

ASHANTI AND HER NEIGHBOURS c. 1700-1807

by

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Abstract

By the middle of the second half of the seventeenth Century, the Portuguese trading monopoly on the Gold Coast had come to an end. The Dutch, who were largely responsible for bringing this about, could not follow their predecessor's example of monopolising the Gold Coast trade however. The development of plantation agriculture in the American and the Caribbean islands provided other European nations with strong economic motives to share in the Guinea trade. Thus English, Danish and Brandenburgers appeared on the coast to compete with the Dutch for the trade in gold, slaves and ivory. This ushered in an era of competition which was greatly to the advantage of the Africans. Apart from the increase in the volume of trade, the trans-Atlantic trade brought unprecedented wealth into the country. It was soon discovered however that the existing small states based on kinship and lineage were incapable of meeting the new economic demands, therefore larger political states such as Denkyera, Akwamu and Akyem were created by the Akan peoples to meet this demand. The creation of these states was made possible by the introduction of firearms in appreciable quantities into the country by the European traders. Because all these states aimed at political and economic expansion their association was characterized by mutual rivalry. Denkyera and Akyem usually acted together against Akwamu therefore Akwamu assisted in the creation of the Ashanti Kingdom to

balance the might of its enemies and to preserve its western frontier. By the middle of the eighteenth century however Ashanti had defeated Akyem and Denkyera and was undoubtedly the dominant political and economic power in the hinterland of the Gold Coast since Akwamu itself was defeated by Akyem in 1730. In 1807, Ashanti conquered the coastal Fantis who, like the Ashantis, had also embarked upon political and economic expansion throughout the eighteenth century. It was clear, therefore, that in the early nineteenth century the probability was that the Gold Coast might become a monarchy ruled by the kings of Ashanti. That this did not happen was due to the policy adopted by Britain during that period.

INTRODUCTION

In 1807, Ashanti, which had been pursuing a policy of political and economic expansion throughout the eighteenth century, made the first of her nineteenth century invasions of the seaboard by attacking the Fantis. This even immediately led to European repercussions. The British, who, at that time, had become the predominating European commercial nation on the coast, decided that the Fantis should be given protection against the attacking Ashanti army.¹ Undoubtedly, the British action was motivated by a desire to help the Fantis with whom the British had had a long trading connection and in whose country the main British settlements of Cape Coast Castle and Anomabo fort were located. It is clear, however, that the fundamental reason underlying the British move was the prevailing view in the British establishments on the coast that an Ashanti conquest of the seaboard was not in the British trading interests. In spite of British assistance, however, the Fantis were completely defeated, and the British fort at Anomabo was besieged by the Ashanti army. At this point, Colonel George Torrane, Governor of Cape Coast Castle, and President of the British Council of Merchants on the Gold Coast, decided to intervene. Torrane met the Asantehene, Osei Bonsu, (1801 - 1824) who commanded the Ashanti army, and after some discussions during which he discovered that the Ashantis were not unaccustomed to civilised habits,²

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1. H. Meredith, An Account of the Gold Coast of Africa, (London, 1812), pp. 132-63. W. W. Claridge, A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti, Vol. 1, pp.237-53. W.E. Ward, A History of the Gold Coast, (Second impression 1952), pp.140-50.
 2. T.70/35 Copy of a letter from Governor Colonel George Torrane, Cape Coast Castle, to Committee of Merchants, 20th July, 1807. Meredith, who was second-in-command of Anomabo fort during the invasion also observed that "the Ashantees...seem not to be unacquainted with the customs of a civilized people". Meredith, 1812, op.cit., p.148.

Torrane reversed the traditional policy of hostility towards Ashanti, and "adopted an attitude of benevolent neutrality toward Zey (Osei) the King of Ashanti".¹ Torrane believed that the British could work with the Ashantis, and so he abandoned the policy of co-operating with the Fantis, and prepared to send an envoy to Kumasi, but died before this could be done.²

It was clear, however, that the British could not establish peaceful relations with the Ashantis in the early nineteenth century, as Torrane and his advisers fondly believed. Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807 "gave notice of the British nation's resolve to stop the flow of West Africans from the Guinea Coast across the Atlantic".³ Apart from the Act itself, which forbade British subjects to partake in that inhuman traffic, the British Government signed treaties with other foreign nations by means of which their nationals were similarly restricted. Moreover, an African Squadron of the British Navy was instituted to police the African coast, so as to seize contraband cargo that British or foreign vessels might attempt to ship across the Atlantic to the Americas. Lastly, the colony of Sierra Leone was to provide a depot for the cargoes thus seized. Britain therefore could not be expected to find favour with Ashanti, which, by 1807, had become the main source of slaves on the Gold Coast.

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1. P.G. James, "British Policy in relation to the Gold Coast, 1815-1850", M.A. Thesis, presented to the University of London. 1935
 2. C.O. 267-44 Letter from Commodore Sir James Lucas Yeo, to the Admiralty, dated 7th November, 1816.
 3. Edmund Collins, "The Panic Element in Nineteenth-Century British Relations with Ashanti", in Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, Vol.V, pt.2, p.92

Thus the old British opposition to Ashanti's political aims was reinforced by their desire to stop the Ashantis from dealing in slaves, and to undertake "legitimate trade". After Torrane's death, therefore, his successors were inclined to favour the coastal peoples, and did nothing to meet Osei Bonsu's request for direct negotiations between himself and the British authorities on the coast. In the nineteenth century, therefore, the history of the Gold Coast was essentially the history of Ashanti's relationship with the British and their coastal allies especially the Fantis.¹

Historians have recognised this relationship as one of the dominating issues in the nineteenth century. But, as Margaret Priestley rightly points out, they have laid far too much emphasis on the importance of 1807.² For instance, it was not correct that the Fanti and the Ashanti armies faced each other for the first time in 1807. Nor was it true that the event of that year caused a crisis in the affairs of the British, and so forced them to make a choice between the conflicting parties, their information about the power and resources of the inland peoples being inadequate.³ There is plenty of evidence from Danish, Dutch and English sources to show that the events of the early nineteenth century had their precedents in the eighteenth century. For instance, in the late 1740's, the activities of the

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1. For the relations between British, Ashanti and the coastal peoples in the nineteenth century, see, among other works, Claridge, *op.cit.*, Vols. 1 and 2. A.B. Ellis, A History of the Gold Coast, (London, 1893); Ward, A History of the Gold Coast, 2nd ed., 1958.
 2. M. Priestley, "The Ashanti Question and the British: Eighteenth Century Origins", in *Journal of African History* 11, 1 (1961), p.36.
 3. Claridge, *op.cit.*, 1, pp.242-3; Ward, 1952, pp.142-5 and 155.

Asantehene, Opoku Ware, (1720-1750), caused such unsettlement and apprehension on the coast, that all the European traders had to take cognisance of them.¹ Moreover, Brodie Cruickshank, writing in 1853, refers to the disturbances which occurred in the reign of "Sai Cudjoe" (Osei Kwadwo), and points out that in 1765, 1767, and again in 1772, the Council of the Company of Merchants at Cape Coast Castle took into account the unsettled state of the country, and considered the policy to be adopted in view of the threatened invasion of Fanti. According to the same author, it was in 1765 that the first mention was made of the Ashantis in the records at Cape Coast Castle, and in 1792, on the occasion of another invasion scare, that there occurred the first "direct intercourse" of which he was aware between the King of Ashanti and the Governor of the British fort.²

The truth of the matter is that Gold Coast historians have paid far less attention to Ashanti history in the eighteenth century. For instance, both Claridge and Ellis, who deal much more fully with the nineteenth century, devoted a few chapters only to the previous century. Claridge had three chapters only, of Volume 1 on "The Rise of Ashanti, 1700-1803", and Ellis, also, had three chapters on the

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1. See Chapter 3. Opoku Ware has been described by a modern Danish writer as the king who made Ashanti "the Prussia of Africa". See Georg Norregaard, "De Danske establishment paa Guineakysten", in Vore Gamle Tropekolonier, ed. Johannes Bronsted, Kiobenhavn 1953, p.515.
 2. B. Cruickshank, Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa, London, 1853, pp.53-54 and 57. See also Chapter 6.

eighteenth century.¹ Reindorf's book has much to commend it. As much as he could, he set down the traditional history of the Gold Coast states of his day, and seems to have drawn a great deal from Danish as well as English written sources.² But, as he himself points out, his object was mainly to record the traditions of the Ga people. His accounts of the other states, therefore, have serious limitations. Ward, too, has drawn from both European written sources, and oral tradition. But though more favourably placed than most of his predecessors, his work is rather superficial, and full of inaccuracies. For instance, he follows his predecessors in recording Cruickshank's very brief references to the threatened Ashanti invasion of the coast after 1750.³ But had he cared to consult the records of the English African Companies in the Public Records Office, he would have discovered that the episode of 1792, for example, is very well-documented.⁴ As far as Ashanti history in the eighteenth century is concerned, the fundamental factor underlying the errors of the Gold Coast historians is that they all relied on the works of Thomas Edward Bowdich, and Joseph Dupuis, who were in Kumasi, the Ashanti capital, in the early nineteenth century.⁵ Admittedly, the observations of both men on the traditions and customs of the Ashantis are of great interest

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1. Claridge, 1915, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.181-234. Ellis, 1893, pp.74-106.
 2. C.C. Reindorf, A History of the Gold Coast and Asante, 2nd ed., Basle n.d. Reindorf relied on the works of Roemer, and probably used some of the documents in Christiansborg Castle.
 3. Ward, History, 1958, p.147. Ellis, op.cit., pp.100-1 and 104. Claridge, op.cit., 1, p.213. Sir F. Fuller, A Vanished Dynasty: Ashanti, (London, 1921) pp.35-6.
 4. See Chapter 6.
 5. T.E. Bowdich, Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee (London, 1819), pt.2, pp.228-50. J.Dupuis, Journal of a Residence in Ashantee, (London, 1824), pt.I, pp.224-64.

and value. But as works of history, their accounts have serious limitations. For instance, although their chronologies of the Ashanti kings contain major differences, in neither case can it be regarded as reliable.¹ Moreover, Dupuis in particular, appears to have obtained most of his historical information from the Kumasi Moslems. But these Moslems were not impartial observers, and most of what they told Dupuis cannot be reconciled with information obtained from contemporary written sources.² The result is that there are many similarities between all these historical works which give a generalized and sometimes inaccurate picture of Ashanti history in the eighteenth century, based mainly on oral tradition, rather than on written records.

It is clear, then, that the eighteenth century development of Ashanti badly needs investigation, and this is the purpose of this thesis. In it an attempt has been made to tell the story of the Ashanti kingdom from the time of Osei Tutu, the first true Asantehene, in the late seventeenth century, to the early nineteenth century, when Ashanti had become the dominant political and economic power on the Gold Coast. Without an understanding of the emergence of the Ashanti kingdom, and its impact on the surrounding African states in the eighteenth century, it is almost impossible to place in correct perspective the events of the nineteenth century. Since the printed works on Ashanti and, indeed, on the Gold Coast as a whole, are of

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1. See "The Ashanti Kings in the Eighteenth Century: A Revised Chronology", in Journal of African History, I, 1, (1960), pp.83-96, M. Priestley and I. Wilks. Also Chapter I.
 2. See Chapter 6.

(X)

little help in dealing with the Ashanti history during this period, I have drawn heavily on the archives of the Danish, Dutch and English West Indian and African Companies. The Danish records consulted are the papers of the Danish West Indian and Guinea Company in the Royal Archives (Rigsakivet) and the Royal Library (Kongelige bibliotek). The Dutch records fall into two main series: the Archives of the Second Dutch West Indies Company, and the Archives of the Dutch Possessions on the Coast of Guinea. Both series are in the General State Archives, (Algemeen Rijksarchief), The Hague. The English records consulted are the T/70 series in the Public Record Office, London. Besides these, I have also used the C.O. (Colonial Office) and A.D.M. (Admiralty). The C.O. and A.D.M. series deal with Sierra Leone and other West African British possessions. They are in some respects duplications of the T/70 series. They are also very improperly indexed, and therefore their usefulness is limited.

This is not the first time that these records have been used. Davies¹ and Martin² have used the T/70 series, and Norregaard³ has used the archives of the Danish West India Company. But the object of these authors was not to write a history of the Gold Coast. Davies used it in writing a history of the Royal African Company, and Martin for the Company of Merchants trading to Africa. Norregaard also used the Danish records to throw light on the Danish Company's activities in

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1. K.G. Davies, *The Royal African Company*, (London, 1957).
 2. E.C. Martin, *The British West African Settlements 1750-1821*, (London, 1927), and an article by the same author, "The English Establishments on the Gold Coast in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century", in Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Fourth Series, V (1922).
 3. Georg Norregaard, 1953, *op.cit.*

in Guinea. But their works are useful guides to the documents relevant to African history. Apart from these three authors, Miss Priestley¹, and Ivor Wilks² have also used the records of all the European Companies. They did not, however, use the original manuscripts, but the Furley papers, deposited in the Balme Library, University of Ghana.³ While the Furley collections may be helpful in many respects, they have to be supplemented, and their accuracy checked in Copenhagen and The Hague.

Apart from these archival materials, some relevant Dutch and Danish printed works have been used.⁴ There are two of these books which are of special importance. Firstly, Ratelband's *Five Day Registers of Elmina Castle, between 1645 and 1647*⁵ are very helpful for a study of West African history, in the seventeenth century. The author's aim was to preserve for future historians the records of the Dutch Company, which had been neglected hitherto. Secondly, for a study of Ashanti history in the eighteenth century, the Dane, Ludovic Frederick Roemer's books are indispensable.⁶ Of course, Roemer tends to exaggerate, and he often makes some careless slips. For instance, he records the death of Opoku Ware in one place as 1749, in another

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1. M. Priestley in *Journal of African History*, 1961, op.cit.
M. Priestley and I. Wilks in *Journal of African History*, 1960, op.cit.
 2. For other works of Ivor Wilks, see Chapter I, p. n. Wilks is also trying to reconstruct the history of Ashanti by using Arabic documents.
 3. The late Mr. J. T. Furley, formerly of the Gold Coast Civil Service, made photostatic copies, notes and transcripts of the Danish and Dutch Company Records.
 4. The printed works in Danish are very well kept in the Royal Library, (Kongelige Bibliotek), Copenhagen.
 5. E. Ratelband, *Vijf Dag registers van het Kasteel Sao Jorge de Mina, (Elmina) aan de Goudkust, 1645-1647, Linsehoten-Vereeniging, 1953.*
 6. L.F. Roemer, *Tilforladelig Efterretning om Kysten Guinea*, (Copenhagen, 1760).

as 1751.¹ But his work is reliable because he was an eye-witness to many of the happenings on the coast, and he also used many of the manuscripts of the Danish Company.

Finally, I have also relied a good deal on the legal and anthropological works of Rattray and Busia.

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1. Ibid., pp.110 and 226.

CHAPTER I
THE GOLD COAST IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EARLY
EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

The history of the Gold Coast in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is largely the history of the consolidation and rise of the Ashanti kingdom and her relations with the neighbouring African and European peoples. During the second half of the seventeenth century, various Akan-speaking peoples were organised into a military union, aiming at political, economic and commercial expansion. This major development in the country resulted in unsettlement and apprehension among the neighbouring African states and even the European traders who had established themselves on the coast had to take cognisance of it. By the early nineteenth century, the Ashanti kingdom had overcome all the neighbouring African states and was "indisputably the greatest and the rising power of Western Africa."¹ For a clear appreciation of the political and economic basis of the rise and expansion of Ashanti, it is necessary to give a brief account of the political, economic and commercial situation in the country during the seventeenth and the early years of the eighteenth century.

The seventeenth and the early eighteenth century has been described as the period of the great "volkerwanderung" of the Gold Coast peoples. It was an era of migrations into, and within, the country itself, of wars,

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1. T.E.Bowdich, A Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantée, (London, 1819), p.341. By this time, Ashanti had asserted her control to a greater or lesser extent, over coastal peoples from Cape Mount in the West, in what is now Liberia, to Popo in the east, a seaboard of little under 1000 miles. See I.Wilks, The Northern factor in Ashanti History, (Gloucester, 1961), p.12, f.n.3.
 2. W.E.F. Ward, A History of Ghana, 2nd Ed. (London, 1958), p.104.

and consolidation of states. It was also a period which saw intensive commercial activity on the coast by various European communities with their different notions of trade and politics. In dealing with this period therefore, it is almost hopeless to concentrate on one main theme.

During this period, the Gold Coast may be defined as that stretch of the Guinea coast from Cape Appolonia in the west to the mouth of the river Volta in the east, a distance of about 300 miles. It was likely that at a remote period in history, the majority of the peoples who inhabit the country today, were living in the open grassland areas inside the country itself or just outside it. The traditions of origin¹ of the majority of the Akan-speaking peoples who constitute the bulk of the population of the country indicate that their ancestors entered the forested areas from the north or north-west. Akwamu, an Akan state in the south-east, preserves traditions of the founders, having migrated to their present home from Kong, the Mande Dyula town on the medieval trade route between Begho and Bobo-Dioulasso. The Fantis say they reached the coast from Tekyiman in the north-west of Ashanti, under the leadership of three chiefs: Oburumankoma, Odapagyan and Oson; the Akyem Bosomes say they came from Ejura, an open grassland area north of Ashanti Mampong. The Dagombas and the Mamprusis in the northern Region of modern Ghana say they entered the country from the north-east. In the south-east, the Gas, the Adangmes, and the Ewes claim to have come from Southern Nigeria. In the south-west, a section of the Nzima peoples say they entered the country from the Ivory Coast.

1. For traditions of Origin, see e.g. C.C. Reindorf, The History of the Gold Coast and Asante, 2nd Edition (Basel n.d.), Ch.I. E.R.Meyerowitz, Akan Traditions of Origin (London, 1952) and The Akan of Ghana, Ward, 1958, op.cit., pp.51-63. Traditions linking the Akan with the Western Budan were first recorded in print by J.M.Sarbah, Fanti Customary Laws (London, 1897)

The interesting point to notice is that all these traditions of origin indicate movements en masse. The Akans, the Ga-Adangmes and the Dagombas, all claim that their ancestors occupied a previously uninhabited country. Some recent commentators on the subject, basing their arguments mainly on linguistic and sociological considerations, have tended to think that this was in fact the case.¹ But, as Fage rightly points out, the Akan traditions of migrations, for example, might not necessarily have been the traditions of the bulk of the people, but more essentially those of successive waves of immigrants who organised earlier kinship groups into political states of the type being developed farther north in the Sudan.² We know that the ancestors of the Dagombas and the Mamprusis met a people akin to the Konkombas already living in the northern Region of Ghana.³ We also know that the Gas and the Adangmes entered an area which was already the home of the Obutus, and earlier Akan-speaking immigrants.⁴ It appears that even the Fantis did not reach their present home directly from Tekyiman, as they say, but that they originally formed part of an old Akan kingdom in the forest called Akanny. As late as 1752, Esilfi, described as "the public orator of Abrah", told the English at Cape Coast, in the presence of representatives of "the Braffoe, Curranteers, the priests of Burabura Wegya and all inland towns of Fantees", that the Fantis left "Arcania" for the coast "under their

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1. See e.g. W.T.Balmer, A History of the Akan peoples of the Gold Coast (London, and Cape Coast, 1926), pp.26-31. J.B. Danguah, "The Akan Claim to origin from Ghana", in West African Review, Vol.XXVI, Nov. and Dec.1955, pp.968-70 and 1107-11.
 2. J.D.Fage, Ghana: A Historical Interpretation, Madison, 1961, p.26. See also, R. Mauny, "The question of Ghana" in Africa XXIV July 1954 and Jack Goody, "Ethno-history and the Akan of Ghana" in Africa XXIX No.1, 1959, pp.67-81.
 3. D.Tait, "The political system of Kokamba", Africa XXIII No.3, July 1953, pp.213-23.
 4. Ward, 1958, p.105. M.J.Field, Religion and Medicine of the Ga people 1-3, 10-11, 77 etc.

Braffo Imorah"¹. Indeed, some versions of Fanti tradition point out that the Fantis found the Etsi and the Asebu peoples already established on the coast and that the Fantis had to defeat these peoples in a number of battles before they could dislodge them from their lands.² A recent archaeological survey carried out in the Accra area has also confirmed that large scale invasions from the east must be discounted.³ On the whole, traditional accounts of mass movements into unpopulated areas must be rejected on the grounds that they probably originated, as it is their present-day purpose, as a means of substantiating or denying political and economic claims. Some Ashantis, for instance, say that they originated from Asantemanso, a place within their country itself. But it should be remembered that Osei Tutu and Okomfo Anokye who founded the Ashanti Union laid down a law making it a capital offence for anyone to allude to his ancestry.⁴

It is reasonable to suppose that there were people living in the country who may be regarded as autochthones.⁵ The fact that the medieval trade with the Sudan included important commodities like kola nuts, a forest crop, and salt, a coastal product, presupposes that the Gold Coast forests and coastlands were not empty.⁶ The ancestors of the Gas, for instance,

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1. T70/30 T.Melvil, Governor of Cape Coast Castle to Committee of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 23rd September 1752; "Aeriphy" (Esilfi?) "Braffo" was probably a general term for "Captain" of the Asafo companies. "Curanteers" were the elders of State. "The priests of Burabura Wegya" were the fetish priests of the great Fanti fetish grove at Mankessim. The English believed that the "Braffo was like a Dutch "stadtholder" and the "Curanteers", Senators. See *ibid.* Letter from Geo. Cockburne to Committee, Cape Coast Castle, 14th March, 1753.
 2. W.W.Claridge, A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti, 2 Vols. (London, 1915), Vol.I, p;6.
 3. Paul Ozanne, "The Early Historic Archaeology of Accra" in Trans.Hist.Soc. Ghana, Vol.VI, Legon, 1963, pp.51-70.
 4. Ward, 1958, p.62.
 5. Perhaps the widespread belief in "Mimoatia", dwarfs, may support this hypothesis.
 6. See, pp.8-13.

might be regarded as the families who obtained control of an existing population and an economic system at the crucial moment when the economy was rapidly expanding. It has been suggested that Nyanoase, the Akwamu capital, had a predecessor in a "Final Prehistoric site", near Nsawam and that, initially, it might have consisted largely of indigenous peoples drawn in from the neighbouring villages.¹ Whatever might have been the case, it was certain, however, that the Gold Coast forests and coastlands were originally thinly peopled and that, from about the thirteenth century onwards, these areas received a large number of immigrants from other parts of West Africa.

The reasons for these migrations are probably complex. It would seem, however, that they had something to do with the chaotic political and economic situation in the Sudan as a result of the break-up of the medieval Western Sudanese Empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay. This was indeed the case in the late sixteenth century and the early years of the seventeenth, when the Mor^occans, after destroying the Songhay Empire, failed to create any stable political machinery capable of sustaining the Western Sudanese civilizations, based on the trans-Saharan trade with North Africa and Europe. The decline in political power of the pashalik of Timbuktu and the general collapse of central authority was clearly not conducive to trade.² In contrast, it was during this period that the tenuous Portuguese trade monopoly on the Gold Coast was finally overthrown when the Dutch captured their last post at Axim in 1642. The subsequent appearance of the Dutch, English, Danish, Swedish and Brandenburgers on the coast, created

1. P. Ozanne, 1963, op.cit.

2. E.W. Bovill, The Golden Trade of the Moors, (London, 1958), pp.174-8.
I. Wilks, 1961, p.11.

competitive conditions greatly to the advantage of the Africans.

By the early seventeenth century, most of the African states had been consolidated. A Dutch "Map of the Lands of the Gold Coast of Guinea"¹ dated in 1629, shows that there were six large and two small kingdoms on the coast. From west to east, these were Little Inkassa, Ante, (Ahanta), Great Kommenda, Fetu, Asebu, Fanti, Agona and Accra. Behind these coastal states, there were a host of comparatively small kingdoms. The most important of these, from the point of view of size and trade, were Akanny, Akyem, Wassa, Wanquie, (Wenchi), Igwira, Adom, Great Inkassa, Insocco, Kwawu and Akwamu.

It is interesting to notice that apart from one or two states on the coast which possessed some gold, all the gold and slaves produced in the country came from the inland states. Igwira was noted for gold which the people sent to Axim and the neighbouring trading settlements in exchange for salt and other European merchandise. Wassa was reputed to have been extraordinarily rich in gold and that the inhabitants were continually at work in the "gold mines". Wenchi had gold but the people also knew the art of weaving fine cloths which they sold to the Akannists. The Akyems had no gold but were the main source for slaves. Great Inkassa had gold, which the people sent to the Quauqua coast, but when there were no ships lying off that coast, the traders went to Little Kommenda. Insocco had no gold nor trade in general, but the people manufactured beautiful cloths and carpets which were highly esteemed by the Akannists.

1. WIC. 743 Verspreyde Stukken, Caerte des Lantschap van de Goud Kust in Guinea, van Atsyn (Axim) tot Ningo. Mouree, 25th December 1629. See Enclosure. According to the Dutch cartographer, the kingdoms of Asebu and Fetu were originally integral parts of the kingdom of Aguaffo or Great Kommenda.

That the important trading activities were concentrated in the interior points to the fact that, before the arrival of the Europeans, the Gold Coast peoples looked to the north and not the south for their contacts with the outside world. In the medieval period, these peoples were in close commercial relations with the peoples of the Sudan. Davies has pointed out that the Europeans did not have to create any new demands in West Africa because trade had been carried on for a long time with the medieval cities of Western Sudan.¹ It has also been said that the Portuguese noticed that some of the kinds of cloth that sold best on the Gold Coast were of Moroccan manufacture.²

There were two major trade routes linking the country with the Sudan. One of these trade routes ran north-north-west from present-day Ashanti through towns like Bondoukou or Bona to the Mande districts of the upper Niger valley upstream of Timbuktu. According to Dubois, the Sudanese medieval city of Djenne must have developed as a market primarily for a southern traffic.³ Wilks strengthens this argument and points out that the Mande town of Begho, lying to the north-west of modern Ghana, was the southern end of the Djenne trade route to the south from where merchants reached the Guinea coast.⁴ It is believed that, though the bulk of the Sudanese gold was obtained from the Bambuk and Bure fields to the west, in the region of the upper reaches of the Niger and the Senegal rivers, some

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1. K.G. Davies, The Royal African Company, (London, 1957), p.4.
 2. J.W. Blake, European Beginnings in West Africa, (London, 1937), Vol.I, pp.97-98; Fage, 1961, p.42.
 3. F. Dubois, Timbuktu the Mysterious, translated by D. White (London, 1897), pp.171-2; Also, J.D. Fage, "Ancient Ghana: A Review of the Evidence" in Trans. Hist. Soc. Ghana, III, 2, Achimota, 1957, pp.96 and 98, n.45.
 4. I. Wilks, "The Northern Factor in Ashanti History: Begho and the Mande", in Journal of African History, II, 1 (1961). pp.25-34.

Gold Coast gold must have travelled northwards along this route to the Sudan.¹ Along this north-westerly route went also some ivory and slaves to the cities of Mandeland notably, Ghana, Mali, Dia, Segu and Djenne. The other trade route was that running to the north-east through eastern Gonja and Dagomba and across the river Niger to Hausaland. This route made contact with the trans-Saharan caravan trade in the commercial emporia of the Hausa states. Traders from such Hausa cities as Kano and Katsina travelled along this route to Salaga in eastern Gonja and there exchanged their cotton cloths, leather goods and some slaves for gold, cowrie shells and other products.² Besides gold, ivory and slaves, there were two other important articles of trade which travelled along these trade routes to the Sudan. These were Kola nuts and salt.

The Kola nut is the fruit of the Kola tree - *Cola acuminata* - which is scattered throughout the forests of the Gold Coast. John Beecham spoke of a sheriff of Tripoli in North Africa, who said the kola nuts were "so important a corrective to the unpalatable or unwholesome waters of the Fezzan, and of other kingdoms that border on the vast Sahara, as to be deemed of importance to the happiness of life"³ It is said that the twin interlocking kernels of the kola nuts were regarded as a symbol of friendship and that no gift was complete without kolas in the Sudan.⁴

Kola nuts were reaching the Sudanese cities from all parts of the West African forests. Clapperton saw at Kiama that every caravan he met

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1. I. Wilks, (Gloucester, 1961) op.cit., p.6.
 2. M.J. Herskovits, "The significance of West Africa for Negro Research", Journal of Negro History, Vol.XXI, pp.15-30, and The Myth of the Negro Past, (New York, 1940). Also, A.A.Boahene, "The Caravan Trade in the Nineteenth Century", Journal of African History, III,2, (1962)pp.349-359.
 3. John Beecham, Ashantee and the Gold Coast (London, 1841) pp.155-56.
 4. Bovill, 1958, p.240; See also, *ibid.*pp.237, 241-2.

with was transporting kola nuts from the south.¹ Lander points out that on leaving Kulfa, after the death of his master, he came across companies of merchants going to "Ghunja" for "gora nuts".² "Ghunja", of course, is the present-day Gonja district of Northern Region of Ghana and Gora is the Hausa name for kola nuts. In Gonja today, there are still to be found many of the principal centres where kola nuts from the south, especially Ashanti, are collected for export to the north. In Barth's time, Timbuktu was importing kola nuts from Tanguela far away in the hinterland of the Ivory Coast.³

The salt trade with the Sudan may be of some antiquity. The Sudan, though well-endowed by Nature in many respects, had always lacked salt. The only natural deposits in the whole of the Western Sudan were not only meagre, but concentrated in a small area in the centre of the country. These were the salt pans of Dalhul Fogha in Dendi and the neighbouring "Fadama" or marsh of Birnin Kebbi, the soil of which was sufficiently impregnated with salt to make possible its recovery by evaporation. Salt was such a luxury commodity in the Sudan that only the rich could buy it, and it is said that the poorer classes of people had to extract very small quantities from the ashes of grasses, millet stalks, and certain shrubs, as well as cattle dung. According to Bovill, gold was valued in the Sudan almost entirely for its purchasing power in salt.⁴ The Sudan, therefore, had to rely a good deal on imported salt.

The rock-salt deposits of the Taghaza in the Sahara has always

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1. K.B. Dickson, "Cocoa in Ghana", an unpublished Ph.D. Thesis for the University of London, 1960.
 2. Ibid., p.47.
 3. Bovill, 1958, p.237.
 4. See Bovill, 1958, inter alia, pp.67-68, 140-41, 236-37.

been, and to some extent still is, the main source of Sudanese imported salt. But, Bovill's assertion that Taghaza "came very near to being the only one because sea-salt, the sole alternative, was not readily obtainable,"¹ was clearly an overstatement. We have noted that the Akannists were in close commercial contact with Begho, the southern end of the Djenne trade route. These Akannists were also on record as having obtained large quantities of white sea-salt from the coastal Fantis in exchange for gold, and that they carried the salt for sale far inland.² It would have been surprising if some of this scarce commodity did not find its way to the cities of the Sudan along the Djenne route. Furthermore, one of the chief articles of trade of the Quaqua coast, lying to the immediate west of the Gold Coast, was salt. Barbot says that the people of this area traded a great deal in salt with their neighbours to the north-east, and adds, "if these Quaqua salt merchants are to be depended upon, they carry it beyond the Niger to a people that are not black, and who, according to their description, must be Moors".³ Indeed, all early European observers on the Gold Coast noted that most of the coastal villages and towns were engaged in boiling salt for sale to the inland merchants. The Dane Tilleman, for example, commented that salt obtained at Labadi, Teshie and Osu - all parts of Accra - were bought by the people and carried "great distances inland".⁴ Salt was in such great demand by the inland traders that they were prepared to give one, and sometimes two, slaves for a handful of salt.⁵

1. Ibid, 1958, 140-41.

2. Isaak Tirion, Hedendaagsche Historie of tegenwoordige Staat van Afrika, (Amsterdam, 1763), p.499.

3. Barbot in Thomas Astley's A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels, Vol.II (London, 1745), p.564.

4. Eric Tilleman, En liden enfoldig beretning om det landskap Guinea, (Kiobenhavn, 1697), pp.97-102.

5. Tirion, 1763, op.cit., pp.464-465.

On the arrival of the Europeans, though the emphasis was on the gold and slave trades, the salt trade remained an important local industry which yielded great profits to both European and African trader alike. The peoples of the coastal towns and villages obtained the salt either by boiling sea water in kettles or earthen pots, or they collected the salt from natural salt pans which had been dried up by the heat of the sun. Atkins, describing the salt trade at Cape Coast, wrote, "the sale appears like a fair in the (Cape Coast) Castle and many of those Negroes whose ivory or gold would not buy a bushel of salt had travelled some hundred miles inland".¹ The salt from Accra in particular seemed to have been in great demand by the inland traders. In 1709, Sir Dalby Thomas, the Agent-General at Cape Coast, remarked that "Accra salt is a commanding commodity with the Ashantees".² In the same year, the Royal African Company wrote to Parliament that their James Fort "stands in the kingdom of Accra and opens trade to Quombue, (Akwamu), Akim and Aquawoa (Kwawu) for gold, slaves, teeth (ivory) and salt."³

In the early years of the eighteenth century, the carrying trade was virtually monopolised by Ashanti and Akyem merchants. There arose in these two states merchants who came to the coast to buy nothing else but salt for sale farther north. They usually arrived in small parties and stayed for long periods until they had received their salt supply. In 1715, William Baillie, the English factor at Kommenda, reported the arrival of "sundry salt merchants from Ashantee" who informed him that other traders

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1. J. Atkins in Astley's Collections, Vol.II, p.603
 2. T 70/5 Abstract of Letters received by the Royal African Company, 21st May and 21st June 1709. Ibid. Letter from William Hicks, Accra, 4th Jan. 1708/9.
 3. T 70/175. The Royal African Company to Parliament, London, 13th Feb. 1709.

were on their way thither.¹ In that same year, the Dutch factor at Shama reported the arrival of about ten Ashanti traders who bought nothing because "they came to buy salt."² In 1722, the Danes regretfully recorded that the Akwamus had closed the trading paths leading from the coast to the interior so that Akyem salt merchants had to go to Cape Coast and Elmina for their salt. The Danes got the Osu people who lived near their Castle of Christiansborg to promise not to send their salt in canoes to these two towns so that the Akyems would be forced to come back to Accra. At the same time, David Herrn, the Governor, remonstrated with Akwonno, the Akwamuhene, who happened to be at Accra at that time, to open the trading paths. The Akwanuhene promised to make his peace with the Akyems on his return from a campaign in the east.³

The salt trade was so profitable that the European traders actively participated in it. In 1708, Director-General Haring explained that the Dutch decided to share fully in the salt trade because of the high profits involved, which was greatly to the advantage of the Dutch West Indian Company. The salt was bought at Accra for one and a half engels a piece and sold at Elmina for four engels a piece. The profit accruing from this source was employed in defraying some of the expenses involved in the maintenance of the forts.⁴ In June 1729, the English declared that the Accra people had made part payment of a debt they owed them, and they expressed the hope that the remainder would be paid in the next salt season, adding, "those people

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1. T 70/1464 William Baillie's Komenda Diary, entries for 6th April, 10th and 19th May, 1715.
 2. N.B.K.G. 82, M. Heyman, Shama, to Director-General H. Haring, 12th Jan. 1715.
 3. V.G.K. Letter from Governor-General David Herrn, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, 1st July, 1722.
 4. WIC Letter from Director-General H. Haring, Elmina, dd.23rd March, 1708.

having no other way to pay it but in that commodity, and which is indeed more for your Honours advantage than if it was paid in gold, as there is a profit of hundred per cent. and upwards on the sale of salt."¹ Both the Dutch and the English used small coastal vessels in transporting Accra salt to Elmina and Cape Coast and thereby undercut the African traders who could, at best, transport their's in large canoes. In 1708/9, the English sent the small ship "Dorothy" to Accra for salt.² The Dutch also sent the small ship "Piershill" in July 1724 for salt which "is the most important article of trade on the coast."³ A year later, the Dutch commissioned a Portuguese ship "Juffrouw Margaretha" on the same errand.⁴

The inland merchants such as the Akanists travelled not along roads but mere foot paths to the coast. In the early nineteenth century, Thomas Edward Bowdich, who visited Ashanti on behalf of the Governor and Council of Cape Coast Castle, found that Kumasi, the Ashanti capital, was linked with all parts of the country by a host of these trading pathways. The most important of these trade routes linking Kumasi with the coast were four: the Aowin path; the Wassa path; the Assin path; and the Akyem path.⁵ The Aowin path linked Kumasi with the coastal centres at Cape La Hou, Cape Appolonia, and Assine; the Wassa path ran from Kumasi through Denkyera to Wassa where it bifurcated, one branch going eastward across the river Pra through Aguafo to Shama, Kommenda, Elmina and Cape Coast. The Assin path

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1. T 70/4. Letter from John Brathwaite and Robert Cruickshank, Cape Coast Castle, 30th June 1729.
 2. T 70/5. W. Hicks, Accra, to Governor and Council of Cape Coast Castle, dd. 4th Jan. 1708/9.
 3. WIC. Vol.106, Director-General Pieter Valekenier, Elmina, dd. 20th July.
 4. Ibid., Letters dd. 11th July 1725, and 16th Jan. 1726.
 5. For these pathways, see e.g. Bowdich, 1819, pt.2, pp.162 ff. Joseph Dupuis, Journal of a Residence in Ashantee, (London, 1824), p.XXVII. K.B. Dickson, "The development of Road Transport in Southern Ghana and Ashanti", in Trans. Hist. Soc. Ghana, (Legon, 1961), Vol.VI, Pt.1, pp.33-35.

passed through the Adansi and the Assin countries to Abora Dunkwa, where it bifurcated, one branch passing near Abora, the old Fanti capital, to Kormantsi and Anomabo, and the other, to Mouree and Cape Coast. The Akyem path first ran ^{South} north-east of Kumasi through Dwabin and Akwapim to Accra and the neighbouring beaches. On the coast itself, there were no good pathways linking the important trading centres, and those wishing to travel from Anomabo to Elmina, for example, had to walk for the most part on the sandy beach. The means of communication between the coastal towns was coast-wise traffic by surf-boats and schooners.

This picture was not very different from that obtaining during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The Assin path was frequently used by the Akannists and the control of the Akyem path was one of the main sources of friction between the Akyems and the Akwamus during this period. It would seem, however, that there were two other important trade routes in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Firstly, there was "a second Akyem path" running through Agona to the coastal trading centres of Winneba, Senya Bereku and Apam. In 1715, the Dutch reported that the Agona people had reached an understanding with the two Akyem chiefs, Ofori and Apenten, that they would not close the "passes" in future, and that, as a result, the Akyems were going to

the coast with their gold to buy goods.¹ Secondly, there was another Aowin path running from Axim across the river Tano through Aowin country to Bondouku and the farther north. In 1715, some Aowin traders who travelled along this route had their rafts capsized while crossing the river Tano, and five of them were drowned.²

Outside the forest belt, the two northern trade routes were dominated by Mande and Hausa merchants who acted as middlemen between the traders of the Gold Coast forest and the caravans of the Sahara desert.

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1. N.B.K.G. 82 J. Boerhaven, Bereku, to Director-General H. Haring, 20th May, 1715.
Ibid. J. V. Alzen to Haring, 6th September 1715.
"Afforry" or "Offory" is recognisable in Akyem as the Ofori Panyin (the elder) who founded the modern state of Akyem Abuakwa. The first mention of Ofori known to the writer is a Dutch report of 1704. In that report, the Dutch, who were anxious to acquire a greater part of the gold coming from Akyem, sent presents, to secure Ofori in their interest, including muskets and red cloths, Ofori died in 1727.
See WIG Vol.99, Letter from Director-General William de la Palma, Elmina, to the Assembly of Ten dated 9th April, 1704, and VGK Letter from Governor Pahl, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, to the Directors dated 14th April, 1727.
"Apintin" was surely the Akyem Kotoku Chief, Ofosu Apenten, who initiated the Akyem-Ashanti war of 1717 and whose skull is still retained at Kumasi.
See N.B.K.G. 82 J. Doutreleau, Accra, to D/G. H. Haring dated 10th Oct. 1715.
Also M. Priestley and I. Wilks, "Ashanti Kings of the Eighteenth Century: a revised chronology", in Journal of African History, 1, 1 (1960)
R. S. Rattray, Religion and Art in Ashanti, (Oxford, 1927) p.132
 2. N.B.K.G. 82 Willem Butler, Axim, to Director-General Haring, 2nd. July 1715.

There is reason to believe, however, that some of these Mande and Hausa traders penetrated the forest and reached the Guinea coast. Wilks has indicated that, "other long range traders, in their own manner equally intrepid, had preceded the Portuguese" on the Gold Coast.¹ Pacheco mentions the Mandinguas (Mande) as among the merchants who brought the gold "from distant lands".² In the late seventeenth century, the Dutch, still adhering to the old view that the main gold-producing areas of West Africa were far inland, reported that "beyond this district (Insocco) live white-men who may be supposed to be Moors. It is they who do the greater part of the traffic in gold".³ Perhaps the "Moors" who were found on the coast by De Marees, the Dutch traveller, in 1602, were some of these itinerant traders.⁴

Apart from the trade with the Sudan, there existed an extensive maritime trade between the Gold Coast and the Ivory Coast, Whydah, Ardra, and Benin. Blake has pointed out that the first European traders on the Guinea coast played the role of middlemen who carried commodities from such places as Cape Verde and Benin to the Gold Coast where they were exchanged for gold. Fage argues this further, and points out that there is reason to believe that trade existed between the Gold Coast and Benin before the arrival of the Portuguese and that what the Portuguese did was to increase the volume of trade by the efficient means of transportation at

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1. I. Wilks, "A Medieval Trade-route from the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea" in Journal of African History, III, 2, (1962), p.337.
 2. G.R. Crone, Voyages of Cadamasto, Hakhuyt Soc. Series Vol.LXXX.
 3. WIC. Verspreyde Stukken, 848.
 4. Report by Director-General Abranzz, Elmina, These diverse papers are being given new indices and therefore may not be found under this No. in future.
 4. Pieter De Marees, Reizen naar Guinea, Linschoten - Vereeniging Vol.V., ed. H. Naber.

their disposal.¹ The main articles of trade involved were cloths from the Ivory Coast and beads and cloths from the Dahomean coast and Benin.

The origins of this trade will probably never be known but it may be that preferences for the produce of these areas may give a further proof of the migrations of peoples from these regions into the Gold Coast. Traditions recounted by the Dane Roemer, who was on the coast in the 1740's, connect the Accra plain with Benin,² and it is conceivable that the ancestors of the Ga-Adangme and Ewe peoples were already aware of the existence of the bead and cloth industries there. Whatever might have been the case, early European observers on the coast found that the Gold Coast peoples had great preferences for the commodities of these areas. Pacheco asserts that blue beads called Coris and slaves from Benin were used to exchange gold on the Gold Coast.³ De Marees points out that the beads came from Benin and adds that they were made from blue, green and black stones which were obtained from the Forcados river. These beads were desired by the Negroes "especially of the Golden Coast of Guinea."⁴ From Villault, we learn that the Ivory Coast cloth, known as the Quaqua cloth, was "a pretty sort of cotton stuff" which was sold on the Gold Coast where it was used "for clothing the common people".⁵

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1. Blake, 1937, op.cit., p.93. J.D. Fage, "Some remarks on Beads and trade in Lower Guinea in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" in Journal of African History, III, 2, (1962), pp.343-44.
 2. L.F. Roemer, Tilforladelig Efterretning om Kysten Guinea, (Kiobenhavn, 1760), pp.114-18.
 3. P.R. Pacheco, Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, Hakluyt Soc. Series II, Vol.LXXIX, pp.128-9, ed. G.H.T. Kimble.
 4. De Marees, 1602, op.cit., p.231.
 5. Astley's Collections, 1745, p.231. "Qua qua" was supposed to have been an imitation of how the people of this part of the Ivory Coast said "good morning" or "welcome". See Tirion, 1763, op.cit., p.486. Also, K. Ratelband, Vijf dag registers van het Kasteel Sao Jorge da Mina (Elmina) aan de Goudkust, 1645-1647, Linsehoten-Vereeniging, 1953, p.59, f.n.3. Ratelband says the Quaqua coast was the area to the immediate west of the Gold Coast.

It is clear from the early writers that the bead found on the Gold Coast came from Benin or even the Cameroons.¹ The bead industry, however, soon spread westwards until places on the Gold Coast itself came to be associated with it. As early as 1629, the Dutch found the people of Elmina actively engaged in "polishing beads which the Portugese bring them".² All late seventeenth and early eighteenth century European writers point out that they found evidence of local knowledge of working at beads.

The beads were used mainly for personal adornment, especially among the chiefly classes. Loyer saw that the King of Assine had "his grey beard twisted into twenty small locks which were threaded with sixty Bits of Aygris stone, bored round and long."³ Bosman found that the "Natives of the Gold Coast plait their hair with a sort of coral here called Conte de Terra... .. a sort of blue coral which we call Agrie and the Negroes Accori".⁴ In 1715, some Aggrey beads intended for King Osei Tutu of Ashanti were claimed by the Dutch to have been stolen by John Cabes.⁵ The Aggrey beads, however,

1. For more information about Aggrey or Akori beads, see e.g. R. Mauny, "Akori Beads" in Trans.Hist.Soc.Nigeria, (1958), I,3. J.D. Fage, "Remarks on Beads and trade in Lower Guinea in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" in Journal of African History, (1962), op.cit.

I am grateful to Mr. Kima of the Cameroon Foreign Office, for his information that the bead industry was, and to some extent still is, an important local industry in the Cameroons, and that the beads were made from animal bones, such as elephant teeth. The colours of the beads are derived from dyes of some local shrubs.

2. Chart 743 (1629) op.cit. Some Aggrey beads were known to have originated from "Aquimena", a place identified by Wilks as a small state north of Aburi in modern Akwapim state. See, I. Wilks, "The Rise of the Akwamu Empire" in Trans.Hist.Soc.Ghana, III,2, (Achimota, 1957), p.101.

3. Godfrey Loyer, "Abstract of a voyage to Issini on the Gold Coast in 1701", in Astley's Collections, Vol.II, p.422.

4. William Bosman, A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea divided into the Gold, the Slave and the Ivory Coasts, (London, 1705), p.119.

5. N.B.K.G. 82, Jan Landman, Kommenda to D.-G. Haring dd. 22nd June, 1715. On John Cabes, see

were sometimes used as a medium of exchange, especially in the region of Cape Appolonia and the Quaqua coast. Loyer noted that "the Aigris-stone serves for money here (Assine), and is highly valued, though it has neither lustre nor beauty".¹ Barbot also found that the African traders exchanged their cloths for arm rings and "sometimes but seldom, for beads".² In 1715, the Dutch sub-factor Heyman, who was trading off the coast of Cape La Hou in the small yacht "Chama", asked to be sent to him "800 lb armrings, and 30 Mas Blew Agri Corael because the Negroes of Cape La Hou are waiting for these goods."³

According to Villault, the Quaqua cloth was "striped white and blue" and it was three-quarters of an ell broad and three or four ells long.⁴ Marchais also points out that the cloths consisted of six pieces which were sewn together and that each cloth was about three yards long and six inches broad.⁵ About the origin of the cloth, Barbot points out that the area around Cape La Hou and the Quaqua coast produced much of the cotton which the inland peoples spun and wove into short cloths. The finished cloths consisted of "six stripes which were three French ells long and coarser". The coastal people were merely factors who bought the cloths from the inland people and sold them to the European traders for Akory. Barbot adds that

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1. Loyer in Astley's Collections, p.433.
 2. Barbot in Astley's Collections, p.564.
 3. N.B.K.G. 82 Willem Butler, Axim, to D.-G. Haring dd. 7th August, 1715. Heyman exchanged these goods for 40 slaves and 280 lb ivory. In the Dutch records the Akory beads appear under the name of Agri, Comte de Terra or "the Element". See, also V.G.K. Day-Journal 1698-1703, entry for 18th July 1702. A Mas was an East Indian measure equivalent to 3.75 grammes. For the measurements used during this period, see e.g. Pieter Van Dam, Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie, ('s-Gravenhage, 1931), Vol.2, pt.1, especially pp.825 & 834.
 4. Villault in Astley's Collections, p.563.
 5. Marchais in ibid., p.563.

the inland manufacturers sold large quantities of the cloths to "a white people who lived far up in the inland, and who usually rode on mules or asses, carrying Assagayes or spears; which must needs be Arabs from the Sahara or about the banks of the (river) Niger".¹ Some cloth, however, must have come from Begho, for Loyer saw at Assine "Turkish carpets, fine cloths, strip red and blue silk" in the hands of the people who claimed to have bought them from Nzoko.²

East of the Gold Coast lay Whydah, Ardra and Benin. Barbot found that apart from agriculture, the people of Whydah spun and wove fine cotton cloths.³ But it was the English ships-captain, Philips, who affords good information about Whydah cloths. Philips points out that the Whydah cloth was about two yards long and about a quarter of a yard broad and that three of such were commonly joined together to make a piece of cloth. The people of Whydah exchanged their cloths for such commodities as knives and tobacco. A piece of cloth on the Whydah coast might be had for eight knives.⁴ The Ardra cloths were said to be small and narrow whereas the Benin cloths consisted of either three or four bands. Ratelband points out that each of the Benin bands measured two and a half to two and three-quarters ells ($2\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{3}{4}$ ells) long and two ells broad and that the four bands were called "Mouponoqua", and the three bands "Ambassis". The colour of the Benin cloths was blue or blue with white stripes.⁵

The Dutch, English, Danes and all the European merchants followed the Portuguese example of transporting these West African products for sale

1. Barbot, in *ibid.*, p.564.

2. Loyer, *op.cit.*, p.429.

3. Astley's Collection of Voyages, 1745, Vol.III, p.11.

4. Astley's Collection of Voyages, 1745, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.15.

5. K. Ratelband, Vijf dag registers, 1953, *op.cit.*, p.37, f.n.2.

Here Ratelband was following Olifert Dapper, Naukeurige Beschrijvinge der Afrikaensche Geweten, (Amsterdam, 1668), pp.499-500.

One Amsterdam ell was equivalent to 69 cm. Ratelband 1953, *op.cit.*p.X.C.V f.n.3.

on the Gold Coast. The list of goods deposited at Cape Coast Castle, Elmina and Christiansborg Castle include large quantities of corals of all kinds, and cloths from Cape Verde, the Quagua, the Dahomean and the Benin coasts. In 1645, the Dutch yacht "Fortuyn" sailed with the ship "Leuwinne" to Ardra and Benin and brought back to the Gold Coast 588 pieces of Ardra cloths and 1755 pieces of Benin cloths in three bands. Two hundred pieces of these cloths were deposited at Dutch Crevecouer at Accra and the rest were distributed at Elmina, Mouree and Kommenda.¹ In October of the following year, the Dutch received information from their factor at Benin that an English yacht, which had been on the Ardra coast, had traded four hundred or five hundred small cloths from that place.² In December 1645, the list of goods which the retiring Director-General, Jacob Ruychaver handed over to his successor, J. Van der Wel, included $4466\frac{3}{4}$ ounces of fine coraals, 610 pieces of Ardra cloth, 3258 pieces of Benin cloths in three bands.³ A list of goods which the Dutch seized from a Portugese ship off the Roads of Elmina included 185 pieces Cape Verde cloths, and 6028 pieces Benin cloths.⁴ The Dutch ship "Juffrouw Maria Jacoba" brought to Elmina goods which included 4143 pieces of cloth and 440 cotton threads from Benin.⁵

In spite of the large-scale importation of cheap cotton prints into the country, the demands for these West African products were so great that when supply failed to meet the demand, the European trader imported cloths

1. K. Ratelband, 1953, pp.36-37.

2. K. Ratelband, 1953, pp.251-2.

3. Ibid., pp.386-7.

4. WIC. Vol.102, Letter from Director-General William Butler dd. 31st February, 1718.

5. WIC. Vol.104. Letter from D.-G. W. Butler, Dec., 1719.

with the same descriptions as those from Ardra, Whydah, Benin and the Quaqua coasts. In August 1668, the English ship "the Arcany Merchant" brought among other goods, 1752 pieces of Benin cloths to the Gold Coast.¹ As late as 1752, instructions were sent from London to Cape Coast to send "Patterns of the Ashantee and Whydah cloth as now cotton is tolerable cheap, they can be made here so as to dispose of them to good account on the coast."²

The European traders, with their efficient means of transportation, must have derived great benefits from these West African imports. For instance, during this period, the price of an iron bar never exceeded 3 guilders (6/-) in Holland, but if this iron bar was sent to a place in the Bight of Benin, it might be exchanged for two pieces of Benin cloth. If these two Benin cloths were sent to the Gold Coast, they might be sold for eight guilders (16/-), thus realising a profit of five guilders (10/-). Again, a piece of Quaqua cloth exchanged for one pound of coraal, might fetch ten pounds ^{worth} of ivory in Benin. If the ivory was sent to the Netherlands, it might be sold for nine guilders (18/-). Even more advantageous was the barter trade with the island of Sao Tome. For a piece of Quaqua cloth sent there, the planters readily gave 32 pounds ^{worth} of sugar in exchange. This sugar could be sold in Holland for ten guilders (20/-).³

It appears, however, that the large-scale importation of cloths from Europe and the East Indies into the country tended to work to the disadvantage of the West African producers. The Gold Coast peoples quickly

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1. T 70/635 f.6. 20th August 1668.
 2. T 70/1478 Committee to Mr. Hushands, London, 6th October 1752. For Ashanti cloth see pp. 37-38 below.
 3. See e.g. K. Ratelband, 1953, op.cit., p.XCV.

developed a taste for these foreign imports, and tended to take lesser quantities of the West African cloths. The adverse effects were keenly felt in Benin where the cotton cloth industry had taken deep roots. Here, the Dutch were reluctant to buy large quantities of the cloths which could not be quickly disposed of on the Gold Coast. The King of Benin protested, and insisted that all the Dutch ship captains should take at least 1700 pieces of Benin cloth on board their ships before they were allowed to buy other goods on that coast. The Dutch had to comply with the king's request because, at that time, they were driving a profitable trade in gum and ivory on that coast. The Dutch, however, found a way out of their dilemma by sending some of the Benin cloths to the Netherlands where they were sold at Amsterdam for 12 stuivers a piece.¹

It was the trans-Atlantic trade in gold, slaves and ivory, however, which drew the Gold Coast peoples irresistibly into the world economy. It would seem, initially, the Gold Coast attracted the Portugese because of its gold and ivory. Indeed, there is evidence that in the sixteenth century the Portugese were actually importing slaves into the country from other parts of West Africa, especially from Benin and the region of the Niger delta.² The search for Guinea gold, however, was soon reinforced by the demand for African slaves. The development of the Portugese slave trade began as a result of the development of sugar plantations, firstly, in Madeira, then in Sao Tome, and finally in Brazil. The Spanish Caribbean colonies, and, to a lesser extent, Mexico and Peru, also became profitable

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1. WIC. Vol.104, Director-General W. Butler's letter dated 4th July 1719. A stuiver was equivalent to 5 cents in Dutch currency of the period.
 2. J.W. Blake, Europeans in West Africa, pp.59-60; Fage, (Madison, 1961), pp.45 and 100 f.n.40.

slave markets for Portuguese traders.¹

The Portuguese monopoly of the Guinea trade, however, was tenuous, and soon Spanish, French, English and Dutch privateers risked capture and possible death to partake in that gainful trade. These privateers doubled their efforts after 1530 - the heyday of the Portuguese gold trade in Guinea - when the Portuguese concentrated their attention on the East and virtually neglected the Guinea Coast.

But it was the conquest of Portugal by Philip II of Spain in 1580 which marked the beginning of the collapse of the Portuguese trade monopoly in Guinea. As a result of this episode, the Portuguese possessions in Brazil and Africa were thrown open to Philip's revolted subjects of Holland. In 1595, the Dutch made their first voyage to the Gold Coast, and were speedily followed by others, in spite of strong opposition by the Portuguese.² The Dutch action was clearly intended to exasperate the Spanish king, but it was also possible that it was part of the Dutch efforts to dominate the carrying trade to the Americas. The potentialities of the demand for slaves in the Spanish American colonies, and in the English and French plantation colonies in the Caribbean, provided the Dutch with a strong economic motive to share in Guinea trade. In the event, the Dutch decided to have their own bases in the country to challenge more effectively the Portuguese monopoly. In 1598, they established themselves at Mouree, Butri, Kormantsi and Kommenda, so that the Portuguese chief trading settlement of Elmina Castle, was contained with a pair of Dutch settlements on each side. In 1625, they stormed Elmina Castle with the help of some of

1. C. R. Boxer, Four Centuries of Portuguese Expansion. A succinct Survey, 1415-1825 (Johannesburg, 1963), p.24.
2. Ward, 1958, p.77.

the local peoples, but failed to dislodge the Portuguese. They succeeded, however, in 1637, and, when this was followed up by the capture of the last Portuguese stronghold at Axim in 1642, the Portuguese monopoly of the Guinea trade ended.¹

In a sense, 1637 may be regarded as one of the great land marks in Gold Coast history. Whatever hopes the Dutch might have entertained after the expulsion of the Portuguese, it soon became clear that they could not follow their predecessor's example of monopolising the Guinea trade. Fage has pointed out that post-revolutionary England and Colbertian France, with their notions of economic nationalisms, could not afford to see the Dutch in sole control of the carrying trade to the Americas.² When settlers from England and France occupied some of the West Indian islands and began to engage in large-scale sugar plantations, an additional impulse was given to traders from these two countries to engage in the Guinea slave trade. Thus began the foundation of English and French West Indian and African Companies, with greater or lesser degree of governmental assistance, aiming at competing with the Dutch in supplying slaves from Africa to the rapidly expanding communities of the West Indies and tropical America. In this scramble for the West African trade, even comparatively smaller and weaker nations like Denmark, Sweden and Brandenburg, urged on by official or mercantile interests who sought to emulate the Dutch example, came in for a share.

A permanent feature of this great competitive era was the erection of forts and castles on the Gold Coast. During the later part of the

1. Ibid., pp.77-79.

2. Fage, 1961, p.46. For the forts see e.g. "A new Check list of the forts and castles of Ghana", ed. J.D. Fage, in Trans.Hist.Soc.Ghana, Vol.IV, pt.I, pp.57-66.

A.W. Lawrence, Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa, (London, 1963).

seventeenth and the early years of the eighteenth, Danish, English and Brandenburger forts appeared on the coast alongside those which the Dutch had captured from the Portuguese, or had built for themselves. From Axim in the west to Accra in the east, Dutch and English forts were interspersed almost evenly at all the major trading centres on the coast. The Danes, after a brief settlement at Amanful, near Cape Coast, finally confined their activities to Accra and, later on, built some unpretentious forts east of it, to a point just beyond the river Volta. It is estimated that, excluding subsidiary trading stations or lodges, there was something like thirty major stone- or brick-built forts, garrisoned by Dutch, English or Danish Companies, each of which had a legal monopoly of their country's trade on the Guinea coast.¹ The headquarters of these traders - Cape Coast Castle, Elmina Castle and Christiansborg Castle, Accra - all served as warehouses where goods from Europe and other places were stored either for sale to the African traders or for onward transmission to Europe and the Americas.

This large concentration of European establishments, coupled with an equally large number of merchant ships, on the coast, greatly increased the volume of trade in slaves, gold, ivory, pepper (Malaguetta) and gum. Sir Reginald Coupland has stated, with scarcely any exaggeration, that the treatment of Africa by Christian Europe in the period of the slave trade constituted "the greatest crime in history".² This judgment has been echoed overtly or by implication by other students of the trade.³ The surprising fact was the apparent callousness with which both the European traders and

1. Fage, 1961, p.46.

2. Sir Reginald Coupland, The British Anti-slavery Movement, (London, 1933) p.35.

3. See eg. E.Donnan, Documents illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America, (Washington D.C. 1930-5). C.Lloyd, The Navy and the Slave Trade, (London 1944) Ch.II. W.E.B.Dubois, The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the U.S.A. 1638-1870, (New York, 1904). H.A.Wyndham, The Atlantic and Slavery, (London, 1935).

the mercantile communities of West Africa joined together in an unholy partnership to provide huge profit for themselves out of the terrible business of denuding Africa of its human resources to provide a labour force for the plantations of the New World. It has been pointed out that the trans-Atlantic slave trade which, in the sixteenth century, had run at a mean level of perhaps 9000 slaves a year, rapidly grew in volume, so that even conservative estimates put the total number of African slaves supplied to America in the eighteenth century at something like 7,000,000, giving an annual mean of approximately eight times the sixteenth century figure.¹ During a period of fifty-six years (1676-1731), the Dutch, who were undeniably the most important of the European traders on the Guinea coast during this period, officially estimated that they exported over £2 million sterling worth of gold, 88,406 slaves, 2,956,649 lb. of ivory and 309,458 lb. wax from West Africa to Europe and America.²

It is difficult to discover how much of these West African commodities were taken from the Gold Coast. It would seem, however, that from the very beginning, Europeans were attracted into the country mainly because of its ancient reputation as the chief source of West African gold.³ At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Dutch complained that during a period of eight years (1668-1676) they were only able to export 3150 marks of gold worth £43,200 sterling from the coast.⁴ The

1. Fage, 1961, p.46.

2. The estimates were derived from figures obtained from WIC Verspreyde Stukken 928. A mark of gold equals 8 ozs. of gold and an ounce of gold was worth about £4.

3. From all early European accounts the gold trade of Guinea paid handsomely. "There are indications, in the correspondence of King John II of Portugal that the Crown came to depend upon a regular supply of gold from Mina". The quotation is from Almeida, Historia de Portugal, III, 554, as cited by J. W. Blake, 1937, op.cit., pp.82-4. Also, K. O. Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885, (London, 1956) ; p.1, f.n.2.

4. WIC Vol.97. Director-Gen. J. Van Sevenhuysen, Elmina, 15th April, 1700.

Royal African Company noted that Accra "is a place of very great trade especially for gold valued at £20,000 per annum."¹ Bosman pointed out that in a good year some 7000 marks of gold worth £200,000 sterling could be obtained on the Gold Coast, and it should be remembered that gold was a much scarcer commodity then than now.²

Nevertheless, it was clear by the 1720's that the gold trade of the country had already passed its peak and that the country was increasingly becoming identified with the slave trade. Director-General Butler reported in 1720 that the gold trade had decreased in volume by something like fifty per cent. during the past ten or twenty years, a phenomenon which he attributed to the "heavy payments which the Negroes receive for their slaves".³ Six years later, the report was that the gold trade had almost dwindled to nothing and that the Gold Coast was fast becoming the "Slave" coast.⁴ The increased demand for slaves on the sugar plantations in the New World which made the European traders and, especially, the interlopers, willing to pay high prices for slaves, clearly decided the Africans to abandon the tedious job of working in the gold pits for the comparatively easy task of raiding for slaves. At the beginning of the century, the price for a male slave was about five ounces worth of gold (£10 sterling) and for female and a healthy child, four ounces (£8 sterling).⁵ The Dutch, English and Danish Governors on the coast accused one another for paying more with a view to engrossing the lion's share of the trade. It appears, however,

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1. T 70/175 The Royal African Company to Parliament, London, 13th February, 1709.
 2. Bosman, 1705, 89. Davies, 1957, p.225.
 3. WIC 104, D-G. Willem Butler, 14th July 1720. WIC 105 Ibid, letter dated 8th May, 1722.
 4. WIC 106, D-G. Pieter Valckenier, Elmina, 16th January, 1726.
 5. There are numerous references to this in all the European records. But see e.g. T 70/1515 Prices of Slaves 1737-1807.

that during this period, the peoples of West Africa were themselves reluctant to part with their gold. To them gold had always meant something more than a medium of exchange. The Portuguese found the coastal peoples using gold as a personal ornament. But gold was also employed in a number of ritual ceremonies, particularly for burials.¹ Thus the large-scale exportation of the metal made the West Africans not only refuse to produce the metal in any great quantity, but even to demand gold instead of trade goods for their slaves. Akwamu merchants, for example, were demanding payment in gold for the slaves they were bringing to Accra.² This attitude provoked a sharp comment from the Royal African Company. In 1729, the Company instructed their servants at Cape Coast Castle that "it was never intended that gold purchased there (Whydah) should be brought to Cape Coast and sunk there; if the native traders would not accept English manufactures they should keep their slaves."³

The reference to the gold from Whydah was actually to the gold sent there by the Portuguese. After their expulsion from Axim, the Portuguese continued to visit the Guinea coast. But their contacts with Lower Guinea - Costa da Mina - were few, fleeting and tenuous. The Portuguese concentrated their slave trading activities in Angola, Benguela, and, to a much smaller extent, the area in Upper Guinea around Cacheau and Bissau. But with the discovery of gold in Minas Gerais, in the last decade of the seventeenth century, it became urgently necessary to find labourers

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1. Bowdich, 1819, p.334. Joseph Dupuis, 1824, p.IVI. Fage, 1961, pp.41-42.
 2. V.G.K, Letter from Governor Franz Boye, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, to the Directors dd. 13th November, 1714. Also, Johan Rask, Kort og sandferdig Reisbeskrirelse til og fra Guinea, (Trondhjem, 1754), p.81.
 3. Royal African Company to John Braithwaite, Robert Cruickshank and Charles Peacke, London, 14th August, 1729. T70/

who were stronger and more fitted for work in the mines than the slaves from Angola and the Congo. This led to the reopening of the slave trade between the Brazilian ports - Rio de Janeiro, Bahia and Pernambuco (Recife), and Lower Guinea.¹ They brought gold, hides, sugar and tobacco to West Africa, and took away slaves. In 1724, the Dutch reported that the Portuguese were in such great demand for slaves that they needed ships to collect slaves from other parts of West Africa for sale to the Portuguese at Elmina.² A year later, the Portuguese slave trade was described as "the artery and nerves" of the Gold Coast trade.³ The Portuguese, however, concentrated their efforts at the Dahomean and the Benin coasts. They settled at Whydah in 1721 and, after the Dahomean conquest of that state in 1727-28, it is estimated that an average of 6000 slaves were exported to Brazil annually.⁴

The Portuguese trade was so lucrative that it became one of the basic causes of Anglo-Dutch conflicts on the coast in the first half of the eighteenth century. The Dutch claimed the right to force all Luso-Brazilian ships trading on the Gold Coast to call first at Elmina and pay a tax of ten per cent. The English ostensibly resented the Dutch interference in Portuguese freedom of trade and, partly to frustrate the Dutch efforts, but mainly to further their own trade interests, they required the Portuguese to trade in the Cape Coast roads on payment of five per cent. duty only.⁵ Moreover, in order to help the Portuguese ships elude capture by Dutch cruising vessels, the English gave the captains of Portuguese ships not only

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1. C.R. Boxer, Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire, (Oxford, 1963), pp.16-17.
 2. WIC 106 D.-G. P. Valckenier, Elmina, dated 8th Jan. and 8th May, 1724.
 3. WIC 106 Ibid., 10th July, 1725.
 4. Boxer, (Oxford, 1963), p.17.
Form more information about the Dahomean conquest of Whydah see e.g. WIC Vol.107, D.-G. Robert Norre's letter dd. 16th May, 1727.
 5. WIC Vol.922, D.-G. P. Valckenier's letter dd. 15th June, 1725.

English passports, but also allowed them to fly the English flag.¹

Nevertheless, the scarcity of gold on the Gold Coast continued to worry the European traders because the Brazilian gold was only a small fillip in comparison with the gold trade in the country itself. The situation must have become even worse when, in the early 1730's, the King of Portugal decreed that his subjects should send no more Brazilian gold to West Africa. The Dutch thought that the decree was unlikely to be ignored as the Portuguese Crown was determined to enforce it.² Indeed, this seemed to have been the case for, shortly afterwards, the Portuguese and other European traders were taking gold from the Dahomean coast, a move which forced the King of Dahomey to place an embargo on the export of gold from his kingdom.³

The Gold Coast, during this period, was clearly an area of great commercial significance. The trade with the Sudan coupled with the maritime trade in slaves, gold, ivory and cloths brought a general prosperity to the Gold Coast peoples. This prosperity manifested itself almost immediately in the growth of large coastal trading centres in areas where, formerly, there had only been tiny fishing and salt-making villages. Towns like Sekondi, Shama, Kommenda, Elmina, Cape Coast, Anomabo, Winneba, Bereku and Accra grew and waxed on the unprecedented prosperity brought in by the intensive commercial activities. Some of these towns which had previously been mere outlets of their respective coastal kingdoms, either replaced the capitals of these states or rivalled them in importance and wealth.

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1. See e.g. WIC: Vols. 108, 109. Letters from D.-Gs. Robert Norre and Jan Pranger, dated 14th April, 1728 and 14th February, 1733, respectively.
 2. WIC 109, D.-G. Jan Pranger's letter dated 3rd. April, 1732.
 3. T 70/1470 fol. 21. William's Fort Whydah, 1737.

There was a constant flow of peoples from the interior into these coastal towns, not as invading hordes, but merchant-adventurers of various degree; or they may have come to provide agricultural and market labour which the traders would depend on. For example, Anomabo, which started off as a small Etsi village, and later became one of the ports of the Fanti state, became such an important coastal trading centre that Bosman could write, "The Town Anomabo may very well pass for the strongest on the whole coast affording as many armed men as the whole kingdoms of Saboe and Commany; and yet is proportion but a fifth part of Fantyn".¹ The large-scale importation of cowrie shells, the established currency of the Western Sudan, must have given the coastal communities an unprecedented purchasing power in their dealings with the northern peoples from whom they obtained their gold, slaves and ivory.

The coastal states themselves put their commerce on a new basis. They exercised strict control on the trading paths and refused to give permission to inland traders to come down to the coast to deal directly with the European traders until they had paid heavy tolls. In due course, they set up inland markets to deal with the inland traders instead of allowing them to the coast. The Accra people set up a market at Abonce, two hours journey from their capital of Great Accra, where the inland traders from Akyem, Akwamu, Aquimena and Kwawu came to exchange their gold and slaves for salt and other European merchandise. The king appointed his trade representative who saw to it that only the Accras carried the goods from the European forts to Abonce and also supervised the trade relations

1. Bosman, 1705, op.cit., p.56.

there. He had full powers to regulate customs duties and to settle trade disputes. He could close the trading paths to traders who refused to pay the king's duties.¹ When there were troubles between the coastal states and the inland states, the former not only closed the trading paths through their country to the coast, but they refused to allow the inland traders permission to enter their inland markets as well. On the coast itself, the Fantis levied a toll of 340 guilders (£34 sterling) on any ship which arrived at any of their ports.² One of the results of this commercial reorganisation was the appearance of coastal "middlemen" whose wealth in slaves and money surpassed that of most of the petty coastal chiefs, and therefore came to wield great influence in coast trade and politics.³

The most interesting and perhaps the most important development was the reorganisation of the states behind the coastal kingdoms. It is reasonable to suppose that the medieval trade with the Sudan was bound to have repercussions in the political sphere. The effect, however, was not as politically revolutionary as might be supposed, for the Sudanese trade did not involve the introduction of firearms, an important instrument for would-be creators of empires, into the country. Indeed, it was only with the advent of the Moroccans, in the late sixteenth century, that firearms were introduced into the Sudan itself. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Insocco, the southern terminus of the Djenne trade route, had no

1. Tilleman, 1697, op.cit., pp.100-102.

Also, John Ogilby, Africa, being an accurate description of the Regions of Aegypt, Barbary, Lybia and Billedutgerid, the land of Negroes, Guinea, Aethopia and the Abyssines... (London, 1670), pp.434-35.

2. WIC Vol.484, D.-G. Willem de la Palma's letter dated 10th Oct, 1703.

3. See next Chapter.

firearms.¹ Nor did the Portuguese, during their long monopoly of the Gold Coast trade, appear to have introduced firearms on any large scale. Admittedly, the peoples of Axim and Elmina, who were the allies of the Portuguese, had some firearms with which they engaged in minor skirmishes with their enemies, such as the Ahanta peoples. It seems, however, that firearms were not found in many of the coastal states. In a battle between the Asebus and the Etsii people during this period, the Asebus were able to defeat the Etsiis, who opposed them with superior numbers, largely because of about 60 or 70 muskets, and two small cannons which the Dutch gave them.² At that time, the Gold Coast armies relied mainly on bows and arrows, shields and javelins and spears. The Aowins were said to have been experts in shooting poisoned arrows.³ Even the Akwamus, who were known to have been capable of sending over 25,000 armed men to the field, were described as being "so nicely dexterous in shooting arrows".⁴ At the beginning of this century, the Bekwais told Rattray that, in the past, they fought with swords, shields and stones, and that during the Ashanti and Denkyera wars (1698-1701), they had only thirty guns.⁵ Indeed, it appears that during the period when firearms were unknown, wars in the country were nothing of importance. Even at the end of the seventeenth century, Bosman could write, "a national offensive war may well be managed here with 4,000 men in the

1. Chart 743 (1629) op.cit. Mr. Iver Wilks has indicated that Insocco had four guns. This is not correct. In the context, "geen vier geweeren" could only mean "no firearms". In old Dutch "vier" meant "fire" or "four". I am indebted to Miss A.P.Mollema for drawing attention to this important fact.

See I. Wilks, "The Northern Factor in Ashanti History" in Journal of African History, II, 1 (1961) op.cit. and "Begho and the Mande" in The Northern Factor in Ashanti History (Gloucester, 1961), op.cit., pp.4-5

2. Chart 743, (1629) op.cit.

3. Bosman, 1705, op.cit., p.79.

4. Ibid., 1705, op.cit. pp.184-86.

5. R. S. Rattray, Ashanti Law and Constitution, (London, 1929), p.148.

in the field....sometimes the number of what they call an Army does not amount to more than 2,000 (men)".¹

The introduction of firearms into the Gold Coast on a large scale was the direct outcome of the overthrow of the Portuguese trading monopoly, and the subsequent appearance on that coast of the English, the Dutch, Danes and Brandenburgers. Bosman, realising the dangers inherent in that kind of traffic, shrewdly remarked that by that action the Europeans were providing the Africans with "a knife to cut our own throats". He added, however, that the Dutch had to indulge in the importation of arms for, if they refused to do that, the other Europeans would import them and thereby engross the greater part of the coast trade since the Africans were in great demand of that commodity.² The result was that, soon afterwards, the traditional bow and arrow were "not much in vogue amongst the coastal Negroes".³

In the first half of the seventeenth century, when the Gold Coast market had not yet been flooded with firearms, the best known inland state was Akanny.⁴ During this period, this state was bounded on the west and the south-west by Twifo and Abramboe respectively; on the east by Akyem, on the north and north-west by Inta and Bono respectively and on the south by Atty (Etsi).⁵

The Akanny country has been identified with the present-day Assin state of Ghana.⁶ The available evidence, however, tends to suggest that

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1. Bosman, A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea, 2nd Edition (London, 1721), p.153.
 2. Bosman, 1705, op.cit., p.184.
 3. Bosman, 1705, op.cit., p.186.
 4. For information about Akanny see e.g. Bosman, op.cit., p.77; John Ogilby, Africa, (London 1670); John Barbot, 'A Description of South Guinea' in Churchill's Collection of Voyages, (London, 1732), p.175. and 188 ff; Ratelband, 1953, op.cit., ch.IV, pp.XCII-XCIII.
 5. Chart 743 (1629), op.cit.
 6. See e.g. I. Wilks, The Northern Factor in Ashanti History (Gloucester, 1961) op.cit., p.5; G. Macdonald, The Gold Coast: Past and Present, (London, 1898) p. 104. Macdonald argues that there was no state called Akanny at all, and that the "Akanny Sika" which Bosman referred to, was none other than gold coming from Akyem. "Sika", of course, is the Akan word for gold. It is now used to refer to money in general.

this was not the case. Undoubtedly, some inhabitants of Assin were living in the Akanny country during this period. Early in the nineteenth century, Bowdich found that the capitals of the two rebellious Assin chiefs, Tsibu and Aputei, were located in the southern part of the modern Adansi division of Ashanti.¹ It appears, however, that the Akanny of the seventeenth century was the old Akan state of "Arcania", whose territorial boundary then embraced the whole of modern Adansi, parts of Akyem and Denkyera and Southern Ashanti. At that time, it was probable that the southern boundary of the Akanny state was the River Pra. On this point, Bowdich's observations on the Assin country are significant. He noted that Assin Manso, the modern capital of the Apimenim division of the Assin state, was not only the former great Fanti market, but also it was "the last town of the Fantee territory".² Again, Bowdich wrote, "Every account I received afterwards, confirmed the boundary of the Fantee and Assin territories to be between Mansue and Fousou."³ Also, some versions of Fanti tradition point out that, in the olden days, the Fanti country stretched from the coast to the River Pra, and it is significant to notice that a number of towns in the Assin country today pay a sort of feudal due to some Fanti chiefs.⁴ The movement of the Assins from the Adanse area into their present country was the result of political upheavals in that area dating from the rise of

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1. Ansa, the capital of the third Assin chief, Amo, was also located in this region. Bowdich, 1819, op.cit., p.26.
 2. Bowdich, 1819, op.cit., pp.19 and 24.
 3. Ibid., 1819, p.25, f.n. "Fousou", of course, is the modern Assin Fosu. Bowdich in fact believed that the Assin country was the area between the right bank of the River Pra, and the Twisa mountains. On entering Praso, the first Assin town, he observed: "...the Assins may be considered, collectively, a (more) mannerly and orderly people than the Ashantees..." Ibid., pp.25-27.
 4. Towns like Bosomadwe and Okuruwa in the state of Assin Atandasu, still pay feudal dues to the Omanhene of Abora state because "the Fantis formerly owned all the land", they say.

Denkyera. The Assin country was originally the home of the Etsii peoples, over whom the Fantis exercised some form of overlordship.¹ Perhaps the Akanny state was the Adanse state reputed to have been the first Akan state.²

All early accounts indicate that the Akanny people were the most important inland traders in the country. The Akannists, like the contemporary Hausa and Mande traders, were itinerant merchants who frequented the coastal trading centres for European goods and sent them far inland for resale to the peoples living there. The Akannists were known to have traded as far West as the Qua Qua coast, though they did not venture as far east as the Ardra and the Benin coasts. Their chief trading path was the "Assin path" which they seemed to have used without much hindrance from the peoples through whose countries they passed. Some of these Akanny merchants were known to have settled temporarily at many of the coastal trading centres where they acted as brokers for traders from their own country as well as other inland tribes. Such Akanny merchants usually spoke the Portuguese language.³

It has been pointed out that the Akannists were in close commercial contact with the peoples of Insocco and Wenchi, whose locally manufactured cloths they valued highly. It would appear that, in course of time, the cloth industry spread into the forest until the Akannists themselves became weavers of fine cloths. Early in the eighteenth century, a Dutch factor

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1. A number of towns in the Fanti and Assin countries claim to have had an Etsi origin.
 2. See e.g. C.C. Reindorf, History, Gold Coast and Asante, op.cit., pp.48-49.
E. Meyerowitz, Akan traditions of Origin, (London, 1952), op.cit. and The Sacred State of the Akan.
 3. What was, perhaps, more important, and certainly more lasting, was the spread of the use of the Portuguese language as a commercial lingua franca all along the coast. In 1715, the Dutch factor at Apam believed the story of troop movements by the Akyems told him by an Agona chief because the latter spoke to him directly in Portuguese. NBKG 82 G.Hendrik, Apam, to D.-G. Haring, 6/6/1715

was instructed to present one fine "Akanny cloth" to the king of Whydah.¹ Also, the Ashanti king, Opoku Ware, presented one such cloth to the Dutch at Elmina which was said to have been worth about 50 bend^as (£400 sterling), in 1725.²

The Akanny traders were apparently received well on the coast, and the European traders vied with one another to court their friendship, since the Akannists supplied about two-thirds of the gold received on the coast. In 1645, the Dutch ordered a monthly salary to be paid to the Akanny chief "Correnkijn", as it was being done for the chiefs of Mouree and Elmina.³ In 1680, the Danes at Fredericksburg Castle at Amanful, near Cape Coast, made monthly payments to the king of Fetu, the Dey of Fetu, the cabuceer of Cape Coast as well as the king of Akanny's trade representative at Cape Coast.⁴

In the second half of the century, however, the most important inland states were Akyem, Denkyera and Akwamu. The emergence of these states may be accounted for by the determination of some enterprising families to organise a formidable state, capable of controlling the gold and slave resources in the Gold Coast interior. The peoples of these well-organised states, whose loyalty to the paramount chief transcended family and tribal loyalties, could be made to work in the innumerable gold pits, rarely exceeding about thirty feet in depth, scattered all over the interior.

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1. N.B.K.G. 82 Van Naersen, Whydah to D.-G. Haring, dd 25th March, 1715.
 2. WIC Vol.106, Letter from D.-G. Pieter Valckenier, Elmina, 11th July, 1725. Perhaps this was a "Kente cloth" still woven in Ashanti. The Dutch sent it to Holland to be placed in a Museum as an "Antiquity".
 3. Ratelband, 1953, op.cit., p.37. "Correnkijn" is clearly Kurankyi, which is a well-known name in both Assin and Adansi. See WIC 97, D.-G. William de la Palma's letter dd 1st May, 1703.
 4. V.G.K. Incoming and outgoing letters and documents from Guinea, 1624, 1659-80, April, 1680. The Danish fort was bought by the English in 1685 for strategic reasons, and renamed Fort Royal.

Moreover, they could be armed and engaged in slave raiding expeditions to provide slaves who could be forced to work in the gold pits or sold to the coastal communities. The general prosperity in the country and the introduction of firearms in appreciable quantities made the creation of such states possible.

Akyem was undoubtedly an integral part of the old Akanny kingdom of the Akans. In fact, during this period, Akyem was known as "Great Akan".¹ It was then bounded on the north by a state called Ahoy, on the north-west by Inta, on the east by Akwamu, on the south and south-east by Sonquay and Aqua respectively, and on the north-east by Kwawu. In the 1620's, Akyem was mainly noted for slaves but, during the second half of the century, Akyem was one of the main sources of gold in the country. Tilleman points out that the bulk of the gold which was received at Accra and the neighbouring beaches came from "Acania which lies West-North-West of Aquamboe" and that the Akyems were continually at work in the gold pits under the direct supervision of their chief Bomba.² Bosman also remarked that Akyem "furnishes as large quantities of gold as any land I know..."³ In the early years of the eighteenth century Akyem was known as one of the main sources of gold in the country.

It was probable that, initially, Akyem was under one monarch, but by the beginning of the eighteenth century she was governed by a number of chiefs. Bosman noted that Akyem "for as far as it is known to us, was formerly under a Monarchal Government", but that because the then ruler was a minor who showed "but too palpable signs of a Cruel Nature, hath not been

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1. During this period, the Akyem boundary must have included what is now South-East Ashanti; it is significant that parts of Eastern Ashanti are still known as Asante-Akyem. But see Reindorf, History, op.cit., p.61.
 2. Eric Tilleman, (1697), op.cit., pp.115-116.
 3. Bosman, (1705), op.cit., p78.
 4. Akyem and Eguira were the two main sources of gold during this period, see N.B.K.G. 82, Haring's letter dd. 11th November, 1715.

able to make himself Master of the whole land ... For the Governing Men of the kingdom, fearing he will prove a great Tyrant, to restrain him, have taken a part of the Administration into their own hands..."¹ By 1715, Akyem had been constituted into the modern states of Akyem Abuakwa and Akyem Kotoku under Ofori and Apenten, respectively.² Between them, they controlled the gold pits in the upper reaches of the Birim and the Pra rivers, and raided the neighbouring Inta and Kwawu peoples for slaves.

It is not clear what political association bound these two Akyem states, but it would appear that, in matters of foreign relations, they acted together for their mutual interests. For instance, in 1715, they acted together in sending ambassadors to the Fanti chiefs who were assembled at Abora, to protest against Fanti interference in their quarrels with the Akannists.³ During the Akyem and Ashanti war of 1717, which ended in the death of the King of Ashanti, the Akyem Abuakwas co-operated with the Kotokus who had initiated the war.⁴ In fact, no distinction whatsoever was made in contemporary documents between the two Akyem states and, together, they were described as "the most potent power in the interior to the leeward".⁵

Akwamu⁶ in the 1620's, was a small state lying in the immediate

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1. Bosman, 1705, p.78. For more information about internal dissensions in Akyem, see also Barbot, 1732, op.cit., p.189.
 2. N.B.K.G. 82, Boerhaven, Bereku, to D.-G. Haring, 20th May, 1715.
 3. N.B.K.G. 82, J. Visbeek, Kormantsi to D.-G. Haring, 26th Sept., 1715.
 4. N.B.K.G. 82, J. Doutraeu, Accra, to D.-G. Haring dd. 10th Oct., 1715. M. Priestley and Ivor Wilks, "Ashanti Kings in the Eighteenth Century.." in Journal of African History, (1960), op.cit., p.123, f.n.62
 5. See e.g. T 70/1464, William Baillie's Kommenda Diary, entry for 19th May 1715, postscript. N.B.K.G. 82, E.Roberts to D.-G. Haring, Elmina, 31/2/1715
 6. Mr. Ivor Wilks has dealt with the history of Akwamu in some detail. His main works on Akwamu are: 1. "The Rise of the Akwamu Empire, 1650-1710, in Trans.Hist.Soc.Ghana, Vol.III, pt.2. Achimota, 1957, pp.99-136; 2. "The Rise and Fall of a West-African Empire: Akwamu 1650-1750" - an unpublished M.A.thesis in the Univ. of Wales; 3. "Akwamu and Otublohum" An Eighteenth-Century Akan MarriageArrangement" in Africa, Vol.XXIX, No.4, October 1959; 4. "A Note on Twifo and Akwamu" in Trans.Hist.Soc. Ghana, III, 3, 1958, pp.215-17.

hinterland of Agona across the trade routes inland from the coast to Akyem, Kwawu and the farther north. At that time Akwamu was neither reputed as a source of gold or slaves and the Dutch cartographer, apparently thinking of the forms of control which the Akwamus exercised over the trade routes, uncharitably described them as "diefachtich volck", a predatory people.¹ It might be, as Wilks suggests, that the Akwamu state, during this period, must have extended as far as the upper Birim river, and even further westwards over the area between the Pra and the Birim.² In that case, the traditional hostility between the Akyems and the Akwamus may have originated in their determination to monopolise the gold pits in this area. In the late seventeenth and the early years of the eighteenth century, Akwamu extended her domination over the Kwawus, the Krepis, the Akwapims, and the Ga-Adangme peoples. The main impulse behind the Akwamu policy was clearly economic. First, Akwamu secured effective control over the trade routes in the hinterland of the Accra kingdom, and thereby made the Accras economically dependent on them, by the incorporation of the Guan and Kyerepong peoples of modern Akwapim into the Akwamu state. By defeating the Accra kingdom itself, in 1680-1, the Akwamus reaped fixed revenues, such as the rents from the European settlements at Accra, and variable revenues, such as the tolls which they exacted from the Akyems and other inland traders in their inland market at Nyanoase. The sources of income enabled Akwamu to finance those major campaigns that extended her power eastwards to the coast of Dahomey and north-eastwards into the Afram plains. The extension of Akwamu overlordship over the Kwawu and the Krepi peoples of the Afram plains was certainly

1. Chart 743, 1629, op.cit.

2. I. Wilks, 1957, op.cit., pp.99-100.

intended to monopolise the gold and slave resources in that area. Bosman discovered that the gold which reached the Dutch fort at Ponni, east of Accra, came from "Quahoe which abounds in that metal", and that the Kwawus passed through "Aquamboe to Accra where they drive the greatest part of their trade."¹ In 1709, the Danes commented that the Akwamu campaigns against the peoples of the Afram plains were detrimental to the slave trade, because "Quahoe is the place from where the slaves come."²

The rise of Denkyera as a powerful inland state may be dated from the second half of the seventeenth century, since that state was unheard of on the coast in the 1620's.³ This conjecture seems to receive support in Bosman's assertion that Denkyera, which was "formerly restrained to a small compass of land, containing but an inconsiderable number of inhabitants, is, by their valour, so improved in Power, that they are respected and honoured by all their neighbouring nations; all which they have thought to fear them, except Asiante and Akim who are yet stronger than they".⁴

The consolidation of the Denkyera state must be attributed to some families from the princely houses of the old Akanny kingdom. It is interesting to notice that the old Denkyera capital, Bankesieso, was located in present-day Adansi state, on a site near the modern gold-mining town of Obuasi.⁵ The aim was clearly to create a powerful state out of the tottering Akanny kingdom, capable of sustaining and meeting the rapidly expanding economy in the Gold Coast hinterland. Such a state, with increased supply of firearms, could control the gold resources in the upper reaches of the Tano, Ankobra,

1. Bosman, 1705, op.cit., p.326.

2. V.G.K. Letter from Erich Ligaard, dated 3rd May, 1709.

3. See Chart 743, (1629), op.cit.

4. Bosman, 1705, op.cit., pp.72-73.

5. Ward, 1958, op.cit., p.53.

the Ofin and the middle part of the Pra rivers. Furthermore, such a centralised state could conduct effectively slave raiding expeditions among the less sophisticated Bono and Inta peoples to the north, as well as control the trade routes from the interior to the coast from Axim in the west to Cape Coast in the east. By the early 1690's, Denkyera had realised her aims and was in control of the gold-producing countries of Wassa, Inkassa, Igyina, Great Inkassa, Aowin and Twifo. In about 1697, the Denkyera incorporated Akanny itself into their state and thereby virtually monopolised the economic resources in the hinterland of the western Gold Coast.

The Denkyeras were certainly bad administrators. The Denkyera state was centralised in the sense that ultimate political power rested with the king and his advisers, though the internal administration of the tributary states were left in the hands of their own chiefs. But the Denkyeras seemed to have been preoccupied with ruthless exploitation of the tributary states, so that what we know of her history is a record of internal discord and disunity. Bosman comments, "Dinkira, elevated by its great Riches and Power became so arrogant, it looked on all other Negroes with a contemptible eye, esteeming them no more than its slaves; which rendered it the object of their common hatred ..."¹ The arbitrary demands of the Denkyerahene on the nascent Ashanti Union was one of the immediate causes of the Ashanti and Denkyera wars.² In fact, during their conflicts with the Ashantis, Denkyera's relations with her tributary states were so bad that it was largely due to their lukewarm support and even their open rebellion, which finally made the Ashantis the victors. In June 1700, there were persistent rumours at Elmina that Denkyera had started troop movements, and

1. Bosman, 1705, pp.74-75.

2. Ibid., p;75; Ward, 1958, op.cit., p.120.

that it was unknown whether they intended to attack the Ashantis, the Fantis, the Twifos, the Adoms, the Wassas or the peoples living in the Ankobra area.¹ The Dutch, whose trade was being badly affected by the uncertainties and apprehensions arising out of these rumours, invited the Denkyeras, the Twifos, the Akännists, the Cabes Terras and other states involved in the disputes, to Elmina for a settlement. In the following month, it was reported that representatives from these states had been to Elmina and that, in the presence of the chief factors, Pieter Nuyts and William Bosman, they had solemnly promised to end all wars and to try to prevent all disturbances in future. They also indicated their willingness to keep open the trading paths and to make them safe for the inland traders to use.² The Dutch apparently failed in their mediatory efforts for, in May of the following year, the report was that trade was bad because the Denkyeras, "proud of their former victories", were always engaged in hostilities with their neighbours. It was said that the Denkyeras had ruined the states of Akanny, Twifo, Adom, Wassa and Aowin so that these states had decided to close all the "passes", and to prevent the transportation of firearms to Denkyera. The Dutch commented that since none of these states dared to attack Denkyera, it was hoped that the Ashantis, who were being supplied with arms, would initiate the attack.³ In fact, the Akännists

1. WIC Vol.97. D.-G. Jan van Sevenhuysen's letter dated 21st June 1700.

2. Ibid., letter dated 1st July, 1700.

3. There is no evidence to support Bosman's acid comment that the Denkyeras foolishly allowed the Ashantis to pass through their territory with the firearms they had bought on the coast. Reindorf points out that the Ashantis received their firearms through the Akwamus in the east. It would seem, however, that the Ashantis also travelled along the Assin path to Cape Coast and Anomabo, where they bought large quantities of ammunition. In that case, they might have received active support from the rebellious Akanny and Cabes Terra States, who controlled these trading pathways. See Bosman, 1705, p.76; C.C. Reindorf, The History of the Gold Coast and Asante, 2nd Edition, (Basel n.d.), p.53.

not only supported the Ashantis, but welcomed them as their liberators.¹

The character of the relationship between Akyem, Akwamu and Denkyera was one of intense rivalry and hostility. Undoubtedly, personal rivalry of their chiefs and dynastic disputes were also contributory factors. But it would seem that the decisive factor was economic. The fact that all these states were near neighbours aiming at political and economic expansion, was bound to raise problems which could lead to wars. The struggle for gold and slave resources may have led to extravagant land claims which gave an additional impulse to the power politics in the interior. Akyem, Akwamu, and Denkyera all obtained their slaves from the northern states of Inta, Bono, Kwawu and Krepi, and it was certainly the case that commercial rivalries accounted for many of the wars among these states.

It might be that Akwamu directed her expansionist aims to the east and north-east largely because of Akyem opposition in the west. Bosman comments that the Akwamu power "is also very terrible to all their neighbouring countries, except Akim"², and the might of Akyem was sufficient to frustrate any ambitions Akwamu might have had in that direction. It appears probable, however, that during the "Dark Age of Akwamu history", when she was a small state lying behind the coastal Agona kingdom, Akwamu was in some feudal relationship with Akyem, and that her reluctance to honour her obligations as a vassal of Akyem, because of her increased power and prestige, led to the disputes between them. It may be that when the royal house of Akwamu left Twifo and settled at Asamankese in the modern Akyem Abuakwa state,³

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1. WIC Vol.97, J. van Sevenhuysen's letter dated 16th November, 1701. Reindorf (p.57) says the Ashanti army was assisted by Pra Agyensam, the Chief of Assin Kushyia. Kushyia is on the left bank of the Pra near the modern town of Praso.
 2. Bosman, 1705, p.65; I. Wilks, 1957, op.cit., p.102.
 3. Ward, 1958, op.cit., p.55; I. Wilks, in Trans.Hist.Soc.Ghana, III, 3, 1958, op.cit., pp.215-17; Barbot, 1732, p.182.

they entered into an Akyem dominated territory. If this supposition is correct, then it would help to explain Bosman's contention that the hostility between Akyem and Akwamu originated from the latter's refusal to pay a feudal due to the former. In that case, "the feudal due" must have been a land-tax which Ansa Sasraku, the reputed founder of the Akwamu state, neglected to pay, and thereby became a bone of contention between the Akyems and his successors, Basua and Ado.¹

The forms of control which Akwamu exercised over the trading paths leading from the coast into the interior clearly angered the Akyems. This was particularly the case with regard to the trading path leading from Winneba and Senya Bereku through Agona to Akyem and the farther north. One of the cardinal principles guiding Akwamu foreign policy was to exert some kind of influence in Agona. This would enable her not only to secure her western frontier, but also to prevent the Akyems and other interior traders from reaching the coastal trading centres of Winneba and Bereku. This was because, if that happened, trade would be diverted from Accra to these areas, and thereby make it impossible for Akwamu to exact tolls on the Akyem path to Accra. Thus as early as 1659, Akwamu is found in alliance with Agona, and in conflict with Accra and Akyem.² Twenty years later, Agona and Gomua forces assisted Akwamu in the final overthrow of the Accra kingdom.³ The Agonas, however, resented Akwamu interference in their affairs, and in 1688 there were rumours of impending alliance between Agona and Akyem.⁴ Akwamu

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1. Bosman, 1705, p.69; for other possible interpretations, however, see I. Wilks, 1957, op.cit., p.123. Wilks' supposition that the Akwamuhene borrowed money from the Akyems seems rather far-fetched.
 2. I. Wilks, 1957, p.117.
 3. L. F. Roemer, 1769, op.cit., p.100.
 4. V.G.K. Nicholai Fensman's Books entry for 6th July, 1688; L. F. Roemer, 1769, p.102.

reacted by attacking Agona. In a series of battles which followed, the Agonas were defeated, and Akwamu annexed the coastal strip of Agona to Accra, in order to control that area more effectively.¹ Indeed, Akwamu was so concerned with what happened at Winneba and Bereku that they strenuously refused to allow the Dutch and the English to strengthen their position there by building more forts in addition to what they already had in those places. English efforts to build a lodge at Shidoe, a mile east of Bereku, in addition to their fort at Winneba was keenly contested by the Akwamus. The report in October 1713 was that Shidoe had been destroyed by the "Quomboes who took away the Company's effects there, to the value £500".² In the following year, it was reported that "the settlement at Shidoe by reason of difference between Anguinas (Agonas) and Quomboes, has been more chargeable than expected."³ The Dutch settlement at Senya Bereku was established in face of great opposition from Akwamu. It was alleged that the Akwamuhene swore to prevent the Dutch from settling there if it even cost him his life. The king argued that the establishment of a fort at Bereku would jeopardise the trade at Accra, and his relations with the European traders since the Akyems would no longer trade there. Moreover, he would lose his "gold purses".⁴

Akyem and Akwamu hostility was such that the former was known as having made a number of incursions in the latter's territory during this period; in 1699, for example, in face of Akyem threat, Abo, the Akwamuhene, fearing that the Akyems might sack his capital, took the precaution of

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1. I. Wilks, 1957, pp.117-118; Eric Tilleman, 1697, op.cit., pp.86-101.
 2. T 70/5. Copies of letters by Seth Grosvenor, James Phipps and Robert Bleau, Cape Coast Castle, 6th October, 1713.
 3. Ibid., letter dated 24th May, 1714.
 4. WIC Vol.99, Letter from Director-General Pieter Nuyts, Elmina, 24th April, 1706. By the "gold purses" the Akwamuhene meant the tolls which he collected on the Akyem path to Accra.

sending his gold to the king of Ladoku, east of Accra, for safe-keeping, presumably on the grounds that the Akyem armies could not penetrate thus far.¹ Later in the same year, Akyem sacked two Akwamu towns, taking one hundred people prisoner, and early in 1700 followed this up by the capture of another town.² Akyem harassment of Akwamu provoked Tilleman to remark that "when the Akwamus, on their oath and fetish, say they are going to make war in the east, it is then that they will generally turn to the west."³

The intense rivalry and hostility among these states paved the way for the formation of alliances among them. Unfortunately, since the European traders were mainly confined to their trading settlements, their reports are not of much help in giving detailed accounts of such alliances. Moreover, unlike the coastal states, whose developments were under the constant attention of the European traders, the inland states were comparatively unknown. However, the few references to them indicate that their alliances were essentially military in character. The Akyems usually acted in the Denkyera interest. The repeated attacks on Akwamu by Akyem in the late seventeenth century were probably calculated to prevent the Akwamus from giving any effective help to the Ashantis, who were known to have been in close relations with them. Bosman, who was on the coast during that time, says the Akyems entered the war on the side of Denkyera, and that the Akyems lost about 30,000 men "besides that a great cabuceer of Akim with all his men were cut off."⁴ In 1702, King Ado had to cut short his campaign at Whydah, on the grounds that, in May of that year, the Queen-mother of

1. V.G.K. Day-Journal 1698-1703 entry for 10th October, 1699.

2. Ibid., entries for 10th October, 1699, and 10th January, 1700.

3. Eric Tilleman, 1697, p.114.

4. Bosman, 1705, op.cit., p.76.

Akwamu sent messengers to Labadi, Accra, to try to convey to the Akwamuhene the news that Denkyera, in alliance with Akyem, had defeated the Ashantis, and that the fear in the Akwamu capital was that the allies might turn their victorious arms on Akwamu. Fortunately, an English long-boat was lying at anchor off Labadi at that time, and the message was quickly conveyed to Abo. He hurried back to his capital, only to discover that the Ashanti set-back was temporary, and that Akwamu was not likely to be attacked.¹

It is clear, then that the seventeenth and the early years of the eighteenth century was an era which saw great political, economic and social changes on the Gold Coast. The medieval trade with the cities of Western Sudan was quickly superseded by the trans-Atlantic trade in slaves, gold and ivory to Europe and the Americas. The increased volume of trade largely as a result of the efficient means of transportation at the hands of the Europeans, attracted merchant adventurers and other peoples to move from the grassland areas into the forests and coastlands of the country, areas which had been recorded hitherto as economically backward. In the course of time, coastal fishing and salt-making villages grew into large urban trading centres. Since the peoples of these towns came from all parts of the country, they took little or no account of the traditional authorities. Instead, they relied on the guns of the forts and castles for their defence against external enemies. Thus

1. V.G.K. Day-Journal 1698-1703, entries from 4th May to 9th August, 1702.

Also, *ibid.*, entries from 11th August to 22nd August, 1702.

Also, I. Wilks, 1957, pp.125-6.

in a very real sense one begins to find references to Elmina as a Dutch town, and Cape Coast as an English town. At Accra, where there were Danish, Dutch and English forts, Danish, Dutch and English Accra came into existence. It was this phase of development which Fage has neatly summed up as the "about face"¹ in Gold Coast, and, indeed, in West African history. On the Gold Coast, the political effects of the "about face" were far-reaching. Before the whiteman came, Akan political practice had been based on government by kindred groups. An Akan state was essentially an association of loosely united family groups who traced descent to a common ancestry. But the introduction of firearms into the country in appreciable quantities by the Europeans made possible the reorganisation of states on a basis which transcended tribal or family loyalties. This development manifested itself most in the forest states behind the coastal kingdoms. Kingdoms such as Denkyera, Akwamu and Akyem supplanted the old tribal kingdoms such as Akanny (Adanse). All these forest kingdoms aimed at political and economic expansion, therefore their political association was characterised by mutual rivalries and jealousies. On the whole, however, Denkyera and Akyem usually acted together in opposing Akwamu and it was to preserve her own political and economic independence that Akwamu assisted the creation of the nascent Ashanti state to balance the might of her enemies.

1. Fage, (Madison 1961), p.51

CHAPTER II
THE RISE OF ASHANTI

The beginnings of the Ashanti kingdom are rather obscure. It is clear, however, that the majority of the peoples who later on themselves constituted the nucleus of the Ashanti Union, were originally living in the Adanse and Amanse districts of modern Ashanti. The traditions of origin of almost all the important Ashanti divisional states¹ indicate that their founding ancestors migrated from these areas. The Mampongs say that their ancestors came from Ahensan in Adanse. The Kumasis, Dwabens, Kumawus, Kokofus, Bekwais and the Nsutas, on the other hand, say they "came out of a hole" at Asantemanso. The ancestors of the Ashantis, therefore, were formerly subjects of the Akanny state which, we have indicated, may confidently be identified with the old Adanse kingdom, "the first seat of the Akan nation where God first began the creation of the world".²

The origins of these migrations northwards are probably complex. The Ashantis themselves attribute the thrust northwards to two basic causes: dynastic disputes and over-population. For example, the Mampongs say that Maniampong, the reputed founder of their state, left Ahensan because of a disputed succession following the death of the Ahensan chief, Kwakye Panyin (the elder).³ On the other hand, the

1. On the traditional histories of the Ashanti divisional states, see e.g. Rattray, Law and Constitution, 1929, op.cit., Chs.XVI-XXIII. J. Agyeman-Duah, "Ashanti Mampong: a traditional history to the reign of Nana Safo Katanka", in Trans.Hist.Soc.Ghana, Vol.IV, pt.II, pp.21-5. Perhaps Asantemanso was the most important of the early settlements of the Ashantis. The migrations which preceded the foundation of Kumasi, Dwaben, Nsuta, and other towns, left Asantemanso itself deserted. Today, it is a tiny hamlet of no importance save as a religious centre. See, R.S. Rattray, Ashanti, (London, 1923) pp.121-2; K.A. Busia, The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti, (Oxford, 1951) pp.45-7.

2. Reindorf, History, op.cit., p.48.

3. Rattray, Law and Constitution, 1929, p.235.

Kumawus say that they left Asantemanso because of a population explosion which resulted in an acute shortage of farming and hunting land.¹ There seems no good reason to doubt that these factors provided strong motives for migrations. The general prosperity arising out of the intensive economic and commercial activities in the country, during the second half of the seventeenth century, clearly made possible the growth of population on an unprecedented scale. Since the Akannists had been the main traders throughout the greater part of the seventeenth century, it was not surprising that over-population manifested itself in their country. Moreover, it was quite normal for sections of the royal families in the country to move away after succession disputes, and to settle in other places where they could establish new dynasties.²

It appears, however, that the fundamental factors underlying these migrations were external. Wilks, apparently intrigued by this phenomenon, has examined the forces and influences that permeated Ashanti from the north, and their significance, for an understanding of Ashanti history from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. He has this to say on Ashanti beginnings: "The upheaval out of which the new Ashanti state emerged would appear to have been in part consequent upon the extension of the trade route from Begho - an outpost of the civilisation of the Middle Niger, a colony of Mande-speaking peoples thrust out to the very fringe of the rich gold-bearing and kola-producing

1. Ibid., p.217.

2. For example, it is related that a chief of Kokobienteh in Adanse quarrelled with the King of Denkyera, his overlord, and fled with a handful of his followers to Akwamu. This Kokobienteh stool was located at Kyebi and, later, became the paramount stool of the modern state of Akyem Abuakwa. See M.J. Field, Akim Kotoku: An Oman, (London, 1948), Ch.I.

forest country - through Nta and Adansi to the coast". Wilks argues this point further and asserts that what made possible the thrust to the north "is only to be understood with reference to southern factors, to the influence of Akwamu, and the importance of the European traders, as the purveyors of guns".¹ This thesis is wholly unsatisfactory, because there is a serious attempt here to underestimate the political and economic revolution which had taken place in the forests and coastlands of the Gold Coast in the seventeenth and the early years of the eighteenth century. Admittedly, some gold must have reached the coast from the Begho area, but it was clearly the case that the bulk of the gold resources in the country was located in the southern states of Igwira, Denkyera and Akyem. Indeed, if the Adanse immigrants had been commercially minded, they would have turned southwards and not northwards, for the realisation of their objectives. Furthermore, it must be stressed that the thrust to the north pre-dated the creation of the Ashanti kingdom, and it was undertaken by people who regarded themselves as Dwabens, Mampongs, Kokofus, and Kumawus. Admittedly, these peoples were bound together by such ties as common origins, customs, and language, but they only recognised a loose relationship with one another. The formulation of common political and economic objectives was to emerge after the advent of Osei Tutu and Okomfo Anokye and the subsequent creation of the Ashanti state. Surely, Ashanti carried her victorious arms into the Begho area and beyond "until it was arrested on the

1. I. Wilks, "The Northern Factor in Ashanti History: Begho and the Mande", in Journal of African History, II, I (1961). Also, see A. A. Boahen's article "The Two Faces of Ashanti" in Trans. Hist.Soc.Ghana, Vol.VI (1963), p.127.

frontiers of the Dyula kingdom of Kong",¹ but this was a much later development, and it must be seen as a result of the defeat of Denkyera in 1701.

The migrations of Adanse and Amanse peoples northwards, during the second half of the seventeenth century, was a direct consequence upon the emergence of Akyem, Akwamu and Denkyera as powerful states in the hinterland of the Gold Coast. The upheaval which followed the rise and consolidation of these states hastened the complete disintegration of the old Adanse state, and thereby created an atmosphere of apprehension and unsettlement which resulted in the movement of peoples from that state to all parts of the country. Since these were southern states, the Adanses had to move northwards where there were comparatively less powerful states, to resist their advance. Indeed, it appears that the "numerous enterprising or discontented families"² of Bowdich moved northwards because of political and economic pressures emanating from these southern states. A strong element of self-preservation entered into the calculations of the Ashanti ancestors, for they either had to stay in Adanse and be made slaves by the military states being created in the south, or move northwards into comparative freedom. Having left their own country, however, the Adanses entered into a territory already peopled by other Twi- or Guan-speaking peoples such as the Kwabiris, the Atwimas, the Amakoms, the Domaas and the Tafos. Thus the Adanses had to fight with them to get some land on which to settle. Land-hunger, more than any desire to control the extension of the Begho trade route, was the

1. See pp. 98-100 below.

2. Bowdich, Mission....to Ashantee, 1819, op.cit., p.229.

fundamental factor which united the Dwabens, the Mampongs and other Adanse immigrants against the neighbouring Guan peoples, and thereby prepared the ground for the emergence of the Ashanti state.¹

Ashanti tradition attributes the creation of the Ashanti kingdom to Osei Tutu and Okomfo Anokye.² Some of the earlier versions of the tradition tell how Obiri Yeboa, Kwamanhene, sometime after the second half of the seventeenth century, had no brothers, and only one sister, Manu Kotosii, who was childless. Since this endangered the future of the dynasty, as succession should pass to younger brothers or, failing that, to the son of a sister, Obiri Yeboa sent his sister to Otutu, a renowned shrine in Akwapim, at that time in Akwamu territory. There, offerings were made for a son, and Manu subsequently bore Osei, who was named Tutu for the greater glory of the shrine. Another version takes the story up from the time when Obiri Yeboa sent his nephew and heir, Osei Tutu, for training at the Denkyera court. While there, Osei had an affair with one Akobena Bensua, a sister of the Denkyerahene, and when it was discovered that she was pregnant, Osei had to flee for his life. He took refuge in Akwamu, where the Akwamuhene, Ansa Sasraku, became his friend, because of Osei's personal beauty. It was in Akwamu, too, that Osei Tutu first met Okomfo Anokye, who, according to some versions of the story, was a native of Awukugua, and thus a subject of Akwamu. Osei, the future man of action, and Anokye, the wise companion, became great friends, and when Osei was called to the vacant

1. Sir Francis Fuller, A Vanished Dynasty: Ashanti, (London, 1921), pp.10-11, and Rattray, 1929, op.cit., pp.169, 199, 235.

2. See e.g. Rattray, 1929, op.cit., Ch.XXIV;
Ward, History, 1958, op.cit., pp.114-6.

stool of Kwaman, following the death of his uncle, Anokye agreed to accompany him. Ansa Sasraku provided Osei with a body of troops, thirty according to some versions of the tale, three hundred according to others.

There is no reason to doubt the veracity of these traditional accounts, because the Ashanti traditions were essentially tales connected with the consolidation and rise of the kingdom. Osei Tutu is certainly known to history. Bosman attributes the defeat of Denkyera to "Zay, the king of Asiante"¹, and he was clearly "the great Asiante Caboceer Zaay", whom the Dutch sub-factor, David van Neyendaal, was sent to contact in 1701, with gifts which included a looking-glass and a feathered hat.² Okomfo Anokye, on the other hand, is a typical folk-hero, but may be an historical figure nonetheless. The magical element is so strong in the legend connected with these two men, that it is almost impossible to distinguish truth from fiction. Even today, their names are so great in Ashanti that all laws and customs are attributed to them. But, as Ward points out, miracle stories do not grow up around nonentities, and the very predominance of the magic in the legend shows that the contemporaries of these two great men believed that their actions were superhuman.³ Furthermore, it is interesting that tradition records the sojourn of Osei Tutu in both Akwamu and Denkyera. Reindorf has pointed out the significance of this by asserting that Osei "had the opportunity of mastering the politica of the two principal powers then existing, Denkyera and Akwamu."⁴ One may add that Osei must have realised at both

1. Bosman, An Accurate Description..., 1705, op.cit., p.77.

2. See pp. _____ below.

3. Ward, 1958, p.116.

4. Reindorf, op.cit., p.53.

these courts, that the two states were essentially the products of the Atlantic trade. For example, he must have been aware that the consolidation and rise of Denkyera and Akwamu were not only made possible by the large-scale introduction of firearms into those countries, but also by the fact that the two states aimed at meeting the new economic demands resulting from the European contact. Besides, he must have been aware of the internal difficulties which made these states anything but cohesive political entities. Whatever may have been the case, Osei's own personal feud with the Denkyerahene, and the fact that his people were smouldering under Denkyera overlordship, must have thrown him into the hands of the Akwamus, the traditional enemies of the Denkyeras. It might well be that Osei saw in Ansa Sasraku a potential ally in his peoples' struggle against Denkyera domination. Ansa Sasraku, in turn, must have been prepared to support any move which might lead to a weakening of the Denkyera and Akwamu coalition. In particular, Akwamu would welcome the creation of a powerful state to the north-west of Akyem to balance the might of that enemy state, and thereby secure her western frontier. In that case, it seems reasonable to suppose that when Osei was working out the broad outlines of his future policy, he must have received the co-operation of the Akwamu court. Thus, it may be possible, as tradition relates, that when Osei left Akwamu for Ashanti, Ansa Sasraku provided him with troops. Indeed, there may be an interesting survival of this in the present military organisation of Ashanti, because in most Ashanti divisions, the second-in-command of the army is known to this day as the Akwamuhene.¹ Be this as it may, Akwamu

1. I. Wilks, "The Rise of the Akwamu Empire, 1650-1710" in Trans.Hist.Soc. Ghana, Vol.III, pt.2; Achimata, 1957, p.127. Rattray, 1929, pp.88-9

and Ashanti alliance was an important element in Ashanti history during the eighteenth century. Perhaps a clear statement on this alliance was the assertion by Opoku Ware, Osei's successor, that he made war against the Akyems, in 1742, because they had ravaged Akwamu, that he would assist the Danes because they had helped the Akwamus, and that he would attack the Dutch because they had assisted Akyem.¹

On his return home, Osei Tutu's major preoccupation was to talk the chiefs of Mampong, Kokofu, Kumawu, Dwaben, Bekwai, Nsuta and the others of the original divisional states, into a political union under his own leadership. He must have pointed out to the chiefs that his purpose was to create and maintain stable conditions for the growth of a civil society capable of meeting the new economic demands arising out of the development of the trans-Atlantic trade. Again, he must have told the chiefs of his own experiences at the courts of both Denkyera and Akwamu. He also probably emphasized that the consolidation and rise of these two states had been possible largely because the basis of those states rested on loyalty to one political head which transcended all tribal loyalties. Furthermore, he must have impressed upon the chiefs that since the new state would be assisted by the powerful Akwamus, they would be capable not only of subjugating the neighbouring Guan peoples, but also could free themselves from Denkyera overlordship. If Denkyera power was broken, the Ashantis and the Akwamus could eliminate Akyem, which was already riddled with internal dissensions, and thereby be in a position to exploit to the full the gold and slave resources in

1. T 70/1515 Letter from Richard Graves, Cape Coast Castle, to Royal African Company, dated 3rd April, 1742.

the Gold Coast hinterland. Osei's job was probably easier than is generally supposed, for the elements of union were already there. For example, all the chiefs of the original divisions, except the chief of Mampong, belonged to the Oyoko clan, as Osei himself, and, therefore, the notion of brotherhood implicit in the Akan family system, was exploited in the interest of union.¹ This, indeed, seems to have been the case because the Mamponghene, who belonged to the Bretuo clan was conciliated by being made the first of his Abrempon (Divisional Chiefs) by Osei Tutu. He commanded the right wing of the Ashanti national army and he deputised for the Asantehene as the commander-in-chief when the king himself did not accompany the army.² Furthermore, his stool, the symbol of chiefly office, was the Silver Stool, whereas the king himself occupied the Golden Stool.³

After the chiefs of the divisions had accepted the policy of union, Osei Tutu and Okomfo Anokye determined that the Ashanti state should last. To that end, a number of state-building instruments - some inherited and others devised - were put to use. For instance, Osei Tutu removed his court from Kwaman, the capital of his predecessor, and established himself at Kumasi, which to this day remains the capital of

1. Rattray, 1929, pp.76-7 and 272-3.

2. Ibid., p.120. The Mamponghene was probably created commander of the Ashanti national army for the reasons suggested by Prince Owusu Ansa one of the hostages given to the British in 1831. He was quoted as saying, "In Ashanti, the King never joins the army except on occasions when the full strength of the Ashanti power is to be put forth, and in pursuance of some solemn vow", quoted in H. Brackenbury, Narrative of the Ashanti War, 2 Vols., (London, 1874), Vol.2, p.224.

3. Rattray, 1923, op.cit., Ch.XXIV. Osei Tutu regarded the Ashanti state as a human body of which he held the head, whilst the Mamponghene held the feet. See Rattray, 1929, p.236.

the Ashanti kingdom.¹ Moreover, the songs and recitals connected with traditional history were couched in terms calculated to disseminate the notion of a common origin. The most potent of these instruments, however, were the Ashanti army, the Golden Stool, the Odwira festival, and the Ashanti "Constitution".

Ashanti was fundamentally a military union. The basis of the kingdom rested on military power, and it was by direct military action, rather than by any process of negotiation or treaty-making, that she achieved her political and economic objectives. This is not to suggest that the Ashantis were ignorant of diplomacy as a valid instrument of political action. Dupuis points out that it was "a maxim associated with the religion" of the Ashanti king, "never to appeal to the sword while a path lay open for negotiation".² Indeed, the importance which Akan society attached to diplomacy, as opposed to force, finds expression in the institution of Okyeame. The Akyeame were, and still are, in direct contact with the king in ceremony and in substance, and therefore wielded great political influence in society. They were men appointed without regard to accidents of birth, but for "outstanding ability in the civil arts of wisdom, eloquence and wit". In times of war, some of them accompanied the army, and it was they who conducted the politics connected with the campaign.³ Nevertheless, it may be said that diplomacy, and

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1. Fuller, 1921, op.cit., pp.2 and 9. Kumasi was probably founded in the 1680's, because a Dutch report of 1679 mentions Tafo, five miles north of Kumasi on the north-west trade route, as an inland trading centre of considerable importance, but did not mention Kumasi itself. Verspreyede Stukken 848, report by Director-General Abramsz, dated 23rd November, 1679.
 2. Dupuis, Journal...in Ashantee, (London, 1824), pp.225-6.
 3. Bowdich found that Agyei, who rose to become the second Okyeame, and "foreign minister" in Ashanti, was originally a salt-carrier from Akwamu. Bowdich, 1819, op.cit., pp.248-9. On this institution see e.g. Rattray, 1929, p.105n, pp.380-4 and 392-7. Okyeame means 'spokesman'.

not war, was regarded by the Ashantis as the extreme limit of political action, because the army was the chief instrument of foreign policy.

The Ashanti forces which achieved such spectacular successes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were not regular troops. Like the armies on the Gold Coast during this period, all the able-bodied Ashanti men were mobilised as and when required.¹ Every Ashanti divisional state supplied its quota of men according to the overall requirements of the projected campaign. As may be expected, Ashanti, as a forest state, had no cavalry.² The main strength of the army lay in the infantry - musketeers, bowmen and spearsmen. The musketeers commanded the greatest prestige, and it was most probable that great importance was placed upon maintaining a superiority in the possession of muskets. It appears, however, that the bow and arrow played an important role in the military efficiency of the Ashanti army. As late as 1807, when the bow and arrow had been abandoned by most of the coastal peoples, the English at Cape Coast noted that the Ashantis fought with "musquets, bows and arrows".³ The retention of these weapons was probably due to the fact that the muzzle-loading guns of that period could not be depended upon to sustain a heavy volume of concentrated

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1. Bosman wrote thus of the Gold Coast armies in his day, "If I have before talk'd of Negroes who followed the wars, you must not from thence infer that they make that their whole Employment. No, it is but one part, I assure you; and all the Negroes in the country are Soldiers as long as the war continues, if at least they are but able to buy Arms or their Masters bestow any on them; and the War ended each Man applies himself to the Exercise of his particular Calling". Bosman, 1705, op.cit., p.70.
 2. Horses were known in Ashanti in the reign of Osei Tutu, for in 1709 Sir Dalby Thomas was informed that the horses in Ashanti were "small and thin-bodied and not above 14 hands high". But they were probably used for ceremonial occasions only. T 70/26 Letter from Sir Dalby Thomas, Cape Coast Castle, dated 8th May, 1709.
 3. T 70/35 Copy of Governor Colonel Torrane's letter to Committee of Merchants, dated 20th July, 1807.

fire. The superior power of the muskets, however, may be supplemented by the rapidity of fire attainable with the bows and arrows.

The successful employment of the Ashanti army as the instrument of rapid territorial expansion, presupposes a highly developed system of military organisation. Rattray has described in some considerable detail, the military organisation of the divisional states of Asumegya, Bekwai, Dwaben, Kokofu, Kumawu, Mampong and Nsuta. The Ashanti national army was comprised of a body of scouts (akwansrafo), an advance-guard (twafo), a main body (adonten), a personal body-guard (gyase), a rear-guard (kyidom) and two wings - left (benkum), and right (nifa).¹ It may be that during the time of Osei Tutu the military organisation had not yet attained this pitch of perfection, but it was clearly these powers of combination and co-ordination which underlay the apparent invincibility of the Ashanti army.

The Golden Stool,² with its mythological origins, appeared to Bowdich as "the palladium of the kingdom".³ Ashanti tradition says that on one Friday, a great gathering of the union chiefs was held at Kumasi, and there, Okomfo Anokye brought down from the sky, with darkness and thunder, and in a thick cloud of white dust, a wooden stool adorned with gold, which floated to the earth and alighted gently on Osei Tutu's knees. Anokye then announced that the Golden Stool contained the spirit of the whole Ashanti nation, and that its strength and bravery depended upon the

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1. Rattray, 1929, Chs.XI-XXIII. Fuller, op.cit., pp.12-15. Busia points out that the national army differed from the state armies in that each wing of the former had two formations: right and right-half (nifa nnaase), left and left-half (benkum nnaane). Busia, 1951, p.90.
 2. On the Golden Stool see e.g. Rattray, 1929, Ch.XXIV. E.W. Smith, The Golden Stool, (London, 1926), Ch.1.
 3. Bowdich, 1819, op.cit., p.281.

safety of the stool.¹ Stripped of its legendary origins, this tale gives an insight into the astute statesmanship of Osei Tutu and Okomfo Anokye. By making the Golden Stool the repository of a national spirit transcending all local ties, Anokye played upon the superstitious beliefs of the Ashantis, and thereby succeeded in impressing on the national consciousness that henceforth Ashanti was a nation, linked by a common mystical bond, of which the new stool was the visible symbol. This stool, exhibited on great public occasions with a pomp and ceremony distinct from that of the king, constituted an emblem of unity even more potent than the king of Ashanti himself. The Golden Stool supplied the religious basis of the Ashanti union, and it is significant that despite many vicissitudes, it still survives today, with its unifying power unimpaired.

The Odwira festival "at which all dependants and tributaries" were expected to attend, was "instituted like the Panathenaea of Theseus, to unite such various nations by a common festival". Busia reiterated this view, by noting that the rites associated with the Asantehene's odwira rekindled the "sentiments of solidarity and nation-hood" in the Ashanti chiefs who participated in them.² Perhaps the political significance of the Odwira lay in the fact that it enabled the king to detect and punish those who would plan subversion in the kingdom. Failure to attend the festival was a sign of disloyalty to the king, and the Asantehene could count on the support of some of the chiefs to punish the recalcitrant chief. On the other hand, a chief who had

1. Ward, 1958, op.cit., p.119. Rattray, 1923, Ch.XXIII.

2. Bowdich, 1819, p.256.

Busia, 1951, p.101.

offended the king, and was present at the Odwira festival, might be arraigned before the assembled chiefs to answer charges of misbehaviour. Thus the Asantehene's Odwira was one of the most potent means of keeping the kingdom together.

Adapted to the same purpose of unification was the "constitution". Ashanti government has been described as despotic, and the Ashantis have been portrayed as a people who lived under a kind of "Spartan military discipline, ruthlessly enforced by one lord and master, the King".¹ This view, of course, has no basis in Ashanti constitutional history. In the early nineteenth century, Bowdich found at Kumasi that there were an "Assembly of Captains" as well as an "Aristocracy or privy council", to check the king.² Bowdich also drew attention to "the mixed nature" of Ashanti government, and indicated that it was "founded on equality and obligation."³ It must be said that, from the very beginning, the king of Ashanti was a primus inter pares as far as the Divisional Chiefs were concerned. The Amanhenes had their obligations to the king, but they also had compensating rights. They had to take an oath of allegiance to the king promising to attend his call by day or night; they were obliged to supply him with fighting men when so required, and they did recognise a right of appeal from their own courts to the Asantehene's court in Kumasi.⁴ They were expected to attend the Odwira festival, a ceremony which, according to Busia, was held to honour

1. The quotation is from Sir Garnet Wolseley, Life as a Soldier, cited in Claridge, History, 1915, op.cit., p.182. Sir Garnet Wolseley led the British expedition against the Ashantis in 1874.

2. Bowdich, 1819, pp.105, 252-253.

3. Ibid., p.231.

4.. Busia, 1951, op.cit., pp.52-6; Rattray, 1929, Ch.XIII.

and propitiate past Ashanti kings, and to cleanse the nation from defilement.¹ They also contributed to a war tax or a national levy imposed by the king for some specific purpose.² It seems they also observed certain trade regulations made by the king, because the Dwabens told Rattray that "The Asante Hene had the power to close the road until his kolas should have reached the early market".³ It is a matter of some dispute as to whether or not the Asantehene could destool the Divisional Chiefs. Rattray was informed by the Kokofus that "the Asante Hene might destool the Kokofuhene even against the wishes of the Kokofu 'Mpanyinfo'".⁴ Busia, on the other hand, says that they could not; and he describes the provision that those, and only those, ^{the} elected a chief, could also depose him, as "the cardinal principle of the Ashanti Constitution."⁵ These two apparently conflicting views are not irreconcilable, for it was certainly the case that as the kings of Ashanti gained in prestige and power, they must have been instrumental in removing certain divisional chiefs of whom they disapproved.

The rights enjoyed by the Divisional Chiefs were many. For example, because most of the Ashanti lands were acquired independently by the divisions before the Ashanti Union, they held their land absolutely; their title being based on conquest, and not upon gift from the king. Thus there was a distinction between their lands and those of the Kumasi chiefs. Busia points out that, "The rights of the Asantehene

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1. Busia, 1951, pp.29-39. Rattray, Religion and Art in Ashanti, 1927, Ch.II. Bowdich, who gave an early vivid account of the king's Odwira, or Yam Custom, noted that "All the caboceers and captains, and the majority of the tributaries, are enjoined to attend...", Bowdich, 1819, p.274.
 2. See e.g. Rattray, Law and Constitution, 1929, Ch.XIV.
 3. Ibid., p.187.
 4. Ibid., p.212. 'Mpanyinfo' means 'elders.'
 5. Busia, 1951, pp.54 and 99.

over lands in the Kumasi Division were the same as the rights exercised by the Divisional Chiefs in their own Division. But over the lands of the Divisional Chiefs, the Asantehene exercised no rights."¹ Again, because the armies of the Divisions were largely responsible for the conquests of the neighbouring peoples, the Amanhenes (Divisional Chiefs) had a great say in the formulation of foreign policy. Bowdich discovered that they could interfere in all foreign politics, and even possessed the right to veto the king's decision. However, they watched rather than shared in the domestic administration, "generally influencing it by their opinion, but never appearing to control it from authority; and their opinions on civil questions, are submitted with a deference directly in contrast to their bold declarations on subjects of war and tribute, which amounts to injunction".² The Divisional Chiefs, therefore, constituted a formidable body, if only they could unite against the king.

In view of this fact, Osei Tutu and his successors did not think it politic to augment further the powers of the Amanhenes. Instead, they deliberately chose to magnify the position of the Kumasi chiefs, thereby balancing the power of one class of chiefs against that of another, and so setting in motion that rivalry between the Kumasi chiefs and the Amanhenes which has been one of the recurrent themes in Ashanti history. For example, the Kumasi chiefs became governors of the distant conquered states where they enjoyed "a princely rank". Since the Kumasi chiefs were directly responsible to the king, the policy of recruiting them as provincial governors ensured that the Asantehene should be able

1. Ibid., 1951, p.53.
2. Bowdich, 1819, p.252.

to put a larger army into the field than any of the outlying chiefs. Moreover, because they were members of the Kumasi State Council, the king must have relied on them a good deal for the formulation of his day to day policies, rather than on the Divisional Chiefs, whose visits to Kumasi were infrequent. Thus the Kumasi chiefs soon came to exercise "a political preponderance in the councils of the nation".¹ Perhaps, viewed against this background, the institution of adamfo had its origins earlier than in the reign of Osei Bonsu (1801-1824).²

This institution was an administrative arrangement whereby an Omanhene could only approach the king through his adamfo in Kumasi. The adamfo was usually one of the Kumasi chiefs, who acted as a sort of liaison officer between the outside chief and the king. If the presence of, say, the Mamponghene was required in Kumasi, messengers were sent through the Kontihene of Kumasi. Busia comments thus on the institution of adamfo, "It was a development which recognised the need of some contact between Kumasi and the outlying states in the period between the intermittent meetings of the Union Council".³ Wilks, however, argues this point further, and regards as significant the titles that were used: Mamponghene, for example, would address the Kontihene as K'adamfo, (my patron), and the Kontihene would address Mamponghene as M'abarimba, (my man). Wilks writes, "It seems likely that here we have a survival of the attempted reduction of the Amanhenes to vassals, with the institution of the adamfo, or patron, being, as it were, a half-way stage to governor. Ashanti attempted, but did not quite succeed, in

1. Dupuis, 1824, p.235.

2. W. Tordoff, "Political History of Ashanti 1888-1935", dissertation submitted for degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Univ. of London, 1961, p.132.


3. Busia, 1951, p.100.

extending its administrative system to the original Amanto, and so evolving an homogeneous structure of government throughout the empire, with the administration in the hands of the Kumasi Nsafohene, themselves directly responsible to the king".¹ Wilks's contention is misleading and must be discounted. Firstly, M'adamfo means 'my friend', and not 'my patron'. Secondly, though the kings of Ashanti were jealous of the powers of the Amanhene, they never contemplated making them subservient to the Kumasi chiefs. That would have been tantamount to a subversion of the constitution, and this could have united the Amanhenes against Kumasi, an event which would have led to the break-up of the Ashanti Union. Thirdly, there was "an homogenous structure" in the Ashanti government, because the national government was modelled on the governments of the divisions. For instance, the Asantehene was as much head of the administration of the Kumasi division, as the Dwabenhene was of the Dwaben state. Moreover, the Amanhenes had under them a number of sizeable villages, whose heads owed them obligations similar to those which they themselves owed to the king. Indeed, even at the height of its military successes, in the early nineteenth century, the Ashanti monarchy was so insecure that Dupuis could write, "Powerful as the monarchy of Ashantee certainly is, collectively estimated, it may be considered as a fabric whose foundation is subject to periodical decay, and therefore requires unremitting attention....".² As Rattray pointed out, some thirty years

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1. Quoted from I. Wilks, Akan administrative practices, as cited by Tordoff, Ph.D. Dissertation, op.cit. Also W. Tordoff, "The Ashanti Confederacy", in Journal of African History, III, 3, (1962), pp.399-417.
 2. Dupuis, 1824, pp.236-7.

ago, the term adamfo was "largely a courtesy title; its application to an individual inferred no legal rights on one side or disabilities on the other".¹ It is clear, therefore, that though the key-note of the Ashanti constitution was decentralisation, it was also a potent means of keeping the country together.

The first task of the new state was to continue the subjugation of the peoples living within a few miles' radius of Kumasi.² Osei Tutu's uncle, Obiri Yeboa, had died fighting the Domaas, and so they were the first to be attacked. In a series of battles, Domaa resistance was overcome; Odomara Kwesi, the Domaa chief, was killed, and a number of Domaa refugees fled westwards. The Ashantis then turned their attention to the Amakoms, and subjugated them. The Amakom chief, Akosa, was beheaded, and his brother Bafo fled with a handful of followers into the Tekyiman area, where he founded the modern state of Nkranza in the Borong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. These Ashanti military successes probably alarmed the Tafos.³ Apart from the fear of political domination, the Tafos must have realised that Kumasi might supercede their town as an important trading centre. Perhaps it was in view of some such considerations that Osafo, the Tafo chief, asked Osei Tutu and his people to leave the Kumasi area. The Ashantis replied by declaring war on the

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1. Rattray, 1929, pp.95-6. Rattray found that a divisional chief might find it politic at times "to curry favour with his 'friend at court'", partly for the reasons suggested by Busia, and partly because, in view of inter-state rivalry, that was the only means of protecting his interests at the king's court.
 2. On the Ashanti struggles with the Domaas, Amakoms and the Tafos, see e.g. Fuller, 1921, pp.10-11; Ward, 1958, pp.117-118.
 3. The Tafos are on record as living in fear of the Adanse peoples as early as 1679. See WIC 848 Verspreyde Stukken. Report by Director-General Abramz, 3rd November, 1679.
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Tafos. The Tafo country was rapidly overrun, and Osafo was killed. The stool regalia of the Tafo stool was added to that of the Kumasi stool.

The significant point to notice about these early Ashanti conquests was that these peoples, who lived within a few miles' radius of Kumasi, were effectively incorporated into the kingdom. They were given rights of citizenship and, within a few years, these erstwhile enemies became ardent supporters of the new kingdom. An interesting case in point was the policy adopted towards the Amakoms. Osei Tutu appointed his favourite, one Edu Penin, to succeed Akosa, as the chief of Amakom. He then gave his niece, Nyarko, to Edu in marriage. The offspring of this union was Opoku Ware, whom Osei Tutu named as his successor. What Osei Tutu hoped to achieve by this marriage arrangement was clearly to conciliate the defeated Amakoms, who owned the greater part of the Kumasi lands, and to get them to have a vested interest in his dynasty.¹ In this way, "the natural forces of parental and filial love were regulated for the creation of new patterns of loyalty and affiliation."²

The new state, however, was soon called upon to face a more serious crisis. It has been pointed out that the Denkyera state was no exception to the general rule that a conquering state bleeds its conquered provinces and drives them to despair. It was clear that the Denkyeras could not remain unperturbed by the national feeling that was

1. Fuller, 1921, p.11.

2. Edmund Collins, "The Panic Element in Nineteenth-Century British Relations with Ashanti", in Trans.Hist.Soc.Ghana, Vol.V., pt.2, p.81.

growing up in Ashanti. Moreover, the Denkyerahene could certainly not approve of one of his tributary states being in close alliance with the traditional enemy - Akwamu. Furthermore, the creation of a strong state to the north would clearly make it difficult for the Denkyeras to raid the Borong and other peoples in that area for slaves. Thus, Denkyera decided to attack the nascent Ashanti Union before the danger from that quarter became more serious.

Accounts differ as to the actual occasion for war. The Ashantis say that they threw off Denkyera overlordship because Ntim Gyakari, the Denkyerahene, made some preposterous demands on them. The Denkyera king sent a great brass pan and demanded that it be returned to him full of gold dust, and accompanied by the favourite wife of each of the Ashanti chiefs. This was rejected by the Ashantis, and they prepared for war against the Denkyeras.¹ Bosman, however, was informed that the cause of the war was the mistreatment of one of Osei's wives by Bosianti, the Denkyerahene, On the accession of Osei Tutu, Bosianti sent some of his wives to congratulate his vassal. These Denkyera messengers were kindly received by Osei and the Ashantis, and then sent back to their husband. Shortly afterwards, Osei returned the compliment by sending some of his wives to the Denkyera court with a friendly message. These Ashanti women were also well-received in Denkyera, and they were treated as persons of importance. "But the King cast a wanton Eye upon one of them, and hurried on by exorbitant lust, gratified his brutal Desire; After satiating of which, he suffer'd her together with the rest to return to their injured Husband who was informed of

1. See traditional histories in Rattray, Law and Constitution, 1929, op.cit.

this Affront". Osei was angry at this insulting behaviour by the Denkyera king and, though the latter offered some monetary compensation, Osei rejected the offer and prepared for war.¹ One salient fact which emerges from both these accounts, is that the Denkyeras obviously intended to provoke the Ashantis into instant war. Indeed, it would seem that this was a follow-up of the Denkyera occupation of the Akanny state in 1697, because Akanny was a buffer-state between Denkyera and Ashanti, and the Denkyeras must have regarded the conquest of that state as a first step towards an invasion of Ashanti. Whatever may have been the case, it was clear, in the late seventeenth century, that Ashanti was prepared to take up the Denkyera challenge because, apart from the fact that her own political and economic survival depended upon the break-up of Denkyera power, Ashanti was also increasingly becoming the leader of Denkyera's revolted subjects.²

Ashanti tradition records two major battles with the Denkyeras.³ The first battle was fought near Adunku where the advance-guard of the Ashantis were defeated. They fell back on the main army at Feyiase, some eight miles south-east of Kumasi. Here, the second and final battle was fought. The Denkyeras were defeated, and Ntim Gyakari, who was playing an oware game with one of his wives, was surprised by a Dwaben man, Adakwa Yiadom, who killed him. Adakwa took the Denkyerahene's gold bangle, and this became a source of dispute between the king of

1. Bosman, 1705, pp.76-77.

2. See pp. ~~43-44~~ above.

3. On traditional accounts of the Ashanti and Denkyera war, see e.g. Reindorf, History, op.cit., pp.54-59.

Ward, 1958, pp.120-22.

Fuller, (p.17) says Adunku was situated between Asumegya and Ejumun.

See Rattray, Religion and Art, 1927, op.cit., pp.382-90.

Ashanti and the Dwaben chief. That there were two major battles finds support in contemporary Dutch sources, although there was a time lag of about one year between the two battles. A Dutch report of 1699 indicates that the Denkyeras, assisted by the Akyems, had been fighting the Ashantis and the Akwamus since June, 1698.¹ By the end of 1699, hostilities had stopped and the Denkyeras spent most of 1700 trying to reach a peaceful settlement with their other disgruntled subjects.² Early in 1701, the report was that the Ashantis and the Denkyeras had resumed their conflicts and in November of the same year, it was known at Elmina that the Denkyeras had been defeated, and that the Ashantis were plundering and taking large numbers of Denkyeras prisoner.³ Bosman, who was on the coast at that time, recorded that the Ashantis left "the towering Pride of Dinkira in Ashes".⁴

It must be pointed out, however, that Ashanti victory was not solely due to her own military strength during this period. Apart from the treacherous acts of most of Denkyera's tributary states, the decisive factor underlying Denkyera defeat was the effective military assistance which the Akwamus gave to the Ashantis. One may even conjecture that the Ashantis failed to pursue the war, in the late months of 1699 and throughout 1700, when Denkyera was passing through grave internal crisis, largely because they realised that they could not expect any effective

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1. WIC 97 Letter from Director-General Jan van Sevenhuysen, dated 1st March, 1699.
 2. WIC 97 Letter from Director-General Jan van Sevenhuysen, Elmina, dated 31st July 1700. Also, *ibid.*, letter from chief factor Pieter Nuyts, Kormantsi, to Sevenhuysen. Nuyts reported, *inter alia*, the arrival of a party of Denkyera traders who brought no gold, but only slaves to sell.
 3. WIC 97 Letter from Director-General Jan van Sevenhuysen, Elmina, dated 30th May, 1701, and 16th November, 1701.
 4. Bosman, 1705, *op.cit.*, p.77.

help from the Akwamus, whose king, Basua, died in that year. The Dutch, who were anxious to revive trade on the east coast, immediately sent presents to the new king of Akwamu entreating him to make his peace with his enemies.¹ The new Akwamu king was Ado, who apparently had no intention of abandoning the Ashantis. Soon after his accession he ordered his subjects not to go to Danish Christiansborg Castle because he had been informed that a Danish ship had sold guns and powder to the enemies of Akwamu at Winneba.² Roemer also points out that it was made a capital offence for an Akwamu trader to sell firearms to the Akyems.³ Thus, whereas the Akwamus and the Ashantis were receiving appreciable quantities of guns and powder, the Akyems and the Denkyeras were almost completely cut off from that vital commodity during this critical period.

As a result of the defeat of Denkyera, Ashanti emerged not only as the dominant political power in the hinterland of the western coast, but also the main source of gold, ivory and slaves, in that area. This fact immediately led to European repercussions. The Dutch and the English who were the main European traders on that coast had to take notice of Ashanti's presence, and to adopt a policy which would secure the Ashantis in the interest of their respective Companies. In particular, it became a matter of considerable importance for the Governor and Council of Cape Coast and Elmina Castles to court the friendship and goodwill of the Ashanti king. But before we examine the reactions of the Dutch

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1. WIC 97 Letter from Director-General Jan van Sevenhuysen, Elmina, dated 10th June, and 12th November, 1699. For further references to the death of Basua and the accession of Ado, see V.G.K. Day Journal 1699-1703, entry dated 26th March, 1699.
 2. V.G.K. Day Journal, 1699-1703, entry for 21st May, 1700.
 3. I. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, op.cit., p.54.

and the English to Ashanti, it is necessary to sketch briefly the nature of European relations with the coastal communities.

The relationship between the European merchants in their Gold Coast forts, and the African coastal communities has been described as a partnership.¹ The Africans wanted trade as much as the Europeans, and so a kind of co-operation between black and white came into existence. In that state of inter-dependence, the Africans may be said to have been the superior partners. Since the Europeans were confined to their coastal settlements, they had to court the friendship and goodwill of the Africans who brought them trade from the interior. Moreover, in view of the intense rivalry which characterised the activities of the European traders on the coast, it became necessary for the various Companies to secure permanent African allies who could not only provide them with uninterrupted trade, but also help to defend the forts against their enemies. Indeed, co-operation between the Africans and the Europeans was considered such a vital pre-condition for gainful trade, that in July 1699, for example, the Royal African Company ordered Cape Coast Castle to "endeavour by all fair means possible to gain friendship with the natives, especially the Kings and most especially with those where the best trade is exported...and frequently to study the best ways to procure the Company large returns".²

In pursuance of the policy of good relations, a number of methods were adopted by the European traders. Because they were not the

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1. J.D. Fage, Ghana, (Madison, 1961), op.cit., pp.48-50.
 2. T 70/51 Royal African Company, London, to Nicholas Buckeridge and John Browne dated 6th July, 1699.

owners of the land on which their forts and castles stood, they paid ground rents to the African chiefs and potentates on the coast. In June 1714, for example, the English paid twenty-four months' ground rent due to the "Braffoe and Curranteers of Fantee for Anomaboe Fort and Agya factory".¹ Besides these monthly payments, a number of irregular payments were made to the Africans with a view to securing some particular advantage. In 1703, an Akanny messenger who was sent to Cape Coast Castle by the chiefs of that country, returned home with three cases of spirits and some other goods as presents for the chiefs "to confirm them to the interest of the Royal African Company of England and to encourage them to sway the trade between their country and this Castle".² In 1723, the Dutch reported that the Danes gave the Akwamu king over 100 bendas so that the king would attack Dutch Crevecoeur. The Akwamu king swore an oath to be "master of the Dutch fort", and, with a force estimated at between ten and twelve thousand men, beleaguered it for over three weeks, until the threat of an Akyem invasion of Akwamu obliged him to retire into the interior."³

The Europeans, however, relied a great deal on the "Company slaves". These people fell into two main categories. Firstly, there were the ordinary messengers, such as Abo, Aban, Cudjoe, Jan, and Coffee, who were sent regularly to the chiefs to induce them either to send trade to the forts, or to collect debts owed to the Company. Such messengers were very trusted people, who had often been in the Company's

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1. T 70/381 Accounts and Journals, 1714-1715, entry dated 17th June 1714.
 2. T 70/1463 Memoranda Book kept at Cape Coast Castle, entry dated 24th February, 1703.
 3. 2 WIC 105 Letter from Van de Meer and de Lange to Director-General Abraham Houtman, dated 29th June, 1723.

service for a long time. For instance, in 1702, the Dutch sent Abo and Jan "who have faithfully served us for more than twenty years" to contact David van Neyendaal, "who is at the moment with the great chief Zaay in the land of Asiente".¹ The others were the chief brokers. These included such names as John Cabes, Edward Barter, John Conny, Noi, Pieter Pasop, Amo and Thomas Ewusi. Some of these people were either chiefs or relatives of chiefs, and so the Europeans relied upon their authority and influence to promote their trade interests. Their chief job was to provide the forts with trade, and to see to it that the trading paths were kept open. To that end, they were often credited with large quantities of goods which they sent into the interior. As chief brokers, they were also expected to act as "commercial spies". For instance, a Dutch chief trader at Kommenda should not only know when inland traders would arrive on the coast, but also he should intercept and conduct them to the Dutch fort so that they did not go to the neighbouring English fort. This aspect of the chief broker's work contributed a good deal to Anglo-Dutch disputes on the coast, For example, in an agreement signed in 1700 between the two trading nations, it was stipulated that "no traders of any other Natives or others of this country be any wayes hindered or intercepted directly or indirectly, by any person or persons belonging to either Company from coming to any forts and factorys belonging to any of the said two Companys..."²

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1. 2 WIC 98 Letter from Director-General Willem de la Palma, Elmina, dated 25th September, 1702.
 2. 2 WIC 97 Copy of Articles of agreement made and concluded upon between Keers Edwards Newte, Gerard Gore, and H. Freeman, Chief Merchants and Directors for the Royal African Company of England of Cabo Corso Castle, and Jan van Sevenhuysen, Director-General for the Netherlandish West India Company, dated at Elmina 10th February, 1700.

The chief brokers also undertook important missions to the chiefs. John Cabes, for example, was sent to the king of Aguafo to discover the truth of a report that the Dutch had obtained his permission to build a fort "upon a hill on the west side and very near to Commenda Castle."¹ Furthermore, because the chief brokers were expected to help defend the forts against attacks by both European and African enemies, it became necessary for them to control large bands of armed retainers, drawn largely from their own slaves. In 1701, for example, the Dutch, who were expecting an attack by the French, consoled themselves that "in case of fighting, Pieter Pasop and his men were as good as any white men."² Two years later, the Dutch warmly commended "our Chief Broker Pieter Pasop who has made such an impression on the Blacks by his well-known courage and knowledge of war, and by being related to the mighty King of Akwamu."³

It must be pointed out, however, that the activities of these favoured individuals were not always calculated to further the interests of the Europeans. Undoubtedly, they were men of their times and, because they were aware of the sharp practices indulged in by both European and African traders on the coast, they also used their privileged position to promote their own interests. Edward Barter allegedly rebbed

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1. T 70/1463 Memoranda Book kept at Cape Coast Castle, entry dated 26th February, 1703.
 2. 2 WIC 97 Letter from Factor Jean de Pre to Sevenhuysen, dated 16th April, 1701. Franco-Dutch disputes on the coast arose out of the former's intention to build a fort east of Dutch Crèvecoeur at Accra. See 2 WIC 98 Letters from Director-General Willem de la Palma, dated 15th March and 10th October, 1703.
 3. Ivor Wilks, "Akwamu and Otublohum: An Eighteenth Century Akan marriage arrangement", in Africa, October 1959, op.cit., p.394. According to Wilks, Pieter Pasop was a brother-in-law of the King of Akwamu. See I. Wilks, "Akwamu 1650-1750: A Study of the Rise and Fall of a West African Empire", M.A. Thesis, op. cit., p.53.

the English at Cape Coast, and sought refuge with the Dutch at Elmina, where he died in 1703.¹ In 1704, the king of Aguafu informed the Dutch that trade had not been coming to Elmina because their chief broker, Pieter Pasop, conspired with the late chief of Little Kommenda to prevent Denkyera and Twifo traders from reaching the coast.² John Cabes served both the English and the Dutch, and quarrelled with them all.³ In 1715, John Cabes was the chief English broker at Kommenda, but William Baillie, the factor there, thought little of him. Baillie wrote, "when he hears of trade coming, he never tells me but borrows goods to be paid in two months out of the warehouse, and send them up the country, intercepts the traders and buys their slaves at a small rate and when he brings them down, if he finds the possibility of getting interlopers, he is sure to let me know of none of them. But if he finds it difficult to do this, as a result of the strict watch kept on the coast, he sends the slaves to the castle with some of his people whom I have never seen and represent them as traders with full instructions to get the full of my allowance for slaves and the best of goods".⁴

It is clear, therefore, that the Europeans were subject to the laws of the African states. We have indicated that the European settlements on the coast were designed to ward off attacks by European and African foes. This immunity, however, was never complete. There were

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1. K.G. Davies, Royal African Company, 1957, pp.280-1.
 2. 2 WIC 99 Letter from Willem de la Palma, Elmina, dated 7th November, 1704.
 3. On John Cabes' activities, see e.g. N.B.K.G.82 Reports from Jan Landman, Shama, dated 7th July, 6th June, 26th and 27th August, 1715. Also, T 70/1464 William Baillie's Kommenda Diary, 1714-1716.
 4. T 70/1464 William Baillie's Kommenda Diary, with accounts entry dated 29th May, 1715.

occasions when African forces captured forts and held them for periods of several years. A well-known example was the seizure of Christiansborg Castle by Asemeni, an Akwamu chief in the late seventeenth century.¹ In the early years of the eighteenth century, John Conny, a chief in the Ahanta area, seized and occupied the Brandenburger fort, Groot Friederichsborg, in spite of repeated Dutch efforts to dislodge him.² Furthermore, there were several instances of Europeans, including governors, receiving severe physical ill-treatment at the hands of the Africans within sight of their forts. For example, as late as 1765, the Fantis seized and mishandled Jan Woortman, the Dutch factor at Kormantsi, who was returning from a visit to Anomabo; when the Director-General protested to the Omanhene of Abora, he was told that his factor had wronged the Fantis.³

Nevertheless, although the Africans used economic sanctions to emphasize their supremacy, there was one sense in which it may be said that the political and economic survival of the coastal peoples depended on the Europeans. It has been indicated that the increased economic activity in the country resulted in the growth of large urban communities on the coast. Because the peoples of these towns came from all parts of the country, they tended to take little or no account of the traditional

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1. On the Asemeni governorship of Christiansborg Castle, the fullest printed accounts are in Captain T. Phillips, Journal of a Voyage in 1693-4, in Churchill's "Collection of Voyages and Travels, Vol.VI, pp.211-3; Bloome's Memoirs in Barbot 1732, pp.448-9. See also V.G.K. Day Journal 1699-1703, entries for 30th and 31st December, 1699, and 26th January, and 3rd February, 1700. Also I. Wilks, in Trans.Hist.Soc.Ghana, Vol.III, pt.2, 1957, op.cit., pp.120-122.
 2. See pp. 133-136 below
 3. 2 WIC 116 Letter from Jan Woortman, Kormantsi, to Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, dated 11th June, 1765.

authorities. Instead, they relied heavily on the guns of the European forts and shipping for protection against their enemies. This trend was clearly encouraged by the Europeans. For example, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Portuguese induced the Elmina people to stop paying tributes to their overlords, the Kings of Aguafo and Fetu; created Elmina an autonomous municipality, and governed it with the help of three local chiefs.¹ Perhaps an interesting case was the extension of Dutch authority over the Mouree peoples in the early years of the eighteenth century. In 1707, the Fantis defeated the Asebu peoples in a series of battles and the King of Asebu passed under the influence of the Fantis. The Fantis were assisted by the English at Cape Coast Castle, and, because the Dutch had a fort at Mouree, the coastal outlet of the Asebu kingdom, the Dutch decided to protect their trading interest there. Director-General Pieter Nuyts, and chief factor Jan Landman went to Mouree to treat with the Fantis, on behalf of the numerous refugees from all parts of Asebu who had sought refuge in the Dutch fort. The Fantis, apparently under pressure from the English, refused to negotiate with the Dutch. The Dutch thereupon signed an agreement with the elders of Mouree, whereby the Mouree people transferred their allegiance from their captive king to the Dutch. The elders of Mouree argued that they considered all their obligations to their king terminated because he was no longer an independent monarch, but a puppet of the Fantis and the

1. Chart 743, 1629, op.cit.

The Dutch who succeeded the Portuguese at Elmina followed their predecessors' example in exercising strict supervision over the Elmina peoples. They raised taxes and administered justice, See K. Davies, 1957, op.cit.

English.¹ Furthermore, because most of the coastal states were engaged in numerous wars with their neighbours, they became heavily indebted to the Europeans, who provided them with guns and powder on credit. In this way, their chiefs were not able to act against these creditors, for fear of reprisals. In May 1703, for example, some Akanny messengers, who were returning from a visit to Cape Coast Castle, were seized in Abramboe country by some Aguafo people. The English immediately sent John Gabes to the king of Aguafo, to remind him that he was "indebted of great sums to the Royal African Company of a long time and if this was his way of using them notwithstanding their not pressing for payment he would now make him pay that debt".² Indeed, some of the coastal states were so weak that they could not resist undue interference in their affairs by the Europeans. Sir Dalby Thomas was not only able to get a certain Aqua Brafo to be made King of Fetu, but also, he was responsible for the choice of a certain Fetu woman as the Queen Mother of that state. When some Fetu people protested against his action, and attempted to destool the woman by force of arms, Sir Dalby Thomas warned, "I made her a queen so I will protect her and assist her as my queen against all that will be her enemies without a just cause."³ Even powerful peoples like the Fantis were induced by means of bribes to embark upon wars which could only benefit the Europeans. In 1703, the Agent-General at Cape Coast

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1. 2 WIC 122 Agreement signed between Director-General Pieter Nuyts and the elders of Mouree, dated 10th November, 1707. Also, 2 WIC 100 Letter from Pieter Nuyts, dated 22nd April, 1708.
 2. T 70/1463 Memoranda Book kept at Cape Coast Castle, entries dated 26th and 28th February, 1703.
 3. T 70/1463 Memoranda Book kept at Cape Coast Castle, entries for 12th and 17th April, 1703, 26th June and 6th July, 1703.

Castle, sent a messenger with gifts to the Brafo of Fanti to find out "how he was disposed to the raising of a warr against the queen and kingdom of Anguina (Agona) for their treachery to the Royal African Company in bringing the Dutch to settle at Sanja Bereku which belongs to the Company". The Brafo accepted the presents and sent messengers to Akwamu, Winneba and other places "to the chief men of his acquaintances to bring them in the interest of the Royal African Company and to ingage them against the Kingdom of Anguina if they persist in their treachery against the Company."¹ Thus, in the early years of the eighteenth century, European trading interests were closely bound up with those of the coastal peoples, and it was against that background that European and Ashanti relations must be viewed.

The Dutch were the first European traders to contact the Ashantis after the Denkyera defeat. They did that for two main reasons. The Ashantis spent a long time plundering the Denkyeras of their gold, and taking a number of them prisoner, either for sale or to be sacrificed to their gods. Trade, therefore, was extremely bad on the west coast, and so the Dutch were anxious to get the Ashantis to open the trading paths and to bring down trade to the forts. The other reason was that it was widely believed on the coast that the numerous wars undertaken by the Denkyeras were instigated by the Dutch, and that it was the latter who supplied them with guns and powder. The Dutch therefore feared that the Ashantis would not send them trade, since they had been the friends

1. T 70/1463 Memoranda Book kept at Cape Coast Castle. Anglo-Fanti efforts to prevent the Dutch building their fort at Senya Bereku, are fully dealt with in this document. The English did not want the Dutch to establish themselves so near their fort at Winneba. The Dutch finally did build their fort there.

of their enemies. In November, 1701, Director-General Sevenhuysen, and his Council, decided to send under-factor David van Neyendaal to contact "the very much feared Asiente Caboceer Zaay".¹ The instructions drawn up for the guidance of Neyendaal shows that he had to go through the countries of Aguafo, and Twifo to Akanny where the Akanny chief "Akjesin" and his captain "Crantie", would conduct him to the presence of the king. When he had been received by Osei, Neyendaal was to congratulate him warmly on his great victory, and to let him know that the Dutch sympathised with the Ashanti cause. Neyendaal should then discuss business with the king. Firstly he should ask the king to permit his people, or any other people who wanted to resort to the coast, to trade, to do so. He must assure the king that, if the Ashantis were induced to go to the Dutch forts for their trade, they would receive as good bargains as they could expect from any other European trading nation on the coast. Moreover, the Dutch would undertake to punish those who ill-treated the Ashantis on the coast. Secondly, Osei should be asked to undertake to make the trading paths safe. Otherwise the Twifos and other peoples through whose countries the Ashanti traders must pass, would hinder them. Thirdly, Neyendaal must make available to the Akannists and the Ashantis the prices of trade goods in the Dutch forts, so they should know beforehand what to expect when they arrived on the coast. Having completed these commercial transactions, Neyendaal

1. 2 WIC 97 Letter from Jan van Sevenhuysen, Elmina, dated 16th November, 1701. In this letter Sevenhuysen gives the background to the Neyendaal Mission to Ashanti. He disclosed that the Dutch had no more than 200 Marks of gold in the chest at Elmina, because "the Ashantis are so rich from the spoils they had taken from the country of Denkyera that they do not care about trade." Neyendaal volunteered to lead the mission to Ashanti.

should also make it clear to the chiefs and people of Ashanti and Akanny countries that there was no truth in the rumours circulating in the country that the Dutch were behind the numerous wars undertaken by the Denkyeras against the neighbouring peoples. In particular, they had not bribed the Denkyeras to fight the Akannists. Admittedly, the Dutch had given 100 bendas of gold to the Denkyeras, but this was meant to enable the Denkyeras to buy guns and powder with which to wage war against King Abbe Tekki and his Aguafo peoples. Indeed, it was unreasonable to suppose that the Dutch would instigate the Denkyeras to destroy Akanny, whose people had for a long time been the main traders on the coast. Moreover, Neyendaal should stress that the money was paid to the Denkyeras in the presence of some Akannists as well as other peoples, and therefore the Akannists would have known if the intention was to enable the Denkyeras to fight them. Finally, Neyendaal was instructed to distribute some gifts to the king of Ashanti and his chiefs, as well as to the chiefs of Akanny. The gifts to Osei Tutu included one big velvet cloth with gold trimmings, a golden looking-glass and a plumed hat.¹

It is significant that the Dutch admitted that they had supported the Denkyeras in fighting the king of Aguafo and his people. A Dutch report of 1699 notes that the Aguafos were completely defeated by the Denkyeras,² and it may be that it was after the Denkyera victory that the ground-rent for Elmina Castle was paid to them. Neyendaal's instructions did not touch on this point, but documents relating to his

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1. Informatie en Instructie voor den onder Coopman D.V. Neyendaal waar na hij zig kan, en ook salmoeten reguleren gedurende de reijze ^{landwaert} ~~landwaert~~. See Appendix
 2. See 2 WIC 97 Letters from Director-General Jan van Sevenhuysen, dated 1st March, 10th June, 1699, and 26th June, 1700.

own transactions in Ashanti had been lost,¹ and so it is impossible to know how the Ashanti king came to be the ground-landlord of Elmina Castle. In the late nineteenth century, however, the Dutch told the English at Cape Coast that "many years ago the Dutch Company of traders under special protection of the Government granted a stipend of £80 a year payable in trade goods to the king of Denkerah for the purpose of promoting trade with his tribe and gave him a document to this effect on which the dates of annual payments were noted. On Denkerah being conquered by the Ashantees this document (pay note) came in possession of the King of Ashantee and after some negotiations with the Company, the latter granted him the same amount; they considering it desirable to keep up the same friendly relations with him as they formerly used to have with the Chief of Denkerah".²

Neyendaal stayed in Ashanti for more than a year and, in June, 1702, Willem de la Palma, the new Dutch Director-General, sent messengers to contact him. The Dutch messengers were to go first to Akanny to contact the three chiefs of that country, namely, Tiboy (Tsibu), Awanee (Awuni) and Intim Coffee (Intim Kofi). These messengers were to give the chiefs some brandy and three velvet cloths, and then to induce them

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1. Bosman says Neyendaal's papers were taken by some French pirates; see Bosman, 1705, op. cit., p.77.
 2. Agenda van openbare Besluiten No E/8. Letter from Consul at Elmina to Captain C.C. Lees, Lieutenant-Governor, Gold Coast Colony, Cape Coast, dated 21st June, 1876. It is clear that they regarded the payment for Elmina Castle to the Ashantis as a means of facilitating trade and not because the Ashantis were the ground-landlords of Elmina as a result of their conquest of Denkyera. But, as Coombs points out, the truth probably lay between the two extreme views. Undoubtedly, the Africans and the Europeans viewed the payments quite differently, and it was this fact which accounted for the misunderstandings between the British and the Ashantis in the nineteenth century. See Douglas Coombs, The Gold Coast, Britain and the Netherlands, 1850-1874, (London, 1963), pp.8-12, 81, 84, 86, and 107-8.

to open trade with the Dutch forts. After that, the messengers should travel to Ashanti. In Ashanti, the messengers, accompanied by Neyendaal, should present Osei with a beautiful red velvet cloth, and a black felt hat with a red feather. They should inform the king that the Dutch expected him to use his great power to increase the trade with the Dutch. The king was also to be told that if he could send a son to Elmina, he would be treated as "a prince of the country". Also, the king must be informed that to protect trade, and to make it possible for Ashanti traders to travel in safety to the coast, the Director-General had assembled the kings of Aguafo, Fetu and Asebu, as well as the Braffos of Twifo and Cabes Terra, to discuss the means of keeping the trading paths from the coast to Denkyera open. Finally, the messengers were asked to present "a costly gold and silver cloth to the Prince, son of Zay or if he does not have one, to his wife".¹ Indeed, friendship with the Ashantis was so valued by the Dutch that they were determined to do nothing to incur the displeasure of Osei Tutu. For instance, in 1708, messengers arrived at Elmina from Osei to inform the Director-General that some 80 pieces of ivory which the king had sent to the Dutch fort had not been sufficiently paid for. The Dutch thought this unlikely, for a similar complaint had been made during the directorship of Willem de la Palma, but since they valued their good relations with Osei, they decided that the king's demands should be met.²

The Dutch, however, found a keen competitor for the Ashanti trade in Sir Dalby Thomas. Sir Dalby repeatedly warned the Royal African

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1. 2 WIC 98 Letters from Director-General Willem de la Palma, Elmina, dated 18th July and 25th September, 1702.
 2. 2 WIC 125 Resolutions of the Director-General and Council, Elmina, 20th March, 1708.

Company that presents to the chiefs and other important peoples in the Gold Coast were essential if the Dutch were to be prevented from engrossing the greater part of the trade. He stressed that "your Honours trade to Ashantee is so important and the King's friendship so valuable that you can't be too generous to the King".¹ In 1707, he hoped to make Sekondi "a great place of trade to the inland country of Ashantee".² He asked London for "a field bed prettily made up or an English quilted bed with cotton for a covering" to be sent to him, because the King of Ashanti had asked him for a bed.³ In 1709, he reminded the Company of the bed, and pleaded that if it was impossible to send one "a more chargeable present" would be acceptable. In that same letter, he requested that "a fine horse furniture, Holsters and Pistols (with a bullet mold for them fit for a colonel to wear having to throw over the saddle when he is off), a feathered hat, a Colonel's scarf and General's truncheon", should be sent as a present to the King of Ashanti because he had heard that that king "sometimes rides on horseback".⁴ After Sir Dalby's death, the English continued to send presents to the Ashantis. For example, in 1714, the Royal African Company sent to "Say King of Ashantee" presents which included "a silk flagg with the Company's

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1. T 70/5 Abstract of letters received by the Royal African Company of England from the coast of Africa. No.1 March 20th 1705 - August 15th, 1715, entry for 8th May, 1709.
Sir Dalby Thomas was English Agent at Cape Coast Castle from 1703 until his death in 1711.
 2. T 70/5 Abstract of letters;... entry for 17th June, 1707.
 3. T 70/26 Letter from Sir Dalby Thomas, Cape Coast Castle, dated 22nd August, 1707.
 4. T 70/26 Letter from Sir Dalby Thomas, Cape Coast Castle, dated 8th May, 1709.
Osei Tutu must have reciprocated the kind gesture from Cape Coast Castle, because Sir Dalby noted that he returns "dashee for dashee". "Dashee" means "gifts". See T 70/5 On Sir Dalby's relations with Ashanti see also Davies, op.cit., pp.288-9

Armes, a laced Hat, a skarf and a General's truncheon".¹

Nevertheless, anxious as they were from a commercial point of view to solicit the friendship and goodwill of the Ashantis, the Dutch and the British reacted differently to the prospect of Ashanti as the political master on the west coast. The Dutch were apparently not worried about Ashanti being the dominant power there. Neyendaal's mission was intended to enable the Dutch "to work together with Zey (Osei) in all things in future."² The Dutch probably believed that they could contain the king of Ashanti by signing treaties of friendship with him. Such treaties, whilst benefiting the Ashantis, could also promote the trade interests of the Dutch. In fact, in 1703, the Dutch signed a treaty with the powerful Akwamu king, who dominated the east coast, with this object in view. By this treaty, concluded on the 3rd April, of that year, the Dutch bound themselves not only to pay the monthly ground rent for Crevecoeur, but also an additional one ounce of gold for every twenty pounds of gold traded at the fort. Furthermore, the Dutch recognised the dominion of the Akwamuhene over Accra, and promised that, in the event of the King of Akwamu being forced to wage "a just war against wanton people who wish to disturb trade", to supply the King with one hundred fully armed young men, with three thousand pounds of gun-powder and with three hundred pounds of bullets. The Akwamuhene, in turn, agreed to keep open the trade routes from the interior; not to allow his chiefs to indulge in disputes that might affect trade, unless he had given authority, and to prevent his subjects from trading with

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1. T 70/381 Accounts and Journals. Entry for 30th September, 1714. This document contains numerous references to presents sent to the king of Ashanti and other coast chiefs.
 2. Instructions to D. Van Neyendaal, op.cit.

interlopers, and to punish those who did.¹ Besides this, when the Dutch heard, in 1715, that an Ashanti army under Akankwatia had arrived in the Wassa country, they were greatly pleased, because they believed that "the Ashantis were coming to settle nearer the coast."² Indeed, Dutch and Ashanti friendship was so close that in 1708, when there were persistent rumours at Elmina that Sir Dalby Thomas had sent messengers to king Osei and the Twifo chiefs asking for a body of troops to enable the English to take possession of the Dutch forts, the Director-General and his Council simply ignored them.³ The British, on the other hand, considered that it was undesirable that the coastal tribes should fall under the domination of the Ashantis. It must be said that this attitude was clearly dictated by motives of self-interest, and was not the result of any regard for the coastal peoples themselves. In fact, although the coastal peoples had had a long trading connection with the Europeans, they were intensely detested because of their "middleman" activities. The coastal communities were constantly referred to as being avaricious, unruly, and lacking in effective government. In the opinion of the British at Cape Coast Castle, this latter characteristic was a decided advantage, because it enabled them to extract good trade bargains from the people by playing off one state against the other. Ashanti, however, was regarded as an absolutism presided over by a despotic king; the imposition, therefore, of the Ashanti system on the

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1. 2 WIC 98 Letter from Willem de la Palma, Elmina, 10th October, 1703. Enclosure Y Annexure 5. Copy of Agreement between High and Mighty Lords States General of the United Netherlands and the West India Company and Akwonno, King of Akwamu and his Councillors and Head Chiefs, dated 3rd April, 1703. Also, Wilks, in Trans.Hist.Soc.Ghana, 1957, op.cit., p.128.
 2. N.B.K.G.82 Letter from Willem Butler to Director-General H. Haring, dated 6th February, 1715.
 3. 2 WIC 100 Letter from Director-General Pieter Nuyts, Elmina, dated 23rd April, 1708.

on the coast was regarded as being harmful to European trading interests. In such an event, the despotic Ashanti king could not only cut off the forts from supplies, but also he would be in a position to dictate his own trade terms.

Furthermore, the British, unlike the Dutch, did not believe that the Akwamus could be made to serve the European economic interests. On this point, European experience on the east coast must have helped to solidify the views of the British. In 1705, for example, the Danes sent two anchors of spirits, pipes and some tobacco as a present to the Akwamuhene, but this was regarded by Akwamu as being inadequate. The King threatened to stop trade at the Danish fort unless some more generous gifts were sent to him. Governor Ligaard immediately ordered more goods, valued at 3 ounces of gold, to be sent to Akwamu.¹ In 1707, the English reported that the Akwamuhene "has made war with the Akims and will not let them trade which hinders the trade of Accra and Winneba". A year later, Sir Dalby Thomas wrote, "James Phipps can't make the trade at Accra as formerly because of the tyrannical temper of the king of Quomboe".² Thus, although the British would have liked to secure Ashanti military assistance against their Dutch rivals, they did not want the Ashantis to impose their rule on the coastal peoples. In view of this fact, when Osei Tutu was worried about the closing of the trading paths, and he "sent to know if Sir Dalby was willing he should open the ways of trade by destroying those that opposed it", the English Agent-General

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1. V.G.K. Letter from Erich Ligaard to Directors, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 1st September, 1705.
 2. T 70/5 Abstract of letters sent by Sir Dalby Thomas to Royal African Company, entries dated 21st February, 1707, and 30th September, 1708.

replied "in general terms so far as it might tend to the advantage of trade".¹ This fact is important because the prospect of Ashanti as the dominant power on the coast was to come to the fore from the 1740's onwards, when she had overcome all the interior states, and was threatening an invasion of the coast. At this point, it must be said that the officers of the European Companies on the coast were not independent authorities. At Cape Coast, Elmina and Christiansborg Castles, detailed reports of events were drawn up and sent to Europe, whence the Companies referred important issues to their respective governments. Thus the officers on the coast were constantly in touch with the authorities in London, Amsterdam and Copenhagen, from whom they received their instructions. But, because communications between Europe and Africa took a long time, it was inevitable that immediate decisions had to be taken by the officers on the spot. Moreover, the authorities were aware that their servants had first-hand knowledge of local matters, and were more likely to be the best judges of what should be done in certain situations. The opinions and actions of the Governor and his Council, therefore, were of crucial importance in the formulation of the "official" policies towards the African peoples. During the reign of Osei Tutu, however, Ashanti was not strong enough to dominate the coast. Her main preoccupation was her relations with the defeated Denkyeras, and her tributary states, especially the Wassas, Twifos and the Aowins.

It has been said that the Ashantis knew how to conquer, but did not know how to govern; that after the reduction of a new state, and

1. T 70/5 Sir Dalby Thomas, Cape Coast Castle, to the Royal African Company, dated 30th September, 1708.

its inclusion as a province of the kingdom, no army of occupation was left, but the district was handed over to one of the Ashanti chiefs, as Governor or Resident, and beyond the payment of an annual tribute, and the rendering of military service when called upon, nothing was required.¹ Admittedly, Ashanti's policy towards the distant states of the kingdom, such as Wassa, Twifo and Aowin, was very different from their policy towards the contiguous states, such as Domaa, Tafo and the Amakoms, which were effectively incorporated into the kingdom. The adoption of this policy, however, did not mean that the Ashantis did not know how to govern; in fact, in pursuing this policy, the Ashantis were following one of the traditional modes of government common to all the Akan states. On this point, a contemporary observation, made by the Dutch Director-General, Jan Pranger, soon after the Akyem conquest of Akwamu in 1730, is relevant. In a letter sent to Pranger by de la Flanque, the Dutch factor at Accra, the hope was expressed that the Akyems would occupy the Akwamu country. Pranger, who knew the customs of the country, wrote back saying, "as regards the Akwamu country, you say that you want to see the Akims themselves assume the possession and government of it, but that will never happen because it is an old custom of the natives that they always leave a part of their defeated enemies in their own country, one of whom they put in authority over it, who they then regard as their tribute-paying vassal. The victorious party can settle there if they wish to, but nevertheless, they obtain no share in the government."² Apart from the

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1. Claridge, op.cit., pp.228-229 Ward, 1958, opcit., p. 141-142.
 2. 2 WIC 109 Letter from de la Flanque, Accra, dated 10th November, 1730, and Director-General Jan Pranger's reply, dated 17th November, 1730.

fact that this policy had the definite advantage of enabling the conquering power to make use of the undamaged military resources of the vanquished peoples, it was also a positive means of reconciliation. Roemer, commenting a few years later on the same event, wrote, "All other African nations sold their prisoners and, (in the language of the natives) eat them, but these Akims were wiser; they kept the slaves in their country and married their indigenous slaves to these foreigners: treated them with kindness with the result that the Akwamus quickly forgot their fatherland, and King and became in the course of five years as good as the native Akims".¹

In the early eighteenth century, the Ashantis pursued this traditional policy for two main reasons. Firstly, Ashanti territory proper was too small, therefore there was not sufficient manpower to make possible the military occupation of the defeated states. Moreover, Ashanti appears to have embarked upon the war with the Denkyeras without having completed the subjugation of the neighbouring Guan peoples. Early in 1706, the Dutch factor at Axim reported that Ashanti traders were buying guns and powder "for distribution further inland, behind their country, for the inhabitants of a district lying far behind Auwien (Aowin), where war is waged on horseback".²

Again, in May 1715, the English factor at Kommenda was informed by some Ashanti traders who came to buy guns and powder, that the Ashantis were contemplating an invasion of "a country behind their own". The factor suspected that this was mere subterfuge, and that

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1. Roemer, 1760, op.cit., p.160. Also, V.G.K. Letter from Governor A. P. Waroe, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, to Directors, dated 28th December, 1730.
 2. Jan Landman to Director-General Pieter Nuyts, entered in Nuyts Diary, Acquisitions, 1902, XXVI.

the Ashantis were going to attack "Akim, their bordering neighbour to leeward and also a very Potent country", because the Akyems were also buying large quantities of firearms on the east coast. The Ashanti traders were right, because a few months later the same factor reported the arrival of a party of Ashanti traders who brought no slaves, because "what they have caught in their last battel with Gyenebra, a country beyond Ashantee, being so very meagre and lean," they could not undertake the long journey to the coast.¹ The other reason is that although the Ashantis plundered and annexed parts of Denkyera territory,² they must have realised that they had to adopt a more cautious policy towards the states of Akanny, Twifo, Wassa and Aowin. These peoples, like the Ashantis, had suffered under the military rule of Denkyera, and that was the reason why some of them actively supported the Ashantis. Hence, they regarded the Ashanti victory as the beginning of their own liberation. Moreover, they had a long tradition of independence before Denkyera domination, and therefore they must have viewed the upstart Ashanti kingdom with misgivings, if not with contempt. Furthermore, Denkyera defeat did not automatically mean that the Ashantis would have a free passage to the European forts on the west coast. They had to pass through the states of Akanny, Twifo, Wassa and Aowin, and so they needed the co-operation and goodwill of these peoples.

1. T 70/1464 William Baillie's Commenda Diary, with Accounts. Entries for 27th May and 4th August, 1715.

2. The people of Asumegya, for example, told Rattray that after the Denkyera war "the King of Ashanti gave us land in Denkyera, where our people founded the villages of Dominase and Agyemasu". Rattray, Law and Constitution, 1929, op.cit., p.132.

Nevertheless, Ashanti found it extremely difficult to deal peacefully with these peoples, and she had to resort to arms on a number of occasions to bring them back to obedience. The fundamental factor making for friction between the Ashantis and the former Denkyera tributary states, was the forms of control which the latter exercised over the trading paths to the coast. Soon after the Denkyera defeat, the Akannists undertook to maintain the trading path from Denkyera through Cabes Terra to the coast, apparently without the knowledge of the Ashantis. In May 1703, the Akannists, led by their chief, Kurankyi, attacked the overran Twifo, killing King Amba of that state. Kurankyi then proceeded to Elmina Castle with a number of traders from Denkyera, and his own country. There, he told the Director-General that if the Dutch could provide him with trade goods to the value of 30 bendas, or 7 marks 40 ozs. of gold, he would reopen the routes so that "traders from Denkyera and other places who are on the frontiers of Twifo could continue their journey to Elmina".¹ The Wassas, too, were seizing and selling into slavery people who used the trading paths through their country. In 1715, for example, they stopped a party of Aowin traders, who were travelling to Axim, and asked them to pay tolls before they would be allowed to continue their journey. The Aowins refused to comply with this preposterous request, and the Wassas thereupon seized about 80 of the Aowin traders, put them in irons, and robbed them of their gold and ivory.² The worst offenders, however, appear to have been the Twifos. The Dutch say that a few weeks after the defeat of Denkyera,

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1. 2 WIC 99 Extract of Resolutions by Director-General Willem de la Palma, and Council, Elmina, dated 1st May, 1703.
 2. N.B.K.G.82 Willem Butler, Axim, to Director-General H. Haring, dated 6th February, 1715.

they sent some two messengers to go and contact the Ashanti king, but they were refused a passage through Twifo.¹ Indeed, during the early years of the eighteenth century, the activities of the Twifos were so inimical to good trade, that in 1712, Ashanti, in alliance with the Akannists, the Fetus, Asebus and some Fantis, attacked that country and drove away their chief, Commomore, who sought refuge in Cabes Terra. The Dutch Director-General commented that "this is a delightful feat and something which our predecessors have wished for and attempted to bring about without success because this small power (Twifo) which lives by plunder has not given free passage to trade".² In the following year, Accafou, the new Twifo chief, apparently finding himself surrounded by powerful enemies, applied to the Dutch for financial assistance, so as to enable him to buy muskets and powder. For a loan of 53 bendas, 8 ozs. of gold, granted him, Accafou signed an agreement with the Dutch whereby he provided securities in the form of some valuable beads and gold chains, as well as giving up one of his nephews as a hostage.³ The Twifo country, however, remained in such a disturbed state that, in 1715, the English factor at Kommenda described Twifo as "a scattered nation harassing their neighbours whenever they have opportunity and only living by plunder and roguery."⁴ It was Aowin, however, which threatened the political and economic ambitions of Ashanti during this period.

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1. Instructions to Neyendaal, op.cit.
 2. 2 WIC 101 Letter from Director-General H. Haring, Elmina, dated 15th August, 1712.
 3. 2 WIC 122, f.72 Articles of agreement with Accafou, the head of the Twifos, dated 30th July, 1713,
 4. T 70/1464 William Baillie's Commenda Diary, with Accounts, entry for 6th April, 1715.

From the point of view of commerce, territorial extent and military potentialities, Aowin appears to have been the most powerful of the tributary states. Bosman points out that it was with great difficulty that Denkyera asserted her domination over that state in the late seventeenth century.¹ The break-up of Denkyera power, and the comparative freedom under the Ashantis, enabled the Aowins to recover some of their pristine glory, and to embark upon military expansion. In 1715, the Dutch reported that, for some years past, the Aowins had overrun the whole of Great Nkassa and that they had carried their victorious arms to "Sacco", where the bulk of the Aowin army had encamped.² The Aowin thrust northwards was clearly aimed at exploiting the gold resources in the Begho area, and, since the Ashantis were expanding in that direction, there was bound to be a clash of economic interest between Ashanti and her tributary state. Moreover, the new conquests enabled Aowin to increase her military resources, which could not fail to be taken into consideration by the Ashantis. What decided the Ashantis to move quickly against the Aowins, however, was that the Aowin country at that time served as a place of refuge for rebels and criminals from Ashanti and other tributary states. Willem Butler, the Dutch factor at Axim, was informed that Ashanti intended to attack Aowin because about 3000 men sent by "Zaay against a certain country which is inland between Ashanti and Aowin called Affin the Coco"³, had refused to return to Ashanti after the successful

1. Bosman, 1705, op.cit., p.79.

2. N.B.K.G.82 Willem Butler, Axim, to Haring, dated 8th October, 1715.

"Sacco", of course, is Nsoko (Begho).

3. "Affin the Coco", of the Dutch must be an area in the present-day Sefwi country.

completion of their task. Instead, they had sought, and been given permission by the Aowins to settle permanently in their country with their acquired booty.¹ Furthermore, the Aowins were giving protection to large colonies of refugees from Ashanti, Denkyera, Akanny and Twifo.² It is clear, therefore, that apart from economic and military considerations, Ashanti had to frustrate the ambitions of the Aowins if she was not to be denuded of her human resources.

In the late months of 1714, the two Wassa chiefs, Intwan and Ajepa, were called to Ashanti, presumably to discuss plans for an invasion of the Aowin country. In December of the same year, Amankwatia, the Kontihene of Kumasi and Commander-in-Chief of the Kumasi armies, was reported to be in the Wassa country with a body of Ashanti troops. The British at Cape Coast Castle, apparently believing that Amankwatia's mission was to settle the Wassa country, and to reopen the trading paths which had been closed for some time, hurriedly sent presents to "Amonquateha, an Ashantee Captain in the Wassa country".³ By August of the following year, all arrangements had been completed for an invasion of the Aowin country with troops drawn from Ashanti and Wassa.⁴ If the Ashantis had intended a small punitive invasion, they were quickly disabused of that idea, for the Aowins put up a spirited defence of their country. On hearing of Ashanti intentions, they arrested

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1. N.B.K.G.82 Willem Butler, Axim, to Haring, 8th October, 1715.
 2. N.B.K.G.82 Willem Butler, Axim, to Haring, 8th October, 1715.
 3. T 70/381 Accounts and Journals, entry for 31st December, 1714.
N.B.K.G.82 Letters from H. Blake, Sekondi, and Willem Butler, Axim, to Haring, dated 24th January, and 2nd February, 1715, respectively.
 4. N.B.K.G.82 Director-General H. Haring, Elmina, to Blenke, Sekondi, dated 17th August, 1715. W. Butler, Axim, to Haring, dated 30th August, 1715.

all the refugees resident in their country who were reluctant to join them against their enemies, and put them in irons. They then instructed the guards to kill them on the approach of the Ashanti army, so that they did not fall into the hands of the enemy, and thereby show them the lie of the country, or give away any of the secrets of the Aowins. Furthermore, they decided to fly to "Encasser and Socco" in case there was the possibility of an Ashanti victory.¹ The result of all these elaborate preparations was that Ashanti and Wassa forces found themselves involved in a general war for which they were clearly ill-prepared, and they were defeated in the early stages of the campaign. In September 1715, the English reported that "the Awawees (Aowins) have beat the Ashantees who are returned to recreate new force and have sent to the Cufferos (Twifos) to come to their assistance as the Abrimboos and.... the Adoms and Axims are to join the Awawees".² The reorganisation of the Ashanti forces, and the arrival of some more troops from Twifo, must have tipped the balance in their favour because, after a few months, Aowin and her allies were defeated. In December, 1715, a Dutch report was that the people in the Cape Apollonia area had been defeated, and that Amankwatia and Intwan were moving troops into the Igwira and Abocraase country, where a part of the Aowin forces was holding out.³ In a series of battles Aowin resistance was overcome, and the army pursued to the Inkassa and Begho area, where the Aowins surrendered. In January 1716, the English factor at Kommenda asked for increased supplies of muskets and powder because "the Ashantees have destroyed

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1. N.B.K.G.82 Willem Butler to Director-Haring, dated 10th October, 1715.
 2. T 70/1464 William Baillie's Commenda Diary with Accounts, entry for 27th September, 1715.
 3. N.B.K.G.82 Letters from M. Heyman, Axim, 3rd November, 1715
Willem Butler, 10th December, 1715.

the Cape Apolonians and Awaweese and are now coming to trade with their plunder".⁴ A few days later, the Dutch factor at Axim reported that Amankwatia and Intwan had reached an agreement with the vanquished Aowins, and that the latter had agreed to pay 300 bendas as a token of their submission to the Ashanti king.¹ It is clear, then, that during the reign of Osei Tutu, the Ashanti armies crossed the river Tano, and carried their victorious arms into the Begho area. In the early nineteenth century, Dupuis reported that in the reign of the first king, the Tano river was crossed and "a great extent of country conquered", that Benda became an "auxiliary kingdom", and that Gyaman was invaded "with a powerful army, with which he vanquished those tribes, and reduced their monarch to the condition of tributary".² Dupuis further notes that some Mande peoples "submitted to the yoke of vassalage, under the government of Ashantee, and were permitted to enjoy their inheritance peaceably in Ghombaty, Sokoo, and the confines of Ghofan".³ It seems, however, that the thrust into the Begho area was the result of Ashanti's determination to check the political and economic aims of the vassal state of Aowin, and that the line of march of the Ashanti forces was the "second Aowin path", and not along the extension of the Begho trade route to the Gold Coast.

Amankwatia, who had been conducting the Aowin campaign, was

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1. N.B.K.G.82 Willem Butler, Axim, to Haring, dated 24th January, 1716.
 2. Dupuis, 1824, op.cit., p.230.
 3. Ibid., p.xxxvi.
Ghombaty appears to refer to northern Gyaman. Sokoo (i.e. Nsoko) is the area of the old Begho. Ghofan was the region around Gbuipe in Western Gonja. See Ivor Wilks, The Northern Factor in Ashanti History, (Gloucester, 1961)p.17,f.n.1.

hurriedly recalled because of an Akyem threat to invade Ashanti.¹ A decade after the disastrous defeat sustained during the Ashanti and Denkyera wars, the Akyems had sufficiently recovered to threaten the security of the Ashantis. In 1712, they undertook certain instant war. First, they received under their protection the king of Denkyera, who had thrown off his allegiance to the king of Ashanti and had sought refuge in Akyem with many of his subjects. Secondly, the Akyems entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with the people of Cabes Terra, who had offered asylum to the Twifo chief, who was deposed by Ashanti and her allies. Director-General Haring, who believed that war was imminent between the two countries, thought that it would be dangerous for the Europeans to take sides, because whichever side suffered defeat, in the event of war, it would be detrimental to European trading interests. Haring pointed out that if the Ashantis were defeated, "the best and most powerful traders on the west coast" would be ruined, and the peoples of the small states, such as Twifo, would not only plunder traders who might pass through their countries, but also, they would demand expensive presents from the Europeans. On the other hand, an Akyem defeat could mean an end of the gold trade in the country, because Akyem was the most important source of that commodity. If that happened, the effect would be greatly felt in Accra, because the Akwamus who had been hoarding gold would buy European goods with cowrie shells, as they had done

1. N.B.K.G.82 Letters from Willem Butler, Axim, and H. Blenke, Sekondi, to Director-General H. Haring, dated 20th and 22nd January, 1716, respectively.

during the past four and a half years.¹ In spite of the apprehension in the European forts, however, the expected Ashanti and Akyem conflicts did not take place, because Ashanti was preoccupied with the "Aowin Question".

Because there was no immediate threat from Ashanti, the Akyems decided to attack the Akannists, who were known to act in the Ashanti interest.² In April 1715, the Dutch reported that a large number of Akannists were fleeing with their wives and children to Fanti and Cebes Terra countries, because they had heard rumours that the Akyems were contemplating an invasion of their country.³ A month later, the report was that the intentions of the Akyems were unknown, but that the Fantis and the Akanny refugees believed that the Akyems would invade Akanny after the rainy seasons. Meanwhile, the king of Abora state called a meeting of all the Fanti chiefs at Abora, the Fanti capital, to decide on what steps to take if the Akyems made good their intentions to invade Akanny. The Fanti chiefs decided to support the Akannists should the Akyems attack them, because they regarded Akanny as a buffer state between their own and Akyem country.

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1. There were rumours on the coast that the Ashantis acted in concert with the Akyems against Akanny. This is hard to believe, but probably because the Ashantis had already decided on war with the Aowins, they did what in order to gain time, and to make sure that the Akyems did not attack them. See N.B.K.G.82 Letters from Jan Visbeek, Kormantsi, and J. van Alzem, Bereku, to Director-General H. Haring, dated 12th July and 6th September, respectively.
 2. N.B.K.G.82 Letter from J. Visbeek, Kormantsi, to Director-General H. Haring, dated 19th April, 1715.
2 WIC 102, Letter from Director-General H. Haring, Elmina, dated 28th April, 1715.
The Akannists who fled to Cebes Terra actually went there to fight the Cebes Terra, who were the allies of the Akyems. See N.B.K.G.82 Letter from Jan Landman, Kommenda, to H. Haring dated 15th June, 1715.

They argued that since the intentions of the Akyems were unknown, it was most probable that an invasion of Akanny was a first step towards an invasion of the Fanti country. The Fantis then appealed to the English at Cape Coast Castle for muskets and powder, and the English sent a Cape Coast chief, and one of their own messengers, to Abora to tell the chiefs that their request would be granted, provided some gold was lodged in the castle against payment.¹

While the Fantis were still debating, ambassadors arrived from Akyem to tell them that they had no intention of invading the Fanti country, therefore the Fantis should stop meddling in their quarrels with the Akannists. The Akyem messengers further told the Fanti chiefs that their kings would be happy if the Akanny refugees were driven away from the Fanti country, or sold into slavery. The Fantis replied that they would do nothing of that kind, because they and the Akannists had always been, and still were, the same people, and so that they considered an attack on the Akannists as an attack on themselves.² The Akyems, thereupon, declared that it would be better if the Fantis "armed all the fishes in the sea to fight for them"; and the Fanti chiefs retorted in similar scathing terms.³ At the end of June 1715, the Akyem armies entered Akanny country. Since almost all the able-bodied Akannists had fled, the Akyems sacked a few

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1. N.B.K.G.82 Letters from J. Visbeek, Kormantsi, to H. Haring, dated 28th May, and 4th June, 1715. Also, Letter from G. Hendrix, Apan, to Haring, dated 6th June, 1715.
 2. N.B.K.G.82 Letter from J. Visbeek, Kormantsi, to Director-General H. Haring, dated 26th September, 1715.
 3. N.B.K.G.82 Letters from J. Visbeek, Kormantsi, and G. Hendrix, Apan, to Haring, dated 4th and 6th June, 1715, respectively.

towns, and then hurriedly retired into their country, without pursuing the enemy into Fanti country as they had intended to do.¹

The Akyem decision to cut short the campaign in Akanny was the result of a move by the Agonas to cut them off from their supply of guns and powder. Because of their incessant hostilities with the Akwamus, the Akyems received the bulk of their supply of firearms from the European settlements at Senya Bereku, Shidoe, Winneba and Apam through the Agona country. Thus, to ensure the flow of arms into their country whilst fighting the Akannists, both the Abuakwas and the Kotokus signed a treaty with Nyanko Eku, the paramount chief of the Agona state, whereby Akyem traders were granted free passage through Agona country.² The Agonas, however, apparently, acting under political pressure from the Akwamus, unilaterally abrogated the treaty with the Akyems. In June 1715, a Gomua chief called Gyani informed the Dutch factor at Apam that Ofori, the Akyem Abuakwa chief, had sent ambassadors to Nyanko Eku to solicit the military assistance of the Agonas against the Akannists, the Fantis and the Acrons. Gyani revealed that the Akyem messengers told Nyanko Eku that if he would help the Akyems, the empty pan which they had brought would be filled with pure Akyem gold, which then would be presented to the Agona chief. Nyanko Eku refused to comply with the request of the Akyems. He said that he preferred the "bad gold" of the Fantis to the Akyem gold, because he believed that the Akyems would attack his country soon after they

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1. N.B.K.G.82 Letter from J. Visbeek, Kormantsi, to H. Haring, dated 29th June, 1715.
 2. N.B.K.G.82 Letter Jan Boerhaven, Bereku, to H. Haring, dated the 20th May, 1715.

had defeated the Fantis and their allies. Moreover, he had sworn an oath with the late Brafo of Fanti promising to assist the Fantis in any future war, and, to show his honesty of purpose, had had sent his son to stay at the Fanti court at Abora. Furthermore, the Agona capital was so near the Fanti border that he could not expose it to attacks from the Fantis. Gyani also said that Nyanko Eku had decreed that no Agona man should sell guns and powder to the Akyems. He added, however, that although the king had declared for the Fantis, "the big Agona Crom Soedru" continued to supply the Akyems with firearms and that Nyanko Eku had sworn to punish his rebellious subjects as soon as the Akyems had been defeated by the allied forces.¹

In the light of this unexpected development, the Akyems decided to attack the Agonas. In July 1715, rumours were current in the Dutch forts that the Akyems had abandoned their intentions of invading the Fanti country, but that they were going to fight the Agonas.² In September of the same year, the factor at Bereku reported that all the important Agona chiefs, namely, Nyanko Eku, Apreba, Affery and others, had arrived at the coastal town of Shidoe to discuss "the

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1. Agona was under Akwamu overlordship at that time. The Akwamus were allies of the Fantis. According to the Dutch, the Fanti chiefs at Abora sent messengers to contact the Akwamuhene, who was on a visit to Accra, and to inform him about their intentions regarding Akyem. The Akwamuhene sent the messengers back with 2 bendas to buy drinks for the assembled Fanti chiefs, and to tell them that as soon as they were attacked by the Akyems, he would also attack the Akyems and the Agonas. See N.B.K.G, 82 Letter from G. Hendrix, Apam, to Haring, dated 6th June, 1715.
 2. N.B.K.G.82 Letter from G. Hendrix, Apam, to Director-General H. Haring, Elmina, dated 24th July, 1715.

present state of affairs with the Akyems".¹ The Akyems, however, postponed the invasion of Agona for several months, because of differences in opinion between the Akyem Abuakwas and the Akyem Kotokus.

It appears that the Abuakwas had always regarded the Akwamus as the traditional enemy of Akyem. Because of this, the Abuakwas were known to have made a number of incursions into Akwamu territory. For example, in March 1715, the Akwamuhene who was on a visit to Accra told the Dutch factor there that he was "experiencing grave difficulties with Ofori", but failed to give further details when pressed to do so.² A few days later, Akwonno was reported to be still at Accra in spite of the fact that he had been informed that the Akyems had sacked an Akwamu village, and that his great chiefs had warned him of an imminent Akyem invasion of his country.³ The Akyem Kotokus, however, thought that the Ashantis were the most dangerous enemy of the Akyems. Indeed, it appears that they had agreed to join the Abuakwas to attack Agona, because the defeat of the Agonas would enable them to get an uninterrupted supply of firearms with which to attack the Ashantis. This conjecture seems to be supported by the fact that whilst preparations were in progress for an invasion of the Agona territory, some two hundred Akyem traders arrived at Dutch Crevecoeur, and told the factor there that "the Akim Caboceer Apintin

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1. N.B.K.G.82 Letter from J. Van Alzem, Bereku, to Director-General H. Haring, Elmina, dated 6th September, 1715, and Haring's reply, dated 8th September, 1715.
 2. N.B.K.G.82 Letter from Sub-Factor, J. Van Dyck, Accra, to H. Haring, Elmina, dated 23rd March, 1715.
 3. N.B.K.G.82 Letter from factor Zelst, Accra, to Haring, Elmina, dated 31st March, 1715.

thinks himself strong enough to fight the Zaay (Osei) of Asjantijn".¹ The Abuakwas, however, must have argued against an invasion of Ashanti at that time. They preferred to attack the Akwamus and the Agonas before an invasion of Ashanti could be considered. If these two countries were defeated, the Akyems would receive an unlimited supply of guns and powder from all the European forts on the east coast, and this would enable them to defeat the Ashantis. Meanwhile, since the Ashantis were deeply involved in the war with the Aowins, they could be bribed to refrain from entering the war. The Abuakwa argument was convincing and on the 30th October, 1715, the Dutch factor at Accra reported that the Akyems had sworn an oath to "march on next Sunday against the Agonas and the Akwamus; that the Caboceers Apintin and Offery have agreed with each other to act together; that Caboceer Offery has received the blessing of the Zaay of Asjantijn to whom he had sent considerable presents; and that the Caboceer Apintin has sent back to the house of her father the daughter of Aquando...."² In early 1716, reports from Accra indicate that the Akyems had been fighting the Agonas, the Akwamus, the Fantis and the Akrons for quite some time. But, as in the case of the campaign in Akanny, the Akyems suddenly ceased hostilities, and retired hurriedly into their own

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1. N.B.K.G.82 Letter from J. Dautreleau, Accra, to H. Haring, Elmina, dated 10th October, 1715.
 2. Ibid., same to same, dated 30th October, 1715, and Haring's reply, 4th November, 1715. It would seem that Apenten was married to a daughter of Akwonno, the Akwamuhene, and this, coupled with the fact that Kotoku was far away from the Akwamu border, probably accounted for the good relations between the Kotokus and the Akwamus. On the other hand, the Abuakwas were nearer the Akwamu border, hence the constant hostilities between the Akwamus and the Abuakwas.

country.¹

The reason for this inexplicable behaviour of the Akyems was that the Ashantis were threatening to enter the war. The Ashantis, apparently aware of Kotoku intentions, and, flushed with their recent victory over the Aowins, responded to an appeal for help from the Agonas.² Early in 1717, the report from Cape Coast Castle was that "the Ashantees and the Aekims are resolved on a war with each other." In September the report was that "a decisive battle was likely between the Ashantees and the Aekims by which the Trade will be opened"; and, in October, that trade was bad and the trading paths stopped because of hostilities.³ The Dutch and Danish records also provide plenty of evidence to support the English accounts of conflicts between the two countries, during this period. In February 1717, the Dutch reported that the two major trading states, Ashanti and Akyem, were preparing to fight each other.⁴ In October of the same year, van Alzen, the factor at Accra, reported the death of the Zaay (Osei), which had been

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1. N.B.K.G.82 Entry by Director-General H. Haring, dated 12th April, 1716.
 2. V.G.K. Letter from Governor Frans Boye, Christiansborg Castle, to Directors, dated 10th May, 1716.
The Akyems may have decided against fighting the Akwamus and the Agonas at this time, if they could be sure of a free passage to the coast. A Dutch report of December, 1715, indicates that they made overtures for peace, but negotiations broke down because the Agonas demanded 200 bendas from the Akyems before they could grant Akyem traders free passage to the Coast. See N.B.K.G.82 Letter from J. van Dyck, Accra, to Haring, dated 31st December, 1715.
 2. N.B.K.G.82 Letter from van Alzen, Accra, Ho Haring, dated 30th Oct. 1717
N.B.K.G.82 Letter from D.-G. Robbertz, Elmina, dated 4th March, 1718.
 3. T 70/6 Letters from Cape Coast Castle to the Royal African Company, dated 6th February, 25th September, and 25th October, 1717.
 4. 2 WIC 103 Dispatch from Director-General Engelgraaf Robbertz and Council, Elmina, 31st February, 1717. It is clear from this report that whereas Ashanti was the main source of trade on the west coast, Akyem was the main source of trade, especially gold, on the whole of the east coast.

followed by the withdrawal of the Ashanti army and its subsequent defeat by the pursuing Akyems.¹ The Danes at Christiansborg Castle also reported, in November 1717, that the two kingdoms had embarked upon a decisive war, and that that accounted for the lack of trade at Accra, since the two kingdoms were the main sources of gold, slaves and ivory in the country.² From 1718 onwards, the reports from all the European establishments were that peace had been made between the two countries.³

These contemporary European accounts are clearly references to the same circumstances as those which Ashanti tradition associates with the death of Osei Tutu on the river Pra, during a campaign against the Akyems.⁴ In 1817, Bowdich was informed at Kumasi that Osei had been shot whilst in his hammock.⁵ Three years later, in 1820 Dupuis was also told that the king, with some two or three hundred retainers to the rear of the main army, was suddenly attacked by the Akyems as he was crossing the river Pra. He further records that the king's retinue was annihilated, and adds that after the king's death, the main Ashanti army "returned home, bringing in their train a considerable number of prisoners, who were doomed to be immolated to

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1. N.B.K.G.84 Letters from van Alzen, Accra, Blenke, Axim, to Director-General E. Robbertz, dated 30th October, and 10th November, 1717, respectively.
 2. V.G.K. Letters from Governor Knud Rost, Christiansborg Castle, dated 29th November, 1717, and 11th February and 30th June 1718.
 3. T 70/6 Entry dated 26th May, 1718.
2 WIC 104 Dispatch from Director-General Willem Butler, and Council, dated 8th August, 1718.
V.G.K. Letters from Governor Knud Rost to Directors, dated 31st October, 1718, and 22nd February, 1719;
 4. See for example, Dupuis, 1824, op.cit., p.231; Reindorf, op.cit., p.66; Fuller, 1921, op.cit., p.23.
 5. Bowdich, 1819, op.cit., p.233.

to his shade; for as to the body of the king, it was never recovered."¹

Priestley and Wilks, however, believe that the king who died in 1717 on the Pra was not Osei Tutu, but another king called Osei.² They regard Dupuis's testimony of the non-recovery of the king's body as being of "crucial importance", and assert that this had led to discrepancies in traditional accounts of the circumstances which led to the institution of Ashanti's Great Oath. They argue that since the king's body was not recovered, his name became a "kunorokosem", something known, but not to be mentioned, its utterance strongly tabooed (akyiwadie); and that this was the reason why the King's name was not mentioned when the Great Oath was being sworn.

This view is untenable. Admittedly, after a period of more than a hundred years, there were bound to be discrepancies in traditional accounts, if only because memory is short. It must be said, however, that the king's name was never mentioned when swearing the Great Oath, not because his body was not recovered, but because, to the Akans in general, death and a great man's name should never be coupled.³ The death of an Akan chief, whether in battle or through natural causes, was considered an event of such national calamity that it was usually, referred to in such obscure phrases as "a mighty tree has fallen", "Nana (Grandfather or chief) has gone to the village," or "the fire in the house has gone out".⁴ In the olden days, to say that a chief had

1. Dupuis, 1824, pp.231-3.

2. Priestley and Wilks, "The Ashanti Kings in the Eighteenth Century: a revised chronology", in Journal of African History, 1,1 (1960), pp.83-96. Apart from the date on which Osei Tutu died, the sources used by the authors have been checked and found very accurate.

3. Reindorf (p.67) says if an Ashanti king died in battle, it was considered such a great disaster, that when any warrior was asked about the rumours of the king's death, his reply was likely to be "I joined the campaign, but never heard of it".

4. These sayings are still current among the Akans of Ghana today.

died would have been an offence punishable by death. Moreover, it was not every chief whose death was commemorated in an oath. Any Akan chief, or person whose death forms the basis of an oath for his people, must have been regarded by his people as a great man indeed. The Ashantis believed, and still believe, that Osei Tutu was the greatest of their eighteenth century kings, and it was due to this fact, coupled with the fact that they were unable to give him a fitting burial, that his name was enshrined in an oath which Bowdich described as "the most solemn oath of the Ashantees".¹ It appears, however, that the strength of their case rests on contemporary written sources. In 1712, the English at Cape Coast Castle reported the death of an Ashanti king, and noted that this explained the absence of Ashanti traders on the coast. This report must be ignored, because, apart from the fact that the Dutch, who gave detailed reports of events in Ashanti in that year, failed to mention it, there were numerous occasions when such reports had been based on mere rumours. For example, in 1715, Willem Butler, the Dutch factor at Axim, was informed that the Ashantis were marching on the Aowins, because "the Zaay had already died", and that the Ashanti chiefs planned to place the successor of Osei on the Aowin stool, whilst they divided the Ashanti kingdom amongst themselves.² Butler believed this story, but a few days later, he reported that Amankwatia and Intwan, the Wassa chief, were marching

1. Bowdich, 1819, p.233.

2. N.B.K.G.82 Willem Butler, Axim, to Director-General H. Haring, dated the 8th October, 1715.

on the Aowins "without the knowledge of the Zaay".¹ Also, in 1739, the Danes heard rumours that the king of Ashanti had died.² We know, however, from Danish and other sources, that the king of Ashanti then was Opoku Ware, whose death was reported in the early months of 1750; again, in 1706, Jan Landman, the Dutch factor at Axim, reported that he had been informed by some Ashanti traders that Zaay (Osei), on account of his great age, had recently handed over "his sword and all his riches, greatness and authority to the Assantynse Caboceer Amanquatja", so as to avoid disputes about the succession upon his death.³ Priestley and Wilks infer from this report that if Osei Tutu was old in 1706, then he could not have accompanied the Ashanti army in 1717, and that this report supports the English account of his death in 1712. It must be pointed out that there are cases on record where aged Akan chiefs had accompanied their armies to war. If the campaign was considered of great importance in the national interest, the aged chief would normally be conveyed to the battle-field to give moral support to his people. It seems, however, that Landman's report may have been a reference to the creation of Amankwatia, whose mother reputedly suckled Osei, as the first Kontihene of Kumasi, senior divisional chief and, inter alia, commander of the Kumasi armies, by

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1. N.B.K.G.82 Letter from Willem Butler, to H. Haring, dated 20th October, 1715.
 2. V.G.K. Letter from Governor E. N. Boris, Christiansborg Castle, to the Directors, dated 10th March, 1739.
 3. Letter from Landman in Nuyt's Diary, Acquisitions, 1902, XXVI, 115.

that king.¹ In that case, the episode had nothing to do with Osei being an old man. All that happened was that Osei Tutu elevated that famous chief to act for him in the Kumasi division, as the Mamponghene deputed for him on the national level. Indeed, President Nuyts thought that Landman's report was so incredible that he believed that Osei Tutu had abdicated in favour of Amankwatia. He noted in his diary that "Zaay had transferred his kingdom and his dependencies to his slave the Caboceer Amanquadja".² It is clear, therefore, that arguments in favour of Osei's death in 1712 are inconclusive. On the other hand, traditional accounts and contemporary written sources agree that Osei died in 1717.

By the end of Osei Tutu's reign, the Ashanti kingdom had emerged from obscurity and was clearly poised to play a major part in the political and economic developments on the Gold Coast. Ashanti had superseded Denkyera as the dominant political power in the hinterland of the west coast, and she was also in control of the gold, slave and ivory resources in that area. The political and economic ambitions of the vassal states of Aowin had led to its subjugation. But in doing that, the Ashanti forces had overrun the area of Great Inkassa, and carried their victorious arms into the Begho area. These remarkable developments were taken notice of by the

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1. Rattray, 1929, p.68; Busia, 1951, p.91.
In 1820, Dupuis discovered that the Kontihene of Kumasi was also called Amankwatia; it is still customary in the absence of the Asantehene, for the Bantamhene (Kontihene) to assume the presidency of the Kumasi state Council.
 2. Acquisitions, 1902, XXVI, 115, President Pieter Nuyts, Elmina, to Jan Landman, Axim, dated 4th November, 1706.

European traders on the coast, who vied with one another to secure the Ashanti king in their interest. But, although for purely commercial reasons, they desired to be on good terms with the Ashantis, the Dutch and the English reacted differently to the prospect of Ashanti as the political overlord of the western coast. In the process, the Dutch and the English developed different policies towards Ashanti, which were clearly stated during the second half of the eighteenth century, when Ashanti was in complete control of the whole of the Gold Coast hinterland, and was threatening an invasion of the coast.

The emergence of Ashanti was made possible by Osei Tutu. Osei was greatly revered in Ashanti, not because he spoke "through guns",¹ but because he was a great political genius and statesman. He accurately gauged the political and economic situation in the country during the second half of the seventeenth century, and organised his people into a political union capable of playing a decisive role in that development. It is significant that Osei spent part of his early life in the powerful states of Denkyera and Akwamu. In these two kingdoms, Osei not only learnt his politics, but also discovered that the rise of those states had been made possible by the introduction of firearms into the country. Thus, the rise of Ashanti, as Metcalfe points out, appears to have been a compound of the state-building genius of Osei Tutu, and the introduction of guns and powder.² Osei gave the Ashanti policy a cohesion and a capacity to absorb new elements; whereas by controlling the southward movement of guns, the Ashantis secured

1. Fuller, 1921, p.23.

2. G.E. Metcalfe, Maclean of the Gold Coast, (London, 1962) p.36.

a decisive advantage over their neighbours to the north. Furthermore, it was significant that it was in Akwamu that Osei found, and formed a friendship with, Okomfo Anokye, an event which was to become so decisive in his career. If Osei Tutu was the future king and man of action, Okomfo Anokye was the wise companion, and adviser.¹ Fage has said that Okomfo Anokye's greatest achievement was the creation of the Golden Stool of Ashanti.² By that act, Anokye provided the religious basis of the Ashanti Union, because "it was presented to the Ashantis as enshrining the soul of the nation."³

Nevertheless, it must be said that Osei Tutu left behind him a kingdom which was politically and militarily vulnerable. The policy adopted towards the conquered states of Denkyera, Wassa, Akanny, Twifo and Aowin, was unprogressive, and this fact, coupled with the fact that most of these peoples had a long tradition of independence, largely accounted for the frequent revolts. Ashanti traders were kept waiting for long periods in Wassa and Twifo countries, and Ashanti had to play off one state against another before her traders could gain free passage to the coast. Moreover, it seems that the superb Ashanti military organisation had not attained perfection in Osei's time. It was neither invincible nor feared then. The army found it difficult to overcome the Aowins, and the Akyem victory on the banks of the Pra clearly threw the Ashanti forces into disarray. Indeed, the disaster at the Pra so shook the foundations of the kingdom that it did not dissolve into its component parts largely because of the martial genius of Opoku Ware.

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1. Fuller, (p.9) describes Anokye as the "Cardinal Wolsey of Ashanti".
 2. Fage, (Madison, 1961), op.cit., p.54.
 3. A.A.Y. Kyeramatten, A Panoply of Ghana, (London, 1964), p.25

CHAPTER III

ASHANTI UNDER OPOKU WARE, 1720-1750

In the 1720's, Opoku Ware was described by the European traders on the coast as the most powerful monarch in the country.¹ In 1766, John Hippisley, the Governor of Cape Coast Castle also described him as having been the wisest and most valiant monarch of his time, in that part of the world, drawing attention not only to his long and active reign, but also to his use of wise counsellors, and his successful wars.² Again, both the English and the Dutch believed that Osei Kwadwo, the Asantehene who reigned from 1764 to 1777, wished to model himself on his great predecessor.³ The nineteenth century Ghanaian writer, Carl Reindorf, reiterated this view, and noted that Opoku Ware "extended the Asante dominion more than any of his predecessors or successors."⁴

It is difficult to ascertain the actual year of Opoku's accession to the Golden Stool of the Ashantis. The preliminary to his reign was confusion and civil strife, largely as a result of the unusual circumstances surrounding the death of Osei Tutu. The Ashantis

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1. WIG Vol.106. Letters from Director-General Pieter Valckenier, dated 11th July, 1725, and 16th January, 1726.
VGK Letter from Governor Pahl, Christiansborg Castle, to directors, Accra, dated 10th September, 1727.
 2. T 70/31 ff.201-2. Letter from Governor John Hippisley, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, 13th July, 1766.
 3. T 70/31. Hippisley's letter op.cit.;
WIG Vol.115. Letter from Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, Amsterdam, dated 15th October, 1764.
 4. C.C. Reindorf, History, op.cit., p.85. Reindorf's comment is given added weight by the fact that Opoku Ware reigned for some 12 years more than he (Reindorf) calculated.

say that Okukuadani, a nephew of Osei Tutu, claimed the stool, but he was rejected by the chiefs because his supporters were few and, also, because Opoku had been nominated by Osei Tutu himself as his successor. The disputes which followed resulted in civil war, and Okukuadani and his followers were exterminated.¹ That there was civil strife in Ashanti soon after the Ashanti-Akyem war of 1717, is confirmed by evidence from contemporary European sources. In 1718, van Naerssen, the Dutch factor at Axim, reported that Ashanti "was much at variance between itself, and had already fought twice between itself", and that according to the reports of the Africans, "the heir of the Zaay was getting the upper hand however."² Four years later, in 1722, Director-General Willem Butler reported the arrival at Elmina of messengers from "the young Zaay of Ashanti".³ Early in the nineteenth century, Bowdich was informed in Kumasi that Opoku Ware was enstooled in 1720.⁴ It is clear, then, that Opoku's enstoolment took place between 1718 and 1720. Bowdich's date of his accession, therefore, is acceptable.

Soon after his accession, Opoku Ware set about the reunification of Ashanti. He was determined to restore confidence, and so to rekindle the fighting spirit of his people. To that end, he instituted the Great Oath of the Ashantis. The "oath" as an institution is common in Akan society. Every chief, lineage head, and, indeed,

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1. Fuller, A Vanished Dynasty...., 1921, op.cit., p.25.
 2. N.B.K.G. 85. Letters from van Naerssen, Axim, to Director-General Willem Butler, Elmina, dated 9th and 30th October, 1718.
 3. Ibid. Entry by Director-General Willem Butler, dated 3rd February, 1722.
 4. Bowdich, 1819, op.cit., p.234.

every man of importance, had his oath.¹ It referred, usually obscurely, to some tragic incident of the past. An allusion to this misfortune was strongly forbidden for two main reasons. Firstly, it was widely believed that it offended the ancestors of the community, and thus estranged them from the living. Secondly, the Akans feared that an allusion to the incident might lead to a repetition of the former disaster. Thus, if an oath was sworn, it behoved the authorities to investigate the reasons for which the taboo had been broken. This meant that private issues, like debt, theft, abuse, slander, assault and adultery, could be made public issues. Hence, Busia's assertion that the Oath was "the only means of having a private injury inquired into, by the central authority".² The Oath, too, might be put to other uses than to bring a private issue to public notice. For example, a chief might swear an oath enjoining his people to observe a certain custom or trade regulation; to perform a certain service, or to support a particular cause. Also, before he set out on a campaign, a war-lord would swear that he would never turn his back to the enemy.³ But, in all cases, the "oath" was intended to achieve the same purpose: to remind the people of the inseparable link between them and their ancestors who protect them.

The Great Oath (Ntam Kese) recalled the death of Osei Tutu, who, according to Busia, is the most venerated person in Ashanti.⁴

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1. On the oath in general, see, for example, Rattray, Religion and Art, 1927, op.cit., Ch.XXII, and Law and Constitution, 1929, Ch.XXXVI; Busia, 1951, pp.75-77.
 2. Busia, 1951, p.77.
 3. Busia, 1951, pp.77-8.
 4. Ibid., p.76¹/₂

It is concerned with the day on which, and place at which, the king was killed. But, because it was considered the greatest oath in Ashanti, the actual names of the day, Memeneda, (Saturday), and place, Kormantsi, must not be uttered when swearing the oath. A person swearing the Great Oath would simply say: "Meka Ntam Kese" ("I say the Great Oath"); a less obscure, and therefore much more serious version, was "Meka Kormante ne Memeneda", ("I say Kormante and Saturday"). The Great Oath is surrounded by such strong taboos that Bowdich could write, "when the oath by Cormantee and Saturday was sworn a gloomy silence" followed.¹ Dupuis gives a much better account of the strength of the taboos. Dupuis wrote, "Miminda Acromantee (implying Saturday and Acromantee) by which the national affliction is recorded, has been considered ever since an oath of the most solemn and unequivocal import; and the day itself has been cast into the calendar among the list of the ominous days stigmatized by the Ashantees as days which forbode evil.... The words, as recorded, are deemed too profane to utter, unless in a whisper between friends; and this redoubtable oath is most commonly taken by inference only, as the dreadful day, the day of God's chastisement, etc. The effect of these expressions only, as I have witnessed at the court, clouds every brow with woe, from the king to the slave who stands behind his chair, many fly from the presence.... Others cover their faces with both hands, uttering at the time a charm or invocation to the patron Gods to shield them from the ominous import of those words, and the effect of the king's wrath or

1. Bowdich, 1819, op.cit., p.297

sorrow.... The Oath itself entails the penalty of death, frequently by torture".¹

In this striking passage, Dupuis clearly demonstrates how deeply the Ashantis felt the loss of the founder of their nation. The Oath was intended not only to assure the Ashantis that Osei's spirit continued to guide the nation, but also to unite and rekindle their fighting spirits, to achieve the purposes for which the Ashanti kingdom was called into being. It was not only the Asantehene's greatest oath, but also a national one - Asantefo Ntam. For this reason, although the king alone retained the right to impose the death sentence, and to hear cases involving the Divisional Chiefs, the latter were entitled to hear cases in which the oath was invoked by their own subjects.² No chief who used the Great Oath in swearing his allegiance to the Golden Stool could go back on his word, because, if that happened, the Asantehene could always count upon the support of the other chiefs to punish the recalcitrant one. Moreover, the oath was invoked by the chiefs to clear themselves of suspicion that they were plotting against the State.³ Even the Asantehene was not above the law in cases where the Great Oath was invoked. Both Rattray and Busia state that the king could be arraigned before a national tribunal on

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1. The quotation is from Dupuis, 1824, op.cit., pp.232-3, as cited in Priestley and Wilks, Ashanti Kings in the eighteenth century... in Journal of African History, 1, 1 (1960), op.cit., p.90
 2. Rattray, Law and Constitution, 1929, p.161, Note 1. There was a slight variation of procedure between the different states. Ibid., Chs.XVII-XXIII.
 3. For example, in 1945, when Bakwai announced its secession from the Ashanti Confederacy Council, all the chiefs reaffirmed their loyalty to the Golden Stool by swearing the Great Oath. Busia, The Position of the Chief..., 1951, pp.55-6, and 171.

on which sat all the Divisional Chiefs.¹

Opoku Ware must have encountered little difficulty in reuniting his people, because of the treacherous activities of the tributary states of Twifo, Wassa and Aowin. While the Ashantis were campaigning in the Akyem country, these three states seized the opportunity to enter Ashanti, sack a number of villages, and take large numbers of Ashantis prisoner, whom they sold into slavery at the coast. In March 1719, the Dutch at Elmina reported that although the protracted war between the Akyems and the Ashantis had ended, there was no hope of a lasting peace in the country, because the Ashantis would certainly revenge themselves on the Twifos, the Wassas and the Aowins, who had "sacked two or three Ashanti villages, and had stolen a number of the Ashantis".² Two years later, in 1721, the report was that the Ashantis were marching against the Wassas and the Aowins, and in the following year, that the Ashantis had emerged as victors in their wars against their enemies, and that "the gold rich Aowin country has suffered most" during the war. The Aowins were driven away from their country, and they were scattered all over the country-side. The report also revealed that the Ashantis were selling large numbers of the prisoners-of-war at Elmina, Cape Coast, and Anomabo.³

It is interesting that these contemporary accounts noted the destruction of Aowin, for this episode is clearly remembered by the

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1. Rattray, Law and Constitution, 1929, p.161, note 1; p.105. Busia, 1951, p.101.
 2. WIC Vol.104. Letter from Director-General Willem Butler and Council, Elmina, dated 27th March, 1719.
 3. WIC Vol. 105. Letters from Director-General Willem Butler, dated 1st November, 1721, and 8th May, 1722.

Ashantis. It is related that while the Ashanti army was still fighting the Akyems, the Sefwis, led by their chief, Ebirim Moro, seized the opportunity to pounce on Kumasi and sack it, killing the Queen Mother, Nyarko, and all but two members of the royal family, who were captured and sent to Sefwi as prisoners. When the news reached Opoku Ware, he returned to Kumasi by forced marches. There, a meeting was held and Amankwatia, the Kontihene and Commander of the Kumasi forces, who had conducted the earlier campaign against the Aowins, was detailed to pursue the enemy. Amankwatia and his forces caught up the Sefwis before they could recross the river Tano, gave them battle, and completely routed them. Ebirim Moro was killed, but Amankwatia pursued the fleeing Sefwis into their own country, and defeated them. By this signal defeat of the Sefwis, the whole territory up to the river Bia was annexed, and this tract of land, known as Ahafo, in the north-west Ashanti, became the game-preserve of the Ashanti kings.¹

The complete subjugation of the powerful Aowins, and the consequent thrust into the Ahafo area by the Ashantis, was bound to result in conflicts with the powerful state of Tekyiman in the neighbourhood. The story goes that Amo Yao, the Tekyimanhene, was so frightened that he made friendly overtures to the Ashantis. Amo Yao selected as his messenger to the Ashanti king, the fugitive Bafo, from Amakom, who had established himself in the nearby village of Nkoranza. Bafo was

1. See, for example, Fuller, 1921, op.cit., pp.26-27; Reindorf, History, op.cit., pp.81-2.

According to Reindorf, one thousand prisoners "were sacrificed in honour of the royal personages" the Sefwis had massacred. During this period, the Aowin country included parts of modern Sefwi.

instructed to send three bags of gold-dust to Opoku Ware, in order that the Ashantis and the Tekyimans might be friends. Bafo decided to keep the valuable presents, and instead he substituted flints, lead and powder, and sent them in three parcels to Opoku Ware. When the Asantehene asked Bafo what the gesture meant, Bafo said that the Tekyimanhene was determined to fight the Ashantis, hence such curious gifts. Opoku Ware was unable to get an explanation from Amo Yao himself, because Bafo saw to it that all messages to the Tekyiman Court passed through himself. Bafo had the Tekyimans informed that the Ashantis were preparing to attack them, and the frightened Amo Yao asked Bafo to tell him wherein lay the apparent invincibility of the Ashanti army. Bafo told the Tekyimanhene that the strength of the Ashanti army lay in the fact that, before they set out on a campaign they buried all their guns for forty days so as to render them more deadly. Amo Yao believed this story, and he immediately ordered all the Tekyimans to bury their guns. Bafo had the Ashantis informed then of what the Tekyimans had done, and Opoku immediately marched his troops to the Tekyiman border. There, a chief and his people who had defied the orders of Amo Yao, offered the Ashantis stout resistance. But as the mass of the Tekyiman guns were rusted and useless, the country was quickly overrun by the Ashantis after three engagements. Amo Yao and the Tekyiman Queen Mother, Gyamarawa, were captured, and sent to Kumasi, where the Queen Mother, was ill-treated because of her boast that she did not know what was meant by poverty. It is further related that Amo Yao was well-treated, and that it was the Tekyimans who

introduced solid "gold weights" into Ashanti.¹

That Tekyiman was won by a trick is collaborated by two pieces of evidence from Dutch sources. In January 1724, it was reported that the Ashantis had won a big victory over a country "lying behind Ashanti and which is at least three times as large as Ashanti"; and that the Ashanti victory was won by "treachery". The report further stated that the defeated country was ruined, and that the Ashantis took large numbers of people prisoner. It was also said that, in order to let the Dutch know about the event, the Ashanti king sent an ambassador with "a great number of slaves" to Elmina Castle, and that the Dutch received him civilly, and sent him back with gifts to the Ashanti king.² This report did not mention the name of the conquered state, but two years later, in 1726, Opoku Ware was threatening an invasion of Abremboe country with Tekyiman troops, to secure the fugitive Wassa chief, Intsiful.³

The reasons for an Ashanti invasion of Tekyiman will probably never be known. It is clear from Ashanti sources that the Tekyimans were afraid of them, and that that was the reason why Amo Yao made friendly overtures to Opoku Ware. The available evidence, however, suggests that this was not the cause. It was certainly the case that Ashanti, after the disastrous defeat by the Akyems, and the subsequent

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1. On traditional accounts of this episode, see e.g. Reindorf, History, op.cit., pp.71-73. Fuller, 1921, op.cit., pp.27-29.
 2. WIC Vol.105. Letter from L. Beuns, Elmina, to the Council of Ten, dated 8th January, 1724.
 3. N.B.K.G. 93. Letter from Director-General Pieter Valckenier, Elmina, to factor Jacob Elet, Kormantsi, dated 5th May, 1726.

wars with the Aowins, was not militarily capable of threatening the ancient, more populous and powerful state of Tekyiman. Indeed, the whole Bafo episode, it seems, suggests that the threat came from Tekyiman, and not vice versa. Since Tekyiman controlled most of the gold resources in the present-day north-west Ashanti, it was unlikely that the Tekyimans would tolerate Ashanti's presence in the Ahafo area. If that were the case, then Opoku Ware used Bafo, his paternal uncle,¹ to achieve a purpose for which the Ashanti military resources at that time were incapable of bringing about.

The defeat of the powerful state of Tekyiman made it possible for the Ashantis to control the gold and slave resources in the greater part of the present-day Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. Moreover, it provided the Ashantis with more troops, and Opoku Ware felt able to turn his attention to the southern states of Akwamu, Wassa, Twifo and Akyem.

We have noted that the creation of the Ashanti kingdom was made possible by assistance from Akwamu. Osei Tutu must have worked with the Akwamuhenes, Ansa Sasraku, Basua and Ado, as equal partners. His successor, however, initiated a policy towards Akwamu which was clearly aimed at reducing the Akwamus to the position of junior partners in the alliance. This policy was vigorously pursued by Opoku's successors, so that, in the early nineteenth century, a commentator on Gold Coast politics could remark, "the political state

1. Bafo was the brother of Akosa of Amakom, and therefore a relative of Edu Penin, Opoku Ware's father. See, Fuller, 1921, pp.25-26.

of the Gold Coast has been chiefly marked by a decline of the power of Aquamboe, which, instead of ruling over all the neighbouring states, now scarcely maintains its own independence. The predominance is at present indisputably possessed by Ashantee...."¹ There were valid reasons for this shift in Ashanti's policy towards Akwamu during this period. Ashanti, as the dominant political power in the hinterland of the western Gold Coast, was clearly in a position to end her military and economic dependence on Akwamu. The main reason, however, appears to have been the decline of Akwamu during the reign of Akwonno, who ruled from 1702 to 1725.

Wilks rightly points out that Akwonno must be ranked with Ansa Sasraku among the most able and greatest of the Akwamuhenes of the past. Akwonno built upon, and consolidated, the gains of his predecessors, so that by the time of his death in 1725, Akwamu found itself in control of an empire "extending well over a hundred miles on each side of the river Volta, and an indeterminate way inland over the Afram plains and the hill country beyond the Volta to the east."² But Akwonno's twenty-three years' rule was also a period of internal decay in Akwamu. It has been pointed out that in the early years of the eighteenth century, the Akwamus were hoarding gold instead of selling it. This meant that Akwamu prosperity increasingly came to depend upon the slave trade, and Akwamu policy was geared to meet the increased

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1. Hugh Murray, Historical Account of Discoveries and Travels in Africa, London, 1818, Vol.II, p.316
 2. I. Wilks, "The Rise of the Akwamu Empire, 1650-1710", in Trans. Hist. Soc. Ghana, Vol.III, pt.2, Achimota, 1957, pp.128 and 130.

demands for slaves by the European traders at the coast during this period. It may be supposed, therefore, that it was under these circumstances that Akwamu's policy both towards her own subjects, and towards other peoples, began to change. Roemer records that "the rule of the first Akwamu kings was, in the opinion of the Accras and all the conquered peoples, very mild", but that the Akwamus "behaved more and more harshly towards the Accras and others under their domination as time passed".¹ In 1709, for example, Samson Walter, the English factor at Accra, declared that trade at Accra was bad because of "the king of Quomboe hindering the inland traders; but in hopes he'l(1) soon be humbled, the inland people being about to make war upon him".²

Under Akwonno, the rule of law in Akwamu gave way to tyranny. Everywhere power was abused, and violence, it seems, became a valid instrument of Akwamu policy. This change showed itself most clearly in the growth of organizations concerned chiefly with the illegal enslavement of peaceful citizens, and with their secret sale to the Europeans on the coast. Members of these organizations, collectively known on the coast as "Siccadingers", terrorized the countryside. They seized innocent people, and carried them off to the coast, where the Accras and other coast middlemen arranged for their sale to the forts, or to the numerous interlopers. The activities of these Akwamu

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1. Roemer, *Tilforladelig Efterretning*.... 1760, op.cit., p.106.
 2. T 70/5 Sampson Walter, James Fort, Accra, to Governor of Cape Coast Castle, dated 31st January, 1709

robber bands can be better appreciated from Roemer, "The Akwamu Siccadings or the thievish young man who were sent into neighbouring territories to rob people often returned with empty hands; often with blood-stained heads; but in order to have some reward for their pains, they took their own countrymen and fellow citizens and sold them to the Accras, who would have been glad if all the inhabitants of Akwamu had been sold as slaves."¹ Akwonno did nothing about this growing abuse of power. Indeed, he employed his own bands of Siccadings to raid into neighbouring territories.²

Perhaps the greatest disservice which Akwonno rendered to his people was his betrayal of the Akwamu and Ashanti alliance. There is no evidence to suggest that Akwonno formally repudiated the special relations with the Ashantis. Indeed, it would seem that he cherished them, because Akwamu stood to gain by co-operating with the Ashantis. For example, in 1708, Akwonno marched his troops into Kwawu country, and defeated the Kwawus in a series of battles. The Akwamus pursued the Kwawu forces to the borders of Ashanti, where the latter unexpectedly reformed, turned, and inflicted a serious defeat on the battle-worn Akwamu forces. Akwonno thereupon decided to retire into Akwamu to re-equip and reinforce his troops. In mid-February 1708, the Akwamu army arrived back in the capital.³ The Dane Ligaard, who gave detailed

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1. Roemer, 1760, op.cit., pp.125-6.
 2. Ibid., pp.143-4. Akwonno is said to have retained about 1000 Siccadings, who raided the Gomuas for slaves,
 3. V.G.K. Letter from Governor Erich Ligaard, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, to Directors, dated 23rd February, 1708. On the Akwamu struggles with the Kwawu peoples, see ibid. Letters dated 14th July and 8th October, 1708; Rask, Kort og sandferdig Reisebeskrivelse til og fra Guinea, 1754, op.cit., pp.155-6, 162 and 93. Also, I. Wilks, in Trans.Hist.Soc.Ghana, 1957, Vol.III, pt.2, Achimota, 1957, p.129

accounts of this campaign, did not give reasons for the unusual behaviour of the Kwawu troops when they reached the Ashanti border. One may conjecture, however, that the Kwawu resolution was one born out of desperation. Since the Ashantis were known to act in the Akwamu interest, the Kwawus clearly feared that their fate would be worse if they entered into Ashanti territory.

Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests that Akwonno, presumably jealous of the growth of Ashanti power, was determined to betray the ideals of the Akwamu and Ashanti alliance. According to the Dutch, the great disaster which befell the Ashantis on the river Pra in 1717, was largely the responsibility of the Akwamuhene. Akwonno suggested to the Ashantis that one of their armies should pass through Akwamu to attack the Akyems where they would least expect it. The Akwamuhene then had the Akyems informed of the line the Ashantis must take. As a result, part of the Ashanti army was surprised and surrounded, the troops were unable to procure food, and soon small-pox broke out in the camp. The Akyems then attacked vigorously and inflicted heavy losses.¹

That there was an understanding between the two erstwhile enemies is further shown by a Dutch report of 1725, In that year,

1. N.B.K.G.82 Letter from van Alzen, Accra, to Director-General H. Haring, dated 30th October, 1717.

N.B.K.G.84 Letter from Director-General Engelgraaf Robertz and Council, dated 4th March, 1718. Also Priestley and Wilks in Journ. African Hist., 1, 1 (1960), p.88.

Akwonno and his troops retired into Akwamu when the Akyems hastily moved into the interior, when rumours of the impending Ashanti invasion of their country reached them. It was probable that it was during the intervening period that Akwamu and Akyem rapprochement came into existence. See V.G.K. Letter from Governor Frans Boye, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 16th May, 1716.

the Danes reported that there were hostilities between the Akwamus and the Akyems, because the Akwamus had refused to surrender the wives and children which the Akyems had sent to Akwamu for safe-keeping during their recent war with the Ashantis; that Akyem messengers, sent there to bring back the Akyems, discovered that Akwomno had given some of the women in marriage to his sub-chiefs, and sold several others to the European traders; and that the Akwamuhene himself kept the Akyem king's sister as his slave.¹ Besides, presumably because the Ashantis entered into the war upon Agona invitation, the Akwamus allied with the Fantis to fight the Agonas soon after the Ashantis had been defeated.² Indeed, the twenty-three years' of Akwonno's reign brought Akwamu fortunes to such depths that, on his death, the Danes pointed out that unless his successor found new friends, the empire would collapse, since Akwamu was surrounded by enemies, and also because the Akwamu monarchy rested on such slender support.³

Akwonno's successor was, of course, Ansa Kwao, who had neither the ability nor the inclination to check the abuses which were sapping the strength of his kingdom. Ansa Kwao even went further than Akwonno, and sent his own bands of Siccadings "to steal hill negroes and Adampis from his own nation, though not the Accras, because they were useful to him in getting goods for the slaves".⁴ Indeed, during the

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1. V.G.K. Letter from Governor A. Suhm, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 20th September, 1725.
 2. V.G.K. Letter from Governor A. Suhm, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, to Directors, dated 15th July, 1724.
WIC Vol.106 Letter Director-General Pieter Valckenier, Elmina, dated 20th August, 1724.
 3. V.G.K. Letter from Governor A. Suhm, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 20th September, 1725.
 4. Roemer, 1760, op.cit., pp.121-122.

short reign of Ansa Kwao, the break-down of the rule of law in the Akwamu dominions was so complete that internal revolts became rampant. For example, Amega, a son of a powerful Akwamu Divisional Chief, Asromaso, and an Akwamu administrator in the Adangme area, so terrorised the countryside that the people rebelled and drove him out of office. Amega fled to the Akwamu capital and appealed to Ansa Kwao to assist him with troops to quell the revolt. At that time, however, Ofori, the Akyem Abuakwa chief, had died, and since it was unknown what his successor's policy would be towards Akwamu, Ansa Kwao felt constrained to maintain his forces in the west at full strength, and so Amega's request was turned down. Amega then appealed to his father, who enlisted the support of other chiefs, quelled the revolt, and reinstated Amega as governor of the Adangme area.¹

In the light of all this, Opoku Ware felt bound to find other allies to check the Akwamus. To that end, he immediately made friendly overtures to the Akyems, and apparently the two countries reached an understanding to act together in future. As early as 1724, the Dutch reported that since the war with the Tekyimans was over, the Ashantis might attack the Akwamus because the latter had "very badly treated the Akyems who are now the great friends of the Ashantis."² In 1727, the report was that the Fantis, the Akyems, the Kwawus and the Ashantis had resolved to invade Akwamu, and that there were comotions

1. V.G.K. Letters from Governor Pahl, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 14th April and 10th September, 1727.

2. WIC Vol.105 Letter from L. Beuns, Elmina, dated 8th January, 1724.

in Akwamu which had resulted in many of the Akwamus fleeing to the coastal towns to seek refuge.¹

This formidable combination of states against Akwamu fizzled out, however. The Akwamus did not find it difficult to persuade the Fantis to leave their allies in the lurch. Ansa Kwao, the Akwamuhene, hurriedly sent Kwesi Edu, an Akwamu war-lord, to negotiate with the Fanti chiefs, who were assembled at Kormantsi, for a peaceful settlement of their disputes. Kwesi Edu's mission was successful, and the Fantis not only withdrew from the alliance, but also they warned the Akyems that if they persisted in their intentions to attack Akwamu, they would enter the war on behalf of the Akwamus.² The Ashantis, too, could not play any effective role in the coalition against Akwamu, because they were in conflicts with the Wassas during this period.

The origins of the disputes between the Ashantis and the Wassas did not merely stem from the forms of control which the Wassas exercised over the trade routes, which led from Ashanti through their country to the coast. The sacking of a number of Ashanti villages, when the Ashantis were campaigning in Akyem in 1717, largely accounts for the bad relations between the two states. It would seem, however, that what precipitated matters was the dispute between the Wassas and John Conny, the wealthy Ahanta chief, and former chief

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1. V.G.K. Letter from Governor Pahl to Directors Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 10th September, 1727.
 2. V.G.K. Letter from Kamp to Directors n.d., but included in the packet marked "VGK 1722-1731".

broker of the Brandenburg Company.

It has been pointed out that John Conny occupied Groot Friederisckborg and other possessions of the Brandenburg Company on the Ahanta coast after they had been abandoned. The vast trading experience which he had acquired as the chief broker of the Brandenburgers enabled Conny to play an active role in coast trade and politics. The security of the forts enabled him to wield great influence on the neighbouring peoples, and he soon emerged as a shrewd businessman, whose immense wealth was based on the large amount of gold, and an equally large number of slaves he possessed. Moreover, his far-flung connections enabled him to exploit to the full the gold and slave resources in the middle reaches of the Ankobra river. Conny's agents were found all over the Aowin and Igwira countries, where European merchandise was exchanged for gold, slaves and ivory. Thus the Dutch who were established at Axim, found their trading interests greatly threatened by John Conny and his agents, and they schemed to dislodge Conny, and to occupy the Brandenburg forts themselves. John Conny, however, was determined to keep the forts, and he also enlisted the support of the Wassas and the Cape Appolonians to oust the Dutch from Axim. From 1715 onwards, a series of battles were fought on the western coast between John Conny and his allies on the one hand, and the Dutch and their African allies on the other.¹ Nothing came out of this, because none of the battles was

1. On the Dutch disputes with John Conny see e.g., N.B.K.G.82, Letters from Willem Butler, Axim, to Director-General H. Haring, dated 6th February, and 30th August, 1715; W.W. Claridge, History, 1915, op.cit., Vol.2, pp.203-205

was decisive, although the confusions arising out of these skirmishes tended to ruin the trade in that area. John Conny attributed his failure to dislodge the Dutch from Axim to the ineffective military assistance given by Intwan, the Wassa chief, to whom he had advanced large sums of money. In the circumstances, Conny asked Intwan to refund the monies he had given him, but because the Wassa chief was then assisting Amankwatia to subjugate the Aowins, he could do nothing but prevaricate. These events led to serious quarrels between Conny and Intwan, and the former arrested a number of Wassas, including Bo Kofi, a relative of the Wassa chief, and imprisoned them pending payment of Intwan's debts.¹ The Wassas retaliated by entering into an alliance with the Akannists and a section of the Ahantas, in order to fight Conny and his people. In May 1724, the Dutch reported that the Wassas and their allies were marching on Conny, and that they had sent messengers to inform the Director-General that they wanted the Dutch to help them. The allies also threatened that if Dutch assistance was not forthcoming, they would seek English support, and if Conny was defeated, the Brandenburg forts would be handed over to the English. On the following day, it was definitely known at Elmina that John Conny and his people were besieged by Intsiful, described as "the great Caboecer of the Wassas", and Dodoo Tsibu, the chief of Abramboe, and their troops.² The Dutch were, of course, not prepared to see the

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1. N.B.K.G. 82 Letter from Willem Butler, Axim, to Director-General H. Haring, Elmina, dated 8th October, 1715. Butler rightly guessed that the Wassas would attack Conny after the Aowin campaign was completed.
 2. WIC Vol. 106 Letters from Director-General Pieter Valckenier, Elmina, dated 8th and 9th May, 1724. Intsiful succeeded Intwan, who might have died soon after the war against the Aowins.

English in control of the Brandenburg forts, therefore they agreed to help the Wassas and their allies. On the 25th October, the Director-General wrote that "we have been obliged with regret, to start a war against the rebel Jan Conny and for that purpose we have secured the support of the negroes from Elmina, Aguafo, Fetu, Abramboe, Accany, Wassa and Ahanta with which power we hope (if God permits,) to be able to defeat and humble Jan Conny".¹

John Conny was, however, neither defeated nor humbled by the Dutch and their African allies, because of the timely intervention of Opoku Ware. It appears that Ashanti's intervention at this time was largely due to an appeal for help by John Conny, who was said to be on friendly terms with Ashanti. As early as 1715, when Conny was having troubles with other Ahanta chiefs, the Dutch factor at Sekondi reported that Osei Tutu sent messengers to Ahanta to settle the disputes in his name.² In 1719, Director-General Butler declared that the Dutch had been unsuccessful in their several attempts to solicit the help of the Ashantis to punish Conny, because the Dutch West India Company did not permit their officers on the coast to use their money to bribe people. On the other hand, John Conny, with his great riches, could easily get the help of the most powerful people in Guinea to fight his war for him.³

Since the Wassas and their allies were heavily dependent upon the Dutch for the supply of guns and powder, Opoku's first objective

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1. WIC Vol. 106 Letter from Director-General Pieter Valckenier, Elmina, dated 25th October, 1724.
 2. N.B.K.G. 82 Letter from H. Blenke, Sekondi, to Director-General H. Haring, dated 24th January, 1715.
 3. WIC 104 Letters from Director-General Willem Butler, dated 27th March, and 6th July, 1719.

was to secure the withdrawal of the Dutch from the coalition. He sent messengers to Elmina to negotiate with the Dutch on this head and, since the Dutch were aware of the advantages to be gained from friendly relations with the Ashantis, they agreed on the terms proposed by the Ashanti king. In July 1725, Director-General Pieter Valckenier reported to his superiors at Amsterdam that, "we are pleased to inform you that, urged on by the powerful negro of Ashanti, we have been compelled to end the war against Jan Conny and to put an end to our quarrells with him. Poku has paid us 20 marks of gold to make good our expenses incurred during the campaign, and he has also presented us with a cloth said to be worth 50 bendos gold, although we believe it is worth less...."¹ In addition, John Conny himself, presumably acting under pressure from Ashanti, paid the Dutch 20 marks of gold, 16 Male slaves at 5 ozs. each, making 10 marks in all, and presented the Dutch with a cloth valued at 12 marks, 4 ozs. of gold.²

After the negotiations with the Dutch had been completed, Opoku Ware marched his troops on the Wassas. Early in 1726, the Dutch reported that the "King of Ashanti is marching against the Wassas", and that it was probable that he would also invade Akanny. By May of the same year, the Wassas country had been rapidly overrun and Intsiful, who had succeeded Intwan as the chief of Wassas, fled

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1. WIC Vol.106 Letter from Director-General P. Valckenier, Elmina, dated 11th July, 1725. In order to show his sincerity of purpose, Opoku Ware also instructed the Ashanti traders to resort to Elmina Castle for their goods and, in one day, the Dutch were able to purchase one hundred slaves and 3000 lb. worth of ivory.
 2. WIC Vol.106 Letter from Director-General P. Valckenier, Elmina, dated 16th January, 1726.

with a few of his people, and sought refuge in Abramboe, on the north-western frontier of Fanti. The Ashantis pursued the fleeing Wassas into the Twifo country, where they encamped pending the arrival of reinforcements from Ashanti. On the 20th of the same month, two Ashanti war-lords, Anane and Apreko, were reported to have arrived in Twifo at the head of 50,000 troops, and that they had assembled large numbers of canoes with which to cross the river Pra for an invasion of Abramboe, in order to capture the rebel Wassa chief.¹

The expected invasion of Abramboe did not come off, because of the intervention of the Fantis, the Dutch and the English at Cape Coast Castle. The Fantis were clearly opposed to an Ashanti occupation of Abramboe, which was under their influence. Moreover, they must have realised that if the Ashantis established themselves in Abramboe, there were bound to be conflicts between them and the Ashantis. But because the Fantis were on good terms with the Ashantis, the former decided to mediate between the warring parties. On the 13th May, 1726, the Brafo of Fanti informed the Dutch factor at Kormantsi, Jacob Elet, of their intentions, and added that they were arranging for a meeting between Intsiful and representatives of the Ashanti king to take place in Fetu. Elet communicated this information to the Director-General at Elmina, but because the Dutch were determined that reconciliation

1. WIC Vol.106 Letter from Director-General Pieter Valckenier, Elmina, dated 16th January, 1726.
N.B.K.G.93 Letter from Jacob Elet, Kormantsi, to Director-General Pieter Valckenier, dated 13th May, 1726, and Valckenier's reply, dated 15th May, 1726. Also *ibid.*, Letter from J. Maes, Shama, to Director-General Pieter Valckenier, dated 14th and 20th May, 1726. The Ashanti troops were assisted by Twifo troops, led by Kodwo Abbe Tekki.

between Intsiful and Opoku should be achieved through their means, they objected to the Fanti offer. Instead, Pieter Valckenier warned the Fantis that if they did not want to have trouble with the Ashantis, they should refrain from meddling in the Intsiful affair, because, apart from the troops under Ananne and Apreko, Opoku also intended to invade Abramboe with a large body of troops drawn from Tekyiman and Aowin.¹ The Fantis then informed the Dutch Director-General that they were prepared to leave everything in his hands, provided his efforts would bring about reconciliation between Intsiful and his overlord.²

The English at Cape Coast Castle, however, were opposed to the Dutch being the sole mediators, because they feared that if the Dutch succeeded, the Wassas would be in the interest of the Dutch, and since the latter were on friendly terms with Ashanti, it meant that the bulk of the trade on the west coast would go to the Dutch. The English therefore sent their chief broker, Thomas Ewusi, to Abramboe, to warn Intsiful that if he went to Elmina, the Dutch would hand him over to the Ashantis. Moreover, the English urged on the Fantis to mediate between the Wassas and the Ashantis, instead of abandoning that responsibility to the Dutch. They then wrote to the authorities in London to the same effect. In their reply, the Royal African Company expressed concern about the continued existence of

1. N.B.K.G. 93 Letters from Jacob Elet, Kormantsi, to Director-General Pieter Valckenier, Elmina, dated 13th, 14th and 20th May, 1726, and Valckenier's reply, dated 15th May, 1726.

2. N.B.K.G. 93 Letter from Jacob Elet, Kormantsi, to Director-General Pieter Valckenier, dated 15th May, 1726.

The Dutch wanted the matter to be settled at Elmina, so they made several attempts to get the Wassa chief to go to Elmina Castle for that purpose.

the Ashanti and Wassa disputes, and regretted that the Dutch at Elmina were reluctant to join the English in bringing about a peaceful settlement of the affair. The Governor and his Council, however, were congratulated on their unilateral efforts to bring about peace, but, realising the Fanti involvement in the disputes, they commented thus on the Council's intention to use the Fantis as mediators "....and as for making the Fantis the mediators between the Ashantis and the waterside natives, though it were better that the peace of the country should be re-established by their means than not at all; yet we cannot but think that if peace could be obtained by any other means, the Fantis are the last that either of the Companies should employ as mediators in such an affair".¹

In the light of all this, the Ashanti and Wassa disputes persisted for more than four years until Intsiful, probably realising that he must be his own saviour, made his peace with the Ashantis and returned to Wassa in October, 1730.² It soon became clear, however, that Opoku Ware was not prepared to forgive a man who was not only responsible for bringing trade on the west coast to a standstill, for a number of years, but also had nearly brought about Ashanti and Fanti conflict. In March, 1731, the Dutch reported that "at last the Ashantis with whom we have the biggest trade, have defeated the notorious king of Wassa, Intuffer; his whole country is ruined and he himself has

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1. WIC Vol.107 Letters from Director-General Robert Norre, Elmina, dated 11th April, 1727, and 14th April, 1728.
T 70/54 Royal African Company to the Governor and Council of Cape Coast Castle, dated 31st December, 1730.
 2. WIC Vol.109 Letter from Director-General Jan Pranger, Elmina, dated 30th October, 1730.

fled to some other country; so that this great obstacle which has given us so much trouble and who was the cause of the decline of our trade, has been removed".¹ The Dutch should have been more temperate in their jubilation over the misfortune of Intsiful, because his second flight from Wassa was not followed by a revival of trade on the west coast. Intsiful depopulated his country, moved closer to the Fanti border, and occupied certain "impregnable passes", so that all inland traders, including the Ashantis, were completely barred from reaching the western forts. Moreover, he entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Fantis and other small states, apparently with the connivance of the English at Cape Coast Castle.² Indeed, the activities of Intsiful and his following so affected the Dutch trade that Jan Pranger, the Director-General, believed that his death would be the only solution to the problem, and he schemed to bring that about. He sent for the kings of Aguafo and Fetu to come to Elmina to discuss the possibility of attacking the Abramboes and killing Intsiful. His messengers, however, returned to say that the kings could not come because they had sworn an oath to

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1. WIC Vol.109 Letter from Director-General Jan Pranger, Elmina, dated 1st March, 1731.
 2. WIC Vol.109 Letter from Director-General Jan Pranger, Elmina, dated 11th August, 1731.

John Hippisley, "On the necessity of erecting a fort at Cape Appolonia", in Essays, (London, 1764), pp.52-54.

A manuscript copy of Hippisley's essays is in WIC Vol.116, ff.1181-1236.

The Dutch tried to get Intsiful to go to Elmina Castle again, so as to assist him to resolve his differences with the Ashantis. But, again, their efforts were frustrated by the English chief broker, Thomas Ewusi.

assist Intsiful "against anybody who will attack him".¹ The English were also unable to find a solution to the Ashanti and Wassa problem, and they again referred the matter to London. The Royal African Company pointed out that it was regrettable that "the Dutch still continue so obstinate, as not to join with you heartily therein. One would think they had long enough pursued that old, destructive and chymical scheme, of thinking by their bribery and underhand cunning with the natives to engross the whole trade of the coast to themselves to be tired of the same". The Governor and his Council were enjoined to observe "an exact neutrality" with all parties, and not to "embarque in any of their quarrels upon any account, but to be ready to interpose by your good offices for restoring peace and friendship amongst them because the natives are very sensible people and know their own interest as well as the Dutch do theirs".²

It is clear, then, that since the Ashantis were engaged in a protracted war with the Wassas, they could not actively participate in the coalition against the Akwamus. The available evidence suggests, however, that they co-operated with the Akyems, who had the motive and were free to fight the Akwamus. In 1727, there were strong rumours in the Dutch forts that the Akyems intended to purchase Ashanti neutrality

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1. WIC Vol. 109 Letters from Director-General Jan Pranger, Elmina, dated 11th August, 1731, 3rd April, 1732, and 21st March, 1733.
 2. T 70/54 Royal African Company, African House, London, to Governor John Braithwaite, 17th June, 1731.
T 70/1470 A Description of the Castles Forts and Settlements belonging to the Royal African Company of England on the Gold Coast of Africa and at Whydah, dated ? September, 1737.
Ashanti-Wassa disputes remained unresolved long after the death of Opoku Ware.

before launching a new offensive against Akwamu.¹ Roemer gives a much fuller account. He states that when the Akyems decided to attack the Akwamus, they sent messengers to Opoku Ware promising him 500 slaves if he would assure them that the Ashantis would not invade their country in their absence. Opoku agreed to the Akyem proposition, but allowed them only five months within which to finish the campaign. Roemer, who was apparently aware of the Ashanti and Akwamu alliance, explained [off] this unusual behaviour of Opoku by saying that the Ashanti king did not believe that the Akyems could "ruin so considerable a nation like Akwamu", and that Opoku's real motive was to find a casus belli for declaring war on Akyem.² This was certainly a plausible explanation, but, in spite of his knowledge of internal decay in Akwamu, Roemer did not know that the relationship between Ashanti and Akwamu had deteriorated in such a way that the former secretly desired the humiliation of the latter. Whatever credence may be given to Roemer's interpretation of Opoku's action, the significant point was that when war broke out, in 1730, between Akyem and Akwamu, Ashanti did nothing to help her ally.

A minor incident occurred at Accra which sparked off Akyem and Akwamu conflicts. In 1728, Otting, a cousin of the Akwamuhene, who was staying in the Dutch fort, was murdered by one of the Dutch Accras. The Dutch say that Otting died accidentally from the wounds

1. I. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, op.cit., p.80.

2. Roemer, 1760, op.cit., p.153..

According to the same source, the Akyems sent the 500 slaves to the Ashanti king after the defeat of the Akwamus.

inflicted by one of his own slaves in the fort. The Akwamus, however, believed that the Dutch factor at Accra, de la Planque, was privy to the murder, therefore they demanded that La Planque should pay a compensation of 2000 bendas gold. Ansa Kwao threatened that if the Dutch refused to pay the compensation asked for, he would march his troops on the Dutch Accras, defeat them, and demolish Dutch Crevecoeur.¹ According to the Danish Governor-General at Christiansborg Castle, de la Planque not only refused to comply with the Akwamuhene's request, but also he said that he would rather spend the money in buying guns and powder with which to fight the Akwamus.² Ansa Kwao thereupon marched his troops into Dutch Accra on February 1728, and beleaguered the Dutch fort for more than five weeks, but failed to take the fort because of the stout defence put up by de la Planque and his men.³

These developments at Accra seriously hampered trade, and both the Dutch Director-General, Jan Pranger, and John Braithwaite, the English Governor of Cape Coast Castle, decided to mediate between the hostile parties. The Akwamus agreed to the terms of peace and, on the 28th May, 1730, Braithwaite wrote to London that "my good offices were so acceptable to the Accras and the Aquamboes between whom I made the inclosed articles of peace....that I received a very gratefull acknowledgements from both partys and presents in all to the value of

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1. WIC VOL.108 Letter from Director-General Robert Norre, Elmina, dated 14th April, 1728.
Ibid., Letter from Director-General Jan Pranger, Elmina, dated 16th April, 1730.
 2. WIC VOL.108 Letter from Governor A.P. Waeroe, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, to Director-General Jan Pranger, Elmina, dated 25th March, 1730.
The available evidence suggests that de la Planque, in fact, instigated his chief broker, Amu, and his people, to revolt against Akwamu rule.
 3. WIC Vols.108 and 109 Letter from Director-General Jan Pranger, Elmina, dated 16th April, and 9th July, 1730

£100...."¹ In their reply, the Royal African Company expressed their hope that the peace he had initiated would be preserved, and that "the friendship established between you and the Dutch West India Company will be maintained, according to Mr. Pranger, the General's, declaration of his intentions to you, and that by your joint interest, the ways may be opened into the inland countrys that a good trade may be established in the forts and factories under your direction."²

But the intervention of Braithwaite and Pranger brought only a temporary peace, because of the activities of Amu and the Dutch Accras. Amu and the Dutch Accras, as well as the Akwapims, retired into Akyem and appealed to that traditional enemy of Akwamu for help. The Akyems agreed, and, together with troops drawn from the Assin country, they joined Amu's forces and invaded Akwamu. In July 1730, the Dutch reported that there was heavy fighting between the Akwamus and the allied forces, and they expressed the hope that the Akwamus would be defeated, and "their wings clipped because they hinder the passing of Akyem traders to the coast."³ The Danes say that the Akyems and their allies were defeated in the first engagement, but that the Akyems, taking advantage of the rainy season, started a new offensive, and completely routed the Akwamus.⁴ Robert Cruickshank, a member of the English Council of merchants, who was sent to Accra "to

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1. T 70/4 Letter from John Braithwaite, Governor of Cape Coast Castle, to the Royal African Company, dated 28th May, 1730.
 2. T 70/54 Letter from Royal African Company to Braithwaite, and others, African House, London, dated 1st October, 1730.
 3. WIC Vol.109 Letter from Director-General Jan Pranger, Elmina, dated 9th July, 1730.
V.G.K. Letter from Governor A.P. Waroe, Christiansborg Castle, 24th December, 1730.
 4. V.G.K. Letter from Governor A.P. Waroe, Christiansborg, Accra, 24th December, 1730.

wait the event and secure the Company's interest", also reported that the Akyems were "becoming intire conquerors". The Governor of Cape Coast Castle, immediately ordered Cruickshank to treat with the victors, and on the 30th November, 1730, the report was that messengers sent by Thomas Ewusi, the English chief broker, had been introduced to the "King of Arcania and Carboshiers and by them to the King of Achim".¹ The Danes, who had hitherto supported the Akwamus, were surprised at the unexpected defeat of their allies, but because they wanted to share in the Akyem trade, they hurriedly sent presents to the Akyem chiefs.²

The Akyem conquest of Akwamu in 1730, was one of the major developments in the country during the eighteenth century. The event was described by contemporaries as the greatest revolution that had taken place in that part of the world since the Akwamus themselves destroyed the old Accra kingdom in the late seventeenth century.³ The Akwamus were pushed across the river Volta, and the whole western half of the Akwamu empire was reconstituted into the modern state of Akyem Abuakwa. The Akyems also created the state of Akwapim out of the Aburis, Berekusos and the Lartehs, the majority of whom were Guan- and Kyerepong-speaking peoples. Ofori Dua, an Akyem war-lord, and a member of the Akyem Abuakwa foyal family, was appointed the Omanhene

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1. T 70/7 Letters from Governor of Cape Coast Castle to the Royal African Company, entry dated 22nd October, 1730. The messengers were instructed to inform the Akyem "King of the impositions of the Dutch" and the Akyems, after expressing their resentment, sent trade to the English fort. See *ibid.*, entry dated 30th November, 1730.
 2. V.G.K. Letter from Governor A.P. Waroe, to Directors, dated 28th December, 1730.
 3. *Ibid.*

of the new state. He located his capital at Amanprobi and his followers founded the important Akwapim towns of Akropong and Amanokurum.¹ Also, Owusu Akyem, a sister's son of Ba Kwante, the Omanhene of Abuakwa, and Commander of the Abuakwa forces, replaced Amega as the administrator of the Adangme area, including the hill peoples of Krobo. Further more, although the Accra peoples decisively contributed to the general effort to defeat the Akwamus, they did not recover their independence. Instead, the two Akyem chiefs, Frimpong Manso, of Kotoku, and Ba Kwante, proceeded to divide authority over Accra. Frimpong Manso became the overlord of the Osu district, in which stood Danish Christiansborg Castle. Ba Kwante had charge of the Accra townships in which stood Dutch Crevecoeur and English James Fort.² Thus the Akyems, like the Akwamus before them, received ground rents from the three European settlements, and thereby secured a permanent, regular means of purchasing muskets, and powder, which were essential for their political and economic expansion.

This rapid and somewhat unexpected build-up of Akyem power greatly alarmed the Ashantis. It has been indicated that the Ashantis had apparently condoned and connived at the disaster which befell the Akwamus. But it was certainly the case that they did not envisage the

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1. Ivor Wilks, M.A. Thesis, op.cit.; B.F. Akuffo, Ahemfi Adesua, (1950), p.VIII. Reindorf, History, pp.87-88. Reindorf calls him "Prince Safori". By this act, the Akyems forged a strong link between themselves and the Guan-Kyerepong speaking peoples of Akwapim, which was to last until the present day.
 2. V.G.K. Letters from Governor A.P. Waroe, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 24th and 28th December, 1730; and 27th September, 1731. Roemer, 1760, op.cit., pp.158-9. Also, Biorns Beretning om de Danske Forter og Negerier, 1788, (ed. Prof. Eriiderik Thaarup), p.203.

complete break-up of Akwamu power. Since the Ashantis were still engaged in a protracted war with the Wassas and their allies, it was clear that the political balance in the Gold Coast hinterland was tilted in favour of the Akyems. The consternation in Ashanti must have been very great, since it was known that the rebel Wassas chief, Intsiful, had been to Akyem, presumably to talk the Akyems into joining the coalition against Ashanti.¹

In the circumstances, Ashanti could not react immediately to the successes of the Akyems. Nevertheless, their hostile intentions became clear even before the Akwamu conquest had been completed. As early as December, 1730, the Danes expressed their hope that trade at Accra would flourish since the Akwamus had been ruined. The report added, however, that this would only be possible if the Akyems were spared an attack by the Ashantis, "who are stronger than the Akims".² The Dutch also believed that the Akyems refused to sell the Akwamu prisoners because they feared an attack by Ashanti, and that they hoped to use the captured Akwamus against the Ashantis.³

The Ashantis need not have been unduly worried about Akyem military strength, because, soon after the common purpose had been achieved, the Kotoku and Abuakwa coalition began to disintegrate. It

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1. WIC Vol. 109 Letter from Director-General Jan Pranger, Elmina, dated 1st March, 1731. An Akyem-Wassa coalition meant that the two states could effectively control the trade routes through their countries, and thereby completely cut off the Ashantis from their access to the coast.
 2. V.G.K. Letter from Governor A.P. Waroe, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 24th December, 1730.
 3. WIC Vol. 109 Letter from Director-General Jan Pranger, Elmina, dated 1st March, 1731. Also, V.G.K. Letter from A. P. Waroe, dated 28th December, 1730, and Roemer, 1760, op. cit., p. 160

may be that a clash of personalities was one of the factors underlying their disputes. Frimpong Manso was a great warrior who tempered his martial propensities with efficient internal administration. Ba Kwante, on the other hand, was said to have been addicted to drink and inefficient as a ruler. He was arbitrary in his rule, and he extorted great sums from his people. Roemer regretted that Owusu was not the Omanhene of the Abuakwa state during that critical period in Akyem history.¹ The real point of conflict, however, appears to have been connected with matters arising out of the Akwamu defeat.

It is clear that the Akyem Abuakwas, and not the Kotokus, gained greatly from the Akwamu defeat. The explanation for this would seem to be that, contrary to what is generally supposed, it was the Abuakwas who bore the brunt of the fighting.² By fleeing across the Volta, the Akwamus had sought refuge in the eastern half of their empire, and there was the possibility of a revival of their power on the coast, between Accra and the mouth of the Volta. It may be supposed therefore that the Akyem chiefs must have disagreed as to whether or not the war should be carried into that area. Akyem Kotoku was nearer to Ashanti, and therefore open to attack from that quarter, and Frimpong Manso was clearly not prepared to expose his country, because of a campaign against the remnant Akwamus. The Abuakwas, however, had occupied much of Akwamu country, and they must have feared that a revival of Akwamu power could mean a reversal in

1. Roemer, 1760, op.cit., p.181.

Reindorf, History, op.cit., pp.80.

2. See e.g. I. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, op.cit.

their fortunes. The Abuakwas therefore were determined to continue the war into the new Akwamu homeland. The Abuakwa fears were probably increased by reports from Accra. In 1732, the Danes bought land at Great Ningo to build a lodge on. Dutch attempts to get Owusu to repudiate the transactions with the Danes were unsuccessful,¹ so they decided to work through their chief broker, Darko, and his people. Having in mind the former co-operation between the Danes and the Akwamus, the Accras allowed themselves to be persuaded by the Dutch that the Danish fort was being built in order "to assemble and cherish the scattered Akwamus".² Darko and his people declared that "the Danish factor, Sparre, had not scrupled....to settle at Great Ningo so that, in that way, he could give the Akwamus more help, who at that time were still our enemies, the Accra peoples mortal enemies."³ Since Darko and the Accras were in touch with the Akyems, it was not surprising that, in November, of the same year, Owusu's messengers were in Accra to ask for recruits to help in the campaign against the Akwamus.⁴ Early in 1735, Owusu's troops crossed the Volta near the coast, and encamped in the neighbourhood of Keta. By March, Owusu's

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1. On the building of Fort Fredensborg at Great Ningo by the Danes, see e.g. V.G.K. Letter from Governor E.N.Boris, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 15th April, 1736. According to Boris, the Dutch offered Owusu double the amount paid by the Danes in order to stop the Danish fort being built, but Owusu refused.
 2. WIC.Vol.109 Letter from Director-General Jan Pranger, Elmina, dated 3rd April, 1732.
 3. WIC Vol.110 Declaration of Darko and other Accra Chiefs made before chief factor From, dated 25th April 1734; on the attack on Sparre see also V.G.K. Letter from Sparre to Jan Pranger, dated 14th February, 1732. In order to get Sparre released, Ayi Kuma, the leader of the Accras, demanded 300 bendas gold, but the Danes promised to pay 100 bendas.
 4. I. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, op.cit., p.126.

forces engaged the Akwamus on an island in the river Volta, and From, the Dutch factor at Keta, reported that no ivory could be had on the coast because the Krepis, who brought it, were fleeing before the advancing Akyems,¹ Indeed, it may even be said that it was because the Kotokus refused to join the Abuakwas to fight the war in the east, that Ba Kwante decided to acquire the ground rent for Christiansborg Castle, which had hitherto been paid to Frimpong Manso. The Abuakwa chief instructed the Danish Governor to make the monthly payments to him instead of Frimpong Manso. In February, 1733, the Danes noted that they had advanced twenty-two months ground rent to Ba Kwante because "Frempong has surrendered his monthly custom to Bang Quantijn".² These events led to disturbances in Akyem, and in July 1737, it was reported that there had been little trade at Accra for the past four months, because of a civil war between the Akyems - "that is between Frempong's and Bang's people".³

The Abuakwa-Kotoku conflicts only lasted for a few months, because, in the late months of 1737, rumours were current at Accra that the Ashantis were preparing to invade Akyem. According to the Dutch, Okaidza, a resident of Dutch Accra, fled to Osu and, in alliance with the Danish Governor, he sent one Patram to Akyem to tell Frimpong

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1. WIC Vol. 110 Letter from Bartram From, Keta, to Director-General Jan Pranger, dated 17th February, and 18th March, 1735, and 27th June, 1736.
 2. V.G.K. Letters from Governor A.P. Waroe, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 19th February, 24th April, 1733, and 30th April, 1734.
 3. V.G.K. Letters from Governor E.N. Boris, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 12th July, and 30th September, 1737.

Manso, Ba Kwante and Owusu, that the Dutch Director-General, acting through his chief broker, Darko, had bribed the Ashantis to exterminate the Akyems by force of arms. The Dutch denied any knowledge of this affair, and they sent messengers to Akyem to inform the Akyem chiefs that the story had been put up by Okaidza and the Danes to discredit the Dutch. The Dutch envoys returned with representatives from Akyem, and a great meeting was held at the Dutch fort to discover the truth in the matter. Okaidza and Patram were found guilty of starting false rumours, and because Okaidza was the originator of it all, he was fined 70 bendas, or 70 marks 4ozs. gold. Okaidza, however, could not pay this vast amount, therefore he surrendered several members of his family as hostages to the Dutch pending payment.¹ The Danes confirm this story in its essentials, although they deny any knowledge of having been in alliance with Okaidza. They say that Okaidza was ill-treated in the Dutch fort, and that that was why he fled to Osu, and subsequently had the Akyems informed of what the Dutch and the Ashantis were planning to do.² The truth of this matter, however, appears to have been that, after the overthrow of Akwamu, the effective control of Accra affairs passed into the hands of the Accra residents, and not the Akyem. In particular, the descendants of the Accra king, Okai Koi, who had been killed by the Akwamus in 1677, contested the supremacy in the Accra area with Darko,

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1. Dutch accounts of this episode are contained in WIC Vol.III Letters from Director-General De Bordes, dated 14th April, 1738.
 2. V.G.K. Letter from Governor E.N. Boris, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 30th September, 1737. The Danes say that the man sent to Akyem was called Tettiara.

the son of Amu, who was regarded as an Akwamu. The most prominent of Okai Koi's descendants were Ayi Kuma and his son and successor Okaidza. In 1738, and 1739, there were several minor battles between Okaidza's people, with Danish support, and Darko's people, assisted by the Dutch. In December, 1737, for example, Darko and his people attacked the followers of Okaidza, and their expressed purpose was "to get Okaidza's head". Okaidza managed to escape to Osu, and sought refuge in the Danish fort there. Darko's people pursued the enemy and attacked the people of Osu. The Danish fort opened fire on the invaders, wounding and killing several of them. On the following day, the Danish Governor told the Osu people that they should not entertain Okaidza and his people in their town, otherwise they would have trouble with the Dutch. The Osu people said that they, as well as the Labadis, and the Teshi peoples, regarded Okaidza as "the rightful Accra chief", and that Darko was a slave's son, and a puppet of the whiteman.¹

In spite of Dutch efforts to clear themselves of Okaidza's charge against them, the Akyems remained convinced that they were intriguing with the Ashantis to destroy them. Apart from the persistence of the rumours reaching the coast, the Akyems were also aware that they themselves had been able to defeat Akwamu largely because of the assistance in money and firearms provided by de la Planque, the Dutch factor at Accra at that time. Furthermore, an event occurred in the region east of Accra which must have increased the Akyem fear of

1. V.G.K. Letter from Governor E.N. Boris, dated 3rd May, 1738.
Also, I. Wilks, "Akwamu and Otublohum...", in Africa, October, 1959, op.cit.

an imminent Ashanti invasion of their country. In July 1737, a Dahomey army marched through Little Popo to Keta, seized the Dutch lodge there after a siege of several days, and captured, and later on executed, From, the Dutch factor.¹ The report of this event which reached Accra indicated that the Dahomeans were assembling canoes preparatory to crossing the Volta to campaign in the west. Director-General De Bordes, who was at Accra at that time, commented thus, "it now seems clear that these Dahomeans intend only to kill and rob, and are to be regarded as nothing but barbarians. Therefore, we shall do all we can to overthrow them. Our belief, which is not without foundation, is that since the Akwamus are living in close co-operation with this marauder, the object is to defeat the Accras and then to make war upon the Akims so that the Akwamus may settle again in free possession of their country". De Bordes also indicated that the Ashantis were involved in the Dahomean-Akwamu plot to attack Akyem and the Accras, and it should be remembered that, in later years, Opoku Ware declared that one of his reasons for attacking the Akyems was to restore the Akwamus to their homeland.²

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1. V.G.K. Letters from Governor E.N. Boris, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 12th July, and 30th September, 1737.
WIC Vol.111 Declaration by J.J. Steimark, dated 4th December, 1737. Bartram From was executed apparently for his previous attempts to induce the Ashantis to attack the Dahomeans, Director-General Jan Pranger, to whom From made the suggestion, thought "his proposal to bribe the Ashantis to fight the Dahomeans extraordinary, firstly, because of the great distance separating the two states and, secondly, because it will not be possible to bring it about for a cost less than 500 marks of gold, expenses which the Company cannot afford". See WIC Vo.109. Copy of Jan Pranger's letter, dated 9th August, 1732.
 2. WIC Vol.111 Letter from Director-General De Bordes, Accra, dated 21st July, 1737.
T 70/1515 Letter from Richard Graves, Cape Coast Castle, dated 3rd April, 1742.

In view of these developments, the Akyems took a number of defensive measures. Firstly, Owusu moved his troops into the Dutch Accra area, and beleaguered the Dutch fort for several months. All traders from the interior were forbidden to trade with the Dutch, and a strict watch was kept on the trade routes. This precipitated a sharp decline in Dutch trade at Accra, and messengers were sent to Ba Kwante and Frimpong Manso to effect a peaceful settlement. The two Akyem chiefs were won over, and Owusu was instructed to move his troops into the Lower Volta area, presumably to check the revival of Akwamu power in that area. In March 1740, the Danes reported that Owusu's army had encamped in Akwapim, and that he was preparing to leave for the east with a big army; in May, that the Accras, as well as the peoples of Labadi, Teshi and Ningo, had joined Owusu's forces; and in August, that heavy fighting was going on between the Akyems and the peoples living in the Lower Volta Area.¹ Secondly, the Akyems entered into an alliance with the Wassas and the Fantis in order to control the trade routes effectively, and thereby prevent the Ashantis from receiving firearms from the coast. The eastern Fantis and the Agonas, who apparently resisted Akyem pressure to be drawn into the alliance, were attacked by the Akyems. The Akyems invaded Agona, and defeated the combined forces of the eastern Fantis and the Agonas. Menuan, described by the Danes as "the great Fanti market town", was razed to the ground. The Fantis and the Agonas retaliated by robbing and

1. V.G.K. Letters from E. N. Boris, and P.M. Jorgensen, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 3rd March, 23rd May, 3rd August, 1740.
T 70/1515 Letter from Richard Graves, Cape Coast Castle, dated 3rd April, 1742

seizing small parties of Akyem traders who travelled to Winneba and Senya Bereku and Ba Kwante declared that in future, the Akyem traders would be escorted down by a body of troops.¹ The Akyems, however, were not affected by the destruction of the market at Agona, because the bulk of their trade at that time, went to Accra. In November 1738, for example, the Danes purchased from the Kotokus about 1,400 rix dollars worth of gold.² On the west coast, the western Fantis and the Wassas proved loyal to the Akyems. The Wassas marched to Sekondi, where the people were known to have traded with the Ashantis. They attacked the town and demolished the Dutch and English lodges there.³ The Fantis also assembled between 30,000 and 40,000 troops, and laid siege to Elmina, whose people were known to act in the Ashanti interest. The Elminas were completely cut off from their supply of victuals, and anybody who ventured out of town was seized and sold into slavery.⁴

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- 1.. V.G.K. Letters from Governor E.N. Boris, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 6th October, 1738, and 27th April, 1739.
T 70/1470 A Description of the Castles Forts etc., op.cit.
N.B.K.G. 103 Letter from Kuyl, Bereku, to Director-General De Bordes, dated 17th September, 1738.
 2. V.G.K. Letter from Governor E.N. Boris, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 28th November, 1738.
 3. V.G.K. Letter from Governor E.N. Boris, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 15th February, 1740.
WIC Vol.111 Letter signed by F. Bavonius, Commercial Secretary, Elmina, dated 30th April, 1740.
 4. V.G.K. Letter from Governor E.N. Boris, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 15th February, 1740.
WIC Vol.111 Letter from P.B. Verschaeven, Elmina, dd 24th Nov. 1739. The Elminas must have been in great distress, because, according to the Danes, the Fantis were assisted by the Director-General, De Bordes. He provided the Fantis not only with brandy and powder, but also a sum of 26,000 rix dollars, and promised to contribute further to the expenses which the Fantis might incur during the campaign. The Dutch say that De Bordes was angry with the Elminas because they disobeyed his instructions to attack the Aguafo peoples.

It is clear, then, that in the late 1730's the situation on the Gold Coast was one of unsettlement and apprehension, arising out of an expected Ashanti invasion of allied territories. Apart from the desire to have free and uninterrupted access to the coastal trading settlements, Opoku Ware's chief concern was clearly to redress the political and economic balance in the Gold Coast interior. Early in 1740, conflicting reports of the situation in the interior kept reaching Accra. Some said that the Akyems had withdrawn into their own country in order to plant their corn. Others said that there was consternation in Akyem because the Akyems had been informed that the Ashantis were preparing to march, and it was unknown whether they intended to attack them, or whether they would go to the western district to relieve the Elminas, who were besieged by the Fantis.¹ Moreover, in 1741, the Akwamus were boasting that Opoku Ware of Ashanti would give them Accra as a present after defeating the Akyems,² In the light of all this, the Akyems made haste to purchase large quantities of firearms. The Danes, for example, sold about 6000 pounds of powder, 2000 pieces of flint, and 6,800 ankers of Danish brandy.³

The Ashanti invasion of Akyem, however, was timed to take place when the Akyems were in a serious predicament. In the summer of 1741, Frimpong Manso, the great Kotoku warrior king, died, and the Ashantis apparently without waiting for his funeral customs to be

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1. V.G.K. Letter from E.N. Boris, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 15th February, 1740.
 2. I. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, op.cit., p.127. In anticipation of the Ashanti invasion, the Akwamus were said to be lying in the bush around Accra, and seizing everyone they could, so that "the Accra people were obliged to go armed whenever they fetched water".
 3. V.G.K. Letter from E.N. Boris, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 23rd May, 1740.

performed, invaded the enemy territory.¹ The Akyems summoned the Accras to join them, but only a small section, led by Darko, responded. With considerable optimism, the Akyems threatened retribution as soon as the Ashantis had been defeated.² In January and February, 1742, it was known at Accra that fighting had been going on between the Ashantis and the Akyems.³ In March 1742, the Akyems and their allies were completely defeated. Apau, the Kotokuhene, Ba Kwante, and Owusu, were all slain.⁴ Darko fled into the bush, but was betrayed by one of his guides, an Akwamu man, described by the English as Darko's "fetish boy". He fell into the hands of an Akwamu chief, Popiwaa, who, despite Darko's offer of one hundred bendas of gold for his life, had him beheaded. Popiwaa justified his action by saying that Darko "should pay for what his father had done, who was the chief instrument of killing the Quomboe

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1. Roemer, 1760, op.cit., p.181. Also V.G.K. Letter from Governor P.N. Jorgensen, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 2nd April, 1742. Frimpong Manso was succeeded by Apau, who was killed during the Ashanti invasion.
 2. N.B.K.G. 105 Letter from Kuijl, Accra, dated 5th December, 1741.
 3. V.G.K. Letter from Governor P.N. Jorgensen, Accra, dated 2nd April, 1742.
T 70/1515 Letter from R. Graves, Cape Coast Castle, dated 3rd April, 1742.
The Akyems must have gained some earlier successes. See V.G.K. P.N. Jorgensen's letter dated 5th December, 1741.
 4. On the Ashanti defeat of Akyem, see, for example, WIC Vol.113, Letter from van Kuyll, Accra, to Director-General Jacob de Petersen, dated the 18th March, 1742, and *ibid.*, copy of the minute of the Dutch Council at Elmina, dated 22nd March, 1742.
T 70/1515 Letter from R. Graves, Cape Coast Castle, Accra, dated 3rd April, 1742.
V.G.K. P.N. Jorgensen's letter dated, 2nd April, 1742.
Roemer, 1760, p.159.

country".¹

The Ashanti army encamped in the Abuakwa country for some time but, in April 1742, they moved in the direction of Accra. In May, they were on the outskirts of the town, but they did not enter it. Instead, they moved into the area between Accra and the mouth of the Volta, and attacked Great Ningo, Teshi and Labadi. Then they entered Accra and demanded monetary compensation from the Europeans for their harbouring refugees in their forts. The Danes paid 110 bendas. The Dutch, however, had to pay 200 bendas because they had allowed their chief broker, Darko, "to go with his people to Akim to join the Akims to fight against the Ashantis".²

The defeat of Akyem left the Ashantis the dominant political and economic power in the Gold Coast interior. The Ashantis annexed parts of Akyem and Kwawu, and they declared their overlordship over Akwapim, Adangme and Accra. The European traders hurried to congratulate Opoku on his great conquest, and confirmed him in his dominion over Accra by granting him the payment of the ground rent for their forts there.³ The Ashantis, however, did not appoint

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1. T 70/1515 Letter from R. Graves, Cape Coast Castle, dated 3rd April, 1742.
I. Wilks, "Akwamu and Otublohum...", in Africa, October, 1959, op.cit. Wilks' account of Darko's death is misleading. Darko did not flee to Akwamu, as he suggest, but he was captured during the war in Akyem.
 2. V.G.K. Letter from G. Dorph, Accra, dated 11th July, 1743.
T 70/1515 Richard Graves' letter dated 3rd April, 1742.
 3. The Danes and the English paid 32 rix dollars and £8 per month respectively. The Day Books of all the Companies are full of such payments. In 1757, for example, the English paid "Cuishee King of Ashantee his Ground Rent at £8 per month for January 15th, 1756 to 15th January 1757", in trade goods.
T 70/975 Letter from James Whyte, James Fort, Accra;
Accra Day Book; Accounts for January and February, 1757.

administrators to govern the Accras and the Adangmes as the Akyems and the Akwamus had done. Instead, Opoku Ware continued Osei Tutu's policy of ruling the distant conquered states through their own chiefs. For instance, two years after their defeat, the Danes reported that Pobi succeeded Ba Kwante, Akradua succeeded Owusu, and Boronni succeeded Apau as the Kotokuhene.¹ The Ashantis were satisfied to make the Akyems, the Akwapims, the Adangmes and the Accras tribute-paying vassals, and to rely on the undamaged economic and military resources of these peoples. But this unenlightened policy, as we have noted, had one fundamental defect: it enabled the conquered states to regain power quickly, and to revolt whenever the opportunity offered itself. For instance, soon after their defeat, the Akyems could threaten that they would never allow trade to go to Danish Christiansborg, because apart from failing to help them, the Danes did not even send messengers of condolence to them after they had been defeated.²

Perhaps an interesting development, resulting from the Akyem defeat, was the new relationship between Ashanti and Akwamu. Admittedly, Akwamu, unlike Akyem, was not a conquered state. Indeed, it was largely because of Ashanti threats to invade Akyem in the 1730's that Akwamu power revived on the coast between Accra and the river Volta. After the Akyem defeat, however, Opoku Ware made clear his intentions of making Akwamu a dependent ally. Akwonno, who ruled Akwamu until

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1. V.G.K. Diary Book kept in Guinea from 3rd February, 1744, to 31st December, 1745; entry by J. Billsen, dated 4th April, 1744.
 2. V.G.K. Ibid., entry by J. Billsen, dated 21st July, 1744.

1744, was treated by the Ashanti king as one of his divisional chiefs. He accompanied Opoku's messengers on a number of occasions to collect ground rents for the forts at Accra.¹ In 1744, however, Opoku definitely asserted his overlordship over Akwamu. Roemer gives a detailed account of the events leading to the enstoolment of the Akwamuhene, Opoku Kuma, which clearly demonstrates the new Ashanti policy towards Akwamu. He notes that one of the prisoners captured during the Akyem war was a member of the Akwamu royal family. When the identity of this Akwamu nobleman was made known, Opoku Ware agreed to restore him to the Akwamus, so as to be made king, on condition that he took the name of Opoku Akoa, Opoku's subject. Opoku complied with the king's request, and returned to Akwamu. As soon as he became the Akwamuhene, he changed his name to Opoku Kuma, Opoku the younger. Opoku Ware felt cheated, and he decided to punish the Akwamuhene for disobeying him. Opoku Akoa explained his action by saying that he would lose the respect of his people if he retained the name given to him in Ashanti. After prolonged negotiations, it was finally settled that the Akwamuhene might purchase the name for one hundred slaves, which he did.² Surely the substance behind Roemer's story was the formal assertion of Ashanti's overlordship over Akwamu, though the latter did not become a tribute-paying vassal at that time. Indeed, in the same year, Opoku emphasized his claim by demanding Akwamu troops to assist him in a campaign against his enemies.³

1. V.G.K. Ibid., entry by J. Billson, dated 22nd July, 1744.

2. Roemer, 1760, op.cit., pp.214-5.
Reindorf, History, op.cit., pp.82-83.

"Akoa" could also mean a slave.

3. See pp. 162 below.

Furthermore, Darko, Opoku Kuma's successor, did not repudiate the claims of the Ashantis. Indeed, it might be, as Wilks suggests, that Darko realised that in its weakened state, Akwamu could benefit from Ashanti protection; economic, and not military, recovery had to be the prime consideration.¹ In that case, the new relationship proved advantageous to both sides. For example, in the late 1740's it was largely through Akwamu assistance that Ashanti traders were able to reach the coast to trade with the Europeans.² On the other hand, Darko, under Ashanti protection, was able to govern Akwamu well. It is said that he gave his people "many and good laws", and it was through the constructive policies that he pursued, that Akwamu was able to establish her domination over parts of Kwawu and Osudoku, countries that had slipped from Akwamu control after the collapse in 1730.³ In 1744, therefore, Opoku Ware pursued a policy which ensured that Akwamu, which had been largely responsible for the consolidation and rise of Ashanti, should be drawn into that very empire which Osei Tutu had created. By the early nineteenth century, the process had been so complete that Dupuis could write that Ashanti had extended her frontiers to incorporate as provinces with the empire Accra, Akwapim, and the Adangmes "whilst Aquambo, the only existing kingdom in that quarter worthy the title, courted the conqueror's alliance, and was received into protection as a confederate of the empire".⁴

1. I. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, op.cit., p.140.

2. See pp. 170-171 below.

3. Björns Beretning om Danske Forter og Negerier paa Guinea Kysten, 1788, op.cit., pp.211-2.

I. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, op.cit., p.141.

4. Dupuis, Journal.....in Ashantee, 1824, op.cit., p.234.

After the defeat of Akyem, it was widely believed that the Ashantis would invade the Fanti and the Wassa countries. The confusion and apprehensions caused by the persistence of the rumours of an Ashanti invasion must have been greatly increased when it was learnt that the Ashantis had assembled about 400,000 men ready to march to the coast.¹ The allied states made elaborate preparations to resist the Ashantis. A decree was proclaimed making it a capital offence for anybody to trade with the Ashantis in muskets and powder; the trading paths were closed and a strict watch kept to detect would-be breakers of the law. Besides, the Fantis and the Wassas and their allies embarked upon massive military preparations.² In fact, the situation on the coast was so serious that the English believed that if the Ashanti invasion materialised, and they became the conquerors, it would change the "Plan of Politicks" in that part of the world.²

The expected Ashanti irruptions into the west coast did not take place, however, because, in the late months of 1744 and early 1745, the Ashanti army moved north and invaded Gonja and Kong. Some Danish messengers were in Ashanti during this period, and they were

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1. V.G.K. Diary Book kept at Christiansborg Castle, Accra, op.cit., entry by J. Billson, dated 4th April, 1744.
The figure of 400,000 was certainly an exaggeration. Nevertheless, in 1817, Bowdich was told in Kumasi that Ashanti proper could raise 204,000 fighting men. On this particular occasion, Roemer says each of the three Akyem chiefs supplied 10,000 men each, and Akwamu provided 300.
Bowdich, 1819, op.cit., p.
Roemer, 1760, p.218.
 2. C.O. 388/44 Extract of a letter from Cape Coast Castle to Captain Pocock, Commander of H.M.S. Sutherland, dated 27th November, 1745.
M. Priestley, "The Ashanti Question and the British", in Journal African History, II, 1, (1961), p.49.

made to accompany the Ashanti army, apparently to watch how the Ashantis conducted their campaign. Their report was summarised by Roemer, and since this was the first contemporary account of Ashanti's thrust to the north from written sources, it is worthwhile quoting in full: "...for twenty-one days they marched through the bush and across rivers, which sometimes hindered them, until they came to a wilderness where neither grass nor a single straw was to be seen; then for fourteen days they had to wade through sands and sometimes the army went for two days without water. For as long as they had been in the bush they had eaten fruits, roots and game, and had lacked nothing; in the wilderness, however, many went hungry. At last, they came to a flat land, where they found people living in towns and villages (Opoku had among his people many who had travelled to this land and traded there). The Ashantis surprised them and took them prisoner. They advanced further still, and came to a large town in which Opoku and his 300,000 men encamped; the inhabitants all having left the town. Opoku's army, however, only occupied a small part of the town, from which they concluded that more people lived there than in the whole of Ashanti. The Ashanti traders informed their king that he would pass through many such towns before he came to the capital city of the king. They found an abundance of victuals, cows, sheep, goats, fowl and horses. Of the latter there were so many that Opoku provided a thousand of his men with them, and thereby obtained a force of cavalry.

He sent these riders out to obtain information about the whereabouts of the enemy. They did not return, however, and, according

to the statements of a few prisoners of that nation whom they took, all were slain. It was also reported that the Ashantis were opposed by a large number of horsemen. This nation had the Turkish religion, and we have received many Arabic books in Accra which the Ashantis had taken from the town mentioned. They also took some Moor's prisoner, who had come to trade in this country without doubt from Barbary, whereof two Moors yet live in Ashanti.

The Ashantis remained for a whole month in this town, and Opoku feared to advance farther; at last Opoku's enemies appeared, and surrounded the whole town with a very large army. The Ashantis were thereupon forced to throw themselves against the enemy, which they did with considerable losses; the horses became frightened by the shooting (of muskets), since these horsemen have no guns but lances or spears and sabres. And so the Ashanti army retired, surrounded by cavalry, straight across the wilderness into the Ashanti bush. Thus ended this war for Opoku, who considers himself the greatest king in the world; he had indeed got some hundreds of prisoners and horses, etc., but he and his allies had lost over 40,000 in the wilderness, including one of our messengers who died of starvation. This campaign took eight months and each of the allies returned his own country again, and on Opoku's orders must hasten to a new war which should be against the Fantis."¹ Roemer did not mention the name of the country, but merely asserts that it was "the mighty nation

1. Roemer, 1760, pp.218-22.

On the figure of 300,000 see pp. 162 above, note

which lies north-east of Ashanti". A Gonja chronicle, apparently of late eighteenth century origin, puts the matter succinctly: "At the end of this year, AH 1157 (1744/5 AD) the infidels entered the country of Gonja, and the Gonja knew them as Imbo (Ashanti). They also invaded Gwong (Kong?) and the people of Gwong took to flight, in the month of Dhul-hijja, the month of prayer..."¹

By 1745, then, Ashanti was not only the dominant political power, but also the chief source of gold, slaves and ivory in the Gold Coast hinterland. This latter point is worthy of note, because some historians have tended to think that Ashanti "was not notably a nation of traders". Bowdich, for example, wrote, "they are as little commercial as the Romans were in their infancy, and their government would repress rather than countenance the inclination (believing no state can be aggrandized but by conquest) lest their genius for war might be enervated by it, and lest, either from the merchants increasing to a body too formidable for their wishes to be resisted, too artful from their experience to be detected, they might sacrifice the national honour and ambition to their avarice, and furnishing Inta, Dagwumba or any of their more powerful neighbours (who have yielded to circumstances rather than force) with guns and powder (which are never allowed to be exported from Ashantee), break

1. Roemer, 1760, p.218.

2. Jack Goody, The Ethnography of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, West of the White Volta, (Colonial Office, 1954). Appendix IV. Bowdich, (p.330), states that the Ashanti invaded Dagomba during the reign of Opoku Ware. Undoubtedly, Ashanti must have had some influence in the Dagomba even before Opoku's reign. The invasion of 1744/5, however, appear to have been against Gonja and Kong.

the spell of their conquests and undermine their power".¹ The available evidence suggests that this assertion is untenable. It is interesting that the thrust to the north followed hard upon the defeat of Akyem. Both Tilleman and Roemer assert that the gold mines in Akyem were worked by slave labour.² Since the Akyem country was almost depopulated in the war of 1742,³ one may conjecture that the Ashantis invaded Gonja and Kong partly to get slaves to sell to the Europeans on the coast, and partly to secure sufficient manpower to work the Akyem gold pits. Moreover, the Ashanti authorities never discouraged the people from engaging in commerce. Rattray has clearly shown that commerce was one of the major preoccupations of the Ashantis, and that all the chiefs, including the Asantehene, had people who did their trading for them.⁴ In April 1715, the English factor at Kommenda reported the arrival of "sundry Ashantee traders and caboceers who are designed for Cape Coast. They have sent most of their slaves and teeth (ivory) along with the General's boy by way of Abrimboe. But they have great quantity of gold, some slaves and teeth with them here which they

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1. I. Wilks, The Northern Factor in Ashanti History, (Gloucester) 1961, p.18.
Bowdich, 1819, op.cit., p.335.
 2. Eric Tilleman, En liden enfoldig beretning om det landskabs Guinea....., 1697, op.cit., p.116.
Roemer, 1760, p.166.
 3. According to Roemer, the devastation in the Akyem country was such that two years after the war, the oldest man in Akyem was not more 40 years old. This was probably an exaggeration, but it was not unlikely.
 4. T 70/1464 Baillie's Kommenda Diary, with Accounts entry dated 22nd April, 1715. Among the Ashanti traders were "one of the King's wives, and his son".
Rattray, 1929, op.cit.

would have me buy in expectation of great price than at Cape Coast."¹ Besides, there were Ashanti chiefs who established their trading head-quarters in some of the coastal states. For example, Antibene, described as an "Ashantee Caboceer", had his permanent residence in the Aguafo country, where he conducted his trade with the Europeans at Elmina, Shama, and Kommenda. Also, in February 1729, the Dutch reported that Bafo, an Ashanti chief who provided them with plenty of trade goods in slaves, gold and ivory, had been killed by poison, and that this had led to disturbances in Ashanti, and thereby badly affected trade.²

The incursion into Gonja and Kong territories was the last military campaign which Opoku Ware undertook against his external enemies. During the last few years of his reign, he was chiefly occupied with the internal administration of his kingdom. The first notable act he did was to send twelve young men and two girls to the Dutch at Elmina, and to request the Director-General, Jacob de Petersen, to send them to Holland to be taught reading, writing and music. De Petersen thought that the expense involved was too great, since Opoku only provided ten elephant tusks to pay for the children's education. He therefore decided not to send them to Europe, but to put them to the school at Elmina. De Petersen then had the Asantehene informed of his decision. Opoku was willing that the Ashanti children attended the local school, but he asked de Petersen to use the elephant tusks in ordering a coffin with a glass head-end for him. The king

1. Ibid.

2. WIC Vol. 108 Letter from Director-General Robert Norre, Elmina, dated 27th February, 1729.

also asked the Dutch to allow another young Ashanti man called Gyakye to travel to Holland to bring back the coffin. The Director-General agreed to this latter request, and wrote to his superiors in Holland to the same effect. The Directors approved of de Petersen's actions, and they undertook to send the king's coffin without freight charges. However, they stressed that the children should be taught the rudiments of Christianity.¹ Opoku's second, and perhaps most important act, was his attempt to strengthen the Ashanti monarchy at the expense of the Kumasi chiefs.

It has been pointed out that the Ashanti kings deliberately augmented the powers of the Kumasi chiefs to balance the might of the outlying chiefs, with their dangerous, separatist tendencies. Bowdich noted that "every subject state was placed under the immediate care of an Ashantee chief, generally resident in the capital, who seldom visited it, but to receive the tribute from the native ruler, for whose conduct he was in a reasonable degree responsible."² The addition of so many new provinces to the kingdom must have greatly increased the powers of the chiefs, and Opoku, it seems, attempted to curtail their power in the provinces. This brought about disturbances in Ashanti. In August 1746, the Danes reported that there were "great

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1. WIC Vol.925 Letters from Director-General Jacob de Petersen, Elmina, dated 1st May and 31st October, 1744; 1st July and 30th November, 1745.
 2. F.L. Bartels, "Jacobus Eliza Capitein, 1717-1747", in Trans. Hist.Soc.Ghana, Vol.IV, pt.1, p.8. Jacje (Gyakye?). Gyakye was not one of the children sent to Elmina to be educated as Bartels says, but was sent to Europe specifically to collect the king's coffin.
 2. Bowdich, 1819, op.cit., p.235.

disputes in the Ashanti country", and they expressed the fear that the quarrels might lead to civil war.¹ In the early nineteenth century, Dupuis was informed in Kumasi that the Kumasi chiefs revolted, and Opoku fled his palace and sought refuge with his kinsman, the Dwabenhene. At Dwaben, he received the support of some of the Divisional Chiefs to bring back the rebel chiefs to obedience. After a series of battles the rebels were defeated, and Opoku reoccupied his capital. He pardoned the rebel leaders, and allowed them to return to Kumasi, but only on condition that they accepted the limitations on their power.²

These disturbances in Ashanti had immediate repercussions in the distant provinces. In September 1746, the report from Christiansborg Castle was that the Akyems had left their country and that some had retired into the Fanti Country, and others to Kwabo and Popo. In January 1747, it was known at Accra that the Akyems had entered into an alliance with the Fantis, the Wassas and other coastal peoples to fight the Ashantis.³ By 1749, the Denkyeras and the Twifos had joined the Fantis and their allies.⁴

Nevertheless, in spite of the determination of the Fantis, the Wassas, the Denkyeras, the Twifos and the Akyems to cut off the Ashantis from the coast, and thereby prevent them from having access to firearms, Ashanti traders managed to reach the coast east of Accra.

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1. V.G.K. Letters from Joast Platfues, L.F. Roemer and Hachenberg, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 20th August, 1746.
 2. Dupuis, 1824, op.cit., p. _____
 3. V.G.K. Letters from J. Platfues, Roemer and Hachenberg, dated 9th September, 1746 and 18th January 1747. The Akyems who moved eastwards of Accra attacked the Akwamus on an island in the river Volta.
 4. V.G.K. Letter from J. Platfues, Roemer and Carl Engman, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 26th November, 1749.

The Ashantis shunned the more direct and shorter trade routes, through Wassa and Akyem, and used the longer, but safer, route along the Kwawu scarp, across the Afram plains and so into the Krepi and Akwamu countries. There, they were escorted to the European forts at Prampram, Great Ningo, Pani and Accra by Akwamu middlemen. In 1748, for example, the Danes reported that, accompanied by Akwamu middlemen, 2000 Ashanti traders arrived at Great Ningo with slaves, gold and ivory. At Cape Coast, the English also wrote, "there is not an ackie of gold or any teeth (ivory) to be bought on any part of this coast, or slaves to windward of Winneba, but there is considerable trade at Accra by the Ashantees opening a path to that place".¹

At the Coast, however, the tribulations of the Ashantis did not come to an end. Hippiisley noted that the journey through Krepi and Akwamu "takes them at least three weeks to perform and is otherwise very inconvenient from the mountainous and marshy ways. They also receive such ill treatment from the Aquamboes, who will not suffer them to trade with the Europeans, but on condition of being their brokers, at commissions little short of forty per cent; and lose such numbers of slaves in so long a journey, that of late years they have less and less been inclined to pursue so tedious, troublesome and dangerous trade."² Roemer gives a much fuller account: "It is ridiculous", he wrote, "to see how the Ashanti Kotoko, (great Ashantis, as they call themselves) are cheated by the few Akwamus, and not only

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1. T 70/1515 Extract of a letter from John Roberts and others to Henry Sascilles, Cape Coast Castle, dated 4th February, 1749.
 2. John Hippiisley, Essays, in WIC Vol.116, op.cit.

in trade; for instance, an Akwamu chief who might come to us with fifty Ashanti will usually sell half a score of them before they return. He makes the Ashantis believe that the place where they are going to on the coast is peculiarly dangerous because of sea-devils, which sometimes come on to the land, and take back people with them to the sea". In this way, a number of Ashanti traders were subsequently lured away from their friends, seized and, later, sold as slaves. The Akwamus then "return to the other Ashanti traders, deploring the fact that they had not been able to overpower the sea-devils, who were too strong for them; and although they had fought with them and pursued them to the beach, the sea-devils had carried off some Akwamus and Ashantis".¹ Since the Kumasi chiefs were disgruntled as a result of Opoku's abridgement of their powers, the Ashanti king could not adopt a forward policy towards the allied states. Nor could the European traders get the Fantis and the Wassas as well as the Akyems to open the trade routes and to reconcile with the Ashantis. According to Roemer, the Dutch at Elmina whose trade was badly affected by the closure of the western trade routes, spent large sums of money to induce the Wassas and Fantis to come to terms with the Ashantis, but all to no purpose.²

This was the situation at the end of the first half of the eighteenth century on the Gold Coast, when Opoku Ware died. Danish

1. Roemer, 1760, op.cit., pp.224-5.

I. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, op.cit.

2. Roemer, 1760, p.223.

and Dutch reports of May 1750, suggest that the event occurred earlier in that year.¹ This seems to be confirmed by an entry in an Arabic chronicle, apparently of late eighteenth century origin, which records the death of "Muliki Asanti", the king of Ashanti, in A.H. 1163, early in the Christian year 1750. The report continues "... may God curse him, may He take his soul and cast it into the fire. He it was who troubled the people of Gonja; continually and at all times did he trouble them. He seized their possessions. Whatever he wished, so he did, for he was all powerful in his rule".²

Opoku Ware was clearly one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of the eighteenth century Ashanti kings. Surely the Ashanti kingdom was not his creation, but it was he who prevented the Ashanti union from dissolving into its component parts after the great disaster in 1717. Indeed, the thirty years of Opoku's rule were chiefly concerned with the consolidation of the power of the kingdom, and with a vigorous expansion into neighbouring territories, culminating in the invasion of Gonja and Kong in 1744-5. Under him, Denkyera, Twifo, Aowin, Akyem, Wassa, Akwapim, the Accras and the Adangmes became tribute-paying vassals of Ashanti. Moreover, the Ashantis became the ground landlords of Accra, and thereby received the regular stipends from the European forts which enabled them to acquire firearms in

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1. V.G.K. Letters from Governor Joost Platfues, and others, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 4th May, 10th August, and 17th December, 1750. N.B.K.G. 111 Letters from Brunner, Accra, to Director-General Van Voorst, Elmina, dated 3rd and 29th May, 1750. Priestley and Wilks, in Journ.Afr.Hist., I, 1 (1960), p.92.
 2. Jack Goody, The Ethnography of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, West of the White Volta, (Colonial Office, 1954) Appendix IV.

appreciable quantities, a necessary prerequisite for their political, economic and military expansion. Moreover, Akwamu, though not a conquered state, became a junior partner in the Ashanti-Akwamu coalition, and the Akwamus, like the conquered state of Akyem, was expected to provide the Asantehene with troops when required. In fact, Opoku Ware achieved one of the main objectives for which the Ashanti state was created; Ashanti became the dominant political and economic power in the Gold Coast hinterland, and therefore become the chief source of the country's gold, slave and ivory. Moreover, he established friendship with the European traders, especially the Dutch, which was to have great significance during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Nevertheless, Opoku's achievements were a mixed blessing for the Ashantis. Although the Ashantis had secured complete control of the gold and slave resources in the interior, the revolt of the Denkyeras, the Wassas, the Akyems and the Twifos almost made it impossible for them to reap the full benefits arising therefrom. When the Wassas and the ^WAkyems entered into an alliance with the powerful coast Fantis, to prevent the Ashantis from reaching the coast, Opoku Ware must have realised the futility of his career, since internal difficulties made it impossible for him to destroy the powerful combination against him.

Thus, after Opoku Ware's death in 1750, Ashanti was saddled with serious internal and external problems which needed all the patience and tact of a statesman to resolve, and it was against this background that the achievements of his successor, Kusi Obodum, must be seen.

CHAPTER IV

ASHANTI, 1750-1764: The Years of Inaction?

Opoku Ware was succeeded by Kusi Obodum. Danish and Dutch reports suggest that his enstoolment took place in the early months of 1750. The accession of "Kayishi" (i.e. Kusi), is also recorded for the same year in the Arabic chronicle already mentioned.¹ As we have pointed out, Kusi became the Asantehene at a most critical period in Ashanti history, since the policies pursued by his predecessor brought into existence a counter-balancing alliance which controlled two of the major trade routes from Kumasi to the coast. This led to stagnation of trade on the coast from Axim to Winneba, because the Ashanti traders could only visit the European settlements east of Accra, where they exchanged their gold, slaves and ivory for guns, powder, brandy, knives, buttons, iron bars, brass basins and cowrie shells.² Kusi's accession led to speculation on the coast that the Ashantis would defeat the allies and reopen the trade routes. This hope was not fulfilled, and the European traders blamed the king for his people's inaction. The Dutch, for example,

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1. V.G.K. Extract of letters from Guinea, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 4th May, 10th August, and 7th September, 1750. WIC 490 Letters from Brummer, Accra, to Director-General Van Voorst, Elmina, dated 8th January, and 10th February, 1751. J. Goody, The Ethnography of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast West of the White Volta, (Colonial Office, 1954) App. IV., op.cit.
M. Priestley and Wilks, "Ashanti Kings in the eighteenth century..", in Journal African History, 1, 1, (1960), pp.93-4.
 2. V.G.K. Letter from Joost Platfues, and L.F. Roemer, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, to Directors, dated 7th November, 1748. T 70/30 Letter from Governor T. Melvil, Anomaboe, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 30th October, 1754.

not only described Kusi as an effeminate, lazy monarch, who was addicted to drink, but also they accused him of being responsible for the fact that the trade routes had been closed for so long.¹ These opinions have been repeated in almost all the printed works on Ashanti. For instance, Brodie Cruickshank says that he had difficulty in keeping the conquered states under subjection without attempting any further expansion. Fuller also describes Kusi as "an elderly mediocrity who left the business of governance to his chiefs and advisers." Furthermore, Priestley and Wilks, in recent articles on Ashanti, have endorsed these statements, adding that Kusi was not a particularly forceful character.²

This view of Obodum is misleading because it shows complete lack of appreciation of the difficult political problems which he had to deal with throughout the whole fourteen years of his reign. It must be stressed that the main objective of the allied states was to maintain their political and economic independence of Ashanti by preserving a lucrative middleman interest in the inland trade and to check any further expansion by cutting off the Ashantis from direct access to supplies of firearms from the coast. Thus, unless the

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1. WIC 114 Letter from Fiscal D.P. Erasmi, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 1st May, 1760.
WIC 115 Letter from Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten.
 2. Brodie Cruickshank, Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa, (London, 1853), p.52.
Sir Francis Fuller, A Vanished Dynasty..., 1921, op.cit., p.31
M. Priestley and I. Wilks, "Ashanti Kings...", in Journ.Afr. Hist., 1, 1, (1960), op.cit.
M. Priestley, "The Ashanti Question and the British: Eighteenth Century Origins", Journ.Afr.Hist., 11, 1, (1961), pp.41-42.

powerful alliance disintegrated, the Ashantis were clearly not in a position to force their way down to the coast. Indeed, Director-General Huydecooper summed up the matter neatly when he wrote, in 1764, that as long as this alliance lasted, there was no hope of a passage through from the interior, as the self-interest of the member-states demanded the closing of the trade routes.¹ Moreover, the support which the powerful Fantis were known to have given the allies must have deterred the Ashantis from making an irruption onto the coast. Since Fanti involvement in the quarrels of the interior states eventually led to open conflicts with the Ashantis, during the reign of Kusi's successor, it is necessary to know who were the Fantis, and how the events in the hinterland affected them.

The Fantis fall into two main groups; the Barbər Fantis (i.e. The Aboras, Mankesims, Nkusukums and the Anomaboes) occupied the western district of Fanti country, whereas the Ekumfies, Adjumakos and the Gomuas occupied the eastern sector.² It may be that, initially, the effective political head of all the Fanti peoples was the King of Abora. In 1715, for instance, the Brafo of Fanti called a meeting of all the Fanti chiefs in his town, to consider an Akyem threat to invade Fanti territory. The King of Abora refused to attend the meeting because, as a leading Fanti king, the meeting ought to be held in his state. All the chiefs of Fanti agreed with the king, and the meeting was held at Abora, in spite of the protests of the Brafo of

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1. WIC 115 A letter from Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 15th October, 1764.
 2. According to some versions of Fanti traditional history, the Barbər Fantis were the "real" Fantis.

Fanti.¹ Moreover, Abora, the residence of the King of Abora, was widely known as the political centre of the Fanti state. In 1752, for example, the British described Abora as the first town in Fanti for greatness, and at least twice as big as Anomabo.² Nevertheless, it was clear that, by the middle of the eighteenth century the King of Abora's claim to pre-eminence was more apparent than real, because the Fanti state was increasingly becoming an association of independent states. The Governor of Cape Coast Castle, writing of the eastern Fantis in 1753, noted that "The Accomfee Fantees and the Burabura Fantees....were originally the same people, but now they have two Braffoes (or Stadt-holders), and two sets of Curranteers (or Senators); they are neither under the same circumstances in point of Union as the Switzers or Grisons, nor as the United Provinces of Holland. I call their connexion a federal union for want of a better expression; tis an union formed on manners, customs and religion for they are under the same subjection to the Father (or God) of Fantee as the Western Fantees are".³

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1. N.B.K.G.82 Letters from J. Visbeck, Kormantsi, to Director-General H. Haring, dated 28th May, and 5th August, 1715. Although the Brafo was the commander-in-chief of all the Fanti armies, his powers seemed to have been very limited. Visbeck noted that "the Braffo is dependent on the Caboceers of Abrah because their power is bigger than that of the Braffo and all his elders together". The Brafo was elected from all the Fanti divisional chiefs by turns for a limited period. In April, 1768, Idun Kwegyir, described as the Captain of Abora, was elected "Captain General of Fantee". In the following month, Adoo "Principal Pynin of Annamaboe" was elected "Braffoe of Fantee".
 2. C.O. 388/45 Governor Thomas Melvil, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 20th August, 1752. The Dutch records also provide plenty of evidence in the eighteenth century to support the view that Abora was the political centre of the Fantis.
 3. T 70/30 Geo. Cockburne, Cape Coast Castle, to Committee of Merchants, dd 14th March, 1753. During this period the English were enlisting the support of all the Fantis to prevent the French from building a fort on the coast. See e.g. J.N. Matson, "The French at Amoku" in Transactions of the Gold Coast and Togoland Historical Society, 1, Part 11, (Achimota, 1953)

At the beginning of the century, Bosman remarked that "if the Fantyneans were not in perpetual civil divisions, the circumjacent countries would soon find their power by the irruptions into their territories".¹ By 1750, however, the Fantis, by means of threats, intimidation, diplomacy, colonization, the use of their language, as well as by force of arms, had brought the petty coastal states of Aguafo, Fetu, Asebu and Agona into the Fanti federation. Thus the Fantis came to exercise an influence over a coastal strip stretching eastwards from the mouth of the river Pra near Shama to Senya Bereku, a distance of more than 70 miles.² Undoubtedly, there were political reasons for Fanti expansion because they were bound to be involved in the political developments of the time. The consolidation and rise of the Ashanti kingdom, and the subsequent disintegration of the old states of Denkyera, Wassa, Twifo, Akyem and Akwamu, must have decided the Fantis to take measures to protect the territorial integrity of their state.³ Since most of these states abandoned their territories and established themselves closer to the Fanti border, the Fantis must have realised that a conflict between them and the Ashantis was inevitable, especially as they would be the last serious obstacle blocking Ashanti's line of access to the coast. It may be supposed therefore, that the Fantis sought to dominate Aguafo, Abremboe, Fetu

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1. Bosman, 1705, op.cit., p.56.
 2. On the Fanti expansion in general, see e.g. T 70/31 W. Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, 10th January, 1764. W. Bosman, 1705, pp. H. Meredith, An Account of the Gold Coast of Africa, (London, 1812), pp.95-6, 111-2 and 115; A.B. Ellis, A History of the Gold Coast, (London, 1893), pp.108-9; Claridge, 1915, op.cit., Vol.I, p.229; Balmer, op.cit., pp. 25-26.

and Agona, so as to control more effectively the northwards movement of firearms,¹

Nevertheless, the fundamental factor underlying Fanti expansion was economic. The Fantis, like the Ashantis in the interior, responded to the new economic demands arising out of the development of the trans-Atlantic trade. The Fantis were extremely active in the coast trade in the eighteenth century. In 1727, for example, the Danes reported that the Fantis were itinerant traders, who travelled great distances to Ashanti, Akyem and Akwamu, with the goods they had bought cheaply from the Europeans on the coast, and sold them at exorbitant prices to the inland peoples.² The Fanti chief port of Anomabo was open to traders from all nations, including interlopers. The Fantis levied customs duties on the ships which entered into Anomabo roads, and they frequently ignored the protests of the Governors of the trading Companies on the coast not to trade with interlopers. In 1764, John Hippisley, noted that the chiefs of the European forts would have wielded great influence on the coast had not the Gold Coast trade been carried on "almost entirely by the Fantees, a people exceedingly intelligent and tenacious of their Rights; in so much so that they would laugh in a person's face who should tell them that by an Act of the English Parliament they have not the

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1. All these coastal states had markets established on their northern borders, where they traded with the inland peoples. See e.g. T 70/31 Letter from Governor William Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 19th January, 1764.
 2. V.G.K. Letter from Governor A. Suhm, and Council, to Directors Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 5th March, 1727.

liberty to trade with whom they think proper".¹ The control of the markets at the northern borders of the Fanti country also enabled the Fantis to become the most important of the middlemen in the coastal trade. In those places they exacted tolls from the inland traders, and regulated trade patterns on the coast. The British declared, in 1764, that trade was bad on the Gold Coast, because "goods are more plenty; the Blacks are more knowing than they were in former times; Besides this, regular markets have been settled on the borders of the Fantee country where the Warsaws, Akims and several others keep up a constant intercourse between Ashantee and Fantee country."² Furthermore, the strip of coast from Shama to Senya Bereku contained Dutch and English settlements, and since these two nations were commercial rivals, the Fantis obviously sought this area in order to profit from their dissensions.³ For political and economic reasons, therefore, the Fantis were clearly opposed to Ashanti's expansion. Thus the Fantis were prepared to support the intervening states of Denkyera, Akyem, Wassa and Twifo to resist Ashanti's advance. Thus, in 1753, when Intsiful, who had been a thorn in the flesh of the Ashantis for so long, died, the Fantis met at Abora and decided to send messengers to Wassa to tell the Wassas "not to be discouraged by the loss of their king, but to remain in the place where

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1. John Hippisley, "On the Trade at the Forts on the Gold Coast", in Essays, MS copy in 2 WIC 116 ff.1181-1236, op.cit. Between 1737 and 1741, Governor Melvil noted that because Anomabo was a free port, a male slave sold there at 10 ozs., i.e. £40 sterling. T 70/30 Letter from Governor Thomas Melvil, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 17th March, 1755.
 2. T 70/31 Letter from Governor William Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to Committee of Merchants, dated 27th May, 1764.
 3. W.E.F.Ward, 1958, op.cit., p.143.

they were, without making any overtures for an accommodation with the Ashantees".¹

Apart from the formidable character of the combination against the Ashantis, the political situation in Ashanti itself during this period was not conducive to the adoption of a forward policy. Danish reports indicate that the preliminary to Kusi Obodum's reign was unsettlement and civil strife in the kingdom. This also had its origin in Opoku Ware's attempts to strengthen the powers of the monarchy at the expense of the Kumasi chiefs. We have pointed out that Opoku, after defeating the rebels, allowed the leaders to return to Kumasi on condition that they accepted the limitations on their powers. In order to ensure the continuity of his policies, Opoku also appointed one Darko to succeed him. On his death, however, the chiefs ignored Opoku's request, and elected Kusi Obodum as the Asantehene. In May 1750, the Danes reported that Ashanti had been plunged into civil war because of succession disputes following the death of Opoku Ware. In the following year, the report was that Kusi was firmly established on the throne, and that Darko, who disputed Kusi's claim, had committed suicide.² Kusi Obodum was obviously elected king so as to repudiate Opoku's internal reforms, and to rule according to the tenets of the old constitution. Indeed, before long,

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1. T 70/30 Diary or Narrative of Transactions with the Fantees from the Death of Intuffero, King of Warsaw, dated 23rd September, 1753. Intsiful is referred to in the English and Dutch records as Intuffero, Intuffer, etc.
 2. Roemer, 1760, op.cit., p. V.G.K. Letters from Guinea, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, dated 4th May, 10th August, 7th September, 1750; signed by Joost Platfues, L. Engmann, and M. Svane. Ibid., Letter from Joost Platfues and D. Engmann, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, to Directors, dated 7th May, 1751.

the Kumasi chiefs recovered most of their powers, so that, some 70 years later, Dupuis could write, "Had it been practicable to have given stability to the wise regulations of Sai Apoko (i.e. those diminishing the power of the Kumasi Nsafohene), it is generally believed by the Moslems that the empire of Ashantee, at this day, would have held a rank proportionate to several of the most powerful monarchies inland...."¹ The accession of Kusi, however, did not end the civil disobedience in Ashanti because Kusi was essentially the nominee of a faction. In March, 1755, the English declared that "the almost total destruction of Akim and Assin and the Civil Wars in Ashantee have made those slaves which pass under the denomination of Cormantcy very scarce and consequently very dear."² Moreover, Kusi dared not leave Ashanti to campaign in foreign lands, for fear that the disgruntled elements in his kingdom might destool him in his absence. Indeed, in 1760, the Dutch reported that there was disunity in Ashanti because most of the principal chiefs hated the king, and that they were waiting for an opportunity to put "the young Zaay, son of the famous Poku in his place".³

Therefore, it is clear that the political situation in the country did not permit a policy of military expansion. In the circumstances, Kusi Obodum reversed the policy of his predecessors and made

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1. J. Dupuis, Journal of a Residence in Ashantee, (London, 1824), opcit., p.
 2. T 70/30 Letter from Governor Thomas Melvil, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 17th March, 1755. The Akanny country was definitely called "Assin county" after 1750.
 3. WIC 114 Letter from J.P.T. Huydecopper, to Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 1st May, 1760.

war, instead of diplomacy, the extreme limit of political action. In fact, in pursuing this policy Kusi was responding to peace moves emanating from the coast. Fanti trade, like that of Ashanti, was greatly hampered by the stoppage of the trade routes.¹ The Fantis therefore decided to mediate between the Ashantis and the allied states. In November, 1753, some Fanti ambassadors went to the allied camp and succeeded in getting them to make peace with Ashanti. They then sent messengers to Cape Coast Castle to inform the Governor that they had "at last fixed the terms of peace between Ashantees and Warsaw" and that the English should send a messenger to join them to go to Ashanti so as "to gain credit to what they shall say and to show that the English and the Fantees stand by one another". Governor Melvil was not hopeful of the successful outcome of the mission to Ashanti, but he acceded to the request of the Fantis, because "the Fantees are very eager after the Trade and promise to submit to any terms or regulations I shall make for the security of the Ashantee traders". A few days later, messengers from Wassa, Fanti, Akyem and "some lesser Nations" arrived at Cape Coast Castle to join the Governor's messenger to go to Ashanti "whither they are going to swear to the peace and open the paths".²

Apart from the English and Fanti efforts at mediation, the Dutch at Elmina also made strenuous efforts to settle the disputes between

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1. Since the Ashantis were not allowed to come to the West Coast, Fanti traders had to go to Akwamu and Accra to trade with them. See e.g. V.G.K. Letter from Carl Engmann, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, to Directors, dated 3rd May, 1753.
 2. T 70/30 Letters from Governor Thomas Melvil, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 5th and 11th November, 1753.

Ashanti and her tributary states. Between September 1754 and November 1758, Director-General de Gietene and President Ulsen, sent their chief brokers, Dwammo and Kofi Andafor, to the warring parties, to try to settle the disputes.¹ According to Dwammo and Andafor, the allied chiefs who had encamped in the Akanny country, agreed to reconcile with the Ashantis, and they sent their own messengers to join them to go to Ashanti. When they arrived at the Ashanti court, Kusi Obodum and his chiefs recounted the wrongs they had received from the Wassas, the Akyems, the Denkyeras and the Twifos. In particular, the king stressed that the main purpose of the allies was to destroy the Ashanti kingdom; that important Ashanti ambassadors sent to them to discuss peace had been imprisoned and finally executed, and that against "the custom of all Negroes, the allies had taken prisoner the Titje and finally executed him."² The King and his chiefs, however, agreed to accept Dutch mediation, but the king declared that the allies should pay him 1000 bendas of gold in order "to put back his sword with which he had sworn his people to fight, into its sheath."

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1. WIC 114 Relas gedaandoer Djemoe dienaar van wylen de Directeur-Generaal de Gietene en Coffee Andafor dienaar van den oud Praesident Ulsen behelvend hun wedervaaren, en verrigtingen eerst uyt ordne van voornoemde Generaal van September 1754 tot desselve er lyden op 24 October 1755. En laast uyt ordne van den laast gemelde Heerze oud Praesident van January 1756 tot heeden dat Zy retourneeren. Also, T 70/30 Thomas Melvil, Cape Coast Castle, to Committee of Merchants, dated 30th October, 1754. According to this report the allies were asked to pay 1600 ozs. of gold. The Wassas were to pay 800 ozs., whereas the Denkyeras and the Akyems had to pay 400 ozs. each. The Wassas paid 400 ozs. to Ikusi Obodum's messengers, and promised to pay "the other Moitey when Say (the heir to the Stool) of Ashantee takes fetish to observe what has been concluded."
 2. Titje, of course, is a court crier.

After prolonged negotiations, the allied representatives agreed to pay the sum, and the Asantehene then put forward his conditions for peace. First, he demanded that the allied states should not molest the Akannists, the Kwawus and the Sefwis, who were still loyal to the Ashanti government. Second, that he had taken under his protection parts of the countries of Akyem and Aowin, whose chiefs and people had asked for Ashanti's protection, and that the allies should leave these peoples to live in peace. Third, that Ashanti traders should be allowed a free passage to the coast; that they should be allowed to procure provisions on the way, and that if any of the traders fell into debt, the matter should be referred to him for restitution, instead of imprisoning the trader. Further, the king asked that all rebels, criminals and deserters, from both sides, should be handed to their respective authorities without difficulty. Fifth, that Agyerakwa, the cousin of late King Poku, who was given as a hostage to King Pobi of Akyem, and was still retained by that king, should be sent back with all his dependents, and effects. Also, the personal effects of Djan Frimpong, an Ashanti man who was killed by the Wassas during the reign of King Opoku, and the golden headgear of Kwakye, the herald who died in a Wassa prison, should all be surrendered to the Ashantis. Sixth, that Odupon, King of Twifo, should refund to him the 20 Bandas gold which the late king Poku gave him to buy gun-powder, but which Odupon had misused. Seventh, that the allies should decamp and leave the Akanny country within ten months, so that the Akannists, who had been driven away by them, should reoccupy their territory in peace. Finally, the king swore before his chiefs that if the allies failed to leave the Akanny country, he would declare war

on them.

The Dutch messengers and the deputies from the allied states as well as an Ashanti chief, Mensah, returned to the allied camp to inform them of the king's conditions for peace. As soon as they had been told of them, the Wassas, the Akyems, the Denkyeras and the Twifos rejected the peace terms, and swore that since they did not want to lose the money they had paid the king, they would not rest until they had destroyed the Ashanti kingdom by force of arms. The allied objection stemmed from two main reasons. Firstly, they said that they had been wronged by the Akannists and, though they had expected the Ashantis to champion the cause of the Akannists, they had also hoped that the Ashanti king would have induced the Akannists to give them satisfaction. Secondly, they considered that the ten months within which they were expected to leave the Akanny country were not enough since they had to retire into their own country in good order. The Dutch messengers persuaded the allied chiefs to send representatives to Elmina to discuss the matter with the Director-General, so that the latter could induce the Ashanti king to modify his peace terms, but the allied chiefs rejected the offer, and the negotiations broke down.¹

It was not surprising that the Europeans and the Fantis failed to reconcile the Ashantis and their enemies, and to reopen the trade routes. The messages were heard, presents received, and promises

1. The Dutch messengers returned to Elmina with gifts from Kusi, "Akjaanba", the Queen Mother, Safo Katanka, the Mamponghe, and Odanguah, the Dwabenhene, to President Ulsen. Except Akjaanba, who sent a beautiful piece of Kente cloth, all the chiefs sent slaves to Ulsen.

sometimes given, but all to no purpose. Governor William Mutter of Cape Coast Castle attributed this to "the greedy, avaricious and villainous disposition of the natives which puts out of every white man's power to keep up a free and uninterrupted intercourse with the inland countries". But, as Hippisley rightly points out, the animosity between the Ashantis and the Wassas, for example, "is so strong and has subsisted so many years," that it seemed impossible a reconciliation would ever take place. The Ashantis would certainly revenge the indignities they had suffered at the hands of their tributaries. The allied states, on the other hand, were determined to end their political and economic dependence on Ashanti.¹

By 1758, then, the political pattern on the Gold Coast was no different from the situation in 1750, when Kusi Obodum became the Asantehene. Indeed, the situation was ever more serious, because the allies were convinced that their disputes with Ashanti could only terminate in war. They therefore embarked upon massive military preparations. The Wassas, the Denkyeras and the Twifos bought large quantities of guns and powder on the west coast, and prevented any Ashanti trader from reaching the European settlements in that area.² In the east, the Akyems induced the Krabos to join them in harassing the Ashantis. The Akyems and the Krabos not only

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1. T 70/31 Letter from W. Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 27th May, 1764.
John Hippisley, "On the Necessity of Erecting a Fort at Cape Appolonia", in Essays, op.cit., pp.53-54.
 2. WIC 114 Letter from Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 6th August, 1760.

effectively controlled the trade routes through their own countries, but also they seized Ashanti traders who used the paths through Akwamu, and either killed or sold them to the slavers on the coast. In 1764, the report from Cape Coast Castle was that "the trade which is brought to Accra comes mostly from Aquamboe on the River Volta. But as the path from that place to Accra lies near the Crabo Hills which are inhabited by 700 or 800 lawless Banditti, they seize on the traders with impunity whenever they please, and that puts a stop to all trade till matters are compromised".¹

Because the Ashantis were almost cut off from the coast, the European traders believed that they would definitely declare war on the allied states, and push their way to the coast. This did not happen, and the Dutch Director-General, Huydecooper, declared that an invasion of the allied territory would never take place so long as Kusi Obodum lived, because he hated war. The Dutch believed that what would make the Ashantis invade the coast was the death or destoolment of King Kusi.² Thus it was with considerable optimism that they reported, on 3rd August 1760, that Adu Gyamera, described as "the General of all Ashanti and a pretender to the throne", had instigated the overthrow of the king.³

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1. WIC 114 Letter from J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 27th February, 1760.
T 70/31 William Mutter to the Committee, dated 10th January, 1764.
 2. WIC 114 Letter from J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 1st May, 1760.
 - 3, WIC 115 Letter from D.P. Erasmi to the dated 3rd August, 1760.

It was clear, however, that Kusi Obodum was biding his time, because there were definite signs, soon after peace negotiations had broken down in 1758, that the coalition against Ashanti was disintegrating. Firstly, the Fantis were clearly disappointed when their efforts at mediation failed, because the stoppage of the trade routes affected their trade as much as it did Ashanti trade. Fanti traders who travelled through Accra to Akwamu to trade with the Ashantis and other inland traders, were seriously hampered by the Akyems. In 1760, for example, James Whyte, the English factor at Accra, entertained "the Curranteers and messengers of all Fantee, Cape Coast, etc., who came to give the Accras fetish that they should protect their trading men who were passing to and fro betwixt Fantee and Aquamboe from the Akims".¹ On the west coast, too, the Wassas and the Twifos were making it difficult for Fanti traders to trade with the Ashantis in their market towns in Aguafo and Abramboe. Because the Wassas were aware that the Fantis were secretly sending firearms through Abramboe country to Ashanti, Asare Abr mpa, described as "captain-general of Wassas", suddenly marched about 3000 troops into Abramboe, sacked a number of villages and took 300 people prisoner, whom they sold as slaves on the coast. The Dutch also quoted Asare as saying that he intended to invade the Aguafo, and the

1. T 70/976 Accra Day Books, September to October, 1760, entry for 26th October, 1760. James Whyte, the factor at Accra, spent £2. 10. 0 on drinks for the Fanti messengers.

Fetu countries.¹ As soon as the Fantis learnt of the Wassas attack on Abramboe, they held a great meeting at Abora, and after prolonged discussions, they decided to send messengers to Governor William Mutter at Cape Coast Castle, to ask him to supply them with guns and gun-powder "for the defence of their country, and for them to go and fight the Warsaws in Abremboe".² Thus, frustration in the commercial field, coupled with the fact that Fanti was only indirectly involved in Ashanti's disputes with her tributary states, decided the Fantis to make friendly overtures to the Ashantis. The eventual outcome of this was that between 1759 and 1760, Ashanti and Fanti had reached an agreement to attack the Wassas and their allies at an opportune moment.³

Apart from the withdrawal of Fanti support, there were dissensions in the allied camp itself. It appears that the invasion

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1. WIC 115 Letter from Director-General D.P. Erasmi, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 22nd March, 1761.
T 70/31 Letters from Governor W. Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 15th October, 1760, and 10th January, 1764.
T 70/69 Letter from the Committee of Merchants, London, to Governor W. Mutter and Council, dated 15th October, 1764.
 2. ADM 1/3810 Extract of a letter from Governor William Mutter to the Committee, dated 15th October, 1760.
WIC 114 Letter from Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 27th February, 1760.
WIC 115 Letter from D.P. Erasmi, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 22nd March, 1761.
 3. T 70/30 Governor Nassau Senior, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 25th September, 1759, and 3rd February, 1760.
Ibid., William Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the same, dated 15th October, 1760.
WIC 115 Director-General D.P. Erasmi, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 22nd March, 1761.

of Abramboe was planned and executed on the orders of Asare Abr mpa, without the consent of Enimir, the Wassa king. Since Enimir had apparently no intention of antagonising the powerful Fantis, he must have quarrelled with his commander-in-chief. The result of the feud between the two chiefs led to serious disturbances in Wassa, and Asare enlisted the support of other chiefs to destool Enimir. The king was arrested, put in irons, and would have been executed had not the Twifos and other Wassa chiefs, who were still loyal to the king, freed him, Asare and his supporters were defeated, and the rebel leader fled to Akyem Abuakwa, and sought refuge with Pobi, the Abuakwahene. Enimir thereupon applied to Pobi for the return of Asare in order to be tried for treason. Pobi, who apparently believed that the Wassa General had acted in the best interest of the allies, refused to send Asare back to Wassa. This led to disputes between Enimir and Pobi, and it was widely believed that the Wassas and the Akyems would fight each other.¹ Secondly, there were disputes between the Denkyeras and the other members of the alliance. It is related that Owusu Bori, the king of Denkyera, suggested at a meeting of the allied states, that the allies should reopen negotiations with the Ashantis, because the continued existence of the disputes was detrimental to the economic interests of both sides. The Wassas, Akyems and Twifos immediately suspected Owusu Bori

1. T 70/31 Governor W. Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 27th May, 1764. Copy of Mutter's letter is also in ADM 1/3810.
WIC 115 Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten.

"of carrying on a correspondence privately with Ashantee and of abandoning his own country in order to assist the Ashantees in destroying the other nations in alliance with them...." The allies therefore determined to attack Denkyera, destool Owusu Bori, and to replace him with a pliant member of the Denkyera royal family. When Owusu got wind of this, he marched his troops into the allied camp under cover of darkness, killed many of the allied troops, and took large numbers prisoner. Owusu then fled with his supporters to Ashanti, where he signed a separate peace treaty with Ashanti, and promised to help the Ashantis in defeating the Wassas, the Akyems and the Twifos.¹

It was in early 1764, however, that the Ashantis felt able to invade the allied territory. This was because the Akyems invited the Yoruba state of Oyo to assist them against Ashanti at that time. Oyo, like Ashanti, was a great slave-trading state in the interior, which had been expanding at the expense of her neighbours.² During this period, Oyo had expanded westwards, and had established her dominion over the powerful Dahomey peoples. It would seem that Oyo was jealous of the rapid build-up of Ashanti power, and therefore must have seen in the rebellion of Ashanti's tributary states, an opportunity to break up Ashanti power. Dupuis was informed in Ashanti

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1. WIC 116 Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 29th December, 1764. T 70/31 Governor W. Mutter to the Committee of the Company of the Merchants trading to Africa, dated 25th January, 1765. Ousabody (Owusu Bori?)
 2. On Oyo see e.g. J.D. Fage, An Introduction to the History of West Africa, (London, 1956), pp.88-91. J.D. Fage, "States of the Guinea Forest", in The Dawn of African History, ed. R. Oliver, (London, 1961), pp.70-74

that, during the reign of king Kusi, "the caboceers of Bouromy, Quahou and Akim were instigated to take up arms by the intrigues of the court of Dahomey whose monarch received them into pay, and promised to support them with an army for the restoration of their original government."¹ Whatever the case may have been, the Ashanti king obviously considered the intervention of Oyo serious enough, and Dankwa, the Dwabenhene, was detailed to attack the Akyems, and their allies. In a series of battles Akyem resistance was overcome, king Pobi of Abuakwa fled with a handful of his followers, and the Ashanti troops crossed the river Volta to meet the Oyos. The Ashanti and the Oyo forces met, and a bloody battle ensued. The battle raged for a whole day, but the outcome was indecisive, and the battle-worn Ashanti troops decided to retire. Odanquah and his troops fell into an ambush, and they were all killed. In May 1764, the report from Cape Coast Castle was that "the Ashantees have met with a very considerable loss lately which had almost deterred them from venturing to the waterside. The affair is this: One of their Caboceers called Odanquah having made an incursion into Yo country, which lies behind Whydah. He and all his people to the number of 10,000 or 12,000 men fell into an ambush

1. J. Dupuis, Journal of a Residence in Ashantee, 1824, op.cit., p.

The Ashantis referred to Oyo as Appo. It was probable that the Ashantis told Dupuis that they fought against Dahomey instead of Oyo, because they encountered for the first time the Amazon section of the Dahomey army. See Rattray, Law and Constitution, 1929, p.221.

and were either killed or made slaves of".¹

This disastrous defeat, culminating in the loss of the Dwabenhene, must have decided the Ashanti chiefs to replace the aged Kusi Obodum with the youthful Osei Kwadwo, who could be depended upon to prosecute the war against the Akyems and the allies with vigour. A few months afterwards, in October 1764, Director-General Huydecooper reported from Elmina that "the drunkard Kusie", who had long ruled Ashanti, and as a result of whose cowardly attitude the trading paths had been closed for so long, "has now been kicked out of government and has been succeeded by a courageous youngman, Zai (Osei) who would most certainly follow the footsteps of the late king Poku".²

It is apparent therefore that Kusi Obodum was not a nonentity, as some historians would have us believe. Kusi's fourteen years' rule of Ashanti was certainly not marked by spectacular military successes, as Opoku's had been. Indeed, as we have noted, his one great effort to defeat the allies ended in disaster, and led to his eventual destoolment. But it must be emphasized that Kusi Obodum became the Asantehene at a most critical period in Ashanti history. Ashanti was threatened by an external invasion at a time when the kingdom was riddled with internal dissension. All this had its origins in the policies pursued by Opoku Ware, and Kusi must have realised that a

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1. T 70/31 Governor W. Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 27th May, 1764. See also copy in ADL 1/3810. The Dutch also refer to this episode rather obliquely. See WIC 115, letter from Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 15th October, 1764.
 2. WIC 115 Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 15th October, 1764.

reversal of Opoku's methods was the only means of preserving the territorial integrity of the Ashanti kingdom. The adoption of diplomacy, instead of war, as an instrument of foreign policy, was not a sign of weakness, but an indication of Kusi's political maturity. Indeed, it might well be, as Reindorf suggests, that Kusi Obodum was the most merciful and peaceful of the eighteenth century Ashanti kings.¹ Kusi was certainly the victim of circumstances. The adverse criticism of the Europeans on the coast must be rejected on the grounds that they were motivated by their own economic interests, and not by any appreciation of the difficult political problems facing the Ashanti government during this period.

1. C.C. Reindorf, History, (2nd ed.) op.cit., pp.130-1.

CHAPTER V
THE REIGN OF OSEI KWADWO, 1764-1777¹

By 1765, the new direction of affairs in Ashanti, coupled with the disagreements among the allied states, made possible Ashanti's advance on the coast. The youthful Osei Kwadwo was clearly determined to prosecute with vigour the war against the tributary states. Soon after his accession, the Europeans on the coast were referring to him as enterprising, courageous and fiery, though inexperienced. Both the British and the Dutch drew attention to his intense admiration for Opoku Ware, and indicated that Osei Kwadwo wished to follow in the footsteps of his great predecessor.² Apart from Osei's personal qualities, the rapprochement between the Ashantis and the Fantis, coupled with the withdrawal of Denkyera support for the allies, must have made an Ashanti invasion of allied territory a feasible proposition. In January 1765, the report from Cape Coast Castle was that "the Ashantees now give out that they will join the Denkyeras and then attack the Wassas, Akims and Tufferos"; in the following month, that all was quiet, "from one end of the coast to the other at present", but that it was only a temporary calm, because "by all accounts the

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1. Osei Kwadwo's activities have been ably dealt with by Miss Margaret Priestley, and this chapter is intended as a supplement to that work. See M. Priestley, "The Ashanti question and the British: Eighteenth Century Origins", in *Journal of African History*, 11,1, (1961), pp.35-59, op.cit.
 2. WIC 115 Letter from Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 15th October, 1764. Ibid. 116, the same to same, letter dated 8th March, 1765. T 70/31 Letters from Governor John Hippisley, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 20th March, and 12th July, 1766. Bowdich was informed in Kumasi that, in the early nineteenth century, Osei Kwadwo had been "esteemed a very great captain". Bowdich, 1819, op.cit., p.237

Ashantees are determined to force their way to the waterside."¹

The Wassas, the Akyems and the Twifos also made elaborate military preparations in anticipation of the expected Ashanti onslaught. They abandoned their own countries and encamped at Bendah "about forty miles to the North-East" of Cape Coast Castle, Osei Kwadwo, however, could not leave Ashanti immediately, because "two very considerable Ashantee Caboceers" had died, and the king "has to bury and make custom for the deceased". Meanwhile, a party of Akyems and the Akwamus "who are gone to join the Ashantees", engaged in some minor skirmishes.²

It was in May 1765 that the Ashanti forces advanced from the north to join the Fanti armies from the south. Apparently because they realised the formidable nature of the combination against them, the Wassas and the Twifos abandoned camp at Bendah, and fled to "Ahiman, about fifty or sixty miles to the North-West" of Cape Coast Castle. Thus the Akyem forces, under the leadership of Pobi, the Akyem Abuakwa chief, had to fight the Ashantis and the Fantis alone, and since the Akyems were "half starved for want of provisions and in a manner surrounded by an army of Ashantees commanded by Sey Coomah, King of Ashantee, and another of Fantees", they fell an easy prey to their enemies. Pobbi and his principal chiefs committed suicide, and

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1. T 70/31 Letters from Governor William Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 25th January, and 10th February, 1765.
Also, WIC 116 Letters from Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 8th March and 27th June, 1765.
 2. T 70/31 Governor William Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 25th April, 1765.

the Akyem forces decamped and fled. The Ashantis decided to follow up this victory, by dealing next with the Wassas and the Akyems. But because the rains had then set in, Osei Kwadwo decided to remain on the coast for at least a year. He came to an understanding with his Fanti allies for this purpose, and he established his camp in the Abora state within the Fanti federation. In order to demonstrate that his intentions were peaceful, and that his aim was to bring back the rebellious states of Wassa and Twifo to obedience, he gave the Fantis one of his close relatives as a hostage, as well as many presents. In addition, both the Ashantis and the Fantis took fetish to live in harmony with each other.¹ The Fantis nevertheless were suspicious. Their agreement with the Ashantis was brought into existence by the special circumstances of joint opposition to the allied states for closing the trade routes. But with the total defeat of the Akyems, and the Wassas and the Twifos in flight, the alliance was unlikely to be more than temporary. Since the Fantis were aiming at political and economic domination of the petty coastal states, they must have disliked the prospect of having the Ashanti army at such close quarters for a long period. Osei Kwadwo might emphasize that his purpose was to punish his rebellious subjects and to reopen the trade routes. The Fantis

1. WIC 116 Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 8th May, 1765.

T 70/31 Governor William Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 20th July, 1765.

The British say that Pobi was taken prisoner by the Fantis, but this was not correct, for if that were the case, he would have been set free soon after the hostilities between the Fantis and Ashantis began.

"Ahiman", of course, is the modern Twifo Heman. For a useful comment on the wide application of the word "fetish", see Dupuis, 1824, op.cit., p.107 note.

however, believed that the Ashantis aimed at the political subjugation of the coastal states.¹

It is not surprising, therefore, that hostilities broke out between the Ashantis and the Fantis. Undoubtedly, the behaviour of the Fantis was provocative in a number of ways. For instance, as a result of the defeat of the Akyems, the victors had large numbers of slaves to sell, and the price of slaves, which had stood at 10 ozs. and 6 ozs. for a male and female slave respectively, immediately fell to 6 ozs. and 4 ozs. The Fantis thereupon not only kept their own slaves "till the prices raise", but also "by their greedy and perfidious conduct, have been the means of cutting off all communications with the Ashantees who have certainly numbers of slaves to dispose of".² Moreover, in spite of the understanding to live in peace with the Ashantis, the Fantis seized and sold as slaves Ashantis who went to their villages for food. The Governor of Cape Coast Castle, for example, noted that the Fantis sold "not less than 1200 or 1500 of the Ashantees". Osei Kwadwo, who believed that his people might have committed some crime, sent four of his chiefs and a herald to discover the reasons of the Fanti action, but they were all detained. The Asantehene's protests fell on deaf ears, and, unable to obtain satisfaction by peaceful means, the Ashantis resorted to arms. On 27th June 1765, reports reached both Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle that there had been fighting

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1. T 70/1022 Cape Coast Castle Day Books, 1765, entry dated 18th June. Also, E. Donnan, Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America, (Washington, 1930-5), Vol. II, pp. 527-8.
 2. T 70/31 Governor William Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 20th July, 1765.

between the Fantis and the Ashantis for the past three days.¹

The conflicts between these two erstwhile allies immediately led to European repercussions. Both the British and the Dutch had hoped that, by their joint effort, the allies could defeat the Wassas, the Akyems and the Twifos, and reopen the trade routes, so as to ensure a constant flow of slaves from the interior to their coastal settlements. Ashanti and Fanti disputes, however, seemed to jeopardise that prospect. In their own trade interests, therefore, the British and the Dutch decided to intervene, so as to reconcile the warring peoples. At first, however, both Cape Coast and Elmina adopted an independent line of action. As soon as news of hostilities between the Ashantis and the Fantis reached Cape Coast, the Governor sent messengers with presents "to the Fantee Caboceers at their camp to advise them to make peace with the Ashantees".² In addition, the Governor called a meeting of the Council of Merchants to discuss the political situation and its impact on British trade. The Council passed a resolution on 10th July which, because of subsequent events, merits quoting in full: "Whereas the Fantees and the Ashantees, after destroying the Akims, have commenced hostilities against each other the consequence of which is likely to be a war between these two Nations; it is the opinion of this Council that should the Fantees,

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1. WIC 116 Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to Assembly of the Ten, dated 27th June, 1765.
T 70/31 Governor W. Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 20th July, 1765.
T 70/1022 Cape Coast Castle Day Books, 1765, entry for 27th June, 1765.
 2. T 70/1022 Cape Coast Castle Day Books, 1765, entry for 27th June, 1765.

who by the best information have been the aggressors in this quarrel, get the better of the Ashantees a total stagnation of Trade would ensue, and that, on the contrary, should the Ashantees become Masters of the Fantee Country, the Forts and Settlements on this coast would be greatly endangered, as the King of Ashantee being an absolute prince, might, upon the slightest provocation, or from mere caprice, so effectively block up any Fort as to oblige the garrison (if 4 or 5 Europeans and as many Mulattoes deserve that Name) to surrender. Such being the present unsettled state of affairs in this country, it is hereby resolved (after mature deliberation) to observe a strict Neutrality between the two Nations as possible¹. The Dutch at Elmina also declared themselves neutral, but they sent some Elmina chiefs and some of their servants with two white flags to the camps of the Fantis and the Ashantis, urging them to cease hostilities.² But the signs were ominous, and it became necessary for the British and the Dutch to concert their efforts at mediation. The initiative came from Elmina. Director-General Huydecooper desired the defeat of the Fantis, but he feared that this might not happen, because the Wassas and the Twifos at their camp in Twifo Heman would join the Fantis and attack the Ashantis from the rear. If that happened, the Ashanti army, surrounded on all sides, and in a predominantly hostile country, would

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1. T 70/31 Minutes of the Council at Cape Coast Castle, dated 10th July, 1765, signed by William Mutter, Gilbert Petrie, and John Grossle.
 2. WIC 116 Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 27th June, 1765.

certainly suffer defeat. In order to forestall that, Huydecooper decided to join William Mutter to reconcile the Ashantis and the Fantis. On 20th July, Mutter reported that "Mr. Huydecooper, Governor of Elmina, had been here for these eight days past, and we have jointly taken every step which we think proper and necessary in order, if possible, to reconcile the Ashantees and Fantees".¹

The period of Anglo-Dutch consultations was one of much diplomatic activity both at Cape Coast and Elmina Castles. Although there was some sporadic fighting, a full-scale war did not develop. Osei Kwadwo and his troops "more for want of provisions than anything else", left their camp and established themselves in Denkyera country. On 8th July, messengers representing the Companies were sent to the Ashantis, and the Fantis who had assembled at Fetu to consider the crisis. The Ashanti embassy returned to Cape Coast Castle on 21st July and, on the following day gave a report to the Dutch at Elmina of its interview with the Asantehene. In it, Osei Kwadwo explained that neither he nor his predecessors had ever had troubles with the Fantis and so he was surprised at the behaviour of the Fantis, who, although they were the allies of the Ashantis, had ill-treated his people. He pointed out that the Fantis' behaviour was even more objectionable because they had eaten fetish and exchanged hostages to live in peace and friendship, yet the Fantis had captured 4000

1. WIC 116 Director-General Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 27th June, 1765.
T 70/31 Governor W. Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 20th July, 1765.

Ashantis, whom they had sold as slaves, excluding 10,000 men who had died of famine because the Fantis prevented them from obtaining food. Osei Kwadwo then disclosed that, upon the advice of his principal chiefs, he had decided to retire, re-equip his army, and to return to the coast to take his revenge because he "now considers all the coastal peoples as his enemies". The Asantehene, however, agreed to accept European mediation, and to reconcile with those who had wronged him, provided the Fantis returned the four chiefs and the herald they were still retaining. Osei Kwadwo also indicated that the Wassas and the Twifos should be included in the peace negotiations, so as to end all disputes.¹ The British and the Dutch thereupon directed their efforts towards the achievement of these demands. Messengers passed forwards and backwards between Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle, the principal Fanti towns of Abora, Mankesim and Fetu, and the Ashanti camp in Denkyera. For example, in August 1765, the British paid subsistence allowance to Kofi Abo, described as "the Company's linguist" at Anomabo, and a messenger from Dutch Director-General Huydecooper, who went "on public business to Murram"; on the 18th of the same month, presents were sent to the principal Fanti chiefs "assembled at Fetue on account of the quarrel subsisting between the Fantees and the Ashantees"; and in December, 1766, a bed, double satin hammock and pole, rum and brandy were sent to Osei Kwadwo and his

1. WIC 116 Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 27th June, 8th November, 1765. T 70/31 Governor William Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 20th July, 1765.

principal chiefs.¹ Anglo-Dutch mediation achieved very little, however. There were many reasons for this failure. Firstly, though the Fantis boasted that they had put the Ashantis to flight, they genuinely believed that the Ashantis would make another descent on the coast. On 20th July 1765, it was widely known on the coast that the Queen Mother of Ashanti was urging the Asantehene "with all the force of female vehemence to war", declaring that she herself would call the Ashantis to arms, and lead an attack upon Fanti if the king failed so to do. In March 1766, the report from Cape Coast Castle was that the Asantehene "mediates an invasion upon the sea coast", and that he was urged on by "the young Counsellors and the Queen Mother"; in July, the Governor of Cape Coast Castle prayed the Committee of Merchants in London to repair the British forts on the coast so as to put them in a posture of defence because "the young enterprising Sayie, King of Shantee seems to threaten the Gold Coast with a fiercer and better conducted irruption than he made last year".² Again, in September 1766, Governor Gilbert Petrie, who visited Accra, reported the arrival of Ashanti messengers there. Ostensibly, they came to collect the arrears of pay due to the Asantehene, but "in reality, to receive the subjection

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1. T 70/1022 Cape Coast Castle Day Books, 1765, entries for 14th and 18th August, 1765, and Ibid.
T 70/1024 entries dated 1st October and December, 1766.
The Cape Coast Castle Day Books, and the Elmina Journals, and Correspondence with the outposts make it possible to reconstruct a full picture of the comings and goings of the Companies' messengers during this period.
Mankessim, the seat of the "High Priest of Fanti", was called "Murrum" by the British, and "Grand Terne" by the Dutch.
See WIC 299 e.g. Director-General Van der Grijp, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 15th September, 1788, and E.C. Martin, The British West African Settlements 1750-1821, (London, 1927), p.109.
 2. T 70/31 Governor W. Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 20th July, 1765. Ibid., Governor John Hippiusley, Cape Coast Castle, to Committee, dated 20th March, and 13th July, 1766.

or at least to make peace with the residue of the Akim nation and the several other states inhabiting the country between Accra and Ashantee and thereby to open a communication with the Europeans by a more direct and a much shorter road than that hitherto used by the Ashantees on account of the late power and opposition of their enemies the Akims". Petrie argued that the motives of the Ashantis were doubtful, and admitted of a double interpretation. First, that if the Fantis persisted in refusing to make a reasonable satisfaction to the Asantehene for the insult and loss he sustained from their attack on him the previous year, and consequently refused to supply him with European commodities, "he may have a recourse left in the trade of that channel". Second, that "Zay's endeavour to open that passage from his country to the seaboard is that if his ambition leads him to dissemble his sentiments on this occasion and to conceal a design to make peace another irruption into the Fantee country", he might be enabled by means of such a passage to supply himself with arms and ammunition in spite of his enemies.¹

In view of this, the Fantis not only refused to surrender the Ashanti hostages, but also they began to build up a new alliance with the Wassas and the Twifos. They offered these two states protection against Ashanti. In the months July to November, all Fanti efforts were directed towards achieving this objective. After prolonged negotiations, the Wassas and the Twifos agreed to join the Fantis in

1. T 70/31 Governor Gilbert Petrie, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 13th September, 1766.

opposing Ashanti and, in November 1765, the British sent presents to "Enimree, King of Warsaw, ENCHAKOON, principal Caboceer of Warsaw, Effafuah, principal Caboceer of Tuffero, Guinterry Empanee, Attinagy and Soben, Caboceers of Warsaw and Tuffero being all assembled at Fetue to drink fetish to be friends and allies of the Fantees".¹ Thus a new political alignment based upon Fanti-Wassa-Twifo co-operation came into existence, its object being to prevent the Ashantis from making another advance by the western trade routes. John Hippisley, who realised the importance of these developments, pointed out that since Akyem was "an undone nation or made a part of the Ashantees", the Fantis entered into "an alliance offensive and defensive with the Warsaws and Tufferoes to which Ammoniah, King of Appolonia has acceded", in order to guard against the dangers arising from the Akyem defeat. Hippisley believed that this alliance would last because the very existence of the member states depend upon it.² Furthermore, the Fantis prohibited "by a Law" the sale of guns, gun-powder, irons, lead and pewter to the Ashanti traders who resorted to the markets on the borders of Fanti country. But although some of those who broke this law and traded in firearms with the Ashantis were put to death, "yet are the demands of the Ashantees for these articles so great that they are secretly supplied by these very Fantees".³ A second reason why Anglo-Dutch negotiations broke down, was the activities

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1. T 70/1022 Cape Coast Castle Day Books, 1765, entries from 9th and 23rd November, 1765.
 2. T 70/31 Governor John Hippisley, Cape Coast Castle, to Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 20th March, 1766.
 3. T 70/31 Governor Gilbert Petrie, Cape Coast Castle, to Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 13th September, 1766.

of Richard Brew, a private British trader at Anomabo, who also chose to act as mediator, and whose behaviour caused great annoyance to both Companies during this period. Brew's business interests were firmly bound up with those of the Fantis, and he was clearly behind Fanti resistance to Ashanti's advance to the coast. In August 1765, the herald whose return Osei Kwadwo had demanded in the previous month as an essential condition at peace with the Fantis, was sold to a French captain lying in the Mouree roads. The Dutch managed to get the herald, by exchanging him with another slave, so as to send him to Ashanti. Brew and Webster protested to Huydecooper, claiming that the herald was his property. The Dutch refused to comply with Brew's demand, whereupon he and Webster seized and put in chains one of Huydecooper's messengers on his way back to Elmina from Kankesim, where he had been sent in connection with the Anglo-Dutch peace negotiations. The Dutch protested vigorously to the Governor of Cape Coast Castle, but failed to secure the release of the messenger, because Brew was also quarrelling with Governor Mutter of Cape Coast Castle. Eventually, the matter was referred to the Dutch West India Company in Amsterdam, and to the British Board of Trade by the Committee of the Company of Merchants in London.¹ The major difficulty, however, attending joint mediation was the fact of Anglo-Dutch suspicion and rivalry.

1. There are many references in the British and Dutch records, to the activities of Richard Brew, and his partner, Webster. See e.g. WIC 966 entries during August by Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper. Also, M.A. Priestley, "Richard Brew: an Eighteenth Century Trader at Anomabu", in Trans.Hist.Soc.Ghana, IV, pt.I, (Legon, 1959) 29-46, and pp. 215-216 Below.

Although both the British and the Dutch were officially neutral in the Ashanti and Fanti disputes, it was clear that the sympathies of the Dutch lay with the Ashantis. Director-General Huydecooper was heir to a long tradition of Dutch co-operation with Ashanti, and he was certainly not opposed to Ashanti becoming the political master on the Gold Coast. In 1764, when the disputes among the Wassas, the Denkyeras, the Twifos and the Akyems threatened to disrupt their alliance, Huydecooper expressed the desire to fish in troubled waters, so as to enable the Ashantis to reopen the trade routes. In June 1765, he instructed his messengers, who were going to the Ashanti camp to discuss peace with the Fantis, to tell the Asantehene privately that the Ashantis could count on the friendship of the Dutch, and that he had bought a number of the Ashantis whom the Fantis had sold as slaves, in order to send them back to Ashanti at an opportune moment. Moreover, he secured the services of the Ashanti prince, Agyerakwa, who became the Dutch chief link with the Asantehene.¹ Furthermore, during the discussions at Cape Coast Castle in July 1765, Huydecooper noted that the British seemed very reluctant to help the Ashantis, and he tried to convince them of the undesirability of strengthening the Fantis.² For the same reasons, he tried to persuade the Wassas, the Twifos, the Abremboes, and the Elminas, not to join the Fantis against Ashanti. On 25th October 1765, Governor Mutter reported that the Wassas and the Twifos had not yet committed

1. WIC 115 Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, Elmina, to Assembly of the Ten, dated 15th October, 1764.

2. M. Priestley, "The Ashanti Question and the British...", in Journ.Afric.Hist., 11, 1, (1961), opcit., p.54.

themselves by signing a treaty of alliance with the Fantis, because of "the infidelity of the Fantees, and owing to the address and intriguing disposition of Mr. Huydecooper, General of Elmina, who has hitherto prevented the Warsaw Caboceers from going to Fetue".¹

These activities of the Dutch Director-General were known at Cape Coast Castle, and aroused British suspicion of Dutch intentions. As we have indicated, the British were as anxious as the Dutch to establish direct commercial contact with Ashanti. Indeed, during the short period of Ashanti-Fanti rapprochement, the British paid subsistence allowance to messengers "going to the Ashantee camp at Abrah in Fantee with 22 Fathoms tobacco and one cotton Promal for the King and his principal Caboceers".² But the British were anxious that the seaboard should be under divided political control, and not under an absolute monarch, like the king of Ashanti. Thus before the policy of co-operation was many months old, Hip;isley and Petrie wrote to Mutter from Accra, advising him to be wary of the Dutch negotiations, and warning him of the adverse consequences that would follow an Ashanti conquest of the coast. The Governor agreed with this view, and noted that the plan of the Dutch had changed. He pointed out that, initially, Huydecooper had aimed simply at re-establishing friendly relations between the Ashantis and the Fantis, whereas now his object

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1. T 70/31 Governor William Mutter to Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 25th October, 1765.
WIC 116 Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 19th July, 1765.
Only Elminas obeyed the Dutch and refused to join the Fantis, and they were attacked by the latter. See *ibid.* same to same, 8th November, 1765.
 2. T 70/1022 Cape Coast Castle Day Books, 1765, entry for 12th June, 1765.

was that the latter should be defeated, and a way forced through to the waterside.¹ The British case was clearly put by John Hippisley, who succeeded Mutter as Governor of Cape Coast Castle in 1766.

Hippisley wrote, "The Dutch avowedly espouse the cause of the Shantees and this from a principle the most erroneous in African politics. They urge the insolence of the Fantees, ever since our establishments were made and the frequent outrages they are guilty of to whitemen; their confused government and the consequent difficulty of appeals to them, whereas, say they, if the whole Gold Coast was under one powerful Prince, there would be only him to satisfy.... as it easily might by giving him Presents and we should then be in a condition to bid defiance to the rest. But ought they not to consider, we owe the supremest advantage from the mixt government of the Fantees? The independence of District on District is of such importance that whilst it subsists (and so it may, if not put an end to by the officious and fatal interposition of whitemen) we may safely promise ourselves to hold our forts and power in this country as long as we please..." Hippisley then concluded that if there was a renewal of the Ashanti and Fanti war, and the latter were in danger of being defeated, they should receive the support of the British, since their victory was in the British Company's interest.²

This political re-grouping, and the attitude of the British

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1. C.O.388/53 John Hippisley and Gilbert Petrie, James Fort, Accra, to Governor William Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, dated 1st October 1765, and Mutter's comments on this letter.
 2. C.O.267/13 Copy of a letter from John Hippisley, Governor of Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 13th July, 1766.

on the coast, were certainly the main reasons why the Ashantis did not carry out their intentions to invade the coast after 1765. The prospect of an Ashanti onslaught, however, continued to haunt the coastal peoples. The Ashantis had reasserted their overlordship over the Akyems, and thereby had managed to reopen the eastern trading paths from the interior to Accra and the neighbouring beaches. But the rebellion of the Wassas and the Twifos had not been suppressed, and the opposition of these two states had now been reinforced by the hostilities of the Fantis and the Cape Appolonians. This meant that the European settlements on the west coast were deprived of sharing in the Ashanti trade. Thus, although Anglo-Dutch mediation failed, the Companies reverted to the policy of independent negotiations with Ashanti. In July 1766, for example, Governor John Hippisley sent an embassy to Osei Kwadwo, bearing a public and a private message. In the private message, to be delivered to the king alone, Hippisley strongly urged the Asantehene to refuse the Dutch invitation to invade the coast. He sought to dissuade the king from such a course by pointing out that "a compliance with the invitation of the Dutch to come to the waterside would contradict the first rules of his two immediate predecessors' conduct; his great-uncle Apocha's particularly who with all the advantages of successful wars and able counsellors acquired by long and active reign" had always declared against an invasion of the coast. Hippisley argued that Opoku Ware must doubtless have been influenced in his decision not to embark upon a coastal invasion by the fear that, "by residing at the waterside his subjects would quickly be debauched both in their constitutions and principles,

because they would drink the spirituous liquors being at least six times as dear in Shantee as they are at the waterside", and also because, if the Ashantis came into contact with Fanti "liberty", it would have the effect of undermining the king's arbitrary power, so that "his scepter would scrap out of his hand..."¹ In October 1766, the messengers sent by Hippisley to Ashanti returned to Cape Coast Castle, accompanied by an embassy from Osei Kwadwo. They brought "the most fair and reasonable" proposals for peace, because the Asantehene merely requested the Fantis to allow all the Ashantis - hostages and messengers - still retained on the coast, to return to Ashanti. The Ashanti ambassadors stressed that if the king's demands were met, he "offers to drink fetish with the Fantees and drown in oblivion all his past grievances." Governor Petrie declared that there were some prospects of peace being established between the Fantis and the Ashantis, because the Fantis were assembling to give audience to the Ashanti messengers. Petrie warned, however, that this would be the work of time, of trouble and expense, because the Fantis "are very slow, very turbulent in all their meetings, very much divided amongst themselves and very avaricious". By December, however, the Fantis had accepted, in part, the Asantehene's terms relating to the return of the hostages. They promised to give a free passage to all the Ashanti messengers and hostages, except young Osei, the member of the Ashanti

1. T 70/31 Letter from Governor John Hippisley, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 13th July, 1766.

Hippisley, however, endeavoured to maintain an interest with both the Ashantis and the Fantis. In this letter he pointed out that he was, at that very moment, treating the Asantehene "in a respectful manner", and that "a decent present is preparing for him, and I have ordered the arrears of his ground rent at Accra to be paid by his messengers who are now there".

royal family retained at Anomabo. He too would be released on condition that the Asantehene allowed the Fanti hostages to return home from Ashanti. The Dutch also persuaded the Wassas and the Twifos to sign a treaty of peace with the Ashantis, and to keep open the trade routes. Since the disputes affected their economic interests, and because they regarded the Fantis as faithless allies, King Enimir of Wassa and his chiefs agreed, and both the Wassas and the Twifos reaffirmed their allegiance to the Asantehene.¹

By the beginning of 1767, therefore, the prospect of an Ashanti invasion of Fanti territory was remote. The cessation of hostilities, however, proved short-lived, because the Akyems revolted again. Obirikorang, who had recently succeeded Pobi as the Omanhene of Akyem Abuakwa, refused to swear allegiance to the Asantehene, and, according to a report from Cape Coast Castle, he decided to abandon his country, and to "take sanctuary on the other side of the River Volta with Ashampoe, King of Papae". The Ashantis feared that the Akyems would induce the Wassas and the Twifos to join them, so Oséi Kwadwo sent "two armed bodies to hinder the Akims in their designs".² In January 1773, Governor David Mill reported that the Ashanti army was defeated in the first engagement, but Obirikorang, fearing that the

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1. T 70/31 Letter from Governor Gilbert Petrie, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 20th October, 1766.
WIC 132 Resolutions of the Council at Elmina, 1764-1767, entries dated 8th and 22nd December, 1766. Also WIC 116 Director-General J.P.T. Huydecooper to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 1st Feb. 1767. The Dutch sent presents to Osei Kwadwo, which included, a green velvet cloth, a green velvet cap with gold trimming, a stick with a silver knob, an East Indian cloth, 24 pipes and a roll of tobacco.
 2. T 70/31 Letter from Governor Gilbert Petrie, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 20th August, 1767.

Ashantis would bring more reinforcements, sent the Akyem women and children to Krobo country, and kept them "in places made by nature defensible". The Abuakwa chief and his army then moved into the Accra area, and at first everybody thought that they would go to Accra and seek shelter under the three European forts there, a move which could not fail to have implicated the Accras. Obirikorang, however, did not go to Accra. Instead, he reached an understanding with the eastern Fantis, and after giving them "many presents for liberty to retire into their country" he encamped in an area between Accra and Senya Bereku. Since the Ashantis were not prepared to engage the Fantis and the Akyems at the same time, Osei Kwadwo instructed his army to attack the Krobos, "into whose hands the Akim King had deposited part of his women, and who had for many years past been his auxiliaries". After a series of battles, in which the Ashantis were clearly at a disadvantage, since "the Croboes inhabit a hill of great natural strength", the Ashantis were eventually defeated, and they had to retire into their own country.¹

The western Fantis could not fail to be involved in these developments. They had refused an Akyem request for protection soon after the revolt.² But they must have feared that if the Ashantis succeeded in defeating the Akyems, they might attack them in order to

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1. WIC 118 Letter from P Woortman and Laefdael, Elmina, to the Assembly of the Ten, dated 30th August, 1770.
T 70/31 Copy of letter from Governor David Mill, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 30th January, 1773. Also T 70/32 Ibid., dated 4th December, 1773. According to Wilks, Obirikorang was finally deposed by the Asangehene and his successor, Ampoforo, reaffirmed his allegiance to Osei Kwadwo. See I. Wilks, M.A. Thesis, op.cit.. p.134.
 2. T 70/31 Governor Gilbert Petrie, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 20th August, 1767.

secure the release of the hostage still retained at Anomabo. A major difficulty attending the surrender of this hostage was that he was not in the possession of the Fantis at all, but in the hands of Richard Brew, who rivalled with the Companies to be the mediator in the Fanti-Ashanti disputes. In 1768, when the Governor of Cape Coast Castle went to Anomabo to persuade the Fantis to return the hostages to Ashanti, he discovered that the Fantis were prepared to do this, provided the Dutch were excluded from having a share in the settlement of their disputes with Ashanti, and also if the Governor would act in concert with Brew. The Governor agreed to do this, provided Brew acted in a subordinate capacity, and that it was the Company to whom the hostages were handed over for return to Osei Kwadwo. Brew rejected the proposal "with the utmost disdain", declaring that if he could not participate with the Governor on equal terms, he would continue to follow an independent line of action. The Governor then pointed out to the Fantis that they would be very unwise to place their confidence, at this juncture of their affairs, in a private trader, instead of in the Company, which, as a public establishment, was in a much better position to give them support and assistance than any individual could ever be. Even when the Fanti Oracle at Mankesim declared for the Company of Merchants, and instructed the elders of Anomabo to deliver the hostages to Cape Coast

Castle, "Mr. Brew's profusion prevailed over the power of the Deity".¹

Brew's persistence to be involved in the Fanti and Ashanti disputes did not stem merely from his desire to be popular with the Fantis and to make them believe that he was superior in power, wealth and importance to the servants of the Company. There was a material side to it, quite apart from the question of prestige. He intended to claim expenses from the Ashantis for the upkeep of the hostages whom Osei Kwadwo had been trying to recover since 1765! In 1768, Brew claimed that the Asantehene owed him some 300 ounces of gold for the cost of their maintenance over the past three years. The Governor of Cape Coast Castle, however, believed that Osei Kwadwo would never meet such an unreasonable demand; in his opinion, Brew would have stood a better chance of getting a partial settlement if he had acted jointly with the Company's officers, instead of acting independently.²

The upshot of these varied cross-currents of activity was that

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1. T 70/31 Letter from Governor Gilbert Petrie, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 21st October, 1768.
T 70/1026 Cape Coast Castle Day Books, 1768, entries dated 23rd 25th and 28th August, and 2nd 14th and 20th September.
WIC 118 Letter from Director-General Pieter Woortman, Elmina, to the Zeeland Chamber, dated 21st April, 1770.
Also, M.A. Priestley, "Richard Brew; an Eighteenth Century trader at Anomabu", in Trans.Hist.Soc.Ghana, Vol.IV, pt.1, op.cit., pp.29-43.
Brew's influence with the Fantis partly stemmed from the fact that he was married to a daughter of Eno Besi Kurentisr, the Omanhene of Anomabo, an important member of the Fanti Council of Chiefs. He was referred to in the English records as John Currantee.
 2. T 70/31 Governor Gilbert Petrie, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 21st October, 1768.
WIC 118 Letter from Director-General Pieter Woortman and Council to the Zeeland Chamber, dated 9th October, 1768.
According to the Dutch, Brew released most of the Ashanti hostages, and kept young Osei, the most important of them, being a relative of the Asantehene.

the western Fantis took precautionary measures to defend themselves in the event of an Ashanti onslaught to secure the hostages. They declared that no guns, gunpowder, or any kind of ammunition, should be sold to the Ashanti traders. To enforce this, parties of armed men from the Abora state took positions on all the trade routes, to seize "the goods and persons of every trader who would be found attempting to carry up any of the contraband articles". It might well be, as Governor Petrie points out, that the Fanti resolution must have been not only taken suddenly, but privately, for young Osei, the hostage at Anomabo, apparently unaware of this, sent one of his servants with "a quarter barrel of gun powder" to contact one of the Ashanti traders at Manso during this period. The messenger, accompanied by an Anomabo man, was arrested by the Abora soldiers, and carried to Abora where he was executed. The execution of the messenger was clearly an act of folly, because it could have led to war between the Ashantis and the Fantis. Governor Petrie reported that whenever the news of this atrocious deed was heard "it spread terror and dismay", because nothing was expected to follow "than an immediate Rupture with the King of Ashantee to whom such an act of violence was the highest insult that could be offered". Petrie pointed out that it was a long-standing custom among the peoples of the Gold Coast that "the persons not only of Tities or heralds, Messengers and Hostages, but of all those who belong to or accompany them are held sacred, and an injury done to any of them is considered to affect the Honour of those represented or are sent from". The murder of such persons, therefore, was always regarded as "a challenge and a mark of defiance". In view of such considerations, it was feared in Cape Coast Castle, that the first act

of Osei Kwadwo, on hearing of the ghastly behaviour of the Fantis, would be to put to death all the messengers in his possession, except those from the Dutch. Then "it is probable", wrote Petrie, "we shall have the greatest Revolution ever known on the Gold Coast. Either the King of Ashantee will become sole and absolute master of the coast and extirpate the Fantees, or be overcome by them and driven back to his country; in either case the trade must be ruined for many years after a little glut which might follow a Battle by the sale of prisoners".¹ In order to avert this danger, the British decided to intervene. But since it was considered dangerous for the British themselves to send messengers to Ashanti, since they were known to act in the Fanti interest, the Governor persuaded the Ashanti hostage to send messengers to inform Osei Kwadwo that the man who was killed was a slave of no importance, and that the Fantis had punished the culprits, therefore his death should not be a basis for invading the coast. Unfortunately, these other messengers from young Osei were also prevented from going to Ashanti by the Abora soldiers. According to a report from Cape Coast Castle, "the soldiers of Abora obstinately refused either to let the messengers go up to Ashantee or to make the smallest satisfaction to the person whose property the Man was whom they had murdered and who had so readily offered his intercession to secure them against the resentment of the King of Ashantee, his Master and Relation". The report added that the old men in Fanti, especially the chiefs at Cape Coast and Anomabo, were deeply disturbed by the prospect of an Ashanti attack, but that the young people affected to be perfectly indifferent about the matter. "Sey Coomah and his Ashantee",

1. T 70/31 Letter from Governor Gilbert Petrie, Cape Coast Castle, to Committee of Company....., dated 9th October, 1767.

say they, "may come when they will, we are braver and more powerful though not so numerous as them, therefore we have no need to fear them as enemies".¹

Because the Fantis were unco-operative, the British could have abandoned them to their fate. There were two vital considerations, however, which decided the British to continue with their efforts at mediation. Firstly, they believed that if the Fantis were defeated, the whole Gold Coast would fall under the domination of the king of Ashanti, for "all the smallest opposition to a People who had conquered the Fantees". If that happened, all the European settlements between Cape Appolonia and the River Volta, would become "as much dependent on the King of Ashantee as the Forts at Whydah are on Dahomey". Secondly, the British feared that the Dutch would be the greatest beneficiaries of an Ashanti victory, because the Dutch had all along made the Asantehene regard the British "as his enemies or at least the Allies of his enemies, the Fantees".² On October 25th 1767, therefore, the Council at Cape Coast Castle passed a resolution proclaiming its neutrality as of 1765. This time, however, it was decided to put all the British forts in a posture of defence, and to ask for naval assistance from Britain, on the grounds that the Dutch

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1. T 70/31 Letters from Governor Gilbert Petrie, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 9th October, and 6th November, 1767. Petrie, however, was of a different opinion regarding Fanti bravery and military strength. He said that all he had noticed was "in bravado, and the tyrannical exercise of their superiority over the lesser states, their Neighbours on the Sea Coast and their insolence to Europeans who have chosen to make themselves dependent on them".
 2. T 70/31 Letter from Governor Gilbert Petrie, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 6th November, 1767.

had persistently invited the Ashantis to invade the coast. Furthermore, the Council urged the Governor of Cape Coast Castle to renew his peace-making efforts with the Fantis.¹ In the following year, Gilbert Petrie urged the Fantis to rely on the Company, because apart from the close links which existed between them, it was the Company alone which would be their effective source of help in time of crisis. He even suggested that if peace were concluded through the Company's mediation, the British would be under an obligation to guarantee it, and to defend the Fantis against any breach on the part of their enemies.² The Fantis finally agreed to return the hostages, and the situation greatly improved. Then, in 1772, occurred another invasion scare. The Assins suddenly started to plunder the Fantis. It was believed that the Asantehene had instigated this as a preliminary to an invasion of Fanti.³ There was no truth in this, because the Ashanti army which moved south was fully occupied with the Akyems and the Krabos⁴

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1. ADM 1/3810 Minutes of the Council at Cape Coast Castle, dated 25th October, 1767.
 2. T 70/31 Governor Gilbert Petrie, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 31st March, 27th August and 21st October, 1768. Petrie was also urged on to mediate between the Ashantis and the Fantis by the Committee of Merchants in London in order to prevent the Dutch from getting the sole merit as peacemakers. See T 70/69 Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa to Governor Gilbert Petrie and Council, Cape Coast Castle, dated 6th April, 1768.
 3. T 70/31 Letter from Governor David Mill, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 22nd June and 12th August, 1772.
The Committee in London was of the opinion that the 1772 troubles were connected with the fact that the Fantis had not handed over the Asantehene's relative to the Ashantis. See T 70/69 Committee etc. to Governor David Mill, and Council, Cape Coast Castle, 10th Dec. 1772.
 4. T 70/31 Governor David Mill, Cape Coast Castle, to Committee etc. 12th December, 1772, 30th January and 6th March, 1773, and pp. 214 above.

Nevertheless, the European traders regarded the situation as serious enough to take cognizance of it. Director-General Woortman informed the Governor of Cape Coast Castle that the Dutch would remain strictly neutral, and asked the British to co-operate in re-establishing peace. Governor David Mill expressed his personal agreement, but because he believed that the Dutch were strongly attached to Ashanti, although in an "Indirect Manner", he did not commit himself to a policy of co-operation with the Dutch. Instead, he said that he must consult the Council in order to discover its views.¹ Consequently, no Anglo-Dutch plan for mediation emerged, and on August 1772, the Council passed a resolution to the effect that the Fantis should be given every assistance "consistent with reason", if they were attacked. The Council explained, however, that this did not mean that the British would interfere in a general war. But they would protect the Fantis if they were driven under the forts for shelter; an act of humanity, declared the resolution, which the Fantis had a right to expect.²

It is clear therefore that between 1765-1772, largely as a result of Anglo-Dutch rivalry, the former were gradually committed to a policy of having to defend the Fantis, should they be attacked by the Ashantis. This pro-Fanti policy, and the failure to explore the possibilities of Anglo-Dutch co-operation, did not find favour in London. When trouble first began in June 1765, the Committee of

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1. WIC 119 Letters from Director-General Pieter Woortman, to Governor David Mill, Cape Coast Castle, 28th and 30th July, 1772.
T 70/31 Governor David Mill, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 6th March, 1773.
 2. T 70/152 Minutes of the Council at Cape Coast Castle, dated 11th August, 1772. Also J. J. Crooks, Records Relating to the Gold Coast, (Dublin, 1923), p.37

Merchants, upon receiving the news, referred the matter to the Board of Trade and Plantations, who recognized it as very serious and important as to the effects which it might have on trade and the security of the British forts. It therefore approved the policy laid down in the Council's resolution of July 10th.¹ The Board, however, expressed disagreement with the current opinion on the coast that an Ashanti conquest would endanger the British settlements. It made its views known to the Committee, who consequently wrote to the Governor of Cape Coast Castle that "we differ somewhat in opinion from Mr. Mutter in regard to the danger of the British forts and settlements if the Ashantees should force their way to the sea coast, apprehending in that case it will be as much the interest of these people to live in harmony with us as it is at present that of the Fantees and a great increase of trade may be expected by the Ashantees having a direct communication with the ships; this event will also be a just punishment on the Fantees for their perfidious conduct". The Committee added, however, that the Governor and Council were the best judges of what ought to be done in the present critical situation strongly recommending that the Council acted in the way most likely to increase trade.² Again, during the 1767 invasion scare, the Committee

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1. Non-involvement in African politics was the "official" policy of all the European Companies, although conditions on the coast often made the pursuit of such a policy impracticable. The major consideration, of course, was that expense should be kept as low as possible, See e.g. T 70/69 Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa to Governor William Mutter and Council, Cape Coast Castle, dated 29th October, 1765.
 2. T 70/69 Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to African to Governor John Hippisley and Council, Cape Coast Castle, dated 3rd September, 1766.

gave no definite indication of support for the Fantis. They pointed out that it was not easy to decide about this, and that they would try to get the further views of the Board of Trade and Plantations and of Merchants in London, Bristol and Liverpool.¹ Because of this cautious approach, and the desire not to be involved in African politics, it was with grave misgivings that the Committee received a report of the Council's resolution of August, 1772. They immediately consulted the Board of Trade and Plantations, which expressed disapproval of the action taken at Cape Coast Castle. Both the Board and the Committee regretted that the Governor and Council did not apply to the Dutch to try and resolve the problem jointly, and pointed out that they had acted irregularly in committing themselves to support of the Fantis before doing this. In April and December 1773, the Committee informed Governor David Mill of this, and ordered him categorically to act in accordance with their letter of 10th December, 1772.²

The truth of the matter was that the British officers on the Gold Coast were in a complete dilemma. In the first place, it was not easy to work in co-operation with the Dutch, as the Committee of Merchants and the Board of Trade and Plantations had supposed. As Governor Petrie pointed out, the Company's servants believed that on the Gold Coast, and, indeed, "in every other part of the world where the Dutch are our Neighbours, it has been a maxim in their political

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1. T 70/69 Letter from the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa to Governor Gilbert Petrie and the Council, Cape Coast Castle, dated 17th November, 1767.
 2. T 70/69 Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa to Governor David Mill and Council, Cape Coast Castle, dated 19th April, and 10th December, 1773.

conduct from which they seldom if ever err, to aggrandise themselves with the Natives on whom we are both dependent and supplanting us to the utmost of their power".¹ Dutch and Ashanti co-operation was a fact, and it was widely held in Cape Coast Castle that even if the conquering Ashantis allowed them to keep their forts, the bulk of the Gold Coast trade would go to the Dutch. On the other hand, although the Fantis were difficult to deal with from a commercial point of view, the British had had a long trading connection with them,² and it was largely through Fanti assistance that they had been able to hold their own in the face of bitter rivalry with the Dutch. Indeed, Governor David Mill summed up the British position well when he wrote, in 1772, that the Company's servants had a difficult part to play between the two nations, and neutrality would be the best course for them to pursue. But, he added, how could they remain neutral when their forts were situated in the country of one of the parties concerned?³

Nevertheless, the Europeans ought not to have been worried, because the evidence suggests that the Ashantis had no intention of renewing their conflicts with the Fantis during this period. The army sent against the Akyems, was intended as a punitive measure, and since

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1. ADM 1/1310 Copy of a letter from Governor Gilbert Petrie to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 6th November, 1767.
 2. For documents relating to early English trade with the Gold Coast, see J.W. Blake, Europeans in West Africa, 1450-1560, (Hakhyt Society. Second Series No.LXXXVII, 1942), Vol.II.
 3. T 70/31 Governor David Mill, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 22nd June 1772. The important British settlements of Cape Coast Castle and Fort William, Anomabo, were all located in the Fanti country.

the Wassas, the Denkyeras and the Twifos had voluntarily reaffirmed their loyalty to the Asantehene, and had promised to keep open the trade routes, Ashanti traders could travel to the coast without difficulty. The major reason, however, seemed to have been that it was during the period 1768-1772 that an Ashanti army moved northwards and conquered Dagomba.¹

There is reason to believe that Ashanti had some kind of influence in the Dagomba area before the advent of Osei Kwadwo. Ashanti's thrust into the Gonja area during the reign of Cpoku Ware must have had an impact on the Dagombas. But this probably amounted to no more than trading rights up the north-east trade route, through Salaga and Yendi to Hausaland. Ashanti influence, however, tended to grow as a result of this, and eventually led to a more effective invasion. This was possible because Dagomba was weakened by internal dissensions. It is related that Na Saa Ziblim of Kpatina, a nephew of Gariba, the King of Dagomba, schemed to gain the throne of Dagomba, and this resulted in civil war. Na Saa Ziblim then invited the Ashantis to help him, and Osei Kwadwo, apparently realising the political and economic benefits which would result from the conquest of Dagomba, accepted the invitation. Kwame Pete, the Adontehene of

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1. I am indebted to Professor Fage for furnishing me with the gist of some versions of Dagomba traditional history which he and the late Dr. David Tait collected. On earlier traditional accounts of Dagomba history, however, see F. Tamakloe, A Brief History of the Dagomba
C.C. Reindorf, History, op.cit., pp.132-33.
Fuller, A Vanished Dynasty, 1921, pp.34-35.
Prof. Fage believes that the reign lengths of the Dagomba kings provided by Tamakloe were some 50-60 years too early. He places: Na Sa Ziblim 1770-85
Ziblim Bandamda 1785-1809

of Kumasi, was detailed to invade Dagomba, and although the Dagombas opposed the Ashantis with superior numbers, they were eventually defeated because they wielded bows and arrows, spears and javelin, whereas the Ashanti were armed with muskets. As a result of this defeat, Dagomba became a tribute-paying vassal of Ashanti. Kwame Pete was given the overall charge of the administration but, as Bowdich discovered, the effective government of the Dagomba state continued to be in the hands of its own king and chiefs, who ruled according to the traditional laws and constitution of the Dagomba people. But the Dagomba capital and large towns were made to pay each year a handsome tribute to Kumasi.¹

That it was in the time of Gariba and Osei Kwadwo that Dagomba became fully tributary to Ashanti, is supported by quite independent evidence, that of the tradition of the Dagomba Kambonse. Kambonse is, of course, the Dagomba word for Ashanti, but it also refers to the musketeers in the Dagomba army, who were equipped and trained by Ashanti, and who have Ashanti day names. The Dagomba Kambonse have their own separate traditions, which suggest that they were founded in or about 1770.

After the subjugation of the Dagombas, Ashanti's relations with her neighbours became less turbulent. Although no formal peace had been concluded between them and the Fantis, Ashanti and Fanti

1. The annual tribute paid by the capital and large towns of Dagomba in return for Ashanti protection was: 500 slaves, 200 cattle, 400 sheep, 400 cotton cloths, and 200 cotton and silk cloths.

Bowdich, Mission...Ashantee, 1819, pp.320-1. Dupuis also noted that Ashanti influence carried "great weight" in the Councils of Dagomba. Dupuis, 1824, op.cit., pt.2, XXXIX

traders met freely for the purposes of trade at the markets on the northern border of Fanti. Trade prospects on the Gold Coast were so good during the mid-seventies that Governor Mill noted, in 1775, that "so far from any dispute between the Shantées and Fantees, there is now and has been during the course of last year, so free an intercourse of Trade, that a far greater number of slaves were exported in 1774 than in any one year...." Again, in November 1777, the report was that there was peace in the country, and that "slaves are very plenty".¹

The active reign of Osei Kwadwo ended in 1777, the Dutch at Accra heard of his death in November, of that year, and Boakye, an Ashanti envoy there, had to return to Ashanti because of the event. The British at Cape Coast Castle also first refer to the event in January 1778.² By the end of his reign, the counter-balancing alliance, aimed at preventing the Ashantis from reaching the coast for firearms, and thereby checking Ashanti's further expansion, had broken up. This was brought about, in part, by the king's own exertions, but largely because the alliance itself was on the point of disintegration. Akyem was defeated, whilst Denkyera, Wassa and Twifo voluntarily submitted. In pursuit of this objective, however, the Ashantis had to come in conflict with the Fantis, their former allies, in whose country the Ashanti army had encamped. The resultant tension forced both the Dutch and the British, whose trade was

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1. T 70/32 Letters from Governor Richard Miles, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 15th April, 1775, and 20th November, 1777.
 2. T 70/32 Letters from Governor Richard Miles, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 19th and 31 January, 1778, and 25th June, 1778.

affected by the stoppage of the trade routes, to take cognizance of the prospect of Ashanti as the dominant political power on the coast. In the event, the two European nations were forced to take opposite sides. Whereas the Dutch were not opposed to Ashanti's political aims, the British were determined that the seaboard should be under divided political control, and therefore were inclined to support the Fantis against Ashanti. Furthermore, since Ashanti already exercised some kind of authority in the Gonja area, the defeat of Dagomba made her the dominant political power in the Northern Region of modern Ghana. This fact not only made it possible for Ashanti to have capable fighting men, but also she became the chief source of slaves in the whole Gold Coast.

CHAPTER VI
ASHANTI 1777-1807

The change of ruler in Ashanti was not followed up by any deterioration in Ashanti's relations with the coastal peoples. In January 1778, Richard Miles, the Governor of Cape Coast Castle, referred to "the death of Zey Coomah, King of Ashantee", and he expressed the hope that the event would not cause "any very great Revolution either in the trade or politics of the country...." In June of the same year, it was reported that Osei's death had brought no change in the favourable commercial position of the Gold Coast. On the contrary, Osei Kwame, the new Asantehene, had sent messengers to the King of Wassa requesting him to send messengers to the Fantis "to learn whether they are amicably disposed towards them and, also, whether they will accept the presents usually given on the occasion of a King's death".¹ Indeed, from a commercial point of view, there was no need for the Ashantis to create disturbances on the coast. Ashanti traders travelled along the Wassa and Akyem paths to the coast without difficulty. The only trade route still closed to them was the Assin path which led to the European settlements at Anomabo, Mouree, Kormantsi and Cape Coast. This was because the Fantis only allowed the Ashanti traders to reach the markets at the northern borders of the Fanti country. Even so, there was the possibility that the Ashanti government could reach a peaceful agreement with the Fantis to allow the Ashanti traders to reach the forts at Cape Coast,

1. T 70/32 Letters from Governor Richard Miles, Governor of Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 19th and 31st January, and 25th June, 1778. Osei Kwadwo was also known as Osei Kuma, Osei the Younger, because Opoku Ware was also known as Osei Opoku.

Anomabo and the neighbouring beaches. Indeed, shortly before his death, Osei Kwadwo apparently undertook such negotiations for, in 1775, he sent messengers to inform the British at Cape Coast Castle that "he wanted to open a market nearer the waterside than before", and that the Fantis had already agreed to allow him to do so. The Ashanti messengers also informed the British that the Asantehene "is determined to forget all former differences and to live in the strictest amity with the Fantees".¹

Nevertheless, there were two main reasons why the Ashantis wished to maintain good relations with the coastal peoples during this period. Firstly, in the early 1780's, the Ashanti kingdom was in a very disturbed state. According to a report from Cape Coast Castle, Osei Kwame was a minor when he became king, and therefore he was "governed entirely by his mother". On the 8th October 1780, the Governor and Council of Cape Coast Castle noted that it was difficult to get a proper account of the condition of Ashanti, but that so far as could be ascertained the Queen Mother's interference in the government of Ashanti "has thrown that once populous and powerful country into great disorder so as to weaken it very much".² Secondly, apparently as a result of the disturbances in Ashanti, the tributary

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1. T 70/32 Letter from Governor David Mill, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated the 30th December, 1775.
 2. T 70/32 Letter from Richard Miles, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of Merchants, dated the 31st January, 1778. Ibid., copy of a letter from the Governor and Council at Cape Coast Castle to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 8th October, 1780.

state of Dagomba seized the opportunity to regain its independence. In October 1780, and again in February 1781, news reached Cape Coast Castle that Ashanti was in a state of war and confusion because "a very powerful people, named Duncoes formerly subjects of the King of Ashantee" had revolted, and that "in two or three actions the Duncoes have had the advantage over the Ashantees", so that that kingdom was in a very critical situation.¹ It is difficult to know who were the "Donkos" because this was a general term used by the Akan-speaking peoples to refer to the peoples of the Norther Region of modern Ghana. But, according to some versions of Dagomba tradition, the Dagombas revolted against Ashanti domination during the reign of Na Zibilim Bandamda, a contemporary of Osei Kwame.²

By 1785, however, peace had been restored in Ashanti, for in that year some Ashanti troops entered Appolonia and sacked the town of "Arvin", whilst Ashanti traders were reported to be at the European forts at Accra.³ Moreover, Osei Kwame, who had apparently gained control of affairs in Ashanti, in the early 1790's, felt able to accept an invitation from the Danes at Christiansborg Castle, Accra,

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1. G.O.267/20 Copy of a letter from the Governor and Council at Cape Caost Castle, to the African Committee, dated 3rd February, 1781.
T 70/32 Copy of a letter from Governor and Council, Cape Coast Castle, to Committee, dated 8th October, 1780.
 2. Professor J.D. Fage - Personal communication. Fage was told that during the Dagomba revolt "whitemen were in Ashanti". This is hard to believe. But it was likely since it was during this period that the Danes sent Hans Borgensen, a white man, to Kumasi, to solicit Ashanti military help against the Popos. See pp. 235-236 below.
 3. T 70/33 Letter from Governor and Council, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of Merchants, dated 9th July, 1785.

to assist them with a body of troops to fight the Little Popos.

The Danish invitation to the Ashantis had its origins in European rivalry on the coast, and its interaction on African politics. During the second half of the eighteenth century, the strip of coast between Accra and the mouth of the river Volta became extremely important for the slave trade. There were two main reasons for this. Firstly, the hinterland of this coast was dominated by the Akwamus, who raided the Krepis, the Kwawus and the neighbouring peoples, for slaves. Secondly, the Ashantis, as we have noted, used the trade routes through Akwamu to the coast whenever the western trading paths were closed to them. In view of this fact, the European trading Companies strove to establish forts or lodges in that area, to supplement the numerous ships which traded there. In 1764, for example, Governor William Mutter prayed the Committee of Merchants in London to rebuild their lodge at "Lay about 14 or 15 leagues to leeward of Accra". Mutter pointed out that the trade which came to Accra at that time came mostly from Akwamu, but that when the Akwamus and other inland traders were prevented from going to Accra by the Krobos, they went to the Danish fort at Ningo, which lay about 11 or 12 leagues to the east of Accra; or to another Danish factory at Ada, and, sometimes, to Little Popo. He argued that if the English built a fort at Lay "you would in a great measure cut out all other nations; for as the path from Aquamboe to Lay, does not go near the Crobo Hills, and as Lay is situate some leagues nearer the market than any European settlement in that country, you may from thence judge

what advantage you would reap by the situation of your fort". Furthermore, if it was objected, Mutter wrote, that the Danish factory at Ada, which was situated on an island in the River Volta, would still have the advantage of Lay, "I must inform you that by the course of the River, Lay is nearer Aquamboe than Addah; besides, this factory of the Danes, which is only a thatched House, is so badly supplied in goods, and their affairs in general so indifferently managed, that by far the greatest part of the trade would centre at Lay: where not only a considerable quantity of ivory would be yearly bought, but the very best of slaves of any on the Gold Coast called Cripees".¹ In the 1780's, too, the Committee was again warned that the Danes were engrossing the bulk of the trade east of Accra, because apart from their forts or lodges at Ada, Keta and Little Popo, they were also "attempting to effect a settlement or factory at Whydah where their Vice-President was ashore, negotiating treaties with the natives".² Indeed, by their long trading connection in this area, the Danes had come to exercise political influence on the coastal peoples, which tended to equal the influence wielded by the British and the Dutch on the coast west of Accra. They forbade the African traders to trade with the ships and interlopers of other European nations, and they

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1. T 70/31 William Mutter, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of Merchants, dated 10th January, 1764. According to the Danish Governor Kipnasse, the slaves designated "Crepess" (Krepis), fetched higher prices in the West Indies than even the "Donkos" from the north. See V.G.K. Kipnasse, Pro Memoriam, dated 26th May 1781, entered in the Guinea Journal.
 2. T 70/33 Copy of a letter from Governor and Council, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of Merchants, dated 9th July, 1785.

often instigated the Africans under their forts to attack the Dutch and English forts in the neighbourhood. For instance, in September 1790, the English reported that some Ningo people and Danish "Company slaves" led by the second-in-command of the Danish fort at Ningo, marched to Prampram by night and seized two children of Kofi Bruce, a mulatto sergeant in the English service, and an Ashanti trader, and carried them away. The English believed that the seizure of the Ashanti trader was intended to "cramp the British trade, and strike terror in the Ashantees, and other countries to prevent their trading with the English which ought to remain free and open to both nations".¹ Again, in March 1791, the report was that the Danish Governor Biorn travelled to "leeward to endeavour to bring the people of Ada, Padioura and Aogaga" to grant him an exclusive right to the trade of those places and to urge them never to trade with the English ships in future. The peoples of the Lower Volta refused to accede to Biorn's request, and the Governor ordered the destruction of the towns by fire, which was done.²

Biorn?
For these reasons the English also intrigued with the Popos, the Ketas and the neighbouring peoples to prevent the Danes from engrossing the whole trade in that area. In 1785, Latse, described as "a Caboceer of the English Company", and a number of the principal chiefs of Little Popo, sent messengers to the Governor of Cape Coast

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1. T 70/1563 Extract of an account of a Council Meeting held at Cape Coast Castle on the 4th October, 1790.
 2. T 70/1563 Duplicate of a letter from the Council at Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of Merchants, dated the 1st March, 1791.

Castle, praying him to establish a fort or factory in their town, in order to "protect them from the encroachments of the Danes", and to promote the interests of the English Company.¹ Moreover, according to Governor Biorn, the Ketas and the people of their fishing towns, Angoja and Pottebra, murdered a Danish factor, Mr. Thessen, who was returning from a visit to Popo, on the grounds that the Danes had given protection to "Prince Okaitkee", who claimed the Popo Stool as the rightful successor to the late Popo king. The Popos attacked the Danish fort in their town, and forced the factor there to surrender all the goods and slaves in the fort to them. They then marched to Aflao, looted the goods in the Danish lodge there, and set fire to it; The Popos finally joined the Ketas and attacked the Danish fort at Keta.²

Because the peoples of the Lower Volta were known to enjoy the support of the British, the Danes decided to enlist the support of the Ashantis and the Akwamus to fight them. Biorn sent factor Hans Borge^sen to Osei Kwame, praying him to send between 10,000 and 12,000 armed men to help the Danes against the Popos and their allies. A second embassy also left Christiansborg Castle for Akwamu to ask King Akoto for military help. The Akwamuhene was then engaged in some wars with the neighbouring peoples, so he could not promise any help to the Danes. Osei Kwame, however, agreed to assist the Danes,

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1. T 70/33 Copy of a letter from the Governor and Council at Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of Merchants, dated 9th July, 1785;
 2. T 70/1565 Duplicate of a letter from A.R. Biorn, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, to Governor Archibald Dalziel, Cape Coast Castle, dated 6th May, 1792.

and he promised to despatch an Ashanti war-lord, Kwansa, with 10,000 troops to the coast, provided the Danes undertook to pay him 500 pereguans or 20,000 rix dollars.¹

The prospect of an Ashanti entry to the coast revived the British fears that the Ashantis contemplated political domination of the seaboard. William Roberts, the factor at James Fort, Accra, for instance, declared that "should the Shantees come down to Mr. Biorn's assistance (which we have no doubt but they will unless some measures are adopted to put a stop to them), they will not only stop all trade but render Mr. Biorn's power superior to our own, even joined with the Dutch, and in all probability bring about his much wished for plan of unlimited power over this country from Winneba to Whydah."² For these reasons, Archibald Dalzel, who had become Governor of Cape Coast Castle, protested to the Danish Governor to desist from inviting the Ashantis to the coast. Dalzel denounced the territorial ambitions of the Danes in the Lower Volta area, and declared that he did not believe that "any nation whatever (the natives excepted) have any title to the territory of Popo, superior to the British". He pointed out that the British did not acknowledge the sovereignty of the Danes over Popo, nor their exclusive right to the navigation of the River Volta.

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1. V.G.K. Biorn's Pro Memoria in Guinea Journal, dated 24th April 1792, and 24th January, 1793.
Ibid., Baron Von Hager, dated 14th March, 1793.
T 70/1565 William Roberts, James Fort, Accra, to John Gordon, dated 29th March, 1792.
 2. T 70/1565 William Roberts, James Fort, Accra, to John Gordon, dated 29th March, 1792.

The British, he wrote, had a right to trade on every part of Africa "not actually possessed by European Powers", and warned that he would protect British subjects settled at Popo or "elsewhere on the coast of Africa."¹ To this, the Danish Governor replied that he was also determined to protect the interests of the King of Denmark in Africa, and "to preserve European honour and security" in the Lower Volta area.²

Since the Danes were determined to assert their political sovereignty over the peoples of the Lower Volta, and were equally bent upon soliciting the help of the Ashantis and the Akwamus to back up their claims, the British decided to act in concert with the Dutch at Elmina to check them. On 28th April 1792, Dalzel wrote to Governor Jacobus De Veer that he had received "repeated advises of the ambitious designs of the Danish Governor of Christiansborg, an usurper who has made many encroachments on the rights of the Dutch as well as the British", and requested that De Veer should join him in treating Biorn "as a disturber of the peace".³ After a few days' consultations, the British and the Dutch issued a statement denying Danish territorial claims in the Volta area, and denouncing Governor Biorn for inviting the Ashantis to interfere in the affairs of the coast. The statement claimed that Popo was a free trade area where both the Dutch and the

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1. T 70/1565 A. Dalzel, Cape Coast Castle, to A.R. Biorn, dated 2nd May, 1792.
 2. Ibid., A.R. Biorn, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, to A. Dalzel, dated 12th May, 1792.
 3. Ibid., A. Dalzel, Cape Coast Castle, to Jacobus De Veer, Governor in chief of Elmina, dated 28th April, 1792.

British flags had been hoisted for a long time. Besides, they empowered Meers Roberts and Liefstinck "to send a message to the King of Ashantee to represent the danger to which he would expose himself by his interference in this business". Furthermore, Roberts and a Dutch factor, Coppeling, were sent to Popo in order to "give the natives of that town assurances of Anglo-Dutch protection".¹ As soon as he learnt of this, Governor Biorn denounced Anglo-Dutch pretensions and declared that the Danes had had a factory at Popo for more than a century, and that the Popos had always lived under the protection of the Danish flag. Apart from this, Biorn argued, the Popos had received monthly payments of ground rent as well as "Sundays Custom and New Year's presents". Also, the Danes had often assisted the Popos by giving them loans to enable them to buy guns and powder to wage wars against their neighbours. Furthermore, Biorn said that no other European nation had had a factory at Popo, and that "the only trade your respective nation have made at Popo has, and always has been, by passing Captains for a short time". Finally, he pointed out that his invitation to the Ashantis could not be construed as being against European interests, because "every nation have a right and it is a custom to send messengers and presents, etc., etc., to Asianthee".²

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1. Ibid. Copy of Anglo-Dutch Resolution, dated 3rd May, 1792. Signed by A. Dalzel and W. Roberts for the Committee of Merchants and D. Liefstinck and J.H. Sachees, for the Dutch Governor-General De Veer.
 2. T 70/1565 Letters from A.R. Biorn, Christiansborg Castle, Accra, to A. Dalzel, Cape Coast Castle, dated 6th and 12th May, 1792.

Governor Biorn's claims, however, "evaporated in smoke", because the British Board of Trade and Plantations made strong representations to the Danish authorities in Copenhagen, and Biorn was recalled. His successor, Andreas Hammer, was instructed to discontinue negotiations with the Ashantis, which he did, though "not without heavy expenses disbursed by the Danes....".¹

After the invasion scare of 1792, Ashanti's relations with the coastal peoples were more peaceful. The main reason for this was that, in the late 1790's, Ashanti was in a very disturbed state. It would seem that Osei Kwame was not "the most merciful of the race of kings" who prohibited many customs that involved human sacrifice as the Moslems of Kumasi told Dupuis in the early years of the nineteenth century.² On the contrary, contemporary evidence suggests that he was a tyrant whose cruel deeds ultimately plunged the Ashanti kingdom into civil war. In November 1797, Danish Governor Wriesberg reported from Christiansborg Castle, Accra, that there were civil disturbances in Ashanti. The reasons for this were that Osei Kwame had killed by poison Osei Opoku, his brother and heir-apparent to the Ashanti Stool; that in a similar manner he had murdered another member of the royal family, called Opoku Amankwa, for no other reason than that the latter was the most handsome person in Ashanti; and, finally, that the king had caused to be killed about 1400 or 1500 people who went to Kumasi to take part in the funeral ceremonies of the murdered princes. For

1. T 70/33 Letters from A. Dalzelo Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of Merchants, dated the 12th October, 1792, and 7th February, 1793.

2. Dupuis, Journal.....in Ashanti, 1824, p.245.

these reasons, "Akranduas", the Queen Mother, enlisted the support of a great number of the Ashantis to destool him. Osei Kwame was arrested and put in irons in his palace, whereas his supporters, including the king's most trusted "General", were executed. Wriesberg commented that there could be no end to the disturbances in Ashanti until the king died, and he blamed the fetish priests in Ashanti for the king's tyrannical regime.¹

The fundamental factors underlying Osei Kwame's unpopularity were "his attachment to the Moslems and, as it is related, his inclination to establish the Koranic law for the civil code of the empire".² The Ashanti chiefs could not tolerate the adoption of Islam as the official cult of the kingdom because, as Busia pointed out, Ashanti religion and, indeed, that of the Akan-speaking peoples as a whole, "is mainly ancestor-worship".³ There were other practical reasons for its rejection, however. The Kumasi chiefs feared "that the Moslem religion, which they well knew levels all ranks and orders of men, and places them at the arbitrary discretion of the sovereign, might be introduced, whereby they would lose that ascendancy they now enjoy. To anticipate the calamity they dreaded, a conspiracy was entered into".⁴ In the circumstances, Osei Kwame, who could not publicly dare to avow his new faith, fled, with the Golden Stool of Ashanti, to the provincial capital of Dwaben and, failing to return

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1. V.G.K. Letter from Johan P. Wriesberg, to the Directors, dated 6th November, 1797. Copy in the Guinea Journal, No.365.
 2. Dupuis, 1824, p.245.
 3. Busia, The Position of the Chief..., 1951, p.23
 4. Dupuis, 1824, p.245.

to Kumasi, he was destooled.¹

The deposition of Osei Kwame provoked a violent reaction in the Moslem north-west of the kingdom. Gyaman raised the standard of revolt in order to restore Osei Kwame to the throne, and the Moslem Dyula state of Kong lent its support. The allied cavalry crossed the Tano but the new king of Ashanti, Opoku II, allowed the invaders to extend themselves over the grassland area, whilst the Ashanti armies assembled. In a series of battles, the rebels were defeated with great slaughter, and a number of prisoners taken. Among the prisoners "were upward of five thousand Moslems, who were distributed among the provinces and in the capital. In no instance were these people subjected to the penalty of death, as many of the heathens were, neither were they sold into slavery".² The king of Gyaman, who had initiated the revolt was replaced by that Adinkira who was later to be killed in the Ashanti-Gyaman war of 1819.³

Nevertheless, there was no immediate peace in the north-west of the empire. Opoku II died shortly after the victory against the Gyamans, and this event encouraged further attempts to restore the deposed Osei Kwame to the throne. Osei Tutu Kwame⁴, who succeeded Opoku, was immediately faced with a rebellion in western Gonja, from the Moslem states of Ghofe (Gbuipe) and Ghobagho (Daboya). Banda was sacked, and its King Fua was slain before the Ashanti forces were able

1. Bowdich, Mission...Ashantee, 1819, pp.238-240.

2. Dupuis, 1824, pp.245-7.

3. Bowdich, 1819, pp.244-5; Dupuis, 1824, pp.xxvii.
Adinkira's skull was still retained at Kumasi at the beginning of this century. See Rattray, Religion and Art, 1927, p.132.

4. Osei Tutu Kwame is now more usually referred to as Osei Asibe Bonsu.

to engage the rebel army. In a series of battles, the Gonjas were defeated at a place north of Kintampo, and pursued across the river Volta into their own territory, where the Ashanti army again attacked them. The chief of Gbuipe was captured, and died in the Ashanti camp.¹ The Gyaman troops, led by Adinkira, extended the campaign northwards, and attacked Bouna.² This led to another uprising in Bondoukou, where an attempt was made to supplant Adinkira as king of Gyaman by a nephew of his predecessor, who had earlier sought refuge in Gbuipe.³ The Bondoukou rebellion was quickly suppressed, and the north-west finally settled down to enjoy a period of peace. The underlying factor in its pacification, however, appears to have been the execution of Osei Kwame in 1803, or early in 1804,⁴ for with that event vanished any immediate hopes of having upon the throne of Ashanti a king who, although not a practising Moslem, was "a believer at heart".⁵

In the circumstances, Osei Tutu Kwame began his reign "an avowed enemy to the religion of Islam". It is related that "he put a number of the 'Prophet's children' to death in his country".⁶ Since the Moslems of the north-west, and in particular the policy of Kong, was considered "directly inimical to that of the court of Ashantee",⁷

1. Dupuis, 1824, p.248.

2. Bowdich, 1819, pp.237-8, and 301.

3. Dupuis, 1824, p.249. Adinkira was considered "a tool of the Court of Cocomassy".

4. Bowdich, 1819, pp.239-40.

Priestley and Wilks, in Journ.Afr.Hist., 1960, p.95

5. Dupuis, 1824, p.245.

6. Dupuis, 1824, p.98.

7. Bowdich, 1819, p.181.

Dupuis, 1824, p.xxxvi.

Ashanti traders tended not to frequent the north-west trade route. Instead, in the early nineteenth century, the bulk of trade went through Salaga and Yendi to the Bussa crossing of the Niger, and so into Hausaland.¹

Nevertheless, whatever had been the severity of Osei Tutu Kwame's persecution of the Moslems, his attitude soon changed to one of toleration, and then of patronage. Ashanti still needed the gold and ivory of Gyaman, and Kong. Bowdich discovered that the Ashantis "procure most of their ivory from Kong",² and Dupuis also noticed that the gold brought down to Ashanti from Gyaman was often in solid lumps embedded in loam, and rock.³ Moreover, Ashanti traders were still visiting the towns beyond Kong, although by circuitous routes.⁴ Moreover, Osei Tutu Kwame, Dupuis reported, "does not neglect to supplicate the Moslems for their prayers, particularly when anxiety, when the state council is convened on business of emergency, or when the national priests or necromancers are unable to solve any problem to the satisfaction of majesty".⁵ Indeed, when Osei Tutu Kwame, at the head of his armies, entered the coast in 1807, to fight the Fantis, Governor Torrane noticed that he was attended by "many Moors, and every Ashantee man has a Gregory or Fitiseh, which is a little square cloth

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1. According to Dupuis, this was "the track of amity and alliance", Dupuis, 1824, p.cviii.
 2. Bowdich, 1819, p.332.
 3. Dupuis, 1824, pt.2, p.lvi.
 4. Ibid., pp.xv and cvii.
 5. Ibid., p.xi. For a useful summary of the activities of the Moslems in Ashanti during Osei Bonsu's reign, see, I. Wilks, "Islam in Ashanti", in The Norther Factor in Ashanti History, (Gloucester, 1961), op.cit., pp.14-29.

inclosing some little sentences of the Alkoran; some have many".¹ It would seem, however, that the worsening of Ashanti's relations with the Fantis soon after his accession must have been the main factor underlying the Asantehene's desire to be on friendly terms with the Moslem states of the kingdom. Since the Fantis were known to enjoy the support of the British traders, on the coast, Osei and his chiefs must have considered that it was necessary to maintain the Ashanti forces at full strength. Thus it was probably thought unreasonable to allow internal dissensions to dissipate the military capacity of the kingdom.

We have indicated that Osei Kwadwo got the Fantis to agree that the Ashantis should establish a market nearer the coast and, also, to promise to live in peace with the Ashantis. The Fantis did not keep their word, for there were a number of occasions when it was reported that the Fantis had closed the trade routes to Ashanti traders. For instance, in December 1780, the English reported that Ashanti traders were at Accra and Appolonia, but that none could go to Cape Coast Castle and the neighbouring beaches partly because the Ashantis "will not go on Salt Water", and partly because "the Fantees will not let them pass through their country".² Again, in 1789, the report was that the trade routes had been closed, and the Governor of

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1. T 70/35 Copy of a letter from Governor Colonel George Torrane, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 9th July, 1807.
 2. T 70/33 Copy of a letter from Governor and Council, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of Merchants, dated 24th December, 1780. "Salt Water", of course, is the sea.

Cape Coast Castle had sent three officers to Wassa "partly to satisfy their curiosity, but particularly to endeavour to convince Enemery the King of that country of the many advantages that would arise to both them and the English by sending theirs and the Ashantee trade to the waterside without the interference of the Fantees". The report added that the Fantis "are too politick and too powerful a people, to permit the inland blacks to bring their own Trade to Market anywhere near the Fantee territories".¹ Also, in 1800, Governor Dalzel noted that "the trading paths have for many months past been shut up by a misunderstanding between the Fantees and the Ashantees", and that this had led to "a great stagnation of trade at Annamaboe where there is much competition".² It is clear, then, that by 1800, frustration in the commercial field, coupled with the fact that the Ashantis wished to avenge the injustice meted out to them during the reign of Osei Kwadwo, brought the relations between the two countries nearer to a final breakdown. A small incident occurred within the Ashanti kingdom itself which ultimately led to Ashanti-Fanti conflicts with disastrous results for the latter.

During this period, the Assin country was ruled by three chiefs: Tsibu (Cheeboo), Aputei and Amo Adae. It is related³ that

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1. T 70/33 Copy of a letter from Governor and Council, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of Merchants, dated 26th January, 1789.
 2. T 70/34 Copy of a letter from A. Dalzel, Governor of Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of Merchants, dated 13th October, 1800.
 3. This episode is fairly well documented. See e.g. Dupuis, 1824, pp.250-64. W.W. Claridge, History, 1915, op.cit. A.B. Ellis, A History of the Gold Coast, (London, 1893) For an eye-witness account, see H. Meredith, Account of the Gold Coast of Africa, (London, 1812), pp.132-5. Meredith was the second-in-command at Anomabo fort.

a wealthy subject of Amo died, and in accordance with the custom of the country, he was buried with some gold ornaments, and other precious stones and beads. Soon afterwards, one of Tsibu's people rifled the grave of Amo's deceased subject, and escaped with the treasure. Amo appealed to Tsibu and Aputei to punish the culprit, and to return the stolen goods, but his appeals fell on deaf ears. Amo then appealed to the Asantehene, and after the matter had been gone into, it was decided in favour of Amo. Aputei was detained in Kumasi as a hostage until restitution should be made. He soon made his escape, and when at liberty, he refused to abide by the decision of the Ashanti court. Amo then assembled his armies, attacked, and defeated his enemies. The Asantehene intervened to restore order. He sent messengers including heralds to settle the differences among the Assin chiefs, but his messengers were killed. After repeated warnings, which were all ignored, the Ashanti army joined Amo Aday's forces, and marched on the armies of Tsibu and Aputei. The latter party was defeated, and the rebel leaders escaped to Fanti, and appealed to the Fanti chiefs for protection. The Asantehene appealed to the Fantis to return Tsibu and Aputei, but the Fantis, after a great meeting held at Abora, refused to accede to the king's request. The Ashantis then declared war on the Fantis. Between 1806 and 1807 a number of bloody battles were fought between the two peoples. The Fantis were first defeated at Oboka,¹ in the Abora state, and then fell

1. Oboka (Buinka) is now a small village in the Abora state.

back on Abora, the capital. The Ashanti forces advanced and laid siege to the town, Abora fell, and Ata, the Omanhene of Abora state, became a prisoner of the Ashantis. The Ashantis then destroyed Mankessim, and other important Fanti towns, and followed up their victories by advancing on Anomabo, where a number of the Fantis and the Assins had sought refuge. After encamping for a short while at Kormantsi, where the Dutch factor there apparently sold them some muskets and powder, the Ashantis moved on Anomabo, defeated the remnant forces of the Fantis, and then attacked the English fort there, fatally wounding the factor, White.

At this point, Governor George Torrane, of Cape Coast Castle, intervened. Torrane had not only promised to help the Fantis, but also he had actually allowed Tsibu and Aputei to seek refuge in Cape Coast, promising the Assin chiefs that he would protect them "either by mediation or force of arms".¹ But since the Fantis had been completely defeated, and the Anomabo fort was on the verge of capitulation, Torrane decided to treat with the Ashantis. He met the Asantehene and his chiefs at Anomabo, and after some discussions, he handed over Tsibu to the Ashantis, who executed him. Moreover, he divided up the Assin refugees with the Ashantis, and sold his share to the slavers on the coast. The Asantehene appeared satisfied, and he moved eastwards in the direction of Winneba to subdue a section of the Fantis, under Nkum, the chief of Ekumfi.

1. W.W. Claridge, History, 1915, p.241.

The fatuous Torrane has been aptly denounced by some historians for his inhuman treatment of the Assins and for his conduct generally during the negotiations with the Ashantis.¹ He was a typical slave trader, who hoped for "a speedy establishment of a pax Asantica" in place of the divisions which had existed on the coast hitherto, and for himself, a brisk trade with the victor.² Besides, Torrane entertained romantic notions of becoming the first person to discover the source and termination of the River Niger. He wrote thus to the African Committee, "I have received a message from the King, importing that as soon as the war shall be over, he will return and form his camp near Annamaboo, to the end, that we may arrange all points for the future of the country, and the regulation of the trade; and here let me observe that an intercourse securely opened with Ashantee, offers prospects of the highest advantage; and the more so, as the slave Trade is now at an end. The Ashantees have ivory and gold in great abundance, and the Fantees have ever thrown impediments in the way, so as to prevent their intercourse with us; but it appears to hold out an object of more national importance, and one, if I can be the happy instrument of bringing about, I shall deem my services in Africa not altogether misapplied. I mean a thorough knowledge of the source of the Niger, and a direct and safe way of going to Tombuctu, should any more adventurers engage in that research..."³ This assertion by the chief

1. See e.g. Claridge, History, pp.241 et subsequat.

2. G. Metcalfe, Maclean of the Gold Coast, 1962, op.cit., pp.37 and 44.

3. T 70/35 Copy of a letter from Governor Colonel George Torrane, Cape Coast Castle, to Committee of Merchants, dated 9th October, 1807.

British merchant indicates a fundamental shift in the thinking of the British traders on the coast regarding the Ashantis. Hitherto their policy towards Ashanti had been based upon insufficient knowledge of that kingdom and their desire to have the seaboard under divided political control so as to further their own trade interest. The realisation, in 1807, that the king of Ashanti, unlike the coastal chiefs, had "the strictest regard to his word", and that all the principal Ashantis seemed "half a century advanced in civilisation to those people on the waterside",¹ decided the British to change their attitude towards the Ashantis, and to seek a working alliance with them. Torrane was invited by Osei Bonsu to establish a British residency in Kumasi, and the officer appointed to that post was "on the point of proceeding to the Capital when.... Governor General Torrane died and this laudable undertaking was relinquished".²

The year 1807 was certainly one of the great landmarks in Gold Coast history. Its importance, however, does not lie in the fact that it was during that period that "two native states never before in contact, came face to face, the Fantees having had no experience of the enemy they were now to meet". Nor was it the occasion on which the British were forced to make a choice between the conflicting parties, and thereby gave rise to the urgent question

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1. T 70/35 Copy of a letter from Governor George Torrane, Cape Coast Castle, to the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, dated 20th July, 1807.
 2. C.O.267/44 Letter from Commodore Sir James Yeo to the Admiralty, dated 7th November, 1816.

of the British relationship with Ashanti and Fanti.¹ The events of that year had their precedents in the eighteenth century. The significance of 1807 was that it was the year in which Ashanti, which at the beginning of the eighteenth century was "but lately known"², became the dominant political and economic power on the whole of the Gold Coast. Under Osei Bonsu, Dupuis wrote, "the kingdom of Ashantee (north-) west to (south-) east, i.e. from Gaman to the Volta River, embraces about four degrees of longitude, including its recent acquirements in the west; and from south to north, i.e. from Cape Coast Castle to the tributary kingdom of Ghofan (Buipe) about four degrees latitude".³ Apart from the original states, such as Mampong, Dwaben and others, which had been founded within forty miles radius of Kumasi, Ashanti had no less than twenty-one tributary states. They included Gyaman, Tekyiman, Dagomba and Gonja on the one hand, and Denkyera, Wassa, Aowin, Sefwi, Akyem and Assin on the other, with Akwamu as a dependent ally. Bowdich also noted that the Comoe river was regarded as the limit of Ashanti jurisdiction to the north-west, and that, to the north-east, Ghaba (Gambaga) the present Mamprussi, was considered "the boundary of the Ashantee authority", though Ashanti influence, through the medium of Dagomba, was held to penetrate as far as the Niger.⁴ Over his extensive

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1. See e.g. W.W. Claridge, History, 1915, op.cit., Vol.1, pp.242-3. Ward, History, 1958, op.cit., pp.142-5 and 155. For a useful comment on this see M.Priestley "The Ashanti Question and the British" in Journal of African History, 11, 1, (1961), pp.35-37.
 2. W. Bosman, An Accurate Description..., 1705, p.69.
 3. Dupuis, 1824, pt.2, pp.xxvi.
 4. Bowdich, 1819, pp.179, and 181-2. To the south-east the influence of Ashanti extended to Dahomey, whose king sent an embassy to Kumasi in the reign of Osei Bonsu, Dupuis, 1824, pp.243-244, and 249.

northern and southern territories, Dupuis wrote, the Asantehene ruled "with unrivalled sway, every king, chief, viceroy or caboceer, being his absolute and unconditional vassal, as tributaries or not, and most of them holding their governments by virtue of an appointment from the Court".¹

After 1807, then, the Gold Coast was clearly on the path to becoming a common monarchy ruled by the descendants of Osei Tutu. That this did not happen, was due to the intervention of the British. In 1807, an Act of the British Parliament made it illegal for British subjects to engage in the African slave trade. By treaties, foreign nationals were similarly restricted, and an African Squadron of the British Navy was instituted to seize contraband cargo that British or foreign vessels might attempt to ship across the Atlantic.² The Gold Coast peoples were not British subjects at that time, and they were clearly not bound by an Act of the British Parliament. In particular, the basis of Ashanti economy was the slave trade, and the Ashantis obviously did not understand why the British had suddenly decided to stop a trade in which they had but lately participated. Thus in a letter of 22nd September 1817, to John Hope Smith, Governor of Cape Coast Castle, and President of the Council of Merchants on the Gold Coast, Osei Bonsu undertook not to renew the war with the Fantis and hoped that the King of England would "in turn, consider if he cannot renew the Slave Trade, which will

1. Dupuis, 1824, pt.2, p.xxvi.

2. Apart from the Act of 1807, another Act was passed, in 1833, which abolished slavery throughout the British Empire.
J.D. Fage, An Introduction to the History of West Africa,
(Cambridge, 2nd ed.) 1959, p.100.

be good for me".¹ At an earlier stage of Bowdich's negotiations, Amankwatia, the Kontihene of Kumasi, had opposed the signing of a treaty with the British unless the slave trade was first renewed. Bowdich declared that this was impossible, and Amankwatia was "at length overruled, but with considerable difficulty".² Since the British Government urged on by the Humanitarians, and other interested bodies, were determined to stop the trade, it was almost impossible for the British to establish peaceful relations with Ashanti. The British therefore renewed their support for the coastal peoples against the Ashantis. The outcome of this was Anglo-Ashanti disputes which culminated in the defeat of the British and their allies at Nsamankow in 1824, and the defeat of Ashanti at Dodowa in 1826.³

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1. Quoted by Bowdich in Mission...to Ashantee, 1819, p.149. See also Osei Bonsu's remarks as recorded by Dupuis, 1824, pp.162-4. And see also Comment by the King of Dahomey, as recorded by A. Dalzel, The History of Dahomey, (London, 1793), p.219.
 2. Bowdich, 1819, p.106.
 3. For the relations between British, Ashanti and the coastal peoples in the nineteenth century, see, among other works, Ellis, History, 1893, op.cit. Claridge, History, 1915, op.cit., and F.M. Bourhet, The Gold Coast, (2nd ed. London, 1952), pp.16-17.

Abbreviations

P.R.O.	...	Public Record Office
A.D.M.	...	Admiralty Papers
C.O.	...	Colonial Office
V.G.K.	...	Vestindiske Guinea Kompagni
W.I.C.	...	West-Indische Compagnie
N.B.K.G.	...	Nederlandische Bezittingen ter Kuste van Guinea
J.A.H.	...	Journal of African History
T.G.C.T.H.S.	...	Transactions of the Gold Coast and Togoland Historical Society
T.H.S.G.	...	Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana.
J.R.H.S.	...	Journal of the Royal Historical Society.

De derde nu als hy na de plannen zal gekomen zijn, waer-
Zay hij zal, zo dat hy niet verhoudt, om den zelven met
andere te mogen gaen zien, om de veranderinge van ons aarden
Zelven gevonden om te Leventen, t'gint met Onfaasij Compliment
dient gevonden of geest, met dien om zyn beoogde zeyn te
felicitieren. En om zyn verhouding te bevestigen, dat wij allen in
nemen, hem daer verandering en geestelich doen, (hoedanig en vrees
Wien dezelve zijn, zo dat hy niet verhoudt, om de omge-
kumen zien, dewelke geestelich niet zyn geest, na zyn beoogde
off de genegenheit die wij hem toe dragen, maar Onrijgh om dat
wij tegenwoordig van geen andere of beta. verhouding zyn verhouding,
komende hy Onrijgh te beloven, dat zo haast ons andere uit
Europa toekomt, wy dezelve zullen vinden, en te meer als we
t'gelyk hebben, om van hem zay te mogen verhooren, waer in dat
hy in't toekomstige in dat moge hebben, hem na zay t'gelyk
zay op die dag, of op een andere, als t'gelyk zeyn komt, een
den zelve het volgende vonden, in't toekomstige.

Derde en vooral dat hy zyn beoogde of andere, die Onrijgh zullen
vullen Onrijgh, niet alleen penninge geest, maar dezelve
ook aan zay, om haer Onrijgh te verhooren, als andere Onrijgh
te komen zeyn, hem niet alleen belovende, namaak ook vrees
kentende, dat ze by ons te gaen verhooren, als Onrijgh zullen
Onrijgh, en dat wij verhooren zullen, dat hem vinden, voor zo
van ons verhooren zeyn, niet de alle verhooren verhooren,
en gefelid, of al geestelich, dat we te meer haer zullen
verhooren.

De tweede nu als hy na de plannen, om van zyn hand om de
die verhouding te doen, dat wij verhooren te verhooren, d'negotien
in in't geest te verhooren, om de verhooren, Pien en vrylijke
pandage, door de omgeestelich te verhooren, zondt de verhooren
door hem te verhooren of geestelich te verhooren, of andere
zo als de verhooren, die wij komende doen, namaak om die
zijn, want het geestelich te verhooren, om t'gelyk, dat de t'gelyk te
en de omgeestelich haer Onrijgh zullen verhooren, dat het
in hooge van noot is, hy dezelve zondt de verhooren, dat ze
het haer niet zullen hebben om namaak geestelich te verhooren
te verhooren.

Ten

Doest dat wij de dinkwaare ziele hebben omgekogt, of ten minste
geenacht hebben de welke omgekogt, op dat de welke mogten afluimen
om die van Akhanni op nieuw wfs' noot. te brengen, en wfs' adolien
dit is niet alleen te alle en onwaare, ma' antelofte ook zondt. Enige redin
want na die d'neve aan de dinkwaare handt. Bondes goed hebben
Vondt, zijde van zijde Akhannisten, als die die, de Senay,
Affesi Sim, Abasije, en waer andere, alreth de Coming
van Commanij en die by geveest, zittende die geen de nog by
Sevende byro zijn, komen, en meten ymigen, dat het vastacken
van geveest. Van dat Bondes, Eniglyke heft jedunt om abe
Tehni, en Commanij, uit te brengen, en te verstaan, zondt
dat wij zeyen. Enig ander Vindflap Ginniguel Accanni, yate
geveest in den zin hebben gelad, an d'onten. En het heft omsoek
van ons geveest zijn, dat wij de d'onne aen de accanni
zoude hebben by geveest, hier aen te brengen dat deed beftel.
Dijng van zelfs zek te wagt worden, en te stellen.

Ten tweede vonden na gerd, dat wij die van Jales Jaraa ondt.
Aen de son in de byand van Accanni d'onten; dit is maer
van d' gelyke onwaare, en niet aen, wittende de Accanni
van die die grote Negotianten zyn geveest, dat wi de welke
vonn alle andere hebben geveest ook te heiden, en te ferbrachten,
zondt ons met de Calles Jaraa veel te becommen, de redin
waeren wy de welke te zeden Eniglyke hebben vangelouden,
en vinnig flap beveest, te Eniglyke witten van de Accanni
zelfs geveest, op dat op de d'onne de d'onne passagie door die
Jelwa Land d'neve mogte vichagen, en ook om dat Jales Jaraa
ont naen die van Accanni, die geveest d'ont uit te stellen
den Commanij hebben geveest, dog van die af d'onten wij die van
Accanni de d'onne, en te zeden, dat ze hebben zyn onvold
tegen Jales Jaraa willen aen brengen, en zyn van ons byro
dat wij ons handt te Eniglyke van de welke zullen aen brengen,
zondt de luytelingen Eniglyke Beveest, of aen brengen te geven,
mits dat Akhanni, ons van haer handt vinnig maer
— tydelijke advertentie geest.

Ten derde in Jaraa Enige geveest, welke zyn niet onvold
om die te brengen, dat die byd Akhannij, om die die
geveest, wij ons niet ons hebben becommen om haer uit de

Dinkwaare

Dirkhaere Slavernij of duivelsche heijde teken loofen; maar dat
de Engelen zulke met het Congen van gedenken, haer Soude hebben
geestelike, des uytroeping stinend mede op geen reden te weeten,
want gemenke wij niet zijn aangegaten, en aan ym ont Conige
gedaten te Congen zoo niet ook weeten, dat wij het een niemant
hebben geynt, allen siffij soude afen heeft het vrees, en ook
getuigen. En Accanij is hier een vrees, die wij zijn wat ook
Edele afgeestelike, Enlyk maar ten dat wij nog ym ont aan Elmina
Conige de minste kennis van de coningen hadden, zynde het jumeast
met de vrees, dat ymand zijn geest aan een Con onbekende
zou willen uyt Congen; En in het te wijzig sendmend worden
wij van de Juffen mede vrees, zouda aan de vrees onse
Coning Conige de minste kennis hebben geynt, na dat dat
alles aan Accanij zal vrees geloude van de Conige nog weeten
by geynt, dat zo wij die van Accanij niet en vrees, zo zouda
by de vrees op haer vrees, allen, te vrees de Coning
vrees hadden, zoo zouda niet geloude, en haer met vrees
vrees hebben, en niet allen hebben wij die geene die vrees
vrees geene, maar de vrees aan de vrees als vrees, en nog
vrees vrees vrees, en niet allen vrees, dat te vrees hebben wij haer
mede vrees vrees, en geene vrees vrees vrees, want een
Con vrees En haer geene vrees vrees, is vrees vrees,
vrees vrees, en vrees met vrees vrees, en met vrees
vrees, Enlyk maar, en niet by vrees in vrees vrees
vrees, als of wij de vrees met hem vrees vrees.

En vrees is het vrees dat hij vrees, zo vrees vrees
vrees zal vrees vrees, vrees vrees, dat hij vrees
vrees vrees vrees, vrees vrees, met vrees, en
vrees, vrees En vrees vrees, met hem wil vrees
vrees; welke tot de vrees vrees vrees dat hem vrees
vrees vrees, vrees vrees is vrees.

En vrees vrees vrees zal hij vrees vrees vrees vrees
vrees vrees vrees vrees vrees vrees vrees vrees vrees
het on vrees vrees vrees; zynde vrees te vrees dat hij
vrees vrees, wat vrees dat hij vrees te vrees, hoe vrees dat
van het vrees vrees tot het vrees on vrees vrees, en hoe vrees vrees
vrees vrees; ook te vrees vrees vrees vrees vrees vrees
en vrees in vrees vrees vrees, vrees vrees vrees; op dat wij
vrees vrees vrees vrees, hoe vrees en hoe vrees vrees vrees
vrees vrees vrees.

Van de gelijke sal by moethen aan tekenen, hoe lang in tyd hij op ydder
 plaats sal blijft hangen, wet hem daer wederwaerd, en hoedanigh
 oorsak want te weten; int cont alles wat gedurende de reys
 komt te passeren, te weten en distinct aan tekenen, op dat wij
 om in tijt en wijle daer na sullen kunnen verstaen, en op dat
 hij de uusen sal kunnen weten, te weten wat de reden aan hem
 om te loze, daer toe dienende me de geyven.

En in gevalle gemelde Labocca Zaaij, Eerlijg begerde, omme
 nog lang in tyd aldaer te blijven, te dat hij zulck (zelfs
 speculatie makende) wil mogen beoordeelen; dog aldaer sal
 hij Comp. van te rugge zinden, en met derelce ons van
 zyne ontenting, en wederwaerd advijs geve, ook bezingen
 dat in haer geselschap een goede quantsche Nijntien na
 herwaerdts affhemmen.

Al du's verlaert op't Landt St. George d' Elmina
 den 5^{ten} October 1701.

Wittie vander Keringe, onleest
 vanden Gesten d' Assiëre Labocca Zaaij

1. Grood fluweel bleet, met goude kant gebroet
2. gode van goud spie
3. Wijn met witte Phage
4. Quata sol.
5. Vellen goud

Voor twee hemvolgende Labocce
 door d' Sekharisten akje in de Caertje
 van Suoyten

2. G. Blaauwe zijde kledin, met goude Hoimen
4. Vellen goud Pea
2. Sullen brandaoyne

Voor de vrom: Akje in de compie
 van de vrom, by welke vromte ook moet gezegt
 worden, dat we d' ansee gesloten, voor hem gesloten
 beuaren totten tyd, hij om wat na de zal getomten worden.

R'eking

Rekening vande Goederen door
 D' Heer J. J. van der Meer
 1708

600 kleine Impressionen 4: 4: 6.
 224. Theplakaten 1: 6: 7.
 1 grote Ince —: —: 9/4

1708. 3: 3: 6 1/4

Welke goederen voortaan in eenen
 gewille ontrent metten geaugmenten
 worden met 1/4 van de hiel is ontatad —: 7: —

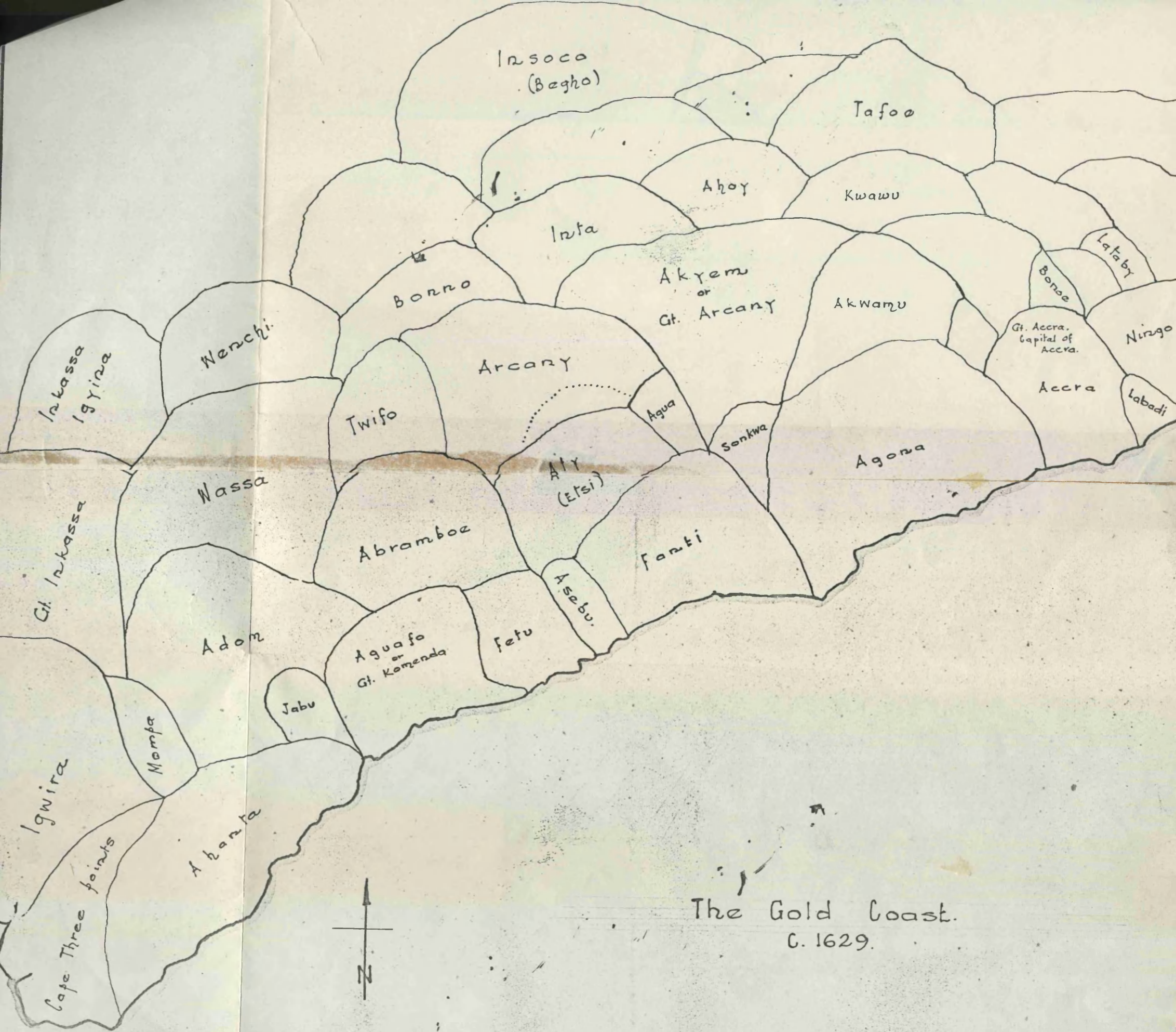
So dat vordie goederen moet gedyt 4: 2: 6 1/4
 Weerden

Verorden (in zonden nog verorden, vint gunt de haren off
 draagt partienien vordien) moet sek te rug geygt worden,
 de dy haer ingeligen aangelanden wotins met goud vordlag,
 en vordien en vordie vordie, vordie vordie vordie vordie
 vordie, het ons aangeligene vordie vordie te vordie.

Vaer Instructie of Orde.

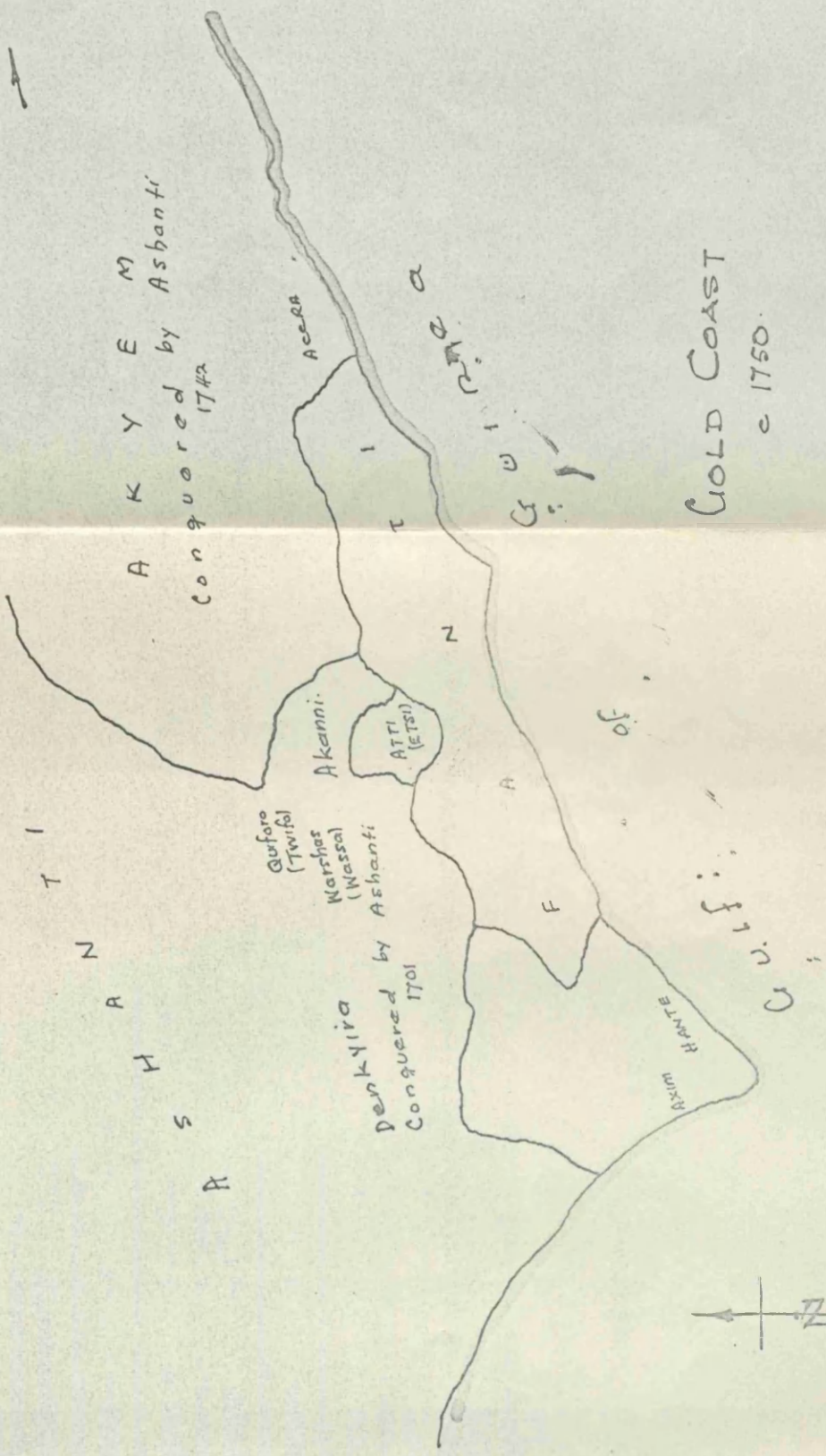
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Op den ontfang der zullen zij na land gaan, te onker doen ligen
 en direct na Rio Gabon zeijlen, aldaer niet alleen een prou
 van den vordie vordie, maar wel vordie vordie vordie vordie
 vordie vordie vordie vordie, vordie vordie vordie vordie
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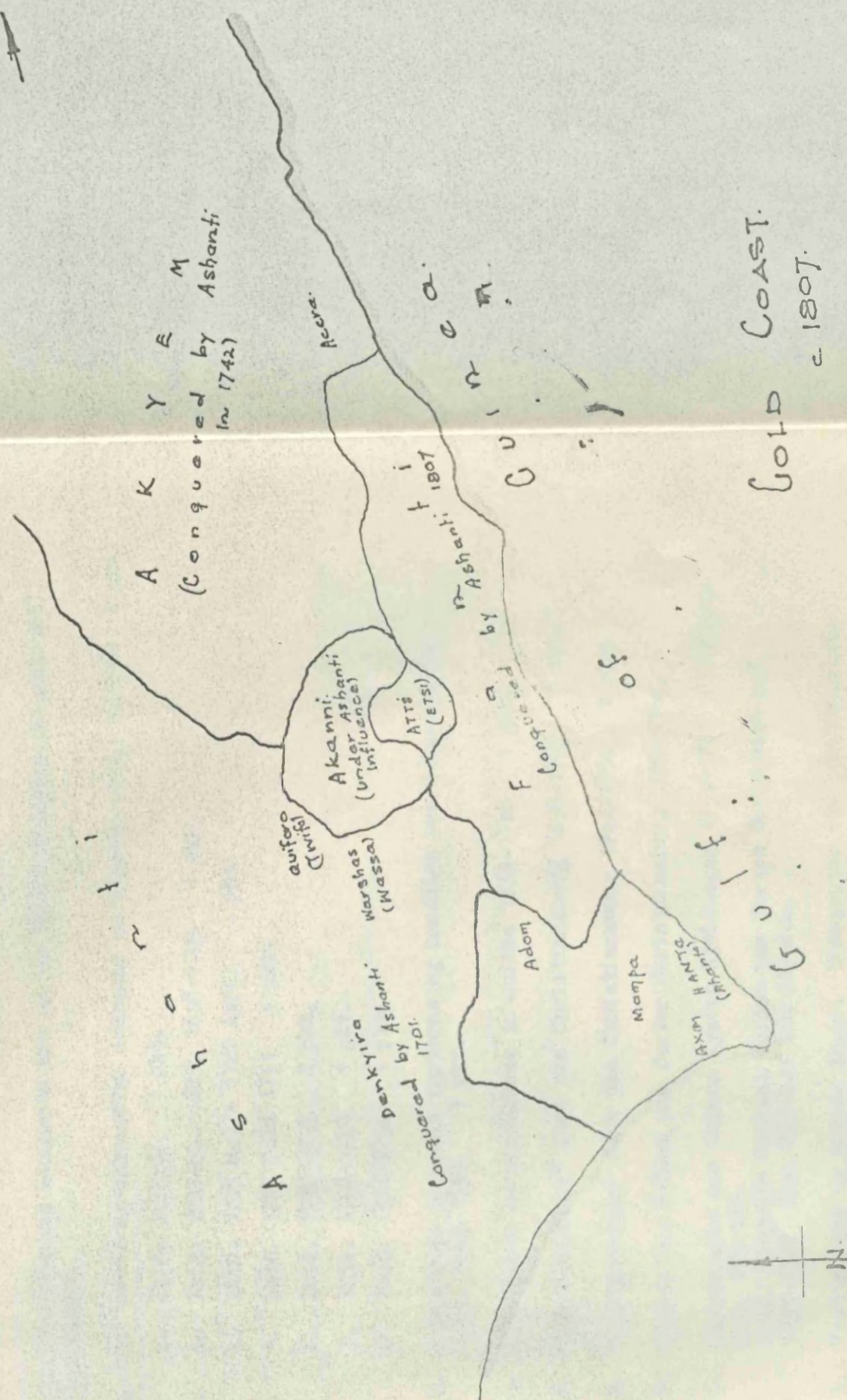
The Gold Coast.
c. 1629.

AKWAMU
(Dependent
of Ashanti)

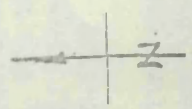


Gold Coast
c. 1750.

AKWAMU
(Dependent Ally of Ashanti)



Gold Coast.
c. 1807.



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Vol.120	Overgehonden stukken 1790/1791 als bylagen van een missive van de Directeur General van 2 August 1791 (met een paa stukken van 1792)	
Vol.122	Contracten met naturellen 1659-1765	
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Vol.124 and Vol.127 Resolutien van de Directeur General en Raden

B. Archieven van de Nederlandische Bezittingen ter Kust van Guinea
(Dutch Settlements on the Coast of Guinea)

Vol.81 Journal van d'Elmina 1658-1709

Vol.82 Dagregisters van d'Elmina 1709-1717

Vol.83 Dagregisters van d'Elmina 1717-1724

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30. 1753-1762)
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52. 1703-1715) Copies of letters sent by the Royal Mission to
53. 1720-1728) the coast of Africa, December 1685-5th April 1698.
54. 1728-1740 Cape Coast Castle.
66. 1720 July-1737) Instructions to Chief Agents in Africa
67. 1737-1750)
68. 1749-1751 Letters between various servants of the company
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69. 1764-87
70. 1787-93
71. 1793-99
72. 1799-1808
73. 1808-1815
74. 1815-1818 October
75. 1664-1672 Royal Adventurers
155. 1770-1776)
156. 1780) Reports of Select Committees.
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974. 1752-1755)
975. 1756-58) Accounts - Day Books
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- 982. 1793, 1795-1800 } James Fort Accra
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- 1230. 1687-1691 -ditto-
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- 1232. 1740-;741 Goods in charge of Charles Bladwell
- 1240. 1791-1797 Accra: Receipt and expenditure. (ledger form) Stock bought and expended) etc.
- 1263. 1755-1768 Annual Register of number of slaves exported from Accra.
- 1264. 1772-1776 Slave barterers by R. Miles at Tantumquerry, Accra and Anomabu
- 1267. 1791-1792 'Blacks' Ledger
- 1268. 1791-1792 Slave barterers; giving payments of customs at Accra.
- 1269. 1791-1792
- 1433. 1685-1702)
- 1434. 1698-1712) Black Book

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- 1466. 1730) Accra etc. Copy-Book of diaries.
- 1468. 1777-78 Diary at Cape Coast Castle
- 1476. 1758-50) Letters to, from and relating to John Roberts
- 1477. 1751-52 } etc.
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1515. Prior to 1750

1516. 1750, 1751

1517. 1751

1518. 1752

1519. 1752, 1753

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1521. 1753

1522. 1754

1523. 1755

1524. 1755, 1756

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