

ONE STATE, MANY ORIGINS: PEOPLING OF THE AKUAPEM STATE: A RE-EXAMINATION

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Abstract

In 1994, the Akuapem paramountcy of south-eastern Ghana was engulfed in communal violence resulting in the death of one person, several severe injuries and property damaged estimated in thousands of Ghanaian cedis. When calm was eventually restored, a number of chiefs and their people announced their secession from the state established in the 1730s. A revealing development which emanated from the “break-up” was the rise to prominence of the people of Akropong, Aburi, and also those of Adukrom and Larteh, both Guan communities. This was achieved at the expense of other groups within the state, including those of Krobo emigrant origin. Yet, lesser known groups, which included Akan merchants from elsewhere, participated in the state foundation process, with some of them occupying important stools. This paper seeks to re-examine the foundation history of the Akuapem state with the aim of “restoring” the voices of the hitherto silenced groups. In doing this, particular attention is attached to the arrival and place of these least-mentioned groups. It is argued that Akuapem, though a “unitary” state, was made up of peoples of diverse origins.

Résumé

En 1994, la violence qui s'est emparée du royaume d'Akuapem dans le sud-est du Ghana a causé la mort d'une personne, plusieurs personnes grièvement blessés, et l' endommagement de biens estimé à des millions de cédis ghanéens. Quand le calme fut finalement restauré, un certain nombre de chefs et des habitants ont annoncé leur sécession de l'État mis en place dans les années 1730. Un développement révélateur qui émanait de cette rupture a été la montée en proéminence du peuple d'Akropong, représenté par les royaumes d'Aburi, et ceux d'Adukrom et de Larteh - ces derniers étant deux groupes Guan. Ce développement eut lieu au détriment d'autres groupes y compris les immigrants Krobo. Cette situation se développa en dépit du fait que des groupes moins connus, incluant les marchands Akan venant

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d'ailleurs, faisaient partie du processus de fondation de l'État mais avec seulement quelques chefferies d'occupation importantes. Cet article réexamine l'histoire de l'État d'Akuapem dans le but de restaurer les voix des groupes jusqu'ici réduites au silence. Une attention particulière est portée sur l'arrivée de ces groupes peu connus et sur le territoire qu'ils ont occupé. Ainsi donc l'article prouve que Akuapem, un État plutôt unitaire, était composé de personnes d'origines plus diverses qu'on ne le suppose généralement.

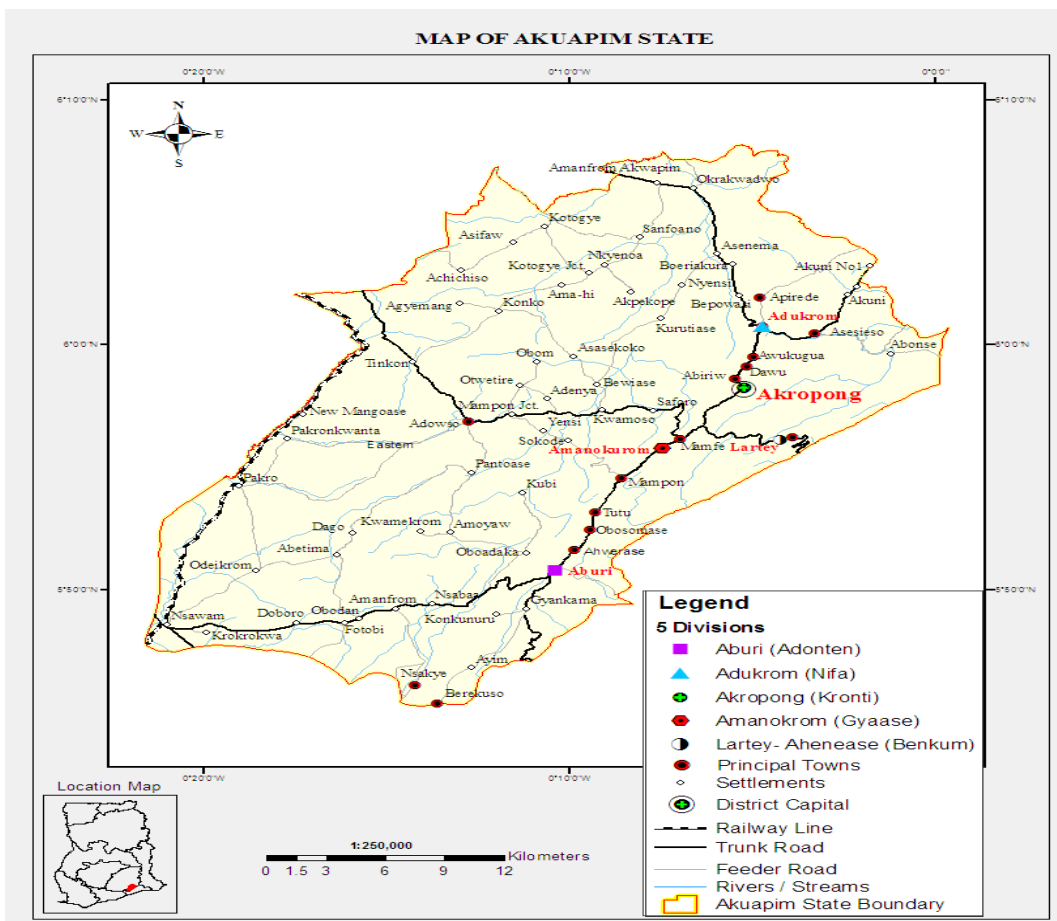
Introduction

In 1994, the Akuapem paramountcy of south-eastern Ghana was engulfed in communal violence resulting in the death of one person, several severe injuries and property damaged estimated at thousands of Ghanaian cedis (thousands of dollars).¹ When calm was restored, several principal chiefs, including those of Aburi, Larteh and Adukrom, declared their independence from the paramountcy established in the 1730s and formed three separate states.²

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¹ The exchange rate varies but property damage at the time was in the millions of cedis. For more on the 1994 conflict, see *Daily Graphic*, Monday, January 4, 1994, No. 13421, p. 1; *Ghanaian Times*, Monday, January 24, 1994, No. 11, 2 & 3; Ansah-Koi, "The Akwapim Imbroglio: A Study of Internal Conflict in Contemporary Ghana," in *Democracy, Politics and Conflict Resolution in Contemporary Ghana*. M. Oquaye, ed., Accra, Ghana: Gold Type Publications Ltd., 1995; M. Gilbert, "No Condition is Permanent: Ethnic Construction and the Use of History," *Africa* 67(4), 1997, 501-33.

² *Daily Graphic*, Tuesday, May, 1994, pp. 8-9; Ansah-Koi, "The Akuapem Imbroglio....," p.157.



A revealing development emanating from the “break-up” was the rise to prominence of the people of Akropong, who are of Akyem Abuakwa origin and most closely associated with the paramountcy; the Aburi people, who though an Akan group like those of Akropong, are of Akwamu origin; and the Adukrom and Larteh communities, both Guan people, which are generally acknowledged by the other groups in Akuapem as the owners of Akuapem lands. Interestingly, this is not the first time the Akropong group’s pre-eminence in the Akuapem polity has become an issue. The development, as I will soon discuss, has contributed to the “silence” of the voices of other groups in the reconstruction of Akuapem history. It is for this reason that I write this paper

which seeks to restore these hitherto silent voices to their rightful place in Akuapem socio-cultural history. In re-examining the peopling of the Akuapem ridge I primarily speak to earlier literature on the state's formation.³ Insightful as these pioneering works are on the role of the Guan people and the two Akan groups—Akwamu and Akyem Abuakwa settlers, in the foundation of the Akuapem state, they have nevertheless downplayed or totally ignored the existence and/or contributions of other groups to the state's formation. For instance, C.C. Reindorf, whose pioneering work on Akuapem set the tone for the writing of Akuapem's history, relied heavily on oral traditions to highlight the three as the foundation members of the state.⁴ Historians writing after Reindorf also took the same stand. The credence given to the three groups in Akuapem oral traditions stems from the fact that Guan, Akyem and Akwamu groups are conspicuously visible in the geo-politics of the state. For instance, the Akyem occupied the paramountcy, while Guan and Akwamu groups occupied the leadership positions of the divisions created to govern the new state. The problem with taking the oral traditions at their face value and without much probing is that it omits the role of other groups, including that of the immigrant Akan merchants

³ These include Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, Basel Mission, 1895; I. Wilks, "The Growth of the Akwapim State: A Study in the Control of Evidence," in *The Historian in Tropical Africa*, J. Vansina, ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964, 390-409; K. Kwamena-Poh, *Government and Politics in the Akuapem State, 1733- 1850*, London: Longman; Evanston, IL: Northwestern, University Press, 1973; D. Brokensha, ed., *Akwapim Handbook*, Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1972; M. Gilbert, "The Sudden Death of a Millionaire: Conversion and Consensus in a Ghanaian Kingdom," *Africa*, Vol. 58, No. 3, (1988): 291-314; M. Gilbert, "The Cracked Pot and the Missing Sheep," *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (1989): 213-239; M. Gilbert, "The Cimmerian Darkness of Intrigue: Queen Mothers, Christianity and Truth in Akuapem History," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (1993): 2-43; M. Gilbert, "The Christian Executioner: Christianity and Chieftaincy as Rivals," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 25, No. 4, (1995): 347-386; M. Gilbert, "No Condition is Permanent: Ethnic Construction and the Use of History," *Africa*, Vol. 64, No. 4, (1997): 501-533; E. Ayesu, "The Asafo in the Local Politics of the Akuapem State, 1900-1920: The Ankwansu Riots," M. Phil Dissertation, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, 1998; Larbi, "Akanization of Hill Guan Arts," *Research Review (New Series)*, Vol. 18, no. 2 (2002); B. Osei-Tutu, "Mound Makers and Brass Casters from the Akuapem Ridge, Eastern Ghana: Question of Identity in Archaeological Record," *Africanistes*, Vol. 75, No. 2, (2005): 56-64; B. Osei-Tutu, "Frontier Archaeology of the Akuapem Ridge and the eastern Accra Plains," *Research Review Supplement*, Vol. 17, (2006): 91-106 .

⁴ Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante*.

and the Krobo, in the foundation and administration of the state. The aim of this paper therefore is to restore the voices of the heretofore silenced groups as I pay attention to their role in the formation of the state.⁵ The restoration, I argue, will facilitate a fuller understanding of the foundation history of Akuapem with its attendant historic tensions and conflicts, which fed into the 1994 conflicts.⁶

In addition, this paper also speaks to the scholarship on land, migrations, borders, and the socio-cultural and identity formations in the “historical evolution of African people.”⁷ The story of Akuapem, like that of most African societies, was influenced by processes spanning a long period of time. To this end, Akuapem was a “multifaceted phenomenon of varied nature and character.”⁸ For instance, Akuapem had its indigenous people, the Guan, who were later joined by people from Akyem Abuakwa and elsewhere. As a result, several changes including settlement, land appropriation and management took place. Intriguingly, the changes were initiated as

⁵ I now revise my earlier position on the foundation of the Akuapem State (“The Asafo in Local Politics”).

⁶ In my doctoral dissertation I discussed extensively the foundation of the Akuapem state. See, E. Ayesu, “Tradition and Change in the History of Akuapem (Ghana) Chieftaincy During British Colonial Rule, 1874-1957,” History Department, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, 2011.

⁷ A classic example of this literature is Lentz and Nugent eds. (2000), *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limit of Invention*, Basingstoke and New York: Macmillan and St. Martin’s Press.

Instructively, despite the general theme of this work, the chapter on the 1994 civil war in northern Ghana (chapter 9, written by Artur Bogner, pp.183-203) has relevance for understanding some of the developments in Akuapem. For instance, the civil war in the north happened in the same year as the one in Akuapem. In addition, and more importantly, they were both fuelled by past grievances and conflicts. In the case of the Akuapem incident, the background to the whole episode is traceable to developments associated with the process leading to the peopling of the state, which is the subject of this article. Other equally important works this article speaks to are, Rathbone, “Defining Akyemfo: The Construction of Citizenship in Akyem Abuakwa, Ghana, 1700-1939,” *Africa*, Vol. 66, No. 4, (1996): 506-525; C. Lentz, “Colonial Constructions and African Initiatives: The History of Ethnicity in Northern Ghana,” *Ethnos*, Vol. 65: 1 (2006); T. McCaskie, “Denkyira in the Making of Asante,” *Journal of African History*, vol. 48, (2007): 1-25; L. Brydon, “Constructing Avatime: Questions of History and Identity in a West African Polity, c. 1690s,” *Journal of African History*, Vol. 49, (2008): 23-42; Falola, and Usman, *Movements, Borders, and Identities in Africa*, University of Rochester Press, 2009.

⁸ Falola and Usman, *Movements, Borders and Identities*, p.1.

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part of the establishment of the chieftaincy institution that was “new” to the area. Meanwhile, the establishment of Akuapem chieftaincy was spear-headed by the Akyem “settlers” and was based on inter-group and multi-ethnic alliances and served as core for the day-to-day administration of the state and the accommodation of later groups, including returning African diasporans from the Caribbean. Both in principle and practice, Akuapem chieftaincy, as elsewhere in Ghana, was centralized albeit with institutional checks and balances to ensure social cohesion. This notwithstanding, it privileged the immigrants - especially the Akyem group, over and above the Guan and Akwamu groups in the Akuapem state.⁹ As a result, the Akuapem state was bedevilled with tensions and intractable conflicts with the 1994 one being the most recent and most violent. Nevertheless, the institution has survived in Akuapem, thanks to its demonstrable resilience and the resolve of the people to live with it in spite of its “imperfections.”¹⁰ Thus, the Akuapem situation, as discussed in this paper, exemplifies the “development of people and ideas, and on the development of states and societies” that took place in the Gold Coast and on the African continent in general.¹¹

Finally, it is instructive to note that there are several sources for the study of these developments. These include “oral, archaeological and written” sources and “requires focusing on various subjects.”¹² In what follows I have used all these sources; albeit with a strong emphasis on oral histories which have been preserved and transmitted respectively by the groups involved themselves. And in so doing, I listened to the voices of the people not for the “less common purpose” of merely knowing where

⁹ The Akwamu groups in question were a segment of the former overlords of the Guan people of Akuapem who played a key role in the war that resulted in the defeat and the ultimate fall of the Akwamu Empire. For more on the development see, Ivor Wilks, *Akwamu, 1640-1750: A Study of the Rise and Fall of a West African Empire*, Trondheim, Norway: University of Science and Technology, 2001. See also, Ivor Wilks, “The Rise of Akwamu Empire, 1650-1710,” *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1957): 99-136.

¹⁰ The chieftaincy institution’s resiliency was not unique to the Akuapem area but is a characteristic feature that has helped it to withstand challenges throughout Ghana dating back to the country’s colonial period. For an insightful discussion of the development, see, Nana Arhin Brempong, “Chieftaincy, An Overview,” in *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*, in I. Odotei and A. Awedoba, eds., Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2006, 27-41.

¹¹ Tonyi Falola and Usman Aribidesi, 1.

¹² Ibid.

they came from but most importantly to know the circumstance leading to their place and role in the Akuapem polity. For instance, the oral traditions reveal how the Akyem group ensured their political dominance through a process of “social engineering,” which was built on power and asymmetrical relations.¹³ The Akyem leadership settled some of their members among existing Guan communities to report on developments which might have the potential of “dislodging” the Akyem from the area. In addition, the Akyem leadership encouraged intermarriages between their members and the Guan and members of the existing Akan groups with whom they entered into alliance on their arrival and subsequent settlement. The success of the social engineering process, coupled with the alliance formed with the other Akan groups, underscored the presence of Akyem and Akan office holders in Guan and Akwamu towns. They broadened their power base to these areas and used their presence and connections to distribute power and offices among the constituents making up the Akuapem state. They established the necessary connections within the towns and divisions thereby directly and indirectly influencing the day-to-day administration of the communities. Simply put, this paper, like McCaskie’s work on another state on the Gold Coast (now Ghana), interrogates the “staggering wealth and diversity” of Akuapem traditions “for what they are- and often they alone- can tell us the history...” of the Akuapem state.¹⁴ To this end, the paper makes a strong case for the continuous relevance of oral traditions for the study of Africa’s past.

¹³ E. Ayesu, “The *Asafo* in the Local Politics”, chapter 2, 17b-32.

¹⁴ McCaskie was writing about Denkyira and Asante. For more on his work, see, T. McCaskie, “Denkyira in the making of Asante, c. 1660-1720,” *Journal of African History*, Vol. 48, (2007): 1-25. In a related development Rathbone, in what I consider as a response to Addo-Fening, used a similar approach to write about Akyem Abuakwa, traditional brothers of the Akyem settlers in Akuapem. See Rathbone, “Defining Akyemfo: The Construction of Citizenship in Akyem Abuakwa, Ghana, 1700-1939,” *Africa*, Vol. 66, No. 4 (1996): 506-525. For Addo-Fening’s work, see “The Akim” or “Achim” in the Seventeenth-Century and Eighteenth-Century Historical Contexts: Who Were They?” *Research Review (New Series)*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1988): 1-15.

Land and People

Akuapem is located at the south-eastern corner of the Eastern Region of present day Ghana. It shares a common boundary with the Ga state to the south,¹⁵ Krobo chiefdoms to the northeast, New Juabeng to the northwest and Akyem Abuakwa to the west. In the 18th century, European records commonly referred to Akuapem as the “hill country”.¹⁶ According to Kwamena-Poh, the Danish reference to the area as “hill country” was apt because of the hilly nature of the landscape.¹⁷ However, a careful survey of the terrain and the location of the various towns and villages did not justify such a reference. At best, one cannot help but agree with K.B. Dickson’s statement that “to describe Akwapim (Akuapem) merely as a mountainous region is to ignore the orderly arrangement of valley, hill and plain which makes the region a striking one.”¹⁸

The people of present day Akuapem may be divided into two main ethnic groups. The first group comprises the Guan-speaking independent farming communities whose aboriginal ownership of the land is admitted to by all other groups in the state.¹⁹ The Guan communities were further sub-divided into two: the Kyerepong Guan, who

¹⁵ Irene Odotei, “External Influences on Ga Society and Culture,” *Research Review*, vol. 7, nos. 1 & 2, (1991): 61.

¹⁶ M. A. Kwamena-Poh, 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ K. B. Dickson, “Relief and Drainage,” in *Akuapem Handbook*, Brokensha, ed., 8.

¹⁹ They produced mainly maize, yams and plantain, with some of them, especially the men, engaged in palm wine tapping (Kwamena-Poh, 3). According to Kwamena-Poh and A. A. Anti (in separate interviews), they were basically subsistent farmers who produced for their own consumption and sold whatever surplus they produced to their neighbours. Incidentally, the fortunes of the Guan communities, together with the Akwamu and later Akyem people who came to settle among them, changed for the better. The development was arguably associated with European trade on the Gold Coast. Moreover, the peoples’ active participation in palm oil production in the 19th century brought in its wake prosperity. Furthermore, the introduction of cocoa towards the end of the nineteenth century widened further the economic activities of the people. It was therefore no wonder that the Akuapem people, “began to spread their activities beyond the ridge to the lowlands lying west” (M. A. Kwamena-Poh, p. 3; Polly Hill, *The Migrant Cocoa-Farmers of Southern Ghana: A Study in Rural Capitalism*, Cambridge (England): University Press, 1970).

occupy Abiriw, Dawu, Awukugua, Adukrom (capital of the division), Apirede, Aseseeso and Abonse, and constitute the Nifa (right) division of Akuapem, and the other sub-group — the Larteh-Guan consisting of Larteh-Ahenease and Larteh-Kubease. The Larteh-Guan, together with Mamfe, Abotakyi, Mampong, Tutu and Obosomase, formed the Benkum (left) division of the state. These towns in the Benkum division were related to the Guan communities by kinship. However, they differ linguistically. The people of these towns were generally believed to have once been Guan speakers, like their Larteh and Kyerepong neighbours. Presently, the only links between them and their Guan-speaking neighbours are their patrilineal system of inheritance and the “Ohum” festival which they all observe.

According to J.G. Christaller, the people of these towns were of Guan descent who “have since about 1750 entirely changed their own language.”²⁰ In spite of the linguistic change all the people of both the Benkum and the Nifa divisions celebrate the “Ohum” festival. Unlike the “Odwira” festival, stool-centred and associated more with Twi-speaking, the “Ohum” festival is connected with the worship of Guan gods and traditional priests play prominent roles. Significantly, both festivals constitute rites of purification and remembrance, as well as of thanksgiving.

Little is known for certain about the time of arrival of the Guan communities of Kyerepong and Larteh on the Akuapem Hills. The Dutch map of 1629, however, gives a clue to the time of settlement in the Akuapem area.²¹ On the map, the area is shown as being occupied by the people of Aboera, Bonoe, Equa and Latebi. These communities shared a southern boundary with the Ga state. Ga oral tradition claims that they met the Guan on their arrival on the Accra plains.²² Wilks has identified

²⁰ J. G. Christaller, *A Grammar of the Asante and Fante Language called Tshi* (Chwee, Twi), Basel: Basel Mission, 1875, xii.

²¹ See K. Y. Daaku, *Trade and Politics On the Gold Coast, 1600-1720: A Study of the African Reaction to European Trade*, London, Clarendon, 1970; see p. 199 for the 1629 Map of the Gold Coast.

²² Irene Odotei, “External Influences”, 61.

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“Aboera” as the present day “Aburi,” and “Equa” as “Atweasin,” now a ward in the Aburi township.²³

The other Guan group, Larteh, was identified on the 1629 map as Latebi. Meyerowitz, in an attempt to trace the movement of the Larteh group, postulated that it migrated to the Gold Coast at the end of the 16th century. Upon arrival on the coast, the Larteh people were said to have founded La Doku and Labadi (now La).²⁴ The final movement of the people to their present home was attributed to a quarrel among the immigrants.

Although Osafohene Larbi Ansah of Larteh-Kubease in an interview with me corroborated Meyerowitz’s account, Fage and Kwamena-Poh disagreed with the theory of an external origin of the Larteh people. According to Fage and Kwamena-Poh, any claim of connection between the Larteh people and Nigeria, as argued by Meyerowitz, is untenable since the Larteh language is close to that of the Kyerepong Guan, who do not point to Nigeria as their original home.²⁵

Reindorf, on his part, traced the settlement of the people to the activities of Akans, who drove the Guan-speaking people living around Tema to the Akuapem mountains and beyond. The close relationship between the Guan and communities on the Accra plains was further buttressed by the Ga origins of some Larteh names. For example, Kwamena-Poh considers the name ‘Latebi’ on the 1629 map to be of Ga origin - Latebii (lit. Late people). Indeed, there is evidence of association between the Guan language and the language spoken between Prampram and Ada on the far east of Accra.²⁶ The dispute over the origins of the Guan, notwithstanding, it is a fact that by the beginning of the 17th century, the Guan communities in Akuapem were settled in

²³ Ivor Wilks, “The Rise of the Akwamu Empire, 1640-1710,” *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, Vol. 2, (1957): 105. See also, Ivor Wilks, *Akwamu, 1640-1730: A Study of the Rise and Fall of a West African Empire*.

²⁴ Eva Meyerowitz, *Akan Traditions of Origin*, London: Red Candle Press, 1952, 77-79.

²⁵ J. D. Fage, “Ancient Ghana: A Review of Evidence,” in *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, vol. iii, no. 2, (1957): 94; M. A. Kwamena-Poh, 16.

²⁶ See C. C. Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast*, 23 for details.

their present location and had to wait until the second decade of the 18th century before attracting the attention of the Europeans at the coast.²⁷

The Twi-speaking group in the state can also be divided into two. The first are the Akwamu remnants who now form the Adonten (vanguard) division.²⁸ They occupy the towns of Aburi (divisional capital), and Brekuso and Ahwirease. The second section of the Twi-speaking group is the people of Akyem Abuakwa origin living in Akropong (the state capital) and Amanokrom (head of the Gyaase division). The origins of the Akwamu remnants, according to Wilks, are associated with the growth and subsequent fall of the Akwamu Empire. According to him, by the early decades of the 18th century, the Akwamu had built themselves a well-organized state on the western boundaries of the Akuapem Hills²⁹ and, by 1703, Akwamu had established its imperial capital at Nsakyé “within the old Aburi state...”³⁰ Akwamu’s movement of its capital from Asamankese to the Nyanawao Hills and, finally, to Nsakyé was influenced by economic and political considerations. Economically, Nsakyé was nearer to Abonse, the great center of trade which linked the interior to the coast.

The move to the area gave the Akwamu state the much-needed revenue from market tolls to finance its expansion programme. According to Addo-Fening and Kwamena-Poh, the move was politically precipitated by the need to avoid confrontation with the emerging Akyem power.³¹ When the Akwamu Empire fell, the inhabitants of present day Nsakyé and sizeable populations of Aburi, Ahwirease, Kitase, Brekuso, and surrounding villages, did not join the fleeing Akwamu people who sought refuge and settled at the banks of the Volta River.³²

²⁷ M. A. Kwamena-Poh, 13.

²⁸ Since 1994, the Guan and Akwamu remnants have “seceded” and declared independence from the original state formed in 1730s (see also Kumi Ansah-Koi, op. cit 156).

²⁹ Ivor Wilks, *The Rise of the Akwamu Empire*, 99-100; See also Ivor Wilks, *Akwamu 1640-1750*.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ The two History professors made the assertion when I asked them to comment on the development.

³² M. A. Kwamena-Poh, 21-22.

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Explaining the presence of the remnants in Akuapem, Nana Okyere Bekoe claimed that leaving a group behind was a calculated strategy by fleeing Akwamu to protect the blackened stool which had been left at Nsakyé to ensure the continued presence of Akwamu in Akuapem.³³ Nana Bekoe's argument is however untenable in view of the fact that the stool in question was used by post-1730s Akwamu chiefs in their "new" capital at Akwamufie.³⁴ That the fleeing Akwamu people could not have left their stool at Nsakyé can best be understood if one considered the place of the stool in the chieftaincy institution. With this in mind, one can however deduce from Nana Bekoe's argument the possibility of Akwamu securing the safety of the stool somewhere at the old capital, Nsakyé to avoid its capture and the consequent annihilation of the kingdom before they fled across the Volta River to their present location. They however retrieved and restored it to its rightful place upon finding the overbank of the Volta River ideal for settlement and the rebuilding of the Kingdom. Obviously, they could not have kept it at Nsakyé, a distance of over 50 miles from their "new" location.

Moreover, the paramount importance of the black stool to the chieftaincy institution and the community at large would not encourage its absence from the centre of the community. That a vanquished Akwamu might have cherished maintaining some form of presence in place that was once dear to them cannot be dismissed. However, the presence of its remnants in present day Akuapem had more to do with the rebellions which characterized the closing stages of the once-great empire. Akwamu, at the peak of its power and glory, was bedevilled with rebellions by discontented royals and subjects alike. Even though the rebellions were unsuccessful at the initial stages, these disgruntled elements eventually severed all ties with the empire. It was this dissident group who teamed up with the state's enemy and the Guan communities to overthrow Akwamu's imperial power.³⁵

³³ Data gathered from interviews with Nana Okyere Bekoe, Banmuhemaa of Aburi, November-December 1997.

³⁴ Data from interviews with Nana Awo Agyaa II, queenmother of Aburi (June 1997).

³⁵ A contributory factor to the eventual fall of the Akwamu Empire was the series of rebellions staged by its officials, especially those in Accra and Akuapem. See Ivor Wilks, *Akwamu, 1640-1750*.

The presence of the other Akan section comprising Akropong and Amanokrom was closely associated with the re-organization of the hill towns into a state following the expulsion of the Akwamu overlords from Akuapem territory.³⁶ Akwamu overlordship had exposed the Guan communities on the Akuapem Hills to unprecedented high-handedness. According to Romer, “Aquando (Akwamu) ... permitted his people to steal and plunder both among themselves and the Mountain Negroes and Adanges (Adagme) ...”³⁷ Interestingly, Akwamu high-handedness was not limited to the “Mountain Negroes” but was extended to the communities living in the Accra plains.³⁸ It was not surprising therefore that there was wide-spread support in the mobilization of forces to overthrow Akwamu’s control which was a subject of controversy. For instance, while Reindorf asserted that the Ga, supported by the Danes, took the initiative, Akuapem traditions stated that it was the people of Aburi, once the vanguard of Ansa Sasraku’s (Akwamu’s imperial highness) army, who first revolted against the central authority.³⁹ Both Kwamena-Poh and Wilks opened the subject of Akwamu’s fall to further debate by scholars when they acknowledged the leading role of Amo, an Akwamu resident of Accra, in the development that became known as the “Akuapem War of Liberation”.

Such a debate, though necessary, is beyond the scope of this paper. Of greater importance, however, is the “new order” brought about on the Akuapem Hills following Akwamu’s defeat. It is quite revealing that the fall of Akwamu saw the emergence of Akyem Abuakwa who, as Kwamena-Poh rightly pointed out, had been watching events in Akwamuland and who were determined to use their military

³⁶ According to Akuapem traditions the initial group made up of males came as fighters and had been invited in by the Guan communities and their rebellious Akwamu allies. The immigrants were later joined by non-combatants accompanied their wives, children and other female relations. This was after Akwamu had been defeated and it had become imperative that they settled “permanently” on the Akuapem ridge. Incidentally, most of the Akyem people like their Guan hosts were farmers and were quick therefore to engage in farming at their “new” home.

³⁷ Cited in Kwamena-Poh, 28.

³⁸ C. C. Reindorf, 86. The “Mountain Negroes” here refers to the Guan communities who Kwamena-Poh referred to as “Hill People.”

³⁹ M. A. Kwamena-Poh, 87.

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strength to destroy Akwamu power and influence along the coast.⁴⁰ To all intents and purposes, Akyem's entry into the war or revolt was not only a matter of responding to an invitation by oppressed subjects and rebellious officials, but even more to the point, it was about "striking while the iron is hot." The fall of Akwamu eventually ushered the Akuapem Hills irreversibly into, for better or for worse, a new geo-polity.

A number of traditions sought to explain the circumstances leading to the permanent settlement of the Akyem contingent on the hills after the defeat of Akwamu forces. According to the most widely held tradition, the settlement was necessary because of the fear of a possible regrouping of Akwamu forces to fight to reverse the victory of the allied forces. Another tradition held that the inability of the Guan community to pay off the Akyem Abuakwa "liberators," led by Safori after the war, compelled the former to agree to the settlement of the latter on Akuapem soil.⁴¹ Both traditions have credibility because of the situation in which the Guan communities found themselves at the time.

In the first place, the defeat of Akwamu was made possible through the support that the Guan community obtained from the Akyem Abuakwa liberators. The Guan people, like their forebears, were not skilful warriors. As Struck rightly pointed out, the "... forbearers of the Akwapims were people who did not understand trade; they were planters; from early morning their eyes were on nothing but their plantations and their food; they did not understand war; we have not heard from anyone that the Akwapim kept making war now here, now there."⁴²

In addition, the people were relatively poor. For instance, unlike Denkyira, Asante, and Akyem Abuakwa, who had abundant mineral resources, especially gold, the Guan community did not have vital resources to enable them buy arms, let alone pay for military services rendered to them.⁴³ It is possible that it became expedient for them to

⁴⁰ Ibid, 37.

⁴¹ Christian C. Reindorf, 89.

⁴² B. Struck cited in M. A. Kwamena-Poh, *Government and Politics*.

⁴³ Asante, for example, derived substantial revenue from her resources, especially the gold trade, from which it was able to arm its forces for its expansionist programme. That Asante's military successes had more to do with access to firearms obtained from its gold revenue is an undeniable fact. The absence of such trade resources explains the limitations of the Guan

enter into an agreement which granted the Akyem Abuakwa warriors settlement rights in Akuapem. Thus, the role of the Akyem, Guan, and Akwamu remnants in the Akuapem saga is incontrovertible; but are they the only actors and role players?

The “Silent” Others in the Akuapem State: Akan Merchants and Krobo “Exiles”

Any neat classification of Akuapem communities exclusively into Guan, Akwamu, and Akyem completely distorts the reality on the ground. This is because besides the Guan, Akwamu, Akyem communities, there were significant “others” who were part of the state-building enterprise. For instance, Akuapem traditions admit that some of the Guan towns were not composed of just Guan-speakers but were, in fact, conglomerations of various groups of people.⁴⁴ One such town is Mamfe, which is generally believed to be a Guan town. Mamfe oral traditions however credited Kwadwo Toku from Adanse, Abbey from Grand Popo, Akote from Gyaman, and Asamoah from Sehwi, as the founding fathers of the town.⁴⁵ These men were traders and through their trading activities, they might have contributed to making the town an important cross-road linking the interior, especially Asante, to the coastal trade, as far back as the 18th century.⁴⁶ These men’s pioneering roles were recognized with the creation of offices occupied by their descendants and the immortalization of their names in some of the town’s appellation:

*Mamfe Toku ne Abbey, Gyaman Akote a omene son;
Agyako ne Asamoah, won na wo se ko a, wo se bra,*

communities in the face of Akwamu high-handedness. See Samuel Tenkorang, “The Place of Firearms in the Struggle between Ashanti and the Coastal States,” in *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, Vol. IX, (1968): 1-16. for the connection between gold and firearms in the Asante wars on the coast.

⁴⁴ Interviews with Nana Addo Birikorang, op. cit.; see also M. A. Kwamena-Poh, *Government and Politics*, 10.

⁴⁵ It is significant to note that none of these four men was a Guan. While Adanse, Gyaman and Sehwi were all inland towns within Greater Asante, Grand Popo was in present day Republic of Benin. Data obtained from interviews with Mrs. Christiana Constance Boadu, Registrar, Akuapem Traditional Council (June-July 2009). See also C. C. Akyeampong, “A History of Mamfe Akuapem from c1700-1900,” Long Essay, History Department, University of Ghana, Legon, 1978, 12.

⁴⁶ Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the 19th Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1975, 55.

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won na wo se bra, wo se ko.

English translation:

“Mamfe Toku and Abbey; Gyaman Akote, who swallowed the elephant;
Agyako and Asamoah; who when they say “go,” they mean “come;”
and when they say “come,” they mean “go.”⁴⁷

Aside from the founding fathers, Mamfe had a strong Akwamu presence with some elements of its ruling house reputed to have had Akwamu antecedents. Akwamu’s control over the Guan communities probably facilitated such a development. Larteh-Ahenease also had non-Guan elements among its people. These were the Oyoko and Asona clan members. The origins of the Oyoko members are hard to trace, while that of Asona is contested. Members of these clans formed a significant portion of the population and were represented in the governance of Ahenease by the appointment of their leaders as some of the chief’s principal counsellors.⁴⁸

Amanokrom, generally considered to be the other settlement of the Akyem Abuakwa fighters, is populated by another Akan group, the Bretuo clan. According to Amanokrom traditions, before the Akyem Abuakwa settlers moved in, the Bretuo were already settled there. Being the pioneers in the town, the elders of the clan were made to play a vital role in the installation process of the town’s authorities. For instance, after the nomination and election process, the chief-elect was presented to the Bretuo clan heads with customary drinks and money. Thereafter, the chief-elect was handed over to the Bretuo elders to be “tutored” in the history and traditions of the town prior to his inauguration as Chief of Amanokrom.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Interviews with Osabarima Ansah Sasraku III, Mamfehene and Akuapem Kyidomhene; Kwamena-Poh; and Mrs. Christiana Constance Boadu.

⁴⁸ Interviews with Opanin Edward Asah at Teacher Mante (a farming town on the Accra-Kumasi Highway), Opanin Kyenku Larbi, a resident of Suhum, and Opanin Yaw Anomah of Nteetaman, near Adawso-Akuapem (June-December 2009). See also, E. A. Asiedu, E.A., “Chieftaincy Disputes Among the People of Larteh of the Akuapem District,” B. A. Long Essay, University of Ghana, 1984, Appendix: Traditional Political Organization of Larteh.

⁴⁹ Interviews with Oyeeman Wereko Ampem II, Akuapem Gyaasehene and Chief of Amanokrom, and Okyeame Osei, Chief Linguist, Manko Aba Ahenfi, Amanokrom, (January 2001; August 2003); Nana Gyamea Bretuohemea, Amanokrom, January 2005).

Elsewhere in Aburi, there is also the ceremonial recognition of the Agona group's ownership of the town. In this regard, the chief of Aburi, who is a descendant of the Akwamu remnants, can only take his seat at public gatherings in the town after the head of the Agona group (commonly referred to as *kurow wura* 'town owner') had taken his seat.⁵⁰ Any breach of this protocol was considered to be sacrilegious and appropriate penalties were exacted.

The Akan People in Guan Towns

The origins of the Asona and Agona clans in Larteh, Apirede, Brekuso, and Aburi lie in the larger picture of what I consider to be a social-engineering enterprise initiated by the Akyem settlers during the foundation of the Akuapem state. Tradition had it that upon their eventual permanent settlement in Akuapem, the Akyem Abuakwa fighters, who were all members of the Asona clan, settled some of their kin among the Guan communities and entrenched them in the community by securing important offices for these people.⁵¹

The move accounted for the presence of Asona clan members in towns like Adukrom, Abiriw, Larteh Ahenease, Larteh Kubease, Apirede, Ahwirease, and Brekuso, where the office of Mankrado, or second-in-command in the traditional hierarchy, was vested in the Asona group. This was done ostensibly to pre-empt any conspiracy on the part of the Guans to dislodge them. Meanwhile, leading personalities in Akuapem, including Nana Awo Agyaa II and Nana Gyeke Darko, have inexplicably expressed doubts as to whether the Asona members in these towns were part of the original

⁵⁰ The protocol best-explains the historical gift of land by the Agona chief to the Aburi chief (of Akwamu origin) for settlement. Data from various interviews with Nana Kwame Takyi, a descendant of the Akwamu remnants, Nana Baah Abu Okae, Akuapem Oseawuohene, and member of the Agona family of Aburi, Ohene Atua, member, Agona family (2007, 2008, 2009).

⁵¹ Interviews with Nana Awuku Dabanka, Santeasehene, Akropong and Akuapem Guantoahene (a newly-created divisional office). His account was corroborated by Nana Kwame Takyi, Nana Baah Abu Okae, and several other traditional leaders interviewed between May and December 2009.

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Akyem Abuakwa fighters who eventually settled in Akuapem.⁵² This dispute can be resolved by understanding the manifestations of the Akan clan system.

The Akan of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire are divided into seven distinct family groups irrespective "of their several and distinct nationalities" with members of each group or clan claiming a common ancestress.⁵³ The underlying philosophy of the clan system is that all clan members share descent ties, even if no biological connection can be proven. Based on this ideology, clansfolk naturally extended courtesies and privileges to those who professed membership in the clan.⁵⁴ It is possible then that Asona members found elsewhere in Akuapem were not part of the original Akyem fighters-turned-settlers. However, they might have been part of the much-talked about migratory process on the Gold Coast shore, a consequence of the Atlantic trade.⁵⁵

⁵² Their doubts can best be understood when one considers their role in the stand-off between the Akwamu and Guan groups on one hand, and the paramountcy on the other, following the 1994 communal conflict. Following the disturbances and the subsequent "breakaway" of the former two, opposed factions in the dispute have sought various ways to undermine each other's influence in the Akuapem polity. In this regard, the doubts regarding the membership of the Asona clan were arguably meant to question the right of the Akropong Asona to dominate the paramountcy of the state in view of their relatively smaller population size in the state when compared to the Guan or the Akwamu groups. Puzzling as this development may seem, it is its timing and the personalities involved that should concern us here. Both Nana Awo Agyaa II and Nana Gyeke Darko represent Aburi and Adukrom respectively, and were principal personalities in the 1994 conflicts. It stands therefore to reason that their assertion was an attempt to "invent" a new tradition for the Akuapem state; a development which gives credence to the argument advanced by Terence Ranger and others on the "invention of tradition." See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

⁵³ John Mensah Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Law: A Brief Introduction to the principles of the Fanti and Akan district of the Gold Coast with a report of some Cases thereon decided in the Law Courts*, London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1968, 4.

⁵⁴ For more on the origins and place of the lineages in the socio-cultural lives of the Akans, see R. S. Rattary, *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, London: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1928; K. A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief*; P. A. Sarpong, "Taboos and Sin in Africa," in *Ghana Retrospect*, Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1972; E. K. Braffi, *The Akan Clans: Totemism and Nton*, Kumasi: University Press, 1992; I. Wilks, *Forest of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1993.

⁵⁵ A classic description of the movement of people to the coast in "response" to the European trade can be found in Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, London: Longman, 1975.

I am not in any way doubting the assertion that the Akyem Abuakwa settlers, in an attempt to entrench themselves and safe-guard their interests in their “new” settlement, “planted” some of their members within existing Guan communities; evidence on the ground showed that they did that. To achieve that, the Akyem newcomers identified existing Asona members on arrival and, after the necessary customary rites, encouraged and/or facilitated the process that led to the institution of offices to be occupied by them and which their descendants continue to occupy even today.

This assertion demands that I modify my earlier assertion on post-1730s Akuapem society. I had argued that the Akyem Abuakwa settlers, at the foundation of the Akuapem state, did not take measures to build a homogeneous society similar to what the Oyoko founders of the Asante state did.⁵⁶ However, new evidence shows that they used the presence of Asona clan members in Akuapem towns as a buffer to their power and authority and most importantly, entrenched their influence in Akuapem. From the foregoing, I agree with Kwamena-Poh’s argument that Safori (aka Ofori Dua/Kuma/Kae), the Akyem Abuakwa war captain who led the allied forces in the Akuapem war of liberation, was not the founder of the Akuapem state, and that the distribution of offices was not done immediately after settlement.⁵⁷ This is because it would require a considerable amount of time for a group on arrival at a new location to settle and to identify existing clan members with whom to enter into alliance. The same can be said of the effort to “plant” their members deep within the existing political establishment the Akyem settlers came to meet on the Akuapem Hill. It may therefore have taken some time, laced with patience and religious fortitude to accomplish these political designs. The process might have been part of the steps embarked upon towards the establishment of the Akan-type chieftaincy institution in Akuapem. From the foregoing, I would argue that members of the Akuapem state could not be said to have considered everyone in it as the same or identical.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ See E. Ayesu, “The Asafo in Local Politics,”

⁵⁷ See M. A. Kwamena-Poh, 39-40; 43-44.

⁵⁸ This then should explain the state’s perennial conflicts and should shed more light on Jeffrey Herbst’s work (*States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) on the nation-state in Africa. Akuapem, and for

“Deliberate” efforts were made at least by the Akyem “settlers” to wield more power and influence over all others.

The Non-Akyem People of Akropong

Although Akropong, the seat of the paramountcy, was founded by the Akyem newcomers, even this town has had non-Akyem elements living in it. A case in point was the Akwamu group, the descendants of Ofei Kwasi Agyeman.⁵⁹ There was also the Asante element, some of whom eventually became members of the ruling party in Akropong.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the activities of the Basel Mission brought about the settlement in Akropong of another group — the members of the black diaspora in the Western Indies.⁶¹ One could rightly argue that the group’s “late” arrival in Akuapem

that matter African nation-states, did not come out of unitary social order but rather out of multiple and oftentimes imbalanced political arrangements favourable to one group or the other.

⁵⁹ Akuapem traditions credit Ofei Kwasi Agyeman, official of the Akwamu court stationed at Aburi, with the initial rebellion that led to the eventual overthrow of Akwamu imperial order in Akuapem. He is credited also with the suggestion to invite the Akyem fighters to join in the war to liberate Akuapem. For more on the traditions, see M. A. Kwamena-Poh, 33-33, 51, 52, 138. Meanwhile, Ofei Kwasi Agyeman and his descendants were re-settled in Akropong where he was given a principal office following the victory of the Akuapem forces and the subsequent establishment of the Akuapem state after the 1730s war.

⁶⁰ The origins of these people, according to A.A. Anti and Nana Addo Birikorang, could be traced to the activities of the Asante Resident left in Akuapem in the 1740s following Asante’s victory over Akyem Abuakwa and Akyem Kotoku which culminated in the sack of the Gold Coast coastal littoral. The Asante Resident and his officials, aside of their official duties, were said to have established various forms of relationships with Akuapem women including members of the ruling family at Akropong. Although he would not give much detail, Oseadeeyor Addo Dankwah III, when asked to comment on the assertion, admitted that there is a strong Asante presence among the ruling houses of Akropong. He named two of his predecessors, Nana Owusu Ansah (1907-1914) and the latter’s successor, Omanhene Ofori Kuma II (1914-1918; 1932-1941) as two chiefs with Asante ties traceable through their mothers. Both Ivor Wilks (“The Rise of the Akwamu Empire,” 403) and M. A. Kwamena-Poh (77, 82, 83, 90-91) confirm the existence of an Asante Resident to Akuapem, all of which suggests the possibility of that official and his entourage having left behind descendants at their duty post. It would seem that even in this matrilineal community having a non-Akyem father did not pose obstacles to a candidate’s accession to the paramount stool of Akuapem.

⁶¹ Noel Smith, “The Churches,” in *Akwapim Handbook*, D. Brokensha, ed., 64. Much as Andreas Riis is credited with the pioneering success of the Basel Mission in Akuapem and the

— over a hundred years after the state’s foundation, and their small number (seven), made it impossible for them to have impacted meaningful on the Akuapem polity. But this is exactly the opposite of what happened. In fact, the development that necessitated their arrival and settlement, coupled with the role of the Basel Mission which brought them, played out, as Akuapem deeply positioned them in every facet of its socio-political set-up. They were, on their arrival, set to make a positive impact on the state. Moreover, the creation of the Akuapem state, as indicated earlier, was a process which arguably came to a close in the early 1900s. This was the time when all groups and institutions, including chieftaincy, the church, and colonial rule could be said to have carved a niche for themselves in the area.

One final issue regarding the origins of the people had to do with the Adangme, especially the Krobo elements, in Akuapem. Here I limit the discussion to the people of Mampong, which is best described as a town of a mixed group of people. Apart from the Guan people there are other groups including Adangme and Krobos.⁶² In the case of the Krobos, they are found in two wards - Besease and Akrode; and are generally believed to be the next group after the Guan people to have settled in Mampong. In view of this their chiefs occupy two of the seven principal stools in the

Gold Coast in general, it was the dedicated services of these “returnees” which increased the membership of the Basel Mission and broadened its frontiers beyond Akropong to reach all towns and villages of Akuapem. As people of African descent, Okuapehene Addo Dankwah I, his elders and Akuapem citizenry became convinced that the church was worth joining. It was no wonder that membership of the church grew at a fast pace following their arrival. For more on the returnees’ work in the church, see P. Hall, *Autobiography of Rev. Peter Hall, First Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana*, Accra: Westerville Publishing House, 1965; Noel Smith, *The Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 1835-1960: A Younger Church in a Changing Society*, Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1966; A. A. Beeko, *The Trail Blazers: Fruits of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 1828-2003*, Accra, Ghana: Afram Publications, 2004; M.A. Kwamena-Poh, *Government and Politics*.

⁶² Other groups were those of Assin, Akwamu and Akyem Abuakwa origins. Also included were the Adangme and the Krobo. Data obtained from interviews with Mr. Samuel Lartey, (a.k.a. Kwaku Date), a 92 year old former Cocoa Buyer of the defunct Asampaneye Co. Ltd (Ghana), and a native of Mampong (November-December, 1997); Opanin Kwasi Kumi, a farmer and resident of Adawso-Bekyea (a Mampong village); and Mr. S. Oboubisa, retired teacher, Mampong (1997-1998; May-December 2009). See also A. D. Ofofu, “A History of Mampong-Akuapem, c. 1730-1977,” B. A. Long Essay, Department of History, University of Ghana, Legon, 1978, 1.

town.⁶³ A noteworthy figure in Ghana's history, Tetteh Kwasi ('Tetteh Quarshie' as he is known) who is credited with the introduction of cocoa into Ghana was a member of this group.⁶⁴ According to Nana Okyere Baah, chief of Adompore, the ancestors of his people were of Adangme and Krobo origins and were the next group to follow closely after the Guan people to settle in the town. What is interesting is that, most of these settlers were women who had been driven out of Krobo lands for breaking Dipo laws pertaining to sexual abstinence by adolescent girls.⁶⁵ Mampong, and for that matter Akuapem, traditions are instructively silent on the number of these migrants. This notwithstanding, it can be said that their number was significant enough for them to be settled in separate wards and to occupy important stools in the town. That not all of these women were dipo "offenders" cannot be ruled out. It is reasonable to assume that some relations of the victims, especially mothers and other kinfolk who were scandalised perpetually by the unfortunate incident might have accompanied or followed the exiles. To this end I would argue that the coming of the Krobo people to Akuapem was a gradual but significant process which altered the demography of the state.

⁶³ Interviews with Nana Asare Teipo II, Chief of Besease December 1998 and Opanin Asare Ayuw, gold and blacksmith and principal elder of Besease (December, 1998).

⁶⁴ Interviews with Nana Okyere Baah II, chief of Adompore, Mampong (May-August, 1998) and Nana Asare Teipo II. Note that controversy surrounds the question of who first brought the cocoa tree to Ghana. While the general population credits Tetteh Kwasi (Quarshie), Kwamena-Poh, on his part, gives that credit to the Basel missionaries who cultivated the crop in their garden at Akropong, from where Tetteh Kwasi might have gained knowledge of its nutritional value which might have emboldened him to smuggle a sizable quantity of the beans to the Gold Coast from the Seychelles. For more on the cocoa industry in Ghana, see Polly Hill, *The Migrant Cocoa Farmers of Southern Ghana*; M. A. Kwamena-Poh, *The Basel Mission and the Development of the Cocoa Industry in Ghana, 1858-1918*, Mamfe, Akuapem (Ghana): Pato Computer Works, 2005.

⁶⁵ Interviews with Nana Okyere Baah, op. cit. This was confirmed by Nana Asare Teipo II; Madam Aku Sika, petty trader at Adompore and a descendant of Krobo migrants (August 1998); Madam Leticia Obuobea, a resident farmer of Bekyea (a farming village on the Mamfe-Koforidua highway) and a descendant of Krobo migrants; and Mr. Nii Amartey, a local dealer in Arts and Crafts and a descendant of one of the Krobo "exiles." For more on the Krobo people and the Dipo ritual, see Odonkor, Thomas Harrison, *The Rise of the Krobos: From an Original Ga Text*, Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1971; Cephass Narh Omenyo, *The Ongoing Encounters between Christianity and African Culture: A Case of Girls' Nubility Rites of Krobos*, Adwinsa Publications, 2001.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the historical trajectories in the foundation of the Akuapem state. I have shown that there is the need to rethink the story of the peopling of the state. For instance, I have shown how the Guan people of Akuapem, the original owners of Akuapem lands, had invited Akyem warriors in to assist them to throw off Akwamu imperial rule. Before then, supported by a rebellious Akwamu faction, they had tried unsuccessfully to achieve what the Akyem were brought in to do. I have also shown that the Akyem warriors became settlers and engineered a social process whereby they settled some of their members among Guan communities. Furthermore, I have highlighted the alliances Akyem settlers formed with other Akan people, including the Bretuo clan members, and eventually succeeded in exercising greater control in the state's affairs disproportionate to their numerical strength. Moreover, I have demonstrated how Krobo migrants came to settle in Akuapem. Within this discourse, I have shown that besides the often written about groups, others including Bretuo clan members, and Asante people were also founding members of the state. In addition, people of Krobo origins were involved in the foundation of the state and for that reason occupy important stools in Akuapem towns, especially, in Mampong. Using extensively oral data in addition to archival and written documents, I have shown that by privileging Guan, Akwamu, and Akyem people in the founding of the Akuapem state earlier scholars did not pay enough attention to the so called "less" known groups and their contribution to Akuapem history. In addition, I have demonstrated the centrality of migration in the evolution of the Akuapem state, a development which was not peculiar to that state but common to all African societies.⁶⁶

Through this analysis it has emerged that the peopling of the Akuapem state was influenced by trade, warfare, political expediency and cultural exigencies. These socio-political conditions notwithstanding, from the onset the peopling of Akuapem, I would argue, was made possible by multiple patterns of settlement with the attendant potential for inter-marriages. For instance, as the Akyem settlers settled some of their members among Guan communities and formed alliances with pre-existing Akan

⁶⁶ T. Falola and U. Aribidesi, p.1.

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people and others, so were conditions for intermarriages made possible. The same can be said of the Krobo exiles, especially women who in their predicament settled in their “new” homes with the right to marry whoever they so wished and devoid of socio-cultural taboos that drove them away from their original homes. Such socialization, no matter how advantageous it might have been, splintered the ethnic and cultural identities of most Akuapem people and left in its wake new forms of social, cultural and linguistic identities with inherent potential for conflict.

Moreover, the peopling process was made possible by the availability of land that originally belonged to Guan communities, and parcels of which the Guan people gave out to the incoming groups. Additionally, it was on this land that the social engineering underpinnings took place. Such then was the centrality of land to Akuapem’s history, and a major factor in the state’s conflicts, the most recent of which being the 1994 incident.

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