

Full Length Research Paper

The people the boundary could not divide: The Gyaman of Ghana and Côte D'ivoire in historical perspective

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This article aims at constructing the history of the Gyaman state before colonial rule. It is the first in a series of three papers to be published in the Journal of African Studies and Development. The current paper shall interrogate the pre-colonial political structures that culminated in the formation of the Gyaman state. It also discusses the socio-politico-economic activities of the Gyaman people before colonial domination by both the British and the French. The discussion of the early history of Gyaman and its constitution is important as it sets the background for understanding the Gyaman people and their history of resilience and also sets the background for understanding subsequent modern issues confronting this great West African traditional state.

Key words: Gyaman, Ghana, La Côte d'Ivoire, traditional, state.

INTRODUCTION

A version of their traditional account states that the Gyaman people left Akwamu in the first decade of the seventeenth century and lived in Suntreso, now a suburb of Kumasi as Dormaa people. Available evidence indicates that Akwamu was founded by Otumfo Asare of Twifo-Hemang. The founders of the Twifo Hemang state originated from Kumbu. According to Meyerowitz (1969), Kumbu (Kumu) or Comoe was situated in the Kong Mountains in the Republic of La Côte d'Ivoire and its capital was called Kong (Mayerowitz, 1969; Ofosu-Mensah and Ansah, 2012). The Black Fulani otherwise called "Zaberima" (Songhay) invaded Kumbu and occupied its capital, Kong around 1460. As a result of the conquest of Kumbu, many of its refugees fled to the southern part of Banda and formed a temporary government at a place now called Dwenemu. Majority of the people left and under the leadership of Agyen Kokobo, located themselves in the region of Elmina where they founded the Twifo-Hemang state with its capital at Amenfi probably during the last quarter of the

fifteenth century. Traditions tell us that after the death of the fifth Hemang ruler, succession disputes compelled a section of the community led by Otumfo Asare to migrate to the Nsawam region where they carved a Kumbu state which they named after their former state. Kumbu was later corrupted to Akwamu. This appears as "Aquamboe" on eighteenth century maps. Wilks (1959) relates that, by 1650, Akwamu had risen as a powerful coastal power. Akwamu tradition named Asamankese and Nyanoase near modern Nsawam as successive capitals (Wilks, 1959). The Akwamu subjugated the Guan and the Kyerepon whom they called *Nkoa Apem* (a Thousand Slaves). *Nkoa Apem* was later corrupted to *Akwapim*. Akwamu expanded its sphere of influence and soon began to control the trade routes between the European forts in Winneba and Accra districts. The Akyem exerted constant bellicose pressure on the Akwamu, hence they moved their capital from Asamankese to Nyanoase. King Ansa Sasraku IV ruled at Nyanoase from 1684 to 1692. Akono Panyin (1692-1719) succeeded him (Akolatse,

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1978). Akono established friendly relations with the English along the coast. This alliance helped him benefit in the trade with the Danes at Keta. The Akwamu, by the first quarter of the eighteenth century had become middle men in the trade in gold and slaves that passed through its territory from Asante. Tributes paid to the royal treasury by the vassal states as well as rents and tolls paid by European traders enriched the Akwamu state. At the peak of its prowess and by the first quarter of the eighteenth century, Akwamu had successfully exercised its influence over Aburi, Latebi, Akrade, Agona, Ladoku, Peki, Krepi, Ho, Kapndo, Ga, Kwahu and Akyem. By 1733, allied forces of Akyem, Agona, Ga, Kwahu, Obutu, Gomoa, Fante and the Dutch of Fort Crevecoeur defeated the Akwamu who then fled to take refuge beyond the Volta River where they built a new state called Akwamufie or Awaweneso. Akwamu tradition identifies four main causes of war (Ward, 1966). In the first place, the Akwamu were in the habit of *panyarring* the Akyem and Fante traders to the Dutch, a practice that caused general insecurity to trade. The second cause was that the Akwamuhene insulted Frimpong Manso, the Akyem Kotokuhene. Frimpong's sister had married the Akwamuhene and her husband made it plain that he wished to have nothing to do with his wife's relatives. This irritated Frimpong Manso who swore an oath to fight the Akwamuhene with an alliance of Ga and Fante chiefs. The third cause of the war was that the men of Akwamu royal family terrorised the vassal states. The Akwamu chief of Asamankese complained to the Akwamuhene about their behaviour but the men were in no mood to stop. They killed the niece of a notable Akwamu war captain and he swore to revenge.

At Nyanoase, succession dispute took place involving two rival candidates who were twins. This was after the death of the third Akwamuhene, Ansa Sasraku I in about 1600. The senior twin had been elected by the deceased king with the support of the Gyaasehene, while Nkansah, the Queen, threw her support behind the junior twin. To avoid a possible feud, the Queen and Obiri Yeboah, the junior twin, together with a number of followers, who she called **Dɔ Mma** (Beloved Children) migrated from Nyanoase. According to Siaw Owusu, (1975) Dormaa was derived from **Dɔ Man** that is "Nation of Love" in English. Adjei Kyeremeh (1980) also reports that Dormaa was derived from **Dɔ Wo Man** "love your country". The Akwamu Aduana migrants settled at several places such as Kentenkyerease near Nsawam, Obomen in Kwahu and in Asante where they carved a Dormaa state with its capital at Asantemanso and subsequently at Suntreso in 1620. Asante military hostilities against the Dormaa caused a section of them led by Adu Bene to leave Suntreso in the second quarter of the seventeenth century. The group journeyed north-west and settled at Abanpredease near Bomaa (ADM 3/2/1, PRAAD, Sunyani). Traditions relate that Bofo Tantan left Abanpredease probably in the second quarter of the

seventeenth century with his followers and having invaded the Akwamu state, succeeded in carving the Dwenemu and Kyerebio states. Tan Date Panyin also left Dwenemu with his people in 1660 and founded Amanvi (Amanfi). He established the Zanzan dynasty and laid the foundation of the Gyaman Kingdom. Adingra (Adinkra) Panyini, a royal of Dormaa Asantemanso invaded Amanvi around 1680 and established Yaakase as a new capital of Gyaman. He also established the Yaakase dynasty. Adu Bene and his brother, Bofo Bene and other members of the Dormaa royal lineage left Abanpredease for the Dwenemu region. Later, they invaded the Nafana and the Broko (Kulango) and prominently took part in the formation of Zanzan. Adu Bene (1688-1720) also known as Bene Kombi Panyini became the next Gyamanhene (King of Gyaman) after Adingra Panyini around 1688. Assinoah (1965) relates that Adu Bene laid the foundation of Gyaman and ruled as the first Gyamanhene. This is incorrect because the Gyaman kings list we had access to named Adu Bene as the third king. He ruled after Adingra Panyini and his Stool name was Bene Kombi Panyini. It is however true that Adu Bene ruled at Abanpredease. He was followed by Obiri Yeboah, Yeboah Afari, Sakuriye and Boadu Agyemang. The Akwamu-Aduana migrants subdued the indigenes that included the Gbin, Ligbi, Numa, Nafana, Lorho, Dagba, Kulango and the Anyi and imposed their rule and culture on them (Terray, 2006). The indigenes lived in widely scattered villages under independent chieftains. Among these villages were: Gyamala, Mayera, Koti, Broko, Mfodwokwa, Gakuro, Nasian, Nzonzomea, Gomere, Sapia, Kyele, Duadaso, Kabile, Kokuan, Sisangba (Sampa) (Agyeman, 1965). One group left Abanpredease and settled at Ayokomase between Sunyani and Nsuatre. This group later moved to Adantase and then to Droboso near Wenchi. It is not certain when this group left Abanpredease for Droboso. A section of this group left Droboso and settled in the Gyaman country probably during the reign of Gyamanhene Kofi Agyeman Panyini in the 1780s (Droboman Annual Munufie Festival Brochure, 2006).

Context

Gyaman also spelled "Jamang" was a medieval African state of the Akan people, located in what is now Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. Gyaman was founded by the Abron, a branch of the Akan, in the late 15th century. The Abron then proceeded to conquer the Kulangos, Nafanas, Ligbis, Hwelas, and other ethnic groups of the area.

In the pre-colonial Gyaman government, a paramount chief known as the *Gyamanhene* ruled the kingdom from Amanvi, but his four provincial chiefs held the kingdom's real power. The kingdom's economy centered on the Dyula market town of Bonduku. In the nineteenth century, Gyaman was subjugated by the Ashanti, though it briefly

regained its independence following the Asanti's defeat by the British. In 1888, Gyamanhene Agyeman signed a treaty of protection with France, but the French failed to establish a post in the kingdom, leaving it vulnerable to Samori's 1895 invasion. The French later expelled Samori in 1897, incorporating Gyaman into French West Africa.

The Jaman District was a district in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. It was created in 1989 by splitting the former Berekum-Jaman District in two, and was itself split into the two districts of Jaman South and Jaman North by a constitutional demarcation by the John Agyekum Kufuor Government on November 12, 2003.

Amanvosos tradition relates that when the Drobosos migrants under the leadership of Sakyiako came to Gyaman, all traditional provincial boundaries had been delimited. Sakyiako and his entourage initially sojourned to the Sumahene (the Paramount ruler of the Suma Province of the Gyaman State) who took them to the court of Gyamanhene Agyeman Panyini. Sakyiako's exodus from Droboso to the Gyaman territory was occasioned by a sentence of banishment imposed on him by the Wenchihene (the paramount ruler of the Wenchihene State). The background of the sentence was that Sakyiako seduced the Wenchihene's wife and was sentenced to a fine of 120 *predwan* (about 80 Ghana Cedis or 70 Euros). His inability to pay the fine resulted in his banishment from Droboso together with his followers. Gyamanhene Kofi Agyeman paid the fine for Sakyiako on humanitarian grounds. The latter with his people were permitted by the Gyamanhene to settle between the rivers Bowia and Bisa on the Land of the Amanvosos people where they carved a state that they named Drobo. Drobo was immersed into the *Adondene* (vanguard) wing of the Gyaman army and ranked third on the state military hierarchy after Songore and Gyeene. The pact that granted Sakyiako and his people a stay in Gyaman deprived them of all forms of war booty. This historic agreement was recapitulated by the Drobohene's (the ruler of Drobo) horn language as follows:

"Sakyiako ee! Sakyiako ee! Koto no ne no ngo e, Bengye benni membe bi" (Interview with Opanin Dongo)

Translation:

"Sakyiako ee! Sakyiako ee! Go and fight the enemy let them Share the booty and eat it; I am not part of it"

Amanvosos traditions relate that until the British made the Drobohene the head chief of British Gyaman in 1898, he was subordinate to the Amanvosohene (the ruler of Amanvosos) and paid him tribute in the form of game. The closest neighbours of the Drobo were the Pongo, Amanvosos, Mole, Koti and the Dawiri. Sakyiako's indebtedness to the Wenchihene that occasioned his banishment was captioned by the Molehene's (the ruler of Mole) horn language as follows:

"Asare Koko Medi Wuo Ngokro Drobohene di Ka Ngokro"

(Interview with Nana Aforo)

Translation:

"Asare Kokoo, I think of my death while the Drobohene thinks of his indebtedness."

Bofo Bene and Tan Date I were noticed in the local tradition to have effectively subdued the indigenes. Adingra Panyini ruled from about 1670 to 1688. He allied with Nkoranza and conquered the Nasian, Kulango, Gbin and the Guro. Bene Kombi Kwadwo (Bene Kombi Panyini) came after Adingra Panyin. Abo Kofi (1720-46), who took the Stool name Abo Mire, succeeded him. Abo Kofi's reign opened a new chapter in the history of Gyaman. He launched effective campaigns against Banda and Bouna (Buna). The conquerors having subdued the indigenes imposed their rule on them and did so effectively through inter-marriage. It was during the reign of Kofi Sono Ambem that the indigenes were completely subdued. At the peak of its power, Gyaman was bounded on the north-east by Banda. Along its northern frontier was Kong. The Tano River near Abesim in the Brong-Ahafo Region marked its frontier with Asante. The indigenous people whom the Akwamu Aduana migrants subdued were put under provincial chiefs. The Anyi and Bouna chieftains were put under the Siengihene (the ruler of Siengi), Nasian, Buni and Barbo were put under the Gyamanhene himself. Nevertheless, these vassals enjoyed some amount of internal autonomy (Terray, 2006). Opoku Ware I ruled Asante from 1720 to 1750. He invaded Gyaman during the reign of Abo Kofi. According to local tradition, Opoku Ware I launched the attack because he feared that the unification of Banda and Takyiman under Gyaman would pose a threat to Asante expansionist policy. Opoku Ware I therefore decided to demolish Gyaman before it put those states under its control. Another reason for Opoku Ware's military campaign against Gyaman was economic. He wanted to have access to Gyaman's gold, ivory, kola and slaves.

Abo Kofi made for himself, a golden stool in defiance of the Asantehene's supremacy. The Golden Stool was a symbol of the greatness of the Asante nation. The Asantehene sent Kwasi Pede and Asiama to tell Abo to surrender the Stool but Abo refused and subsequently decapitated the messengers. This further provoked the Asantehene; consequently, he took arms against Gyaman. Evidence is available to show that, it was Opoku Ware's wife called Suku Abena from Sikassiko (Sampa) who revealed the news about Abo Kofi's golden stool to the king of Asante. Asante recruited its forces from all sections. Gyaman forces of Suma, Drobo, Pinango and Songore fought and pushed back the Asante (Ward, 1966). When the advance guard of Gyaman became short of arms, Abo Kofi dispatched reinforcements, under the Kwasindaahene (ruler of Kwasinda), yet the Asante army put up fierce resistance

and eventually Asante succeeded in inflicting a decisive defeat on Gyaman. Abo Kofi and a section of the army run to take advantage in Kong, but the Kong mistook the advance of the Gyaman army for an attack on their country. The Kong people therefore opened fire on the fleeing army of Gyaman as a matter of self defence. The pursuing Asante captured Abo Kofi and killed a large number of Gyaman soldiers. Gyaman oath "*Meka Kong*" (I swear by Kong) originated from the Abo Kofi War. Asante's victory in this war enabled it to exercise political control over Gyaman as a vassal state. Gyaman not only consented to paying annual tribute to the Asantehene, but also various chiefs of Asante extorted huge sums of gold from her (Interview with Nana Konadu III, 2006; Ofosu-Mensah, 2012). Another consequence of the Abo Kofi War was that it enabled Asante establish commercial links with Kong, Bouna and Banda to increase her trade in kola.

The fall of Gyaman to Asante as a vassal did not utter rules of succession in the former's politics. Kofi Sono Ambem (Ampem) succeeded Abo Kofi. Available evidence suggests that Opoku Ware I killed Abo Kofi and placed Kofi Sono who came from a rival family on the throne. He did that in the hope of interfering intermittently in the internal affairs of Gyaman to weaken its government. But the Gyaman people were quick to know Ware's presumption and soon arranged to take their chiefs alternatively from royal families so that Opoku Ware I's plans failed. Nyame tradition relates that Opoku Ware of Asante signed a ceasefire agreement with Gyaman. Under the terms of the agreement, a group of soldiers were stationed at a place near Dwenemu to act as a military espionage. When Atta Kwame, the commander of the army felt reluctant to carry out the mission, Kofi Sono Ambem (Ampem) pleaded with him in the words: "*Hwe Nyame (ndi) nti na tena ha* (look up to God and stay for this special state assignment). The settlement that Atta Kwame and his soldiers founded was therefore named Nyame. After the defeat of Gyaman in the Abo Kofi War (1746), Bantamahene (a divisional chief in the Asante capital of Kumase) was put in charge of Gyaman affairs. He collected tributes and suppressed revolts.

Kofi Sono Ambem, a royal from Dwenemu assumed the throne in 1746 and ruled till 1760. Under him, Gyaman continued to pay tribute to Asante. Kofi Sono was not only accredited for putting the aborigines under submission but also he defeated and put under his control, Western Gonja and Bouna. Kofi Agyeman Panyini (1760-90) succeeded Kofi Sono Ambem. When Osei Kwadwo became the King of Asante, he demanded arrears of tributes Gyaman refused to pay under Kofi Sono Ambem. This annoyed Agyeman who took arms with Asante. Gyaman allied with Wassa and defeated Asante twice. Asante reinforced its army and eventually inflicted a decisive defeat on Gyaman. Bene Kombi Kwadwo Kuma (1790-1800) succeeded Kofi Agyeman.

Bene Kombi saw that the solution to Gyaman's problem did not lie in continuous hostility with Asante. He therefore established friendly relations with Asante and took for allies Nkoranza and Banda.

Kwadwo Adingra or Adinkra (1800-1818) succeeded Bene Kombi Kwadwo Kuma. Adingra's ascension to the throne was a significant turning point in the history of Gyaman. It was during his reign that Gyaman was completely annexed to Asante till 1882 when it was declared a British protectorate. Initially, Adingra established friendly relations with Asante and joined its campaign against Kong and Bouna. Later, Adingra diverted his allegiance to Kong probably to secure Gyaman-Kong borders. Asante thought Adingra was trying to ally with Kong against it and so resumed hostilities with Gyaman. The immediate cause of Adingra and Asante military encounter was a conflict over a golden stool. Gyamanhene Kwadwo Adingra manufactured a golden stool which Asante took for defiance, for the golden stool was a symbol of Asante's supremacy. Adingra's golden stool was seen as a blatant disrespect for the authority of the Asantehene. The latter sent an emissary led by Kwame Butuakwa to ask Adingra to surrender the stool and he did. Adingra manufactured a second. This time, he did not only refuse to surrender the stool and pay a fine of 1000 ounces of gold but also killed the Asante messengers dispatched to seize the stool. This engendered a war between Gyaman and Asante. The latter recruited its forces from Akyem Kotoku, Akyem Bosome, Akwapim and from other tributary states. The first of the series of the encounters was fought on the Gyaman-Asante frontier along the banks of the Tano River. The greatest of the battles was fought along the banks of the Tain River. Initially, Asante was defeated. Sooner or later, it mastered reinforcements under Bantamahene Amankwaa Tia and the Juabenhene and in the end, Gyaman was defeated in 1818. The second part of the Gyaman state oath that utters "*Meka Tain*" ("I swear by the Tain River") originated from this battle that became known as the *Adinkra War of 1818*. The oath signified a bitter encounter the Gyaman army had in the war along the bank of the Tain River when the Gyaman army fleeing from the victorious forces of Asante fell into the Tain River and were drowned. Suma traditions state that an outbreak of small pox disease in the Gyaman army killed many soldiers (Interview with Nana Bosomtwe, 2006). Traditions relate that when Adingra saw that circumstances were grim, he called his wife and the rest of his Council of Chiefs, advised them to hide the Stool, while he himself committed suicide (ADM 3/2/2 PRAAD, Sunyani). Adingra's body was buried with those of the Gyaman soldiers to make it difficult to discover, but his son Appau was captured and under torture, he revealed his father's body to the Asante soldiers. Appau, when taken captive by the victorious forces of Asante was sent to the court of the Asantehene to teach craftsmen some artistic impressions. Ntonso tradition affirms that it was

from Appau that the Asante artists learnt the famous designs that became known as “Adinkra” named after King Kwadwo Adingra of Gyaman.

It is established that out of about 20,000 war prisoners, the Asante sold 10,000 as slaves to the European traders on the coast. Prominent among the captives was Sokoni Agyei who was taken captive by the Juabenhene. Boaten and Adamu, a Muslim chief were also taken captives by Opoku Frefre, the Gyasehene of Kumasi. The Adinkra War (1818-19) had far reaching consequences. It enabled Asante take strong measures against Kong, which throughout Gyaman-Asante relations had been hostile. Secondly, Gyaman had a great loss of its soldiers as a large number of its army died in the war. Asante also severely suffered the war as most of its army was killed while others sustained injuries. Even though the Adinkra War marked a period for effective annexation of Gyaman to Asante, the former continued in its rebellion activities till it regained its independence after the defeat of Asante by the British in the Sagrenti War of 1874.

Asante’s defeat in the Sagrenti War, which culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Fomena reduced it to pieces. Important states such as Mampong, Nsuta, Bekwai, Kokofu and Agona refused to obey the centre. All outlying provinces such as Kwahu, Sefwi, Banda and Gyaman asserted their independence (Ward, 1966). Gyaman’s sovereignty was enhanced in 1882 when it was declared a British Protectorate. When Gyaman was partitioned, French Gyaman gained full independence while British Gyaman by a colonial administrative arrangement remained in the Asante Confederacy till 1959.

Bonduku (Bondoukou)

Bonduku was an outstanding and historic town in the Gyaman state. It had already been established by the indigenes: the Gbin, Kulango and the Nafana before the arrival of the Akwamu migrants. The Mande Djula Muslims had settled in this town to trade in gold as well as in other commodities available in the area (Terray, 2006). They offered no resistance to the Akwamu migrants’ invasion probably because they wanted to back the “winning horse.” The invaders offered a stable government for Bonduku. Traders from Begho were attracted to the place on account of the prevalence of peace in the town. Tradition relates that King Abo Kofi having seen the value of the Mande Muslims as spiritualists, medicine men and literates in Arabic invited them to settle at Bonduku so that they would offer him spiritual protection and act as his secretaries and administrators. Kofi Sono Ambem followed Abo’s policy and invited more Muslims to settle at Bonduku. Gyaman people referred to the Muslims as *Kofi Sono Ngramofo* (Kofi Sono’s Muslims). He employed them in his court to offer him spiritual protection. Amanvi tradition relates that Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman (1850-99) prayed to his

ancestors to convert a considerable number of his subjects to Islam so that they would offer spiritual assistance to Gyaman especially in war time because it was expensive to engage the services of the Djula Muslims. The serene atmosphere in Bonduku sustained commerce. Available evidence suggests that by the end of the nineteenth century, Bonduku had become the most important commercial centre in the Gyaman state. The growth of Bonduku as a vital commercial centre was associated with Mande merchants from Begho. The significant point about the influx of the Mande Muslims was that their competent economic and industrial pursuits in Bonduku contributed largely to its growth and importance. Some of the Mande traders were goldsmiths and blacksmiths. The Mande and Djula traders were responsible for the predominance of Islamic influence in the area. Freeman observed that Bonduku housed both pagans and Moslems and there were Pagan and Muslim quarters. He estimated Bonduku’s population at 700-800 by 1882. Nana Adu Bibi II relates that Bonduku was not the political capital of Gyaman; it was a commercial and a principal town where the Gyamanhene and his Elders met to welcome foreign dignitaries and held important reunions.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on an eighteen month field work in the Gyaman traditional areas of both the West African neighbouring republics of Ghana and la Côte d’Ivoire. The authors in this study relied on orthodox historical methodology which combined the study and analysis of primary archival data and secondary sources. The authors also went on field trips or research tours of the key Gyaman towns on both sides of the border between Ghana and La Côte d’Ivoire in order to obtain vital first-hand information from the indigenous people (both from the royal families and the streets) through oral interviews. All interviews were audio recorded for transcription and analysis, for emphasis sake, each interviewee was interviewed five times to cross-check on consistency of account and validity. For archival sources, documents from the Public Records Archival and Administrative Department (PRAAD) in Sunyani were examined. These included documents and correspondence written by colonial officials, individuals and chiefs. Chiefs provided documents from their Palace Archives. Data gathered in La Côte d’Ivoire was mainly based on oral traditions through interviews.

POLITICAL ORGANISATION OF PRE-COLONIAL GYAMAN

The political structure of Gyaman was purely an Akan type and was hierarchically organised. At the top of the

state political hierarchy was the Gyamanhene and below him were the *Amanhene* (rulers of the various provinces), the *Adikrofo* (the village heads) and the *Abusua Mpanyinfo* (the lineage heads). The political structure provided for checks and balances that ensured effective administration. The *Omanhene* had a Council of Elders, which composed of all the village heads of his province. He was responsible to the commoners through the Council of Elders. The Council approved of the decisions of the *Omanhene* before they were implemented. The *Amanhene* (provincial chiefs) constituted the Council of Chiefs that acted as an advisory body to the Gyamanhene. He could not declare war without consultation and approval of the Council of Chiefs. They could impeach and destool him for major criminal offences such as autocracy, theft and adultery.

At the lineage level, the lineage head was the political head and was referred to as *Abusua Panyini*. He acted as a custodian of the lineage property such as land and was the spiritual leader who mediated between the members of the lineage, the family gods and the ancestral spirits. Gyaman people like other Akan groups believed that the spirits of the dead had control over the living. They could inflict harm on the living when offended and offer protection when propitiated (Interview with Nana Munufie, 2006). A cluster of lineages constituted a village. The village was organised under the *Odikro*. The *Odikro* had a Council of Elders who assisted him to administer the affairs of the village. He presided over the village government and adjudicated cases brought before him. The Gyaman state was divided into provinces (districts). Each province or *Omansin* was composed of several towns and villages and was ruled by the *Omanhene*. Provinces available in the Gyaman state included: Suma which occupied the *Nifa Province*. Kwasindaa and Gomere constituted the *Akyidom Province*. Gyeene, Songore and Drobo formed the *Adondene Province*. Kyeedo comprised the *Angobea (Ankobea)*, whereas Gyapekrom constituted the *Abakoma Province* and Kwasikuma was the *Gyaase*. The occupants of the Kofi Sono Ambem Stool were selected from the **Yaakase** and the **Zanzan** dynasties. The former was composed of Amanvi, Adandia and Tangamuru while the latter was made up of Tagban, Herebo, Diasemba, Dwenem, Amodi and Asuofiri. These states together constituted the *Ahenvie Province*. Pinango (Pinanko) constituted the *Bengum Province* (Interview with Nana Anane, 2006). This province is predominant in the *sousprefectures* (districts) of Asuofri (Assuefry), Kunfao (Kounfao), Tankese (Tankesse), Transua, Sandege (Sandegue), Nasia (Nassian) and Sorobango. Pinango is etymologically derived from two Akan words: *Pini* (push), *Nko* or *Ngo* (don't move). The group acquired this title from the effective resistance they put to Asante forces in the various battles. The Asante army could not push them back so they assumed a nickname *Pini Ngofo (Nkofo)*, literally, "the pushed but not moved people". This

was corrupted to *Pinango* or *Pinanko*. Towns and villages constituting a province were ruled by *Adikrofo* (Village Heads). The *Adikrofo* constituted a Council of Elders of the *Omanhene*.

As a head chief of a province, the *Omanhene* exercised the responsibility of an arbitrator and guardian of his provincial community. His authority rested on religious sanctions. The Gyaman people believed in the presence of the ancestors with the departed chiefs as the most important ones. The *Omanhene* (Provincial Chief) was the intermediary between the dead and the living in his provincial community. In his capacity as a chief, he officiated as a high priest at religious ceremonies such as the *Munufie Yam Festival*. The Gyaman people had several symbols representing political authority. For instance, the Stool of a chief was a political symbol that stood for the entire political community (Interview with Nana Gyampa, 2006). On the death of a chief, his stool was consecrated or blackened and kept with the stools of the past chiefs. The palace of the chief symbolised a political authority. It was built with an extensive courtyard for council meetings and adjudication of cases. One important feature of the palace was it had a raised platform called *Ese*. At a meeting with the Council of Elders, the chief sat on the *Ese*. He had a large number of personal attendants and office holders responsible for special functions in the court proceedings and on public occasions. Another symbol of political authority and identity was the elephant tail. When someone defied a political authority, he was summoned before the chief and the elders. In this case, the person (usually a linguist) who administered the summons carried along with him an elephant tail symbolising an emissary or an authority of a higher order. Gyaman people were members of the Aduana clan. The Aduana clan has a dog as its totem and a symbol of identity. The *Okyeame* (linguist) was an important person at the chief's house. He was the intermediary between the chief and the Council of Elders. At state meetings, an elder addressed the chief through the linguist saying:

"Nana Kyeame tie ma Nendo Nana Ne Nembayinvo se..."

Translation:

"Nana Kyeame (the linguist) tell His Majesty and the Council of Elders as follows..."

Local administration

Gyaman local authority comprised the *Odikro* and the *Omanhene* as well as their Council of Elders. The Elders on the Village Council were members of the most important matrilineages in the village. Election of an Elder to the Council was done by the males in the households comprising the lineage and had to be accepted by the

chief and other members of the Council. When elected and subsequently accepted by the chief, he took the oath of office. Apart from the Lineage Elders, the *Odikro* could also appoint people specially gifted with strong intellect and retentive memory or wealthy men as members of the Council. The *Odikro* and his Council of Elders administered the affairs of the village. They made laws and administered justice. It was their responsibility to see to the prevalence of peace and order. The Provincial Government was made up of the *Omanhene* and his Council of Elders, which was composed of chiefs of the various towns that formed the province.

The Provincial Council, the governing body of a province formulated and implemented policies but they conformed to the policies of the central government. The *Amanhene* had to inform the central government about developments in their provinces. It was incumbent on the government at this level to promote the welfare of its citizens. Though Gyaman was a centralised state, this aspect of decentralisation made the implementation of policies very effective (Interview with Nana Kontimaa, 2006). It also coordinated and harmonised the political structures. Appointments and dismissals of village chiefs were subject to the approval of the Paramount Chief of the province to which the village belonged.

A provincial chief could be impeached and dismissed by his Council of Elders. The impeached chief was tried at the court of the Gyamanhene, the highest court of the land. Nana Bene Yaw of Dwenem was tried and destooled in 1952 at the court of Gyamanhene, and Kwame Adingra at Dabilayo Amanvi in the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire for an attempted expansion of his state capital. He organised all the village heads under him and allocated plots to them for putting up houses at Dwenem, the traditional capital. His expansionist policy was meant to attract developmental attention of the colonial government to the traditional capital. His adversaries, led by Asembawuo, jealous of his popularity alleged that Yaw Bene's attitude was tantamount to defying the supremacy of the Gyamanhene and engineered his destoolment at the court of the Gyamanhene. If Yaw Bene had been allowed to carry out his plans, he would have worked to enhance the socio-economic development of Dwenemu.

Central administration

Gyaman central administration centred on the Gyamanhene who was the head of state and government. He was assisted by the *Abadwafo* (Council of Chiefs) composed of the *Amanhene* (provincial chiefs), the Queen Mother and some important Elders. The Gyamanhene took decisions in consultation with the *Abadwafo*, the Queen Mother and the Elders. He was the political head and Commander-in-Chief of the people's militia. He exercised judicial functions and his court was the highest court of appeal in the country. According to

available evidence, the Gyaman people did not build a state capital for fear of frequent invasions by the Asante. The hometown of the reigning king became a provisional political capital. Bene Kombi Panyini (1688-1720) and Tan Date I (1650-1654) ruled from Zanzan; Kofi Sono Ambem (1746-60), Kofi Fofie (1818-1830), Kwadwo Yeboah (1899) and Kofi Yeboah II chose Herebo as the seat of their governments. Bene Kombi Kuma (1790-1800) ruled from Nasian while Kwasi Yeboa I (1830-50) ruled from Tabagne. Kwame Tan Date II located the paramountcy at Diasemba. Adingra Panyini ruled from Yaakase and Adandia. Abo Kofi Abomre located the seat of his government at Asuofri (Table 1). Kofi Agyeman (1760-90) and Kwadwo Adingra Kuma (1801-1818) located the seat of their governments at Tangamuru. Kwaku Agyeman (1850-1899), Kwadwo Agyeman and Kwasi Adingra Agyeman located the paramountcy at Amanvi, while Kwaku Amagyina also established his government at Adandia (Calendrier Française, 1995). The central government was responsible for the welfare of all citizens of Gyaman. It met whenever the peace of the entire state was threatened. The government also met to consider the state's relations with other states. The *Amanhene* renewed their allegiance to the Gyamanhene's role by paying annual tribute during the *Munufie Festival*. It was by the Gyamanhene's role as the intermediary between the people and the ancestors that he became a central figure at an organised religious ceremony such as the *Munufie Festival*. It was a taboo to eat new yam except after the Gyamanhene had raised the curtain with the celebration of the *Munufie Festival*. The festival was celebrated in order beginning with the Gyamanhene, then the provincial chiefs and lastly with the village heads.

The Military

The army was an important arm of the state. The state had no standing army; consequently, every citizen mostly men, above the age of eighteen were automatically recruited into the army. The military was divided into different battle wings: *Adondene*, (the vanguard); *Nifa* (right wing); *Bengum*, (left wing); and *Akyidom* (rear guard). The people inherited this military arrangement from Akwamu and it was referred to as *military square mile formation*.

Political organisation was patterned along the line of this military arrangement. On the battle field the wings formed a line of uneven ring around the king and this made it difficult to capture him who was the most coveted prize in war. The *Twafo* and the *Pakanfo* were the ones who did the reconnoitring. The army used mostly guns as well as bows and arrows. Gyaman procured guns and gun-powder from the Europeans along the coast. Apart from the army, another wing of defence was the Gyamanhene's body guards. Freeman (1966) observed

Table 1. List of Gyaman kings from both royal gates.

Zanzan gate		Yaakase gate	
Name of king	Period of reign	Name of king	Period of reign
1. Tan Date I	--	2. Adingra Panyini	1654–1688
3. Bene Kombi Panyini	1688–1720	4. Abo Kofi (Abo Mmire)	1720–1746
5. Kofi Sono Ambem	1746–60	6. Kofi Agyeman	1760–90
7. Bene Kombi Kwadwo Kuma	1790–1800	8. Kwadwo Adingra Kuma	1801–1818
9. Kofi Fofie	1818–30	11. Kwaku Agyeman	1850–1889
10. Kwasi Yeboah I	1830–50	13. Kwaku Amagyina	1899–1905
12. Kwadwo Yeboah II	1889–1899	15. Kwadwo Agyeman	1922–1952
14. Kwame Tan Date II	1905–1922	16. Kwame Adingra	1952–64
17. Kofi Yeboah III	1964–1992	18. Kwasi Adingra Agyeman	1992 to date

that most of the Gyamanhene's body guards were Wangara Muslims, armed with bows, spears and guns (Freeman, 1966).

Election and destoolment of a Chief

A chief was elected from one particular lineage. Members of the royal lineage were not singled out for any special favour. When a Village Stool or a Provincial Stool fell vacant, the Elders forming the Village Council or the Provincial Council held a meeting over which the *Krondihene* (*Krontihene*) presided. At the meeting, the Elders selected from among themselves, two or more people to approach the Queen Mother and ask her to nominate a candidate for the Stool. The Queen Mother then held a meeting with all the adult men and women of the various branches of the royal lineage. They considered the eligible candidates in turn and chose the one they considered most suitable. When they decided on a candidate, the Queen Mother was sent to inform the *Krondihene*. The latter summoned a meeting of the Elders and told them of the Queen Mother's nominee. A day was fixed for the installation ceremony. An installed Village Chief swore the oath of allegiance to his Provincial Chief to legitimise his office while a Provincial Chief swore the oath of fealty to the Gyamanhene to earn legitimacy.

When a Village Chief was going to be elected and installed, the Elders and the commoners alike attended to witness the election and installation ceremonies on the appointed day (Interview with Nana Konadu, 2006). Some qualities required of an eligible candidate were *inter alia*, intelligence, manliness, physical fitness, humility, generosity and eloquence. The leader of the commoners was called the *Ngwangwaahene* (*Nkwankwaahene*). He was the leader of the youth. Though he had no official place on the Council of Elders, the *Ngwangwaahene* was recognised as the representative of the commoners. His position was of a political importance for it enabled the commoners to

criticise the government. On the day of election, the commoners sat behind the *Ngwangwaahene*. The Okyeame then told the gathering the name of the candidate the Queen Mother had elected. This was followed by a demonstration of approval or disapproval distinctly given by applause, hisses, laughter or silence. The elders would ask the commoners what they thought of it. They could approve or disapprove of it. If the candidate was not accepted, the Queen Mother was informed and the royals proceeded to nominate another. If after three nominations, the Queen Mother's candidate was still unacceptable, the lot fell on the Council of Elders to nominate a candidate. After a candidate had been elected and accepted, the men and women in the royal family met at the Queen Mother's house. They settled all disputes between the chief-to-be and any member of the royal family. Afterwards, the adult members of the royal family swore an oath of allegiance to the elected chief. A day was then appointed for the installation.

Generally, succession to a chiefly office was matrilineal. It alternated but ensured continuity of policy; however, succession to some specific provincial stools was patrilineal. These included: *Pinango* (*Pinanko*); *Angobea* (*Ankobea*); *Fumasua* and *Akyidom* stools (Interview with Nana Konadu, 2006).

Once a chief was installed, he assumed the status of a chief priest and a judge. Under the Gyaman constitution, it was the electors or the "Kingmakers" who had the right to dismiss a chief. The people expressed this in a maxim as follows: *Nea Osi Ohene na Otu Otu Ohene*. "The one who elects a chief destools him." Offences a chief committed that warranted his destoolment were: fighting, drunkenness and gambling. Others were autocracy and disrespect for his subjects. A chief could also be destooled if he disclosed the "servile" origin of his subjects. The Queen Mother first advised him. If he continued in the commission of such offences, the Council of Elders impeached him and at the same time constituted a court to try him. When found guilty, a sheep was slaughtered to signify his destoolment. The public was then informed of the destoolment. The *Krondihene*

was then asked to take over the administration of the state before a new chief was elected.

In the Gyaman country, the occupants of the Kofi Sono Ambem Stool were alternatively selected from the Yaakase and Zanzan royal dynasties. When the Kofi Sono Ambem Stool fell vacant, the *Abadwafo* that comprised all the *Amanhene*, some important Elders and the Paramount Queen met to find out the royal gate whose turn it was to provide a candidate for the stool. In the **Yaakase** dynasty, it was the responsibility of the Queen and the *Akyidomhene* to tell which one of the royal communities of Adandia, Tangamuru and Amanvi whose turn it was to offer a candidate. It was imperative on the *Akyidomhene* to keep the stool, the symbol of office of the Gyamanhene to prevent illegal occupation of it were a wrong candidate. In the **Zanzan** dynasty, according to our informants, the *Pinangohene*, the *Akyidomhene*, the Queen of Diasemba and the *Gyamanhemaa*, (the Paramount Queen of the Gyaman state) investigated and produced evidence in respect of which one of the royal communities of Herebo, Diasemba, Zanzan and Tagbane had to produce a candidate for the stool.

The proposed candidates were presented to the Gyamanhemaa to nominate which one of them was best suitable for the office. She then asked the *Akyidomhene* and the *Pinangohene* to summon a meeting of the *Abadwafo* that was composed of all the *Amanhene* and certain important Elders. The Elders were informed of the Queen's nominee. The Council thanked the Queen for giving them a candidate. Later, the *Amanhene* relayed the news to the *Adikrofo*. A day was then fixed for the installation rituals. It was a day in which everybody took a keen interest. The *Amanhene*, the *Adikrofo* and the *Ngwangwaahene* who represented the commoners alike met. The new King swore an oath of allegiance to those present to legitimise his office. Offences that called for the destoolment of the Gyamanhene included: drunkenness, adultery, fighting, stealing, autocracy and womanising. The Gyamanhemaa advised him first. If he became recalcitrant, the *Abadwafo* preferred impeachment charges against him and again constituted a court to try him. If he was guilty, a sheep was slaughtered, and his sandals removed to signify his destoolment.

JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

The judicial system was composed of the Gyamanhene's court, the *Omanhene's*, the *Odikro's* court and the *Abusua Panyini's* court. The Gyamanhene's court was the highest national court. It was presided over by the Gyamanhene himself and panelled by the provincial chiefs and other important Elders. It tried criminal cases and civil offences such as treason, murder, impeachment, refusal to pay back a loan, and violation of a taboo.

Sentences passed by the court ranged from death and banishment to fines. A provincial court was presided over by the *Omanhene* who was assisted by his Council of Elders, the Queen Mother and other important Elders. It tried criminal cases such as, murder, suicide, *mmonaa* (rape), witchcraft and assault as well as the swearing of an oath without good reason. The Gyaman people like other Akan people classified offences into two categories: those which concerned the central authority and those which did not concern the chief but were household offences. Offences which concerned the central authority was taboos or things hated by the state. State taboos were murder, suicide, sexual offences, assaults, stealing and invocation of a curse upon a chief; treason, cowardice and violation of a recognised taboo (Interview with Nana Kontimaa, 2006). Household cases included: theft, slander, failure, default in payment of loans, and disrespect for elders. Murder included homicide as well as sexual relations with a pregnant woman by another man or with a girl before she had reached the age of puberty. Suicide applied to the one who killed himself in order to avoid the consequence of his wrongful action or to the one who killed himself for an unknown motive. The one who committed suicide was tried, found guilty and decapitated. Sexual offences included: having an affair with a woman in her menstrual period, sexual connection with someone of the same blood (incest), sexual connection with a half sister or anyone with the same close paternal relation (incest); adultery, rape and sex in the bush. Words of abuse against a chief were tabooed. Adultery became a state offence when it involved a chief's wife. Stealing was a state offence if it was a theft of regalia or any stool property. Physical attack on a chief was a state offence. State or public offence was tried at the chief's court. Treason was a very serious offence especially on the part of an Elder who had sworn an oath of fealty to a chief or on the part of an army captain who before setting out to the battle field took the oath never to flee from the enemy (Interview with Nana Dongor, 2006). The penalty for these crimes was death.

The judicial system of Gyaman classified offences into private and public ones. Private offences were deemed to affect the relationship of persons living in the same community. Public offences affected the relationship between the community on one hand, the chief's ancestors and the state gods on another. Private offences were committed in two kinds of relationship. In an offence committed by one member of a lineage against a member of a different lineage or against a member of the same lineage, the injured party laid his/her complaint before any respected member of the lineage. If the offence was of a serious nature, he/she brought it before the head of the lineage. Pacification was claimed from the offender for the injured person who was expected to accept it not only as proof that the injury had been cancelled but also to serve as a sign that friendly relations had once again been restored between the

parties. Items for pacification were more often than not, eggs and a fowl. In most cases, when a person of one lineage committed an offence against another person of a different lineage, it was still regarded as a private injury. The members of the offender's lineage were to see to it that their kinsman/woman put the matter right. In the same way, the relatives of the injured person were expected to see to it that his/her damage had been repaired. It was therefore a collective responsibility of the offender's lineage and the injured person's lineage to see to it that the injured person had been compensated. The injured person submitted his/her complaint to the Elders of both lineages who met to settle the matter. They might decide to call other Elders to ensure impartial adjudication. The Elders decided who was in the wrong and asked him/her to pay compensation to the injured person. The offender was made to apologise. The injured person accepted the reparation through the Elders. The Elders who arbitrated accepted a gift of palm wine from the offender. They told him/her to offer drinks to signify that he/she was satisfied with the settlement. This was captured in the local parlance: "*tu nza gu so.*"

This also provided evidence that the matter had been settled. For an offence committed between parties of the same lineage or different lineages, the case could also be submitted to the chief's court. The injured person swearing the chief's oath in defiance of a claim or to maintain his/her innocence did this. Once the oath was sworn, the matter then came under a public or state taboo. It was no longer a matter involving two parties but became one that concerned the relationship between the community and the chief's ancestors. Public offences were offences that estranged or threatened to push away the ancestors or the gods from the community (Busia, 1968). Public offences were: murder, sexual offences which were tabooed, offences against the chief, swearing an oath in vain and offences against the supernatural powers. Murder and suicide were offences that required the hearing of the central authority. It was feared that the ghost of the murdered person might disturb the chief until judicial investigation had been held and blood exacted for blood. The chief was bound to try the murderer to prevent supernatural retaliation. Inadvertent murder such as a hunter shooting someone in the bush, mistaking him/her to be a beast was considered religious. The chief sacrificed on the ancestral stools to cleanse the sins of the murderer.

As regards suicide, the presumption was that, he/she had killed himself because he/she committed an offence which was tabooed and instead of waiting to be tried by the central authority, he/she had taken his life. The dead person was tried by the chief's court. If he/she was found guilty, the dead person's relatives accepted the guilt and the deceased was punished by decapitation. This was believed to put the community right with the ancestors. If someone had sex with a woman in the bush, both were said to have committed *Ndwaham*. The offenders were

asked to pay with a cow which was slaughtered at the very place the sexual act took place to avoid the calamity that would befall the entire community. Invoking a curse upon the chief, stealing stool property entrusted to his care were public offences believed to alienate the ancestors from the community. The trial of these was done at the chief's court. It began with a sacrifice for the ancestors who had been wronged. It was believed that failure to do so would deprive the community of the blessings and favour from the ancestors.

Our informants were unable to distinguish between an offence done against the chief personally and an offence against the stool and the ancestors. A story was told of a young man at Dwenem who walked with a friend to his father-in-law's house and reported divorce of his wife. Since the in-law was a chief, the young man's action was treated as a dishonour to the chief and was therefore made to stand trial for a public offence.

Land tenure system

Land, an essential property was communally owned. Land was vested in the chief, family or lineage head, who acted as a trustee, holding the land for the state or for the whole community. He was invested with the power to manage the land in the interest of the community as a whole. Under the trusteeship conception of land, every adult in the community was able to get a portion of the land to work on since livelihood in an agrarian community like Gyaman rested on land (Gyekye, 1996). In the Gyaman country, every individual by virtue of his/her membership of a particular lineage had access to land. Kinship ties ascertained the individual's claim to a specific piece of land. That meant one's claim to a specific stretch of land was determined by the fact that his/her ancestors occupied the land for hunting, farming or gathering purposes. Even though land was a communal property held in the interest of the state, a chief could allocate land to strangers but he did so in the interest of the family whose ancestral land he wanted to apportion. Rivers, mountains, trees and valleys marked boundaries in pre-colonial Gyaman society (Figure 1). Farming, hunting and collection were used to delimit boundaries. Borders of a traditional state, towns and villages were clearly delimited by the area within which its inhabitants farmed, gathered or hunted.

Treasury system (*Sanaa*)

Monetisation was not widespread in the traditional Gyaman society, for there was no wage-earning system. Public services were provided by communal labour. Women kept villages and towns clean. Each swept around her house. The chief's house was built and maintained periodically by his subjects and slaves.

**A MAP SHOWING PRE-COLONIAL (PRE-PARTITION) GYAMAN
(AT THE PEAK OF ITS PROWESS)**

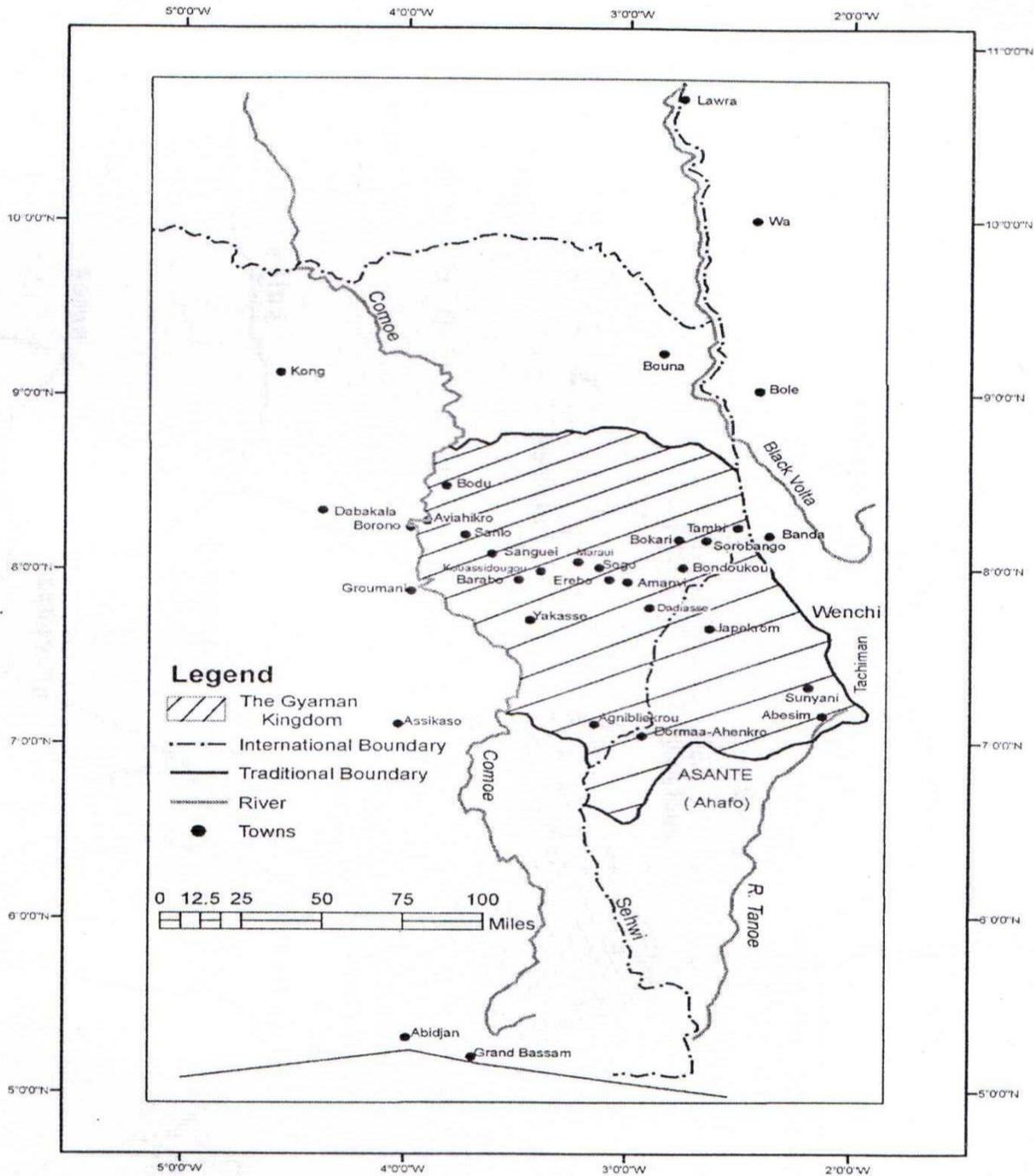


Figure 1. A map showing pre-colonial (Pre-Partition) Gyaman at the peak of its prowess.

The men provided labour to dig pit latrines a few yards from the village. The subjects of the chief made stool farms to feed his numerous servants, this was organised by communal labour, where on a particular date, all the people in an area under the chief's jurisdiction came

together to work (farm) on his plantation. However, the chief needed some money and a treasury system was evolved to meet his financial needs. The currency used in Gyaman was gold dust, which was weighed for the purpose of exchange. Bowdich (1819) states that Gyaman

people also used cowries as currency. The *Sanaahene*, (a minister of finance) managed the treasury of the chief. The treasury (*sanaa*) was replenished through taxation and trade called *Batadie*. The *Batafo* (traders) travelled long distances to transact business on behalf of the state. Other sources of revenue for the state treasury were fines. A person who had been guilty by a court paid to buy his freedom. Gifts and tributes also constituted sources of revenue for replenishing the state treasury.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

The pre-colonial economic life of the people was mainly agriculture which comprised farming and hunting. Farming included animal husbandry. Fertility of the soil enhanced farming activities. Farmers grew yam, plantain, maize, cassava and cocoyam. The Savannah region of the Gyaman state was noted for the production of assorted types of yams such as *Pona*, *Yaadeko* and *Asobayerɛ*. Maize and cassava also thrived well in the savannah areas. Vegetables grown in the Savannah areas were groundnuts and pepper while garden eggs, okra, tomatoes and pepper were grown in the Forest Belt. Water yam called *afaseɛ* and *gbaa* were grown in the forest areas. According to our informants, the Kulango and Nafana farmers paid tribute to the Gyamanhene with tubers of yam. In the savannah areas, animals such as cattle, sheep and goats were initially reared in large numbers; however, Samori's invasion of the area in 1896 led to a widespread destruction of animals. Hunting, which was usually done at night was an occupation mainly reserved for men. Hunting at night, *Anadwoha* was mostly done in the forest areas. The hunter went to the bush with a gun and hunting lamp. Another man who was well versed in night hunting accompanied him. The process of hunting with an escort was called *Ayaa*.

The escort searched to pick a shot animal, while the hunter hunted on. Snails were also picked during the night. Settlers on Atuna's land such as the Buobunu, the Komfokrom and the Abrikasu paid tribute to the *Atunahene* (the ruler of Atuna) in game and snails. (ADM 211/3 PRAAD, Sunyani). Some Gyaman people engaged in *fidisum* (setting of traps) to catch small animals like grasscutters and rats. Others engaged in fishing with baskets called *nsowa*. Streams were banked up to catch fishes.

According to our informants, another lucrative economic activity in Gyaman was rubber tapping. Rubber *powee* was tapped, coagulated and sold to the Europeans along the coast. Dwenem and Nyame were noted for rubber production. Tributes were paid to chiefs and landlords with rubber (ADM 1/2/11/3 PRAAD, Sunyani). Gold mining was another economic activity. Gold was picked along river banks. *Amena* (hole) was also dug through the earth to collect gold. It was a common practice to migrate from one place to another in

search of gold. Nana Kwasi Amoa moved from Mpuaso to the mouth of river Pru to search for gold. He founded a village there which he named Pruano, later to be called Gyapekrom. Kwame Abina, a native of Bomaa who had sojourned to the Pongohene sought permission from the Dwenemuhene to prospect for gold along the banks of the Pru River where he founded the Pruho state, later to be called Katakyliekrom. Gold was mined in large quantities at Soko and Adandia. Tradition relates that gold attracted merchants from Begho, Kong, Asante and Mande. Bowdich and Dupuis in 1817 and 1820 respectively heard of Gyaman's fame in gold. According to Dupuis, between 8,000 and 10,000 slaves washed gold on the bank of the Ba River that watered the southern part yielded 200 ounces of gold.

Handicraft industries were established. Skilled craftsmen such as goldsmiths, brass smiths and gold carvers worked in craft industries to manufacture golden bracelets, gold jewellery and rings. Artisans produced cloths, baskets and sacks. Cloth dyeing was also practiced. Gyaman rulers displayed handicrafts at festivals and during important ceremonies. There was iron works in the Numu villages. Degba women and Motiamo engaged in pottery.

The Hausa who settled at Bonduku were skilful in cloth dyeing. Cloth weaving was done by the Djula specialists (Terray, 2006). Soap making was another pre-colonial economic activity. Soap was made from sulphur called *Doo*. The technology in making this soap was simple. Debris of dried *Onyina* tree (iroko) was burnt, sulphur was then extracted from the ashes, mixed with water and boiled with palm oil to produce soap called *Doo Samina*. In British Gyaman, many people took to cocoa growing when it was introduced to the area. According to Nana Kye Nyame and Opanin Yaw Angama Dongo of Amanvoso, the introduction of cocoa led to the influx of migrant farmers from Korase, Amanvoso, Pongo, Dawiri, Suma, Old Drobo to the forest region of Dwenem, Bodaa, Nyame and Atuna to acquire land for cocoa cultivation. These migrant farmers founded the settlements which included: Kofuko, Abrikasu, Faaman, Komfokrom, Buohunu, Konsia, Adiokor, Dodosuo and Baano.

CONCLUSION

In this article, a coherent attempt has been made to discuss the early history and constitution of the Gyaman state. The Gyaman people migrated from Akwamu in the sixteenth century and lived in Suntreso, now a suburb of Kumasi as Dormaa people (Boahen, 1986). Protracted war with Asante caused them to move further to their present location where they carved the Gyaman state, under the leadership of Adu Bene. The Akwamu migrants subdued the indigenes, integrated them into Akan culture to form a culturally homogenous state with the occupant of the Kofi Sono Ambem Stool as the traditional head.

The Political organisation of pre-colonial Gyaman was a centralised one and power was hierarchically arranged. The state was ruled by the *Gyamanhene* whereas a province was controlled by a provincial chief called the *Omanhene*. The *Odikro* controlled the village while the *Abusuapanyin* administered the affairs of the lineage. In the traditional Gyaman society, the military and state were united and complementary; however, there was no standing army. Every male beyond the age of seventeen was an automatic member of the national army. The military was divided into battle wings to include: the *Adondene* (the vanguard); *Akyidom* (rear); *Bengum* (left wing). It was the duty of the military to ensure the security of the state.

The Gyamanhene was the commander-in-Chief of the army. Gyaman had a traditional judicial system that comprised four sets of courts namely: the Gyamanhene's court which was the national court, the provincial court, the village court and the lineage court. Offences were classified into private and public ones. The former severed the relationship between individual members of the community while the latter severed the relationship between the community and the ancestors.

Pre-colonial economic activities were basically subsistence food crop production, animal husbandry and hunting. Gold was also mined in large quantities especially at Adandia, and Soko (Interview with Nana Adingra, 2006). Iron working, soap making and fabric designing were among the duties of Gyaman industrialists in the pre-colonial period. However, with the introduction of cocoa in the second decade of the twentieth century, subsistence food crop production was done alongside cocoa growing. Cocoa cultivation led to an influx of migrant farmers from Old Drobo, Pongo, Dawiri, Suma and Amanvoso in the northern part of British Gyaman to the forest areas of Dwenemu, Atuna and Nyame in the south to acquire land for farming purposes. Intra migration to acquire land for cocoa cultivation led to the establishment of new communities to include: Kofuko, Faman, Gonasua, Komfokrom, Buobunu, Abrikasu, Konsia, Baano and Adikor as well as Dodosuo (Interview with Opanin Dongo, 2006). Thus, the introduction of cocoa changed the demographic pattern of British Gyaman with the forest areas registering higher population density than the savannah areas of the north. In French Gyaman, while cocoa and coffee productions were going on in the forest areas, cashew was also grown in the savannah belt. This occurrence discouraged dislocation of population and sustained pre-colonial population patterns. In the Gyaman society, land was communally owned, however, chiefs and family heads held the land in trust for the community. A chief was the political head and at the same time, the intermediary between the living and the ancestral spirits. His religious role was epitomised by the spiritual function he performed at the *Munufie* festival. The next paper in this series

of articles shall address how Gyaman underwent colonial domination.

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