal with these problems—the reader is instead referred to Warren (1974).

33. Most of the survey data are presented in *Techiman Traditional State, Part II, Histories of the Deities* (Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana). Only the first volume of this important work has been published. I thank Mike Warren for making available to me the manuscript for the yet unpublished volumes. The results of his survey are summarized in Warren, 1974, 1976.

34. See McLeod, 1981: 64. For example, the Tano *obosom,* Taa Kwabena at Duase (Asante), was taken from the Dormaahene during a war. Interview, Duase, Oct. 5, 1980. Interestingly, Rattray (1929: 124) observed the contrary, for he writes that "the *abosom* captured from the enemy were destroyed because they had helped the enemy."

35. The author is unaware of traditions indicating that any of the major Takyiman Atano were ever permanently removed from the Bono area. A tradition, however, recorded at Manso (the site of the ancient capital of Bono Maaso) recalls an Asante attempt to take the sacred basin called Ayaa Dasuo that is still maintained in the village. The basin, imbued with supernatural powers, could only be taken as far as Akumadan before disaster befell its "captors" and they were forced to return it to Manso. For a fuller account of this tradition see Silverman, 1983a: 133.

36. Until the turn of the present century these villages (located in the Subin River valley) have been under the control of Asante. The chiefs of Takyiman, knowing that the villages originally had been part of ancient Bono Maaso, have felt that they rightfully belong to the Takyiman State. At the turn of the present century Takyiman took advantage of the Asantehene's exile to the Seychelles and British anti-Asante sentiment and managed

to convince the colonial government to place the communities under Takyiman authority. In 1935, however, this ruling was overturned and the villages were once again placed under Asante jurisdiction. Meyerowitz, over the course of nearly two decades, assisted the Takyimanhene Akumfi Ameyaw in his efforts to regain the villages (see Meyerowitz, 1962: passim). The dispute still has not been fully resolved. Nevertheless most of the towns now see themselves as part of the Takyiman Traditional State. Curiously, the scholars who have examined the history of this dispute have yet observed that they are also the homes of some of the oldest and most powerful Atano—Tanoboase Taa Kora, Tuobodom Twumpuduo, and Tanoso Atiakosaa.

37. Rattray (1923: 178–179, 180, 189, 190) recorded this tradition at Tanoboase in the early 1920s, as did Meyerowitz (1951: 131–132) in the 1940s, Warren and Brempong (1971: 134) in 1970, and the author in 1980 (Interview, Tanoboase, May 30, 1980).

38. Meyerowitz (1951: 131) relates that Twumpuduo, an avowed pacifist, resented being coerced into participating in the war and only offered his service as an oracle. The ex-*obosomfoo* for Taa Mensah, Kofi Mosi, explained that the red fez worn by the *obosom* when it is carried was taken from Adinkra during the Asante-Gyaman War. Interview, Takyiman, May 27, 1980.

39. In 1980 Tanoso (Takyiman) was an important training center for Asante priests. Interview, Tanoso, Oct. 2, 1980. One of the priests interviewed in Asante in 1980 indicated that he had spent two years as a young man, roughly 45 years ago (ca. 1940), studying at Tanoso. Interview, Adwenase, Oct. 10, 1980.

40. The priest for the *obosom* Duase (Asante) Taa Kwabena indicated that periodically one of the deity's attendants is sent to collect water from three sites along the Tano River, namely, Tanoboase, Tuobodom, and Tanoso. Interview, Duase, Oct. 5, 1980. Informants at Tanoso (Takyiman) claimed that in the past the Asantehene would send bearers to collect water from the river at Tanoso to be used in purification rituals. Interview, Tanoso, Oct. 2, 1980.

41. Though Taa Kora is the seniormost Tano *obosom* and commands tremendous respect throughout the Akan area, in Takyiman, Taa Mensah is more important. There are perhaps several reasons for this. One is that since the Bono-Asante War of 1722–23, Takyiman has been the capital of the Bono state and Taa Mensah resides in that town. Taa Kora, on the other hand, situated in Tanoboase, close to the ancient Bono capital (Maaso), has since the war been regarded as one of the Asantehene's gods. It is only within the last 20 years that the Tanoboasehene (who is also the *obosomfoo* for Taa Kora) has ceased swearing allegiance to Kumase. See n. 36 above.

42. Such was the case in 1970 when the Omanhene destooled the Abosomfoohene. See Warren (1974: 92–94) for an account of the events that led to this serious action.

43. For a description of the Asante Adae see Rattray (1923: 92–112), and for the Bono Adae, Rattray (1923: 113–120).

44. Several authors have dealt with this phenomenon. See Debrunner, 1961; Field, 1960; McLeod, 1975; and McCaskie, 1981b.

CHAPTER 25. THE DISCOVERY OF PRE-ANYI FUNERARY STATUETTES IN SOUTHEASTERN IVORY COAST

Jean Polet

ABSTRACT

The present paper examines terra cotta heads excavated in an archaeological dig in southeastern Ivory Coast. Dating from the 17th century and found throughout the region, these heads are similar to those of the Akan with slight stylistic differences. I present evidence that the lagoon peoples who made these heads had relationships with the Akan much earlier in time than the advent of the Anyi.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological research has been undertaken since 1984 in the extreme southeastern corner of Ivory Coast near the site of the old town of Assini and the Ghanaian border (map 25-1). This research has investigated a series of sites from which the Eotile people were chased by the Anyi upon their arrival from present-day Ghana at the beginning of the 18th century. These sites have yielded objects—ceramic for the most part—that are directly comparable with those discovered by colleagues in western Ghana (cf. Bellis, 1972).

Eotile oral traditions mention that when a village elder died, a terra cotta figurine was manufactured. In 1983 erosion caused by exceptionally heavy rains exposed the crown of the head of a terra cotta statuette in the village of Ngaloa. Since this village was the residence of the "fetish priest" with whom I worked, I was informed of the discovery and was able to excavate the site two months later. The excavation revealed a group of statuettes (called *mmaso* in Anyi) that unfortunately had been displaced (i.e., exhumed and reburied) at some time. Others seem to have been destroyed when trenches were dug for house foundations. Offering deposits, farther away, were not disturbed.

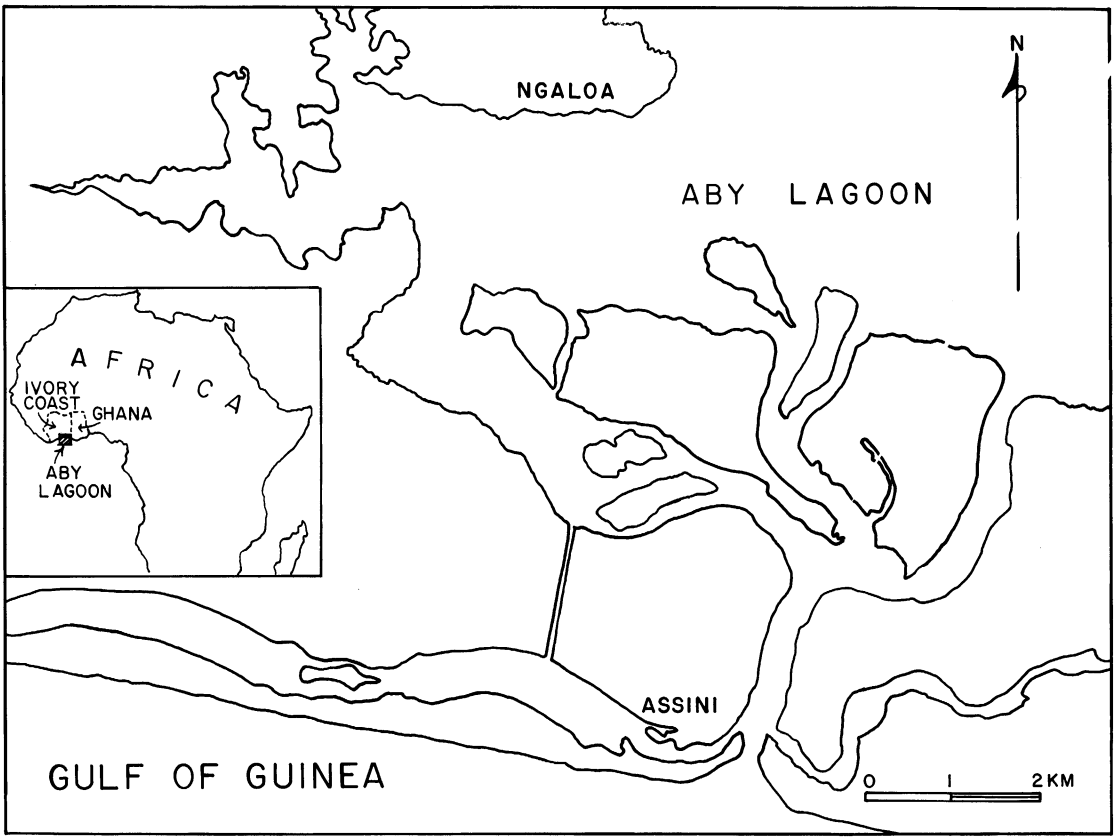
THE SITE AND ITS CONTENTS

The Excavation

We had to limit the extent of the dig to a 5 × 5 m square due to the proximity of houses. At the end of the dig it became evident that the whole of the deposit undoubtedly was included in this square.

The first 30 cm of soil removed from the site comprised the ground level of the village and contained much charcoal and many beads (including plastic ones). Approximately 10 cm farther down was the level in which the statuettes and remains of sacrifices were found. The sand was clean and sterile throughout the pit except in the north and east quadrants where the *mmaso* was located (fig. 25-1). Vestiges of the historical ground level, the level of the ground at the time the *mmaso* was functioning, can be seen in the west and south quadrants. The orientation of the statuettes in the site is not significant because they had been disinterred and reburied by the villagers. Far more interesting is the discovery of other objects associated with the figurines: three deposits of gin bottles to the north, to the east, and to the west of the statuettes, and a deposit of shells and catfish spines (*Corbula trigona, Pachymelania byronensis* and *chrysictys*). All the bottles were pointing north (fig. 25-2). The *Corbula trigona* shells were whole (i.e., the two valves were still stuck together), the *Pachymelania* had the apex cut off which shows that they were prepared for eating, and some catfish spines showed knife marks; all of this seems to confirm that we are dealing with food offerings.

The hard ground level in the south and



Map 25-1. Aby Lagoon showing Ngaloa and Assini.

west quadrants mentioned above contained nothing and was covered over with clean yellow sand. These indications, as well as a careful reading of the north wall of the pit, led us to the conclusion that the deposit was intentionally covered with sand at some point in the past. Furthermore, it seems as though this sand was taken from the west of the *mmaso* which would explain the abrupt discontinuity of the hard ground level at this spot.

The Statuettes

Three heads and many body fragments were found, along with numerous potsherds. None of the heads can be fitted to a body, which clearly indicates that certain pieces were lost from the site prior to our archaeological excavation.

Head no. 1 (83 Ngaloa 265) (fig. 25-3): The head has an almost cylindrical form, and the distance from nose to nape of neck is identical with that between the ears. The eyes—deep, horizontal incisions in added-on pieces of clay—are closed; the eyebrows are lightly marked by a semicircular line with a scarification keloid between them. The nostrils are quite evident and deep. The mouth is slightly open. The ears, with the external ear clearly represented, consist of two deep, conical holes. Keloids are found on the temples. The jaw is quite pronounced. The curve of the forehead continues to a line vertical to the ears, and here begins the coiffure composed of tresses and concentric motifs which in real life were obtained by shaving the surrounding hair (fig. 25-4). The neck is not ringed, but has light, very short, horizontal incisions on the sides.

Head no. 2 (83 Ngaloa 263) (fig. 25-5): This head, too, is cylindrical. The eyes—in relief—are closed; the eyebrows are lightly traced with a scarification keloid between them. The

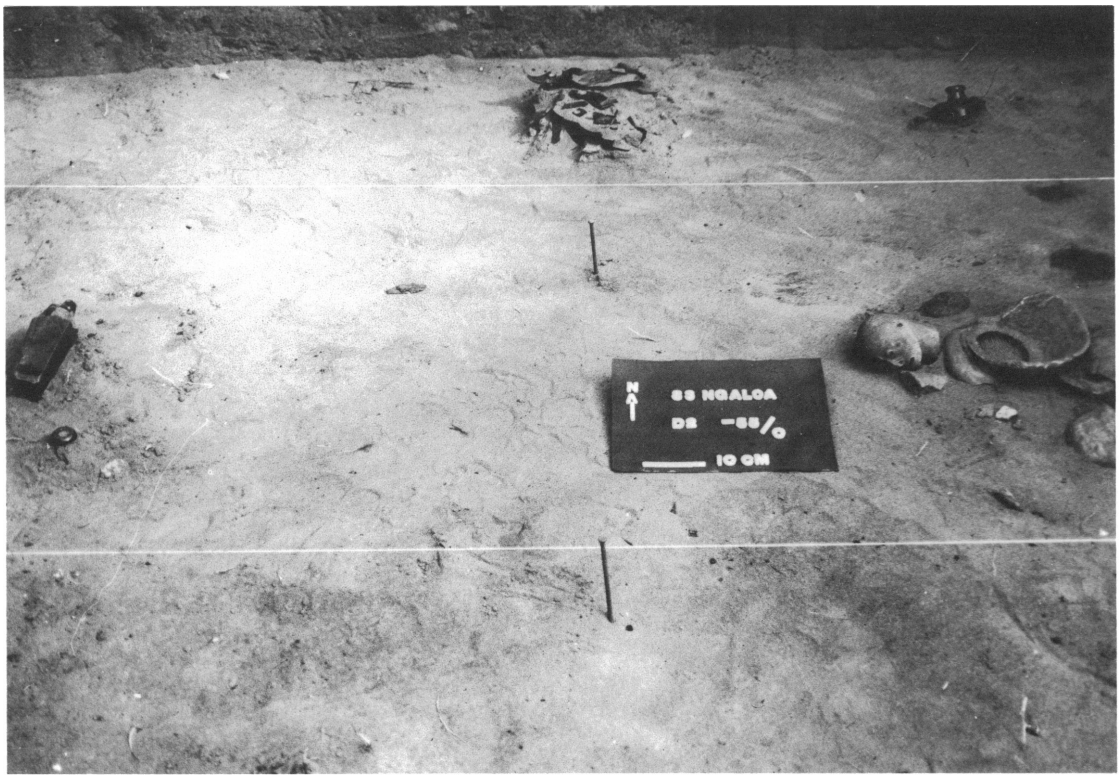


Fig. 25-1. *Mmaso,* terra-cotta figurines, and sacrificial remains were found here.

nostrils are quite evident, and the mouth is slightly open. The ears are in the same style as that of the first head, but the outer edges are damaged. There is no scarification on the temples. The jaw is prominent. The coiffure, once again, starts at a line vertical to the ears and consists of six tresses but no razor-cut motifs. The neck is smooth and has no incisions.

Head no. 3 (83 Ngaloa 260) (fig. 25-6): The cross-section of this head is slightly ovoid, with greater depth than width. The closed eyes are engraved in the mass and surmounted by eyebrows which are separated horizontally by a mark left by a keloid that has disappeared. The ears are represented by deep, narrow holes with the external ear not being represented. As with the first head, scarification is represented on the temples, but in addition it is also found on the cheeks and the nape of the neck. There may also have been scarification at the corners of the mouth. The chin is strong while the jaws are only slightly differentiated. The hat is a truncated cone, with the center of the flat top bearing a mark from a lost "button."

METHOD OF MANUFACTURE

Head no. 1, which appears to be solid, was made of two different types of clay. The center is coarse clay which has been covered with a layer of fine clay, varying from 2 to 7 mm, in which are modeled the lines of the face.

Head no. 2 also is made of two different clays. The coarse clay, however, which must have contained organic matter, is formed from thick coils upon which the face has been modeled in fine clay at one end, with the other end penetrating a hollow base. The head is thus hollow, which must have been necessary for the evacuation—by the earholes—of the gas resulting from the combustion of the organic matter contained in the coarse clay.

Head no. 3 is solid and made of only one type of clay. It was, however, made in two

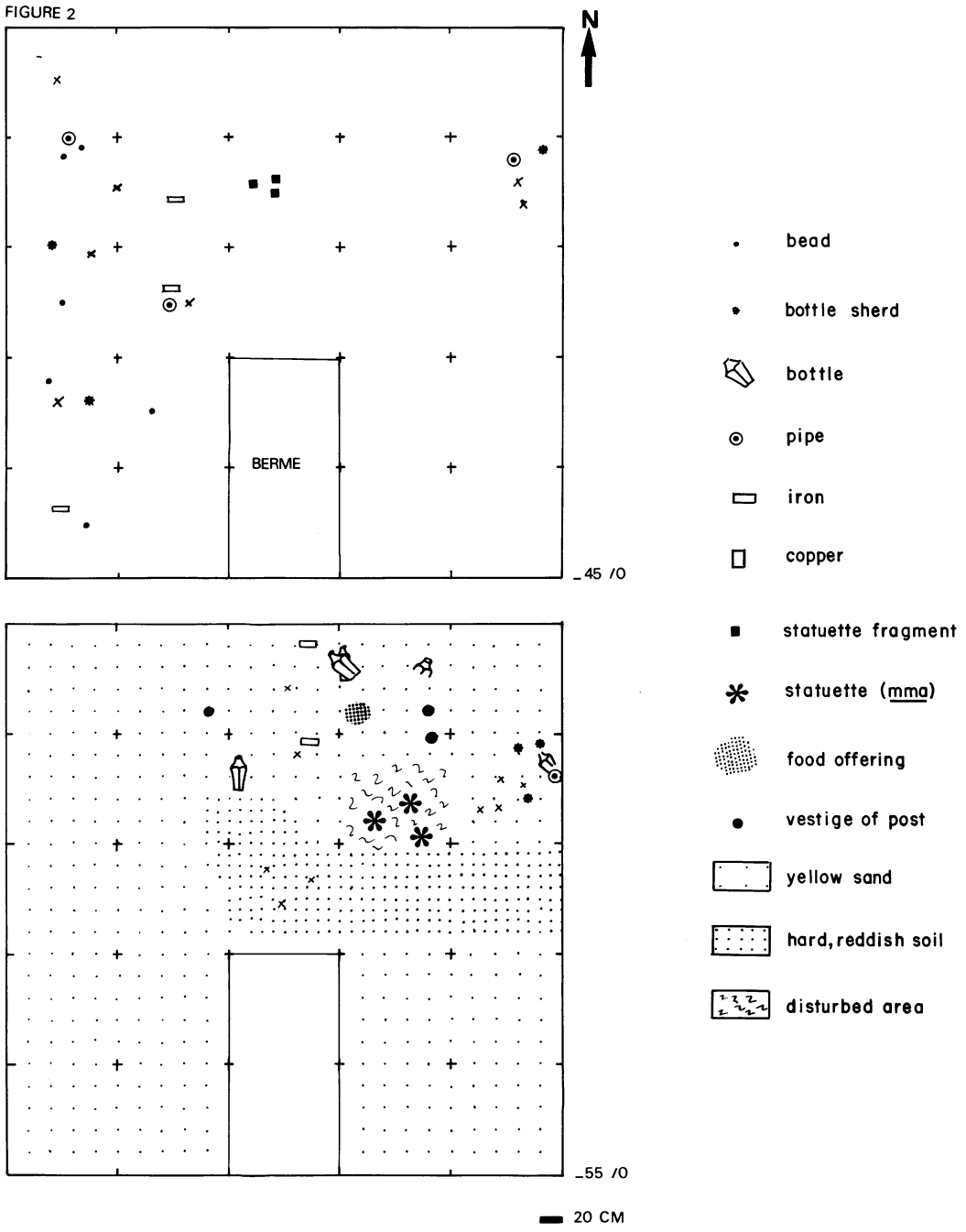


Fig. 25-2. Three deposits of gin bottles, some shells, and catfish spines were unearthed. All the gin bottles pointed north.

stages with the hat being added to the spherical crown which is similar to those of the other heads.

One whole body and fragments from four other bodies were recovered. The whole body, in a roughly cylindrical form which thins

Fig. 25-3. Head no. 1 (83 Ngaloa 265). This head is cylindrical and has ears consisting of two conical holes. The jaw is pronounced. The coiffure is composed of tresses and concentric motifs. Note the keloids on the temple.

Fig. 25-4. Head showing coiffure starting vertically from the ears.

down toward the top, is hollow and the base is pierced by a hole. This hole, which Soppelsa (1982) sees as having cultural significance, must in fact have allowed the evacuation of gases during firing. Concern for decoration is only evident in the slight protuberance of clay at the base. The other fragments allow us to analyze the techniques used in their fabrication. Here, too, two different types of clay were used: one, coarse, was modeled by built-up coils; the other, fine, covers the coarse clay and is smoothed down.

Let us examine the question of who built this *mmaso* and when. Art historians, dealing with statuettes removed from their sacred sites, i.e., the *mmaso,* and whose exact origins are not revealed during commercial transactions, call these pieces "Anyi heads from Krinjabo" because, in effect, it was in this area that the first ones were collected and then published by the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. This is quite erroneous, however, for *all* the populations who currently live around the shores of the Aby Lagoon—Abure, Anyi, Eotile, and Nzima—have at some point in their history manufactured *mma,* with some peoples making them until quite recently. Numerous accounts have signaled the presence of such funerary altars in places other than Krinjabo: Fleuriot de Langle in 1843[1] described one at Assini on the coast and Neveux published the photograph of a *mmaso* which was taken at Grand-Bassam in 1922. Neither author, unfortunately, gave precise descriptions of the statuettes which were found at these sites, so that currently in the Ivory Coast art market one still finds the so-called Krinjabo and other heads which art dealers claim come from Ghana. This opposition of styles is completely false, however, for while visiting a still-functioning *mmaso* some 50 km from Krinjabo, we found juxtaposed statuettes that could be attributed to the "Krinjabo" style and statuettes that were totally different.

Concerning the Ngaloa statuettes we find

Fig. 25-5. Head no. 2 (83 Ngaloa 263). Cylindrical head has the eyes closed. In this head the coiffure starts vertically from the ears and consists of six tresses. The outer edges of the ears are damaged.

Fig. 25-6. Head no. 3 (Ngaloa 260). In cross section the head is seen to be slightly oval and deeper than wide. Scarification is represented on the temples.

few of the characteristics that are habitually attributed—by de Grunne and Coronel, for example—to the Krinjabo funerary heads: the head does not lean to the rear; none possesses a "coiffure savante" or has a ringed neck. The scarifications between the eyes or on the temples are not typical of the Krinjabo or Aowin styles: some heads from the Hemang region (Sieber, 1973: 84) or from Fomena Adanse (de Grunne, 1980: 179) or even Kwahu (ibid.: 187) have them in the same places.

How can these facts be explained? The Eotile case is complex because, as is seen from the written sources, the Eotile have been in very close contact with the Anyi for a long time. Conquered militarily by the Anyi at the beginning of the 18th century, obliged to leave their territory, regrouped by force to the north of the lagoon, the Eotile developed (at Bianou) a *mma* art form that one might suppose was the result of the influence of their conquerors. In fact, this is how Amon d'Aby (1960) has described the situation.

It was only in the second half of the 19th century that the Eotile were able to resettle the southern shores of the lagoon but they never reoccupied their former places of residence (Polet, 1981). One could thus conclude that the *mma* date from this period and are in the pure Anyi tradition. Yet the case of Ngaloa is even more complex. "Ngaloa" is an Eotile word which can be glossed "I remain there," and in effect the power of the single family which peoples this encampment lies in the fact that they were the only ones to remain in their territory, and they alone still speak the Eotile language. This is thus the only site that has continually maintained the Eotile culture. This is supported by historical sources: research in the archives in

Dakar, Senegal, has revealed old maps of the Aby Lagoon along with other written reports by the first occupants of the Assini post. From reading these documents it would appear that in 1843 the southwest shores of the lagoon had no villages except for "two houses of fishermen near the coast" (Dossier 5 gl: 12) that a companion map (Dossier 5 gl: 34) locates near Ngaloa. (See note 1.)

The Eotile, we know, lived in houses built over shallow water but buried their dead on dry land (Polet, 1981). Although they lived on the water and exploited the resources of a lagoon which could be considered their territory, the land close to their villages was thus part of the village domain.

All known *mmaso,* however, whether in Ghana or Ivory Coast, are located outside villages, in clearings made in the forest along the principal path into the village (Soppelsa, 1982: 63). The excavation of the *mmaso* in Ngaloa showed that the ground upon which the statuettes rested was clean, without any trace of human passage apart from the sacrificial offerings linked to the deposit. It was thus not part of a village, and one can conclude that the *mmaso* was then in a noninhabited area—perhaps a forest—and that the corresponding settlement was that of the fishermen living immediately to the south, over the shallows of the lagoon itself, whose presence is noted on the 19th-century maps that predate the resettlement of the Eotile around the lagoon.

Concerning the probable dates for the Ngaloa statuettes, we would argue that the preceding facts and conclusions effectively challenge the idea of an Anyi origin—whether direct or indirect—for the statuettes, even though this previously seemed to be evident. The *mmaso* could thus predate the mid-19th century, although the presence of European bottles and pipes indicates that the site cannot be older than the middle of the 17th century. Can we be more precise? To attempt further precision, two facts must be taken into account:

The *mmaso* (statuettes and offerings) was, it seems, intentionally covered over, and thus protected. It "functioned" therefore when the Eotile who lived there were facing a threat. Resisting the Anyi, refusing to leave their territory, they must have lived in danger from the time of the Anyi arrival until the mid-19th century when they were allowed to reoccupy the southern part of the lagoon.

During our research on the Nyamwan necropolis, we found that oral traditions, recorded in Ngaloa itself, had kept alive the knowledge of the burial site used at the time of the Anyi invasion (Polet, 1983), i.e., the first half of the 18th century. The oral traditions had nonetheless forgotten the existence of the *mmaso.* Was this because the *mmaso,* or the date of its interment, was older? Or was it because although the necropolis concerned everyone, the *mmaso,* being much smaller, only concerned a single family and was more readily forgotten? The protection of the *mmaso,* once covered over, required that its location be kept secret. This knowledge, in the hands of a minority—a family—could be forgotten simply because the elders hesitated too long in transmitting their knowledge to the next generation—to speak would be to admit that one is soon to die—and were surprised by death before they were able to reveal it.

While we cannot date exactly the creation of the *mmaso,* the above arguments lead us to an early date: the late 17th or the early 18th century. We await the results of carbon-14 dating that will allow us to be more precise, but already the historical, stylistic, and archaeological data are concordant with this conclusion.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND COMPARATIVE ELEMENTS

The region in which these objects were found was considered by the Dutch, French, and English chroniclers in the 17th century to be the first "beacon" on the Gold Coast when arriving from Europe. The main reason that no fort was established in this area was undoubtedly due to the nature of the coast, for it was low and sandy and difficult to reach through the heavy surf.

The Assini region is, in effect, a natural outlet for the gold produced in the western regions of what is now Ghana (Sefwi, Ejura, Aowin, and Denkyira), regions that are traversed by the Bia and the Tano rivers which

Fig. 25-7. Neck of anthropomorphic jug.

flow into the lagoon north of Assini. This is not idle speculation. Some 17th-century texts confirm that a good portion of the gold produced in the west of (present-day) Ghana escaped the control of the European forts and was traded to "interloper" boats lying off Assini. Let us cite Bosman (1705) referring to the late 17th century: "The Gold Coast being a part of Guinea is extended about sixty miles, beginning with the Gold River three miles west of Assine, or twelve above Axim, and ending with the village Ponni seven or eight miles east of Accra." In this text, the Aby Lagoon—which at that period had its outlet three miles west of Assini—is referred to as the Gold River, due to the gold which undoubtedly came from the areas traversed by the Bia and Tano rivers, since the sandy quaternary soils of the Assini region contained none.

Further evidence is found in the fact that as early as 1658 the Dutch made a reconnaissance mission on the lagoon and tried to ascend the Tano River in a yacht to get direct access to the sources of gold (Van Dantzig, 1976: 44).

Thanks to the texts of Loyer and Tibierge (Roussier, 1935) we are well acquainted with the populations living here at the end of the 17th century: the Eotile, also known as the Veterez or Pescheurs ("fishermen"), who were considered autochthonous, and the Issynois (now known as Esuma) who had only recently arrived and who occupied the littoral. These texts show us that political power in the region belonged to the masters of the lagoon, the Eotile, who controlled all the trade. The Issynois, on the coast, were dependent on the Eotile even for food since the littoral was nonproductive land. It was thus the "fishermen" who were in contact, by the rivers, with the people in the western Gold Coast prior to the invasion of the region by the Anyi following the Denkyira-Asante wars. There was thus an entire commercial and cultural area that existed prior to the political dom-

inance of the Anyi, and this area extended in the west to the Comoé River (cf. Ducasse *in* Roussier, 1935: 7) and also to the interior as we shall see below.

Let us return to the topic of the funerary statuettes. Patricia Crane Coronel (1979) states that terra cotta funerary statuettes were found in the Aowin area prior to the arrival, around 1700, of the Aowin who are related to the Anyi. These statuettes, although different from the ones in Ngaloa, have in common the facial scarification, the high forehead with the coiffure starting at a line vertical to the ears, and a smooth neck without rings—unlike the Krinjabo statuettes.

For this same historical period we have discovered at La Seguié (Polet and Saison, 1981), in the area of Agboville some 150 km north of Ngaloa, the neck of an anthropomorphic jug (cf. fig. 25-7). The volume of the spherical head, the hairstyle, and the ears are treated differently than the Ngaloa statuettes. Nevertheless, the eyes are like "coffee beans," scarification keloids are incised on the cheeks, between the eyes, and on the side of the neck, and the aquiline nose resembles that of head no. 3. The archaeological site was dated by oral traditions and the presence of tobacco pipes to the end of the 17th century. Moreover, the style of this head reminds one of the anthropomorphic recipients found in the art style called "Akye."

The Ngaloa statuettes, we maintain, must be analyzed not as a simple incarnation of Krinjabo art, but rather as the product of one of the lagoon societies of eastern Ivory Coast which participated in an economic region where goods, men, and ideas were in constant circulation, and the region itself was linked to the Atlantic trade.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are grateful to Philip Ravenhill for translating this paper, originally written in French, into English.

NOTE

1. Archives Nationales de Sénégal, 1843. Dossier 5 gl Assinie-1843, folder no. 4: Rapport de M. A. Fleuriot de Langle.

CHAPTER 26. THE ASANTE ORIGINS OF THE LAGOON PEOPLES AS AN ART HISTORICAL PROBLEM

Monica Blackmun Visonà

ABSTRACT

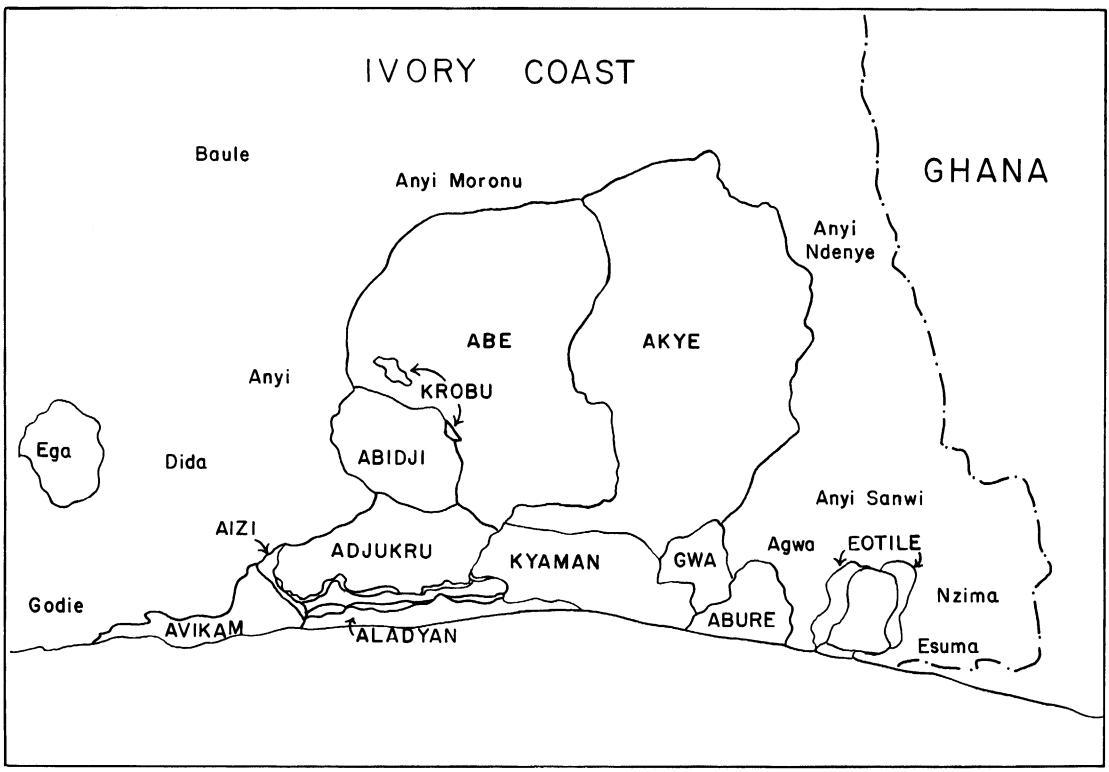
At least 12 ethnic groups living in the southeastern corner of the Ivory Coast are known as the "Lagoon peoples." Ivorians consider these cultures to be Akan, and most origin myths collected in the area mention migrations from Ghana popularly assumed to have occurred several hundred years ago. Linguistic and archaeological evidence, however, indicates that the Lagoon groups and the Twi speakers of Ghana are more distantly related than such myths would suggest. Since a recent survey of Lagoon art forms has made it possible to compare the artistic traditions of Ghana with this area of the Ivory Coast, the issue may now be addressed from an art historical perspective.

Contrasts between Lagoon and Ghanaian Akan art can be discussed in the context of three related forms: art objects displayed by diviners and other religious specialists, regalia worn by royalty in Ghana and by village leaders in the Ivory Coast, and the art produced by Lagoon age grades, and by their analogous Fante *asafo* companies. Even though the art forms of each region have evidently had strong influences on the art of the other during the course of the 20th century, the Lagoon cultures are revealed as the source of a well-established and independent artistic tradition, supporting the view that the Lagoon peoples are not recent immigrants, but heirs to an older and more complex ethnic development.

INTRODUCTION

In the southeastern corner of the Ivory Coast there are 12 ethnic groups known collectively as the *lagunaires,* or Lagoon peoples. Ivorians consider these groups to be Akan and include them in the same category as peoples such as the Baule, Anyi, Abron, Nzima, Fante, and Asante.[1] This classification is due in part to a number of origin myths collected among several Lagoon groups, which claim that the ancestors of the present populations came from the east to settle in the previously uninhabited areas they now occupy.[2] Conservative elders refuse to specify a single kingdom as the point of origin, asserting only that the founders of their village came originally from what is now Ghana. In popular culture, however, the ancestral homeland of the Lagoon peoples is usually identified as Asante (or, more rarely, Denkyira). This belief is now reinforced by newspaper articles and television programs. Even though the *lagunaires* refer to the migrations as relatively recent events, most Ivorian scholars now postulate that the Lagoon peoples may have arrived in their present locations as early as the 14th or 15th centuries.[3]

If the ancestors of the Lagoon peoples did indeed arrive en masse from Ghana within the last five or six hundred years, and did not merge with autochthonous groups in the region, one would assume that their material culture, social structure, religious practices, and language would closely resemble those of the Asante and other Twi-speaking peoples. Scholars such as Niangoran-Bouah (1963, 1964) have, in fact, assumed that it is possible to talk about an Akan culture stretching from the southern Ivory Coast to central Ghana, even though other authorities, such as Boahen, do not believe that many of these Ivorian groups are Akan at all (Boahen, 1966a; Flynn, 1982). Since Lagoon cultural traits are still very inadequately documented, these preliminary categorizations of Lagoon ethnic groups do not rest on a systematic comparison of Lagoon and Asante (or central Akan) ethnography. At present the only aspect of Lagoon cultures which has been re-



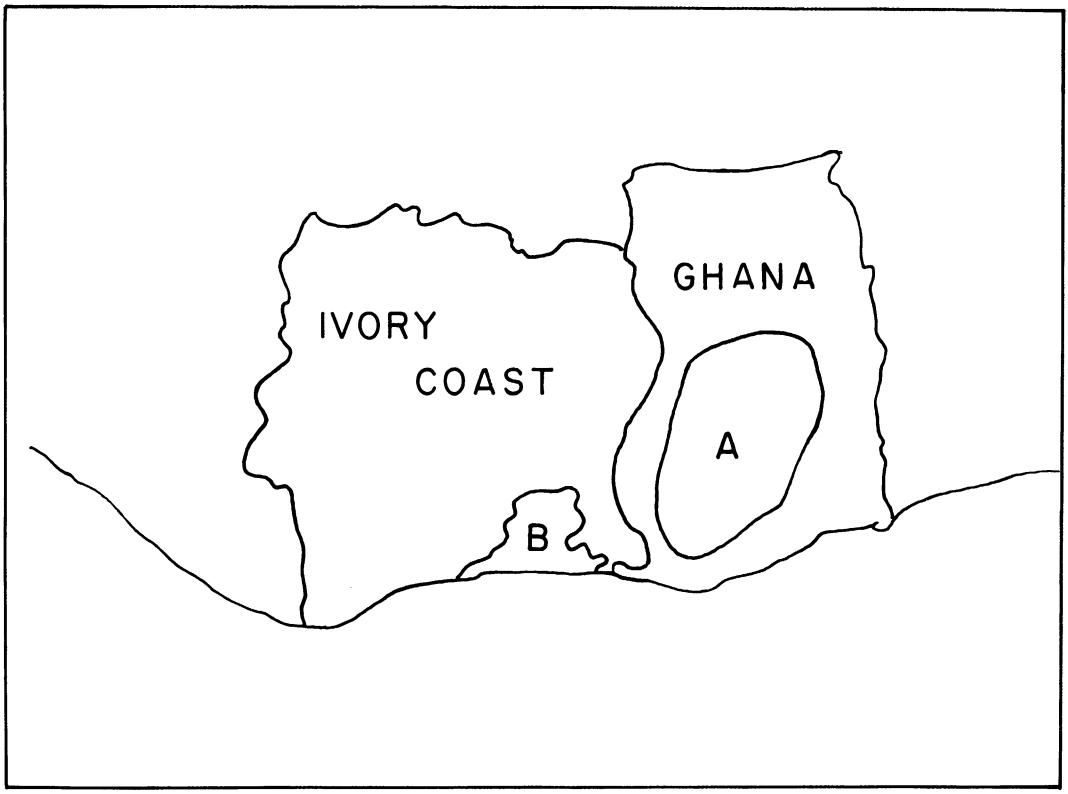
Map 26-1. Lagoon cultures.

lated to that of other Akan cultures in a scientific manner is language.[4]

A nine-month survey of Lagoon art forms, concluded in July 1984, is thus of great interest to historians and ethnologists as well as to art historians, for some aspects of the material culture of the *lagunaires* and the Asante may now be contrasted. An analysis of the similarities and differences between the artistic traditions of the two regions will not only provide insights into the development of art in this area of Africa, but will also challenge the belief popular in the Ivory Coast that the Lagoon peoples are formed primarily of recent emigrants from Asante.

Several caveats must be presented before beginning this comparison. Each of the 12 groups included in my list of Lagoon peoples has a distinct language, unintelligible to its neighbors, and seemingly independent social, political, and religious systems. The data collected on their artistic traditions show that the forms and uses for art in the region were also extremely varied. Broad generalizations, based on these diverse denominators, must thus be made in order to contrast these diverse cultures with the single state of Asante. From east to west the *lagunaires* are as follows: Eotile (Mekyibo, Vetre); Abure (Aboure, Akaples); Gwa (M'Batto); Akye (Attie); Kyaman or Tshaman (Ebrie); Abe (Abbey); Aladyan (Alladian, Jack-Jack); Adjukru (Adioukrou); Aizi (Ahizi); Krobu (Krobou); Abidji; Avikam (Brignam) (maps 26-1, 26-2). The Esuma (Essouma, Assini), Agwa, and Ega, while retaining elements of Lagoon language and/or culture, have evidently been absorbed into the societies of their surrounding neighbors.[5]

While the art forms of Asante have been extensively researched and published by authorities such as Rattray (1927), Cole and Ross (1977), and McLeod (1981), my survey of Lagoon art is as yet incomplete. The Aladyan, Krobu, and Aizi were not properly covered, and the regional differences existing in



Map 26-2. Greater Asante (**A**) and the Lagoon area (**B**).

the larger ethnic groups were not fully investigated. Since available information on the art of the Anyi and other western Ghanaian Akan groups is quite limited, it is also difficult to reconstruct Lagoon-Anyi-Asante contacts. In light of these difficulties, many of my conclusions will be hypothetical, pending further documentation. For the sake of brevity, Asante and Lagoon art forms of two types will be contrasted: figural statuary, and regalia used by political leaders.

FIGURAL STATUARY

Figural statuary was found throughout the southeastern Ivory Coast prior to the First World War. While the handful of deities worshiped across ethnic boundaries were rarely represented by anthropomorphic figures, lesser gods charged with the protection of a village, clan, or extended family were frequently portrayed in figures of wood, chalk, or clay. Full or partial human forms could have been a few inches or a few feet in height, and could have been modeled by the devotee or carved by a renowned artist.[6] Innumerable minor spirits of the bush or water insisted that gifted individuals become diviners; in return for regular public sacrifices the supernatural beings allowed the clairvoyants to diagnose the reasons for the misfortunes of their clients, and to discover remedies for their problems. Usually such healers owned wooden statues, which acted as the mouthpieces and material supports for their spirits. When the figures were displayed during the dances in honor of the spirits, the diviner interpreted their pronouncements to the assembled crowd.

Colonial administrators and European missionaries opposed to traditional cults were able to suppress the worship of many supernatural beings by destroying the images, the trees, or the natural formations acting as their material representatives. However, the efforts of these men were insignificant com-

pared to the work of a Liberian missionary, William Wade Harris. Arriving on the coast just before the First World War, Harris converted vast numbers of people to Christianity.[7] Thousands of wooden and terra-cotta figures were destroyed as priests and diviners renounced their calling and asked to be baptized.

Virtually all figures for the protective deities of villages and clans disappeared in the wake of Harris' visits. Among most of the coastal groups, diviners have become quite scarce. Those who continue to practice no longer own statuary, sacred stones, or other objects which might link them to an openly "pagan" past. Clairvoyants who still possess human figures in these ethnic groups keep them carefully hidden, and since private, secret worship of spirits with the aid of statues or charms is believed to be connected to the practice of witchcraft by most Lagoon peoples, both the statues and their owners are considered to be evil and dangerous. Even purely ornamental statuary may be suspect in the coastal Lagoon groups, as an Adjukru man discovered: village clairvoyants insisted that he destroy a large figure he had purchased to decorate his living room; they had determined that the image had become inhabited by an evil spirit.

In other Lagoon groups diviners are numerous, but rarely use statues to communicate with their spirits. Among these peoples, healers prefer to work with stones, mirrors, or even dolls made of small calabashes, in order to avoid images associated with idolatry. Most of the clairvoyants conducting their therapy through carved figures claim to have found them in the bush. As any object given to a healer by his or her spirits receives a special sanction, these miraculously discovered objects are above reproach. In fact, an individual who finds a statue in a field, grove, or stream accepts this event as a sign that supernatural beings wish him or her to become a diviner.

Only Akye and Eotile therapists still order large numbers of statues from artists (fig. 26-1). After diviners' statues were destroyed by followers of Harris in the 1920s and 1930s, Akye and Eotile healers replaced them. When both surviving statuary and the replacements themselves were sold by their descendants in the 1960s and 1970s, their disciples commissioned new ones. The Akye consider carved figures to be indispensable in traditional divination, for they believe that an anthropomorphic image is the most suitable intermediary between the world of men and the world of spirits. Diviners speak to statues in order to call their spirits, and the statues speak to them during healing sessions or in dreams to inform them of the spirits' views. Each figure has its own personality, distinct from that of either the clairvoyant or his or her tutelary deities. A statue may have its own set of personal taboos, and diviners who practice without these figures often do so because they are afraid that such anthropomorphic images may be too difficult for them to handle. The tendency to name statues either after a spirit (Akua or Akuaba is a favorite name of this type) or after a member of the diviner's family underscores their identification as ex-

Fig. 26-1. Akye diviner with her wooden assistant.

Fig. 26-2. Lagoon figure, collection of the Musée de l'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (ex. coll. Girardin).

tensions of both human and superhuman personalities. In Akye divination, wooden figures are go-betweens shared by the diviner and his or her spiritual partner (Visonà, 1984).

Asante protective deities apparently were not associated with carved figures in this way during the precolonial period. It seems that anthropomorphic statuary began to be important in Asante shrines about the same time that it was being suppressed among many Lagoon peoples. McLeod has postulated that some of the new cults and their figures arrived in Asante from the southwest (McLeod, 1981: 70, 174), and the prevalence of statues in the Aboure-Eotile-Gwa-Akye area in the 1920s suggests that the Lagoon peoples may have been one of the sources of these new religious forms. The stylistic similarities between the Asante and Lagoon figures make the hypothesis yet more intriguing, for some of these Asante figures exhibit the strong facial features, short thick legs, and outstretched arms usually found in sculpture of the Lagoon style (fig. 26-2).[8] The role of Asante shrine statuary, however, is now quite different from that of analogous Lagoon works. While they partake of the supernatural power associated with the deity or deities, Asante images kept in shrines seem to be primarily decorative adjuncts to the other material supports for the spirits' strength. Unlike Lagoon figures, they apparently illustrate the supernatural force of a priest or diviner, but are not its principal extensions.[9] Although an Akye, Abure, Eotile, or Abe statue may be displayed in part because of its visual impact, it is regarded above all as a container for spiritual power.

Some of the many other types of statuary used by Lagoon peoples may also be compared to Asante figures. The famous abstract images of *akua'mma* once had a direct equivalent in at least one culture, the geographically distant Avikam.[10] Avikam figures were carried, cuddled, and nursed by barren women until they were able to conceive, and were sometimes played with by older women past child-bearing age. Related fertility-inducing statues were also carved by the Avikam to serve as stand-ins for "spirit lovers," or spouses left behind in the other world at birth. In Avikam belief these spiritual beings could prevent a man or woman from having a normal sexual life if they became jealous of the person's human partners. By caring for the figure as if it were a spouse, the human being could assuage this supernatural jealousy. While the Avikam have abandoned all figural statuary, the Abure and Eotile still commission "spirit lover" figures (fig. 26-3). If the practice of carving images for other world spouses is indeed an ancient tradition in these groups, and not simply a result of Baule influence, it may be part of a very old pan-Akan artistic tradition.[11] On the other hand, only the Abure and Eotile carve small images to replace dead twins, and twin figures may thus be merely a local development (fig. 26-4).[12]

Throughout the Lagoon area statuary is owned by (or, in the most iconoclastic groups, was owned by) dance societies. Large female figures displayed during secular or semisec-

Fig. 26-3. Eotile spirit lover figures (male image carved by a Baule artist).

Fig. 26-4. Eotile twin figures.

ular dances may represent the *presidente* of the dance troupe, its best dancer, or simply a beautiful woman whose feminine pulchritude is designed to draw onlookers. Images named after the leader or leaders of the society, or its star performer, are equivalents of the Baule portrait masks documented by Vogel (1977). Smaller idealized portraits given to the best dancers to carry during the festivities are often undistinguishable from statuettes carried by other dancers who mimic diviners (fig. 26-5). Asante works related to such dance figures may include the idealized "queen-mother" images, which are either portraits of specific women or statues honoring matrons in general,[13] as well as the ensembles of figures displayed by Asante dance troupes. The history, distribution, and formal variation of this type of secular statuary in the Akan area deserves further study.

The terra-cotta statuary of the Akan peoples is too vast a subject to be discussed here. I would like to mention in passing, though, the existence of human-headed pottery vessels and full or partial figures of terra-cotta among the Abe, Akye, Gwa, Abidji, and Abure during the 19th century.[14] Evidently the two types of images were interchangeable as commemorative portraits of the dead. Terra-cotta images were also used in the worship of various categories of deities (as noted above) and are still formed today for the worship of personal spirits among the Abure and Eotile. The Lagoon peoples must thus be included in any future study of the development of terra-cotta images in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.

The varied usages for Lagoon figures are matched by their stylistic diversity. While several formal elements are diagnostic of Lagoon style—these include the treatment of the human form as an assembly of distinct geometric units, the use of attached arms or feet, and the tendency to represent scarification marks with tiny inset pegs—wide variation

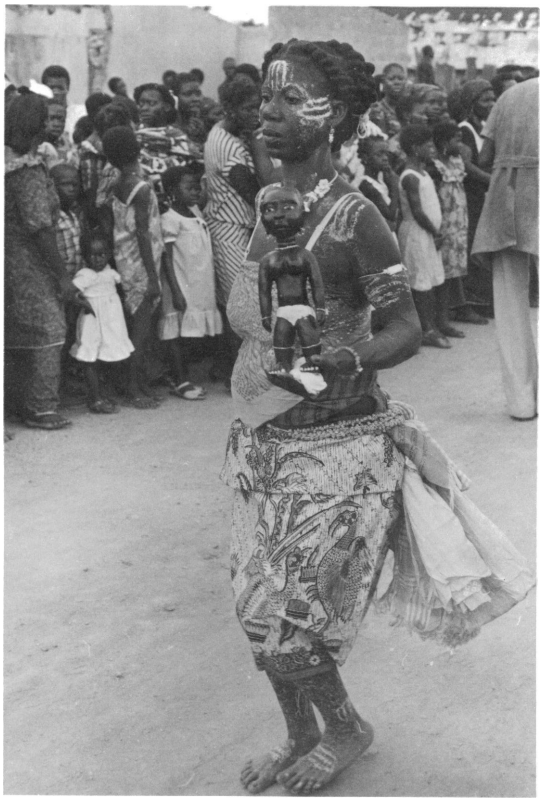


Fig. 26-5. Akye dancer carrying figure during performance of *bitshome.*

Fig. 26-6. Figures owned by an Akye diviner (both carved by artists who still continue to work in her village).

may be found within these general parameters (fig. 26-6). The corpus of works from Asante displays a more limited stylistic repertoire. Both the aesthetic richness of the Lagoon objects, and the attribution of supernatural power given to them, suggest that figural sculpture was traditionally much more important in Lagoon cultures than it was in Asante.

If the *lagunaires* emigrated from Asante only 500 years ago, explanations must be found for the differences between Lagoon and Asante statuary. For many years art historians, who accepted the Asante origins of the Baule, explained Baule proficiency in sculpture in terms of their contacts with the Guro. Could Lagoon sculptural traditions be similarly attributed to Dida or Bete influence? Or are the differences between Asante and Lagoon forms due to the development of the Asante state, since powerful images of supernatural beings might threaten the burgeoning authority of the Asantehene and his court? In that case wood carving would have declined in the centralized states of Ghana while continuing to flourish in the more loosely structured, acephalous societies of the Lagoon area. I believe that neither explanation could fully account for the dissimilarities between the roles and styles of statuary from the two regions.

REGALIA

Differences between the sociopolitical systems of the Ivorian and Ghanaian groups are, of course, most closely reflected in their regalia. The role of stools in the two areas provides the first striking contrast. Apparently all Akan peoples except the Lagoon groups blacken stools in order to venerate ancestors. When a Lagoon leader dies, his stool (which has been darkened by plant pigments or merely painted) may be kept by a successor (if it were an insignia of office) or by a de-

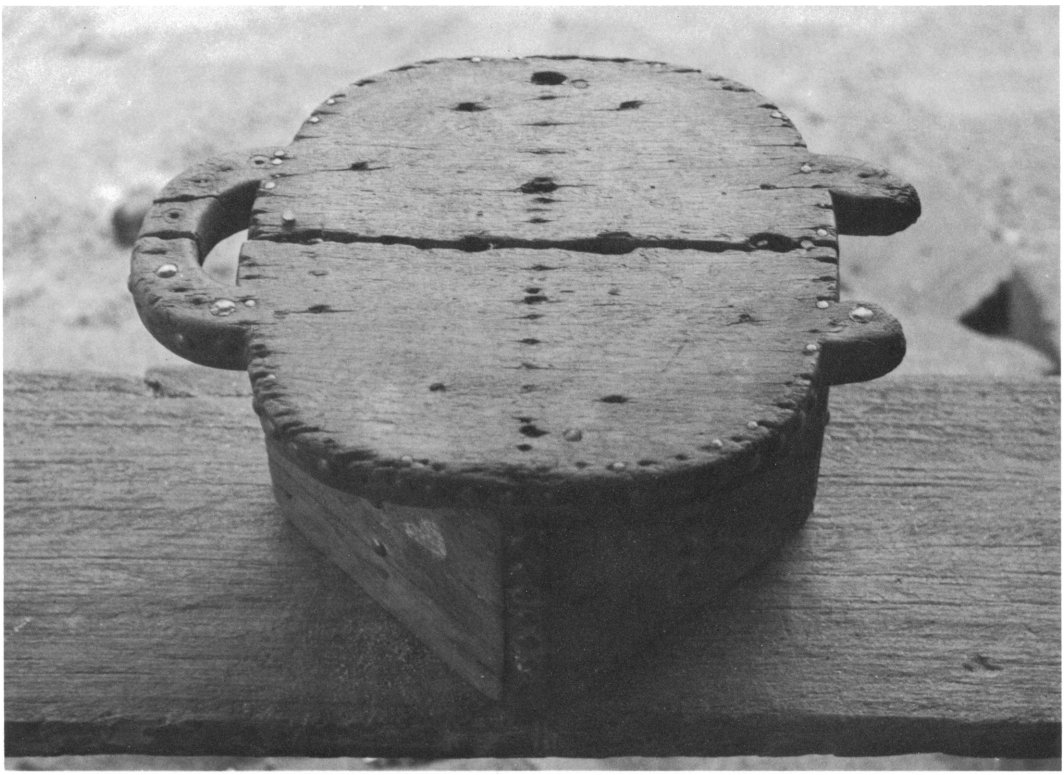


Fig. 26-7. Avikam stool, kept by owners as a family heirloom.

scendant (if it were simply a family heirloom). In neither case does the stool become a receptacle for the spirit of the deceased, and it may be sat upon without compunction. Only the Abure, whose sociopolitical system is somewhat aberrant compared to the other Lagoon groups, offer sacrifices to the ancestors upon stools.[15] The form of Lagoon stools was traditionally very similar to Asante examples, even though older Lagoon stools are rather small in comparison. Round stools were once equal in prestige to the square examples, but the former stools have virtually disappeared (fig. 26-7).

Drums of the Lagoon peoples are often given names very similar to their equivalents in Twi-Fanti. When Akye and Abure drums speak (by alternating high and lower tones to duplicate patterns of human speech) they are said to be talking Anyi or Asante. War drums were once festooned with human skulls in both Ghana and the Ivory Coast.[16] However, the most important drums of the Lagoon peoples are almost always richly carved and painted. Visually they tend to be more interesting than their Asante counterparts.[17] Almost all Lagoon drums are owned by corporate groups, such as an age-grade or clan, rather than by an individual leader. Ivory trumpets, on the other hand, are more likely to be the property of an eminent individual. Small ivory horns with two holes can produce two tones and thus "talk" by themselves, but ideally praise and proverbs should be called out by an orchestra of four to six pierced tusks, each with a single tone. The tips of these trumpets are subtly carved into forms reminiscent of birds' heads or the human phallus.

Fine carving is also displayed on Lagoon staffs. Sculpted pommels or finials may appear on the batons of any important man in a Lagoon community; they are not limited to the official spokesmen or linguists of the vil-

Fig. 26-8. Akye staff, probably carved in the early 20th century.

lage. As one might expect in these egalitarian societies, the staff of a *chef de village* may be indistinguishable from that of a minor age-grade representative, for there are no images restricted to the use of the men of highest rank. The only exception to this generalization, once more, occurs among the Abure (Ablé, 1978: 233). The iconography of Lagoon staffs is much more limited than that of Asante regalia. Lagoon images illustrate the power of leaders in easily apprehended terms; a fist implies that the man has all the men in his village, age-grade, or family firmly within his grasp; a ring of human heads refers to the ability of the owner to lop off heads at will; and a figure riding on the shoulders of a slave is flaunted by a man rich enough to purchase a human being. The Asante proverbs and allusions illustrated on linguists' staffs are much more subtle and sophisticated (Cole and Ross, 1977; McLeod, 1981). Whereas Lagoon staffs refer to the owner who holds the object himself, Asante staffs are displayed by courtiers and the messages are related to the sovereign, the Asantehene.

Lagoon staffs, like their Asante counterparts, are often covered in gold leaf. However, their finials may also be ornamented with figures in wood, or in wood studded with brass tacks, or by tops of ivory. In fact, the current use of ivory staff finials, and ivory combs, appears to be limited to the Lagoon peoples. Many of the wooden figures atop these Lagoon canes may have been influenced by Baule styles, for they are remarkably fluid and elongated for Lagoon statuary. Gold-covered wooden staff finials, dagger hilts, flywhisk handles, and other items, however, are often unmistakably Baule in inspiration, if not in workmanship, for some are identical to comparable Baule work.[18] Staffs with finials carved in wood or covered with gold leaf have been approximately dated to the middle or end of the 19th century by informants (fig. 26-8), and ivory finials seem to depict men wearing 19th-century European military dress.

Art historians have sometimes assumed that the use of staffs among the Asante was the direct result of the European practice of giving canes to allies and messengers (McLeod, 1981: 98–101). While this tradition may indeed explain the role of staffs in Asante diplomacy, it may not provide a complete reason for the Asante adoption of decorated, proverbial staff finials in the early 20th century. Models for these ornamented objects could have arrived from the west, for the Baule and the *lagunaires* were carving human figures on batons at least 50 years before comparable Asante examples were made.

The most dazzling forms of Asante and Lagoon regalia are undoubtedly their gold jewelry. The fame of Kumase goldsmiths is such that many Lagoon gold objects have been classified as Asante by Westerners, even though pieces from the two areas may be differentiated on stylistic grounds.[19] While both types of goldwork were traditionally created by lost wax casting, Asante examples tend to

be much more naturalistic than their Lagoon counterparts. The surface of traditional Lagoon gold objects is covered with tiny ridges, producing a shimmering effect lacking in most Asante pieces (fig. 26-9). Only rectangular and circular gold pieces (identified as shields and "soul-washers' disks") are widespread in both areas.[20] These formal distinctions are probably due to the differing roles of gold in the two regions. In central Ghana, gold glorifies the monarch, and is displayed in the context of royal appearances. Its iconography refers to his authority, and thus must be easily legible as illustrations of a proverb or concept (Cole and Ross, 1977; McLeod, 1981).

In the Lagoon cultures every man and woman may aspire to gold ownership. Often the ability to display gold objects during certain festivals entitles a man to special privileges as well as bestowing upon him a title usually translated as "king." The quality and size of each gold piece are carefully scrutinized by onlookers during such ceremonies, for those who have already achieved high status must determine whether or not the newcomer is as wealthy as he claims to be. While statements about riches and their acquisition are contained in the imagery of Lagoon gold objects, this subject matter is of secondary importance compared with the fact that their simple, abstract shapes help viewers assess their value more accurately. In recent years only the Kyaman (Ebrie) have continued to produce gold objects using traditional methods, and Lagoon work may gradually be replaced by objects made by Nzima or even Asante goldsmiths in the future.

Asante and Lagoon leaders thus use similar categories of regalia (staffs, stools, and gold jewelry), and, in some cases, Lagoon dignitaries own objects actually imported from Ghana. However, the meaning of these art works differs according to the cultural context in which they are used. Since the *lagunaires* have no paramount chiefs, and only the Abure have hereditary monarchs, men who wear or display regalia proclaim their personal status as men of wealth and/or important leaders. Asante regalia links royals and dignitaries to the Asantehene. If the Asante and Lagoon cultures were indeed closely related, the material differences in their regalia might be understandable, but the functional differences would be difficult to explain.

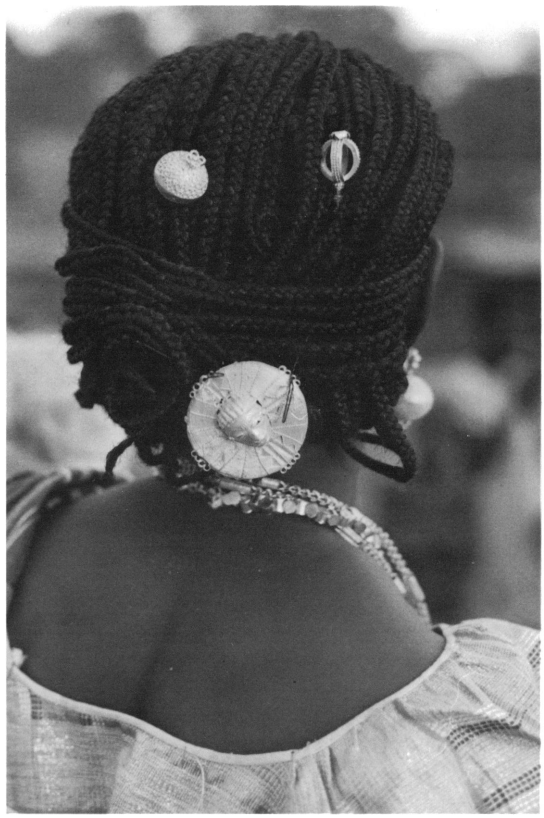


Fig. 26-9. Young woman wearing old Lagoon gold disk (probably cast by an Akye or Kyaman artist).

LAGOON AGE-GRADE SYSTEM

All the Lagoon regalia mentioned above appears during age-grade festivals. Unlike other Akan peoples, the Lagoon groups divide their male population into categories according to sociological age. Cerulli (1975) even cites the absence of an age-grade system in her definition of truly Akan peoples. It thus seems strange that so many people in the Lagoon area believe that the institution originated in Ghana, and that it was brought to the Ivory Coast either by the founders of the ethnic groups or by a later culture hero. However, there are in fact some similarities between Lagoon age-grades and Akan systems

of *asafo,* for both types of organization cut across matriclan identities to form military companies loyal to the community as a whole. Some Lagoon war captains are even known as *sabohin, sahwe,* or *sapronian,* false cognates for *asafohene.* The closest counterparts to Lagoon celebrations are the festivals of Fante *asafo* groups.

The art of Fante *asafo,* admirably documented by Ross (1980), is similar to Lagoon age-grade demonstrations in several ways. Special costumes provide important displays of the group's wealth and power in both types of celebration. Flag dancers, said to possess superhuman skill, perform during *asafo* festivals as well as during many Lagoon age-grade ceremonies. Finally, the art objects owned by both kinds of military groups display wild beasts, warriors decapitating enemies in the presence of admiring women, and other forthright images of brute strength.

Fante and Lagoon displays differ, however, in the source of their images and the nature of the materials of which they are formed. *Asafo posuban* (large, well-decorated shrines) are built of cement, painted bright colors, and molded into battleships, castles, airplanes, and other potent foreign forms. Lagoon sculptural groups, carried on the heads of participants, depict only ferocious animals, hunters, executioners, and other themes taken from traditional cultures. *Asafo* members dress in costumes mimicking European uniforms, or in imaginative fashions devised for the festivals, whereas a Lagoon age-grade member appears in variants of traditional wrappers and robes. Although a few items of imported apparel (such as 19th-century top hats) may be worn, ancestral dress of bark-cloth or raffia is also common. While *asafo* officials are protected by war shirts festooned with Islamic charms, age-grade leaders wear medicines taken from local forests and streams.

Unfortunately, little information exists on the visual component in Asante military rituals. If documentation could be found for the existence of aesthetic images in Asante *asafo* ceremonies it would be possible to postulate that the presentation of art by warrior groups was once a pan-Akan phenomenon.

CONCLUSION

It would be tempting to stress similarities between individual objects and specific usages for art which link the Asante and the Lagoon peoples, for this would conform to popular Ivorian beliefs about past migrations. However, the overall differences between the artistic traditions are striking. If the ancestors of most Lagoon peoples left Asante within the last three or four hundred years, their art forms and the institutions with which they are associated would be more alike.

The development of the Lagoon groups may instead have followed a model similar to that now proposed by historians for the Baule (Weiskel, 1980). In that case a small, prestigious, and powerful group of immigrants arrived from Ghana as recently as the 18th century, mingling with the much larger indigenous population. This theory would account for the oral traditions while underscoring the importance of ancient, non-Ghanaian culture traits in the area. A second option would postulate that the Lagoon area was indeed populated during a single period, but that the immigrants arrived much earlier than five or six hundred years ago. The Lagoon peoples would thus be a homogeneous group descended from purely pre-Akan or proto-Akan immigrants. To me the most appealing hypothesis is this: that a gradual, fragmentary movement of peoples into the area has been occurring since Neolithic times. While some immigrants may have indeed come from Asante, they would have been absorbed by older populations, and would have mingled with immigrants from what is now western Ghana. This theory would explain the complexity of the divisions between Lagoon languages, as well as the antiquity of archaeological sites excavated by specialists such as Jean Polet. Finally, it would account for the occasional appearances of Ghanaian objects, terms, and cultural practices in the southeastern Ivory Coast. For while reflections of Asante may be found in some elements of Lagoon material culture, the 12 ethnic groups known as the *lagunaires* obviously have separate and well-established artistic traditions.

NOTES

1. See the ethnic maps and explanatory texts of the atlas of the Ivory Coast, Ministère du Plan (1979).

2. For examples of such myths see Boni (1970) and Memel-Fotê (1980: 57).

3. Although Locou acknowledges that "les peuples lagunaires sont issus de groups autochtones attestés dès la période néolithique et de groupes venus par vagues successives de l'ouest et de l'est," he goes on to say that "le peuplement [of the Lagoon region] s'est affectué dans l'espace, de la forêt vers les lagunes, et dans le temps, de XV au XVIII siècle" (1983: 39–40). Textbooks for secondary schools in the Ivory Coast also imply that the influence of autochthonous groups was of minor importance in the formation of the Lagoon peoples, and that the ancestors of each modern ethnic group arrived in a single wave during this later period.

4. The recent publication of the Université d'Abidjan, Institut de Linguistique Appliqué (1982), establishes that the Lagoon languages are distantly related to each other and even more distantly related to Twi-Fante. Preliminary glottochronologies indicate that the Lagoon languages separated from a common source over 1000 years ago (Bole-Richard, personal commun., 1983).

5. Both Memel-Fotê (1980) and Locou (1983) include the Nzima and Esuma in their lists of 14 *lagunaires.* While an ethnographic study of the Nzima has shown that they are definitely not a Lagoon group (Cerulli, 1975), further research is needed to determine whether the Esuma and the Ega may still be considered independent Lagoon peoples.

6. Information on extinct art forms is very difficult to gather (Stanton, 1974; Augé, 1975; Visonà, 1986). Thus the summary descriptions provided by Acho (n.d.), Djueagbou (n.d.), and Mobio (1945–46) are very important in the reconstruction of Lagoon religious and cultural history.

7. See Stanton (1974) and Augé (1975) for explanations of Harris's success.

8. Asante figures of this type are illustrated by McLeod (1981: 70, 174). Other shrine figures tend to be highly schematic, in keeping with older Asante traditions.

9. "In most instances these images are revered as representations and aids to worship, much like saints' statues in Christian churches" (Cole and Ross, 1977: 98). This description would *not* apply to Lagoon figures.

10. See Cole and Ross (1977) and McLeod (1981) for descriptions and illustrations of *akua'mma.*

11. See Vogel (1977) and Ravenhill (1980) for analyses of Baule spirit lover/spirit spouse figures.

12. Evidently twin figures are found among Ga peoples as well; see Field, quoted by Cole and Ross (1977: 107). Abure examples have been illustrated by Niangoran-Bouah (1964), and are discussed by Adjoussou (1943–44).

13. Illustrated by McLeod (1981) and Cole and Ross (1977).

14. Soppelsa (1982) includes a description of Abure, Eotile, Akye, and Abe terra-cottas. My fieldwork data indicate that the geographical functional range of Lagoon terra-cottas is (and was) greater than his study suggests.

15. Ablé (1978: 27, 244) asserts that the Abure are a "royaume bien structuré," and mentions both sacred stools and stool rooms.

16. Illustrated by McLeod (1981: 43).

17. See illustrations in Nketia (1963). However, drums for voluntary associations are much more richly decorated; see Cole and Ross (1977: 170).

18. Examples of gold-covered wooden objects either imported by the Lagoon groups or merely copied from Baule prototypes are illustrated by Himmelheber (1972).

19. See Donne (1977). Fischer (Fischer et al., 1981) is apparently the only other scholar who has attempted to assign regional styles of Akan goldwork.

20. Illustrated and discussed by Cole and Ross (1977) and McLeod (1981). In the past, Lagoon and Asante goldwork may have been more similar than they are today.

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