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# BRONG

KYEMPIM

ESSAYS ON THE SOCIETY,  
HISTORY AND POLITICS OF  
THE BRONG PEOPLE

Edited with introduction by  
**Kwame Arhin**

(a) UNIVERSITY OF GHANA  
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# A PROFILE OF BRONG KYEMPIM

(Essays on the Archaeology, History, Language and Politics of the  
Brong Peoples of Ghana)

Edited with Introduction

By

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## PREFACE

With the exception of chapter viii, all the papers in this volume were read and discussed at an inter-disciplinary seminar on the Brong district of the Brong-Ahafo Region held at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon from 16th to 18th March, 1973.

The authors are grateful to the Institute of African Studies for the facilities offered for the seminar and for getting the papers into shape for publication; to Nana Agyeman Badu, Omanhene of Dormaa, for his active interest in the seminar; to Nana Kwakye Ameyaw, Omanhene of Techiman, for joining us at the seminar; and to Professors Adu Boahen and John Hunwick and Mr Isaac Tuffuor, Senior Lecturer, of the History Department and Dr George Benneh, Senior Lecturer, Department of Geography for their contributions to the discussions at the seminar.

Dr Paul Baxter of the University of Manchester and Professor K. Wiredu, University of Ghana, read drafts of the papers and made invaluable suggestions. But they are in no way responsible for the faults in the book.

Dr Kwame Yeboah-Daaku, a beloved colleague and contributor, died before we went to press. This volume is dedicated to his memory.

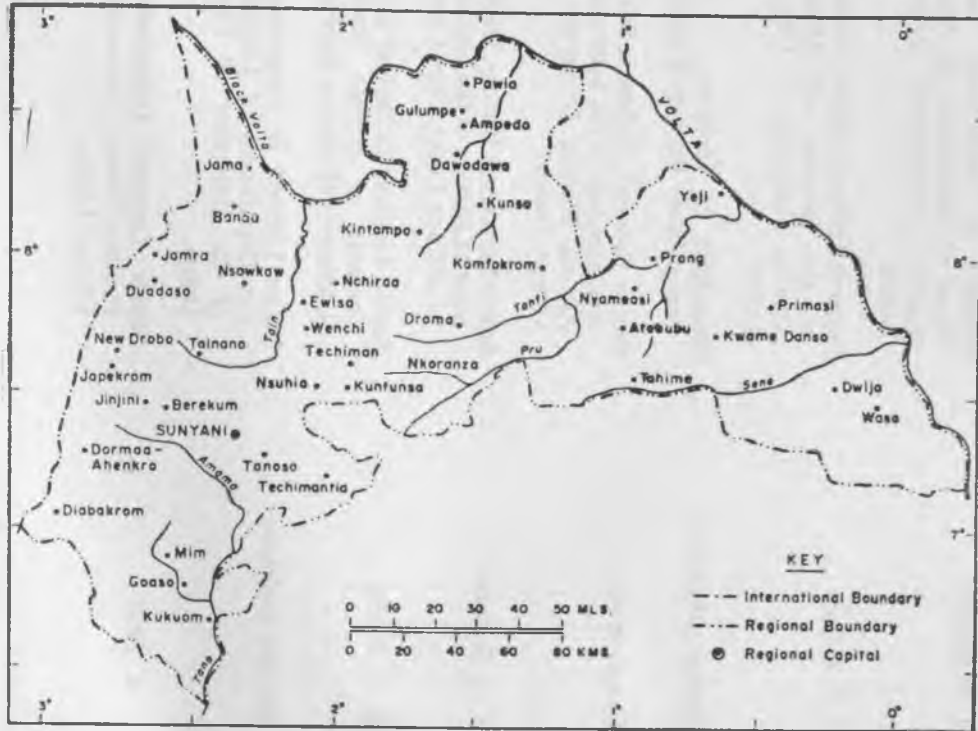
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*July, 1974*

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# BRONG AHAFO REGION



## INTRODUCTION\*

### THE BRONG

*Kwame Arhin*

As noted in the Preface, eight of the nine papers in this volume<sup>1</sup> were read at an inter-disciplinary seminar held at the Institute of African Studies, Legon, in March 1973. The original aim of the Seminar had been to produce data on the basis of which one could demarcate the Brong people as a distinctive Akan sub-group. It turned out that only four of the papers provide some useful evidence for that task.

Firstly, Dolphyne shows that Brong dialects constitute a group within the Akan or Twi language which is quite distinct from Asante, south and west of the Brong language area. These dialects are localized in that section of the Brong-Ahafo Region which is distinguished as 'Brong' from the 'Ahafo' section. The people of the Ahafo section speak Asante-Twi and regard themselves as Asante and not Brong.

But in the area of the Volta Bend, the northwestern corner of the Brong area, there are Gur-speaking peoples (for example, the Nafana of Sampa, the Koulango of Seikwa and Badu and the Mo/Degha of New Longoro) as well as Mande-speaking peoples (such as the Ligby of Banda and Kintampo, the Hwela and Numu of Namasa and Nsoko) who may speak a Brong dialect only as a second language (Goody 1963: 178; 181; 1964: 193-204) just as most speakers of Brong dialects may speak Asante as a second language.<sup>2</sup>

If, then, the 'Brong' are defined as those peoples who speak Brong dialects as their first language, one must exclude from the Brong peoples the Gur and Mande-speaking peoples.

Secondly, Nana Kwakye Ameyaw distinguishes between the Brong and the Asante on the basis of the days of occurrence of their main periodic festivals. The Brong have *abono nne* which fall on week-days, e.g. Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. The Asante have the *Akwasiadae* which falls on Sundays. It is not only the days of occurrence of the main festivals which differentiates the two groups. As Nana stated in an unpublished part of my interview

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\*Unless otherwise indicated, the use of names in the text refers to contributions in this volume.



with him, for the 'true' Brong, who, to him are the people of Techiman (the successor state to Bono Manso), the foci of the *abono nne* rites are the state deities. For the Asante, the foci of the rites are the stools, or rather their deceased occupants. One might speculate further: it appears that it would be found on deeper enquiry that, for the Brong, communion with their numerous state and family deities through their priests is the main element of their religion. In contrast, for the Asante, it is communion with the ancestors.<sup>3</sup>

Again the use of this criterion for the definition of 'Brong' would mean the exclusion of the non-Akan peoples, the Koulango, the Ligby, the Nafana and the Degha.

Thirdly, Nana Ameyaw says that the true 'Brong' are citizens of Techiman and that the term 'Brong' is derived from 'Bono' the name of the first northern Akan state. Nana Ameyaw is probably right. Abronfo (pl. of Bronni sing = men or man of Bono) must certainly refer to the citizens of the kingdom of Bono, a pre-Asante state recorded on the old European maps and described by Dapper as bordering on "Wankyi" or Wenchí. Bowdich (1819:233) was informed that Osei Tutu (d. 1712/1716) conquered 'Boorum' soon after the conquest of Denkyera. The major Asante conquest in the north after the conquest of Denkyera was that of Bono-Manso, which is dated 1722/23 and occurred in the reign of Opoku Ware (1720-1750). Dupuis (1824:233) indeed places 'the subjugation of Bouromy' in the reign of Opoku Ware. Dupuis also (*op. cit.*, *appendix iv*, xxxiv) described 'Bouromy' as a district bordering on the Volta. Ratray (1923:104) identified the true Brong as citizens of Techiman.

It does appear, then, that by the nineteenth century, the whole area between Asante-Mampong and the Volta was known both to the peoples in that area and to outsiders as 'Brong' signifying an area that but for the Asante conquest, would be the domain, 'Bono-man', of the king of Bono-Manso.<sup>4</sup>

If this is the case it follows that incoming groups were called 'Brong' by virtue of their relative nearness to the Bono Manso state; or that the term 'Brong' was imposed upon such peoples as those of Gyaman, Dormaa, Atebubu, Nkoranza and the sub-chiefdoms in the district by their northern (the Gonja) and southern neighbours (the Asante) as a reference name. This would account for the designation of the aboriginal inhabitants in the Begho area as Brong by their Mande speaking co-settlers (Posnansky). It appears, also from information gathered at Berekum, that the aboriginal inhabitants in the districts occupied in the area of modern Sunyani-Odumasi, Nsoatre, Berekum and Dormaa were all called 'Brong' by the southern immigrants, the ruling groups and their adherents.

The immigrant rulers and their aboriginal subjects occupied politically discrete territories, preserved and transmitted separate

traditions of origin or 'histories', observed separate rituals of chiefship and thus maintained separate political identities under their own names. The bonds between them were geographical contiguity, related dialects and most important of all, the Asante connection. Paradoxically it was the Asante connection that nurtured Brong consciousness and Brong self-identification by the various peoples and that thereby became the basis of the twentieth century struggle for a separate Brong Chiefs' Council and administrative region.

The peoples of these states have accepted the designation 'Brong', particularly in situations of political conflict with Asante. In its modern sense — since the last quarter of the nineteenth century— 'Brong' has acquired a distinctively political meaning. It has become a protest word adopted by those living northeast, north and northwest of Asante who deny political allegiance to the Asantehene. So used, 'Brong' covers such non-Akan peoples as the Nafana and Koulango peoples of Sampa and Seikwa, all Gur-speaking, who on linguistic or other cultural grounds<sup>5</sup> would deny that they are Brong. The people of Berekum, for example, say that they are culturally Asante, but in most political situations identify themselves as Brong. That kind of political identification also has certain cultural consequences. A Brong who insists on his non-Asantenes, i.e. denies that he owes allegiance to the Asantehene, would normally speak his Brong dialect particularly in situations of vehement political protest. This has had the effect of reviving interest in Brong dialects among groups who before the movement for Brong secession from Asante had considered it convenient and advantageous to speak Asante (Dolphyne).

While the papers do not deal at all exhaustively with the original question of investigating the Brong people as a separate sub-Akan grouping, they draw attention to the place of the Brong area in the commercial, cultural and political history of the constituent peoples of modern Ghana.

As Posnansky points out, the Brong district lay in 'contrasting ecological zones' in a zone separating the northern savannah from the southern forest. The zone favoured the entry of the beasts of burden of Mande-speaking traders, was auriferous, and in these conditions, ideally situated for market establishments mediating between the gold and kola forest areas and the old-established markets of the middle Niger. Commerce with the north involved not only the aboriginal people of the Begho area, the Brong of Bono-Manso but also the Nchumuru east, and the other Akan south, of the Begho area.

With trade came cultural influences: Akan craftworks were influenced by the Mande-speaking establishments. It is highly

probable that the initial stimulus to the evolution of the Akan gold currency and weight systems was trade with the market establishments of the Begho complex (Posnansky). Cloth-making, black-smithery, gold-smithery, tannery and weaving among the Brong of Bono-Manso and through their mediation, among the southern Akan, were also influenced through contact with the sedentary and itinerant traders of Begho.

Islam has not done very well among the Akan. But whatever early progress it made was partly from the direction of the early settlements of Begho (Odoom).

The political history of the Brong peoples is the history of their struggles with the Asante. The Brong district today has ten paramount chiefdoms in an area of 13,680 square miles. These are Abease, Atebubu, Banda, Berekum, Dormaa, Nkoranza, New Drobo, Mo, Techiman and Wenchi. Of these only four—Banda, Dormaa, Nkoranza and Techiman—had what the Asante regarded as paramount, **obrempon**, status before the colonial period. Abease, Atebubu, Berekum, Mo, New Drobo (half of the old Gyaman (**Abron**) chiefdom in British territory) and Wenchi were British-created paramountcies. But paramount or **obrempon** status in the days of Asante hegemony meant not independence but subjection to the Asantehene.

Struggles between the peoples who later came to be identified as 'Asante' and as 'Brong' started in the seventeenth century and was certainly the major factor in preventing the consolidation of a Brong kingdom comparable in cohesion and size with the united Asante kingdom. The Oyoko dynasty under Obiri Yeboah started fighting with Dormaa, (the later **Abron**), in the Kwaman, modern Kumasi area, in the first half of the seventeenth century. The fighting continued through the reigns of Osei Tutu and Opoku Ware and ended in the defeat of Gyaman in 1746/47. Asante defeated and destroyed Ahwene Koko, the capital of old Wenchi, in 1711 or 1712.<sup>6</sup> Asante also conquered Bono-Manso in 1722/23. Nkoranza (to which Mo/Degha later became an appendage) which was firmly established after the Asante-Bono-Manso War, was really a northern extension of Asante.<sup>7</sup> Banda became an Asante 'ally' early in the eighteenth century. Atebubu, Abease and neighbouring communities were brought under Asante rule in about 1744/45. The nature of Asante's historic relations with Dormaa is obscure and requires investigation. It appears that Dormaa, a part of the Gyaman kingdom, reached its own accommodation with Asante early in the eighteenth century and was thereafter treated distinctly from the main Gyaman chiefdom established in the area of modern Bonduku.

Asante statecraft bore heavily on the Brong territories. Not only did the Brong make substantial contributions to the Asante economy and manpower requirements in the domestic economy and Asante

warfare<sup>8</sup> but it is also in this area that the Asante tried their major methods of incorporation. Bono-Manso was dismembered; nine of its villages, including Tuobodom, 4 miles north of the new capital of Techiman, became administrative units of Kumasi. Sunyani-Odumasi, Nsoatre and Berekum were also directly subjected to the Kumasi (Bantama) stool, resulting in the separation of Dormaa territories of Boma, Abessim and Chiraa from the main territorial block of Wam. Seikwa was directly administered by the Akympimhene, Nsawkaw and Badu by the Adumhene of Kumasi. Odumasi and Berekum in particular served as Asante security posts.

A major reason for the Asante interest in the Brong districts was undoubtedly economic. The northwest was rich in gold and in such raw material as cotton. It remained an area of trade establishments—including Bonduku and Wenchi—even after the break-up of Begho; and it was the source of craftsmen's skills which the Asante showed considerable ingenuity in organizing and adapting to their socio-political needs.<sup>9</sup> Similarly the 'Brong' of the northeast, though without gold, intervened between Asante-Mampong and the kola markets in Dagomba (Yendi) whence the Asante derived savannah craft works, luxury and consumer goods, and natural products, including livestock, salt (from Daboya) and smelted iron in exchange for kola nuts.

'Brong' opposition to Asante rule was led by Gyaman which throughout the eighteenth century took opportunities offered by a new succession to the Asante stool and therefore the untested generalship of a new ruler to launch a secessionist revolt. The last in the series of Gyaman violent revolts against Asante was in 1818—1819 (Britwum). Thereafter the Brong both in the northwest and in the northeast had to wait till 1874.

The British invasion of Kumasi in that year was followed by a civil war between Kumasi and Dwaben, by the deposition of Karikari and over a decade of succession wars in Asante. The Brong of both the northeast and the northwest saw their opportunities in the troubles in Asante. In the east the Brong of Atebubu, Abease, Wiase and the Guang of Krachi—later to be joined by Nkoranza—established an anti-Asante confederation and requested the British for protection against a possible Asante attempt at another take-over. The Government of the Gold Coast sustained the independence of the eastern Brong because of their interest in trade in the northeast; also while not ready, owing to restraints from London, to extend the territory under its rule, the Government of the Gold Coast wanted to keep Asante divided and weakened in the event of a future possible take-over of Asante. A 'forward-looking' policy required that Asante be stripped of her former territories in the north whose populations increased her fighting power and whose resources made her rich; or at least that the secessionist territories be sustained in their independence (Daaku).

In the northwest, Gyaman was also at the head of a confederation that included Techiman and which also sought protection from the Government of the Gold Coast.<sup>10</sup> A consequence of the anti-Asante movement was the attack on Berekum and Nsoatre in 1883-84 that for a period made Berekum and Nsoatre subject to the Gyaman kingdom (Arhin).

The seeds of Brong consciousness, then, were sown in the period of the anti-Asante movements following 1874. However, there is no evidence that there was a political conjunction between the eastern and western Brong. Also the movement which in the west included such non-Brong as a section of the Sefwi people, were purely defensive alliances against possible future Asante attacks. This passive characteristic and the intervention of European rule, (for Gyaman, European rule meant a division of its territory into French and British Gyaman) prevented Brong consciousness from crystallizing into a movement towards an all-Brong political unification.

The Brong states became severally parts of the Asante 'protectorate' between 1896 and 1901 and were independently administered by the Ashanti Resident and his subordinate officers. With the Asantehene exiled and the Native Committee of Administration restricted in its operations to the Kumasi division, the Brong states won the independence of Kumasi to which they had apparently always aspired. The Techimanhene in particular had the satisfaction of getting restored to him the Tano-Subin valley villages which had been taken from him in the reign of Opopo Ware. And the chiefs of Atebubu, Abease, Berekum, New Drobo and Wenchi became newly independent states under colonial rule; in the case of Berekum with additions of territory.

On the annexation of Asante to the British Crown by an order in Council (1 January 1901) and the passage of the Ashanti Administration Ordinance of 1902, Ashanti was divided into four administrative districts, the Brong states forming the north-western and north-eastern districts of Ashanti.

There were further administrative reorganizations in 1906, 1907 and 1913 and also in 1920. The order No. 4 of 1920 divided Asante into two provinces, eastern and western; most of the Brong states were included in the western provinces.<sup>11</sup>

It does appear that the habit of nearly two centuries of relations with Kumasi chiefs had stuck. It has been reported, rather curiously, that contrary to the expectations and orders of the colonial administration, certain Brong chiefs—Techiman, Dormaa and Berekum—continued to recognize the Kumasi chiefs as their 'head chiefs' to whom they preferred to refer major oath and land cases rather than to the officers of the colonial administration.<sup>12</sup>

It was probably the same habit of centuries (enforced by common inclusion within one colonial administration and a certain amount of pressure from officers of the colonial administration) which was responsible for the ultimate decision of all but one (Atebubu) of the Brong states to join the Asante Confederacy Council of chiefs. At the start of the enquiry to determine which of the Brong chiefs favoured the restoration of the Confederacy, the chiefs of Banda and Mo favoured restoration; Wenchi and Nkoranza were silent. Atebubu, Abease, Berekum, Dormaa, Gyaman and Techiman said they were opposed. Yet ultimately only Atebubu refused to join. When the Confederacy was inaugurated on 31st of January 1935, it included the 'Brong' divisions of Banda, Mo and Wenchi. Nkoranza, Gyaman, Dormaa and Berekum joined in May 1935, Techiman in April 1936, and Abease in October 1938.<sup>13</sup> The restoration meant in essence subordination to the Asantehene—though this time under the supervision of the British colonial administration—which they had appeared to dislike in the days before British rule.

In view of the subsequent outbreak of the movement for a separate Brong Council of chiefs and administrative region, the willingness of the Brong chiefs to join the Confederacy in 1935/36 requires explanation. In addition to the force of habit and pressure by colonial officials noted above, there were other possible reasons. Firstly, it is probable that a chief like the Techimanhene hoped to have his grievances over the Tano-Subin villages attended to if he were within the Confederacy rather than outside it.<sup>14</sup> Secondly, individual Brong chiefs, who in this period had apparently not thought of uniting and asking for a separate Council of chiefs, were probably impressed by the prospect of advantages that might be derived from inclusion within a large administration area and chiefs' council.

Drah deals at length with the reasons for the Brong movement which ended in the creation of the Brong-Ahafo Region and a Brong Ahafo House of Chiefs in 1959. The reasons may be sought in three main areas. These are: (i) The expectation of the Techimanhene that his voluntary adherence to the Confederacy would induce the Asantehene to return the nine Tano-Subin villages to him turned out to be false. (ii) The composition and working of the Confederacy, with its institutions like the Asantehene's court A, and welfare scheme like the 'Ashanti National Fund', from which scholarships were expected to be awarded to the subjects of all the Confederacy states, appeared to be unfavourable to and discriminatory against the Brong.<sup>15</sup> (iii) The Asante and Brong states held different views about the political significance of the Confederacy, and in particular about the position of the Asantehene. For the Asante, the Confederacy meant a revival of the Asante 'Constitution' before colonial rule. Then the Asantehene had been the undisputed head of — as the Asante thought—nine districts of Asante: namely, Adansi, Asante-Akyem,

Atwima, Amansie, Ahafo, Brong, Kwabre, Manso and Sekyere. They therefore insisted upon the old tokens of acceptance of the Asantehene as overlord, such as that a newly installed *omanhene* should take an oath of allegiance to the Asantehene in the course of which the latter should place his right foot on the neck of the latter; or that no *omanhene* should have gold or any other ornaments similar to those of the Asantehene.<sup>16</sup>

The Brong, on the other hand, thought that the confederacy was a voluntary association of "free" states in which at best only deference might be paid to the Asantehene. They in turn objected to these tokens of subjection to the Asantehene and the indignities to which they claimed that chiefs were subjected in Kumasi for what the Asante chiefs considered as evidence of insubordination.<sup>17</sup>

The consequence of all this was the birth of modern 'Brong' consciousness and separatism followed by the adoption of what may be called Brong 'nationality' even by those states that had before then not considered themselves as Brong. The states of Techiman, Dormaa, Drobo, Abease, Suma and Antepim-Domase declared their secession from the Confederacy in 1952.<sup>18</sup> The Brong-Asante issue became merged in the struggle for power between the Convention Peoples' Party, the ruling party, and the Opposition Parties including the short-lived National Liberation Movement.<sup>19</sup>

I suggest three reasons for the success of the Brong in winning a separate region together with Ahafo. The first is the sheer determination of the leaders of the movement who were successful in exploiting the political differences between the leaders of the ruling party and the Kumasi chiefs, all strong adherents of the National Liberation Movement. The second reason arose from the first. It was the desire of the leaders of the ruling party to break the Asante Region into politically manageable units. The third reason was that a separate region for Brong-Ahafo was administratively viable and, perhaps, desirable. The table following shows the position of the Brong-Ahafo Region in terms of size, population and urban centres in relation to the other regions of Ghana:

But the political struggles between some of the Brong and Kumasi chiefs did not end with the creation of the Brong-Ahafo Region. Neither the Brong-Ahafo Region Act (1959) nor the Ghana Constitution (1960) specifically mentioned inter-regional traditional political allegiance. The chiefs in the Brong area who were recognized *amanhene* became members of the Brong-Ahafo Regional House of Chiefs.<sup>21</sup> Brong chiefs traditionally subordinate to Kumasi chiefs remained in that position. In spite of their situation in another region, their sub-chiefdoms still legally formed parts of the Kumasi traditional division or area (that is, they were subject to the *omanhene* of Kumasi who is also the Asantehene) in matters concerning chiefs. Even of greater importance to the chiefs concerned, revenues from their 'stool' lands were paid by officials of

Region	Size	Size in relation to that of Ghana	Population	Number of centres with population 5,000 to 10,000	Number of centres with population above 10,000
North rn ... ..	27,175	30%	727,618	6	2
Brong Ahafo ... ..	15,273	17%	766,599	14	4
Upper ... ..	10,548	11%	862,793	—	4
Ashanti ... ..	9,417	10%	1,481,698	7	4
Western ... ..	9,236	10%	770,087	8	8
Volta ... ..	7,943	9%	947,268	8	6
Eastern ... ..	7,698	8%	1,211,611	18	9
Central ... ..	3,815	4%	800,135	15	7
Greater Accra ... ..	995	1%	851,514	2	6

Sources: (1) Ghana Population Census 1970.

(2) Socio-Economic Survey 1969, Department of Rural Planning, Accra.



the central government into the Kumasi stool or chiefs' treasury out of which the Brong chiefs were expected to receive their share.

Between 1960 and 1966, the government of Kwame Nkrumah tried to resolve the question of inter-regional traditional political allegiance by creating, and recognising, as *amanhene* some of the subordinate chiefs in the Brong-Ahafo Region who traditionally owed allegiance to Kumasi chiefs and through them to the Asantehene. A chief created and recognized as *omanhene* became autonomous in traditional political terms and a member of his Regional House of chiefs. He was thus enabled to sever his traditional political ties with his erstwhile Kumasi 'overlord'. The chiefs of Nsoatre, Sunyani and Odumase No. 1, Seikwa and Nsawkaw, among others, were recognized *amanhene*.

The National Liberation Council, the military government, which succeeded Nkrumah after the latter's overthrow by a *coup d'état* on February 24th, 1966 passed a Decree [112 of 1966], the effect of which was that the government of Ghana had ceased to recognize the paramount status and the traditional councils of subordinate chiefs elevated by the Nkrumah government: and that the chiefs mentioned would, on the coming into force of the Decree, be considered by the government as subordinate to their superordinate chiefs before their elevation by the Nkrumah government.

It appears, however, that the Decree was at variance with political realities. Successive governments, civil and military, have had to find political rather than legal solutions to the problem. At the time of writing a Committee appointed by the military government — the National Redemption Council\* — is enquiring into the problem. Clearly the heart of the matter is how to reconcile historical or pseudo-historical tradition with contemporary social and political realities.

### Summary

Used linguistically, 'Brong' refers to the speakers of Twi-Brong dialects. Ethnographically, it is best used to refer to the people of the Techiman chiefdom. Lastly, in its political and widest usage it means the peoples of the chiefdoms and sub-chiefdoms of the Brong section of the Brong-Ahafo Region who do not, or refuse to, acknowledge traditional political allegiance to the Asantehene. This wider use of the term originated in the extension of 'Bono' to cover the actual and presumed territorial domain (*Bonoman*) of the erstwhile King of Bono-Manso, whose successor was the Techimanhene. 'Brong', as the collective name of a congeries of peoples, has attained reality and permanence through the political and administrative act of the Government of Ghana in making it the joint name of the Brong-Ahafo Region.

\* The National Redemption Council succeeded the Civil regime of Dr K. A. Busia (1969-72) after a *coup d'état* of January 13th, 1972.

Notes on Introduction

- 1 The exception is chapter *ix* by F.K. Drah on The Brong Movement.
- 2 J. Goody 'Ethnographic Notes on the Distribution of Guang Languages' *Journal of African Languages*, Vol. 2, Part 3, 1963; 'The Mandé and the Akan Hinterland' in J. Vansina, R. Mauny, and L.V. Thomas eds. *The Historian in Tropical Africa*, O.U.P. 1964.
- 3 See R.S. Rattray's accounts of these festivals in *Ashanti* O.U.P., 1923 chs. v, *ix* and *xv*. and also *Religion and Art in Ashanti* O.U.P. 1927; also K.A. Busia 'Ashanti' in *African Worlds*, ed. D Forde, O.U.P. 1954, pp. 203–204.
- 4 See J. Goody, 1963, *op. cit.* and 'The Akan and the North' in *Ghana Notes and Querries* No. 9, November 1966;  
K.Y. Daaku 'Pre-Ashanti States' in *Ghana Notes and Querries op. cit.* pp. 10–13;  
K.Y. Daaku and A. Van Danzig: 'The Akan Forest States'. A Provisional translation of an extract from O. Dapper *Beschreibung von Africa* (German edition) Amsterdam, 1970 in *Ghana Notes and Querries*, No. 9, November 1966, pp.15–17;  
also A.A. Boahen: 'The Origins of the Akan' in *Ghana Notes and Querries*, No. 9 November 1966, pp. 3–10;  
T.E. Bowdich: *Mission from Cape Coast to Ashantee*, London, 1819;  
J. Dupuis: *Journal of A Residence in Ashantee*, London, 1824.
- 5 For example, unlike the Brong-Akan, they have a patrilineal descent system.
6. See Paul Ozanne 'Ahwene Koko: Seventeenth Century Wenchi' *Ghana Notes and Querries*, No. 8; Jan. 1966, p.18;  
K.Y. Daaku 'A Note on the Fall of Ahwene Koko and Its Significance in Asante History' *Ghana Notes and Querries* No. 10 December 1968, pp. 40–44; also information from Opanyin Dabanka (an elder of Wenchi), who was unable to say in which Asantehene's reign the attack on Wenchi took place.
- 7 See J. Goody 'Introduction', J. Goody and K. Arhin, eds. *Ashanti and the Northwest*, mimeographed, Institute of African Studies, 1965.
- 8 See Chapter *iii*.
- 9 See Goody, 'The Akan and the North' in *Ghana Notes and Querries*, No. 9, November 1966, pp. 18–24.

- 10 The Confederation, first mentioned in the records of the government of the Gold Coast on October 28th, 1881, included Techiman, Sequa (Seikwa), Suma, Drobo, Kwatwoma, Fiassi (Fiase-Wassaw?) Bini? Barabo? Nisia? Supre? Wrochey (name of a chief) Quasi Doh (name of a chief) Cheryor (name of a chief) Krosah (name of a chief) and Sehwi. Its main principle of organization was interestingly, as follows:

The kings on the thrones of the sub-chiefdoms pay no tribute to King Agyeman (Agyeman of Gyaman) and do not submit matters to him for consideration or instruction unless such matters be of great importance, but, if called upon, they are bound to take part in Agyeman's wars, by supplying warriors in numbers according to size and population of the districts, and at this time they are under (joint) control.

*Notes on Gaman taken October 28th. 1881, Enclosure in No. 30 in Parliamentary Papers (C—) 3386 Seikwa, Suma and Drobo were all units of Gyaman.*

- 11 W. Tordoff, *Ashanti Under The Prempehs 1888—1935*, Oxford, 1965, pp. 112—128.
- 12 Tordoff, *op. cit.*, 89
- 13 Tordoff, *op. cit.*, 350
- 14 Tordoff, *op. cit.*, 355
- 15 See K.A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti*, O.U.P. 1951, 188—193; *Report of the Mate Kole Committee on the Asanteman-Brong Dispute* Government Printer, Accra, 1955.
- 16 *Report op. cit.*, See also A. Triuli 'The Asantehene-in-Council: Ashanti Policies Under Colonial Rule, 1935—1950'. *Africa*, XLII, No. 2 April, 1972, pp. 89—111.
- 17 *Report of the Mate Kole Committee, op. cit.*
- 18 Report of the Mate Kole Committee, *op. cit.* Domase consisted of two towns known as Antepim and Awua-Domase. The ruling lineage of Antepim—Domase says it originated in Denkyera in the central region of Ghana; that of Awua-Domase traces its connection with the Bantama (Kumasi-Kuronti) Stool. The dispute between the two stools over precedence went on in the District Commissioner's courts from early in the colonial period to the 1930s. See for example letters from the Provincial Commissioner, Sunyani to District Commissioner 16th March, 1928, File No. 403/W.P.8/23, in *Ghana National Archives*, G.N.A. Sunyani. It still goes on.

- 19 See D. Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946—1960* O.U.P. 1964, pp 293—297; on the Ahafo side of these political disputes, see A.F. Robertson 'Histories and Political Opposition in Ahafo, Ghana', in *Africa* Vol. XLIII, No. 1 January, 1973, pp. 41—58.
- 20 In his final reply to the debate on the Brong Ahafo Region Bill, 20th March 1959, in the National Assembly, Mr A.E.A. Ofori Atta, the Minister of Justice and Local Government, said on behalf of the Government.  
The Bill before this House this morning is a fulfilment of the solemn promise of 1956 based on the conviction of the Government and the C.P.P. and made to the people of Brong Ahafo. I need not remind hon. Members that the battle for independence was nearly lost on this issue.  
The Government were convinced that culturally, administratively, and socially, there must be a region for the Brong-Ahafos apart from the Ashanti Region. The Government insisted that the Constitution of Ghana must make provision for a Brong-Ahafo Region.  
Col. 456: *Parliamentary Debates 'Official Report—First Series Vol. 14; 19th February—20th March, 1959.* 'The battle for independence' is a reference to the apparent attempt by the National Liberation Movement to delay independence pending the grant of a federal Constitution to Ghana by the British Government See Austin, *op. cit.*
- 21 All the present seven administrative regions of Ghana have Houses of Chiefs, and there is also a National House of Chiefs which together are expected to deal with chieftaincy disputes and to assist governments of Ghana in re-examining and codifying customary law.

CHAPTER I  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE BRONG-AHAFO  
REGION

*Merrick Posnansky*

Brong Ahafo has not witnessed a great amount of archaeological activity although more work has been conducted in the Gonja area because of the recent activities of the Volta Basin Research Project (1963-70). In 1970 however the Department of Archaeology initiated a new project, *The West African Trade Project*, the object of which is to find out more about the archaeological aspects of the beginnings of long distance trade between the middle Niger and the Ghana area.<sup>1</sup> A research centre has been established at Hani with the immediate object of undertaking an extensive excavation of Begho and with the long term aim of providing a base for research over a much wider area. The western part of Brong Ahafo was intentionally chosen as it represents an area of contrasting ecological zones, a linguistic contact area, and a region where the archaeological potential has been clearly indicated by Oliver Davies<sup>2</sup> and in which a substantial amount of first rate anthropological investigation and publication by Jack Goody<sup>3</sup> and of historical research by Ivor Wilks<sup>4</sup> had laid a useful foundation for future work. The bulk of this paper describes the preliminary results of the research undertaken at Begho\*.

### Past Research

As early as 1912 curious flat, often oval or elliptical section pieces of soft stone, or even terracotta, up to eleven inches long and two inches wide with criss cross striations on both faces had been found at Kintampo by members of the Geological Survey\*. They are a class of artefact so far unique to Ghana and are now known as 'stone rasps' and are a characteristic feature of the Kintampo culture first defined by Oliver Davies<sup>5</sup> in 1959 and later elaborated by Flight<sup>6</sup> who conducted several excavations at Kintampo. In 1972 a further site of the Kintampo cultural tradition was found at Mumute, half a kilometre from the Brong quarter of Begho which is the subject of a separate paper by Mr E.K. Agorsah. †

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\* The writer acknowledges with appreciation the permission given by the editors of the *Ghana Social Science Journal* to quote *in extenso* parts of the section on Begho which will appear in an article Volume 2, Part 2 under the title "The early development of Trade in West Africa — Some Archaeological Considerations". See also the author's, 'Aspects of early West African trade' *World Archaeology* Vol. 5. No. 2 October, 1973. ed.

\* A Department of the Government of the Gold Coast, ed.

† Unfortunately omitted from this publication, for reasons of space; copy in Institute of African Studies, Legon, Library.

The Kintampo tradition, objects of which have been found in various parts of Brong Ahafo, dates to the latter half of the second millennium B.C. and has been thought of as "neolithic" because of the association of polished stone axes and other tools characteristic of the better known Saharan "neolithic". Domestic mammalian remains at Kintampo and also at the site of Ntereso, as well as grindstones, indicate the strong likelihood that the Kintampo cultural tradition provides the first evidence for agricultural societies in Ghana.<sup>7</sup>

Though many objects clearly postdating the Kintampo period are described in the *Field Notes on Ashanti* by Oliver Davies, none of them have been placed in an historical context. In 1965 Mr James Anquandah<sup>8</sup> made an archaeological survey of the Techiman-Wenchi area which drew attention to discoveries at Techiman, Tancbasi, Manso, sites in the area of Nkoranza, Wenchi and around Hani where the former town of Begho was located. This survey put on record discoveries by previous visitors to the area. In 1966 Ozanne<sup>9</sup> published a description of Ahwene Koko, seventeenth century Wenchi, whilst R. Duncan Mathewson, a Research Fellow of the Volta Basin Research Project of the University of Ghana, conducted a survey in the northern Tain basin as part of a broader scheme to put the research then being undertaken in the area to be flooded by the Volta lake around the confluence of the Black and White Voltas into a wider perspective.<sup>10</sup> Additions to the survey excavations were carried out at a site north-east of Namasa which had previously been referred to as the Dumpo quarter of Begho.

The area east of a line running between Kintampo and Nkoranza and south of Techiman is largely unexplored archaeologically except for a few sites along the Volta investigated as part of the rescue operations of the Volta Basin Research Project.<sup>11</sup>

### **Begho**

Begho has rightly been considered one of the most important historical sites in Ghana. Its existence was indirectly known to European merchants on the coast by the early seventeenth century.<sup>12</sup> Its importance was due to the trade that Begho was said to have participated in between the Niger, particularly the stretch around Jenne, the Forest belt and ultimately the coast. Both Wilks and Goody<sup>13</sup> have in recent years written in detail about the historical sources, the oral traditions and the cultural anthropological evidence, and both see the foundation of Begho and the development of the long distance trade in gold as due to the expansion of Mandespeaking people whilst the present writer has related the exploitation of the gold resources to the general world-wide expansion of trade and consequent insatiable demand for gold.<sup>14</sup>

Begho is said by various authorities to have been founded as early as the eleventh century (Meyerowitz)<sup>15</sup> or as late as the sixteenth century<sup>16</sup> and to have been abandoned or destroyed any time between the fourteenth (Delafosse)<sup>17</sup> and the eighteenth centuries (Ozanne)<sup>18</sup> There is also some controversy as to its location. Early twentieth century French scholars placed Begho in the vicinity of Bondoukou<sup>19</sup> in the Ivory Coast. This view now has few followers. Wilks<sup>20</sup> situated the town to the north-east and south-east of the present village of Namasa (also called 'Demisa' in various historical texts) whilst Meyerowitz, Shinnie, Anquandah, Ozanne and Goody<sup>21</sup> it would more clearly seem to be near the modern village of Hani some 6½ kilometres to the south of Namasa and 51 kilometres west north-west of Winchi. The most recent article by Bravmann and Mathewson in *African Historical Studies* for 1970<sup>22</sup> manages to combine both locations and calls the whole area, of perhaps some forty to fifty square kilometres in the Hani-Namasa area, Bicu, their orthographical rendering of Begho.

The oral history of Hani and of Nsawkaw,<sup>23</sup> sixteen kilometres to the east of Hani, is quite definite in placing Begho, pronounced by them as Beew, a kilometre to the east of Hani at a place known to them as *Amanfokeseeso*. The oral traditions relate how the original ancestors came from a hole in the ground (*Bonkeseso*) situated in a grassy plain (*Nserekeseso*) four to five kilometres to the west of Hani. The oral traditions further describe the town of Begho as consisting of three major geographically distinct quarters of the Brong; the Kramo or Muslim trading community; and of the Numu blacksmiths (*Tonfo* or *Tumfuo*) The Numu and Muslims, according to the linguistic evidence discussed by Goody, were proto-Dyula and Dyula speakers respectively.<sup>24</sup> A rather less distinct quarter, the Nyaho, is situated a little under half a kilometre north-west of Hani where the population is said to have consisted of both Brong and *Tonfo* elements. At the present day, the village of Namasa has a predominantly Muslim population speaking a Dyula dialect. Various versions account for the abandonment of Begho: the most common refer to internal dissension whilst others bring in directly or indirectly relations with the Ashanti around 1722/23 who eventually gained political control of the area and diverted the trade to Kintampo, Salaga and Kumasi.

The people of Hani are able to guide visitors to all the Begho quarters. Each quarter consists of an area of mounds, each mound being between one and two metres high and up to 30 metres across, presumably representing former homesteads, the largest of which, that of the Brong, is nearly a kilometre across. Between the quarters, which are around a kilometre from each other, there is an exposure of laterite and a large laterite block which indicates the site of the market (*Gyetunidi*) where the Brong and the traders are

said to have met. The blacksmiths quarter is the smallest in area. On and around all the mounds there are considerable quantities of surface pottery largely thrown up by the burrowing activities such creatures as porcupines and aardvarks.

Various archaeologists have visited the vicinity of Begho and collections have been made of surface finds. In 1967 Mr Duncan Mathewson<sup>25</sup> conducted a test excavation at a site two-and-a-half kilometres north-east of Namasa which he called the Dumpo quarter of Bicu and presumed was the Guang quarter of Begho. Oral traditions in Namasa however refer to this site as Nyamaga Gboo and our informants, including the Namasahene's linguist, were quite definite that Nyamaga was a separate ancient settlement and not part of Begho which they affirmed was near Hani. Even by bush track Nyamaga is nearly ten kilometres from the Brong and Kramo quarters and the absence of continuous settlement between the two sites would suggest that Nyamaga cannot be considered as a quarter of Begho, though it could well be older as Mathewson obtained a radiocarbon date of 1019 ± 158 A.D. (Birm-71) for one of his lower levels. Unfortunately this latter date is not a secure one as there was an inversion in the C.14 sequence with some more recently dated samples being found in stratigraphically earlier contexts.<sup>26</sup> Also it is not known exactly what the sample dates as the excavation consisted of a test pit with very little attempt to work out the structural implications of the samples. Settlement there certainly had been in the area from stone age times onwards but what we need to know is the date of the beginnings of organized trade based on large market centres and on this point the samples do not help.

Without inscriptions or continuity of settlement name it is impossible to be certain that the site of Begho has been positively identified. Nevertheless the testimony of the oral traditions, the existence of four distinct areas of settlement with abundant surface finds and the absence of other sites with a better claim to be Begho would suggest that the mound 'fields' east of Hani are the most likely site of Begho. It is possible of course that Begho referred to a wide area south of the Black Volta rather than to a specific town. There is certainly evidence from Mathewson's work that a whole cluster of towns like Bima and Bofe, as well as Begho itself, were contemporary with Begho and presumably shared in the trade.

Many very good reasons have been advanced for the location of Begho where it is, such as the proximity to gold resources; kola to the south; perhaps the local presence of elephants; good iron working potential in the existence of iron rich laterite outcrops and abundant fuel; and most important of all the proximity to a natural route through the Banda hills to the south of the Black Volta—a



route which did not involve the crossing of any large rivers. The natural ecology was favourable for the growth of large settlements with an adequate rainfall and fertile soils. This area of 'derived savannah' was the furthest extent to which pack animals from Mali could reach without rapidly succumbing to tsetse borne diseases.

So far four excavations have been conducted at Begho which have been described elsewhere in greater detail<sup>27</sup>—two in the Brong quarter (1970 and 1972) and one each in the *Twunfour* (1972) and Kramo (1971) quarters. Interpretation of the excavations in terms of the history of the area will depend on the analysis of the finds which is still being undertaken. Each house so far excavated has exhibited significant differences from the ones previously excavated and broad generalizations may only be possible when further sites have been excavated which should indicate the typical features of each quarter rather than merely highlighting the specific differences which are likely to exist between the houses of individuals in any large settlement.

Certain general conclusions can however be suggested. Though there were differences in detail between the pottery assemblages of each quarter there was a broad similarity in basic forms, decoration and paste which suggests that the Kramo, if it was the trading community, was not all that ethnologically distinct from the Brong. Similarities between the pottery found in the Brong quarter and that made at Bondakile, the main present day potting centre of the area some seventeen kilometres to the north-west of Begho, indicates a cultural continuity between Begho and the present day peoples of the area. The people of Bondakile are Mo, called Degha by Goody<sup>28</sup> and are thought to be remnants of the pre-Akan indigenous inhabitants which could indicate that their ceramic traditions predate the foundation of Begho. There is little relationship with the pottery from the Volta confluence area where one of the most distinctive types of pottery is decorated with red painted designs.<sup>29</sup> At Begho this design-painted ware numbered less than 30 small pieces out of a total pottery assemblage at all four sites of over 100,000 sherds. cursory examination of pottery from sites north of Kumasi, like Mampong<sup>30</sup> which might be contemporary with Begho also indicates little direct similarity. It would thus appear that the population of Begho cannot be identified with groups to the south and east and from the point of view of its ceramics, the Begho people are probably the ancestors of the present day Brong people in the area. A detailed quantitative and qualitative assessment of the ceramics is being undertaken by Mr L. B. Crossland and it is hoped to compare the pottery with that from sites of the same age from the Sudanic zone to see if any 'immigrant' wares can be identified which may provide a clue as to the actual existence, number and relative importance of the Mande traders in

the towns reputedly important for trade located north of the forest and south of the bend of the Black Volta.

The prevalence of red slipped wares at Begho and in the Volta basin has been cited by Davies<sup>31</sup> and others as an indication of immigrants from the north.<sup>32</sup> Fine red slipping is certainly a feature of sites associated with the early Sudanic states and is found on such sites as Kumbi Saleh, the presumed capital of the Ghana empire, but it is also found on pottery of the Kintampo 'neolithic' tradition. That, it was a northern trait is likely but so far that matter is all pottery ultimately. Slipping is not a highly localized element and the red colouring matter is obtained from the iron rich lateritic deposits developed on the Basement Complex rocks of Africa. Features which are perhaps more culturally significant are the red painted designs of such Volta confluence assemblages as that of New Buipe and certain of the actual pottery forms such as the pedestals and pot-stands which do not seem to form part of the indigenous ceramic tradition of the region and which could quite easily be derived from the middle Niger. Some of the pots clearly imitate copper vessels and indicate that this was a period when vessels of copper and its alloys, particularly small basins, were of significance and presumably brought by the traders. Ozanne<sup>33</sup> similarly noted from the Accra Plains the effect that the arrival of brassware might have had on coastal ceramics resulting in polished finishes and angled forms such as the carination also common at Begho. Copper vessels cannot however normally be expected from excavated house sites since when a copper pot or basin is worn or broken it would still retain a high value for remelting and manufacture into other objects unlike its ceramic counterpart. It is of interest to note that three small basins now in the Archaeology Department Museum, were dug from graves near Techiman Secondary School though there is no means of dating them.<sup>34</sup>

Architecturally the evidence so far obtained is of buildings without foundations largely built of swish on a rectilinear pattern with rooms some 2 - 3 metres wide and up to 4 - 5 metres long. A recurrent feature is the presence of platforms up to 40cm. above floor level around the edge of the rooms or facing into the courtyard. These are still features of Brong architecture. In the Brong quarter, one house with earthenware cylindrical drain pipes was excavated in 1972 which indicates that the flat roofed Sudanic house was perhaps tried in the seventeenth century but did not succeed. Similar drain pipes are found in the New Buipe<sup>35</sup> sequence appearing in the sixteenth or seventeenth century and presumably also represent a northern influence.

Burials have been found on both the Brong and Kramo quarters. Those on the Brong quarter have no consistent pattern of orienta-

tion and are flexed, whilst the only two found on the Kramo quarter are extended in a north-south orientation which may indicate that they are those of Muslims, though the direction of Mecca is east north-east rather than north-south. Other signs of Islamization which one might expect to accompany the arrival of Mande traders, such as 'pilgrimage' water flasks of north African origin or actual mosques have not been found, though a small flat rectangular piece of glass may have come from an amulet of the type stitched into jackets and which was still very popular at the time Dupuis visited Ashanti.<sup>36</sup>

Evidence of trade can only satisfactorily be obtained from the number and size of the settlements in the area and from the presence of trade goods. The oral traditions, the six radio-carbon dates from the 1970 and 1972 excavations which ranged from A.D. 1430 + 100 to 1710 + 100, and archaeological material such as tobacco pipes, indicate a date for Begho between A.D. 1350 and probably not later than A.D. 1725. From the work at present in progress the town was at its peak in the seventeenth century. It would appear that a town with several thousand inhabitants developed during that period and that the population dispersed with the decline of the trade consequent upon the rise of Ashanti and the growth of Kumasi as a major market centre. Market towns rarely reveal the products for which they were famed. Gold was too precious to be lost and the fact that the people of Begho did not bury grave goods militates against finding gold ornaments. Kola which must also have been an important trade staple does not survive. However there is evidence of various industries which may have contributed to trade. Iron slag is very abundant on all the sites and indicates a widely dispersed smelting of iron which was not confined to the *Tumfuo* quarter. Dr Van Landewijk<sup>37</sup> has strongly argued that many of the blue, often rather poorly made, beads at Begho may have been made locally from the siliceous slag which is a by-product of iron smelting. He thinks that the local manufacture of blue beads in West Africa may explain the legends about the Aggrey beads. Beads were certainly made since the waste products from their manufacture are found. Other industries could have included the carving of ivory ornaments for trade and local use. Bracelets, the ends of two decorated ivory side blown trumpets and pieces of unworked ivory have been found on the two Brong sites. By the time Portuguese arrived on the Ghana coast there was certainly trade there. Mande traders, some of whose words have remained as loan words in the Akan languages,<sup>38</sup> were bringing down striped blue cloth whilst the coastal peoples were trading in dried fish and salt.<sup>39</sup> In a 1629 coastal account<sup>40</sup> mention is made of 'Insoco', which might refer to Begho, and of the importance of weaving in the area. Spindle whorls have been found on each excavation and on the Kramo quarter a metre deep hole associated with

a cistern may be a dye hole for the blue cloth that was in demand further to the south. The townspeople were certainly more prosperous than the present day communities in the area. Cattle were more commonly eaten and hunting undertaken for relatively larger game than the grasscutters and small antelopes of the present day. cursory examination of the teeth indicates the presence of horse amongst the bones which could indicate its use for trade, or its presence at Begho may indicate the prestige and/or northern origins of its rulers.

Actual imports have varied considerably in number from site to site in Begho. On the B1 site 372 isolated (as opposed to being in strings) beads, many of which were clearly imports and some recognizably of Dutch or Venetian manufacture, were found whereas there were only 21 from the B2 site. Again on the B1 site there were more than 40 objects of copper or its alloys compared to 14 from the B2 site for the levels of the same age. It is obvious that there were contrasts in personal wealth between different houses of the same quarter at Begho though it may be that certain areas of a house may prove to be more rewarding than others. In archaeology there is a very strong element of chance which even extensive sampling cannot entirely eliminate. On the B1 site a piece of late sixteenth (or possibly seventeenth) century Chinese blue and white porcelain was found which provides a tantalizing insight into the luxury goods which may have been imported and still await discovery. Cowries, which were certainly imported, would appear to have had little importance as less than half a dozen have been found and those only on two of the sites. This could mean that gold dust was more important as even a local medium of exchange.

The most interesting artefact yet found, a brass bracelet, was not discovered during excavation but as so often happened was an accidental find. Dug up in the area traditionally reputed to be the original market located between the Kramo and Brong quarters, by a local cultivator it is impossible to date precisely, though it is most likely to date from the main period of Begho. Triangular in section and weighing 356 grams it is decorated with a plaited design around the inner edge, beaded along the outer apex and with alternating raised cowrie shell designs and segment shaped designs covered with ridges parallel to the arc of the segment along the two flat faces. The designs are reminiscent of those found on Ashanti brass ware and the bracelet probably belongs to the same cultural and technological tradition. At Nsawkaw nineteen kilometres east of Begho can be seen a large collection of brass ware in three locations, each regarded as a shrine in its own right. The largest is a brass basin in the open air, over a metre across, with an ornate design around the sides consisting of an Arabic inscription in Kufie script which is clearly of North African manufacture and of possible fourteenth

century date. The bowl is reputed to have come from heaven. The most venerated item is a two headed female 'Janus' figure in polished brass evidently made in West Africa. The figure is said to have been brought from the sacred hole from which the people of Hani and Nsawkaw came. In another house a collection of eighteen major items and several minor ones includes two bowls with Arabic inscriptions in panels around the outside. A jug, a calabash ladle and bells exhibit workmanship not dissimilar to that found on certain pieces of Ashanti brassware. The designs of the non-imported items like those with the arabic scripts often consist of all-over designs or include continuous rows of chevron designs but there are no naturalistic designs. Other isolated bowls or collections of brassware, which appear to have a north African origin have come from Atebubu, Ahwene Koko,<sup>41</sup> Manso north of Nkoranza and Amoaman and Ejisu in Ashanti. Other bowls<sup>42</sup> are reported from Kranka, Nkoranza (which may now be lost) and Adoi in Brong Ahafo and Nsuta near Mampong in Ashanti, the descriptions of which do not allow one to postulate an origin. Mrs. Meyerowitz thinks the Ejisu bowl may have been brought from Bono Manso.<sup>43</sup> The existence of these bowls in the Brong Ahafo area indicates the past importance of trade whilst the fourteenth century date of a bronze ewer of Richard II of England, found in one of the Asantehene's enclosures in 1896 in Kumasi, could, after dating, provide an indication of when the foreign brassware may have been reaching the Brong area.

The imported brassware may have been one of the stimulants for the later growth of the Ashanti brass working traditions. Though many of the brass gold weights show a great individuality of design there are certain features which indicate a northern influence. The all-over designs, the shape of many of the brass containers (*kuduo*) and the treatment of the decoration, and the patterns of some of the geometric gold weights are somewhat reminiscent of Islamic brassware whilst many belong to the Islamic weighting system.<sup>44</sup> It could be postulated that brass items were constantly imported into the towns of the Sudanic belt. A crocodile from a mound at Killi in Mali<sup>45</sup> is not dissimilar to the later Ashanti gold weights, whilst bracelets from some of the Mali mounds parallel some of the motifs of the Begho bracelet. The Mande traders would have brought down brass objects as items of trade and it is probable that some of the presumed indigenous Brong brassware owes its origin to inspiration from Malian and North African prototypes. With the rise of Ashanti many of the objects, as well as the necessary technology and designs, would have been brought south where they flourished, particularly from the early eighteenth century in the suitable economic and social climate provided by the effervescent rise of the Ashanti. This is of course speculation but gives an indication of how

finds once fitted into their historical context may throw new light on important problems of culture contact.

### **Begho And The Gonja**

It is of interest to note the contrasts that have so far been observed between the Begho area and the Gonja area. Both are credited with having witnessed movements from the north-west of Mande people, though in the case of Gonja it was a sudden movement of Ngbanya horsemen whilst the movement into the Begho area was the gradual movement of traders, who presumably to avoid upsetting the mechanics of the trade would have avoided altering the *status quo* as much as possible. The Gonja area presented a relatively sparsely inhabited area containing a dispersed settlement of cultivators with different linguistic origins. The Ngbanya created a conquest state with a definite immigrant hierarchy. Islam was the religion of its rulers. In Begho the ecological attractiveness of the area would suggest a rather more densely settled area, perhaps with some nucleated villages existing even before the arrival of the Mande. Except in certain areas the actual rulers were probably not Muslims and the archaeological evidence suggests that the local rituals prevailed. The absence of much detail about the rulers of Begho is in contrast to the detailed stories of Jakpa and his successors and suggests that the Begho rulers presented what would now be termed a rather low profile. No chiefs' graves are remembered at Begho, and none which can clearly be indicated as chiefs' burials have been excavated in contrast to the more prominent chiefs' burial-places of Gonja. Mathewson has argued that the red slipped carinated wares of the area "represents autochthonous Dumpo occupation which antedates the arrival of the Mande and the commercial development of Bicu"<sup>46</sup> He associates the red design-painted sherds with the Mande who he sees as suddenly arriving in the area in the sixteenth century. The evidence from Begho does not support this contention as the red slipped wares, if anything, increase in quantity in the sequence and are not so abundant in the earliest levels (? fifteenth century). The red design-painted wares are insignificant in quantity and if associated with the Mande then they are associated with the Ngbanya only, who were only one minority Mande group. But because of the nature of their impact as discussed above, their effect in the Gonja area was probably greater. They came as conquerors. The double-storied houses, like that at Jakpawuase near Salaga, their flat roofs drained by earthenware drainpipes, their horses as evidenced by iron horse-trappings, all left a material mark. As a conquering group it probably included women folk<sup>47</sup> who could have included the makers of the design painted-ware, whereas the Mande traders at Begho were probably content with local women, local pottery and only marginally influenced the material culture perhaps by having the

Mo potters make certain pot forms with which they were familiar in their area of origin. One feature common to both areas is the use of the thick swish walls built up in layers of wet clay rather than plastered onto a framework of poles and woven horizontal sticks. As a male activity, this building technique may have been one of the definite cultural traits brought down by the early Mande traders to Brong Ahafo.

It is pertinent to ask, why did not Jakpa and his militant predecessors stay in the richer Begho area but moved to the more barren Gonja area? Human factors are always difficult to assess but it may have been because of the rather closed Begho environment and the inability to use horses there and probably because it was already well settled. Contact was certainly maintained with the Begho area according to Wilks<sup>48</sup> who has indicated how the Mallams who did the conversions for the Ngbanya came from Begho. The Ngbanya certainly passed through the Begho area where some of their graves at Njau are still remembered, whilst Goody<sup>49</sup> records that this settlement is still known as Kponkokuura in Brong (Gbangawuura in Gonja) which means the horseman's village.

### Priorities For Future Research

Though we are getting to know a little about the earliest agricultural societies within the area (the Kintampo cultural tradition) and rather more about the period AD 1400—1750 from archaeology, the period in between is still a blank. The oral traditions of the area jump straight from holes in the ground\*, which archaeologically may refer to rock shelters and water holes, to the existing societies of the area. Unfortunately the intermediate sites we seek may be difficult to find. Small settlements of cultivators, particularly if they lived in relatively flimsy houses and had little in the way of material goods, are notoriously difficult to find except by accident. We certainly need to know if the Begho ceramics go back in time within the same area before we can postulate Brong origins. In the next few years it is hoped to excavate one of the settlement sites north-east of Namasa which may predate Begho. The connections with the area to the east will be explored and one of the Department of Archaeology's M.A. students, Mr E. Effah-Gyamfi, hopes to undertake trial excavations on sites associated with the Bcno Manso state in the long vacation of 1973. Other trading sites like those of Bima and Bofe will similarly be sampled and eventually, we hope, so will several sites en route to Jenne in the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta. In September, (1973) I shall visit Museums in Dakar and Bamako to see whether there are any direct correspondences between the ceramics of the Begho area and those of the Mali empire. Unfortuna-

\* See Interview with Nana Kwakye Ameyaw, Ch. iii ed.

tely, however, very few firmly dated sites of the period from A.D. 1300–1400 have been found or excavated in the middle Niger area.

Though many sets of oral traditions were collected from western Brong Ahafo in the early days of the Ashanti Research Project more collecting should be undertaken particularly from smaller centres to the west of Begho. Place name studies may reveal more about the autochthonous inhabitants than further speculations based on traditions. The work being undertaken by Mr Crossland on the Begho ceramics and links with modern potting traditions highlight the need for renewed investigation of the material culture of the wider area. The modern 'trade' zones of the present day potters may indicate more than just the realities of economics. An analysis of the traditional material culture should go a long way to isolating and estimating the scale and nature of elements of both cultural continuity and intrusion. It can thus be seen that for a more comprehensive picture to emerge about the area we need the active collaboration of historians, linguists and anthropologists and we hope that scholars in these disciplines will make use of the facilities of the Begho Archaeological Research Centre to undertake such collaborative research.

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## CHAPTER II

### A NOTE ON THE HISTORY OF ISLAM IN BRONG AHAFO

K. O. ODOOM

#### The Mande and The Saharan Trade

The history of Islam in the area covered by what is today the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana forms part of the story of the spread of those islamised African peoples whose main interest was to participate in the great trans-Saharan trade system, in which gold from the Western Sudan featured prominently for a number of centuries.\* This interest in trade in turn fostered the establishment of communities of Muslims along the great trade route which stretched from the shores of North Africa to the fringes of the forest in the South, from the Atlantic Ocean in the West to Hausaland in the east. The point must be emphasized that the establishment of these communities of traders must be seen as one aspect of the process of islamisation which took the form of what Levtzion has termed "the dispersion of Muslims rather than the spread of Islam",<sup>1</sup> for it involved the movement of islamised peoples from one area into another and, as already noted, their main interest lay in trade rather than in converting the indigenous people among whom they settled to carry on business. However, these traders, being Muslim, carried Islam over a wide area as they extended the trade routes in search of newer and richer sources of gold.

Four main centres in the Western Sudan have been identified with the production of gold, which occupied the pride of place among the articles of trade in the area. The first to be exploited by Muslim traders were those of Bambuk in the area where the Senegal and Faleme rivers meet. It has been suggested that it was gold produced in this region which came under the control of the rulers of ancient Ghana and to which that Empire owed its prosperity and fame.<sup>2</sup> The second gold fields were those of Bure located on the Upper Niger, and these became accessible to Muslim traders in the period between the 11th and 12th centuries. The growth of several Malinke chiefdoms which eventually culminated in the creation of the Mali Empire is attributed to the exploitation of these gold fields.<sup>3</sup> The third and fourth — and perhaps the most important — of these gold fields as far as our region is concerned, were the so-called "Lobi gold fields" located along the Black Volta River in north-eastern Ivory Coast and north-western areas of Ghana

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\* See Posnansky, ch. *i*, in this volume, ed.

and the northern Akan forests. I say the most important because, firstly, it was gold from the Lobi and Akan goldfields that reached Europe through the coast. Secondly, the centre for the distribution of gold from the Lobi and Akan gold fields was the town of Begho in the modern Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.

Needless to say, all these gold fields were worked by local people but the net-work for distributing the metal extracted was established by Muslim traders who also enjoyed exclusive monopoly in distributing it along the trade routes to North Africa, from where it found its way to European markets. It has in fact been claimed that the Western Sudan provided Europe with most of her gold requirement throughout the Middle Ages until the discovery of America.<sup>4</sup> It also appears that it was the attempt by Europeans to break this Muslim monopoly over the gold trade which led to the exploration of, and the establishment of forts and castles, especially by the Portuguese, along the West African coast beginning in the 15th century. The best known of these Muslim traders in gold were indeed members of that great family of Mande tribes known to the peoples of modern Ghana as the Wangara, a term made current in West Africa by the Hausa who in turn derived it from Arabic sources.<sup>5</sup> Hence the history of the spread of Islam into the Brong region cannot be properly understood without taking account of the ancient continental trade system and the part the Wangara played in that system.

Before moving on to another aspect of our subject, I wish to emphasise that the role of the Mande in trade in the Western Sudan was not a one-way affair. Apart from gold which they carried northwards along the trade routes, the Wangara or Dyula traders, as they are usually called, brought with them to the gold producing areas in the South one important item — salt. This commodity, produced in salt-mines in the Saharan oases, was either in bars or broken into pieces and then carried on camels across the Sahara by Sudanese traders to be distributed along the trade routes that led ultimately to the gold mines. The distribution was again in the hands of the Wangara who had become islamised as a result of contact with Arab and Berber merchants with whom they exchanged itinerant traders and, as they extended the trade routes, there grew up along them colonies of Muslim traders among whom these Dyula found hospitality. Trade and Islam thus came to be closely associated with the Dyula branch of the Mande.

The extent of Mande involvement in the trans-Saharan trade and thus in the spread of Islam in the area of which Brong forms a part may be gauged from the wide distribution of languages of the Mande family along the trade routes. Jack Goody, for instance, has summarised it this way:

As can be seen from the map in *The Languages of West Africa*, languages of the Mande family are distributed right along the great trade routes which led from the Niger bend to the Begho—Bouduku area. The economic basis for the achievements of the great empires of the Niger bend lay in the trade in gold ivory and slaves across the Sahara to the Barbary Coast and then to Europe, a trade largely carried on by Moorish merchants. The gold mines of Wangara (Mande) were the goal of European exploration. The source of these supplies of gold and slaves lay to the West and South of the famous Sudanese cities, and trade to those areas was largely in the hands of the Mandespeaking Dyulas, whose name is itself derived from the Mande word 'to trade', and has taken on the generalized meaning of trader throughout the region. Salt from the mines of the Sahara was exchanged for gold, ivory, slaves and kola nuts. Cloth and cattle also went South from the regions between the forest and the entrepôts on the Niger.<sup>6</sup>

### Begho and Bono Manso

By far the most important commercial centre and outpost for Islam in the Brong country was the ancient town of Begho which owed its prosperity and fame to the settlement there of Dyula traders. Jack Goody has already drawn attention to the role of these Dyula traders in the spread of Islam southwards along the trade route from the Niger down to Begho.<sup>7</sup> Suffice it to note here, that prior to the rise of Ashanti in the latter part of seventeenth century, Begho, to all intents and purposes, marked the southerly limit of Dyula commercial activity. The choice of this town, its colonisation and development into a commercial centre by the Muslim Dyula for the distribution of gold from its production centres in the Akan forest was all dictated by natural factors. For, as Wilks has pointed out, a more northerly route over the Banda Hills was obstructed by the Black Volta, while further south, though scarcely more than a day's journey from Begho itself, the high forest made penetration impossible.<sup>8</sup>

According to local tradition from Nsawkaw, the inhabitants of Begho were composed of three groups: the Muslims ('Karamoko') the Brong (the Abronfo) and the Blacksmiths (the tonfo or Numu).<sup>\*</sup> At Hani itself, which was built as successor to Begho, the tradition is that the components of the Begho population were the Muslims, the Brong and the Nafana. The town is said to have consisted of two quarters, one for Muslims and another for non-Muslims.<sup>9</sup> It may be assumed that the Muslim quarter was developed as a market for the itinerant Dyula traders. It is said that the Muslim

<sup>\*</sup> See Posnansky, ch. *i*, ed.

section of the town was known to the Akan as 'Nsoko' and it is probably by this name that Begho became known to Europeans on the coast. The name Nsoko itself appears in nineteenth century European records and, according to Dupuis, it stood for the whole region around Begho while Namasa, located on the edge of the ruined township, was considered its capital.<sup>10</sup>

It is not certain when the Muslim Dyula first began settling at Begho.\* The event, however, must have taken place before the rise of Ashanti as the effective power in the region south of Eegho during the latter part of the 17th century. It also antedates the founding of the Gonja state to the north probably in the middle of the 16th century, for traditions of Namasa speak of a battle between the Mande invaders who founded Gonja and the "cave people", namely the Brong. The "invading horsemen" were driven away by the combined forces of the people of Begho and the Brongs, who, at that time, were subjects of the Begho chief.<sup>11</sup>

Although the date for the first Mande settlement at Begho is a matter of some controversy, it is generally agreed that the first Mande groups to arrive there are those defined by linguists as Proto-Dyula. Following Tauxier (1921) and Goody (1964) Levtzion identifies them as the Ligby and the Numu, the former having "migrated from the Upper Niger to the fringes of the forest, towards the region where the frontiers of the Ivory Coast, Guinea and Liberia meet."<sup>12</sup> "Attracted by the prospects of gold, probably that of the region of Banda," the Ligby accompanied by the Numu, arrived at Begho where they were joined later by the Dyula.<sup>13</sup>

The opening up of the Akan gold fields, the rise of Jenne and the development of Begho both as commercial centres within the Sudanese trade system must all be seen as related events. An early 16th century account of trade to Jenne is given by Valentim Fernandes who wrote:

To Jenne the merchants came who go to the gold mines. These traders belong to a certain race called the Ungaros: these are red or brownish. In fact no one is allowed to approach these mines but those of this race, to the exclusion of others, because they are regarded with a great deal of trust . . . When these Ungaros arrive at Jenne each merchant brings with him a hundred negro slaves, or more to carry the salt on their heads from Jenne as far as the mines, and from there to bring back the gold. The merchants who make trade with the gold mines do considerable business. Certain of them have trade that can rise to 60,000 mithqals; even those who are content to bring the salt to Jenne make 10,000 mithqals' business.<sup>14</sup>

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\*See Posnansky, ch. *i*, ed.

This description of the trade in salt and gold to and from Jenne, respectively, which was in the charge of the Mande Dyula, confirms a statement by the Timbuktu author of *Ta'rikh al — Sudan*, al-Sa'di, who spoke of the trade pattern in the area in the following terms:

Jenne is one of the greatest Muslim markets, where traders with salt from the mine of Teghaza meet traders with the gold of Bitu . . . It is because of this blessed town [of Jenne] that caravans come to Timbuktu from all points of the horizon: east and west, south and north.<sup>15</sup>

If the Bitu of al-Sa'di refers to Begho — and there seems to be no reason to doubt the identification<sup>16</sup> — then Begho was certainly one of the earliest centres for the diffusion of Mande Muslim influence not only in the Brong region but also in neighbouring areas. The trade route from Jenne to Begho passed, for instance, through the predominantly Muslim towns of Kong and Bobo-Dioulasso and it is most likely that these two were developed by Muslim traders as caravan towns. Ivor Wilks has also stressed the rise of warrior groups along this trade route. Some of these groups, accompanied by Muslim Dyula, were responsible for the creation of the Gonja state to the north of Begho, while others, he claims, moved southwards to found the royal house of Akwamu.<sup>17</sup>

As has already been noted, Begho owed its prosperity and fame to the settlement there of Mande groups among whom were the Muslim Dyula whose role in the salt and gold trade made Begho into a prosperous commercial centre. Their dispersion from Begho followed the ruin of the town. The collapse of Begho which seems to have occurred in the early eighteenth century<sup>18</sup> is attributed to a quarrel which arose among the various components of its inhabitants — a quarrel which “involved not only Muslim Dyula and non-Muslim Brong, but also one Dyula group and another.”<sup>19</sup> The ‘urban warfare’, (as Wilks describes it) which followed the quarrel scattered Begho’s inhabitants. One may also see in the collapse of Begho the result of change in the trade patterns in the area due to the chaotic conditions in the Western Sudan following the Moroccan invasion, the rise of Ashanti and the extension of the trade route from the Akan forest to the coast.<sup>20</sup>

The rise of Begho itself as a commercial centre, was, of course, due to its proximity to the gold fields of the Akan forest. The first Akan state from which gold reached Jenne and beyond from the distributing centre at Begho was that of Bono-Manso. Indeed, it would seem that the creation of this state was due in no small measure to the trade in gold and kola, some of which, at any rate, must have come from further south and which she must have controlled. This is confirmed by some of the traditions recorded by Mrs. Meyerowitz, according to which the “prosperity and advanced

civilization" attained by the state of Bono Manso were due to this Muslim trade in gold and kola.<sup>21</sup>

Traditions also record the presence of Muslim traders in the capital of the state, some of whom are on record to have established social relations with the ruling classes, especially with royal princesses.<sup>22</sup> The dispersion of the Muslims from Bono Manso is said to have occurred at the time of the Ashanti invasion in 1723. This point receives some confirmation from the fact that all the Muslims living at the present time in the area of the old state claim to have arrived there since "the second quarter of the 19th century."<sup>23</sup>

This claim, based as it was on Goody's enquiries in the area, is, however, contradicted by information given to Dupuis in 1819 in Kumasi concerning the existence of Muslim communities in both the northwestern and northeastern provinces of what was then the Ashanti empire. Within the former, Dupuis was told by the Kumasi Muslims, were "the provinces of Soko (Nsawkaw) and Takima" (Takyiman) where Muslims had established themselves in large towns and lived "in distinct societies under the jurisdiction of their own laws, but in subordination to the caboceers, appointed by the king of Ashanti . . ."<sup>24</sup> In the same area Namasa, which formed part of the Begho complex and was described as the "metropolis of Soko," was estimated as containing about one thousand Muslims. Waraki (? Wenchi) and Kherabi (unidentified) also are mentioned as among the towns where Muslims were known to form part of the population. Of great significance in this connection, perhaps, was the district of Kherabi where the Muslims were said to live "entirely by themselves in a city" of some size. Though no name of a 'city' is mentioned, such a 'city' was reported to Dupuis to have been the residence of the head of the Muslims who, from there, ruled all the believers in Ashanti's northwestern provinces on behalf of the Ashanti monarch.<sup>25</sup>

With regard to the provinces in the northeast, Nkoranza (Coransah) and Banda (the kingdom of Banna) were known among the areas which had Muslim residents among their populations.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, when it is considered that the information given to Dupuis led him to estimate the number of Muslims in Ashanti's Northwestern provinces alone to be 80,000 souls, and that this figure, according to his reckoning, was smaller than that of the provinces of the northeast,<sup>27</sup> it becomes obviously difficult to reconcile the position of Islam in the time of Dupuis with the information given to Goody in 1965.

While it can be conceded that the Kumasi Muslims probably exaggerated the importance of Islam in Ashanti's provinces, one would still have to explain where all the Muslims in the Begho area as well as those within the Bono Manso state dispersed after the



collapse of the former and the defeat of the latter by Ashanti. It could be suggested that while some of the Muslims from the Begho complex migrated to Kong and Banda (see below) others—including some of those within Bono Manso — went to establish themselves in the towns and districts enumerated to Dupuis by the Kumasi Muslims.

If this suggestion is accepted one or two comments may be made here in connection with the information given to Goody. Firstly, it appears certain that Goody's information came from Muslims who could recall only the events in the area which just about coincided with the British defeat of Ashanti in 1874. It should also be noted that this was a period characterised by intense activity in the kola trade with the Akan forest—trade which was mainly controlled by the Muslim Hausa. May it not be assumed that the Hausa near-monopoly of the kola trade at this time was accompanied by and led to large scale Hausa migration into the area?

Secondly it is probable that, as Levtzion has shown in the case of Dagomba, the earlier Muslim residents in the northwest of Ashanti were superceded by the more recent arrivals by virtue of their numerical strength. Unlike the case of Dagomba, however, where Muslims held offices at the Ya Na's (the king of Dagomba's) court and where it is therefore possible to distinguish the earlier from the more recent arrivals by virtue of the offices held by their descendants today, Muslims did not become, or perhaps, were not allowed to become welded into the socio-political structure of the Brong, or indeed of any Akan state.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the above references to Muslim groups in the old Bono Manso area, there is record of Muslims within the Bole division of the Gonja state who claim descent from Muslims who lived in the area between Nkoranza and Takyiman. These are identified by Goody as the Gberi, but they are known among the Gonja as 'Mbotisua', a word which is generally interpreted as 'Akan Muslims' or 'Muslims of the Akan'. "They are traditionally connected with gold and kola trade and appear to be descended from a group of Dyula who settled in 'Brong' country and adopted the local culture, or else indigenes who were converted to Islam."<sup>29</sup>

The speculation about the Akan Muslims in Gonja (Mbotisua) points to the success Muslims seem to have had among some sections of Brong society at least in the field of proselytisation. But what about the impact of Islam and Muslim cultural tradition on Brong culture as a whole, especially since Muslims are said to have had close social relations with members of the Bono royal household? It is impossible in this short paper to examine this whole question but one or two observations may be made.

In the first place it is clear that this first Akan Kingdom of Bono Manso was closely linked with the economy of the Western Sudan and, as a result it came to acquire "some markedly northern cultural traits in, for example, the importance of the horse in both ritual and everyday life"<sup>30</sup> This statement is probably based on Mrs Meyerowitz' remark that in the Bono kingdom "the horse was used for general transport; the whole nation rode."<sup>31</sup> There is reference also to two other cultural traditions of the Brongs which have northern origin, both of them in the field of chiefship ritual. Bono tradition, according to Mrs Meyerowitz, claims that in former times their chiefs sat on cushions and not on stools.<sup>32</sup> The same writer makes reference to another northern influence on Brong chiefship rituals. This is the use of the hooded gown<sup>33</sup> by Brong chiefs which, though originally not Muslim, is certainly of Middle Eastern origin and was brought to the Brong region by Muslims from further north.

In the second place it is worth recalling some of Rattray's accounts of 'Brong' ceremonies which indicate strong Muslim influence. There is, for instance, reference to the use of the fez<sup>34</sup> and to the Muslim Holy City of Mecca described as a place "well known to the Ashanti."<sup>35\*</sup>

But perhaps by far the most important Muslim cultural influence on the Brong is to be seen in the forty-day calendar of the Akan (*Adaduanan*) according to which a period of 42 days is calculated by running a seven day week against a six day one.<sup>36</sup> The seven day week which has its probable origin in Middle Eastern society occurs in the Hebrew, Christian and Muslim religions while traditionally in West Africa weekly cycles of three, four, five or six days are common and are linked with the rotation of market days. The significance of Friday to the Akan should be noted in this connection. It is probable that the 'Adaduanan' and its mode of calculation are the result of the influence of the Muslim calendar on local methods of calculating the week and 'represents the conjunction of the Moslem (based on a seven day week) and the indigenous (based on a six day week) cycles that reflect the economic interests that were the feature of these savanna towns.'<sup>37</sup> The Brongs' special role in purveying the 'adaduanan' to the Akan seems to be confirmed by Rattray's information that the Brongs were the 'keepers of the King's calendar' and that the king always referred to them whenever he was in doubt as to the date of a festival.<sup>38</sup>

It may be concluded from the above summary of the evidence that Islam and Muslims did have a considerable degree of influence

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\*One may also note the practice of the Asantehene of giving *Sadaka*, alms, at palace every Friday. The Asantehene then distributes cakes or *doughnuts* to the children in the presence of the Nsumankwahene, chief of the Asantehene's physicians, and the Kumasi Chief *Imam*, ed.

on the Brongs both religiously and culturally and as Goody observers, "Muslim influence in Bono was strong and there was, it is said, the same kind of bipolarity between chiefs (i.e. ruling estates) and Muslims (i.e. traditional Muslim groups) as that found in the Voltaic area".<sup>39</sup> One may finally point out that in spite of this strong Muslim influence in Bono, there was one office that no Muslim nor indeed, any circumcised person could hold — and this was the office of chief. Circumcision thus stood as a barrier between the Muslim and chiefly office in the Bono kingdom and this may have accounted for the absence of converts among chiefly estates in Bono.

The kingdom of Bono-Manso was of course broken up in 1722/23 by Ashanti forces who were also responsible for dealing the last blow to Begho, already in decline before the advent of the Ashanti forces. With the break up of the two Muslim centres of trade in the Brong region — Begho was rebuilt as Hani<sup>40</sup> — other Muslim market centres were developed in consequence of the extension of Ashanti dominion over areas where they did not formerly wield authority, or if they did, only on a small scale.

The rise of Ashanti and her wars of conquest and expansion with which we are only indirectly concerned, may both be seen as closely related to the opening up of the Niger — Begho trade route to the coast at Elmina. Wilks has commented:

Not only did the early expansion of Ashanti occur along the line of the route, into and beyond the Begho region until it was arrested on the frontiers of the Dyula kingdom of Kong but even earlier the extended trade route had determined the line of advance of the groups who only later were to constitute themselves the nucleus of the new Ashanti state.<sup>41</sup>

It appears, therefore, that Ashanti expansionist activities in the 18th century were, in effect, an attempt to gain control over the Akan gold fields as well as over the trade route to the north and south.

### **The aftermath of the Ashanti conquest**

The Ashanti conquest of Bono Manso led to the break up of this first Akan forest kingdom; its rulers became the subjects of Ashanti kings. This, together with the dispersion of the Muslims from the Bono kingdom and their subsequent resettling in other areas, was the first direct consequence of Ashanti's emergence as the most effective power in the forest region bordering the savannah.<sup>42</sup> The second consequence of some importance to this paper was the creation of new trading and market centres in what is today the northwest of Ashanti within the present Brong Ahafo as well as at

Salaga and later at Krachi. With the decline of Begho as a trading centre the Muslim Dyula and, in particular, the Ligby, migrated to what is today Banda where they are said to have engaged in the kola and, to a lesser extent, the slave trade. In the course of their commercial activities some of them came to settle in other trading centres such as Yendi, Sansanne-Mango and Salaga — all within the Middle Volta Basin. After the destruction of their settlements within Banda by the Abron of Gyaman, the Banda Muslims migrated to Wenchi and Kintampo in the early 1880's. In all these areas the descendants of these Dyula groups are known by the common patronymic Banda.

It appears that the trade in gold to the north ceased, due principally to Ashanti control over the Akan gold fields as well as to their diversion of the metal to the coast because of increased demand for it by Europeans. The Ashanti needed European goods, especially guns and gun powder some of which they paid for in gold. What, however, is certain is, that the nineteenth century saw a change in the articles of trade from the Akan forests to the north. Kola nuts instead of gold became the most important commodity in the north-bound trade. The same century saw the take-over by the Hausa of Northern Nigeria of the distribution of the new commodity. It was the Hausa therefore who are credited with the creation of new market centres like those of Kintampo and Atebubu. Thus, it was Hausaland rather than Jenne and Timbuktu which became the final destination of the kola from the Akan forest.

By far the most important Muslim trading centre in Brong Ahafo in the late nineteenth century was that of Kintampo. The development and growth of this market was a direct result of the British conquest of Ashanti in 1874 which greatly upset the trade pattern and resulted in the closure of the main route to Salaga. In the early 19th century and before the confusion following Ashanti defeat, Kintampo had been known only as a rest stop on the Hausa route from Kumasi to Buipe and Daboya and it was not until about 1882 that the market there became known. It was then, as Lonsdale described it, "the headquarters of the kola trade".<sup>43</sup> In 1884 the first European visited Kintampo and described the town in his report as "the largest market in this part of Africa".<sup>44</sup> According to Levtzion, the Kintampo market grew in importance "at the expense of Salaga, as a considerable part of the latter's floating population moved there".<sup>45</sup> During the reign of the Asantehene Mensa Bonsu (1874-83) the Kintampo market suffered considerably due to the closure by the Nkoranza chief of the Ashanti trade route to the north which passed through his territory. As a result, Kintampo had no direct access to the coast and goods brought there came from Bonduku.

The importance of the Salaga market and of Kintampo as heir to the former may be inferred from Lonsdale's report which asserts that "the leading traders, the organizers of the caravans, invariably expressed their hope that kola may once again be plentiful in the Salaga market as during the time the Ashanti controlled it, primarily because of the increased distance for them to travel to Kintampo, and particularly on account of the loss they suffer on that extended portion of their journey through sickness and death among their horses, mules and donkeys . . ."46 But of course the Salaga market was never to return to the fame and glory of its former days. By 1892 the 'spirit of trade and enterprise' at Salaga had declined so considerably that Binger heard of people leaving for Kintampo and Kete Krachi.<sup>47</sup> The decline of the Salaga market was the result of British efforts to divert the bulk of the former north-bound trade to southern markets. The final blow to Salaga as a market town came with the civil war which occurred in 1892, during which most of the alien trading population dispersed.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper I have attempted to set in outline the story of the Muslims who moved into the area now covered by the Brong-Ahafo region. Their story is one of participation in trade rather than one of carrying Islam to the people with whom they traded. This trade was first in gold and to some extent in slaves to which kola was added in due course. By the time kola took the pride of place in the north-bound trade, gold had probably ceased to have any significant place as an item of trade.

In the period in which gold was the main product from the Akan forest, some of it must have come from the Takyiman and Banda areas, whence it was sent to Begho, some forty miles from the capital of the first Akan kingdom of Bono Manso, and then northwards to western Sudan. It was Muslims, particularly the Muslim Dyula, who were in charge of this trade between Bono Manso and the north and it is they who are credited with having made both Begho and the Akan kingdom prosperous.

With the rise of Ashanti the trade pattern changed. The new state took control over the gold producing centres in the forest and diverted the gold trade to Europeans on the coast. The Muslim Dyula scattered and in the 19th century the Hausa trade in kola took the place of the Dyula gold trade. Though Islam seems to have left no impression on the local people in the region, we must credit Muslim groups with helping to make the Brong region known to the outside world. The market centres, which they established became centres of civilization and its indigenous people certainly participated in the concomitant prosperity until Europeans took over the trade in the nineteenth century.

NOTES

1. N. Levtzion, 1968, p. xxv.
2. N. Levtzion, *op. cit.* p.3
3. N. Levtzion, 1971, p.132
4. R. Mauny, 1961, p.301
5. Ibn Battuta, 1922, iv. 394
6. Quoted from Kwame Arhin, 1965, p.135
7. Jack Goody, 1953 pp. 45-46
8. Ivor Wilks, 1961, p. 3
9. Goody, 1964, pp. 194-5. It is to be presumed that the Numu who were also a branch of the Dyula but pagan lived in the same quarter with the pagan Brongs.
10. J. Dupuis, 1824, p.Lviii. Wilks 1961 was the first to identify 'Insoko' in a 17th century Dutch document with the 'Nsoko' that was supposed to have been the name of the Muslim quarter of Begho. Goody 1964 however argues against this identification, although he agrees with Wilks that 'Nsoko' was a common name by which settlements of Mande peoples were known to Akan speakers. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the Muslims at Begho maintained themselves in a different quarter of the town just as the Hausa were to do later in other parts of Ghana.
11. See *History of Namasa* as recorded in Arabic (IASAR) 340 (ii), and also *The History of Namasa* by Namasahene Sumayila II at Institute of African Studies.
12. Levtzion, 1968, p.8. I have followed Levtzion's position in speaking of the first "Mande group" rather than of "the earliest *Muslim* element" of Goody (1964, p.195). Goody's statement gives the impression that members of these proto-Dyula groups were all Muslim whereas he himself later on speaks of the "Ligby as Muslims, the Numu Pagan and the Hwela now evenly divided."
13. *Ibid.*
14. Quoted from Wilks, 1971, p.356
15. Al-Sa'di, 1900, p.11-12; trans. pp.22-23
16. See Mauny, *op. cit.*, 359-60; Goody, 1964, p.211; Levtzion, 1968, p. 4.
17. Wilks 1961, p. 9. This point has received more emphasis in his latest article, (1971) on 'The Mossi and Akan States.' In J. F. A. Ajayi and M. Crowder eds. *History of West Africa*, vol. I, 1971, especially pp.364 ff.
18. Wilks, 1971, p.355.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Levtzion, 1968, p.11; Wilks, 1961, p.12. See below for the case of Salaga in the late 19th century.
21. Meyerowitz, 1951, p.198.
22. Meyerowitz, 1958, pp. 106-122.
23. Goody, 1965, p.49.
24. Dupuis 1824, p.Lviii.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Among the various Muslim groups resident at Nkoranza at the time of Dupuis were descendants of "Moslem Mandings" known to the Kumasi Muslims as "Salkoh" (Dupuis, p.124).

27. Dupuis, *op. cit.* Lviii.
28. See Levtzion, 1968, pp.91 ff.
29. Goody, 1964, p.198; Levtzion, 1968, p.7.
30. Wilks, 1971, p.360.
31. Meyerowitz, 1962, p. 81.
32. Meyerowitz, 1958, p.117
33. Meyerowitz, 1962, p.154
34. Rattray, 1923, p. 164.
35. *Ibid.* p.179
36. Goody 1965, p.20.
37. *Ibid.* Goody also points to Gonja and Dagomba, both of which were influenced by Islam, as possessing similar cycles. In Gonja, there is a seven-day week based on the Islamic calendar but there is also a traditional six-day cycle revolving around the Kulupi market day. It is significant that when the Salaga market day (Saturday) and the Kulupi market fall on the same day it is seen as something of special significance, while in Yendi the same coincidence is observed with license and general jubilation.
38. *Op. cit.* p. 144.
39. Goody, *op. cit.*, p.19.
40. Goody, 1965, p. 37.
41. Wilks, 1961, p. 12.
42. Of 'Mbotisua' above and also Dupuis' reference to Muslims in Ashanti's provinces.
43. Levtzion, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
44. *Ibid.* See also Arhin, 1965, p. 138.
45. Levtzion, *ibid.*
46. *Ibid.* p. 40.
47. *Ibid.*

### CHAPTER III

#### BONO-MANSO AND TECHIMAN

*Interview with Nana Kwakye Ameyaw Omanhene of  
Techiman — Successor to the Bono-Manso State*

[This interview with Nana Kwakye Ameyaw the Techimanhene was conducted by Kwame Arhin, editor of the present volume, in the presence of the Kurontihene and Akyeamehene of Techiman who put in a word now and then. It was transcribed and translated by C. E. Agyenim-Boateng, Graduate Research Assistant, Institute of African Studies. Nana Ameyaw, who was present at our seminar on the Brong peoples, answered questions on the points raised. We publish it both for the information it affords and also for an illustration of the interest that some modern educated chiefs of Ghana take in oral traditions.]

**Q:** What is the meaning of Bono or Brong?

**A:** "Bono" as has been explained by my forefathers means a "pioneer" — something that comes first. Among the Akan if a woman gives birth for the first time this is referred to as her *abonowoo*. It therefore appears to me that we were called *Bonofoo*, because we were the first to settle; we were the pioneer settlers in this area.

**Q:** Where did you come from to settle here?

**A:** I was informed by my elders that we came out of a hole (*yefri ebone mu*) called *Amoowi* at Pinihi near Nkoranza.<sup>1</sup>

**Q:** Nana, you have made mention of a hole (*bone*). Could it not be that the "Bono" used in reference to your tribe was derived from the traditional belief in your egress from the stone cave (compare *boo* and *bono*)<sup>2</sup>

**A:** No.

**Q:** Where did you [i.e. your ancestors] first settle before moving to your present site?

**A:** The tradition is that we first settled at *Pinihi* — which was discovered to be an unfavourable site so we moved to *Yefri*. While at this site the king sent messengers to look for a more favourable site. Manso was recommended to the King so we moved to settle at Manso. The Kurontihene was not allowed to come to Manso with the group. He was made to stay at *Yefri*. The families that came along were encouraged to live apart from each other, in different parts of the then acquired territory. This led to the expansion of the territory.



- Q:** How were the people grouped as they started settling in the new territory. Were they grouped by *nton*, clans?
- A:** Perhaps each group of people settled its area under a leader. As regards grouping by clan it is difficult to say whether the different clans now in existence date back to that period of time. We have the *Ayokoo* as the royal clan at Tekyiman, *Aduana*, *Bretuo*, *Asakyiri* and some others can also be found here.<sup>3</sup>
- Q:** You imply that when your people first settled here the area was then uninhabited. How came it that the Brong Manso state expanded over its actual and suspected extent?
- A:** What I can say for sure is that when my peoples settled here there was no inter-tribal warfare to stimulate dispersal over the land. What happened was that as our number increased segments of families left to build their own settlements. This led to the increase in number of towns and villages that formed the state. Expansion of the territory was also by conquest; for example, my people fought a war against the Yagbumwura (Gonjas) and drove them across the Volta.<sup>4</sup> We occupied their territory and the Volta became the boundary as the Yagbumwura and his people lived on its other bank.
- Q:** Where did the Yagbumwura live before crossing the Volta? Can you give us any guide so as to help us locate the place on a map?
- A:** The only guide that I can give is that he lived across the Volta, but I cannot tell whether it was at Buipe or Kabere.
- Q:** What were the boundaries of the Bono-Manso state?
- A:** We had borders with Yagbumwura, Krachi, Ejura (that is to say Mampong) Offinso, Gyaaman and Banda.
- Q:** What marked your boundary with Offinso?
- A:** A place called "Mfutudwaneemu" — this is a stretch of marshy land that lies near a stream which one crosses after passing Asuosu on the Techiman-Kumasi road. This stretch of marsh land turned dusty during periods of drought — which could be the *mfutudwaneemu* that was said to be the boundary with Offinso.
- Q:** Were there people living on the lands of the Bono Manso state who were not 'Brong' by tribe?
- A:** Yes, there were such groups of people. One can name people of Domase near Sunyani as an example. They were Denkyira who came to ask for land for settlement from the Techimanhene. People of Seikwa and Badu are believed to have come from Bona in Ivory Coast.

**Q:** What marked your boundary with the Gyaman state?

**A:** I cannot be specific on this. I know boundaries were marked by rivers and streams, but I cannot say for sure whether it was River Tain or River Yentumi. Techiman is referred to as "Bono Kyempim Duaduakwa hene mu hene," i.e. Duaduakwa the giver of thousands, king of kings. This is an appellation of the *Omanhene* of the state played on *atumpan* drums. It informs us of how the state was organised. It is said that as our ancestors increased in number when they settled at Bono Manso, the *Omanhene* (paramount chief) made different families settle under an elder in different parts of the territory. This was a security measure:<sup>5</sup> by settling people in different parts of the state he could be informed of any invasion of his territory by any group of warriors. Certain posts were therefore created — *oduadua nnipa no poso, poso, poso*, literally he settles people at strategic points. Akomadan was one such security post; Ankama, a hunter was posted there to report attacks from the south. He built a house and lived there and this was referred to as Ankama *nnaso*, i.e. Ankama's hunting lodge (now turned into Akomadan). Nyafoman (now called Akumasa Domase) which is near Nkoranza was another security post. The Adontenhene was stationed there to inform the king of enemy attacks from that direction. It is even said that when the Asante first heard of the Bono Manso state an army was sent to attack it. The Asante attack was repelled by the powerful Adontenhene and his men. The Asante went back and informed their king that the Bono Manso state was no little state to overpower — *enye fo man* — hence the origin of Nyafoman.

Yefiri, an earlier settlement before the movement to Bono Manso, was left in the charge of the Kurontihene.

**Q:** Could you tell us something about the wars fought by the Brong while at Bono Manso

**A:** I can only tell of the few wars that I know of. We first fought the Gonja (Yagbumwura) and drove them from their settlements across the Volta. I do not know of the wars that followed till our encounter with Opoku Ware. We were defeated by the Asante in this war. We thereafter fought on the side of the Asante in the wars against the Gonja in the Bote war against the Banda and against the Gyaman. We took our Taakora and Tanmense deities to these wars to help the Asante win. We also joined them in their wars with the Fanti and the Ewe.<sup>6</sup> After the Asante conquest of Bono Manso and our participation in the wars against Gyaman we rebelled, drove the Ashanti residents out of our lands and occupied them.

- Q:** You state that Bono Manso's boundaries were with the Gonja, the Gyaman, with Krachi and with Asante. Did it have any boundary with Atebubu?
- A:** It could not have shared a boundary with Atebubu for the Atebubu state was then not in existence.<sup>7</sup> The only chief who was known to be in the area was the Wiasehene with whom we never fought. We had settled before the people of Atebubu came.
- Q:** Mrs Meyerowitz wrote of the existence of a powerful state that was in the neighbourhood of Techiman and was under Ataara Finam.<sup>8</sup> What do you know about this?
- A:** I do not know much about Ataara Finam. I do not know whether or not he was a brother to the ruler of Krachi and lived with him. All that I know is that his territory was at first on the other side of the Volta but he and his people later moved to stay somewhere in Kwahu.
- Q:** What were Bono-Manso's marketing centres? Where did your people trade?
- A:** There used to be a trading centre, *dwabirem*, at Bono Manso. Goods sold included food items and kolanuts. Traders from outside the area brought blankets, beads, gold, slaves and exchanged them for kola. Some traders brought gold and exchanged it for cowrie shells. Salaga was also another trading centre. Our people went there to trade while people from Salaga also came down to trade. Bew (Begho) near Nsawkaw was also a known trading centre. Traders who came to our markets moved in a convoy (caravans). Bew (Begho) was both a market centre and a resting-place for those who came to our markets. They spent the night there on their way down and when going back slept there to work on the goods bought, especially kola. The kola was usually wrapped with leaves on reaching Begho. The Begho trading post was not controlled by Bono Manso (Techiman).<sup>9</sup>
- Q:** How did the chief acquire wealth?
- A:** In our state, gold was dug for the chief at Prabom (Prabom Obuasi) across the Tain towards Banda. Individuals who found gold nuggets took them to the chief who took the greater part. The chief also took a greater part of what was plundered in wars. He could also ask his subjects to farm for him. Besides he sent people to trade for him.
- Q:** Were there any subjects specially appointed as traders for the chief?
- A:** There was no select group of persons as traders for the chief. Whenever the chief needed any goods, like drinks and blankets

from Mpoano (Gold Coast), he could send any of his subjects to go on the errand.<sup>10</sup>

Q: What currency was used in the state?

A: Gold was the currency in use. Trading was done in gold. Gold weights were used to determine what quantity of gold should be exchanged for a commodity.

Q: Was it the chief who fixed the units of the currency?

A: The chiefs and elders determined the units of the currency. This can be borne out by the way in which gold was measured at the chief's court when a man fell into debt and had to pay with gold. The *akyeame* (spokesmen) usually held one side of the balance to make the gold weight heavier. More gold had to be put on the sack till it came to a position of equilibrium. Any gold dust that overflowed was never returned to the debtor. The *akyeame* took the extra. The chiefs fixed the quantity of gold that should make a *peredwan*, a *doma*, *dwoa*, etc.<sup>11</sup>

Q: Would you say it was your ancestors who introduced the idea of state treasury, i.e. introduced gold weights, scales, etc.

A: Meyerowitz (reference had been made to Meyerowitz) may be right in saying this because I hear that when Asante conquered Techiman (Bono Manso) and took Nana Ameyaw Kwakye captive to Kumasi, the Asantehene invited him to play the *oware* game with him.<sup>12</sup> While playing, the captive discovered that the players used in playing were in copper. Unlike his which had been in gold, they made the fingers dirty which smelt badly after playing. He commented on this and said his had been better for use. The Asantehene made him send messengers to Bono-Manso to bring his *Oware* with the players. The *Oware* had before then been hidden with his *Sanaa* at the time of the wars, so they were taken together to Kumasi. It was there that the Asantehene saw the *nsenea*, scales, and *abrammoo*, weights. He took them for his use and never returned them to Techiman.

Q: Do you believe there are some other handicrafts, *adwini die*, that the Asante borrowed from Brong?

A: Yes, I believe certain Brong crafts were introduced to Kumasi. In one of Dr Kyerematen's books,<sup>13</sup> he could not name some of the regalia and explained this was because they were brought from outside Asante. I believe some of the items were taken away from us after the conquest.

Cloth weaving could also be said to have been borrowed from us. Only the Banda, beside ourselves, engaged in cloth weaving — we wove the *kyekye*. There was also an old tradi-

tional cloth known as *gagawuga*<sup>14</sup> which, I believe, was first designed and woven here. Stool carving too originated from here.

Q: Who is a “Brong”?

A: A real “Brong” is one who comes from Techiman.

Q: How comes it that “Brong” now applies to all the people who live in the Brong district of the Brong Ahafo Region, including those from outside Techiman, e.g. Atebubu?

A: I think they call themselves Brong because the name has been extended to cover them. This has been possible because they came to join us in the area after we had settled as pioneers and had been called *Bonofoo*.

Q: What distinguishes the Brong from the other Akan tribes?

A: (i) Our dialect — we Brong do not use long sentences when speaking. We make much use of breaks in speech — short sentences.

(ii) Our festivals are also different from those of Asante.<sup>15</sup> The *Kwasidae* festival is known and celebrated over the whole Asante territory; we Brong do not celebrate it. Instead we have *abono nne*. Here in Techiman Wednesday is our *abonoda*. In other Brong traditional areas, Friday is their *abonoda*. The Asante celebrate their annual festivals on Sunday (*Akwaside*) while in Brong it differs within the traditional areas. Techiman celebrates hers on *Fofie*, Friday, Berekum and Dormaa on *Kwafie*, Friday, and Atebubu and some others on *Kurufie*, Thursday. Other such days as *Monofie*, *Kurufie* and *Nkyifie*, used for yam festivals, are not known among the Asante.<sup>16</sup>

#### EDITOR'S NOTES ON CHAPTER IV

1. E. Meyerowitz (1952:33) places the foundation of the Bono Manso kingdom in 1295–1325. She says she was told that the founders of the Bono Manso state came originally from a place in the ‘Great White Desert’ to Diala or ‘Diula’ which was close to a big river. Then they settled among the Mo, the aboriginal Mossi. Here they fought and lost a war and fled under the leadership of three, one of whom brought a section of the refugees to the neighbourhood of the Black Volta. They settled on the fringes of the forest in a cave at Amowi. The cave afterwards collapsed and they came to Yefri whence they migrated to Bono-Manso. It has been shown that

Miss Meyerowitz' chronology of the Bono Manso state is inaccurate; she thought Asante's defeat of Bono Manso, in 1722-23, took place in 1740 (J. Goody, 1954: appendix iv). C. Flight: *Journal of African History* IX, 2, 1970:268 has recently concluded that the period of the formation of the Bono-Manso kingdom probably began in the fourteenth century.

2. See M. Posnansky, *supra* ch. I.
3. For comparative lists of Akan clans, see Rattray (1929:63).
4. The Yagbumwura, according to Goody (1967:188) was the paramount chief of all Gonja. Goody (*ibid*:185) also says that Bono-Manso was one of the 'enemies' of the Gonja state, founded sometime in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. While Bono-Manso may not have defeated the whole of the Gonja state, it possibly expelled scattered Gonja migrants who Goody (1967:v) appear to have first established themselves north of the forest borders.
5. See Arhin, *infra.*, ch. 4.
6. In 1868-69. See Ellis, (1893:262:262).
7. The Atebubu state was probably established in the late seventeenth century. See Arhin, 'Introduction' *Ashanti and the Northeast*, Research Review Supplement No. 2, Institute of African Studies, Legon, 1970, also Daaku, *infra*.
8. Ataara Finam or 'Atele Firempong' as Meyerowitz (1952:78) calls him. She wrote 'The capital of the great Guan state was once at Kokofu near Atebubu; its most famous king was Atele Firempong, who lived in the traditions of Kwaman, Kumawu, Agogo and Kwahu'. See also Arhin 1970, *op. cit.*, and Daaku, *infra.*, ch. 6.
9. See Wilks (1961).
10. Compare with Rattray's (1929:107-119) account of the finances of an Asante chiefdom, also Arhin, (1967*b*).
11. For lists of the units of the Akan gold currency see Sarbah (1960:70). Also Ramseyer and Kuhne (1875 appendix 11, pp. 303-304).
12. Meyerowitz (*op. cit.* 35-36). See also Reindorf, (1895, 2nd edition 1950:72) who says on the defeat of Bono-Manso 'the whole treasure of the kingdom was taken by Asantes, whose power was greatly increased by this victory. Several improvements were, by Amo Yaw's (the king of Bono-Manso) advice, made in the government and social conditions of Asante. He taught Opoku to make gold and silver weights, to claim the estate of a deceased chief or general, also to enact laws fining offenders in order to add to his power and reduce that of his subjects'.
13. The reference is probably to A. A. Y. Kyerematen, *Panobly of Ghana*, Longmans, 1964.
14. They say in Asante, 'wo fira gagawuga koraa a, menyé no den?' lit. 'even if you wear *gagawuga* so what?' *Gagawuga* is said to have been the cloth of kings or chiefs.
15. On Brong dialects see Dolphyne *infra*. ch. 8.
16. For the purposes of comparing the reckoning of the festival days and the rites of the festivals see Rattray (1923:chs. v-ix). Rattray (*ibid*: 114) significantly states: 'One day I overheard one of my men saying that in olden times, when the king of Ashanti was in doubt as to any date for a festival, he always referred to the Brong, who were the keepers of the king's calendar, so to speak'.

## CHAPTER IV

### ASANTE SECURITY POSTS IN THE NORTHWEST\*

Kwame Arhin

#### Introduction

Most writers on the Asante wars have stated that Asante could conquer but not govern,<sup>1</sup> and have given this as a reason for what I have elsewhere (Arhin, 1967a) called the 'cycle of rebellion' among Asante's conquered territories and the consequent instability of the Asante empire. Asante's early mode of administering her conquered territories was to appoint a chief (normally the leader of the conquering army) as the overseer of the territory who also annually went himself or sent a messenger to collect tribute and to settle internal disputes (Bowdich, 1819:235). Later, as Wilks (1969) has pointed out, a system of regional commissioners was developed mainly for political purposes: to report incipient rebellion in the subject state, and to ensure that the king's writ operating through the system of Asante's Great Oath, ran in the regional territories (Goody, 1965:8, Arhin, 1967a).

I wish to suggest in this paper that, in so far as ensuring the military and political subordination of the territories in the north-west was concerned, the Asante early resorted to another practice. This was the establishment of security posts in the west and north-west. These security posts included Manso-Nkwanta on the border with Denkyira in the southwest,<sup>2</sup> Ahafo settlements in the virgin forests between Asante and the Sefwi chiefdoms;<sup>3</sup> certain villages in Techiman, the successor state to the Bono-Manso chiefdom after the conquest of the latter in 1722-23;<sup>4</sup> and also the sub-chiefdom of Odumase between the Dorma and the Gyaman states.<sup>5</sup>

There were, as far as I can see, two ways in which these security posts were established. Firstly, as in the case of Manso-Nkwanta and Ahafo, new villages were founded and placed under a hunter who went on *amantuo*, travelled with a group of other hunters and their close kin. The second method was to send a group of rulers with close kin to rule existing villages. In such cases, illustrated by Odumase, Sunyani, and Tuobodom, four miles south of Techiman town, one finds either twin villages with their chiefs

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competing for supremacy, or what amounts to 'circulating succession' to the chiefship by two dynasties.

It appears to me from (i) the oral version of the story of the establishment of the first settlement of Berekum that it was one of these scout or security posts. The impression is strengthened when one examines (ii) the political organisation of Berekum; (iii) Berekum's relations with Asante, and (iv) with her neighbours, including Dormaa and Gyaman. I intend to examine *i - iv* and (v) attempt to set out the characteristics of Berekum as a model Asante scouting or security post.

### (i) Berekum Tradition of Origin

Modern Berekum lies a hundred miles northwest of Kumasi at a junction. From this junction roads, (formerly footpaths) lead to Seikwa in the north, Bonduku (a 19th century trading town in Gyaman) in the northwest and to Dormaa (formerly Wam) in the south-west. Its immediate eastern neighbour is Nsoatre.

The main tradition of the foundation of Berekum, that of the present chief and his elders, says that on the return of an Asante army from a war with Abo Kofi (the Gyamanhene), the Asantehene, Opoku Ware (1720-50) (who had himself led the Asante army) placed a number of warriors under Kwaku Tia from Asante Asokore at Awaasu north of Berekum.<sup>6</sup> They were to spy upon the Gyaman (Abron) people and report plots of rebellion to Kumasi. Tia and his contingent were also given a number of Abron war-captives. Later a group from Adanse (north of Kumasi) were added to the Asokore contingent. Much later another group of Denkyira people were also planted in Berekum.

The chief and his elders say that the people of Berekum have thrice moved site. The Awaasu settlement was found to lie in a marshy area, so Pepease (also north of Berekum) was chosen. A number of chiefs were buried at Pepease which became their *banmu*, the burial-place of chiefs, and their sacred grove. From Pepease they moved to Akurofo, the abandoned settlement, where they came to the site of modern Berekum.

The "military" origin of Berekum was retained in the old name of Berekum, "Asokore-Berekum Domtene": *dom* (Akan) means, a crowd, an assembly, a fighting group, or unit of it; *tene* means a file; so that the phrase means the file of warriors from Asokore at Berekum and "Berekum" itself is said to mean the place where the hunter got game but with difficulty; "Bere na w'akum": 'one gets game with difficulty'.



The royal lineage is said to be composite; it consists of chiefs of the mother's line (the Asokore group), and chiefs of the line of sons (the Adansi group). The chief of the mother's line are those matrilineally connected with Amankona Diawuo, a maternal relative of Kwaku Tia, the warrior from Asokore; chiefs of the line of sons are those descended from a full sister of the third chief whose mother, from the Adansi group of settlers, was married to the first chief of Berekum. A similar change in the succession from mother's people to sons occurred at Manso-Nkwanta which was also a security post. This change shows the fragile traditional foundation of the succession owing, first to the shortness of the life of the settlement and, second to the functionary character of the settlement which requires more attention to ability in a chief than to strict legitimacy.

The chief and his elders explain that the succession of sons started when there were no suitable male successors in the Asokore group, and Kwaku Diawuo, a son of Amankona Diawuo, the first Berekumhene, succeeded. Diawuo's maternal descendants have since occupied the Berekum stool. The stool list of Berekum chiefs is as follows:

**Asokore (Maternal line)**

Amankom Diawuo  
Kyere Diaboa

**Adanse (sons' line)**

Kwaku Diawuo  
Kyere Yaw  
Boateng Akuamoah  
Nana Tabiri  
Pampraw<sup>7</sup>  
Kwasi Diawuo  
Kofi Date  
Kwabena Owusu  
Kojo Barnie  
Kwame Boateng  
Yiadom Boakye  
Akuamoah Boateng  
Yiadom Boakye<sup>8</sup>

Early written Asante traditions mention the Asante wars with Gyaman but are unfortunately silent on the details of security arrangements the Asante made after her conquest of the latter. Bowdich (1819:233) was told that Osei Poku, i.e. Opoku Ware invaded Gyaman, and that Abo, the Gyamanhene, 'purchased a peace by presenting large sums of gold to the warrior chiefs, and consenting to an annual tribute'. But he fails to mention (p.238) Gyaman in his list of conquered territories and the Kumasi chiefs under whose immediate care it was placed.

Dupuis says (1824:230) that Osei Tutu invaded Gyaman with a 'powerful army with which he vanquished those tribes, and

reduced their monarch to the condition of a tributary'; that (p.233) Opoku Ware had to fight once again the wars of the previous reign, and achieved 'the entire reduction of Assin, Akim, the re-occupation of Dinkira (Denkyera) the perfect conquest of Gyaman, and its annexation to the empire as unconditional tributary'.<sup>9</sup>

For the purpose of determining the period (if not the exact date) in which Berekum was established it is necessary to show which of the Asante attacks on Gyaman or Abron immediately preceded its establishment. Goody (1965:16) has gone to some lengths to show that contrary to Dupuis's information, Osei Tutu himself only pursued the Abron when they were known as the 'Dormaa' as far as Abesim, before the Asante-Denkyira war 1699-1700; that (*op. cit.* 18) it was Opoku Ware who first despatched the Dadiesoabahene, Nti Panyin, to invade Abron, in continuation of the wars of the previous reigns (Obiri Yeboah and Osei Tutu); and that 'the perfect conquest' of Gyaman or Abron mentioned by Dupuis most probably took place in 1746-47.

It is certain that the security post of Berekum was established after the 'perfect conquest' of Abron. Opoku Ware is normally credited with the establishment of scouting posts, for example, in Ahafo on the borders with Sefwi-Wiawso after conquest of the latter (Fuller 1921, 2nd ed. 1968 p.26; Arhin, 1970; Fynn 1971:61) and within the Takyiman chiefdom.<sup>10</sup> The need for these scouting or security posts would suggest itself after a series of experiences of relations with defeated peoples and particularly during the efforts of consolidation with which Opoku Ware is credited (*Dupuis, op. cit.*)

Berekum could have been established only after the 'perfect conquest' of Gyaman when the land between the Tano river and the modern Berekum borders with the Drobo, a sub-chiefdom of Gyaman, was seized and became available for settlement. Also for the purpose of maintaining effective occupation of the land, it was necessary to establish occupation posts. The settlement of Berekum must be seen as part of a consolidation effort which included the creation of the Bechem settlement and the Bantama-Awua-Dumase connexion<sup>11</sup> and also the political subjection of neighbouring Nsoatre. Already Seikwa, Badu, Nsawkaw and Banda had been brought within the Asante political system and Opoku Ware had achieved Asante dominance in the whole of the northwest (*Dupuis op. cit.* 234; Goody, 1965; 16, 17).

## **(ii) The Political Organisation of Berekum**

Until the Yaa Asantewa War (1900-01) when the British elevated the Berekum chiefdom to a paramountcy<sup>12</sup> (Tordoff, 1965:137, *Berekum fieldnotes*) Berekum remained a sub-chiefdom and a sub-

unit of the Kuronti (Bantama) division of the Kumasi state. The present Berekumhene himself stated that it was a deliberate policy of Kumasi not to raise any of the chiefs in the security border areas to paramount status; a paramount chief would have more initiative for intrigue than a subordinate one who formally, at any rate, could not have any pretensions to pursuing an independent external policy.

Before 1900, the Berekum sub-chiefdom consisted of *adanpankron*<sup>13</sup> (also used as titles for the chiefs) nine villages with 'town halls', whose chiefs were the principal councillors of the Berekumhene. These chiefs were known as *mpanyinfo*, (elders) heads of localized lineages. None of them was an *obirempon*, a major sub-chief such as one finds within an Asante paramountcy (Rattray 1929:79, 94).

The *adanpankron* claim different place-origins and have different traditions of migration into Berekum. None of them claims that his earliest ancestors were companions of Kwaku Tia, the head of the scouting groups. Their stories suggest spasmodic additions to the population of Berekum rather than the gradual spread of a settled population from a central point such as was normal with the central Asante chiefdoms (Rattray 1929.72).

The following are the *adanpankron*, their village seats (*italicized*) and the villages under their authority.

Kurontire	<i>Senose</i> , Jamdede, Kutre No. 1 Abi.
Akwamu	<i>Biadan</i>
Benkum	<i>Nsapor</i> , Nanasuano, Amomaso.
Nifa	<i>Domfete</i> , Benkasa
Adonten	<i>Kotoa</i> , Asaapuu
Ankobeaa	<i>Abisase</i> , Akroforo
Twafo	<i>Adom</i> , Tewbaabi, Amankokwaa
Kyidom	<i>Fetentaa</i> , Kato, Anyinasu, Nkyenkyemamu, Mpasem, Botokrom.
Gyase	Jinijini, Mpatasie, Koraso, Nkwantanka, Pempaase, Ampenkuro, Domiabra, Kutre No. 1, Namasua, Kankamano, Antokrom, Yakwan.

Two observations must be made here. Firstly, the designations 'Kurontire', 'Akwamu', etc., date from the elevation of the Berekumhene to paramount status which meant a corresponding increase in the status of his sub-chiefs by the colonial authorities. Before then the sub-chiefs had all been known as the *adanpankron*, elders. Secondly, it is said at Berekum that the villages under the various chiefs had all been established by members of what may be called the 'dominant' villages, the village-seats of the chiefs, (Schapera; 1940:57) with which they had kinship, affinal and ritual relations.

Of the *adanpankron* interviewed, the Gyasehene, chief of the household division, which includes the sons and grandsons of successive chiefs of Berekum, and the Asokore group of royals, said his maternal ancestress had migrated from Adanse Forrena in pursuit of a cure for barrenness. She had married Amankona Diawuo, the then Berekumhene, who made their eldest son, Kwasi Date, the first Gyasehene. The Akwamuhene, head of the Akwamu division, claims that his ancestors migrated from Adanse to Bantama to Awaasu, the first Berekum site.<sup>14</sup> The Kurontihene, next to the Berekumhene in authority in Berekum and head of the *adanpankron*, claims that his ancestress came to Berekum from Techiman to marry. The Benkumhene, head of the left wing, said his ancestress migrated from Anwanweneso in Akwamu, also in search of cure for barrenness; that they first settled at Koraso near Drobo (i.e. they were subjects of the Gyamantene) and moved to Berekum when they heard that Tankwasi, a deity of Berekum, could cure barrenness. The Nifahene, chief of the right wing, claims Akwamu as the place — origin of his ancestors and that the latter were part of the Dormaa group who left Akwamu and after passing through Amakom/Suntreso (all modern Kumasi suburbs) Abampiredase (Boma), Abesim and Chiraa settled in the Bonduku and Wamfie areas (Goody, 1965:66). The Twafohene, chief of the advance guard, asserts Adansi as the home of his ancestors.

The reasons given by some of the chiefs for the emigration of their ancestresses/ancestors may be true or false. It is respectable to claim Adanse or Akwamu as a place-origin. Adanse is said to be the original home of many of the Asante chieftains (Rattray, 1929). The Akwamu empire preceded Asante, was its military 'tutor' (Wilks, 1961:31) and became Asante's protectorate and not its subject state.

It is pertinent to point out that Berekum may have been a beneficiary of Asante's attempts to disperse and control the population of her more troublesome provinces. Dupuis was informed (1824:241-242) that after a war with Wassaw, Osei Kwadwo (1764-1777) removed 'two powerful tribes' to 'Bouromy' (Brong) and 'Quahou' (Kwahu) 'either to supply a deficiency of the population of those parts, or to secure their future allegiance'. Whether the causes of the emigration of the various groups were as stated or not, it is certain that the early populations of Berekum arrived in successive groups among 'Brong' scattered settlements and, hence their Brong 'tongue'.<sup>15</sup>

A characteristic of the Asante scouting or security out posts then, was that their earlier populations were heterogeneous in ethnic and place-origins. Such a state could hardly have the cohe-

sion and the strength deriving therefrom to contemplate secession or intrigue with potential enemy-states. This lack of cohesion<sup>16</sup> would also prevent such early consolidation as would induce Kumasi to raise the status of the chief. So that either through internal weakness or deliberate policy of Kumasi, Berekum was kept a subordinate of the Bantamahene.

(iii) *Relations with Asante*

I have already noted that Berekum was sub-unit of the Kuronti (Bantama) division of Kumasi till the colonial period. The Berekumhene and his elders say that *na yekobo Bantamahene so som Osantehene* 'we served the Asantehene through the Bantamahene'. For a chief to say that *me bo ohene bi so* is different from saying that *obi ye m'adamfo*. The former means 'I am a subordinate of another chief', the latter that 'chief so-and-so is my friend at court' which as Rattray says (1929: 95), meant a patron or 'representative' at the Asantehene's court, and implied a relationship of equality, though the Kumasi chiefs tended to behave as if they were the superiors, of their *nnamfo*, (Rattray, *ibid*).

The Berekumhene and his sub-chiefs meant by 'som' 'serve', above all military service, participation in Asante wars. When discussing their relations with Asante before the twentieth century, the chiefs usually recall the part their predecessors played in various Asante wars, and the trophies acquired in those wars; they are relatively silent on other implications of 'som'.

To illustrate: The Gyasehene recalls the part his ancestors played in the *Fanti sa*, the first Asante invasion of the Fanti area in 1806-1807 (Fynn *op. cit.* 142-143) in which he claims his ancestors seized the *apesemaka* drums from the Fanti. The Akwamuhene says that Berekum fought on the side of the Asante during the 'Kormantine' (Kormantze) wars i.e., in 1806-1807. The Benkumhene claims that his ancestors distinguished themselves during the same Fanti war. The Nifahene recalls the participation of Berekum in the 'Kromanti' war. The Twafohene says that his ancestors helped the Berekumhene in many wars. Berekum, however, is said to have fought only one war of her own, the *Nkyibena tuotu* (see below) so that the 'many wars' were those of Asante.

Also during the negotiations preceding the restoration of the Asante Confederacy, the Berekumhene, Kwame Boateng, and his councillors recalled in a letter that their chief 'ƆƆƆƆƆƆƆƆ went to Fanti War (Fanti Sa) with Kumasihene. When the war was over the cost of gunpowder shot (sic) was charged from us. Three hundred (300) of our men died, we received no thanks'.<sup>17</sup>

Participation in Asante wars, particularly for a people who regarded themselves as Asante, was really only the prominent feature of 'som', service. Those who participated in Asante wars also paid *apeatoo*, war tax (Arhin 1967b:283-291) and other 'imposts (e.g. *aseda*), (thanksgiving fee on entoolment) *muhoma* (a fee for waist-band) *ayibuadie* (aid for funeral rites) *omantoo* (national tax) etc.' (Rattray, 1929:105). These were collectively known as *ka*, levy or debt and it was accepted in the course of the proceedings of the Committee of Privileges (1936:39) that Berekum paid *ka* as a separate unit of the Kumasi Kuronti division.

Berekum also used the Asante Great Oath, *Ntamkese*. The chief and his elders do not recall any other oath before the *Nkyibena* which was instituted after the *Nkyibena tuoto*. This was a one-day pitched battle with Dormaa, helped by a Gyaman contingent, approximately in the reign of the Asantehene Mensah-Eonsu (1874-83).

Taken together, participation in Asante wars, the payment of the various levies and the use of the Great Oath as the sole oath — signifying the undisputed acceptance of juridical obedience to the Asantehene and ritual guidance of his ancestors (Rattray 1929:102, 106, Busia 1954: pp. 203-204) — meant that, though distant, Berekum lands were formally and substantively part of central Asante in a way that conquered territories, like Takyiman or Gyaman, were not (Arhin 1967a).

#### (iv) *Berekum's Relations with Her Neighbours*

As noted, Berekum's immediate neighbours were Nsoatre in the east, Seikwa in the north, Gyaman in the west and north-west, and Dormaa in the south and southwest.

Berekum's relations with Nsoatre and Seikwa were relations of 'peace' which was emphasized and institutionalized in practices indicating privileged relations. Berekum citizens had the right to 'loot' Nsoatre when the death of an Nsoatrehene was announced and a similar right was accorded to Nsoatre citizens on the death of a Berekumhene. A Berekum man who committed adultery in Seikwa was not subject to the normal payments and a similar exemption was granted to a Seikwa adulterer in Berekum.

The elders of Berekum explain the practice of reciprocal looting between Berekum and Nsoatre on the ground that they shared common institutions. The two towns have as their tribal deities Tain Kwasi (brought from the headwaters of the river Tano near the town of Techiman) which impelled religious collaboration and the observance of common rules and avoidance. They celebrate the *Kwafie*, a first fruits festival similar to the Asante Odwira (Rattray 1927:122-136) on the same day. No explanation has so far been offered for the mutual exemption from adultery payments between Berekum and Seikwa...

It seems to me to be significant that, in contrast, Berekum had no such 'pact' of peace with either Dormaa or Gyaman; or with any of the towns that were effectively parts of the two states. Relations with Dormaa and Gyaman might be described as those of latent hostility.

The 'hostility' became open and violent in the reign of Mensah-Bonsu when Dormaa and Gyaman attacked Berekum and Nsoatre on a Tuesday, routed the Berekum army and carried away a number of captives, including members of the Berekum royal family to Dormaa and Bonduku. This war, as already noted, was the origin of the *Nkyibena* oath with which both Berekum and Nsoatre commemorate an event they regard as calamitous.

The chief and elders of Berekum are vague on the reason or reasons for the attack. But there are a number of pointers to the probable reasons. The reign of the Asantehene Mensah-Bonsu (1874-1883) followed upon that of Karikari (1867-1874) the end of whose reign saw the first British invasion of Kumasi. The invasion became a signal for the revolt of the Asante subject states in the north and northwest. Among the Brong peoples, Atebubu in the east and Techiman and Gyaman in the west threw off the Asante 'yoke'. Anti-Asante defensive alliances were formed in the east and west.

In this context, it is reasonable to see Berekum, an Asante enclave between Dormaa and Gyaman territories, as a special target of Dormaa and Gyaman hostility. It is suggestive that during the attack Berekum asked Kumasi (albeit in vain) for help. Dormaa and Gyaman aim was to cut the Berekum and Kumasi connexion and restore Dormaa and Gyaman rule over the whole of the territory on the Gyaman side of the Tano river.<sup>18</sup>

That aim was achieved for a period. During the negotiations preceding the restoration of the Asante Confederacy Kwame Boateng, the Berekumhene, and his elders stated that 'we are Brongs and have nothing to do with Asante amalgamation... We do not share in the opinion that Asante should once revert to the old dynastic regime of centralized Government.' Explaining themselves, they said that if the British were 'no longer willing to hold their trust with us, then because we are left unprotected, we shall return to serve French Agyeman, our former overlord'; that 'From the time of Bonsu, Kwesi Diawuo our Omanhene broke his allegiance with the Asante yoke'; that 'we did not serve Bonsu, Kweku Duah and Prempeh I, so we are not serving Kumasi now'; that 'The Jamans and Wams [Dormaa] once waged war against us. We called for aid from Kumasi, but Kumasi turned deaf ears to us. We do not want any amalgamation. Brongs and Asantes have nothing in common' and that 'when we left our allegiance to Bonsu, we served Agyeman of Jaman.'<sup>19</sup>

Berekum had one great reason for not wishing to join the confederacy. This was their fear that Berekum would lose her paramountcy if 'Asante should once revert to the old dynastic regime of centralized Government.' But the Berekumhene and his elders were also clearly saying that Kumasi's failure to help them during the *Nkyibena* war had induced them to identify themselves politically with the 'Brong'.

It ought to be stated that today the chiefs and his elders identify themselves as ethnically and culturally 'Asante' but state that they are Brong by virtue of their geographical situation and also by virtue of the 1960 Republican Constitution which created the Brong-Ahafo Region.<sup>20</sup> They point out that they are obliged by social nearness to their neighbours to speak 'Brong', which indeed they do when they wish to emphasize their political separateness from Asante. They identify 'Brong' as Gyaman. But they have preserved their Asante dialect which they speak when they wish to recall their Asante origin and also when they wish to emphasize solidarity with an Asante friend. They also point out that their court etiquette, political institutions<sup>21</sup> their drumming and dancing are all Asante.

#### v. Conclusions: Characteristics of Asante Scouting or Security Posts

From the Berekum, example, then one would expect Asante scouting or security posts in the northwest to have the following characteristics:

- (a) establishment in the reign of Opoku Ware, 1720-1750;
- (b) diverse ethnic and place origins of the early population;
- (c) a composite royal lineage;
- (d) subordinate political status to a Kumasi chief, and
- (e) persistent cultural identification with Asante.

Odumase and Tuobodom, in fact, do have these characteristics.

Security posts as a mode of controlling subject-states was in the early days more acceptable to the Asante than placing Asante rulers over these states. Replacing local, with Asante, rulers would have contravened the prevalent Akan ideology, that one could 'rule' an area effectively only if one were descended from the dead founder of the **oman**. The dead founder was the supreme spiritual guardian of the **oman** and would communicate only with his own maternal descendants. He was unlikely to heed the prayers and accept the sacrifices of an usurper.<sup>22</sup>

This paper has also indicated a certain connection between the 'history' of Berekum as the people know it and their political organisation (Tait 1955:19).



1. B. Cruickshank (*Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast*, London, 1852 Frank Cass 2nd ed. 1966 Vol. II pp. 58-59) speaking of the Asante conquests says 'They had for their sole object the maintenance of Ashantee superiority, without any attempt to assimilate the conquered tribes with them, which they knew would have met with strong opposition, and rendered necessary the continual presence of such a military force as must have greatly interfered with their career of conquest'. A. B. Ellis (*A History of the Gold Coast*, 1971 edition, Curson Press Ltd., London and Dublin p.106) says that 'But though the Ashantis could conquer they could not govern and their authority over the tributary states was more nominal than real', and W. E. Ward, (*A History of Ghana*, Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1958 ed. p.141) reviewing Asante's relations with her conquered territories says 'Ashanti Statecraft, however, was unprogressive'; for 'The native chief was left in authority, the Ashanti governor usually continuing to reside in Ashanti except for occasional visits'.
2. See Kwame Arhin 'Succession and Goldmining at Manso-Nkwanta' in *Research Review*, Vol. 6, No. 3 1970, pp.101-109.
3. See Kwame Arhin *Collected Papers on Ahafo Landholding* Supplement No. 3, *Research Review* June, 1970.
4. See *Proceedings of the Meetings of the Committee of Privileges Held at Kumasi* from 18th June, 1935 to 3rd January 1939, pp. 216-248. The Committee, consisting of the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti, the Asantehene and other chiefs, was appointed to enquire into questions of territorial jurisdiction arising from the establishment of the Confederacy.
5. See Arhin 'Aspects of Colonial District Administration: The Case of the Northwestern District of Ashanti 1904-1911' in *Research Review* Vol. 8, No. 1, 1971 pp. 1-30.
6. The present Akwamuhene, the chief of Biadan, has another version of the early story of Berekum. He says that the Asokore group was descended from a woman who came to Berekum to seek a cure for barrenness and that the woman met his ancestors, some of the Dormaa (Abron) migrants in the area. The Dormaa or Abbron migrants certainly preceded the Asante group — witness the Asante attack on Abbron — but it is by no means clear the Akwamu group were among the Gyaman migrants. Also nobody else in Berekum believes it.
7. It is said at Berekum that Prampraw was a son of a woman from the Denkyira migrant group. It was apparently an integrative device of the early chiefs to marry from all the migrant groups.
8. I tried obtaining the genealogy of the Berekum chiefs. But the chief and elders were so vague that drawing a diagram was impossible. The Asokore group have recently sought the intervention of the Asante-Asokorehene and of the Asantehene by swearing the Great Oath — that they 'own' the Berekum chiefship — over what appeared to be their permanent exclusion from the stool. The case was finally settled through arbitration by Berekum elders. It is alleged that the exclusion originated in a misdeed of an ancestress which resulted in her group being cursed, which meant some sort of political excommunication from the *nkonwafieso*, stool-house. Sheep were slaughtered after the settlement to remove the curse to permit the restoration of the group's rights to the stool.
9. 'Proceedings of the Meetings . . .' *op. cit.*
10. See E. A. Agyeman, *Gyaman — Its Relations with Ashanti, 1720-1820*. Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Legon, 1965, p. 48.
11. 'Proceedings . . .' p.43.
12. On first July, 1901, C. H. Armitage, a Travelling Commissioner of the Government of the Gold Coast signed an agreement with the chiefs of Bechem, a section of Ahafo and Borumfo — Nkwanta/Odumase and Nsoatre in which the latter agreed to 'recognize' and serve the Berekumhene, Kobina Owusu, his heirs and successors as head and 'king' of the districts of Bechem, Ahafo and 'Borumfu' in Northern Ashanti. Up to

the restoration of the Asante Confederacy in 1935, the chiefs concerned paid 'judicial obedience' to the Berekumhene (accepting the Berekum *Nkyibena* as their final oath) and served as members of the Berekum Traditional Council. Berekum was so favoured for alleged loyalty to the Government of the Gold Coast during the Yaa Asantewa War. The present Berekumhene and his elders say that they refused to help Asante out of the conviction that she would be beaten.

See Kwame Arhin 'Aspects of Colonial District Administration' . . . *op. cit.*

13. Mr A. C. Denteh, of the Language Centre, Legon, explains that *adanpan* meant a 'hall'; that a chief could give a village a right to build a 'hall' which was equivalent to according it a 'municipal' status and also upgrading the status of the chief.
14. As noted (Note 6) the Akwamuhene claims that groups of Dorma migrants were in the area before the Asokore group got there.
15. The Nifahene of Berekum says that there was a village, Abi, a small hunting village, scantily populated before the Asokore group settled at Berekum to 'spy' on the Gyaman. 'Brong' means 'aborigines' in this context as also from the interpretation given by Nana Takyimanhene.
16. For instance — in 1905, the Commissioner of the Western Province of Ashanti reported that the Berekum sub-chief Tarbil (Tabi) of Nsapor had committed a breach of native custom by contracting a debt in Dormaa without telling the Berekumhene and without a Berekum security and wrote:

In accordance with the King's [Berekumhene's] wishes, who was afraid this chief would in consequence try to secede to Wam, I ordered him to remain in Berekum and told the King secession from one tribe to another on account of debt would not be allowed.
17. *Papers Relating to the Restoration of the Ashanti Confederacy*, Gold Coast 1935, Appendix 60, pp. 101–102.
18. Captain R. La T. Lonsdale, Special Commissioner of the Government of the Gold Coast reported in his *Report* on his *Mission* to Ashanti and Gyaman, April to July 1882, that Gyaman had threatened to invade Kumasi 'but for the Whiteman.' His visit to Kumasi and Bonduku was to settle counterclaims between Asante and Gyaman which had led to the closure of the trade passages and apparently to the Gyaman invasion of Asante territories. The Asantehene claimed *inter alia* that 'the people of Wam, Berekum and Abesim, now in Gyaman be handed over to him'. Lonsdale also reported that 'Wam, Berekum and Abessim wish to return but independent of Ashanti'. It is just possible that in spite of their joint attack on Berekum, Dormaa (Wam) and Gyaman fell out over counterclaims to Abessim land which is said to be part of Dormaa. Lonsdale's *Report* in Enclosure No. 56 PROCO 879/19.
19. *Papers Relating to Restoration* . . . *op. cit.* also Davidson-Houston reported (*Confidential* 2nd July, 1896) that the 'Borumfo' feared a possible attack by Gyaman, to whom they had been tributary for the past twelve years which places the Gyaman attack on Berekum in 1884 and also that a Gyaman attack on Berekum had driven 'the Berekums into the bushes' in PROCO 96/275.
20. See Article 6 of the 1960 *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana*.
21. It ought to be noted though that the composition of the Berekum *Gyase*, which appears to be similar to that of neighbouring Dormaa differs from that of Kumasi *Gyase*. The Berekum or Dormaa *Gyase* consists of *ahenemma* and *ahenenana*, children and grandchildren of successive chiefs, who are also the 'service' people, *asomfo*, stool-carriers, etc. The Asante *Gyase* consists of functionaries who are unrelated to the chief. It also ought to be said that Dormaa celebrates Kwafie and not the *Akwasidae*.
22. See K. A. Busia 'The Ashanti' in *African Worlds* ed. D. Forde, O.U.P. 1954, pp. 203–204.

## CHAPTER V

### KWADWO ADINKRA OF GYAMAN: A STUDY OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE BRONG KINGDOM OF GYAMAN AND ASANTE FROM C.1800—1818

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In 1817 after a protracted war between Asante and the Fante states, the British Government sent a mission to Kumasi, the Asante capital, to negotiate peace.<sup>1</sup> T.E. Bowdich, who was a member and ultimately the spokesman of the mission, referred, in his work, to a growing disturbance in 1817 in the relations between Osei Tutu Kwame Asibey Bonsu (c.1800—1824), the Asantehene, and Kwadwo Adinkra, King of Gyaman.

The kingdom of Gyaman, lying to the north-west of Asante, was probably founded about the first half of the seventeenth century by a Dormaa chief called Adu Ben. But Gyaman did not become a powerful state until towards the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century, when its successive kings succeeded in establishing a highly efficient centralised administration over the indigenous peoples whom they conquered and incorporated into the newly founded state.<sup>2</sup> Its territory was fairly large and it had a well disciplined army. Above all Gyaman was rich in minerals and natural resources which gave the kings much economic power and drive, and made the kingdom a great force to reckon with in the north-west of Asante. From about 1740, when the "perfect" conquest of Gyaman is said to have been accomplished by Asante under Opoku Ware,<sup>3</sup> relations between the rulers of Gyaman and of Asante came under constant strain and stress. The Gyaman rulers were dissatisfied with the subordinate role they came to play under Asante. Subsequently Gyaman 'national consciousness' was expressed in recurrent rebellion against Asante — a main aspect of the relations between the rulers of Gyaman and Asante until 1874 when Gyaman partially seceded from the Asante Empire, following the invasion of Kumasi by British troops in the same year.

This paper is an attempt to examine one of the important episodes in the history of the relations between Gyaman and Asante during the period 1800—1818. In particular, it is a study of the relations between the Gyamanhene, Kwadwo Adinkra and the Asantehene, Osei Tutu Kwamina Asibey Bonsu. Asante re-defeated Gyaman in this period and is said to have tightened its control over the chieftdom by making it "a province in lieu of the tributary rank it enjoyed before."<sup>4</sup>

Little so far is known about the early life of Kwadwo Adinkra. There is a suggestion, which is not altogether slight, that in his youth

Adinkra served at the court of Asante in Kumasi where (as Osei Tutu, the first king of united Asante had done in Denkyira and Akwamu before he became king) Adinkra probably had the opportunity to study Asante court politics and diplomacy. It is, however, fairly certain that Adinkra and Osei Tutu Kwamina Asibey Bonsu were contemporary rulers. From the work of Abu Bak'r-as Sadik, the son of a Moslem magnate of Timbuktu, it is known that Adinkra was king of Gyaman in about 1800.<sup>5</sup> Adinkra's reign, therefore, was from about 1800 to 1818 when he died in the Asante-Gyaman war.

The events preceding the election of Adinkra to the Gyaman throne raise an interesting but intriguing problem. The story is told that in the last years of Ben Kompi Kwadwo II's reign (1790-1800), the people of Gyaman rebelled against Asante rule. In the campaign that ensued Ben Kompi Kwadwo II, the Gyamanhene, is said to have died and Adinkra, presumed to have been supported by the Asante authorities, was elected to succeed him.

The intriguing problem is: who was Adinkra? Was he a Gyaman or an Asante? References in the works of Joseph Dupuis and Robertson, to Adinkra as "a tool of the court of Coomassy"<sup>6</sup> and a relative of the King of Asante<sup>7</sup> seem to indicate that Adinkra was not a native of Gyaman but that he was an Asante citizen, a relation of the Asantehene, who was imposed on the people of Gyaman by the Kumasi authorities. Indeed, the circumstances, surrounding Adinkra's election to the Gyaman stool, then under Asante patronage and influence, tend to support the view. But recent investigations have clearly revealed that Adinkra was a member of the Gyaman royal family, and that he descended from the Yakaase ruling line, which was alternate to the Zanzan dynasty from which the late King of Gyaman, Ben Kompi Kwadwo II, came. The two dynasties—Yakaase and Zanzan—were established by the founding fathers of the kingdom of Gyaman. It was from among the two dynasties that the kings of Gyaman were alternately chosen to rule the kingdom.<sup>8</sup> It may, thus, be restated that Adinkra was a native of Gyaman. Perhaps, he was only "a tool of the court of Coomassy", and also literally related to the King of Asante in the sense, as will shortly be shown, that for a greater part of his reign until he turned a rebel against the Asante authority, Adinkra allowed himself to be used by the Asante Government far more in the interest of Asante than in that of Gyaman.

Adinkra is generally represented in traditional Asante history as a powerful and proud ruler who always flouted the authority of the King of Asante. That Adinkra was powerful cannot be doubted, but that he was always proud and defied the authority of the Asantehene is certainly not borne out by the facts. His pride and defiance

of Asante authority seem to have manifested themselves only in the last years of his reign. But for a greater part of the period when he was king of Gyaman, Adinkra remained a loyal, if not a subservient, vassal to the Asante court.

Brong traditions maintain that for a considerable period before he revolted against Asante rule, Adinkra loyally served his Asante overlord and paid regularly to Kumasi the stipulated annual tributes and contributions he collected from Gyaman.<sup>9</sup> Writing in 1819, Robertson referred to Adinkra and Mansa as people who "receive consular direction and transmit the revenues to Akomassey (Kumasi) as they are received by them from those states which are under their control".<sup>10</sup> Robertson was obviously referring to the period in Adinkra's reign when the latter mutually co-operated with the Asante government in Kumasi, which must have made him appear "a tool of the court of Kumasi".

Furthermore, it is known from other sources that in the earlier period of Adinkra's reign, there was close co-operation between him and Osei Tutu Kwamina Asibey Bonsu, the Asantehene. In or about 1801, Asante was at War with Gonja and Bouna, two of the Asante tributary states in the north-west of the Asante Empire. The revolt of Gonja and Bouna was part of a general Moslem drive in the north-west to restore to the Asante throne the deposed King called Osei Kwame (1777-1800), who was believed to have Moslem sympathies, and to be inclined "to establish the Koranic law for the civil code of the empire".<sup>11</sup> In the campaign against Bouna in particular, Abu Bak'r-as-Sadik, who was an eye-witness, reported Adinkra's remarkable role in the war which culminated in the defeat of Bouna, and the author's own capture to Bonduku, the Gyaman commercial capital, from where he was sent to Kumasi and thence subsequently sold into slavery.<sup>12</sup>

The significance of the Asante-Bouna campaign, as far as the relations between Gyaman and Asante were concerned, may be seen in the fact that Adinkra distinguished himself as a courageous and brilliant fighter on the side of Asante. The support he gave to Asante later brought him into open conflict with a section of his own people who, taking advantage of Adinkra's absence from Gyaman while fighting in Bouna, attempted to stage "a partial revolt" to destool him.<sup>13</sup> The case of this section of the Gyaman people was perhaps, that, by supporting the Asante whom their late ruler from the Zanzan line, had resisted, Adinkra appeared to have betrayed the cause of Gyaman independence and 'national consciousness'. It was for this reason that, while Adinkra was away from Gyaman fighting for Asante, his opponents invited to the throne the nephew of the late King, Ben Kompi Kwadwo II who was living in exile in Kong.<sup>14</sup> This partial revolt by the Gyaman people against Adinkra was immediately crushed by him with a large contingent of troops from Kumasi.

The fact that the Asantehene sent military aid to Adinkra to enable him to suppress an internal rebellion in Gyaman indicates that reciprocal co-operation existed between him and the Gyamanhene. Osei Tutu Kwamina needed the services of Adinkra to reassert his authority in the north-west of his Empire which had been considerably undermined by the Moslem revolt during this period much in the same way as Adinkra required the co-operation of the Asantehene to maintain his own position on the Gyaman throne. It is even possible, and this is purely conjectural, that in the wars against the Fanti states (1807-1817), which also coincided with the outbreak of revolts in Akyem and Akuapem in the southeast of the Asante Empire, Adinkra was loyal to Asante. If he did not actively take part in person, he must have sent Gyaman auxiliaries to join the Asante army in the field of battle. The most that can be established from the above is that, although a powerful ruler, Adinkra was not always proud and defiant. On the contrary, the facts support the view that for a greater part of his reign Adinkra remained a loyal vassal of the king of Asante.

Nevertheless the long period of close and reciprocal co-operation came to a sudden end. From about September 1817, Bowdich reported that the relations between Adinkra and Osei Tutu Kwamina Bonsu were cold; then they suddenly took a dramatic turn. No single episode in Gyaman-Asante relations is as vividly remembered in local traditions, and so well documented in contemporary European records, as the Adinkra revolt, generally referred to as the Adinkra war. Several explanations may be offered for the outbreak of the war in the period 1817 to 1818 but three of them are worthy of note.

First, from the evidence of local traditions Adinkra refused to pay tribute to Kumasi as before.<sup>15</sup> It is not known exactly when this occurred, but most probably it happened immediately before the campaigns in the south came to an end when Adinkra must have thought that the Asante were too preoccupied to notice his attempt to become an independent ruler. That Adinkra did refuse to pay tribute is supported by some evidence from Asante when Dupuis arrived in Kumasi to take up his post as British consul. In January 1820, Dupuis reported that an Asante ambassador was sent to Cape Coast to settle the differences, which arose during the Adinkra war, between the King of Asante on one hand and the people of Cape Coast and the British authorities on the other. This ambassador, in an interview, told Dupuis that the Asantehene waged war on Gyaman because Adinkra had defied him and had "refused to pay him gold as before".<sup>16</sup> Again, some of the Moslems who were resident in Kumasi at the time informed Dupuis that Adinkra wanted to transfer allegiance and tribute from the King of

Asante to the Sultan of Kong, a neighbouring Mande-Dyula state, and as a result, the Asantehene declared war on him.<sup>17</sup>

The second explanation for the outbreak of the war may be found in the report which was received in Kumasi that not only had Adinkra refused to pay tribute to Asante but that he had actually offered some money to the ruler of Kong. The payment of money to the Sultan of Kong by Adinkra was an act which Osei Tutu Kwamina Asibey Bonsu could not tolerate, and his anger is reflected in his interview with Apau, the son of Adinkra, who was captured in the war and later brought to Kumasi: "Your father was a rebel, he was full of pride, and wanted to be a great King; he forgot when he was my slave. Is this not true? Then he wanted Sarem (referring obviously to Kong and the vast grassland in the north-west) to help him, and sent gold to make friends. Is not that true too? He forgot I was his master . . ." <sup>18</sup> The tribute which Adinkra is said to have paid to Kong instead of Kumasi was certainly not intended to bring Gyaman under the power of Kong, but obviously to induce its ruler to support Gyaman against Asante. The intended alliance was already under way because the foundation for it seems to have been laid by the dynastic arrangement by which Adinkra had married Nyankura, a Mande princess from Kong.<sup>19</sup>

Refusal to pay tribute, it must be pointed out, was generally the first step taken by all vassal rulers in an attempt to repudiate Asante authority in their states. Thus when the signal was given by Adinkra, it clearly showed to the Asante authorities in Kumasi the road where the ambition of the Gyamanhene lay. Taken together with Adinkra's refusal to pay tribute to Kumasi, his alleged offer of money to the Sultan of Kong had rather serious implications for Gyaman-Asante relations because during this period, the Mande state of Kong, which lay about seven days' journey from Bonduku, was one of the greatest rival states to the power of Asante in the north-west.<sup>20</sup>

But what was, perhaps, the most serious factor of all was the news, received almost simultaneously with the Gyaman refusal to pay tribute, that Adinkra had made for himself a stool which, according to Bowdich, was "thickly plated and embossed with gold".<sup>21</sup> Its "splendour and value was stated as everyway superior to that used by the Ashante chief which is represented as being formed of the common wood of the country cased over with golden plates".<sup>22</sup> Adinkra's gold stool seems to have had a far greater meaning and significance to the Asante than its implied superiority to the Golden Stool of the great potentate of Asante. The significance of Adinkra's 'gold stool' episode lies in the fact that it was regarded in Asante both as an act of gross presumption on the part of the Gyamanhene and as an eloquent proof of his ambition to

become as great and powerful as the Asantehene who, by the constitution of the Asante nation, was the only King permitted to possess and 'sit' on a stool adorned with gold.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, by carving the golden stool, Adinkra had not only defied the authority of the King of Asante but more importantly had violated the Asante constitution. It is no wonder then, that, on receiving the information, the King of Asante reacted immediately. A high-powered mission under Kwame Butuakwa,<sup>24</sup> who was, at the time, Asante resident commissioner at Abura Dunkwa, was sent to Gyaman to demand the stool which Adinkra was alleged to have carved. It is said that Adinkra readily surrendered the stool to Butuakwa, who brought it to Kumasi.

There is a suggestion in a British official report of 1824 that the stool was "sought for and recovered by the queen of Buncatoo even after its arrival at Coomassie".<sup>25</sup> But Bowdich, who was in Kumasi at the initial stages of the crisis, reported that Adinkra's sister was away when the stool was surrendered. On her return, she became so much annoyed at her brother's apparent cowardice that she reprimanded him and "ordered a solid stool to be made to replace",<sup>26</sup> the one which had been surrendered to the Asantehene. On this evidence alone, it is reasonable to reject the British official report of 1824, and assert that the stool, which was surrendered was not recovered, but that a new one was made to replace the lost one.

One point, however, needs clarification. Who was this woman who ordered the replacement of the stool? Was she Adinkra's sister as Bowdich claims, or his wife, as Clozel, Delafosse, and Reindorf, contend?<sup>27</sup> Bowdich is most certainly right. In such a Akan matrilineal society as Gyaman was, a wife of a king might exercise influence over her husband at home but she could not be directly involved in court or state politics. This was only possible in the case of a queen, who might be the sister or the mother or the aunt of the reigning king, and who might sometimes even wield as much power and influence as the king himself in the event of a national crisis such as happened in Gyaman. Indeed, the role of the queen-mothers and queens in the administration of Gyaman<sup>28</sup> tends to tip the scale rather heavily in favour of the view that it was the queen (a sister) and not the wife of Adinkra who ordered the replacement of the stool that was surrendered to the Asantehene.

The news of the making of a new golden stool by Adinkra soon reached Kumasi, and, as before, messengers from the Kumasi court were sent to demand it together with an accumulated tribute worth about 1,000 oz. of gold. On this occasion, Adinkra gave the Asante messengers a point blank refusal and placed them under arrest. He then summoned his council of elders whom he



addressed in the presence of the Asante messengers in the following words usually repeated by the Gyamanhene's horn-blowers on ceremonial occasions:

Akyekyedee wotwa nkontompo;  
Akyekyedee, wotwa nyayiriya,  
Wo baakofoo yi wosie basa, wosie sre,  
Wotua dua, woto kosua. Na wo mma yi bedi deeben?  
Asante Kotoko se wogye apem!  
Yeene apem anaa yeeta apem?  
Yennya, nea ebeba mmra.<sup>29</sup>

This means, 'you tortoise, you are a liar and a cheat; you alone you have limbs, you possess a tail and you lay eggs. What shall your children eat? Asante Kotoko say they are demanding a thousand oz. of gold. From where shall we get it? We cannot afford it. Come, what may!'

These words throw considerable light on the feelings of Adinkra and his people towards the Asante. The symbolising of the Asante as the tortoise is quite revealing. Like the tortoise which has the features of both a mammal and a bird the Asante appeared double-faced to the people of Gyaman. With one face the Asante, who wanted everything for themselves, demanded a stool, and with the other, they wanted an amount of gold, which was too heavy to bear. Indeed, the words demonstrate the courage and determination of the Gyamanhene, and represent him as a ruler prepared to fight in order to free his kingdom from Asante domination. Subsequently, Adinkra ordered that the ears of the Asante messengers be cut off and that all Asante residents in Gyaman be thrown into the gold pits of the kingdom.<sup>30</sup> These steps are evidently what Osei Tutu Kwamina Asibey Bonsu is reported by Dupuis to have referred to as Adinkra killing his sword bearers and sending him an insulting message.<sup>31</sup>

It is evident that the various acts committed by Adinkra over a period — the refusal to pay the annual tributes, the alliance with the Sultan of Kong to whom an offer of gold was made, the carving of a golden stool and finally the insult alleged to have been heaped on the King of Asante whose messengers were disgraced and mutilated — all these acts put together, amounted to extreme provocation to the Asantehene which made war inevitable in about February, 1818.

Elaborate preparations for war were made by both sides. Between November 1817 and January 1818, it is on record that Osei Tutu Kwamina Asibey Bonsu placed orders for several articles of clothing which included military uniforms for himself and his captains. Guns and gun-powder were also requested from the English, the

Dutch and the Danes, the principal European merchants with whom Asante had trading contacts. The Moslems in Kumasi were asked to say prayers for the King's success in the impending campaign.<sup>32</sup> Sacrifices to the national gods and prayers said by the King's Moslem friends were a common practice in Asante when the King was going to war. The religious ceremonies were deemed necessary for the intercession of the war gods of Asante and of the God of the Moslems for the success of the King in his impending campaign against the people of Gyaman.

Similarly, Adinkra made some preparations for the war. A Dutch journal of December 6, 1812 records that Adinkra bought goods from Elmina which had previously been ordered by the King of Asante. This incurred the displeasure of the Asantehene who launched a formal protest, particularly against the supply of arms by the Dutch to the people of Gyaman who were his enemies.<sup>33</sup> It is possible that further attempts by Adinkra to obtain large supplies of arms from the other merchants on the coast failed, largely due to the persistent difficulties put in his way by the King of Asante whose influence on the European merchants was considerable. This failure probably accounts for Adinkra's last minute attempt at negotiations for peaceful settlement of his differences with the Asantehene who, under the influence of a strong war party in his council, turned down the Gyamanhene's offer of four hundred **bendas** (about £3,200).<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, Adinkra in the end succeeded in recruiting a large force. Dupuis was informed by Baba, the spiritual head of the Kumasi Moslems at the time, that Adinkra's force, consisting of contingents from his neighbouring pagan and Moslem allies, totalled 140,000.<sup>35</sup> This evidence is corroborated by the linguist of the present New Juabenhene who, even though he does not give figures, throws much light on the strength of Adinkra's army. According to this chief, apart from a large reserve of several armed units, Adinkra's army was larger than that of the King of Asante and when this was brought to the notice of the King and court by the Asante scouts, the whole Asante force in camp became panic-stricken.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, besides several thousands of Moslems under Baba, who formed one wing of the army, the King of Asante had a force said to have totalled 80,000, as large as half of this number being equipped with firearms.<sup>37</sup> The entire force of Asante was recruited from the metropolitan states as well as from such provincial states as Akyem Kotoku, Akyem Bosome, Akwamu and Akuapim and most of the tributary states except, as Reindorf maintains, the Fanti states which did not take part in the war on behalf of Asante.<sup>38</sup>

From Hutchinson's last despatch, it is clear that in the early part of February 1818, the Asante army were on the Gyaman frontier<sup>39</sup>

where they met the formidable army of Adinkra. About this time the first of the series of battles was fought on the banks of the river Tain, and it was here that the Gyamans distinguished themselves as skilled and courageous fighters.<sup>40</sup> For several days, they attacked the Asante forces, killed several of the men and succeeded in pushing the rest back. Great confusion set in the Asante camp, and it looked as if the Gyaman forces were winning the day. But the Bantamahene, Amankwatia, who was the spearhead of the Asante army together with the Kokofuhene, the Juabenhene and the chief of Akyem Bosome called Koragye Ampaw, put great morale into the Asante army. Rallying behind these chiefs and captains, the Asante army moved forward, crossed the river Tain, broke through the mighty forces of Gyaman and attacked and defeated one wing after another. Several of the Gyaman men were killed. Several others were captured, and some succeeded in escaping in utter confusion to Kong. The Asante won a great victory over Gyaman.

The fate of Adinkra is variously rendered. The Asantehene, in conversation with Dupuis, is reported to have said that he killed Adinkra, and took his gold, adding that Adinkra's skull "was broken but I would not use the trophy and now I made a similar skull of gold. This is for my great customs, that all my people may know I am the King".<sup>41</sup> This is the general view of the Asante to this day. This view is also shared by the people of Kotei and Seketia, in the present day Brong region, who maintain that Adinkra was captured in the war and was beheaded; his stool was captured, and that Gyaman was completely defeated.<sup>42</sup>

On the other hand, the people of Suma, also in the Brong region, have a different story to tell. While admitting that Adinkra was defeated, they maintain that the Gyaman stool was not captured nor was Adinkra killed by the Asante. According to this same source, when Adinkra realised that things looked grim for him and his state, he summoned before him his wife called Kra Adwoa and the surviving members of his council. He asked the latter to hide all the stool regalia, and then committed suicide.<sup>43</sup> According to a recent writer whose evidence is corroborated by traditions of Suma, Adinkra's body was buried with the bodies of several Gyaman people who had been killed in the war to make it difficult for the Asante to discover the body of Adinkra. But his son Apau was captured, and, under severe torture, he showed where his father had been buried. The Asante discovered what they believed to be Adinkra's body with his head almost battered. His body was thus removed and brought to Kumasi.<sup>44</sup> From the circumstance under which Adinkra's body was discovered, it is probable that Apau showed the Asante the body of a different person than, not as that of his father's. But Adinkra was well known in Asante, particularly in Kumasi, so that the Asante

would have no difficulty in identifying Adinkra's battered body.<sup>45</sup> In any case, an effigy of Adinkra's head is part of the Asantehene's stool regalia.

The death of Kwadwo Adinkra by no means ended the war. The rest of the Gyaman army and people who had taken refuge in Kong returned to the field with auxiliary troops from Kong and renewed the attack on the Asante. This renewed fighting compelled the Asantehene to remain in Gyaman for over a year after Adinkra's death, and it was not until August 1819, when the situation had returned to normal in Gyaman, that the Asantehene returned to Kumasi.<sup>46</sup> In 1820 when Dupuis was in Kumasi there was virtually no more trouble in Gyaman.

At the end of the war, Asante tightened its control over Gyaman by making it "a province in lieu of the tributary rank it enjoyed before."<sup>47</sup> This is made more evident from the first article of the Supplementary Treaty signed between Osei Tutu Kwamina Asibey Bonsu and Dupuis, acting on behalf of the British authorities. It is stated that after the war the King of Asante assumed full and undisputed sovereignty over Gyaman and that, for political reasons, he maintained troops in Amanaha on the banks of the Assin river and in other parts of Gyaman so as to prevent the inhabitants from trading or having direct communications with the coast.<sup>48</sup> It is also evident from a Dutch report that the King of Asante "appointed one of his caboceers King of Bontooko"<sup>49</sup> but this 'Caboccer' of the Asantehene was, probably, a personal representative of the King who, from this time, jointly ruled Gyaman with the successor of Adinkra, chosen, according to custom, from the Zanzan ruling house.

The maintenance of an army of occupation in Gyaman and its neighbourhood and of an Asante resident official, after the cessation of hostilities, shows the extent to which Asante rule came to be more effectively established in Gyaman; it further indicates that the government of Asante was not satisfied with its previous administrative arrangement in Gyaman which allowed too much power and freedom in the hands of local rulers.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. British merchants trading in Cape Coast and Anomabo were interested in peace between the Fanti and the Ashanti who were the main source of gold dust and ivory, the trade articles.
2. E. A. Agyeman: 'A note on the foundation of the Kingdom of Gyaman in *Ghana Notes And Queries*, No. 9, November, 1966, pp. 36-39.

3. J. Dupuis: *Journal of A Residence in Ashantee*, 1824, p. 233. Also see Arhin, *Supra* ed.
4. J. Dupuis: *op. cit.*, p. 104.
5. Abu Bak'r-as-Sadik, pp. 19-21, quoted by E. A. Agyeman *op. cit.* 1965.
6. J. Dupuis: *op. cit.*, p. 249.
7. G. A. Robertson: *Notes On Africa*, 1819, p. 182.
8. E. A. Agyeman 1965, pp. 15 & 49.
9. *Suma Traditions* collected by E. A. Agyeman, 1965 Appendix II. See also Robertson *op. cit.*, p. 182; Bowdich: *Mission from Cape Coast to Ashantee*, 1819, pp. 320-321; Wilks: 'Ashanti Government in the 19th Century', unpublished manuscript, Legon, 1964, p. 21 and Footnote p. 73. Wilks estimates the tribute paid by Gyaman to Asante at 18,000 oz. of gold per annum.
10. G. A. Robertson: *op. cit.*, p. 182.
11. For more about this revolt see Dupuis, *op. cit.*, p. 245 and also E. A. Agyeman, 1965: pp. 67-71.
12. See Abu Bak'r-as-Sadik: *op. cit.*, pp. 5, 19-21 and Wilks: *The Northern Factor in Ashanti History*, 1961, p. 23.
13. Dupuis: *op. cit.*, p. 249, that section of the people of Gyaman were presumably supporters of the Zanzan ruling family.
14. Dupuis: *op. cit.*, p. 259.
15. *Suma and Seketia Traditions* collected in 1964 in E. A. Agyeman, 1964 Appendix II.
16. Dupuis: *op. cit.*, 'introduction' p. xxxiii.
17. Dupuis: *op. cit.*, p. 98.
18. Dupuis: *op. cit.*, p. 165.
19. Delafosse: *Frontiers de la Côte d'Ivoire*, etc. 1908, p. 231. See also Reindorf: *A History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, 1895, 2nd edition, p. 163.
20. Bowdich: *op. cit.*, 1819, p. 169.
21. Bowdich: *op. cit.*, 1819, p. 244.
22. *Reports of Commodore Sir G. Collier and Sir Charles McCarthy and other official sources*, 1824, in *West African Sketches*, I.A.S. 1963, p. 230.
23. Busia, K. A.: *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti*, Oxford, 1951 p. 56.
24. Reindorf: *op. cit.*, p. 164 — also *Suma Traditions*; The people of Suma, in the Brong region, said that when the King of Asante demanded the stool it was refused. This is probably confused with the second stool said to have been made, which was not surrendered on demand.
25. *Reports of Commodore G. Collier and Sir McCarthy and other official sources in West African Sketches*, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
26. Bowdich *op. cit.*, p. 244.
27. Bowdich: *op. cit.*, p. 244. Clozel: 'Introduction' to Clozela and Villamur, *Les coutumes indigenes de la côte d'Ivoire*, Paris, 1902, p. 17, Delafosse: *Frontiers de la Côte d'Ivoire*; etc. Paris 1908 p. 231; Reindorf, *op. cit.*, p. 164. Adinkra's sister was called Tamia, *ibid.*, p. 165.
28. E. A. Agyeman; 1965, p. 17.
29. *The Traditions of Suma* in E. A. Agyeman, Appendix II. The words were sung by Nana Kwame Fori of Asiri, Adumhene of Suma Brong. According to Mr A. C. Denteh of the Institute of African Studies, Legon, the sword of the sword-bearers sent to collect the gold stool of Gyaman and arrears of tribute was cast in the make of a crocodile head.
30. *The Traditions of Suma* in E. A. Agyeman: *op. cit.*, Appendix II. It was the Sumahene called Kwaku Gyabaa Kokroko who cut the ears of the Anantahene of Kumasi, one of the messengers sent to collect the Gyaman stool and the tribute. See also Reindorf: *op. cit.*, pp. 163-164; Claridge: *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti* Vol. I, 1915, p. 300.
31. Dupuis, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
32. 'Hutchinson's Diary' in Bowdich, 1819, pp. 381-446.

33. *Dutch Diaries and Correspondence* (1815–1823) See Journal of 6 December 1817 (Balme Library, Africana section, University of Ghana)
34. Bowdich, 1819, *op. cit.*, p. 245: See also Reindorf: *op. cit.*, p. 165. Reindorf asserts that Adinkra sued for peace because the army from Kong did not arrive, as expected.
35. Dupuis: 1824, Appendix p. cxxx.
36. Information was given by Okyeame Adjepong, linguist of the Omanhene of New Juaben. He was at the time employed by the Institute of African Studies, Legon, on the collection of oral traditions.
37. Dupuis, 1824, *op. cit.*, Appendix, p. cxxx.
38. Reindorf: *op. cit.*, p. 165.
39. Hutchinson's last despatch of February, 1818.
40. *The Traditions of Suma op cit.*, and information from Okyeame Adjepong. See E. A. Agyeman, *op. cit.*, Appendix II; see also *Ashanti Heroes* by Bonsu Kyeretwie, 1964, p. 23.
41. Dupuis: *op. cit.*, pp. 164–165.
42. *The Traditions of Koti and Seketia* in E. A. Agyeman: *op. cit.*, Appendix II.
43. *Suma Traditions* in E. A. Agyeman: *op. cit.*, Appendix II: Adinkra is said to have told his wife, Kra Adwoa, "Mihyira m'ano twesee". This probably meant that he intended to save himself from disgrace and torture at the hands of the Asante and thus killed himself.
44. Bonsu Kyeretwie, 1964; *op. cit.*, p. 27; see also *Suma Traditions* in E. A. Agyeman: *op. cit.*, Appendix III.
45. I am grateful to Mr A. C. Denteh for this information.
46. *Dutch Diaries and Correspondence* 1815 to 1823; Journal of 28th August, 1818 to 31st August, 1819, *op. cit.*
47. Dupuis *op. cit.*, p. 263.
48. Dupuis *op. cit.*, Appendix, cxxii.
49. *Dutch Diaries and Correspondence*, 1815–1823; See Journal of 28th August, 1818, *op. cit.*

#### Appendix: Gyaman Stool List.

Adu Ben  
Obiri Yeboah  
Yeboah Afari  
(Sakuriye — from Delafosse's list but does not appear in Oral tradition)  
Boadu (Badu) Ben  
Tan Date I  
Adinkra Panyin (1654–688)  
Ben Kompi Panyin (or Ben Kompi I 1688–1720)  
Abo Mire or Abo Kofi (1720–1746)  
Kofi Sono Ampem Osagyefo (1746–1760)  
Kofi Agyeman (1760–1790)  
Ben Kompi Kwadwo II (1790–1800)  
Kwadwo Adinkra Kakyire (Kwadwo Adinkra II) 1801–1818  
Fofie (1815–1830)  
Kwasi Yeboah I (1830–1850)  
Kwadwo Agyeman 1850–1899 (also called Kweku Agyeman by people of Seketia)  
Kwadwo Yeboah II (1899)  
Amakyina  
Tan Date II  
Kwadwo Agyeman  
Kwame Adinkra (not a royal by native custom)  
Kofi Yeboah III (present chief, now resident at Sherebo in Ivory Coast.)

## CHAPTER VI

### POLITICS AMONG THE EASTERN BRONG 1700—1960

K. Y. Daaku

Eastern Brong here includes the stretch of territory from the Volta in the North to the borders of Ejura in the South and from Nkoranza in the west to Kete Krachi in the east. The area is peopled by a mixture of groups, comprising the original Nchumuru, (Dwane) and immigrants from the Twi-speaking people from the south, as well as people from Northern Ghana.

The early history of the area has been one of struggle between the immigrants from the south and the original Guan speakers under their almost legendary leader Atara Finam (Atere Firaw). An unknown factor in Ghanaian history is the extent of the power and territory, as well as the nature of the government of Atara Finam. At one time or the other his writ appears to have run thorough Kwahu in the south to the borders of Nkoranza<sup>1</sup> that is, the area washed by the Sene and Afram Rivers. With his capital at Gyanebofo, Ataramanso controlled the north-eastern trade routes leading to the north.

Traditions of the states of Atebubu, Kumawu, Beposo, Agogo and Kwahu assert that they fought either jointly or individually against Atara Finam, and drove him across the Volta, and hence, the saying "Atara Finam ode amemenenfe twi faa mpempemso" i.e. "Atara Finam under great pressure crossed the Volta with his thousands."<sup>2</sup>

For the emergent states in the forest area to the south and west of Ataramanso there was the need for a free and uninterrupted access to the northern markets where they could sell their kola nuts and other forest produce for livestock and other manufactured goods from the north. It was therefore imperative that Atara Finam, who was said to be "obstructing them from the rays of the sun", should be eliminated, to accord them uninhibited growth. From about the middle of the seventeenth century Atara Finam's territories were attacked on several fronts. By the 1680s it appears that his power had been completely broken and his territories parcelled out among the victors.

After the fall of Atramanso, people from far and near came to found settlements in the area. Traditions of origins of towns like Abease, Atebubu, Wiase, Bassa, Kete-Krakye, Prang and Yeji, indicate that their founding fathers came from places like Saman, near Kwaman, the site of modern Kumasi, Takyiman, Jukwa, Kwabre, Wassa, Larteh and Anum-Boso.<sup>3</sup>

One of the factors which led to the movements of peoples from the south to eastern Brong was the centralising policies of the emigrants from Asantemanso and Adanse, who later founded the Asante nation. Apart from those escaping the power of emergent Asante, there were the pre-Asante settlers who had moved to settle on the trade routes so as to exploit their economic potentialities. Indeed the struggle for the control of the trade paths has always loomed large in the relations between the neighbouring towns.

By the middle of the eighteenth century two main centres of power had emerged in the area. Atebubu, which had moved from the old site at Saaman to settle along the main trade route, the "Amaniampong highway" passing through Mampong and Ejura to the north, increased its political and economic status and began to over-shadow Abease, a once powerful religious centre. In the extreme east was Krakye, the home of the famous Denteh Oracle which attracted devotees and supplicants from far and near. It was also the most convenient port on the Volta to which Adacanoemen brought the valuable salt from the south.

The traditions of Bassa for instance say that they voluntarily chose to come under Krakye because of the protection afforded them by Denteh.<sup>4</sup> Since no chief in the area would undertake any serious political venture without first consulting Denteh, Krakye now vied with Atebubu as the leading town in eastern Brong.

Whatever the internal rivalries among the states, it was the emergence of Asante which profoundly affected the area. From the time of Opoku Ware I (1720—1750) to that of Prempeh I (1888—1896) the brunt of Asante power was strongly felt in the area. Although traditions of many of the states like Atebubu, Prang and Abease deny ever being conquered by Asante, there is no doubt that eastern Brong was brought under Asante power by force of arms. Bowdich, Dupuis and writers after them refer to the subjugation of the "Boorom" and the 'Yobaty' tribes. Reindorf explicitly details the exploits of the Asante armies in the area, especially the forces of Dwaben, Mampong and Nsuta which came to exercise a supervisory role in the area on behalf of the Asantehene. By 1748, the Asante forces had crossed the Volta at Krakye to subdue the tribes in the Buem area.<sup>5</sup>

In apportioning the eastern Brong states among the various victorious Asante chiefs, Dwabenhene Akyasi, under whose control Krakye was placed, won the most lucrative prize since the prestige of Denteh came to be shared by the Dwabens. As subjects of the Dwabenhene, the Krakyes not only paid annual tributes but they placed the services of the famous Oracle under Dwaben. The control of Denteh was to feature largely in the struggles between Kumasi and Dwaben in the nineteenth century.



Between 1750 and 1850, eastern Brong remained under uneasy subjection to Asante. They provided contingents for Asante campaigns and paid annual tributes to their overlords. At times, however, some states made unsuccessful attempts to rid themselves of Asante rule, but their efforts were thwarted by lack of unity among the peoples of eastern Brong. This enabled Asante to exploit the internal rivalries among them to her own advantage. It was not unusual, for instance, for Asante to detail one of the states to put down rebellions by its neighbours. They were also drawn into internal Asante political struggles. During the first Asante-Dwaben struggles in the 1840s, Krakye was attacked by Atebubu and other Asante forces for its loyalty to Dwaben.<sup>6</sup>

In the course of the nineteenth century, however, the Brong states began to feel the pinch of the Asante yoke and sought to unite in opposition to their overlord. One common denominator was their position in the Asante military organisation. They were said to have been placed in the Adonten division of the army and suffered heavy casualties for which they never reaped adequate compensation. But as long as the Asante military and political strength remained intact, they saw little hope in freeing themselves through military action. However, some of them realised that their salvation lay in strengthening and exploiting the advantageous position which the presence of the Denteh Oracle gave them. Whereas in the early 1850s, Atebubu, for instance, had been willing to subdue Krakye on behalf of Asante, ten years later it was ready to bring itself under the rule of Krakye-Denteh. After the Krepi war of 1869, Kwame Gyane, the Atebubuhene sought protection from Krakye. It may be said that from about the 1860s, the basis of what is often referred to as the Eastern Brong or Denteh confederation was laid. But it was the British defeat of Asante in 1874, and the subsequent confusion which gripped that empire, that enabled Atebubu and the other Brong states (except Nkoranza) to declare their independence.<sup>7</sup> Atebubu now defiantly closed the northern trade route to Asante traders.

Fortunately for the newly established Brong confederation troubles in Metropolitan Asante enabled them to nurture their independence. Between 1874 and 1888 the Asante forces were so completely taken up with settling internal disputes or engaged in civil strifes as to have no time to pursue any recalcitrant tributary state. It may be recalled that not only Dwaben but states like Bekwai, Kokofu and Adanse refused to accept the authority of Kumasi.<sup>8</sup>

After the deposition of Kofi Karikari, however, his successor, Mensah Bonsu, 1874-1883, determined to restore Asante to its former position. He proved an able and determined leader, but his high-handedness led to his eventual deposition. This event, his

deposition, was to throw Asante into more confusion which was again exploited by the Brong. The choice of Prempeh was opposed by supporters of Atwereboanda. States like Mampong, Kokofu and Nsuta supported the latter claimant. After his enstoolment, Prempeh ably set out to rebuild the Asante empire. One by one his forces over-ran Nsuta, Mampong and other states. The struggles enhanced the position of the members of the Brong confederacy. Atebubu for instance, became the refuge centre for the fugitive kings of Mampong and Nsuta. Again in 1893, the king of Nkronza took refuge in eastern Brong, where he had obtained both moral and material support from both Atebubu and Krakye in his struggle against Kumasi.<sup>9</sup>

The members of the Brong Confederacy knew that having assumed a defiant attitude it would not be long before they faced Prempeh's armies. What saved them was their advantageous position on the all-important Amaniampong Highway to the north, which became the target of the European traders. The confusion had led to trade stagnation which greatly disturbed the administration on the coast. It was therefore considered imperative for the administration to find alternative routes. Their attention was turned first to eastern Brong, where the Atebubu market had been established after 1874, and to Krakye which was the navigable port by canoes from the coast. With trade in view, the administration dispatched Captain Lonsdale in 1881 to Kumasi and charged him to open the trade route to Salaga and other places (Ward 292).<sup>10</sup>

Both the British on the coast and the members of the Brong Confederation exploited the Asante defeat to their own advantage. The confederate states, especially Atebubu and Krakye, sought to translate their open rebellion into genuine independence of Asante by appealing to the British to grant them protection in 1874. The British administration, on the other hand, viewed the Brong states from both commercial and diplomatic points. In addition to them, their place being regarded as stepping stones to the market of Salaga, it was essential to prevent the Germans, who were advancing westwards from Togo, from gaining control over the area. The interests of the British in the area is evident in the number of officials like Capt. Lang, Capt. Lonsdale, Ferguson and others who were sent between 1881 and 1894 to reconnoitre, sign treaties and to protect the eastern Brong from possible Asante attacks.<sup>11</sup>

In 1890, Atebubu formally entered into a treaty of protection with the British. It was on the strength of the treaty that the British despatched troops and officials to Atebubu in 1893 during the Asante-Nkoranza war, a gesture which dissuaded the Asantes from attacking and reincorporating the eastern Brong into the

Empire. Whatever might have been Prempeh's intentions towards the Brongs, his capture and exile in 1896 "uprooted the Asante Confederacy and secured the complete independence of Brong tribes of Kumasi control".<sup>12</sup>

In 1900 when Asante was formally annexed by the British, they came under the same administration with their former Brong subjects. Unfortunately, eastern Brong was divided into separate administrative districts: some were placed within the Atebubu and others within the Mampong districts. Although the imposition of British rule relieved them from Asante domination, it spelt the demise of the Brong Confederation. With the hated Asante rule removed the bond of unity, that is "the century of Wrongs" was gone. The rivalries between Wiase and Atebubu were revived, the former refusing to acknowledge the rule of the latter over him.<sup>13</sup>

In the negotiations leading to the restoration of the Asante Confederacy in 1935, the British administration agreed that any Brong state which wanted to join the Asante Confederacy should be allowed to do so, but it insisted that there should be no coercion. It is interesting to note that not even the fact that the Brong and the Asante had come under the British administration would induce many of the Brongs to consider themselves as having something in common with Asante. Whilst states like Abease and Wiase eventually agreed to join the Confederacy, after it had been set up, Atebubu, which had all the time maintained its posture of defiance, resolutely refused to be drawn into any connections with Asante. It remained independent.<sup>14</sup>

Since the seventeenth century eastern Brong has been the scene of struggles. This started with the Akan emigrants from the south who set out to wrest control of the area from the Guan King, Atara Finam. But scarcely had these people settled down to consolidate their newly won lands than the burgeoning Asante power moved into the area. From the time of Opoku Ware, a series of campaigns was launched in eastern Brong which eventually brought the whole of the area from Abease to Krakye and northwards to the Volta, under Asante control. Asante institutions, especially political practices, were imposed on the people. Although they hated being forced to pay taxes and being constantly drawn into the Asante wars, they were unable to do much to reassert their independence. It must be pointed out that to the Asantes eastern Brong was of great political and economic value. Politically they could exploit the power and prestige of the Denteh Oracle at Krakye, whose protection was solicited by rulers throughout the forest area. It was also on the all-important trade route leading to the market at Salaga. In the latter part of the nineteenth

century the eastern Brong states united under the leadership of the Priest of Denteh, who became the spokesman of a confederacy of states in which Atebubu provided the military leadership. The confederate states benefited from the dynastic and civil struggles which plagued Asante after 1874. After 1888, however, the dynamic leadership of Prempeh I could have led to their eventual defeat and incorporation into the Asante empire. But the eastern Brongs were saved by the determination of the British not to allow Asante to regain its former status. In the scramble for possessions in West Africa, Britain was determined that neither Germany advancing from the east, nor France from the west, would gain control of the hinterland of modern Ghana. It was with these two aims in view that the administration decided to annex the eastern Brong states. The imposition of British rule enabled them to achieve their ambition to be independent of Asante. Not even the fact that they and the Asante came under British rule for over thirty years would induce many of the former Brong confederate states to agree to come together when the Asante Confederacy was restored in 1935.

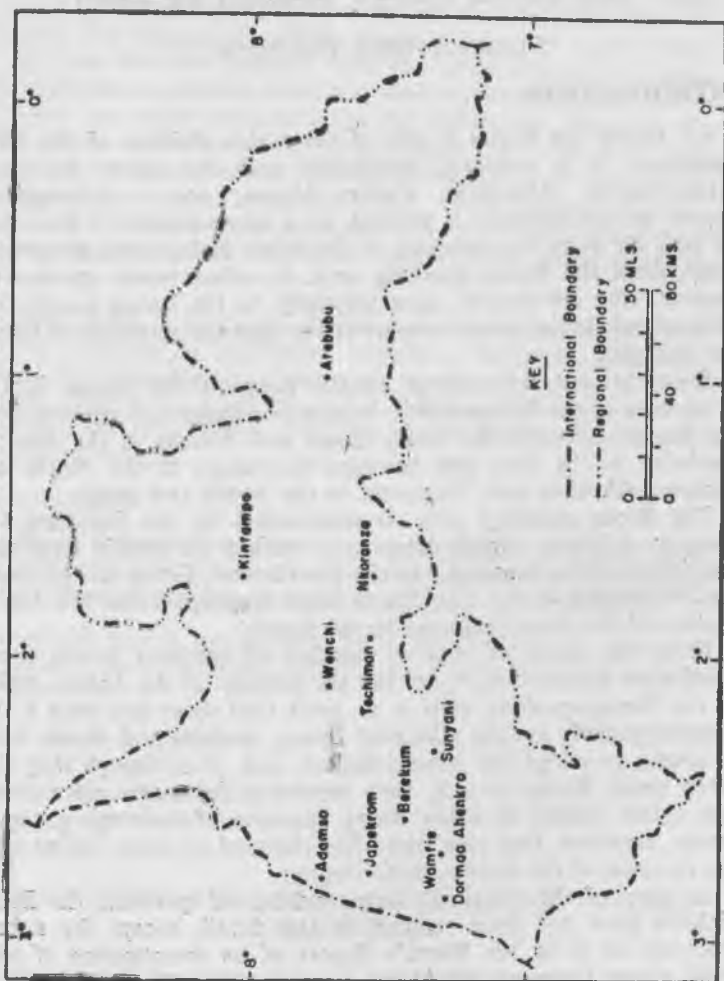
The Brong ambition to be completely independent of Asante manifested itself during the struggle for Independence. Their efforts were rewarded with the establishment of a separate Brong-Ahafo region after independence which may be described as a penultimate achievement of two centuries of struggle.

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# BRONG SPEAKING AREA



## CHAPTER VII

### THE BRONG (BONO) DIALECT OF AKAN

FLORENCE ABENA DOLPHYNE

#### INTRODUCTION

0.1 Brong (or Bono) is one of the major dialects of the Akan Language. It is mutually intelligible with the other dialects of Akan-Asante, Akuapem, Fante, Akyem, etc. — although the degree of intelligibility is related, to a large extent, to how near or how far away the speakers of the other dialects are, geographically, from the Brong-speaking area. In other words speakers of Asante, who are closest, geographically, to the Brong people, can understand Brong speakers more easily than can speakers of Fante, for example.

Brong is spoken by about 320,000 people (1960 census figures) in an area in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana that extends from the border between the Ivory Coast and Ghana in the West to Atebubu in the East and between Kintampo in the North and Dormaa-Ahenkro and Nkoranza in the South (see map).

The Brong-speaking area is surrounded by the following languages: Ligbi (a Mande language), Nafana (a Senufo language), and Mo (a Grusi language) to the North-west; Gonja to the North and Nchumuru to the East (both Guan languages) and the Asante dialect of the Akan language to the South.

From the point of view of number of speakers Brong comes third after Asante and Fante but the prestige of the Asante dialect in the Brong-speaking area is so great that there has been a tendency especially among educated Brong peoples and those living in towns, to adopt the Asante dialect, and, even though they very often speak Brong as well, they reserve it for much older people and speak Asante to other Brong speakers of their age group. It seems, however, that this trend has changed to some extent since the creation of the Brong-Ahafo Region.

In spite of the relatively large number of speakers, the Brong dialects have not been studied in any detail, except for a brief reference to it in Ida Ward's *Report of an investigation of some Gold Coast Language Problems*, London 1945 and B. J. Aidoo's paper *The Linguistic differences between Asante and Bono of the Sunyani Area* (unpublished).

0.2. There are certain linguistic features that are peculiar to the variety of the Akan Language spoken within the geographical area described above, which help to distinguish Brong from other dialects of Akan. At the same time there are marked differences

between the spoken language that is used in different parts of the Brong-speaking area, and it is sometimes not very easy for speakers from one town or village to understand speakers from a town or village some 30 miles away, so that what is spoken in the Brong area might be better described as a dialect cluster rather than as one dialect. For example it will be obvious from this paper, especially to those who are familiar with the other dialects of Akan, that the differences between what is spoken in different parts of the Brong area are more marked than the differences between the Asante, Akyem and Kwahu dialects, for example. This paper sets out some of the characteristic features of the Brong dialect cluster as a whole, as compared with the major Akan dialects: Asante, Akuapem and Fante; and discusses some of the differences between the types of Brong spoken in different parts of the Brong-speaking area.<sup>1</sup>

The description is based on stories and conversations recorded by native speakers in Japekrom, Adamso, Berekum, Dormaa-Ahenkro, Sunyani, Fiapre, Odumase, Abesim, Wamfie, Wenchi, Techiman, Nkoranza, Kintampo and Atebubu. The material was collected by Mr B. J. Aidoo, a former student of the Department of Linguistics, Legon.

### 0.3. *Transcriptions*

The Brong dialect has not been written, and the examples cited in this paper are written with the symbols of the Akan orthography, with the following additional convention for the vowel symbols:

Nasalised vowels are written with the symbol /-/ over the vowel letter, where the vowel is not preceded or followed by a nasal consonant.

- e.g. kɔ̃ (to fight)
- fĩ (dirt)
- but hono (to dissolve)
- nkyene (salt)

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BRONG DIALECT CLUSTER

### 1.0. *Sound Correspondences between Brong and the other Dialects of Akan*

#### 1.1 *Correspondence between Brong /h/ and Akan /hy/ and /hw/*

Most Brong speakers have a glottal fricative /h/ where other Akan speakers have a labialised or a non-labialised alveolo-palatal fricative /hw/ or /hy/.



e.g. <i>Brong</i>	<i>other Akan</i>
he	hye (to wear)
he	hwe (to look at)
hire	hyire (white clay)
hia	hyia (to meet)
afahe	afahye (festival).

In other Akan dialects the palatal fricatives occur only before oral front vowels and the glottal fricative before other vowels and nasalised front vowels.

e.g. hye (to wear)	horo (to wash)
hyia (to meet)	ɛhɔ (there)
hwie (to pour out)	ha (re) (to be light — of weight)
but hiã (to need)	
hem (to blow one's nose)	

In Akan palatal consonants occur before front vowels and the open vowel /a/, while velar and glottal consonants occur before back vowels and the open vowel.

e.g. <b>Palatal consonants</b>	<b>Velar and glottal consonants</b>
kyɛ (to share out)	kɔ (to go)
twɛ (to pull)	kɔ (to fight)
twa (to cut)	ka (to bite)
gya (to leave behind)	kwa (to smear)
gye (to receive)	gu (to scatter — e.g. seeds)
adwini (pattern)	gwa (to split open)
hyɛ (to wear)	gow (to soften)
hwie (to pour out)	ɛ hɔ (there)

1.11. There is historical evidence from early written texts<sup>2</sup> to show that the palatal consonants are a recent development, and that they are a result of a systematic palatalisation of the velar and glottal consonants in the environment of a following front vowel. (Some older speakers of the Asante dialect still say 'hire' for 'hyire' (white clay) and 'ɔkena' for 'ɔkyena' (tomorrow)). Since the Brong /h/ pronunciation for other Akan /hy/ is widespread throughout the whole of the Brong-speaking area (see chart section 9.0), it is not likely, (as was suggested by some participants at the Brong Seminar) that the Brong pronunciation could have been borrowed from one or more of the neighbouring languages. The conclusion that may be drawn is that since palatal consonants are a recent development in Akan<sup>2</sup>, it appears that in the Brong dialects the glottal fricative did not get palatalised along with the velar consonants, and that the forms 'hɛ' instead of 'hwe' and 'hia' instead of 'hyia' represent a much older pronunciation, that is, as far as /h/ in these examples is concerned the Brong dialects have retained an older form of the Akan language.

### 1. CVnV Stems

In the Akuapem and Asante dialects there is a large number of CVnV verb stems (i.e. where the second consonant is /n/) most of which have CVn variants, the CVnV forms being used in more emphatic speech.

- e.g. kyene/kyen (to surpass)  
dane/dan (to turn over)  
sone/søn (to strain)

Apart from a few exceptions, nominal stems with similar structure are only CVn.

- e.g. òdan (house)  
èkøn (neck)  
but efunu/efun (corpse)

In the Brong dialects such stems have

#### 1. CVnV Structure

- e.g. dane (to turn over; house)  
bøne (to smell)  
kwane (path)

#### 2. CVrV Structure

- e.g. dare (to turn over; house)  
hyere (ship; vehicle)  
kware (path)

#### 3. CV/CV Structure

- e.g. dī (name)                      dǎ (to turn over; house)  
bō                                      sɛ (how much?)

### 1.21 CVnV Stems

The CVnV form is the most common, but most of such words also have a CVrV pronunciation, and the same speaker may use the two forms as free variants.

It is quite common for polysyllabic words that end in vowels to lose the final vowels over the years unless there is some special reason for their being retained (such as stress on the final syllable). This loss of final vowel affected a large number of CVnV words in the Akuapem and Asante dialects, but in the Fante dialect the process was complete and all such words have CVn structure. It seems therefore that in the Brong dialects these CVnV forms have not undergone the change that has taken place in the other dialects.

### 1.22 CVrV Stems

The CVrV pronunciation for Akan CVnV stems is peculiar to the Brong dialects, and seems to be an exclusive Brong innovation.

In Akan /n/ is in complementary distribution with /d/ and /r/— /n/ can occur in stem-initial position and inter-vocally but always in a **nasalised** syllable, except where it is an assimilated /d/ e.g. da/nna (day/days); /d/ occurs only in stem initial position and /r/ intervocally and both occur in **oral** syllables only. The CVnV stems are therefore nasal and the CVrV ones oral. Nasality is phonemic in Akan (e.g. ka (to be left behind) kã (to say)), and there are pairs of disyllabic words in the language that are distinguished mainly by the occurrence of /n/ or /r/ as the second consonant, and the corresponding vowel nasality or its absence.

e.g. sone (to strain)	sore (to get up)
kyene (to surpass)	kyere (to stay long)
hono (to dissolve)	horo (to wash)
pene (agree)	pere (to be restless)

The Brong innovation is one of replacing the marked (+nasal) with the unmarked (—nasal) feature value, thus neutralising the distinction between such pairs of stems.

### 1.23 CV/CV Stems

These are not as common as the CVnV and CVrV forms. The vowel of the CV form is oral or nasalised depending on the vowel quality.

e.g. dī (name)	dã (house)
kō (neck)	sē (now much?)

The vowel quality of the CV form is not always the same as the vowel quality of the initial syllable of the CVnV stem.

(1) Where the V of the initial syllable of the CVnV stem is the vowel /ə/ the vowel of the CV form is /ɔ/. The usual Akan pronunciation is put in brackets. in the following examples.

e.g. kō (kən) neck
bō (bən) to smell

(2) Where the V of the initial syllable of the CVnV stem is the vowel /ɛ/ the V of the CV form may be

- (1) a nasalised /ẽ/  
 e.g. twẽ (twen) to wait  
 sẽ (sen) to be perched

or (ii) an oral /ɛ/, (sometimes followed by a glottal stop when the word occurs before pause).

e.g. se (sen) how much?
pɛ (pɛn) sometime ago, once.

The Brong CV forms may be derived by applying the following phonological rules:

	Brong	Asante	Akuapem
(1) Delete final vowel of the CVnV stem	dan/bɔn/ twɛn	dan/bɔn/ twɛn	dan/bɔn/ twɛn
(2) In Brong replace /ɔ, ɛ/ with a higher vowel quality	dan/bon/ twɛn	dan/bɔn/ twɛn	dan/bɔn twɛn
(3) In Brong and Asante nasalise vowels before final /n/	dɔ̃n/bɔ̃n/ twɛ̃n	dɔ̃n/bɔ̃n twɛ̃n	dan/bɔn twɛn
(4) In Brong and Asante replace final /n/ with ɔ̃/ũ after back vowels and with ɛ̃/ĩ after non-back vowels. <sup>3</sup>	dɔ̃ɛ̃ bɔ̃ɔ̃/ twɛ̃ɛ̃	dɔ̃ɛ̃/bɔ̃ɔ̃ twɛ̃ɛ̃	dan/bɔn twɛn
(5) In Brong delete final vowel	dɔ̃/bɔ̃ twɛ̃	daɛ̃/bɔ̃ɔ̃ twɛ̃ɛ̃	dan/bɔn/ twɛn <sup>4</sup>

1.24 In the Brong dialects then there is a large number of (1) CVnV stems that have retained their original form; as well as a number that have been affected by the two Brong innovations resulting in (2) oral CVrV stems and (3) monosyllabic CV stems.

The following are examples of the different pronunciations associated with CVnV stems:

- kwane/kware (path)
- dane/dare/dã (to turn over; house)
- kɔno/kɔ (neck)
- dini/dĩ (name)
- twene/twɛ̃ (wait)
- hyɛne/hyɛɛ (ship/vehicle)

Examples of other words with similar structure:

- kramane/kramare (dog)
- apakane/apakare (chief's palanquin)
- sekane/sekare/sekã (knife)

### 1.3 Assimilation of voiced plosives and affricates into nasals

In some dialects of Akan, e.g. Akuapem, Asante, Akyem, Kwahu, a voiced plosive or a voiced affricate is assimilated into a nasal in the environment of a preceding nasal consonant within the same word.

This happens in

(a) Negative verbal forms and in Optative Tense forms where the nasal Negative prefix or Optative prefix occurs immediately before a voiced plosive or a voiced affricate.

e.g. mma (don't come)	stem: ba
ɔnnye (he won't take it)	„ gye
onnwa (let him cut it up)	„ dwa
ɔmmefa (let him come and take it)	Ingressive Prefix: be

(b) **Nominal forms** where a nasal nominal prefix occurs immediately before a voiced plosive or a voiced affricate.

e.g. nnwom (song)	stem: dwom
nnua (trees)	„ dua
mmofra (children)	„ abofra

This phonological process is absent in Fante, and in Brong it is not regular so that both assimilated and unassimilated forms occur.

(i) **The assimilated forms** occur in Nominal forms, Negative verbal forms and Optative Tense forms where the nasal prefix occurs before a **voiced plosive**.

e.g. nnua (trees)	stem: dua
mmaayaa (young girls)	„ abaayaa
onni (he won't eat)	„ di
ɔmmra (let him come)	„ bra

(ii) **The unassimilated forms occur in**

(a) Nominal forms, Negative verbal forms and Optative forms where the nasal prefix occurs before a **voiced affricate**.

**Brong**

e.g. ndwom (song)
akyinye (debate)
bengyae (let them stop it)
ma mindwa (let me cut it up)
ɔngye (he won't take it)

**Other Akan**

cf. nnwom
„ akyinnye
„ wonnyae
„ ma minnwa
„ ɔnnye

(b) 1st person singular verbal forms where the 1st person singular 'pronoun' is reduced to a homorganic syllabic nasal. (see Section 4.1) e.g.

nda (I sleep)	cf. meda
mbɛɛ (I came)	„ mebae
ndidi (I eat)	„ mididi

(c) possessed forms of the noun where the 1st person possessive 'pronoun' is reduced to a homorganic syllabic nasal that occur before the noun.

mba (my child)	cf. me ba
ndeɛ (my thing)	„ me deɛ
(i.e. mine)	
ndane (my house)	„ me dan

1.31 It seems from these examples that

(1) In the Brong dialects, the assimilation of voiced plosives and voiced affricates into nasals in the environment of a preceding nasal which occurs in some Akan dialects affected only voiced plosives but not voiced affricates.

(2) The reduction of 1st person pronoun to a syllabic nasal in the Brong dialects took place after the assimilation of voiced plosives to nasals referred to in (1) above, hence the forms "nda" (I sleep) "mbɛɛ" (I came) "mba" (my child) as compared with "nnua" (trees) "mma" (don't come).

#### 1.4 Correspondence Between Brong /l/ and /r/ in the other Akan dialects

In the Brong dialect cluster, /l/ and /r/ are in free variation, and they occur intervocalically in words where the other Akan dialects have /r/.

e.g.	<i>Brong</i>	<i>Other Akan Dialects</i>
	bolɔdɛɛ/borɔdɛɛ (plantain)	borɔdɛ
	abɛlɛbɛ/abɛrɛbɛ (pineapple)	abɔrɔbɛ
	akɔlaa/akɔraa (child)	akɔdaa/akɔraa

In Akan /d/ is in complementary distribution with /r/, /d/ occurring in stem-initial position, and /r/ intervocalically, so that /r/ is described in the phonology of Akan as intervocalic /d/. /l/, which is in free variation with /r/ in the Brong dialects (and in some parts of the Asante-speaking and Fante-speaking areas as well as in the Kwahu dialect), can also be described as an intervocalic /d/. There are, however, some few words in which all three sounds /d/, /l/ and /r/ are in free variation, so that in such words the distinction between stem initial /d/: [d] and intervocalic /d/: [r, l] does not apply.

e.g. *Brong*  
dɛ/rɛ/lɛ (to say) as in: ɔdɛ/ɔrɛ/ɔlɛ (he says) fiɛda/fiɛra/fiɛla (Friday).

#### c.f. *Some Types of Asante*

akɔdaa/akɔraa/akɔlaa (child)  
ahodɔɔ/ahorɔɔ (several)

## 2.0 Tone

(Tone marks: (ˊ) high tone (ˋ) low tone (!) downstep. e.g. Kɔfí; Á!má).

It has not been possible in this study to do a detailed tonal analysis of Brong. Moreover there are marked differences in the tonal patterns used in different parts of the Brong-speaking areas, and what follows is therefore a brief statement of some of the ways in which the Brong dialect cluster as a whole differs tonally from the Akuapem, Asante and Fante dialects.

## 2.1 The Emphatic Particle *né*

The emphatic particle *né* is always said on a high tone. In the other Akan dialects it is a low tone *nà*.

e.g. <i>Brong</i>	cf.	<i>Akuapem and Fante</i>
<i>mé né mbéè</i> (it is I who came)		<i>mé/émi ná mébáè</i> <i>Asante: mé ná mèbáèè</i>
<i>nyé ánànsè né! yá hò</i> (there lived (was) Ananse)		<i>Akuapem, Asante and Fante</i> <i>nye ánànsè ná òwó hò</i>
<i>Bónó né η!ká</i> (it is Brong I speak)		<i>Akuapem, Asante and Fante</i> <i>Bónó ná mé!ká.</i>

## 2.2 Possessive Noun Phrase with the Possessive 'Pronoun'<sup>(5)</sup>

In the following examples the possessive 'pronoun' in Brong, like in Fante, is said on a high tone, while it is said on a low tone in Akuapem and Asante.

<i>Brong</i>	<i>Fante</i>	c.f.	<i>Akuapem/Asante</i>
<i>mékàndò/ηkò</i>	<i>mó kón</i>	,,	<i>mè kón (my neck)</i>
<i>wó kàndò/kò</i>	<i>wó kón</i>	,,	<i>wò kón (your neck)</i>
<i>né ! yéré</i>	<i>né yér</i>		<i>nè yéré (his wife)</i>
<i>n'ásó!ási</i>	<i>n'á soá! ésiw</i>		<i>n'àsò à!sí (lit. his ear is blocked) (he is deaf)</i>
<i>n'ání!á fúrá</i>	<i>n'ényí! éfúrá</i>		<i>n'àní á!fírá (his eyes are blind).</i>

## 2.3 Verbal Forms

In the following examples, the Brong verbal forms differ tonally from one or more of the other Akan dialects. (Verb stems; *fa* (take) *bisa* (ask).

<i>Tense</i>	<i>Brong</i>	<i>Fante</i>	<i>Akuapem</i>	<i>Asante</i>
Habitual	<i>ófà</i>	<i>ófà</i>	<i>ófà</i>	<i>òfà</i>
	<i>òbísá</i>	<i>òbísà</i>	<i>òbísá</i>	<i>òbísá</i>
Progressive	<i>òófà</i>	<i>òréfà</i>	<i>òréfà</i>	<i>òòfà</i>
	<i>òòbísá</i>	<i>òrèbísá</i>	<i>òrèbísá</i>	<i>òòbísá</i>

Past	ɔ́fɛ́ɛ̀(ɔ̀)	ɔ́fáɛ̀	ɔ́fàɛ̀	ɔ́fàɛ̀ɛ̀
	ɔ̀bisɛ́ɛ̀	ɔ̀bisáɛ̀	ɔ̀bisàɛ̀	ɔ̀bisáɛ̀ɛ̀
Perfect	áá́fà	wáá́fà	wáá́fà	wá́fà
	áábísà	wéé́bísà	wàbísà	wábísà

In these examples the Brong forms are tonally more like the Fante forms than the Akuapem or Asante. It may be noted in passing that as far as tone is concerned, Brong 'sounds' more like some dialects of Fante than Akuapem or Asante.

### 3.0 Nominal Affixes

#### 3.1 Prefixes

Most nouns in Akan either have an initial vowel or an initial syllabic nasal consonant which is homorganic with the following consonant:

e.g.	ɔhene	(chief)
	eti/etire	(head)
	aba	(seed)
	mpa	(bed)
	nsu	(water)
	ŋkoa	(slaves)

In the Brong dialects nouns either have an initial syllabic, homorganic nasal or an initial /a/. Nouns which begin with /e, ɛ, o, ɔ/ in the other Akan dialects are consonant-initial in Brong.

e.g.	<i>Brong</i>	<i>Other Akan Dialects</i>	
	pɔ̀nkɔ̀	əpɔ̀nkɔ̀	(horse)
	bɛ	ɛbɛ	(proverb)
	wuo	owuo	(death)
	kramane	əkraman	(dog)
	du	edu/idu	(ten)

The Brong consonant-initial nouns are a development away from the more common structure for nouns in the 'Kwa' group of languages where most nouns have vowel prefixes.

#### 3.2 Suffixes

The vowel suffix which occurs in nouns in the Asante dialect, but which has been lost in the Akuapem and Fante dialects, is retained in the Brong dialects. This nominal suffix is usually an open vowel which agrees with the vowel of the stem in two dimensions of vowel Harmony — advanced/unadvanced; rounded/unrounded.



e.g.	<i>Brong</i>	<i>Asante</i>	<i>Akuapem/Fante</i>
	tire (head)	etire	eti/itsir
	boɔ (stone)	ɛboɔ	ɔbo/ebo
	nsuo (water)	nsuo	nsu
	adeɛ (thing)	adeɛ	ade/adze
	wuo (death)	owuo	owu

These examples show that while nouns in the Brong dialects lost the /e, ɛ, ɔ, o/ vowel prefixes and retained the suffixes, Akuapem and Fante lost the nominal suffixes and retained the prefixes. Asante nouns however retained both the vowel prefixes and suffixes.

It is worth pointing out here that nouns in related languages such as Nzema, Anyi/Baoule also have nominal suffixes that are comparable to those in Asante and Brong.

	<i>Nzema</i>	<i>Anyi</i>	c.f. <i>Asante</i>	<i>Brong</i>
e.g. water:	nzule	nzuo/nzue	nsuo	nsuo
head:	etile	— —	etire	tire

From such evidence one may conclude that nominal suffixes occurred in the 'parent' Akan language, so that as far as nominal suffixes are concerned the Brong and Asante forms represent what used to occur in an older form of the Akan language.

#### 4.0 Personal Pronouns

The description below follows Schachter and Fromkin's treatment of traditional 'subject pronouns' as Subject-Concord (SC) prefixes.<sup>7</sup> For reasons set out in section 5.2 under Possessive Noun Phrase, traditional possessive pronouns are also described as Possessive Concord (PC) markers. Below are the Brong personal pronouns and the concord markers associated with them.

	Independent Pronoun	SC Prefix	PC marker	Pronoun Object
1st pers. sing	me	N-/me- <sup>8</sup>	N-/me-	m
2nd " "	wo	wo-	wo	w
3rd " "	ɔno	wɔ-/ɔ-	ɔ-; ne	no
1st " plural	yɛ	yɛ-	yɛ	yɛ
2nd " "	hɔ	hɔ-	hɔ	hɔ
3rd " "	bɛ	bɛ-	bɛ	bɛ
unspecified subject prefix.		ɛ-		

The ways in which Brong personal pronouns and the concord markers associated with them differ from those of the other Akan dialects are discussed below for each personal pronoun.

4.1 1st Person Singular Pronoun: me.

(a) **Subject Concord prefix:** This is a syllabic nasal when it occurs immediately before a consonant. The nasal is homorganic with the following consonant: e.g. m occurs before p, b, f; n before t, d, s; ŋ before k, g, h.

- e.g. mbɛɛ (I came)
- nde too hɔ (I put it there)
- Dormaa ne ŋka (I speak the Dormaa dialect)
- nte ha (I live here)
- but mɛfa (I shall take it)
- meekɔ (I am going)

In the other Akan dialects the subject concord prefix is me—

- e.g. mebae (I came)
- mede too hɔ (I put it there)

(b) **Possessive Concord Marker**

This is also a syllabic nasal when the possessed noun is consonant-initial. The nasal is homorganic with the following consonant;

- e.g. mba (my child)
- nse (my father)
- ŋkɔ (my neck)
- but mafuo (my farm)
- madwane (my sheep)

In the other Akan dialects the possessive concord marker is 'me'.

- e.g. me ba (my child)
- me se (my father)

(c) **Pronoun Object**

This is a syllabic bilabial nasal m, as in the Fante dialect.

In Asante and Akuapem it is usually 'me' and sometimes 'm'.

- e.g. bæhwe m (they are looking at me)
- ɔde maa m (he gave it to me)

4.2 2nd Person Singular Pronoun: wo

Same as in the other Akan dialects.

(a) **Subject-Concord Prefix**

- e.g. wokɛ (you went)
- wobɛda ha (you will sleep here)

(b) **Possessive Concord Marker**

- e.g. wo dane, (your house)
- wo nua (your brother)

(c) **Object Pronoun**

- e.g. ɔɔfrɛ w (he is calling you)
- ɔde maa w (he gave it to you)

4.3 3rd Person Singular Pronoun: ɔno

(a) **Subject-Concord prefix**

Unlike the Akuapem and Asante dialects which have two 3rd person singular subject-concord prefixes—one for animate reference and another for non-animate reference—Brong, like Fante, has *ɔ-* for both animate and non-animate reference. It is sometimes pronounced *wɔ-* in Brong, especially in the Atebubu area.

e.g. <b>Brong</b>		cf. <b>Akuapem and Asante</b>
ɔkɔ (he/she/it has gone)		ɔkɔ (he/she has gone)
		ɛkɔ (it has gone)
ɔbɛkɔ (he/she/it will go)		ɔbɛkɔ (he/she/will go)
		ɛbɛkɔ (it will go)
sɛ wɔɔdɛ ɔ (if it is sweet)		sɛ ɛɛdɛ ɔ (if it is sweet)
wɔrokɔ (he is going)		ɔrekɔ (he is going)

### (b) Possessive Concord Marker

In Akan there are two possessive concord markers associated with the 3rd person singular pronoun; *ɔ-* and *ne*. (The *ɔ-* form does not occur in Fante).

e.g. <i>ne dan</i> (his house)	<i>ne nua</i> (his brother/sister)
<i>ɔwɔfa</i> (his uncle)	<i>onua</i> (his brother/sister)

The form 'ne' can occur with all nouns. The *ɔ-* form has a limited distribution, occurring only with a subclassification of nouns with the feature "human" which Boadi<sup>9</sup> refers to as the 'Kinship' group.

In the Brong dialects the *ɔ-* form occurs with a larger number of nouns than in the other dialects of Akan.

<b>Brong</b>	cf.	<b>Akuapem and Asante</b>
<i>ne wɔfa/ɔwɔfa</i> (his uncle)		<i>ne wɔfa/ɔwɔfa</i> (his uncle)
<i>ne kunu/okunu</i> (her husband)		<i>ne kunu/okunu</i> (her husband)
<i>ne nua/onua</i> (his brother/sister)		<i>ne nua/onua</i> (his brother/sister)
<i>ne ba/ɔba</i> (his child)		<i>ne ba</i> (his child)
<i>ne yere/ɔyere</i> (his wife)		<i>ne yere</i> (his wife)

In the Brong dialects therefore the *ɔ-* possessive concord marker has a much wider distribution than in the other Akan dialects in which it occurs. A similar distribution in related languages such as Nzema and Sefwi indicates that this wider distribution in Brong represents what used to occur in the 'parent' Akan language. In the Akuapem and Asante dialects the number of nouns with which the *ɔ-* possessive form can occur has become considerably reduced, while in the Fante dialect this possessive form has been lost. Here again it seems Brong has retained an older Akan form.

### (c) Pronoun Object

The third person singular pronoun object for animate reference in Brong and in the other dialects of Akan is 'no'. Where

the pronominalised noun object is inanimate the object is covert, that is, it is not expressed, in all the dialects of Akan.

- e.g. frɛ no (call him)  
Kofi huu no (Kofi saw him)  
ɔde maa no (he gave it to him)  
but Kofi hui (Kofi saw it)

#### 4.4 1st Person Plural Pronoun: ye

All the dialects of Akan including Brong, have the form 'ye' for the subject-concord prefix, but the possessive concord marker and the object pronoun is 'yen' in Akuapem and Asante and 'hen' in Fante. Brong has 'ye' for both the possessive concord marker and the pronoun object. Like some other CVnV/Cvn words in Brong, this pronoun has lost its final nasal. (See section 1.2).

(a) **Subject-Concord Prefix**

- ye kɔ (we go)  
ye befa (we shall take it)

(b) **Possessive Concord Marker**

- ye dan (our house)  
ye nua (our brother/sister)

(c) **Pronoun Object:**

- ɔfrɛ ye (he called us)  
bede maa ye (they gave it to us)

#### 4.5 2nd Person Plural Pronoun: hɔ

In the Akuapem and Asante dialects this pronoun is mo and in the Fante dialect hom. The Brong form bears a close resemblance to the Fante one.

(a) **Subject Concord Prefix**

- hɔdidi (you eat)  
hɔbede (you will sleep)

(b) **Possessive Concord Marker**

- hɔ kasaa (your language)  
hɔ nua (your brother/sister)

(c) **Pronoun Object**

- maahu hɔ (I have seen you)  
ɔfrɛ hɔ (he is calling you)

#### 4.6 3rd Person Plural Pronoun: *bɛ*

The third person plural pronoun 'bɛ' more than anything else in the Brong dialects has been the one linguistic item by which other Akan-speakers have identified Brong-speakers. It does not occur in any of the major Akan dialects — Asante has both 'yɛn' and 'wɔn/wɔɔnom'; Akuapem 'wɔn', and Fante 'hɔn'. 'Bɛ' is an old 3rd person plural pronoun of the Benue-Congo language group, and it occurs in Nzema and in Anyi-Baoule. It also occurs in the Wassaw dialect of Akan. 'Bɛ' is used throughout the Brong-speaking area and even though it does not bear any resemblance to the 3rd person plural pronouns of the Akan dialects nearest to the Brong area, it cannot be regarded as borrowed from the neighbouring languages in the Ivory Coast, in which it occurs. It seems Brong has retained this Benue-Congo form which has been lost in most of the other dialects of Akan.

##### (a) Subject-Concord Prefix

bɛkɔ (they have gone)  
bɛɛ (they say)

##### (b) Possessive Concord Marker

bɛ kasaa (their language)  
bɛ dane (their house)

##### (c) Pronoun Object

fɛ bɛ (call them)  
kɔbisa bɛ (go and ask them)

#### 4.7 Unspecified Subject Prefix: *ɛ-*

Sometimes in emphatic constructions, an unspecified subject prefix occurs with the verb after the 'ne' emphatic particle.

e.g. ɔnuɑ ne ɛbɛɛ (it is his brother who came)  
ne wɔfɑ ne ɛyɔɔɛ (it is his uncle who did it)

The use of this prefix in emphatic sentences is however optional so that the following sentences also occur:

ɔnuɑ ne bɛɛ (it is his brother who came)  
ne wɔfɑ ne yɔɔɛ (it is his uncle who did it)

**Note:** The unspecified subject prefix also occurs in the Asante dialect after the emphatic particle 'na'. It does not occur in Akuapem or in Fante.

e.g. ɔno na ɛbaɛ (it is he who came)  
wɔɔnom na ɛkɔɛɛ (it is they who went)  
(the 'na ɛ' sequence in Asante is pronounced /nɛ/).

#### 5.0 Noun-Plus-Concord Marker Noun Phrase

### 5.1 Noun Phrase as subject of a Sentence

In most Akan dialects the subject of a sentence is expressed by a noun or by a subject-concord (SC) prefix.

- e.g. Kofi kəe (Kofi went)  
 or əkəe (he went)  
 Kofi fa bae (Kofi took it and brought it)  
 or əfa bae (he took it and brought it)

It is only in emphatic sentences that both a noun and an SC prefix may be used.

- e.g. (Akuapem and Fante) Kofi na əkəe (it is Kofi who went)  
 (Asante) Kofi na ɛkəɛ<sup>10</sup> (it is Kofi who went)

In the Brong dialect however when a noun subject is used it almost always requires a concord marker whether the sentence is emphatic or not. e.g.

#### (1) Unemphatic Sentences

- maame no əle (lit. the woman she said)  
 akɔdaa no əmaa dwom so (lit. the child he started a song)  
 Kofi ne Ama bəkəe (lit. Kofi and Ama they went)  
 mpanimfoə bəkəe ɛ . . . (lit. grown-ups they said that)  
 me ne wo yəbəkə (lit. I and you we shall go)  
 nsuo ɛɛtə<sup>11</sup> (lit. the rain it is falling)  
 hene hē ɛɛba<sup>11</sup> (lit. the chief he is coming)

#### (Serial Verb Construction)

- ɲkɔdaa no baakə baaba (lit. the children they have gone they have come back)  
 əde əkyɛ no (lit. he takes it he gives it (as a present) to him).  
 əde ɛɛma<sup>11</sup> no (lit. he takes it he is giving it to him)  
 bəpəgya bəkəe (lit. they lifted it, they went away).

(Note: sometimes the SC prefix is not repeated in the serial verb construction. e.g. nde maa no (I took it, gave it to him)).

#### (2) Emphatic Sentences (with the emphatic particle 'ne')

- me ne ɲkɛɛ (it is I who said it)  
 wo ne woyɔə (it is you who did it)  
 onua ne ɛbɛ (it is his brother who came)  
 ne wɔfa ne ɛyɔə (it is his uncle who did it)

Sometimes however when the subject requires a 3rd person singular pronoun, the pronoun does not occur with the verb after the emphatic particle.

- e.g. onua ne bæ (it is his brother who came)  
nye baa bi ne ya hɔ (there was (lived) a certain woman)  
ananse ne yɔɔ (it is Ananse who did it).

It may be pointed out here that in the Fante dialect the noun-plus S-C prefix Noun phrase is sometimes used although this is not very common.

- e.g. abofra no ɔye adze (lit. the child he does well)  
hɔn nyinaa woguanee (lit. they all they ran away)

The noun plus concord marker construction in Brong gives support to Schachter and Fromkin's treatment of Akan 'pronoun' subjects as subject-concord prefixes which agree with the noun subject in number and person. It seems as if this type of construction was more widespread in the Akan language than the present structure of the language would lead one to conclude. For unemphatic sentences the Akuapem and Asante dialects have lost this type of noun phrase completely; Fante still uses it to some extent, but in Brong it is regularly used, except for a few examples of serial verb construction. Here too Brong has retained an older form of the Akan language which has almost disappeared from the other Akan dialects.

For emphatic sentences with the 'ne' emphatic particle however, Akuapem, Asante and Fante dialects regularly use the noun plus concord marker construction, but in Brong the use of the subject concord marker is optional.

### 5.2 Possessive Noun Phrase

In general a possessed noun in Akan may be preceded either by a noun which is the possessor or by a possessive 'pronoun'.

- e.g. Kofi dan (Kofi's house) or ne dan (his house)  
Kofi ne Ama sukuu (Kofi and Ama's school) or wɔn sukuu (their school).

In the Brong dialects however when the noun which is the possessor is expressed, it obligatorily requires a possessive 'pronoun'.

- e.g. Kofi ne dan (lit. Kofi his house)  
Onyankopɔn n'anim (before God. lit. before God his face.)  
Kofi ne Ama bæ sukuu (lit. Kofi and Ama their school)  
ɛbɛ aboa bɛ tire ni? (lit. which animals their heads are these?)

Sometimes when the possessor referred to is a plural noun, two 'pronouns' are required.

- e.g. bɛ bɛ kasaa (lit. they their language).

This type of possessive noun phrase does not occur in the Asante dialect but it does in the Fante and Akuapem dialects.

e.g. (Fante) emi na ɔwo hɛn ndzɛmba (lit. I and you our things)  
           Kofi ne sika (lit. Kofi his money)  
           mbofra no hɛn ntar (lit. the children their dresses).

(Akuapem) m'agya ne nua bea (lit. my father his sister)

This type of possessive noun phrase shows that what has been traditionally referred to as 'possessive pronouns' in Akan are in fact concord markers which agree with their nouns in number and person. Like the noun plus subject-concord marker noun phrase discussed above the noun plus possessive concord marker noun phrase seems to have been widespread in the Akan language at some earlier stage in the history of the language. While it has been retained in the Brong and Fante dialects, its use has become restricted in the Akuapem dialect to singular nouns requiring the third person singular concord marker, but it has been lost in the Asante dialect.

## 6.0 Vocabulary

Like all other dialects of Akan, Brong has a number of vocabulary items that do not occur in any of the other dialects.

e.g. awehoma — monkey  
       ahundede — bat  
       anansoa — ananse story  
       kom — farm

In this section however, only a few vocabulary items with a high frequency of occurrence, that are strikingly different from what occur in the other Akan dialects are discussed.

### 6.1 *kē/hē*

'*kē*' in the Japekrom/Adamso subdialects and '*hē*' in the other subdialects are used for the (a) demonstrative pronouns, 'this', 'that' (b) the definite article and (c) the subordinate clause marker. Other Akan dialects have 'yi' for the demonstrative pronoun meaning 'this'; 'no' for the demonstrative pronoun meaning 'that' and for the definite article, as well as for the subordinate clause marker.

#### e.g. (a) Demonstrative Pronouns (this/that)

wiase <i>kē</i>	(this world)
ɔne ɔba <i>kē</i> bɛɛkɔ mvoum <sup>12</sup>	(she and this/that her child were going to the farm).
mmerɛ bi baa <i>hē</i> kɔɔ nsuom	(once this/that woman went to the river).
anadwo <i>hē</i> a hene <i>hē</i> ɛɛba . .	(that night when this chief was coming)
mɔkɔ <sup>13</sup> brɛ mba <i>hē</i> ya	(I shall go where this my child is).



cf. **other Akan:** *wiase yi* (this world)

(b) **The definite article (the)**

<i>akɔlaa kɛ̃ ohuu anomaa bi</i>	(the child saw a bird)
<i>ne sie kɛ̃ so le</i>	(and the ant hill also said)
<i>akɔlaa hɛ̃ buee pono hɛ̃</i>	(the child opened the door).
<i>ne baa hɛ̃ le yoo</i>	(and the woman said 'yes').
<i>ɔpɛgyaa tuo hɛ̃</i>	(he raised the gun)

cf. **other Akan:**

<i>abofra no buee pono no</i>	(the/that child opened) the door.
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(c) **Subordinate Clause Marker**

<i>na bɛɛkɔ mvuom kɛ̃ na bɛkɔ too dwo</i>	(and when they were going to the farm they found yam).
<i>nipa deɛ yɛɛbre ne hɔ̃ kɛ̃</i>	(the person over whom we are toiling).
<i>na ɔforɔɛ hɛ̃</i>	(and when he climbed it)
<i>bɛwoo no hɛ̃ bede no kɔhɛɛ bon-glo</i>	(when he was born they put him in a bungalow).
<i>asɛm deɛ ɔka kyereɛ wo hɛ̃</i>	(lit. the case which he told you).

c.f. **Other Akan:**

<i>asɛm a ɔka kyereɛ wo no</i>	(lit. the case which he told you).
<i>wɛwoo no no . . .</i>	(when he was born . . .)

## 6.2 The Verb 'to say'

The verb meaning 'to say' is *sɛ/lɛ/rɛ/dɛ* and occasionally 'se' which is the form used in the Asante dialect.

The pronunciation 'se' is mainly used in the Atebubu area. In the rest of the Brong-speaking area the pronunciation 'le', *rɛ*, *dɛ* or a reduced form 'ɛ' is used. All four pronunciations may occur in the speech of one person. (For relationship between d/l/r see section 1.4)

e.g. <i>baa hɛ̃ le yoo</i>	(the woman said 'yes')
<i>ɔrɛ ɔɔkɔ</i>	(he says he is going)
<i>hene hɛ̃ dɛ oobeku no</i>	(the chief said he was going to kill him).
<i>bɛɛ bɛɛkɔ</i>	(they say they are going)

**Note:** Some dialects of Fante also have *dɛ/lɛ/rɛ* for the verb ('to say').

### 6.3 The Verb 'ya'

The verb 'ya' is used in Brong where the other Akan dialects use 'wə' (to be) or 'te' (to live in a place).

- e.g. dwe ya ne tim (there are lice in his hair)
- anomaa bi ya kurom ha (there is a certain bird in this town)
- Kwaku ananse ne ya hɔ (there was/lived Kwaku Ananse)
- mekɔ brɛ mba hɛ ya (I shall go where this my child is/lives).

### 6.4 The Verb yɔ/ɔ

One of the renderings for the verb 'to be' in most dialects of Akan is 'ye' which is often reduced to 'ɛ'

- e.g. ɛye dɛ/ɛɛdɛ (it is sweet)

In the Brong dialects the Present Tense Affirmative form has 'yɔ' or 'ɔ', although the Negative form has 'ye'

- e.g. adwuma kɛ ne sika yɔ pɔno aduonu (lit. this job, its money is twenty pounds).
- ɔyɔ m fɛ (lit. it is beautiful for me)
- ɔɔdɛ ( it is sweet)
- but ɔnye de ( it is not sweet)
- e.g. m'anansoa ntoɔɛ sɛ ɔɔdɛ o sɛ ɔnye de o... (lit. my story that I have told whether it is sweet or it is not sweet...)

### 6.5 The Verb 'de/di'

Another rendering for the verb 'to be' in most Akan dialects is 'ne' or 'ni', which is a contracted form for 'ne oyi' (it is this one). In the Brong dialects this verb is very often 'de' or 'di'

- e.g. mba di (this is my child)
- ne yerɛ de m ( I am his wife. lit. his wife is me)

cf. Other Akan:

- me ba ni ( this is my child)
- ne yere ne me ( I am his wife)

(see section 1.22 for relationship between /d/,/r/and/n/)

### 6.6 The Verb 'bra'

In most Akan dialects the verb 'bra' means 'to come' and 'brɛ' means 'to bring'. In Brong however the verb 'bra' means 'to come' and 'to bring'.

- e.g. bra ha ( come here)
- fa bra me ( bring it to me)

cf. Other Akan:

- bra ha ( come here)
- fa brɛ me ( bring it to me)

### 6.7 The Verb 'ho'

The verb for 'to be dry' is 'ho' in Brong and 'wo' in other Akan dialects.

- e.g. aho ( It is dry)  
se oho a ( when it is dry)
- cf. Other Akan:  
awo ( It is dry)  
se ewo a ( when it is dry)

It is only in this word that a Brong /h/ corresponds to other Akan /w/.

## 7.0 Subdialects of Brong.

Apart from the general characteristics described above which distinguish Brong from other dialects of Akan, there are marked differences between the type of Brong spoken in different parts of the Brong-speaking area which sometimes make it difficult for a person from the western section of the area to be understood by another from the eastern section. The Brong speakers are themselves aware of these differences and can very often tell the town a speaker comes from.

This section describes some of the linguistic characteristics of the subdialects. Each subdialect is identified by the town(s) or village(s) in which it is spoken.

The subdialects seem to fall into five main groups, each of which has certain characteristics peculiar to it.

1. Japekrom/Adamso
2. Berekum/Sunyani/Dormaa/Wamfie
3. Wenchi
4. Nkoranza/Kintampo
5. Atebubu

### 7.1 Japekrom/Adamso Subdialect

The following description is based on recordings made in Japekrom and Adamso, in the north-western section of the Brong speaking area.

#### 7.11 Consonant Mutation

What is most striking about this subdialect is the phonological feature of consonant mutation, whereby voiceless consonants become voiced in the environment of a preceding nasal consonant.

- e.g. akōraa/ngōraa ( child/children)  
fie/ahemvie ( house/palace)  
si mu/ma nzi mu ( start off/don't start off)  
tie/ma ndie ( listen/don't listen)  
əpɛ/əmbɛ ( he likes it/he does not like it)  
twa/ma ndwa ( cut it/don't cut it)

Consonant mutation is very characteristic of the Bia group of languages—Nzema, Anyi, Baoule—which are spoken across the border in the Ivory Coast. None of the Akan dialects has this pho-

nological feature and since it occurs in the area closest to the Bia languages it is very likely that it is borrowed from the Ivory Coast languages.

On the other hand since the Bia languages are, genetically, closely related to Akan, it is possible to consider consonant mutation as something that was once common to all the Akan dialects, but which has been retained in this section of the Brong area because of its proximity to related languages in which the same phonological process occurs.

### 7.12 Negative Imperative forms

The second person singular Imperative form in Akan is the simple verb stem.

e.g. kɔ (go)	fa (take it)
kasa (speak)	tie (listen)

In the Akuapem and Asante dialects the Negative of this Imperative form has the Negative morpheme, which is a homorganic nasal, prefixed to the stem.

e.g. ŋkɔ (don't go)	mfa (don't take it)
ŋkasa (don't speak)	ntie (don't listen)

In the Japekrom/Adamsso subdialect of Brong, as well as in Fante, the Negative form has the nasal prefix as well as 'ma' which occurs before the negative form.

e.g. ma mva	(don't take it (stem — 'fa'))
ma nyɔ	(don't do it)
ma ngɔ	(don't go (stem — 'kɔ'))

This form of the Negative Imperative also occurs in Nzema, a related language, except that there is no homorganic nasal before the verb stem.

e.g. ma yɛ	(don't do it)
ma fa	(don't take it)

### 7.13 Demonstrative Pronouns, Definite Article, etc.

The Japekrom/Adamsso subdialect has 'kɛ' where the other subdialects have 'hɛ' for

#### (a) The demonstrative pronoun

e.g. wiase kɛ	(this world)
fa kɛ to kɛ so	(put this one on that one)
ɔne ɔba kɛ bɛɛkɔ mvuom	(lit. she and this her child were going to the farm)
saa abayaa kɛ ne hɔ ɔfe	(this girl is beautiful)

#### (b) The definite article

akɔlaa kɛ ohuu anomaa bi	(the child saw a bird)
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na sie kē so lē . . . (and the ant-hill also said)  
ɔfaa sika kəkəɔ kē (he took the gold)

(c) **The subordinate clause marker**

na bɛɛkə mvuom kē na (and when they were going to  
əkɔtoo dwo the farm he found yam)  
nnipa deɛ yɛɛbrɛ ne hɔ kē (the person over whom we are  
toiling)  
nea obenya sika dodɔɔ kē (the one who will have the  
largest amount of money).

### 7.14 Adamso subdialect

In addition to consonant mutation and the Negative forms described above which are characteristic of the Japekrɛm/Adamso subdialect as a whole, the subdialect spoken in Adamso has the following characteristic:

#### Future Tense — 1st Person Singular

The first person singular of the simple Future Tense has the form *mbɛ* — (cf. Akuapem, Asante, Fante: *mɛ*—)

e.g. *mbetɔa so* (I will continue)  
*mbɛpene* (I will agree)  
*mbeduru* (I will reach)

The other subdialects of Brong as well as the other dialects of Akan have the form 'me-' e.g. *məkɔ*' (I will go)

As stated elsewhere (section 4.1) the 1st person singular subject-concord prefix is a syllabic nasal in Brong when it occurs before a consonant, but 'me' in the other Akan dialects. The Adamso 1st person singular Future Tense form indicates that:

- (i) the 1st person singular Future Tense form was 'mebɛ-' in which the full forms of both the subject-concord prefix and the Future Tense prefix were represented.
- (ii) the 1st person singular S-C prefix later got reduced to a syllabic nasal: *mbe* — (as in the Adamso subdialect).
- (iii) in the other Akan dialects the /b/ in the /mb/ sequence got assimilated into a nasal consonant: *mme*-
- (iv) the long nasal later got reduced to a single nasal consonant: *mɛ*-. Hence the other Akan form 'məkɔ' (I shall go) 'mɛfa' (I shall take it).

## 7.2 BEREKUM/SUNYANI/DORMAA/WAMFIE SUBDIALECT

### 7.21 Demonstrative Pronouns, etc.

This subdialect is different from all other Brong subdialects in having 'yi' for the demonstrative pronoun 'this' and 'no' for the demonstrative pronoun 'that', the definite article and the subordinate clause marker (as in the major Akan dialects) instead of 'kē' or 'hē' that is used in all the other Brong subdialects. There are however a few instances of 'hē' in this area.

- e.g. (a) **Demonstrative Pronoun** — 'yi'  
nka nsuo yi əɔfam (lit. the river it almost took  
(drowned) me)  
nkɔraa yi (these children)
- (b) **Definite Article**—'no'  
baakɔ akogyina nkwanta no so (one went and stood  
at the junction).  
bɛtwɛɛ akondwa no (they removed the chair)
- (c) **Subordinate Clause Marker** — 'no'  
na əwaree no no . . . (and when she married him)  
dini nea əbɛka sɛ fafrɛ (the name which he says you  
no no should call him).

It is possible that this area has had the longest contact with Asante speakers and the use of 'yi' and 'no' instead of 'hɔ' is a result of Asante influence. (In the other bigger towns such as Wenchi and Techiman some speakers use 'yi' and 'no' as well as 'hē').

### 7.22 Progressive Tense Form — Berekum

In addition to the above, the subdialect spoken in Berekum has a different pronunciation for the 2nd person singular Progressive Tense form.

- e.g. wo ne nka woɔma nsuo yi (it is you who nearly made this  
afa me yi river take me).  
berɛ a wodii kane sɛ woɔkɔ (when you set off to go to the  
mfuom no farm).

In the other subdialects, the Progressive Tense prefix is a long vowel of the same quality as the subject-concord prefix.

- e.g. wookɔ (you are going)

## 7.3 THE WENCHI SUBDIALECT

### 7.31 The Future Tense Prefix

The Future Tense Prefix in the Wenchi subdialect is 'bɔ' instead of 'bɛ' as in the other subdialects of Brong and in the other dialects of Akan.

e.g. mɔbɔ korɔno	(I will become a thief)
ɔbɔhye no nneema miensa	(he will ask him to do three things).
ɔbowia	(he will steal it)
woboku me	(you will kill me)

### 7.32 1st Person Singular Subject-concord prefix

Unlike the other subdialects where the first person singular subject concord prefix is a syllabic nasal when it occurs before a consonant, the Wenchi subdialect has the full form of the prefix 'me-' in these verbal forms. (It is possible this is due to Asante influence).

e.g. mefae	(I took it)
sɛ mete to hɔ	(If I pluck it)
mepe	(I like it)

## 7.4 NKORANZA/KINTAMPO SUBDIALECT

### 7.41 CV<sub>n</sub>V(CV<sub>n</sub>) Stems

Words with CV<sub>n</sub>V structure in which the first vowel is the half-open /ɛ/ or /ɔ/ vowel in the other Akan dialects have a CV pronunciation in which the vowel quality is e or o depending on whether the usual Akan pronunciation has an /ɛ/ or /ɔ/ vowel respectively (section 1.23). This phenomenon is more common in this subdialect than in any of the other subdialects. The usual Akan pronunciation is put in brackets.

e.g. anomaa sɛ̄ (sɛn) sere so	(a bird perched on the grass)
me nkyɛ̄ (nkyɛn)	(beside me)
twɛ̄ (twɛn) me	(wait for me)
kɛntɛ̄ (kɛntɛn)	(basket)
taasɛ̄ (taasɛn)	(a type of smoking pipe)
ɔbɔ̄ (ɛbɔn)	(it smells)
ŋkɔ̄ (me kɔn)	(my neck)

### 7.42 The Verb 'se'

The Nkoranza/Kintampo subdialect is different from the other subdialects in having 'se' instead of dɛ/ɛ/ɛ/ɛ for 'to say'.

ɔse yoo	he says 'yes'
baa hɛ̄ ɔse	the woman says

## 7.5 ATEBUBU SUBDIALECT

### 7.51 Vowel Harmony

Akan, like some other West African languages, has Vowel Harmony in which only vowels which have the feature "advanced" or "unadvanced" can co-occur in any given word.

e.g. 'advanced' vowels  
obetu (he will dig)  
esie (ant-hill)

'unadvanced' vowels  
ɔbɛto (he will throw)  
asɛɛ (the base of . . .)

In the Atebubu subdialect (as in Fante as well) there is another dimension of Vowel Harmony — that of rounding or unrounding of the vowels. Verbal affixes in particular are advanced/unadvanced as well as rounded/unrounded depending on which of these features are present in the vowels of the verb stem. The verb stems are shown in heavy type in the following examples.

e.g. Bemmedi	(let them come and eat)
kesi sɛ	(until)
begye	(come and take it)
morokɔ	(I am going)
bəmmɔɔ	(let them come and weed)
ɔbɔyɔ sɛ	(it will be about . . .)
bɔduruu hɔ	(they arrived there)

This type of Vowel Harmony also occurs in Possessive Concord Markers.

e.g. mu no	(my mother)
mɔ nkɔdaa	(my children)
me dane	(my house)
bɔ no	(their mother)

When one takes into consideration the fact that the dominant characteristic of Vowel Harmony in West African languages is the contrast between "advanced" and "unadvanced" vowels, one can only conclude that the additional feature rounding/unrounding which occurs in this subdialect is an innovation.

### 7.52 The Progressive Tense Prefix

In the other subdialects, as in Asante, the Progressive Tense prefix is an extension of the vowel quality of the subject-concord prefix.

e.g. meekɔ	(I am going)
ɔɔba	(he is coming)

In the Atebubu subdialect, as in Fante, the Progressive Tense prefix is '-re'- and the vowel quality of the prefix agrees in Vowel Harmony (see Vowel Harmony above) with the verb stem.

e.g. morokɔ	(I am going)
ɔroforo	(he is climbing)

Very often however, the vowel of the prefix is a more open quality.

e.g. bɔrɔyɔ	(they are doing it)
woreyi	(he is removing it)
wɔrɛtɛ bɛ	(he is watching them)



### 7.53 Assimilation of Voiced Plosives and Affricates into nasals

In the other subdialects a voiced affricate does not get assimilated into a nasal when preceded by a nasal consonant (see section 1.3) In the Atebubu subdialect, as in some dialects of Akan, (e.g. Akuapem, Asante, Akyem) a voiced affricate like the voiced plosive, also gets assimilated into a nasal in the environment of a preceding nasal consonant.

e.g. bennyae no	stem: gyae
(let them release him)	
nwom (song)	: dwom
nwane (sheep)	: dwane
anna (he won't sleep)	: da

### 7.54 The Past Tense suffix -ε

In Brong, as in Asante, Affirmative Past Tense and Negative Perfect Tense forms of the verb have the suffix -ε when they are not immediately followed by an overt object. In other Akan dialects the suffix is i/e.

e.g. Brong, Asante	Akuapem, Fante
ohuuyε (he saw it)	ohui
oḡhuuyε (he hasn't seen it)	oḡhuiε/oḡhui
but ohuu Kofi (he saw Kofi)	ohuu Kofi
oḡhuu no (he hasn't seen him)	oḡhuu no ε/oḡhuu no

In the Atebubu subdialect when the Affirmative Past Tense or the Negative Perfect Tense verb is followed by an object the suffix occurs after the object.

bəkəka kyereε bo no ε	(they went and told their mother).
əde kosua ta mienu braa wurukye ε	(she brought two eggs to (River) Wurukye).
ohiaa panini bi ε	(he met a certain man)
oboduruu kwan so ε	(lit. he arrived on the road)
onnyaa no ε	(he hasn't released him).

This phenomenon occurs in the Akuapem dialect with the Negative Perfect Tense forms of the verb.

e.g. memfae ε	(I haven't taken it)
oḡhui ε	(he hasn't seen it)
ənyεε adwuma no ε	(he hasn't done the work)
oḡhuu no ε	(he hasn't seen him).

This *ɛ* suffix no longer occurs in the Fante dialect. In the Akuapem dialect its use is restricted to the Negative Perfect Tense forms of the verb. In the Asante dialect and in the other subdialects of Brong the *-ɛ* suffix occurs only when the Affirmative Past Tense or the Negative Perfect Tense verb is not followed by an overt object.

In the Atebubu subdialect this Past Tense suffix occurs whether the verb is followed by an object or not. This wider distribution in the Atebubu subdialect seems to reflect what used to apply to the whole of the Akan language, so that as far as the distribution of the Past Tense suffix is concerned the Atebubu subdialect represents an older form of the Akan language.

### 7.55 The Verb 'sɛ'

The Atebubu subdialect is different from the other subdialects of Brong in having 'sɛ' for the verb 'to say'. The other subdialects (except Nkoranza/Kintampo) have *dɛ/lɛ/rɛ/ɛ*.

- e.g. *ɔsɛ ɔmmfa mma no* (he says he should give it to him)  
*ɔsɛ moroba* (he says 'I am coming')  
*bɛsɛ bɔrɔyɔ* (they say they are doing it).

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

### 8.1 Historical Inferences

As pointed out in the relevant sections, some of the linguistic characteristics of Brong seem to represent what used to prevail in the Akan language as a whole but which have either been lost or become restricted in their distribution in the other dialects, so that in some ways the Brong dialect cluster represents an earlier form of the Akan language. These Brong characteristics are:

1. The use of /h/ instead of /hy/ or /hw/ before oral front vowels (section 1.1)

e.g. 'hɛ' instead of 'hyɛ', or 'hwe' (to wear; to look at)  
'hia' instead of 'hya' (to meet)

2. The pronunciation of the final vowel of CVnV stems, which in most of the other dialects is no longer pronounced (section 1.21).

e.g. *kwane* (path) *kəno* (neck)  
*təno* (sell) *dane* (house)

3. The wider distribution of the *ɔ*- 3rd person singular possessive concord marker (section 4.3 (b)).

e.g. *ɔba* (his child)  
*ɔyere* (his wife)

4. The requirement of a concord marker that agrees with its noun in number and person when the noun is (a) the subject of a sentence or (b) the possessor of an object. (Section 5).



FOOTNOTES

1. I am indebted to Dr J. M. Stewart of the Institute of African Studies for his very useful comments on an earlier version of this paper.
2. See J. M. Stewart: Asante Twi in the Polyglotta Africana. Sierra Leone Language Review, 5, 1966.
3. This rule affected only some of the items with the  $\varepsilon$  vowel quality, hence 'se' (how much?).
4. The final nasal in these examples is pronounced /ŋ/. This is an innovation peculiar to the Akuapem dialect which is not relevant to the present discussion.
5. See Possessive Noun Phrase, section 5.2).
6. The Brong forms have the final '- $\varepsilon$ ' suffix that occurs in Asante. If the final vowel of the verb stem is a close vowel the verb has the same pronunciation as in Asante e.g. /odiiyɛ/ (he ate it) /ohuuyɛ/ (he saw it). If the final vowel of the verb stem is an open vowel the verb is pronounced with a long / $\varepsilon\varepsilon$ / which is preceded by a /w/- glide if the final vowel of the stem is rounded.  
e.g. stem: fa: ɔfɛɛ (he took it)  
          kɔ: ɔkwɛɛ (he went)
7. See P. Schachter and V. Fromkin A Phonology of Akan: Akuapem, Asante and Fante U.C.L.A. 1968.
8. N- stands for a homorganic nasal.
9. L. A. Boadi: 'Akan Noun Phrase' (forthcoming).
10. See unspecified subject prefix, section 4.7.
11. Where the verb is the Progressive Tense form, the unspecified subject prefix / $\varepsilon$ / is used with the noun subject e.g. abofra hɛ ɛɛkɔ (the child is going) but ɔkɔ (he is going).
12. For 'mvuom' See Japekrom/Adamso subdialect — Section 7.11: Consonant Mutation.
13. See Atebubu subdialect — Vowel Harmony Section 7.51.

CHAPTER VIII  
THE BRONG POLITICAL MOVEMENT<sup>1</sup>

F. K. DRAH

**Introduction**

In June 1951 the newly elected government of the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Nene Azzu Mate Kole, Konor of Manya Krobo, charged with the following task:

"In the interests of unity and of the importance, for future constitutional development, of preserving the historic unity and significance of the Ashanti people, to examine the situation presented by the differences between certain Brong Chiefs and their brother Chiefs in Ashanti which have come to public notice and to consider the steps which should be taken to restore unity."<sup>2</sup>

As is generally known, the differences alluded to in the committee's terms of reference were deeply rooted in the long history of the relations between the Asante and "Brong." The differences came to a head in March 1951 with the inauguration of the Brong political movement known as the Brong-Kyempem Federation (BKF) by seven traditional states in north-western and north-eastern Asante. These were Techiman, Dormaa, Techiman, New Drobo, Odumase, Abease, and Suma.<sup>3</sup> Explicitly, they demanded a Brong traditional council separate from, and independent of, the Asanteman Council which was until 1950 known as the Ashanti Confederacy Council.

In this essay an attempt is made to (i) identify and explain the origins of the Brong-Kyempem movement; (ii) delineate the course of the movement; and (iii) pinpoint one or two significant implications of the movement for the constitutional and political developments in Ghana up to 1959 — the year of the establishment of the Brong-Ahafo Region.

It is significant that, in the terms of reference already quoted, the C.P.P. government talked of "certain Brong Chiefs and their brother Chiefs in Ashanti;" in other words, both parties to the dispute were considered as "brothers" by the government. The question, then, is whether the "Brong Chiefs," especially those whom the government had in mind were, or even regarded themselves as, Asante. This, of course, is a very large question to which various answers have been given.

However, in the epilogue to the "Statement of Grievances" (hereafter referred to as *S.G.*) issued on 2nd August, 1951, the member-states of the BKF were in no doubt whatever about the existence of a "Brongland" which, to them, constituted a nation distinct from the Asante nation. The latter they regarded as much imperialistic in relation to the Brong as the British were regarded in relation to colonial Ghana. Hence they found no difficulty in drawing, with much rhetorical flourish, a striking parallel between their struggle against "Asante domination" and the struggle of colonial Ghana against British imperialism. They thundered:

"The hour of liberation has come and no nation can take calmly the domination of her freedom by another nation. Those who condemn the action of the federated Brong states in breaking away from the Asanteman Council should first condemn the action of the whole country for the present struggle to be free from the domination of British imperialism, for the one is just like the other only (on) a minor scale or confined to a section of the country . . ." (*SG*, Epilogue, para.2).

And the point was stressed that the Brongs could manage or administer their own affairs in order "to bear their full share of the country's burden, economically, politically, socially, educationally and in whatever aspect of life that goes to make the Gold Coast, and Ghana to become a happy and better place to live" (*ibid.*, para.3).

The assertion of Brong independence of the Asanteman Council in 1951, then, contained all the known ingredients of "ethnic nationalism".<sup>4</sup> To the student of Asante history, Brong nationalist historiography, as could be gleaned from both the general introduction and the enumeration of grievances by the individual member-states, leaves much to be desired with respect to historical accuracy; but that is the strategy of almost every nationalist historiography. It is true that some Brong Chiefs seized the unique opportunity offered by the British defeat of Asante in 1874 to repudiate their allegiance to the Asantehene and, through him, to the Golden Stool, by constituting themselves into a defensive alliance against Asante; it is also true to say that in 1896 the Brong states, with the deliberate support of the British, attained their complete independence of Kumasi, the epicentre of the Asante Confederacy.<sup>5</sup> Thus the assertion of independence from the Asanteman Council in the post-World War II period was not a political novelty.

In spite of such historical evidence, it is equally true to observe that Brong nationalism did not possess any durable roots of long historical standing. In the "*SG*" the member-states talked of the

“natural boundary between the northern and southern parts of (Asante), with the class of people called ‘Ashantis’ occupying the southern section and the ‘Brongs’ occupying the northern section” (SG, Introduction, para. 1). This was an heroic attempt to distinguish “Brongland” from “true Asanteland.” However, “Brongland,” like Ghana, was anything but a “natural” entity. For it encompassed many peoples in addition to the “Aborono” or the pure Brong. The Dormaas, Berekums, Bandas and Mos, for example, could not be regarded, nor did they regard themselves, as Brongs. The only autochthonous Brongs were, indeed, the people of Techiman.<sup>6</sup>

And this brings us to the consideration of the factors — general and specific — that generated the passion among these relatively separate peoples to lose themselves in a single communal emotion against the Asanteman Council in the post-war period.

i) *The General Factors.*— Undoubtedly, the first factor turned on the common experience of wrongs — real and imagined — suffered by these diverse peoples at the hands of the Asante before and after the forcible imposition of British colonial rule in 1901. The second factor, linked to the first, consisted in the sharing of a common language and certain customs. Although these were rather similar to those of the Asante, yet they were distinct from them. And, thirdly, these various tribes increasingly came to see the restored Asante Confederacy as the veritable expression of a resuscitated Asante imperialism. All this is evident from the SG (of which more below).

ii) *The Specific Factors.*— The specific event that triggered off what was to become a strong expression of a Brong sense of self-identity in contradistinction to the Asante in the immediate post-war years arose in Techiman. In 1936 the Committee of Privileges, which had been established to tackle the multifarious stool and land disputes that were expected to result from the restoration of the Asante Confederacy, returned some nine villages in the Tano Subin valley (located in Techimanland) to various Kumasi clan chiefs. The villages were Tuobodom, Buoyam, Tanoboase, Nchiraa, Offuman I and 2, Branam, Nwoase and Subenso.<sup>7</sup> There was continued feeling of bitterness over the loss of these villages; a feeling of bitterness which found expression in the iron-bottomed refusal of Nana Akumfi Ameyaw III, the Techimanhene, to accept the decision of the Committee of Privileges. And this, despite the repeated failure to have the decision rescinded through petitions to the Governor, not to mention the abortive, costly court battles.

In 1951 the Techiman State berated the colonial government for concurring in the original decision of the Committee; it also bitterly criticised the very procedure whereby that decision was

reached on the ground that, since the Asantehene was an interested party to the land dispute, he should not have been made a member of the Committee by the government.

“By this act, the Government deliberately made the Asantehene a judge in his own case. Why was this undue privilege, which was contrary to British justice and fair play, not extended to Techiman also?” (SG, Techiman State, para. 5).

The loss of the nine villages, then, was a considerable source of hostility of Techiman towards the Asante Confederacy Council. And the appearance of a strong feeling of Brong nationalism in Techiman in the immediate post-war years is explained largely in terms of the issue of these villages. The underlying reason is not far to seek. It was Lord Hailey who once noted the difficulty of those who knew only the industrialized countries of the western world in realizing the “significance of the position occupied by the land in the eyes of most peoples of Africa.”<sup>8</sup> But as an apologist — albeit an enlightened one — of colonial rule, Lord Hailey failed to identify the core of the matter: the fact that in most of Africa land, apart from its economic value, was perceived as an instrument of social power and control. And land rights went *in tandem* with political and social obligations. With specific regard to the nine villages, there was no certainty that the various Kumasi clan chiefs, who were given rights over those villages, would discharge their corresponding political and social obligations.<sup>9</sup> Besides, the Techimanhene may have rightly considered that the Kumasi clan chiefs in question would continue to have social power and control over a significant portion of Techimanland. And that was intolerable. In fact, the loss of the nine villages was seen as a portent of worse things to come; i.e. eventual loss of all Techiman’s rights which would turn it into a “vassal state” of Asante (SG, Techiman State, para. 8).

Thus it was that early in 1948 Techiman made certain moves which led to what turned out eventually to be an effective secession from the Asante Confederacy. First, Nana Ameyaw III succeeded in persuading the chiefs of three of the villages in question, namely, Tanoso, Offuman II and Tuobodom, to proclaim not only their secession from Kumasi but also their desire to join the Techiman state. Secondly, Nana Ameyaw himself ceased to attend meetings of the Asante Confederacy Council. And, thirdly, he refused to have Techiman’s contribution — which was one-third of the total levy collected in Techiman — paid to the “Ashanti National Fund” which is discussed later. The colonial government brought considerable, minatory pressures to bear upon Techiman in order to bring it back into the Confederacy Council, but without success. The government even went to the extent of suspending the Techiman native authority (SG, Techiman State, para. 10).



There is no question that Techiman's secession had a "demonstration effect" on Dormaa. The leader of the Dormaa secessionist movement was, as it eventually turned out, Nana Agyeman Badu, who was enstooled as Dormaahene in April 1950. But in his first appearance at a meeting of the Confederacy Council in June 1950, he betrayed no signs of the effect of Techiman's action in 1948 on him when he spoke in glowing terms of the Asantehene and the Confederacy Council itself as follows:

"Otumfuo and Nananom, on behalf of myself, elders and people of Dormaa I express my sincere thanks and gratitude to Otumfuo, the Asantehene. I am not unaware of the great political unrest that occurred in the Dormaa state. This affected the peace and prosperity of the State so much so that the consequences would have been greater but for Otumfuo. He with great tact, patience, wisdom and justice, was able to settle all matters to the satisfaction of the greater section of the people. I thank Otumfuo also for granting me the privilege to be a member of this Council. During the present session I have watched with great interest the superb wisdom and tact that Nananom have shown in conducting the proceedings of the Council and matters affecting the welfare of this country. *I have observed the genuine interest they have in our people.* I have indeed learnt very much from the deliberations. I promise to co-operate with Otumfuo and Nananom."<sup>10</sup>

The sincere tone of this statement cannot be doubted. But whoever may have been the initiator of the Dormaa secessionist movement,<sup>11</sup> it is clear that by December 1950, Nana Agyeman Badu had become convinced that the Asanteman Council no longer had any "genuine interest" in the welfare of his people. The immediate event that touched off the split between Dormaa and the Asanteman Council in December 1950 was the decision of the latter to accept the *Report* on local government in Asante issued by a Select Committee of the Legislative Council as a working group-plan for future local government in Asante. Nana Agyeman Badu and the Dormaa State Council took umbrage at this decision, their reason being that they had little time to consider the *Report* in question (*SG*, Dormaa State, para. 22). The decision itself was perhaps unexceptionable; but it served as a convenient pretext for Dormaa's break with the Asanteman Council. The stark point is that Dormaa, like Techiman and some others in Brongland, also nursed certain grievances, some of them of long historical standing, against the Asante. Hence, as already noted, the formation in March 1951 of the BFK (including Dormaa) as a body distinct from, and independent of, the Asanteman Council; the BFK immediately approached the government for recognition.

Although the Brong question was to be perceived as a political resource which must be exploited fully to party political advantage from 1954 onwards with the emergence of the National Liberation Movement (N.L.M.), in 1951 the fledgling C.P.P. government saw it essentially as a complex political issue. There was every reason for the C.P.P. government to tread warily with specific regard to it. The C.P.P. itself, as a developing mass nationalist party, boasted of many Asante among its staunchest rank-and-file supporters as also within its leadership. (It is even doubtful that by 1951 the C.P.P. leadership as a whole had carefully considered singling out the Asanteman Council as one of its political enemies — despite Nkrumah's flesh-creeping warning to the chiefs that, failing co-operation with his party, the time would come when they would run away and leave their sandals behind.)<sup>12</sup>

That the C.P.P. government was in a very delicate political position in 1951 is underlined by the opening words of the terms of reference of the Committee it appointed to inquire into the Brong-Asante dispute. The people of colonial Ghana, in other words, must present a united front in the struggle for independence. The country could hardly afford regional fragmentation. Hence the imperative need for restoring the unity of Asante which was threatened by the Brong secessionist movement.

In response to the appointment of the Committee, the BKF in August 1951 issued a comprehensive "Statement of Grievances" to which reference has already been made. For the sake of convenience as also for analytical purposes, these grievances and the findings of the Committee are discussed together.

The "Statement of Grievances" falls into three parts: first, a general introduction which is devoted to a consideration of those historical, linguistic, and demographic factors, which, in combination, separated the Brong from the Asante; secondly, the enumeration of grievances by each member-state; and, finally, an epilogue. These grievances are conveniently grouped under two broad heads: 1) Political-Constitutional and 2) Socio-Economic.

## I. POLITICAL-CONSTITUTIONAL

i) All the member-states, in varying degrees, made valiant efforts to prove their contention that they enjoyed sovereign, independent status within the restored Asante Confederacy. Hence the resort to either oral or written history or both. Such efforts furnish an interesting example of the political uses of history. The arguments put forward by Techiman and Dormaa will suffice as representative illustrations of this point.

Until the Techiman state, "through persuasion", became a member of the restored Asante Confederacy, it "had enjoyed complete independence." The "British-Techiman Treaty signed in 1897" was cited in confirmation of Techiman's "immemorial" independence of the Golden Stool. On that score, then, Techiman — "a typical Brong state" — had "never been a part of the Ashanti states", namely, the old Asante Confederacy; its joining of the restored Asante Confederacy was very soon considered as a mistake (*SG*, Techiman State, paras. 1-3).

Dormaa's position on the "immemorial" independence of the Brong states was rather more subtle; and it provided an interesting interpretation of the constitutional structure of the restored Confederacy. Dormaa, we are told, "had been a sovereign state long before the coming into power of the Ashantis, and had enjoyed complete independence in spite of several wars waged between the Ashantis and the Dormaa State." However, through the intervention of Major Jackson, the Chief Commissioner of Asante, "the Dormaa state reluctantly condescended (sic) to join the Confederacy." From such a position, it was only a short step to the constitutional interpretation of the Asante Confederacy as a conciliar organ of sovereign, independent states, with the clear implication that the Asantehene's position was only that of *primus inter pares* — the equals being the heads of the chiefdoms comprising the Confederacy. As Dormaa put it, the restoration of the Asante Confederacy became possible in the first place precisely because of the willingness "of the several states . . . to come into a federation. Nowhere in the despatches 'relating to the Restoration' is there a suggestion that the sovereign independence of a state adhering to the Confederacy was thereby lost or forfeited." Which, in effect, meant that all the states joined the Confederacy without prejudice to their long-cherished independent existence (*SG*, Dormaa State, paras. 1-3 and 11).

It has been said that people do not laugh at those they fear or hate. The member-states of the BKF, therefore, took very seriously their own versions of the history of Asante-Brong relations. Be that as it may, it is, perhaps, pointless here to attempt any extended critical discussion of those versions, beyond drawing attention to the fact that the member-states considered it imperative to create certain self-images based on historical interpretations which many outsiders may regard as of doubtful validity.<sup>13</sup> Certainly, those interpretations constituted a powerful political weapon with which to advance the cause of Brong separatism.

A concomitant of their alleged historical sovereign, independent status was the member-states' categorical denial that it was the normal practice for a Brong chief to swear allegiance to the Asante-

hene as a necessary condition of government recognition of that chief's paramount status in his own chiefdom. The Mate Kole Committee rightly noted that a decision on the issue was beyond its competence, since the issue was of a customary and constitutional kind.<sup>14</sup>

(ii) But the paramount chiefs of the Brong states could not, in practice, avoid swearing the oath of allegiance to the Asantehene. The BKF, however, bitterly resented how that oath was taken. The Dormaa state cogently and graphically described the ritual thus:

“ . . . the mode of the swearing of the Oath of Allegiance (consisted in) the placing of the Asantehene's foot on the head of the Chief taking the oath.

The ritual, it was deeply felt, struck at the very dignity and self-respect of the Brong chiefs; it was, moreover, considered as the “principal cause” of the instability of the institution of chieftaincy in the Dormaa state and, by extension, in the rest of Brongland. It was argued that “ . . . every Chief who swears this kind of oath eventually becomes despised by his people and deposed” (SG, Dormaa State, para. 4).

However much of an over-simplification this statement was, with particular regard to the incidence of the destoolment of chiefs in Brongland, there is no mistaking the feeling of repugnance with which the ritual was regarded. Significantly, the Committee of Enquiry was so impressed by the BKF's fundamental objection to the ritual as to suggest to the Asanteman Council the need for its modification in line with “modern political and social conceptions.<sup>15</sup>

A related source of grievance was the manner of government recognition of chiefs in the Brong states. Such recognition, it was contended, took too long in forthcoming because it was subject to the swearing of the oath of allegiance to the Asantehene. This procedure was criticised on the ground of its harmful effect on the administration of the states in question (SG, Dormaa State, e.g., para.5).

(iii) In 1950, as already noted, the “Asanteman Council” was adopted as the new name for the “Ashanti Confederacy Council.” In view of their standpoint that the restored Confederacy Council comprised sovereign, independent states, the member-states of the BFK saw in the new name a further attempt by the true Asante to “subjugate” the Brong. They argued that “the change of name (would) inevitably involve a change in the constitution of the Council itself” (SG, Dormaa State, e.g. paras. 11—14). This, although true, was an under-statement, For, by 1950 when the new name was adopted, the constitution of the Confederacy Council had been

considerably transformed. For our purposes, the following aspects of the transformation are relevant.

The Confederacy Council in 1935<sup>16</sup> comprised about twenty-two chiefly members. It is worth noting that from 1935 onwards the Asantehene used his prerogatives to invite a few more chiefs to participate in the Council's deliberations, albeit in an unofficial capacity. In June 1935 five Extraordinary Members (the so-called educated commoners or youngmen) were co-opted to serve on the Council. These were not, that is to say, statutory members; their duties, as the Asantehene put it, were to be "only of an advisory nature." By 1946 the number of such members had increased to seven.

The Council was extensively reorganised in 1947. Its membership, for example, was reviewed on the basis of population, thereby increasing it to a total of about fifty-four. One more representative was given to the Adansi, Dormaa, Juaben, Mampong, Nkoranza and Offinso divisions; while four new divisional chiefs were added, and the Asantehenemaa (the Queen-mother of Asante) became a full member. The Kumasi division alone was given five more representatives. Besides, the Asantehene was empowered to nominate "not more than ten persons of Ashanti birth" (which in practice, meant Extraordinary Members whose number was thus raised to ten). The Asantehene's nominations, however, had to be approved by the Chief Commissioner. Now, if the Extraordinary Members, as K.A. Busia has noted, were appointed "to represent the views of the educated commoners of Kumasi".<sup>17</sup> then the 1947 reorganisation exercise actually raised the Kumasi division's representation to twenty-four.

In that case, the increased membership of the Council as a whole could not but benefit the Kumasi division *vis-a-vis* all the other divisions of the Confederacy. Hence the understandable complaint of the BKF that the membership of the Council heavily tilted "the voting power in the Confederacy Council to the advantage of the Kumasi Division".<sup>18</sup> Which meant that it was not the Brong divisional chiefs *only* — as the BKF alleged — who constituted ready objects of Kumasi intrigues whenever they became involved in constitutional disputes brought before the Council; in fact, also all the divisional chiefs of "Ashanti proper", who lived outside the strategic command post that was Kumasi, more or less found themselves in a similar situation. On the other hand, there was some substance in the grievance that no Brong educated commoner had ever been appointed an Extraordinary Member. Even here, the evidence seems to point to a tendency for only individuals from a narrow circle of Kumasi citizens to be appointed as Extraordinary Members.

(iv) A related source of disaffection was what was perceived as the paucity or even complete absence (in some cases) of Brong representation on the various committees or boards of the Council, notably the Scholarship Selection Board and the powerful Executive Committee. The issue was hardly as simple as the BKF would have liked one to believe.

The Executive Committee was established in 1947 in place of the Standing Committee. Originally meant to undertake such tasks as the Confederacy Council would in its own discretion assign to it "from time to time", the Executive Committee rapidly developed into the pillar of the Council: it served "as a sieve, passing through the more important or contentious matters for the attention of the full Council."<sup>19</sup> And its membership appears to have been dominated by the Kumasi-based members (especially the Extraordinary Members) of the Council (although the Mamponghe, the Juabenhene and the Esumegyahene were almost invariably included). An important reason for this development was the need for taking quick decisions "with an easily convenable Committee". It is significant to note, though, that all the Brong divisions put together had only a single representative on the Committee: the Dormaahene from 1947 until he was replaced by the Berekumhene in 1950.<sup>20</sup>

But the BKF was on rather slippery grounds when it alleged that no Brong chief or educated commoner had "ever served on the Scholarship Board . . . The only Brong man who served was Mr Buahin", and then only in his "capacity as Education Officer in charge of the Sunyani District" (SG, Dormaa State, e.g., para. 19). In refutation of this allegation, the Asanteman Council underscored the imperative necessity of having on the Scholarship Selection Board those "who by their academic background and general experience" were sufficiently competent "to interview candidates for scholarship awards". It was, indeed, desirable to "avoid the representation of sectional interests" on the Board. The Mate Kole Committee wholeheartedly — and rightly — accepted this explanation.<sup>21</sup>

(v) The BKF complained also of the lack of freedom of speech during the deliberations of the Asanteman Council. It did not seem, it alleged, that the Council was considered as a "Parliament where freedom of speech exists but a place where courtiers go to shower praises and eulogies (on) the Asantehene . . ." Hence, it was further stated, members of the Council as a whole found it almost impossible to present their views adequately and effectively. What were considered as the highly restrictive limits of acceptable behaviour of chiefs within the Council were spelled out thus:

In the Confederacy Council any statement made which is not deemed appropriate or decent or pleasant to the President makes the speaker liable to slaughter sheep or to apologise.

And an episode involving the Dormaahene was cited as a case in point. At a meeting of the Council held on the 27th November, 1950, we are told, Nana Agyeman Badu interrupted the reading of the *Report* on local government on the ground that, since members had not read the *Report*, a discussion of it should be deferred to enable members ample time to study it. But "some of the members said that the Dormaahene had disgraced the Council and should therefore apologise or withdraw his suggestions" (SG, Dormaa State, paras. 20 and 21).

There is no evidence that Nana Agyeman Badu was asked to slaughter any sheep, but the experience, as was hinted very early on, may have touched him on the raw. However that may have been the allegation of lack of freedom of speech cannot be easily refuted. It is true, as the *Minutes* of Council meetings amply testify, that the Asantehene repeatedly instructed the members to feel free to state their opinions on matters under discussion. These repeated admonitions were called for precisely because of the reluctance of the chiefs to express views which might not chime in with the Asantehene's. Why this was so, is explained in terms of the long tradition that "no one may oppose the occupant of the Golden Stool who is believed to speak with the wisdom and authority of the ancestors whose place he fills", as Busia has put it. Although the chiefs of the Confederacy Council, Busia has suggested, expressed their opinions more freely than in precolonial Asante, that ancient tradition still inhibited free discussion.<sup>22</sup> And the feeling still persisted that the chiefs should not question the Asantehene's ultimate right to make decisions in the Confederacy's interest. Yet, this was the very right, which they thought implied a severe limitation on their freedom to make their own decisions, and which the member-states of the BKF would no longer accept.

(vi) Finally, the member-states felt that the Confederacy courts, especially the Asantehene's "A" Courts, operated to the disadvantage of the Brong divisions compared with the other divisions of the Confederacy. For one thing, they said, these courts were so unwieldy and centralized that the administration of justice was rendered expensive and slow. For another, since all such courts were Kumasi-based, those Brong chiefs who had to be panel members, incurred considerable expenditure on their travels, and during their stay in Kumasi for as long as those courts sat. The Mate Kola Committee expressed sympathy with the Brong chiefs on this grievance; accordingly, it strongly recommended the decentralization of the Confed-

deracy courts to enable them to "sit in different parts of Ashanti with panels drawn from the best available persons within the locality".<sup>23</sup>

## 2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC

(i) The BKF bitterly resented the Kumasi clan chiefs' ownership of certain lands and villages which, it was believed, originally belonged to some Brong states. Since the core of the land question has already been pointed out, it is unnecessary to repeat it here. The only other point to be made in this connection is the fact that the land issue has been intimately bound up with the issue of allegiance to the Golden Stool. The two issues have constituted a problem (especially in the Ahafo portion of present-day Brong Ahafo Region) which is yet to be solved to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned.

(ii) The issue of the prohibition of cocoa cultivation may also be seen as another source—albeit of an indirect sort—of Brong economic discontent. In 1938 the Confederacy Council, at the suggestion of the Asantehene, promulgated an order prohibiting the planting of new cocoa trees. The reason for it was the admirable one of averting a possible food shortage by directing farmers' attention to the cultivation of foodcrops. The order affected all the divisions of the Confederacy.<sup>24</sup>

It soon became clear, however, that a number of chiefs were not zealous in enforcing the order. Hence, at a meeting of the Council in 1946, the Asantehene was constrained to complain thus:

It is a matter for regret that since the order was made many Divisions have failed to see that it is obeyed by their people. The Offinsohene, for instance, is reported to have said secretly in this Hall that there were few cocoa farms in his Division and so he would see that his people planted some more so that they might be at par with the other Divisions. Summons were once issued against certain people at Techimantia for disobeying this order but the District Commissioner, Sunyani, refused to countersign them because he said he had been told by the Chief Commissioner that the law was not being obeyed in Nkwanta, Berekum and Dormaa Divisions. Then, the following exchanges took place.

**Asantehene:** The Chief Commissioner has told me that new cocoa farms have been made in Dormaa, Berekum and Nkwanta Divisions. I should like to know what the Representatives of these Divisions have to say...

**Dormaa Representative:** I would like to explain that between Dormaa and Nkwanta there is a belt of forest which is said to have been cultivated by certain people.



**Asantehene:** According to what the Dormaa Representative has said the Dormaa Native Authority is as much to blame as those who have cultivated this forest because the offenders ought to and should have been prosecuted for disobeying the Council's order. Their silence meant that they acquiesced in the action of those offenders.

**Dormaa Representative:** I agree with the views of Otumfuo, unless cultivation is restricted there will be no forest left in the near future and the result will be famine throughout the country. It is mostly the people who do not attend meetings of the Council who contravene its orders.

**Asantehene:** Does the Dormaa Representative mean to tell us that all the people in his Division have to attend the sessions of the Council before laws made are obeyed?

**Dormaa Representative:** No, Sir, I know that gong-gong is beaten after every session promulgating any orders that are passed here; but there are some people who secretly refuse to obey such orders. In future we shall prosecute any offenders as suggested by Otumfuo.

**Berekum Representative:** Since Berekum was impeached at the last session, I am glad to be able to say that there have been no fresh cases. All offenders will rigidly be prosecuted.<sup>25</sup>

There is no evidence that the Brong representatives involved in the above exchanges were opposed to the order. Nor was the issue, raised by the order, mentioned by the BKF in the SG. But one may make the reasonable conjecture that in the volatile circumstances of the immediate post-World War II period the Brong chiefs in particular may have felt that the continued enforcement of the order would put their areas in an economically disadvantageous position compared with the true Asante divisions in most of which cocoa had been cultivated much earlier. Indeed, according to Busia, most of the chiefs with whom he discussed the order in the early 1940's came from those divisions where the cultivation of cocoa "had started late"; and when the order was promulgated their subjects had just started to grow cocoa on a large scale. Those chiefs stated bluntly that it was rather the divisions where cocoa had been cultivated over a considerable period of time which ran a possible risk of food shortage. But inasmuch as the order affected all the divisions, "their subjects were kept poor, because they could not cultivate cocoa . . ." <sup>26</sup> Although the identity of the divisions in question is not disclosed, there is no reason to believe that they did not include some Brong divisions.

(iii) Formal education, it goes without saying, has been (and continues to be) one of the few crucial determinants of social change in Africa as elsewhere. Accordingly, the Brong states must have also whole-heartedly shared the motivation behind the establishment

of the "Ashanti National Fund" in 1942, in order to promote "public and social services for the benefit of the whole Ashanti people". To this end, an annual levy of 2s. per man and 1s. per woman was ordered by the Confederacy Council. Of the total amount collected in each division, the division retained two-thirds and paid one-third into the National Fund. A committee was established to administer the Fund. Part of this fund was used to provide scholarships to deserving candidates of Asante birth to pursue further studies at home and abroad.<sup>27</sup>

The Brong states complained of discrimination against Brong people in the operation of the scholarship scheme. Since its institution, it was alleged, "only one Brong man has been granted a scholarship from the fund, namely, Mr Busia of Wenchi; but even this... was withdrawn while the candidate was still pursuing his studies in the United Kingdom" (SG, Dormaa State, para. 18). On the latter allegation, Mr C.E. Osei, the Financial Secretary of the Confederacy Council, stated what in all probability seems to be the correct position: "Mr B.K. Busia, having failed to satisfy his examiners in the subjects for which he is undergoing training, has been asked by the Council to return to the Gold Coast, thus meaning a withdrawal of his scholarship".<sup>28</sup>

Significantly, earlier in 1949, the Asantehene had become so disturbed by the repeated allegation of discrimination in scholarship awards that he found it necessary to refute it. Scholarship awards, he stated, far from being made unfairly, were actually based on "the results of the entrance examinations of the various colleges." Moreover, the scholarships for each year were "advertised in the local papers for the information of every one"; and those applicants, who had met the requirements of their chosen higher institutions, were called to an interview before the Scholarship Selection Board, which we have already discussed. It was this Board, the Asantehene emphasized, and not the Council's Secretariat (which was the general impression) that selected and awarded candidates the scholarships.<sup>29</sup>

Unfortunately, the Asantehene's explanation did not help, as he had hoped, to "remove every vestige of suspicion from the minds of those" who, in any case, were not prepared to accept it as a statement of the whole truth of the matter. Thus it was that the Asanteman Council was once more constrained to state its version of the case before the Mate Kole Committee; a version which was similar to that given by the Asantehene in 1949. The Mate Kole Committee fully endorsed this version, and stressed the necessity of granting the scholarships "to only these persons with optimum capacity of benefiting from a scholarship regardless of sectional feelings. We regard this to be a sound policy." It, however, recommended the representation of each of the nine territorial groups in Asante by at

least one member on the body charged with administering the Fund; this, it hoped, would considerably assure all the contributing member "as to the fairness and efficiency of the administration of the National Fund".<sup>30</sup>

While the Committee rightly rejected "ethnic arithmetic" as a criterion for the award of scholarships, it would seem not to have considered the matter in the round. True, in the absence of statistics showing the break-down of the beneficiaries of the scholarship scheme according to their areas of origin, it is difficult to make any bold claims. But it is not impossible to make some intelligent guesses. The BKF's version of the scholarships issue was no doubt partial, in the sense that it saw only the Brong as victims of discrimination. It hardly took into consideration the possibility of there being discrimination against a wider group of people; that is, all those people who found themselves outside a ring of a minority of well-connected, rich and influence-peddling families and royal clans in Kumasi and its immediate environs — in fine, the underprivileged. Seen from this perspective, the possible occurrence of a measure of discrimination in the award of scholarships could not be ruled out; in which case, it was not only the Brong, but also the majority of true Asantes (who were as much underprivileged as the Brong as a whole) that fell victim to such discrimination. No wonder, even many brilliant true Asante-born school-leavers failed to gain Confederacy scholarship awards.<sup>31</sup>

(iv) There was, finally, the psychological syndrome. One need not be highly imaginative in order to discern the feeling, running like a scarlet thread through the BKF's SG, on the part of the Brong that they were objects of contempt and ridicule in the eyes of the true Asante, especially the Kumasi-born. The Brong divisional chiefs, for instance, complained that they were not infrequently subjected to insults and social discrimination not only at Confederacy Council meetings but also during social visits to Kumasi.

One such incident, it was alleged, was that involving Nana Yeboa Afari, the Dormaahene, in 1935. On a visit to Kumasi, he attended a durbar, "the Asantehene ordered him to take off his sandals and fillet before saluting the Asantehene". The Dormaahene's noncompliance with the order led to a quarrel between him and the other chiefs, including the Juabenhene. In the event, the Dormaahene did not salute the Asantehene and returned to his house. But later, on the intervention of the Chief Commissioner, the Dormaahene attended another social function at the Asantehene's palace where the differences were settled, with the Asantehene pacifying the Dormaahene "with a case of gin". But the whole episode was considered as "a great disgrace to the Dormaa State". Another incident occurred in 1941, again involving a Dormaahene — Nana Asubon-

teng II—when he attended a meeting in Kumasi. He took with him, as he had done on several occasions, a stool with its sides ornamented with gold. This time, however, the stool was seized and the Dormaahehene was compelled to “stand in the glaring sun for many hours, answering questions put to him in connection with the stool”, while the stool itself had been stored away in a cell. The Dormaahehene, we are told, incurred considerable expenditure before securing the stool back (SG, Dormaa State, e.g., paras. 15 and 16).

To try to determine the historicity of these incidents cited by the BKF may be a fruitless exercise of the historical imagination. At the same time, however, the psychological and political purposes the liberal citation of such incidents was meant to serve cannot be ignored: to dramatise the deep psychological injury the BKF believed the peoples of Brongland as a whole had sustained in their dealing with the true Asante. The psychological injury involved a sense of inferiority which, it was believed, had been considerably fostered in the Brong by the true Asante to facilitate continued Asante domination. Small wonder that one of the cardinal objectives of the BKF was “to fight relentlessly until the Brong are redeemed. . . from tribal inferiority complex.” But there can also be no question about the reality of the sort of feeling the Brong as a whole in turn harboured towards the Confederacy Council in particular, and the true Asante in general. It was a feeling of fear and hostility. A typical expression of such a feeling was that of the Abease Women in their resolution to the BKF in July 1951. They resolved, *inter alia*, “THAT we fear (the Asante), because of their hideous atrocities. THAT we will never find it easy to co-operate with them, because we feel that we shall only be happier under Brong-Kyempem” (SG, Abease Women, paras. 2 and 3).

Such, then, were the grievances of the B.K.F. They amounted, in a nutshell, to a feeling of neglect, and discrimination at the hands of the true Asante. But the B.K.F. declared that it did not seek the redress of those grievances within the structure of the Asanteman Council. All the resolutions passed by the various youth and women’s associations made great play with the idea of non-co-operation which meant opposition to any settlement of the dispute that would lead to a restoration of Asante unity. What they wanted was a federation of their own, the affairs of which would be directed by a Brong traditional council.

The Mate Kole Committee accepted the idea of a “Brong Council”, since it saw nothing “wrong with the idea of related states coming together to discuss matters of common interest for the common good.” The Asanteman Council was also, in some measure, conciliatory. It stated:

“The Council is in entire sympathy with the idea that states having close territorial affinities should combine into administrative units to plan and act together on matters of local government. This idea is embodied in the Coussey Report on Local Government which has recommended the setting up of Local and District Councils. *The Council, however, fails to see how such decentralisation should occasion the secession of member states from the Council.*”<sup>32</sup>

There was the rub! The point is that there was an unmistakable collision of purpose between the B.K.F. on the one hand, and the Committee and the Asanteman Council on the other. The Committee of Enquiry was not clear about the constitutional structure of the “Brong Council” it envisaged: Was it to be a traditional body on a par with the Asanteman Council; or an administrative one, presumably a higher District Council for the whole of Brongland? On the other hand, the Asanteman Council was obviously thinking of the “Brong Council” as an administrative instead of a traditional body at the local level. In this connection the Asanteman Council appear to have thought the issue through to its political and constitutional implications better than the Mate Kole Committee. This much must be said for the Committee, though that it was constrained by its terms of reference which emphasised the imperative need for the restoration of Asante unity.

There is a sense in which one may correctly see the Brong-Asante dispute as a purely traditional and constitutional one until September 1954. The dispute would seem to have centred on allegiance to the Golden Stool. But if the discussion of the Brong grievances above is anything to go by, then the dispute was more than a purely traditional and constitutional one: It was also a political dispute. Truly enough, nowhere in the major individual statements of grievances did each member-state of the B.K.F. make an *explicit* demand for a separate and independent Brong region. It is also noteworthy that such a demand was not among the objectives of the B.K.F. as stated in its Constitution. These were:

- (i) To raise the social, economic and educational status of the Brong peoples;
- (ii) To protect, encourage and foster the constitutional status of the Brong states;
- (iii) To maintain complete unity among the Chiefs and peoples of the various Brong states;
- (iv) To serve as a strong political vanguard of the Brong peoples;
- (v) To fight relentlessly until the Brong are redeemed from want, ignorance and tribal inferiority complex;
- (vi) To encourage and foster rural development in the Brong states.<sup>33</sup>

The nearest the B.K.F. came to making an explicit demand for a separate, Brong constitutional and political existence is in objectives (ii) and (iv). Encouraging and fostering the constitutional status of the Brong states would logically imply constitutional devolution, which, in turn, would mean the severance of all traditional links with the Golden Stool; it was not for nothing that the member-states of the B.K.F. spiritedly questioned the historical basis of their allegiance to the occupant of the Golden Stool, as we have already seen. Serving as a strong vanguard of the Brong peoples implied that the B.K.F. was considered, and strongly believed, to be the thin end of the wedge of a future Brong region. These, admittedly, are hints, albeit strong ones. But a careful scrutiny of the *SG* as a whole would, on balance, point to a separate Brong existence, which would be politically and constitutionally — and not merely administratively — independent of the Asanteman, as the logical development of the very establishment of the B.K.F. In fact, alone among the member-states, it was the Techiman State Council, which, in its resolution of 6th August, 1951 sent to the B.K.F., spelled out this logical development:

Whereas the aims and objects of the Brong-Kyempem Federation is (sic) to achieve for the Brongs a separate and complete administration entirely independent of the Ashanti Confederacy or Asanteman Council . . . we urge that you make it your aim to gain the Government's recognition for the Brong Kyempem Federation and also ask the Government to set up a Regional Administration for the Brong area (*SG*, Appendix II, Techiman State Council Resolution, para. 14.).

But that as it may, in the sort of mood into which the Brong nationalists as a whole had by 1951 worked themselves, the very conception of a separate region was hardly considered as a practical, much less a logical, impossibility. To say this is not to imply that the possibility of reconciliation, despite the protestations of the B.K.F. to the contrary, was non-existent; nor is it to gloss over the considerable obstacles in the way of the establishment of a separate Brong region.

As Tordoff has argued convincingly, a resolution of the Brong-Asante dispute, which would lead to the restoration of Asante unity, was always on the cards — until September 1954.<sup>34</sup> First, had the Asanteman Council been more cautious and statesman-like in its reaction to the Dormaa stool dispute involving Kwasi Ansu, the Dormaa state would probably have renewed its allegiance. In December 1951 the Dormaa State Council destooled Kwasi Ansu as chief of Wamfie and Krontihene of Dormaa. But the Asanteman Council continued to recognise Kwasi Ansu's claims as chief of the "Mansen" state by inviting him to attend the meet-

ings of the Council.<sup>35</sup> Secondly, it was most probable that Techiman would also have renewed its allegiance, if the Asantehene had been conciliatory in his stand on the Tano Subin valley villages — as Mr J. H. Allasani argued in his minority Report attached to the Mate Kole Report. Indeed, the Drobohene and the Sumahene, two of the original signatories to the B.K.F.'s SG, did make their peace with the Asanteman Council in September, 1952, as the Mate Kole Committee stated in its Report. But, of course, some of their subjects disapproved of their action, a situation which led to domestic strife within each state.

There were certain factors in the period 1952 to 1954 which combined to threaten the continued existence of the BKF as an organised expression of Brong sentiments. First, it is a measure of Nana Agyeman Badu's influence within the Brong movement that during his absence from the country in this period,<sup>36</sup> it became dormant. This development was possibly related to the fact that the movement was, in its early stages, dominated by the chiefs and elders of the member-states involved. As such, it was not the sort of monolithic movement which linked all manner of its adherents with a binding organisational force. A merely collective emotion against an "outgroup" was not alone sufficient as an enduring, binding force; leadership and organisation were necessary to reinforce it.

The evidence of the number of youth and women's associations and groups<sup>37</sup> which sent resolutions of solidarity to the BKF in 1951 and presented memoranda to the Mate Kole Committee later could give a facile impression of the extent of support of the youth and commoners for the Brong movement. In the absence of any reliable statistics, it is difficult to estimate the strength or otherwise of the membership of each association or group. However, there is no mistaking the point that, since most, if not all the associations or groups were hurriedly brought together to undertake the specific task of expressing solidarity for the BKF, they may have lacked strong grass-roots support themselves. So that it was possible for most of these associations or groups to have comprised as many members as the number of signatories to the resolutions sent to the BKF.

Thirdly, the very existence of the BKF itself helped to open up a Pandora's box; it spawned minor separatist movements of differing degrees of intensity within most of the member-states: for example Dormaa, Suma, Drobo, and, when it joined up later, Berekum. Such fissiparous forces hardly made for unity of purpose and organisation. Besides, in this period, some of the important states such as Wenchi, Sunyani, Nkoranza, and Berekum still maintained their aloofness from the BKF and continued to owe allegiance to the

Golden Stool. Then there was, as already noted, the declared policy of the C.P.P. government which aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution of the dispute within the context of a restored Asante unity; not to mention the parallel argument that administration would be made more difficult in a divided Asante.<sup>38</sup>

The last but not the least important factor turned on the intransigent opposition of the Asanteman Council, especially the Asantehene, to secession of any division of the Asanteman. The episode involving the attempted secession of the Bekwai division led by its chief in 1945 was still fresh in the Asantehene's mind when in the following year he came heavily down on any talk of secession. He warned those who were "in the habit of threatening me with secession from the Confederacy". He was not the only beneficiary of Asante unity.

"Disunity and disintegration" would render all Asante "vulnerable to the shafts and arrows" of their enemies. Then he assured the members of his determination to continue to play his allotted part and to "see to the preservation and maintenance of this Council" until the end of his tenure of office.<sup>39</sup> In 1952 he was surely not likely to relent in the face of the Brong secessionist efforts.

Such, then, was the state of affairs in which the BKF found itself until the return of Nana Agyeman Badu in 1954. He succeeded in reviving the BKF, which meant the re-opening of the Brong-Asante dispute. From September 1954 onwards, certain political events were to play, to some extent, into the hands of the Dormaahene, now the undisputable leader of the Brong movement. Just when the hitherto, relatively peaceful struggle for independence was about to turn the corner of success, a rather dark, sinister shadow fell across it. The shadow was symbolised by the emergence of the National Liberation Movement (N.L.M.). Backed up to the hilt by the Asanteman Council as a whole, it soon gained strong footholds in Asante and parts of Akim Abuakwa. It gave the achievement of a federal independent Ghana with a liberal-democratic constitution as its number one political objective. To this end, it teamed up with splinter opposition groups, and did not hesitate to appeal to Asante ethnic nationalist sensibilities; Asante was a nation; and a nation it must largely remain within a federal independent Ghana.<sup>40</sup>

Such a political platform could hardly be expected to appeal to the founders of the Brong secessionist movement who sought to escape from "Asante domination". Therefore, they redoubled their efforts in the direction of their stated goals, and put their considerable weight behind the C.P.P. in Brongland; they naturally backed the C.P.P.'s counter-political platform of a unitary, centralized independent Ghana. The relatively localised Brong-Asante dispute thus became inextricably conjoined to the wider country-wide party



political dispute between the C.P.P. centralists and the N.L.M. dominated opposition federalists. To both parties to the Brong Asante dispute, the side of the great party political divide on which an individual in the Asanteman stood assumed a significance of major proportions.

The Dormaahene, who had been opposed to the C.P.P. in 1951,<sup>41</sup> now found himself firmly in the C.P.P. camp. Most of his subjects in Dormaa did likewise. The BKF was changed into the Brong-Kyempem Council (BKC), and two Brong sub-divisional states, Sunyani and Bechem, became members. The BKC made no secret of the motivation behind its support for the C.P.P. and its political platform: the official recognition of the BKC (which would simply mean public acknowledgment of its long-term objectives).

In the face of the N.L.M. onslaught, the C.P.P. began to view the Brong question as a development which it could exploit to its political advantage: on this re-appraisal the N.L.M. must be faced head-on with what the C.P.P. believed was the very political weapon it had resorted to, namely, "ethnic particularism". But, even early in 1955, the C.P.P. government was still reluctant to commit itself totally to a separate Brong region. Such was the measure of the C.P.P. government's dilemma. Open and total commitment to the Brong cause was fraught with the possible risk of unleashing a rash of secessionist movements all over the country or encouraging the revival of dormant ones. On the other hand, to be lukewarm in its support of the Brong cause threatened to alienate the sizeable Brong support for the party. And that would mean confronting the federalists in Asante with a somewhat blunted weapon that was the C.P.P.; for the party had emerged from the 1954 general elections not inconsiderably weakened, organizationally and in terms of membership, in Asante.

The C.P.P. government did not release the *Mate Kole Report* until March 1955, and then only after a sustained campaign mounted by the BKC both within and outside the chambers of the Legislative Assembly. Earlier in March the C.P.P. member for Sunyani West, Mr S. W. Yeboah, had tabled a motion demanding the publication of the *Mate Kole Report*; the motion, seconded by Mr Krobo Edusei, C.P.P. member for Sekyere East, was carried by the House.<sup>42</sup>

The C.P.P. government eventually yielded to the inevitable. On 25th March, 1955, the Prime Minister, Dr Nkrumah, read a statement on the Brong-Asante dispute in the Legislative Assembly. First, he informed the House of his recommendation to the Governor to publish the *Report*. Secondly, he told the House of the many petitions the government had received in which the BKC directed the government's attention to the fact that nine states had seceded from the Asanteman Council with which they no longer wished to

be associated. The government, then, would consider the petitions demanding "withdrawal from membership of the Asanteman Council". Thirdly, the government would examine "the possibility of setting up a Brong-Kyempem Council". Fourthly, it would consider "the desire of the Brongs for the establishment of a Development Committee for their area". And, finally, the government would "examine the case for the establishment of two administrative regions for Ashanti". He assured the members that these issues were receiving the government's "earnest and prompt attention".<sup>43</sup>

The Prime Minister's statement gave a fillip to Brong hopes. But the C.P.P. government was still bogged down in inaction. Now that the Brong question had become entangled with the federal issue, it did not want to take any precipitate action which would endanger the settlement of the latter; so anxious was the C.P.P. to achieve an early independence for Ghana. The pressures, however, continued to mount from the Brong side for the early fulfilment of the promises of the March statement. The C.P.P. government was constrained to take some action sooner than it had hoped, and then only in a manner that compounded its own problems to its great discomfiture.

The immediate problem centred on Bechem stool affairs. In 1954 the Bechemhene was declared destooled by the Kumasi State Council. His destoolment had, however, not been published in the government gazette on the ground that the action taken against him was politically motivated, namely, as a reprisal for his refusal to join the N.L.M. In what may be described as a mood of disappointment and frustration the Bechem-Ahafo Youth Association and Bechem elders resorted to one of the well-known strategies of a desperate but potentially dangerous ally; political blackmail. In a petition of October 1955, they "warned" the C.P.P. government that they might be compelled to "betray their confidence in the government and the Prime Minister, Dr. Nkrumah", if the government did not take prompt action on the twin issues of government's recognition of the BKC and the secession of Bechem from the Kumasi division.<sup>44</sup>

The government responded with the passage of the State Councils (Ashanti) (Amendment) Ordinance on 17th Dec., 1955. Under the State Councils (Ashanti) Ordinance, 1952, only paramount chiefs could appeal from the decisions of the Asanteman Council or a State Council direct to the Governor in constitutional cases. Under the new Ordinance the right of appeal, which was made retro-active to 1st January 1954, was extended to all manner of chiefs in Asante. On this basis the Bechemhene could appeal direct to the Governor which he did. The Ordinance met with strong opposition from the Asanteman Council and the N.L.M. and its allies. They felt that the Ordinance was a direct attack on the constitutional heritage and cul-

ture of the Asante nation.<sup>45</sup> It was the passage of this Ordinance which made it impossible for the N.L.M. and its allies to meet and discuss the dragging constitutional issues with Sir Frederick Bourne who had earlier in 1955 been appointed the government's Constitutional Adviser.

The irony in the C.P.P. government's position was this, that, in attempting to make what can only be described as a partial concession to Brong demands, the government only succeeded in undermining considerably its efforts at resolving the larger, national constitutional dispute. Small wonder that, in a renewed effort to extricate itself from this *cul-de-sac*, the C.P.P. government temporarily put the Brong question into cold storage.

Apart from other difficulties (which are discussed below) in the way of the creation of a separate Brong region, there was the considered opinion of the Constitutional Adviser to be reckoned with. He said:

Whatever may be the result of the long standing difference between the Brong States of Western Ashanti and the Asanteman Council, I cannot see any administrative justification for a separate region of this comparatively small area wherein local opinion on the subject is far from unanimous.<sup>46</sup>

Such an argument did not, nor could it be expected to, cut much ice with the Brong nationalists. Sir Frederick Bourne certainly approached the issue with the apparent detachment of a clinical surgeon. If a separate region for the Western Asante Province was ruled out, even on administrative grounds, then obviously a separate Brong region was out of the question, and one could only trust, that with goodwill, the Brongs could come to realize this. Unfortunately, Bourne's implied readiness to take that line was unaffected by evident proofs of its absence. The problem about "goodwill", it has been said, is simply that where it is present one need not make any bother about it; but where it is absent, it is well-nigh impossible to provide it overnight. This was especially so in the highly politically charged atmosphere of Asante in the period September 1954 to 1956. In the event, however, Sir Frederick Bourne's verdict had the effect of inducing the C.P.P. government to withhold for close on two years its open recognition of the BKC.

And from 1956 to the eve of independence the C.P.P. government largely directed its efforts at finding a solution to the larger constitutional and political dispute. To that end, it convened the Achimota Conference in February 1956. The Conference's task was to discuss the *Report* of the Constitutional Adviser and to reach agreement on the salient features of regional devolution recommen-

ded in that *Report*. The N.L.M. — dominated opposition declined the invitation to attend the conference. On the other hand, the Brong movement was ensured of a voice in the Conference's deliberations when the BKC was invited to send a delegation, led by Nana Agyeman Badu, to the Conference.

The invitation constituted a measure of victory for the Brong movement. For it manifested the C.P.P. government's tacit recognition of the BKC. It is more than a manner of speaking to observe that, by early 1956, the Brong movement had become a strong political force to be reckoned with. For one thing, as already indicated, the BKC's membership had been reinforced by Bechem and Sunyani. For another, not an inconsiderable number of people including some chiefs in Ahafo Asunafo, had flung themselves into the movement for a separate region which would encompass the whole of the old Western Province of Asante which included Ahafo Asunafo.<sup>47</sup> The Bechem-Ahafo Youth Association, which has already been mentioned, was very active in that direction.

With specific regard to the Brong question, the Achimota Conference, in its *Report*, made one cardinal concession to Brong nationalist sentiments. Having "*unanimously decided* that the representations made by the Brong/Kyempem Council delegation" were considerable "in material and fact," the Conference recommended that, in the event of the establishment of Regional Assemblies throughout Ghana, "the case for a separate Assembly for the Brong area should be given careful consideration". In this connection the conference noted that "... the views of the State Councils and local government councils concerned would have to be sought by Government before a final decision was reached".<sup>48</sup>

Interestingly, the Conference stopped short of making an unambiguous recommendation for a separate Brong region and House of chiefs — the very issues which were of disturbing significance to the Asanteman Council and its allies. The Conference was of the opinion that:

the Ashanti Region is a compact area well served by roads and railways radiating from Kumasi. Certain Brong States and Brong elements in other States advocate that a portion of the Ashanti Region should be made into a separate region which, it is averred, would be predominantly Brong. Nevertheless there is some controversy as to which parts of the Brong area wish, or do not wish, to sever their administrative connection with the Ashanti Region.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, the Conference was not clear in its mind whether a separate Brong region was desirable and necessary. On the issue of a separate House of Chiefs, the Conference applied a general principle it had

enunciated: "wherever a Regional Assembly is established in a region provision should be made for a House of Chiefs." In view however, of its rather cloudy stand on the question of a separate Brong region, the Conference could only state blandly that the issue of a separate Brong House of Chiefs should be considered simultaneously with the other issue.<sup>50</sup>

It is arguable that there is an apparent contradiction between the Conference's positive recommendation for a "separate Assembly for the Brong area" and its ambiguous position on a separate Brong region. For the former would seem to imply the latter. But, on closer scrutiny, such a contradiction disappears if it is recognised that the "separate Assembly", as far as the conference was concerned, encompassed considerable local administrative devolution within the Asanteman—a position similar to that of the Asanteman Council, as we saw above.

But, in what turned out eventually as a very clever political move, the C.P.P. government in April 1956 made an open declaration of its intention to create a separate Brong region with its own Regional Assembly and a House of Chiefs. This appeared in a **White Paper** which contained the government's **Constitutional Proposals and Statement on the Report of the Constitutional Adviser and the Report of the Achimota Conference**.

For the country as a whole, the C.P.P. government rejected federation in favour of a considerable measure of devolution of administrative functions to the proposed Regional Assemblies. Not surprisingly, the N.L.M. and its allies rejected the government's constitutional proposals. With particular respect to the Brong question, they were strongly opposed to the carving of a new region of the Asanteman. In view of the constitutional impasse, the Secretary of State for the Colonies requested the C.P.P. government to hold fresh general elections—within two years—to determine the strength or otherwise of support for its constitutional proposals; he also announced a firm date for independence. The elections were duly held in July 1956, and the C.P.P. won seventy-one out of the one-hundred-and-four seats. Of the six seats in Brongland, the C.P.P. won four, but it lost the Ahafo seat. In the seven Brong-Ahafo seats, the C.P.P. polled a total vote of 41,222 as against 32,881 for the N.L.M. and its allies.<sup>51</sup>

And this meant that of the eight seats (out of twenty-one) the C.P.P. won in the Asanteman, four were located in Brongland. The importance of this fact was not lost on the B.K.C. Indeed, as Mr C. S. Takyi, C.P.P. Member for Wenchi East, stated later in the National Assembly, the election slogan of the C.P.P. in Brongland was: "vote C.P.P., vote Independence; vote C.P.P.

vote Brong-Ahafo".<sup>52</sup> Clearly, Brongland had delivered the political goods: it had, in no small measure, helped the C.P.P. to meet the condition of a "reasonable majority" in the elections laid down by the Secretary of State.

Although Ghana became independent in March 1957, it took the C.P.P. government two more years to redeem its promise to the Brong. The delay is explained largely in terms of the necessity of clearing a few major constitutional hurdles, notably the constitutional amendment restrictions.<sup>53</sup> The Constitution (Repeal of Restrictions) Bill was passed in September 1958. And the efforts of the Brong movement were crowned with success when, on 20th March, 1959, the Minister of Justice and Local Government, Mr A. E. A. Ofori Atta, introduced into the National Assembly the Brong-Ahafo Region Bill, under a Certificate of Urgency. The Bill went through all its stages on that day. On receiving the Governor-General's assent, it came into effect on 4th April, 1959.

In his speech winding up the debate on the Brong-Ahafo Region Bill, Mr A. E. A. Ofori Atta emphasized the C.P.P. government's conviction that "culturally, administratively, and socially, there, must be a region for the Brong-Ahafos . . ." <sup>54</sup> In other words there were more than administrative grounds for the creation of the new region. In 1955, as we have seen, the Constitutional Adviser argued magisterially against the creation of a separate Brong region on certain general grounds including the administrative. But even then, and discounting the possibility of the inclusion of Ahafo-Asunafo, there were, on administrative grounds alone, certain advantages in the creation of such a region.

To begin with, a separate Brong region would enable the Brong to participate actively in their own development, thereby serving to obliterate eventually the Brong feeling of neglect. A Brong regional organisation would, in all probability, be much nearer to the peoples of Brongland as a whole, and more concerned with their economic and social well-being than the remote Kumasi-based regional organisation.

Secondly, it would, to a large extent, lighten the heavy bureaucratic load that was placed on the Kumasi regional office; a load which became all the heavier following the launching of the N.L.M in Asante. For the Kumasi regional office was hard put to it in coping with the subsequent eruption of the numerous local disputes — especially in some remote corners of Brongland — most of which often resulted in violent riots. In 1957 a Committee of Enquiry appointed by the Minister of the Interior and Justice, Mr Ako Adjei, underscored in its *Report* the undersized strength of the peace officers, mostly stationed in Kumasi, which made for the

sluggish handling of the hundreds of alleged cases of intimidation, threat and extortion that became rampant in Asante at the height of the federalist agitation.<sup>55</sup>

Nor, thirdly, could one underestimate the advantage of having a Regional Officer in Brongland who would be more easily available for consultation by the Brong local authorities as a whole on matters which demanded immediate action. That way, the sense of frustration felt by many Brong local authorities, subject as they were to distant governmental control, could be obliterated. This was all the more necessary since the 1951 Local Government Ordinance, in empowering the Minister of Local Government to delegate wide powers to Regional Officers, abrogated most of the powers hitherto exercised by the locally based administrative officers. A Brong regional office would, furthermore, be in a more advantageous position than the Kumasi-centred one to deal speedily with the various estimates and petitions or resolutions submitted by the local councils in Brongland.

However, to direct attention to the administrative advantage is not to gloss over the corresponding difficulties involved in the creation of a separate Brong region. In the first place, disagreement over the location of the new regional centre was more than just a remote possibility: it was doubtful that Sunyani, for instance, would be favoured as the regional headquarters by the Brong states in northern Asante, particularly in view of the existing poor system of communications and transport. But this obstacle, largely a technical one, was not as serious in magnitude as the internal political difficulties. In 1952 it was not clear that such Brong areas as Wenchi, Nkoranza, Nkwanta, Banda and Mo, which still maintained their loyalty to the Asanteman Council, and largely supported the N.L.M., would be willing to be included in a separate Brong region. Besides, states like Drobo, Suma and Berekum were already divided violently over the issue.<sup>56</sup>

Above all, there was the question of delimiting the boundaries of the new region—and this was not only physical but also human. As has already been seen, there were certain elements in Ahafo Asunafo who favoured the creation of a new region which would include that area. They were also pro—C.P.P. And yet, the Ahafo Asunafo area as a whole was not only historically purely Asante, with close traditional links with the Golden Stool through the Kumasi clan chiefs; it was also overwhelmingly pro-N.L.M. Therefore, the inclusion of that area in a new region with its own House of Chiefs would mean that, from the angle of traditional allegiance, the Kumasi division would consequently be split between two regions, namely, the new region and what would be left of the Asanteman.

In view of the acrimonious political conflict that was unleashed by the emergence of the N.L.M., the political argument against a separate Brong region could not be easily dismissed out of court, as the C.P.P. government recognised. On the other hand as Tordoff has argued forcefully, the case against a separate Brong region from the standpoint of traditional allegiance was not clear-cut. It was not clear, that is to say, why premium should be put on considerations of traditional loyalties in the determination of an administrative issue. According to Tordoff, the answer to the problem lay in "the confusion which often prevails in Ashanti between administrative and constitutional issues"; a confusion which could be illustrated by the bitter dispute, for instance, between Dormaa-Ahenkro and Dormaa-Wamfie which "made it administratively impossible, from 1952 onwards, to persuade the latter to co-operate in working the (newly created) Dormaa Local Council".<sup>57</sup>

However all this may have been, it is worth noting that the Brong-Ahafo region was eventually created not merely on the grounds of its administrative viability; it was created to cater for needs besides the administrative, as Mr A. E. A. Ofori Atta aptly put it in the statement already quoted above; needs which the B.K.C. had effectively dramatized. Which is to say, in effect, that the creation of the new region was due partly — but significantly — to the intransigent stand taken by the B.K.C. Although in the immediate post-independence period it had no tangible reason for thinking that the C.P.P. government would possibly renege on its 1956 promise, the leadership of the Brong secessionist movement did not take the issue of the creation of a new region for granted. Thus the Dormaahene in November 1957:

... As the Prime Minister, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, had said that the freedom and independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up with the freedom of the continent of Africa, in the same way, the freedom of Dormaa is, to me meaningless, except it is linked up with the freedom and independence of the whole of BRONG, including Ahafo-Asunafo . . . I take this opportunity to appeal to the progressive government of Ghana to take immediate steps to set free the 300,000 chiefs and people of Brong-Ahafo-Asunafo from the Asantehene's misrule. I have no doubt that the socialist government of Ghana will never support or encourage by direct means or otherwise, a section of the community to enslave another . . .<sup>58</sup>

On the evidence available, since 1956 the C.P.P. government had been all along fully aware of its obligations towards Brongland as a whole; an awareness which was expressed succinctly by Mr A. E. A. Ofori Atta thus:



“The Bill before this House . . . is a fulfilment of the solemn promise of 1956 based on the conviction of the Government and the C.P.P. and made to the people of Brong-Ahafo.”<sup>59</sup>

But, in addition to the need to fulfil its “solemn promise” to the peoples of Brong-Ahafo, the C.P.P. government had its own reasons for creating the new region. By 1959 the political argument against the creation of the new region had been undercut considerably by the attainment of independence in 1957. Moreover, some chiefs like the Mamponghene, Berekumhene, Adansihene, Essumehene, Wenchihene and so on, who were staunch supporters of the N.L.M., had either abdicated or been deposed. And their successors, beside other chiefs in the Asanteman, had emulated the example of the Asantehene in making their peace with the C.P.P. government. The N.L.M. itself no longer existed as an independent political force, since on 3rd November, 1957, it merged with the other splinter opposition groups to form the United Party (U.P.) with Dr K. A. Busia as its leader. (The U.P. was formed in anticipation of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act which was passed by the C.P.P. dominated National Assembly in December 1957. The Act made illegal the existence of political parties on a regional, tribal, or religious basis). It was from this vantage-point that the C.P.P. government made an earnest of its determination to break the back of what it considered as dangerous Asante nationalism by carving the new region from the Asanteman. In the event, it was a punitive action; and the rest of the Asanteman as a whole saw it as such.

To put this action in the correct perspective, further elaboration may be necessary. In view of the kind of interpretation it put on events in Asante, especially from September 1954 to the eve of independence, the C.P.P. government persuaded itself about the inherent rightness of the course of action it took against Asante in the immediate post-independence period. The political atmosphere in the country as a whole was doubtless tense from August 1956 to the eve of independence, mainly because of the continued intransigence of a section of the leadership of the N.L.M.-dominated opposition.

In the first place, Nkrumah was bitterly disappointed at his failure to *bring* independence to Ghana in 1956; a failure for which he held the N.L.M. in particular responsible, as his *Autobiography* well shows. His disappointment may have become all the more unbearable when he realised his own failure to grasp the import, and the disruptive possibilities for his independence programme, of the emergent federalist movement. In 1954 he naively dismissed the N.L.M. as only an eleventh-hour irritant, something that would soon “all blow over”.<sup>60</sup> By December

1955, however, he had realised the full implications of "The Ashanti Problem." But, he still counselled patience. "The Ashanti situation," he told his supporters at an Accra rally, "is such that it should be handled with tact and patience; it is only those of us who know what is really happening in Ashanti who know what steps should be taken to deal with the situation."<sup>61</sup>

From Nkrumah's standpoint, the issue of early independence was also intimately bound up with that of national unity. The disruption of his carefully planned programme of independence in 1956 at the latest by the Asante-dominated opposition forces was sufficiently disappointing; what was unpardonable was the serious threat they posed to national unity — *the* national unity, he convinced himself, which he had carefully and diligently nurtured since the foundation of his party. There was even the possibility that independence might not be granted by the British government. He was, therefore, concerned to impress upon the opposition the gravity of the situation. Hence, he said at a Ho party rally that: "The presentation of a united front to the world, whatever our internal differences, will enable us to achieve our ambition (i.e. independence)."<sup>62</sup> Failing that, independence was a highly impossible dream.

Indeed, the bold secession threats which came to be made by many opposition leaders after the 1956 general elections were sufficiently serious to alarm the C.P.P. government as a whole, and Nkrumah in particular. S. G. Antor of the Togoland Congress (T.C.) talked of the secession of Southern Trans-Volta Togoland in terms of the "inalienable rights" of its people; while opposition militants in the Northern Territories explained the right of their region to secede in terms unrelated to the interests of their opposition allies in the other regions. Since their region, it was claimed, had *special* treaties of protection with Britain, the departure of the latter *ipso facto* gave the region the *special* right to secede.<sup>63</sup> At a Kumasi rally Baffuor Osei Akoto, the national chairman of the N.L.M., advised his Asante audience to put themselves in a psychological readiness "to shed their blood to preserve their national identity and heritage." At another N.L.M. rally, speakers emphasized the determination of the Asante to re-enact, for the benefit of the C.P.P. government, the historic reputation of their ancestors "in being warlike in defending their liberty."<sup>64</sup>

Then in late November 1956, the militants on the Executive Committee of the N.L.M. sent a cable to the Colonial Secretary to the effect that:

"... pending the final withdrawal of British control, (an) interim Government shall be established before March 6, 1957, in Ashanti and the Northern Territories."

The Colonial Secretary, in his reply, called their bluff, emphasizing that "the partition of the Gold Coast" was not "in the interests of the Gold Coast as a whole or of any of its component parts," and that the British government could not "abandon their established policy" which was "directed towards the grant of independence to the Gold Coast as a whole."<sup>65</sup>

Fortunately, through the personal intervention of the Colonial Secretary — he came to Ghana — a settlement of the constitutional dispute was reached to the satisfaction of virtually all the parties involved. The opposition spokesmen openly announced to the world the satisfactory results of the consultations between them, the C.P.P. government and Mr Lennox Boyd, the Colonial Secretary. And the Asantehene counselled his people that the moment to "forgive and forget" had arrived; he assured the Asante political refugees in other parts of the country a safe and warm welcome on their return home. After independence, however, the C.P.P. government was in no mood to "bury the hatchet, forget the past" — as Baffour Osei Akoto, who had been one of the most militant advocates of Asante secession, also advised all the sundry on the eve of independence.<sup>66</sup> For Nkrumah and his followers (who, in fact, demanded punitive measures against the N.L.M. leadership and its allies) that past was too fresh and bitter to live down with equanimity. Hence the powerful, added reason for creating the Brong-Ahafo Region. From the point of view of the Asanteman Council, the N.L.M. and their ardent followers, the action was not only vindictive; it also undercut considerably the economic and geo-political power of the Asante.

It is rather strange that, in almost all accounts of politics in post-war Ghana, little attention is paid to the importance attached to the numerical factor in Asante political calculations. One of the major factors underlying Asante's hesitant approach to the Colony-Asante unification issue, for instance, was the Asante's uncertainty about the strength of their representation on the Legislative Council, which, they feared, would be dominated by the Colony. The same uncertainty was expressed during the deliberations of the Coussey Constitutional Commission.<sup>67</sup> The creation of the new region, then, must have been seen as the cutting down of the Asanteman to a less dangerous, geo-political size — which, indeed, was part of the C.P.P. government's motivation. It is debatable, though, how crucial this factor in C.P.P. calculations would have been in the absence of a politically powerful Brong movement.

### Summary

Such, then, in bald, rough-hewn outline is the story of the Brong political movement which was an organized expression of the quest for independence from the Asanteman. The story may be briefly summarised thus:

(i) Broadly speaking, the Brong movement arose out of the deeply felt need of hitherto, relatively diverse peoples in Western Asante for a separate, independent, and authentic Brong self-identity. The consciousness of this Brong self-identity was not a sudden outgrowth in the immediate post-war years; rather, it had reached a fairly developed stage by that period. Then, these relatively separate peoples were no more in doubt about what they considered to be their dependent status — in every respect — within the Asante Confederacy.

(ii) The growth of this consciousness of a single Brong self-identity of such peoples, then, was the paradoxical, because unintended, end-product of their inclusion in the restored Confederacy. For, it was most improbable that such a consciousness would have developed, had each of these peoples continued its individual existence independent of the Asante — as was largely the case in the period 1900–1935. But their re-entry into the Asante orbit of power involved their common exposure to certain “abuses” at the hands of the true Asante.

(iii) Founded on a modest scale (in terms of membership); having nearly become still-born (as evidenced by its dormant condition from 1952 to 1954); and with all the odds virtually stacked against it at its inception (what with the Asantehene’s intransigence and the fledgling C.P.P. government’s felt need for national unity which implied Asante unity), the Brong movement nevertheless had by early 1956 brilliantly managed to be at its most self-assertive, with the emotionalism of all its adherents heated up. It thus compelled national attention.

(iv) Such a development was due to the combined strength of three major factors:

- (a) the almost granite-like belief of the BKC in the rightness of the Brong cause.
- (b) the resourcefulness and the determination of the leadership in the persons of Nana Ameyaw, Nana Agyeman Badu and Mr Ntow, the General Secretary of the BKC, to mention only a few; and
- (c) the sudden change in the national political configuration following the emergence of the federalist movement. The eventual realisation of the dangerous political implications of this movement induced the C.P.P. government to form a working alliance with the BKC. Caught between the pincers of these two forces, the Asanteman Council — N.L.M. alliance struggled valiantly but in vain to maintain the *status-quo* in the Asanteman.

(v) A separate region for the Brong — and the Ahafos — was eventually created not on administrative grounds only — although these were important. For the C.P.P. government an additional consideration was the need to settle old scores. For the BKC also, the new region answered to more than administrative conveniences: it signified, above all, a most welcome release from what may be regarded as the psychological entrapment of the soul-destroying inferiority complex the Brong had indeed developed during the long period of their relations with the true Asante as a whole.

## EPILOGUE

It is appropriate to end this introductory essay with a rather brief discussion of one or two significant implications of the Brong movement for the political and constitutional developments in Ghana during the period under review. But, in view of the continuing significance of what is now the Brong-Ahafo question, it is also appropriate that the discussion encompass some recent developments.

The first, and most obvious, implication may be briefly put. When the Brong-Asante dispute came to be merged with the fierce C.P.P. - N.L.M. confrontation, the C.P.P. government's planned independence programme was consequently thrown out of joint. Thus A. E. Ofori Atta during the debate on the Brong-Ahafo Region Bill:

“I need not remind hon. Members that the battle for independence was nearly lost on [the Brong] issue”.<sup>68</sup> For ill or good the Brong movement succeeded to some extent in dogging the relentless efforts of the C.P.P. government to reach an early settlement with the N.L.M.-dominated opposition on the national constitutional and political issue. Fortunately for the Brong movement Nkrumah did not abandon it owing to his altered perspective on the “Ashanti Problem”.

In the event, however, the Brong cause served as a convenient pretext for the C.P.P. government to strike at the core of chieftaincy in Asante: the Golden Stool and its supporting institutions, with the Asanteman and the Kumasi State Councils bearing the brunt of the attack. With the passage of the State Councils (Ashanti) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1955, the considerable room for manoeuvre the clan chiefs of the Kumasi State Council, for example, had hitherto had over the Ahafo and Brong Sub-chiefs in local constitutional matters was virtually wiped out at a stroke. No longer would the balance of political advantage in such matters always lie with them. In effect, therefore, the Ordinance considerably undermined the traditional allegiance of Brong and Ahafo sub-divisional chiefs in particular to their Kumasi overlords and, through them, to the Asantehene.

One should have thought that with the creation of the Brong-Ahafo Region the ghost of the Brong-Asante dispute (which now embraces Ahafo also) would be laid. But such is the nature of local politics in Ghana that a facet of that dispute has persisted to this day. This is the problem consisting of the twin issues of traditional allegiance and titles to land ownership, a problem which exists in many parts of Ghana.

In Asante, however, it has assumed a significance of major proportions, as we have seen, on account of the character of Asante's historical evolution. Through the efforts of Osei Tutu and some of his successors, Asante was able to achieve a unity greater in depth and scope than that attained by its Akan counterparts elsewhere in the country. This unity was epitomized by the Golden Stool, the mythical creation of which by Okomfo Anokye was, by all accounts, a stroke of genius. The Golden Stool was — and still is — believed to embody the "soul" of the Asante. As much, it evoked awe and veneration in the true Asante. And its occupant and custodian, the Asantehene, naturally enjoyed their allegiance.

After they had pursued the policy of physically dismembering the Asante Union, especially from 1900 to 1932, the British set about re-invigorating the formal structure of Asante unity as an instrument of colonial policy. The result was the restoration of the Asante Confederacy or Union in 1935. For the true Asante that historic event, whatever may have been the real intentions of the British, involved the restoration of the Golden Stool and its occupant to their former position and status in the hierarchy of the traditional Asante political system. Hence the Golden Stool continued to constitute the traditional symbol of Asante unity.

Thus, like Buganda in Uganda until the "Obote Revolution" of May 23rd, 1966, Asante as a historical kingdom has presented modern Ghana with the problem of the "dual polity": the existence of two focal points of allegiance, the central government on the one hand, and the Golden Stool and its occupant on the other, in the Asante region. The problem might still have existed and persisted even in the absence of a Brong political movement. But it is arguable that it was largely this movement which threw that problem into sharp focus. In 1951 the unmistakably serious challenge its emergence presented to the Asanteman Council, the nationalist C.P.P. government and the country as a whole cannot be seriously disputed, as we have seen.

From the Asanteman Council's point of view, although the Brong states as a whole may not have been Asante by origin, yet they were doubtless Asante by conquest. In that case, they had to do their duty by their Asante overlords through continued allegiance to the Golden Stool and its occupant; and this, in the noble cause of

maintaining the historic unity of Asante. As the hon. B. D. Addai said in October 1949:

Ashanti commands great reputation everywhere in the country . . . because there is unity in Ashanti. To maintain and enhance this reputation that unity must be guarded very jealously and knit together more closely.<sup>70</sup>

And this meant continued allegiance to the Golden Stool. From 1948 onwards some Brong states came to think otherwise.

The C.P.P. government eventually agreed with them. It, therefore, dealt a blow at Asante sense of historic unity and pride; a blow that was as brilliantly calculated in its delivery as it was stunning in its impact: for the C.P.P. government included Ahafo, which was not only historically purely Asante but also endowed with a rich heritage of natural resources, in the new region it created in 1959.

And yet the creation of the new region did not involve a permanent solution of the problem of traditional allegiance and titles to land ownership. The C.P.P. government may have considered the elevation of some sub-chiefs to paramountacy status and the demotion of some paramount chiefs in the area as a political solution to the issue of traditional allegiance. On the issue of stool lands revenue paid by the Kumasi "islands" to the central treasury in Kumasi, the C.P.P. government had earlier in September 1958 passed the Ashanti Stool Lands Act. This Act transferred the administration of the Golden Stool land in the Kumasi division from the Asantehene's Lands Office to the Commissioner of Lands.<sup>71</sup>

In all this the C.P.P. government mistook a legal, for a political, solution. And it hardly reckoned with Kumasi determination to cling to titles to land ownership, however much their origins may have been blurred by—or even lost in—the mists of the past.

On the accession to power after the military overthrow of the C.P.P. government in 1966 the National Liberation Council (N.L.C.), doubtless under pressure, demoted the C.P.P.—elevated chiefs;<sup>72</sup> it even appointed a Committee to inquire into the issue of traditional allegiance and related matters in the Brong-Ahafo Region. The widespread impression was thus created that the Committee's real business was to decide on the very existence of the region.<sup>73</sup> In the event, it wound up business for reasons which were not made public. The government of the Progress Party (P.P.) was widely believed to have also had a shot at the problem and devised a political formula for its solution; but it did not have the opportunity to complete the business, to put the seal on the matter. The National Redemption Council (N.R.C.) has re-opened the matter with the appointment of yet another Committee to look into it.<sup>74</sup> Which all

shows that, thanks to the Brong movement, the Brong-Ahafo Region has since its creation affected national politics in a disturbing way.

Whatever may have been the N.R.C.'s motivation, there is no question that most of the educated commoners — who were young at the time of the birth of the Brong movement—have grown to attach considerable importance to its offspring, so to say: namely, the Brong-Ahafo region. Most probably the issue of traditional allegiance, which is still of significance to a great many of their chiefs and elders, does not weigh very much with them. The financial considerations are bound to do so, however, for them the emotional attachment to a separate Brong-Ahafo existence cannot be easily divorced from its economic content.<sup>75</sup>

And they still have a leader in the person of the Dormaahene<sup>9</sup> Nana Agyeman Badu. Following the announcement in June 1973 by the Asantehene, Nana Opoku Ware II, of his intention to create nine divisional councils in Asante and Brong-Ahafo, there was an angry outburst among the Brong-Ahafo youth.<sup>76</sup> Earlier in May at a Sunyani rally held by the Brong-Ahafo Youth Association, Nana Agyeman Badu, not to be outdone, declared: "The time of slavery is dead and buried forever." He asked if the youth would stand aloof to see their region abolished: "It is now the turn of the youth to show up strength and resistance and put a stop to all sorts of calculated cheating." Imploring the Brong-Ahafo youth to project the image of the region because it was the land of their birth, he lashed out thus: "... no Ghanaian youth from any other region is better than any Brong-Ahafo youth, unless that individual submits himself to the person."<sup>77</sup>

In a memorandum sent to the Committee on Brong-Ahafo chieftaincy affairs in October 1973, the Brong Ahafo Students' Union (BASU) also declared:

"Mr Chairman, it is being suggested in certain circles that the Brong-Ahafo Region was created for administrative convenience. With due respect, we would like you to treat such claims as coming from people who are not informed; for it certainly ignores the stormy relations that existed between the component traditional areas of present-day Ahafo and our erstwhile so-called Kumasi/Ashanti overlords. We very uncompromisingly reject any such claims and assert positively that the boundaries of present-day Brong-Ahafo were drawn with due respect to and cognisance of the fact of people who abhorred the dishonour, the disrespect and the cheating that they had suffered under their former 'lords'. If we should accept the rather wrong claim that some people in the region are Ashanti and should be part of the Ashanti region, we [would] like to submit that this is not incompatible with the regionalisation of this country, for the Eastern Region,



for example, is made up of such ethnic groups as the Krobos, the Kwahus, the Akuapims and the Juabens. We do not find anything wrong with Brong-Ahafo being made up of Brongs and Asante-speaking Ahafos. In any case the claim that Ahafo or any part of our region is 'Ashanti' is spurious and we reject it. . . we would like to emphasise that the argument that because we have once been the 'servants' of Ashanti we should continue to occupy that that pariah status is porous and therefore not acceptable to us. . . ."78

It would appear that Nana Agyeman Badu has been placed in a position to start the battle all over again. And, considering the nature of the support he can muster in the 1970's his strategy will, in all probability, be different from that of the 1950's

And this brings us to the final significant implication of the Brong movement. First, in a polyethnic society like Ghana, the persistent habit of taking other people's sensibilities for granted and according them an inferior status in the political and social reality never pays off in the long run. The foregoing discussion of Asante-Brong relations, it is hoped, has clearly underscored this point; otherwise there would have been no Brong political movement. As the Akwamuhene succinctly put the matter in 1949;

. . . in addition to love and unity we must have mutual respect for one another; because love without respect is vain; and unity divested of respect is also poor. . . we should cultivate the habit of respect towards one another."79

Secondly, since Ghana is still a fledgling state nation, there is a point beyond which certain historical claims—whatever their justification—cannot be pressed into service without endangering the fragile foundations for national integration that have with great effort been laid.

The Brong Ahafo—Asante question can be solved only if and when the fact of the existence of the Brong Ahafo region, with all that it entails, is acknowledged by all and sundry. All the regions in present day Ghana are related to one another in the primary—albeit significant—sense that all of them exist within one territorial unit under a single central authority. Any attempts at questioning, however slightly, such an arrangement can only be interpreted as a demand for a special, privileged status within it; and that would be unfortunate, to put it rather mildly.

## Notes And References

- 1 I am grateful to Dr Kwame Arhin, the editor, for his very useful comments and suggestions on the first draft of this introductory essay.
- 2 *Report of the Committee on Asanteman-Brong Dispute* (Accra, 1955), p.3. The other members were Mr J. H. Allasani and Mr A.Y.K. Djin. Owing to other business commitments, the latter could not participate in the work of the Committee from September 1951 on; consequently, he did not sign the Report. In the body of the essay, the Committee is variously referred to as the Mate Kole Committee or the Committee of Enquiry, while in subsequent notes the *Report* is cited as *Report of the Mate Kole Committee*. Various institutions and organisations, mainly from Brongland, sent memoranda. See App. 1. The Asanteman Council also presented its case through a four-man delegation (p.3, para. 6).
- 3 The names and number of the original member—states are as they appear in the *Statement of Grievances* (hereafter cited as *SG*). Other states such as Bechem, Sunyani and Berekum joined later.
- 4 The term (i) "ethnic nationalism", is used in a general sense in this context: the quest of different but related peoples for a single, separate identity in contradistinction to other identities (ii) "Brong nationalism" makes sense only in the context of Brong-Asante relations (iii) 'Brongness' and "Brongland" are in this context "ethnic" and political designations, and they posit the idea of differentiation of "distinctiveness", e.g. "Brongness" as distinct from "Asanteness"; "Brongland" as distinct from "Asanteman". (iv) The idea of "distinctiveness" may (that is not necessarily) lead to the "ideal of independence", which it did in the case of the Brong movement: i.e. independence of the Asanteman. (v) This usage must be distinguished from another, more technical one: *ethnic nationalism* arises, we are told, primarily from the concern to ensure the survival of a group's *cultural* identity. It, therefore, presupposes an existent, recognisable, homogeneous cultural entity. Hence the concern for cultural survival involves ensuring the *political* survival of the group and the physical protection of its members. Establishing a separate political organisation or state for the group is seen ultimately as the only way of ensuring its political survival and protection from hostile outside interference. See, A.D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (Duckworth, 1971), pp. 215-17. (vi) It is clear that the Brong movement was not an *ethnic nationalist* movement in Dr Smith's sense. There was no pre-existent cultural homogeneity to serve as a basis; on the contrary, a single cultural identity had to be artificially created through political action. A consciousness of Brong self-identity developed from the exposure of the diverse peoples in that part of Asante to a common external factor: "Asante domination". Nor did the Brong movement aspire to nationhood and statehood outside Ghana. The "outgroup" was the "Asanteman" and not Ghana as a whole. The Asante-inspired N.L.M. would possibly illustrate Dr Smith's usage, if not in its initial stages, at least in its final phase. See Note below.
5. See W. Tordoff: "*Ashanti Under the Prempehs 1888-1935* (Oxford, 1965) pp. 1-109, and *passim*", and "The Brong-Ahafo Region", *The Economic Bulletin* (Accra, May 1959), Vol. 3, No. 5, p. 3. K. Y. Daaku, *Supra*.
6. See Nana Kwakye Ameyaw and K. Arhin, *Supra*. (i) Significantly, in distinguishing between the "true Ashanti" and "Brong", the BKF was apparently only following established practice. The colonial administra-

tion had used the distinction as a convenient criterion for determining membership of the projected restoration of the Asante Confederacy—*Papers Relating to the Restoration of the Ashanti Confederacy* (Gold Coast, 1935), p. 9, para. 9. (ii) For the origins of the Mos and Bandas, see J. N. Matson, *A Digest of the Minutes of the Ashanti Confederacy Council, 1935-49* (Cape Coast, n.d.) p. 1, and for those of the Berekums and Dormaas, W. Tordoff (1965), op. cit., p. 338, note 2. (iii) For the political implication of “Brongness”, see Kwame Arhin, ed. *Ashanti and the North-East*, Supplement No. 3, RESEARCH REVIEW, March, 1970, p. 4 and Kwame Arhin, *Introduction, Supra*.

7. *Proceedings of the Meetings of the Committee of Privileges, 18th June, 1935—3rd January, 1936*, pp. 216-248; for a critical analysis of the origins of the land dispute and the committee's decision, see W. Tordoff (1965), op. cit., pp. 141-2 and 355-6.
8. Lord Hailey, *An African Survey* (Oxford, Rev. Ed., 1956), pp. 685-774.
9. In 1949 the Akyempimhene, e.g., deplored the dereliction of duty by the Kumasi clan chiefs as a whole to their subjects in the “Kumasi islands” when he said: “It is gratifying to hear the advice given by the Otumfuo regarding the relation between us, the Kumasi clan chiefs, and our subjects living outside Kumasi. It is desirable as well as advisable that we should visit our subjects very frequently; because it is only by personal contact with them that we can know their feelings, wants and sufferings and so be able to assist them solve their difficulties. The District Commissioners go to these villages very frequently and ask the villagers how often their senior chiefs in Kumasi visit them. It will shock you to hear the answers which are often given them. They are not very complimentary . . .”—*Minutes of the 14th Session of the Ashanti Confederacy Council, 1949; 6th October, 1949*, pp. 83-4. It would seem that the Kumasi clan chiefs were more interested in the rewards (including the stool lands revenue) attendant on their overlordship.
10. *Minutes of the 3rd Session of the Ashanti Confederacy Council, 1950; 22nd June, 1950*, p. 54.
11. In 1959 Nana Kwame Ntow II, Akwamuhene of the Dormaa State, claimed that, at an emergency meeting the Dormaa State Council held on 11th February, 1951, to discuss the troubled state of Dormaa-Asante-man Council relations, Nana Kwasi Ansu (then Krontihene of the Dormaa State) emerged as the moving spirit behind the Dormaa secessionist campaign. “The campaign for the consolidation of forces and contact for more forces in the Brong states was suggested by Kwasi Ansu before the initiative was taken” — *The Address during the Durbar of the “Kwafie” and Victory Celebrations, 7th February, 1959, Dormaa Ahenfie Papers* for a brief account of the “Kwasi Ansu episode” December 1951-1952.
12. See, e.g., Bankole Timothy, *Kwame Nkrumah* (Allen and Unwin, Paperback, 2nd ed. (1963), p. 94.
13. It is not being implied here that the interpretations offered by the Brong states were all of them without any foundation in fact. The constitutional interpretation of the restored Confederacy offered by the Dormaa State Council, e.g. could be seen as a re-statement of British intentions at the time of the restoration. It is arguable that Sir Arnold Hodson's statement on the restoration as not a “new creation but a return to former institu-

- tions" was historically misleading. But he was, perhaps, pointing to what the British intended as the underlying principle of the Confederacy when he said: "In this retoration . . . the domestic affairs and property rights of properly constituted divisions will not be interfered with unless the native authorities concerned invite assistance . . ." — J. N. Matson, —*Digest . . .*, p. 2, See A Triulzi, "The Asantehene — In — Council: Ashanti Politics Under Colonial Rule, 1935-1950", AFRICA, Vol. XLII, No. 2, April 1972, pp. 98-9.
14. *Report of the Mate Kole Committee*, p. 4, para. 17.
  15. *Ibid.* It must be noted, though, that the form of oath-taking applied to all the divisional chiefs in the Confederacy. But this does not explain away the Brong objection, since the Brong chiefs as a whole, unlike their true Asante counterparts, may not have developed a deep sense of reverence for the Golden Stool to warrant this kind of "humiliation" at the hands of its occupant. See W. Tordoff (1965), *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.
  16. See J. N. Matson, *A Digest . . .*, pp. 3-4.
  17. K. A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti* (Frank Cass, 1968), p. 169, the co-option of educated commoners was first suggested by Major Jackson, the C.C.A.—*Minutes of the Confederacy Council*, 1st Session, 1935; 7th June, 1935, p. 5.
  18. *Report of the Mate Kole Committee*, p. 4, para. 12 (xii); *Cp.* K. A. Busia (1968), *op. cit.*, pp. 192-3.
  19. J. N. Matson, *A Digest . . .*, p. 4.
  20. E. Triulzi (April, 1972), *op. cit.*, p. 109.
  21. *Report of the Mate Kole Committee*, p. 5, para. 24 and for membership of the Board. See *Minutes of the Confederacy Council*, 14th Session, Sept./Oct. 1949; Presidential Address, App. I (a), p. 93.
  22. K. A. Busia (1968), *op. cit.*, pp. 184-5; for Asantehene's repeated admonitions, see e.g. *Minutes . . .*, 8th Session, Sept./Oct. 1949; closing Remarks, pp. 85-86.
  23. *Report of the Mate Kole Committee*, p. 5, para. 20.
  24. J. N. Matson, *A Digest . . .*, p. 23.
  25. *Minutes . . .*, 8th Session, 1946; 4th March, 1946, pp. 20-22.
  26. K. A. Busia (1968), *op. cit.*, p. 188.
  27. K. A. Busia (1968), *op. cit.*, pp. 173-5.
  28. *Minutes . . .*, 3rd Session, June 1950; App. 7, p. 67.
  29. *Minutes . . .* 14th Session, Sept./Oct. 1949; App. I, pp. 93-4.
  30. *Report of the Mate Kole Committee*, p. 5, paras. 23 & 25.
  31. The Brong rejoinder would be that, compared with the true Asante as a whole, they in fact had a raw deal.

32. Quoted in *Report of the Mate Kole Committee*, p. 5, para. 26.
33. *Constitution of the Brong-Kyempem Federation*; Article 2, *SG*, App. III. This Constitution appears as a whole to have been patterned after that of the Asante Confederacy. There are some striking differences, though: e.g. there is no permanent President; the office is held by yearly rotation among the Head Chiefs through election — an incumbent is eligible for re-election for a further term not exceeding one year at a time; membership is open to every Brong state or town or Ohene of Brong origin; and equality of status of all members is stressed (Article 3(d)).
34. W. Tordoff, "Brong-Ahafo Region" . . . , p. 5.
35. But for considerations of space, an extended case study of this interesting but bitter quarrel, which became a component of the Brong-Asante dispute, would have been given here in illustration of some aspects of local politics in Brongland in the period; its tangled, factional character involving a number of individuals or clans forming themselves into groups that almost invariably broke up into splinter-groups, which, in turn regrouped into kaleidoscopic mergers or coalitions around such issues as chieftaincy titles to land and party affiliation.
36. He had left for Britain in 1952 to study public administration at Ruskin College, Oxford, although according to Yeboah Afari, the Dormaahene was not inactive: he managed to have the Brong question raised in the British Parliament.
37. See *SG*, App. II and *Report of the Mate Kole Committee*, App. I.
38. *Cf. Papers . . . Ashanti Confederacy*: "The political amalgamation of the Ashanti and the Brong will make for a stronger State, and will make administration easier" (Gov. T.S.W. Thomas, in 1934), p. 2, para. 9.
39. *Minutes . . . 8th Session*, February/March, 1946; closing remarks, p. 83. Later in 1949 he referred to Techiman's action in 1948 as a "revolt against me" — and an arrogance. See *Minutes . . . 14th Session*, Sept./Oct., 1949; 6th October, 1949, p. 77. The significance of the Asantehene's opposition to secession cannot be overemphasized. But in the post-restoration period the Asantehene no longer had the monopoly of physical force to back up his religious and political authority. That force now belonged to the colonial administration, later to be inherited in some measure by the C.P.P. government in 1951. Thus, the Asantehene could not physically coerce recalcitrant, rebellious states back into the Asanteman, unless the central government was willing to do so, as it did in the case of Bekwai in 1945. He could resort to customary sanctions like destoolment; but this was unlikely to affect a situation where the offending chief was himself an "overmighty subject".
40. See Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana 1946–1960* (Oxford Paperback, 1970), ch. vi., for the origins and objectives of the N.L.M., and its confrontation with the C.P.P. The N.L.M. leadership took great pains to represent the party as national; and it is true that it attracted into its fold a great many individuals and groups who found themselves out on the political limb during the course of the spectacular rise of the C.P.P. to power. In this respect, it makes considerable sense to see the events in the period 1952–1956 in terms of the "struggle for power", as Dennis Austin has done. But "power" for whom, and for what? On the evidence

provided by the origins, structure and the leadership of the N.L.M. as well as the pronouncements of the leadership, the struggle would seem to be between the Asante and the Colony (mainly the Fanti) for power over the allocation of economic resources and related perquisites. And if they lost, there was a possible alternative. True, the N.L.M. was able to rope in some influential elements in the Northern Territories to its side, so that the confrontation appeared to be between the North and the South. In this Northern axis, however, there was no doubt about who was the senior partner. The most revealing and clearest evidence of Asante motivation and intentions is provided by the joint statement issued by the N.L.M. and the Asanteman Council in January 1955: (i) The statement described as fraudulent and illegal the 1954 Nkrumah Constitution which the C.P.P. government considered as a sufficient basis for an independent Ghana, (ii) Raising the tantalising spectre of other ominous sources of cleavage within the country, the statement expressed in no uncertain terms a deeply-felt anxiety for Asante ethnic interests as against the interests of the country as a whole. There is no "mistaking the explicit overtones of Asante nationalism." For a full reproduction of this highly interesting joint statement, see the *Ashanti Pioneer*, 4th February, 1955, p. 2.

41. See Dennis Austin, op. cit. pp. 143-4. (i) In the 1951 general elections Nana Agyeman Badu stood in his own area against the C.P.P. candidate, B. Yeboah Afari in the electoral college and lost by 19 votes to his opponent's 36. (ii) Interestingly, his name appeared also on the list of contestants for the seven Asanteman Council seats, and he polled a single vote. (iii) The change of name may have been dictated by the concern to ensure that the BKF would not be confused with the Asante Federal Movement.
42. Gold Coast, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 18th February, 1955. Significantly, in explaining why the *Report* had not been released, Mr E. O. Asafu-Adjaye, the Minister of Local Government, said in February 1955: "Government felt that publication . . . would not promote an easier settlement of the question at issue; and the Government had thought it fit, having found out the underlying causes of this Secession movement, and considered it lost, to try to remove those causes rather than try to give emphasis to them by publication" — *ibid.*, 21st February, 1955, my *italics*. The Minister must have been rather out of touch with events in Asante at the time — unless this was part of the government's strategy.
43. Gold Coast, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 25th March, 1955; *Statement* by the Prime Minister. The two new members were Sunyani and Bechem. The BKC's Petition to the P.M. was dated 12th Feb., 1955.
44. See W. Tordoff, "Brong-Ahafo . . .", p.7 *Daily Graphic*, 22nd October, 1955.
45. *Minutes of the Emergency Meeting of Asanteman Council*, 27th and 28th October, 1955. Nana Essumegahene, in his fairly long and emotional speech, did not doubt at all that: "Nkrumah and his followers had found Ashanti a hard nut to crack owing to its peculiar and unique culture and traditions. It was this uniqueness of Ashanti that had inspired support for the demands of the N.L.M." By this Bill, Nkrumah "was determined to destroy Ashanti both as a Nation and as a people, for he was asking for power to determine who should be and who should not be a chief . . ." pp.3—5).
46. *Report of the Constitutional Adviser* (Gold Coast, 1955), p.4
47. There were two major opposing groups of chiefs and commoners: (i) the pro-C.P.P. and secessionist faction under the Kukuomhene; (ii) the pro-NLM and pro-Asante faction under the leadership of the Mimhene. For

- a discussion of the political ramifications of the Ahafo clearage, see A.F. Robertson, "Histories and Political Opposition in Ahafo, Ghana," AFRICA, VOL. XLIII, No. 1, Jan., 1973 and J. Dunn and A.F. Robertson, *Dependence and Opportunity: Political Chance in Ahafo*. (Cambridge, 1973), especially ch. 3, where J. Dunn offers a penetrating analysis of the economic dimension of Ahafo-Kumasi relations. A major source of Ahafo discontent was (and still is)—economic: Ahafo contribution of stool lands revenue, especially cocoa-tribute revenue, to the central revenue of the Golden Stool on behalf of some Kumasi clan chiefs.
- 48 *Report of the Achimota Conference* (Gold Coast, 1956), p.7, para. 24. *italics added*.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p.7, para. 23
- 50 *Ibid.*, p.8, para. 31.
- 51 See Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana . . .* (1970), ch. VII, pp. 361—4; and for the full election results by constituency, see the *Ghana Evening News*, 19th July, 1956, pp.1—3. Mr A.W. Osei, the N.L.M. candidate who won the Ahafo seat from Mr B.K. Senkyire, the previous C.P.P. M.P. for the area, is now the President of the Ahafo Youth Association which is demanding a severance of *all* links with Kumasi; while Mr Senkyire is the President of the Brong-Ahafo Youth Association — personal communication (May 1974) from Mr K. Yeboah-Konadu—a post-graduate student in Political Science (1972—74), Legon, and current President of the Brong-Ahafo Students' Union (BASU).
- 52 *Ghana Parliamentary Debates*, 20th March, 1959.
- 53 See *The Ghana (constitution) Order in Council 1957* (S.I. No. 277), Part V, sections 32 and 33, and Dennis Austin, *op. cit.*, pp. 379—80. To say the least, the Independence Constitution made the creation of any new region extremely difficult.
- 54 *Ghana, Parliamentary Debates*, 20th March, 1959.
- 55 *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Allegations of Intimidation Threatening and Extortion in Ashanti* (Nov. 1957, unpublished), p.8, paras. 18—20. In 1954, it noted, the strength of the police in Asante, excluding the Railway and Harbour Police and the C.I.D., was 642 all ranks; but in 1956 it was increased to 1,136 all ranks. The members of the Committee were: Mr C.W. Quist (Chairman), Mr George S. Lassey (Barrister-at-Law) both of Accra, and Mr. J.P. Tyrie, Superintendent of Police, Kumasi.
- 56 W. Tordoff, "Brong-Ahafo Region", p.9. The factional strife over the Brong issue in Berekum will, like the one of Dormaa, repay extended study also.
- 57 *Ibid.*
- 58 *Address delivered by Nana Agyeman Badu during the "KWAFIE" Festival, 2nd November, 1957, Dormaa Ahenfie Papers.*
- 59 *Ghana, Parliamentary Debates*, 20th March, 1959; e.g. on 1st November, 1957, the C.P.P. government had appointed a number of Regional Commissioners to represent it in the regions; one of them was the Commissioner for Western Asante—the Brong areas in spite of the fact that the new region had not yet been created.
- 60 Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (Edinburgh, Nelson, 1957), ch. 19. It is significant that ch. 20 headed "In Search of Relaxation" is interposed between ch. 19 titled "The Ashanti Problem" (when the NLM came to Nkrumah's notice for the first time) and ch. 21 titled "The 'Federation' Issue" (when he became seriously concerned with the NLM as a significant political movement).
- 61 *Daily Graphic*, 13th December 1955, p.1.
- 62 *Daily Graphic*, 11th September 1956, p.1
- 63 See the *Ashanti Pioneer*, 13th December 1956, 5th January 1957; and Gold Coast, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, 2nd August, 1956.

- 64 *Ashanti Pioneer*, 24th September, 1956, p.1, and 17th November 1956, p.1, respectively.
- 65 See the *Ashanti Pioneer*, 27th November 1956, p.1, and the *Ghana Evening News*, 11th December, 1956, p.1 respectively.
- 66 See the *Ashanti Pioneer*, 11th, 12th February, and 9th March, 1957.
67. See W. Tordoff (1965), op. cit., pp.303—6; *Report of the Committee on Constitutional Reform*—popularly known as the Coussey Committee Report (Colonial No. 250, 1949), para. 44; H.K. Akyeampong, *The Doyen Speaks: Some of the Historic Speeches by Dr. J.B. Danquah* (Accra, 1956), pp.35—36; M. Wight, *The Gold Coast Legislative Council* (London, 1947), p.194; and *Memorandum by the Asanteman Council to the Rt. Hon. Allan T. Lennox-Boyd*, dated 25th January, 1957.
- 68 Ghana, *Parliamentary Debates*, 20th March 1959.
- 69 See M. Crawford Young, "The Obote Revolution." *Africa Report* (Washington, June 1966), pp.8—14.
- 70 *Minutes . . .* 14th Session, Sept/Oct.; 6th Oct., 1949, p.83.
- 71 The passage of this Act followed the publication of the *Report of a Commission appointed to enquire into the affairs of the Kumasi State Council and the Asanteman Council*, by Mr Justice Sarkodee-Addo, (Accra 1958). The Act did not, however, divest the chiefs of ownership of stool lands in the Kumasi division; (ii) on the issue of traditional allegiance, Mr Ofori Atta stated that the Brong-Ahafo Region Bill was not intended "to disturb any traditional allegiance which may be cut across by the new boundary . . ."—*Ghana, Parliamentary Debates*, 20th March 1959. For an extended discussion of this issue, see W. Tordoff, "Brong-Ahafo . . .", pp. 16—18.
- 72 N.L.C. Decree 112, 1966.
- 73 Some members of the NLC found it necessary to deny such reports; and Dr. Busia was emphatic that the NLC would not compel Brong-Ahafo back into the Asante fold. See the *Daily Graphic*, 24 and 25th March, 1966.
- 74 The four-man committee is under the chairmanship of Mr Justice Charles Coussey; it was appointed in the latter part of 1972 to enquire partly into "whether any chiefs in the Brong-Ahafo Region owe allegiance to any other chiefs outside the region, and if so what are the privileges and duties arising from such allegiance."
- 75 E.g. a one-day Youth Congress, attended by representatives of the various student and youth organisations in Brong-Ahafo, in early July 1973 passed a resolution demanding, *inter alia*: (i) the dissolution of the Coussey Committee; (ii) a firm government declaration on the autonomy of the B—A. region "so that no chief in the region (would owe) allegiance to any other chief outside it", and (iii) that "the land and other revenues of the region be used for its development." The case for the dissolution was that: "It is improper in the modern age to set up a Committee to find out whether a person or group of persons belong to a certain ethnic group, e.g. Ashanti or the North, for such enquiry tends in the final analysis to fan naked tribalism which ought to be seriously discouraged"— *The Pioneer*, 9th July, 1973, p.5.
- 76 *The Pioneer*, 14th June, 1973, p.1. The report was rather misleading, for it gave the impression that all the councils had in fact been already established; on the contrary, the Asantehene was aware that the divisional councils in Brong—Ahafo could not be inaugurated until after the Committee had completed its business; but see also *The Pioneer*, 25th June, 1973, p.1.
- 77 *The Pioneer*, 29th May 1973, p.5.
- 78 *Memorandum* presented by the Brong-Ahafo Students' Union (BASU) to Coussey Committee, dated 21st October 1973, paras. 19—21.
- 79 *Minutes . .* 14th Session, Sept/Oct.; 6th October 1949, p.81.



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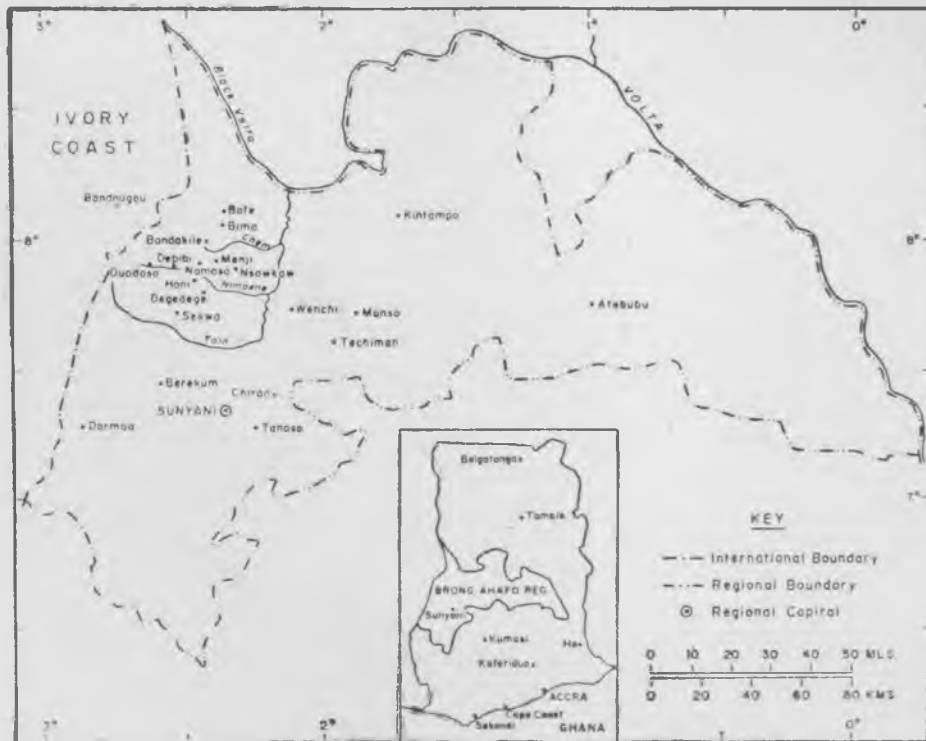
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# TOWNS AND VILLAGES MENTIONED



## ABOUT THIS BOOK

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This book offers a historical, cultural, social and political portrait of the Brong district of the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana from the viewpoints of several social science disciplines. It demonstrates how, though they differ in language and other cultural aspects, the peoples of the region have become united on the basis of certain common social and political aspirations. It shows 'Brong' contributions to the evolution of the culture of modern Ghana. It also examines the historical and socio-political mainsprings of the Brong political movement which culminated in the establishment of the Brong-Ahafo Administrative Region and House of Chiefs in 1959, and outlines the problems that hang over from that political act.





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