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STRADDLING LAND AND SEA: A HISTORY OF THE EDINAFO’S INVOLVEMENT IN THE ATLANTIC COMMERCE, 1701-1872

BY

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To
The Splendour of GOD;
Family; Friends who became Family

&

The memory of Professor James Robert Kwesi Anquandah

(10th April, 1938 – 7th September, 2017)
“The sea and the land, being always neighbours, are continually at variance, and contending who shall give way; the sea with great violence attempting to subdue the land, and the land with equal obstinacy resolving to oppose.”

Kwamena Ansa
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, except for references to other people’s work which have been duly acknowledged, this work is a result of my own research work, done under supervision, and has neither in part or in whole been presented elsewhere for another degree.

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I bear sole responsibility for any errors yet remaining in this work.
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ABSTRACT

This study is a local history and will emphasise major indigenous socio-economic developments between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries of Dutch presence in Elmina. It will stress the nature of the Atlantic commercial interactions between Europeans and Africans on the Gold Coast and how the Edinafo intermediated and dominated these interactions. Elmina was drawn into a vibrant Atlantic Ocean trade in gold, European luxury goods, and slaves from the turn of the fifteenth century. Straddling land and sea, Elmina came under the economic and political sway of the Akan interior and the Atlantic world. Being a major part of this world where an Atlantic commercial enterprise was established, Elmina became important in shaping trade relations amongst European and African merchants.

This study will explore the agency of the Edinafo as a model of an African involvement in the Atlantic commerce, with a focus on how they influenced the Dutch Atlantic commercial interest on the Gold Coast. Thus, the study will emphasise the dynamic and complex Atlantic interactions on the Gold Coast and the intermediary role of the Edinafo which, to a far extent, influenced the Dutch West India Company (WIC). In Elmina, there were the “commercial agents” or makelaars (brokers), merchants, entrepreneurs, Dutch officials—particularly the Abrofomba (Euro-Africans)—as well as the Edinafo and their political hierarchy. Moreover, Elmina was involved in the politics of the Gold Coast since the early eighteenth century. This emanated from the rise of Asante who built a strong commercial and political relation with the Edinafo, much to the chagrin of the Fante states. Consequently, local interest in the commercial exchanges and its associated politics in Elmina became a bulwark against the Dutch commercial and political exploitation of the roles of the brokers, political officials, indigenous merchants, the

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Abrofomba Dutch officials, amongst others, in the commercial interaction. This culminated in the departure of the Dutch WIC from the Gold Coast in 1872.
GLOSSARY


*Aldea de duas partes* [Portuguese] — “the “Village of Two Parts”: Referring to both Eguado and Efutu, two polities that were significance to the emergence of Elmina.

*Anomansa* — “The water the never dries up.” The earliest ancestors of Elmina were believed to have come across water that could never dry up during their migration to the coast. Their earliest settlement on the coast was therefore called “Anomansa” as a result.

*Asafo(s)* — A para-military group or a distinct social quarter (or individuals that form that quarter).

*Ebusua* — matrilineage: Tracing descendants through maternal line. Akan matrilineage accommodates outsiders including slaves and the *Abrofomba*.

*Edinafo*: Referring to the citizens of Elmina. This was complex because of the multicultural nature of the Elmina society.

*Burgomaster* — Mayor: Usually an elected representative of the *Abrofomba* in Elmina.

*Caboceer* — Elder or locally appointed leaders and representatives.

*Krom*— Town.

*Makelaar* — Dutch broker: representative, envoy, delegate or commercial agent.

*Menya/benya* — “I have got”: Nana Kwaa Amankwa, the founder of Elmina, uttered “benya” when he discovered the Elmina coast and its riches. Because Kwaa Amankwa was of Brong ancestry, he said *benya* (rather than *menya* which is purely Akan) due to the usual use of *be* in communicating.
Ωhen/ Ωmanhen — Paramount chief.

*Paano* — Bread.

*Pão* [Portuguese] — Bread.

*Tapoeyer* — General term for the *Abrofomba*. Distinction can however be made between a *tapoeyer and a vriburger*.

*Vriburger* — A *Broniba* with the privilege of Dutch education and often employed as a Dutch official. The term is also used to identify a *Broniba* who has attained higher status in the Elmina society due to his/her influence in the Atlantic commerce.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Elmina (meaning ‘mine’, or ‘gold mine’) was so named by the Portuguese because of the quantities of gold they received by trading with the Blacks.

— Ludewig Ferdinand Rømer

All the Blacks, even though they may live 100 miles inland, know that at Elmina they can find any type of goods they desire, indeed, they can choose from among some hundred pieces of each kind.¹

— Ludewig Ferdinand Rømer

Introduction

Esi was a ten-year-old twin girl from a royal house in Elmina. One day, Esi went to the shores and before her was a confrontation between some Portuguese from the Elmina Castle and a Spanish merchant and his crew. Pedro Acunar was the captain of a Spanish boat carrying trade goods and six men.² He traded the merchandise at the shores of Elmina and went back to sea.³ Acunar’s presence attracted the displeasure of the Portuguese, they seized his boat, dragged it to shore and burnt it into ashes. Apart from Esi, a crowd of the natives were attracted to the scene. Appalled by the maltreatment of the poor trader and his crew, Esi pelted a stone at one of the Portuguese.⁴ Fuming with rage, the crowd followed suit by hurling stones at them. Sensing danger, the Portuguese abandoned the place to the relief of Acunar and his men. A few days after this incident, the Dutch took over the Elmina Castle in a brutal battle with the Portuguese.

³ In this study the people of Elmina (Ghana, West Africa) are referred to as the Edinafo and the territory is known as Elmina (alternatively, Edina).
⁴ Six years after the incident, Esi (1632-1692) left Elmina to live with Acuner’s family and adopted the name Isabelita Hermonia. See Ephson, 1-2. Also, see Adjaye, Joseph K., Elmina, ‘The Little Europe:’ European Impact and Cultural Resilience (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2018), 104.
The Portuguese fiercely defended their monopoly from the early sixteenth century on the Gold Coast by the same way they treated Acunar and his crew. They did this by capitalising on the location of forts at Axim, Shama, Elmina and Accra. This compelled the British, their fiercest rival, to limit their trade to British occupied areas on the Gold Coast; and the inhabitants were mostly afraid to trade with the British, lest they incur the wrath of the Portuguese. Esi’s affair, however, shows that at this point the Edinafo had lost confidence in the Portuguese. It should be emphasised that the Edinafo, or the Gold Coasters, had always defied European monopoly on the Gold Coast. They did this by trading with other European ships that anchored at the shores. Such confrontations became the norm rather than the exception during the Dutch commercial interactions with the people of Elmina. This thesis argues that the Edinafo dominated their Atlantic commercial relations with the Dutch from 1701 to 1872. This local African agency challenges the conventional historiography of scholars like Larry Yarak and Michel Doortmont, who portray the Atlantic commercial relations from a Eurocentric perspective.

The Atlantic commerce was a complex interaction between the countries that subtend the Atlantic Ocean (Africa, the Americas, Europe and Asia). The involvement of Africa’s West coast since the late fifteenth century resulted in the description of places that became known as the Gold Coast, Ivory Coast and the Slave Coast in the Atlantic historiography of the Guinea coast. Thus, these coasts became significant theatres for the Atlantic commercial interactions. On the Gold Coast, Elmina was involved in a vibrant Atlantic Ocean trade in gold, European luxury goods and slaves, from the turn of the fifteenth century. Straddling land and sea, Elmina came under the economic and political sway of the Akan interior and the Atlantic world. Being a

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5 Ephson, 2.
6 Atlantic world, as used here, is the interaction between Africans and the Europeans across the Gold Coast and formed a major theatre demonstrating the interdependence, interaction and the interconnectedness of the Atlantic
major part of this world where an Atlantic commercial enterprise was established, Elmina became important in shaping trade relations amongst European and Africans since the inhabitants were the intermediaries. For the Akan interior, Elmina was an important trade centre; for the European, Elmina was both a trade entrepôt and their political headquarters (i.e., Elmina Castle). This study will explore to what extent the inhabitants of Elmina were involved in the Atlantic commerce, and thereby give credence to Elmina as a formidable Atlantic enclave.7

Elmina's commercial position predates the fifteenth century trade with Europeans. Indeed, it was already a central point on the trans-Saharan trade route from Jenne to Timbuktu.8 This trade route followed the course of the Akan interior and became important for establishing a vibrant Atlantic economy. The main architect of this trade was the Wangara or the Mande-Dyula. The involvement of the Malian states, together with the coastal Fante or Akan interior states led to the emergence of names like Kara Mansa (essentially referring Kwamena Ansa) of Elmina. He was the earliest coastal ruler the Portuguese encountered in 1482. Thus, with the exchange of coastal commodities like salt, gold, slaves, etc., the people of Elmina were active participants. No wonder Fante traditions assert that they migrated from areas around Jenne and Timbuktu, commerce. In Elmina, apart from the mainstream economic interactions, the study also looks at political developments that explain the nature of European imperialism, particularly the Dutch and how the Africans responded. For details on how Elmina was culturally impacted by the Akan interior, see DeCorse, Christopher, An Archaeology of Elmina: Africans and Europeans on the Gold Coast, 1400-1900 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 175.

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7 Atlantic enclave may be used synonymously with the ‘Atlantic world.’ Only that the latter invokes the larger Atlantic society (i.e., including Africa, Europe, the Americas and Asia). However, the former may also refer to, as used in this case, a defined territory (within the larger Atlantic society). Thus, Atlantic enclave is a centre for a complex Atlantic commercial interaction. Elmina being an Atlantic enclave, the study will maintain that in Elmina there was a complex commercial and political interaction as a result of its intermediary role and the cosmopolitan nature of its society.

before passing through Takyiman in present-day Ghana. Although the people of Elmina recognise this origin parable, apparently the complex nature of the Atlantic commercial interactions had compelled informants to reject Fante consanguinity. Instead, they identify with their interior ally, Asante. The present study will allude to this development and explore, to what extent, Asante-Elmina alliance influenced the activities of the Edinafo as intermediaries in the Atlantic commerce.

In Thorkild Hansen’s *Cost of Slaves*, Irene Odotei emphatically states in the introduction that trade and politics coincided on the Gold Coast during the Atlantic exchanges. This was because the Atlantic commercial relations between Africans and Europeans resulted in a situation of interdependence which influenced economic, political, social and cultural systems on the Gold Coast. Odotei, therefore, maintains that “politics and commercial activities were virtually inseparable.” This was demonstrated in Kwame Daaku’s analysis of *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast* which concentrates on the nature of the British trade. Daaku’s study emphasises how the Gold Coasters dominated the commercial relations. The present study, thus, argues that whilst the people of Elmina dominated the Atlantic commerce, due to their intermediary role, they were also involved in the politics of the Gold Coast. The politics of trade was significant for understanding the nature of commercial relations. Thus, there was tension because of power struggle which mostly had economic objectives.

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12 Hansen, 12.

By the early eighteenth century there was a change in power across the Gold Coast. Asante conquered Denkyira in 1701. For Asante, they were interested in avoiding the Fante intermediaries. However, they found sympathy from the people of Elmina, who were always threatened by the Fante. This enhanced the long-established political and economic relationship between the Edinafo and Asante. By overthrowing Denkyira, a major power, Asante became the recipient of what was known as the kostgeld (‘monthly rent’ or ‘Elmina Note’—certifying the landlord—of the Elmina Castle). However, the Fante were also interested in Elmina. As a result, there were many attempts to bring Elmina under Fante control due to its economic significance on the coast. The Fante rivalry towards Elmina was also because of their alliance with Asante. These alliances demonstrate the complexities of trade and its associated politics on the Gold Coast. It also involved the Europeans traders and their chartered companies, especially the Dutch WIC and the British Royal African Company (RAC). Whilst the Fante found ally in the British, the Edinafo were closely associated with the Dutch.

Largely, the relationship between Elmina and the Dutch was symbiotic. Thus, both parties depended on each other during the Atlantic commercial interactions. The Dutch and the British were also fierce trade rivals but circumstances, such as the abolition of the slave trade (hereafter, European slave trade), in the nineteenth century ensured that they corresponded with each other. On the other hand, whilst Asante had been significant to the Dutch as trading partners, Asante was always involved in trade and political misunderstanding with the British. Therefore,}

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14 The ‘Elmina Note’ or kostgeld is discussed in detail in the historiography since its nature and significance was a matter of considerable debate amongst historian. Important to the debate was how it relates to the Asante-Elmina relation on one side and Asante-Dutch relation on the other side. These relations are important in appreciating the role the Edinafo played in the commercial interactions on the Gold Coast.
15 The close association of Elmina with the Dutch had inspired examination of the people of Elmina through the Dutch. Whilst this cannot be avoided, such perspectives have silenced the voices of the local people
16 The use of ‘European slave trade’ rather than ‘slave trade’ is to provide a better distinction from ‘indigenous slavery’ which was mostly practiced by the local people even during the European slave trade.
this study contends that these developments make it impossible to examine only elements of trade in the Atlantic commerce without associating them with the politics. This was because the heart of these tensions was to control the commercial interactions on the Gold Coast.

Elmina was a multi-ethnic society. There were people from different European and African cultural settings who were established there since Elmina was a sprawling commercial centre on the Gold Coast, as far as the Atlantic commerce was concerned. Thus, individuals migrated from parts of the Gold Coast and beyond in order to take advantage of the Atlantic commercial interactions. The migrants, together with the natives of Elmina formed a very active community of “inhabitants living under the [Elmina] Castle.” The agency of these inhabitants, and those in the immediate hinterland, significantly influenced the Atlantic commerce and the Dutch commercial interest on the Gold Coast. Harvey Feinberg argues that the emergence of the political elite in Elmina in the eighteenth century was largely due to the increase in population and the dynamic activities of the town. This thesis will test Feinberg’s claim by examining how this elite used their power and influence to shape the economic and political relations on the Gold Coast.

Apart from the Niger Bend trade routes that influenced Elmina society, the Portuguese from 1482 built on the existing commercial structures. Amongst the trade goods, including salt, beads, cloth etc., they also introduced people of Benin origin who became important to the economic interactions by serving as slaves. This study notes the significance of ‘indigenous slavery’ in Elmina during the period. These slaves became important members of the Elmina society. The Benin slaves the Portuguese introduced became collectively known as the

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17 Balme Library, University of Ghana: Furley Collections, The Gold Coast, 1731-1739. Extracts from the Journals, Correspondence with out-forts, Dispatches &c, of the Director-General of the Netherlands West India Company, 47-49.
18 Feinberg, “Africans and Europeans,” v.
Alatabanfo. An influential merchant, Brempong Kwa Mensah, also acquired many slaves who later formed into a diaspora in Elmina called the Mawurafo. There were also the Abrofomba (Euro-Africans).\textsuperscript{19} Some of the Abrofomba became Dutch officials whilst others were independent merchants (apart from the local merchants), or both. These new class and families became significance in the Atlantic commercial interactions.

By the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth centuries, there was an influential class in Elmina. There were brokers who represented the Dutch WIC and in their own capacity as merchants. Some of these merchants wielded political power, although not comparable to that held by the rulers of Elmina. The present study maintains that, whilst some of the brokers became so powerful, the Dutch government in Elmina was unable to exploit their agency adequately to push their political and economic interests on the Gold Coast. At the turn of the eighteenth century to the nineteenth century, the agency of these brokers was overshadowed by that of the Abrofomba. The Dutch sought to exploit the Abrofomba as economic and political brokers. Their emergence and significance—except for the uneducated who were employed as soldiers and servants at Dutch fortifications—was a policy since the early eighteenth century to educate them to serve the Dutch interest on the Gold Coast. Some of these Abrofomba and the indigenous people consequently leveraged on the economic opportunities and became the merchant princes; others became Dutch officials.\textsuperscript{20}

The Elmina local government involved the Ḷhen (or Ḷmanhen) and the elders, as well as prominent individuals who were members of the various quarters or asafos. The asafos were

\textsuperscript{19} Abrofomba (singular: Broniba) is literary translated as 'Euro-Africans.' These were a section of the Edinafo with European fathers.

\textsuperscript{20} The position of the Abrofomba became significant during the early nineteenth century as a result of the presence of few Dutchmen on the Gold Coast. Their small number was due to many factors. A major factor was the abolition of the European slave trade which made their presence on the Gold Coast unprofitable. This was because most of the Dutchmen were involved in the European slave trade.
local militia groups with distinct identities who performed various functions. The Dutch referred to the elders as *caboceers*. They also had their assistance. As Elmina’s population increased, the role of the rulers became clearly demarcated.

The Portuguese built *Castelo de São Jorge da Mina* (hereafter, Elmina Castle) in 1482, eleven years after their arrival on the Gold Coast. In 1637, the Dutch succeeded in taking over after a series of fierce fighting with the Portuguese. Thus, Elmina Castle became the Dutch headquarters on the Gold Coast from 1637 to 1872.\(^{21}\) The Castle served “as living quarters for permanent commercial and military staff (including the Director General and other Dutch officials). It was also used as “store-house for goods brought from Europe and bought on the coast.\(^{22}\) The Castle was the largest Dutch warehouse on the Gold Coast and Fort St. Jago (Fort Coenraadsburg) only served military purposes.\(^{23}\) During the European slave trade, the Palaver Room in the Elmina Castle was the centre for auctioning slaves brought by slave traders.\(^{24}\) The Castle also housed slaves bound for the New World. The Castle was the Dutch headquarters; it was also the head of the Dutch government.\(^{25}\) Close to the Castle was a population of inhabitants and immigrants who took advantage of the Atlantic commercial interactions. After the abolition of the European slave trade, the Elmina Castle was used to serve other purposes, apart from being seen as a representative of the Dutch government. From 1831, the Castle became a significant depot for the recruitment of Gold Coasters to serve as soldiers on behalf of the Dutch

\(^{21}\) Albert van Dantzig, James Anquandah and A. W. Lawrence have done some pioneering historical architectural works on forts and castles across the Guinea coast, although that of van Dantzig and Anquandah were limited to the Gold Coast. In these works, Elmina Castle and St. Jago (Fort Coenraadsburg) featured prominently. See Van Dantzig, Albert, *Forts and Castles of Ghana* (Accra: Sedco Enterprise, 1980); Anquandah, J. K., *Castles and Forts of Ghana* (Paris: Atalante, 1999) and Lawrence, A. W., *Trade Castles and Forts of West Africa* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963).

\(^{22}\) Van Dantzig, xii.

\(^{23}\) Fort Coenraadsburg was built in 1665 on top of St. Iago Hill. The Hill was a site for the Dutch fortification in 1637. The fort is also known as St. Jago. See van Dantzig, iii.

\(^{24}\) The Palaver Room was perhaps the most significant chamber in the Elmina Castle during the Dutch presence and was relevant for doing all kinds of commercial and political transactions.

\(^{25}\) ‘Dutch government’ and the ‘West India Company (WIC)’ will be used interchangeably in the study.
East India Company in Indonesia (Java). Moreover, in much of the nineteenth century, the Palaver Room in the Elmina Castle became the centre for discussing matters of economic and political importance between the Dutch officials and the Edinafo local government.

The Edinafo were active participants in the Atlantic commerce. The position of the Elmina Castle, which was a point of dispute between the Europeans (the Portuguese and the Dutch) and the Africans (especially between Asante and the Fante) was significant during the Atlantic commerce. Elmina became an Atlantic trade entrepôt and its inhabitants mediated the interactions. Most importantly, the people of Elmina responded to the dynamics of the commerce as entrepreneurs, merchants, trade agents and equal stakeholders. More so, some served as Dutch officials, especially the ‘groomed’ Abrofomba, who became significant in maintaining the Dutch imperial Atlantic commercial interest in Elmina, and the Gold Coast.26 Local dominance of the commercial and political interactions, however, especially in the nineteenth century, became a bulwark against the Dutch Atlantic trade in the Gold Coast. This necessitated their departure in 1872.

**Historiography**

Local African agency in the context of Atlantic history has evolved into a significant historiographical approach. It emerged as a critique of the Eurocentric analysis of the Atlantic commercial interactions. One of the critical pioneering works that projects this background is John Thornton’s *Africa for Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World 1400-1800*, published in

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26 The introduction of the word ‘imperialism’ suggests the overall Dutch colonial, although embryonic, possessions on the Gold Coast. It encompasses all the Dutch forts and the system of administering them. This study, therefore, will maintain that the overall Dutch imperialism on the Gold Coast was a failure due to the difficulty of penetrating indigenous socio-political and economic structures. This consequently led to their departure.
1998. Thornton’s study discusses a broad perspective of Africans as cultural agents in the New World. He argues that all trade in Africa during the Atlantic commerce was “voluntary” since the Europeans lacked the military might to compel Africans to take part in any trade their leaders resisted. Indeed, this provides a significant context for analysing Afro-European commercial relations on the Gold Coast. In 2001, Christopher DeCorse also published his *An Archaeology of Elmina: Africans and Europeans on the Gold Coast, 1400-1900.* DeCorse used oral, documentary and archaeological evidence to establish that cultural change in Elmina was driven from within. This was because the Akan culture provided the basis for such changes, although based on European material culture.

Africanist scholars, including Thornton and DeCorse, have employed the centrality of local African initiatives to explain the perspectives of European officials who were active participants in the Atlantic commercial interactions. Works including Pieter de Marees’ *Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea* (1602), Willem Bosman’s *Nauwkeurige Beschryving van de -Goud- Tand-en Slavekust* (*New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*), and Ludewig Ferdinand Rømer’s *A Reliable Account of the Coast of Guinea* (1760), recount such Eurocentric perspectives. For example, in Bosman’s *New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, Albert van Dantzig questions its authenticity in his article, “Willem Bosman’s “New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea”: How Accurate Is

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28 Thornton, 6.
29 Thornton, 7.
It?”32 For instance, Bosman was 16-years-old when he visited the Guinea coast in 1688 and consequently became the chief merchant in 1698.33 In 1701, he was deported for allegedly engaging in activities that were detrimental to the Dutch trade on the Gold Coast. As a result, Dantzig believes he must have written the book as “justification for his own actions.”34 Indeed, these writers were commercial adventurist and wrote not in the capacity as historians. Moreover, such studies mostly misrepresent African roles. The present study will, however, only make occasional references to such printed sources.

One of the pioneering works on African agency in the Atlantic commerce was done by Kwame Yeboah Daaku. In Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast 1600-1720: A Study of the African Reaction to European Trade, published in 1970, Daaku gives a broad appraisal of how the Gold Coasters reacted to the Atlantic commerce, particularly in the seventeenth century. Daaku’s monograph demonstrates the broad theatre of trade and politics covering most part of the Gold Coast. By highlighting the African roles, Daaku shows how the Atlantic commerce influenced political and socio-economic life on the Gold Coast. Thus, the Atlantic commerce provided the basis for the successive rise of great inland states like Denkyira, Akwamu and Asante. These states also encountered opposition from the coastal Fante states. Within this belligerent atmosphere of trade and politics, a new elite emerged to control the commercial interactions and subjected their authority on the Gold Coast. Exploring the roles of John Konny of Pokoso (Ahanta) and John Kabes of Komenda, Daaku emphasises how they dominated the

33 The chief merchant was the assistant of the Director General who is the overall leader of the Dutch possession of the Guinea coast.
34 Van Dantzig, 105.
commercial interactions whilst fanning a flame of dissent between the British and the Dutch. John Kabes, for instance, was an important Dutch merchant but later sided with the British against the former. Kabes encouraged the British to be established in Komenda, whilst ensuring that the Dutch do not have influence there. The confrontations between the Dutch and the British during the period resulted in the Dutch-Komenda war. Daaku’s timeline, however, did not consider major developments in the latter part of the eighteenth century and much of the nineteenth century. In addition, significant trade centres like Elmina and its inhabitants are not given thorough analysis. Also, Daaku explores development during the British trade and only makes occasional references to the Dutch trade.

Following Daaku’s study, Edward Reynolds published his *Trade and Economic Change on the Gold Coast 1807-1874* in 1974. Apparently, Reynolds’ work complements the shortfalls in Daaku’s timeline. Thus, his study concerns the abolition of the European slave trade and its transition to the production and sale of “legitimate” products. Reynolds’ study revisits an aspect of the Gold Coast economy which was long in gestation before being displaced by the sale of slaves (i.e. the institutionalisation and standardisation of gold, ivory, salt and later palm oil). Reynolds’ work is significant in that it examines a very critical period in the Atlantic commerce on the Gold Coast (i.e., the nineteenth century). Most importantly, his study explores the socio-cultural and political changes that emerged because of the “new commercial order” — thus, sale of non-slave commodities and the significance of the palm oil trade. He argues that the abolition of the European slave trade was significant since it brought about an economic

36 Daaku, 116.
37 Daaku, 115.
39 Reynolds, 9.
40 Reynolds, 3.
revolution in the ensuing years. There was also the emergence of African merchants, including James Bannerman, George Kuntu Blankson, Robert Johnson Gharney, Robert Hutchinson, Thomas Hughes and John Mensah Sarbah, who commanded commercial and political leadership during the period. The study projects class relations of these elite merchants to the others, although biographical data on these merchants are scanty. Also, the study was based on Gold Coast territories under British occupation. This influenced Reynolds’ use of British sources. However, although he doubted the authenticity of the British sources, he did not include oral sources. That notwithstanding, Reynolds’ study discusses the palm oil revolution and its associated British imperialism which was gaining ground during the nineteenth century. The present study will, therefore, fill the void by including the agency of the people of Elmina within the narrative. Unlike Daaku and Reynolds, Harvey Feinberg examines developments in much of the eighteenth century with focus on Elmina.

Harvey Feinberg establishes the nature of Elmina-Dutch relations in his study, *Africans and Europeans in West Africa: Elminans and Dutchmen on the Gold coast During the Eighteenth century*, published in 1989. According to him, this relation was formalised in September 1739 and again in May 1740. During these periods, prominent Elmina leaders (including the Ŭhen and caboeer Amba) conferred with their Dutch counterparts at the Elmina Castle. During the meetings, the leaders of Elmina stressed their mutual understanding with the Dutch. Feinberg

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41 Reynolds, 106-114.
43 Feinberg, 136.
44 *Caboer* refers to an elder or official. The word it is used in the Dutch records. Another word is *makelaar*. It also refers to Dutch ‘brokers’ or ‘middlesmen.’ The *makelaars* also mediated between the local people (and their government) and the Dutch government. The study will project the agency of such brokers in the eighteenth century. However, having had an increasing number of *Abrofomba*, with some able to communicate in Dutch, English and Fante, the *Abrofomba* became significant as Dutch *makelaars* and officials in the nineteenth century.
argues that the Dutch were an essential part of the Elmina society although the relationship was largely symbiotic. Feinberg’s study, indeed, emphasises how Africans reacted to Dutch imperialism on the Gold Coast. The case of Elmina is significant in that the Elmina Castle was the Dutch imperial headquarters since 1637. Thus, relations between the Dutch officials and the people of Elmina would influence the Dutch possessions on the Gold Coast. The present study places such developments within the context of the Atlantic commerce. Feinberg based his study on papers of the Dutch WIC which extensively supports his eighteenth-century account of Elmina. However, his timeline excludes development in the nineteenth century that, to a far extent, was a deviation from the peaceful coexistence of the Dutch and the Edinafo. Such Dutch-Elmina relations significantly influenced the Dutch imperial hold of Elmina and their possessions on the Gold Coast during the nineteenth century.

Although the people of Elmina enjoyed a relatively cordial relationship with the Dutch, Harvey Feinberg points out an exception in his article “An Incident in Elmina-Dutch Relations, The Gold Coast (Ghana), 1739-1740,” which he published in 1970. Feinberg argues that after a period of strong diplomatic and trade relations with the Dutch, the leaders of Elmina became “more independent.” However, the Dutch officials believed that the indigenous people were subject to them. This resulted in the turbulence and difficulty the Edinafo encountered with the Dutch from 1735 to 1740. The present study, therefore, examines subsequent clashes in the context of the Atlantic commerce and how they influenced Dutch imperialism on the Gold Coast. During the above crisis, there was a burgeoning Elmina-Dutch-Asante relation. Apparently, this tripartite relation was influenced by the ‘Elmina Note.’

46 Feinberg, 359.
47 Feinberg, 360.
Feinberg published another article in 1976 titled, “There was an Elmina Note, but…” The “Elmina Note” also known as *kostgeld*, according to Feinberg, was “a Dutch agreement to pay to the holder a set monthly amount of money” or its equivalent in trade goods. The existence and nature of the ‘Elmina Note’ was a matter of considerable debate amongst historian. Feinberg’s analysis on the existence of the ‘Elmina Note’ seeks to establish Asante-Dutch relation and its impact on Elmina. He establishes this by demonstrating the nature of Afro-European relations as one based on mutual understanding. This understanding was shown by offering gifts to the indigenous political hierarchies. The local leaders also gave gifts of various items including gold and palm wine to their European counterparts. This was done as a sign of goodwill with its inherent intention to attract trade or get a preferred position in the commercial interactions. However, the ‘Elmina Note,’ which was believed to be the monthly allowance paid to Asante appears to give Asante authority over Elmina due to their recognition as the landlords of the Elmina Castle. This debate is important since the present study makes reference to Asante-Elmina alliances in the Atlantic trade.

In the context of Asante-Dutch relations, Larry Yarak has done an extensive study. Like Feinberg, Yarak’s works are important for appreciating the reactions of the *Edinafo* to the trade and politics on the Gold Coast. In his article “The ‘Elmina Note:’ Myth and Reality in Asante-

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49 Feinberg, 618.
51 Institute of African Studies Library, University of Ghana: Journal of the Visit to Kumasi by W. Huydecoper 1816-1817. Translated by G. W. Irwin, 41-46 and from 87-89; see also Department of History library, University of Ghana: NBK 233, Register of Commissions issued by the Director-General. Letter of Information and Instruction for Sub-Merchant D. V. Nyendael. Translated by Albert van Dantzig. A sample of the letter is attached to the appendix.
Dutch Relations,” published in 1986, he discusses the nature of the ‘Elmina Note.’ According to Yarak, the ‘Elmina Note’ was a “pay document which authorised the Asantehene to collect two ounces of gold (or its equivalent in trade goods) per month from the Dutch authorities at Elmina.”

Yarak sought to fill the historiographical lacuna by resorting to Dutch, Danish and British documents. He maintains that the Dutch had long established the payment “of two ounces of gold” to the chief of Accra for the permission to build a lodge, Fort Crèvecoeur. This was later transferred to Akwamu, owing to their defeat of Accra in 1703 and to Akyem for defeating Akwamu and dominating the coastal towns in 1730. Hence, Asante’s defeat and subsequent control of the entire southeast Gold Coast from 1742 meant that the Dutch began to pay “kostgeld to the Asantehene in respect of their fort at Accra.”

However, it is unclear whether the payment was an “inducement for trade” or “rent payment.” Although he was able to establish the genealogy of the note, it is still unclear whether the note was a paper document or not. Also, whilst he defends that the ‘Accra Note’ was transferred to Elmina and became known as ‘Elmina Note,’ it is still difficult to ascertain Asante’s alleged claimant of the kostgeld as a paper note. However, the present study regards the kostgeld as an ‘inducement for trade’ and avoids relating the payment to Asante as landlords of Elmina.

54 Yarak, “The ‘Elmina Note’,” 366.
55 Yarak is also torn between the fact that the payment of monthly rent is dependent on Asante’s ability to maintain friendly trade relations or the payment is independent of trade. This deserves further clarity. Yarak himself acknowledges the difficulty of explanation in the available European records. See Yarak, “The ‘Elmina Note’,” 366.
56 He maintains that the note was long in existence and Asante was a beneficiary for over 120 years. Whilst payment was always done in Accra, there were changes during the reign of Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame (1804-1823) which brought about a movement of the payment to Elmina. Yarak further asserts that what had been the pay note in Accra became known as the ‘Elmina Note’.
Larry Yarak has made an analysis of this development by exploring the impact of Asante imperialism in a critical article titled, “Elmina and Greater Asante in the Nineteenth Century.” He debunks the theoretical analysis espoused by scholars like K. Arhin, Ivor Wilks and John K. Fynn on the ‘structure’ of Greater Asante. For instance, Arhin maintains that Asante expansion was largely based on political factors; and that it was deliberately ‘designed’ to encompass “those peoples with whom Asante enjoyed a large degree of cultural homogeneity.” Arhin’s analysis stems from those of W. E. F. Ward and others who based their arguments solely on economic reasons as well as trade. Yarak, therefore, argues that attempts to pigeonhole the nature of Asante ‘empire’ is problematic.

In Elmina alone, for instance, the interplay of trade and politics in the nineteenth century created a “complex web” of interactions between the various indigenous groups and the expatriate groups. Hence, “material as well as strategic and even ideological issues were involved.” Yarak based his analysis on sources that document the perspectives of the two states on their relationship. For instance, the Asantehene variously retorted that the people of Elmina were their ‘slaves and subjects’; they ‘belonged’ to him and ‘served’ him. The Asantehene also referred to Elmina as his ‘friends.’ The people of Elmina also defended that Asante was their ‘protector’ and were ever prepared to defend Asante interest. For example, in Willem Huydecoper’s visit to Kumasi, from 28th April, 1816 to 18th May, 1817, some inhabitants of Elmina visited Kumasi to

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59 Arhin, “The Structure of Greater Ashanti,” 66; See also Yarak, “Elmina and Greater Asante,” 36.
60 Yarak, “Elmina and Greater Asante,” 38.
61 Yarak, 35.
62 Yarak, 38.
call on the Asantehene’s assistance against war threats by the people of Wassa.\textsuperscript{63} Yarak, therefore, maintains that the distortions in articulation were based on Elmina’s “willing submission” to Asante authority rather than through conquest. Indeed, the nature of Asante imperialism on the Gold Coast significantly influenced the people of Elmina. This was because the merchants of Elmina defied all odds by serving as suppliers of firearms and gunpowder, amongst other merchandise, to Asante. Peculiar to Yarak’s analysis is that he did not consider the agency of the \textit{Edinafo} whilst situating their role within the limit of Dutch interest on the Gold Coast.

Furthermore, Yarak has studied the administrative structure of Asante in his monograph \textit{Asante and the Dutch, 1744-1873}, published in 1990.\textsuperscript{64} The study essentially examines Asante’s relationship with the Dutch officials at Elmina and the people of Elmina. Again, Yarak based his research on Dutch archival documents for his analysis with limited oral accounts. Also, his analysis highlights activities from the perspective of Asante rather than Elmina. For instance, the first part of his study explores the residency of an Asante court official Debo\textsuperscript{s}ohene Kwadwo Akyampon in Elmina from 1822 to 1832. Yarak studies the role of the Asante commissioner and how he interacted with Dutch officials and the people of Elmina. This is also significant since it emphasises the long-established political and commercial relations between Asante and Elmina.

Yarak’s study of Asante-Elmina relations complements Renè Baesjou’s work, \textit{An Asante Embassy on the Gold Coast: The Mission of Akyeampon Yaw to Elmina 1869-1872}, which was published in 1979.\textsuperscript{65} Baesjou’s study is set in an important timeline in which decisive decisions

\textsuperscript{63} Institute of African Studies Library, University of Ghana: Journal of the Visit to Kumasi by W. Huydecoper 1816-1817, 23 and 32.


were made by the Dutch concerning their departure from the Gold Coast. Within this decisive moment, Baesjou documents how the Africans responded to the Dutch’s intended departure. For instance, the exchange of forts between the Dutch and the English in 1869 heightened tension between the *Edinafo* and the Fante. Significantly, Baesjou’s study emphasises the role of Asante in the disturbances of the period which culminated in the departure of the Dutch. These developments are significant in that the present study complements the discussions by including Elmina and the *Edinafo* in the narrative.

In “West African Coastal Slavery in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Afro-European Slave owners of Elmina,” published in 1989, Larry Yarak conducts an extensive research on the slaveholding activities of the *Abrofomba*. This involved how the *Abrofomba* exploited and related with their slaves in the nineteenth century.\(^66\) Yarak refers to a number of prominent *Abrofomba* including Carel Ruhle, C. H. Bartels, Jan Nieser, Jacob Ruhle, Jacob van Dijk, Jacob Simons and Jacob Huydecoper. These *Abrofomba* commanded some number of slaves and other estates, even though some left no account of slaveholding after their death.\(^67\) These slaves played several roles after the abolition of European slave trade and the institution of a plantation economy in which the *Abrofomba* presided. It is worth noting that the agency of these *Abrofomba* in the retarded plantation economy of the Gold Coast did not make any significant impact to the Dutch commercial exploit, unlike in the East Indies. Moreover, Yarak’s study does not address the nature of the *Abrofomba’s* interactions during the Atlantic commerce. The present study takes note of the institution of ‘indigenous slavery’ on the Gold Coast.

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\(^{67}\) Yarak, 48-50.
Akosua Adoma Perbi has studied the institution of ‘indigenous slavery’ extensively in her *Indigenous Slavery in Ghana from the 15th to the 19th century*, published in 2004.68 Her examination, going back to the fifteenth century, emphasises that slaves were an essential part of the social, cultural, economic and political structures of the Gold Coast. Particularly for Elmina, indigenous slaves played significant roles in complementing the works of the intermediaries in the Atlantic commercial interactions. They helped to transport merchandise from one place to another and worked in the service of the WIC. The services of slaves were also exploited in farms and during other economic activities such as fishing. The Portuguese merchants who visited Elmina earlier, recognising the significance of ‘indigenous slaves’ introduced Benin ‘captives’ into Elmina as slaves. Perbi employs a blend of oral accounts and documentary sources to demonstrate the exploitation of slaves in the socio-economic processes. Perbi argues that there was a vast difference between slaves on the Gold Coast and elsewhere, because their state of “servitude” was characterised by “rights.” Also, the slaves were prominent during the Atlantic transactions on the Gold Coast.69 It could be established that both the WIC officials and their *Abrofomba* brokers were unable to exploit the services of ‘indigenous slaves’ for their plantation farms unlike the situation in Dutch territories in the East Indies. This necessitated the channelling of resources to protect Dutch possessions in the East Indies during the nineteenth century. Thus, the *Edinafo* and other Gold Coasters became significant for that expedition since 1831.

In addition, the position and role of the *Abrofomba* has provoked critical studies amongst some historian. Dutch records describe this ‘class’ of people as *tapoeyers* or *vrijburgers* and other

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69 Perbi, 3.
documents refer to them as ‘Afro-Europeans,’ ‘Mulattoes’ or ‘Euro-Africans’.70 J. T. Lever’s “Mulatto Influence on the Gold Coast in the Early Nineteenth Century: Jan Nieser of Elmina” examines the life of Jan Nieser. Referred to as Broniba (pl. Brofomba) in the local Fante language, Jan and other Euro-Africans had immense privileges by virtue of their European patrilineage. They were sent to school and groomed to participate in the Atlantic commerce, and thereby perpetuate Dutch influence locally and in other Dutch territories. Becoming a private trader and wealthy, Nieser’s privileged status enhanced his identity in Elmina. This brought him respect and recognition amongst the Dutch and the indigenous people. For instance, in the early nineteenth century, Nieser used his influence to supply ammunition to Asante and the Edinafo against the Fante. He was also able to appeal to the Dutch on behalf of Elmina to join the war. Thus, such multiracial citizens (or Abrofomba) of Elmina were a significant part of the Elmina society.

Natalie Everts therefore cautions that care must be taken when establishing the relationship between the Abrofomba and the indigenous people in Elmina. Although acknowledging that a class distinction may be made, Everts admits that there were closer ties with their African parentage, just like the way slaves were absorbed into the ebusua (matrilineage). This was because the matrilineal structures made room for their incorporation as compared to “some intercultural Atlantic Communities of the Upper Guinea stretch of coastline.”71 These studies are

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70 The debate has been whether these Euro-Africans (Abrofomba) were distinct group of people or they were absorbed into the indigenous culture. ‘Class’ as used herein is to distinguish them from the purely indigenous people. This study, however, considers them as part of Elmina inhabitants. Larry Yarak distinguishes between the position of tapoeyers and vrijburger in society. Superficially, tapoeyers refer to the identity of people with both African and European descent. Meanwhile, a critical distinction made by Yarak is based on their knowledge of jurisprudence, status in society and amount of wealth they possessed. As a result, the vrijburgers were of higher status since they possessed wealth and had the knowledge of European law because of higher education. See Yarak, “Elmina and Greater Asante in the Nineteenth Century,” 34.

significant in understanding the socio-cultural relations during the Atlantic interaction in Elmina. In Elmina, the *Abroomba* became an important group of individuals. This was because most of them served as Dutch officials since there were only a few Dutchmen on the Gold Coast, and some were independent merchants, like Jan Nieser.\(^{72}\) It should also be emphasised that the Dutch government had sought to exploit their agency as political and commercial brokers. However, such close ties with their African mothers made them develop their own political and economic interest. However, scholars like Michel Doortmont still situate the significance of the *Abroomba* within the context of their Dutch fathers.

Michel Doortmont made this critical analysis in his study, “The Dutch Atlantic Slave Trade as Family Business: The Case of the van der Noot de Gietere-van Bakergem Family,” which was published in 2007.\(^{73}\) Doortmont’s study emphasises the changing nature of the Dutch trade by the 1730s. During the period, the Dutch WIC recognised private trade. Significantly, the study examines the involvement of the *Abroomba* merchants in the European slave trade. Doortmont explores the Van der Noot de Gieter family of the Netherlands and their African descendants known as the Van Bakergem. Doortmont and emphasises a strong connection with the Dutch ancestors which significantly shaped the family ties of the Van Bakergem. Thus, he examines developments through the perspectives of the Dutchmen. Although, Doortmont’s study projects the Dutch influence on the Gold Coast, his examination does not emphasise the position of local African agency but the European influence.

African Agency in the history of the Atlantic commerce has become a significant perspective for examining the role of Africans in the Atlantic commercial interactions. Indeed, such analyses

\(^{72}\) Levers, 254.

have demonstrated the contribution of indigenous Africans and the Abrofomba, especially to the Dutch commercial interest. Particularly for Elmina, the complex nature of its inhabitants, with many of them being migrants, adds to the intricate nature in which they were involved in the Atlantic commerce. The African role was significant since they dominated the Atlantic commercial interactions. This study continues the discussion on Afro-European relation in the Atlantic commerce. It emphasises the specific roles of the inhabitants of Elmina and how these roles, to a far extent, influenced the Dutch commercial and imperial enterprise on the Gold Coast.

Relevance of the Study

In “Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities”, Alison Games believes that Atlantic historians are grappling with the challenge of restoring Africa to the Atlantic world. This is because historians in the field have continuously accentuated the history of Americans and Europeans. However, John Thornton’s Africa for Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World challenged the status quo by making Africans central in the Atlantic history, and as cultural agents. This study pursues Atlantic history as an interaction between Africans and Europeans rather than projecting Africa as a place “associated with slavery and slave trade.”

This study is a local history within the context of economic history and will emphasis major indigenous socio-economic developments between the eighteenth and the latter part of the nineteenth century of Dutch presence in Elmina. It will emphasise the Atlantic commercial interactions between Europeans and Africans and how the Edinafo intermediated and controlled

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these interactions. This is because local African agency in the context of the Atlantic commerce in Elmina had been largely omitted in the literature.

Significantly too, the study will reconstruct the involvement of the Edinafo in the Atlantic commerce as intermediaries. Thus, the study will establish the role of “commercial brokers,” merchants, the political hierarchy and the inhabitants of Elmina as agents in the Atlantic commerce. It will demonstrate how they took advantage of the opportunities and challenges of the Atlantic commercial interactions and how their roles influenced the Dutch imperial interest on the Gold Coast. It will achieve this by giving centrality to the Edinafo in safeguarding the trade.

The study will also contribute to the historiography of the nature of pre-colonial economy of the Gold Coast. Especially, it will highlight developments (both political and economic) which led to the establishment of British colonial rule over the Gold Coast. Thus, the study highlights activities of Dutch Gold Coast (observed through the agency of the Edinafo) and how it impacted the Dutch interest.

**Methodology**

This is a wholly qualitative research. The study will make use of primary and secondary sources. The main archival sources to be consulted are the Public Records and Archives Administration (hereafter PRAAD), Accra. It contains correspondences from Elmina, files of the Secretary for Native Affairs (SNA) or Elmina Native Affairs in ADM 11/1/1111. The documents were transcripts of a meeting held in Elmina in connection with a Commission appointed by the Colonial Governor on 31st March, 1914. The Commission was tasked to inquire into a
disagreement between the Ōmanhen and the asafos. The asafos involved in the dispute were the Wombir (Number 4) and Nyampa (Number 7) companies. In this enquiry, some inhabitants of Elmina recounted their history. The history was connected to the formation of the various quarters or asafos, particularly the Akrampa, or the Abrofomba quarters who were significant during the Dutch Atlantic exploits. This transcript provides a rich insight into Elmina’s past.

Additionally, the study will make use of primary documents (both published and unpublished) compiled by the indefatigable Albert van Dantzig, with some translated by himself from Dutch to English. The first document in this category is titled, ‘Dutch Documents Relating to the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast (Coast of Guinea) 1630-1740.’ It contains translations of letters and papers collected in the Algemeen Rijks Archief (ARA), State Archives of The Netherlands at The Hague. The letters included correspondences between the Dutch WIC in the Gold Coast and their owners in the Netherland. There were also correspondences between the English and the Dutch on the Gold Coast. However, most of the translations are in abridged form. These translations will provide relevant information on the way some inhabitants of Elmina responded to the challenges and opportunities of the Atlantic commerce. Thus, it will be significant for establishing the position of the Dutch brokers (makelaars) in Elmina and across the Gold Coast. Another significant document compiled by van Dantzig is the ‘Selected Documents on Elmina and its Neighbours from 1836-1876.’ It contains letters, correspondences, summary of trade and

75 In connection with the disagreement on 31st December, some members of the Aborigines’ Rights Protection Society came to Elmina to settle the dispute between the chief and the various quarters or the asafos. According to the findings of the Society, the Ōmanhen was guilty of seven charges. Amongst the charges was that the “ōmanhene and his Councillors received the sum of £ 48 as canoe tolls and have appropriated it to their own use and not divided it amongst the companies according to custom.” The incident, although resolved by previous enquiries (by the Aborigines Society), the chief refused to accept the charges. This necessitated the significance of the Commission to investigate the matter. This is interesting since it appears the Abrofomba, or their descendants, became a strong political force during Ghana’s colonial period in Elmina. This was a sharp contrast to their role as Dutch brokers in the Atlantic commerce and the difficulty of penetrating the local political structures. This needs further examination to establish its connection, or otherwise, to the chieftaincy dispute in the ensuing decades in Elmina. See PRAAD (Accra): ADM 11/1/1111, Elmina Native Affairs.
commercial activities as well as political intervention within the purview of the British and Dutch commercial enterprises on the Gold Coast. This compilation will also be important since it emphasises major developments in the nineteenth century.

Apart from the van Dantzig’s ‘Selected Documents on Elmina and his Neighbours,’ he translated a letter from ‘NBKG 233, Register of Commissions & C. Issued by the Director-General’. It was a Letter of Information and Instruction for Sub-Merchant D. V. Nyendrael. The letter gave specific instructions on his voyage to the interior after Asante’s conquest of Denkyira in 1701. The intention of the letter was to help attract Asante merchants to Elmina. This is also significant since it will project the nature of Dutch trade across the Gold Coast.

Also, the study will make use of compiled Dutch documents known as ‘E. F. C. NoteBook Pages’ from the Department of History, University of Ghana. It contained correspondences and letters in the eighteenth century. This document will also be helpful in describing the socio-economic and political developments in Elmina during the eighteenth century. This document will be used together with ‘Oral Tradition of Fante States’ (an improperly labelled and uncatalogued documents collected and bound by the Technical Services Unit of the Balme Library, University of Ghana) from the institute of African Studies.76 The documents, however, contain papers from Furley documents labelled ‘Furley Du. D & C Box 1815- 1823 No. 3.’ They also contain letters and correspondences between the British and the Dutch forts on the Guinea coast (Gold Coast). It covered the early years of the nineteenth century. This period was a very significant one since it contains developments concerning the abolition of the European slave

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76 The label of the Documents as ‘Oral Traditions of Fante States’ put them in the same category as oral accounts collected by John Fynn on the Fante states. Fynn’s oral accounts were also variously labelled as ‘Oral Traditions of Fante States.’ However, the former is translated written Dutch and British documents. Details are given above. Hence, I have added the caption: ‘Improperly labeled Documents’ to distinguish them from Fynn’s oral documents on Fante States. This is because Fynn’s oral documents were also employed in the present study.
trade and the challenges in ensuring the British extend the abolition to the Dutch territories. Most importantly, it provides insights on how the people of Elmina responded to these developments. A critical example is how the people of Elmina interacted with Europeans during the canoe trade which brought about tension between the British and the Dutch concerning the revival of the slave trade.

Moreover, Balme Library’s collection of Institutional Repositories under Furley Collections will also be employed. The study will use Furley Collections from 1610-1664. There was also Furley Collections from 1731 to 1739. Both Furley documents contain extracts from Dutch journals, correspondence with the Dutch forts, dispatches of the Director General of the Netherlands West India Company (WIC). These documents will be significant in emphasising local agency in the Atlantic commercial interaction. Particularly, they will establish the dynamics of the position of the broker and other individuals.

Furthermore, the study will employ the ‘Journal of the Visit to Kumasi by W. Huydecoper 1816-1817, translated by G. W. Irwin.’ The document can be found at the Department of History and Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana. Huydecoper travelled into the interior from 28th April, 1816 to 18th May, 1817. The document will be significant because it explains developments in Kumasi in the early nineteenth century in relation to Elmina.

Lastly, oral traditions will be analysed in this study. This will give us greater insights into Elmina’s earliest social and economic organisations and the evolution of what became Elmina. John Fynn has painstakingly gathered oral accounts concerning the history of the Fante States transcribed since 1974. These documents can be found in the African Studies Library, University of Ghana. Since the written documents are mostly of Dutch origin, these oral accounts will be used to fill the gaps and also ascertain how oral accounts corroborate European statements in the
written documents. This will be a rich blend to enhance the position of local agency. In view of this, I will also conduct personal oral interviews from informants in Elmina.

**Limitations of the evidence**

Almost all the sources that I consulted had their specific challenges. The creators of European accounts were obviously expatriates whose reports were first, shaped by certain interests and second, with little or no practical understanding of Elmina society and culture. More so, they employed brokers and interpreters (both indigenous and Euro-Africans) who described events to suit their own interest. Corollary, these limitations skewed the scope and reliability of aspects of such written evidence, despite their overall relevance to my thesis. However, by reading these European trade journals and dispatches, produced documents and oral testimonies, I was able to transcend some of these limitations by cross-verifying the extent of reliability.

In addition, the use of oral evidence I collected, reflects my intention to balance the dominant European perspectives (represented usually in written sources) by including indigenous voices. However, this approach was sometimes limited by factual inconsistencies and “invented traditions” or “feedbacks” from previously formalised oral traditions. Furthermore, the limited amount of written primary sources relating to the activities of the inhabitants of Elmina informed my reliance on oral evidence. However, considering the sensitive nature of ‘Indigenous slavery’, I was less successful in finding many willing informants to give oral testimonies even based on anonymity. This was because majority of the current inhabitants belonged to slave ancestries. Hence, these individuals prefer to be rather quiet about their history than disclose their identity. Meanwhile, the moment one wants to engage them on the Atlantic commerce, the assumption is that it concerns the slave trade. However, this study had sought to avoid concentration on the European slave trade, although some passing discussions have been made on it. Indeed,
concerning the timeline, it cannot be avoided. In that context, the study examines the agency of Brempong Kwa Mensah.

Another challenge regarding the collection of oral accounts involved the identification of such Elmina families. Elmina was a multi-ethnic society and identifying a family without a complex family tree was a major challenge. This is because majority of the Elmina families can trace their ancestry to other societies. Another aspect of this challenge was the extent of migration in Elmina itself. This was because the politics of trade ensured that people moved away from their established homes in Elmina to places like Cape Coast and other surrounding polities; it was also due to the vagaries of the Atlantic commerce. Moreover, it is difficult to conclude that the ancestors of contemporary inhabitants of Elmina had acquired, mostly, Dutch names due to marriage. Apparently a majority of the inhabitants adopted certain names due to their association with a merchant or family, as an apprentice or otherwise. For instance, someone who has assisted a merchant called de Bordes or van Dyke who plied his trade at the Elmina Castle, may consequently have his original name altered to the latter. This was because over a long period of being identified with that merchant’s family name results in its adoption. However, the European documents have also not been consistent with the names. In some occasions people are addressed with their last name. This becomes difficult to ascertain the exact person when two different people who bear the same name are being addressed on different occasions.

**Research Questions**

➢ What was the nature of Elmina’s evolution and how did its past socio-political and economic activities enhance its significance as an Atlantic trade entrepôt?

➢ What was the structure and policy of the Dutch Atlantic interests on the Gold Coast and how was it challenged by local commercial interests?
➢ To what extent were the Edinafo involved in the Atlantic commercial interactions and how did it impact the Dutch commercial interests on the Gold Coast?

Structure of Study

This study is divided into six chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the thesis. Chapter Two, titled, Anomansa (“The Water that Never Dries Up”) and the aldea de duas partes (“Village of Two Parts”), discusses the founding of Elmina and how the involvement of its inhabitants in the socio-political and economic processes was significant for its establishment as Atlantic trade entrepôt on the Gold Coast.77

Chapter Three, Watch the Waves of the Sea, examines the Dutch Atlantic interest in Elmina, and the Gold Coast, and how the indigenous people responded to the challenges and opportunities.78

It explores how the Dutch organised their trade with inferences drawn from the British trade and how the people of Elmina served as intermediaries in the interactions. ‘Watch the Waves of the Sea’ is a metaphor which describes the nature of early European traders in Elmina. The phrase was used in Bayo Holsey’s article, “Watch the Waves of the Sea: literacy, Feedback, and the European encounter in Elmina.” In the introduction to the article, there is a brief oral account, collected by Holsey, on the perception of the Edinafo concerning the earliest European intrusion into Elmina. From the title and the content of the article, Holsey sought to project the sheer contradictions in oral accounts. Over here, however, the phrase is used as a metaphor for the coming of the European traders.

77 Anomansa (or Anom-ansa) is translated “The River that Never Dries Up”. This suggests that their ancestors settled along a river body which is identified as the Benya River. This may also suggest a long period of drought condition during their migration to the coast. The Portuguese called the place the ‘Village of Two Parts’ (aldea de duas partes) because there are two villages, Eguao and Fetu, separated by River Benya. These two villages were independent of each other. It also suggests that control over Elmina was between these two villages. The phrase is believed to have appeared in Portuguese records concerning their earliest encounter with the coast. See Feinberg, Africans and Europeans,” 77.

Chapter Four, Brokers, Rulers and Citizens, explores the role of brokers, the political hierarchy of Elmina and its inhabitants. It highlights the complex ways in which they were involved in the Atlantic commerce. Especially, the chapter emphasises the dominant roles played by these groups to the detriment of the Dutch commercial interest on the Gold Coast. This chapter is the main thrust of the thesis. It will be observed that the Dutch were unable to exploit the agency of the brokers, who were employed by the WIC as agents. However, whilst the local political hierarchy cordially related with the Dutch government, they sought the interest of the local merchants more than that of the Dutch. This resulted in the many clashes between the Dutch government and the Elmina local government. Whilst the number of Dutchmen sent to the Gold Coast was continuously decreasing, it became necessary to exploit the agency of the Abrofomba as Dutch representatives.

Chapter Five, Entrepreneurs, Merchant Princes and Officials, is a continuation of chapter four. It explores the role of certain individuals in the context of the Atlantic commerce and Dutch imperialism on the Gold Coast. Using the commercial activities of Brempong Kwa Mensah (a slave trader) and Butrinyen Plange (a ‘legitimate’ trader) as illustrations, the chapter demonstrates the various ways in which the people of Elmina dominated the Atlantic commercial interaction. In addition, the chapter examines the agency of Dutch officials, particularly Pieter Bartels whose activities on the Gold Coast had a far-reaching effect on the Dutch interest.

Chapter Six summarises the main arguments.
CHAPTER TWO

ANOMANSA (“THE WATER THAT NEVER DRIES UP”) AND THE
ALDEA DE DUAS PARTES (“VILLAGE OF TWO PARTS”)

Yes, we [Edina] had gold dust in this town. The naming of this country by our
colonial masters as Gold Coast was due to Elmina. Our land in the ancient days
was all filled with large quantities of gold dust. Our lagoon was filled with large
quantities of gold and also beyond the lagoon. Our ancestors collected large
quantities of gold from the beds of our lagoon and went to weigh them into many
denominations and used them as a medium of exchange. 79

— Kweku Kaye et al

Introduction

When Nana Kwaa Amankwaa arrived [from Tekyiman or Equafo], he first saw a lagoon
flowing into the sea. Amazed by the edifying scenery, he exclaimed in delight, benya! 80 Nana
Kwa Amankwaa then saw that there was a river flowing into a lagoon and the river was full of
gold. To satisfy his curiosity, he collected some of the gold [dust]. Delighted by his find, he
exclaimed, benya! After the discoveries, Amankwaa decided to know the source of the lagoon.
This led him to encounter an old woman (apparently an apparition). The old woman asked him to
spend the night with her which he complied with. The following morning Nana Amankwaa woke
up from sleep to the scene of a deep hole. The old woman made a long rope with twelve knots
which entered the hole. She used a month to reach the end of each knot, whilst she went down

79 The respondent was asked: “Did you have gold dust in this town [Edina]? See Kweku et al, Oral Tradition of
Fante State, Edina (Elmina), Unpublished paper, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, 1974, 14
&15.
80 The entire paragraph is an oral account shared by Elmina informants. Benya (menya) is literally translated: ‘I have
got’ or ‘I have found.’ The Be[ nfl ay in Benya is a Brong dialect spoken by the people of Brong Ahafo of present-
day Ghana. This supports the tradition story that the Edinafo came through Takyiman. Currently, the river that Nana
Kwaa Amankwaa discovered is called River Benya. Interview with Mr. Ato Eshun, Director of the Elmina Castle,
the hole taking her twelve months to complete the journey. The old woman gave Amankwaa the stern warning never to enter the hole.\textsuperscript{81}

Origin accounts of states and settlements in Ghana usually project mythical characteristics. Though characterised by exaggerations and inconsistencies, traditions of origins become valuable historical sources if used critically and in complement with written and archaeological sources. Admittedly, some of such accounts are proven by the documents, but not without their own biases. Fante traditions unanimously assert that their earliest ancestors migrated from Takyiman in the Brong Ahafo Region of present-day Ghana. Oral traditions of Abrem, Eyanmain, Eyan Denkyera, Eyan Abaasa, Elmina, among others, concur with this assertion.\textsuperscript{82}

These accounts are unique in that they demonstrate the influence of different founders: the Abrem were founded by Twiwia Kodie, the Enyanmain were led by Nana Amoako Boudam and the \textit{Edinafo} were founded by Nana Kwaa Amankwaa. These settlements were begun by small groups of nomadic individuals or households and later developed into fully-fledged political entities, in terms of having their own economic and socio-political structures. Particularly for Elmina, reference is made to blood-ties with two independent polities, Eguafu and Efu. Thus, understanding such traditions will enhance the nature of Elmina’s political development and its relevance to the Atlantic world.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{81} This was an oral account by a respondent who was interviewed by Fynn. See the original account in J.K. Fynn, \textit{Oral Traditions of Fante States} No. 4. Edina (Elmina).

\textsuperscript{82} Abrem is known in the European records as Bramus, Abramboe or Abramue. Enyanmain, Eyan Denkyera and Eyan Abaasa are collectively known as the Eyan State. Elmina is the capital of the Edina state which comprises Elmina, Ankwanda, Asaman, Ampenyi, Simbwe, Kanka (Dutch Komenda), Benu Akyinimu, Ataabadza and other villages. The Edina State is bounded on the west by Akatakyi (British Komenda), on the east by Oguaa (Cape Coast) and on the north by Eguafu.

\textsuperscript{83} However, in connection with examining the evolution of the two, more attention is given to Eguafu than Efutu. This is because of the siting of the Elmina Castle which is believed to be in the domain of Eguafu. Yet, this claim of allegiance to the Castle, although it relates to the proximity to both polities, it is difficult to understand which of them wielded maximum power to the right of the Elmina Castle and the community that evolved with it (although the evolution happened much earlier than the construction of the Castle). Here, oral traditions of Elmina seem to
This chapter discusses Elmina’s earliest history and how it relates to its position as a trade entrepôt. It is structured in two broad themes. Firstly, it identifies the origin and socio-political developments, and secondly, it provides a description of the Elmina economy and the involvement of the Edinafo. The first traces Elmina’s emergence, the relationship between its socio-political structures and how they project its position as an Atlantic enclave. Essentially, it explores the politics and complexities of its involvement in the Atlantic commerce on the Gold Coast. On the economy, it examines the town’s socio-economic activities and how these activities demonstrate the trade significance of Elmina prior and after the fifteenth century. These structures include agriculture, fishing, salt production, craft specialisation and trade. This analysis will, however, emphasise the centrality of trade which the economy was largely based on.

**Origins and Socio-political Organisation**

![Map of Central Region, Ghana](image)

**Fig 2.1**: Central Region (Ghana) showing some coastal and inland states.

favour Eguafo much more than Efutu. In these accounts emphasis is placed on Eguafo much more than Efutu. However, it is agreed that the Efutu also founded part of Elmina.
The oral account above on the founding of Elmina by Nana Kwaa Amankwaa usually completes the many origin stories of the town. One of the traditions maintains that the *Edinafo* migrated from Takyiman before arriving at the coast. Other Elmina respondents claim that their earliest ancestors lived with the people of Eguafio or were related by consanguinity. According to them, Nana Kwaa Amankwaa was a nephew of the chief of Eguafio. One day Amankwaa went on a hunting expedition and discovered the coast for the first time. This was because he searched fruitlessly for water and came across the amazing discoveries, the lagoon and the sea. After quenching his thirst and realising that the water could never dry up in several generations, he called the settlement Anomansa. This presupposes that in either version (from Takyiman or from Eguafio) Amankwaa had encountered some drought conditions before getting to the coast. The Benya lagoon stretches from the Atlantic Ocean in the east and to the west at salt pans.

Oral traditions of Bono Takyiman maintain that it was the earliest Akan state to be founded. The exact date is however uncertain. It has been suggested that the state emerged between the thirteenth and the early fifteenth century, which is contemporaneous with the Mole-Dagbane states. The state emerged around the trade route from Jenne to the Niger region. If the *Edinafo*’s migration through Takyiman is reliable, Nana Amankwaa was delighted about his gold discovery because he was familiar with the mineral. Hence, the Fante (including Elmina)

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84 *Anomansa* is literally translated as ‘the liquid/water which never gets finish’ or ‘the water which never dries up.’
85 Benya lagoon is currently salty. According to tradition, some human effort or natural occurrence (perhaps, sea erosion) might have exposed the sea to the river Nana Kwaa Amankwaa discovered. Interview with Mr. Ato Eshun. Also, interview with Nana Kojo Aduakwa V, Chief of Atunkwa of Elmina, 1908 Efua Ansaba Fie (Omanhen Fie), 30th March, 2018.
87 Boahen., 60.
recognise Takyiman as their ancestral home, and when they arrived at the coast the Etsi were already settled in the area.\textsuperscript{88} They were the Guan.

The consensus in Ghanaian historiography is that the Guan people are the autochthonous inhabitants of the geographical area, which was named as the Gold Coast and Ghana respectively under different historical époques. The Etsi together with the Asebu, Efutu (also used are Fetu, Futu and Afutu), the Senya Breku and the Kyerepon were the Guan group to the west coast. They encountered the Akan groups, the Fante, the Kwehu, the Akyem and the Akwamu, who migrated southward to the coast.\textsuperscript{89} The Etsi founded Egya and Mowure [Moure], near Cape Coast, as well as other communities before the Fante arrived.\textsuperscript{90} The Asebu to the east conquered the Etsi lands and pushed them inland.\textsuperscript{91} The Efutu also founded parts of Elmina, Amanforo, which was part of Cape Coast, and Simpa or Winneba. In the past the Elmina state stretched from Moure to Shama, to the north, it went from Jukwa to Efutu and Wassu. The people of Asima also shared borders with Elmina along the River Pra. According to Elmina traditions, the presence of the people of Komenda or Akatakyi who came from Nkusukum reduced the Elmina borders after acquiring their land from the Kankan (Dutch Komenda). The \textit{Edinafo} also claim to have had a common border with the Eguafu, the Abrem and the people of Efutu who lived close to Jukwaa in the Jukwaa State.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{88} It is argued here that the incessant warfare between the \textit{Edinafo} and the other Fante states was responsible for the \textit{Edinafo} not recognising themselves as part of the Fante but claim consanguinity to Asante who were their allies. Etsi traditions confirm that they initially settled along the coast. They also maintain that they migrated from Upper Niger around Timbuktu and that they were the first people to migrate from the area. See Ketekrachi Traditions Numbers 32-37 Recorded by J. E. K. Kumah. Unpublished manuscript, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

\textsuperscript{89} To the east coast are the Gas, Adangbes, Ewes and the Kroboes.

\textsuperscript{90} Ampene, Kwame. \textit{History of Guan Speaking Peoples of Ghana}. (Eastern Region, Bosu: Laterion House, 2003), 3. 3; Boahen, 63.

\textsuperscript{91} Around Assin-Attandanso and Assin-Apemanim lands.

\textsuperscript{92} Kweku et al, Oral Tradition of Fante State, Edina (Elmina), 5.
Oral traditions of the people of Eguafo maintain that they were the first to migrate to the coast before the Fante arrived. The Chief of Breman and Kyidomhene of Eguafo Traditional Areas asserted that: “…because we were Guans, people called us AGUAFO, so Aguafo emerged from the word Guan.” Like the Edinafo, “we later adopted Fante language because the Fante outnumbered the Guans in the area.” Whilst there is similarity in the accounts, the Edinafo maintain that they spoke Asante Twi before adopting Fante. Anquandah argues that they spoke “Fante Akan” and attributes the changes to the Edinafo’s long established trade relations with Adanse and Assin to Mali due to the gold and European slave trade. This is interesting since Elmina’s trade significance predated the Portuguese contact. Yet, the Portuguese monopoly on the Gold Coast re-oriented local trade along the Fante coast into the Atlantic world and subsequently the Portuguese language became widespread. For instance, the pronunciation of bread in ‘Elmina Fante’ is *paano*, this was adopted from the Portuguese’s dialect, *pão*. Hence, the languages of the West coast of Ghana evolved because of their interactions with different communities.

What evidence could support Elmina’s claim that they migrated from Takyiman in present-day Ghana? The origin of the kingdoms in the Volta basin is uncertain. But it is generally agreed that the Sisala, the Tampolensi, Vagala and the Guan occupied various parts of the Northern Region and Upper Volta. Around the same period, the Wangara or Mande-Dyula traders from the Niger Bend founded some important commercial towns including Buna, Wa, Bole and Begho in Ghana’s north. The Wangara people came into contact with some

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93 Ampene, 3.
95 Interview with Mr. Peter Kinsley Mensah (Uncle Amuodu), Butrinyen Traditional Council, Elmina, 13th March, 2018.
96 Boahen, 53.
97 Boahen, 54.
Mohammedanism group who influenced their religious orientation. As a result, apart from their trading exploits in textile and salt, they also propagated the Islamic faith. The major states to appear in the territory were the Mamprusi, Dagomba, Gonja and the Mossi who were invaders. The Mamprusi, Dagomba and Mossi were believed to have been founded from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries. Indeed, if the Edinafo’s claim can be put within the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, it should certainly predate Portuguese contact and may have taken place during the early fifteenth century, or before. This was because when the Portuguese arrived in the territory in 1471, they came into contact with an organised political hierarchy vested in commerce. This was demonstrated by a leader called Kwamena Ansa (Kara Mansa) which the Portuguese conferred with eleven years after their arrival on the coast. Kwamena Ansa was the leader of a territory on the coast encompassing Elmina.

Archaeological study conducted along Ghana’s Fante coast has discovered traces of “surface scatters” and “midden deposits” which suggest a significant pre-European settlement. This settlement was built on local institutions that interacted with each other. Such pre-European settlements laid the foundation for the development of Atlantic societies on the Gold Coast including Elmina and Cape Coast. For instance, Elmina as an independent polity evolved during the advent of the European trade at the West coast of Africa. What was the nature of Elmina’s evolution during this period? Prior to the European arrival, the settlements in the Akan littoral

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98 The Soninke of old Ghana are believed to be behind these conversions.
99 Boahen, 54.
101 Christopher DeCorse’s in-depth archeological study of Elmina emphasises continuity rather than change in the belief system of the people of Elmina during the European contact. The present paper argues that the socio-economic developments during the pre-European period were a relevant background for the growth and establishment of the Atlantic commerce; and this was largely indigenous driven, despite European influence. See DeCorse, Christopher. An Archaeology of Elmina: Africans and Europeans on the Gold Coast, 1400-1900 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001)
and the interior were made up of small villages that mostly shifted from one place to the other. The coastal settlements were mostly small fishing and farming communities.\textsuperscript{102} In the context of Elmina, there was a nascent development of a town between what is alluded to as \textit{aldea das duas partes} [the “Village of Two Parts”] in the Portuguese records.\textsuperscript{103} This “village” describes two independent polities —Eguafo (Commendo) and Efutu —separated by the Benya lagoon. This is confirmed by a Dutch map of 1629. On the map, “…in the old days one half [of Elmina] used to be under Great Commendo [Eguafo] and the other Futu who came there to collect their contribution.”\textsuperscript{104} Christopher DeCorse suggests that the two villages may have been located on the same peninsula— “a thin strip of reddish brown Elminian sandstone that lies between the Atlantic Ocean and the Benya Lagoon” — rather than being separated by the Benya Lagoon.\textsuperscript{105} Some inhabitants of these two towns formed pockets of settlements along the west coast as fishing enclaves. These settlements had traded amongst themselves, or their parent settlements (Eguafo and Efutu), or with visitors far into the interior. This fully-functioning settlement is confirmed by the fact that the Portuguese had to break down some local structures to make way for the construction of the Elmina Castle in 1482.\textsuperscript{106}

Moreover, settlements in the interior impacted the evolution and growth of Elmina’s political and socio-economic structures during the advent of the Atlantic commerce. Particularly for Eguafo, both oral and documentary records have emphasised its significance to Elmina’s socio-political development. As a polity that was long in existence before the European contact, the Atlantic

\textsuperscript{102} DeCorse, 18-20.
\textsuperscript{103} Hair, P. E. H. \textit{The Founding of the Castelo de São Jorge da Mina: An Analysis of the Sources, African Studies Program} (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1994), 129.
\textsuperscript{105} The modern settlement ends at Benya Lagoon and the lagoon separates the modern settlement from the peninsula. See DeCorse, 48 and 44.
\textsuperscript{106} See DeCorse, 47; See also Blake, J. W. \textit{Europeans in West Africa}, 1450-1560 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1942), 77.
commerce changed its organisation and form. Like Elmina, Eguafo saw transformation in its socio-political structures, especially in the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries. However, in terms of demography, Eguafo seems to have been decimated by migration to coastal towns including Elmina.

The independence of Elmina from the direct influence of the hinterland polities of Eguafo and Efutu happened a few years after 1482. Developments from that period until the Dutch arrival ensured that Elmina became relatively independent. Dutch report of 1629 confirms that the Edinafo lived independently and were governed by Portuguese governors. With the help of the local chiefs the town attained the status of a city under the Portuguese crown. This development suggests Portuguese influence due to their presence in the Elmina Castle rather than being rulers of Elmina. Indeed, the Portuguese interfered in the affairs of the local people but not without the local leaders. Both Eguafo and Efutu were warring polities which the Portuguese encountered on the coast. Don Diego d’ Azambuja led the Portuguese delegation to one Kara Mansa who was the chief of Eguafo to request his permission to build the Elmina Castle in his domain to facilitate trade on the coast. As a result, the Portuguese were instrumental in brokering peace talks with the two states. However, this analysis excludes the role played by the local people in ensuring the sustainability of the nascent Atlantic economy in Elmina. Indeed, the issue of language and lack of knowledge of the local trade routes by the Europeans would ensure that the indigenous people were significant in the commercial interactions.

107 DeCorse and Spiers, 30.
108 DeCorse and Spiers. 32.
109 Kweku et al, 27.
111 This was on the right bank of the Benya Lagoon; See Kweku et al, Oral Tradition of Fante State, Edina (Elmina), 111.
Elmina evolved out of this complex interaction. Particularly during the Atlantic commerce, the Edinafo became significant in determining the nature of the exchange. This development precipitated the emergence of new coastal elites and rulers who took advantage of the Atlantic commerce. These citizens became the facilitators of the commercial interaction and in their own capacity as merchants. Especially during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, such indigenous roles significantly influenced the Dutch trade on the Gold Coast. Another important local structure that evolved because of the commercial interaction was Elmina’s political institutions.

Elmina’s chieftaincy developed as the town’s significance in the Atlantic commercial interactions increased. The emergence of a single leader happened much later in the eighteenth century. During the period, the office of the paramount chief or the Ɔmanhen became important. Moreover, the political structure of Elmina was characterised by quarters or asafos which ensured that power was diffused rather than being in the hand of one person. The heterogeneous nature of the town was due to its ability to accommodate inhabitants from various coastal and interior states, which later included the Europeans. Despite Elmina’s multi-cultural nature, there was commonalities in terms of intermarriages, involvement in trade, and unity in terms of the Akan language, among others. Ruling through a monarchical system of succession, the Ɔmanhen is the leader. Contrary to most of the Akan lineages, the patrilineal mode of inheritance is practiced. Oral accounts maintain that the succession to the Ɔmanhen was changed from the matrilineal during the reign of the tenth ruler, Nana Ampon Diedu. It buttresses the point that the political structure of Elmina was unlike that of Asante or Akwamu

112 DeCorse, 39-40.
113 DeCorse and Spiers, 37.
114 DeCorse and Spiers, 37.
115 Kaye, K. et al, 5.
during the period. Such political structures became a measure against Dutch commercial interest in Elmina, especially in the nineteenth century.

One of the formidable social and political organisations and group relations in Elmina are the asafos. These local militias play various roles in the society, although mostly isolated to political and socio-cultural activities. Little is known about their direct participation in the Atlantic commerce. Nevertheless, some of the asafos are direct impact of the Atlantic commercial interactions. The concept of asafo predates the position of the Ńmanhen.116 The expansion of the structure of the asafo from the seventeenth to eighteenth century ensured that their roles were clearly demarcated.117 Elmina traditions credit Asebu as the originators. The first companies that emerged were the Wombir, Alatabanfo and followed by the Abese.118 The Alatabanfo were the Benin slaves the Portuguese introduced into Elmina during the early years of their commercial relation with the Edinafo. Thus, the Alatas organised into a Benin diaspora in Elmina and founded their own asafo called the Alatabanfo.119 This development also emphasises the fact that Elmina’s population was made up of settlers from various backgrounds. There were Akan-speakers, including Eguafo and Efutu, who had been involved in fishing and other economic activities prior to the European arrival.120 The ten asafos in Elmina include Ankobea, Akyem, Borofomma, Nkodwo, Akrampa, Manwere, and the Enyampa.121 Seven of the companies had been in operation since the eighteenth century whilst three had been added at the turn of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.122 Hence, the companies emerged

116 DeCorse and Spiers, 36.
117 Henige, “Kingship in Elmina,” 505-506; Baesjou, An Asante Embassy on The Gold Coast, 19; DeCorse, 40-45.
118 Fynn, Oral Traditions of Fante States, Edina (Elmina), vii. This is Fynn’s analysis.
119 Perbi, 24.
120 Feinberg, “Africans and Europeans,” 82.
121 Kaye, Kweku et al, 10.
122 DeCorse and Spiers, 36.
differently. The slaves and their descendants working for the WIC also formed the Akrampa.\textsuperscript{123} The \textit{asafo}s are formidable in the political structure of the society.\textsuperscript{124} It is significant to note that the position of the \textit{asafo} was significantly impacted by their involvement in the Atlantic commerce. For direct involvement in the Atlantic commerce, the position of the \textit{Abrofomba} is important.

In the Atlantic commercial interactions generally, the agency of the \textit{Abrofomba} families was significant for the progress of trade on the Gold Coast.\textsuperscript{125} These were the descendants of the Dutch personnel resulting from the sexual relations they had with the local women. These individuals later organised into the Akrampa \textit{asafo}. The leader was the Abrampahin or the \textit{Burgomaster}. The \textit{Burgomaster} was always in touch with the Dutch and the \textit{Emhanhen}. The office liaised between the Dutch company and local people. This class of the \textit{Abrofomba} was also important because they were respected merchants and hardly mixed with the local people. They performed various roles including being Dutch officials. However, this study contends that the Dutch WIC was unable to adequately exploit their agency to further their Atlantic commercial exploit. For instance, Jacob Abraham De Veer, native of Elmina served as a consular agent in the service of the Dutch company. His position came at a time the Dutch were concerned with protecting their possession in the East Indies. As a result, the WIC pursued a vigorous programme to recruit Gold Coasters to perform various roles in Java. Others were also

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\textsuperscript{123} DeCorse and Spiers, 36.
\textsuperscript{125} PRAAD (Accra): ADM 11/1/1111.
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important merchants. Essentially, the agency of these *Abrofomba* was significant for the sustenance of the Dutch Atlantic commerce in Elmina.\(^\text{126}\)

That the *Edinafo* spoke Asante before adopting Fante could be attributed to the concept of ‘feedback’ on Fante tradition. This was because of their long-established symbiotic trade relations with Asante. Consequently, they deny any blood ties with the Fante, apart from their Eguafo ancestry often referred to in oral accounts. This deserves further studies to ascertain Elmina’s identity through such nuances. However, since ‘feedback’ is a powerful tool in the oral tradition of Fante coastlands, it is apparent Elmina’s incessant and prolonged warfare with the Fante have eroded every sign of goodwill towards the Fante.\(^\text{127}\) By 1704, Fante had been unified and belligerent; and by 1724, they were the dominant powers on the coast. They brought Sabou, Efutu, Agona, Eguafo and other settlements under their control and sought to do same with Elmina.\(^\text{128}\) This study makes reference to such Elmina-Fante animosity. Consequently, conflicts of interest between the two often made the trade routes to Elmina unsafe. This was coupled with the activities of people who often panyar natives of Elmina. The conflict between Elmina and Fante in 1868, significantly led to the downfall of the Dutch. This particularly influenced *Edinafo*’s rebellion against Dutch commercial policies in the nineteenth century as a result to support their alliance with Asante.

Elmina enjoyed a relatively cordial relationship with Asante. This began when Denkyira– who were the most powerful states on the Gold Coast– were overthrown from the Elmina Castle in

\(^{\text{126}}\) The vrijburgers were educated by the Dutch so that they can represent their interest in Dutch possessions. For instance, there was a deliberate attempt to recruit such children, educate them and offer them entrepreneurial skills especially in plantation farming so that their activities can supplement Dutch trade on the Gold Coast. This point is argued extensively in the next chapter. The *tapoeyers* were the underprivileged Abrofomba who were often used as soldiers at Dutch possessions on the Gold Coast. They did not have the benefit of Dutch education. However, some acquired the status of the vrijburgers by exploiting the opportunities of the Atlantic commerce.


\(^{\text{128}}\) Feinberg, “Africans and Africans”, 10.
1701 by Asante. Whilst recognising Elmina’s autonomy, to strengthen the relation, Asante established an embassy in Elmina at various times. The mission of Kwadwo Akyeampon and later Akyeampon Yaw to Elmina had been strategic in strengthening trade relations with both states.\textsuperscript{129} As a result, “a contingent of Elminese traders was always in Kumasi, just as there were continually Asantis in Elmina.”\textsuperscript{130} This study emphasises the commercial ties between Elmina and Asante which significantly impacted Dutch trade on the Gold Coast.

The position of Elmina was responsible for heightening tension between the Fante and the Asante.\textsuperscript{131} During Fante unification, they had pent-up anger against Elmina due to Dutch-Asante alliance. By this relation, Fante was alarmed that European merchandise including firearms would be traded with Asante at Elmina. In revenge, Elmina suffered a series of joint attacks from Abrem, Eguafu, Asebu, Fante and Efutu (i.e., from 1726 to 1782). With assistance from Asante, Elmina was able to repulse such attacks. This could not have been achieved without firearms from the Dutch. The attacks on Elmina continued into the nineteenth century. In order to facilitate trade and security between Asante and Elmina, Kwadwo Akyeampong, an Asante ambassador to Elmina stationed about 200 soldiers in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{132}

According to oral accounts of Elmina, the town’s significance was based on the gold that was obtained from the territory.\textsuperscript{133} The economic interaction that took place in the town made it a strategic trade location during the Atlantic commerce and enhanced its socio-political developments. This became significant during the Dutch period with an emergence of a strong

\textsuperscript{130} Baesjou, 27.
\textsuperscript{131} Boahen, \textit{Ghana: Evolution and Change}, 23.
\textsuperscript{132} Boahen, 25.
\textsuperscript{133} See Kweku et al, 14 and 15
leadership, and the relevance of the asafos. The complexities of Elmina’s relation and interaction with its neighbours and interior polities—and the Europeans alike—was based on its importance as a trade entrepôt. Elmina’s position as a trade entrepôt placed the town at the centre of Gold Coast politics, which in turn influenced how the Edinafo interacted with their neighbours.

**Aspects of Elmina Economy**

The economy of Elmina can be divided into agriculture (crop production), fishing, salt production, craft specialisation and trade. In Elmina, all kinds merchandise was exchanged, and many people were involved in various ways. Whilst fishing and agriculture were described as the dominant occupation, trade was significant. Salt making and craft specialisation were also important during the period. The advent of the Atlantic trade impacted these economic activities by increasing the volume of production and trade. During the Atlantic commercial interactions, trade declined at various times in Elmina due to shortage of European merchandise or local products. In addition, conflict with neighbouring communities and between the interior states often brought about insecurity and affected trade. Elmina’s pre-Atlantic commercial interactions with the interior were significant for establishing the town as an Atlantic commercial enclave.

A significant development during the pre-Atlantic period was Elmina’s involvement in the trans-Saharan trade. The most instrumental people within this trading system were the Mande-speaking merchants from Upper Niger. These traders traded as far as Jenne and other southern lands in the lower Guinea Coast. Their activities were amongst a wide trade route that also took people to “Hausa Lands” (Northern Nigeria).\(^\text{134}\) Apparently these Wangara traders founded places like Bobo-Dioulasso, Kong and Begho.\(^\text{135}\) There was a “short” route “from

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\(^{134}\) Wilks, “A Medieval Trade Route from the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea,” 338.

\(^{135}\) Bobo-Dioulasso is fifteen a day’s journey south of Jenne, Kong is fifteen day’s journey south of Bobo-Dioulasso whilst Begho is also fifteen day’s journey south of east of Kong. See Wilks, 338.
Begho to Bobo-Dioulasso” through Bouna. Shorter routes were also discovered south of Begho to avoid the dense forest. By 1400, three of these routes were identified. The western route led from Timbuktu and Jenne to Begho to Dormaa (Wam), from Dormaa through Ahafo and Twifo to Elmina. Ivor Wilks suggests that the route had inspired the Portuguese decision to send their “embassy from Elmina to Mali.” The second route went through Wenchi, Tafo (later Kumasi), Adansi, Assin and to areas close to Cape Coast. The final and easterly path led from Afram plains through the Volta gorge to Accra.

Using the trade routes, forest traders sent gold and kola, inter alia, to Begho whilst Mande traders also entered the forest in the south. John Fage asserts that there had already been a long-established trade route between the Gold Coast and Benin. In the trade, akori (cori) beads and cloth were pronounced. Upon their arrival, the Portuguese took advantage of the prevailing trade relations. They immediately became instrumental intermediaries in meeting the demand for firearms and slaves from Benin. In addition, the slaves were used to carry quantities of European merchandise “into the hinterland and coastlands.” Thus, Elmina was significantly involved in both intra and inter trade relations with her neighbours and the interior states. This development emphasises the significance of “indigenous slavery” in Elmina and across the Gold

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136 Wilks, 338.
137 Wilks, 339.
138 Amenumey, 93.
139 Wilks, 339; Amenumey, 93.
140 Wilks suggests that it was to discuss bilateral agreements based on the inland trade to the Gold Coast; See Wilks, Forest of Gold, 7 and 8.
142 Amenumey, 95.
144 At a point this merchandise had been rendered contraband. Firearms had been banned by Pope Sextus IV and the sale of slaves by King John III (1521-57). However, the trade continued. The ban was to forestall its support for the expansion of Islam during the period. See “A Medieval Trade Route from the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea,” 339 and “Wangara,” 464.
145 Anquandah, Castles and Forts, 55.
Coast. These slaves, with some imported from Benin, became significant in the production and transport of various commodities, including food crops.

A dominant feature of the Elmina market was that most of the local products including food crops were obtained from the interior, both for local consumption and for export (i.e. purchased by the European merchants stationed at the coast). Ludewig Ferdinand Rømer’s account of the coast of Guinea intimates that trade was automatically attracted to “Elmina where not only does the Dutch company have a great warehouse, but the General, the Fiscal, the Chief Merchant, the Chief Bookkeeper, and the Secretary buy and order from Holland entire shiploads [of goods], and everything is sold.” As a result, “all the Blacks, even though they may live 100 miles inland, know that at Elmina they can find any type of goods they desire, indeed, they can choose from amongst some hundred pieces of each kind.” Rømer’s account gives a succinct description of the significance of Elmina to the Akan interior. The Dutch WIC supplied European merchandise to the Gold Coast through Elmina. The Edinafo merchants also intermediated the commercial interactions by ensuring that the merchandise got to the interior. They did this by establishing a complex supply channel to the interior. One of such channels led to Asante.

In Ghana, agriculture is a long-established profession. For example, the Akan began farming somewhere between 2000 and 1000 BC. James Kwesi Anquandah’s evidence of this is based on the Kintampo complex which archaeological excavations have identified as the first sign of settled life and domestication. For the coastal Akan states, available evidence suggests that just a small number of the population were involved in agriculture as compared to fishing.

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146 Rømer, A Reliable Account of the Coast of Guinea, 51.
147 Rømer, 52.
148 Anquandah, Rediscovery, 88.
This is true for coastal Fante states including Oguaa (Cape Coast) and Elmina. Particularly for Elmina, it is clear that its emergence was based on an unsettled fishing settlement. However, due to the significance of fishing and the rearing of a few domestic animals, there were commercial exchanges with neighbours and settlements in the interior.

The agricultural economy of Elmina and Cape Coast had similar features: they were mostly involved in poultry keeping and the rearing of farm animals.\textsuperscript{149} Since the Edinafo did not engage much in food crop production (at least those settled close to the Elmina Castle), they obtained food crops from other settlements. Essentially, both Eguafa and Efuti supplied them with root crops and grains.\textsuperscript{150} They also obtained food crops from Axim and Ahanta. The Edinafo obtained food crops and grains by exchanging them with fish, since it was their major preoccupation, and with European merchandise which they easily obtained from the Dutch. According to Willem Bosman, Elmina, Axim and Accra were the only settlements in the late seventeenth century that were good at cattle rearing.\textsuperscript{151} Apart from rearing farm animals, almost all the coastal settlements kept poultry.\textsuperscript{152} This was also the normal delicacy of the local people and the European settlers. These activities were significant in that they supplied the individuals involved in the Atlantic commerce with food. This ensured smooth Atlantic commercial interactions. However, Harvey Feinberg recounts an incident in the eighteenth century in which the Dutch Director General de Bordes ordered the seizure of corn by canoeemen on 27\textsuperscript{th} May, 1739.\textsuperscript{153} This incident was preceded by a refusal of Elmina food vendors to sell food to the garrison at the Elmina Castle.\textsuperscript{154} The development negatively affected the commercial relations between the Edinafo and the

\textsuperscript{149} Arhin, \textit{The Cape Coast and Elmina}, 7.
\textsuperscript{150} Feinberg, “Africans and Europeans,” 17.
\textsuperscript{151} Willem Bosman was the Chief Merchant of Elmina by the end of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century.
\textsuperscript{152} Bosman, \textit{Description}, 240.
\textsuperscript{153} Feinberg, “An incident in Elmina Dutch Relation,” 361.
\textsuperscript{154} Feinberg, 360.
Dutch. Such incidences foreshadow the many clashes in the nineteenth century that was to lead to the departure of the Dutch from the Gold Coast.

According to an Elmina respondent:

When the whiteman arrived and were cordially received by Nana Kwamena Ansa our chief at the time they brought goods like textile, knives, mirrors, gins and gun powder. They put up stores and sold their wares in their stores. We used pots of palm oil in paying for the goods we received from them. The palm oil was brought from the rural areas.  

The scanty evidence of agricultural activities of Elmina indicates that whilst food crops and animal resources were purchased by the local people and Europeans alike, much of such products were obtained from the Akan interior. According to an oral account of the palm oil trade, the Europeans put it “in a big barrel and sent [it] to the whiteman’s country.” Apart from palm oil that was traded in Elmina, there also emerged a sprawling trade in rice from around Axim as well as yam, potato and millet across the Gold Coast. There was the sale of fruits including pineapples, limes, oranges, sugarcane, plantain, etc. Farming in Elmina was influenced by the Europeans. As a result, sweet potato, orange, pineapple, sugar cane, coconut, plantain and peanuts were grown in Elmina by the seventeenth century. Indeed, whilst Africans quickly absorbed such commodities, the Dutch WIC was unable to exploit their agency in establishing plantation farms on the Gold Coast. Such attempts to institute a plantation economy did not receive support from the local people. This profoundly influenced the Dutch resolve in the Gold Coast. However, attempts were made by the Abrofomba in maintaining

155 Kaye, Kweku et al, Oral Tradition of Fante State, Edina (Elmina), 25.
156 For a review of the nature of farming and hunting in West Africa and the Gold Coast in general, see DeCorse, An Archaeology of Elmina, 109-114.
159 Feinberg, 16; Bosman, Description, 16.
160 DeCorse, 112.
plantation farms. This too was insignificant. Apart from trade, the Edinafo were involved in fishing.

The economy of the Gold Coast littoral states including Elmina largely depended on seafaring. Writing at the turn of the seventeenth century, Jean Barbot succinctly describes the extent of fishing on the Gold Coast.

After that of merchant, the trade of fisherman is the most esteemed and commonest. Fathers bring their children up to it from the age of nine or ten. Every morning (except Tuesday, which is their Sunday), a very large number of fishermen come out from the land for up to two leagues. There are many of them at Axim, Anta, Comendo, Mina [Elmina], Corso, Mourée, and Cormentin, but more at Comendo and Mina than elsewhere.¹⁶¹

For instance, by 1600s, Elmina was described as having “many canoes in which they go fishing and spend much time at sea.”¹⁶² A Dutch report also emphasised that the Edinafo were “brave fishermen, greatly outnumbering all their neighbours both in canoes and people.”¹⁶³ This confirms oral reports that project fishing as the major preoccupation of the settlement, prior and during the European contact. During the Atlantic era, most of the inhabitants of Elmina were still engrossed in fishing. This was because fish products were patronised by the indigenes and Europeans alike. The processed fish was also relevant for the market. Today, the occupation has stood the test of time since most of the inhabitants are still fishermen or engaged in the trade of fish products. The position of the Edinafo as canoemen due to their seafaring was significant to the Europeans in terms of transportation along the coast. Consequently, after the abolition of the slave trade in the early nineteenth century, the Edinafo found a profitable trade in the sale of canoe to Portuguese and Spanish ships.

¹⁶¹ Quoted in DeCorse, 108.
¹⁶² DeCorse, 108.
¹⁶³ This is John Fynn’s own analysis of events. See Fynn, Oral Tradition of Fante States (Edina), x.
The production of salt is one of the significant commodities of the coastal settlements. Oral accounts of Elmina and Komenda confirm that salt was extracted from the coastal streams. Apart from these areas, other important towns include Accra, Ada and Keta. In these settlements the commodity is formed when the lagoon dries up to form salt crystals. In February 1733, the Dutch reported that the Edinafo “and other people travel to Accra with their canoes to load salt there and sell it here [Elmina], and elsewhere.” Whilst it emphasises the significance of salt production and trade during the period, the Dutch WIC, however, consider the sale of the commodity “elsewhere” prejudicial to their trade since it would attract traders to send their commodities to an area they have no jurisdiction. Available evidence suggests that salt is sold with roasted fish and transported in apakan (wooden trays) and traded among other Fante states and interior towns including Wassan, Adanse and Brong Ahafo. Salt was also relevant because it was demanded in exchange for goods. Thus, merchants could barter their salt for other merchandise. Moreover, people paid credit in salt. For instance, in 1733, Darcon, the son of an Accra man, Makelaar Amoe, inherited a debt which included “26 cases salt,” amongst other items his father owed the WIC. Therefore it is evident that salt was a very significant commodity during the period.

Craft specialisation was another significant activity in the coastal settlements. Apart from their relevance to the Elmina economy, the impact of the Atlantic commerce did not only enhance their activities but predisposed some artisans to employment opportunities in European

164 Amenumey, 90 & 91.
166 This point is expatiated in the next chapter. It concerns the measures the Dutch Company put in place to sustain the trade in Edina.
167 Anquandah, Rediscovering, 89.
168 Reynolds, Trade and Economic Change, 7.
169 Reynolds, 7.
170 Balme Library: Furley Collections, the Gold Coast 1731-1739, 54a.
or Asante service. Being a typical fishing settlement, one of the earliest crafts was in the area of boat/canoe making. Whilst enhancing fishing, such canoes became relevant means of transportation to the indigenous people and the Europeans. For instance, it was significant for transporting European goods to the coast and vice versa. The boatmen were also used in European service. The boats were made of kapok trees and between 13 to 30 feet in length and 3 to 6 feet in width.\textsuperscript{171}

Archaeologists have found out that ceramic manufacture in places like Eguafo, Brenu Akyim and Elmina predated European contact.\textsuperscript{172} Hence, the local pottery technology can be distinguished from the European imports. The technique is similar across the Akan settlements.\textsuperscript{173} In the nineteenth century, it was reported that there was a small pottery village near St. Jago Hill, north of the Benya River that “consists of about fifty huts, occupied by Negroes, whose women keep busy with the preparation of all sorts of pots.”\textsuperscript{174} Apart from pottery, there were items that included spoon (\textit{saawal atere lattire}), scalepan, gold dust separating pan (\textit{famfa}) and balance (\textit{nsenia dua}) associated with the gold trade were discovered. Other items were bead and ivory trumpets.

The Portuguese and the Dutch, both of whom were in occupation at various times in Elmina impacted the skills of the local people. Under these Europeans, the \textit{Edinafo} specialised in carpentry, gold, silver and black-smith and masonry.\textsuperscript{175} The smiths made ornaments and utensils including rings, tooth picks, button plains or filigree, sword hilts, etc.\textsuperscript{176} Because of the bilateral relationship between Elmina and Asante, \textit{Edinafo} artisans, masons and carpenters were

\textsuperscript{171} Feinberg, “Africans and Europeans,” 19.
\textsuperscript{172} DeCorse, \textit{Archaeology of Elmina}, 116.
\textsuperscript{173} DeCorse, 117.
\textsuperscript{174} Quoted in DeCorse, \textit{An Archaeology of Elmina}, 118.
\textsuperscript{175} Arhin, \textit{The Cape Coast and Elmina}, 8.
\textsuperscript{176} Arhin, 8.
instrumental in building the house of Asantehene Nana Osei Bonsu (1804-1823) in Kumasi.177 This development stresses the complex nature of Elmina-Asante relation. Such relations, especially in the nineteenth century became a major threat to Dutch interest on the Gold Coast. Asante consistently received merchandise from Elmina, especially during their advances against the British, much to the chagrin of the Dutch and the British.

Trading was a major feature of the economy of coastal settlements on the Gold Coast prior to the establishment of the maritime Atlantic commerce from the late fifteenth century. For this reason, Ivor Wilks argues that the economic impact of the European maritime trade was not “revolutionary”.178 Wilks argues further, the pre-Portuguese [or pre-European] economy of the Gold Coast provided a berth for, as well as sustained the Atlantic economy. Indeed, Elmina for instance was already linked to international trade through its trade relations with the Western Sudan; and both oral and European documentary sources acknowledge the presence of a formidable coastal leader called Kara Mansa (Kwamena Ansah) who allowed Azambuja to build the Elmina Castle.179 This presupposes that the Portuguese met a leader called ‘Mansa’ which is an Arabic or Mande title for ‘trader’.180 Below was an account of what the Portuguese reported:

Hither the king [Kwamena Ansa] came, and before him a great noise of trumpets, bells and horns, which are their instruments, and he was accompanied by an endless number of blacks, some with bows and arrows, and others with assegais and shields; and the principal persons were attended behind by naked page-boys, with seats of wood, like chairs (cadeiras), to sit upon.181

177 Arhin, The Cape Coast and Elmina, 8.
178 Wilks, “A Medieval Trade Route,” 337.
179 However, this has raised concerns from scholars since they could not trace the name Kara Mansa again after the initial appearance. See DeCorse and Spiers, A tale of two polities, 36
180 Ampene, 3; Wilks, 33. For how the Akan borrowed Malian (Malinke) words, see Wilks, Ivor, Forest of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1993), 5-7.
181 Quoted in DeCorse and Spiers, “A Tale of Two Politics,” 34.
It has been argued that ‘Kara Mansa’ was the corruption of ‘Kwamena Ansa.’\textsuperscript{182} This narrative coincides with Elmina oral accounts which recognise Kwamena Ansa as their sixth chief. His reign saw the arrival of the Portuguese in 1482. This development is quintessential to Elmina’s vested position as a trade center prior to the late fifteenth century. The present study, however, seeks to ascertain the extent to which the rulers of Elmina were involved in the Atlantic commerce. The study also seeks to identify how their involvement in the Atlantic commerce influenced the Dutch commercial interest.

The trade in gold along the coast was perhaps the most important product during the arrival of the Portuguese and this continued during the Dutch period. Somewhere close to the mouth of the River Pra in Shama, the Portuguese were overwhelmed by the quantity of gold they obtained during their first visit to the Gold Coast in 1471.\textsuperscript{183} This largely inspired their location of the Elmina Castle close to River Benya. It is estimated that between 1487 and 1489, about 8,000 ounces was sent to Lisbon annually; and between 1494 and 1496, the quantity rose to 22,000.\textsuperscript{184} During the sixteenth century, the commodity amounted to 26,000 ounces.\textsuperscript{185} By the sixteenth century Mande resourcefulness in the trade had waned giving the Portuguese the opportunity to dominate the trade of the immediate hinterland.\textsuperscript{186} These local trade structures were followed by the Dutch. They were interested in Elmina after having secured plantation farms in Brazil.\textsuperscript{187} Hence, the Dutch sought to use Elmina to enhance their recruitment of slave labour for their plantation farms. Particularly in Elmina, it led to the Dutch interest in reviving

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\textsuperscript{182} Ampene, 3; DeCorse and Spiers, 36.
\textsuperscript{184} See Wilks. \textit{Forest of Gold}, 4.
\textsuperscript{185} Wilks, 5.
\textsuperscript{186} Wilks, “Medieval Trade-Route,” 339.
\end{flushright}
the gold trade to enhance their recruitment of slaves. This was because, where merchants send their gold, others send their slaves.

At the turn of the seventeenth century, the interest in the gold trade waned. This was due to the rise of the European slave trade where plantation economies in the New World demanded slave labour.\textsuperscript{188} The export of slaves from the Gold Coast to the New World increased from the early to the mid-eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{189} This particularly coincided with the rise of Asante. Elmina became a significant entrepôt for exporting slaves across the Atlantic Ocean. For instance, in a letter by the Director General Pranger of the WIC in 1731, it was acknowledged that “51 slaves [had been sent to Elmina], and has ordered the windward Forts to send their slaves to Elmina for shipment to the West Indies.”\textsuperscript{190} These slaves were obtained because of the fighting and infighting between the states in the Guinea coast. Particularly amongst the Dutch, Asante was always consistent in coming to them to “dispose of their slaves” whilst a “greater number go over to English & others.”\textsuperscript{191} This describes the nature of Asante’s commercial interaction with the Europeans. Together with the \textit{Edinafo}, they controlled the relations. It became a mark of the Dutch’s unsuccessful Gold Coast expedition. This was because of the complex nature of the commercial relations and the \textit{Edinafo} were at the forefront of such developments.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The economic significance of the \textit{Edinafo} and Elmina encompass both the pre-European and her involvement in the Atlantic world. During the Atlantic period, the Elmina Castle became the

\textsuperscript{188} Anquandah, \textit{Castles and Forts of Ghana}, 20.
\textsuperscript{189} Reynolds, \textit{Trade and Economic Change}, 10.
\textsuperscript{190} Balme Library: Furley Collections, the Gold Coast 1731-1739, 3.
\textsuperscript{191} Balme Library, University of Ghana: Furley Collections, the Gold Coast 1731-1739, 47.
transit point for both human and non-human cargoes. It is necessary to understand the generality of the economy since the various industries (fishing, farming, salt making, craft specialisation, etc.) enhanced the involvement of the Edinafo in the Atlantic commerce. The trade in gold initiated by the Portuguese was later pursued by the Dutch because of the demand for the product. The production and supply, however, was largely based on indigenous structures. This was supported by the proliferation of European merchandise into the economy which was demanded by the local people. From the second half of the eighteenth century, the demand for slaves had begun to wane culminating in the banning of the servants of the WIC from engaging in the European slave trade. However, this was largely detrimental to sustaining trade between the local population and the Dutch. The next chapter will discuss how the Dutch WIC carried out their trade in Elmina and across the Gold Coast; it will also emphasise their policies and how that conflicted with local commercial interests.
CHAPTER THREE

WATCH THE WAVES OF THE SEA

Men [Portuguese] of such eminence, conducted by a commander, who, from his own account, seems to have descended from the God who made day and night, can never bring themselves to endure the hardships of this climate; nor would they here be able to procure any of the luxuries that abound in their own country. The passions that are common to us all will therefore invariably bring on disputes; and it is far preferable that both our nations should continue on the same footing they have hitherto done, allowing your ships to come and go as usual; the desire of seeing each other occasionally will preserve peace between us. The sea and the land, being always neighbors, are continually at variance, and contending who shall give way; the sea with great violence attempting to subdue the land, and the land with equal obstinacy resolving to oppose. 192

—Kwamena Ansa

This castle [Elmina Castle] has justly become famous for beauty and strength, having no equal on all the coast of Guinea. Built square with very high walls of dark brown stone so very firm from that it may be said to be cannon-proof. On the land side it has two canals always furnished with rain or fresh water sufficient for the use of the garrison and the ships-canals cut in the rock by the Portuguese by blowing up the rock little by little with gunpowder. The warehouses either for goods or provisions are very largely and stately always well furnished.

—Jean Barbot (1682)

Introduction

On 26th August, 1625, Captain Veron’s 12 sails, involving ships and yachts, together with the ships Hollantsche Thuyn, Neptunus van de Vere and Orangieboom, anchored off the coast of Sierra Leone to refresh and repair. 193 At exactly 8 o’clock in the morning of 25th September, the 15-sail fleet left the waters of Sierra Leone to the Gold Coast. The plan was to capture the Elmina Castle and make themselves masters of it. Meanwhile, an express yacht,

Postpaert, was sent ahead of the fleet with the master plan of the attack. The idea was to inform the General of the Coast (Fort Nassau), Mr. Arent Jacopsen, to prepare for their arrival. But the General was nowhere to be found. On 21st October, the fleet arrived safely near Commany where they could spot the Castle and united with four other ships. From 5th to 7th November the attack was executed. The ships Haerlem, Sphere Mundi, Oragnieboom and Omlandra anchored close to the Elmina Castle whilst the yachts Oudevaer, Zee-paerdt and Armuyden anchored close to the Elmina village. Their task was to continuously bombard the Castle from their respective positions in order to prevent the Castle cannon from targeting the 1,300 men matching towards it. Tired, they took shelter near St. Jago Hill close to the Castle. Suddenly, about 200 local soldiers who had laid ambush appeared from nowhere and pounced on them. The chief officers, who had gone to the hill to observe the Castle called out: “Alarm! Alarm!” They ran helter-skelter, and some could not get to their arms to ward off the enemy. The Dutch soldiers were slaughtered in their numbers.

In this failed expedition by the Dutch WIC, more than 440 people lost their lives. Amongst the casualties were 350 soldiers and 91 seamen. In addition, the Commander-in Chief of the fleet, Admiral Andries Veron, was killed after a fruitless struggle with his assailant. However, General Arendt Jacopsen survived the attack. This failed expedition was amongst a series of failed attacks (late 1590s, 1603, 1606 and 1615) by the Dutch in their attempt to make themselves

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194 General Arent Jacopsen was not at Fort Nassau at Moure when the yacht Postpaert arrived. The General had left for Accra earlier to demand 20 lb gold which the King owed the West Indian Company. He later returned to join the fleet on 24th October with 5 ships, soldiers and Blacks from Fort Nassau. This is aside the 15 sails under the commandership of Admiral Veron and four other ships they united with at the coast. The Dutch built Fort Nassau as their first permanent settlement on the Gold Coast in 1612 at Moure. This posed a major challenge to the Portuguese monopoly on the coast.

195 Balme Library, University of Ghana: Furley Collections, The Gold Coast 1624-1638, 40-68.
masters of the Elmina Castle.\textsuperscript{196} Most importantly, it was through lack of support from the people of Elmina that the Dutch were unable to capture the Castle on these attempts. This chapter examines the complexities of the Dutch presence in Elmina. It explores the nature of their Atlantic trade and its associated politics on the Gold Coast. Essentially, it assesses the involvement of the Dutch company or government and how they related with the natives. The chapter argues that the measures employed by the Dutch—because of Elmina being the headquarters of the Dutch possessions on the Gold Coast—largely failed due to a lack of support from the indigenous people. Thus, the Edinafo—whether blacks or the Abrofomba—sought their own economic and political interest against that of the Dutch.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{elmina-castle.png}
\caption{Elmina Castle taken from Fort Coenraadsburg on St. Jago Hill opposite. The castle flies the Dutch flag from a very tall mast and stands out brightly whitewashed. In addition to the castle we see the roadstead with three merchant ships, the Benya Lagoon with bridge, a part of the old town of Elmina with stone houses, all destroyed by the British in 1873, and part of Liverpool Street to the left and centre, with the row of new, flat-roofed, luxurious merchant’s houses dating from the 1840s. The picture was reportedly taken by an American ship’s Captain, John F. Brooks in 1865.}
\end{figure}

Source: mobious.mysticseaport.org

The Dutch and Trade

Fig. 3.2 Dutch forts and lodges on the Gold Coast

If Diego d’ Azambuja and his mission had heeded the advice of Kwamena Ansa when they came to Elmina in 1482, the nature of European and African involvement in the Atlantic commercial world would have been different. Chief Ansa, in his advice to the Portuguese mission, suggested that they “watch the waves of the sea.”197 Thus, the Portuguese should follow the waves of the sea and go back to Portugal; they could come back whenever they wish to trade. Little did they know that apart from the tropical weather being the “White Man’s Grave”, Ansa

197 Reference to epigraph; See Bayo, “Watch the Waves of the Sea,” 84.
had also meant that they would face stiffer opposition from the indigenous people when he said, “the land with equal obstinacy resolving to oppose [the sea].”

In the late 1500s when Dutch ships were returning from Brazil with cargoes of dyewood and sugar, they became aware of the wealth of gold that abounded in a place known to them as Mina. In one of the voyages to Brazil, a Dutch Merchant, Barent Eriksz, was arrested by the Portuguese when his ship accidently reached the Guinea coast because of the Guinea current. Whilst spending a year and a half as a prisoner at São Tomé, he became acquainted with the place called Elmina through a French prisoner who informed him of the wealth that abounded in the Elmina Castle and the weakness of the Portuguese garrison. After his release in 1593, Barent Eriksz started a voyage to the Gold Coast where he bought gold and other products. This development began the Dutch interest on the Gold Coast.

Having displaced the Portuguese from Elmina in 1637 and enjoyed good trade with the inhabitants of the Gold Coast, the Dutch faced daunting tasks. There was a change in the power structure from 1701. Asante toppled Denkyira, the dominant power on the Gold Coast and became the landlords of the Elmina Castle and received monthly rent or kostgeld. The trade and diplomatic relations between Asante and Elmina significantly influenced the Dutch position in Elmina and the Gold Coast. Elmina merchants consistently supplied European merchandise to Asante. Apart from Asante, the Dutch had to contend with the English whose numerous fleets rendered the Dutch trade less profitable. Moreover, the activities of interlopers and some servants of the WIC made the Dutch trade difficult. Also, the agency of the Edinafo who

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198 Bayo, “Watch the Waves of the Sea,” 84.
199 De Marees, Description and Historical Account, xix.
mediated the Atlantic commercial interactions significantly influenced the WIC and the Dutch government in Elmina. This eventually led to their departure from the Gold Coast in 1872.

By the early eighteenth century, trade was poor on the Gold Coast. Asante was involved in war with Denkyira. After the Asante conquest of Denkyira in 1701, the Dutch were expecting Asante to trade the captives and other seized items at Elmina. However, the Dutch recorded low trade that year. Hence, the Dutch government sent emissaries to establish trade relations with the Asante. Sub-Merchant Nyendael was sent to Kumasi with details of the Dutch merchandise in stock at Elmina and their prices. He was also instructed to offer gifts to various inland polities. The nature of Asante’s trade demonstrates the approach to trade by the Gold Coasters. Trade was highly unpredictable, and the prospects were based on rumours across the Gold Coast. For instance, where there were rumours of war, the local merchants diverted their trade to other trade centres across the Gold Coast or engaged in interloping. Interloping is the market system in which trade was diverted away from the mainstream monopoly of the English Royal African Company (RAC) or the WIC. Thus, the indigenous merchants were not bound to trade with one European company, although the Dutch had superficially emphasised their monopoly over the vicinity of their forts and lodges. The local traders took advantage of the various ships that anchored at the coast by engaging in interloping. This was particularly detrimental to the Dutch commercial interest because they had fewer ships. During the same period, the war between Akwamu and Akyem made trade difficult in the Dutch lodge at Ponnie. The difficulty of benefitting from the trade made the Dutch want to abandon their possessions in Accra.

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200 See Department of History Library, University of Ghana: NBKG 233, Register of Commissions & c. Issued by the Director-General Letter of Information and Instruction for sub-merchant D. V. Nyendael.

201 At Ponnie trade was quite encouraging in the 1698 since the Dutch obtained some slaves and gold from the place but the English impresses upon the King. The Portuguese also sent their ships there. See Department of History Library, University of Ghana: Dutch Documents Relating to the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast, 1680-1740: WIC, Letters from the Coast of Guinea. Van Sevenhuysen to Ass. of X, Elmina, 8th May 1699, 44.
was also war between Twifo and Denkyira. These acts of warfare kept the trade routes closed. The incessant wars do not presuppose that trade was halted but diverted to other locations. For instance, where traders found it difficult to get to Elmina due to insecurity, they either traded with the British or other visiting ships along the Gold Coast.

Generally, the Dutch intervention in the wars was to compel the vanquished to accept the victor so as to ensure that their trade functions. Thus, there was no direct Dutch involvement in the wars. Their concern was that their intervention would rather be to the benefit of those ships engaged in interloping. The Dutch recognised interloping as a general problem on the Guinea coast and particularly detrimental to Dutch commerce. Hence, they sought to increase their involvement in alternative sources of trade to shore up the shortfall: actively engage in the slave trade by increasing the number of slave ships to Allada— which seemed to be a viable way of obtaining slaves— and starting plantation farms on the Gold Coast, particularly at Shama, Butri and Axim. Dutch slave ships were, however, challenged by the British ships whilst the Dutch policy of establishing plantation farms did not meet indigenous interest.

From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century the English dispatched many ships and accepted bad or falsified gold from the local merchants which the Dutch with fewer ships rejected. For instance, in 1853, only 6 Dutch ships called at Elmina whilst there were 22 British ships. There were other ships from America, France, Portugal, Austria, amongst others,

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202 Concerning establishing plantation farms, the Dutch faced challenges including labour since the number of slaves traded on the Gold Coast was few. There were numerous British ships which were involved in the slave trade across the Guinea coast. This affected the Dutch supply to their possessions in Suriname and other places. Hence, the Dutch were resolved to import slaves from Allada to support the plantation farms. However, the trade was also impacted by competition from the British, the Portuguese and other European ships in the territory.

203 For instance, if force had been applied it was easy for them to abandon their houses to trade with other European merchants. This was particularly so in Elmina. This was a major concern to the Dutch government in Elmina since they cannot predict the nature of trade of the local merchants.

resulting in a total of 82 ships. The number was not different in the following year: 9 Dutch ships anchored at Elmina whilst 24 English ships called at the same port.\textsuperscript{205} The total number of ships this time was 71. The actual Dutch trade did not flourish as compared to the British. Yet, the Dutch government in Elmina tried to keep trade in Elmina by encouraging Asante merchants particularly, to come there rather than go elsewhere, especially to British possessions on the Gold Coast. This seemed to be a difficult task since the Dutch could not control where the people traded. This was due to the complexities of the trade on the Gold Coast. Nevertheless, one thing was assured of at Elmina: when trade improved the local people were sure that they would find anything they needed.\textsuperscript{206} Trade was also boosted when important coastal or interior merchants visited the Elmina Castle with their entourage. The Dutch government sought to encourage more of such visits by sending emissaries to the polities on the Gold Coast, especially to Asante. In pursuance of that policy, they either employed the services of Dutch officials like Nyendael, or African brokers. In the eighteenth century some of the brokers were Aboucan, Pieter Passop, Amba, Akim, etc. who were employed by the Dutch WIC.

In the early eighteenth century, whilst the poor nature of trade can be attributed to the interior wars, the activities of the Director Generals (D.G) of the Dutch in Elmina were also detrimental. For instance, the agency of van Sevenhuysen affected the Dutch trade in the early eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{207} He was a ruthless character who dealt with the local traders with cruelty. He authorised robbery of traders and their wares during trade at the Elmina Castle. Rather than trade with Dutch merchandise, D.G van Sevenhuysen would seize gold and merchandise from some of the merchants. For the traders and those seeking protection from the Castle, he sold

\textsuperscript{205} Department of History Library: Selected Documents, KVG 395, Schomerus, MVK.
\textsuperscript{206} Rømer, \textit{A Reliable Account of the Coast of Guinea}, 33.
\textsuperscript{207} Department of History: Dutch Documents, WIC 98: W. de la Palma to Ass. Of X, Elmina, 26\textsuperscript{th} June, 1970, 40.
them into slavery. D.G van Sevenhuysen worked with an Elmina broker, Akim, who also treated the local traders with cruelty. In his attempt to make up for the poor trade due to wars, his cruelty was further discouraging the local traders who mostly dominated the trade. As a result, they had the advantage of either engaging interlopers or trading with the British, Danes or Brandenburgers rather than the Dutch. Due to Sevenhuysen’s cruelty, most traders abandoned their homes in Elmina to trade in Cape Coast and other coastal politics.

One of the ways that trade was attracted was to offer gifts to urge local leaders to come to Elmina. However, power struggle between wealthy traders and the European officials threatened such policies. For instance, beginning from the eighteenth century, the power of principal traders like Edward Barter was a major difficulty for the English in Cape Coast. That of Elmina was the competing local merchants. Moreover, the local wars mostly closed the trade routes thereby reducing the amount of trade that is carried out in Elmina. In addition, unfavourable commercial and political policies of the Director General influenced the rate at which merchants came to Elmina. Thus, the activities of the local political hierarchy, principal traders and the role of European officials and the agency of interlopers or private traders, was detrimental for a successful Dutch enterprise on the Gold Coast. It was these complexities of trade and politics that characterised Dutch the enterprise.

The most profitable traders were the interlopers whose activities were a great havoc to the European trading companies. Both officials of the European companies and the indigenous traders took advantage of this market. In the interloping market goods were cheap and easier to sell than in the mainstream market. The market also provided convenience for the local traders.

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208 For the estate of John Kabes, See Daaku, *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast*, 115.
209 Daaku, 117.
who could trade adulterated gold dust, which were mostly rejected by the Dutch. The nature of interloping was so grave that in two days the Dutch could encounter about 35 ships whilst the British encountered about 80 ships from England, Barbados and Jamaica.\footnote{210} The Dutch often complained of poor trade, the truth was that trade was rather diverted away from the Dutch to the interloping ships. This was because the Dutch were careful of the goods they bought which made local merchandise less patronised in the mainstream market but highly patronised in the interloping trade.

During the 1630s the Dutch were involved in an imperial conquest of northeastern Brazil. After a successful conquest in 1636, they embarked on slave expeditions to West Africa for their sugar plantations. As intimated, their slave trading met competition from the English and French ships.\footnote{211} In the eighteenth century, Director General W. de La Palma noted that:

\begin{quote}
The slave trade, that of ours should be considered of such a nature that it should be carried on forcefully by a great number of ships. One might say that the annual provision for the colonies of Surinam and Curaçao is satisfactory, but it is also definitely true that there are so many foreign Nations as well as Dutch and Zealand interlopers who profit by taking their slave loads to the Spanish West Indies.\footnote{212}
\end{quote}

Clearly, de la Palma’s proposition was targeted at the Slave Coast rather than the Gold Coast. This is because in Albert van Dantzig’s study, “Effects of the Atlantic Slave Trade on Some West African Societies,” he maintains that “the number of slaves on the Gold Coast was always inferior to the much shorter stretch of the Slave Coast.”\footnote{213} The trade on the Gold Coast, according to the Dutch varied between slaves and gold. Indeed, the Dutch trade on the Gold

\footnote{210} Department of History Library: Dutch Documents: WIC 124, Resolutions of the Director-General and the Council at Elmina, 38-44.  
\footnote{211} Feinberg, “Africans and Europeans,” 62-63.  
\footnote{212} Department of History Library: Dutch Documents: WIC 98, W. De la Palma to Ass. Of X, Elmina, 26th June 1702.  
Coast was quite complex. According Walter Rodney, the 2nd West India Company had wanted to abandon the slave trade on the Gold Coast.\textsuperscript{214} Hence, in 1703, Jacob Van den Broucke was sent with “proper instruction” to Whydah to leverage on the European slave trade there.\textsuperscript{215} However, at various times the slave trade became “more favourable” on the Gold Coast.\textsuperscript{216} The nature of the trade was such that, where slaves were traded, the indigenous merchants also traded other commodities. Thus, the Dutch needed to encourage the European slave trade in order to improve trade in other commodities, such as gold. At Elmina, the Dutch employed the services of brokers to attract trade. However, Feinberg concedes that it was difficult to reconstruct the nature of the “slave trading system on the Gold Coast” — both catching and selling.\textsuperscript{217} This was due to the complex nature of the interactions. Whilst this is true, particularly for the people of Elmina who were involved as intermediaries, this study examines the agency of a native called Brempong Kwa Mensah who, as the accounts suggest, recruited slaves for labour during the period. These slaves later founded places like Mpeasem, a suburb of Elmina.\textsuperscript{218} They later occupied other places such as Bronibema and Brenu Akyinim.

For the people of Elmina, trade in other merchandise apart from slaves was significant. For instance, there was trade in other merchandise including gold and palm oil. Amongst the reasons for this was that Elmina Castle was a major warehouse for the Dutch. It was within this complex commercial interaction that the eighteenth-century slave trader, Ludewig Ferdinand Römer, notes that:

\textsuperscript{214} Rodney, “Gold and Slaves on the Gold Coast,” 16-17.
\textsuperscript{216} Department of History Library: Dutch Documents: WIC 98, Provisional D.G. Pieter Nuyts to Ass. Of X, Elmina, 13th November, 1705, 78.
\textsuperscript{217} Feinberg, “Africans and Europeans,” 62.
\textsuperscript{218} Yarak, “Asante and the Dutch: A Case Study in the History of Asante Administration, 1744-1873,” 62.
…all the Blacks, even though they may live 100 miles inland, know that at Elmina they can find any type of goods they desire, indeed, they can choose from amongst some hundred pieces of each kinds.219

Yet, incidences of war with the Fante and the interior wars threatened the consistency of such markets.

By the early nineteenth century, there was a collaborative effort between the British and the Dutch on the Gold Coast. The Dutch had mooted such efforts earlier, especially in order to ward off interloping ships, but they feared it would be in favour of the British. The British abolished the European slave trade in 1807 and they were bent on preventing the ships of other European nations to abandon slave trading on the Guinea coast. The Dutch also abolished slave trading in 1814, leading to a reduction in the number of Dutchmen serving on the Gold Coast. Indeed, these developments did not curtail the institution of the European slave trade due to the numerous interloping ships. One of the major collaborative efforts between the Dutch and the British in the Gold Coast was an expedition against the chief of Apollonia in the nineteenth century. However, the Dutch had Asante to contend with since Asante were engaged in a long-drawn war with the British which threatened the Dutch relation with the English. The Dutch professed neutrality in the wars. This compelled the chiefs and elders of Elmina to follow their neutrality. Amidst the chaos of war, the people of Elmina, particularly the merchants, were still inclined towards Asante. Despite an embargo by the Dutch in the nineteenth century to trade with Asante, they still supplied firearms and gunpowder to Asante.220

219 Rømer, A Reliable Account of the Coast of Guinea, 52.
220 The commercial relationship between the people of Elmina and Asante should be examined in greater length. Larry Yarak has given a snapshot of it in his 1986 article, but the study needs to involve the nature and character of both Asante and Elmina merchants from the eighteen to the nineteen centuries. Yarak’s analysis was bases on establishing the motive of Asante expansion and how it relates to the politics of Asante-Elmina relations. He pursues this by, yet again, establishing the context of the kostgeld or ‘Elmina Note’ which Asante uses to claim ownership of Elmina as subjects. See Yarak, Larry, “Elmina and Greater Asante in the Nineteenth Century,” Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, Vol. 56, No. 1 (1986): 33-36, www.jstor.org. Accessed 28th June, 2017.
Private Trade

The first West Indian Company (WIC) held absolute monopoly over the Atlantic. In practice, there was the WIC trade and that of the interlopers. The interloping market was exploited by the Gold Coast merchants and the officials of the WIC. The WIC attempted in several ways to abandon the private trade by its officials, but it still continued. In 1634, Jan Jochemsz notes the dangers:

Concerning the private trade, we seek in every way to prevent it as much as possible, but it hides its head and brings goods whose kinds are in the cargoes. It is difficult to prevent here, as they can sell the same publicly along with the company’s goods, and weigh the gold for themselves, separately; which can best be obviated by a close supervision in the fatherland [The Netherlands].

The close supervision suggested by Jan Jochemsz was pursued when the Second WIC took over in 1674. It abolished private trade because it was detrimental to the Dutch trade. However, by 1730 the Dutch WIC lost its monopoly, especially on the slave trade. Thus, the company allowed free trade for its inhabitants on payment of anchor fee. By 1754, the officials of the WIC on the Gold Coast had the permission to engage in private trade. This became a Dutch policy across the Guinea coast. Visiting ships that anchored at the Dutch trading ports were required to pay the fee. These taxes provided significant income for the WIC in the nineteenth century.

The Dutch commercial interest on the Gold Coast was not a profitable venture, unlike that of the British. J. S. Gramberg suggests three reasons for the Dutch failure on the Gold Coast. First, he believes the local people under the Dutch flag defected to the British because they received less attention from the Dutch. Thus, states like Wassa, Denkyira, Abrem and Twifo

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222 Balme Library, University of Ghana: Furley Collections: Letter from Jan Jochemsz Sticker, to the Assembly of XIX. Fort Nassau. 3rd February, 1634 (WIC. OC.11), 158-159.
were formally under the Dutch. The peace agreement between the British and Asante in the 1830s recognised the independence of these states under the British flag. Hence, these states paid their taxes to the British. Secondly, the British, whilst inciting the Fante against Asante, exchanged their gunpowder and lead for the poll tax. Lastly, Gramberg believes that the chiefs in the British territories were active participants in the surpluses of the poll tax. These reasons are significant because they describe the extent to which the Dutch interacted with local political and economic structures. The difficulty of the Dutch trade made them resolve to concentrate on exploiting indigenous goldmines and establishing a plantation economy on the Gold Coast to supplement their trade.

**Supplementing Trade**

The WIC’s attempt to get close to the goldmines in the Gold Coast was a total failure. The process began in the early eighteenth century. Whilst the mineral was mined at Brazil, they sought to include gold rich territories on the Gold Coast. However, it was a difficult venture since the indigenous Gold Coasters would not gladly deliver their mines into the hands of the Dutch company. The company enquired about the location of these mines from the traders who came to the coast and they found out that, contrary to their opinion the mines were several days’ journey into the interior. Yet, these mines are kept secret to prevent the coastal towns from having knowledge of their location. According to Director–General Pranger and the Council of Elmina Castle, attempts to own the mines would be costly. This was because applying “extreme force” would demand that the Dutch augmented the number of soldiers with local and white recruits. Meanwhile, success was not guaranteed. The challenges were that they did not have

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224 Balme Library, University of Ghana: Furley Collections, The Gold Coast, 1731-1739, 44.
225 The Dutch were able to augment the number of soldiers at the Elmina Castle through the Dutch recruitment policy for the Java expedition. The recruits were used to perform various tasks after 1831 when the first Batch of
people with knowledge of mining. Moreover, they would need several slaves or labourers and the ones that were obtained were old people and children. In addition, the white recruits could not work in the mines due to adaptation challenges. Also, internal wars had caused the decline of trade between the natives and the Dutch company. Hence, the WIC’s uncertainty about acquiring the interior gold mines—whether by force or otherwise—had ensured that they do not risk attempting to pursue it.

In the early nineteenth century, however, the Dutch government sent a delegation led by a German to examine the mining communities. The mission was to research into the possibility of mining gold on the Gold Coast. The leaders of the mission were assisted by some local miners from Elmina and Cape Coast. However, this attempt was unsuccessful. The delegation again arrived at a village in Ahanta called Dabo with a number of miners. Disregarding the warning by the native chiefs and elders, they began mining. Eventually, they realised that the place had been exploited by the natives with abandoned pits and huge wells. After incurring huge damages including the death of labourers and engineers, they abandoned the project. Moreover, the natives attached religious sentiments to gold mining with the belief that “God created the gold for the black man; if a white man wants to touch it, it is drawn deep into the earth.”

The Dutch failure to actively exploit gold became an opportunity for the merchant princes. Elmina was a relevant entrepôt for the sale of gold—apart from palm oil, maize and ivory which were traded in other Dutch places on the Gold Coast including Sekondi, Butri and Shama—and the merchants sought to take advantage of the opportunity. One of the influential merchants in

recruitment was done. It appears the attention was the East Indies rather than using them in the Gold Coast. However, there were instances when the recruits were used to enforce Dutch policies on the Gold Coast.

226 Gramsberg, Schetsen van Afrika’s Westkust, 7-8.

Elmina who attempted to extract gold scientifically in support of the Dutch gold mining policy was Carl Hendrik Bartels. Bartels abandoned the idea of extracting gold because he did not have the support of the local people. In addition, the custom disallowed any foreign involvement in their mines.\textsuperscript{228} Notably, Bartels did not have the support of the WIC who were engrossed in their own difficulty of taking advantage of the extraction, as well as the possibility of eventually leaving the Gold Coast. It should be emphasised that the European were unable to compel the local people to change the nature of their production on the Gold Coast.\textsuperscript{229} As they ensured that the European products they purchased met their standard, they were also prepared to continue the old structures of economic activities. This is also demonstrated in the Dutch inability to successfully encourage a plantation economy in their possessions on the Gold Coast.

Apart from the Dutch WIC’s inability to own the mining of gold in the Gold Coast, one of the things it did was to encourage the cultivation of plantations.\textsuperscript{230} Preliminary research by the Dutch found out that both the West coast of Africa and the interior was suitable for the cultivation of cotton plantations. By the early eighteenth century, the Dutch WIC wanted to establish cotton plantation in Shama, Butri and Axim. At Elmina, cotton was planted on the hills to the north and northeast of the St. Jago Hill. An experienced Brazilian called Rocha de Vieira was contracted on the possibility of establishing cotton plantation on the Gold Coast. Although the prospect was encouraging, the quantity that he started with was small. There was no support from the Dutch company to expand production.\textsuperscript{231} The apathy from the Dutch officials stemmed

\textsuperscript{228} Although some of the Euro-Africans or tapoeyers acknowledge their blood relation with the local people, they were not considered as part of Elmina, since they served as agents of the Dutch. Consequently, it necessitated the creation of a Euro-African asafo to claim some legitimacy in the community.

\textsuperscript{229} See Daaku, \textit{Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast}, 24.

\textsuperscript{230} Department of History Library, University of Ghana: Dutch Documents Relating to the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast: WIC 98, W. De la Palma to Ass. Of X, Elmina, 20\textsuperscript{th} June 1702.

\textsuperscript{231} On the personal level Mr. da Rocha Vieira was hardly understood by the Dutch personnel. It is also believed he was not encouraged because he took more salary than the Dutch bookkeeper.
from the difficulty in accessing the interior land and a lack of interest from the local farmers. It was also because the main preoccupation was fishing and trade, particularly in Elmina. Thus, people were not attracted to plantation farming. Most of the local people found it difficult to adapt to the plantation farms. By the 1840s, the prospect of cotton production near Cape Coast by some Cape Coast entrepreneurs including Francis Swanyz and F. L. Hutton was encouraging to the WIC. Amongst these merchants were C. Bannerman of Winneba and W. M. Lutterodt of Accra. By 1850, however, the cotton planted in Cape Coast was halted because of insect infestation.\textsuperscript{232} This also discouraged the WIC.

Apart from cotton the cultivation of tobacco was also experimented on the Gold Coast. Whilst some personnel in the service of the WIC supported the plantation, there was general apathy from the Dutch headquarters at Elmina. The Dutch government in Elmina attempted to inspire the local people to be involved in the plantations farming but there was poor response. The irresponsiveness on the part of the natives of Elmina also buttresses the point that the indigenous traders did not accept the measures introduced by the Dutch government but pursued programmes that favoured their own interest.\textsuperscript{233} They still supplied products like palm oil which was still in high demand and traded in other commodities including gold dust. Hence, they were significant in maintaining trade relations on the Gold Coast. Yet, the Dutch did not have the men to compel the states into establishing a plantation economy. J. S. G. Gramberg was one of the Dutch officials who attempted to encourage plantation farming amongst the local people in Shama.\textsuperscript{234} He sought to prove that the soil was suitable when the right methods were adopted.

\textsuperscript{233} See DeCorse, \textit{An Archaeology of Elmina}, 144.
\textsuperscript{234} Jeekel, C. A. \textit{Onze Bezittingen op de Kust van Guinea}, (Amsterdam: C. F. Stemler, 1869), 3.
Gramberg cultivated cotton, groundnuts, flax, hemp, tobacco and coffee. However, when he exited Shama for Europe his plantation farm collapsed.

The Dutch government in Elmina could not have access to indigenous lands, unlike in the East Indies. Meanwhile, the Dutch were also unwilling to commit resources into developing plantation across the Gold Coast. Having estimated the cost involved, coupled with the poor knowledge of the tropical environment by planters, although they expressed their wish for encouraging the cultivation, they were unwilling to support the cultivation. For instance, the Dutch interest in palm oil across the Gold Coast ensured that the local merchants were involved in its production and delivery. In 1834, the Dutch governor at the Elmina Castle consented to pay the chief of Ahanta a *kostgeld* of 2 *Romaals* every month for the promotion of the palm oil trade. However, they did not demonstrate the same commitment towards the cultivation of plantation farms; the Dutch wanted the initiative to be led by the local farmers. However, it was the *Abrofomba* merchants who pursued the development of plantation farms without help from the WIC and the local people, although based on slave labour. In Elmina, one of the merchants who was engaged in the cultivation of cotton in the 1850s was the *Burgamaster* (Mayor) Hansjorie. Whilst the product was of high quality, after several attempts, the Mayor stopped production.

The Dutch government in Elmina sought to establish a plantation economy on the Gold Coast in the early eighteenth century. During the period, the government resolved that any Dutch personnel who had a child with the local women had an obligation to take the child to the

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Netherlands at their own expense for formal education.\textsuperscript{237} This policy would ensure that the plantation economy that was to be established on the Gold Coast would be managed by the \textit{Abrofomba} who were knowledgeable in the plantations. This consequently created the situation for the privileges of education and support experienced by some of the \textit{Abrofomba} who became influential merchants.\textsuperscript{238} Amongst the resolutions was a clause that the \textit{Abrofomba} that were five to six years of age should be specially housed and educated in craft specialisation as well as in how to establish cotton plantation. The policy, however, failed in enhancing the Dutch commercial interest on the Gold Coast, although many of the \textit{Abrofomba} had the benefit of being educated by their Dutch fathers. For instance, Larry Yarak, examining the position of the \textit{Abrofomba} in the context of plantation farms argues that although they took advantage of the plantation economy, their contribution was not substantial to augment the Dutch commerce on the Gold Coast.\textsuperscript{239}

The failure of the Dutch policy to educate the \textit{Abrofomba} to pursue economic ventures was a part of their failure to drive the establishment of a plantation economy in the Gold Coast. Unlike in the East Indies where Europeans succeeded in creating a plantation economy, it was difficult on the Gold Coast due to labour challenges and the close ties of these \textit{Abrofomba} with their African mothers. It was also due to their inability to access the interior lands. Concerning the position of slaves on the Gold Coast, they enjoyed some rights and could buy their freedom.\textsuperscript{240} Such

\textsuperscript{237} Department of History Library, University of Ghana: Dutch Documents Relating to the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast: WIC 124, Resolutions Concerning Morals and Religion, 41–42.
\textsuperscript{238} An example is Nicolaas Mattheus van der Noot who sent his two sons, Nicolaas and Matthijs (or Mattheus) to The Netherlands, more specifically to the island of Texel, close to the mid-18\textsuperscript{th} century. The children were born of a slave woman and a free woman respectively. See Doortmont, Michel R., “The Dutch Slave Trade as Family Business: The Case of the van der Noot de Gietere ─ van Bakergem Family,” in The Transatlantic Slave Trade: Landmarks, Legacies, Expectations, ed. James Kwesi Anquandah, Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, Michel R. Doortmont (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007), 123.
\textsuperscript{239} See Yarak, “West African Coastal Slavery in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Afro-European Slave owners of Elmina.”
\textsuperscript{240} Perbi, \textit{A History of Indigenous Slavery}, 3.
complexities pertaining to slavery on the Gold Coast made it difficult for the Dutch and their Abrofomba allies to mobilise labour effectively for their plantation plans. The Dutch difficulty of exploiting indigenous slaves was compounded by the abolition of the European slave trade. In Elmina, Yarak maintains that slaves had the ability to bring up legal cases against their owners.\textsuperscript{241} This characterised the servant-master relations between the Abrofomba plantation farmers and their slaves. More so, although the ‘mulatto’ impact in Elmina was strong due to the Abrofomba’s close ties with their Dutch fathers, J. T. Levers argues, their absorption into the Akan lineage was influential. As a result, the Abrofomba could not meet the Dutch policy of serving as commercial and political agents. Moreover, they also found challenges in exploiting indigenous structures like the status of slaves on the Gold Coast.\textsuperscript{242}

Natalie Everts argues that there was no Abrofomba identity in Elmina.\textsuperscript{243} Although, they were highly respected by the indigenous people, the Abrofomba successfully related with their African background. During the period, most of the Abrofomba recognised the worldviews of their African mothers, although they benefitted from the privileges bestowed on them by their Dutch fathers. They were easily persuaded because of their cultural affinity with their African root rather than that of their European fathers, although their education was intended to turn them otherwise. Their education was meant to use them as a tool to exploit the resources of the indigenous people. However, they rather negotiated with the chiefs and elders as well as the local people against the wishes of the Dutch WIC. Also, the success of some of these Abrofomba in commercial enterprises, and as Dutch officials, was due to their acknowledgment as a having

\textsuperscript{241} Yarak, “West African Coastal Slavery in the Nineteenth Century,” 53.
Dutch lineage. Yet, the Dutch government was unable to adequately use them to exploit the indigenous economy. Thus, they did not lend themselves to the policy of making them Dutch commercial and political brokers in Elmina in particular, and the Gold Coast generally.

From the early nineteenth century, the Dutch attention was, however, turned towards the East Indies due to its success in establishing a plantation economy there. Indonesia became the most important Dutch empire during the period. Unlike Elmina, the Dutch government in Indonesia had control over land which it leased to European farmers. This made their holding there the most prominent spice and cash crop trade from the nineteenth to the twentieth-century. Becoming a plantation economy, they exported staples like tin, copra, and petroleum. There were commodities including tea, rubber, tobacco, coffee and sugar. By the nineteenth century, “the East Indies were the only profitable part of the Dutch overseas empire.”

In the early nineteenth century, the Dutch superiority was threatened by some natives of Java, at a time that the slave trade was abolished. As a result, the Dutch government in Elmina started recruiting African soldiers to fight on their behalf; it also became an opportunity for indentured slaves to buy their freedom. According to the terms of the recruitment, each recruit was paid sums equivalent in gold for accepting the offer. For instance, two oz. of gold was paid to a recruit. They were also given 2 achies for other expenses. During the recruitment exercise,

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244 Plantation farms here describe farms that can sustain the export trade. Majority of the Abrofomba, including Jacob Simons, Coroline Huydecoper, etc. owned plantation farms in the nineteenth century. Yet, these farms can be best regarded as subsistence farms since they did not support Dutch export during the period. These farms became important during the Asante-British wars in the eighteenth century which resulted in food crisis in Elmina. Plantation economies were rather efficient in the West Indies, especially in Indonesia and the Suriname. See Yarak, “West African Coastal Slavery in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Afro-European Slaveowners of Elmina.”


246 Hart, Empires and Colonies, 201.


248 Department of History Library, University of Ghana: Selected Documents, Elmina and Its neighbours, 1836-1876, Extracts-Furley Collection, 177.
Elmina was designated as the African Recruiting Depot. Indeed, the nature of recruitment was so complex that prisoners of war in the Gold Coast became significant as recruits for the war in Java. There were women and men alike who served in various positions. Whilst Elmina recruits were not forthcoming, the Dutch established another recruitment depot in Kumasi. In Kumasi, the Asantehene supplied slaves to serve the Dutch army in the East Indies.\(^{249}\) This development became very significant for the Dutch and formed a major policy throughout the mid-nineteenth century until their departure from the Gold Coast in 1872.

Among the recruits were the inhabitants of Elmina who were sent to Java to serve in various capacities, as soldiers and in the administration. For instance, amongst the notable inhabitants of Elmina were Pieter Bartels, who was exiled to Java to perform administrative roles due to his involvement in a local rebellion against the Dutch, and Jacob Abraham De Veer who served as a consular agent in the East Indies for 14 years.\(^{250}\) Their activities significantly impacted the Dutch involvement in the Java War (1825-1830) and the Aceh War (1873-1904) respectively.\(^{251}\) One of the inhabitants who was recruited into the Dutch army was Corporal Jan Kooi who reportedly adopted the Dutch name upon his recruitment.\(^{252}\) Jan Kooi joined the Dutch East Indies army in 1869. Between 1874 and 1879 he was involved in several military expeditions which earned him several recognitions.

**Conclusion**

\(^{249}\) Department of History Library: University of Ghana: Selected Documents, Elmina and Its neighbours, 1836-1876, Extracts-Furley Collection, 177.
\(^{250}\) PRAAD (Accra): ADM 11/1/1111.
\(^{251}\) It is not clear the various capacities the Africans served in the war. This deserves further research to determine the involvement of the Africans in the Java war and particularly how that enhanced the success of the Dutch in the war and the Dutch Empire in the East Indies. Like Pieter Bartels who was exiled, some prisoners were also deployed to Java to serve the Dutch East Indies army. The Aceh war was an armed military conflict between the Sultanate of Aceh and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
Elmina Castle was the Dutch headquarters from 1637 to 1872. Developments in Elmina such as the poor nature of Dutch trade impacted Dutch relation in other Dutch lodges across the Gold Coast, although isolated development at the various Dutch forts and lodges may be impactful. The relationship between the Dutch government and the local Elmina government, or other Dutch areas, had been symbiotic. Dutch imperialism on the Gold Coast was unstable. Having established monopoly in the Atlantic trade after toppling the Portuguese, the Dutch were unable to maintain that monopoly for long. Hence, from 1730, the Dutch recognised private trade. Significantly, the Dutch created a liberal environment for all parties involved in the Atlantic commerce. Having realised the unprofitability of their Atlantic commercial interest, they were resolved to get into the interior to exploit the gold resources. Local factors, however, made such expeditions unsuccessful. Also, they were unable to rip the benefit of a plantation economy, unlike in the East Indies. Moreover, their political hold on the Gold Coast, particularly in Elmina, always confronted local political forces. This became pronounced in the nineteenth century. In addition, the Dutch were unable to adequately exploit the services of brokers and commercial agents who represented their interests. More so, the same fate befell their Abrofomba agents. Indeed, the West Indies became the only profitable Dutch colony, and the Gold Coasters recruited through Elmina were used to protect Java against local rebellion.
CHAPTER FOUR

BROKERS, RULERS AND CITIZENS

Tekki’s Affair

On 8th June, 1732, three Elmina chiefs (Codja Comma, Ando and Eduama Eseram), the broker, Aboucan, an employee of the West India Company (WIC), six elders of Elmina (Mysang Arompo, Andowie, Assera, Botju, Bobier Ahinsan and Abiou), and the Braffo of the town, Aquammin Osiepo, were summoned to the Elmina Castle. Their presence at the Castle was to swear an oath against Tekki, a native in the service of the WIC. The Director-General of the Castle, Jan Pranger, accused him of engaging in bad conduct regarding his duty to the Dutch company. Meanwhile, the chiefs and elders agreed that Tekki’s activities as an assistant broker was detrimental to trade and threatened the internal peace of the Elmina community. As a result, they unanimously decided to banish him from the Gold Coast to Surinam, without which there

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253 The ‘chiefs’ as mentioned above represent the people recognised as having the overall political power. At this stage it is significant to note that Elmina was largely governed by wards. The leaders of the wards became the elders of the community. From the seventeenth-century to the eighteenth century the Dutch documents made reference to ‘chiefs’ rather than a ‘single’ individual. Yet, care must be taken since throughout the interaction in Elmina, some people had acquired the status as a chief due to the economic role they played in the Atlantic commerce. This acquired chiefly-status, however, did not possess political power. The ‘broker’ was mainly employed by the West Indian Company to attract trade to the Elmina Castle and represent the company’s interest in other matters, as they were very influential people. It appears in the early eighteenth century, and before, that the office of a ‘broker’ was the most formidable in the Atlantic interaction. This is because they were the glaring merchant class. Kwame Daaku notes that, at this point, the Abrofomba merchants were not significant in trade on the Gold Coast unlike in Senegambia; See Daaku, Trade and Politics, 98. The Abrofomba merchants became important during the late eighteenth century and much of the nineteenth century. The Braffo of Fante also means the Commander-in-Chief. For details on the office of the Baffo, see Shumway, Rebecca. The Fante and Transatlantic Slave Trade (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2011), 121-124; See Balme Library: Furley Collections, The Gold Coast, 1731-1739. Extracts from the Journals, Correspondence with out-forts, Dispatches &c, of the Director-General of The NETHERLAND WEST INDIA COMPANY, 47-49.

254 Jan Pranger was the Director-General of the WIC from 6th March, 1730 – 13th March, 1734. He was present on the Gold Coast by 1720. See H. Feinberg, “Director Generals of the Netherlands West India Company: an accurate list for the eighteenth Century,” Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 130 (1974), no: 2/3, Leiden, 306-312, 310.
would be no peace amongst the “inhabitants living under the Castle.” The delegation further agreed to take full responsibility of all debts Tekki owed the WIC.

Brokers were major players in the Atlantic commercial interactions on the Gold Coast. The above episode illustrates empirically the centrality of brokers to the trade generally and in terms of the creation of a liaison between the town and the Dutch company during the Atlantic commerce. At the same time, however, brokers were individuals looking after their own private commercial interest. As Tekki’s Affair demonstrates, the Atlantic commercial interactions involved a complex enactment of political and commercial interests of individual brokers, the WIC, and the Elmina community. Whereas the WIC and the brokers appeared to be driven by purely economic motives, they were nevertheless, immersed in the political and socio-cultural context of Elmina. The punitive intervention of the town’s political elite against Tekki indicates that they were willing to use their political and cultural clout to maintain a peaceful and conducive atmosphere for the trade that made their town an Atlantic trade entrepôt. Above all, the Tekki Affair shows that the Elmina government was an influential and indispensable actor and a mediator in the Atlantic commerce. Interactions of this kind became a common feature of Atlantic commercial interactions on the Gold Coast, particularly in the nineteenth century. This chapter establishes the involvement of brokers, the political elite and the inhabitants of Elmina in the Atlantic commerce. The roles played by them emphasises their influence on the Dutch interest on the Gold Coast. Thus, their independent interests became a bulwark against the Dutch commercial success.

255 The “inhabitants living under the Castle” suggests the immediate community close to the Castle. Tekki was exiled to Surinam since the territory came under Dutch possession in the 17th Century. In the late seventeenth century, an influential Dutch broker called Accameny who was the brother of the chief of Eguafo was also exiled to Surinam. He was alleged to have helped the people of Komenda against the Dutch. See Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, 105.

256 This may not necessarily mean ‘debt’ but the estate (or property) owned by Tekki as a broker of the WIC.
Brokers and Commercial Agents

The position of a broker in Elmina was very complicated one but significant to Dutch interest on the Gold Coast, from the early eighteenth century. The broker was an employee of the WIC. The occupier of the office complements the work of the Director General. The individual’s role involves embarking on political, economic and diplomatic missions. The fundamental duty of the broker was to attract trade to the Elmina Castle. Thus, he serves as an emissary to other states on the Gold Coast to attract traders. The individual also mediates the transactions between the traders and the officials at the Elmina Castle on behalf of the WIC. Another area the broker was highly influential was the interloping market for his personal trade. The broker’s activities in that market involved buying merchandise from the interloping ships— and the Dutch or British forts— and selling them to traders on the Gold Coast. However, these roles were, for some, overshadowed by the extent of their involvement in the politics of the Gold Coast. Thus, the individual who held the position was politically inclined. He had a number of slaves who worked for him. His influence on the Gold Coast was either respected or feared by the inhabitants. The broker was also revered by the rulers of Elmina. Apart from some who built good relations with the chief and elders of Elmina, others had been at loggerhead with them. This was due to their activities in Elmina, which threatened interaction amongst the people. For instance, Akim and Tekki’s exploit as brokers of the WIC stained relations with the rulers of Elmina. In addition, the broker was respected by the Dutch officials. Also, the position was occupied by a highly informed individual who was abreast of the culture and traditions of the inhabitants of the Gold Coast. Their activities preceded that of the merchants and entrepreneurs of the late eighteenth and much of the nineteenth century.

In the eighteenth century, the brokers were the wealthiest agents and merchants in Dutch
tories on the Gold Coast. It is unclear how they were recruited but it appears their appointment was based on recommendations. For instance, Aboucan recommended Tekki to be his assistant after the death of Cobbena Pantyn, a native of Elmina, although the idea was kicked against by some Dutch officials. Apparently the brokers were participants in the Atlantic trade which made them ideal for the position because of its complex roles. Consequently, they became the “commercial agents” of the WIC and attracted trade to the Elmina Castle. However, some of these agents used their office to seize goods of traders who came to Elmina. For instance, Akim and Tekki’s activities greatly affected trade at the Elmina Castle because they were involved in the falsification of gold as well as the capture and sale of traders into slavery.

Akim worked with Director-General van Sevenhuysen. He was an inhabitant and citizen of Eguafo prior to coming to Elmina. Generally in Elmina, migration of people from other places to settle was a commonplace. This was largely responsible for the cosmopolitan nature of the population. It resulted in the formation of trade diasporas or wards in Elmina. Together with Director General Sevenhuysen, Akim made life difficult for the traders who came to Elmina. A letter written by the new Director-General William de la Palma confirmed some activities of Akim and van Sevenhuysen:

After our arrival here [Elmina.] we found that the trade and their blood, in such a way that the natives were in terror of having anything to do with the Hollanders. By whom that was caused, I believe you know so well that it is not necessary to

257 Feinberg, “Africans and Europeans,” 109. Joan van Sevenhuysen (Sevenhuysen) was appointed as the Director-General on 14th November, 1685. He did not immediately start his service until the 1690s. His service ended on 16th May, 1702 and he left the Gold Coast on 27th July, 1702.
258 It is not clear when Akim was appointed by the WIC as a broker. But it appears his appointment was curtailed in 1702 when Director-General Sevenhuysen was replaced by Director-General De la Palma.
259 Department of History Library, University of Ghana: E. F. C. Notebooks Pages, Gold Coast: Letter, Director-General W. de la Palma to David van Nyendaal (in Ashanti) (Enclosure (3) to de la Palma’s letter to Chamber, Amsterdam, Sept. 25 infra), 7.
260 Feinberg, “Africans and Europeans,” 82.
inform you; but the broker Akim, the natives say was the chief tyrant, so his master has the greatest guilt.261

Director General van Sevenhuysen orders for unlawful seizure of goods and Akim executes the orders. Apparently the action of van Sevenhuysen, amongst others, was due to the bad trade on the Gold Coast in the early eighteenth century. This was largely because of the war between Asante and Denkyira. Thus, van Sevenhuysen attempted to compensate for the losses through abducting traders and seizing their goods. Some of the Director Generals always attempted to present a good report of the Gold Coast trade to their superiors in the Netherland. Thus, it was to enable van Sevenhuysen present a good report of the trade on the Gold Coast that he granted Akim the power to:

Control…direct… and to suppress the disputes of the natives with such absolute domination and extortion of their goods that more than two-thirds of the inhabitants had retired from Elmina and placed themselves under the protection of the English, Danes and Brandenburgers; consequently, there are only about 1,000 men capable of bearing arms instead of 12,000 formerly in case of an attack by European.262

This development posed a major challenge for the new Director General, William de la Palma.263 To bring back the traders, he was “endeavouring by all possible means to give the embittered natives of the whole coast an impression of our directorate.”264 He sought to achieve this by offering gifts to the traders. An example of the way Akim pursued his work involved he, Akim, and another broker, Akoe.265 Akoe provided 17 bendas of gold to Akim for new merchandise.266

261 Department of History Library, University of Ghana: E. F. C. Notebooks Pages, Gold Coast: Letter, Director-General W. de la Palma Elmina to David van Nyendaal, 7.
262 E. F. C. Notebooks Pages: WIC 97, Letter (extract) Director General William de la Palma, Elmina to Association of Ten W.I.C. Amsterdam, 9.
263 W. de la Palma was the Director General of the Elmina Castle from 16th May 1702 to 17th October 1705 when he died.
264 E. F. C. Notebooks Pages: WIC 98: Letter (extract) Director General William de la Palma, Elmina to Presiding Chamber, Amsterdam WIC, 8.
265 It is unclear if Akoe was an assistant to Akim. That seems to be the likelihood. Otherwise, Akoe would be a broker in other Dutch forts on the Gold Coast.
266 E. F. C. Notebooks Pages: WIC 98, enclosure “M” in De la Palma to Ass. Of X, 17th July, 1702, 54.
Under orders of the Director General van Sevenhuysen, Akim seized the gold, together with all the merchandise supplied to Akoe, under the pretext that they were bad goods. This meant that Akoe obtained the goods from interlopers but not from the Elmina warehouse. Such deceptions were common in Akim’s activities.\footnote{It appears such deceptions were common on the Gold Coast, both English and Dutch territories. In W. Huydecoper’s expedition to Asante in the early nineteenth century, he reported that Asante merchants, who had gone to Cape Coast to trade due to the adulteration of gunpowder by some Dutch merchants in Elmina, also suffered the same fate when Cape Coast merchants there were used to deceiving them to seize their goods. See \textit{Journal of the Visit to Kumasi} by W. Huydecoper, 1816-1817. Translated by G.W. Irwin. Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.} Another broker whose agency was significant on the Gold Coast was Pieter Passop. Unlike Akim, Passop’s role emphasises an independent and a political character.

Passop who succeeded Akim, was a brother-in-law of the chief of Akwamu and was highly revered on the Gold Coast.\footnote{Dutch Documents Relating to the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast: WIC 98, Enclosure No. 4: Report by W. De La Palma about his Voyage to the Factories at Apam and Accra, 61.} He was followed by Aboucan and Amba, respectively. It appears the emergence of the \textit{Abrofomba} merchants from the second half of the eighteenth century and the centrality of the rulers of Elmina suppressed the significance of the brokers. Feinberg emphasises that Elmina became significantly politicised during the period in relation to developments on the Gold Coast.\footnote{Feinberg, “Africans and Europeans,” 111.} This was a sharp contrast to the agency of Pieter Passop and Aboucan. These developments were amidst the acceptance of private trade after the Dutch gave up their monopoly on the Gold Coast in 1730.\footnote{See Daaku, \textit{Trade and Politics}, 105.} It was within these changes in Dutch interaction with the Gold Coast that Pieter Passop emerged. In the late seventeenth century, Passop was part of a delegation sent to the Akwamu chief, Basua, in 1693.\footnote{Dutch Documents Relating to the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast: WIC 98: No. 2 to W. de la Palma to Ass. Of X, 10\textsuperscript{th} Oct. 1703: Report by Jac. Van den Broucke & Nic. Du Bois on their Voyage to Akwamu.} In the delegation Passop served as an interpreter to the Dutch government. The delegation was sent to urge the chief of Akwamu to avoid giving Christianborg Castle to other nations apart from the Danish and the Dutch.
Amongst the agreement that was signed, the parties decided that the inhabitants of Akwamu will have no “authorisation” to trade with interlopers on behalf of the chief. However, if the Dutch company experience shortage of any commodity, the chief would have to inform the “commanding Merchant at the Dutch fort in Accra.”

They also agreed that:

The King shall have to allow, and eat assurance (take an oath) upon it, that all those who go to buy goods from interlopers and who are not his subjects, and bring (those goods) with daring self-assurance into the bay of the Dutch fort, that they are arrested and their goods confiscated, of which the King will profit by receiving one third (of those goods), in order to prevent that evil trade which does nothing but cause the ruin of the Dutch Company.

Clearly, Pieter Passop rose to prominence due to his involvement in the politics of trade on the Gold Coast. His influence extended beyond Elmina. In the early eighteenth century when war was a major issue on the Gold Coast, according to the Dutch documents, Passop was instrumental in maintaining peace amongst the inhabitants from Axim to Accra. Though the Dutch had been unable to stop the war by “promises and threat[s]”, “our great broker Pieter Passop… had made such an impression amongst the blacks by his well-known valour and knowledge of their acts of war.” Passop was also a prolific trade agent. On many occasions he was significant in attracting traders to Elmina. One of the ways he did this was his ability to encourage old Akani traders to Elmina in the early eighteenth century. The Akani traders often

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272 Dutch Documents Relating to the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast: WIC 98: Enclosure No. 5: Agreement between Willem de la Palma in the name of Their Highmightinesses of the State-General of the United Netherlands as well as their General Chartered West Indian Company on the Coast of Africa on the one side, with Aquando, King of Aquamboe [Akwamu] as well as his Councillors and Principal Chiefs on the Other. 62.

273 Dutch Documents Relating to the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast: WIC 98. Enclosure No. 5, 62. This agreement was significant because the Dutch seem to be exploiting the indulgence of the chief of Akwamu in the Atlantic commerce. It also emphasises the Dutch intention of subjecting their monopoly on certain parts of the Gold Coast.


traded with the Dutch at the Elmina Castle but war had ensured that they traded elsewhere.²⁷⁶ These traders “controlled more than two-thirds of the inland gold.” According to Kwame Daaku, the Akani traders often hoarded their commodities until other European traders arrived at the coast.²⁷⁷ But Passop was influential in encouraging them to come to Elmina. It was also at a time when the English were involved in a misunderstanding with majority of the inhabitants of the Gold Coast.²⁷⁸ Significantly, Pieter Passop became a special Dutch representative in Commany.²⁷⁹ This ensured that he informs the Dutch at Elmina about developments in Commany.²⁸⁰ He also had slaves in other places including Saboe and Fetue. Although Pieter’s role as a commercial agent was significant to the Dutch commercial interest on the Gold Coast, that of Aboucan encapsulates wealth and power on the Gold Coast.

It is unclear when Aboucan became a broker of the WIC and when he ended his service with the Dutch. It is, however, certain that Aboucan was influential in that he acted as a “commercial agent” and was actively involved in his own private trade. He did this by buying Dutch merchandise including gunpowder. He owned what was known as a “Salt Crom,” or Salt Village in Elmina.²⁸¹ Aboucan’s Salt Village was so important that it became a point of dispute between the Edinafo and the Fante. This dispute was started by one Ahenagua of Commany who destroyed Aboucan’s Salt Village in his anger.²⁸² He set fire to stores of salt, grain and yam at

²⁷⁷ Daaku, Trade and Politics, 60.
²⁷⁸ Department of History Library, University of Ghana E. F. C. Notebooks Pages: WIC 98, Letter, Director-General Pieter Nuyts Elmina to Ass. Of Ten WIC. Amsterdam-Elmina., 44.
²⁷⁹ Commany was an important trade ally of the Dutch WIC; Nuyt’s Diary, E. F. C. Notebooks Pages, 60.
²⁸⁰ It appears Commany at this time was an important trade contact of the Dutch. As a result, they Dutch government in Elmina always ensured that they were abreast of development there. Pieter Passop, hence, served as an ambassador to Commany on behalf of the Dutch government in Elmina.
²⁸¹ E. F. C. Notebooks Pages: Letter from Commany (vid. Bosch) 9th Dec., 142.
²⁸² It is not clear what the provocation was but the period was full of such altercations between the Fante and the Edinafo. One reason was because of Asante and it appears the Fante were targeting pro-Asante agents. See E. F. C. Notebooks Pages: Valckenier to Tinker Cape Coast, 142.
the Salt Village. In this confrontation, Aboucan was able to singlehandedly organise an army under the Dutch flag to invade his attackers.

The involvement of Aboucan in the Fante wars against Elmina should be stressed here. In the 1720s, Aboucan was accused by the Fante of supplying gunpowder to Asante, based on rumours. This development attests to the significance of rumours on the Gold Coast. For instance, whilst Fante were planning to attack Asante, rumours went that:

... Abocan is playing the rogue. There are again a large number of Ashantees at Elmina, who are buying nothing but muskets, powder and ball which is evidence that Abocan is on the side of the Ashantees and is against the Fantees.

These rumours changed Fante intention by including Elmina in the attack. Yet, the Fante specially informed the rulers of Elmina that Aboucan is the only one who could prevent the attack by sending “principal men” to them to settle their differences. The anger of the Fante was so great that the traders of Apam refused to sell grains to Aboucan’s servant.

The differences between the Fante and the people of Elmina did not escalate into war after Aboucan was able to appease them. The nature of the confrontation between Aboucan and the Fante demonstrates the extent of influence some of the brokers wielded. The Dutch government in Elmina was, however, not involved in the altercation. Aboucan’s influence is also seen in the Tekki’s Affair.

By the 1730s, Aboucan had built a strong reputation amongst the rulers of Elmina. This ensured that the rulers assisted him to exile Tekki who was equally influential. Whilst mischievously attempting to kill Aboucan and become the chief broker, Tekki threatened the rulers of Elmina.

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283 Feinberg, “Africans and Europeans,” 159.
284 E. F. C. Notebooks Pages: Letter from Tinker (Cape Coast), 142.
285 E. F. C. Notebooks Pages: Letter from Moure (Ockers), 151.
286 E. F. C. Notebooks Pages: Letter from Moure (Ockers), 152.
287 E. F. C. Notebooks Pages: Letter from Apam (Raems), 159.
that someday, they will come to him “pawning like dogs (Just as the notorious Makelaar, Akim, had done under Mr. van Sevenhuysen’s Direction).”

Tekki was appointed as an assistant broker based on Aboucan’s recommendation. Apart from the planned murder of Aboucan, the elders also accused Tekki of being behind the production of false gold. Falsification of gold in the early eighteenth century was a common development. In addition, the rulers maintained that Tekki had been responsible for the murder of a number of Elmina natives and traders including one Jas Aplocoe.

With this, the Elmina government was fully convinced that Tekki had blood-ties with the Fante. President Francois Barovius, president of Dutch interest on the Gold Coast from 1740 to 1741, once notes that the people of Elmina “had friends and blood relatives” everywhere, far and near. Hence, the chiefs and elders did not want a public execution of Tekki lest the Fante might come to his rescue with another war which would destabilise the peace of the community. The elders and chiefs made themselves fully responsible for the consequences. They seized Tekki’s bad gold and slaves. Unable to prove his innocence, he was exiled to Surinam as a slave.

In 1738, a year after Aboucan’s death, Tekki’s affair resurfaced again. This time, a group of Fantes from Anomabo, Great Commany and Bremboe went to Elmina to lay claim to Tekki’s estate, led by another Fante man who claimed to be a blood relative of Tekki. However, the people of Elmina were able to suppress that mutiny. The development demonstrates the extent of influence possessed by the brokers on the Gold Coast. The argument holds that, like the agency of Pieter Passop and Aboucan, the broker held political power in Elmina. This power must be distinguished from those held by the rulers of Elmina. That of the broker was due to their wealth.

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288 Balme Library: Furley Collections, the Gold Coast, 1731-1739, 80.
289 Feinberg, “Africans and Europeans,” 81. President Francois Barovius was the President of Dutch interest on the Gold Coast from 17th March, 1740 to 8th March 1741.
290 E. F.C. Notebooks Pages: Elmina, 177-178.
Thus, their involvement in the Atlantic commerce projects the dynamism of local agency, and local power as well as identity. These are significant themes for understanding the involvement of the people in the Atlantic commerce. These features were very glaring in the nineteenth century, which projects a different mode of interaction amongst the traders and rulers in Elmina.

The broker was the most influential personality during the early eighteenth century. Their agency can be compared to that of John Kabes of Komenda and John Konny of Ahanta. John Kabes was a trader, ruler, farmer and broker who owned “a lucrative salt pan, like Aboucan of Elmina.” However, John Kabes projected an independent character, perhaps, more than the Elmina brokers. He also represented English interest and held more political power than that of the Elmina brokers. Kwame Daaku argues that the intricate nature of his character makes it difficult to appraise, like the Elmina brokers. Distinctions can be made from the role played by the brokers and that of the Elmina merchants. It appears the position of the broker, at least in the early eighteenth century, had been influential due to their involvement as Dutch agents and independent traders in their own right. The subsequent brokers included Amba (1741-1748, Quouw Mysang (1767-1780s), Quammena (1790s). Amongst these brokers, Amba was most influential. He was once involved in a fierce fight with Aboucan on 3rd and 4th April, 1736. The intervention of the Director-General de Bordes made him respected by the Edinafo. However, there was a sharp contrast between the role of the brokers in Elmina and John Kabes. Kabes was a merchant and used his political position with the English to assert his authority. Although Elmina merchants were also affluent, their influence was not a threat to the English, the Dutch

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292 Daaku, 115.
293 Director General Martinus Francois de Bordes (April 7, 1736-March 16, 1740) succeeded Anthony van Overbeke (13th March, 1734-2nd April, 1736).
and the Elmina leaders. This can be attributed to the mediation of the leaders of Elmina and the inhabitants.

The Local Government and the People

The office of the Elmina chief and the elders were relevant in the Atlantic commerce, not as brokers or merchants, but as equal stakeholders in the Atlantic commercial interactions. Together with some influential members of the community, the chiefs and elders formed the Elmina local government. The office of the local government was recognised by the Dutch authority as an important political organisation. Harvey Feinberg argues to this regard, by emphasising the evolution of Elmina’s political structure. Feinberg maintains that population increase due to the involvement of the people in the Atlantic trade relations was an immense contributory factor to the growth of its political institution in the eighteenth century. Thus, Elmina’s political structure detached itself from the control of the Dutch government at the Elmina Castle. This study, however, establishes that the growth of Elmina’s political institution, which asserts itself as a sovereign state, significantly impacted the Dutch commercial interest on the Gold Coast, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The study acknowledges the politics of Dutch imperialism on the Gold Coast which was largely a failure as compared to the English. By the nineteenth century the East Indies were the only profitable part of the Dutch overseas empire. In the case of Elmina, however, the Dutch sought to exploit the services of the Abrofomba as political and economic brokers, planned in the early eighteenth century. The local government of Elmina, however, formed a bulwark against the

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295 The Dutch government in Elmina was unable to exploit the economic resources to their advantage. This includes their inability to take charge of mining, encourage plantation economy and their inability to effectively assert their authority over the local people.
political domination of the Dutch government and their Abroomba allies. The case of Elmina is also significant because Elmina was the Dutch headquarters on the Gold Coast. Hence, developments in Elmina will also influence other Dutch territories on the Gold Coast. The position of the rulers of Elmina was not corrupted by their involvement in the Atlantic commerce. As maintained by Feinberg, their office was rather strengthened as a formidable political entity. Here, it should be emphasised that Elmina’s political structure was not as centralised as that of Asante or Akwamu during the Atlantic commerce. So how were Elmina’s rulers and elders involved in the Atlantic commerce?

Importantly, the role and influence of the Elmina political leaders should be contextualised within the inter-state relations on the Gold Coast in general. In the early eighteenth century, slaves had been a major commodity on the Guinea coast. The case of Elmina, yet, deserves further analysis due to the complex nature of its economy. Slaves had been traded but trade in gold was also vigorously pursued. The Dutch participation in the slave trade had been largely due to British competition.297 Thus, it was necessary to encourage the European slave trade to prevent traders from sending their gold to where slaves were being traded. Hence, traders of various kinds were attracted, sometimes by the brokers, to centres where there were commercial interactions on-going. To attract traders in Elmina would mean the European slave trade had to be encouraged there as well. For instance, getting to the middle of the eighteenth century, the Dutch company servants were prevented from engaging in the slave trade. Because of that:

Trade…declined, and is declining daily and there is no hope of improvement in this because those servants are deprived of the desire and ability to prosecute trade and to keep it alive; and it is also to be observed that the Natives bring their gold and tusks to those who buy their slaves, as is natural [in Elmina].298

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Apparently, the Elmina government overlooked the slave transactions, but they frowned on cases of panyarring of its inhabitants. The unlawful abduction of inhabitants of neighbouring states was a common practice throughout the Gold Coast. Most of those panyarrred were believed to be in debt or to pay for a crime committed by a relative. Even when trading in slaves was abolished, panyarring still continued in the nineteenth century. During the Atlantic slave trade the practice of panyarring also complemented efforts to make slaves available for the slave market.

In January 19, 1707, the chiefs of Elmina reportedly called the attention of the Dutch government concerning some citizens of Commany who continuously engage in kidnapping women of Elmina near the Sweet River.299 Concerning panyarring, Akosua Adoma Perbi notes that:

> Around 1710 acts of robbery and ‘panyarring’ were committed against the servants of the Dutch company by the Fante. The neighbours of the Elminas subjected the town to constant attacks and protracted sieges aimed at capturing the town. The roads leading to the farms and trade paths became dangerous to trade, because the Fantes laid ambush and kidnapped them. Life became insecure because Elmina could be attacked at any moment of the day.300

In such cases, Elmina’s political leaders were not ready to compromise. For the one involving Commany, the leaders responded by requesting to be allowed to “catch all the Commany fugitives under the [Elmina] Castle, in retaliation.”301 Thus, a sizeable number of outsiders had been seeking refuge at Elmina, including Commany fugitives. It appears that Elmina had been preferred due to the varied nature of its citizens and commerce there. The promptness of Elmina’s local government compels the Dutch government to respond to forestall any disagreement that may end up in war. Thus, the Dutch government responded by sending emissaries to Commany to rescue the abducted women in the case above. The attempts of the

299 E. F. C. Notebooks Pages: Asebu, 73.  
301 E. F. C. Notebook Pages: Asebu, 73.
rulers of Elmina demonstrate some level of sensitivity during the European slave trade towards its inhabitants. Yet, the cosmopolitan nature of Elmina during the Atlantic commerce leads us to raise questions about how successful such attempts were. Moreover, ‘indigenous slavery’ also adds to the complex nature of Elmina inhabitants, in that slaves performed various functions. Consequently, some of the slaves became accepted as citizens of Elmina families. Others also had sexual relations with European officials whose children formed part of Elmina.

The empirical features of a centralised authority include a demonstration of a bureaucratic system, the existence of a formidable army and recognition of a central political figure, in the person of a chief. These features are tools for ensuring coercion and introducing “socially binding” decisions. These yardsticks are glaring signs in Elmina’s political setup during the period, which led to making “socially binding” decisions. Elmina’s political hierarchy did not centralise the position of a chief but had a much more decentralized political and social system which made leaders of wards becoming significant. The case of Elmina is interesting, since, again, Elmina was a multi-ethnic community with various economic interest groups— the Dutch government and their agents, the Dutch agents themselves (brokers), Abrofomba merchants, the autochthonous merchants as well as the neighbouring traders who often plied their trade in Elmina, and those who were seeking refuge, amongst others. Hence, it was these conflicting interest groups that Elmina rulers were expected to mediate the interactions.

It is with this background that the chief and elders were involved in the Atlantic commercial transactions in Elmina. They were instrumental in mediating the trade and politics; and they were also abreast with developments across the Gold Coast, including areas occupied by the English.

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The Elmina rulers were not directly involved in the Atlantic exchanges, unlike during the pre-Atlantic period, when Kara Mansa (Kwamena Ansa) was an influential trader and a chief in the territory encompassing Elmina. None the less, some people acquired the title of chiefs due to their role in the commercial and political interactions. But the positions of such people were clearly demarcated. The involvement of the chiefs and elders, however, was to maintain the much-needed atmosphere for production and exchange to thrive for the various interests in the society, understood as a relevant characteristic by Bates. Yet, it seems they also benefitted immensely in terms of revenue from the trade which compelled them to actively get involved in promoting it.

The nature of trade on the Gold Coast was such that traders carried their goods to areas where trade was booming and paid tolls to the leaders of those places to ensure a smooth passage to the trade centres. This was so in Elmina since the territory was a trade entrepôt and attracted a wide number of people whilst some of its inhabitants served as intermediaries. The question remains: were the Elmina leaders involved in the European slave trade, or the Atlantic commerce? Whilst informants decline that the rulers of Elmina were directly involved in the Atlantic commerce, this study is not ruling out the possibility. Although it is often ignored that production of gold took place there, exploiting gold was also relevant to the society, especially when slaves were also involved at certain times. Importantly, though Elmina was not a major gold producer, much of the trade in gold took place there.

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304 Bates, 29.
305 Interview with Mr. Ato Eshun, Director of Elmina Castle, Elmina Castle, 13th March, 2018.
306 The presence of gold dust in Elmina has been well articulated by oral tradition. Such traditions emphasise that gold dust in the Benya Lagoon had attracted the founder Kwaa Amankwaa, apart from the fresh water he discovered.
307 There was unanimity in the response by informants, although they also acknowledge that the commodity was not produced on a large scale.
on the Gold Coast were Akyem, Adansi, Assin, Denkyira, Aowin, Twifo, Adom, Tafo, Kwahu, Asante and Wassa.\footnote{Perbi, \textit{A History of Indigenous Slavery}, 86.} One must also recognise that the Dutch commercial interest changed from gold to slaves due to local and foreign competitions.\footnote{Rodney, \textit{“Gold and Slaves,”} 16.}

The chiefs and elders represented the interest of the local people with the help of the merchants and the European authorities. They settled disputes and signed agreements with the Dutch government on behalf of the local people. This was obvious in the case of Tekki’s affair when there was communication with the different parties. More importantly, the chiefs were keen in ensuring that Tekki was dealt with whilst maintaining peace. Their testimonies regarding Tekki’s bad conduct towards both European and local traders was relevant for the final verdict of Tekki’s affair. Whilst it is still unclear if Elmina’s political leaders were involved in the commerce, it seems their position allows them to gain some revenue from the merchants, since Tekki had threatened them that someday, when he becomes the chief broker, they would come to him “pawning like slaves.”\footnote{Balme Library: Furley Collections, the Gold Coast, 1731-1739, 80.} The responsiveness of the chief and elders was also demonstrated against the broker Akim in the early eighteenth century.\footnote{Akim was involved in seizing goods from traders and panyarring some of them. He was also involved in selling false gold.}

When there was a major issue regarding trade, the chief and elders invited the disgruntled individuals together with the merchants as well as some Dutch officials to the Palaver room. In this room the issue was discussed dispassionately until they arrive at a conclusion. The Palaver room was a sort of local courtroom for much of the nineteenth century, located in the Elmina Castle.\footnote{The place is currently used as the gallery room where all sorts of local products are displaced for tourists.} It was also a slave auction room during the European slave trade era until the early...
nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{313} In the Palaver room, the influential merchants became important in mediating the discussion between the Dutch government in Elmina and the local government. This especially was so during the period of the “legitimate commerce” where interconnection between the rulers of Elmina and the Dutch became much more pronounced. Two of the influential figures in the nineteenth century were Carl Bartels and Jacob Simmons. They were highly respected merchants and can be considered as agents of the Dutch government.\textsuperscript{314} Particularly for Carl Bartels, his role in Elmina demonstrates the complexities of the \textit{Abrofomba} merchants in Elmina. Others, like Pieter Bartels, who may be related to Carl Bartels, were involved in administrative matters, serving as a Dutch agent outside Elmina. As examined below, their involvement, amongst others, significantly influenced the Dutch enterprise.

Apart from serving as the mouthpiece of the local people, the chief and elders were highly informed about major developments regarding trade and politics on the Gold Coast, like the brokers. This enabled them to confront issues with the involvement of the interested parties and the Dutch officials. Most often too, they quickly responded to the friction between the small-scale merchants and the influential ones. Such struggles usually involve controlling an aspect of the Atlantic commerce in slaves and ‘legitimate’ products. One area this was demonstrated was in the early nineteenth century when rumours spread that influential merchants in the persons of Carl Bartels, Jacob Simons and Thales were impeding the trade of the small traders.\textsuperscript{315} These rumours were also like a development which compelled Carl Bartels to abandon gold washing

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\textsuperscript{313} More light will be thrown on the Palaver room and slave auctioning under the agency Brempong Kwa Mensah who was a facilitator in the slave trade; Interview with Nana Kojo Aduakwa V, Chief of Atunkwa, Elmina. 1908 Efua Ansaba Fiel Òmanhen Fie-Opposite Police Station.

\textsuperscript{314} These were the \textit{Abrofomba} who became significant in the nineteenth century. Their emergence and subsequent involvement in the Atlantic interactions had been a Dutch policy of educating such people to serve their interest in Elmina and the Gold Coast at large.

\textsuperscript{315} Selected Documents on Elmina and Its Neighbours: KVG 361 (27.VI.34), Furley Collections.
\end{center}
mills that he had imported into Elmina.\textsuperscript{316} The misunderstanding became pronounced and replaced the politics of trade of the brokers in the eighteenth century. Usually the small-scale traders won these struggles because, perhaps, they well-articulated the issues and due to ‘understanding’ of some of the influential merchants who could go elsewhere to trade.\textsuperscript{317} As Larry Yarak notes, power resided in the indigenous people rather than the \textit{Abrofomba} merchants. Hence, the chiefs and elders usually possessed the coercive power which favours the local or small-scale merchants.\textsuperscript{318} This interaction is interesting since it appears the Dutch sought to exploit the position of the \textit{Abrofomba} merchants to safeguard the interest of the Dutch enterprise. Yet, their efforts were impeded by the local political forces which mostly compelled their mobility. More so, most of these merchants were used in other capacities by the Dutch government. Additionally, they saw themselves as significant to the local government because they mediated between them and the Dutch government. As a result, imposing their power would have impeded their own legitimacy since the \textit{Abrofomba} had not considered themselves different from the autochthonous people and the Akan concept of belonging had been so strong.\textsuperscript{319} Also, the Euro-African merchants did wield political influence, like the brokers in the eighteenth century. This happened after the bombardment of Elmina where attempts were expedited by certain descendants of the \textit{Abrofomba} families to seek political legitimacy.\textsuperscript{320}

\textsuperscript{316} Bouët-Willaumez, E. \textit{Commerce et Trade des Noirs aux Cotes Occidentales d’Afrique, X} (Paris, 1848), 1-5.
\textsuperscript{317} “Understanding” here means that the \textit{Abrofomba} mostly lacked the coercive power to subject their authority over the indigenous people. Such power was rather wielded by the local government of Elmina and, to a lesser extent, the Dutch government in the Castle. In the various circumstances that the Dutch had wanted to subject their authority they had failed. See Larry Yarak, “West African Coastal Slavery in the Nineteenth Century,” 47. Also, see PRAAD (Accra): ADM 11/1/1111. An inhabitant of Elmina maintains that although they recognised the Euro-African as their ‘masters’, the black people [local government] were the ‘seniours’[sic].
\textsuperscript{319} This is not to say that the \textit{Abrofomba} were equal to the local people; but they recognised they were not pure Europeans. Indeed, they recognised their social background as having an African lineage. Consequently, they also organised into a major ward in order to claim recognition and, perhaps, political legitimacy.
\textsuperscript{320} Interview with Nana Kojo Aduakwa, Elmina. 13\textsuperscript{th} April, 2018.
Clearly, the *Abrofomba* could not easily interact with the local people, although they were highly respected by them. Without a coercive force, like the Dutch government, they could not compel the inhabitants to recognise them as a political force. The friction between the *Abrofomba* and the local merchants became pronounced during the nineteenth century when trade transitioned to “legitimate” goods. The clashes amongst the traders could also be the reason why most traders migrated to other coastal territories to take advantage of trade opportunities. Carl Bartels, for instance, had his warehouse in Kormantin and often traded there. Another Elmina merchant called J. Grillard also had his factory at Fort St. Sebastian in Shama. Thus, in such crisis the intervention of the chief and elders were sought to ensure there was the needed atmosphere for trade.

The concept of ‘crisis of adaptation’ as coined by A. G. Hopkins is relevant in understanding the disagreement between the large-scale merchants—who were often the *Abrofomba*—and the small-scale merchants. This disagreement became common after the abolition of the slave trade. Within the struggle, the local leaders of Elmina appeared as intermediaries, rather than as wealthy merchants. Thus, the chiefs and elders of Elmina were agents for policing and administering the Atlantic interactions rather than being involved in the mainstream Atlantic commercial interactions.

A. G. Hopkin’s ‘crisis of adaptation’ has been critiqued to give credence to the complexities involved in certain societies, especially in coastal intermediary societies (such as Bonny), the same can be argued for Elmina. The case of Elmina evokes some peculiarities in the sense that slaves were significantly indigenously used, rather than solely kept to be shipped across the

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Atlantic. In *A History of Indigenous Slavery*, Akosua Perbi explains the significance of slaves as important members of society rather than as merchandise. This had been so since the Portuguese era which necessitated the importation of Benin slaves. The Dutch brokers earlier also exploited the services of many slaves in their commercial relations with the local people. Also, some wealthy merchants, like Brempong Kwa Mensah and his brother Brempong Abaka have been known to be caretakers or facilitators of the European slave trade which mostly led to the protection of the slaves. Yet, it is not clear how these slave merchants, or their successors responded to the dynamics of the Atlantic commerce after the abolition.

It is noteworthy that Hopkins argues that the emergence of the crisis was a direct impact of the abolishing of the European slave trade in the early nineteenth century, and the institutionalisation of “legitimate” trade. For instance, amongst other things, Hopkins intimates that the Yoruba war continued because the Yoruba rulers had gained power due to the profits they obtained from the European slave trade. As a result, they became specialised producers in an already competitive market of local products. This brought about crisis in their commercial relations. The opposite was the case in Elmina. Here, the merchants, rather than the rulers were involved in the crisis with the local people. For instance, the British passage of the Abolition Act was responsible, inter alia, for the Asante-British conflict in 1807. Thus, Asante merchants and the crown had been significantly influence by the abolition.

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324 This point is demonstrated by the agency of Brempong Kwa Mensah who was a facilitator during the slave trade.  
326 Interview with Ato Eshun, Director of Elmina Castle, Elmina. See also Larry Yarak W, “Asante and the Dutch: A Case Study in the History of Asante Administration, 1744-1873” (Ph.D. diss. Northwestern University, 1983), 421.  
328 Amenumey, *Ghana: A Concise History from Pre-Colonial Times to the 20th Century*, 123.
Comparing the situation regarding the abolition of the European slave trade in Elmina and other Dutch territories on the Gold Coast with that of Yoruba and Asante, the case of Elmina is peculiar. For the case of Yoruba, the Yoruba wars were fought between the 1870s and ‘90s. The Yoruba people were the producers of palm oil and palm kernel in the hinterland which was traded to Europe through Lagos. Lagos was originally a small fishing village, which became one of the most important slave trading centres on the West Coast in the first half of the nineteenth century. The similarity that can be drawn is, Elmina equally evolved as a fishing settlement and also a very significant slave trading centre since the fifteenth century. Both Elmina and Lagos also evolved entrepreneurs, new trade routes, new consumer goods, and new political systems. Although both areas project different phases of the Atlantic history, they were also significant in the Palm oil trade which replaced the European slave trade. Yet, unlike the leaders of Elmina, the Yoruba rulers took control of the trade in ‘legitimate’ commodities.

In Elmina, however, the nature of its economy vis-à-vis the economic relation between Elmina merchants and traders projects a different perspective to the “crisis of adaptation”. According to this background, Elmina’s economy was not largely based on the slave trade. Thus, although the Elmina Castle provided shelter for slaves from the Gold Coast bound for the New World, the people of Elmina did not leverage on the trade which would have involved the rulers of Elmina as merchants. This assertion was arrived at due to the unanimity of Elmina informants concerning the role of the Elmina merchants during the European Slave trade. The silence on their active involvement is also due to the fact that some of the present inhabitants of the town may have slave ancestry. This has properly impacted oral accounts concerning the agency of a known slave dealer called Brempong Kwa Mensah. In addition, such merchants’ activities excluded the rulers. Again, one must be wary in understanding the position of slaves in Elmina,
whilst, especially, recognising the town as an Atlantic trade entrepôt. In this development, the demands of the Elmina Castle can be separated from the Elmina society. At best, inhabitants of Elmina were intermediaries and facilitators of the trade. Thus, Elmina can be distinguished from states like Asante, Dahomey, Benin and Futa Djalon who were active participants in the European slave trade. In addition, the people of Elmina did not demonstrate the extreme case of the *siccadings* of Akwamu, who raided their own inhabitants and sold them into slavery. However, “pride in citizenship existed” in Elmina and the political leaders were responsible for protecting that pride. This is not to suggest that abduction did not escape the attention of the rulers.

Asante had been the major suppliers of slaves to the Dutch in Elmina. The Dutch government also acquired slaves from the various Dutch forts and lodges on the Gold Coast. However, the nature of the interaction was such that “the natives [Gold Coasters] by custom are used to carry their slaves to the English and gold to the Dutch.” But, in the 1720s, the Dutch reported a different dynamic of the trade:

> …at present the gold trade is so scarce that we hardly get sufficient gold to pay the subsistence of the servants, so that this coast can more properly be called the slave, than the gold coast. Your Honours can easily see this from the quick dispatch of the slave ships: for we have sent them one after the other with their required cargoes to their destinations within 5 weeks.

Clearly, these were not slaves obtained from Elmina by Elmina merchants. Yet, the argument remains that since the *Edinafo* were not influential slave traders, they still traded gold with the

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330 Rodney, 21.
331 Rodney, 21.
332 This was an account given by an English trader in 1706. Quoted in Rodney, “Gold and Slaves on the Gold Coast,” 16. Asante demonstrated the same thing in 1807 when the English abolished the slave trade. It was maintained that Asante had about 200,00 prisoners of war to trade with the English and after having knowledge of the abolition, they engaged in another war with them (the English). See Amenumey, *Ghana: A Concise History from Pre-Colonial Times to the 20th Century*, 124.
333 Quoted in Rodney, 16.
Dutch. Thus, the nature of Elmina economy was such that whilst the European slave trade was ongoing, the trade in gold dust also happened simultaneously.

Furthermore, as already emphasised, the nature of power relations in Elmina was significant. Power relations in Elmina have been critical to major developments. I have already stated that the policy of using the *Abrofomba* as political agents—through their education in The Netherlands and their attachment with their Dutch fathers (through their names and skin colour) — did not pose any threat to their connection to the families of their African mothers. Thus, this group of Africans, although relatively small and mostly wealthy, did not possess the authority or significance relative to the local government. Most especially, the Dutch could not exploit the *Abrofomba* as a pre-colonial colonising tool based on the policy of their Dutch education. Hence, whilst they were influential, the ultimate power resided in the local leaders.

Moreover, the local leaders did not become wealthy on the back of the European slave trade, and the legitimate trade as demonstrated by states like Yoruba, Akwamu and Asante. In Elmina, it rather increased the relevance of their agency in the politics of the Gold Coast. Thus, the chief and elders were keen at mediating the challenges of the crisis of the trade. Fourthly, the mobility of Elmina merchants also made it difficult to make claims to trading rights to the Elmina Castle. Moreover, most of the influential traders were used in other capacities to support the Dutch government in Elmina and elsewhere on the coast. Such complexities, to a far extent, impacted the nature of the “crisis of adaptation” in Elmina. These factors significantly suppressed Dutch authority in Elmina, which affected their hold on other areas on the Gold Coast. Such influences are demonstrated in the many rebellions of the leaders in Elmina against the Dutch government.

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334 See PRAAD (Accra): ADM 11/1/1111.
Apart from ensuring a peaceful relation between the large-scale and the petty merchants, the chief and elders also needed the involvement of these merchants to resist certain measures introduced by the Dutch. These were Dutch policies to protect their trade during the palm oil revolution after the abolition of the slave trade. In 1808, palm oil exported to Britain from West Africa was far below 200 tons. The figure rose to 13,850 tons in 1836. Particularly in the Gold Coast, the whole quantity of palm oil export jumped to 1,050 tons by 1848, from 350 tons in 1829. The development significantly impacted the Dutch palm oil trade close to the middle of the nineteenth century. During the period, there were correspondences between the English merchants at Cape Coast and Anomabo to charge low prices for gallons of palm oil. The directives issued by the English affected prices in Elmina by enabling merchants to fix it below what was charged earlier. Due to the price reduction the indigenous merchants got only one Engels of European merchandise for 6 gallons of palm oil delivered. The price reduction was, however, resisted by the Elmina merchants at the Palaver room. The case of the palm oil boom (which would seek to impact the prices the merchants deliver them to the coast) demonstrates the extent of partnership between the local merchants and their political leaders. It is unclear whether the new price, which was in line with what was charged in British territories, was reversed. What is significant here is the involvement of the local leaders which reinforces the point that the leaders in Elmina had been abreast of developments outside Elmina, which had far-reaching effect on the commercial interactions. Yet, developments in the early nineteenth century on the Gold Coast influenced the nature of trade and politics in Elmina. This was a significant period that affected the nature of the Dutch Atlantic enterprise in the ensuing years leading to their

337 Department of History Library, University of Ghana: Selected Documents: KVG 361, Furley Collections.
departure. Prior to their departure, there was a policy of building stronger ties with the English on the Gold Coast. One of the activities that impacted Anglo-Dutch relations on the Gold Coast was the canoe trade.

During the Atlantic commercial interactions on the Guinea coast, the role of certain sections of the coastal population known as canoemen or boatmen was very significant. This was because they transported both passengers and cargoes. Whilst some were independent canoemen, others were employed by Europeans to perform various marine roles. Many of the European ships encountered challenges in the leeward side of the Guinea coast. Meanwhile, the local people also faced challenges on the sea. Canoemen employed on the coast were originally from the Gold Coast because the locals on the leeward side of the Guinea coast were not skilled in maritime navigation. It is recorded that, “if you wish to trade here [slave coast], you must bring a new strong canoe with you from the Gold Coast with oarsmen, because one cannot get through the surf in any boat.” These “transporters of passengers” started from the fifteenth century to the twentieth century. It was also reported that these canoemen were mostly Akan speaking people from coastal towns like Anomabo, Cape Coast and Elmina. This resulted in the emergence of Gold Coast diasporas in areas including Ouidah.

338 The leeward part of the Guinea coast is basically the territory of the Gold Coast whilst the windward side is the Slave Coast. See the map below.
339 Strickrodt, Silke, Afro-European Trade in the Atlantic World. The Western Slave Coast c. 1550-c.1885 (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2015), 68.
341 Gutkind, “The Canoemen of the Gold Coast (Ghana),” 344.
Fig. 4.1: A map showing the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast. The Gold represents the windward part of the Guinea coast whilst the Slave Coast is the leeward side.

Source: Dutch Documents Relating to the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast, i.

After the abolition of the European slave trade, the significance of the canoemen continued. An important development during the early nineteenth century was the interest of Portuguese and Spanish merchants in what was known as the canoe trade. Indeed, the canoe business was a long-established commercial relation by the Portuguese on the windward side of the Guinea coast.  

The canoe trade became a major commercial activity in Elmina. The Dutch WIC encouraged the trade because it aided the sale of commodities like palm oil, tusk and other native products. Thus, the Dutch government at the Elmina Castle encourages the canoe trade because of its double effect of attracting merchants to Elmina to trade with other European ships. During the period, the canoes were needed by the European ships for use at the leeward side of the Guinea coast. These were places like Popo, Whydah, Porto Novo and Badagry. Apart from encouraging trade in other products in Elmina, the Dutch also benefitted from what was known as the consignation fund.  

This was a fee paid by ships that anchor at Elmina to take advantage of the

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canoe trade and trade in other commodities. During anchorage, each Portuguese ship pays this fee in 20 rolls of Portuguese tobacco. The significant of this commodity was that Asante merchants highly demanded for the tobacco which boosted Dutch revenue on the coast. This became a major fee for reducing Dutch expenditure during the period. However, this development in Elmina became a major issue since the British had attributed the canoe trade to the continuation of the European slave trade which they were resolved to compelling other European ships to avoid.

Apparently, the British became alarmed that the Dutch were perpetuating the European slave under the guise of the canoe trade. This provoked various Dutch attempts to discourage the sale of canoes in Elmina in order not to stain their relation with the British. Also, it appears the Dutch did not want to risk going to war with the British. Meanwhile, the Dutch instruction that canoes were not to be sold to ships suspected of the European slave trade could not appease the British since the trade continued.\footnote{344 Institute of African Studies: Oral Tradition of Fante States (Improperly Labelled Document): Letter to Colonial Department No. 386 (from Oothout) 16\textsuperscript{th} December, 1821 (Elmina Castle).} However, when the Portuguese ships started facing challenges in obtaining canoes at Elmina, the Portuguese vessels went to Dutch territories in Accra where they purchased the canoes without any hindrances. This was because there were no Dutch directors in Accra. Whilst this development caused a serious decline in Dutch revenue at Elmina, due to their inability to receive tolls, it began the British interference in Dutch Accra. At Dutch Accra, it appears Dutch authority was unavailable due to their inability to put a Dutch governor there. Whilst the place was lacking a government, the inhabitants of Dutch Accra supplied canoes to Europeans ships without the knowledge of the Dutch imperial government in Elmina. The lack of a Dutch governor in Dutch Accra at the time was as a result of the presence of fewer Dutch
officials on the Gold Coast. This led to the gradual intervention of the British in Dutch Accra. This significantly influenced the exchange of forts between the English and the Dutch in the 1860s. Apart from the canoe trade, the Anglo-Asante wars of the 1820s also affected Anglo-Dutch relations.

By 1824, Asante was involved in a long-drawn war with the British. During the war, Asante who had subdued the Shama people, compelled Shama to supply them with ammunition. As a result, the Shama also threatened to break into the Dutch fort there to pacify the anger of Asante. This development was happening when the Dutch were building good relations with the British and had professed their neutrality in the Asante-British wars. Thus, if they allow the Shama to break in to supply firearms and gunpowder to Asante, they break the trust and confidence of the British. The trust had been on mutual trade relations and correspondences on protecting their interests on the Gold Coast. The Dutch quickly deployed Jacob Simmons and four soldiers to their fort at Shama to prevent the attack. At this point, Dutch neutrality was so precarious that A. Gordon Laing, the British captain Commanding the British troops, reported that he did not “understand exactly the nature of that neutrality which permits advantages to a set of the most barbarous monsters that Africa ever produced, and refuses them to a power which is in such strict terms of amity with his Majesty the King of the Netherlands.”

Captain Laing was horrified by the benefits Asante still derived from the Dutch. Although his statement alluded to the incident at the Dutch fort in Shama, it appears the British interpretation was that the Dutch, although professing neutrality, were still trading with Asante. Indeed, the relationship between

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346 The letter was not found. The quote was stated in *Journal of Commander a. i. Last*. Improperly labelled Document, History of Fante States. The Document can be found at Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana. The Document contains correspondences between the English and the Dutch in the early nineteenth century.
Asante and the Dutch had been complex.\textsuperscript{347} Within these crises, the Dutch had still recognised Asante as overlords of the Elmina Castle who still received the \textit{kostgeld}.

Although, superficially, the Dutch professed neutrality, the people of Elmina were in strong amity with Asante. It appears the political leadership of Elmina, had been compelled to mimic Dutch neutrality. But Elmina-Asante alliance continued: Asante still acquired goods including gunpowder from Elmina merchants. This was a major threat to Dutch-British alliance. In order to dispel every notion of their alliance with Asante, the Dutch government in Elmina passed a decree on 15\textsuperscript{th} March, 1824.\textsuperscript{348} The decree spelt out radical measures to prevent the sale of ‘illicit goods’ (firearms and gunpowder to Asante through Elmina). The decree established free trade for Dutch ships calling at Elmina with only Dutch merchants, except the people of Elmina. The decree also stated that goods without a “passport” shall be confiscated. Also, the trade would not recognise any canoe involved in the trade unless they were duly approved by the Dutch captains. The most important article was that, nobody can sell gunpowder to Asante and nobody can say any bad thing against the British. Those found culpable of flouting the decrees, whether \textit{Abrofomba} or indigenes, would be appropriately punished. It is clear this was a deliberate attempt to control what merchandise the people of Elmina sold to Asante.

The sanction on free trade in Elmina due to their alliance with Asante was indeed a toll on the smooth functioning of trade. In response, a section of the people besieged the Elmina Castle in arms, flutes and drums, and blocked the entrance to the Elmina Castle demanding the head of the commander. They believed “he is too befriended with the English and plots with them.”\textsuperscript{349}

\textsuperscript{347} See Yarak, \textit{Asante and the Dutch: A Case Study in the History of Asante Administration, 1744-1873} (Ph.D. Diss. Northwestern University).
\textsuperscript{348} Institute of African Studies Library, University of Ghana: History of Fante States (Improperly Labelled Document) Mouwe Pagenstecker Last xxiiv, Jan. 1824.
\textsuperscript{349} History of Fante States (Improperly Labelled Document): Letter to Minister, 11 June, No. 15, 388.
Whilst these measures were ongoing, Asante still collected rent for the Elmina Castle. Having been short of gunpowder during the period, apparently due to the measures the Dutch had put in place against the people of Elmina, they requested that their rent be paid in gunpowder, guns and flints. Upon deliberation, and probably, apprehension, the Dutch paid Asante rather in brass basins, bowls, brass rods and iron bars. This was contrary to a development in 1816 when Gyesi, an Asante ambassador was in Elmina to purchase some goods including gunpowder on credit. Instead, Gyesi was paid in Asantehene’s outstanding kostgeld for 1816. Thus, he received an equivalent of 24 ounces of gold in gunpowder. Why Asante did not decline those items and insisted on gunpowder suggests, yet again, the intricacies of Asante-Dutch relations. At this time, it appears the Dutch were feigning shortage of gunpowder, whilst it is also true that their ‘politics of neutrality’ had cost the Dutch certain essential commodities the British had been supplying them to further their trade.

The agency of the Elmina local government in relation to the Dutch government in the early nineteenth century also emphasises the authority of the local leaders against the latter. Thus, the local leaders of Elmina asserted their authority by resisting Dutch interference in the affairs of their society. On 30th March 1837, fire engulfed houses in Elmina reducing some of them to ashes. This encouraged the Dutch government to expedite action on broadening the Elmina paths leading to the interior. On the 2nd of the following month, another fire outbreak burnt down

351 Yarak, 268.
352 In Kumasi the construction of the path began on 2nd December, 1816. The width was about 40 feet. It was done by clearing the bush. W. Huydecoper was dispatched to Kumasi between 1816-1817 to, amongst other things, urge the Asantehene to take the path construction serious. Some Asante merchants kicked against the path by arguing that the Director-General of the Elmina Castle was colluding with one Mr. Nieser which negatively impacted their trade there. Mr. Nieser was accused of increasing the price of ammunition, adulterating gunpowder. This forced some of Asante merchants to rather trade in Accra, Anomabo and Cape Coast. Some of them returned later to Elmina since Fante middlemen were charging outrageous fees and using deceptive tactics to seize their goods. Mr. Huydecoper was, however, able to use diplomatic relations with the chief of Asante to ensure that the path was started in earnest. Yet, the job was not to his satisfaction, whilst he was leaving the weeds were still growing on the path. See Institute of African Studies Library: Journal of the visit to Kumasi by W. Huydecoper. Translated by G. W. Irwin.
60 houses. Whilst the governor of the Elmina Castle walked through the rubbles two days after, he identifies sections of the community where the paths could be extended. The original idea was to construct a way from Elmina to Kumasi to facilitate trade and movement due to the significance of Asante to the Dutch trading interest.\footnote{353} Whilst the owners of the burnt structures were attempting to rebuild, they were stopped with the message that their structures were in the way of the to-be-constructed path.\footnote{354} Immediately, rumours went around the community that “all the servants should abandon their white masters and that the female cooks should not provide the garrison and depot with food on penalty of burning of trespassers.”\footnote{355} At the forefront of this riot were the Elmina women who accused the Dutch government of deliberately masterminding the arson attacks on the trading structures. Immediately, the leaders of Elmina were detained and charged with inciting the people against the Dutch-path-project, due to their initial apathy since the Dutch government did not consult them. The project failed although the Dutch government coerced the people. This development differed from the execution of the path project in Kumasi where a diplomatic mission was sent by the Dutch to urge the Asantehene to start the construction of a path to the coast. Upon several consultations and reminders by the Dutch, the Asantehene supervised the clearing of weeds to expand the paths to the coast.

\footnote{353}{It is most likely the plan was to have easy an access to the interior. See Selected Documents on Elmina and its Neighbours: Extract-Furley Collections: KvG 362.}
\footnote{354}{The differences which resulted from the Dutch plan to construct a path through Elmina was a precursor to another heated confrontation later with the English and the political hierarchy of Elmina during the colonial period. This was also a time when the English had taken over the Elmina Castle and were masters of it. Their case for constructing a road was that vehicles were going to be introduced and it became necessary to expand the pre-colonial “roads” of Elmina. Further studies should be made in this regard to understand the role of Elmina during the colonial period, particularly relating to the conflict of interest between the colonial government and the Edinafo.}
\footnote{355}{Selected Documents on Elmina and its Neighbours: Extract-Furley Collections: KvG 362.}
The local leaders were released on 26th April. A ten-day ultimatum was promulgated by the Dutch government to demolish the structures that had been in the way of the project. When compliance was problematic, the Dutch deployed 32 Java recruits, to demolish the houses for the construction. Also, the Dutch government employed the services of the president of the Council of Merchants, then Carl. H. Bartels, to identify the appropriate means of compensating the inhabitants. This confrontation between the people of Elmina and the Dutch government demonstrates a significant aspect of the Afro-European relations on the Gold Coast, which negatively influenced the Dutch commercial relations. Particularly, it encapsulates the difficulty of the Dutch government in subjecting its authority over the local people and their government. Indeed, although in the 1830s, the Dutch Java recruitment programme augmented their military capabilities at Elmina, the Dutch government could still not coerce the people of Elmina to kowtow to their policies. This development was because of the high political temperature in

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357 The Dutch recruitment exercise of Gold Coasters for the East Indies which began in the early 1830s became significant for maintain security at Dutch possessions at this point.
Elmina, with the active delineation of the role of the local leaders. This local political control also recognised the rights of the Elmina inhabitants, and even the slaves.

**Conclusion**

The eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries were the most significant periods in Dutch interaction with the Gold Coast. It was the period in which the Dutch government in Elmina attempted to strengthen its imperial hold of the Gold Coast because of the changing dynamics of trade and its transition from slaves to non-slave commodities. These attempts were pursued through various economic policies, including fostering trade in slaves in other territories and increasing Dutch merchandise as well as employing “commercial brokers”. The position of the brokers, although significant, it mostly served the interests of the individuals rather than their Dutch employer. Whilst the intention behind the use of such agents was complex, the Dutch government was unable to exploit their agency to enhance their economic and political end in Elmina. Amidst this development was the position of the Elmina authorities, who together with the inhabitants defied many of such Dutch policies including trading with interlopers and establishing a plantation economy. The Edinafo resisted and questioned Dutch trade and political interventions, especially during the nineteenth century. The interaction between the brokers, the Dutch officials, rulers and inhabitants of Elmina demonstrates the complex nature of the Edinafo’s involvement in the Atlantic commerce. Through the complex interactions, local economic and political interest significantly influenced the Dutch commercial interest in Elmina, and the Gold Coast. I have established that the Dutch were unable to successfully exploit the Abrofomba in their commercial, and political, relations on the Gold Coast. The next chapter will critically examine some individuals as merchants and officials and how their role influenced the Dutch imperial control of the Gold Coast.
CHAPTER FIVE
ENTREPRENEURS, MERCHANT PRINCES AND OFFICIALS

In January 1869, the people of Elmina informed the Dutch in a public meeting, that they had lost confidence in their Governor, and that they would on their own account send a Commission to Holland, in order to be sure, that the Government in the Netherlands be well informed about the state of affairs in Elmina. The Dutch Governor would send one of his own officers together with this Commission, in order to check, that their complaints would be presented in accordance with the truth. So Meijer was added to this Deputation...Amongst those who were delegated to The Hague was a certain George Emingsang who lived some years in Germany during his youth, and who spoke also some English and Dutch.  

— J. P. Schoemaker

Introduction

On 4th January, 1869, Governor Boers of the WIC and Governor Blackall, his British counterpart, met to transfer Accra to the English. Particularly for Dutch Accra, the Dutch lost the influential merchants since most of them lived there. Whilst resistance followed from the natives, one of the Accra elders wanted to know if they would be permitted “to leave their chicken and pigs walking freely through the Krom, which was forbidden in English Accra.”

The agreement of allowing Accra to come under the British flag was part of what was known as the Sweet River Convention in July 1867. The convention stipulated that all territories west of the Sweet River were to go under the British flag whilst the forts at the east came to the Dutch. During the transfer of forts, the English flag was lowered and replaced by that of the Dutch in Dixcove without resistance from the natives. This significantly horrified an influential

358 Schoemaker, J. P. Laatste Bladzijde onzer Nederlandsch West-Afrikaansche Historie ('s-Hertogenbosch, 1900), 3.
359 Jeekel, Onze Bezittingen op de Kust van Guinea, 3.
360 Adjaye, Elmina, ‘The Little Europe,’ 10. The agreement was that the exchange of forts will take effect in 1868.
361 Jeekel, Onze Bezittingen op de Kust van Guinea, 4.
Dixcove merchant, Mensa Koema. The transfer was replicated in other areas including Axim, Apollonia, Sekondi and Komenda. Komenda and Sekondi, with help from Wassa and Denkyira, attacked Elmina in protest. The transfer of forts was a precursor to the Dutch final departure from the Gold Coast. The agency of the people of Elmina prior to this development is significant for understanding the final departure of the Dutch from the Gold Coast in 1872.

Many individuals and families were involved in the complex Atlantic commercial interactions, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the areas that these people worked, they largely pursued their own economic interests. This made them entrepreneurs, merchants, facilitators and administrators. In Elmina, most of the names were of *Abrofomba* and native origin, like Da Costa, de Bordes, Plange, Mensah and van Dyke. Some scholars have examined some of these names in the context of ‘merchant princes.’ These scholars include Larry Yarak, Michel Doortmont, J. T. Lever, Raymond Dumett, Kwame Daaku. Their works were vital in putting Gold Coast merchant princes within the history of the Atlantic commerce, and its aftermath. Works by Yarak, Lever, and Doortmont are particularly noteworthy in that their analysis was based on some merchant princes in Elmina.

This section examines the agency of Brempong Kwa Mensah, Butrinyen Plange, Carl Bartels, Pieter Bartels and George Emil Emingsang in the Atlantic commercial, and its associated political relations. Most importantly, the study discusses how their agency influenced the Dutch interest on the Gold Coast. Doortmont’s description of a “family network as social catch-all” is

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important to note as it was significant for the rise of some merchant princes, even if they were used as brokers and administrative agents.\textsuperscript{363} In Elmina, there was also the involvement of migrants in the commercial interactions. Many people settled in Elmina to take advantage of the Atlantic commerce. The interactions among the various groups in the Atlantic commerce — both the European slave trade and trade in non-human cargo — was complex. The complex nature of the commercial relations resulted in instances of fighting for legitimacy by the wealthy Abrofomba merchants, rather than seeing wealth as a sign of political power. Although wealth resulted in commanding respect and social influence (like the brokers in the eighteenth century), it was largely a sign of economic power. It is also important to recognise that having a name such as van Dyke, de Bordes or van Hien was not only gained via parentage. Some individuals adopted the names because of their association with a particular influential family or merchant prince.

By the eighteenth century, the European slave trade was very significant on the Gold Coast, aside trade in other commodities. This happened with high insecurity across the Gold Coast due to incessant warfare and the unlawful abduction of free natives. Asante had risen in the early eighteenth century and their wars with the Fante increased the political tension. The wars also made the trade routes insecure. Apart from that, the Edinafo were also involved in the dynamics of the Atlantic trade. More importantly, Elmina experienced an exodus of inhabitants from neighbouring communities who settled there. That these migrants diffused into the Elmina community is significant for understanding the relations between the inhabitants during the time.\textsuperscript{364} It appears some of the immigrant sort permission from Elmina rulers to settle.\textsuperscript{365}

\textsuperscript{363} Doortmont, “The Dutch Atlantic Slave Trade as Family Business,” 101.
\textsuperscript{364} Interview with Nana Kojo Aduakwa, Chief of Atunkwa. 30\textsuperscript{th} March 2018.
\textsuperscript{365} Interview with Nana Kojo Aduakwa, Chief of Atunkwa. 15\textsuperscript{th} March 2018.
However, others had to work to earn that legitimacy. It was under such social structures that Tia Ankamah, a native of Kormantin, according to traditions, settled in Elmina with a retinue of slaves.\footnote{366 Interview with Uncle Ato Eshun, 12\textsuperscript{th} February 2018.} Ankamah’s emergence was during the Elmina-Fante wars. However, it is unclear how he was involved in the Atlantic commerce. It appears he rose to become a chief as a social status. What is significant about his story is his ability to resettle his slaves in Elmina.

**Brempong Kwa Mensah**

One of the natives of Elmina who was directly involved in the Atlantic commerce was Brempong Kwa Mensah. Kwa Mensah and his brother Barima Brimpong Abaka were agents in the European slave trade. Brempong Kwa Mensah was a native of Elmina. Like Tia Ankamah, he also earned the title of a chief.\footnote{367 PRAAD (Accra): ADM 11/1/1111.} But Mensah was a formidable figure in the slave trade. His role was one of a facilitator, caretaker and an entrepreneur.\footnote{368 Interview with Nana Kojo Aduakwa V. 30\textsuperscript{th} March 2018.} He was one of the influential merchants during the auctioning of slaves in the Palaver Room at the Elmina Castle.\footnote{369 Interview with Nana Kojo Aduakwa V. 30\textsuperscript{th} March 2018.} He was obliged to be present in the Palaver Room to observe proceedings. When the merchants brought their slaves to be sold, those that were due to be sold would be taken to the Palaver Room and examined. The prices were announced and acquisition of the slaves took place. However, the merchants who had unsold slaves could not send them away and return on the next market day. This was because it could take weeks or months for the traders to reconvene in the Palaver Room.

Kwa Mensah performed the role of a facilitator by ensuring that he acquired all the rejected and unsold slaves and provided them with food and shelter until the next market day. This was
because the slave traders had to buy from other merchants before bringing the slave to be sold at the Elmina Castle. There was two ways in which slaves were obtained at the Elmina Castle. First, there were those slaves that were brought by merchants to Elmina. The slaves went through inspections before being sold. In this transaction, facilitators were important to both the local slave traders and the European merchants. Secondly, slaves were shipped from other Dutch forts on the Gold Coast by Dutch officials posted there. Thus, the same process might have happened in those forts where facilitators played crucial roles.

Brempong Kwa Mensah became a formidable character because, by some means, he acquired most of the slaves for his own use. On the next market day, Brempong returned fewer slaves than he was offered under the pretext that they had died. Death, indeed, was a common occurrence amongst such slaves. To establish the truth, he made empty burial mounds. This entrepreneurial ingenuity increased his worth as a facilitator. However, Brempong Kwa Mensah, according to oral accounts, treated these slaves well by putting them to work as farmers. It also appears that Mensah’s involvement went beyond the mere role of a caretaker but was involved in buying and freeing of slaves. These slaves consequently formed a diaspora in Elmina called Mawurafo. This entrepreneurial ingenuity increased his worth as a facilitator. However, Brempong Kwa Mensah, according to oral accounts, treated these slaves well by putting them to work as farmers. These slaves consequently formed a diaspora in Elmina called Mawurafo.

The involvement of Kwa Mensah in the European slave trade largely influenced the stock of slaves the Dutch received from the Elmina Castle. The Dutch records emphasised that their stock of slaves was decimated because of death. This was a major challenge to their enterprise which ensured that they expedite slave trading expeditions to places like Whydah. Yet, this had its own challenges, including competition from other European ships. The case of Brempong

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370 Interview with Nana Kojo Aduakwa, 30th March, 2018.
373 Department of History Library, Dutch Documents Relating to the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast: WIC 124, 25th May, 1700, 43-44.
Kwa Mensah was also significant because he acquired wealth because of his involvement in the European slave trade. What is unclear, however, is where Kwa Mensah’s farms had been located. Indeed, traditions had connected them to places like Bronibema and Brenu Akyinim in the hinterlands of Elmina.

![Map of Elmina and its Immediate Hinterland](image)

**Fig. 5.1** A map showing Elmina and its Immediate Hinterland that interacted with it during the Atlantic commerce. Source: Yarak, “Asante and the Dutch: A Case Study in the History of Asante Administration, 1744-1873,” 17.

The challenge of ascertaining the extent to which slaves were used by merchants is also clear in the case of Brempong Kwa Mensah and the slaves he acquired. Akosua Perbi gives a general disposition to the challenge by demonstrating that ‘indigenous slaves’ were employed in both commercial and administrative activities. Perbi’s study, emphatically maintains that the indigenous slaves had “rights.”

Yarak also gives an indication into the usage of slaves after the abolition of the European slave trade took effect in Elmina. He argues that a section of the Elmina society possessed slaves and some of the slaves were used in the Abrofomba plantation.

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farms. But the challenge of understanding the nature and structure of ‘indigenous slavery,’ especially involving the identity of slaves, has become a sensitive matter in Elmina. For the slaves of Kwa Mensah, it is likely some had been involved in farming in other interior polities including Eguaso. This was because Eguaso was a major supplier of food to Elmina during the Atlantic commercial relations.³⁷⁶

**Butrinyen Plange and de Bordes**

Butrinyen is a name associated with the people of Senya Breku.³⁷⁷ Their ancestors immigrated to Elmina to take advantage of the commercial interactions. This development also explains the varied origin of the inhabitants of Elmina. Butrinyen Plange had a Dutch father and a mother from Elmina.³⁷⁸ He acquired the name ‘Plange’ from his Dutch father. It is likely he obtained his first name from his mother’s family in order to preserve the family name. Thus, his first name could not have come from his father. It is also likely that his blood relation with his father was responsible for his entrepreneurial success.³⁷⁹ Feinberg describes the nature of interactions between the Dutch and the local entrepreneurs by establishing that the Dutch “created a demand and the Akan and Ga responded.” As a result, the Dutch “were employers and purchasers and Africans were independent entrepreneurs or employees.”³⁸⁰

Butrinyen Plange was an Elmina entrepreneur. His activities were set in the palm oil trade on the Gold Coast. He was a supplier of palm oil to the Dutch in Elmina.³⁸¹ It appears Butrinyen Plange acquired the oil from places close to Bronibema and Eguaso, and supplied it to the Dutch. Plange commanded a number of slaves who carried the palm oil from the interior to the coast. His

³⁷⁶ Feinberg, “Africans and Europeans,” 146.
³⁷⁷ Interview with Nana Aduakwa and Mr. Kwame de Bordes, 30th March, 2018.
³⁷⁸ Interview with Mr. Amoudu, 15th February, 2018.
³⁷⁹ Interview with Mr. Amoudu, 15th February, 2018.
³⁸⁰ Feinberg, 65.
³⁸¹ Interview with Mr. Amoudu, House of Butrinyen Traditional Council, Elmina. 15th February, 2018.
involvement in the palm oil supply made him an important merchant during the period. Apart from palm oil, Butrinyen Plange was also involved in producing other merchandise. He was significant in extracting shells from the sea and using them to form lime to whitewash the Elmina Castle. His slaves were important in the extraction and processing. Mr. Plange was assisted by de Bordes who was his storekeeper. de Bordes was apprenticed to Plange which later enabled de Bordes to establish his own supplying yam to Dutch ships and the Elmina Castle.

Subordinate positions such as retail store clerks, buying agents and storekeepers were a common phenomenon within coastal merchant societies. It is unclear if de Bordes was related to the Director-General Martinus Francois de Bordes (April 7, 1736- March 13, 1740). However, it should be emphasised that a majority of Gold Coasters assumed the names of their friends and employees. That de Bordes was in business with the Dutch at the coast demonstrates the significance the Dutch attached to the Abrofomba. Such blood consanguinities were also the case in employing Dutch political agents or brokers on the Gold Coast in the nineteenth century.

The supply of food by coastal farmers during the Atlantic commerce was a very important activity during the period. During the eighteenth century, about 800 to 1,000 people were working for the WIC and needed a constant supply of food. The number increased in the nineteenth century. More significantly, de Bordes supplied food to the visiting Dutch ships. His supply of yam at the Elmina coast ensured that the crew of visiting ships were properly fed on yam. It appears the surplus was supplied to the officials at the Elmina Castle. Feinberg adds that the interior traders also bought such food when they came to the coast. De Bordes’ entrepreneurial success was challenged by the interior farmers. According to traditions, de

382 Interview with Mr. Amoudu. 15th February, 2018.
383 Interview with Kwame de Bordes, Elmina. 15th February, 2018.
385 Feinberg, 65.
386 Feinberg, 65.
Bordes was prevented from continuing the supply of yam to the Dutch since the farmers loathed the amount he was paying them. As a result, the farmers believed that when the “white men are hungry they will come to them”. \(^{387}\) This is translated in the Akan language as *Bronibebe* (the white man will come). Apparently, this confrontation with the farmers affected his trade with the Dutch ships that anchored at Elmina to refresh and the Dutch officials at the Elmina Castle. \(^{388}\)

**Carl Bartels**

One of the most influential individuals whose activities had far-reaching effect on the economic, social, and political life of Elmina was Carl Hendrik Bartels. He was a merchant, administrator, broker and a political figure whose services were keenly sought by Elmina’s political leadership and the Dutch government. Because of his distinguished characteristics, he was highly respected by the Dutch government, the chief and elders as well as the local merchants. As the president of the Council of Merchants in Elmina, he was the mouthpiece of the merchants and represented the indigenous government and the local community. He experienced several oppositions regarding his economic exploits from the local merchants. This was because a majority of the small-scale merchants always saw the accomplished merchants as a threat to their commercial survival in Elmina.

\(^{387}\) Interview with Mr. Kwame de Bordes, Elmina. 15\(^{th}\) February, 2018.

\(^{388}\) For the food crisis which resulted in a confrontation between the people of Elmina and the Director General de Bordes, Feinberg gives two reasons. The first reason was that French interloping ships abounded on the Gold Coast and they offered higher prices which attracted the farmers. The second reason was the war between Elmina and the Fante which affected food supply. During the war, Director-General Martinus de Bordes urged the people of Elmina to invade the Eguamo in their home which they declined. Martinus Francois de Bordes was provoked and ordered the seizure of grains from Elmina which resulted in the confrontation. See Feinberg, “An Incident in Elmina-Dutch Relations, the Gold Coast (Ghana), 1739-1740,” *African Historical Studies* Vol., 3, No. 2 (1970).
Carl Bartels was born in Elmina to a Dutch father, Cornelius Ludwich Bartels, who was the Director-General of the Elmina Castle from May 8, 1798 to April 28, 1804, and a mother from Elmina. According to Charles Francis Hutchison, Bartels’ mother was one of the “wealthiest and [most] important citizens of Elmina.” He was educated in The Netherlands and was well-spoken in Dutch and English. According to a Dutch report in 1856, he was fluent in Fante too, since it appears “he would be able to make the interested people – the section of Elmina interested in attending church services to be run by the Dutch government– understand in the Fanti-language than the common [Dutch] government interpreter.” Hutchison also makes mention of his love for astronomy and his skill in engineering. Bartels’ scientific inclination was tested when he decided to transform the nature of gold mining in Elmina.

Bartels was one of the most respected merchants in the early nineteenth century. Although an inhabitant of Elmina, on several occasions Bartels is reported to have based his trade in

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389 Cornelius Ludwich Bartels died on 28th April, 1804. For a list of the Director Generals of the Second West India Company from 1702 to 1804 see H. Feinberg, “Director Generals of the Netherlands West India Company: an accurate list for the eighteenth century.”


391 The context of the report regards a group of Abrofomba of Elmina who requested the assistance of the High Authority in the Netherlands to establish a church in Elmina. Carl Bartels was one of the consultants for the project. Because of his influence, “he was able to convince 66 inhabitants of Elmina to sign” on to attend church. Generally, however, the Dutch government and the Abrofomba were unable to successfully encourage the local people to attend church services due to lack of interest. See Selected Documents on Elmina and Its Neighbours: KVG 395, Extract - Furley Collections.

Kormantin, another Dutch lodge on the Gold Coast. It appears he obtained European merchandise from the coast and traded it amongst the local people and vice versa. Bartels continuously traded in Fort Amsterdam instead of the Elmina Castle. This can be attributed to the ease of migration of merchants as well as the high political and economic temperature in Elmina. There were several protests movements against the large-scale merchants and their dominant roles in the Atlantic commerce by the small-scale merchants. It seems, however, that most of Bartels’ activities were still pursued in Elmina. Bartels became the President of the Council of Trade which sought to safeguard the interest of the merchants. Clearly, the Council of Merchants was recognised as an important body in Elmina. In the 1830s when the Dutch government was facing challenges in redeeming its financial obligations like the payment of the kostgeld to Asante, it was suggested that the council took responsibility of the payment. The reason was that they were “especially involved in trade with that kingdom.” This received positive response since some of the merchants made some donations, although limited. In 1853, another call was made for the home government to endorse a tax on the merchants. It appears the Council was always at loggerheads with the local merchants for control of trade. As examined above, the leaders of Elmina were responsive in settling such contentions. A case in point was when some members of the Council of Merchants including Bartels, Jacob Simons and one Thale were horrified by “unknown citizens of Elmina, since they spread rumours that they (above mentioned Messrs.) would impede the small trade of the Negroes.” This called for a meeting between the chief and elders as well as the influential merchants in the Palaver Room.

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395 NBKG 769: Correspondence with the Merchants; Council Minutes of a Meeting dd. Elmina 27th Nov. 1834.
396 Yarak, 162.
397 Yarak, 163.
I have established that the nature and politics of the interactions in Elmina were always based on rumours. These rumours were strong enough to influence the social and economic relations of the various interest groups. Thus, it was a common system of communication across the Gold Coast where rumours of war brought trade to a standstill for several days. Most often too, the competition for trade necessitated rumour mongering to outwit economic opponents. This was particularly common between the traders under British jurisdiction and those under the Dutch. It was such rumours in Elmina that compelled Carl Bartels to abandon his newly imported gold-washing mills from Europe.

Writing about gold mining in the Gold Coast, Walter Rodney notes that “African miners deliberately kept outsiders ignorant of the precise area where gold was worked, and consequently European observers were vague on the methods which were employed, apart from the washing of alluvial gold in coastal stream.” Moreover, indigenous people also attached religious meanings to the mines by seeing them as sacred places. For these reasons, and also due to their reliance on manual or non-mechanised methods, the attempts made by the Dutch to exploit the gold mines at Ahanta were unsuccessful. Carl Bartels’ mining exploits was faced with similar mysticism. However, unlike the Dutch, he introduced modern technology in the form of gold washing mills. The records show that in addition to Carl Bartels, R. J. Ghartey of Winneba, Apam and Anomabo also used mechanised methods in his gold mines at Wassa in the 1870s.

The people of Elmina expressed mixed attitudes towards Carl Bartel’s mechanised gold mining efforts. Whilst a few were elated about the economic prospects of the enterprise, a majority of the townspeople were wary of the effects of the enterprise on their livelihoods. This people drew

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399 Rodney, “Gold and Slaves in the Gold Coast,” 19.
their income from the gold of the soil. This insecurity compelled him to abandon the imported
gold-washing mills. Thus, whilst recognising the agency of these wealthy merchants as a
significant part of Elmina society, it is also important to understand the power relations of such
interactions. Such a radical decision by a wealthy merchant could be a way of legitimising his
citizenship. This development shows how the Dutch’s policy of benefitting from the Abrofomba
as their political and economic agents failed.

Carl Bartels was a member of the Dutch Colonial Council in Elmina. The council was made up
of a group of Abrofomba merchants who safeguarded the imperial interest of the Dutch. Again,
as the case is in every colonial machinery, such offices were suppressive towards the inhabitants
of the colony whilst friendly towards the colonisers (here the Dutch government in Elmina). This
is not to say that Elmina was a Dutch colony since the leaders of Elmina attempted to assert their
authority whilst resisting Dutch unfavourable policies. Apparently, the Dutch Colonial Council’s
endeavours had rather been geared at winning the sympathy of the Edinafo rather than being
oppressive to support the Dutch’s nascent colonisation of Elmina. Bartels’ role in Elmina, and
elsewhere, is significant in that it demonstrates the complexities of the involvement of the people
of Elmina in the Atlantic interactions. This was also a time when Dutchmen were unwilling to
serve on the Gold Coast which made it necessary to exploit the services of the Abrofomba.

Pieter Bartels

Pieter Bartels was another Broniba whose activities had significant impact on the
Atlantic commercial interaction in Elmina in particular, and on the Dutch commercial interest on
the Gold Coast. Like Carl Bartels, Pieter Bartels was educated in the Netherlands and he could
speak and write both Dutch and English. 401 Like many of the Abrofomba merchants and officials,

Neth. Indies.
he was successful in his occupation partly due to consanguinity with the respected Cornelius Bartels, a Dutch official. Michel Doortmont has made similar observations about the African children of Nicolaas Mattheus van der Noot de Gietere, noting that his first son, Nicolaas van Bakergem, also became a successful WIC official.402 Like his father, Nicolaas had expertise in slave trading on the Gold Coast and plantation business in Surinam.403 Yet, there were some Abrofomba who rose on the back of their own entrepreneurial genius. Most of them endured being apprenticed to influential merchants. Under their tutelage, they leveraged on the opportunities to build their own estate. Dumett argues in this regard, although he also stresses “family ties to a king or chief”.404

Pieter Bartels was appointed as the Provisional Commander of Fort St. Sebastian at Shama. His appointment was due to his level of education as well as his blood ties with the Bartels. At Shama, Bartels was to perform administrative roles. The people of Shama were relatively peaceful and posed no challenge to his authority. According to Major Jan General Verveer who appointed him, Bartels “could not become dangerous there, on the one hand because of the small distance between this fort [Sebastian] and Elmina.”405 Apparently, Bartels’ responsibility included that of Ahanta, an important centre for the palm oil trade; and the Dutch government in Elmina was prepared to protect their interest there.406 Not long after taking office, Bartels succeeded in encouraging the chief of Ahanta, who barely recognised the Dutch flag, to renew his commitment. Thus, Bartels “executed a difficult task with courage and prudence.”407 This encouraged the Dutch to invest financial resources in promoting the palm oil trade there. The

403 Doortmont, 101.
Governor was prepared to pay “a kostgeld of 2 Romaals per month” to the chief of Ahanta to encourage production and trade.408

Bartels’ success with Ahanta enabled him to be appointed as a commander at Butri on 23rd June, 1834, whilst Boerman was put in charge of Shama and Sekondi.409 At Butri, Pieter Bartels used every opportunity to intervene in the local problems to boost his political influence. For instance, the youth of Butri were used to wrestling as a form of entertainment. In one of the wrestling competitions, one of the wrestlers lost his life and Bartels was quick to report the incident at the Elmina Castle.410 During the same time, Kweku Aka, the chief of Apollonia was terrorising his subjects. Being under the British flag, the inhabitants of Apollonia often called for the assistance of the British. However, the first British expedition failed. It was clear the assistance of the Dutch was needed since the British had forged stronger ties with the Dutch. Consequently, the Dutch government put Pieter Bartels in charge of 40 men and other volunteers (including some Java recruits) from Elmina and elsewhere. The second expedition to Apollonia was a joint force of British and Dutch soldiers in 1835 which yielded some result. The chief of Apollonia was compelled to become remorseful, but not for long.411 However, it appears the politics of the expedition got Bartels involved in a scandal.412 It seems Bartels did not give an adequate report of the expedition. At this point Bartels’ trustworthiness began to be in doubt. On the 5th March, 1836, some colleagues of Bartels complained of his strange behavior. This led to his dismissal from the command of Butri.413

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409 Selected Documents on Elmina and Its Neighbours: KvG 361 (23.VI.34), Elmina Journal.
411 After a few months the case involving the king of Apolonia resurfaced again.
412 The English made peace with the Apollonia chief whilst also acknowledging the importance in the expedition.
The atrocities committed by the chief of Apollonia went beyond his subjects. During the same period, Wassa farmers traded with merchants at Axim. This boosted the Dutch trade in Axim. On 7th April, 1834, the chief of Apollonia was reported by the Dutch Commander in Axim, Mr. Tonneboiyer, for panyarring 49 farmers. At the same time, he beheaded 4 of them whilst seizing their gold.\textsuperscript{414} This development encouraged the collaboration between the British and the Dutch. It was also necessary because the British had to pass through Axim which was under the Dutch flag. This development became significant for the exchange of forts between the British and the Dutch.

What was to confirm Bartels involvement in the earlier scandals was a rebellion by some inhabitants of Ahanta on 23rd October, 1837 against the Dutch government in Butri. The rebellion was by some youth who were accompanying the chief of Ahanta through Butri. It was costly to the Dutch government. During the mutiny, a Dutch commander, Maassen, was sent to Butri to ensure peace with the people of the Ahanta chief, Bonsoe.\textsuperscript{415} Commander Masssen and his assistant, Cremer, were shot dead.\textsuperscript{416} Apart from them, a Java recruit and a Dutch corporal was also wounded. The Dutch recorded other casualties of top personnel including Commander Tonneboeiyer.\textsuperscript{417} Some Java recruits and slaves were also killed. It took a lot of effort for the Dutch to bring the mutiny under control. One of the individuals involved in the mutiny was one Kobbena Assefoi who was a member of the council of the Ahanta chief. The rebels were arrested and imprisoned. It appears the prisoners would become useful for various services at Java. As a

\textsuperscript{414} Selected Documents on Elmina and Its neighbours: KvG 361 (7.IV.34), Elmina Journal.
\textsuperscript{415} Selected Documents on Elmina and Its neighbours: KvG 362, Elmina Journal.
\textsuperscript{416} Selected Documents on Elmina and Its neighbours: KvG 361 (24.X.37), Elmina Journal.
\textsuperscript{417} Selected Documents on Elmina and Its neighbours: KvG 361 (29.X.37), Elmina Journal.
result, 12 persons were exiled to Java whilst some escaped upon hearing that they were going to be sent to the East Indies.\textsuperscript{418}

The Ahanta mutiny is significant here because Pieter Bartels was found guilty of inciting the people of Ahanta against the Dutch government in Butri. It appears Bartels was using the mutiny to protest his dismissal. His guilt was confirmed by the smuggling of firearms through a forest path to Ahanta.\textsuperscript{419} Sekondi hunters were contracted to safeguard the path and they intercepted a messenger apparently sent by Bartels. He was arrested as a result and a document confirming the delivery of ammunition to Ahanta was found on him. The delivery took place a few weeks before the mutiny. During the hearing, the chief of Ahanta, Bonsoe, Bartels’ assistant and the prisoners, all accused Bartels for the mutiny as he was then Bonsoe’s councilor.

Bartels was given some considerations due to his relations with Cornelius Bartels. The Dutch government was also bent on avoiding any bad impression amongst the people of Elmina regarding the treatment of Bartels, although the offence amounted to death. Thus, Pieter Bartels was given a comparatively lenient punishment for his high treasonable act by being exiled to Java. The intention was that Bartels would serve in an administrative capacity in the East Indies. Yet again, this development reinforces the nature of the Dutch recruitment programme to Java. However, attempts were expedited to ensure that he does not come into contact with the Africans serving in the East Indies lest he “will get [their permission] to establish himself anywhere where such troops are detached.”\textsuperscript{420} It is unknown the exact role Bartels played in the East Indies.

\textbf{George Emil Emingsang}

\textsuperscript{418} Selected Documents on Elmina and Its Neighbours: KvG 421(2.11.1839). Elmina Journal. This development reinforces the nature of Dutch Java recruits and their use in the Gold Coast. It appears the Dutch were using every possible means to get African soldiers for the East Indies army and they were— apart from using the ploy of “voluntary” recruitment—sending prisoners of war to the East Indies. This development was particularly horrifying to the English because they believed the Dutch were encouraging the European slave trade.

\textsuperscript{419} Selected Documents on Elmina and Its Neighbours: MvK. 4252.

\textsuperscript{420} Selected Documents on Elmina and Its Neighbours: MvK 4252 No. 441 (14.VII.1838).
George Emil Eminsang was perhaps one of the self-made entrepreneurs and merchants during the second half of the nineteenth century. René Baesjou emphasises the economic expanse of George Eminsang. According to Baesjou, he was “a very prosperous Elminian merchant” who could communicate in English, Portuguese, Dutch and German, apart from Akan.\(^{421}\) The agency of Eminsang underscores the involvement of Elmina merchants in Kumasi. For instance, Nyandael’s mission to Kumasi in the early eighteenth century saw a number of such Elmina merchants. Eminsang’s trade was in foodstuffs, livestock, and textiles, amongst others.

Apart from mercantilism, Eminsang was also significant during the latter years of Dutch presence in Elmina, and for that matter the Gold Coast. A significant incident during the period was another Fante attack on Elmina in the middle of 1868.\(^{422}\) In the subsequent years, there were several other attacks. On 16\(^{th}\) August, 1868, the chief of Elmina, Nana Conduah, sent a petition to the Dutch Minister of Colonies in The Hague requesting protection from the Fante.\(^{423}\) However, King William III did not give any favourable response to the petition. It became necessary to send a delegation comprising a local government representative and a Dutch official to The Hague. George Eminsang represented the local government and the Dutch officer was Maijer.\(^{424}\) The objective of the delegation yielded some result. Governor Boers who presided over the transfer of forts which resulted in attacks on Elmina was replaced by Cornelius


\(^{423}\) In the heat of the development, Kobbena Kondua was destooled on 15\(^{th}\) January, 1869 of the same year and replaced by Kobbena Djan on 15\(^{th}\) of July. In the 20\(^{th}\) century chieftaincy dispute has been a major development in Elmina. It is believed this incident do not have anything to with the great chiefly factions of the later years. However, this deserves further studies to examine how that has impacted Elmina socio-political and economic space; Selected Documents on Elmina and Its Neighbours: KvG 730, “To Parties Concerned” (Min.of Col., The Hague).

\(^{424}\) See also Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*, 411; and Baesjou, *An Asante Embassy on The Gold Coast*, 30.
Johannes Marius Nagtglas.\footnote{Selected Documents on Elmina and Its Neighbours: KvG 730 Min. of Col., The Hague to Gov. Boers. & I.} This did not, however, change the Dutch approach towards the Gold Coast.

In the second half of the nineteenth century of Dutch presence in Elmina, for that matter the Gold Coast, was the most difficult. There was high insecurity, which resulted in the transfer of forts, due to the Elmina-Fante war it provoked and the involvement of Asante on behalf of Elmina. An Asante ambassador in Elmina, Akyeampon Yaw, was believed to be committing atrocities against the Fante. On 26\textsuperscript{th} May, 1869, there was an accident involving the boat of the Dutch Ship ‘Amstel’ at Komenda, which came to the Gold Coast to ensure peace amongst the factions.\footnote{Selected Documents on Elmina and Its Neighbours: KvG 728 (7.111.1870) Memo Nagtglas to Kennedy; the Ship was brought to forestall peace in Elmina and across the Gold Coast.} In the accident, a Dutch officer and five crew members lost their lives, and one officer and three seamen were captured by inhabitants of Komenda. These incidents were making things difficult for the Dutch. Governor Cornelius Johannes Marius Nagtglas who was horrified by the developments, noted:\footnote{Cornelis Johannes Marius Nagtglas (16\textsuperscript{th} May 1814 to 19\textsuperscript{th} January, 1897) was a Dutch Governor during the periods 1857-1860, 1861-1862 and from 1869 to 1871.}

More than 200 years have nearly elapsed, and yet European Commerce, military protection and Christian mission have proved a failure on the Gold Coast, so that the question might arise: What is done with it?\footnote{Indeed, in terms of education, the Dutch failed. Governor Kennedy of Cape Coast noted that: “Here are already several schools at C.C. [Cape Coast], making considerable impression…and a benevolent lady is on the eve of establishing a female school, for which purpose she raised a subscription of 1800.- The Dutch have [however] used their G.C. [Gold Coast] possessions mainly as a draw farm for Labourers and Soldiers for “Java”, but have done little else in the direction ofcivilizing the nations…” Selected Documents on Elmina and Its Neighbour: C0 96/84 (6.111.1870) Nagtglas to Kennedy (+ notes by Kennedy), Public Record Office, London.}

This comment suggests the difficulty and unprofitability of the Dutch commercial interest on the Gold Coast. Already, Dutch officials were unwilling “to come and serve in such an ungodly place.”\footnote{Selected Documents on Elmina and its neighbours: KvG 728 (14.XI.1870) Ussher (private) to Nagtglas.} At this point, it was clear that the Dutch possessions on the Gold Coast were going to be
ceded to Great Britain. The “proceedings” took place in “secret until such time as it shall have been determined to enter into the transfer.” The reason was to avoid any form of protest from the Edinafo which could affect the planned transfer. However, since some of the inhabitants were educated, they were able to read reports of the transfer in the newspapers. Rumours immediately went around the community concerning the transfer. This resulted in clashes between some sections of the Elmina community and the Dutch which resulted in the reconstitution of the Colonial Council in which George Emingsang was put in charge of the archives. The task of the Council was to ensure a smooth transfer whilst safeguarding the Dutch affairs.

**Conclusion**

During the Atlantic commercial interactions in Elmina, a new elite emerged to control the commercial relations. These elites were the entrepreneurs or merchants and people employed as Dutch officials. Also, amongst the new class was the position of indigenous slaves. The slaves were easily absorbed into the Elmina society. An example was the slaves of Tia Ankamah and Brempong Kwa Mensah. This chapter argues that the WIC was not able to effectively exploit the agency of the individuals who controlled the commercial and political relations. Those placed in political positions, like Pieter Bartels, was to help administer the Dutch interest in the commercial relations. However, due to the individual commercial and political interests, amongst the Edinafo and the Abrofomba merchants, the Dutch were unable to effectively subject their authority. In the case of mercantilism, there was always conflict between the accomplished merchants, like Carl Bartels, and the small-scale merchants who had the support of the rulers of Elmina. The tension in Elmina was also heightened by the animosity between the Edinafo and the Fante. This was compounded in the 1860s when there was the exchange of forts between the Dutch and the British. However, unlike the Gold Coast, the Dutch were able to exploit the resources of the East Indies.

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430 Selected Documents on Elmina and Its neighbours: CO 96/85 (17.x.1870) Usher to Kennedy.
which made it important to recruit Gold Coasters to serve in Java in various capacities. The
difficulty of the Dutch political and commercial control of the Gold Coast resulted in the ceding of
their Gold Coast possessions to Great Britain in 1872.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

In the early 1870s, two newspapers, Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant and the African Times reported on the transfer of Dutch possessions on the Gold Coast to Great Britain. A Commission was set up to settle Dutch affairs and to supervise the transition. The Committee’s president was J. M. C. W Joost, and the other members included Jacob Simons as the secretary, and George Eminsang who was responsible for conserving the remaining archives. Eminsang was replaced by Molenaa later. Whilst many Abrofomba supported the transfer, the leaders and people of Elmina were greatly disappointed when rumours of the transfer reached the town.\footnote{Selected Documents on Elmina and Its Neighbours: BZ/3002 (28.VIII.1870) Nagtglas to Min. of Col.} Already irked about the Fante siege of Elmina (which resulted in the starvation of the people) in 1868 as well as the Dutch secrecy regarding the frontier arrangement, they became even more distressed about the transfer of the forts to the English in 1872.

The opposition to the 1872 transfer manifest in a series of riotous protests and extreme violence against the Dutch officials overseeing the transfer. On 26\(^{th}\) April, 1872, Joost was shot dead, in protest against the transfer and on 29\(^{th}\) the various quarters in Elmina (with the exception of the Abrofomba) protested against accepting the British flag.\footnote{Selected Documents on Elmina and Its Neighbours: Inventory of the 2\(^{nd}\) Dept. of the National Archives, The Hague 336. No. 55.: Consulate (10.V.1872).} Relative peace was restored in early May, 1872, when a Dutchman, Plange, succeeded in urging Asante to recognise the transfer with the promise to double the kostgeld.\footnote{University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh}

Local African agency in the context of the Atlantic commerce has become a major critique of the Eurocentric analysis of the Atlantic commercial interactions. As outlined in the historiography section, some studies like Daaku’s and Feinberg’s discuss the involvement and
role of the Gold Coasters in general and particularly the *Edinafo* in the Atlantic commerce. For instance, Daaku establishes that the Gold Coasters controlled the commercial relations, mostly with the British, from 1600 to 1720. Particularly on Elmina, Harvey Feinberg emphasise that the commercial relations between the *Edinafo* and the Dutch was cordial in the eighteenth century. However, there was an incident from 1735 to 1740 which marred the relations. The incident involved Elmina’s protest against the close association of the Dutch Director-General de Bordes with the Fante, which resulted in the seizure of maize that was being carried by the canoemen in Elmina. The point of departure is the emphasis that my study places on the immense influence that the liaising role of the *Edinafo* in the Atlantic commerce (between the Dutch and the Akan interior) had on the Dutch’s commercial and political exploits on the Gold Coast. The major and original contribution of my research is that all sections of Elmina society and state pursued independent economic and political agendas to push their own interests. Thus, while they dealt mainly with the Dutch politically and economically, their actions and interventions did not promote the interest of the Dutch government or the WIC. The lack of support for Dutch initiatives in commerce, agriculture and politics on the Gold Coast therefore was a contributory factor to the collapse of Dutch imperialism in West Africa.

The significance of Elmina in the Atlantic commercial relations on the Gold Coast is worth emphasising. As a coastal town on the Gold Coast, Elmina became a strategic location for commercial interactions since the pre-Atlantic era when Mande merchants interacted with coastal West African settlements. Also important was the location of the Elmina Castle which made Elmina an Atlantic trade entrepôt and the headquarters of European imperialism on the Gold Coast. From 1482 to 1872, the Elmina Castle was effectively annexed by the Portuguese, the

Dutch and the British respectively. However, what interests this study is Elmina’s role in the developments leading to the Elmina Castle coming under the British sway of influence in 1872. This is demonstrated through the *Edinaho*’s commercial relations with the WIC (or Dutch government). From 1701, the politics of the Gold Coast also increased due to the rise of Asante which significantly impacted the nature of interactions on the Gold Coast.

The Dutch WIC annexed the Elmina Castle from the Portuguese in 1637. Consequently, the Dutch moved their headquarters from Moure to Elmina. During the period, Elmina became important for the export of slaves from the Guinea coast to the Americas, and trade in gold and other merchandise was pursued.\(^{434}\) One of the major challenges against the Dutch trade was competition from other European ships. This brought about an important market system known as interloping. What was significant in the interloping system was the dominant role of the Gold Coasters in the trade. This appeared to be a rebellion against Dutch monopoly on the Gold Coast. For the local merchants, they could trade commodities like bad gold with such interloping ships.

One of the characteristics of the Dutch commercial interactions on the Gold Coast was their involvement of commercial agents. These agents were influential individuals who attracted trade to the Elmina Castle and other Dutch possessions on the Gold Coast. Examples of such local agents were Akim, Pierter Passop and Aboucan. I have emphasised that the WIC was unable to exploit the agency of their commercial agents effectively. This was because the agents were always involved in the Atlantic commerce as merchants in their own right. Some of them, like Aboucan, was also involved in the Fante-Elmina disputes due to his trade relations with Asante merchants. For instance, Aboucan’s role in the Fante-Elmina crisis of the 1720s is significant.

\(^{434}\) Department of History Library, University of Ghana: Dutch Documents Relating to the Gold Coast and the Slave Coast: WIC 98, W. de la Palma to Ass. Of X, Elmina, 26th June, 1702, 50.
During the period, Aboucan supplied firearms and gunpowder to Asante merchants. This development heightened Fante-Elmina hostilities. Moreover, such developments were a background to the Fante-Elmina conflicts which significantly impacted the crisis of the 1860s during the exchange of forts.

Apart from the role of the commercial agents, the WIC also began a conscious policy of educating their Abrofoomba children to serve their commercial and political interest. The Abrofoomba were children that resulted from the intermarriages between the Dutchmen and the Elmina women. Their education was to instill technical skills and the knowledge of establishing plantation farms in them. Although some of the Abrofoomba were educated, a majority of them were uneducated and employed as military personnel and as Dutch servants. The educated ones, however, became significant as merchants and political brokers for the WIC. As merchants, the Abrofoomba vigorously competed with the local small-scale merchants. The small-scale merchants also had the support of the rulers of Elmina. As a result, although the accomplished merchants like Carl Bartels successfully intermediated the political relations between the Dutch and political rulers of Elmina, the Dutch government was unable to exploit their agency to enhance their commercial and political control of the Gold Coast. The example of Pieter Bartels as a Dutch official is important for understanding how some of these Abrofoomba also took advantage of their privileged status to pursue their own economic and political aims. The case of Bartels also emphasises the relevance of the Dutch in protecting their imperial control of the East Indies due to its economic success. Pieter Bartels was exiled to Java as a Dutch agents to protect Dutch interest in the East Indies.

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435 Department of History Library, University of Ghana: E. F. C. Notebooks Pages: Letter from Moure (Ockers, 30th May.), 152.
During the Dutch’s Atlantic commercial relations with the *Edinafo* in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, protests against the Dutch policies were a commonplace. These acts of rebellions led to the difficulty of the Dutch in asserting their authority and successfully exploiting the local commercial resources. One of the major *Edinafo* protests against the commercial dominance of the Dutch was in the 1820s. During the period, the *Edinafo* built a strong commercial relation with the merchants of Asante. However, Asante was also involved in a war with the British. The diplomatic relations between the Dutch and the British resulted in the passage of the 15th March, 1824 decree by the Dutch to suppress the *Edinafo*’s involvement in supplying firearms and gunpowder to Asante.\(^{436}\) The decree was to control the commercial relations of the *Edinafo*. However, they continued to supply merchandise to Asante. Most of the items during the period were obtained through interloping. Moreover, the small-scale merchants who were influenced by the decree challenged Dutch authority by demanding the removal of the Dutch Director-General for his close association with the British. The effect of this incident was that the British began to interfere in the affairs of Dutch possessions on the Gold Coast. Another case of British interference in Dutch possessions was the canoe trade. In this trade, due to the British intention to urge other European ships to stop trading in slaves, the Dutch compelled Elmina merchants to stop supplying canoes to Portuguese and Spanish merchants engaging in the slave trade. This resulted in those European ships obtaining canoes at Dutch Accra. Due to its proximity with British Accra, the British became involved in Dutch Accra due to the inability of the Dutch to put a governor there. This significantly impacted the exchange of forts between the British and the Dutch in the 1860s. The idea is to make it easy to administer the forts.

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I have established that the Dutch Atlantic commercial exploits on the Gold Coast was a failure. In order to supplement trade, the Dutch pursued a policy of encouraging plantation farms whilst exploiting the local goldmines. These attempts were also unsuccessful due to local resistance. During the same period, however, the Dutch were able to successfully exploit the resources of the East Indies by establishing a plantation economy there. This development largely contributed to the Dutch policy of recruiting Gold Coasters to protect their possessions in Indonesia. Hence, the study argues that, if the Dutch had been successful at dominating the commercial relations in Elmina and the Gold Coast, the WIC would not have eventually ceded their possessions on the Gold Coast to the British. However, the commercial and political relations of the Edinafo threatened the Dutch commercial success due to the local dominance. In 1873, the British bombarded Elmina after their acquisition a year earlier to suppress the local economic and political forces that impeded the progress of the Dutch. This, indeed, was a significant milestone in the British imperial control of the Gold Coast and marked a new Afro-European relation in Elmina.
APPENDIX

Fig. A 1. A letter containing information and instruction for D. V. Nyendael into the Gold Coast interior in the early eighteenth century.

Source: Department of History Library, University of Ghana.

Letter on Information and Instruction for Sub-Resident D. V. Nyendael in accordance with which he should, and also should, act during his Voyage into the Interior.

(translated from the Dutch original by A. van Damme)

In the first place, he should, when asked after his arrival in Country or Shuffer where he is going, and how far, answer that he is first going to the negative Chief Aklesan, and after that to the Adjumane Subahsen Zay, where he sees that there is no doubt that he will receive all help and assistance needed from the governors living there.

Secondly, once he has arrived at that place where mentioned Aklesan in staying, he should go and visit him and also the Adjumane Chief, and consecrate both of them together on our behalf, and as the occasion presents itself, deliver the presents intended for them, informing them at the same time that we have received, on their advice, to send a mission and also some small presents to Subahsen Zay. He should also request them on our behalf to direct matters in such a way that mentioned presents are graciously accepted; and in case there were to ask why we delayed this mission for so long, he could politely answer that up to the present we did not know where exactly Zay had his residence, and that we did not wish either through that we could address ourselves to him; apart from that, that we were not without reason afraid that those of Shuffer would not be willing to allow us passage, in consideration of the fact that already twice they have shown considerable edge of their dislike towards us (made in margin: below can be seen of which this consists), first by evoking big bunches of merchandise which we had wanted to send through their country in order to sell them, as well as by their affronting of arresting (taking) the same which was sent with the said goods, and which they still have in their possession, together with all the goods. Secondly, they absolutely refused to allow our boys Nacum and Chines, who stayed for several weeks in Shuffer, to pass through in order to go to Zay.

Thirdly, once he has arrived at the place where Zay stays, he should strongly insist on being allowed to see him as soon as possible in order to deliver to him the presents which are being sent to him, which are meant to be a nice compliment to congratulate him with his victory, and that to let him know how happy we are about it if we send him these presents.

(what kind of presents they are, and for whom they are intended, D. V. Nyendael will know on the notice above). These presents do not mean nothing to the friendship which we feel for him, but at the same time we do not dispose of any better or other curiosities. He, Nyendael, should promise that as soon as others arrive from Europe, and more so if we may have the fortune to learn from him, Zay, himself what he might like to receive in the future. After this, he should on that same day, or on another one, whatever may be most expedient, suggest and request the following:

First, and primarily, that he should not only give permission to his own people and others to come to trade on the coast, but also encourage them to trade not only with us but also with other Nation (sic: singular), promising and assuring him that they will be well received by us as well as elsewhere, and that we shall take care that not the least harm be done to them as far as our authority stretches, and that if such were to happen, that we shall certainly take revenge on their behalf.

Secondly, he should request Zay to make on his part arrangements that after his (also their) departure to Adjumane the traders returning from our coast have free and safe passage through Aklesan and Shuffer, without being harassed or molested by anybody; otherwise all the provisions which we are taking would be useless, because it is sufficiently proved and certain that the -Shuffers and the Adjumane would again play their old role, and it is therefore of extreme necessity that he tidies them in such a manner that they will not have the courage to undertake any evil again in future.

Thirdly, it will be necessary that he informs the traders there what kind of trade goods are at present being sold by us, and at what prices.
but in the presentation of mentioned tradegoods, and in everything that is to be said to Zay, he should first of all deliberate with the Acoanists chiefs Akjesin and Cratlie, and he should do nothing which may be against their desires or beyond their knowledge, so that they may not hamper our actions, or even overthrow them, and therefore he should also inform them as soon as he arrives of the presents we have intended to be given to Zay and his other Caboceers, but that we leave it to them to make different arrangements if that may be necessary. As said, the most important matter to be treated with the mentioned Akkanini chiefs, to which he has to pay special attention, is to economize ourselves with them, and if the occasion presents itself also with the whole of Akkanini of what up to now we are being unjustly accused of, which consists principally of the following:

Firstly, that we would have bribed the Dinkirase, or at least would have tried to bribe them to come down to fight again the Akkanini people in order to destroy them. This is not only false and untrue, but also without grounds. Because at the time that we supplied the Dinkirase with hundred bensos of gold, several Akkanini, such as Dickie Cobbe, Afferri Pim, Abadje and several others, as well as the Kings of Commy and Petu were present, and if these men are still alive, they should come and witness that the supply of those 100 bensos was only meant to eradicate and to defeat the Comminize and Abe Tekki, and that we meant no evil to any other state, let alone Acoanini. Otherwise it would have been very silly of us to convocate the most important Acoanini. With this we believe that this accusation will automatically be destroyed and cancelled.

Secondly, we are being accused of supporting those of Cabes Term, and in that manner behaving as enemies of Acoanini. This is equally untrue, and with good reason: we know very well that as of old, the Acoanini have always been great traders, and therefore we have always sought to remain friendly with them above all others, and to favour them above all others, without bothering much about the Cabes Term. The only reason that for some time we have shewn them some friendship, was really in favour of the Acoanini themselves, in order that their passage through that country would be the more free, and also because those of Cabes Term, next to those of Acoanini, have done us a considerable service, helping to defeat the Comminize. But we should from now onwards, promise those of Acoanini that if they want to start a war against Cabes Term, and they demand it from us, we shall completely withdraw our support for them, refuse their refugees protection and possession (sic), on condition that Acoanini gives us timely advice of their intentions.

Thirdly, there are some malicious people who have spread the rumour that at the time that Akkanini was defeated by Dinkirase, we would not in the least have bothered about releasing them out of the Dinkirase slavery or servitude, but that only the English would have assisted them with the loan of tradegoods. This rumour has no foundation whatsoever either, because if indeed we were never requested to lend any goods to anybody, it is also well known that we never refused to do so. Only Coffy Brattafee has requested such, and he got it. There has indeed been one Acoanini here whose request we had refused, but that was only because here in Ellina we, not everybody else had the least knowledge of him, and it would really be strange if anybody would credit a person with goods without knowing him at all. With as little reason we are being accused by those of Cabes Term - without us having given the least credit a person with goods without knowing him at all. As far as we know and when all this has been daily explained reason thereto, as far as we know and when all this has been daily explained reason thereto, as far as we know and when all this has been daily explained reason thereto, as far as we know and when all this has been daily explained reason thereto, as far as we know and when all this has been daily explained reason thereto, as far as we know and when all this has been daily explained reason thereto, as far as we know and when all this has been daily explained reason thereto, as far as we know and when all this has been daily explained reason thereto, as far as we know and when all this has been daily explained reason thereto.
it was boozed up on the road and filled with kerdwyvel (palmwine?) and closed with lacquer, only and alone in order to give us a bad name with Akjesim, as if we wanted to mock at him.

The above is the most important part of what he, Nyendaal, should demonstrate to Zay and to Akkanny. Before taking leave from the first mentioned he should insist strongly on his request of the dispatch of a party of traders together with him, which may serve as a proof of his pleasure at our mission.

During his voyage he shall have to keep a proper journal, so that at his return he should be able to report to us in writing about his experiences underway. It is therefore necessary that he makes every day notes about what length of road he has travelled, how long it takes to go from one village to another, and what are their names; he should also note on what day and at what time he arrives in 'juiffer and all following countries, so that we may conclude from it what size these countries are, and how far they are from each other. He should also indicate how long he stays stationary at any place, what happens to him there, and how he is received everywhere; in short, he should neatly and clearly note down everything he may experience during his voyage, so that when the time comes we may regulate ourselves accordingly. In order that he may be able to know the hours of the day, we hereby supply him with a watch (orlogio).

In case mentioned Caboceer Zay seriously desires that he stays there for some time, he may (speculating himself on the advantages) agree to it, but in that case he should send back the Company's slaves, and advise us through the same of his encounters and experiences, and also take care that they are accompanied by a good number of traders from there.

Done this 9th October 1701 at St. George d'Elmina Castle.

List of Presents:
firstly, for the Great Asjanteese Caboceer Zay:
1 Ps. Red Velvet Cloth with a gold lace border
1 Ps. big gilt Mirror
1 Ps. Helmet with Feathers
1 Ps. Quita Elk (umbrella)
4 sheets of gold leather
for the the two Caboceers who follow after him - to be indicated by the Akkanists Akjesim & Grassije:
2 Ps. Elus silk cloths with golden flowers
4 sheets of gold leather
2 jugs of brandy
for the mentioned Akkanisten Akjesim &c.:
1 jug of brandy , at the delivery of which it should be stated that the other presents destined for him will be kept in safekeeping for him here till the time that he has come a little nearer to us (i.e. has become friendlier to us)
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