

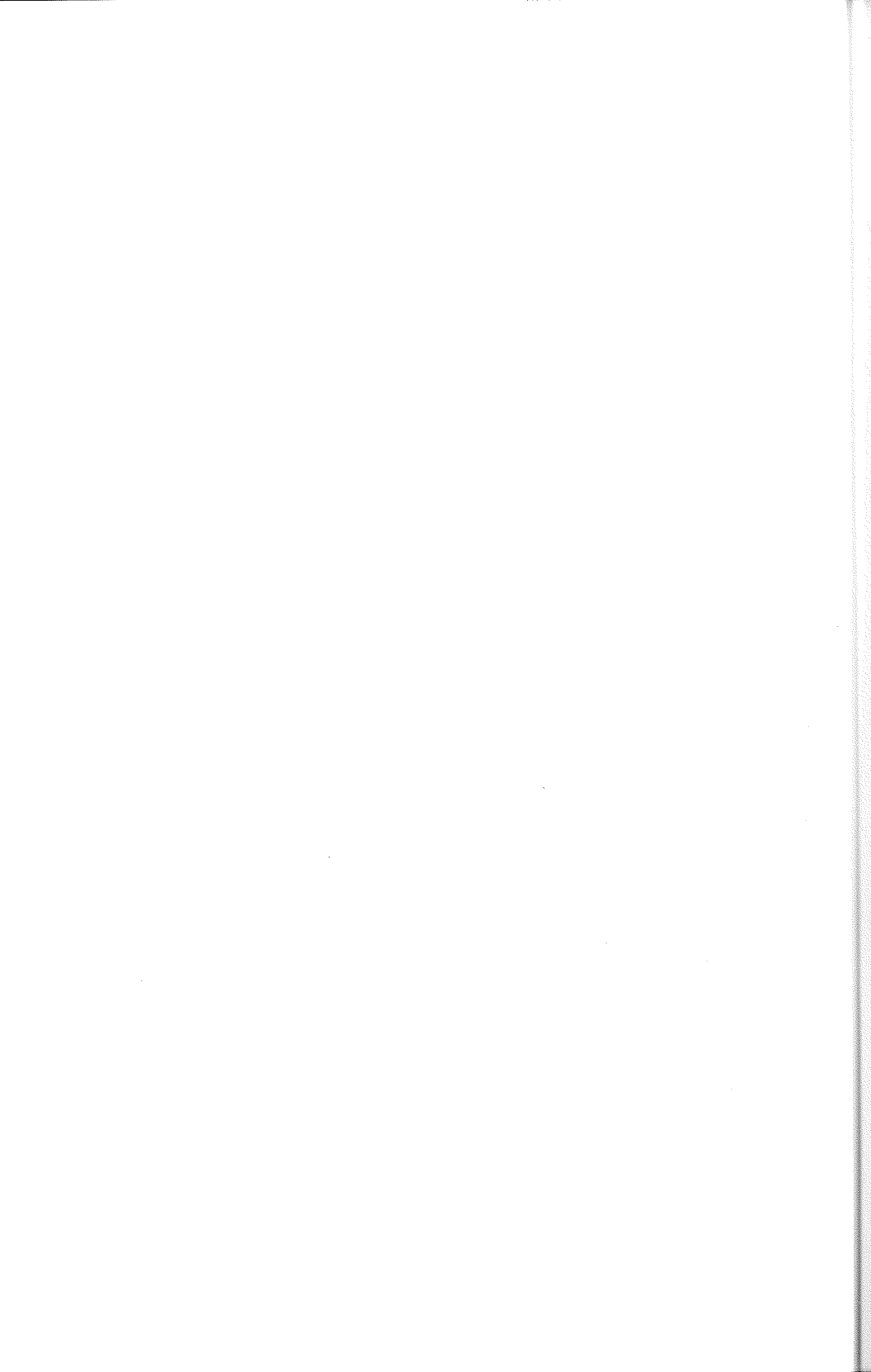
Frederic P. Miller, Agnes F. Vandome,
John McBrewster (Ed.)

History of Ghana

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Elmina Castle, Ghana Empire, Ashanti Empire, Anglo-Ashanti
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Gold Coast (British colony)

This article is about the British colony in west Africa, 1821-1957. For other uses, see Gold Coast (disambiguation)

Colony of Gold Coast	
British colony	
	
Flag	
Capital	Cape Coast (1821-1877) Accra (1877-1957)
Language(s)	English
Government	Constitutional monarchy
- 1821-1901	Victoria (first)
- 1952-1957	Elizabeth II (last)
Historical era	World War I
- Colony established	1821, 1821
- Combination with local kingdoms	1901
- Addition of British Togoland	13 December 1956
- Independence as Ghana	6 March 1957

Gold Coast was a British colony on the Gulf of Guinea in west Africa that became the independent nation of Ghana in 1957.

The first Europeans to arrive at the coast were the Portuguese, in 1471. Upon their arrival, they encountered a variety of African kingdoms some of whom controlled substantial deposits of gold in the soil. In 1482, the Portuguese built the Castle of Elmina, the first European settlement on the Gold Coast. From here they traded slaves, gold, knives, beads, mirrors, rum and guns.

News spread quickly, and eventually, English, Dutch, Danish, Prussian and Swedish traders arrived as well. These European traders built several forts along the coastline. The *Gold Coast* had long been a name for the region used by Europeans, due to the large gold resources found in the area, although slave trade was the principal exchange for a number of years.

The British Gold Coast was formed in 1821 when the British government abolished the African Company of Merchants and seized privately held lands along the coast. The remaining interests of other European countries were taken over by the British, who took over the Danish Gold Coast in 1850 and the Dutch Gold Coast including Fort Elmina in 1871.

Britain steadily expanded the colony through the invasion of local kingdoms as well, particularly the Ashanti Confederacy and Fante Confederacy. The main British problem was the Ashanti people who controlled much of Ghana before the Europeans arrived and are still today the biggest community in Ghana. Four wars, the Anglo-Ashanti Wars, were

fought between the Ashanti (Asante) and the British, who were sometimes in alliance with the Fante.

During the First Anglo-Ashanti War (1863-1864) the two groups fought because of a disagreement over an Ashanti chief and slavery. Tensions increased in 1874 during the Second Ashanti War (1873-1874) when the British sacked the Ashanti capital of Kumasi. The Third Ashanti War (1893-1894) occurred because the new Ashanti Asantehene, ruler of the Ashanti, wanted to exercise his new title. From 1895-1896 the British and Ashanti fought in the Fourth and final Ashanti War, where the Ashanti fought for and lost their independence. In 1900 the Ashanti Uprising occurred and resulted in the capture and loss of Kumasi. This was due to an attempt to steal the Golden Stool, the Asantehene's throne. At the end of this last Ashanti War, the Ashanti people became a protectorate on 1 January 1902.

By 1901, all of the Gold Coast was a British colony, with its kingdoms and tribes forming a single unit. Various natural resources — such as gold, metal ores, diamonds, ivory, pepper, timber, corn and cocoa — were shipped from the Gold Coast by the British. The British Colonisers built railways and a complicated transport infrastructure which formed the basis for the transport infrastructure in modern-day Ghana. Western hospitals and schools were also built, an attempt by the British to export what were then modern day amenities to the people of the Empire.

However, by 1945, demands for more autonomy by the Gold Coast population were beginning to arise, in the wake of the end of the Second World War and the beginnings of the decolonisation process across the world.

By 1956, British Togoland, the Ashanti protectorate, and the Fante protectorate were merged with the Gold Coast to create one colony, which became known as the Gold Coast. In 1957 the colony gained independence under the name of Ghana.

Britain and the Gold Coast: the early years

By the early nineteenth century, the British, through conquest or purchase, had become masters of most of the forts along the coast. Two major factors laid the foundations of British rule and the eventual establishment of a colony on the Gold Coast: British reaction to the Asante wars and the resulting instability and disruption of trade, and Britain's increasing preoccupation with the suppression and elimination of the slave trade.^[1]

During most of the nineteenth century, Asante, the most powerful state of the Akan interior, sought to expand its rule and to promote and protect its trade. The first Asante invasion of the coastal regions took place in 1807; the Asante moved south again in 1811 and in 1814. These invasions, though not decisive, disrupted trade in such products as gold, timber, and palm oil, and threatened the security of the European forts. Local British, Dutch, and Danish authorities were all forced to come to terms with Asante, and in 1817 the African Company of Merchants signed a treaty of friendship that recognized Asante claims to sovereignty over large areas of the coast and its peoples.^[1]

The coastal people, primarily some of the Fante and the inhabitants of the new town of Accra, who were chiefly Ga, came to rely on British protection against Asante incursions, but the ability of the merchant companies to provide this security was limited. The British Crown dissolved the company in 1821, giving authority over British forts on the Gold Coast to Governor Charles MacCarthy, governor of Sierra Leone. The British forts and Sierra Leone remained under common administration for the first half of the century. MacCarthy's

mandate was to impose peace and to end the slave trade. He sought to do this by encouraging the coastal peoples to oppose Kumasi rule and by closing the great roads to the coast. Incidents and sporadic warfare continued, however. MacCarthy was killed, and most of his force was wiped out in a battle with Asante forces in 1824. An Asante invasion of the coast in 1826 was defeated, nonetheless, by a combined force of British and local forces, including the Fante and the people of Accra.^[1]

When the British government allowed control of the Gold Coast settlements to revert to the British African Company of Merchants in the late 1820s, relations with Asante were still problematic. From the Asante point of view, the British had failed to control the activities of their local coastal allies. Had this been done, Asante might not have found it necessary to attempt to impose peace on the coastal peoples. MacCarthy's encouragement of coastal opposition to Asante and the subsequent 1824 British military attack further indicated to Asante authorities that the Europeans, especially the British, did not respect Asante.^[1]

In 1830 a London committee of merchants chose Captain George Maclean to become president of a local council of merchants. Although his formal jurisdiction was limited, Maclean's achievements were substantial; for example, a peace treaty was arranged with Asante in 1831. Maclean also supervised the coastal people by holding regular court in Cape Coast where he punished those found guilty of disturbing the peace. Between 1830 and 1843 while Maclean was in charge of affairs on the Gold Coast, no confrontations occurred with Asante, and the volume of trade reportedly increased threefold. Maclean's exercise of limited judicial power on the coast was so effective that a parliamentary committee recommended that the British government permanently administer its settlements and negotiate treaties with the coastal chiefs that would define Britain's relations with them. The government did so in 1843, the same year crown government was reinstated. Commander H. Worsley Hill was appointed first governor of the Gold Coast. Under Maclean's administration, several coastal tribes had submitted voluntarily to British protection. Hill proceeded to define the conditions and responsibilities of his jurisdiction over the protected areas. He negotiated a special treaty with a number of Fante and other local chiefs that became known as the Bond of 1844. This document obliged local leaders to submit serious crimes, such as murder and robbery, to British jurisdiction and laid the legal foundation for subsequent British colonization of the coastal area.^[1]

Additional coastal states as well as other states farther inland eventually signed the Bond, and British influence was accepted, strengthened, and expanded. Under the terms of the 1844 arrangement, the British gave the impression that they would protect the coastal areas; thus, an informal protectorate came into being. As responsibilities for defending local allies and managing the affairs of the coastal protectorate increased, the administration of the Gold Coast was separated from that of Sierra Leone in 1850.^[1]

At about the same time, growing acceptance of the advantages offered by the British presence led to the initiation of another important step. In April 1852, local chiefs and elders met at Cape Coast to consult with the governor on means of raising revenue. With the governor's approval, the council of chiefs constituted itself as a legislative assembly. In approving its resolutions, the governor indicated that the assembly of chiefs should become a permanent fixture of the protectorate's constitutional machinery, but the assembly was given no specific constitutional authority to pass laws or to levy taxes without the consent of the people.^[1]

In 1873 British influence over the Gold Coast increased further when Britain purchased → Elmina Castle, the last of the Dutch forts along the coast. The Asante, who for years had considered the Dutch at Elmina as their allies, thereby lost their last trade outlet to the sea. To prevent this loss and to ensure that revenue received from that post continued, the Asante staged their last invasion of the coast in 1873. After early successes, they finally came up against well-trained British forces who



The Portuguese-built Elmina Castle was purchased by Britain in 1873. Also known as St. George Castle, it is now a World Heritage Site

compelled them to retreat beyond the Pra River. Later attempts to negotiate a settlement of the conflict with the British were rejected by the commander of their forces, Major General Sir Garnet Wolseley. To settle the Asante problem permanently, the British invaded Asante with a sizable military force. The attack, launched in January 1874 by 2,500 British soldiers and large numbers of African auxiliaries, resulted in the occupation and burning of Kumasi, the Asante capital.^[1]

The subsequent peace treaty required the Asante to renounce any claim to many southern territories. The Asante also had to keep the road to Kumasi open to trade. From this point on, Asante power steadily declined. The confederation slowly disintegrated as subject territories broke away and as protected regions defected to British rule. The warrior spirit of the nation was not entirely subdued, however, and enforcement of the treaty led to recurring difficulties and outbreaks of fighting. In 1896 the British dispatched another expedition that again occupied Kumasi and that forced Asante to become a protectorate of the British Crown. The position of asantehene was abolished and the incumbent was exiled.^[1]

The core of the Asante federation accepted these terms grudgingly. In 1900 the Asante rebelled again in the War of the Golden Stool but were defeated the next year, and in 1902 the British proclaimed Asante a colony under the jurisdiction of the governor of the Gold Coast. The annexation was made with misgivings and recriminations on both sides. With Asante subdued and annexed, British colonization of the region became a reality.^[1]

The colonial era: British rule of the Gold Coast

Military confrontations between Asante and the Fante contributed to the growth of British influence on the Gold Coast. It was concern about Asante activities on the coast that had compelled the Fante states to sign the Bond of 1844. In theory, the bond allowed the British quite limited judicial powers--the trying of murder and robbery cases only. Also, the British could not acquire further judicial rights without the consent of the kings, chiefs, and people of the protectorate. In practice, however, British efforts to usurp more and more judicial authority were so successful that in the 1850s they considered establishing European courts in place of traditional African ones.^[2]

As a result of the exercise of ever-expanding judicial powers on the coast and also to ensure that the coastal peoples remained firmly under control, the British, following their defeat of Asante in 1874, proclaimed the former coastal protectorate a crown colony. The Gold Coast Colony, established on July 24, 1874, comprised the coastal areas and extended inland as far as the ill-defined borders of Asante.^[2]

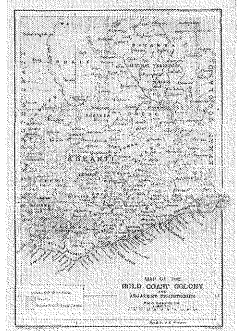
The coastal peoples did not greet this move with enthusiasm. They were not consulted about this annexation, which arbitrarily set aside the Bond of 1844 and treated its signatories like conquered territories. The British, however, made no claim to any rights to the land, a circumstance that probably explains the absence of popular resistance. Shortly after declaring the coastal area a colony, the British moved the colonial capital from Cape Coast to the former Danish castle at Christiansborg in Accra.^[2]

The British sphere of influence was eventually extended to include Asante. Following the defeat of Asante in 1896, the British proclaimed a protectorate over the kingdom. Once the asantehene and his council had been exiled, the British appointed a resident commissioner to Asante, who was given both civil and criminal jurisdiction over the territories. Each Asante state was administered from Kumasi as a separate entity and was ultimately responsible to the governor of the Gold Coast. As noted above, Asante became a colony following its final defeat in 1901.^[2]

In the meantime, the British became interested in the broad areas north of Asante, known generally as the Northern Territories. This interest was prompted primarily by the need to forestall the French and the Germans, who had been making rapid advances in the surrounding areas. British officials had first penetrated the area in the 1880s, and after 1896 protection was extended to northern areas whose trade with the coast had been controlled by Asante. In 1898 and 1899, European colonial powers amicably demarcated the boundaries between the Northern Territories and the surrounding French and German colonies. The Northern Territories were proclaimed a British protectorate in 1902.^[2]

Like the Asante protectorate, the Northern Territories were placed under the authority of a resident commissioner who was responsible to the governor of the Gold Coast. The governor ruled both Asante and the Northern Territories by proclamations until 1946.^[2]

With the north under British control, the three territories of the Gold Coast--the Colony (the coastal regions), Asante, and the Northern Territories--became, for all practical purposes, a



Map from 1896 of the British Gold Coast Colony.

single political unit, or crown colony, known as "the dependency" or simply as the Gold Coast. The borders of present-day Ghana were realized in May 1956 when the people of the Volta region, known as British Mandated Togoland, voted in a plebiscite to become part of modern Ghana.^[2]

Colonial administration

Beginning in 1850, the coastal regions increasingly came under control of the governor of the British fortresses, who was assisted by the Executive Council and the Legislative Council. The Executive Council was a small advisory body of European officials that recommended laws and voted taxes, subject to the governor's approval. The Legislative Council included the members of the Executive Council and unofficial members initially chosen from British commercial interests. After 1900 three chiefs and three other Africans were added to the Legislative Council, these being chosen from the Europeanized communities of Accra, Cape Coast, and Sekondi. The inclusion of Africans from Asante and the Northern Territories did not take place until much later. Prior to 1925, all members of the Legislative Council were appointed by the governor. Official members always outnumbered unofficial members.^[3]

The gradual emergence of centralized colonial government brought about unified control over local services, although the actual administration of these services was still delegated to local authorities. Specific duties and responsibilities came to be clearly delineated, and the role of traditional states in local administration was also clarified.^[3]

The structure of local government had its roots in traditional patterns of government. Village councils of chiefs and elders were almost exclusively responsible for the immediate needs of individual localities, including traditional law and order and the general welfare. The councils, however, ruled by consent rather than by right. Chiefs were chosen by the ruling class of the society; a traditional leader continued to rule not only because he was the choice of what may be termed the nobility, but also because he was accepted by his people. The unseating or destooling of a chief by tribal elders was a fairly common practice if the chief failed to meet the desires or expectations of the community.^[3]

Traditional chiefs figured prominently in the system of indirect rule adopted by British authorities to administer their colonies in Africa. According to Frederick Lugard, architect of the policy, indirect rule was cost effective because it reduced the number of European officials in the field. By allowing local rulers to exercise direct administrative control over their people, opposition to European rule from the local population would be minimized. The chiefs, however, were to take instructions from their European supervisors. The plan, according to Lugard, had the further advantage of civilizing the natives, because it exposed traditional rulers to the benefits of European political organization and values. This "civilizing" process notwithstanding, indirect rule had the ultimate advantage of guaranteeing the maintenance of law and order.^[3]

The application of indirect rule in the Gold Coast became essential, especially after Asante and the Northern Territories were brought under British rule. Before the effective colonization of these territories, the intention of the British was to use both force and agreements to control chiefs in Asante and the north. Once indirect rule was implemented, the chiefs became responsible to the colonial authorities who supported them. In many respects, therefore, the power of each chief was greatly enhanced. Although Lugard pointed to the civilizing influence of indirect rule, critics of the policy argued that the

element of popular participation was removed from the traditional political system. Despite the theoretical argument in favor of decentralization, indirect rule in practice caused chiefs to look to Accra (the capital) rather than to their people for all decisions.^[3]

Many chiefs and elders came to regard themselves as a ruling aristocracy. Their councils were generally led by government commissioners, who often rewarded the chiefs with honors, decorations, and knighthood. Indirect rule tended to preserve traditional forms and sources of power, however, and it failed to provide meaningful opportunities for the growing number of educated young men anxious to find a niche in their country's development. Other groups were dissatisfied because there was not sufficient cooperation between the councils and the central government and because some felt that the local authorities were too dominated by the British district commissioners.^[3]

In 1925 provincial councils of chiefs were established in all three territories of the colony, partly to give the chiefs a colony-wide function. This move was followed in 1927 by the promulgation of the Native Administration Ordinance, which replaced an 1883 arrangement that had placed chiefs in the Gold Coast Colony under British supervision. The purpose was to clarify and to regulate the powers and areas of jurisdiction of chiefs and councils. Councils were given specific responsibilities over disputed elections and the unseating of chiefs; the procedure for the election of chiefs was set forth; and judicial powers were defined and delegated. Councils were entrusted with the role of defining customary law in their areas (the government had to approve their decisions), and the provincial councils were empowered to become tribunals to decide matters of customary law when the dispute lay between chiefs in different hierarchies. Until 1939, when the Native Treasuries Ordinance was passed, however, there was no provision for local budgets. In 1935 the Native Authorities Ordinance combined the central colonial government and the local authorities into a single governing system. New native authorities, appointed by the governor, were given wide powers of local government under the supervision of the central government's provincial commissioners, who assured that their policies would be those of the central government.^[3]

The provincial councils and moves to strengthen them were not popular. Even by British standards, the chiefs were not given enough power to be effective instruments of indirect rule. Some Ghanaians believed that the reforms, by increasing the power of the chiefs at the expense of local initiative, permitted the colonial government to avoid movement toward any form of popular participation in the colony's government.^[3]

Economic and social development

The years of British administration of the Gold Coast during the twentieth century were an era of significant progress in social, economic, and educational development. Communications were greatly improved. For example, the Sekondi-Tarkwa railroad, begun in 1898, was extended until it connected most of the important commercial centers of the south, and by 1937, there were 9,700 kilometers of roads. Telecommunication and postal services were initiated as well.^[4]

New crops were also introduced and gained widespread acceptance. Cacao trees, introduced in 1878, brought the first cash crop to the farmers of the interior; it became the mainstay of the nation's economy in the 1920s when disease wiped out Brazil's trees. The production of cocoa was largely in the hands of Africans. The Cocoa Marketing Board was created in 1947 to assist farmers and to stabilize the production and sale of their crop. By

the end of that decade, the Gold Coast was exporting more than half of the world's cocoa supply.^[4]

The colony's earnings increased further from the export of timber and gold. Gold, which initially brought Europeans to the Gold Coast, remained in the hands of Africans until the 1890s. Traditional techniques of panning and shaft mining, however, yielded only limited output. The development of modern modes of extracting minerals made gold mining an exclusively foreign-run enterprise. For example, the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation, which was organized in 1897, gained a concession of about 160 square kilometers in which to prospect commercially for gold. Although certain tribal authorities profited greatly from the granting of mining concessions, it was the European mining companies and the colonial government that accumulated much of the wealth. Revenue from export of the colony's natural resources financed internal improvements in infrastructure and social services. The foundation of an educational system more advanced than any other else in West Africa also resulted from mineral export revenue.^[4]

Many of the economic and social improvements in the Gold Coast in the early part of the current century have been attributed to Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, governor from 1919 to 1927. Born in Toronto, Canada, Guggisberg joined the British army in 1889. During the first decade of the twentieth century, he worked as a surveyor in the British colonies of the Gold Coast and Nigeria, and later, during World War I, he served in France.^[4]

At the beginning of his governorship of the Gold Coast, Guggisberg presented a ten-year development program to the Legislative Council. He suggested first the improvement of transportation. Then, in order of priority, his prescribed improvements included water supply, drainage, hydroelectric projects, public buildings, town improvements, schools, hospitals, prisons, communication lines, and other services. Guggisberg also set a goal of filling half of the colony's technical positions with Africans as soon as they could be trained. His program has been described as the most ambitious ever proposed in West Africa up to that time. Another of the governor's programs led to the development of an artificial harbor at Takoradi, which then became Ghana's first port. Achimota College, which developed into one of the nation's finest secondary schools, was also a Guggisberg idea.^[4]

It was through British-style education that a new Ghanaian elite gained the means and the desire to strive for independence. During the colonial years, the country's educational institutions improved markedly. From beginnings in missionary schools, the early part of the twentieth century saw significant advances in many fields, and, although the missions continued to participate, the government steadily increased its interest and support. In 1909 the government established a technical school and a teachers' training college at Accra; several other secondary schools were set up by the missions. The government steadily increased its financial backing for the growing number of both state and mission schools. In 1948 the country opened its first center of higher learning, the University College.^[4]

The colony assisted Britain in both World War I and World War II. From 1914 to 1918, the Gold Coast Regiment served with distinction in battles against German forces in Cameroon and in the long East Africa campaign. In World War II, troops from the Gold Coast emerged with even greater prestige after outstanding service in such places as Ethiopia and Burma. In the ensuing years, however, postwar problems of inflation and instability severely hampered readjustment for returning veterans, who were in the forefront of growing discontent and unrest. Their war service and veterans' associations had broadened their

horizons, making it difficult for them to return to the humble and circumscribed positions set aside for Africans by the colonial authorities.^[4]

The growth of nationalism and the end of colonial rule

As the country developed economically, the focus of government power gradually shifted from the hands of the governor and his officials into those of Ghanaians. The changes resulted from the gradual development of a strong spirit of nationalism and were to result eventually in independence. The development of national consciousness accelerated quickly after World War II, when, in addition to ex-servicemen, a substantial group of urban African workers and traders emerged to lend mass support to the aspirations of a small educated minority. Once the movement had begun, events moved rapidly—not always fast enough to satisfy the nationalist leaders, but still at a pace that surprised not only the colonial government but many of the more conservative African elements as well.^[5]

Early manifestations of nationalism

As early as the latter part of the nineteenth century, a growing number of educated Africans increasingly found unacceptable an arbitrary political system that placed almost all power in the hands of the governor through his appointment of council members. In the 1890s, some members of the educated coastal elite organized themselves into the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society to protest a land bill that threatened traditional land tenure. This protest helped lay the foundation for political action that would ultimately lead to independence. In 1920 one of the African members of the Legislative Council, Joseph E. Casely-Hayford, convened the National Congress of British West Africa, which sent a delegation to London to urge the Colonial Office to consider the principle of elected representation. The group, which claimed to speak for all British West African colonies, represented the first expression of political solidarity between intellectuals and nationalists of the area. Even though the delegation was not received in London (on the grounds that it represented only the interests of a small group of urbanized Africans), its actions aroused considerable support among the African elite at home.^[6]

Notwithstanding their call for elected representation as opposed to a system whereby the governor appointed council members, these nationalists insisted that they were loyal to the British Crown and that they merely sought an extension of British political and social practices to Africans. Notable leaders included Africanus Horton, Jr.; J.M. Sarbah; and S.R.B. Attah-Ahoma. Such men gave the nationalist movement a distinctly elitist flavor that was to last until the late 1940s.^[6]

The constitution of 1925, promulgated by Guggisberg, created provincial councils of paramount chiefs for all but the northern provinces of the colony. These councils in turn elected six chiefs as unofficial members of the Legislative Council. Although the new constitution appeared to recognize African sentiments, Guggisberg was concerned primarily with protecting British interests. For example, he provided Africans with a limited voice in the central government; yet, by limiting nominations to chiefs, he drove a wedge between chiefs and their educated subjects. The intellectuals believed that the chiefs, in return for British support, had allowed the provincial councils to fall completely under control of the government. By the mid-1930s, however, a gradual rapprochement between chiefs and intellectuals had begun.^[6]

Agitation for more adequate representation continued. Newspapers owned and managed by Africans played a major part in provoking this discontent--six were being published in the 1930s. As a result of the call for broader representation, two more unofficial African members were added to the Executive Council in 1943. Changes in the Legislative Council, however, had to await a different political climate in London, which came about only with the postwar election of a British Labour Party government.^[6]

The new Gold Coast constitution of 1946 (also known as the Burns constitution after the governor of the time) was a bold document. For the first time, the concept of an official majority was abandoned. The Legislative Council was now composed of six ex officio members, six nominated members, and eighteen elected members. The 1946 constitution also admitted representatives from Asante into the council for the first time. Even with a Labour Party government in power, however, the British continued to view the colonies as a source of raw materials that were needed to strengthen their crippled economy. Change that would place real power in African hands was not a priority among British leaders until after rioting and looting in Accra and other towns and cities in early 1948 over issues of pensions for ex-servicemen, the dominant role of foreigners in the economy, the shortage of housing, and other economic and political grievances.^[6]

With elected members in a decisive majority, Ghana had reached a level of political maturity unequaled anywhere in colonial Africa. The constitution did not, however, grant full self-government. Executive power remained in the hands of the governor, to whom the Legislative Council was responsible. Hence, the constitution, although greeted with enthusiasm as a significant milestone, soon encountered trouble. World War II had just ended, and many Gold Coast veterans who had served in British overseas expeditions returned to a country beset with shortages, inflation, unemployment, and black-market practices. There veterans, along with discontented urban elements, formed a nucleus of malcontents ripe for disruptive action. They were now joined by farmers, who resented drastic governmental measures required to cut out diseased cacao trees in order to control an epidemic, and by many others who were unhappy that the end of the war had not been followed by economic improvements.^[6]

Politics of the independence movements

Although political organizations had existed in the British colony, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) was the first nationalist movement with the aim of self-government "in the shortest possible time." Founded in August 1947 by educated Africans such as J.B. Danquah, A.G. Grant, R.A. Awoonor-Williams, Edward Akufo Addo (all lawyers except for Grant, who was a wealthy businessman), and others, the leadership of the organization called for the replacement of chiefs on the Legislative Council with educated persons. For these political leaders, traditional governance, exercised largely via indirect rule, was identified with colonial interests and the past. They believed that it was their responsibility to lead their country into a new age. They also demanded that, given their education, the colonial administration should respect them and accord them positions of responsibility. As one writer on the period reported, "The symbols of progress, science, freedom, youth, all became cues which the new leadership evoked and reinforced." In particular, the UGCC leadership criticized the government for its failure to solve the problems of unemployment, inflation, and the disturbances that had come to characterize the society at the end of the war.^[7]

Their opposition to the colonial administration notwithstanding, UGCC members were conservative in the sense that their leadership did not seek drastic or revolutionary change. This was probably a result of their training in the British way of doing things. The gentlemanly manner in which politics were then conducted was to change after Kwame Nkrumah created his Convention People's Party (CPP) in June 1949.^[7]

Nkrumah was born at Nkroful in the Nzema area and educated in Catholic schools at Half Assin and Achimota. He received further training in the United States at Lincoln University and at the University of Pennsylvania. Later, in London, Nkrumah became active in the West African Students' Union and the Pan-African Congress. He was one of the few Africans who participated in the Manchester Congress of 1945 of the Pan-Africanist movement. During his time in Britain, Nkrumah came to know such outspoken anti-colonialists and intellectuals as the West Indian, George Padmore, and the African-American, W.E.B. Du Bois. In 1947 when the UGCC was created in the Gold Coast to oppose colonial rule, Nkrumah was invited from London to become the movement's general secretary.^[7]

Nkrumah's tenure with the UGCC was a stormy one. In March 1948, he was arrested and detained with other leaders of the UGCC for political activism. Later, after the other members of the UGCC were invited to make recommendations to the Coussey Committee, which was advising the governor on the path to independence, Nkrumah broke with the UGCC and founded the CPP. Unlike the UGCC call for self-government "in the shortest possible time," Nkrumah and the CPP asked for "self-government now." The party leadership, made up of Nkrumah, Kojo Botsio, Komla A. Gbedemah, and a group of mostly young political professionals known as the "Verandah Boys," identified itself more with ordinary working people than with the UGCC and its intelligentsia.^[7]

Nkrumah's style and the promises he made appealed directly to the majority of workers, farmers, and youths who heard him; he seemed to be the national leader on whom they could focus their hopes. He also won the support, among others, of influential market women who, through their domination of small-scale trade, served as effective channels of communication at the local level.^[7]

The majority of the politicized population, stirred in the postwar years by outspoken newspapers, was separated from both the tribal chiefs and the Anglophile elite nearly as much as from the British by economic, social, and educational factors. This majority consisted primarily of ex-servicemen, literate persons who had some primary schooling, journalists, and elementary school teachers, all of whom had developed a taste for populist conceptions of democracy. A growing number of uneducated but urbanized industrial workers also formed part of the support group. Nkrumah was able to appeal to them on their own terms. By June 1949, when the CPP was formed with the avowed purpose of seeking immediate self-governance, Nkrumah had a mass following.^[7]

The constitution of 1951 resulted from the report of the Coussey Committee, created because of disturbances in Accra and other cities in 1948. In addition to giving the Executive Council a large majority of African ministers, it created an assembly, half the elected members of which were to come from the towns and rural districts and half from the traditional councils, including, for the first time, the Northern Territories. Although it was an enormous step forward, the new constitution still fell far short of the CPP's call for full self-government. Executive power remained in British hands, and the legislature was tailored to permit control by traditionalist interests.^[7]

With increasing popular backing, the CPP in early 1950 initiated a campaign of "positive action," intended to instigate widespread strikes and nonviolent resistance. When some violent disorders occurred, Nkrumah, along with his principal lieutenants, was promptly arrested and imprisoned for sedition. But this merely increased his prestige as leader and hero of the cause and gave him the status of martyr. In February 1951, the first elections were held for the Legislative Assembly under the new constitution. Nkrumah, still in jail, won a seat, and the CPP won an impressive victory with a two-thirds majority of the 104 seats.^[7]

The governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, released Nkrumah and invited him to form a government as "leader of government business," a position similar to that of prime minister. Nkrumah accepted. A major milestone had been passed on the road to independence and self-government. Nonetheless, although the CPP agreed to work within the new constitutional order, the structure of government that existed in 1951 was certainly not what the CPP preferred. The ministries of defense, external affairs, finance, and justice were still controlled by British officials who were not responsible to the legislature. Also, by providing for a sizable representation of traditional tribal chiefs in the Legislative Assembly, the constitution accentuated the cleavage between the modern political leaders and the traditional authorities of the councils of chiefs.^[7]

The start of Nkrumah's first term as "leader of government business" was marked by cordiality and cooperation with the British governor. During the next few years, the government was gradually transformed into a full parliamentary system. The changes were opposed by the more traditionalist African elements, particularly in Asante and the Northern Territories. This opposition, however, proved ineffective in the face of continuing and growing popular support for a single overriding concept--independence at an early date.^[7]

In 1952 the position of prime minister was created and the Executive Council became the cabinet. The prime minister was made responsible to the assembly, which duly elected Nkrumah prime minister. The constitution of 1954 ended the election of assembly members by the tribal councils. The Legislative Assembly increased in size, and all members were chosen by direct election from equal, single-member constituencies. Only defense and foreign policy remained in the hands of the governor; the elected assembly was given control of virtually all internal affairs of the colony.^[7]

The CPP pursued a policy of political centralization, which encountered serious opposition. Shortly after the 1954 election, a new party, the Asante-based National Liberation Movement (NLM), was formed. The NLM advocated a federal form of government, with increased powers for the various regions. NLM leaders criticized the CPP for perceived dictatorial tendencies. The new party worked in cooperation with another regionalist group, the Northern People's Party. When these two regional parties walked out of discussions on a new constitution, the CPP feared that London might consider such disunity an indication that the colony was not yet ready for the next phase of self-government.^[7]

The British constitutional adviser, however, backed the CPP position. The governor dissolved the assembly in order to test popular support for the CPP demand for immediate independence. The crown agreed to grant independence if so requested by a two-thirds majority of the new legislature. New elections were held in July 1956. In keenly contested elections, the CPP won 57 percent of the votes cast, but the fragmentation of the opposition gave the CPP every seat in the south as well as enough seats in Asante, the Northern

Territories, and the Trans-Volta Region to hold a two-thirds majority of the 104 seats.^[7]

Prior to the July 1956 general elections in the Gold Coast, a plebiscite was conducted under United Nations (UN) auspices to decide the future disposition of British Togoland and French Togoland. The British trusteeship, the western portion of the former German colony, had been linked to the Gold Coast since 1919 and was represented in its parliament. The dominant ethnic group, the Ewe, were divided between the Gold Coast proper and the two Togos. A clear majority of British Togoland inhabitants voted in favor of union with their western neighbors, and the area was absorbed into the Gold Coast. There was, however, vocal opposition to the incorporation from some of the Ewe in southern British Togoland.^[7]

See also

- Anglo-Asante Wars

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History of Ghana (1966-1979)

Leaders of the 1966 military coup, including army officers Colonel E.K. Kotoka, Major A.A. Afrifa, Lieutenant General (retired) J.A. Ankra, and Police Inspector General J.W.K. Harlley, justified their takeover by charging that the CPP administration was abusive and corrupt. They were equally disturbed by Nkrumah's aggressive involvement in African politics and by his belief that Ghanaian troops could be sent anywhere in Africa to fight so-called liberation wars, even though they never did so. Above all, they pointed to the absence of democratic practices in the nation—a situation they claimed had affected the morale of the armed forces. According to General Kotoka, the military coup of 1966 was a nationalist one because it liberated the nation from Nkrumah's dictatorship—a declaration that was supported by Alex QuaisonSackey, Nkrumah's former minister of foreign affairs.^[1]

Despite the vast political changes that were brought about by the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah, many problems remained. For example, the underlying ethnic and regional divisions within the society had to be addressed. The apparent spirit of national unity that seemed to have developed during the Nkrumah years turned out to have resulted in part from his coercive powers as well as from his charisma. As a consequence, successive new leaders faced the problem of forging disparate personal, ethnic, and sectional interests into a real Ghanaian nation. The economic burdens, aggravated by what some described as past extravagance, would cripple each future government's ability to foster the rapid development needed to satisfy even minimal popular demands for a better life. The fear of a resurgence of an overly strong central authority would continue to dominate the constitutional agenda and to pervade the thinking of many educated, politically-minded Ghanaians. Others, however, felt that a strong government was essential.^[1]

A considerable portion of the population had become convinced that effective, honest government was incompatible with competitive political parties. Many Ghanaians remained committed to nonpolitical leadership for the nation, even in the form of military rule. The problems of the Busia administration, the country's first elected government after Nkrumah's fall, illustrated the problems Ghana would continue to face.^[1]

National Liberation Council and the Busia years, 1966-71

The leaders of the coup that overthrew Nkrumah immediately opened the country's borders and its prison gates to allow the return from exile or release from preventive detention of all opponents of Nkrumah. The National Liberation Council (NLC), composed of four army officers and four police officers, assumed executive power. It appointed a cabinet of civil servants and promised to restore democratic government as quickly as possible. The ban on the formation of political parties remained in force until late 1968, but activity by individual figures began much earlier with the appointment of a succession of committees composed of civil servants and politicians as the first step in the return to civilian and representative rule.^[2]

These moves culminated in the appointment of a representative assembly to draft a constitution for the Second Republic of Ghana. Political party activity was allowed to commence with the opening of the assembly. By election time in August 1969, the first competitive nationwide political contest since 1956, five parties had been organized.^[2]

The major contenders were the Progress Party (PP), headed by Kofi A. Busia, and the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL), led by Komla A. Gbedemah. Critics associated these

two leading parties with the political divisions of the early Nkrumah years. The PP found much of its support among the old opponents of Nkrumah's CPP- the educated middle class and traditionalists of Ashanti Region and the North. This link was strengthened by the fact that Busia had headed the NLM and its successor, the UP, before fleeing the country to oppose Nkrumah from exile. Similarly, the NAL was seen as the successor of the CPP's right wing, which Gbedemah had headed until he was ousted by Nkrumah in 1961.^[2]

The elections demonstrated an interesting voting pattern. For example, the PP carried all the seats among the Asante and the Brong. All seats in the northern regions of the country were closely contested. In the Volta Region, the PP won some Ewe seats, while the NAL won all seats in the non-Ewe northern section. Overall, the PP gained 59 percent of the popular vote and 74 percent of the seats in the National Assembly. The PP's victories demonstrated some support among nearly all the ethnic groups. An estimated 60 percent of the electorate voted.^[2]

Immediately after the elections, Gbedemah was barred from taking his seat in the National Assembly by a Supreme Court decision involving those CPP members who had been accused of financial crimes. Gbedemah retired permanently from active participation in politics. The NAL, left without a strong leader, controlled thirty seats; in October 1970, it absorbed the members of three other minor parties in the assembly to form the Justice Party (JP) under the leadership of Joseph Appiah. Their combined strength constituted what amounted to a southern bloc with a solid constituency among most of the Ewe and the peoples of the coastal cities.^[2]

Busia, the PP leader in both parliament and the nation, became prime minister when the National Assembly met in September. An interim three-member presidential commission, composed of Major Afrifa, Police Inspector General Harlley of the NLC, and the chief of the defense staff, Major General A.K. Ocran, served in place of an elected president for the first year and a half of civilian rule. The commission dissolved itself in August 1970. Before stepping down, Afrifa criticized the constitution, particularly provisions that served more as a bar to the rise of a dictator than as a blueprint for an effective, decisive government. The electoral college chose as president Chief Justice Edward Akufo Addo, one of the leading nationalist politicians of the UGCC era and one of the judges dismissed by Nkrumah in 1964.^[2]

All attention, however, remained focused on Prime Minister Busia and his government. Much was expected of the Busia administration, because its parliamentarians were considered intellectuals and, therefore, more perceptive in their evaluations of what needed to be done. Many Ghanaians hoped that their decisions would be in the general interest of the nation, as compared with those made by the Nkrumah administration, which were judged to satisfy narrow party interests and, more important, Nkrumah's personal agenda. The NLC had given assurances that there would be more democracy, more political maturity, and more freedom in Ghana, because the politicians allowed to run for the 1969 elections were proponents of Western democracy. In fact, these were the same individuals who had suffered under the old regime and were, therefore, thought to understand the benefits of democracy.^[2]

Two early measures initiated by the Busia government were the expulsion of large numbers of noncitizens from the country and a companion measure to limit foreign involvement in small businesses. The moves were aimed at relieving the unemployment created by the country's precarious economic situation. The policies were popular because they forced out

of the retail sector of the economy those foreigners, especially Lebanese, Asians, and Nigerians, who were perceived as unfairly monopolizing trade to the disadvantage of Ghanaians. Many other Busia moves, however, were not popular. Busia's decision to introduce a loan program for university students, who had hitherto received free education, was challenged because it was interpreted as introducing a class system into the country's highest institutions of learning. Some observers even saw Busia's devaluation of the national currency and his encouragement of foreign investment in the industrial sector of the economy as conservative ideas that could undermine Ghana's sovereignty.^[2]

The opposition Justice Party's basic policies did not differ significantly from those of the Busia administration. Still, the party attempted to stress the importance of the central government rather than that of limited private enterprise in economic development, and it continued to emphasize programs of primary interest to the urban work force. The ruling PP emphasized the need for development in rural areas, both to slow the movement of population to the cities and to redress regional imbalance in levels of development. The JP and a growing number of PP members favored suspension of payment on some foreign debts of the Nkrumah era. This attitude grew more popular as debt payments became more difficult to meet. Both parties favored creation of a West African economic community or an economic union with the neighboring West African states.^[2]

Despite broad popular support garnered at its inception and strong foreign connections, the Busia government fell victim to an army coup within twenty-seven months. Neither ethnic nor class differences played a role in the overthrow of the PP government. The crucial causes were the country's continuing economic difficulties, both those stemming from the high foreign debts incurred by Nkrumah and those resulting from internal problems. The PP government had inherited US\$580 million in medium- and long-term debts, an amount equal to 25 percent of the gross domestic product of 1969. By 1971 the US\$580 million had been further inflated by US\$72 million in accrued interest payments and US\$296 million in short-term commercial credits. Within the country, an even larger internal debt fueled inflation.^[2]

Ghana's economy remained largely dependent upon the often difficult cultivation of and market for cocoa. Cocoa prices had always been volatile, but exports of this tropical crop normally provided about half of the country's foreign currency earnings. Beginning in the 1960s, however, a number of factors combined to limit severely this vital source of national income. These factors included foreign competition (particularly from neighboring Côte d'Ivoire), a lack of understanding of free-market forces (by the government in setting prices paid to farmers), accusations of bureaucratic incompetence in the Cocoa Marketing Board, and the smuggling of crops into Côte d'Ivoire. As a result, Ghana's income from cocoa exports continued to fall dramatically.^[2]

Austerity measures imposed by the Busia administration, although wise in the long run, alienated influential farmers, who until then had been PP supporters. These measures were part of Busia's economic structural adjustment efforts to put the country on a sounder financial base. The austerity programs had been recommended by the International Monetary Fund. The recovery measures also severely affected the middle class and the salaried work force, both of which faced wage freezes, tax increases, currency devaluations, and rising import prices. These measures precipitated protests from the Trade Union Congress. In response, the government sent the army to occupy the trade union headquarters and to block strike actions—a situation that some perceived as negating

the government's claim to be operating democratically.^[2]

The army troops and officers upon whom Busia relied for support were themselves affected, both in their personal lives and in the tightening of the defense budget, by these same austerity measures. As the leader of the anti-Busia coup declared on January 13, 1972, even those amenities enjoyed by the army during the Nkrumah regime were no longer available. Knowing that austerity had alienated the officers, the Busia government began to change the leadership of the army's combat elements. This, however, was the last straw. Lieutenant Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, temporarily commanding the First Brigade around Accra, led a bloodless coup that ended the Second Republic.^[2]

National Redemption Council years, 1972-79

Despite its short existence, the Second Republic was significant in that the development problems the nation faced came clearly into focus. These included uneven distribution of investment funds and favoritism toward certain groups and regions. Furthermore, important questions about developmental priorities emerged. For example, was rural development more important than the needs of the urban population? Or, to what extent was the government to incur the cost of university education? And more important, was the public to be drawn into the debate about the nation's future? The impact of the fall of Ghana's Second Republic cast a shadow across the nation's political future because no clear answers to these problems emerged.^[3]

According to one writer, the overthrow of the PP government revealed that Ghana was no longer the pace-setter in Africa's search for workable political institutions. Both the radical left and the conservative right had failed. In opposing Nkrumah's one-party state, Busia allegedly argued that socialist rule in Ghana had led to unemployment and poverty for many while party officials grew richer at the expense of the masses. But in justifying the one-party state, Nkrumah pointed to the weaknesses of multiparty parliamentary democracy, a system that delayed decision-making processes and, therefore, the ability to take action to foster development. The fall of both the Nkrumah and the Busia regimes seemed to have confused many with regard to the political direction the nation needed to take. In other words, in the first few years after the Nkrumah administration, Ghanaians were unable to arrive at a consensus on the type of government suited to address their national problems.^[3]

It was this situation—the inability of the PP government to satisfy diverse interest groups—that ostensibly gave Acheampong an excuse for the January 13 takeover. Acheampong's National Redemption Council (NRC) claimed that it had to act to remove the ill effects of the currency devaluation of the previous government and thereby, at least in the short run, to improve living conditions for individual Ghanaians. Under the circumstances, the NRC was compelled to take immediate measures. Although committed to the reversal of the fiscal policies of the PP government, the NRC, by comparison, adopted policies that appeared painless and, therefore, popular. But unlike the coup leaders of the NLC, members of the NRC did not outline any plan for the return of the nation to democratic rule. Some observers accused the NRC of acting simply to rectify their own grievances. To justify their takeover, coup leaders leveled charges of corruption against Busia and his ministers. In its first years, the NRC drew support from a public pleased by the reversal of Busia's austerity measures. The Ghanaian currency was revalued upward, and two moves were announced to lessen the burden of existing foreign debts: the

repudiation of US\$90 million of Nkrumah's debts to British companies, and the unilateral rescheduling of the rest of the country's debts for payment over fifty years. Later, the NRC nationalized all large foreign-owned companies. But these measures, while instantly popular in the streets, did nothing to solve the country's real problems. If anything, they aggravated the problem of capital flow.^[3]

Unlike the NLC of 1966, the NRC sought to create a truly military government; hence, in October 1975, the ruling council was reorganized into the Supreme Military Council (SMC), and its membership was restricted to a few senior military officers. The intent was to consolidate the military's hold over government administration and to address occasional disagreements, conflicts, and suspicions within the armed forces, which by now had emerged as the constituency of the military government. Little input from the civilian sector was allowed, and no offers were made to return any part of the government to civilian control during the SMC's first five years in power. SMC members believed that the country's problems were caused by a lack of organization, which could be remedied by applying military organization and thinking. This was the extent of the SMC philosophy. Officers were put in charge of all ministries and state enterprises; junior officers and sergeants were assigned leadership roles down to the local level in every government department and parastatal organization.^[3]

During the NRC's early years, these administrative changes led many Ghanaians to hope that the soldiers in command would improve the efficiency of the country's bloated bureaucracies. Acheampong's popularity continued into 1974 as the government successfully negotiated international loan agreements and rescheduled Ghana's debts. The government also provided price supports for basic food imports, while seeking to encourage Ghanaians to become self-reliant in agriculture and the production of raw materials. In the Operation Feed Yourself program, all Ghanaians were encouraged to undertake some form of food production, with the goal of eventual food self-sufficiency for the country. The program enjoyed some initial success, but support for it gradually waned.^[3]

Whatever limited success the NRC had in these efforts, however, was overridden by other basic economic factors. Industry and transportation suffered greatly as world oil prices rose during and after 1974, and the lack of foreign exchange and credit left the country without fuel. Basic food production continued to decline even as the population grew, largely because of poor price management and urbanization. When world cocoa prices rose again in the late 1970s, Ghana was unable to take advantage of the price rise because of the low productivity of its old orchards. Moreover, because of the low prices paid to cocoa farmers, some growers along the nation's borders smuggled their produce to Togo or Côte d'Ivoire. Disillusionment with the government grew, particularly among the educated. Accusations of personal corruption among the rulers also began to surface.^[3]

The reorganization of the NRC into the SMC in 1975 may have been part of a face-saving attempt. Shortly after that time, the government sought to stifle opposition by issuing a decree forbidding the propagation of rumors and by banning a number of independent newspapers and detaining their journalists. Also, armed soldiers broke up student demonstrations, and the government repeatedly closed the universities, which had become important centers of opposition to NRC policies.^[3]

Despite these efforts, the SMC by 1977 found itself constrained by mounting nonviolent opposition. To be sure, discussions about the nation's political future and its relationship to the SMC had begun in earnest. Although the various opposition groups (university students,

lawyers, and other organized civilian groups) called for a return to civilian constitutional rule, Acheampong and the SMC favored a union government—a mixture of elected civilian and appointed military leaders—but one in which party politics would be abolished. University students and many intellectuals criticized the union government idea, but others, such as Justice Gustav Koranteng-Addow, who chaired the seventeen-member ad hoc committee appointed by the government to work out details of the plan, defended it as the solution to the nation's political problems. Supporters of the union government idea viewed multiparty political contests as the perpetrators of social tension and community conflict among classes, regions, and ethnic groups. Unionists argued that their plan had the potential to depoliticize public life and to allow the nation to concentrate its energies on economic problems.^[3]

A national referendum was held in March 1978 to allow the people to accept or reject the union government concept. A rejection of the union government meant a continuation of military rule. Given this choice, it was surprising that so narrow a margin voted in favor of union government. Opponents of the idea organized demonstrations against the government, arguing that the referendum vote had not been free or fair. The Acheampong government reacted by banning several organizations and by jailing as many as 300 of its opponents.^[3]

The agenda for change in the union government referendum called for the drafting of a new constitution by an SMC-appointed commission, the selection of a constituent assembly by November 1978, and general elections in June 1979. The ad hoc committee had recommended a nonparty election, an elected executive president, and a cabinet whose members would be drawn from outside a single-house National Assembly. The military council would then step down, although its members could run for office as individuals.^[3]

In July 1978, in a sudden move, the other SMC officers forced Acheampong to resign, replacing him with Lieutenant General Frederick W.K. Akuffo. The SMC apparently acted in response to continuing pressure to find a solution to the country's economic dilemma. Inflation was estimated to be as high as 300 percent that year. There were shortages of basic commodities, and cocoa production fell to half its 1964 peak. The council was also motivated by Acheampong's failure to dampen rising political pressure for changes. Akuffo, the new SMC chairman, promised publicly to hand over political power to a new government to be elected by July 1, 1979.^[3]

Despite Akuffo's assurances, opposition to the SMC persisted. The call for the formation of political parties intensified. In an effort to gain support in the face of continuing strikes over economic and political issues, the Akuffo government at length announced that the formation of political parties would be allowed after January 1979. Akuffo also granted amnesty to former members of both Nkrumah's CPP and Busia's PP, as well as to all those convicted of subversion under Acheampong. The decree lifting the ban on party politics went into effect on January 1, 1979, as planned. The constitutional assembly that had been working on a new constitution presented an approved draft and adjourned in May. All appeared set for a new attempt at constitutional government in July, when a group of young army officers overthrew the SMC government in June 1979.^[3]

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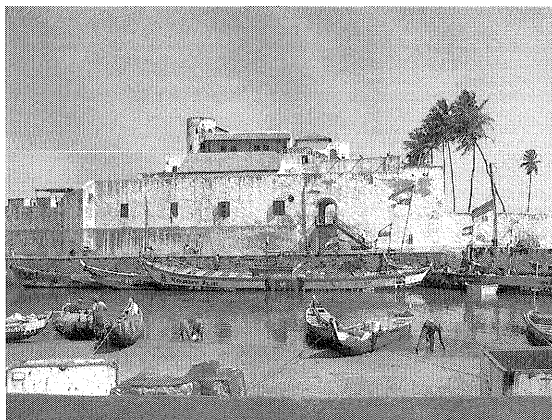
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Elmina Castle

Elmina Castle was erected by the Portuguese in 1482 as São Jorge da Mina (*St. George of the Mine*) Castle, also known simply as *Mina* or *Feitoria da Mina* in present-day Elmina, Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast). It was the first trading post built on the Gulf of Guinea, so is the oldest European building in existence below the Sahara. First established as a trade settlement, the castle later became one of the most important stops on the route of the Atlantic Slave Trade. The Dutch seized the fort from the Portuguese in 1637, and took over all the Portuguese Gold Coast in 1642. The slave trade continued under the Dutch until 1871 when the fort became a possession of the British Empire. Britain granted the Gold Coast its independence in 1957, and control of the castle was transferred to the nation formed out of the colony, present-day Ghana. Today it is a popular historical site, and was a major filming location for Werner Herzog's *Cobra Verde*. The castle is recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

Elmina before the Portuguese

The people living along the West African coast at Elmina around the fifteenth century were presumably Fante. The Fante ethnicity bears an uncertain relationship to "Akan," itself a word connoting conquest and warfare. Among their ancestors were merchants and miners trading gold into the Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds from medieval times. The ancestors of the Akan-speakers of the forests however undoubtedly came from north of the forest.



St. George Castle

The tribal people on the West African coast were organized into numerous small chiefdoms that were drawn according to kinship lines. Family was extremely important in society, and family heads were united in communities under a recognized chief. Along the Gold Coast alone, more than twenty independent kingdom-states existed. Elmina lay between two different Fante kingdoms, Fetu and Eguafu. While there was a relative degree of interstate rivalry, tribes generally intermingled freely. Trade between chiefdoms was important for the economy. The coastal people also had strong trade relations with the Sudanese empire to the north.

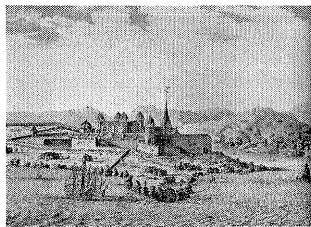
West Africans nurtured ancient connections to other parts of the world. Common metals trade, iconic artistic forms, and agricultural borrowing show that trans-Saharan and regional coastal connections thrived. The Portuguese in 1471 were the first Europeans to "discover" the Gold Coast as such, but not necessarily the first sailors to reach the port.

Portuguese arrival

The Portuguese first reached what became known as the Gold Coast in 1471. Prince Henry the Navigator first sent ships to explore the African coast in 1418. The Portuguese had several motives to voyage south. They were attracted by rumors of fertile African land that was rich in gold and ivory. They also sought a Southern route to India so as to evade Arab traders and establish direct trade with the East. In line with the strong religious sentiments of the time, another focus of the Portuguese was Christian evangelization. They also sought to form an alliance with the legendary Prestor John, who was believed to be the leader of a great Christian nation somewhere in Africa.

These motives prompted the Portuguese to form the Guinea Trade. They made gradual progress down the African coast, each voyage reaching a subsequently farther point. After fifty years of coastal exploration, the Portuguese finally reached Elmina in 1471 during the reign of King Afonso V. However, because royalty had lost interest in African exploration as a result of delayed returns, the Guinea Trade was put under the possession of the Portuguese trader Fernão Gomes. Upon reaching present day Elmina, Gomes discovered a strong gold trade. He established a trading post, and the point on the coast where it resided hence became known to the Portuguese as "A Mina" (the Mine) because of the gold that could be found there.

Building São Jorge de Mina



Elmina Castle viewed from the sea in 1668. Notice European shipping in foreground and African houses/town shown in left hand corner and in various areas around the fort.

Trade between Elmina and Portugal grew throughout the decade following the establishment of the trading post under Gomes. In 1481, the recently crowned King John II decided to build a fort on the coast in order to ensure the protection of this trade, which was once again held as a royal monopoly. King John sent all materials needed to build this fort from Portugal to the Gold Coast on ten caravels and two transport ships. The supplies, which included everything from heavy foundation stones to roof tiles, were sent in ready-made form along with provisions for six hundred men. Under the command of Diogo de Azambuja, the fleet set sail on December 11, 1481 and arrived at Elmina a little over a month later on January 19, 1482. Some historians note

that Christopher Columbus was among those to make the voyage to the Gold Coast on this fleet.

Upon the fleet's arrival, Azambuja contracted a Portuguese trader who had lived at Elmina for some time to arrange and interpret an official meeting with the local chief, Kwamin Ansa (interpreted from the Portuguese "Caramansa"). Concealing his self-serving interests with elegant presentation and friendliness, Azambuja imparted to the chief the great advantages of building a fort, including protection from the very powerful King of Portugal.

Chief Kwamin Ansa, while accepting Azambuja as he had any other Portuguese trader who arrived on his coast, was wary of a permanent settlement. However, with plans of great financial investment, the Portuguese could not be deterred. After offering gifts, making promises, and hinting at consequences of noncompliance, the Portuguese finally gained the reluctant agreement of Chief Kwamin Ansa.

When construction began the next morning, the chief's qualms were immediately proved to be well-founded. In order to build the fort in the most defensible position on a peninsula, the Portuguese had to demolish some of the homes of the villagers, who consented only upon the payment of gifts in return. The Portuguese also tried to quarry a nearby rock that the people of Elmina believed to be the home of the god of the nearby River Benya. In response to this, the local people forged an attack that resulted in several Portuguese deaths before an understanding could be met. Continued opposition led the Portuguese to burn the local village in retaliation. Even amidst this tension, the first story of the tower was completed after only twenty days, as a result of the great amount of prepared materials. The rest of the fort and an accompanying church were completed soon after despite resistance.

Immediate impact of the fort

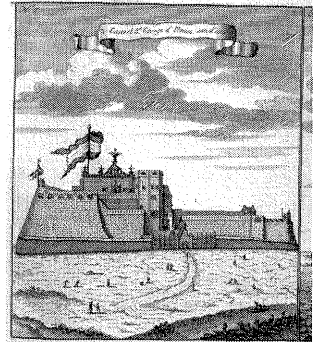
The fort was the first pre-cast building to have been planned and executed in Sub-Saharan Africa. Upon its completion, Elmina was established as a proper city. Azambuja was named governor, and King John added the title "Lord of Guinea" to his noble classifications. São Jorge da Mina took on the military and economic importance that had previously been held by the Portuguese factory of Arguim Island on the southern border of the African Arab world. At the height of the gold trade in the early sixteenth century, 24,000 ounces of gold were exported from the Gold Coast, accounting for one-tenth of the world's supply.

The new fort, signifying the permanent involvement of Europeans in West Africa, had a considerable effect on Africans living on the coast. Elmina declared itself an independent state at the urging of the Portuguese, whose Governor then took control of the town's affairs. The people of Elmina were offered Portuguese protection against attacks from neighboring coastal tribes, with whom the Portuguese had much less genial relations, even while they were friendly with the powerful trading nations in the African interior. If any tribe attempted to trade with a nation other than Portugal, the Portuguese reacted with aggressive force, often forming alliances with the betraying nation's enemy states. Hostility between tribes thus increased, and the traditional organization of society suffered, especially with the introduction of guns which made easier the domination of stronger kingdoms over weaker states.

Trade with the Europeans helped make certain goods such as cloth and beads more available to the coastal people, but European involvement also disrupted traditional trade routes between coastal people and northern tribes by cutting out the African middlemen. The population of Elmina swelled with traders from other towns hoping to trade with the Europeans, who gradually established a West African monopoly.

Atlantic slave trade

By the seventeenth century, most trade in West Africa concentrated on the sale of slaves. São Jorge da Mina played a significant part in the Atlantic Slave Trade. The castle acted as a depot where slaves were bought in bartering fashion from local African chiefs and kings. The slaves, often captured in the African interior by the slave-catchers of coastal tribes, were sold to Portuguese traders in exchange for goods such as textiles and horses. The slaves were held captive in the castle before exiting through the castle's infamous "Door of No Return" to be transported and resold in newly colonized Brazil and other Portuguese colonies.



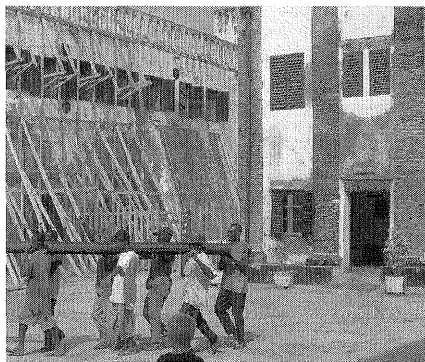
"The Castle of St. George d'Elmina, one side of it" in 1704.

Control by other European nations

In 1637 the fort was taken over by the Dutch, who made it the capital of the Dutch Gold Coast. During the period of Dutch control, they built a new, smaller fortress on a nearby hill to protect St. George Castle from inland attacks. This fort was called Koenraadsburg. The Dutch continued the triangular Atlantic slave route until 1871, when the Dutch territory was taken over by the British.

Renovation

The castle was extensively restored by the Ghanaian government in the 1990s. Renovation of the castle continues as part of the Elmina Strategy 2015 (<http://www.elminaheritage.com>) project. The bridge leading into the castle is one of the highest priority tasks in the project. As of August 2006, the bridge renovation has been completed and construction on the upper terraces continues.



External Links

- [São Jorge da Mina \(CPC\)](http://www.ghana-pedia.org/org/index.php?option=com_directory&listing=S) & page=viewListing&lid=239&Itemid=36
Ghana-pedia webpage - São Jorge da Mina (http://www.ghana-pedia.org/org/index.php?option=com_directory&listing=S)


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- Forts of Ghana (<http://www.colonialvoyage.com/ghana.html>)

- World Statesmen-Ghana (<http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Ghana.html>)
- Strategy 2015 Project (<http://www.elminaheritage.com>)

Geographical coordinates: 5°04'59"N 1°20'53"W

Ghana Empire

Wagadou EmpireGhana Empire	
	
Ghana Empire at its Greatest Extent	
Capital	Koumbi Saleh
Language(s)	Soninke, Mande
Religion	Traditional Religions, Islam
Government	Monarchy
- 790s	Majan Dyabe Cisse
- 1040-1062	Bassi
- 1203-1240	Soumaba Cisse
Historical era	Middle Ages
- Established	c. 790
- Conquered by the Almoravids / Submitted to Mali Empire	1240

The **Ghana Empire** or **Wagadou Empire** (existed c. 790-1076) was located in what is now southeastern Mauritania, and Western Mali. This is believed to be first of many empires that would rise in that part of Africa. It first began in the eighth century, when a dramatic shift in the economy of the Sahel area south of the Sahara allowed more centralized states to form. The introduction of the camel, which preceded Muslims and Islam by several centuries, brought about a gradual change in trade, and for the first time, the extensive gold, ivory, and salt resources of the region could be sent north and east to population centers in North Africa, the Middle East and Europe in exchange for manufactured goods.

The Empire grew rich from the trans-Saharan trade in gold and salt. This trade produced an increasing surplus, allowing for larger urban centres. It also encouraged territorial expansion to gain control over the lucrative trade routes.

The first written mention of the kingdom comes soon after it was contacted by Sanhaja traders in the eighth century. In the late ninth and early tenth centuries, there are more detailed accounts of a centralized monarchy that dominated the states in the region. The

Cordoban scholar al-Bakri collected stories from a number of travelers to the region, and gave a detailed description of the kingdom in 1067. At that time it was alleged by contemporary writers that the *Ghana* could field an army of some 200,000 soldiers and cavalry.

Upon the death of a *Ghana*, he was succeeded by his sister's son. The deceased *Ghana* would be buried in a large dome-roofed tomb. The religion of the kingdom involved emperor worship of the Ghana and worship of the *Bida'a*, a mythical water serpent of the Niger River.

Etymology

The empire was known to its own citizens, a Mande subgroup known as the Soninke, as *Wagadou*. The *dou* in the empire's name is a Mandé term for "land" and is prevalent in place names throughout central West Africa. The *waga* in the name roughly translates to "herd". Thus, *Wagadou* translates to the phrase "Land of Herds". The Empire became known in Europe and Arabia as the **Ghana Empire** by the title of its emperor.

Origin

The Ghana Empire is believed by many to have been a continuation of the cultural complex at Tichitt-walata attributed to Mandé people known as the Soninke. Subsequent incursions of Berber tribes, however, collapsed the earlier socio-political organization in the region and established small settlements in the area known as **Awkar**, around the middle of the fourth century. Around 750 or 800 AD however, the Soninke adjusted and united under Majan Dyabe Cisse or Dinga Cisse in taking over Awkar.^{[1] [2]}

Some people believed that the Ghana Empire was a small kingdom, with its base at the city of Kumbi, and that Al Fazari was the first to describe it to the world. Later, it was conquered by King Sumaguru Kante of Sosso in 1203. It was later incorporated by the King of Mali around 1240.

Some archaeologists think that the Mandé are among the first people on the continent, outside the Nile region and Ethiopia, to produce stone settlement civilizations. These were built on the rocky promontories of the Tichitt-Walata and Tagant cliffs of Mauritania where hundreds of stone masonry settlements, with clear street layouts, have been found. Dating from as early as 1600 BC, these towns had a unique four-tier hierarchy and tribute collection system. This civilization began to decline around 300 BC with the intrusion of Berber armies from the Sahara, but with later reorganization and new trade opportunities, the Wagadou/Ghana Kingdom arose. This polity seems to have inherited the social and economic organization of the Tichitt-Walata complex.

Koumbi Saleh

The empire's capital was built at Koumbi Saleh on the edge of the Sahara desert. The capital was actually two cities six miles apart connected by a six-mile road. But settlements between the cities became so dense due to the influx of people coming to trade, that they merged into one. Most of the houses were built of wood and clay, but wealthy and important residents lived in homes of wood and stone. This large metropolis of over 30,000 people remained divided after its merger forming two distinct areas within the city.

El Ghaba Section

The major part of the city was called El-Ghaba. It was protected by a stone wall and functioned as the royal and spiritual capital of the Empire. It contained a sacred grove of trees used for Soninke religious rites. It also contained the king's palace, the grandest structure in the city. There was also one mosque for visiting Muslim officials. (El-Ghaba, coincidentally or not, means "The Forest" in Arabic.)

Merchant Section

The name of the other section of the city has not been passed down. It is known that it was the center of trade and functioned as a sort of business district of the capital. It was inhabited almost entirely by Arab and Berber merchants. Because the majority of these merchants were Muslim, this part of the city contained more than a dozen mosques.

Economy

The empire owed much of its prosperity to trans-Saharan trade and a strategic location near the gold and salt mines. Both gold and salt seemed to be the dominant sources of revenue, exchanged for various products such as textiles, ornaments and cloth, among other materials. Many of the hand-crafted leather goods found in old Morocco also had their origins in the empire.^[3] The main centre of trade was Koumbi Saleh. The taxation system imposed by the king (or 'Ghana') required that both importers and exporters pay a percentage fee, not in currency, but in the product itself. Tax was also extended to the goldmines. In addition to the exerted influence of the king onto local regions, tribute was also received from various tributary states and chiefdoms to the empire's peripheral.^[4] The introduction of the camel played a key role in Soninke success as well, allowing products and goods to be transported much more efficiently across the Sahara. These contributing factors all helped the empire remain powerful for some time, providing a rich and stable economy that was to last over several centuries.

Government

Much testimony on ancient Ghana depended on how well disposed the king was to foreign travelers, from which the majority of information on the empire comes. Islamic writers often commented on the social-political stability of the empire based on the seemingly just actions and grandeur of the king. A Moorish nobleman who lived in Spain by the name of al-Bakri questioned merchants who visited the empire in the 11th century and wrote that the king:

[He] Gives an audience to his people, in order to listen to their complaints and set them right...he sits in a pavilion around which stand 10 horses with gold embodied trappings. Behind the king stand 10 pages holding shields and gold mounted swords; on his right are the sons or princes of his empire, splendidly clad and with gold plaited in their hair. Before him sits the high priest, and behind the high priest sit the other priests...The door of the pavilion is guarded by dogs of an excellent breed who almost never leave the king's presence and who wear collars of gold and silver studded with bells of the same material.

Decline

The empire began struggling after reaching its apex in the early 11th century. By 1059, the population density around the empire's leading cities was seriously overtaxing the region. The Sahara desert was expanding southward, threatening food supplies. While imported food was sufficient to support the population when income from trade was high, when trade faltered, this system also broke down. It has been often supposed that Ghana came under siege by the Almoravids in 1062 under the command of Abu-Bakr Ibn-Umar in an attempt to gain control of the coveted Saharan trade routes. A war was waged, said to have been justified as an act of conversion through military arms (lesser jihad) in which they were eventually successful in subduing Ghana by 1067. This view however, has seen general scrutiny and is disputed by some scholars as a distortion of primary sources.^[5] Conrad and Fisher (1982) suggested that the notion of any Almoravid military conquest at its core is merely perpetuated folklore, while others such as Dierk Lange attributed the decline of ancient Ghana to numerous unrelated factors, only one of which can be likely attributable to internal dynastic struggles that were instigated by Almalvorid influence and Islamic pressures, but devoid of any military conversion and conquest.^[6]

Aftermath

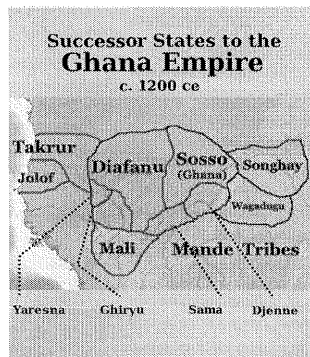
General Abu-Bakr died in 1087 and the Almoravid rule over the remains of the Ghana Empire did not long survive him. The now fractionalized region came under the rule of the Soninke again, though with far less power.

Sosso Occupation

Around 1140, the rabidly anti-Muslim Sosso people of the Kaniaga kingdom captured much of the former empire. Diara Kante took control of Koumbi Saleh in 1180 and established the Diarisso Dynasty. His son, Soumaoro Kante, succeeded him in 1203 and forced the people to pay him tribute. The Sosso also managed to annex the neighboring Mandinka state of Kangaba to the south, where the important goldfield of Bure were located.

Mandinke Rule

In 1230, Kangaba led a rebellion under Prince Sundiata Keita against Sosso rule. *Ghana* Soumaba Cisse, at the time a vassal of the Sosso, rebelled with Kangaba and a loose federation of Mande speaking states. After Soumaoro's defeat at the Battle of Kirina in 1235, the new rulers of Koumbi Saleh became permanent allies of the Mali Empire. As Mali became more powerful, Koumbi Saleh's role as an ally declined to that of a submissive state. It ceased to be an independent kingdom by 1240.



Influence

The modern country of Ghana is named after the ancient empire, though there is no territory shared between the two states. Later traditional stories claimed linkages between the two, with some inhabitants of present Ghana claiming ancestral linkages with the medieval Ghana.

Rulers

Rulers of Awkar

- King Kaja Maja : circa 350 AD
- 21 Kings, names unknown: circa 350 AD- 622 AD
- 21 Kings, names unknown: circa 622 AD- 790 AD
- Kind Reidja Akba : 1400-1415

Soninke Rulers "Ghanas"

- Majan Dyabe Cisse: circa 790s
- Bassi: 1040- 1062

Almoravid Occupation

- General Abu-Bakr Ibn-Umar 1057-1076

Rulers during Kaniaga Occupation

- Soumaba Cisse as vassal of Soumaoro: 1203-1235

Ghanas of Wagadou Tributary

- Soumaba Cisse as ally of Sundjata Keita: 1235-1240

External links

- Historical maps of Ghana Empire (<http://www.worldhistoricalatlas.com>) Maps to be combined and compared
- Rise and Fall of the Ghana Empire (<http://www.accessgambia.com/information/ghana.html>)
- Empires of west Sudan (http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ghan/hd_ghan.htm)
- Empire oh Ghana, Wagadou, Soninke (<http://www.soninkara.org/histoire-soninkara/wagadou/recherches/index.php>)
- Kingdom of Ghana, Primary Source Documents (http://www.bu.edu/africa/outreach/materials/handouts/k_o_ghana.html)
- Gold: Select Bibliography for Teaching about GOLD in the West African Kingdoms (<http://www.bu.edu/africa/outreach/materials/handouts/gold.html>)
- Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali (<http://www.bu.edu/africa/outreach/materials/handouts/SUNDIATA.pdf>)
- Why this epic of Ancient Mali? (http://www.bu.edu/africa/outreach/materials/handouts/Ancient_Mali.pdf)
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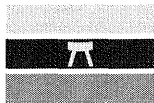
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- [5] Masonen, Pekka; Fisher, Humphrey J. (1996), "Not quite Venus from the waves: The Almoravid conquest of Ghana in the modern historiography of Western Africa", *History in Africa* **23**: 197-232. Available here (http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/~amcdouga/Hist446/readings/conquest_in_west_african_historiography.pdf)
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Ashanti Empire

AsantemanAsante Union



Flag



Asante Empire (red outline) during the 19th century

Capital	Kumasi
Religion	Ancestor worship
Government	Monarchy
- 1670-1717 (first)	Osei Tutu
- 1888-1896 (last of indep. Asante)	Prempeh I
- 1999-present (sub-national within Ghana)	Osei Tutu II
Legislature	Asante Kotoko (Council of Kumasi) ^[1] & the Asantemanhyiamu (National Assembly)
History	
- Founded	1670
- Independence from Denkyira	1701
- British protectorate	1896
- Restoration of monarchy	1935
- Incorporation into Ghana	1957
- Dissolved	1902
Area	
- 1874 ^[2]	259000 km ² (100000 sq mi)
Population	
- 1874 ^[3] est.	3000000

Density	11.6 /km ² (30 /sq mi)
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The **Ashanti Empire** or **Asante Empire**, also known as the **Ashanti Confederacy** or **Asanteman** (independent from 1701-1896), was a pre-colonial West African state of what is now the Ashanti Region in Ghana. Their empire stretched from central Ghana to present day Togo and Cote d' Ivoire, bordered by the Dagomba kingdom to the north and Dahomey to the east. Today, the Ashanti monarchy continues as one of the constitutionally-protected, sub-national traditional states within the Republic of Ghana.

Origins

The Ashanti or Asante are a major ethnic group in Ghana. They were a powerful, militaristic, and highly disciplined people of West Africa. The ancient Ashanti migrated from the vicinity of the northwestern Niger River after the fall of the → Ghana Empire in the 1200s. Evidence of this lies in the royal courts of the Akan kings reflected by that of the Ashanti kings whose processions and ceremonies show remnants of ancient Ghana ceremonies. Ethno linguists have substantiated the migration by tracing word usage and speech patterns along West Africa.

Around the 13th century AD, the Ashanti and various other Akan peoples migrated into the forest belt of present-day Ghana and established small states in the hilly country around present-day Kumasi. During the height of the Mali Empire the Ashanti, and Akan people in general, became wealthy through the trading of gold mined from their territory. Early in Ashanti history, this gold was traded with the greater Ghana and Mali Empires.

Kingdom Formation

Akan political organization centered on various clans, each headed by a paramount chief or Amanhene.^[4] One of these clans, the Oyoko, settled Ghana's sub-tropical forest region, establishing a center at Kumasi.^[5] During the rise of another Akan state known as Denkyira, the Ashanti became tributaries. Later in the mid-1600s, the Oyoko clan under Chief Oti Akenten started consolidating other Ashanti clans into a loose confederation that occurred without destroying the authority of each paramount chief over his clan.^[6] This was done in part by military assault, but largely by uniting them against the Denkyira, who had previously dominated the region.

The Golden Stool

Another tool of centralization under Osei Tutu was the introduction of the 'Golden Stool' (sika 'dwa). According to legend, a meeting of all the clan heads of each of the Ashanti settlements was called just prior to independence from Denkyira. In this meeting, the Golden Stool was commanded down from the heavens by Okomfo Anokye, the Priest or sage advisor, to Asantehene Osei Tutu I. The Golden stool floated down, from the heavens straight into the lap of Osei Tutu I. Okomfo Anokye declared the stool to be the symbol of the new Asante Union ('Asanteman'), and allegiance was sworn to the Golden Stool and to Osei Tutu as the Asantehene. The newly founded Ashanti union went to war with Denkyira and defeated it.^[7] The Golden Stool remains sacred to the Ashanti as it is believed to contain the 'Sunsum' — spirit or soul of the Ashanti people.

Independence

In the 1670s, then head of the Oyoko clan Osei Tutu began another rapid consolidation of Akan peoples via diplomacy and warfare.^[8] King Osei Kofu Tutu I and his chief advisor, Okomfo Kwame Frimpon Anokye led a coalition of influential Ashanti city-states against their mutual oppressor, the Denkyira who held Asanteman as one of its tributaries. Asanteman utterly defeated them at the Battle of Feyiase, proclaiming its independence in 1701. Subsequently, through hard line force of arms and savoir-faire diplomacy, the duo induced the leaders of the other Ashanti city-states to declare allegiance and adherence to Kumasi, the Ashanti capital. Right from the onset, King Osei Tutu and Priest Anokye followed an expansionist and an imperialistic provincial foreign policy.

Asanteman under Osei Tutu

Realizing the weakness of a loose confederation of Akan states, Osei Tutu strengthened centralization of the surrounding Akan groups and expanded the powers of the judiciary system within the centralized government. Thus, this loose confederation of small city-states grew into a kingdom or empire looking to expand its borders. Newly conquered areas had the option of joining the empire or becoming tributary states.^[9] Opoku Ware I, Osei Tutu's successor, extended the borders, embracing much of present day Ghana's territory.^[10]

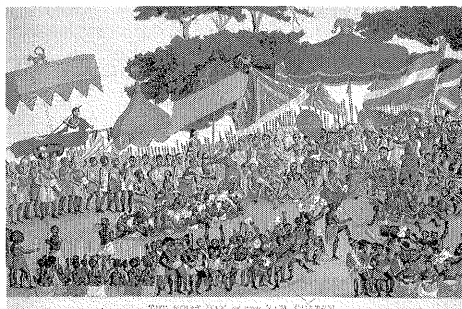
Geography

The Ashanti Empire was one of a series of kingdoms along the coast including Dahomey, Benin, and Oyo. All of these states were based on trade, especially gold, ivory, and slaves, which were sold to first Portuguese and later Dutch and British traders. The region also had dense populations and large agricultural surpluses, allowing the creation of substantial urban centres. By 1874, the Ashanti controlled over 100,000 square kilometers while ruling approximately 3 million people.^[11]

Economy

The lands within Asanteman were also rich in river-gold and kola nuts, and they were soon trading with the Songhay Empire, the Hausa states and by 1482 with the Portuguese at the coastal fort *Sao Jorge da Mina*, later Elmina. Thanks largely to profits from the slave trade, the Ashanti had risen to be a major force in the area.^[12]

Daily life



Ashanti yam ceremony, 19th Century by Thomas E. Bowdich

The history of the confederacy was one of slow centralization. In the early nineteenth century the Asantehene used the annual tribute to set up a permanent standing army armed with rifles, which allowed much closer control of the confederacy. Despite still being called a confederacy it was one of the most centralised states in sub-Saharan Africa. Osei Tutu and his successors oversaw a policy of political and cultural unification and the union had reached its full extent by 1750. It remained an alliance of several large

towns which acknowledged the sovereignty of the ruler of Kumasi, known as the Asantehene.

Agriculture

The Ashanti prepared the fields by burning before the onset of the rainy season and cultivated with an iron hoe. Fields are fallowed for a couple years, usually after two to four years of cultivation. Plants cultivated include plantains, yams, manioc, corn, sweet potatoes, millet, beans, onions, peanuts, tomatoes, and many fruits. Manioc and corn are New World transplants introduced during the Atlantic European trade. Many of these vegetable crops could be harvested twice a year and the cassava (manioc), after a two-year growth, provides a starchy root. The Ashanti transformed palm wine, maize and millet into beer, a favorite drink; and made use of the oil from palm for many culinary and domestic uses.

Clothing

The main cloth of the Ashanti was the kente cloth, known locally as nwentoma. Clothing production was typically gender specialized. "The Covering of the State," is made of camel's hair and wool. An ornamental figurine, plated with gold or silver, topped all ceremonial umbrellas.

Family

Standing among families was largely political. The royal family typically tops the hierarchy, followed by the families of the chiefs of territorial divisions. In each chiefdom, a particular female line provides the chief. A committee from among several men eligible for the post elects that chief.

Children

Tolerant parents are typical among the Ashanti. Childhood is considered a happy time and children cannot be responsible for their actions. The child is not responsible for their actions until after puberty. A child is harmless and there is no worry for the control of its soul, the original purpose of all funeral rites, so the ritual funerals typically given to the deceased Ashanti are not as lavish for the children.

The Ashanti adored twins when they were born within the royal family because they were seen as a sign of impending fortune. Ordinarily, boy twins from outside of it became fly switchers at court and twin girl's potential wives of the King. If the twins are a boy and girl, no particular career awaits them. Women who bear triplets are greatly honored because three is regarded as a lucky number. Special rituals ensue for the third, sixth, and ninth child. The fifth child (unlucky five) can expect misfortune. Families with many children are well respected and barren women scoffed.

Menstruation and impurity

The Ashanti held puberty rites only for females. Fathers instruct their sons without public observance. The privacy of boys was respected in the Ashanti kingdom. As menstruation approaches, a girl goes to her mother's house. When the girl's menstruation is disclosed, the mother announces the good news in the village beating an iron hoe with a stone. Old women came out and sang **Bara** (menstrual) songs. The mother spills a libation of palm wine on the earth and recites the following prayer:

"Supreme Sky God, who alone is great,

Upon whom men lean and do not fall,

Receive this wine and drink."

"Earth Goddess, whose day

Of worship is Thursday,

Receive this wine and drink,

Spirit of our ancestors,

Receive this wine and drink"

"O Spirit Mother do not come,

'And take her away, ' And do not permit her,

To menstruate only to die."

Menstruating women suffered numerous restrictions. The Ashanti viewed them as ritually unclean. They did not cook for men, nor did they eat any food cooked for a man. If a menstruating woman entered the ancestral stool house, she was arrested, and the punishment was typically death. If this punishment is not exacted, the Ashanti believe, the ghost of the ancestors would strangle the chief. Menstruating women lived in special houses during their periods as they were forbidden to cross the threshold men's houses. They swore no oaths and no oaths were sworn for or against them. They did not participate in any of the ceremonial observances and did not visit any sacred places.

Slavery in Asanteman

Slaves, the modern day Ashanti point out, were seldom abused. A person who abuses a slave was held in high contempt by society. They further demonstrate the "humanity" of Ashanti slavery (in relation to slavery in the Americas) by pointing out those slaves were allowed to marry, and the children of slaves were born free. If found desirable a female slave may become a wife, the master preferred such a status to that of a free woman in a conventional marriage, because this type of marriage allowed the children to inherit some of the father's property and status.

This favored arrangement occurred primarily because of conflict with the matrilineal system. The Ashanti slave master felt more comfortable with a slave girl or pawn wife who had no *abusua* (older male grand father, father, uncel or brother) to intercede on her behalf every time the couple argued. With the wife's slave status, the man controlled his children unquestionably with the mother isolated from her own kin.

Death in Asanteman

Sickness and death are major events in the kingdom. The ordinary herbalist divines the supernatural cause of the illness and treats it with herbal medicines. The medicine man, a person possessed by a spirit, combats pure witchcraft.

If the patient fails to respond to medicine, the family performed the last rites. Then a member of the family poured water down the throat of the dying person when it is believed the soul is leaving the body and recite the following prayer:

Your abusua [naming them] say: Receive this water and drink, and do not permit any evil to come whence you are setting out, and permit all the women of the household to bear children.

People loathed being alone for long without someone available to perform this rite before the sick collapsed. The family washes the corpse, dresses it in its best clothes, and adorns it with packets of gold dust (money for the after-life), ornaments, and food for the journey "up the hill." The body was normally buried within 24 hours. Until that time the funeral party engage in dancing, drumming, shooting of guns, and much drunkenness, all accompanied by the wailing of relatives. This was done because the Ashanti typically believed that death was not something to be sad about, but rather a part of life. Of course, funeral rites for the death of a King involve the whole kingdom and are much more of an elaborate affair.

The greatest and most frequent ceremonies of the Ashanti recalled the spirits of departed rulers with an offering of food and drink, asking their favor for the common good, called the *Adae*. The day before the *Adae*, talking drums broadcast the approaching ceremonies. The stool treasurer gathers sheep and liquor that will be offered. The chief priest officiates the *Adae* in the stool house where the ancestors came. The priest offers each food and a beverage. The public ceremony occurs outdoors, where all the people joined the dancing. Minstrels chant ritual phrases; the talking drums extol the chief and the ancestors in traditional phrases.

The *Odwera*, the other large ceremony, occurs in September and typically lasted for a week or two. It is a time of cleansing of sin from society the defilement, and for the purification of shrines of ancestors and gods. After the sacrifice and feast of a black hen -- of which both the living and the dead share, a new year begins in which all were clean, strong, and healthy.

Government

The Ashanti government was built upon a sophisticated bureaucracy in Kumasi, with separate Ministries to handle the state's affairs. Of particular note was Ashanti's Foreign Office based in Kumasi; despite its small size, the Ashanti Foreign Office allowed the state to pursue complex arrangements with foreign powers, and the Office itself contained separate departments for handling relations with the British, French, Dutch, and Arabs individually. Scholars of Ashanti history, such as Larry Yarak and Ivor Wilkes, disagree over the actual power of this sophisticated bureaucracy in comparison to the Asantehene, but agree that its very existence pointed to a highly developed government with a complex system of checks and balances.

Asantehene

At the top of Ashanti's power structure sat the *Asantehene*, the King of Ashanti. Each *Asantehene* was crowned on the sacred Golden Stool, the Sika 'dwa, an object which came to symbolise the very power of the King. Osei Kwadwo (1764-1777) began the system of appointing central officials according to their ability, rather than their birth.^[13]

As King, the *Asantehene* held immense power in Ashanti, but did not enjoy absolute royal rule, and was obliged to share considerable legislative and executive powers with Asante's sophisticated bureaucracy. The *Asantehene* was the only person in Ashanti permitted to invoke the death sentence. During wartime, the King acted as Supreme Commander of the army, although during the nineteenth century, actual fighting was increasingly handled by the Ministry of War in Kumasi. Each member of the confederacy was also obliged to send annual tribute to Kumasi.

The *Ashantihene* (King of all Ashanti) reigns over all and chief of the division of Kumasi, the nation's capital. He is elected in the same manner as all other chiefs. In this hierarchical structure, every chief swear fealty to the one above him -- from village and subdivision to division to the chief of Kumasi, and the *Ashantihene* swears fealty to the State.

The elders and the people (public opinion) circumscribe the power of the *Ashantihene*, and the chiefs of other divisions considerably check the power of the King. This in practical effect creates a system of checks and balances. Nevertheless, as the symbol of the nation, the *Ashantihene* receives significant deference ritually for the context is religious in that he is a symbol of the people, living, dead or yet to be born, in the flesh. When the king commits an act not approved of by the counsel of elders or the people, he could possibly be impeached, and made into a common man.

The existence of aristocratic organizations and the council of elders is evidence of an oligarchic tendency in Ashanti political life. Though older men tend to monopolize political power, Ashanti instituted an organization of young men, the *nmerante*, that tend to democratize and liberalize the political process. The council of elders undertake actions only after consulting a representative of the Young Men. Their views must be taken seriously and added into the conversation.

Obirempon

Below the Asantahene, local power was invested in the *obirempon* of each locale. The *obirempon* (literally "big man") was personally selected by the Asantahene and was generally of loyal, noble lineage, frequently related to the Asantahene. *Obirempons* had a fair amount of legislative power in their regions, more than the local nobles of Dahomey but less than the regional governors of the Oyo Empire. In addition to handling the region's administrative and economic matters, the *obirempon* also acted as the Supreme Judge of the region, presiding over court cases.

Elections

The election of chiefs and the Asantehene himself followed a pattern. The senior female of the chiefly lineage nominated the eligible males. This senior female then consulted the elders, male and female, of that line. The final candidate is then selected. That nomination is then sent to a council of elders, who represent other lineages in the town or district. The Elders then present the nomination to the assembled people.

If the assembled citizens disapprove of the nominee, the process is restarted. Chosen, the new chief is en-stooled by the Elders, who admonish him with expectations. The chosen chief swears a solemn oath to the Earth Goddess and to his ancestors to fulfill his duties honorably in which he "sacrifices" himself and his life for the betterment of the *Oman*. (State)

This elected and en-stooled chief enjoys a great majestic ceremony to this day with much spectacle and celebration. He reigns with much despotic power, including the ability to make judgments of life and death on his subjects. However, he does not enjoy absolute rule. Upon the stool, the Chief is sacred, the holy intermediary between people and ancestors. His powers theoretically are more apparent than real. His powers hinge on his attention to the advice and decisions of the Council of Elders. The chief can be impeached, de-stooled, if the Elders and the people turn against him. He can be reduced to man, subject to derision for his failure. There are numerous Ashanti sayings that reflect the attitudes of the Ashanti towards government.

"When a king has good counselors, his reign is peaceful"

"One man does not rule a nation"

"The reign of vice does not last"

Communication in Asanteman

The Ashanti also invented a "talking drum". They drummed messages to the extents of over 200 miles (321.8 kilometers), as rapidly as a telegraph. Twi, the language of the Ashanti is tonal and more meaning is generated by tone than in English. The drums reproduced these tones, punctuations, and the accents of a phrase so that the cultivated ear hears the entirety of the phrase itself. The Ashanti readily hear and understood the phrases produced by these "talking drums." Standard phrases called for meetings of the chiefs or to arms, warned of danger, and broadcast announcements of the death of important figures. Some drums were used for proverbs and ceremonial presentations.

Legal System

The Ashanti state, in effect, was a theocracy. It invokes religious rather than secular-legal postulates. What the modern state views as crimes, Ashanti view as sins. Antisocial acts disrespect the ancestors, and only secondarily harmful to the community. If the chief or King fail to punish such acts, he invokes the anger of the ancestors, and is therefore in danger of impeachment. The penalty for some crimes (sins) is death, but this is seldom imposed, rather banishment or imprisonment.

The King typically exacts or commutes all capital cases. These commuted sentences by King and chiefs sometimes occur by ransom or bribe; they are regulated in such a way that they should not be mistaken for fines, but are considered as revenue to the state, which for the most part welcomes quarrels and litigation. Commutations tend to be far more frequent than executions.

Ashanti are repulsed by murder, and suicide is considered murder. They decapitate those who commit suicide, the conventional punishment for murder. The suicide thus had contempt for the court, for only the King may kill an Ashanti.

In a murder trial, intent must be established. If the homicide is accidental, the murderer pays compensation to the lineage of the deceased. The insane cannot be executed because of the absence of responsible intent. Except for murder or cursing the King; in the case of cursing the king, drunkenness is a valid defense. Capital crimes include murder, incest within the female or male line, and intercourse with a menstruating woman, rape of a married woman, and adultery with any of the wives of a chief or the King. Assaults or insults of a chief or the court or the King also carried capital punishment.

Cursing the King, calling down powers to harm the King is considered an unspeakable act and carries the weight of death. One who invokes another to commit such an act must pay a heavy indemnity. Practitioners of sorcery and witchcraft receive death but not by decapitation, for their blood must not be shed. They receive execution by strangling, burning, or drowning.

Ordinarily, families or lineages settle disputes between individuals. Nevertheless, such disputes can be brought to trial before a chief by uttering the taboo oath of a chief or the King. In the end, the King's Court is the sentencing court, for only the King can order the death penalty. Before the Council of Elders and the King's Court, the litigants orate comprehensively. Anyone present can cross-examine the defendant or the accuser, and if the proceedings do not lead to a verdict, a special witness is called to provide additional testimony. If there is only one witness, whose oath sworn assures the truth is told. Moreover, that he favors or is hostile to either litigant is unthinkable. Cases with no witness, like sorcery or adultery are settled by ordeals, like drinking poison.

Ancestor worship establishes the Ashanti moral system, and it provides thus the principle foundation for governmental sanctions. The link between mother and child centers the entire network, which includes ancestors and fellow men as well. Its judicial system emphasizes the Ashanti conception of rectitude and good behavior, which favors harmony among the people. The rules were made by **Nyame** (God) and the ancestors and one must behave accordingly.

The Ashanti armies

The Ashanti armies served the empire well, supporting its long period of expansion and subsequent resistance to European colonization. Armament was primarily with firearms, but some historians hold that indigenous organization and leadership probably played a more crucial role in Ashanti successes.^[14] These are, perhaps, more significant when considering that the Ashanti had numerous troops from conquered or incorporated peoples, and faced a number of revolts and rebellions from these peoples over its long history. The political genius of the symbolic "golden stool" and the fusing effect of a national army however, provided the unity needed to keep the empire viable. Total potential strength was some 80,000 to 100,000 making the Ashanti army bigger than the



Ashanti war captain

better known Zulu, comparable to Africa's largest- the legions of Ethiopia.^[15] While actual forces deployed in the field were less than *potential* strength, tens of thousands of soldiers were usually available to serve the needs of the empire. Mobilization depended on small cadres of regulars, who guided and directed levees and contingents called up from provincial governors. Organization was structured around an advance guard, main body, rear guard and two right and left wing flanking elements. This provided flexibility in the forest country the Ashanti armies typically operated in. The approach to the battlefield was typically via converging columns, and tactics included ambushes and extensive maneuvers on the wings. Unique among African armies, the Ashanti deployed medical units to support their fighters. This force was to expand the entire substantially and continually for over a century, and defeated the British in several encounters.^[15]

European Contact

European contact with the Ivory Coast region of Africa began in the 1400s. This led to trade in ivory, slaves, and other goods which gave rise to kingdoms such as the Ashanti. On May 15, 1817 the Englishman Thomas Bowdich entered Kumasi. He remained there for several months, was impressed and on his return to England wrote a book, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee*, which was disbelieved as it contradicted prevailing prejudices. Joseph Dupuis, the first British consul in Kumasi, arrived on March 23, 1820. Both Bowdich and Dupuis secured a treaty with the Asantehene. However, the governor, Hope Smith, did not meet Ashanti expectations.^[16]

Wars of the Asante

From 1806 until 1896, the Asante Union was in a perpetual state of war involving expansion or defense of its domain. The Asante's exploits against native African forces made it the paramount power in the region. It's impressive performance against the British also earned it the respect of European powers. Far less known than its Zulu contemporaries, Asanteman was one of the few African states to decisively defeat the British Empire in not

only a battle but a war.

Asante-Fante War

In 1806, the Ashanti pursued two rebel leaders through Fante territory to the coast. The British refusal to surrender the rebels led to an Ashanti attack. This was devastating enough that the British handed over a rebel; the other escaped.^[17] In 1807 disputes with the Fante led to the Ashanti-Fante War, in which the Ashanti were victorious under Asantehene Osei Bonsu ("Osei the whale").

Ga-Fante War

In the 1811 Ga-Fante War, a coalition of Asante and Ga fought against an alliance of Fante, Akwapim and Akim states. The Asante war machine was successful early on defeating the alliance in open combat. However, Asante were unable to completely crush their enemies and were forced to withdraw from the Akwapim hills in the face of guerilla tactics. They did, however, manage to capture a British fort.

Ashanti-Akim-Akwapim War

In 1814 the Ashanti launched an invasion of the Gold Coast, largely to gain access to European traders. In the Ashanti-Akim-Akwapim War, the kingdom faced the Akim-Akwapim alliance. After several battles, some of which went in favor of the Asante and, some of which went in favor of the out numbered Akim-Akwapim alliance the war ended. Even though the outnumbered Akim-Akwapim won some key battles and had moments of glory by 1816, Asanteman was established on the coast.

Anglo-Ashanti Wars

First Anglo-Ashanti War

The first of the → Anglo-Ashanti wars occurred in 1823. In these conflicts, Asanteman faced off, with varying degrees of success, against the British Empire residing on the coast. The root of the conflict traces back to 1823 when Sir Charles MacCarthy, resisting all overtures by the Ashanti to negotiate, led an invading force. The Ashanti defeated this, killed MacCarthy, took his head for a trophy and swept on to the coast. However, disease forced them back. The Ashanti were so successful in subsequent fighting that in 1826 they again moved on the coast. At first they fought very impressively in an open battle against superior numbers of British allied forces, including Denkyirans. However, the novelty of British rockets caused the Ashanti army to withdraw.^[18] In 1831, a treaty led to thirty years of peace with the Pra River accepted as the border.

Second Anglo-Ashanti War

With the exception of a few Ashanti light skirmishes across the Pra in 1853 and 1854, the peace between Asanteman and the British Empire had remained unbroken for over 30 years. Then, in 1863, a large Ashanti delegation crossed the river pursuing a fugitive, Kwesi Gyana. There was fighting, casualties on both sides, but the governor's request for troops from England was declined and sickness forced the withdrawal of his West Indian troops. The war ended in 1864 as a stalemate with both sides losing more men to sickness than any other factor.

Third Anglo-Ashanti War

In 1869 a European missionary family was taken to Kumasi. They were hospitably welcomed and were used as an excuse for war in 1873. Also, Britain took control of Ashanti land claimed by the Dutch. The Ashanti invaded the new British protectorate. General Wolseley and his famous Wolseley ring were sent against the Ashanti. This was a modern war, replete with press coverage (including by the renowned reporter Henry Morton Stanley) and printed precise military and medical instructions to the troops.^[19] The British government refused appeals to interfere with British armaments manufacturers who were unrestrained in selling to both sides.^[20]

All Ashanti attempts at negotiations were disregarded. Wolseley led 2,500 British troops and several thousand West Indian and African troops to Kumasi. The capital was briefly occupied. The British were impressed by the size of the palace and the scope of its contents, including "rows of books in many languages."^[21] The Ashanti had abandoned the capital. The British burned it.^[22] The Ashantehene (the king of the Ashanti) signed a harsh British treaty on July 1874 to end the war and start the gradual destruction of the Asante Union.

Fourth Anglo-Ashanti War

In 1891, the Ashanti turned down an unofficial offer to become a British protectorate. Wanting to keep French colonial forces out of Ashanti territory (and its gold), the British were anxious to conquer Asanteman once and for all. Despite being in talks with the kingdom about making it a British protectorate, Britain began the Fourth Anglo-Ashanti War in 1894 on the pretext of failure to pay the fines levied on the Asante monarch after the 1874 war. The Asanteman were victorious and British was forced to sign a treaty of protection.

Fall of Asanteman

In December 1895, Sir Francis Scott left Cape Coast with an expedition force. It arrived in Kumasi in January 1896. The Asantehene directed the Ashanti to not resist. Shortly thereafter, Governor William Maxwell arrived in Kumasi as well. Asantehene Agyeman Prempeh was deposed and arrested.

Britain annexed the territories of the Ashanti and the Fanti in 1896, and Ashanti leaders were sent into exile in the Seychelles. The Asante Union was dissolved. Robert Baden-Powell led the British in this campaign. The British formally declared the coastal regions to be the → Gold Coast colony. A British Resident was permanently placed in the city, and soon after a British fort.

Ashanti Uprising of 1900

As a final measure of resistance, the remaining Asante court not exiled to the Seychelles mounted an offensive against the British Residents at the Kumasi Fort. The resistance was led by Yaa Asantewaa, the Queen-Mother of Ejisu. From March 28 to late-September 1900, the Asante and British were engaged in what would become known as the War of the Golden Stool. In the end, Asantewaa and other Asante leaders were also sent to Seychelles to join Prempeh I. In January 1902, Britain finally added Asante to its protectorates on the Gold Coast.

Akan states of Gold Coast
Accra (Ga) Efutu Akyem (Bosome, Abuakwa, Kotoku) Adanse Akuapem Akwamu Asen Mankessim (Fante) Dwabena Gyaaman (Abron) Bono Denkyira → Asanteman (Twi)

See also

- Ashanti
- Anglo-Asante Wars
- History of Ghana
- Rulers of the Akan state of Asante
- African military systems (1800-1900)
- African military systems to 1800
- African military systems after 1900

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- Africa Guide (<http://www.africaguide.com/culture/tribes/ashanti.htm>) contains information about the culture of the Ashanti
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Geographical coordinates: 5°27'N 0°58'W

Anglo-Ashanti wars

The **Anglo-Ashanti Wars** were four conflicts between the Asante Empire in the Akan interior of what is now Ghana and the British Empire in the 19th century. The ruler of the Asante (or Ashanti) was the Ashantehene. The coastal people, primarily Fante and the inhabitants of Accra, who were chiefly Ga, came to rely on British protection against Ashanti incursions. Finally the Asante Empire becoming a British protectorate.

Earlier wars

The British were drawn into three earlier wars:

In the Ashanti-Fante War of 1806-07, the British refused to hand over two rebels pursued by the Asante, but eventually handed one over (the other escaped).

In the Ga-Fante War of 1811, the Akwapim captured a British fort at Tantamkweri and a Dutch fort at Apam.

In the Ashanti-Akim-Akwapim War of 1814-16 the Ashanti defeated the Akim-Akwapim alliance. Local British, Dutch, and Danish authorities all had to come to terms with the Ashanti. In 1817 the (British) African Company of Merchants signed a treaty of friendship



Ashantee war captain, c. 1834

that recognized Ashanti claims to sovereignty over much of the coast.

First Anglo-Ashanti War

The First Anglo-Asante War was from 1823 to 1831. In 1823 Sir Charles MacCarthy, rejecting Ashanti claims to Fanti areas of the coast and resisting overtures by the Ashanti to negotiate, led an invading force from the Cape Coast. He was defeated and killed by the Ashanti, and the heads of MacCarthy and Ensign Wetherall were kept as trophies. See Charles MacCarthy for details of the *Battle of Nsamankow*, when MacCarthy's troops (who had not joined up with the other columns) were overrun. Major Alexander Gordon Laing returned to Britain with news of their fate.

The Ashanti swept down to the coast, but disease forced them back. The Ashanti were so successful in subsequent fighting that in 1826 they again moved on the coast. At first they fought very impressively in an open battle against superior numbers of British allied forces, including Denkyirans. However, the novelty of British Congreve rockets caused the Ashanti army to withdraw.^[1] In 1831, the Pra River was accepted as the border in a treaty, and there were thirty years of peace.

Second Anglo-Ashanti War

The Second Anglo-Asante War was from 1863 to 1864. With the exception of a few minor Ashanti skirmishes across the Pra in 1853 and 1854, the peace between Asanteman and the British Empire had remained unbroken for over 30 years. Then, in 1863, a large Ashanti delegation crossed the river pursuing a fugitive, Kwesi Gyana. There was fighting, with casualties on both sides, but the governor's request for troops from England was declined and sickness forced the withdrawal of his West Indian troops, with both sides losing more men to sickness than any other factor, and in 1864 the war ended in a stalemate.

Third Anglo-Ashanti War

The Third Anglo-Asante War lasted from 1873 to 1874. In 1869 a German missionary family and a Swiss missionary had been taken to Kumasi. They were hospitably treated, but a ransom was required for them. In 1871 Britain purchased the Dutch Gold Coast from the Dutch, including Elmina which was claimed by the Ashanti. The Ashanti invaded the new British protectorate.

General Wolseley with 2,500 British troops and several thousand West Indian and African troops (including some Fante) was sent against the Ashanti, and subsequently became a household name in Britain. The war was covered by war correspondents, including Henry Morton Stanley and G. A. Henty. Military and medical instructions were printed for the troops.^[2] The British government refused appeals to interfere with British armaments manufacturers who sold to both sides.^[3]

Wolseley went to the → Gold Coast in 1873, and made his plans before the arrival of his troops in January 1874. He fought the Battle of Amoafu on January 31 of that year, and, after five days' fighting, ended with the Battle of Ordahsu. The capital, Kumasi, which was abandoned by the Ashanti was briefly occupied by the British and burned. The British were impressed by the size of the palace and the scope of its contents, including "rows of books in many languages."^[4]^[5] The Ashantehene, the ruler of the Ashanti (Asente) signed a harsh British treaty, the Treaty of Fomena in July 1874, to end the war. Wolseley completed

the campaign in two months, and re-embarked them for home before the unhealthy season began. Most of the 300 British casualties were from disease. Wolseley left behind a power vacuum which led to more fighting, as the Ashantehene could no longer control the former vassal tribes.

Some British accounts pay tribute to the hard fighting of the Ashanti at Amoaful, particularly the tactical insight of their commander, Amanquatia: *"The great Chief Amanquatia was among the killed. Admirable skill was shown in the position selected by Amanquatia, and the determination and generalship he displayed in the defence fully bore out his great reputation as an able tactician and gallant soldier."*^[6]

Fourth Anglo-Ashanti War




The Fourth Anglo-Ashanti War was a brief war, from 1894. The Ashanti turned down an unofficial offer to become a British protectorate in 1891, extending to 1894. Wanting to keep French and German forces out of Ashanti territory (and its gold), the British were anxious to conquer Asanteman once and for all. The war started on the pretext of failure to pay the fines levied on the Asante monarch by the Treaty of Fomena after the 1874 war.

Sir Francis Scott left Cape Coast with the main expedition force of British and West Indian troops in December 1895, and arrived in Kumasi in January 1896. The Asantehene directed the Ashanti to not resist. Soon Governor William Maxwell arrived in Kumasi as well. Robert Baden-Powell led a native levy of several local tribes in the campaign. Asantehene Agyeman Prempeh was arrested and deposed. He was forced to sign a treaty of protection, and with other Asante leaders was sent into exile in the Seychelles.

War of the Golden Stool

In the War of the Golden Stool (1900), the remaining Asante court not exiled to the Seychelles mounted an offensive against the British Residents at the Kumasi Fort, but were defeated. Yaa Asantewaa, the Queen-Mother of Ejisu and other Asante leaders were also sent to the Seychelles. The Ashanti territories became part of the → Gold Coast colony on 1 January 1902.

See also

- → Ashanti Empire
- Rulers of the Akan state of Asante
- British Empire
- History of Ghana
- → Gold Coast (British colony)
- African military systems after 1800
- category:People of the Third Anglo-Ashanti War
- category:British military personnel of the Fourth Anglo-Ashanti War
-  Ashantee Medal (1873-74 British Campaign Medal)
-  Ashanti Star (1896 British Campaign Medal)
-  Ashanti Medal (1901 British Campaign Medal)

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- [1] Alan Lloyd, *The Drums of Kumasi*, Panther, London, 1964, pp. 39-53
- [2] Lloyd, *Ibid* pp. 88-102
- [3] Lloyd, *Ibid* p. 83
- [4] Lloyd, *Ibid* pp. 172-174
- [5] Lloyd, *Ibid* p. 175
- [6] Charles Rathbone Low, *A Memoir of Lieutenant-General Sir Garnet J. Wolseley*, R. Bentley: 1878, pp. 57-176

John Kufuor

John Kofi Agyekum Kufuor	
	
Succeeded by	John Atta Mills
Born	8 December 1938 Kumasi, → Gold Coast

John Kofi Agyekum Kufuor (born 8 December 1938) is a political figure from Ghana. He is a former President of Ghana, serving from 2001 to 2009; and a former Chairperson of the African Union serving from 2007 to 2008. He ran for election in 2000 and won, succeeding Jerry Rawlings, who defeated him when he previously ran for President in the election in 1996; Kufuor's victory marked the first peaceful democratic transition of power in Ghana since the country's independence was declared.

Biography

Early life and background

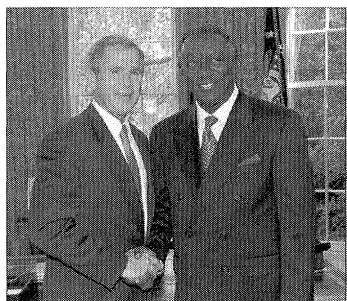
A member of the Ashanti people, Kufuor is married to Theresa Kufuor (née Mensah), with whom he has had five children. Kufuor and his family belong to the Roman Catholic Church. He was born in Kumasi and educated at Osei Tutu Boarding School (1951-53), Prempeh College (1954-58), Lincoln's Inn, London (1959-1961) and Exeter College, University of Oxford (1961-1964). In the Second Republic's Parliamentary Register Kufuor lists as his hobbies and interests table tennis, reading, football, and film shows.

Early political career

As Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs he represented Ghana on a number of occasions. From 1969 to December, 1971, he led Ghana's delegation to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Ministerial Meetings in Addis Ababa, and the Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Lusaka. In 1970, he led the Ghanaian delegation to Moscow in the former Soviet Union, Prague (Former Czechoslovakia), and Belgrade (Yugoslavia) to discuss Ghana's indebtedness to these countries.

As the Spokesman on Foreign Affairs and Deputy Opposition Leader of the Popular Front Party (PFP) Parliamentary Group during the Third Republic, he was invited to accompany President Limann to the OAU Summit Conference in Freetown, Sierra Leone. He was also a

member of the parliamentary delegation that visited the United States of America (USA) in 1981 to talk to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank on Ghana's economic problems.



President Kufuor with United States President George W. Bush during a visit to the USA in 2001

In January, 1982, the leadership of the All People's Party (APP), which was an alliance of all the opposition parties, advised some leading members, including the Deputy Leader of the Alliance, Alhaji Iddrisu Mahama, the General Secretary, Dr. Obed Asamoah and Mr. J. A. Kufuor to accept an invitation from the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) to serve in what was purported to be a National Government. Kufuor was appointed the Secretary for Local Government in this new government.

As a Secretary for Local Government, he wrote the Local Government Policy Guidelines that were to be the foundation of the current decentralized District

Assemblies.

Presidency

On 20 April, 1996, Kufuor was nominated by 1034 out of 2000 delegates of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) drawn from all the 200 Constituencies of the Country to run for the President of Ghana on 10 December, 1996. After campaigning for less than nine months, Kufuor polled 39.62% of the popular votes to Rawlings' 57% in the 1996 election. On 23 October, 1998, he was re-nominated by the New Patriotic Party not only to run again for President but also to officially assume the position of Leader of the Party.

Kufuor won the presidential election of December 2000; in the first round, held on 7 December, Kufuor came in first place with 48.4%, while John Atta-Mills, Jerry Rawlings' Vice President, came in second with 44.8%, forcing the two into a run-off vote. In the second round, held on 28 December, Kufuor was victorious, taking 56.9% of the vote.

Kufuor was re-elected in presidential and parliamentary elections held on 7 December 2004, earning 52.45% of the popular vote in the first round and thus avoiding a run-off, while at the same time Kufuor's party, the New Patriotic Party, was able to secure more seats in the Parliament of Ghana. (<http://africanelections.tripod.com/gh.html>)

On 29 January 2007, Kufuor was elected as the Chairperson of the African Union for the 2007-2008 AU session. He was succeeded by Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania on 31 January 2008.^[1]

Kufuor was involved in a car crash on 14 November 2007, in which another car collided with his and caused it to roll over several times. Kufuor was reported to be uninjured.^[2]

Cabinets

First Cabinet (Jan 2001)

- John Agyekum Kufuor — President of Ghana
- Hon. Aliu Mahama — Vice President of Ghana
- Prof. Christopher Ameyaw Akumfi — Minister of Education Replaced later by;
- Mr. Kwadwo Baah Wiredu— Minister of Education, Youth & Sports
- Mrs. Cecilia Bannerman — Minister for Manpower Development & Employment
- Mr. Albert Kan-Dapaah — Minister for Communication
- Mrs. Gladys Asmah — Ministry for Women & Children's Affairs
- Hon. Yaw Osafo-Marfo — Minister for Finance
- Mr. Jacob Otanka Obetsebi-Lamptey — Minister of Information
- Dr Kwame Addo-Kufuor — Minister of Defense & Later Acting Minister for the Interior
- Madam Hawa Yakubu — Minister for Tourism
- Hon. Kwadwo Baah-Wiredu — Ministry for Local Government & Rural Development
Replaced later by;
- Mr. Charles Bintim — Ministry for Local Government & Rural Development
- Hon. Hackman Owusu-Agyeman — Minister for Foreign Affairs Replaced later by;
- Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo — Minister for Foreign Affairs
- Major (Rtd) Courage Emmanuel Kobla Quashigah — Minister of Food & Agriculture
- Hon. Richard W. Anane — Minister of Health
- Prof. Mike Oquaye — Minister for Environment and Science
- Hon. Kwamina Bartels — Minister for Private Sector Development & PSI
- Hon. Dr. Richard Winfred Anane — Minister for Road Transport
- Prof. Christopher Ameyaw-Akumfi — Minister for Habours & Railways
- Mr. Alan Kyeremanten — Minister for Trade and Industry
- Hon. Malik Al-Hassan Yakubu — Minister for the Interior Replaced later by;
- Hon. Hackman Owusu-Agyeman — Minister for the Interior
- Mr. Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo — Attorney-General & Minister for Justice Replaced
later by;
- Hon. Papa Owusu Ankomah — Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Alhaji Mallam Issah — Minister of Youth & Sports Replaced later by;
- Hon. Papa Owusu Ankomah — Minister of Youth & Sports Replaced later by;
- Hon. Osei Kwaku — Minister of Youth & Sports
- Hon. Albert Kan-Dapaah — Minister for Energy replaced later by;
- Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduom — Minister for Energy
- Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduom — Minister for Economic Planning & NEPAD
- Hon. Felix Owusu Agyapong — Minister for Parliamentary Affairs
- Miss Elizabeth Ohene — Minister of State in Charge of Tertiary Education
- Miss Christine Churcher — Minister of State in Charge of Primary, Secondary &
Girl-Child Education

Second Cabinet (Jan 2005)

- John Agyekum Kufuor — President of Ghana
- Hon. Aliu Mahama — Vice President of Ghana
- Hon. Yaw Osafo-Maafa — Minister of Education and Sports
- Hon. Joseph K. Adda — Minister for Manpower, Youth & Development
- Hon. Kan-Dapaah — Minister for Communication & Technology
- Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduom — Minister of Energy Replaced later by;
- Hon. Mike Oquaye — Minister of Energy
- Hajia Alima Mahama — Ministry for Women & Children's Affairs
- Hon. Kwadwo Baah Wiredu — Minister for Finance & Economic Planning
- Mr. Dan Botwe — Minister of Information
- Dr Kwame Addo-Kufuor — Minister of Defense
- Mr Jacob Otanka Obetsebi-Lamptey — Minister for Tourism & Modernization of Capital City
- Mr. Charles Bintim — Ministry for Local Government & Rural Rural Development
- Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo — Minister for Foreign Affairs and NEPAD
- Mrs. Gladys Asmah — Minister for Fisheries
- Mr. Ernest Akobuor Debrah — Minister of Agriculture and Food
- Major (Rtd) Courage Emmanuel Kobla Quashigah — Minister of Health
- Ms Christine Churcher — Minister for Environment and Science
- Hon. Kwamina Bartels — Minister for Private Sector Development & PSI
- Hon. Dr. Richard Winfred Anane — Minister for Road Transport
- Prof. Christopher Ameyaw-Akumfi — Minister for Habours & Railways
- Mr. Alan Kyeremanten — Minister for Trade and Industry
- Mr. Papa Owusu Ankamah — Minister for the Interior
- Mr. Prof. Mike Oquaye — Attorney-General & Minister for Justice
- Hon. Felix Owusu-Agyapong — Minister for Parliamentary Affairs
- Miss Elizabeth Ohene — Minister of State in Charge of Tertiary Education

Third Cabinet (2006)

- John Agyekum Kufuor — President of Ghana
- Hon. Aliu Mahama — Vice President of Ghana
- Hon. Papa Owusu Ankama — Minister of Education, Science and Sports
- Hon. Joseph K. Adda — Minister for Manpower, Youth & Employment
- Prof. Mike Oquaye — Minister for Communication
- Hajia Alima Mahama — Ministry for Women & Children's Affairs
- Hon. Kwadwo Baah Wiredu — Minister for Finance & Economic Planning
- Mr. Kwamina Bartels — Minister for Information and National Orientation
- Dr. Kwame Addo-Kufuor — Minister of Defense
- Mr Jacob Otanka Obetsebi-Lamptey — Minister for Tourism & Diaporan Relations
- Mr. Asamoah Boateng — Ministry for Local Government, Rural Development & Environment
- Dr. Patrick Moore — Minister of Mining and Minerals
- Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo — Minister for Foreign Affairs and NEPAD
- Mrs. Gladys Asmah — Minister for Fisheries
- Mr. Ernest Akobuor Debrah — Minister of Food & Agriculture

- Major (Rtd) Courage Emmanuel Kobla Quashigah — Minister of Health
- Hon. Dr. Richard Winfred Anane — Minister for Transportation (Later Resigned)
- Prof. Christopher Ameyaw-Akumfi — Minister for Ports, Habours & Railways
- Mr. Alan Kyeremanten — Minister for Trade and Industry, Private Sector Development & PSI
- Mr. Albert Kan-Dapaah — Minister for the Interior
- Mr. Joe Ghartey — Attorney-General & Minister for Justice
- Hon. Felix Owusu Agyapong — Minister for Parliamentary Affairs & Acting Minister for Transportation
- Mr. Francis Poku — Minister for National Security
- Mr. Kwadwo Mpiani — Minister for Presidential Affairs
- Hon. S.K. Boafo — Minister of State in Charge of Culture & Chieftancy Affairs
- Miss Elizabeth Ohene — Minister of State at the Presidency

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- [2] "Ghana's president involved in a car crash" (http://www.int.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=86&art_id=nw20071114151854122C185913), Reuters (*IOL*), 14 November, 2007.

See also

- List of national leaders
- List of Ghana Heads of state by age
- Kufuor government
- Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD-IV), 2008.

External links

- President of Ghana Speaks at Ahmadiyya Muslim Caliphate Centenary Convention (http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=153_1208691830)
- Official Website of the Government of Ghana (<http://www.ghana.gov.gh/>)
- Official website of the Office of the President of Ghana (<http://www.ghanacastle.gov.gh/>)

Political offices		
Preceded by ?	Minister for Local Government 1982	Succeeded by Acquah Harrison
Preceded by Jerry Rawlings	President of Ghana 2001 - 2009	Succeeded by John Atta Mills
Preceded by Abdoulaye Wade	Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States 2003 - 2005	Succeeded by Mamadou Tandja
Preceded by Denis Sassou-Nguesso	Chairperson of the African Union 2007 - 2008	Succeeded by Jakaya Kikwete
Party political offices		

Preceded by Albert Adu Boahen	New Patriotic Party presidential candidate 1996,2000,2004	Succeeded by Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo
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Osei Kofi Tutu I

Osei Kofi Tutu I was one of the co-founders of the Empire of Ashanti, along with Okomfo Anokye, his chief priest. The Ashanti were a powerful, warlike, and highly disciplined people of West Africa, whose history goes back more than 2000 years. The Ashanti are said to be the descendants of those Ethiopians mentioned by Diodorus Siculus and Herodotus who were driven southward by a conquering Egyptian army. Osei Tutu led an alliance of Ashanti states against the regional hegemon, the Denkyira, completely defeating them. Then, through force of arms and diplomacy, he induced the rulers of the other Ashanti city-states to declare allegiance to Kumasi, his capital. Through his career he was closely advised by Okomfo Anokye, his chief Priest.

The Founding of Ashanti Confederacy

The Empire of Ashanti was officially formed in 1701 and Osei Tutu was crowned Asantehene (King of all Ashanti). He would hold that position until his death in 1717 in a battle against the Akyem. Osei Tutu was the fourth ruler in Asante royal history, succeeding his uncle Obiri Yeboa. The Asante comprise the largest contingent of the Akanor Twi-speaking peoples. Akansocieties are matrilineal, with a person belonging to the **abusua** of his mother. Inheritance, succession and status are lineally determined. Osei Tutu belonged to the Oyoko **Abusua**.

Background

By the middle of the sixteenth century, previous migrations of **Abusua** groups resulted in the development of a number of Akan states within a thirty mile radius of modern-day Kumasi, Ghana. The dense concentration of states in this limited area was primarily due to the region being a known source of gold and kola; two important trade routes—one from Jen'ne and Timbuktu in the western Sudan and the other from Hausaland—entered the area. These states were all dominated by the Denkyira. In the middle of the seventeenth century the last of the **Abusua** groups, the Oyoko **Abusua**, arrived.

Exploiting the **Abusua's** mutual hatred for their oppressor, Osei Tutu and his priest-counselor Okomfo Anokye succeeded in merging these states into the Asante Union. This was a carefully orchestrated political and cultural process, which was implemented in successive stages.

The Golden Stool

First, the union was spiritually brought into being through the Golden Stool, invoked by Okomfo Anokye, and explained as the embodiment of the soul of the Asante Union. The ruler—in essence the religious and political leader—and the occupant of the Golden stool was to be known as the Asantehene and to be subsequently selected from the lineage of Osei Tutu and Obiri Yeboa.

Osei Tutu as The Asantehene

Second, Kumasi was chosen as the capital of the Asante Union, and Osei Tutu was now both the Kumasihene and the Asantehene. The Odwira Festival was inaugurated. Established as an annual and common celebration, and attended by all member states, this served as a unifying force for the nation.

The Power of The King

Third, Osei Tutu, assisted by Okomfo Anokye, developed a new constitution for the Union. The Asantehene, who was also the Kumasihene, was at its head, with the kings of the states of the union forming the Confederacy or Union Council. While the power of the asantehene was not absolute, Osei Tutu enjoyed much despotic power. He is arguably one of the most significant black kings in history. He more than tripled the size of his empire through wars of conquest, and expansion, and he brought a sense of dignity back to West Africa.

Military

Fourth, as one of the key objectives for forming the Asante Union was to overthrow the Denkyira, Osei Tutu placed strong emphasis on the military organization of the Union. Supposedly borrowing the military organization from the **Akwamu**, Osei Tutu honed the Union army into an effective and efficient fighting unit.

Expanding The Empire

With the Asante Union firmly established and its military organization in place, Osei Tutu embraced on wars of expansion and revenge.

After avenging his uncle's death at the hands of the **Dormaa** and bringing some recalcitrant states into line, Osei Tutu focused on the Denkyira. In 1701, the absolute defeat of the Denkyira and their abettors, the people of Akyem, brought the Asante to the attention of the Europeans on the coast for the first time. The victory broke the Denkyira hold on the trade path to the coast and cleared the way for the Asante to increase trade with the Europeans.

Death of The Asantehene

In 1717, Osei Tutu was killed in a war against the Akyem. He was struck by bullets from snipers and sharpshooters, who were hiding in the dense forests and the trees as he crossed a river in a canoe.

At the onset of the struggle, Osei Tutu underestimated the Akyem, because they were few in number, however this would prove to be a fatal mistake. He went into the battle, without his usual *magical amulets*, and even left some of his body armor back at Kumasi, his capital.

Minutes after being struck by the bullet, Asantehene Osei Tutu I died. His last words were "ankah me nime ya" (If only I knew) in reference to underestimating the akyem.


The Legacy

Osei Kofi Tutu I and his adviser, Okomfo Anokye, forged the Asante Union from a number of different **Abusua** groups who submerged their old rivalries and hatred for the common good—the overthrow of their common oppressor, the Denkyira. Skillfully utilizing a combination of spiritual dogma and political skill, and ably supported by military prowess, Osei Tutu tripled the size of the small kingdom of Kumasi which he had inherited from his uncle Obiri Yeoba and laid the foundation for the Empire of Ashanti in the process.

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- http://www.info-ghana.com/ashanti_empire.htm
- <http://www.upstate88.com/blackhistory/page4.html>
- <http://countrystudies.us/ghana/5.htm>
- http://www.kumasimetro.org/cc_kma.cfm?tblCADCorpID=33
- http://www.ashanti.com.au/pb/wp_5e360041.html
- <http://www.nathanielturner.com/majestykingasante.htm>
- <http://www.ijebu.org/conquerors/oseiTutu/>

Kofi Abrefa Busia

Kofi Abrefa Busia	
	
Succeeded by	Colonel Acheampong (Military coup d'état)
Born	July 11, 1913 Wenchi, Ghana
Died	August 28, 1978 (aged 65) Oxford, UK

Kofi Abrefa Busia (11 July 1913 – 28 August 1978) was Prime Minister of Ghana from 1969–72. He was born in Wenchi, in the then British colony of → Gold Coast (now called Ghana). He was educated at Methodist School, Wenchi, Mfantsipim School, Cape Coast, then at Wesley College, Kumasi from 1931–32. He later became a teacher at Achimota Secondary School. He gained his first degree with Honours in Medieval and Modern History from the University of London, through correspondence during this period. He then went on to study at University College, Oxford, where he was the college's first African student. He took a BA (Hons) in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (1941, MA) 1946) and a DPhil in Social Anthropology in 1947, with a thesis entitled *The position of the chief in the modern political system of Ashanti: a study of the influence of contemporary social changes on Ashanti political institutions*.

He served as a district commissioner from 1942 to 1949, and was appointed first lecturer in African Studies. He became the first African to occupy a Chair at the University of Gold Coast. In 1951 he was elected by the Ashanti Confederacy to the Legislative Council. In 1952 he was Leader of Ghana Congress Party^[1] which later merged with the other opposition parties to form the United Party (UP).

As leader of the opposition against Kwame Nkrumah, he fled the country on the grounds that his life was under threat. In 1959 Busia became a Professor of Sociology and Culture of Africa at the University of Leiden near the Hague, Netherlands. From 1962 until 1969 he was a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford.

During this period he was financially supported in secret by Sir Roy Welensky and the government of the Central African Federation, which paid him substantial sums through a London public relations consultancy named Voice & Vision.

He returned to Ghana in March 1966 after Nkrumah's government was overthrown by the military, and was appointed as the Chairman of the National Advisory Committee of the NLC. In 1967/1968 he served as the Chairman of the Centre for Civic Education. He used this opportunity and sold himself as the next Leader. He also was a Member of the Constitutional Review Committee. When the NLC lifted the ban on politics, Busia, together with friends in the defunct UP formed the Progress Party (PP)^[1].

In 1969, PP won the parliamentary elections with 104 of the 105 seats contested. This paved the way for him to become the next Prime Minister. Busia continued with NLC's anti-Nkrumaist stance and adopted a liberalised economic system. There was a mass deportation of half a million of Nigerian citizens from Ghana, and a 44 percent devaluation of the cedi in 1971 which met with a lot of resistance from the public.

While he was in Britain for a medical check-up, the army under Colonel → Ignatius Kutu Acheampong overthrew his government on 13 January 1972. He died from a heart attack in 1978.

Along with J.B. Danquah, Busia's name is associated with Ghana's political right. The New Patriotic Party has claimed the Danquah-Busiaist mantle in the Fourth Republic.

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- *Africa in Search of Democracy*. London, 1967

Notes

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External links

- Ghana-pedia webpage - Dr Kofi A. Busia ([http://www.ghana-pedia.org/org/index.php?option=com_directory&listing=Busia, Dr Kofi Abrefa&page=viewListing&lid=250&Itemid=36](http://www.ghana-pedia.org/org/index.php?option=com_directory&listing=Busia,Dr%20Kofi%20Abrefa&page=viewListing&lid=250&Itemid=36))
- Ghanaweb about Dr. Busia (<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/people/pop-up.php?ID=122>)
- Busia Foundation (http://www.busiafoundinternational.org/about_busia.html)

Political offices		
<p>Preceded by Akwasi Afrifa Military Head of State</p>	<p>Prime Minister of Ghana 1969 - 1972</p>	<p>Succeeded by → Ignatius Kutu Acheampong Military Head of State</p>
Parliament of Ghana		
<p>New title</p>	<p>Leader of the Opposition 1952 - ?</p>	<p>Succeeded by ?</p>
<p><i>Parliament suspended by military</i></p>	<p>Member of Parliament for Wenchi East 1969 - 1972¹</p>	<p><i>Parliament suspended after military coup</i></p>
Party political offices		

New title	Leader of the Ghana Congress Party 1952 - 1957	Succeeded by ?
New title	Leader of the United Party 1957 - ?	Succeeded by ?
New title	Leader of the Progress Party 1969 - 1972	Parties banned after coup
Notes and references		
1. Ghana@50 (http://www.ghana50.gov.gh/history/index.php?op=postIndependence4)		

Ignatius Kutu Acheampong

Ignatius Kutu Acheampong	
Succeeded by	Lt. Gen. F.W.K. Akuffo
Born	23 September 1931  Gold Coast
Died	16 June 1979 (aged 47)  Accra, Ghana
Service/branch	Ghana army

General (then Colonel) **Ignatius Kutu Acheampong** (pronounced) (23 September 1931 – 16 June 1979) was a former military head of state of Ghana. He ruled from 13 January, 1972 to 5 July, 1978, when he was deposed in a palace coup. He was later executed by firing squad.

Politics

Acheampong led a coup d'état to overthrow the democratically elected government of the Progress Party and its leader Dr. Kofi Busia on 13 January 1972.^[1] He became Head of State and Chairman of the National Redemption Council (NRC), which was later transformed into the Supreme Military Council on 9 October, 1975, with Colonel Acheampong (promoted to General) as its chairman.

Notable historical changes and events introduced or implemented in Ghana during the period under Acheampong include: the change from the imperial to the metric system of measurement, change from driving on the left to right-hand drive in "Operation Keep Right", "Operation Feed Yourself" (a programme aimed at developing self-reliance in agriculture), "National Reconstruction" (aimed at promoting employment and skill for workers), face-lift projects in cities, and the reconstruction/upgrading of stadia to meet international standards.

There were, however, widespread accusations of both the encouragement and endorsement of corruption in the country under his rule.

Union Government and overthrow

Acheampong sought to perpetuate the military in government by introducing a model called "Union Government" or "Unigov" for short.^[2] This became a very contentious national issue which was vehemently opposed by many. A referendum held on 30 March, 1978 to accept or reject this concept was widely believed to be rigged, though the official results were 60.11% for and 39.89% against.^[3] The electoral commissioner at the time, Justice Isaac Kobina Abban (who later became Chief Justice), went into hiding from the government for fear of his life after coming under pressure to manipulate results.^[4]

Acheampong was deposed in a palace coup on 5 July, 1978 and succeeded by the Chief of Defence Staff, Lt. General Fred Akuffo.^[2] He remained under virtual house arrest at Trabuom in the Ashanti Region until the advent of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).^[5]

Execution

Acheampong, together with two other former Heads of State (Gen. Afrifa and Gen. Akuffo) and five other senior military officers (Amedume, Boakye, Felli, Kotei and Utuka), were executed by firing squad on 16 June 1979, after the 4 June revolution that brought Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings and the AFRC to power.^[5]

Family

Acheampong was married to Mrs. Faustina Acheampong. His grandson is American football player Charlie Peprah. A native of Plano, Texas, Peprah played four seasons at the University of Alabama and was picked in the fifth round of the 2006 NFL Draft by the New York Giants. He currently plays for the Green Bay Packers.

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See also

- National Redemption Council
- Supreme Military Council
- Corruption in Ghana
- List of Ghana Heads of state by age

External links

- Ghana-pedia webpage - I.K. Acheampong ([http://www.ghana-pedia.org/org/index.php?option=com_directory&listing=Ignatius Kutu Acheampong&page=viewListing&lid=146&Itemid=36](http://www.ghana-pedia.org/org/index.php?option=com_directory&listing=Ignatius%20Kutu%20Acheampong&page=viewListing&lid=146&Itemid=36))

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Preceded by Kofi Busia Prime Minister		

Preceded by J. Kwesi Lamptey	Minister for Defence 1972 - ?	Succeeded by ?
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