

THE PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE ON THE GOLD COAST, 1471-1807¹

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Abstract

It is well known that a vehicular variety of Portuguese served as the principal language of communication between Africans and Europeans from soon after the first appearance of the Portuguese on the Gold Coast towards the end of the fifteenth century until the demise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the nineteenth. This paper seeks to reconstruct the circumstances of its establishment and spread and the range of its use. It is argued that it was not “merely” a trade language but was used in a wide variety of situations, and that the label “pidgin” as usually defined is not particularly applicable. In the absence of written documents it is difficult to establish its grammatical features, but a range of historical sources and the evidence of the languages spoken on the coast today make it possible to construct a glossary of well over 100 words in common use.

In an earlier study I discussed the appearance of the Portuguese language as a language of trade on the Gold Coast, as well as the circumstances of its spread, in some detail (Dakubu 1997: 142ff.) In this paper I take a closer look at what can be said about the language itself, and compile what can be retrieved of its vocabulary.

The language has been mentioned occasionally in the literature, but not often. A few linguists mentioned it in print in the 1970s, referring to it as ‘Pidgin Portuguese’ (Berry 1971, Naro 1973, Spencer 1971). However, although the language as used on the Gold Coast no doubt had very local features, this seems to be a misnomer, for reasons I will return to. It was very frequently mentioned in pre-colonial European writings about the coast, usually in terms that associated it with the local people, but acknowledging that Europeans of various nationalities used it too, and not solely to communicate with Africans. Thus in the middle of the 18th century, at the height of the slave trade, the Danish trader L. Rømer based in Osu at Christiansborg wrote:

¹ This paper is a slightly revised version of a paper first presented at the International Conference on Afro-Hispanic, Luso-Brazilian and Latin American Studies held at the University of Ghana, August 5, 2009.

The staff on the Coast often use such forms of expression [ie. Portuguese words] ... and other Negro-Portuguese terms in their reports to their superiors here, as well as to those in England and Holland.... but I know that we here ought to compile a dictionary of Negro-Portuguese and Danish in order to make the reports which come from the Guinea Coast comprehensible. (Winsnes 2000: 164-5.)

He then goes on to define some words, including *palaber* and *callisiare*, but as far as I know, such a dictionary was never compiled.

Almost a century before Rømer, F. Müller, chaplain at the Danish fort at Amanfro near Cape Coast, quotes things local people said to him that indicate that Africans there commonly communicated on every-day topics with Europeans in a variety of Portuguese (see Appendix, Phrases). A decade or so later, the Danish captain Tilleman commented that a number of the locals in Sierra Leone spoke quite good Portuguese (Tilleman 1697/1994: 11), while on the Gold Coast some of the Blacks spoke “a little Dutch, English, and Portuguese as well” (ibid: 19), but also, that on the Gold Coast trade with Europeans was carried on by those who “can speak the country’s Portuguese..”. Apparently those who spoke it were people living in close association with the forts, and they or their close relatives had perhaps worked there (Tilleman 1697/1994: 30). Working through a local intermediary who could speak Portuguese seems to have been a business necessity for all European traders (with the possible exception of the English) until early in the nineteenth century.

The ‘country Portuguese’ was not a written language; to my knowledge there are no extant documents in it. Contracts and agreements between the forts and the local authorities were commonly written in the language of whoever owned the fort, and then interpreted orally in Portuguese before signature, and there is at least one quite detailed description of this procedure (Groben 1694: 82), but apparently the Portuguese version was never written down, or at least no such document has survived. The exclusively oral use of the language, added to the fact that European writers attest that it had a very strong local flavour, is presumably why some linguists have referred to it as a pidgin. However it does not fit the usual definition of a pidgin, as a simplified language created under pressure by people of diverse linguistic origins who did not have sufficient access to native speakers of the common language to learn it properly. It is true that the Portuguese had no official base on the Gold Coast after 1642, when they lost their forts (including Elmina) to the Dutch. However throughout the sixteenth century, Elmina and to a lesser extent Axim had significant numbers of Portuguese-speaking European residents, and schools were held for local boys, where

they presumably learned Portuguese as well as Latin (Texeira da Mota and Hair: 1988: 77). Vogt (1979: 55) reports that the king of Fetu's sons visited the vicar of the chapel where Fort St. Jago now stands for instruction in the faith, customs and language of the Portuguese. For several years in the 1570s, Augustinian missionaries at Elmina taught mulatto children in the castle and also worked at Komenda and Abakrampa (Bartels 1965: 2). Such instruction was not unique to the Gold Coast, but took place all along the Guinea Coast wherever the Portuguese established themselves. In 1553 it was reported that the King of Benin (City) spoke Portuguese well, having learned it as a child (Hakluyt 1907: 42). I detail all this to stress that in the first century or so of its use, the Portuguese language was learned formally as well as informally, on the Gold Coast and elsewhere on the coast of West Africa.

After 1642 the Portuguese continued to trade on the Gold Coast, but the continued use of their language seems to have been due mainly to an unspoken agreement between non-Portuguese Europeans and the local merchants, by which the local African merchants with connections at the forts controlled the trade and kept it in their own hands. That is, ordinary African residents of the coast could not easily start trading with Europeans, but would have to work with a local Portuguese-speaker. It should also be noted that Portuguese was the *lingua franca* of the Dutch trading empire around the world, not just in West Africa, and most of the sailors and traders in the Dutch service spoke it (Boxer 1965: 224; Valkhoff 1972: 94).² However these people did not write Portuguese, probably learned it very informally themselves, and we can assume that their standard of formal education was on average not high, so that after the Portuguese and their priests left their forts there was no support for an educated metropolitan version of the language on the Gold Coast. No doubt a broad range of second-language varieties developed, but we have no way of determining what they might have been like.

Sources and Problems

Our sources of data for this language are basically of three kinds:

- a) European writings about the coast since the 15th century,
- b) words attested in Ghanaian languages today, and
- c) words attested in English as spoken on the erstwhile Gold Coast.

The last two are essentially similar, as they consist of loan words found in extant languages.

² Boxer (1965) discusses the reasons for this situation. Partly it came about because the Dutch succeeded the Portuguese in many places, including in the Far East, not only in Africa.

All sources involve problems, albeit different ones. European writers of books about the Gold Coast were usually writing either to impart information to prospective merchants and sea captains who were not yet familiar with the coast but might consider going there, for example, Tilleman (1697) and Rømer (1756); or to entertain people in their home countries who were unfamiliar with the coast and had no intention of going there, ie. popular travel writing, for example Rask (1754) and Rømer (1760), or a mixture of these. Europeans on the Coast wrote voluminous letters, often with purposes not dissimilar from the books, but also as business reports to their home offices, for example the Dutch documents edited by van Dantzig (1978). In the case of reports, the only reflection of the presence of Portuguese is the use of certain terms, such as *caboceer* and *grandee*, that were so entrenched in local usage that they seem to have become part of the local version of the metropolitan language – see Rømer’s comment above.

The published books are more interesting for our purpose. No writer gave a wordlist of local Portuguese, and we can imagine that most of them did not think such a thing was necessary, because a European would either learn Portuguese before arrival or, when on the coast, work through an interpreter, until such time as he picked up a local language. However they frequently used Portuguese words with a local reference, and introduced both local Portuguese and Fante or Ga words when describing local customs, food crops, etc. As a result, most of the Portuguese words in such sources are related in one way or another to relations between Europeans and local people, whether in business dealings or in social interactions such as marriage to local women. Most important, though, the sheer number of words and expressions extant is very limited.

Europeans recorded local words for the benefit of other Europeans, and these in fact constitute most of our earliest records of Fante and Ga. These wordlists are sometimes unwitting attestations to the pervasive use of Portuguese, because occasionally the words are Portuguese, not Fante or Ga. More experienced and knowledgeable writers such as Müller and Rømer were quite clear as to which words were Portuguese and which Fante or Ga, but there are cases where a writer probably simply confused them. Thus Capt. Towerson’s sixteenth century list of eight “Mina” words include four that are clearly Akan, two Portuguese, one Ga and one whose origin is unclear (Dalby and Hair 1964). It may of course have happened that certain Portuguese words were used in a local language, as in fact happens with English words now.

Local languages also borrowed Portuguese words that are still used. They tend not to be the same words that the Europeans record, because they mainly refer to introduced culture items that were new to local people, not coastal items that were new to the Europeans. If the words became integrated into local languages, it seems a fair inference that they were commonly heard in the locally-spoken Portuguese. When Portuguese finally gave way to English on the Gold Coast, English, the replacing language, took over some Portuguese words in local use, including *palaver*, *sabi* from *saber*, *calabash*, and *pikin*.

Some Features of the Vocabulary

It appears that Gold Coast Portuguese did not consist only of Portuguese words. Part of its local flavour came from the local words used, for example ‘Dey’ from Akan *ɔ-dehe*, now pronounced *ɔdehye*,³ and ‘Braffoe’ from Akan *brafo* as a title. I include the Akan word **Nyan-kɔme* ‘God’, because Müller says that that is what the local people used when speaking to Europeans. Presumably this category of words varied from place to place.

There were also borrowings from other European languages, including the (obsolete?) English expression *kill-devil* for ‘gin’, and Dutch *baas* for ‘overseer’. The Dutch word occurs in Danish sources, and the English one in both Danish and Dutch. Indeed, Schmidt in 1761, in describing an engraving of a Ga warrior in full gear remarked that “Certain terms...[used by Schmidt in the description] are not the Negroes’ own but are a mixture of Portuguese with their language and some come from other European languages and are called [collectively] Negro-Portuguese” (Winsnes 2000: 264).

From the European writings we get the impression that the names of gold weights used were Akan, and that the forts otherwise dealt in their own national currencies; that is, we do not find Portuguese names for these things, although the social aspects of doing business were discussed in Portuguese.

The language, and the words from it that show up in Ghanaian languages today, also include a number of words that are not of European origin but were moved around the world by the Portuguese-speaking traders and crews. Most of them came either from the Far East or from the Americas, particularly new food plants. Many of them were borrowed by European languages as well: words such as ‘hammock’, ‘veranda’, ‘cacao’. At least two come from other parts of the west coast of Africa,

³ It is sometimes claimed that this word is of North African origin, but in that case the similarity to the Akan word may well have promoted its use.

namely ‘banana’, like Ga *amadaa* ‘plantain’, and the English word ‘yam’. An interesting word in this general category is ‘kenkey’, which is standard in Ghanaian English but does not come from a Ghanaian language. It seems to have started off in the Far East, meaning something like cooked rice. The word in Portuguese today (*canja*) apparently means ‘chicken soup with rice’ but also anything ‘easy to do’.⁴ Probably the word was spread not in connection with specific ingredients but as food that was bought ready-cooked, the local ‘fast food’.⁵

I have been unable to determine the source of a word spelled *Acrossa* by Tilleman and *Crosse* by Müller. It clearly means ‘tiger nut’, *Cyperus esculentus* – Müller even gives the Akan equivalent, *atadwe*. One rather slim possibility is the Akan word *akoropaa*, referring to another small plant that also has a small tuber, *Tacca leontopetaloides* (L.) (Dokosi 1998: 545-8). Apparently in those days it was a more important crop than it is now.

In some cases it is uncertain whether a word should be attributed to Coast Portuguese, or only to usage of a particular European language. Thus *costgeld* meaning something like ‘fees’ and *troncken* for something like ‘warehouse’ are not Portuguese and seem to be found only in the Dutch documents, although they are apparently not standard Dutch words either. The word *Tapoeyer* for ‘mulattos’ was also used by the Dutch. They were convinced all the mulatto traders were cheating them, so perhaps it is from Portuguese **tapear** ‘to cheat’, although Baesjou (1979: 18) proposes a Brazilian origin.

The Life and Death of Gold Coast Portuguese

Although Portuguese was the trade language throughout the seventeenth and for most of the eighteenth centuries, by the end of the eighteenth it seems to have been on the wane. It had never been the only language of trade, for European traders who stayed long on the coast frequently learned Fante or Ga,⁶ and English seems to have gradually spread. Isert (1788/1992: 103) commented that English was much used in Whydah, one of the places on the Benin coast where Portuguese lasted the longest. Monrad writing on the basis of his Christiansborg residence in the first decade of the 19th century (1822/2008: 349/253) remarked that,

⁴ Perhaps rather like *koko* ‘easy, simple’ in current Ghanaian English, also the name of a plain food.

⁵ This does not mean that the food that ‘kenkey’ refers to came from the east, rather that this is the name it came to be called by in Portuguese and now in English.

⁶ See for example the story in a Dutch document of 1731 (Van Dantzig 1978) about an Englishman “known to speak the Negroes’ language well”. Rømer evidently had some command of Ga.

Thus, many Negroes, especially on the Upper Coast, still speak the Portuguese language, as all the languages of the Coast Negroes are more or less mixed with it. Also, the Negroes on the Upper Coast continue to have practiced using it, because the Portuguese ships that trade in Africa hire Negroes and canoes from there, to be used in trade along the coasts and on the rivers far down the coast.

“Upper Coast” referred to the coast west of the Volta. The implication seems to be that although Portuguese was still used, the Danes at least did not need to use it, but used interpreters directly from Ga or Fante into Danish.

We might ask whether the arrival of returnees from Brazil in the middle of the nineteenth century helped to maintain the Portuguese language a while longer. It apparently did make a difference east of the Volta, for Portuguese was the language of instruction in Whydah schools until the end of the nineteenth century (Bay 1986), despite the early popularity of English there, but on the Gold Coast I do not think it did, or not for long, despite the fact that in Accra they were integrated as a section of the Ga known as ‘Tabon’, from the Portuguese greeting *esta bom?* The freed slaves who arrived from Brazil were mainly not Brazilian born, and perhaps had no particular attachment to the language, or perhaps in some cases did not even speak it. In any case, by the time they arrived, English colonialism was getting under way, and English was the language that traders needed to know.

A final word on what seems to be a relatively new Portuguese word in Ghanaian languages, *galamsey* for ‘illegal gold winning’. The Brazilian word for an independent gold winner is *galimpeiro*, from a word of the Algarve region of southern Portugal, *galampear*, meaning ‘rob, plunder’. It is possible that this is a survival from the nineteenth century, but I know of no record of it before the middle of the twentieth. Probably it has arrived more recently, possibly with Ghanaians returning from Portuguese-speaking southern Africa.

To conclude, it will be observed from the contents of the Appendix that while the number of Portuguese words still in use on what was the Gold Coast is not vast, neither is it negligible. The fact that more than 150 words and several sentences can be retrieved in a language which was rarely if ever written, and for which we thus have essentially no written documents, and moreover has not been spoken on the Gold Coast for about two hundred years, is surely a witness to its former importance. These words record a period that for better or for worse was crucial in the formation of the Ghana we know today, and reflect both what was new to the coast, in the words of non-African origin, and what was unfamiliar to the Europeans, as witnessed by the

African words they adopted. They also remind us that ‘globalization’ has been in progress for quite a while, for they originate from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas.

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Appendix

Gold Coast Portuguese Words and Phrases

The Portuguese or in some cases other headword is given first, in **bold**. This is followed by the source in brackets, if the word is not Portuguese in origin. This is in turn followed by the source meaning, in quotation marks ‘...’. Citations from written sources are then given, in approximate chronological order, with the cited word in *italics* followed by the abbreviation of the source, and either the page number, in parentheses (..), or the year of citation in the case of the Dutch Documents (DD). If two page numbers are given separated by a slash (eg. for Tilleman) the first is the page number in the published translation, the second the original. (If a work has been translated but only one page number appears, it is because the word itself was translated and so does not appear in the translation. The page number given is for the original.) A roman numeral in a citation from Müller refers to the ‘chapter’ of his ‘Fetu’ (Fante) vocabulary – and so indicates a word considered by Müller to be a word in that language. Following this and separated by a double semi-colon ;; are citations from currently spoken languages of the erstwhile Gold Coast – GC and Gh English, Ga, Akan.⁷ The abbreviation ‘obsol.’ means the word is not currently used in the language in question.

Sources

Contemporary and historical sources are listed in alphabetical order according to the abbreviation used. Where bibliographic details are missing, see the References.

⁷ Although most if not all of the Portuguese words were borrowed into Ewe as well, they have been excluded from this essay because the coast east of the Volta was not considered part of the Gold Coast, and because the Portuguese were established on the coast east of present-day Ghana, once known as the ‘Slave Coast’, for much longer. The history of the language in that area merits a study of its own.

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- DeM: De Marees, Pieter, 1987. *Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea (1602)*. Albert van Dantzig and Adam Jones, trans. and ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- DH/T: Dalby and Hair, 1964. (Towerson)
- E/D: Escudier, Denis de (ed.) 1992. *Voyage d'Eustache Delafosse sur la côte de Guinée, au Portugal et en Espagne (1479-1481)*. Paris: Editions Chataigne.
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- Me: Meredith, Henry. 1812. *An Account of the Gold Coast of Africa*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown.
- Mo: Monrad (1822).
- Mül: Müller (1968/1676).
- Rø: Winsnes (2000).
- T: Tilleman (1994/1697).
- W/W: Winsnes, Selena Axelrod, 2004. *A Danish Jew in West Africa, Wulff Joseph Wulff, Biography and Letters 1836-1842*. Trondheim: Dept of History NTNU.
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abrir 'to open'. *abrid* Mül (193).

açucar 'sugar'. *Assugri* Mül VI; Akan *sikyiri* Ga *sikli*.

albacóre 'a large fish' (albacore). Mül (216).

almade 'a rowing boat'. Vogt.

amarrador (Braz.) 'master'. Ak. *amradofò*, Ga *amrado*, *amralo*.

- ananas** ‘pineapple’. deM; *anassas* MüL (216); Twi *anansi* B/H;; Ga *ananse* ‘wild pineapple’.
- arca** ‘chest’. *Addacca* MüL XIV; Twi *addack-hà* B/H; Vogt ;; Ak. *adaka*; Ga *adéka*.
- armazém** ‘warehouse’. *armasoen* ‘consignment, full load, of slaves’ DD p.126 and passim.
- armezim** a cloth. Vogt; *armozy* DD 1733 and passim.
- atrás** ‘behind’. *atra* MüL (95).
- baas** (Dutch) ‘overseer’, of European artisans and company slaves. W/I (152); *bas* Mo. (360).
- bacia** ‘basin’. *bassina* DH/T.
- bambu** (E. Asian, via Dutch?) ‘bamboo’. Ak. *mprampuro* Ga *pamplo*; Eng. *bamboo*.
- banana** (Guinea origin, Mande or West Atlantic) *amenenne* (DeM); *bannanas* (MüL); Akra *amadah* W/I;; Ga *amádàá* Dangme *mánàà* ‘plantain’.
- banco** ‘bank’ T (120/32) ‘legal weight’.
- bandelier** ‘belt’. Bo; MüL.
- bandera** ‘flag’. MüL XII.
- batel, bateira** ‘small boat’. Ga *batɔɔ*; Akan *batadewa*.
- beatilha** ‘nun’s veil’. a fine grade of cloth: *platthiljos* DD 1686, 1729; *plattilies* = Ga *klala* Schmidt 1761.⁸
- bolo** ‘cake’. ‘a steamed bread’: *bolle* Rø (196); *Abullo* W/I (123, in Accra and Asante wordlists); *abulla* W/W (77) ;; Akan *àbódòó* Ga *abólòó*.
- bonito** ‘a large fish’. MüL (216) ;; Eng. *bonito* refers to any of several kinds of mackerel.
- bom** ‘good’. *bono* Rø (98).
- brafo** (Akan) a title. *Braffo* DD 1690, 1702.
- branco** ‘white’. *baa, blaa* E/D; *Blanquen* ‘white people’ MüL (36 & passim); *Blanks* Bo; *Blanke* Schmidt/Rø (263); *Blanke* Mo (21);; Akan *brɔ-fò* Ga *blɔ-fò*.

⁸ This etymology was suggested by Adam Jones (1985). **Platillo** in Spanish is ‘a kind of pan’, and it is possible that in some cases this is what a spelling like *platthiljos* refers to, since crockery and metal pans were among the trade goods imported to the Coast.

- brandir** ‘flourish, brandish, wield’. *brandee* ‘stake property against settlement of a dispute’ Me.
- brincar** ‘play’. *pringaren* DD 1738; *brengaren* ‘celebrations’ Schmidt in Rø (262); *bringar* W/I (138); Mo (18).
- brisa** ‘breeze’. *brissa* ‘wind’ Mül (94, I).
- buzio** ‘conch, whelk’. Used for ‘cowry’: *bossies*, *bos* Rø (92, 196); Schmidt in Rø; *Boss* W/I (85); *bossies*, *cabes* *bos* W/W (82).
- cabeça** ‘head’. 1) ‘cowries’: *cabes* DD 1730; *cabes* W/I (84) ‘*ih* [*yih*]to the Black’ [Ga *yii* ‘heads’]; *cabes* ‘account, because of’ Mo (24, 74); *cabes* *bos* W/W (82).
- 2) ‘chief’: *Cabusees* T (8/10); *Cabessiros* Mül (114); *Caboceros*, *Caboceers* DD 1682, 1690, 1700, passim; *Cabocero* Bo.; *caboceer* Rø (68, 79, 237); *kabossies*, *Kabossie* W/I (47, 48, 59, 89, 99 passim); *caboceers*, *cabuseer* (Mo xxii, 16, and quotes Bowdich); *caboceer* W/W (89).
- cabo** ‘cape’. In place names: *Cabo Apollonia*, *Cabo Corsso* T: (53/19; 69/22 passim); DD 1675.
- cabra** dimin. **cabrito** ‘goats & sheep’. *cabrite* Mül (121); *cabriets* DD; *cabrit* Rø (91); *cabritter* W/W (59).
- cal** ‘lime’ Akan *akádo*, Ga *káàloó*.
- calabaza**, **carabassa** (Span.) ‘calabash’. *Calabassa* Mül (147); Bo. ; Eng.
- caminho** ‘road’. *camienje* DD 1732.
- camisa** ‘shirt’. *camezà*, *camisai* P/H ;; Akan, Ga *kamínsàá*.
- candeia** ‘lamp’. Akan *kanéa* Ga *kané*.
- canoa** (from Arawak) ‘canoe’. *canò* Mül; *Canoas* Bo.
- Cape Coast** ostensibly English, this name is clearly an Anglicization of *Cabo Corso*, which indicates that this headland was a landmark for sailors from the earliest arrivals of Europeans in the area (see **cabo** and **corso** below).
- carga** ‘burden, bag’. ‘bandelier’ Mül XV; *cargant* DD 1705 – apparently a chain or money bag of some kind.
- cargazón** (Span.) ‘cargo’. *cargasoen* DD passim.

- carta** ‘paper’. *br̄houmacratà* [br̄-nhoma-krataa] B/H ;; Ak. *krâtaá*
- casa** ‘house’. *cassa* Mo (47), also used for a Ga coming of age custom for boys, Mo (66/55).
- casar** ‘marry, set up housekeeping’. Refers to indigenous marriage customs and also to Euro-African temporary marriage arrangements. *callisiare*, *callischarer* Rø (165, 185); *cassarerede* S/Rø (264); *cassaren* W/I (140, 156); Mo (61/47).
- castelo** ‘castle’. *Casteel* Mül (9).
- cauri** (Hindustani) ‘cowry’. *coris* Mo (39/12) ;; Eng.
- cebola** ‘onion’. Ga *sàbólàí* Dangme *sabólā āsāmúnàá*.
- chave** ‘key’. *Saffi* Mül XIV; *sassi* B/H;; Akan *sáfě*, *safõwá* Ga *sámfeé*.
- chumbo** ‘lead’ (metal). *súmbo* Mül IV; *sombouy* B/H;; Akan *sùmpĩ* Ga *súmùí*.
- cobra** ‘snake’. Recorded only in a place name: *Rio Cobre* Bo.; *Ancober* DD passim ;; Eng. *Ankobra* river.
- cobre** ‘copper’. *Coper* Mül X; *copri* B/H ;; Akan *kôbere* Ga *kápìè*.
- cocos** ‘coconut’. *coquos* 1498; Mül (203) ;; Ga *àkókòóshi*.
- cola** ‘cola (nut)’ Mül (215).
- consagrar** ‘recognize as official’. Used in connection with temporary marriages of Europeans to local women, see **casar**. *consaw* DD.
- conta** ‘accounts’. Akan *akõntàá* Ga *akóntàá*.
- conta** ‘(rosary) bead’. *conte de terra* DD 1718: *contreterre* Rø (23).
- corcobados** ‘a fish’. T (14/11).
- corso** an adjective describing something having to do with sailing.⁹ In the place name *Cabo Corssó*, see **Cape Coast** above. *Corssó* T; *Cors* Rø.
- costa** ‘coast’. *Custe* Mül; *Costy* DD passim; *Custe*, *costa* Rø.
- costumes** ‘customs’. 1) ‘ceremonial homage’, also ‘rent’ for land: T (9/10); DD 1729; *Coustyme* Rø.(149/179);
- 2) ‘funeral celebrations’. Mo (21) ;; Ga, Dangme *kùsúmí*

⁹ Information from H. Bediako, personal communication.

- crevellan** (or **scrivellos**) (source unknown) small elephant tusk. DD 1719 and passim; W/I (85).
- crossa** (source unknown) ‘tiger nut’. *Acrossa* T (133/37); *Crosse* Mül (211).
- cruz** ‘cross’ *crus* HJL/B.
- Day** (Akan) ‘chief’. Mül (109); DD 1689 ;; Twi *ɔ-déhye*.
- dentro** ‘inside’. *adentro* Mül (193).
- Diabo** ‘devil’. *Diabol* Mül (193).
- Dios** ‘God’. Mül (89); *A dio* ‘good day!’ W/I (28).
- dobrar** ‘fold’. *Doubra* DeM.
- dorado** ‘a fish, bream’. Barbot; Mül (227); Rø (214).
- dɔnko** (Akan) ‘native from the interior; slave’. *Duncos* ‘northerners’ Mo (114) ;; Twi *ɔdɔŋkɔ*.
- esta** ‘this’. Barbot, Müller.
- este, estar** ‘be, stand’ *sta* Mül (193).
- fava** ‘bean’. *faba* Rø (82).
- feitiço** (1) ‘artificial’, from **feitiar** ‘to form, shape’. Meant a) ‘alloyed gold’, b) ‘manufactured object’: *feitiso* DeM; *Feitizo* Barbot; *Fetiche* Bo; DD 1716, 1737.
- feitiço** (2) ‘witchcraft’ *Fetissie* T (133/36) ‘taboos’; *Fitiso*, *Fetisiken* Mül I ‘local deity’; *Fetiche* Bo.; *fetisse* DD 1732; Rø. passim; Mo. passim ;; Eng. *fetish*.
- feitiçeiro** ‘sorcerer, traditional priest’: *Fetisseiro* T (131/36): *Fetissero* Mül (78, I); *Feticheer* Bo.
- fiador** ‘guarantor’. *fiadoor* DD 1703, 1737.
- fidalgo** ‘person of rank’. DD 1705 (used for local dignitaries on other parts of the coast).
- filho** ‘son’. Mül.
- feitor** ‘manager’. Used to indicate the official called in Akan *ɔkyeame*. *Fitiro* Mül (108); *Fetaire*, *Fetere* DD (1689, 1690).
- forte** ‘strong’. Mül.
- forno** ‘oven’. Akan *ɔfrônoó* Ga *frónòó*.
- goiaba** ‘guava’. Ga *gówà*: Eng. *guava*.

- ?gosto** ‘taste’. *Gusares* æbler [G. apples] W/W (67).
- granada** ‘shot’. *Granadoes* Bo.
- grande** ‘wealthy, influential person’. *Grande* MüL (6, 133); *grandees* DD 1703, 1737; Rø (179); W/I (67); *Grande*es W/I (47, passim); Mo. (68); *Grande*e W/W (89). as adjective: ‘big, important’: Rø (98).
- hamaca** ‘hammock’. *hamanké* B/H;; Akan *ahãmãŋkaá*, Ga *àhímanká*.
- homem** ‘man’. *Homes* ‘men’ DD 1738.
- inham** (SW Africa) ‘yam’. *Enjamos* MüL (164) ;; Eng. yam.
- Nyankome** (Ak.: note the element **-pɔŋ** ‘great’ is absent). *Jan Commè* ‘God’ MüL (98) ;; Akan *o-nyankopɔŋ*.
- juju** (Brazilian) ‘magic’. Eng.
- kakraba, krakra** (Ak.) ‘small’. Used esp. re diluted gold. *cacraba* T (137/37): *kakeraas* ‘gold’ DD 1738.
- kenkey** (E. Asia) originally ‘cooked rice’. *kangues, kankis* DeM; *cantje* MüL (162, XIII); *kankis* W/I (101, 125);; Eng. *kenkey*; Port. *canja*.
- kill-devil** (Eng.) ‘gin’. *kerduyvel* DD 1701; *kieldyvel* Rø (58).
- krom** (Akan) ‘village’. *Crom* DD 1705, 1711, 1737, *voorcrom* ‘suburb’ DD 1711.
- lamben** (source?) ‘cloth strip’. Vogt; DeM; *lememniassen* DD 1731, 1739; Akan *dan-ta*.
- macron** (source?) ‘old, unfit for sale (of a slave)’ DD 1684, 1733.
- malaguette** (Italian ‘millet’? OED – in sense of ‘grain’?) ‘pepper’. *mangeta* Thevet transl. Hackett 1568; *managete* Towerson 1599; Ogilby 1670; *malaget* Rø (199); W/I (127).
- male** ‘bad’. Rø (98).
- mancebo** ‘youth’. *mancevos* MüL (144); *manseroes* Barbot (esp. members of asafu companies).
- marinha** ‘marine’, **marinhiero** ‘seafarer’. *Marinie* ‘toll master’, ie. king’s representative on the beach to collect import duties DD 1690.
- mercador** ‘merchant’. *Merckador* T (120/32); *mercadoor, mercador* DD 1702, 1704 passim.

- milho** ‘corn’. *Millie* T (123); *milys*, *milhio* DD 1675, 1678, 1732; *Milie* Mül (160); *Milhio* Bo; *millie*, *millio* Rø (196, 236).
- moço** ‘boy, young man’. *Moss* W/I (157).
- molto**, **molta** much, very DH/T.
- morador** ‘garrison soldier; resident on the coast’. Vogt.
- mosquete** ‘musket’. *musquettons* (? evidently foreign word) DD 1704 (108).
- mulato** ‘mulatto’. Bo; DD passim: Rø passim; W/I (120); *mulatinde* (fem.) W/W (157, 160).
- mulher** ‘woman’. *muliere* Mül; Bo. (199).
- natural** ‘native, home born’. *Natureller* T (112/30); Mül (25).
- negociar** ‘conduct business’. *negotierende* (Mül 65, 147); *Negotien* Rø.
- negro** ‘black’. *Negros* ‘Black people’ T (109/29): Mül (126); Rø passim; Mo (39/13), passim; *Negeri* ‘local village’ T (89/25); Mo. (13).
- okyeame** (Akan) ‘spokesman’. *Tyami* DD 1690.
- pacova** (from Tupi, a language of Brazil) ‘banana’. *Baccofes* Mül XVI.
- palanquim** (from India). Eng. *palanquin*; Akan *apakáŋ*, Ga *akpakáí*.
- palavra** ‘word, speech’. DD 1704, 1732; *palabres*, *palaber* Rø (164); Mo (17); *palaber* W/I (60); *palaver* W/W (76); Eng. *palaver*.
- pano**, Span. **pañó** ‘cloth’. Bo; Ra: *pantjes* Rø (183); S/Rø (263); W/I (38, 94, 160); Mo (28), and for a Ga girls’ puberty custom (56); *pantier* W/W (71); *panties* W/W (90). The form seems to include a Dutch diminutive suffix.
- paõ** ‘bread’. Ak. *páãñõó* ‘bread’, Ga *akpóðñóó* ‘biscuit’.
- patata** (from Taino, a Caribbean language) ‘potatoes’. *Patattas* Mül (203); *patattes* DD 1726; *patatos* Rø (198); Eng. *potato*. Used for sweet potatoes and sometimes other root crops.
- pegar** ‘seize’. *pingaret* W/I (134).
- penhor** ‘pawn’, **penhorar** ‘seize’. *panyar* DD 1732, 1739; *penjarte* ‘possessed’, *penjarer* Rø (91, 164); *panyar* Mo (41, 127) ‘be possessed by a deity; capture’ (74); *panyar* W/W (77).
- pequeno** ‘small; child’. *Pikanne* ‘minor’ Rø (98); GC Eng. *pikin*.

- pieza** (Span.) ‘piece’. *Piezas d’Indias* DD 1706.
- pimenta** ‘pepper’. *piment* Rø (199).
- pito** (Nigerian, prob. Hausa). *Bittau, bitauw* DD 1732-3; *pitto* Rø (235); W/I (127, 140); *pytho* Mo (23, 57) ;; G.C. Eng. *pito*.
- porco** ‘pig’. *proccò* B/H;; Ak. *prokoo* Ga *kplòtóó*.
- potential** ‘powerful person’. *potentater* Rø (53).
- pregar** ‘to beg’. *pringar* DD ‘barter’.
- prego** ‘nail’. *prego* MüL XIII; *preghou* B/H;; Akan *prêgo, prêko* Ga *plékòó*.
- preto** ‘black’. *pretto* MüL.
- queijo**, Span. **queso** ‘cheese’. Akan *kêsuú* Ga *kéèsuú* (obsol.).
- rei** ‘king’. *re* Rø (157).
- remador** ‘oarsman’. *remidorer* ‘boatmen’ Rø (192).
- remorado** ‘delayed’. *remora* ‘delay, difficulty’ Bo.
- revier** (Eng. river? French rivièrè?) ‘lagoon’ Mo (137).
- rio** ‘river’, eg. *Rio Volta* DD 1670; Rø passim; Mo (115); W/I (31).
- roçar** ‘to plant’. *rossar* ‘farming’ W/I (56, 161); *rosarre* Mo (83, 121).
- saber** ‘know’. G.C. Eng. *sabi*.
- ? **sacar** ‘pull out, extract, draw a gun’. *siccadinger* ‘Akwamu raiders’ Rø (121) ;; Eng. *sack*.
- ? **salador** viz. **saldar** ‘balance, settle, an account’, ‘a grade of official’. DD 1737 (re Benin City).
- sancte** ‘holy’. Bo (153).
- sapata, sapato, sapateta** ‘slipper’. Akan *asepâteré* Ga *asepââteré*.
- sardinha** ‘sardine’. *sardin* ‘herring’ Rø (196).
- seda** ‘silk’. Akan, Ga *seda*.
- senhor** ‘sir, mister’. MüL (193); *Seignore* Rø (108).
- sica** ‘knife’. *osseikarn* P/H; *zikkan* W/I (123);; Akan *sekan*.
- signo** ‘symbol’ (astrol.). *signa* ‘symbol’ Rø (96).
- tabaco** ‘tobacco’. *tabba* P/H; W/I (139) ;; Ga *tawá*.

tábua ‘board’, **tabu** ‘rudder-oar, paddle’. MüL; *attabhoum* ‘paddle’ P/H ;; Akan *ɔtabõŋ* Ga *tablõŋ*.

taça (ult. Ar.) ‘cup’, and slang for ‘pewter’. MüL XIV; *tássa* ‘dish, tin’ W/R; Ga *tasaá* (obsolescent).

taxa ‘tax’. MüL.

terra ‘land’. MüL (124); DD 1700.

torquado ‘a large fish’. MüL (234).

trocar ‘exchange, trade’. *troquere* ‘exchange’ Rø (53).

trovão ‘thunder clap’, **trovado** ‘thunderstorm’. *travat* ‘rain’ T (133/37); *trovado* DD 1730, 1739; *travados* Rø (18); *travats* W/I (25, 26); *travadoes* ‘line squall, storm’ W/W (107).

tubarõn ‘a large fish’. MüL (229).

urso ‘bear’. Used for ‘hyena’: MüL; Rø.

varanda (from an Indian language) Akan *àbránnàá* Ga *abránàá*.

vela ‘sail’. *Abedda* MüL ;; Akan *àbránnàá* Ga: *àbálàá*.

vinho de palmã ‘palm wine’. MüL (200).

voladoros ‘flying fish’. MüL (226).

volta ‘change, alteration, twisting’ (as in Rio Volta). Rø. (207) claims it means ‘leaping’. Early maps indicate a change in the currents at its mouth.

Phrases:

Adio a hura! ‘Good day sir (*owura*)!’ W/I (28).

aldeia da duas partes ‘town in two parts’, see Feinberg (1989: 105); numerous maps.

arca con tres chaves ‘box with three keys’, the chest where gold was kept in Elmina. Vogt (1979: 58).

bonos Gentes ‘good people’ Rø.

Filhos da Deos ‘white men’ (‘sons of God’) MüL (89).

Grande bonos Dies ‘major auspicious days’ Rø (98).

Homes Grandes ‘big men’. DD 1738.

Jan Commè sta atra forte translated as '[The white] God is a defender (*?anderSchlag*) of men'. Mül (94).

Males Gentes (coast of) 'bad people' ie. western coast of Côte d'Ivoire. Rø (203).

Male dies 'inauspicious days'. Rø (98).

Muliere Grande 'senior wife'. Bo (199).

O Senor, no abrid, pretto Diabol sta adentro 'O sir, don't open it, there is a black devil [ie. a medicine shrine] inside' Mül (193).

Per esta crus de Dios 'by this cross of God' (an oath). Barbot.

Pikanne bonos Dies 'minor good days'. Rø (98).

Seignore el Re (Senhor el rei) 'my lord the king' W/I 157.

Seignore Moss (Senhor moço) 'Mr. young-man' W/I 157

