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Ghana's Vanishing Past: Development, Antiquities, and the Destruction of the Archaeological Record

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Abstract

Ghana's past is being destroyed at a rapid rate. Although the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board has in some instances successfully intervened to stop the illicit trading of antiquities, the destruction of archaeological sites as a consequence of development over the past two decades has been staggering and the pace is accelerating. The potential of the legislation that established the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board and empowered it to manage and preserve the country's archaeological past has not been realized. The lack of political action, limited relevant public education, insufficient funding, and the poverty of the majority of the Ghanaian populace have allowed for the widespread destruction of both sites and historic buildings. Conspicuously, both the absence of integrated development planning by the Ghanaian government and the inability of development partners (both foreign and domestic) to recognize the potential value of cultural resources have contributed significantly to the continued loss of the archaeological record. While the antiquities trade is a continuing threat to Ghana's cultural resources, it is, in fact, tourism and economic development that pose the major menace to the country's archaeological past. This article reviews the history of cultural resource management in Ghana, including both traditional attitudes toward preservation and current legislation. Case studies are used to illustrate the problems faced.

Actuellement le passé matériel du Ghana disparaît très rapidement. Le Conseil des musées et des monuments du Ghana a réussi à intervenir dans certains cas pour arrêter la traite illicite en antiquités. Toutefois, la croissance rapide du développement urbain au fil des derniers vingt ans a entraîné une énorme destruction de sites archéologiques qui ne fait qu'accroître. Les lois établissant le Conseil des musées et des monuments du Ghana lui ont en même [end of page 89] temps accordé les pleins pouvoirs en mesure de la gestion et la préservation du passé archéologique du pays, malheureusement les possibilités de cette législation n'ont jamais été réalisées. Plusieurs éléments contribuent à la destruction très répandue de sites et de bâtiments historiques, dont le manque de prises de mesures politiques, d'éducation publique pertinente, de fonds, et la misère dans laquelle vivent la plus grande partie de la population ghanéenne. Il est évident que l'absence d'une planification intégrée pour le développement de la part du gouvernement ghanéen et l'incapacité des partenaires en développement (nationaux ainsi qu'internationaux) de reconnaître la valeur potentielle de ressources culturelles sont deux éléments supplémentaires clés qui contribuent de façon importante en la perte continue de vestiges archéologiques. La traite en objets antiques présente toujours une menace pour les ressources culturelles du Ghana. En fait le tourisme et le développement économique représentent une menace encore plus importante à la préservation du passé archéologique du pays. Cet article revoit l'histoire de la gestion des ressources culturelles au Ghana, comprenant à la fois les positions traditionnelles envers la préservation ainsi que la législation actuelle. Des études de cas éclairent les problèmes actuels.

Keywords: Ghana; Cultural resource management; Development; Antiquities trade; Forts and castles; Koma terracottas; USAID.

Introduction

The plight of Africa's past has been highlighted in a number of recent conferences and publications (e.g., Ardouin, 1997; Schmidt and McIntosh, 1996; Serageldin and Taboroff, 1994; Udvardy *et al.*, 2003). In particular, attention has focused on the looting of archaeological sites for objects of artistic worth, the antiquities trade, and issues of cultural patrimony. These are major concerns and governments worldwide have far to go to safeguard the myriad of objects that "embody the spirit and creativity of the African past" (Schmidt and McIntosh, 1996, p. xi). However, the threat to the past does not solely lie in the search for antiquities. Development, economic recovery, and nation building, terms that pervade the lexicons of virtually all governments and international aid agencies, also have consequences (e.g., Koroma, 1996; Kusimba, 1996; Mabulla, 1996; Wilson and Omar, 1996). As will be seen, while intervention to arrest the antiquities trade has met with some success, the impact of the efforts to curtail the destruction of Ghanaian archaeological resources threatened by development has been extremely limited. The

situation in Ghana is particularly tragic as the country has long had relevant legislation which, if enforced and funded, could protect cultural resources and provide for effective management.

Historic preservation and archaeological resource management is a major concern of governments throughout the world. Increasing emphasis on managing cultural resources is reflected in both national and global agendas. For example, [end of page 90] UNESCO launched the "World Decade for Cultural Development" in 1988 (Serageldin and Taboroff, 1994). It emphasized the first and most important objective for the decade: to recognize the cultural dimension of development. On the African front, under the joint sponsorship of the governments of Norway and Sweden, the Rockefeller Foundation, the World Bank, and UNESCO, a major international conference on the topic "Culture and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa" was held in 1992 (Serageldin and Taboroff, 1994). The conference underscored the need to take culture beliefs into account in the widest possible context in African development. This conference was followed by a regional seminar in Cote d'Ivoire in 1993, with the theme "Museums and Archaeology: The Quest for Public Communication" (Ardouin, 1997). The Carter Lecture series at the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida also focused attention on the rapidly disappearing African past (Schmidt and McIntosh, 1996). Individual African nations have taken varied steps toward improved management practices (for examples of legislation and the varying success of implementation, see Arinze, 1990; Brandt and Mohamed, 1996; Collet, 1991; Goodland and Webb, 1987; Karoma, 1996; Kusimba, 1996; Mabulla, 1996; McIntosh, 1994; Mturi, 1996; Ndoro, 2001; Schmidt, 1996; Sidibé, 1996). This concern of the international community is a result of the awareness that the archaeological heritage is a major, vulnerable, and nonrenewable resource.

The potential economic worth of effective cultural resource management has also been recognized. Cultural tourism, arising out of human's fascination with their past, has become a major revenue earner and some nations have been quick to realize that the past (encompassing archaeological resources, historic buildings, and cultural sites) "is also a commodity which can be marketed to the public" (Collet, 1991, p. 3). The treatment of heritage as a commodity is most obvious in Western Europe and the United States of America but many countries in Asia, South America, and Mesoamerica have also capitalized on their cultural patrimony (e.g., Bruner, 1996a; Collet, 1991, p. 3; Ekechukwu, 1990; Isar, 1986; Layton, 1989). In Africa, the strides taken toward improving cultural resource management in Zimbabwe and Egypt are undoubtedly linked to the successful marketing of their pasts (Collett, 1991, p. 3; Ndoro, 2001).

African independence and the economic growth during the 1950s and 1960s resulted in substantial investment and economic aid to the developing countries. Consequently, development emerged as a necessary and dominant theme (Cleere, 1989, p. 2). Yet, the interrelated consequences of infrastructural development, including increasing urbanization and natural resource exploitation, emerged as a source of worry. While 'development brought many needed improvements such as roads, medical care, communication systems, housing, and hydroelectricity, it also created an increasing threat to the archaeological past as sites were increasingly destroyed as a result of construction. In less industrialized countries in particular, the consequences of economic development has often included widespread [end of page 91] deforestation and the devastation of large tracts of hitherto undisturbed natural and historical landscapes. The need to maximize agricultural yields meant that erosion of the nonurban environment continued apace, while the demand for oil and alternative sources of energy stepped up mineral prospecting and extraction in many areas (e.g., Cleere, 1989, p. 3; Wilson and Omar, 1996). Affluent, adventure tourism increased the sale of antiquities to foreign tourists and, consequently, the intentional looting of archaeological sites (for West African examples, see Schmidt and McIntosh, 1996, especially chapters by Brent, Jegede, LaGamma, Nkwi, and Sidibé). This paradox in economic development is what has drawn the international community's attention to the preservation and marketing of archaeological resources. These developments led to the international concern for environmental protection. The establishment of the United Nations Environmental Program in 1972 provided funding to mitigate the impact of development (Cleere, 1989, p. 3). The development pressures of the 1960s, followed by the environmental movement in the 1970s, led many countries to pass legislation replacing the outdated, ineffectual statutes of a less stressful pre-World War II era (Cleere, 1989, p. 4). It was these new laws that gave birth to cultural resource management.

The trend in worldwide management of archaeological resources over the past two decades has arisen (Hutt *et al.*, 1992, p. 15; Messenger, 1989; Schmidt and McIntosh, 1996), first, as a result of the awareness of its ideological basis in establishing cultural continuity and identity. Second, it is economically justified by mass tourism both nationally and internationally. Third, it has the academic function of safeguarding archaeological data, which is held

in trust by institutions for the wider public. Unfortunately, concern has arisen because heritage legislation in most countries permits the private ownership of archaeological resources, which makes it challenging to determine where materials were originally found. The problems arising from unclear jurisdictional status are exacerbated by the general public's fascination with the past, collectors' desire to own antiquities, and the high value placed on some objects. In developing countries, the problem is made worse by the lack of trained personnel and inadequate funding to identify and evaluate antiquities and effectively manage cultural heritage. While notable preservation efforts have been made, African museums and academic institutions entrusted with management of archaeological resources often face tremendous constraints in attempting to fulfill their mandates, despite recognition of the tremendous cultural, historic, economic and political potential of the material record of the past (see discussions and references in Ellison *et al.*, 1996; Musonda, 1990; Posnansky, 1982).

The potential role of archaeological preservation in national economic development and in national identity formation has long been recognized by Ghanaian political leaders and traditional authorities. The increasing contribution of cultural tourism to Ghana's economy since the late 1980s (USAID, 2001, p. 2) has also underscored the potential economic benefits of effective cultural resource management practices. Yet development priorities such as transportation [end of page 92] infrastructure, mining, and housing have been favored, generally with little attention as to how policies and projects might impact on cultural resources.

Cultural Resource Management in Ghana

While in many respects Ghana typifies the constraints developing countries (particularly those within West Africa) face in implementing effective cultural resource management practices, the country possesses both traditional attitudes favorable to preservation and relevant governmental legislation, as well as a national institution charged with protecting cultural resources. "Traditional" is used here to refer to the management practices of indigenous Ghanaian societies to preserve the past, which in many instances are linked with their view of history as an uninterrupted continuum (Kense, 1990, p. 138). This continuity is expressed through ancestor worship, kinship relationships, and sacred locations. The present is understood largely through identification with forebears and inherited, material possessions and culturally valued landscapes that range from artistic treasures, shrines, and regalia, to sacred groves and natural features perceived to have spiritual significance (e.g., Agorsah, 1977; Chouin, 2002; Kankpeyeng, 2001). Traditional religious views and concepts prevent the disposal or destruction of these things. Indigenously managed cultural loci are active, utilitarian sites, with the concept of "museum" that differs from the narrow western concept of a place where objects from different cultures are exhibited for a large number of people (Speranza, 1990, p. 24).

Ghanaian traditional leaders take pride in their regalia, which reflect and create an awareness of the past, pertaining to the existence of empires and chiefdoms. These treasures remind both the king and the chief of his responsibilities to his people and his predecessors, and the powers entrusted to the kings and chiefs by the ancestors. For example, the Golden Stool and associated regalia of the Asantehene is not only the strength and unifying factor of the Asantes but also an external symbol of the Asante empire (Schildkrout, 1996, p. 40). Individual families or communities also keep various items for ritual purposes. These regalia and ritual objects are preserved at various palaces and shrines. In addition, many sacred groves are maintained because of the beliefs attached to them and for their continuing role in customary festivals and rituals (Chouin, 2002).

These indigenous values sometimes prevent the destruction of cultural resources directly related to the histories of individual groups. Unfortunately, these beliefs have little strength in the face of economic necessity and the increasingly pervasive impact of western popular culture. This has resulted in a dire need for revised and more stringent governmental management practices. It must be recognized, however, that traditional heritage management has persisted alongside modern legislation, to the extent that traditional leaders have embraced modern archaeological heritage management practices. The Asanteman Traditional Council, [end of page 93] as part of the silver jubilee celebration of Nana Opoku Ware II in 1995, established the Manhyia Palace Museum at the Old Palace of the Asantehene, Kumasi (Schildkrout, 1996, pp. 36-46) with the technical support of the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB). This museum incorporates the regalia and objects associated with the kings of Asante. Similar efforts have been initiated at a smaller scale in other areas. Notably, the economic potential of cultural features as tourist destinations has been recognized by traditional authorities, in part, because of its emphasis in an increasing number of government tourist development programs, publications, advertisements, and trade fairs (e.g.,

Bruner, 1996b, pp. 300-301; Ghana Tourist Board, 1996). The efforts of traditional authorities at preservation and presentation emphasize the potential importance of the partnering of government and nongovernmental institutions.

Both the archaeological study of Ghana's past and the preservation efforts of some monuments began just prior to World War II, although the amateur archaeologists (e.g., Junner, 1940, 1939; Kitson, 1916; Wild, 1927, 1934a,b, 1935a,b) who conducted much of the initial work sent the material excavated to England leaving little in Ghana (Kense, 1990, p. 138; Shaw, 1945, p. 470). Modern archaeological heritage management in Ghana started with the appointment of Thurstan Shaw in 1937 as a part-time curator of a tiny museum at Achimota College that housed collections of colonial officials and amateur archaeologists (Kense, 1990, p. 141). This step was followed by the establishment of the Monuments and Relics Commission in 1948, which was aimed at the preservation of antiquities and the restoration of architectural monuments (Myles, 1989, p. 125). Further recognition of the importance of Ghanaian heritage was demonstrated with the foundation of a National Museum as a research center, which was temporarily housed at the Department of Archaeology, University College of Ghana, Achimota, which subsequently became the University of Ghana, Legon.

Despite these early developments, archaeological heritage management remained embryonic until Ghana's independence on March 6, 1957. The legal foundation of archaeological heritage management came in March 1957 when Ordinance 20 merged the Monuments and Relics Commission and the National Museum to establish GMMB. The creation of an institution to manage archaeological and cultural resources was part of nationalists' desire to develop a national identity for the emerging nation state. Ghana, like all African countries, was defined by colonial powers that drew arbitrary boundaries that subsumed a great deal of ethnic diversity. Since colonialism created culturally heterogeneous countries, monuments served as a means of creating a uniform cultural identity, within which the colonial period was no more than an irrelevant episode (Cleere, 1989, p. 8). Thus Kwame Nkrumah, President of an independent Ghana, buttressed his political ideology of a unitary state centered on the motto of "Unity in Diversity" that was preached during the struggle for independence. The recognition of Ghanaian heritage should, therefore, be seen as having been central to a nationalist political agenda. [end of page 94]

In recognition of this agenda, the exhibits of the National Museum were displayed thematically with objects from different ethnic groups illustrating Ghana's varied cultural heritage. Nkrumah also encouraged the National Museum to collect and display objects from African societies outside of Ghana, underscoring Nkrumah's pan-Africanist outlook (Kankpeyeng, 1996, p. 12; see also Posnansky, 1982, 1996). Casts of Benin bronzes, Egyptian antiquities and parts of mummies, Senufu masks from Côte d'Ivoire, Zulu wooden figures and beadwork from South Africa, Ife bronze heads from Nigeria, and Bushongo carvings from the Congo were acquired from other African countries through exchange and included in the permanent exhibits and collections of the Ghana National Museum. These themes are still reflected in the Museum's displays, which in some instances remain virtually unchanged from when they were initially installed.

Another important post-independence development was the construction of the Akosornbo Dam in the 1960s, which created the Volta Lake, the largest man-made lake in the world in terms of surface area (Moxon, 1984, p. 23). The salvage excavations that were conducted prior to the inundation of the lake area enriched the archaeology of Ghana (Posnansky, 2003a). Notably, no legal requirements mandated that any survey or mitigation of archaeological resources impacted by the project be undertaken. Rather it was at the urging of Oliver Davies and Peter Shinnie, then at the Department of Archaeology, University of Ghana, that money was set aside for archaeological survey and mitigation. The Volta Basin Research Project eventually subsidized archaeologist Oliver Davies as Executive Secretary, two full-time professional archaeologists and four technical staff (Posnansky, 2003a, pp. 14, n. 3). Some 600 sites were identified and more than 30 excavated. Although the coverage was incomplete and much for the work remains unpublished, the research provided a corpus of archaeological data on the region and rationale for the legal basis for protecting Ghana's archaeological heritage (Davies, 1971; Posnansky, 2003a, 2003b);

The duties and responsibilities of GMMB were not specified until the late 1960s with the National Liberation Council Decree (NLCD) 387 of 1969. Under paragraph 14 of the decree, GMMB was entrusted to equip, maintain, and manage the National Museum; to preserve, repair, or restore any antiquity that it considers to be of national importance; and to keep a register of all antiquities it acquires or are brought to its notice. NLCD 387 also provides a legal definition of Ghana's *archaeological heritage*, defined under paragraph 30 as:

- (a) an object of archaeological interest or land in which any such object is believed to exist or was discovered, including any land adjacent to such object or land which in the opinion of the Board is reasonably required

to maintain the object or land or its amenities or to provide access thereto, or for the exercise of proper control or management over such object or land; or

- (b) any work or craftwork, including any statue, modelled clay figure, cast or wrought iron metal carving, housepost, door, ancestral figure, religious mask, staff, drum, bowl, ornament, utensil, weapon, armour, regalia, manuscript or document, if such work of art or craft work is of indigenous origin and [end of page 95]

(i) was made or fashioned before the year 1900, or-

(ii) is of historical, artistic, or scientific interest, and is or has been used at any time in the performance, and for the purposes of, any traditional ceremony. (NLCD 387, 1969, p. 11)

The comprehensive NLCD 387 definition of *archaeological heritage* embraces all components of the past including artifacts, shrines, sacred groves, and historical structures. It has been further specified to include any "object of archaeological interest," defined as:

- (a) any fossil remains of man or of animals found in association with man; or
(b) any site, trace or ruin of an ancient habitation, working place, midden or sacred place; or
(c) any cave or other natural shelter, or engraving, drawing, inscription, painting or inscription on rock or elsewhere; or
(d) any stone object or implement believed to have been used or produced by early man; or
(e) any ancient structure, erection, memorial, causeway, bridge, cairn, tumulus, grave, shrine, excavation, well, water tank, artificial pool, monolith, group of stones, earthwork, wall gateway or fortification; or
(f) any antique tool or object of metal, wood, stone, clay, leather, textile, basketware or other material, which is of archaeological interest. (NLCD 387, 1969, p. 12)

Thus cultural resources are seen to include prehistoric, historic, and ethnographic materials, as well as lands, buildings; and structures relevant to Ghana's past. By definition, Ghana's archaeological heritage embraces both movable and immovable properties of indigenous Ghanaians, as well as historic European structures. The legislation of 1969 was further refined in 1972 with Executive Instrument 42 that was specifically issued to protect European forts, castles, and trade posts along the coastal belt of Ghana (see Nunoo, 1972). Further regulations elaborating GMMB's responsibility to register antiquities or historical sites were detailed in Executive Instrument 29 of 1973. This legislation spelled out the procedures and restrictions for the sale and export of Ghanaian artifacts.

The preceding legislation currently provides the legal basis for the management and protection of cultural resources. Since the 1990s, the National Commission on Culture (NCC), the governmental organization with a supervisory role over GMMB, has been working toward fashioning new laws to redefine and improve the management of Ghana's cultural resources. The Draft Cultural Policy of Ghana (NCC, 1991a) and the Review Committee Report on GMMB (NCC, 1991b), discussed by Appiah-Baiden (1992), contain new thoughts aimed at decentralizing GMMB and nurturing local communities support and participation in the preservation of the Ghanaian archaeological heritage. Unfortunately, changes in the Chairman of NCC and lack of stable management of GMMB since 1990 have delayed the passing of new legislation.

The lack of substantive action is of great concern as Ghana has been increasingly caught up in the opposing concerns of development and heritage management. The beginning of an economic recovery program in the mid-1980s, with the [end of page 96] support of international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, has invigorated economic activity, particularly construction, mineral exploitation, and urban renewal. The period has also witnessed the rapid growth in tourism, a development that has made tourism the third largest source of revenue to Ghana's national economy and enhanced Ghanaian cultural revival (Bruner, 1996b, p. 300; USAID, 2001, p. 2). Consequently the government of Ghana has recognized the importance of historic preservation and archaeological heritage management.

Despite this recognition, inadequate financial support and insufficient management are obstacles to the realization of full potential of Ghana's past. While the current laws merit re-evaluation, NLCD 387 and subsequent legislation specify cultural resource management guidelines and the role of GMMB in the preservation of Ghana's archaeological heritage. Unfortunately, the need to include cultural resource management in national development has been largely unrecognized. The preservation of Ghana's heritage has consistently been subordinated to perceived national development priorities, such as transportation, mineral exploitation, housing, agriculture, and tourism, rather than viewed as an integral part of a cohesive national development strategy. Consequently, GMMB,

established and empowered by the decree for heritage preservation, has been unable to compile a national register and to undertake even minimal efforts to survey, locate, and record archaeological resources. This failure is problematic because the identification and documentation of archaeological resources is essential for their management. Planners can only take cultural resources into consideration if such resources are identified and documented. Even in instances where resources have been identified, they have not been afforded protection when faced with development, either private or governmental.

The inability of GMMB can be explained, in the first instance, by the fact that the Board has been plagued by the chronic problem of inadequate funding. The poor financial situation is exacerbated because GMMB and its activities are only supported by a limited annual budget. Legislation does not encourage private and public participation in the preservation of Ghanaian archaeological resources. Indeed, at present even the revenue generated by monuments such as the European forts and the national museums is collected by the government or paid into a consolidated fund. Only the central government can access the consolidated fund and, therefore, GMMB cannot rely on the revenue it generates to further develop or preserve the resources in its care. Lack of training for the GMMB staff in modern protection and preservation methods further impedes effective management and the development of improved practices. Beginning in the 1980s, the situation was partially remedied by the training of a few Board staff by the International Center for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), and other institutions. Yet, many of these trainees never returned to GMMB and rather sought greener pastures with [end of page 97] other employers or in other countries. Some employees lack commitment to the museum's mission and see museum employment as temporary (see discussion in Posnansky, i 996). Lack of support facilities in Ghana, along with staff attrition and retirement, has limited the value of these programs.

Despite these handicaps, government intervention has successfully protected archaeological resources in some instances. GMMB stopped the looting of mound sites associated with distinctive terracottas in northern Ghana and curbed the export of these antiquities. As will be seen, however, preservation efforts have been far less successful in the face of growing tourism development and economic interests. The varying situations faced are illustrated by cases from northern and coastal Ghana. These will be examined in turn (see Fig. 1 map).

Northern Ghana

Northern Ghana is poorly known archaeologically. Regional chronologies are lacking and basic information on the presence and extent of archaeological resources is unavailable for much of the Upper West, Upper East, and Northern regions. There have, however, been a number of preliminary archaeological surveys and discoveries (e.g., Casey, 1993; Davies, 1967; Kankpeyeng, 2003, in press; Shinnie and Kense, 1989). The tempo of development has been slower in the north than in the south. Bolgatanga, capital of the Upper East Region, Wa, capital of the Upper West Region, and Tamale, capital of the northern region have populations of about 30,000, 35,000, and 450,000, respectively. This can be contrasted with Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tema, and Accra in the south, which are the four largest cities in the country with populations of more than 1.5, 1, 1, and 2.5 million. Hence, it might be assumed that fewer archaeological sites have been impacted in the north. It is, however, impossible to evaluate the degree of impact because archaeological data are unavailable, and cultural or environmental impact assessments have not been conducted in conjunction with development work.

In the north, GMMB maintains a regional office in Wa and there is a regional museum at Bolgatanga. The staffs of these facilities are relatively small; the Upper East Regional Museum, for example, has a staff of 15. Monuments protected by GMMB include the George Ekem Ferguson graveyard in Wa (Fig. 2) and the town walls at Gwollu and Nalerigu. GMMB has also been assisting to preserve the Wanaa's (chief's) palace at Wa. However, preservation and restoration work has almost entirely focused on the distinctive, timber and clay, Sudanic- and Jenne-style mosques at Nakore, Wa (Dondoli section), Bole, Dakrupe, Manluwe (see Fig. 3), Banda Nkwanta, Larabanga, and Wuriyanga. In the majority of cases, the mosques are replastered annually by the local people with support from GMMB. In 2003 the World Monuments Fund provided a grant for restoration work at the Larabanga mosque.

Aside from these monuments, other sites and cultural resources have been afforded little protection. Perhaps the most disappointing example of GMMB's [end of page 98]

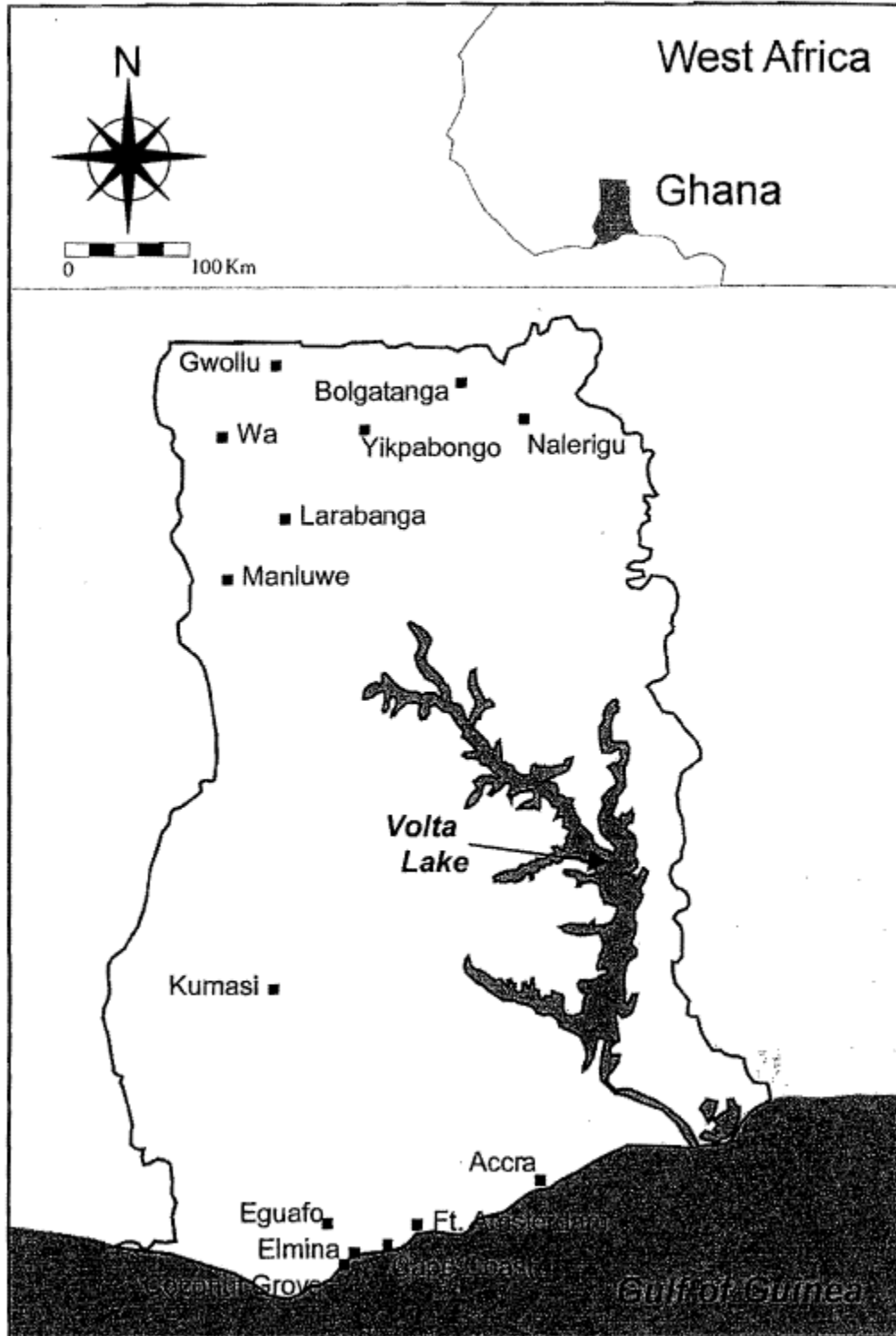


Fig. 1. Map of Ghana with sites referred to in the text.
[end of page 99]

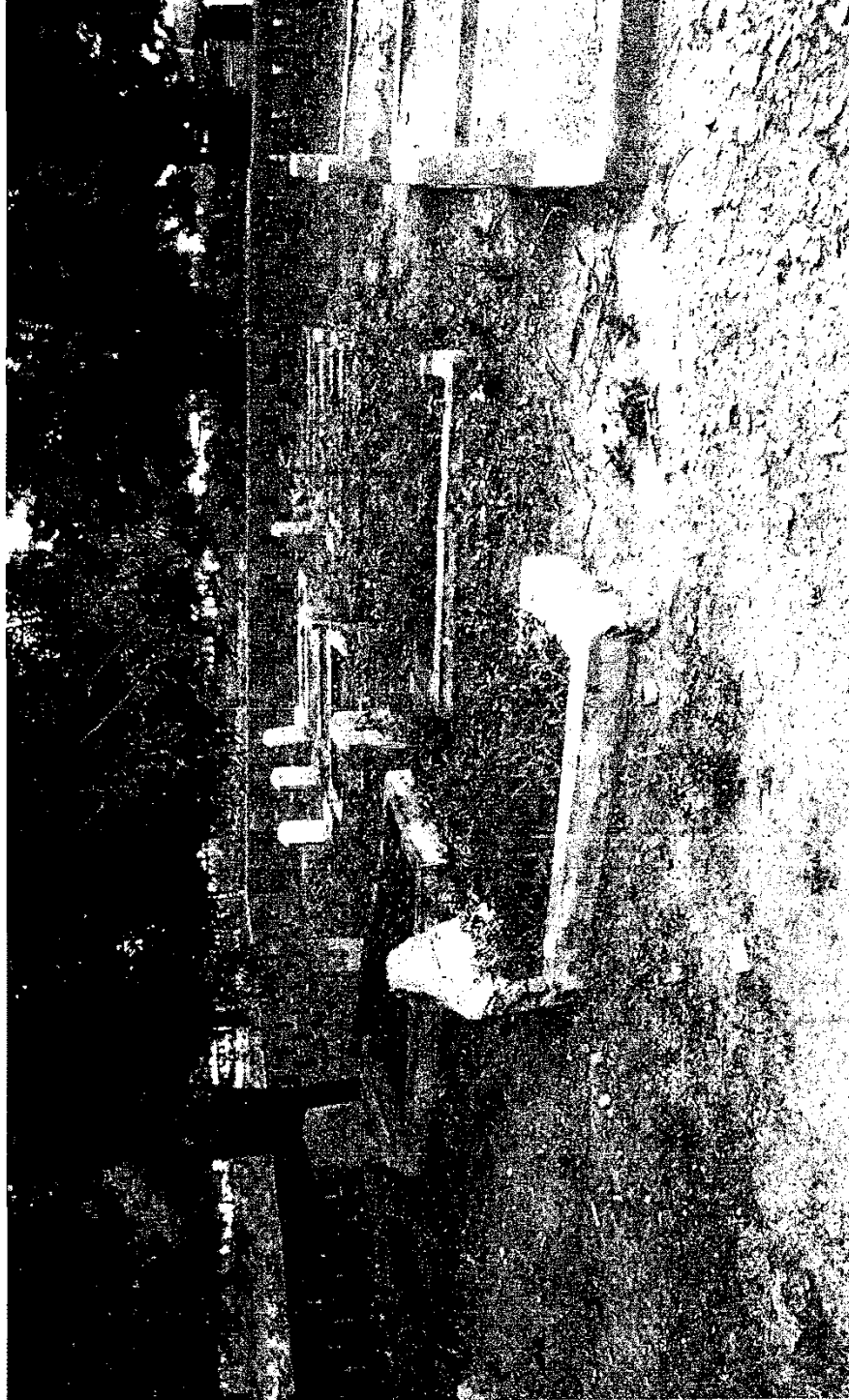


Fig. 2. Photo of Ferguson cemetery Wa in 1987 (photograph courtesy of C. R. DeCorse)
[end of page 100]



Fig. 3. Sudanic-style, timber, and clay mosque at Manluwe, Upper West Region. The preservation of mosques in northern Ghana is a of the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (photograph courtesy of C.R. DeCorse).
[end of page 101]

unsuccessful intervention in northern Ghana is the destruction of the British fort at the old residency in Wa, which had been used by colonial officials and the regional government up until 2002. The fort was built by the British in the first half of the twentieth century and it continued in service in the early 1970s. By the early 1980s, however, it was in ruins, though still identified as a historic monument by GMMB. Despite this fact, it was demolished in the mid-1980s at the direction of the regional authorities of the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) following the creation of the new Upper West Region. The structure was considered to be outmoded and also a security risk because of its location within an area that served as a residency for the Regional Secretary, as well as for visiting military authorities such as the Chairman of PNDC (the Head of State). While the need for new construction cannot be denied, the fact that the concerns of GMMB were largely ignored and no drawings, plans, or archaeological assessments of the site were made prior to its destruction is unfortunate.

Among the most tantalizing discoveries made in northern Ghana, also serve as an illustration of the successful intervention by GMMB to both prevent the destruction of archaeological sites and prohibit the illicit trade in antiquities. These findings relate to a previously unknown terracotta tradition associated with burial mound sites in the Sisili and Kulpawn rivers basins (see Fig. 4). These enigmatic anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines were initially reported to the curators and Director of the National Museum in 1982 by Ben Baluri Saibu, a native of the area; At about the same time, Franz Kroeger, a German anthropologist conducting research in northern Ghana, notified faculty at the Department of Archaeology, University of Ghana, Legon of the discoveries. As a result of these reports, Isaac N. Debrah (then principal curator at the National Museum, Accra) and Benjamin W. Kankpeyeng (then curator at the Upper East Regional Museum project office at Bolgatanga) made a preliminary visit to the area in 1984. They confirmed the presence of the stone circle burial mound sites containing terracotta figurines at the village of Yikpabongo and in surrounding communities. The terracottas are unique. They are stylistically different from those identified at Djenné-jenno in the Inland Niger Delta region, and also distinct from the Akan funerary terracottas of southern Ghana and southeast Côte d'Ivoire. During this visit the GMMB officials observed that the sites were intact, except in a few areas where villagers had dug soil for house construction.

In 1984, James Anquandah, an archaeologist at the University of Ghana, applied to GMMB for a permit to undertake preliminary archaeological research in the area. Subsequently, Anquandah directed the first systematic archaeological work at Yikpabongo in March 1985. Benjamin Kankpeyeng represented GMMB. The 3-week field season revealed that the burial mound complexes are distributed over an area of at least 30-miles radius around Yikpabongo that covers portions of the three administrative regions of northern Ghana: the Upper East, Upper West, and Northern regions (including Wa, West Mamprusi, Bulsa, Sisala, and West [end of page 102]



Fig. 4. Confiscated "Koma" figurines. The figure at left measures 16.5 cm high; the figure at right is 9 cm high (photographs courtesy of the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board).

Gonja districts). The information on the distribution of the sites was gathered from elders and hunters. The archaeological excavations recovered human remains from the burial mounds and hundreds of figurines (Anquandah, 1987, 1998; Anquandah and Van Ham, 1985). The artifact assemblage also includes local ceramic sherds, faunal remains, grinding stones, metal bracelets and tools, as well as trade items such as cowries.

A chronology for the cultural tradition associated with the burial mound complexes has not been established. The traditions of the ethnolinguistic groups currently occupying the region, mainly the Koma, Sisala, Bulsa, and Gonja, provide no clues to the producers of the burial mounds (Anquandah, 1987, 1998). Thermoluminescence dating for some of the figurines, from both the excavations (Anquandah, 1987, 1998; Anquandah and Van Ham, 1985) and the looted pieces (Dagan, 1989) range from AD 1200 to 1800. The tradition has provisionally been referred to as the "Komaland Complex" (Anquandah, 1998) or "Civilization of Komaland" (Anquandah and Van Ham, 1985; cf. Davis, 1987). The limited research undertaken did not identify or investigate habitation areas associated with [end of page 103] the burial mounds, limiting insight into the sociocultural developments that may be represented. However, the potential significance of the sites and the terracottas for understanding and interpreting West African terracotta traditions, as well as the culture history of northern Ghana, is clear.

Unfortunately, looting of the sites followed the University of Ghana's study (Kankpeyeng, 1996, pp. 25, 31, 33). The local communities vandalized the sites for terracottas that were then sold to itinerant antiquities dealers (for discussion of the trade, see Bredwa-Mensah, 1997; Brent, 1996). The villagers had no ancestral links to the sites or knowledge of the culture that produced them. The oral traditions of the current inhabitants of Yikpabongo say their ancestors encountered the terracotta figurines when they migrated to the area. Prior to the preliminary archaeological investigation, the Yikpabongo community considered the pieces "Kronk:ronbali" or "olden days children" (Anquandah and Van Ham, 1985, p. 7), or fairies, and left the mound complexes undisturbed. But this belief was dispelled by the archaeological investigations and the subsequent activities of antiquities dealers. Thus some people abandoned their social values and fears and indiscriminately destroyed some of the mounds in their search for salable figurines. The looted terracottas were illicitly exported out of the country and sold in international markets (Bredwa-Mensah, 1997; Brent, 1996, p. 64; Dagan, 1989; Debrah, 2002). Some found their way into museums and art galleries outside Ghana, while others undoubtedly rest in many private collections.

Recognizing the serious impact the looting was having on the archaeological sites, GMMB initiated a variety of efforts at the local, national, and international levels to curtail the looting of the sites and the illicit trade in the figurines. First, GMMB sought the support of authorities at the district assemblies of Wa, Sisala (Tumu), Balsa (Sandema), and West Mamprusi (Walewale) to help curb the looting. GMMB, in collaboration with the West Mamprusi District Assembly, conducted intensive public education programs at the villages of Yikpabongo, Tantal, and Dabozeasi in 1988. The government officials stressed the importance of the archaeological sites and called for an end to the looting. The inhabitants were also informed that they could be prosecuted in lawcourts if they were caught vandalizing the archaeological sites. Ghana was then being ruled by the PNDC military government and the people were told that severe sanctions would be applied if anyone was caught with the terracottas. When officials observed newly looted sites adjacent to the chief's palace and other houses at Dobozeasi, the chief, elders, and village members of the Committee for Defense of the Revolution were summoned for interrogation at Walewale, the capital of the West Mamprusi District Assembly. To demonstrate the legal implications that could arise from any further destruction of the sites, some individuals were prosecuted at the Walewale Magistrate court. These proceedings, public lectures, and the meetings with chiefs and elders drastically reduced the looting of the sites.

In addition to the public education campaign, the district authorities of Wa, Tumu, Walewale, and Sandema instituted road blocks and baggage checks on [end of page 104] access roads to the region. The People's Militias, paramilitary units established during the PNDC military regime, operated these check points. In one instance on the Wa-Katua road an unclaimed bag containing terracotta figurines was confiscated and handed over to the GMMB staff at Wa and subsequently sent to the Upper East Regional Museum, Bolgatanga (Fig. 4). Other terracottas were also confiscated and are currently at the Upper East Regional Museum at Bolgatanga and the National Museum, Accra.

GMMB also took steps to prevent the export of the looted terracotta pieces. Posters of the terracottas were sent to custom officials throughout the country to help with the identification and confiscation of the figurines at custom's posts. The support of foreign diplomatic missions was sought through calls to embassies and through the distribution of posters to foreign missions. Posters were also given to the Ghanaian foreign ministry and Ghanaian missions abroad. These endeavors further helped to check the illicit export of the terracotta figurines. For example, in 1992 Dutch customs authorities and police cooperated in the confiscation and subsequent return of 200 terracotta pieces. Following the detection of the illicitly exported terracottas by Dutch customs officials, a Ghanaian consul, "aware of the kind of traffic that occurs," contacted the Dutch Ministry of Justice and also initiated a civil suit, "the only course of action" for the retrieval of the terracotta statuettes (Brent, 1996, p. 64). The Utrecht dealer of the statuettes was not prosecuted in Ghana because of a compromise between lawyers of the two parties (the Ghanaian Consulate and Utrecht dealer) in Holland, which permitted the dealer to continue to return to Ghana "as a simple tourist" and freed him from prosecution for the illegal export of antiquities (Brent, 1996, p. 64). The terracottas were confiscated and returned to Ghana, where they were handed over to GMMB.

GMMB has continued to take steps to protect the Koma terracottas and prohibit their export. The region continues to be recognized as an important national cultural resource. Dissertation research by the primary author (Kankpeyeng, 2003) was initiated with the intention of investigating the archaeology of the region, and further work specifically on the mound sites is currently being planned. The Koma terracotta pieces appear on the ICOM Red List (ICOM, 2000), which draws the world's community's attention to antiquities that are not to be exported from their countries

of origin. Photographs on the ICOM website include confiscated terracottas now at the Upper East Regional Museum and the National Museum in Ghana.

The above incidents illustrate the success of GMMB efforts to ban the export of the Koma figurines. However, the sizable quantities and large shipping containers represented also serve to underscore the booming illicit traffic in antiquities and the considerable threat to the archaeological record. They also show that, despite laws requiring exporters of antiquities to contact GMMB for export permits, many exporters circumvent Ghanaian custom controls. Unfortunately, while recovered items are now in museum collections, they have no contextual information and, consequently, are of limited scientific value. **[end of page 105]**

Despite GMMB's success in curtailing the looting of the Koma sites, the situation also illustrates the legal and managerial inadequacies that allowed the looting to take place. If better support and controls had been in place, GMMB would have been better able to demarcate the full extent of the archaeological region. Existing legislation also fails to provide for an integrated approach to heritage preservation. While under NLCD 387 paragraph 28(f) GMMB has been empowered to make regulations for carrying out the principles and purposes of the decree through executive instruments, legislation should have further mandated all state agencies to consult GMMB on all undertakings such as projects, licenses, or loans that affect historic properties and archaeological sites. Presently, institutions such as the Wildlife Department and Forestry Commission that control areas in the remote parts of the country do not incorporate the protection of archaeological sites in their missions. For example, portions of the Koma archaeological tradition sites are within areas controlled by the Ghanaian Wildlife Department and looting of sites could have been curtailed if the looters had been checked by the staff of the Mole National Park.

Existing legislation also does not provide opportunities for GMMB to raise enough revenue to support effective preservation management. Paragraph 25 of the National Museum Decree, 1969 (NLCD 387) lists the sources of funding for GMMB to carry out its duties and responsibilities. The sources of funding listed included grants, subventions, donations, fees, and subscriptions. These sources have provided GMMB with poor funding. The result has been poor discharge of responsibilities by GMMB. Preservation and restoration of archaeological heritage is an expensive venture. Funding for heritage conservation has been the sole responsibility of the government. Funds from the government have in recent years continued to diminish as a result of the current economic difficulties. Grants from international institutions, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), have been restricted to European forts and castles on the coast. Traditional Ghanaian sites have attracted comparatively poor funding.

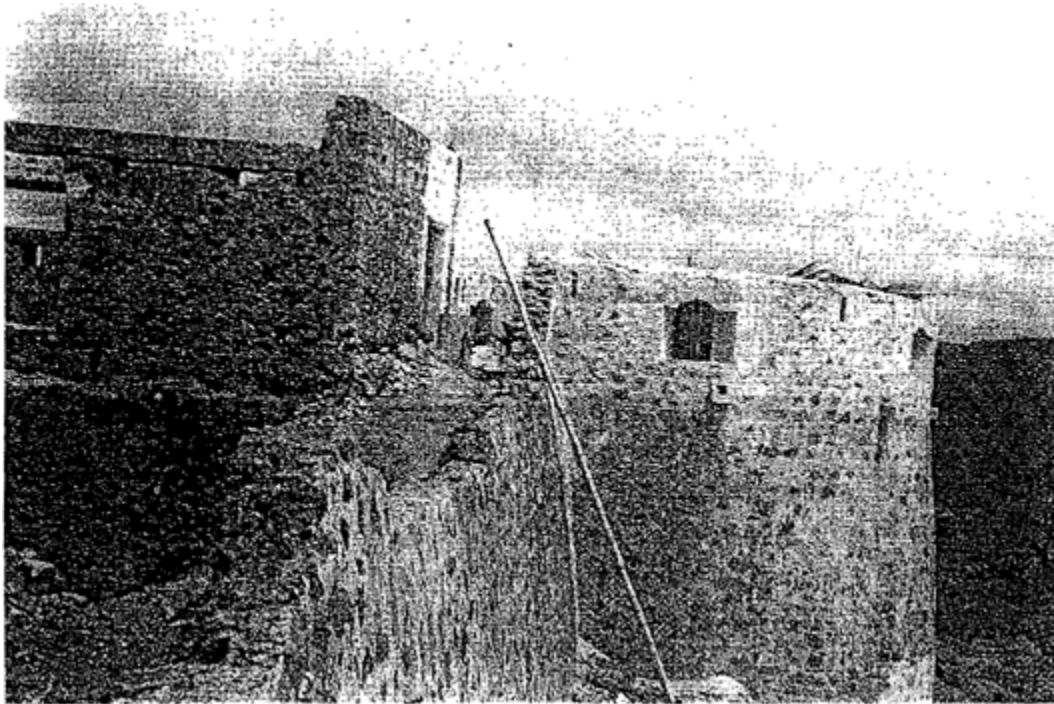
The Central Region of Coastal Ghana

In contrast to the north, the Central Region of Ghana has been the focus of somewhat more archaeological research and preservation efforts. Hence, it is ironic that it is here that the destruction of archaeological resources has been among the most dramatic and cultural resource management efforts most ineffectual. Preliminary survey data was gathered by Oliver Davies in the 1960s (Davies, 1976) and there have also been a number of excavations, including work at the Fante capitals of Efutu and Asebu (e.g., Agorsah, 1975; Bellis, 1972; Calvocoressi, 1975, 1977; Nunoo, 1957). Ongoing research by the Central Region Project has focused on the area between the Pra River in the West and Sweet River in the East (DeCorse, 1998; **[end of page 106]** DeCorse *et al.*, 2000). While this research has sought to identify all archaeological resources, much of the work has concentrated on African settlements associated with the transformations that occurred in the era of the Atlantic World. Excavations by Spiers, Chouin, and Carr have examined change and transformation within the Eguafu State, while excavations by DeCorse have focused on the large African settlement adjacent to the important European trade entrepot, Castelo de São Jorge da Mina, at Elmina (Carr, 2001; Chouin, 2002; DeCorse, 2001; DeCorse *et al.*, 2000).

The European monuments of the coast were the focus of the first intensive preservation work in Ghana. Constructed between the late fifteenth and the early-nineteenth centuries, these structures represent a unique collective monument. Almost 60 European forts, castles, plantations, and lodges were established along the 150-mile-long stretch of coastland. In the Central Region, Cape Coast and Elmina castles were also the first Ghanaian monuments to be designated as World Heritage sites. In addition to the forts and castles, many nineteenth-century merchant houses of historical significance can also be found (e.g., Beck and Hyland, 1978; Cape Coast Archive, 2003; van den Nieuwenhof, 1991). The number and size of these monuments clearly creates complex, long-term cultural resource management concerns.

A. W. Lawrence, first Director of the National Museum of the Gold Coast and first professor of archaeology at what was then the University College, Achimota, conducted an extensive study of European forts and castles of coastal Ghana during the 1950s and he provided what remain the most detailed structural histories of the monuments (Kense, 1990, p. 145; Lawrence, 1963, 1969; for other references, see DeCorse, 2001, pp. 4-6, 195, n. 16). Lawrence also directed the renovation and reconstruction of some of the principal monuments (see Fig. 5). His concern was with the European buildings and he provided no assessment of associated African settlements. More importantly from a management standpoint, he provided no record of what renovation or reconstruction work he had undertaken, or on what sources he had based his reconstructions. In some cases, large sections of structures were rebuilt using shell mortar, which is difficult to distinguish from original construction, making it impossible to evaluate what work has been done. Although the forts were mapped by the colonial government, no systemic management plan for any of the structures was developed.

The forts and castles of Ghana have continued to be a major focus of preservation efforts. In terms of the allocation of resources, the coastal forts have the largest number of GMMB staff, most of whom are stationed in the Central Region at Elmina and Cape Coast, with individual caretakers at smaller forts such as Abanzi and Komenda. GMMB's responsibilities for preserving structures have continued to expand, despite the economic vicissitudes of the 1970s and 1980s, and continuing budgetary constraints. Until recently some of the structures were used to meet varying current needs, including serving as prisons, schools, and [end page 107]



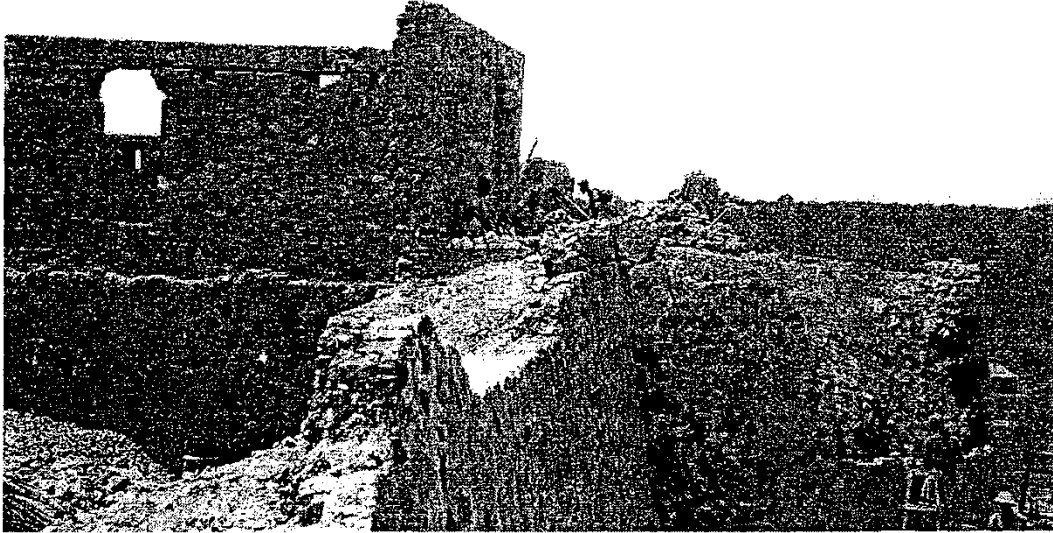


Fig. 5. Reconstruction work at Fort Amsterdam, Abanzi, in the 1950s directed by A. W. Lawrence. The bottom photo shows the fort's northeast bastion prior to restoration; the completed work is shown at top (photographs courtesy of the Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art). . [end of page 108]

government facilities. Elmina Castle was used by the Gold Coast Police Force and later by the Ghana Police as a headquarters and training center until 1972, when it was transferred to GMMB (DeCorse, 2001, p. 69). The West African Historical Museum, maintained by GMMB (Simmonds, 1972) shared Cape Coast Castle with the Ghana Prison Service until 1992, when it was also turned over to full GMMB management. The prisons at Fort William, Anomabu, discontinued from service in 2000, and James Fort in Accra, decommissioned in 1993, were both transferred to GMMB management.

The constraints posed by limited budgets, insufficient staff, and poor expertise have inhibited effective resource management. Government support and assistance from other sources has been piecemeal, often with only the most remedial work being undertaken. These include efforts by the African Descendants Association Foundation in the 1970s to restore portions of Fort Amsterdam, Abanzi (*Ebony*, 1972), which had earlier been extensively reconstructed by Lawrence. Limited funding was available and the work did not make adequate use of appropriate architectural and reconstruction techniques. The resulting reconstructions of some of the building's features were not consistent with structural histories of the fort and much of work subsequently collapsed. The late Albert van Dantzig unsuccessfully attempted to undertake restoration work at Fort Batenstein, Butre, located in the Western Region.

The lack of comprehensive planning and the recording of restoration and conservation work undertaken has remained a recurring problem. In 1987, when the bastion of Fort Amsterdam Abanzi collapsed, GMMB was chastised by some for failing to make detailed plans prior to demolishing a portion of the structure to complete reconstruction work. Yet photos of Lawrence's work indicate that portion of the structure that collapsed was actually a reconstruction done in the 1950s (Fig. 5). Excellent documentation of the historic structures of Elmina, Cape Coast, and Butre, and some remedial conservation work at Abanzi was done by the GMMB and Dutch researchers in the late 1980s (DeCorse, 1987, p. 30; Joustra and Six, 1988). These data, however, have not been integrated into management plans.

The first comprehensive approach to the management of any of the coastal resources or, indeed, any part of Ghana, was prepared in the 1970s (Beck and Hyland, 1978). This study identified European monuments, historic buildings, and scenic landscapes within Elmina, and proposed a management plan for the town. Unfortunately, the study and its recommendations were entirely put aside and development continued unchecked. It should be noted here that, while some elements of a management plan would have required substantial capital outlay, some steps could easily have been implemented with little cost. These could have included efforts to curb erosion, limiting activities that directly impacted the archaeological record or historic resources, and restricting access to areas of known historic significance. Although a detailed survey of Elmina's archaeological resources was [end of page 109] not completed until the 1980s and 1990s (DeCorse, 2001, pp. 71-102), the location of Elmina's historic buildings and outlying forts

were known from previous publications (Lawrence, 1963; O'Neal, 1951) and had been specifically identified in the Bech and Hyland (1978) study. They could, therefore, have been identified for protection. Unfortunately, the combination of the lack of planning and the deteriorating economic conditions of the late 1970s and 1980s resulted in the increased destruction of many sites of archaeological, cultural, and scenic value.

A number of the nineteenth-century merchant houses Cape Coast, Elmina, and other coastal towns, already in need of serious preservation efforts in the late 1970s are now gone. In Elmina, historic Bridge House collapsed in 1981 (Fig. 6), and neighboring Plange House burnt down in 2001. Elmina's scenic vistas identified by Bech and Hyland are now crowded with unsightly modern construction built in the last 30 years. During the early 1990s, historic structures throughout Cape Coast succumbed to lack of maintenance, while others were demolished or damaged as roads were widened. Although fascinating discoveries of artifacts were made, in no instance were structures documented or archaeological resources monitored. The site of Danish Fort Royal overlooking Cape Coast, which had remained largely undeveloped through the 1980s, was obliterated by new construction, which exposed buried cannon and early trade materials (DeCorse, 1993, p. 159). Even some of the more substantial ruins have been heavily impacted by modern construction and land use, notably the British and Dutch forts at Komenda and Ft Nassau, Mori (Fig. 7). At Anomabu, the interesting, multi-storied thatch roof structures pictured by Cole and Ross's (1977) *The Arts of Ghana* have disappeared.

During the time period when Elmina Castle served as a police training facility, the Castle had been relatively well maintained and access to the lands around the castle and the majority of the Elmina peninsula as far as Bantama had been restricted. This included a large portion of the old Elmina settlement, which had a population of close to 20,000 when it was destroyed by the British in 1873. The town site lay largely undisturbed on the Elmina peninsula, making it a unique archaeological resource (DeCorse, 2001). Unfortunately, following the transfer to GMMB, neither funding nor the authority to prevent development of the site was on hand. By the late 1980s, development in the form of kiosks, chop bars, and fish smoking ovens had encroached on the old town site, while the western end was graded for use as a soccer field. The town lorry park was temporarily relocated to the Elmina peninsula.

This increased activity exposed large areas of the site, including foundations, midden deposits, and burials that had previously been protected by soil and a thin covering of vegetation. Some kiosks were actually constructed on the remnants of early foundations. At this time, the district assembly started to dump trash along the ocean shoreline. Ironically, this undoubtedly has helped protect portions of the site from erosion. However, the amount of refuse is staggering, and in places is now piled to a depth of more than 5 m. Archaeological excavations during 1990 were suspended because it proved impossible to dig through the rubbish. **[end of page 110]**

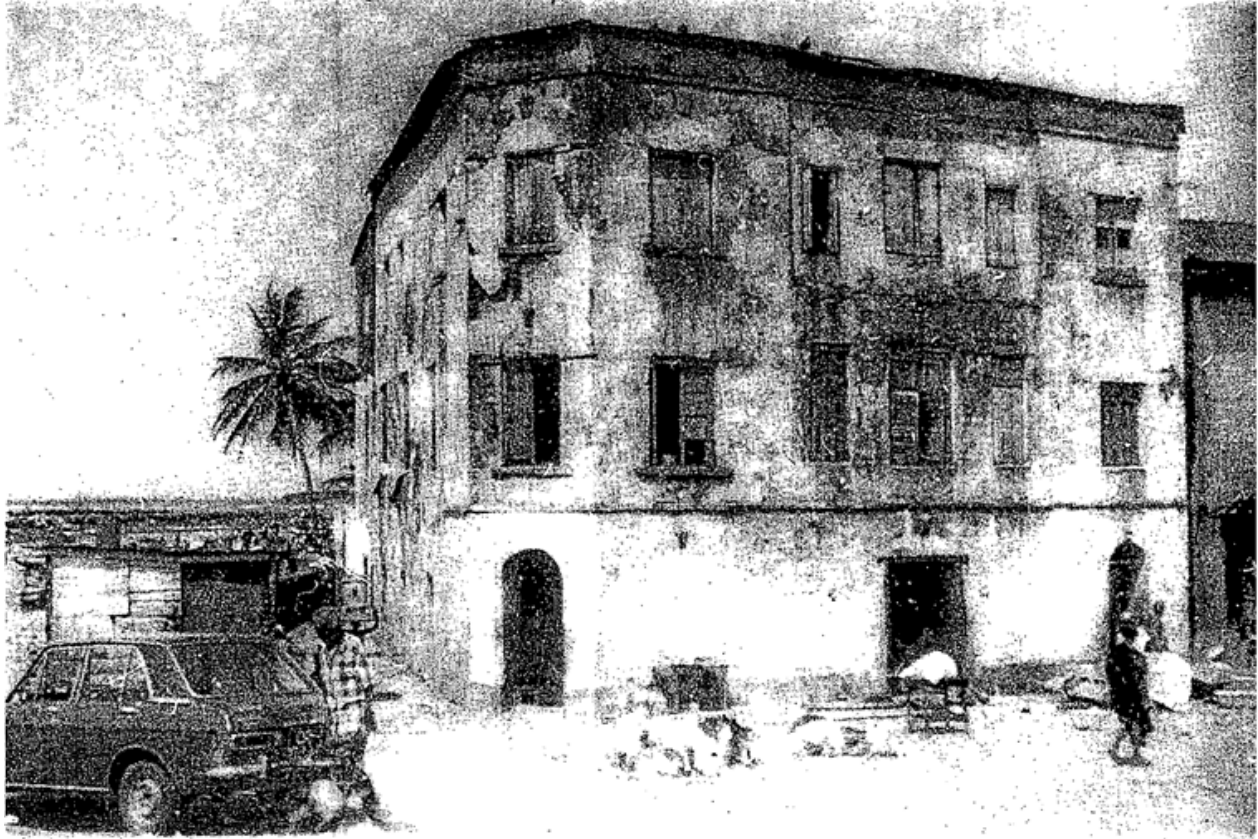


Fig. 6. Historic Bridge House in Elmina before its collapse in 1981 (photograph courtesy of C. R. DeCorse). [end of page 111]

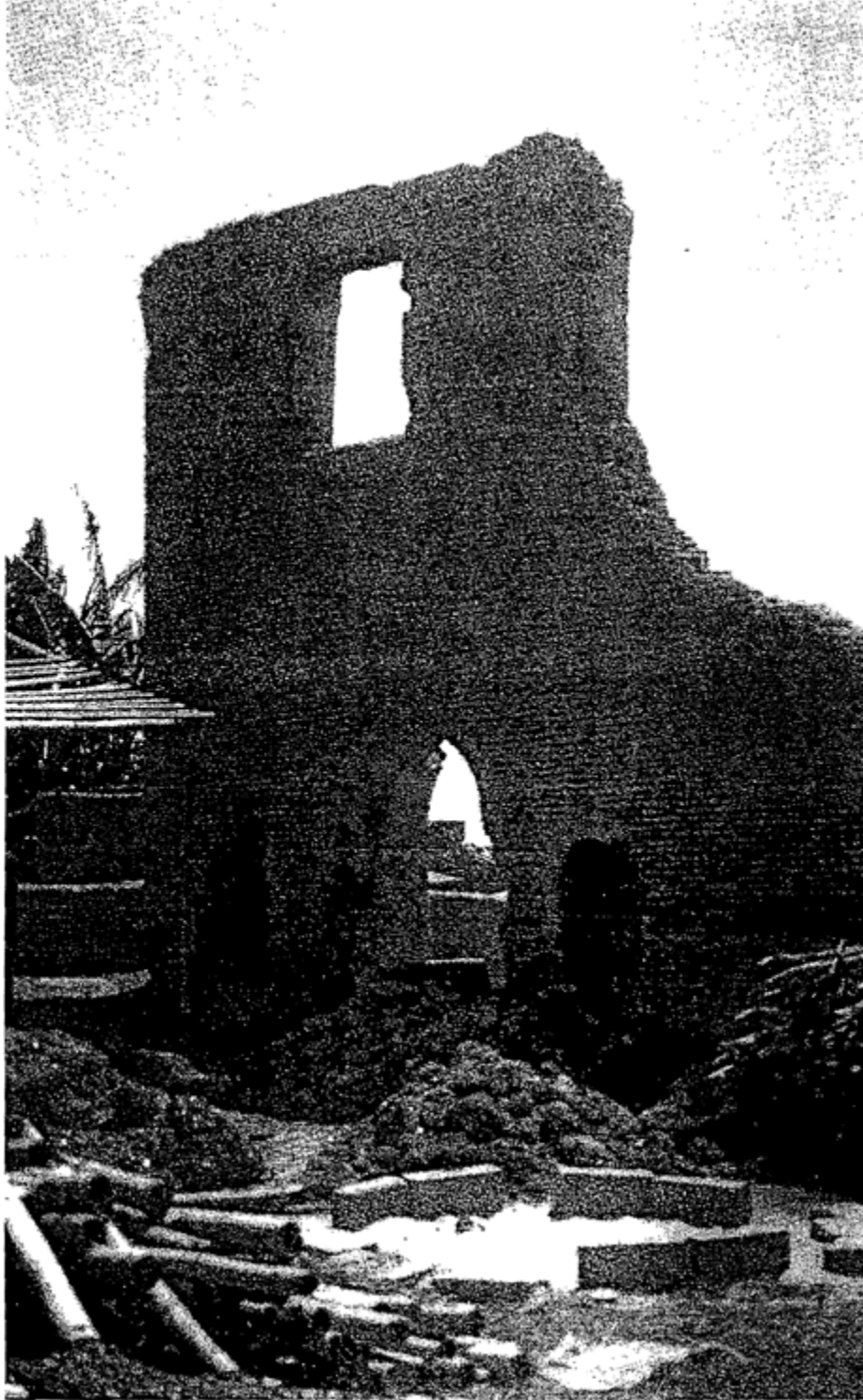


Fig. 7. Fort Nassau, Mori. Built by the Dutch in 1612, this was the first non-Portuguese fort built on the coast. The fort's ruins, including a large section of wall built with distinctive Dutch bricks, which had remained largely undeveloped, have been heavily impacted by the construction of fish smoking ovens and kiosks since 1990 (photograph courtesy of C. R. DeCorse). [end of page 112]

It is of note here that throughout this time period GMMB staff participated in the archaeological work then being done on the old town site and various district and regional officials met with archaeologists, visited the site, and the

impacts of development were pointed out. The inability of GMMB to curtail much of the destruction is testament to the lack of financial resources and governmental support.

As economic conditions started to improve in the late 1990s, some efforts were made to curtail development. The lorry park was relocated back to the town center and some of the kiosks closest to the castle were removed. Squatters' shacks along the foreshore north of the Benya Lagoon were also demolished. On the other hand, the reconstruction of the bridge across the Benya Lagoon and the adjacent break wall was not monitored. The exposure of these areas may have provided clues to the construction of the break walls and the original, seventeenth-century Dutch bridge (see DeCorse, 2001, p. 217 n. 39). The remains of Bridge House were demolished and used to construct a new hotel on the site, the remaining stone and brick dumped a kilometer away. Forts Beekestein, Schomerus, Java and Nagtglas, nineteenth-century redoubts built by the Dutch to protect the Elmina, had been heavily impacted by the development in the first half of the twentieth century, but house construction and increasing pedestrian traffic largely obliterated all but a few of the remaining traces (DeCorse, 2001, pp. 55-56). Pigsties encroached on the site of fort Veersche Schans, which had previously remained relatively well preserved (Fig. 8; DeCorse, 2001, pp. 86-89; cf. Calvocoressi, 1977).

Even well-intentioned efforts at preservation sometimes went awry. In 1990, GMMB built a series of walls on the Elmina peninsula to delineate areas for parking and craft kiosks, as well as to afford some protection to the old town site. Excavations for the footings of the more than 1000 m of walls, entirely located within the old town site, were not monitored by archaeologists. The contractor reported that "... the excavations for the wall revealed that the foundations of the houses [representing the old settlement] were about six inches from the ground [surface] and that, the entire length of the wall's foundations passed over archaeological finds" (letter to Kwesi Agbley from Ato Austin, chairman of the Central Region Development Commission, November 21, 1990; DeCorse, 2001, pp. 217-218, n. 39). The fact that the construction work was not monitored is made all the more unfortunate by the fact that the walls have not afforded any protection to the site. Trash dumping and use of the shore as a toilet facility has continued, while a large squatters' village now crowds the western end of the peninsula.

In 1991 an innovative 5-year development program was initiated with economic support provided by USAID. The Central Region Integrated Development Programme (CERIDEP) was specifically aimed at the conservation, management, and public presentation of Castelo São Jorge da Mina and Fort St. Jago at Elmina and Cape Coast Castle (Bruner, 1996b; Hyatt, 1997; Hyland, 1995; US/ICOMOS, 2000). This work was aimed at complementing cultural tourism, particularly [**end of page 113**]

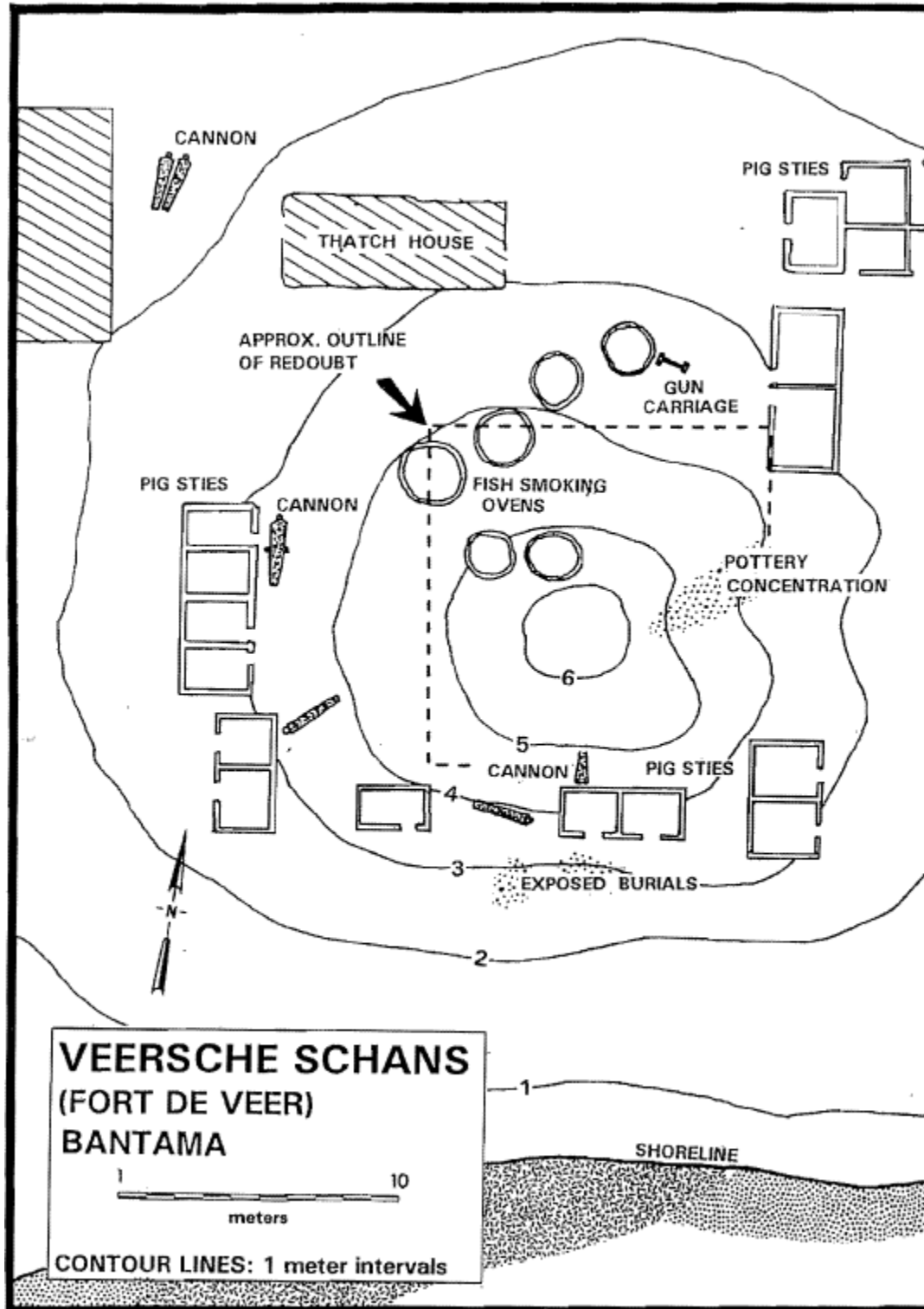


Fig. 8. Fort de Veer, Bantama, Central Region. The site of this nineteenth-century Dutch redoubt that once protected the Elmina settlement has been heavily impacted by fish smoking ovens and house construction since 1990 (photograph courtesy of C.R. DeCorse).[end of page 114]

African descendent populations, and ecotourism focused on the Kakum National Park located just north of Cape Coast. An initial amount of U.S.\$7.8 million was allocated by USAID over 5 years (Hyatt, 1997, p. 31). Although this expenditure is modest by USAID standards, it nevertheless represents a staggering amount of money. Aside from the support provided in the course of the Volta Basin Research Project, the capital outlay exceeds the total amount expended on archaeology and monument restoration in the country's history.

The project has been cited as a great success and credited with generating more than U.S.\$75 million in public and private sector investment in hotels, restaurants, and infrastructural development (Hyatt, 1997, p. 31). Over the past decade, Central Region tourism has grown exponentially and accounts for a significant portion of the growth that has made tourism Ghana's third largest source of foreign revenue after minerals, timber, and coco. The degree to which CERIDEP and related projects are responsible for this, rather than the general improvement in the economy and infrastructural developments, will not be evaluated here. What is clear, however, is that development efforts provided for limited assessment and mitigation of historical and archaeological resources impacted by development. From the onset, the focus was on the "repair, rehabilitation, reinstatement in appropriate use and presentation to visitors of Cape Coast and Elmina castles, and Fort St. Jago" (Hyland, 1995, p.48).

The architectural and engineering assessments that were completed as part of the project concentrated on the types of materials present, structural stability, safety, and the restoration needed to render them suitable for tourist access and occupation. Although some of the foreign consultants noted that renovation work should take into account the historic significance of the structures and the historic materials used (e.g., J+F Johnston Ltd., 1992, p. 1.05), no detailed drawings or architectural assessment was subsequently made of buildings impacted by renovation work. As part of the renovation and reconstruction (as opposed to conservation or restoration) work, large areas of mortar and plastering were removed from some structures, and channels for new pipes and wiring were cut. Assessment at this stage would have provided a unique opportunity to re-evaluate previous conclusions about the buildings' structural histories: a point made by some of the consultants (J+F Johnson Ltd., 1992, p. 3.4). However, the interpretations reached about the age and cultural affiliation of different parts of the structures were entirely based on a limited number of secondary sources, primarily Lawrence (1963), although it was recommended that further historical and archaeological research should be undertaken, which might result in different interpretations (J+F Johnson Ltd., 1992, p. 3.1).

Archaeological work undertaken at Cape Coast and Elmina castles and at Ft St. Jago was completed as part of the development project but this was very limited and included some areas that had likely been cleared of cultural deposits by Lawrence in the 1950s (Anquandah, 1993, pp. 8-11, 1997, pp. 17-18, 48-54; **[end of page 115]** J+F Johnson Ltd., p. 3.4; Kirkdale, 1991). This was limited and aimed at ill-defined historical questions rather than the mitigation of archaeological resources impacted by new construction, equipment, and increased tourist traffic. Neither museum staff nor archaeological consultants monitored construction areas or trenches dug for sewage and drainage that impacted archaeological deposits (see DeCorse, 2001, p. 74). As a consequence of the preliminary nature of this work, the insight it provided into the past and its contribution to management concerns is very limited.

The impact of the development program on archaeological resources was not confined to the larger monuments in urban areas. The coastal margin preserves a rich archaeological record of archaeological sites documenting human occupation from the Stone Age until the present. The coast and immediate hinterland have an almost continuous string of sites along the beach and surrounding the coastal lagoons. These indicate a pattern of small settlements exploiting lagoonal and marine resources from the first millennium AD through the seventeenth century (DeCorse, 2001). These scenic beaches were also central to development plans. Brenu Beach located west of Elmina was developed as a tourist beach, with a small restaurant, toilets, and shower facilities. Archaeological research has identified an extensive scatter of Late Iron Age-early Historic Period material stretching for almost a kilometer along the shore. Sherds recovered from 1993 test excavations at Brenu have been dated to approximately 1000 BP (DeCorse, 2001, pp. 18, 199 n. 34). Despite the site's archaeological potential, no impact assessment was undertaken prior to development. The possible impacts of the construction of the interpretive center, facilities, and trails at the Kakum National Park were also unmonitored. Without any archaeological work it is impossible to say what archaeological resources may have been destroyed.

The preceding has focused on listed monuments managed by GMMB that were the focus of international development efforts. However, private sector developments, particularly that along the coast, have also had dire consequences. The Coconut Grove Site is a particularly unfortunate case. This coastal site had been identified during

survey work in 1987, 1997, and 1998 (DeCorse, 2001; DeCorse *et al.*, 2000). In the 1990s, portions of the site were developed as an upscale hotel. Adjacent areas were also subdivided for the construction of residential bungalows. This construction impacted Iron Age midden deposits and large amounts of displaced archaeological material can be found around the resort's swimming pool. Because the site had a high density of surface material, it was identified as a promising area for archaeological testing in 2000 (DeCorse, in press; DeCorse *et al.*, 2000). Excavations on land adjacent to the resort uncovered a clearly delineated stratigraphic feature that has provided one of the best thermoluminescence and radiocarbon sequences for the West African coast, tightly clustered in the eighth and ninth centuries AD.

In the process of surveying the site, fired clay features, possibly the walls of iron smelting furnaces were identified weathering out of the entrance road to the [end of page 116] hotel. Because of the potential importance for these features for dating the advent of iron technology on the coast permission was requested to undertake a 2-day salvage excavation of the features.

GMMB sent a letter directing the resort owner to allow salvage work to be undertaken (Letter from Raymond Agbo, Acting Regional Director, GMMB, to Coconut Grove Beach Resort, July 24, 2000). The traditional leaders who had poured libation when archaeological work was initiated on the nearby property also supported investigation of the features. Yet the lessee of the hotel property refused to allow archaeological work. This outcome of GMMB's attempt at intervention is made all the more distressing by the fact that the owner was, at the time, a Member of Parliament, and is currently an appointee in the national government. The remnants of the features remain in the hotel's entry road.

The development of the shore continues apace with no evaluation of the archaeology being provided. The expanding lagoonal salt industry, farming, and mineral extraction have had even more dire impacts on archaeological resources. Especially disastrous is the mining of gold deposits, locally called gallemsay. This term actually refers to illegal mining, done without a Ministry of Mines permit. This is, however, not the case, as in many instances the miners have the appropriate permits. The primary target of much of this activity is not naturally occurring, gold-bearing alluvial deposits but archaeological middens, burials, and features (Fig. 9). Workers will actually note that when they find human remains this is an indicator that they are likely to get some gold. In some cases the gold obtained consists of finished gold objects that are subsequently melted down (Fig. 10). The test excavations at the site of Eguafu conducted in 1993 extended to a depth of almost 2.5 m and recovered cultural material from the entire profile. The 2 x 2 test excavations are dwarfed by a massive gallemsay pit, which is only one of many such excavations (Fig. 11). Despite the efforts of the town chief and archaeologists to stop this destruction, the mining of the site continues.

Conclusion

The success and failure of the cultural resource management efforts discussed provide sad illustration of the tension that exists between economic development and cultural resource management. While in the case of the Koma sites, GMMB was able to successfully intervene with villagers, itinerant traders, and international antiquities dealers, intervention in the face of foreign and domestic development concerns has been minimal. Sadly, the situation in the Central Region is not unique and, in fact, is likely somewhat better than areas such as Accra where development pressures are even greater. Forty years ago Field observed that "The majority of the ancient sites on the Accra Plain have been demolished unexamined by experts, and are now built over" (Field, 1962, p. 5). He further observed that, while the Department of Public Works had instructions to report any ancient remains they [end of page 117]



Fig. 9. Gallemsy (gold mining) pits at Eguafo. The pit measures almost 2 m deep. Piles of broken ceramics lie scattered at the base of the pit. See Fig. 11 (photograph courtesy of C. R.DeCorse). [end of page 118]

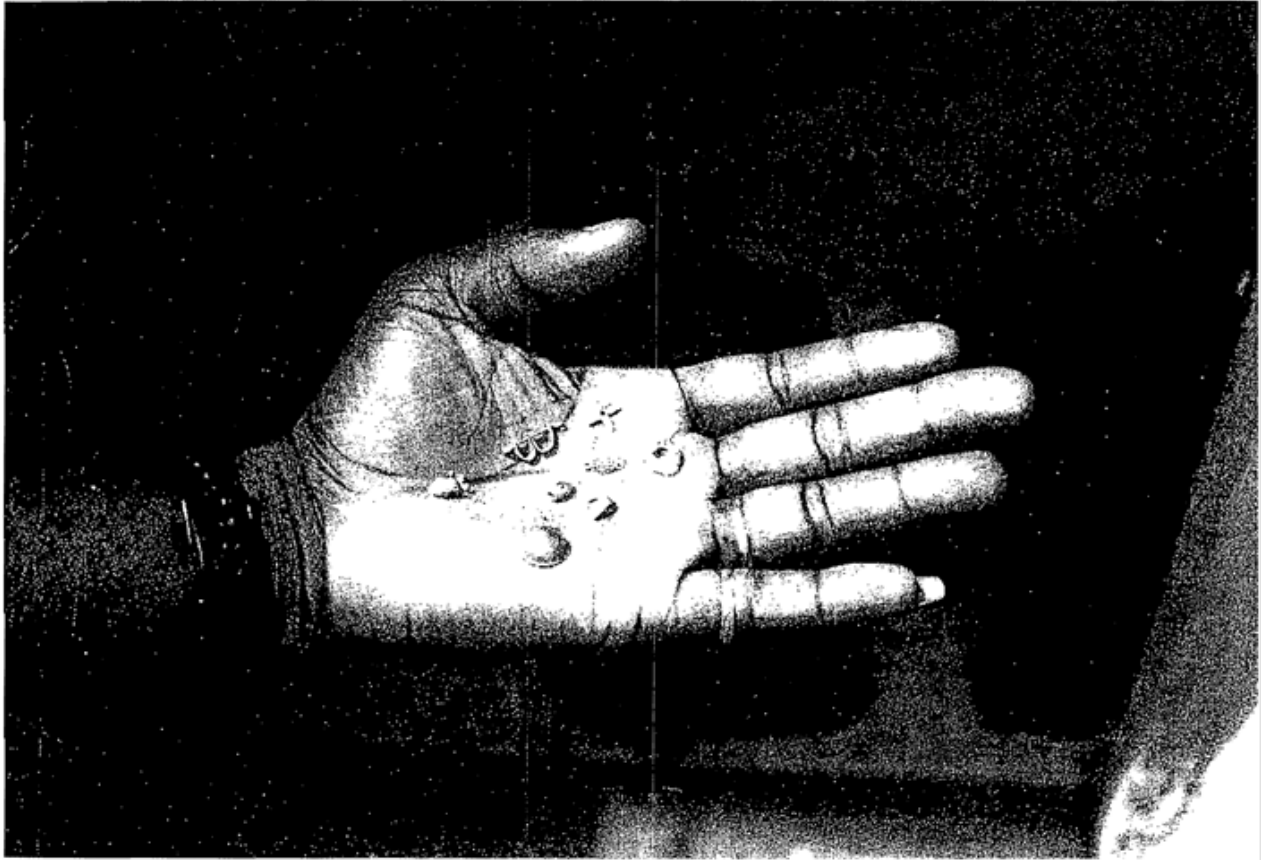


Fig. 10. Finished gold objects uncovered by gold diggers at Eguafo in 1993 and donated to the Central Region Museum. Many such finds are simply melted down. Note the miniature set of shackles at the top center (photograph courtesy of C.R. DeCorse). **[end of page 119]**

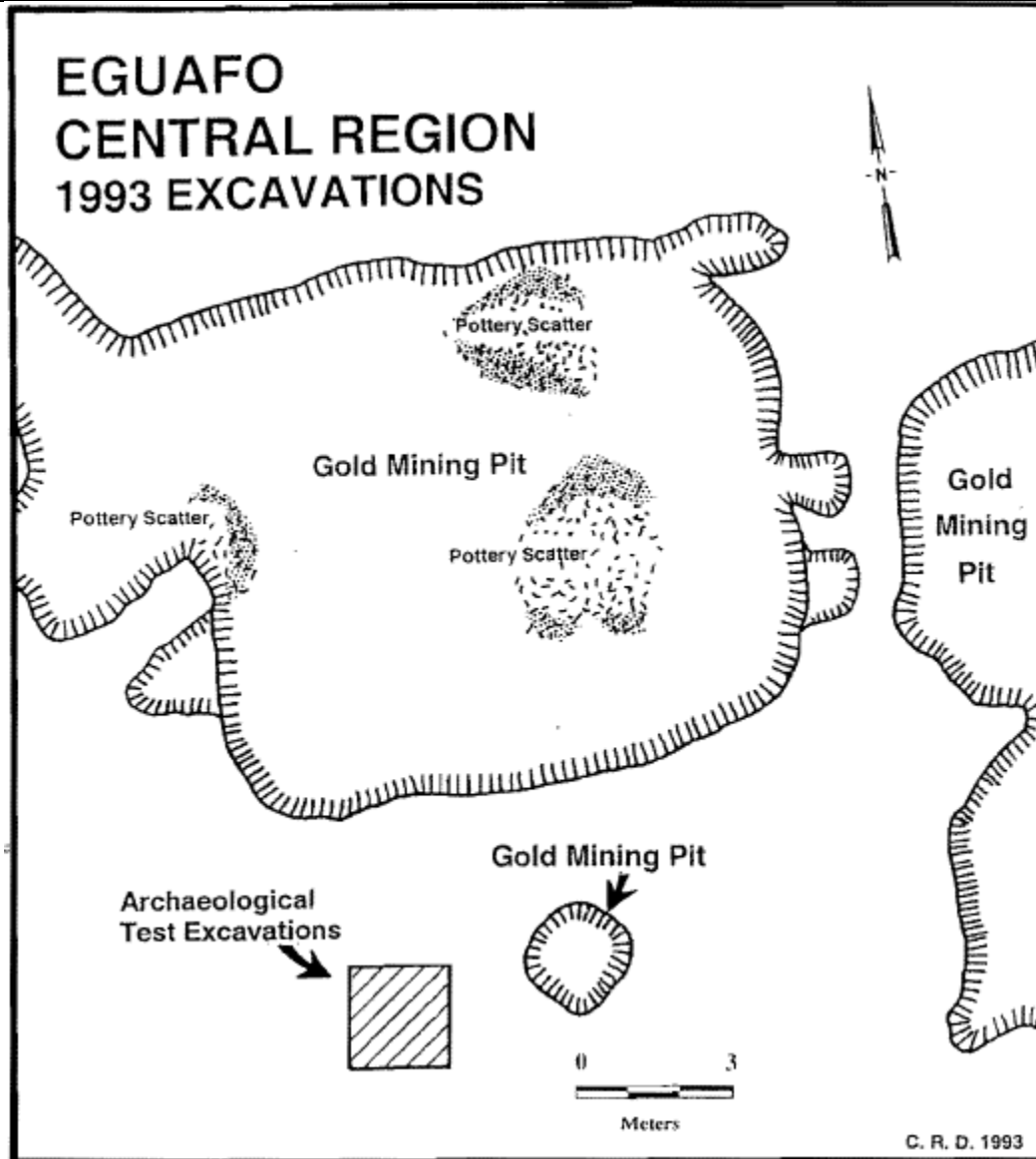


Fig. 11. Map showing gold mining pits and archaeological test units at Eguafó 1993. The test excavation exposed undisturbed cultural deposits to a depth of over 2 m (photograph courtesy of C.R. OeCorse).

come across in their activities, "This has saved nothing from destruction up to now" (Field, 1962, p. 5). Then, as now, the money for a systematic survey was not available, but then "A few sites are so conspicuous that they hardly need looking for" (Field, 1962, p. 5). Field's concerns and observations are as relevant today as they were decades ago.

The lack of archaeological survey, recording, and assessment in connection with development, even in situations where resources have been identified and the conservation of archaeological, historical, cultural, and environmental resources [end of page 120] are a stated concern, is distressing. Development agencies must be lauded for their willingness to consider nontraditional projects that deal with the restoration and protection of archaeological resources. Nonetheless, USAID and other development agencies have, at best, a mixed record of considering cultural resources or indigenous perspectives in their development programs (e.g., Horowitz, 1989; Reyna, 1991, 1997). Individual projects are rarely integrated into overarching development programs, and their objectives and outcomes are mitigated by a host of concerns and considerations that are imbedded in the politics and economics of development. Host country cultural resource management plans, if they do exist, are certainly not considered.

As is often the case with development, from the onset, the USAID Central Region project relied on highly paid consultants, some with limited relevant experience, who often spent a limited amount of time in country. The GMMB personnel involved with the project received little in the way of financial remuneration for their participation. Although one of the stated objectives of the development project was to develop local infrastructure, GMMB facilities were not developed and equipment purchased by the project not made available at the projects end. Rather a nongovernmental organization (The Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust) was created with an initial endowment of U.S.\$2 million from USAID (Hyatt, 1997, p. 29; US/ICOMOS, 2000, p. 14). This contravened the existing national legislation and sidestepped GMMB, the national institution already entrusted with the care of Ghana's historic resources.

The lack of planning and enforcement at the national level should be underscored. The relevant legislation that does exist for Ghana has not been used to protect the country's resources and, in fact, has remained largely unrecognized and unenforced even by those concerned with preservation. As a consequence of the development efforts in the Central Region, increasing attention has been focused on the need to preserve historic structures (although actual assessment and mitigation have remained limited). Meetings have debated the ways to improve the management of the cultural and ecological resources within the Cape Coast, Elmina, Kakum triangle (Bruner, 1996b, p. 294; NCC, 1994; US/ICOMOS, 2000). Partnership with the United States ICOMOS has led to the creation of an excellent database for the cataloging and reporting of historic resources (Cape Coast Archive, 2003; US/ICOMOS, 2000). A detailed plan for heritage legislation for Cape Coast was also outlined (US/ICOMOS, 2000, pp. 64-73). Although this lacks provision for archaeological assessment or mitigation, it outlines excellent guidelines for conservation and tourist development plans. Incredibly, however, like the USAID reports and planning documents, the proposed conservation plans fail to refer to or integrate any of the relevant national legislation already in place.

The case studies presented make clear the need for a more holistic approach to cultural resource management involving far greater cooperation and the better integration of cultural resource management into development programs at the [end of page 121] local, regional, and national levels. These observations echo concerns raised by other West Africanist researchers (Adande and Bagodo, 1991; de Maret, 1994; McIntosh, 1994; Posnansky, 2003a; Sidibé, 1996). In particular, there is a need to establish guidelines for international development agencies and foreign companies. In many world areas, companies that contribute to the destruction of cultural heritage and the natural environment in the course of construction and mineral exploitation provide funds for archaeological and environmental impact assessment, mitigation, and conservation. In Ghana, however, mining companies, private developers, and nongovernmental organizations do not contribute to the funding of archaeological heritage preservation.

The responsibility for conservation of Ghana's cultural resources cannot, however, rest solely on foreign companies and external resources. African governments have often failed to preserve resources on government land, developed with government money, or to afford even minimal protection to sites with documented historical significance (e.g., Karoma, 1996; Kusimba, 1996; Mturi, 1996; Schmidt and McIntosh, 1996, pp. 9-12; Wilson and Omar, 1996). As Posnansky (2003a, p. 2) has pointed out, dams and other projects built with local funds have generally lacked any attempt at salvage work, in contrast to the Akosombo Dam where foreign aid and loans were available. Like the majority of West African countries, Ghana has no effective guidelines for the preservation of resources in national parks, wildlife refuges, military installations, and other government lands. The situation can be contrasted with the United States, where the National Park Service, military, and various state agencies are responsible for the monitoring and preserving of archaeological resources within their areas of operation and, in fact, have some of the best documented, preserved, and managed archaeological preserves in the country (see Hutt *et al.*, 1992; United States Forest Service, 1994). The government of Ghana should take the lead in ensuring that the nation's past is preserved by effectively managing the resources on its own lands. While this should involve financial commitment by the national government, it can begin with recognition of the need. As illustrated by the case of the British fort at Wa, historical resources have been destroyed even when sites have been previously reported and the cost of their preservation nil. This case has sad parallels in other parts of Africa (e.g., Abungu and Abungu, 1998; Karoma, 1996; Kusimba, 1996; Mabulla, 1996; Mturi, 1996; Wilson and Omar, 1996).

To effectively manage cultural resources, the Ghana government must also seek new partnerships with nongovernmental organizations and academic institutions. Archaeologists appreciate the financial constraints governments and developers face and if approached for assistance are often willing to help. Given adequate lead time, archaeological impact assessments can be built into existing research projects. The potential of

nongovernmental, community-based organizations can also be encouraged and exploited. There are now a number of NGOs aimed at preserving the Ghana's cultural resources, such as the Save Elmina Association (1996) and the Foundation for the Preservation of Castles and Forts in [end of page 122] Ghana. Traditional councils, the focus of traditional rule, should also be exploited. National heritage management authorities need to utilize such initiatives at the community level by redefining legal frameworks and managerial practices in line with both modern heritage management practices and indigenous perspectives. This approach will not only help shift the financial burden of preservation from a solely government effort to a public-private partnership, but also make the communities active players in the protection of their archaeological sites, structures, and objects.

Protective legislation and policies for cultural resource management should constitute an integral component of land use, development, and urban planning, as well as of cultural, environmental, and educational policies (e.g., Ardouin and Arinze, 1995; Elia, 1993, p. 98). This task should involve revision of the National Museum Decree, 1969 (NLCD 3 87), to include integrated development planning, provide for both private and public participation in preservation efforts, and entrust metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies to make local regulations for the enforcement of the decree. Archaeological, historic, and cultural resources must be identified and recorded. The compilation and accessibility of a national register to include both indigenous Ghanaian and European sites; development of open-air sites and living museums; encouraging research to provide contextual information on the archaeological resources; and adequately presenting the archaeological heritage to the public are issues that should be addressed. Their management depends on the effective collaboration between professionals from many areas. It requires the cooperation of government authorities, academic researchers, private and public enterprises, and the general public. Heritage managers must make the components of the heritage accessible to the public, both physically and intellectually, by presenting and interpreting making the fullest use of modern techniques of mass communication (see Cleere, 1989, p. 14). Recognition of these concerns will enable the country's non-renewable resources to be protected and preserved so that they may continue to play a significant role in the development of a national identity and economy.

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