

AKAN STUDIES COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 1
September 1989

CO-CHAIRS' STATEMENT

by
Judith Timyan and
Raymond A. Silverman

Here, finally, is the first issue of the Akan Studies Council Newsletter. As we promised, we have made Akan history the thematic focus of this inaugural issue, with statements on the current state of research in the various regions. We would like to thank Robert Addo-Fening, Jean-Noël Loucou, Gareth Austin, Dolly Maier, Jean-Pierre Chauveau and Claude-Hélène Perrot for taking the time to prepare their state-of-the-field statements.

The inevitable difficulties involved in getting a new organization started are undoubtedly compounded by the facts that we are addressing a multi-national, multi-regional membership and are attempting to make the Newsletter bilingual. To get the Akan Studies Council off the ground we have sent out two mailings—letters and questionnaires to a total of 110 individuals. As of this date we have received responses from 57 of these people. The current membership of the ASC, a list of which is found in the Newsletter, is composed of those who returned a completed questionnaire. For all of you who have not yet responded and who wish to join the Akan Studies Council, a copy of the questionnaire is included at the end of the Newsletter. We have also included a list of all the individuals to whom we sent letters and questionnaires so if you know of someone who is not on that list who might be interested in joining the ASC please pass along the questionnaire or ask them to contact either Judith Timyan or Ray Silverman.

This first issue of the Newsletter is being sent to everyone on the original list, as we really do want to include the widest audience possible. However, beginning with the next issue only members (i.e. those who have returned a completed questionnaire) will receive Akan Studies Council correspondence. What we are really after is information on the scholars, specialists and general audience who make up the Akan constituency, so this is not intended as an exclusionary move but rather as an incentive for you to send in your completed questionnaires.

As stated in our earlier correspondence, it is due to the generosity of Peter Shinnie, who has agreed to bear the cost of duplicating and mailing the Newsletter, that we do not have to request dues from all of our members at this point in time. Nevertheless, it was decided at the 1988 Akan Studies Council meeting that it would be prudent to establish a small fund that could be used to cover miscellaneous expenses. To avoid the trouble associated with money transfers and currency conversions, especially for relatively small amounts, it was decided that \$5.00 be requested from those members residing in North America only. Members living in Africa or Europe will be exempt from paying these dues for the time being.

ASC Newsletter

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To date only ten members living in the U.S. or Canada have sent in their \$5.00. To those who have not: please send a check made out to "Akan Studies Council" to Ray Silverman. Thank you.

We received from our membership only a single announcement to be included in this first Newsletter. If any of you wish to publicize an event, solicit information from other members, or bring the membership's attention to a particular issue, please feel free to submit an announcement.

Finally, we would like to remind you that the second meeting of the Akan Studies Council will be held during the upcoming African Studies Association meetings in Atlanta, Georgia. The meeting will take place on Saturday, November 4, 1:00-2:30 p.m. in the English Suite of the Hyatt Regency Hotel. If there are any items you would like to have included on the agenda please contact either Ray Silverman or Judith Timyan by November 1. We hope to see a good contingent of you there. Hopefully, future meetings of the ASC will be able to be held in other regions.

Any correspondence concerning the ASC should be addressed to either Ray Silverman [Department of Art, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI 48824 (USA)] or Judith Timyan [International Center for Research on Women, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20036 (USA)].

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AKAN STUDIES COUNCIL MEETING

Our next meeting will be held in conjunction with the ASA Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The meeting will take place on Saturday, November 4, 1:00-2:30 p.m. in the English Suite of the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Please try to attend.

From Dennis M. Warren, Iowa State University:
The ex-Omanhene of Techiman, Nana Akumfi Ameyaw II, passed away while on a visit to Toronto last January.

STATE OF THE FIELD: HISTORY

La Recherche sur l'Histoire des Akan de Côte d'Ivoire

by

Jean-Noël Loucou

Université Nationale de Côte d'Ivoire

Les Akan de Côte d'Ivoire forment le groupe ethnique le plus important du pays. Ils sont composés des Abron, des Agni, des Baoulé et de la quasi-totalité des groupes dits lagunaires. Leur histoire a fait l'objet de nombreuses études menées aussi bien par des chercheurs ivoiriens que des chercheurs étrangers. Le présent papier fait sommairement l'état des recherches.

L'étude du peuplement est mieux précisée grâce à la thèse de Yao Anan (1984), à l'ouvrage et à l'article de Jean Noël Loucou (1984 et 1986a). La civilisation, notamment les poids à peser l'or et le langage des tambours, est décrite dans deux ouvrages de G. Niangoran-Bouah (1981 et 1984-1987).

Les autres études sont des monographies relatives aux différents groupes. Ainsi Albert Ablé (1978) retrace l'histoire et l'organisation politique des Abouré. H. Diabaté (1984 et 1986) étudie le royaume Sanwi de même que D. Kadja (1975). Sié Koffi (1976) aborde l'histoire et la société des Agni-Diabé. Les Baoulé sont étudiés par J.N. Loucou (1982-1985 et 1986b), A. Kacou (1973 et 1975) et G. Kouadio-Tiacoh (1983). Les Agni du Moronou ont été étudiés par A. Brou Tanoh (1970, B. Comoé-Krou (1977), Aka Kouamé (1979) et S-P M'bra-Ekanza (1983). Sur les Ebrié, il n'existe pas encore d'ouvrage de synthèse. On peut toutefois signaler les articles de G. Niangoran-Bouah (1969) et de Yao Anan (1979). Le groupe Nzema a fait l'objet d'une récente thèse élaborée par Allou Kouamé (1988).

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Akan History Research in Ghana

by

Robert Addo-Fening
University of Ghana

After a period of dormancy resulting from the economic difficulties of the mid-1980s and the attendant dearth of publication outlets and the 'brain-drain', Akan history research in Ghana is showing signs of recovery especially at the University of Ghana, Legon. The refreshing thing about current Akan research is its scope.

Up to about 1970 Akan history research focussed almost exclusively on Asante and her one time satellite, Akwamu. The works of Boahen, Wilks, Fynn and Daaku in these areas are well known. since the 1970s, however, considerable attention is being paid to the histories of other Akan states, especially Akuapem, Fante and Akyem.

Professor J.K. Fynn of the Department of History, Legon, has been engaged for some time in the collection of the traditional histories of the Fante States. He has just completed the manuscript of a major study on the early history of the Fante titled, *The Fante of Ghana c1600-1874*. This

work is awaiting publication by Ghana Universities Press. Professor Fynn's latest publication, "The Political System of the Fante of Ghana during the pre-Colonial Period" [*Universitas*, vol. 9, November 1987, Legon] examines the validity of the long-held view that the Fante as a people possessed no recognizable political structure in pre-colonial times.

Dr. R. Addo-Fening, also of the Department of History, specializes in the history of Akyem Abuakwa. His latest publications in this field are "Customary Land Tenure System in Akyem Abuakwa" [*Universitas*, vol. 9, November 1987, Legon] and "The Akim or 'Achim' in the 17th Century and 18th Century Historical Contexts: Who Were They?" [*Research Review*, N.S., vol. 4, no. 2, 1988, Institute of African Studies, Legon]. Currently he is engaged in a biographical study of Nana Sir Ofori Atta I, 1881-1943.

Asante continues to receive attention in Akan history research. Professor Kwame Arhin of the Institute of African Studies is undertaking a study titled "the political economy of the expansionist state". This study, with Asante and Dagomba as the focus, seeks to discover the role of the state in economic development as a basis for assessing the significance of colonial rule.

Mrs. Akosua Perbi, of the Department of History has embarked on a study of domestic slavery in Asante between the 18th and 20th centuries under two themes: (a) the effects of the trans-Atlantic slavery on domestic slavery in Asante in the 18th and 19th centuries; and (b) the 'slavery slur' in Asante in the 20th century. The latter study aims at discovering the extent to which "slave origins" have affected peoples' chances in matters of inheritance of stool and property.

The Guan, an ethnic group whose history has hitherto been subsumed under Akan history, are being seriously studied under the aegis of the Guan Congress. The Congress has plans to publish in the near future a number of research papers on Guan history in a projected *Journal of the Guan Historical Society of Ghana*.

It is hoped that the present trend will continue.

Akan Historical Studies in Britain¹

by

Gareth Austin

London School of Economics
and Political Science

The brevity of this statement requires that it be mainly a structured and annotated directory of current research, rather than a genuine examination of where we are and where we ought to be going. It is a personal survey, and I cannot guarantee what I earnestly hope, namely that I have not misrepresented the direction of anyone's work, still less omitted to mention it altogether.² Though my focus is research based in the U.K., I would also like to draw the attention of colleagues outside Europe to contributions from scholars based, respectively, in Germany and Sweden. Sadly, I have not found any research going on here on the history of the Akan peoples of Cote d'Ivoire.³ It is to be hoped that the formation of the Akan Studies Council will encourage a rectification of the long-standing, and ever more anomalous, "colonial" division of labour between French and British scholars.

This survey is organised in three sections. But before I go any further, I would like to dedicate this short essay to the memory of Marion Johnson. We all miss her generous personality, and though her death in February 1988 has reduced the quality

1. I would like to thank David Killingray, Tom McCaskie, and Anne Thurston for information. I owe a particular debt to Ray Jenkins for his detailed letter and enclosures. I also thank Richard Rathbone for information and comments on the draft of this piece.

2. Disciplinary boundaries overlap, and are in any case invidious. But I must draw a line somewhere, in order not to anticipate surveys of other disciplines which are to appear in later issues of this Newsletter. "Akanist" historians writing in the U.K. have published little recently about the period since independence. So this mini-survey covers work confined to, or "rooted" in, colonial and pre-colonial times; whether the authors call themselves historians or not.

3. There is something of a tradition of economists contrasting Ivorian and Ghanaian economic policies since independence, most recently Teal 1986, and Richard Crook is currently researching aspects of Ivorian politics. I have begun a modest investigation of cross-border comparisons in the history of cocoa farming in Akan communities, and have made two short orientation visits to Cote d'Ivoire. But as yet I do not plan to conduct major primary research there.

and range of work in progress on Akan history, obviously her influence will continue to be strong in discussions of the many topics she tackled. Of her last projects, the one with the most "Akan" content was her work on domestic slavery and the internal slave trade, and - in collaboration with Ray Dumett - on their suppression (Johnson 1986, Dumett and Johnson 1988). A memorial volume is being edited by David Henige and Tom McCaskie.

1. Primary Sources: Their Provision and Annotation

Since Lynn Garrett's thesis (Garrett 1981), direct contributions to the analysis of the "early" history of the Akan have been lacking over here. However, in Germany Adam Jones has brought out two volumes of densely annotated translations of, respectively, German and German-and-Dutch 17th-century writings about West Africa (Jones 1983, 1985). More than half of the first volume concerns the Fetu country, and contains much valuable material for historians of the Akan (especially from Muller). The second volume's main geographical focus is the Three Points area, though it has less to say about indigenous society and culture than does its companion volume.

Later European writings are also not being neglected: Ray Jenkins is critically re-examining the work of A. B. Ellis (see Jenkins 1987), while Tom McCaskie is preparing for publication an annotated edition of the Asante diary of the Wesleyan missionary Chapman. Jenkins also continues his study of early Gold Coast historians (Jenkins 1986 and Jenkins, Forthcoming, B; following his thesis - Jenkins 1985A).

While certain major sources for the pre-colonial period are being made more accessible, some researchers have tried to highlight an acute, cumulative erosion of the documentary base for further work on 19th and, especially, 20th century Ghanaian history: the steady physical deterioration of the contents of the National Archives (Austin 1986, Jones 1988). One aspect of the archives crisis that very few government ministries have actually transferred documents to N.A.G. for nearly twenty years, apparently because of the Archives' shortage of space and skilled personnel. This concerns future and perhaps existing historians, especially because of the likelihood of loss or damage to files retained, unwanted and perhaps neglected,

in the ministries. The Ghana government, with the assistance of the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers, plan to establish a number of "Records Centres" as provisional repositories for files transferred from the ministries. This summer a 4-week workshop is being held in Accra to train archivists for this project, with participation from the University of Ghana, the University of Ibadan, and Dr. Anne Thurston of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London.

2. New Analyses

In a series of major articles Tom McCaskie has sought to change the perspectives of historians of Asante, particularly for the 18th and 19th centuries, from surveying the political and economic behaviour of pre-colonial Asantes to focussing upon the terms in which they experienced, understood and sought to act in their world (especially McCaskie 1983, 1986A and B, 1987). His book-length conference paper (McCaskie 1988) takes his project further, by a detailed examination of the Kumase *odwira* festival which he sees as the presentation by the state of a conscious, structured "argument", in which a blend of intellectual and emotional weapons were used to try to establish the state's hegemony (in Gramsci's sense) over the civil society. The state sought to define the terms in which its subjects viewed the world. This work is rich in suggestive detail and, while I do not recommend it for reading in the back of a mammy lorry, it abundantly repays concentrated attention in the study. Meanwhile we await the appearance of McCaskie, *Asante: Interpreting an African Culture* (Manchester University Press). On a somewhat different tack, McCaskie has also contributed an analysis of Mampon dynastic history, cross-checking oral sources with the relatively rich written record available for Asante (McCaskie 1985).

Tom McCaskie has not been alone in considering pre-colonial Asante categories. Malcolm McLeod's study of Asante-European gift exchanges during the nineteenth century reveals much about the internal assumptions of Asante society, as well as about its relationships with Europeans (McLeod 1987). Clifford Williams (1988) has re-opened the debate over the meaning of "human sacrifice". At a very different level, insiders'

developing ideas about the historic identity of their society are of course explored in Ray Jenkins' work on Gold Coast historians, referred to above.

Urban history is being tackled from various angles. Ray Jenkins is studying "the evolution of complex ethno-cultural orientations and connections" of "the cosmopolitan, Christianised, commercial communities of the Cape Coast, Accra and Akropong triangle, c.1830-1920" (Jenkins, personal communication dd. 17 June 1989). Not least, he has examined the overseas links of these communities (Jenkins 1985B, 1986, Forthcoming A). Augustus Casely-Hayford is well proceeding with doctoral research on the social history of the Cape Coast elite during the 19th and 20th centuries (Casely-Hayford 1989). Christopher Steed at Uppsala, Sweden, is researching the neglected history of religious change in 20th-century Kumasi, concentrating on the oldest-established denominations (Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, and Anglican). He is concerned with religious history in its broadest social context: for example, wishing "to investigate the relationship between changes in Asante religious values and practices, and Asante indigenous ideas of development and social change" (Steed 1988).

Although the history of large-scale mining has not been primarily an Akan story, the mines have of course been a major part of the economic and social environment of some Akan areas, and a source of employment. Substantial research at Birmingham was completed in the early 1980s into the labour history of the mines, and into the history of northern migrant labour both in the mines and on cocoa farms (Van Hear 1982, Crisp 1984), although the authors have since shifted their main attention elsewhere.

Turning to the political conflicts of the independence era, Richard Crook uses primarily Akan examples in a valuable examination of the background to the colonial government's abandonment of "indirect rule" (Crook 1986). Richard Rathbone has reviewed the respective socio-economic profiles and objectives of the supporters of the CPP and the NLM. He argues that actually these were "nearly identical", the difference being that the wave of post-war prosperity which launched so many small businessmen eager for political patronage, had come a few years later in Asante than it had further south. So "the new aspirant

group" of Asante emerged too late to share substantially in the CPP's initial capture of local and national spoils, and therefore they decided to invest in a new political vehicle (Rathbone 1983). Rathbone has also made considerable progress on a new "Akan" project, an examination of the murder of the odikro of Apedwa in the aftermath of the death of Okyenhene Nana Sir Ofori Atta of Akyem Abuakwa, in 1943. Exploration of this *cause celebre* in its extremely complicated social, cultural and political contexts is beginning to shed light in a wide range of directions (Rathbone, forthcoming 1989).

Richard Rathbone has also been investigating political interference in the police during the "hot" years of 1948-51, while David Killingray writes about the policing of the colonial frontier on the Gold Coast, during its successive northward extensions between 1970 and 1911 (both in D. Anderson and D. Killingray (eds.), forthcoming 1990).

My own research on southern Ghanaian economic history is still focussed primarily on a long-term project, a study of the history of rural capitalism (in various senses) in Asante, with Amansie (and to some extent, Adanse) as the main case-study. The conceptual framework, both of the thesis and of subsequent writings, has been to a large extent an attempted synthesis of those elements of market economics and historical materialism which seem to me to be useful for handling my evidence. The thesis was a provisional account for the 1817-1914 period (Austin 1984). Two articles have presented some findings for the inter-war period. The first showed, for example, the advance of annual wage-labour contracts on cocoa farms in the 1920s and early 1930s giving way by the 1940s to a counter-trend towards sharecropping; at the instigation of the labourers not the farmowners (Austin 1987). The second "positively" re-evaluated the economic and political achievements of Asante chiefs and cocoa capitalists in the cocoa "hold-ups" (Austin 1988A). Currently, I am exploring the interactions of cocoa farming with the production and consumption of foodstuffs. I am also finishing two essays which seek, respectively, to dig deeper into the causes of the decline of the Ghanaian cocoa industry, and to synthesise my main findings about rural capitalism in Asante history (Austin 1986, 1988B).

On agriculture and rural social structure, Sandy Robertson has revised his analysis of share-cropping in the cocoa economy, and placed it in a broad international comparative context (Robertson 1987).

In terms of technical advance, the most interesting work underway here is perhaps Casely-Hayford's Cape Coast study. He has adopted a collective biography approach, to a large extent as pioneered by the Asante CB Project in the 1970s, but, as befits the 1980s, he has himself created a computer data-base program specifically tailored for the task of digesting assorted data related to the network of individuals concerned. He has made a particular effort to collect contemporary photographs, using the computer to record and enhance them.

3. Generalities

Perhaps the broadest level of debate in the field concerns of the relationship between the study of Akan (and by extension, African) history in its own right and its study within the framework of comparative world history. Tom McCaskie (1988) returned to this, recalling Ivor Wilks' (1975) strategy of emphasising the resemblances between 19th-century Asante and other complex societies, specifically contemporaneous European states, as a means of securing a place for Asante in comparative history. In accordance with this, he unapologetically applied to Asante concepts (such as class and bureaucracy) originally developed for the analysis of European societies. McCaskie challenges this approach as materialist, rationalist, and rationalising. This means, he argues, that it fails to examine the historical experience of Asantes in their own terms, which requires giving great weight to the cultural and intellectual dimension, rather than simply to the socio-economic. I am not convinced that this is (to use a word he avoids, perhaps wisely) a clash of "paradigms". His own revisionist work has shown empirically that the "Africanist" literature of which Wilks (1975) in some ways represents the culmination, did over-emphasise the secular quality of the Asante state (e.g. McCaskie 1980). In this respect, Wilks misrepresented the comparison between Asante and Europe by exaggerating the similarities. On the other hand, although comparative history requires recognition of differences as well as similarities, it

can only do this intelligibly if it can (at least at a certain level of abstraction) describe them using concepts recognised by students of all the societies concerned. One such concept is the hypothesis that the behaviour of people in the past tended to be rational, but "rational" only in the minimal sense of logical in the selection of means (intellectual or material) to achieve given ends, without implying anything about the nature of the ends. Even then, the term can obviously not be applied to all individual actions or thoughts, but it does have a wide relevance to the elucidation and explanation of repeated patterns of behaviour or thought, such as institutions and ideologies. Using the word in this formal, instrumental, and context-specific sense, it is possible to explore highly non-secular perceptions and beliefs in terms of conflicting rationalities; as indeed Wilks does in his most recent essay, responding to Williams on "human sacrifice". The "killings at Asante 'customs' ... were, I suggest, quite rational procedures *granted* the particular form that the belief in an afterlife took in Asante and the way in which this belief was articulated with notions of the status of both the living and the dead." (Wilks 1988, 452)

Whether we like it or not, the amount of research on Akan history undertaken at British universities - especially in the prolonged financial dry season that set in in the tertiary education sector in 1981,⁴ and still shows little sign of breaking - will continue to be largely a function of the extent to which it can be shown to contribute to the study of African and world history generally, to the analysis of economic under-development, and to progress in related disciplines. This may sound depressing, for us who value Akan and West African history in its own right. However, there are at least two reasons for optimism. First, a major demand for the study of Akan/Ghanaian/West African history specifically may emerge from the large Akan expatriate community in Britain, and that community is already beginning to provide an infusion of graduate students. Second, as I argued above, there is no necessary contradiction

4. Not that starvation should necessarily be inferred from drought: one example is that during 1986-88 my research enjoyed the most welcome support of a post-doctoral fellowship from the U.K. Economic and Social Research Council.

between examining the history of a particular culture in the hope of elucidating general themes, and studying it for its own sake.

References

abbreviations:

ASA: African Studies Association.

ASAK: African Studies Association of the United Kingdom.

HA: *History in Africa*

IJAHS: *International Journal of African Historical Studies*.

JAH: *Journal of African History*.

SOAS: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

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Etat des Etudes Akan en France (Histoire)

by

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Dans les travaux des chercheurs les plus anciens, l'histoire des populations akan est rarement abordée par des historiens spécialisés. A l'exception de Claude-Hélène Perrot et des archéologues Jean Polet et Josette Rivallain, dont les travaux concernent la période dite "proto-historique," il s'agit surtout d'anthropologues et de sociologues (Marc Augé, Jean-Pierre Chauveau, François Devalière, Jean-Paul Eschlimann, Michel Sure, Emmanuel Terray, François Verdeaux) ou d'économistes (Jean-Louis Boutillier, Jean-Marc Gastellu). Une génération de jeunes doctorants en histoire apparaît cependant (Karine Delaunay, Dominique Juhé-Beaulaton, Thierry Rivière). Il est donc remarquable qu'en général les études historiques, y compris chez les historiens spécialisés, partent d'une ou s'associent à une perspective anthropologique, privilégiant quelques grands domaines d'analyse: histoire économique (Boutillier, Chauveau, Delaunay, Gastellu, Verdeaux, Terray), histoire politique (Perrot, Rivière, Terray) ou les faits de représentation et de religion (Augé, Eschlimann, Perrot, Sure). Certains aspects originaux sont développés (l'utilisation des documents biographiques par Devalière, l'histoire des paysages végétaux par Juhé-Beaulaton).

Les entités socio-culturelles concernées varient également d'une génération à l'autre de

chercheurs. Les plus anciens ont tous travaillé sur des groupes akan localisés totalement ou partiellement en Côte d'Ivoire: Abron du Gyaman (Terray et Boutillier, ce dernier à partir de ses recherches sur les Kulango); peuples dits "lagunaires" (Augé, Polet, Rivallain, Verdeaux); Anyi du Bona (Eschlimann), du Molonu (Gastellu) et du Ndenye (Perrot); Baule (Chauveau, mais il faut aussi rappeler les travaux en partie historiques de Pierre Etienne prématurément disparu); Ano (Devalière). Au contraire, la jeune génération des historiens s'intéresse surtout à des Akan du Ghana: pêcheurs fanti et leurs migrations en Côte d'Ivoire (Delaunay), paysages végétaux de la Côte d'Or (Juhé-Beaulaton), royaume Ga d'Accra et ses relations avec les Akan (Rivière), traditions de migrations des "lagunaires" ivoiriens (Sure).

Au point de vue institutionnel, et sans tenir compte des doctorants, on notera que quatre chercheurs appartiennent à l'ORSTOM, Institut Français de Recherches pour le Développement en Coopération (Boutillier, Chauveau, Gastellu, Verdeaux), deux à l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Augé, Terray), un à l'Université de Paris I (Perrot), un au Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniques (Polet). Devalière et Eschlimann poursuivent leurs recherches sur les Akan à titre personnel à côté de leur activité professionnelle principale.

Pour étoffer le nombre somme toute réduit de chercheurs français travaillant sur l'histoire des Akan, il convient d'ajouter les travaux de Diana Hulman sur l'histoire des Tyokosi du Mango (Togo) originaire de l'Ano en Côte d'Ivoire.

Akan Historical Studies in North America

by
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While as grand a gathering of many Akan specialists as occurred in November 1984 at the American Museum of Natural History's "Asante: Kingdom of Gold" conference (proceedings of which were published in E. Schildkrout, ed. *The Golden Stool*, New York, 1987) has not taken

place since then, Akan scholars have continued their research and communicated it through many channels. Generally North American scholars have not pursued any one particular theme nor carried on a dialogue on any one bone of contention, but continue to accumulate and interpret new and old research materials from new and old archival and field sites.¹

One of the more commonly used channels for presenting new research is the annual African Studies Association Conference. In 1988, in Chicago, Larry Yarak (Texas A&M U.) and myself jointly chaired two panels on Asante history entitled "Studying the Akan Past: Class, State, and Ideology." Papers presented by those of us working in North America included Larry Yarak's review of the literature focused on "State, Society, and Politics in Nineteenth Century Asante." Broadening out from my own work on the Asante-Ewe War of 1869, I presented a paper focusing on "The Military Acquisition of Slaves in Nineteenth Century Asante." Jean Allman (U. of Missouri-Columbia) presented a portion of her interesting dissertation work on Asante's position in the independence struggle in "The Youngmen and the Porcupine: Class, Nationalism, and Asante's struggle for Self-Determination, 1954-57." Joseph Adjaye (U. of Pittsburgh) up-dated us on his work in the Prempe archives and Seychelles documents with his paper "Agyeman Prempe I and the Survival of Asante Kingship." And David Owusu-Ansah (James Madison U.) reflected on the implication of shifting power bases in nineteenth century Asante in his paper "The Kumase Council and the Council of State: Changing Relations." Many of these papers have been submitted for publication but have not yet appeared in print.

In this year's 1989 ASA conference (Atlanta, November 2-5) the preliminary program indicates a broad range of research topics on the Akan: David Owusu-Ansah is chairing an entire panel on "Musicians and Oral Historians: Culture Transmis-

1. This article is, I am sure, not a complete coverage of everything and everyone currently active in Akan history studies. I have limited the coverage to the most recent, purely historical and most visible scholarly papers. My apologies to anyone whose work I have inadvertently omitted. The members of the Akan Studies Organization I am sure would like to be informed about your work.

sion in Akan and Mande Society." Kwasi Aduonum (Evanston, Ill.) will present a paper for that panel on "The Atumpam Talking Drum in the Akan Adowa Musical Ensemble." On another panel Larry Yarak continues to make use of his facility with Dutch and his time spent in the Dutch archives in the paper he will be presenting, "Dutch Military 'Recruitment' on the Gold Coast: Slave-Trading in Mid-Nineteenth Century Asante." This complements a paper he has recently published in *Ethnohistory* (36, 1, 1989) entitled "West African Coastal Slavery in the 19th-Century: The Case of the Afro-European Slaveowners of Elmina." Larry's paper topic also demonstrates the necessity Akan scholars have come to feel of understanding African slavery if we are to understand the economy, politics, society, military, or international relations of African states. Ray Kea (Carlton College) has recognized this with his work on early Akan states and is currently researching a paper on "Slaves, Pawns and the Social Construction of Servitude on the Gold Coast, 1740-1860."

In twentieth century, colonial, and post-colonial studies relating to the Akan, Osei-Mensah Aborampah (U. of Wisconsin- Milwaukee) is presenting at this fall's ASA a paper on "Ethnicity and Nationalism in Ghana." Jean Allman ventures into the social history/women's studies field with a paper on "The Changing Dynamics of Mothering in Asante: Gender, Class and Social Change in the Colonial Period." Ray Dumett (Purdue U.), with his years of research into the Ghanaian/Asante gold mines is presenting a paper on "Sickness and Death on the Ghanaian Mining Frontier before 1914." He and the late Marion Johnson have also published an article entitled "Britain and the Suppression of Slavery in the Gold Coast, Ashanti, and the Northern Territories" in S. Miers' and R. Roberts' new book *The End of Slavery in Africa* (U. of Wisconsin Press, 1988). Also dealing with colonial labor problems is Joseph Engwenyu's (Eastern Michigan U.) paper at this fall's ASA, "World War II and Labor Protest in the Gold Coast."

The scholar that out-produces us all despite (or perhaps because of) eschewing raw research presentations at ASA, is Ivor Wilks. He has recently been compiling, re-analyzing, and writing up research materials he collected in some cases many years ago. This has drawn him back to one of his earlier interests, Islam in Asante, and he has

just published with Cambridge U. Press (1989) a book *Wa and the Wala: Islam and Polity in Northwestern Ghana*. This complements nicely his 1986 publication with N. Levtzion, *Chronicles from Gonja: A Tradition of West African Muslim Historiography* (Cambridge U. Press). The indebtedness of the field of Akan studies to Wilks is clearly demonstrated by Cambridge U. Press' decision to publish a new edition of *Asante in the Nineteenth Century* this year (1989) which includes a 25-30 page new introduction by Wilks discussing recent literature in the field and revisions in fact and analysis he wishes to make in the book. By far the most interesting piece of Ivor's that I have read recently and which is probably most indicative of the direction in which Akan studies should at least in part move, is a short piece "She Who Blazed a Trail: Akyaawa Yikwan of Asante," found in P. Romero, ed., *Life Histories of African Women* (Ashfield Press, 1988). It deals with social structure and values, the importance of genealogy, and the significance of career patterns, as well as the fascinating life story of an influential woman. It is clearly an example of how Wilks would like to see the Asante Collective Biography Project used to inform our historical understanding of Akan studies. Unfortunately the Asante Collective Biography Project is currently in low gear as Wilks' and Yarak's recent application for NEH funding was turned down.

A few valuable historiographical essays have been published recently that deserve mention here. Ray Dumett has published in *Business History Review* (62,3, 1988) an article on his expertise entitled "Sources for Mining Company History in Africa: The History and Records of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation (Ghana) Ltd." Probably the most valuable source for historiographical as well as methodological discussions is David Henige's journal *History in Africa*. In the 1989 (16) issue Ray Silverman and David Owusu-Ansah have published an article "The Presence of Islam Among the Akan of Ghana: A Bibliographic Essay." In the forthcoming 1990 (17) edition Joseph Adjaye will have an article on "Asantehene Agyeman Prempe I, Asante History, and the Historian."

Some research has recently been published on groups peripheral to the ever-dominant Asante and these include work on the Krobo in "The Rise of Paramount Chiefs Among the Krobo," by Louis

Wilson, *International Journal of African Historical Studies* (20, 3, 1987) and Sandra Greene's "Social Change in 18th-Century Anlo: The Role of Technology, Markets and Military Conflict," in *Africa* (58,1, 1988). And Phyllis Boannes (West Virginia U.) has just completed her Northwestern Ph.D. dissertation on the Kumawu in the early colonial period. As in the past however few American scholars apparently have the urge to venture into Akan studies in the Ivory Coast.

One subject of great future interest has been opened up by the British historian Clifford Williams in an article on human sacrifice, "Asante: Human Sacrifice or Capital Punishment? An Assessment of the Period 1807-1874," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* (21, 3, 1988) to which Wilks wrote a most interesting response in the same volume. However, to my knowledge so far, no one has ventured to tackle with field research on this sensitive yet revealing topic.

In summary, American scholars are currently pursuing wide- ranging interests in slavery, labor, social structure, technology and political power. Except for Wilks' work, the influence of Islam is surprisingly neglected at this point; and examination of philosophy and "mind-set" among the Akan remains in the hands of the British historians.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS IN AKAN STUDIES

This list of recent publications in Akan studies was compiled from information submitted by members. We had some problems with incomplete and partially illegible citations--we ask that in the future the citations be as complete as possible and that they be typed. One of the primary functions of the ASC is the dissemination of information. We therefore ask that you take a few minutes once or twice a year and send us a list of your recent publications.

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