

# GHANA STUDIES COUNCIL

## *Newsletter*

number 8

spring/summer 1995

### **CHAIR'S REMARKS** by Jean Allman

As promised in the 1994 *Newsletter*, our membership list has now been revised so that it includes only those individuals from whom we have heard in the past two years. Our change of name from the Akan Studies Council to the Ghana Studies Council does not appear to have resulted in the loss of any active members and we have gained several new members as a direct result of the name change.

In order to put the GSC on some sort of an annual schedule, we have not collected dues or questionnaires for most of 1995. Now that the dust has settled, it is time to put the Council in motion again. We will enter 1996 with a membership of approximately 140 and funds in excess of \$2000. Approximately \$565 of that total was collected as part of our emergency appeal in support of efforts by the Historical Society of Ghana to publish *Transactions*. At our last meeting, we decided not to disperse those funds until I have had a chance to speak directly to the editor this August. (See Minutes, Correspondence and Announcements for related information.)

You will notice that the 1995 *Newsletter* has a slightly different format than last year's. We have several more "Notes and Queries" and I'd like to thank all of those individuals who contributed so generously to this section. There are fewer announcements than in the past, but I'm hoping that this section, too, will become increasingly useful to members. Finally, because we had no information on what members published, the "Recent Publications" section is not included in this issue.

The **1996 GSC Questionnaire** is at the back of this *Newsletter*. Please take a moment now to fill it out and send it in, along with your 1996 dues. The information you provide will allow us to update our mailing list and publish our (long overdue) list of recent publications concerning Ghana in the next *Newsletter*. If you have items you would like included in the next *Newsletter*, send them along with your questionnaire and dues. It would be extremely helpful if you could get these to me by the end of 1995. (Newsletter submissions can wait until winter or spring.)

Finally, here's how 1995-1996 looks for the GSC. Please mark your calendars:

**Sept.-Dec. , 1995:** 1996 Membership questionnaires and dues collected.

**3-6 Nov. 1995:** 1995 ASA meeting in Orlando, FL. The GSC is sponsoring two panels on "Popular Culture in Ghana" at the conference and will hold its annual meeting, as well.

**15 Dec. 1995:** Call for submissions for *Newsletter 9* (Everyone is encouraged to submit items. Announcements, notes, queries, research updates, etc. are all welcome. We are particularly interested in submissions from our members in Ghana who are best situated to update the rest of us on conferences, archival holdings and recent theses, etc. in Ghana.

**1 April 1996:** Deadline for submissions to *Newsletter 9*

Please send all correspondence, questionnaires, dues (checks payable to 'University of Minnesota') and *Newsletter* submissions to:

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I'm looking forward to seeing many of you in Orlando, Florida this November.

### **GHANA STUDIES COUNCIL NEWSLETTER**

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**MINUTES OF THE  
GHANA STUDIES COUNCIL MEETING,  
5 NOVEMBER 1994, TORONTO**

**Present:** Sandra Greene, Tom Mc Caskie, Natasha Gray, Dan Mato, Brian Vivian, Mary Esther K. Dakubu, David Owusu-Ansah, Merrick Posnansky, Michael Schlottner, Gareth Austin, Harvey Feinberg, David Henige, Revecca Shumway, Amy Settergren, Victoria Tashjian, Ivor Wilks, Larry Yarak, Roger Gocking, Dan Britz, Dolly Maier.

**Opening:** Jean Allman called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm. With no corrections being offered, Allman approved the minutes of the Ghana Studies Council meeting held in Boston on 5 December 1993.

**Report on the National Archives of Ghana:** Roger Gocking reported that the National Archives of Ghana may be incorporated into the Ghanaian government's national records administration. There is some concern over the potential loss of the archive's independence. Gocking will report on this matter more fully in the next newsletter.

**Report from the Chair:** Allman is in the process of setting up a GSC account at the University of Minnesota. As soon as it is opened, checks which have been sent to the GSC in recent months will be deposited.

The GSC currently has \$2244.77 in funds. Of this amount, \$565.00 is earmarked as emergency funds for the Historical Society of Ghana (to help fund publication of *Transactions*) and \$182.00 is owed Allman for xeroxing expenses, leaving a balance of approximately \$1500.00.

There are some 200 people on the GSC mailing list, but many are not actively involved with the Council. Inactive members are being purged from the GSC mailing list.

There is a need to systematize the due date for membership dues.

Submissions to the upcoming newsletter (number 8) are encouraged. Please send announcements, notes, information on housing and any bulletin board-type information to Allman, who will send out a formal letter soliciting submissions a month or so from now.

**Report on the GSC-UK Branch Meeting:** David Killingray reported on the 6 September 1994 GSC-UK meeting in Lancaster. He will attempt to contact all people in the UK who are working on Ghana to encourage new members to join the organization.

**Announcements:** Atta Kwami, an art historian at the University of Science and Technology, would like to give a paper on Ewe funerary painted sculpture at next year's ASA annual meeting. Please consider him for panels.

**African Link:** a magazine published by Ghanaians in this hemisphere, welcomes new subscriptions.

A symposium on ethnicity in Ghana, part of a larger symposium on ethnicity in Africa, will be held in Edinburgh on 25-26 May 1995. Papers are welcome.

Kwame Arhin sent a note announcing that the Institute of African Studies is holding a seminar on Cape Coast-Elmina in March 1995. It will be modeled on the 1990 seminar which focused on Kumase and will address broad themes (history, society, economy). Participants can be provided with board and lodging but not airfare. Arhin announced also the availability of copies of *Handbook: City of Kumasi*. Contact him directly about both the seminar and the handbook.

The African Studies Association has approved this organization's change of name from Akan Studies Council to Ghana Studies Council.

**Items for Discussion:** Allman raised the question of what to do with the GSC's balance of approximately \$1500.00 in general funds. After some discussion it was agreed that we should hold on to the money for the time being. Possible uses include providing journal subscriptions or video equipment to the Institute of African Studies, or providing funding to help Ghanaian scholars who are already in the United States attend ASA annual meetings. Allman requested that over the next year people think about how the money might be spent, and bring their suggestions to the GSC's next annual meeting. Anyone who is in Ghana this year is encouraged to ask people there for suggestions of useful forms of support.

Members of the Council did not think it made sense to use general funds for copying and mailing the newsletter. The Council will continue to rely on a network of people who mail out the newsletter through their institutions, while Jean seeks to persuade the University of Minnesota to pay for xeroxing and mailing costs in return for an acknowledgement of their support.

It was also agreed that we should keep the current dues structure even though there is a surplus in the general fund.

The GSC decided not to disburse the emergency fund money which is earmarked for *Transactions* at this time. Allman will be in Ghana this summer and will look into Historical Society of Ghana uses for this money.

There are only sufficient items for one newsletter a year. From now on, a letter will go out each December requesting submissions to the annual GSC newsletter. The deadline for submissions will be 1 March, although submissions can be sent in on a rolling basis. The newsletter will be published in the summer, and will contain an annual questionnaire and dues request. Allman and Larry Yarak will edit the newsletter.

Allman raised the question of the length of the term of the GSC's Chair. While nothing was resolved on this point, the Council is considering appointing a permanent Treasurer so that the Council's bank accounts don't have to move with each new Chair.

The GSC-sponsored panels for next year's ASA annual meeting will focus upon popular culture in Ghana. They seek to be multi-disciplinary and Ghana-wide in nature. Dan Mato and Emmanuel Akyeampong agreed to serve as 1995 GSC panel coordinators.

Other Business: Ivor Wilks suggested that the GSC send congratulations to the Asantehene on the occasion of the twenty-fifth year of his reign.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

### ERRATA

#### Omanaso, and the Mines of the Great Elephant

In the note on this topic which appeared in the Newsletter, no. 7, Spring, 1994, the omission of a sentence produces an obscurity in the argument. On p. 7 the end of the first paragraph in the first column should read:

But what, then, of the name "Omanaso"? In 1964 Nana Komere Ababio commented on the matter. "Omanaso," he said, was "misinterpreted Manso." It meant "Nation's ear," that is, Twi *oman aso*. In view of the early forms.....

Nan Komere Ababio's comment is correctly footnoted 4 in the published text.

### GSC CORRESPONDENCE

A Note from  
David Henige  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

At the GSC meeting at the ASA (November, 1994), the verdict as to whether to continue funding *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* seemed to be: let's wait and see what happens before throwing possibly good money after possibly bad money. Since this decision comes after a period of about fifteen years of waiting and seeing, perhaps a more radical alternative should be considered -- either taking direct responsibility for continuing to publish something called *the Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* or establishing a new journal entirely.

Presumably, the former would require the official approval of the Historical Society of Ghana and perhaps even the Ghanaian government -- unlikely contingencies. The latter course, on the other hand, would require neither, and would moreover allow the

new journal to travel without old baggage, particularly without a reputation of unpredictability. It would also encourage establishing a journal that could, if it cared to be, more broadly interested in things Ghanaian other than history.

Pragmatic considerations arise. The GSC is neither large nor wealthy and starting a new journal might well seem to require at least some of each. This isn't necessarily so, however. What is required is a high degree of enthusiasm and voluntarism. An editor/editorial team, together with an editorial board, could, if judiciously selected, command the resources to produce a reputable-being and reputable-looking journal. It would require a commitment to recruiting papers, editing and copy-editing them as necessary, establishing a house style in aid of this, providing or arranging for formatting, establishing liaisons with university publishing units (not presses) and printers, and establishing a system of distribution.<sup>1</sup> Probably all this would involve some formalization of the GSC in terms of handling money, but the rudiments of this seem already in place.

Startup would involve costs before there were any returns - perhaps a year's worth. Thinking in terms of one largish issue per year, such costs need not be very great. To cite an example: to print 400 copies of *African Economic History* (ca. 180pp) for 1993 cost less than \$4 for each copy, which is then marketed at \$15 to \$20, and to institutions at \$30 or so an issue. Even an inchoate marketing system should ensure that break-even is reached. In fact, this could be accomplished while at the same time sending some number of free copies (50? 100?) to Ghana for local consumption, perhaps brokered through HSG. None of this is possible, however, if there is not a great deal of free labor by those designated to bring such a journal to life.

The benefits of establishing such a journal seems palpably obvious. How many papers have not been published, how many have not even been written, because of the absence of a suitable place to publish them? What of the papers that, we have been told time and again, are about to appear in the revived *THSG*? We can't count what doesn't exist, but it hardly seems possible to believe that a 180-250-page journal can't be supported by contributions from Ghanaianists that would otherwise not be written. The fact is that the rate of publication in Ghanaian matters over the past fifteen to twenty years is far from commensurate with the number of scholars working in the field, and this must be attributed in part to the clearly perceived lack of a suitable place to which to submit research results, raise theoretical and methodological issues, keep track of current work, etc..

Furthermore, some extremely relevant stuff has been published in journals without a natural audience. For example, the most recent issue of *Ethnohistory* has an extended and suitably spirited exchange between Ivor Wilks and Norman Klein as to

Akan origins. Interesting and provocative, but will it naturally and readily come to the attention of the most likely interested parties? This is hardly to suggest that Akan/Ghana scholarship should not be allowed onto a wider stage, but, especially in matters of dispute, there exists a target audience that will most benefit from -- as well as most likely contribute to -- the following of the debate and the advance of knowledge and opinion. And where better to see this happen than in a journal devoted specifically and entirely to Ghana and published under the aegis of the Ghana Studies Council? And why wait any longer?

And possibly creating a book-reviewing mechanism, although this can often (almost always?) have an unfavorable input-output balance, and would jeopardize the efficiency of the rest of any operation.

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**New Plans For the Ghana National Archives**  
**By Roger Gocking**  
**Mercy College**

For those of us who have depended on the National Archives of Ghana as one of our main sources of information any talk of reorganization, restructuring or expansion of its operations is important news. In the summer of 1994 I was once again using the National Archives in Accra and learnt from its Director, Mr. C. K. Gadzekpo, that there are major changes in the offing as far as the country's National Archives are concerned. The plan is to create a National Records Administration that will lead to more efficient archival administration. Most of all this new body will be responsible for developing a way of systematically transferring documents that are no longer in use in Ghana Government offices, but are worth retaining, to the National Archives. Mr. Gadzekpo informed me that legislation was about to go before the Ghana Parliament to set up this National Records Administration. In this new arrangement the National Archives will become part of this larger administration.

In his discussions with me about the new plans, Mr. Gadzekpo was concerned that in the new arrangement the National Archives might lose its identity, and that archivists might end up becoming more like record officers with a non-archival focus. Undoubtedly there will be many administrative, job responsibility and pay-scale issues that will have to be ironed out that this reorganization will create. It will clearly place strains on an organization that has recently passed through some rough times, and has only recently begun the long, hard task of beginning to find its feet.

At the same time, however, Dr. Anne Thurston of University College London, who has been very active in

promoting a National Records Administration for Ghana, indicated to me in a letter on the subject of reorganization that there is a desperate need to develop a system that will not only make it possible to retrieve records for the purposes of day to day administration, but will also insure that records of historical value do reach the Archives. She pointed out that in the colonial period the quantity of files that the government generated was very small, and there was in place a registry system, modelled on that of the Colonial Office, that was well-kept and able to select papers for archival preservation. However, after independence the bureaucracy expanded dramatically and training for registry staff declined. The result was that by the late 1980s the systems had broken down to such an extent that file classification systems had lost their logic and the file retrieval systems were no longer operated."

For those who have worked on post colonial history this is evident as far as the availability of material in the National Archives for this period is concerned. As Adam Jones pointed out in a 1987 report on the National Archives in *West Africa* ("Neglected heritage," 6 July 1987), "hardly any of the material acquired in the past twelve years has been accessioned." At that point in time the committee responsible for deciding what new material should go into the archive and how it should be classified was not meeting. It was hardly surprising under these circumstances that he "could find accession registers for only four years in the 1950s, two in the 1960s and three in the early 1970s." For historians like myself of the colonial period this lacunae is not nearly apparent as to those whose interest is in the more recent past. It is ironic, however, that when historians do turn to revise interpretations of this more recent past, they may indeed have to look for other sources than those offered by Ghana's National Archives. Significantly, much of the more recent work on Ghana relies heavily on newspapers like the *Ghanaian Times*, and the *Daily Graphic* and the newsweekly, *West Africa*. Luckily the newspapers have kept complete archives which can be used to fill in the gaps in the National Archives' collection.

According to Dr. Thurston, the work of creating the National Records Administration has already begun and Restructuring Teams are now at work in ministries and departments to assist in locating closed files and introducing the file management system. Indeed, she maintains that "the profile of records management has been raised significantly and it now features prominently in the Civil Service Reform Programme."

Perhaps most importantly this new initiative is attractive to outside funding in a way that a National Archives would not be. It is far easier to link the question of good record management with the need for reliable information necessary for formulating development programs, and evaluating the success of government programs in general. The new National Records Centre has been established with World Bank Funds and has also been able to attract money from the Government of Ghana. There have also been several visits by members of staff from the U.K. Public Record Office. These have been part of an ongoing involvement on the part of British

experts in improving the performance of the Ghana National Archives. However, workshops like the visit to Ghana of fourteen archivists from all over Africa that Dr. Thurston was responsible for organizing in 1989 can only represent short term solutions. As she pointed out on the occasion of this workshop to help in the accessioning of the backlog of discarded government materials that had built up, the entire way in which Commonwealth archives have functioned in the past must change. They can no longer wait for records to come to the archives, but must "intervene at an earlier stage and bring records through." ("Archive busters," *West Africa*, 7-13 August 1989) The National Records Administration is designed as a more structured and permanent solution.

Apart from making records available for the study of Ghana's more recent past, what these changes in the structure of Ghana's National Archives will amount to remains to be seen. Recent Ghanaian history is full of attempts to "restructure," "renovate," and "redeploy" institutions and personnel that have left a trail of institutional debris and little else. Clearly the creation of National Records Administration addresses an important need in Ghana today, but at the same time, as Mr Gadzekpo pointed out to me, it would be a great loss to researchers if the National Archives lost its identity and special role as a result of this restructuring. There is, for example, a great deal of preservation work that needs to be done for the present collection that over the years has suffered considerable disintegration, some of it irreversible. Hopefully, however, this new initiative will result in a higher profile for archival concerns in general and the improvements that were evident in the functioning of the National Archives that I observed this summer will continue.

#### **NOTES AND QUERIES:**

##### **A Case of Geneological Parasitism: Acrosan of Amanfro by Adam Jones Universität Leipzig**

Larry Yarak's and Roger Gocking's interesting contributions to this Bulletin on the invention of tradition in the Elmina-Cape Coast area reminded me of an experience I once had there myself. In 1983 I published a translation of the travel account of Wilhelm Johann Müller, who had resided on Amanfro Hill, 1 km. east of Cape Coast Castle, from 1662 to 1669 (Müller in Jones 1983: 134-259). He had been employed by the Danish Guinea Company. Until then Müller's book had appeared only in German and had consequently been overlooked in most historical works on Ghana; but it was mentioned in Nørregard's book on the Danes in West Africa, whose English version appeared in 1966. While preparing this translation, I was able to examine in Copenhagen two versions of a treaty signed in 1659, by which Amanfro Hill was sold to the Danes by the authorities of the polity called Fetu,

whose capital lay about 10 km. inland. These authorities included the Acrosan and someone called "Cobre, captain" (Jones 1983: 262). Acrosan, also known to Europeans as Johann (Jan) Claessen or John Cloice, was mentioned several times in Müller's book, because he had more dealings with Europeans than other Fetu dignitaries.

Upon my arrival in Cape Coast in 1987 I enquired after Amanfro Hill. The man who showed it to me could scarcely read or write. He had not only heard of Acrosan but claimed to be a direct descendant. I learnt from him that the ownership of the hill had for a long time been a matter of litigation. Consequently a brother of this man, who had studied at the University of Ghana, had in the early 1960s sought references to the hill's history in the works of British historians, but had found them 'useless'. In 1968, however, he had been able to spend a year in Denmark; and there, having discovered Nørregard's book, he ordered a photocopy of the treaty of 1659.

In a manuscript dating from the 1970s, which was shown to me, this brother claimed Acosan as an ancestor of his own matrilineage. From colonial court records written in 1883 and 1903 he knew that Hannah Martin, the lineage's spokeswoman, had mentioned two ancestors named Tufu Koba and Krassie or Classi. Now he suggested a link between these names and those in the treaty:

I am left in no doubt that the Tufu Koba and the Krase mentioned in the case by Hannah Martin are the same as the Cobre, Capitain, and Akroisan or Johann Classen the Tay in the contract. The Classen was a corruption of the name Akrosan by the Europeans and it came back to the Africans again as Krassie.

Hannah Martin had also admitted that a man called Afadu, belonging to a different matrilineage, had been the first to set foot on the hill, but she had insisted that he had been sent by her own ancestors. Lest this statement be exploited by other people, the brother of my informant tried to identify this Afadu. In a book by Daaku (1970: 104) he found a reference dating from 1704 (i.e. 45 years after the treaty!) to a slave called Affado, who had worked for the Royal African Company in Cape Coast Castle. Thus it became clear to members of the lineage that:

- their ancestor Krassie (or Classi) had actually been called Acrosan (or Johann Claessen);
- the Danes had received permission from him to settle on the hill in 1659;
- Afadu, who had first set foot on the hill, had not been the owner but merely one of the 300 slaves sent by Acrosan in 1659 to clear the shrubs on behalf of the Danes.

In this way Acrosan was 'adopted' by the whole lineage as its founder -- a form of 'geneological parasitism', although in this case what was adopted was not a whole genealogy but only one person (cf. Henige 1974: 51-5). Yet this step was considered

provocative by the polity (*oman*) of which the lineage formed a part. When a member of the lineage was elected Benkumhene of Cape Coast (Oguaa) in 1977 and chose as his official name 'Akroisan Tufu Koba IX', he had to be persuaded by the Omanhene to select a different name. As long as the quarrel over ownership of Amanfro Hill remains unresolved, however, the ancestor Acrosan, of whom probably nobody had heard before 1968, can anticipate a long life in future 'traditions'. His importance may even increase, if his 'descendents' find out that in addition to giving the Danes Amanfro Hill he gave the English land rights in Cape Coast (Kea 1982: 115-6).

#### References:

- Daaku, Kwame Yeboa. *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast, 1600-1720* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).  
 Henige, David. *The Chronology of Oral Tradition: The Quest for a Chimera?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).  
 Jones, Adam. *German Sources for West African History, 1599-1669* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner 1983).  
 Kea, R.A. *Settlements, Trade, and Politics in the Seventeenth Century Gold Coast* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins 1982).  
 Nørregård, Georg. *Danish Settlements in West Africa, 1658-1850* (Boston: Boston University Press 1966).

#### A Brass Basin at Abakrampa by Gérard Chouin University of Ghana, Legon

Amongst the oral traditions we can still gather in Eguafu - the capital of Eguafu Traditional State, located approximately twelve kilometers to the north-west of the coastal town of Elmina - those relating to a certain powerful brass basin (*Ayewa Kese*) have particularly held my attention. In the nineteenth century, several Dutch travellers and officers reported having seen or heard of an unusual vessel in this village. The earliest reference I am aware of appears in the journal of Dutch Governor-General H. W. Daendels. In May 1816, Daendels obtained a description of the basin from an official report on the Elmina district written by H. J. Milet, a Dutch officer at Elmina<sup>1</sup>. In July of the same year, Daendels himself visited Eguafu and saw the basin, but he was much disappointed, finding it "badly and clumsily worked";<sup>2</sup> by contrast, Milet had described it as "very old-fashioned but well worked". In March 1859<sup>3</sup> and later on, in August of the same year,<sup>4</sup> the presence of this vessel in Eguafu was confirmed by other Dutch reports. The last mention of it seems to be in a book written by the Dutch naval officer, C. A. Jeekel, who visited the Gold Coast in 1868.<sup>5</sup>

Today, the brass basin is no longer at Eguafu. When asked, the elders of the place will take the visitor to a small vessel which lies under a silk-cotton-tree not far from the chief's palace on the outskirts of the village; but this is no more than a poor, rusty pan, without a bottom, which appears to have put there in place of the original.

This substitution is well explained by oral tradition, and thanks to the information I collected recently in Eguafu, I was able to re-discover<sup>6</sup> the original basin in the chief's palace at Abakrampa, the capital of the Abura Traditional State (Central Region). Indeed, the evidence is clear that Abura troops seized the vessel at Eguafu and brought it to Abakrampa as a trophy during the 1868 Elmina-Fanti war.

As the nineteenth century descriptions suggest, it is a large basin (94 cm in diameter, 33 cm deep) made from one sheet of yellow copper about 2 mm thick, skillfully hammered. The rim itself has been reinforced with a ring of the same metal, the two parts being fitted together with different kinds of rivets. It was originally ornamented with 40 copper knobs (of which 34 remain), which were also used as rivets, and 4 lion's heads (only 2 remain), which used to hold what must have been two grips.

I will not attempt to write in full the historical background of the basin here (the study being in its initial stages), but I would like to make some preliminary remarks and ask members of the Ghana Studies Council to send me any additional information they might have.

First of all, it is worth noting that the Eguafu basin is virtually identical to another well-known basin which was kept at the Asante Royal Mausoleum at Bantama, near Kumasi, until 1896, when it was taken away by the British:<sup>7</sup> the same kind of knobs, the same four lions. In addition, in oral traditions both are said to have descended from Heaven.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, even if we don't know much about their function,<sup>9</sup> both of them seem to have been of importance in the cults associated with sacred kingship; and, finally, both appear to have been taken away from their original place as trophies of war with high spiritual value.<sup>10</sup>

This means that obviously these basins issued from the same European workshop and were imported to the Gold Coast at a period and by people both still unknown. They were then sold or presented as gifts there. By a process equally unknown, they ultimately came to be included in local rituals. But why should such a process happen at least twice, with the same kind of basin?

An answer to this question may be found in what seems to have been a nineteenth century oral tradition recorded by the Dutch which asserted that, originally, the Eguafu basin was "used by the Portuguese for baptism".<sup>11</sup> It is possible that this information derived from two local traditions of which we find echoes in the Dutch archives. The first one said that the basin "had been brought there by Jan Kompaan (the God of the Whites), as a present for the people of Eguafu".<sup>12</sup> The second reported that the copper vessel had been "a wash basin of one of the former Commany [Eguafu] kings".<sup>13</sup>

Now, at least in Eguafu, we know something about Portuguese missionary activities as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century; and in 1632, a document reported, not without some optimism, that

this kingdom had become "converted" to the Catholic faith<sup>14</sup>. In the years 1641-1642, French Capuchin friars from Brittany also came to the country where they seem to have converted a son of the Eguafu king. This was the last mission, but undoubtedly not the least: about two years later, after a tragic succession crisis, a son (the "convert"?) of the same king was appointed by his father to succeed him, in contravention of the prevailing matrilineal system of succession<sup>15</sup>. Thus it is clear that in the seventeenth century or, perhaps even earlier, there were links between Christian missionaries and the institution of kingship in Eguafu.

Further investigation needs to be done to determine whether such a thesis is valid or not; but I am convinced that these basins are interesting not only as evidence for the history of trade between Europe and the coast of Guinea, but also as evidence of a more exciting, though difficult-to-comprehend phenomenon: the religious and spiritual syncretism issuing from the contact between Europeans and Africans, and its continual re-interpretation and re-formulation.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See H. W. Daendels, *Journal and Correspondence, Part One: November 1815 to January 1817*, Legon, 1964, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> See Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague, Archief van de Nederlandsche Bezittingen ter Kuste van Guinea (NBKG) 727, Report on the Elmina District, March 1859; translated in A. Van Dantzig, *Special paper: Elmina and its Neighbours (1836-1876)*, *Selected documents*, unpublished, fol. 229-229v.

<sup>4</sup> See NBKG 727, Survey of the Elmina District, August 1859; translated in R. Baesjou, *An Asante Embassy on the Gold Coast: The Mission of Akyempon Yaw to Elmina (1869-1872)*, Leiden, 1979, p. 215.

<sup>5</sup> See C. A. Jeekel, *Onze Bezittingen op de Kust van Guinea*, Amsterdam, 1869, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Albert Van Dantzig had already located the basin in 1965, during a journey to the field with his students.

<sup>7</sup> Photographs of this basin in-situ at Bantama, first published in Rattray's *Religion and Art in Ashanti* (Oxford, 1927), frontispiece, have been reproduced in several subsequent works on Asante. See notably I. Wilks, *Forests of Gold*, Athens, Ohio, 1993, p. 242; and C-H. Perrot and A. Van Dantzig (eds.), *Marie-Joseph Bonnat et les Ashanti. Journal 1869-1874*, Paris, 1994, p. 283.

<sup>8</sup> Oral traditions collected by the author, with the assistance of Mr. Thomas Montford, from March to December 1994, at Elmina, Eguafu, Bremen. For the Bantama basin, see National Archives of Ghana (NAG), ADM 11/1/1370: "Correspondence regarding a brass basin removed from the burial place of Ashanti kings at Bantama in 1896".

<sup>9</sup> The function of the basin in Bantama is not at all clear. Bowdich, who visited Kumasi in 1817, wrote that it was used to collect the blood of sacrificed slaves, with a view to

producing "an invincible fetish". See T. E. Bowdich, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee*, London, 1819, pp. 279 and 289. Rattray, for his part, explicitly denied that the basin was used in connection with human sacrifices, but he did not state what it was used for. See Rattray, *Religion and Art*, p. 113. Because of this question, when Asantehene Agyeman Prempeh I requested the return of the basin in 1930, the British decided not to give it back because of its possible link "with the ceremonies attendant to human sacrifices". In his request Prempeh was somewhat evasive on the point, asserting that the "Brass Pan was not used for anything particular", but that it was "a very important thing for Ashanti". See NAG, ADM 11/1/1370.

<sup>10</sup> For the Abakrampa people, the Eguafu basin is now a trophy of war. Rattray believed the Bantama basin was also a war trophy, captured from Sefwi. See Rattray, *Religion*, p. 113.

<sup>11</sup> See Daendels, *Journal*, p. 114.

<sup>12</sup> See NBKG 727, Report on the Elmina District, in Van Dantzig, *Special Paper*, fol. 229v.

<sup>13</sup> See Daendels, *Journal*, p. 150.

<sup>14</sup> See J. B. Ballong-Wen-Mewuda, *São Jorge da Mina, 1482-1637*, Paris, 1993, vol. 2, pp. 424 and 435, n. 117.

<sup>15</sup> See G. Chouin, *Eguafu, un royaume africain au "coeur français"*. Paris, Afera, forthcoming in 1995.

#### Ghana's Chiefs: New Titles, New Traditions?

By Roger Gocking  
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While I was looking through back issues of the *Ghanaian Times* and the *People's Daily Graphic* last summer for a future article on the history of the Public Tribunals, I came across a number of instances where chiefs from important coastal stools were publicly using titles that were clearly of very recent origin. The one that stuck out most noticeably was the case of Nana Mbra V, the *Omanhen* of Oguaa Traditional Area. A 1988 report in the *Ghanaian Times* on Chairman Rawlings attending the Oguaa *Fetu Afahye* speaks of the *Omanhen* as *Osabarima* Kodwo Mbrah V.

I subsequently went to Cape Coast and was able to speak to Mr. J. A. King-Gaisie, the *Oman* Secretary, about this new title, and was informed that it had come into official use in 1987. It clearly represented a conscious effort to enhance the dignity of one of Ghana's longest serving paramount chiefs who in 1988 was going to be fifty years on the stool. The term comes from Twi and translates roughly as "great war leader." The *Oman* Secretary felt that it symbolized the long and outstanding leadership that Nana Mbra V had provided for his people in the face of considerable adversity.

Like so many Akan words, there are different spellings of this title. I obtained a 1990 Oguaa *Fetu Afahye* program, and saw that here the new title was spelled *Osabarimba*, and I assume that this is how Cape

Coast continues to spell the title. Nevertheless, in 1992, when the *Ghanaian Times* again reported on the Cape Coast *Fetu Afahye*, their spelling remained the same as it had been in 1988. To any one familiar with the contentious and unresolved question of proper Akan spellings this should come as no surprise. Even for a often-used title like *Omanhene/Omanhen* there is no standard spelling. Cape Coasters and Elminans seemed to have settled on the latter, but the country's main newspapers (Accra based) use the former. There is a similar difference of opinion over the spelling of Mbra/Mbrah.

According to the *Ghanaian Times* (7 September 1992) the James Town *Mantse* (spelled *Manche* by some) has also acquired what seems like a new title. When I attempted to interview his predecessor in 1988 (he was too busy to devote time to my arcane queries), he formally described himself as Nii Kojo Ababio IV. The *Nii* is a typical Ga chiefly title. However, the present stoolholder, enstooled very recently in 199, according to the *Ghanaian Times*, styles himself *Oblempong* Kojo Ababio V which in Akan languages means something like "mighty person." It would seem to me that this represents a conscious attempt to assert his standing in the Accra chiefly hierarchy, and at the same time identify this Ga stool with its important Akan/Akwamu connections. In the same report, which was describing the *Homowo* festival in Accra, there was also mention of *Nana Okooku* Afari Mintah II, the Paramount Chief of Agona Nsaba which also seems to be an embellishment of a normal Akan title.

On one level this creativity is not particularly new. After Kwame Nkrumah appropriated for his own political purposes the title, *Osagyefo*, which had been the *Asantehene's* formal title, the latter adopted the new title of *Otumfuo* which is how the present *Asantehene*, Otumfuo Opoku Ware II, styles himself. However, the adoption of what seems to be predominantly Twi titles is a good indication of how powerful the influence of Akan culture continues to be in Ghana today. Even more important, this creativity is an excellent indication of the vibrancy of the chieftaincy at a time in Ghana's history when this most unique institution is once again being forced to deal with new political developments that will affect its future. Acquiring new titles celebrating "traditional" roles seem to have become one subtle way of enhancing chiefly status.

**An Elminan Political Exile in Surinam**  
**Jean Jacques Vrij**  
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On March 15, 1851 the Elmina fish-seller Adjua Gyapiaba, then about 27 years of age, arrived in the Dutch West Indian colony of Surinam as a deportee. More than two years before, while in Kumasi on business, Adjua Gyapiaba had been involved in a serious dispute with a fellow Elminan, which began over payment for a fish. In a fit of anger over accusations of slave origin, she had stated that, being a descendant of Elmina's oldest family, all Elminans

were the slaves of her and her family. Adding insult to injury, she followed this up by claiming that the Elminans were all slaves of Asante, and she swore an oath on the Asantehene to that effect. The Asantehene Kwaku Dua, upon hearing the case, decided to send Adjua Gyapiaba back to Elmina for trial, declaring her to be a "dangerous woman". The Elmina government, intent on punishing her for her outbursts, pressured the Dutch authorities residing in the main fort at Elmina into trying her case. Had there been no European fort, they stated, Adjua Gyapiaba would have had to die at the stake. Out of an alleged concern for public order, the Dutch authorities decided to banish her from the coast for life. (For a more complete account, see Baesjou, 1979: 46-9.)

What follows is a résumé of what I have been able to find out about Adjua Japiaba's life in Surinam, using sources available in the Netherlands. A planned visit to Surinam hopefully will yield more.

At first, the Dutch colonial authorities in Surinam were not at all happy with Adjua Gyapiaba's arrival. As they were not informed about the exact nature of her offence, they didn't know if they should fear her influence on the predominantly Black population of the colony. Furthermore, the governor recollected the case of an exile whom he had known in Curaçao, another Dutch West Indian colony, who had also come from the coast of present-day Ghana around the year 1828 and "whose living expenses had had to be paid for by the government, without him being willing to do any work in return, which he flatly refused, pretending that in his own country he had been a *Prince*."

Adjua Gyapiaba's attitude turned out to be different. She received some support from the government only at the start. In February 1859 the governor stated that she had already been earning a living as a tradeswoman for a long time.

Not that she was doing all that well financially. In 1862, "Adjuba Apiaba", as her name is often rendered in the Surinam sources, was given use of a yard on the Gemenelandsweg in Paramaribo, Surinam's capital, for which she was charged a low rent, on account of indigence. In March 1869 the colonial government resolved that, considering her weak health, for the future she could inhabit the yard free of charge.

In the meantime Adjua Gyapiaba had made an attempt to get help to return to Elmina. In 1868 she opened her heart in a petition sent to the Dutch king: "The thought of my native country, of my poor old mother and other relations, pains me and makes my stay here unpleasant, however well I may find myself. The wish, the longing for those who are dear to me awakes in me often, then to doze off again. Seventeen years, Your Majesty! have already passed, and still I find myself in the same state of mind." The petition was passed on to officials of the Ministry of Colonies in The Hague, whom Adjua Gyapiaba apparently failed to convince. Although both the governor at Elmina (after he had consulted the indigenous Elmina



government) and his counterpart in Surinam advised the Ministry of Colonies that there were no objections against her returning to Elmina, no decision was taken on Adjua Gyapiaba's request. It appears she never returned. (René Baesjou states that she did come back, but he seems to have confused her with the Ahanta chiefs exiled to the Dutch East Indies in 1838. They did return to the coast in September 1869.)

Adjua Gyapiaba apparently didn't let her distress get her down, however. In Surinam, as it turned out, she became quite a renowned figure. She may have been poor, but she acquired fame as a fortune-teller and herbalist. Many people, from all layers of society, made use of her services, and she is said to have been on friendly terms with Governor Van Sijpesteijn (1873-1882). She organized dancing-parties that attracted large crowds in her yard at the Gemenelandsweg, which was known for decades after her death as "Apijaba-djari" (Apijaba's yard). Someone who had known her well told a Surinamese newspaper in 1916 that she performed "the real African dances" instead of the Creole variety. He also emphasized that "Api-Jaba wasn't just anyone; she was a true princess who was 'banished' from Africa where she was born, but she didn't come as a slave."

Adjua Gyapiaba also figures in a popular novel published in Paramaribo in 1913. Furthermore, for a long time after her death, at least up to 1949 (Van Lier: 33), her fame lived on in Surinam oral traditions. Some say that as a healer and soothsayer she earned quite a lot of money; at least enough to redeem her partner in life, a Dutch soldier, from military service.

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**Archival sources:** National Archives, The Hague, Archief van het Ministerie van Koloniën, 1850-1900: 106 (*verb.* July 5, 1851), 798 (*verb.* March 16, 1859), 2095 (*verb.* June 18, 1868), 2101 (*verb.* July 3, 1868), 2143 (*verb.* October 3, 1868), 6845 (*res.* February 25, 1862), 6873 (*res.* March 4, 1869).

**Early Photography in Elmina**  
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In an article published in *Africa* in 1987, Vera Viditz-Ward argued that the development of photography in 19th-century Europe took place in the context of a growing European appetite for images of "exotic and mysterious peoples and places".<sup>1</sup> She noted that the daguerreotype was "presented to the world as a gift of the government of France" in 1839, and that late in that same year "French daguerreotypists were travelling to North Africa, the

Middle East and South America to photograph architecture, landscapes and ruins."<sup>2</sup> The earliest evidence she found for the existence of photography in Freetown, however, dates only from 1857. In my own research on the history of Elmina, I have been keenly interested in locating early photographic representations and engravings of the town and its people. Such resources are especially vital to the reconstruction of the physical space of pre-colonial Elmina, as the original town, which was located adjacent to the Dutch Fort St. George, was destroyed by a British bombardment in 1873, and a new town was constructed at a different location.

That such photographs of old Elmina existed, and existed from a very early date, is testified by several references to the presence of daguerreotypists in Elmina which I have found in the Elmina Journal, the dairy of events kept by successive governors of the Dutch forts on the Gold Coast from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. The earliest - and most exquisitely detailed - reference I have found dates from early 1840. On 18 January 1840 the French brig of war *La Malouine*, commanded by Captain Bouët anchored in Elmina roads. The ship and the Dutch fort exchanged 21-gun salutes, as was customary, and the captain and his officers came ashore.<sup>3</sup> The next day:

Captain Bouët brought his Daguerreotype on shore in order to show us a test [made] with it. At eleven o'clock it was put into operation at the house of Mr. Coorengel, located close to the beach,<sup>4</sup> in order to produce a drawing of [the fort of] St. George. Although the process is very long and difficult, at two o'clock we had the most beautiful and faithful depiction of this establishment [i.e., the castle], along with a small portion of the *krom* [town of Elmina], all in a compass of 10 Rhenish inches broad and eight high.

The calm weather favored the proceedings, so that everything, down to the smallest objects, was visible on the plate.

The lines of flag poles were not missed in the scenery, even the leaves of some of the palm trees which stand near the fort could be counted with a magnifying glass. This machine was given to Captain Bouët by the French government.<sup>5</sup>

This brief reference confirms Viditz-Ward's suspicion that daguerreotypists were at work in West Africa from the very beginnings of photography.

Some years later another French daguerreotypist appeared at Elmina, but he was involved in a very different type of activity. In early 1847 a certain "Heer Sorin" was reported to be busy in Elmina taking portraits of Elmina citizens willing to pay \$6 for a sitting.<sup>6</sup> He reportedly took portraits of some 34 people before he left for Cape Coast on 3

February. On this occasion the weather did not favor the daguerreotypist, as harmattan winds were blowing. The Dutch governor noted in his journal that for portraits of "Negroes" it was necessary for Sorin to expose the plate for 140 seconds; for "mulattoes" 100 seconds; and for "Europeans" 35 seconds.<sup>7</sup> The implication is that Sorin drew customers from a broad spectrum of Elmina's well-to-do citizenry.

Whatever became of the products of these early photographic efforts? We would of course be exceptionally fortunate if any of the original photographs could be located, and perhaps one day some will. Vidlitz-Ward expressed skepticism that any daguerreotypes left at the coast could have survived the climate.<sup>8</sup> However, Paul Jenkins has recently shown that at least some of the early photographs made by Basel Missionaries on the Gold Coast formed the basis of engravings which were subsequently published or otherwise distributed to advance missionary activities.<sup>9</sup> It may therefore be possible that early Gold Coast photographs survive in a different form.

Such may be the case with a magnificent engraving which I was shown during my recent research stay in Ghana. The engraving is in the possession of Mr. E. F. Pobee of Adisadel Collge, Cape Coast, to whom I am most grateful both for the information about his family which he generously shared with me, and for permission to photograph the engraving of his ancestor. A digital reproduction of my photograph is found below.

Mr. Pobee is a great-great-great-grandson of the man represented, Carel Hendrik Bartels (1793-1850). Bartels, who was of European and Ghanaian ancestry, was without doubt the most influential merchant in the town of Elmina during the 1840s. Those Ghana scholars who have visited the "Dutch cemetery" in Elmina will have seen the massive engraved stone marking his grave, which lies in front of the vault holding the remains of former Dutch governors, and which was placed there by his numerous children. When Mr. Pobee showed me the engraving of Bartels, which appears to have been produced sometime after the latter's death in 1850, I was struck by the lifelike quality of the image. It now seems to me quite possible that this engraving was produced on the basis of one of the photographs taken by Sorin during his stay at Elmina in 1847. Of course there is at present insufficient evidence to prove this hypothesis. I would like to conclude this brief note with a plea for researchers to seek out and attempt to document old family portraits, especially those found in the coastal communities, where the origins and practice of photography clearly date from the very beginnings of the art itself.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> V. Vidlitz-Ward, "Photography in Sierra Leone, 1850-1918", *Africa*, 57, 4 (1987), 510.



<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> National Archives, The Hague, Archief van de Nederlandsche Bezittingen ter Kuste van Guinea (NBKG) 364: Elmina Journal, entry for 18 January 1840.

<sup>4</sup> I believe this to be the structure known today in Elmina as "Bridge House". This house was still standing as late as 15 years ago, but is now in ruins. The "Save Elmina Association" (SEA), a group of Elminans based mostly in Accra, is determined to gather sufficient funds to reconstruct this historic structure to its 19th-century specifications. SEA would greatly appreciate any monetary contributions from members of the Ghana Studies Council. Mr. Michel van den Nieuwenhof, a Dutch architect currently employed in Accra, has produced a wonderful collection of drawings reconstructing this and other historic private houses in Elmina. It is hoped that these will serve as the basis for eventual restoration. John Fountaine Coorengel, a merchant of European and Ghanaian descent, may have been the original builder of "Bridge House", which was probably constructed in the late 1830s. I am grateful to Dr. M. Doortmont of Erasmus University, Rotterdam, for assistance in the identification of Coorengel.

<sup>5</sup> NBKG 364: Elmina Journal, entry for 19 January 1840.

<sup>6</sup> NBKG 366: Elmina Journal, entry for 30 January 1847.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Vidlitz-Ward, 511.

<sup>9</sup> P. Jenkins, "The Earliest Generation of Missionary Photographers in West Africa and the portrayal of Indigenous People and Culture", *History in Africa*, 20 (1993), 92-3.

**The Frigate *Fredensborg*  
by Selena Winsnes  
Lilleström, Norway**

The frigate *Fredensborg* was built in Copenhagen in 1752-53 by the Danish West India-Guinea Company. On its last journey the ship followed the triangular route, carrying gold, ivory and 265 slaves to the West Indies. Twenty-nine slaves died on the journey. Having sold the remaining slaves and taken on new cargo – sugar, tobacco, dyewood, mahogany, cinnamon and cotton – the ship set sail for Copenhagen, also carrying three slaves to be delivered to a buyer in Copenhagen. Storm forced the captain to sail along the Norwegian coast of Skagernak where he sought a harbor of refuge. This was not an infrequent occurrence, but on 1 December 1768, the ship ran aground and sank off Tromøy, near Arendal, in southern Norway. There were no casualties, and some of the cargo and the log book and journals were saved before the ship sank. The wreck was found by divers on 15 September 1974, and two marine archaeological expeditions in 1975 and 1977 brought up more articles. These are now on display in the Aust-Agder Museum in Arendal.

Because the log book and other important journals were saved, this is undoubtedly one of the best documented journeys of any Scandinavian ship during the period of the slave trade. What makes the *Fredensborg* find of special interest is that it sank after having nearly completed the journey of the triangle trade. The artefacts, along with the written materials, make up an interesting and highly informative source, unlike any other find in Scandinavia.

Anyone interested in further information should contact: Leif Svalesen, P.O. Box 104, 4818 FÆRVIK, one of the divers who found the ship and who has since become deeply involved in research on both *Fredensborg* and the Danish-Norwegian slave trade; or Aust-Agder Museet, Parkveien 16, 4800 Arendal, Norway.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**\*\*The Silver Jubilee of Otumfuo Opoku Ware II, Asantehene, is being celebrated in Kumasi. Events are planned throughout the year. The *Akwasidae Kese* will take place on Sunday, August 13th, Dwabrem, Manhyia, Kumasi.**

**\*\*The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London is organizing a conference on "Africa's Urban Past" for 19-21 June 1996. Any**

scholar with research interest in this field who wishes to attend should send the title and abstract (c. 300 words) of a proposed paper to the conference organizers by 30 September 1995. Conference Organizers: David Anderson and Richard Rathbone, History Department, SOAS, University of London, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG, England, UK. tel: 0171-637-2388. email: da@soas.ac.uk or rr@soas.ac.uk

**\*\*Albert van Dantzig reports that, as of 24 May 1995, he was still awaiting for word from the printers that the next issue of *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* is ready to be distributed. He is hopeful that the issue may be ready by the end of July. Reminder: the cost of a subscription is \$15 per issue for individual subscribers; libraries pay \$20. All requests and inquiries should be directed to the Publications Manager, Historical Society of Ghana, P.O. Box 12, Legon, GHANA.**

**\*\*The African Studies Centre, Cambridge University, has recently published T.E. Kyei's *Marriage and Divorce Among the Asante: A Study Undertaken in the course of the 'Ashanti Social Survey'* as No. 14 in its African Monograph Series. For further information contact the Centre at Free School Lane, Cambridge CB2 3RQ GREAT BRITAIN.**

**\*\*The second edition of *The Historical Dictionary of Ghana*, co authored by David Owusu-Ansah and Daniel Miles McFarland, has recently been published by Scarecrow Press, 52 Liberty St., P.O. Box 4167, Metuchen, NJ 08840.**

**\*\*The African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison has recently published Selena Axelrod Winsnes's critical translation of Erick Tilleman, *En Kort og Enfoldig Beretning om det Landskab Guinea og dets Beskaffenhed (1697)*.**

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Political Science  
**Research:** The roots of authoritarianism in Ghana; techniques of social mobilization across space and time in Ghana

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**Research:** Oral tradition, Folklore  
Asante Twi proverbs and folklore and general information about Akan culture

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**Research:** Economic anthropology, political anthropology

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History

**Research:** Gold Coast / Ghanaian coastal history; intellectual resistance and responses to colonialism; Gold Coast nationalist history

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Linguistics and African Languages  
**Research:** Akan linguistics, English linguistics, Akan literature, the Volta Comoe languages

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History  
**Research:** Akan of Ghana and their neighbors

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**Research:** History of culture contact as revealed in results of language contact; historical socio-linguistics of Ghana

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History  
**Research:** Afro-Dutch interfection during the 16-19th centuries. Urbanization in West African coastal areas

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**Linguistics**  
**Research:** Akan phonology; Akan dialects; Akan and related languages

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**History**  
**Research:** Asante history and culture

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**Research:** Asante-Akan cultural history in light of its material culture

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**History**  
**Research:** The rise and development of the Fante peoples; the history of the Akan peoples of Ghana

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**Research:** Culture and applied development; traditional religion and worldview; Akan influences on the North

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**Art**  
**Research:** Ghanaian Art; Ewe Art; painting; printmaking

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**Oral Tradition**  
**Research:** Twi proverbs, dilemma tales, folktales, anansesem

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**Research:** African literature and poetics, Blacks in Diaspora, African history, Asante history, Akanology

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**Research:** Akan verbal art and its ritual performance; proverbial alterations

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**Research:** Farming systems social and economic change, effects of structural adjustment on rural and urban poor

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**Social Anthropology, Ethnology**  
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**Research:** Marriage, sexual relationships, birth control

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**Research:** Medical anthropology, pharmaceuticals, the elderly, Highlife song

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 colonialism, indirect rule

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 Asante, ethnohistory, food systems,  
 political economy

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**Research:** Elmina, coastal Akan

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 Nigeria, history of science

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 gold mining; domestic trade and  
 agriculture; labor history; slavery and  
 the slave trade

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 especially metalwork

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**Research:** Dutch influences in Ghana  
 during the 18th and 19th centuries  
 especially at Elmina

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 Akuapem

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**Research:** Ghanaian colonial history  
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 of geographical and ecological factors  
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 West Africa; sociopolitical history, oral  
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 research: performing arts

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 Research: Emergence of the Akan kingdoms

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 Research: Leadership art and history of the Ga, Dangme, Ewe and related peoples living on the periphery of the former Akan kingdoms; cross-cultural studies of the ideology of power

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 Interdisciplinary  
 Research: cultural identity; class formation

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 Research: Political and military arts of the Akan

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 Research: Islamic history of Kumasi

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 Research: ceramic late Stone Age; Later Iron Age; implications of European contact and Atlantic trade

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 Folklore  
 Research: Asante queenmothers

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 History  
 Research: Social and economic history of marriage in Asante; Asante legal institutions

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 Research: Emergence of Akan States, acculturation of traditional economies

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