PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY OF ORAN
INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FACULTY OF LETTERS LANGUAGES AND ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ANGLO-SAXON LANGUAGES
SECTION OF ENGLISH

THEME

The Ashanti's Political, Military, Judicial, and Economic Organization Evolution and Change (1750-1824)

This study is submitted to the Department of Anglo-Saxon Languages in candidature for the Degree of magister in African Civilization



Submitted by:
ALACHAHER (Mme BENZERDJEB) FAZILET

Under the supervision of:
Dr. BOUHADIBA ZOULIKHA

Jury :

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Examiner	Mr Mestfaoui Aziz	(MCA)	University of Adrar

Academic Year: 2011/2012

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of my father, Belkacem, my grandfather and my uncles.

To my mother and my sister whose kindness and support inspire me daily, and to my devoted husband, whose guidance, love and passion for life are my foundation.

To my three enlightening candles, my princesses, my beloved daughters Lydia (who showed comprehension and warm support), Alaa (whose suggestions contributed to the design of the dust jacket) and Dallal (who seemed always curious about her mother's interminable work).

Acknowledgment

My heartfelt thanks go to a number of people for helping me to make this magister thesis possible. First and foremost, my deepest gratitude goes to Mrs Zoulikha Bouhadiba without her consolidated support, guidance and patience my thesis would not have been possible.

I would like to sincerely thank Mrs Leila Moulfi and Professor Fouzi Borsali for their precious help, valuable remarks and constructive criticism despite their busy timetable.

The completion of this work would not have been possible without the help and references provided by the virtual library, Questia.com. I also benefited from the help of Mrs Maureen Davis, the secretary of the Aberdeen Library who sent me the photocopies of chapters considered as precious references for my research.

Very special thanks are due to my close friends and colleagues. My appreciation is also extended to a number of staff members from the university of Adrar, Mr. Mestfaoui, Mr. Bouhania, Mr Benkraled and their respected wives, and from the University of Tlemcen, Mr.Frid, Mrs. Senouci, and Mrs.Khenafou (without their outstanding cooperation, this thesis would not have recently come to light).

However, my biggest debt has been to my husband who helped me 'to keep on keeping on'.

And last, but by no means least, my thanks go to the members of jury, who accepted to read my thesis and to take part in refining this dissertation.

Quotation

"***Despite the three-centuries-long slave trade which sent some twelve million Africans into servitude…. The interior of Africa was still mainly in the hands of African peoples, whose hostility, combined with the rigors of tropical diseases, kept European penetration to a minimum. It was still a time when African princes could think themselves magnanimous in according European newcomers the title of masters of the water, secure in the knowledge that they retained the vastly more important title of lords of the land***"

Bruce Vandervort
Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa
(1830 – 1914), p.1.

Abstract

The central theme of this study deals with the Ashanti's political, judicial, military, and economic systems of organization and the identification of various internal factors which determined first the structure of the Ashanti institutions and second the performance of its ruling authorities. It retraces the historical rise of the Ashanti's West African kingdom originating from the Gold Coast region through a period stretching from their first settlements into the forest region till the years of progressive decline. This research paper scrutinizes the evolution of the political and economic systems in Ashanti in relation with highly developed military and judicial institutions made in the hands of supreme kings, the Asantehenes. Four Asantehenes are presented in the enclosed thesis. Two of them, the Asantehene Osei Bonsu (1695-1731) and Apoku Ware (1731-1750) formed the historical background for the stereotype of a traditional system of ruling and managing the Ashanti people who pledged allegiance to the 'Golden Stool' and to traditional rules and customs. Then, the work will follow the presentation of how the third Asantehene, Osei Kwadwo (1750-1800) refused to remain under a static decentralized chieftaincy and a subsistence economy. Osei Bonsu's revolutionary changes (1800-1824) will be analyzed later notably by the introduction of new agents in charge of the whole institutions of what was known at that time as the Ashanti empire. Hence, this paper examines the Asantehenes' genius roles in centralizing political rule and economic enterprise which underwent radical changes in ruling the political, judicial, military, and economic organization. The major causes for such changes are due to the interaction of various factors related to the Ashanti internal conflicts, the existence northern communities in the Ashanti territory. Unfortunately, the Ashanties witnessed many years of successive revolts from the neighbouring subdued people who sought protection from Europeans on the coast and that marked the Ashanties decline that will be analyzed later for such a satisfactory constructed account.

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General Introduction

African people were initially viewed as primitive people scattered in small groups and devoid of a definite system of organization. European soldiers and statesmen who engineered the conquest of Africa in the late nineteenth century liked to think of themselves as ambassadors of innovation and progress to a continent mired in timeless savagery(1). Contrary to these views, historical researches have demonstrated that several kinds of societies emerged with developed political and economic systems(2).

A multiplicity of illustrations can be given on these kinds of African societies such as the Zulu empire that appeared from the '*crushing*' of the neighbouring tribes or '*Mfecane*' as it was known in Zulu; the Jihad states of Al-hadj Umar, Ahmadu Seku an Samori in West Africa; the rejuvenated Solomonic empire of Ethiopia; the Sokoto empire of northern Nigeria; and the tribal political and economic organization the Ashanti empire notably chosen for our research purposes. Actually, the Ashanties (or the Asantes) are a major Akan ethnic group present-day Ghana, who founded a powerful militaristic empire to the north of the coastal areas of the Gold Coast, which had prevailed from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth. Since they have a history spanning several centuries and evolved a system that is perhaps the most highly developed among those found in West Africa, the Ashanties have the component features that are useful for the purposes of the enclosed thesis.

We know more about Ashanti than of any other, thanks to the records of visitors to its capital Kumasi at different times in the nineteenth century. Ashanti has inspired one of the richest ethnographic and historical literatures on any part of West Africa. At all times, there are great differences in the quantity and form of sources on specific institutions, notably because of differences between categories of source in the extent and nature of their

(1)Bruce Vandervort, Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa (1830-1914), University College London Press, First Edition, 1998, p.2.

(2) David C McClelland, The Achieving Society, Princeton, 1961, p.152.

concern with the Ashanti's institutions. For instance, the rate of output of source material on the political institutions in relations with production and trade within Ashanti became more voluminous with time during 1800s. The most important research conducted during the colonial period was ethnographic, pioneered in the 1920s by R.S.Rattray, the official colonial government anthropologist. He sought to give an account of what he regarded as the authentic Ashanti society, freed from the distortions of 'foreign influences' such as colonial rule and cocoa growing. His interpretations emphasised the functional efficiency of the Ashanti institutions, and downplayed the exploitative and conflict aspects of some of them, slavery and human pawning(3). The anthropological and sociological work most notably made by K.A.Busia, was also of great importance for the enclosed study. Research on Ashanti history has also examined the aspects of indigenous political and economic life. The pioneer was Ivor Wilks, perhaps the fundamental achievement of whose early work was to show that the Ashanti state was precisely that, rather than the matrilineage writ large, as R.S.Rattray had urged.

More important is the contribution of king Nana Agyeman Prempeh I (1888-1886) for the understanding of the history of the Ashanti kingdom in 'The History of Ashanti Kings and the whole country itself'. It is among the earliest example of history writing in English by an African ruler and his amanuenses. The chief source was his mother the Asantehemaa Yaa Kyaa, who possessed and encyclopaedic knowledge of the oral history of her own lineage, which was also the royal dynasty of the Ashanti. The result is an indispensably detailed document that charts the history of the Ashanti monarchy. However, over the last thirty years studies have appeared from many writings on a variety of issues

(3)When the Asantehene prempeh I returned as a private citizen, from a long exile he mentioned Rattray: "from him we learn what kind of a labyrinth the residence of a royal personage might be and his studies of the nature of Asante kingship were made visiting the different chiefs and collecting their versions of remembered story".Otumfo Nana Agyeman Prempeh , The History of Ashanti Kings and the whole country itself, Oxford University Press, p.150, 2003.

relevant to the enclosed research addressed in this thesis[4]. These will be cited and discussed, as appropriate, in the chapters below.

The central theme of this study the main part of this research work sprang from the role and the performance of the Ashanti's ruling indigenous authorities which led to the evolution and change of the local political and economic institutions together with the interaction of various internal and external factors. This paper is, therefore, an attempt to provide a modest contribution and to demonstrate that, far from being static and impervious to change, the Ashanti society was constantly in flux; and also the study emphasizes on the main changes or reforms of the Ashanti institutions. Specifically, this paper analyses the factors leading to the creation of the Ashanti state, the processes of state consolidation and expansion, and the chief purposes in the transformation of the state machinery into a sophisticated bureaucratic and achievement-oriented apparatus. The period covered in this research goes back to the very origins of the Ashanties and the historical process which gave birth to the Ashanti empire. The date 1824 was chosen as the end of the period under study because it represents the year during which the Ashanties of the Gold Coast were under their last years of a fully sovereign empire, thereby coming to the pre-colonial period, i.e. the British intervention.

The interpretation put forward here is to explain how the Ashanti's political, economic, judicial and military organization evolved and changed. The work presented in Chapter1 is principally the identification of the stereotype of a traditional system of ruling and managing the Ashanti people who pledged allegiance to the 'Golden Stool' and to traditional rules and customs.

The analysis in Chapter2 was to present a relatively advanced stage of centralized political organization characterized by an efficient and adaptable directed economy. It was set on a pyramidal structure with the king and the

traditional elders at its peak and the sub chiefs at the bottom. This government focused on the expansion and the consolidation of the empire to suit the purposes of the authority holders.

Chapter3 will consider the fact that the indigenous authority holder that is the king managed the shift of authority to him alone at the top of the pyramidal structure through non-hereditary officials at the bottom instead of the subchiefs trying to monopolize the state affairs.

The Ashanti's Political, Military, Judicial, and Economic Organization before 1750

Introduction

Among the most powerful and dominant Akan-speaking people of the Gold Coast (Ghana nowadays), the Ashanties seemed to have emerged within the forest region to make up well-organized groups of people able to control, to direct and to manage their day-to-day activities.

The identification of the Ashanti groups of people and the brief examination of their political and economic aspects of life before 1731 will then help as a historical background to the study of the evolution of the Ashanti's political, judicial, military and economic institutions up to 1824.

In the eighteenth century, the Ashanties(1) were identified as people resulting from the amalgamation of five ethnic groups known as the Akans(2), the Ga, the Ewe, the Guan and the Mole-Dagbani who spread over three different regions of the Gold Coast.

The Akans counted eighteen clans known as the Oyoko (considered as the Ashanti's royal clan), the Aduana, the Agona, the Asakyri, the Asenie, the Asona, the Bretuo, the Ekoona, the Dako, the Asokore, the Tena, the Dwum, the Atwea, the Adaa, the Kuona, the Atena, the Toa and the Abrade clans(3). In 1669, most of the Akans spread over the core of the forest region called the Tafo country(4). The members of the Oyoko clan were located in Kumasi, Dwaben, Kokofu, Bekwai, Nsuta. Thirteen other non-Oyoko clans were situated in Mampon, Asumenya, Ofinso, Adansi, Edweso, Kumawu, Denyaase, Kwahu, Akwamu, Denkyira, Wassa, Nzima, and Assin while the other four Akan clans were situated in the south east and the north west of Kumasi in Akim, Accra, Gyaman and Bono, respectively.

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(1) According to archeological records and to Akan oral tradition, the first Ashanties emerged in the second half of the seventeenth century in the region of Buna in the north west of the Gold Coast forest. In the 1660s, the Ashanties counted five brothers from the Akan Oyoko clan led by their queen mother –who became after the great Ashanti's ancestress- Ankyewa Nyame. Few years later, in 1667, they moved down to Asantemanso and later into the Tafo country known as Kumasi.

I.Wilks, Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the kingdom of Asante, Ohio University Press, Second Edition,1993, p.65.

(2) "The Akans are divided into two categories, the *Akan-Fo* such as: Ashanti, Adansi, Akim, Assin, Denkyira, Akim, Accra, Gyaman and Bono speaking the Twi language and considered as the first Akan autochthones of the forest region and the *Epeto-Fo* (the foreign people) who have minor cultural differences and represented the Fante, Wassa, Sefwi and the other groups of the south of the forest". I.Wilks, "The State of the Akan and the Akan States", Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines,(v:xxvii, 3-4, p.23).

The other four ethnic groups namely, the Ga and the Ewe consisted of seven small communities while the Guan and Mole Dagbani included respectively the Gonja and Dagomba tribes. The Ewe and Ga communities were situated in the seven regions of Ewe, Ga, Shai, Ada, Asogli, Ho and Peki in the south east of the forest while the Gonja and Dagomba tribes were in the north (See map n°1 p.7). Thus, what will be examined first below will be the organization of the political institutions that were set to gather the Ashanti's ethnic groups.

The Ashanti's ethnic groups spoke different languages with distinguishable sub-cultural traits and origins, while some of these sub-cultural groups were small and compact, some others were large and strong enough to organize their kingdoms of varying size and degree of autonomy, to make up three main divisions within the core and the periphery of what was known at that time as the Ashanti empire.

These three divisions comprised the central, provincial and local divisions known as the *Metropolitan Ashanti* or the *Ashanti Confederacy*, the *Provincial Ashanti(*with its *Internal* and *External Provinces* and the *Local Division)*, respectively. What were the criteria chosen by the main authorities to set up their political organization? And what kind of political control was then instituted into the divisions of the empire to unite the different ethnic groups altogether?

I.I.The Political Divisions

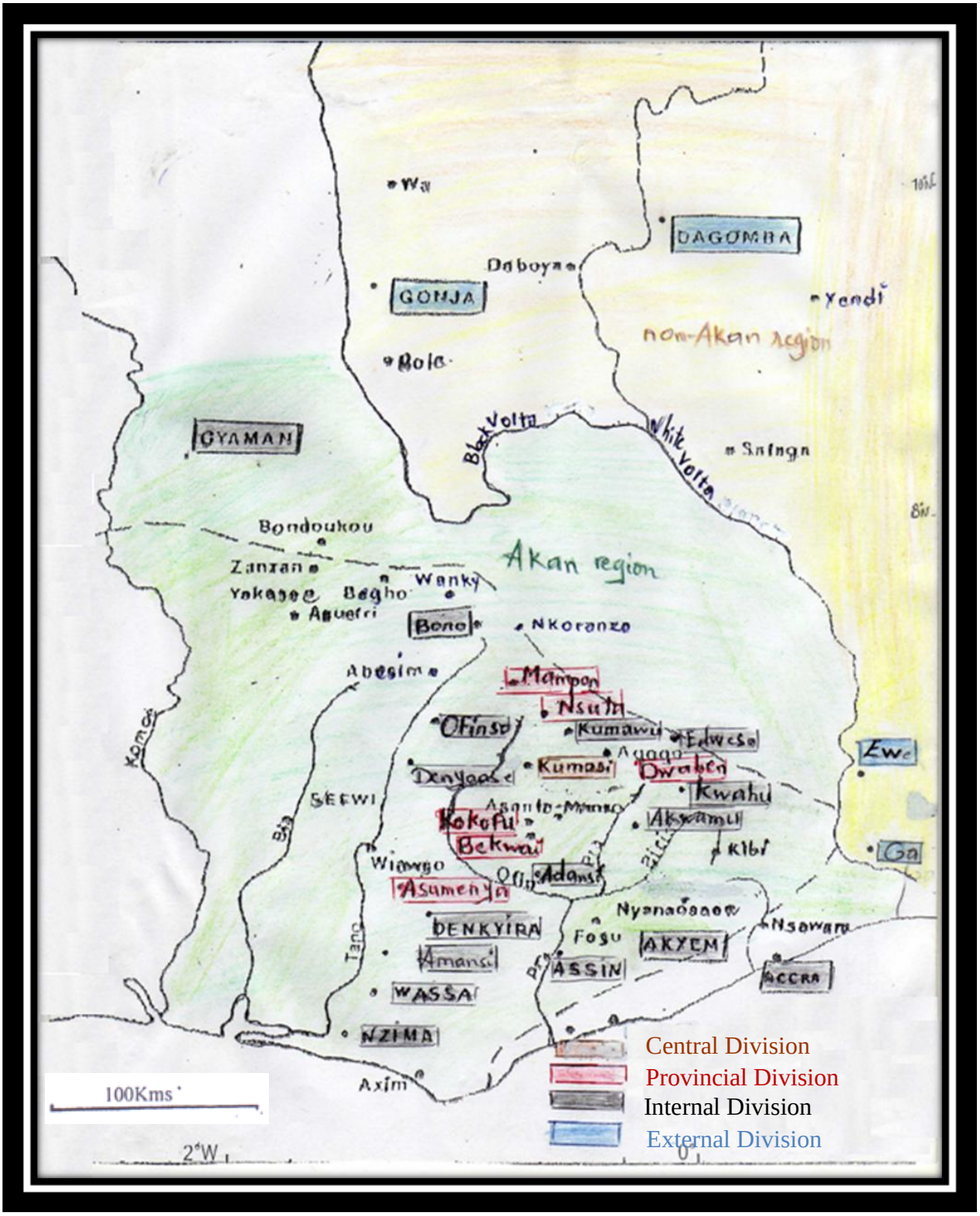
Inside the three divisions, a certain hierarchy was greatly instituted among the main authority holders. The Metropolitan Ashanti included the king and his eight Office Holders (the king's local advisers). The Provincial Ashanti included seven Omanhene (known as sub-chiefs leading the Akan States) and the Local Ashanti division comprised the Local District Chiefs (in the Akan States) and the Ohyene (the Lineage-Heads in the Ga and Ewe communities)(See Diagram1 p.9).

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(3) Kofi Akwabi-Ameyaw, "Ashanti Social Organisation: some ethnographic clarifications", Ethnology, University of Cincinnati, 1989, p.23.

(4) W.W.Claridge, A History of the Gold Coast and the Ashanti, London: Frank Class and Co. LTD, Second Edition, 1964, p.193.

Map1: The Asante Empire (1695-1750)



Source: Gérard Pescheux, "Le Royaume Asante (Ghana)", Parenté, Pouvoir,Histoire :XVII^{e}-XX^{e}siécles", Paris, Editions Karthala,2003, p.29.

1.1.a. The Central Division

As it is shown on Diagram1, the king was the head of the empire within the Metropolitan Ashanti; he was eligible to such a position through Akan's established criteria. First, the election was set up by a body of king makers in the capital of Kumasi(5). They comprised lineage-heads considered as traditional elders residing in Kumasi. They counted five members known as the Krontihene, the Adontenhene, the Kydomhene, the Benkumhene and the Oyokohene together with the members of the Oyoko royal family that is, the Queen mother and the king's maternal uncles whose attendance was of a great importance.

The election was instaured according to a system of matrilineal hereditary succession whereby only the former king's brothers and nephews from the mother's side could inherit property and be entitled to succession. In addition to matrilineal succession, physical and moral qualities of the candidate to succession were greatly considered, that is, he had to be free from physical blemish and quite strong and wise(6) with a certain military and political experience respecting the whole local and traditional beliefs(7). Two Ashanti kings marked the late seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century: Osei Tutu (1695-1731), commonly considered as the founder of the Ashanti's political institutions with the help of his fellow chiefs and Apoku Ware (1731-1750) who followed his predecessor's work and developed the political organization of the empire.

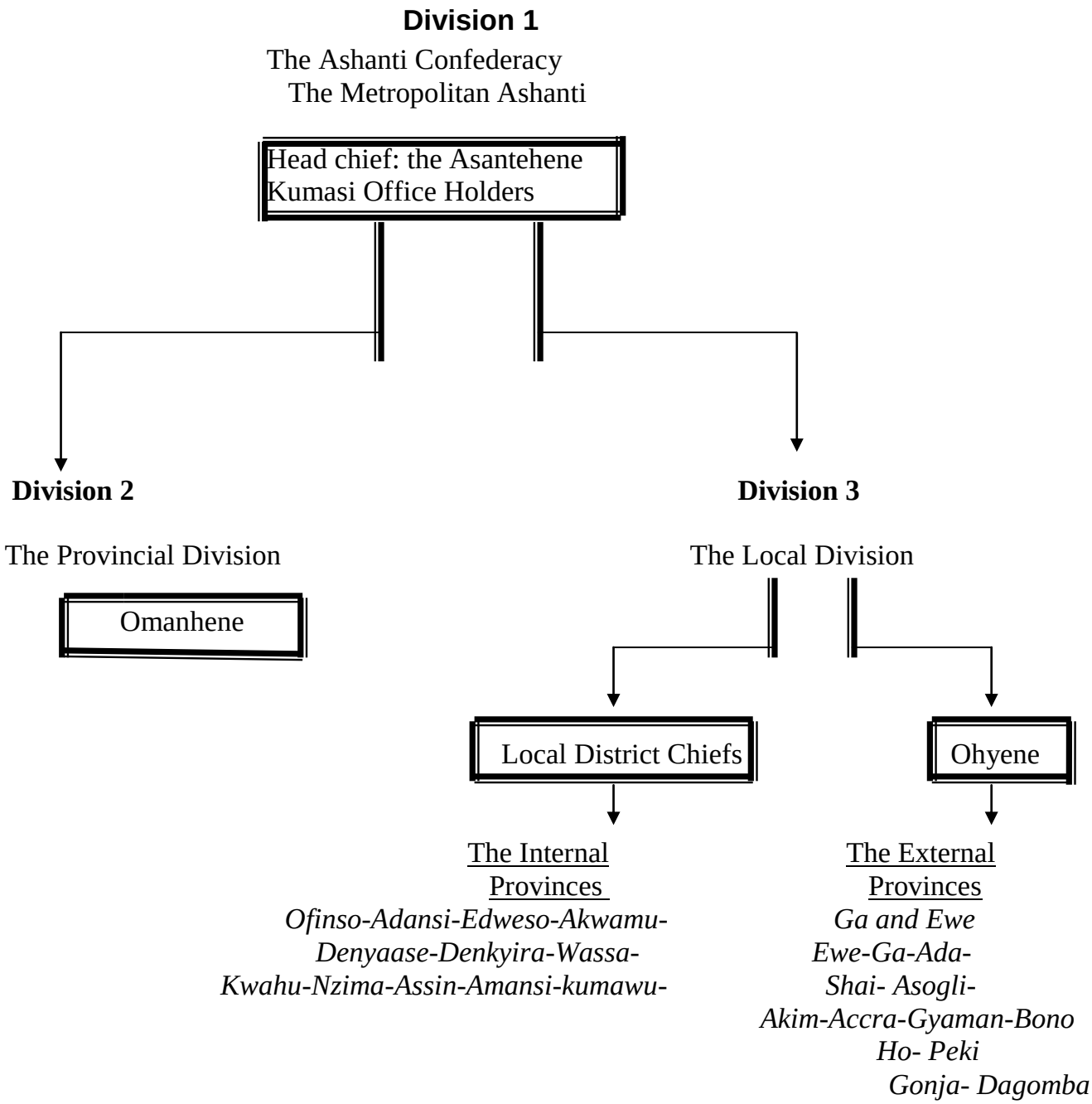
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(5) "When a king died and a new one had to be appointed, the elders held a meeting at which the Krontihene presided. At the meeting the elders selected two from among themselves to approach the queen mother and ask her to nominate a candidate for the stool. The queen mother then held a meeting with all the adult men and the senior women of the branches of the royal lineage. They considered the eligible candidates in turn and chose the one they thought the most suitable.... When they had decided on the candidate, the queen mother sent to inform the Krontihene. The latter summoned a meeting and told them of the queen mother's nominated candidate".
K.A.Busia, 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, London, 1951, p.9.

(6) The necessary qualities were "intelligence (adwepa), humility (ahobr-ase), generosity (ne yam ye), manliness (abooduru), and physical fitness". R.S.Rattray, Ashanti Law and Constitution, Oxford University Press, Second Edition, 1969, p.90.

(7) "The Asantehene was not allowed to cross the Pra River (in the South of Kumasi) and he had to remain free from physical blemish. Besides, neither his bare feet nor the other parts of his body were supposed to touch the ground". R.O.Lagace, "Society Twi: Ashanti", Australian National University, retrieved March 24, 2006 from (http://www.Ashanti Culture/1708/doc/html).

Diagram 1: The Divisions of the Empire (1696-1750)



Osei Tutu or Tutu the conqueror was the main candidate for royal succession. In 1695, he inherited his sovereignty after the death of his uncle Obiri Yeboa (1663-1695). Born about 1645, he spent his youth in the royal court of Denkyira , the south eastern overlords of the Tafo-Kwaman region of the time. He later spent some time in the court of Ansara Sasraku, leader of Akwamu, and prior to his return to Kwaman (north of Kumasi) in the late 1670s to take over from Obiri Yeboa. Henceforth, tracing O.Tutu's moves after his rise to power furnished important insights into a state formation in Ashanti.

Osei Tutu was a political strategist. He was said to be a strong conqueror who acquired a large political and military experience during his stay in both Denkyira and Akwamu neighbouring states to become a military leader. He was also a wise sovereign at the head of the Oyoko clan. He began by establishing control over the region surrounding Kumasi (See map1 p.7). Then, he grouped other clan chiefs around his court, using Kumasi as his base. Later, he conquered the surrounding Akan chiefdoms. In doing so he took the title of Asantehene(8).

Within the empire, the Asantehene held a sacred position. Through the creation of the Golden Stool by the priest Akomfo Anokye, the Asantehene was the most venerated living person in Ashanti. The people of the empire, mainly the Akans feared and believed that the Stool embodied the spirit or soul of the whole Ashanti nation and that the Asantehene was the sole and perpetual guardian of the Stool. The latter represented the ties of kinship that gave ultimate sanction to the different opponents. It was a fictitious extension of control among the king's subjects so that different states could be easily incorporated within the Ashanti empire and through which the Asantehene became the guardian of the Ashanties' spirit and unity(9). By the institution of the Golden Stool, the Asantehene gained the support of the religious chiefs and became the centre to which all the authority holders of the Ashanti empire were connected(10).

(8) R.S. Rattray, op.cit, pp.91-92.

(9) "The Golden Stool was the most important stool made of gold. It was called Sika Dua in Ashanti's Twi language and according to legend, Tutu's adviser, the priest Akomfo Anokye originated the myth of this stool. He called down the stool from the sky and slowly came down on King Osei Tutu's Knees without touching the ground". Otumfo Nana Agyeman Prempeh, op.cit, pp.100-101.

(10) "The Ashanti do not like to speak of the Asantehene, still less to be questioned about him. When they have to talk about him they do so in low tones, modulating gradually into whispers". K.A.Busia, op.cit, p.96.

The subordinate members were eight lineage heads known as traditional elders. They consisted of the five electing members during the Asantehene's succession and three other Kumasi elders who reigned over eight divisions of the Kumasi State and were distinguished according to the name of their lineages. They were respectively known as the Oyokohene, the Krontihene, the Kidomhene, the Benkumhene, the Adontenhene, the Nifahene, the Akwamuhene and the Gyasehene.

In Metropolitan Ashanti, mainly in the capital Kumasi, the eight traditional elders were given the name of Office Holders and had definite stools (special Ashanti's wooden chairs) that differentiated them from other authority holders in the exercise of their functions close to their king. In 1720, they attended a new established council, the Advisory Council that was instituted and presided by the Asantehene Osei Tutu to maintain the political organization of the whole empire(11) (See Diagram 2 p.12).

The Office Holders regularly collaborated with the Asantehene in the establishment of new Ashanti's laws. They were engaged in making Akan and non-Akan people respect their king as the supreme authority over the whole empire and to give their entire reverence, contribution and allegiance to the king's subchiefs as members of the royal court. In return, the Asantehene promised to rule his subjects with the help and advice of his eight advisors.

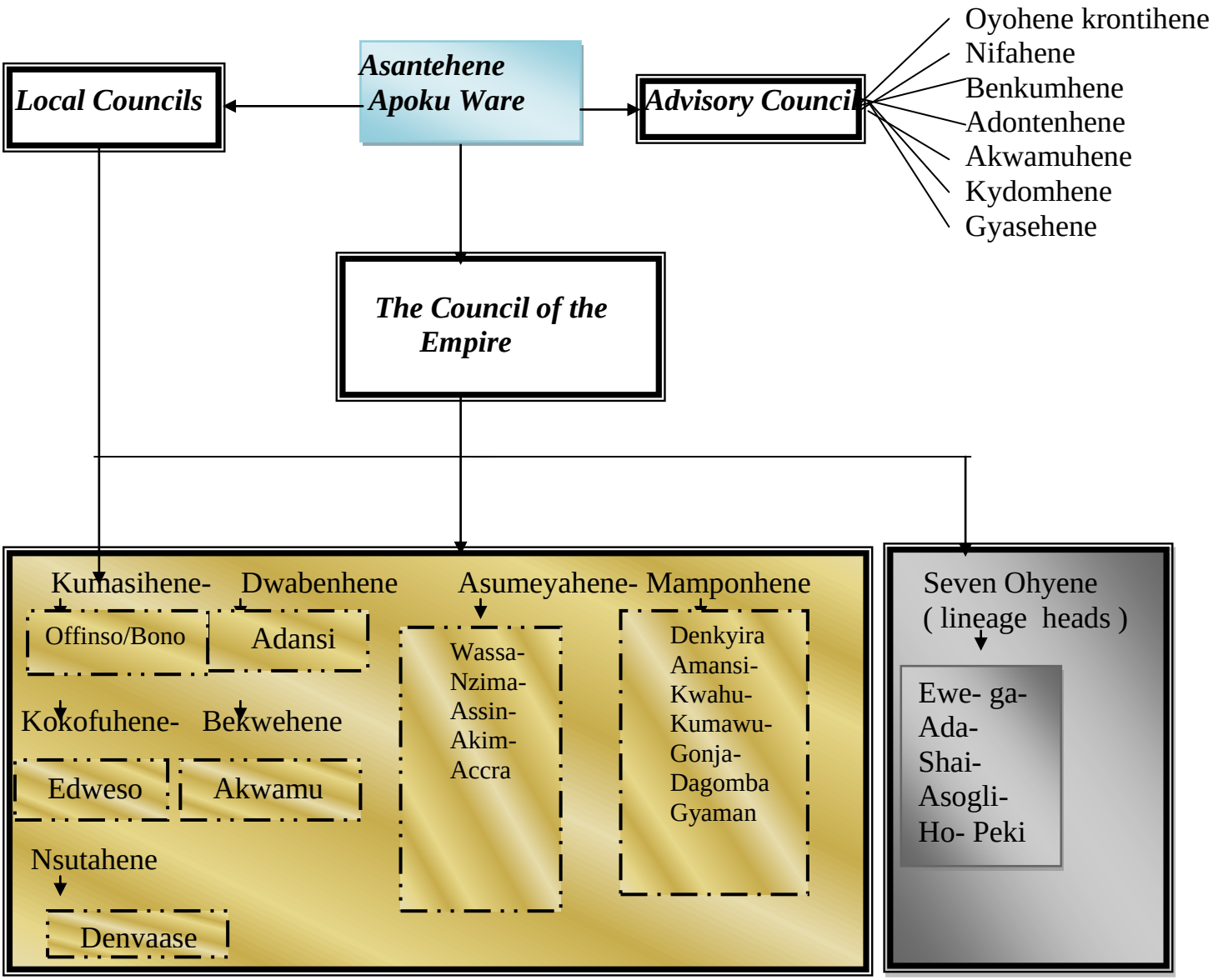
Outside the Advisory Council, the Office Holders' prerogatives extended to a constant supervision over the Asantehene's functions and decisions through their established Kumasi Assembly (known also as the Council of Elders). The Office Holders often gathered and were granted few prerogatives. They had the right to destitute the king and to attribute him the political control of the other provincial division(12).

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(11) K.A.Busia, ibid, p.232.

(12) "...the Asantehene was bound by custom to act with the consent and on the advice of his officeholders. They had ultimately the constitutional right to destool the king. As the fundamental principle was that only those who elected a king could destool him". K.A.Busia, ibid, p.21. For the Asantehene's destoolment I.Wilks stated: "...sometimes the officeholders initiated a destoolment themselves when, for example, a king repeatedly rejected their advice, or when he broke a taboo, or commited a sacrilegious act". I.Wilks, The Asante in the 19th century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order, Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp.34-35.

Diagram 2: The Council of the Empire



Key:

Centralized political control

Decentralized political control

1.1.b. The Provincial Division

Six sub-chiefs called Omanhene together with the Asantehene ruled the Provincial Ashanti. They were known as the Dwabenhene, the Kokofuhene, the Bekwaihene, the Nsutahene, the Mamponhene and the Asumenyahene, in addition to the Asantehene who remained Kumasihene. The six Omanhene lived in the different Oman[13]or states including and surrounding the central forest region such as Dwaben, Kokofu, Bekwai, Nsuta, Mampon, Asumenya (See map n°1p.7).

The Asantehene and his six Omanhene were cautiously attributed the control over eighteen Ashanti States. The Kumasihene (the king) controlled Ofinso and Bono. Four other Omanhene including, the Dwabenhene, the Kokofuhene, the Bekwaihene and the Nsutahene controlled respectively, Adansi, Edweso, Akwamu and Denyaase and the other Omanhene: the Mamponhene controlled Kwahu, Kumawu, Denkyira, Amansi, Gonja, Dagomba, Gyaman and the Asumenyahene took Wassa, Nzima, Assin, Akim and Accra.

It was mainly through hereditary membership that the Kumasihene, the Dwabenhene, the Kokofuhene, the Bekweihene, and the Nsutahene were chosen to rule the Akan groups surrounding Kumasi. They were in majority elected into the Ashanti's royal matriclan that is, they were linked together by kinship relations into the Oyoko clan. In addition, the Dwabenhene, the Bekweihene, the Kokofuhene and the Nsutahene were considered as confederated people who joined the Ashanti royal members by a diplomatic agreement of cooperation. Through this union, the four Omanhene acquired the Asantehene's absolute trust in controlling the most important Akan people of the central empire who wanted to maintain their identity against the neighbouring oppressive and tyrannical ruler known as the Denkyirahene (the ruler of the Denkyira State)[14].

Besides the four Omanhene's hereditary membership, the two other Omanhene, the Mamponhene and the Asumenyahene had political ranks thanks to their acquired status in the Ashanti empire. These Omanhene had not the same kinship links as the other Omanhene. They were non-Oyoko sub-chiefs who were chosen by the Asantehene through their military assistance in the Ashanti army. The Mamponhene

(13) Singular Aman, W.W.Claridge, op.cit, p.170.

(14) R.S.Rattray, op. cit, pp.94-95.

was the head chief of the right wing of the Ashanti army while the Asumenyahene was the head chief of the left one. They were appointed as Omanhene after their campaigns against the main Southern Akan States whichwere incorporated into the Ashanti empire mainly after the Denkyira conquest (since they were allies to the Denkyirahene and refused the Ashanti's union).

Furthermore, with the introduction of the Golden Stool institution the Omanhene had a Ceremonial Stool which was of great significance to the authority holders but to ensure direct supervision over the provincial Akans, the Omanhene together with the Asantehene needed permanent contact with their respective local subchiefs and a new institution was thus established.

In 1730s, it was the new Asantehene Apoku Ware (1730-1750) who maintained further accomplishments within the Provincial Ashanti to establish the *Local Councils*. The six Omanhene and the Asantehene assisted their own councils in their own states gathering their local sub-chiefs under their direct rule.(See Diagram 3p.15).

Each Council was attended by its respective leader in addition to the local District Chief and Village Heads of the relevant state. The latter met to report all the provincial people's activities and to solve any important political issue on order to preserve Ashanti's political control and order in the local provinces(15).

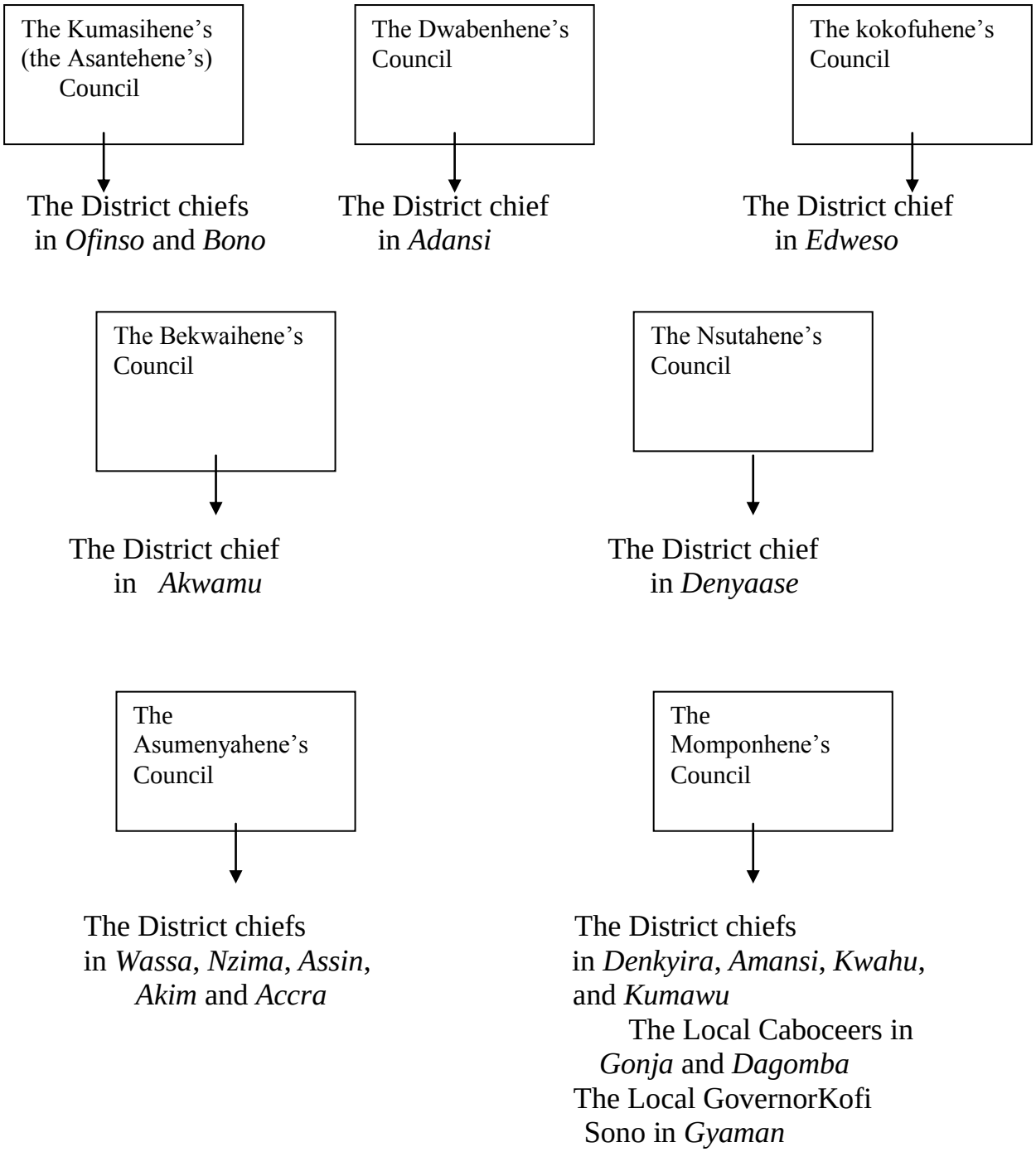
1.1.c. The Local Division

District Chiefs and Lineage-Heads were appointed in the Local Division of the empire. The District Chiefs given the control of the internal provinces and the Lineage-Heads (known as Ohyhene) ruled the external provinces. In the internal provinces, the District chiefs were subordinate Akan hereditary chiefs who had the direct supervision of the local Akan states. They were helped, in their rule by other sub-chiefs who were in their turn assisted by the village-head chiefs(16).

(15) I.Wilks, The Asante in the 19th century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order, p.39.

(16) Otumfo Nana Agyeman Prempeh, op.cit, p.142.

Diagram 3: The Omanhene's Local Councils



Some of the District Chiefs were chosen according to their royal hereditary membership. Some of them were taken as royal Akan members and others were non-Akan royal chiefs. As it is shown on Diagram 3, the local governor Kofi Sono in Gyaman and the local chief Bafo Pim in the capital of Bono were among the Asantehene's relatives. The other District Chiefs in Gonja and Dagomba were the local royal 'caboceers' of the northern tribes.

Moreover, these District Chiefs were chosen to rule important territories where different local ethnic groups resided. Kofi Sono (1746-1760), the local representative in the Gyaman Council was appointed Gyamanhene since A.Ware chose him among his royal relatives and governed all the local representatives of the Gyaman ethnic groups such as the Nafana and Gbin autochthones, the Kulango and western Bonduku people, the Tambi in the north, Comoe in the west and the Dogma, Ntakima in the east(17).

Bafo Pim, in his turn, was appointed as the Bono District Chief (he was considered as the Asanthene's cousin from the maternal side), he contributed in the Ashanti's campaigns against Gyaman and got the control over the Bono ethnic groups in Nkyraa, Tubodom, Tanoso, Sabino, Nkoransa, Takyiman, Wankyi and Kintampo. In his direct supervision of the Bono areas, five new Office Holders were chosen among the Kumasi dignitaries to help Bafo Pim in his local control. They were known as the Adumhene, the Dadiesoahene, the Amantahene, the Nsumankewahene and the Adamankwahene. The first four office holders were attributed the supervision of Nkyma, Tubodon, Tanoso and Sabino while the Adamankwahene was attributed the supervision of the other parts of the state including Nkoransa, Takyiman, Wankyi and Kintampo(18).

The Gonja and Dagomba local representatives were not Ashanti's royal hereditary members, they were the native Guan and Mole Dagbani royal chiefs. In fact, the Gonja and Dagomba states consisted of Muslim states which were left under the government of their own supreme chiefs called the 'caboceers'.

(17) W.W.Claridge, op.cit, p.209.

(18) R.S.Rattray, op.cit, p.256.

Through a system of patrilineal succession, these 'caboceers' were elected by the chiefs and elders of the capitals of each state. In the Gonja state, the Gonja caboceer was elected (from the capital of the state Buipe) by Muslim chiefs and dignitaries. He ruled the different Gonja areas which consisted of Kpembi near Dagomba, Bole, Wa and Daboya whereas the Dagomba chiefs elected their caboceer from the (Metropolitan state of Salaga) for the control over Yendi, Kpabia, Savelugu and Gambaga. In their control, the Gonja and Dagomba caboceers attributed the direction of each area to hereditary chiefs who were the members of the caboceers' royal clan from the paternal side. The latter assisted the caboceers in the direction of their attributed areas following their own system of government and their devised political institution.

Outside the internal provinces, seven non-Akan Lineage-Heads called Ohyhene of the south eastern regions were given control of the external provinces (See Diagram 3p.15). They were the native traditional chiefs of the Ga and Ewe regions. They were attributed more autonomy than the Akans (without any district chief or village head control) and they often depended on the supervision of the king's intermediaries and messengers and this rather showed the absence of the Ashanti's direct supervision(19).

To supervise his sub-chiefs whether under a centralized or decentralized control, the Asantehene Apoku Ware held a third council called the Council of the Empire. The latter annually gathered the main authority holders and sub-chiefs that is the six Omanhene of the different Akan States, the Asantehene's intermediaries in the south eastern communities, the eight Office Holders, the Ashanti dignitaries in addition to the chief of the council, the Asantehene.

All the members of the council of the Empire assisted the Asantehene in the most important affairs of the Ashanti empire. They met to discuss war and reported all the political conflicts. They participated in the periodic Odwira ceremonies, a large gathering that rekindled sentiments of solidarity and nationhood among all the chiefs and commoners. They attended the national tribunal into which even the Asantehene could be tried and they also supervised the economic and social conditions of the people under their supervision and control.

(19) W.W.Claridge, op.cit, p.209.

The source of A. Ware's political position was to continue his predecessor's achievements. He stood at the head of his kinship unit in Kumasi and came to articulate the kin solidarity of his own clan, the Oyoko. He sought to augment his power with that of an ascribed status with the help of the Office Holders, the Omanhene, the District Chiefs and the Ohyhene in leading political control, the Ashanti's political structure was subsequently organized and political control was distributed following a pyramidal structure strengthened by subordinate kin members and political institutions that made up its basis. This pyramidal structure was headed by the king or the Asantehene and his Office Holders and based on the local sub chiefs' centralized and decentralized political control.

From the Metropolitan through the Provincial to the local Ashanti in each Akan state, every Omanhene, District Chief and Village-Head chief reproduced the pattern of the authority exercised in the centre of the Ashanti empire as they were organized in a way that showed the centralized Asantehene's control. However, the south-eastern division of the empire was left under the decentralized Asantehene's control since the Ohyhene's communities were rather remote areas but situated in a region which was to open later on routes for further conquests and trade especially with the Europeans on the coast(20). Every Office Holder, Omanhene, District Chiefs or Ohyhene inherited their offices through their own respective lineages to which they belonged. That is to say, their lineage members appointed them in any succession or destoolment made by the Asantehene(21).

The establishment of the Advisory, Local and Empire political councils facilitated the exercise of political control and respect of order over the subdued provincial people. The Ashanti's political organization needed then the administrative organization that linked these councils with the different divisions.

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(20) Naomi Chazan, The Early State in African Perspective, Studies in Human Society,V:2, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1988, p.66.

(21)W.W.W.Claridge, op.cit, p.211.

1.1.d.The Administrative Institution

Under the reign of the Asantehene Apoku Ware, new administrative officials were appointed in the central and provincial divisions. They consisted of two categories of Office Holders who dealt with the organization of efficient local councils.

Inside the royal court, the Office Holders were the *Gyasehene* and the *Birempomhene* who were chosen among the king's faithful servants. The Gyasehene served the Asantehene as the head of drummers and hornblowers and the Birempomhene provided a wide range of personal services including umbrella carriers and messengers in the internal servant's organization of each Oman(22).

Besides their work within the royal court, the Asantehene left some administrative functions to the Gyasehene and the Biremponhene. The Gyasehene controlled the royal revenues that came to the king's treasuries and supervised any expenses among the royal family members and Office Holders while the Biremponhene was the king's reliable messenger to the Office Holders and often attended the Advisory Council to supervise the administration of the different issues and to register all the decisions taken during the Office Holders' meetings.

The royal Gyasehene and Biremponhene exercised also other administrative prerogatives inside the provincial division. They ensured the supervision of the local Gyasehene and Biremponhene who were appointed by the Omanhene(23). Like the royal Gyasehene, the local Gyasehene were, in the Oman, given the administration of the Omanhene's revenues and properties whereas the local Biremponhene were messengers supervising the local chiefs' work in the local districts and having to report the local chiefs' activities especially concerning their possible conflicts, revolts and revenues. The Gyasehene's and Birempomhene's administration ensured the Omanhene's organization of both political and economic affairs.

(22) R.S.Rattray, op.cit, p.256

(23) "The term '*Gyase*' applies to the most immediate adherents attached to the household of any important personage. In this instance, even an ordinary well-to-do man (rich man) may have his own *Gyase* , so much so that the head of the family (*Opanyin* or *Atrankonnua*) or a ruler of a town (*Odekro*), or a head of a division of a state (*Ohene*) or the supreme head or king of a state (Omanhene) should necessarily have his own Gyase-men, and the number of the members constituting the Gyase of each of the above heads depends on the importance of the party

The king's creation of the Gyasehene's and the Biremponhene's offices were to ensure the efficient organization of the empire meetings and also the permanent acknowledge over the daily reports that were studied and registered by the Biremponhene. These administrative officers were to interfere into the Omanhene's military activities, too (especially the Mamponhene and the Asumenyahene)(24).

1.2. The Military Institution

In 1732, the firm organization of the Ashanti's army in the Central Division and the creation of new military companies in the Provincial Division were compulsory for further conquests.

Inside the central division, the Ashanti army comprised five Office Holders (chosen within the Kumasi divisions) who were trained to exercise their military prerogatives into what was called the Abontendom group. The Abontendom members were five members known as the Abontenhene (the chief of the army), the Nifahene (the chief of the right wing of the army), the Benkumhene (the chief of the left wing), the Kydomhene (the chief of the rearguard) and finally the Kontirehene known as the Bantamahene who led the army during the Asantehene's absence (he could be replaced also by the Akwamuhene)(25).

In times of war, the Abontendom members led the Ashanti troops that were mobilized for a full military assistance. Helped by the confederated Omanhene and the local chiefs, the Abontendom members used to prepare the Akan and non-Akan provincial people whose engagement was of great importance in the Ashanti army. The provincial people had to assist the military Ashanti campaigns to subdue their neighbours. The military assistance of the Denkiyra and Akwamu people, for instance, among the Ashanti military forces was of a great importance in

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concerned. That is to say, the number of the members of the Gyase attached to the Ohenes household is by far fewer than that attached to the Omanhene household". I.Wilks, Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante, op.cit, p.100.

(24) "The Bono Biremponhene learnt reading and writing from the Muslims of the north (as they were captives of the Bono king) and taught the Ashanti administrators the art of writing and registering the important events that came to the court". E.Terray, op.cit, p.327.

(25) R.Cornevin, Histoire des peuples de l'Afrique Noire ,France : Edition Berger Lever Ault, Paris, Troisième Edition, 1963, p437. And E.Terray, "Contribution à une Etude de l'Armée Asante", Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, 61-62, V: XVI (1-2), pp.104-105.

the conquest of the neighbouring people such as Nzima, Wassa, Ewe, Ga... who assisted, in their turn, the Ashanti troops for further invasions(26).

This Abontendom's command over provincial military assistance was to strengthen the Ashanti's army by preparing the states of the empire, willy-nilly, in supporting the Asantehene to spread his control over rebellious people.

Outside the Central Division, the Asantehene and the six Omanhene established their own military institution in the Provincial Division through their headship of seven new personal military companies known as *Fekuo*. Each *Fekuo* company consisted of different military troops whose members were trained officers and soldiers chosen among the war-captives and among the Omanhene's own subjects and servants(27) (who were brought or left as slaves by an army chief or by a deceased local chief).

Each company functioned as the local Omanhene's personal guard. Its members had to maintain local security in each Aman. They protected the Omanhene from any rebellion and established respect and order. In times of war and military conflicts, the Fekuo troops were trained to execute missions and order. They secured also the conquered people's submission to a complete military assistance that was of a great importance in times of war. The military assistance of the Bono people for example besides the Ashanti's army officers had a major contribution in the Ashanti's expansion northwards for the control over the northern Gonja and Dagomba people(28).

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(26)The Asantehene was also assisted by the Bono people to confiscate legally some of the Omanhene's villages. As T.C. McCaskie stated: "The Asantehene Apoku Ware was given the juridical right for the confiscation on some Omanhene's territories mainly the Mamponhene's ones. Indeed, some villages situated in the North of the Mampon state (called Asonomaso, Nantan and Safo) were legally confiscated by the established law which stated that no one of a respected royal family should be insulted by his name. This was what a member of the Mampon clan (the Tana clan) made by insulting the Asantehene's name and thus the Mamponhene was ordered to compensate his sovereign".

T.C.McCaskie, "Ahyiamu: A place of Meeting. An essay on Process and Event in the History of the Asante State", Journal of African History , V25, 1984, p.125.

(27) "The members of the companies consisted of captives, he (that is, O.Tutu) had taken in the war from Banda, Berekum, Akwamu, Denkyira and Dogma." R.S.Rattray, op. cit, pp.94-95.

During their military campaigns, the Fekuo troops had their own chiefs who were considered as the royal commanders of the Omanhene's Fekuo companies. They were appointed officers of the royal court who had their military experience within the Ashanti army. They were chosen by the Asantehene and controlled by the Anantahene Fosu (the holder of the Ananta stool in Kumasi)(29).

The Asantehene's power and strength could be seen through his developed means of protection. The Ashanti's military forces were equipped, during their campaigns, with the latest firearms instead of traditional weapons. These firearms were initially taken from the subdued Akan people of Adansi, Ofinso, Akwamu, Denkyira ...who imported them from the Europeans on the coast. Following the Denkyira and the Akwamu military formation, the Asantehene introduced new techniques for the acquired weapons and for directing the military forces(30).

The appointment of these royal servants was not well received by the military leaders and the Omanhene. They considered them as the king's personal spies and often revolted. A.Ware barely survived a revolt made by the precedent Osei Tutu's military chiefs in 1748, while towns around Kumasi resisted the interference of the group of the Kumasi confederated Omanhene. The Asantehene A.Ware decided then to reform the judicial institution.

1.3. The Judicial Institution

The king was the supreme authority in judging his subjects. They could be publicly condemned to death during their revolts and non-assistance in times of war or to the payment of special sums given in gold dust during any hostility or insults against the king, the administrative or the military agents(31).

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(28) K.A.Busia, op.cit, p.101. And also R.S.Rattray, ibid, p.96.

(29) R.S.Rattray, ibid, pp.257-258.

(30) "The Akan people of the south obtained large quantities of weapons mainly from the British Royal Company at Cape Coast under the chief agency of Sir Dalby Thomas".
S.Tenkorang, "The importance of Firearms in the Struggle between Ashanti and the Coastal States (1708-1807)". Transaction of the Historical Society of Ghana , Vol IX, p.1.
And I.Wilks quoted: "In June 1700, Director General Van-Sevenhuysen noted that Denkyira and the neighbouring Adjansee (it means Ashanti) needed more muskets because the inland Negroes seem to have a lot of wars in mind". I.Wilks, Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the kingdom of Asante, op.cit, p.111.

The sums paid were made in 'mperedwan' (the Ashanti's currency made in gold dust) and they varied between five to twenty 'mperedwan' according to the importance of each judgment and guilty subject. The biggest sum that was to be paid could reach thirty 'mperedwan'(32) if the Asantehene and his royal family members were subjects to insults among the Akans. Besides, the Asantehene inherited the personal properties of a deceased Akan according to his rank and social status. That is to say, when the person was humble, only a symbolic part of his properties was devoted to the Asantehene but it became bigger when the person had considerable properties.

The Asantehene's judgments and laws were then applied by the Abontendom members at the royal court. The latter were engaged to make the Ashanti people obey the Asantehene's sentence and punishment. They exercised their functions within a sphere of jurisdiction that comprised both the Metropolitan and Provincial people.

Through the Asantehene's established military institution, the people of the empire were partially united and obedient to the established politico-ritual symbols of unity. People like Ofinso, Adansi, Edweso and others like the subdued provincial Akans (such as Denkyira, Wassa end Assin) were rather resistant to the Asantehene's attempt to gather the people of the empire under the same instituted laws. They often sought for ways of revolt and rebellion to overthrow Ashanti's supremacy but each time the newly established judicial laws and military members showed the Asantehene's achievement to react at any dangers or risks of invasion, rebellion or secession which might threaten the supremacy of the central authority of Kumasi(33).

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(31) "Among the Ashanties, no one should be considered as guilty of an offence except on the basis of the established fact of a personal act and of the known motive behind this act. No one should be considered as guilty of an offence until he has had a fair and impartial audience. No one should be condemned and punished without the basis of a just verdict".

Paul Hagan, "The Rule of Law in Ashanti: A Traditional Akan State", Prèsence Africaine, V113, 1980, p.208.

(32) 30 mperedwan= 60ounces(oz) =3pounds(Ib) =1,36kg, P.Hagan, op.cit, p.210.

(33) E.Terray, op.cit. p.115.

On the whole, the Ashanti's political organization before 1750 was a methodological and thoughtful effort used to strengthen the beginnings of a centralized political system within the Ashanti's empire through hereditary attribution of political control over each state and community. This strengthened system witnessed numerous processes of state formation and consolidation under O.Tutu's reign to become integrally tied by the newly devised constitutional and traditional and military institutions while under A. Ware's reign, the consolidated empire was coterminous with the existence of a functionally discrete political center which regulates activities in order to firmly enlarge the bases of the central government by the association of an increasing number of people of different origins (either Akans or non-Akans) indirectly left to their deliberation and responsibilities. As Ashanti tradition was related to the a matrilineal from of social organization, it allowed maximal individual mobility, and at the same time, enabled the assimilation of people. However, as most of the people of the empire were subdued ones, they were gathered under a new confederacy that was military in purpose and character and improved the application of new institutions which showed the supremacy of the authority holders, namely the Asantehene and his Office Holders. However, although O.Tutu's and A.Ware's achievements marked a period of rapid territorial aggrandizement and consolidation, economy was not neglected.

1.4. The Economic organization

Two main periods marked the beginning of the Ashanti's economic organization. From 1695 to 1731, witnessing king O.Tutu's reign with the initiation of food and gold production and from 1731 to 1750 following king A.Ware's reign and whose economic achievements were rather a development and exploitation of the local resources adding the acquisition of slaves in the tribute system. Each economic achievement will be then chronologically dealt with during the different periods of reign of these two Ashanti kings.

1.4.1.From 1695 to1731

Inside the forest region, the Ashanti's economic organization was initiated under O.Tutu's reign by the use and production of the basic natural resources of the empire. Thanks to the tropical climatic conditions and the geographical situation of their territory(34), the Ashanties were situated in most of the fertile forest region of the Gold Coast country. Farming and mining were their major activities including

the production of root crops and gold. Outside the forest region, the exploitation of the conquered people (of the south east and the other Akans) was made through the Ashanti's acquisition of the provincial tribute. However, what kind of economic system was undertaken within each region of the empire? and how was this system set up following the diversity of the Ashanti regions and their vegetation zones?(See map n°2p.26).

1.4.1.1.The Food-Producing System

The food producing system was the main agricultural sustenance system used in the Ashanti forest region. In such tropical regions, root crops were chiefly produced in considerable quantities following an agricultural system of distribution that suited the whole Ashanti people's needs.

Different crops were cultivated and were chiefly yams, plantains and gathered wild fruits. Yam was the most cultivated root crop -for its starchy edible tubers- appropriate for the moist climatic conditions of the forest region.

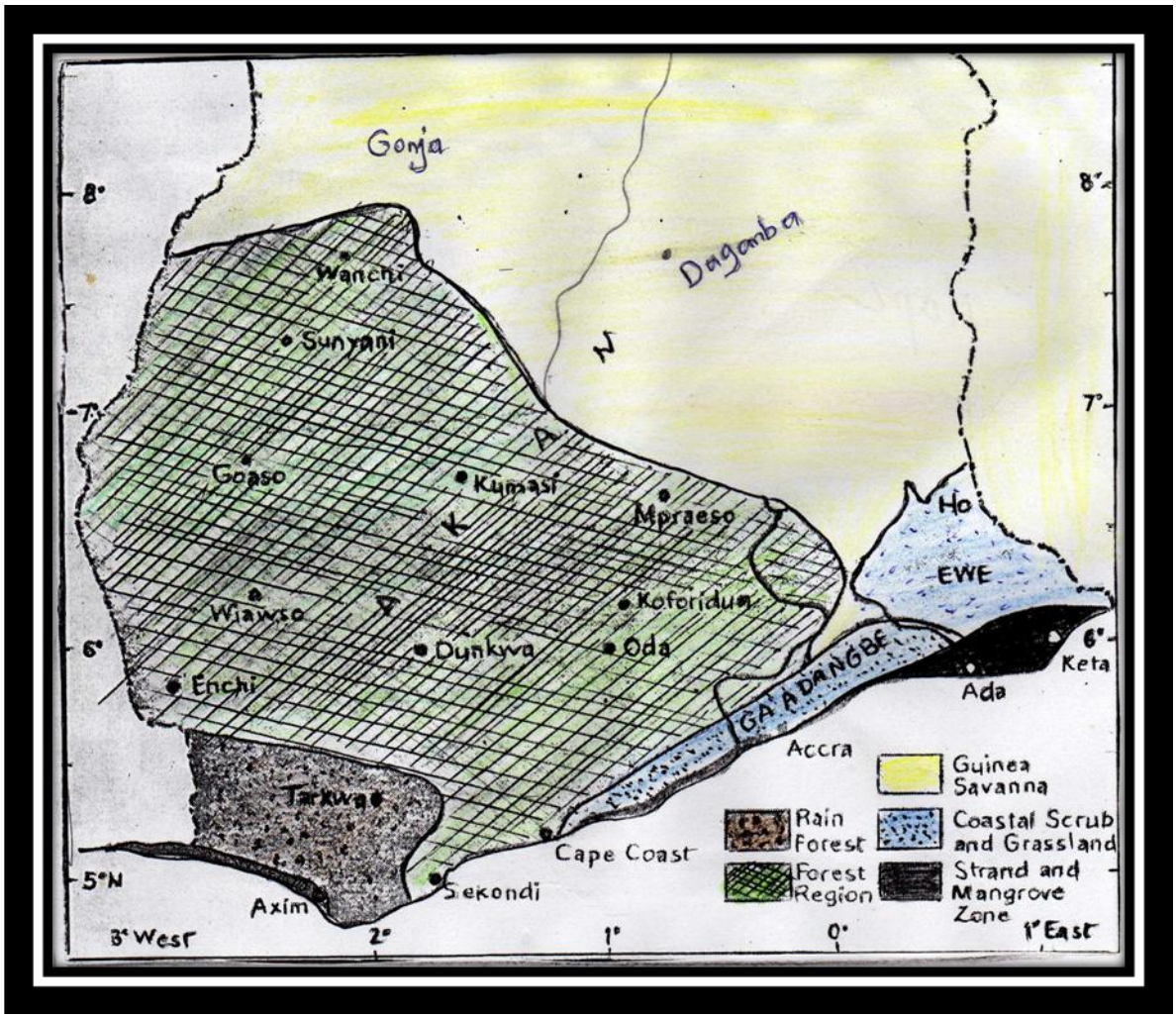
In the early eighteenth century, yams were cultivated throughout the Ashanti's forest region. The areas for its production stretched from the Mampon region to the southern regions including the external Akan provinces that is, Denkyira, Wassa, Nzima, Assin, Amansi ….

The yam cultivators differed according to their type and origin. That is to say, small groups comprised local Akan workers -most of them were migrant people in search of a settlement where they could grow crops- who cultivated the land with

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(34) "Throughout the Ashantees forest region, the climate is tropical. It is characterized by a high humidity with a temperature which varies according to the climatic conditions…. In the south eastern regions, the climate varies from the dry easterlies to the moist air variations". T.E.Bowdich, Mission from Cape coast Castle to Ashantee, London, Third Edition, 1966, p.162. And R.O.Lagace stated: "In the forest region, two rainy seasons depend on the existence of two air masses. One derives from the Sahara in the North, from which come the hot tropical air masses called the *harmattans*. The other air mass derives from the South West called the *monsoon*, which is characteristically very humid. The rainfalls water several lakes and rivers in the Ashanti country such as the Volta River (in the East of Kumasi), Lake Bosumtwi, the Pra, Ofin and the Birim Rivers". R.O.Lagace, op.cit.

Map2: Linguistic cultural and vegetation zones



Source: Adu Boahen, "Ghana Evolution and Change in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries", Longman, 1975, p.3.

the help of their relatives and members of their families and often lived in the different divisions, sub-divisions and villages of the Ashanti empire. Other large groups comprised slave labour. They were either free native workers who indebted to the owner of the land or war-captives (known as 'nnomun') -who were taken from the various Ashanti wars against the Akans and the south eastern people- who worked in large numbers gathered into the wide areas of the forest zone.

Both the local and slave workers were divided into several groups appropriate for preparing and cultivating the land following mere techniques of production. Some labourers cleared the land and were specialized in falling the trees of the forest and removing all the unpleasant weeds where after they used to burn this vegetation to avoid the appearance of other weeds or roots while others cleaned and cultivated the land. Some other local labourers used the small patches or areas of the bush zone for yam production as men generally cleared the land and their wives or children helped them for agriculture(35).

Mainly before the rainy seasons, yams were harvested. They could reach ten tons per hectare with large tubers often weighing from five to ten kilograms that were ready for their local distribution and later for their consumption (36).

The harvested crops were confiscated and divided by the Omanhene (the landowners) into different parts shared among the workers, the local chiefs and the Omanhene. While most of the distributed parts of harvested yam tubers were directly consumed by the local workers and chiefs, the Omanhene's share was largely consumed during the Odwira festival since it was annually offered to the Asantehene among the main chiefs and people of the empire to celebrate the

(35) "The implements for the production of yams consisted chiefly of axes, hoes, cutlasses, spades, wooden bowls and blades. They were made either in iron (which was either obtained locally or it was taken from the conquered people of the South) or in wood by the simple worker or by skillful blacksmiths specialized in smelting and making these tools which were rather simple and carefully used for the production". R.S.Rattray, Ashanti,op.cit,pp309-310

(36) " For the direct consumption, the yam tubers were either boiled or roasted while for its indirect consumption, the yam tubers were processed for the preparation of the yam flour after drying the tubers in the sun. This flour could be stored for a long time".

C.Johnston, "The Principle Perishable Staples of the Tropical World". Post-HarvestedTechnology, 1990, Retrieved May 14, 2004 from:(http://www.tro/tech/org/post harvested tech/.html).

traditional beliefs and customs and to demonstrate also the Asantehene's great acquisitions and his subject's gratitude(37).

Great consideration was given to the Asantehene after the yam harvest since he remained the sacred and perpetual guardian of the Golden Stool institution through which he was given the right for the distribution of lands to his sub-chiefs (the Omanhene) and the acquisition of any produced natural resource of the empire. Even in the south eastern communities of the Ga and the Ewe, their local food commodities such as cassava, rice, maize and salted fish became the property of the Stool and consequently the Asantehene's property(38).

It seems that the Ashanti's economic system of food production through yam plantation was basically organized for the local consumption. A typical organization for a subsistence economy that focused on the local consumption of the produced crops used to celebrate the traditional meetings and keep the labour force sustained for the gold production.

1.4.1.2. The Gold Producing System

Producing gold needed first different groups of workers employed for the prospection and extraction of gold using the appropriate techniques of extracting gold. The latter had a great importance in developing the Ashanti's economic activities throughout the empire.

In the 173os, the areas of Ashanti gold stretched from the Amansi district in the west of Kumasi to the Kwahu region. They consisted of well known prospected sources of gold that were located in Kwahu, Denkyira, Adansi (with Obuase, the site of modern Ashanti's gold mine)(39), Wassa (which included the Tarkwa goldfield) and Amansi with the Manso Nkwanta source of gold (See map n°3p.30).

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(37) "The consumption of yams during the Odwira festival was also celebrated by the Ashanti people to show their gratitude to the first man who brought the yam plant in Ashanti called Abu: "According to legend, he was the first man who encouraged the Ashanties to introduce the yam plant and also the matrilineal succession as he left-before his death – all his possessions to his nephew". Margaret Warner, "How Yams came to the Ashanti", Faculty of Arts Australia, 1994, Retrieved May 15, 2004 from: (http://www.ashantieaton.com/yams/came/docs/html).

(38) R.S.Rattray, Ashanti law and constitution , op.cit, p.345.

The gold sources in Amansi, Denkyira, Wassa and Assin were the Mamponhene's and the Asumenyahene's properties. The Kwahu and Amansi areas were left to local miners considered as small limited Akan groups of workers.

To mine and extract gold, the Mamponhene and the Asumenyahene employed the same slave workers used for the production of yams while the local miners were helped by their relatives using the different techniques and means of production. The way in which the extraction of gold was achieved seemed to be rather a difficult and hard task(40). Some slave and local labour extracted gold with a technique of digging known as the surface or shallow digging (called mmoaboa). As its name shows, the surface or the shallow digging was done in places where gold was close to the surface. Using their own simple implements for digging(41), the small scale miners prospected for and mined gold with the help of their relatives and so did the other slave miners, then any acquired pebbles or sand mixed with the gold nuggets and dust were removed then cleaned. Other miners filtered gold using the gold panning technique. That is to say, they used to wash the alluvial streams of the main sources of gold situated usually in the southern part of Kumasi.

Whether in the forest or along the streams and rivers, gold nuggets of different size and large amounts of gold dust were extracted generally after the rainy seasons and they were then shared out.

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(39) "They were famous sources of gold which were prospected by skilful old men and traditional elders called 'Karamoko'. The latter prospected the different areas of the forest region looking for the appropriate sources of gold and their investigations depended mainly on the study of well-known signs and places that facilitated their gold prospection". E.Terray, Une Histoire du royaume Abron du Gyaman (Des origines à la conquéte coloniale), op.cit, p.275.

(40) Kea stated "Once you find mines you should make a fortress there or a house for the chiefs and for the miners make a stockade where they will live. In addition to the miners, you should also have blacks who will clear the land around them and sow yams, and anything else to sustain themselves, and also to provide sustenance to the miners. Most of the time roles interchanged and miners planted yams and agriculturers extracted gold. It was evidently based upon observations of local production". R.A.Kea, "The development of Asante local production", African History, V16,1, (1975), pp.127-128.

Map3: Sources of Gold and Market Centers (1696-1750)



Source: Kwame Arhin, "Gold Mining and Trading among the Ashanti of Ghana", African History,V.23, p.98.

The distribution of gold was almost similar to the distribution of yam. The Asantehene confiscated all the big nuggets (to keep away-as it was said- its danger from those who wanted to use it) and left gold dust to the Omanhene (namely the Mamponhene and the Dwabenhene) and to the local miners since he was the sole guardian of the Golden Stool. In addition, he took the annual tribute of 70% of mined gold dust supplied by the southern Akans(41).

Since most of the gold nuggets and gold dust were-in great parts-confiscated by the Asantehene, they were melted by the royal goldsmiths for the making of the Ashanti's currency of that time, the gold dust currency. It consisted of the first established currency in Ashanti that was used to launch some local economic activities (to buy yam seeds and other food) following the initially established system of seed weights called the '*Ntaku System*' that was used both in the local commercial activities and acquired natural resources supplied by some conquered states of the empire after 1730(42).

1.4.2.From 1731 to 1750

In the beginning of the 1730's, A.Ware got a realm stretching from the southern areas of the Gold Coast –except the Fante region- to the northern Gonja and Dagomba savannahs. The area under his control over approximately 100.000 square miles and the population reached one million inhabitants(43).

The Asantehene Apoku Ware brought into being a new economic system of organization.He thought at first of exploiting the areas under the Omanhene's direct control to continue the production of another crop and to develop the local production of gold in the forest region and second to fashion the structure of the local and external trade especially with the northern people of the savannah.

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(41) "Almost the same implements used for agriculture were used for digging and extracting gold. These implements were chiefly shovels (the narrow shovel was known as *soso toa* and the other shovel was called *soso tupre*), small cans or buckets and broad wooden bowls (known as *akoro*, singular *koro*)". K.Arhin, "Gold Mining and Trading among the Ashanti of Ghana". African History ,V23, p.90.

(42) K.Arhin, ibid, p.91.

(43)R.A. Kea, op.cit, p.113.

1.4.2.1.The Cultivation of a New Root Crop: Cassava

In 1731, yams were still cultivated and consumed by the local population of the forest region and the introduction of cassava was rather a new efficient enterprise that procured additional supplements to the Ashanti's consumers.

The cassava or manioc plant is rather similar to the yam plant in producing heavy tubers. It is considered as a root crop producing tubers with a considerable weight that reached ten to fifteen kilograms and its shape differed according to different varieties and qualities(44). To cultivate cassava, the areas surrounding the kumasi region and other provincial regions of the forest which were used for the yam plantations were also used for cultivating cassava. In fact, cassava did not require new cleared and fertile lands and directly after the rainy season, it was planted between the long rows of the freshly sowed yam seeds.

The labour force required was the same used in the production of yams. Free and slave farmers worked the land and the harvested crops were divided among them by the landowners of the areas under cultivation.

The harvested crops were divided into different parts shared among the workers, the local chiefs and the Omanhene. The latter kept a great part of their acquired crops to offer it later on to the Asantehene during the Odwira festival. The consumption of cassava tubers consisted of a new nutritive supplement that could be stored and used for another local enterprise.

1.4.2.2. The exploitation of the gold sources

In the beginning of the 1740s, the gold areas were chiefly Akan areas that were largely exploited. Since they were important sources of gold, these areas were divided among the confederated Omanhene who undertook the gold production and introduced a new method with unchallenged means that increased the level of production.

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(44)The Portuguese settlers were the first to introduce cassava which was imported from America. The Southern Akans especially the Fante and Accra learnt how to cultivate it and later other countries such as Ashanti introduced it in their food production.

C.Johnston, op.cit, (http://www.tro/tech/org/post harvested tech/.html).

Kwahu, Adansi, Denkyira, Wassa and Assin goldfields were auriferous sources of gold and the other newly conquered lands had rich goldfields, too such as the *Konongo* field in the Akim region, *Berekum, Dogmaa* and *Ahenko* in the Gyaman region and *Takyiman, Wenchi* and *Nsoko* in the Bono State (See map n°3p30).

These goldfields were divided among their respective Omanhene. That is to say, Konongo, Assin and Wassa were under the Asumenyahene's control. Kwahu, Denkyira and the Gyaman fields were given to the Mamponhene. Adansi belonged to the Dwabenhene and the Bono fields were among the Asantehene's possessions that were left under Bafo Pim's supervision(45).

Under the Omanhene's supervision, an increasing number of miners was mobilized for the gold production. They were chiefly slave workers including men and women. They were usually captured during the Ashanti's wars with the northern Gonja and Dagomba states while others were indebted Akan workers. They were then taken as the Omanhene's subjects and were left under the local chiefs' supervision to undertake the extraction of gold. The exploitation of the gold resources led to the increase in the gold dust production which was compulsory for the acquisition of wealth together with the slave tribute.

1.4.2.3. The Supply of the Slaves

Within the Ashanti royal court, the slave tribute was imposed on the conquered people of the external provinces. That is, the Ga, the Ewe, the Gonja and Dagomba people were compelled to supply a large number of slaves to the authorities of the empire.

The slave tribute was annually established and collected by the Kumasi Office Holders who gave it back to the Asantehene during the Odwira Festival, as it was the sole gathering of all the Omanhene and local chiefs (during the Council of the Empire). The imposition of the slave tribute had a great importance for the Asantehene. It showed the provincial people's allegiance to their ruler (since they were considered as vassal people) which was to be recognized publicly during the national meetings. Besides, acquiring slaves was a great opportunity to get them appointed in the different offices to set up slave trading activities in the late 1750s.

(45) K.Arhin, op.cit, pp.20-21.

Conclusion

Though the Ashanti's organization in the production of yams and cassava were initially limited to a subsistence economy, the initiation of a local trading system and organization of the production of gold began by the emergence of the Asantehene's directed economy. The latter was chiefly led by the Kumasi chiefs and the Omanhene of the empire who undertook the exploitation of the Ashanti's natural resources through a developed local exchange and tribute systems leading to the beginnings of the accumulation of profit and wealth within the Asantehene's treasury. It formed the basis of a planned policy that allowed the most powerful Akan empire of that time, the Ashanti empire to embark on new achievements into the Ashanti's political and economic organization after 1750. Consequently, Apoku Ware's achievements encouraged his heir Osei Kwadwo to lead new campaigns imposing further political and economic reforms.

Introduction

The resulting offensive operations against the neighbouring states made the Ashanti in acquisition of a vast territory and a population which was more numerous and dense than Ware's times. When Osei Kwadwo succeeded to the throne in 1750, Ashanti grew from a group of confederated states to a vast empire. He reigned over the whole Akan provinces except the southern Fante regions and also the non-Akan provinces including the Ga, the Ewe, the Gonja and Dagomba states. The Ashanti people reached then two million people including the increasing population of Kumasi and its surrounding Nsuta, Dwaben, Kokofu and Bekwai regions with about one hundred thousand inhabitants(1).

As it was shown in the previous chapter, O.Tutu's and A.Ware's reigns had marked a successful era for imperial conquests and organized control; their successor had then to improve the development of the system of political and economic organization for the continuation of the Ashanti's imperial policy. Most of the areas located in the south east, west, north and north west of the forest region were under control and In fact, the next fifty years of Osei Kwadwo' reign were spent for a constant improvement of his control over the whole institutions of the empire.

In the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century, Osei Kwadwo (1750-1800)(2) launched series of internal political reforms in the Ashanti confederacy that were followed by the introduction of economic changes in the 1760s. The political and administrative tasks whose accomplishments were reserved to the Asantehene changed their nature and form imposing a profound reorganization of the state. The next fifty years proved to be a turning point in O. Kwadwo's life. He started to launch series of internal constitutional reforms in the political divisions together with the military and judicial institutions. These reforms were followed by the introduction of economic changes in the 1760s that improved Osei Kwadwo's achievements up to 1800.

(1) W.W.Claridge, op.cit, p.132.

(2) "Osei Kwadwo was also called Osei Kojo or Osei Kwamina known as Kwamina the whale since wanted a direct access to the sea through his conquest of the Fantes". W.W.Claridge, ibid, p.132.

However, one would then inquire about how could the Asantehene take in charge the running of all the agencies of the Ashanti empire? Will he adopt a new system of government or will he follow his predecessors' work? And if any political and economic changes would occur, who could take most profit especially when reactions for revolts and secession from the old oligarchy and the Office Holders would rise up?

After studying O.Kwadwo's reforms, the main circumstances for their application will be first examined. That is to say, to which major preoccupations did these reforms obey? What was the Asantehene's aim to achieve these reforms? Next, what was the final objective placed to face the sub-chiefs' reactions? These are the main inquiries that are attempted to achieve.

2.1. Osei Kwadwo's Political Reforms

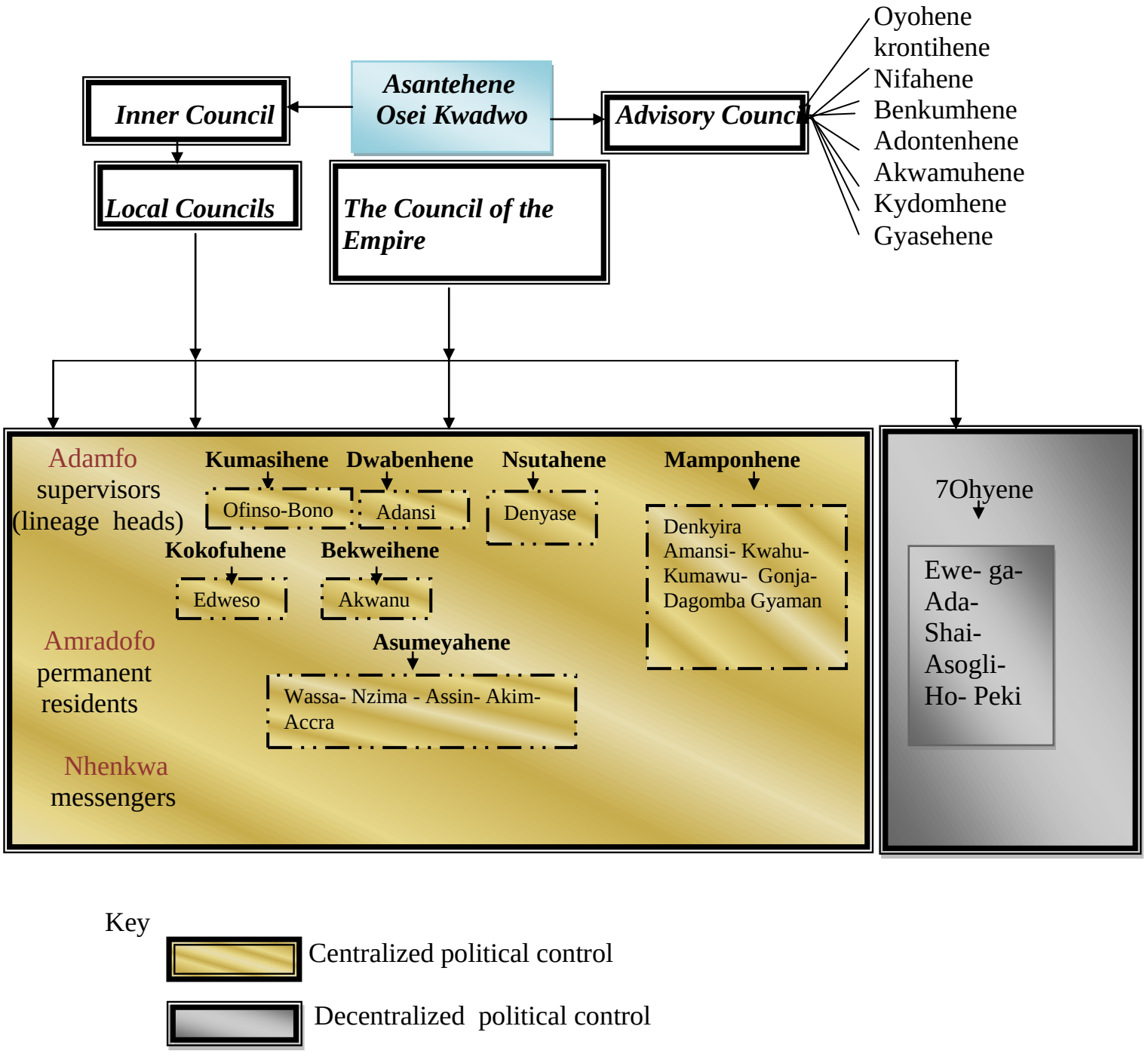
Through the establishment of the new Asantehene's council, different groups of officials were appointed holding new functions besides the other authority holders of the central and provincial divisions of the empire who controlled the Akans, the Ga, the Ewe, the Gonja and the Dagomba people. The main circumstances of these appointments will be later identified together with their impact on the Office Holders in the Central Division and the Omanhene in the Provincial Division.

2.1.1.The Establishment of the Inner Council

In addition to the three previously established councils namely, the Advisory, the Local and the Empire Councils, the Inner Council (known also as the Privy Council) was created under O.Kwadwo's headship gathering new appointed members (See Diagram 4p38).

O kwadwo's new appointed members counted eighteen officials that is, five *Nhenkwa*, seven *Adamfo* and six *Amradofo*. The Nhenkwa and the Amradofo were chosen among the faithful Asantehene's servants working as the hornblowers and drummer within the royal court while the Adamfo were carefully selected among the military officers of the royal army companies.

Diagram 4: The Council of the Empire under Osei Kwadwo's reign



These Asantehene's officials met almost everyday except on Holydays and assisted the king in the different political and economic issues of a central or local province according to their attributed functions in their respective regions.

2.1.2. The Nhenkwa's Functions in the Central Division

The newly appointed Nhenkwa officials held new functions in the state of Kumasi in addition to the other confederated states. They were responsible for the Kumasi Office Holders' daily assistance. They had to communicate the Asantehene's messages and orders since they were often present during the Office Holder's meetings especially at the Advisory council.

Everyday, the Nhenkwa were in charge of supervising and inspecting states under the confederated Omanhene's rule in Kokofu, Dwaben, Bekwai and Nsuta. They were also in charge of the promulgation of the main decrees that occurred during the official meetings including the Inner Council, the Local Councils or the Council of the Empire. In addition, the Nhenkwa were left the task of receiving the official guests during the king's absence such as the confederated Omanhene and the other foreign representatives of the European and the Muslim northern territories(3). M.A. Akanba pointed out that:

> ***There is in Asante a status known as Nhenkwa; the word means friend, but in this connection must be translated "friend- at –court". If the Asantehene is a prominent king living at a distance from Kumasi, there will be a distingued member of the Asantehene's entourage, permanently resident at court, who is the Asantehene's Nhenkwa officials. They have the duty of watching the Asantehne's interests of every kind at couet; and all communications coming to the king will be made through the Nhenkwa***(4).

(3) Bowdich pointed out that the Nhenkwa were also charged with the responsibility of publicizing all new decrees and regulations throughout Kumasi as they gathered the people of the principal wards and villages by gong-gongs for their announcement. T.E.Bowdich, op.cit, p.256. And Ajaye wrote, "they acquired the Asantehene's expertise for the application of these tasks and were considered as the main channels of communication between the king and his official guests". J.K. Adjaye; "Indigenous African Diplomacy: An Asante Case Study" International Journal of African Historical Society. V 18, 3, (1985), pp.490-491.

(4) A.M.Akanba, Revelation: The movement of the Akan People from Kanaan to Ghana, Author House UK Ltd, First Edition, 2010, p.255.

2.1.3.The Adamfo's and the Amradofo's Functions in the Local Division

The Adamfo were seven members chosen among the king's military troops and considered as the Asantehene's officers. They were appointed into new created non-hereditary offices and were attributed some specific territorial regions of the external provinces in addition to important functions within the Ashanti empire.

The Adamfo assisted the Asantehene in establishing control over the subdued Akan and non-Akan people of the empire according to their attributed regions (See Table 1p.41). As it is shown on Table1, the seven Adamfo officers called the Adumhene, the Bantamahene, the Asumankwahene, the Asafohene, the Asumhene, the Akyempimhene and the Dadiesoabahene were attributed most of the northern and the north western districts of the Gonja, Dagomba, Bono, Banda and Gyaman states(5) (See map n°4p.42). They reported all the political, economic and military activities of each provincial state and district. They secured the king's laws and orders thanks to their military campaigns done in the conquest of the northern, north western and north eastern regions(6).

The six Amradofo officials were also appointed by the Asantehene Osei kwadwo and depended only on the Asantehene's control and instructions to exercise their functions within their attributed southern and south eastern territories of the external provinces (See Table 2p.43). The Amradofo were carefully attributed some specific territories under the Ashanti's conquest. These territories included the states of the south and the south east of Kumasi, namely, Assin, Wassa, Elmina, Accra, Akim, and Akwapim (See map n° 4p.42).

Like the royal Gyasehene and the Biremponhene servants, the Amradofo were chosen among the Asantehene's servants and direct subordinates from the royal court who were chosen among the king's drummers and horn-blowers. Both the Adamfo and the Amradofo were cautious in studying the Omanhene's actions and applying the Asantehene's laws and instructions. They reported the local conflicts and supervised the economic activities (especially for the application of the tribute amount).

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(5) K.A.Busia, op.cit, p.42.

(6) R.S.Rattray, Ashanti, op.cit, p.72.

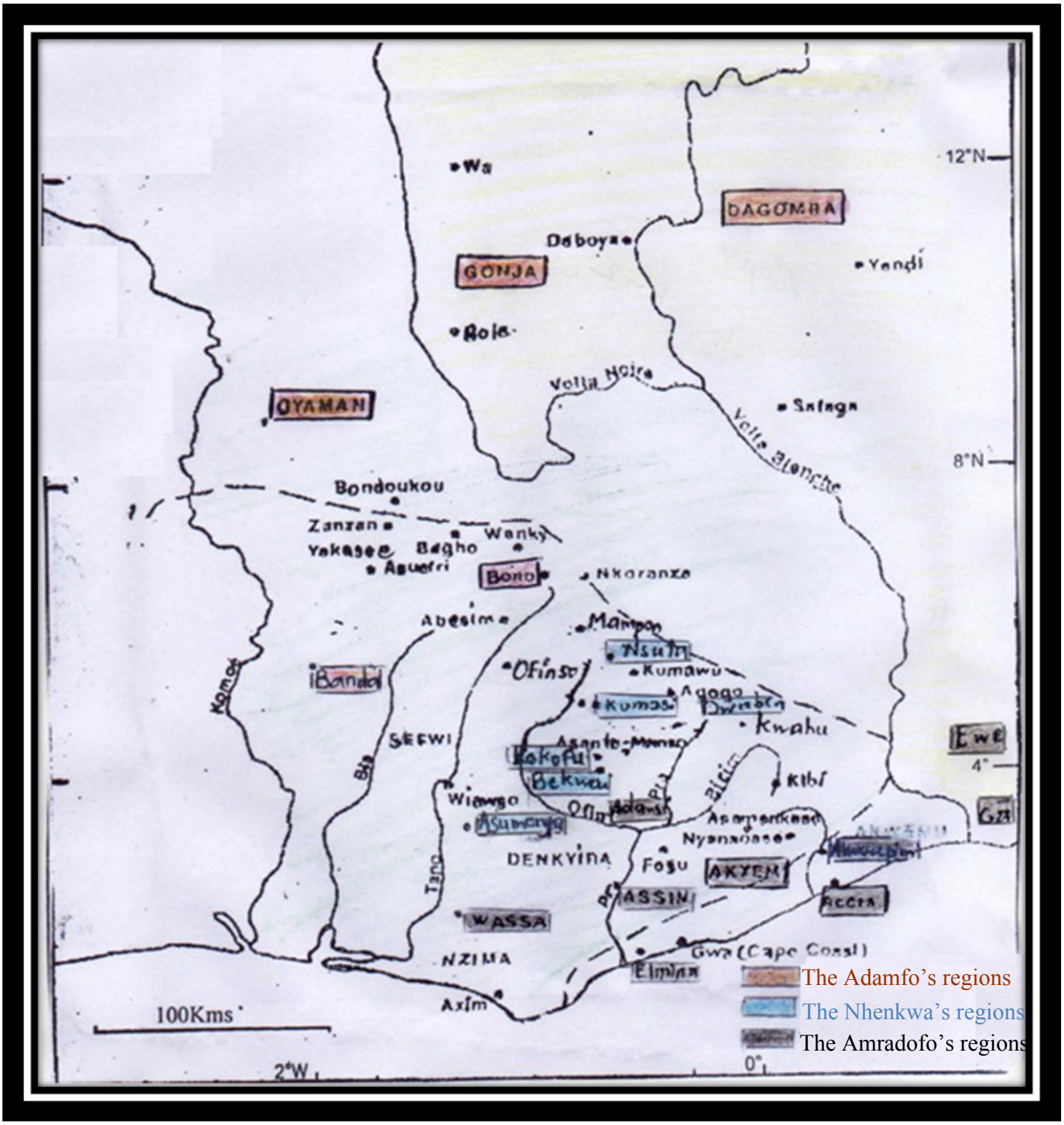
Table 1 : The Adamfos of the northern, north eastern and north western provinces

	States or Districts	Adamfos	The attributed regions
BANDA	Banda Nasawkaw / hani Bekyme / Nsuta/ Takyiman Wankyi	Adumhene Asafohene	**The Northern and North Western Akan territories of the forest region**
BONO	Seikwa Namasa Menji Brawhani	Akyempimhene Asumhene	
GYAMAN	Mansa Branam Bima Nkorankwagya Nkyirawa Badu / Berekum Nswatre/ Nkuranta	Dadiesoabahene Nsumankwahene	
Gonja Dagomba	Prang/ Yeji/Salaga Krepi/Namonsi/ Krachi	Bantamahene	**The Northern non-Akan territories**

Source : Emmanuel Terray , The Ashanti empire by the end of the 18th century, in *Histoire du Royaume Abron du Gyaman*, op.cit, pp.530-531.

Map4: The Asante Empire(1750-1850)

The New Appointed Official's Regions



Source: Emmanuel Terray, "Histoire du Royaume Abron du Gyaman", Paris, Edition karthala,1995,p.145.

Table 2 : The Amradofos of the southern and the south eastern Akan and non- Akan provinces

	States	Districts	The attributed regions
Amradofos 1	Assin	Wiango Amansi Obuase	**The Southern Akan territories**
2	Wassa	Tarkwa Nzima	
3 4	Adansi Elmina	Fosu	
5 6	Accra Ga Adangbe Ewe	Akwapim Konango Nyanoaso Asampoko	**The South Eastern non-Akan territories**

Source: Emmanuel Terray, "The Ashanti empire by the end of the 18th century" in "*Histoire du Royaume Abron du Gyaman*", ibid, p.532.

However, the Asantehene's appointed officials namely, the Adamfo, the Amradofo and the Nhenkwa, came to represent the centralized king's control over a constant supervision of the different states and institutions restricting the power of the Omanhene and the Kumasi Office Holders who were still in possession of a large degree of local autonomy as well as power within the Ashanti army. These new achievements raised many revolts among the Omanhene and the Office Holders. These main authorities saw the cumulative effect of O.Kwadwo's reforms that increased his power and control. They resisted to the point of civil war to avoid any attempt to extend the king's power into their domains(7). The latter sought for other measures to develop new military formations of new soldiers directly controlled by the crown known as the military companies.

2.2. The Creation of new Military Companies

Mainly after securing a direct political supervision over the main Central and Provincial Divisions, O.Kwadwo started to reform the military institution. Four new military companies known as the *Hiawu,* the *Nkonson,* the *Nkawara* and the *Ankobea* companies were created to ensure the central authority's total security.

The Adamfo got a personal guard that ensured their functions. Every Adamfo had his own *Hiawu* company with a personal guard of about eight hundred to one thousand heavy-armed soldiers (the latter were either war captives or the Asantehene's subjects whom he bought from a deceased chief or captain)As Akanba depicted:

> ***Every Asante king who lived at a distance from Kumasi had his honorary rerpresentative who needed to be garrisoned in the area under supervision. The Adamfo was not in any sense the social superior of the king whom he represented who acted as consul or ambassador, much as a roman senator under Trajan might be the patron at court of some far away provincial tribe or city***(8).

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(7) R.S.Rattray, ibid, p.85.

(8) A.M.Akanba, Revelation: The movement of the Akan People from Kanaan to Ghana, Author House UK Ltd, First Edition, 2010p.244.And E.Terray, Contribution a une étude de l'Armée Asante, op.cit, p.311.

T.C.McCasckie mentioned that emphasis was placed not only on maternal succession but also on the father-child bond. The paternal connection highlighted achievement incentives. The *Nkonson,* the *Nkawara* and the *Ankobea* companies were ruled by the closest Asantehene's relatives, his brothers. They held their functions as the personal Asantehene's guardians organized for his permanent protection. These were held in check by matrilineal obligations and the presumption of equality among the major Akan clans(9). Each company assumed its function within the help of a large group of well-trained soldiers considered as the king's subjects. E.Terray pointed out that before the chief of the company was appointed, the king collected recruits in readiness for him to drill. They might be either captives taken in a recent war, or his own subjects whom he bought as indebted slaves, or they had been given to him by a deceased chief or captain(10).

Between one thousand to one thousand and fifty soldiers within each company were received and trained. They assisted the captains of each company in their military actions supervising any local revolt among the authority holders or the local subdued provincial Akan and non Akan people.

On the whole, Osei Kwadwo's reforms and changes brought into the Central and Provincial Divisions called for radical measures restricting the subordinate chiefs' power. It was made possible through a new established bureaucracy whose members were chosen by the Asantehene not on any traditional or hereditary side but because they would be loyal and efficient subordinates responsible to him alone. This royal bureaucracy was in charge of the running of all the agencies of the central government including the management of the state enterprises, the administration of the provinces, the conduct of foreign affairs and the maintenance of the internal security. I.Wilks stated that the Asantehene acquired the inner strength which was so markedly lacking in some other West African kingdoms, notably Oyo and other Akan predecessors. It enabled the kingdom to withstand many threats presented by revolts from its states by its new military formations and judicial institution(11).

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(9) T.C.McCaskie, State and Society in pre-Colonial Asante, Cambridge University Press, First Edition, 1995, p.26.

(10) "The *Ankobea* company was divided into four principal units, two of them were under the *Atipinhene's* and the *Apagyahene's* command". Busia, op.cit, p.93.

(11) I.Wilks, Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akans and the Kingdom of Asante, op.cit, p.96.

2.3. The Judicial Institution

Into each Provincial Division, the Asantehene gave his instructions to establish the Regional or the Provincial Courts held by the Omanhene judging those who made offence against the Ashanti established laws. The Omanhene had to judge the offences that were differentiated by O.Kwadwo as the public and the private offences.

The private offences (*efisom*) consisted of the sexual offences, and certain forms of abuse, the violation of taboos, certain kinds of assaults, witchcraft and sacrilege affecting the social relations between persons or groups living in a community(12). The public offences (*oman akyiwade*) involved the breaking of a law or command enjoined by the swearing of an oath, assaulting the king or the provincial chief, stealing, treason, cowardice and the invocation of a curse upon a chief affecting the relationships between the community and the chief(13). Among the public offences, the Asantehene stated that no one should make himself equal to him, who was the successor of his royal ancestors. The incident that happened to the Dogmaahene during the early periods of Kwadwo's reign gave the illustration of th position of the king as a supreme judge. During his attendance to the Local Councils, the Dogmaahene came to the Mamponhene's council with his chair that was decorated with gold bands and no one in Ashanti was allowed to have his stool adorned with gold. In the old days this would have led to a war and the offence was considered an offence against the king and the Ashanti ancestors.

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(12) Rattray classified the private offences into the categories of sins or tribal taboos and specified that "...murder included homicide, suicide applied to the one who had killed himself from known motives which the Ashanti therefore presumed to be evil, the sexual offences were incest and adultery with a chief's wife..., the forms of abuse which were tabooed were words of abuse against a chief which reflected on his ancestors". R.S.Rattray, Ashanti law and constitution, op.cit, pp.67-68.

(13) "...First, assaults which were tried during the chief's council were assaults on the chief himself, or any official of the stool, such as the stool-carrier, the king's reign gave a good illustration of the position the king occupied as supreme judge. During his attendance to the Local Councils, the Dogmaahene came to the Mamponhene's council with his chair that was decorated with gold bands and no one in Ashanti was allowed to have his stool adorned with gold. In the old days this would have led to a war and the offence was considered as an offence against the king and the Ashanti ancestors. Second, stealing was a tribal offence if it was the stealing of regalia, or treasure-trove, or stool property (akonwa agyapade). Third, stealing from a tribal god, that is,

The fine imposed on the Dogmaahene was twelve sheep which had to be sacrificed for the Ashanti royal ancestors and the penalty for such public offences was either the offering of animals or food to the ancestors the payment of a big sum of gold dust that was levied to sixty mperedwan according to the political or economic status of the offender and his offensive act. The fine imposed for the private offences was also fixed in gold dust that varied from seven to ten mperedwan according to the kind of private offence(14).

Sentence and punishments that occurred in the Provincial Courts were decided locally by the Omanhene and later reported to the Asantehene by the new appointed *nkwansrafo* officers. They were the new appointed local police agents responsible for the security of the people of the empire. They reached five hundred to six hundred armed men at each post. They exercised their functions at their posts located in the boundaries of the Metropolitan Ashanti region(15).

Authority started to become increasingly centralized in the king's hands and enforced by a state apparatus existing separately from other political institutions of the early 1700s. O.Kwadwo formulated, imposed and enforced laws giving rise to an officialdom enacting these functions. He decided to cement his ties with non–kin officers into the government structure. He made the Kumasi chiefs in constant connection with the Omanhene via the Adamfo and Amradofo officials. N.Chazan noted:

> ***The fact that the Kumasi chiefs gradually became correspondents for federated chiefs, and thus achieved on a federal scale a type of autonomy which their counterparts in other units did not have, sets them apart from other capital-city officeholders in the Akan area, that is the Ashanti empire***(16)

This was especially true since the Kumasi Office Holders during O.Tutu's reign commanded, at the outset, all the newly formed companies and districts directly

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the sword, the stool, gold, or sacred things of a god, also came under this class and fourth treason, especially on the part of an elder who had sworn the oath of allegiance to the chief, or cowardice on the part of a captain who before setting out to battle took the oath over to turn his back to the enemy, were crimes regarded as tribal sins". K.A.Busia, op.cit, pp.66-67.

(14) K.A.Busia, ibid, p.68.

(15) "People were not allowed to go further until a messenger had gone to the capital and come back with permission". L. Mair, African kingdoms, Clarendon Press, Oxford, (1977), pp.85-86.

responsible to the king. As it was emphasized in the first chapter especially under O.Tutu's reign, he tried to augment his own Oyoko Kumasi Office Holders and he deliberately chose to magnify their position, thereby balancing the power of one class of chiefs against that of another and so setting in motion the rivalry between the Omanhene and the Kumasi chiefs which had been one of the recurrent themes of Ashanti history.

The consolidation of the Ashanti empire in the 1750s focused on the redefinition of certain group of officials functioning, most significantly, on the elaboration of arrangements of collective identity and the regulation of power roles. The former suited the interest of kin elites and the latter those of the rising military-administrative group. Osei Kwadwo served as the critical link between the two. In fact, the Ashanti empire was military in purpose and character but there were the beginnings of a civil administration. The institutions of the empire based on the lineage system as it functioned during Tutu's reign could not certainly face the new era of Kwadwo's reign.

Nevertheless, at its initial phase, the Ashanti empire was still under the direct supervision of the limited power of the Office holders. As D.E.Apter stated:

> ***The Asantehene's aim was not by any means to show that he was an absolute monarch possessed of unlimited power. At a certain extent, he was always controlled to a certain extent by the chiefs. The king alone could not make peace or war nor could he go into negotiations or treaties which concerned the interest of the whole empire, without the consent of the chiefs***(17) .

A more subtle appreciation was given by R.S.Rattray who pointed out that in reality every move and command which appeared to emanate from the Osei Kwadwo's mouth was discussed in private and was previously agreed upon by his councilors, to whom popular opinion on any subject was made known. Serious departures from the custom would eventually lead to destoolment(18).

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(16) Naomi Chazan, The Early State in African Perspective, Studies in Human Society, V:2, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1988,op.cit, p.75.

(17) David.E.Apter, Ghana in Transition, New York, 1966, p.107.

(18) "Although the Ashanti constitution was intended to appear to be autocratic, in correct practice it was democratic to a degree. This is the reason why there was a reaction the moment a chief was destooled". R.S.Rattray. Ashanti law and Constitution, op.cit, p.82.

The main factor in leaving O.Kwadwo exercise his authority as he did was, in fact, that the king was invested with sanctity just as long as he sat upon the stool of his dead ancestors. By the Golden Stool institution, he was given real supreme authority since he was described as the sanctified figure which was the nerve centre of the tribe. His authority driving from the past coursed through the blood in his veins and was made manifest by election to office. And, another factor in the appointment of new officials was that the Asantehene had to ensure his central authority in order to lead the management of the commercial transactions over the whole empire including the internal organization of the economic activities. The growth of trade added thus a new distinctive dimension to bureaucracy as it required the introduction of other officials leading the economic reforms while the resources were increasingly produced.

2.4. Osei Kwadwo's Economic Reforms

Under O.Kwadwo's reign, the Ashanti territory spread over some 150.000 square miles of forest and savanna and exploiting this vast region needed a reorganization of the local production and the setting of an efficient circulation of the Ashanti's products including the trade in gold and slaves.

2.4.1. The Development of Food Production

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the traditional agricultural system for food production in the Ashanti country was based upon the use of new plantations for the introduction of new food staples and new methods of crop cultivation. A rising demand for other food staples became compulsory with the growth of the population of the central Kumasi region and the other towns of the forest region. Planting yams and cassava became insufficient and other staples such as cocoyam, plantains and maize were then planted(19). These new staples were introduced into the Ashanti country by the subdued Akan coastal people in Akwamu, Accra and Twifo who were among the first importers of the new crops seeds from the European settlers(20).

(19) Cocoyam (known as taro) (Colocasia esculenta), a herbaceous plant. Native to south-eastern Asia. It became a staple crop cultivated for its large, starchy, spherical underground tubers, which were consumed as cooked vegetables. And plantain (Musa paradisiaca) was the plant of the banana family (Musaceae) closely related to the common banana. The plantain is a tall plant (3-10 metres [10-33 feet]) with a conical false "trunk" formed by the leaf sheaths of its spirally arranged leaves, which are 1.5 to 3 m long and about 0.5 m wide. The plant is believed to have originated in Southeast Asia. C.Johnston, "The Principle Perishable Staples of the Tropical World". Post-HarvestedTechnology, 1990, Retrieved May 14, 2004 from :(http://www.tro/tech/org/post harvested tech/.html).

The cultivation of these crops was undertaken within four Akan forest regions. The area of central Kumasi and its surroundings (Mampon, Agogo, kwahu, Bekwai...), the areas located in the south of Kumasi (Adansi, Denkyera, Assin...), those in the north (Bono and its surroundings) and in the north west of Kumasi such as the Dogma lands.

These areas were cultivated by the local population and slave labour(21) who managed to reorganize the plantation of their crops. They chose first a system of periodic crop rotation that is, a three-year cycle plantation of the food crops and second to associate the cultivation of different crops into the same plantation. In this way, in the first year of cultivation, maize and plantains were directly planted after the dry season to protect them from rains and sun. In the second year, the yam and cocoyam seeds were planted directly after the rainy season and the maize and plantains harvest. In the next third year, cassava was finally planted and later cultivated as it grew upon almost exhausted soils(22).

Planting and growing the crops was rather a hard task since the rural implements for agriculture remained the same traditional axe, hoe and cutlass of O.Tutu's times. First, there was the difficulty of clearing spots over the new cultivated areas and collecting then carrying the unnecessary weeds. Second, preparing the crop beds for the plantation such as preparing fields for maize and at the same time preparing the yam mounds and later planting then finally harvesting(23).

The amounts of harvested crops were estimated enough to feed the local population (see Table 3p.51). The harvested crops mentioned on table 2 concerned the central region of kumasi and the new cultivated crops together with yam and cassava which brought enough calories to keep the local farmers adequately sustained.

(20) Mainly the Portuguese and later the Dutch settlers of the coastal Elmina fort. W.W.Claridge, op.cit, p.205.

(21) "The number of this labour force varied according to demographic concentration of the local population in specific areas. In the central Kumai town the population growth reached twenty thousand inhabitants". I.Wilks, op.cit, p.55.

(22) Maize, cocoyam and plantains needed non-exhausted soils and protection from rains and sun. Katherine.S.Newman, Law and Economic Organization: A comparative study of preindustrial societies, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p.176.

(23) "In the more central parts of the kingdom, the features of the land rendered the process of clearing it infinitely more complicated and laborious. Trees of more than ordinary dimensions

Table 3: Estimated Outputs of One-Hectare Field over Three Years of Cultivation

Harvest Year	Crop	Estimated Gross Yield in Tons	Inedible Part as Percentage of whole	Calories per 100 Grams of edible part
1	**Maize**	0.75	68	218
	Plantains	2.50	45	168
2	**Yam**	2.50	11	160
	Cocoyam	2.50	15	108
3	**Cassava**	3.75	15	180
		Totals: 12tons		14,657,000 calories

Source : I.Wilks, "The Forests of Gold : Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante", Ohio University Press, 1993, p.54.

After the harvest season, some of the cultivated crops were either kept dried and stored such as maize, cocoyam and plantains to be sold or consumed later on during the hard seasons(24). The other crops could be directly consumed such as yams and cassava which were used to feed the local miners at the goldfields(25).

2.4.2. The Gold Producing System

In the beginning of the 1750s, gold was abundant and its amounts increased steadily in the royal treasury. By employing a new means of extracting and confiscating gold dust used as the local currency, O.Kwadwo succeeded in developing a system managing the use of his gold for a long distance trade.

2.4.2.1. The Increase in Gold Production

Gold was produced in great quantities throughout the forest region. That is to say, in the areas surrounding Kumasi such as Ofinso, Agogo, Asantemanso and the gold sources located in Wassa, Obuase, Assin, Denkyera, Akim , Kwahu and Asikaso in Gyaman (See map n° 5p.53).

A large number of gold miners was introduced for the extraction of gold at these gold areas. In addition to the local miners, other provincial miners were especially given by the kings of the newly conquered regions of Gyaman, Bono, Gonja and Dagomba and were taken in terms of tribute to the Asantehene. They were considered as slave miners who reached a hundred miners at each source of gold made under the Omanhene's control. The number of the miners would reach more if they were not employed in other major centers that offered a wide range of employment opportunities other than mining: in the royal court, in the military administrations, in trade, in craft work and so forth.

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were necessarily be rooted out, or felled...The cumbersome growth of fibrous stems and vines, mixed with other plants, required much labour in hacking to pieces and in removing. They took time in drying weeds and this augmented the expense of the operation". C.Johnston, ibid.

(24) "Because plantain has a maximum of starch before it ripens, it is usually cooked green, either boiled or fried, often with coconut juice or sugar as a flavouring. It may also be dried for later use in cooking or ground for use as a meal. The plantain meal can be further refined to a flour...". C.Johnston, ibid. (http://www.tro/tech/org/post harvested tech/.html).

(25) It was reported that in one-hectare field and over three years of cultivation over the central Kumasi region for example, the cultivable land was about 3.840 square miles (about 995.000 hectares), of the order of 166.000 farms of six hectares each would exist, and then each family of at least five members were then supported. I.Wilks, ibid, p.54.

Map5: The Ashanti's Sources of Gold and Slave Market Centers (1750-1800)



Source: Ivor Wilks, "Forests of gold: Essays on the Akans and the kingdom of Asante", Ohio University Press, Athens,1993,p.93.

The four main Omanhene known as the Mamponhene, the Asumenyahene, the Dwabenhene and the Kumasihene that is, the Asantehene O.Kwadwo undertook the production of gold either through digging or panning the alluvial streams from which gold nuggets and especially gold dust were extracted in big quantities(26).

The increasing amounts of gold dust were then either confiscated by the royal Gyasehene according to the established system of taxation or used in the developing long distance trade in gold.

2.4.2.2. The Development of the Taxation System

The taxation system was developed by the Asantehene O.Kwadwo to collect gold dust imposed on the Akan people of the Provincial and Local Ashanti who enterprised production and trade organized under the Omanhene's and the Office Holders' control(27).

Besides the Asantehene's acquisition of the half of each enterprise in the production of gold and crops, he devised a new system of taxation involving the collection of different amounts of gold dust which comprised:

- A tax of 20% of every 100 ounces of gold melted for the making of ornaments by the authority holders or the free miners.
- A tax in gold upon each imported product.
- 1/5 or 1/3 the share of gold discovered in the bush by the local miners.
- The confiscation of the hoardings of the disgraced officials and subjects who were under the Asantehene's jurisdiction.
- A war tax imposed on the newly subdued people.
- 1/10 of an ounce of gold was imposed on every married man having considerable properties.

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(26) I.Wilks, ibid,p.64.

(27) "In Asante as elsewhere, gold is found in nugget and ingot form...and if gold (from there) arrives in gold dust, it is because in this form it constitutes the currency (monnaie courante) of the country, and ingots and nuggets are smelted and reduced to gold dust to facilitate commerce. At kumasi only, there are more than a hundred workers exclusively engaged in this industry". K.Arhin, "Gold Mining and Trading among the Ashanti of Ghana", op.cit, p.94.

The people concerned with the payment of these taxes were essentially the principal producers of gold including the southern Denkyira, Wassa, Aowin people, the Western Gyaman and the north western Bono, Banda people, in addition to the confederated people of Dwaben, Mampon, Bekwai, Asumenya…

Before each new season, taxes were collected by the officials of the court, the Adamfo and the Nhenkwa. The former collected the imposed taxes in gold dust from the western and the north western Akans while the latter collected taxes from the other people of the empire including the confederated Omanhene and the southern Akans. The collected gold dust allowed the Asantehene to integrate the long distance trade in gold extending his power and wealth over the northern boundaries of the forest region.

2.4.2.3..The Establishment of the Long Distance Trade: the Trade in Gold

In the developing local trade markets, small gold dust amounts were used in the local Ashanti's transactions while in the flourishing long distance trade, large amounts of gold were transacted between the major gold merchants and its purchasers. Using the local means and caravans of transport, the merchants drew profit throughout the north and north western opened routes that led to the main staples of the north.

First of all, the organization of the trade in gold was led from the two main Oman of Mampon and Bono. The Mamponhene and the Bonohene were then the main gold organizers since the geographical location of their states, in the North of Kumasi. They started their organization by the appointment of the caravans' heads and its members.

The main heads for the direct long distance trade were chosen as hereditary members inside the Mamponhene's and Bonohene's clans(28). These members belonged, indeed to the closest maternal relatives of the two Omanhene considered as their brothers who were at the same time their local advisers in the local councils of the Mampon and Bono states.

(28) K.Arhin, ibid, p.91.

The Omanhene's relatives led the caravans of trade that included the numerous groups of royal servants, slaves and military officers who respectively helped in finding the appropriate markets, carried gold and protected the members of the caravan. The royal servants and military officers were the Asantehene's subjects while the slaves were subjects to the Mamponhene and the Bonohene. These king's and Omanhene's subjects were usually trained servants who were taken as war-captives from the Ashanti wars against the northern and the north western people. They knew well the different opened routes to drive easily the caravan members towards the north and the North West.

Following their chiefs' instructions, the different caravans crossed their way from the Mampon and the Bono states along three major routes. From the Mampon state the caravans went towards the north western and Eastern routes whereas from the Bono state the other caravans were directed towards the North. Nevertheless, these routes led to the three important markets of trade including the Kong market (in the North West through Gyaman), the Bole market place (in the North in Gonja), and the Salaga market of Dagomba (in the North East) (See map n°6p.57).

At these markets, the chiefs of each caravan were in contact with the entrepreneurs of different origins who came generally from the North. These entrepreneurs involved the Dyula merchants of Kong (who belonged to the Malinke people of the Upper Niger) and the Yarse merchants (who belonged to the Muslim Mande people speaking the Mole-Dagbani language) in Gonja and Dagomba[29].

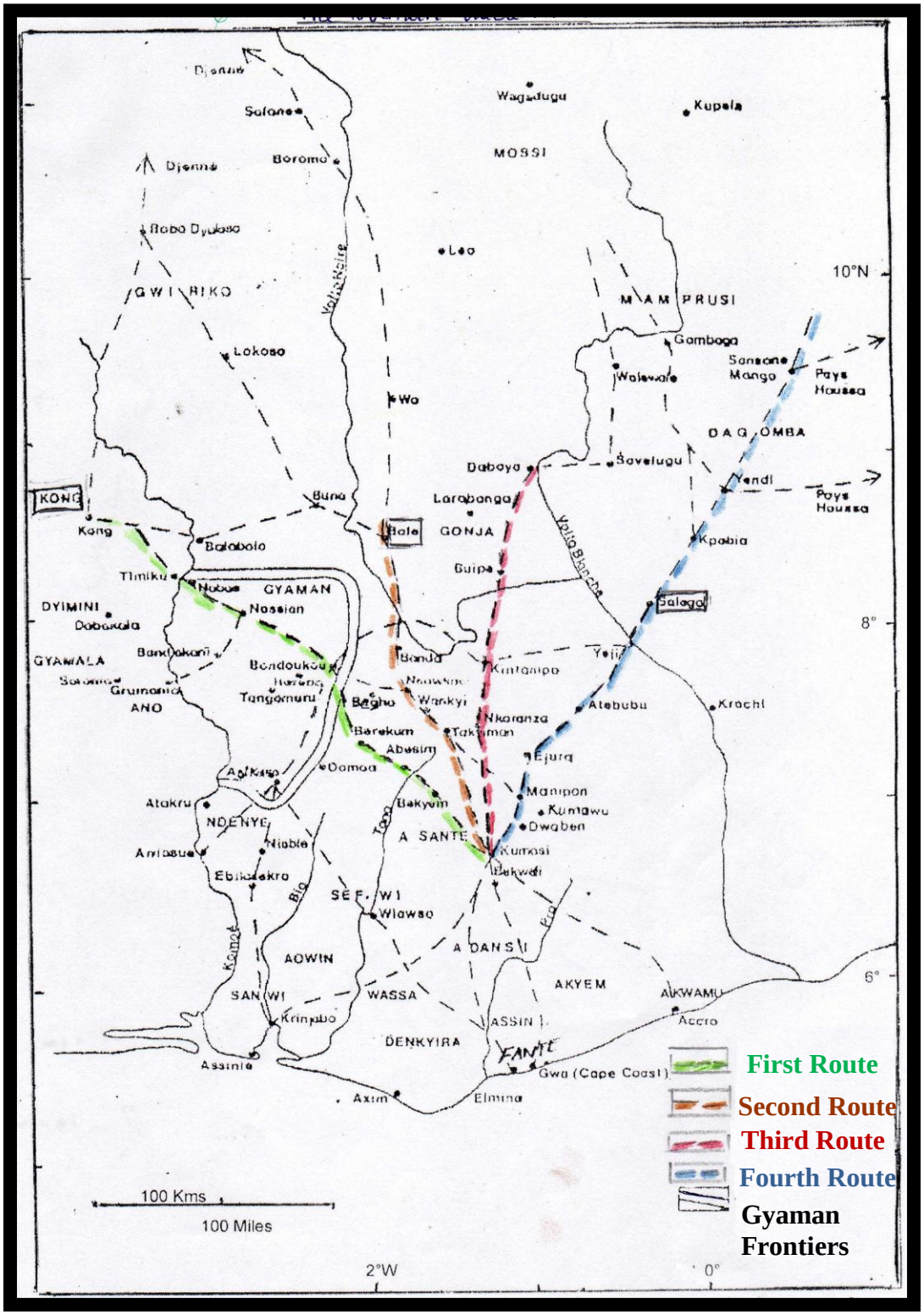
With the Dyula and Yarse merchants, the Omahene's caravans exchanged their gold with the varied products of the north that were exclusively designed to some caravans. That is, the Mamponhene's caravans exchanged their carried gold with different products such as brass, copper and salt whereas the other Bonohene's caravans exchanged their gold with brass, cloth, silk and some salted food[30].

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(29)Nehemia Levtzion, Muslims and chiefs in West Africa, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1968, pp.04-05.

(30) E.Terray, op.cit, pp.714-719.

Map6: The Asante Empire and its Neighbours: the Northern Trade Routes(1750-800)



Source: G.Pesheux, "Le Royaume Asante", op.cit, p.147.

Since these products were considered of great value, they were brought to the royal court in Kumasi and some of them (namely brass, copper and salt) were gifted to the Mamponhene and the Bonohene as sign of loyalty, and the others (namely brass, cloth, silk and salted food) presented to the supreme chief, the Asantehene. However, by the substantial flourishment of the gold production thanks to the revolutionary methods of gold extraction, a new economic chain reaction was launched: an improved gold dust currency began to rise over the different regions; a new internal and external economic exchange system was introduced. The latter ameliorated the living conditions of the Omanhene -who developed the beginnings of an entrepreneurship over northern lands based upon the manipulation of the demands of gold and also the introduction of another golden product of trade, selling slaves to the coastal European merchants.

2.4.3. The Slave Trade

Besides gold, the slave trade was also a source of great wealth. Undertaking the slave trade was of great importance for the Asantehene O.Kwadwo to acquire the European products. It was an opportunity for the king to engage his royal officials to gather the required slaves and to ensure the efficient circulation of the purchased products throughout the newly conquered southern routes towards the European forts.

Osei kwadwo chose four new appointed royal official traders called the *Batafo* officials to lead the organization of the slave trade. They organized four caravans of trade whose members where gathered first in the Kumasi royal court. Each caravan included the Batafohene and other traders (they were regular southern traders who guided the caravans towards the easiest and secured paths of trade), the Amradofo officials (those supervising the southern territories were the members of the first two caravans and those supervising the south eastern and southwestern regions were in the third and fourth ones) and their personal military guard companies. In addition, each caravan involved different king's servants employed as porters carrying and taking care of all the exchanged European products and a great number of slaves needed for the major transactions with the coastal people[31].

(31) E.Terray, op.cit, pp714-719.E.Terray, "Réflexions de la formation des Prix des Esclaves a l'Intérieur de l'Afrique de l'Ouest précoloniale", Journal des africanistes, 52, 1-2,(1982), pp.112-113.

Under the Batafohene's supervision, the slaves required for trade- including young men and women- were chosen from three main sources. Those who were considered as criminals and judged as irretrievable subjects could not readily be absorbed into the Ashanti society. A great number of acquired slaves comprised also the war captives. In addition to the other considerable number of slave tribute collected by the Asantehene's officials from the northern and north eastern Gonja and Dagomba states(32). The great number of collected slaves was divided later into two groups. Each group belonged to the slave caravans led towards the south and the south eastern and south western routes of slave trade.

Once organized, each slave caravan was conducted from Kumasi, on foot, along four different and major routes opened after the acquisition of the Akan states and communities of the internal southern provinces(33). Starting from the capital Kumasi, the first route was taken towards the Assin country and later Accra at Christianborg fort. The second one was made southwards to Adansi and after Denkyera towards the market places of the Fante territory located in Assin Fosu, Esikuma and Agona. The third southern route was led in the direction of the Elmina fort (located about one hundred miles from the Kumasi state) across the Denkyira country and the last fourth caravan direction was led to the Axim fort across the Wassa country. These opened routes led to the most important market places of that time situated in the south (See map n° 6p.57).

At these market places the Batafohene's officials were in direct contact with the principal agents of slave trade. They involved either native or foreign agents. In the Elmina and Axim forts, the agents of trade consisted of the Dutch agents who had previous friendship relations with the Asantehene A.Ware and were under the direction of Jacob Ruhle and Jan Niezer (known as *tapoeijers* that is, Afro-Dutch mulattos). The Christianborg fort was a Danish fort whereas in the Fante market places, their principle agents were native brokers who were considered as middlemen negotiating the possible transactions made between the Batafohene and the British agents located in the southern forts of Cape coast and Anomabo(34).

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(32) "The akwanmofo offices were created in the late eighteenth century for cleaning the roads and paths of the royal Ashanti empire from nuisances, and to see that the authorities through whose land they passed kept them open. They had funds to pay for the work and were authorized to fine those committing a nuisance". L.Mair, op.cit, pp.85-86.

The transactions made in exchange of slaves varied at each market place according to the importance of the acquired European product. The negotiated products were most of the time firearms (muskets)' cotton cloth (the high British quality was chosen), the woollen Dutch clothes, iron bars (usually presented with nine inches long), crop seeds (especially from Dutch origin) and a multitude of other luxury products such as brass bowls, sandals, alcohol, tobacco. The value of every exchanged slave against firearms depended on the physical ability of the latter. A young well-built male or female slave could be estimated to an iron bar often weighing twelve to thirteen kilograms and fifty muskets. The European products were then carried by the caravans' porters and returned back to the Asantehene's court since they were considered as the royal Asantehene's properties that were shown during the political and traditional meetings.

Conclusion

By 1750, the Ashanti empire had gained economic, political and military control over the bulk of present-day Ghana. The Asantehene's ability to gain control over his adversaries was rooted in its superior management and organization. The slave trade with the coastal European traders was as important as the trade in gold with the northern Muslim traders. The Asantehene's intervention in both kinds of long distance trade was to increase the revenues of the royal treasury and at the same time increasing the Asantehene's desire to drive out the southern Fante middlemen traders. Unfortunately, he died before his final achievement and was succeeded by his nephew Osei Bonsu (1800- 1824) who reigned over twenty four years of successful imperial conquests and economic developments.

(33)H. Thomas, op.cit, p.347.

(34) S.Tenkorang, "The importance of Firearms in the Struggle between Ashanti and the Coastal States (1708-1807)", op.cit, p.02.

Chapter III

The Ashanti's Political, Military, Judicial, and Economic Organization under Osei Bonsu's Reign (1800-1824)

Introduction

By the turn of the eighteenth century, the Ashanti empire started to forge for itself a place in a rapidly changing world. First contacts and first impressions with European envoys from the coast turned out to be surprisingly curious. They were attracted and admired the greatness of the Ashanti territory and everyone wrote his essay describing the king's court and his hegemony enlarged in readiness for any constitutional or economic reforms. This chapter delineates the changing political and economic settings in which factors and resources were put to work over the period. Before any discussion of other changes that affected the Ashanti's constitutional and economic organization by the coming of the new century, it is worthwhile before to show the limits and of the Ashanti empire and its population density.

3.1. The Limits of the Ashanti Empire

Osei Bonsu's[1] enthronement (1800-1824) witnessed the greatest years of expansion and conquest. According to the data provided in 1815 by T.E.Bowdich, the Ashanti empire expanded through a territory of approximately three hundred thousand (300.000) square miles stretching from the immediate hinterland of the Gold Coast till the northern savannahs with an area of Central Metropolitan Ashanti including a rising population of about seven hundred thousand (700.000) inhabitants with its internal provinces situated about fifty miles radius around kumasi. According to the same source[2], the Provincial Ashanti reached more than two million inhabitants in the whole northern Gonja, Dagomba and Mamprussi regions, in the north western, western and southern Akans as well as the south eastern Ga and Ewe communities together with the newly acquired states of the south : the Fante states (See map n°7p.63).

The consequence for such a territorial expansion was of a great benefit to the new Asantehene. It was first formulated by the acquisition of a great number of subjects and war captives. The latter were part of the new Asantehene's planned policy.

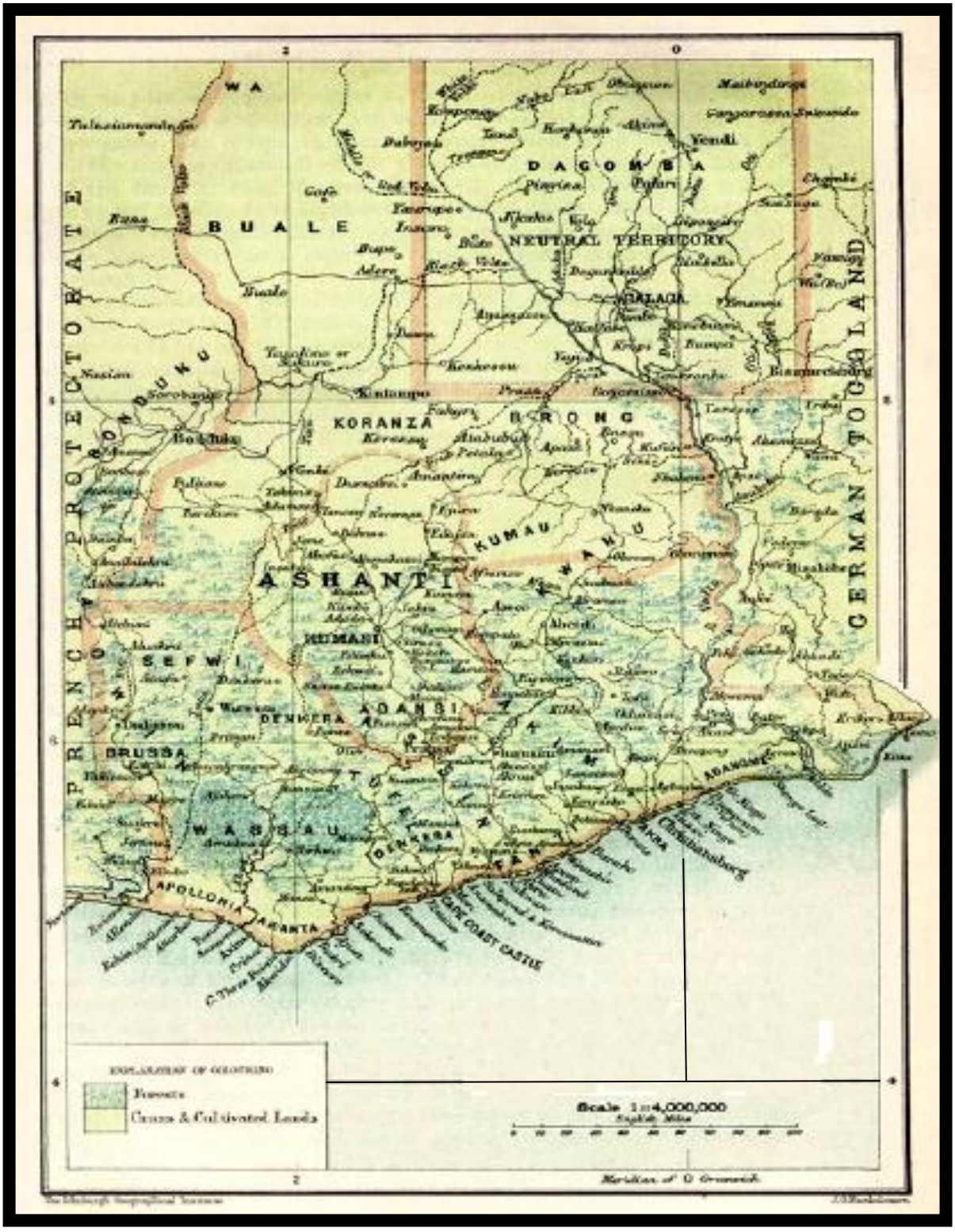
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(1) He was also called Osei Kwamina or Osei the whale since he wanted direct access to the southern coastal states.

(2) T.E.Bowdich, op.cit. p.119.

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Map7: The Asante Empire in 1800



Source: Thomas Edward Bowdich, "Mission from cape Coast castle to Ashantee", London, John Murray, Third Edition, 1966.p.129.

Throughout the Ashanti empire, the Asantehene attributed particular functions to new appointed officials. They were concerned with the running of all agencies of the central government: the conduct of foreign affairs, the administration of the provinces, the maintenance of internal security, the creation of new military formations, and, at the same time the management of the state enterprise. However, the way in which these officials exercised their functions would exhibit the main king's objective in creating new offices in acceptance for their kinship belonging. Thus, one has first to inquire into the Asantehene's main intentions while introducing any new reforms within the Ashanti empire. To what extent will he achieve his objective? And how would the main authority holders react? And finally which external factors favoured the application of these reforms?

3.2. Osei Bonsu's Political Reforms

During his first visit to the royal Asantehene's court as British commissioner in 1815, T.E.Bowdich described the Ashanti traditional gatherings as follows:

> ***During the traditional ceremonies (Odwira and Adae ceremonies) hundreds and hundreds of household servants and officials rushed before the Asantehene. They were called the*** *Odehye* ***and formed a class of administrators known as the Akyeame*** *Asante Agyei****, the Ahenkwa*** *Owusu Dome****, the Adamfo*** *Kwaku Sakyi****, the Afenasoafo*** *Kra Denhyee****, the Amradofo*** *Akwa Amankwa****, and the Nseniefo*** *Kra Nyame****... They then presented themselves successively with their retinues and bands of music, and bowing before the king, received his foot upon their heads; each then directed his officials to the king (holding up the two first fingers of his right hand) and swore by the king's head, that they would apply all kings' instructions and fulfill their specific assigned responsibilities*** [3].

(3) I.Wilks wrote that in 1817 Bowdich was the first to make a serious attempt to represent the extent of the Greater Asante in the nineteenth century on paper and to show what he called "the boundary of the Asante's authority. I.Wilk, Forests of Gold and the Kingdom of Asante, op.cit, p.189.

3.2.1.The conduct of Foreign Affairs in the Central Division: The Akyame

Asante Agyei[4] known as the Akyame was one of the most important figures in the royal court of the capital, kumasi. He was the head of the foreign affairs and was often referred to as 'linguist' or 'spokeman'. The Akyame spoke in the name of the king on public occasions, especially on the installation of chiefs and in trying court cases. He had notably the prerogative of intermediary between the Asantehene and his subordinate chiefs, the Omanhene. The Akyame was the official king's councilor and adviser. He replaced the king in the running of the agencies of the central government that included the direction of the political administration of the three political divisions. That is to say, he had the headship of the external and the internal affairs in the Inner Council (See Diagram5p.66).

R.S.Rattray wrote that during his visit to the court of Kumasi[5], the Akyame was quite attentive to the Asantehene who was permanently assisted by six official members holding permanent functions inside the divisions of the empire. First, the Akyeame was the head chief. He had under his command two new officials called the *Nseniefo* and the *Afenasoafo* (including Osei Bonsu's new appointments) in addition to the *Nhenkwa*, the *Adamfo* and the *Amradofo* officials (involving those appointed during O.kwadwo's reign) (See Table 4 p.67).

3.2.1.1. The Nseniefo: the Agents of Communication

The Nseniefohene **Kra Nyame** was among the Akyeame's direct subordinates. He was chosen among the royal criers and heralds and had the direction of other Nseniefo officials who were appointed as the agents of communication in the capital of Kumasi. They replaced the Nhenkwa in the exercise of their functions inside the Central Division and had to communicate the Asantehene's messages[6]and orders to the main authorities especially the Kumasi

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(4) Bowdich recorded the individual success story of Asante Agyei. He worked in the salt trade on the Volta and was noticed by the chief of Akwamu, who enlisted him in his bodyguard. He was in the chief's retinue when the latter was summoned to Kumasi to answer some charge against him. He spoke for three hours in defense of his master. The Asantehene was so impressed that he took him over for negotiations between him and other councilors. Later Agyei was appointed to the rank of Akyame, the word translated as 'linguist'.T.E.Bowdich, op.cit, p.228.

(5) A story recorded by Rattray illustrates the Akyame's duty. "While the chief of the

Diagram 5: The Council of the Empire under Osei Bonsu's reign

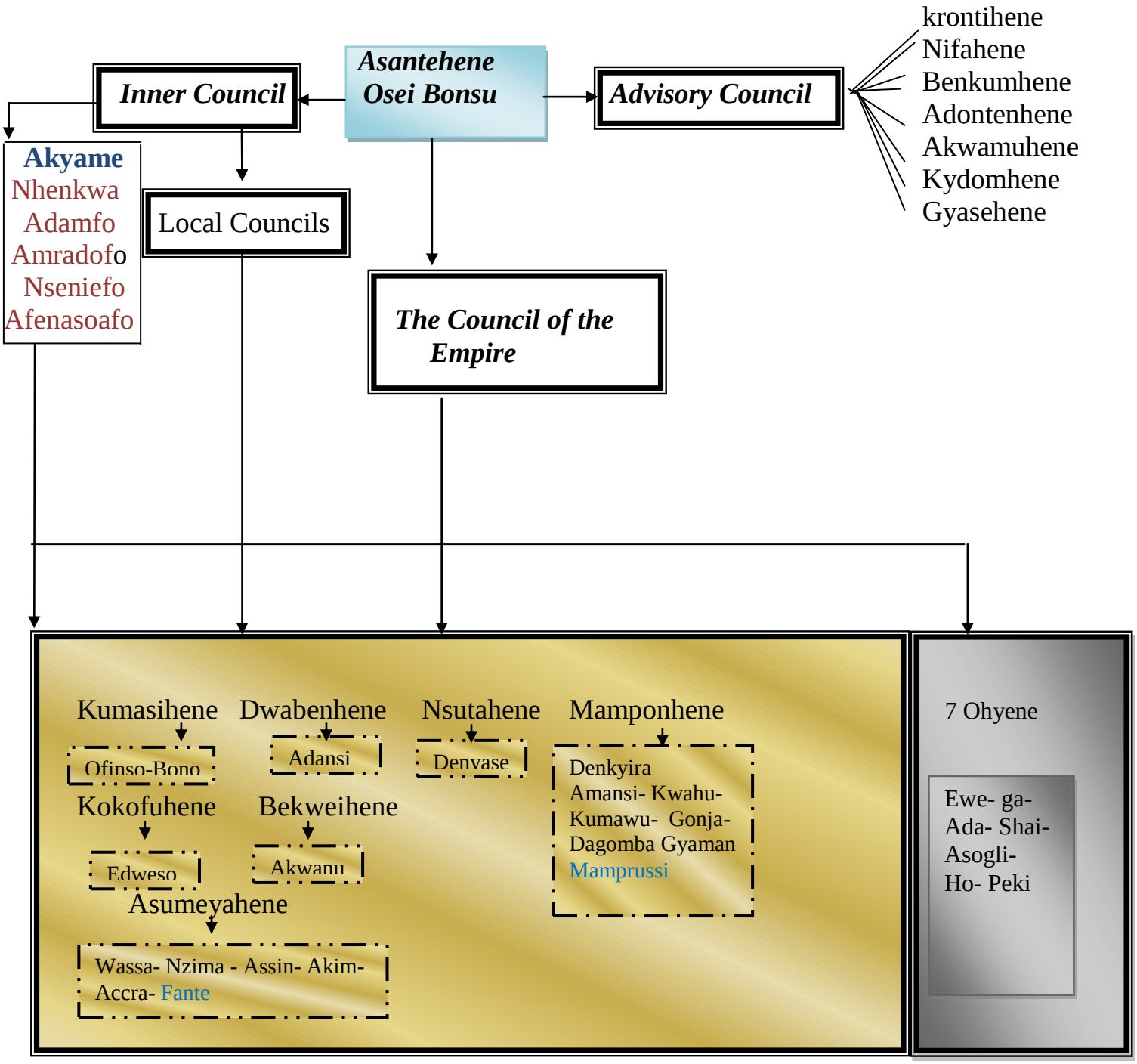


Table4 : Osei Bonsu's appointed officials

	The officials	***Their functions***	***The attributed areas***
The Akyeame's control	Nseniefo Foreign representatives	agents of communication	*Royal Court*
	Afenasoafo (Nsoromma and Worosatire)	couriers /official envoys	*Central Division* (the Ashanti confederacy and the internal provinces)
	Ahenkwaa	Holding foreign diplomatic relations	*Central Division*
	Amradofo	resident commissioners	*Provincial Division* The external provinces *southern states(Fante, Elmina, Cape Coast, Abura Dunkwa)
	Adamfo	Resident commissioners	*Provincial division* Specific northern provinces * northern states: Gonja, Dagomba, Mamprusi

Source: Adjaye, J.K, "Indigenous African Diplomacy: An Asante Case Study", International Journal of African Historical Society, V 18, 3, (1985).p.39.

Office Holders and the other traditional elders. They were also in charge of the promulgation of the main decrees that occurred during the official meetings including the Inner Council, the Local Councils or the Council of the Empire. In addition, the Nseniefo were left the task of receiving the official guests during the king's absence such as the confederated Omanhene and the other representatives of the foreign European or northern governments.

3.2.1.2. The Ahenkwa (Express Messengers)

The Nhenkwa official called Owusu Dome had to receive the new foreign representatives of the Muslim states of the north and the Europeans of the coast residing the royal Ashanti court whose presence was of a great importance for the development of the diplomatic relations between Ashanti and the other foreign states.

The northern representatives were Bashaw Mohammed al Ghamba (referred to as Baba in European records) Kantoma and Shouna belonging respectively to the Gonja, Dagomba and Mamprussi people while the European representatives consisted of the British representatives J.Hutchinson (1813) and T.E.Bowdich (1815) and the Dutch W. Huydecooper(7) .

The Nhenkwa's role was to help them fulfill their administedred missions. They were notably in charge of handling the meeting with the king and the Kyeame to make negotiations concerning the development of the diplomatic relations and the development of the political and the economic activities between Ashanti and

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province of Dwaben rebelled, and there seemed a danger that he would be joined by the Bekweihene. An Akyame and a sword-bearer were sent to summon the Bekweihene to Kumasi, where he asserted his loyalty and offered to commit his forces in action against Dwaben. When such a rebellion was successfully put down, it was for the Akyame to fix the indemnity to be paid. Every Akyame exercised as much influence on his activity as the chief himself". R.S.Rattray. op.cit. p.150.

(6) Bowdich pointed out that the Nseniefo were charged with the responsibility of publicizing all new decrees and regulations throughout kumasi as they gathered the people of the principal wards and villages by gong-gongs for their announcement. T.E.Bowdich, op.cit, p.256.

the European representatives whose forts such as the Elmina Dutch fort and the Cape Coast and komenda British forts were located on the coast[8]. The Nhenkwa handled also the exploration of the foreign representatives to the Ashanti territory and ensured their security.

The Ashanti government was built upon a sophisticated bureaucracy in Kumasi, with separate Ministries to handle the state affairs. Of particular note was the Ashanti's Foreign Office under the Akyame's control ; despite its small size, it 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

3.2.2.The Administration of the Provinces

3.2.2.1. The Afenasoafo(Official Envoys)

A further appointment under the Akyeame's direction was the Afenasoafohene **Kra Denhyee**, the head of the royal sword bearers. The latter controlled the *Afenasoafo* officials who were to be numbered by thousands. They worked as sword bearers divided into two main groups the *Nsoromma Afenasoafo* and the *Worosatire Afenasoafo* carrying the royal golden axes decorated with emblems of cast gold, indicative of their groups' belonging[9].

Both the Nsoromma and the Worosatire Afenasoafo worked as couriers. Each Afenasoafo group was responsible of communicating both verbal and written messages which they were trained to memorize and convey it towards the authorities ruling the Akan internal provinces. That is to say, the Nsoromma directed the communication of their messages to the southern Akan provinces and the Wororsatire directed those with ones in the north west [10].

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(7) Rattray reported that the city of Kumasi was full of the Asantehene's officials and Kumasi was divided into seventy-seven named wards. Some of which were the homes of the king's servants. R.S.Rattray,ibid, p.135.

(8) Nehemia Levtzion, "Muslims and chiefs in West Africa", Oxford Clarendon press,1968, p.182.

(9) J.K. Adjaye, "Indigenous African Diplomacy: An Asante Case Study" International Journal of African Historical Society. V 18, 3, (1985), pp.490-491.

Every Afenasoafo was in charge of resolving disputes. They also served as guides to missions and embassies traveling to or from the capital. They were required to have knowledge of the roads and of the distances from one place to another. However, the other Akyeame's subordinates were to be included into the Provincial Division of the empire.

3.2.2.2. The Local Division: The Amradofo and the Adamfo (resident commissioners)

3.2.2.2.a. The Amradofo of the Southern and the South Eastern Provinces

The Amradofohene **Akwa Amankwa** had the control of the Amradofos whose offices were appointed during O.Kwadwo's reign for the supervision of the southern and the south eastern provinces. The latter consisted of Assin, Wassa, Accra, Akim, Akwapim, Elmina, in addition to Cape Coast and komenda.

The Amradofo officials known as resident commissioners obtained the supervision of these strategic places that were of a great importance to the Ashanti traders especially after the Fante conquest. The latter consisted of nineteen states which were of a great importance to reach the most important forts of slave trade at that time that is Elmina, Cape Coast, and komenda. The latter were of a great importance for the Amradofohene to concentrate his efforts to choose three skilled resident commissioners able to convey the royal messages and to hold their attributed prerogatives. They were called *Kwadwo Akeampon Beakye*, *Addo Bradie* and *Kwame Butuakwa* residing the Elmina, Cape Coast, and komenda forts, respectively(11). The three Amradofo officials were endowed with political functions. They were instructed with the establishment of the Asantehene's authority and to preserve peace and order in the Fante states(12). They were assisted in the exercise of their functions through their headship of a great retinue whose functions were for the execution of the Asantehene's law and order together with the oppression of rebellion among the native Fante people.

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(10) Rattray noted a few known officials, the term Nsoromma, referred to those whose sword was decorated with a star while the Worosatirehene to those ecorated with a head (woroso tire). R.S.Rattray,op.cit. p.356.

(11) K Arhin, "Status Differentiation in Ashanti in the Nineteenth Century: a Preliminary Study", Research review, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana ,4,1968,p.35.

(12) "They usually resided with the fallen chiefs of the Fante and informed them with the Asantehene's established laws and institutions". George Hagan, "Le Concept du Pouvoir en Afrique Noire", Presse de l'Unesco, 1990.p.41.

The Amradofo had diplomatic functions, too. They were careful in preserving diplomatic and the international relations between the Ashanti and the British and the Dutch traders since they ensured the circulation of the European commodities and diffrent messages to the royal court in Kumasi. They were also asked to respect the Asantehene's oath for entire allegiance to the king and every Amradofo was obliged to respect these royal instructions, otherwise they were severely punished(13).

The institution of the Amradofo's office was a way to gain complete control over the Fante people who were still resistant to the Ashanti's laws. The Amradofo developed friendship relations with the Europeans especially the British who allowed them to denounce the Fante's hostility and cheating(14).

3.2.2.2.b.The Adamfos of the Northern Territories

After his successful conquest on the Fante states, the Asantehene started his campaigns in the northern territories under the direction of the Adamfohene **Kwaku Sakyi.** He led the Adamfo officials including the seven appointed officials under Kwadwo's reign in addition to the eighth Adamfo official (known as the kurewahene). They had the duty of supervising the Mamprussi, Gonja and Dagomba territories(15)(See Table 4 p.67).

Since 1820, O.Bonsu's administrators were paid no regular wages. By virtue of the propriety of control they exercised over particular skills, they were entitled only to fixed fees and commissions. For example, in 1823, the Ashanti resident commissioner Adu Bradie was authorized to collect a fine of one hundred and fifty ounces of gold from komenda. His commission was twenty percent (thirty ounces)

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(13) "Punishments occured among the Amradofo and this was what happened to Abura Dunkwa and kwame Butuakwa who threatened to destroy the Cape Coast fort when they refused to respect the British rules". W.E.Ward, op.cit, p.151.

(14) Bowdich pointed out that the Fante were still considered as middlemen who used to plunder and cheat the Ashanti's commodities exchanged with the British of the south and the Ashanti's friendship relations with the British later to the Ashanti's direct access to the external trade and at the same time to maintain the Amradofo's control over these native people of the south. T.E.Bowdich, op.cit, pp.239-240.

(15) Osafreado Amankwatia, J.A.Braimah, H.H.Tomlison, History and Traditions of the Gonja, University of Calgary Press, 1997, p.136.

3.3.The Maintenance of Internal Security

Hence, the class of administrators began to take the important characteristics of an administrative non-hereditary civil class appointed to suit Bonsu's needs for more faithful servants in court [16].

Traditional accounts narrated that every new Asantehene either created a new captain of a new company or enlarged his predecessor's company after a successful war. The army too served the empire well, supporting its long period of expansion and subsequent resistance to any foreign colonization. It was restructured on a more centralized basis, with military officers appointed directly by the king[17].

In 1818, after his whole victory and destitution of the Gyaman king called Adinkra, O.Bonsu chose to maintain two military companies considered as a household regiment of foreigners. First, he decided to enlarge the *Ankobea* Company and later to add another company. It was called *Fekuno* was composed of slaves and war captives. Both the *Fekuno* and the *Ankobea* companies were under the direction of the Asantehene's sons the *Anamanakohene* and the *Apeasemakahene*. This not only made it possible to raise the sons to the positions of honour, but it also ensured that the Asantehene was loyally served by captains who besides owing their elevation to him, they were bound to him by filial ties[18].

Bonsu's companies were of great strategic importance since they were established to guard the royal court against the danger of a further military coup. Indeed, The tradition was that the companies were created to commemorate victories but Bonsu's objective was to make the captives grouped in the company and placed under their respective leaders who were given tides by which their military company or military unit were distinguished.

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(16) W.W.W.Claridge, op.cit, p.165

(17) Osafreado Amankwatia, J.A.Braimah, H.H.Tomlison op.cit, p.137.

(18) Emanuel Terray, "Contribution à une Etude de l'Armée Asante",op.cit, p.65.

In Kumasi, the old military army built up under O.Tutu's reign (whose leaders in times of war were the Kumasi office holders led their own lineages to fight in the front, rear, centre, wing, or main body) was made up of contingents sent by the various northern rulers, i.e. the most recently conquered people, the Mamprussi contingents. The latter were made under the control of the military officers commanding the Kumasi divisions and formed soldiers partly armed with muskets and partly with bows and arrows The Ashati army had numerous troops from conquered and incorporated peoples, and faced a number of revolts and rebellions from these peoples over its long history. 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 2000.000 making the Ashanti army bigger than any other neighbouring empire. Under O.Bonsu, the Ashanti army was described as a fierce organized one whose king could bring thousands of men into the field whose warriors were trained in the northern territories and learnt their military expertise deployed in the battle field.

Military organization was highly structured around an advance guard, main body rear guard and two right and left wing commanders. Every commander of each section was attended by northern agents from the Mamprusi and the Hausa stated chosen for their military skills. This provided flexibility in the forest country where the Ashanti army typically operated in. the approach to the battlefield became essentially via conveying tactics including ambushes and extensive maneuvers on the army wings. This force was to expand substantially and continually to defeat various encounters. However, further advance for the Asantehene's civil administration was on the judicial sphere.

3.4. The Reinforcement of the Court

The Asantehene's Court was a Court of Appeal for all cases arising within the Ashanti empire. This was the highest tribunal presided over by the Asantehene and assisted by the Kumasi Office Holders and the military chiefs. The captains of the Fekuno and the Ankobea companies assisted the tribunal[(19)]. They were members of the Asantehene's court and they also settled disputes among their own subjects since the distant villages were administered by their respective divisional chiefs. As stated by M.Coquet:

> ***At the head of the judicial system, the Supreme Court exercised both judicial and administrative powers; it is the court of first and last resort in matters concerning the government. The Court of Appeal, located in Kumasi, tries all cases on appeal from ordinary tribunals*** [20],

The Asantehene typically exacted or commuted all capital cases. These commuted sentences sometimes occurred by ransom or bribe but were considered as revenue for the state. O.Bonsu stated by himself new principles for the rule of law that were to be pronounced in a judicial formula which the Akyame had the duty to pronounce when passing judgment in both criminal and civil cases. These principles involved:

*The man who committed an offence to the king, the penalty for which he well knew was death.

*Those who had no respect for the Golden Stool, they had no respect for the king.

*A lie always aggravated the punishment, and truth generally extenuated, and sometimes atoned of itself for the offence.

*The man who committed an offence to the Akyame and his officials, the penalty for him is death.

* Cursing the king, calling down powers to harm the king was considered as an unspeakable act and carried the weight of death

* An Akyame who undermined his role, he is considered as a serious threat to the peace and stability of the state[21].

It was not a regular tribunal, but it was summoned if the nature of the judgment became compulsory. Thus, a man tried in Mampon could appeal to the Asantehene's court by swearing the Great Oath on the Mamponhene's Akyame (spokesman) who pronounced the judgment of the court. The Akyame became the defendant at the Court of Appeal. In this context, T.E.Bowdich reported from the Asantehene Osei Bonsu:

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(19) "The limits of the Ashanti jurisdiction to the north west reached the Comoe River". T.E. Bowdich, op.cit, pp.181-182.

(20) Michele Coquet, Art de Cour en Afrique Noire, S. Nouvelle, Adam Biro, Paris, 1996, p.23.

(21) George.p.Hagan, "The Rule of Law in Asante, a Traditional Akan State", Présence Africaine, 113, Paris, 1980, p.208.

> ***In his judicial administration, truth was of a vital importance because it was the primary touchstone of justice, and truth generally extenuated, and sometimes atoned of itself for the offence: he (the Asantehene) invariably anticipated the temerity of perjury, where convincing evidence was to be opposed to the accused***[22].

And George.P.Hagan rightly defines the judicial role of the Akyame thus:

> ***The Akyame is present in is judicial capacity and gives in all cases brought before to the king or chief. In case of appeal from a lower to a higher court, it is against the Akyeame, who in the first instance gave judgment, that the unsuccessful litigant must take proceedings***[23].

Osei Bonsu continued the process begun by his predecessors of replacing hereditary chiefs as much as possible by appointed officials. This was more efficient since they were appointed for their abilities and could be dismissed if their work was unsatisfactory. Since they were responsible to the king and showed the effect of the increasing the royal power. Meanwhile, Osei Bonsu accepted also other northern foreigners in the capital of the state Kumasi. The effective occupation of the northern parts of the empire had some remarkable consequences which have been ignored by some historians. The Asantehne ordered the appointment of some foreign expatriates. Actually, one of the most interesting aspects of state organization was his recognition of the value of written records in administration. He employed Muslims who kept records in Arabic, and set up an Arabic school in Kumasi. As K.Arhin stated:

> ***This penetration in Kumasi, in particular reached 1000 Muslims living there under the leadership of the scholar Muhamed al-Ghamba, referred to as Baba in the European records. Some of these Muslims were wielding considerable influence at the Asantehene's court***[24].

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(22) W.E.Ward, op.cit, p.151. And T.E.Bowdich,op.cit p.199.

(23) G.Hagan, ibid, p26.

(24) K.Arhin, op.cit, p.39.

The Ashanti's Political, Military, Judicial, and Economic Organization (1800-1824)

The principal objective behind Osei Bonsu's political achievements came to centralize power in the hands of the king, and to create as Ivor Wilks pointed out a complex bureaucracy to solidify the Ashanti's government[25]. The new appointed military agents namely, the *Ankobea* and the *Fekuno* officers got non-hereditary ranks and had to attend the Local Councils and to assist the Omanhene in their administrative and military control.

Thus, by the beginning the nineteenth century, an administrative apparatus had been evolved and seemed capable of accepting new members and sustaining a new policy.

> ***Positions at his royal service were increasingly open to talent, irrespective of social origin. And, the Council of Elders undertook actions only after consulting the official representatives. This was to be seen in the king's council where instead of members attending through hereditary rights, the king's appointees were summoned to attend meetings for specific purposes. In this way, a highly developed government with a complex system started to be established***[26]**.**

From the king's side, one of the most fundamental features of this organization referred to the attribution of duties and responsibilities for every official as soon as a new territory was settled down. From the eight Kumasi office Holders' side, they reported that the whole constitutional reforms were seen as extensive alterations to the old matrilineal principles of the authority made in their hands. Indeed, in 1817 showed the impact that those administrators had on the old traditional rulers. "It was potentially a force of change", as T.E.Bowdich commented. It led specifically to the impotence of the kin authority holders (that is, the Oyoko clan members) and the emergence of a slew of administrative functionaries", he added. Meanwhile, their claims would increase more since the king's authority was linked to ensure his own benefits as far as the economic reforms are concerned[27].

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(25) T.C.McCaskie State and Society in pre-Colonial Asante, Cambridge University Press, First Edition, 1995.p.24.

(26) Adu Boahen, Ghana Evolution and Change in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries,Longman, 1975, p.27.

(27) T.E.Bowdich, op.cit, p.135.

3.5. Osei Bonsu's economic reforms

The abolition of the slave trade, in 1807 was very unwelcome to the Ashanties, for it removed one of their main sources of foreign exchange and deprived them of a way of disposing of the acquired captives. As Western demand for slaves was falling down, the Ashanties thought to increase their exports of gold and to produce a semi-cultivated forest staple, the kola nut. Besides, the prosperity of the large entrepots on the coast and on the desert margin on the Hausa lands created some additional employment opportunities for the traders and the transporters, and also for farmers, who supplied stuffs to towns and caravans.

The Asantehene feared that if slaves were accumulated in large number, they would threaten the security of the empire. Thus, he thought that since Ashanti had a number of alternative sources of income, the end of the slave trade did not plunge her into an economic crisis. In the aftermath of British withdrawal from the slave–buying the inflow of captives appeared, not surprisingly, to have exceeded Asante's internal demand. Slaves were then taken for other purposes. That is, they became a source for the development of the main sectors of Ashanti's economy, namely agriculture, mining and trade for the management of the Asantehene's empire enterprise.

3.5.1.The Management of the Empire Enterprise

It became more profitable for the Ashanties to remain on the forest fringes for permanent settlements and farming in the Ashanti heartland became difficult because of the large amount of labour needed; the Asantehene began using the slave labour in great quantities to clear the forest for planting and to mine the gold. The slaves were recuperated initially from the Hausa and Nkoranza people of the northern territories and from the coastal trade. Sold with low prices much of the supplied slaves who were retained in Ashanti and worked and had a highly labour-intensive task(28).

(28) G.Austin, Labour, land and capital in Ghana: from slavery to free labour in Asante (1807-1956), University of Rochester Press, New York (USA), 2005, p.122.

3.5.1.1. Local trade

Since crops were largely cultivated under O.Bonsu's reign, local trade was established in some district markets such as the market place of Kumasi held by some small scale retailers or merchants who exposed their local food staples and other commodities using a developed system of weighing the Ashanti's currency, gold dust.

With the development of agriculture, local trade was developed on the local market centers and the retailers known as *adwadifo* purchased commodities in bulk and with the assistance of hawkers known as *mpaafo* they sold their goods from ward to ward in the towns and from village to village in the rural areas. They still worked privately on their own accounts and did not proceed within the framework of the great-roads system since their objective was to extend their business network away from the long distance trade markets. In the Kumasi market place, the Ashanti retailers were called the *adwadifo* known as the Ashanti's local people who produced their own crops and products and used to sell the surplus of their production. However, the merchants known as the *akonkofo* were the Asantehene's agents (often chosen among his servant in the royal court) who traded with the different products which were generally brought from the southern and the south eastern people that is, the Akans, the Ga-Adangbe and Ewe people.

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The adwadifo's products were local food staples such as the yam tubers and the yam flour, some collected tubers and fruits, together with other hand-made products whereas the akonkofo's products contained the south eastern staples as the grain crops (rice, sorghum, maize, and millet), salt and fish and the Akans' crops known as cassava (which was cultivated among the Southern Akans) and other root crops. These products were important supplements for the forest region people who were usually attracted to buy them(29). The transactions made between the Ashanti people and adwadifo or the akonkofo were usually made in gold dust following a developed system of weight that will be examined later on within this chapter.

(29) "These commodities are the most produced within the south eastern regions usually known as the grassy lands in addition to the savanna…", R.S.Rattray, op.cit, p.146.

3.5.1.2. The Kola enterprise

The kola nut was introduced into the Ashanti territory in the late eighteenth century by a Gonja man called Adu Bini, who brought it from the north. Kola particularly the variety of *Cola Nitida* was a major commodity of Ashanti trade. However, the cultivation of kola nuts in Ashanti (mainly after 1800) provided a new asset that was produced in great quantities especially in eastern and the north western Ashanti forest region (See map 8 p.80).

As it is illustrated on map.8, the old traditional food crop farming had been largely abandoned and kola cultivation was remarkable for being almost entirely for peasant cultivation. Everyone in Ashanti assisted in the collection of the kola nuts in the forest region. The average kola farm was only two and a half acres. The crop proved immensely popular, and it was run by the Ashanti farmers only partly with the help of their own families. However, later following the exponential increase of kola in West Africa, imported labourers from the north in large numbers were to tend the kola plantations and to carry the kola nuts to the northern markets. Paul. E. Lovejoy added:

> ***Slaves and pawns were used to collect nuts, and while women and children gathered them, too, this was not exclusively a female occupation, as it was further in the west of the forest region***(30).

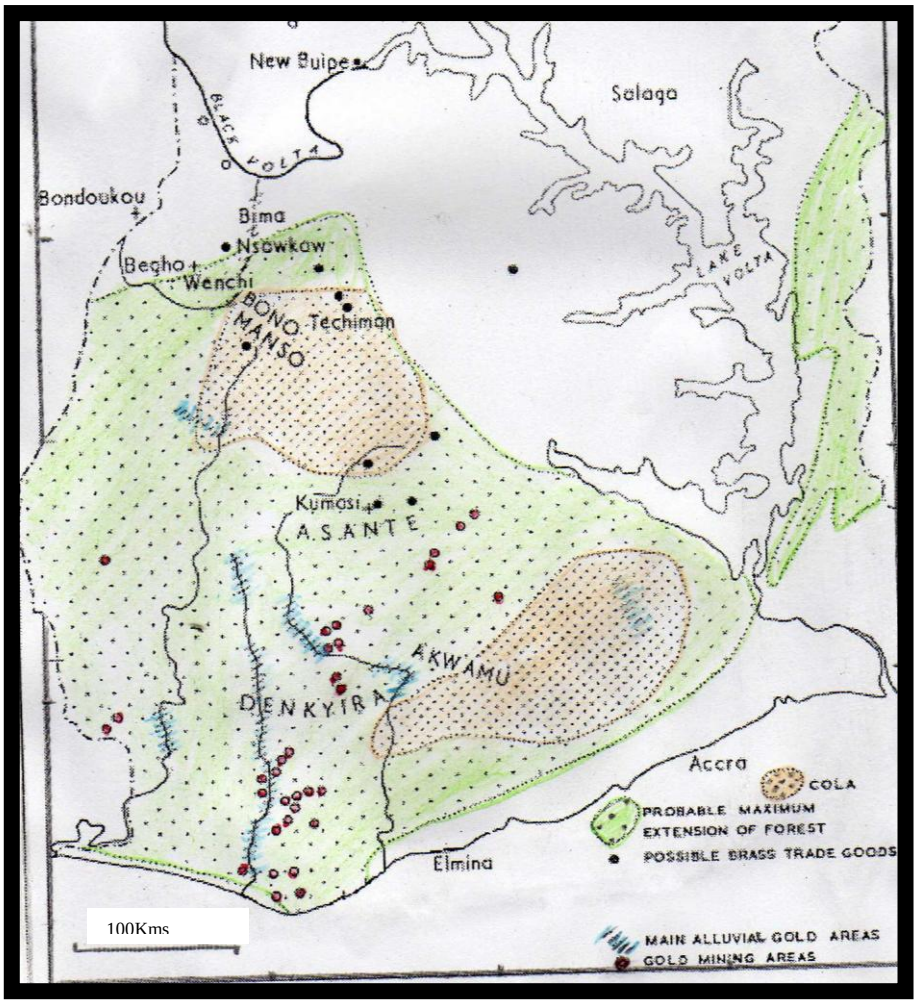
Several hundred tons of nuts were traded each year by the Ashanties to the northern regions. The examination of the map provided by N.Levtzion shows the routes of Kola trade starting from the forest region. The areas concerned with spread from the Mampon region to Takyiman and the Tano river valley(See map9p.80).

The trade between the region of the kola plantations in the forest and Salaga was well controlled by the Ashanti authorities, as illustrated by the account of an Ashanti chief trader, namely the Bantamahene:

> ***I went once to Salaga with forty*** *apakam* ***(loads) .They were carried by free men. It was no disgrace for free man to carry a load while trading. Each carrier was allowed to carry as many extra nuts as possible, attached to the chief's loads, and these he could trade on his own account. The Omanhene sent his heralds with us, carrying an*** *afona* ***(the state sword) as an insigna of office to show we had been***

(30) Paul. E.Lovejoy, "Kola in the History of West Africa", Cahiers d' Etudes Africaines, 77-78, XX-1-2, p.101.

Map8: Areas of Kola Trade and Gold Deposits in the Ashanti's Forest Region (1800)



Source: Karen Sanders, **Sustainable Trade in Pre-Colonial Asante**, College of Art and science, Eastern Michigan University, published Thesis, Vol.1, 2008,p.18

> ***sent by the chief. As soon as we had passed, these heralds closed the path until we had disposed of our kola, i.e. about twenty days. The guards were stationed at Ejura and Atebubu. It was a law in olden times that all kola must first be exchanged for cowries (known as*** *sidie****), with which you bought what you had been commissioned to purchase***[31]***.***

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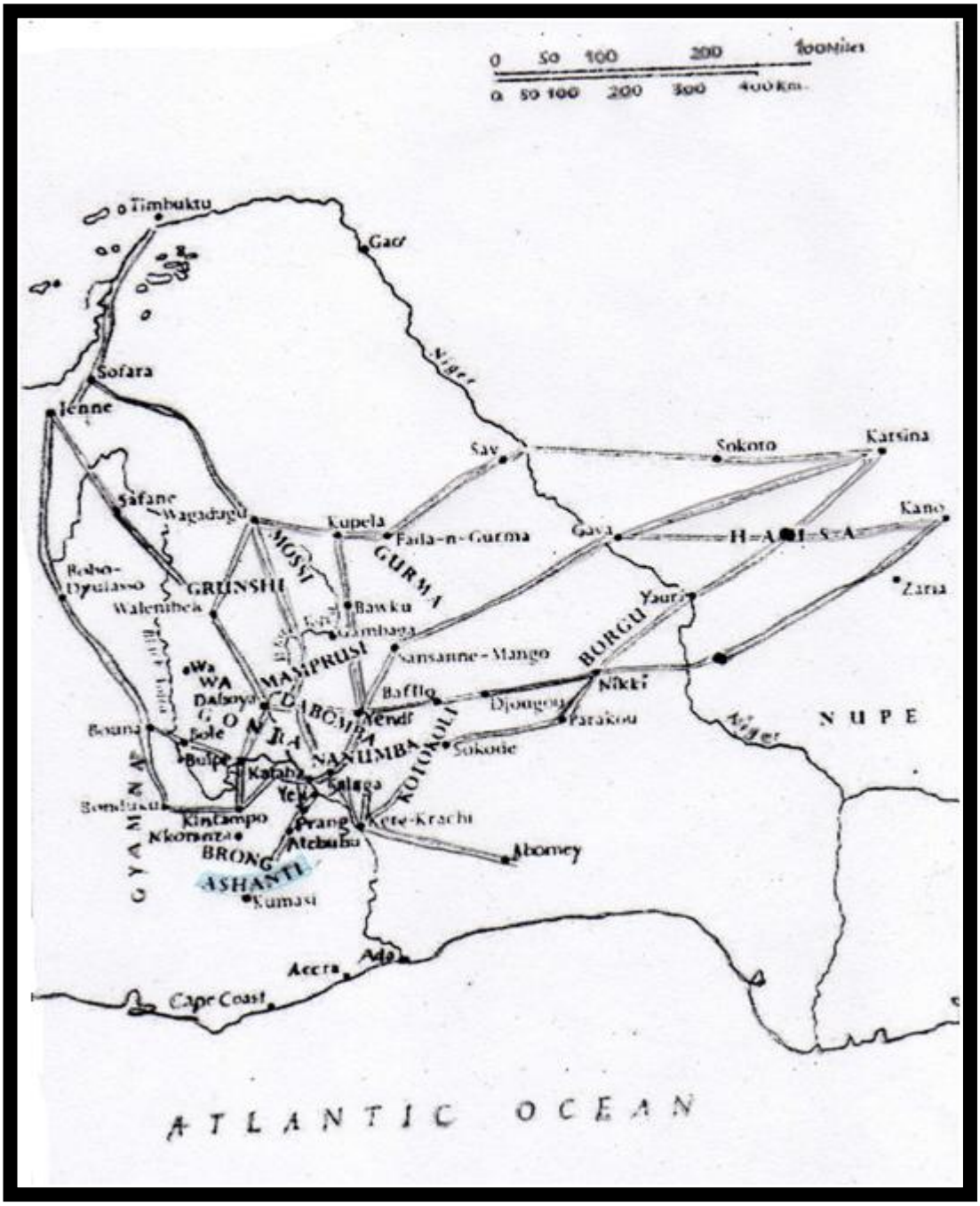
> ***I went once to Salaga with forty*** *apakam* ***(loads) . They were carried by free men. It was no disgrace for free man to carry a load while trading. Each carrier was allowed to carry as many extra nuts as possible, attached to the chief's loads, and these he could trade on his own account. The Omanhene sent his heralds with us, carrying an*** *afona* ***(the state sword) as an insigna of office to show we had been sent by the chief. As soon as we had passed, these heralds closed the path until we had disposed of our kola, i.e. about twenty days. The guards were stationed at Ejura and Atebubu. It was a law in olden times that all kola must first be exchanged for cowries (known as*** *sidie****), with which you bought what you had been commissioned to purchase***[32]***.***

By 1820's, the kola trade was extremely profitable and Ashanti supplied most of the northern markets with kola nuts. The trading centers on the northern bank of the Volta River were the meeting-point for traders from the Mande and the Hausa lands. At that point the flow of kola nuts instead of gold became the main

(31) Paul. E.Lovejoy, ibid, p.123

(32) Nehemia.Levtzion, op.cit, p.32

Map9: Routes to the Volta Bassin



Source: Nehemia Levtzion, **Muslims and chiefs in West Africa**, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1968.p.2.

export product of the forest to the north, at the Salaga market (See map8p.80). Nehemia Levtzion wrote:

> ***Kola is chewed; its liquid, acting as stimulant, helps to overcome thirst. Being valuable, kola comprises a most appropriate present; it is given by a host to his guests and by subjects to their chiefs. Grown in the forest, it is consumed mainly by people of the savannah and in the Sahel. Hence its importance in the West African inter-regional trade,...Hausa and the Bornu depended almost exclusively on the kola nuts of the Ashanti forest***(33).

The Ashanties conquered most of the kola production zone as it controlled Gonja and Dagomba and merchants were confined to markets outside the production zone, so that kola prices could be protected. The market place of Salaga became the official centre for the trade with. As it was a new town founded in the first years of the nineteenth century near the provincial capital of Gonja, it developed rapidly into the largest urban centre in Ashanti. The principal foreign merchants were Hausa from the Sokoto caliphate, Yarse from the Mossi states, and the Wangara from Borgu, but the Hausa had a somewhat different relationship with the Ashanti since they were of Muslim origin based in the savannah and used a corporate structure to promote business for great distances(34).

Kola was marketed through an intricate system of brokers and sub-brokers, who acted as intermediaries between the farmer and the wholesale buyers. The latter involved four main buyers who handled ninety percent of the kola trade in 1815. The northern merchants sent their agents down country to buy kola from the brokers. The brokers were native Ashanti who were the royal agents of the king and to whom the kola revenues returned. Hence, the kola trade with the north reached its peak in the nineteenth century. At the beginning of that century, the Ashanties lost an important source of income by the abolition of the slave trade and they had to pay in gold for the transactions with the coast. It became more convenient for the Ashanties to buy clothing and other manufactured goods such as iron agricultural tools, salt and brass from the north, where they could pay in kola. As the imports of the kola nuts to the Hausaland increased, the Asantehene sought to increase the imports of gold trade, too.

(33) Nehemia.Levtzion,ibid, p.34

(34) Osafreado Amankwatia, History and Traditions of the Gonja, op.cit, p.140.

3.5.1.3. Gold production and state enterprise

For the development of the trade in gold, O.Bonsu thought of a new way to get the maximum amount of gold for trading purposes. To allow free enterprise but following several imposed restrictions over extracting gold and trading it. Besides, to evaluate the value for such restrictions, O.Bonsu devised his own system of evaluating the local currency, gold dust using gold weights.

O.Bonsu decided that everyone within the Ashanti forest region could be involved in the trade of gold on the main alluvial gold areas and gold deposits (See map8p.80). That is, free Akan peasants were left to wash the alluvial gold from the rivers on a seasonal basis and also in other gold mines especially those of southern Denkyira and Akwamu. And, the most auriferous gold mines were left to the Omanhene and operated by his agents who used slave labour as the basis of most gold production.

As mining of gold was open to every common citizen within the Ashanti empire. This encouraged the Ashanties to discover more gold deposits for themselves and to find methods of prospecting and extracting gold so that they could trade gold and build their own personal wealth. In this way and during the 1800s, gold was extensively looked for and a new method of extracting gold was introduced together with the other methods of panning and shallow digging. It was known as the shaft digging method (or *amenapeaa nkron*)[35] that needed a great number of slaves divided into three groups of workers. In shaft digging, the miners started digging shafts more than three feet in diameter and started extracting blocks of mixed pebbles and gold that would be cleaned and washed afterwards. They consisted of skillful diggers (who used to dig deep shafts using new acquired tools), carriers (who transported the heavy blocks to remote places to get them washed) and washers (who used to wash the blocks to filter the cleaned gold nuggets and dust).

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(35) "The shaft digging method was introduced by the Asantehene A.Ware mainly after the conquest of the Bono people. The latter had advanced techniques of prospecting and extracting gold using various iron tools acquired from the states situated in the North.... As the Bono people were subdued, few Bono producers and especially the chief of Takyiman Ama Yao remained in the Ashanti court to introduce this new method and other ways of melting gold". A.Ott, op.cit, p.15.

Many other major gold deposits were consequently discovered throughout the Ashanti forest region of the Gold Coast. The locations of these sites are depicted on (Map10p.86). Sefwi, Wassaw, Aowin, Akim, Fante, Akwamu,Akwapim, and Brong gold fields were intensively mined and the river beds were washed out. However, the two main areas within the Ashanti territory at which the natural gold deposits were the most highly concentrated were Wassaw and Aowin. With the discovery of these two much larger gold deposits the Asantehene began to introduce his slave labour force using the new method of gold extraction i.e. the shaft digging method(36).

Since most of the gold nuggets and gold dust were-in great parts-confiscated by the Asantehene, they were melted by the royal goldsmiths for the making of the king's regalia and some other ornaments or they were converted into the Ashanti's currency of that time, the gold dust currency. In this way, the other head-chiefs or Omanhene and local miners who acquired small nuggets and gold dust made their own currency. It consisted of the performed gold dust currency in Ashanti that was used to launch some local economic activities (to buy yam seeds and other food) following the established system of seed weights called the '*Taku System*' that was used both in the local commercial activities and acquired natural resources supplied by some conquered states of the empire in the 1800s.

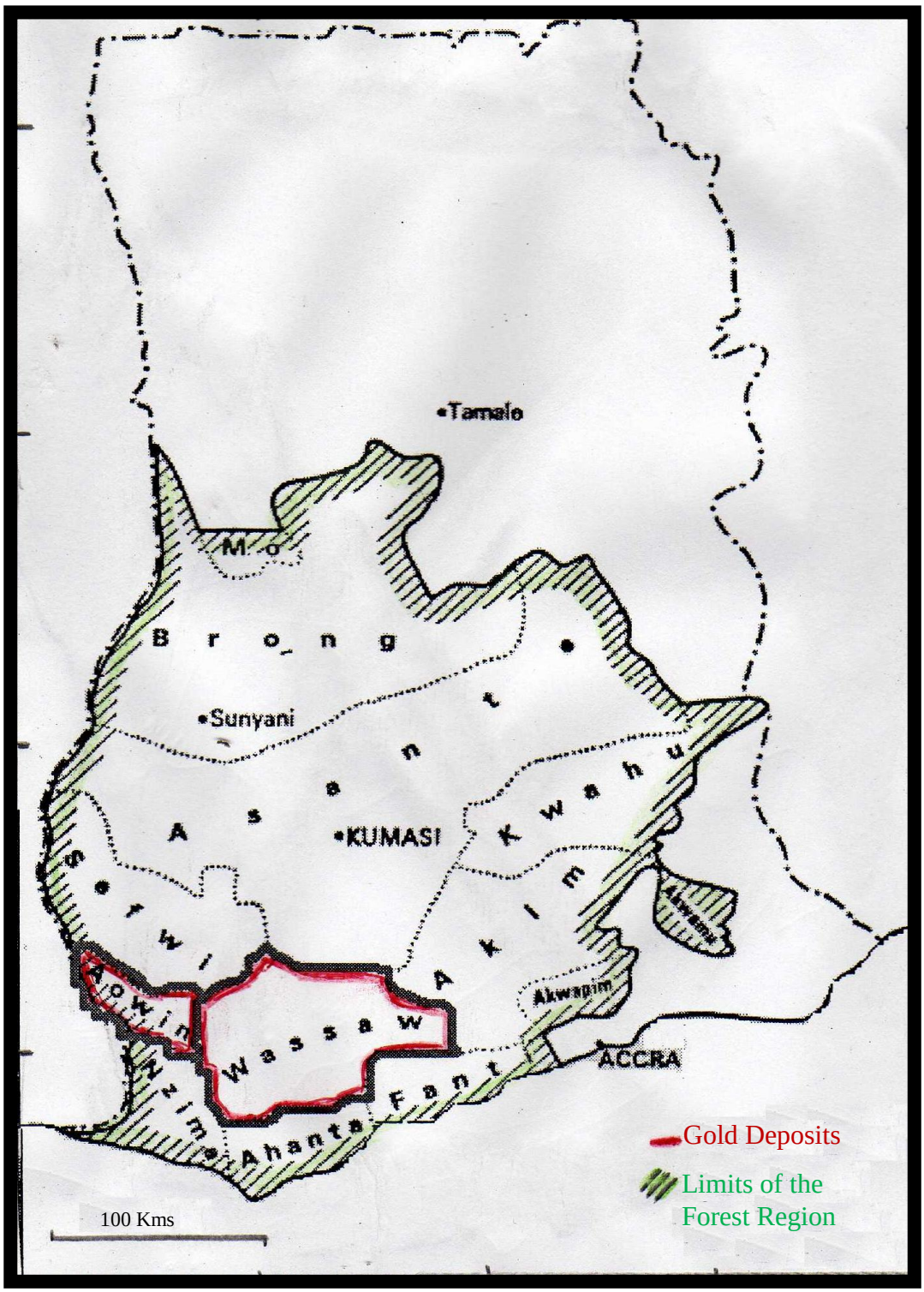
The production of gold increased steadily as the gold nuggets and gold dust were produced in large quantities shared among the Omanhene and the Asantehene. That is to say, half of the extracted gold at each goldfield returned back to the Omanhene whereas the Asantehene confiscated the other part of the production. Most of the Omanhene's and Asantehene's acquired share of gold served in some craft work while the other parts were used for new economic activities.

With the discovery of the gold deposits and the management of the system of local currency, Osei Bonsu began to place additional restrictions on the trade of gold. The major change which was exacted was that the only trade route that would be maintained from the southern two gold containing regions (Wassaw and Aowin) to the south of the forest and those directed to the north would intersect through the capital, Kumasi.

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(36) Kwame Arhin,"Aspects of Ashanti Northern Trade in the Nineteenth Century", Africa, 40, 1970, p.364

Map 10: The Two Main Gold producing areas in the Nineteenth Century Asante



Source: Karen Sanders, **Sustainable Trade in Pre-Colonial Asante,** op.cit, p.20.

It was in this way that the Asantehene ensured that all mined gold could be calculated and the correct amount of the two thirds royal contributions would be obtained from all gold trade. In return, the Asantehene ensured the continual maintenance of the trade routes -as the tropical rainforest climate made the rate of the agricultural growth in the forest extremely high-and appointed a great number of road cleaners. As shown on map11p.88, all major trade routes between the north and the south of the Gold coast country had to pass through the capital of Kumasi. It formed a combination of bottlenecking the trade through the forest region but, still allowing the Akans to openly mine, collect and trade gold.

The Asantehene thought for other restrictions in trading gold led by his officials. He used of his servants (a great part of them could reach eight to ten thousand slaves were employed in washing the beds of the streams) and on the other hand the Omanhene. The king, at the *Adai* festival, distributed among a number of chiefs various sums of gold dust with a charge to turn the same in good account. These chiefs then sent down to the coast caravans of tradesmen, some of whom would be their slaves, sometimes some two to three hundred, to barter gold for European goods, or buy such goods with gold dust.

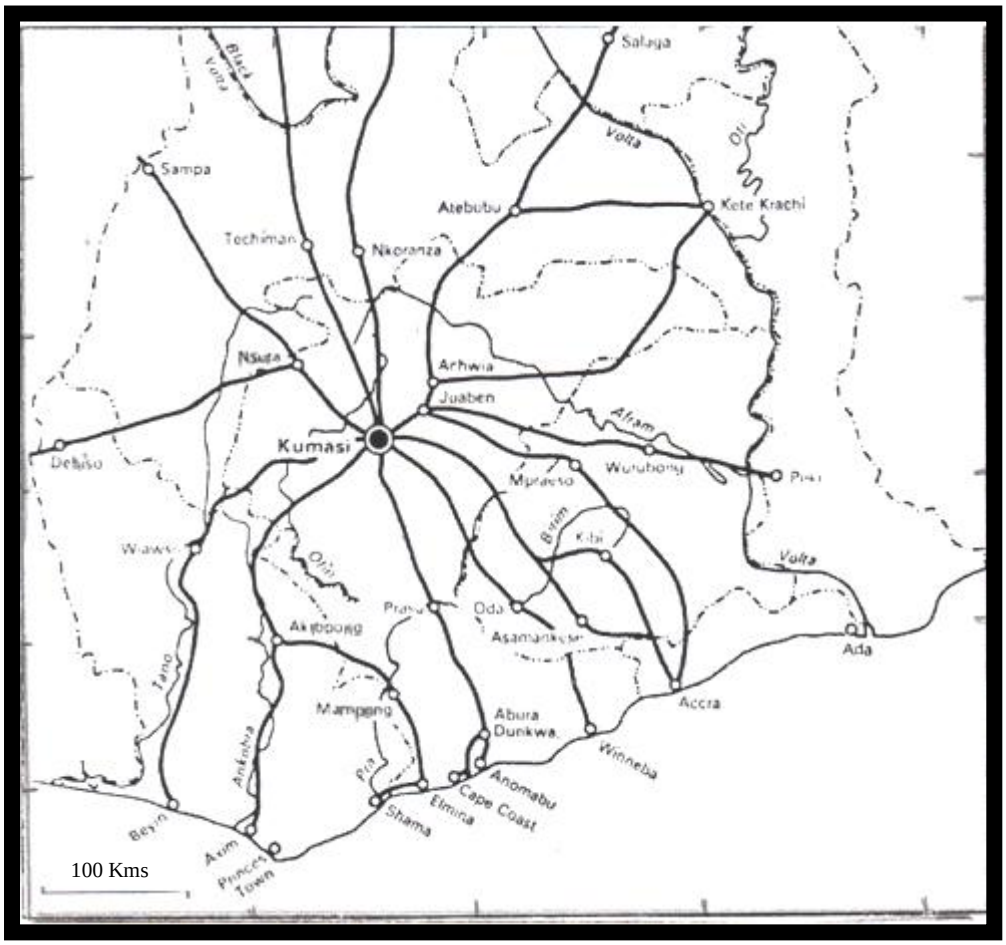
The chiefs of the divisions of kumasi, the Omanhene acted as a mercantile agents for the king, each receiving from 500 to 1000 mperedwan yearly(37) which they in turn distributed to their sub-chiefs and captains and other subjects, who took it to the coast for goods brought from the interior; and made thereby fabulous profits: they rendered account to the king at the end of each year with these resources, there is no wonder that they were immensely rich and could afford to meet the exactions of the king who knew well their wealth.

The Akan peasants became also itinerant traders who bought up cloth, metal and European firearms from the coast, or salt, cloth and other trading items from the north; and traveled through the country selling them for gold. In this way,

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(37) "At that time the mperedwan (peregwan or pereguine), the highest denomination in daily use in Ashanti, was equivalent to 2 fourth ounces of gold dust". I.Wilks, Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the kingdom of Asante, op.cit, p.134.

Map11: Major Trade Routes through the Capital of Kumasi in Asante



Source: T.E Bowdich, **Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee,** op.cit, p.325.

either through taxation or from trading, the Asantehene was able to gain the greatest profit from this lucrative business[38]. In 1816, the Annual production of gold was estimated then to 100.000 oz[39].

In Ashanti, the estimation of the acquired products was made through the Ashanti gold weight system which was a very interesting way in which the Ashanties themselves calculated prices within their own economy. According to A.Ott, there was a special method of converting the values of each product by the standard Ashanti gold weights, using the same conversion rates. Also, the value of gold was relatively stable against European currencies over the period. In fact, this system had three main units of weight called the *dama, taku* and *ta* which differed in fractions and varied from the smallest unit to the largest one. Every local trader employed these units of weight to assess the value of the gold dust according to the given price of each purchased commodity[40].

In 1817, a constant stream of Ashanti traders might be seen daily wending their way to the coast and back again. The chiefs were fed bountifully by the labour of their slaves, and sharing large sums of the revenue (the fines their oppression had imposed on other governments), with incalculable fees for corruption or interference, and who possessed a large surplus of income daily accumulated. The wholesale operations, in contrast of the retailers, were in the hands of those known as the *akwantufo*, that is, "those moving around the roads". The *akwantufo* included both private and public traders who were of a great knowledge of how transactions in gold dust were made. The elaborate system of reckoning the value of gold dust by weight was admirably analysed by Garrard, who showed it to be based upon the Islamic mithqual to be used for Osei Bonsu's system of taxation and general finance [40].

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(38) Phyllis.M.Martin and Patrick O'meara, Africa, Second Edition, Indiana University Press Blooming Town, 1986, pp.195-196.

(39) Mathew Nathan, "Historical Chart of the Gold Coast and Ashanti", Journal of the Royal African Society, Vol: 4, No: 13, 1904, p.40

(40) ". It consisted of Seed weights where the taku was considered as the largest weight among other weights which were either fractions or multiples of the Taku such as: *powa, pesewe, damma, kokowa, takufu* and the *taku*". A.Ott, "Akan gold weights", Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, Vol IX, pp.18-19.

3.5.2. Taxation and general finance

The court at Kumasi was the centre of a highly developed system of revenue. The Minister of Finance, the *Gyasewahene* held a daily court of exchequer. The state was financed by tribute from conquered areas, a poll tax levied in Kumasi, including the royal mines, worked by slave miners and much of the areas of trade. While he *Gyasewahene* held a court of his own under the supervision of the head of the executioners and police lived immediately to the south of the palace.

It has been shown that the Asantehene's authority demonstrated the capacity to intervene in property rights in the sense of reconstructing and redistributing the ownership or sovereignty over lands and subjects by imposing fines on chiefs, often to the extent of extortion(41). He also demanded heavy death duties and rents on the use of some natural resources. Besides, he obtained revenues from a variety of sources some of which were also tapped by chiefs: war booty, tributes paid by defeated or otherwise subordinate rulers; taxes on the income of the Ashanti population at the point at which it was earned, such as market tolls and gold-mining rents, in addition to a range of occasional levies which, for at least part of the country, were apparently consolidated into a poll tax; court fees and fines; the occasional labour services of subjects(in war or in public work); and the regular labour of the chiefs' servants i.e. the Gyasehene, who farmed, traded, escorted and in other ways served them(42). Taxes included:

- The Omanhene paid taxes to the state either in a form of market tolls or gold-mining rents.
- Every miner was simply required to pay the two-third payment of the gold mined
- Things gained in war were shared between the Asantehene and the Omanhene. They were divided into three and the king received 1/3 of them.
- The remainder2/3 was mixed and was again divided into three and the Commander of the army received 1/3 of it again.
- Then a portion of the remainder 1/3 was taken and shared among the judges and the rest 1/3 belonged to the chiefs who occupied the right, left and front wings of the army.

(41) Georges Niangaran-Bouah, "Idéologie de l'or chez les Akans de Cote d'Ivoire et du Ghana", Journal des Africanistes, 48,1, (1978), p.135.

(42) T.F.Garrard "Studies in Akan goldweights", Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, 13,n°1and 2,14, (1972-1973

- Half money of a condemned subject belonged to the Asantehene and the other half portion was given to the Queen mother.
- Court fees and fines.
- Tributes paid by defeated or otherwise subordinate rulers(43).

Officials were authorized to fine those committing a nuisance. The akwanmofo offices were created in the late eighteenth century for cleaning the roads and paths of the royal Ashanti empire from nuisances, and to see that the authorities through whose land they passed kept them open. They had funds to pay for the work and were authorized to fine those committing a nuisance (44). Thus through the Asantehene's decision to maintain trade routes only through Kumasi, and the establishment of system of confiscating parts of the extracted and transacted gold , this allowed the king to control and gain his direct wealth from the trade.

Besides,The state treasury was distinct from the personal exchequer of the king, whose banker, the Sanahene, was subordinate to the Gyasewahene. The treasury had a separate office for the handling of monies (*damponkese*), for revenue collection, and for state trade (*batafo*). It also collected the cashiers, the guardians of the roads, the road cleaners, and other middle-level offices. The administration of the gyase was thus responsible for the extraction and allocation of the nation's wealth.

Therefore, not only political affairs were directed by the king's officials, but the imperial financial affairs were similarly under royal surveillance. In the early 1820s, the Asantehene's government sought to reduce the number of slaves it received in tribute and replace them with other forms of wealth. By imposing rents on the land, the Asantehene showed that he had rights on the land as he tended to restrict access to wealth producing resources such as gold deposits and kola trees and to charge rent for exploiting them. Whereas usually subjects or citizens of the chiefdom were free to start looking for kola or gold, non-citizens had to obtain

(43) "Rents were imposed on the use of some natural resources in the forest region, too". K.Arhin, "Status Differentiation in Ashanti in the Nineteenth Century: a Preliminary Study", op.cit, pp.34-35.

permission. Otherwise, it determined the Ashanti maxim saying in Twi "afuo mu ye dee, asase ye ohene dee" applied: "the farm is my propery, the land is the king's" as Wilks interpreted it. Rattray glossed it: "The farm (meaning really the produce), or the right to make use of the farm, is mine, but the land, i.e. the soil is the chief's". This policy exhibited the development of a mixed economy based on the state intervention since some industries were controlled privately and others by the government(44).

Conclusion

This study has shown that the Ashanti people traded extensively in a wide variety of natural resources and manufactured products. There came an era of the Ashanties equivalent to 'legitimate commerce', from the beginning of the end of the slave trade till the end of Bonsu's reign, was characterized by a significant increase in the exploitation of the forest land: specifically with respect to the endowment of kola and gold leading to a directed economy. This trade undoubtedly brought benefits, at least to some of the parties concerned. The king who controlled the production and wholesaling of the exports whether gold, kola or slaves, gained a great deal from external trade. In 1824, the Asantehene had gross revenue many thousand pounds from overseas sales. A proportion of exports earnings were spent on goods such as cloth, hardware and salt which helped to raise living standards

In fact, there was considerable demand for labour (for producing and trading both exports and goods for the internal commodity market). Much of the extra-subsistence economic activity was in the hands of the commoners, especially married men drawing on the labour of their conjugal families and seeking to acquire slaves it appeared that the majority of slaves imported into the Ashanti region were female, but there seemed to have been a rough balance between the male and the female, which suggested that the labour as such, rather than the possibility of additional wives, was the major objective sought by the main traders. This induced greater use of slaves in production for the market as well as in other roles.

(44) L.Mair, op.cit, pp.85-86

In 1820s, the Ashanti empire became a highly centralized, bureaucratic state. The extensive reorganization of the military and civilian agencies of the government and the creation of new fiscal, diplomatic and mercantile structures all worked to enlarge state power and to concentrate it in the monarch's hands. Economically, political stability led to a developing extensive trade in food staples, gold and slaves. To facilitate this trade the Asantehene established a unique infrastructure between his territory and that of his trade networks. The internal economic stability allowed them to further monopolize the trade profits. For instance, Osei Bonsu had a deliberate policy of limiting the growth of merchant classes, since they might ultimately challenge his authority. Thus, he restricted the accumulation of capital by imposing high rates of interest and exacting heavy death duties. Another interesting effect was the phenomenal expansion of trade between Ashanti and the northern regions of the Hausaland. The system of exchanging staples for northern products was of a great necessity for the Ashanties to keep their gold specifically for trade with the southern Europeans and thus to have a continuous surplus for their local products. I.Wilks reported:

> ***This is perhaps the chief advantage which arises from commerce with strangers. It rouses men from their indolence; and representing the Ashanti nation with objects of luxury, which they never before dreamed of, raises in them a desire of more splendid way of life than what their ancestors enjoyed. And at the same time, the few merchants, who possess the secret of this exportation and importation make great profits; and becoming rivals of wealth to the ancient nobility, tempt other adventures to become their rivals in commerce***(45).

Politically, administering the Ashanti empire with such a dense population was to call for radical measures. In the first place, it was marked by local authorities' easy assimilation into the Ashanti's cultural model. Even the

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(45) I.Wilks, "The Mossi and Akan States: 1500-1800". In Ajayi and M.Crowder, History of West Africa, Vol: 01, London: Longman, 1976, pp.444-445.

provincial Oman were restructured according to the Kumasi model. It was mainly due to the inherent affinity of the internal provinces with the Ashanti people. As it was stated by I.Wilks:

> ***Yet the possibility must be allowed for that at least some of these societies had acquired strongly Akan cultural traits precisely in consequence of their incorporation into the Ashanti policy***(46).

In the second place, Ashanti's penetration also carried over to tributary states. The Sefwi borrowed socioeconomic and political structures from the Ashanties. They integrated the Twi language into the local Aowin dialect. Examples of such acculturation processes abound. Busia describes Manya Krobo de-stoolment procedures in terms similar to that of the Ashanties. The Ga also copied many Asante institutions(47). The Lobi, according to Chazan, developed aspects of matrilineal descent arrangements. Dagomba reorganised its army along Ashanti lines(48). In reality, military conquest and expansion was accompanied by the conscious and forceful penetration of the Ashanti's cultural norms and by the selective opening of the centre to symbolic access by the periphery.

It was the Asantehne will to unify his empire under one nation and to choose the help of the non-kin officials in doing so ha was faced with perpetual protest in Kumasi and later in the Oman. It was the beginning of a defining feature of Ashanti political economy which lasted for a long period of time but there was protest and rebellion by coalitions of export suppliers and chiefs against any major attempts at what they considered to be organized extortion. That is to say, the hereditary chiefs of Kumasi i.e. the Office Holders were systematically eliminated and replaced by a bureaucracy whose members were subject to royal appointment and control. Thus, political affairs were directed by officials notably shown as ministers solely responsible to the throne, while the provinces were ruled by a sort of consuls similarly under royal surveillance.

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(46) I.Wilks, Asante in the nineteenth century, op.cit,p.71.

(47) N.Chazan, op.cit, p.81.

(48) Busia, op.cit, p.52.

Meanwhile, the cumulative effect of these measures was greatly to strengthen the Asantehene's governing policy while the Kumasi Office Holders Osei Bonsu's attempt in carrying out a series of political purges that greatly curbed their power. However, the general pattern of the Ashanti government in the nineteenth century was that the Asantehene tended to monopolize political power and instituted an organization of young men who were non-kin appointed officials (given the name of elites) chosen by the king himself:

> ***O.Bonsu marked the evolution of a sort of elite class where senior posts became allowed to men of merit, and non-Ashanti people coming from the provinces, and even from outside the empire who frequently achieved high office within both in bureaucracy and army. That is, the king his desire to increase his power in relationship with the old oligarchy***(49).

In fact, according to I.Wilks:

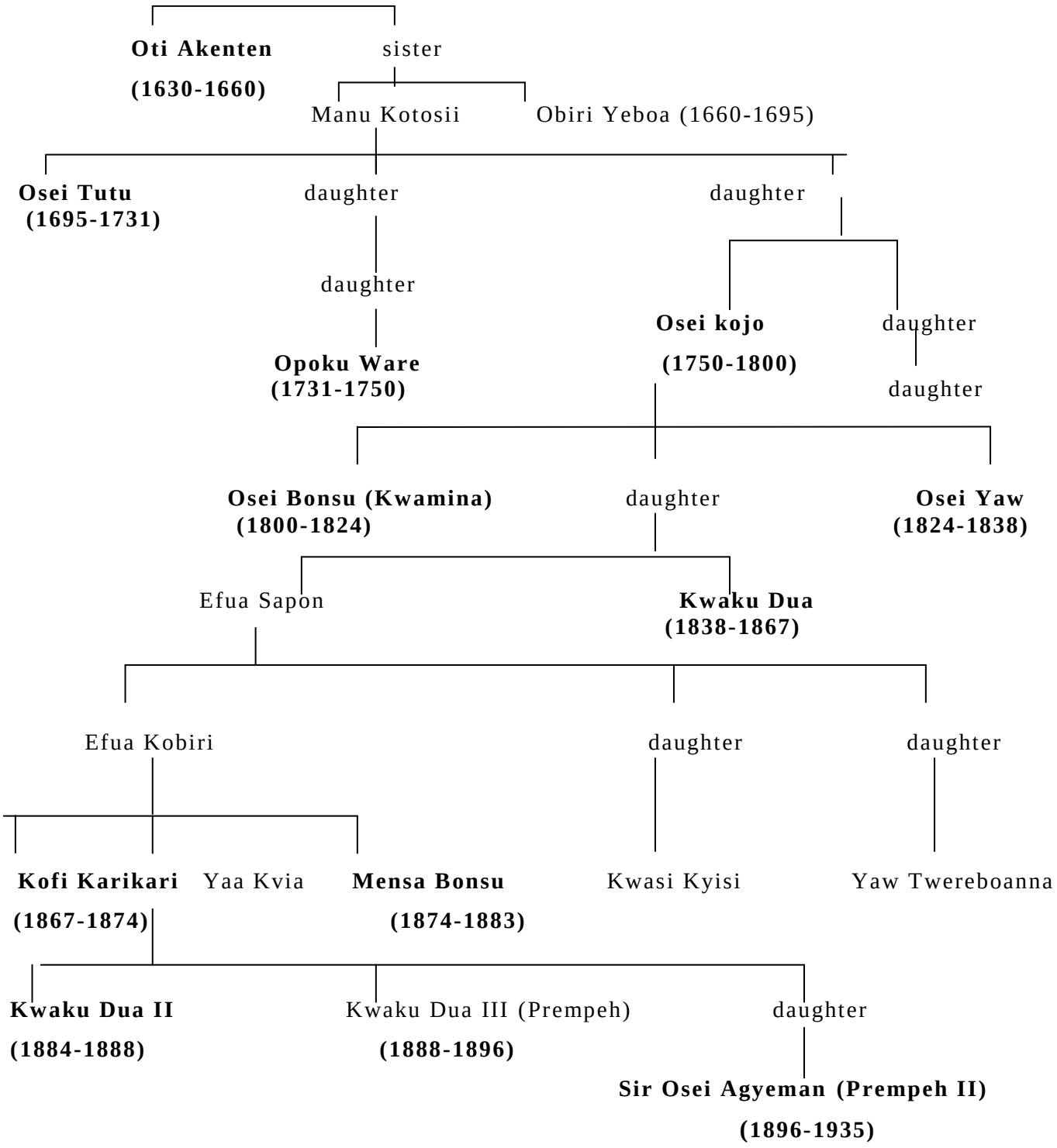
> ***The Asantehene brought into being an appointive bureaucracy directly responsible to him and to his appointees were designed to strengthen his position in relationship with the Omanhene and the Kumasi Office Holders that is, the traditionalist Oyoko chiefs***(50).

Beyond this, the Asantehene moved to circumscribe also the Omanhene's power in what was called the Amanto states or the internal provinces. The latter were exempt from imperial reforms and still possessed a great degree of local autonomy as well as power in the Ashanti army. The Omanhene reacted and clung tenaciously to their ancient privileges and resisted, to the point of civil war. They reported that any attempt to extend the power of the new bureaucracy into their domains would certainly lead to serious revolts. It was for the respect of this policy that O.Bonsu decided to leave for his successors (See Diagram6p.95).

(49) N.Chazan, op.cit, p.81.

(50) I.Wilks, ibid,p.73.

Diagram 6: The Ashanti kings: Asantehenes



Source: W.E.F.Ward, A History of Ghana, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1958, p.420.

General Conclusion

The Ashanties and their empire had endured for centuries within a continent which had an indisputable reputation of instability. From the birth of their civilization, their Asantehenes uniquely positioned themselves as thoughtful organizers within and through the country of the Gold Coast. These Asantehenes were described as powerful invaders and wise doorkeeper to trade. This position allowed them the ability to evolve a political, military, judicial and economic organization around their home territory and to create for them reputable power across Africa. This reputation protected them further from hostile powers which chose to follow them and to trade, instead of attempting to conquer them. This study has shown an overview of the Ashanti's origin that was undertaken to provide insight for an appreciation of their king's humble beginnings.

It is therefore, a matter of importance to examine the main aspects of the qualified Asantehenes applied for the headship and to determine the relationship between the main Empire institutions and then to analyze the most important factors that made major contribution for its initial stability. The importance of the Golden Sool at this juncture cannot be exaggerated. First, by making the Golden Stool ('*Sika Dua*', a golden chair) the repository of a national spirit transcending all local ties, the early Asantehene Osei tutu (the founder of the Ashanti confederacy) and his priest Anokye played upon the superstitious beliefs of the Ashanti and thereby succeeded in impressing upon them that henceforth Ashanti was a nation linked by a mystical bond of which the new stool was a visible symbol. Second, they were aware that religion can be a means of enshrining and deifying society and that the social field may be more aptly expanded and rendered cohesive in the minds of men by symbolic rite and ritual representations, of which the Golden stool was an extremely useful instrument. Third, for obvious ideological reasons-that the golden stool could not have come from elsewhere and hence have strongerstatus-it was regarded as being called down from the sky. Fourth, the political unity of this act could not be underestimated: in one fell swoop all previous stools (among Akan myths) were abolished and the Golden Stool became the first. A new hierarchy of stools was created that flowed from the centrality of the Golden Stool. The appointed Asantehene was enthroned on the sacred Golden Stool, which came to symbolize the strengthened power of the king Every Oyoko Office Holder had his own stool and the closest stool to the Asantehene was that of

the Mamponhene, who significantly was the sole non-Oyoko divisional chief of the provincial Aman of Mampon. Each independent divisional chief took an oath of allegiance to the stool, and all lands and stools were subordinated to the Asantehene. Upon the stool, the king was sacred, the holy intermediary between people and ancestors. The Asantehene reigned over all the chiefs of the divisions of the empire, the Omanhene and he was the only person in Ashanti permitted to invoke the death sentence. In this way the Golden Stool became the concrete focus of the Ashanties identification, loyalty, and continuity.

Political authority, as alluded to in the myth of the Golden Stool, therefore contained both ascribed and achievement elements. The stool, because of its inanimacy, was a symbol of genealogy as well as of personal qualifications. Access to a stool was open to anyone who could make an ascribed claim, providing that he was acceptable to the people and the council that is, a representative organ of kin groups and functional associations. It marked the rise of the kin-rooted foundations of the Ashanti's policy for the formation of the Ashanti empire.

During Osei Kwadwo's reign, the features of a new Ashanti policy began to take shape. He sought to demote some of his Kumasi and Omanhene chiefs and create new stools more directly under his control. The essence of the changes wrought by Osei Kwadwo was the subversion of the power of the hereditary nobility and the transfer of the functions of government to a new class officials controlled by the king. These shifts had been referred to as' the Kwadwoian Revolution' or the initial bureaucratic upheaval of Ashanti government. Partly as a result of political need to improve the administration and partly because he coupled military with political reform, establishing the internal security branch, the *Hiawu,* the *Nkonson,* the *Nkawara* and the *Ankobea* as a potential threat and a means of exercising internal coercion. To effect the necessary changes, O.Kwadwo simply deprived certain lineages from hereditary stools, made lesser appointive stools into depositories of real power and changed then hereditary positions into appointive ones.

During Osei Bonsu's reign, the transition to a final phase of appointed bureaucracy within Kumasi enabled the development task specialization and the elaboration of new areas of activity. The first, and perhaps the most important, was the expansion of the center into the economic sphere. The key stool in the

bureaucracy was the Gyasewahene, or the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who looked after financial affairs and collected tributes, poll taxes, death duties, and tolls. Second, overseeing the administrative asks were the Okyame who had a legal background. The chief linguist had the task roughly equivalent to that of a prime minister, while other linguists were attached to different departments as counselors. This group must therefore be distinguished from that of the administration, which carried out purely bureaucratic tasks but were not directly involved in policy making. The *Fekuno*, the third branch of government, was charged with the task of law enforcement. During war time, he was increasingly helped by the chief army commander and personal military companies.

Consequently, five internal sources of instability resulted and created problems of fragmentation within the Ashanti center. Since the meetings of the council of the empire were often sporadic and unwidely, the Asantehenes beginning with Osei Kwadwo, began to nurture the council of officials that is, the Inner council which gradually evolved into the Council of Kumasi. Beginning as a miniature cabinet around the Asantehene, this council gradually came to include seventeen members, mostly office holders such as the Okyame, the Adamfo, the Amradofo, the Gyasehene, the heads of the heralds, the executioners. This council attempted to subvert the decision-making power of the Council of the Empire, and nineteenth-century kings were prone to ruling through the executive fiat, following the considerations raised for their advisers.

The Inner Council incorporated later new economic and bureaucratic elites, while the Council of the Empire became the repository of kin and military elites to cause frictions within the governing structure. A clash between both elites was inevitable, different organizational principles were at stake. In the course of these processes, the balance of power moved from kin to functional groups and representative principles developed conflicts among the various elites within the center itself. Two main factions developed thus in Ashanti in the nineteenth century. The so-called war party was led by representatives of the Golden Stool version of the Ashanti model; the peace party was composed of the new elites who possessed a secular and functional orientation. Conflict between these two groups colored Kumasi politics after

the kwadwoian Revolution, bringing about the de-stoolment of several Ashanti monarchs. Changes in the relative power positions of proponents of each view however, provided the framework for a certain pattern of conflict which regulated tension in the Ashanti's policy, at least until 1890s.

Conflicts plagued the Ashanti policy and there were perpetual center-periphery tensions, which continued to play an important role in the political sphere. These tensions reached a peak with the attempted secession of Dwaben (1875), an effort put down by brutal force. At the end of the nineteenth century, the unresolved problems between Kumasi and the Omanhene led to some bitter succession disputes. Banda, Takyiman and Gyaman frequently revolted against Kumasi. Not only Dwaben, but Kumawu, Mampon, Nsuta, Bekwei and Kokofu also broke away from Kumasi. Even the small division of Mansa-Nkwanta revolted against kumasi during the reign of Mensa Bonsu (1875-1883) and was successful because none of the other chiefs would join in the war. In 1895, the chiefs of Bekwai and Abondom signed formal treaties with the British government without the permission of the Asantehene. The Omanhene frequently revolted and the revolts were not mere sporadic incidents but were symptomatic of the Union that is, the confederacy

However, The Asantehene held immense power in Ashanti, but did not enjoy absolute royal rule, and was obliged to share considerable legislative and executive powers appointed through matrilineal hereditary succession. Most importantly, the existence of aristocratic organization and the Council of Elders was evidence of an oligarchic tendency in Ashanti political life.

Unfortunately, added to these internal conflicts, the empire witnessed a constant dislocation of its main institutions. The Asantehene was able to monopolize trade in such a way that the whole trade relationships grew into a symbiotic relationship between their economic and political stability and the consolidation of peaceful and long lasting link between the Ashanti's and their neighbours. Firstly, the Asantehene's organization of the empire officials under his direct service tended to democratize and liberalize the political process. They sought for a constant assistance at the main Councils of the Empire and ensured that their views should

be seriously taken and added into the conversation. Secondly, the Asantehene had a large staff. He had his spokesmen and officials. An elaborate pattern of specific relationships existed between the chief and his principal officers in which their various performances were carefully worked out while their functions were not. The positions were, relative to western standards, functionally diffuse. Besides, although the formation of the confederacy was impelled by the need of common defense, no permanent army was established. The conquered states supplied men required for defense or for external invasions as the need arose. All able-bodied men were liable for military service, and their chief was responsible for providing them with powder and ammunition.

These five internal sources of instability created problems of fragmentation within the Ashanti centre. However, they were attenuated somewhat by periodic shifts in elite coalitions and by recurrent efforts to permit at least partial access to the centre. But what the Ashanti empire could not control was a sixth type of conflict, that generated between the ruling stratum either middle-level functional groups or the population at large. The introduction of new social and economic factors in Ashanti was accompanied by the beginning of social differentiation among classes. By the waning years of the nineteenth century, these divisions had superseded more traditionally rooted sources of conflict. Up to that point, Ashanties had known conflict at the apex of the social system. It had also come to terms with spatial instability and tension among the middle rungs of the social structure. The change at the end of the century induced radical instability, which became to the reconstructed social order.

Ultimately, all what can be said is that the Asantehenes really proved that in West Africa indigenous people can perform political and economic standards of living almost comparable to the Western standards; and that with the absence of the European occupation in the Ashanti heartlands before 1824, the development of Ashanti suzerainty over a large part of the Gold Coast, this system grew in size into a dominating bureaucracy, more like a legitimized holding company of partially independent divisions than like a formal kingdom. Yet, at the center a very real monopoly of power was held by the paramount chief, the Asantehene, whose central position of monarchy was one day under a highly centralized political control.

To conclude, the Ashanties displayed a great ability to emerge as a highly organised empire in the past. They will certainly continue to manifest a respect for the Golden Stool and all that it represents and to retain a keen awareness of the debt they owe to those who have gone before, to the ancestors. Then, the Ashanti nation may either cease to exist other than as a romantic evocation of times past or, it will forge for itself a place in a rapidly changing world, the structure of which none of us, the Ashanti included, can even begin to portray. Ashanti will, surely, continue to work out its destiny within the framework of the Republic of Ghana and of whatever wider configurations of African states may emerge. Its history, explored in this research, suggested that it will do so without abandoning a sense of identity: a consciousness of cultural and linguistic community, an awareness of the past, and a highly particular vision of the unity of past, present, and future. Such, surely, are the stuffs of nationhood.

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Glossary

The organization of this work is thematic rather than chronological or geographic. In consequence, the attempt has been made to arrange this glossary synthetically in such a way as to provide the reader with the maximum possible assistance in locating events and persons in time and space. A broad chronological Asante history may thus be obtained by use of the entries for individual rulers, local clans and Gold Coast objects and places

A

Abontendom (or Adontendom the main body of the army,the Abontendomhene is the commander) 21

Accra (coastal state) 1,9,12-13, 15, 22, 25, 28, 38,43, 50,55,66, 78

Ada (south eastern state) 5-6,9,12,13,15-16,23, 28,33,37-41,43,59

Adai festival (Ashanti's festival gathering every forty days) 87

Adamfo officials (officials in the royal court appointed under Osei Kwadwo's reign) 38,40- 42, 44,65-67, 71

Addo Bradie (British commissioner) 70

Adu Bini (the first man to introduce kola in Ashanti forest region) 78

Aduana (Akan matri-clan) 5

Advisory Council (Royal Office Holders' Council in Kumasi) 11-12, 38,66

Adwadifo (retrailers) 78

Afenasoafo officials (sword bearers) 65-67, 69-70

Agogo (Akan matri-clan) 5

Agona (Akan matri-clan) 5

Akan-Akans (people of the Gold Coast region to whom the royal Ashanti clan, the Oyoko clan belongs to)5,8,11,17, 22-23,43,47, 51,69,74,83, 89-90,94,97, 106-110

Akim (south eastern Akan state) 9,12,15,38,66

Akwamu (Akan state, the Akwamuhene is the Akwamu's sovereign and commander of the right wing of the Ashanti army) 9,12, 15,38,84

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Ankobea (military company established by Osei kwadwo and achieved by Osei Bonsu) 72-73,76,98

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Asogli (Akan clan) 6,9,12,38 ,66

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Asumenya (Akan state, the Asumenyahene is Asumenya's district chief known as Omanhene) 15,29,33,55

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B

Bafo Pim (district chief of the Bono State) 33
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Batafohene 59
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Bono 5,9,12-13,15-16,23,28, 33,37-41,43,59

Bonohene (Akan sub chief) 55-66
Brass 56,83

C

Caboceers (Muslim chiefs in the Ashanti court) 15,17
Cape coast fort (southern British fort) 22,25
Cassava (root crop) 51
Ceremonial Stool(the district chiefs or Omanhene's chair)14
Christianborg (southern Dutch fort) 59
Cocoyam (tropical root crop) 51
Cola Nitida (variety of kola appropriate to the Ashanti's plantations of the forest region) 79
Copper 56

D

Dagomba (south western Muslim province controlled by the Mamponhene) 6,12,15,22,38
Dama (seed weight among the units of Ashanti gold weights) 89
Damponkase 89
Denkyira (southern Akan state conquered by the king Osei Tutu after the battle of Fiyase in 1696) 9,12,15,21-22,38,66,84
Denkyirahene (17th century tyrannical king subdued and incorporated into the Ashanti provincial division under the Mamponhene's control) 14
Denyaase (Akan state) 9,12,15
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Dyula merchants (northern merchants) 56

E

Edweso (internal Akan province)9,12,15, 38,66
Efisom (private offences)46

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Ewe (southeastern non-Akan groups) 6,9, 12,21,38,78

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Fante (coastal Akans) 59,70
Fekuno company (Bonsu's military Company) 72-73
Fekuo (military company) 7,21-22,76,99
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Ga (south eastern communities)5,6,9,17, 21,28,33,36-37
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Gold Coast (Ghana nowadays) 97,89,108
Gold dust (Ashanti's currency known as mperedwan) 23,31,54,78,84,89
Golden Stool (a sacred king's golden chair devised by Akomfo Anokye, the local priest) 3,10,74,97-98
Gold weight (made in brass used to weigh the gold dust currency) 84,89,108
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H

Hausaland (northern muslim territories) 83
Harmattans (hot tropical air masses) 25
Hiawu Company (royal military company for internal security) 98-99
Ho (non-Akan Ewe and Ga south easterncommunities) 6,9,12,38,66

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Inner Council (or Privy Council gathering Osei Kwadwo's officialdom) 38,64,66
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Kofi Sono (the Gyamanhene under O.Kwadwo's reign) 15
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Mamprussi (northern non-Akan state) 66
Mampon (Akan state member of the Ashanti confederacy) 56,66
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Mensa Bonsu (the Ashanti king 1875-1883) 101
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Mpaafo (hawkers)78
Mperedwan (Ashanti currency) 23,87
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Nnomun (war captives) 27
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Nseniefo officials (Osei Bonsu's agents of communication) 65-67
Nsuta (Akan state) 12,38-9,41
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Nkonson company (military company under O.Kwadwo) 99
Nifahene (commander of the right wing in the army) 12,38
Ntaku (Tutu's system of weighing gold uding seed weights) 31

O

Obiri Yeboa (father of Osei Tutu and founder of the Ashanti state in Asantemanso ,north of the forest region) 10
Odehye officials (all the appointed officials assisting the king in court) 64
Odwira festival (traditional gathering of the whole office holders, district chiefs, sub chiefs, and villagers)28
Office Holders (refers to all the holders of a stool in the empire, the Kumasi royal chiefs or the Omanhene sub chiefs) 6,9,11,18,20-21,39,54,56
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Osei Bonsu (or Osei kwamina, king of Ashanti, the founder of the empire bureaucracy in the pre-colonial rule period) 62,64-67,75-77,89,99
Osei Tutu (king of Ashanti, the founder of the Ashanti confederacy and the Ashanti constitution)10,21,24,36,47-48,50,73,98
Osei Kwadwo(the late eighteenth century king of Ashanti) 36-38,45,49,99
Oyoko (royal Ashanti clan) 5,48,95,98-99

P

Peki (south eastern communities) 9,6,12,38,66
Plantains 51
Poll tax 91,100

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Salaga market (in the north west of Kumasi) 41,79,56,81,83
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Taxe in gold 43
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W

Wankyi (a district south of Banda) 41
Wassa (southern Akan state) 9,12,15,21,33,38,43,66,85

Y

Yam (famous Ashanti potatoe) 27-28,78
Yarse merchants (northern muslim merchants) 56

Abstract

The central theme of this study deals with the Ashanti's political, judicial, military, and economic systems of organization and the identification of various internal factors which determined first the structure of the Ashanti institutions and second the performance of its ruling authorities. It retraces the historical rise of the Ashanti's West African kingdom originating from the Gold Coast region through a period stretching from their first settlements into the forest region till the years of progressive decline. This research paper scrutinizes the evolution of the political and economic systems in Ashanti in relation with highly developed military and judicial institutions made in the hands of supreme kings, the Asantehenes. Four Asantehenes are presented in the enclosed thesis. Two of them, the Asantehene Osei Bonsu (1695-1731) and Apoku Ware (1731-1750) formed the historical background for the stereotype of a traditional system of ruling and managing the Ashanti people who pledged allegiance to the 'Golden Stool' and to traditional rules and customs. Then, the work will follow the presentation of how the third Asantehene, Osei Kwadwo (1750-1800) refused to remain under a static decentralized chieftaincy and a subsistence economy. Osei Bonsu's revolutionary changes (1800-1824) will be analyzed later notably by the introduction of new agents in charge of the whole institutions of what was known at that time as the Ashanti empire. Hence, this paper examines the Asantehenes' genius roles in centralizing political rule and economic enterprise which underwent radical changes in ruling the political, judicial, military, and economic organization. The major causes for such changes are due to the interaction of various factors related to the Ashanti internal conflicts, the existence northern communities in the Ashanti territory. Unfortunately, the Ashanties witnessed many years of successive revolts from the neighbouring subdued people who sought protection from Europeans on the coast and that marked the Ashanties decline that will be analyzed later for such a satisfactory constructed account.

Key Words:

Asantehene; Confederation; Kumasi Capital; Centralisation; Directed Economy; Gold Currency; Officials; Ashanties;Osei Bonsu; Osei Kwadwo.