

THE CHRISTIANSBORG KEYS IN AKWAMU STATE REGALIA: A
MATERIAL CULTURE ANALYSIS

BY

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THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my research work undertaken at the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, under the supervision of Professor Benjamin W. Kankpeyeng. This research has not been presented in full or in part to any other institution for examination. I therefore accept full responsibility for this study.

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Signature

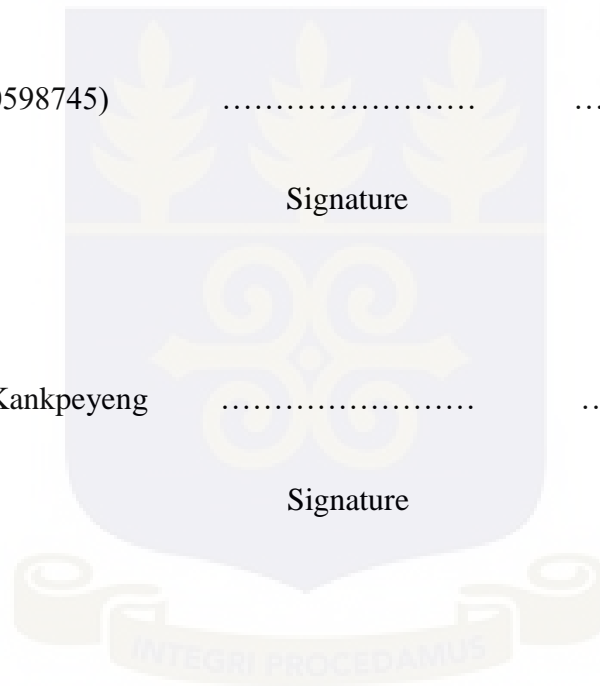
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Date



ABSTRACT

Regalia are invaluable sources of information on the early history and social organization of ethnic groups in Ghana. They do not only show the majesty and wealth of chiefs but also are an indication of societal attitude throughout history. Regalia reflect the long history of groups and their relations with others. The study highlighted the settlement history of Akwamu, their relations with the Ga and Danes on the Accra coast in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the personality of Nana Asomani and the reasons for the seizure of Christiansborg, as well as the Christiansborg keys' status as Akwamu State regalia. The study portrays the meanings and significance of the incorporation of the Christiansborg keys as part of Akwamu kingdom's royal regalia. It elaborates the conservation, periodic display or exhibition, and the interpretation associated with the bunch of keys. The significance of the castle keys includes showing the prowess and authority of the Akwamuhene, as inspiration to the sub-chiefs and people of Akwamuman to work in the interest of the Akwamu state, as well as helping build stronger relations with the Danish society on their shared heritage for the purposes of education and socio-cultural development. The study also makes recommendations for enhancing the cultural value and public access to the Christiansborg keys.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my family and friends.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

Artifacts are evidences of past historical events that continue to exist today. They are unique from other historical sources in the sense that they are authentic primary sources available for research and can also be re-experienced (Prown 1993:2-3). In the case of material culture, ethnic groups usually use their social practices to transform material things into cultural objects. In their newly ascribed status, these objects tend to serve as important sources of the early history, social organization, social or economic interactions, as well as the experiences and attitudes of individuals or groups of people in times past. Shanks and Tilley (1992:133) believe that, material culture can be interpreted when it is placed in context and explained with a wide range of evidences in order to highlight the manner in which they operate or contradict in a field of social, economic, political, and ideological relations.

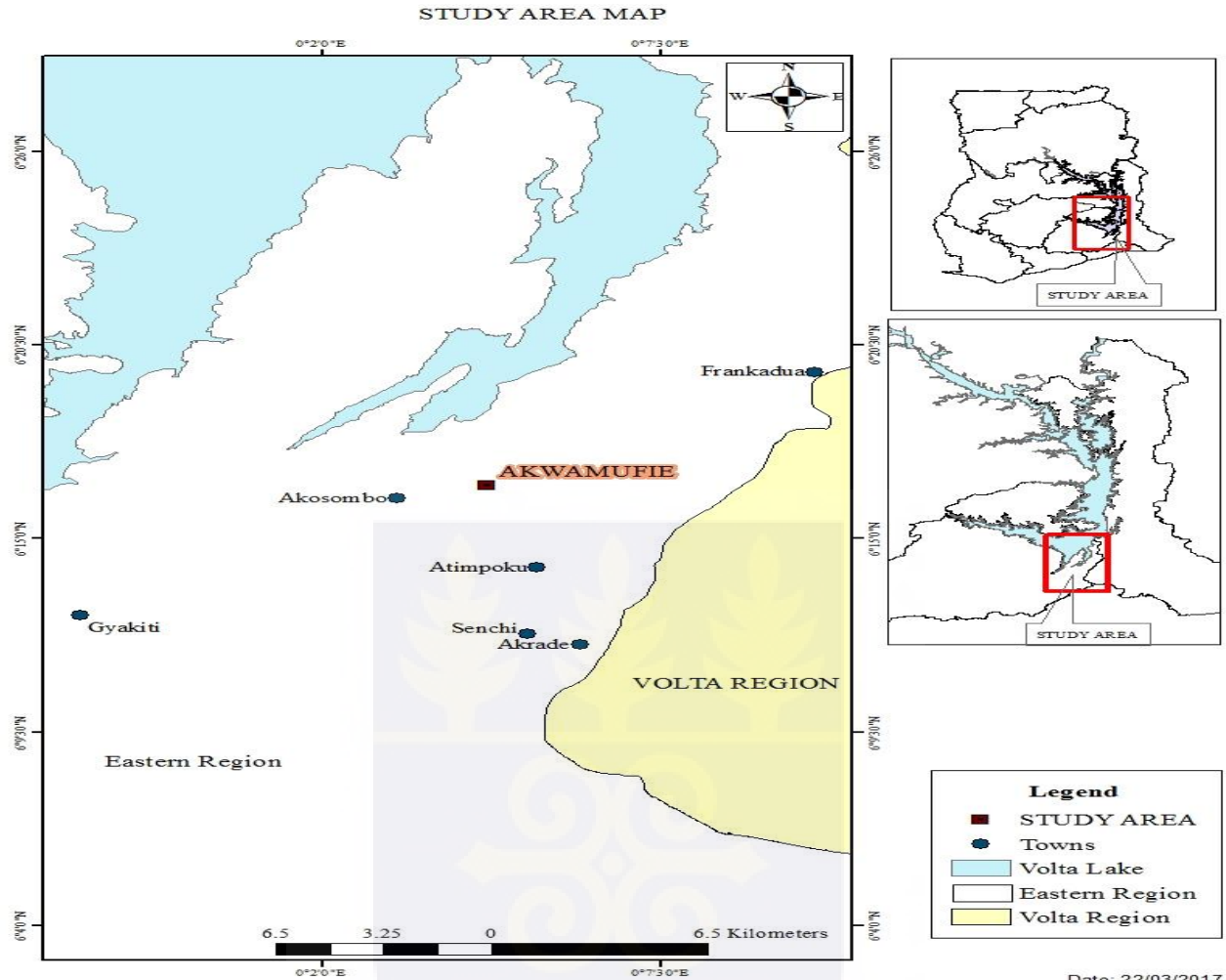
The focus of this research was to identify the inherent information related to the ownership of the Danish Christiansborg keys as Akwamu State regalia. It sought to identify its heritage value and impact on Akwamu's socio-cultural behaviour and lifestyles through the use of archival research on existing literature, oral traditions and ethnographic studies. It goes further to examine the migration history of Akwamu from their original home, the numerous people they encountered through trade and warfare before finally settling at Akwamufie; their present location. The research also explored trading activities between Akwamu, the Danes and Ga at Osu in the seventeenth century.

1.1 The Study Area

The Akwamu are part of the Akan ethnic group of Ghana and belong to the Aduana clan. The Akwamuhene is usually referred to as “Aduana Piesie” which means the Leader of the Aduana clan. The totem animal of the Aduana clan is a dog which has been incorporated into the Akwamu state emblem. The dog is seen standing on a ceremonial stool with fire in its mouth. There is a very popular saying by the Akwamu which is; “Akwamu Kotoi, Ogyam aa Okum Ogyam”. This is an expression of the fearlessness of the Akwamu people and the Akwamuhene is the chief who conquers other chiefs. The Akwamu army therefore fights to conquer and annihilate.

1.1.1 Geography

Akwamufie is the spiritual capital of Akwamuman under the leadership of Odeneho Nana Kwafu Akoto III and Queen Mother Nana Afrakomah II. Akwamufie is in the Asuogyaman District of the Eastern Region. According to the Ghana Statistical Service’s 2010 Population and Housing Census, the district has a population of 98,046 with Akwamufie contributing 2,160 people. The Asuogyaman District is located approximately between latitudes 6° 34’ N and 6° 10’ N and longitudes 0° 1’ W and 0°14’E. It shares border with Ewe speaking people (Ho West and North Tongu Districts) to the East; Afram Plains South District to the north; Upper and Lower Manya Districts to the South and West respectively. There are over 40 communities in the District including Akwamufie, Atimpoku, Akrade, Akosombo, Adumasa, Gyakiti and Senchi. The name of the District is a reflection of the fact that most of the major communities are located along the banks of the Volta Lake. “Asuogya” means river banks and “oman” equals a state or community.



Map1: Akwamufie, Asuogyaman District, Eastern Region (Source: Ohene-Larbi 2017)

Therefore Asuogyaman literally means a state located near the bank of a river (See map 1 above).

1.1.2 Economic Activities

The inhabitants are primarily engaged in agricultural activities such as the cultivation of crops, rearing of livestock or breeding of fish for sale or for family consumption. Although every community engages in at least two of the aforementioned economic activities, some are well-known for specific ones. For instance, communities like Adomi, Atimpoku and Akosombo, deal

heavily in fishing, whiles Nkwakaben and Asikuma are prominent in livestock rearing. Gyakiti, Fintey and Frankadua specialize in food crops like maize, cassava, plantain, yam and vegetables. The Atimpoku market is the place where most of their economic activities and businesses are carried out. Very few people engage in forestry such as planting and growing of trees in the area.



Figure 1: Odeno Kwafo Akoto III. (Source: www.akwamuman.org Assessed on 20-02-2017).

1.2 Research Problem and justification

A lot of scholarly work has been done on the pre-colonial history of Ghana with much reference to state formation, European contact and trade relations. Scholars like Addo-Fening (1997), Amenumey (2011), Buah (1980), Reindorf (2007), Ward (1948), Wilks (1997) and others have conducted historical researches on the origin, migration, rise and fall of the Akwamu State. Most scholars who have worked on the rise of Akwamu as a powerful state in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries do highlight the seizure of the Christiansborg keys by Asomani and some Akwamu warriors in 1693. For instance, Wilks (1997:46) wrote that "...one of the most spectacular and novel of all Akwamu gains is the capture of Christiansborg from the Danes in 1693". Others like Anquandah (1999) and Van Dantzig (1980) who wrote on the forts and castles of Ghana do acknowledge the seizure of the keys and Akwamu's trade on the coast. DeCorse (1993) also illustrated the Danish presence and trading activities on the coast from selling and buying guns, ivory, and slaves to the establishment of plantations on the Gold Coast after the abolition of the slave trade by the Danish government.

It is therefore obvious that earlier works on Akwamu have been limited in their analysis of the intangibles associated with the Christiansborg keys, despite the several ways of deciphering the hidden meanings of material culture. Irrespective of this potential, there has not been any significant research conducted on the Christiansborg keys, and what they mean to the people of Akwamu. The study will also highlight traditional conservation practices used by the Akwamu on their royal regalia. Hence my work will fill the gap left by earlier researchers.

1.3 Research Aim

The aim of this research is to document the history and heritage value of the Christiansborg keys, and their significance to Akwamu's heritage.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To trace the early history of Akwamu and circumstances leading to their present settlement at the Volta gorge.
2. Understand the nature of trading interaction that existed between Akwamu, Ga and the Danes on the coast.
3. Investigate the reasons for the seizure of the Christiansborg keys.
4. To find out the heritage value of the Christiansborg keys as Akwamu State regalia, with specific focus on the intangible aspects.

1.5 Research Questions

Some of the questions that guided this research include;

1. What is the settlement history of Akwamu?
2. What was the nature of the relationship that existed between the Akwamu on one side, and Ga-Danes on the Accra coast?
3. Who was Asomani and what were the reasons for the seizure of Christiansborg (Osu Castle)?
4. Why did the Akwamu refuse to hand over the keys to the Danes?

5. In what ways have the keys been incorporated into the culture of the Akwamu, like court practices, war songs, libations and ritual practices?
6. How are the Christiansborg keys conserved by the Akwamu Traditional Council?
7. What is the meaning of the keys to the people of Akwamu, and the Danes?

1.6 Conceptual framework

This research was undertaken with the guidance of material culture studies and uses of cultural heritage. Prown (1982:1) defines material culture studies as the study through artifacts of the beliefs, values, ideas, activities and assumption of a particular community or society at a given time. Artefacts are basically objects made or modified by people which provide an insight into the past. The proper study of material culture can help us to understand or learn more about human behaviour, creativity and the impact of economic activities on societies. This therefore means that, artifacts convey the meaning of past human activities and have different kinds of value. This could be a result of the object's rarity or the values attached to it by the maker or present owners. In most circumstances, the owners of such objects consider them as their heritage. It is in this light that Hoelscher (2011:203) sees heritage as the present day uses of the past for a wide array of strategic goals like economic benefits or matters relating to identity, and is produced or displayed through images, objects, events and monuments. Leone and Little (1993:160) argue that artifacts enable us to ask questions that produce answers that would not necessarily come up through the use of documentary materials. Thus the study of artifacts comprehends written materials without opposing it for a critical knowledge of our society. Also, Jones (1993:182) insists that artifacts reflect the spirit of an age, the belief of a society or a subgroup, or the experiences of an individual.

The research sought to use the Christiansborg keys in Akwamu State regalia as material culture to understand the thought of Akwamu in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as to what it means to own or seize the keys of a castle belonging to an European nation, and the nature of social and economic interactions that existed between the natives and the Danes. Again, how the state of Akwamu is using the Christiansborg keys as part of their material cultural heritage to secure political identity and unity.

1.7 Research method

This research used multi-disciplinary approach in interpreting the various issues concerned. The research methods comprised documentary records, oral records, and ethnographic studies.

1.7.1 Documentary records

Review of existing literature related to the study was conducted at the Balme Library, Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies Library, Institute of Africa Studies Library, and the History Department Library all at the University of Ghana, Legon. Archival research was also undertaken at the Public Records and Archives Administration Department's (PRAAD) offices in Accra and Koforidua. This was aimed at getting access to both published and unpublished literature. Some of the literature that were found to be crucial included; Amenumey (2011) *Ghana: Concise History from pre-Colonial times to the 20th Century*; Balmer (1925) *A History of the Akan Peoples of the Gold Coast*; Buah (1980) *A History of Ghana*; Daaku (1970) *Trade and Politics in the Gold Coast 1600-1720*; DeCorse (1993) *The Danes on the Gold Coast: Culture Change and the European Presence*; Justesen (2005) *Danish Sources for the History of Ghana, 1657-1754*; Meyerowitz (1950) *Akan Traditions of Origin*, Odotei (1972) *The Ga and their Neighbours, 1600-1742*; Romer (1760) *A Reliable Account of the Coast of Guinea*;

Wellington (2011) *Stones Tell Stories at Osu- Memories of a Host Community of the Danish Trans Atlantic Slave Trade*; and Wilks (1997) *The Rise of the Akwamu Empire 1650 – 1710*.

Finally, the internet was surfed to get published journals and papers on topics related to the study. These journals and papers covered areas such as European presence and trading activities in the then Gold Coast, Akwamu's trading and military policies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the presence of Danish merchants and the establishment of Christiansborg as the headquarters of their trade after 1661.

1.7.2 Oral accounts

Oral tradition encompasses information or cultural knowledge transmitted from one generation to another by word of mouth which has not been written down. Oral tradition has always been important in the construction or writing of Africa history. This stems from the fact that it has the potential to eliminate prejudice by scholars. Oral traditions were collected from people who are knowledgeable in the oral history of Akwamu. This group included the chiefs, elders and the youth of Akwamu. Communities such as Akwamufie, Akosombo, Atimpoku, Akrade and Senchi were visited to collect oral accounts. Informal interviews were conducted by talking to between fifteen and twenty people each from Akwamufie, Atimpoku and Akrade. The researcher managed to engage in four focus group discussions at Akwamufie, and two in Atimpoku and one in Akrade.

1.7.3 Ethnographic studies

An ethnographic study entails the understanding of contemporary cultures and societies. As a result an ethnographic research was carried out from 1st May to 31st July, 2017 to help in the interpretation of both documentary sources and oral accounts. The ethnographic studies

concerning the cultural practices of Akwamu were conducted at Akwamufie, the spiritual capital of Akwamuman. This was made possible through the use of purposive sampling technique.

1.8 Significance of the study

1. It has added to existing knowledge on Akwamu history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by elaborating on the socio-economic relations between Akwamu and Gadanés, the seizure of Christiansborg, as well as the significance of the castle keys to Akwamu's heritage.
2. By bringing out Asomani's seizure and reign as Governor, it has increased the heritage value of Christiansborg by giving another interpretation of its history as one of African resistance against European domination of politics and trade.
3. The study is an additional resource for which researchers, curators, educationists, anthropologists and students can use.

1.9 Delimitation of the research

The research sought to assess what the Christiansborg keys mean to people of Akwamu and Danish heritage. However, it became practically impossible to visit every Akwamu community in Ghana to gather enough diverse data because it was self-funded. I was also restricted in the use of some information concerning the keys like the exact number of the bunch of keys. Although I had the opportunity to see the keys, I was not permitted to take photograph of them. Lastly, it was difficult to get substantive data from the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD) in Accra and Koforidua concerning the early history of Akwamu and their subsequent interactions with the Danish merchants at Osu. This is because most of the documents available there dealt with the colonial period and its aftermath.

1.10 Organization of the Study

The next chapter covers intellectual discussions as documented by scholars, including the history and philosophical discussions on the meaning of objects. Chapter three focuses on the methodology used in gathering the data.

Chapter four focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the major findings from the research.

The last chapter concludes the study with some recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON AKWAMU'S HISTORY AND REGALIA

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of related literature to emphasize the theoretical and empirical basis of the study. Several published and unpublished information were collected from libraries, journals, books, and the internet. The reviewed literature deals with the origin and migration of Akwamu as an Akan state, the Akwamu Empire, Akwamu's relations with the Ga and Danes, and the seizure of Christiansborg by Asomani. It further discusses the uses of regalia as status of chiefs and their significance.

2.1 The Origin of the Akan group

A great number of scholarly works has been done on the origin of the Akan groups of Ghana. Researchers with diverse academic backgrounds such as history, archaeology, anthropology, sociology and ethnography have been involved in this regard since the turn of the twentieth century. According to Balmer (1925:19), it has become an impossible task to trace the authentic origin or early history of the various ethnic groups of Ghana. This is because of the unavailability of written documents and consistent traditions. He believes that by making references to their present location, language, and the people they interacted with, one can bring out a probable account of their early history. Ward (1957:21) agrees with Balmer (1925) by insisting that Akan history prior to the year 1450 is very unclear but most stool traditions are detailed after 1700. The Akan occupy the whole of Asante and the forest areas west of the Volta Lake in Ghana. Wilks (1993:91) writes that the root of the word Akan is "kan" which means first

and foremost therefore it implies “us” the true people. This is based on his argument that the name has to do with the first five Akan towns around Adanse. These towns are Adansemanso, Abuakwa Atwumamanso, Asantemanso, Asenmanso and Abankeseso.

Meyerowitz (1950:124), by relying on the traditions of the major Akan clans, says that they originated from the region between Djenne and Timbuktu. She adds that others like the ruling classes of Bono Manso and Kormantse came from places further north of the Sahara desert. This view is strengthened by Claridge (1964:45) who argues that the Akan or Twi-speaking people were a pastoral race who inhabited the open country beyond the forest belt and farther north than Salaga. He says that the Akan were overpowered by a northern lighter-skinned people who seized their cattle and women. This resulted in the Akan migration into the forest areas where they settled and built villages. With time the population increased to the extent that some moved southwards until they reached the coast. The north or north-west movement of the Akan is supported by Fage (1968:39) who believes that they moved from the Niger Valley from Timbuktu westwards, in the regions where the empires of Ghana and Mali developed. He affirms that it is possible to interpret traditions among the Akan, especially in the territory of ancient Bono, as indicating that their ancestors left the Niger Valley during the period when the Ghana Empire was in decline around the twelfth century.

Adu Boahen (1992:412) contends that the process of state building among the Akan gained momentum with the emergence of Bono in the second half of the fifteenth century due to the trade with the Mande people centered on Begho. Adu Boahen is of the opinion that from about 1550, Awurade Basa, king of Fomena, attempted to centralize the Akan city states and clans under his leadership around Fomena and Akrokere. Although this resulted in the formation of Adanse confederation, some Akan groups or clans migrated to establish chiefdoms such as

Kwahu, Akyem Abuakwa, and Akwamu. It must be stated that the aforementioned scholars failed to give the precise origin of the Akan people of Ghana.

2.2 The Akwamu Empire

Ward (1948:39) without explaining much on the origin of the Akwamu simply says that they came from Kong. However Meyerowitz (1950:96) is clearer by insisting that the ancestors of the Abrade clan (Akwamu) moved from the Kumbu or Kumu kingdom in the Ivory Coast after their subjugation by the Zaberima (Songhai) or black Fulani. The Zaberima occupied their capital city called Kong, which was closer to the sources of the Kumbu River in the Kong Mountains. The Abrade clan, together with other refugees migrated into the forest region south of Banda where they formed a temporary state at Dwenemu near Diabokrom. The death of their leader paved way for succession dispute forcing the Abrade to move.

Both Meyerowitz (1950:97) and Wilks (1976:434-435) agree that they founded a settlement about thirty to forty miles north of Elmina under the leadership of Agyen Kokobo. Wilks believes the initial settlement was called Kumkunso which is represented by the present Twifo-Hemang. Meyerowitz (1950: 97) says that the Abrade founded Amenfi and Hemang and were subsequently referred to as Twifo-Hemang because the Kumbu migrants were called Twifo by their neighbours. Regardless of the differences in the narrative, there is no doubt the Abrade (Akwamu) founded Twifo-Hemang. After the death of their fifth king, a succession dispute broke out which forced a section of the royal family under the leadership of Otumfour Asare to move eastwards to establish Asaremanke (Amenumey 2011; Buah 1980; Meyerowitz 1950; Ward 1948; Wilks 1976). The name Asaremanke (Asamankese) means Asare's big town. This,

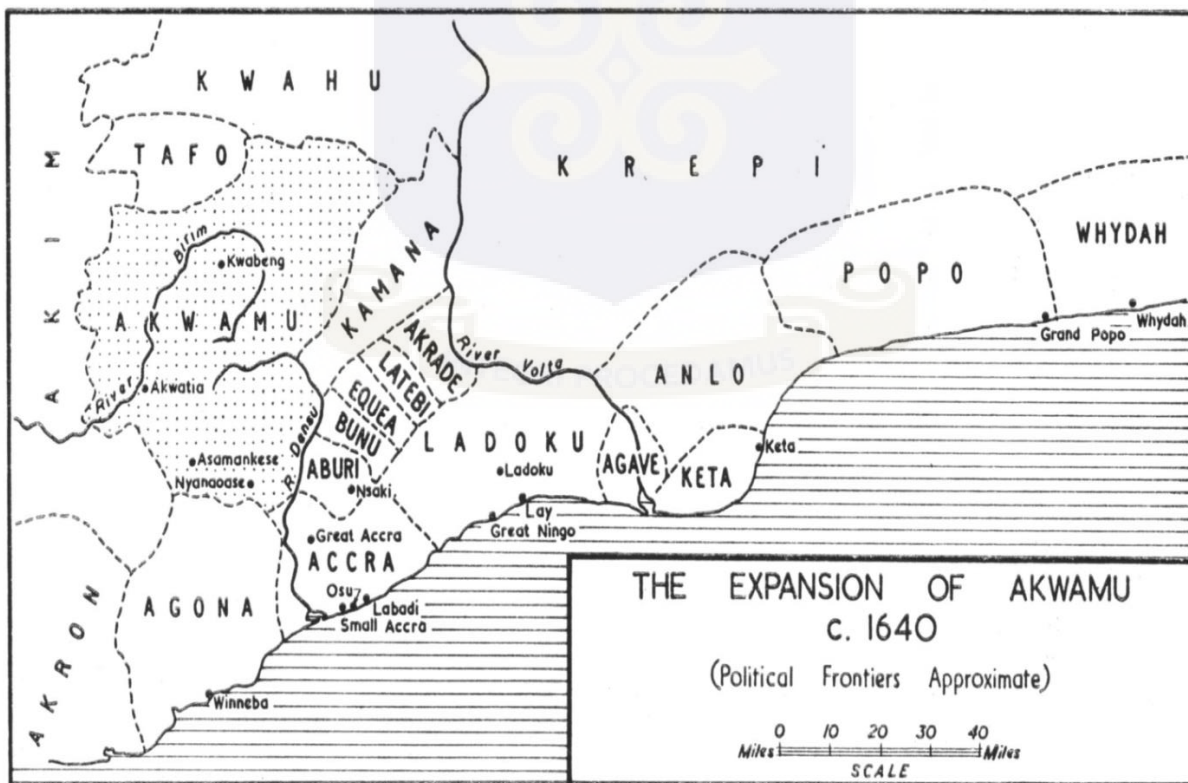
according to Meyerowitz (1950:98), was because Asare made the town his capital and was later moved to Nyanoase, on the hill above Asaremankele by his successor.

Several accounts have been given by scholars when it comes to the origin of the name Akwamu, Meyerowitz (1950:98) thinks that the people founded a Kumbu state in either 1560 or 1570 in the Akwatia-Nsawam region, north of Accra, after their former kingdom in the Ivory Coast. She believes the name was mentioned as Acquamboe in the eighteenth century European records and maps. Hence the people are known as Akwamu. Akhan (2012:2) also narrates that when a section of the royal family and army migrated from their homeland in Twifo Hemang to reestablish themselves they passed through the Fante area. Since the people moved in huge numbers, Akhan says that the Fante passed the comment “Nnipa na wɔdɔsɔ saa no, wohwe wɔn saa na wo kɔn bɛ bu”. This translates as “these people are so many, even looking at them break one’s neck”. The people were thus called “Akɔn–bu-fo” (neck-breakers) which later became Akwamufo.

Romer (1760:116) gives his account by referring to a conflict that broke out between two prominent natives who fell in love with a lady of royal status. The men decided to allow the woman to openly choose her preferred husband. The woman made her choice and the loser pretended to be satisfied with it but later came at night and took her by force to his house. The man, together with his followers ran with her the same night. After six weeks of travelling they arrived in Accra where they sought the friendship of the Mantse. Romer says that the king gave them a piece of land about 4 miles from the sea and farther inland. Romer believes that either the woman or her runaway husband was called Akwamu hence the entire nation or people were referred to as Akwamufo.

According to Buah (1948:50) and Wilks (1976:435) the people now known as Akwamu were settled at Nyanoase by 1600 under the able leadership of their king Ansa Sasraku I. It was from their settlement at Nyanoase that the Akwamu began to expand as an empire in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The Akwamu Empire expanded beyond the east of the Volta Lake. Ivor Wilks noted that:

“It would appear that in the early decades of the seventeenth century Akwamu lay athwart the Atewa Hills, a long densely forested range culminating in a series of peaks of about 2,400 feet above sea level, and running from the neighbourhood of Asamankese in the south to that of Anyinam in the north, where the valley of the Birim separates the Atewa Hills from the main line of Kwahu scarp. East of the Atewa Hills, it is likely that the middle reaches of the Densu River formed the Akwamu Border” (Wilks 1997: 25).



Drawn by S. J. A. NELSON, Geography Dept., U.C. Ghana.

Map2. The Expansion of Akwamu State (Source: Wilks 1997)

According to Amenumey (2011:33), the Akwamu were traders supported by fighting men. They therefore established a gold market at Abonse where traders from the interior were forced to conduct their trade with Accra. Wilks (1976:436) agrees with Amenumey that the Abrade clan grew its authority to the extent that by the middle of the seventeenth century they were not only in control of the trade at Abonse but were also in the position to direct trade from the east and west of their market. They channeled trade routes from the interior to the coast windward or leeward of Accra. The rise of Abonse as an important market inherently became a threat to the trade at Accra. The Akwamu began to infiltrate the Akuapem ridge by building settlements among the Guan and migrant Akan groups in the area. The Akwamu exercised authority in the Akuapem area through the organization of a military union. This gave the Akwamu state adequate food supplies and manpower to pursue wars of territorial expansion. Rodney (1975:300) confirms the importance of trade to the Akwamu state by saying that its rulers major economic objective was to control its own trade and that of inland people to the coast.

It must be emphasized that the Akwamu Empire rose primarily because of its military prowess and control of trade routes to the coast. The empire disintegrated because of several reasons. The core reasons were internal disputes resulting in an attempt to remove Akwamuhene Ansa Kwao from authority after the death of Akonnor in 1725; the declaration of war on Akwamu by Akyem leader Frimpong Manso following the treatment of his sister and other women; as well as rebellion of vassal led the Akuapem states (Amenumey 2011:38-39; Ward 1957:111-112). The Akwamu were chased out of their territory to their current location at the Volta gorge. This W.E.F. Ward narrated;

“They marched 50 miles north-eastwards to the Volta, on the advice of their general, who was familiar with the river country. They reached the river somewhere near the modern Senchi

Ferry, the enemy hard on their heels; there no boats, and their general's familiarity with the district did not extend to a knowledge of the fords. It seemed as if all were lost but in the nick of time their god Ayesu took on him the form of a wild pig and trotted ahead of them to reveal a ford; the whole army splashed across behind him and by the time the enemy scouts were appeared on the river bank they were safe on the other side” (Ward 1957:113).

2.3 Early Osu settlement and European Trade

It is important to discuss the development of Osu as a major trading town on the coast because of its role in Akwamu commerce and subsequent interaction with the Danish merchants.

According to Odotei (1972:14) the various groups of Ga-Adangme began to disperse in the lower Volta and by 1200 they had founded small settlements. She further states that the Ga-Mashie, Nungua, and Tema people settled in the Accra plains prior to the arrival of the La and Osu groups. Wellington (2011:8) shares the view of Odotei that the ancestors of Osu, as a group of families, moved out of their original community called Osudoku due to a quarrel between one Noete Doku family and another family over some precious beads.

The bead, as narrated by Odotei (1972:23), was part of some precious beads borrowed by Namote to decorate her daughter who was an initiate of the Otofo (puberty) rites. All attempts by Namote's family to pay for the lost bead proved futile hence she left with her brother Noete Doku to avoid the outbreak of a civil war in Adangme. It was a common practice in the early migration days of the Ga to allow hunters to locate an area closer to water bodies and suitable for agriculture (Odotei 1972:21). This confirms the point made by Wellington (2011:8) that the ancestors of Osu were led to their present location by a hunter called Kadi who was in the employment of king Odoi Atsem, Chief of Labadi. Wellington suggests that the migrants adopted the name Osu in remembrance of their former home known as Osudoku. Again, the

name Osu is an Adanme expression meaning “we have arrived”, and was used probably by Kadi when he led the migrants to the place.

It was after a period of power struggle in Ga Mashie that their leader Ayite built a strong central government which aided them to expand territorially in all directions such that by the end of 1634 the king’s land comprised Ayawaso, Small Bereku, Little Accra (the coast), Labadi and Ningo, Odotei (1972:32-33). The success of the Ga state was dependent on its economic policy which usually led into conflicts with other native groups. The Ga played the middleman role by directing the flow of trade from the Accra coast, Odotei (1972:77). The trade was well organized such that traders from neighbouring states were not even allowed to do business in the capital Ayawaso. This was to give rise to Abonse market where European goods like clothes, knives and guns were exchanged for gold and slaves (Odotei 1972:80).

2.4 The building of Christiansborg

According to DeCorse (1993:153), the primary interest of Denmark in West Africa was trade which the monarchy saw as a way to rebuild the national treasury in the face of rising court and military expenses. He asserts that despite attempts by Denmark to establish trade ties in Africa in the early years of the seventeenth century, the first successful Danish ship to arrive on the coast may have been around 1649. Anquandah (1999:24), DeCorse (1993:155), and van Dantzig (1980:28) believe that Hendrick Caerlof, a former employee of the Dutch and Swedish companies in Gold Coast, helped the Danes to secure their initial trading posts. Caerlof used his contacts on the coast to seize Swedish outposts at Cape Coast, Anomabo, Osu, and Takoradi for the Danish monarch, albeit short lived.

DeCorse (1993:158) writes that the first permanent Danish trading post was Fredricksborg, named after Frederick III, king of Denmark and Norway (1648-1670). This was built after seeking permission from the Dey of Fetu, and subsequently became the headquarters of Danish trade in West Africa. Claridge (1964:106) is of the opinion that the people of Accra initially opposed the erection of European forts on their land until about 1642 when the Danes and Dutch obtained permission from the king to build store houses. They agreed to pay seven marks of gold (E225) yearly for the concession. Claridge (1964) says that it was from this agreement that the European merchants negotiated the importance of converting their store houses into proper forts. This, the European merchants argued, will put them in a better position to protect the people of Accra from their foes Akwamu. Odotei (1972:53) says that the Danes reached an agreement with the king of Accra, Okai Kwei, on August 18, 1661, to obtain a piece of land for the building of Christiansborg. Anquandah (1999:24) states that Josh Cramer, the then Danish Governor of Fredricksborg, bought the land for an amount of 3200 gold florins. Wellington (2011:44) disagrees with Anquandah by saying that the Danes did not buy the land but rather paid 50 benda of gold as compensation to the chief for the access and usage of the promontory. He explained this by insisting that the Ga tradition frowns upon the sale of land since it is too sacred to have monetary value. King Okai Koi however insisted that the building should be of good quality, and promised to assist in the building and defense of the fort. The king therefore drank a fetish called aquamdoe to emphasize his commitment, Odotei (1972:54).

The Danes, within a short time, constructed their fort to replace the earthen lodge previously owned by the Portuguese and Swedes and named it Christiansborg after the king of Denmark, Christian IV, who died in 1648 (Anquandah 1999:24; Wellington 2011:17).

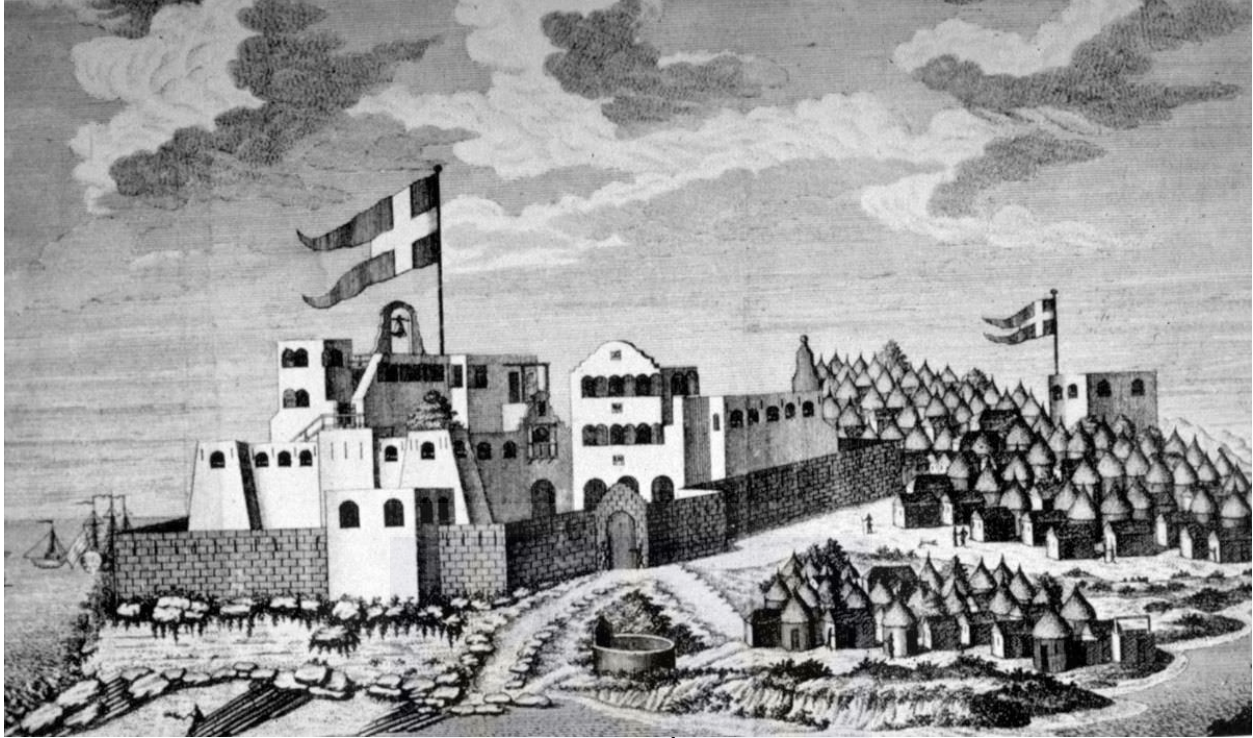


Figure 2: An illustration of Christiansborg in the 18th century. (Source: Romer 1760).

By the end of 1685, Christiansborg had replaced fort Fredricksborg in Fetu as the headquarters of Danish trading activities in West Africa (DeCorse 1993:159; Nathan 1904:23). The presence of Christiansborg and other European forts on the Accra coast increased the treasury of her chiefs to the envy of their black neighbours because of her economic policy.

Odotei (1972:83) explains that Accra's policy prevented inland traders from dealing directly with the Europeans contrary to the practice on the western part of the Gold Coast in the seventeenth century. That is Akan traders were allowed to trade directly with the Europeans, inasmuch as they paid their tolls to the kings in towns like Fetu, Axim and Kormantse. According to Wellington (2011:21) the Danes, Dutch and English were referred to as "Den Blofo", "Kinka Blofo" and "Ngleshi Blofo" respectively by the Ga.

2.5 Akwamu's Conquest of Accra

The beginning of formal or informal relations between the Akwamu or Abrade clan and Accra has not been made clear by earlier scholars. Odotei (1972: 98) and Wilks (1976: 435) agree that the chiefs of Accra permitted the Abrade clan to settle at Nyanoase so as to strengthen their northern frontier against traders from the interior. Ward (1957:14) also believes that the Ga first encountered the Akwamu during the reign of Mankpon Okai. At this time they regarded the Akwamu as a band of robbers who fled from Accra to live in the caves and the forest on the hill by Nsawam known as Nyanoa. Ward says that the people named their settlement Nyanoase, and from there started raiding and plundering Accra farms. Whether the Nyanoase settlement was sanctioned by Accra or not, the Abrade people settled there from Asamankese as indicated earlier. Wilks (1986:7-8) says that in 1646 Akwamu was taking payment in gold from Accra as tolls to allow traders from Larteh to use their routes to Accra. He believes that Akwamu control of trade routes and Akuapem made Accra dependent on Akwamu. This inevitably laid the foundation for future war between the two states because they were interested in controlling the coastal trade between the Europeans and inland traders. The Akwamu and Ga exchanged hostilities for a while resulting in an open warfare in 1677. Scholars like Wilks (1986) and Odotei (1972) state that the immediate cause of the war was the inability of the Ga chief to restore the foreskin of an Akwamu royal in his court. Amenumey (2011:34) goes further to say that the real motive for the attack was economic and not the formal excuse of Accra's circumcision of the prince.

According to Ward (1957:15-17) some of the elders of the Ga were unhappy with Chief Okai Koi and secretly told the Akwamu to stop paying tribute to the Ga Mantse. Again, one of the sons of Okai Koi killed the son of the chief of Asere. The Asere chief, in revenge, ill-advised

chief Okai Koi to circumcise an Akwamu royal called Odei who was under training at the Ga Mantse's court. The advisors knew that such an act could lead to war because a circumcised royal could not ascend to Akwamu stool. Romer (1760:116) asserts that the circumcision of the Prince which prevented him from becoming Akwamuhene made him get the name Akotia. According to Odotei (1972:101) the circumcision was done to enable the prince (Odei) to take part in the ceremonies associated with the king's court and the worship of Ga gods. The rebellious chiefs informed Akwamu of Odei's fate and promised to help them get rid of Okai Koi. The leader of the rebellious chiefs was warlord Nikoikoi (Odotei 1972:102). Odotei further suggests two scenarios that could allow a state to send an heir apparent to another's court. She believes either the host is suzerain over the heir-apparent's state hence the prince serves as security against rebellion; or there is great respect and trust between the two states.

The Akwamu used the circumcision as an opportunity to declare war on Accra. According to Amenumey (2011:34) and Ward (1957:16) Akwamu sought the assistance of their allies to heavily defeat and conquer Accra. Odotei (1972:109) says that the three European companies in Accra became involved in the war to the extent that the Danes even thwarted an Akwamu attempt to capture Osu. Rodney (1975:301) affirms that Accra was made part of the Akwamu state after a crushing defeat in 1680. Akwamu therefore became landlords of the European forts. Wilks (1997:38) believe that the annexation of Accra gave Akwamu fixed revenue like rents from the forts to pursue wars of territorial expansion to places like Afram Plains and Dahomey.

2.6 Asomani and the Seizure of Christiansborg.

The seizure of Christiansborg is centered on the personality of Asomani, an Akwamu businessman. According to Ephson (1969:3) Asomani lived between 1650 and 1702 and served

as a cook in the English service. Justesen (2005:90) however states that Asomani died on October 20, 1703 and gave evidence of his employment by the Danish merchants. Justesen shows that Asomani was also employed as a cook in the category of young men courtesy an inventory of slaves found at Fredricksborg on February 11, 1681. Ward (1958:93) believes that Asomani used his familiarity with the Europeans to specialize as an agent for traders from the interior who needed brokers or interpreters in their business with European merchants.

The actual reason behind the seizure of Christiansborg remains unclear. According to Claridge (1964:128) Christiansborg was seized by the Akwamu because of their desire to avenge some real or fancied insults that had been offered to them by the Danes with whom they have been on bad terms. He failed to state the exact insult by the Danes. Amenumey (2011:36) states that the attack was to punish the Danes for supporting Accra during Akwamu conquest between 1677 and 1681. Anquandah (1999), van Danzig (1980) and Ward (1997) gave an account of the seizure without stating the cause for Asomani's actions. According to Wilks (1997:46), the Akwamu attempted to revenge by selling Christiansborg in 1688 to the French after the Portuguese evacuation of the fort in 1683 and subsequent Danish reoccupation. Wellington (2011:79-80) supports Wilks view of an earlier attempt to sell or takeover the fort by Akwamu. Wellington thinks that the Portuguese stay at Christiansborg was cut short because they illegally acquired the building from a Dane called Peter Bolten. The Danes got Christiansborg back through diplomacy hence the Portuguese left earlier than expected on 20th February, rather than 28th August 1682 which was the agreed date. According to Wellington, the Akwamu wanted to capitalize on the vacuum to take over the building but failed. They therefore sought the assistance of Asomani who had the support of Peter Bolten and knew the strengths and weaknesses of the Danish living conditions in Christiansborg. The relationship between Asomani

and Thomas Bentzen is highlighted by Justesen (2005:90) who narrates that Bentzen gave Asomani six bende in gold to arrange a meeting with the Akwamuhene on the possibility of taking command of Christiansborg in 1687. This shows that Asomani was a trusted ally of the Europeans. Asomani capitalized on his popularity with the Danish merchants to plan and successfully execute the seizure of Christiansborg as asserted by Amenumey (2011:36); Ward (1957:50-51); and Wilks (1997:46-47) in June 1693.

Anquandah (1999:27) and van Dantzig (1980:32) both agree that the keys of the castle were taken to Akwamu and still remain as stool property. Asomani was made Governor of Christiansborg by King Basua for his role in the seizure of the castle. He removed the Danish flag and hoisted that of Akwamu. Two separate colours have been mentioned by earlier researchers. Some believe that the flag hoisted by Asomani was white with a black figure brandishing a sword (Claridge 1964:129; Ward 1958:94; Wilks 1997:47). Others state that it was blue with the image of an African warrior holding a dagger (Anquandah 1999:27; Justesen 2005:108; Tilleman 1994:26). After a year's occupation of Christiansborg by Asomani as Governor, the Danes negotiated with the Akwamuhene and paid 50 marks of gold to get the fort back. The Danes however were made to relinquish all hopes of reparation for the loss of their merchandise in the course of the seizure (Anquandah 1999:27; Wilks 1997:47). Not much was heard of Asomani after the resale except the fact that he tried to reestablish his business at Labadi but was asked to relocate by Akwamuhene Ado (Wilks 1997:48).

Wilks (1986:28) suggests that Akwamu sold Christiansborg because of the probability of getting more funds and the resumption of the monthly payment of rent. Hansen (2002:49-50), on the other hand, suggests that Akwamu handed over the fort because they needed the Danes to continue trade since they had ran out of muskets and ammunitions.

2.7 Uses of Regalia by the Akan

Rattray (1929:331) traces the derivation of the word regalia in Akan to “Adie-pe-gya” which means something that has been sought after by the ancestors and then put aside for safekeeping. According to Kyerematen (1964:1), regalia represent the insignia of royalty used at coronations and other such occasions which comprise a wider range of objects from the most sacrosanct or the near ludicrous. He further explains that some regalia are revered because of their historical connections, symbolic meaning, social and ritual functions. Cole and Ross (1977:134) write that the regalia of southern Ghana are the most visible of all arts designed to enhance the power and grandeur of chiefs. The two are of the opinion that Akan regalia, aside validating the chief’s position of leadership, serve as record-keeping. Kyerematen (1964) agrees with this by saying that regalia serve as chronicles of early history and evidence of social organization. Kyerematen argues that for people to understand and appreciate their heritage, regalia are often displayed when the chief appears in state or at a durbar. Kyerematen (1964:102) summarizes the social functions of regalia by saying that “...at ceremonial gatherings the minstrels, horn blowers, drummers and court-criers proclaim the military successes of the predecessors and remind the public and his enemies that he is descendant of such a one, who killed and humbled such a one, and will not shrink, if necessary, from repeating the deeds of his forebears”. In other words, regalia remind chiefs of their responsibilities as leaders to the people they serve and their ancestors.

Having gone through the review of selected literature relevant to the study, the next chapter throws light on the research methodology employed by the researcher for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This research sought to identify the inherent information related to the ownership of the Christiansborg keys and how they have been incorporated into the cultural practices of Akwamu. This chapter therefore describes the research approach and methods used in undertaking the study. Both primary and secondary sources like library research, museum visit, interviews, focus group discussions, photography, direct observation and ethnographic studies were used. The above mentioned methods imply that an eclectic approach was pursued. This stems from the fact that, it helps in exploring how people feel or believe about specific things and their attitudes toward them.

3.1 Library Research

The researcher consulted earlier scholarly works related to the study topic. Most published and unpublished works were made available to the researcher via library use. The following libraries at the University of Ghana, Legon, were visited; the Balme Library, Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies Library, Institute of African Studies Library, and the Department of History Library. Again, by surfing the internet, the researcher came across scholarly literature that aided the analysis and interpretation of findings from the field.

3.2 Museum research

In the course of collecting data for the study, I joined the Akwamu Traditional Council representatives headed by the Akwamuhene Odeno Kwafo Akoto III to lead a delegation from the Danish Embassy in Accra on a special tour of the Bogyawe Palace Museum in Akwamufie. The museum is often open to special visitors to the palace and exhibits the most revered of Akwamu State regalia, including the Christiansborg keys and white stool (don-gwa). The keys were physically inspected and examined by me. I also recorded the oral traditions which touch on the keys and their significance.



Figure 3: A photograph of the Chiefs, delegation from the Danish Embassy, and Ohene-Larbi (back in orange shirt), after a visit to the Bogyawe Palace Museum, Akwamufie.

(Source: Ohene-Larbi 05-03-2017)



Figure 4: A photograph of the Christiansborg Keys in Akwamu State regalia. (Source: www.akwamuman.org Assessed on 20-02-2017)

They are a bunch of metallic keys with different shapes and sizes for separate doors. Very few of them are dark-golden in colour while most are dark brown or dirty silver. Although tradition did not permit me to count the bunch of keys, my estimation is that they are between twenty and twenty-four keys with an average length of 0.069 metres.

3.3 Population for the study

The population for this work was carefully selected based on their level of understanding and knowledge of the history and culture of Akwamu. Since Akwamu communities are widespread, five towns were selected for the study because of their proximity to each other, and their active participation in festivals and durbars at the Bogyawe Palace. The towns were Akwamufie, Atimpoku, Akrade, Akosombo and Senchi. Unlike other Akwamu settlements located far away from Akwamufie, which is the spiritual capital; towns like Atimpoku, Akrade, Akosombo, and Senchi are constantly involved in the court activities of the Akwamuhene. This means that they are abreast of the historical and cultural practices of the Akwamu state. The population was divided into three groups. The first group comprised the Chiefs and traditional leaders of the focus towns since they are regarded as custodians of Akwamu culture and heritage. The second group consisted of non-title holding elders of the society. The last group was made up of the youth. The total population for this research was seventy respondents with ages ranging between eighteen and eighty-six.

3.4 Sampling

The researcher used purposive sampling technique in identifying key respondents for the study. This sampling technique implies the use of the researcher's judgment in choosing the members of the population based on specific characteristics relevant for testing the research hypothesis. The characteristics included familiarity with the settlement history of Akwamu, Asomani and the seizure of Christiansborg, the castle keys as state regalia and their significance to the cultural heritage and identity of Akwamu as an Akan group. This method was preferred because of the researcher's prior knowledge of the study area.

3.5 Ethnographic studies

Ethnographic study was specifically conducted in Akwamufie to understand the socio-cultural behavior of Akwamu such as their belief system and court practices, as well as what the Christiansborg keys mean to them as their heritage. The researcher was able to attend two Akwasidae festivals at the Bogyawe Palace, Akwamufie, and made some direct observations of court practices that were crucial for the study. Photography was used to capture images of how the Christiansborg keys are used during state functions like durbar or festivals at the chief's palace. It was also used to capture the statue of Asomani at Atimpoku Roundabout as a testament of the importance of the Christiansborg keys to Akwamu's heritage.

Informal interviews were conducted in gathering information for this research through a well prepared open-ended questionnaire. With this, the interviewer was able to explain the scope of the research to the interviewees who felt relaxed and openly shared their thoughts. Interviews were arranged and conducted at palaces, private offices, and homes. The language used was Twi, which the researcher is very fluent in speaking and writing because he is Akan from New Juaben (Koforidua) in the Eastern Region of Ghana.



Figure 5: Ohene-Larbi (middle) with some Asafo elders (Source: Ohene-Larbi 30-07-2017).

All interviews were recorded with the aid of a voice recorder for effective cross-checking and analysis. Field notes were also taken for reference. All interactions were played and attached as appendixes after the field work. Focus group discussions were also conducted with the chiefs' representatives made up of six people with ages from fifty to seventy; adult citizens of Akwamufie consisting of five people with ages between fifty and seventy-eight; and Asafo of Akwamufie with ages between twenty and eighty-six years.

Now that the research approach and methods have been elaborated, the next chapter focuses on the presentation and discussion of field findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights the findings and discussion of information gathered during the collection of oral traditions and ethnographic studies. The key concerns of this chapter are the migration history of Akwamu, their relationship with the Ga and Danes on the Accra coast, the reasons for the seizure of Christiansborg by Asomani, as well as the uses and conservation of the Christiansborg keys as regalia by the Akwamu.

The ethnographic study undertaken on Akwamu State regalia at Akwamufie were aimed at understanding the socio-cultural and philosophical values attached to the Christiansborg keys as regalia to emphasize their relevance to the heritage of Akwamuman. The purpose of the investigation was to acquire significant historical and cultural knowledge on the keys and document them for the purposes of preservation and education. In gathering oral tradition, open-ended questionnaires (see appendix) were used to get adequate information from respondents for qualitative analysis of findings and to come out with unbiased conclusions. There were little variations in the content of the questionnaires administered to the three main categories of interviewees. The first part of the questionnaire took the biographical data of respondents such that I could examine the accuracy or otherwise of their responses for analysis. Secondly, the questionnaire sought information on the migration and settlement history of Akwamu. The third part inquired about the history of the Christiansborg keys as Akwamu State regalia and how they are used in traditional court or palace ceremonies. The final part gathered respondents' opinion on the meaning of the castle keys to them on a personal level, and the state as a whole.

4.1 Migration and Settlement History of Akwamu

The ancestors of the Abrade clan or Akwamu originally migrated from Southern Sudan and at a point in time settled at or passed through Timbuktu before settling at the Kong Mountains in present day La Cote d'Ivoire. The major cause for their movement was as a result of their defeat by the Fulani who wanted to convert them to Islam (Nana Samanhyia Darko II: personal communication). Their ancestors however refused so they decided to relocate to a new settlement. The oral tradition, based on the origin of Akwamu, affirms the assertion made by Claridge (1964:45), Fage (1968:39) and Meyerowitz (1950:124) that the ancestors of the Akan came down from Timbuktu or the Niger Valley. Also the point emphasized by Meyerowitz (1950:96) that the Akwamu left the Kong Mountains after their subjugation by the Zaberima or black Fulani. The oral tradition again affirms Ward (1958:44) view that the Akan represent a section of the people of ancient Ghana who refused to accept Islam and moved southwards rather than accept a position of inferiority on their land.

The Abrade clan, under the leadership of Agyen Kokobo, founded Twifo Hemang, near Elmina. It was under Agyen Kokobo that the first Akwamu stool was created. The Akwamu were originally known as Twifo but got the name Akwamufo when they were moving from their settlement at Twifo Hemang. The Fante, whose territory they used made the comment “Nnipa na wɔdɔsɔ saa no, wohwe wɔn saa na wo kɔn ye wo ya”. This means that “these people are too many to the extent that when one watches them he or she feels pain in the neck” (Nana Samanhyia II: personal communication). This narrative agrees with the account by Akhan (2012:2) on the origin of the name Akwamu, but contradicts that of Romer (1760:116). The oral tradition indicated that the name Akwamufo is sometimes misinterpreted to reflect the war-like nature of the people and their tendency to ambush traders on their way to or from a market

centre. Thus many see them as bandits working on “ekwan” (paths) hence the name “ekwan-mufo” (the paths people) later corrupted into Akwamufo. The name is said to have been given to them by their rival neighbours and some European merchants, especially the Danes.

From Twifo Hemang, the Akwamu briefly stayed at Abakrampa, and later moved to Akwatia prior to the settlement at Asamankese. The people were led by Otumfuor Asare following an outbreak of a succession dispute. The settlement was named after Otumfuor Asare so it became Asaremanke (Asare’s big town), now known as Asamankese. At Asamankese, which was lowland, the elders saw the Nyanoa Hill and realized that people used its environs, like Adoagyiri and Nsawam, to trade in Accra. The Akwamuhene saw it as expedient to settle on the Nyanoa Hill so that he can control the traders using that part of the country. The Akwamu therefore established two main settlements at Nyanoa. The first was at the base of the hill called Nyanoase, and the latter on top of the hill called Nyanoaso. The Queen Mother and the king were based at Nyanoase and Nyanoaso respectively. It was from these settlements that the Akwamu emerged as a force to reckon with in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This supports the views of Buah (1948:50) and Wilks (1976:435) on the beginnings of Akwamu’s expansion from the 1660s.

According to oral tradition collected at Akwamufie, Atimpoku and Senchi, the Akwamu were initially farmers and traders but also thrived in warfare which became more or less a secondary occupation to the chiefs and people. This is in line with the point made by Amenumey (2011:33) that the Akwamu were traders supported by fighting men. The ancestors engaged in warfare because it gave them access to land, people, and money. That is more people to join the military in times of war, contribute to the state treasury through the payment of taxes and road tolls, as well as yearly gifts from the vassal states (Nana Samanhyia II: personal communication). Also

the Akwamu were not miners of gold but acted as middlemen of the gold trade between people from the interior or the forest zones on one side, and the coastal people of Accra and European merchants on the other side.

The Akwamu Empire, at its zenith, stretched as far as Whydah, controlled the Accra Plains, the Akuapem Mountains and Krepi (see map2). The empire for several reasons started to disintegrate. The seeds of decline were planted initially after the death of Nana Ansa Sasraku II. This stems from the fact that an Akwamu royal called Amo felt he was qualified to ascend the stool as Akwamuhene. He was however denied the opportunity and instructed to focus on a stool in Accra. This understandably made him unhappy so he started to form alliances with the enemies and vassal states of Akwamu who had had enough of Akwamu's domination (Nana Samanhyia II: personal communication). The internal struggle for power reached its peak when there was an attempt to remove Akwamuhene Ansa Kwao from power after the death of Otumfuor Akonnor Panyin (1702-1725). The succession dispute weakened the state thereby paving the way for the enemies and vassals to form a unit to challenge the power and authority of Akwamu (Odeneho Kwafu Akoto III: personal communication). There were several battles in favour of the allies which forced the Akwamu to move from their home to the Volta gorge to establish Akwamufie and its surrounding communities. The oral tradition confirmed the narrative by Ward (1957:113) but indicated that the Akwamu were familiar with the area because they had used the fords of the Volta when they fought the Nkonya and Anum people around the Volta River, now known as the Volta Lake. The difficulty was that the Akwamu were hotly chased by the allies so they could not use their familiar route hence got stuck at the banks of the lake. It was at this point that they made sacrifices to their gods to pave a way for them. The gods manifested themselves in the form of a bush pig which led them through the lake. Thus the ancestors

followed carefully the exact path used by the animal to cross the river. As a result of this incident, the bush pig is seen as sacred animal so most indigenes of Akwamu do not eat it, especially the royal family. It must be noted that the crossing of the Volta River by the Akwamu occurred centuries before the creation of the Volta Lake in the 1960s. This explains the current location of the Akwamu at the Volta gorge in the Eastern Region.

4.2 The Akwamu-Ga Relationship

As indicated earlier, the Akwamu moved to Nyanoase and Nyanoaso to control the trade routes to Accra. Oral tradition gathered at the Bogyawe Palace, Akwamufie, insisted that the Akwamu did not seek permission from the Ga before settling at Nyanoase. This account disagrees with that of Odotei (1972:98), Romer (1760:116), and Wilks (1976:435) who wrote that the ancestors of the Abrade clan were permitted by the Ga Chiefs to settle at Nyanoase. The growing influence of Akwamu at Nyanoase encouraged the Ga Chiefs to ask them to collect tolls from traders using their paths (Nana Samanhyia II: personal communication). This was the genesis of formal relations between the two states in the seventeenth century. The tolls agreement between the Chiefs affirmed the view expressed by Wilks (1986:7-8) that the Akwamu were taking payment in gold from Accra as tolls for allowing traders from Larteh to use their trade routes to Accra. This in a way made Accra dependent on Akwamu for her economic activities.

The economic relations made the leader of the Ga to make a request so as to strengthen their relationship. The request was to ask the Akwamuhene to send a royal to Accra to learn the Portuguese and Danish languages in order to be abreast of the then current trends in the coastal trade. The Akwamuhene did send a royal to the Ga court and this practice gradually resulted in the infiltration of Ga communities by people of Akwamu descent. This became possible because it turned out to be the habit of Akwamu chiefs to send royals and trusted subjects to Accra

(Odeneho Kwafo III: personal communication). The sending of royals to the palace of Ga Chiefs highlighted the point made by Odotei (1972:102) that a state can only send an heir-apparent to another state's court if there is great respect and trust between the two states.

The influx of Akwamu royals and people led to the establishment of Akwamu quarters in Accra, and the Akwamuhene later sent one of his wing-chiefs to be leader of the settlers. After settling for a while and learning the Ga language, the Akwamu settlers realized that the Ga practiced patrilineal system of inheritance and not matrilineal system which they were familiar with. Again, contrary to Akwamu practices, the Ga usually removed the foreskin of the male organ (penis), an important criterion for a male to be fully incorporated into the society or court ceremonies. Since the Akwamu never adhered to this rite prior to their contact with the Ga; they were referred to as "fooloi" meaning "uncircumcised" as confirmed by Wellington (2011:78).

To further strengthen the economic ties between the Ga and Akwamu, the Akwamuhene sent his niece called Amaniwaa to be married in Accra to a royal. This, in the eyes of the Akwamuhene, will make the descendant of the marriage an heir-apparent to both stools in Accra and Akwamu. This is because of the inheritance systems of the two states. Economically, the marriage became necessary because of the increasing volume of trade and the profit gained as a result of tolls collection. The marriage of Amaniwaa yielded a son called Otu, from whom the name Otublohum was derived. Otublohum was thus used to refer to Akwamu quarters in Accra. Otu grew up to be a leader of the Akwamu residents and it was under his leadership that the Ga adopted some Akwamu socio-cultural and military practices. The Ga established chieftaincy stools which resulted in the reduction of the political influence of the Wulomei (traditional priests). The Ga also took Akwamu names like Addo, Offei, Darkoa, and Amo (Nana Samanhyia II: personal communication).

The oral tradition concluded that the actual causes of dispute between the Ga and Akwamu were the love for money and the insatiable quest for power. The oral accounts confirmed the story of Prince Odei's circumcision in Accra by king Okai Koi and his subsequent inability to restore the foreskin as shared by Amenumey (2011:34), Ward (1957:15-16) and others already reviewed. However the account suggested that the circumcision was not the main factor for the outbreak of war or Akwamu's attack of the Ga but rather the desire of the Akwamuhene to control trade on the Accra coast between the inland traders and European merchants. This revelation agrees with Amenumey (2011:34) that the primary motive for the attack was economic, and not the usual excuse of Accra's inability to restore the foreskin of Odei, the Akwamu prince. The Akwamu forces therefore engaged in a series of battles with the Ga and by 1681 Accra had been made part of Akwamu territory.

4.3 Asomani and the Seizure of Christiansborg

According to oral tradition taken at Bogyawe Palace, the main cause of the seizure of Christiansborg was the desire to end European or Danish control of the trade along the coast by the Akwamuhene. The reason was that, the Akwamu did not accept the status of a subordinate, and do not want to be under the political and economic might of another state or group of people. This view re-echoed Meyerowitz (1950) view on the initial reason for Akwamu migration southwards. Successive chiefs of Akwamu had realized the richness of the gold and slave trade, as well as the extent to which the European merchants were making huge profits at the expense of local traders. This was the main reason why the Akwamuhene usually sent his trusted servants and royals to the Ga coast to learn the terms or organization of the coastal trade and languages of the dominant European merchants at the time. It was out of this that Asomani emerged on the Accra coast.

The oral tradition could not establish the exact number of years lived by Asomani, unlike the period provided by Ephson (1969:3) to be between 1650 and 1702. It was found out that Asomani was an Akwamu royal and nephew of Nana Manukure Akoto, an Akwamu chief. Asomani was allowed to leave Akwamu to work in Accra so as to follow the pattern of Akwamu royals who went there to learn trade and European languages. Asomani worked with European merchants like the English and Danes before establishing himself as a trade broker in Accra. This confirmed Asomani's employment history as written by Anquandah (1993), Amenumey (2011), Justesen (2005), Ward (1958) and Wilks (1997) which have been reviewed earlier.

The oral tradition implied that, after Asomani had established himself as a business broker and gained the trust of the European merchants like the Danes, he returned to Akwamu. It was from this point that he asked the Akwamuhene for the necessary action to be taken to fulfill the long-held Akwamu desire to usurp European control of the gold and slave trade on the Accra coast. The plan to seize Christiansborg was therefore conceived. Asomani returned to Accra to inform the Danes that he would be bringing a team of traders from Akwamu who were interested in buying guns. On the agreed day in June 1693, Asomani and eighty warriors, who portrayed themselves as traders, entered Christiansborg to do business with the Danes. It was customary at the time to allow buyers to test the guns before purchase in the castles and forts. The warriors capitalized on this to put their well-hidden bullets in the guns to attack the unsuspecting Danish merchants. This led to the outbreak of a fierce battle with the Danes resulting in the seizure of Christiansborg by Asomani and the warriors. Some of the Danish merchants suffered serious injuries, the governor escaped, and a few were taken as captives to Akwamu. Asomani kept the Danish merchandise in the castle as his and the keys were given to the chief.

The Akwamuhene, Basua, who masterminded the seizure of the castle, rewarded Asomani with the position of Governor of Christiansborg for his role in the conquest. Asomani removed the Danish flag and hoisted an Akwamu flag which was made up of yellow and green colours. The green represented “Kwaebibirim” (the forest region of Akwamu), and yellow stood for gold – which is a symbol of wealth and the main item of trade by the Akwamu (Nana Samanhyia II: personal communication). The colours of the flag contradict that asserted by earlier researchers like Anquandah (1999:27), Claridge (1964:129) and the rest who either described it as white or blue as already reviewed. Asomani enjoyed the position of a governor for a period of one year between June 1693 and June 1694 when the castle was renegotiated back to the Danish merchants after the payment of an amount of £1600. Although Asomani was given some ransom after the fort went back to Danish hands, he was not happy because he had lost his preferred status. He therefore attempted on several occasions to disrupt the Danish trade after settling at a place between James Town and Labadi. This narrative from the oral tradition agrees with Justesen (2005:114) on the attitude of Asomani after the Danes had resumed operations in Christiansborg. Justesen wrote that;

“The fort and its palavers- so called here- are very well, both with king and other natives. However the well-known Ahsemonie, who in Councillor of Trade Nicolay Janssen (Arff’s) time overran the fort with his followers, appeared here with ill intent below the fort by night and made a minor commotion; but since he was driven off by our artillery and musket fire, no more has happened, except that the king of Aquambou has sent his messenger here to let us know he was unaware of this, and would have been displeased to hear that the said Ahsemonie wished to harm us. He has therefore sent a messenger to him to go straight to Aquambu to be punished. I had Merchant Hans Pedersen travel to Aquambu with the object of informing the king further of this same Ahsemonie’s expedition and to demand suitable satisfaction because of him” (Justesen 2005:114).

It was because of Asomani's actions that he was asked by the Akwamuhene to move from his place around Labadi. Asomani later reorganized himself to continue his business when he relocated to somewhere around Ada. Nana Asomani could not return to Akwamu as a royal because he was also circumcised as a boy when he went to Accra. This explains why he was very unhappy after losing his position as governor because he could not ascend any stool as a royal in Akwamu (Nana Samanhyia II: personal communication). Asomani saw himself as king of trade on the Accra coast, and Christiansborg as his palace.

The oral tradition did emphasize that at the time of the seizure, the Akwamu and Danish merchants had cordial relationship in terms of politics and commerce. The seizure became necessary because the Akwamu chiefs felt that European merchants should not be their overlords or dictate the terms of trade on their home soil or native land. This was based on the fact that by June 1693, the Akwamu were rulers of the Ga coast, hence taking control of the castle was seen as an initiative to control trade in their territory or on the land they ruled. This was the main motive contrary to claims by earlier researchers that the seizure was a form of punishment or revenge for the Danish support of Accra during Akwamu's attacks and subsequent defeat of the Ga between 1670 and 1681.

On the concept of key ownership, it was found out that a key symbolizes power in Akwamu culture. Keys give access to rooms, houses or treasure boxes hence it is an indication of security and independence. It therefore means that when someone takes your key(s) it implies the person has taken away some level of your freedom and security to show his authority. The one who has lost his keys can only accept the terms of the holder or taker so as to enjoy the level of freedom he or she craves for. It was based on this belief that the Christiansborg keys were kept as trophy to prove that the Akwamu seized Christiansborg from the Danes and subsequently dictated the

conduct of trade in Accra. Again the keys were not given back to the Danes in order to serve as evidence of the military and tactical minds of the Akwamu in pursuing their interest as an empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The keys were kept as trophy by the ancestors to prove the historical achievement of Nana Asomani and the warriors. This prevented the event from turning into a legend, which if not well documented will inevitably become a myth. The history turning into a myth would have undermined the authenticity of the seizure of Christiansborg in June 1693 (Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III: personal communication).

4.4.1 The Christiansborg Keys as Akwamu State Regalia

After the event of June 1693, the Christiansborg keys, which were initially kept as war trophy, gained the status of regalia by becoming Akwamu stool property. This has already been established by Anquandah (1999:27) and van Dantzig (1980:32). The keys were made regalia in order to protect its history, and in agreement with Kyerematen (1964:102) that regalia serve as chronicles of early history and social organization. The Christiansborg keys are locally referred to as “*ɛdɔm nsafoa*” (keys of the state) or “*Osu abankɛse nsafoa*”. The keys are not directly used in the installation rites of new occupants of the Akwamu stool like the “*nsuaefena*” (swearing-in sword). They are however shown to the newly enstooled king as one of the state regalia after he had sacrificed a sheep to the ancestral spirits and caretakers of Akwamu State regalia. The Christiansborg keys therefore become the responsibility of the chief to ensure their safety against destruction and theft. This is to say that the keys, the white and black stools, clothes, native sandals, and other state property are officially put into the chief’s custody.

The oral accounts suggested that the Christiansborg keys are brought out during the Odwira festival of Akwamu as state regalia to show the prowess and authority of the Akwamuhene. This

agrees with the already reviewed claims made by Cole and Ross (1977:134) and Kyerematen (1964:102) on the importance of showing state regalia to the public on formal occasions like durbar by chiefs in Ghana. On such outdoorings occasions, the keys are put in the hands of an Ahenkwaa (chief's servant) in a white calico who sits in front of the chief. Also, the keys are tied with a green cotton material and worn on the neck like a medal by the Ahenkwaa. The chief's servant, who wears the bunch of keys, puts on a traditional cloth which is lowered to the chest level for the keys to be visible. The Ahenkwaa either sits in front or stands behind the chief such that whoever looks at the Akwamuhene will also see the "edom nsafoa". The Figure 6 below shows the Christiansborg keys being shown at a durbar as one of the state regalia. The Ahenkwaa wearing the "edom nsafoa" can be seen standing close to Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III, and just behind the Danish sword bearer in white cloth.

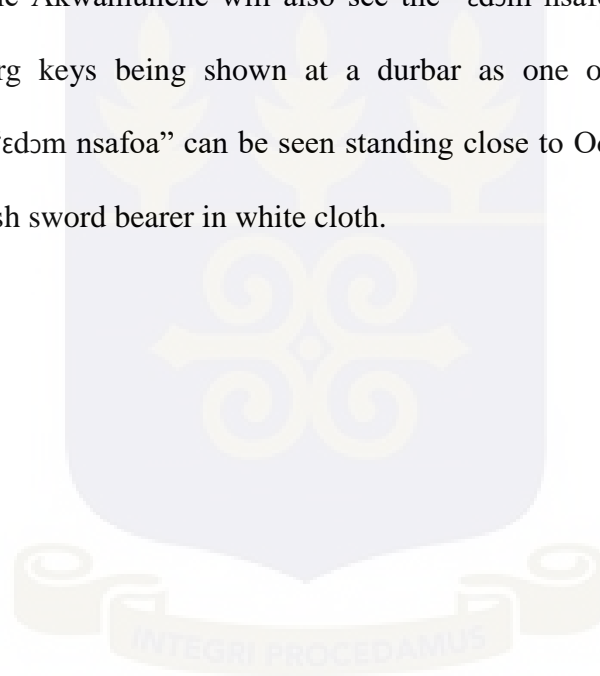




Figure 6: Akwamuhene seated in state with the wearer (arrowed) of the Christiansborg keys behind him. (Source: www.akwamuman.org Assessed on 20-02-2017).

From the ethnographic study conducted at the Bogyawe Palace, it was realized that whenever the Akwamuhene sat in a durbar to meet his sub-chiefs and people, songs were sung to him. The songs are known as “m’anhia” which are used to honour, praise and inspire the chief as leader of Akwamuman. The Christiansborg keys, as state regalia, are reflected in a song which has been passed down from generation to generation to the current Asafo (warriors) who use it as one of

their numerous songs to the chief. The song is titled “*ɛɔm nsafoa*” just as the keys’ locally given name. The Asafo sing it very close to the Akwamuhene so only the chief or those closest to him can hear the lyrics of the song. The “*m’antina*” songs are basically recitals of actual historical events used by the Asafo to proverbially ask the Akwamuhene what he wants to do for his people, looking at the deeds of his predecessors. The Christiansborg keys’ song is very short so it is recognized as “*ɛhum*” in the chief’s court. The “*ɛhum*” are very short songs used to arouse interest or as a prelude to a demand or request by the Asafo or singers. These are the lyrics of the “*ɛɔm nsafoa*” song;

Edom nsafoa ɛɔ yɛn (We have the keys of the state)

Wodi adeɛ aa wɔn mma yɛn aa!! (We are not served when they are eating)

Edom nsafoa ɛɔ yɛn nsam (We have the keys of the state in our hands)

Eto kum aa wɔfrɛ yɛn aa!! (They call us in times of difficulty)

Edom nsafoa ɛɔ yɛn nsam (We have the keys in our hands)

Wodi adeɛ aa wɔn mma yɛn eee!!! (We are not served when they are eating)

Edom nsafoa ɛɔ yɛn nsam (We have the keys in our hands)

Yɛn Agya Kwafɔ Akoto; ɛɔm nsafoa ɛɔ yɛn hɔ oo!! (Our father Kwafɔ Akoto; we have the keys of the state)

Wodi adeɛ aa wɔn mma yɛn aa!!! (We are not served when they are eating)

Edom nsafoa ɛɔ yɛn nsam (We have the keys of the state in our hands)

Eto kum aa wɔfrɛ yɛn aa!! (They call us in times of difficulty)

Edom nsafoa ɛɔ yɛn nsam (We have the keys in our hands).

The lyrics of the song are used to alert the Akwamuhene of the struggles of his people in terms of socio-economic development. Since the Akwamu state relies on the support of its citizens to

prosper, the chiefs and elders must use the rich cultural heritage of Akwamu to solve some of the needs of Akwamuman (Abusuapanyin Asiedu: personal communication). The “Edɔm nsafoa” song testifies to the knowledge and memories of the Akwamu that a lot of money and gold was paid to the Akwamuhene by the Danes before Christiansborg was given back to them in 1694. The “Edɔm nsafoa” song again serves as a reminder to the Akwamuhene of his responsibilities to seek the welfare of his people in all his activities (Opanyin Gyiti: personal communication).

4.4.2 The Meaning of the Christiansborg Keys to Akwamu

The people of Akwamu believe that there are several ways of honouring their ancestors for sacrifices made towards the growth of Akwamuman. In preserving their memory, some are given stool names, others are mentioned in proverbs or songs, and few have statues or monuments made in their honour. This tradition demonstrates that heritage is produced or displayed through objects, images, events, and monuments (Hoelscher 2011:203). The chiefs and elders of Akwamu, in collaboration with the Asuogyaman District Assembly, commissioned a statue to commemorate the achievements of Nana Asomani at Atimpoku on 1st July, 2007. As a result of poor conditioning, restoration works were done by the Akwamu Gorge Conservation Trust and the Royal Senchi Hotel on the statue. After this the statue was re-commissioned by Odenaho Kwafo Akoto III on 27th April, 2013. This was done through the re-enactment of a ceremony in which Nana Asomani IV, a direct descendant of Asomani, handed over the Christiansborg keys to the Akwamuhene (see Figure 7 below).



Figure 7: Nana Asomani IV handing over the keys to Odeneho Kwafu Akoto III. Looking on is Carsten Nilaus Pedersen, former Danish Ambassador to Ghana, and his wife. (Source: www.akwamuman.org Assessed on 20-02-2017).

The Christiansborg keys are so important to the chiefs and people of Akwamu to the extent that a monument or statue has been made in memory of the seizure of the castle by Nana Asomani and the eighty warriors at Atimpoku Roundabout (see Figure 8 below). The statue is made of bronze and the figure of Asomani is about 1.245 metres tall, while the gun and keys in his hands measure at 0.533 metres and 0.159 metres respectively. The monument portrays Asomani in a batakarikese (war dress) holding a flintlock, locally known as Danish gun, in his right hand, and a bunch of keys in his left hand.



Figure 8: The statue of Asomani at Atimpoku Roundabout.
(Source: Ohene-Larbi 03-03-2017).

He is standing with his left leg on cannon with cannon balls underneath it. The cannon and the balls are used to represent European castles and forts along the coast of Ghana. Asomani having his left leg on the cannon shows his authority or seizure of Christiansborg with the keys in his hand as the governor of the castle. The war dress shows the contribution of the eighty warriors, who acted as traders interested in purchasing guns, in taking over the Danish castle.

The statue of Asomani is used to inspire the sub-chiefs and people of Akwamuman to pursue the interest of Akwamu in their areas of work. Just as Asomani is spoken of today or has a monument in his memory, those chiefs and citizens who continue to serve the Akwamu stool will be honoured for their hard work. This was done in the spirit of the popular saying that a nation that does not honour its heroes is not worth dying for. The statue was erected at Atimpoku Roundabout because it is an integral part of Akwamu settlements at the Volta gorge, and also the central point for all commuters going to Akosombo or using the Adomi Bridge. People are motivated by the monument, especially the youth. Although in today's Ghana, there will be no need for the Akwamu to go to war with other ethnic groups, they are willing to sacrifice their strength and time for the development of Akwamuman such that one day, the future generation will remember them like Nana Asomani (Kenneth Mamfe, Kofi Mireku, and Yaw Selorm: personal communication). Some indigenes are filled with pride whenever they see the statue or hear of the Christiansborg keys because their ancestors were the initiators of independence or emancipation from European control of affairs in the seventeenth century.

The Christiansborg keys are priceless to the people of Akwamu in several ways. First, the current generation cannot comprehend how their ancestors managed to keep the castle keys from the Danes, though they resold the seized castle to them. The Christiansborg keys are very crucial in telling Akwamu history and promoting heritage education of the youth. As a result, the current

generation of Akwamu appreciates the efforts of their ancestors (Nana Samanhyia II: personal communication). The sharing of knowledge concerning the history behind the seizure of Christiansborg is to aid the people of Akwamuman to come together and work in peace towards the re-awakening of the great Akwamu State (Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III: personal communication). This explains why the statue was commissioned at Atimpoku and also the bringing out of the Christiansborg keys during state functions so that more people will see them and get inspiration from them. The history behind the castle keys as state regalia showed cooperation between the Akwamuhene (king Basua), Nana Asomani, and his subjects (warriors). The people of Akwamu should always work together with the chiefs and elders for sustainable development of their society (Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III: personal communication).

The “*ɛdɔm nsafoa*”, as the Christiansborg keys are locally referred to, is very important to them because they have helped the people of Akwamu to build new and strong ties with the Danish community to promote the study and appreciation of their shared heritage. This has resulted in the formation of the Akwamu-Danish Friendship Association aimed at promoting education between the states. As a result, every year high school students from Denmark visit Akwamufie in the form of a cultural exchange program to Akwamu history and culture as shown in Figure 9 below.



Figure 9: A group of Ghanaian and Danish students learning a traditional dance as part of the cultural exchange program at Akwamufie.

(Source: www.facebook.com/friendsofakwamu Assessed on 16-06-2017).

The Christiansborg keys are cherished by the Danish community because the current generation is not enthused by their ancestral involvement in the slave trade and its negative impact on the African society. The Danish presence resulted in the exploitation of the indigenes and the subsequent transfer of people to the Danish Virgin Islands like Saint Thomas and Saint Croix. This led to separation of African families who could not reconnect with their kindred back on the continent; a period in history that the Danes are not proud of. The presence of the confiscated keys as part of Akwamu State regalia is not only a physical evidence of history but also a symbol of resistance by the Akwamu or Africans against European domination and exploitation of their human and mineral resources. The Danes are therefore very excited about the keys which continue to get popularity in Denmark through current newspaper reportage, as well as visits by

students to Akwamufie. The history of the keys was shared in a three-page article titled “The King and Denmark have a common dark history” in one of the leading newspapers in Denmark called *Morgenavisen Jyllandsposten* on 26th March, 2017. The people of Denmark appreciate the willingness of the Akwamu to safeguard the Christiansborg keys by turning it into state regalia (Tove Degnbol: personal communication). This has helped in the education and promotion of the rich heritage of Akwamu, Ghana, and Denmark dating back to the 17th century.

The association, which is based in Copenhagen, Denmark, has been supporting schools in the Akwamu state with basic necessities such as computers, books, tables and chairs to enhance learning conditions. To ensure continuous relations, the Akwamu State has enstooled a Dane called Mr. Mogens Falk as Chief of the association in Denmark (see Figure 10 below). His stool name is Nana Yaw Afriyie I, and his primary responsibilities include liaising between the Akwamu-Danish Friendship Association and the Akwamu palace to ensure that the requests made by schools in the Akwamu State are met. The association has helped schools in Akwamu State to the extent that their libraries are well stocked and have adequate facilities to enhance learning (Nana Samanhyia Darko II: personal communication). The keys are therefore of political and social importance to Akwamuman.



Figure10: A photograph of the installation of Nana Afriyie I (Mr. Mogens Falk) at the Bogyawe Palace, Akwamufie. (Source: www.facebook.com/friendsofakwamu Assessed on 16-06-2017).

4.4.3 Conservation of the Christiansborg Keys

The Christiansborg keys have been part of the Akwamu stool property since June 1693. This raised the question of how the keys have been conserved for a period of 324 years by the chiefs of Akwamu. Nana Samanhyia II, who acts as the palace curator of the keys, said that several measures have been put in place since its acquisition. First, during its outdooring in a state function, the white calico with which the keys are held by the Ahenkwaa (chief's servant) prevents sweat from getting to the keys which are made of metal in order to avoid rust. Again, if they are worn as a necklace, the length of the green cotton material that supports the keys ensures that they do not touch the bare chest of the Ahenkwaa. This prevents contamination from body sweats and creams which would inevitably lead to rust.

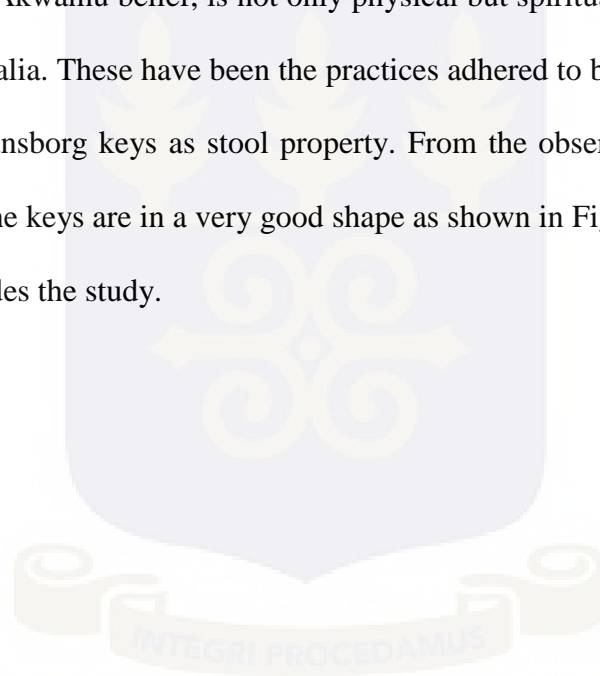


Figure 11: Nana Samanhyia II, the Palace Curator, holding the Christiansborg keys. (Source: Nana Samanhyia II, 6-07-2017).

Secondly, after use in state functions, the keys are kept in an ancient air-tight wooden box called “apem adaka” which was previously used in storing gold and gold dust. “Apem adaka” means a box with a thousand gold. The wooden box is also a stool property because it was carried by their ancestors from Southern Sudan, where they trace their ancestry. Chemicals are not applied on the keys, and no modern remedial conservation works are done on them because they are sacred to the stool, hence people are not allowed to touch them. Successive palace curators are not trained by their predecessors to use any ‘foreign material’ on the keys so the present curator or Gyaasewahene is not in the position to alter the ways of the ancestral practices which have maintained the keys for over 300 years (Nana Samanhyia Darko II: personal communication).

It was also observed that there were some norms associated with the usage of the Christiansborg keys at the Bogyawe Palace. If they are going to be displayed at a state function, the curator (Nana Samanhyia II) and the Ahenkwaa (chief's servant), who will either wear or hold it, are advised not to have sexual intercourse with a woman the day before the occasion. Abstinence from sex is generally enforced in Akan states when it comes to dealing with sacred objects. It is believed that the state regalia of Akwamu, including the Christiansborg keys, possess the spirit and blood of their ancestors hence it is sacrilegious to have sexual intercourse before touching them. Sex, according to Akwamu belief, is not only physical but spiritual which can contaminate the sacredness of the regalia. These have been the practices adhered to by the chiefs to ensure the longevity of the Christiansborg keys as stool property. From the observations made during the research, I can say that the keys are in a very good shape as shown in Figure 4 above.

The fifth chapter concludes the study.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary

Since June 1693 when Asomani and the eighty warriors of Akwamu confiscated the keys from the Danes at Christiansborg, the “*ɛdɔm nsafoa*” have been kept at the Bogyawe Palace in the care of the Gyaasewahene (Chief-of-Staff) and under the direct supervision of the Akwamuhene. The seizure of Christiansborg attested to the motives of the Akwamu, and the rivalry between European trading parties and the desire of the African elite to dominate trading relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries along the coast of Accra. The acquisition, use, and significance of the Christiansborg keys is an integrated component of Akwamu’s cultural heritage and history, including traditions of origin, expansion, trade relations with other ethnic groups and Europeans, as well as the administration of the kingdom.

5.2 Recommendations

This research has shown that the Christiansborg keys have become an integral part of Akwamu court rituals and practices as regalia; hence the following recommendations are being suggested;

1. To promote education and importance of the Christiansborg keys, the statue at Atimpoku should be incorporated into the celebration of Adaekese and Odwira festivals by reenacting a ceremony or pouring libation near it. Also, there should be visible signage by the road side to inform commuters of Nana Asomani’s statue. These will increase public awareness of its related history and meaning to the people of Akwamu.

2. The Christiansborg keys suffer from change of micro and macro environments when they are moved from the “apem adaka” to the display showcase when they are shown to visitors to the Bogyawe Palace Museum. It is therefore important that the curator combines modern curatorial or metal conservation practices with the traditional conservation measures to protect the keys from destruction. The Ghana Museums and Monuments Board should list them as national monument because of their heritage value. This will encourage the Curatorial and Conservation Department of the institution to assist the Bogyawe Palace in the preservation and remedial conservation of the Keys.
3. With the interpretation of the keys’ history at the Palace Museum, it is recommended that the history, context of the seizure, as well as the meaning of the Christiansborg keys to the people of Akwamu should be shared such that visitors get a deeper understanding of its status as regalia. This is because the display of the keys emphasizes their position as only a war trophy, relegating the inherent values brought out by the study and associated with it to the background.
4. Lastly, the younger members of the Asafo should be taught the lyrics of the Christiansborg keys’ song. This is because it was realized that only the elders, aged between 50 and 86 years, knew the lyrics and meaning of the song. This will help conserve the lyrics and meaning of the song in the future, aside being documented by this research.

5.3 Conclusions

This study has added additional insights into the current uses of heritage to gain cultural, ethnic, and political identity which is shown through objects, images, songs, events, and monuments.

The maintenance of the Christiansborg keys at the Bogyawe Palace has emphasized traditional

conservation practices which are not uniquely different from the western museological practices. This is because the Akwamu have curatorial traditions, and have created structures for the collection, display, and preservation of highly valued objects, as well as practices related to their use, interpretation, care, and conservation. The care of these objects is entrusted to the office of the Gyaasewahene, who can rightly be referred to as the Curator. He ensures that indigenous customs, beliefs, norms, and taboos are used to protect the state regalia, including the Christiansborg keys. This study raised some issues regarding heritage education and accessibility. Full access to the Christiansborg keys is restricted at the Bogyawe Palace because of the sacredness associated with it. As a result, the Gyaasewahene has the sole authority to physically touch and inspect the keys based on the training he received under his predecessor (see Figure 8). This prevented me from critically examining the keys to bring out the various shapes and sizes of the bunch of keys.

It is based on these limitations that I recommend further research to be conducted because there are more areas to be covered when it comes to shedding more light on the Christiansborg keys. For instance, an in depth curatorial study of the bunch of keys to establish the authenticity of their integrity as metallic objects which has been in existence for over 300 years. Nevertheless, the protection and conservation of the keys are ensured because of the creation of the office of the Gyaasewahene, who is directly in charge of the keys and other state regalia of Akwamu.

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APPENDIX A: Questionnaire to guide informal interviews

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HERITAGE STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON.

RESEARCH TOPIC: THE CHRISTIANSBORG KEYS IN AKWAMU STATE REGALIA:
A MATERIAL CULTURE ANALYSIS.

- a. Name:..... b. Date..... c. Place of interview.....
- A. Age: a. [0-29] b. [30-59] c. [60 and above]
- B. Sex: a. Male b. Female
- C. Occupation or traditional title.....

Questionnaire

1. Who are the Akwamu, and their settlement history?
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.....
2. What was Akwamu's role in the coastal trade between the indigenes and the Europeans?
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3. What was the nature of relationship that existed between the Akwamu, on one side, and Ga-Danes on the Accra coast?

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4. What is the history behind the seizure of the Christiansborg keys?

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5. Who was Asomani and what role did he play in the event of 1693?

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.....

6. How was the attack or seizure organized? What was the role of the king in organizing the men? Were they Akwamu state warriors or private army of Asomani? Are there popular personalities still remembered apart from Asomani in folktales?

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7. What is the concept of key ownership in Akwamu customs and traditions?

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8. What is the total number of the bunch of keys?

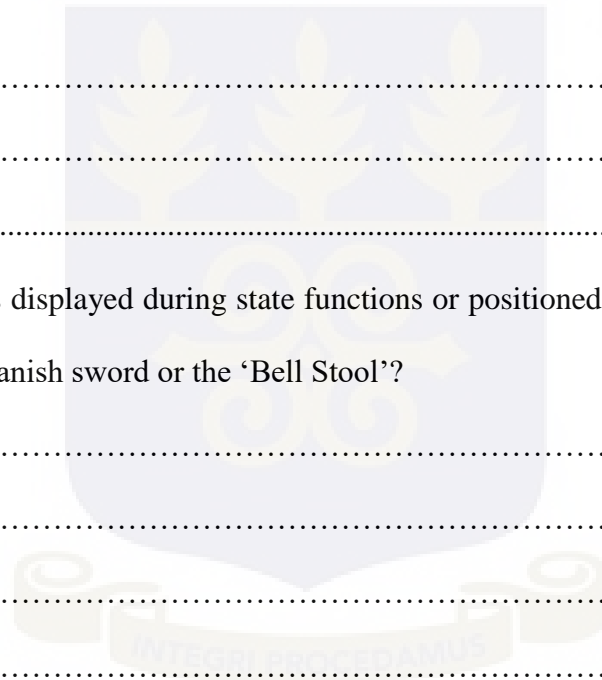
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9. On what occasions are the keys brought out to the public and how are they prepared for such occasions?

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10. How are the keys displayed during state functions or positioned with other state relics or regalia like the Danish sword or the 'Bell Stool'?

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11. Are the keys seen or used as neckwear?

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12. What name is given to the bearer of the keys and why is he always seated in front of the king or positioned at the left-back side of the King during state durbar?

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.....

13. What are the keys tied or held with during state durbar; what is the symbolic meaning in Akwamu tradition?

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14. Has the keys been given a traditional name? Are the keys' history and importance expressed in Akwamu state designs like linguist staff, rings, bracelets, native sandals and chairs?

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15. Are there war songs, praise songs, and dirges concerning the history of the keys? If yes; what is the meaning of the songs?

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16. Are the keys used in the installation rites of chiefs or sub chiefs like Asafohene or Benkumhene? That is do chiefs swear an oath to it?

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17. Do the Asafo use the keys in their performances or ceremonies?

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18. Are the keys purified like the black stools of Akwamu or mentioned when pouring libation for past kings like Basua and Ado?

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19. How are the keys preserved? What are some of the remedial conservation works done on the keys after a state function? Are there myths concerning the preservation of the keys (ntamkese)? Where exactly are they kept and who is in charge? Are they kept alone or together with other state relics or regalia?

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20. What role has the keys played in strengthening Akwamu-Danish relations?

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21. Are the keys used in any formal or informal educational activities?

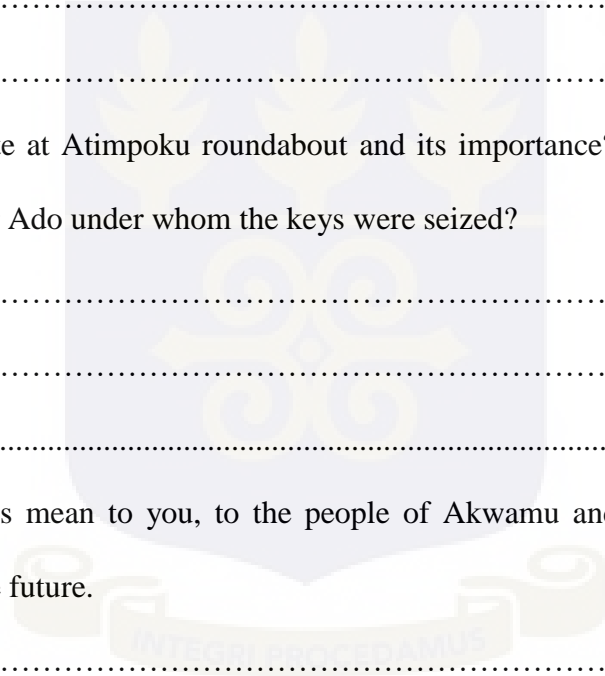
.....
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22. Why is the statute at Atimpoku roundabout and its importance? Why Asomani and not the king Basua or Ado under whom the keys were seized?

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23. What do the keys mean to you, to the people of Akwamu and the Danes in the past, presently, and the future.

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APPENDIX B: List of Interviewees

1. Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III, 50 years - Akwamuhene
2. Nana Samanhyia Darko II, 63 years - Gyaasewahene.
3. Nana Asamoah Yeboah-Afari, 51 years – Adantamuhene
4. Tove Degnbol, 54 years – Danish Ambassador to Ghana
5. Okyeame Nana Asare, 62 years - Chief Linguist
6. Okyeame Anima (queen mother’s linguist) 58years
7. Abusuapanyin Asiedu, 86 years
8. Oheneba Yaw Boafo, 75 years
9. Agya Osae, 65 years
10. Opoku Darko, 77 years
11. Kwabena Nyarko, 50 years
12. Afia Adubea Mmabahemaa, 56years
13. Kenneth Mamfe, 25 years
14. Isaac Kwakye, 47 years
15. Abusuapanyin Kwabena Asante, 49 years
16. Michael Darko, 40 years
17. Kwaku Selorm, 31 years
18. Kofi Mireku, 39 years
19. Hayford Akoto, 44 years
20. Samuel Kofi Amponsah, 58 years
21. Samuel Addo Otchere, 34 years
22. Opanyin Akoto Gyiti, 62 years

23. Osei Bonsu, 26 years

24. Stephen Adu Acquah, 47years

25. Eugenia Asante, 48years – women leader

26. Daniel Dodi, 21years

